



# YDI SYMPOSIUM PACKAGE: CENTERING STUDENT VOICE

**NOVEMBER 2, 2022  
9 AM TO 12 PM PST VIA ZOOM**

# INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical developmental period in which youth undergo remarkable physical, neurodevelopmental, emotional, and social changes that may guide future trajectories into adulthood. It can represent a period of positive development, healthy behaviour establishment, and life skill building; however, it may also signify a vulnerable time for the onset of mental health challenges and risk behaviours.

These vulnerabilities have been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated youth mental health, with a significant rise in symptoms of anxiety and depression observed among young people—even more so, it appears, than other age groups.<sup>1</sup> Evidently, gathering data and insights from youth is paramount to providing timely, adequate, and appropriate support to foster positive youth mental health, well-being, and healthy development.

## THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT

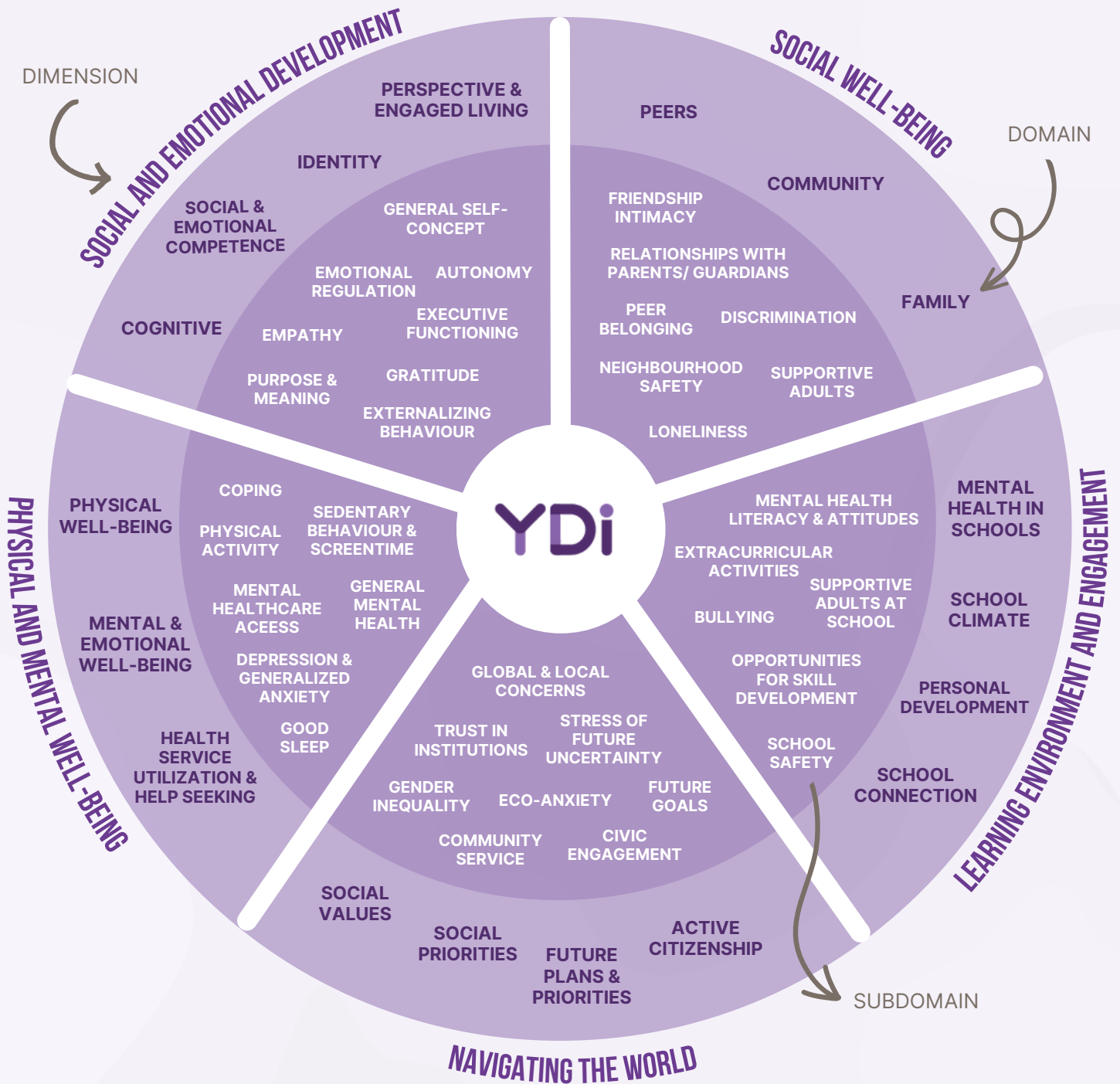
The Youth Development Instrument (YDI) is a survey developed by Dr. Hasina Samji, an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University and a Senior Scientist in Population Mental Well-being at the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, in collaboration with the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP-UBC). The YDI is an online self-report questionnaire for Grade 11 students, collecting population-level data on youth mental health and well-being, administered through school districts and independent schools across BC. In the 2021/2022 cycle, the YDI had 9,255 youth participants from 22 school districts participate.

YDI data can be linked to Early (EDI) and Middle Years (MDI) Development Instruments, extending trajectory data into adolescence, as well as prospectively to health and education services datasets creating, to our knowledge, a unique, longitudinal dataset illuminating young people's well-being over time. The YDI takes a strengths-based approach through its emphasis on developmental assets that are embedded in the YDI's five primary dimensions: *Social and Emotional Development*, *Social Well-being*, *Learning Environment and Engagement*, *Physical and Mental Well-being*, and *Navigating the World*. In addition to five core dimensions, the YDI also has cross-cutting domains on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, positive and adverse childhood experiences, and positive mental health.

<sup>1</sup>Samji, H., Wu, J., Ladak, A., Vossen, C., Stewart, E., Dove, N., Long, D., & Snell, G. (2022). Mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and youth—a systematic review. *Child and adolescent mental health*, 27(2), 173-189.

# A SNAPSHOT OF THE YDI

Below is a graphical representation of the YDI's dimensions, domains, and subdomains. Please note that only a select number of YDI subdomains are depicted on the graphic below.



# THIS YEAR'S YDI SYMPOSIUM

The *YDI Symposium: Centering Student Voice* is a half-day event where partners from diverse sectors will converge in the presence of youth to learn about the 2021/2022 YDI findings, as well as how YDI data can be used to improve youth mental health and well-being in BC. The symposium will showcase youth voices and personal stories relating to mental health and well-being, outline key findings from the 2021/2022 YDI implementation cycle, and feature presentations from our community partners. With representatives from education, health, community, research, and policy sectors, this event brings together key partners to mobilize this data and highlight efforts to promote the inclusion of youth voice and perspectives in youth mental health planning, decision-making, and advocacy.

## THIS YEAR'S SYMPOSIUM THEME: CENTERING STUDENT VOICE

*Centering Student Voice* was chosen as this year's theme in recognition of the need for youth involvement and advocacy at decision-making tables that pertain to youth mental health and wellbeing. Far too often, youth are not consulted and are instead subjected to decisions made for them by others. To break this cycle, we believe it is important to focus our symposium on both *amplifying* and *listening* to students' voices.

Further, as part of the BC Children's Hospital's *Covid & Kids* project, led by Drs. Hasina Samji and Evelyn Steward and funded by BC Children's Hospital Foundation, we held two deliberative dialogue sessions focused on developing recommendations to promote youth mental health and well-being in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery period. Inclusion and representation of young people in youth mental health research, program development, and evaluation were critical themes that emerged in these discussions. As leaders in this area, we have an opportunity to collectively empower youth to use their voices to lead meaningful change in their communities and champion positive mental health and well-being for young people in BC.

The theme, *Centering Student Voice*, was central to the planning and development of this year's YDI symposium. We invited members of our past and current Youth Advisory Councils (YAC) to consult on the symposium and help guide the development of the event's agenda. We hosted monthly meetings with interested students and jointly brainstormed strategies for how best to engage youth leading up to and throughout this year's symposium. Both sessions, *Co-Constructing School with Student Voice* and *Youth Engagement in Theory and Practice*, were chosen and developed to showcase both the importance and impact of student voice.

# THIS YEAR'S YDI SYMPOSIUM

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Capturing Health and Resilience Trajectories (CHART) Lab gratefully acknowledges that we are located on the unceded, traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō, Səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh), and k<sup>w</sup>ik<sup>w</sup>əʔəm (Kwkwetlem) Nations.

Many of those attending the symposium are from traditional lands all throughout BC and even from other parts of Canada. From coast to coast, we encourage each of you to reflect on the territorial land you are attending the event from, as well as what reconciliation and decolonization mean to you and actions steps you will take to challenge and dismantle our colonial systems and promote reconciliation with Indigenous people.

### **ELDER SYEXWALIYA (ANN WHONNOCK)** (she/her) Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw (Squamish Nation)



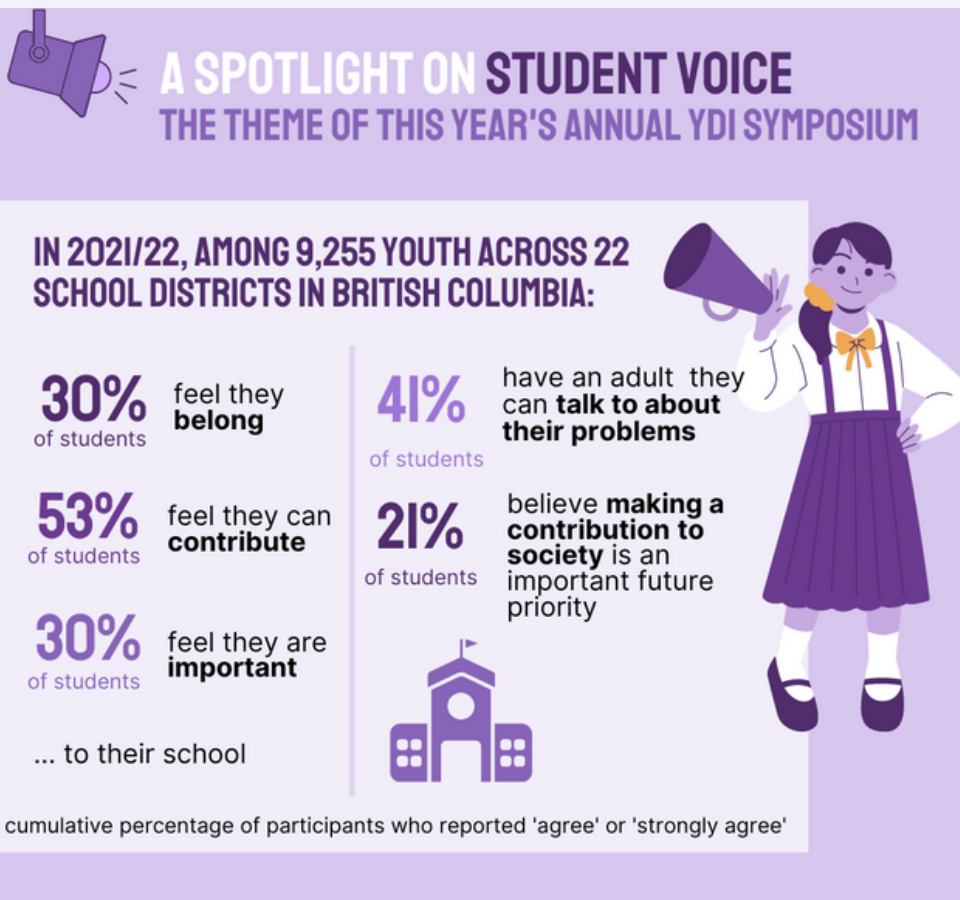
As taught by her late grandparents, Syexwaliya supports families and shares cultural teachings and protocols within and outside of her community. Her passion is to see that Squamish culture, language and ceremonies continue to be the cornerstone of the Nation for future generations and the culture carried on by future generations and her snichim (language) to be used, not only by herself, but for all the families and future generations in their daily lives and ceremonies. Let's not let our Culture and Snichim die out!

# THIS YEAR'S YDI SYMPOSIUM

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very fortunate to have our youth voices — Adya Gupta, Manuel Boada, and Brandon Stellaard — bravely sharing their personal reflections on youth mental health and well-being in the context of the YDI at this year's symposium. We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to our three youth speakers above, as well as Malia Mercado, Emmi Oullette, and Kennice Wong, for playing an integral role in the planning of this event. We kindly thank all other student delegates and community representatives for joining us. Lastly, we would like to extend a warm thank you to all the youth who provided their submissions on a creative expression pertaining to student voice which we are excited to share on the day of the symposium.

Scan to enjoy a playlist curated by youth that empowers and conveys the meaning of "Student Voice":



# THIS YEAR'S YDI SYMPOSIUM

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very fortunate to work in collaboration with diverse groups, organizations, and individuals from across the health and education sectors on various YDI initiatives. We are honoured and grateful to have several of our partners share the stage with us and present their own work related to youth health and well-being at our annual event. We would like to thank Gino Bondi, David De Wit, and Nathan Ngieng from the Abbotsford School District who will be sharing how they co-construct learning environments with students in school. We would also like to thank Alex Gist and Sabrina Khan from BC Children's Hospital and Rehanna Thiara for their Youth Engagement in Theory and Practice presentation.

### The CHART Lab Team

We would also like to thank our CHART Lab team members who led the planning of this event, including Rachel Correia, Jillian Herring, Jocelyn Lee, and Brooke Low.

Additionally, thank you to every single lab member for their sustained involvement and passion for all things YDI. We could not deliver the YDI and make advances in improving youth mental health and well-being without you.

- Hasina Samji, PI
- Jacquie Maloney
- Judy Wu
- Julia Kaufman
- Mari del Casal
- David Long
- Adeleke Fowokan
- Brooke Low
- Rachel Correia
- Christine Yanagawa
- Jillian Herring
- Jocelyn Lee
- Lauren Gorfinkel
- Rob Higgins
- Yan Lim



# AGENDA

\*Please note: with the exception of breakout rooms, the event will be recorded

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|----------------------|---|
| <b>9:00 - 9:15</b>   | <b>Welcome and Land Acknowledgement</b><br>Elder Syexwaliya   |
| <b>9:15 - 10:00</b>  | <b>Highlights From the YDI 2021/22 and Youth Reflections</b><br>Dr. Hasina Samji, Adya Gupta, Manuel Boada, and Brandon Stellaard |
| <b>10:00 - 10:30</b> | <b>Session 1: Co-Constructing School with Student Voice</b><br>Gino Bondi, David De Wit, and Nathan Ngieng                        |
| <b>10:30 - 10:40</b> | <b>Session 1 Discussion</b><br>Breakout Rooms   |
| <b>10:40 - 11:10</b> | <b>Session 2: Youth Engagement in Theory and Practice</b><br>Alex Gist, Sabrina Khan, and Rehanna Thiara                          |
| <b>11:10 - 11:20</b> | <b>Session 2 Discussion</b><br>Breakout Rooms   |
| <b>11:20 - 11:50</b> | <b>Keynote Address: Perseverance</b><br>Corey Hirsch  |
| <b>11:50 - 11:55</b> | <b>Closing Prayer</b><br>Elder Syexwaliya   |
| <b>11:55 - 12:00</b> | <b>Closing Remarks and Thank You</b><br>Dr. Hasina Samji  |



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YDI 2021/22 & YOUTH REFLECTIONS

## DR. HASINA SAMJI & YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dr. Hasina Samji will kick off the second annual YDI symposium with a presentation on the YDI and key findings from the 2021/2022 implementation cycle. She will also discuss the significance behind this year's symposium theme, *Centering Student Voice*, for the YDI and work beyond. Her presentation will feature three youth co-presenters from the YDI Youth Advisory Council (past and current)—Adya Gupta, Manuel Boada, and Brandon Stellaard—who will share their personal stories and connections to three key YDI areas: mental wellbeing, social wellbeing, and youth's future and goals.

Adya will discuss her experience with mental health and reducing mental health stigma, Manuel will share his experience fostering a sense of community belonging at his school, and Brandon, a former YAC member, will talk about his experience transitioning from high school to post-secondary education. Together, this session aims to underscore the significance of YDI findings for youth themselves, and showcase one of the many ways the YDI can be used to amplify student's voices.



### **DR. HASINA SAMJI** (she/her) YDI Principal Investigator

Dr. Hasina Samji is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, a Senior Scientist in Population Mental Well-being at the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, and Director of the Capturing Health and Resilience Trajectories (CHART) lab. An infectious epidemiologist with training from the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, she leads the YDI in collaboration with the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP-UBC), community, health, education, clinical and policy partners, and youth themselves.

She is also the co-Principal Investigator of the "COVID and Kids" project funded by BC Children's Hospital Foundation to identify strategies to support youth mental health during the pandemic recovery period.

# MEET OUR STUDENT PRESENTERS

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YDI 2021/22 & YOUTH REFLECTIONS



**ADYA GUPTA** (she/her)  
Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Member

I am a grade 11 student at Abbotsford Senior Secondary School and this is my second year with the YAC. I joined the YAC because I believe that mental health, especially among youth, is often overlooked, and the YDI helps tell the story of youth mental health and wellbeing in BC. As YAC members working with school districts, communities, and researchers, we can create a significant impact in the lives of youth. I have had the honour and opportunity to work alongside amazing people and share my story at conferences and dialogues. Participating in these events revealed to me that there are major challenges for youth including mental illness, substance use, and worries about the future. I strive to make a difference for youth and support their mental health.

**MANUEL BOADA** (he/him)  
Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Member

I am a senior at Abbotsford Senior Secondary School. I travel internationally to play Rugby 7s. I spend my free time coding autonomous systems and running an activism club at school where we fundraise for causes we believe in. I have always been passionate about youth mental health. Accordingly, I am glad that I joined the Youth Advisory Council because it has enabled me to impact meaningful change. Not to mention, the people here are really nice! I have been impressed by all the teamwork that is going on behind the scenes for this symposium to be possible.



**BRANDON STELLAARD** (he/him)  
Youth Advisory Council (YAC) Member

I am a first-year student at Vancouver Island University completing a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in political studies and psychology. I graduated with honours from Alberni District Secondary School in 2022. I became acquainted with the YDI in September 2020, when my school district, SD70, was one of the first to pilot the survey. I immediately saw how impactful YDI data would be. I joined the YAC from 2020-2022. Being a YAC member opened many doors for me; I became a member of the Young Canadians Parliament in 2021, and got involved in advocacy at the local level. Being a YAC member is by far the most impactful thing I've done and I cannot overstate how important the YDI data is, and will be, for the future of youth across BC.



# CO-CONSTRUCTING SCHOOL WITH STUDENT VOICE

GINO BONDI, DAVID DE WIT, AND NATHAN NGIENG



**GINO BONDI** (he/him)

Assistant Superintendent, Abbotsford School District

Gino has been an educator in the BC public school system for 25+ years, starting as an English teacher and school counsellor and now oversees all secondary schools and the International Department. Gino's theory of action creates value by connecting educators' professional identities to the organization's strategy which is guided by the vision statement: "a co-constructed inquiry-based learning experience that is equitable and social and emotional learning (SEL) informed." Gino engages with students, staff, and parents to improve strategic outcomes and develop organizational capabilities.

**DAVID DE WIT** (he/him)  
District Principal of Learning Support Services, Safe Schools Portfolio,  
Abbotsford School District

David de Wit is currently a District Principal of Learning Support Services with the Safe Schools portfolio in the Abbotsford School District. Dave has 20 years of experience as an administrator in both the Abbotsford and North Vancouver school districts. His leadership roles have spanned both alternate and mainstream secondary schools.



**NATHAN NGIENG** (he/him)

Assistant Superintendent, Abbotsford School District

For over 20 years, Nathan has been an educator in the B.C. public education system and an advocate for inclusive support in education for students. In his current role, he leads and supports the strategic direction and planning for middle schools in Abbotsford, focusing on equitable and inclusive school environments.



# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

ALEX GIST, SABRINA KHAN, & REHANNA THIARA



**ALEX GIST** (he/him)

Health Promotion Specialist, BC Children's Hospital

Alex has worked in education for almost 20 years in a variety of roles from teaching English Arts, to teaching English and skills to immigrant and refugee youth, managing SEL-based out-of-school time programs, and helping schools to support the mental well-being of their students. Alex is also a Ph.D. candidate in the Human Development, Learning, and Culture program at UBC. His research interests include social and emotional learning in teacher education and supporting the development of positive student-educator relationships in online and blended learning environments.



**SABRINA KHAN** (she/her)

Health Promotion Specialist, BC Children's Hospital

Sabrina has worked across the pan-Canadian health system in patient safety, quality improvement, research, and evaluation before focusing on her passion for health promotion and making a difference at the community and system levels of health care. She has extensive experience in partner engagement and collaboration and has a Master of Public Health from UVic and a BSc from UBC.



**REHANNA THIARA** (she/her)

Balancing Our Minds Youth Advisory Council Member

Rehanna is a grade 11 student from Surrey, BC. She took interest in advocating for mental health as a kid listening to her friends talk about their mental health. Rehanna later became involved in helping to create a mental health toolkit with Balancing Our Minds. She is very passionate about this work and has been most grateful to work alongside other youth and have her voice heard.

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS: PERSEVERANCE

COREY HIRSH (HE/HIM)

Corey Hirsch is a former NHL goaltender, coach and an Olympic Games silver medalist and currently a colour commentator for the Vancouver Canucks with SportsNet Radio. Following his professional hockey career and after dealing with his own mental health struggles, he embarked on a mission to open a conversation to end the stigma around mental health.

In 1994, just three years after being drafted by the New York Rangers, Corey both won a silver medal and drank from the Stanley Cup as a member of the Rangers' championship team. What no one knew was that Corey tried to take his own life that same year.

Months later, he was traded to the Vancouver Canucks and went on to play 100 more NHL games, before finishing his career in Europe. The entire time, Corey struggled with his mental health issues. When he could no longer play due to debilitating panic attacks and severe weight loss, he finally reached out to his team trainer. Corey was eventually diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder and got the lifesaving treatment that he needed.

Corey would go on to coach goaltenders with the Maple Leafs and Blues, before joining Sportsnet Radio to do colour commentary for the Canucks.

In February 2017, Corey wrote a piece for *The Players' Tribune*, sharing publicly his mental health diagnosis and suicide attempt. His story sparked important conversations within hockey and beyond, as more athletes began to open up about mental health.

Today, Corey is an advocate in the battle to end the stigma around mental health. He is an engaging speaker that educates, motivates, and inspires his audience. He gives hope to others struggling by showing vulnerability and letting people know they are not alone.



# THANK YOU!

Thank you again for registering for this year's second annual YDI symposium, *Centering Student Voice*. We look forward to convening with you on November 2nd!

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



The CHART lab is committed to promoting health and well-being through community engagement, collaboration, and data.

For more information about the YDI and associated projects, including the School District Reports and Infographics, please visit the CHART lab website, <https://www.chartlab.ca>. A recording of the symposium will also be available on the website shortly after the event.

Also, be sure to follow the YDI on social media for the latest updates on reports, events, and data!



@yditeam



@yditeam



@yditeam



Youth Development Instrument

### 2021/2022 YDI PROVINCIAL REPORT COMING SOON!

