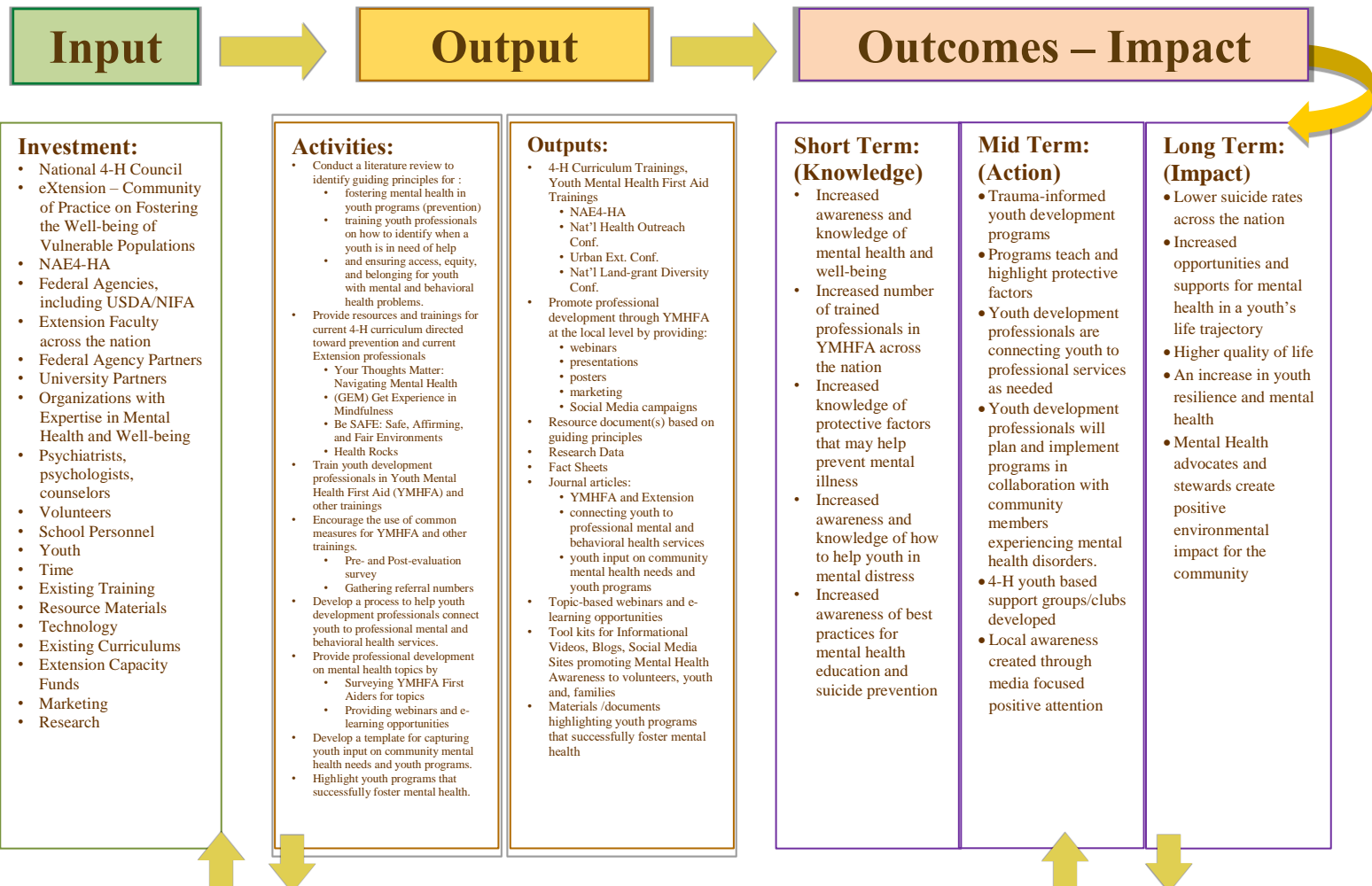


# Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion Group



**SITUATION**

**Need:**  
Quality youth programming that fosters education in mental health and well-being across the nation.

Extension/4-H needs to address the stigma around mental health by raising awareness and providing education and resources.

**PRIORITIES**

Increasing youth development professionals' knowledge of mental health.

Integrate prevention techniques and facilitate resources for youth and families in need.

Find/Develop resources that create youth to youth support systems and communication processes for mental health support.

Take stock of and share internal and external promising practices.

Articulate the value of equity work to the 4-H mission for youth with behavioral and mental health challenges.

Collaborate with other Champion Groups and Partners

**OBJECTIVES**

Support access, equity, and belonging of youth with mental health challenges and promote mental health and wellbeing in national youth development programs by providing resources such as best practices and professional development.

Work will focus on:

- fostering mental health education in youth programs (prevention)
- training youth professionals, volunteers and youth on how to identify when a youth is in need of help
- and ensuring access, equity, and belonging for youth with mental and behavioral health problems.

**PARTICIPATION**

- Extension Faculty and Staff
- Program Leaders
- Youth Development Professionals

**Investment:**

- National 4-H Council
- eXtension – Community of Practice on Fostering the Well-being of Vulnerable Populations
- NAE4-HA
- Federal Agencies, including USDA/NIFA
- Extension Faculty across the nation
- Federal Agency Partners
- University Partners
- Organizations with Expertise in Mental Health and Well-being
- Psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors
- Volunteers
- School Personnel
- Youth
- Time
- Existing Training
- Resource Materials
- Technology
- Existing Curriculums
- Extension Capacity Funds
- Marketing
- Research

**Activities:**

- Conduct a literature review to identify guiding principles for :
  - fostering mental health in youth programs (prevention)
  - training youth professionals on how to identify when a youth is in need of help
  - and ensuring access, equity, and belonging for youth with mental and behavioral health problems.
- Provide resources and trainings for current 4-H curriculum directed toward prevention and current Extension professionals
  - Your Thoughts Matter: Navigating Mental Health (GEM) Get Experience in Mindfulness
  - Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming, and Fair Environments
  - Health Rocks
- Train youth development professionals in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) and other trainings
- Encourage the use of common measures for YMHFA and other trainings.
  - Pre- and Post-evaluation survey
  - Gathering referral numbers
- Develop a process to help youth development professionals connect youth to professional mental and behavioral health services.
- Provide professional development on mental health topics by
  - Surveying YMHFA First Aiders for topics
  - Providing webinars and e-learning opportunities
- Develop a template for capturing youth input on community mental health needs and youth programs.
- Highlight youth programs that successfully foster mental health.

**Outputs:**

- 4-H Curriculum Trainings, Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings
  - NAE4-HA
  - Nat'l Health Outreach Conf.
  - Urban Ext. Conf.
  - Nat'l Land-grant Diversity Conf.
- Promote professional development through YMHFA at the local level by providing:
  - webinars
  - presentations
  - posters
  - marketing
  - Social Media campaigns
- Resource document(s) based on guiding principles
- Research Data
- Fact Sheets
- Journal articles:
  - YMHFA and Extension connecting youth to professional mental and behavioral health services
  - youth input on community mental health needs and youth programs
- Topic-based webinars and e-learning opportunities
- Tool kits for Informational Videos, Blogs, Social Media Sites promoting Mental Health Awareness to volunteers, youth and, families
- Materials /documents highlighting youth programs that successfully foster mental health

**Short Term: (Knowledge)**

- Increased awareness and knowledge of mental health and well-being
- Increased number of trained professionals in YMHFA across the nation
- Increased knowledge of protective factors that may help prevent mental illness
- Increased awareness and knowledge of how to help youth in mental distress
- Increased awareness of best practices for mental health education and suicide prevention

**Mid Term: (Action)**

- Trauma-informed youth development programs
- Programs teach and highlight protective factors
- Youth development professionals are connecting youth to professional services as needed
- Youth development professionals will plan and implement programs in collaboration with community members experiencing mental health disorders.
- 4-H youth based support groups/clubs developed
- Local awareness created through media focused positive attention

**Long Term: (Impact)**

- Lower suicide rates across the nation
- Increased opportunities and supports for mental health in a youth's life trajectory
- Higher quality of life
- An increase in youth resilience and mental health
- Mental Health advocates and stewards create positive environmental impact for the community

**Assumptions**

- Most youth development professionals recognize the need to serve youth with mental health disorders
- Most youth development professionals recognize the need to foster mental health in their programs
- There is administrative support for outreach and programming to serve youth with mental health disorders and foster mental health
- Efforts will be undertaken to enhance the capacity of staff and volunteers to offer quality delivery of existing programs that target youth with mental health disorders and programs that foster mental health
- Increased knowledge will change practice

**Possible External Factors**

- Stigmas (mental illness)
- Availability of funding
- Willingness of youth development professionals to participate in programming
- Willingness of community members to enroll and participate in programs