



**BEYOND
HIGH SCHOOL:**

A guide to discovering your pathway to success.



This resource was made possible with support from the community, plus partners, funders and sponsors.



NELSON



Beyond High School A guide to discovering your pathway to success
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Canada 

TABLE OF Contents

Introduction 7

About You: The Learner 11

Post-Secondary Pathways 23

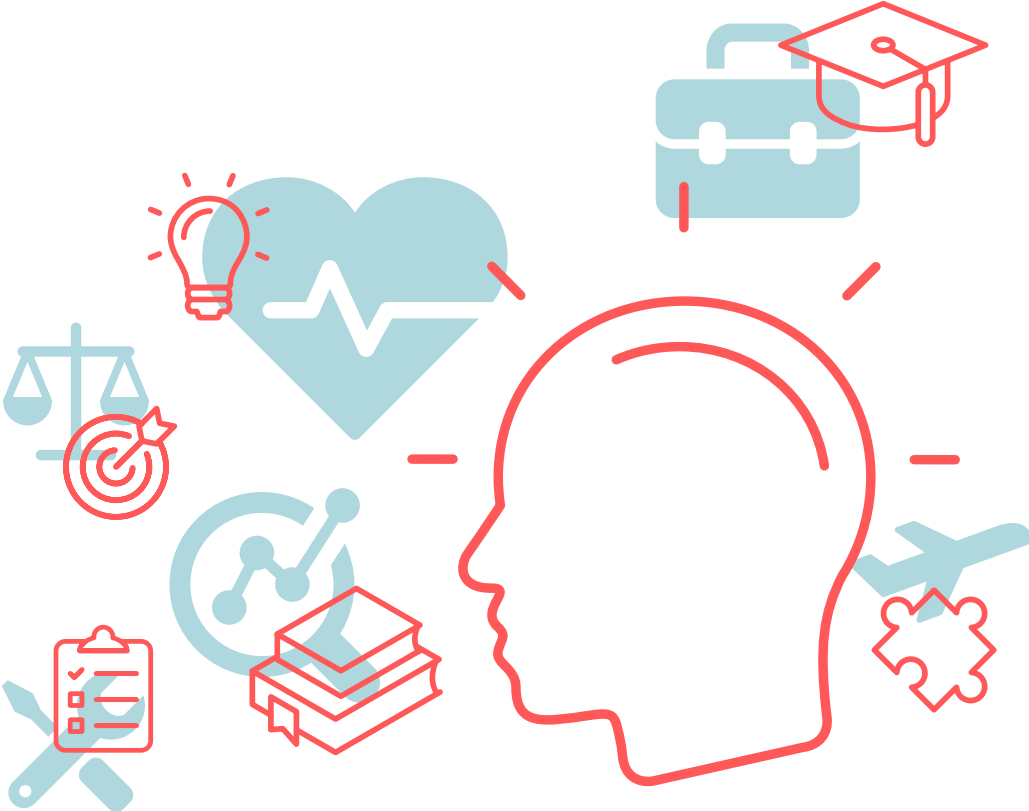
Entrepreneurship 51

Mental Health and Well-Being 57

Putting Your Plan Into Action 67

Conclusion 76

References 77





Introduction

Introduction



What is this guide about?

This guide was developed with the help of many experts, including those with lived experiences, who reside and/or work in west Mississauga. They came together through the Erin Mills Connects community organization to create a resource that would help youth plan their education or employment pathways following high school. This guide also includes mental health information for youth and families to receive support.

Although *“Beyond High School: A guide to discovering your pathway to success”* is written for students who are transitioning out of high school, it also keeps their families in mind. Making big decisions about life after high school needs the wisdom and assistance of many.

To reach more families, Erin Mills Connects worked hard to make the guide as accessible as possible – translating it into several languages prominent within this community, testing it with potential users, and creating it as a digital resource. For those who are reading a printed document right now, online resources are still easily accessed through *onpathway.me* links and QR codes.

Why is this guide needed in our community?

West Mississauga is fortunate to have many advantages: good schools, community centres, public service agencies, youth groups, caring neighbours, and access to many of Canada’s best post-secondary institutions. This area also has significant economic assets such as municipal support and stability, and proximity to markets. It is home to many corporate offices, successful small businesses, and an energetic community of entrepreneurs.

Over the course of the pandemic, however, this area also showed vulnerabilities through high rates of Coronavirus transmissions and lost days of in-class learning for K-12 and post-secondary school students.

The need to promote and support mental health became even more evident in the early days of the pandemic. The time had come to collaborate on a resource to help students and their families confidently pursue opportunities after high school – leading to greater well-being. Thanks to Canada’s Healthy Communities Initiative, Erin Mills Connects was given the means to help make this happen.

How to use this guide

This resource is for high school students, but is meant to be shared with parents/guardians. It will help create dialogue about students’ post-secondary pathways. Breaking down big decisions into smaller discussions, will help reduce the anxiety of youth and their caregivers.



This guide has five main components:

1. **About You: The Learner** – how your self-awareness, values and character strengths will create your success
2. **Post-Secondary Pathways** – the choices ahead of you and the resources you’ll need
3. **Entrepreneurship** – the exciting world of creating your own enterprise
4. **Mental Health and Well-Being** – taking care of mind and body
5. **Putting Your Plan into Action** – assembling all the pieces into a plan for now and long-term



FEELING OVERWHELMED?

Speak to a trusted adult, such a family member or a teacher. **See page 63** for additional help in our community when you are feeling too overwhelmed.

Acknowledgements

“Beyond High School: A guide to discovering your pathway to success” required the time, expertise, and talents of many. An advisory committee created the framework. Writers provided content. Post-secondary youth made sage recommendations about, “what information they’d like to have had when they were in Grade 11 or 12.” High school students and families tested the guide. Translators created linguistic bridges to bring the resource’s information to many families who are new to schools and systems in Canada. Erin Mills Connects Steering Committee thanks them all, listed here.

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Printing

Thank you to Nelson for printing copies of this resource for schools and groups serving area youth and their families.

Art and Design

We appreciate the talents and care of the team at Synergy Design, based in Streetsville.




Tips for translating linked resources into another language

For websites: “Open a web browser and go to translate.google.ca. You don’t need a Google account to access it, because it’s free to all. In the text box on the left, type in the entire URL (including the http://) of the website you want to view. On the right, choose the language you want to see the website in. Click on the highlighted URL.” (Cains, 2022)

For PDFs: Download the document that you wish translated onto your device. Then upload it to Google Translate. Choose the language that you want. You can then download the translated document.

To turn on YouTube subtitles:

On the desktop version of YouTube, click on Settings  located in the video frame.

1. If subtitles are off, click “subtitles/CC” to turn them on.
2. Click on “English (or another language if shown)” in the new menu.
3. Another new menu will appear: you may need to click on “subtitles/CC” again.
4. Now click on “Auto-translate.”
Choose your language.

You can also select your language choice through your YouTube Account preferences.



1.



ABOUT YOU: The Learner

1.

ABOUT YOU: The Learner



Students place a great deal of importance on decisions about post-secondary pathways, given the commitment of time, effort and finances that go into this stage in a student’s life. We want all students to make thoughtful decisions. A first step is being self-aware, knowing who you are as a learner, your interests and passions, your values, strengths and needs. Your identity is complex, and it is important to explore the many facets of who you are as a learner when considering important decisions about life after high school.

What Is Self-Awareness?

Self-awareness has been called “the meta-skill of the 21st century” (Eurich, 2018a). While most people think they are self-aware, Eurich’s (2018b) research shows that only 10-15% are actually self-aware. What exactly is self-awareness? It is “the ability to be aware of one’s inner life - one’s emotions, thoughts, behaviours, values, preferences, goals, strengths, challenges, attitudes, mindsets, and so forth - and how these elements impact behaviour and choices across contexts” (University of California Berkeley, 2019). Self-awareness can be thought of as being on a continuum (Ackerman, 2021), beginning with a superficial understanding of yourself and spanning to a more intense emotional, psychological, cognitive, social, and physical understanding of yourself.



Let’s get started.
How self-aware are you?

Indicate the degree to which you are self-aware on the following continuum.

Superficially Self-Aware

(I’m only aware of how I physically look)



Intensely Self-Aware

(I’m emotionally, psychologically, cognitively, socially, and physically aware)

I know this because...(evidence of the depth of your self-awareness):

Figure 1: Self-awareness Continuum. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2021b, flourishco.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.



Why Is Self-Awareness Important?

There are many benefits to self-awareness. Individuals who are self-aware are generally confident, optimistic, hopeful, curious, open-minded, reflective, compassionate, objective and goal oriented. Self-aware people pay attention to their actions, behaviours, emotions, beliefs, and values. They hold themselves to realistic and challenging standards, build positive relationships, and focus on self-improvement (Gini-Newman & Nanavati, 2021a). Self-awareness can make individuals more proactive, creative, and confident, able to view situations from other perspectives, and be more effective at work (Ackerman, 2021). Researcher Tasha Eurich (2018a), notes that adopting a “learn-well mindset” (p. 116) can help us self-reflect in ways that do not cause us to ruminate, that is, fixate on ourselves and our performance in an unhealthy way and, instead, focus on learning about ourselves, including learning from our mistakes, in ways that move us forward in our lives (p. 112-113, 115-116).

Your identity is influenced by many factors including your faith, culture, gender, life experiences, family, and community. The latter, family and community, can play an especially significant role in influencing your thinking and behaviour (Kutcher, 2017, p. 4). Your personality also shapes who you are and for information about common personality traits, see Resources p. 15. As a learner, you have many strengths and areas of growth. Part of being self-aware is also being able to identify your learning preferences and the kind of environment in which you learn best. When considering your post-secondary options, knowing your interests, your dreams, your hobbies, what motivates you and brings meaning and purpose to your life are also part of your identity. Research tells us that youth with a strong sense of purpose who pursue something that makes a positive difference in the world, are “happier, healthier, more motivated and more resilient” (UC Berkeley, n.d.).


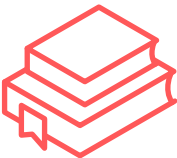

Indeed, the more self-aware you are as an individual, and the more you understand yourself as a learner, the more you will be able to make good decisions about life after high school, ones that align with who you are and what matters to you most.



Complete the following **Me, the Learner: Self-Awareness Profile** chart to help you capture what you know about yourself, your identity, and what matters to you as a learner as you consider post-secondary options.

ME, THE LEARNER: Self-Awareness Profile





Your Identity Areas to Consider	Questions for Reflection	Note Evidence/Sources of Information and Feedback <i>E.g., parents/guardians, teachers, counsellors, educational assessments, IEP, report card marks and comments, learning skills, personality trait assessments, hobbies, achievements, extra-curricular involvement, leadership opportunities, etc.</i>
<p>Learning Strengths</p> 	<p>What are your strengths as a learner? What are you good at? What subjects are you most interested in? What subjects have you excelled in?</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>Learning Interests and Passions</p> 	<p>What interests you and what are you most passionate about? What excites and motivates you? What brings meaning and purpose to your life? How might your interests and passions have a positive impact beyond you? Where do you see yourself five years from now?</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>Learning and Your Senses</p> 	<p>How do you use your senses, auditory, visual and kinesthetic, to shape your understanding of your learning experiences and who you are as a learner?</p> <p>Notes:</p>	




Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

ME, THE LEARNER: Self-Awareness Profile




<p>Learning Needs: Environment</p> 	<p>What have been your most rewarding and successful learning experiences? What have been your most challenging and least successful learning experiences? What would you want your post-secondary instructors to know about creating a learning environment that allows you to flourish as a learner? For students with an IEP, will you need any accommodations?</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>Learning Needs: Instruction</p> 	<p>What types of learning experiences have helped you learn? What are your learning needs? For students with an IEP, will you need any accommodations?</p> <p>Notes:</p>	







**With your new learning awareness, describe yourself as a learner.
As a learner I am...**

Figure 2: Me, the Learner Self-Awareness Profile. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2022e, flourishco.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.

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RESOURCES:

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Self-Awareness	AIESEC is a global youth leadership program, headquartered in Montreal.	Self-Aware Leadership Development Qualities - AIESEC	onpathway.me/AIESEC 	Video
Identity	<i>Know Before You Go</i> is a guide to prepare high school students for post-secondary pathways. It was written by Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University, Dr. Stan Kutcher. The resource is available free through Mental Health Literacy.	<i>Know Before You Go</i> (Kutcher, 2017, pp. 1-13)	onpathway.me/go 	Epub, downloadable PDF
Life Purpose	Based at the University of California, Berkeley, the Greater Good Science Center studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being.	Seven Ways to Find Your Purpose in Life	onpathway.me/purpose 	Website
Learning Styles	Mental Health Literacy, writer Dr. Stan Kutcher, and others made this free online book available to help first-year students adjust to a post-secondary environment. <i>Read pp. 16-20 for information about learning styles. Take a quiz to see your preference and get study tips.</i>	Transitions: Making the most of your campus experience (book version) (Kutcher, 2019)	onpathway.me/Transitionsbook 	PDF
Emotional Intelligence	If you want to learn even more about yourself, read about Emotional Intelligence (EI). <i>Psychology Today</i> offers a good explanation of how EI benefits your education and future career.	Why You Need Emotional Intelligence to Succeed at School	onpathway.me/EI 	Article



When you consider your values in decision making, you can be sure to keep your sense of integrity and what you know is right, and approach decisions with confidence and clarity. You'll also know that what you're doing is best for your current and future happiness and satisfaction. (*Mind Tools, n.d.*)

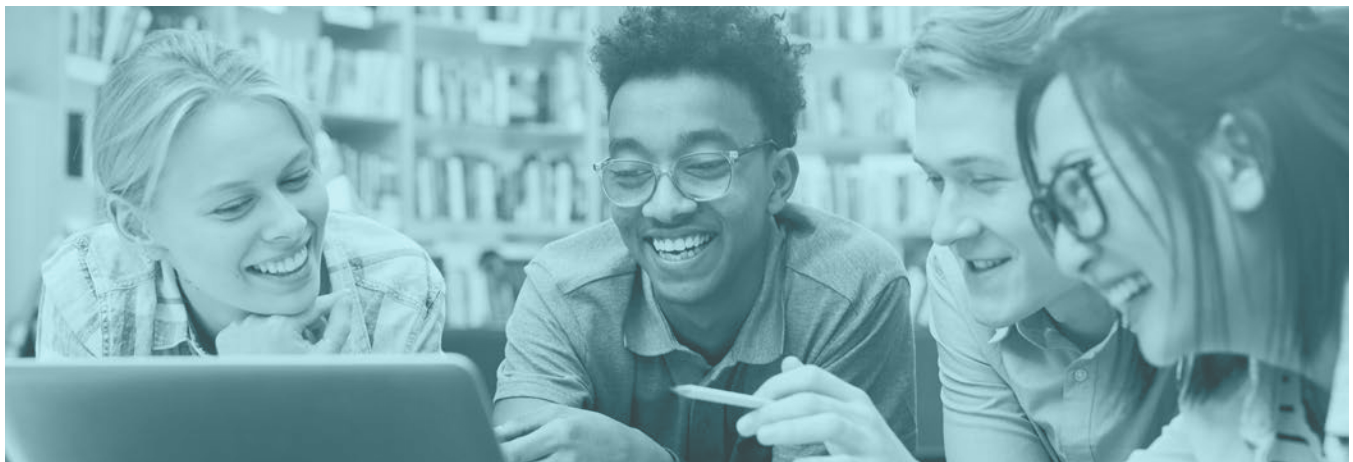


What Are Values?

Self-awareness includes being aware of what matters to you, your principles, that is, what you value and believe in. Being true to yourself, who you are, can only happen if you are aware of what you value the most and how you can use those values to guide your thinking and decisions. Eurich (2018a) points out: “[Developing] a core set of principles that guide how we want to live our lives is a first and critical step in becoming self-aware. In particular, values define the person we want to be and provide a standard for evaluating our actions” (p. 27). There are many influences that have an impact on your values, including your family, culture, faith, traditions, friends, institutions, and life experiences (Gini-Newman & Nanavati, 2021a). Researchers Kouzes and Posner (2018) conclude: “Values constitute your personal ‘bottom line.’” They influence every aspect of your life – for example, your moral judgments, commitments, and personal and group goals – and the way you respond to others. They serve as guides to action and set the parameters for the decisions you make, consciously and subconsciously” (p. 24). A person’s values can change with age and life experiences. It is therefore important to periodically revisit your list of values to make sure you are using what you believe in to help guide your behaviour and key decisions.

Values are Extremely Important

Values can impact many aspects of yourself, including your behaviour and decisions, your commitment, and work ethic (Kouzes & Posner, 2018, p. 25). Those who are clear about their values find it easier to make important decisions, are more self-disciplined, are better able to focus and face difficult situations, and they have more positive relationships (Christian, 2020). In general, when our activities and goals are aligned with our values, we are more likely to feel happy and fulfilled (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019) and experience a sense of integrity knowing that we are being true to our values. When our lives are not aligned with what we believe in, we are much more likely to feel less fulfilled and can experience internal conflict with negative health impacts such as stress and anxiety. The more you are aware of your core values and can articulate them to yourself and others, the more likely these values will guide your decision-making around post-secondary pathways. Work and study after high school require a great deal of commitment. Kouzes and Posner (2018) remind us that “[you] won’t stick around a place (or a project, or a team) when you feel in your heart and in your soul that you don’t belong..Commitment is based on alignment with personal values, who you are, and what you are about” (pp. 25-26).



EXERCISE: What do you value?



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

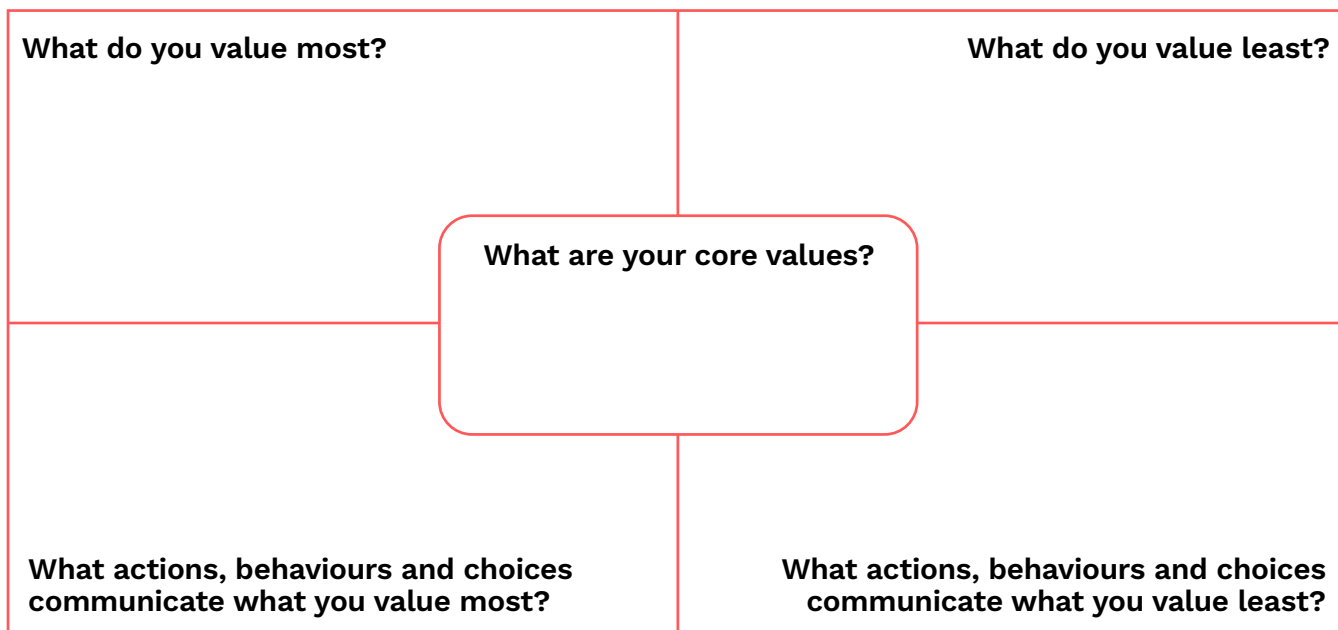


Figure 3: What do you value? From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2021c, flourishco.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.



Instructions

Using the “What do you value?” graphic organizer, make a list of what you value most (top left), and indicate what actions, behaviours and choices communicate what you value most. Then make a list of what you value least (top right) and indicate what actions, behaviours and choices communicate what you value least.

Now take a look at the following list of values. Skim this list and add other values to the graphic organizer that are important to you.

Then watch the following video: How do you work out your personal values (onpathway.me/val)

Now review your list of values and place your top 4-5 core values that truly capture who you are and what you believe in at the centre of the graphic organizer (Gini-Newman & Nanavati, 2021a).

Keep these 4-5 core values in mind when making important post-secondary pathway decisions. You may or may not be able to honour all your core values with every decision you make. You may need to prioritize. However, your core values will become an important guide that can definitely support your decision-making.

- Family
- Freedom
- Loyalty
- Intelligence
- Creativity
- Humanity
- Success
- Respect
- Diversity
- Generosity
- Integrity
- Love
- Joy/Play
- Excitement
- Change
- Beauty
- Personal Development
- Honesty
- Adventure
- Kindness
- Teamwork
- Learning
- Innovation
- Strength
- Friendship/Relationship
- Humour
- Leadership
- Home
- Friendship
- Goodness
- Faith
- Wisdom
- Order
- Courage
- Balance
- Compassion
- Fitness
- Patience
- Prosperity
- Wellness
- Gratitude
- Endurance
- Justice
- Forgiveness
- Self-Respect
- Happiness
- Harmony
- Peace
- Openness
- Respect

List of values. Adapted from *Defining your list of values and beliefs (with 102 examples)*, by L. Christian, 2020, January 29, SoulSalt, <https://soulsalt.com/list-of-values-and-beliefs/>. Copyright 2022 SOULSALT INC.

What Are Character Strengths?

Character refers to “one of the attributes...or features that make up and distinguish an individual” (Merriam-Webster, Inc., n.d.-a) and, in this context, a strength is “a strong attribute or inherent asset” (Merriam-Webster, Inc., n.d.-b). When we talk about character strengths, we are therefore referring to traits that form an individual’s nature and these traits are demonstrated in a person’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviour (The Flourishing Center, 2018a). Character strengths are widely and morally valued across social groups and cultures, are societally encouraged, and are stable in that they are demonstrated the same way in different circumstances (The Flourishing Center, 2018a).

We can grow our self-awareness of our strengths and we can build each of our character strengths. For example, when we use a character strength in a new way, we are cultivating that part of ourselves.

Using the **What are your top character strengths?** graphic organizer, take a moment and list what you believe to be your character strengths (top left). In the bottom left part of the organizer, indicate the actions, behaviours and choices that communicate your strengths to others around you, including your friends and family.

EXERCISE:

Character Strengths



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

What are your character strengths?	What character strengths do you consider to be areas of growth for you?
What are your top character strengths?	
What actions, behaviours and choices communicate your character strengths?	What actions, behaviours and choices will help you develop these strengths?

Figure 4: What are your top character strengths? From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2022d, flourishco.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.



NOTES:



When deciding on which career to follow or what job to take as we decide on the future, trying to match your top 5 strengths with a job is very important, as the most valued job, relationship and hobbies are the ones congruent with people's strengths. (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019, p. 232).



Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman, through extensive research across history and cultures, identified 24 character strengths, organized into six virtues, called the VIA Classification which has been “widely recognized and used by psychologists as a reference guide in relation to strengths and positive functioning” (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019, p. 227). While the researchers view each person as being capable of showing all of these strengths, some strengths are expressed more by some individuals than others. All of us, therefore, have a unique blend of these strengths.

Watch the following video: The Science of Character (onpathway.me/SC). Consider the following list of character strengths: The VIA Classification of 24 Character Strengths (onpathway.me/24).

Modify your list of strengths (top left) if needed; star what you believe to be your top 3 to 5 character strengths and place these in the centre of the graphic organizer. Notice the list of virtues under which each strength is classified (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence). Under which virtue(s) do most of your character strengths fall? What might this say about your character and what is important to you? (Gini-Newman & Nanavati, 2021d)




We all have character strengths that come more easily to us than others. However, knowing which strengths we might wish to further develop, enhances our overall strengths and well-being. In the top right section of the graphic organizer, list the character strengths that you consider to be areas of growth for you, that is, ones you want to build intentionally. In the bottom right, indicate actions, behaviours and choices that will help you develop these strengths.

Why Are Character Strengths Important?

Those who make decisions aligned with their strengths and whose lives reflect their strengths, are happier, more confident and optimistic, more engaged at work, and experience greater school success and well-being (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019, p. 231; The Flourishing Center, 2018a). Having good character is associated with leadership, tolerance, the valuing of diversity, kindness, altruism, reduced problems of substance abuse, violence, depression, and stress (The Flourishing Center, 2018b). Strengths can also enhance our overall health and produce positive emotions, building psychological resilience (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2019, p. 231). When it comes to choosing a post-secondary pathway, consider an occupational field that draws on your strengths. These are assets that can support your learning and skills. Being aware of our character strengths can help us reach our potential.

Note that when it comes to using our character strengths, it is important to recognize that each strength has a negative opposite. Our strengths can be both underused or overused. For example, the opposite of honesty is dishonesty and someone who is too honest can be seen as being rude (Finding The Golden Mean, n.d.). Part of our self-awareness is recognizing when we are underusing or overusing each of our strengths and aiming for a balanced approach in our lives.

MORE RESOURCES: 

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Character	Dr. Rumeet Billan who was raised in Peel Region speaks about a purpose-built life. She is the author of <i>Who Do I Want To Become?</i>	Who do you want to be when you grow up: Rumeet Billan at TEDxNovaScotia	onpathway.me/who 	Video
Values and Life Decisions	Defining values leads to better decisions and better lives. This video is created by the non-profit organization Decision Education Foundation that is dedicated to helping learners make good choices.	Decision Focus 04 - Clear Values	onpathway.me/DEF 	Video
	Peace Itimi is a vlogger committed to helping people develop their businesses and grow personally.	Personal Core Values: The Why, What and How	onpathway.me/core 	Video



Firing up your strengths gives you more fuel so you can operate on all cylinders. Tapping into strengths and putting them to work increases your effectiveness and allows you to fully use your gifts. (Hughes, 2006, p. 48).





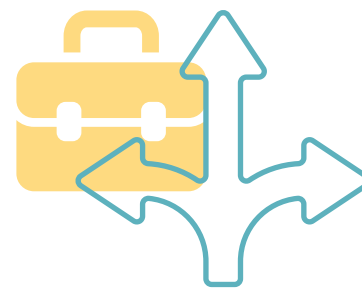
2.



POST-SECONDARY
Pathways

2.

POST-SECONDARY Pathways



If you went through the exercises and Resources in Section 1, you will know much more about yourself, especially about your values (beliefs you hold strongly) and your character strengths. You likely already have a good idea of where you will be happiest and most successful. This section will help you further refine your thinking about the exciting next few years.

Transitioning

What do we mean by pathways?

There are several opportunities available to you after graduating from high school. These options are often called “pathways.” Pathways are the routes that you plan on taking to reach your career goals. You have many pathways to consider after high school, such as: apprenticeship, college, university or the workplace. A “Gap Year” can be used to prepare yourself (e.g., earning money or volunteering to learn what you want to do long-term).

Why is a pathway important to your future?

You want to choose what is best for you, so it is important to be open-minded about your first step after high school. Please remember, some pathways can lead to other pathways.

Take into account your strengths and preferences

- A program that interests you and the passion for the subject/work
- Your learning style and needs to learn new information and skills
- How do you feel when you visit campuses or workplaces (during tours, open houses, webinars, virtual presentations), for instance? Ask yourself: Do I see myself here? Does it feel right?
- What impression do you form when you talk to others in the program or industry? (Consult reputable sources if searching online).

- Look at all options, i.e., programs and pathways at different institutions, including publicly funded colleges and universities, private institutions, and trade unions.
- How easy or difficult is it to combine two learning pathways to get the future you want? For example, are there collaborative or transfer programs between colleges and universities?
- Living needs. (Students need to consider their preferred lifestyle and the salaries associated with various pathways. It is advised to do further research on salary ranges.)
- Investigate programs for equity-deserving populations. Post-secondary institutions reach out to under-represented students, helping them apply to programs and overcome systemic barriers. Examples are McMaster University’s Access Strategy (onpathway.me/MAS), Queen’s University Indigenous Students Admission Pathway (onpathway.me/IS), and Spanning the Gaps (onpathway.me/SG) at The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education that helps students upgrade skills. Many institutions also offer mentoring programs to help students get used to their post-secondary pathways, e.g., Trent University’s Rebound peer-support program (onpathway.me/Trent) (J. Pichette, personal communication, March 24, 2022).
- If you have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or other accommodations, please read the information following the **Career Trends and Exploration** section.



FEELING OVERWHELMED?

Speak to a trusted adult, such a family member or a teacher. **See page 63** for additional help in our community when you are feeling too overwhelmed.



To help you figure out your FIRST STEP after high school, refer to the statements below to see which section seems most like YOU.

How much does this sound like you?

- I enjoy creating, fixing, manufacturing or operating things
- I enjoy learning by doing (using my hands) rather than reading or listening to lectures or attending classes
- I would like to earn money while I learn the skills for my career from an expert, on-the-job
- I only want to spend a few weeks at a time in a classroom
- I want to learn a specialized skill that I can use to become self-employed or to run my own business in the future

How much does this sound like you?

- I would prefer to invest my time preparing for a particular occupation
- I would like to gain practical (on-the-job) experience in my field before I graduate
- I would like the option to start working in a particular field after spending 2 - 3 years in post-secondary school
- I prefer smaller class sizes instead of larger lecture-hall style of classes
- I prefer more hands-on, practical learning rather than theory
- I do well in courses at the college (C) and open (O) levels, and enjoy these types of classes
- My career goals require a diploma or degree

How much does this sound like you?

- I am passionate about a particular subject area (e.g., history, English, math, computer science, psychology, science)
- I want to develop a broad background, not specific to a particular occupation
- I enjoy listening to lectures and taking detailed notes
- I prefer theoretical, abstract, book-learning
- I am good at learning through independent research and reading on my own
- I have achieved marks of at least 70-75%+ in all or almost all of the Grade 11 & 12 U/M courses I have completed

How much does this sound like you?

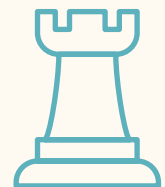
- I want to start earning money quickly and/or live on my own very soon
- I want to spend my time getting focused, specialized training for a specific job
- I want to get out of school as soon as possible
- I prefer to learn on-the-job
- My ideal job may/may not require a high school diploma

How much does this sound like you?

- I am interested in taking a year off from study
- I would like to travel the world
- I am interested in engaging in service work (maybe even abroad for a while)
- I want to work and save some money before starting post-secondary
- I am interested in an internship

Which block of statements above was most appealing to you?

- Apprenticeship
- College
- University
- Workplace
- Gap Year



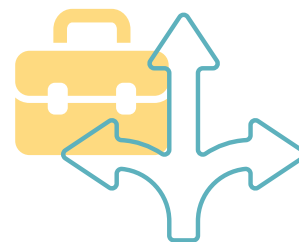
TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

- This experience may be **your first step**, opening the door to other pathways.
- Ask yourself: What is my long-term goal?
- New experiences and opportunities may change your path. That is okay, and can be very rewarding. It is important to be open-minded.
- Different experiences allow us to grow and evolve.
- Making decisions is hard, but do the best you can.



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

POSSIBLE POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS:








Apprenticeship




Explanation	Apprenticeship
<p>Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships provide specialized training in a skilled trade for example: carpentry, electrical, plumbing, automotive • 80-90% of the learning is on-the-job with an experienced tradesperson supervising the training • 10-20% of the training is in-school at a college or an approved union training centre • Students learn and earn money while working • Apprenticeship programs are offered at colleges or union training centres • If going directly into the workforce from high school, an apprentice must be sponsored by an employer • Students can start an apprenticeship while in high school and earn credits toward their diploma (via co-op placements and through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP): onpathway.me/OYAP) • You can get involved in OYAP while at high school • A pre-apprenticeship program at college can also help secure an apprenticeship • Four sectors of apprenticeship are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction & Manufacturing • Industrial • Motive Power (e.g., modern vehicle systems) • Service <p>Union Halls (office or meeting places of a trade union)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become familiar with union halls in your area. In addition to colleges, some mandatory blocks of training are provided at union training centres for apprentices. Please see below. <p>Start an apprenticeship ontario.ca: onpathway.me/apprent Province/Territory Union Halls – unionmemberservices.org: onpathway.me/unionhall</p>
<p>Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferably a high school diploma (OSSD) • Age - 16+ • OYAP (Grade 11 and 12 students)
<p>Recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to your Guidance Counsellor/Co-op teacher about OYAP • Build a network with people in the industry • Helpful to take safety courses (e.g., first aid, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS))
<p>Time Frame</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become a certified tradesperson after writing a provincial examination • May take 2-5 years after gaining experience and the required number of hours in the field • Duration also depends on the trade or occupation
<p>Credentials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Red Seal Program works directly with industry and provinces to develop standards for the Red Seal exam • A Red Seal Endorsement is granted after successfully passing the national exam and is affixed to a Trade Certificate

MORE RESOURCES:

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Trades	Skilled Trades Ontario aims to promote trades and related programs.	About trades	onpathway.me/ontrades 	Website
Apprenticeship	The Government of Ontario lists several resources for becoming an apprentice.	Apprenticeship in Ontario	onpathway.me/ONapprentice 	Website
	Halton Industry Education Council (HIEC), a not-for-profit social enterprise, provides this tool to search for apprenticeships.	Connecting employers and apprentices across Ontario	onpathway.me/search 	Website
	The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF-FCA) is a non-profit organization connecting the apprenticeship community.	What is an apprenticeship?	onpathway.me/appr 	Video
	Learn more about Ontario apprenticeships from OYAP.	OYAP full version	onpathway.me/OYAPv 	Video






Explanation	College
<p>Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College programs focus on occupation-driven learning • Blend of academic learning and practical skills training • May offer work integrated experience • Classes often led by instructors with professional experience in the industry • College classes and co-op programs often allow students to gain valuable experience in their chosen careers before graduating • Class sizes are smaller than university size classes (there is a greater focus on hands-on learning) • College tuition is less expensive than university tuition <p>Colleges offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation Programs: General Arts and Science • Pre-university programs • Academic upgrading • Transfer Programs: Students can earn a diploma and then a degree from an accredited university/college (or vice versa) For example, students can earn a Social Service worker diploma at Humber College and a Social Worker degree at Toronto Metropolitan University. • Collaborative Programs (joint ventures) between colleges and universities (offer a diploma and a degree concurrently). For instance, a business student at the University of Guelph-Humber can earn an Honours Bachelor of Business Administration from University of Guelph plus a Diploma in Business Administration from Humber • Degree Programs - offer the same accreditation as a university degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes theoretical and practical learning plus co-op opportunities • Specific, employment ready skills • Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Business Administration at Sheridan College • Bachelor of Engineering (Mechatronics) at Humber College • Bachelor of Science (Nursing) at Seneca College <p>Private Career Colleges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer certificate and diploma programs in specific fields (arts, business, service, trades etc.) • Great for students who may need certain skills before entering the workplace or who want to gain more practical skills to make themselves more marketable in a competitive job market
<p>Requirements</p> <p>For application and admission details plus program eligibility (including high school prerequisites), visit the OCAS (Ontario College Application Service) site: onpathway.me/OCAS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or Equivalent. People can also apply for Mature Student Status (19 years or older) • To apply to a college program (diploma or an advanced diploma), in high school, students can be enrolled in either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College (C) • Mixed (M) • Open (O) or • University (U) level courses • OR students can take a combination of the course levels (listed above) • There is NO set number of Grade 12 U/M level courses from high school • Grade 12 English (or Grade 12 French) is required for all college programs. • Degree programs at college require six U/M Grade 12 courses for admission

<p>Application Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can apply to colleges through using Ontario Colleges website. See “More Resources” on p. 29. • Students need their Ontario Education Number (OEN) to apply. This can be found on a report card or on a high school timetable • Students can apply to a maximum of five college programs. Other fees may apply. Check the OCAS website. • Cost is \$110.00 CDN (non refundable) for up to five programs • Students can begin to apply in October of their graduating year. Pay close attention to firm application deadlines for “highly competitive” programs. All other programs will remain “open” until the program is full. • Colleges have access to all Grade 11 and 12 marks, regardless of when or where the credit was earned • Grades are transmitted from the school board to OCAS at set times throughout the year (after midterm/final mark reporting periods)
<p>English or French Language Proficiency Requirements. Check the schools that interest you for their requirements or visit the OCAS site at: onpathway.me/lang</p> 	<p>OCAS advises students that “[if] you’re applying to a program taught in English and English is not your first language, proof of English language proficiency is required.” Similarly, “If you’re applying to a program taught in French and French is not your first language, you may need to complete a test to determine your French language skills” (n.d.). In either case, find out from your preferred college(s) about their language testing requirements.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the college website for any additional admission requirements (including required courses, auditions, portfolio requirements, and interviews) and eligibility requirements • Research whether the program is a highly competitive program (ie. dental hygiene, paramedicine): onpathway.me/demand
<p>Time Frame</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates (range from 3 to 12 months) • Pre-programs (1-2 years) • Diplomas (2 years) • Advanced Diplomas (3 years) • Degrees (4 years) • Transfer programs may range from 4-5 years (i.e., the overall time to earn a diploma or degree at one institution and then a second credential at the other partner institution.) Refer to onpathway.me/ONtransfer for requirements.
<p>Credentials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates (may provide preparation for diplomas or advanced diplomas) • Diplomas • Advanced diplomas • Degrees (Bachelor of...) • Focus on theory, practical and work experience • Same accreditation as university: Bachelor Degree • Usually more focused on a particular area • Smaller class sizes compared to university class sizes

MORE RESOURCES:



Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Programs	From OCAS, this tool helps you explore college programs. In the Program Research box, enter what you'd like to study, e.g., design. Then refine your search by credential, location, language, demand for program, and more.	Find a program	onpathway.me/ONcollege 	Website
Colleges and Universities Working Together	This video from the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) explains how it helps colleges and universities work together, and make student transfers easier.	ONCAT Feature Video	onpathway.me/collab 	Video
Private Career College Programs	The Ontario government list of private colleges	Private career colleges	onpathway.me/college-p 	Website




University



Explanation	University
<p>Description</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on theoretical, abstract, book-learning, critical thinking • University provides students the opportunity to develop a broad background in a particular subject area, not always specific to a particular occupation • Lecture format (students take detailed notes) • Emphasis on independent learning and research • An undergraduate degree may be required for further postgraduate studies, e.g., undergraduate degrees required for teachers college, law school, medical school, masters programs
<p>Requirements</p> <p>Please refer to Ontario Universities' Info (OUInfo) (onpathway.me/OUInfo) for program overview, and admission requirements (high school prerequisites).</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 6 Grade 12 U/M courses are required to apply • Almost all Ontario universities require Grade 12 English. Applicants from a French-language high school can present a 4U French instead of 4U English at Glendon Campus of York University, for instance (OUInfo, n.d.-b). Check admission requirements for each institution and program that interests you • Most universities require a minimum of 70%+ in 4U English or 4U French (may vary according to the institution) • Those who wish to apply as mature students should contact the admission offices of the institutions they are considering (OUInfo, n.d.-a). Universities may define mature students by age, e.g. 21 or 25, or by the number of years out of secondary school
<p>Application Information</p> <p>Most undergraduate university applications are made through OUAC (ouac.on.ca). See “Other Pathways” for the Royal Military College of Canada.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC) is the portal that all applicants must use for undergraduate programs in the province of Ontario • A PIN code is emailed to students by OUAC in October/November of their graduating year • Students can apply to three programs for \$150 • Each additional program costs \$50 • There is an administrative fee of \$50 to change a program or university • There may be additional fees depending on program and other factors. • Admission decisions are sent to applicants directly from each university • Most offers of admission are sent out via email between February to May • Universities must notify applicants of their application status by late May (students will either receive an offer of admission, a refusal, or a deferral) • Students must accept offers online by the deadline date indicated in the offer letter • Students should keep a file of their offer confirmation • Students should read offers carefully (including deadlines to accept, financial commitments and timelines, and maintenance of grade averages) • All offers are considered conditional based on the completion of all graduation requirements and are contingent on other conditions stated in the offer
<p>Recommendations/ Other Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you have a valid and appropriate email account • Record application/reference #/passwords in a safe place • Keep a file for any important information sent to you (confirmation letters/ acknowledgement emails etc.) • OUAC manages the application process and the transmission of grades to each university. All other information/requirements will be sent to applicants directly from the universities. • Supplementary applications must be sent directly to the university, not OUAC

<p>English or French Language Proficiency Requirements. (Check the schools that interest you for their requirements). (onpathway.me/OUInfo)</p>	<p>If you are applying to an Ontario university where instruction is in English, you must be proficient in spoken and written English. If you are applying to an Ontario university that is bilingual, e.g., University of Ottawa, proficiency in French or English is required. Where French is the language of instruction, e.g., Université de l'Ontario français, then French language proficiency is required.</p>
<p>Time Frame</p>	<p>Undergraduate degree (3-4 years)</p>
<p>Credentials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate degrees (3-4 years) • Honours Bachelor degree programs (4 years) • Graduate programs - Master's Degree (1-2 years) • Doctoral programs (3-7 years)

MORE RESOURCES: 

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
<p>Ontario Universities' Info (OUInfo)</p>	<p>OUInfo helps students search for programs, universities and requirements.</p>	<p>A guide to Ontario's universities for high school students</p>	<p>onpathway.me/OUInfo</p> 	<p>Website</p>
<p>Universities in Canada</p>	<p>Learn more about universities (private and publicly funded) in Canada</p>	<p>Explore universities</p>	<p>universitystudy.ca</p>	<p>Website</p>
<p>Universities in Canada and Elsewhere</p>	<p>A tool to help students explore school options</p>	<p>Finding the right program and career just got easier</p>	<p>schoolfinder.com</p>	<p>Website</p>

Workplace



Explanation	Workplace
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can directly enter the workplace after high school • Students can explore part-time, full-time or seasonal employment • This may be for a time period before exploring other experiences (travel, post-secondary) or at the same time.
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Insurance Number (SIN) is required • Some work placements may require a Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a bank account for direct deposit from employer (for pay) • Can advance with ongoing training via apprenticeship or certificate programs at college • Be aware of your health and safety rights: • Worker Health and Safety Awareness in 4 Steps Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: onpathway.me/safety

MORE RESOURCES:



Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Finding a Job	Canada Job Bank search tool	Your career starts here	jobbank.gc.ca	Website
	The University of Toronto Mississauga offers help for creating a resume and cover letter.	Resume & Cover Letter Toolkit	onpathway.me/resume	Website
	Networking is explained through this short video by Carleton University.	Learning Through Connections	onpathway.me/networking	Video
Helpline	Employment Ontario offers help to learn more about training and jobs.	Employment Ontario live chat	onpathway.me/ONchat	Website
Youth Opportunities	Youth can learn about education, training, jobs, volunteering, and other opportunities from this Government of Canada website.	Youth in Canada	onpathway.me/youth	Website
Job Market Trends	From this Ontario.ca page, find out about which jobs will be in demand and what training and education you'll need to be ready.	Ontario's labour market	onpathway.me/market	Website

Other Pathways



Explanation	Resources
<p>Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train and provide forces to protect and defend Canada • Students interested in the CAF can consider doing a 4-credit co-op placement in high school • It must be a 4-credit (full day) co-op placement • Co-op placements in CAF will happen during semester II of your Grade 12 year • Students must be a Canadian citizen and will be required to pass the CAF physical and aptitude tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canadian Army: onpathway.me/army <p>Canadian Armed Forces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Armed Forces: forces.ca • An application to Canadian Military Colleges, including the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, is also an application to the CAF. For more information about educational programs, start here: onpathway.me/RMC

Gap Year



Explanation	
<p>Description</p> <p>Consider taking some time between completing high school and starting post-secondary to explore careers and personal interests through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel (abroad) • volunteer work • employment • internships • work with a mentor in an occupation that may be of interest to you <p>Benefits</p> <p>A Gap Year can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand global communities • Gain independence and self-confidence • Discover and travel to new communities • Help you determine your next pathway and your areas of passion/interests • Network with others (be mentored by someone in a particular career/pathway) • Enhance your skill development 	<p>When planning for your Gap Year, consider how this will be funded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated costs? Travel, living accommodations? • Potential sources of income (job?/savings?) <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some post-secondary institutions may allow you to defer an admission offer if exploring a Gap Year (directly contact the institution to learn more). • Think about the support you'll need to pursue your education or career after your Gap Year.
Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Gap Year Association: cangap.ca • Volunteer Canada: volunteer.ca 	

POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS PLANNING TEMPLATE

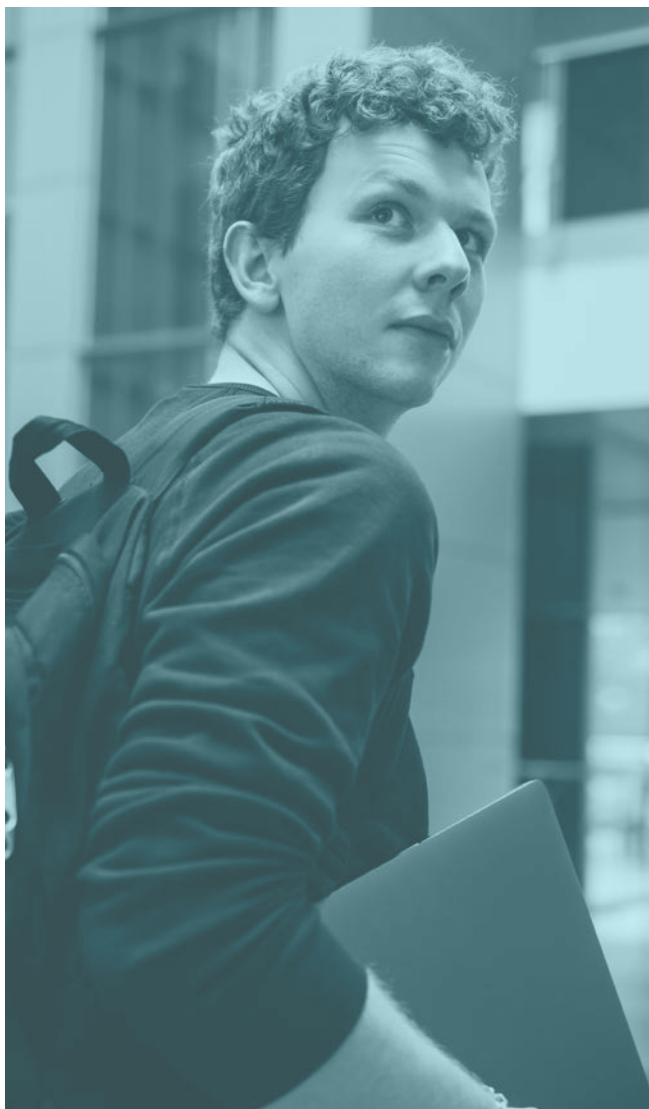
Name of Institution (Training Centre, College/University)	Name of Program	Credential (Certificate, Degree, Diploma)	Length of Program	Admission Requirements			Additional Info Needed (English tests/policies around failed/repeated courses etc.)
				High School Prerequisites (courses required to apply)	Minimum High School Average Required to Apply (grade range)	Any Other Additional Requirements (audition, interview, portfolio etc.)	
1.							
2.							
3.							



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

Career Trends and Exploration

- As you explore your career/pathway possibilities, it is advised to look at current social and technological trends to help you make an informed decision about what career you might wish to pursue.
- Current labour market trends indicate a demand in the following areas: STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) opportunities.
- Consider doing a co-op placement to get real experience in the industry you may be interested in.
- Work part-time or consider a summer job in a field that interests you.
- Volunteer in the field. This will provide you with networking opportunities and will develop and build your transferable skills.



Use the following guiding questions below to seek out valuable information from people in the career that may be of interest to you.

1. What did you do immediately after high school?
2. What high school courses prepared you for this pathway?
3. What education/pathway is required? (apprenticeship, college, university, hands-on training?) What credentials are required?
4. How did you decide what to do as a career?
5. How did you first become interested in this field of work?
6. What tips would you give to someone interested in this career pathway?
7. What are some skills/experiences that helped you to get to your chosen career?
8. Did you have a previous career/job that led you to this career pathway?
9. What are some of the obstacles you encountered on your education and career/life path?
10. How did you overcome these barriers or challenges? Did any of these challenges turn into opportunities?
11. What kind of work or tasks are performed by people in this job?
12. What is your typical work day? (how many hours/week/shift work/flexibility of schedule etc.)
13. What do people in the industry have to say about this job (what they like or dislike, what advice they have for people who want to get into the career, etc.)?
14. What transferable/essential skills do you currently have that would help you be successful in this career?
15. Salary range? Opportunities for growth?

What if you have an IEP or other accommodations?

Everyone should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. That is a value shared by communities, educators, and employers, and is promoted by laws such as the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

If you received accommodations in high school, post-secondary institutions will continue to work with you to help you reach your goals. Sometimes individuals discover, after high school, that they need accommodations to study, complete co-op work terms, and more. Post-secondary institutions are also ready to guide students in the kinds of documentation they need to receive assistance.

That said, right now there are differences in accessibility services in post-secondary programs across Canada (NEADS, 2018). Ontario is working to standardize what “access” means for all learners, allowing them to, “feel a sense of belonging, and have an opportunity to participate in all aspects of [post-secondary] education without barriers” (Doyle, 2021). Although the pandemic made life more difficult for most, there has been some progress to ensure that education is more equitable and accessible, writes the chair of Ontario’s Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee, Tina Doyle: “This includes the ability to participate remotely and the application of the principles of inclusive design so that courses are designed with flexibility in mind (2021).”

Do your research

It is still important to find out what is expected to receive accommodations in various post-secondary programs when you are deciding where to continue your education. Accommodations that you receive in high school do not automatically move with you to post-secondary learning. However, if you have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), it may help you and your post-secondary advisors decide what kind of help you need. Some programs require additional documentation.

Accessibility services at post-secondary institutions

Each Ontario publicly funded college or university has its own accessibility office. You are responsible to self-identify and register at this office to receive physical, psychological and/or learning accommodations. It is recommended that you do this as soon as you accept an offer of admission because the process can be lengthy.

Examples of program accommodations that may be offered:

- Additional time
- Accessible classrooms
- Cue sheet
- Alternate format for textbooks and course packs
- Ergonomic or adaptive furniture in the classroom
- Reduced course load
- Volunteer note-taking
- A quiet, individual and/or small group setting
- Preferential seating

- Prompts (Access to alternative format textbooks e.g., electronic, Braille)
- Accessible versions of Powerpoint slides and other documents on course websites
- Use of sign-language interpreters in class
- Use of a Frequency Modulated (FM) system in class
- Permission to record lectures
- Use of an assistant in labs

Examples of testing accommodations that may be offered:



- Writing exams in a quiet location
- Use of extra time
- Use of assistive technology (e.g., a device equipped with specialized software)
- No more than one exam per day
- Sign language or oral interpreter
- A Unified English Braille version of the test with or without the audio version
- Verbatim scribing of answers

(Centennial College, n.d.; George Brown College, 2021, August 24; Humber College, n.d.; McMaster University, 2021, November 16; Mohawk College, n.d.-a; Mohawk College, n.d.-b; OCAD University, n.d.; Toronto Metropolitan University, n.d.; Seneca College, n.d.; Sheridan College, n.d.; Université de l’Ontario français, n.d.; University of Guelph, n.d.; University of Ontario Institute of Technology, n.d.; University of Toronto, 2020, June 16; University of Waterloo, 2019, May 17; University of Western Ontario, n.d.; Wilfrid Laurier University, n.d.; York University, n.d.)

Important points for obtaining accommodation(s) in your post-secondary program:

1. Register with the accessibility office as soon as you accept your offer of admission
2. Arrange a meeting with your post-secondary program’s accessibility officer
3. Complete forms and submit required documentation
4. Be prepared to self-advocate for accommodations
5. Some programs offer phone/virtual intake meetings

MORE RESOURCES:

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Transitioning to Post-Secondary	This guide has essential information to help students successfully enroll and study at Ontario's publicly funded post-secondary schools. It is created by the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre at Queen's University.	Transition Resource Guide for Students with Disabilities	onpathway.me/TRG 	Website
	LD@school, a project of the Learning Disabilities (LD) Association of Ontario, provides videos and other materials to benefit student learning.	Preparing Students with LDs to Transition from Secondary to Post Secondary	onpathway.me/LDvideo 	Video

Microcredentials and Their Potential

Microcredentials have gained a lot of attention since the pandemic to help workers quickly and economically gain new skills (Davidson & Ruparell, 2020).

What are microcredentials?

At the 2022 Future Skills Summit, Northeastern University Associate Dean Carrie Chassels concisely described microcredentials as “high-impact bursts of just-in-time learning.” Many post-secondary institutions offer microcredentials, as well as industries, such as Information Technology (C.-M. Brown, personal communication, March 4, 2022). Some educational institutions collaborate with companies to ensure that students are keeping up with workplace and technological change (Purbasari Horton, 2020). Microcredentials are delivered as online, in-person or hybrid courses.

Understanding what constitutes a “microcredential” varies widely, leading the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) to define it as, “a representation of learning, awarded for completion of a short program that is focused on a discrete set of competencies (i.e., skills, knowledge, attributes), and is sometimes related to other credentials” (Pichette, Brumwell, Rizk, & Han, 2021).

Why should high school students care?

HEQCO notes that microcredentials may be useful for exploring careers before committing to full-time education. Microcredentials can also be part of a lifelong learning strategy and may help students attain certificates, diplomas, and degrees (Brown; Franklin, 2020).

MORE RESOURCES:

To begin exploring microcredential offerings, visit eCampusOntario: onpathway.me/micro



Financial Aid and Budgeting for Post-Secondary Education

What is out there and how to ensure it's enough?

This section will consider how much money you will need to pursue your pathway of choice, and some strategies you have to make your next step affordable and attainable.

Why do I need to plan now?

To map out your future, it is important to make responsible decisions about money. Paying for post-secondary education can be expensive; it is important to create a financial plan to ensure that spending limits are reasonable. Be realistic with your costs and your budget to avoid running out of money later in the year. Furthermore, planning ahead will allow for a smoother transition, less stress and ideally a debt-free education.

What do I have to consider?

There are many factors to consider while planning for post-secondary education.

- Class size/size of the institution
- Cost of living at home versus cost of living away (How often will you be able to come home if living away?) Think about costs involved, transportation methods and distance
- Distance from home (where is your program offered, consider different campuses)
- Educational expenses (tuition, books, etc.)
- Financial circumstances and assistance available (scholarships, bursaries, loans)
- Food (meal plan, groceries, etc.)
- Housing (residence, rent/mortgage)
- Interests and passions

- Learning style. Consider yourself as a learner – does this pathway meet your learning style?
- On campus support (career counseling, mentoring, orientation programs, etc.)
- Opportunities: Can this pathway lead to greater opportunities? How can this pathway further develop your skills?
- Special learning options? (including co-op work terms, experiential learning, research, and exchange programs)
- Transportation (commuting, public transit, car expenses, gas, parking)
- Going to recruitment events held by educational institutions, such as open houses, tours (virtual and in-person) and school fairs

A community of commuters – things to consider when living off-campus

- The time it takes to commute (budget the commuting time in your daily schedule)
- Commuting can be physically exhausting, resulting in a long day
- The costs of public transit. How does it stack up against buying/leasing a car or ridesharing/ carpooling?
- If commuting by car, there is the risk of getting stuck in traffic and travelling in poor weather conditions
- If commuting via public transit, how can you maximize this time? (ie., relax, study, read, socialize with other peers who may also be commuting)
- How do you plan to engage with the many extra-curricular opportunities on-campus, such as clubs, teams, orientation week and so much more?



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

School Program	Size of School	Average Class Size	Learning Options/ Support	Length of Program	Tuition Costs	Housing (Residence/ Living at home)	Distance From Home	Travel	Future Learning
1.									
2.									
3.									



Based on the table to the left, reflect on the following.

1. Which option seems to have more pros or cons for you? (Highlight the pros in one colour and the cons in another.)
2. Remember, not all pros and cons are equally weighted. Do some of the pros outweigh the cons?
3. What are some of the barriers/ challenges for each option?
4. How can you overcome some of these obstacles?



MORE RESOURCES:

When planning for life after high school, it is important to consider all pathways onpathway.me/explore

Up-to-date average tuition costs from Statistics Canada onpathway.me/tuition



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

Sources of funding

There are many ways students can pay for post-secondary education including:

- Scholarships (e.g., entrance or admission scholarships, major awards, other scholarships)
- Financial aid (Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP))
- Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs)
- Other (bursaries and loans)
- Scholarships, bursaries and grants can help lessen the financial burden even further.
- Students can use one of the options above or a combination of these options.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Entrance or Admission Scholarships

- Scholarships are often based on academic average (merit).
- Scholarships are valuable sources of revenue to offset a student's academic expenses. Be sure to check the conditions regarding the scholarship you have received and be sure to adhere to those conditions as you accept the financial award.
- Entrance scholarships are based on high school grades. Some institutions may provide automatic scholarships to students based on their high school average (no application is necessary).
- Some institutions have defined criteria for awarding guaranteed entrance scholarships. In this case, the scholarship value is based on the high school final admission average. Terms and conditions of the scholarship are defined by the respective institution.



Major Awards and/or Scholarships

- These scholarships require applications.
- Application-related scholarships are mostly based on academic excellence, but they may also consider community involvement, extracurricular activities, references, and/or a school nomination.
- Some applications may be quite extensive, and may include written responses or essays.
- Depending on the scholarship and application, please ensure you allow enough time to complete all applications (which may range from 2-10 hours per application).
- Investigate the criteria and demands of all major scholarships in your Grade 11 year of high school (or earlier) so that you are well prepared in terms of time and components which need to be completed.
- For any scholarships which require a reference, please make sure you reach out to your potential referees in advance, seek their permission and ensure you give them enough time to write a letter of recommendation.

Examples of Major Awards and/or Scholarships

Loran (Character Service Leadership): loranscholar.ca

Queen's University Major Admission Awards:

onpathway.me/QMAA

Schulich Leader Scholarships: schulichleaders10.com

The Canadian Federation of University Women

(CFUW)-Mississauga: onpathway.me/CFUW

The Canadian Scholarship Trust Foundation:

onpathway.me/CSTF

The Peel Regional Labour Council Scholarships:

onpathway.me/PRLC

Scotiabank Scholarships: onpathway.me/SB

The University of Western Ontario National Scholarship:

onpathway.me/UWOS

The University of Western Ontario National Indigenous

Scholarship Program: onpathway.me/NIS

Please note: Some high schools have their own internal selection process that students must follow to be considered as the school's nominee. Students should check with their school's Guidance Department/Student Services Department for more information.

Other Scholarships

More information regarding available scholarships can also be accessed via ***The Scholarship Report***.

- ***The Scholarship Report*** is accessible to all students and parents/guardians.
- The report provides direct links to scholarships, bursaries, and award websites.
- The database provides tips to assist students on how to locate, and apply for scholarships (and will help you match those you qualify for).
- **Please ask your school for the password to *The Scholarship Report*.**

There are also other awards and scholarships sponsored by employers and organizations (often based on athletics, extra-curricular involvement, leadership, community service, character and special abilities).

These sites contain a list of available scholarships, awards and bursaries for students pursuing a post-secondary education.

- 99scholarships.ca
- scholartree.ca/blog
- ontarioscholarships.ca
- Studentscholarships.org
- scholarshipscanada.com
- studentawards.com
- bfcn.ca
- longanscholarshipfoundation.com
- Regional and national scholarships compiled by the Peel District School Board: onpathway.me/PDSBlist

FINANCIAL AID

What is the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)?

OSAP is a government program that provides financial aid to qualified Ontario students to help pay for education-related costs.

- OSAP offers two kinds of aid:
 - Grants you do not have to pay back
 - Loans you must repay
- To qualify for OSAP, students must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- OSAP involves an extensive application to determine financial eligibility.

- OSAP is a program funded by both the provincial and federal governments and administered by Ontario (designed to supplement your financial resources)
- Students seeking OSAP support, must apply for OSAP. Once the application is complete, students will be considered for non-repayable grants, as well as an OSAP loan
- OSAP offers aid for students enrolled in full-time and part-time programs
- OSAP can be used for:
 - Tuition and compulsory student fees
 - School supplies such as books, computers and more
 - Living expenses such as rent, utilities, groceries, transportation, and healthcare
 - Child care for students with children

Applying for OSAP

Students need to apply for OSAP each academic year.

- The application process may take four to six weeks (it is advised to apply in advance, prior to the start of your program)
- If a student is denied OSAP one year, students can reapply each year (based on financial need and family income)
- To apply for OSAP, students will need the following information.
 - Social Insurance Number, as well as the SIN numbers of your parents/guardians/spouse
 - Tax return information, as well as that of your parents/guardians and/or spouse
 - Bank account information for direct deposit
 - School information, such as program of study, start/end dates
 - Total expenses during the period you will be in school, such as tuition, supplies, food, rent, and transportation
 - Registered Education Savings Plans, scholarships and other financial resources that you may have

The amount of money you receive from OSAP depends on:

- Education expenses – tuition, books, living expenses, supplies, equipment, miscellaneous fees, and childcare costs
- Program status: full-time or part-time basis
- Number of program hours at the post-secondary institution
- Financial circumstance – consideration of your financial situation and that of your family, dependents, and other factors
- Access to other forms of financial aid (including scholarships and bursaries)
- “Single, full-time students may receive a maximum of \$405 a week from OSAP. Full-time students who are married, in a common-law relationship or sole support parents/guardians can get up to \$695 per week. OSAP loans for part-time students cannot exceed \$10,000 at any time” (Spring Financial Inc., 2022). See the links below.

Here’s How Much You Can Get With the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP): onpathway.me/OG

OSAP–Ontario Student Assistance Program: onpathway.me/OSAP

Student aid and education planning - Canada.ca: onpathway.me/AID

Applying for OSAP - Ontario Universities’ Application Centre: onpathway.me/apply

Financial aid guide for university and college students in Canada - MoneySense: onpathway.me/money

How To Qualify For Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) - Loans Canada: onpathway.me/loan

Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)?

An RESP is a long-term tax-free savings account, sponsored by the Canadian government, which encourages subscribers (parents/guardians/contributors) to invest in a child’s future post-secondary education.

- Subscribers to an RESP make contributions, which accumulate tax-free savings. The government then contributes a certain percentage to these plans based on the deposit made.
- If you have a RESP, speak with your parents/guardians and contact your RESP institution to determine requirements, deadlines, processing times and when you can withdraw the money.
- Ontario Securities Commission produced this 2020 video to explain RESPs: onpathway.me/RESP

OTHER WAYS TO PAY FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Bursaries (Grants)

Bursaries are awarded to students in financial need, who may not be able to afford post-secondary education.

- In comparison to loans, they are non-repayable financial aid, designed to assist students who meet financial eligibility criteria
- They may also have some academic requirements
- Applications generally require proof of financial assistance
- Students do not have to pay back bursaries or grants
- Federal government offers grants via the Canada Student Grant program

Internships/co-operative education experiences

- Some institutions offer experiential learning opportunities while studying
- These placements sometimes pay students as they gain on-the-job experience

Loans/Line of Credit

- Apply to financial institutions (e.g., banks or credit unions)
- Financial institutions may offer special rates on lines of credit for students

Sources of funding



Now, it is time to review all your possible sources of funding. Which possible option(s) are best for **YOU?**

Possible options for post-secondary sources of funding:	Description	Advantages <i>(Benefits)</i>	Disadvantages <i>(Risks)</i>	Possible amount available (\$)	RANK THEM in numerical order. What works best for you?
Bursaries					
Credit Cards					
Grants					
Line of Credit					
OSAP					
Private Student Loan					
Scholarships					
Other					

If you need help completing this chart, contact your financial institution, e.g., bank, credit union.



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.



SOURCES OF FUNDING

1. To help you prepare for post-secondary, it is important to plan ahead and calculate all your costs
2. Consider all your sources of income and money coming in (e.g., scholarships, employment, bursaries)
3. Make adjustments accordingly
4. Use the template below to guide you in the planning process.

FINANCIAL PLANNING TEMPLATE

Post-Secondary Student Budget

Complete as many fields below (based on after-tax values) to ensure an accurate estimate of the total budget you will need.

BUDGET FOR THE YEAR: \$ _____

INCOME: \$ _____

ESTIMATED INCOME (after taxes)	Amount (\$)	Monthly/Annually
Annual employment income (after tax)		
Scholarships/Bursaries/Grants		
Parental/guardian contributions		
Other		
TOTAL INCOME:		



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

EXPENSES: \$ _____

ESTIMATED EXPENSES Estimate your expenses for the items listed, either as monthly or yearly values.	Amount (\$)	Monthly/Annually
Food/Housing Expenses		
Meal plan/groceries		
Residence/rent/mortgage		
Utilities (gas, electricity, water)		
Other (internet use, TV)		
TOTAL FOOD/HOUSING:		
Transportation		
Car payments		
Insurance/license/registration		
Gas		
Service/repairs/tires		
Public transportation		
Ride shares		
TOTAL TRANSPORTATION:		



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

Education

Tuition		
Books/subscriptions/supplies		
Student fees¹/Exam fees		
Other		
TOTAL EDUCATION:		


Investments and Savings

Registered Retirement Savings Plan		
Tax Free Savings Account		
Other		
TOTAL INVESTMENT AND SAVINGS:		

Loans and Insurance

Credit card bills		
Government student loan payments		
Loans (bank/other)		
Uninsured health/dental insurance		
TOTAL LOANS AND INSURANCE:		

1: Student fees can include bus passes, dental coverage, gym fees and more. Learn what's covered by researching student fees at the institutions you are considering.

 Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

Lifestyle		
Clothing/shoes		
Personal hygiene (product/grooming)		
Cleaning supplies		
Entertainment (dining out, social clubs, etc.)		
Phone bills		
Fitness/Leisure (gym etc.)		
Travel		
Other		
TOTAL LIFESTYLE:		
TOTAL EXPENSES:		

TOTAL INCOME (Input)	TOTAL EXPENSES (Output)	SURPLUS/DEFICIT	SURPLUS (Profit/Savings) Income > expenses
\$ _____	- \$ _____	= \$ _____	DEFICIT (Loss) Income < Expenses

Post-Secondary Student Budget by Namita Parmar, 2022. Copyright 2022 by Namita Parmar.

NOTES:

SURPLUS:

- If your income is greater than expenses, consider investing your money in a savings account (speak to a financial advisor for your best options).

DEFICIT:

If your income is less than your expenses (deficit), consider reducing your costs by:

- Focusing on * “NEEDS” versus ** “WANTS”
- Investigate other ways to secure income. For example, part-time job options. Some opportunities may be available on campus.
- Look at the costs of living at home versus away from home.
- Compare living in residence versus renting a place off-campus (perhaps with roommates to lower costs).
- Consider meeting with your guidance counsellor or another caring adult to discuss strategies.

*** NEEDS:**

A necessity, something that is essential for life or daily functioning (e.g. food, a computer for school/work, books, toiletries).

****WANTS:**

A desire, something you wish for, something that is non-essential for daily life (e.g., latest model of a smartphone or expensive streaming subscriptions).



Plan ahead.

Use the T-chart below to brainstorm five to seven **NEEDS** and **WANTS** that are specific to you. Now, see if you can eliminate two or three **WANTS** to reduce your costs.

NEEDS	WANTS



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.



MORE RESOURCES:

Student aid and education planning: onpathway.me/CDNA

Student Budgeting and Money Management - Practical Tips for Post-Secondary Students - Credit Counselling Society: onpathway.me/CCS



3.



Entrepreneurship

3. Entrepreneurship



What is entrepreneurship?

There are many definitions of “entrepreneurship” that mention setting up businesses, taking on financial risk, pursuing opportunity and hoping for profit. For the purpose of this section, entrepreneurship is, quite simply, problem solving— it’s creating better goods and/or services.

You’ll discover in this section that it has never been easier to start a business. There are extensive resources for young entrepreneurs in this area, and many people who are willing to help. This section will provide a brief introduction to what’s available.



Why consider becoming an entrepreneur?

It’s a lifestyle choice. Although entrepreneurship allows you flexibility and to be your own boss, it is hard work. On the other hand, it’s very rewarding to see your labour pay off. It’s exciting to be creative and collaborative, and do something that potentially no one has ever done.

“Coming to work daily is not a chore when you love what you do, especially when you’re helping other people succeed,” says entrepreneur Robert Martellacci, founder and chief executive officer of MindShare WorkSpace. “Passion has no clock.”

Entrepreneurship: What does it take?

There are many who gravitate to entrepreneurship early, even in childhood. Some start later in life. Just like any vocation, mastery involves diligence, commitment and practice to develop capabilities.

What are those capabilities?

Recently, University of Calgary’s Houston Peschl, Connie Deng and Nicole Larson identified seven fundamental and teachable skills (2020). Entrepreneurial thinking involves:

1. Problem solving (identifying the problem, creating a plan and implementing it)
2. Tolerance for ambiguity (being able to adapt)
3. Failing forward (learning from failure; see failingforward.ca for Open Educational Resources)
4. Empathy (taking another’s perspective)
5. Creativity with limited resources (working with what’s available)
6. Responding to critical feedback (listening to suggestions and acting on them)
7. Teamwork approach (working together on shared goals)

It is interesting to note that these skills are very similar to competencies identified for “learning and leading” in the 21st century (C21 Canada, 2020).

How do I become an entrepreneur?

There are many ways to pursue entrepreneurship. The following are suggestions to expose you to as many people and experiences as possible to help you evolve as an entrepreneur.

The Summer Company Program

A low risk and low cost opportunity to dip your toe into entrepreneurship is through the Mississauga Business Entrepreneur Centre. Besides offering a \$3,000 grant for you to start your business, there are resources, webinars and a virtual community. Students emerging from these and other programs have created landscaping, website development, social media marketing, and e-commerce businesses. See “More Resources” for information.

Research Funding and Training Programs

A number of organizations will help entrepreneurs find coaching and funding for their ventures. For instance, Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Entrepreneurs (RAISE) is a program launched by the Ontario Government in 2022. Business owners can apply to receive a \$10,000 grant as well as training to grow their enterprises. Visit onpathway.me/RAISE.

Another program, EnterpRISEing Youth (onpathway.me/RISE), helps those with mental health challenges gain confidence to start their own ventures. Youth between 16-29 learn online to create business plans. The program is free.

Explore the Startup Culture

Startup culture has come to mean: creativity and collaboration where members of a team are equals. Universities and colleges support this innovation, and provide students and others with opportunities to develop their entrepreneurial ideas. A couple of outstanding examples are in our community.

Sheridan EDGE

Among its many programs, EDGE offers youth (ages 15-29) in Peel and Halton Regions the chance to create enterprises that advance equity, justice, and inclusion.

Social Impact Catalyst provides free coaching, training, and support for 14 weeks. In addition, each youth receives a \$2,000 honorarium for their project. Watch for the deadline to apply at onpathway.me/impact.

University of Toronto ICUBE UTM

This support and resource centre for startups, also called an “incubator,” is free to residents in the Region of Peel.

ICUBE UTM has two main programs: Ideation Lab to plan your sustainable enterprise, and Venture Forward to help it grow.

See “More Resources” to connect with the EDGE and ICUBE.

Find a Mentor

Mentorship in life and business will provide you with direction, wisdom, and knowledge. Find an individual whom you look up to— someone who has qualities and experience that can assist you. One of the best ways to find a mentor is through school, family, or at startup incubators.



By listening to [my mentor’s] stories and thoughts, and having critical conversations with him, I have been able to gain insights into more than 25 years of success. Mentorship has helped me grow as an individual and leader.

Aman Sahota, co-founder of Ei Amplified





As a university student, I was offered the opportunity to work for MindShare Workspace as part of an integrated learning program. I was able to develop my personal and professional skills, such as digital media skills, collaboration, and leadership. *Ivana Zelich, Digital Media Associate, MindShare Learning*



Pay Attention to Other Entrepreneurs

In Canada, CBC's Dragons' Den has been a catalyst in spurring the startup culture. Contestants pitch their enterprises to industry leaders to gain funding and business support.

Our community has great examples of entrepreneurial success stories, including Flipp, a shopping app that matches customers with North America's largest retailers. It was invented by Mississaugans David Meyers and David Au-Yeung with others. Founded in 2007, Flipp Corporation now employs hundreds of people, and millions have downloaded the Flipp app (Dingman, 2016; Flipp Corporation, 2020).

Another inspiration is Ami Shah. She is co-founder and chief executive officer of Peekapak, an award-winning curriculum promoting Social and Emotional Learning. Shah and her business partner were offered a spot at a program in Silicon Valley where they discovered their digital content was perfect for schools (TechTO, 2015). Since the pandemic, Shah has seen a greater need for Peekapak's content, especially activities on empathy (2020).

Build a Network

Networking is an essential skill that entrepreneurs harness to connect with like-minded individuals and build valuable partnerships.

Attend networking opportunities available within Mississauga. Workshops and events can help you develop skills and meet individuals looking to form collaboratives.

- **IDEA Mississauga** (ideamississauga.ca) offers events and webinars.
- **University of Toronto Entrepreneurship Week** (onpathway.me/UofTwk) showcases innovations and successful ventures. This event can help build your profile and find potential business partners.
- The Mississauga Board of Trade also gives entrepreneurs and small business owners opportunities to build their professional networks. Visit mbot.com to learn more.

Look for Experiential Work Opportunities

As the job market becomes increasingly competitive, obtaining work experience can set you up for success. You will be able to apply and practice what you have learned.








Worth a Shot

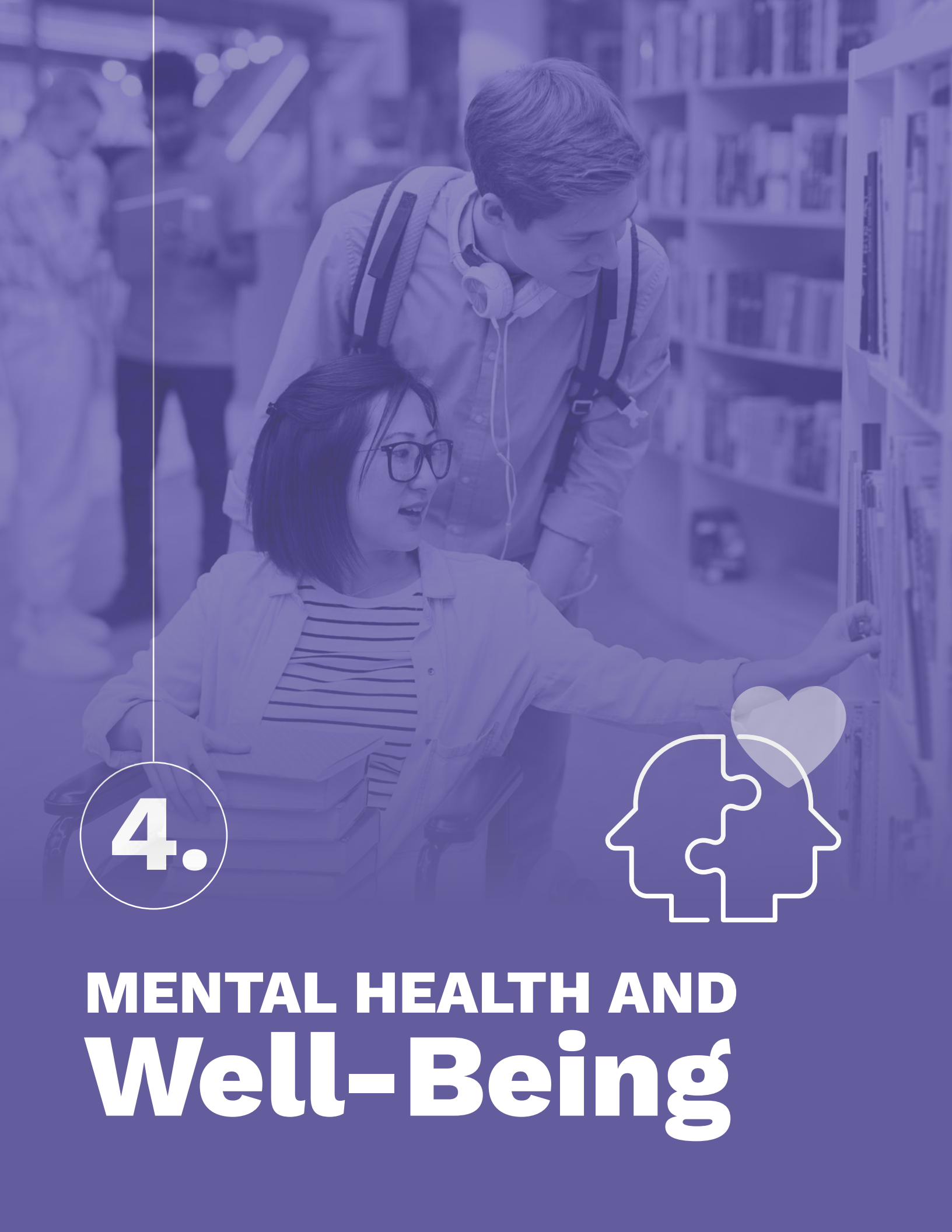


Do your homework and develop a well-researched business plan, advises Martellacci. Seek input from your family and friends to help give you a broader perspective on your decisions. "You will never know if that great idea you have for a product or service would have succeeded unless you try," he concludes.

MORE RESOURCES:



Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Starting a Business	Mississauga's Economic Development Office launched IDEA Mississauga in 2022. It represents industry, government, education, programs and others who support innovation.	10 Steps to Starting a Small Business	onpathway.me/ideas 	Website
	IDEA Mississauga offers small business owners and entrepreneurs free workshops and webinars to help succeed.	Events & Webinars	onpathway.me/webinars 	Website
Summer Company Program	Mississauga accepts program applications for youth businesses.	Summer Company Program (Young Entrepreneur Program)	onpathway.me/summerco 	Website
Innovation Hubs	ICUBE UTM is the hub of social entrepreneurship at University of Toronto. It provides resources, programs, workshops and mentorship.	Let's make it!	onpathway.me/ICUBE 	Website
	Sheridan's EDGE offers learning opportunities, mentorship, co-working space and funding to assist social entrepreneurs.	Lead the change. Make an impact	onpathway.me/EDGE 	Website
	Entrepreneurship program for youth 15-29 years old.	EDGE Social Impact Catalyst Powered by RBC Future Launch	onpathway.me/SIC 	Video
	The MaRS Discovery District, a not-for-profit corporation, provides an environment where more than 1400 startups have found assistance since 2008 (2022).	MaRS Startup Toolkit	onpathway.me/mars 	Website



4.



MENTAL HEALTH AND Well-Being

4.

MENTAL HEALTH AND Well-Being



What is mental health and why is it important?

What do we mean when we use the words “mental health?” Many people think that when we talk about mental health, we are actually talking about mental *illness*, and although these concepts are interrelated, they are not one and the same.

Mental health is similar to physical health – we all have it! Both mental and physical health are important parts of our overall well-being. By contrast, mental illnesses are conditions that affect our thinking, mood and behaviour and can negatively impact how we function from day

to day. Examples of common mental illnesses include depression, anxiety disorders, and bipolar disorder (Public Health Agency of Canada–Agence de la santé publique du Canada, 2020). Mental health relates to our ability to enjoy life. We are able to reach our goals and cope with stress. It is a sense of spiritual and emotional well-being. This means, mental health is more than the absence of mental illness (PHAC-ASPC, 2014).

The “dual continuum model” (Keyes, 2002) illustrates the relationship between mental health and mental illness. This model shows that a person without a mental illness is not necessarily mentally healthy. They may be feeling down or experiencing a high level of stress because of life circumstances. It also shows us that we can all strive for good mental health and that individuals with mental illness can experience a high level of mental health.

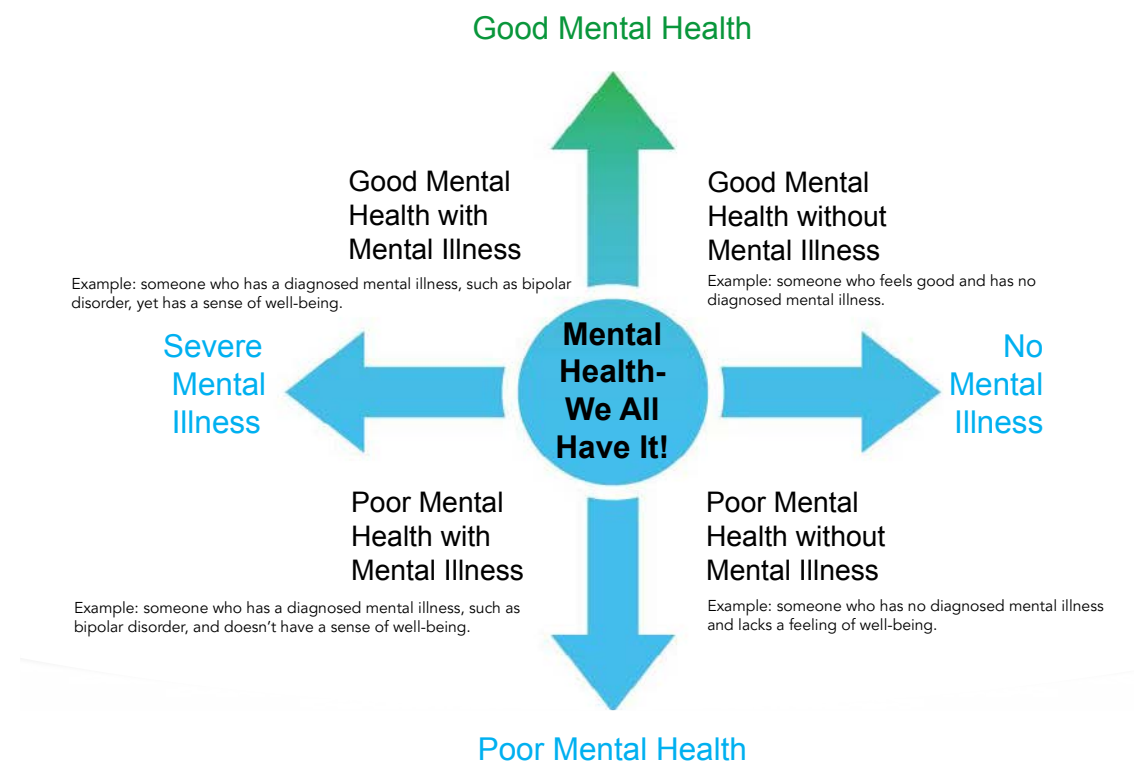






Figure 5: Mental Health: We all have it! Adapted from About your mental health, 2022, School Mental Health Ontario–Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario. Retrieved February 13, 2022, from <https://smho-smsso.ca/students/learn-more/about-your-mental-health>. Copyright 2022 School Mental Health Ontario

RESOURCES:

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
What Is Mental Health?	CAMH Health Promotion Resource Centre (CAMH HPRC), a source for health promotion about mental health and substance use	Promoting Mental Health: Finding Shared Language.	onpathway.me/MHMI 	Video
	Kids Help Phone	What is mental health?	onpathway.me/MH 	Website
Levels of Psychological Health	Mental Health Literacy provides accessible, evidence-based mental health educational resources, working with networks across Canada and the world.	Mental Health Literacy: Pyramid Explained	onpathway.me/pyramid 	Video
What Is Mental Illness?	The Canadian Mental Health Association is the nation's most established community organization of its kind.	Fast Facts About Mental Health and Mental Illness	onpathway.me/facts 	Website

Resilience, Stress and Anxiety

What is being resilient?

Resilience has long been defined as our ability to handle life's hardships while still maintaining a degree of well-being. Top Canadian resilience researcher Dr. Michael Ungar adds that being resilient is having the capacity to advocate for ourselves and find resources to help restore health (Resilience Research Centre, 2021). Resources can be assistance from our family, connection to our communities and support from mental health professionals. There are many ways resilience is also increased through helpful social structures that strive to improve conditions and allow us to become more empowered (Preston, Shields, & Akbar, 2021).

Stress – the good and the bad

In many ways resilience and stress are connected. Stress that feels tolerable to us, and is sustained over a short period of time, and where the possible solutions to it are within our personal control, can assist us in being more resilient and better able to withstand life's difficulties. However, when stress feels intolerable, or is sustained over a long period of time, and where possible solutions to it are outside our personal control, it can be extremely harmful. Distinguishing between these different types of stress is important!

Reframing tolerable short-term stress may help (for instance seeing it as motivating or a normal part of everyday life). Taking steps to reduce pressure, such as changing our work habits, meditating or speaking to someone, can also be useful. Check out links in “More Resources” or “Crisis Support, Helplines and Referrals” at the end of the section.



Anxiety – when is it too much?

Anxiety is a very common human reaction to a perceived threat or important life events. It is a normal early warning signal that usually shuts off after a problem is addressed (e.g., getting an essay finished or finding a job). However, sometimes we can react to situations with anxiety where no real threat is present. Or we can experience a disproportionate amount of anxiety in situations when the threat is not as large as we might think it is.

Although anxiety can be protective and can get us to “take action” or “respond” to a stressful situation, persistent worries that don’t go away or get in the way of our day-to-day functioning may be a sign of an anxiety disorder. Each of us can experience anxiety differently, but if you think that anxiety may be becoming a problem for you, consider paying additional attention to four important key factors (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013):

1. **Frequency** - how often does anxiety occur for you?
2. **Duration** - how long does the anxiety last for you?
3. **Intensity** - how intense is your anxiety? Is it distressing for you?
4. **Impact** - how does anxiety impact your everyday life? At home? school? in relationships?

Help for anxiety is available and it is important to reach out to others for help. You can talk to your family doctor. You can also seek support from a mental

health professional (e.g., a psychiatrist or a registered psychologist, social worker, or psychotherapist). See “More Resources” or “Crisis Support, Helplines and Referrals” to learn more.








Mental health impacted by COVID-19



Many of us felt our mental health decline during the pandemic. For instance, about a quarter of those surveyed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH, January 2022) reported having moderate or severe anxiety, a significant increase since July 2021. CAMH also found that anxiety was more pronounced in young adults and parents/guardians with children under 18.

It is well documented that when people are racialized and/or new to the community, they are also more likely to be negatively impacted by the pandemic. Mental health leader Dr. Kwame McKenzie of the Wellesley Institute and University of Toronto notes that 85% of an individual’s health is influenced by factors other than genetics and biology (KDE Hub - Carrefour DEC, 2022, 40:24). Fifty per cent is related to Social Determinants of Health, including housing, income, education, safe job conditions, disabilities, healthcare wait times, and community belonging. Since the pandemic started, many leaders, including youth and elected officials, have been pushing to eliminate social, psychological, and health inequities across Canada to better protect us all (Betker, McKenzie, Restoule, Mantoura, & Hopkins, 2022).

If you are someone whose psychological health was weakened because of the pandemic, you are not alone. Reach out for help from our many community health, mental health, youth and family services, listed in “Crisis Support, Helplines and Referrals” at the end of this section.

MORE RESOURCES:

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Resilience	School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) supports students, teachers and caregivers in promoting mental health, and works alongside the Ontario Ministry of Education and others.	Skills for students: Persevering even when things are hard	onpathway.me/res 	Video
Conversation Starters and more	This resource helps identify who and what <i>you need</i> to support your psychological health. Conversation starters and contact information for immediate assistance are also included.	MY CIRCLE OF SUPPORT: The people, places, and things that support me when I need it	onpathway.me/COS 	PDF
Stress	Université de Sherbrooke is home to a program that helps high school students develop skills to handle stress as well as social and emotional pressures.	Workshop 1 - When stress plays tricks on me... - Part 1	onpathway.me/udes1 	Video Series
		Part 2	onpathway.me/udes2 	Video Series
Anxiety		Workshop 2 - The fear of fear itself... When anxiety takes over - Part 1	onpathway.me/udes3 	Video Series
		Part 2	onpathway.me/udes4 	Video Series
Parent/Guardian Resource	SMHO also assists parents/guardians to support their children.	Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child, and other resources	onpathway.me/MHinfo 	Website

<p>COVID-19</p>	<p>No one can argue that the pandemic has hurt us. Isolation, constant change, loss and sickness are a few of the insults to our well-being. Youth and education-focused organizations Jack.org, SMHO, and Kids Help Phone put together an information hub for youth and caregivers about mental health and support.</p>	<p>COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub</p>	<p>onpathway.me/Jack</p> 	<p>Website</p>
<p>Conversation Starters and What to Expect After You Ask for Help</p>	<p>From SMHO, this resource helps start a conversation about mental health and wellness and what to expect after reaching out.</p>	<p>Reaching Out</p>	<p>onpathway.me/RO</p> 	<p>PDF</p>
<p>Mental Health Explained in Various Languages</p>	<p>CAMH, Canada’s largest mental health teaching hospital, offers information in many languages.</p>	<p>Asking for help when things are not right (fact sheet) and more</p>	<p>onpathway.me/translate</p> 	<p>Website</p>

Strategies for positive mental health and self-care

Make looking after yourself a priority, especially when it seems it’s the last thing you can manage. In tough times, good nutrition, adequate sleep, exercise, relaxation and connecting to your support network will help you stay mentally focussed and healthy. In the short term and long run, putting yourself first is a good plan.

Practice for well-being

Did you know that gearing down takes practice? So does recognizing when you need to take a break. Walking, doing yoga, spending time with a pet, playing music or games with your friends, and visualizing a place where you feel peaceful can all help. In time, you will begin to know when you are becoming overwrought, and what’s your best approach to quieten your mind, ease your emotions and release tension from your body. Try the self-care exercises from School Mental Health Ontario in “More Resources” below.





Begin a wellness routine

SMHO suggests eight different practices that can help to improve wellness and decrease stress. *Calm Place, Tense and Relax, Calm Breathing, Gratitude Moment, Just Notice, Just Listen, Let It Go, and Four Finger Affirmations* are illustrated in “More Resources” below (see Social-Emotional Learning posters).

Try them out, see what works best, and make your wellness practice something you do everyday.



MORE RESOURCES:



Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
Self-Care Exercises	Watch other videos in the series from SMHO.	Finding calm: Forest visualization	onpathway.me/forest 	Video Series
		Social-Emotional Learning posters for secondary	onpathway.me/SEL 	Website
Conversation Starters, Self-Care and Getting Help	This booklet was developed by young people through ThriveSMH, a student group of SMHO. Find information on: self-care, noticing when you need help, where to go for help, and how to start talking about how you feel.	No problem too big or too small	onpathway.me/booklet 	PDF
Different Ways to Look After Yourself	Jack.org is a Canadian non-profit that aims to improve conversations among youth about mental health. It launched a video series in 2022 about self-care and all that it entails.	Demystified	onpathway.me/jackcare 	Video Series






Crisis Support, Helplines and Referrals



If you are struggling with your mental health and feel that you need additional support, help is available and it is important that you reach out!

Organization	What it is	Phone	URL	Format
211	A referral line for people of all ages in need of shelter, mental health assistance, food, and more. Interpretation can be provided quickly.	211	211ontario.ca	Helpline and Website
24.7 Crisis Support Peel Dufferin	Crisis support for all ages, available anytime every day.	905-278-9036 or 1-888-811-2222	onpathway.me/crisis 	Crisis line and Website
Black Youth Helpline	Black Youth Helpline serves all youth and specifically responds to the need for services for Black youth.	1-833-294-8650 or 416-285-9944 everyday from 9 a.m. – 10 p.m.	blackyouth.ca	Helpline, Website
Child Development Resource Connection Peel - CDRCP (mental health)	A directory listing services for children, youth and adults with special needs including information on autism, mental health, child protection, and more.	905-890-9432 TTY 905-890-8089 Mon-Fri, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	onpathway.me/CDRCP 	Website directory
eMentalHealth.ca: Mental Health Services, Help and Support in Your Community	An initiative of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, this resource provides confidential and trustworthy information, 24/7. It offers a mental health directory, fact sheets, screening tools, news and information on mental health studies.		eMentalHealth.ca	Website
EveryMind 24/7 Crisis Response	EveryMind Crisis Response gives free and confidential support to those under 18 years of age experiencing a mental health crisis.	905-278-9036 1-888-811-2222	EveryMind.ca	Helpline, Crisis counselling, Walk-in (check COVID restrictions), Website

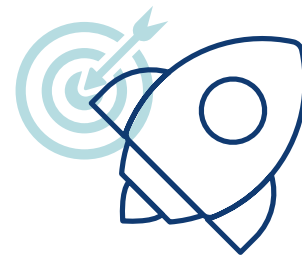
Organization	What it is	Phone	URL	Format
Good2Talk	Free confidential support services (via phone, Facebook messenger and text) for post-secondary students in English, French and Mandarin.	Contact a professional counsellor 24/7 by calling: 1-866-925-5454 Contact a volunteer crisis responder 24/7 by texting "GOOD2TALKON" to 686868 or by using your Facebook Messenger app.	onpathway.me/G2T 	Helpline, Text, Messenger, Website
Indigenous Hope for Wellness Helpline	Indigenous Hope for Wellness Helpline provides immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to Indigenous peoples across Canada. Services are offered 24/7 in English, French, Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.	1-855-242-3310	hopeforwellness.ca	Helpline, Chat, Website
Kids Help Phone - Urgent Help	Immediate support for children and youth. (English, French and Arabic via phone, Facebook Messenger and text).	1-800-668-6868 or text "CONNECT" to 686868. Black youth can text "RISE" to 686868	onpathway.me/help 	Helpline, Text, Messenger, Website
Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services	Free short-term counselling services for newcomer children, youth, and adults.	905-403-8860 x5253, Monday to Friday located at: 2225 Erin Mills Parkway Mississauga ON L5K 1T9	polycultural.org	Helpline, In-person (check COVID restrictions), Website
Residential School Crisis Line	Provides support for former Indigenous Residential School students. Access emotional and crisis referral services.	24-Hour National Crisis Line: 1-866-925-4419		Crisis line
University of Toronto Mississauga Health and Counselling Centre	A listing of culturally specific mental health counselling services available in the Greater Toronto Area.		onpathway.me/UTMh 	Website



5.



**PUTTING YOUR PLAN
Into Action**



5.

PUTTING YOUR PLAN Into Action

Now that you have focused on your background and needs as a learner, have developed strategies to prioritize your health and well-being, and have considered various post-secondary pathways, it is time to consider setting one or more post-secondary goals for yourself and creating an action plan to make each of your goals a reality.

What is Goal Setting?

Goal setting refers to a process of thinking and decision making that helps you achieve a desired future target. In other words, goal setting is about making something you want to accomplish actually occur. This process can apply to a wide range of contexts and can involve an individual, team or organization. Goals can be personal, involving self-improvement, or professional, related to a chosen career. For example, a goal can be related to improved learning, skills, or a range of desired accomplishments. In terms of post-secondary planning, you may wish to consider creating a goal related to both your health and well-being, and your chosen career path.



Why is Goal Setting Important?

In general, setting goals can benefit us by:

- making our dreams clear and concrete;
- helping to guide our thinking and decision-making;
- creating individual and team commitment and accountability.

Setting goals tells yourself and others that you are making an effort to accomplish something that is important to you. Goals take time to achieve and can be short or long-term. Attaining a goal is often complicated, requiring the use of several thinking strategies over a period of time. Goals are only achieved when you make a personal commitment to them, holding yourself accountable to making your dreams a reality.

If one of your goals takes longer than a year to achieve, it will be helpful to create a series of related short-term goals that become checkpoints along the way to attaining your long-term goal. Note the difference between a short and long-term goal and how they are related.

A short-term goal:

- can be reached in a fairly short period of time, that is, usually a few weeks or months
- is relatively easy to achieve

A long-term goal:

- takes a long period, usually one to several years, to accomplish
- requires numerous thinking strategies, and therefore more effort to achieve

Brainstorm possible goals related to your health and well-being and your future career and sort them into two categories: short-term goals and long-term goals. Use the following T-chart to help show you the links between your short-term and long-term goals.



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

Short-term goals	Long-term goals related to set of short-term goals
1.	1.
2.	
3.	
1.	2.
2.	
3.	

Figure 6: Short and Long-Term Goals. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2020, flourishco.org. Copyright 2020 by Flourish Co.

Now let's focus on your long-term goals and make them SMART. You may have heard of the following acronym often used to fine tune a goal. A **SMART** goal is:

- S - specific** (clear, precise, well-defined)
- M - measurable** (able to track progress toward achieving the goal; can break into manageable pieces/ milestones)
- A - attainable** (challenging yet achievable)
- R - relevant** (useful to your overall life/career plan/ direction; ask yourself why you want to achieve this goal. Note: Some use the word realistic instead of relevant. Pick the term that best suits your goal.)
- T - time bound**
(set a deadline/time limit to achieve the goal)
(Haughey, 2014)

Watch the following short video that explains the SMART acronym in more detail:

Setting SMART Goals - How To Properly Set a Goal (animated) (onpathway.me/goals)

Here are some examples of goals.

Which are SMART and which are not?

- a) My goal is to obtain a summer job.
- b) My goal is to obtain one summer job by the middle of June at the latest so I can save enough money to help pay my university tuition.
- c) My goal is to improve my final term mark in science.
- d) My goal is to improve my final term mark in science by 10% to ensure that I have a better overall average when applying to post-secondary programs.

Answer: Goals B and D are **SMART** as they adhere to the criteria for a **SMART** goal (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime Bound).

Now, take your long-term goals and edit them to reflect the SMART acronym. My long-term SMART goals are:



- 1. _____
- 2. _____

Consider the following criteria to help you frame an even stronger goal – a High IMPACT+ Goal.

THE CRITERIA FOR *IMPACTFUL* GOALS ARE:

Insightful: Provides a new understanding of how to make improvements in the future.

Motivating: Sustains motivation to persevere towards the desired future result.

Productive: Produces the greatest positive result using the fewest resources.

Aligned: Provides a clear trajectory to a desired future result.

Consequential: Leads to broad and far-reaching improvement

Transformative: Leads to meaningful change.

+Ethical: Ensures that actions connected to the goal remain ethical in nature.

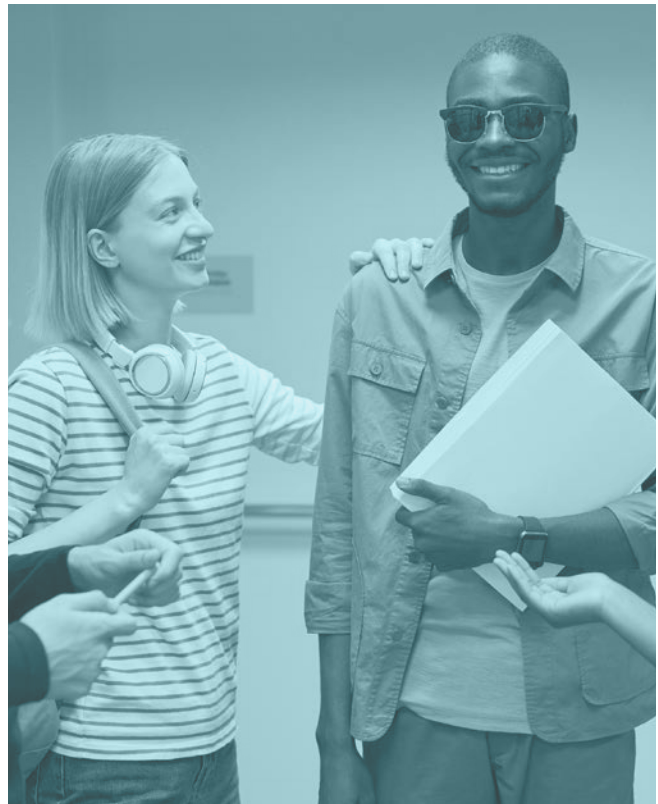


Figure 7: A High Impact+ Goal. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2022b, flourishco.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.

What criteria were used to turn the following SMART goal into a High IMPACT+ goal?

SMART Goal:

Coach 10 people each year to help each meet one well-being goal in that year.

High IMPACT+ Goal:

Coach 10 people each year by building their ability to be thoughtful to help them meet their most valuable and pressing well-being goal in a socially-responsible way.

NOTICE:

Coach 10 people each year **by building their ability to be thoughtful** (*insightful, consequential, productive*) to help them **meet their most valuable and pressing** (*motivating*) well-being goal **in a socially-responsible way** (*ethical*).

What criteria were used to turn the following SMART goal into a High IMPACT+ goal?

SMART Goal:

Lead 20 teachers in Uganda in the implementation of one core element of a thinking approach to learning over 5 years.

High IMPACT+ Goal:

Lead 20 teachers in the most under-supported regions of Uganda in the implementation of one core element of a thinking approach to learning over 5 years to help students improve their achievement on reading, writing and math tests by 20%.

NOTICE:

Lead 20 teachers **in the most under-supported regions of** Uganda (*ethical because equitable*) in the implementation of one core element of a thinking approach to learning over 5 years to **help students improve their achievement on reading, writing and math tests by 20%** (*aligned, consequential, transformative*).

A STRATEGY FOR PROSPECTIVE THINKING: Graphic Organizer

<p>Current Life Reality and Level of Satisfaction</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: I would like to take a healthy approach in starting my post-secondary school life, living away from home. I want to prioritize regular exercise in my daily routine. I have some difficulties with stress management and can tend to eat in an unhealthy way when I'm feeling stressed.</i></p>	<p>Identify Desired Future Result</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: To maintain a healthy lifestyle by incorporating exercise into my daily life. This will result in better stress management, and I will be able to maintain healthy eating habits. I will also be able to optimize my academic results if I am living a healthier lifestyle.</i></p>	<p>Brainstormed Possible Goals</p> <p><i>EXAMPLE: My goal is to become more responsible living on my own by adding a minimum of 45 minutes of exercise (cardio – running or biking) into my daily routine to improve my heart rate so that I can better manage my stress, maintain healthy eating habits and improve my overall academic performance.</i></p>	<p>How Impactful Is Each Goal?</p> <p>EXAMPLE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insightful (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motivating (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Productive (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aligned (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consequential (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transformative (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> +Ethical (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Insightful (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Productive (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Aligned (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Consequential (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Transformative (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> +Ethical (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Insightful (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Productive (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Aligned (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Consequential (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Transformative (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> +Ethical (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Insightful (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Motivating (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Productive (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Aligned (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Consequential (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> Transformative (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) <input type="checkbox"/> +Ethical (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all)

Figure 8: A High Impact+ Goal. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2022b, flourish.co.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.



Visit onpathway.me/BHS for downloadable worksheets and exercises. Print them, or work on them on your device. It's your choice.

Complete the Graphic Organizer on page 70 to set a High IMPACT+ Goal:

1. Brainstorm all the ways you can think of to move your current reality to your desired future result.
2. Consider the criteria for a High IMPACT+ Goal. Review the meaning of each criterion. Circle or highlight the word/phrase (very, somewhat, a little bit, not at all) that best describes how well each goal meets each of the criteria. Add more rows if you need them to the chart.
3. Star the goal that has the highest Impact on your current reality (the one that meets all the High IMPACT+ Goal criteria to the highest degree).

If there is a tie, choose the goal that resonates with you the most and commands your passionate commitment.

Write your High IMPACT+ Goal using the following template:



MY High IMPACT+ Goal is to

(do X, accomplish X, learn X, improve X)

by _____
(time)

so that _____
(what makes it impactful).





Action Planning

What is Action Planning?

Goal setting alone is not enough to turn your dreams into reality. A plan is needed that includes a list of tasks and the actions you will need to take to achieve your High IMPACT+ goal. Both individuals and teams can participate in action planning, a process that provides clarity and helps build confidence, motivation, teamwork, and ownership. A detailed action plan provides a way to evaluate progress towards your target, becoming a helpful guide for making decisions that move you closer and closer to the achievement of your goal. This process is continuous as you can adjust your plan at any time.

An action plan therefore provides individuals and teams with:

- A common goal to focus on.
- A set of clear steps that support the attainment of the goal.
- A list of the most useful resources that are needed to support each step. Resources can include people with needed expertise and sources of funding.
- A list of potential obstacles you may need to address, and strategies that can help you overcome them.
- A manageable deadline for the completion of each step.

Why is Action Planning Important?

Action planning can reduce stress and uncertainty for individuals and teams by providing them a way to be organized, that is, clear steps to follow that lead to the achievement of High IMPACT+ goals. When creating a plan, it is helpful to be proactive using a process that includes anticipating needs, foreseeing potential setbacks and ways to overcome them. Action planning is therefore a way of thinking ahead that helps you determine an effective way to attain your health and well-being and post-secondary career goals. Like all plans, commitment and follow through are key ingredients to success. With action planning and a healthy degree of determination, you will become better at managing your personal and professional dreams.

Use the following Action-driven Thinking Flowchart to support the action planning process:

1. **Brainstorm and record** a comprehensive list of possible actions that align to your High IMPACT+ Goal.
2. **Prioritize** your brainstormed list of actions from most to least effective in meeting your goal.
3. **Sequence** your top 3-4 most effective actions to connect them in a natural way, building one on the next, so that they propel you towards meeting your goal.

(Gini-Newman & Nanavati, 2022a)

ACTION-DRIVEN THINKING: Flowchart Template



STEP 1: Brainstorm possible actions		
Action	How well does this action support my High IMPACT+ Goal	Prioritized Action Steps – List Sequentially
Action 1:	Very well Not well 4 3 2 1 0 because:	1:
Action 2:	Very well Not well 4 3 2 1 0 because:	2:
Action 3:	Very well Not well 4 3 2 1 0 because:	3:
Action 4:	Very well Not well 4 3 2 1 0 because:	4:
Action 5:	Very well Not well 4 3 2 1 0 because:	<div style="border: 1px solid #00728f; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Now the most effective 3-4 actions and sequence them here</p> </div>
Action 6:	Very well Not well 4 3 2 1 0 because:	

Add more rows if you have additional goals on your list.

Figure 9: Action-driven Thinking Flowchart. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Nanavati, 2022a, flourishco.org. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.

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Decisions about how to plan actions strategically involve criteria. **CONSIDER THE 3RS.**

Resource-based:

there are sufficient resources available to support plans of action;

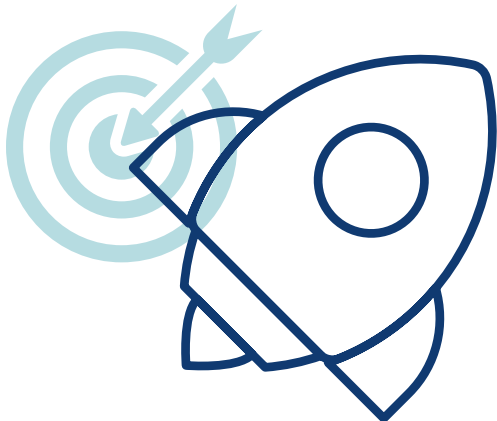
Responsive:

actions address potential challenges that can be anticipated;

Realistic:

actions can be taken within a reasonable time frame

(Gini-Newman & Navavati, 2022c)



Use the following **Strategic Thinking Chart** to complete your action plan and...

1. Transfer your set of sequential action steps from your Action-driven Thinking Flowchart to the first column.
2. Identify what resources you will need and what resources you currently have available for each of your action steps.
3. List anticipated challenges you may face and strategies to overcome each challenge.
4. Be sure to include a **completion date** for each of your action steps. Assess to what degree each completion date is realistic, and make revisions if necessary.

STRATEGIC THINKING TEMPLATE

High IMPACT+ Goal:



	Resource-based Are there sufficient resources available to meet your needs?	Responsive How will you ensure your actions respond to anticipated challenges?	Realistic How likely are you to complete this action on this date?
Sequential Action Steps	Resources Needed What will you need to complete each of your action steps? Resources Available Consider people, finances, data, education, things you need that are available, etc.	Anticipated Challenges Action Revision to Overcome Challenges (Strategy)	Completion Date Realistic? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Revised completion date if not realistic
1:			
2:			
3:			
4:			

Figure 10: Strategic Thinking Chart. From L. Gini-Newman & M. Naravati, 2022c, *flourishoo.org*. Copyright 2022 by Flourish Co.



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MORE RESOURCES:

Topic	Organization	Title	URL	Format
How to Create an Action Plan	Bit Tech Labs Inc., a digital workspace developer, offers a step by step guide to planning.	Action Plan: Definition, importance & how to steps!	onpathway.me/steps 	Website
Dreams and Goals	Astronaut Chris Hadfield from Milton, Ontario worked years to become an astronaut. In this National Film Board of Canada production he talks about major hurdles and how his family helped him stay true to his dream.	NFB Space School: The Hadfield Journey - Chapter 5 - Doubts	onpathway.me/Chris 	Video

Conclusion



Thank you for using “*Beyond High School: A guide to discovering your pathway to success.*” It is one of many tools available to you to explore your important future steps. Erin Mills Connects is proud to be able to assist in your journey, from self discovery to making an actionable plan.

Please share this resource with others, and if you have suggestions for its improvement, please let us know at info@erinmillsconnects.org.

Erin Mills Connects is a collaborative, and it learns from and works with others in the community to help improve well-being for all. Please visit us at erinmillsconnects.org.



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