

# An introduction to McCreary Centre Society

YOUTH HEALTH • YOUTH RESEARCH • YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

*McCreary Centre Society (McCreary) is a charity committed to improving the health of BC youth through research, evaluation, and community-based projects. Our vision is that all youth are supported to be healthy and connected.*

*McCreary is committed to honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.*

Adolescence is a time of change and self-discovery and is particularly important for developing healthy lifestyles into adulthood. McCreary acknowledges that in order to fully support the healthy development of BC youth, communities need relevant, accurate, and up-to-date information to guide their programming and policy decisions.

Our BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) and other youth health research projects (including special population surveys, and smaller qualitative and quantitative studies), give an evidence base of youth health trends, emerging issues, and risk and protective factors for healthy development.

Our high-quality academic research is used by service providers, academics, policy makers, young people, and those who support them.

Through youth and community engagement projects, we engage local communities across BC who help steer the direction of our work. This ensures that our research is as relevant, useful, and culturally responsive as possible.

## ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEYS

The **BC AHS** is a province-wide survey administered to youth in Grade 7 to 12 every five years since 1992. The survey covers a wide range of youth health topics, including education; family; friends; extracurricular activities; physical, mental, and sexual health; and substance use. Other regularly recurring surveys are conducted with homeless youth, and those involved in the justice system.

McCreary developed the **Next Steps** program as a way of engaging youth in survey results. Through workshop activities, youth learn about risk and protective factors for healthy development, and are supported to develop and deliver projects which address youth health issues in their community.

## EVALUATIONS

McCreary conducts independent evaluations for other non-profit organizations and statutory agencies. We adopt a collaborative and flexible approach, with the programs being evaluated deciding on the evaluation approach best suited to meet their needs and goals.

## YOUTH RESEARCH ACADEMY (YRA)

The **YRA** is a group of youth aged 16–24 with experience of the government care system. Members of the YRA are trained to conduct research projects of interest to youth in and from government care and the agencies that serve them. Since 2019, the YRA have been conducting a longitudinal study of youth transitioning out of care.

## YOUNG INDIGENOUS RESEARCH TEAM (YIRT)

The **YIRT** are a group of young Indigenous researchers who have come together to work on projects that support Indigenous youth health and well-being.

## YOUTH HEALTH AMBASSADORS (YHA)

The **YHA** are youth from across the province who are trained to facilitate conversations with their peers about current youth health issues.

## BC HEALTH & WELLNESS YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (BC YAC)

The **BC YAC** is a diverse group of high school students who provide their perspectives on topics related to health and wellness to inform BC government decisions. The group's main areas of focus include vaping and other types of substance use.

## YOUTH ADVISORY & ACTION COUNCIL (YAC)

The **YAC** is a group of youth leaders aged 15–24 who develop projects to improve youth health, including organizing 'by youth for youth' workshops and events.

## YOUTH GRANTING PROGRAMS

The **Youth Action Grants** program is coordinated by McCreary's YAC, and offers funding to young people in school districts that participated in the BC AHS. Grants support youth to deliver projects which improve youth health in their school or community.

The **Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants** also provide grants to youth-led projects, with a focus on peer mentorship, youth homelessness, youth substance use, and challenges impacting youth in and from care.



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