# Take a Hike Program Model and Theory of Change

Take a Hike's goal is to minimize barriers for vulnerable youth to help them achieve success in school and in their lives. Over the course of two decades, Take a Hike has uncovered practice-based evidence as to what program ingredients support youth to make positive changes. The program model Take a Hike has developed is one of the few in British Columbia to incorporate dedicated mental health services in a school setting. This evidence-based model forms the foundation of all work staff undertake with the youth to support their growth and development.

We believe that youth who have endured past adversity that has negatively impacted their development can thrive through engaging in personal reflection and learning if the environment is experienced as safe, caring, and responsive to individual needs. Take a Hike staff design all program structures and activities through a lens of attachment and trauma-informed practices that are grounded in an advanced understanding of child and youth development. Through this lens, staff are intentional in their practices to ensure that youth experience the core elements that comprise the foundation of the program's effectiveness:

- Relationships that are safe and caring
- An environment that is safe and predictable
- Individualized support that meets the youths' unique and changing needs
- Continuous, intensive shared time and learning with staff and youth
- Staff communicate their strong belief in youths' ability to succeed

Youth join TAH, a program that uses evidence-based approaches to supporting vulnerable youth.

Over time, youth feel safe in the program, gain self-understanding and come to see they need to make changes to have a better life.

Once youth voice the need to make changes, they are able to embrace all that TAH has to offer.

Youth develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that allow them to become resilient individuals.

Staff understand that for many youth in the program, school has not been a positive experience and, as a result, learning to trust new adults and engage in a dynamic program that addresses not only academic needs, but also mental and physical health, may take time. This process of building trust and becoming fully engaged is part of the work that youth take on with attentive staff who consider the unique needs of each youth.

As youth enter the program and come to know and trust staff and classmates as well as engage in the diverse group and personal reflection activities, they come to a better understanding of themselves. This understanding includes appreciating the life circumstances, personal coping strategies, and other challenges that act as obstacles to pursuing their passions and achieving their goals. Once this understanding begins to develop, youth voice the need to make personal changes. It is at this point, that they become fully engaged and seek out as much benefit as possible from participation in the four program activities (academics, clinical counselling, adventure-based learning, and community
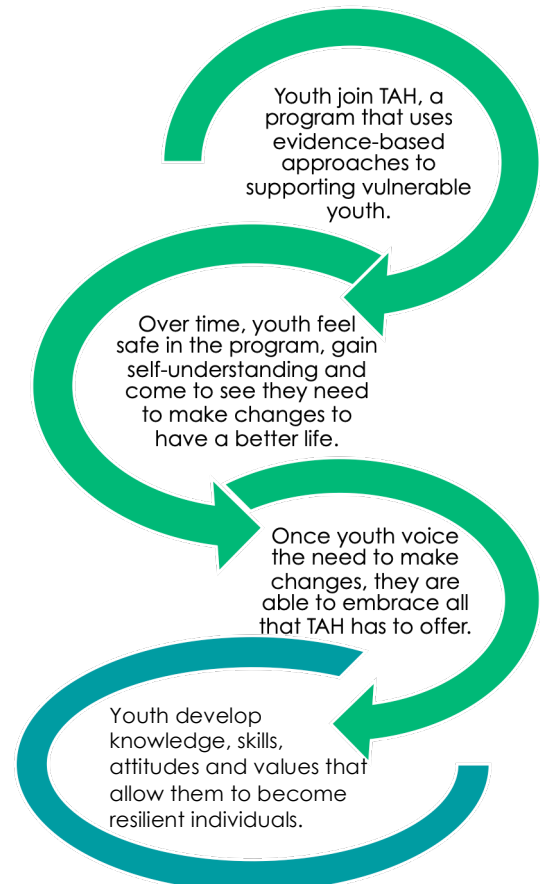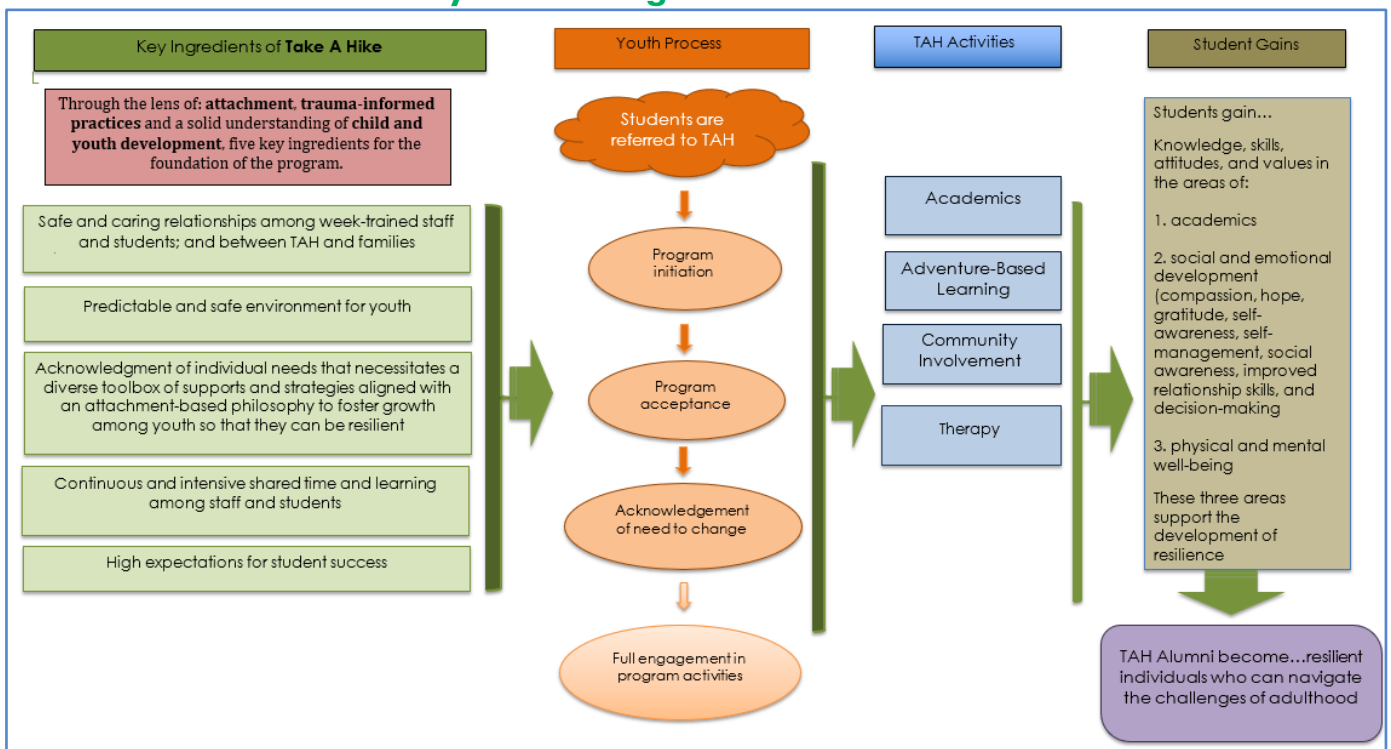
involvement). Through embracing all that Take a Hike has to offer, youth can make positive changes and experience growth in their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in three key outcome areas:

1. Academic development
2. Social and emotional development
3. Physical and mental well-being

These three areas support the development of resilience. Every youth has a different life path, but no matter what that path may hold, the long-term goal for each Take a Hike student is that they will ultimately become resilient young adults who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to face and overcome life's challenges.

Take a Hike's Theory of Change at a Glance

Key Ingredients of **Take A Hike**	Youth Process	TAH Activities	Student Gains
Through the lens of: **attachment**, **trauma-informed practices** and a solid understanding of **child and youth development**, five key ingredients for the foundation of the program.	Students are referred to TAH		Students gain… Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in the areas of:
Safe and caring relationships among week-trained staff and students; and between TAH and families	Program initiation	Academics	1. academics
Predictable and safe environment for youth	Program acceptance	Adventure-Based Learning	2. social and emotional development (compassion, hope, gratitude, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, improved relationship skills, and decision-making
Acknowledgment of individual needs that necessitates a diverse toolbox of supports and strategies aligned with an attachment-based philosophy to foster growth among youth so that they can be resilient		Community Involvement	
Continuous and intensive shared time and learning among staff and students	Acknowledgement of need to change	Therapy	3. physical and mental well-being
High expectations for student success	Full engagement in program activities		These three areas support the development of resilience
			TAH Alumni become…resilient individuals who can navigate the challenges of adulthood

Take a Hike Program Model and Theory of Change

Youth Profile

Our grade 10-12 youth are capable and generally motivated young people who have experienced difficulty succeeding in the mainstream school system. Many youth have experienced some type of trauma or mental health concerns, and have commonly coped in destructive ways at some point in their lives. Complexity in their lives means that our youth need additional supports, which many have struggled to access through other means.

Each Take a Hike youth has a unique background and life experience, and the program responds to their individual needs, but it is common for youth to be identified as needing additional support with behaviour or mental health (BC Ministry of Education 'R' or 'H' designations).
For most youth in Take a Hike, attending to mental health needs is critical to support school engagement and subsequent positive development.

About 1 in 7 young people in BC will experience a mental illness at some point, with between 50% and 70% of mental illness manifesting before the age of 18. At the same time, only 1 in 4 children and youth in Canada receive treatment.[1] Canadian research has found that older youth who struggle with depression are more than twice as likely to drop out of school compared to peers without depression or those youth who recovered from depression. Further to this, youth with conduct disorders and/or ADHD are more likely to drop out compared to other at-risk youth.[2]

Take a Hike is one of the few educational or outdoor programs in British Columbia that has dedicated mental health services woven into the program. Take a Hike offers older youth an intensive opportunity to counter past negative experiences in school and improve mental health and resilience ahead of a key transition time in their lives. Through Take a Hike, youth can stay engaged in school and receive supports, treatment and referrals to additional community-based services, prior to them choosing to drop out of school.

Each Take a Hike classroom contains a unique and diverse mix of youth, reflective of the local community. Over time, about three quarters of our youth have identified as male, one quarter as female and some as non-binary. Roughly one third to half of youth (depending on program location) identify as Indigenous. Approximately one quarter of youth come from families who are new to Canada. Approximately one quarter of our youth are or have been involved in the foster care system.

One thing all Take a Hike youth have in common is that they see the program as a viable way to change their lives. Youth often enter into the program with a host of labels, and feel marginalized because of them. Take a Hike provides youth with a fresh start and an opportunity to see themselves differently.

Program Objectives and Outcomes

Program Objectives

- Increase youth attendance and engagement.
- Engage youth in social and emotional learning.
- Help youth improve their own mental and physical health and well-being.
- Improve academic success, leading to high school graduation.

Short-Term Outcomes (0-6 months)

- Attend regularly.
- Engage in Take a Hike activities.
- Feel safe/sense of belonging in the program.
- Develop trusting relationships with staff.
- Express the need to make personal changes.
- Increased knowledge of outdoor skills

Medium-Term Outcomes (6 months to 1 year)

- Improved academic success.
- Improved social-emotional attitudes, knowledge, skills and values (such as self-compassion, hope, gratitude, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making skills, etc.).
- Improved physical and mental well-being, including:
- Reduced problematic substance use.
- Increased levels of positive physical well-being.

Long-Term Outcomes (1-3 year)

- Increased graduation rates.
- Social-emotional functioning:
- Improved social support network.
- Improved community connections.
- Increased ability to reach out for support.
- Increased goal-setting for the future.
- Improved levels of mental health and well-being.

Post-Program Outcomes

Take a Hike alumni are resilient individuals who can navigate the challenges of young adulthood. These youth can:

- Cope effectively with stress (i.e. able to be resilient).
- Navigate the developmental tasks of young adulthood (i.e. furthering their education, being gainfully employed, finding housing).
- Engage, have healthy relationships and have the ability to access community supports.
- Are motivated to take care of their own well-being.
- Set goals for the future.

Take a Hike Program Model and Theory of Change

Program Community and Culture

Youth spend all day, every day, including three multi-day wilderness trips, with the same twenty youth and four staff members. The group quickly feels like a tight-knit family. Safe and caring relationships develop amongst the staff, youth and community volunteers, and extend to youth's families. Research has clearly demonstrated that learning (i.e. attention, memory, decision-making, motivation, social functioning) is heavily affected by how we feel.[3] To that end, how Take a Hike creates an environment for learning is as important as the learning itself.

Safe and caring relationships: Relationships have been described as the *'soil'* which forms the foundation for youth development of social and emotional skills.[4] Relationships are placed at the centre of the program and staff understand the importance of developing trusting relationships with youth. At the start of each day staff 'collect' youth by connecting with, acknowledging and validating each youth individually. This paves the way for building the trust and attachment that form the basis of safe, caring relationships. Not only does this include the relationships between staff and youth, but also the relationships among staff, and the relationships between Take a Hike and families. Healthy relationships among all provide youth a stronger safety net as well as an experience of how individuals can relate to one another in healthy ways, both in times of harmony and conflict.

Research has shown that:
- Student-teacher relationships that are warm, trusting, and have low degrees of conflict have been shown to improve social competence and positive school adjustment. When the classroom is characterized by these types of relationships between students and teachers, deeper and more complex learning can take place. Further to this, caring relationships with adults is one of the strongest predictors of learning outcomes. [5][6][7][8]
- Building strong relationships between parents and school-based staff supports student performance.[9]
- Having consistent and caring relationships with adults improves developmental outcomes such as positive identity, empowerment, boundaries and constructive use of time.[10]

Safe and predictable environment: Take a Hike recognizes the importance of creating an environment in the classroom and beyond (e.g. field trips) that is predictable and safe for youth. Predictability is created through being explicit as to youth expectations and boundaries. These expectations and boundaries are consistently applied, so that youth come to trust that they are safe in Take a Hike and that they know that stressful situations (e.g. conflict among peers, group distress when facing challenges, etc.) will be addressed by staff. Physical safety is addressed across all outdoor activities by Take a Hike's comprehensive risk management strategy. Creating an external environment that is safe and predictable supports youth to learn how to self-manage over time, as they can turn their attention to their inner challenges as they come to believe that the external environment will be managed by staff.

Research has shown that:
- Routines, consistency and predictability are key to working from a trauma-informed approach.[11]
- Environments that are 'safe and orderly' can support the reinforcement of positive classroom behaviour, which in turns promotes better school achievement.[12]

- A caring, supportive and well-managed environment increases the effectiveness of efforts to enhance students' social and emotional competencies.[13] [14]

Tailored supports and strategies aligned with attachment-based approaches: Take a Hike staff come with a diverse set of skills and tools. At the same time, youth come into the program with varying needs. Staff engage in ongoing assessment of individual youth needs in order to create tailored plans to support youth so that they can develop the skills that foster resilience. Although staff bring diverse toolboxes of knowledge and skills to the program in their work with youth, they all work from an attachment-based, trauma-informed framework that is embedded in a solid understanding of child and youth development. In using tools and strategies that are trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate, the critical question that staff ask themselves when supporting youth is whether an intervention/interaction brings youth closer in relationship to staff or moves them further away. The interventions/interactions that bring youth closer are those chosen in Take a Hike.

Research has shown that:
- Creating personalized plans for learning and growth helps students feel more connected and supported in order to achieve academic outcomes.[15]
- Students who are more interested in their learning are more likely to feel positive about the future.[16]
- Students who engage in learning that is meaningful to them are more likely to experience feelings of intrinsic motivation.[17]
- Supporting youth to better understand their capabilities and needs and tailoring adventure-based activities to meet identified needs positively impacts program outcomes for youth.[18] [19]

Continuous and intensive shared time and learning among staff and youth: Staff and youth share the same space during school time and for substantial periods of time away from the classroom. The intensive nature of Take a Hike affords staff the opportunity to learn more about the youth at the same time as modeling positive behaviours. Continuous shared time enables staff to support youth as needs emerge through real-time interactions that can provide youth with an opportunity to see other possibilities, grow emotionally, and increasingly experience positive outcomes.

Research has shown that:
- Adults spending time outside of the classroom, thereby taking on different roles with youth, has been found to support relationship development, as youth have an opportunity to see adults in a wider range of environments, which allows more opportunities for connecting on different levels.[20]
- Youth achieve more positive outcomes when these relationships are longer in duration, as it allows youth time to assess the trustworthiness of adults. [21] [22] [23]
- Trusting and caring relationships are critical for all, but can provide those youth who have not had positive relationships with adults with a corrective experience. [24]
- Through spending time together in multiple contexts, youth have more opportunities to develop social and competence skills which are best embedded 'deep and wide' throughout a program.[25]

Staff communicate their strong belief in the youths' ability to succeed: Staff believe that all youth can be successful regardless of their past or current challenges. If staff give youth the message that they will be successful, it is more likely that youth will adopt a belief in themselves that they can be successful. There is pursuit and follow-through with youth who are having difficulty meeting expectations; every absent youth has daily contact with a Take a Hike staff member. Take a Hike staff believe that every

youth has the capacity to flourish. They work intentionally to support each youth to develop those skills known to be important for adult success.

Research has shown that:
- Teachers who have high expectations for their students' present content and learning that is more advanced compared to teachers who have low expectations.[26]
- Setting a norm that communicates high expectations for academic learning and classroom behaviour contributes to student success.[27] [28]
- Students who experience high expectations are more likely to have increased motivation for learning.[29]

Program Staff

Take a Hike is offered in partnership with the public school system, and incorporates other community partners. This partnership allows the program to include well-trained staff who strive to meet the diverse needs of youth. To this end, the program includes a teacher, clinical counsellor, adventure-based learning specialist, and youth worker.

All staff work from an attachment-based, trauma-informed framework that is embedded in a solid understanding of child and youth development. They have experience working with vulnerable youth and skill in teaching social and emotional skills. Further to this, Take a Hike is committed to ongoing personal and professional development given that research has shown that a teacher's own social-emotional competence is an important factor that contributes to the "quality of teacher–student relationships, student and classroom management, and effective social and emotional learning (SEL) program implementation all which mediate classroom and student outcomes".[30]

Their self-sufficiency in the outdoors is demonstrated by at least 40 nights of backcountry experience and a wilderness first aid certificate. Teachers possess a valid teaching certificate; clinical counsellors a registered clinical counselling designation; youth workers degrees in humanities; and adventure-based learning specialists carry significant certifications in outdoor pursuits.

While each staff member demonstrates high personal and professional standards, their real strength is in the way they interact as a team. Job functions overlap. Meetings occur daily and weekly, and sometimes many times a day.

The District Principal and Take a Hike's Director of Operations provide hands-on support and training to each program as they help youth grow and learn. An active supervision model ensures staff receive continuous feedback, and is a leading practice within the school system. Beyond are the Foundation staff, who provide program support and community engagement.

Program Activities

Academics

Take a Hike aims to meet the educational needs of youth in order to support both their academic success and their social and emotional development. Academics are closely integrated with and supported by the other three core program components: clinical counsellors support the social and emotional learning that helps youth thrive academically; academic curriculum is incorporated into outdoor adventure-based activities; community involvement offers a place-based and service-oriented form of experiential learning.

School districts are the partners with the expertise in education; as such, the academic offering at each Take a Hike program is unique. Common across all programs is a place-based and cross-curricular approach that includes both direct instruction and experiential learning, within and outside the classroom. For example, a foods and nutrition course may get youth interested in nutritional values by combining direct instruction with hands-on planning and preparing meals to be taken by each youth on a physically demanding multi-day wilderness trip. Youth may learn to measure velocity by experiencing tobogganing or longboarding. Academic components that are common amongst all Take a Hike programs include:

- Youth have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that takes into account all aspects of youth development. This includes academic, social-emotional and behavioural goals for the student.
- The primary teacher spends all day, every day, including multi-day wilderness trips, with the class. In many cases, subject specialist guest speakers will complement the primary teacher.
- Volunteers provide one-on-one academic support.
- Youth take all of the core courses required for the Dogwood Diploma. Elective courses offered are often a natural fit with experiential learning, including: leadership, tourism, physical education, outdoor education, art, foods and nutrition, and planning.
- If a youth is put on a path to a School Completion Certificate or Adult Dogwood, this is done in consultation with the youth, family, school district principal responsible for supporting the program, and Take a Hike's Director of Operations.

Research has shown that:
- Social-emotional competencies are inextricably linked to academic success.[31][32]
- Academic engagement is influenced by the degree to which students feel that teachers are meeting their psychological needs.[33][34]
- Academic engagement is associated with better academic competence, lower likelihood of dropping out of school, and higher likelihood of healthy social and emotional outcomes.[35][36][37]
- Neuroscience has shown that learning is strengthened when multiple and diverse opportunities are provided to use and deepen an understanding of new knowledge and skills, such as is done in cross-curricular and experiential learning.[38]

Clinical Counselling

A unique feature of the Take a Hike program is the inclusion in each program of a dedicated full-time registered clinical counsellor. The clinical counsellor spends all day, every day, including classroom activities and multi-day wilderness trips, with the same group of up to twenty youth.

School counsellors are in a position to assist with academic concerns, provide brief intervention, and assist with referrals to other services, whereas clinical counsellors provide long-term, intensive psychotherapeutic interventions for youth who require ongoing support.[39] Continuous and intensive time spent together enables clinical counsellors to develop authentic relationships with students which give a true picture of the challenges students are experiencing. Shared time also enables clinical counsellors to be present to support youth as challenges arise moment-to-moment. Having these intensive supports in schools is ideal as schools, as opposed to clinics, are more likely to be the environment where youth are open to receiving mental health supports.[40] Clinical counselling becomes a natural part of the classroom that takes place alongside academics, instead of a separate support. This is often not seen by youth as what they understand to be 'counselling'.

For many youth, Take a Hike is their first therapeutic encounter. Take a Hike clinical counsellors provide early intervention and prevention mental health supports that help youth build social and emotional skills, find healthy ways to cope with life's stressors, and improve mental health and well-being. This can include coping with anxiety, depression, ADHD, past trauma, or other mental health concerns. Working from a trauma-informed and attachment-based lens, Take a Hike clinical counsellors use various therapeutic approaches tailored to the needs of each individual youth, including: emotion-focused therapy (EFT), eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), Satir transformational therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), solution focused therapy (SFT), mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), narrative therapy, and art therapy.

- Clinical counsellors work with youth one-on-one as often as they need – at least once per week, and as often as 2-3 times per week.
- Parents and family are involved where possible, including through family therapy.
- Peer support is cultivated through group sessions (e.g. daily circle).
- Clinical counsellors work with youth's existing supports (e.g. community policing officers, other clinical counsellors, etc.) and will help connect them with further resources in the community when needed (e.g. addictions treatment).
- Clinical counsellors work with adults in the program to help them build relationships with more challenging youth.
- Clinical counsellors provide a first point of support for other issues that arise for adults in the program (e.g. after crisis situations, burnout prevention, etc.)

Take a Hike begins every day with circle. This daily group meeting, held in a circle, is a way to bring staff and youth together to ensure that everyone is seen and to provide structure for the day, thereby reducing anxiety about the unknown. The circle provides a venue for staff and youth to reflect, share experiences, and strengthen skills. Each day a different question is posed for youth and staff to answer, such as 'what is something you will do better today than you usually do?', 'how will you avoid conflict and discomfort today?', or 'what is something that you used to think about your family that you don't any longer?'

Through these activities, relationships are strengthened and the program community takes shape over the year, becoming what many Take a Hike alumni call 'family'. Youth come to experience this family as a place where challenges are faced and overcome, rather than avoided and left unresolved. Through this, they have a chance to learn, and later model for others, healthy emotion identification, expression and regulation. In essence, they learn what healthy relationships should look like, how we can effectively communicate, listen to others, and enhance perspective-taking. The circle is a structure that youth and staff use throughout other parts of the day when needed as well as on field trips. Because the circle is such a dominant format of group connection in Take a Hike, youth see the circle as a central process in the Take a Hike program.

Research has shown that:
- Psychotherapy, both individual and group, provided in school settings can be effective in addressing youth needs.[41][42]
- Psychotherapy that is longer in duration positively impacts school attendance.[43]
- Better outcomes are achieved when youth have access to more frequent psychotherapy sessions rather than the traditional once a week format.[44][45]
- Social and emotional well-being is linked to academic success.[46][47]
- Youth with stronger social and emotional competencies are more likely to enter college, succeed in their careers, have positive work and family relationships, have better mental and physical health, have reduced criminal behaviour, and become engaged citizens.[48]

Adventure-Based Learning

We use the outdoors as a hook that enhances other program components. It's a place where youth can have fun, connect classroom learning to real-world experience, and build and test relationships in a safe environment.

Adventure-based learning offers unique opportunities for youth to grow and develop trust, communication, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills, but this often comes through challenging and uncomfortable experiences. We ensure that youth experience these challenges in a safe, supportive way, with clinical counsellors present to help youth work through issues that arise.

Around half to three quarters of our youth will leave the city for the first time with Take a Hike; outdoor activities are often a new experience. Being in nature takes youth away from daily stressors and distractions, and helps them to self-regulate and engage in self-reflection. Being outdoors allows staff and students to interact through shared experience, which builds attachment that supports therapeutic and social-emotional work done with the students.

Adventure-based activities also provide opportunities for place-based and experiential learning that supports classroom learning. Cross-curricular academics covering sciences, math and other subjects are often incorporated into outdoor activities. Acquisition of outdoor skills is usually a by-product of adventure-based learning, but it is not the primary objective.
- Activities are planned and led by an adventure-based learning specialist.
- Field trips occur weekly. Activities focus on hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing, kayaking and outdoor safety skills.
- Youth participate in three multi-day wilderness trips (fall, winter, spring) of 3-10 days in length each year.
- Youth are taught responsible environmental stewardship and abide by Leave No Trace camping.

- Outdoor equipment and equipment management systems are provided by Take a Hike.
- Take a Hike provides the infrastructure for a well-planned, robust and safe program.
- Risk management standards follow Take a Hike guidelines, school district policy, YouthSafe Outdoors or activity-specific standards – whichever is highest.

Research has shown that:
- Spending time in nature has positive impacts on the brain, body, feelings, thought processes and social interactions.[49]
- Being in nature has been found to be inherently rewarding, resulting in a surge of positive emotions that calm our nervous system and support the development of greater openness, creativity, connection, generosity and resilience.[50]
- Walking in nature has been found to decrease rumination, anxiety, and negative affect as well as enhance cognition and cardiovascular relaxation.[51][52][53]
- Even brief periods of time in nature can increase cognitive control, and prolonged time in nature can strengthen attentional processes.[54][55]
- Overall, regular exposure to nature increases physical, mental and well-being outcomes.[56]
- Youth can strengthen relationships with their peers through spending extended time together in the wilderness, as they must learn to work together and rely on one another, thereby drawing support from one another. [57][58][59]
- Wilderness-based programs can positively impact academic skills as a result of having practical and interactive opportunities to learn, as well as a need to engage in problem-solving.[60]

Community Involvement

Community is an essential part of the Take a Hike program. Youth are re-engaged through a unique classroom community, and come to feel a sense of belonging as part of this. Classroom volunteers, mentors and guest speakers make youth aware of the wider community that cares about their well-being, and which they can rely on for support. Youth then begin to build connections in the wider community through spending up to 60 hours per year volunteering. These connections help youth to build skills and resilience, and come to form part of their network of support as they transition to life as young adults.
- Community involvement helps to break down the barriers between vulnerable youth and the community.
- Youth learn to trust that the community can support them in times of need, and that they have something to offer.
- Youth gain valuable job-readiness and community service skills.

Research has shown that:
- Youth who volunteer benefit through developing increased respect for others, satisfaction through helping others, and understanding of how to be helpful and kind. Further to this, youth are able to develop better decision-making skills, create an ethic of civic responsibility, and enhance existing social skills.[61]
- Volunteering provides youth an opportunity to gain social and cultural capital.[62]
- More recently, youth volunteering has been found to significantly reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease.[63]

A Sample Schedule

- Class operates 5 days per week.
- Every day begins with a group meeting ('circle') as a chance for youth and staff to check in.
- 50-60 field trips per year, including one field trip per week and three multi-day wilderness trips per year in fall, winter and spring.
- Average of 4 days per week in the classroom. Program activities incorporate a mix of direct instruction, interactive activities and experiential learning.
- Periodic field trips around the community in addition to regular weekly field trips.
- One afternoon per week (around 60 hours per year) of community volunteer work.

Link To First Nations Communities And Indigenous Education Curriculum

Many school districts and communities interested in Take a Hike see how beneficial the program would be for Indigenous youth. Academic work can easily incorporate the Indigenous education curriculum, and adventure-based learning offers an excellent platform for using traditional ways of learning and knowing to teach science, technology, engineering and math. While Take a Hike is very open to offering tailored programming for Indigenous youth, it must be realized that this is not our expertise. Such an undertaking would be done in cooperation with the local nation(s) and school district.

Youth Journey

Youth in Take a Hike have faced challenges in the mainstream school system. We provide youth a fresh start in their schooling and an opportunity to see themselves differently within the school system. Taking this leap into a new program after having had many challenges in the mainstream school system is a process for youth.

Phase 1: Application For, And Choice To Attend The Program

- Youth are often referred to the program by a principal, guidance counsellor or teacher. In some cases, family members or students themselves reach out for help.
- Youth make a written application to the program and attend an in-person interview.
- Youth and caregivers are introduced to the program through conversations with staff and other Take a Hike youth.
- Youth agree to enter into the program after gaining knowledge of what the Take a Hike program entails.
- Take a Hike generally accepts youth on a first-come, first-served basis. It is rare for a youth who applies not to be accepted into the program.
- There are two intake points to the program each year: September and February. We avoid continuous intake because of the intense onboarding and community-building process that we use with youth.

Phase 2: Acclimating To Classroom Culture and Community Norms

- Youth engage in Take a Hike, and learn to trust and feel safe in the program. This can be seen as a process of accepting and buying into the program's goals and values.

Take a Hike Program Model and Theory of Change

- Activities in the first few weeks of school are very intentional and designed to build a strong classroom community, help youth get to know their peers and build trusting attachment relationships with classroom staff.
- Youth participate in team-building and initiative tasks, learn basic outdoor skills and participate in a multi-day wilderness trip. New youth are mentored by senior youth and staff members are very intentional in their interactions with youth.
- Youth begin to attend class regularly, and there is daily contact with and pursuit of students who are not attending.
- Youth learn (and test) the boundaries and expectations of the program, and staff respond in a firm but caring way.

Phase 3: Need For Change
- Youth identify that changes need to be made in their life in order for them to successfully move ahead.
- This may happen within the first few weeks of entering the Take a Hike program, or may take much longer.
- Clinical counsellors engage with youth on a very casual and friendly basis, often using outdoor activities as a way of connecting. Seemingly innocuous conversations lead into deeper conversations about the student's life experience.
- Once youth come to an awareness that their current ways of being in the world are not working and changes are necessary, they begin to thrive through full engagement in all components of Take a Hike.
-

Phase 4: Thriving In The Program
Take a Hike supports youth development through four key activity areas: academics, individual and group counselling, adventure-based learning, and community involvement. In addition, attention is given to material needs that youth may have (e.g. proper clothing, food, etc.) to ensure that they can fully participate in all Take a Hike activities.

Through full participation in program activities, youth develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that all aim to help them increase their resilience. Although there are numerous skills known to support the development of resilience, Take a Hike focuses on those skills known to be at the heart of resilience for youth (engagement in school, social-emotional development, physical and mental well-being, and positive values).

Phase 5: Program Completion
Youth may stay in the program for up to three years; the average youth spends one and a half to two years in the program. Many youth graduate high school in Take a Hike, and others choose to return to mainstream high school for graduation.

Phase 6: Alumni Success
Take a Hike alumni are resilient and hopeful individuals who can build healthy relationships, navigate the challenges of young adulthood, and achieve success – however they define it.

Reference List

[1] Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division. Mental Illnesses in Children and Youth. https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/mental-illnesses-in-children-and-youth-2/

[2] Dupéré, V., Dion, E., Nault-Brière, F., Archambault, I. Leventhal, T., & Lesage, A. (2018). Revisiting the link between depression symptoms and high school dropouts: Timing of Exposure Matters. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 62*, 205-211.

[3] Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Damasio, A. (2007). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Mind, brain, and education, 1*, 3-10.

[4] Jones, S. M., & Bouffard, S. M. (2012). Social and emotional learning in schools: From programs to strategies. *Society for Research on Child Development Social Policy Report,* 25, 1-22.

[5] Jones, S., & Kahn, J. (2017). *The evidence base for how we learn: Supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development. National* Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development.

[6] Jones, S. M., & Bouffard, S. M. (2012).

[7] Gregory, A. & Ripski, M.B. (2008). Adolescent trust in teachers: Implications for behavior in the high school classroom. *School Psychology Review, 37,* 337-353.

[8] Stipek, D. (2006). Relationships matter. *Educational Leadership, 64*, 46-49.

[9] Zins, J. E. (2007). Social and emotional learning: Promoting the development of all students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *17*, 233-3.

[10] Norton, C. L., & Watt, T. T. (2014). Exploring the Impact of a Wilderness-Based Positive Youth Development Program for Urban Youth. *Journal of Experiential Education, 37,* 335–350.

[11] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a traumainformed approach*. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

[12] Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). Enhancing students' social and emotional development promotes success in school: Results of a meta-analysis. *Child Development, 82,* 474–501.

[13] Zins, J., Bloodworth, M., Weissberg, R. & Walberg, H. (2007). The scientific base linking social and emotional learning to school success, *Journal Of Educational And Psychological Consultation, 17*, 191-210.

[14] Zins, J. E. (2007).

[15] Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health, 74*, 262-273.

[16] Csikszentmihalyi, M. & Hunter, J. (2003). *Journal of Happiness Studies, 4*, 185-199.

[17] Laursen, E. K. (2015). The power of grit, perseverance, and tenacity. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 23, 19-24.*

[18] Bettmann, J. E., Tucker, A. R., Tracy, J., & Parry, K. J. (2014). An Exploration of Gender, Client History, and Functioning in Wilderness Therapy Participants. *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth, 31*, 155–170.

[19] Norton, C. L., Wisner, B. L., Krugh, M., & Penn, A. (2014). Helping Youth Transition into an Alternative Residential School Setting: Exploring the Effects of a Wilderness Orientation Program on Youth Purpose and Identity Complexity. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 31*, 475–493

[20] Futch Ehrlich, V. A., Deutsch, N. L., Fox, C. V., Johnson, H. E., & Varga, S. M. (2016). Leveraging relational assets for adolescent development: A qualitative investigation of youth–adult "connection" in positive youth development. *Qualitative Psychology*, 3, 59-78.

[21] DuBois, D. L., & Rhodes, J. E. (2006). Youth mentoring: Bridging science with practice. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 547–565.

[22] Grossman, J. B., Chan, C. S., Schwartz, S. E. O., & Rhodes, J. E. (2011). The test of time in school-based mentoring: The role of relationship duration and re-matching on academic outcomes. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 49*, 43-54.

[23] Simpson, J. A. (2007). Psychological foundations of trust. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 16*, 264–268.

[24] Rhodes, J. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[25] Jones, S. M., & Bouffard, S. M. (2012).

[26] Rhem, J. (1999). Pygmalion in the classroom. *The National Teaching & Learning Forum. 8*, 1-4

[27] Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011).

[28] Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004).

[29] Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in self-determination theory: another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist, 41,* 19-31.

[30] Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009, p.492). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 79,* 491-525.

[31] Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., & Durlak, J. A. (2015). Social and emotional learning: Past, present, and future. In J. A. Durlak, C. E. Domitrovich, R. P. Weissberg, & T. P. Gullotta (Eds.), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice* (pp. 3-19). New York: Guilford.

[32] Greenberg, M., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic

learning. *American Psychologist, 58,* 466–474.

[33] Deci, E., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). What is the self in self-directed learning? Findings from recent motivational research. In G. Staka (Ed.). *Conceptions of self-directed learning: Theoretical and conceptual considerations.* Munster: Waxmann.

[34] Krapp, A. (2005). Basic needs and the development of interest and intrinsic motivational orientations. *Learning and Instruction, 15,* 381-395.

[35] Eccles, J. S., Wigfield, A., & Schiefele, U. (1998). Motivation to succeed. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc.; Fall, A. M. & Roberts, G. (2012). High school dropouts: Interactions between social context, self-perceptions, school engagement, and student dropout. *Journal of Adolescence, 35,* 787-798;

[36] Wang, M. & Eccles, J. (2013). School context, achievement motivation, and academic engagement: A longitudinal study of school engagement using a multidimensional perspective. *Learning and Instruction, 28*, 12-23.

[37] Wigfield, A., Eccles, J. S., Schiefele, U., Roeser, R., & Davis-Kean, P. (2006). *Development of achievement motivation*. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.), Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development (6th ed., pp. 933–1002). New York, NY: Wiley.

[38] Alexander, R. (ed.) (2010) Children, Their World, Their Education: Final Report and Recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review. Abingdon: Routledge.

[39] Hess, R.S., Magnuson, S., & Beller, L. (2012). What is so special about counseling in schools? In Hess, R.S., Magnuson, S., & Beller, L. (Ed). *Counseling Children and Adolescents in Schools* (pp. 7-26). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

[40] Carlson, L.A. & Kees, N.L (2013). Mental health services in public school: A preliminary study of school counselor perceptions. *Professional School Counselling, 16*, 211-221.

[41] Reese, R.J., Prout, H.T., Zirkelback, E.H., & Anderson, C.R. (2010). Effectiveness of school-based psychotherapy: A meta-analysis of dissertation research. *Psychology in Schools, 47*,1035-1045.

[42] Fedewa, A.L., Ahn, S., Reese, R.J., Suarez, M.M., Macquoid, A., Davis, M.C., & Prout, H.T. (2016). Does psychotherapy work with school-aged youth? A meta-analytic examination of moderator variables that influence therapeutic outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology,* 56, 59-87.

[43] Angold, A., Costello, E.J., Burns, B.J., Erkanli, A., & Farmer, E.M.A. (2000). Effectiveness of nonresidential specialty mental health services for children and adolescents in the "real world". *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 39*, 154-160.

[44] Hansen, N.B., Lambert, M.J., & Forman, E.M. (2002). The psychotherapy dose-response effect and its implications for treatment delivery services. In: *Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE): Quality-assessed Reviews*. York (UK): Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (UK).

[45] Harnett, P., O'Donovan, A., & Lambert, M.J. (2010). The dose response relationship in psychotherapy: Implications for social policy. *Clinical Psychologist, 14*, 39-44.

[46] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a traumainformed approach*. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

[47] Garbacz, S. A., Swanger-Gagne, M. S., & Sheridan, S. M. (2015). The role of school-family partnership programs for promoting student social and emotional learning. In Durlak, J.A., Domitrovich, C.E., Weissberg, R.P., Gullotta, T.P., & Comer, J. (Eds.), *The handbook of social and emotional learning: Research to practice* (pp. 244-259). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

[48] Jones, S., & Kahn, J. (2017). *The evidence base for how we learn: Supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development. National* Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development.

[49] Green, K. & Keltner, D. (2017). *What Happens When We Reconnect With Nature.* Greater Good Magazine.

[50] Green, K. & Keltner, D. (2017)

[51] Bratman, G., Hamilton, P., Hahn, K., Daily, G., & Gross, J. (2015). Nature experience reduces rumination and subgenual prefrontal cortex activation. *National Academy of Sciences, 112*, 8567-8572.

[52] Lee, J., Tsunetsugu, Y., Takayama, N., Park, B., Li, Q., Song, C., Komatsu, M., Ikei, H., Tyrvainen, L., Kagawa, T. & Miyazaki, Y. (2014). Influence of forest therapy on cardiovascular relaxation in young adults. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2014,* 1-7.

[53] Suttie, J. (2016). *How Nature Can Make You Kinder, Happier, and More Creative.* Greater Good Magazine.

[54] Berman, M., Jonides, J. & Kaplan, S. (2008). The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature. *Psychological Science, 19,* 1207-1212.

[55] Atchley, R., Strayer, D. & Atchley, P. (2012). Creativity in the wild: Improving creative reasoning through immersion in natural settings. *PLoS ONE, 7,* 1-3

[56] McMahon EM, Corcoran P, O'Regan G, Keeley H, Cannon M, Carli V, Wasserman C, Hadlaczky G, Sarchiapone M, Apter A, Balazs J, Balint M, Bobes J, Brunner R, Cozman D, Haring C, Iosue M, Kaess M, Kahn JP, Nemes B, Podlogar T, Poštuvan V, Sáiz P, Sisask M, Tubiana A, Värnik P, Hoven CW, Wasserman D. (2016). Physical activity in European adolescents and associations with anxiety, depression and wellbeing. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. *26*, 111-122.

[57] Long, A. E. (2001). Learning the ropes: Exploring the meaning and value of experiential education for girls at risk. *Journal of Experiential Education, 24*, 100–108.

[58] Wu, C. C., & Hsieh, C. M. (2006). The effects of a leisure education programme on the self concepts and life effectiveness of at-risk youth in Taiwan. *World Leisure Journal, 48*, 54–60.

[59] Fuller, C., Powell, D., & Fox, S. (2017). Making gains: The impact of outdoor residential experiences on students' examination grades and self-efficacy. *Educational Review, 69,* 232–247.

[60] Quibell, T., Charlton, J., & Law, J. (2017). Wilderness Schooling: A controlled trial of the impact of an outdoor education programme on attainment outcomes in primary school pupils. *British*

Educational Research Journal, 43, 572–587.

[61] Mueller, A. (2005). Antidote to learned helplessness: Empowering youth through service. *Reclaiming Children and Youth. 14*, 16-19.

[62] Jardim, C., & Marques da Silva, S. (2018). Young people engaging in volunteering: Questioning a generational trend in an individualized society. *Societies, 8*, 8.

[63] Schreier, H., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Chen, E. (2013). Effect of volunteering on risk factors for cardiovascular disease in adolescents: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *JAMA-Pediatrics*, *167*, 327-332.