



EVALUATION PROPOSAL FOR

OK YOU:
OK CHALLENGE



PREPARED BY *EVALUATORS WILL*
FOR THE AEA STUDENT CASE COMPETITION 2025





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OVERVIEW: OK YOU

what's
~~wrong~~ right
with me?



OK YOU is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting youth well-being through creative, arts-based approaches to emotional resilience. Founded in 2019, OK YOU aims to address the mental health crisis among adolescents in the U.S.

*** MORE THAN 30%
OF TEENS ARE
ESTIMATED TO
HAVE AN ANXIETY
DISORDER**

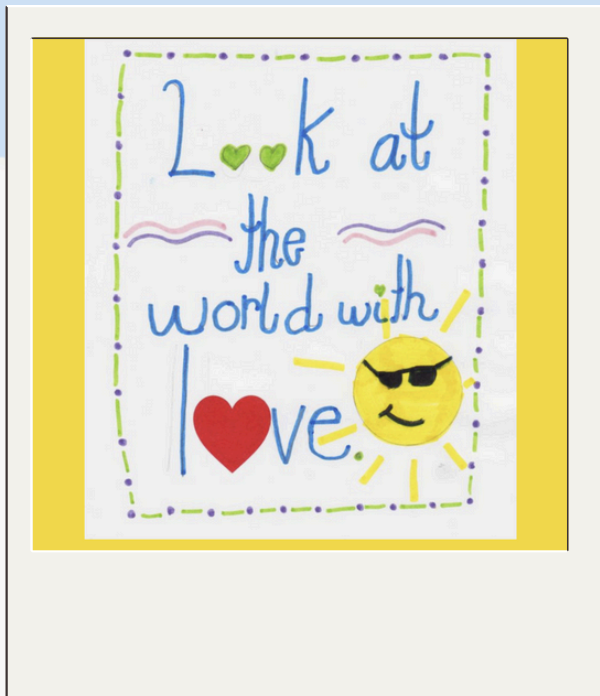
*** 20% OF TEENS
WILL EXPERIENCE
DEPRESSION BY
THE AGE OF 17**

*** 3 IN 5 TEEN
GIRLS REPORTED
FEELING SAD
EVERY DAY FOR
AT LEAST TWO
WEEKS**

OK YOU's mission centers on fostering "Inner OKness," which embraces emotions as opportunities for self-discovery and growth. Its programs pair creativity with therapeutic practices to build protective factors for mental health, including resilience and self-actualization.

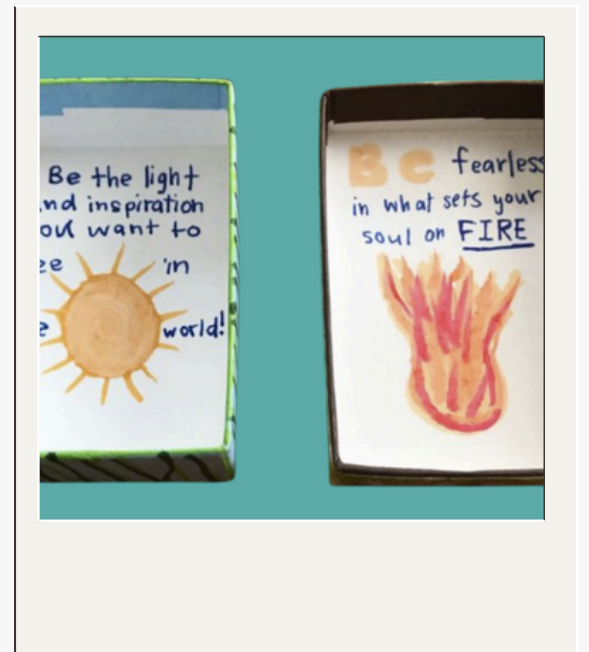
Youth—and those who support them—increasingly need mental health interventions that are culturally relevant, accessible, and inclusive. OK YOU has dedicated special attention to developing resources for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, immigrant, and rural youth, as these young people face additional barriers related to mental health.

OVERVIEW: THE OK CHALLENGE



In 2023, OK YOU launched the OK Challenge as a youth-led design competition. The program was launched in the context of rising mental health concerns among adolescents, which are exacerbated by increasing social media exposure, pandemic-related disruptions, and academic pressures. The OK Challenge was designed to help high school students better understand themselves by promoting self-awareness and developing psychological flexibility.

In 2024, OK YOU gathered feedback from participants and community members involved in the inaugural OK Challenge. OK YOU recognized the program's deep relevance for today's teens, particularly those from marginalized communities with insufficient access to mental health services. These insights encouraged OK YOU to strengthen the OK Challenge to further embrace its core values of arts, mental health, and youth leadership.



THE 2025 OK CHALLENGE!



In 2025, the OK Challenge expands nationally to reach and mobilize more diverse youth and community organizations in supporting youth mental health.

High school students are recruited for the competition by schools and community agencies. Participants will submit creative project ideas that address the question “**How do you get through stress and worry?**” Submissions are evaluated by peer judges, with winners receiving cash prizes. Finalists will be featured in an e-book that will be published on OK YOU’s website.

Local participants are invited to join OK YOU’s Inner Peace Corps to take on a leadership role and continue to influence youth mental health in their community. Feedback and data for the program will be collected to adapt and enhance future iterations of the OK Challenge.

How do you get through
stress and worry?

We’re looking for your
creative ideas!

CHALLENGE

ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!







EVALUATION NEEDS

The evaluation of the 2025 OK Challenge addresses the overarching question: “**What can be learned from the 2025 OK Challenge to inform OK YOU’s evolving approach to engaging and empowering youth leaders nationally?**” The evaluation will be guided by OK YOU’s core values of transformative change, authenticity, and youth leadership. The evaluation will center on:

- Establishing, training, and authentically engaging a **Youth Evaluation Team**
- Utilizing **participatory** evaluation approaches
- Collecting qualitative data that allows participants to **construct their own reality**
- Using **creative narrative-driven methods** to describe the program’s impact

With these values and methods at the forefront of the evaluation, the evaluation will gain an understanding of both the outcomes of the OK Challenge and the experiences, insights, and growth of participants. These findings can inform how OK YOU can potentially scale and adapt the OK Challenge to promote youth mental health and support youth leadership.



PARTNER GROUPS	COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	ENGAGEMENT METHODS	USE OF EVALUATION	ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS
OK YOU STAFF	Regular communication through syncs, briefings, and newsletters	Working sessions to engage in the iterative feedback process	Inform strategic decisions and improve program design and better understand expected long-term impacts	Limited staff capacity, avoid overbudenng with evaluation needs
INNER PEACE CORPS	Utilizing youth-friendly formats: texts, video calls, and voice memos.	Inviting interested members to form a youth evaluation team, offering space for feedback. Flexible Scheduling.	Reflect on evaluation process, develop personal/professional skills	Respect their dual roles as leaders/learners, honor lived experiences, provide proper compensation
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS	Communicate in simple and affirming language. Prioritize accessibility and creativity.	Surveys, interviews, photovoice submissions, and focus groups. Flexible Scheduling.	Amplify youth voice in program design	Obtaining informed consent, ensure anonymity and safety
PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS	Newsletters, summary reports distributed online	Pulse surveys and story circle groups	Understand change from the community level, support broader alignment	Mindful of their time constraints and competing responsibilities
COMMUNITY ADVISORS/BOARD MEMBERS	Executive summaries, learning brief, board presentations	Occasional input through planning meetings and reviewing key findings	Oversight of the program and organization, funding decisions	Highlight the importance of evaluation for scaling and accountability

PRIMARY PARTNER ANALYSIS

SECONDARY PARTNER ANALYSIS



PARTNER GROUPS	COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	ENGAGEMENT METHODS	USE OF EVALUATION	ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS
OTHER RELATED ORGANIZATIONS	Conferences, presentations, publicly available briefs/reports	Story circles, knowledge exchange forums, webinars	Inspirations or replication, cross-sector collaboration, and fostering collective impact	Highlight what is transferable and what is context-specific to OK YOU and the OK Challenge
FUNDERS	Evaluation report, executive summaries, data visuals	Funder briefings, learning sessions, grantee reports	Evidence of outcomes, justifications for new funding, expansion of effective practices	Most funders are private foundations, need to strike a balance between storytelling and metrics



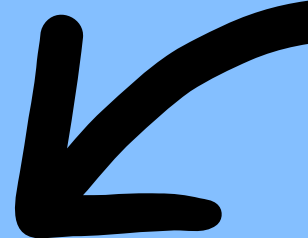

LOGIC MODEL



The OK Challenge is a powerful opportunity for OK YOU to advance its purpose of building a youth-led wellness movement.

The OK Challenge achieves this through three main mechanisms: **identifying and elevating new youth leaders** to advocate for change in their communities; developing and disseminating **new youth-developed creative wellness tools** to support resilience and well-being; and **deepening engagement with youth supporters nationally** to grow the movement's reach.

OK YOU believes that young people have the potential to reshape the mental health ecosystem to support OKness for everyone. The OK Challenge provides youth with the opportunity, incentives, and resources to take the first step. The OK Challenge then **amplifies youth voices** and wellness tools—through technology and partners—to have a lasting impact on youth mental health nationally.



The OK Challenge logic model displayed on the next slide assumes the following must hold true in order to see the expected outcomes and impact:

- Partners are able to reach youth across diverse geographies, cultures, and backgrounds
- Logistics and technology do not impede youth participation
- Youth have the motivations, incentives, and interest to participate
- Creative wellness tools are efficacious in improving youth mental health
- Youth and youth supporters promote and use creative wellness tools
- Youth leaders are able to influence actors and create persistent change in community conditions

LOGIC MODEL

Inputs

Youth participants across geographies and diverse identities

OK YOU Staff

Partners: educators, counselors, youth-supporting organizations

OK YOU technology platforms

Funding

Activities

Outreach
Engagement with program partners and youth to encourage participation

Submission Support
Workshops and resources to support youth in developing wellness tools and submitting

Judging
Inner Peace Corps youth judge submissions and select finalists

Dissemination
Creation of e-book with projects, promotion of winning entries, and dissemination of resources

Leadership opportunities
Development of a leadership pathway for local OK Challenge participants

Short-term Outcomes

Accessibility
Increased youth and partner awareness and knowledge of art and wellness tools

Engagement
Increased youth engagement in creative mental health and wellness resources

Resilience
Increased youth resilience and protective factors for mental health

Partnerships
New and strengthened partnerships with the OK You movement nationally

Medium-term Outcomes

Advocacy
Increased youth leadership in their communities and engagement in youth mental health advocacy

Resilience
Increased youth resilience and protective factors for mental health

Sustained wellness practices
Youths' ongoing use of art and creative wellness tools to build resilience

Purpose

Build a youth-led wellness movement

Impact

Youth experience positive mental health

External Conditions

Social environment (including political environment, economic factors, and cultural attitudes) influences youths' willingness and motivation to participate in leadership and wellness opportunities

Other actors in the mental health system provide clinical mental health supports to youth with greater needs

EVALUATION MATRIX: NARRATIVE



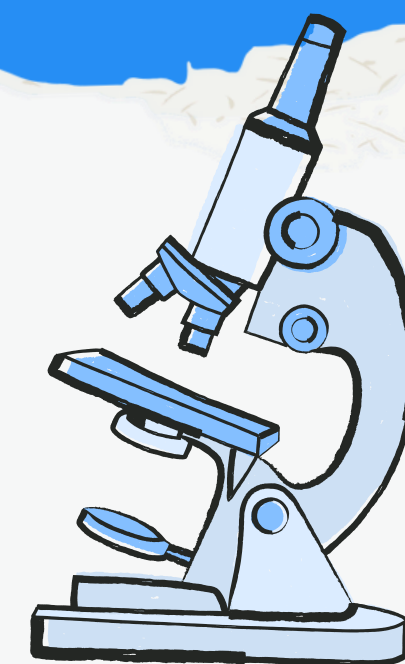
Approach

This evaluation prioritizes a participatory approach, grounded in the knowledge that meaningful learning for OK YOU requires youth engagement and direction. It incorporates methods that empower youth to shape learnings and tell the program's story. Key to data collection and meaning-making is the creation of the Youth Evaluation Team, which will be comprised of volunteers from OK YOU's existing Inner Peace Corps program.



Design

Evaluation questions 1, 2, and 3 will employ a mixed-methods design. Quantitative data collected will provide a foundational understanding of the program's context and provide insight into short-term outcomes. The strong emphasis on qualitative data collection reflects OK YOU's guiding values around youth as leaders and engaging the community in learning for impact.



Methods

Through the use of qualitative methods, data collection serves as a reciprocal exchange, relying on creativity for both learnings in this evaluation and meaningful activities for youth. Quantitative methods using passive website data and pulse surveys allow OK YOU to decrease the burden of data collection on staff and align with objectives to maximize technology use.

EVALUATION MATRIX: NARRATIVE (CONT.)



Youth Evaluation Team

To strengthen evaluation capacity and center youth voices, a Youth Evaluation Team will be formed by recruiting members from the Inner Peace Corps. Youth evaluators will self-direct to take on specific roles in the evaluation and will be provided with training and individualized support. For example, youth evaluators may choose to support survey collection and analysis or assist with story collection for the Most Significant Change approach. Youth evaluators will be compensated for their participation and will gain valuable professional experience while helping to ensure the evaluation is youth-centered.



Workshop Shareout/Learning

Toward the end of the six-month evaluation period, a collaborative learning focus group will be convened with OK YOU staff, evaluators, and the Youth Evaluation Team. Using a data placement approach, the session will present evaluation findings in an accessible format to encourage group discussions. The focus will be on youth leadership in mental health and to provide recommendations to refine program design and address barriers for the future.



Most Significant Change

Throughout the life cycle of the evaluation, evaluators and the program team will collect personal stories from youth participants and program partners on the influence of the OK Challenge. Story circle groups will be conducted with both youth participants and community partners to complete the data collection. This method has the strength of generating rich, in-depth qualitative data that can be leveraged for external audiences. Periodic voting exercises with program staff and youth leaders will prioritize the most significant changes.

EVALUATION QUESTION #1

What are the key drivers and characteristics of youth participation in the OK Challenge?

Evaluation Sub-Questions

- a. What motivates youth to participate in OK YOU's featured program?
- b. What is the extent of their engagement across different geographic locations, age groups, and partnering organizations?

UMBRELLA METRICS	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	METHOD
YOUTH VOICE AROUND PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth responses for motivation & decision to participate (Disaggregated by interest points: location, grade, partner referenced)Themes/stories from youth around participation decisionRecommendations from youth around aligning the OK Challenge with youth motivations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth Google submission formParticipating youth story circles
UNDERSTANDING YOUTH PARTICIPATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Partner actions to engage youthPartner perceptions on youth motivations for participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Partner pulse survey
SUBMISSION ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Count of the OK Challenge site page viewsCount of winning e-book and project page viewsCount of submissions (Disaggregated by interest points: location, grade, partner referenced)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Website analyticsYouth Google submission form

EVALUATION QUESTION #2

What do youth perceive as the effects of the OK Challenge on their personal practices, resilience, and wellbeing?

Evaluation Sub-Questions

- a. How are youth’s mental health and creative engagement affected through the OK Challenge?
- b. Did the OK Challenge engage participating youth in OK YOU’s available creative MH Tools?

UMBRELLA METRICS	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	METHOD
IMPROVED YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth stories on how engagement in the OK Challenge was helpful to their mental healthThemes around how engaging in the OK Challenge affected participating youths’ resilience% of participating youth in that report using creative strategies to support their resilience in hard times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth Google submission formParticipating youth story circlesPost-circle group pulse survey
CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth stories on engaging in creative wellness practices since their OK Challenge engagement% of participating youth in that report engaging in creative wellness practices since OK Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participating youth story circlesPost-circle group pulse survey
ACCESSIBILITY OF CREATIVE MENTAL HEALTH TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">% of participating youth in that report accessible OK YOU’s resources following their OK Challenge engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Post-circle group pulse survey

EVALUATION QUESTION #3

How did the OK Challenge influence youth mental health leadership? What key learnings can inform future iterations of the OK Challenge?

Evaluation Sub-Questions

- Since the OK Challenge, what changes in youth mental health leadership have partners seen in their communities, and what contributed to these changes?
- Do youth report outcomes in alignment with Long-term outcomes?
- What learnings about youth leadership can be surfaced from data to support youth leadership programming at OK YOU?

UMBRELLA METRICS

PARTNER INSIGHTS AND ACTIONS AROUND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

WORKING TOWARD YOUTH OUTCOMES: CONNECTEDNESS AND SUSTAINABLE WELLNESS PRATCIES

LEARNINGS AROUND YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN MENTAL HEALTH

SPECIFIC INDICATORS

- Partner observations around conditions for youth leadership in mental health and changes since OK Challenge
- Changes in partner organization practices or understanding related to youth's creative approaches to mental health, as informed by their engagement with the OK Challenge

- Creative activities or strategies used by youth to connect with themselves
- Youth-identified conditions needed for sustainable wellness practices
- % of Youth who feel more connected to themselves following a creative wellness activity

- Learnings generated from OK YOU staff, evaluator, and Youth Evaluation Team

METHOD

- Partner story circle groups (Most significant change)

- Youth story circle groups (Most significant change)
- Post-circle group pulse survey

- Data placemat + discussion

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS



ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES

OK Challenge Program Fidelity

The evaluation goals of this program were primarily focused on assessing program outcomes and reach. Because of this scope, we will have limited process data to investigate program design and fidelity.

Resource Considerations

Participatory evaluation methods require more time than traditional methods. Youth Evaluators will require training and support to build their capacity and confidence.

Long-Term Impact

Given the six-month evaluation timeframe and the program's reach across a national audience, it is challenging to assess the long-term impact of the OK Challenge.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

This evaluation is primarily focused on evaluations. Though, key questions around recommendations and learnings from OK YOU Staff and the Youth Evaluation Team will drive meaningful Program design questions.

The evaluation will offer substantive but achievable roles for youth with close supervision. Youth evaluators will be provided with scaffolding and gradual increases in responsibility to support their self-efficacy.

This evaluation will primarily focus on identifying leading indicators and a conditions analysis of what it takes to achieve potential long-term changes identified in the Logic Model for OK Challenge. This establishes a foundation as OK YOU builds a data practice that allows for longitudinal collection for a long-term outcome analysis.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS (CONT.)



ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES

Participant Engagement

Contacting youth participants for evaluation purposes several months after the OK Challenge can potentially cause low response rate, especially the only contact method is via email.

Technical Accessibility

The availability of the internet can impact a youth's ability to learn about, connect with OK YOU's OK Challenge supports, and complete a submission.

Data Analysis

In centering youth voices and honoring their lived experiences, a large volume of qualitative data is needed for the evaluation, which can be time-consuming and labor-intensive to analyze and interpret.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

The evaluators will leverage community partners to recruit participants for the evaluation, since they have easier access to contacting the youth.

Partners will be informed of the internet access challenge, and OK YOU will encourage them to provide students with access to their resources for participation in the OK Challenge and subsequent online evaluation activities.

The qualitative data will be collected at different time intervals to ensure ample time for data analysis and interpretation. The Youth Evaluation Team will also be trained in qualitative data analysis techniques to expand the evaluation capacity.



THANK
YOU!

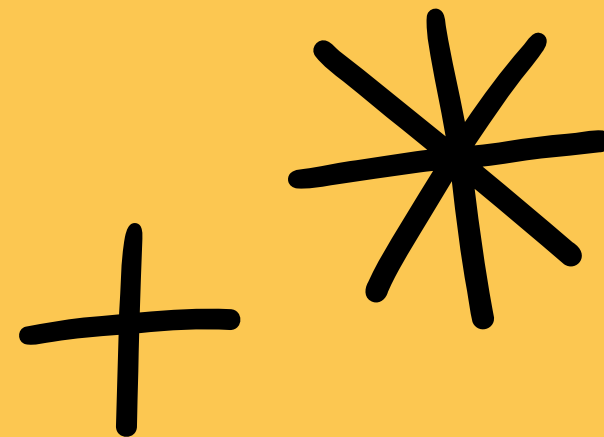


WE LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH OK YOU
TO EVALUATE THE OK CHALLENGE AND
CONTRIBUTE TO ITS LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT





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