

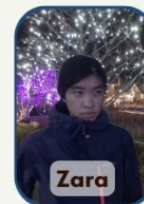
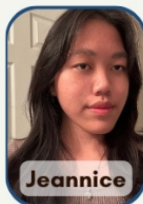
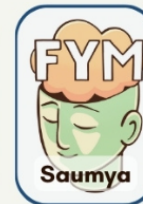
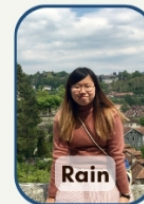
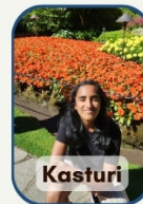
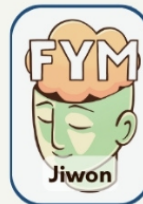
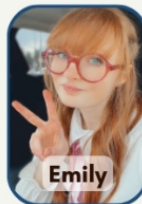
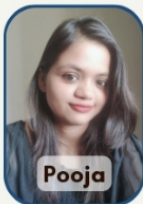
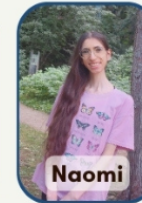
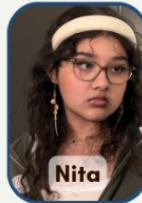
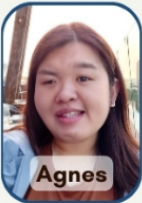
ANNUAL REPORT

FREE YOUR MIND
MENTAL HEALTH SOCIETY

20
24

Free Your Mind

Our 2024 Team



FREE YOUR MIND
mental health society



COLLAGE CREATED BY NITA CHOWDHURY

VICTORY ANGELI

DEB CHOWDHURY

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in Free Your Mind Mental Health Society (FYM). This report covers the key activities of this organisation between January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. The following pages contain:

An introduction to FYM's origins;

A discussion of key organizational **values**;

An overview of our **5 teams**: Events, Executive, Marketing, Speak Your Mind, and Video Creation;

An examination of our **analytics**;

A summary of our **financial** activities;

A **roadmap** for 2025 and beyond.

Free Your Mind would like to acknowledge the role of our many supporters – from our entirely volunteer-led team, to our service providing partners, to our general audience – for their role in our continued success. Please enjoy this discussion of our collective labour.





IMAGE COURTESY OF ARGEN ELEZI @ARGENEL ON INSTAGRAM

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Free Your Mind situates itself as an immigrant-led not-for-profit organisation built on Indigenous lands. In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyârhe Nakoda Nations, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta District 6, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta. We commit ourselves to not only recognise the ongoing legacies of colonialism, but also to responsibly center Indigenous voices in efforts toward decolonisation.

IDEA STATEMENT

No discussion of Free Your Mind as an organisation can exist without consideration for Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) principles. Free Your Mind is deeply committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment for our volunteers, partners, and supporters. We posit that diversity is our strength, and we uplift members from racialised, newcomer, 2SLGBTQIA+, neurodivergent, and disabled communities. Our commitments to IDEA are reflected in our leadership structure, where members from equity-denied groups hold programmatic and administrative decision-making power. Free Your Mind strives to meet our supporters wherever they are in life, and we do our best to amplify historically silenced voices.

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OUR HISTORY

Free Your Mind Mental Health Society was founded on April 13, 2018, when a young person decided to speak out about a lack of mental health discourse in their community. This youth was Victory, who, at the time, went by a different name. As Victory recalls,



My struggle with poor mental health began at the age of 5. My family had just immigrated from China, and we were all experiencing the stressors of living in a different culture. When I went to school, I stuck out like a sore thumb. My classmates picked on me for my broken English and the shape of my eyes. I continued to suffer through junior high, where I struggled through two years of constant sexual harassment. I repressed much of who I was, such as my queer and transgender identities, as I feared further alienation. This destroyed my mental health, to the point that I was constantly in crisis and met criteria for three separate mental illness diagnoses. By the time I turned 17, I had rightly attributed a lot of my suffering to the stigma surrounding mental health struggles, and the culture of silence that prevailed in my hometown of Calgary, Alberta. I founded Free Your Mind to break that silence.



On that day in April, Victory approached three of their friends with a project proposal in hand. It was a timeline for an open air, drop-in event, presented to the Calgary community at no cost. Victory had tentatively named it Project Mindfulness, and had three aspirations for the initiative. Project Mindfulness would raise awareness for youth mental health, raise funds for ConnecTeen (a local distress line), and raise Victory up to the platform where they would share their personal story for the very first time.

Once Victory assembled their team, the four youth went to work. They banded together to make Project Mindfulness a reality. In just over a year, the 4-person team assembled a list of corporate sponsors, donors, and advertisers. For instance, David's Tea provided in-kind refreshments for Project Mindfulness attendees, and Lemoncello donated a hundred-dollar scarf for a silent auction. Local and national charities set up **booths** at the event. Organisations including the Canadian Mental Health Association, Jack.org, and Kids Help Phone delegated representatives to raise awareness of their organisation. The strategic venue that we booked – a theatre in Kensington, Calgary – attracted constant foot traffic. The event went live in June of 2019, and lasted approximately **4 hours**. The **400+ people** who visited enjoyed a mix of professional mental health education, personalised conversations, and recreational activities. Project Mindfulness was a smashing success.



In the weeks following Project Mindfulness, the four event planners met for dinner. A final debrief gave rise to an absolute consensus: Free Your Mind could not die with the conclusion of a one-time event. The team recognised the value of what they built, and they wanted to keep the momentum going. The four youth would recruit their friends and neighbours to their cause. Free Your Mind would expand, and diversify the work they did. This decision made Free Your Mind what it is today.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Free Your Mind upholds three key values: **awareness**, **understanding**, **mindfulness**. We define our values as such:



Wellness begins with awareness. The first step to building mental health is recognizing what mental health entails. Free Your Mind hosts events, publishes blogs, and facilitates discussions around mental health literacy and related topics.

Our goal is to spread deeper understanding around wellness, with a focus on the Canadian community. We empower our supporters to share their personal journeys. We believe that stigma can only be broken when people take the time and listen to what mental health struggles and healing entails.

We want to leave our audience with the lasting benefits of mindfulness. We work to provide the public with the strategies and knowledge necessary to care for themselves, support their loved ones, and seek help when they need it.



Since the completion of Project Mindfulness, Free Your Mind has completed a dozen distinctive projects to promote our key values. We engaged over **100** different volunteers, across four teams, between 2019 and the end of 2023. Here is a small selection of the projects we completed during the COVID years, and ones we have since retired:

A mentorship program: Free Your Mind recruited older youth (i.e., people aged 18-25, mainly post-secondary students) to mentor younger youth (i.e., people aged 12-17, mainly junior and senior high school students). Each mentor was assigned one or two mentees, whom they met during a virtual welcome event. The mentor would facilitate discussions with their mentee(s) once every two weeks, and check in with the Events Team once a month. The mentor would guide their mentee(s) through the ups and downs of teenage life, such as a difficult transition from junior high to senior high school.

Podcasts and livestreams: youth volunteers engaged a mix of external speakers and fellow Free Your Mind volunteers to share their thoughts around various mental health-related topics. For instance, the Events Team recruited several of their peers from Speak Your Mind to address student-facing concerns, such as stress management during exam season. Conversations were either streamed for live audience engagement, or they were recorded and later uploaded to podcast-sharing platforms.

Questions and Suggestions: members of the general public submitted inquiries through a message box embedded into Free Your Mind's official website. Our volunteers collected them once every few weeks, and redirected those asks to an external service provider. This person, who was a licensed therapist, responded to those inquiries in writing. Free Your Mind personnel closed the communications loop by posting the therapists' written responses on the official website.

The following pages describe the work we completed in the past 12 months.



OUR TEAMS

Free Your Mind hosted five distinct teams in 2024: the Events Team, Speak Your Mind, the Marketing Team, the Video Creation Team, and the Executive Team. Free Your Mind's teams are headed by their own director, or a pair of co-directors, and produce largely parallel projects that advance the same organisational values.

EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Executive Team is the administrative body that oversees all activity within Free Your Mind. It is made up of three directors: the Executive Director (ED), the Director of Accessibility (DoA), and the Director of Communications (DoC).

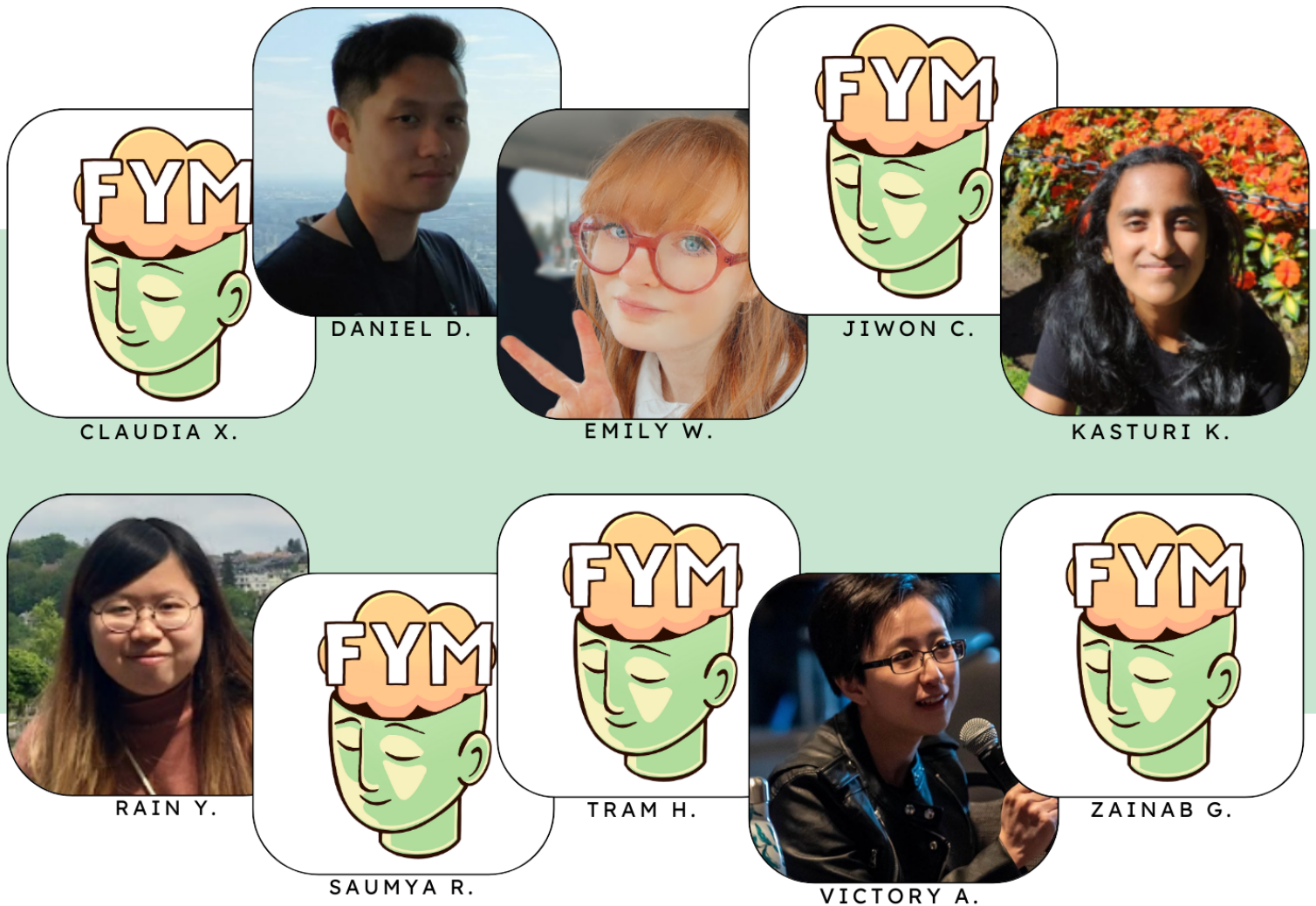
The **ED** is the highest authority within Free Your Mind. They are responsible for conflict resolution and administrative negotiations. The **DoA** is most responsible for safeguarding accessibility, which includes twice a year program evaluation efforts. The **DoC** leads recruiting efforts every February and September, which includes outreach coordination, scheduling interviews, and onboarding new members.

In 2024, the Executive Team effectively resolved two safety concerns around members struggling with their mental health, and helped Free Your Mind maintain relations with Kickstand, a community partner. In November, they worked with a third party to plan, organise, and deliver a 3-hour equity, diversity, and inclusion workshop to all Free Your Mind volunteers.

EVENTS TEAM

The Events Team's mission is reflected in its name; members produce meaningful public-facing events that advance mental health discourse, self-care, and outreach. The Events Team remained virtual for the entirety of 2024.

5 general volunteers worked with the Director of Events to plan and research three informative webinars, executing 2 of them in 2024 and scheduling the last for early 2025. The completed webinars addressed: 1) the interplay between media use and body image among Canadian youth, and 2) the potential benefits of embracing a new hobby, particularly arts and crafts, outdoor activities, and civic engagement. The final webinar will most likely take the form of an expert panel, where therapists, psychiatrists, and youth mental health advocates advise high school and post-secondary students struggling with exam stress. After saying goodbye to some volunteers and hello to new ones, by the end of 2024, the Events Team had grown to 7 general volunteers, all working hard to brainstorm and plan for 2025.



SPEAK YOUR MIND

Speak Your Mind is a blogging initiative. Volunteers research, draft, and submit prose covering the topics of their choice, as long as they relate to youth mental health. Like the Events Team, Speak Your Mind volunteers work in a purely virtual context.

In 2024, **6** general volunteers shared their manuscripts with **2** Co-Directors of Speak Your Mind. 2024 marked a return to the co-director structure, which we had briefly experimented with during the pandemic years. Directors provide feedback on each blog regarding clarity, factual accuracy, and safe story-telling practices before publishing them on Free Your Mind's official website, as well as writing their own blogs. The **35** blogs published in 2024 achieved a total of **22,063** views, addressed mental health legislation impacting certain Canadian provinces, best practices for individuals seeking self-care, members' own mental health journeys, and much more.



AVA C.

LIV B.

MAYELA L.

MANPREET V.



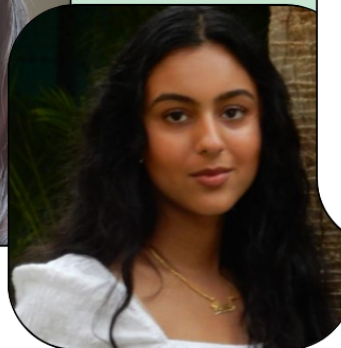
NIDHI P.



NAOMI S.



POOJA S.



REET K.



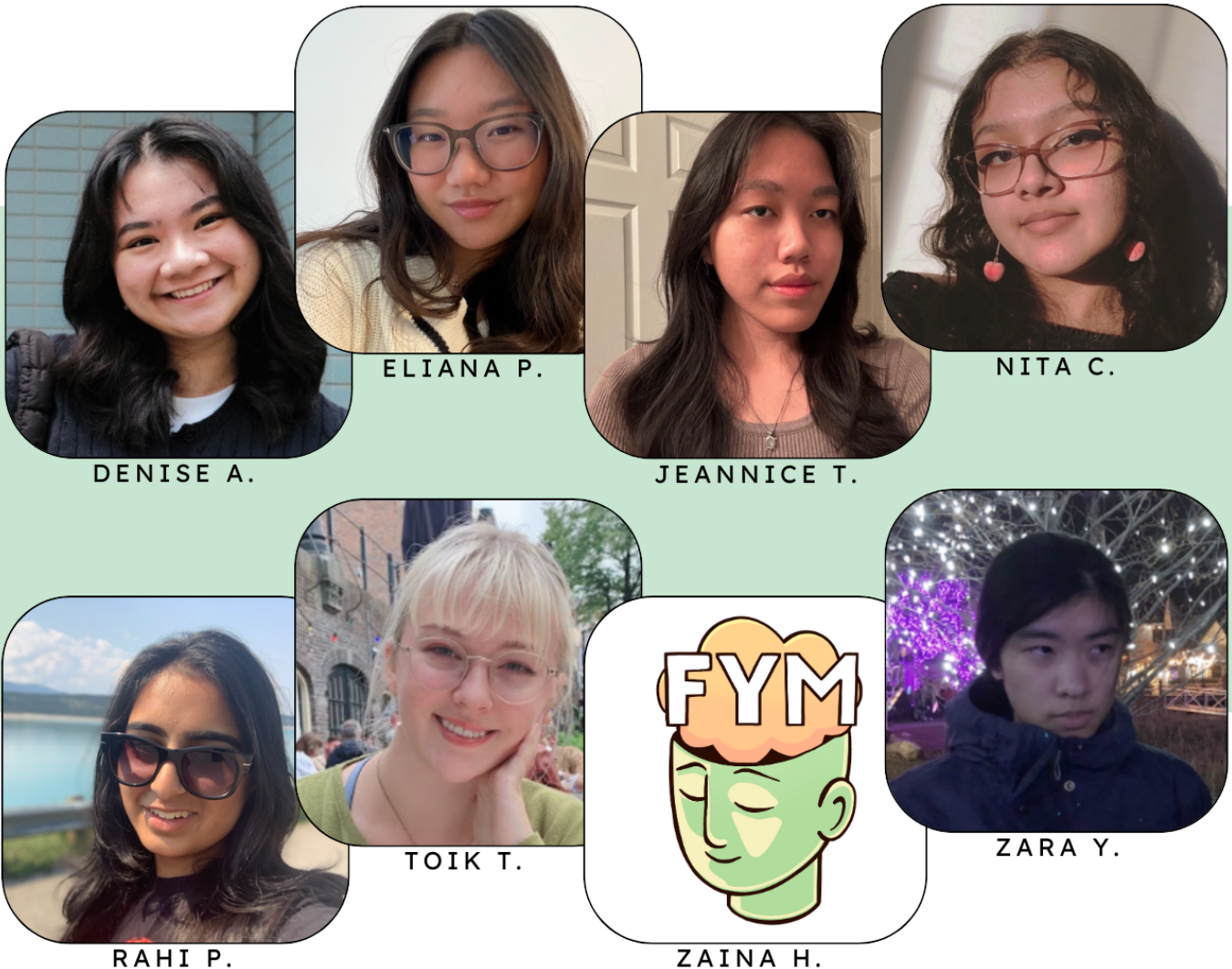
SANGEETHA V.

MARKETING TEAM

The Marketing Team promotes outgoing blogs, upcoming events, and published videos to improve their reach. They collaborate with Free Your Mind's other teams to maximise impact.

In 2024, **7** general volunteers collaborated with the Director of Events to produce **89** social media posts and **174** stories across **2** Instagram platforms, one for Free Your Mind overall and one specifically to promote and showcase Speak Your Mind's work. Twice a year, the Marketing Team works with Free Your Mind's Executive Team to coordinate recruitment phases, seeking out new volunteers using Meta advertisements, VolunteerConnector, and similar venues.

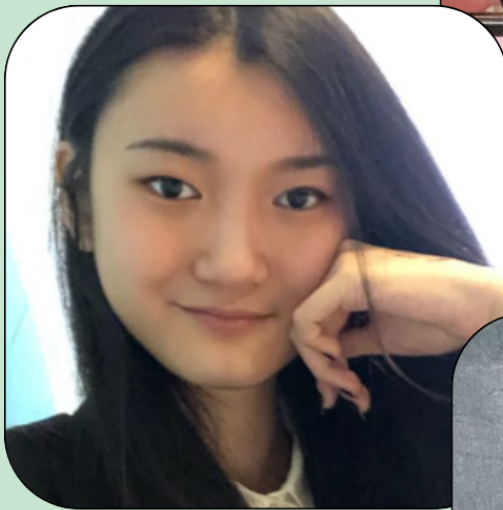
The Marketing Team also produces original content for Free Your Mind's pages. For instance, volunteers designed, edited, and shared posts recognising Canada's transgender day of visibility, OCD awareness week, and international friendship day.



VIDEO CREATION TEAM

The Video Creation Team adapts individual research projects, volunteers' mental health narratives, and Speak Your Mind's blogs into short-form media for visual learners. In October 2024, the Video Creation Team merged into the Marketing Team.

In the months leading up to this merger, **3** general volunteers worked with the Director of Video Creation to produce **2** films, totaling **11** minutes of original content. One video addressed strategies to break through creative blocks, while the other raised awareness for social anxiety disorder.



CINDY L.



FELIX L.



MARIANA G.



SOPULU E.

OUR EVALUATIONS

Once every six months, the Executive Team sends out an organisation-wide survey to gauge internal satisfaction with our programming. Free Your Mind is an entirely youth-led organisation, and we always put our volunteers first.

METHODOLOGY

In December 2024, the Executive Team released two surveys using Google Forms. The surveys differed in their target demographic. One was for general volunteers, while the other was for team directors. Both surveys asked respondents to reflect on the quality of internal communications, leadership support, organisational accessibility, and personal skills development as experienced over the past six months. All surveys were anonymous, unless the respondent chose to share identifying information in short-answer sections, so there is extremely limited risk of backlash should participants indicate dissatisfaction with Free Your Mind.

The surveys were completed by **14 out of 19** general volunteers (6 out of 7 Events Team members, 5 out of 7 Marketing Team members including former Video Creation members, 3 out of 5 Speak Your Mind bloggers) and **3 out of 3** team directors respectively. The 3 executive team members, who managed data analysis, were not expected to complete either survey.

Both surveys relied heavily on 7-point Likert scales, where participants are shown a statement and asked to agree or disagree. Someone who indicated agreement with a phrase would have selected a 5, a 6, or a 7 on the scale. Inversely, participants who indicated disagreement with a given statement would have select a 1, 2, or 3.

If participants indicated strong agreement with a given statement, they would have all rated it a 7 on a 7-point Likert scale. If someone indicated strong disagreement with a given statement, they would have rated it a 1 on a 7-point Likert scale. A selection of 4 indicates true neutrality toward the statement.

Toward the end of each section, participants encountered open-ended text boxes, where they could share any lingering thoughts relevant to their time at Free Your Mind. Both general volunteers and directors made use of this space.

RESULTS

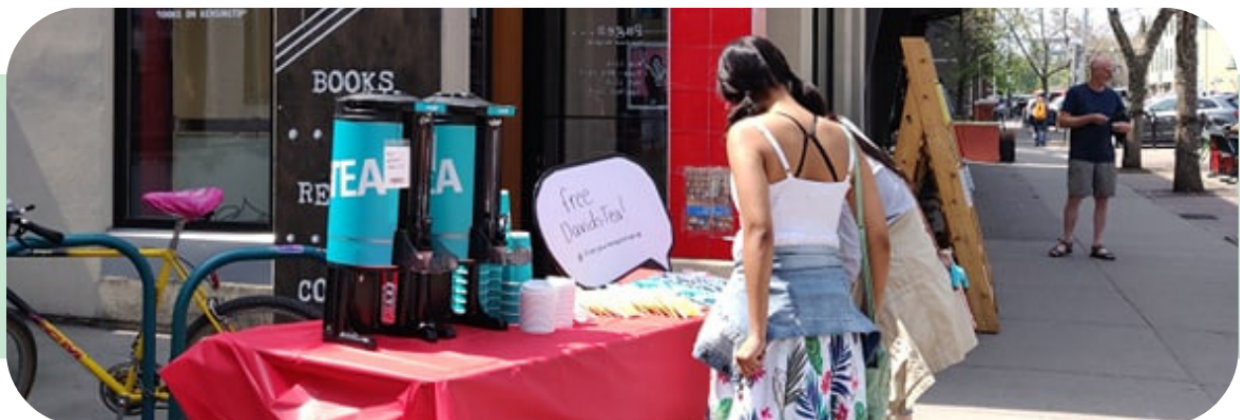
The overwhelming majority of Free Your Mind volunteers express **satisfaction** and **pride** when asked about their time volunteering here. This pattern holds consistent across roles and demographics. For instance:

Free Your Mind volunteers perceive the organisation to be **warm and inclusive**, where everyone is made to feel like they belong. When general volunteers were presented with the statement, “Free Your Mind is a place where everyone is welcome,” every single respondent indicated agreement. When directors were shown the same phrase, every single respondent indicated strong agreement.

Free Your Mind volunteers share a strong sense of **organisational identity**, and believe in the work that the group completes. When general volunteers were presented with the statement “I am proud to call myself a Free Your Mind volunteer,” every single respondent indicated agreement. When team directors were presented with the statement “I am proud to call myself a Free Your Mind Director,” every single respondent indicated strong agreement.

Free Your Mind volunteers describe the organisation as having **strong leadership**. When general volunteers were shown the statement “in my opinion, the executive team did everything right over the past six months,” every single respondent indicated agreement. When team directors were presented with the same phrase, every single respondent indicated strong agreement.

Free Your Mind volunteers learn **valuable skills** during their time with us. When general volunteers were presented with the statement “Free Your Mind isn’t important to my personal growth,” all but one respondent indicated disagreement. Every single director who was given the same statement indicated strong disagreement. Other questions, which asked members whether their time volunteering with us improved their communication, writing, leadership, and time management skills, produced extremely similar results.



Many of Free Your Mind's members – both general volunteers and directors – wrote long-form comments praising the organisation. General volunteers shared:



A safe and flexible space that welcomes everyone, [Free Your Mind] provides an excellent opportunity for basic experience in marketing, graphic design, leadership, and writing.

MARKETING TEAM MEMBER



I am so glad I found Free Your Mind, which has helped me grow as a person and further develop my communication and leadership skills, as well as gain perspective on various mental health [topics].

SPEAK YOUR MIND BLOGGER



I am very happy with my position and what I get to do. Everyone is so respectful and understanding of each other's capacities and schedules. Excited to do more in the coming months!

MARKETING TEAM MEMBER



Directors were also eager to share their positive feelings toward Free Your Mind. One particularly satisfied respondent wrote:

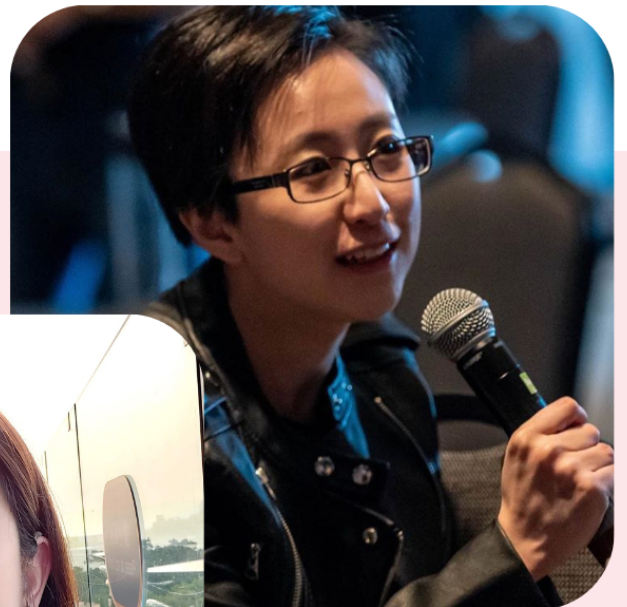


[Free Your Mind] provides a space for youth to learn about mental health, and create and execute ideas with a team about mental health projects based on their interests and passions. Free Your Mind is very active in encouraging people's ideas and provides a platform and support for them. Free Your Mind is also constantly changing, looking for feedback, and growing when faced with challenges instead of staying stuck in one place.

Free Your Mind’s executive team takes all of our member feedback to heart, and we will continue to do right by our supporters in the coming years. We pride ourselves on the openness, transparency, and inclusivity that consistently generate such positive feedback from our members, and we will carry this energy into the foreseeable future.



DEB C.



VICTORY A.



AGNES L.

OUR ANALYTICS

In 2024, Free Your Mind used Instagram as our primary form of external promotion and communication.

- 1) **@freeyourmindyyc** promoted ongoing activities including online webinars hosted by the Events Team and recruiting new volunteers.
- 2) **@speakyourmindyyc** promoted blogs from the Speak Your Mind Team.

Our analytics are shown here. Please keep in mind:

Views: The number of times our content was played or displayed.

Reach: The number of unique users who saw our content, including from both organic and paid distribution of our Instagram content.

Content interactions: The number of likes or reactions, saves, comments, shares and replies on our content.



OVERVIEW

@FREEYOURMINDYYC

Content overview

Breakdown: Followers/non-followers

All Posts Stories

Views 37.6K Reach 24.3K ↑ 23% Content interactions 437 ↑ 100%



Views breakdown

Jan 1 - Dec 30

Total 37,648

From followers 28%

From non-followers 72%

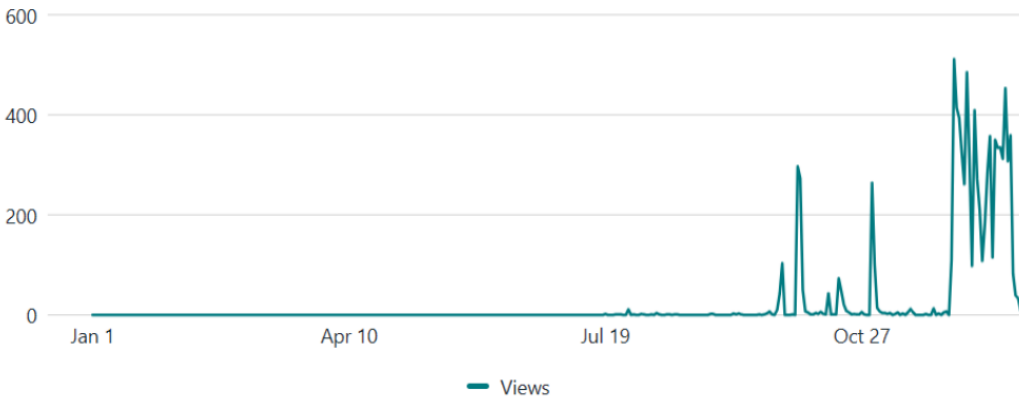
@SPEAKYOURMINDYYC

Content overview

Breakdown: Followers/non-followers

All Posts Stories

Views 9K Reach 895 ↑ 32.6% Content interactions 184 ↑ 100%



Views breakdown

Jan 1 - Dec 30

Total 9,016

From followers 87%

From non-followers 13%

AUDIENCE

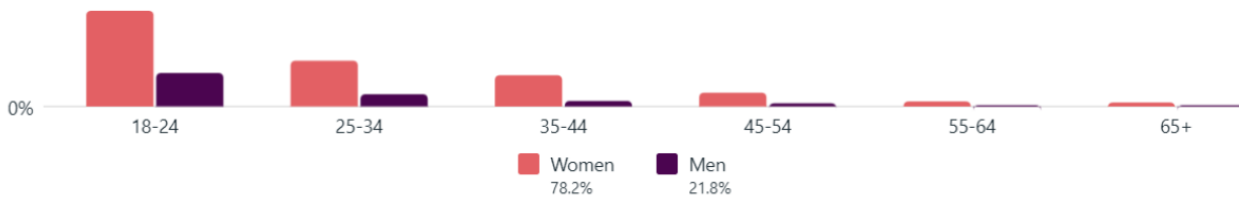
@FREEYOURMINDYYC

Instagram followers ⓘ

655

Age & gender ⓘ

Top cities



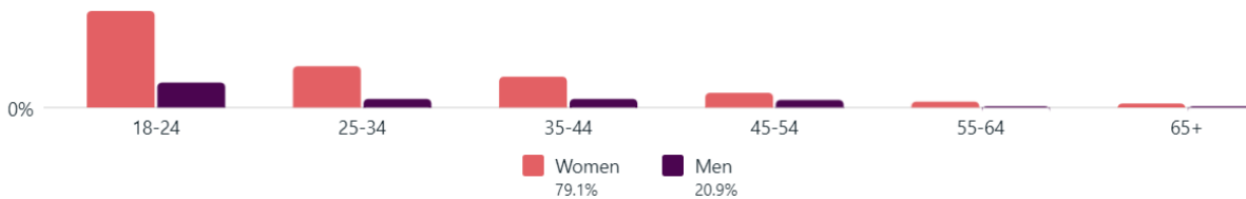
@SPEAKYOURMINDYYC

Instagram followers ⓘ

460

Age & gender ⓘ

Top cities



OUR FINANCES

Free Your Mind Mental Health Society Statement of Activities

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

Revenue

Sponsorship ¹	\$6,421.30
Total	\$6,421.30

Expenses

Honouraria ²	\$5,750.00
Social media (event promotion campaign) ³	\$64.56
Social media (recruitment campaign) ⁴	\$197.83
Software subscriptions ⁵	\$317.98
Website hosting ⁶	\$90.93
Total	\$6,421.30

Notes

1. Sponsorship by Kickstand, a partner nonprofit.
2. \$250.00 annual gift per volunteer, for all volunteers active for >4 months.
3. Instagram advertisements to promote online events.
4. Instagram advertisements to promote new volunteer recruitment.
5. Includes Canva Pro and Otter.ai.
6. Domain renewal and web hosting fees made to Hostinger.

Please note that Free Your Mind operates on a reimbursement system, where we receive full financial compensation for all program related spending from Kickstand. Free Your Mind does not retain any liquid or transferable assets.

Free Your Mind Mental Health Society's financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024 are reported by Debadrita Chowdhury and Victory Angeli, to whom the responsibility of auditing all financial statements has been delegated.

LOOKING FORWARD: 2025

2025 will be an exciting year for Free Your Mind. Speak Your Mind, our blogging team, is expanding their roster of volunteers. The Marketing Team is planning to diversify community outreach initiatives, and to both publicise the work done across the organisation and showcase marketers' unique talents. The Events Team is planning its first-ever in-person event since Project Mindfulness. This activity, tentatively named the Keystone Project, will take place in Alberta. It will showcase local mental health resources, encourage civic engagement among attendees, and generally facilitate mental health literacy. All of our projects, regardless of the team they fall under, prioritise the needs of historically silenced communities and strive to safeguard equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Please follow us online to stay informed about our upcoming initiative!



<https://freeyourmindinitiative.com>



@freeyourmindyyc

@speakyourmindyyc



CONTACT

Free Your Mind loves to hear from our audiences and supporters! Please reach out to us if there are any questions about this report.

For more information about Free Your Mind, please visit our website at www.freeyourmindinitiative.com

For general inquiries, please email info@freeyourmindinitiative.com

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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