



Powered by Youth

Advancing Youth Mental Health Through Physical Activity

18 May 2026 • 12:30 - 3:30 PM • Conference Room 9

Bold Ideas for Brighter Futures 2026, Cape Town, South Africa



Convened by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University

in collaboration with SeriousFun Children's Network, USA & RISHI Foundation, India

12:30 PM WELCOME

Anita Shet, Workshop Chair
Johns Hopkins University

12:40 PM THE SCIENCE

Emerging evidence on physical activity & adolescent mental health

Recreational Physical Activity and Children With Chronic Conditions

Mary Silvia & Ann Gillard
SeriousFun Children's Network

Building Resilience With Physical Activity Among Youth With HIV

Siddha Sannigrahi
Johns Hopkins University

Physical Activity in School-Based Settings

Birger Forsberg
Karolinska Institutet

Pathways of Effect: Neurobiological, Psychosocial & Social Mechanisms

Anita Shet
Johns Hopkins University

Q & A | Break

1:25 PM PROGRAMS IN PRACTICE

Case studies - programmatic models, youth perspectives & lived experience

Running for Resilience: The Positive Running Program
India

Babu Seenappa, Lakshmikanth Reddy & Jeevitha Pushparaj
RISHI Foundation

Community-Based Mental Health Support Through Mountain Biking
South Africa

Megan Pool, Brandon Rubusha & Jaco van der Linde
Pedal for Good

Camp-Based Approaches to Socio-Cultural Accessibility
Malawi & Uganda

Resty Babirye Okello & Symon Mtambo
Baylor Children's Foundation

Camping for Children With Serious Health and Life Challenges
South Africa

Lize van Vuuren
Camp Footprints, Just Footprints Foundation

Physical Activity Promotion Among Adolescents
Sweden

Emilia Lindquist
Karolinska Institutet

2:55 PM ACTION TOOLKIT

The integration toolkit: plug-and-play approach guided activity





STEP 1 — IDENTIFY CONTEXT

Reflecting on your current service environment, describe your target population and the types of physical activities that would resonate in your setting.	
Who do you work with? (e.g., adolescents with chronic illness, socially disadvantaged youth)	
Current setting / program (e.g. community health clinic)	
Country / region	
Which global case study resonated most with you, and why?	
Think about what sports or movement forms are already culturally familiar and accessible in your community - these will be your best "entry points."	

STEP 2 — DESIGN INTERVENTION

Sketch the shape of your intervention. What will young people actually do, and how will they lead it?
Activity type (e.g., structured running, team sport, dance, outdoor camps)
Format (e.g., weekly group sessions, weekend camps, school-based program)
How will youth with lived experience co-design or lead this intervention?

STEP 3 — MAP YOUR FEASIBILITY

Use the four integration pillars to assess what's already in place and what barriers you'll need to address.		
Pillar	Facilitators	Barriers
People → Who will run it and support it?		
Resources → What do we need to make it happen?		
Community Fit → Will young people actually engage with it?		
Future Growth → Can this last and reach more youth?		

