

Event Brief

Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund Community, Introductory Webinar

February 11, 2020

Purpose

This meeting was the first opportunity for projects funded by the Government of Canada's Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund (MHP-IF) to come together. The primary purpose was for projects to meet each other, and to set an early precedent for active, constructive, and supportive engagement within the MHP-IF community. A secondary purpose was to provide some general updates related to upcoming events and funding.

Notes from project introductions are summarized in this event brief, and prepared by the Knowledge Development and Exchange (KDE) Hub.

Participants

The webinar was co-hosted by the MHP-IF team, and the Knowledge Development and Exchange Hub (KDE Hub) teams, and included more than 40 participants from:

- MHP-IF funded Projects (at least one representative from 18 of the funded projects)
- MHP-IF Team
- KDE Hub Team

Meeting structure

- Participants were provided with brief project descriptions (English and French) prior to the call
- The 2 hour webinar started with an initial welcome provided by the MHP-IF team, followed by some updates and a Q&A opportunity (slides available from the MHP-IF team upon request)
- Project representatives were given three minutes to introduce and share three things about their project that they thought it was important for others to know
- As each project presented, participants were encouraged to add comments into the chat function with any questions or observations
- The meeting ended with some early reflections on learning with and from each other as an MHP-IF community, facilitated by the KDE Hub team
- Project introductions were recorded so that the recording could be posted to the KDE Hub website for reference and to share with any team members unable to be on the call

What did we learn?

This introductory meeting gave an opportunity to understand and celebrate the commonalities between projects as well as the uniqueness of each project. While introductions were brief, they provided some early insights into the nature and scope of projects who are part of the MHP-IF community and possible points of connection between projects.

See Appendix A for a table that includes the brief descriptions of each project along with additional highlights shared on the call.

The MHP-IF model was underscored throughout the meeting. It provides an exciting opportunity to create and share new knowledge to understand how to do mental health promotion on the ground. The diversity of project settings and environments will help to understand what works for whom and in what contexts.

Questions and observations shared during the project presentations (in the chat) identified an interest in learning more about:

- The means of engaging youth and different groups of youth
- How projects are networked with other initiatives and communities
- How projects are navigating research and evaluation in different settings
- The use of evaluation to develop and refine an intervention
- Differences in delivery and outcomes in different settings
- Specific program components (e.g., land-based teaching activities)
- How there might be opportunities for learnings across projects with regards to: defining culture, strength-based/empowering approaches, addressing child-caregiver relationships, and intersectionality and anti-oppression

How will learnings from this event be used?

- Insights from the process of the webinar as well as the content will help to shape this new community and its supports in ways that are practical and helpful
- An awareness of other projects will facilitate greater networking at future virtual and in-person events



Organization and Project Title	Description	Highlighted During the Introductory Webinar
<p><u>University of British Columbia (UBC) School of Nursing</u></p> <p>Promoting adolescent mental health through policy: Refining and testing a multi-level intervention to promote individual and population mental health through youth-engaged policymaking</p>	<p>This youth engagement and capacity building intervention is comprised of a series of Collaborative Policymaking Workshops and emerging activities designed to promote skills-building and collective action for youth mental health. Youth (aged 13-24) who experience intersecting health and social inequities (youth who have experience with mental health services, live in poverty, are in the care of the child welfare system, or who are Indigenous, newcomer/immigrants, and/or LGBTQ2+) will be engaged as collaborators in capacity building and policymaking activities. Youth will gain mental health knowledge and skills, and will be enabled to identify factors in their communities that impact youth mental health, develop strategies and action plans, and engage stakeholders in collaborative policymaking processes to promote youth mental health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project grew out of previous work that engaged children and youth to build experiential and context rich knowledge to inform public health policy regarding mental health; An environmental scan on policy-related engagement for youth confirmed there is a gap in policy-training programs and there is no testable framework for youth engagement in policy • A prototype curriculum has been developed with youth aged 17-28 and it will be tested in three community sites in BC and AB; the curriculum will be delivered by youth and adult facilitators in partnership; a train-the-trainer model will equip facilitators in relationship building, connectedness, identifying community partners as well as social and emotional learning • The evaluation will assess knowledge gains, increases in connectedness and resilience as well as policy impact
<p><u>Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario</u></p> <p>Professionnels en petite enfance, agents prometteurs dans la promotion de la santé mentale des enfants</p> <p>Professionals in Early Childhood, promoting agents (innovators) in child mental health promotion</p>	<p>This project examines the effect of promising strategies and joint effort between early years professionals and the parents of children aged 0 to 12, that aims to diminish the presence of risk factors and to highlight the positive effect of known protective factors for the development of healthy children. The objective of the project is to initiate a collective reflection of professionals in early years and to invite them as contributors and active participants in the establishment of favourable conditions for well-being and to the overall development of children. The proposed intervention targets the three main spheres of influence in the healthy development of children: home, day-care (preschool and extracurricular), and young families living in three francophone communities in Ontario: Hawkesbury, Kapuskasing, and Milton.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We hope to build the capacity of early childhood professionals working in French in a minority environment, particularly in mental health in French • We hope to offer to parents of children who frequent early childhood services in French the development of healthy living habits, including pride/confidence in transmitting francophone language and culture to their children in a minority context • We hope to create regional, francophone spaces for discussion and reflection that focus on early childhood mental health promotion
<p><u>Simon Fraser University</u></p> <p>Supporting Kinship & Foster Parents Promotes Resilience and Wellbeing in Teens in Care: An Attachment and Trauma Informed Intervention</p>	<p>This project will provide training to community-based practitioners to deliver a trauma informed and attachment focused group-based intervention to foster parents in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec. The project will support caregivers in developing sensitive and strength-focused caregiving skills in the context of adolescent trauma to promote a sense of security within relationships and support adolescents' resilience. Parents will be guided in groups through 10 training sessions, engaging with new learning material, role plays, and reflection exercises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated by the fact that adolescent mental health is often overlooked even though adult psychiatric disorders often emerge before age 25; Foster children experience high-levels of adversity, often at a young age, and are susceptible to mental health issues • Foster parent-child relationships are the focus as research has found that the quality of this relationship can predict improved mental health, academic performance and general health in adulthood • The project will evaluate a proven curriculum that has now been adapted for foster parents; the 'Connect' curriculum has been developed and evaluated over two decades and the hope is that the adapted program will provide similar benefits

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<p><u>FOXY</u></p> <p>FOXY Mental Health Intervention: Building Resiliency, Coping Skills, and Strengthening Mental Health among Youth in the Northwest Territories through the Arts</p>	<p>This intervention will use the arts to focus on cultural identity and developing coping skills, social and emotional skills, and prosocial behaviours, while processing trauma. The project will target youth (aged 13-17), specifically young Northern and Indigenous women, and will include trans women and gender non-binary youth. The intervention is rooted in consensus building, and community-based participatory action research models. A culturally safe, Northern-focused, mental health promotion intervention will be developed based on evidence, best practices, and trauma-informed health promotion and social ecological theory. Youth, Northern-based researchers, clinicians, community members, and Elders will participate in all aspects of the development of the intervention. Intervention activities will take place at two sites in the Northwest Territories.</p>	<p>This project was not represented on the introductory webinar.</p>
<p><u>Central Toronto Youth Services</u></p> <p>Families in TRANSition (FIT)</p>	<p>This project is designed to improve the mental health of transgender, non-binary and gender questioning (trans) youth (aged 13-24), by strengthening relationships with their caregivers/parents. The intervention involves 12-week-long support groups that will run simultaneously for families. A parent group is aimed at increasing parent understanding of trans identity and healthcare, the mental health impacts of transphobia and trans-misogyny, rejecting parenting practices, and micro-aggressions such as mis-gendering, as well as behavioral strategies to promote secure attachment during the period of early transition. A youth group aims to improve trans youth mental health by increasing peer and parental support, providing coping skills to mitigate gender discrimination and increasing knowledge and agency regarding social, legal and medical transitioning options. Intervention activities will take place at two locations in Toronto, Ontario.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride and Prejudice is a youth focused mental health program that has been around since the 1980s; parental support is a protective factor so turning to focus on parents • Work is being done to write a facilitation manual and workbooks; workbooks may be effective in smaller communities where there may not be enough participants for group sessions • Using a participatory action research model to make sure that it is trans people themselves who are leading the research
<p><u>Strongest Families Institute / L'Institut des Familles Solides</u></p> <p>Parents Empowering Kids - Keeping It Simple (PEK-KIS): an innovative, stepped-care e-approach to prevent behaviour challenges and promote positive parenting in early childhood</p>	<p>This project will revise and expand a parenting program, Parents Empowering Kids, to include a prevention and promotion focus based on a stepped-care approach. The project will use innovative technology and distance delivery to provide access across Newfoundland and Labrador to positive parenting skills and to help parents and caregivers build pre-schoolers' social and emotional strengths.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongest Families Institute is designed to remove barriers to care and provide programming that focuses on improving behaviours and relationships • They target mild to moderate behaviours including those with diagnoses (e.g., Oppositional Defiance, Attention Deficit) as well as those without formal diagnoses • Promoting prevention and early intervention by modifying a current program to provide broader access; offering the program as part of pre-school check-ups (3-6 year olds) regardless of whether there are behavioural concerns and regardless of the severity of concerns

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<p><u>RésoSanté Colombie-Britannique</u></p> <p>La santé mentale, on s’en parle! Accompagnement des jeunes immigrants francophones en Colombie-Britannique et en Alberta vers des solutions innovantes pour une bonne santé mentale</p>	<p>This project aims to equip young immigrants aged 13 to 22 who frequent francophone schools and other education establishments in British Columbia and Alberta to be able to maintain positive mental health. It also aims to equip those who work in the francophone school settings and who support and guide the integration of youth and their families in their new environment. For this purpose, the Workers in Establishing Immigrant Families in Schools of the Francophone School Board will contribute to mobilizing youth and their family, as well as those who work in schools, to facilitate interviews and identify youth who will test the new resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An app will be used so that youth can monitor their own mental health on a daily basis; the app provides evidence-based resources and it is being adapted for use with young immigrants • The app will be tested with francophone youth in BC and AB in partnership with schools; the pilot phase will begin in the next school year • This project will evaluate outcomes and consider adaptability and scale-up for the rest of Canada
<p><u>Community Food Centres Canada / Centres communautaires d’alimentation du Canada</u></p> <p>Mind Your Food</p>	<p>The Mind Your Food project will co-develop, implement, test, and evaluate a community-based program that builds protective factors for mental health in youth (aged 13-19) experiencing food insecurity—including Indigenous, newcomer, and low-income communities. The program aims to achieve this through a cooking, nutrition, and food focused curriculum that emphasizes healthy relationships with oneself, with others, and with the larger community. Interventions will take place in New Brunswick, Manitoba and Ontario.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year one will focus on the development of a food-focused program which will explore protective mental health factors such as nutrition, cultural identity and community connection • There will be an emphasis on collaborative development with youth and to-date they have held focus groups with 42 youth and community stakeholders; preference is for the program to be very experiential with both land-based activities and kitchen skills • Adaptability will be important considering the variety of contexts the program will be delivered in so they will be prioritizing choice in the development of the curriculum
<p><u>Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre</u></p> <p>Inuusirvik Community Wellness Hub – Pilot of a holistic, community-centred wellness program model for Inuit families in Nunavut</p>	<p>This project will develop a Nunavut-led wellness hub that seeks to address some of the most pressing determinants of health for the territory of Nunavut through a trauma-informed approach, rooted in holistic Inuit wellness philosophy. The hub will coordinate existing programs into an integrated community-led mental health and wellness service delivery model, which will include land-based programs, literacy programs, early childhood education programs, Inuit counselling services, suicide prevention, and maternal-child health programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness hubs are a tried and true place for rural and remote communities to provide gathering places but there are currently none in Nunavut; this will thus be an innovative approach for the territory and the hope is that the model will be replicated across the Arctic • This wellness hub will take a holistic approach based on Inuit pathways to well-being and Inuit self-determination • The hope is to increase access to a variety of early childhood programming and services; this will involve partnering with those who lead community-based health and wellness agencies in Nunavut

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<p><u>University of Toronto – The Laboratory for Social-Emotional Development and Intervention</u></p> <p>Nurturing Child Development and Well Being in Refugee Children and Families: A Developmental Approach to Mental Health Promotion</p>	<p>This project aims to support healthy child development and developmentally sensitive services for refugee children and families, specifically from Syrian and Yazidi refugee communities in Ontario. The project will leverage strength in refugee children and caregivers, implementing a suite of child-, family-, school- and community-based intervention strategies. The project will also promote a streamlined strategy for implementing mental health service delivery across different systems supported through sustainable partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project will be informed by a theory of social-emotional development which is based on over 10 years of developmental and clinical research at their lab • Using a strength-based approach to build a mental health promotion framework sensitive to the developmental needs of children; a tailored approach that will take into account specific mental health needs associated with trauma • Partners will include a network of practice and policy leaders to integrate work into policy and social service delivery
<p><u>University of Western Ontario</u></p> <p>Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG): A school-based intervention to promote wellbeing</p>	<p>STRONG is a resiliency intervention for refugee and newcomer youth in Ontario. This 10-session school-based approach, based on cognitive behavioural therapy, aims to strengthen newcomer groups' transition resilience, promote individual strengths and skills to make positive choices, and provide a positive sense of self and belonging. In addition to group sessions, clinicians facilitate an individual session with each participant to help them process their journey narrative. The project will also include school-wide and peer components, and a coaching and consultation process for clinicians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are experiencing the impact of current job action in the Ontario school system and have been impressed by the commitment of clinicians to continue to maintain the interventions • School-based research is getting harder and harder considering the complexity to get ethics approval and work through consent issues • Seeing a growing hunger for bringing together equity issues and mental health interventions
<p><u>Mount Saint Vincent University</u></p> <p>Engaging families in positive solutions for social-emotional learning during early childhood</p>	<p>This is a parent training and engagement program designed to complement an existing social and emotional learning program (called the Pyramid Model) being delivered in early childhood centres in Nova Scotia. The program will provide an opportunity for families of young children to strengthen parenting skills in social and emotional learning, healthy relationships, and pro-social behaviour. Parenting skills will be addressed throughout the program, as the goal is to provide parents with skills supported by evidence-based practices for social and emotional learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They chose this project to close the gap in knowledge between childcare providers and parents with regards to understanding of social and emotional learning; it is hoped that the program will promote continuous support across environments (child care and home) with children getting consistent messaging in both places • Based on the <i>Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children</i> already being implemented in child-care centres in Nova Scotia; extending to include a complementary parenting program on social and emotional learning • Meeting families where they are at by providing easy access to the program in their daycare centres; a developmental evaluation will seek feedback on the sessions for adapting and improving further implementation

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<p><u>The Pas Family Resource Centre Inc.</u> The Cedar Path</p>	<p>This project will establish and implement a youth-focused community initiative that regularly engages youth (aged 13-19) in healthy lifestyle activities in the Pas, Manitoba. The intervention will offer opportunities for youth to engage in pro-social activities, provide positive mentorship, develop healthy attachments to their communities, and learn to establish and make progress toward self-identified and personal goals. Activities will be developed through engagement and collaboration with youth participants and the community, and will include individual and group sessions, such as workshops, and land-based learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cedar Path was chosen as the name for this project because cedar is a medicine for turning negative energy to positive energy • It is a youth-focused and youth-led project and preliminary focus groups have already been completed • Youth have identified that they need land-based teachings on: respect for and use of animals, the importance of community and family in traditional life, land-use (preparing land, gardening, harvesting), and the history of Indigenous people in Canada (e.g., meeting with Elders with residential school experience)
<p><u>Hospital for Sick Children (Infant Mental Health Promotion)</u> Nurturing the Seed: The Journey to Infant/Early Mental Health & Wellness</p>	<p>This is a pilot program that will evaluate Nurturing the Seed, a strength-based health intervention model designed for Indigenous children (birth to five) that focuses on the promotion of infant and early mental health. The project aims to strengthen knowledge and skills among front line practitioners about infant and early mental health; create a model for coaching and mentoring; increase the capacity of staff to be sensitive to diverse Indigenous cultural values and worldviews in service delivery; improve developmental outcomes of Indigenous children; evaluate the influence of Nurturing the Seed by a wide range of practitioners; and increase parent, practitioner and policymaker understanding of the importance of relationships for mental health during infancy and early childhood. Interventions will take place in Ontario, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project is using a strength-based approach which leverages primary care relationships • They are working with three Indigenous communities; the communities have designed the evaluation so the project looks a bit different across the communities while still having common elements • The program includes training staff to identify mental health concerns from birth; trying to immediately respond to concerns and promote early intervention; the program works with families and staff at the same time and will be evaluating if this leads to better outcomes

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<p><u>Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative</u></p> <p>Celebrating Culture, Celebrating Life: an empowerment approach to building resiliency amongst immigrant and refugee youth in Edmonton, Alberta</p>	<p>This project will establish and test a youth-oriented brokering intervention. The project will target cultural minority youth (aged 13-19) in Eritrean, Oromo and Syrian communities in Edmonton. Participants will be engaged as cultural brokers, to address risk and build protective factors and reduce health inequities by overcoming and reducing barriers at the individual, family, community, systemic and structural levels. The project aims to establish a profile of the unique risk and protective factors for newcomer youth; and establish a conceptual framework to demonstrate the relationship between the risk and protective factors and the underlying causes, including social determinants and structural violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHBC was created in 1991 in Edmonton – community leaders created this community co-operative to assist those not well served by the health system; they employ ‘cultural brokering’ defined as an act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purposes of reducing conflict or producing change; through the practice of cultural brokering they give families a cultural guide, provide mediation, balance power between families and community systems and serve as catalysts for change • A youth program has been provided for 13 years in 16 different ethno-cultural communities; they have learned that first generation and second generation immigrant youth are called on to interact and adapt in different ways than their parents and other youth therefore they need a tailored support system • Through this project they hope to understand in greater detail the brokering role as it pertains to youth and they hope to share those learnings
<p><u>Newcomers Employment & Education Development Services (N.E.E.D.S.) Inc.</u></p> <p>Enhance Wellness of Refugee Children, Youth and Families</p>	<p>The project aims to address multiple factors that influence the overall mental health of refugee children, youth and families including risk and protective factors and the social determinants of health. The primary audience for this project will be Syrian refugee children and youth (aged 6-21) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Interventions will be delivered for children and youth, their parents and guardians, and service providers and educational staff. Psychosocial and educational support will be provided to children and youth, including through psychosocial groups and one-on-one interventions, and the expansion of a homework program that provides refugee youth with a safe space to learn, grow and develop academic abilities. Families will also be supported through Circle of Security Parenting groups. At the community level, training will be delivered to service providers and educational professionals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will create a trauma-informed curriculum for children and youth delivered through psycho-social groups that focus on increasing protective factors and developing pro-social behaviours to increase integration, coping, and regulation strategies as well as overall wellness • Circle of security groups for parents and guardians so that they can be a resource to their children; increase their capacity through an evidence-based parenting program model; hold parenting groups helps parents also stay connected to the agency • At the community-level facilitate professional development opportunities to help service providers and educational professionals understand the impact of trauma on children and youth and learn the principles of trauma-informed care

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<p><u>Matsqui-Abbotsford Impact Society</u></p> <p>Nation of Wellness (NoW)</p>	<p>This youth-led, adult supported initiative aims to facilitate youth (aged 14-28) to inspire, guide and support their communities to build a culture where young people with experience of marginalization—and their concerns and passions—are seen, heard, included, and celebrated. A Stewardship Group comprised of young people will serve as the primary governance body for the initiative, and will co-develop and adapt activities for various contexts. Components of the initiative will be designed to evaluate, determine and articulate essential characteristics, factors and activities that establish resiliency, and that will allow young people to demonstrate their capabilities, and inspire commitment to a strength-based lens. Activities will include conferences developed by youth, community dialogue events, community cohesion and connection programs, advocacy efforts, and peer navigation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a strong emphasis in this project on it being youth-led and the youth will shape it depending on their interests and passions; involved youth meet once a week • Partnering with the local school board and actively engaged with them on emerging issues • Working with an Indigenous community as well in Seabird and have established a youth council there
<p><u>The Students Commission of Canada</u></p> <p>Authentic Social Identity and Mental Health</p>	<p>This intervention is peer-led and designed to empower youth to make changes in their daily lives to enhance positive social identity, and to influence and create system change in the social spaces that they inhabit, both online and off-line. This will include workshops and program enhancements that can be incorporated into existing programs delivered by peer leaders in youth organizations, coaching networks, schools and mental health agencies to help the formation of healthy social identities. A core curriculum of content and processes will be developed that can be adapted and implemented by peer leaders for the settings in which they interact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Commission of Canada is a national organization to help authentic youth voices and allow them to be heard; while national in scope still relatively small and often work in partnership • Social identity formation and mental health are tightly linked and includes both on-line and off-line aspects; <i>Influence in Action</i> is a program model already developed; this intervention is peer-driven and -designed and will train youth to be peer influencers • There are six partner-led sites across five provinces and hoping to develop further partnerships in new spaces (e.g., sports teams and athletic spaces); Using their Sharing the Story program evaluation and research platform to gather data and compare data with other projects using this model
<p><u>Community-Based Research Centre Society</u></p> <p>Maximize: Leveraging existing GBQ2S+ youth and young adult sexual health networks and interventions to address mental health and wellbeing</p>	<p>This project will adapt the existing Totally Outright community health leadership program designed to respond to gaps in sexual health among GBQ2S+ youth and young adults (aged 18-24). The adaptation will include a mental health focus and will be tested through program delivery at three sites in Edmonton, AB; Vancouver, BC; and Halifax, NS. Participating youth will build connections with peers, community leaders and service providers; improve their health literacy through the delivery of a mental health promotion curriculum; and develop practical skills to promote mental health in their communities. A multi-sectoral community health intervention team composed of a range of professionals will be established to provide guidance, support and access to professional networks for youth participants during intervention development and implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure existing program, <i>Totally Outright</i>, which has focused on sexual health and community building; restructuring with a mental health lens with priority on protective factors including social inclusion, cultural identify as well as social and emotional coping skills • Revamping content by working collaboratively with partner organizations – helping to shape the curriculum together; each group will have local context but from a base understanding informed by research and using a strength-based approach • ‘No one understands our health better than ourselves’ and as such lived-experience is important so they will be looking to empower the youth themselves to develop projects in ways that are most helpful to them