

Event Brief

Co-designing the 1st Annual Symposium, Webinar

March 13, 2020

Purpose

This session was a co-design experience with MHP-IF projects, focusing on idea generation for the 1st annual symposium. The annual symposium will be a two-day in-person event attended by MHP-IF projects, the KDE Hub team, PHAC MHP-IF team members as well as invited guests and speakers.

Participants

The webinar was hosted by the KDE Hub, with participants from the MHP-IF funded projects. The session was facilitated by Ryan Voisin from Overlap Associates, specialist in human-centred design.

Meeting structure

- Participants were provided with a brief backgrounder prior to the event which outlined the parameters and priorities for the annual symposium as well as the focus for the webinar
- The focus of the one-hour webinar was on these three questions:
 1. Consider the draft annual symposium objectives (provided). Which objectives should receive the most emphasis? Are there any gaps in this set of objectives?
 2. What skills and knowledge would you like to build or refine at the symposium?
 3. Are there session styles that you find particularly effective? What have you seen done successfully at other conferences/symposiums (including types of breaks, networking and social opportunities, etc.)?
- Menti, an interactive presentation software, was used for real time feedback and visualization of responses
- In addition to responding to the Menti questions, open discussion and use of the chat function was encouraged
- The webinar was recorded so that the recording could be posted to the KDE Hub website for reference and to share with any projects or team members unable to be on the call

What did we learn?

Participants were asked to rank the importance of draft objectives. These objectives were strongly supported in the following order:

1. Create supportive connections within the MHP-IF community
2. Increase knowledge and build skills in selective areas that are relevant to the needs of projects and best done in person
3. Consider meaningful and realistic knowledge development priorities within and across MHP-IF projects
4. Inspire a shared vision for how the MHP-IF can contribute to child and youth mental health promotion in Canada

Another objective – begin to construct the MHP-IF projects’ story so far – received the lowest ranking. During discussion it surfaced that there is interest in *storytelling* as part of skill development, but it is too early to focus on the story itself during the first symposium. There were no suggestions for additional objectives and the group was supportive of the top four objectives guiding symposium planning.

Participant named skills and knowledge to develop and refine at the symposium including:

- Evaluation skills and tools (including working together to create a new tool or method that can be used across projects)
- Participatory program design and evaluation
- Planning for scaling up projects
- Storytelling tools and methods
- Project management skills
- Identifying key stakeholders and maintaining intersectoral collaborations
- Strategies to influence (and measure the influence) of projects on policy and practice
- Using social media and other creative strategies for knowledge translation; knowledge mobilization tools; KDE for influencing media
- Working collaboratively with families and outreach strategies for vulnerable families; strategies to keep harder-to-reach participants engaged (participant retention)
- Learning from each other’s project challenges and solutions

Ideas for session/symposium formats included:

- Round table discussions (small enough so all have opportunity to speak, moderated, grouped by interest, world café method)
- Panel discussions
- Sessions with focused questions/objectives; the appreciative inquiry approach; allowing for anonymous contributions (e.g., sticky notes), then opening discussion
- Gallery walks
- Youth involvement (in planning, participation and presenting)
- Mapping activities (e.g., large map allowing projects to identify in their location successes, challenges, and/or resources)
- Time for groups to introduce their projects face-to-face
- Active breaks

How will learnings from this event be used?

- Insights from the webinar will directly inform the planning of the annual symposium
- Interest was expressed in further contributions to symposium planning; opportunities will be offered to MHP-IF projects for feedback on a draft agenda and an invitation will be made for contributions to the planning of specific sessions

