

Event Brief

Webinar: MH COVID Project Community Knowledge Exchange Session

December 13, 2023

A [recording](#) and [slide deck](#) is available

Purpose

The purpose of this knowledge exchange event was twofold. First, it was an opportunity for the KDE Hub to share back preliminary findings from two KDE Hub-led studies that engaged members of projects funded through the *Supporting the Mental Health of those Most Affected by COVID-19 (MH COVID)*, the *Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund (MHP-IF)* and the *Mental Health in the Early Years (MHITEY)* initiatives. Second, it invited participants to take part in discussions and data collection that explored project funding for mental health promotion and illness prevention, a common high priority finding across both studies.

Participants

The knowledge exchange event was attended by 32 MH COVID project members, alongside 10 members of the KDE Hub team.

Meeting structure

The webinar was opened by Scientific Co-Director Dr. Alice Schmidt Hanbidge. This was followed by presentations by Dr. Katie Cook, Research and Evaluation Manager and Dr. Katie Dowling, Postdoctoral Fellow. Following the presentations, interactive activities (brainstorming and focus group style discussions) were conducted to give participants the opportunity to provide insights, perspectives, and feedback in relation to the theme of funding for mental health promotion and illness prevention initiatives. The webinar was closed by Scientific Co-Director Colleen McMillan.

What did we learn?

Hub Concept Mapping Study, Dr. Katie Cook

This three-phased study aims to identify levers that are necessary for moving the field of mental health promotion forward. Phase 1 looked at what actions and/or resources are needed to create and sustain momentum in the field of mental health in Canada. In Phase 2, participants sorted and rated these statements based on perceived importance and relevance. Phase 3 consisted of focus groups where preliminary findings were shared, and cluster (theme) labels were refined. Current cluster labels are 1)

sustainable and flexible funding, 2) research and evaluation for action, 3) engaged partnerships across sectors, 4) meaningful connection and communication, 5) frameworks and supports for equity in mental health promotion, and 6) accessible community-based, culturally affirming approaches. A pattern match was then discussed looking at the importance and relevancy of the connection between themes. The findings from this study will help to inform the future work of the KDE Hub in building momentum for mental health promotion.

Hub Implementation Study, Dr. Katie Dowling

A survey was used to collect data on implementation and evaluation needs of projects funded through three federal streams mentioned above (MH COVID, MHP-IF and MHTEY) . One of the key questions from this survey explored implementation challenges experienced by projects. The findings from this research question informed the focus of Katie's presentation. Using thematic analysis, eight key implementation challenge themes were identified: 1) culture and context, 2) engagement, 3) evaluation, 4) funding, 5) staffing, 6) planning, 7) partnership, and 8) adapting. An infographic with an embedded summary report summarizing these eight themes can be found [here](#). Moving forward, these findings will help to inform the development of tailored Hub strategies, tools, and resources that support mental health promotion and illness prevention project implementation.

Interactive Activities

After providing consent, participants were asked to reflect on, and discuss funding strategies and mechanisms that would better support mental health promotion and mental illness prevention initiatives. Participants contributed their input via Google Jamboard and small group discussions in breakout rooms. These activities were guided by the following research questions:

1. How does funding relate to other key concepts and mechanisms for mental health promotion/illness prevention?
2. What is unique about the field of mental health promotion/illness prevention for diverse communities that has implications for funding?
3. Thinking about the funding needs of your project, what do you think future funders should keep in mind?
4. In what ways can funding structures foster sustainability and longevity of mental health promotion/illness prevention work?

What's Next?

The KDE Hub intends on analyzing this data and sharing the findings with projects in the coming months. Research study findings will also be accessible on the KDE Hub website. Findings will also be communicated with system-level actors to raise awareness about the needs of mental health promotion and mental illness prevention projects, including how to optimize funding programs for upstream mental health initiatives.

