2019 Online KT Conference: Innovative KT Strategies That Work

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The Power of Engagement: Community-Based Organizations and Knowledge Mobilization

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The power of engagement: community-based organizations and knowledge mobilization

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Wisdom2Action – Knowledge Mobilization Network

• Founded by the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) KMb Program, with funding of $2.8 million CDN over 7 years (Jan. 2011–Jan. 2019)

• Mandate to support the mental health and well-being of children and youth in challenging contexts

• Our mission: “Building a stronger, more effective and collaborative youth serving sector to respond to Canada’s most vulnerable young people”

• Network of over 250 members from every province and territory; also includes dozens of international members

• Cross sectoral & interdisciplinary – researchers, community-based service providers, educators, health care professionals, and youth
W2A KMb approach

• Guided by the PARiHS model:
  • Gather – Contextualize - Facilitate the uptake of best and promising practices
• Value the research **AND** practice evidence
• Strengthen the evidence base of practice through evaluation, evidence and engagement
• Participatory, youth-engaged
• Principles – anti-oppression, equity, positive youth development
Barriers and facilitators to KMb in community-based sector

• Barriers
  • Staff time and resources
  • Limited funding
  • Staff capacity to access and understand evidence
  • EBPs not considered relevant
  • Lack of learning networks

• Facilitators
  • Passion and dedication to doing better
  • Deep understanding of youth
Gathering the evidence
Creating Supportive Environments for Children and Youth with Complex Needs

[Website link]

Prepared by: Helen Mokha
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Project Manager: Emily Zieck
KMb innovation microgrants

• Project team included staff, academic researchers, and youth
• Criteria reflected W2A principles, e.g., youth engagement
• Small grants to support projects to help organizations share a promising practice or to support KMb from research
• Additional honorarium provided to engage graduate student in evaluation
Contextualize the knowledge
W2A Embrace Life – gathering the knowledge

- Participatory planning team
  - Youth, service providers, health care professionals, government officials, researchers
- Literature Review with 50+ programs identified
W2A Embrace Life – context

• Diverse group
  • High school, undergraduate and graduate students
  • Service providers
  • Lived experience
  • Language and culture

• Connected online prior to the event to start capacity building & design the event

• Youth planning day

• Peer support model
W2A Embrace Life - facilitation

• Synthesis and project planning on site at the event
• Youth engagement prototype for rural and remote First Nations communities
• Collaboration and funding
W2A events evaluation

• Immediate post event
  • New knowledge, new connections
  • Youth engagement
  • Facilitation methods

• 6- and 12- month evaluations
  • Service partnership and change
  • Adoption of new frameworks
  • Academic partnerships
Facilitate the uptake of best and promising practices
KMb and evaluation mentoring program

- Build on KMb innovation fund
- Help Network members overcome common barriers
- Regional Hub structure
- KMb and evaluation tool kit
- Application process
- Annual workplans, 100 hours of mentoring
Mentoring program evaluation

• Importance of relationships, even at the organizational level
• Understanding context
• Responsive and adaptive work planning
• Mentoring not managing
• Staying connected
Youth engagement evaluation

• “Engagement that works best is one where everyone – including adults and professionals – feel like they have gained from the experience.”
  — Youth Advisory Council member

• Chance to move beyond service by service advocacy

• Individually and collectively, youth advisors position themselves as:
  • As collaborators and partners (i.e., part of the sector)
  • In transition, as emerging professionals (i.e., part of the sector)
  • As youth themselves, with histories of diverse, challenging contexts and lived experience (i.e., beneficiaries of a strong youth-serving sector)

• Benefits are mutual

• Need to understand impact more, especially at sector level
Theory of Change

• Stronger youth advisors results in a stronger youth-serving sector that improves youth wellbeing.
Lessons learned

• Shifts in roles of knowledge producers and knowledge users
• KMb approach that accounts for unique internal and external barriers
• Principles matter
• Plan for and fund evaluation
Next steps for W2A

• Incorporated as a social enterprise in February 2018

• Providing services in engagement, evaluation and evidence (research and knowledge mobilization)

• Committed to community impact

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• Wisdom2Action.org
Disclaimer

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Don’t forget to fill out the evaluation form!
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