

COVID-19 Report

An update on Foundry's response to the pandemic in 2020

Report Two | March 16th—December 31st 2020

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge, with much gratitude, that our work takes place on land steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people today. We recognize and respect Indigenous People as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

Thank you to those who have supported Foundry, and to the following supporters of Foundry's provincial virtual services: the Province of British Columbia, Y.P. Heung Foundation, St. Paul's Foundation and Canucks for Kids Fund. Thank you also to RBC Foundation for funding our virtual and in-person peer support programs, and to FRAYME for their Virtual Innovations in Care grant in support of the evaluation of Foundry's virtual services. Our thanks also goes to the Morris Foundation for supporting pro-social, non-clinical wellness activities offered in-person at all Foundry centres.

We also wish to acknowledge the entire Foundry network for your ongoing leadership, creativity and inspiring dedication, ensuring ongoing access to services and continuity in care despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

For additional information, please visit foundrybc.ca

Context

Foundry, our Foundry Network and all our partners, continue to challenge and transform how young people and their caregivers access health and wellness services. We are constantly adapting to keep up with the rapidly changing lifecare needs of young people across British Columbia—traits that are now helping us navigate an unprecedented public health crisis.

COVID-19 arrived at a time when young people were already facing high mental health needs. A [recent report](#) by BC's Office of the Representative for Children and Youth and Simon Fraser University confirms that the pandemic has led to dramatic increases in rates of anxiety, posttraumatic stress, depression and behavioural challenges compared to rates typically found in the general population of young people.¹ In the third national poll by [Mental Health Research Canada](#) the number of people indicating a high degree of anxiety following the outbreak of COVID-19 increased from 5% to 20%, and reports of depression doubled across Canada, yet fewer Canadians are currently accessing supports. These reports of anxiety and depression were highest among young Canadians.²

The emergency measures implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are directly affecting the mental, physical, emotional, economic and social needs of young people, their caregivers, as well as our staff. But Foundry is constantly evolving and growing to ensure that the wellbeing and healthy development of young people is prioritized, and that Foundry centres and virtual services can continue supporting youth and their caregivers in living a good life.

As the COVID-19 situation continued evolving throughout 2020, so too had Foundry's response. Our initial [COVID-19 Response Report](#) highlighted how we forged an innovative pathway through the first 16 weeks of the pandemic. This second report provides an overview of the remainder of 2020 as Foundry continued to implement creative solutions, expand our learning and provide urgently needed health and wellness resources, services and supports—online and through integrated service centres in communities across BC.

Foundry offers integrated mental health and substance use services, physical and sexual health care, youth and family peer support, and a variety of social services and resources - online and through centres in eleven BC communities (with another eight centres in development) for youth ages 12-24 and their caregivers. [Foundrybc.ca](#) and [virtual services](#) further broaden Foundry's reach.

References:

1. Waddell C, Schwartz C, Barican J, Yung D, Gray-Grant D. *COVID-19 and the Impact on Children's Mental Health*. Vancouver, BC: Children's Health Policy Centre, Simon Fraser University, 2020.
2. mhrcc.ca/national-data-on-covid

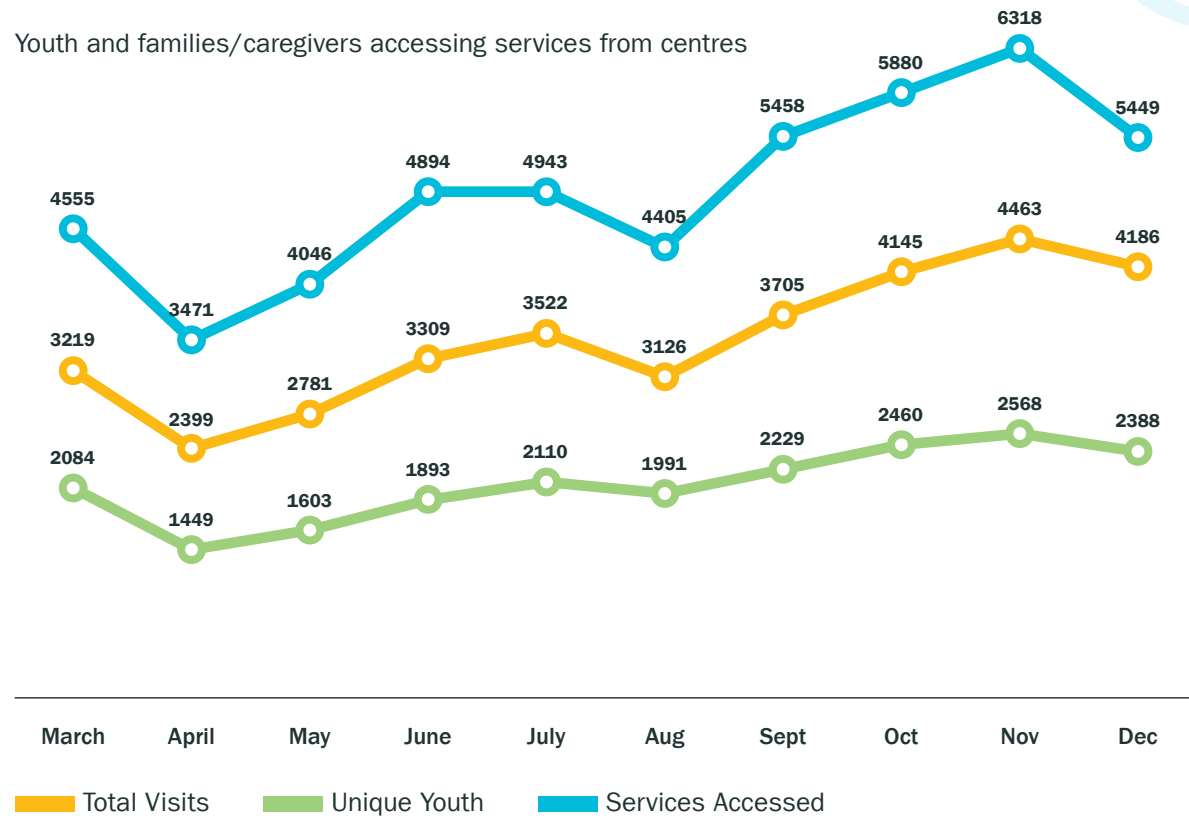
Network of Foundry centres: supporting youth and caregivers across BC

Foundry centres continued to provide a hybrid of in-person and virtual services, with safety protocols in place including the practice of physical distancing, the installation of plexiglass and use of face masks, enhanced cleaning and sanitation protocols, rotating staff schedules to limit attendance, and outdoor-based group activities.

Wellness Program activities continued in creative ways at Foundry centres, both online and through safe and socially distant in-person sessions. Examples include: cooking and food preservation classes, 'Sketching in Nature,' 'Workout in the Park,' game nights, hiking trips in partnership with BC Parks Foundation, 'Bob Ross Painting Night,' outdoor yoga, 'Quarantine Fitness' groups, horseback riding and pumpkin carving events. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the impact of these pro-social recreational activities is currently underway.

Service utilization at Foundry centres

Youth and families/caregivers accessing services from centres



Services accessed

Types of services accessed from centres from March 16 to December 31, 2020.

Mental Health & Substance Use

36%

Physical Health

22%

Sexual Health

16%

Walk-in counselling

10%

Youth Peer Support

5%

Social Services

5%

Groups

4%

Navigation

1%

Other

1%

Age distribution

Ages of young people accessing services from centres for the first time from March 16 to Dec 31, 2020.

12-13

9%

14-15

14%

16-17

20%

18-19

23%

20-21

17%

22-23

13%

24-25

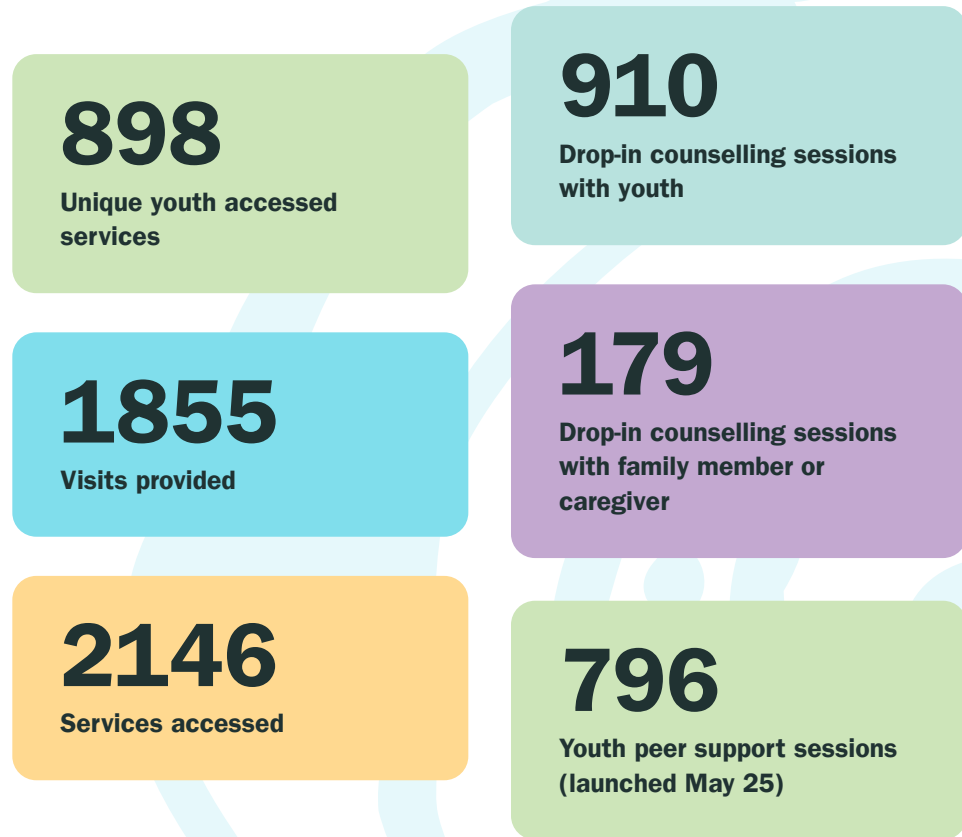
4%

Provincial virtual services: supporting youth and caregivers virtually

Our first COVID-19 report highlighted the launching of Foundry's provincial virtual services in response to the pandemic, including [drop-in counselling](#) services via chat, voice or video calls in April, [peer support services](#) in May, and online workshops for [youth](#) and [caregivers](#) in June. The introduction of online registration in September resulted in a significantly increased uptake in virtual services over the past four months (See the graph ["Total youth and total visits by month for Foundry's provincial virtual services" on page 7](#)).

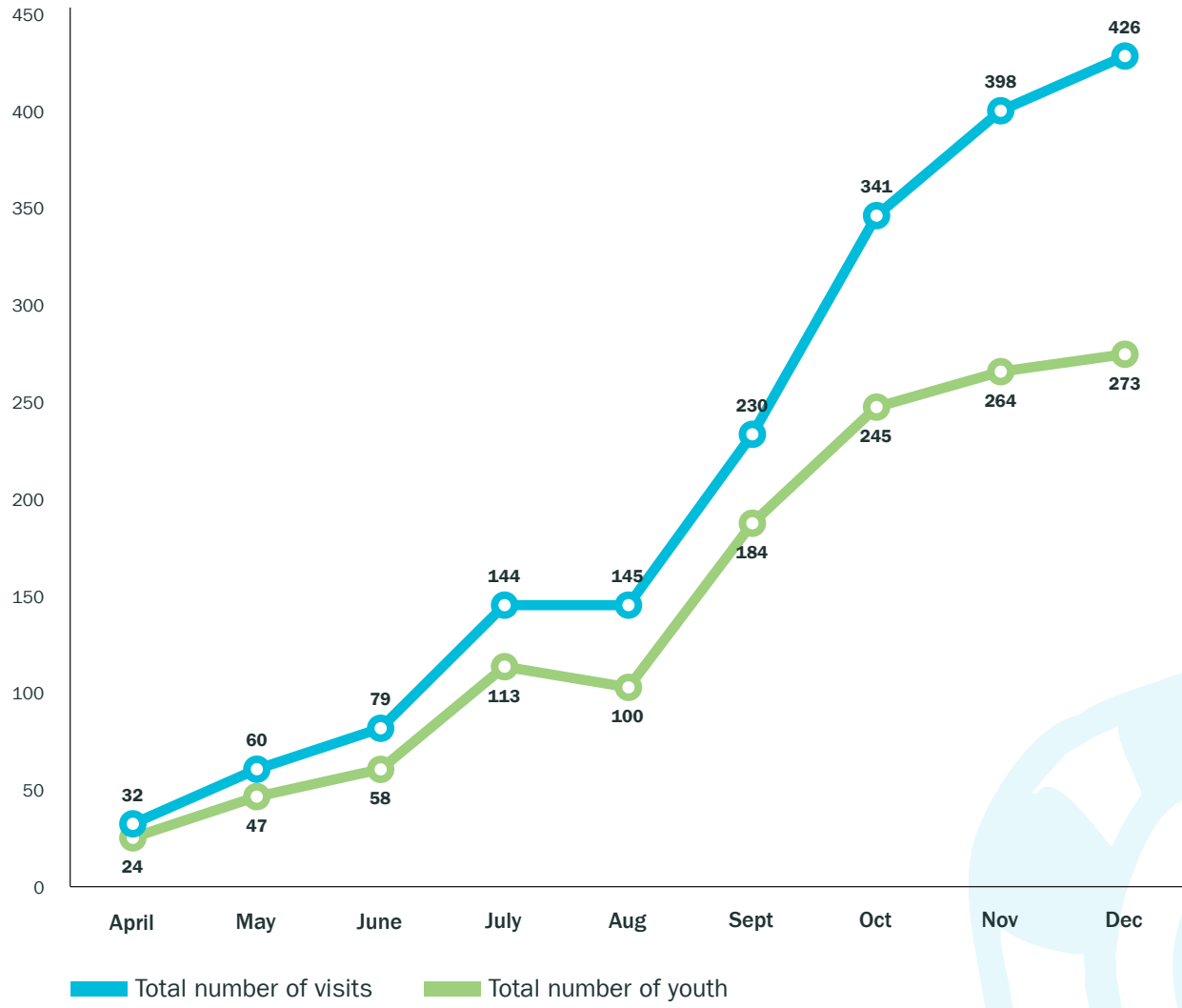
Foundry's provincial virtual service utilization

April 16, 2020 to December 31, 2020



Total youth and total visits by month for Foundry's provincial virtual services

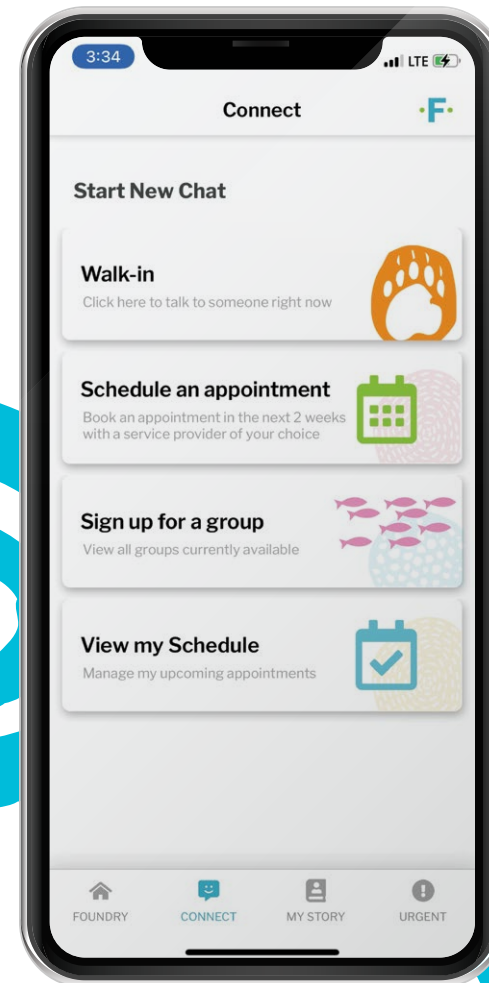
Excludes 194 booked appointment with no show.



Next steps for Foundry's provincial virtual service

- **Early 2021:** virtual primary care services will be bolstered, with nurse practitioners attending to physical and medical needs
- **Early 2021:** virtual service hours extended to seven days a week from 1-9pm, to help meet increasing demand
- **Early 2021:** The Foundry BC App is under development, with a Foundry Youth Advisory Committee currently engaging in beta testing, and will launch early this year
- **Ongoing:** Virtual Innovations in Care grant from FRAYME to fund the evaluation of Foundry's virtual care delivery, user experiences and the impact of shifting from in-person to virtual services
- Foundry continues to offer virtual groups and workshops including 'Conversations on Substance Use,' 'LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit Youth Group,' 'Virtual Service Q & As,' 'Queer Café,' 'YMind,' and 'EFFT Caregiver Workshops.' New groups for 2021 include 'Mindshift,' 'Beauty of Life in Psychosis,' and 'SMART Recovery.'

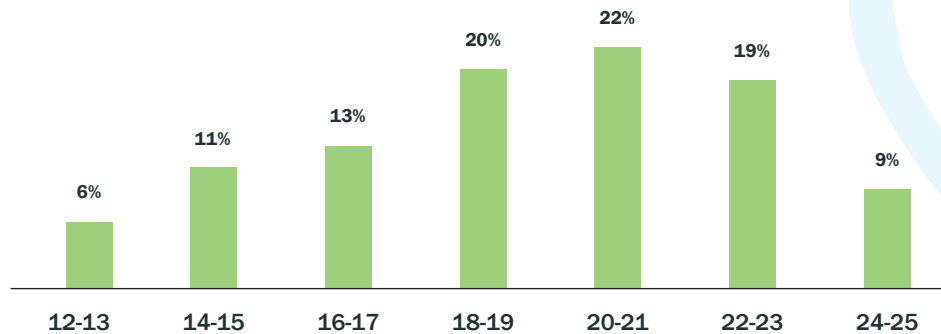
Foundry BC App arriving early 2021.



Characteristics of young people accessing Foundry's provincial virtual service

Age At Registration

April 16 to Dec 31, 2020 (n=902)



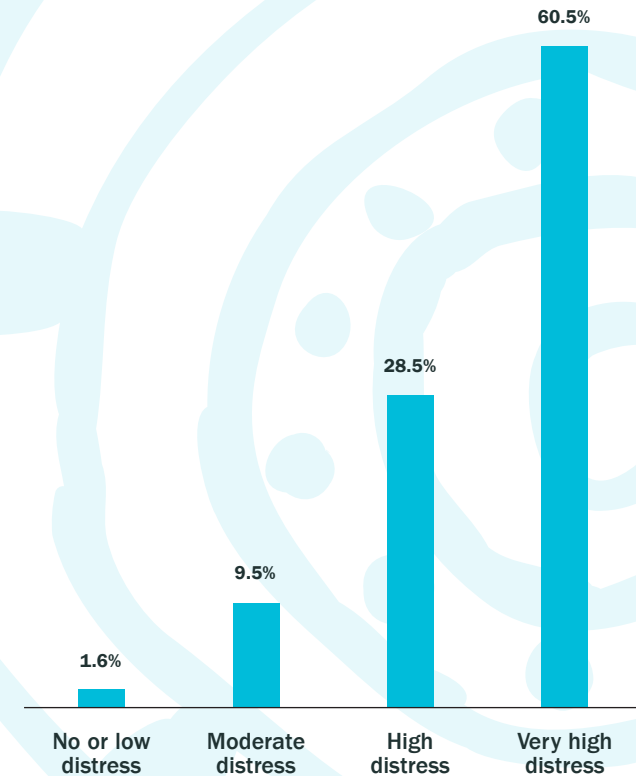
17%

of youth receiving services are ages 12 to 15.

First visit assessment results

K10 (Kessler Psychological Distress Scale)

April 16 to Dec 31, 2020 (n=270)



89%

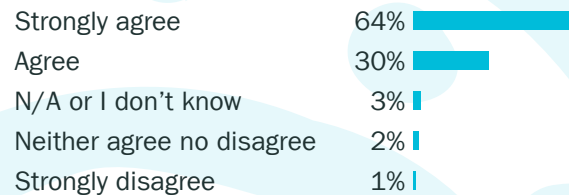
of youth are in high or very high distress at the first visit.

Survey feedback

If a friend needed this sort of help, I would suggest Foundry's virtual service to them (n=202)

94%

would recommend Foundry virtual to a friend who needs help



Found out about this centre through... (n=287)

38.2%

discovered Foundry through a friend or family member

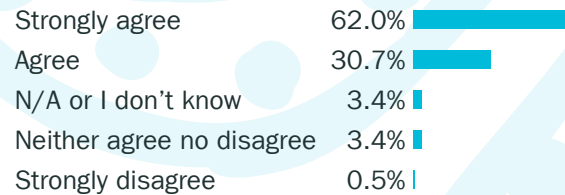


Survey feedback

I would use this service again if I needed support (n=205)

92.7%

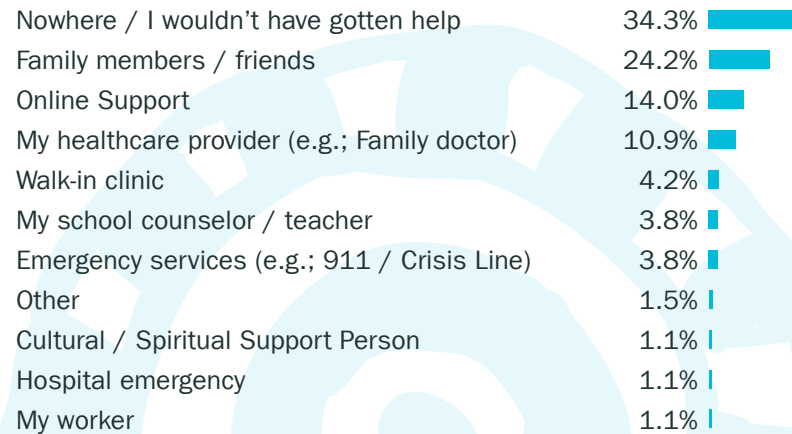
would use Foundry virtual again



If this centre was unavailable, I would have gone to... (youth that requested MHSU services, n=265)

34.3%

would not have received help if Foundry's provincial virtual service wasn't available



Foundry central office: supporting our staff

The Foundry central office (FCO) team of subject matter experts continued to support and work with the Foundry network and centres.

Youth and Family Peer Support: Two communities of practice have been in operation for 28 youth peer supporters (YPS) and 11 family peer supporters (FPS) to access operational and practice support.

FPS also partnered with Debbie Wiebe from Peer Support Canada to implement core competencies into Foundry's peer practices and with CMHA-Calgary to deliver the new FPS curriculum to Foundry family peer supporters.

Evaluation: Two youth peer evaluators and members of the FCO evaluation team continued refining the YPS curriculum and are also assessing the impact of transitioning from in-person peer support training to virtual.

Youth and family engagement groups maintained connections, despite physical distancing, and shifted to online activities that encouraged interactions, relationship-building and the continuation of wellness journeys.

Foundry's communications team continued activities to raise awareness about Foundry's services and to share reliable sources of information for youth and families. The BC Centre for Disease Control listed Foundry as a recommended resource of information regarding COVID-19 for children, youth and parents, and pageviews for foundrybc.ca have almost doubled since our first COVID report.

Expansion: FCO continued to support the onboarding of our eight new Foundry communities in Burns Lake, Comox Valley, East Kootenay, Langley, Squamish, Surrey, Port Hardy and Cariboo-Chilcotin as they hired centre leads, acquired building locations, launched fundraising campaigns and continued their orientation to the Foundry network and model.

FCO also launched three new working groups:

The Anti-Racism Organizational Change Working Group (AROC)

consists of Foundry centre leads, provincial youth advisors, and FCO staff including youth engagement and peer support coordinators. AROC is actively working to understand and address structural racism and its impact on Foundry, to make recommendations on how best to embed anti-racism culture, and to support usability of Foundry centre services by youth who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC).

The Overdose Working League of Learners (OWLL)

was formed in response to the ongoing public health emergency around illicit drug overdose deaths. With guidance from youth with lived and living experience of substance use, as well as caregivers and the Foundry network, OWLL aims to support actions to address issues related to this crisis and substance use-related harms.

A Peer Support Implementation Working Group

was formed in July to assist peer support supervisors and coordinators with implementation and various community adaptations of peer support practices and services.

Support and training

March 16 to Dec 31, 2020

71

Clinicians received Foundry Walk-in-Counselling Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) training

17

Knowledge exchange calls across the Foundry network to discuss impacts of COVID-19 and new protocols

81

Service providers received Foundry Emotion-Focused Family Therapy (EFFT) training completion, including clinicians, family peer supporters and family navigators

173

Staff from centres and FCO attended virtual care practice seminars

113

Service providers offered Toolbox training

Supporting new COVID-19 research initiatives

The Foundry research team has adapted considerably to lead a program of person-oriented research in this new, virtual research context, allowing us to continue with over 20 research projects across the Foundry network.

These strategies included:

- Adapting and delivering research training to youth research assistants through digital platforms
- Creatively promoting research opportunities and engaging young people in virtual research activities.
- Developing tailored safety protocols for engaging young people in mental health and substance use research in virtual contexts

Family and Youth Research Advisory

This partnered initiative, funded by the Faculty of Medicine at the University of British Columbia, sees Foundry Youth and Family Advisory members informing COVID-related research proposals and grant submissions from faculty members. Investing in a standing advisory ensures meaningful engagement of those directly impacted by the research early in the research process, while also ensuring researchers can be responsive to new and emerging opportunities and needs.

COVID-19 Longitudinal Research Study

In partnership with CAMH in Ontario, this study is exploring experiences and outcomes for young people across the course of the pandemic. This will involve conducting a series of three interviews with 60 participants (ages 16-24) over the course of 12 months.

Digital Divide

Research to understand the needs of young people accessing and navigating digital health information and technologies. A youth research assistant participating in this project has shared their experience.

Conclusion

When I reflect on 2020, I think of a year that, despite its unprecedented challenges, was also a time of remarkable growth, collaboration and innovation.

Through an incredible collective effort, the entire Foundry network rapidly and thoughtfully implemented creative solutions so youth and caregivers across our province could continue accessing our integrated health and wellness services, despite the pandemic. We proudly welcomed eight new lead agencies and communities to our network, and opened Foundry centres in Ridge Meadows, Terrace and Richmond. Service providers from centres across BC came together to launch Foundry's provincial virtual service a year ahead of schedule, and the development of our Foundry BC App was expedited so we can deploy this first-of-its-kind technology in early 2021.

Thank you to the outstanding staff at Foundry Virtual, at Foundry centres across the province, at Foundry central office, and to the young people and caregivers we partner with for ensuring Foundry adapts and evolves in the right direction. Thank you, as well, to our remarkable community of over 200 partners, to our government partners and to our generous donors for your incredible support. I am excited to continue this journey with you all, and know that whatever 2021 brings, we can accomplish so much together.

Please visit foundrybc.ca to learn more about how Foundry centres and virtual services are continuing to provide supports to young people and those around them throughout this complex time, and how Foundry is continuing to learn, grow and evolve toward our vision of transforming access to services for youth and families across BC.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and safe new year,



Steve Mathias

Executive Director

Foundry Central Office

smathias@foundrybc.ca



• **FOUNDRY** •
WHERE WELLNESS TAKES SHAPE