

The UBC Youth Research Advisory Panel: Moving From Consultation to Co-Creation

Alisha Daya (Youth Member), Dan Nixon (Youth Engagement Specialist, Foundry) Jeanna Pillainayagam (Youth Member), Zee Goerzen (Youth Member), Gloria Cheung (Youth Member), Skye Barbic (Principal Investigator)

Introduction

This presentation will explore the centering of youth voices and youth representation within research from the perspective of panel members from the UBC Youth Research Advisory Panel. The panel members will share the benefits of meaningful youth engagement within research and the importance of including youth at a co-creation level.

Objectives

To combat the exclusion of youth voices and the transactional nature of the current youth engagement work being done in research, the UBC Youth Research Advisory Panel (YRAP) aspires to allow youth and researchers to co-design research surrounding youth health. The panel provides feedback to researchers grant proposals, leading with their lived experiences and knowledge of the challenges the healthcare system presents to patients. The co-creation relationship allows the youth panel members to engage in bridging the gap between the views and priorities of the researchers with the views and priorities of the youth. This process allows the youth to identify assumptions around their lived experiences the researchers may be making and inform the perspectives the researcher takes in their research.

Approach/Methods

The youth on the panel work collaboratively with the researcher, providing direct feedback and edits to research grant proposals. The youth have full discretion over which researcher they feel they can support through continued interaction or a letter of support. The youth panel was comprised of youth with lived or living experience (n=10, age 13-25). The panel allowed young people to collaboratively work alongside researchers on their engagement strategies and methods. The panel initially provided feedback but as more projects were undertaken moved towards ideation and co-creation.

Results or Practice/Policy Implications

The panel gives youth power over their own narratives of their health and the ability to address unmet needs. This work is central to closing the knowledge gap between service providers and youth. This panel also has positive and empowering effects on the panelists themselves through the tangibility of the actions taken. This work allows research to be more representative, shifting the focus from publication and prestige to intentional knowledge exchange. The experience of working with the panel is a step in improving research as the work with youth will allow the researchers to reflect on their own work. The panel is working to move youth engagement within researchers beyond just consultation to co-creation and co-design.

Conclusion

The lack of youth voice and representation including Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC), two-spirit, and queer (LGBTQIA+) individuals within research hampers the effectiveness of research both in its execution and its impact on society. The exclusion of diverse voices from the research process disconnects researchers from the youth population they are hoping to impact. The current system treats youth as supplementary voices to research, only capable of providing context. Youth are not supplementary but are essential and critical voices to creating meaningful research outcomes.

