

Setting up for success: Preconditions for Effective Implementation of Integrated Youth Services in Community

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Introduction

Foundry is a network of integrated youth service centres located in British Columbia, Canada. The network has expanded from its first centre opening in 2015 to 11 now open and 12 more in active development. The development of Foundry centres starts within community and engages local partners, youth, and families/caregivers. This includes a designated lead agency, a non-profit organization or health authority already present in the community, to lead centre establishment and operations at the local level. Over the past seven years, through a developmental evaluation and practical experience, Foundry is learning what conditions are required within lead agencies and communities that enable a centre to successfully open and operate, and what kind of relationships need to exist between the lead agency and Foundry central office in order to achieve our shared vision.

Objectives

To share the conditions that are required within lead agencies and communities, and in relationships between lead agencies and the central office, in order to successfully open and operate a Foundry integrated youth service centre across multiple dimensions, while maintaining organizational values, service quality, and integrity. These dimensions include capacities related to leadership; meaningful youth and family/caregiver engagement; organizational partnerships; equity, diversity, and inclusion; Indigenous cultural agility, safety, and humility; project management (capital and program-related); operations; and service delivery.

Approach/Methods

Drawing from our 2018 developmental evaluation¹, the practical experience of staff, and feedback from our network and youth and family advisors, an assessment of the capacities listed above were integrated into Foundry's 2019-2020 expansion activities to identify eight new communities ready to host a Foundry centre. We are also beginning to embed these learnings into our new phase of expansion this calendar year.

Results

Two years later, despite the number of challenges presented by a global pandemic, the eight communities selected in the 2019-2020 expansion process are progressing well in their centre development, leading us to assess that the application of our learning has been effective (though our learnings continue). Foundry's learnings from 2015 to present can be used to inform the development of integrated youth services centres in complex, multi-stakeholder environments. We have been sharing our learnings to date with provincial and

national government representatives and agencies across Canada and internationally, as well as funders and other decision-makers interested in developing integrated youth services in their jurisdictions.

Conclusion

Foundry has a unique set of experiences and data that provide an informative case study for other integrated care organizations to consider, learn from, and improve. Throughout the process to open and operate a centre, all activities should be undertaken with key input from young people and their families/caregivers.

