Digital engagement: translating online views and clicks to program enrolment for NEET youth in an IPS program.

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Introduction

Foundry Works is a new evidence-based supported work and study program offered within Foundry, a provincial integrated youth service organization in British Columbia (BC), Canada. The implementation of this program, first as a pilot, and later across 12 centres and Foundry's provincial virtual service occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. Restricted access to in-person services changed the way the program could be promoted and shared with youth across the province from physical spaces (school, clinics, and other youth areas) to digital environments. To adapt, Foundry Works employed a digital marketing and enrolment strategy that supported youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) to discover, understand, and self-refer for Individual Placement Support (IPS) services. This presentation will focus on the success and challenges of creating and translating youth awareness from organic and paid digital marketing materials to program enrolment through a digital pathway.

Objectives

The objective of this project was to create a digital pathway that was effective in translating youth engagement in digital spaces (social media platforms and webpages) to program enrolment by: 1) optimizing program awareness with youth and caregivers through organic and paid digital marketing; 2) understanding navigation trends of youth and caregivers viewing the IPS program webpage; and 3) understanding youth preferences relating to, and the effectiveness of, different self-referral pathways including a web form and app.

Approach/Methods

A digital marketing and enrolment strategy was designed with the primary focus of engaging and enrolling NEET youth across British Columbia as directly and effortlessly as possible. Translation rates were used to evaluate and optimize the use of search terms, ads, and social media content in generating traffic to the IPS program's webpage. Hotjar© and Google Analytics software were used to record trends in how individuals interacted with and navigated the program's webpage. Enrolment options were provided using a web-based form and the Foundry BC app. These two points of entry were compared for effectiveness and preference for youth enrolling in the program.

Results

Within three weeks the Foundry Works program increased website visits from 150 to 2162. The program was able to collect information relating to the top performing search terms and ads based on click-through rates to the

program's website. Based on navigation trends, the program was able to understand what content was most viewed and engaged with on the website, and how to modify the website to create a better experience for the viewer. Engagement data was used by the program to determine which self-referral pathway was most popular with youth and structure enrolment processes base on those results.

Conclusion

Now, more than ever, understanding the ways youth engage with and navigate digital environments is critical for promoting and enrolling youth in health services. When a comprehensive digital pathway/strategy is utilized, it can lead to a greater number of young people accessing the support they need; in the way they want.