

Impact of peer support in an integrated youth health service organization: Service mapping data from 2018-2021:

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Introduction

Youth peer support services are one of five core integrated youth service streams offered at Foundry centres across British Columbia, Canada. Peer support services can be accessed along every level of Foundry's Integrated Stepped Care Model. Peer support is often accessed by youth and family members in collaboration with mental health, substance use, physical health, and social services. Peer supporters are integrated members of the clinical team and often act as the first point of contact for youth and family members seeking services within their local Foundry centre. Over the past three years, we have seen an evolution of peer support services in Foundry centres regarding the numbers of unique youth accessing peer services.

Objectives

Many youth at Foundry centres have reported that the sharing of lived and/or living experience resonates with them. One option to quantify these sentiments is by assessing service utilization patterns for peer support. As such, the objectives of this study are to: (1) demonstrate the 3-year impact and range of peer services in diverse communities including rural/remote, suburban, and urban communities; and (2) describe the potential for peer support services to bridge to other service streams offered within Foundry centres and community-based services that are relevant to youth and families.

Approach/Methods

Using data that have been collected through the Toolbox database (a centralized data capture system available at each centre across the Foundry network), we descriptively analyzed service utilization patterns of peer support services over the past three years (April 24th 2018 – January 31st, 2022) from 11 communities and our provincial virtual care service.

Results

The total number of unique youth accessing peer support from April 24th, 2018 – January 31st 2022 was 3521. The data strongly demonstrate that youth peer support services are accessed at a high rate across all Foundry centres and often in conjunction with other services.

Conclusion

The results of our data show that peer support is an integral service stream within the Foundry model and there has been an uptake in the number of youth accessing peer services as Foundry centres have evolved. These data

support anecdotal evidence from many young people and their families that peer supporters are effective at building rapport and modeling peer values of hope and recovery, thus supporting overarching treatment goals and care experiences.



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