

# Exploring the experiences of young people and staff in the Wellness Program within integrated youth services in Canada

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## Introduction

### What is the Wellness Program?

- Offered at Foundry, an integrated youth services initiative for ages 12-24 in British Columbia, Canada [1]
- Meaningful, non-traditional, leisure-based activities [2]
- Encourages connection with nature, others and to self [2]
- Targets five domains of wellness (Figure 1)

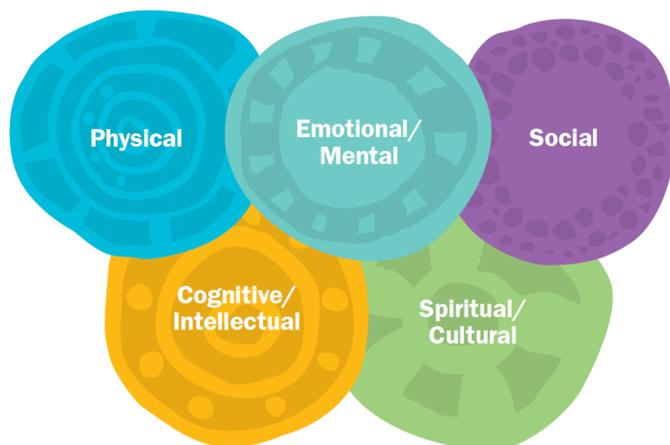


Figure 1: Five domains of wellness (adapted from Payne and colleagues) [3]

## Objective

The purposes of this work were to:

1) Explore the experiences of young people and program staff engaging in the Wellness Program

2) Explore how the Wellness Program impacted social connections for young people

## Qualitative Methods

Focus groups (n=2) with young people (n=9)



One:one interviews with program staff (n=7)

- Participatory Action Approach [4]: collaborative team of Youth Peer Evaluators (YPEs), research and evaluation associate, and researcher
- Thematic analysis [5]
- Coding in NVivo© software done by YPEs (training and oversight from researcher)
- YPEs: peers to provide insights, make meaningful contributions, gain valuable evaluation skills and work with team

## Results

### From our ongoing analysis and focus on social connections we discovered:

- So much love for the program leaders and facilitators!
- The in-person social atmosphere was special and important
- Meaningful conversations/connections at programs are preferred
- An educational aspect is desired from program leaders

"If it wasn't a super structured dialogue, people had the chance to sort of have banter and talk, if it's while cooking or painting and things like that which uh I think helped immensely when trying to make friends amid a pandemic... specifically for the online events, acquaintances and companionships were made."

Youth participant

"It helped with isolation and kept me from completely losing my marbles during quarantine."

Youth participant

"Opportunity to engage face to face with this programming has been really really important. I think the lack of those kinds of options that are added to the distress calls that young people are feeling when they're walking through the door to go for counselling sessions."

Program staff

"More in depth conversation would have helped feel more connected."

Youth participant

Demographic (optional)	Young people (n=7)	Program staff (n=6)
Age (years)	Mean = 17 Range = 15-23	Mean = 44 Range = 37-67
Identity	Female (n=3) Not sure/Questioning (n=2) Gender Fluid (n=1) Non-binary (n=1)	Female (n=6)
Ethnic/Cultural Background	Caucasian/White (n=3) South Asian (n=2) Indigenous/Caucasian/Black (n=1) Indigenous/Caucasian (n=1)	Caucasian/White (n=6)

## Conclusion

The Wellness Program helped to enhance social connections for young people in British Columbia, Canada

More in-depth topics and education can enhance connections further

Future work is needed to help understand program impact on health outcomes

1. <https://foundrybc.ca/>

2. Providence Health Care Society d.b.a. Foundry. Wellness Program Guide. 2021 Nov.

3. Payne, L., Ainsworth, B., & Godbey, G. Leisure, Health, and Wellness: Making the Connections. Urbana, IL: Venture Publishing, Inc.; 2010.

4. Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. Historical Social Research, 191-222.

5. Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Thematic analysis. In B. Smith & A. Sparkes (Eds.), Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise (pp. 191-205). New York: Routledge.



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