

Towards consensus standards for integrated youth services initiatives in Canada

Warren Helfrich
1-250-486-8840
whelfrich@foundrybc.ca
915 - 1045 Howe Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2A9



Warren Helfrich, Karen Tee, Joanna Henderson, Skye Barbic, Steve Mathias

Introduction

As integrated youth services (IYS) initiatives continue to grow globally and collaboration across initiatives expands, there is an opportunity to move towards the establishment of common service standards for the delivery of IYS, rooted in common principles and a shared understanding of the core elements of these services. This would reflect a natural evolution of IYS, similar to the evolution of other types of health services that are delivered in multiple jurisdictions globally. It would also provide the basis for further development and expansion of IYS to address the needs of young people around the world.

Objectives



To lay the groundwork for establishing common service delivery standards for IYS globally, beginning with the development of common standards for IYS in Canada and continuing to collaborate with initiatives in other jurisdictions to build a global consensus.

Methods

Foundry, an IYS initiative in British Columbia, Canada, has been developing standards for elements of its service delivery model since 2017. This has included service-specific standards for Foundry's walk-in counselling and peer support services.

Beginning in the spring of 2021, work began to develop a **comprehensive standards framework** to address all aspects of the Foundry IYS model. This has included:

• Consultation with headspace (Australia) personnel involved in the development and implementation of headspace's Model Integrity Framework (hMIF).

• Data gathering about standards currently in use in British Columbia for youth mental health services.

• Review of hMIF in Australia and current standards in British Columbia.

• Development of a draft version of Foundry's comprehensive standards framework.

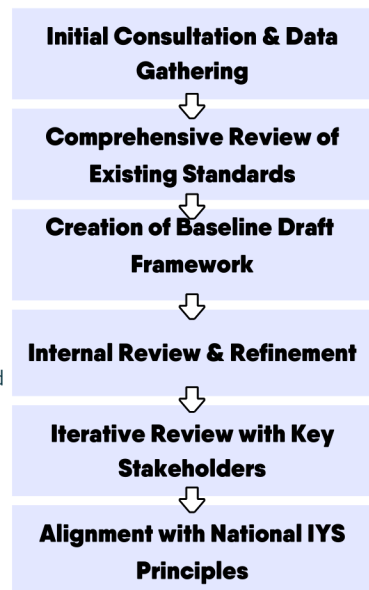
• Refinement of draft in consultation with Foundry Central Office staff, Foundry network members, families/caregivers and youth. This work is in progress.

Simultaneously, Foundry has co-lead the formation of the pan-Canadian Federation of IYS Networks and identification of **common principles for IYS**.

The Federation is intended to facilitate collaboration and resource sharing amongst IYS initiatives to further develop IYS nationally in Canada.

The Federation engaged in a Delphi process to identify common principles for IYS in Canada. This was completed in June of 2022.

Work is ongoing to align Foundry's comprehensive standards framework with the Federation's common IYS principles to identify a minimum set of **common national standards for IYS in Canada**.



Results

Foundry's baseline draft of comprehensive standards framework includes standards for the administration of IYS, common service processes and service-specific standards. There are multiple sub-sections in each of these areas, as noted below.

Administrative Standards	Common Service Process Standards	Service-Specific Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & Governance • Workforce & Culture • Health, Safety & Risk Management • Technology • Partnerships & Community Development • Research, Evaluation & Continuous Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Service Standards • Culturally Safe & Welcoming Care • Youth & Family Engagement • Screening & Orientation • Assessment & Planning • Services & Interventions • Transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk-in Counselling Services • Mental Health Services • Substance Use Services • Physical & Sexual Health Services • Peer Support Services • Social Services • Family/Caregiver Services

Conclusion

The creation of shared and recognized standards and their associated accreditation processes are a common pathway for the development of specific models or types of services delivered in multiple jurisdictions. Public funders of these service models utilize standards as a means of implementing public policy by establishing baseline expectations. This approach supports consistency and helps to ensure that the core elements of these services or models that are viewed as best practice are implemented.

While internationally recognized consensus standards for IYS would support further development of the model globally, they do not currently exist. As part of the Federation of IYS Networks, Foundry is working to create national consensus standards in Canada and establish a process for collaboration in standards development across jurisdictions. This work could be used to move towards the eventual development of international IYS standards.

