

# COVID-19 Report

A review of Foundry's response to date

Report One | March 16th — July 3rd 2020

# Context

*“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”*

—Coretta Scott King

When the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a public health emergency on March 17, 2020 by the Province of British Columbia, Foundry quickly saw how practices of physical distancing, suspension of in-person schooling, increasing unemployment, and concerns about loved ones were compounding youth mental health and wellness the world over.

The need was and continues to be clear. Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 5 youth experienced mental health or substance use challenges, yet fewer than 25 percent received appropriate support.<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 has heightened this across the population. Canadians increasingly feel lonely, depressed, anxious or engage in binge drinking.<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that close to two million Canadians are predicted to show signs of traumatic stress,<sup>3</sup> while British Columbia saw the highest number of overdose deaths in June 2020.<sup>4</sup>

As demand for additional mental health and substance use support increases, Foundry centre staff across BC, alongside the Foundry central office team and our youth and family advisors, have worked tirelessly and quickly to identify and implement local innovative solutions in response to this crisis. We also rose up to share our collective wisdom, expertise and resources to ensure all young people ages 12–24 across the province are provided the support they need, when they need it most.

In the pages that follow, we share how Foundry has forged a pathway through this crisis—from the day our province declared a public health emergency on March 17 through to today—to provide health and wellness resources, services and supports—online and through integrated service centres in communities across BC.

**Foundry offers health and wellness resources, services and supports—online and in centres in nine BC communities (with another 10 centres in development) to youth ages 12–24 and their caregivers. Foundry centres—created in partnership with young people and families—offer physical health, mental health and substance use services, peer support, and social services under one roof, making it easier for youth to get help when they need it. Foundrybc.ca and virtual care further broaden Foundry’s reach.**

## References:

1. [camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/covid-19-national-survey](https://camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/covid-19-national-survey)
2. [globalnews.ca/news/6906456/coronavirus-stress-mental-health-canada/](https://globalnews.ca/news/6906456/coronavirus-stress-mental-health-canada/)
3. Estimates are based on the effects of the SARS outbreak in 2003.
4. [cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/overdose-deaths-b-c-june-2020-1.5652311](https://cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/overdose-deaths-b-c-june-2020-1.5652311)

# Foundry Virtual

With the declaration of a global COVID-19 pandemic, Foundry centres across BC, alongside Foundry central office, had to work quickly to implement innovative virtual solutions. In early April, Foundry Virtual provided young people and their caregivers from across BC with drop-in counselling services via chat, voice or video calls.

By mid-May, youth peer support workers began working at Foundry Virtual, and by June, Foundry Virtual launched our first online workshops for youth and caregivers. In July, we introduced an online registration to reduce barriers to accessing services by phone, and this has immediately resulted in an increase in uptake for walk-in counselling services, with over 100 registrations in one week. Foundry Virtual will soon also offer virtual primary care services, and will launch a Foundry Virtual app before the end of the year.

## Virtual booking

Although not reflected in this report, appointments have jumped significantly since Foundry launched an online and text message booking system in early July. **31 appointments for walk-in counselling or peer support were booked virtually in the first week since launching the online system, and 45 appointments in week two.**

March 16th — July 3rd

**121**

**unique youth accessed services through Foundry Virtual**

**191**

**total sessions including drop-in counselling and peer support**

- 166 total drop-in counselling sessions with youth
- 9 total drop-in counselling sessions with family member or caregiver
- 16 total youth peer support sessions (Note — launched the week of May 25th)

**73**

**young people registered for a Youth Mindfulness Workshop**

**1200**

**counselling hours**

Available virtually through counsellors from Foundry centres across the network.

**22**

**parents and caregivers completed the first Emotion-Focused Family Therapy Caregiver Workshop**

More than 50 parents and caregivers expressed interest in participating in the group (there was a max number).

**205**

**FCO supervisor hours**

Foundry central office clinical staff provided clinical supervision.

**70**

**supervisor hours**

provided by Foundry centre/network staff.

For more information on Foundry's virtual services, visit [foundrybc.ca/virtual](https://foundrybc.ca/virtual)

# Foundry Virtual

## Geographic representation

Regions where young people and families/caregivers are accessing services from, including peer support, drop-in counselling and groups.

### Fraser Health

31%

### Interior Health

10%

### Island Health

22%

### Northern Health

7%

### Vancouver Coastal Health

38%

## Age distribution

Ages of young people accessing the service.

### 12 – 14

7%

### 15 – 17

17%

### 18 – 20

42%

### 21 – 23

23%

### 24

11%

## Feedback

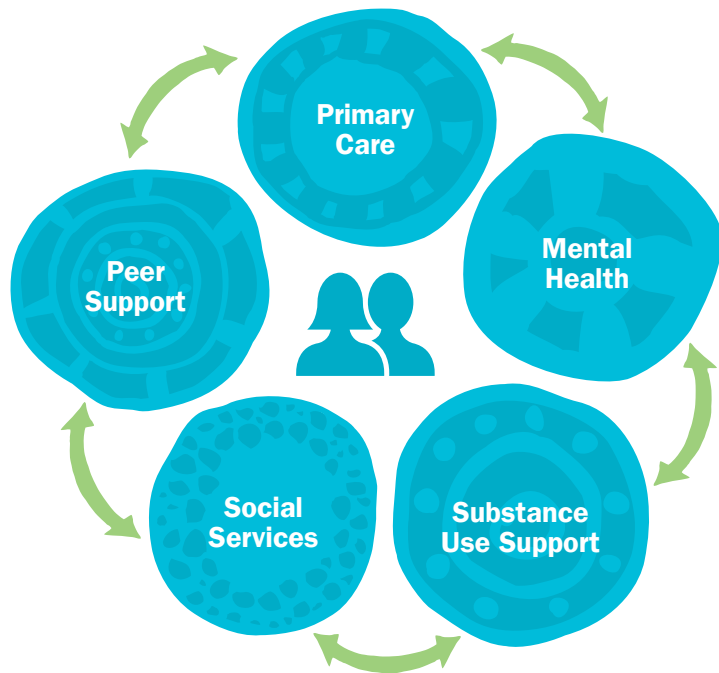
32% of young people indicated if this service was unavailable, they would not have gone anywhere else to get help (n=75)

Of youth who responded to our feedback survey, 84% 'strongly agreed' and 16% 'agreed' they would use the service again if needed (n=31)

Of youth who responded to our feedback survey 84% 'strongly agreed' and 16% 'agreed' if a friend needed support, they would recommend Foundry's virtual services to them (n=31)

# Foundry centres pivot in response to COVID-19

While eight of nine Foundry centres remained open during the early months of the pandemic to offer some in-person services, physical distancing measures meant an immediate need for virtual service options. It is estimated that between 50% and 98% of all visits from March 16th to July 3rd were completed either virtually or by phone, rather than in-person.



## Virtual services

- **Walk-in counselling:** scheduled and conducted by phone and video
- **Youth and family peer support:** Call-in support; Youth peer support workers (YPSW) checked-in with youth via phone/text; YPSW oversaw social media accounts
- **Youth and family engagement staff:** met online using MS Teams and Zoom to continue pro-social activities and connections
- **Psychiatric assessments:** (assessments, prescriptions, monitoring) using video or phone
- **Social services** (employment, housing supports) offered by phone

## In-person services

- **Essential primary care services** such as physical assessments or Opioid Agonist Therapy, with service providers in full PPE if physically touching clients
- **Counselling for youth,** after screening and based on need or circumstances
- **Psychiatric services,** including assessments, consultations, psychiatric medication prescription, monitoring
- **Outreach to youth** including provision of food supplies
- **Safe drug supply** continues to be a top priority, given that we have been in the middle of two crises—opioid overdose crisis and COVID-19 pandemic
- **COVID-19 testing** provided by one centre

# Foundry centres pivot in response to COVID-19

## Rising demand

Volume of visits declined across all centres in March and April, but started to rise again in May and June. One centre is almost back to pre-COVID-19 volume, offering both in-person and virtual services.

### Service utilization at Foundry centres

Virtual and in-person services from March 16, 2020 to July 3, 2020:

**9,471**

visits

55% Mental Health Substance Use (MHSU)  
28% physical health  
23% sexual health

**3,599**

unique youth

55% MHSU  
28% physical health  
23% sexual health

**12,303**

services accessed

50% MHSU  
25% physical health  
14% sexual health

## Leadership support

Centre leaders supported their staff/teams through daily virtual check-ins and weekly or bi-weekly community teleconference calls with partners to update on status.

**8**

**new Foundry centres coming soon**

Burns Lake  
Comox Valley  
Cranbrook  
Langley  
Squamish  
Surrey  
Port Hardy  
Williams Lake

For more information on Foundry's expansion, visit [Foundrybc.ca/expansion2020](https://foundrybc.ca/expansion2020)



# COVID-19 didn't slow down Foundry central office

Foundry central office (FCO)'s team of subject matter experts continued to support and work with the Foundry network of centres, leading during an uncertain and complex time.

FCO not only continued to train large numbers of network staff in core Foundry services, but FCO added two "Virtual Care Practice" seminars within weeks of COVID-19 striking. FCO supported the Network to pivot services safely during this unprecedented time.

**FCO continued to offer network-wide training but pivoted to virtual offerings and deliveries.**

**18**

**clinicians received training in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)**

**70**

**service providers and front desk staff received training**

- 30 attended the Provincial coaching session
- 40 received Toolbox training to support service provisions and data collection while providing services virtually

**12**

**knowledge exchange calls across the Foundry network to discuss impacts of COVID-19 and new protocols**

**24**

**participants received youth peer support training**

**40**

**clinicians and family peer supporters received training in Emotion-Focused Family Therapy (EFFT)**

# COVID-19 didn't slow down Foundry central office

In response to COVID-19, FCO provided the following supports and resources.

## Internal resources

Created an internal webpage on COVID-19 guidelines and resources for Foundry centre leaders and staff

## Virtual services

Coordinated drop-in counselling services via chat, voice or video, accessible to all youth ages 12-24 and their caregivers across BC

## Public resources

Created a COVID-19 webpage ([foundrybc.ca/covid19](https://foundrybc.ca/covid19)) and additional online tools and resources for youth and their caregivers

## Clinical supervision

Provided clinical supervision in the first two months of the Foundry Virtual launch

## New staff

Since March 16, we've hired 13 new staff with 11 more positions posted and awaiting placements

## Virtual care practice seminars

173 staff from centres and FCO attended

## Booking support

Created an online appointment booking system for Foundry Virtual

## Virtual app

Expedited development of a Foundry Virtual App to offer all Foundry services via smartphones by year-end

## Funding

Provided centres with funding for COVID-19 infrastructure expenses



# Foundry's communications strategy was more important than ever

At the start of the pandemic, a “Foundry COVID-19 Response Team” was created, including representatives from its communications, clinical, knowledge exchange, and youth and family engagement teams, as well as health literacy representatives from BC Children’s Hospital.

The Response Team rapidly distilled reliable and relevant information to support BC youth by:

1. Amplifying (and translating for young people/families) key messages disseminated by government to support public health responses to COVID-19
2. Developing content to support the needs of young people and families that pre-existed before COVID-19 and that were exacerbated by the pandemic
3. Hosting opportunities through social media to engage young people and families/caregivers to create a sense of community while promoting togetherness and social connection during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Foundrybc.ca COVID-19 Online Content

From March 16, 2020 to July 3, 2020

Content Page	Date Published	Page Views	Unique Users/ Unique Page Views
COVID homepage	March 17, 2020	2,710	2,209
Tips for when the news stresses you out	March 17, 2020	1,783	1,598
Social distancing and why it helps during a pandemic	March 18, 2020	13,048	12,026
How to talk to your teens about the Coronavirus	April 22, 2020	307	284
Sex and COVID-19	May 11, 2020	442	389
Tips for when "normal" does not feel normal anymore	March 27, 2020	248	224
Want to beat those COVID blues? Get active!	June 15, 2020	108	105
Existing anxiety and stress pages on foundrybc.ca		6,204	3,843
Foundrybc.ca homepage		39,291	30,984

## Social media

March 16 to July 3, 2020

### Facebook

@foundrybc

**80** posts

**1.61m**  
impressions

**8,075**  
link clicks

**5.81%**  
engagement

Posts reached **1.1 million people** and resulted in **26,800 engagements, 4,177 reactions, and 1,138 shares**. The average daily engagement per post was 244 engagements, while the daily average impressions were 14,600 impressions. On average, posts directed 73 daily clicks to foundrybc.ca.

## Content related to COVID-19

**Facebook**—19 posts, resulting in 895 link clicks, 19,878 impressions and an engagement rate of 6.53%.

**Instagram**—17 posts, resulting in 13,189 impressions and an engagement rate of 6.22%.

**Twitter**—5 tweets, resulting in 1,651 impressions and 3.64% engagement rate.

### Instagram

@foundry\_bc

**66** posts

**567k**  
impressions

**447.7k**  
persons reached

**6.84%**  
engagement

Posts resulted in **3,333 likes**. The daily average impressions were 5,155 impressions, and each post averaged 51 likes. On Instagram stories, 166 stories resulted in 39,900 impressions and a reach of approximately 33,500 persons, with a low engagement rate of 0.07%.

### Twitter

@foundrybc

**49** tweets

**45.3k**  
impressions

**224**  
retweets

**3.3%**  
engagement

Tweets resulted in **166 clicks, and 349 likes**. The average impression per tweet was 925 impressions. There were 1,604 engagements, averaging 33 engagements per tweet.

# Youth and family engagement continued more meaningfully than ever

Foundry's youth and family engagement groups maintained connections despite physical distancing, shifting to online activities that encouraged interactions, relationship-building, and the continuation of wellness journeys. Youth and family, engaged as members of the Foundry COVID-19 Response Team, were involved in knowledge exchange, and participated in workshops and training.

## Engagement activities across the Foundry network consisted of:

- Cooking and baking videos and live-streams, including delivery of ingredients
- Workout and exercise videos
- “Sundaes on Thursday” ice cream socials
- Book clubs
- Art classes, with supplies sent to homes, or classes in the park
- Yoga and mindfulness classes online and in the park
- LGBTQ+ groups
- Family/caregiver support groups through video conferencing tools or outdoor spaces
- Movie nights through shared screens
- Hiking (socially distanced)
- Podcasts co-created with youth
- Quarantine Zoom Hangouts
- Knowledge translation pieces with Foundry Richmond Instagram
- Community conversations (harm reduction, guest speakers, youth led)
- Peer-to-peer mentorship program for high-school students
- Learning Sessions: ABC’s of common eating disorders in Kelowna
- Online games/Dungeons and Dragons
- Life Hacks #Hangouts (for youth ages 16–24 who are accessing or have accessed government care, mental health and/or substance use services)
- Abbotsford developed a “Coping During COVID-19” workbook
- Youth Peer Group (A group for youth impacted by a family member’s or friend’s substance use)

# Foundry's research team stepped up

The research team worked to mobilize over 20 projects in a virtual capacity.

Dr. Emily Jenkins received widespread [media attention](#) for her work exploring the mental health risks associated with COVID-19, and the experiences of marginalization on health outcomes and experiences.

Foundry grad students and scientists presented at diverse conferences (Canadian Occupational Therapy Conference), panels (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Alberta's Breaking the Silence), and COVID-19-specialty panels (CIHR, CIHI, MMHA, UBC, PopData).

## Foundry research activities

**11**

**Youth Research Assistants hired**

**19**

**youth engaged and employed**

**6**

**new grants submitted**

**8**

**studies adapted to virtual delivery**

**4**

**new studies implemented**

- Digital Divide
- Suicide risk
- Youth engagement
- Substance use

**2**

**grants received**

- UBC Faculty of Medicine COVID-19 Strategic Investment Fund
- CIHR funded "COVID-19 Longitudinal Study Exploring the Short, Medium and Long Term Needs of Youth"

# Foundry's next steps

**As the COVID-19 situation evolves, Foundry's response will adapt to meet the needs of young people and their families across BC.**

- Operating Foundry centres safely by practicing physical distancing, implementing cleaning and sanitation protocols; rotating staff schedules to limit attendance; and offering outdoor-based group activities;
- Transitioning from Microsoft Teams and Zoom for youth and family service delivery, and completing a purpose-built Foundry Virtual App for smart phones. The Foundry app, co-designed with youth advisors, will offer virtual access to all of Foundry's core services, from anywhere in BC, before the end of the year;
- Collaborating with our international partners Jigsaw (Ireland) and headspace (Australia) to better understand the needs of young people over the next year;
- Establishing a 10-member youth and family advisory council for COVID-19 research, offering advice on research questions, methods, results, and knowledge translation for the headspace-Jigsaw-Foundry network;
- Continuing our expansion by opening two new Foundry centres in Richmond and Terrace, and supporting our eight new Foundry communities as they work through the start-up phase.
- Expanding our virtual peer support and virtual primary care services, which will include gender affirming care
- Launching [new virtual groups](#):
  - » Queer Café—a space for young people who identify as LGBTQ2IA+ to come together for conversation and activities in a supportive, inclusive environment—launching July
  - » “SpeakUp!” 5-week webinar series on youth rights—launching August
  - » #Relationship Goals—group on Healthy Relationships—launching September



# Conclusion

**When the pandemic hit, Foundry centres didn't want to shut down. We wanted to ensure that young people could continue to access the support they needed, meaning an overnight shift to providing virtual care. Thank you to the entire Foundry network for your creativity, flexibility and inspiring dedication, ensuring ongoing access to services and continuity in care.**

Thank you also to all those who have supported Foundry's provincial virtual services, including the Province of British Columbia, Y. P. Heung Foundation, St. Paul's Foundation, Canucks for Kids Fund, and also RBC Foundation's support of our virtual peer support program.

Foundry is one of the most integrated health systems in Canada, offering mental health and substance use services, physical and sexual health, peer support, and social services in one place. COVID-19 accelerated the need to also layer new virtual care supports, resources and technology into Foundry's array of services, but this has also greatly expanded our reach and impact.

As we forge a pathway through this crisis, we look forward to keeping you updated on how Foundry is continuing to meet the needs of young people and families across BC.

For more information, visit [foundrybc.ca](https://foundrybc.ca).

