

# Co-Creating Knowledge Products: The Power of Lived Experience

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## Introduction

To combat the exclusion of youth voices and the transactional nature of the current youth engagement work being done in research, the UBC Youth Research Advisory Panel aspires to allow youth and researchers to co-design research surrounding youth health. The panel provides feedback to researchers on grant proposals, including knowledge products, leading with their lived experiences and knowledge of the challenges the healthcare system presents to patients.

Youth engagement with healthcare research is an integral part of ensuring that research for youth is representative. However, youth engagement does not have to start and end at the research design stage. It is incredibly valuable to include youth in the knowledge translation process, and give them spaces to share their learnings from their experiences engaging with research and researchers.

## Objectives

This project allowed members of the UBC Youth Research Advisory Panel (YRAP) to engage with research beyond providing feedback on draft grant proposals, specifically informing the development of knowledge translation products. The panel members had opportunities to take part in the knowledge translation process and share their learnings from their time on the panel, and to co-create those opportunities with researchers.

## Approach/Methods

Two integrated panels were created, one comprised of youth with lived or living experience (n=10, age range 13-25) and family members with lived or living experiences (n=6). Panels inform, shape, and create research projects that have direct impacts on youth health. After collating panel members, we developed a term of reference, workflow, and marketing strategy to share the opportunity for researchers to engage with the panel.

## Results

Although initially the objective of the panel members was to provide feedback on draft grant proposals to researchers, the panel members were also given opportunities to share and apply their main learnings from partaking in the panel. Including knowledge translation activities such as:

- Presenting at conferences and learning institutes on topics such as youth safety in research, the experiences of members regarding the panel, and the hopes of panel members for the future of youth participation in research.
- Writing blog articles and academic papers that conveyed the experiences and learnings of the panel members, as well as those of the researchers they engaged with.

- Providing input on future iterations of the panel and aspects that could be improved.
- Partaking in media interviews to discuss the importance of youth involvement in research.

## Conclusion

Youth involvement in research does not have to be limited to one particular stage of the process. The perspectives and knowledge of young people who engage with research can also be used as resources during knowledge translation and dissemination, especially when trying to communicate research findings to other youth. It is therefore important for researchers to create spaces and provide opportunities for youth involvement throughout the research process. When youth are able to communicate their experiences and learnings, it not only empowers other youth to bring their voices to research, but it also empowers other researchers to include youth voices in their own research.

