

Integrated Youth Services: Benefits of an International Collaboration

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Introduction

Building from the momentum of IAYMH 2019, a formal collaborative was formed between Foundry, headspace and Jigsaw to provide ongoing connection and collaboration opportunities for the three organizations. Given the established nature of each entity, the intent of the collaborative is to enable the organizations to leverage each other's expertise and experiences on themes that would enhance organizations' capacities.

Objectives

The primary purpose of this presentation is to describe this collaboration and how it is being used to transfer knowledge, leverage resources, and to better understand emerging issues related to youth and families/caregivers, service improvement approaches, implementation of novel innovations, research, and evaluation. The secondary objective is to invite dialogue about the cross-organizational collaboration to scale integrated youth services globally and share innovative practices.

Approach/Methods

Through rotation, each organization acts as the Secretariat and is responsible for the facilitation and coordination of meetings, decisions, and the exchange of knowledge. Over a series of collaborative-wide and focused themed meetings, a summary of the transpired work and future opportunities has been collated.

Results/Policy Implications

To date, this collaboration has facilitated global improvements in data collection systems and tools, shared outcome measures, and the potential for an international Minimum Data Set to support the creation of a Learning Health System for integrated youth services across multiple countries. Shared learnings were instrumental in supporting the launch and delivery of Foundry Virtual (an online integrated youth services platform in British Columbia), a work/study initiative, school strategies, family engagement and services, mental health and substance use service innovations, and joint research collaborations. For young people, the collaborative increased global sharing and connection opportunities, including co-designing approaches to safely engage diverse youth in digital storytelling, planning, research, and policy.

Conclusion

While this intentional, international collaboration has resulted in ongoing knowledge exchange, shared learnings, and joint research projects, the greater learning has emerged as staff from the organizations develop a strong

sense of mutual trust and begin to share not only successes but challenges. Creating a safe space for teams and young people to meet, share and reflect together on what works best for youth has been an enriching, empowering, and enlightening experience.



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