

Atlantic Community Showcase Presentations

Ten projects have been selected for the Atlantic Community Showcase. Each presenter will have 2 minutes to promote her/his presentation to participants as part of the Symposium Opening. Symposium participants will mingle and visit each Showcase exhibit during the reception that follows the Opening. Exhibits will remain available for viewing and discussion during the Symposium.

1. ACCESS Open Minds New Brunswick/ ACCES Esprits ouverts Nouveau-Brunswick

Presenters: Lee Thomas, Jacob Roy, Érika Gauvin

ACCESS Open Minds is a national research project in youth mental health co-funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research and the Graham Boeckh Foundation. The project has twelve sites across Canada, with New Brunswick acting as the only site of provincial transformation. As a province-wide initiative, the New Brunswick site is also co-funded by the New Brunswick Health Research Foundation. The vision of the ACCESS Open Minds NB project is that youth (ages 11 to 25) who live with mental health challenges should be able to: **GET CARE EARLIER GET CARE QUICKER GET BETTER CARE CONTINUE TO GET CARE AS THEY GROW INTO YOUNG ADULTS HAVE A VOICE IN THE KIND OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE THEY RECEIVE.**

How does your presentation make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

This project is enjoying success in uniting youth, families, service providers, researchers, policymakers, community organizations and First Nations in the development and evaluation of new best practices in community-based youth mental health care.

What will others learn from your presentation?

ASI participants will learn about the importance of authentically engaging all stakeholders in the design and implementation of systems transformation. We will hopefully be able to share the journey that the New Brunswick team has travelled, the successes we enjoyed, the challenges we face(d), and the lessons that we learned.

What is a challenge you would like some help with?

One of the challenges we are facing is the development of resources and training around youth peer support work. Young people have told us the importance of peer support in their mental health care, but there is very little existing evidence on trainings for young people on how to be a peer to someone struggling with a mental health challenge.

2. Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being Among High-Risk Girls with Significant Disruptive Behaviours using the Evidence-Based SNAP Program Model

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Bernier, Lila Pavey, Halifax, NS

BRAVE (the Centre for Building Resilience and Anti-Violence Education) was established in 2014 to house the Alternative Pathways project in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Funded for five-years under Public Safety Canada's Crime Prevention Action Fund, BRAVE offers the SNAP® (Stop Now and Plan) program model, an evidence-based program that teaches girls aged 6-11 with significant disruptive behaviours and their families' effective emotion regulation, self control, and problem-solving skills. SNAP® was developed by Child Development Institute in Toronto, Ontario over 30 years ago and the program model has been delivered around the world. BRAVE is the first all-girls SNAP® site in the world focusing on reducing bullying, delinquency, and criminalization among high-risk girls by addressing gender-specific risk factors such as exposure to trauma and violence, and providing gender-responsive programming. Most girls who enter service at BRAVE fall within the highest risk category for delinquency, school drop out, engaging in risky behaviours, physical and mental health issues, and/or future criminalization. Of the current 104 girls in service at BRAVE, almost all have some form of violent behaviour (e.g., physical or verbal aggression, bullying, threatening behaviour), more than half of the girls have documented histories of abuse, neglect, and trauma, and over one-third have a mental health diagnoses. A large proportion of girls in service at BRAVE have one or more mental health diagnoses. This program has proven to increase overall mental health and well-being of the girls and their families. Our research shows that girls involved in the SNAP® program have decreased aggression, fewer rule-breaking behaviours, reduced oppositional defiant and conduct problems, lowered anxiety, withdrawn, and depressive symptoms, fewer social problems, and increased self-esteem and confidence. This presentation will address the importance of using a gender-specific, evidence-based program model- SNAP® to address bullying, delinquency, and criminalization, and increase mental health and well-being among at-risk girls by addressing gender-specific risk factors.

How does your presentation make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

A large proportion of girls in service at BRAVE have one or more mental health diagnoses. This program has proven to increase overall mental health and well-being of the girls and their families. Our research shows that girls involved in the SNAP® program have decreased aggression, fewer rule-breaking behaviours, reduced oppositional defiant and conduct problems, lowered anxiety, withdrawn, and depressive symptoms, fewer social problems, and increased self-esteem and confidence.

What will others learn from your presentation?

The importance of using a gender-specific, evidence-based program model- SNAP® to address bullying, delinquency, and criminalization, and increase mental health and well-being among at-risk girls by addressing gender-specific risk factors.

What is a challenge you would like some help with?

A key challenge that BRAVE faces is being able to continue to provide this service to girls and their families beyond the five-year pilot funding. With a demonstrated need to continue this vital service and to expand to reach more children in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada, sustainability of this much-needed program is essential.

Main Presenter

Dr. Jennifer Bernier

Executive Director, BRAVE- Centre for Building Resilience through Anti-Violence Education

Jennifer Bernier, PhD., is the Founder and Executive Director of the Centre for Building Resilience through Anti-Violence Education (BRAVE) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. As Executive Director, Jennifer provides leadership to achieve the Centre's commitments to address bullying, delinquency and future criminalization amongst high-risk girls aged 6-11 who display social and behavioural concerns. The Centre provides a comprehensive set of services and supports for girls, their families, and school-based peers using the world-renowned SNAP® (Stop Now and Plan) program. Dr. Bernier has worked for over 15 years on issues of social justice and health amongst women and girls, including violence and trauma, addiction and mental health, as well as incarceration and community reintegration. She has extensive experience in applied social and community-based research, program evaluation, sex and gender-based analysis, and community development. In 2017, Dr. Bernier received the Nova Scotia Department of Justice Minister's Award for Leadership (Individual Category) in Crime Prevention for her contributions to early childhood intervention and prevention programming for girls and their families.

3. Supportive Housing and Mental Health

Presenters: Robert Cahill, Sarah Brown, Choices for Youth, St. John's, NL

The RallyHaven Supportive Housing program offers support to at-risk youth from a housing first philosophy, focusing on building a strong foundation for participants to address mental health issues and overcome barriers. The program houses 16 youth in 6 properties around St. John's, NL and is supported by a staff of 4 front-line workers, a team lead and a coordinator offering case management and wrap-around supports. We are looking to present with the team lead and a youth who is currently availing of these supports to demonstrate the perspectives of both support staff and the clientele. RallyHaven has a proven history of positive outcomes around mental wellness, education, employment, and transitions to independent living, but recognizes a need for more diverse housing options; in particular, single unit dwellings, which would allow RallyHaven to offer support to those with more complex mental health needs. We believe safe and inclusive spaces are vital to best serving those who battle mental health issues and hope that we can promote the importance of a stable home to recovery.

How does your presentation make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

RallyHaven focuses on the connection between mental wellness and flexible support. Our program's continued evolution is based upon putting evidence-based support services into action.

What will others learn from your presentation?

Others will learn creative ways to aid youth coping with mental illness through the unique perspectives of a professional and a client, as well as learn the importance of meeting fundamental needs in order to address barriers in the best way possible.

What is a challenge you would like some help with?

-Additional creative solutions in supporting youth. -Make new connections. -Exchange ideas to develop best practice policies.

Main Presenter

Robert Cahill

Team Lead, Choices For Youth- RallyHaven Supportive Housing

Robert is the Team Lead for the RallyHaven Supportive Housing Program with Choices For Youth and has worked the front line in supportive housing, men's shelter, and shared living programming under Choices For Youth's banner.

4. "LET'S TALK" "PARLONS-EN" "MAOI-AGNOTEMATINETJ" Forum Provincial en santé mental 2015 Provincial Mental Health Forum

Presenter: Albert Cyr, Follow up Committee, NB Provincial Mental Health Forum 2015

One of the most important right of a child, is access and preservation t of attachment throughout the development into which to grow and develop. Families and communities are important parts of that equation. The Provincial Mental Health Forum is a citizen and community base initiative for a collective and community discussion between partners, persons with a mental illness, and families around issues of access to mental health care, equity of care, mental wellness, and overcoming stigma. Le Forum 2015 fut inclusif des différentes communautés dans les échanges de l'état actuel des connaissances, la nature des maladies mentales, les meilleures pratiques, l'amélioration des performances et l'élimination des silos. La collaboration entre les partenaires en santé, les personnes, les famille et les élus a été le pilier de l'initiative. The Forum provided an opportunity to create alliances, collaboration and networking. Un rapport en fut ressorti contenant 25 recommandations. Un comité de suivi fut établi pour assurer le suivi aux recommandations par les partenaires participants. The recommendations touch on (1) the need for stable funding and collaboration with First Nations, (2) protecting the most vulnerable, (3) identifying new promising approaches, (4) Recognizing Cultural Competency and Linguistic Requirements and (5) overcoming stigma in our attitudes, language and practice.

How does your presentation make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Creating opportunities for collaboration among all community stakeholders, services providers and decisions makers contributes to breaking silos, build accountability and stimulate public momentum in the transformation of a Mental Health System,. It is also an opportunity for public awareness, ownership and responsibility

What will others learn from your presentation?

Primarily, it is an opportunity to learn about the impact of citizen and community initiative in becoming a significant partner in the transformation of the mental health system long neglected so the rights of children, youth, emerging adults and their families to readily access efficient mental health care, and the range of services required at par with physical health care

What is a challenge you would like some help with?

Alliances and collaboration and networking needs to move beyond the boundaries of a province in Atlantic Canada to include an opportunity to share on best practices and innovative initiatives that are inclusive. I need assistance for creating an Atlantic Mental Health Forum in conjunction with the planned New Brunswick Provincial Mental Health Forum 2018.

Main Presenter

Albert Cyr
Chair, Follow up committee, Provincial Mental Health Forum 2015

PROFILE DE : Albert Cyr

Présent: Retraité depuis 2009 Activiste santé mentale: équité d'accès et de services de santé mentale;
Président, Comité Consultatif communautaire en Santé Mentale, Vitalité zone 1. Président, Forum Provincial

en santé mentale 2015 Président, Comité de suivi au Forum provincial en santé mentale 2015 Membre du comité local de rétablissement, Vitalité zone 1 Membre du Comité provincial de rétablissement du Nouveau-Brunswick Membre du groupe de famille chez "Accès-Esprits ouverts Nouveau-Brunswick" Participant invité, Conférence consensuelle sur la santé mentale des adultes émergents: Faire de la transition une priorité au Canada, 2-4 novembre 2015. Membre du Groupe de travail du Gouvernement sur les "Ordonnances de traitement communautaire, 2015-2016 Personnel: Père d'un jeune adulte qui souffre de Schizophrénie. Acadien ,Membre de la minorité linguistique du Nouveau-Brunswick carrière: Psychologue, en clinique de santé mentale, en éducation et en privé; Directeur Régional, Services de Santé Mentale, Bathurst - Péninsule - Miramichi; Directeur Régionale , Services Communautaires intégrés(Santé mentale, Santé publique et Services sociaux), Moncton. Éducation: Maîtrise en Psychologie clinique, Université de Moncton; Doctorat en Psychologie, Développement de programme et clinique, Fielding Institute, Californie

5. The Young Mothers' Project

Presenter: Caralee McDaniel, Coordinator, In-home Family Support Program, Dartmouth Family Centre

Research tells us that at least 20% of new mothers experience postpartum mood disorders, 30 % report anxiety interfering with functioning, and many more experience significant difficulties in coping and adjusting. A mother's mental health is critical to ensuring a secure attachment relationship with her child. The Young Mothers' Project, collaborative by design and intention, between the IWK Health Centre Mental Health and Addictions Program's Maternal Mental Health clinicians, and Dartmouth Family Centre. The project sought to deliver mental health assessment and follow-up services to young mothers 17 to 24, in the communities where they lived, connected to the other parenting supports and education available in a Family Resource Centre. Mothers were engaged with high risk of mental health and attachment problems, arising from their family history of mental illness, prior trauma and mental health problems of their own presenting in childhood and adolescence. Provided by social work and psychiatrist part-timers, working with and through the FRC staff, 75 mothers received mental health assessment, 180 follow-up therapy visits and 50 women attended group skills based therapies for emotional regulation and attachment based parenting. Five young fathers participated in a pilot father's group, also around emotional regulation and parenting role adjustment. Dr. Joanne MacDonald, Perinatal Psychiatrist, and Coleen Flynn Social Work Therapist provided the clinical services. Parent educators co-led some group work. The Family Centre provided space for programming, quality childcare within a child development program and nutritious snack for both women and children.

How does your presentation make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Mothers', and fathers', mental health provides a base for young children to develop the secure attachment, brain development and emotional regulation that are the foundations of positive child mental health. Anxious parents are more likely to raise anxious children; emotionally volatile and irritable parents are more likely to have their children demonstrate emotional lability and behavioral disruption. Attachment theory has shown that a mother's mental health is critical to ensuring a secure attachment relationship with her baby. The Young Mothers Project trialled interventions in a community setting intended to develop practical skills and change for the mother herself, and for her parenting capacity and efficacy.

What will others learn from your presentation?

Community service providers are essential partners in this kind of novel community mental health care to an at-risk population. Family Resource Centre staff provide peer-driven endorsement of the importance of mothers' mental health to child development, providing opportunities for women to explore their strengths and concerns regarding their mental health, identifying the potential for mental health problems, improving mental health literacy, reducing stigma, and facilitating access to mental health treatment. The poster presentation will describe the philosophies and problem-solving in the development of the project, the specifics of the group interventions and preliminary findings.

What is a challenge you would like some help with?

This project was a time-limited, resource-limited pilot. Our challenge is how to continue this targeted collaborative work from our community-based NPO ongoing with partners in Mental Health and Addictions within the Health Authority. An additional challenge is providing the outcome measures that will make the case for early mental health intervention for children beginning with their parents, particularly their mothers. Ultimately we are seeking active cross-sectoral interventions that serve our most vulnerable at critical points in child development.

Main Presenter

Caralee McDaniel

Coordinator, In-home Family Support Program, Dartmouth Family Centre

Caralee McDaniel is the Coordinator of the In-home Family Support Program at Dartmouth Family Centre. The home visiting program is a partnership with Public Health Service's Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative. She has worked at the Centre for almost 17 years, first as a Community Home Visitor with the Growing Together Project, funded by the now-defunct Invest in Kids and later within the current model.

6. Minding the Gap: Self Organization & Advocacy of Peoples in the Trans Community

Presenter: Derek Biso, Windsor, Ontario (formerly of PEI)

The Trans Action Group is a cooperative group therapy and individual network support program that has been developed in Windsor Ontario. The Trans Action Group is conducted under clinical supervision and in cooperation with local LGBT2SQA Pride organizations, this program is developing a model for like organizations to support the needs of people in the trans community and nonheteronormative peoples. Participation in the Trans Action Group is intergenerational but is predominately composed of emerging adults and youth. Mentorship and peer support is fostered in the group therapy component, complimenting the individual service navigation and psychotherapy supports available. The initial success of the organization is promising to meeting the gap that challenges many trans peoples in accessing services and supports and actualizing their human potential. Trans peoples are a vulnerable population of intersecting identities who are targeted by hate, violence, and ignorance and subject to higher rates of trauma. The Trans Action Group was born out of the need of a community for support and help accessing services basic to survival. As trans identities gain protection in the Canadian charter we are challenged to see that freedom enshrined in lived-experiences of people everyday.

How does your presentation make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

The Trans Action Group is a 16-week group therapy program developed in partnership by people of the trans community, clinicians, and local LGBT2SQA Pride organizations. The program is building a body of research to continue to develop direct supports and service navigation for trans people and to also work with the community to educate service providers and evolve institutional language. Affirmation and validation of our identity is fundamental for our capacity to flourish as individuals, and yet there are people - even here in Canada, that rejects respecting our person and who we are. TAG is actively promoting health and well-being and also compiling research to build a body of evidence to help develop good practices for meeting the needs of all peoples.

What will others learn from your presentation?

Our presentation will provide information on language to adopt to communicate effectively with people of all gender identities, illustrate the institutional barriers that exist and provide prompts for fostering safe and as inclusive as possible spaces. The presentation will explore the power of cooperation to make things happen and challenge our understanding of research, resilience, and revolution. My aim is to inspire those who attend our presentation to help stand in solidarity with people in the trans community and assist in fostering a culture that embraces our diverse identities and ways of being in the world.

What is a challenge you would like some help with?

The resources available to people in the trans community is often limited due to the access to capital, employment, supports and services. The barriers are structural, social, and personal in nature. Poverty, homelessness, trauma, and addiction are plagues upon people in the trans community; these diseases rooted in rejection, alienation, and dehumanization. It is important for those working as service providers, researchers, policy makers, and community (and conference) organizers to reach out and build relationships with those who live on the fringe of society, are marginalized and cast as outsiders. We need to bring each other into the centre again and recognize our shared web of relations and help each other actualize each of our potential as humans. We need help creating a culture of care, centred in compassion, understanding, and insight. We need help accessing resources to help support the creation of this culture.

Presenter:

Derrick Biso

Participant, Trans Action Group, Windsor

Derrick Biso was conceived, born and raised on Prince Edward Island. They now reside in Windsor Ontario with their partner Jann. Derrick is an active citizen, having volunteered with the PEI Pride organization and participated in the provincial election of the Island legislature and also a thespian and performance artist they have a deep network of relations in the East Coast. Now located in Windsor, Derrick is continuing their work with the LGBTQ2SA community and local Pride organizations and also building a network of cooperatives with local food systems, artist associations, and community research and program development organizations. Derrick graduated for the University of Prince Edward Island with a Bachelor of the Arts in Philosophy and Diversity and Social Justice Studies. Certified as a yoga instructor and practicing as a graphic designer and media maker, Derrick is also pursuing a Masters of Philosophy at the University of Windsor.

7. JCSH Resources Support Child and Youth Mental Health

Presenter: Katherine Eberl Kelly, Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium on School Health

The Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) is a partnership that spans the health and education sectors at the ministry level in all provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec. It is also supported at the federal level by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Thus, 25 government departments of Education and Health/Wellness have committed to the health, well-being, and learning of all children and youth in Canada. The mental well-being of each student is fundamental to the work of the JCSH and positive mental health, youth engagement, and health-education links are at the forefront of all collaborations across ministries; across provinces and territories; and across research, policy, and practice. JCSH has committed to providing resources that reflect the best evidence and the best practices in the country, free of charge and available in English and French. This poster will highlight some of our work with these research and practice teams to show how these tools can work in every school and with every student. As is the case with holistic positive mental health practice, these resources will benefit all students and school communities, regardless of other health, well-being, or learning challenges.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Positive Mental Health is positively correlated with improved student autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Research and experience have demonstrated that youth engagement and youth-adult partnerships can change a young person's life for the better. The Healthy School Planner helps schools build healthy school environments that help students succeed academically and prepare youth to make healthy choices as adults. These resources all work with the evidence-based Comprehensive School Health Framework to improve child and youth mental health.

What will others learn from your project?

Visitors to the poster will be able to see the variety and depth of these resources, the result of blending research, policy, and practice expertise in order to build tools that benefit children and youth throughout Canada. In addition, the poster will provide participants with a number of practical tips and applications that contribute to improved health and wellness in schools and school communities.

How does your project demonstrate scale up of a tested innovation that promotes child and youth mental health in Atlantic Canada?

JCSH has long had a commitment to being a bridge of research, policy, and practice leading to improved children and youth health, well-being, and learning. The resources shown in this poster exemplify that collaboration in action as all researchers involved in each resource worked extensively with policy and practice leaders on the Research Advisory Committees from throughout the country for review and feedback. Each of the resources took more than a year to bring together.

Main Presenter

Katherine Eberl Kelly

Executive Director, Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health

Katherine Kelly was appointed Executive Director of the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH) in 2010. Katherine holds an M. ED in Leadership and Learning from the UPEI, as well as a B.Ed from the University of Regina and a B.A. from the University of Saskatchewan. She has held variety of senior level

positions in the health and education systems including Director of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Relations, Chief Executive Officer of a regional health authority, and Director of Child and Family, Mental Health and Addictions. She has also been a lecturer in the UPEI Faculty of Education and a classroom teacher.

8. THRIVE St. F. X using Transitions

Presenters: Cat McIntyre, Tarun Porter, Dr. Chris Gilham, Antigonish, NS

THRIVE: Don't Just Survive University is a pilot-project board game that aims to increase both mental health literacy and life skills in students transitioning from high school into university. Players play collaboratively by helping and supporting each other with the end goal being to beat the board. Each turn, players are challenged with real-lived experiences that can cause significant stress; players have different resources available and can utilize resources to mediate their own stress levels or, they may utilize resources to help a friend through a stressful time. The goal of the game is to teach students about the seven categories of life skills: school, moving out/living with roommates, financial management, relationships (romantic, parental, peer group, etc.), sex and sexuality, managing stress, and mental health and disorders. By having students interact with stressors in these sections, they have an opportunity to "play through" an array of challenging life events, with no risk. They build skills in finding resources to support themselves through times of stress, and are given a space to think about the ways that they live with their stress in addition to acquiring self-care skills. While Thrive disseminates important information to students, it also provides an excellent resource for self-reflection, stress-management, and self-advocacy skills.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

THRIVE as a game is built directly out of Transitions, a document created by Dr. Stan Kutcher from Dalhousie university. The goal of Transitions is to help students build life skills which aid in managing the difficult and often jarring transition from high school to university. It is the first Canadian publication of its kind. Containing mental health self-help information, Transitions can be tailored to increase help-seeking efficacy as local, provincial, and national resources are included. Transitions is a formidable resource. Thrive is an engaging way to introduce Transitions to students, as well as direct them to specific strategies directly in the resource via game play.

What will others learn from your project?

We know that students can increase their mental health knowledge from peer-to-peer interaction, using Transitions and peer led workshops (Gilham, Austen, Wei, & Kutcher, 2017). Recently, Transitions was reviewed by our team and we created a workshop based on primary points of the document which was presented to university students at St. Francis Xavier University. In this workshop, we discussed clear evidence regarding the prevalence of mental illness, basic literacy skills in speaking safely about mental illness, and self-advocacy. We also included pre-and-post presentation surveys which indicated that having the information presented in this format increased student mental health literacy. Thus, we suggest that by using the board game others will learn material presented in Transitions while learning collaboratively with peers. Furthermore, while Transitions is primarily targeted to students transitioning from high school to university, any player who interacts with the game will learn how to develop healthy life-skills that contribute to their knowledge of managing life-stressors in addition to improving their mental health literacy. Being that THRIVE is built out of Transitions, the content, knowledge, and skills that the board game interacts with is evidence-based best-practice for supporting mental health literacy in schools, communities, and campuses.

How does your project demonstrate scale up of a tested innovation that promotes child and youth mental health in Atlantic Canada?

By formatting Transitions in the way of a board game, we have scaled up the innovative document created by Dr. Kutcher. While our current audience is primarily first year university students, the structure and content of THRIVE could quite easily be formatted for high school students in addition to younger students. Furthermore, THRIVE could be paired with our Transitions workshop in order to create more engagement with mental health literacy and more opportunities for students to consider their methods for self-care during times of stress.

Reference Gilham, C., Austen, E., Wie, Y., & Kutcher, S. (2017). Improving mental health literacy in post-secondary students: Field testing the feasibility and potential outcomes of a peer led approach. Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health (in review).

Main Presenter

Cat MacIntyre

THRIVE Teamlead, St. Francis Xavier University

Cat and Tarun are second year Bachelor of Education students at St. Francis Xavier University. Through various university experiences, each discovered a passion for mental health literacy and awareness programs. Most recently, Cat has worked alongside Dr. Chris Gilham, Tarun Porter, and Dr. Stan Kutcher (Dalhousie) to take Transitions and create their very own mental health literacy project to be released to Residence Life Programming. Being a future teachers, Cat and Tarun believe in advocating for safe spaces for all students, and know that mental health literacy and resources are critical in helping teachers help students reach success in life.

9. Exploring Perspectives Towards Establishing a Creative Arts Therapies Practitioner Association

Presenter: Alicia Arsenault, Charlottetown, PEI

Creative arts therapies [CATs] represent a collection of techniques utilizing one or several elements of creative arts as the main tool within the therapy and are becoming a popular alternative to traditional therapies and medications for a variety of conditions including improving child and adolescent mental health. My research examined the awareness of creative arts therapies within a community, and the interest level in the establishment of a practitioner association by gathering data from practitioners in related fields. Sixteen practitioners completed an interview or survey. Two sets of questions were designed; one set for participants specifically engaging in creative arts therapies for their work, and one set for those who utilize elements of the creative arts in their work without therapeutic intent. Participants answered between 16 and 19 questions about their work-based affiliation to CATs, their knowledge of creative arts therapies, and their potential interest in an association for practitioners. Results indicated the majority of participants were unaware of services available in the community, and were unable to fully define the term creative arts therapies. All but one participant indicated some level of interest in a practitioner association, yet most expressed concerns or conditions to accompany their interest.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Moving evidence to action is at the heart of my research; the evidence for the positive impact on the mental health of children and youth from involvement in the arts and creative arts therapies is abundant. The next step is communication and partnership across disciplines. By making this crucial step practitioners can continue to forge the field and share best practices to grow.

What will others learn from your project?

My project is an opportunity to showcase the value of creative arts therapies specifically within the realm of child and youth mental health to practitioners, parents and other presenters who may not be familiar with them. Additionally; my project brings to light specific struggles practitioners in Atlantic Canada encounter and may serve as a catalyst for seizing opportunities to connect with others and strengthening this community of practice through networking.

How does your project demonstrate evidence of promising collaborative practices, policies, research?

My research suggests there is opportunity within Atlantic Canada for building policy to support research. Specifically, collaborative practices should be developed with sustainability in mind to build a lasting community of practice versus short-term solutions. Abundant research exists supporting the positive impact of arts therapies on mental health; my research identified a need for increased and cohesive communication between practitioners and a clearer understanding of the term 'creative arts therapies' as essential next steps

Presenter

Alicia Arsenault

Alicia is a passionate advocate for involvement in the arts, and recently completed her Master's in Child and Youth study focusing on the impact of creative arts on mental health and for individuals with developmental delays. While attending MSVU Alicia created an improvisation and movement program for inpatient youth at the IWK, and has been involved with CMHA's "I'm Thumbody" program on PEI for several years.

10. Imagine NB: Empowering Young Leaders

Presenter: Arianne Melara Orellana, New Brunswick Multicultural Council

Imagine NB: Empowering Young Immigrant Leaders in New Brunswick As Canadian-born youth begin planning their future during high school, immigrant youth also begin to explore options, but their pathway is often less clear, especially in New Brunswick. Because only 4% of New Brunswick's population are immigrants, compared with 21% across Canada, it is less common for immigrant youth to have role models to look up to, who have lived the immigrant experience. The research conducted thus far has revealed that barriers faced by immigrant youth exist and include exclusion and marginalization based on race, cultural identity, language and lack of community connections or awareness of professional opportunities. Challenges like these affect how immigrant youth integrate in the community and their mental health during the acculturation and settlement process. The NB Multicultural Council (NBMC) is seeking to change that. NBMC is launching Imagine NB – a bilingual 2 year leadership accelerator for immigrant youth (ages 15-17). The program will encompass leadership development workshops, meetings with key leaders, mentorship, youth-led projects and the opportunity for immigrant youth to impact the province with their unique talents and perspectives. Imagine NB is designed as a platform where immigrant youth can demonstrate their leadership and further advance their skills to help them be better positioned to access leadership positions and contribute to shaping the future of our province. Imagine NB will deepen cross-cultural understandings and dialogues within schools and in the larger community, will contribute to building more inclusive communities, and will help immigrant youth to develop a stronger sense of belonging to our cities.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Imagine NB highlights the challenges most commonly experienced by immigrant youth in New Brunswick and how these challenges affect youth's integration into the province which include social, economic, and psychological aspects. This project is seeking a creation of a platform where immigrant youth can develop their skills and be better positioned to be leaders in the province which in turn, addresses challenges like marginalization and exclusion due to lack of community connections or awareness on Canadian culture.

What will others learn from your project?

Imagine NB will give an opportunity for others in New Brunswick to learn about challenges commonly experienced by immigrant youth, what these challenges look like, and why these challenges might exist in the first place. It will also be an opportunity for New Brunswickers to interact with cohort of immigrant young leaders and learn what type of leadership they bring to the province. This program will also deepen and increase cross-cultural dialogues, understandings, and perspectives helping to make schools and the larger community a more inclusive and connected environment.

How does your project demonstrate evidence of promising collaborative practices, policies, research?

The project demonstrates evidence through one of the most important research tools available to us: immigrant youth themselves, their voice, their lens and their lived journeys and recollection of experiences. The focus groups conducted at the beginning of April, as well as the information gathered through interviews and conversations at forums and conferences organized and planned by immigrant youth and social workers working primarily with newcomer youth, provide a wealth of knowledge in terms of what practices have been used for similar programs and how to potentially ameliorate the aforementioned challenges.

Presenter

Arianne Melara Orellana

Project Manager, New Brunswick Multicultural Council

Arianne was born and raised in El Salvador. She came to Canada as an international student and completed her liberal arts degree in International Relations and Economics at St. Thomas University. Arianne was the recipient of the Winfield Poole prize for the best Honours thesis in Political Science and the Prize for Economics in fourth year. Before joining NBMC, she worked for WE (formerly known as Free The Children) in Toronto supporting youth and educators in experiential service-learning programs, facilitated numerous youth workshops, and project managed a youth summit in Waterloo. She has joined NBMC as the project manager of a Multicultural Youth Leadership Program. She speaks Spanish, English, and French.