

Child and Youth Health Network

March Planning Session Notes and Next Steps

March 16, 2018

INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

Formed in 2014, the Child and Youth Health Network (C&YHN) came together as a multi-stakeholder collaborative composed of community organizations, municipal and provincial representatives, the Capital Regional District, and Island Health. The C&YHN emerged out of discussions with service delivery organizations, health practitioners, front-line staff working with children and youth, systems leaders, parents, and children and youth. All voiced the critical need for a comprehensive approach to the health and well-being of children and youth.

Since 2014, the C&YHN has worked to:

- ✓ Bring leaders from across community groups, organizations and systems that work with children and youth together to explore a multi-sectoral approach to addressing issues;
- ✓ Engage a broad cross-section of community, with over 200 members involved in Network events;
- ✓ Obtain financial support from a number of community and government funders; and
- ✓ Create an Index of Connectedness tool, which has been developed in collaboration with experts in the field of child and youth development.

The C&YHN, despite generous grants from local funders, has not been successful in creating a sustainable plan for future work. The challenge of on-going funding, and diminishing participation by network members lead the Backbone Committee of the C&YHN to call members together to discuss the future of the C&YHN. The following information is a brief representation of the resulting discussion and next steps.

THE SESSION

Network members were invited to participate in a review/planning session held on March 7, 2018 at Burnside Gorge Community Centre. Twenty-one member representatives attended the session, (see pages 4 & 5 for the list of participants). The purpose of the session was to review the achievements of the C&YHN to date and determine if there is to be a future direction for the Network. The session was facilitated by Catherine Schissel.

The Value of the Child and Youth Health Network:

Participants were asked to begin by identifying the value of the Network. Responses included the following:

- The Network presented the possibility of working differently, exploring ways to better serve families and increasing access to, and coordination of, services;
- A multi-sectoral initiative that worked to support coordination between complex systems;
- Providing a place to come together and stop the busy work and reflect on the higher level issues;
- Providing an opportunity to build important connections between community services and system players;
- Bringing people together who are close to the work and inspiring them to work differently;
- Focusing on children and youth;
- Exploring shared measurement;
- Bringing together new and different players; and
- Creating a shared vision.

Achievements and Challenges for the Network:

Participants were then asked to identify the achievements of the Network. Responses include the following:

- Building relationships and bringing diverse people together to work on the issue;
- Identifying common concerns;
- The 'measures of connectedness' project;
- Engagement of others through the working groups/constellations;
- Engagement of funders and funding from multiple sources;
- Exchange of ideas and knowledge generation (provincial level);
- Youth voice;
- Individual learning of network participants; and
- Increased understanding of the challenges in system level change.

Participants also identified the following challenges for the Network:

- The complexity of balancing the desire for action with planning and dialogue;
- The collective impact model, it was new and quite prescriptive;
- The time commitment and capacity of organizations to do this type of work, especially smaller community organizations;
- The challenge to find on-going funding to support network coordination;
- The lack of connection with other networks doing similar work in the community, especially the Local Action Teams;
- Indigenous representation;
- Authentic and on-going participation by youth;
- Engaging high level sector representation, especially from provincial Ministries.
- Having the work of Network inform the organizations that were participating in the work - taking it back into organizations and changing practice;
- Willingness to be uncomfortable, look at issues of power and privilege and embracing the messiness of change;
- Balancing between being very broad, while having something concrete for people to rally around; and
- Lack of clarity around goals and really understanding the focus of the Network.

Future of the Network:

Participants were then asked to reflect on everything that had been discussed to this point and to answer the following difficult, but important question: Should the Network continue? If yes, in what form and for what purpose? If no, then what?

- Everyone agreed that doing collaborative work was critically important, especially in the area of children and youth.

- They also agreed that coming together to address complex issues and finding new ways to achieve system level change was not only critical, but may be some of the most important work we can do to truly make population level changes and support health outcomes.
- However, it was acknowledged that at this point the work of the Network was being shouldered by the Backbone Committee, which is only 3 Network members plus the Coordinator, and that this is not a sustainable model going forward.
- Also, sustainable funding continues to be a challenge and it is was never the intention of the Network to compete against other community organizations for local grant funding.

NEXT STEPS

After much thoughtful and honest conversation it was agreed that at this time there is not sufficient capacity to continue with the work of the Network in its present form. The following were then agreed up as next steps to wrap up the work of the Network in its current state:

- The Coordinator will continue to work on the deliverables for the current project funding, which will conclude in May 2018;
- There will be a community session in May to wrap up the measures of connectedness projects and present the findings from this work;
- The Backbone Committee will explore the possibility to capturing the work of the Network, including process, challenges, achievements, etc. into a final report to help inform other collaborative initiatives; and
- Members of the Network that are interested in continuing the work on child and youth mental health will work with the Foundry Victoria (a youth mental health hub), to explore how they could support the further development of a collaborative network on the issue. Justine Thomson from Need2 and Bronwyn Dunbar from the Children’s Health Foundation of Vancouver Island will act as point people for this next step.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

The following individuals participated in the discussion:

- Amanda Ng, CRD
- Amy Rosborough, Island Health practicum student
- Areli Hermanson, Island Health
- Barb Park, HN coordinator
- Bronwyn Dunbar, CHFVI – Children’s Health Foundation of Vancouver Island
- Catharine Berghuis, Island Health
- Colleen Hobson, ED Saanich Neighbourhood Place
- Jayna Brulotte, Victoria Foundation
- Jason Jones, Saanich Parks and Rec
- Jen Harrison, Youth Program Quality Initiative and Foundry and Local Action Team
- Justine Thomson, NEED2
- Kathy Easton, Island Health
- Kelly Greenwell, Quadra Village Community Centre

- Kirsten Anderson, Greater Victoria Public Library
- Leann Finlay, Burnside Gorge Community Centre
- Lisa Fenton, Success by Six
- Maya Molander, Fernwood NRG (Neighbourhood Resource Group)
- Morgan Fankboner Island Health Public Health
- Petra Chambers-Sinclair, Biohack U
- Suzanne Cole, Burnside Gorge Community Association
- Tracy Cullen, Horner Foundation

Thank you for your time and thoughtful contributions.