



Policy Wise
for Children & Families

GENERATING NEW EVIDENCE

PROJECT AND RESEARCH REPORT

2018-2019

We connect people with evidence.



INTRODUCTION AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

OUR VISION

Children, youth,
and families thrive
in respectful, safe,
and supportive
environments shaped
by wise decisions.

OUR MISSION

To inform, identify,
and promote
effective policy and
practice to improve
the well-being of
children, families,
and communities.

Welcome to the 2018-2019 edition of the Generating New Evidence Project and Research Report for PolicyWise for Children & Families.

This document provides an overview of the projects and research from the past year, pulls out some key highlights of each, and indicates what next steps are planned, if any.

If you are interested in scheduling a presentation on any of these projects or research, or would like to be put in touch with a researcher, please send a detailed request to info@policywise.com.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION?

Knowledge mobilization (KMb) is about “making evidence accessible, understandable and useful” for people to make informed decisions. A comprehensive approach to KMb requires commitment to core principles and leading practices in KMb. Fundamentally, KMb practice involves building connections and understanding; connecting people to people, people to information, and people to leading practices. To do this successfully, we are committed to mobilizing and building capacity among staff to apply consistent approaches in areas such as engagement, change management, communications, information management, and implementation.



Our primary goal being to create and maintain focus on the use of data, information, evidence, and knowledge to advance child, family, and community well-being.

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ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: PREVENTION AND PROACTIVE SUPPORTS



OVERVIEW

Over the last 15 years, numerous initiatives and approaches have been implemented in Alberta that aim to prevent adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and support children, youth, and adults who have already experienced childhood adversity. Currently, in Alberta, there is not a system-wide, common evaluation framework to monitor impact, or implementation guidelines to support the scale and spread of effective initiatives.

This project is focused on the development of a provincial framework that will support effective use of ACEs models and practices and ultimately enhance outcomes for children and youth.

HIGHLIGHTS

The project team is conducting an environmental scan which aims to outline the effectiveness, outcomes, and practice considerations of ACEs screening and assessment approaches. The scan will explore approaches overall and with attention to ACEs in specific contexts and with specific populations (e.g., Indigenous peoples, refugee populations, rural and remote areas). The scan includes an academic and grey literature review and interviews with diverse thought leaders from local and international contexts.



PROJECT

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES: PREVENTION AND PROACTIVE SUPPORTS

NEXT STEPS

Finalize and release the environmental scan. Continue to work with Alberta-based stakeholders to further understand practice-based evidence in Alberta's context; develop an evaluation framework to determine the extent that models and practices designed to prevent ACEs and promote resilience are achieving outcomes.

ALBERTA NONPROFIT DATA STRATEGY

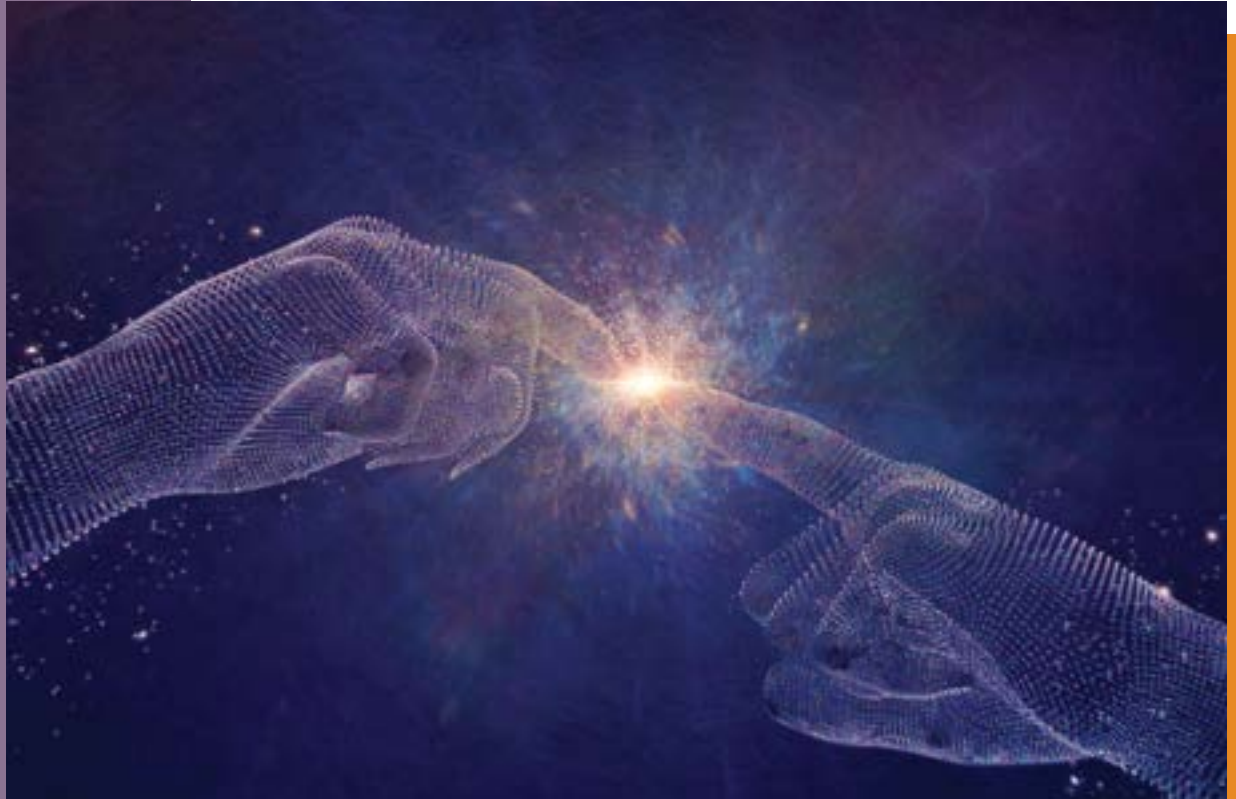
IN SUPPORT OF THE ALBERTA NONPROFIT NETWORK (ABNN)



It is well recognized that a coordinated, multipronged effort is required to enhance the use of data in the nonprofit sector. The Alberta Nonprofit Network (ABNN) and the Alberta Government has brought partners together to take the initial steps towards an Alberta Nonprofit Data Strategy. These initial steps, or phases, are meant to build the foundation, bring partners together, and inform future development of a full Alberta Nonprofit Data Strategy.

Phase I of this work, led by the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations with support from Alberta Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, identified challenges and opportunities, and assessed the sector's capacity regarding the development of a provincial data strategy. Phase I built awareness and engagement amongst a broad range of stakeholders in Alberta and to move towards expanding the acquisition, analysis, and utilization of data within the nonprofit sector. A document, Alberta Provincial Data Strategy Roadmap, 2019 (Roadmap) was created, which included a summary of feedback and recommendations moving forward in developing an Alberta Nonprofit Data Strategy.

Phase II will build upon Phase I by developing plans for the initiatives identified in the Roadmap. Phase II will initially focus on engaging in further stakeholder consultations to get input on proposed initiatives to address sector priorities, and will then move on to planning the implementation of each initiative. PolicyWise will take the lead in the development of Phase II, leveraging its expertise and existing data initiatives focused on the nonprofit sector.



PROJECT

ALBERTA NONPROFIT DATA STRATEGY

IN SUPPORT OF
THE ALBERTA
NONPROFIT
NETWORK (ABNN)

HIGHLIGHTS

Four key areas were identified as the focus areas for Phase II:

1. Government of Alberta Datasets
2. Nonprofit Datasets/Data sharing
3. Nonprofit Data Hub
4. Data Capacity Building

NEXT STEPS

The Data Strategy Steering Committee will be struck and engaged to refine priorities and begin initial steps. A high-level environmental scan will be conducted to support engagement of stakeholders in development of initiative plans.

APPRENTICESHIP DATA INTEGRATION ENGAGEMENT PROJECT



OVERVIEW

Alberta's Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) system is a partnership between industry and government. The goal is that apprentices, trainers, employers, and government work together to create an industry-focused, highly skilled, internationally-competitive workforce. Programs to support apprentices are also delivered through external not-for-profit community agencies funded by the Government of Alberta and other non-governmental sources. To better understand the current landscape of the data between Alberta Advanced Education and its partnering agencies, a scoping exercise was conducted with Women Building Futures, Careers: the Next Generation, Trade Winds to Success, Skills Canada Alberta that offer many services such as training, information sessions, workshops, and matchmaking to connect apprentice candidates to employers.

HIGHLIGHTS

PolicyWise engaged with staff and leadership from the agencies to investigate the types of data being collected and how the data was collected during service delivery. Further discussions took place to define key gaps in knowledge that could be addressed by better data integration between the Government of Alberta and apprenticeship agencies. Five key areas were identified: 1) the ability to track the journeys of learners across programs and organizations, 2) data to support better assessment of readiness of learners to start apprenticeships, 3) return on investment in supportive programs and apprenticeships, 4) data about broader industry outlooks to define areas of need for apprentices, and 5) long term tracking of apprentice outcomes.

Agencies expressed a strong desire to support a data integration initiative, and recognize that this engagement represents the beginning of an opportunity to link data and generate the evidence they have long desired. They stressed that linking the rich data they have of their clients with the outcome data collected at Alberta Advanced Education would greatly support service delivery. Ultimately, the success of their clients, not just in their employment and education outcomes, but in their lives overall could be better supported by this evidence.



NEXT STEPS

No further steps required.

PROJECT

APPRENTICESHIP
DATA
INTEGRATION
ENGAGEMENT
PROJECT

BENT ARROW:

EXPLORING CEREMONY AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICE IN SERVICE DELIVERY



This project is a partnership between Children's Services, Bent Arrow, and PolicyWise. It seeks to understand and describe the impact of ceremony and traditional practices in promoting and restoring child and family well-being. As part of the methodological process, PolicyWise participated in cultural teachings, practices, and activities at Bent Arrow prior to engaging with service providers and client families. An illustrated explanation of Bent Arrow's service delivery process is a key deliverable for this project.

Important thematic messages from the findings include:

- Culture and ceremony are practiced in ways of thinking, doing, and relating to oneself and others
- Including ceremony and traditional practice within service delivery facilitates healing and promotes resilience for staff and client families. Connecting to culture, spirituality, identity, community, support workers, and kin are ways in which healing occurs and resiliency is developed.
- Offering ceremony and traditional practice in service delivery does not preclude being responsive to other cultures. A foundation of the Bent Arrow approach is that people from all different cultures are served with compassion and empathy and service practitioners meet families where they are at and understand and accommodate unique needs



PROJECT

BENT ARROW: EXPLORING CEREMONY AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICE IN SERVICE DELIVERY

NEXT STEPS

Collaborate with Bent Arrow and the graphic illustrator to develop a visual explanation of the Bent Arrow approach and ways of working. Final analysis and report writing are also underway. Project is expected to be completed by July 2019.

CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY EARLY LEARNING & OUTREACH EVALUATION (CPL)



OVERVIEW

The Calgary Public Library operates two early childhood programs out of their "Story Trucks." Facilitators use these vehicles to travel to dayhomes and Calgary Housing Complexes in select communities to deliver early childhood programming to children aged 0-5. PolicyWise has been contracted to conduct a developmental evaluation on these programs as well as to develop an evaluation framework. The developmental evaluation included conducting a document review, interviews with various stakeholders, and observations on the Story Truck. The evaluation framework that is currently in progress also incorporates staff training around data collection.

HIGHLIGHTS

The developmental evaluation was completed in December 2018. Findings from the developmental evaluation informed the second half of this project and reinforced the program approach, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. A synthesis of existing literature helped to shape the beginning of the evaluation framework. Ongoing development of the framework is underway and data collection tools and processes are currently being pilot tested in one of the programs. A working group composed of representatives from the design team and the program coordinator have met monthly with PolicyWise to provide validation on the outcomes, indicators, measures, and data collection tools. The working group has provided ongoing, valuable feedback to help contextualize the framework and identify implementation considerations.



PROJECT

CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY EARLY LEARNING & OUTREACH EVALUATION (CPL)

NEXT STEPS

After the completion of pilot testing the first program, PolicyWise will gather feedback from the facilitators and make revisions as necessary. In the Fall, facilitators will then pilot test the data collection tools in the second program. An analysis plan is underway to guide the ongoing interpretation of the collected data and allow for continuous monitoring and improvement.

CHILD AND YOUTH DATA LABORATORY (CYDL) LONGITUDINAL STUDY

EXPERIENCES OF ALBERTA CHILDREN
AND YOUTH OVER TIME,
2005/06-2010/11.



Completed

PolicyWise conducted policy-relevant analyses to support decision-making for government, community organizations, and other stakeholders. In partnership with the Government of Alberta, the CYDL focused on linking administrative data across ministries to inform policy and practice. The Child and Youth Longitudinal Study linked data for Albertans 0-30 years old over a 6-year period of time. In addition to the substantive work in past years, several research themes were identified in 2018/2019 in collaboration with participating ministries including: transitions for individuals with disabilities, shared clients of multiple systems, and homelessness. The analyses of linked-administrative data revealed complex relationships between social determinants, patterns of service use, and the outcomes of children, youth, and families.



PROJECT

CHILD AND YOUTH DATA LABORATORY (CYDL) LONGITUDINAL STUDY

EXPERIENCES OF
ALBERTA CHILDREN
AND YOUTH OVER
TIME, 2005/06-
2010/11

HIGHLIGHTS

Over the course of the project:

- Six ministries contributed data from over 20 programs.
- Ministry partners including data analysts, policy analysts, and directors participated in regular cross-ministerial research discussions with PolicyWise.
- Over 20 population profiles were generated to help contextualize services used by children and youth in Alberta.
- The interactive Program Overlap matrix was built and can be used to explore the proportion of children and youth who were linked across 20 Government of Alberta programs across six years of data.
- Over a hundred presentations were made to: ministry partners in the Government of Alberta, stakeholders in Alberta and across Canada, and at international conferences such as the International Population Data Linkage Network.

The 2018/2019 year was a productive time for the CYDL in releasing policy-relevant products on the well-being of children, youth, and families in Alberta. Reports included analyses revealing:

- The characteristics and trajectory of young adults considered high users of multiple systems. Individuals were considered high users of multiple systems, or Shared Clients, if they were prolific offenders (14 or more offenses over a 5-year period), were in the top 10% of emergency room users, and were recipients of Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) or Income Support. Compared to individuals who were not high users of multiple systems, Shared Clients were more likely to have received diagnostic codes for: mental health conditions, physical health concerns such as assaults and traumatic brain injuries, substance use, and live births. Shared Clients were also more likely to reoffend, be high users of the emergency room, and receive Income Support or AISH in the future.
- Risk factors and outcomes of visible youth homelessness. Youth who received a diagnostic code for homelessness from a physician were more likely to have received diagnostic codes for abuse, assault, substance use, a mental health condition, pregnancy, and were more likely to have been charged with an offence or have received special education services. Youth with this indicator for homelessness were more likely to be residentially instable, to receive Income Support, be charged with an offence, and to receive diagnostic codes for mental health conditions, pregnancy, and assault.
- The Child-to-Adult Transition report tells the story of how young adults with disabilities experienced the transition to adult services at 18. Compared to children without disabilities, children with disabilities were less likely to graduate, more likely to require support services, showed a higher drop in physician visits after the transition compared to before the transition, had higher corrections involvement, and were more likely to experience homelessness. In addition, the report elucidated risks and resilience factors related to the above outcomes. An academic paper was published that shows the trajectories of service use for youth with complex needs during the period that they transitioned to adult services. This paper provided evidence that more types of service use was related to poorer outcomes (e.g., lower graduation and more mental health service use), as well as longer continued use of services.
- The Early Childhood Services report tells the story of young children with disabilities' mental health and achievement after preschool and kindergarten. Compared to young children without disabilities, children with disabilities were more likely to be below expectations in school and to be seen for mental health related conditions. In addition, the report elucidated risks and resilience factors related to the being below expectations in school and to being seen for a mental health condition, with children with more severe disabilities and more service needs generally having poorer outcomes. An academic paper is also in review on when and which families with children with disabilities used family disability support services in the child's early years. This paper provides evidence that families are more likely to use services after their child is 2 years old and when they also engaged with other services.



PROJECT

CHILD AND YOUTH DATA LABORATORY (CYDL) LONGITUDINAL STUDY

EXPERIENCES OF
ALBERTA CHILDREN
AND YOUTH OVER
TIME, 2005/06-
2010/11.

NEXT STEPS

PolicyWise will continue to share results from the project and to leverage lessons learned from this work in future collaborative data integration initiatives.

CHILD BRIGHT



OVERVIEW

The Child Bright Network includes patients, families, researchers, clinicians, policy makers and other key stakeholders that work together to improve health care systems, practices, and knowledge to ensure better outcomes for children with a brain-based developmental disability and their families. It is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research under Canada's Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research and other funders. The Women and Children's Health Research Institute (WCHRI) serves as the data-coordinating centre for the network. PolicyWise, with support from WCHRI, is supporting data sharing of the 13 research projects within the network.

HIGHLIGHTS

PolicyWise will partner with WCHRI for at least three years. Activities broadly include the support of data sharing within and external to the network. Thus far, PolicyWise has been working with WCHRI to develop knowledge mobilization materials to increase awareness and start the conversation regarding data sharing between researchers, parents, and participants. PolicyWise has also reviewed documentation from the research projects to provide recommendations on data sharing.



NEXT STEPS

PolicyWise will continue to support data sharing for the Child Bright network. SAGE services will be offered to share the data as research projects enroll participants and collect data.

PROJECT

CHILD BRIGHT

CHILD INTERVENTION CLIENT FEEDBACK PILOT PROJECT



OVERVIEW

In collaboration with Children's Services, PolicyWise piloted a range of client feedback collection methods to understand the experiences of children, youth, families, and caregivers involved in the child intervention system. The purposes of this project are to identify lessons learned and recommendations for a future system-wide client feedback tool; provide insight and build knowledge about the client experience to lead to system improvements; and empower and honour the voices of children, families, and caregivers serviced by the child intervention system.

HIGHLIGHTS

Five different client feedback modalities were tested across eight regional child intervention service delivery sites across the province. For caregivers, the modality was an online survey. For children and youth, the modalities were:

- An online survey
- Indigenous sharing circles
- In-person interviews
- Arts- and play-based feedback collection

Through the modalities, children, youth, and caregivers were asked to provide their perspectives and experiences on topics related to connections and relationships, honesty, feeling listened to, permanency, safety, cultural connection, empowerment and encouragement, and transitioning to adulthood.

Participating clients and pilot site staff generally reported that the pilot reinforced the importance of hearing client voices, opinions, and experiences. Participants largely expressed that taking part in the process was a positive experience, while also providing helpful suggestions and feedback for further piloting and testing of feedback tools.



NEXT STEPS

Consolidate and report on findings related to client experience and feedback, as well as lessons learned and recommendations for future refinement of client feedback tools and approaches.

PROJECT

CHILD INTERVENTION CLIENT FEEDBACK PILOT PROJECT

COLLABORATIVE DATA LINKAGE PROJECT

PARTNERSHIP WITH C5



The Collaborative Data Linkage Project is a partnership between PolicyWise, C5 Hub, Boyle Street Community Services, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Terra Centre for Teen Parents, and Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre. The collaborative serves 30,000 clients in Edmonton.

The Collaborative Data Linkage Project aims to link and integrate data between the C5 agencies to enable closer integration of decision making, service evaluation, and planning. PolicyWise and C5 agencies will investigate the type of data collected by the agencies to assess how data can be anonymously linked and shared. To investigate the potential of linking and integrating data PolicyWise will (1) conduct analysis on the clients' journey across agencies to support a more holistic perspective of clients, (2) make recommendations for a shared intake process that encompasses the needs of the five agencies, and (3) build capacity in C5 agencies to not only understand, but also keep linking, sharing, and using data.

The Collaborative Data Linkage Project is partially funded by the Stollery Charitable Foundation and the Don & Joan Stanley Family Fund through Edmonton Community Foundation, and PolicyWise.



PROJECT

COLLABORATIVE DATA LINKAGE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP WITH C5

HIGHLIGHTS

Staff and leadership across the C5 collaborative have been engaged through two cross-agency workshops and within-agency meetings. Workshops have solidified shared priorities across the agencies, such as better integration of services and more robust reporting for advocacy of clients. Discussions have focused on information held by the agencies and the knowledge gaps that data can help address. Discussions have also focused on governance of the data and the potential to link the data using PolicyWise's LinkWise methodology.

NEXT STEPS

Data Stewardship Agreements are to be executed between PolicyWise and each agency to allow linkage and analysis of the data. Results will be interpreted in collaboration with C5 staff to ensure appropriate contextualization and application to knowledge gaps.

COLLABORATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY EVALUATION



OVERVIEW

On behalf of the Ministry of Children's Services, PolicyWise is conducting a process evaluation of Collaborative Service Delivery (CSD) in the Child Intervention system. The objectives of the evaluation are to capture and better understand the context and variations of CSD as implemented across the province, and specifically:

- Document the evolution of CSD to date, including lessons learned along the way.
- Understand how and why elements of CSD are applied and practiced in each site/region.
- Identify the core elements of CSD that are contributing to outcomes.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Completed document review, including previous evaluations, briefing notes, and practice manuals.
- Completed first round of data collection, consisting of interviews with Children's Services and external agency partner leadership.
- Shared summary of activities to date and preliminary findings with Children's Services in March 2019.



NEXT STEPS

To be confirmed

PROJECT

COLLABORATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY EVALUATION

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION



Completed

The focus of this SEED project was partnership development to identify possibilities of 'community capacity building for violence prevention'. The literature review revealed a lack of related community-based research. Phase one involved recruitment of community volunteers willing to collaboratively seek to identify strategies to reduce sexual and intergenerational violence. Over several months the group came together and shared ideas and thoughts around the issue. The reflective process was guided by questions such as: What can we do to address violence in our community? What can we do to become resources to protect ourselves and our children from violence? Through dialogue and reflection on divergent understandings and conceptualizations of sexual violence based on unique lived realities and different frames of reference, the group developed a shared framework within which discussion moved forward toward building consensus on priorities for potential action steps to prevent violence. The question then became: **how could current provincial systems of after the fact response through the criminal justice system and victim-offender interventions be reshaped to give primary emphasis and greater latitude to local community member collaboration centered on prevention?**



PROJECT

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

HIGHLIGHTS

This work affirmed that the community development strategy/ approach has strong potential to allow community volunteers to contribute insights toward addressing agreed problems at a local level. The research team's approach contributed to a greater confidence of participants in the value of their pre-existing knowledge, as well as the potential to expand that through respectful discussion in a safe space.

NEXT STEPS

The building of shared understandings is essential and represents a major investment of time and energy and a climate of trust. The investigators suggest that more applied research following the community development approach to capacity building is needed. While this project was focused on prevention of interpersonal violence, the investigators indicate that the approach would offer similar benefits on many social issues.

COMMUNITY DATA PROGRAM



The Community Data Program (CDP) is a membership-based community development initiative that facilitates access to the evidence needed to inform effective and responsive policy and program design and implementation. The CDP offers data products, analytical tools, and services that are unique in Canada and exclusive to CDP members. It enables communities across Canada to measure and track local well-being. The data is from federal sources, such as Statistics Canada, tailored to the local regional context. The CDP is led by the Canadian Council on Social Development and has operated since the mid-1990s. PolicyWise has partnered with Strathcona County and nine other small to medium municipalities to form a local CDP consortium in the greater Edmonton region. There are over 30 such regional consortia across Canada.



NEXT STEPS

As a new initiative, this initial year is critical to assess the value of such data to PolicyWise's stakeholders and consortia partners. Learning how to get the most out of the CDP is the key moving forward.

PROJECT

COMMUNITY DATA PROGRAM

DATA TO ACTION DAYS

IN SUPPORT OF THE ALBERTA NONPROFIT NETWORK (ABNN)



OVERVIEW

On February 5 and June 4, 2019, PolicyWise, in partnership with the Alberta Nonprofit Network, facilitated one-day Data to Action events in Edmonton and Calgary. The purpose was focused on learning and developing better data competency. Over 50 participants attended the full day event at the Roundhouse on MacEwan campus in Edmonton and at the Kahanoff Centre in Calgary.

Participants worked together with other stakeholders to gather information about how to think strategically about their data, what elements are needed to build organizational capacity for data and evidence, and how to draw data into compelling stories.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Featured speakers and panelists from leading organizations such as the Muttart Foundation, Homeward Trust, Edmonton Social Planning Council, Bissell Centre, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, Calgary Immigrant Education Society, Calgary Homeless Foundation, Vibrant Communities Calgary, and Calgary Counselling Centre.
- The panel discussion focused on: Successes, Lessons, and Solutions for the Nonprofit Sector.
- Three workshops offered participants the opportunity to 1) look at data as a strategic asset, 2) discuss how to build foundational pieces for organizational data competencies, and 3) tell more compelling stories with data and evidence.



NEXT STEPS

As a new initiative, PolicyWise is learning from participants and responding to how best to build capacity through conference-style events across Alberta in coming years.

PROJECT

DATA TO ACTION DAYS

IN SUPPORT OF
THE ALBERTA
NONPROFIT
NETWORK (ABNN)

DATA VISUALIZATION AND ANALYTIC TOOL COLLABORATION

WITH THE ALBERTA FIRST NATIONS
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE CENTRE
(AFNIGC)



Completed

With our partners at AFNIGC we co-created a user-friendly, standalone piece of analytic and visualization software, to be owned and freely distributed by the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre. The user-friendly tool was built in partnership with AFNIGC to help strengthen analytic capacity among First Nations in Alberta, and support First Nations in following the principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®).





PROJECT

DATA VISUALIZATION AND ANALYTIC TOOL COLLABORATION

WITH THE ALBERTA
FIRST NATIONS
INFORMATION
GOVERNANCE
CENTRE (AFNIGC)

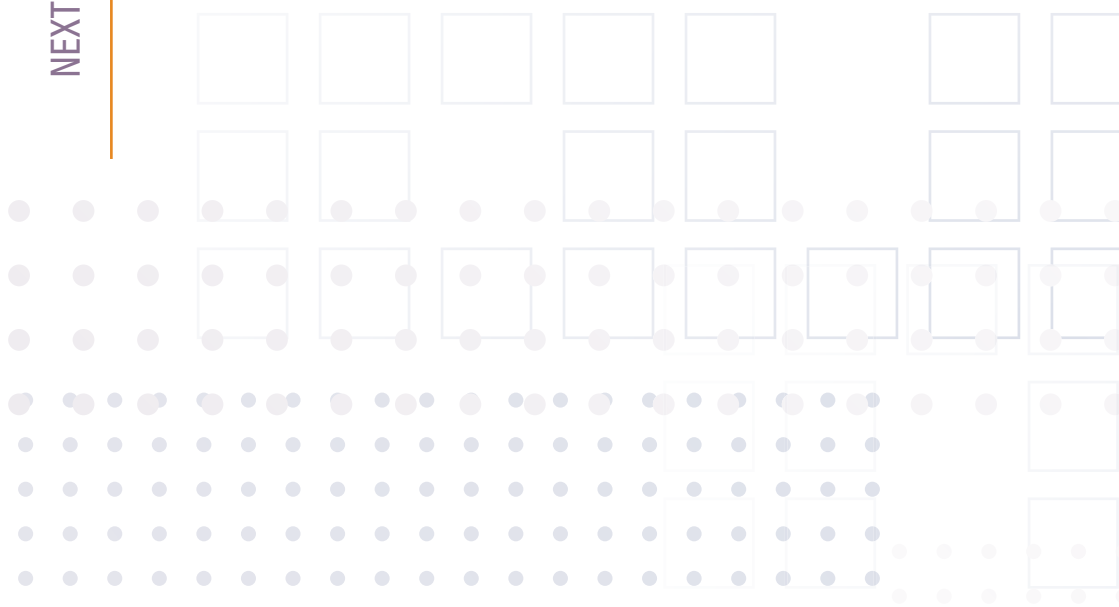
HIGHLIGHTS

The data analytics tool will be used by First Nations in Alberta as a freely available and user-friendly tool that allows:

- Technicians and decision makers to analyze and visualize their data.
- High school students the opportunity to learn more about data analysis.

NEXT STEPS

Support users of the data analytic tool by creating a video tutorial highlighting how to use the tool.



EDMONTON AND AREA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN



The Community Mental Health Action Plan is a vital partnership consisting of diverse stakeholders and experts from community and government, who are passionately invested in creating positive changes within the shared mental health system by improving system integration, the delivery of services, and the use of evidence-informed practices. We focus on providing support for service providers, who in turn are better able to support their clients.

The priorities of the Community Mental Health Action Plan focus on promoting positive mental health, ensuring Albertans can access supports during a crisis, and preventing a crisis from happening in the first place. The goals of the Action Plan are organized under the following three focus areas:

- **System Integration:** working collaboratively across sectors to share resources and increase access to the full continuum of care of mental health and wellness services
- **Service Delivery:** building capacity of on the ground professionals, community members, individuals and families in navigating the mental health system
- **Evidence Foundation:** encouraging the use of evidence as the foundation for actions and practices



HIGHLIGHTS

PolicyWise participates on the Evidence Foundation leadership group as a change agent. A key highlight is the creation of **Living Library** where **mental health champions** (lived/living experience, mental health professionals) can share their wisdom as a way to inform practice and influence policy development.

NEXT STEPS

Please read the Community Mental Health Action Plan for more details on the goals and actions over the next few years.

PROJECT

EDMONTON AND AREA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

FAMILY VIOLENCE FRAMEWORK EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION



OVERVIEW

PolicyWise supported the development of an evaluation action plan for the Framework to End Family Violence in Alberta. The framework is a collective effort of numerous ministries to prevent, reduce, and end family violence. Building on previous years' work, PolicyWise, with the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence (ICFV), completed three projects that support research and evaluation and demonstrate the impact of the framework.

HIGHLIGHTS

PolicyWise supported three evaluation projects in collaboration with the ICFV and its evaluation subcommittee:

- A report on the achievements of the framework in the past three years demonstrating GoA and AHS contributions towards strategic priority areas and goals
- Assessing the current state of data being collected by GoA related to family violence and how the data can be used to report on prevention of family violence programming and activities
- Identifying best practices for measuring the prevalence of family violence in Alberta and to establish a path for consistent collection and reporting on prevalence
- Identifying areas for improvement and next steps regarding family violence-related work



NEXT STEPS

PolicyWise will assist ICFV by facilitating a workshop to identify strategic, program, and evaluation-related priorities. Once priorities are determined, PolicyWise will implement key projects with input from ICFV.

PROJECT

FAMILY VIOLENCE FRAMEWORK EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD) COUNCIL SUPPORT & RESEARCH PROJECTS



PolicyWise supports the operations of the FASD Cross-Ministry Committee and five FASD Councils. The councils ensure Albertan's FASD needs are being met and their focus includes research and evaluation, education and training, supports and services, awareness, prevention and communications, and assessment and diagnosis.

PolicyWise streamlines communication between ministries, academics, and practitioners as well as manages the development of evaluative resources and research projects aligned to the Government of Alberta's FASD initiatives.

Key projects conducted in 2018/2019 include:

- FASD Workforce Development: Level 2 Curriculum for Education Professionals – Intermediate FASD training for individuals in the education sector to deliver quality supports, and services
- Best Practices Guide for FASD Service Delivery and Evaluation Toolkit – A guide that allows agencies to assess current service delivery and to inform future service offerings by supplying a framework to develop evidence-informed policies and practices
- FASD Informed Mentoring & Coaching: A Practice Model – A practice model for mentoring and coaching of individuals with or suspected of FASD, their families, and caregivers
- FASD Informed Navigation: A Practice Model – A model for FASD informed navigation practice, with the goal of providing individuals with FASD, their families, and caregivers coordinated care services across the lifespan that support their stability and provide continuity of care in their community
- Managing FASD Clinic Wait Lists: Recommendation to Improve Capacity and Efficiencies – A project to develop a consistent definition of wait list, provide recommendations to better track and manage individuals on wait lists, and to recommend templates to inform referred individuals about wait times and the assessment and diagnosis process



PROJECT

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER (FASD) COUNCIL SUPPORT & RESEARCH PROJECTS

NEXT STEPS

PolicyWise will assist the Cross-Ministry Council in convening a three-day planning session with stakeholders from across Alberta. This planning session will determine priorities and future project work.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AS A FOUNDATION FOR SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH. EVALUATION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY

STATUS



Initiated

OVERVIEW

Mental health problems are a pressing public health concern for adolescents in Alberta. To address this issue, recent work has focused on the promotion of positive mental health for all youth, regardless of whether an underlying mental illness is also present. By focusing on an overall state of well-being, mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention can be built on a strengths-based, inclusive foundation, with a simultaneous focus on risk and protective factors. Through this Early Career Transition Award, the investigator will specifically consider two gaps in this knowledge base. First, on optimal approaches for coordinating different systems of care, and how to then implement these approaches in sustainable, high-quality ways within the school environment; second, on gender-informed approaches to school-based mental health promotion.

HIGHLIGHTS

None at this time.



FUNDED
RESEARCH PROJECT

**HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIPS
AS A FOUNDATION
FOR SCHOOL-BASED
MENTAL HEALTH
EVALUATION,
IMPLEMENTATION,
AND SUSTAINABILITY**

NEXT STEPS

The research conducted during this award will directly inform school- and community-based school mental health practice and service delivery; fill key gaps in the research and evidence base; contribute to social policy goals that focus on realizing healthy relationships for all youth; and build a provincial collaborative approach through co-created knowledge mobilization and research engagement. This award will also be foundational for the investigator's research program development.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY PRACTICE AND POLICY TO SUPPORT HIGH-RISK YOUTH. YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STATUS



Completed

OVERVIEW

The research team completed a youth-led participatory action research (YPAR) project on youth engagement through working with youth at risk (e.g., youth without homes, street-involved youth) in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada as an in-depth case study. This extensive study, along with an integrated review of the literature, examined key perspectives of youth engagement, especially, the engagement of youth at risk in our global society at personal, social, and system levels in various life contexts (e.g., education, leisure, community). To help redefine the essence and meaning of youth engagement, key themes of youth engagement are identified including: (a) connectedness, (b) meaning-making, (c) empowerment, and (d) social justice. Practical insights into implications of such conceptualizations of youth engagement as a new framework are provided. Overall, investigators aimed to advance the definition and meaning of youth engagement through substantiating the themes or properties of youth engagement informed by the literature, while using the YPAR case study as an illustration for consolidating these themes/properties as a new framework of youth engagement.

Research Team

Jane Springett, PhD - School of Public Health, University of Alberta - *Researcher*
 Pushpanjali Dashora, PhD - Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta (Co-PI) - *Researcher*
 Tara-Leigh McHugh, PhD, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta - *Researcher*
 Anne-Marie McLaughlin, PhD, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary - *Researcher*
 Peter Smyth - Alberta Human Services, Edmonton & Area Child and Family Services - *Community Partner*
 Thérèse Lorincz-McRae - Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area - *Community Partner*
 Vanessa de Koninck, PhD, Centre for Race & Culture - *Community Partner*
 Catherine Broomfield - iHuman Youth Society - *Community Partner*



FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT

IMPROVING COMMUNITY PRACTICE AND POLICY TO SUPPORT HIGH- RISK YOUTH

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

As an in-depth case study of the youth engagement-related issues discussed here, the YPAR project on youth engagement in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, has contributed to co-creating a community of learning, practice, and support in an iterative, organic way to benefit youth at risk personally, socially, and system-wide (e.g., improved community practice and policy) using youth-centered/guided approaches. Importantly, a key learning from this multi-year YPAR project is that respectful and non-judgmental relationship-building, co-learning, and power-sharing with youth are essential to work with and engage youth at risk. Youth leaders, including Aboriginal, immigrant, and street-involved youths, were co-drivers/co-researchers to guide the trajectory of the project and to engage, inspire, and support youth at risk for their journeys toward a more positive, constructive, and meaningful life. Over 350 youth leaders' meetings were held in a safe, non-judgmental, and respectful space where opportunities for youth advocacy, capacity-building, and leadership skill development were provided.

NEXT STEPS

None at this time.

INTEGRATED HUBS

COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE HUBS FOR YOUTH

STATUS



Ongoing

OVERVIEW

This project seeks to understand and build on 'what works' in community-based youth mental health services (with a prevention and early intervention focus); initiate a community-engagement and capacity-building process that will inform the establishment of integrated youth service hubs in small urban centres in Alberta; and develop a provincial implementation framework, adaptable to local context, that allows for evidence-informed, community-based physical and virtual hubs to address youth mental health.

HIGHLIGHTS

In late 2017/early 2018 a call was released for service providers interested in implementing an Integrated Hub for youth ages 11-24 in their community by bringing together multiple, cross-sectoral community partners. This initial grant call was a two-step process where applicants first submitted an expression of interest (EOI) followed by participation in a site visit with PolicyWise. In the EOI, community applicants described their vision for an Integrated Hub in alignment with provincial parameters which included critical elements, guiding principles, and core values. Each community presented their approach to integrating existing services and redistributing resources to serve youth while incorporating these provincial parameters into their ways of working. After initial screening, communities that met the minimum scoring threshold participated in a site visit with PolicyWise.

During this visit, the PolicyWise team assessed community readiness, led the communities in an empathy mapping and service pathway activity, and shared community-specific service use data. The outcomes of these site visits were shared with each community and an external, cross-sectoral review panel was convened. Two communities were identified as successful through this independent review process. Over the past year PolicyWise has supported these communities as they progress through early phases of implementation. PolicyWise has provided implementation support, conducted developmental evaluation, shared findings, and provided a connection to the provincial landscape and direction.



FUNDED
RESEARCH PROJECT

INTEGRATED HUBS

COMMUNITY-
BASED MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICE
HUBS FOR YOUTH

NEXT STEPS

Continue to work with communities, and apply ongoing lessons learned and preliminary findings to inform ongoing implementation, evaluation, and governance work in this project.

LATE TALKING TODDLERS — PREDICTION OF A PERSISTENT LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT ASSOCIATIVE LEARNING ABILITIES

STATUS



Completed

OVERVIEW

Toddlers who are behind schedule to begin talking (late talkers) are at high risk for a diagnosis of Specific Language Impairment, one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders. Little is known about late talkers' abilities in cognitive domains outside of language because clinical tests that categorize later talkers centre on measuring their vocabulary abilities. Vocabulary abilities are not a strong predictor of later language learning given a proportion of late talkers overcome their slow start to talking. The aim of this pilot study was to measure late talkers' perceptual abilities, specifically their visual mapping and memory abilities, in order to test whether these non-language skills would predict a persistent language delay. The research team tested their Novel Shape protocol to assess the visual mapping and visual memory abilities of toddlers ranging in age from 24 to 36 months.

HIGHLIGHTS

Results showed that the Novel Shape task showed age and language level changes; with three-year old children showing improved visual mapping and memory scores compared to two-year old children and children with higher language scores showing improved visual mapping and memory scores compared to children with lower language test scores.



FUNDED
RESEARCH PROJECT

LATE TALKING TODDLERS — PREDICTION OF A PERSISTENT LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT ASSOCIATIVE LEARNING ABILITIES

NEXT STEPS

The next steps for this program of research are to apply these pilot data to seek research funding to administer the Novel Shape test protocol to a larger cohort of children, including typically developing and late talking toddlers. The team aims to follow a large cohort of toddlers and children across three developmentally sensitive time points; 24 months, 30 months, and 36 months in order to more closely examine developmental changes over time. They aim to recruit toddlers and children who show typical language development and those who show slow language development in order to closely examine the impact of language abilities on the success of this task.

Research Team

James S. Magnuson - University of Connecticut (Co-PI) - *Researcher*
Varina Russell - Ryerson University (Emeritus) - *Researcher*
Linda Allis - Alberta Health Services - *Service Provider*
Stephanie Olivella - University of Calgary - *Trainee*

LINKWISE METHODOLOGY



OVERVIEW

In examining the social context of individuals, rarely does one single data source represent a comprehensive view. Individuals interact with many social services across government, nonprofit, and private sources, as well as different health and social services. The linkage of data across these sources to enable a more comprehensive look at the context and supportive service use has proven to be a powerful way to generate policy- and program-relevant evidence. LinkWise represents a novel way of anonymously linking individual-level service data to support population-level analysis. It takes advantage of advanced data hashing techniques and a probabilistic linkage model to allow the linkage of data without the exposure of direct identifiers from partnering agencies. It is a made-by-PolicyWise solution that was applied to the Calgary Thrives project to link data between three Calgary-based nonprofit agencies. It is ready to be deployed for other government, nonprofit, or cost-recovery applications as a service.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Allows integration of data while protecting privacy
- Allows individual-level linkage between data sources without release of direct identifiers
- High sensitivity and specificity



NEXT STEPS

Use the LinkWise methodology to facilitate data sharing projects across organizations such as the Collaborative Data Linkage Project.

PROJECT

LINKWISE METHODOLOGY

MATERNAL NEWBORN CHILD AND YOUTH (MNCY) GRANTS

STRATEGIC CLINICAL NETWORK HEALTH OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT FUND – ROUND TWO



Completed

PolicyWise managed a grant competition issued by the Maternal Newborn Child and Youth (MNCY) Strategic Clinical Network™ (SCNTM). This funding call was for research and quality improvement projects to improve health and clinical care for mothers, infants, children, and youth. Three types of grants were available, including Large Targeted, Small Targeted, and Open. Targeted applications needed to specifically address identified MNCY priorities.

As part of this grant management, PolicyWise facilitated the administration and review process. This included administering and collecting registrations and applications, engaging with new and established networks for reviews, as well as participating on the Grant Steering Committee.



PROJECT

MATERNAL NEWBORN CHILD AND YOUTH (MNCY) GRANTS

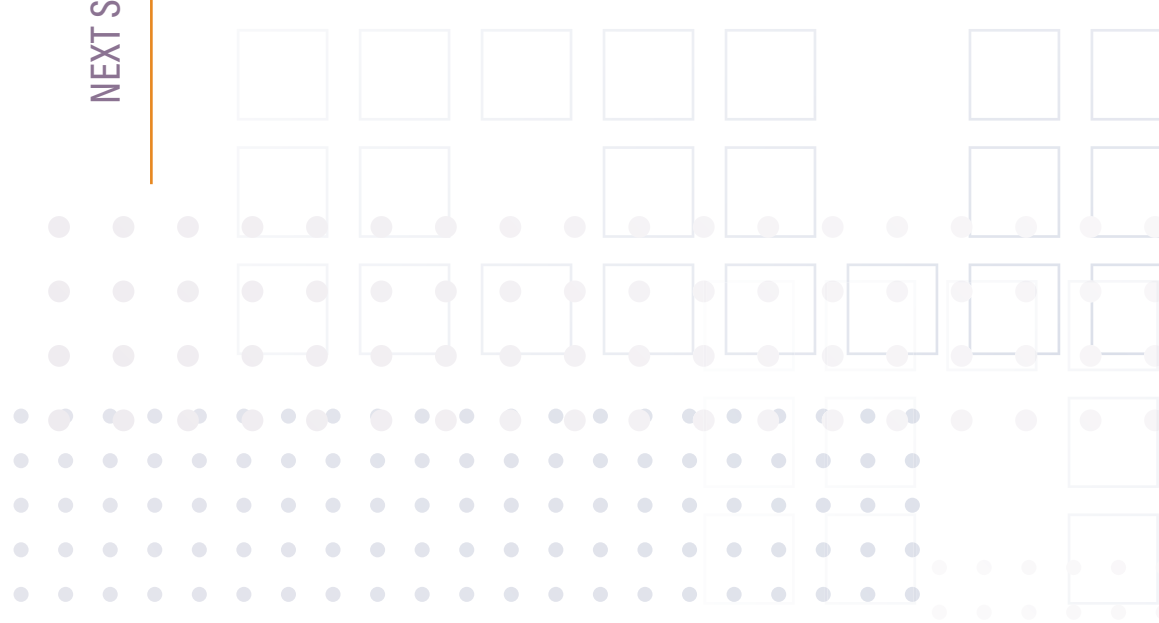
STRATEGIC
CLINICAL NETWORK
HEALTH OUTCOME
IMPROVEMENT FUND
– ROUND TWO

HIGHLIGHTS

A total of 43 applications were submitted. An external peer-review was conducted by three expert reviewers for each application. For the 129 reviews, 105 reviewers participated. The targeted applications also underwent an internal review. Scores and comments from external reviewers and the internal review discussion were all taken into consideration for the final funding decisions.

NEXT STEPS

No further steps required.



MATERNAL, YOUTH, CHILDREN AND INFANT LINKED DATA ALBERTA INITIATIVE



Completed

The Maternal, Youth, Children and Infant Linked Data Alberta Initiative (MyCHILD) is a collaboration between the Maternal, Newborn, Child and Youth Strategic Network of Alberta Health Services, Alberta Community and Social Services, PolicyWise, and Alberta Innovates. The goal is the ongoing integration of data on children with neurodevelopmental disabilities, as well as those who experience complex medical conditions from health and non-health government data sources. Such children are served through many social services including health, children's services, disability services, and others. With better integration of data between these diverse sectors, novel insight can be gained into their experiences and outcomes, thereby informing improvement in care and efficiencies of service. MyCHILD was contemplated as a linked data repository that could be leveraged to conduct analysis on children with neurodevelopmental disabilities, complex medical conditions, and many other health and social challenges.

PROJECT

MATERNAL, YOUTH, CHILDREN AND INFANT LINKED DATA ALBERTA INITIATIVE



HIGHLIGHTS

The project was not able to reach the state of extraction and linkage of data between the public body partners, but many accomplishments were achieved, and lessons were learned. A Scientific Advisory Committee and a Policy Advisory Committee were struck to identify priority research and policy questions that could be addressed by integrating the linking of data from health and non-health sources. Two proposals were put forward to take advantage of the MyCHILD linked data. PolicyWise worked with privacy experts from Alberta Health Services and Alberta Community and Social Services to develop a draft privacy impact assessment to identify risks and propose mitigation strategies. Ultimately, learnings from this project can be leveraged in future data integration initiatives. There is a clear will in the public sector to take a cross-sector approach to data.

NEXT STEPS

Share the final report.

MULTI-YEAR TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES ACTION PLAN



OVERVIEW

In collaboration with Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, PolicyWise developed and implemented a multi-year action plan to integrate trauma-informed practices in the youth criminal justice system. Trauma-informed practice is an approach that understands, recognizes, and responds to the effects of trauma in individuals. This project includes: reviewing and synthesizing evidence to inform the action plan on a yearly basis, incorporating change management throughout the implementation process, developing an evaluation and monitoring framework, working with corrections staff to identify opportunities to make trauma-informed changes, providing in-person and online training to staff, and ensuring policies and human resource practices reflect a trauma-informed lens.

HIGHLIGHTS

Activities completed in 2018/2019 include:

- Provided online and in-person training on trauma-informed practice to youth corrections staff
- Convened action teams for Young Offender Centres and Community Corrections
- Developed trauma-informed service maps for youth corrections settings. The maps identify issues and potential trauma-informed changes for each setting.
- Developed family and youth orientation guides
- Reviewed the talent acquisition process to include trauma-informed components
- Conducted surveys with staff on the organizational response to trauma
- Developed a monitoring and evaluation framework

PROJECT

MULTI-YEAR TRAUMA- INFORMED SERVICES ACTION PLAN



NEXT STEPS

The third year of the action plan will include:

- Additional trauma-informed practice training for staff
- Annual staff survey to assess staff and organizational response to trauma
- Developing and implementing a collaborative learning approach
- Implementing the monitoring and evaluation plan
- Ongoing review of policies and procedures
- Implementing service map projects

PRENATAL SUBSTANCE EXPOSURE/ FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER IN CHILD WELFARE

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE ON BEST
PRACTICE AND CARE OF INFANTS,
CHILD, AND YOUTH

STATUS



Initiated

OVERVIEW

Infants, children and youth are key populations of children in foster care, particularly those with prenatal substance exposure, particularly alcohol, often leading to a diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Infants and children have the capacity to overcome early life adversities and early intervention is a critical pathway for supporting resilience, enhancing developmental pathways and supporting family preservation. Badry (2017) and Marcellus (2017) collaborated and completed two scoping reviews that were funded by the Canada FASD Research Network (30,000) and the Ministry of Child and Family Development in BC (10,000) in 2016. The research will engage in knowledge translation of these recent projects, conduct interviews with key stakeholders including Indigenous stakeholders with a long term project goal of development of life course approaches to best practice for children in care with FASD. An environmental scan will be conducted to gather emerging policy and practice documents. Further, investigators will conduct a review of all public documents from the Office of the Youth and Child Advocate in Alberta and BC to inform this research.



FUNDED
RESEARCH PROJECT

**PRENATAL
SUBSTANCE
EXPOSURE/FETAL
ALCOHOL SPECTRUM
DISORDER IN CHILD
WELFARE**

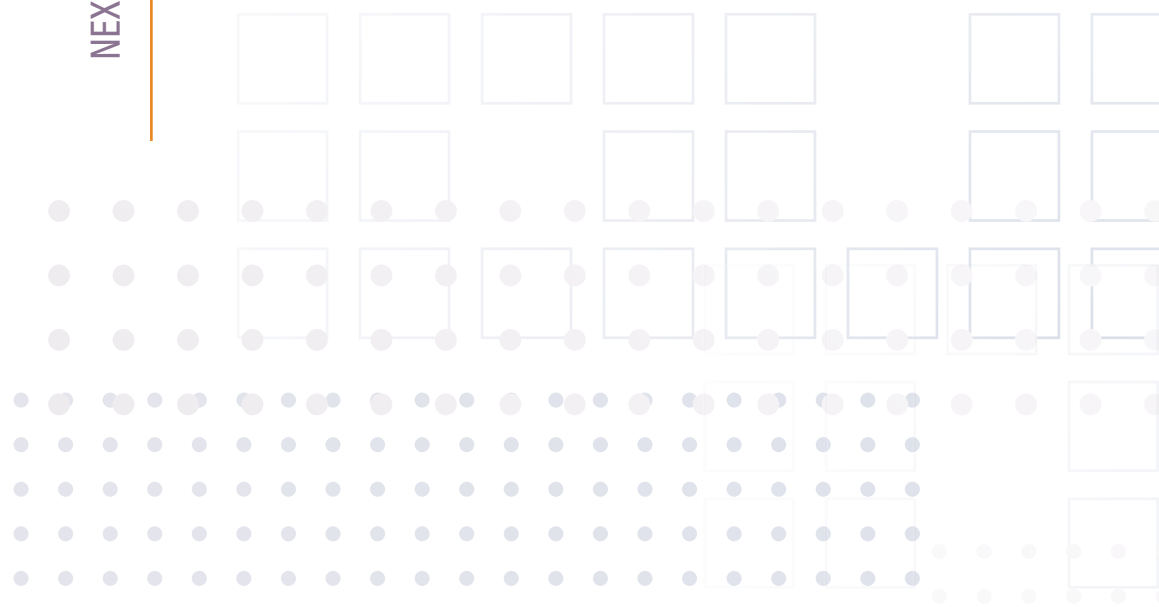
ADVANCING
KNOWLEDGE ON BEST
PRACTICE AND CARE
OF INFANTS, CHILD,
AND YOUTH

HIGHLIGHTS

None at this time.

NEXT STEPS

None at this time.



PROMOTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF AFRICAN, BLACK, AND CARIBBEAN YOUTHS IN ALBERTA

A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

STATUS



Initiated

OVERVIEW

Research on African, Black, and Caribbean immigrant youths reveals an increased risk of mental health problems among this population. Despite this high prevalence of mental illness, little research focuses on the mental health of these youths in Canada. This study will examine the mental health needs of African, Black, and Caribbean immigrant youths and identify culturally relevant strategies to increase access to and uptake of mental health services. This twelve-month project will use participatory action research to foster maximum inclusion of youths in the research process.

HIGHLIGHTS

None at this time.



FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECT

PROMOTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF AFRICAN, BLACK, AND CARIBBEAN YOUTHS IN ALBERTA

A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

NEXT STEPS

When available, findings will be shared at a community engagement session for stakeholders, such as immigrant service providers, and health and government sectors; the results will also be disseminated to the academic community via two publications and two conference presentations.

Research Team

Philomina Okeke-Ihejirika - University of Alberta / Women and Gender Studies - *Researcher*
 Jordana Salma - University of Alberta / Nursing - *Trainee*
 Emmanuel Onah - Africa Centre/Youth Coordinator - *Service Provider*
 Belen Samuel - Africa Centre / Youth Empowerment Group - *Community Partner*
 Margot Jackson - University of Alberta/ Nursing - *Researcher*
 Michele Harvey-Blankenship - Alberta Health Services / Pediatrics - *User of Health Information*

REVIEW OF CANADIAN RED CROSS SAFETY & WELL-BEING PROJECTS

2016 ALBERTA FIRES RECOVERY OPERATIONS



OVERVIEW

The Canadian Red Cross contracted PolicyWise to review the Psychosocial Supports (PSS) that have been provided in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) since the May 2016 wildfire. This work involved analyzing a selected inventory of Canadian Red Cross funded projects to understand their intended short-term outcomes and measures, clarify gaps, and inform future priority areas for psychosocial recovery in years three to five following the wildfire. The project team also conducted interviews and facilitated an engagement session with community service provider stakeholders to understand local perspectives on the current response and priorities for future recovery.

HIGHLIGHTS

Understanding issues commonly experienced by disaster-affected individuals and communities is key to designing and implementing supports. Psychosocial responses can be understood as a spectrum of support and intervention that range from specialized crisis, trauma, and mental health services to general basic services and security. The review found that:

- Demand for mental health services and intensive supports remain high in the RMWB at year three of recovery.
- The need for increased specialized services, particularly for children, youth, and Indigenous people is a priority for the community.
- Community cohesion and social connection are both strengths and challenges within the current response. Stakeholders emphasized the continued need for prevention and community resilience-building activities for ongoing recovery.
- Community stakeholders expressed the desire to collectively build on the improved service provider coordination and sense of community that resulted from the initial recovery efforts.



PROJECT

REVIEW OF CANADIAN RED CROSS SAFETY & WELL-BEING PROJECTS

2016 ALBERTA
FIRES RECOVERY
OPERATIONS

NEXT STEPS

RMWB community stakeholders in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross are using the findings from this review to guide planning and priorities for ongoing and future psychosocial recovery.

RURAL AND REMOTE MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT EVALUATION



OVERVIEW

Led by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Alberta Division, the three-year Rural and Remote Mental Health project aims to build capacity in rural and remote communities to promote mental health. The project involves training “Community Animators” from rural and remote areas and establishing an online network to connect Animators and other stakeholders across the province. The intent is for Animators to develop the skills needed to convene coalitions in their communities to collectively develop transformational roadmaps for supporting mental health.

PolicyWise is conducting an evaluation to understand and improve the design and implementation of the project over the three year timeframe. In Year One (2019), the evaluation will focus on: 1) the adaptation and refinement of the training; and 2) the development of the network and its connection to the training.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Completed a Synthesis Review paper that integrated literature on mental health promotion, community development, and communities of practice to conceptualize the work of Community Animators and build a foundation for the evaluation.
- Evaluated training sessions for first cohort of Community Animators, providing feedback to CMHA for adapting and refining training plans for the second cohort of Animators.
- Conducted reflection interviews with CMHA staff on evolution of the RMH project.



NEXT STEPS

- Evaluate training sessions for second cohort of Community Animators.
- Continue reflection interviews, and share periodic feedback with CMHA project team.
- Create and implement data collection tools to examine the emergence of the online Animator network and the work Animators are doing within their home communities.

PROJECT

RURAL AND REMOTE MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT EVALUATION

SECONDARY ANALYSIS TO GENERATE EVIDENCE (SAGE)

ACADEMIC AND NONPROFIT COMMUNITIES



OVERVIEW

SAGE is a collaborative data platform that connects stakeholders through data. It increases the value of data by bringing stakeholders together to use data in new ways. SAGE catalyzes collaboration by providing clear governance and reducing barriers to enable data-driven collaborations in the academic and nonprofit sectors. The SAGE team offers a broad array of services that support data management and secondary use of data.

HIGHLIGHTS

SAGE has continued outreach into academic and nonprofit communities to advance the culture of data sharing. Twelve research groups have now made use of data assets within SAGE. In a recent survey of users, 91% would recommend using SAGE and 82% expressed a change in their attitudes towards data sharing as a result of SAGE. Seven Secondary Data Use Grants were awarded in 2018 to develop capacity in secondary data use. In addition, four summer studentships were awarded to support students with academic teams and nonprofit agencies (Bissell Centre, Calgary Urban Project Society) to work on data-related projects.

SAGE has evolved in response to needs identified in the nonprofit sector. It serves as a platform for special data projects such as last year's Calgary Thrives project. Learnings from that project are now being applied to a new project with the C5 hub of agencies in Edmonton. Such projects serve to push the envelope on the impact of data on practice and as a way of building capacity by doing.



PROJECT

SECONDARY ANALYSIS TO GENERATE EVIDENCE (SAGE)

ACADEMIC AND
NONPROFIT
COMMUNITIES

NEXT STEPS

SAGE will continue to seek out opportunities to support data sharing in the academic and nonprofit sectors. In addition, SAGE will serve as a platform to further develop data capacity in the nonprofit sector through collaborations, capacity building, and involvement in sector-wide initiatives such as development of the Alberta Nonprofit Data Strategy with the Alberta Nonprofit Network and Alberta Culture, Multiculturalism, and Status of Women.

SECONDARY ANALYSIS TO GENERATE EVIDENCE (SAGE)

STUDENTSHIPS AND GRANTS



As part of data capacity building in the academic and nonprofit sectors, PolicyWise offered opportunities for the support of external trainees.

The Secondary Data Use Grant program was continued for a second year and seven projects were awarded. From the University of Calgary, Dr. Brae Anne McArthur (postdoctoral fellow), Kaylee Ramage (doctoral student), Melissa Mueller (master student), Natalie Scime (doctoral student), and Dr. Rochelle Hentges (postdoctoral fellow) were awarded. From the University of Alberta, Dr. Maria Ospina (assistant professor), Dr. Okan Bulut (associate professor) were awarded. Access requests spanned the use of the All Our Families cohort data, the ACES 2013 data and the FASD 2017 survey data.

A new program was developed to allow the training of students and development of special projects at academic and nonprofit partners. The SAGE Summer Studentship supported four students over the summer with All Our Families (Anika Winn), Alberta Pregnancy Outcomes and Nutrition (Newsha Mahinpey), Calgary Urban Project Society (Samantha Tram), Bissell Centre/Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (Genna DiPinto). The students learned about the nonprofit context of data collection and use. A key focus for two of the students was around governance and the issue of appropriate consent for vulnerable clients. They were able to help their host organizations make real progress in their use of data and were also able to make new connections for PolicyWise.



PROJECT

SECONDARY ANALYSIS TO GENERATE EVIDENCE (SAGE)

STUDENTSHIPS
AND GRANTS

HIGHLIGHTS

See Overview.

NEXT STEPS

Continue to offer guidance to nonprofits and researchers interested in collaborative data integration.

SKIP PROGRAM: SUPPORTING KIDS INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

AUTISM FOCUS

STATUS



Completed

OVERVIEW

This Early Career award supported Dr. Sandra Hodgetts in her program of research. A series of projects were completed related to inclusion and participation for people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in daily life contexts, such as school, community, and work, as well as their involvement in decision-making and services.

HIGHLIGHTS

The first trajectory of research relates to disclosing one's diagnosis of ASD. Investigators completed a scoping review of perceptions and outcomes of disclosing a diagnosis of ASD to others (e.g., peers, teachers, community members). This review revealed a discrepancy between the perspectives of "others", who report that disclosure would increase inclusion and understanding, and people with ASD, who often perceive increased stigma and exclusion following diagnostic disclosure. A grounded theory study was completed, looking at family processes and perceived outcomes of diagnostic disclosure of ASD to others. This study revealed the complexity and continuous nature of these decision for families, with the ultimate decision being what parents' thought was in the best interest of their child, regardless of whether they choose to disclose or not in a given situation. Continuing to build on this trajectory of research, the team is evaluating processes, perceived outcomes and expectations of disclosure within community recreation settings. They are currently continuing this line of research with (1) an online survey of parents about their experiences, preferences, and perceived outcomes, (2) a collective case study approach in community recreation contexts, and (3) a multi-site study that will evaluate outcomes of disclosure/non-disclosure on social engagement and inclusion in community contexts through direct observation of outcomes. The second trajectory of research relates to goal setting for people with neurodevelopmental conditions, including ASD. Findings from a multi-phase study that investigated current focus and processes around goal setting in ASD across home and school services are published in Disability & Rehabilitation.



FUNDED
RESEARCH PROJECT

SKIP PROGRAM: SUPPORTING KIDS INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION AUTISM FOCUS

NEXT STEPS

Along with her colleague Lesley Wiart (Physical Therapy, University of Alberta), Dr. Hodgetts aims to continue this work related to engaging children with neurodevelopmental conditions in goal setting.

PROJECT

STRATEGIES TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM RISKS OF MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

PAX/TRIPLE P RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIAL

STATUS



Ongoing

OVERVIEW

On behalf of Alberta Health, PolicyWise is leading a randomized control trial to investigate a combination of two strategies to protect children from risks of mental, emotional, and behavioural disorders. These two interventions are PAX: Good Behavior Game (school-based) and Triple P: Positive Parenting Program (home-based). Since 2013, the study has been underway in 24 schools in 9 Alberta cities and towns.

HIGHLIGHTS

PolicyWise, with the support of the co-investigators, has analyzed the data to assess potential outcomes related to child functioning, classroom behavior, and self-reporting from teachers. Drafting of the technical (statistical) report and the final report to stakeholders has commenced.



PROJECT

STRATEGIES TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM RISKS OF MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

PAX/TRIPLE P
RANDOMIZED
CONTROL TRIAL

NEXT STEPS

Final analysis and report writing are underway. Knowledge mobilization activities will take place in the Summer/Fall of 2019.

TOWARDS CROSS-SECTORAL, COLLABORATIVE CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOL SETTINGS



Schools are an ideal setting for reaching a large number of children and youth; this is especially true in rural, remote, and under-resourced urban areas. Offering mental health supports and services within schools increases access compared to providing them in the community alone.

PolicyWise and the Alberta Health Services Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network worked together to outline recommended actions to ensure children and youth in Alberta have access to consistent and equitable cross-sectoral, collaborative mental health supports in school settings.

- Consistent means that mental health supports in schools are compatible and in agreement with Alberta's provincial guiding and practice frameworks and are provided in the same way over time (barring improvements) to all youth, children, and families.
- Equitable means that all school settings will provide access to core mental health supports, but some school settings will provide additional supports to individuals or groups facing additional challenges (e.g., social, economic).¹ Recognizing the diversity of communities and school settings, mental health supports in schools will vary to a degree across Alberta communities.

PROJECT

TOWARDS CROSS- SECTORAL, COLLABORATIVE CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

HIGHLIGHTS

This project explored evidence-informed, leading practices in a complex system characterized by highly established ways of working. As such, data collection was conducted in three cumulative phases:

PHASE 1: ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- To gain an evidence-informed, comprehensive understanding of child and youth mental health in school settings (academic and grey literature review, jurisdictional scan, interviews)

PHASE 2: CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT

- To assess and consolidate what is known about Alberta's child and youth mental health pathways to support, initiatives, and services in schools (interviews, survey, document review)

PHASE 3: STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- To inform a shared vision and approach on a cross-sectoral model to address child and youth mental health in schools (deliberative discussions)

Three connected and reinforcing priority areas were identified to guide movement towards consistent and equitable cross-sectoral and collaborative approaches to child and youth mental health supports. These priority areas are:

- Establish a provincial, comprehensive approach to mental health promotion
- Co-design and implement, cross-sectoral and collaborative models of care and support in the middle tier of intervention
- Leverage existing structures at provincial and local levels to inform shared funding, leadership, and accountability.

NEXT STEPS

Together with the Alberta Health Services, Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network, the next stage of this project is to focus on priority area two: the co-design and implementation, cross-sectoral and collaborative models of care and support in the middle tier of intervention.

TRAUMA, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, HEALING AND RESILIENCE (TDHR) VIDEO

"JOURNEY HOME"



OVERVIEW

The Trauma, Child Development, Healing and Resilience Literature Review was presented as a case study, with a focus on the Cree experience of colonization and trauma. It explores Cree law, culture and pedagogy as a foundation for understanding the damage caused by colonization and what must be reclaimed in the healing process. The Journey Home is a video summary of the Literature Review to support training and development for caregivers, ministry partners, agencies, and others in the human services sector.

HIGHLIGHTS

Historical trauma refers specifically to the inter-generational impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples. Every First Nation, Métis and Inuit community will have unique experiences of colonization due to significant diversity of culture, geographic location and other specific historical encounters or events. The policies of apprehending children damaged the very foundation of Indigenous social organization: the web of relationships. As each generation of children was removed, the relationships within the web became weaker.

First Nations in Alberta share an interconnected worldview that focuses on building, maintaining and strengthening relationships with all living things. Three focus areas were identified in the video for supporting decolonization, reconciliation and self-determination:

- Reclaiming the mediating role of the Indigenous family: The process of building family resilience is central to their health and survival. Building resilience is a (sometimes very difficult) process of individual and family re-orientation, reclamation of the rules between family members, and the adoption of roles and responsibilities to the family unit, broadly defined.
- Interconnected family services: Interconnected family services must be grounded in the principles of reciprocity and fluidity (everything and everyone can and must change), as well as be informed by the values that are inherent in the nation's legal traditions (such as love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth).
- Healing theory and programs: Healing programs and services are experiential educational processes that teach history, culture, and connectedness, and mobilize sacred knowledge in the "recapturing of the life force."

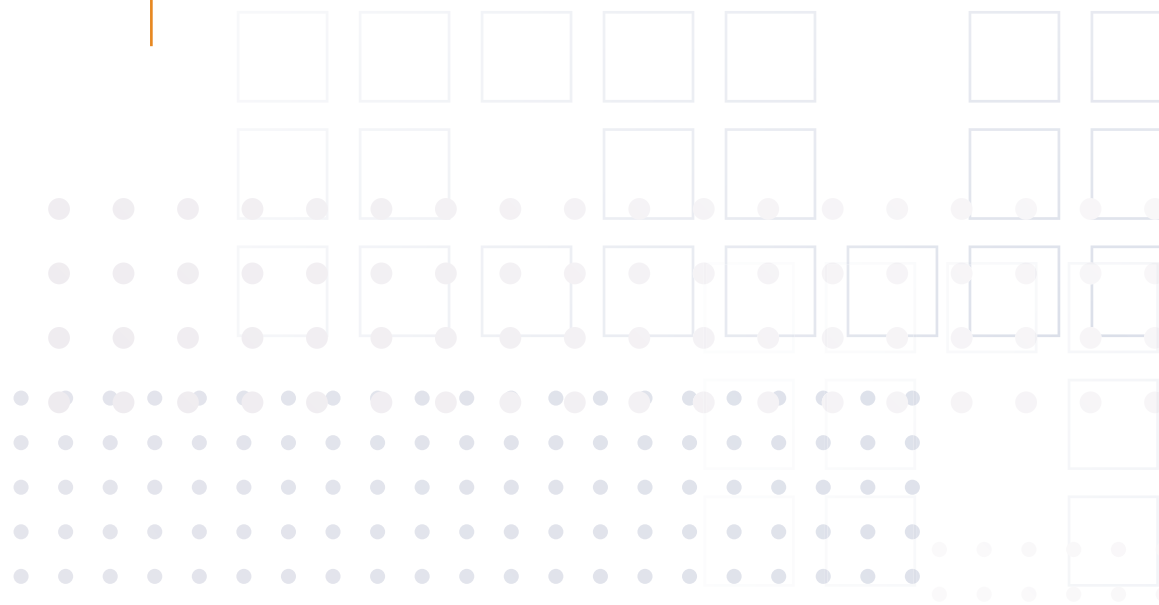


PROJECT

TRAUMA, CHILD DEVELOPMENT, HEALING AND RESILIENCE (TDHR) VIDEO "JOURNEY HOME"

NEXT STEPS

No further steps required.



USING DATA ANALYTICS & VISUALIZATION TO TELL A STORY - TRAINING

WITH THE ALBERTA FIRST NATIONS INFORMATION GOVERNANCE CENTRE (AFNIGC)



Completed

From September 2018 to June 2019 we worked in partnership with the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC) to build capacity in data analytics among First Nations and nonprofits through a series of monthly trainings. The training was designed as a basic introduction to research and evaluation processes and methods, the principles of Ownership, Control, Access & Possession (OCAP®), as well as data collection, management, analyses, and visualization. Participants in the training identified information needs in their First Nations or organizations, and undertook a research project guided and supported by mentors from PolicyWise. The participants shared their research and results with invited special guests from their communities and organizations at a celebration hosted by AFNIGC in June 2019.

- Eleven participants, representing four First Nations and three nonprofits, explored and shared data stories important to their communities and organizations.
- Guest lecturers included Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, university researchers and librarians, and partners from the Government of Alberta.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the training. The mentors were an awesome help. PolicyWise/AFNIGC thank you for the very rewarding/educational/training experience that I will definitely apply to my work."

- First Nation participant



PROJECT

USING DATA ANALYTICS & VISUALIZATION TO TELL A STORY - TRAINING

WITH THE ALBERTA FIRST NATIONS INFORMATION GOVERNANCE CENTRE (AFNIGC)

"The program is much more than data analytics. The Indigenous lens and content embedded within the program sheds light on the impact of colonialization on Alberta First Nations and the negative impact of "Western ways" of researching Indigenous people and issues on First Nations. The program exceeds the standards of a grad school research course. The instructors bring a wealth of knowledge from Indigenous communities and from the research world. Participants have access to Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous leaders as well the experts in data, analytics, and research from PolicyWise... The topics are current, informative, innovative and pioneering the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers in Alberta. Relationships are key to this program. Relationships with First Nations communities and leaders and relationships within the program. I will have friends and colleagues for life because of this program."

- Nonprofit participant

NEXT STEPS

Use the learnings, reflections, and results from the training to refine and improve our training model and materials.

WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



OVERVIEW

Government of Alberta's approach to well-being and resiliency has been formed by three complementary documents: the Well-being and Resiliency Framework, the Evaluation Framework and the Miyo Report. Common elements across all three documents form the foundation and direction of Alberta's approach, including:

- Children and youth are a collectively-held responsibility.
- Evaluating activities requires a diverse set of tools, to be implemented in contextually appropriate ways. The goal is to assess meaning and measurement.
- Service delivery is appropriate and contextualized to the local community; using leading practices, practice-based evidence, promising healing practices, and informed by Indigenous ways of knowing.

These documents work together and build on one another to define and implement the Government of Alberta's approach. Like the Well-being and Resiliency Framework, the Evaluation Framework is a living document and may change over time to reflect leading practices and lessons learned.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Evaluation Framework provides a platform for ongoing monitoring, adaptation, and continuous improvement. It includes indicators and measures for the defined continuum of services; processes to measure and report on outcomes and effectiveness of prevention and early intervention; programs provincially and best practices for reporting on the achievement of the overarching outcome of helping children and youth be safe and reach their full potential.

Key considerations for implementing the Evaluation Framework include:

- Collaborating with staff and agency partners
- Aligning service delivery with outcome areas
- Enhancing system outcomes
- Creating consistent reporting templates
- Promoting staff training
- Enhancing analysis and reporting back
- Demonstrating effectiveness and quality



NEXT STEPS

No further steps required.

PROJECT

WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCY EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

THE STORY BEHIND OUR LOGO

THE CIRCLE

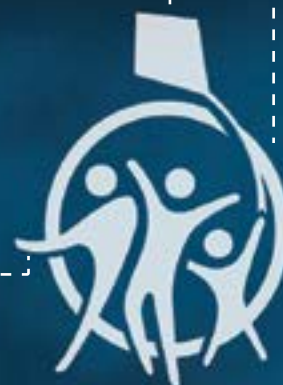
A symbol representing inclusivity, wholeness, safety, interconnectedness, equality and completion. The circle brings important meaning to the people we strive to support through our work.

THE KITE

A symbol representing child and family well-being through health and happiness. Kite flying is a common family activity that resonates across cultures.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Our mission is to inform, identify, and promote effective policy and practice to improve the well-being of children, families, and communities.



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for Children & Families





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