

Evaluation for CAI's granting stream *Alcohol & Girls: Making Prevention a Priority*

McCreary Centre Society

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OVERVIEW

CAI commissioned McCreary Centre Society to evaluate CAI's granting stream, *Alcohol & Girls: Making Prevention a Priority*. The goal of the granting stream was to reduce girls' likelihood of harmful alcohol use by increasing their resilience and capacity to make informed choices. This funding stream was guided by research showing that protective factors—such as supportive family, sense of belonging at school, connection to community, healthy peer relationships, and individual strengths—are associated with a reduced likelihood of substance use, including as a way to cope with life challenges (e.g., BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2018).

The granting stream aimed to support community agencies to build on their existing programming by using an upstream approach which was family focused (i.e., involved strengthening connections between girls and their primary caregiver); built skills and enhanced resilience (e.g., ability to resist peer pressure); and/or was interactive and youth-led. The aim was to involve girls (Grades 7–12) as much as possible in the planning and delivery of programming.

Initially, organizations who received grants were given up to 12 months to run their programs, and grant funding was to be spent by December 31, 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many agencies had to postpone the delivery of programming and CAI adjusted the timeline in response, with agencies given until the end of June 2021 to complete their funded project activities.

A total of 21 community organizations were awarded grants. Grantees from these agencies were invited to work with McCreary Centre Society to co-develop the evaluation measures.

Evaluation

The evaluation assessed process, outcomes, and learnings. The process component examined ways in which each project contributed to preventing harmful alcohol use among girls. The evaluation also assessed the extent to which youth were meaningfully engaged in planning and delivering the projects. In addition, the evaluation canvassed challenges and successes in carrying out the project (e.g., relating to meaningfully engaging youth in project planning and delivery; engaging harder to reach participants in project activities and keeping them engaged; and collaborating/partnering with other agencies for this project).

The outcomes component measured the degree to which there were improvements for youth participants (e.g., reduced risk of harmful alcohol use, improved overall well-being), which were attributed to their involvement in the project. The evaluation also canvassed grantees' perceptions of any shifts within their organization, such as changes in perceptions around girls' alcohol use, programming shifts to address girls' alcohol use and to promote protective factors, and shifts in the agencies' approaches to meaningful youth engagement.

The learnings component tapped what grantees learned through carrying out their CAI-funded project, including their reflections on promising practices to prevent harmful alcohol use among girls. This component also included grantees' reflections on how their project could be scaled up, to optimally support the prevention of harmful alcohol use among girls.

The mixed-methods evaluation consisted of youth and grantee surveys, as well as grantee interviews. All measures (survey items and interview questions) were co-created by grantees and McCreary Centre Society, with input from CAI.

The youth survey was developed with the understanding that it would not necessarily be suitable to distribute a survey across every project, or that all girls who took part in a project would complete it. The expectation was that only a subset of youth participants would take part in the evaluation (i.e., complete a survey).

About this Report

Survey data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Some percentages could not be reported because they represented a very small number of individuals. In these instances, the results were reported descriptively instead of quantitatively.

The evaluation findings do not necessarily reflect the experiences of girls who took part in CAI-funded projects but who did not participate in the evaluation. Similarly, the experiences and views of grantees who did not take part in the evaluation were not captured in this report.

Survey percentages among youth participants and grantees should not be compared because the relatively small sample sizes would make comparisons unreliable. In addition, participants and grantees who filled out surveys were not necessarily involved in the same projects (e.g., a grantee may have completed a survey while no youth participants from their project may have done so).

Throughout this report, survey findings are supplemented with qualitative information from grantee interviews to offer a more comprehensive picture of the projects and of the experiences of those involved.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Grantees took part in one of two video-conference calls with McCreary Centre Society to co-develop the measures (i.e., youth and grantee surveys, and grantee interview questions). Grantees also had an opportunity to review the draft measures before they were finalized.

Participation in the evaluation was voluntary for both grantees and youth. Surveys were submitted anonymously, and interview findings were reported in such a way that grantees could not be personally identified.

Interviews

The interviews with grantees included questions about the following:

- Project goals and how the grantees had intended to achieve the goals
- The extent to which the goals were achieved
- Any changes made to the project while it was taking place, and reasons for those changes
- How youth were meaningfully engaged in project planning and delivery
- Project partnerships
- Project-related challenges and successes
- Thoughts on how their project might be modified/strengthened and scaled up in the future
- Any suggestions or feedback for CAI
- Significant changes within grantees' organization which they attributed to the project (e.g., changes in perceptions around girls' alcohol use, in programming, and their approaches to youth engagement)
- Significant changes among youth participants which grantees attributed to the project (e.g., changes in girls' perceptions of alcohol use, their alcohol consumption, and their overall well-being)
- Any other changes which grantees attributed to the project
- What grantees learned through their involvement in the project
- Promising practices to prevent harmful alcohol use among girls

Surveys

Youth and grantees were invited to complete surveys at the end of their involvement in the project. Surveys were available in both online and paper-and-pencil formats.

Youth participant survey

The youth survey was distributed among project participants when grantees felt it was appropriate to do so. The survey included forced-choice questions about the following outcomes among girls, because of their involvement in the project:

- Healthier views around alcohol use
- Reduced alcohol use, likelihood of alcohol use, or harmful use

- Improved well-being (e.g., overall mental health; self-confidence; hopefulness; and connections to peers, their family, community, culture, and nature)
- Skill improvements (e.g., leadership, teamwork, healthy coping, refusal skills)
- Increased knowledge of and access to community services and supports

The survey scales included a 'Not applicable/Don't know' option because not all projects tailored their programming to achieve all the measured outcomes.

A combination of forced-choice and open-ended questions were also included about girls' reasons for staying involved and any barriers that made it difficult for them to participate in the project; the amount of input they had in project planning and delivery; what they liked most about taking part; any other identified outcomes (that were not directly asked about); suggestions to improve the project; and the degree to which they felt safe taking part, had fun, felt their involvement was meaningful, and felt their cultural identity was respected and there was sensitivity to their cultural needs.

Grantee survey

The grantee survey was intended to supplement the interview findings, and included questions about the extent to which grantees felt their project contributed to various outcomes among youth participants (see youth participant survey details above) and their organization. Organizational outcomes included shifts in perceptions around girls' alcohol use; grantees' approach to youth engagement; and programming approaches.

Open-ended survey questions also gave grantees an opportunity to list any other project outcomes, including unexpected ones; to share reflections relating to their project; and to offer feedback and suggestions for CAI.

Participants

Nine grantees/facilitators took part in interviews over the phone or through video conferencing, which lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. Another two grantees submitted written responses to the interview questions, for a total of 11 interviews. In addition, 12 grantees completed an anonymous grantee survey. In their communications with McCreary, some grantees mentioned they had completed a survey but were unable to take part in an interview (e.g., too many other commitments), while others opted to participate in an interview exclusively, and some completed both an interview and survey.

A total of 27 girls—aged 10 to 18 years—completed a youth survey. They most commonly identified as Indigenous (56%) and/or European (52%), while a few identified as East Asian, South Asian, or a background not among the list of options (e.g., they specified Caucasian or Canadian; youth could mark all backgrounds that applied). All spoke English at home, while a few also spoke an Indigenous language or another language at home.

The majority of girls (63%) had attended most or all of the project sessions, while 22% had attended around half, and the remaining few participants had attended only some of the sessions. The findings in this report did not appear to differ based on how many sessions participants had attended (e.g., most/all vs. some).

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS

“This project is a great initiative. The biggest challenge we had was COVID. Otherwise, the girls who attended enjoyed the groups, as did the adults, and we were able to build a community.”
-Grantee/project staff

Goals and Activities

Grantees described the overarching goal of their project as supporting girls at risk of harmful alcohol use to make informed decisions (around alcohol use and other activities), which would promote their overall health and well-being. For instance, participants were supported to gain refusal skills or to recognize risks and to drink more safely if they chose to drink. Girls were also supported to develop healthy coping skills, as opposed to using alcohol and other substances to cope with challenges in their lives. Projects were also intended to help participants realize they could have fun without using alcohol, and to introduce them to healthy activities (e.g., spending time outdoors, hiking) as an alternative to alcohol and other substance use.

In some projects, an aim was for girls to gain skills in setting healthy relationship boundaries, as well as in communication, self-care, and stress-management. In addition, supporting girls to set and achieve education and career goals was identified. Grantees whose projects involved Indigenous girls commonly identified enhanced cultural identity and greater knowledge of Indigenous culture as objectives for participants, as well as breaking unhealthy relationship patterns.

A wide range of activities were carried out to achieve the project goals. Activities fell into the broad categories of education; hands-on skill-building activities; outdoor and physical activities; arts-based activities; and interacting with animals. Educational activities included information workshops on substance use and girls’ health; role playing various scenarios (e.g., relating to setting boundaries and communication); cultural learnings and talking circles involving Elders; and hearing stories from individuals with lived experience of mental health and substance use challenges. Examples of hands-on skill-building activities were gardening, constructing/building (and learning how to use appropriate tools), making natural cosmetics, and cooking/meal preparation. Outdoor and physical activities included hiking, canoeing, kayaking, completing a ropes course, dance, acrobatics, and yoga. Arts-based activities involved various crafts (e.g., beading) and creating a mural, while interacting with animals included engaging with therapy dogs and horses. There was some overlap among the activity categories; for example, a number of programs involved educational or skill-building activities while spending time outdoors (e.g., learning about plants).

Changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic

“We had a lot planned, but then COVID hit.” -Grantee/project staff

Grantees explained that while their project goals generally stayed the same, they had to modify their activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, some projects had to shift from indoor to outdoor gatherings in adherence with public health orders, while others pivoted to offering a completely virtual program (i.e., through Zoom) while physical distancing orders were in place. Grantees commented that the shift from in-person to virtual programming was challenging, particularly when hands-on activities had been planned and/or when the aim had been for girls to expand their social circles by socializing with one another. When restrictions eased somewhat, many grantees were able to resume in-person meet-ups but with fewer participants and exclusively outdoors.

Some had to postpone all project activities while physical distancing measures were in place, such as school-based projects that had to put programming on hold when schools closed due to the pandemic. However, other school-based projects were able to find community-based partners (e.g., neighbourhood houses) and to shift their programming away from schools so that activities could still take place while schools were closed.

One grantee noted that due to the pandemic, the focus of their project shifted from discussing workshop content to participants having a safe space to interact with one another. This was described as a positive change because the girls had an opportunity to talk about issues in their lives and to connect with one another, in a way that would not have been possible had the focus remained solely on discussing workshop content.

Partnerships

“Our community is great at coming together.” -Grantee/project staff

Projects involved engaging partners such as Elders, experts, and facilitators from the community. In some groups, adult supports in the community (e.g., girls’ caregivers) accompanied girls on trips, such as hiking and canoeing outings. Grantees said the involvement of community partners and supports helped to reinforce a sense of connectedness.

Grantees expressed satisfaction with their community partnerships and many said their project would not have been successful without them. For example, one grantee explained they had gained needed project volunteers and participants through their partnerships. Others stated that their partnerships provided participants with transportation to in-person sessions, even during the pandemic, or supplied harder-to-reach participants with laptops so they could attend virtual sessions.

Some noted that getting funded through CAI resulted in their organization forming new relationships and partnerships in the community that had not existed prior to receiving this funding.

Only a few challenges relating to project partners were identified. The COVID-19 pandemic required some partnerships to change (e.g., from school-based to community-based partners). Another challenge, also pandemic-related, was that different partner agencies had different health and safety protocol to reduce COVID-19 exposures. As a result, the grantees had to adjust their service delivery to ensure that different sets of protocol were adhered to.

Youth Engagement

Project planning and delivery

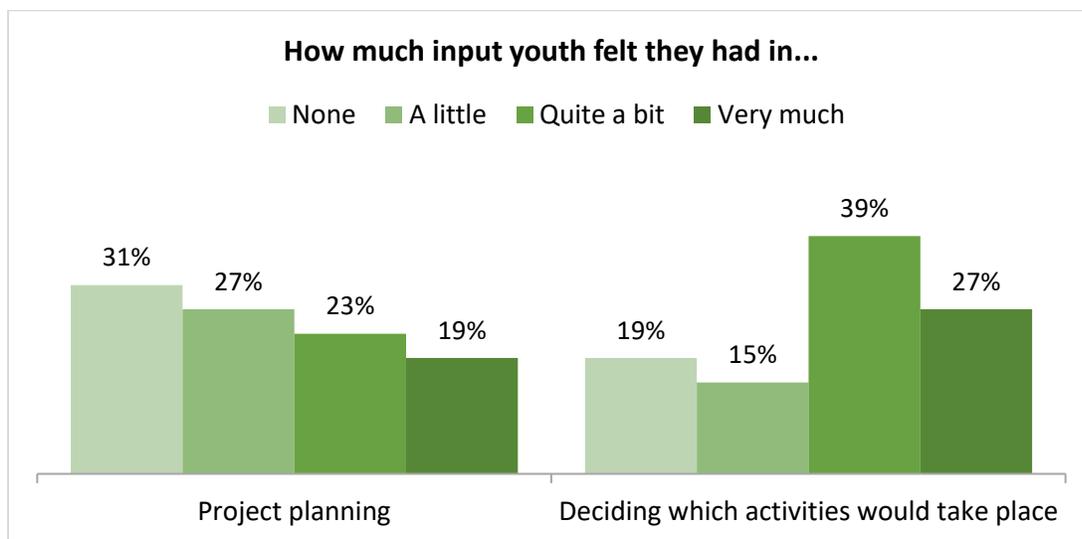
“The youth are the backbone of the project and the staff merely act as facilitators and organizers.” - Grantee/project staff

Most grantees said that girls were involved in planning the project in some capacity. For example, grantees consulted with girls during the project-planning phase and asked them about the topics and activities they felt should be included. In some groups, girls were presented with ideas relating to possible topics and activities, and they shared their thoughts on those ideas, while in other groups girls offered their own additional ideas, such as adding a cultural-learning component. Many grantees said the activities and topics offered to participants were based on girls’ ongoing feedback (e.g., feedback they shared every week about what they wanted to do or

learn the following week). Girls also gave input on the food they felt should be offered during the sessions.

In some projects, girls had opportunities to facilitate their own workshops to their peers. Also, some projects involved a peer-support or leadership component where older participants mentored younger ones. There were also opportunities for former participants to return as mentors to help deliver the project and support new participants. Grantees connected to these projects said that staff supported youth in their leadership or mentorship roles throughout the project. Other grantees said that while they had intended to implement a peer mentorship component, the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for it to be carried out.

Around 7 in 10 youth who completed a survey (69%) reported having at least a little input in project planning, including 42% who reported quite a bit or very much input. Most youth (81%) also had at least a little input in decisions about which activities would take place, including 66% who felt they had quite a bit or very much of a say in these decisions.



Barriers to engagement

Overall, grantees felt they were successful at engaging girls at risk of harmful alcohol use and at keeping them engaged. However, they noted that engagement decreased when sessions shifted to a completely virtual format. Grantees said the switch to online delivery created barriers to recruiting and engaging harder-to-reach youth in particular, but engagement waned for all youth. Some noted that youth were fatigued by virtual meetings, were experiencing mental health challenges, and/or felt overwhelmed by circumstances in their lives (e.g., at home) and did not have the support or resources to engage in meetings that took place virtually.

Grantees said that once pandemic-related restrictions eased and they were able to offer in-person programming, engagement improved. However, some grantees commented that although restrictions eased somewhat, in-person meetings were still limited to a small group of girls, even though many more wanted to take part. Also, some grantees explained that they could not offer transportation to participants during the pandemic, even after restrictions eased, which limited who could take part (i.e., having no access to transportation was a barrier to participation).

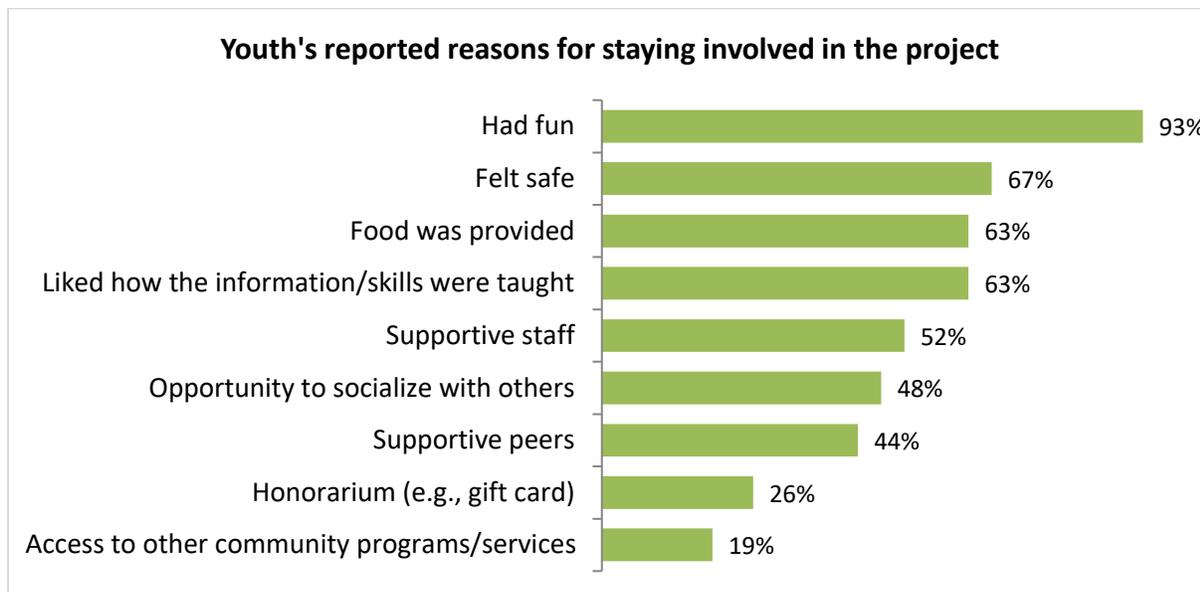
Among girls who completed a survey, 59% reported they had experienced challenges to taking part in the project. The most commonly identified barrier was being too busy (37%). Some also

identified transportation barriers (being unable to get there or home) and/or feeling too anxious or depressed to participate. A couple reported not having the needed technology to take part in online sessions (e.g., Internet connection, laptop). A few youth also reported a barrier to participation that was not among the list of options, and they most commonly specified the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staying engaged

“It's something I looked forward to.” -Youth participant

When asked why they stayed involved in the project, the vast majority of youth indicated they had fun. Most also reported staying involved because they felt safe, food was provided, and they liked how the information or skills were taught. Around half identified supportive staff and/or the opportunity to socialize with others as the reasons they stayed involved, while a minority reported staying involved for the honorarium they received (they could mark all that applied).



Note: Youth could mark all reasons that applied.

Grantees said that offering participants an honorarium had helped to get girls involved in the project, and somewhat helped to keep them involved. However, the honorarium was not the determining factor in keeping participants engaged. Rather, grantees felt the girls stayed engaged because they enjoyed coming together in a safe space to talk about issues that were meaningful and relevant to them (e.g., girls' health, substance use). Involvement of peer mentors also helped with engagement; the girls were motivated to attend and they arrived on time when peer mentors encouraged attendance and punctuality. Also, many of the girls appreciated attending sessions on a regular basis because it offered some consistency in their lives, and they had few opportunities to otherwise take part in activities or connect with others. In addition, having a voice in project planning and delivery, and feeling heard and valued by project staff, helped to keep participants engaged.

The 12 grantees who completed a survey reported a total of 410 youth, aged 9–19 years, had taken part in their projects. In the interviews, some grantees described having a core group of around 10–12 girls who took part on a regular basis, while others said that over 20 girls participated each week. Core participants included girls with mental health challenges and histories of trauma who were at risk of harmful alcohol use. Several grantees said that many of

the girls had been excluded or ostracized by peers in other settings but felt a sense of belonging in their project, which helped to keep them engaged.

Project Challenges

Some project challenges that grantees identified were related to the COVID-19 pandemic (mentioned above). These included keeping participants engaged when programming took place virtually, and needing to find new project partners such as when schools shut down.

Another identified challenge was insurance, and specifically the need to get one-off insurance for each activity that took place. This barrier was mitigated when a school partnership was involved and insurance was covered under the school's policy. When school partnerships were not involved, insurance was less of a barrier if a caregiver accompanied each youth participant to the activities.

Ensuring inclusivity of a very small minority of participants who identified as transgender (male to female) was also described as a challenge. Specifically, it was important to ensure that a safe and welcoming space was created, while also encouraging discussions that were relevant to girls' health. One decision that was made in this situation was to avoid talking about menstruation as a 'rite of passage' to be sensitive and inclusive to transgender youth who did not menstruate.

Project Strengths

When asked about their project's strengths, many grantees highlighted that they integrated fun activities into their sessions—including outdoor activities that participants would not have otherwise experienced—to provide them with a “natural high” and to foster connections within the group.

All grantees identified relationship-building as a strength of their project, and several said that regular check-ins helped to promote trusting relationships within the group. Some grantees noted that while the workshops and formal skills that were taught were useful, the check-ins were the most valuable for participants. Through check-ins, girls in some groups shared their feelings and experiences, supported one another, set a self-care goal for the week, and felt accountable to follow through on their goal because they reported back to the group the following week. Some grantees whose projects supported Indigenous girls said their sessions started with a talking circle and a smudge, and involved participants sharing their experiences and expressing empathy toward one another.

The process of relationship building helped to create a safe space that was conducive to having open and non-judgmental discussions about topics such as substance use, boundaries/consent, and healthy relationships. Some grantees added that participants in their groups had not previously had the opportunity to talk about alcohol use because it was not a topic that was discussed at home. The discussions the girls had through their involvement in the project helped to increase their awareness of issues relating to alcohol use; to destigmatize mental health and substance use challenges; and to encourage them to access help if they needed it.

Grantees identified using a harm-reduction approach when talking with participants about the use of alcohol and other substances. For example, rather than telling participants to not drink, they discussed ways to reduce risk of harm if the girls chose to drink (e.g., ensuring someone they trusted was with them and avoiding binge drinking).

In projects that engaged Indigenous girls, the involvement of Elders in project oversight and activities—such as cultural teachings and traditional ceremonies—was seen as a strength. Elders' involvement helped participants to feel more connected to their culture and community. The involvement of other community partners was also identified as a strength, which helped to improve community connectedness and participants' awareness of a variety of community resources and supports.

The facilitators were also seen as a strength of the project, in that they were positive role models for the girls. For example, they modelled strength and resilience, and the importance of treating their bodies well. Some grantees added that facilitators demonstrated that leading a healthy lifestyle (including reduced alcohol use) was necessary for them to earn a living and survive. Also, the consistency that facilitators offered to participants was a strength because many of the girls otherwise lacked consistency in their lives, particularly when schools closed during the pandemic. In addition to the support that facilitators provided to participants, many identified the support that facilitators gave to one another as a project strength.

Grantees described the value of participants eating together during in-person sessions, which further contributed to building connections. In some groups, participants were involved in preparing healthy meals together, and they learned about nutrition and gained food-preparation skills in the process. The girls then ate together and were able to bring food home after the session, which addressed food insecurity issues and further helped them to feel connected to the group.

Youth engagement and a youth-led focus was identified as another strength and as contributing to successful outcomes. For instance, listening and responding to youth's needs and suggestions for the project helped the girls to feel heard and to stay engaged. Grantees who were able to hire youth as project staff identified this as a strength. These youth staff members not only gained job skills (e.g., leading workshops) but also encouraged other girls to take part in the project.

In addition, most grantees identified the support they received from CAI as a strength of their project. Beyond the financial support, they appreciated CAI staff's flexibility in supporting them with making changes to their project (e.g., due to the pandemic) and valued having a funder who was extremely understanding of the situation and of their community's needs. They felt that due to CAI's support and flexibility, they were able to successfully deliver their project and to support at-risk girls in their community during a time when these girls were particularly vulnerable.

OUTCOMES

Grantees felt that despite reductions in participant numbers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their project goals had mostly been achieved or had fully been achieved. Some commented that the project goals had been surpassed in that additional unexpected positive outcomes had resulted from their project.

Skills, Knowledge, and Perceptions around Alcohol Use

Grantees said they were surprised by how engaged participants were in workshops or discussions that addressed alcohol use, and some girls told them it had been their favourite topic of discussion in the sessions. According to grantees, participants who were not currently involved in alcohol or other substance use, but were at risk of using substances, seemed to benefit from these sessions because they learned about the possible harms of alcohol use and binge drinking, and about harm-reduction strategies. For example, project staff talked about staying safe if youth did choose to drink, and having a realistic approach toward drinking (e.g., the youth may find themselves in a situation where they feel pressured to drink or might want to try alcohol).

Grantees felt that participants who had used alcohol also benefited from taking part in the project. The healthy discussions about using alcohol and other substances, through a harm-reduction lens, helped participants to think about their own substance use, including why they might be drinking and how to stay safe. Participants were also introduced to healthy activities as alternatives to alcohol use, and they talked about wanting to take part in those activities again. In addition, they were taught ways to cope with challenges or stressors in their lives that did not involve the use of alcohol.

The vast majority of grantees who completed a survey (92%) indicated that youth participants developed healthier views on alcohol use because of their involvement in the project. When asked to explain, they commented that the non-judgmental group discussions about alcohol use, binge drinking, coping strategies, harm-reduction, and safer use contributed to participants' development of healthier views.

Grantees' explanations of how participants gained healthier views about alcohol use (grantee survey)...

"We were able to talk about alcohol and how it affected generations, the history, and how important healthy relationships are."

"We were opportunistic in discussing safe partying tips in the group. The atmosphere allowed for the youth to share openly about any substance use."

"Social support and mentorship from older women who took a non-judgmental approach and were open to also sharing stories from their own lives helped to develop more healthy, mature attitudes to alcohol use."

"The youth [came to] understand that alcohol/substance use is an unhealthy coping strategy that people engage in for a variety of reasons. They have learned other, more healthy, coping strategies and the dangers of binge drinking."

"We have used a harm-reduction lens to teach about safe use and how to identify when substance use is becoming a problem."

“Through different activities and healthy relationships, I believe participants have a healthier view on alcohol use.”

“Our conversations brought a more informed reality of the impacts of alcohol consumption. We talked a lot about first time drinking, drinking water, eating food, and dealing with pressure. We also talked about the various types of alcohol and how they affect the body differently (i.e. beer vs. wine vs. liquor). This has been an ongoing topic of conversation in the group.”

“Coping strategies, harm reduction, consent, and social pressures have been discussed with participants at varying times throughout the program and many questions have been asked and answered.”

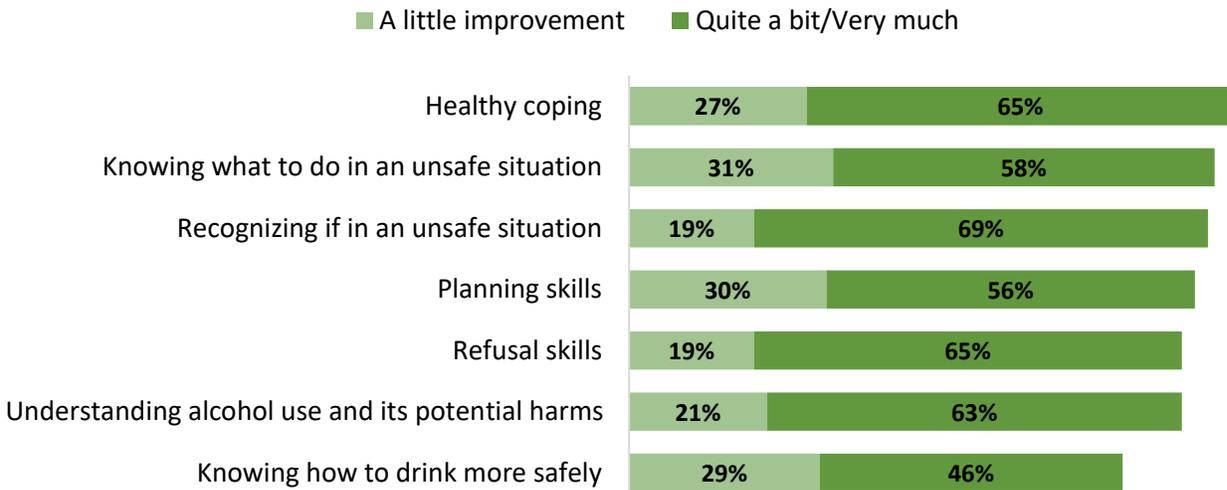
“In our sessions we have explored many healthy strategies to cope with stress. This has allowed our students/youth to find alternatives to substance use. They have experienced safe activities outside their comfort zones and practice healthy dialogues with trusted adults when they're in need of support. They have also heard from adults with lived experience of substance use.”

“We have a couple speakers come in to share their recovery stories. I believe this had a positive impact on [girls'] views towards using substances and the harm that could happen if engaging in risky behaviours.”

In the interviews, one grantee said an unexpected outcome was the positive impact their project had on the girls' families. As family members developed trust with project staff, they were able to engage in difficult conversations, including about alcohol and substance use and how behaviours and patterns could change within their family. The grantee said these conversations were effective because they did not involve blame or judgment.

Most youth survey respondents reported enhanced healthy coping and refusal skills because of their involvement in the project. They also reported improved skills in recognizing if they were in an unsafe situation and in planning ahead, as well as improved understanding of what to do if they were in an unsafe situation. In addition, the majority of youth reported at least a little improvement in their understanding of alcohol use and its potential harms (84%) and in how to drink more safely if they were to drink (75%). Similarly, all grantees who completed a survey felt that participants showed improvement in these areas.

Improvements in skills and understanding that youth attributed to their involvement in the project



Alcohol Use

While grantees felt that involvement in the project helped to shift girls' perceptions around alcohol, some interviewees noted they could not be certain if the project was effective for alcohol prevention among girls who had not yet tried alcohol. Also, some grantees were unsure if the project helped to reduce participants' alcohol use among those who had already tried alcohol. However, others were certain that the project supported girls to reduce their alcohol consumption, and added that it supported some girls to enter a treatment program. Further, all grantees who completed a survey felt that girls' involvement in the project helped to lower their likelihood of harmful alcohol use at least a little, including 92% who felt it helped with harm reduction quite a bit or very much.

How grantees felt that participants' involvement helped to lower their likelihood of harmful alcohol use (grantee survey)...

"Participants are more likely to engage in alternative activities, and to manage uncomfortable feelings with exercise, gardening, grounding, etc. Participants are also more likely to talk to an adult friend instead of seeking alcohol, as a result of this project."

"There was a sense of trust and this allowed the girls to open up a little and share and ask questions. We brought awareness to holistic health, taking care of self inside and out. This all supports making healthy choices and also getting support."

The girls have learned to replace substance use with other activities they enjoy. Using a harm-reduction lens, providing youth with substance use education has allowed them to make healthier choices and increase awareness.

"Participants have been set up with opportunities to build healthy coping skills and build resilience through trying a wide variety of activities. They have been introduced to community supports, learned about harm reduction, and had pathways opened for continuing support in the community."

Most youth who completed a survey reported no change in their alcohol use due to their involvement in the project, and many of these youth explained they had never tried alcohol. However, 20% reported drinking less or that their alcohol use felt safer (e.g., less binge drinking). A few reported they were less likely to start drinking because of their involvement in the project, while some younger youth added comments that they did not know if they were less likely to start drinking.

Girls' comments about their alcohol use and any alcohol-related changes because of their involvement in the project...

"I'm too young to drink."

"I don't drink, never have, #sober4life"

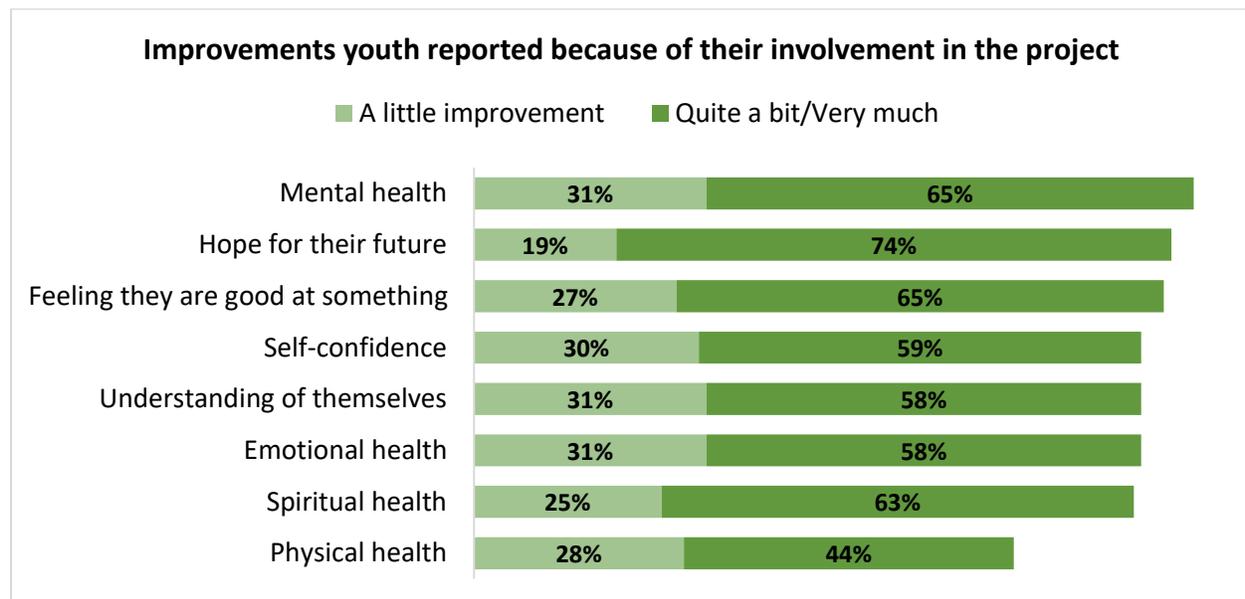
"I feel safer with my use because I am taught healthy ways to use it."

"Instead of going out or whatnot, I'm [taking part in this project] at the school so can't drink here."

"I learned not to drink a lot because I don't want my kids to have a life I've had. And I want to help people now."

Health & Well-being

Most girls reported at least a little improvement in various aspects of their health and well-being because of their involvement in the project. For example, most reported their mental health and spiritual health improved quite a bit or very much, as did their self-confidence, sense of competence (feeling they were good at something), and hope for their future.



Similarly, grantees who completed a survey reported that girls in their groups demonstrated improved health and well-being because of their involvement. For example, most felt the girls' mental and emotional health improved quite a bit or very much, as well as their self-confidence and sense of competence. Grantees who took part in interviews also noted that the girls' self-confidence improved because of their involvement in the project and they came to feel valued

and appreciated. Grantees added that enhanced self-confidence in turn helped to reduce the risk of harmful alcohol use because participants felt more confident setting healthy boundaries.

In addition, some grantees said that participants gained skills in stress-management and self-care. For example, girls in one group set a goal for themselves to not use their phones an hour before going to bed at night, and they followed through, which improved their sleep and well-being. Also, girls in some groups gained knowledge and skills relating to healthy eating and nutrition, which contributed to healthier eating and improved well-being.

Many projects involved physical activity, which grantees said encouraged the girls to become active and helped to connect them to their body. In some cases, the girls encouraged their family members to become more physically active.

Comments about improved health and well-being...

“I feel safe when I'm here and my depression seems to lessen.” -Youth participant

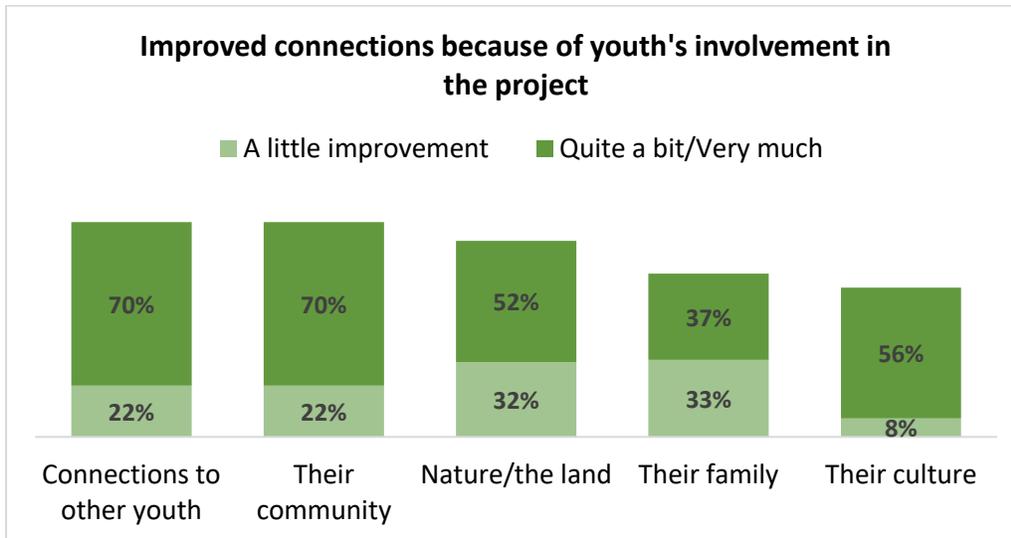
“Youth have learned about healthy eating and to be mindful of everything they put into their bodies. They have participated in a variety of physical/outdoor activities and identified self-care strategies that work for them.” -Grantee/project staff

“For some participants, access to meals and other resources has meant a lot. Some participants have incorporated new free locations to visit and activities to do into their lives that have already become healthy outlets.” -Grantee/project staff

“This project has brought together bigger conversations about the future, change and unhealthy situations in general, allowing participants to self-reflect and think about a different direction when it comes to positive directions.” -Grantee/project staff

Connections and Relationships

The majority of youth participants reported enhanced connections which they attributed to their involvement in the project. For example, most reported their connections to other youth and to their community improved quite a bit or very much. Most youth reported at least a little improvement in their connection to nature (84%), their family (70%), and their culture (64%).



In response to an open-ended question about how their involvement in the project affected their life (if at all), youth commonly stated they became more social and had the opportunity to connect with more people. A few noted that the time they spent in nature, through taking part in project activities, helped them to learn more about nature and to feel connected to it. Grantees who were interviewed also commented that the outdoor activities offered through the project helped the girls feel connected to nature and increased their likelihood of continued involvement in activities, such as hiking, after the project ended.

Comments from youth participants...

"I got to meet more people."

"[Involvement in this project] has helped me to be more social."

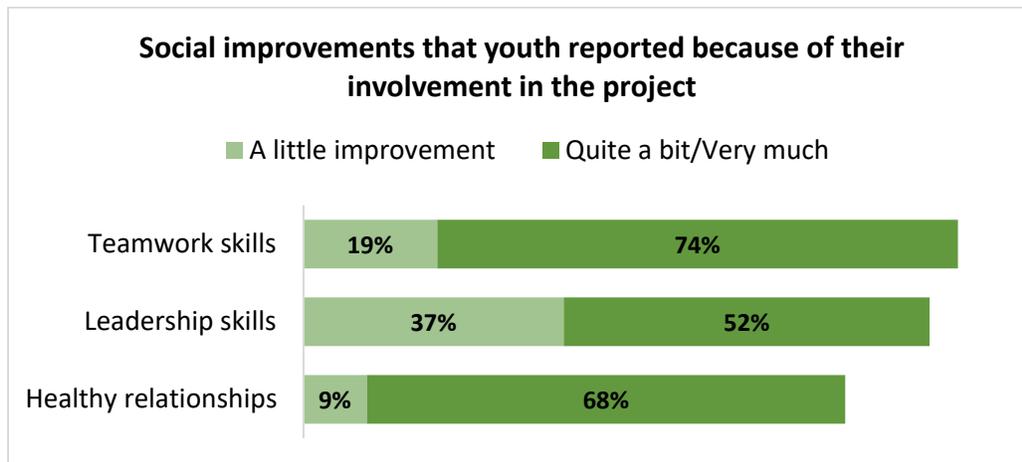
"It has made me less shy than I was before."

"I learned more about nature and liked spending time outside."

Grantees who completed a survey also reported enhanced connections among participants. For example, 83% felt girls' connections with other youth improved quite a bit or very much because of their involvement in the project. Grantees who took part in interviews commonly described the development of friendships among the girls, including among girls who would have otherwise not connected with one another, as well as among girls who had previously experienced conflicts with one another (some had known each other before the project started). In projects that took place in schools, the girls appreciated seeing familiar faces in their school hallways, outside of the sessions, and some felt more connected to school as a result. Many grantees added that the friendships endured after the project ended and the girls continued to support one another, including with managing their alcohol use.

Some grantees said the connections that developed among project participants helped to create a sense of community that felt more like a family as opposed to a typical youth group. While fewer girls than had originally been intended were able to take part in many of the projects, the smaller groups and the protracted time-frame (due to the pandemic) helped participants to feel more connected.

Grantees explained that through these connections and relationships, the girls gained social skills, including skills in communication and teamwork. All grantees who completed a survey reported that participants' skills improved, at least a little, in the areas of teamwork as well as leadership and healthy relationships because of their involvement in the project. Similarly, most youth survey respondents reported they had gained skills in these areas.



Comments from grantees/project staff...

"The biggest outcome is that the youth are feeling a sense of connection and belonging."

"The girls learned to be part of a team, and to lean on one another."

"Youth have learned about the components of a healthy relationship and useful interpersonal skills."

"This group has provided a strong connection to community during these isolating times of COVID."

"This program running amidst the COVID-19 pandemic has provided participants with connections they wouldn't have otherwise had. There are also several participants who have found healthy connections with peers through the group where they are otherwise bullied at school and in other social circumstances."

"The group has allowed the youth to form healthy relationships with their peers and staff alike."

"Healthy new friendships have blossomed out of this group."

"The group has helped to build a supportive community defined by open communication and a willingness to be vulnerable in new situations. Over time, the girls have become readily accepting of new members, welcoming them in without being prompted."

Cultural connectedness among Indigenous youth

Most Indigenous youth who completed a survey (77%) reported their connection to their culture improved quite a bit or very much. Also, most Indigenous participants (71%) indicated their understanding of their culture improved to this degree (54% among all survey respondents).

Grantees whose projects supported Indigenous girls said that involvement of Elders and other Indigenous community members in project activities helped participants to gain cultural knowledge and to feel more connected to their culture. For example, a project involving a rite of passage ceremony for Indigenous girls helped them to gain understanding of their culture and a sense of connection to it, as well as to enhance their sense of cultural pride. Learning about their culture and feeling connected to it also helped Indigenous girls to gain a better understanding of themselves. Grantees reported that these positive effects in turn helped to reduce the likelihood that participants would feel the need to escape by engaging in potentially harmful behaviours such as alcohol use.

“We engaged in cultural activities, including teaching about smudging protocols and connections to the land.” -Grantee/project staff

Community Resources

Most youth reported that their involvement in the project helped to increase (quite a bit or very much) their knowledge of community services and supports (70%) and their knowledge of people in the community they could turn to for support (59%). Similarly, grantees said that participants became aware of resources, services, and supportive people in the community because various community partners were involved in the project.

In addition to greater awareness of these resources, most youth reported increased access to needed services and supports (77%) and to supportive people in their community (58%). Findings among grantees who completed a survey were similar, with most reporting increased access to services/supports and to supportive people in the community among youth participants, as well as greater awareness of these resources.

*“The girls are now aware of local community supports to help deal with stress, mental health issues, addictions, and substance use. We have also worked hard to de-stigmatize these topics in order to encourage our youth to reach out for help when they are in trouble/crisis.”
-Grantee/project staff*

Organizational Outcomes

Virtually all grantees who completed a survey (and for whom these questions were relevant) reported at least a little improvement in their organizations' approach to girls' alcohol use (90%), programming (100%), and approach to youth engagement (91%) because of their CAI-funded project.

Grantees who were interviewed shared details about outcomes within their organization that resulted from their project. For example, some realized the value of having discussions with youth about alcohol use, because of young people's desire to talk and learn about this topic,

and said they would incorporate these discussions into other programming on a regular basis moving forward.

Others developed a deeper understanding of the girls' home lives within the context of poverty and addiction, due to their project. They said there was a positive shift within their agency in that staff were now more inclined to identify their own biases and assumptions; were having more conversations about class and race within their agency; and were less judgmental of others in their community.

Some grantees said their project helped them to develop new partnerships and to identify new partnership opportunities within their community (e.g., beyond schools). Their agency also learned how to bring different partners together to create programming opportunities for a diverse group of girls, and realized that programming does not need to be limited to students within a particular school.

Others said their agency will continue to give youth opportunities for training, meaningful employment, and volunteering because their project underscored the importance of offering such opportunities to young people. Further, they would continue to address class issues by removing barriers to employment and providing good wages.

There were also reflections and ideas within some agencies on how to make programming more inclusive to transgender youth (e.g., exercising greater awareness and sensitivity around certain topics).

A few grantees felt there were no organizational shifts resulting from their project because their agency had taken a youth-engagement, trauma-informed, harm-reduction approach prior to the start of their CAI funding and would continue to do so in the future. However, they noted that the CAI funding helped to build capacity within their agency and supported the development of community partnerships to carry out youth-engagement activities they would have otherwise been unable to offer.

Organizational changes resulting from grantees' CAI-funded projects (grantee survey)...

"Youth or the conversation of youth has finally started again. Bringing relevancy to youth and allowing them to feel heard and valued has started again."

"We have changed the language that we use around gender to be more inclusive."

"We aim to have more programming around mental health."

"The harm reduction philosophy we use to discuss substance use with youth hasn't changed, however the ability to host a variety of activities related to health and wellness has drastically increased due to the funding we received through this grant. It would be amazing to be able to continue similar projects in the future."

"We have accessed community resources, activities, and facilitators that we have not previously accessed. We've embraced reaching out in online capacities to fill gaps."

"Our organization has always worked from a trauma-informed, harm-reduction lens - so nothing has changed in that regard. But our partnership with the school district has allowed us to access a diverse group of young ladies who have helped inform this project."

Other Outcomes

A few grantees said that girls' involvement in the project, and the self-confidence they gained in the process, helped them to pursue their entrepreneurial endeavours. They gained skills to find and maintain a job, as well as to pursue a meaningful career path.

Grantees also said the project was impactful for project staff. For example, some learned new ways to meaningfully engage vulnerable girls. Many had experienced satisfaction with how their project was carried out and its positive impacts on participants.

In one community, project funding enabled grantees to install WiFi on their site which was available to the public free of charge. This helped to address inequity relating to the digital divide that was present in their community.

A number of grantees said that a major success of their project was continued buy-in from a range of community partners, coupled with additional funding they were able to secure, so that their project could continue after CAI funding ended.

Grantees' comments (survey)...

"It was a program that was needed in our community for a long time, and now it can continue to run [due to ongoing funding]."

"This project has provided participants with the skills and supports needed to create their own source of income, to find and keep a job, to express themselves authentically, to feel confident, to defy gender norms, to pursue creative projects, to plan for their future."

FEEDBACK & SUGGESTIONS

Scaling Up

Grantees were asked if they had ideas on how their project could be scaled up in their community to further help to prevent harmful alcohol use among girls. Some suggested that running additional program cycles would be helpful, and some added they were able to do so because they secured funding from other sources (including government funding). A related idea was to invite former participants to take part as mentors and as helpers in delivering future cycle of the project.

Other grantees said that more groups could be run in different locations, and through various agencies, within the community. An idea was for former youth participants to help with delivering those groups and to act as mentors to new participants.

Youth's Feedback

An open-ended survey question asked youth what they liked most about taking part in the project. Participants commonly identified the opportunity to socialize with peers while taking part in fun activities, and the food that was offered. They also appreciated learning new information (e.g., about their culture) and the safe and accepting environment.

What youth liked most about taking part in the project...

Social connections, activities, and food

"Making new friends"

"Being social outside of school"

"Hanging out with friends, crafting, talking to new people"

"The connections we make"

"Doing the activities with friends"

"When we did cooking classes"

"The different activities, food and drinks"

"The good food. Hanging out with people. Doing fun activities"

"I liked the food"

Learning

"The fun and learning new things"

"I liked learning and discussing real-life problems in our world. The snacks were great too."

"Culture learning"

"Learning about plants"

Safe and accepting environment

"Safe place for kids in foster care"

"Felt safe"

"How accepting everyone was"

Most youth reported they had fun and felt safe taking part; their ideas were listened to and they were involved in something meaningful; their cultural identity was respected and the project was sensitive to their cultural needs; and they gained skills that will help them in the future.



Additional comments from youth participants

"[Taking part] has made me feel safe and that there are people who are always there for me."

"It helped me notice that our life isn't to be wasted on drugs, and to be nice to more people."

"[Project staff] were amazing they also helped me and helped me with being shy."

"[Project staff] did such a good job."

"Thank you for letting us have our program!"

Youth's Suggestions

When asked if they had suggestions for how girls could be better supported to take part in the project and to stay engaged, most youth indicated they had none and were satisfied with the support that participants had received. A few commented that support with transportation would have been helpful, such as offering rides home to youth who lived further away if their caregivers were unable to pick them up after the sessions.

The vast majority of girls indicated they had no other suggestions for the project and stated they were satisfied with how it was run. A few offered suggestions, including having more opportunities for participants to share their feelings and experiences with one another through check-ins or "safe circles." A couple of other suggestions were related to food, including offering more cooking classes and adding salads to the healthy foods that were offered during the sessions.

Grantees' Suggestions and Feedback for CAI

Grantees were asked if they had suggestions for the CAI granting stream. Many indicated they had no suggestions and they were very satisfied with their experience with CAI. They described

CAI staff as very supportive, understanding, and kind, and felt there was good communication with CAI. Further, they appreciated CAI's flexibility in allowing them to make changes to their project as needed, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Their most common suggestion was for projects to be funded longer-term (multi-year) so that participants could continue to benefit from taking part and so that more girls in the community could become involved. For example, one suggestion was for the projects to be extended through the summer, when youth experience less structure and fewer opportunities to connect to needed supports, due to schools being closed. Also, many grantees noted that girls in their community had few opportunities to experience positive connections and participate in healthy activities, and having to end their project was a significant loss for the participants. These grantees wished the project funding could be extended so that participants could continue to take part and benefit from their involvement.

Another suggestion was for grantees to be encouraged to include staff training in their budget, including training for upstream approaches to community work.

Grantees' feedback and suggestions for CAI (interviews and surveys)....

"I think the granting process was strong and the projects seemed pretty strong. For our programming, I felt like we really had a good grasp on our youth and...it really made a difference in the community."

"We have seen a huge impact on the participants in the community and would love to see this project continue to support girls in [the community]."

"CAI were very supportive, really kind."

"I appreciate your patience and that you are flexible given COVID-19."

"CAI does a good job at opening up discussions around best practices."

"CAI have been fabulous—lots of check-ins and support."

"CAI have been amazing. We really appreciate all the flexibility with the program rollout."

"Thanks to CAI for rolling with the punches. We had flexibility and autonomy to use the funds in a way we felt was most meaningful to the girls. The flexibility allowed us to change course when it was needed."

"How many moments this grant funding was way more than funding but rather a game changer."

"This opportunity has been extremely rich and fruitful. As a facilitator I have greatly appreciated the ability to be flexible given the pandemic. I've felt very supported all the way along."

PROMISING PRACTICES

Grantees were asked what they had learned through their project about effective ways to prevent harmful alcohol use among girls or to support girls to make healthy decisions around alcohol use.

They offered the following promising practices:

- It is important to create a safe space so that real conversations about alcohol use can take place. Adult supports should be genuine, non-judgmental, and should listen to girls to develop a trusting relationship with them. Developing trusting relationships and connections is key.
- Take a trauma-informed approach. For example, staff should be trained in recognizing trauma symptoms and in understanding the role that trauma may play in girls' lives, including in their use of alcohol.
- The topic of girls' alcohol use should be approached from a harm-reduction lens, as opposed to an abstinence focused approach. Meet girls where they are at, without judging their behaviours. For example, help girls to make a safety plan to address what to do if they find themselves in a situation where others are drinking; how to stay safe if they choose to drink; or what to do if they have had too much to drink.
- Educate girls on alcohol use. Telling them what to do is ineffective, but it is important to give them all the information they need to make the best decisions for themselves.
- Talk to girls about healthy boundaries, consent, body image, and self-worth. It is also important to support girls to talk about their feelings, and to normalize their feelings.
- Teach girls healthy coping skills that do not involve using alcohol or other substances. For example, help them to build a 'toolkit' of coping resources and to identify who their 'safe circle' is whom they can approach for support.
- Introduce girls to fun, healthy, low-barrier physical activities they can engage in as alternatives to substance use. It is good to encourage girls to try something new and to offer them a range of activities and experiences. Do not make assumptions about what activities they may or may not be interested in doing, but rather ask them what they want to do.
- Support girls in setting high (but achievable) expectations for themselves, and offer them support to meet those expectations.
- Offer girls opportunities to be mentored by healthy adults in the community who can act as positive role models.
- Raise girls' awareness of resources in the community in case they or someone they know might need to access them.

Programming Specific

In addition to the practices described above, grantees identified practices within projects or programs that could contribute to preventing harmful alcohol use among girls.

- Ensure there is enough time for participants to connect with one another through group check-ins and for them to have the opportunity to talk about their experiences. For example, in initiatives for Indigenous girls, the use of talking circles and a talking stick can be an opportunity for participants to share their wisdom with one another; for their voices to be heard; and to gain interpersonal skills (e.g., listening, expressing their views/feelings, and being respectful toward others).
- While it is important to make a plan in advance, it is equally important to have backup plans in case the original plan cannot be carried out. Creativity and flexibility are needed when designing and delivering these youth programs.
- Having a co-facilitator is important, so that project staff can lean on one another for support.
- Healthy Elders should be involved in prevention and intervention initiatives for Indigenous girls, including project oversight and involvement in activities and cultural teachings.
- Partnering with community stakeholders (e.g., other agencies, experts, and adult supports) is beneficial because partners are able to help with identifying at-risk girls and inviting them to take part in programming. Involvement of community partners also helps girls to know which adults and agencies they can access for supports in the community.
- Provide food to participants, and it is ideal if participants can also take food home with them.

Youth engagement

- Ensure the sessions are fun and interactive to keep youth engaged.
- Youth should be involved in project decision-making from beginning to end. It helps participants to feel heard and respected, and provides them with opportunities to gain leadership skills.
- Youth appreciate being acknowledged for their time, such as by offering them an honorarium. An honorarium can help to motivate them to attend, and can give them a sense of responsibility for active and positive engagement (i.e., it can positively affect how they engage).
- It is important to do community outreach to engage harder-to-reach youth and a greater diversity of youth in programming. Social media is limited when it comes to recruiting harder-to-reach youth.
- In-person sessions are ideal for engaging youth and keeping them engaged. It is also important to have a big enough space to host a large group of youth (if public health orders allow for this and it is safe to do so).

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Grantees described a range of activities that were offered through their projects, in order to support girls at risk of harmful alcohol use to make informed decisions and to foster their overall health and well-being. Activities included education/informational workshops; hands-on, skill-building activities (e.g., gardening, construction); outdoor and physical activities (e.g., hiking, canoeing, yoga); arts-based activities (e.g., murals, beading); and interacting with animals (therapy dogs, horses). Factors or processes that grantees identified as contributing to successful outcomes included creating a fun, safe and non-judgmental atmosphere; a harm-reduction approach; relationship-building among girls, as well as between girls and positive adult role models; regular check-ins or talking circles so girls could discuss their experiences and support one another; the opportunity to eat together; meaningful youth engagement in program design and delivery; culturally relevant activities and involvement of healthy Elders; and CAI's support, understanding, and flexibility particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (see "summary of projects" diagram on next page).

Grantees suggested that while formal workshops were helpful in teaching girls about alcohol use, the planned content of each session may matter less than creating a safe space for discussions, check-ins, and relationship building. They also identified other promising practices, such as the importance of flexibility, having co-facilitators to support one another when needed, the value of partnering with community stakeholders, and the importance of outreach to connect with harder-to-reach girls.

Some of the factors grantees identified as contributing to successful outcomes—including fostering a fun and safe environment where food was offered—were also factors that the girls commonly identified as helping to keep them engaged, and what they identified as liking most about their involvement. Girls also identified the opportunity to socialize with peers as what they liked most, and grantees highlighted that youth participants benefited from this social aspect, including supporting one another and developing friendships.

Evaluation findings pointed to improvements among girls in a variety of areas because of their involvement in the project. These included healthier views around alcohol use, some indication of reduced alcohol use or likelihood of drinking in the future, and reduced risk of harmful use. There were also improvements in girls' well-being, including their self-confidence and hope for their future, as well as in their connections to peers, community, culture, and nature. The physical activities that took place outdoors (e.g., hiking, canoeing, gardening) seemed particularly helpful in providing girls with healthy alternatives to substance use and giving them opportunities to connect with nature, gain skills, and to develop confidence in themselves. Participants also gained increased knowledge of and access to community services and supports. In addition to outcomes among youth participants, grantees identified positive organizational outcomes resulting from their CAI-funded project. These included positive changes in their approach to youth engagement, to girls' alcohol use, and to programming in general.

Despite challenges that grantees experienced to delivering their project, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., keeping participants engaged virtually when programming shifted online), the evaluation indicated successful outcomes. A limitation is that not all grantees took part in the evaluation. However, all grantees will have an opportunity to review this report and provide additional feedback. Any additional feedback will be incorporated into the final version of this report.

Summary of projects

Inputs

- CAI grant & CAI staff support
- Adult supports/mentors (including Elders)
- Community partners
- Peer mentors
- Food
- Honorarium
- Volunteer/employment opportunities
- Meeting space
- Virtual meeting platform (Zoom)



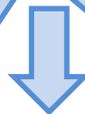
Activities

- Education/informational workshops
- Hands-on, skill-building activities (e.g., gardening, construction)
- Outdoor and physical activities (e.g., hiking, canoeing, yoga)
- Arts-based (e.g., murals, beading)
- Interacting with animals (therapy dogs, horses)



Factors contributing to positive outcomes

- Fun, safe, non-judgmental environment
- Eating together
- Check-ins/talking circles
- Relationship building
- Positive role models
- Harm-reduction approach
- Culturally relevant, involvement of Elders
- Youth engagement in program design & delivery
- Funder's support & flexibility



Outcomes

- Improved self-confidence, well-being, connections, awareness of/access to services, relationship skills, refusal skills, knowledge of alcohol use and potential harms, knowledge of how to stay safe.
- Reduced likelihood of alcohol use or harmful use.



Ultimate goal

Girls at risk of harmful alcohol use make informed decisions to promote their overall health and well-being in adolescence and into adulthood.

APPENDIX: PARTICIPANT SURVEYS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Youth survey
- Grantee survey
- Grantee interview questions

Survey for youth participants (CAI-funded projects)

This survey is part of an evaluation that McCreary Centre Society is carrying out of different projects funded by CAI (Community Action Initiative), including the project you have been involved in.

Voluntary

You can choose to not take part, to stop at any time, and to skip questions you don't feel comfortable answering.

Anonymous

Your name is not included on this survey. Nobody will be able to connect your answers to you personally. Also, the information you share will not be reported in a way that could personally identify you.

More information

If you have questions about the survey, please contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca or 604-291-1996.

What is your age?

- 11 or younger
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20 or older

How many sessions of this project have you attended (either virtually or in person)?

- None
- Some
- Around half
- Most
- All

Did anything make it hard for you to participate in this project? MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

- I was too busy
- I didn't have the technology (Internet connection, laptop, camera, etc.)
- I couldn't get there or home
- I was feeling too anxious or depressed
- Other (please specify): _____
- I did not experience any barriers to participating

What have been your reasons for staying involved in this project? MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

- I liked how the information/skills were taught
- I felt safe
- I had fun
- Food was provided
- Honorarium (for example, a gift card for taking part)
- Supportive staff
- Supportive peers
- The opportunity to socialize with others
- Access to other community programs or services
- I don't know
- Other (please specify): _____

How (if at all) could youth be better supported to take part in this project and to stay engaged?

How much of a say did you have in...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Planning this project? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Deciding which activities would take place? | <input type="radio"/> |

How much has your participation in this project helped to improve your...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Mental health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Physical health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Spiritual health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Emotional health? | <input type="radio"/> |

How much has your participation in this project helped to improve your...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Self-confidence? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Feeling that you are good at something? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Understanding of yourself? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Hope for your future? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5) Healthy relationships? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) Understanding of your culture? | <input type="radio"/> |

What did you like most about taking part in this project?

How much has taking part in this project helped to improve your connection to...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Other youth? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Your family? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Your community? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Your culture? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5) Nature/the land? | <input type="radio"/> |

How much has taking part in this project helped to increase your...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Knowledge of community services and supports? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Knowledge of people in the community you can turn to for support? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Access to needed services and supports? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Access to people in the community you can turn to for support? | <input type="radio"/> |

Have there been changes in your alcohol use, or chance you'll start drinking, because of this project?

MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

- I'm less likely to start drinking alcohol because of my involvement in this project
- I am drinking less alcohol
- My alcohol use feels safer (less binge drinking, etc.)
- There have been no changes in my alcohol use or the likelihood I'll start drinking
- There has been an increase in my alcohol use
- I'm more likely to start drinking alcohol
- Not applicable

Please explain:

How much has this project helped to improve your skills in...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Leadership? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Teamwork? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Healthy coping? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Planning ahead (making a plan)? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5) Being able to say No? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) Being able to recognize if you are in an unsafe situation? | <input type="radio"/> |

How much has your participation in this project helped to improve your understanding of...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Alcohol use and its potential harms? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) How to drink alcohol more safely (if you were to drink)? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) What to do if you are in an unsafe situation? | <input type="radio"/> |

How else (if at all) has your participation in this project affected your life?

Thinking about your participation in this project, please mark how true each sentence is for you:

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) I felt safe | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) I had fun | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) My ideas were listened to | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) I was part of something meaningful | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5) My cultural identity was respected | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) The project was sensitive to my cultural needs | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7) I have gained skills that will help me in the future | <input type="radio"/> |

Do you have any suggestions to improve this project?

What language(s) do you speak at home? (please list all): _____

What is your background? MARK ALL THAT APPLY:

- Indigenous/Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis, Inuit)
- European (British, Irish, German, Dutch, Ukrainian, Italian, Russian, etc.)
- East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)
- South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese, etc.)
- West Asian (Afghani, Iranian, Kazakhstani, etc.)
- African (Nigerian, Kenyan, Ethiopian, Tanzanian, etc.)
- Latin American, South American, Central American
- Australian, Pacific Islander
- Don't know
- Other (please specify): _____

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thanks for taking the time to complete this survey

Alcohol & Girls: Making Prevention a Priority

Evaluation Survey for Grantees

This survey is part of McCreary's evaluation of CAI's Alcohol & Girls granting stream. You will also have an opportunity to take part in a 1:1 interview to share more detailed information about your experience with your CAI-funded project.

This survey is...

Voluntary

You can choose to not take part, to stop at any time, and to skip questions you don't feel comfortable answering.

Anonymous

Your name is not included on this survey. Nobody will be able to connect your answers to you personally. Also, the information you share will not be reported in a way that could personally identify you or your agency. Combined findings will be reported across all agencies who received a grant through CAI.

If you have questions about the evaluation, please contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca or 604-291-1996.

In total, how many youth have been engaged in your CAI-funded project? _____

Age range of participants: _____

Overall, how much do you feel participants' involvement in this project has helped to improve their...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5) Mental health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) Physical health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7) Spiritual health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8) Emotional health? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9) Self-confidence? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10) Sense of competence? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11) Understanding of themselves? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12) Hope for their future? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13) Healthy relationships? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14) Understanding of their culture? | <input type="radio"/> |

In your opinion, have participants developed healthier views on alcohol use because of their involvement in this project?

- Not at all
- A little
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- Not applicable/Don't know

Please explain:

Overall, how much do you feel participants' involvement in this project has helped to improve their connection to...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 6) Other youth? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7) Their family? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8) Their community? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9) Their culture? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10) Nature/the land? | <input type="radio"/> |

Overall, how much do you feel participants' involvement in this project has helped to increase their...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5) Knowledge of community services and supports? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) Knowledge of people in the community they can turn to for support? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7) Access to needed services and supports? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8) Access to people in the community they can turn to for support? | <input type="radio"/> |

Do you feel participants' involvement in this project has helped to lower their likelihood of harmful alcohol use?

- Not at all
 A little
 Quite a bit
 Very much

Please explain:

Overall, how much do you feel participants' involvement in this project has helped to improve their skills in...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7) Leadership? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8) Teamwork? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9) Healthy coping? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10) Planning ahead (making a plan)? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11) Being able to say No? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12) Being able to recognize if they are in an unsafe situation? | <input type="radio"/> |

Overall, how much do you feel participants' involvement in this project has helped to improve their understanding of...

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4) Alcohol use and its potential harms? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5) How to drink alcohol more safely (if they were to drink)? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) What to do if they are in an unsafe situation? | <input type="radio"/> |

From your point of view, has the project impacted participants' lives in other ways? Please explain...

In your organization, have there been changes in the following areas because of this project?

| | Not at all | A little | Quite a bit | Very much | Not applicable/ Don't know |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Approach to girls' alcohol use | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Programming | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Approach to youth engagement | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Other (specify): _____ | <input type="radio"/> |

Please share details of any changes that have happened in your organization because of this project:

Do you have any suggestions to improve this CAI granting stream?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Grantee Interview Questions

PROCESS

1. Would you mind describing what the goals of your CAI project were?
 - a) How were the project activities meant to achieve those goals?
2. Was the project carried out in the way it had been intended, or did changes need to be made along the way?
 - a) What were the reasons for the changes?
3. To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic affected this project?
4. In what ways (if any) has the pandemic affected girls' alcohol use?

Youth engagement

5. Were youth involved in planning the project? How so?
6. Were youth involved in delivering the project? How so?
7. *[If yes to 4 or 5]* How successful do you feel the project was in meaningfully engaging youth in project planning *and/or* delivery?
8. Once youth were brought in, how successful was the project in keeping them engaged?
 - a) What were some ways that were used to keep youth engaged?
9. How successful do you feel the project has been in engaging harder-to-reach youth?
10. Were there any barriers or challenges to engaging youth (including harder-to-reach youth) and keeping them engaged?

Partnerships

11. How successful do you feel the project has been in collaborating or partnering with other organizations or service providers?
 - a) Were there any challenges? If so, what lessons did you and the team learn for the next time? What would you do differently?

Strengths & Challenges

12. What do you see as the strengths of your project?
13. All projects have challenges. What do you feel were challenges associated with this one?
 - a) How were the challenges addressed?

OUTCOMES

14. To what extent do you feel the project goals were achieved?
15. What do you think contributed to your project's success?

16. To what extent has the project helped in improving youth's overall well-being? How do you feel it has accomplished that?
17. How much do you feel the project has helped in changing youth's perceptions of alcohol use?
18. How much do you feel the project has helped in reducing their alcohol consumption? Or their likelihood of drinking?
19. Have there been other outcomes among youth, maybe even unexpected ones, because of their involvement in the project?
20. Were there any partners, or anyone else (individuals/groups/organizations), who particularly supported the project along the journey to help make it successful?
21. To what extent has the project helped to change things within your organization?
 - a) PROMPTS: Any changes to your agency's approach to girls' alcohol use?
 - b) Any programming shifts to address girls' alcohol use and to promote protective factors?
 - c) Any shifts in the agency's approach to meaningful youth engagement?
 - Are there ways that your agency can continue to use youth engagement strategies to help inform youth programming moving forward?
22. Have there been other outcomes because of this project (such as for the youth, yourself, the agency, or the larger community)?

LEARNINGS

23. What have you learned through your involvement in this initiative?
24. What would you say are effective ways, or promising practices, to prevent harmful alcohol use among girls? [or promising practices to support youth to make healthy decisions about alcohol use]
25. If another agency were planning to carry out a similar project, what advice would you give them?
26. Do you have any thoughts or suggestions on how this project could be improved, if it were to be carried out again?
27. Do you have any ideas on how this project could be scaled up in your community, to help prevent alcohol misuse among girls?
28. Do you have any (other) suggestions for CAI?
29. Is there anything else you would like to share?