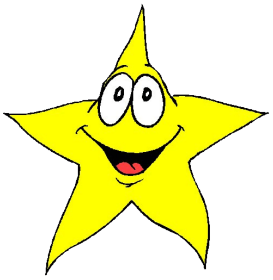
COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Youth Aging out of Care—Vancouver August 2015—Issue 2



We heard you….

A big thank you to stakeholders!

Since the end of June I have been meeting with stakeholders on our distribution list. So far I have met with a total of 39 individuals representing 24 organizations and ministries serving youth aging out of care. Thank you for carving precious time out of your busy schedules to meet with me. A summary of these meetings will be in the September newsletter.

A lot of you mentioned the need to summarize prior meetings in a different manner in order to make our time at community gatherings more productive. As a result this newsletter is dedicated to a condensed overview of the April and September 2014 community conversations.

I was pleasantly surprised to hear 'lets stop talking about this and get moving' from at least 65% of you as stakeholders. It seems we are more ready to move forward than I anticipated. Huge kudos to Caroline Bonesky for the work completed in the past year and for the enthusiasm she generated for the CI approach.

PLEASE RSVP for the September 25 gathering if you have not done so already. We are nearing capacity!

Brief Project Update

- *Stakeholder meetings*
- *Seeking key stakeholders identified as missing at the table*
- *Summary report of meetings*
- *Inventory of services in progress*
- *Profile of Youth Aging out in Vancouver Coastal being completed*
- *Creating a 9 month plan*
- *Developing youth engagement strategies*

In This Issue

- Thank you
- Project update
- Summary April 2014
- Summary September 2014
- What's next

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Summary of April 2014 Conversation

Approximately 30 people attended this conversation with the objective of exploring the collective impact (CI) approach in relation to youth leaving care. Three rounds of dialogues answered a series of questions. ***Round 1 asked: What is missing from the data? What else do we know about youth leaving care? What do we need to know?*** Several themes emerged:

- **Pathways to success:** what does success look like; what's creating good outcomes; what's the reality for the youth
- **Youth centered:** are their voices heard; engaging youth and families/caregivers in conversations; what support is needed to bridge from transition to stability; 'who's on their speed dial' when they need help
- **Possibility thinking:** strengths based perspective; focus on solutions; hope inducing data and storytelling
- **Contextual data:** Vancouver and place focused analysis; political context; outcomes and data connected to protective factors and determinants of health; connection between education and perception of being in care; plans using developmental lens - determinants of health; equal attention to system and context—the why.

The next two rounds of questions are summarized together. ***Round 2 asked: How could a CI approach be applied to the issue of youth leaving care? Round 3 asked: What would it take for us to collectively improve outcomes for youth leaving care?*** Several themes emerged:

- **Start small**: common agenda; common definition of youth; common values; willingness to release status quo and step away from crisis driven, issue driven and reactive responses; a coordinated effort; little experiments
- **Funding structures**: patient and longer term funding; move away from pilots without sustainment; from charity to investment
- **Shared learning:** assessment of available services and resources: authentic youth engagement advising on services;
- **Champions:** political champion needed to garner public interest; private sector engagement; continued conversations.

Round 2 concluded with: What are the opportunities and what are the challenges? Most of the opportunities were identified through the earlier questions. Challenges mentioned most frequently were: common agenda may be difficult with differing agency mandates and philosophies; do we have the right people in the room; don't have public agreement on investing in all children; CI is counter cultural—can our system support it; our context has been risk aversion; sense that indigenous representation is critical and needs to be told separately due to historical context and colonial practices.

Summary of September 2014 Conversation

Approximately 50 people attended this conversation with the objective of defining an ideal state and a shared desire to move forward with the CI approach. The following themes emerged in response to the question ***What change do you aspire to see?***

- **No kids aging out at 19**: network of support; making circles of support a common practice; long term; shared responsibility, 'creating a culture where we share the load'; continuity of care; all youth have capacity, support, resources; value of family
- **No barriers to transition**: employment, schooling, health, housing; communication between systems; policy, changes in practice and funding; 900 rules—which ones inhibit relationship building and belonging
- **Youth centered plans**: meaningful engagement of youth, active agents in creating their own success through enduring relationships, holistic wellness and belonging; vision, hope and goals.

A topic that came out loud and clear was **inclusion**: for youth 17 to 24 years of age its about transition to independence whereas youth in care have a hard date that becomes a barrier to a natural transition; changing the age isn't the issue, its more about allowing a gradual transition; so much is imposed on youth in care where we often ask them to trust us when the system doesn't trust them; allowing them a voice in creating their own plan, the safety net to make mistakes; the unintended outcome of risk aversion and privacy can be isolation.

Several **models** were introduced by groups: the ecological model asking what looks different at each level; a risk aversion gap based model that emphasized community development and individual attachment. The group created a long list responding to ***What do they need and what problem are we solving***?

Key themes from the day included: the ability to have conversations without blaming, an all in collective desire, young people engaged, moving from charity to investment, relationship building and trust, access to data and knowledge. Identified next steps included securing funding to move forward and convening a conversation around values and principles.

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