

CLARITY project

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CLARITY Project

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CONTEXT

In 2017, the Blenk Family of Kelowna, BC, lost their son to suicide. The family focused on bringing awareness to youth suicide, partnering with UBCO researchers and the KGH Foundation. From this partnership and dialogue with youth in the Okanagan community, the CLARITY project emerged. CLARITY-Community-Led Action for Resiliency Important Throughout Youth, is an upstream approach that aims to engage youth to create groups and activities informed by these conversations. The youth council is at the centre of CLARITY, creating opportunities where youth can voice their needs and challenges and lead activities such as hangouts, movie night, youth café.

WHAT IS THE EQUITY CHALLENGE?

CLARITY is a partnership between the UBCO Equity Science Lab, research funders, the local community, and, of course, the youth themselves. Given the diversity of needs from each of these partnerships, the research team has found it challenging to give the right information to the right people with the right amount of detail. As a result, the Research Team has struggled to communicate effectively with these partners, to the detriment of finding sustainable funding to support the ongoing Council activities.

The equity-to-action challenge is to create communication tools that can help guide the conversations with diverse partners and potential future partners. The equity challenge brings together people embedded within the CLARITY project, a project partner and others from various backgrounds. The diversity in backgrounds and lived experiences of this team provided a new lens for creating these tools.

Each communication tool is one page and will be put together in a creative booklet. These resources will help explain the different aspects of the initiative, from the research project to the Youth Council and what is needed from partners. Effectively communicating this information can help ensure that it is consistent and fits the needs of the audience. For example, the communication tools are in plain language, concise, and specific.

WHAT WAS THE EQUITY RESPONSE?

We worked collaboratively, our process emerged organically, and we all leaned into the messiness of the first couple of days. Mapping out how CLARITY was an upstream approach to the causes of health inequities (suicide, anxiety, depression, social isolation) provided useful information for determining which audiences needed to know what. We relied on the expertise of the people in the group who were embedded within CLARITY to provide the background but it took some time to understand the 'equity-to-action challenge'. We requested feedback from the project sponsor at three points in time to ensure we were meeting their expectations. Our understanding of the challenge was to create communication tools to support the CLARITY project team to communicate with various partners effectively. We created multiple one-page communication tools for the audiences of Community Partners, Parents, Research Funders, and Program funders. We agreed to compile these one-pagers (excluding the research funders) into a pamphlet, allowing parties to see who else is involved with CLARITY.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

We learned (or improved our understanding) about “what is equity action”. The real-life example helped us work through and learn more about how to do equity work. We didn’t explicitly refer to an equity framework during the group process, however, the course readings and discussions were fresh in our minds. Reflecting back, we used principles of inclusion, authentic partnering, commitment to the future, responsiveness to the causes of inequities and humility.

We demonstrated authentic partnering by recognizing each team member's different levels of understanding about CLARITY and equity. We used the class time to work through questions and explore the different perspectives that were brought up. The diversity of perspectives, including experts from the Youth Council, the CLARITY research team and other disciplines helped us work through the idea of equity action. We kept coming back to the importance of youth-led action that underpinned the project and its impact on building resilience.

Although we did not identify formal roles at the beginning of the project, this allowed group members to choose how they wanted to be a part of the work. We checked in with group members for consensus before moving on to the next steps. The flexible approach to our group process allowed us to be creative and to practice humility by ensuring we were all listening to and learning from others.

Throughout the process, we embraced inclusion, everyone attended the meetings and participated. We had people online and in person, so we had to figure out how to include everyone in the conversation. This meant limiting side conversations and having everyone on camera. We all were committed to the project and interested in helping the research team with this equity challenge.

REFERENCES



Smith, A., Poon, C., Peled, M., Forsyth, K., Saewyc, E., & McCreary Centre Society. (2024). The Big Picture: An overview of the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey provincial results. McCreary Centre Society.