



Creating Connections

Final Report - Section III

Fundy Region



Fundy Region Working Group

Participants: Nine

Question 1: What are the possibilities?

Connectivity between the recreation world and the mental health world



- Increased communication – already has begun through this symposium.
- Recreation Therapists can become more present in communities.
- Expanding programs through collaboration and new partnerships.
- Focus groups between community organizations and colleges.
- The conversation has to be brought up with all involved groups: recreation departments, mental health organizations, community groups.
- Limiting slang and uncommon language around mental health - common jargon.

Increasing Awareness and Education

- Awareness around youth engagement and the benefits.
- Education and training for practitioners.

Addressing Barriers

- Remove some of the steps, to make the system easier to navigate.
- Programs should meet the needs of the people who need it the most. Limiting barriers - transportation, cost, timing of programs (mornings do not work - due to medications), late afternoons work much better!

Addressing Barriers...

- Something to think about: Some medications make clients sensitive to the sun, light sensitivity, etc.

Building Capacity

- Creation of list of concerns, ideas, things to consider – best practices toolkit.
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- Creating an understanding as they pertain to First Nations Communities - distinguishing the issues, creation of programs, better communication between Mental Health organizations and the community.

- Integration of recreation and leisure into mental health programs.



- Gap: nutrition and recreation.
 - Use of leisure education on coordinating teams.
 - Sharing of resources - staff members, facilities.
 - EIBI program - early intervention program for children with autism - programs do not include recreation - integration of recreation therapy into these programs.
 - Recreation as a “reward”.
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Question 2: What are the priorities for next steps in the Fundy region? (Note: The highlighted points below were identified by the group as priority next steps)

- Creation of *Best Practices Toolkit**.
- Someone with a Recreation background on Mental Health Staff.
- Increase in clients’ connection to community - involvement outside the Mental Health clinic and more involvement in recreation programs overall.
- Remove barriers - subsidies, grants, low cost/no cost.
- Creation of a smaller version of the symposium in the Fundy region - “bring people around the fire” and start collaborating.
- Creation of solutions to the problems - “open up doors” and opportunities.
- Fundy Regional Meeting: Location: Truro - piggy back on Fundy Recreation monthly meeting (invitation to all partners)*.

* Note: Point identified by the group as priority next step.

Question 2...

- Better means to identify the issues and diagnoses without labeling.
- Creation of trustworthiness in First Nation Communities - find ways to bring awareness and connect with community in a means that makes them feel comfortable.
- Creation of a safe environment where First Nation's persons can come to confide or receive help in an atmosphere that is ideal for them.
- Diminish the stigma - through promotion of recreation.
- Promotion of nutrition - and healthy eating habits (at meetings too).
- Education and awareness is the key! Training, training, training, training, training!
- Good nutrition is the foundation for more energy, and better habits overall - especially with the medications that many people with mental illnesses are on.
- Physicians to prescribe “exercise” and “recreation” - along with medication*.
- Importance of credible leisure time (more than walking to Tim Horton's for a donut).
- Promotion of goal setting and planning in the lives of clients - high importance - use Recreation Therapists to create plans for clients.
- Importance of belonging to a team or club - importance of sport and role of sport needs to be looked at.



Question 3: What are the possible collaborations/partnerships/action steps?

- Co-Regional Representatives: Peter McCracken (REC) & Gillian Harris (MH).
- First Nations Communities (Joan & Colin Bernard) & Recreation Departments & Mental Health Organizations in the region.
- Commitment to another conversation with a larger population of Fundy Representatives - creation of a planning team .
- Meeting planned for early Fall - planning throughout the summer months.
- MPAL Terri Roblee will be a part of the planning team.
- Get decision makers on board.

* Note: Point identified by the group as priority next step.