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Session 2 – Exploring the Experiences of young people in Wellness Programs

CTRA conference- Jasper, Alberta

Climb, Connect and Celebrate

May 11, 2023



Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge, with much gratitude, that our work and play takes place on land steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people today. We recognize and respect Indigenous people as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous peoples and their traditional territories

We acknowledge as an act of gratitude that we are visiting the traditional territories of Treaty 6 and 8 Territories as well as Metis Region 4.

We also acknowledge that " we are all mountain people, *e iska win cha sabby*, happy to share the peace, the beauty, and the spirituality of these valleys, rivers, ridges and peaks."

We recognize that for some Indigenous people, the mountains themselves are their ancestors, watching over and protecting us all."



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Overview of YPE role/ personal story
- Qualitative methodology
- Wellness Program Evaluation
- Findings & Recommendations- "Getting in touch with the Body can be super impactful on mental health"
- Q & A





Intro to Matt







Intro to Teresa

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Interviewing

Youth Feedback

Overcoming Obstacles

Learning

Youth Peer Evaluator Role: Teresa

Co-design

Holistic Wellness

Data Analysis

Focus Groups



What is a Youth Peer Evaluator (YPE)?

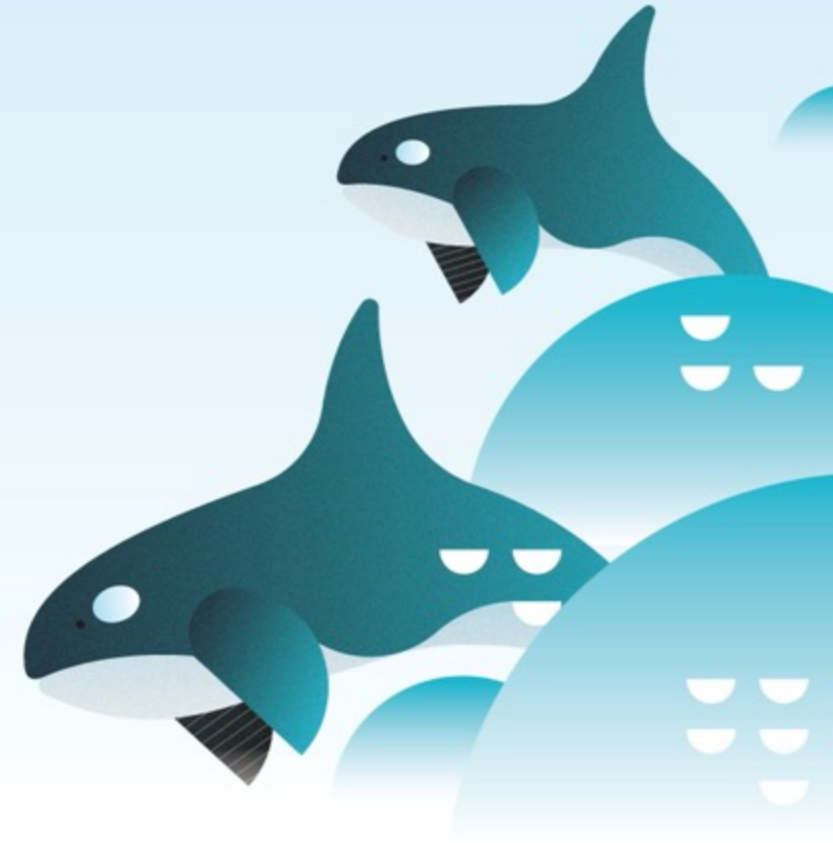
YPEs have been involved throughout the entire evaluation process,
As YPEs we:

- provide insights
- make meaningful contributions
- gain valuable evaluation skills
- work in a team-based approach.



What did we do?

- training
- preparing focus group/interview guides
- data collecting
- coding and analysis (using Nvivo)
- regular check-in meetings with our team



Why was this process special?

- process allowed for professional and personal development for the YPEs
- youth perspectives brought valuable insight and kept focus on youth
- group process created opportunities for team learning and growth



Personal reflections

"Since becoming involved with Foundry as a YPE, I have learned a lot about the importance of holistic wellness. The data analysis that we have been doing proves to me that these programs are making a positive impact on our youth. I find it rewarding to see that I am working for an organization that genuinely cares about the well-being of our young people!"

- Teresa Campbell (YPE)



Video From Chris

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VrNDJLaYS6K8pdQFy-dIVOcQ52-GiQbd/view>



Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation explored the following key objectives:

1. To what extent did the wellness programs impact youth health and well-being?
2. To what extent were young people satisfied with the wellness programs?
3. To what extent were the wellness programs implemented as intended?
4. To what extent did wellness programs enhance Foundry service offerings?
5. To what extent did wellness programs impact the way youth engage with technology?

Evaluation Principles

The evaluation was designed with the following guiding principles in mind:

- **Collect** qualitative and quantitative data to understand the impact of the Wellness Program.
- **Empower** youth by prioritizing the youth voice and hiring youth peer evaluator(s).
- **Study** the impact to Foundry's service model.
- **Collaborate** with researchers to critically investigate the integration of wellness programs.



Evaluation Methods

A collaborative team formed to develop data collection tools & complete program evaluation using mixed-methods January 2021- October 2021

Research & Evaluation
Associate (FCO)

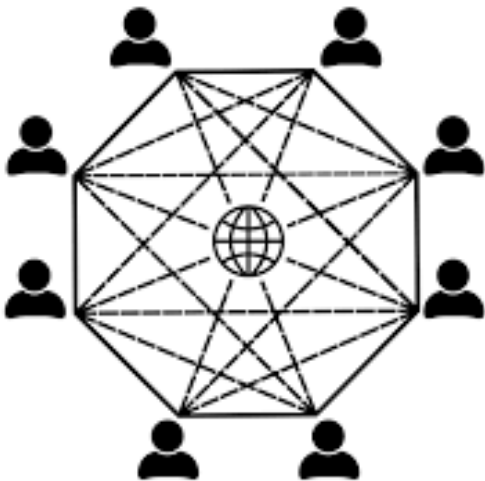
Researcher (UBC)



Evaluation Methods

YPEs collected & analyzed qualitative data with oversight from researcher

Focus Groups with young people (n=2)



1-1 Interviews with program staff (n=7)



Method Summary

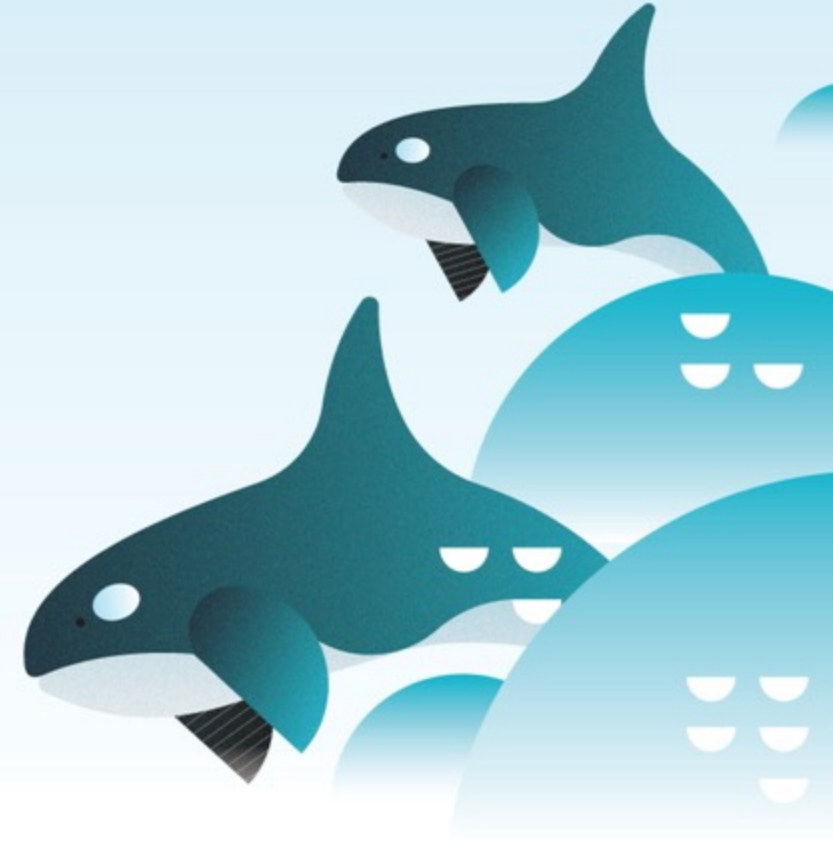
355 unique youth (tracked in Toolbox)*

19 youth survey respondents

2 youth focus groups

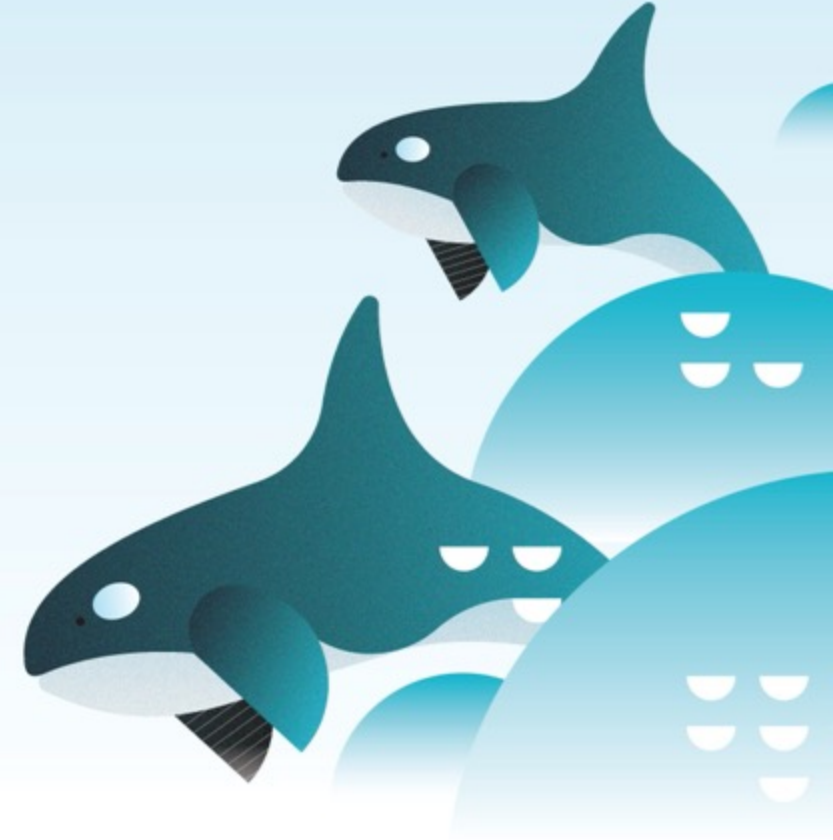
7 staff interviews conducted

*Toolbox is Foundry's data collection system. Because of challenges tracking in Toolbox, note that the number of participants and groups is likely underrepresented in this report



Results: Positive Feedback

- So much love for the program leaders and facilitators!
 - Welcoming, inclusive, accommodating, respectful, open to suggestions
- The in-person social atmosphere was special and important
 - Diverse groups helped participants gain empathy and understanding for themselves and others

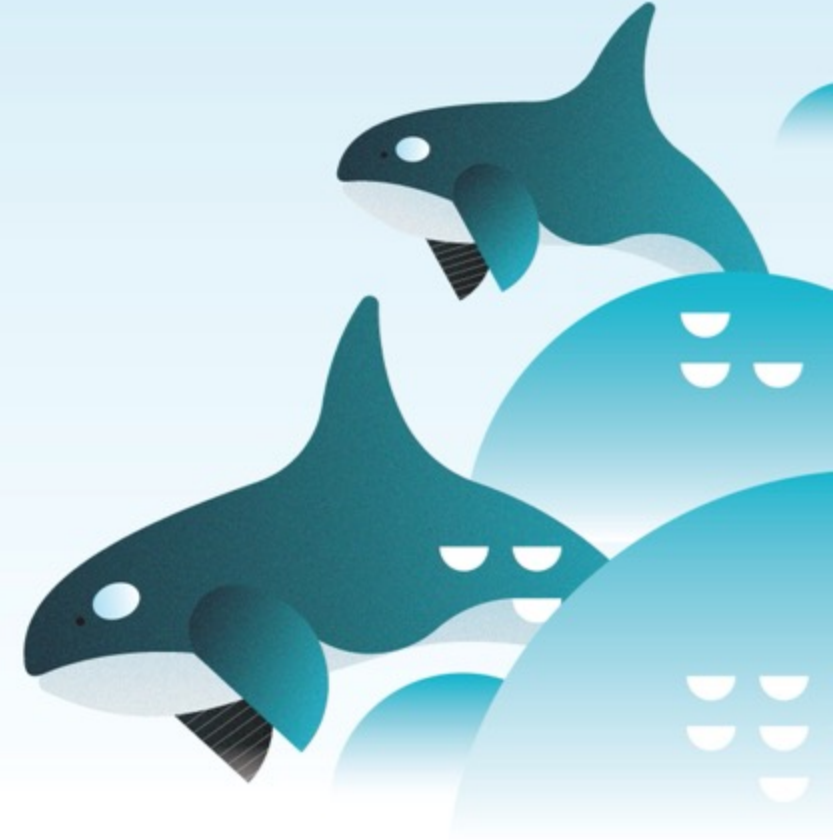


Positive Feedback

- Participants appreciated the opportunity to branch out and try new things

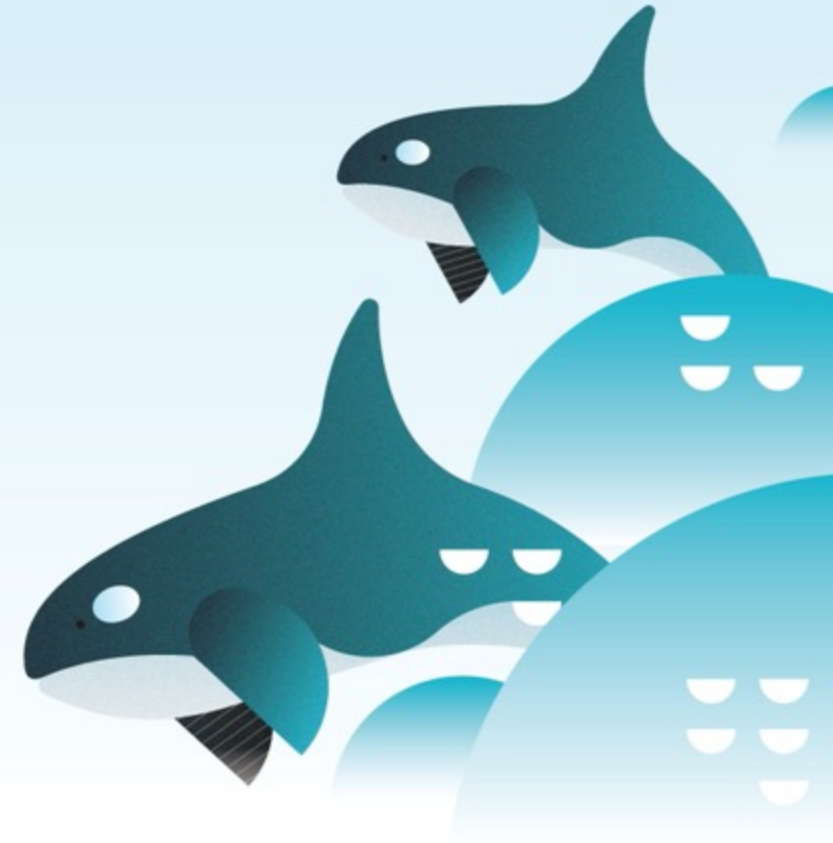
“I found myself picking up different hobbies that I don't think I would've ever turned to if it wasn't for Foundry, such as painting, such as even making what was it, I think it was like mood boards. What I may have deemed as sort of like arts crafts maybe childish, the Foundry embraced and really kind of captured it as an artistic and wellness activity.”

-Youth Focus Group Participant



Program improvements

- Hybrid programming
 - Advertising
 - Facilitation support
-
- Ideal wellness program



Hybrid Programming

Staff and youth both talked about wanting more options for virtual or hybrid programming, specifically with accessibility interests in mind

Youth talked about how **online events can be lower-barrier** if transportation or anxiety is holding people back from participating in wellness activities.

Staff talked about **wanting more funding available for offering hybrid programming** after seeing the way it made care accessible to youth struggling with anxiety or mobility concerns.



Hybrid Programming can be fun and accessible

From Youth:

When asked what suggestions they had for making wellness programs more accessible, a youth responded: “**Having it virtually so we feel included** and less isolated in person and virtually.”

“I mean it's nice through COVID it was definitely still through a screen, but **even just baking cookies with everybody like on the phone kind of thing, it was nice, it was a good connection**, it was good to get like hands on.”



Virtual options allow for wider involvement

From Staff:

“That young person is really really comfortable with virtual services because they struggle with anxiety and they struggle with motivation and they struggle with a lot of self- worth and self-confidence issues. So **there's opportunity for them to engage with some virtual meetings that in their case I think gives them support in their wellness.**”

“I think for the funding we received ... stated that it had to be in person, we couldn't do it virtually so we were limited there and **I think in the future I would love to see funding for virtual groups.**”



Advertising

Lack of advertising was brought up as an accessibility issue.

From Youth:

“My one criticism is there's like no marketing so like people don't know that Foundry holds socials and the only reason I know is ‘cause the youth worker in my school told me.”

-youth participant

“I do think it is a little bit hard to get involved in them ... just because there tends to be tighter knit groups and also just like, not as much accessibility if you don't know what you're doing. I think it could be more clear, at least for my location where it is and what's happening and how to get into them.”

-youth participant

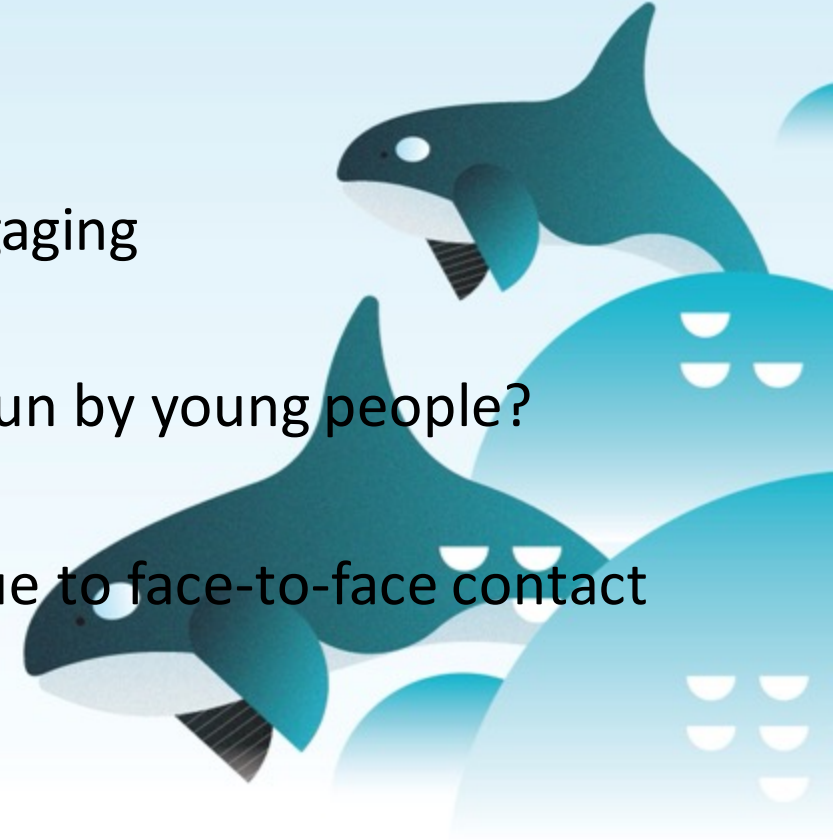
Social Media

Young people shared that use of **social media** could help spread the word about Wellness Programs

- Active & engaging
- Could it be run by young people?
- Digital avenue to face-to-face contact

“I honestly think social media's probably the best way to go.”

-Youth Participant



Word of Mouth/Outreach

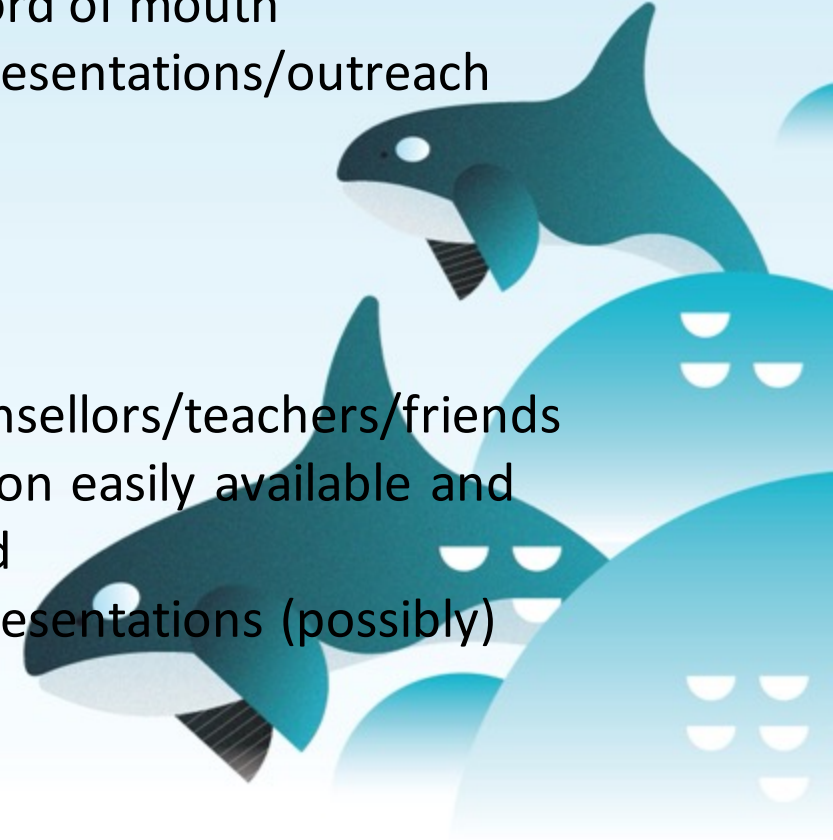
Both staff and young people mentioned **word of mouth and outreach** as an effective advertising avenue

From staff:

- networks/personal connections
- Direct word of mouth
- School presentations/outreach

From youth:

- Peer counsellors/teachers/friends
- Information easily available and publicized
- School presentations (possibly)

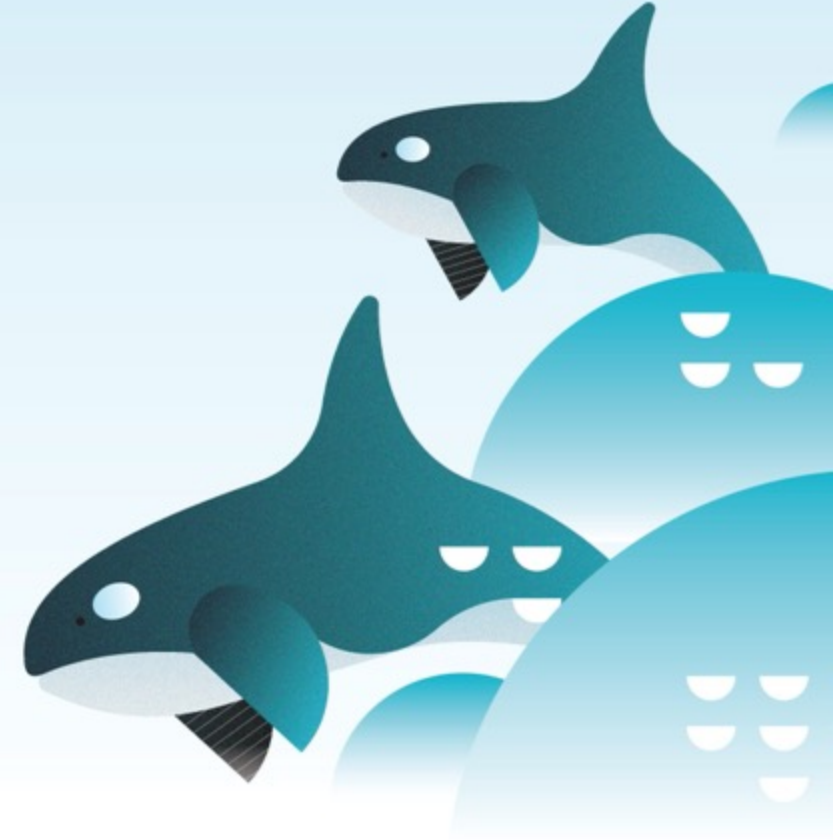


Word of Mouth/Outreach

“I personally believe it's the word of mouth that's more effective.”

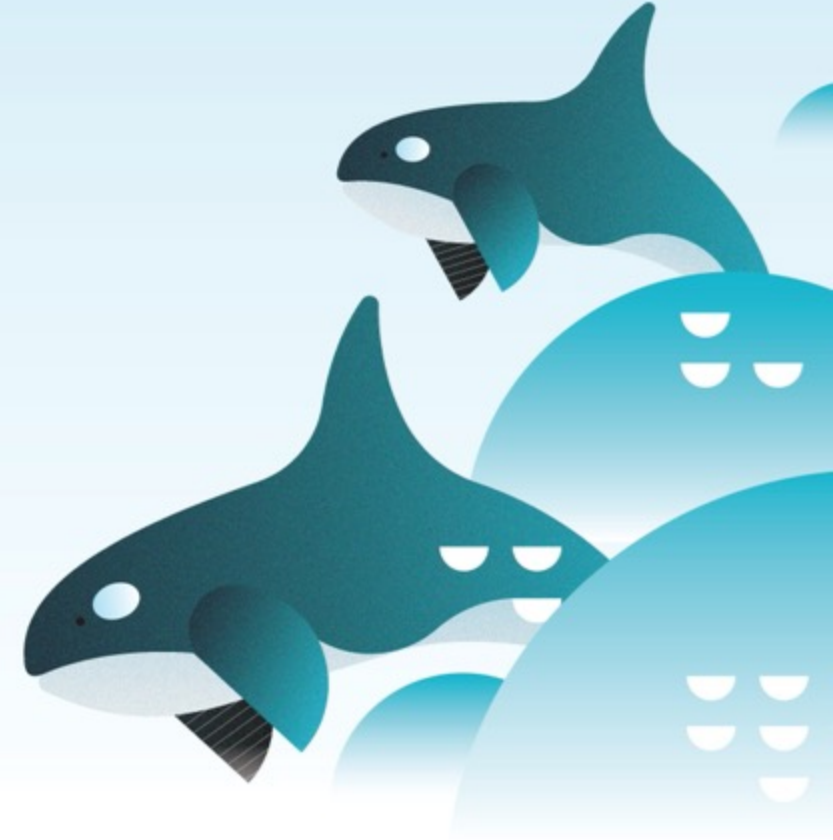
-staff member

- Newsletters
- Engaging school presentations
- Information at the school office
- Peer-to-peer communication
- Posters
- Coordination with teachers
- Being active and visible in the community



Implementation Support

Staff brought up some concerns with program implementation including feeling uncertain about **program outcome intentions, not feeling as well-equipped** to facilitate as they would like, **having to juggle Wellness Program work** with their main work, and **feeling disconnected** from other Wellness Program facilitators.



Implementation Support

“I think it's just really important ... [to] come together and kind of like have a discussion you know about how programs are going, discuss any sort of core competencies, gaps we might be missing, I think that's really important, cuz a lot of times, I felt very alone as a facilitator.”

-staff member

“I love that this time we have so much flexibility and creative reign and trust and we know what we're doing. So that was really great, but I do also think there might be [inaudible] to have that flexibility but I guess we also didn't have a lot of direction of like what the goal or outcome was.”

-staff member



Recommendations

- Facilitation and inclusivity training
 - In-person where possible!
- Clearer program intentions
- Co-facilitators/designated Wellness Program staff
- More community within Wellness Program staff across centres



We welcome your questions and comments!



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Thank You

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References

<https://foundrybc.ca/>

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