



THE LEARNING THROUGH LIVING GRANTEE CASEBOOK

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@frayme_cadre



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LEARNING THROUGH LIVING

BACKGROUND

Learning Through *Living*

Applied Research Grant Program

POWERED BY FRAYME

Since its inception in 2017, Frayme has worked to mobilize evidence and knowledge through investment in the youth mental health and substance use (YMHSU) sector. Initially, Frayme's funding investments were focused on research evidence that addressed gaps in integrated youth service (IYS) solutions across the country.

In March 2020 Frayme introduced a new method of mobilizing funds to the YMHSU sector. Frayme launched its granting stream model with the Virtual Innovations in Care (VIC) program and the Great Big Stories (GBS) program. Rather than launching new project funding, Frayme's granting streams are focused on enhancing knowledge mobilization of critical evidence gaps and solutions. By investing in system enhancement efforts being led by youth, caregivers, researchers, organizations, and communities, Frayme's grant streams help amplify work and scale best evidence and knowledge across the national system.



GRANT OVERVIEW

Through our Learning Through Living (LTL) Applied Research Grant Program, **Frayme mobilized 4 grants of \$50,000 for researchers to engage youth and caregivers with lived expertise in research practice through partnership.**

Frayme supports the implementation of research knowledge into practice. Research that builds on the experiences of those designing and accessing services is an important contribution to building systems of support that work well for youth and their caregivers. Through these knowledge mobilization grants, we supported YMHSU researchers to engage with youth and caregivers with lived expertise to scale their learnings and inform future research about the benefits of integrating lived expertise as a form of research evidence.

ADJUDICATION PROCESS

It is important to Frayme that youth, caregivers and advocates with lived/living experience are meaningfully engaged in the grantmaking process to ensure funded projects are addressing gaps experienced by this population. For the LTL Grant adjudication, we relied on the expertise of six youth, caregivers, and advocates Groundbreakers, along with two subject matter experts from the broader Frayme network. After coming together to learn more about the grant itself and key concepts to be discussed in the review process, adjudicators independently reviewed grant applications over a two-week period. We discussed the outcomes of this review process through two group discussions, with adjudicators having the chance to make a final vote on their top choices for the grant recipients. This final vote, along with important knowledge equity factors considered by Frayme (such as geographical location and diversity of research focus) determined the successful recipients of the LTL Grant.

HEAR FROM THE ADJUDICATORS



*“Frayme including people with lived experience perspectives in their LTL grant adjudication was beautiful. As a person with lived experience with mental health and addictions, **it made me feel like I was being included in the conversation about what research is important and needed** for people who share similar lived experiences”*

— Katelyn Greer, Youth Groundbreaker



*“Words cannot adequately convey my appreciation and respect for **how well Frayme engages community, supports the value of lived experience** and the standards and process by which Frayme works. It was a true pleasure working with Frayme and others in the Grant reviews.”*

— Anita Simon, Child and Youth Mental Health Lead, ICN

USING YOUTH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH TO INFORM COUNSELLING APPROACHES



PROJECT OVERVIEW

This research engaged youth with lived expertise to provide insights into counselling approaches when working with children who have been exposed to intimate partner violence (CEIPV). Through understanding the experiences and preferences of youth with lived experience, the research team aimed to better understand what works in counselling, and if the current CEIPV competencies identified aligned with what youth themselves find important within counselling services and relationships. Further, engaging young people with lived expertise supports a more democratic research process, where young people are directly involved in research that is about and for them.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The University of Calgary is a publicly-funded post-secondary institution with a mandate to achieve focused outcomes that support and encourage engagement, economic, social, and cultural prosperity, and are valuable to all Albertans.

METHODS USED TO ENGAGE

This project used Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR), a qualitative research method which uses a “collaborative methodology that is designed to ensure a voice for those who are affected by a research project” (Day Langhout & Thomas, 2010). In this type of research, it is imperative that data be created or co-created with research participants.

YPAR acknowledges that youth possess both the ability and expertise to conduct research that engages in a critical investigation of their world and produces valuable knowledge to the wider field (Caraballo et al., 2017; Mirra et al., 2016). In this research, youth experts worked with the research team to provide feedback and input on clinical simulations and a competency framework to improve training for clinical counsellors.



SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ENGAGEMENT



Using a centralized communication platform for the team to house all study materials, to connect as a team, and to house all of the scheduled meeting times/meeting links. Specifically, Basecamp was used and it aided in organization and allowed everyone to have access to all materials, while also providing a less formal messaging and chat system that supported connection and learning.



Promoting a safe and comfortable space by using Icebreaker questions to open meetings and grounding activities to close meetings. Icebreaker activities helped to build community and put people at ease. Grounding activities helped everyone be more regulated before moving on to other aspects of their days.



Providing multiple opportunities for presenting and working on outputs so that youth researchers were able to decide based on their schedules, interests, and skills what they were most interested in working on. Having many opportunities (e.g., written reports, oral presentations, creating presentations, video creation, interviews) can be helpful in giving youth researchers voice and choice, further supporting empowerment and agency.



Providing youth a space to share what they need from the team during the project. Specifically, utilizing a quick form where youth experts can indicate their availability, their previous research experiences (if any), their interest in this research project, and how they can best be supported to feel emotionally/physically safe throughout the research.

KEY LEARNINGS

01 **Co-develop Group Rights**

Developing collaborative group rights based on the individual needs and experiences of the group was meaningful and helpful. It allows for youth researchers to voice what is important to them and to let adult researchers know how to best support. It's important to revisit and follow these group rights throughout the research.

02 **Flexibility and time is essential to ensuring safety and group cohesion**

Impact reports cater to a variety of audiences, so it's best to adjust it accordingly. First, identify your target reader. Next, you can shift your focus on what they need to know. For example, your future plans are in the interest of your beneficiaries. Some readers might prefer details like a breakdown of your funding while others, like your trustees, will be more interested in the challenges you encountered.

KEY LEARNINGS (CONT'D)

03 Encourage open, honest feedback

Feedback is essential in order to improve how adult researchers engage in participatory research. Creating a survey (with options to remain anonymous) allows youth to voice any concerns, asking questions, and making suggestions for research activities.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

PODCASTS

- [Youth Researchers](#)
- [Integrating the Voices of Youth in Clinical Training Approaches](#)

PRESENTATIONS/POSTERS

- [Integrating Youth Voices in Clinical Training Approaches \(1\)](#)
- [Integrating Youth Voices in Clinical Training Approaches \(2\)](#)
- [Youth's Green Flags for Therapists \(download link\)](#)

DIGITAL STORIES

- [Google Drive Folder](#)



IMPACT STATEMENT

The Learning Through Living grant funding provided an opportunity to engage youth experts in this research project. By engaging youth experts as part of the research team, the research outcomes are undoubtedly strengthened. Youth researchers have invaluable lived expertise that can support the improvement of counselling skills and training opportunities for students and professional counsellors. For students and professional counsellors alike, hearing from youth themselves about what they find valuable and meaningful in counselling can potentially have a more meaningful impact than hearing research results from adult researchers. Further, the adult researchers on this team have reflected on the impact that working with this group of 12 youth experts has had on our social work and research practices. After doing collaborative research with youth experts, it is hard to imagine doing research any other way!

INTERVIEWS REFINING YOUTH CREATED PROTOTYPES



PROJECT OVERVIEW

MINDS aimed to assess and evaluate the impact of three prototypes currently in the final stages of beta development: *Youth-Centred Practice*, *Queer in the Classroom*, and *Safe Storytelling*.

- *Youth-Centred Practice (YCP)* consists of a series of training modules developed for clinicians and practitioners to enhance and guide care for TAY within the mental health care system in a way that is truly youth-centred.
- *Queer in the Classroom: Supporting the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Youth in Education (QitC)* is an educational resource for educators and adult allies of high-school aged youth providing guidance on cultivating supportive and celebrative environments for LGBTQ+ students.
- *Safe Storytelling* is a toolkit aimed at providing guidelines and practices for youth sharing or hearing stories of mental health.

The goals of this project were to:

- Iterate and develop a deep and meaningful understanding of the core of each of the existing MINDS beta prototypes described above;
- Engage in beta-testing of each prototype;
- Finalize the sustainable development through integration of prototypes in the community setting.

ABOUT MINDS OF LONDON-MIDDLESEX

MINDS of London-Middlesex aims to make a difference in the lives of youth in their community. They do this through designing, piloting, and testing innovative solutions that are developed locally, with youth. Specifically, MINDS aims to tackle the wicked and growing problem of mental-ill health facing transitional aged youth (TAY). Utilizing the fast-paced approach of Social Innovation, tempered by the methodical and calculated decision-making of research, MINDS develops and tests prototypes that are co-designed, co-developed, and co-researched with TAY, community partners, academics, and clinicians.

METHODS USED TO ENGAGE

The MINDS prototypes were conceived of and pitched by youth in the local community, and were deemed important and viable initiatives. All prototype working groups had youth representation and leadership in order to evolve the initiative and move it forward. All prototypes were assessed using quantitative and qualitative metrics – obtained from both adult allies who were engaging with the material, and the youth who were directly affected.

Youth and the research team worked to recruit participants for interviews to assess the prototypes. Interview data was used to ensure lived experiences are properly captured and incorporated into the prototypes. Interview participants included youth, students, parents, teachers, clinical practitioners and storytellers/experts across the different prototypes. An interpretative phenomenological qualitative analysis (IPA) framework was used for the interview process.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ENGAGEMENT



Co-creation in the design and development of the prototypes allowed for lived experiences of transitional-aged youth, experts, and community partners to enhance a foundation of academic, peer-reviewed literature.



Harnessing the skills of youth in both the design process, including local youth graphic designers, and in championing and pitching the prototypes to their local communities.



Working with partner organizations to further refine the prototypes.



Using a peer-based training model for youth researchers to work with people with lived and living expertise.

KEY LEARNINGS

- 01 **Extended timelines**

Given continued and fluctuating unknowns, timelines should be pushed a minimum of 3-6 months, especially if a project involves external stakeholders.

- 02 **Meet with individuals where and when works for them**

Meeting youth where they are at is essential to supporting their mental health, and helps external stakeholders overcome feelings of being overburdened and understaffed.

- 03 **Incorporating an anti-racism/anti-oppression lens**

Although this can create some delay, it makes the work more meaningful and relevant to more individuals. Having equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) experts involved at each step of innovation, development, and research helps streamline this process.

- 04 **Ethics processes and requirements across different institutions can cause significant delays**

Projects with youth engagement should strive to begin the ethics process well in advance of funding.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

TRAINING/RESOURCES

- [Queer In The Classroom Resource](#)
- [Youth Centred Practice Training Program](#)

TOOLKIT

- [Safe Storytelling Toolkit](#)



IMPACT STATEMENT

Frayme's Learning Through Living grant funding provided us with the support we needed to fully realize our mandate. At MINDS, people with lived experience (in particular transitional aged youth ages 16-25 years) are the cornerstone that drive the work we do. In our lab, youth are leaders, engaged at all stages and acting as the driving force behind the direction of our lab. With the generous support received from Frayme for this project, we were able to support the three youth researchers who were leading the three initiatives developed as a part of this work. In addition, we were able to connect and work with over thirty youth graphic artists, web developers, and experts – as all youth are experts in their own experience. Importantly, because of funding received, we were able to provide these youth with honorariums that signified that not only do we respect their time, thoughts, and experiences, but that we fully value it.

We have developed three initiatives aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of transitional aged youth as a result of this work. Our Youth-Centered Practice initiative aims to provide clinicians and other frontline care providers with the tools they need to create meaningful and authentic connections with the youth they serve – setting the stage for more holistic mental health care that truly puts the needs of the youth first. Queer in the Classroom is a series of professional development workshops for educators to move beyond simple tolerance and creation of safe space to genuine acceptance and celebration of queer-identified youth in our education system. All youth should be proud of being who they are. Finally, Safe Storytelling is a youth-guided peer mentorship that helps to prepare youth to share their mental health journey and story in ways that are safe and fulfilling, for not only the youth sharing, but also for the audience receiving it. Because of the funding from Frayme, we have been able to actualize each of these prototypes.

Furthermore, we anticipate that the reach and societal impact of the interventions developed under the Frayme grant will be substantial. Initiatives developed as part of this work cross the spectrum – from creating a strong basis for self-expression at the classroom level, to introspective self-exploration, to engaging as an active participant in mental health care planning. Initiatives and programming that target the mental health and wellbeing of youth at an early age (Queer in the Classroom), encourage self-reflection and understanding on one's journey (Safe Storytelling), and create an environment wherein youth act as collaborators in their mental health care planning (Youth-Centred Practice) can act as buffers against mental health issues and promote positive functioning and wellbeing in the youth.

Models of engagement combining youth decision-making, caring adults, and opportunities to make community contributions are associated with lasting positive effects on wellbeing; youth thrive when they are listened to, respected as contributors, and engaged meaningfully in their communities, and that is what the Frayme grant has allowed MINDS to do.



DISSEMINATING RESEARCH RESULTS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) aimed to further disseminate the findings from a long-term, ongoing qualitative and community-based participatory action research program (the [Care Pathways Study](#)) examining young people who use drugs' (YPWUD's) experiences with systems of care and supervision. The Care Pathways Study focuses on the experiences of younger youth (ages 14-18) as they simultaneously navigate multiple systems of care and supervision, including the substance use service, criminal justice, government care, and mental health care systems. Through interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, researchers are documenting the evolving experiences of young people and their service providers over time. The goal of this work is to create new knowledge that can directly inform ongoing efforts to deliver innovative substance use services to youth across Greater Vancouver.

ABOUT BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE USE (BCCSU)

The British Columbia Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) is a provincially networked organization with a mandate to develop, implement and evaluate evidence-based approaches to substance use and addiction. They aim to improve the integration of best practices and care for substance use through collaborative development of evidence-based policies, guidelines, and standards.



METHODS USED TO ENGAGE

Researchers continued to engage with a long-standing Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), specifically focusing on the planning and facilitation of a number of knowledge translation and dissemination activities, including publications, presentations at local conferences, and a podcast and video episode.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ENGAGEMENT



Engage consistently with YAC members. Consistent engagement promotes sustained, meaningful contact with youth, which builds the foundation for relationship building.



Relationship building and supporting young people beyond the scope of the project. This included prioritizing their well-being and collaboratively exploring how they could best participate, given their current circumstances, interests, and needs.



Fostering a safe space to encourage engagement and build relationships, especially among those who have historically been excluded from research opportunities.

KEY LEARNINGS

01 **Capitalize on networks**

Grantees relied on their existing networks and local advocacy efforts to further expand the reach of their project.

02 **Expand impact, especially amongst individuals with lived and living expertise, through creative knowledge mobilization activities**

Creative outputs should be generated alongside academic publications; doing so can help foster engagement and relationships during production of these outputs. It also creates a safe space for youth to learn and grow.

03 **Give power**

Empower those with lived or living experience to develop and determine the modes of any knowledge outputs.

04 **Explore mediums for participation**

In-person, virtual, and hybrid participation options each bring a unique set of challenges and considerations. Build in time to explore how each medium for participation will impact the youth you are working with, the ways of working within the research team, the meetings themselves, timelines, and honoraria options.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

PODCASTS

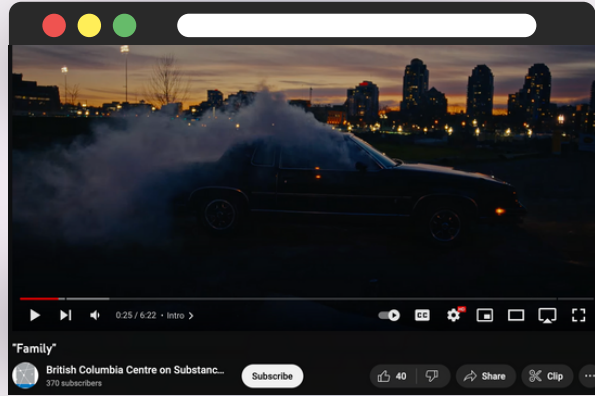
- "After The Flood"

PUBLICATIONS

- Harm Reduction Journal

VIDEOS

- "Family"



IMPACT STATEMENT

Our goals with the Learning Through Living grant were to expand the dissemination and uptake of findings from our long-term, ongoing program of qualitative and community-based participatory action research with young people who use drugs (YPWUD) in Vancouver. The objectives of our research program are: 1) to characterize the individual, social, structural, and environmental contexts that shape young people's access to, retention in, and discontinuation of different substance use services; 2) to describe how young people's engagement with substance use services is shaped by responses from the other systems they interface with; and, 3) to identify critical gaps and opportunities for improvement in the delivery of substance use services for young people.

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), a group of young people with lived and living experience of substance use and mental health concerns in the context of homelessness or unstable housing, is fundamental to our program of research. The YAC has called for more creative, experimental, and arts-based approaches to story-telling which can foster greater and more meaningful engagement among YPWUD than solely academic articles and policy-oriented reports. Furthermore, arts-based outputs also serve as a compelling means of communicating research findings to various stakeholders and individuals who may not have academic training in substance use related scholarship. Therefore, this project utilized funds provided by Frayme to engage a diverse group of youth, including Indigenous and queer youth, as well as those navigating homelessness and unstable housing, in the creation of a podcast and video episode, two peer-reviewed publications, and a community report. One of the peer-reviewed publications reflects on the challenges and opportunities of, and best practices for, doing research and knowledge dissemination with YPWUD, including more creative and arts-based approaches.

The YPWUD who were involved in these projects worked with professional production companies and researchers to tell their stories in their own words. The projects explored the ways that young people's stories are shaped by multiple overlapping contexts, examining experiences of accessing substance use and mental health services and care across time while navigating multiple systems and systemic gaps. In meetings designed to critically evaluate the impacts of the Learning Through Living grant, YAC members told us that arts-based and creative KT projects like the podcast and video projects in particular help them feel like they are "not just a number." The podcast and video episodes have allowed our research team and the YAC to expand our reach and our existing network of partnerships and collaborations, both within our own organization, the British Columbia Centre on Substance Use, as well as the broader community. Our findings will be shared with academic, policy maker, program manager, and healthcare practitioner audiences, but we also want to go beyond those audiences. We are optimistic that the outputs from our work through the Living Through Learning grant provided by Frayme have the potential to shift public perceptions of YPWUD, which are often informed by stigma, misinformation, and misunderstandings.

DETERMINING YOUTH PREFERENCES FOR ONLINE RESOURCES

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project team wanted to engage youth experiencing mental distress as partners in the development of new online resources they could use to help adopt a healthier lifestyle. The HEalthy Lifestyles Project for Youth Experiencing Mental Distress (HELP) project aims to support youth to make positive lifestyle changes that they can do at home or with friends - this includes improvements in sleep, physical activity and limiting screen time. The aim of the HELP study is to understand what Internet or electronic formats youth receiving mental health support find most helpful for learning new information about living a healthier lifestyle.

ABOUT CHEO RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute (CHEO-RI) is a non-profit that connects exceptional talent and technology in pursuit of life-changing research for every child, youth, and family in their community and beyond. This goal is to inspire the best life for every child and youth. They inspire trust in their research excellence by being curious, nimble, passionate, and equitable.

METHODS USED TO ENGAGE

Researchers recruited 10 youth and 4 parents who formed the project's Lived Expertise Advisory Group (LEAG). The LEAG was tasked with designing recruitment strategies to find youth willing to evaluate the HELP e-resources. The LEAG also provided feedback on the e-resources and designed the dissemination plan for the study results. The research team established from the beginning that the expertise and experience of the LEAG members is what would determine the directions of the project.

The role of the research staff was to learn from the LEAG and to do the daily work of implementing their recommendations. Throughout the project, they reinforced these roles by regularly providing feedback to the LEAG members on what actions were being taken in response to their input. LEAG discussions took place with all LEAG members (parents and youth) and in small groups based on youth age, to foster connections and discussions with peers, with a parallel small group format for parents.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ENGAGEMENT



Having a dedicated team member as the contact person for the LEAG who could support and follow up as needed.



Providing options for communication, so each LEAG member could use their preferred channel.



Providing an honorarium, which was particularly helpful for youth participants who are still attending school.



Closing the feedback loop and providing reports back on how LEAG feedback was implemented was motivating for members to further engage.



Smaller group discussions were a comfortable format for LEAG members. They felt it was easier to discuss specific topics in smaller groups of 4-6 people, where they were better able to contribute to a fulsome discussion.

KEY LEARNINGS

01 **Provide lots of time**

Community members and researchers need time to really get to know each other, to develop team cohesiveness and familiarity. Taking the time to share and discuss background information about roles and expectations also helps research members decide on their participation.

02 **Be flexible in support**

Work with community members to determine the type and extent of support that they need to be optimally involved. Also work forward to decide all timelines for meetings, deadlines, etc. initially with all team members, then finalizing the schedule for the entire project at the start of the collaboration.

03 **Recognize the time and expertise of members**

While members all felt that they received substantial non-monetary benefits from their participation, the honoraria remained very important to recognize their time and expertise that contributed to the project's success.

KEY LEARNINGS (CONT'D)

04 **Don't just hear**

Actively listen to the perspectives being shared, and ask questions to clarify and confirm your understanding. In group discussions, ask specific questions to guide the input. For review/other input, be specific about what is being requested and when. Ensure that you close the loop with community members so they know what was being done with the information and how it is impacting the project.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

INFOGRAPHIC

- [Helping Youth Engage in CHEO Research](#)

WEBPAGE

- [Informational Project Overview](#)

IMPACT STATEMENT

The Frayme Learning Through Living Grant enabled our research team to develop true partnerships with youth experiencing mental distress, parents of youth experiencing mental distress, and young adults who experienced mental distress as youth. This was a goal we had long sought as a research team, and the resources available through the LTL grant were critically important for our realization of that goal. Our Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) of 14 individuals guided our research project activities during the 6-month grant timeframe. The research team relied on LEAG experience and expertise to identify the work that we needed to do to make our project successful. The most immediate impact of the LEAG was to increase our awareness of the broad applicability of our HEalthy Lifestyle Project (HELP) e-intervention. While we had designed it for youth on our wait list for mental health support, the LEAG members recognized that the information could also be helpful to youth who have not yet been referred for specialist support. With that recognition, the LEAG members guided us to revise our recruitment strategy and materials. Our partner networks assisted with the dissemination strategy, with our project materials being incorporated into youth mental health workshops being led in local schools. The LEAG members also reviewed the HELP e-intervention, providing important feedback on required improvements and the features and content that should be expanded. As a result of their input, the e-intervention has been substantially modified to reflect youth preferences and support youth engagement. The LEAG members also designed our knowledge dissemination strategies, identifying what information should be shared, how best to share the information and the appropriate timing for dissemination. As such, our LEAG members impacted not only our research materials, but also our research practices.

The LTL grant also enabled us to develop new partnerships and strengthen pre-existing connections. We were able to expand our connections with the CHEO Youth Forum and CHEO Research Institute Family Leader Program. We were also able to develop strong new partnerships with YouthNet / Réseau Ado, Parents Lifeline of Eastern Ontario and Crossroads Children's Mental Health. These partnerships will endure long after the end of the LTL grant as these community partners continue their work to share the HELP e-intervention with youth experiencing mental distress and their families. These partnerships are also the cornerstone of a larger research proposal that will examine the impact of the HELP e-intervention throughout all stages of the youth mental health journey. That project will make the HELP e-intervention available to students through local schools, youth connected to community support networks, youth making initial contact with mental health supports, youth waiting for specialist support, and youth receiving outpatient, day treatment or inpatient mental health services. Together with our lived experience partners we will continue our work to understand how best to support youth mental health through our HELP e-resources.

CONCLUSION

COMMON THEMES AND OVERALL LEARNINGS

The four funded projects were focused on assessing youth well-being and experiences in community-based research, service delivery, and programming. The LTL funding allowed grantees to form or engage existing community-based youth advisories and organizations providing youth mental health and substance use care, onboard youth as youth researchers, and develop more effective recruitment and knowledge mobilization strategies.

Principal researchers reported that by including more diverse perspectives, Frayme's Learning Through Living Grant program has changed them as researchers and will inform their future practices. Furthermore, the youth involved in the projects felt empowered by being meaningfully engaged and contributing to the research initiatives.

Engagement of the community and lived and living expertise in research is generative of more holistic and relevant research and relationships with research. Meaningful engagement helps strengthen relationships between communities and researchers, while aiding in the generation of more effective knowledge mobilization outputs, alongside the development of academic publications and white papers. Community members, both new and those previously engaged with, may also be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of ongoing research and knowledge mobilization strategies and outputs. The end result is that research is ultimately more likely to be used to help reduce the knowledge to practice gap.

The impacts of participatory research and engaging people with lived/living expertise also extend beyond the generation of evidence. Participatory research generates opportunities for those in the community to develop new skills and experiences through building professional networks, hiring at community organizations, exposure to workplace culture and media production, and strategy development opportunities. Participatory research can also function as advocacy by working to identify

social innovations, disrupt systemic barriers, and create new approaches to mental health care. By shifting research towards a storytelling approach, researchers can demonstrate a social responsibility and accountability to the communities they work with, contextualizing data through lived expertise.

One overarching theme and recommendation from the LTL projects is to build in time, flexibility, and good communication practices and tools as key components to the research. Doing so allows the team to generate cohesiveness and quality improvement within the research. This can be accomplished by communication tailored toward building a sense of community in meetings, including through icebreakers and debriefing activities. It is also important to provide different mechanisms to ask questions and raise concerns throughout the research process. Finally, we suggest that participatory research should use creative approaches to virtual/hybrid meetings, asynchronous participation, and honoraria to increase the accessibility of project activities and meetings and the diversity of lived expertise represented.

CONNECT WITH FRAYME

Frayme supports and leads a variety of work and projects with the aim of improving youth mental health and substance use (YMHSU) care systems in Canada.

Reach out to us to learn more about Frayme, our granting programs, and knowledge mobilization activities.

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🌐 frayme.ca

💬 [@frayme_cadre](https://www.instagram.com/frayme_cadre)

Learning Through *Living*

Applied Research Grant Program

POWERED BY **FRAYME**

