



## Frayne Knowledge Request

### Knowledge Need and Parameters:

“How do YMSH organizations stand with respect to serving the needs of youth with neurodevelopmental disabilities/problems that start only in childhood like autism. Traditionally, many mental health services have preferred not to serve these youth with the idea that their needs are distinct or that there are other systems to serve individuals with these problems.

I also ask because it informs us in thinking about interventions - e.g., the literature on vocational interventions for young people is often distinct in whether it refers to interventions for youth with autism etc or youth with depression, MH concerns, etc.”

**Date of Request:** July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**Timeline:** Not specified – response provided on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### Response with findings:

#### From the scan:

The scan did not explicitly ask any questions about whether organizations offer their services to young people with neurodevelopmental disabilities. However, we did have a question about who is included in the “population served”, and if there are any groups or subpopulations that are especially catered to with additional programming or outreach work. So far, none of the organizations interviewed have explicitly mentioned young people with neurodevelopmental delays. That being said, most organizations make a point of mentioning that their services are available to **all** youth that come to their door seeking help with any mental health and substance use difficulties that they are experiencing.

We are also asking folks to identify what kind of services and interventions they offer. So far, only one organization has made explicit mention of a service stream or intervention that caters specifically to the needs of youth with neurodevelopmental disabilities or difficulties. I’m able to tell you that this organization is Foundry because they have published some details of this service on their website (listed below).

To see if organizations hire anyone with specific experience/training in providing services to youth with neurodevelopment difficulties, I looked at the staff lists that were shared with us. None of the organizations that we’ve interviewed mention the involvement of a specialized neurodevelopmental paediatrician or physician on their team. However, many organizations hire nurses, nurse practitioners,



family physicians, social workers, and occupational therapists. These folks are often able to receive more specialized training in this field or can have extensive experience. However, whether that translates into the provision of services for these young people or not is unclear.

I also looked at the list of partners that organizations mentioned they receive in-kind support from, or who are connected via referral pathways. Some partner agencies provide services to youth with developmental disabilities or difficulties. However, once again, there is no explicit mention that these specific services are extended to the IYS organizations through in-kind support.

### **Results from a search of 60 identified IYS organizations (these findings didn't come from the scan):**

#### Foundry:

- One of Foundry's guiding principles is that 'services need to be timely, accessible, **developmentally appropriate**, socially inclusive/equitable, and culturally sensitive/congruent/safe'.
- Foundry Granville, Foundry Campbell River, and Foundry Abbotsford provide a 'STADD Navigator' service. This service is provided in partnership with 'Services to Adults with Developmental Disabilities' (STADD), which is a program run by the Ministry of Social Innovation and Poverty Reduction. STADD provides a STADD navigator on-site. The navigator provides transition planning supports for youth who are eligible for Community Living BC services. The Navigator also works with the team at Foundry to support youth who want help in areas such as housing, employment, education, community inclusion, health and wellness, and other goal areas identified by the youth. They support youth in building a personalized care plan that is unique to them, along with coordinating a supportive team of government and community service providers to assist them in reaching their goals.
- Foundry Prince George doesn't mention the STADD Navigator service on their website, but they do list STADD as an official partner. I'm not sure if that means they also receive the same in-kind service that Foundry Granville, Campbell River, and Abbotsford receive from them.
- Foundry Kelowna doesn't make mention of the STADD Navigator service on their website, but they do list the Ministry of Social Innovation and Poverty Reduction as an official partner. I'm not sure if that means they also receive the same in-kind service that Foundry Granville, Campbell River, and Abbotsford receive from them.
- Perhaps Skye Barbic would be able to provide more details on this piece from a Foundry perspective.

#### Headspace:

- \_\_\_A document published in 2013 by headspace mentions their psychosocial assessment of young people. It advises clinicians to consider clients' developmental age and stage throughout their assessments, and to consult with a colleague or refer the young person for developmentally



appropriate care when they are unable to provide developmentally appropriate care themselves.

#### YouthCan IMPACT:

- YouthCan IMPACT partners with Skylark and East Metro Youth Services – agencies that do provide services to youth struggling with complex mental health and developmental needs.

#### Central Toronto Youth Services

- This agency explicitly notes on their website that **they generally do not work** with youth who have developmental disabilities or who are within the autism spectrum because these youth require more specialized expertise.

#### Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Centre:

- They offer psychological and diagnostic testing, including testing that can identify learning disorders, developmental disabilities, ADHD, autism, and mental health disorders
- They also offer Art therapy – an intervention that is often available to youth with developmental difficulties. However, they do not explicitly mention that this program is available to these youth.

#### Forward Thinking Birmingham:

- They have a specialist learning disability service and team. This team provides assessment and treatment for people up to the age of 19 with moderate to profound learning disabilities (including people on the autism spectrum), who are also experiencing mental health issues or “showing challenging behaviours”. They offer a number of services, including psychological therapies, behavioural support, family work, and medication.

#### Craigwood Children, Youth, and Family Services:

- Programs at the centre focus on adolescents who may be involved in multiple social support systems and still experience difficulties with their lives with family, school, peers, or others in the community. This includes clients with neurodevelopmental concerns. However, there is mention that mental health services and programs are unable to accommodate clients who are ‘developmentally delayed **AND** in need of ongoing support for **personal care**’

#### **Resources used:**

1. Findings from the detailed scan of integrated youth services – only aggregated information was shared



2. Thorough search of services offered at 60 integrated youth service organizations/initiatives from across the globe – through their website and additional publications.