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Partenariat d'Assistance aux Organismes en Santé Mentale (PAOSM) Initiative Report 2023-2024

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For the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN)

Acknowledgements:

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This report was prepared for the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) by an independent evaluator consultant, Christie Huff Consulting, for The Partenariat d'assistance aux Organismes en Santé Mentale (PAOSM), a program funded by the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA).

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of CHSSN, the funders, or the participating organizations. Any changes to this document must be approved by the author to ensure accuracy. If excerpts from this text are used in other publications, the source must be identified.

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Methodology

This report arises out of an evaluation process that began in April 2023 and finished in May 2024. This process involved:

- 1) One-on-one meetings with the Program Manager for the PAOSM at CHSSN;
- 2) Qualitative interviews with the project lead for each participating organization in April - May 2024 to explore their planned approach. These early conversations deepened the consultant's understanding of the strategic approaches the organizations were taking and led to the conceptualization of the image on page 2 "What really leads to English-speaking community members accessing mental health services?"
- 3) A meeting with the funding representative in June 2023 was facilitated with 8 out of the 9 organizations receiving project funding present. The concept illustrated below was introduced during that meeting to make sense of the diverse projects presented and a video was also created for the organizations to review as needed;
- 4) Throughout the fall of 2023, the consultant met with groups individually or in small groups to exchange learning and offer coaching on how they could capture the difference their approaches made;
- 5) An analysis of the quantitative project outcomes submitted by participating organizations to CHSSN;
- 6) A revision of the project descriptions (written by the evaluator) by the project leads of participating organizations in June and July 2023;
- 7) Data captured in a survey sent to all organizations.

The data captured in this report was derived from the CHSSN reporting templates and a survey developed by the consultant to capture learning and outcomes quantitatively and qualitatively. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluator provided feedback to the participating organizations concerning gaps in their data collection regarding outreach and participation. The evaluation as a whole led to valuable insights on common strengths, challenges, and findings across the participating organizations and their PAOSM projects as well as the unique strengths, challenges, and findings of each organization and their CMHI projects.

The recommendation for CHSSN in future years of reporting/learning capture is to introduce this framework early in the year with organizations so that their work can be more easily captured. Detailed project descriptions included in the Appendix were validated with the organizations after the consultants had aligned them with the overall project conceptualization.

The range of work needed to meet mental health needs is described in the image below, created for CHSSN:

WHAT REALLY LEADS TO ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY MEMBERS ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT?

Small number of people dedicated to supporting mental health for English speakers in Quebec. Professionals, employees, interns, volunteers, etc.

Human Resources (HR) acting/interacting on behalf of English-speaking Communities (ESC) - HR strategies expand capacity to connect and support through: advocacy, networking, strategic planning, training, etc.

Promoting mental wellness, prevention education, destigmatizing mental illness

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

TO REACH THE FULL POPULATION OF ESC MEMBERS: INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, PEOPLE IN NEED OF SUPPORT AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

1.25 MILLION* ENGLISH SPEAKERS IN QUEBEC

1 OUT OF **5** ENGLISH SPEAKERS SUFFER FROM A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

SUPPORT & SERVICES

Directly Offering services facilitated by professionals and/or volunteers Workshops, support groups, lending libraries, etc.

Indirectly referring to other public and non-profit services

WE ARE NOT REACHING EVERYONE English-speaking Quebecers experience challenges accessing mental health supports needed in their diverse contexts.

HIGHEST INTENSITY: HOUSING, DAY CENTRES, ETC.

CHSSN Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise Québec

Introduction

The Partenariat d'assistance aux Organismes en Santé Mentale (PAOSM) is an initiative built from the 2021-2023 Covid Mental Health Initiative (CMHI). It was offered to organizations with a mandate to support the English-speaking community (ESC) by enabling access to mental health services across Quebec. Selected organizations were invited to submit applications and use allocated funding to develop their capacity and expand support for the ESCs they serve.

9 organizations received PAOSM funding. To capture the diversity of contexts and the way in which funding was used, they were characterized by:

- Population Density of ESCs served
- Intensity of support needed

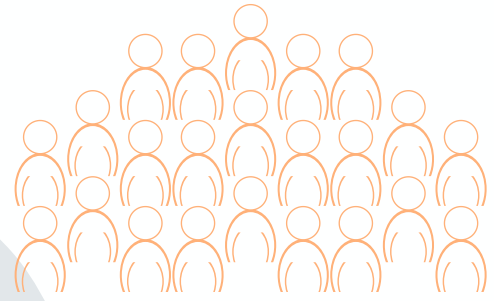
These categorizations were developed by Christie Huff Consulting during the COVID Mental Health Initiative learning consolidation completed in 2022-23.

Key Figures

Providing Mental Health Support to the English-Speaking Community: Key Figures and Methods



Population Density of ESCs Served



The population density of English-speaking communities has a significant impact on accessibility of mental health support and services.

English speakers living in more densely populated areas benefit from the presence of more organizations, increasing the likelihood of service offerings in English. Geographic territory, travel, and health-related barriers (etc.) to accessing mental health services can be partially mitigated in lower density regions where English speakers may be underserved by the widespread increase in organizations' capacity to offer online services post-pandemic.

Greater Montreal

Accessing mental support in the Greater Montreal territory, despite its numerous organizations with mental health mandates, is still problematic. Funding is aligned with CIUSSS regions, but a mapping of services available that is in progress by CHSNN indicates that funding allocations do not address the spectrum of specific mental health needs for areas of high-density English-speaking populations.

Regions outside of Montreal

The low density of English speakers in Québec outside of Montreal is correlated with fewer organizations with English services, which means that they must travel greater distances to access support. In some cases, there are no English services in specialty areas. Social stigma around mental health challenges is still prevalent in small regional ESC communities. ESC community members concerned about others' perceptions of them may seek out services where they feel less likely to be identified, whether through anonymous online participation or by seeking services in other locations/regions.

In the project descriptions below, the evaluator has categorized each participating organization according to the density of the English-speaking population it serves in its outreach and support activities as:

- **Low Density:** Services are distributed across a large geographic territory, which may be either regional or provincial.
- **Medium Density:** Services are concentrated within a single region within which there are municipal territories with a higher density of English speakers.
- **High Density:** Services are concentrated within a small geographic territory with a high density of English speakers.

Intensity of Intervention Needed



The intensity of the intervention required to support the mental health needs of the populations being served by the organizations varied widely across the projects funded. While some projects were focused on educating the public about what promotes mental health and preventing stigmatization of mental illness, others were oriented towards providing highly specialized services to people with advanced and complicated mental health conditions.

In the project descriptions below, the evaluator has categorized each participating organization according to the intensity of the intervention required to support the mental health needs of its target population as:

- **Low Intensity:** The intervention involves promotional activities to educate the public about mental health in general, decrease stigma, and increase the organization's visibility. It also includes outreach and networking activities within and across sectors.
- **Medium Intensity:** The intervention involves connecting with clients directly to assess their needs and refer them to other organizations. It also includes facilitating online or in-person support groups and developing human resources capacity for outreach and support work.
- **High Intensity:** The intervention involves individualized therapeutic support offered

List of Organizations, Regions and Density/Intensity

Name of organization & region(s) served	Area served characterized by Density	Type of support provided by Intensity
Ami-Quebec, Greater Montreal, Provincial	Low, Medium, High	Low to Medium
Connexions, Outaouais	Medium	Low to Medium
Fraser Recovery Program, Quebec, Capital Nationale	Medium	Medium to High
Friends for Mental Health, West Island, Greater Montreal	Low & Medium	Low to High
Mental Health Estrie, Estrie	Low & Medium	Low to Medium
Our Harbour, Montérégie	Medium	High
Seniors Respite Montérégie	Medium	High
Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, Centre-Sud Montreal	High	High
Vent Over Tea, Montreal, Provincial	Low, Medium, High	Low to Medium

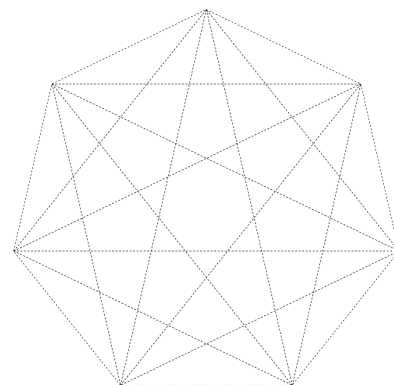
1.0 Communications & Outreach Strategies



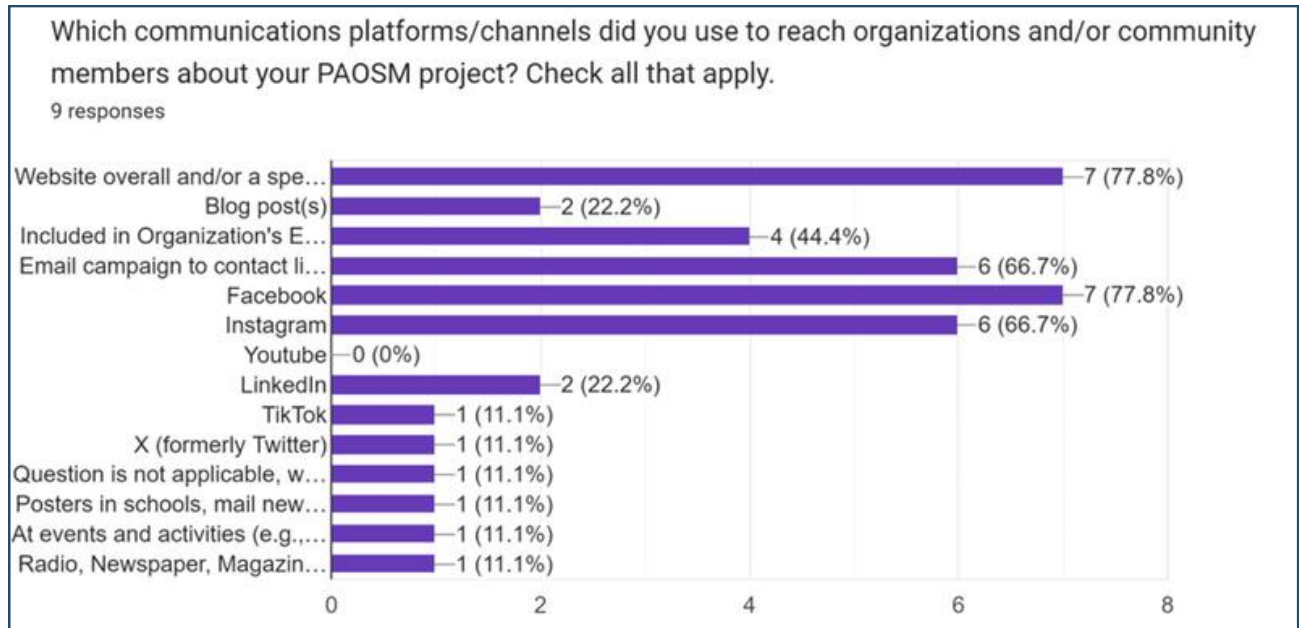
To reach as many of the 1.25 million people in Quebec's ESCs who are potentially in need of mental health education, supports, and services, as individuals, family members, and caregivers, organizations engaged in diverse Communications and Outreach Strategies. In general, nearly 50% of people are not accessing support needed for their mental health based on polling completed by [Mental Health Research Canada](#). For example, Vent Over Tea promoted mental wellness by creating awareness about their free active listening service, achieving a 26% increase in sessions this year. This was done through advertising on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and during tablings at various community and organizational events.

While the projects varied in their use of funding for communications & outreach strategies, the organizations' capacity to strategically communicate is important to recognize and CHSSN is well positioned to share professional development/learning opportunities with organizations. For example, AMI-Quebec utilized some of the funding from PAOSM to support their overall outreach mission; their communications function is enabled through multiple funders' contributions, enabling them to achieve these 2023-24 outcomes:

- AMI was active on 5 social media platforms, increasing its outreach to the public. They reached 32,800 on Facebook (a 13.4% increase), 8,400 on Instagram (a 48% increase), 33,900 on Twitter, and had 41,400 views on YouTube and 45,965 video views on TikTok



1.1 Observations



Most organizations used their websites and Facebook (77.8%) to reach organizations and/or community members about their project, followed by Instagram and email campaigns (66.7%), and newsletters (44.4%). Only one organization responded that they had not communicated about their PAOSM project. Additions: Word of mouth and presence at community fairs (also referred to as kiosks and 'tabling' with partners).



1.2 Successes, Challenges, and Key Learnings

- Fraser Recovery Program was effective in reaching youth through informal presence at schools and adult education centres. While presentations are great for reaching large numbers of students with information about addiction, recovery, and mental health, this doesn't directly translate into connections to students who need the help (they don't tend to come and see presenters after). Real connections were made by having FRP employees hang out informally - during lunchtime, after school, outside, etc. This led to kids talking to them and connecting with services and support.
- Connexions described how presence at events where they can set up a kiosk has been essential to developing relationships - they had a presence at 18 events during the funding period. Their most successful strategy was in-person outreach via kiosks, meetings with partners, and representation at the various tables within the region. Because of close partnerships with several community organizations within the region, reaching out to these partners directly for their trainings was especially effective.
- Mental Health Estrie
 - Expanded their outreach kit, which helped them to have a greater impact at events. The kit contains everything necessary for any staff member to present or host a kiosk at a community event.
 - Consistency is key
 - Continuously using all the platforms available to them in order to reach all the individuals that are looking out for events has been a successful strategy (i.e., Facebook).
 - The more invitations they accept to present on MHE's services, the more invitations they receive. This has led to more opportunities to meet community members and increased awareness of their services.
 - While initial advertising may not yield results, a key learning has been that it can plant a seed. They continued to explore other avenues of advertising and discovered that it is often a combination of these efforts that leads to results.

1.3 Recommendations:

- A clear communication expectation and guidelines needs to be publicly acknowledging the funder's support and sharing their project outcomes on websites and in their social media posts.
- Continue to gather organizations in learning exchanges to share their strategic communications and outreach strategies.



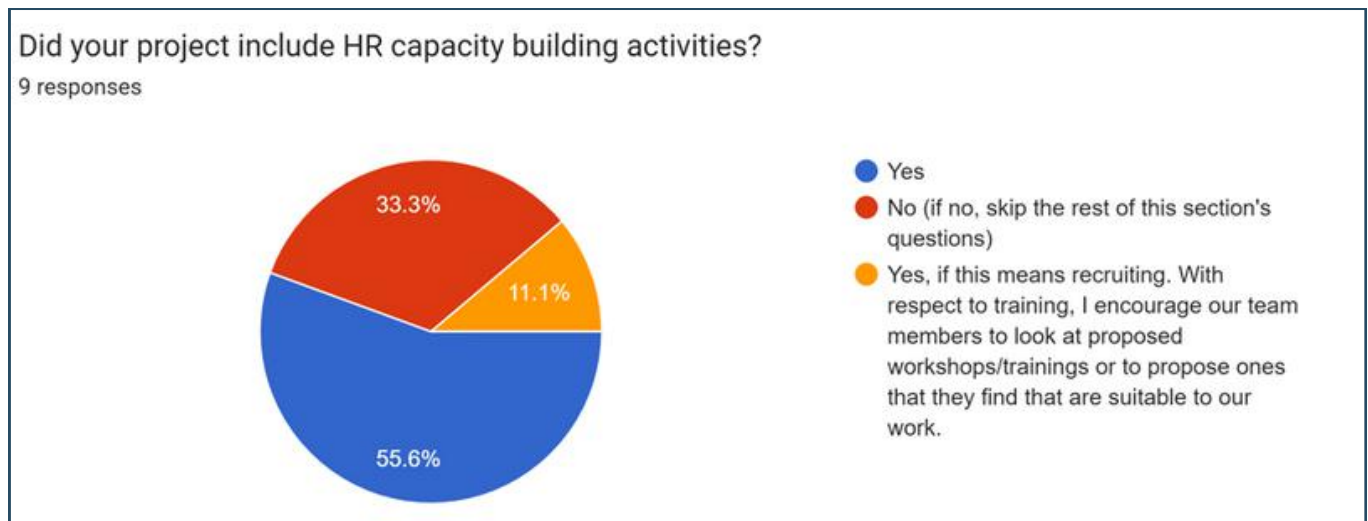
2.0 Human Resources: Capacity Building

As described in the infographic ‘**What really leads to English-speaking community members accessing mental health support**’, organizations engage in capacity building strategies to empower professionals, employees, interns, and volunteers from their own and partner organizations to increase the number of people who can connect and support individuals, families, and caregivers. Funded organizations used a variety of strategies to expand the human resources who can act/interact to connect and support through advocacy, networking, strategic planning, training, etc.

“Volunteers are an essential component of our mission; one that we could not achieve without these invaluable people who provide support, friendship, practical help and a listening ear when they are needed most.” -Dolly Shinhat, Executive Director, Our Harbour

2.1 Observations:

8 out of the 9 funded projects described engaging in Human Resources Capacity Building. This was at times carried out together with their Communications & Outreach work, as was the case with Mental Health Estrie, the value of which cannot be underestimated.



Organizations that engaged in capacity building activities were strongly encouraged to conduct follow-up surveys to reach people who participated to assess the outcomes of the training/support they received. Support to design follow-up surveys was offered but none of the organizations requested help. Only half of the organizations indicated that they completed surveys.

2.2 Successes, Challenges, and Key Learnings:

- **Mental Health Estrie** expanded their Outreach kit which facilitates role and resource sharing amongst team members, since the kit contains everything necessary for any staff member to present or host a kiosk at a community event. This year, they were able to accept invitations to community organizations, groups, and events in regions further away from their office where they had previously provided very little presence.
- **Our Harbour:** given the small size of the organization, there is an absolute necessity to have the right people - and the right combination of people - on the team. For the same reasons, there is also a need to be agile, grateful for all team members and volunteers, responsive, and adaptable - keeping sight of the organization's mission and values.
- **Connexions** is looking at organizing its second round of Mental Health First Aid training, with this one geared towards the new cohort of students at McGill. These trainings have better equipped Connexions' staff to respond to questions while providing support to community members with diverse issues, and referrals to services. The trainings have facilitated staff interactions with different community organizations in the region allowing for a reciprocal support of clientele. A challenge for Connexions has been lack of time/staff to attend all of the kiosks/fairs being organized within the Outaouais that they are invited to.

2.3 Recommendations:

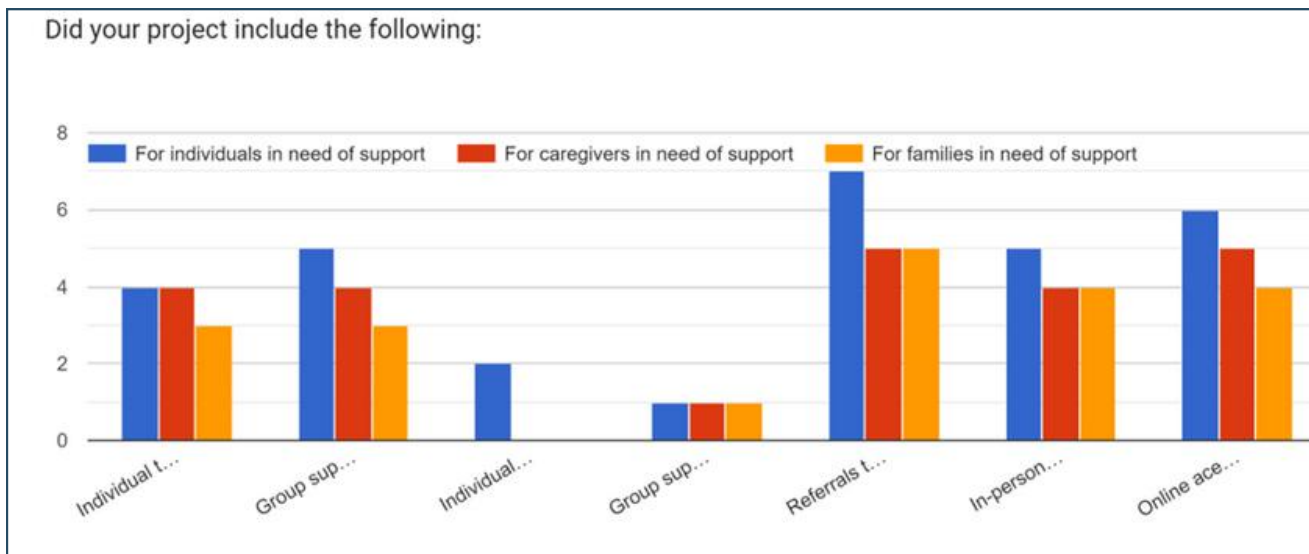
- A more explicit expectation and workshop on designing follow-up surveys should be offered by CHSSN to funded projects/organizations in future years.
- Provide support to organizations in meeting expressed needs for professional development, i.e.:
 - Providing trauma-informed care in community settings (Tyndale St-Georges),
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ and active listening, BIPOC and people with disabilities (Connexions),
 - Aggression, harassment, diversity and inclusion, anything HR capacity building-related (Mental Health Estrie),
 - HR policies and procedures for employees (Seniors Respite Montérégie)



3.0 Supports & Services Offerings

Organizations provided direct supports and services facilitated by professionals and/or volunteers, which can include workshops, support groups, lending libraries, etc. Supports and services were also provided indirectly, by referring community members to other public and non-profit services.

3.1 Observations:



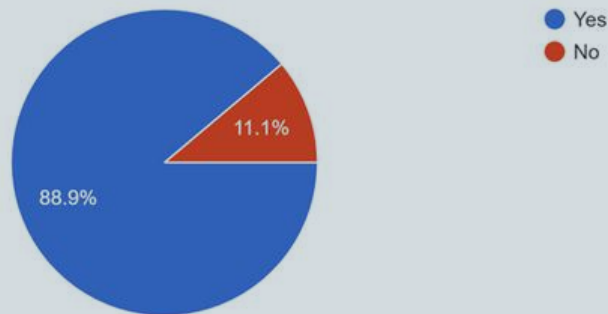
6 out of 9 organizations' projects included direct supports & services for individuals or caregivers in need of support, and 5 out of 9 organizations included the same for families. Indirect supports (such as referrals to other public and/or nonprofit groups) were also included in organizations' projects, with 7 out of 9 organizations offering these to individuals in need of support and 5 out of 9 offering these to families and caregivers.

3.2 Successes, Challenges, and Key Learnings

- **Mental Health Estrie** expressed that it was validated that within their community, they need to meet people where they are. This means providing workshops online, which increases accessibility and anonymity (great challenges in Estrie). This format also allows people to attend from the comfort of their own homes, without worry about childcare, dinner time, distance, exhaustion after work, challenging weather, or financial constraints.

Are there community members who have support/services needs that you are unable to meet OR to find another organization to refer them to in your region?

9 responses

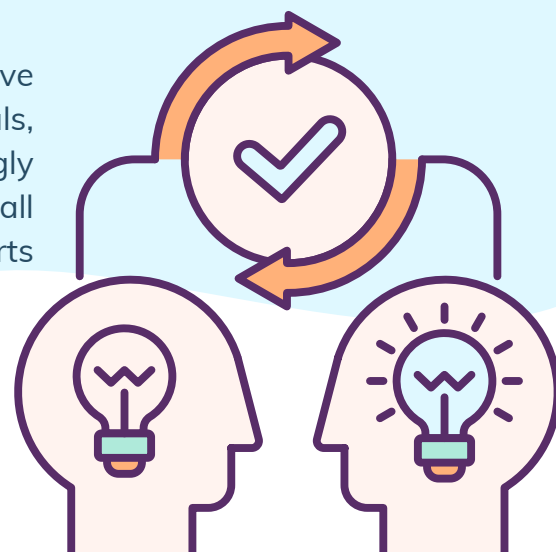


88.9% of organizations (8 out of 9) reported that there are community members who have support/service needs that are not being met in the regions they serve.

- **Ami Quebec said:** “There are gaps in services that neither we nor other organizations can currently offer, for example robust and free individual/family therapy. I am not aware of mental health-based group therapy that could have respond to needs.”
- **Mental Health Estrie** highlighted that there are a variety of organizations and public health institutions at the regional and local levels that do not provide services in English which is problematic and requires a lengthy conversation.
- **Friends for Mental Health** noted that given the long waitlists, and limitations to who they can refer to, caregivers have a hard time finding resources or support for their loved-one/person they are trying to help.
- **Our Harbour** described the changing social and demographic landscape and the challenges associated with providing support/services to people with complex and varied health and mental health needs. Examples of this include the aging population, neurodiverse adults, short-term vs. long-term care/shelter/housing needs and related shortages, etc. Our Harbour provides support and not supervision (24/7) so discharge for people who they can no longer support adequately will need to be considered.
- **Connexions** described the large gap in mental health and wellness services for all English-speaking people in the Outaouais region. Retention of qualified staff in the region has been problematic given the close proximity to Ottawa, which could be rectified by receiving adequate funding needed to attract and retain them. These issues are compounded by the use of services in Ontario by Outaouais English-speakers, which has created a long-lasting perception that their needs were being met. However, the loss of accessibility to health and social services in Ontario has created challenges for both the English population and the service providers in the region.

3.3 Recommendations

Amongst the organizations, successful models have been created for accessible therapy from professionals, peer support and volunteer facilitation. Strongly recommend sharing the strategic approaches with all other organizations designing/delivering direct supports and services.

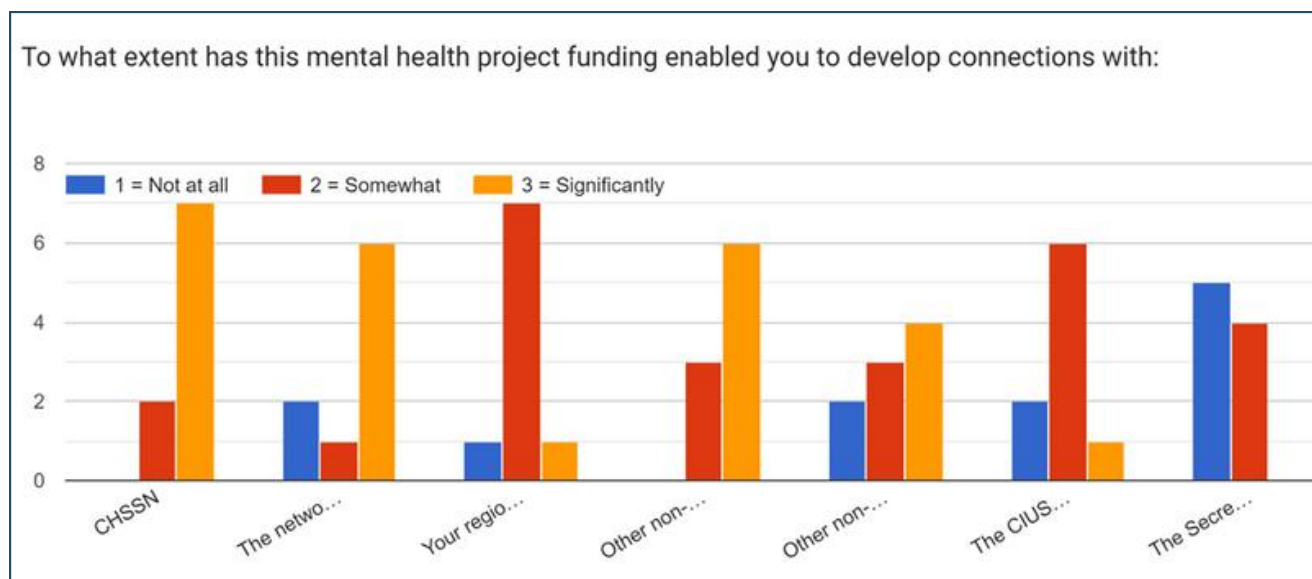


4.0 Connecting & Networking Outcomes

Organizations who collaborate rather than duplicate efforts - creating more connections as a result - should enable more of the people needing mental health support to actually receive it.

“ We are not reaching everyone. ”

4.1 Observations:



Notably, the majority (67%) of organizations reported that significant connections were made at the February 2024 provincial Mental Health and Wellness Forum. When asked about the extent of the connections enabled through this funding to other nonprofits in their respective regions, all 9 organizations reported that it has been either mostly significant (67%) or somewhat (33%). The funding also resulted in connections with nonprofit organizations provincially, with 44% reporting significant impacts and 33% having somewhat of an impact.

The funding facilitated organizational connections to expand services to under-served regions, outside of their own.

From Friends for Mental Health, “Fundings like this one allow us to go above and beyond and offer our services outside of our region, which is amazing. At the mental health event in February, I even offered our services to the organisation from the Saguenay region. They are not from the Montreal area but they certainly might need our help one day. We made a great connection. I want to continue offering our services to organisations outside of our region. We are lucky to have amazing counsellors that are fully bilingual and I think other English speakers, from other regions, should get to benefit from that too. If we can help clients in other regions, we will. This funding allows us to do that and it is very appreciated by all”.

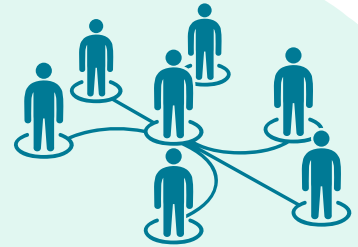
4.2 Successes, Challenges, and Key Learnings

Reflections from Vent Over Tea and Mental Health Estrie: Connecting and networking through outreach to organizations and individuals has proven successful with regards to creating and strengthening partnerships, expanding reach, and increasing impact on the community. For example, some organizations have reported seeing more participation in events and increased referrals to services in areas where sessions were not previously taking place.

Successful strategies included:

- Introductory (or re-introductory) emails sharing information about services and ideas for cross-collaboration
- Attending other organizations’ events to show support and talk about potential partnerships
- Featuring organizations in social media content, blog content, and on resource lists, and asking for this to be reciprocated with appropriate, ready-to-use text
- Bringing in new, individual users through advertising on social media (Facebook, Instagram), as well as attending community events to meet people face-to-face
- Expanding organizational presence in other regions by hiring local staff, and collaborating on developing future projects





4.3 Recommendations

Although CHSSN hosted a connection meeting by Zoom in June 2023 with representatives from 7 out of 9 organizations with the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA) representative, the change of SRQEA personnel overseeing the project meant that the organizations did not solidify a sense of connection directly with the funder. In connecting with CHSSN and its network, the project was highly effective. Organizations' responses indicate a need to develop capacity to strategically connect with their CIUSSS's.





5.0 Additional Recommendations

Overall Funding Recommendations:

- **Continuity:** Given that retention of qualified staff is a pre-occupation of organizations and that these staff enable them to deliver essential mental health support, multi-year funding is strongly recommended to provide financial stability. Community members also need to trust the specific people involved in providing services and this takes time to build. This reinforces the importance of employee retention in the mental health sector. so retention is very important in this sector.

“ The needs are growing and the trust has been built, continuing to fund this initiative is essential and critical that it is done without a gap in service.

- Shauna Joyce, Executive Director, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre

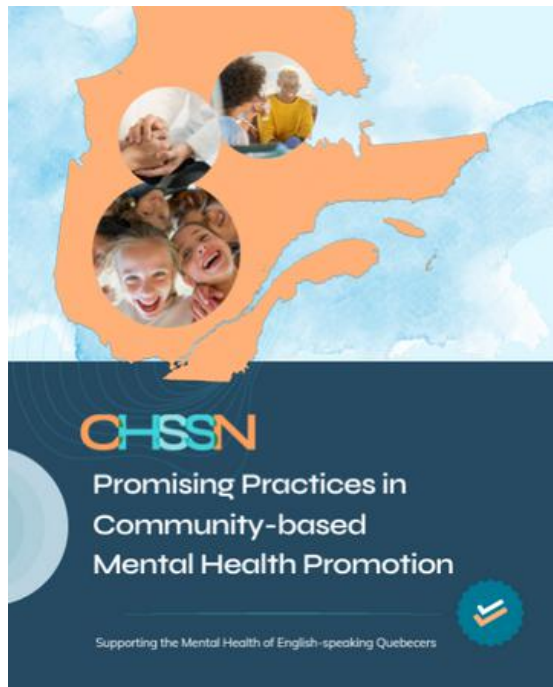
This funding has hugely benefited our organization as it has helped us build our overall capacity. Through this funding, we were able to hire a full-time Mental Health Project Coordinator to put in place all of the related projects. It also helped us provide training opportunities for our staff, clientele and the community organizations we work with.- Connexions

”

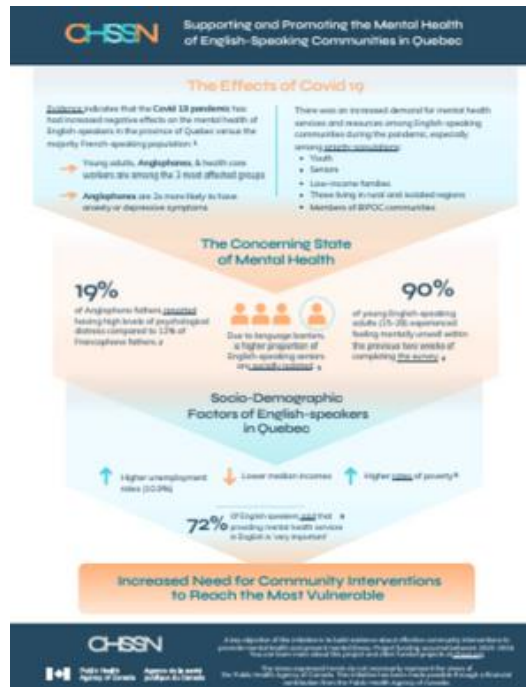
- **Ami-Quebec:** Continuity is essential! The learning is often exactly that, especially when new approaches/projects are proved effective. The expectation for new projects sometimes fail to recognize that continuity of existing, effective projects may be more important.
- **Mental Health Estrie:** As an M30 organization, CHSSN did not receive official notice of approval of the project until 5 months into the project timeline. This meant that we were rushed into organizing events and spending the money in half the projected time. This adds to pressure and strain on the whole organization and the individual staff members involved. The impact of this is immeasurable, as the increased pressure and strain puts staff at risk of burnout and other physical and mental health issues. It could also create challenges regarding staff retention for the organization. It makes planning events much more difficult and can impact the quality of the events we are able to provide to our community. Most guest speakers have full schedules and require significant advanced notice and planning time; therefore, our options are limited on a reduced timeline.

6. Related Documents & Resources

The Promising Practices Collection in Community-based Mental Health Promotion ([EN](#), [FR](#))



The Effects of COVID, infographic on the state of the mental health of English-speaking Quebecers, ([EN](#), [FR](#))



Summary Report from the Mental Health Forum, 2024



Key learnings, highlights and the path forward



Works Cited

Mental Health Research Canada “Key Facts on Mental Health”
<https://www.mhrc.ca/key-facts-on-mental-health#:~:text=From%20the%20data%20collected%20during,getting%20the%20help%20they%20need>

AMI-Québec

Organization Description

Since 1977, AMI-Quebec has been helping families manage the effects of mental illness through support, education, guidance, and advocacy. “While the Québec government considers AMI-Québec a sub-regional organization (and funding is provided accordingly), the organization has extended its mandate to include assistance to English-speaking families throughout the province.”



Project Description

The unique focus of Ami-Quebec's PAOSM project was the development of a Young Carers Symposium, aimed at increasing recognition of young carers, promoting supports, and influencing policy through an action plan and follow-up activities. The project funding was also used to support the overall mission in reaching out to English-speaking community members and specific target populations.

Activities & Results

- Communications & Outreach:
 - 33 in-person (mainly) presentations were offered in schools and the community about mental health/illness associated subjects (stigma, recovery, services). 1745 attended.
 - AMI was active on 5 social media platforms, increasing its outreach to the public. They reached 32,800 on Facebook (a 13.4% increase), 8,400 on Instagram (a 48% increase), 33,900 on Twitter, and had 41,400 views on YouTube and 45,965 video views on TikTok
- Human Resources Capacity Building:
 - The development of The Young Carers Symposium and follow-up activities enabled Ami-Quebec to reach more than 400 people from organizations with connections to Young Carers:
 - 90 people attended the Symposium in-person & 75 online
 - 215 people enrolled to be part of a working group for follow-up
 - Additional people were reached by participating in the International Research and Practice Webinar, QUESCREN Education Vitality, a CCCE summit panel, McGill Social Work's MA class, a REISA forum, etc.
 - A post-symposium action plan was developed to inform policy changes in health, education, and social sectors. Next steps include sharing and adapting the plan, and coordinating actions with relevant stakeholders, including a young carers advisory council. A post-symposium survey will provide insight into the progress attendees feel has been made and help with mapping of available supports. AMI-Quebec will take a leadership role in ensuring the diversity of young carers' experiences are considered, notably, in capacity building efforts with other organizations.

Connexions Resource Centre



Organization Description

“Connexions Resource Centre promotes the health, social wellbeing and vitality of the English-speaking community through empowerment, participation and collaboration within the Outaouais.” The organization is well known in their region - their website was viewed by 50,800 people/23,750 unique visitors during the project funding period.

Project Description

The Connexions project aimed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic which they observed had decreased motivation and increased mental health issues in various groups that they aimed to reach through their comprehensive strategies.

Activities & Results

- Communications & Outreach:
 - Distributed resources at 18 kiosk events (reaching 2300 participants), including those hosted by schools, adult education centres, and post-secondary campuses with career and mental health themes
 - Student volunteers and interns created 30 infographics for #WednesdayWellness Campaign reaching 2,950 followers on Facebook + 388 on Instagram. The infographics were also featured on their website and in a newsletter distributed to 1,850 subscribers.
 - Distributed highly sought after and frequently requested health & social services information and resources from public health and community partners. Also distributed Connexions rack cards during Peer Support Groups, training activities, and other events for families, youth, seniors, and caregivers.
 - The resources above were also disseminated via three newsletters to Connexions members.
- Human Resources Capacity Building:
 - Training opportunities (4) offered to staff and partners with a total of 54 unique participants included:
 - Active Listening Training (Vent over Tea)
 - Mental Health First Aid Training – Mental Health Commission of Canada – (1) Staff & Partners and (2) McGill Medical Students
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ Educational Workshop
- Direct Supports & Services:
 - Four (4) Wellness Activities, with a total of 272 unique participants, during Peer Support Groups facilitated at Western Quebec School Board schools:
 - Beading Activity during Suicide Prevention Week
 - Self-Esteem Writing Workshop
 - Paint a Flower Pot & Plant a Flower
 - Winter Wonderland Cookie Decorating
 - Confidential Mental Health Wellness Check-ins for individual community members (13 unique participants) needing support to access/navigate the healthcare system for mental health services.

Fraser Recovery Program



Organization Description

A recent evaluation of Fraser Recovery Program's (FRP), "Twenty-Five Years and Counting" of supporting youth in recovery from addiction, captured the strengths of their unique approach, which focuses on developing skills and resources to overcome their substance abuse without removing them from their home and school environments.

Project Description

The goals of FRP's 'Youth substance abuse outreach and support' project included:

- Continue our outreach to English-Speaking youth struggling with substance abuse.
- Contribute to our mission of helping youth struggling with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Equip ourselves to better understand and support the mental health needs of our clientele.

Activities & Results

- Communications & Outreach:
 - FRP provided outreach to educate students about the dangers of substance abuse and to reach and support those students experiencing substance use issues. Presentations were given to 172 students at a High School and a Learning Center.
 - Two part-time counselors visited the schools regularly to meet students who self-identified a need for support, as well as those the school staff had concerns about. Students' fear of repercussions discussing substance use required a non-threatening approach - outside the school setting - which allowed connections to be built with these students, making them open to talk.
- Human Resources Capacity Building:
 - Team members attended a (1) Mental Health First Aid training to better equip them to support youth struggling with mental health problems. Topics covered included:
 - Mental health and mental health problems, substance and mood-related disorders, self-injury, anxiety and trauma-related disorders, and feeding and eating disorders.
 - The training also looked at mental health problems as pertaining to specific populations (i.e. disabled individuals, LGBTQIA2+, indigenous peoples, and immigrants).
- Direct Supports & Services:
 - FRP collaborated with the counselors in the various schools responsible for drug and alcohol prevention, to reach students with potential substance abuse issues. They met with 76 students at 4 schools and learning centres and provided ongoing support through calls, online chats, and individual meetings.
 - 16 at-risk students went to the FRP camp facility on weekends and during the summer to be educated on the dangers of substance abuse and showed them that they can have fun without consuming.
 - Substance abuse continues to be a problem and it would therefore be beneficial to continue the efforts undertaken to reach and support more young people.

Friends for Mental Health West Island



Amis de la santé mentale
Friends for Mental Health

Organization Description

Originating in the West Island of Montreal, [Friends for Mental Health](#) was established in 1981 by members of a self-help group for relatives and friends of individuals who were struggling with mental health problems. Their growth over time as they expanded services with mandates and funding available has enabled them to evolve to serve more than 800 members in the 2020s.

Project Description

Thanks to their project focus on offering, “Psychosocial services in English for the greater Montreal region” their Executive Director reported: “We now offer our services to people living in regions around the metropolitan area who do not have access to services in English in their region and that helps the caregivers tremendously”.

Activities & Results

- Communications & Outreach:
 - Creating awareness of mental health in the school and multicultural communities: 41 kiosks and 40 presentations

- Direct Supports & Services:
 - 103 Psychosocial counseling sessions (46 participants)
 - Information and support for drafting requests in evaluation or court orders: 3 accompaniments done
 - 52 training courses and psychoeducational workshops on different disorders (372 participants)
 - 40 support group meetings (256 participants)
 - 38 respite workshops, including mindfulness (266 participants)
 - Information and referrals: 83 short interventions

- Connecting & Networking:
 - Organizations are contacted directly on an annual basis to offer services in English:
 - These efforts are well received by some and referrals follow, while others do not require help, explaining that there are no English speakers in their location (e.g., the Laurentians).

Mental Health Estrie



Organization Description

Founded two decades ago by caregivers in the Eastern Townships, designated as a regional organization serving the 9 réseaux locaux de services (RLS) in Estrie from Granit to La Pommeraiie, Mental Health Estrie was well positioned to expand outreach in the Estrie when it was approached by CHSSN to participate in the CMHI in 2021.

Project Description

Mental Health Estrie expanded and further developed the outreach initiatives established during 2021-2023 thanks to the funds received from the CHSSN for the Covid Mental Health Initiative. Their 'Mental Health Outreach' project enabled them to provide English-language education and support to:

- People who are living with a mental health problem
- Their caregivers (relatives, family and friends)
- People at risk of developing a mental health problem
- The general community

Activities & Results

- Communications & Outreach:
 - Activities included:
 - educational and promotional materials,
 - posters and advertisements for print media,
 - expanding access to services via the website (new lending library and infographics page),
 - informational posts shared via social media, managing social media presence
 - promotional materials for workshops to increase awareness,
 - mental health-themed informational articles for local English-language media and partner publications,
 - promotion of events hosted by MHE and partners via mailing list,
 - radio interviews
 - networking events enhancing relations with partners and public health providers,
 - leveraging local, provincial, and campus newspapers, and two high school yearbooks
- Direct Supports & Services:
 - Provided to a total of 994 people (923 unique people)
 - 226 community members attended the MHE-hosted workshops
 - 757 Community members attended presentations by MHE to the community
 - 8 MHE peer-support group members participated in special outings
 - 3 individuals received one-on-one support
 - 7 Mental Health Workshops (for members of the general community)
 - Overcoming Anxiety series (59 participants)
 - Introduction to Art Therapy (29)
 - Managing Anger (39)
 - Improving Your Relationship with Yourself Series (99)

- Connecting & Networking:
 - 10+Presentations of MHE services to community groups, associations & training centres (86 total connections)
 - 13 community events/fairs/festivals/forums, etc., where MHE had kiosks (675 total connections)

Our Harbour



Organization Description

Built on L'abri en ville's model, "Our Harbour provides a caring, cost-effective long-term housing program on Montreal's South Shore for people of diverse backgrounds living with mental illness. [It] offer[s] life-management support, links with resources in the surrounding community and individual assistance in integrating with society. Our Harbour also educates the wider community about mental illness."

Project Description

'20 Years On: Nurturing the Present, Building the Future':

- Continued access to their Clubhouse activity space for community events and activities, including the celebration of our 20th Anniversary.
- Ensured that residents who have a mental illness and are in the long-term, supported housing program could be re-housed in cleaner, better cared for homes
- Funding offset in part higher rental fees and some costs of refurbishment / re-equipment of new apartments.

Activities & Results

- Direct Supports & Services:
 - Provided a large, welcoming community clubhouse space for our 20th anniversary activities, benefiting their 30 residents, 30+ volunteers, and staff.
 - Offset the costs of four apartment moves affecting 16 people. This was in line with the decision taken not to renew the leases of some of our oldest, most poorly maintained apartments. Efforts included:
 - Packing, moving, re-housing, re-settling, cleaning, replacement or refurbishment of furniture and soft furnishings
 - Offset in part the additional costs of higher rental fees in 2023-2024 for one of the two new apartments.

Moving is one of the most stressful activities for anyone, and, for our population, especially difficult. Feelings of being uprooted, anxiety, fear of change, new surroundings, bus routes, stores, drug stores and more. The staff team's normal workload due to the moves was of course multiplied.

More significantly, the team also increased the time, care and attention provided to residents on a daily basis. It was essential to provide more than usual reassurance and support during what was for our residents a chaotic time, albeit one that ended, eventually, in more pleasant, fresher homes, in greener environments, closer to services, stores and bus routes.

Seniors Respite Montérégie



RÉPIT AÎNÉS
SENIORS RESPITE
Montérégie

Organization Description

Located in the heart of Greenfield Park on Montreal's South Shore, Seniors Respite Montérégie's (SRM) mission is to enrich the quality of life for English-speaking seniors and caregivers through specialized services and respite care. By providing a safe, welcoming place for seniors who cannot be left alone due to cognitive and/or physical limitations, SRM's activity centre directly benefits the mental health of participants who spend 5.5 hours per day with them, while offering their caregivers respite that directly benefits their mental health.

Our services include a day center that enables seniors to socialize and enjoy planned activities in a group setting. We offer a variety of activities by our professionals & volunteers with a supervision ratio of 1:3. This approach makes for a friendly and family-like environment in which everyone is valued. Thanks to the financial support of CHSSN and others, SRM was able to provide services to 36 families allowing OLMC caregivers to benefit from respite while our trained staff cared for their loved ones.

During the project life March 24, 2023, to March 9, 2024, caregivers enjoyed 2409 days (total among all caregivers) where SRM took over the caregiving responsibility for their family members. As our centre receives clients for 5.5 hours each day, this translates to a potential of 13 250 hours of free time for caregivers.

Project Description

SRM's project, "Stimulation and motivation for seniors with cognitive challenges" improved mental health and reduced the stress for their English-speaking cognitively challenged seniors through specialized services. These services also benefit their caregivers' mental health by providing them with respite time to attend to their personal and family needs, daily tasks, or just rest without the constant concerns about the well being of their loved ones.

Activities & Results

- Direct Supports & Services:
 - SRM offered specialized facilitation of activities to diversify the animation provided to their day centre participants, adding laughter yoga and zoo therapy to the music programming already in place
 - 51 sessions during the year:
 - Music Activities: 27 days
 - Laughter Yoga (10 days) helps to change your mood within minutes by releasing certain chemicals from your brain cells called endorphins.
 - Zootherapy (14 days) is a helping relationship, which provides benefits on many different levels (cognitively, emotionally, physically, or psychologically).
 - Number of participants attending sessions overall:
 - Average of 11 participants per session (per day)
 - 561 participants over 51 days of sessions (not unique)
 - 36 unique participants throughout year (not per session)

Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre



Centre communautaire
Tyndale St-Georges
Community Centre

Organization Description

Founded in 1927 to support families in Little Burgundy, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre is an intricate part of the fabric of the community of Little Burgundy, including a large historic Black community, and has provided in-person academic and social support for three generations

Project Description

The Family Support Worker role that is funded through PAOSM:

- Encourages member participation in activities at Tyndale St-Georges and in the wider community
- Provides assistance for those in need of navigating the various services available, such as mental health, financial, legal, and immigration and crisis intervention
- Refers families to other resources that can meet their needs, ensuring accompaniment and follow-up
- Facilitates workshops at Tyndale's Adult and Youth Departments helping them develop different skill sets and social and emotional competencies
- Provides tools to develop coping strategies for families to manage anxiety and uncertainty especially with delays in development and distribution of therapeutics
- Provides information about self-care, and offers guidance and support to establish and follow-up with intervention programs
- Enables program delivery personnel to focus solely on quality program delivery
- Leads a monthly parent support group (which includes a peer-support discussion element) for parents of children 0- 7 years old

Activities & Results

- Human Resources Capacity Building
 - Facilitated staff training sessions (8 sessions for 30 staff) on:
 - emotional regulation
 - supporting neuro-diverse participants
 - behavior management support
 - how to refer participants to the family support worker)
 - Provided supervision to a McGill Bachelor of Social Work intern two art therapy students which allowed us to expand/deepen our reach with participants.
- Direct Supports & Services
 - Parent support group sessions (8)
 - Educated parents on child development, parenting skills, nutrition, budgeting, etc.
 - Developed and facilitated psychoeducational workshops with parents, youth and adult clients (7 sessions)
 - Topics include cyber-safety, parental guilt, self-care, single parent and co-parenting strategies)

- Other key supports and services provided include:
 - Assisting with development of healthy coping strategies and effective communication skills
 - Providing guidance and resources
 - Identifying potential risks or issues that may affect well-being
 - Developing individualized treatment plans, monitoring over time and making adjustments as needed
 - Providing crisis intervention services
 - Advocating for the rights of individuals and families
 - Using evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for clients
 - Assisting families gain access to community resources such as housing assistance programs or job training
- Connecting & Networking
 - Collaborated with other professionals and organizations to ensure comprehensive care for clients

Vent Over Tea



Organization Description

Youth-driven Vent Over Tea trains volunteers to provide active listening services that can help ESC members work through problems by asking reflective questions and showing empathetic regard

Project Description

In our 'Letting No Voice Go Unheard' project, Vent Over Tea engaged 3 part-time staff (including our ED/Operations, Program Manager for the Sherbrooke region, and a Project Coordinator to run our events program and support the team in other ways (i.e. outreach)) and many volunteers who donated their time to achieve the organization's mission which was primarily funded by PAOSM to provide Direct Supports & Services as well as HR Capacity Building.

Activities & Results

- Human Resources Capacity Building
 - Expanded their active listening training to help more individuals become better active listeners in their daily lives, at their jobs, and in school.
 - 6 workshops given (some virtual, some in-person)
 - ~140 participants, with ~100 more scheduled in April 2024 (originally March)
 - 5 Organizations: Jeffery Hale Staff & Volunteers, ARC Workshop, Literacy Québec, LEARN Québec, Seniors Centre in Richmond
 - Some feedback: 85% of respondents reported the event had an impact on their day to day and organizers said it was a fantastic workshop that they'd recommend for other organizations.
- Direct Supports & Services
 - As a result of outreach and advertising efforts:
 - Saw an increase in active listening sessions this year (primarily in the Montreal region, but also in Sherbrooke/Estrie, and booked sessions in the West Island, South Shore, Lanaudière, and the Laurentians).
 - Achieved higher numbers of active listening sessions this year through advertising on Facebook and Instagram and during tablings at various community and organizational events
 - Increased number/proportion of men coming to our service through the referral of a counselor
 - Observed that the in-person format is valued by the community and there is still a need for meeting up face-to-face
 - Increased our number of referrals through counselors and social workers.
 - We saw an increase in men coming to our service through the referral of a counselor
 - Free active listening service offered to individuals both in-person and virtually

- 300 sessions (26% increase Year in Year), 283 in English (~95%)
 - 103 in person sessions, 88 phone sessions, 109 video sessions
 - Most common reasons for booking were work/unemployment, anxiety, relationships (friends/family/romantic), and life changes.
- Offered free mental wellness events for youth and adults aimed at promoting mental health and breaking isolation.
 - 11 events hosted and 2 events attended and facilitated workshops/discussion groups
 - 583 attendees, 9 in person (+2 in person events hosted by other organizations), 2 virtual
 - Want to highlight the Frames of Mind exhibition in December 2023, with over 150 attendees (highest attended event). The event featured new artists with works centered around mental health and identity. 85% of artists were from the 2LGBTQ+ community, and attendees mirrored this demographic.
- Worked with 9 organizations and 5 professionals specializing in active listening, crisis intervention, drama therapy, personal training, and meditation