Brant Workshop Report

Supports for Success

A project of **Wellesley Institute**

Wellesley Institute
advancing urban health

Woodview
mental health & autism services

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Executive Summary

On January 28, 2019 service providers representing a variety of child and youth serving organizations/institutions attended a half-day workshop at Brant Public Library, hosted by Wellesley Institute and Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services. The purpose of the workshop was to explore Supports for Success data and discuss how the information can be used to better support children and youth in Brant through collective impact.

The workshop consisted of individual reflections and group discussions about a vision for collective impact in Brant, barriers to collective impact, strategies to overcome barriers and next steps. Several next steps were suggested by attendees as to how the community can begin working better together to support children and youth. Some next steps could include:

- share and implement knowledge gained through Supports for Success project and workshop;
- put children and youth needs before organizational needs;
- challenge the status quo of how we currently work and operate;
- connect and increase collaboration with one another;
- develop a systems wide strategic plan.

The knowledge and information gained can be used to inform future collective impact work for children and youth in Brant. The group also expressed interest in having a similar workshop with system leaders in Brant who could help to move this work forward.

Background

In 2016, Wellesley Institute began to investigate how youth in Ontario could have the best chance to reach their potential. The motivation behind this was the fact that not all children and youth receive the supports they need to get a fair shot in life – especially those who are racialized, Indigenous, immigrant or low-income.

Wellesley Institute funded an initial phase of work to build an approach that could improve child and youth outcomes. This involved learning from successful international initiatives for systems change, consulting with experts, and discussions with stakeholders, community and youth.

This led to the development of Supports for Success, and the creation of an expanded collective impact model. The Supports for Success model has four key approaches. It has 3 levels of coordination (between funders, providers, and community), is strengths-based, focuses on the life course and is developed from an understanding of the experiences of diverse and marginalized youth.

In 2017, Wellesley Institute entered into a partnership with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) to collect evidence needed to inform the implementation of a model like Supports for Success in four communities across Ontario: Brant, Thunder Bay, East Scarborough and Kingston. Wellesley developed partnerships with local organizations and created local research teams to help with community engagement, data collection, data analysis and reporting.

In Brant, Wellesley partnered with Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services. Together they sought to identify, map and assess existing programs and services, and identify how systems of support could be strengthened to better serve children and youth in the community.

Wellesley Institute is currently in the process of communicating the locally produced research findings to each community and engaging community in discussions about how the model and findings may be applied.

Workshop Overview and Objectives

On January 28, 2019, Wellesley Institute held a workshop in Brant to report on the findings of the research and facilitate a workshop with community stakeholders on how the research findings may be applied and what a collective impact initiative to improve the lives of children and youth may look like in Brant.
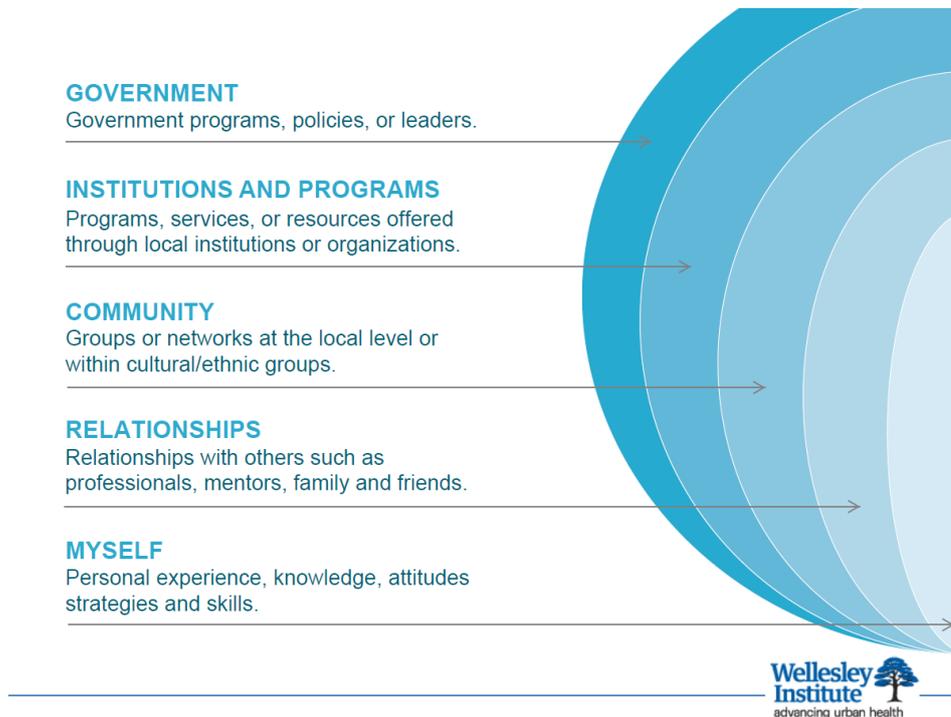
Organizational stakeholders in attendance included:

- Woodview Mental Health and Autism Services
- Brant County Health Unit
- City of Brantford
- Contact Brant
- YMCA Hamilton Burlington Brantford
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Grand Erie
- Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board
- Family Counselling of Brant
- St. Leonard's Community Services

The workshop consisted of four main activities. The first activity was focused on creating a vision for collective impact on the lives of children and youth in Brant. The second and third activities were focused on identifying barriers to the vision, and strategies to overcome the identified barriers. And the fourth activity was focused on next steps and what stakeholders could do to move this work forward.

Throughout the workshop stakeholders were encouraged to think about barriers, strategies and next steps at all levels of the socioecological model: individual, relationships, community, institutions and government.

Figure 1. Socioecological Model

GOVERNMENT
Government programs, policies, or leaders.

INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS
Programs, services, or resources offered through local institutions or organizations.

COMMUNITY
Groups or networks at the local level or within cultural/ethnic groups.

RELATIONSHIPS
Relationships with others such as professionals, mentors, family and friends.

MYSELF
Personal experience, knowledge, attitudes strategies and skills.

Summary of Activities

Activity 1: What do we want our collective impact on the lives of children and youth to look like?

Through group discussions, stakeholders developed a vision for collective impact in Brant. Seven themes emerged related to the availability, accessibility and inclusivity of supports, community voice, capacity building, integrated resources, and transformational change.

Stakeholders named each theme. The themes are presented below with the individual and small group ideas that made up each theme listed underneath.

Everything I need in my neighbourhood

- Hub, one stop shop
- Service providers sharing space (hub)
- Services where and when youth need them
- Wrap around care
- Streamlined supports
- Connection to service information throughout the life (check-ins)
- Smooth transitions between services (warm/smooth transfer)

Our voices matter listen up!

- Youth voice, youth choice
- Strong youth voice
- Youth power and influence, not just voice
- Meaningful youth & family engagement
- Youth & family engaged philosophy (informed/co-created)
- Youth/family co-create
- Client based led/informed services
- Include lived experience
- Trauma-informed service
- Do what is needed – transportation
- Individualized youth goals

All welcome, all belong

- Culturally informed and appropriate services
- Thinking from diverse community perspectives
- Accessible – diverse cultural orientations
- Greater sense of belonging

Right time, right place, access

- Timely, accessible and informed care
- Accessible transportation and time
- Warm welcoming accessible readily available services
- Leave no-one behind /find the disconnected

Building capacity

- Building on strengths (individual/family/community)
- Community building rather than co-ordinated services
- Reduce inequities
- Children enter kindergarten ready to learn (EDI scores)

Integration of resources

- Funding from bottom up rather than funding from top down
- Resources to support backbone
- Radical change vs incremental change

Transformative change and outcomes

- Working together
- Coordinated services, no silos
- Utilize existing collaboratives
- Change and integrate planning
- Increase co-ordinated communication
- Improve communication between sectors
- Shared leadership
- Leadership – put aside ego build upon strengths

- Tiered concise leadership
  - Measures individual success
  - Measures barriers removed
- Common goals to improve outcomes
- Public transparency of indicators and outcomes
- Shared data (dashboard) consistency

Note: There was discussion around whether or not to combine the 'right time, right place 'and 'all welcome, all belong" themes. Some stakeholders thought they should be one category whereas as others thought they were separate.

Activity 2: What is blocking our vision?

Through individual brainstorms and small group discussions, stakeholders identified barriers that were blocking their collective impact vision. Some of the barriers identified include funding, bureaucracy, competition between organizations, differences in priorities, a lack of system wide strategic plan and entrenched patterns of doing things.

List of Barriers:

- Funding – how things are funded, time constraints, funders mandates don't line up with community and program needs
- Funders Mandate
- Not taking risks / inability to use funding creatively
- Power structures
- Competition gets in the way of collaboration
- Competing policies and agendas + funding sources that reduce ability to work together effectively
- Lack of system wide big picture strategic plan
- Entrenched patterns of doing business
- Agency policies
- Red tape and exclusionary criteria
- Transportation in Brantford
- Lack of centralized services
- Systemic issues regarding trauma informed care

Activity 3: What can we do to overcome the barriers and realize our vision?

Through individual brainstorms and small group discussions, stakeholders also identified strategies to overcome barriers to their collective impact vision. These strategies were focused on building trust, developing a systems wide strategic plan with a designated point person, getting out of the comfort zone, putting the child first and better engaging community.

List of Strategies:

- Build trust
- Child centered care – child should always be first
- System wide strategic plan
- Have a designated sector mobilizer - identify or hire one person to oversee momentum of city-wide strategic plan
- Leap – growth is outside of our comfort zone
- Creative use of resources
- Re-organize networks and collaboratives by age instead of sectors
- One leadership table informed by youth families and data
- Community engaged philosophy – proactive approach – anticipating trends – youth and family voice
- Create a social determinants of health – based supports system
- City wide trauma informed training

Activity 4: What are the next steps?

After reviewing the vision, barriers and strategies, stakeholders were asked to brainstorm and discuss what steps can be taken to advance the collective impact on the lives of children and youth in Brant. Attendees were encouraged to think about actions that could be taken at each level of the socioecological model.

Some of the identified next steps included sharing and implementing the knowledge gained through the Supports for Success project and workshop, the need to engage children and put them first, and the need to change "my way" or "me" attitudes and approaches. As next steps, stakeholders also identified the need to challenge the status quo, the need to connect and collaborate with others and the need for a systems wide strategic plan.

Next steps at each level of the socioecological model are presented below.

Government

- Funding for hubs
- Consistent identification of linkages, maximize opportunities
- Provide the government with this data
- Share data with leaders
- Identify and support government politicians who are informed and committed to youth agenda
- Elected government using researched based decisions
- Expand research practices and opportunities at the local level (e.g. Social Network Analysis)
- Be more responsive to community partners and grass roots organizations (Government to Community)

Institutions and Programs

- Taking and maintaining a whole systems approach
- Hire a point person
- Ensure decision makers are in the room
- Create collective goals
- Maintain the review of community collaborations
- Funders sit on committees with community stakeholders, more bottom up
- Agencies working together prior to people getting to crisis
- Adult services need to talk to children services, easier transitions
- Services need to talk to schools and connect the services
- No waitlist, youth need help not just in their worst moment but before
- Better networks to remove barriers to "this is mine attitude"
- Remember who you serve

Community

- Collaboration with peers, organizations and community
- Collaboration between organizations to get an understanding of one another's role
- Synopsis of this presentation to share with stakeholders
- Challenge the status quo at all levels
- Have all voices heard
- Care for our neighbour
- Multicultural events
- Transportation, mental health uber

Relationships

- Talk to youth about what they need and do something about it
- Get feedback from those receiving service
- Listen to understand
- Advocate
- Get connected to others
- Remove the agendas
- Remember we are here for one reason. It is not about "us".
- Stop battling for #'s (stats)

Myself

- Implement knowledge
- Utilise information to justify work
- Disseminating information among peers
- Look collectively, not just "me" attitude
- Willingness to change "my" way
- Remember who we are here for
- Involve youth
- Self-compassion and courage to share your story

Conclusion

A range of stakeholders attended the workshop to envision and discuss what a collective impact model on the lives of children and youth could look like in Brant. Stakeholders engaged in meaningful discussions to develop a vision, identify barriers to the vision, as well as strategies to overcome identified barriers. Several next steps to advance collective impact for children and youth in Brant were identified.

The knowledge and information gained can be used to inform future collective impact work in Brant, as well as the work of individuals and organizations. Stakeholders expressed interest in continuing the conversation around collective impact, with the suggestion of hosting a similar workshop with leaders in the community.