# Community Counselling Fund Survey Findings

# Community-based counselling across British Columbia

Grantee organizations report they fill important roles in their communities by connecting clients to other services.

of organizations
strongly agreed or
agreed their
organization offers
counselling services
that fill a specific need
for the population(s)
they serve.

93%

of organizations (24 of 26) agree or strongly agree their organization is a key entry point for mental health and substance use services.

96%

of organizations (25 of 26) agree or strongly agree their organization is a key place to connect people to other local health and social service providers.

#### **About the Survey**

This survey was administered to grantee organizations of the Community Action Initiative's (CAI) Community Counselling Fund (CCF) to develop a baseline for the next two years of the fund's evaluation. 27 of 29 grantee organizations responded to the survey.

CCF grantee organizations serve clients in

22

communities

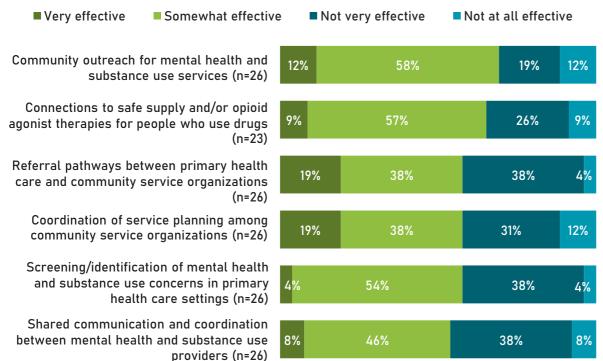
&

52

First Nations communities

### Perceptions of current systems of care

What elements of a system of mental health and substance use care do organizations think are effective?



Continuing needs identified by community organizations:



Specific counselling services and modalities



Expand and increase existing services



Programs and services for specific populations



Additional staff with specialized skills and experience



Addressing systemic barriers such as housing, justice, and safe supply





#### Barriers to accessing counselling:

The following were described as "extreme" or "considerable" barriers to accessing counselling services for their clients:

Previous stigmatizing experiences / distrust of health care providers (n=26)

Historical / inter-generational trauma (n=26)

Internal shame / stigma related to MHSU

Poverty / financial security (n=26)

Community shame / stigma related to MHSU (n=26)

Lack of culturally relevant services (n=26)

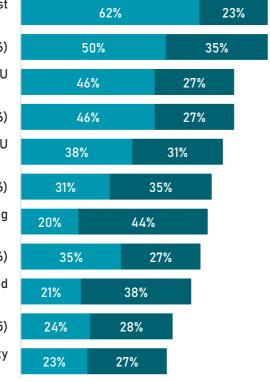
Family pressures / burden of caregiving (n=25)

Transportation to in-person services (n=26)

Lack of access to space for nature-based healing activities (n=24)

Long wait times (n=25)

Concerns of anonymity / confidentiality (n=26)



#### What do community-based organizations think can be done to help address these barriers to access?



**Education** and awareness targeted at reducing stigma



Culturally relevant and language specific services



Staff with expertise specific to clients' needs



**Improved** coordination and partnerships between service providers

Lack of capacity to

## Most-reported challenges faced by community organizations



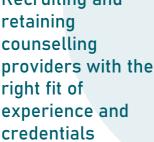
Securing funds that are applicable to planned programming



counselling programming

evaluate





**Organizations** identified flexible, long-term funding (that is also applicable to

program administration and office space) as the greatest need to address these challenges.

# Delivery of culturallyrelevant services

#### Key supports include:



**Funding for** specific programming



Building relationships with Elders, Indigenous

community leaders, and service providers from minority groups

Training for staff in all roles (not only counselling

16 organizations reported offering counselling programs led by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. Of these programs:

Engage elders / knowledge keepers from local First Nations / Métis communities

Integrate traditional medicines

75% Offer land / nature-based healing

Integrate ceremony

Offer local Indigenous language learning

# Engaging people with lived & living experience (PWLLE)



have PWLLE in key decisionmaking positions around the design and delivery of counselling services.

#### Key supports in engaging PWLLE include:



Funding earmarked for staff positions and other roles



Policies, guidelines, and organizational values



**Engaging PWLLE** in leadership and advisory roles



Client and community feedback and outreach





# Response to COVID-19

69% of

organizations (18 of

26) did not have to

reduce their

counselling services

due to the

pandemic



of organizations (24 of 26) have seen an increase in demand for counselling services since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most commonly-reported client concerns include:

anxiety

isolation

depression

iob loss

substance use

gender-based / intimate partner violence

A greater percentage of organizations (n=26) agreed or strongly agreed their capacity to meet the needs of clients had increased since March 2020 Before March 2020 After March 2020

Our counselling staff maintained a caseload that allowed them ample time for client maintenance.

+4%

We were able to accommodate new counselling clients when they needed / wanted to begin counselling.

+8%

Our organization's counselling services were able to meet the demand from our clients / target population(s).



## Transition to virtual services



of organizations (21 of 26) now offer virtual services as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges to implementing virtual services included:



Clients lacking access to equipment



Clients lacking access a private, secure space



Clients not being comfortable or familiar with technology



Lack of funding for staff. equipment, and upgraded infrastructure

Virtual services were most effective in reaching:

% of respondents reporting virtual services were "very" or "somewhat" effective"

ess effective

People in rural / remote communities

People who experience or are at risk of intimate partner violence

People living in economic precarity

People who use drugs / with substance use disorder(s)

Urban Indigenous populations

People with lower tech literacy

Local First Nations / Métis communities

People who are street-involved / street-entrenched

People who speak languages other than English

# Successes in implementing virtual services



Reduced barriers to access such as appointment times and travel



**Ensuring client** safety and alleviating anxiety around in-person services

of organizations (20 of 24) plan to continue offering virtual services after the COVID-19 pandemic

of organizations (17 of 24) have been able to reach new clients with virtual services





Maintaining connections to clients and communities

of organizations (15 of 24) have largely 67% retained existing clients with virtual services



