

Linking Research to Action: A Needs Assessment of Organizations Serving Youth in Peel Region

Jen MacGregor
Anita Kothari
Judy Showers
Karen LeMoine





Purpose

- 1) to understand the current capacity of Peel community-based organizations (CBOs) to acquire, assess, adapt and apply research evidence
- 2) to identify:
 - a) optimal strategies to engage Peel CBOs in the knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE) process
 - b) content-specific information needs



Method

- Online survey
 - Adapted from the ‘Is Research Working for You?’ tool (CHSRF, 2005)
 - 35 of 45 invited CBOs participated
- Focus Groups
 - Questions on use of different types of evidence, website feature preferences, etc.
 - 16 participants total (2 focus groups, 1 interview)



Results: outline

- Selection of findings (full report to come)
- Acquiring research evidence and other sources of evidence used
- Adapting research evidence
- Optimal KTE strategies for engaging Peel CBOs
 - Website feature preferences
- Youth violence prevention content needs
- A key theme



Acquiring research evidence

- Peel CBOs confident, acquire research evidence from a variety of sources:
 - websites, conferences, peer networking, academic journals, etc.
- 74% reported using research evidence ‘often’ to make decisions regarding programming, service delivery or policies

Acquiring evidence


Evidence Source	1 = Never	2 = Seldom	3 = Sometimes	4 = Often	No response
Research evidence	0	2.9% (1)	22.9% (8)	74.3% (26)	0
Local context or issues	0	0	8.6% (3)	88.6% (31)	2.9% (1)
Community / client needs and preferences	0	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	91.4% (32)	0
Political preference	31.4% (11)	25.7% (9)	20% (7)	11.4% (4)	11.4% (4)
Experiential knowledge	0	0	25.7% (9)	68.6% (24)	5.7% (2)
Colleagues sharing ideas	0	0	25.7% (9)	65.7% (23)	8.6% (3)
Current organizational practices	0	2.9% (1)	20% (7)	74.3% (26)	2.9% (1)




Other sources of evidence

- Is one type of evidence (research, experiential, or contextual) more important than another?

“I say experiential would be our first choice... If we could only pick one... you know, when the rubber meets the road, it’s what’s happening at ground level that really drives what you’re doing.”



“...they are all important. That’s sort of like asking a question like which leg of the chair is more important, right?”



“It’s hard to pick one from them...there’s so much of the job that’s based on intuition and context and what you’re doing and I think there needs to be the research that kind of guides... so I think, for me, it’s almost like a toolbox: that you have to use what is working in that context; so, if I was to pick, I guess it would be contextual but it’s really a marriage of all three.”

Adapting research evidence: needs


Evidence Informed Decision-Making (EIDM) Content Area	% CBOs choosing topic as useful and relevant (n)
How and where to find good quality research	70.6% (24)
Fundamentals in assessing the quality and reliability of research	38.2% (13)
How to adapt evidence-based programs to local contexts	76.5% (26)
How and when to target interventions and programs to specific populations	76.5% (26)
Program planning and evaluation skills	61.8% (21)

Note: Participants could choose multiple content areas. n = 34



Adapting research evidence

“[W]e’re inundated with research, different kinds of research... The challenge with that research is to take it and learn from it, to figure out what’s useful, to figure out what’s directive... the challenge also in a big organization is to find the way to put that research or turn it into effective practice...”



“... so we’ve got a very unique situation here that is very difficult to say well it’s comparable to something that’s happening in the United States where there’s a very different context or even outside of Peel [agreement] ... so I think that’s a big challenge, you know, pulling studies out that may or may not be relevant or may not be realistic for our population or our purposes is a tricky, tricky nut. [agreement]”

Optimal KTE strategies

How likely is your staff to...	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Use resources provided on a website or online platform supported by the Region of Peel?	0	0	2.9% (1)	45.7% (16)	51.4% (18)
Participate in relevant Webinars ?	0	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	54.3% (19)	34.3% (12)
Attend relevant workshops ?	0	5.7% (2)	17.1% (6)	45.7% (16)	31.4% (11)
Join us on Facebook ?	8.6% (3)	25.7% (9)	28.6% (10)	22.9% (8)	14.3% (5)
Join us on Twitter ?	25.7% (9)	14.3% (5)	28.6% (10)	20% (7)	11.4% (4)
Sign up to email alerts when there is new content on our website?	2.9% (1)	0	5.7% (2)	65.7% (23)	25.7% (9)
Subscribe to (and read) an e-newsletter ?	0	0	14.2% (5)	45.7% (16)	40% (14)



Website feature preferences

- Google translation
- **Calendar of events**
- **Easy to navigate, simplicity**, site map
- **Links to other sites**
- **Way to connect with/find other relevant groups**
- **Suggestions tool**
- Data/statistics interaction
- **Visually appealing/engaging**
- **No pop-ups**
- **Descriptors/synopsis for articles**
- **Meta-analyses**
- **Funding help**

Youth violence prevention content needs

- greater than 50% of CBOs were interested in all but 3 of 17 content areas

Youth Violence Prevention Content Area	% CBOs choosing topic as useful and relevant (n)
Evidence-based strategies and programs	48.6% (17)
School-based programs	65.7% (23)
Social skills development programs	85.7% (30)
Mentoring programs	77.1% (27)
Early childhood development	40.0% (14)
Parent-child relations	65.7% (23)
Gang prevention and/or intervention	57.1% (20)
Reintegration programs (for youth involved in the justice system)	57.1% (20)
Mental health programs and services	80.0% (28)
Place-based approaches (e.g. working with high-risk / priority neighbourhoods)	65.7% (23)
Issues related to poverty and social inequality	60.0% (21)
Community policing	28.6% (10)
Data and statistics on trends (e.g. local, provincial, national)	62.9% (22)
Types of violence (e.g. bullying, cyber-bullying, dating violence, gang violence)	74.3% (26)
Key risk and protective factors for youth violence	82.9% (29)
Peel-specific programs and research	82.9% (29)
Programs and research from other local jurisdictions	57.1% (20)

Note: Participants could choose multiple content areas. n = 35

Youth violence prevention content needs

Youth Violence Prevention Content Area	% CBOs choosing topic as useful and relevant (n)
Social skills development programs	85.7%(30)
Mental health programs and services	80.0% (28)
Key risk and protective factors for youth violence	82.9% (29)
Peel-specific programs and research	82.9% (29)



The importance of partnership

“...if we can provide information around partnerships, so agency to agency partnerships or agency to community partnerships and if we can somehow create a climate where partnerships are encouraged, I think that that would make a difference in... how we provide services.”



The importance of partnership

“... so it’s for the benefit of the work of both sides, it’s my opinion that will be great for everybody, for the community, for the universities, for college or for the organizations non-profit, profit, whatever, so I think, we need to work together...”



Summary

1) to understand the current capacity of Peel CBOs to **acquire**, assess, **adapt** and apply research evidence

- Peel CBOs are generally confident in their ability to acquire research evidence, find research evidence in a variety of places, but also use other forms of evidence
- Some help with adapting/contextualizing research evidence is needed



Summary

2) to identify a) optimal strategies to engage Peel CBOs in the knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE) process and b) content-specific information needs

- Online/electronic formats are preferred
- Many youth violence prevention topics are of interest to Peel CBOs



Conclusion

- A great foundation for the KTE Plan – Peel CBOs are ready, able and willing
 - Peel CBOs use research evidence
 - Interested in improving EIDM skills
 - Interested in receiving info on youth violence prevention
- Peel CBOs are interested in connecting and collaborating to prevent youth violence in Peel



Thank you participants!



Thank you!

- Contact:
 - Jen MacGregor: jmacgre9@uwo.ca
 - Anita Kothari: akothari@uwo.ca
- Questions? Comments?



Supplementary slides

Acquiring research evidence

	Don't do	Do poorly	Do inconsistently	Do with some consistency	Do well
We look for research in academic journals	0	5.7% (2)	37.1% (13)	45.7% (16)	11.4% (4)
We look for research from organizations (such as Statistics Canada, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Public Safety Canada, etc.)	0	2.9% (1)	11.4% (4)	57.1% (20)	28.6% (10)
We learn from topic-specific listservs	5.7% (2)	14.3% (5)	28.6% (10)	34.3% (12)	17.1% (6)
We learn from conferences and forums	0	0	8.6% (3)	45.7% (16)	45.7% (16)
We look for information on websites	0	2.9% (1)	8.6% (3)	40% (14)	48.6% (17)
We work with researchers through formal and informal networking meetings	2.9% (1)	5.7% (2)	20% (7)	31.4% (11)	40% (14)
We get involved with researchers as host, decision-maker, partner or sponsor	8.6% (3)	8.6% (3)	25.7% (9)	31.4% (11)	25.7% (9)
We learn from peers through formal and informal networks to exchange ideas, experiences and best practices	0	0	5.7% (2)	37.1% (13)	57.1% (20)

Primary clients of CBOs participating in survey

Client Group	% CBOs serving client group (n)
Children younger than 12 years old	51.4% (18)
Youth / Adolescents (12-24 years old)	88.6% (31)
Adults	60.0% (21)
Parents / Caregivers	42.9% (15)
Families	54.3% (19)
New immigrants	45.7% (16)
Specific ethno-cultural communities/groups	28.6% (10)
Other	31.4% (11)

Note: Participants could choose multiple client groups. n = 35

Services provided by CBOs participating in survey

Type of Service	% CBOs providing service (n)
Crime prevention	27.3% (9)
Community /neighbourhood development	45.5% (15)
Education	54.5% (18)
Family/parenting support	54.5% (18)
Health promotion	48.5% (16)
Housing and shelter	21.2% (7)
Law and justice services	39.4% (13)
Mental health services	45.5% (15)
Mentoring programs for children/youth	45.5% (15)
Recreation	36.4% (12)
Social skills development for youth	66.7% (22)
Youth violence prevention	54.5% (18)
Other	30.3% (10)

Note: Participants could choose multiple services. n = 33

Services provided by CBOs participating in focus groups

Type of Service	% CBOs providing service (n)
Crime prevention	31.3% (5)
Community /neighbourhood development	43.8% (7)
Education	56.3% (9)
Family/parenting support	50% (8)
Health promotion	62.5% (10)
Housing and shelter	12.5% (2)
Law and justice services	31.3% (5)
Mental health services	56.3% (9)
Mentoring programs for children/youth	50% (8)
Recreation	25% (4)
Social skills development for youth	68.8% (11)
Youth violence prevention	56.3% (9)
Other	25% (4)

Note: Participants could choose multiple services. n = 16

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Using research is a priority in our organization	0	14.3% (5)	17.2% (6)	31.4% (11)	37.1% (13)
Our organization has committed resources to ensure research is accessed, adapted and applied in decision-making	0	25.7% (9)	20% (7)	34.3% (12)	20% (7)
Staff are involved in discussions on how research evidence relates to our main goals	0	20% (7)	14.3% (5)	45.7% (16)	20% (7)
We communicate internally in a way that ensures that information is exchanged across the entire organization	0	8.6% (3)	14.3% (5)	51.4% (18)	25.7% (9)
Our corporate culture values and rewards continuous quality improvement with resources to support these values	0	11.4% (4)	17.1% (6)	40% (14)	31.4% (11)
When we make major decisions, we usually allow enough time to identify researchable questions and obtain, analyze and consider research results and other evidence	2.9% (1)	11.4% (4)	42.9% (15)	28.6% (10)	14.3% (5)
Our management team evaluates the feasibility of each option, including the potential impact across the organization, as well as on clients, partners and other stakeholders	0	0	20% (7)	51.4% (18)	28.6% (10)
Decision-makers in our organization give formal consideration to any recommendations from staff who have developed or identified high-quality and relevant research evidence	2.9% (1)	2.9% (1)	37.2% (13)	31.4% (11)	25.7% (9)
Staff and appropriate stakeholders contribute evidence; and they know how that information will be used	0	14.3% (5)	35.3% (12)	37.1% (13)	14.3% (5)
Staff who have provided evidence and analysis usually participate in decision-making discussions	2.9% (1)	8.8% (3)	20% (7)	54.3% (19)	14.3% (5)
Staff and appropriate stakeholders are informed of how available evidence influenced the choices that were made in our organization	0	8.8% (3)	41.2% (14)	35.3% (12)	14.3% (5)