



Connecting
the
Dots



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Kelowna
Mental health for all



Looking back at Connecting the Dots: Kelowna

A four-year innovative urban Aboriginal youth mental health project

2014

Objectives of Connecting the Dots

Connecting the Dots was an innovative project which sought to promote the mental health of urban Aboriginal youth and families by mobilizing the community to address risk and protective factors influencing mental health.

The project had three overall goals:



To improve urban
Aboriginal mental health



To adapt the Communities
That Care model to the
urban Aboriginal context



To initiate and sustain a long term
partnership between the Canadian
Mental Health Association and
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

The numbers

173

target
population

233

service
providers

300

general
public

Key Kelowna risk and protective factors

Key risk factors

- Food insecurity
- Lack of cultural connections
- Difficulties with family management
- Barriers to access programs
- Lack of cultural identity

Key protective factors

- Food security
- Improved family management
- Cultural connections
- Cultural programming
- Transportation and mobilization

Kelowna partners

Partners

UBC Okanagan; West Bank First Nation;
Okanagan Boys and Girls Club;
Success by Six; Central Okanagan
Foundation—Vital Signs; The Bridge
Youth and Family Services; Aboriginal
Community Action Towards Children's
Health Coalition, Ministry of Children and
Family Development; Regional District of
Central Okanagan

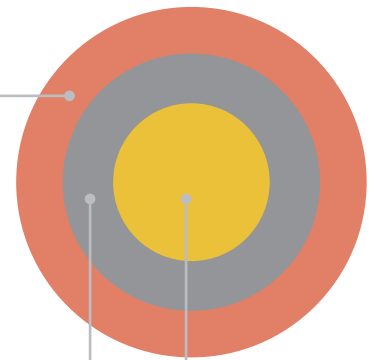
Advisory group

Connecting the Dots core team

Canadian Mental Health Association Kelowna
Amanda Swoboda, Mike Gawliuk, Shelagh Turner

Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society

Niki Stevenson, Cam Martin, Edna Terbasket



Key Kelowna interventions

- Strengthening Families
- Photovoice
- Food Skills

Key Kelowna findings

Food Skills

- 🗨️ "Made a difference on my well-being by having better fuel."
- 🗨️ "Helped me take my mind off stress and my ability to live healthier."
- 🗨️ "Made a difference to feelings of belonging."

Strengthening Families

- 🗨️ "Taught me how to parent in a more calm respectable manner."
- 🗨️ "Helped my inner strength."
- 🗨️ "Showed me how to stop, listen and change behaviour."

Photovoice

- 🗨️ "Provided youth with a strong modality to have their voices heard, it engaged them in learning new skills, involved them in positive, safe social activity. It provided a means to convey youths' thoughts and emotions and a means to engage them in thinking about their world differently."



Lessons learned

- Activities should include the whole family
- Building trust and relationships is essential and takes time
- Community engagement and key leader champions are very important for success
- Cultural competency of all stakeholders is vital



Art by Aboriginal artist Jamin Zuroski, representing culturally relevant adaptations for Communities That Care

Cultural adaptations

- Followed cultural protocol, respected wisdom and followed teachings of Elders
- Included whole community, including Elders, families, adults, youth and children
- Adapted youth survey to be culturally relevant
- Use of meaningful language
- Followed Tribal Best Practices

Cost of project in Kelowna
over \$500,000

www.cmha.bc.ca/connectingthedots