

August 21, 2018

Concurrent Sessions

Updating the Evidence - Presentations and Conversation

Five concurrent sessions will be offered in thematic areas to share evidence that complements and adds to our understanding of child and youth mental health promotion. Each session will include three presentations on evidence followed by a moderated discussion of the questions:

- *How does this work fit into and advance the 2017 Call to Action?*
- *What are the implications for upstream investment and a whole society approach to mental health promotion?*

Results of these discussions will contribute to advancing the [Call to Action](#).

Session 4: Fostering Social and Emotional skills of parents and caregivers

a) Handle with Care; promoting the Mental Health of Children....every day!

Case Stories: 4 Story Groups

Through story and dialogue, four presenters will invite participants on a journey into a variety of communities in four Atlantic Provinces to experience first-hand Handle with Care (HWC) in action. Panelists will use four questions to frame their stories. These questions are:

- What did they do? (a description of what happened)
- Why did they do it? (an explanation of what was accomplished)
- What did they learn from the experiences? (synthesis)
- What can be done to move HWC forward in their regions? (from experience to action)

The Story/Dialogue Method is one way that bridges the gap between descriptive stories and vigorous explanations. It can be said, "there is nothing so theoretical as good practice." Participants will see the validity of knowledge gained through analysis of these stories; how it generates practice-based theory and application of theory to the creation of evaluation. It is one of many approaches to knowledge development, program planning, and evaluation and is particularly suited to the analysis of health promotion strategies such as social and emotional well-being or mental health. It is also congruent with "upstream thinking."

Connection with the ASI theme:

Participants will see for themselves the many types of community partnerships that are moving this program forward throughout the region. They will learn of the power of connections and the role of champions in getting this done. We will be showcasing visually and through discussion, the many ways facilitators have brought the program to parents and others work with and care for children. Testimonials from parents and facilitators will be highlighted.

Participants will learn:

Participants will learn the uses of HWC across sectoral boundaries. They will hear stories of success, lessons learned and challenges to overcome to bring this program to all interested in the mental health of children and youth, especially those with mental health risk factors. They will learn it is strength-based, 8-part program with less than 5% attrition and one where parents beg for more after the program ends. They will learn the program had four building blocks with ten activities to choose from. Participants will also learn the program can be delivered to groups.

Evidence for policy and practice:

HWC is a back-to-basics program! It is preventative and skill building, one that provides ideas and resources any parent or caregiver can use, with children and youth, every single day. It builds on the assumption that all parents want's best for their children. It applies "upstream thinking: that promotes ideas like:

- Children's mental health is critically important for them to thrive, flourish and grow into healthy adults.
- Parents and other caregivers have an important role to play in strengthening children's mental health.
- Positive Relationships between parents. Caregivers and the children in their lives are investments in the future of the child, the family, and the community.

#1 Scaling Up Handle with Care

Eileen Conway-Martin
PEI Trainer/Coordinator, Handle with Care/Atlantic
Councillor and Community Development Worker
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This program's success in PEI includes forging partnerships with culturally diverse groups. Francophone, Indigenous and Anglophone groups are thriving in communities across the Island. In addition to cultural partnerships; the program partners with community organizations, government agencies and service groups to reach Islanders across the province.

Eileen's experience as a community developer, particularly with cultural groups and her attraction to the simple, yet powerful messages of HwC has provided opportunity for her to live her passion for children and families and address a growing need for community supports to social and emotional well-being.

Eileen will share some of the challenges and lessons learned from the beginning of HWC in PEI to the present, as well as look at plans for the future.

#2 Handle with Care - First Nations Education Initiative

Jolyne Knockwood
Handle with Care Facilitator
Early Years and Literacy Coordinator (12 First Nations Communities in NB), First Nations Education Initiative, Fredericton, NB
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Jolyne will bring to the panel the story of Handle with Care within First Nations' communities in NB. Show the commitment made through the First Nations Education Initiative; uptake from community leaders, training of facilitators and the rolling out of the program.

She will share that HWC NB was born from a strong desire by leaders to find a program that was designed to promote the well-being of children and families every day. HWC was chosen because it addressed this need and also could be adapted to include cultural values and customs.

Lessons learned along the way as well as plans for the future will be part of Jolyne's presentation.

#3 Handle with Care - IWK delivery through Community Outreach Programs, Allegro Child Care Centre

Laura McNeil
NS Partner, Trainer, and Facilitator of HWC
Inclusion Coordinator, Allegro Child Care Centre, NS
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The uptake of Handle with Care in Nova Scotia has been unique. Laura will share how HWC facilitators from the IWK in Halifax are delivering the program through their Community Outreach Programs. Three such programs have been delivered and two more recently approved. Partnerships with Family Resource Parenting Journey saw 20 plus home support workers receive facilitator training and now use the program in their work.

It seems that groups everywhere who work with younger children and families are looking for programs that address this need. Handle with Care is such a program. It is strength based, steeped in research, builds parent confidence and skill, and changes behavior of children and parents.

There have been lessons learned from Nova Scotia's journey with HwC and Laura will share some of these and future plans for the province.

#4 Handle with Care - Experience in Corrections Facility, Exploits Valley Community Coalition

Tina Bowers
Handle with Care Facilitator, Master trainer trainee
Coordinator/Family Resource, Exploits Valley Community Coalition, Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
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The work that Tina and her HWC partner, Holly Jenkins have done in Bishop's Falls, NL shows the flexibility of HWC. Recently, both facilitators completed a full program with 11 male prisoners at the Correctional Facility there.

Why there, you might ask? Tina can answer that question based on first-hand experience since her family background was very similar to that of many of the inmates. She always thought it "might be good to bring something positive to prisoners, people who didn't have the greatest start in life, people on the fringes of society." She felt if she could get permission to take the program inside, something good could happen. She did, and it did.

You won't want to miss Tina's heartwarming story, of lessons learned and plans for the future!