

Quest cohort 2 project summaries

Introduction

Quest cohort 2 consisted of six teams who began their Quest journey in July 2021. Teams finished the cohort activities in September 2022. Their Quest project focused on themes related to supported transitions, better service and quicker access. Discover their summaries below.

Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC): Improving care pathways for child and youth victims of Internet Child Exploitation (ICE)

What was the opportunity?

Boost CYAC identified that their client tracking and invoice process with service providers resulted in missed opportunities to engage clients with counselling and maximize allotted funding. Intake workers spent most of their time tracking down forms and invoices from service providers. These challenges stemmed from the process gaps in the Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) program, as well as the lack of a consistent process to document, report, and send invoices.

What was the goal?

The goal was to improve the service flow and invoicing processes to alleviate daily inefficiencies and better serve ICE clients by tracking their use of funding and engagement with service providers. The aim was to identify clients who ended their therapeutic relationships early before maximizing their allotted funding.

What were the improvements?

- Revised program materials to be more concise, including the approval letter, invoice form, and registration package for the ICE program.
- Revised related policies to identify accountabilities, to increase frequency of regular updates of the service provider list, and to provide clear guidelines for payment.
- Provided more frequent orientations/refreshers (quarterly) for service providers, updates to their invoicing system, and a reconciliation process with defined timelines and processes to follow-up and close files.



What was the impact?

It is hoped that the enhanced processes will ensure that better matches are made between clients and service providers, that client records are up-to-date, accurate, and appropriate, and that a follow-up with clients who end their counselling sessions early is completed.. The enhanced tracking and follow-up mechanisms put in place will see a percentage increase in clients accessing therapeutic services in a timely way, engaging fully in the therapeutic process, and maximizing their allotted funds.

At the time of project completion, the team was still implementing improvements. They saw some early gains in terms of better communication with service providers, including the onboarding of new service providers with the new forms that had been created.

Improved communication with the accounting office was another early gain, with processes put in place to better track invoice payments within the agreed-upon timelines. Creating an automated client master list allowed for better data entry, tracking, and the elimination of multiple data sources, which in turn allowed the intake worker to spend less time reconciling clients' records.

Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca: Beyond Brief: Improving client service matching and pathways to mental health services

What was the opportunity?

Hands observed challenges in their client brief services, as they did not have a formalized tool to assess the specific mental health needs of their clients. This made it difficult to identify a consistent care pathway option. As a result, clients were placed on a long waitlist for generalized counselling services, with minimal oversight and limited interactions. This often led to a need for re-assessments and redefining treatment goals if clients' circumstances changed during the waiting period for services. This subsequently impacted the overall quality of services.

What was the goal?



Their goal was to develop recommendations to implement needs-driven assessments and planning processes. To achieve this, Hands aimed to incorporate clear eligibility, exclusion, and priority criteria to define the pathways for waitlists categorized by specific interventions. They also aimed to focus on strategies for waitlist management and triaging recommendations that will help set priorities for the level of urgency to ensure timely services. To improve efficiency, they aimed to map current services with clear definitions to inform a stepped care model approach that sub-categorizes interventions. Through this project, they also planned to identify areas of need from EMHware/software to track workflow.

What were the improvements?

- Implemented a formalized assessment tool – the interRAI – for brief services. Subsequently, clients were placed on a shorter waitlist with identified and consistent care pathway options, ensuring appropriate oversight and interactions with clients as they waited.
- Developed recommendations to implement needs-driven assessments and a planning process with clear eligibility, exclusion, and priority criteria.
- Provided triaging recommendations to help prioritize and map current services with clear definitions. Regular waitlist check-ins and monitoring were also implemented to re-assess clients' needs.
- Trained staff members on EMHware to track workflow.

What was the impact?

The project focused on initiatives that will inform and complement other recommended projects. By identifying key indicators, the team made recommendations to leverage their data to guide subsequent steps in the improvement phase. They intend to mobilize the learnings from their improvement journey by adopting and incorporating the Quest methodologies and tools into future projects. This is part of a larger effort to develop a QI culture with the capacity to attain meaningful change beyond Quest.



Maltby Centre: Improving concurrent mental health and addictions services in KFL&A

What was the opportunity?

Maltby Centre partnered with Kairos, a youth diversion program, to work on improving concurrent mental health and addictions services in the Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) area. Young people with concurrent mental health and substance use and addictions needs lacked consistent access to concurrent and integrated mental health and substance use and addictions services. These services were provided in silos in KFL&A, with limited integration between various service providers in the community.

The staff at Kairos reported an underlying mental health issue in many of the young people they are supporting. They noted that treating a substance use issue without addressing an underlying mental health need can negatively impact outcomes for young people. Mental health clinicians at the Maltby Centre were aware that their client population reporting a substance use issue did not reflect the percentage of the general population with such needs, and surmised that this information was underreported. Additionally, not all Maltby Centre therapists felt they had the knowledge and capacity to deal with substance use and addictions needs with their clients.

What was the goal?

Their goal was to ensure that young people with both mental health needs and substance use concerns were identified and able to access concurrent and integrated services through the Maltby Centre and the Kairos Program at Youth Diversion in an efficient and effective way.

What were the improvements?

- Improved the identification of clients presenting with concurrent mental health and substance use needs.
- Improved the referral process to the substance use treatment program at Kairos and vice versa to mental health services at Maltby Centre.
- Developed integrated services that are aligned.
- Organized training sessions to raise awareness of the services at Kairos among all Maltby Centre staff. They also organized sessions for key partners on the GAIN-SS screener (short



version) and future state/standardized process for identification and referral of concurrent services.

- Created an instructional video for all staff, along with supporting documentation and resources (tipsheet, standard work: referral pathway process map, Kairos staff directory, documentation in EMHware)

What was the impact?

At the time of project completion, the team was still implementing improvements and they continued to meet as a team to monitor and implement the key activities in a phased approach. Early feedback identified that these changes have led to improvements in the cross-collaboration between the two service providers, with important activities already carried out and concrete plans well underway.

As of April 2024, Maltby Centre has fully implemented the GAIN-SS and has started to see an uptick in its use among clinicians. Maltby Centre has been able to track referral data and do data checks to confirm that those identified with substance use needs as per the GAIN-SS are being referred to the Kairos program. Maltby Centre has adjusted their training materials for staff as needed to make the implementation easier, and hopes to continually see an increase in collaborative service offerings with Kairos.

Maltby Centre and Youth Diversion are currently working with The Knowledge Institute on a research project related to this work to better understand the pathways for young people with mental health and substance use and addictions needs.

Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth: Integration across the lifespan

What was the opportunity?

The youth engagement group at Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth identified challenges that deterred their successful transition between child and youth mental health and adult mental health services. Young people frequently disengage when transitioning from child to adult mental health services, making them more vulnerable to the emergence of chronic mental health and addictions issues.



What was the goal?

Open Doors aimed to identify and implement standardized processes and pathways for transitional-aged youth that reflect their unique needs and goals to successfully engage with adult mental health services. Their goal was to improve the rate of successful transitions between providers to support continued mental health support and service during this challenging life stage for young people.

What were the improvements?

- Developed a transition protocol, standard operating procedure and policy, and a service transition satisfaction questionnaire for transitional-aged youth services.
- Formalized communication between organizations and within their organization regarding procedures for transitioning youth.
- Revised eligibility criteria to clarify referrals to Lanark County Mental Health (the adult mental health agency).
- Revised and clarified onboarding orientation to familiarize new staff with transitioning youth.

What was the impact?

Following Quest, Open Doors began a standardization project in the agency which involved all clinical and organizational processes. The result of this work, aside from any relevant program and process updates within the agency, will be a manual of all the information about the agency processes, documents, and resources. This manual will help to onboard new staff and also serve as a reference point for current staff.

Creating a more streamlined transition protocol related to the Quest project is a part of this standardization project. Due to changes in process from Lanark County Mental Health for a period of time, the transition protocol experienced a delay as this was outside of the team's control and other processes were prioritized through the standardization project. However, creating and implementing processes and protocols related to transitional-aged youth remains a priority.



Peterborough Youth Services (PYS): Improving access to mental health services and embedding a culture of continuous quality improvement at PYS

What was the opportunity?

Clients and families at PYS expressed concerns about lengthy wait times, which hindered their access to services. In addition, with significant changes within the agency, leaders recognized the need for adaptability and deemed it an appropriate time to reassess the agency's internal infrastructure and cultivate a culture of quality improvement (QI).

What was the goal?

The long-term goal was to reduce wait times to align with the Ministry's definition on service wait lists. PYS hoped to move towards developing a performance measurement indicator based on the Ministry's definition that will continue beyond their Quest project and become part of the balanced scorecard performance measurement process.

In the short term, the agency recognized the need to focus on revitalizing their organizational infrastructure on quality. They wanted to work towards enhancing their QI culture across the agency to ensure they had the appropriate structures and capacity in place to make the meaningful improvements to their services in a sustainable way.

What were the improvements?

- Focused efforts on redesigning the current quality assurance committee and on creating a continuous quality improvement team to oversee and advise on QI opportunities and culture development.
- Formulated future plans to review all current services to identify efficiencies and reduce waste.
- Worked with community partners to clarify service pathways, reduce overlap of services, and explore opportunities to co-deliver services.
- Internally, worked to improve data integrity, consistency, validity, utilization, and analysis. They will also work to improve communication and access to information for staff and clients and better use technology to improve processes.
- Seek to embed evidence-informed tools to improve quality of care.



What was the impact?

As a result of the initial scoping work with the Knowledge Institute, several initiatives were launched.

Due to identified improvements in the intake process, the agency developed a separate triage function that now precedes intake for its various services. The result has been greater confidence on the part of the staff and clients that children, young people, and families are being directed to the “right service at the right time.”

A secondary consequence of the development of the PYS triage function has been a coordinated access and service process with their partner and Lead Agency, Kinark Child and Family Services, in which they are now able to easily identify and move clients to and from each agency without a secondary intake required. The PYS triage function is directly connected to Kinark’s local triage function so that the two agencies work together, when needed, to determine the “right service at the right time” for their referrals. Children, young people, and families do not have to know which service they need or agency to call, as either agency will ensure that they get the services they need.

Drawing on the benefit of these initiatives, PYS has developed a new strategic plan that aligns with the principles and objectives of the new triage and coordinated access and service processes. Consequently, the performance measurement processes that will be developed to support the new strategic plan will become the basis of the work of the new Continuous Quality Improvement Committee which they hope to implement in 2024.

ROCK: Reach Out Centre for Kids: Reducing client wait time to access counselling and therapy services

What was the opportunity?

On average, children and young people experienced an extended wait time to access counselling and therapy mental health services. This wait time was longer for high-risk children and young people. Recognizing that delayed treatment adversely affects the mental health outcomes for children and young people, ROCK sought to address their challenges with wait times.



What was the goal?

Their goal was to reduce the average wait time for young people assigned to counselling and therapy services.

What were the improvements?

- Simplified and shortened required paperwork and eliminated multiple steps (revised and simplified templates and shortened phases).
- Eliminated the necessity and timing of the interRAI Child and Youth Mental Health Assessment administration (only when deemed necessary based on specific criteria for administration - after their third appointment).
- Revised, retrained, and monitored adherence to Clinical Practice Guidelines “Business Rules” (clinicians would increase and/or maintain four (4) treatment sessions per day).
- Prioritized client flowthrough with enhanced communication, following up with inactive clients.

What was the impact?

At the time of project completion, the QI team at ROCK continues to monitor wait times on an ongoing basis to assess if the changes implemented during this project continue to reduce wait times for accessing counselling and therapy services.