



# Encouraging Mental Health



*Indigenous culture  
is and is a  
heroic little being*

*Wellness - Encouraging Mental Health*  
*art group*  
*people talking*  
*hugging*  
*touching*  
*Horticultural Therapy*

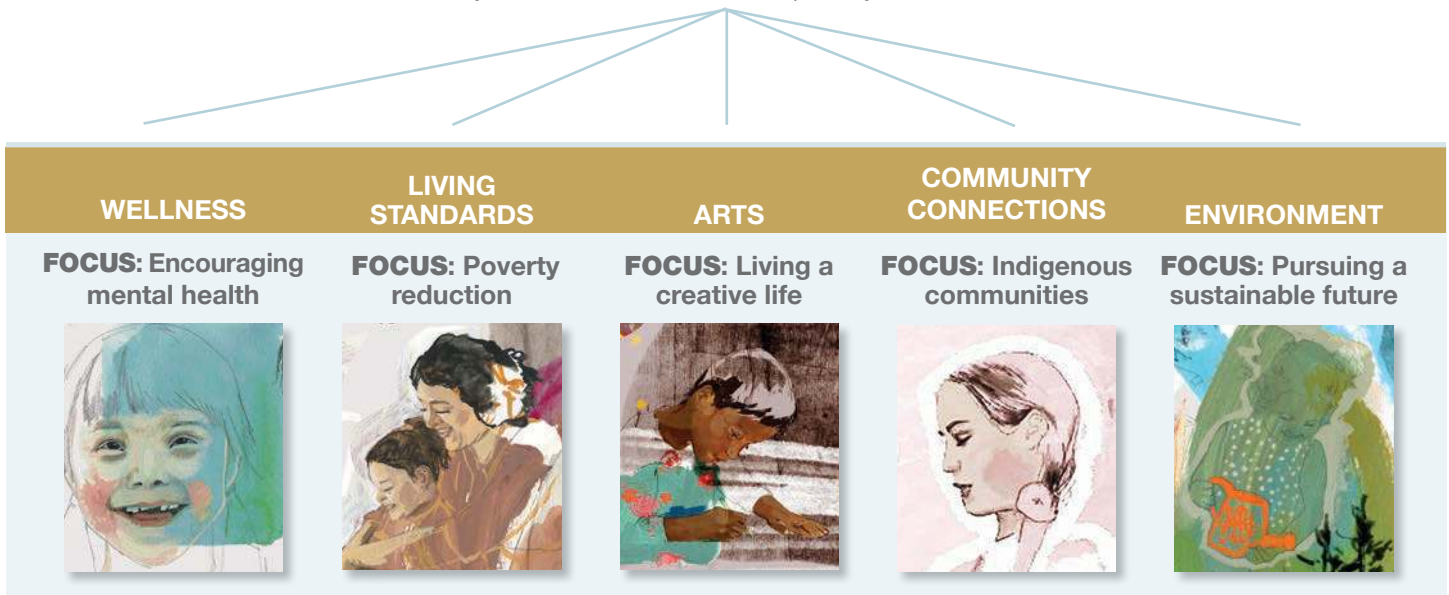




**Calgary Foundation initiated a collaborative re-examination of issues facing our community to:**

- 1 Ensure current and emerging needs are effectively being addressed.
- 2 Add strategic focus, alignment, and impact to our collective work.

Through multi-pronged consultation with community partners and extensive analysis of research, five vital priority areas were identified:



**VISION:** All Calgarians have access to a continuum of mental health and wellness supports.

**OUTCOMES**

- 1 A coordinated community-based continuum of mental healthcare is available for children, youth and families.
- 2 Calgary seniors are connected to reduce social isolation.

**Encouraging Mental Health**

is one in a series of vital priority reports that provide donors, community members and charitable organizations with insights to:

- Comprehend the impact of Calgary Foundation's grantmaking.
- Measure impact and outcomes to guide strategic, targeted community investment.
- Understand the current sector landscape, areas of change, and desired outcomes.
- Inspire innovative solutions and develop strategies to move forward.
- Increase leadership and profile of organizations working for change.

# Outcome Harvesting



To measure complex outcomes, defined as behavioural changes that include actions, relationships, policies, and practices, this report utilized a reflective evaluation process known as **outcome harvesting**. Rather than measuring progress towards predetermined objectives, this innovative approach collects evidence of what works, what's changed, what's in the way, and what's ahead.

## Outcome Harvesting Process

### Plan

Determine scope of work, identify partners and areas of impact, shape evaluation questions, and convene wellness/mental health stakeholders to discuss areas of change within the sector.

### Harvest Data

Review and synthesize relevant data (ie. interim/final grant reports, annual reports, emails, thank-you letters, and websites) to formulate preliminary outcome statements for stakeholder review.

### Substantiation

Substantiate and revise outcome statements based on input provided during the engagement process with mental health stakeholders.

### Interpretation

Systems mapping, and datamining to draft theory of change.

## Outcome Harvesting Statements

Two questions guided the *outcome harvest*:

**Q1 What changes have marginalized Calgarians experienced?**

**Q2 What changes have occurred to strengthen the mental health sector?**

The responses to these questions generated outcome statements that were revised based on interviews with a number of service providers in the mental health sector.

The final outcome statements that are presented in this report, discuss the progress made for clients in the area of mental health,\* while highlighting the impact of Calgary Foundation's contributions.

\*Data from 2013-2016



# Outcome Harvesting Statements

Q1

In the last three years, what changes have marginalized Calgarians experienced? (seniors, newcomers, and people with disabilities)

## Basic Needs

**Service providers improved community connections by addressing client's basic needs.**

In addition to food/shelter, a key preventative factor in mental health is meeting an expanded definition of basic needs including:

- connection with family and friends
- active participation in community
- personal mobility

## Engagement

**Service providers supported greater client engagement and empowerment.**

The transition from a program focused approach, to a more individualized, human-centered, treatment plan provided:

- a reduction in the stigma of mental health
- increased opportunities for client input
- a greater sense of belonging in community

## Connections

**Service providers facilitated connections between diverse groups of clients.**

Raising mental health awareness and building intergenerational, ethno/cultural, and socio-economic connections, contributed to:

- greater social inclusion and acceptance
- greater awareness of available support

“

I'm now able to leave the house and do things. Just having this little bit of independence made such a difference in my day to day living. Until now, I was in quite a state of depression. I just can't say thank you enough.”

Recipient of power scooter through the Equipment and Special Services program, Easter Seals Alberta



## Calgary Foundation Impact

MESH is a collaborative of five organizations addressing **M**ental health, **E**mployment, **S**ubstance abuse, and **H**ousing needs. To create a human centred model, MESH developed a shared intake process that reduces client stress and improves program delivery.

# Outcome Harvesting Statements

## Q2

In the last three years, what changes have occurred to strengthen the mental health sector?

### Collaboration

To adapt to changing needs, many organizations have taken a more collaborative approach to:

- streamline and de-centralize program delivery to increase efficiency
- share knowledge, best practices and research for holistic program delivery
- build networks in all sectors (charitable, government and corporate)
- develop local, provincial, national and global partnerships

### Organizational Capacity

To remain relevant and increase effectiveness, building capacity (fund development/strategic and communications planning, and professional development for Board and staff) is critical, yet many organizations are struggling.

To address this issue, organizations require increased opportunities to:

- attend workshop and networking events
- receive flexible support from funders

Outcome harvesting identified staff resources (HR) as a weak link in an organization's capacity to impact mental health outcomes for clients.

Calgary Foundation recognizes the need for overhead costs to run programs and encourages organizations to include administration costs in grant requests.



### Calgary Foundation Impact

The Calgary Council on Addictions and Mental Health represents 47 organizations (funders and service providers) that work collectively to improve the delivery of competent, integrated, efficient, ethical, and effective person-centered mental health and addiction services and support.

“Calgary Foundation funding was really crucial. It's unique for a funder to have that long range vision, to not just address a client's immediate outcomes, but to look at their long-term potential for success.”

Calgary Seniors Resource Society

The outcome harvest captured both the efforts of charitable organizations working in the mental health sector, and the impact of Calgary Foundation’s funding to address current and emerging needs. Our collective work is ongoing, but the outcomes from the harvest highlighted Calgary Foundation’s progress to support the sector.

- Addressed several needs “upstream,” prior to issues reaching a crisis level, which reduced the strain on the healthcare system and improved the quality of life for marginalized Calgarians.
- Fostered strategic connections between charities and supported established collaborative networks which strengthened organizations serving the mental health sector.
- Offered workshops to organizations to build capacity in human resources, board recruitment, governance, information technology services, and risk management.
- Encouraged adequate administration costs be included in grants as unrestricted funding allows organizations to explore new avenues of engagement and program design, and shape preventions and interventions in responsive ways.
- Adapted grant application process to provide flexible funding options that allowed charities to apply for both an individual program and a grant for collaborative work.

**EXAMPLE**

Punjabi Community Health Services engaged volunteers to assist members of Calgary’s South Asian community in navigating the mental health system.

**EXAMPLE** Members of ‘The Way In,’ a network of agencies supporting vulnerable adults, can apply for a grant on behalf of their respective organization, and a grant to support an expansion or enhancement of the network.

**Encouraging Mental Health** was guided by research presented in the Alberta Health Services *Creating Connections: Alberta’s Addiction & Mental Health Strategy*. The outcome statements featured in this report were mapped to the strategic directions from the *Creating Connections* report.

Alberta Health Services Strategic Directions	Outcome Harvesting Statements
<b>Build healthy and resilient communities</b>	Basic Needs Client Engagement Diverse Connections
<b>Foster the development of healthy children, youth and families (includes seniors)</b>	Basic Needs Client Engagement Diverse Connections
<b>Enhance community-based services, capacity and supports</b>	Collaboration Organizational Capacity
<b>Address complex needs</b>	Basic Needs
<b>Enhance assurance</b>	Not applicable to this harvest



**Strategic Alignment**

This chart illustrates the alignment between Alberta Health Services strategic directions and the outcome harvesting statements to show how Calgary Foundation is supporting the collaborative goals in the mental health sector.



# Summary

**Outcome harvesting was the process used to evaluate the impact of Calgary Foundation support, changes in the sector, and comprehend new approaches on effectively addressing needs in the mental health sector. The process uncovered the following key learnings:**

- 1** Meeting basic needs helps clients create community connections that contribute to improved mental health and reduces the strain on health care resources.
- 2** A client-focused approach encourages greater involvement in service planning and empowers clients to take ownership of their mental health which leads to better outcomes.
- 3** Building connections amongst diverse social groups creates greater social inclusion and feelings of acceptance, while reducing the stigma often associated with mental health.
- 4** Supporting capacity building and providing networking opportunities for service providers, assists in the development of cross sectoral partnerships, which leads to greater effectiveness.



## CALGARY FOUNDATION VITAL PRIORITY WELLNESS



With a focus on Encouraging Mental Health, Calgary Foundation will continue to:

- Provide flexible funding to charitable organizations
- Support the advancement of a client focused approach in the treatment of mental health
- Stay informed about government initiatives
- Seek opportunities for collaborative work
- Connect to the work of other funders





Illustrations by Calgary artist Karen Klassen



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