How ACCESS Open Minds has adapted in wake of COVID-19

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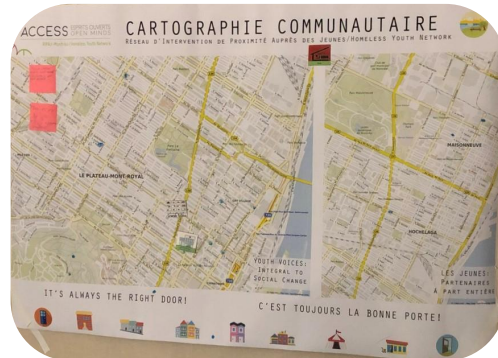
ACCESS Open Minds: What do we do?

1

Improve quality & access to youth mental health services

2

Evaluate the impact of service transformation

3

Partner with youth and families/carers

4

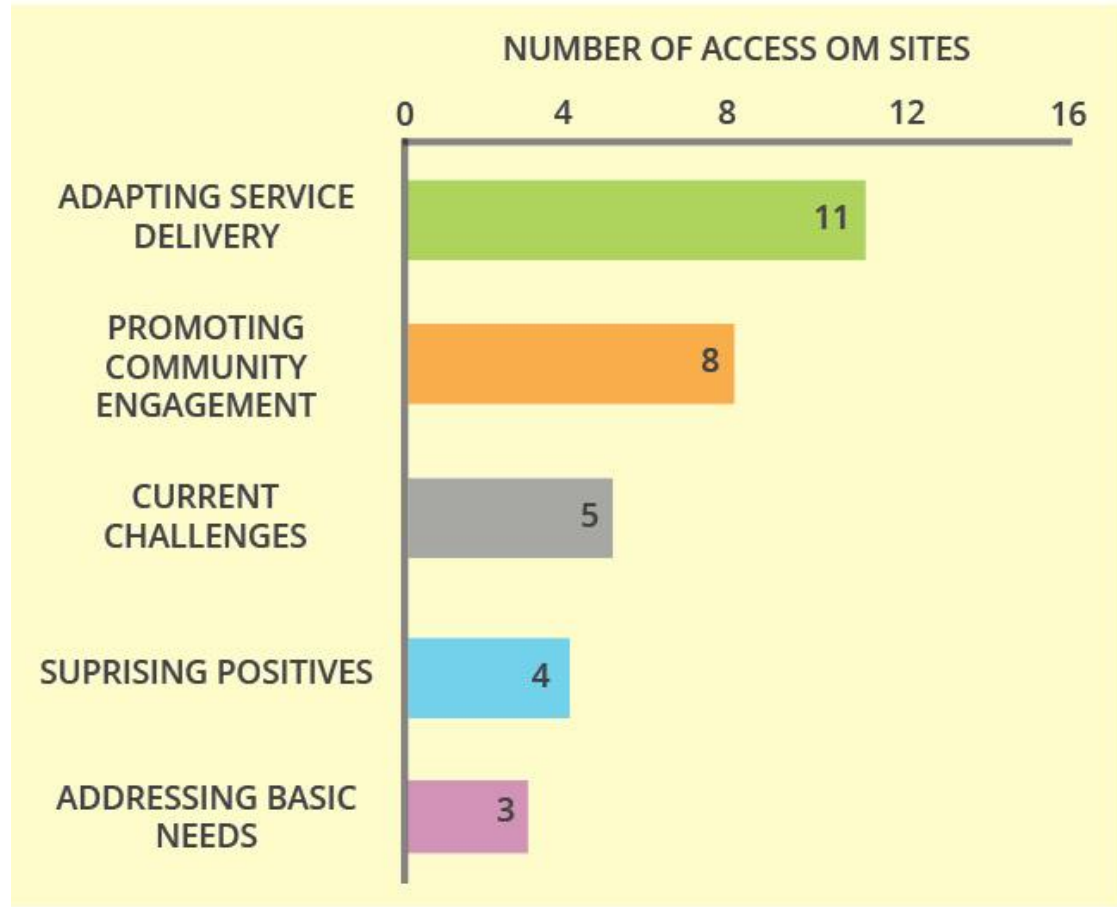**Lead innovation through knowledge sharing**

Our sites

- Our sites span from Nova Scotia to Alberta and up to the Northwest Territories. These sites are **diverse**: urban, rural, remote, Indigenous and non-Indigenous sites.

- Each site has **adapted** their services to their community and **local youth**'s needs

Listening to our sites

NUMBER OF ACCESS OM SITES

- ADAPTING SERVICE DELIVERY — 11
- PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT — 8
- CURRENT CHALLENGES — 5
- SUPRISING POSITIVES — 4
- ADDRESSING BASIC NEEDS — 3

WHAT OUR SITES ARE OBSERVING

Addressing Basic Needs
- Groceries & Food baskets
- Cleaning supplies
- Gas for vehicles

Promoting Community Engagement
- On-the-land programs
- Youth activities
- Family Support programs
- Meetings & Trainings

Adapting Service Delivery
- In-person services with physical distancing measures in place
- Counselling sessions online or via phone
- Phones and tablets for youth to stay connected
- Increased engagement on social media

Current Challenges
- Unable to provide services
- Understaffed (health providers needed elsewhere)
- Lack of resources

Surprising Positives
- Less no shows for appointments
- Fewer reported triggers from clients (due to no school)
- Increased uptake in family & youth activities

Overview

1) **Adaptations** in the network and on sites

2) **Surprising positives** despite these uncertain times

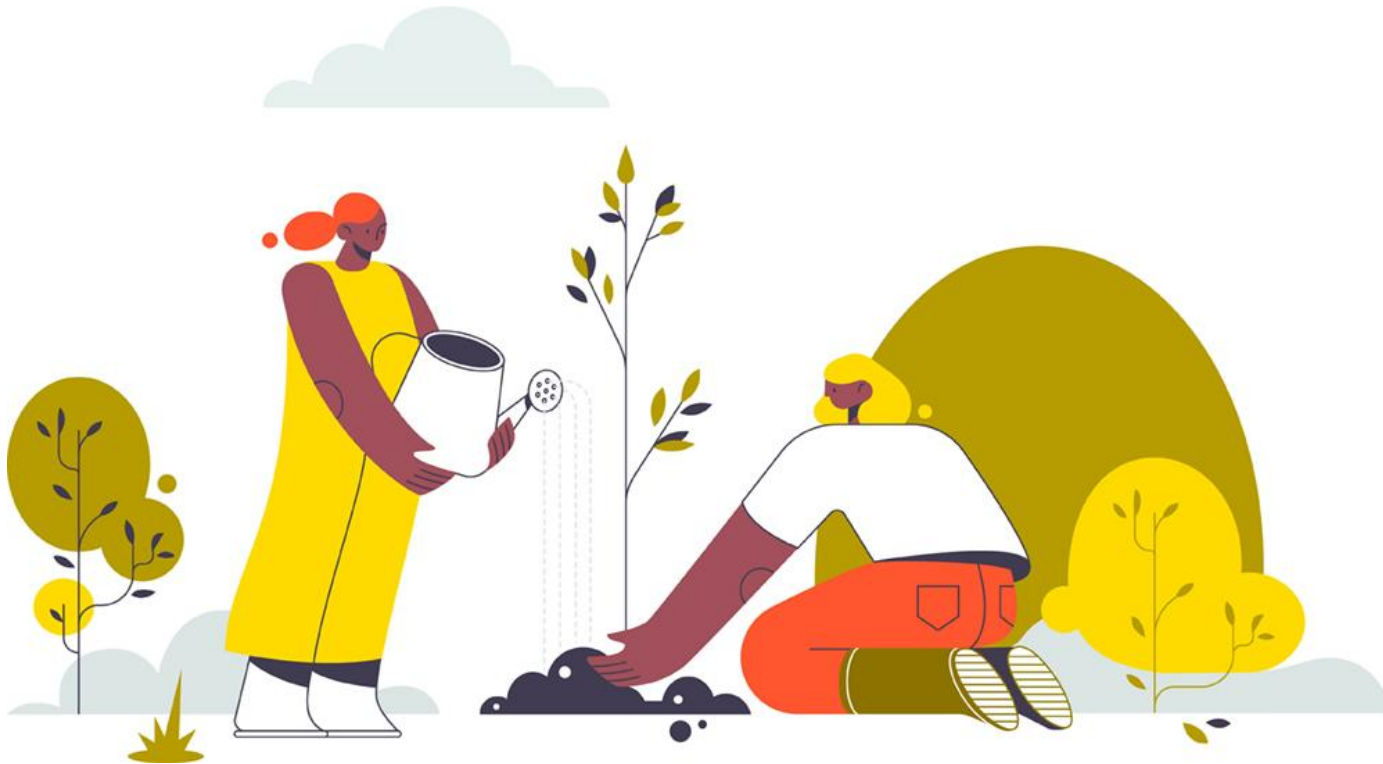3) **Challenges** and how we are addressing them

Site Adaptations

Transitioning services

- Service changing focus to online and phone

- Creative solutions

- Prioritizing basic needs for vulnerable populations

Community Engagement

- On the Land activities

- Youth activities

- Family support and trainings

Providing Resources

- Prioritizing communications

- Brainstorming resources

- Platforms for discussion
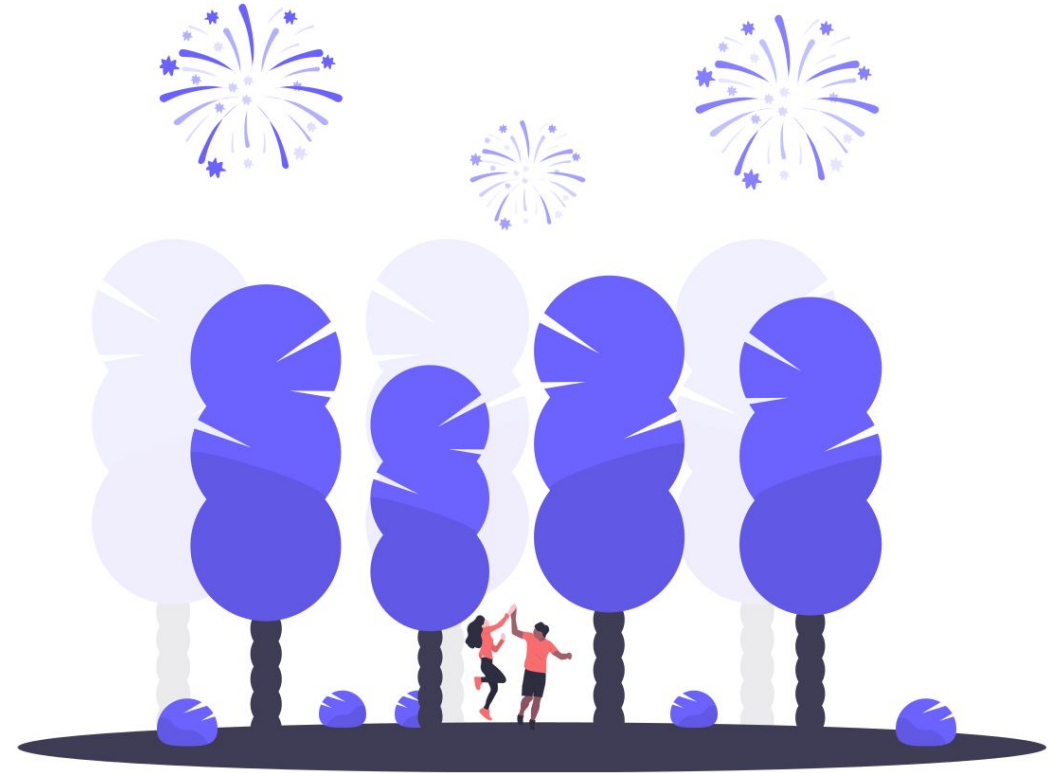
How did your services, organization or community adapt?

Share with us your stories and experiences.

Surprising Positives

1. Webinars

2. Councils

3. Connections

Webinars

- Perfect time for the webinar format

- ACCESS OM has been hosting webinars for a while now, but attendance was relatively low

- New series of panel-style discussions launched
  - *Record attendance!*

Why?

- Flexible work hours

- Newfound comfort with live video platforms

- ACCESS has polished its use of video platforms

- Relevant topics with diverse speakers

ACCESS Open Minds Webinar Series
Wednesday, May 6, 2020
11am MDT / 1pm EDT

COVID-19: Navigating Post-Secondary Education & Youth Mental Health

OUR PANELISTS — MODERATOR

Emily Saunders
Health Sciences Student
Wilfrid Laurier University
ACCESS OM National Youth Council

Kevin Friese
Assistant Dean of Students,
Health & Wellness
University of Alberta

Gina Dimitropoulos
Assistant Professor of
Social Work
University of Calgary

Allison MacNeil
PhD Student in
Clinical Psychology
McGill University

Feo Poukhovski-Sheremetyev
Medical Student
University of Ottawa
ACCESS OM National Youth Council

56 live attendees

564 recording views

64 live attendees

217 recording views

ACCESS Open Minds Webinar Series
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
10am PDT / 1pm EDT / 2pm ADT

COVID-19: Youth E-Mental Health & Virtual Services

OUR PANELISTS — MODERATOR

Alicia Raimundo
Advocate for E-Mental Health

Manuela Ferrari
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry
McGill University
Researcher
Douglas Research Centre

Mary Anne Levasseur
Family & Carers Council Advisor
ACCESS Open Minds
Family Peer Support Coordinator
PEPP-Montréal
Co-Founder
Patient Advisors Network

Ina Winkelmann
Youth Mental Health Program
Coordinator
Mental Health & Addictions Program
CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Matthew McLaughlin
Board Member and National Youth
Council Co-Chair
Kids Help Phone

ACCESS Open Minds Webinar Series
Thursday, July 9, 2020
11am MDT / 1pm EDT / 2pm ADT

COVID-19: Indigenous Innovations in Youth Mental Health

OUR PANELISTS — MODERATOR

Clifford Ballantyne
Youth Worker
ACCESS Open Minds
Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Hayley Gould
Research Assistant &
Intake Coordinator
ACCESS Open Minds
Eskasoni First Nation

Peggy Day
Aftercare Coordinator
Health and Wellness Division
Inuvialuit Regional
Corporation

Gregory Brass
Planning, Programming &
Research Officer
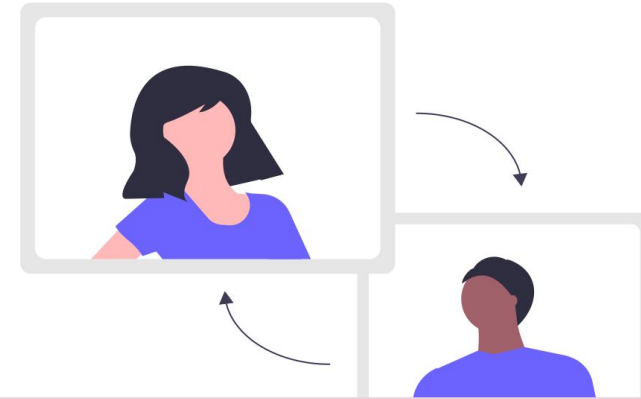Pimuhteheu Regional Public Health Office
ACCESS Open Minds Mistissini

43 live attendees

268 recording views

Councils: National Youth Council

- NYC has always been virtual

- Little adaptation necessary in form

- However, changes occurred in function

- Co-chairs Charles-Albert Morin and Emily Saunders, Chantelle Mireault developed a plan to shift the NYC's mandate towards greater community-building

- Virtual meetings provided *consistency* in a very inconsistent time

- Meetings became less formal
  - Greater focus on self-care and sharing
  - Discussions of current events

"Emphasize dialogue over deliverables"
Chantelle Mireault, Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator

Councils: Site-Specific Councils

- Some of our sites have local, physical Youth Councils as well

- Worked to carry on the "space" element of Integrated Youth Spaces
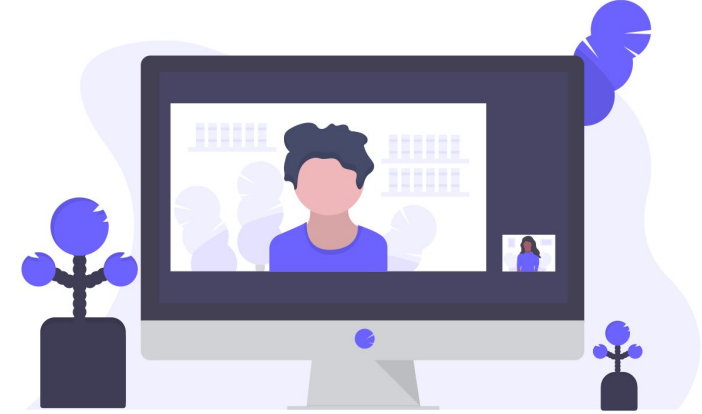
- RIPAJ
  - Virtual check-ins every two weeks
  - Often not focussed on the topic of mental health specifically

  - *"The pandemic has brought our council closer together … we gave each other hope"*

- Chatham-Kent
  - Meetings rapidly transitioned to Zoom with little downtime
  - Opportunities for youth to engage are still presented and delivered virtually

  - *"We still feel in the loop" about the site's operations*

Connections: Telehealth

- Fewer no-shows

- Higher engagement in group sessions

- An opportunity to reintegrate service users
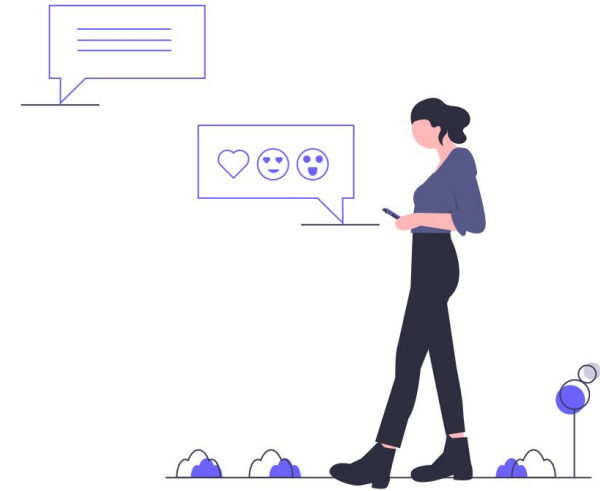
What sites have to say:

- Previously quiet youth have become "chatterboxes" when online

- Virtual care "has brought us down to a more accessible level, through increased use of technology"

Connections: New Online Groups

- Life skills

- Fun and games nights

- Virtual scavenger hunts

- Netflix watch parties

- Traditional teachings groups at some of our Indigenous sites

- High attendance

- Would these youth be attending these events if they *weren't* virtual?

Connections: Indigenous Sites & Mutual Aid

- Some Indigenous sites have reported that COVID mutual aid initiatives have positively impacted their communities

- "COVID has had positive effects on families … resources for on the land activities has brought people together even in these uncertain times"
    - (Ulukhaktok)

- "Higher than ever numbers of people going out on the land with their families; been a very positive effect of the situation"
    - (Ulukhaktok)

- "Goose Break – many families have headed out for goose hunt, many left early when schools shut down; better environment for the youth, given lots of traditional activities"
    - (Mistissini)

Connections: Reconnecting with Family
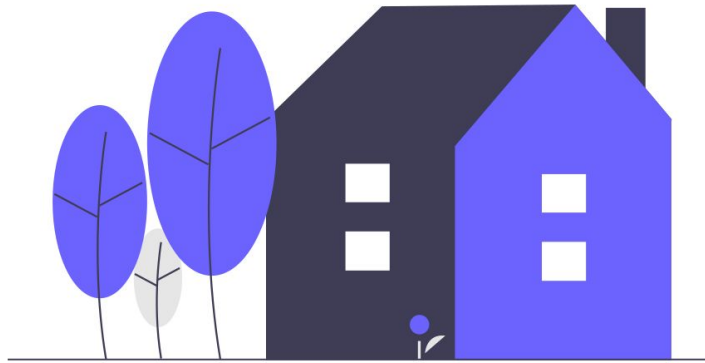
- Homeless or precariously-housed youth have gone back home to live with family or a significant adult

- Depending on the circumstances, this may have positive or very negative implications for the youth involved.

- RIPAJ Site (Montreal) is currently working a publication on this matter
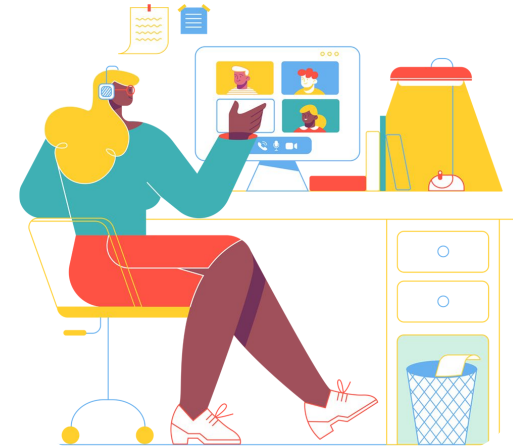
What have been some of the <u>surprising positives</u> at your own sites/organizations?

Challenges : Inequalities

Protective Measures

- Not always enough protective gear for staff
- Not always enough room to accommodate socially distant appointments

Access to technology

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ACCESS OM sites are addressing this by:

1. offering a cleaned communal phone
2. offering a cleaned private room
3. collecting tech donations

Challenges : Fatigue and communication

Lack of staff

- Healthcare staff getting ill, scared of going to work
- Staff being moved to more critical areas, and not being replaced

Virtual Fatigue

- Some service providers and youth find online appointments more tiring than in person
- Everything is online now, hard to keep engaged
- Hard to read body behaviour virtually, different ways of expressing mental states
- Different populations communicate differently, does telehealth suit everyone?

Challenges : Redefining the ACCESS OM model

Care

ACCESS OPEN MINDS ESPRITS OUVERTS

ACCESS OM sites are hosting online activities and events, but don't serve the same purpose as a youth space
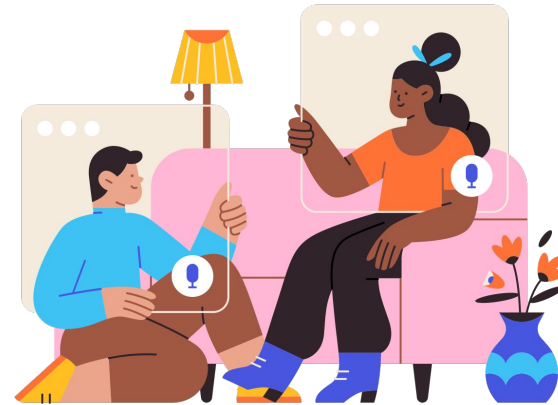
Collaboration

- ACCESS OM works against healthcare silos to bring services together under the same roof
- Healthcare workers collaborate with community organisations, schools for outreach and programming

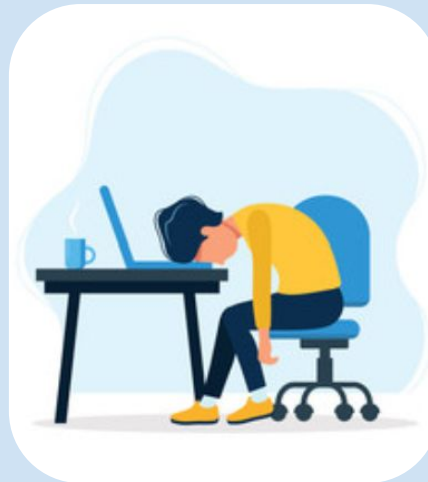# Challenges: Discussion

Inequalities

How to we make sure that everyone has access to resources that are necessary for providing/receiving care? How can we adapt mental health care to different realities, needs and means?

Healthcare Staff

How can we better support staff who are working in new ways?

Care model

How do we redefine care models that are based on safe and social spaces, drop-in appointments and collaboration?
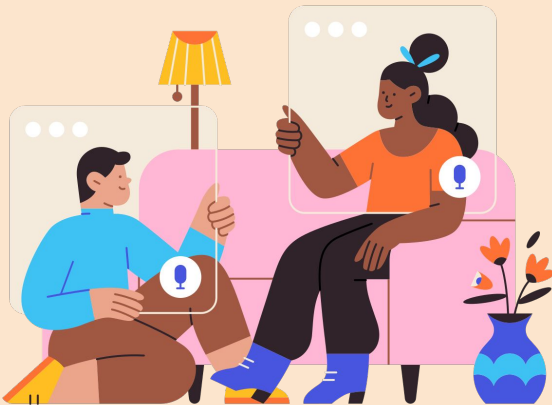
Challenges: Discussion

Redefining our care models

How do we redefine care models that are based on safe and social spaces, drop-in appointments and collaboration?

How do we retain the positives of integrated youth services?

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