Healthy Weights CONNECTION™

www.healthyweightsconnection.ca

Niagara Region
November 2016

Preliminary Findings from Community Organizations

4 Focus Groups

3 Indigenous organizations

Primarily focus on serving Indigenous children and youth, but open to all.

Programs offered:

- Physical activity programs
- Health/nutrition support services
- Youth support programs
- Basic needs support
- Educational support
- Healthcare and medical support

Programs and services are offered across all age groups.

1 Mainstream organization

Serve a diverse population; open to all. Cultural identity is typically unknown.

Serving Indigenous Youth

Indigenous organizations indicated that the majority of their clients are Indigenous (at least 90%).

Mainstream organization does not specifically outreach to Indigenous youth, but are aware of some Indigenous youth making use of services offered.

Mainstream organization does not offer programming in a cultural way.

Indigenous organizations do incorporate cultural activities into their programming in a number of different ways, but not all programming is culturally specific.

They try to incorporate cultural and traditional knowledge *indirectly* by promoting connections with elders and family; by incorporating traditions and traditional foods into larger events and gatherings.

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Barriers to Service

Organization-level

- Lack of funding
- Lack of space to offer programming
- Lack of awareness of programs and services offered
- Lack of innovative programming
- Lack of outreach to Indigenous community

Community-level

- Inadequate transportation
- Access to basic needs
- Family engagement is necessary to keep youth involved
- High program and equipment costs

Gaps in Service

Some of the services that participants reported to be most needed by Indigenous children and youth are:

- Mental health services, especially Aboriginal specific services are needed
- Poverty reduction
- Adequate daycare facilities – especially for newborns
- Bringing back traditional languages and culture

Things that can be done to help local organizations better serve Indigenous peoples

1. Education and Cultural Awareness to reduce discrimination against Indigenous people.
2. Equipping children with the life skills/soft skills to succeed in school and careers.
3. Changes to the education system, so Indigenous children thrive in schools.
4. Increased awareness of existing programs and services among organizations.
5. Effective use of funding.

What makes collaboration among organizations effective?

- Common interests and goals
- Sharing resources and reciprocating
- Respect
- Funding and support

Main barriers:

1. Funding
2. Time