ENHANCE WRAP AROUND SUPPORT SERVICES

Standardize RISK assessment TOOLS

ENCOURAGE CROSS-SECTIONAL COLLABORATION

DEVELOP INTERSECTIONAL POLICIES & SERVICE PROVISIONS

PILLARS OF ENGAGEMENT

Blueprint Project Evaluation Report

NOVEMBER 2023

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*rethinking the development of people

ACWS
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters

We Are All Treaty People

ACWS acknowledges the traditional lands upon which we live, work, and play. We recognize all Albertans are Treaty people and have a responsibility to understand our history so we can learn from the past, be aware of the present, and create a just and caring future. ACWS celebrates and values the resiliency, successes, and teachings Indigenous people have shown us, as well as the unique contributions of every Albertan.

The ACWS office is located on Treaty 6 land in Amiskwacîwâskahikan, which is the traditional territory of the Plains Cree and an ancient gathering place of many Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. These lands have also been home to, and a central trading place of, the Blackfoot, Nakota, Assiniboine, Dene, the Métis people of western Canada, and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel.

We honour the courage and strength of Indigenous women. We honour them as life givers and caregivers as we honour and learn from their continuing achievements, their consistent strength, and their remarkable endurance.

Our members serve all nations and all peoples. They are located on Treaty 6, 7, and 8 lands across this province which include the five Métis territories of Alberta.

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Introduction

Overview

The Blueprint Project is an action-based research initiative led by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) and funded by Wage & Gender Equality Canada. This project seeks to address gaps in risk assessment, information sharing, and client-centred, culturally appropriate services that were identified through interviews and consultations with Alberta service providers and highlighted in the ACWS Inventory of Promising Practices.   The primary strategies employed by the Blueprint Project to address these gaps are to:

A. Develop and enhance the intersectionality of valid and reliable assessment tools and protocols to be used by various agencies to support the safety of those living with or fleeing domestic violence; and

B. Promote cross-sector collaboration to reduce barriers to people who are experiencing domestic violence when navigating multiple complicated systems that may not fully understand the dynamics and complexities of abuse.

The purpose of this evaluation is to explore the impact of the Blueprint Project on the individuals and organizations participating in the project.

Purpose

The purpose of the Blueprint Project is to create a Blueprint of Promising Practices for shifting the way services are delivered for survivors of domestic violence from a program-centric model to a client-centric model. This shift would require a wide variety of agencies serving survivors of domestic violence to collaborate in new ways using common, evidence-based tools that are inclusive of the intersectional identities of people experiencing domestic violence. The project seeks to address gaps in four areas identified in the ACWS Inventory of Promising Practices, including:

3. **Risk assessment.** Comprehensive risk assessment is crucial in ensuring the safety of domestic violence victims. However, different tools used by service providers can lead to different conclusions about the needs of survivors. A community process is needed to validate multiple assessments and produce a comprehensive picture of the survivor's needs. The project aims to develop a Blueprint for this process and introduce tools specifically focused on the needs of NSRI, Indigenous, rural and remote communities, and fsame-sex relationships.

4. **Cross-sector collaboration.** Cross-sector collaboration is imperative for survivors' safety and success. However, there are multiple gaps that create significant barriers, including complicated legal issues, inadequate supports, and inconsistent system responses. Most communities lack formal protocols for information sharing causing clients to retell their story multiple times to different service providers forcing them to repeatedly relive the trauma they have experienced. Insufficient resources and territoriality exacerbate these challenges.

5. **Intersectional Policies and Service Provision.** Systems have limited capacity to design and implement programs and services with an intersectional lens, which makes it challenging to effectively serve clients experiencing multiple intersecting oppressions. Those who are 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, or newcomers, immigrants, or refugees often encounter a lack of awareness and cultural competence when trying to access services. Rural and remote communities also face significant issues with service access due to long distances, lack of transportation, and limited services in the area.

6. **Wrap-around Supportive Responses for People Experiencing Violence.** Domestic violence hinders participation in society and affects health and well-being. Client-centred approaches, trauma-informed

care, integrated health and mental wellness services, safety, system advocacy, accountability, and compassion are essential for recovery. Agencies must work together to develop and coordinate services for the unique needs of each client and bring the services to them to serve clients most efficiently and effectively.

Intended Impact

Through enhancing risk assessment, cross-sector collaboration, inclusive policies and procedures, and wrap-around responses, the Blueprint Project intends to have the following impact on service providers, agency leaders, and clients.

- **Service providers grow their capability to inclusively and intersectionally engage all clients.** Service providers consider and support clients' intersectional identities in all aspects of their work and engage clients relationally to understand their needs and desires.
- **Service providers embrace client-centered collaboration.** Service providers collaborate with other organizations to meet client needs. They share information and use standardized tools to streamline client experience, They adopt a multi-disciplinary team approach to client support and a client-centric mentality.
- **Agency leaders develop adaptable, innovative learning organizations.** Agency leaders strengthen their organization's policies and procedures, build a culture of learning and innovation, and embrace change in service to clients.
- **Agency leaders build a collaborative network of service providers.** Agency leaders believe that sector-wide and cross-sector collaboration is essential to effectively serve clients and engage with other agency leaders to create a client-centered system. They advocate on behalf of clients and keep their voices centred in all aspects of their work. They develop and implement policies and practices to share information to ensure effective collaboration.
- **People experiencing domestic violence engage in systems of support.** People experiencing domestic violence see themselves reflected in the services they receive and believe they are worthy to receive services and support. They develop strong formal and informal supports and are able to achieve their goals for themselves and their families.

- **People experiencing domestic violence are safer.** People experiencing domestic violence create a safety plan and believe in their ability to keep themselves and their families safer. They become more independent and self-sufficient and reach out for support when it is needed.

Community Engagement

The Blueprint Project was developed to address gaps identified through listening and learning from the community. Listening and learning from the community also became the primary approach the Blueprint Project employed to accomplish its goals. The Blueprint Project brought together individuals and agencies with diverse purposes, perspectives, and lived experiences in geographic and identity-based communities to promote learning throughout the project. These communities include:

- **Community Working Groups** – Community Working Groups with a geographic focus were convened in the communities of Grande Prairie, Alberta and Red Deer, Alberta. These working groups brought together a variety of agencies to promote collaboration and provide wrap-around supports that are client-centred, inclusive, intersectional, and trauma-informed. The Community Working Groups met monthly.
- **Communities of Practice** – Three Communities of Practice focused on the 2SLGBTQ+; Indigenous; and Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee communities were convened to support more inclusive and intersectional service provision for community members who have experienced domestic violence. The Communities of Practice are comprised of people from across the province who identify as a member of the communities and of service providers who are working to create more inclusive policies and practices within their organizations and systemwide to support members of these communities more effectively. These groups were identified as a focus in the project because they face significant barriers to accessing services and face multiple forms of oppression that must be considered in all aspects of service provision. These Communities of Practice met monthly.
- **Provincial Working Group** – A Provincial Working Group was convened quarterly to spread the learning and share the resources developed by these Community Working Groups and Communities of Practice throughout Alberta. This group consisted of members of the Community Working Groups and Communities of Practice as well as other interested leaders and service providers from across the province.

The Blueprint Project also assembled a planning committee that worked behind the scenes to plan and adapt the project to support the work of these communities. The planning committee consisted of a project manager, a leader from each Community Working Group, ACWS staff supporting the project, the Community of Practice facilitators, and the evaluator.

Project Evolution

While the purpose of the Blueprint Project has remained the same, the project has evolved significantly since its inception. The project began in September 2019, six months before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time it began, ACWS envisioned partnering with six communities across Alberta to implement the Blueprint Project. Organizations and agencies in these communities would come together in Community Working Groups to design promising practices to support cross-sector collaboration and a common set of inclusive and intersectional tools to promote client-centred care. A Community of Practice would be formed to create a process for testing the practices and tools and develop training for frontline staff to implement the practices and tools with clients.

ACWS formed a Planning Committee to begin to shape the work with interested communities. They identified interested ACWS member organizations to support the project. They worked with the member organizations to identify key service providers in their communities that support survivors of domestic violence. They also identified organizations in each community serving the 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, and Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee communities. The planning committee began recruiting these organizations to participate in the Community Working Groups in each community.

The groundwork had been laid to launch the Community Working Groups when the COVID-19 pandemic was officially announced in March 2020. The pandemic required a significant shift in the Blueprint Project's strategy. ACWS member organizations were required to scale back operations and their partners either scaled back or closed to ensure the safety of staff and clients. They were mandated to implement new health protocols that took significant time to learn and implement. Shelters and their partner organizations were faced with unprecedented demand for services amidst unprecedented staff turnover. The Blueprint Project was put on hold to allow ACWS staff to support their members during this challenging time.

ACWS and the Blueprint Project Planning Committee began devising an alternative strategy to complete the work of the Blueprint Project. Community Working Group meetings that were envisioned to occur in person would now occur virtually using videoconferencing. Many of the organizations that were initially interested in participating in the Blueprint Project no longer had the capacity to do so leading the project to be scaled back to two communities: Red Deer and Grande Prairie. The timeline for launching the Community Working Groups was also extended to allow the participating organizations ample time to adjust to the myriad changes they were facing. In December 2020, the first Community Working Group meeting was held in Red Deer. The first meeting was held in Grande Prairie in March 2021.

During this time, the vision for the Community of Practice changed significantly as well. It became clear from listening and learning to community members that 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, and Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee community members had no or very limited opportunities to connect with and learn from one another. Rather than folding members of these communities into the larger Community Working Groups or a single Community of Practice where their voices would be few among many, the Blueprint Project shifted to creating a Community of Practice for each of these groups. This would allow the members of these communities to have a space that was focused on issues that were meaningful to them and bring together their collective wisdom and experience to guide the development of more inclusive and intersectional tools and practices.

The shifts in the strategy and approach of the Blueprint Project also required a different approach to the evaluation. A new evaluation firm, Dialogues In Action, was hired in April 2021 to conduct a participatory mixed-methods evaluation that was designed to build the evaluation capacity of Blueprint Project members. However, the unprecedented demand for services, persistent challenges, and limited capacity of organizations made participating in the evaluation process difficult for many. The evaluators identified key points in the evaluation process where the input from the Community Working Groups and Communities of Practice would be integrated into the evaluation design and the recommendations that emerged from the evaluation. This helped to minimize the burden on Blueprint Project members while ensuring their perspectives informed the evaluation process and product.

The multitude of challenges faced during this time led ACWS to request a one-year extension of the Blueprint Project. The project was initially intended to end in September 2022 and this end date was extended to September 2023. This extension allowed the Blueprint Project time to build a foundation for ongoing collaboration and make a significant impact on those who were a part of the project to date. However, the extension did not allow sufficient time for the new tools and practices to be implemented broadly and tested methodically by Blueprint Project members, which has limited the data available to determine how they have affected the client experience.

Blueprint Project Timeline

2019

Q4 2019
- **Blueprint Project funding awarded**
- **Results framework developed**
- **Community consultations**
- **Project charter and theory of change developed**

2020

Q1 2020
- **Recruitment of leaders and service providers to form Community Working Groups in six communities and a Community of Practice begins**
- **Information Sharing App development begins**
- **COVID-19 officially declared a pandemic by World Health Organization**

Q2 2020
- **ACWS develops a new strategy and work plan for the Blueprint Project**

Q3 2020
- **Launch of 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice (monthly meetings moving forward)**
- **Outreach to organizations to assess ongoing interest in participating in the Blueprint Project**

Q4 2020
- **Launch of Community Working Group in Red Deer**
- **Monthly workshops to support client-centred practice begin in Red Deer**

2021

Q1 2021
- **2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice begins revising DA-R**
- **Launch of Community Working Group in Grande Prairie**
- **Monthly workshops to support client-centred practice begin in Grande Prairie**

Q2 2021
- **2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice creates Empathy Map**
- **Blueprint Project evaluation of emerging impact begins**
- **Information Sharing App shared with Community Working Groups for input**
- **Blueprint Project Impact Framework and updated evaluation plan completed**

Q3 2021
- **Launch of Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice (monthly meetings moving forward)**
- **Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Empathy Map completed**

Q4 2021
- **Blueprint Project evaluation of emerging impact completed**
- **Red Deer and Grande Prairie Information Sharing Agreements finalized and signed**

2022

Q1 2022
- **2SLBBTQ+ Community of Practice begins developing the Guide for Gaps**
- **Testing of IRIS ACWS Care Platform (information sharing app) begins**

Q2 2022
- **Launch of Provincial Working Group (quarterly meetings moving forward)**
- **Testing of IRIS ACWS Care Platform completed**
- **Training on revised Danger Assessment begins**

Q3 2022
- **Launch of Indigenous Community of Practice**
- **Change Management training begins**

Q4 2022
- **Pilot of Blueprint Project Impact Survey**

2023

Q1 2023
- **Revision of MOSAIC begins**

Q2 2023
- **Blueprint Project final evaluation begins**
- **Revision of MOSAIC completed**

Q3 2023
- **Blueprint Project final evaluation completed**
- **Blueprint for Client-centred Collaboration completed**

Evaluation Methodology

This section describes the methods used to evaluate the impact of the Blueprint Project. It describes research questions explored, sampling strategy, and the qualitative and quantitative methods used for data collection and analysis.

Evaluation Methods

This evaluation focused on exploring two primary research questions:

1. What kind and quality of impact are we having on service providers and agency leaders?
2. What aspects of the Blueprint Project are causing or catalyzing this impact?

To answer these research questions, the evaluators designed a mixed-methods evaluation consisting of in-depth qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey. This design enabled the evaluators to collect descriptive qualitative data to explore the impact of the Blueprint Project and the influencing factors and catalysts of change and build upon it with quantitative data to confirm and expand upon the qualitative discoveries. The general methods used to collect and analyze the qualitative and quantitative data are described below.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluators began by collecting descriptive qualitative data. They designed interview protocols for placement sites, operating sites, and LISC National staff using the Heart Triangle™ approach. The interview questions were designed to yield data about the experiences of the interviewees related to indicators of impact identified in the Blueprint Project impact framework (see Appendix A) and the aspects of the project influencing those experiences.

The Heart Triangle™ approach to qualitative evaluation structures the interview in layers of questions. This technique allowed the interviewer to explore three dimensions of the human experience: the mental dimension (what they know as a result of the Blueprint Project), the behavioural dimension (what they have done or can do as a result of the Blueprint Project), and the emotional dimension (what they feel as a result of

the Blueprint Project). The interviewers then explored the structural elements of perceptions and sense-making within each of these dimensions to gain insight into the placement site leaders' construction of the meaning of the experience. In the mental dimension, the interviewers explored the changes of mindset, outlook, perspective, and beliefs. In the behavioural dimension, the evaluators explored changes in capacity, identity, habits, and trajectories. In the emotional dimension, the evaluators explored changes in dedication, commitment, attachment, and care.

Individuals from the Community Working Groups were identified to participate in interviews using a purposeful stratified sampling technique to select a representative sample based on the following strata:

- **Type of involvement with the Blueprint Project** – The evaluators sought a balanced sample of interviewees from each of the Community Working Groups.
- **Position in their organization or agency** – The evaluators sought a balance of agency leaders, managers, and frontline staff.

The sample sizes for qualitative interviews for each Community Working Group are depicted in Table 1.

The evaluators conducted group interviews with members of the 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous Communities of Practice. This enabled them to gain insight into group dynamics in addition to the evaluation questions. All members who attended the 2SLGBTQ+ and Indigenous Community of Practice meetings on a predetermined date were included in the group interview sample. Due to scheduling limitations, the evaluators were not able to conduct a group interview with the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice and interviews were conducted individually with the members.

Table 1. Qualitative Interview Sample – Community Working Groups					
Community	Agency Leaders	Managers	Frontline staff	Total Interviewed	Percentage of Total
Red Deer Community Working Group	1	2	2	5	42%
Grande Prairie Community Working Group	3	2	2	7	58%
Total	4	4	4	12	100%

Table 2. Qualitative Interview Sample – Communities of Practice		
Community	Number Interviewed	Percentage of Total
2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice	13	65%
Indigenous Community of Practice	4	20%
Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice	3	15%
Total	20	100%

The sample sizes for qualitative interviews for each Community Working Group are depicted in Table 2.

The evaluators convened semi-structured, one-on-one or group virtual interviews lasting between 45 minutes and one hour in length. They collected interview data through notetaking and the Otter web-based or mobile application to record and transcribe notes. They then analyzed the data inductively using thematic analysis. The evaluators identified the overarching and inter-interview themes that emerged from the full sCommunity of Practicee of the data analysis to illuminate the collective insights and discoveries, examining the dynamics among the themes, causes and catalysts of the themes, new or surprising insights related to the themes, and relationships between the themes that were revealed in the data. They then determined the most significant and meaningful discoveries and brought them forward as findings.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

For the quantitative portion of the evaluation, the evaluators designed a questionnaire to collect data on indicators of impact that have occurred as a result of the Blueprint Project. The evaluators administered this instrument to the Blueprint Project members who attended the Blueprint Launch event in September 2023. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The evaluators identified key insights, patterns,

and gaps within the data and incorporated these discoveries into the related findings.

No members of the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice completed the survey.

Limitations

The evaluation was conducted during and immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic was a phenomenon that undoubtedly affected the results of this evaluation. The Blueprint Project members were under tremendous stress due to the significant emerging and changing needs they were trying to fulfill in communities, and this may have influenced their perspective about the Blueprint Project as well as their ability to participate in the evaluation. This likely had many effects including the following.

- **Limited sample sizes.** One of the consequences of data collection during this time of significant change and transition was the limited responsiveness from people to requests to participate in the survey and interviews. As a result of this, the evaluators conducted fewer one-on-one interviews than the 30 that were planned. The lack of responsiveness also led the evaluators to shift the audience for the survey from the broader population of Blueprint Project members to a smaller subset of members who attended an event. This limitation provides reason to exercise caution when interpreting and generalizing from the data.

Table 3. Survey Sanple		
Community	**Number Interviewed**	**Percent of total**
Red Deer Community Working Group	4	18%
Grande Prairie Com-munity Working Group	7	32%
2SLGBTQ+ Communi-ty of Practice	4	18%
Indigenous Communi-ty of Practice	3	14%
Blueprint Planning Committee	4	18%
Total	**22**	**100%**

• **The survey respondents were not systematically selected.** Because the survey was administered during a Blueprint Project event rather than broad outreach, the evaluators could not ensure randomization or representation. While there is significant variety in the characteristics of the survey respondents, the fact that they opted to attend a Blueprint Project event may indicate that they have had a different perspective of the Blueprint Project than those Blueprint Project members who did not attend. This may limit the representativeness and generalizability of the data and provide reason to be judicious when interpreting the data.

• **The evaluation did not include clients.** The Blueprint Project was designed to develop and test practices that impact clients. However, the changes to the project that were necessitated by the pandemic and the strain on service providers during the pandemic limited the implementation of the tools and practices developed in the Blueprint Project with clients. For this reason, clients were not included in the evaluation.

Evaluation Findings

This section provides a discussion of the most significant insights, or findings, discovered through the data.

Part 1: Findings About the Impact of the Blueprint Project

1. Creating an inspiring vision for intersectional client-centred care

Key insight: The purpose of the Blueprint Project resonates with participants and provides inspiration for the work.

The data reveal that the concept of bringing people together to share information to create better experiences and outcomes for diverse clients is a compelling motivator for participants in the Blueprint Project. For many, the expressed intention of sharing information to provide more welcoming and inclusive services for clients who experience multiple oppressions presents a potential solution to a challenge they have long been struggling to address. One Community Working Group member said,

> To hear that you can tell one person one thing and then everyone else is wrapping around you and supporting you and working with you based off that intake was a dream come true. I was like, "Oh my God, that sounds amazing! That makes so much sense." And factoring in trauma and violence and vulnerabilities, it makes even more sense.

These benefits for clients drew a variety of organizations to the Blueprint Project and got them thinking beyond the bounds of their organization's typical clientele. They began to see how they could contribute to the broader vision of coordinated, client-centred care. Another Community Working Group member said,

> I got involved because it is a good initiative and DV is near and dear to my heart. So even though we're not mandated for DV services, we are a family serving organization and I think it's important for everybody to come together to address that topic.

2. Expanding knowledge and resources

Key insight: The Blueprint Project provides a venue for members to share knowledge and resources locally and across the province.

The data show that the Community Working Groups and Communities of Practice convened by the Blueprint Project provide an opportunity for group members to share the knowledge and resources gained from their extensive experience. The Blueprint Project meetings include a balance of facilitated content and participatory discussion that enable members to learn about a broad range of topics from other organizations within their community and across Alberta. This exposes members to a variety of resources to support them in their work.

a. Sharing province-wide wisdom and resources

One of the most valued resources that the Blueprint Project provides is the ability to connect with and learn from organizations and agencies across the province. Members said they have very few opportunities outside the Blueprint Project to have this kind of province-wide exchange about issues that are important to them personally and professionally. One Community Working Group member said,
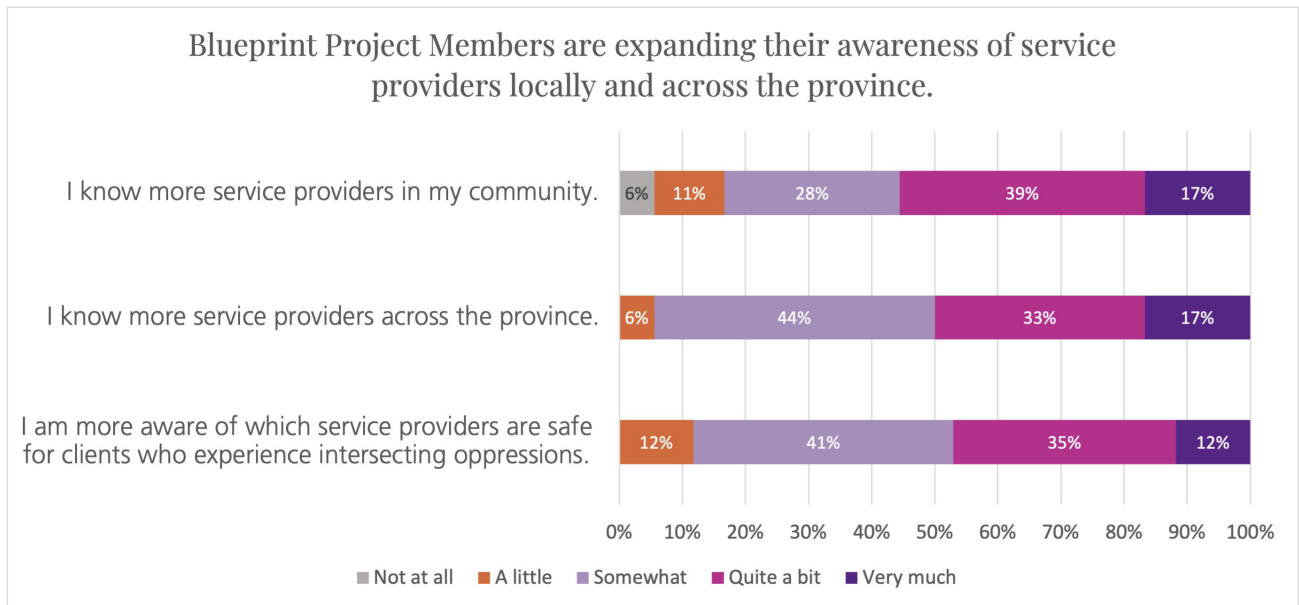
> I think the province-wide knowledge is one of the biggest benefits of the Blueprint Project. There are probably less than 10 folks that I could go to if I was looking for 2SLGBT resources here in our community. There's a handful of other people that are advocates and allies who are somewhat knowledgeable. When you come together with people across the province you just get a wealth of information and knowledge that I wouldn't be able to get any other way.

Members value connecting with people in similar positions to learn about the resources available to them beyond their immediate network. One 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice member said,

> Connecting with queer or ally workers that are in the same field, even if we're not all in the exact same position. That's important to me and it's one reason I was excited to be invited to join this group. I'm always looking for new resources in general. I've gotten to know more about queer-friendly or queer-affirming agencies and also to share a bit about what's happening in my organization. Those are some of the things I most look forward to.

Members also appreciated the diverse perspectives represented in conversations to promote learning and action. One Community Working Group member said, "It is great to see all the different perspectives from all the different types of sectors that we serve coming into one tool or one place where we can put them together and utilize those different perspectives."

The survey data show that more than 50% of survey respondents reported they know quite a bit or very much more service providers in their community and across the province. 50% of survey respondents also reported that they better understand the mission and goals of other service providers quite a bit or very much and they are quite a bit or very much more aware of which service providers are safe for clients who experience intersecting oppressions (see Figure 1).

Blueprint Project Members are expanding their awareness of service providers locally and across the province.

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much
I know more service providers in my community.	6%	11%	28%	39%	17%
I know more service providers across the province.		6%	44%	33%	17%
I am more aware of which service providers are safe for clients who experience intersecting oppressions.		12%	41%	35%	12%

b.   Building confidence for advocacy

The knowledge of what is happening across the province has equipped members with information that helps them feel more confident to advocate for change in their own organizations and communities. Sharing that new policies and practices are being implemented shows that progress is possible and lends greater credibility to advocacy efforts. One 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice member said,

> Going out into the world and being able to speak of the work of this Blueprint Project has been very helpful. Not only this community of practice, but the Indigenous Community of Practice, the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice. It shows that these changes are important. The fact that this work is being prioritized has given me confidence in a lot of ways and in a lot of spaces.

3. Supporting inclusive services

Key insight: The Blueprint Project is helping members gain deeper insight into intersectionality and practical resources to help make their interactions more inclusive.

Throughout the interviews, members expressed that they have a deeper understanding of the complexity of their clients' social identities and the systems of oppression they face. They are also better equipped with tools to help them make the services they provide more inclusive of their clients' multi-dimensional identities.

a.   Deepening knowledge of intersectionality and inclusion

The data show that Blueprint Project members have a greater awareness of the lived experiences of people who experience intersecting oppressions. Members are better able to recognize how systems of oppression affect the lives of people experiencing intersecting oppressions and how to effectively support them. One Community Working Group member said,

> It's very different to read a book about inclusivity or to sit in a webinar about it than to just be in a candid room where people discuss their barriers or discuss their experiences. Cases of "This happened to me," or "I've had this conversation," or "I've witnessed this." It makes a big difference to see the person who has had the experience and see how that affected them.

One of the most significant areas of learning members described was becoming more conscious of the language they are using. This increased consciousness enabled members to adopt more inclusive language to communicate more effectively with clients, friends, and family. One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> I've appreciated learning and being more informed of [the 2SLGBTQ+] population because I don't work a lot with that population. And I have a child who identifies as nonbinary. What I've learned carries over to my personal life and being more informed within my language and my communication with them. Having these tools helps me become more informed in my personal life and my professional life.

The survey data show that 84% of Blueprint Project members who responded to the survey have quite a bit or very much better understanding of the intersectional identities of clients, and 74% better understand the needs of clients who experience intersecting oppressions quite a bit or very much (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2. Blueprint Project Members have a better understanding of the intersectional identities of their clients.
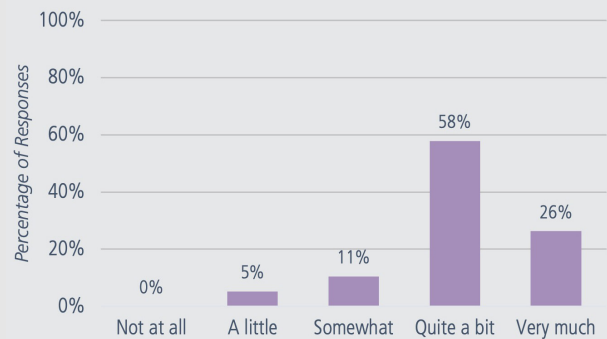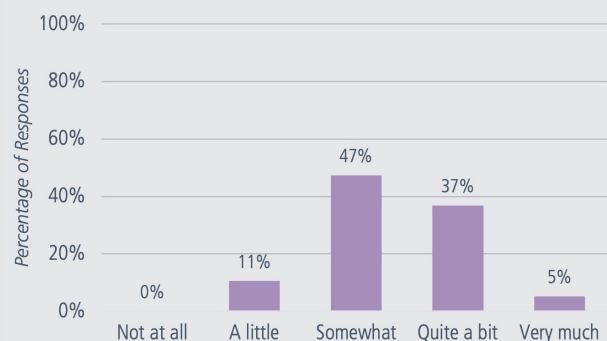

Figure 3. Blueprint Project members better understand the needs of clients with intersecting oppressions.

Training and Resources Implemented, Developed, or Updated During the Blueprint Project

ACWS IRIS Care Platform - In partnership with the Grande Prairie and Red Deer working groups, ACWS developed the IRIS Care Platform to facilitate information sharing between organizations. IRIS is a proprietary online platform that allows Blueprint agencies to securely manage client information and data (CRM) and with client consent, to share information between agencies that have signed onto the Information Sharing Agreement. IRIS is a PowerApp designed through Microsoft that can be used on an agency's desktop, tablet, or phone. Iris allows organizations or programs to create and manage client records, collect intake data, collect assessment data and collect contact/case notes. With client consent, this information can be shared between participating agencies. Unlike other CRM's, the only cost for IRIS is a subscription to Office 365.

Danger Assessment for survivors in same-gender relationships (DA-R) - The 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice reviewed and updated the Danger Assessment for survivors in same-gender relationships (DA-R). The Danger Assessment is a tool used to evaluate the risk of femicide in heteronormative relationships, and it was developed by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell, John's Hopkin's University. The DA-R is a severe abuse assessment tool, not a femicide assessment tool, as the research has not been fully completed on it yet, but having an inclusive tool for same-sex relationships helps us to better serve this community.

Information Sharing Agreement - The Grande Prairie Working Group and the Red Deer Community Working Group each developed and implemented comprehensive information sharing agreements. Stakeholder agencies—10 in Red Deer and 13 in the Grande Prairie region—developed and signed information sharing agreements. With client consent, the agreements provide a way for agencies to collect and share a client's personal information with each other,to the extent necessary for client support,allowing for a coordinated and collaborative approach, so each agency can focus on providing them their specialized services. The signing of the agreements is a critical step for a team of agencies to work together to provide wrap-around, trauma-informed services to clients experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Many fatality inquiries and death review committee recommendations have called for better information sharing to save lives. This is one way of getting there.

Empathy Map - The Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice and 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice developed Empathy Maps. These maps provide a sampling of the experiences of the CoP members to help others understand and empathize with the unique circumstances members of their community face. The maps also serve as the basis for training on cultural competency within the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee community.

Measures of Survivor Assessment Illustrating Complexity (MOSAIC) Scale - ACWS partnered with the 2SLGBTQ+, NIR, and Indigenous Communities of Practice to revise and update the ACWS Acuity Scale to become the MOSAIC tool. The MOSAIC is an evidence-based tool that is used to better understand how many different circumstances in a survivor's life can intersect in ways that intensify their experience of domestic abuse and increase their need for support as they recover. It records survivor resiliency factors, the impacts of abuse, and the presence of factors that can cause additional barriers to a survivor's healing journey. ACWS has partnered with the three Blueprint Communities of Practice to update the MOSAIC to ensure that it is fully inclusive of survivors from diverse communities.

Guide for Gaps - A contractor was identified and hired by ACWS to work with the 2SLGBGTQ+ Community of Practice to develop a Guide for Gaps that could assess where an organization is at regarding inclusivity of the 2SGLBTQ+ community. A small task force from the Community of Practice helped with this work, creating categories and collecting resources. During the process, it was decided to make the tool similar to a Buzzfeed-style quiz for people to assess their organizations online and immediately provide resources based on the results.

Change Management Training - Three sessions were provided on change management, focusing on a few main areas of the Project, including: Understanding the objectives of the Blueprint Project, understanding the needs of specialized populations (I.e., help-seeking, trauma-informed, culturally/psychologically safe); understanding Assessments and Tools; understanding Information Sharing Agreements (why, consent/ implications/ best practice) and Understanding the App

(bringing it all together, how/ why). This information was coupled with walking through the change management process and unveiling some of the reasons we have resistance to change.

Ongoing training on Danger Assessment and MOSAIC - ACWS provides regular training on the Danger Assessment and MOSAIC that is free for Blueprint participants to orient them to the purpose and use of the tools.

b. Developing tools to support inclusive practices

In addition to the knowledge they gained, members also valued having a variety of practical tools to support them in integrating an intersectional perspective into their work. Several tools were developed or revised during the Blueprint Project to make them more inclusive including the Danger Assessment, the MOSAIC, and the Empathy Map (see Training and Resources Implemented, Developed, or Updated During the Blueprint Project). These tools gave members a way to reinforce the skills they were gaining and make tangible improvements to the services they were providing. One Community Working Group member said,

> The empathy map was helpful because it streamlined what we were doing with other projects that were going on as well. Having that available gave us time to get into the motions and develop the procedural memory, the unfolding of things that you consistently do. It was able to get us off the normal path. That process wasn't quick, but we couldn't have done it without a tool like the Empathy Map that was well thought out. I appreciate that the experience was not a quick, reactive response. It was the insight of many people from across the board in the sector and from those with lived experience.

As a result of the tools developed or updated through the Blueprint Project, 63% of survey respondents reported that they have quite a bit or very much more resources to help meet the needs of clients who experience intersecting oppressions (see Figure 4).

The tools were developed or updated through a collaborative process with the Communities of Practice. This process enabled the Community of Practice members to contribute the individual and collective wisdom they have gained through their lived experience to improve the tools. Community of Practice members described this being a valuable process in which they learned from one

another and made a meaningful contribution to support more inclusive services. One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> I think what I appreciated the most from our meeting when we were going through the tool was hearing everybody's different input and making those small tweaks that can make a really big change for how people interpret the tool and how it's used. It showed that the intention here is to make sure that it is inclusive and that we are finding those little words in those little areas that could make a big difference.

A few members also described the updated tools as being very beneficial to their clients. One member of the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice said,

> The tools are not just helpful to me; they help me educate my clients. With one client I remember as we went through the Danger Assessment together, I watched her eyes open. She realized she was in danger and started asking more questions to help her prepare herself to stay safe and get the help she needs to do that. The power of it was that she now understood for herself. She knew what she had to do. I didn't have to convince her.

Figure 4. Blueprint Project members have more resources to meet the needs of clients who experience intersecting oppressions.
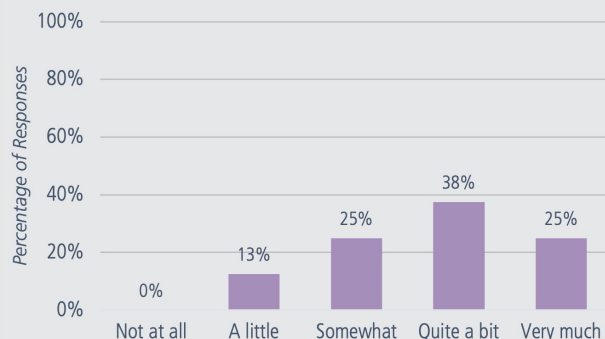
c. Preparing new staff with an inclusive mindset

The data show that the information and tools gained through the Blueprint Project can be assets for new staff coming into organizations or entering the domestic violence sector. Members expressed that the knowledge, skills, and tools developed in the Blueprint Project could provide a common inclusive language and approach to facilitate collaboration. One Community Working Group member said,

> I would hope it would bring some of those silos down [between organizations] doing this work. I would also hope it was utilized by people coming in. You learn from the ones that have been around a bit more and that gives a stronger start to the ones coming in.

Another said, "The Empathy Map has been very important for our organization. I showed it to my coworkers and now we use it when we hire new staff to make sure the clients' perspectives are shared with them."

4. Promoting Innovation

Key Insight: The Blueprint Project inspires members to test new ideas and influence others to create change.

The data show that Blueprint Project members feel more confident trying new things because of their connection to other members and the support provided through the Blueprint Project. They are taking steps to refresh outdated approaches in their organizations and working to influence others to do the same.

a. Gaining confidence

Members feel more confident to test out new ideas and approaches personally and in their organizations because of the support of the Blueprint Project. The innovative orientation of the Blueprint Project and the network of support they have developed with other members motivates them to try news ways to eliminate barriers for their clients and their organizations. One Community Working Group member said, "Having the Blueprint Project and people that also see value in this and have faith in this and want to take that risk with you is nice because it makes it a lot easier to do it." One Indigenous Community of Practice member said,

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I am a little bit more confident in speaking about the tools because it was such a community project. Everyone was able to correct and see things in a safe space without any fear of judgment when they were creating that toolkit. And it just made me think I can also establish this in my own community and working on other committees and other boards. Creating that safe space to fix tools and assessments that we're using even to this day that are little outdated. That can be dangerous in this role when we're creating these programs or we're trying to keep our people safe. You know how easy it is to get stuck in a mindset. This is how we've been doing it forever. This is how it's going to stay and then we don't make that change.

b.   Exerting influence

The Blueprint Project has helped members identify opportunities to effect change through direct action and influencing others. They are encouraged by the changes that have occurred and they see new roles for themselves as advocates and ambassadors helping others understand the need for change and how they can take part in it. One member of the 2QLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said,

it's really helped me feel encouraged to get involved and be part of the change. I teach now and I talk to my students about the ways to get involved. I tell them that there is hope that it's not going to be so gendered. And also learning about the organizations who are invested in in the work that even though in title or on paper it is very gendered, that there are behind the scenes things happening. That is encouraging,

Another said,

This has helped me think about how we want to communicate at the frontline level when we're talking to people and trying to understand where people are coming from. And also to funders when we're talking about the kinds of people we're working with and why the data is shaped the way it is.

5. Building Community

Key insight: The Blueprint Project has created a community of diverse people and organizations committed to inclusive, intersectional, client-centred collaboration.

The data show that the Blueprint Project is a testament to the tremendous impact of building community. The Blueprint has built community in varied ways through the Community Working Groups and Communities of Practice. This work has forged deeper connections and

fostered stronger collaboration between organizations to accelerate change.

a.   Forging purposeful connections

Members are grateful for the connections they have developed with other individuals and organizations through the Blueprint Project. These connections have created efficiencies that have simplified work and improved the client experience. One Community Working Group member said,

I heard about other agencies for a long time, but I didn't know exactly what they were doing. [The Information Sharing Agreement] made it clear what they can do for us and what were their limitations. And meeting people was very helpful. Now, I can send an email telling them I don't know how to navigate this and get help.

Another said,

My Executive Director is connected to other EDs and now they're working together which is a great outcome. We're working on projects with other agencies that makes transitioning from our agency to their agency faster for our clients.

These connections have also provided a system of support for staff who have been overwhelmed due to increased need and staffing challenges during the pandemic. This support is essential to staff wellbeing and retention. One Community Working Group member said,

Before the Blueprint, I thought I knew what was happening in my community, but I didn't know that domestic violence was so prevalent and there are so many agencies working on it. I thought I was alone. Now I feel a sense of belonging in the community because I've had a deeper level of engagement with all these agencies.

Another said,

I think the conversation and the connection and the human piece of this project has been the most valuable for me. Within my own community, I have connected with probably 10 agencies that I never connected with before and many more across the province as well. We joke about the support group where we can commiserate and celebrate, but it has really kept me going when I didn't think I could do this another day.

As a result of these connections, 100% of survey respondents reported that feel a greater sense of

camaraderie in their work and feel more supported in their work to meet the needs of people experiencing intersecting oppressions (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Blueprint Project members feel more supported in their work to meet the needs of people who experience intersecting oppressions.
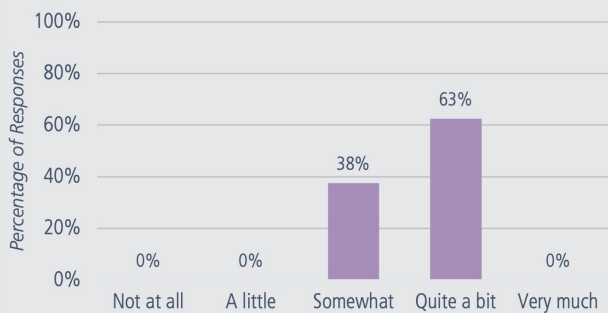
b. Fueling momentum

The Blueprint Project has created an environment where members can see that their contributions are making a meaningful difference. As members witness tangible changes occurring, they are motivated to contribute more. This creates a multiplier effect that generates momentum for sustained change. One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said,

> It's not just us getting together and being supportive of one another. There's real work being done and it looks like work that can be useful and helpful rather than the Sisyphean sort of policy push and that sort of thing. I appreciate all of that work that has been done by a lot of the people who have come through this Community of Practice over the last couple of years.

Another shared,

> It was always this baby step conversation of "We don't know where to start. We're not even sure where to start trying to start." It's been exciting for me to see momentum growing and to see the altering of the tools that are used in different organizations. That has felt like a really progressive step and it shows we don't always have to start with baby steps. Now the tools better reflect people like the Danger Assessment tools and [MOSAIC] tool. That has felt much more hopeful. We can describe actual progress that's happening and not just what people should do to start.

The momentum being built as people see change and forge deeper connections with one another extends beyond the work of the Blueprint Project. It helps to build trust and a sense of partnership that strengthens other efforts in the community as well. One Community Working Group member said,

> I think the community is more than just the result of the time together. It's more than the resources and it's more than the things we create when we're together. It's the relationships that develop and that's what gets people to the table to keep a project going. To create community change and trust and allyship in terms of all sorts of other issues. That's how we build momentum. We're more likely to stretch our capacity when we have an ally and we're part of a collective of people that we trust.

According to the survey data, one of the most significant effects of the Blueprint Project has been that people feel more responsible for ensuring clients who experience intersecting oppressions are served well by their own organization/agency and by their partners. 87.5% of survey respondents reported that they feel quite a bit or very much more responsible for this within their own organization and partner agencies.

6. The Impact of the Communities of Practice

Key insight: The Community of Practices are a source of significant impact for the Blueprint Project.

The findings that follow highlight the areas of impact that are specific to the Community of Practices. The data show that the Community of Practices yield outsized benefit for those who identify as part of the communities on which they are focused. While the Community of Practices have a particularly meaningful impact on the members who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, newcomer, Immigrant, or refugee, they also create an atmosphere where others can learn from the rich lived experiences of community members in a safe and welcoming environment that promotes learning.

a.   Expanding the circle of allies

The Community of Practices yield significant learning for members who do not identify as 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, newcomer, immigrant, or refugee. Members are able to learn from the lived experiences of community members and hear firsthand about how they are affected by systems of oppression. They also have the opportunity to discover the ways in which they can most effectively support these community members and promote inclusion. One Community Working Group member said,

> The value of the Community of Practices was clear for those who identify as Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, newcomer, immigrant or refugee, but there was also tremendous value for those who do not share that lived experience. They welcomed us in and we got to develop deeper understanding of the lived experience of those groups and discover how we can walk alongside them as allies and share the work of creating more inclusive services.

Another said,

> I was talking a lot to people in my circle that were indigenous or 2SLGBTQ+ about allyship and we were talking about how people kind of save those spaces in those conversations for people identifying in that group, but then the work isn't necessarily being done by the people that should be. For example, I'm non-Indigenous. It's great to save room for those voices and keep space for those experiences. But at the same time, that's putting the onus on Indigenous folks to do all the work and all the heavy lifting. At first, I was a little leery because I am not Indigenous, and I wasn't sure if this was a place I should be. But then I pulled back to that initial value and realized there is room for me to do that work and to support these people in that work.

b.   Validating experiences

One of the most significant benefits members who identify as newcomer, immigrant, refugee, Indigenous, or 2SLGBTQ+ gain from the Community of Practices is validation of their lived experience. The verification that their experience was not unique to them depersonalized the situation and helped members feel less alone. This helped them feel supported in advocating for themselves and their communities.

One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said,

> One of the most helpful things is being validated in experiences that I've had where I'm like, "I can't believe someone just said that to me." And I'll share that with the people in my group and they're all like, "Oh, yeah. We've experienced that too." And you're like, "Okay, it's not just me." You cannot take it personally anymore when you have somebody to validate that it was a crappy thing that the person said to you, but that it wasn't them causing harm on me as a person specifically. It wasn't about me.

One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> When we do with Indigenous, it's all about kinship community care circle approach. It does show up when we come together but also there's so many similarities in our struggles with the people that we work with. Having a platform to have a voice is so needed without barriers because minority groups face so many barriers. It's really good when we're not just taking this on as these people but we're taking on systems and these platforms are very useful.

c.   Reducing isolation

Members also feel less isolated in the experiences they have in the work they do with their clients. They recognize there are others who have similar lived experiences and have been through similar situations who they can reach out to for support. This provides reassurance and helps them navigate the complexity of living with and supporting groups that experience intersecting oppressions. One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> One of the things that I've learned through lived experience of others is that we don't have to say yes, and we don't have to put up with it. Having it echoed back at me, I don't feel as isolated in that. When I go into other organizations and talk about a heartfelt trauma informed approach and understanding why our communities may see these kinds of things as intrusive or harmful to them, I'm not alone in that journey.

A member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said, "I've learned how many folks there are in the community and broadly in the family violence community that are dedicated to this work. I think it can feel pretty isolating, especially in a field that is so traditionally gendered."

The survey data show that 100% of respondents feel less alone in the work they do as a result of the Blueprint Project with 52% reporting the feel quite a bit or very much less alone.

d.   Feeling empowered by a team

Members expressed that they are less afraid to address issues because they feel supported by a team of people with similar lived experience. They can turn to others for guidance in how to deal with difficult situations and know that others will have their back if needed. This allows members to be more vulnerable and be bolder to face difficult conversations and situations. One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> I do feel the empowerment of a team behind me when I want to say something that my face gets prickly that lets me know like there's something that needs to be said and I'm kind of scared about it. But I can think about the words and the other examples that folks have shared and feel like "I got this." It's nice to feel like I have a team even if it's in a loose way. It's nice to feel supported by others in that way.

Members shared that the affirmation and support they feel in their Community of Practice carries over and gives them confidence to be vulnerable and address issues in their workplaces and other spaces where they feel less safe. Their positive experience in the Community of Practice help to offset the difficult experiences they face elsewhere. One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said,

> I've witnessed a lot of people really be vulnerable in this space and it encourages other people to be vulnerable. I think the ripple effect is taking that into all of our workplaces where we can't speak our minds and share and be met with acceptance. Being vulnerable and being met with acceptance here helps us take risks in other spaces and speak those truths that sometimes we're afraid to bring into some other spaces.

Another said,

> Feeling affirmed and positive about the work here spills over into the harder conversations where it feels more unsafe. Where you really have to dig in and explain things. This just fuels me to continue to do the work in places where I'm the token queer or in those situations that are draining. This is the opposite of that. So it helps those draining situations not feel as bad.

e.   Bringing their full selves

One of the aspects of the Community of Practices that enables members to feel supported and be vulnerable is that they are able to bring their whole selves to the Community of Practices. Members described other environments where they would have to compartmentalize aspects of their identity and only share what would be accepted to avoid being thought of as unprofessional or being tokenized. Being able to be their full, authentic selves was a relief and helped them feel whole. One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> Whether it's the side conversations or even the embracing of each other's animals on screen as nontraditional family, being able to fully bring the professional, the personal, the political, all the sides that may be certain systems get in the way of and life tells us that need to be separated. I feel here we can bring it all and that's nice.

One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said,

> It's been a personal journey of feeling more confident in my nonbinary identity and the contributions I can bring to spaces and with sharing experiences. I feel like it was almost a starting place for me to feel more competent in just being me. And this space continues to be that space where I feel like I can be real and it doesn't feel like I have to censor myself so much.

f.   Developing a sense of belonging

As members feel more comfortable and confident bringing their true selves, they also feel a part of something larger than themselves. Members described developing a sense of belonging within their Community of Practices that helped them to feel like they belong in other situations as well. One member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> I started watching the YouTube videos and I felt a kind of kinship and belonging. That connection and hearing the stories and the journey everyone has taken has helped me not feel so alone in my practice. In rural communities we have a lack of resources. We don't always have that connection. And we also don't have that education piece when we're dealing with other organizations when it comes to our people.

One member of the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice said,

> It's good to know that there are like-minded individuals out there. There are people who are experiencing the same things that we're experiencing. We're all human. We're all trying our best to just serve our communities and do it in the best way we can.

Part 2: Findings About the Potential for Greater Impact

7. Engaging local champions

Key insight: Members of the Community Working Groups desire stronger leadership at the local level to establish the Blueprint as a community priority and sustain the progress that has been made.

Throughout the interviews, Community Working Group members cited a lack of engagement by local leadership as an impediment to the impact of the Blueprint Project in their communities. Members desire a strong local champion to establish the Blueprint Project as a local priority among partners and to create a network of support among leaders to help them adopt the work of the Blueprint Project in their organizational context. They want to see the project continue and the vision to be realized but express concern that it will not be sustained without greater leadership. One interviewee said,

> I'm concerned it's just going to fizzle because I don't see anybody in our community driving it. And that's sad. If it dies out and fizzles, I think we'll miss an opportunity for increased cooperation and sharing. We'll go back to the practice that they used to have before, and some folks will pick up the phone naturally and some won't. They will just make the client jump through all the hoops again.

a.   Creating champions

The data show that members see the need for champions at the local level to elevate the importance of the Blueprint Project and to inspire others to become and remain involved. These champions would serve as models to help leaders throughout the community see the possibilities for and benefits of involvement in the Blueprint Project. In particular, Community Working Group members thought the local shelter needs to serve in this role because they have the greatest connection to the work of the Blueprint Project and can use the information they have to bring others in. One Community Working Group member said,

> It is almost irrelevant in my eyes to be part of this if our local women's shelter isn't using Iris and implementing it. Maybe they are now, but I'm not aware of that. Until that happens, we wouldn't be entering anything into any kind of database if our local shelter is not.

Another said,

> We have the people in the DV sector in our community. Our primary women's shelter had a lot of transition and a lot of challenges. And if you don't have the "leader" completely bought in and engaged, it feels like "who am I sharing information with?" Even though we all have women that we serve and men experiencing domestic violence that's not our primary role for some of our agencies…In our community, we default to "That's their issue," which is really too bad. But that seems to be the practice.

b.   Extending participation throughout organizations

Members also expressed that participation in the Blueprint Project is siloed in many organizations. For those organizations that have their leadership involved, many leaders have not spread the information provided about the Blueprint Project to the managers and frontline staff who could most directly use it. For the organizations that had managers or coordinators who oversee frontline staff involved, there has been more direct implementation of tools they gained or contacts they made through the Blueprint Project, but broader policies, systems and training have not been affected. For many organizations, this meant that information was not transferred to all those who could benefit from

it and it was not broadly implemented or sustained throughout the organization.

One member of a Community Working Group who is a manager who works directly with clients said, "My executive director came to one meeting, but [they were] not involved after that. I used some of the tools but without a change in policies or training, no one else in my organization was able to do anything with it."

8. Clarifying purpose

Key insight: Members of the Community Working Groups desire a clearer understanding of the Blueprint Project's purpose and scope to ensure they are maximizing the benefits to themselves, their organizations, and their clients.

The data show that members would like to better understand the Blueprint Project's purpose and the many components of the project that could benefit them. They see value in many aspects of the Blueprint Project they have heard about and would like to learn more to identify resources that may be helpful to them.

a.   Rearticulating the purpose and scope of the Blueprint Project

The Blueprint Project's purpose seems to be elusive to many members. This has led to confusion about who should be involved and in what aspects of the Blueprint Project. It has also led to confusion with other local initiatives that are doing similar things. This has caused people to feel like the Blueprint Project's purpose is duplicative of other local efforts. One Community Working Group member said, "The Integrated Coordinated Access Project was also being built at the same time and it was required by provincial government. It had a very similar purpose to the information sharing in the Blueprint Project and it had to be our priority because it was required."

Many members also seem to focus on a particular aspect of the Blueprint Project that is most meaningful to them and have lost sight of the other aspects of the project. One Community Working Group member said, "I know there is much more to it than [the Iris app]. That gets talked about, but I think we're so task orientated. It's easy for us to think about [the app] because it's something tangible." Another said, "Once we got the final draft of the [Information Sharing Agreement], I showed it to my boss and we didn't think I needed to go to any more meetings. What we came for was finished."

b.   Balancing inclusivity and simplicity in the ACWS Iris Care Platform development

The development of the ACWS IRIS Care Platform was something many Community Working Group members were excited about and eager to participate in. Yet the complexity and time required to test the app seemed overwhelming for many who were already overburdened with a growing workload. Members appreciated the inclusive process to develop the Iris app but also felt it lacked clear direction. One Community Working Group member said,

> I think using such an inclusive process to build the app was a double-edged sword. The vision makes sense. And they were being so inclusive to ask us what we needed. That's a positive about that; they were being inclusive, and we'll build it as we go asking us what we need. The problem is that we don't know what we need because DV is not normally the world we work in, and we don't have a lot of time to figure it out from scratch.

Another said,

> When they were developing the app, it was a build-it-as-you-go process. But I think for some folks, that was a challenge because they didn't know what they didn't know. And then we will just try it. There were some concerns about are we sure it's not going to share? And are you sure a client's information is going to be okay?

9. (Re)building trust

Key insight: A lack of trust among Community Working Group members is impeding information sharing.

Although members are invested in the concept of client-centred care, the data indicate that a foundation of trust has either not been established or has been eroded. Building or strengthening trust among Community Working Group members will be imperative to ensure that adequate information is shared to effectively and inclusively support clients moving forward.

a.   Overcoming history

One of the most significant challenges that members expressed is that a signed Information Sharing Agreement and an app to facilitate information sharing is not enough for organizations to trust one another.

Members are concerned that others will not use information in a way that protects survivors of domestic violence and their families and respects their wishes about what information can be shared with whom. The cross-sectoral nature of the Blueprint Project made this particularly challenging because organizations that may have historically been at odds are now being asked to share with one another. One Community Working Group member said,

> When we sat in those meetings initially to start it, I think the idea was awesome. We've all hated that the clients have to tell their stories several times over. But I think when it came to fruition, I don't think the vision was shared by every type of organization and I think the reason for that is not everybody understands domestic violence the way we do as shelters. So, you know, Child Protective Services, RCMP, they all have different policies, they have different protocols. I think it's a wonderful dream. I think in a perfect world, this is what we need. But a perfect world wouldn't have domestic violence. It's a great idea, I just think when you have outside people, they just don't understand it the same way we do and when you have got government involved, and you have different policies, protocols around confidentiality, that's where the roadblocks come up.

Another said, "It would have been great to be able to utilize [the app]. The frustrating part is that it's still not at a standard that I could fully trust Children's Services and all of those ministries. That information is vulnerable and that is a risk."

While most of the members expressed concern about sharing information with other agencies, some also expressed concern about vulnerabilities in their own organizations. One Community Working Group member said,

> We have just three staff. There are only three of us doing the hands-on response. The rest are volunteers and that's vulnerable information. Call me old school, but I think that is just too sacred of information for people who are volunteering their time to access.

b.   Indoctrinating new staff

Compounding the challenges of a lack of trust between various agencies and organizations serving survivors of domestic violence is a significant transition in staff within these agencies. For example, in 2021-2022 the rate of staff turnover for ACWS member shelters was 45 percent. The complexity of cases and the workload

for shelter staff has also increased dramatically (ACWS, 2023) leaving little time for staff to build relationships to foster trust. Yet this trust is critical to providing efficient, effective, and inclusive client-centred services. One Community Working Group member said,

> We're a tight knit kind of community in a lot of ways, but the people at the table have changed. We've got some really green new people, fresh people, or we've got some people that have been in the field for a long time and think they know everybody in this sector. I'm one of those folks and I don't know anybody anymore. I've come to that realization. But some of our folks are like, "I'll just call Susan at agency XYZ." And that is still a pretty common practice. And our integrated coordinated access on the other stream is exactly that. How do we build greater connections between experienced folks and new folks to the sector? And how do we get them information quite easily and accessible? So we were kind of doing a parallel process about building relationships. I think sometimes it's like, well, why are we building a system when there's already a system over here being built to have increased seamless access for folks, and so they don't have to tell their story again?

Another said, "It took years and years to create relationships. And then what happens is people leave, and then relationships go, so now we've seen multiple people leave the Blueprint Project."

And another Community Working Group member said,

> I think you have so many factors involved in why this hasn't moved forward. I don't think it's lack of trying on the part of the people who are involved in this, but people change. People went to different jobs and that always puts a crimp in anything.

Many newer staff who were not with agencies and organizations at the time ISAs were signed or were not involved in having the agreement signed did not know about ISAs. This indicates a lack of transfer of knowledge by leadership.

c.   Simplifying sharing

The density and complexity of the Information Sharing Agreement was another barrier to building trust. Members were intimidated by the ISA and concerned about getting clients to understand it in the midst of crisis. One member said,

> I think when I saw it, it was quite a document. It kind of scared me. And to be honest with you, when you put this kind of idea forward to the clients when

they're in the middle of what they're in the middle of this was really hard to explain to them. If I put myself in their place, I wouldn't believe that my information was being shared appropriately.

The survey data show that who signed onto the Information Sharing Agreement still struggle to share information. Despite 75% of members who signed the ISA reporting they have somewhat, quite a bit, or very much, better tools to share information, 32% still report that they share information with other service providers not at all more effectively (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Blueprint Project members share resources with other service providers modestly more effectively.
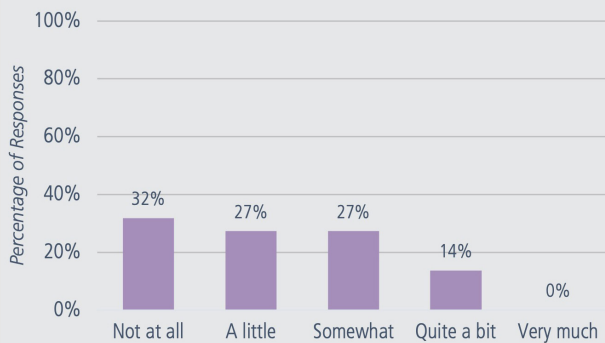
10. Preparing for change

Key insight: Members are hesitant to change their policies and practices because they are concerned about risk and lack capacity for effective implementation.

Although the Blueprint Project encourages innovation, members are also reticent to make changes due to concern over increased risk for their clients and organizations and a lack of staff capacity to effectively implement changes.

a. Balancing risks and rewards

Members are experiencing tension between innovating to promote better client outcomes and sticking with tried-and-true methods. They are excited to test new ideas and to influence others and they are also concerned about trying new approaches that have not been tested. Failure means they may cause harm to

clients who are already experiencing trauma. Yet a lack of innovation means they may be holding onto outdated practices that have not been adapted to effectively meet the needs of diverse clients. One Community Working Group member said, "I've heard so many new ideas in the Blueprint Project and many of them seem really promising. But I am always worried about the risk of trying something that might not work."

Another member expressed the counterargument in support of innovation when they said,

> Especially in the work that we do because we're working with vulnerable populations, people are extra scared of trying new things because there's not really room for error. But if we're not trying new things, we're failing our clients anyway. There's more room there for failure than we think. We do have to be careful but at the same time if we are not taking risks and not trying new things for the sake of protecting our clients, we're not actually doing what we think we're doing. And humans are a lot more resilient than we think that they are. We're really doing them a disservice by being scared of that or by avoiding that and thinking that we're protecting them. When really, it's not their choice. They're not asking us to protect them from change, or to protect them from things being better.

b. Creating capacity for change

Many of the members that are interested in taking risks to reap the rewards of new and innovative approaches developed through the Blueprint Project are limited by the capacity of their organizations to take on anything in addition to their current programs and projects. Many staff are new and time to train them on existing processes and policies is limited. The addition of something entirely new for new and existing staff that may create additional burden for them is a risk for managers in a climate where they are already losing nearly 50% of their workforce (ACWS, 2023). One member said,

> Some difficulties I've had are just wearing too many hats as well as a shortage of staff. I say this kindly, but we now have very inexperienced staff who definitely love the idea of working in these fields. But with the additional hats we all have to wear and our standards we have to follow and everything else, I think they're finding it difficult right now. And I think it's just been such a combination that it's too much to add one more thing. I'm hoping though once things settle, and more people have the consistency within their organizations and agencies, I bet you would have had a much different result.

For many members, capacity is a barrier to participating in the Blueprint Project meetings let alone the additional time it would take to implement something new from those meetings. One Community Working Group member said, "We were just so busy at work, and I was doing it all by myself. I didn't have a helper and there was just more and more to do all the time and I didn't feel like I could get away." Another said,

> It's just timing. And you know, I guess I should take some responsibility because we all have a choice when we're double booked. We choose one or the other. And I chose the other things that were happening. It's been a [difficult] year.

The survey data show that only 35% of survey respondents report they have quite a bit or very much of the capacity needed to effectively serve clients who experience intersecting oppressions and 18% report that they have not at all or a little capacity (see Figure 7). In addition, the predominant barriers to participation in the Blueprint Project cited in the survey were a lack of time and/or capacity (21%) and staff turnover (21%).

Figure 7. Blueprint Project members have limited capacity to serve clients who experience intersecting oppressions effectively.
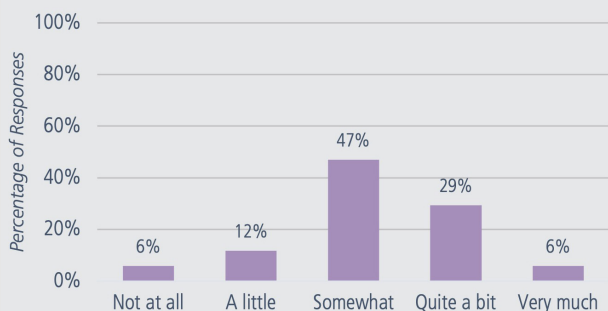
11. Extending the work to clients

Key insight: The work of the Blueprint Project has not yet extended to many clients due to service providers being overtaxed and under-resourced.

The Blueprint Project laid a firm foundation for inclusive intersectional client services. Relationships have been built or strengthened and tools have been developed to support more effective services for survivors of domestic violence who experience intersecting oppressions. However, there is limited evidence the tools and practices that have been developed are being implemented with clients at this point. This represents a significant gap in the intended impact of the Blueprint Project.

The context within which the Blueprint Project has been operating and many of the previous findings provide insight into why this gap in impact exists. Research shows that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a rise in domestic violence in Alberta and worldwide5 at the same time safety measures and provider health required services to be reduced. This strained an already overburdened system and led to significant staff transition among providers. The interview data show that long-time staff were required to adjust to new policies and protocols and new staff had to learn quickly while taking on an increased workload to alleviate a backlog of services for clients in need. Despite recognizing the benefits of the tools and approaches developed in the Blueprint Project, when faced with the choice to add more new work for themselves and their staff many leaders opted to minimize the additional burden.

Although clients have not benefited from the Blueprint Project to the degree intended, the work that has been done has readied service providers to realize the full potential of the project for themselves and their clients.

Approaches that work

12. Establishing communication systems and processes

Key insight: The communication systems established during the Blueprint Project help members stay informed and inspired.

The data show that members appreciated the variety of resources provided in the Blueprint Project. These resources ensure members have access to key information that is relevant and interesting to the members and their organizations in a variety of formats to suit different learning styles. Some of the most helpful systems noted by members included a file-sharing system using Dropbox, a monthly Blueprint Project newsletter, and video recordings of the meetings. One member said,

> I think some of the structures that were really good were that the meetings were recorded meetings, having the resources available, and having [the Blueprint Project team] do outreach to make sure we have what we need. Those were real strengths because they helped keep a record of what was happening and make it accessible so the project could extend beyond the few people who could show up for the meetings.

13. Creating a welcoming environment

Key insight: The welcoming environment created in the Blueprint Project meetings promotes comfort, camaraderie, and authenticity among members.

Throughout the interviews, members expressed gratitude for the warm and welcoming environment created in the Blueprint Project. Members described feeling like they could step into each meeting and feel comfortable even if they had not attended a meeting for an extended period. Members noted that elements like introductions and icebreakers in every meeting helped to set the tone and establish comfort from the outset. They also valued the relational approach of the project managers and facilitators. This personal approach and warmth were especially significant for members of the Communities of Practice who expressed that this helped them feel supported and empowered.

One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said, "I think that cozy feeling is what gets people to show up authentically." Another said,

> The coziness for me is what sparks the feeling of empowerment because I think without that I wouldn't feel seen, feel the collaboration, feel the acceptance in our lovely virtual rooms. That's what I carry with me when I have those harder conversations. So I think it's foundational in that way and it builds into the empowerment to bring things forward.

A member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> I like the introductions at the beginning and getting to know a little bit about everybody. I appreciate the small talk here and there and laughs that everybody brings to the conversation because it is really heavy sometimes. And sometimes the work that we do can be really heavy so it's nice that we have a space where we can be comfortable.

14. Valuing contributions

Key insight: Providing honoraria helps members feel valued for their contributions and indicates the Blueprint Project is invested in their wellbeing.

The data reveal that members are very appreciative of the investment the Blueprint Project made to support participation by offering an honorarium to members who were not paid for their participation in the Blueprint Project by their organizations. This ensured

equitable compensation among members regardless of whether their organizations were supporting their participation. More importantly, it indicated that the Blueprint Project recognized the value of the contributions of time, effort, and wisdom of all members. One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said, "The fact that I am paid an honorarium to attend even though I'm not attached to an agency really shows the investment. I think that says something and I appreciate it." A member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> Nobody else in my agency is being asked to do extra things about inclusivity around race, gender, queerness, etc. And I am, at times, okay being that person. But when it edges on tokenization and that idea of taking our knowledge and our lived experience as nuggets of gold, that needs to be valued. I am invited to many communities of practice, and this is the only one that if your organization doesn't support you being here as part of your job, they will pay you an honorarium as an individual practitioner. That is huge. It shows that they value what we can bring.

15. Creating personal connections

Key insight: The Communities of Practice help forge personal connections that create a caring atmosphere for listening and learning.

The personal relationships developed in the Communities of Practice were a highlight of the Blueprint Project for many members. These relationships help members feel connected to both the work of the Communities and the individuals who are a part of them. This helps members develop a deeper sense of commitment to the project and strengthens their desire to participate even when it is difficult. One member of the 2SLGBTQ+ Community of Practice said, "I'm there because I care and because I enjoy being there." A member of the Newcomer, Immigrant, and Refugee Community of Practice said,

> It feels very caring. It feels like people are paying attention. It doesn't feel like some people are doing this while they are also multitasking on other things. It feels like people want to hear and want to learn and they are invested in it. I think that feels different than some other meetings where people are just showing up because they have to.

16. Focusing on inclusion

Key insight: The intentional focus on inclusion in the Blueprint Project helps members feel empowered to challenge systems of oppression and create meaningful change.

Inclusion was a foundational principle of the Blueprint Project and the intentionality behind it was felt by many members. The data show that this was a distinctive factor that led many members to join the Blueprint Project initially and to sustain their involvement. Members identified several aspects of the Blueprint Project that indicated that inclusion was a core value of the project. Among the most significant is the environment created in the Communities of Practice that put the community members at the fore. The members' interests and needs were centred and the focus and goals of the communities were able to shift as needed to accommodate. Members felt like their voices were heeded and elevated within the Blueprint Project and beyond. One clear sign of this noted by many members was that they were consulted to make tools such as the Danger Assessment and MOSAIC more inclusive and to develop resources to promote more inclusive policies and practices. One member of the Grande Prairie Community Working Group said,

> The nature of this group is to make the world more inclusive, so it would fall naturally that the people in the group are inclusive of one another. We all want the same thing. I think part of the energy just comes from who we want to be as people in the world and the difference that we want to make the world. We're already making that difference among each other, which is really special.

A member of the Indigenous Community of Practice said,

> There is so much similarity in our struggles with the people that we [are in the community] with. A platform to have a voice is needed because minority groups face so many barriers. It's really good when we're not just taking this on ourselves but we know others are with us to take on systems.

Areas for Improvement in Approach

17. Engaging frontline staff

Key insight: Engaging frontline staff in the planning and implementation of client-centred services is critical to transforming the client experience.

The data show that members of the Blueprint Project recognize the important role of frontline staff in designing and implementing client-centred services. Frontline staff must embrace a client-centred approach and take ownership of the changes in order to effectively change organizations and systems. Members also indicate that frontline staff have not yet been engaged in the Blueprint Project to the degree that they must be to effectively inform and implement the changes required. One member of the Grande Prairie Community Working Group said,

> My staff would need to be involved, not just me. They need to understand what needs to happen. Maybe there could be day or half day training sessions for frontline staff because they're the ones really doing the work, right? It would be helpful to get them on board so more people are hearing about it, not just relying on me to talk about it.

A member of the Red Deer Community Working Group said,

> We've got really good agency commitment. The agencies understand the Information Sharing Agreement. We've got all the critical milestone pieces of work in place to change how we deliver services in the community, but what we haven't tackled and need to tackle is how do we get the frontline staff engaged in this to understand that now they're going to design and build the service delivery model? They need to be the ones to design the Blueprint for client-centred trauma-informed services going into the future.

18. Promoting greater consistency

Key insight: Developing methods to support consistent participation in the Blueprint Project and transfer of information throughout participating organizations is essential to spur progress.

Members of the Community Working Groups expressed that one of the greatest hindrances to strengthening collaboration through the Blueprint Project was a lack of consistent participation. Members identified that a lack of involvement from staff at multiple levels within agencies, staff transition, and greater demand for services during the COVID-19 pandemic all made it difficult to participate regularly. The lack of regular participation inhibited information transfer and slowed progress. It also led to people feeling like their time spent in the Blueprint Project wasn't productive causing them to deprioritize participation in the Blueprint among other demands for their time. One member of the Grande Prairie Community Working Group said, "It started to get very repetitive. The same people were no longer coming so we had to start over each time. It felt like we weren't getting anywhere." A member of the Red Deer Community Working Group said,

> Staff turnover has been the biggest issue across the board. Training is really hard. New things are really hard. Change management is really hard. When you have hesitation about new things and then also staff turnover and a need for constant training, it all gets very complex. And it depends on what level [in the organization] the hesitation is coming from. If it's frontline staff, it's problematic because those are the people that we need to be bought in because they're the ones that are going to have to do the heavy lifting eventually. If it's hesitation at a managerial level, then we really have a problem because that stops the flow of information.

Members of the Communities of Practice also expressed that a lack of consistent participation made it difficult to develop relationships to the degree that they would have liked.

19. Supporting more effective change management

Key insight: Ongoing support for change management and iterative learning at all levels in organizations is essential to ensure client-centred services are adopted and sustained.

The data show that members of the Blueprint Project desire more in-depth, ongoing support to make the changes in their organizations that are required to provide effective client-centred services. Members appreciated the change management training that was provided through the Blueprint Project but reported that more support for change management is needed for the extent of change that must occur at the organizational and systemic levels. They also expressed that change management must be supported at multiple levels within their organizations to ensure its success. One member of the Grande Prairie Community Working Group said,

> They did a couple of workshops on change management with mostly agency leaders, and I knew that wasn't going to be effective. You can't teach a group of people about change management without ongoing support and think that is going to result in change.

A member of the Red Deer Community Working Group said,

> What was needed was to support change management at a frontline level. You need that continuous support, that continuous dialogue, that continuous learning loop where the frontline practitioners are really pushing, challenging, disrupting, making sense of, iterating and reiterating, and then getting to a common agreement on client-centred practice.

20. Ensuring accountability and sustainability for IRIS

Key insight: Members need a clearer understanding of how updates to the Iris ACWS Care Platform will be made, who is responsible, and that service providers are invested in using it long-term to ensure their efforts to transition to the new system are not wasted.

Members believe that the ACWS IrisCare Platform will be a valuable tool to support client-centred services, but they are hesitant to fully embrace it without assurance that it will be utilized by others and supported for the long-term. They are reluctant to invest the significant amount of staff time required to adopt it without a better understanding of who will be using it, how they will be using it, and who will be accountable for ensuring it is viable in the short and long term. Many interviewees expressed concern that the app will not be supported once the Blueprint Project funding comes to an end. One member of the Red Deer Community Working Group said,

> I believe in this, but my question is who updates this and who owns it? Who is ultimately responsible for making sure it works? I know the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters is not going anywhere anytime soon. They've been around for a long time. They're going to continue to stay the course. But I think there's always that hesitation when you buy into something and then the infrastructure kind of crumbles or doesn't get updated. I think people need to know what they can count on and that the capacity to transition is there if it's needed.

A member of the Grande Prairie Community Working Group said,

> What if we put time and resources into getting our people on board and starting to use this and then [the other providers] all back out? It's a really hard thing for us to justify and now our staff is going to be angry and wonder why we are doing this. So, we're scared of it not being utilized. Everyone in the community is looking at each other for that reassurance or for that leadership.

Recommendations

This section provides possible recommendations based on the data that can be explored to sustain, expand, and deepen the impact of the Blueprint Project moving forward.

When asked about their ideal vision for the future of the Blueprint Project, interviewees overwhelmingly recognized the value of the work that has been done and expressed that they want to see the project continue. Whether it be through the tools that have been developed or the relationships that have been built, members want the work to continue. The Blueprint Project has shown them the tremendous potential that exists in creating inclusive, intersectional, client-centred services and they want to see that potential realized. One Community Working Group member said,

> I really want to see this through. My ideal would be to onboarded with the [IRIS] app as we've talked about and then have the dominoes fall and have other agencies say, "We're gonna take it and run with it now." I just want to see it unfold the way that we envisioned it.

Another said,

> This work is always growing, it's always changing. To just finish, wrap up the project and then never talk to each other again, that's doing a disservice. And that's not how the real world works. There's always going to be things coming up. There's always going to be challenges, there's always going to be celebrations. I think to stay in touch in some capacity to share those experiences. I really hope that continues.

The recommendations that follow reflect this overarching sentiment from members to continue the impactful work that the Blueprint Project started.

(A) Extend the work to clients

The tools and practices that have been developed hold tremendous promise to improve services for clients. Unfortunately, the challenges of the pandemic and the delays this caused during the Blueprint Project have prevented this work from reaching clients at scale. Continuing the work to test and refine these practices and tools will be essential to yield the greatest benefit for clients.

- **Facilitate comprehensive, ongoing change management.** To test the tools with clients, more leaders, managers, and frontline workers need to be familiar with them and know how to effectively implement them within their organizations. A comprehensive change management strategy should be developed and facilitated throughout the agencies participating in the Blueprint Project and any new agencies interested in participating to help achieve this. The strategy should be ongoing and adaptive to ensure that organizations can implement it regardless of their prior experience with organizational change and their current capacity. A highly relational approach to change management may also be beneficial to create a supportive learning community and ongoing collaboration.

This project confirmed the appetite is there to design the service delivery model where the client does not have to know how to navigate the system. The system and all the resources in the system, focus on the client and come to the client. We can design that, and we have to design that because the people that we serve are right off the bat in crisis. They're exhausted and they can give up so easily.

– Community Working Group member

B Expand client-centred collaboration

The Blueprint Project demonstrated that client-centred collaboration is possible and provided tangible tools to facilitate it. In order for the impact of the Blueprint Project to be sustained and expand, this kind of collaboration must continue to improve and extend to more organizations.

- **Expand information sharing.** Although sharing information is one of the most challenging aspects of client-centred collaboration, it is critical to ensure that clients' receive the services they need while minimizing further trauma. Helping more communities develop an Information Sharing Agreement, build trusting relationships, and adopt common processes and tools will yield tremendous benefits to clients and service providers.
- **Continue building relationships.** The relationships developed in the Blueprint Project have been one of the greatest accomplishments during the project. Continuing to cultivate these relationships and providing support to develop new relationships will ensure that collaboration continues and that more organizations are brought in to support better services to clients.
- **Facilitate further adoption of inclusive tools and resources.** The Provincial Working Group proved to be an effective venue to share learning among Blueprint Project members. However, its impact was limited by the timing and capacity of a variety of members to participate. Additional strategies should be explored to educate others about the tools and to share learning province-wide to ensure the promising practices and tools are adopted.

- **Educate others beyond the DV sector about Blueprint Project tools.** The needs of survivors of domestic violence and the complexity of those needs have been consistently growing.6 It will require the involvement of more organizations from a variety of disciplines to provide the support needed for clients moving forward. Educating more organizations about the valuable tools and practices developed in the Blueprint Project will support more expansive cross-sector collaboration.

C Grow Communities of Practice

One of the most significant areas of impact of the Blueprint Projects was through the Communities of Practice. The Communities of Practice provided a safe environment with common experiences for members of the communities and catalyzed the development of resources to support a deeper understanding of intersectionality and greater inclusion in organizations within and beyond the Blueprint Project. Continuing to support these Communities of Practice will provide myriad benefits moving forward.

- **Establish a "brain trust"** for ongoing consultation for intersectional and inclusive policies and practices. The consultation provided by the Communities of Practice was essential to enhance and create more intersectional and inclusive tools and practices in the Blueprint Project. Other projects and organizations in the domestic violence sector and beyond could also benefit greatly from the wisdom and experience of these Communities of Practice.

It would be nice if there was a community that folks could go to for professional speaking events, for training, for consultation, or to know how their organization is doing. And it isn't individuals but people who are part of a community so folks who have the capacity and who are supported by their workplace can do it or someone else takes a step back because life is happening right now. A community of lived experience with professionals. Because I hear in many of our communities, there is a lot of consultation without compensation and without recognizing the toll that it takes. Is there a way to help lift the load?

– Indigenous Community of Practice member

- **Create a Community of Practice for frontline workers.** Frontline workers are the linchpin to providing client-centred services yet they have had limited opportunity to contribute the knowledge they have gained through their experience with clients in the Blueprint Project to date. A Community of Practice that elevates the voices of frontline workers to shape how these tools and practices are implemented would enable others to learn from their wisdom about what works with clients, build relationships to provide much-needed support for one another, and build their buy-in to support changes to existing practices.

D Build trust between shelters and other supportive services

A strong foundation of trust is necessary to ensure the client-centred collaboration fostered in the Blueprint Project continues. Building greater awareness about the work of the Blueprint Project to develop a common set of inclusive tools and practices can be a starting point for building relationships to support improved collaboration.

- **Facilitate convenings to strengthen relationships and build common understanding about challenges and resources.** The Blueprint Project demonstrated the power of convening to promote collaboration. Creating more opportunities to bring people together for shared learning and relationship-building will help to expand collaboration in the future.

- **Raise awareness about shelter roles and the roles others can take to support clients**. A limited understanding of the roles of shelters can lead to unrealistic expectations about what shelters can and should accomplish with their clients. Facilitating a greater understanding of what shelters can and cannot do and the needs of clients that may require additional support could help other organizations see how they can be involved in supporting clients.

I think better understanding of what domestic violence is and dispelling those myths of about what women experience would really help. And everybody has to be on board. You got to have Child Protective Services understanding why she hasn't left there with the children and that the shelters are more than just a shelter, that we do outreach work. And I think that's a really important part of that Blueprint Project. Because when people are in shelter, you're kind of secluded to the shelter and doing work within the shelter. But eventually women will leave, and they'll need support. I think that is where the Blueprint Project would really be beneficial.

– Community Working Group member

This report was created in partnership with Dialogues In Action.

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