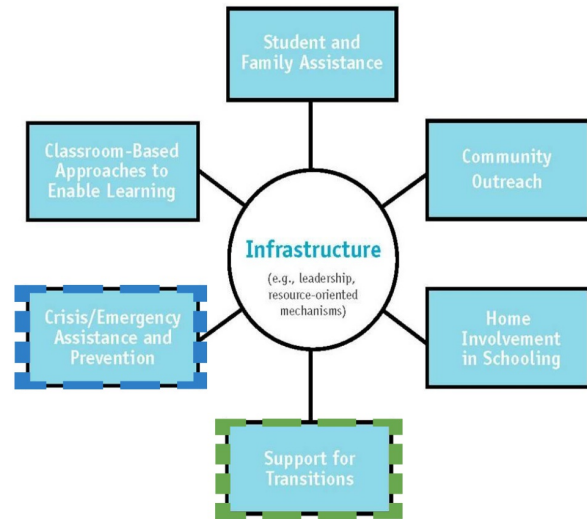


Background

Over the course of three years, beginning in 2012, The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School (DFC), along with numerous community partners, formed a service collaborative in Thunder Bay, with the intention of implementing an evidence based/informed model to facilitate more effective practice within the system. The Thunder Bay Service Collaborative has successfully applied, with some adaptations, the **Rebuilding for Learning** intervention, using an Implementation Science Framework, to create some very positive changes within DFC. Using the model as intended allowed for the opportunity to map out the school's resources and immediate needs. The school staff determined it most important to focus on the **Crisis/Emergency Assistance and Prevention** and **Support for Transitions** areas.

'Rebuilding for Learning' Content Arenas



Crisis/Emergency Assistance and Prevention

The first content arena of focus was Crisis/Emergency Assistance and Prevention. Over the past 10 years, there have been 6 student deaths at DFC High School. Considering that the student population is between 120-150 students per school year, this is an extremely high number. Suicide rates in northern First Nation communities are said to be 20 times higher than the national average in Canada, and many students attending DFC have existing mental health and addictions issues.

In addition, school staff experience burn out and compassion fatigue, and have difficulty in effectively managing student crisis. In the past, the staff were forced to deal with immediate critical issues and were able to respond to only the most serious of issues. In a sense, they were firefighting. In keeping with the model used, their focus is now shifted to the first level of intervention, which involves trying to be proactive and prevent crisis situations before they become too difficult to manage. To accomplish this task, the school and Service Collaborative performed some community mapping and brainstorming to find the best solution to equip the staff with the tools they needed. Staff were given the opportunity for education and training, and a crisis protocol was developed for the school to implement.

To date, teachers, support staff and school administration have been strategically trained in the following mental health areas: ASIST, Safe Talk, Mental Health First Aid, and Non-Violent Crisis and Intervention Training. Train the Trainer sessions also took place so school staff can maintain the trainings when needed. The crisis protocol remains in development, but a base intervention has been implemented. The crisis protocol lays out a pathway for school staff to follow when a crisis or emergency occurs. There were no student deaths at DFC for the 2013-2014 school year.

Support for Transitions

The students who attend DFC are from remote communities and must fly in to Thunder Bay each year to attend school. These students often come from communities that have multiple socioeconomic issues, which may include less than ideal living conditions. Supports for Transitions was deemed an important area to focus on by the school as the students must leave their families and friends each year to live in boarding homes. A transition video was created to be sent to remote communities to show prospective students what life in an urban centre is like. The video aims to help prepare students for their transition to Thunder Bay and high school. The video was produced by school staff and Confederation College Broadcasting students. The transition video can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzCcRf5SC6k&feature=youtu.be>.

The second point of focus for transitions was an orientation event—The Amazing Race 2013—which occurred at the beginning of the school year. The morning of the event, service providers from multiple sectors (i.e., mental health, addictions, recreation, and health) within the city set up booths in the school gym. Students visited the booths and learned about the services available to them while they were in Thunder Bay. It was an opportunity for the students to collect information, meet new people, and ease any fears about accessing essential health, mental health and addiction services.

The Amazing Race included 10 teams of 8-10 students and 2 chaperones from the school including teachers, support staff and administration staff. The teams took public transportation to 7 different locations throughout the city, and completed a set of challenges and a fun activity at each stop before they could proceed to the next stop. The stops were strategically picked out by organizers and offered a wide range of services that the youth could access. The overall feedback from the event was positive and the school plans to continue the event every September.

The Amazing Race media release (2013) can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdxAG7ktVRU>



Amazing Race participants. Source: Chronicle Journal, 2015

Community Engagement

One of the most significant developments of this process has been the fostering of relationships between the community and the school. It took a year to get to a place of trust between the school and community, and both continue to be committed to the partnership. Further, the Service Collaborative has not only developed a relationship with DFC, but also with each other—a sometimes challenging feat for cross sector agencies in finding common ground and working together to satisfy different mandates and funders.

Contact Information

For more information contact:

Jen Bertoni

Regional Implementation Coordinator

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
Northwest Region, Thunder Bay

(807) 626-9145 Ext. 77209

Email: jennifer.bertoni@camh.ca

Newsworthy



February 2014 - DFC staff attended the annual Knowledge Exchange event in Toronto, Ontario, hosted by CAMH. Thunder Bay presented a verbal story about the Service Collaborative process, including a slide show playing in the background.



Sept 2014 & 2015 - DFC continued its Amazing Race event in Thunder Bay. Each year, new locations have been added as the event grows. Students continue to benefit from this event and enjoy the fun opportunity to learn about the city its supports.



The most recent Amazing Race article (2015) can be viewed at:
http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/amazing-race-keeps-newcomers-busy/article_25a1a94e-5e83-11e5-8a9f-d301cc52548e.html.



A link to the Thunder Bay story is:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HI2cyBGyns&feature=youtu.be>



A brief overview and feature stories about what's happening locally are also found on the CAMH website for Thunder Bay. Check it out!:
<http://servicecollaboratives.ca/servicecollaborative/thunder-bay/>