draft 1.2

Push & Pull

Why practice and what it could look like?

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HOW THIS
DOCUMENT WORKS

This document is a first attempt
to bring together values, theories,
and practices. Everything you read
is a draft meant to be debated and
revised.

Introduction

THIS WORK STARTED WITH A STARK REALITY, AND AN HONEST QUESTION.

Too many street-involved adults were prematurely dying. In the 20 months preceding the project, 43 lives were lost to extreme poverty; to virulent addiction; to cold; to exhaustion. What could we do to enable more street-involved adults to not only survive but thrive?

Our approach is to embed ourselves in the contexts where people are experiencing the pain.

That's how we found ourselves at the corner of Queen and Bathurst and inside The Meeting Place, a drop-in centre for people facing extreme poverty, virulent addiction, cold, and exhaustion. People with names, and with histories, and with futures. People like Olivia, Warren, Fred, and Alice.

Our starting point rightly raised red flags. Why focus on the place with the fewest resources and the biggest challenges, when these spaces are merely symptoms of a contorted economic system and failed past policies?

Indeed by starting here, on these muddy grounds, were we somehow suggesting individuals were culpable for their situations? Were we letting the bigger forces off the hook?

No.

Individuals shape and are shaped by bigger forces – by political values, by policy decisions, by economic patterns, by religious institutions, by familial dynamics, by service interactions, by peer norms, by personal belief systems, and beneath it all, by language and narratives.

Take Olivia.

As a residential school survivor, Olivia's trajectory was marked by racist political values, by regressive housing policies, by a powerful church, by a torn-apart family. And yet, Olivia's trajectory was still hers. Only she could choose when to shift directions.

After thirty years on and off the streets, in and out of prison, getting high and drunk, Olivia reached her limit. She took a step towards sobriety, and services took steps to support her. She re-engaged in a longtime passion: furniture making. She starting seeing herself as someone with a possible future, not just a traumatic past. However, while her own narrative was changing, her peer group stayed the same. Drinking is their comfort zone. So Olivia found herself pulled back and forth. And that is where she is today, as of writing time.

MICRO, MESO, MACRO

How do we enable people like Olivia to want a future? To be in a culture that reinforces a future narrative, and to have her aspirations met with actual structural opportunities?

Declining affordability and rising homelessness in North American cities like Toronto, San Francisco, Portland, and Vancouver rightly lead to calls for more structural solutions: more drop-ins, more shelters, more housing, more mental health facilities. And yet building more institutions is not the same as rebuilding lives. It's what happens within those drop-ins, shelters, housing units, and facilities that help or hinder change.

Olivia's pathbreaking actions - engaging with detox and furniture building - have a lot to teach us about what brings about, motivates, and sustains forward momentum. Olivia's everyday actions – spending hours with friends and reengaging with drinking – also have a lot to teach us about what confuses and contradicts that forward momentum.

A whole bunch of factors close to Olivia have aligned for change. Watching friends prematurely pass away made Olivia pause. Open conversations with an Indigenous Elder after weekly spirit circles offered Olivia new insights into coping. Constructive feedback from a fellow artist helped Olivia feel a touch of mastery. These small instances – from taking an introspective moment to acknowledging an emotion, to accepting feedback – contributed to Olivia's growing self-belief. And what we know from the literature is that self-belief is one of the best predictors of wellbeing across different parts of our lives (Bandura, 1997).

A whole bunch of factors farther away from Olivia have also coalesced for change. There was a detox bed available in an Indigenous run facility. During Olivia's stay, a housing worker came to visit. Thanks to resources allocated in the latest Supported Housing Strategy, the housing worker had space in his caseload to work with Olivia. He located a transitional housing unit, paid for as part of a public-private partnership, where the language of investment replaced the language of charity.

And yet, a whole bunch of factors surrounding Olivia are complicating change. Housed, but bored, Olivia gravitates towards her friends at the drop-in centre. The centre is saturated with memories and meanings. When you walk-in, to the right, there's the bench Olivia usually sits on, and the table where her crew swigs wine or whiskey or Listerine. The furniture is institutional and pragmatic. It's neither shabby, nor homey. The walls are colorful, with painted canoes bearing witness to an earlier time. To the back of the space stand the pool table and the dominos table. Around the perimeter are offices, many stuffed with garbage bags of stuff. This is what is normal. Being at home, alone, not drinking during the day, that's abnormal.

We can give this layering of factors some words – micro, meso, and macro practices – to reflect how all levels are enmeshed. Like one of those Russian nesting dolls, **micro practices** (Olivia's conversations and interactions) are embedded within **meso practices** (the rules, norms, symbols, language of Olivia's environment), which are encased by **macro practices** (resource allocations, workloads, accountabilities, rhetoric, etc.) Here we are drawing on the work of Urie Bronfrenbrenner, whose bio-ecological model of human behavior highlights the relationship between

an individual's context, community, and wider society (1979).

Olivia isn't the exception, but neither is she the norm.

Over the past six months, we've had the privilege of getting to know over 60 individuals. Around 15 of these folks have taken steps to move in another direction. Not surprisingly, all have found themselves going forwards and backwards.

For most, micro-practices are absent, inconsistent, or worse, self-destructive. Self-belief goes up and down. Competency and control waxes and wanes. At the same time, meso-practices are a recurring challenge point. The spaces people spend time in seem to prescribe a certain course of action. For example, drinking is usually what happens on the front steps of the drop-in. It's weird not to. And then, there's those daunting macro practices. The rising cost of living. Too few landlords willing to rent to people with bad credit. Case managers with accountabilities focused on the acquisition of housing, and not enough else.

Over these same six months, we've also had the opportunity to experiment with micro, meso, and macro practices. We've explored the type of conversations that strengthen people's self-efficacy, agency, and choice. We've tweaked

the physical environment to find out how to give space for alternative peer cultures. And we've tested with policymakers what just might move the dial on their perceptions of street-involved adults and the macro practices to which they contribute.

Whilst we've barely cracked the surface, we are starting to learn something about the levers for change – and what may not be.

NOT ANOTHER PROGRAM

Up until now, we've always made new flagship programs, services, and networks.

From embedding ourselves in an extreme context and collecting stories, we've landed on one bright and shiny new model. In Australia, we made a network of families helping families. In Vancouver, we made an adult learning platform for adults with cognitive disabilities. Our hunch was that a visible and highly branded solution would serve as an exemplifier – others would replicate the interactions (micro-practices), and this would begin to change the environment (meso-practices) and shift resources (macro-practices).

With time, this hunch may still play out. But what's clear is that it takes a long-term commitment to ensure one exemplifier solution has a ripple effect. And you've got to chase enough scarce resources to keep the solution alive.

Back in January, we published 27 ideas we called Bento Boxes. Rather than make a single flagship solution, we described 5 sets of solutions around 5 segments of street-involved adults. Given the complexity of street-involved adults' lives, we understood that no one intervention would cut it. Someone like Olivia, who was newly and precariously housed, would benefit from new peer networks; opportunities to turn her furniture making into a micro business without losing her benefits; a certified landlord with some conflict resolution skills, etc.

After two weeks of sharing these ideas with the likes of Olivia, we were seeing little enthusiasm and gaining little traction. It only takes walking across the street from The Meeting Place to Queen West Health Centre to see why. The wall is plastered with brochures. Over 50. For everything from GED programs to dental clinics to HIV support groups to breakfast clubs for diabetics to sex education classes to anger management.

We realized that adding a set of brochures to a crowded landscape would do little to get at the crux of things – the fact that only 15 of 60 people we'd met had the tools for change; the way existing spaces communicated norms and facilitated particular peer cultures; how policymakers and the public distribute resources to street-involved adults.

It was time to pivot. If a single new solution or even a set of new solutions wasn't the best way to influence micro, meso and macro practices, then what might be?
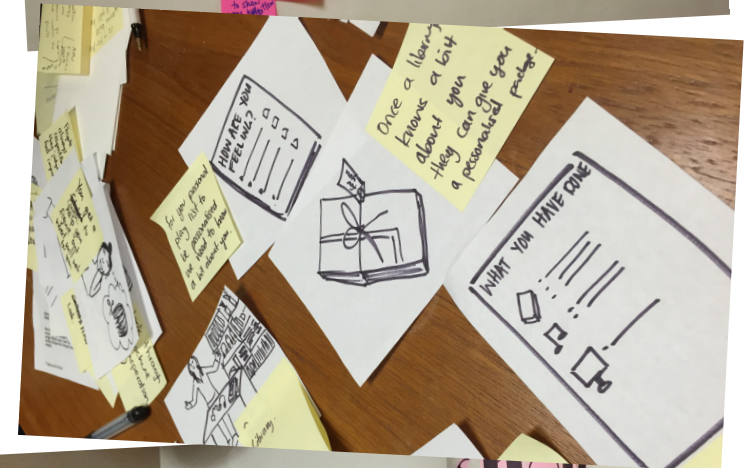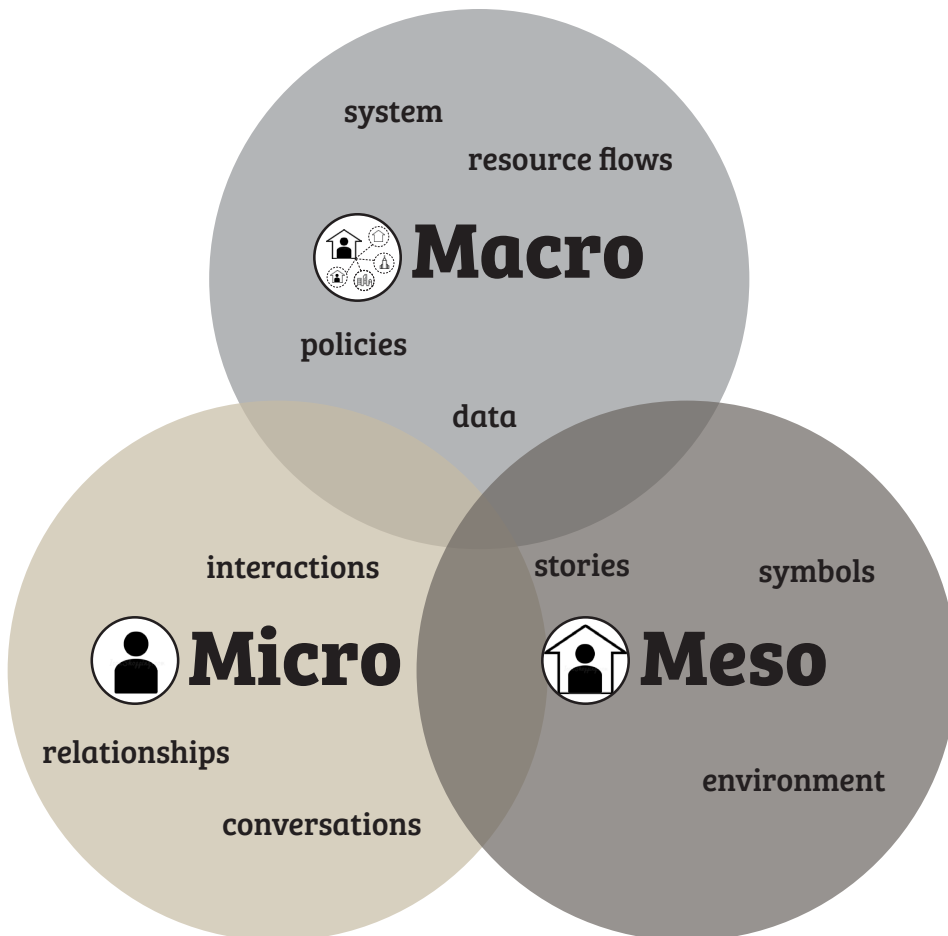
FINDING INSPIRATION

We looked for lateral inspiration, and found it from the tobacco control movement. Whilst addressing tobacco use is not at all part of this project, the success the tobacco control movement has had in influencing policy, practice, and people's lives is instructive. Over a thirty year period smoking rates in North America declined by nearly 30%.

At the macro-level, data and evidence were used in courts and legislatures to make it harder and more expensive to buy tobacco. This was data about ease of access; about addictiveness and harmfulness; about health care costs. Crucially this data didn't just come from advocates, but from researchers, scientists, and from the tobacco industry itself.

At the meso-level, schools, government buildings and restaurants created new routines about where

system

resource flows

Macro

policies

data

interactions

stories

symbols

Micro

Meso

relationships

environment

conversations

LEVEL

LEVERS

you could and could not smoke, and set-up physically distinct spaces. Fairly quickly, norms around smoking shifted. Where it was once normal to see people light-up next to you, now it is abnormal.

At the micro-level, doctors, pharmacists and health care providers started asking patients about their smoking. Cessation coaching just became part of the role of a health care provider. You didn't have to visit a certain kind of doctor, nor did you need to enroll in a special program to gain access to nicotine replacement.

Translate this example back to street-involved adults, and it suggests that instead of making a new flagship program, we could try influencing the data policymakers see; the spaces within which street-involved adults congregate; and the conversations between staff and people.

Micro-practice	Meso-practice	Macro-practice
The conversations and interactions that people like Olivia engage in every day to shape their sense of efficacy, agency, and choice. The assumption is that people are their own experts. They can learn how to listen and locate their own internal resources. What if the staff, professionals, and peer workers Olivia interfaces with were better equipped to draw this to the surface?	The way physical spaces, symbols, and stories communicate expectations & peer norms, and give rise to particular courses of action. What if the settings in which Olivia spent time also introduced her to some distinct routines & norms - or brokered Olivia to alternative spaces?	The organizational policies, resource flows, and encounters the public and people in power have with street-involved adults. What if the public and people in power could have different encounters with people like Olivia, and better understand the implications of existing resource flows and policies?
• Integrate into job titles & role descriptions • Create supportive tools • Lead peers • Frontline coaching • Add to performance management • Blend into credentialing process	• Physical setup of space • Use of images and symbols • Stories & content elevated • Collaborations with cultural institutions, learning spaces, etc.	• Data policymakers use • Metrics organizations use • Narratives spread via media, online, etc. • Roles for policymakers and public – other than as volunteers, donors, decision-makers

PRACTICE FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Past precedent tells us there are levers for influencing data, environments, and conversations – but to what ends? What are we changing micro, meso, and macro practices towards? And who gets to decide?

Success for the tobacco control movement was clear: less people smoking and less harm caused by tobacco.

Success for drop-in centers is less clear. What's been most striking during our residency is how many distinct values we've seen at play. After six months, we are no closer to consensus.

	Care mindset	Saftey Mindset	Capacity building mindset
Ensure survival	Is the mission to service people's basic needs for food, shelter and care?	Is the mission to keep people off the streets and out of trouble?	Is the mission to enable people to find and access resources on their own?
Build community	Is the mission to host a warm and welcoming community?	Is the mission to offer a safe space for those who choose to use? *> To read more, go to the Pragmatism Value*	Is the mission to generate and legitimize roles other than being homeless, addict, offender? *> To read more, go to the Contribution Value*
Enable Change	Is the mission to facilitate healing and holistic health? *> To read more, go to the Healing Value*	Is the mission to increase readiness to change?	Is the mission to stimulate people's minds, widen their networks, and encourage exit from safety net services? *> To read more, go to the Learning Value*

For Fred, a long-time member of the drop-in, maintaining an identity other than 'homeless alcoholic' is critically important. Success is standing apart from the drop-in community. For Alice, another long-time member, success is just the opposite. Being part of the drop-in community is most important, even when that detracts from other goals like sobriety. Alice and Fred hold contrasting values – individual autonomy versus collective belonging.

Can a single space accommodate all value sets? Is it possible for a drop-in to both inculcate belonging and to actively encourage exit? Is it possible for a drop-in to both address immediate needs and to build capacity?

We've observed how questions over mission can express themselves even in the most ordinary conversations. Workers are in constant demand, with a constant stream of people in need of help.

Person: Where can I go tonight? Can you call about a bed?
Worker: Yes…Just give me a moment.
[20 minutes passes]
Person: Have you called for me? You know I don't have all day.
Worker: Oh, I'm sorry, I got busy. The number is on the wall over by my phone. Just give me a few minutes and I will call for you.
[15 minutes passes. Person is waiting and becoming visibly perturbed].

With a care orientation, the worker conceptualizes help in terms of solving a problem 'for' the person. This is reinforced by a gatekeeping culture within the social service system where professional referrals carry more weight than individual initiative. With a capacity building orientation, the worker might conceptualize help in terms of addressing the challenge 'with' the person. Perhaps she would suggest they call together.

Without an explicit value set, spaces risk falling to the lowest common denominator. The only expectation becomes that people will not hurt themselves or others. Such poverty of expectations interlocks with a poverty of aspiration – where past & present mindedness blocks future imagination. Indeed, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argues that the

lack of a capacity to aspire can contribute to the persistence of material poverty (2004). We've witnessed this poverty of aspiration at every level – amongst street-involved adults, the services in which they are enmeshed, and amongst the policymakers charged with coming up with solutions.

And yet, it can be hard to aspire in the face of such urgent human need. When Alice collapses from a binge and ends up in the ICU for the second time in a month, expecting or aspiring for anything more than survival seems far fetched. People living with addictions and mental health challenges fluctuate hourly, daily, weekly, yearly. Do we match this unpredictability with ethical fluidity? Or do we match this unpredictability with ethical firmness? Can you demonstrate compassion when Alice falls off the wagon, whilst creating an environment where getting back on is the

firm expectation and social norm?

We think so. But, then, it is not up to us to set expectations and norms. We have come to realize that bottom-up design approaches can be disingenuous. The idea that design teams like ours can listen to conflicting perspectives and arrive at some elegant, middle ground solution is dangerously naïve.

We are not neutral facilitators. We entered the drop-in center with a value set predicated on flourishing – on growing people's capacities, not simply reducing harm. For us, less of a bad thing doesn't equal more of a good thing. Safety and care are necessary but insufficient for flourishing lives. When safety and care become the core mission, we believe developmental outcomes can get lost. Outcomes like increasing control, competence, possibility, etc.

Perhaps our biggest oversight was not giving voice to these different value sets earlier, and making the assumption that our value set was shared. Indeed our starting point question, **'how do we enable street-involved adults to not only survive but thrive?'** should have been more openly contested. Instead, disagreement lurked beneath the surface.

This document tries to remedy that.

We want to make values visible and therefore contestable. Whilst we cannot decide which values gain preeminence, what we can do is prototype how values link to everyday practices. Rather than keep values on paper as fuzzy words, we can experiment with how values and intents are enacted in messy, real world contexts. When 'care' is your core value you might help someone find housing by doing a search and sending some emails. When 'capacity' is your core value you might help someone find housing by sitting next to them, modeling how to search, and coaching them through an email. Even when it takes longer. That's because 'getting housing' would not be the only success metric.

Over the pages that follow, we flesh out four values and identify practices that reflect these values. We are not starting from scratch, but rather, building on elements of what is already happening. Many of these practices have been prototyped by Lindiwe Tapera, one of the frontline workers at The Meeting Place. Over a six week period, we worked alongside Lindiwe to tweak practices within her existing role. These are practices situated at a micro, meso, and macro level. They are small acts - from asking curious questions to adding new physical materials to the space to bringing-in surprising community resources like astronomers and

concert violinists.

At the same time as prototyping values-led practices with frontline workers, we have been prototyping practice-led intelligence with people in power. Our hunch is that Olivia's interactions with housing workers, health professionals, landlords, and other service providers can offer fresh insights into policy barriers and enablers. By aggregating this micro-level data and putting it into a searchable database called Grounded, we hope to close the gap between top-down decision-making and bottom-up realities. Such data can help add a layer of nuance to policy development, showing that it's not just more housing and more services needed, but how that housing and those services are structured. So far, we've introduced Grounded to 80 policymakers at a federal and provincial level. About a third have expressed desire to use Grounded.

> Watch a video of us testing Grounded here:
https://inouttoronto.wordpress.com/grounded-data-with-a-story/

OR
https://goo.gl/w26U1t

VALUES + THEORIES = INTENTIONAL PRACTICE

Practices are not only shaped by our values, but by theories about what a particular course of action might yield. These may be theories based on our past experience, or on scientific frameworks and peer-reviewed research. We've been drawing on research from a mix of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, behavioral economics, and public health. This research is about what interactions shift people's sense of self and future; open up aspirational windows; and enhance health & wellbeing. If you happen to follow InWithForward's other work, we call interactions that prompt behavior change, mechanisms. We focus on seven mechanisms as the building blocks of evidence-based change practice.

For example, 'story editing' refers to interactions that are about reframing personal narratives. Instead of telling your story to a case worker and the case worker logging your story as case notes, you retain ownership. You might write up your own story or re-tell it, with the help of reflexive questions. Reflexive questioning is a type of interviewing, drawn from narrative therapy, that helps people generate "new patterns of cognition and behavior on their own" (Tomm, 1987).

We would argue that coupling this body of literature with an articulated value set leads to intentional practice. That is practice where the what, why, and how are in alignment. Take a seemingly simple micro-practice like initiating a conversation. Were a worker like Lindiwe to incorporate some reflexive questions when talking to Olivia, she would be enacting a value set centered on healing (versus problem-solving) and drawing on a solid theoretical foundation.

(1) Modeling and Rehearsal
Enabling people to see and practice what new behaviors look and feel like in their own contexts.

(2) Story editing
Helping people to own their stories and recognize their own past solutions.

(3) Bridging Relationships
Introducing people to others who share common interests or experiences, but also have access to diverse resources and perspectives.

(4) Feedback
Visually showing people the progress they are making, and incentivizing their own milestones.

(5)Contribution and reciprocity
Giving people outlets for their skills and active roles beyond that of client, patient, or beneficiary.

(6) Taster Experiences
Exposing people to what options are out there - not via information - but via experiential learning.

(7) Barrier Busting
Getting rid of the practical reasons people can't engage in change - be it the timing, transit, technology, etc.

Self-efficacy theory says that people's self-belief is influenced by the people around them. Seeing people similar to oneself 'succeed' increases the observer's belief that they can too. But, seeing people similar to oneself fail can lower motivation and self-belief (Bandura, 1994).

Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory says human communication is a two-way process in which meanings are generated and changed through back-and-forth dialogue (Cronen et al, 1982).

Social capital theory describes the role of social networks and norms of reciprocity. Bonding social capital refers to ties between socially similar individuals, while bridging social capital refers to ties between socially different people. Such ties help get people ahead because they unlock assets in the networks that would have been unavailable to them without the connection (Fitzpatrick, 2007).

General systems theory highlights the importance of feedback on how we regulate our behavior. Research on the role of personalized feedback on alcohol & smoking use shows its effectiveness in the initiation and continuation of healthier behaviors (DiClemente, 2001).

Role salience theory explains people's attitudes, emotions, participation in multiple roles across their lifespan (Matzeder, 1995).

Critical emancipatory theory says adult education can increase social, political, and personal awareness and engagement (Tisdall, 2000).

AN INVITATION

We want to keep bringing to life intentional practice. We hope some of you, dear readers, do too.

This document isn't our final product. Our goal isn't to launch a talk fest, but to bring together thinking with doing. So we're inviting curious adults, peer workers, frontline staff, coordinators, and managers to build on what they read here. Over July and August, we will support 5 individuals to take forward a value and corresponding practice in their own contexts. We will provide coaching, free resources, ongoing feedback, and a grant for relief time. In other words, we will finance applied professional development. This won't look like a training workshop, but rather, on-the-job support.

We'll introduce you to the concept of prototyping, and walk alongside you to elevate the intentionality of what you already do or would like to do.

Intrigued? Look over this document. At the end of it, there is an expression of interest (the bid). Fill it out – it won't take long. You'll tell us about a value that resonates; identify a practice you'd like to try; and briefly describe the context within which you work. We'll get back in touch and chat with you (and, if needed, your manager) about how it could unfold.

Along the way, we'll keep updating this document to reflect what we're learning

BUT, BUT, BUT

No doubt this document will generate a flurry of questions. Great. We want debate and discussion to ensue. This document is also likely to spark some concern. Here are some of the concerns we've heard so far:

We do this. What's new?
Yes, elements of the practices you see here come from observed interactions. Our creative process uses abductive logic. That means we start on-the-ground with what we see already happening. To that, we add theory and lateral inspiration. We find that great practice is remarkably subtle. It's about who does what (the roles), where (the settings), with what tools (the props), and what words (the scripts). We aim to drill down to the details and extract the nuance of impactful practice. It's this granularity we believe is new.

We tried that before. Why are you reinventing the wheel?
We're certainly building on strong past precedence and conceptual frameworks like harm reduction, social inclusion and community development. In 2007, the Toronto Drop-in Network published their Good Practices Toolkit. This comprehensive publication includes policies, procedures, and suggested practices for drop-in centres. We aim to go a level deeper and link conceptual frameworks to the specific interactions that make up a practice. For example, the Toolkit says 'day trips' are a good practice, but does not detail out how to implement a day trip so that it has the ingredients for behavior change – bridging relationships, story editing, feedback. Nor does it link activities to particular values, and explore which values are complementary and which are contradictory.

It's not about practice. It's about resources.
We often hear the claim, "If only the sector had more resources, then things would be different." Indeed, there is a perception that it's the lack of money that perpetuates lousy outcomes. We don't think it is that simple. Impactful practice can help to generate more resources. And the right kind of resources can serve to sustain impactful practice. Resources are more than money – but people's time, skills, talents, and networks.

Do you have a neoliberal agenda?
We're committed to making our social services work better. That means asking tough questions about how our formal social services inadvertently perpetuate the very ills they were designed to alleviate. But that doesn't mean retrenching the welfare state. It means re-balancing formal and informal supports.

How to read the values

From our six month immersion in a drop-in, we have seen 4 different value sets at play: healing, learning, pragmatism and contribution. This is not an exhaustive list; there are other values present too: belonging, care, efficiency, non-interventionism, nihilism. This is also not an exclusive list; few of these values exist in isolation. By breaking down and exploring these four values individually, we can begin to unpick where they are complementary and where they are contradictory.

Values are a kind-of window. The orientation, size, tint, and thickness of the window influences how we hear, see, and interpret the world. From each window, we view the mission and activities of the drop-in differently. When the window is pragmatism, the mission has to do with curating a nonjudgmental space. The activities are those that keep people safe, even if they choose to use. When the window is healing, the mission has to do with reconnecting mind, body, and spirit. The activities are those that enable people to move away from using, and bring them in touch with themselves and an identity beyond drugs and alcohol.

Even the same every day practice can change forms from one window to the next. Take a practice like preparing a meal with a street-involved adult. From a pragmatic point of view, you view food as necessary for survival. Whatever is available is good enough. Besides, there are more important challenges to address. Yet from a healing point of view, you view food as part of re-engaging body with mind. You put focus on finding nutritionally rich foods, and offering meaningful choice. Eating well is one of the more important challenges to address.

This is the very essence of intentionality. The same practice is executed differently when there are different underpinning beliefs and desired outcomes. Over the pages that follow you will see the 4 values in more detail. Each value starts with a story of somebody we've met over the past six months, and a fictionalized account of how that value might play out within a drop-in centre context. We spell out the beliefs and outcomes behind the featured value. Then we get concrete, outlining the roles, practices, tools, and metrics which can operationalize each value. We have implemented and iterated many of these roles, practices, and tools – and illustrate what it can look like with photos and drawings.

Mission Statement

Beliefs

Practices
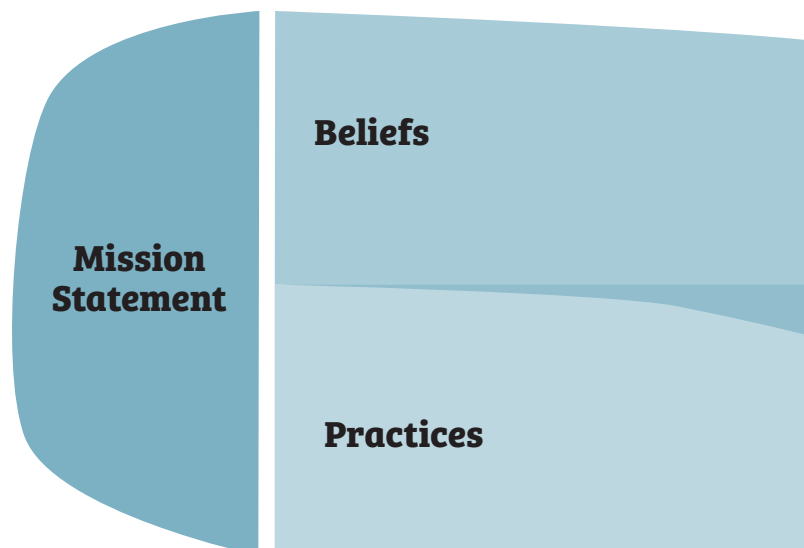
A WORD ABOUT OUR WORDS:

Mission statement
Think of this as the statement of a purpose for a drop-in centre where the selected value is at the core. What does a drop-in centre strive to achieve when [insert value] is fully expressed? Using the mission statement, we might set the language, symbols, and images of the centre.

Beliefs
Beliefs are what you hold to be true, when you've adopted a particular value stance. Beliefs are like the window framing. They are what give the value some shape and structure. You can use beliefs as a kind of litmus test for your practices.

Practices
Practices are what you actually say and do. According to Social Practice Theory, a practice has at least three parts: (1) the sequence of things you do; (2) the meaning associated with each thing you do; (3) the skills required to perform it. We try to specify all three parts.

Levels
Practices unfold at different levels. A micro-practice unfolds between ourselves and the people directly around us. A conversation with a loved one is a micro-practice. A meso-practice is one which shapes the broader environment around us. The language and routines of a staff meeting is a meso-practice. A macro-practice is something we do to influence perceptions, beliefs, and decisions with which we are not in direct contact. Writing about our experiences with street-involved adults and spreading a new kind of story to the public or decision-makers might be a macro practice.

Outcomes & Metrics
Outcomes are what success looks like when the practices unfold as intended, and the value set is living. Metrics are how funders might measure whether outcomes are achieved.

Outcomes

Metrics
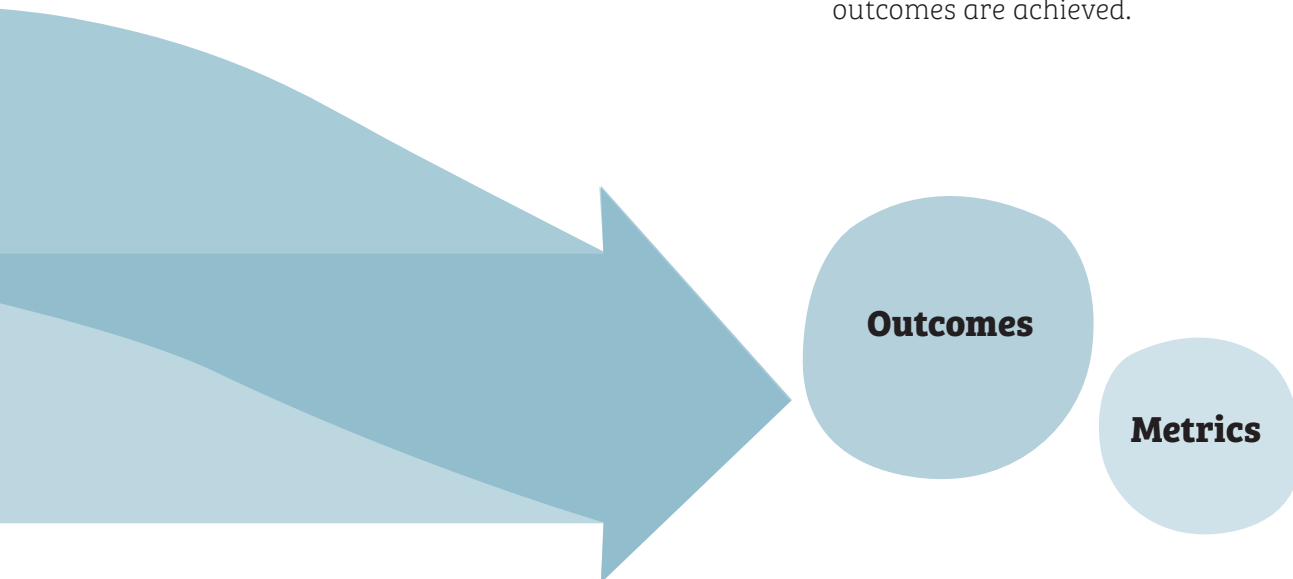
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Value Healing

MISSION STATEMENT

We acknowledge people's pain, hurt, and suffering and enable people to find some meaning, a sense of wholeness, and re-connection to themselves and the world around them.
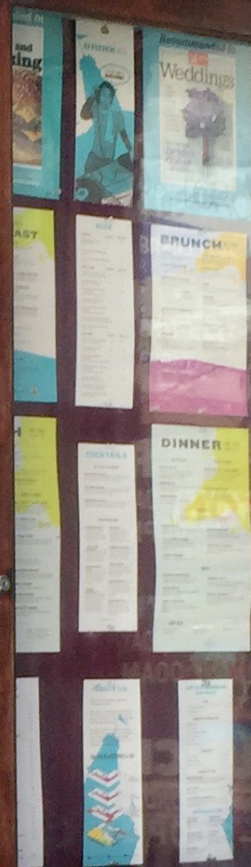
"I have my culture to fall back on" and *"Everyone needs a sense of identity."*

The story

Over the winter, and now into spring, we've had weekly conversations with Olivia. Conversations where pain, trauma and disappointment play the characters and where abuse, drugs, alcohol and death fill many scenes. Talking to Olivia, you can see the knock on effects of her traumas and the thick skin of resilience she has built around herself. Occasionally you can see where the skin's cracks are, the weak spots where there has not been the opportunity for sense-making or healing.

For the past 11-months, Olivia has been trying to place less attention on her addictions and more attention on her other passions in life; she is a strong Indigenous singer and drummer. She finds solace in her culture and often tells us: "I have my culture to fall back on" and "Everyone needs a sense of identity." She tries to keep her hands active with furniture making, repeating the phrase "I need to keep busy" like a mantra.

And yet the addiction hangs on, resurfacing after an old court case is reopened; in moments of boredom; in social situations in which Olivia longs to be like everyone else. When Olivia uses, her future narrative fades. She doesn't want help. Moments of clarity do re-emerge, but unpredictably. After a good night's sleep Olivia decides she wants to talk to someone and maybe re-enter detox. But, making appointments in advance also doesn't work for her because she does not know what her days and weeks look like and how she will feel. She doesn't want to plan for healing, she just wants to engage with it.

So how can we bring healing more into Olivia's everyday life? How can we make it less a destination and more an ongoing process of renewal?

A drop-in centre with healing as the central value would be a place where people are encouraged to make sense of their experiences; reconnect with their bodies, minds, and spirits; and explore what balance looks and feels like, from multiple cultural lenses (e.g. Eastern, Western, Indigenous, Afro-Carribean, etc.)

Healing in this scenario would not just be about outsourcing to medical professionals, but about curating a range of healing moments with and for people. These would be moments that bring together the different parts of the human experience - the physical, the emotional, the intellectual, the social and the spiritual. So nutrition, exercise, meditation,

breathing, sleep, and stress-relief would take a prominent everyday place, drawing in the skills and knowhow of community members and practitioners in training.

Indeed, time spent at the drop-in would focus on promoting self-care. The environment would give people space for their emotions. Whilst drinking would not be allowed, for those wanting distraction or relief from incessant thoughts, there would be things to do on demand. Computers and Ipods would be available for check-out. They would be loaded with content of healing practices such as mindfulness, balance, laughter therapy, etc. Content would be tagged by emotion and thus could easily be matched to what people are needing in a moment. Regular everyday conversations would be turned into healing moments where staff and trained peers would guide members in reflecting and then reframing themselves and their view of themselves in new ways. These curious conversations would not be about rehashing the past, but about recognizing people's preferred actions, motivations, desires, and purposes.

That means a member who comes to this drop-in centre would not just be waiting for a bed or a therapy session to open up. They would also be immersed in an environment laden with symbols, stories, and language promoting the "re-interpretation" of life; this is what Dr. Bernie Siegel, a well known doctor, defines as healing; it's about evolving the stories we tell about ourselves in relationship to the people and places around us.

Beliefs

WE BELIEVE THAT...

Everyone can heal.
Everyone - no matter their history or their fuck-ups - has the capacity to be whole amongst others.

People are not problems.
People aren't the problem. The problem is the problem. We separate the challenges people face, from the people they are.

Self-actualization isn't a luxury.
Yes, we all need food, sleep, and medical care. But, we also all need the opportunity to make meaning from experiences - particularly the painful ones. As Viktor Frankl says, "Suffering ceases to be suffering in some way at the moment it finds a meaning."

Relationships matter.
Healing is an inherently relational process - it involves strengthening relationships with your mind, your body, your spirit, your culture, and your significant people.

Outcomes

WE'RE AFTER ...

Greater balance
People report that their emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, and physical health are in better balance. They are attending to all parts of themselves.

More resources
People have more internal resources to draw on (more recognition of their own strengths, resiliencies, strategies) and more external resources to tap into.

Increased connectedness
People have re-established or strengthened relationships with parts of their culture and people of significance in their life.

More engagement, less isolation
People feel less 'estranged' from the world around them, less judged, more understood, and are increasing their use of community opportunities (e.g. libraries, museums, courses, talks, etc.)

Enhanced meaning
People are revising their own narratives, and report deriving some meaning from their tough experiences of distress, pain, and suffering.

Improved mental health
People report less symptoms of depression, and growing future orientation.

Metrics

- % of members who can talk about a preferred development

- % of members who can share one of their internal strengths

- % of members actively engaging in taster sessions

- # of members maintaining new practices

- % of members accessing external resources

Practices
👤 MICRO

Curious conversations (story editing)

How do you encourage people to re-frame their personal story, and recognize their own internal resources? Enter the practice of curious conversations. A Reflector engages people in one-on-one conversations. Using question prompts and tools inspired by narrative therapy, they pull out a person's exceptions, small initiatives, or preferred developments. Doing so brings people's intents, values, purposes, and strategies to the surface. For example, when Olivia took part in a curious conversation, one thing she said was "I can't make appointments." It was pointed out that she had made an appointment for this very conversation. This made her pause and reflect on her capacities. Such conversations can renew motivation, agency, choice, and aspiration.

Read more about this practice & how we have been doing it! Go to page 28

Mary Poppins bag (taster experiences)

How do you turn idleness and boredom into stimulation and learning? How do you respond to an emotion in that moment, and offer just-in-time resources? The Mary Poppins bag can help. A Reflector wears a bag loaded with novel content - excerpts of books, poems, articles, podcasts, videos, exercises tagged by topic and emotion. We know from psychological research that 'redirection' can be effective. That's where we help people express their emotion differently. When a Reflector hears a member express frustration, sadness, or boredom, they have a menu to offer. For example, when Joanne told the Reflector that she was hungover and was becoming anxious, the Reflector presented her with the menu. Joanne picked a mindfulness podcast to listen to. She reported that the exercises helped her relax and think more clearly. She said she would use this strategy again in the future - particularly to cut out the night time noise & frustration at the shelter.
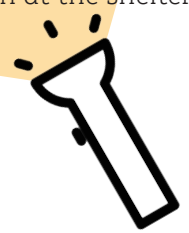
MESO

Pick 'n' mix (feedback)

How do we support and cater for people in starkly different stages of the change process all in the same place? Quite simply, by regularly asking people, "where are you at?" and offering materials to match their headspace. The transtheoretical model of change says that there are five different stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, planning, action, and maintenance. People in contemplation mode can easily fall back into precontemplation, if that's the social norm. So for those thinking about change, it's helpful to offer reinforcing messages. For example, when Joan walks into the drop-in centre, a Healing Guide meets her. Joan responds that she had a rough night, she hasn't had a drink in 6 days and really wants one. Using a set of tools, the healing curator finds out what kind of environment would work best for Joan that day. Joan elects to spend some time in the aromatherapy room. In that room are pictures of people a bit like her, with quotes and stories. She's given a pack with some nice music preloaded on a device.

Alumni Connections (Modeling & rehearsal)

How do you connect people to others who are further along in the healing process? By connecting people with 'alumni members' who have faced similar situations. A Reflector brokers face-to-face conversations, or sets-up an exchange via Facebook or text message. They have a bank of alumni stories to use, tagged by stage of change and circumstance. For example, James who has expressed a desire to reconnect with his family was introduced to Matt over Facebook. Matt used to come to the Drop-in, but over a two year period he reestablished contact with his mom. The Reflector first gave James a copy of Matt's story, which the Reflector collected using a template. Self-efficacy theory tells us that modeling can be an effective way to build motivation and skills - but only if the people doing the modeling are 'like you' and their story feels believable.

MACRO

The fuller story (Barrier busting)

Staff of Drop-in centers are often accompanying members to appointments with doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. How do we enable professionals to understand the complex realities of street-involved adults, and offer better-fit supports? A Reflector would go along to appointments equipped with stories to share with professionals. These are stories which give a fuller context of the person's life, and are tagged by service encounters. Stories are coupled with an invitation for a further conversation with the Reflector to help the professional adapt their approach. We know from research on stigma that the best way to counter negative stereotypes is through more personalized, and contextualized encounters.

Practice: Curious conversations

What we say to ourselves shapes the decisions we make. Our narratives - the stories we have in our heads about who we are, where we've been, and where we are going - change how we interact with the world around us. For many street-involved adults, their narratives can feel like a broken record: unchanging and holding them back.

Curious conversations help people reframe parts of their narrative, and take control of the next chapter of their story. These aren't conversations focused on problem solving or cheering someone up. Rather, they are conversations focused on the small exceptions, initiatives, and preferred developments. We call these a person's "project"- the little things a person is and intends to do differently in their lives. This is not a therapy session It is a 1:1 dialogue where a staff member asks a set of reflexive questions, listens to the answers, and then shares back what they are taking away from what they heard - a process known as 'witnessing'.

We see curious conversations as a micro practice because it's about zooming into the individual's internal world and tapping into their inner monologue.
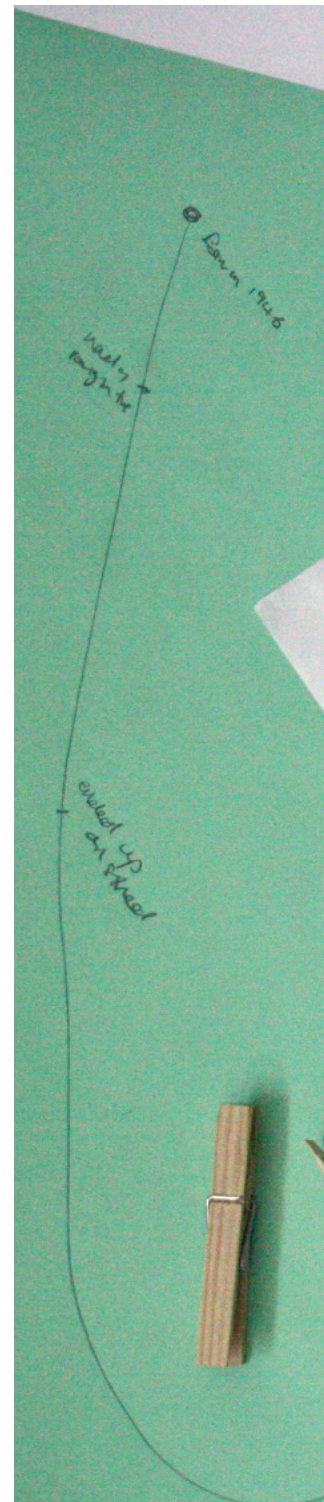
When Regan participated in a curious conversation she started seeing herself as a nurturer, not just a user. In the reflecting back or witnessing part of the conversation, the staff member shared how struck she was by her caring for others. Regan, who often feels guilty for leaving her kids, was positively reminded about the caring and nurturing side of her personality.

What makes this different from regular conversations? The conversation has an explicit intent. It is designed to help the person acknowledge their values, purposes, intentions, and steps forward. Curious conversations give individuals the space to safely engage in future-oriented reflective thinking, where they can express as much or as little as they want. Curious conversations do not delve into past traumas or triggers. Instead, they are one tool for helping people re-imagine themselves and re-locate their internal strengths.

Outcomes

Improved mental health
People report less symptoms of depression, and growing future orientation.

THIS DOESN'T INTEREST ME

THIS DOESN'T INTEREST ME

Harriet

"For me a good ... taking better care of ... to have these really amaz... like to look and feel good again..."

Ryan

"My life would be better if I had more money."

George

"I'm thinking about what I'm going to leave behind when I'm gone. I want to be known for something other than that guy with a beard"

Martin

"Getting a job would be g... got a job then I know I c... my life around and be... would happen for m..."

Angel

"For me a go... feeling calm... all the time"...

Ma...

"When... would ... with my... in 7 years...

Patty

"It's ... to this ... before, bu... want to be al... someone to grow...

Tim

"At the... better f... can dep...

"Last wi... It was ... don't ... Fir...

FINDING OUT MORE

STARTING A PROJECT?

CURIOUS QUESTIONS

Are you ready to be curious?
Jump into this experiment.
These questions aren't about focusing on a person's problem, not about emphasizing with a person, not even to cheer lead them on. These questions are about finding out where a person sees themselves going.

When you hear them talk focus on **exceptions**, where the person has taken a step forward, and where the person has a sense of control. What are the underlying ... ... you are pulling out? Try:

HOW

INVITATION

- Start by giving a member a formal invitation to a conversation.
- Use our invitation card or make your own.

Some things you might say are:

- "This is an invitation for me to listen to your story and share it back to you."
- "We don't have to talk about anything you don't want, just what's comfortable for you."

CHOOSE SETTING

Together with the member choose where you want to have this conversation. Ask yourselves:

- Will you be comfortable?
- Who else is around?
- Are there too many distractions?
- How long can you stay there?
- Do you have to buy something?
- Can you have a private conversation?

WHY

Invitations make the exercise seem special, and communicate its purpose. This facilitates entry into the conversation, and helps to set bounds.

Curious conversations are meant to be a different kind of conersation. By changing the setting, you are subtely indicating to this person that this is going to be different. Settings play a key role in how people interact. and open up.

HOW TO START

- As you are having a casual conversation keep an ear out for all the things that could be a person's "project".

- One way to initiate a deeper conversation is to share something about yourself. This does not mean that you become the focus of the conversation, rather, that by sharing you are expressing some kind of understsanding of what they are talking about.

WHAT PROJECT?

Use the outcome cards tool:

First ask them to sort the cards into 2 groups- cards that "interest me and cards that don't". (Helpful hint- remember you can ask questions at any point. cards are there to help facilitate conversation, they aren't the exercise).

- Ask them to choose their top 3 cards in the pile that "interests me."

- Then ask "what is it about each card that interests them or resonates with them?"

The questions selected focus on finding out what someone wants for their life moving forward. The questions are inspired by narrative therapy. The point isn't to focus on a person's problems and solve their challenges. Rather, it is to focus on their desired outcomes.

GOING DEEPER

Use the curious conversation tool to help you draw out a person's personal project.

The pamphlet is divided into 3 sections of questions. Use some of these questions or write your own.

- Some of our favourite questions are:

How do you want things to be different?

What have you done that you're proud of?

"I want to have a good life for myself" —> "What does that look like?"

Questions are asked with specific language, in specific ways. These questions are influenced by narrative therapy practice, which is rich with metaphors.

HOW

TAKING NOTES
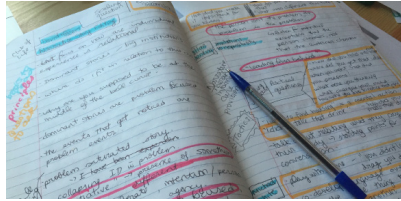
- Jot down what the person tells you, include quotes, and words they use.
- If you don't feel comfortable writing and listening, ask if you can audio record the conversation.
- Categorize your notes during the session or afterwards with coloured pens. Categories could include 'expressed challenges', 'actions they are taking', and 'any mention of something they want to do differently in their life'.

WRAPPING UP
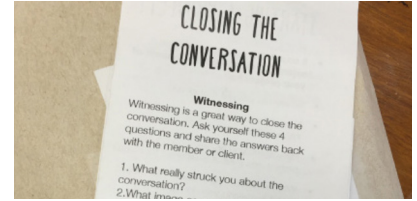
To close the conversation use the "outsider-witnessing" technique. Answer the following 4 questions and share the answers back with the member or client:

1. What really struck you about the conversation?

2. What image comes to mind from this conversation? (if no image comes to mind skip this question)

3. What was it like for you to hear this from the person? (how did you feel during the conversation?)

4. What do you take away from this conversation? (i.e. what did you learn about yourself?)

WHY

Writing notes is an important part of this practice because you will return a person's story back to them at a later time.

Organizing what they say into categories helps you reach further understanding of the information you have collected.

GIVE BACK

As a closing gift leave the member something to spark remembrance of the conversation.

One option is to take one of the outcome cards that they found most interesting, fold it, and on the inside jot down one or two of the meaningful answers that came up in "outsider witnessing".

Other things you can leave are mementos of the conversation such as 1 meaningful word written on a stone.

Dont know what to write? Put one of these phrases on a card:

- "I really admire x about you..."

FOLLOW UP

In the days and weeks after the conversation you might follow-up and see how they are doing.

Ask them:

- Did the conversation spark anything for them?
- Have they been doing anything differently?
- Have they taken steps towards their project? What supports can you broker them to?
- There is always more room for curious conversations; these conversations can be repeated as they pursue their project, or identify a new project.

Outsider Witnessing is a proven technique to help people see their story from someone else's perspective. Hearing someone's thoughts on what you just talked about can spark insights for you, provided these thoughts are motivating and non-judgemental.

Underlying the theory behind brokering people to new supports and inspiration is 'bridging social capital' and the notion that informal resources have value. You can broker people to stories, articles, and other community members.

Practice: Mary Poppins bag

The Mary Poppins bag introduces people to on-demand content and interactive exercises to (legally) stimulate the mind and expand people's points of view. The bag also provides people with concrete strategies and activities for relieving boredom or cravings.

The bag is filled with surprising pieces of content - everything from DIY mindfulness exercises to fictional excerpts to poems to scientific articles to musical podcasts and informative videos. The idea is that the Mary Poppins bag has constantly evolving content attractive to many segments. People are given choice and agency over what to read, watch, listen, and do.

We see this as a micro practice because it is about the individual, the choices they make, and the conversations they have.

When Vincent picked something out of the Mary Poppins bag, he surprised everyone by choosing a package of feminist poetry. It contained a few poems, each written in a different style, some suggestions for how he could write one himself, and a blank notebook & pencil.

We've found that the Mary Poppins bag is easy to implement and incorporate as part of a staff member's every day practice. With the Mary Poppins bag, staff or 'Learning Curators' gain access to a range of tools for calming emotions and introducing novelty.

The bag would not get stale. Fresh content would be regularly made and added. This is content that comes from members, libraries, community members, the Internet, really everywhere. Content is tagged to make it easy for Learning Curators to match a person's interest and state to what is available. With the Mary Poppins bag, idle conversations can turn into more meaningful moments.

Outcomes

Greater self-efficacy
People express greater control and competency (self-efficacy) over learning new things, and are empowered to make their own informal decisions.

Increased coping mechanisms
People report greater awareness and usage of strategies and resources to redirect their thinking

STRETCHING / EXERCISING

COLOUR WALK

NEW BORDA

LISTEN TO A MEDITATION

LISTEN TO A POD-CAS

The *Complete* *Collected* *Poems* *of* *Maya* *Angelou*

HOW

ON THE LOOK OUT

- As a Learning Curator, you are always looking for opportunities to provide some new stimulation for members. You see your role as constantly introducing fresh ideas via a range of formats - paper, podcasts, video, games, etc.

- When you hear members say things like, 'I'm bored,' 'I'm anxious' or 'I'm sad' take this as a moment for connecting them with new content.

MANY OPTIONS

- Use the many resources in your bag to introduce members to what's available. Resources are grouped by emotion, by topic, and by action (read, watch, do).

- Show the members the menu card and ask them to choose a piece of content that sparks their interest.

WHY

GET THE ENVELOPE

- Pick the envelope that matches the content chosen from the menu.

- Envelopes come with instructions on the outside. Read the instructions to the member.

MAKING SENSE?
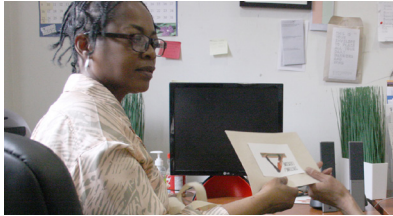
- Chat with the member about what's contained inside, and answer any questions

- Decide whether they will do what's in the envelope on their own, or whether you will do it together

TIME TO REFLECT

- Check-in with the member after they've used the content.

- You can ask: What struck them about the content they just encountered? How did it affect their mood? Would they recommend the content to somebody else in the drop-in? When? Why? What would they add to the bag?

People don't know what they don't know so by providing people with a menu of options you give them a taste of what is available as well as giving them choice.

Reflecting is a key component of any learning experience. It helps you understand what resonated and what did not. It also gives the individual a chance to be a co-producer in the practice.

Value Learning

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe we're all learning beings; that with the right stimulus, we can unlearn and relearn ways of seeing ourselves and the world around us. Our job is to continuously provide fresh stimulus, and enable people to be curious about themselves and their situations. After all, **"No person is a homeless person and nothing else"**

"Well, everyday is the same."

The story

When we ask Fred, one of our regular conversation partners, how he's going, he replies, "Well, everyday is the same." Fred is in his early 40s, with long salt-n-pepper hair. He's been on and off the streets for twenty years. He last had a roof over his head two years ago.

Fred never finished high school and sometimes works as a builder. He sees himself as an intellectual and once spent an entire winter working his way through transcendentalist philosophy books in the mil-dewy basement of the local library. And yet, whenever Fred is offered a place in an adult education class, he declines. He is disinterested in formal education. Besides, it's not worth doing algebra all over again. What Fred does have real interest in is meeting philosophy, astronomy or applied physics professors - people with actual knowledge in their subject matter. But, he doesn't want to have to go to a new place to meet them. He's worried people will judge how he looks. Plus, he is always carrying his pack on his back.

Like Fred, Cherry also didn't finish high school. Photography, media studies, and journalism interest her. As do zillions of other things. She just likes being a part of new, not boring things. Things that keep her mind busy, not thinking about her addictions, and that put her in the company of others. Learning for Cherry isn't about sitting in a classroom or even gaining specific job skills. It's about stimulating and social experiences.

So what would a drop-in centre where learning is the core value look like for people like Cherry and Fred?

In this scenario, learning isn't to be confused with schools, classrooms, credentials, or work. Learning is as much about un-learning destructive thoughts & actions as it is about re-learning fresh ways of thinking and doing. Indeed, it is a mindset of curiosity and inquiry, rather than success or achievement. And it is based on the latest neuroscience research showing that adult brains are not static. With practice, new neural pathways can form. In other words, we can get cognitively un-stuck.

Staff in this scenario would act as content curators. Their role would be to create an environment with fresh stimulus for thinking, for conversation, for mobilization. The drop-in becomes a hive of learning activity as well as a hub brokering people's learning to the broader world. Day retreats are arranged to introduce members to community events and surprising places - be it philosophy cafes or brain labs. Post-docs, professionals and folks with super specific know-how are regularly invited in to give pro-bono

talks, workshops, performances, and 1:1 skill shares. Rather than fit into a charity model whereby drop-ins accept extra food and clothes, learning centres would also activate community member's specific knowhow and skills. The narrative would be one of sharing and swapping conversation, ideas, politics, current events.

Members wouldn't be passive listeners in these talks and experiences, but co-producers. They would be encouraged to reflect afterwards, and to make content that can be shared with others. Indeed, staff would be equipped with all sorts of resources such as podcasts & stories written by members, book chapters, articles, videos, and exercises. These resources would be part of a continually growing content bank shared between centres. Content would be tagged by emotion (e.g. good when you're anxious), by medium (e.g. listening), and by specific topic (black holes).

As a content rich environment, drop-ins as learning centres would offer plenty of in-the-moment alternatives to boredom and idleness. That's not to say boredom and idleness don't also have a place, but they would not be the dominant place. Photos and quotes of people's latest experiences would adorn the walls, Facebook, and social media pages. The language would be of discovery, growth, and development. Fred would say, "Did you hear that talk yesterday on rational decision making? I'm listening to this podcast about a philosopher named Heidegger, but I reckon he got a few things wrong."

Beliefs

WE BELIEVE THAT...

Find new stimulants.
If you always do the same thing, you'll always get the same result. External stimulation - be it a new space, conversation, or thing to think about - opens up new pathways of possibility.

It's never too late to unlearn, and relearn.
Our brains are never done developing. With good nourishment, you can reprogramme old parts.

No learning without reflection.
Reflection means taking ownership of your learnings so they make sense for you.

Good learning is co-produced
People don't learn in a vacuum but through experiences and interactions. Good learning connects your own experience.

Every moment is a teachable moment.
Learning is not limited to formal education, rather every lived experience is an opportunity to see things from a new light.

Outcomes

WE'RE AFTER …

Improved sense of self
People report feeling more confident about their own skills and knowledge, and have a healthier sense of self. They are less fearful of interacting with community members.

Greater self-efficacy
People express greater control and competency (self-efficacy) over learning new things, and are more empowered to make their own informal decisions.

Diversified social network
People meet others who share their interest, not just their lifestyle, and take-up more opportunities.

Increased autonomy
People's increased engagement in bigger ideas and concepts increases their motivation to shape the world around them.

Increased coping mechanisms
People report greater awareness and usage of strategies and resources to redirect their thinking

Improved mental health
Spending time engaged, stimulated and active reduces boredom, self-destructive behaviors, and future orientation.

Improved employability
Learning can lead to development of 'soft' and hard skills necessary for finding or creating work.

Metrics

- % of people who take-up further informal or formal learning

- % of people who make new connections.

- % of people who are engaged in an organized activity or fieldtrip during the day.

- % of people reporting learning a new strategy or skill each month.

- % reduction in boredom and related substance usage.

Practices

MICRO

Topping and tailing (taster experiences)

How do you turn lectures, demos, workshops, and group conversations into great learning moments? By framing each one from start to finish as an explicit learning event. Drawing on andragogy (the pedagogy of adult learning), Learning Facilitators begin events by setting learning goals, and end them with a set of reflective questions. Research shows that clearly articulated goals enhance motivation and a sense of achievement. For example, although Alice comes to informal talks she often can't recall what the talks were about. With the practice of topping and tailing, Alice is not left to extract the interesting information on her own, but is guided to consider the relevance of what is being talked about through three layers of prompts: (1) what, (2) so what, and (3) now what?

MESO

Daily Retreats (bridging relationships)

Communities aren't just comprised of streets, homes, and services - but also cultural institutions, gardens, galleries, architecture, and the rest. How do we bridge people to enriching experiences and interest-based (versus lifestyle-based) communities? That's where Daily Retreats come in. Each day Learning Facilitators host curated tours, and introduce members to surprising spots. Drop-ins have a physical day travel agency desk, which provides annotated maps of the local area, DIY guides, and invitations to meet-up groups outside of the drop-in centre walls. Not wanting to go alone? Volunteer Guides can go with you. For example, Steven, who spends all of his days at the drop-in has walked past the AGO thousands of times, but never felt he could go in. On a Daily Retreat, he went in, for free, met a docent and had his first real conversation about art. He's fascinated by Picasso, and the guide invited him to an upcoming lecture series. We know from the adult learning literature that motivation is linked with relevancy. Now that Steven sees the relevancy of Picasso, he wants to learn more.

Read more about this practice & how we have been doing it! Go to page 48
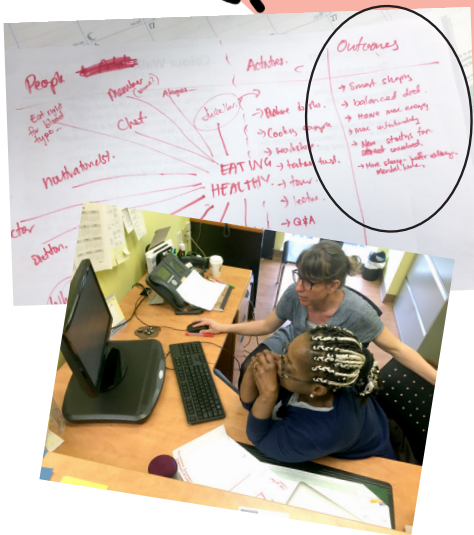
Bringing-in external resources (taster experiences)

In cash scarce environments like drop-ins, how do you find the resources for inspiring programming? Where do new ideas and topics of conversation come from? Learning Facilitators spend time each week creating value propositions and reaching out to postdocs, professionals, and community members with niche knowhow. They work with them to design and deliver probono lectures, demos, workshops, performances, small group conversations and casual sharing of interests. Facilitator Laura reflects that she always thought not having a budget was a barrier to contacting external people. Discovering how to create a pool of probono resource has opened up all sorts of new possibilities. She doesn't deliver the same program week after week anymore; instead, there are new offers each week. We know from the education literature that it is much more powerful to learn from someone passionate about their craft - and that this increases the likelihood of them being bridged to future opportunities and networks.

Read more about this practice & how we have been doing it! Go to page 56

MACRO

Premium Membership Cards (Barrier Busting)

How do you encourage street-involved adults to use the many resources of the city - the museums, libraries, concert halls, etc? By eliminating two of the biggest barriers - the entrance fee, and the perception of being unwelcome. Many community centres already have arrangements for free admittance with these institutions, yet most members of drop-ins aren't aware of this. Premium membership cards list all the places in the city participants can go, for free. Facilitators work to broker more deals with institutions, and help them to feel comfortable engaging with street-involved adults. Steven who enjoyed learning about Picasso at the AGO is now also spending a few hours every week at the ROM. During these hours he engages his brain in a different way and reports feeling less bored, and less compelled to use.

Practice: Daily Retreats

Daily retreats are about introducing people to places rich with inspiration and intellectual stimulation - along with the norms and motifs of those settings. These are settings like the brain lab, the art gallery or the medicinal herb garden where your primary identity is not that of a street-involved adult but as learners or connoisseurs. The physical objects you are surrounded with, the words, and the routines convey something different to those of a shelter or a drop-in centre.

We see this as a meso practice because it's about switching-up the environment in which people are steeped, and therefore the expectations about how you are supposed to act, the roles you are supposed to assume, and the visual and verbal cues you get.

When Fred visited a neuroscience research lab, his reality momentarily shifted. He was treated not as an uninvited outsider, but as any other interested person. His curiosities and questions were encouraged. His niche know-how was respected.

Whilst outings are not new practices for drop-in centres, shelters or community centres, outings as a regular and intentional part of the day-to-day may be. Rather than a special event, intentional outings would become part of the daily fabric. Opportunities to leave the dominant space, enter a new setting as a learner / critic / appreciative inquirer, and interact with people based on a shared interest, would be as normal as playing pool or dominoes.

Outcomes
Improved sense of self
People report feeling more confident about their own skills and knowledge, and have a healthier sense of self. They are less fearful of interacting with community members.

Diversified social networks
People meet others who share their interest, not just their lifestyle, and take-up more opportunities.

HOW
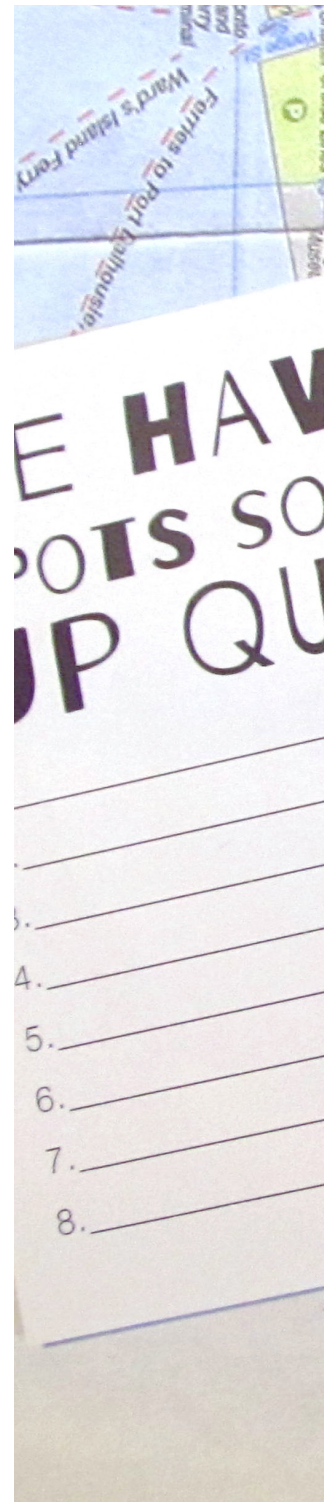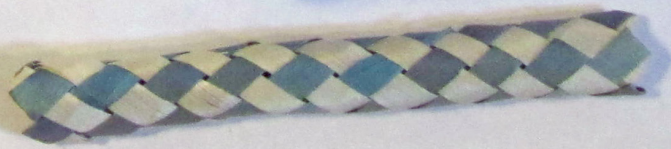
As a starting point for imagining a day retreat, ask these questions:

- What specific outcomes do you want to achieve? Is it about introducing people to novelty? Is it about brokering people to a wider network? Is it about giving people a fresh perspective, and improved sense of self?

- Think about the types of places you could go to archive this, and the type of learning you'd like to impart? For example, maybe a new gallery has opened up, and you'd like to introduce people to a new style of postmodern art?

WHY

While field trips aren't new, we define a good day retreat as one where the theme and the outcomes are clearly articulated. One intention of day retreats is to bridge folks to new people, contexts, and experiences. Providing a bridge to something new widens what is possible for a person.

DECIDE WHERE & WHAT

Take your desired outcomes and the themes you want to explore, and look at the people and places around you:

- Search for an organized event. Check local magazines online to find connections.
- Leverage what's around you. Go for a walk through nearby alleys and look at what makes graffiti different from art; check out a horticulture book from the library and head to a park; or go to the archives with folks to research the history of your building.

Choose an exercise to do during & after the event

- For example, during a walk you could pick a mindfulness exercise to do. Or introduce an architecture concept. Or explore the concept of freedom of expression.

PRACTICE THE EXPERIENCE

Practice the exercise you have chosen.

Make a storyboard of the steps from start to finish. Ask yourself:

- How you will start the exercise?
- What is your script/ what you will say?
- What questions can you ask?
- How you will conclude the exercise?

Do a run through once or twice until you feel comfortable.

Role play the exercise a few times, especially if you have never done it before and feel nervous. The more you practice the more relaxed you will feel doing it. As you practice you might find that you play around with different words and intonations.

ADVERTISE THE RETREAT
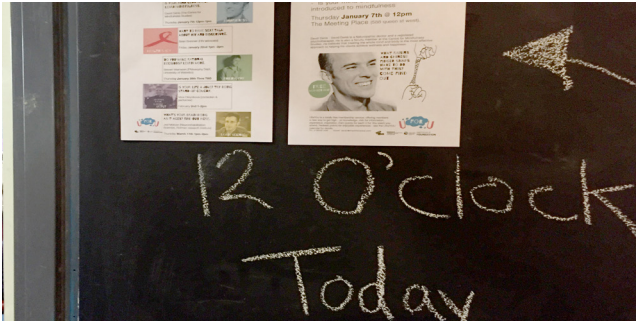
How will you let people know about the latest day retreat? Some advertising options include:

- Signage: chalk, postcards, travel guides
- Word of mouth: recruit a member to help
- Social media: post to Facebook group

Come up with a provocative title, that draws out the themes or questions you want to explore. Instead of something like 'Alley Walk' you could call it 'Is it graffiti or is it art?'

Think like a travel agency. How would a travel agency package the experience - what would be included? What would make it sound attractive?

RECRUITING

Part 1 - a few days before

- Use the signage as a prop, or conversation starter to peak people's interest.
- Go bigger - set up a table or a stand to attract people to you and then talk about the day retreat.
- Text and Facebook people that showed interest. Stuff a postcard into their mailbox.

Part 2 - day of

- Use the poster or postcards to recruit new folks. Point to photos from past day retreats as evidence of what they'll be missing if they don't come along.

Behind clear advertising is a concept called hierarchy of information. What's the most important detail to walk away with? Use at least two different font sizes to differentiate more important information from less important information.

MEETING POINT

- Try creating a consistent meetup spot in your space where people expect to find out about the latest day retreats and schedule their next learning adventure.

- At the meetup spot, you can have maps of the latest adventure and photos from last adventures.

THE RETREAT

- Think of yourself as a tour guide. Introduce yourself. State the goals for the day. Describe the route.

- Distribute roles to members. One member could be the photographer. Another member could be the sound recorder (using a phone or dictaphone). Yet another member could be the navigator.

- Bring along printed materials to read (i.e. a definition of graffiti) or props to distribute (i.e. notebooks or disposable cameras)

- Encourage members to ask questions and share what they know. How does this compare to other experiences they've had?

One of the best ways to create a new social norm is to curate a distinct physical space, with distinct routines. Just like a travel agency sparks feelings of curiosity with a board of destinations and a wall of beautiful brochures, you can create a physical space that engenders a similar feeling with a board of local retreats and lovely photos.

In adult learning theory, great learning feeds off of participant's interests, builds competencies, and feels relevant. Explore the relevancy of day trips on people's lives by asking direct questions, and making connections to bigger concepts and ideas. You can use small moments - i.e. commenting on a building's architecture - to raise bigger questions about people's sense of place.

REFLECTING + FEEDBACK

On your way back ask people to reflect on the field trip and activity. Some things you can ask are

- Was it a good way for them to spend their time? What did they learn? Have they been inspired? What else would they like to do?

Also ask for feedback about how it went. Some things you can ask them:

- What did they like? What did they not like? What would they like to see different?

FOLLOW-UP

- Print out photographs taken during the field trip and display them on a wall (this is also good advertising for future field trips).

- Announce the next field trip.

It's good to ask for feedback. Feedback strengthens the work you do. Additionally, in this case, giving people the option for feedback is a way to include folks in the process. Through co-creation folks can gain a greater sense of self-value, and confidence in their abilities.

When a fieldtrip ends it does not mean that the experience is over. Returning a memento or photograph of the experience is a nice way to help folks remember it. Moreover it can remind folks about how it felt trying something new and the reminder might encourage them to do it again.

Practice: Bringing in external resources

Bringing external people in is all about infusing new topics and fresh faces into places like drop-in centres. Post-docs, professionals and community members with expertise are invited to share their skills, knowledge, and passions. The focus is on the exchange of rich inspiration and giving street-involved adults opportunities to open their minds, discover new things, explore different realities, and create new pathways for future learning. It's about people doing something different, acknowledging that: "if you always do the same thing, you will always get what you always got".

Bringing new people in is a meso practice, in that it changes up what happens in the surrounding environment, and adds external stimulation.

When Mike met the astronomy professor, he was pretty surprised. Finally, here was a chance to ask the specific questions about the universe that had been piling up in his head. The astronomer gave more than just basic answers and introduced Mike to concepts he never knew and hadn't read online. Before the astronomer left, he invited Mike to his monthly open telescope night and to join a group of other amateur astronomers. Mike has never had a chance to look through a telescope, and now that he knows this astronomer personally, he definitely plans to go. He is super excited that his long-held passion for the universe has been re-ignited.

Whilst bringing people into a community centre context is not a new practice, building up a free pool of informal resource may be. There are tonnes of untapped and underutilized resources in the community, and many people who are willing and surprisingly eager to give their time. This practice also creates an environment of learning that goes both ways. While street-involved adults are stimulated with new content, the stigmas external people might hold about street-involved adults can be broken down by means of their close engagement with folks at the centre.

Outcomes

Diversified social network
People meet others who share their interest, not just their lifestyle, and take-up more opportunities.

Increased autonomy
People's increased engagement in bigger ideas and concepts increases their motivation to shape the world around them.
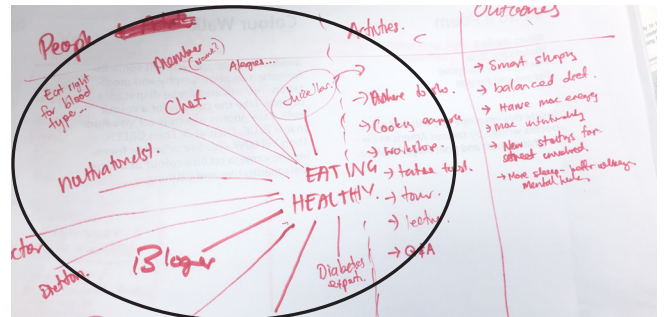
HOW

WHY
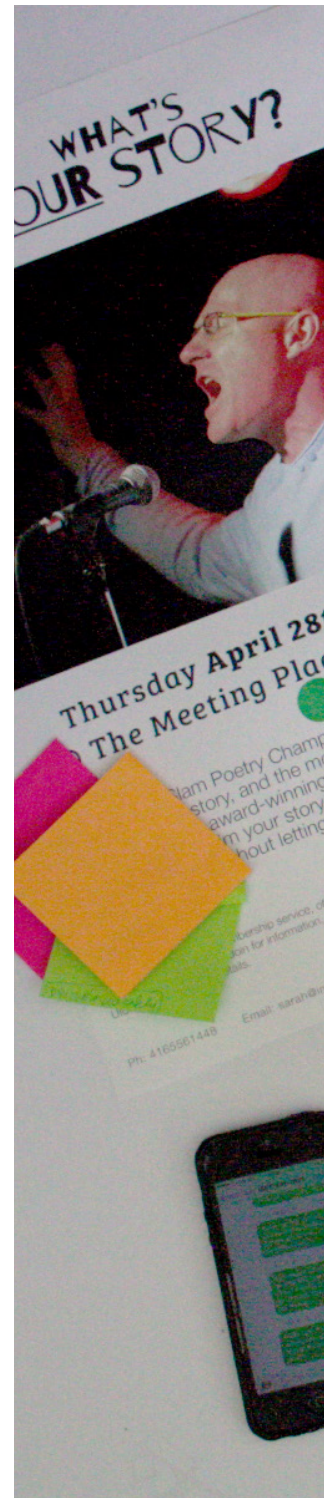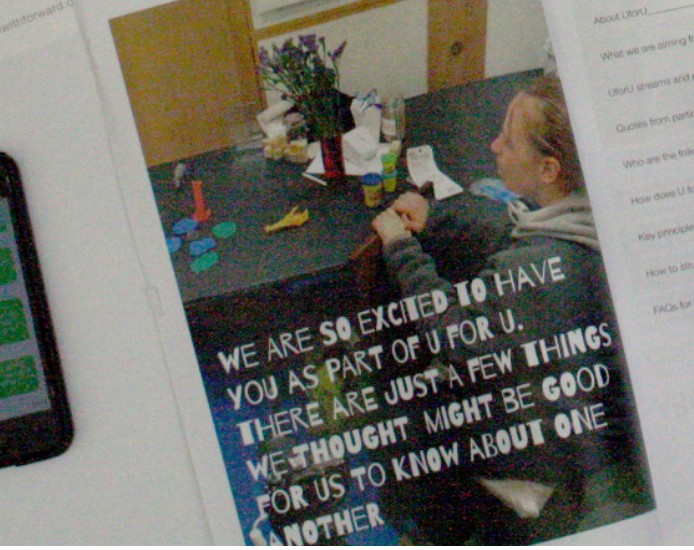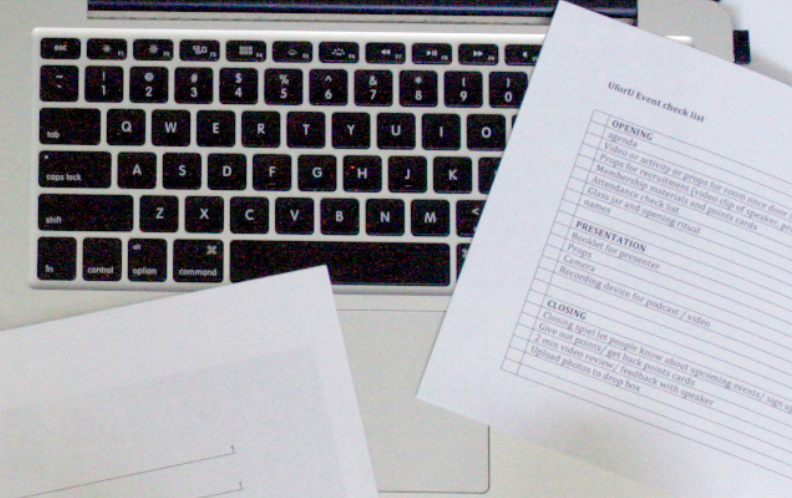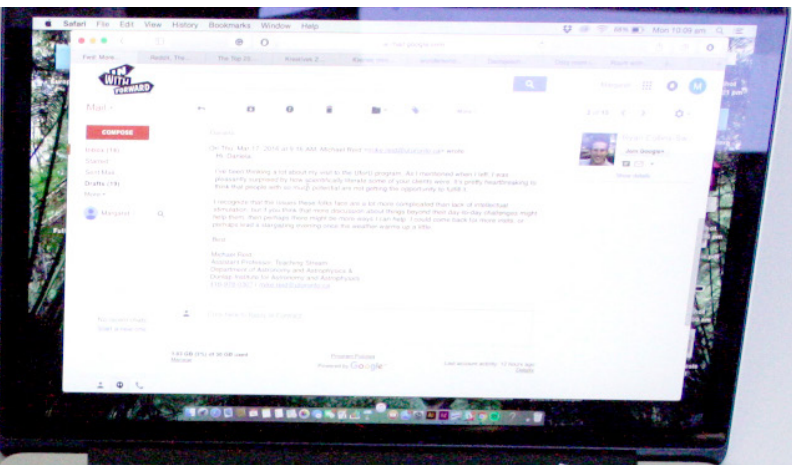
CHOOSE A FOCUS


You can choose a topic of interest by:

- Creating a mindmap of different themes and issue areas, and asking members to add nodes.

- Making a set of prompting cards with different session titles (e.g. Black holes) and asking members to rank their top interests.

- If the topic is wide such as 'eating healthy' break it down into as many niche concepts as you can: sustainable farming, urban gardens, herbal medicine & supplements, farm-to-market businesses, slow food, nutrition, diets, etc.

People don't know what they don't know. While you want to start by asking people what they want to learn, don't stop there. Instead, offer stimulus. Put some weird, wacky, and surprising ideas down for people to react to.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?
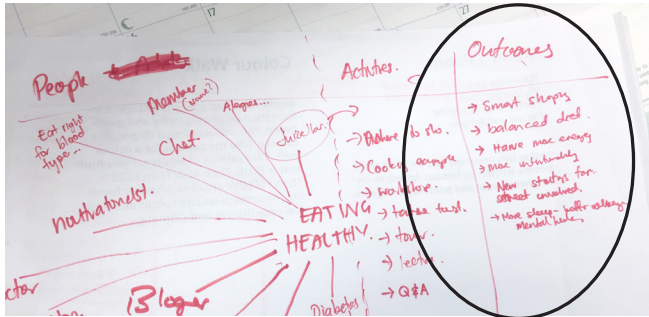
Ask yourself and members, what might come from exploring this topic and bringing someone with niche know-how in?

Some examples:

- Practical strategies for eating well in shelters
- A new recipe to try without a stove
- Learning what to eat to have more energy
- Greater confidence & control in eating well
- New insights into the food production system
- Finding out about volunteer and job opportunities in the sustainable food industry

SEARCH

- Take the topics you brainstormed, and run a Google search for local experts. The more specific your topics (i.e. urban gardening), the better your results will be.
- Try several different keywords. For example, "urban gardening" and "expert" and "Toronto."
- University department websites are great places to start a search. For example: trying to find a nutritionalist? Check the local University's Department of Health or Nutrition.
- Meet-up groups, local networks, or professional bodies are also a good port of call. For example, there is the 'Dieticians of Canada' group.
- It is best to contact people directly - to find individuals' emails as opposed to general administrators.

Before running a session on the chosen topic, ask what is the intentionality behind the learning session? Who are you doing this for and why? What does success look like?

Helpful keywords include:

- The area of the city (e.g. Downtown Toronto)
- The topic (urban gardening)
- Possible job titles of experts (nutritionist, herbal medicine doctor)
- The skills you are interested in (healthy cooking)

MAKE A SPREADSHEET

- Use a 'Contact Management System' (we use a program called HighRise) or just use a simple spreadsheet to keep track of the people you are contacting. You can use our template.

- We find these headings helpful:

- Name

-Credential

-Email

-Website address

-Biographical details

-Date of first contact

-# Of contact attempts

BRAINSTORM WHAT YOU WANT TO COMMUNICATE
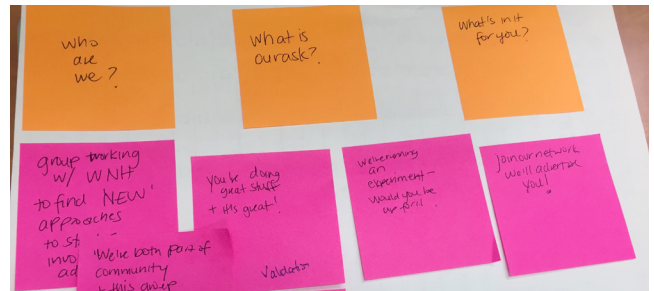

- Brainstorm why an outside expert would want to share their skills and know-how, pro-bono.

- Develop the value proposition. That's answering the question: what will they get out of coming in?

- Get clear on the ask. What do you want from them? How long? In what format - a workshop, a performance, 1:1 meet-up, a tour?

- Figure out the framing. What language might be attractive to them? Do you have testimonials from others?

Here we are drawing on sales & marketing theory to figure out what appeals to people. We try to think about what might matter to them. Is it validating their expertise? Is it drawing on their desire to be altruistic? Is it building up their resume? Is it helping them to feel part of their community? We are explicit about the value-add to them in our communications.

WRITE AN EMAIL
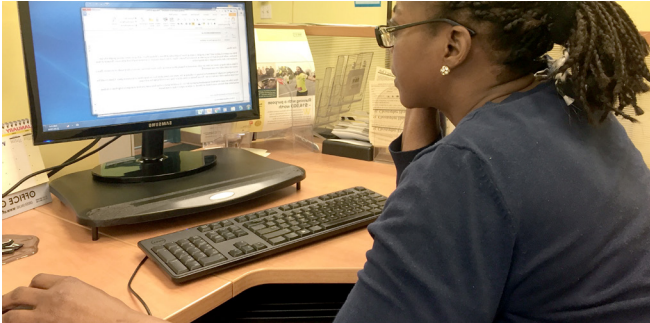
- Write the person a personal note. Not a form letter.

- It is helpful to think in terms of different headings for your email. Plus, what will get them to read our email? (We like the heading: "seeking your expertise on ...")

- In the email:

-Be confident.

-Use short sentences and clear language.

-Tell them who you are, and why their skills matter to this population group.

-Be upfront with your ask.

-Clearly state what they will get in return (experience, helping people etc.)

The best emails are ones that are personal. What struck you about their biography? Read their bio & webpage to choose your framing accordingly. If they say they already run free classes at a community centre, say you are very interested in bringing their experience into a new context like a drop-in. Describe why that matters.

You don't need to mention that you are asking for their time for free, it will be implicit in your framing of the email.

Value Pragmatism

VALUES STATEMENT

We believe that people can make their own decisions. Our job is to ensure people feel respected and safe if they choose to use, and to make visible other paths that they can also choose.

"It all keeps me sane,"

The story

Darren describes crack, beer, and pot as a kind of safety blanket. "It all keeps me sane," he says. He's been on and off the streets since the age of eight, and using since he was eleven. His doctor has told him that he shouldn't stop unless supervised because it might kill him. Whilst crack and pot remain an important part of his daily routine, he's drinking a bit less and getting into fewer fights. He chalks this up to the pacifying effects of age.

As a kid, Darren spent a lot of time trying to get away from the child protection system. He hated school, never learning to read or write. He hates hospitals almost as much, despite bad arthritis that requires ongoing care. Institutions are really not his thing. He does not like structure, instead, filling his days with conversations, laughs, and panhandling. The loose nature of the drop-in centre works for him. There's coffee, food, and plenty of entertaining people around. There, he can just be himself - focusing on the present: on raising enough money for a shrimp burrito and a beer for lunch.

Indeed, setting future goals isn't attractive to Darren. He doesn't have a desire to change things - except, maybe buying a pet iguana - and believes he manages fine with his addiction.

A drop-in centre with pragmatism as the core value would not only respect Darren's choice to use, but would give him the space to do so, within reasonable and safe limits. His drinking would not need to happen out-of-sight. Instead, he could openly drink, provided he was not putting himself or others in harm's way.

A pragmatic approach starts with the assumption that people like Darren are rational beings who make rational decisions. People's decisions are theirs - and it's not humanistic to push people to where society wants them to be. That doesn't mean that a drop-in centre based on pragmatism encourages alcohol and drug use. It just means that it doesn't prohibit or take a punitive approach.

'Readiness to change' theory would underpin a pragmatic drop-in centre. This is theory that says people are at different stages of change. Some people, like Darren, aren't thinking about it. Others are starting to think about it. Still others are planning a detour, and taking some small steps in that direction.

At a drop-in centre oriented towards pragmatism, all these stages are made equally visible and accessible to people. Stories of people functioning with their drug use plaster the wall, alongside stories of people using less. Staff take ordinary and everyday conversations as an opportunity to engage in reflexive moments and ask members questions to help them externalize the challenges they face, and separate their addiction from their identity. For those interested in understanding more about addiction, there are groups based on a range of different philosophies and scientific traditions. There's groups with addiction as a chronic disease at the core. There's groups with addiction as a learned behavior at the core. Opportunities to dive into and debate contrasting perspectives about the brain, emotion, and decision-making are commonplace. People are given tools (via Facebook, texts, journals) to track their drug and alcohol use, and discover for themselves the

relationships between their use, moods, sense of control, and sense of self.

Not only would pragmatically oriented drop-ins engage street-involved people with addictions in exploration of the idea of addiction, it would also engage the public. Indeed, breaking down stigma, judgement, and resulting marginalization would be a core value. This would come about by creating shared spaces for conversation; disseminating people's personal stories using social media and physical displays and offering a range of resources on the differing perspectives of addiction.

Beliefs
WE BELIEVE THAT...

Work with people where they are at
Start with where people are at versus where you want people to be.

The basics, first
Get the basics right. Satisfy people's need for undisturbed, sleep, non-judgmental medical care, and nourishing food.

Make safe
The harm is inevitable, so lessen its destructive impact. Harm reduction keeps alive the possibility of recovery - because "there is no recovery in a graveyard."

Honouring people's choices
Everyone has the right to be their own agent. Respect people's decisions, rather than stigmatize, discriminate, or punish.

Offer, but don't impose
Make visible alternative choices, possibilities and opportunities - but don't make change a precondition to engagement.

Outcomes

WE'RE AFTER ...

Improved sense of self
People report seeing themselves in a more positive light. They increasingly feel more 'in control' of their drug and alcohol usage, with the capacity to make decisions.

Greater political awareness
People view themselves less as 'second-class' citizens, and more as having a legitimate voice.

Less stigmatized
People living with an addiction feel less judged by other professionals and service providers. Professionals and service providers report greater understanding of people living with addictions.

Less harm
People are not consuming non-palatable substances or sharing unsafe tools leading to fewer alcohol and drug related health issues and deaths.

More proactive health care usage. Fewer emergency visits.
People are reaching out to use health care more often, as they feel less judged. More monitored usage decreases visits to emergency rooms.

Metrics

- % of members who have accessed health care before going to emergency

- % of members who report having more control over addictive behaviours

- % of people reducing their usage, and meeting their own self-set goals

- % of people who go to detox, and do not return as regular members

Practices
MICRO

Daily Dose (feedback)

How do we help people learn about their drug and alcohol usage patterns? This is where the Daily Dose comes in. Drawing from research on the role of feedback in health behavior, staff known as Redirectors prompt members to record their substance usage alongside their moods, sense of control, and self-concept. Redirectors make use of text messages, Facebook, and in-person journals. They import data into a simple spreadsheet, and show people their data back. According to Carlo DiClemente in his review of the role of feedback in reducing alcohol use, explicit feedback helps people to self-identify the discrepancy between where they are and where they want to be, and amplifies motivation for change (2001). For example, Olivia knows she drinks more when she feels ashamed. But it wasn't until she saw her own pattern and named her emotional triggers, that she began to think more reflexively about her addiction and try other strategies for managing her feelings.

Externalization (story editing)

How do people start to see that they aren't the problem, and that their addictions, depression, or other challenges are not their sum total? Externalization is a useful practice here. Drawing from narrative therapy, staff who are Redirectors deploy specific language in conversations. They give names to people's challenges, rather than conflating those challenges with the person. So rather than say, "It must be hard to be a diabetic," a Redirector might say, "The diabetes seems to have taken hold today." Prefacing terms like depression, anger, or alcoholism with the word "the" can enable people to separate themselves from their problems. For example, through one-on-one conversations, Matt has helped Fred shift from seeing himself as an alcoholic to a person with the alcohol addiction. For Fred, this practice has opened up fresh ways of addressing 'the alcohol addiction."

MESO

Walking in my shoes (Modeling and Rehearsal)

How do we enable people to see possible futures? By surrounding people with alternative narratives. 'Walking in my shoes' is the practice of capturing alternative narratives, and making those narratives visible with photos, artifacts, quotes, and written stories. Staff and volunteer Story Collectors use a template to record people's small, and big changes. These don't need to be heroic stories of sobriety - but what it looks like to cut down on usage. Stories are illustrated with the help of other members, and tagged by topic: less crack; relief; sadness. Stories go into an accessible database, and images from stories are added to the walls. Social norm theory tells us that the images which surround us send signals about what is acceptable. If we're surrounded by messages of change, no matter how small or shaky, new cognitive possibilities emerge. For example, Ari wasn't interested in abstinence from alcohol, but wanted to be drunk less. A staff member pointed him to the picture of Tom, who has been having one less drink a day, and saving the money for a nice meal. Ari liked the idea, and wants to try it too.

MACRO

Grounded Recorder (Feedback)

How do you get policymakers to know what life is like for the most marginalized folks? Grounded Recorder is the practice of walking alongside individuals going to social service appointments, and jotting down how the interactions play out: what barriers emerged? What was helpful? What was the outcome of the appointment? Recorders have access to tools to help them capture the data - including a notebook and an app to help them upload information from their notebook to the bigger database. This database is made available to policymakers and people in power. Right now, it's common for staff to accompany people to appointments, but there isn't a systematic practice of reporting what happened. Policymakers have found the level of rich detail surprising. It can help them to identify the unintended consequences of seemingly small decisions - like how a form is worded.

Read more about this practice & how we have been doing it! Go to page 68

Broadening Perspectives (Barrier busting)

How do we get street involved adults and the wider community to better understand and interact with one another? Research shows that stigma and stereotypes are largely the product of non-existent, meaningless, or uncomfortable encounters -- i.e. a homeless person persistently asking for money and not knowing how to respond. The practice of Broadening Perspectives recognizes that staff of Drop-ins have heaps of knowhow to pass on to the broader community. Staff and peers serve as community educators, and actively offer up their experience to store owners and local organizations. Using a menu listing common uncomfortable situations, staff offer stories, role plays, tips, and strategies on hand. For example, staff member Linda recently introduced herself to the new manager at Starbucks. They worked together to come up with a solution for intoxicated folks coming in asking for coffee. Now, when someone asks for a coffee, the manager offers free samples. She is passing on to her staff the message that, "We're all humans so there is no need to treat people on the streets any differently."

Practice: Grounded Recorder

The Grounded recorder captures the everyday realities of street involved adults, and feeds that data into a database that can be accessed by people in power. Too many folks in decision making roles do not have access to people's stories and experiences. By starting "where people are at" the Grounded recorder provides a richer, more nuanced picture of how policies and programs are playing out. They record the barriers that get in the way of folks moving forward, as well as successful interactions with services and systems.

We see this as a macro practice because it is about trying to influence the broader system. Giving policy makers, service providers and the broader community data they would otherwise not have builds empathy and understanding that can influence better policy decisions.

A policymaker in Ottawa said he was surprised by the significant impact rules and regulations have on people's lives. From reading the Grounded data he learned of the difficulty people face in trying to pay rent. This is simply because the cheques they receive from the federal and provincial governments come in at different times, while landlords want their money in one payment. This policy maker left the session thinking about how a simple change in policy to make government cheque distribution coincide could influence the lived reality of many folks.

Whilst the Grounded recorder role might resemble some of the advocacy roles in the social sector, we see the information collected as being more neutral and impartial. The Grounded recorder is not an advocate, but simply records observations and direct quotes from the interaction. Collected data is entered into a new type of database; one that is real time, over time and based on ethnographic research methods. This database serves as a platform to provide people in power with ongoing insight.

Outcomes
Greater political awareness
People view themselves less as 'second-class' citizens, and more as having a legitimate voice.

Less stigmatized
People living with an addiction feel less judged by other professionals and service providers. Professionals and service providers report greater understanding of people living with addictions.
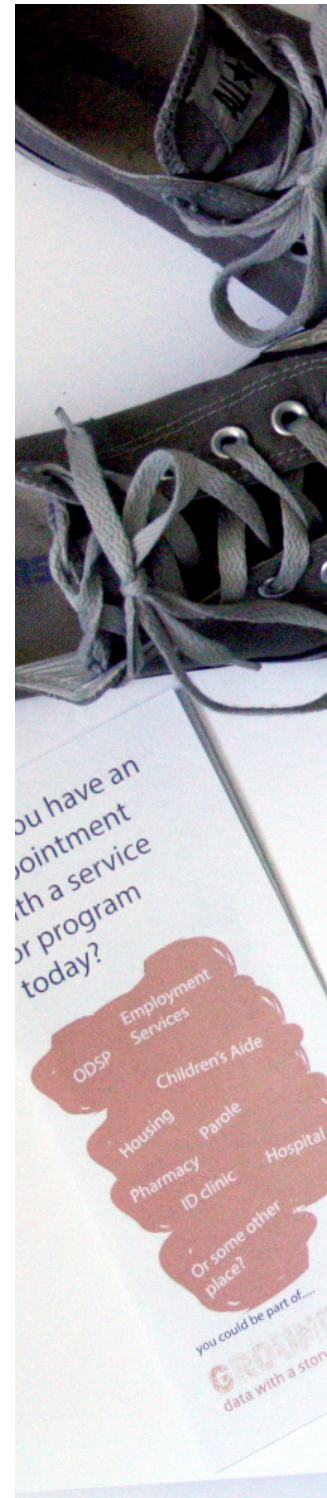
FULL WIN

What systems did you have a success wit
☐ Health ☐ justice ☐ transit ☐ Housing ☐ dete
☐ ODSP/OW ☐ Other

What was the organisation?

What were the key things that hap

Did anything in partic

Did anything in particular enable this?

spend on this?

Damien tries to find housing

order?

Summary

Outcomes

Barriers

Timeline

Ideas

Summary

Damien and his partner Karen badly want a house. A worker shows them a listing on Craigslist. Damien calls the real estate agent and makes an appointment. They spend about 90 minutes getting there. The appointment lasts 10 minutes. As soon as the agent asks about their source of income and for a credit check, they recoil. "Your bad credit is a problem." He confirms.

Increased	Neutral	Decreased
Motivation		
Aggravation/Stirred up emotions		
Sense of worth		
Sense of support		

Barriers
Things that got in the way

2 Rules

2 Personnel

3 Tools

Ideas
What are other possibilities

2 Small

1 Big

5 common FAQ's about
GROUNDED
data with a story

FOUNDATION

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MAY'14
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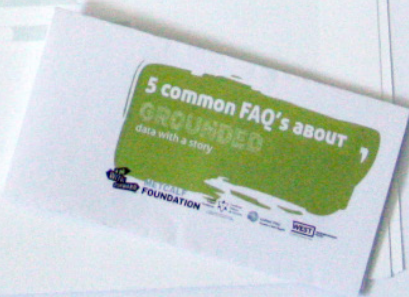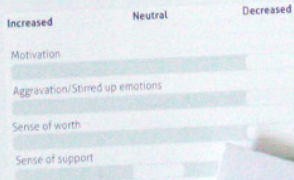
DURING

Scene #1

Quotes and observations, roles . props , scrips, settings

What was the reaction
Quotes and observations

Were there any **shifts?**

	Relaxed or calm	Anxious or
Mood		
Body		
Language		

DO OUTREACH

- Places to go for Grounded include visits to health practitioners, housing services, and social and community services like ID clinics and ODSP offices, etc.

- To find people to 'walk alongside' to appointments, you might try a few different outreach strategies:

-Use Facebook to put out a call to members

-Let case managers and peer workers know

-Ask members with big social networks to help

-Post a calendar (virtual or physical) for members to record appointments and get reminders.

WHY

RECRUIT FOLKS

- Share the value proposition for participation: They get good company! Plus their experiences are fed back to people in power.
- Explain to the person that you will be going along to their appointment as an observer.
- Go through the consent form and ask for their written consent. Find out how they would like their story & data returned to them.
- Confirm when/what time the appointment is and arrange to meet. You can offer to serve as their personal reminder system!

BEGINNINGS

- Go with the member to the appointment, helping with transit if needed.
- Confirm that the member is comfortable with you sitting in on the appointment. Remind them you can leave at any point.
- If the professional they are meeting with asks who you are, give them a flyer and tell them you are with Grounded. Explain you have full consent of the person you are accompanying to be present

TAKE NOTES

- Use the grounded notebook to record the flow of the appointment: what happens at the start, in the middle, and end. Think about the appointment as scenes in a play: who are the characters, what is the script, and props?

- Some things to jot down include:

- What led to the appointment?

-How long did you wait? What was on the walls? What messages were communicated?

-What was the member's emotional demeanor and body language? How does this change?

-How exactly did the appointment unfold? What was the language? What tools and materials?

-What was the outcome? What was helpful and unhelpful? What barriers could be removed?

ENTER DATA

- Google makes everything easy! Load up the Grounded google form.

- Follow the prompt questions and enter the information you collected in your prompt book.

The Grounded Recorder is not meant to be an advocate, but a passive observer witnessing their interaction with the service.

We are drawing on 'service design' techniques to map out a person's journey through the service. We focus both on the details of the experience, and how the person interprets what happens.
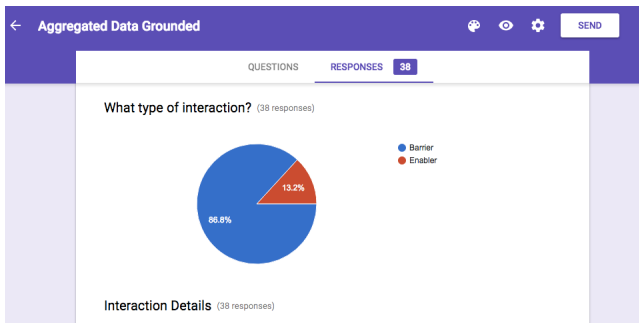
SHOW THE DATA

- The google form automatically combines the data you entered with the other collected data.

- You can print out the charts that visualize the data and show it back to the individual you accompanied. This can help to put their experience in perspective.

Behavior change theory tells us feedback can help us to feel better understood and motivated. People often find it enlightening to compare how their experiences stack up to others. The conversations around the data have the potential to help a person take more control over their situation and advocate for change. This same data can also be packaged to go to policymakers.

Value Contribution

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe people are far more than the labels attached to them -
and that it is our job to help people diversify the roles they take on,
how they perceive themselves, and how other people perceive them.
The more meaning people ascribe to their roles, the more positive
their sense of self and future.

The story

Tom talks in the past-tense. He used to run his family's plumbing supply company. He used to be a father, a husband, and a golfer. He used to be on the straight and narrow. That was then. For seven years, ever since his wife cheated on him, he has found alcohol to be a more reliable companion.

Without a job to demarcate the days, Monday doesn't feel so different to Saturday. He doesn't miss the workplace drama. But, he does miss having somewhere to be. These days he gets up because he has to. The shelter doesn't let him stay past 7. He bounces from drop-in to drop-in, and sees himself as a peace keeper.
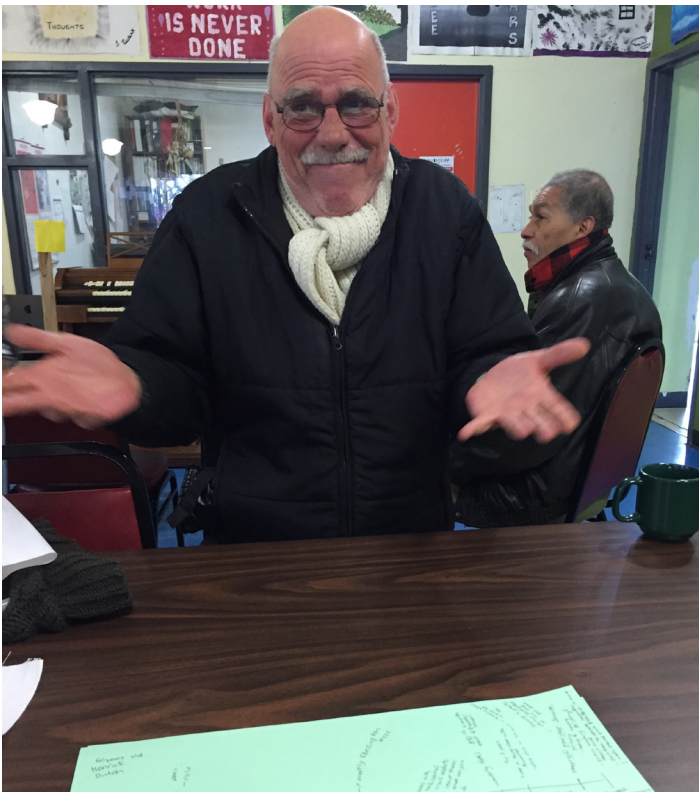
Tom has a friendly relationship with the staff at the drop in, and helps out where he can: washing dishes, putting things away, stepping-in to break up fights. He'd be interested in taking more on, but there isn't always that much to do. His buddies have some arrangements: they come-in early to help set-up, or courier items for pay. Tom doesn't know how to make that stuff happen. He tells us that maybe he hasn't been around for long enough to be in the know.

The research is clear that engagement in an occupation - in an activity that creates a sense of meaning and purpose - can facilitate people's forward movement, underpinning transitions from homeless to housed.

So, what would a drop-in centre where contribution, meaning, and purpose are the core values look like? Think co-ops, informal marketplaces, business incubators, and kibbutzim.

Drop-in as a co-op would be one where members are also part of the governance structure, and play a formal decision making role. Drop-ins as informal marketplaces would be those where trading systems and local exchanges are given explicit space and voice - not just as something that happens on the side, or out the back. Drop-ins as business incubators would be platforms for people to try out micro enterprises - and offer some resources for business development. Drop-ins as kibbutzim would function more as a collective group; there would not necessarily be a distinction between staff and members. Everybody would be given jobs or tasks to make the place self-sustaining.

Behind all these possible scenarios is the concept of role authenticity. In other words, a drop-in with contribution at the core would generate a range of roles for members and make these roles visible, accessible, and part of the daily fabric.

One of the dehumanizing aspects of homelessness is how it can strip people of status and legitimacy. They are no longer afforded the same rights as residents, community members, homeowners, or employees. Their role as a citizen is questionable. The informal activities many do - be it panhandling or bartering - are perceived as on the economic fringe, and often put them in legal risk.

This would not be the case at a drop-in with contribution front and centre. Here, informal activities would be given more of an official platform. Tom knows heaps about plumbing. He could offer his skills to businesses in the local community in exchange for things on his wish list: money, a quality place to sleep, legal help. Staff's role would be to help broker connections, negotiate agreements, and ensure fair relationships. They would work with members to regularly advertise the skills and latest 'micro-businesses' of members. Over time, the norm would be that drop-ins are a place where you are expected to actively contribute, in whatever way work for you.

Beliefs

WE BELIEVE THAT...

Many hats (not labels)
No matter what labels have been put on a person, there are lots of other things that define who they are.

Legitimize informal roles
People already engage in lots of roles such as pan handler, street mum so give these roles legitimacy and visibility.

Move from member to co-producer
People can be more than passive consumers or actors. They can govern, lead, and co-produce the spaces they use.

Teach a wo(man) to fish.
The best way to help people is to build their capacity to try out roles and take on responsibilities. You build capacity by modeling how to do something, rather than doing it for them.

Citizen is a valued role.
Living on the streets does not mean living in the shadows. Enable people to exercise their full citizenship, and help their perspective to be seen and heard.

Outcomes

WE'RE AFTER ...

Increased sense of social inclusion
Members report feeling 'part of' society, and see themselves as active contributors.

Greater sense of purpose
People report a greater sense of purpose and accomplishment in their day-to-day life.

Less boredom
People are spending their time more engaged in meaningful activity, and less time using substances.

More goal setting and routines
People are increasingly making future plans, taking on responsibilities, and organizing their days.

More active (less passive) self-narratives
People report a change in how they see themselves, and have narratives more focused on future action.

More economic opportunity
People have access to a broader range of economic opportunities, and are taking those opportunities up.

Metrics

- % of people who engage in a recognized pursuit each day

- # of new micro-businesses, and average income generated each year

- The productive output of the co-operative - what people make and what is distributed, shared and sold.

- % of people who self-report feeling increased purpose and sense of value.

Practices

MICRO

Temp Agency (bridging)

How do you help people engage in a life they find more meaningful? By giving them roles and meaningful work to be a part of. Research on occupation shows that engagement in a role and an activity that creates a sense of meaning and purpose can facilitate a person's transformation from homeless to housed. Building on this theory, the temp agency involves formalizing and legitimizing much of the informal work that takes place at community centres, as well as creating new roles for folks in and outside the centre. A centre run temp-agency would collect names of folks and their skills. The agency would use weekly emails to advertise within the community centre the skills on offer, and would use Facebook and posters to do the same in the broader community. When help is needed- to deliver a package or move some furniture or shovel some snow or cater a party -the temp agency would become a hub of people offering many skills. Tom is one person who is keen to put his name on this list. He has never had a formal job and so the idea of taking on a role, tasks, and some responsibility, although a bit daunting, is something he is ready to do. He sees this as a chance for him to see what kind of person, other than an addict, he is.

Read more about this practice & how we have been doing it! Go to page 80

MESO

Start-up coaching (bridging)

How can people be encouraged to do something big using their skills and ideas? This is where the practice of start-up coaching comes in. Inspired by micro-businesses in developing countries, coaches at the centre help members find their entrepreneurial flare. Coaches help people come up with an idea for a service or product, develop the value proposition, and test the market for their idea. The best ideas could receive a small amount of money and further mentorship. Stores at community centres could be used to market test their ideas.

Guilds Modeling and Rehearsal

How do we help people to share their ideas and skills with other like minded folks? By building out a structure of 'guilds'. Through a guild structure members have the opportunity to join one or two interest groups. Groups might be around things like building, woodworking, sewing, baking, etc. Members meet regularly and meetings are a chance for sharing, discussion and opportunities for capacity building. Olivia is one person who is keen to join a guild. She is a talented artist and wood worker and often keeps herself busy leading informal workshops with folks hanging around. Olivia is interested in sharing tips and techniques with other folks. She sees it also as a chance to build up her identity as a woodworker, not just an alcoholic.

Practice: Temp agency

The temp agency practice provides street-involved adults with many more visible opportunities to try on short-term roles and projects. Street-involved adults already have many roles; the temp agency practice emphasizes the value and legitimacy of their know-how. Staff performing the temp agency practice act like brokers and coaches, matching people who need a job done inside and outside the organization with people who have the skills. They also help to spread stories and language about work and capacity building. Key to this practice is mobilizing and curating relationships between the community and members, supporting both through any challenges or questions that arise, and empowering members to begin developing their own relationships and exchanges.

The temp agency is a micro practice as it allows individuals to engage in new roles, and through that, redefine their identities.

When the youth centre attached to the drop-in needed a new shelving unit, rather than going to Ikea, a staff member advertised the job on the internal board. Veronica put up her hand; her woodworking skills matched what was needed. She built the shelving unit in a week. Veronica was pretty happy that she had the chance to give back to the youth centre. She didn't even realize there was a youth centre! She also loved keeping her hands busy and getting explicit feedback on her work.

While plenty of drop-ins already engage folks in volunteer roles, many of the roles are informal and under the radar. Perhaps there isn't an obvious discourse around new opportunities each and every week. Folks who want to take on roles and tasks don't know how or where to access these opportunities. This is where the temp agency practice can be useful. It becomes a platform to provide more folks with opportunities and meaning. Folks become much more than the labels they have been stuck with, they become skilled builders, chefs, couriers, painters, hair dressers, etc.

Outcomes

Increased sense of social inclusion .
Members report feeling 'part of' society, and see themselves as active contributors.

Greater sense of purpose
People report a greater sense of purpose and accomplishment in their day-to-day life.

More economic opportunity
People have access to a broader range of economic opportunities, and are taking those opportunities up.

...e other ways?
...nversations, 5 pain points, 5 opportunities

Pain Point 1
Not much new to do today
Q. Are you bored?
A. "No, I'm not bored I'm just hungry"

Pain Point 3
Homelessness
Q. What's happening with housing?
A. "Housing I'll forget about it. The renting lists are 2 - 3 years long"
"I don't want subsidized housing - the rooms are too small, and I have to deal with crack-heads and the police. But that is all customers can help me find"
"If you refuse to take a place, if you don't want to live there, they take you off the list, they discharge you."

Nearly every member of the drop-in has had an issue finding or keeping housing. Waiting lists are way too long, not to mention that housing offered by the city is often not the kinds of places to live. What if there was a system in place that grouped people in and out of the centre with similar housing pref... ...es and needs together and then ...them find independent housing

Pain Point 5
Too painful to keep living!
Q. What got you sober? What keeps you going?
A. "I put my grand-daughter and hold her in my arms, for the first time"
"My son came back into my life"
"My daughter Helen, she has down syndrome and is in a home. If I don't take care of her then no one will"

Relations with family members is important for many members' survival, healing and drive for self-improvement. Family gives members the incentive to live and do better. What if there was a way to increase and assist family reconciliation and reunification? Could we develop a way to assist and

Pain Point 4
...Absurdity
...the current social system work

...ldren here in Toronto is that they ...heltes while they try to find you ...eits for getting housing are so ...lace to ask your caseworker ...re every 2 days or you get lost

...help but they didn't do ...get most of my information ...the street. They're the

service they excel at for quality items of clothing they desire?

...nes who have the best info in whom to go and what to do"
"To get one of the members onto ODSP I need to have collated - this is doctors notes, information on therapies and treatments etc. The problem is that it's very hard to get other agencies to send over this information. Without enough, the member won't be able to get ODSP"

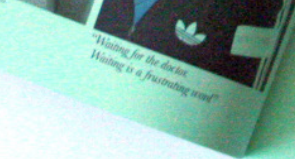What if the system worked better for both members and staff? What if there was an easier way for members to keep and have access to their own files digitally? What if there was a way to take bits of information and digitize it into a portfolio so you didn't have to go searching for pieces of paper? Could members be more empowered to make their own ODSP Housing and OW applications?

"I have a locker at my... ...but it's full of stuff. I would like... ...these things here in the locker bu... ...need help and I worry that a st... ...service comes to help me th... ...throw out everything I have..."
"This drop-in centre is better tha... ...the other centres in the city, here... ...really understand that a lot of peop... ...don't have anywhere to keep the... ...stuff. The staff here let me keep... ...stuff here and trust that I will pic... ...the next day"

Everyone possesses items of valu... ...umental objects, photos, per so... ...tion necessities of daily life. No... ...you are homeless or between hou... ...it's hard to know what to do with... ...things? What if there were lockers... ...keep valued possessions easily a... ...ble, and for not too much money?... ...the same way that cities offer pa... ...porto-potties, can we build acc... ...and affordable storage units and... ...downtown landscape? Would tha... ...small addition free members from... ...constant worry about their stuff

Pain Point 6
Where to keep my stuff?
Q. What do you do with your...
A. "I just ended because I have to wat... ...stuff. I'm homeless now and I have to... ...in a strange unit. But I'm spending to... ...money on it each month"

promote family reconnectment a... ...cess to help members find a sens... ...belonging in their wider commun...

AND EXPLANATION

A DAY IN YOUR LIFE TOUR GUIDE

...nding of your Toronto and your every-day life. Show us what you do in a ...u're not in the Drop-In centre? What services do you use? Who do you ...e best food? Where do you meet your friends? Are there any places in the ...o at night? We want you not just to talk to us about your life, but let us

...ay, as a day in your life tour guide with one of the In/Out team members ...will meet you at an arranged time and place and then hang-out with ...appointment or follow you somewhere you want to take us.

...and your day. So definitely take us out of the drop-in centre and onto

...rgaret, Sarah or Daniela
...ract with other service workers if that's okay with you.
...bout what we see and where we go, and hope that you will be free
...nd stories.

...ours.

...oday?
...ked to
...otions.

...m a set of vouchers.

...to sign a quick contract, and we can cut you a check.

But later on...

"Mixed emotions ..."

"Feeling both MAD and a bit tired"

"Loving and feeling loved"

"Waiting for the doctor. Waiting is a frustrating word"

Fresh look
Fresh starts

PACKAGE WORK
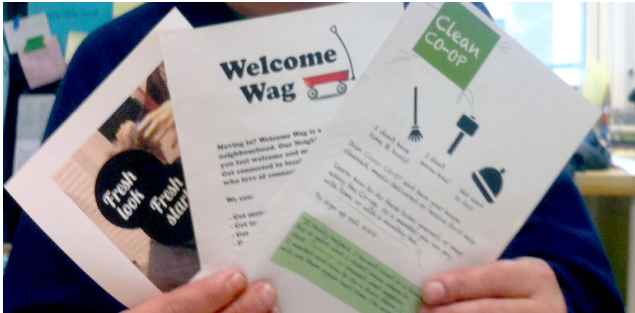
- Send a weekly email to staff and community members asking them to reply with tasks they need help with
- Take the tasks and see if you can group them into mini-projects, or short roles. See yourself as a 'job creator' and come up with a title and description.
- Using the flyer templates, mock-up a job ad. A good ad is short and uses punchy language. Things to include in the flyer:

-Invite people to apply for the job.

-Information about how to submit an application (requirements for the job and where and when to give the application)

ADVERTISE FLYERS

- Create a regular routine for advertising roles.
- You might try sticking the ads into newspapers.
- You might create a weekly job board.
- You might post on Facebook.
- You might set-up an impromptu booth in front of the drop-in, or at check-in.
- You might put the 'weekly opportunity sheet' in people's mailboxes too.

Using flyers that look and feel professional will atrract more attention. You want people to know that you are both serious about giving them a chance to work and about drawing upon their skills.
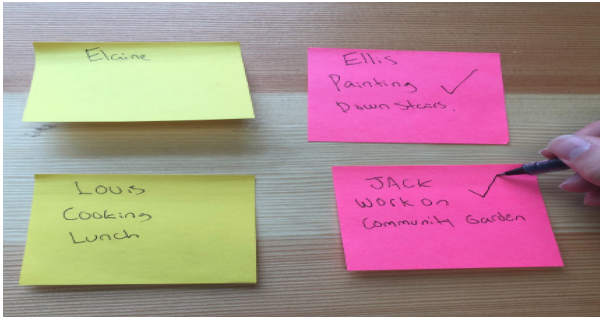
Social norming theory tells us that shifting the dominant culture requires changing the langauge and visual cues. You can use the flyers to start to create a language for productive opportunities.

SELECT WHO

- Create a transparent interview process - depending on the size of the role and the number of folks interested.

- Try a 'scenario-based' approach to interviewing. Give three scenarios for challenges they might encounter, and ask how they would respond.

- Find out what kind of supports they would need to do the role well. Explore their definition of doing well.

MAKE THE MATCH

- Match the person with the staff or community member who submitted the task. Get clear on expectations, time commitment, and incentives.

- We like to put this in writing and create a contract for all to sign. You can use a contract template to do this.

- Connect people to the Toronto Public Tool Library & other resources needed for getting the job done.

While employment programs put a big focus on resume writing and interviews, a lot of more manual labor jobs are based on people's experience, skill, and in-the-moment decision-making. You can use scenarios to help prepare people for what might lie ahead, and build capacities.

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

- Check-in with the member before or during their task.
- Offer direct feedback about their reliability and performance. Reiterate that feedback is not about judgement, but about learning and support.

PAYMENT

- Once the task is complete, pay them according to what was agreed upon.
- Get a written receipt.
- Thank them and, if it went well, write up a testimonial for their Facebook (or if they happen to have Linked-in) or prefer a physical letter for their file.

We learn through reflection and feedback. One of the values of short roles and mini projects is they can help members to try out different things, and figure out what they like and want to improve at.

Money is not always the preferred form of payment. You can get creative. People like choice. Some alternatives include buying them extra resources like wood or paint; paying off one of their debts directly, going with them to buy something they need, etc.

The Bid

We want to help you build up your focus on values and intentionality in your daily practice. If this is something that interests you then this bid is for you! Read on....

In our latest publication "Push and Pull: Why practice and what it could look like" we talk about how the social service sector could do more to develop practice and the values underlying practice. If you haven't read the full booklet find it at www.torontoinout.ca

An invitation

Over July and August 2016, we will support folks in the social service sector to take forward and try out in your own organization one of the values and corresponding practices from this booklet. We're here to support you along the way!

This bid is for you if...

- You currently work at a service provider agency, either on the frontlines or in management.
- You're curious and open-minded to try new things in your day-to-day work.
- You spend too much time fighting fires instead of growing aspirations and crave opportunities to build your skills.
- You know there is cutting edge practices in social service organizations, but you're not sure how to access them.

What you get

- Practice building boot camp with InWithForward team including service designer Jonas Piet.
- 1-on-1 coaching with Toronto In/Out team for a total of 6 hours over 4 weeks.
- 1 shadowing session -Toronto In/Out team member will shadow you in your workplace
- Relief wages for your agency and support (if needed) in getting your manager on side.
- Up to $100 to spend on prototyping materials.
- New strategies and practical tools to use in your day to day.
- A new outlook on your role in making a difference in people's lives.
- A cohort of folks pursuing the same goals.

What you give

- 2.5 days to attend boot camp (currently scheduled for July 14 and 15th).
- Access to your workspace: allow us to shadow you in your workplace during the week of of July 18th)
- Your time: ½ a day per week for 4 weeks, to work on this mini-project.
- Your openness to talking, making, doing, and using new methods that might be uncomfortable at first.
- An exit interview with us about your involvement in the process.

Want to read more about our practice?

Check out our work with West Neighbourhood House at www.torontoinout.ca or the other work we do at www.inwithforward.com

APPLY HERE!

IN/OUT

About the practice & value set

Which value set /practice do you want to develop further?

Healing
- ☐ Curious Conversations
- ☐ Mary Poppins Bag
- ☐ Pick n Mix
- ☐ Alumni Connections
- ☐ The Fuller Story

Learning
- ☐ Day Retreats
- ☐ Bringing in External Resources
- ☐ Topping and Tailing
- ☐ Premium Membership Cards

Pragmatism
- ☐ Grounded Recorder
- ☐ Daily Dose
- ☐ Externalization
- ☐ Walking in my shoes
- ☐ Broadening Perspectives

Contribution
- ☐ Temp Agency
- ☐ Start-up Coaching
- ☐ Guilds

Why that one?

....

The practical stuff

Your name:

....

Where do you work?

....

About you as a practitioner

What is the biggest challenge you face in your day-to-day work helping clients succeed?

....

....

....

What inspires you?

....

....

What is your role in the workplace - both official and unofficial? How has this role evolved over time?

....

....

....

What kinds of professional development have you been part of? And what kinds would you like to be part of?

....

....

....

How to contact you?

....

Are you free for boot camp on July 14 + 15?

....

Please email your application by midnight EST, June 20th to daniela@inwithforward.com
Your answers may be in any medium you like, but please send in as few files as possible.