

Charting the Course Together for Health and Wellness in Oceanside

November 9th, 2017, 8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre, Qualicum Beach

Forum Summary

Ideas were growing at the Oceanside Health and Wellness Network’s community Forum entitled “Charting the Course Together for Health and Wellness in Oceanside”. More than 45 community leaders representing 35 organizations from the region answered the call to come together at the Qualicum Civic Centre on the morning of November 9th, 2017 to learn more about, and collectively work on, complex health and wellness issues in communities across Oceanside region.

Oceanside Health and Wellness Network (OHWN) includes community and organizational members who are committed to working together to enhance the health and well-being of Oceanside residents with a focus on the determinants of health. OHWN works collaboratively and takes collective action on strategic priorities. The Forum was intended to generate dialogue and shared understanding around two important, yet often hidden, issues in Oceanside - food security for school aged children and mental health supports for youth and young adults.



Participants learned about the local challenges with child poverty and food insecurity, and with youth and young adult mental health issues, thanks to guest speakers and OHWN Action Group leads Gerry Herkel and Jason Harrison.

The leaders around the table dug into the root causes of these health issues and shared how these issues are evident in our community. With a nod to the strong relationships and community-based solutions that are already underway in Oceanside, participants rolled up their sleeves and mapped out existing and potential partnerships needed to further address these issues in our community.



We also heard from guest speaker Cindy Lise, Coordinator of OUR Cowichan Communities Health Network, who shared successes and growing pains related to collective impact from the last decade in the Cowichan Valley. Cindy reminded us that relationships are the foundation of this work – we need to always ask who is not at the table and nurture partnerships among those that are present.

Participants brought their energy and enthusiasm to the room, allowing conversations, connections and possibilities to emerge during group conversations. The opportunity to network, explore working together, and share information in individual and collective ways were also important outcomes of the Forum.

Thank you to our sponsors for making this event possible.





A Few Gems from our Presenters

Presenters

Welcome - Sharon Welch, OHWN Chair

Opening prayer - Chief Recalma, Qualicum First Nation

Charting the Course Together for a Healthy Community - Brenda Kent, OHWN Coordinator

Food Security for School Aged Children in Oceanside - Gerry Herkel, Lead, Child Wellness Action Group, Circle of Partners member, OHWN; Affiliations: Federation of Residents in Oceanside; Rotary - Qualicum Beach Sunrise

Mental Health Among Youth and Young Adults in Oceanside - Jason Harrison, Lead, Mental Health Action Group, OHWN; Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association, Mid Island Branch

Building Capacity for Collective Action - Kerri Klein, Shift Collective

Partnership As a Driver for Change: The Cowichan Experience - Cindy Lise, Coordinator, OUR Cowichan Communities Health Network

“Our primary role is to bring interested people together to talk, explore, find areas of synergy, and most importantly, to generate and coordinate action on community-based solutions.”

Brenda Kent, OHWN Coordinator, speaking about OHWN’s role in supporting collective impact.

“Most recent data tells us that 1 in 3 children under the age of 6 in Oceanside is living in poverty – that’s 24% - 34% depending on the region. This compares to 1 in 5 (or 20%) of children in B.C., and to 1 in 6 (or 17%) of children in Canada. So child poverty in Oceanside is at least 5% higher than the B.C. average. Recent data also tells us that 37% of all children in Oceanside are vulnerable in their development as they enter school.”

Gerry Herkel, OHWN Lead for the Child Wellness Action Group, speaking about food security for school aged children in Oceanside.

“1 in 5 Canadians will experience mental illness in their lifetime, but 5 in 5 Canadians are likely to be impacted through family, friends and community members. Further, one out of three of children in B.C. who are in need of mental health services receives them.”

Jason Harrison, Executive Director of Canadian Mental Health Association, Mid-Island Branch and OHWN Lead for the Child Wellness Action Group, speaking about mental health support for young adults in Oceanside.



Key Mindsets for Collective Leadership

1. The ability to see the larger system

Helping people see the larger system is essential to building a shared understanding of complex problems.

2. Hold plans lightly and intentions tightly

Complex issues are always shifting and that's what requires us to adapt. Good Enough, Press On (GEPO).

3. Let go of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’

Everything is information. Look for common ground and employ continuous learning and adaptation.

4. ‘Culture eats strategy for breakfast’

Do not only focus on ‘what’ we do, but ‘how’ we do it.

Kerri Klein, Shift Collaborative, speaking about elements of successful collaboration.



Partnership as a Driver for Change: The Cowichan Experience

Principles for Partnership as presented by Cindy Lise,
Coordinator, Our Cowichan Communities Health Network

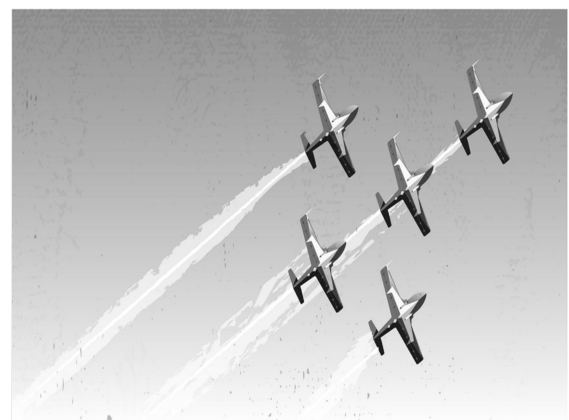
- **Lead visibly** - Have leaders at the helm. Not just one leader but a core group who at any given time can step up, take the lead in order to keep the project moving forward.
- **Network** - Absolutely critical in helping us learn, build relationships, stay connected and begin to be a conduit for information in and out of the projects at hand. Networking takes time, leadership and resources but is a key component to everything we do.
- **Build and engage relationships** - Always ask “Who is not at the table”? Ensure that we are an open door to multiple partners and working over time to build new relationships and to nurture and foster existing relationships.
- **Seek to understand the environment and the people you are asking to change prior to beginning** - Understand the data indicating what is a priority action and as well as where the agencies are coming from, their mandates, roles, assets and limitations.
- **Ensure participation is a requirement** - People only support what they create. If the project or answer is parachuted into a community the likelihood of failure over time is far greater than when co created, driven and supported together. Work with those you are seeking to help.
- **Build the will to succeed** - Establish a positive attitude to begin and build into long-term work short term wins. Build on the successes and celebrate them when they occur.
- **Align partners** - Working with diverse partners with diverse perspectives can be daunting. We believe that dialogue is the foundation of partnerships and that everyone feels heard and their perspective is valued. We use curiosity to achieve understanding.



- **Provide resources and remove barriers to improvement** - This work requires human resources, project resources and in-kind resources to be possible. Removing barriers for engaging in the initiatives, project or network are also key components to success.
- **Communicate regularly** - This is the most complex of components that appears to be the simplest. Communication strategies, key messages, and more should be a top priority. Meet often, talk on the phone, email and schedule it in.
- **Address fears** - Provide a safe space where individuals are free to express their fears is the only option. This takes time, relationships, trust and asking the right questions.
- **Review the initiative periodically** - Scheduled check ins and reviews ensure accountability of actions and keep the projects moving forward.
- **Report on progress** - Working through challenges and potential failures are as important as celebrating successes and building on what works. When we don't address our failures the potential for loss of funding, community buy in and support for the work can threaten the loss of the entire project.
- **Acknowledge losses associated with ending of old way; embrace the birth of a new way** - Sometimes things just don't work. Letting go is harder to do than you think!

Partnership alignment and Collective Impact

= the Secret Sauce





Exploring Root Causes Words from Participants

Small groups discussed the root causes of the two themes using an iceberg metaphor. At the top of the iceberg, above water, are the events that catalyze further reflection. Below the iceberg are the patterns, underlying structures, and mental models that shape how we make meaning of those events. Participants looked at events and the deeper underlying causes and perceptions held in Oceanside related to food security for school aged children and mental health for youth and young adults. The following is a snapshot of the comments and wisdom shared by Forum attendees during this discussion.

Food Security for School Aged Children

Events *(What is happening?)*

Malnourishment due to poverty is leading to behavioural issues. Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores are increasing.

Patterns *(What are the trends and patterns?)*

Youth are experiencing barriers to finding food as well as lack of housing security. Technology and social media are having a negative influence. Existing food programs in schools may be impacting meal provision at home.

"If a child doesn't have access to food for three days, or at meal time when they are couch surfing, do we address those gaps that still exist, or do we do a superb job of what we are already trying to address (food in schools)?"

Structures *(What has influenced the trends?)*

Changes in family priorities due to capitalism. Gaps in parental skills related to feeding children healthy food.

Mental Models *(What assumptions, values and beliefs do people hold?)*

Assumptions and beliefs that food security for children is not an issue in Oceanside.

What will "move the needle" on this issue?

Build community capacity. Help parents be their best selves. Increase access to kitchens to provide training to parents. Provide leadership in cities, towns and organizations to invest in social wellbeing and in youth. Offer universal solutions to reduce stigma.

"It starts with us as leaders in our communities. We have to set priorities. If these children don't get a good education, it won't be good for our economy."



Mental Health for Youth and Young Adults

Events *(What is happening?)*

Increased pressure on mental health services. Presence of stigma, especially for youth and young adults.

Patterns *(What are the trends and patterns?)*

Lack of recognition of the large

"When people are under stress and don't have resilience, people go to survival mode."

disparities between working wealthy and poor in Oceanside. The high cost of basics – housing, food, and education. Youth are disconnected, especially those who are new to the region of Oceanside.

Structures *(What has influenced the trends?)*

Limitations related to availability of and access to services. The present response is reactive not proactive. The care model is siloed, resulting in a model of disconnect for youth care.

Mental Models *(What assumptions, values and beliefs do people hold?)*

Disbelief regarding mental health issues in the region, as well as stigma and Not In My Backyard (NIMBY).

"This is a hidden issue that people don't believe or are not aware of."

What will "move the needle" on this issue?

Have a proactive (upstream) response. Create opportunities for connection among youth and tap into the energy of youth for the solution.

"We have an amazing group of youth and they have a lot of positive energy and they also want to make a difference in the world."



Strengths & Challenges of Collaboration: Food Security for School Aged Children

Participants began by mapping existing collaborations between stakeholders, indicating both strong collaborations and those in need of strengthening. Participants also identified stakeholders who seemed to be missing from the table. They then discussed strengths and challenges of current collaborations on food security for school aged children in Oceanside. The following is a few of the large number of ideas shared by individuals during the Forum.

Where Is More Collaboration Needed?

Attendees identified some areas where they thought more collaboration would be important:

- ◆ Local and regional food producers and suppliers
- ◆ Employers
- ◆ Recreation sector
- ◆ Transportation sector
- ◆ Business sector
- ◆ Community centres
- ◆ Local, provincial and federal government
- ◆ First Nations
- ◆ Technology sector
- ◆ Youth networks
- ◆ Health authority programs and services
- ◆ Education sector
- ◆ Volunteers



Strengths & Challenges of Collaboration

Engaging Business

Attendees spoke of the need to expand small businesses in Oceanside.

"I think one of the challenges...is we tend to ask a lot from a very small number of business in our area, and part of that has to do with our own economic development."

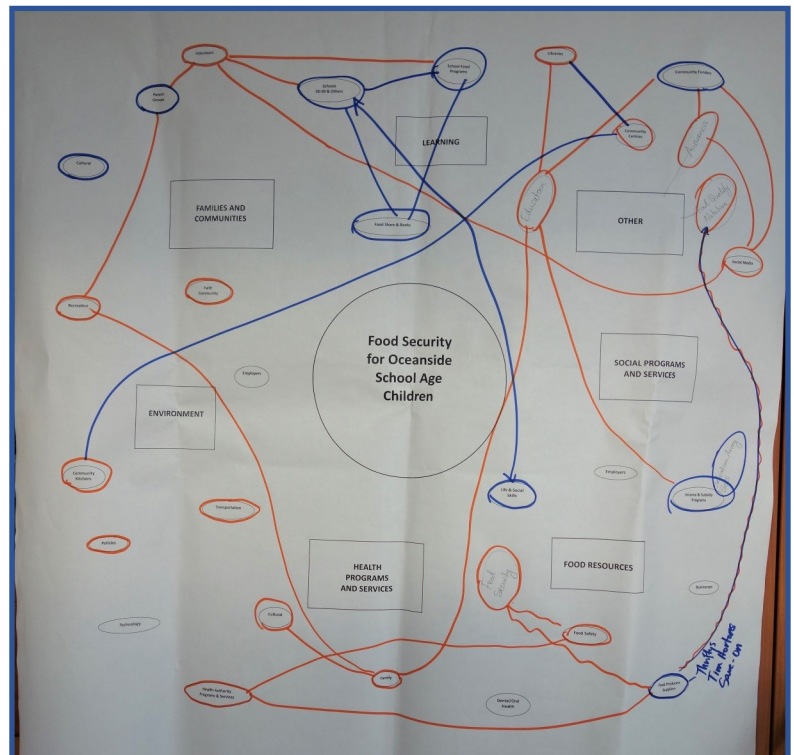
Collaboration in Neighbourhoods

The need to collaborate at multiple levels, from the community regional scale to the neighbourhood scale, was raised by participants.

"We also need to think about neighbourhoods and the kind of tools neighbourhoods have to promote collaboration."

Food Production

A dialogue about food production at the local level occurred. One participant felt that those living in poverty don't have time to grow their own food. Another shared about the local knowledge on food production that is available in the region.



Mapping Connections for Food Security



Strengths & Challenges: Mental Health for Youth and Young Adults

Participants began by mapping existing collaborations between stakeholders, indicating both strong collaborations and those in need of strengthening. Participants also identified stakeholders who seemed to be missing from the table. They then discussed strengths and challenges of current collaborations on mental health support for youth and young adults. The following is a few of the large number of ideas shared by individuals during the Forum.

Where Is More Collaboration Needed?

Participants identified some areas where they thought more collaboration would be important:

- ◆ Business sector
- ◆ Transportation sector
- ◆ Career and employment programs
- ◆ Youth organizations and Youth Link Network
- ◆ First Nations
- ◆ Housing and homeless services
- ◆ Legal assistance
- ◆ Private health services
- ◆ Technology and social media
- ◆ Criminal justice partners
- ◆ Community centres, sports programs
- ◆ Inclusion programs
- ◆ Local, provincial and federal government
- ◆ Community planning
- ◆ Trauma informed care
- ◆ Post secondary education
- ◆ Libraries

Strengths & Challenges of Collaboration

Examples of Strong Collaborations

Strong collaborations already taking place were shared.

“There is strong collaboration in Oceanside with child mental health, but less collaboration around adult mental health.”

“Housing First as an initiative has really strong collaboration.”

Multiple Access Points for Services

An attendee spoke about collaborations around some mental health services, allowing for multiple access points.

“We have a fair amount of redundancy in Oceanside on some key issues. With suicide prevention, for example, a person who is facing crisis can access a multiple number of approaches and a multiple number of players...at the same time.”

Limitations of Confidentiality

Some participants shared that confidentiality rules present a challenge to collaboration in the offering of services.

“Confidentiality factors into what we can or can not share legally. So there needs to be a work around to provide the best services to the client.”

Cultural Power Dynamics

Concern that collaboration could be challenging for those who feel a power dynamic with others in the collaboration was raised by a participant.

“When you’ve got a community member with power at the table with youth, the powerful community member might be seen as more dominant and the youth may not express themselves in the same way. The opportunity is to create a new culture of communication and be more flat at the collaborative table.”

Lack of Deep Roots Among New Arrivals

A participant shared the observation that new arrivals sometimes begin initiatives before knowing what may be most needed in the community. Youth may also arrive without having deep roots and connections.

“A lot of the population is fairly new so we don’t have a deep rooted network in the community. This shows itself in our ability to make contacts when we need to, but also with the formation of roots. Youth new to the community may feel disconnected and challenged to build relationships.”

Collaboration on Transportation

Participants shared thoughts on current transportation collaborations.

“I think the issue is transportation in this rural area. We need more collaboration to bring new partners to the table and identify creative solutions.”

Role of For-Profit Sector

An attendee spoke about the need to better engage the for-profit sector. Some engagement currently happens through volunteerism.



Feedback from Participants

Participants shared with us through feedback and evaluations what they viewed as the main benefits of attending the forum, what they took away from it and where we should go from here.

- Nearly everyone (87%) reported raised awareness of who is involved and how collaboration is happening around the issues.
- Nearly everyone (90%) reported leaving with new insights and ideas around collaboration.
- 75% reported increasing understanding of the issues and 63% reported greater understanding of root causes.
- Overall, people made new connections, increased their awareness about the issues (or affirmed existing awareness) and renewed their sense of commitment to collaborative action.

Awareness of Scope of Services and Initiatives

It was valuable for some participants to hear about the different organizational mandates in the room, as well as who is currently involved in the issues raised. They also reflected on the need to continue to share about who is doing what to avoid duplication of services.

Expanding Networks, Identifying Actors, Connecting

Some participants stressed the importance of “getting the right people at the table” and engaging those who were not yet involved.

Participants also shared about the need to make time to connect, continue to expand networks and to not work in isolation. The need to continue to understand various actor roles was also important.



Communication, Collaboration, Collective Impact

The need to continue to improve communication between partners and collaborators was highlighted by several participants. Avoiding duplication of services was also mentioned.

Participants shared about the wealth of local knowledge that has yet to be shared as part of finding collaborative solutions.

Several participants stressed the need for increased collaboration, highlighting an overall willingness to address concerns together as a group. A starting point also mentioned by a number of participants was build more trust among collaborators.



Best Ideas Heard by Participants at the Forum

The following are some of the best ideas participants said they heard at the Forum:

- Find a way to include farmers to engage local agriculture in addressing the question of food security (and also nutrition literacy!)
- Feed children local food
- Increase municipal involvement and resources in school programs
- Get the input of neighbourhoods and those who we serve
- Don't wait until a plan is perfect before taking action
- If something is not working, stop and start over
- Pool resources and coordination as opposed to silos of resources
- Everyone is open to working together. Keep the doors open!



Participants and Sponsors

Participating Organizations

Arrowsmith Community and Recreation Association
Building Learning Together (BLT) SD 69
Canadian Mental Health Association, Mid Island Branch
Career Centre - Parksville Qualicum Oceanside
City of Parksville
Courtenay - Alberni Constituency Office of Gord Johns
École Ballenas Secondary
Family Resource Association - District 69
Federation of Oceanside Residents' Associations
Forward House Community Society
Haven House Society
Gordon Food Services
Island Crisis Care Society
Island Health
Mount Arrowsmith Salvation Army
Oceanside Collaborative Response Committee
Oceanside Community Members
Oceanside Construction and Development Association
Oceanside Division of Family Practice
Oceanside Health and Wellness Network (OHWN)
Oceanside Health Care Foundation
Oceanside Healthy Living Association
Qualicum Education and Wellness Society
Qualicum First Nation
Parksville - Qualicum Constituency Office of Michelle Stillwell
PASS/Woodwinds Alternative School
Perfect Storm Group
Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
Regional District of Nanaimo
School District 69
Shift Collaborative
Snaw-naw-as (Nanoose) First Nation
Society of Organized Services (SOS)
Town of Qualicum Beach
United Way, Central and Northern Vancouver Island
Vancouver Island Workability Program



We would like to heartfully thank all the participants at *Charting the Course Together for Health and Wellness in Oceanside* for bringing their insights, ideas and participation to the forum.

We look forward to seeing participants again on February 22, 2018 as we will have an opportunity to build collaboration to take actions as a community at *Charting the Course Together for Health and Wellness in Oceanside: Community Actions Workshop*.

Join Us - Become an Oceanside Health and Wellness Network Member
www.rdn.bc.ca/join-ohwn

Contribute to vibrant, healthy communities in Oceanside.

Individuals and organizations are invited to join OHWN. Members benefit by:

- influencing change on issues affecting the health and wellness of communities in Oceanside;
- providing input into emergent issues and OHWN's priority areas participating in collective action;
- engaging with the community and developing collaborative relationships.

To learn more about OHWN, please visit:
www.rdn.bc.ca/ohwn