



TEEN PREGNANCY SUMMIT
NORTHERN TEEN PREGNANCY PROJECT



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Firstly, I want to thank each and every one of you for taking the time to come out to the Northern Teen Pregnancy Summit. What an amazing day we had! I was privileged to meet so many engaged and passionate individuals in our community who are so committed to improving the lives of our young people.

METHODOLOGY

What Happened At the Summit

At the summit, all participants were organized into tables of 5-7 participants from diverse organizations and backgrounds, with one recorder. Our recorders were third-year nursing students from Northern College. We provided the recorders with guidelines before the summit to ensure that we had an accurate and complete record of the table discussion. Our recorders were responsible for transcribing the key points of table conversations and activity outcomes. This information was documented on large sheets of paper, which were kept for analysis.



During the day, we asked each table of participants to complete five different discussion-based tasks, which included the development of draft vision statements for the project and a SWOT analysis. Afterwards, the findings from the vision building exercise, as well as the opportunities discussion and threats discussion were categorized and then the participants were asked to rank the findings via dot voting. First, the participants voted on a vision statement that they believed best matched the direction of the Northern Teen Pregnancy Project. Next, we asked participants to vote on opportunities that were external to our organizations, which they felt we should focus on and protect as we move forward with this project. Lastly, we asked participants to vote on the biggest threats to the success of the project. These voting sheets were saved and are summarized below.

How We Dealt With the Summit Data

I have spent the last several weeks compiling this report of findings from the SWOT analysis and vision building exercises. I reviewed all recorded information and organized the data into sub-categories, which is included. Below, you will find the themes that have been identified through the summit discussion, the data recorded by the groups at the summit, and the ranking and organization of the data by the participants.

THEMES

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

We talked a lot about how our organizations provide a broad range of services to youth, but we all voiced that our organizations struggled with uptake. The highest ranked threat to the project was a lack of youth interest and involvement in initiatives and activities. In order to ensure that we are reaching our teens and meeting their unique needs, we will need to offer opportunities for meaningful youth involvement from needs identification to program design and evaluation. The key, of course, is to ensure that these opportunities are truly meaningful and valuable to that audience and we, as organizations and planners, respect and value the contributions from our teens.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITY AND MENTORSHIP

At the summit, one participant spoke of how the community is viewed by one provincial funding organization as being “not youth-friendly”. We can all agree that the statement hurt but it can’t be denied that the opportunities for youth outside of organized sport and formal schooling are lacking in our community. We discussed the importance of formal and informal mentorship programs and opportunities and we deemed these a priority. Working towards creating a more age-friendly community is key as we move forward with the project.

STIGMA VS. APATHY IN TIMMINS

The idea of stigma and its effect on our teens’ overall health came up several times during our summit discussions. We felt that teens in our community can often be depicted by a negative stereotype, despite there being nothing to support this image. As a result, the participants identified that the project should focus on working to shift community thinking to a more realistic and fair view of teens. We can do this in several ways. One of the most important ways to reduce stigma will be to ensure that we are providing teens with opportunity for meaningful contribution to our project and our community as a whole.

While stigma was often attributed to lack of opportunity and overall prosperity for teens in our community, the concept of apathy was also discussed. Some participants felt that we, as a community, can be apathetic to the overall needs of local youth and have lost interest in ensuring the best health outcomes for this group. The reasons for this apathy may relate to the overall burden of health consequences we see in our area. On the other hand, apathy among our teens is something that will need to be addressed through effective planning, testing, and evaluation (see also Youth Involvement in Planning and Evaluation of Services and Programs).

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

How teens communicate is changing. Our levels of comfort with social media and modern communication tools varied across the room, but we all agreed that changing modes of communication can create opportunities for improved communication. But it can also create hurdles. We need to work to better understand and utilize these social communication tools and communities. They have the potential to allow our organizations and programs to transform the way we access teens in the ways they are most comfortable communicating.

COORDINATION AND HIGH LEVEL SERVICE AND PROGRAM COLLABORATION

We were able to identify many programs and services in the community that are dedicated to teen health. The challenge with many of these small programs is that often they are narrowly focused and not flexible enough. We decided that collectively we could see more progress if we worked on community collaboration. Working together within our organizations and between organizations to improve communication and discover partnerships will allow all of us to see more success in the outcomes of our teens.

UNDERREPRESENTED SECTORS, UNIQUE PARTNERSHIPS, AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Although we had great representation from a variety of agencies, most of them have a mandate to serve youth. Going forward, we have to work towards participation and buy-in from the wider community, including sectors that may not see themselves as having a role to play. Engaging private sector organizations and representatives from all levels of government will give us opportunities to explore new partnerships and discuss unique funding opportunities. These kinds of public/private partnerships may offer us sustainability and funding that is less subject to outcomes that were developed without our unique community in mind.

SPECIALIZED AND EXPERT STAFF

At the summit, we identified that a lack of experts and specialists contributes to a wide range of challenges in our work and community. We often speak of “Northern Brain Drain” in our community, when we see our young people head off to southern Ontario universities and not return to work in their home communities. The reasons for this can be diverse, but the effects are predictable: we are left without the expertise and specialization of many disciplines in our community.

However, there were several possible options discussed. Options included utilizing students through placement and project opportunities, hiring locum physicians, accessing experts through OTN, and sharing of staff through agencies. These could offer our community access to specialties and new opportunities.

ADAPTATION OF PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS FOR NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

Most of us in attendance at the summit were from service organizations. We manage large, provincial and publicly funded campaigns, programs, and services, which provide northern communities with resources and staff. But these programs are often developed and tested in large urban communities. Often, this means that we struggle with implementation because programs don’t really meet the needs of our unique demographics and geography. As well, we are often held to mandates and performance measures that don’t allow for much customization, which creates challenges for us. We may have resources but we lack the power to adapt or customize programs to meet our community’s needs.

MULTIPLE DISPARITIES WITH THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: THE NORTHERN PROBLEM

We identified the effects of multiple health disparities on our community as one of the biggest threats to this project. When juggling competing priorities and numerous challenges, sometimes it’s overwhelming trying to decide where to start. Understanding that our collective influence is bigger than our individual influence, and ensuring that our work is strategic, we will be able to better serve this neglected population.

BUILDING ON THE PROJECT AND NEXT STEPS

At the summit it was clear that we have lots of interest and passion to continue with this project. We have so many champions in the community working to improve teen health and reduce the impact of the social determinants of health in our area. In order to see real change, we will need to work on developing a strategy for the community that addresses the challenges we have identified and protects the strengths we have worked so hard to create. With the right people at the table, we could see significant change.

CONCLUSION

The Northern Teen Pregnancy Summit was a huge success. We had the opportunity to bring many organizations together to get the ball rolling on this important project. We gathered invaluable information which will help guide the next steps. I want to thank every person who took time to come out the summit, reflect upon their expertise, and share their knowledge and experiences with our group. I know the task seems big, and there is a lot of work to do, but I also know that Northerners are not afraid of a challenge. I hope to see many of you sitting at the table as we take this next step forward.

PRELIMINARY STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY SUMMARY

VISION BUILDING EXERCISE (in order of most votes)

1. Achieving optimal teen health through youth empowerment, involvement and multisectoral collaboration.
2. A community where youth are empowered, valued, reach their potential, have strong bonds and strong self-esteem.
3. A community where young people feel empowered and excited about their futures.
4. Youth have an active role in the community and have support from positive mentors.
5. Overall youth well-being with equal opportunities for boys and girls and supports for young parents to succeed.
6. A supportive community that enables teens to reach their potential.
7. Reclaiming the city with the heart of gold through spirituality, mental, physical, and emotional support to decrease teen pregnancy.
8. Empower youth through collaboration to make educated choices about their future.
9. A community that works together to better support teens to realize their potential and find their path.
10. The engagement of youth happens consistently and is coordinated at school, home, sports, health care and community agencies.

STRENGTHS (organized by category)

People

OEYC, NEOFACS workers	social workers
teen prenatal and parenting workers	housing workers
women in crisis workers	employment workers
school boards	alternative school teachers
teachers, guidance teachers	child and youth workers in the schools
family doctors, nurse practitioners, OBs	family home visitors
dietitians (CPNP)	midwives
sexual health nurses	day care workers
family law advocates	DARE officers
community at large champions (AYC)	community members
Aboriginal program leaders	youth leaders (TYEC —YO—PHU)

Resources

alternative schools (all school boards)	mental health workers in schools
sexual health clinics (low cost contraceptives, free condoms)	prenatal dietary program (CPNP)
women's shelters	Jumpstart, KidSport and physical activity programs
DARE program (newly revised)	prenatal education (OEYC, TNFC)
parenting programs (OEYC, TNFC)	in-home parenting support programs (HBHC, Aboriginal HBHC)
before and after school programs	CTCTC – social skill program for kids with disabilities
AYC – grass roots community organization	northern living – plenty of free outdoor recreational opportunities
TYEC – multiple coalitions of youth, community service providers	crisis lines
counselling programs (TFC – subsidized)	vulnerable youth programs (Schumacher Residence)
YMCA – multiple programs	low cost public transit
TNFC – (programs)	Family Law Info Centre (excellent advocates)
school based extra-curricular activities	community based mental health services
Aboriginal cultural programming	

Innovation

willingness to engage in social media marketing and programming	newly introduced mental health programs in schools
ability to use new sexual health curriculum in schools	DARE program – diversified
AYC – full range of youth services (pending start up)	YMCA – Strong Kids
TNFC (opportunities for program development)	midwives postpartum care
College Link	partnerships with Northern College Nursing Program
Collective Kitchen	breakfast programs in schools

Marketing

willingness to engage in social media marketing and programming
service provider to service provider marketing is decent
current relationship with media and willingness to cover this project (Daily Press, CTV, radio stations)

Operations

NEOFACS (multiple programming operations from preconception to parenting – including adoption options)
PHU (multiple programming options from preconception – parenting)
CCAC (in-school mental health work)
school boards

Finance

general program or specific funding from PHU, NEOFACS, CCAC, school boards (alternative school programs)
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WEAKNESSES (organized by category)

People

youth – meaningful involvement	specialists (mental health, physical health, abortion surgeons, psychiatry, counsellors, long wait times)
community youth services advocates and champions (non-parental role models and mentors)	translation specialists
culture specific service providers	service coordinators (community wide, address all services, one stop shop, navigator of services)
program evaluators	municipal, provincial and federal politicians and representatives
youth leaders from diverse backgrounds	

Resources

pregnancy homes or teen pregnancy resource centres	abortions services
youth friendly house (decrease wait times, access, cost and stigma)	continuity of service provision when young people travel between Timmins and northern coastal communities
lack of low-cost to no-cost arts and physical activities	no functioning and dedicated youth centre (multipurpose)
limited post-secondary education options in the community	preconception planning care for teens planning a pregnancy
teen dad programming	LEAP program – eligibility requirements too restrictive
youth employment assistance programs	youth leadership programs

Innovation

maintaining business/services with adults in mind (not youth friendly) re: operating hours, costs, barriers to access	marketing to teens – social media and otherwise
tailoring programs and services to our community and clients	community data/stats
services limited to and restricted by mandates	“not a youth friendly community” – stigma
managing cutbacks and funding changes	combining programs to create quality resources vs. quantity of resources
youth food security	overwhelming community effects of several health disparities relating to the social determinants of health

Marketing

understanding of the youth market
understanding of the target demographic
teen involvement in marketing strategies

Operations

community agencies working in silos relating to specific mandates and deliverables
lots of small programs versus collaboration giving larger quality programs

Finance

funding is very specific to and contingent upon program mandates and deliverables therefore NO flexibility
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OPPORTUNITIES (organized by category)

Environmental

services mapping – seeing what is available, what is needed and what is duplicated	explore OTN options
multisectoral collaborations	No Wrong Door policy
Artemis Youth Centre	school gyms at no cost for after-hours use

Legal

nothing recorded

Technological

“Oh Mama” App	other provincial technological initiatives
use of local media options	Health Care Connect to find family care provider
explore text crisis line and chat support	

Social

looking to other communities (Hamilton youth pregnancy care pathway)	new sex ed curriculum
new abortion pill approved for use in Canada	using media more frequently
teen mothers speaking to high schools	Northern Teen Pregnancy Project
peer to peer mentorship and teaching	non parental adult mentorship programs
career days	community services programs and fairs
youth advisory committees	youth focus group
Yo Mobile	Science Timmins
Speakeasy Emporium	Artemis Youth Centre

Economical

explore private sector (mining operations) funding and collaboration
United Way funding

Political

new federal government	youth advisory committee to the city
improve services and school board connections and communication	increased cultural awareness, sensitivity education and maturity with new government.

PRIORITIES (in order of votes)

1. Youth Engagement

- Teen parents speaking to high schools
- Volunteer, co-op, employment opportunities
- Peer support groups
- Interactive events

2. Building on Today

- Focus groups
- Creating steering committee
- Collaboration of small programs
- Partnerships between agencies
- Service mapping

3. Building opportunities for teens

- Science Timmins, Artemis, Sports, Arts, etc.

4. Mentorship

5. Public Education

- Reducing stigma
- Understanding available services
- Training for parents of teens

6. Technology

- Learning apps
- Social media
- Webinars
- Video-conferencing

7. Teen education

- Life skills training
- Emotional support

8. Sex ed

- New curriculum offers opportunities for discussion

9. Policy makers learn from other community success/strategies

10. Partnering with business

11. Partnering with all levels of education



THREATS (organized by category)

Environmental

lack of measurable quantifiable results	locations of services and buildings that surround them
performance measure that focus on services delivered rather than outcomes achieved create a bias in favour of the most easy to serve	lack of important formal and informal mentorship opportunities for our most vulnerable
lack of significant opportunities for most vulnerable youth to relate and communicate their issues and experiences to decision makers (also lack of advocacy opportunities)	poor provider and resource collaboration especially between private and public sector
competing organizational priorities	major industry changes in the community
multiple health and social disparities in the north	lack of project follow-through
lack of data and resources program that meet unique needs of northern communities (we are always starting from scratch)	

Legal

none identified	
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Technological

lack of consistent and effective social media use	lack of technology knowledge and community skill
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Social

community apathy (lack of engagement)	negative stigma relating to youth
lack of knowledge and expertise with youth communication and needs	not understanding cultural context
LOSING PROJECT MOMENTUM	fear of stigma or negative perception when asking for help
community tends to be reactive rather than proactive	cultural stereotyping

Economical

decreased public health funding to the north	all around funding gaps and disparities
time restraints on services	capacity to maintain and lead projects long-term
high cost of living in the north creates further barriers for those with decreased socio-economic status	overall economic downturn
resource based economy = very susceptible to rapid change	lack of private funding exploration or usage for publicly funded organizations

Political

changes in government parties mean change in priorities, change in funding, change in community mentality	lack of political representation (no municipal, provincial or federal involvement)
lack of accurate northern political representation	red tape for program development and delivery
new leadership within organization can change organizational priorities	utility/social service/health care privatization

PRIORITIES (in order of votes)

1. Youth interest and involvement in activities and initiatives
2. Funding changes (government or otherwise)
3. Stigma/fear, community mentality
4. Red tape bureaucracy
5. Demographics
6. Geography and weather
7. Technology
8. Capacity
9. Apathy within the community
10. Declining local economy
11. Community resistance
12. Out-migration
13. Increased user fees



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