



Connective Leadership Gathering

Supported and Effective Transitions



Summary



30+
Organizations

70+
Participants

6
Recommendations

Over two days in October 2023, 70 invited participants from across the justice, health, and social sectors came together for Connective’s second annual Leadership Gathering.

On the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, representatives from government ministries, non-profits, and Indigenous-serving organizations, as well as frontline staff, individuals with lived experience, and academic and medical experts engaged in a candid and non-attributed discussion of breakdowns in service delivery to people facing multiple and complex challenges.

With particular focus on breakdowns that occur at transition points between services and sectors, participants worked together to draft, revise, and vote on a series of concrete and practical recommendations.

“None of our systems are designed for what they’re dealing with now,” noted one panelist. “We must destroy the silos and listen to those on the front lines, those with lived experience. We have to see through what we think we know to see what actually exists.”

Recommendations supported by more than 70 percent of participants included:

1. The establishment of cross-sectoral hubs to coordinate access to services, strategic resource use, and information-sharing, across the justice, health, and social sectors and between levels of government.
2. The convening of an inter-ministerial summit on systems of service and care among the justice, health, and social ministries to identify current statutory, funding, and information-sharing frameworks impeding the development of cross-sectoral approaches to services and care.

Other recommendations to receive majority support included: establishment of minimum data and reporting standards across services and sectors to improve quality of care; comprehensive commitment to educate service providers on cultural safety, humility and Indigenous-specific anti-racism; conscious attention to the specific issue of service breakdown in transitions in policy development dialogues; and formal partnership between government and academia to promote learning regarding health and social systems.



Introduction

The reality of modern service delivery systems, with their separate organizational and legislated mandates, is that they are typically designed to address one specific challenge – such as addiction or homelessness. For those facing multiple challenges, this structure necessitates frequent transitions between services or sectors.

It is common, for instance, for people to move between the correctional system and the community, from acute care to primary care, or from supportive housing into the correctional system. These transitions should be understood as part of systems of service and care, yet it is here that clients often face recurring vulnerability. Service uptake is impeded by many obstacles – information gaps, cultural barriers, legislated barriers, stigma, restrictive service criteria, and trauma are just a few that service users are likely to encounter.

British Columbia’s service delivery environment is one of overlapping crises:

- Overdose deaths remain at historically high levels.
- Untreated mental health and substance use disorders place people in crisis at risk, increase levels of community anxiety, and engage the attention of the criminal justice system and its ‘revolving door.’
- Homelessness remains a persistent and stubborn issue.

Set against these crises, and despite combined efforts from the public sector and civil society, challenges with sustained and effective service delivery persist across the justice, health, and social sectors. These challenges are particularly acute in **transitions between services or sectors.**



As a longstanding non-profit service provider, and one that has seen these challenges firsthand, Connective has been creating opportunities for dialogue on these critically important issues since 2020 – first through a series of webinars during the pandemic, and then at two Leadership Gatherings in the fall of 2022 and 2023.

The 2023 Leadership Gathering, held on October 16-17 in Vancouver, took the theme of Supported and Effective Transitions. Over two days, invited participants from throughout BC’s justice, health, and social sectors participated in a facilitated process designed to capitalize on the expertise and experiences of those in the room.

What emerged throughout the opening panel presentation, featuring diverse individuals with lived experience, was that yesterday’s systems are no longer equipped to meet today’s challenges.

“None of our systems are designed for what they’re dealing with now,” noted one panelist. “We must destroy the silos and listen to those on the front lines, those with lived experience. We have to see through what we think we know to see what actually exists.” All too often, what actually exists are transitions with no supporting structure; no bridge from one service to another; no alignment in services being provided; and poorly aligned rules, resources, and expectations between different services and sectors.

In the sessions that followed, participants embarked on a rigorous process of ideation and iteration, arriving at a series of six recommendations for improving the support for and effectiveness of transitions for people facing multiple and complex challenges. This report details that process and the resulting recommendations.



Background

The past 30 years in BC have been marked by overlapping social ills: A significant rise in homelessness; an increasing shortage of affordable housing; the acceleration of the toxic drug crisis; a rise in brain injuries following overdose reversals; and the deepening mental health crisis, to name just a few.

These changes have created unprecedented levels of social disadvantage, and unprecedented challenge for the many community and government agencies that work with the people who are most impacted.



- The end of large-scale institutionalization in BC has been correlated with **higher rates of homelessness for people with severe mental disorders**.
- The prevalence of **mental health and substance use disorders among provincially and federally incarcerated individuals** has risen to between two-thirds and three-quarters.
- De-institutionalization for **people with developmental disabilities**, combined with the housing crisis, decline in the use of group homes, and rising demand for services, have resulted in **homelessness and intersectional disadvantage** for this highly vulnerable population.
- The **death toll from drug poisonings** has continued to climb, increasing almost ten-fold from 2012 to 2022. Since BC declared a public health emergency in 2016 there have been 13,000 additional toxic drug deaths and no end in sight.
- The ongoing **housing crisis affects** anyone looking to buy or rent a home, in particular, **those already experiencing social disadvantage**. Despite the efforts of community agencies to support these individuals, the nature of the crisis keeps success at arms length.
- Across virtually every measure that matters for social wellness, health, safety, and well-being the legacy of colonialism has resulted in **over-representation and systemic disadvantages for Indigenous people**.
- An ageing population means that large numbers of people faced with multiple and complex challenges are also seniors. A **growing number of seniors are now among the people living homeless** on BC streets.



Leadership Gathering Dialogue

The Leadership Gathering was designed to gather the collective knowledge and experience of invited participants from across the justice, health, corrections, and community sectors. That knowledge was then shaped into solutions and recommendations, with participants voting on which recommendations to bring forward. Only the recommendations that received majority support at the Leadership Gathering have been included in this report.

Day 1 began with the perspectives of those with lived experience. A fifteen-minute video and hour-long panel conversation, led by those with personal or familial experience of the consequence of gaps in system and service transitions, helped set the stage for discussions over the next two days.

Building on this firsthand insight, participants then formed breakout groups to flush out key issues relevant to service and sector transitions. Each breakout group categorized issues as to whether they existed primarily at the systemic, operational, or individual (i.e., beliefs and attitudes) level.

Identified issues were presented to the entire group for further exploration and clarification. At the end of the day, participants ranked their interest in pursuing solutions for each identified issue and those that received the greatest levels of support were brought forward to Day 2.

“We tend to design systems for people in one category. But they travel across systems, and the knowledge of that person isn’t travelling.”



On Day 2, participants were again divided into three groups, with each one focusing on a level where change was needed: systemic issues, operational issues, and issues related to beliefs and attitudes.

Each group was instructed to consider at least the top two ranked issues from Day 1, with the goal in each case being to identify:

- One or more potential solutions to the issue
- Who should be responsible for making a particular solution(s) happen
- Key governance and collaboration considerations
- Financial costs and benefits of the change
- Principal obstacle(s) to the change

A number of potential solutions were developed and presented back to all participants.

Each solution was subjected to critique, as participants sought to:

- Identify where greater clarity was required
- Identify any unrealistic or erroneous assumptions
- Identify likely obstacles which might hinder progress
- Make suggestions as to how the proposed solution might be improved/set up for success.

The authors of each proposed solution amended their proposal according to this feedback, and then framed the solution as a recommendation.

When the recommendations were finalized, participants again voted anonymously to indicate which recommendations they endorsed. The six recommendations that emerged from the two-day process and received endorsement from a majority of participants are detailed on the next page.

Recommendations

1. That in order to better support safe transitions for people moving between services and systems of care, the Province **establish integrated cross-sectoral hubs** to coordinate access to services, promote strategic application of resources and expedite lawful access to information across the housing, health, justice, mental health and addiction, and social services sectors, and between levels of government. **86%**
2. That the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction convene, as a matter of urgency, **an inter-ministerial summit on systems of service and care** among the Justice, Health, and Social Ministries to consider current statutory, funding and information-sharing frameworks which impede the development of systemic, cross-sectoral approaches to services and care and improved transitions between services for people with multiple or complex needs. **73%**
3. That in order to promote evidence-based strategies to support people in transition between services and systems of care, the Ministries of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Attorney General, Health, Mental Health and Addictions, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and Housing (the Justice, Health and Social Ministries') jointly **mandate coordinated and well-aligned data and reporting standards** across client programming overseen or supported by those Ministries. **66%**
4. That the Justice, Health and Social Ministries **mandate education on cultural safety and humility and Indigenous-specific anti-racism** for all employees, members, trainees, contracted services, and grant recipients. **66%**
5. That BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services (BCMHSUS) **incorporate the topic of "Supported and Effective Transitions" into the curriculum** of its Extension of Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) dialogues. **59%**
6. That the Justice, Health and Social Ministries jointly **sponsor a standing working group** of service providers and academic experts to promote systems learning and the practical application of research to the delivery of services and supports at moments of transition. **55%**

*Percentage indicates the number of Leadership Gathering attendees who endorsed the recommendation

Conclusion



The Leadership Gathering is premised on the understanding that service delivery to individuals under multiple systems is inherently complex. Rapidly evolving social, political, and economic landscapes mean that many of today's toughest challenges look unrecognizable from when our systems of service and care were first being developed. The level of extreme social disadvantage visible in communities across BC highlights the inability of yesterday's systems to keep pace with change. This is especially evident for those who must transition between multiple services and sectors.

Overcoming this complexity and ensuring better supported and more effective transitions between services for those facing complex challenges is within our grasp. Improving outcomes for this population means focusing on the spaces between services, transcending our traditional mandates, and committing to thoughtful collaboration. Transitions between services and sectors must not be viewed as an afterthought – they are an intrinsic part of our systems of care and should be resourced accordingly.

The recommendations developed and put forward by participants of this year's Leadership Gathering represent the profound impact that's possible when we are working together from a place of collaboration, toward positive outcomes for those we serve. Looking ahead, Connective will work with government, leading non-profits, as well as other interested and affected parties, to sustain momentum, encourage action on the recommendations, and determine how we can work in partnership to advance these objectives.

Connective is also actively working to strengthen and expand participation in the Leadership Gathering as a continuous improvement forum going forward. We look forward to collaborating with all those seeking improved outcomes for British Columbians facing multiple and complex challenges.

Participants

Alex Peel, Legal Aid BC

Alison Silgado, Seniors Services Society of BC

Dr. Allan Castle, Castle Consulting

Allison Wong, Ministry of Children and Family Development

Dr. Amanda Butler, Simon Fraser University

Amy Matthias, Native Courtworker Counselling Association of BC

Andrew Van Eden, Tsleil–Waututh Nation

Ashton Goldthorp, Correctional Service Canada

Barb Van Vugt, Correctional Service Canada

Blair Spencer, BC Corrections

Carrie McCulley, BC Corrections

Chris Kinch, Connective

Chris Lamoureux, BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services

Cliff Grant, Aboriginal Housing Management Association

Constance Hourie, Correctional Service Canada

Corrina Chase, First Nations Health Authority

Dan Jack, Correctional Service Canada

Dana Hubackova, Ministry of Children and Family Development

Danielle Scott, BC Housing

Danielle Cousineau, Vancouver Coastal Health

Darla Rasmussen, Sts’ailes Nation

Darrion Campbell, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Darryl Shackelly, Native Courtworker Counselling Association of BC

Deborah Baker, VanCity Community Foundation

Dennis Herfst, Correctional Service Canada

Dominic Flanagan, Consultant

Emin Dhaliwal, Connective

Erin Gunnarson, BC Corrections

Erin Findlay, West Vancouver Police Department

George Sartori, Community Living BC

Gigi McKee, Connective

Jasbir Natt, BC Corrections

Jayce Allen, Connective

Jeff Hayward, Connective

Jen Hirsch, Connective

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John Horn, Connective Nanaimo

Jonny Morris, Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division

Julia Barnes, Connective

Justine Patterson, Phoenix Society

Keir Macdonald, Coast Mental Health

Kim Campbell, Delta Police Department

Kimberley Armstrong, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Kirsten Sigerson, Correctional Service Canada

Lenore Mossing, Progressive Housing Society

Lisa Bayne, Correctional Service Canada

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Dr. Maureen Olley, BC Corrections

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Noha Sedky, CitySpaces Consulting

Pam Young, Unlocking the Gates Services Society

Prachi Khanna, Providence Health Care

Rachel Barsky, BC First Nations Justice Council

Dr. Reid Webster, Connective Kamloops

Dr. Ruth Elwood Martin, Univeristy of British Columbia (Retired)

Stephen Doyle, Yukon Health and Social Services

Stephen Pelland, Provincial Health Services Authority

Dr. Terri–Lee Seeley, Provincial Health Services Authority

Tonia Nicholls, BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services

Tricia Poilievre, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

Vishal Kumar, Connective

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- Tyler Blacquiere, Senior Communications Specialist

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- Allan Castle, Castle Consulting (facilitator and Leadership Gathering coordinator)
- Amanda Butler, Simon Fraser University
- Andrea Carter, Aboriginal Housing Management Association
- Barbara Van Vugt, Correctional Service Canada
- Darryl Shackelly, Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC
- Daryn Martiniuk, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Jonny Morris, Canadian Mental Health Association BC Branch (facilitator)
- Liz Vick, Connective
- Mark Miller, Connective
- Ruth Elwood Martin, University of British Columbia
- Simon Glen, BC Corrections
- Terri–Lee Seeley, BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services
- Tonia Nicholls, PHSA/University of British Columbia
- Tricia Poilievre, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions




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Do you have questions about the Leadership Gathering or the contents of this report?

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