

Nursing Home Without Walls for Aging in Place

Summary

- Most older adults prefer to stay in their homes for as long as possible. However, they often face challenges in accessing appropriate and reliable services at home.
- To address this issue, the Nursing Home Without Walls (NHWW) pilot project was developed and implemented to facilitate healthy aging at home by providing additional resources to long-term facilities to offer essential support and services to older adults.
- The NHWW pilot project aimed to:
 - Ensure that older adults have access to appropriate services and information related to aging in place
 - Provide social health initiatives to counter social isolation and loneliness
 - Increase knowledge on health-related issues important to aging in place
 - Empower local communities to respond to the needs of an aging population
- Participants in the evaluation of the pilot project included:
 - 375 older adults (80 identified as Francophone and 295 as Anglophone)
 - 22 Informal Caregivers

HSPP Focus Area	Improving social built environments to foster healthy aging
Project Start & End Date	June 1, 2019-March 31, 2024
Organization/Agency	Université de Moncton
Location	Lameque, Inkerman, Paquetville, Port Elgin
Principal Investigator(s)	Suzanne Dupuis-Blanchard

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result	Quotes
Improved access to appropriate services and information related to aging in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97.2% of the participants felt remaining at home for as long as possible was very important. • Post-intervention survey results from 375 participants revealed that they felt supported with NHWW to age in place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A significant increase was found in participants knowing whom to contact for information on aging in place (57.8% to 78.4%), feeling of increased security in their own home, and recommendation of NHWW (86.7% to 97.9%). ○ Overall, participants believed that the services they received from NHWW would help them stay at home. • Through 18 qualitative interviews, participants confirmed that NHWW was helping older adults remain at home. 	<p><i>"NHWW is helping me stay healthy now and will help me stay home longer in the future."</i></p> <p><i>"If something happens and my son isn't in the area, I know I can call NHWW and I know they would come or send help for me. I know they would. They are like a lifeline. Even if the water broke and I didn't know what to do, I would call them. They would know what to do."</i></p>
	Decrease in social isolation and feelings of loneliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from the survey showed decreased feelings of loneliness and social isolation because of the programs' social health initiatives. However, the results were not statistically significant. • Survey results revealed significant increase in the feelings of belonging over time.

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result
Increased knowledge on health-related issues for healthy aging and aging in place	Participants received information(education) about healthy aging in place during various activities. Survey results indicated significant increase in the knowledge gained by participants over time.
Engagement of local community towards age-friendly communities (AFC)	Of the four communities in this project, two communities became or are in the process of becoming recognized provincially as age-friendly communities.

Methods and Comparison

The NHWW pilot project was evaluated using mixed methods. Surveys were administered to participants to measure the impact on social isolation and loneliness, feelings of belonging, and aging in place. Informal discussions, contact with family members, and individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

- Overall, the participants felt supported to age in place with the services they received from NHWW.
- Social health initiatives provided through NHWW were successful in improving feelings of belonging and decreasing social isolation and feelings of loneliness.
- Participants had increased knowledge on health-related issues for healthy aging and aging in place.
- Despite the pandemic, participants level of frailty remained stable throughout the project, with a slight increase in frailty which was related to the advancing age of participants over time.
- Participants aging in place have varying needs and programming offered must be person-centered and flexible.

Recommendations

- Strategically expand services to older adults to ensure these expand in proportion to the available and sustainable resources to prevent potential program staff burnout.
- Provide appropriate support to NHWW staff to ensure they are well-prepared to handle the emotional nature of providing navigational services to older adults and caregivers.
- Ensure sustainable and long-term funding for NHWW program sites so that they can provide consistent and reliable service offerings to current clients and expand to more clients.

Next Steps

NHWW has been successfully adopted and secured funding by the Government of New Brunswick- Social Development as a program for aging in place. Due to overwhelming response, NHWW is being expanded to 30 communities within New Brunswick along with interest from other provinces.

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