

Eimeg tan fleoiaoltieg: Home for Life

Summary

- The number of Elders is growing in First Nations. A culturally appropriate long-term care system needs to be established to help take care of aging Elders.
- The purpose of Phase I was to explore the needs of Elders living at Elsipogtog First Nation, the largest First Nations community in New Brunswick, and understand the services and support they need to continue to live in their own homes as long as possible. When Phase I was complete, funding was received to work on scaling-up (Phase II).
 - **Phase I:** A community-based research team was created. They conducted in-depth interviews with 30 Elders in their own language to identify the needs of Elders living in the community (Elsipogtog) and create the Home for Life Assessment Tool (HFLAT) based on the findings. Additionally, new programs were implemented in the community to address some of these needs.
 - **Phase II:** The project has begun to scale up using a Nation-to-Nation, Elder-to-Elder approach, to develop culturally appropriate long-term care program model for First Nations communities.
- In Phase I, there were 30 Elder participants. In the second phase there were 120 Elder participants. All participants were located rurally, all spoke Micmac primarily and most spoke English as their second language (no gender demographics were provided for the sample).

HSPF Focus Area
Project Start & End Date
Organization/Agency
Location
Principal Investigator(s)

Using community approached to reduce health inequalities
 March 2020 – March 2024
 Dobbelsteyn Consulting Group International Inc.
 Elsipogtog First Nation
[Dr. Jennifer Dobbelsteyn](#)

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result	Quote
Health services inequality	Through interviews, five key findings were identified as needs of Elders to be addressed:	"No one cares to visit or check up on me."
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loneliness • Poor housing conditions • Fear, safety, and security • Food insecurity • Lack of a continuum of long-term care in the community; the need to live at home or in a supportive Elder Care Lodge 	"We need help with maintenance. Stuff I can't do anymore by myself, I have to rely on someone else, even cleaning the yard."
		"Some days I get scared, I don't want to go anywhere alone."
		"Meals on wheels would be nice for people living alone who can't cook for themselves."
Assessment		"Would love to stay at home and receive help there. Never liked hospitals, would love to be looked after by Native people."
	<p>The Home for Life Assessment Tool (HFLAT) was developed, implemented and assessed based on the above needs of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team noted that the tool is valid, and measures what it intended to measure (needs of the First Nation community's Elders). Specific data was not provided for this metric. 	

Indicator	Impact / Outcome / Result	Quote
Other (Evaluation of Scale-Up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From interviews with participants from Phase II, 100% of Resource Team members were satisfied with the outcome of the scale-up across six communities. Elders across the six communities that were engaged in the scale-up were overwhelmingly in support of this initiative, and 95% indicated they were satisfied with the scale-up. 	<p><i>"These questions [assessment tool] are very helpful and can be used to help others."</i></p> <p><i>"Elder to Elder approach was very successful."</i></p>

Methods and Comparison

Elders were interviewed about their needs in the community as they age, and this knowledge was used to create a Home for Life Assessment Tool (HFLAT). The tool has been validated and is now being used to scale-up to other Indigenous communities in Canada.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The needs of the community were identified using the HFLAT. From the needs that were identified in phase I, new programs were implemented in the community:

1. "Meals to Go" program to address food insecurity
2. "Eva's Vision" education programs (dementia and end of life care)
3. Long-term care/assisted living lodge planning

In phase II the tool was evaluated, with high satisfaction from resource team members and Elders from six different communities.

Recommendations

This team recommends that a continuum of long-term care be built in First Nations to keep Elders in their community as they age. They also recommend Indigenous long-term care programming, to help caregivers deliver appropriate community care to Elders. Finally, because the Elder community is growing, they recommend specific funding opportunities continue to be accessible for Indigenous aging research. This funding is needed to understand how to meet increasing care needs, while being culturally appropriate.

Next Steps

The HFLAT has been scaled-up in six other First Nation communities in New Brunswick and continues to be evaluated. This project is now recognized and funded by Indigenous Services Canada, to scale-up this assessment tool to other First Nations across Canada. More information about this project can be found:

- On their website, homeforlifeproject.ca, or
- In their [YouTube video about the program](#).

Additionally, collaboration has begun on an international research study on Indigenous brain health, led by Dr. Jennifer Walker (McMaster University).

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