Developing Resources for Staff and Adapting Programming During COVID-19 at Fred Victor

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Abstract

Fred Victor is an organization that supports those experiencing poverty and homelessness in Toronto. As a practicum student in the Health Promotions department at Fred Victor, I gained experience working on health promotion projects and was able to work directly with the community. Throughout the practicum, I worked on several projects to adapt Fred Victor's services during COVID-19. First, I worked to develop a resilience toolkit for Fred Victor staff. COVID-19 has led to higher levels of stress. This prompted Fred Victor to develop tools to support their staff. I designed a toolkit that instructs managers on how to promote resilience in their supervision sessions and team meetings. This toolkit provided information on what resilience is, as well as practical actions that managers can take to promote resilience in staff. This project involved knowledge translation to convey the research on resilience to Fred Victor staff in an accessible way. Additionally, I worked to support the development of online peer support groups. Typically, Fred Victor runs weekly in-person peer support groups for community members. However, due to COVID-19, these groups had to move to an online format. I helped facilitate this transition by developing a guide for facilitating online group programming. This guide included information on the best platforms to run online programming, how to create a safety agreement, and best practices for facilitating the group. I then conducted outreach to community members to ask for their input on the format and content of the groups. These projects are important to public health as they work to meet the public health goal to improve quality of life by promoting and encouraging healthy behaviours. These projects played an important role in promoting the health of Fred Victor staff and clients during COVID-19 by providing them with support and tools to manage their mental health.