Black Health Alliance –
Pathways to Care

Evaluation Report 2020-2021

Presented by The Students Commission of Canada, April 2021

Contents

Origin Story

Black Health Alliance (BHA) is a community-led registered charity working to improve the health and well-being of Black communities in Canada. Building on their track record as an effective mobilizer and champion, they continue to grow their movement for change. Driven by ground-breaking research, strong partnerships, and people, this movement continues to build innovative solutions to improve the health and well-being of Black people, and mobilize people and financial resources to create lasting change in the lives of Black children, families, and communities.

Black Health Alliance aims to reduce the racial disparities in health outcomes and promote health and well-being for people from the diverse Black communities in Canada with emphasis on the broad determinants of health, including anti-Black racism. The overall vision is for people from the diverse Black communities in Canada to experience optimal health and well-being.

Since 2015, Black Health Alliance has worked with mental health professionals, community coalitions and policy makers with the goal of improving services. This collaboration resulted in community consultations in 2017 which involved Black youth, families, community members and stakeholders across Ontario. Mental health and a dearth of suitable mental health supports for Black children and youth were consistently heralded as persistent issues affecting Black communities.

In response, BHA partnered with TAIBU Community Health Centre, Wellesley Institute, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH), and Strides Toronto to collaborate on a project that would expand and progress the current system of services available to Black children and youth in Ontario.

The outcome is Pathways to Care (PtC), a 5-year research and community-led project aimed at removing barriers and improving access to mental health and addictions services for Black children, youth, and their families in 6 cities across Ontario (Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, Windsor, Ottawa, London and Hamilton).

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to gain a greater understanding of the impact that Pathways to Care (PtC) has had this fiscal year (April 2020 – March 2021). PtC is a 5-year research and community-led project aimed at removing barriers and improving access to mental health and addictions services for Black children, youth, and their families in six cities across Ontario.

PtC chose quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to measure their impact thus far. Feedback was provided from people who have various levels of engagement with the project, including youth, families, committee members, volunteers, and organizational partners.

The findings in this annual evaluation report start to capture PtC's key outcomes:

Table 1. PtC outcomes, indicators, and evaluation questions that this annual report explores.

Outcome	Indicator	Evaluation Question
Targeted engagement of Core Stakeholders, PtC Community Advisory Group, Expert Reference Group, Youth Advisory Subcommittee, and Black communities in the conception, development, and implementation of the Pathways to Care project.	1) # of participants engaged in focus group sessions in each region of PtC project. 2) Major themes from Black Youth Focus Group sessions in each region of PtC project. Note: This annual evaluation report only includes data from 3/6 regions: Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton. Additional data will be included in the 2021-2022 evaluation report.	1.7 How many participants attended research activities?
	Committee members who positively comment on their committees' involvement in project direction. Note: Additional data will be gathered during the project's final grant year.	N/A
Building the capacity and infrastructure in Black agencies and organizations to better assist members towards accessing the care they need.	# of knowledge products (e.g. summaries/briefings, web resources, workshops, webinars, articles, etc.) created. Note: Additional data will be included annually.	5.5. How many knowledge products have been created?
	Creation of a hub (PtC website) for information; # of Unique Users. Note: Previous results regarding this indicator can be found in the PtC 2019-2020 annual evaluation report. Additional data will be included annually.	1.5. How effective is the PtC Website at being a resource hub for information?
Increased awareness and action to eliminate the specific barriers to care for Black children, youth, and their families.	Findings and lessons learned from annual project activities documented. Note: This entire annual evaluation report aims to capture the indicator above. Previous results regarding this indicator can be found in the PtC 2019-2020 annual evaluation report. Additional reports will be produced annually.	6. Have PtC project activities been effective in improving youth mental health and access to mental health services for Black children, youth, and their families?

A brief summary of the April 2020 – March 2021 evaluation findings are included below:

Black Youth Focus Groups: These community focus groups captured the barriers that Black youth and families face when accessing resources in their communities, with the most common themes surrounding stigma, lack of cultural awareness from mental health professionals, financial barriers, emotional expression in Black communities, and lack of trust. Participants also discussed possible solutions to increase access to services, with the most common themes surrounding education, self-care strategies, funding, and working with religious communities. Finally, participants discussed mental health in Black youth, with the common theme being the recognition of mental illness as illness. It is important to note that barriers and challenges faced by Black youth and families are rooted in and upheld by systemic violence and Anti-Black Racism.

These findings will help the PtC project and its stakeholders make recommendations for policymakers, mental health organizations, and service practitioners. It is essential to the PtC team that their work is grounded in the voices of those they serve.

Expert Reference Committee & Community Advisory Committee Focus Group: The focus group participants discussed many positive project qualities, including new opportunities, engagement, and diversity. The most common themes surrounded system outcomes, as committee members believed the project fostered larger networks, boosted awareness, and supported the increase of access to resources for Black children, youth, and their families. Overall, committee members felt that the project has delivered on their expectations and they expressed excitement and willingness to increase their involvement as the project continues to unfold. PtC will use these findings to inform and strengthen their committee activities and structure.

Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Focus Group: The YAC discussed the positive individual, social, and system level outcomes of the project. They experienced personal growth as they explored their identities and gained an increased sense of responsibility. Youth believed the project fostered strong relationships with others, as well as provided increased resources and access to services for those in their respective communities. Youth also expressed their desire to be more involved with the project beyond their current advisory role. PtC will use these findings to inform and strengthen their YAC activities and structure.

Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT): The collaborative organizational partners seem to feel confident with their partnership so far. They generally felt that they had good synergy, efficacy, non-financial resources, and decision-making authority. They felt that there were many benefits to participation, and were satisfied with their involvement in the project. Their confidence in financial and other capital resources were not as high, and they only felt moderately involved in the administration and management.

As a follow-up to these findings, the PtC team can qualitatively assess if and how their organizational partners want to be involved with the administration and management of the project. Additionally, as the PtC project continues to engage other organizational partners, PtC can explore how these partnerships could open doors to financial and capital resources.

It is important to note that these are baseline results and that the PAT will be administered annually to allow for comparison in future years.

Google Analytics (GA): PtC staff tracked user activity on the PtC website (resource hub) using GA. The data indicates that 45% (n≈1,350) of users who visited the website engaged with the

site content. Related quantitative and qualitative results, which highlight the preliminary process and impact in detail, can be found in the 2019-2020 annual evaluation report.

It is important to note that these are baseline results that will allow for comparison in future years. Hundreds of leads (i.e., users) are actively engaging with the PtC website and project administrative data will be required at the end of the project to determine whether the site is reaching qualified leads and how effective the PtC website is at being a resource hub.

The GA results, in addition to the qualitative data collected from PtC staff and committee members, indicate that there is a need and benefit, as well as traction and excitement for the PtC resource hub.

PtC Knowledge Products: The knowledge products developed by or associated with Pathways to Care provide essential information regarding mental health and related determinants, and spread knowledge and awareness to Black youth and their families. Most products are aimed towards increasing public understanding on the needs of Black children and youth across the country. Many of the products portray the challenges faced by Black children, youth, and their families due to systemic violence and Anti-Black Racism, while further displaying the effects on mental health. The products call for system-level change in order to meet the needs of Black children, youth, and their families.

Pathways to Care is creating meaningful engagement opportunities for Black children, youth, and their families to express their needs regarding access to mental health services. The project is also providing a space for project staff, organizational partners, and committee members to provide valuable feedback that will help inform and strengthen the initiative in future years. The voice gathered suggests that PtC has continued to work towards, and has been successful in, removing barriers and improving access for families and youth from diverse Black communities to experience optimal health and well-being.

Process & Tools to Date

Pathways to Care (PtC) chose quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to capture their project impact for the April 2020 – March 2021 fiscal year. Feedback was provided from people who have various levels of engagement with the project, including youth, families, committee members, volunteers, and organizational partners. The following tools were used to capture data for this annual report:

- **Black Youth Focus Groups:** The Black Youth Focus Groups consisted of 86 participants (39 in Toronto, 17 in Ottawa, and 30 in Hamilton). 52 of these participants also completed a demographics tool.

- **Expert Reference Committee (ERC) & Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Focus Group:** This Focus Group was held on February 24, 2021 and consisted of four (4) participants from the ERC and CAC. Three (3) of these participants also completed a demographics tool.

- **Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Focus Group:** This Focus Group was held on February 24, 2021 and consisted of four (4) participants from the YAC. All four (4) of these participants also completed a demographics tool.

- **Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT):** The PAT was completed by three (3) collaborative organizational partners. This tool was quantitatively analyzed.

- **Google Analytics (GA):** GA quantitative data from was used to evaluate how users are engaging with the PtC website (resource hub) through Unique Pageviews and Bounce Rate.

- **PtC Knowledge Products:** This section highlights the description, impact, and reach of 10 knowledge mobilization products.

Table 2. PtC evaluation tools used between April 2020 and March 2021.

Project	Qualitative Tools	Quantitative Tools
Pathways to Care	- Black Youth Focus Groups (n=86) - Demographics (n=52) - Expert Reference Committee & Community Advisory Committee Focus Group (n=4) - Demographics (n=3) - Youth Advisory Committee Focus Group (n=4) - Demographics (n=4) - PtC Knowledge Products	- Google Analytics - Partnership Assessment Tool (n=3)

Pathways to Care has utilized additional tools to collect data in previous project years; results can be found in previous annual evaluation reports.

Results: Black Youth Focus Groups

Outcome: *Targeted engagement of Core Stakeholders, PtC Community Advisory Group, Expert Reference Group, Youth Advisory Subcommittee, and Black communities in the conception, development, and implementation of the Pathways to Care project.*

The Black Youth Focus Group results include engagement from a variety of participants, including youth, parents/caregivers, healthcare workers, volunteers, and organizations. There have been 86 people who have participated thus far.

Significant themes are presented in the table below, with the frequency of each theme mentioned. Themes have been segmented into four (4) categories: Barriers for Black Youth Accessing Services, Barriers for Black 2SLGBTQ+ Youth Accessing Services, Solutions to Increasing Access to Services for Black Youth, and Mental Health in Black Youth. It is important to note that barriers faced by Black youth and families are rooted in and upheld by systemic violence and Anti-Black Racism.

Table 3. Summary of themes from the Black Youth Focus Groups.

Categories	Themes	Frequency
Barriers to Accessing Services	Stigma	50
	Lack Of Cultural Awareness From Mental Health Professionals	27
	Emotional Expression In Black Communities	23
	Financial Barriers	23
	Lack Of Trust	21
	Family And Mental Health	21
	Complicated Mental Health System	20
	Lack Of Black Professionals	18
	Lack Of Community Knowledge	16
	Cultural Narratives About Mental Health	16
	Length Of Services	15
	Strong Black Women	15
	Police Involvement	15
	Hospitalization	14
	Wait Times	12
	Stigma From Mental Health Providers	10
	Lack Of Services Specific To Black 2SLGBTQ+ Youth	10
	Lack Of Holistic Care	9
Barriers to Accessing Services – Specific to 2SLGBTQ+	Lack Of Services Specific To 2SLGBTQ+ Youth	10
	Centering Whiteness In Queer Services	9
	Stigma	8
	Queer Spaces As Protective	6
	Not Being Out	3

Solutions to Increasing Access to Services	Education About Mental Health	24
	Self-care Strategies	24
	Funding	19
	Working With Religious Communities	18
	Holistic Care	17
	Working With Communities	14
	Black Mental Health Centre	13
	Policies	13
	Individualized Care	13
	Culturally Competent	13
	Black Mental Health Professionals	12
	Building Rapport With Black Youth	12
	Creation Of Service Pathway	12
	Community Support	11
	Politics	11
	Crisis Support Teams	9
	Culturally Adapting Modalities	9
	Trauma-Informed	9
	Understanding Intersecting Identities	9
	Self-advocacy	9
	Families Learning About Mental Health	8
	Interdisciplinary Teams	8
	Organization Dependent	8
	Anti-Oppression	8
Mental Health in Black Youth	Recognizing Mental Illness As Illness	4
	COVID-19	3
	Dealing With Mental Health	3
	Gun Violence And Mental Health	3
	Institutional Racism	3

Demographic information from the focus group participants who completed and submitted the demographic form (n = 52) is included below. It is important to note that participants were able to select more than one option for any given question. For example, if one participant selected the options *Chinese* and *Caribbean* for their ethnicity, both answers were included in the results below.
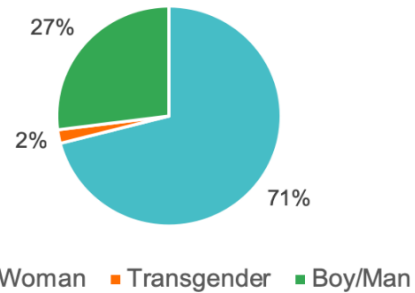
DEMOGRAPHICS

Participants in the Black Youth Focus Group

ETHNICITY

45% Caribbean

18% North American

2% Western European

18% East African

3% Chinese

2% Eastern European

6% West African

2% Southern African

2% Southern European

2% East Asian

2% Arab
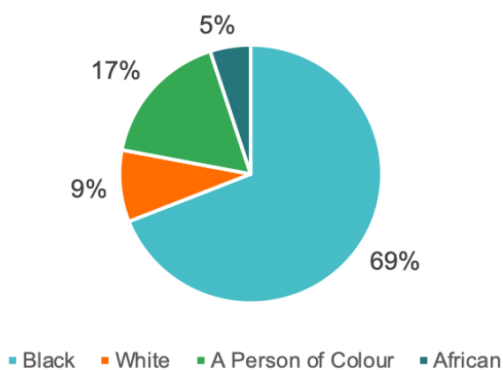
GENDER

27%
2%
71%

▪ Girl/Woman ▪ Transgender ▪ Boy/Man

SEXUALITY

68% Heterosexual/Straight

10% Homosexual/Gay

6% Queer

10% Bisexual

2% Pansexual

2% Lesbian

2% Questioning

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY?

5%
17%
9%
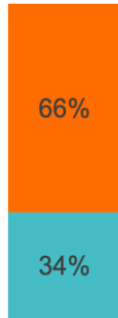69%

▪ Black ▪ White ▪ A Person of Colour ▪ African

AGE

8% 18 and under

20% 19 – 24
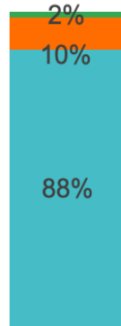
35% 25 – 30

37% 30 and over

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Were you born in a country other than Canada?

Were your parents born in a country other than Canada?

	Yes	No	I don't know

Born in another country: 34% Yes, 66% No

Parents born in another country: 88% Yes, 10% No, 2% I don't know

CITY

26%	Toronto
25%	Ottawa
2%	Rockland
2%	Gatineau
2%	Gloucester
2%	Regina
6%	Mississauga
8%	Brampton
4%	Etobicoke
4%	Pickering
6%	Scarborough
6%	Ajax
4%	York
4%	Waterloo
2%	Oshawa

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME

76%	English
8%	French
3%	Somali
1.6%	Cantonese/Chinese
1.6%	Portuguese
1.6%	Arabic
1.6%	Tigre
1.6%	Amharic
1.6%	Japanese
1.6%	Swahili

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

33%	In a big town/small city
67%	In a big city

61%	In your own home
30%	In your parent's home
2%	Homeless, not welcome at home
2%	Renting
2%	In residence
2%	With a guardian

DO YOU LIVE MORE THAN AN HOUR DRIVE FROM A CITY?

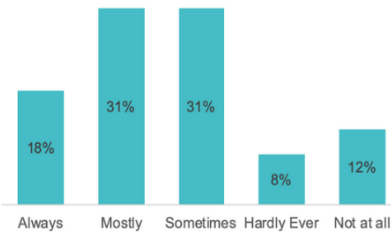|	
4%	Yes
96%	No

MONEY FOR BASIC NEEDS AND FUN ACTIVITIES

Do you have enough money to meet your basic needs (food, housing, clothing, health care)?

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Not at all
42%	24%	20%	10%	4%
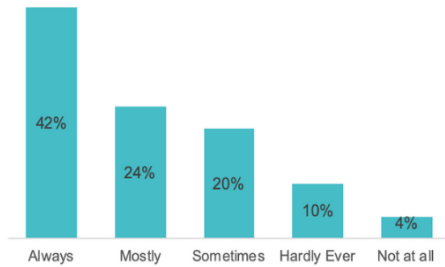
Do you have enough money to meet your basic needs (from a job, parents/guardians, etc.) to do the fund things you'd like to do?

Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Not at all
18%	31%	31%	8%	12%

What is your primary caregiver's (e.g. parent, guardian) highest level of education?

39%
10%
10%
31%
20%
82%

- Doesn't apply or don't know
- Some college or university
- Did not finish highschool
- Finished High School
- Finished college or university
- Finished graduate degree
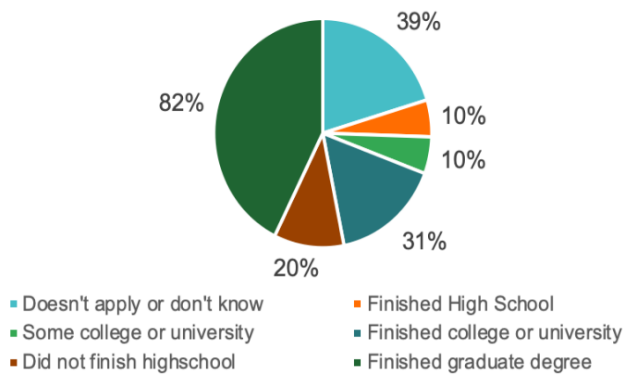
WHO DO YOU LIVE WITH?

32%	Mom(s)
26%	Birth/Adoptive
6%	Live on my own
19%	Roommates/Friends
21%	Brother(s)/Sister(s)
11%	Partner/Spouse
23%	Dad(s) Birth/Adoptive
6%	My child/children
4%	Other relatives
2%	Girlfriend/boyfriend

What grade are you or are you doing something else?

38%	Finished college/university and working
21%	Finished graduate degree and working
6%	Finished high schooland working
8%	Graduate studies
4%	College
2%	University
2%	Not finished highschool and working
6%	Not working or in school
2%	Grade 10
9%	Grade 12

RELIGION/BELIEF SYSTEM

52%	Christianity
14%	Islam
12%	Personal Belief System
2%	Atheist
16%	Agnostic
2%	Indigenous Belief System
2%	Confucianism
2%	Buddhism
2%	Judaism
2%	Odinahi

Results: Expert Reference Committee (ERC) & Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Focus Group

Outcome: Targeted engagement of Core Stakeholders, PtC Community Advisory Group, Expert Reference Group, Youth Advisory Subcommittee, and Black communities in the conception, development, and implementation of the Pathways to Care project.

Four members of the ERC or CAC participated in a focus group where they had the chance to share their experiences in the project and provide suggestions for project improvements. Below is a brief demographic summary of the focus group participants who completed the demographic form.

DEMOGRAPHICS
Participants in the Expert Reference Committee and Community Advisory Committee

ETHNICITY

100% Caribbean

SEXUALITY

67% Heterosexual/ Straight

33% Homosexual/Gay

67% of participants have parents who were not born in Canada.
33% of participants were also not born in Canada.

100% of participants speak English

100% of participants believe they have enough money to meet their basic needs at least most of the time.

67% of participants believe they have enough money to do the things they want at least most of the time.

GENDER

67% Female

33% Male

The focus group provided a space for committee members to reflect on their experiences, identify the impact that the project has had, and share any recommendations. Significant themes are presented in the table below, with the frequency of each theme mentioned. A brief summary of the findings and significant quotes to support the findings are included directly below the table.

Table 4. Summary of themes from the ERC and CAC Focus Group.

Category	Themes	Frequency
Project Qualities	Good Experience	4
	New Activities	1
	New Knowledge	4
	Meaningful	4
	Inclusive	2
Community & System Level Outcomes	Networking	3
	Knowledge of Services	3
	Access to Resources and Services	8
	Connection with Community	5
	Advocacy	4
Initiators & Sustainers	Work Experience	2
	Lend Voice/Personal Experience	3
	Help Others	4
Recommendations	More Meetings	4
	Scheduling of Meetings	2
	Increased Family-based Engagement	2

Project Qualities

Committee members seem to have had many positive experiences within the project. They noted that they were thankful to be involved and were very excited to see the impact the project has in the future. Participants described that the project is engaging and allowed them to gain extensive knowledge that they can use in their life and workplace. Committee members highlighted that the project was inclusive and provided space for various perspectives, experiences, and intersecting identities.

It's just been great to be involved in the project. I'm really excited to see the next phase like what comes out of the project.

Everyone embraced each other and their thoughts and their feelings.

I enjoy getting information and learning about some of the feedback that was given and some of the information that was shared that I wasn't aware of. It was very educational for me personally, I could apply the learning at my work.

I learned a lot like, in terms of demographics, in terms of different areas, in terms of, you know, the mapping they did of the city of where the needs are.

The conversations we have had were great and engaging and easy to follow.

It's been wonderful to also be at the table with so many different perspectives and people with different experiences.

Community & System Level Outcomes

Participants in the focus group seemed to mostly focus on the community and system level impact that the project is having. They believed that the project fosters stronger networks. Most importantly, the committee stated that the project is effective at communicating with and advocating for the community in order to meet their needs regarding knowledge of and access to mental health services.

For people to be able to have somewhere, like with the mapping, have a site that they can go to, whether you're in Hamilton or Toronto, and be able to search like, 'where can I find services, where can I find services that will provide the care that I need', and they can search, and they can find it there. That's huge.

I love the access to care and knowing where to go. Especially for families, you know, when you don't have to look, and look, and look… if you don't know what to look for, what do you do? So if you have like a one stop shop, this is where you go, and they have a list, and then you start from there, you can get some referrals and some ideas.

It's been great to network and meet other professionals who are working towards the same goals as me.

I can see resources being developed. From the beginning, when we were told what we were going to be involved in until now, I've seen a lot of information come in.

It's going to be amazing, all over the province, which was another thing that I thought was important as well, it isn't just Toronto, other places need access too.

Initiators & Sustainers

Participants in the focus group mentioned many initiators as to why they joined the project, as well as why they continue to stay involved. Committee members seemed to join with the intent of promoting access and awareness, reducing barriers, and supporting others. They highlighted the influence of their own lived experience on how they became connected, and why they felt that their support was beneficial.

I am interested in anything to, um, try to promote increasing access to services, trying to reduce barriers, like I'm all for that.

As someone who's lived experiences barriers, I'm always down to speak, share my experience, and to listen to others.

Recommendations

Committee members offered their recommendations for strengthening the project. Most committee members want to attend more meetings and to be more involved. There were also some recommendations around elevating family-based engagement.

I wonder if we were as engaged because I don't recall having a lot of meetings, I'm looking at my calendar thinking that I've only seen very few meetings, I don't feel like there was as much engagement for families.

I would have liked to have more, or an opportunity to do more, I don't know what that would look like.

With the meetings, and again I know everyone has a busy schedule, but I do think like in the future it'd be good to have a more consistent schedule.

Even just have more meetings, cause yeah, like reflecting back, I think it would have been nice to be like more engaged in the project.

Results: Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Focus Group

Outcome: *Targeted engagement of Core Stakeholders, PtC Community Advisory Group, Expert Reference Group, Youth Advisory Subcommittee, and Black communities in the conception, development, and implementation of the Pathways to Care project.*

Four members of the YAC participated in a focus group where they had the chance to share their experiences in the project as well as provide suggestions for future programming. Below is a brief demographic summary of the focus group participants.

DEMOGRAPHICS
Participants in the Youth Advisory Committee.

50% East African
50% Caribbean
25% West African
25% North American

25% Bisexual
75% Heterosexual

50% of participants have parents who were born in Canada.
100% of participants were born in Canada themselves.

67% of participants speak English, with 33% who speak Somali.

100% of participants believe they have enough money to meet their basic needs.

Only 50% of participants believe they have enough money to do the things they want.

100% Female
25% Agender

The focus group provided a space for committee members to reflect on their experiences, identify the impact that the project has had, and share any recommendations. Significant themes are presented in the table below, with the frequency of each theme mentioned. A brief summary of the findings and significant quotes to support the findings are included directly below the table.

Table 5. Summary of themes from the YAC Focus Group.

Category	Themes	Frequency
Project Qualities	Good/Fun Experience	4
	Unique Opportunity	8
	Staff Value Ideas	2
Individual Level Outcomes	New Skills	1
	Sense of Responsibility	2
	Identity Development	6
Social Level Outcomes	New Relationships	3
	Close Relationships	2
	Awareness of Prejudice	3
	Learning About Others	2
	Collaboration Skills	2
Community & System Level Outcomes	Larger Networks	2
	Knowledge of Services	7
	Access to Resources and Services	6
	Engaged in Community	3
	Advocacy	2
Initiators & Sustainers	Work Experience/Learn More	2
	Lend Voice/Lived Experience	4
	Help Others	2
Recommendations	Involved in Planning and Decision-Making	11
	More Flexible Meetings	1

Project Qualities
Youth discussed many positive qualities that the project possesses. In particular, they stated that they felt very happy with their involvement in the project, they felt that their ideas and thoughts were being valued, and they believed that it gave them a unique opportunity that does not exist in other spaces.

I think the work is great because I can't really think of many formal opportunities that we have, as Black youth, to contribute to research.

I feel like my suggestions have been valued and taken up, and because they've been taking up, they've made the group work better.

Individual Level Outcomes
Committee members felt proud of the project and are excited to see more positive impact throughout the year. They felt that they experienced an immense amount of personal growth and development

throughout the project. Youth felt that they could comfortably express themselves in the space and that they gained new technical skills.

I've learned to be more okay with myself, and my identity, and my own culture … this project, even though it's not in-person, has given me more of an opportunity to interact with other people who are Black, and I don't really have that in my life.

I've just had the space to really grow a lot more as a young person.

It's nice to know that, you know, I can do something that I'm passionate about and there are people who are doing this work successfully.

I feel like I've learned so much that I had no idea about before.

A very practical skill is I learned how to use Invivo, for the first time [name] took us through it. I don't have any experience with research so that was really great for me.

I still carried some of the, I don't know, kind of the stereotypical thinking about mental health, that's a problem in the Black community. So I think this is kind of challenged me to, um, rethink and unlearn some of those things.

Social Level Outcomes

The youth committee discussed the social atmosphere of the project. They enjoyed making new friendships with other Black youth and also expressed that they developed meaningful relationships and a sense of community. They developed relational skills and knowledge throughout their participation, as they were more aware of prejudice, they learnt about others with shared identities, and they experienced meaningful collaboration.

I really enjoy being able to meet so many other young Black people who are very active.

I have really liked the meetings because I get to speak with the same people over again, which is nice, and seeing them on social media too, so there is that sort of connection and sense of community.

I've learned a lot about, you know, how people are perceived, and that's one of the big problems and barriers that this project is trying to overcome.

It's been very beneficial to be able to meet and talk with other Black people, just like about their experiences with mental health specifically, and also our collective experience with the system at large.

It's been very, very eye opening. I know that if I'm going through that then someone else is too, but it has been very affirming that like other Black people are simultaneously experiencing the world in a similar way. It makes you feel more connected to others.

Community & System Level Outcomes

Some of the most common themes of this focus group surrounded the community and system level impact that the project is creating. They believed that the project fostered larger networks, increased mental health awareness (and decreased stigma), and increased access to resources. Youth also felt engaged with their community.

In the beginning stages it's great because [the project is] raising awareness, reducing the stigma associated with mental health, especially with Black people.

19

Raising awareness and showing people where resources are. I found even like when [name] shares the posters with us, and I shared them on my Instagram, and so like people will ask me questions, which I think is great because then they get to see that something is being done in this area, and also where they could go to access help if they needed it.

Hoping that we can continue to make more resources more available, just like more known about, for Black folks in Ontario.

Decreasing stigma around mental health, as well as creating awareness about, you know, services that are out there, and creating better services and better access.

I was really proud of the social media work, and it resonated with young people a lot, you know, people are on social media, and it was a good way to get info out there and have people know about it in a way that is totally non-committal and fun.

Initiators & Sustainers

The YAC also discussed why they joined the project. The most common themes surrounded youth wanting to advocate for and help other Black and racialized youth in their respective communities. They believe it was an opportunity to use their voice, learn about mental health, and use their own lived experiences to create positive changes.

I wanted to advocate for the needs of Black and racialized individuals, particularly youth.

I joined because I have my own personal experience with mental health and the mental health system, and I thought it was great to be able to have a say in how it works and how it affects people like me who are actually interacting with the system.

I thought it'd be a great opportunity to learn more about mental health in the Black space and figure out how to- how we go forward in the future and meet the needs of our community.

Recommendations

Committee members offered their recommendations for strengthening the project. The main theme in this section surrounded the desire to be more involved. Youth would like to be more involved with the planning, decision-making, and implementation. They want to be more engaged with the project, as they believe their lived experiences would be a great influence to shaping the project to meet the needs of other Black youth.

The one thing I feel like I'm lacking is that it seems like there's this big curtain, like I'm very happy to contribute, and I'm happy that there are meetings, but sort of in between meetings, I'm like, what's happening behind the curtain and what can I sort of do to like, help facilitate and move along the progress.

I really would like to get more hands on research experience. I do feel helpful like being able to provide feedback and I also would like to be able to like participate in very active ways as well, that aren't limited to advising.

Being able to actively shape the way that things go because I feel like- and again, as someone who has experienced the mental health system, or the health care system, in these real ways, as a Black queer trans person- there is a lot that gets missed.

It would be easier if we were almost part of the brainstorming process. It seems like there's a lot of great changes that are done because of our input. And I know that myself and a lot of us are willing to be there in those beginning discussions so we'll show up if we get an invite.

Results: Partnership Assessment Tool

Outcome: Building the capacity and infrastructure in Black agencies and organizations to better assist members towards accessing the care they need.

Black Health Alliance partnered with TAIBU Community Health Centre, Wellesley Institute, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH), and Strides Toronto to collaborate on the Pathways to Care project.

In order to measure the effectiveness of the collaboration, Pathways to Care staff administered the Partnership Assessment Tool (PAT). The PAT consists of 11 constructs; an explanation of each construct is presented below.

Synergy: The Synergy construct measures how the organizations/people in the partnership work together, develop goals, respond to needs, and carry out comprehensive activities through effective communication. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Extremely Well to (5) Not well at all.

Leadership: The Leadership construct measures how the partners take responsibility, motivate others, communicate effectively, and foster respect, trust and inclusiveness. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Excellent to (5) Poor, with the additional option of (6) I don't know.

Efficacy: The Efficacy construct measures how partners effectively use the resources available to them. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) The partnership makes excellent use to (5) The partnership makes poor use.

Administration and Management: This construct measures how the partnership communicates, organizes the project, performs secretarial duties, provides evaluation, applies for grants, and minimizes barriers. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Excellent to (5) Poor, with the additional option of (6) I don't know.

Non-financial Resources: This construct measures the extent that the partnership has the non-financial resources (e.g., skills, data/information, influence, credibility, etc.) to work effectively. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) All of what it needs to (5) None of what it needs, with the additional option of (6) I don't know.

Financial and Other Capital Resources: This construct measures the extent that the partnership has the financial and other capital resources (e.g., money, space, equipment) to work effectively. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) All of what it needs to (5) None of what it needs, with the additional option of (6) I don't know.

Decision-Making: The Decision-Making Construct measures whether the partners are comfortable, supportive, and included with regards to the decision-making process. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Extremely/All of the time to (5) Not at all/None of the time.

Benefits of Participation: This construct measures whether partners experience benefits within their participation. Examples of benefits include the development of skills, heightened public profile, development of relationships, enhanced abilities to make changes, acquisition of additional financial support, etc. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Yes to (2) No.

Drawbacks of Participation: This construct measures whether partners experienced and drawbacks within their participation. Examples of drawbacks include diversion of time, insufficient influence or credit, frustration, conflict, etc. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Yes to (2) No.

Comparing Benefits and Drawbacks: This construct measures how the benefits of participating in the partnership compares to the drawbacks. This construct contains one question, and it is scored on a scale from (1) Benefits greatly exceed the drawbacks to (5) Drawbacks greatly exceed the benefits.

Satisfaction with Participation: This construct measures how the partners are satisfied with the collaborative work, their influence/role in the partnership, the plans for achieving goals, and how the partnership is implementing plans. This construct is measured on a scale from (1) Completely Satisfied to (5) Not at all Satisfied

Based on the quantitative findings below, the organizational partners seem to feel confident with their partnership. They generally feel that they had good synergy, efficacy, non-financial resources, and decision-making authority. They felt that there were many benefits to participation, and were satisfied with their involvement in the project. Their confidence in financial and capital resources were not as high, and they only felt moderately involved in the administration and management. It is important to note that the scale for each construct varies; the scales are listed above.
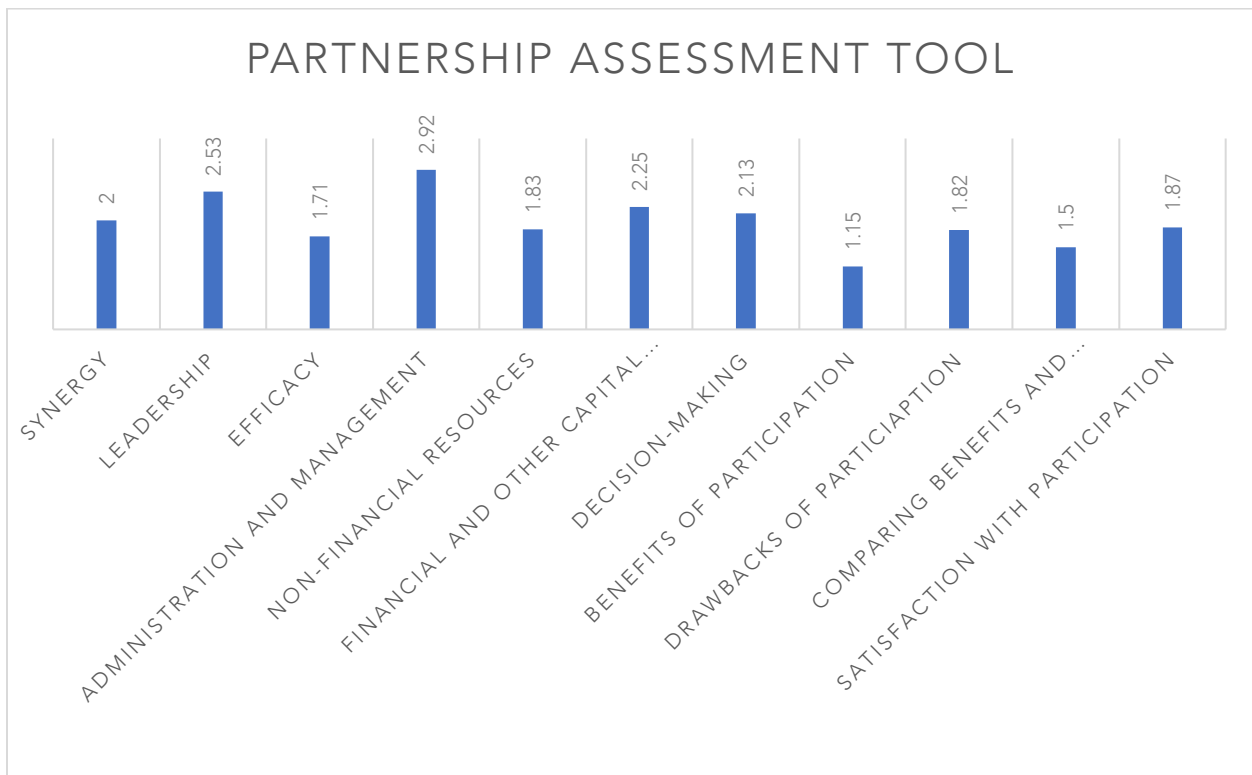

Figure 1. Partnership Assessment Tool – Average Scores Segmented by Construct.

The PAT will be administered annually to allow for comparison in future years.

Results: Google Analytics

Outcome: *Building the capacity and infrastructure in Black agencies and organizations to better assist members towards accessing the care they need.*

Pathways to Care is measuring their website goals and impact using Google Analytics. From Jan 2020 to March 2021, PtC has tracked user activity on the PtC website. For this report, the focus is on Unique Pageviews, which is the number of sessions during which the specified page was viewed at least once.

The chart below indicates the Unique Pageviews for each site page during the initial website launch (Jan 2020 – March 2020) and 12 months after the launch (April 2020 – March 2021).
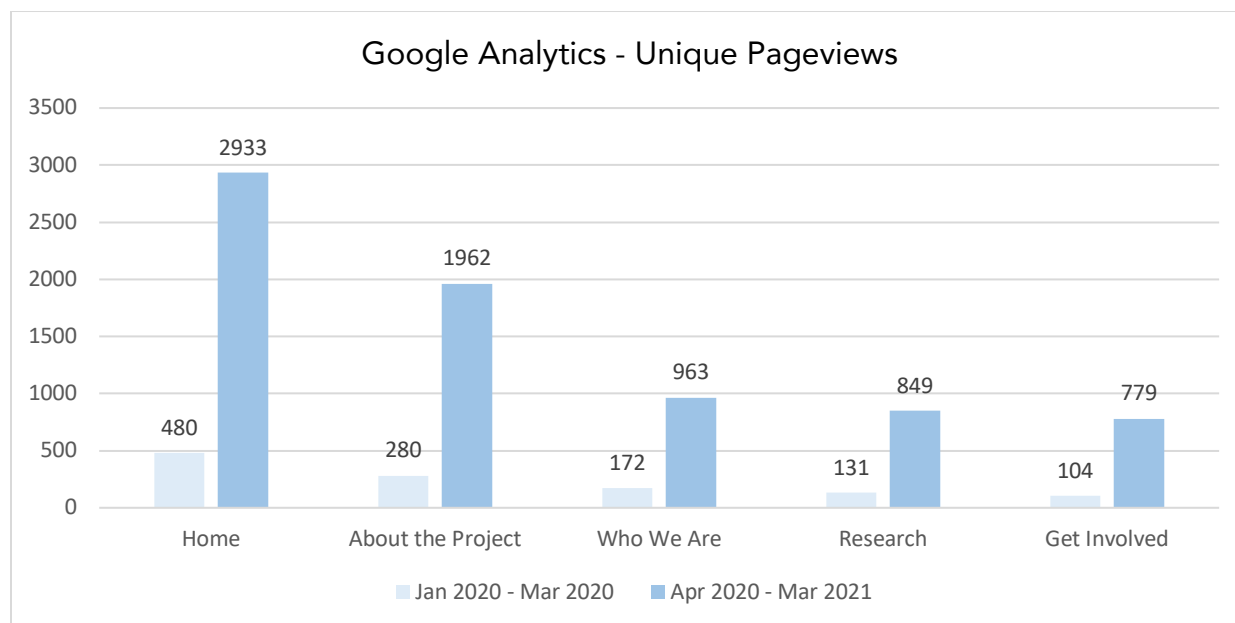

Figure 2. Google Analytics: Unique Pageviews for the Pathways to Care Website.

Google Analytics data also gives insight that out of roughly 3,000 users there was a 55% Bounce Rate (i.e., 55% of users had no engagement with the landing page and the visit ended with a single-page visit) between April 2020 and March 2021. This indicates that 45% (n≈1,350) of users who visited the website engaged with the site content in some capacity.

At the end of the project, Google Analytics and project administrative data will be used to track qualified leads, which will determine how effective the PtC Website is at being a resource hub for information. This data will be collected once the project launches into their *Partnership Building and Knowledge into Action* phases. The data collection will require a three-step process:

1. Google Analytics will be used to track **leads** (i.e., people who visit the website) and to track **click through rate** (i.e., people who navigate through pages, click on links, download resources, etc.)

2. Google Analytics and project administrative data will be used to track **converted leads** (i.e., people who have visited the website and have completed a call to action: called in, filled out forms, registered for events/workshops through the website, etc.)

3. Project administrative data (e.g. workshop attendance list) will be used to track if converted leads are leading to **closed leads** (i.e., people who are following through with accessing services, programs, workshops, and so on).

A high rate of converted leads must be leading to closed leads to ensure that the project is reaching **qualified leads** (i.e. people who have invested interest and a need for the information provided).

This process will determine how effective the PtC website is at being a resource hub and how this project activity is advancing the project's mission of increased mental health and addiction services for Black children, youth, and their families.

Results: Pathways to Care (PtC) Knowledge Products

Outcome: *Building the capacity and infrastructure in Black agencies and organizations to better assist members towards accessing the care they need.*

PtC Knowledge Products are articles, presentations, workshops, infographics, and additional products developed or supported by PtC that align with the project's main outcomes. These products are being actively shared with communities in order to support the increased knowledge of and access to mental health services for Black children, youth, and their families. The overall aim is to translate knowledge and promote knowledge mobilization; the products are intentionally catered to meet various experience and knowledge levels to ensure that the resources provided are accessible.

The Knowledge Products that Pathways to Care has created and/or contributed to are presented in the table below, where the **description**, **impact**, and **reach** are discussed for each.

Table 4. PtC Knowledge Products – Summary of Product, Impact, & Reach.

Product Name	Description and Link	Impact What impact did this product have?	Reach Who engaged with this product?
Research Snapshot: Canadian Black Children and Youth Face Many Barriers to Accessing our Mental Healthcare System	This research snapshot provides a clear summary of the barriers faced in the mental health care system, specifically surrounding Black youth in Canada. Thirty-three peer-reviewed articles and gray literature documents were included to discover systemic, practitioner-related, community-related, and personal barriers to accessing mental health services. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/dsk96p4h	The focus of this product is to raise awareness to local and national stakeholders/funders to be able to better support Black Youth in various settings (e.g., mental health support, financial support).	This product aims to reach funders in order to expand the universal health care system. This product has been shared with the Evidence Exchange Network and CAMH.
Jack.org Panel Presentation: Intersectionality of Black Identity and Mental Health	Jack.org is a mental health NGO; the panel discussion was on the intersectionality of Black identity and mental health. The Panel presentation was used to discuss racism, colonialism, and mental health; along with how racism affects one's mental well-being. It also allowed for an in-depth review of barriers and facilitators to care. Product available upon request.	This panel had a large impact as it provided a better understanding of the needs, challenges, and opportunities for change. With a strategic framework, it allowed for a comprehensive plan to define and improve the pathways to care for Black children and youth.	The virtual panel audience consisted of McMaster university students; attendance around was 10-15 participants and fluctuated.
Article: Project forging Pathways to Care for Black kids, youth in 6 Ontario cities	This article provides a comprehensive summary of the Pathways to Care Initiative. It explains the aim of the initiative to improve the lives of Black children and youth across Ontario, with the addition of 5 new cities. It includes quotes from Black Health Alliance and public health researchers. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/rpfz9bwh	The publication of this article raises awareness to not only the Pathways to Care initiative, but also towards their mission. It explains the organization of the project as well as the importance of such project in the community.	Article published for the public on www.toronto.com

Article: Black communities have long faced barriers to mental-health care. These organizations are working to change that	This article reviews the several overlapping challenges Black Canadians face that can lead to poorer mental health outcomes. The article introduces the Pathways to Care initiative as a project investigating ways to create better pathways to mental health and addictions services. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/w4c7j4re	Similar with other published articles, this article raises awareness to the lack of mental health supports available for Black children and youth. It explains the importance of this support and the reasons as to why Pathways to Care is a necessary program.	Article published for the public on www.thestar.com
Article and Interview: Project working to improve mental health supports for Black children and youth in Ontario	This article was based on an interview with CHUO 89.1 FM (an Ottawa-based campus radio station) conducted with PtC. This article provides an in-depth look of the Pathways to Care initiative and its benefits for youth across the province. Based upon the interview, this article stresses the importance of a heavy system approach for the mental health system. Product available upon request.	The approach of this article was to raise awareness of the organization, with the hopes of expanding their research nationwide. It targets the need for municipal, provincial, and federal government support.	Article was published for the public on www.canada-info.ca, which features the journalism of 22 campus and community radio stations; their audience includes underserved communities in all across Canada and listeners of the 22 featured stations.
Article: Uncensored looks at the mental health toll of anti-Black racism	This article focuses on Project Heal as a program available to support better mental health practices for Black people in Winnipeg to work through the trauma of anti-Black racism. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/4uefdxwc	The article aims to raise awareness in order to create more funding opportunities. It also acts as a reminder that Black people remain on the outskirts of the health-care system.	Article published on www.cbc.ca
Article: Calls for culturally-specific care amidst concerns over mental health issues in Black communities	This article addresses the issues surround mental health care in Saskatchewan. It stresses that the system has not been designed to accommodate those with unique challenges that those in the Black community face. The article explains the barriers faced by Black people in the community, and calls for Canada-wide research on mental health in Black communities in order to have a clear idea of their needs. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/2fbb9ubn	This article aims to sound the alarm about the state of mental health in Black communities across the country, and how little is known about it. They are urging action especially in the form of culturally-appropriate services.	Article published on www.cbc.ca
Centering Black Youth Wellbeing – A Certificate on Combatting Anti-Black Racism	PtC research was used by YouthRex to help develop a certification on combatting anti-Black racism. This online certificate offered by YouthRex provides the Ontario youth sector with the foundational knowledge to cultivate	This certificate will support a structural transformation in Ontario's youth sector that centers the wellbeing of Black young people and their	Over 800 participants have attended the training and received certification.

	practices, policies and alliances that challenge, disrupt and combat systematic anti-Black racism. Product URL: www.youthrex.com/abr-certificate	families in individual practices and organizational policies.	
Scoping Review: Barriers and Facilitators To Accessing Mental Healthcare For Black Children & Youth + Scoping Review Infographic	This scoping review brings attention to the disproportionately poor health outcomes facing Black populations in Ontario, and the importance of collecting race and ethnicity-based health data. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/tnm45zyp PtC has also developed a corresponding infographic that gives a snapshot of the topics covered in the article. Product URL: www.pathwaystocare.ca/scoping-review-infographic	Emphasizes the need for health systems and communities to partner to improve health outcomes. Hope is to exacerbate social, economic and racial justice issues in Canada.	The reach of this article and infographic was tracked through Google Analytics; the article was accessed 337 times and the infographics was accessed 332 times.
Social Network Analysis Report	This report explored the current social relationships of mental healthcare organizations in Toronto. This report helped determine which organizations are being relied on for resources and information in this sector. The content was developed from original research conducted by Pathways to Care. Product URL: https://tinyurl.com/tsdm6wrp	This product helps PtC find future implementing partners for the Pathways to Care framework (improve understanding of which organizations intend to collaborate, and which organizations have been working together on mental health projects and initiatives in the past year). This report will aid in the implementation phase, which will help increase access to services and strengthen services for Black children, youth, and their families.	The reach of this article and infographic was tracked through Google Analytics; this report was accessed 97 times.

Based on the impact summaries above, it is evident that the knowledge products produced and supported by PtC lead to positive outcomes for Black youth, children, and their families. Additionally, the wide reach these products have had over a short period of time is outstanding.

Many of the products that been supported by PtC (i.e., news articles and training content) have had a province-wide (and in many cases, nation-wide) reach. All of the products developed directly by PtC (i.e., reviews, reports, infographics, and presentations), have been accessed hundreds of times by members of the various communities that PtC serves.

Some of the products aim to bring awareness to the PtC project. There are a couple of news articles that highlight the PtC project, which helps increase the project's reach and therefore the impact. Another product, the Social Network Analysis Report, helps advance PtC project activities by identifying future implementing partners for the PtC framework, which aims to strengthen mental health and addiction services for Black children, youth, and their families.

The knowledge products developed and supported by PtC provide essential information regarding mental health and related determinants, and spread knowledge and awareness to Black youth and their families. Most products are aimed towards increasing public understanding on the needs of Black children and youth across the country. Many of the products portray the challenges faced by Black children, youth, and their families due to systemic violence and Anti-Black Racism, while further displaying the effects on mental health. The products call for system-level change in order to meet the needs of Black children, youth, and their families.

Overall, PtC has been successful in developing and contributing to a wide range of knowledge products that are reaching thousands of Ontarians and that align with and advance the project's main outcomes.

Conclusion

It is evident that the Pathways to Care project is providing meaningful community engagement by creating spaces for Black children, youth, and their families to express their needs regarding access to mental health services.

The data in this report gives some insight of the various experiences within the project. The methods selected allowed for participants to reflect on the positive changes they have seen throughout the fiscal year, and discuss how the project is making a difference for themselves and for their respective communities.

The Black Youth Focus Groups touched upon many barriers to access that Black youth face within their communities, with the most common themes surrounding stigma, lack of cultural awareness from mental health professionals, financial barriers, emotional expression in Black communities, and lack of trust. Participants also discussed possible solutions that could help better meet their needs. The most common themes included education, self-care strategies, funding, and working with religious communities. Finally, they discussed mental health in Black youth, with the most common theme being the recognition of mental illness as illness. It is important to note that barriers and challenges faced by Black youth and families are rooted in and upheld by Anti-Black Racism and systemic violence.

The ERC and CAC Focus Group and the YAC Focus Group both discussed many positive project qualities, including new opportunities, engagement, and inclusivity. They also focused on how the project provides mental health resources for those in the community. The YAC in particular, also focused on personal growth that they experienced throughout the project, as they believed that the project allowed them to learn and discover. Participants in the focus groups also provided their recommendations for future years. In general, participants want to be more actively involved with the project; PtC could potentially consider creating a Youth Action Committee in addition to the Youth Advisory Committee (or an amalgamation of both).

Organizational partners seem to feel confident with the collaboration. They generally felt that they had good synergy, efficacy, non-financial resources, and decision-making authority. They felt that there were many benefits to participation, and were satisfied with their involvement. Their confidence in financial and capital resources were not as high, and they only felt moderately involved in the administration and management. Pathways to Care can potentially leverage their network to support in any areas that require additional strengthening.

Google Analytics data indicates that there has been a significant increase in engagement with the PtC website (resource hub) since it was launched. In addition, the knowledge products associated with Pathways to Care provide essential information regarding mental health and spread awareness to Black children, youth, and their families in 6 cities across Ontario (Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, Windsor, Ottawa, London and Hamilton).

It is evident through the results in this report that Pathways to Care is effectively removing barriers and improving access to mental health services for Black children, youth, and their families.