

APPENDIX 8

Examples of Feedback and Impact from Organizations and Groups

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF CALGARY AND AREA (BBBS)

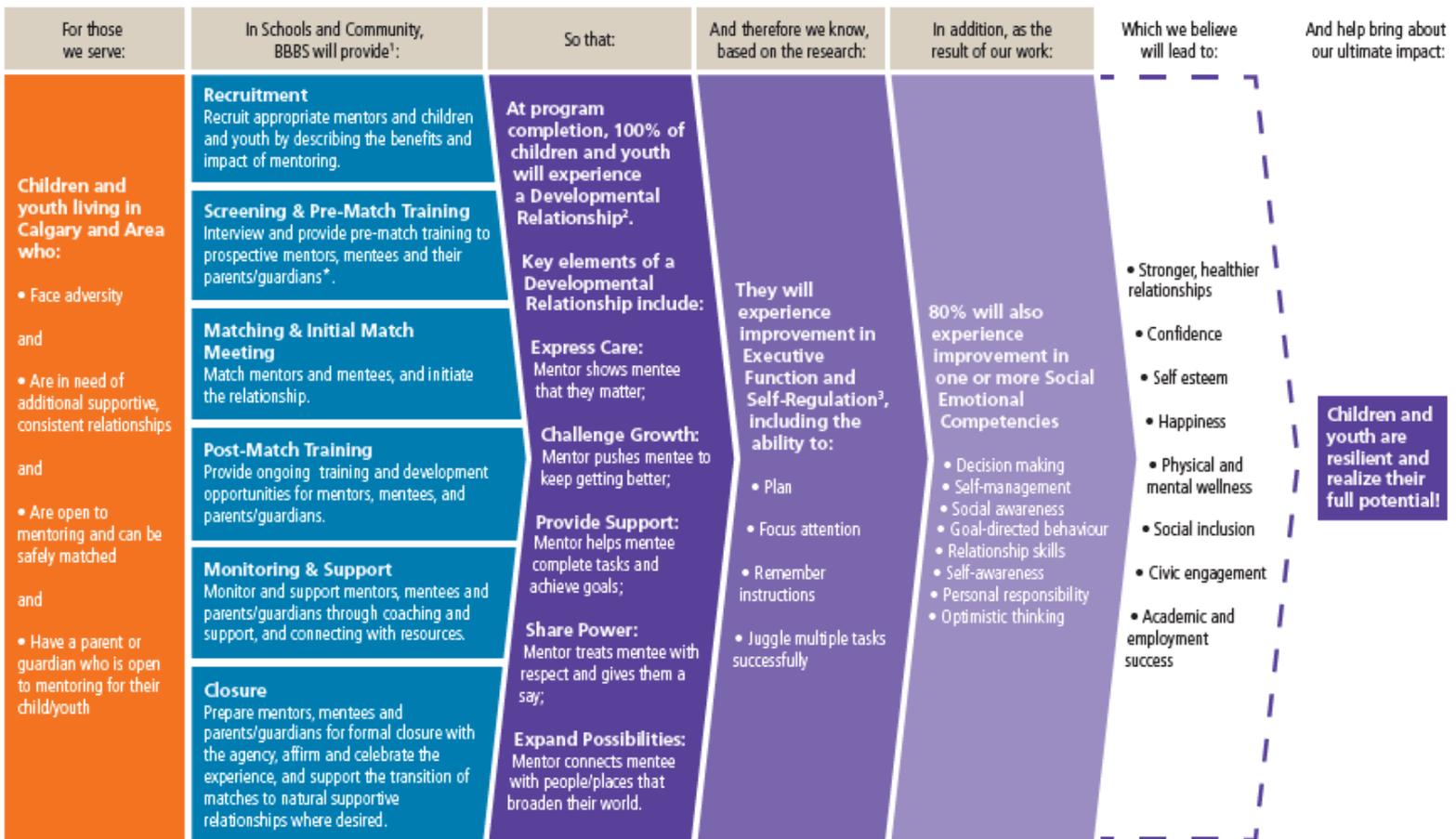
Cynthia Tonet, Director Service Delivery

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Calgary and Area (BBBS) first learned about the Brain Story Certification course from the Palix Foundation staff and through our involvement in the Change in Mind Initiative that was sponsored by the Foundation. After leadership became certified, the Course became mandatory for all staff and practicum students at BBBS, and is completed during the initial staff onboarding period. The deadline to complete the course is within the first three months of employment and time is provided during the work day for staff to complete it.

As a Change in Mind agency, our staff received several presentations on the Brain Story prior to the development of the Course. In addition to the Course being part of service delivery staff orientation, we have embedded the key concepts from the Course into our Mentor training and ongoing match support. We have also explicitly identified executive function, self-regulation and resiliency as primary intended outcomes of our work and are measuring these as part of our Outcome and Evaluation Framework. Although there are no ongoing structured sessions for staff per se, the Brain Story is a foundational construct in our organization's newly created Theory of Change with the expectation that there will be ongoing training and opportunities for staff to discuss the concepts and integrate them into our work.

The information that staff have gained from taking the Brain Story Course has had a huge impact on our organization. It has elevated our intervention - mentoring - from a "nice to have" to a "needs to have" and has created a sense of urgency around ensuring that children and youth have responsive, caring relationships with adults that can help build healthy brain architecture and buffer the impact of early childhood trauma. The Brain Story has been instrumental in helping the organization achieve clarity around its ultimate intended impact which is that children and youth are resilient and realize their full potential.

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF CALGARY AND AREA (BBBS)



Underpinning this Theory of Change is an organizational commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and an imperative to embed the following foundational constructs into the fabric of BBBS through staff training and development as well as policy and practice alignment: Core Story of Brain Development, Strengths Based and Trauma-Informed Practice, and Evidence Informed Mentoring.

* Parents/Guardians are not required to participate in an interview or training in school based programs
 1 The National Mentoring Partnership, Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring, 2015.
 2 Search Institute, The Developmental Relationships Framework, 2018.
 3 Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2011. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function>.

CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES- CALGARY

Patricia Jones, CEO

Catholic Family Service (CFS) learned about the Brain Certification Course through our work with the Palix Foundation. CFS is committed to building strong families. Our programs and services respond to the challenges that threaten families and leave them vulnerable. Our strategic stated ambition is to become a strong leader among not for profit agencies in Calgary and a committed provider of family-centric services. As part that we aim to pioneer the evolution of services related to family systems through research, advocacy and innovation. The Brain Certification Course is assists us to achieve our ambition and is mandatory for every employee at CFS. The opportunity to access no cost, leading edge research to support the families we serve did not take much consideration from a leadership perspective. Currently, all employees are required to complete Brain Certification Course by July 2019. The agency has provided a 3 month window to complete the course and staff may utilize agency allotted professional development hours (35 provided).

We offer over 18 programs to the Calgary community as well as a 60 space child care facility at our Louise Dean Centre location and are focused on using best practice, evidence based approaches to those we serve. As the CEO, I have attended the Frameworks training and have taken the Brain Certification Course. I believe it is critical for the CEO and Senior Leadership to lead the way and be the first to take the training. As part of our strategic plan we are developing an agency wide service delivery model and the Brain Story is a foundational component of this model. It is from this research all other principles are derived. We expect to develop processes for embedding this knowledge as part of initial orientation, meetings and written accountability agreements this year. Supporting all staff to share foundational knowledge about the brain research insures that we have a common language agency wide, are able to collaborate with other organizations who represent the same knowledge and values, and increases our intention to consistently view those we serve through a lens of compassion and curiosity. Our admin and back office staff have inquired as to the logic to them completing the brain core story. My response has been that all employees are critical to support our strategic goals and completing the brain story is integral to this. Our front office receptionist recently completed the core story and this is her feedback:

"It was overall so informative – especially the modules dedicated to ACE and how it reflects in your adulthood. Overall the course was fantastic, and when I started it, I just felt as I needed to keep going which makes it a perfect weekend activity! It will definitely add and solidify a great amount of consideration, compassion, kindness and respect when I greet clients that come in the door every day. It has impacted my mindset and not only when I greet clients here, but in general with everyone I encounter".

CASA- EDMONTON

Rebecca Marsh, Director of Evaluation, Research, & Innovation

CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health (CASA) is a non-profit community organization that provides mental health and addiction services to over 4,000 infants, children, adolescents, and their families in Alberta each year. CASA has been fortunate to be an active participant and supporter of the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative since its inception.

CASA's goal is to provide family-centred and trauma-informed care that is based on the latest evidence. The Brain Story is a foundational tool that provides a framework and shared language for achieving these principles of care across our multi-disciplinary teams. All of our mental health practitioners take the Brain Story training, and we share many of the videos and materials with our families and care partners. This ensures that no matter our professional discipline or background, we are all speaking the same language and working towards the same goals. Some CASA teams choose to do the Brain Story training together, while others who are new to the organization complete it when they join.

CASA is using the Brain Story both conceptually (in terms of our ways of thinking) and practically (in terms of our ways of doing). For example, we use principles from the Brain Story training to inform our evaluation framework. We want to know what interventions work, for whom, and in what context so that we can continually improve our services and best meet the needs of children and families. Tools like the Adverse Childhood Experiences questionnaire can help, and some of our clinical programs are using the screener with youth and caregivers to help facilitate conversations about the impact of trauma and to better understand program outcomes by exposure levels.

CASA aims to be an effective advocate for children's mental health and mental health literacy. The Brain Story provides key metaphors around childhood development that have been rigorously tested and shown to be understandable to a broad range of audiences. These metaphors and concepts have been invaluable in helping us to frame issues and propose solutions in our advocacy work for increasing supports and policies for children and families.

We are also using concepts such as toxic stress and resilience at the organizational level. How can we recognize when our staff are experiencing toxic stress so that we can better support them in managing the tremendous pressures and responsibilities of their work with families? How can we build a resilient healthcare organization by focusing on our strengths and celebrating what we are doing well? At CASA, the Brain Story plays an essential role in how we work with each other and the families we serve, how we understand our roles in supporting positive childhood development, and how we measure and maximize our impact.

CHILDREN'S COTTAGE SOCIETY- CALGARY

Lisa Garrisen, Director of Programs

The Children's Cottage has been using resources from the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative for many years. We have built into our practice concepts such as toxic stress, executive functioning and resilience. These concepts have proven invaluable in changing the conversations we have with parents and allowed us to provide information that empowers parents to make positive changes for themselves and for their children. The Brain Story online training was an amazing opportunity for us to support our entire agency learn the same information around brain health. Because we have programs that run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, training can be a challenge. Ensuring everyone receives the same training can be costly and time consuming. We chose to make the Brain Story mandatory for all full time and part time staff and strongly encourage it for all relief staff and volunteers. All new staff are required to complete the training within their probationary period.

We were excited about the ability that The Brain Story provided to have all staff receive the same training. Additionally having used resources available from AFWI over previous years we knew this training was important to our work and would further support our staff in caring for children and families.

We chose to provide work time for all staff to complete the training. Working collaboratively across all of our programs we supported each team to find the solution that worked best for them. This sometimes meant certain staff members taking on additional tasks to allow others to train. Sometimes it meant covering entire shifts in order for some staff to find enough quiet time to complete their course.

Our work now focuses on ensuring the information lives on in our work. Program leadership from across the agency is working together to find ways to build the concepts that we have learned into daily practice. This will happen in supervision, both formal and informal and in team meetings where we will intentionally create opportunities to review information and have group discussions with each team about how they will incorporate the science into their specific work. Program managers are taking turns leading the development of refresher modules that will be used in team meetings to facilitate conversation and hopefully inspire staff to find their own ways to utilize the information. That said, the Children's Cottage is keen to connect with others in the community to learn how they are incorporating the learnings. We know that people learn and absorb knowledge in different ways and are looking to hear the creative ideas that other agencies might have.

We are noticing a very positive impact on the families we serve and hear from them that they appreciate the information. Often families tell us that they have blamed themselves for their struggles and find the information about brain science particularly helpful as it reframes their struggles as strengths. We always end these discussions with information about resilience and weave it into our goal plans so that our focus is on moving forward and finding ways to heal.

We also see an impact for staff. Understanding brain science allows them to create context for struggles they might experience in their work. Reframing interactions with clients based on an understanding of ACEs and toxic stress changes the narrative.

The Brain Story has been very helpful in creating a common language for all Children's Cottage staff around how we can educate and empower the families we serve. We are looking forward to seeing what more we can do with this information in 2019.

COVENANT HEALTH- EDMONTON

Dr. Jan Banasch, Facility Chief, Addictions & Mental Health

1. How did you first learn about the course?

I heard Nancy Mannix in Dec 2018 at the Hotel McDonald introducing the course with the video. I had been invited to this session by Pallix - THANK YOU SO MUCH!

2. Is the course optional/recommended/mandatory for all staff or only for some and if only some for whom? The course is not known by my dept but I am changing that!

3. Did your organization/staff have preliminary AFWI or Brain Story presentation before you started the course?

I have invited some of the researchers to our Grand rounds sponsored by the Pallix Foundation over the last few years. We have been very impressed by them so the seed was planted but until the Certification course came out I had not appreciated the amazing network of researchers and brilliant work

4. Is the course part of your organization's business plan, orientation, and/or training? No

5. Did leadership take the course prior to recommending to staff? No

6. Do you have periodic, structured discussion sessions to talk about the content of the course and its application? What do these look like, how long are they, how often do they occur, and who leads them?
No

7. If there are no structured sessions, does the course content and application routinely get discussed at other meetings like staff meeting?

I am about to roll out a huge initiative at the GNCH this Sept.

On Sept 6th Nicole Sherran is invited to introduce our dept to The Brain Story certification course at Grand Rounds. On Oct 4th for the Annual Feldman Lecture Day at the GNCH (37 yrs old!) we are dedicating it to the brain story and have confirmed Judy Cameron (Core story concepts), George Koob (applied to Addictions) and Stephanie Covington (gender-based, trauma-informed treatments for addiction) to present. We usually have 200 attendees from across the city. Then every month for the remainder of the year I have invited a Brain story researcher to come and present at Grand Rounds starting with Ruth Lanius on Oct 24th. In this way I hope to inspire as many people as I can in our hospital and dept to undertake the Certification course.

8. Is there a deadline to complete the course? If so, how long do you have to complete it? No

9. Are staff given time during work hours to complete the course? No

10. Are you able to use the course information in practice? In what ways? How significant of a change is this from what you were doing previously?

I think this course material is ESSENTIAL to each and every Mental health practitioner across the disciplines and has huge significance for how we deliver in and out-patient groups. I use it every day in my interactions with patients. It has been a huge asset to my clinical work.

As above - a huge impact which is why I think Psychiatry units/depts/clinics across the Zone should adopt it so patients hear/ are exposed to the same story wherever they get treated!

11. What impact do you think applying this information is having on your organization and clients?

As above - a huge impact which is why I think Psychiatry units/depts/clinics across the Zone should adopt it so patients hear/ are exposed to the same story wherever they get treated!

12. What changes have you made to your organization since completing the course?

I know the deadline was March 22 but I really hope you can use this information. I am so excited about this initiative but I have to tell you I am the only one involved in promoting this but think I can be very influential.

CUPS- CALGARY

Human Services, Health
and Education

Emily Wong, Manager, Research & Evaluation

The Brain Story course is mandatory for all staff and the Leadership Team took the course prior to recommending it to staff. Most of our staff have had exposure to the content of the Brain Story prior to the course. We first rolled it out back in September to December of 2017. CUPS shut down our services for 4-half days and staff were placed in smaller groups to watch and debrief on pre-selected, most relevant videos. Staff received individual module worksheets that included some of the text and articles in each of the modules along with the quiz answers. New staff who have joined us since then have 90-days (the probationary period) to complete the Brain Core Story course. Since we say the training takes about 30 hours, CUPS offers to pay for half, or 15 hours, of the training during company time. Staff receives the module worksheets if it is explicitly requested.

The Brain Story course, along with other brain science knowledge has completely changed who CUPS is and what we do as an organization presently and in the future. We see the Brain Story course as a tool for new employees to “get up to speed” as to why we do what we do at CUPS. Brain science knowledge is filtered throughout all of CUPS and discussions are had at various meetings with a variety of frontline and administration staff; it is so embedded into CUPS that there isn't a need to hold structured sessions to discuss the material. Applying the brain science knowledge into CUPS changes the way we interact with our participants and helps to shed some light as to why they are faced with some of the challenges in their lives. We also believe that brain science knowledge helps the solutions to helping our participants break the cycle of poverty and trauma for themselves and their families.



THE RESILIENCY MATRIX

At CUPS, we address the complex picture of human health presented by the Brain Story. This means we take into account the social, emotional, economic, health and developmental circumstances an individual is experiencing.

The Resiliency Matrix is an assessment tool based on the science of the Brain Story. At CUPS, we go through this form with each client upon intake. Based on the results, we assign each client a

resiliency score. As clients engage with CUPS programs and services, we chart their progress in four domains: Economic, Health, Development and Social-Emotional Resilience.

This standardized tool helps us to deliver customized, integrated care plans to each client. In this way, we help clients from a state of crisis toward stability and self-sufficiency.



EDMONTON NORTH PRIMARY CARE NETWORK

Jaret Farris, Manager

1. How did you first learn about the course?

Attended the 3 Year Early Brain & Biological Development symposium and the following Accelerating Innovation symposium

2. Is the course optional/recommended/mandatory for all staff or only for some and if only some for whom?

At Rundle Health Centre, which is a small office of the Edmonton North Primary Care Network and located in a diverse socioeconomic and cultural part of Edmonton, Brain Story certification is mandatory. The larger management team at the Edmonton North PCN, has also approved Brain Story certification to be mandatory for all staff beginning this year sometime.

3. Did your organization/staff have preliminary AFWI or Brain Story presentation before you started the course? No

4. Is the course part of your organization's business plan, orientation, and/or training?

Part of our "core competencies" for all staff, clinical & non-clinical, at Rundle Health Centre, along with Trauma Informed Care, Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST), along with the Frameworks Institute's Framing Wellness in Alberta & the Wide Angle Lens courses.

5. Did leadership take the course prior to recommending to staff?

No, I am the only leadership position that was completed the course however the Brain Architecture game has been played by all staff & managers (approximately 80 individuals)

6. Do you have periodic, structured discussion sessions to talk about the content of the course and its application? What do these look like, how long are they, how often do they occur, and who leads them?
As part of the larger roll out, such learning sessions are being considered, however the application of learning regularly come forward in case conferences and during program planning discussions.

7. If there are no structured sessions, does the course content and application routinely get discussed at other meetings like staff meeting? See above

8. Is there a deadline to complete the course? If so, how long do you have to complete it?

At Rundle (approximately 10 staff) the certification is expected to be completed within 3 months of starting; timelines for the larger roll out (approximately 80 staff) is still being determined

9. Are staff given time during work hours to complete the course? Yes

10. Are you able to use the course information in practice? In what ways? How significant of a change is this from what you were doing previously?

Staff, both clinical & non-clinical have commented that the course has shifted they way they interacted with client in what they say to them, how they respond to questions, and how they approach people in general

11. What impact do you think applying this information is having on your organization and clients?

Rundle Heath Centre is a safer place for everyone, clients & staff included, care is better & programs are stronger.

12. What changes have you made to your organization since completing the course?

There has been an evolution from intuitive engagement in practice to concrete evidence, in turn increasing our consciThe science & information from the Brain Story was programmed into Rundle Health Centre from its inception so it is hard to identify and changes.

FRESH START RECOVERY CENTRE- CALGARY

Stacey Petersen, Executive Director

1. How did you first learn about the course?

I was a participant in the three year Recovery from Addiction symposiums that took place in Banff, Alberta.

2. Is the course optional/recommended/mandatory for all staff or only for some and if only some for whom? The Brain Story certification is mandatory for all Fresh Start Staff

3. Did your organization/staff have preliminary AFWI or Brain Story presentation before you started the course?

Yes, many of the staff had been apprised of the AFWI work and brain story prior to initiating the course. Palix staff, including Nancy Mannix came and presented to our staff.

4. Is the course part of your organization's business plan, orientation, and/or training?

Although we have not formally incorporated the course in our strategic plan (Planned for the board retreat May 2019), it is a part of our employee training manual and a requirement of employment at Fresh Start.

5. Did leadership take the course prior to recommending to staff? Yes

6. Do you have periodic, structured discussion sessions to talk about the content of the course and its application? What do these look like, how long are they, how often do they occur, and who leads them?

Yes, this gets discussed every Monday morning as part of our weekly counselor/supervisor meetings. These meetings are two hours in duration and are mandatory for all counselling staff. Meetings are led by our Program Manager.

7. If there are no structured sessions, does the course content and application routinely get discussed at other meetings like staff meeting?

Although we have structured meetings with our counselling staff, the course IS discussed at monthly staff meetings which include all organization staff and led by myself.

8. Is there a deadline to complete the course? If so, how long do you have to complete it?

Deadlines have been implemented at various intervals depending on when individuals begin the course. Each person typically has three months to complete the course.

9. Are staff given time during work hours to complete the course?

Yes, the Fresh Start crew is allowed to utilize work hours to complete.

10. Are you able to use the course information in practice? In what ways? How significant of a change is this from what you were doing previously?

Course information is used in practice every single day. during group facilitation and one-one counselling. The course has affirmed and framed an organizational culture that has sought to increase treatment outcomes, foster healing and create generational change.

11. What impact do you think applying this information is having on your organization and clients?

The Brain Story is a part of our organizational DNA and directly correlates to higher treatment outcomes. For many of the people we serve, there is an awakening that occurs surrounding etiology etc. In this mindset there is a shift from an internalized "I am bad" to "I have experienced things that have made me sick, but I can heal".

12. What changes have you made to your organization since completing the course?

There has been an evolution from intuitive engagement in practice to concrete evidence, in turn increasing our consciousness and confidence in applying theory to practice.

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY- CALGARY

Brianna Willey, Practice Framework Facilitator

1. How did you first learn about the course?

At a Palix Foundation Open House cocktail party at the Palliser or Hyatt

2. Is the course optional/recommended/mandatory for all staff or only for some and if only some for whom?

While this certification has not at this time been labelled 'Mandatory', all employees are encouraged to take this certification, and the agency offers various forms of support for employees to do so including, work time allotted to complete the modules, cohorts that complete the modules together and meet twice per month for discussion, and an agency point person for 1:1 support when needed.

3. Did your organization/staff have preliminary AFWI or Brain Story presentation before you started the course?

Yes, we had an all day training, offered to all staff of the agency at one of our ADSM's in 2018.

4. Is the course part of your organization's business plan, orientation, and/or training?

Yes, CJHS is incorporating the Brain Story Certification as part of our agencies strategic planning moving forward as it aligns with practice frameworks we are beginning to roll out such as Trauma Informed Care and Natural Supports approaches. The principles of these approaches and the science of the Brain Story informs our Theory of Change and it is our goal to become an agency that embodies these methods in the work with our clients.

5. Did leadership take the course prior to recommending to staff?

No. Leadership and frontline staff are learning in tandem though the Leadership Team had a Lunch N' Learn session with Nancy as the host at the Hyatt that provided an opportunity to ask questions about the Certification process.

6. Do you have periodic, structured discussion sessions to talk about the content of the course and its application? What do these look like, how long are they, how often do they occur, and who leads them?

Yes, a cohort is offered to support staff throughout the modules and is facilitated by the agencies Practice Framework Facilitator. Sessions are one hour long twice per month until the group has completed the certification. Two cohorts have run thus far and the agency will continue to offer this to support the learning.

7. If there are no structured sessions, does the course content and application routinely get discussed at other meetings like staff meeting?

Staff are able to access Practice Framework Facilitator, and they will begin to connect via staff meeting. This has not yet begun.

8. Is there a deadline to complete the course? If so, how long do you have to complete it? Not at this time

9. Are staff given time during work hours to complete the course?

Yes, staff are encouraged to complete the certification during work hours

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY- CALGARY

Brianna Willey, Practice Framework Facilitator

10. Are you able to use the course information in practice? In what ways? How significant of a change is this from what you were doing previously?

(Feedback from cohort participants)

- I use research in advocacy letters for clients.
- It has made me more mindful- reducing judgements- because now I understand how their brains work.
- Given me a new perspective. Not that I blamed or judged, there's more to it than I previously knew.
- It opens a door to hearing someone's story.
- Learning new ways
- I feel heard and that my words are respected by the legal community. This leads to better outcomes for our clients because we have more credibility and there is an understanding of what is going on for them.
- Having more tools in your tool belt is always useful- better outcomes for our clients
- If forces us to engage in reflective practice and improve what we do and how we behave.

11. What impact do you think applying this information is having on your organization and clients?

Staff are being provided with information they may have known but now have an understanding rooted in science, which is helpful in advocacy with other service providers, the justice system, natural supports, and the clients to understand themselves further. With understanding comes awareness, compassion and appropriate support. Provides an opportunity to be more cohesive and speaking the same language across the agency.

12. What changes have you made to your organization since completing the course?

The certification is a supplement to other changes being made in the agency. Our organization will be working under new frameworks including Trauma Informed Care Practices, Natural Supports Frameworks and Reflective Practice which can all be informed by brain science. We've received funding to create a Trauma Informed Training package for staff working with criminally involved individuals and the course information will help with the curriculum development.

KEPLER ACADEMY- EDMONTON

Lynette Ventura, Executive Director

I first learned about the Brain Story Course when I was hired on to assist in creating Kepler Academy. That was just over 2 years ago. The President and Vice President of Kepler learned about it much sooner as they had had many meetings with Nancy.

The course is something that we at Kepler Academy have made mandatory for all our Educators to take as it is part of our training program. It is such a fantastic course and really opens the eyes of anyone who completes it.

Yes leadership completed the course before we incorporated it into our Training manual.

We don't necessarily have periodic discussions, but we do have random discussions where we talk about pieces of the Brain Story during staff meetings. The meetings are run by the Director and Assistant Director at each location.

We do have deadlines. For any Educator in Management (Director or Assistant Director) they have 3 months to complete the Brain Story and for all other Educators we allow them 6 months to complete it. As the course is quite lengthy, and if we have the time during work hours to allow Educators to work on the Brain Story, we certainly accommodate that, however, in Childcare that is sometimes tricky so Educators usually work on it at home.

We certainly do use the course information in practice. Even when we are doing events to promote our Program, we highlight certain topics that we feel stand out to the audience we are talking to.

The impact is huge. As we have a very diverse cliental, there are so many different children with so many unfortunate environments, that we are able to understand and guide them in the path of success. Some people would look at the children and start judging, where we are now able to look past and implement strategies and understanding.

We haven't made any real changes to the Program since completing the course because we had it implemented right from the beginning and have loved and recommended it ever since.

PROVIDENCE- CALGARY

Brenda McInnis, Vice President

Providence offers a broad range of specialized services and programs supporting the development of young children and their families in the Calgary region. The Community Services department provides therapy supports to independent and charter schools in the region, and administers the Supported Child Care Program, an initiative of the provincial government. The Program provides supports to improve overall quality of child care in Calgary and area by building capacity in the early learning and child care sector. The goal of our work in the child care sector is to improve resiliency and protective factors for children in the early years, to support the inclusion and developmental needs of all children and to support the application of trauma informed best practises.

We first became aware of the Brain Story in September 2016, when two Providence staff, a psychologist and a behavioural specialist, attended an AFWI presentation hosted by the Children's Hospital Aid Society (CHAS). CHAS had invited the charities they support, of which Providence is one. The two returned with many of the resources offered by AFWI. The following year, Providence invited AFWI to present to staff as part of an internal professional development workshop.

Then, two years ago, the Community Services department took up the challenge to have all team members (20) complete the Brain Story certification over the course of one year. Staff were given the flexibility to utilize work time when they were able to fit the coursework into their busy schedules. Throughout this time, staff members initiated discussion groups to reflect on the course content and discuss how to incorporate and embed the knowledge in their work with children, families and child care programs. Leadership within the organization was engaged alongside staff in the process of taking the course and in discussion of potential impact and embedding the knowledge in the frontline.

The Brain Story certification course has reinforced and supported the work of our organization in the work we do with children, families and the child care sector. We have incorporated the concepts, language and tools used in the Brain Story into the professional development training we offer to the child care sector across the Calgary region. The Brain Story training has provided us with common language and training resources, to deeply embed the knowledge of brain development at the front line of child care program delivery of care. The fundamental concepts of brain development, building resiliency, supporting healthy attachment, serve and return communication and the effect of stress on children and families have been incorporated into our training modules offered.

Our potential reach within the child care sector in Calgary is significant - with over 1000 programs in the City of Calgary and surrounding area, with thousands of child care professionals and tens of thousands of young children in before- and after-school care programs, licensed child care programs and family day home agencies.

The senior leadership team within Providence has been engaged throughout the process and has recognized the critical importance of embedding and mobilizing this knowledge in order to continue to support the children and families that we work with directly and to improve practices and outcomes for children in child care programs in our region. As a result, Providence is in the process of embedding in policy the mandatory certification of all employees.

Human Services THE FAMILY CENTRE- EDMONTON

William Smiley, Director Community Based Services

We first learned about the Adverse Childhood Experiences study at a Palix Foundation reception. In a video featuring Dr. Felitti he explained the strong correlation between childhood trauma and later problems in life. The message was compelling and verified our years of working with some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We arranged for Dr. Felitti to come to speak to our whole agency and after his presentation we made the commitment to administer the ACE Questionnaire to all of our clients. We also formed an internal Brain Development Committee to look at how to use the latest research and findings in neuroscience to inform our work. Our committee looked at research and resources and decided to invest in bringing our front-line staff and their supervisors together for a morning a month in a community of learning for presentations and small group discussions.

The first presentations were webinars on the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics by Dr. Bruce Perry. We completed 10 sessions of training in NMT. We then had other training videos by Dr. Baylin. We also had Dr. Nicole Sherren from the Palix Foundation come and facilitate the Brain Game to our staff. She told us about the development of the Brain Story Certification program and we decided that would be perfect for our staff. I talked to Dr. Sherren about modifying the Brain Story for groups and I think we were one of the first agencies to sign up when it became available.

We had about 125 staff do the Brain Story together in 3 hours sessions once a month. We often did 2 modules in one session. Our facilitators watched the videos before and developed discussion questions for the small groups. The questions were related to how we could incorporate our learnings in our work with families as well as our partners like school teachers and principals. In fact, when they heard about what we were doing, some school principals asked if they could attend the sessions. We have had 284 staff registered in The Brain Story and 145 have been certified.

We are reinforcing the learnings by showing selected videos from the training to our monthly supervisor meetings and having small group discussions about how they will keep the knowledge alive in supervision with their staff. We use about 45 minutes of our meeting for The Brain Story every month. Brain Story Certification is now a requirement of all our staff. When someone joins The Family Centre they are expected to complete the course in their first 6 months. We consider it part of their orientation and core training in order to work with the people we have the responsibility for helping. They are given time during work to do it. It is a big investment but it is essential.

The Brain Story is an important element of our agency's development of Trauma Informed Care. It has increased our compassion and understanding of the problems that people have. It has changed our conversations with and about the people we work with. The Brain Story has validated the work that we are doing and encouraged us to keep doing what works – listening to people's stories, acknowledging and validating their experiences, helping them understand the impacts of their childhood trauma, and facilitating their healing. We now know that love, compassion, understanding, and kindness changes brains!

WOOD'S HOME- CALGARY

Jonathan Hutton, Program Manager

1. How did you first learn about the course?

Wood's Homes became aware of the course through its ongoing commitment to evidenced-based treatment interventions that provide the greatest efficacy with children, youth and families that we serve. In addition, senior management at Wood's Homes have been connected with the Palix (formerly, Norlien) Foundation since its inception and greatly value the research that has been produced along with developing practical applications to the work that we do in our organization.

2. Is the course optional/recommended/mandatory for all staff or only for some and if only some for whom?

As we shared we do not at this time have a formal and universal process or expectation for all of our staff to be certified. We have 34 different programs and services and each of them have made the training a priority and have found a variety of ways to make this happen. Some have used annual business plans as a way to commit to this being done, others have had reward processes, others have used a team process to get the training completed. This has been successful with a large number of staff now having completed the entire course. We will be discussing at a senior leadership level how we want to proceed moving forward and discussing making it mandatory and how that would look. At this time it is clearly an expectation that all 500 staff who work here are expected to complete the training. As well, all individuals that have completed the course applying to Wood's Homes are given strong consideration for interviews and possible employment.

3. Did your organization/staff have preliminary AFWI or Brain Story presentation before you started the course?

No, however Nancy Mannix did come to Wood's Homes Parkdale Campus in November 2017 to talk about the course and an update on the work of the Palix Foundation. This was attended by a large number of our staff, managers, and some board members. From the time of this event there was a greater number of staff to sign up for the course and, as of March 2019, we have large number of staff that have completed it within site specific programs. The energy and enthusiasm Nancy provided in the 2017 event further solidified Wood's Homes commitment to ensuring that as many staff as possible completed the course greatly enhancing our existing treatment based approaches currently being utilized.

4. Is the course part of your organization's business plan, orientation, and/or training?

At this time the requirement to take the course is program specific. There are programs that have had it as part of their yearly business plans as a requirement to complete. As stated above the course is being considered as mandatory training for all staff as condition of their employment and is highly valued for those applying to work with us who have taken the initiative to complete the course.

5. Did leadership take the course prior to recommending to staff?

Leadership are all actively signed up for the course with a significant number having completed all of the modules. Leadership have hold the course in high regard and are eager to hear and incorporate learnings of staff, engaged in the course, towards frontline interventions that are guided by evidenced based research.

WOOD'S HOME- CALGARY

Jonathan Hutton, Program Manager

6. Do you have periodic, structured discussion sessions to talk about the content of the course and its application? What do these look like, how long are they, how often do they occur, and who leads them? This is program specific and each team discusses and incorporates learning from the course through a number of different mediums including team meetings, group supervision and individual supervision. The general focus is on how the learning from the course applies and can be implemented in frontline work with children, youth and families.

7. If there are no structured sessions, does the course content and application routinely get discussed at other meetings like staff meeting?

8. Is there a deadline to complete the course? If so, how long do you have to complete it?

At this time there is not a deadline to complete the course. However, all programs are encouraging staff to sign up for the course and for them to complete it as a means of enhancing their existing skills, knowledge and experience towards greater effectiveness with children, youth and families. We are exploring having the expectation of the course being completed prior to the six month evaluation of a new staff member. We are also clearly stating that all practicum students complete the Brain Story during their time at Wood's Homes. We currently have approximately 40 students a year from numerous institutions.

9. Are staff given time during work hours to complete the course?

The time that staff have to complete the course varies by program. In general there is an expectation from leadership that staff use their time in between their respective duties and responsibilities of their position to work on the course.

10. Are you able to use the course information in practice? In what ways? How significant of a change is this from what you were doing previously?

The application of the course work to practice is a work in progress for each program. At this time there is a great emphasis placed upon 'serve and return' with all children and youth along with teaching this essential skill to parents. As part of this understanding the foundations of child development, brain architecture, influence of the environment on development, the role of toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences are focused upon as a means of understanding of 'what happened' with a child, youth and family and not a focus on 'what is wrong'. Wood's Homes has always endeavored to provide the most current evidenced based treatments, as described above, and the course has helped to provide a platform for all staff to learn this in a uniform manner.

11. What impact do you think applying this information is having on your organization and clients?

As stated above the course is allowing our organization to further provide evidence based treatments that are at the leading edge of research in the field and helping to bring our staff together in using a language that further enhances our work and the way in which we deliver it with children, youth and families. As more leadership and staff complete the course and integrate it into every level of our organization there will be a strong foundation of knowledge that will inform the services we are delivering now and into the future.

12. What changes have you made to your organization since completing the course?

The influence of the course is strongly felt now as more leadership and staff work through the course. The conversations occurring at a senior management level filtering through to the frontline teams is continually being influenced by the wealth of knowledge that has been learned through the course. The key change to our organization has been to integrate this course into the daily conversations of all employees through to the direct work with children, youth and families.

YW CALGARY

Lana Bentley, Director, Programs Operations

The notion of “change” is particularly challenging in the human services, for service participants and providers alike. YW Calgary has engaged in an iterative change management process to support its client facing staff in completing the Brain Story certification. The desire to engage staff around the Brain Story Certification was borne from senior management wanting to equip staff to provide services with a more nuanced understanding of clients. Staff have moved from the “grass roots” to “neural pathways” and are now approaching their work with evidence-based approaches and science.

In approaching the process of supporting teams to engage with the content and process, YW incorporated elements of various change management strategies as well as implementation science. YW specifically referenced the ADKAR process.

- A – Awareness of the need to change
- D – Desire to support change
- K – Knowledge of how to change
- A – Ability to demonstrate skills and behaviours
- R - Reinforcement to make the change stick

The process involved the Client Services management team completing the training. After each manager completed the program, they were to start the second wave which involved their supervisors/team/leads/coordinators completing the training. This next piece was quite deliberate and from a change management perspective, the managers had to help their direct reports appreciate the benefits of the training as well as answer the question, “What’s in it for me?” This question was crucial as the brain certification program requires both considerable time and discipline, which are often stretched in programs that run 24/7 and work with clients in crisis.

Managers were able to answer the question decisively as they presented the content as being aligned with the “bigger picture” for the organization (e.g. we believe in harm reduction, we support women as parents etc.). In addition, managers also spoke to the benefit of being able to reframe client behaviour in a less pathologizing manner. Managers were advised that they did not need to concern themselves with getting their staff to perform their duties differently, at this point. The key was simply to have staff learn the content and complete the training. Adapting practice was framed as a delicate process that cannot be rushed.

Although there was no expectation of staff changing their practice, several departments have incorporated the concepts in to their service delivery in a concrete manner. A key example is the Counselling and Personal Development (CPD). The CPD domestic violence treatment groups have incorporated basic information about brain science in to several sessions. Group leaders provide psychoeducation to group members about the core story and follow-up that session by providing teaching and coaching regarding emotion, cognitive, and interpersonal regulation skills. Group participants complete pre and post measures examining their capacity for emotion regulation. This feedback is shared with staff on a regular basis to inform practice.

Overall, the Brain Story certification process has been a positive experience for YW Calgary. The change management process and content have enriched service delivery and strengthened practice.