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## Toronto Coaching in Health (TorCH) – Pilot Project Report

In response to the pandemic, Choose health, a regional service at South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC) and Findhelp|211 Central partnered to launch **TorCH** (Toronto Coaching in Health), an exciting collaborative project that brought peer-led health coaching and system navigation support to marginalized peoples in their homes. TorCH is designed to build client's capacity to self-manage chronic health conditions and navigate complex health systems and this report captures high level outcome from the pilot between August and November 2020.

### About TorCH

TorCH is based on a successful evidence-based peer-led health-coaching program designed and offered by the British Columbia Self-Management Program. Drawing on our strengths, SRCHC and Findhelp|211 Central built on this model and provided wraparound support for people living with multiple chronic health conditions (cancer, diabetes, heart conditions, etc.) that include system navigation support and health-coaching services.

Through 30 minute weekly telephone interactions, peer health coach will listen, clarify and problem-solve as well as provide referrals to 211 for system navigation support. Participants will be empowered to take health enhancing actions and will become more confident in managing their own health. Peers will not prescribe or suggest solutions or give medical advice.



### 1. Capacity building

Using a quality improvement framework, both organizations committed to dedicate resources to support the launch of TorCH as a pilot.

In summer 2020, SRCHC recruited four peers who live with chronic health conditions and with the help of the team from BC Self-Management Program trained them as peer health coaches. Similarly, Findhelp|211 Central identified and dedicated four System Navigators to the pilot project.

## 2. Client recruitment and retention

For the pilot, SRCHC recruited 14 clients as well as confirmed times and days where clients were available to receive weekly calls for three months. In follow-up conversations, two of the prospective clients declined to participate in the pilot and explained the following reason for their inability to participate in the weekly calls:

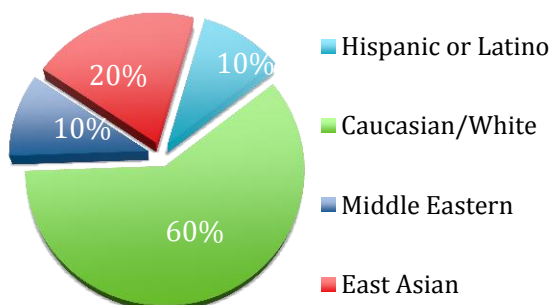
- a. precarious work
- b. pandemic fatigue

Once the weekly coaching calls began, two additional clients dropped out of the program. They said that the program was not what they needed at the moment, but will appreciate being engaged at a future date.

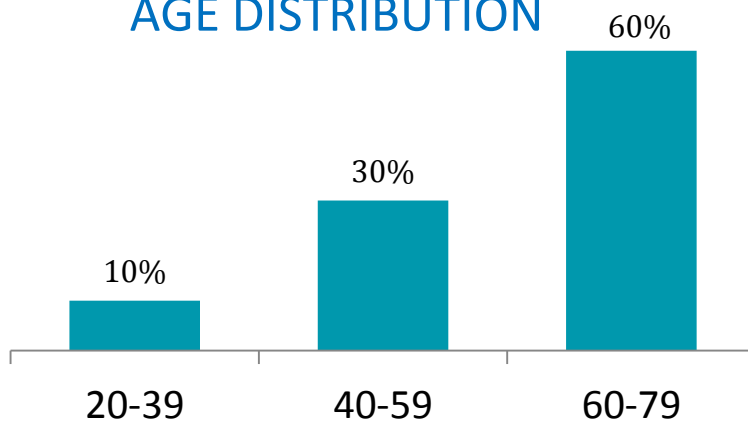
The analysis represents data from 10 participants.

## 3. Client profile

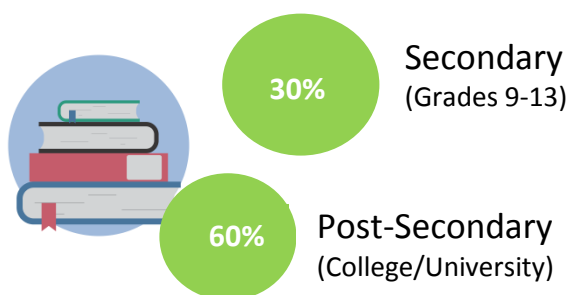
### ETHNICITY



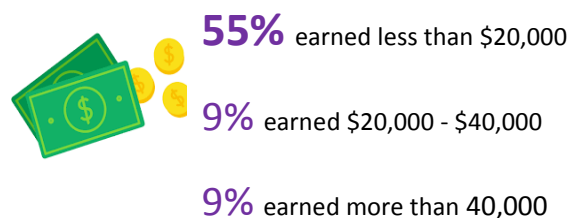
### AGE DISTRIBUTION



### EDUCATION



### INCOME



## 4. Client perspective

Margarita is a self-identified female in her 60s and lives with chronic pain. She considers TorCH to be a very supportive and helpful program. It helped her get better control over her health. Here's what she had to say about the program:

"This program was catering to my situation (especially in this pandemic), provided me with good resources and individual attention. I am sure this will help me to stay focused on my health and make healthy choices that I need to make every day. Thank you for this opportunity and I hope that many others get to benefit out of this opportunity as much as I did! Just keep doing it!"

Upon completing TorCH, Margarita has been participating in the other self-management programs offered by Choose Health.

## 5. Peer perspective

Lourdes is a peer-health coach for TorCH. Lourdes lives with chronic pain and decided to submit an application to become a peer health coach to build on her skills as a peer facilitator for the chronic pain management program. This is what Lourdes had to say about TorCH:

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this brilliant program. The clients expressed much gratitude for their participation in the program and found it very helpful to have a coach aid them in achieving their goals and keep them accountable to their action plans. I would very much like to continue my role as a Health Coach in future programs.”

## 6. System Navigator perspective

211 System Navigators provided navigation support and client follow-up to ensure program participants were able to access the most appropriate services to meet their needs. Clients indicated that connection to a team and personalized support were key success factors in the pilot. These supports enabled identification of additional needs related to social determinants of health that may not have been evident (financial, housing, mental health etc.). Client follow up ensured that clients accessed the most appropriate services and helped identify barriers to service and opportunities for additional support.

System Navigators benefited from the ability to see the impact of their work with the clients they served. This wrap-around model allowed System Navigators to see the impact that improved access to services related to social determinants of health had on overall health outcomes for people with chronic health conditions.

## 7. Outcome

The overall number of participants is too small to generalize, but we did provide the Patient Activation Measure (PAM) to all participants. PAM is a validated tool that is used by the provincial self-management programs to assess the effect of our intervention. As per published data, a 5 point change in PAM score results in positive outcome for patients and save the health system money. For the TorCH participants, we saw a 6 point increase in the median PAM Score.



According to published data, a 5 point change in PAM score has positive outcomes for the patient and saves the health system money. According to recent data analysis, we have found that for every \$1 invested into the community programs, by activating patients, the system is saving \$950.

## 8. Next steps

SRCHC and Findhelp|211 Central see the value of providing this remote support by involving a peer as a health coach. Peers are ambassador of behaviour change and provide a positive and judgement free learning environment. Research has also shown that they can lead delivery of standardized programs effectively. Lastly, as self-management is point of care and beyond, peer support compliments and enhances primary care services by providing practical, social and emotional support to help people do the things needed in order to live healthily.

The qualitative feedback received from the clients who participated in the program reinforced the evidence already demonstrated by the British Columbia Self-Management Program. Mindful of the pandemic, both partners have decided to scale TorCH. SRCHC will train additional peer health coaches and Findhelp|211 Central will dedicate similar number of system navigators to support delivery of TorCH. Together, we will support up to 50 clients through integrated phone-based health coaching and system navigation supports between February and April 2021.