Foundry empowers youth and young adults aged 12 to 24 years to lead healthy lives through a province-wide network of centers and online resources in British Columbia, Canada. However, initial evaluation data gathered from Foundry centers have shown that boys and young men are half as likely to access Foundry compared to girls and young women. To address this need, we set out to understand why boys and young men aged 12 to 17 years aren’t accessing mental health supports and to develop a promotional campaign to connect them with the resources available through Foundry. A campaign concept called “Everything Is Fine” was chosen; the campaign depicts boys and young men trying to appear as if they are OK, even though their facial expressions clearly show they are holding back stress. The campaign concept was chosen through an iterative process of research and testing. Promotion materials were created for social media (Instagram, Snapchat) and school posters, which were distributed across British Columbia, Canada.

Evaluation was conducted through social media analytics and google analytics. Pre- and postsurveys were also distributed to two school districts to assess recognition of Foundry. Approximately 160,000+ persons viewed the media on Instagram, while 170,000+ viewed on Snapchat. There was a 70% increase in website traffic compared with the 3 months prior (18,881 vs. 11,126). In the surveyed school districts, Foundry awareness increased by 10% and 15%. The lessons learned from our campaign were to prioritize research and to leverage media agency experience for large campaigns.

Keywords: social marketing; mental health; men’s health

BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Foundry, a province-wide network of centers in British Columbia, Canada, provides services and resources (online and in-person) for empowering youth and young adults aged 12 to 24 years to lead healthy lives. Support offered through Foundry includes mental health services, primary care, social services, and youth peer support. Online, Foundry offers information...
and self-checks on topics pertinent to youth and young adult health. Currently, young women are more likely to access online resources at foundrybc.ca than their male counterparts (61% vs. 31%, respectively) and are also more likely to access and in-person resources at Foundry centers (56% vs. 36%). Thus, Foundry, in association with the Health Literacy Team at BC Children’s Hospital, developed a promotional campaign to reach and connect boys and young men aged 12 to 17 years to Foundry resources, with a particular focus on accessing mental health supports.

**CAMPAIGN DESIGN**

The campaign working group, led by a young adult man with lived mental health experience, hired a Vancouver creative agency to assist in the development of the campaign. To avoid previous assumptions about the audience the campaign completed significant research to understand the perceptions and barriers of young men to accessing health care services. A literature review and an environmental scan of publicly available data were conducted and found that boys and young men may be hesitant to use these services because of their inability to recognize mental health symptoms, the self-stigma about mental health, and an unawareness of where to seek help (Haavik et al., 2017; McCreary Centre Society, 2019; Rice et al., 2018; Robertson et al., 2015; Vogel et al., 2011).

From these learnings, three iterations of campaign creative concepts were drafted. These concepts were then presented to youth in four focus groups at different high schools in the British Columbia Lower Mainland (youth aged 13-17 years; n = 80) to determine which was most favorably received. A concept labelled “Everything Is Fine” was chosen as the most relatable and reaction inducing. This concept represented boys and young men trying to smile, while their facial expressions clearly show they are holding back stress. Youth shared that they often find themselves in a similar situation where they hide or do not feel comfortable sharing what they are going through. This led to the campaign working group finalizing this concept and build Foundry promotional materials. The final graphics include the headline “Everything Is Fine” overlaying a stressed young person and the tagline “But if it’s not, visit foundrybc.ca for whatever’s on your mind.”

To disseminate the campaign materials, significant research was conducted to determine the channels boys and young men frequently view. This involved drawing on the media agency’s previous experience and marketing best practices with this particular population. A strategy was formulated to promote ads on social network platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, while also distributing print posters to public and private secondary schools in British Columbia (n = 271 schools). The rationale for this approach was that boys and young men are frequent users of these social media channels and would be exposed to posters while at school.

**EVALUATION APPROACH AND RESULTS**

We used several methods to evaluate the campaign. Social media ads on Instagram and Snapchat were evaluated by reach and cost per 1,000 impressions (CPM). Additional online metrics that were used include monitoring foundrybc.ca website traffic through Google analytics. The posters in schools faced evaluation challenges due to geographic reach and coordination capacity. Therefore, we partnered with two school districts in Langley and Campbell River to assess the impact of the surveys in their district by administering a pre- and post-survey in seven schools (n = 298). Survey content was focused on awareness and perceptions of the Foundry brand. The presurvey was administered a week prior to putting up posters at the school, and the postsurvey was administered 30 days after poster setup. All information was collected anonymously, and participation was voluntary. The purpose of data collection was quality improvement and therefore did not require research ethics approval.

The ads on social media were successful in reaching our audience. On Snapchat, approximately 160,000+ persons viewed the media, with CPM being efficient at $4.82. Approximately 475,000+ completed videos views were recorded with a 74% completion rate, and the media sent 7,325 swipe-ups to the Foundry website. On Instagram, the media resulted in 170,000+ persons viewing the media and CPMs were extremely efficient at $3.12. Approximately, 2,467 clicks were sent to the Foundry website. Google analytics showed a 70% increase in new user traffic to foundrybc.ca in British Columbia when compared with the previous 3 months before the campaign (18,881 vs. 11,126). The evaluation within the school district had positive results. In Langley, 26% of students within our audience recalled seeing an ad from Foundry in the past month, while 46% of students in Campbell River reported seeing an ad. We attribute the difference to Campbell River having a physical Foundry center, while Langley does not. There were increases in awareness of Foundry by 10% in Langley and by 15% in Campbell River.

**INNOVATION**

The campaign was innovative and notable for other health promotion practitioners for several reasons. First,
research was a central investment. To adequately engage populations who are typically underserved, health promotion practitioners need to spend considerable time consulting with the group they are trying to reach, and understanding their perspective. Relying solely on literature or statistics limits the ability of how campaigns can engage populations of interest, specifically when operating in contextual environments. Second, hiring a professional creative agency to design ads and dissemination strategies is a worthwhile investment. As health promotion professionals, we have unique and important skill sets. We specialize in crafting messages and designing strategies to promote health. When designing campaigns, we should leverage this experience in ideation and coordination roles but not in the creative design of public-facing campaign materials. Creative agencies specialize in the translation and marketing of intricate messages to large and diverse populations. When possible, they should be utilized for their experience and expertise.

(CONCLUSION)

The Foundry’s “Everything Is Fine” campaign is an important case study for health promotion professionals to consider when designing campaigns prioritizing underserved populations. Based on our experience, we recommend prioritizing research investment, meaningful involvement of priority populations, and working with creative agency partners in health promotion campaigns.

ORCID iD
Marco Zenone https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4201-6070

REFERENCES
Haavik, L., Joa, I., Hatloy, K., Stain, H. J., & Langeveld, J. (2017). Help seeking for mental health problems in an adolescent population: The effect of gender. Journal of Mental Health, 28(5), 467-474. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2017.1340630
McCreary Centre Society. (2019). Balance and connection in BC: The health and well-being of our youth. https://mcs.bc.ca/node/301
Rice, S. M., Purcell, R., & McGorry, P. D. (2018). Adolescent and young adult male mental health: Transforming system failures into proactive models of engagement. Journal of Adolescent Health, 62 (3 Suppl.), S9-S17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2017.07.024
Robertson, S., White, A., Gough, B., Robinson, R., Seims, A., Raine, G., & Hanna, E. (2015). Promoting mental health and wellbeing with men and boys: What works? Leeds Beckett University. http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/1508/
Vogel, D. L., Heimerding-Edwards, S. R., Hammer, J. H., & Hubbard, A. (2011). “Boys don’t cry”: Examination of the links between endorsement of masculine norms, self-stigma, and help-seeking attitudes for men from diverse backgrounds. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58(3), 368-382. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023688