Research Objective and Questions

Objective: To conduct a needs assessment in relation to services for at/in-risk groups of youth between the ages of 16-24 years of age within the Halton Region.

Questions:
- What are the existing services available to meet the needs of the youth in the Halton Region?
- What are the gaps within services that require to be filled through future fundable solutions?

Background/Purpose

Since June 2016, Ferzana and Bethany have been working on behalf of Sheridan College to facilitate a process and develop a Terms of Reference for a Grantor’s Roundtable for the region of Halton. The Halton Grantor’s Roundtable is a collective of Government, Not for Profit Organizations and Corporate Foundations interested in collaboratively supporting sustainable, wrap-around community initiatives with a focus on equity which have the potential to move people from dependence to independence. At a meeting in late November, Sheridan was asked to take the lead in the first of these collaborative efforts—completing a needs assessment of programs and services for youth at risk in the Halton Region.

Methodology

Phase 1: January-April 2017
- Compiling Secondary Data about at/in-risk groups in the Halton Region
- Focus groups/Interviews with Program Administrators
- Focus groups/Interviews with Front Line staff
- Analysis of thematic findings

Phase 2: May - July 2017
- Focus groups with at-risk youth
- Art-based focus
- Involvement of Sheridan students (pending funding approval)
- Analysis of thematic findings

Community Engaged Scholarship

Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) is academic scholarship that “in active collaboration with participating community partners—has a positive impact on complex societal needs and issues” (Engagement Scholarship Consortium, 2015, p.1).

CES as demonstrated in this project
- This research emerged as a need of the Oakville Grantor’s Roundtable.
- The research is a partnership. The funding for one course release for two faculty members has been provided by the Halton Region Department of Community and Social Services. Sheridan College provides the faculty research expertise, and the additional time and resources to support this research.
- Community partners are involved at all stages of the research process through the formation of a Steering Committee.

Potential Impacts

- The evidence-informed data produced by this study will inform future fundable solutions for initiatives benefitting youth at/in risk in the Halton Region.
- The research sets the basis for strong, collaborative relationship development between Halton Region and Sheridan College. This has benefits for future research as well as for student practicum and/or job opportunities.
- The knowledge that we will gain through this research about at/in-risk youth will directly benefit Sheridan College. This has benefits for future research as well as for student practicum and/or job opportunities.

Considerations for Future CES

- As Sheridan College moves along its journey towards a University, it needs to consider the importance of sustaining research that is responsive to its local communities.

How Could They Do This?
- Faculties could develop clear policies around setting up and sustaining research partnerships with local not-for-profit organizations.
- Faculties could provide researchers with in-house supports to facilitate CES (examples of such resources are personnel support; or pooling institutional knowledge on doing CES).
- Formation of substantial institutional partnerships within Sheridan to facilitate and support CES.
- Individual faculty member’s efforts to develop community partnerships for CES could be considered in the calculation of SWFs.

References