




Imagining Inclusion is a community-based participatory research partnership between Open Door Group and Douglas College and is funded by the Vancouver Foundation. The purpose of this Research Brief is to update the project's community stakeholders – from the fields of therapeutic recreation, community recreation, community mental health, and health promotion – about the project and upcoming activities.

Wordcloud created by peer researcher Amanda Berg and the research participants from the *Imagining Inclusion* project.

<http://douglascollegeresearch.ca/inclusionproject/>

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Therapeutic recreation (TR) uses leisure and recreation in individual and group settings to build community inclusion, health, and well-being. The *thrive* program at Open Door Group provides leisure and recreation opportunities for clients with mental health issues. Although most *thrive* clients believe that the program is important for their health and wellbeing, it has been difficult to adequately document positive changes in the clients' lives.

In the fall of 2012 Maya Alonso and Colleen Reid decided to collaborate on a community-based participatory research project. We received funding from the Vancouver Foundation. *Imagining Inclusion* began in September 2013 and will run until August 2015.

In this project we aim to answer two research questions:

1. How do individuals living with mental illness experience community inclusion, health, and well-being?
2. What are meaningful, practical, and relevant ways to represent community inclusion, health, and well-being for those living with mental illness?

We used Photovoice, a method of collecting data that involves research participants taking photographs of their lived experience, to answer the first research question. Currently we are working with 6 research participants to analyze those data. The photographs will become part of a photo exhibit, which will occur this fall, in partnership with the *Project Everybody* series (see below). As well, this fall we will begin to work with many community stakeholders to address the second research question through the development of outcome indicators.

Project Updates

Year 1: September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014

Photovoice Participants

A total of 32 participants attended Photovoice training and participated in weekly photo-sharing and group discussions. All 32 completed the 10 weeks Photovoice process. At the beginning of May, 18 participants chose to remain involved in the project and joined one of the three Peer Task Groups: (1) Newsletter and Video Documentary, (2) Data Analysis and Photo Selection, and (3) Photo Exhibit.

Photovoice Sessions

Between January and March 2014 we conducted 10 Photovoice (PV) sessions. The Photovoice training was facilitated in large groups and included an introduction to the research project, research ethics, and basic photography training. The participants were then divided into 4 groups. Participants met in clusters weekly for 5 weeks to share their photographs and review photo-taking questions. The final Photovoice session was a celebration and evaluation of the project.

Photovoice Data

All participants (32) completed intake interviews and submitted 8 photographs and 8 photo reflection sheets. All meetings were audio-recorded and transcribed and fieldnotes were recorded. Currently, the research team is transcribing, uploading and organizing the data on NVivo 10. Since May 2014 the research team has been meeting weekly with the Analysis Peer Task Group to create a code book and discuss emerging issues and themes.

Research Team

Two peer researchers developed the Photovoice manual and planned, organized, and co-facilitated cluster meetings. Currently they are facilitating the Peer Task Groups. During the Photovoice phase of the project (Jan-March 2014), the *student research assistants* conducted intake interviews, supported participants through the Photovoice project, and participated in research team meetings. Since April they have been transcribing audio recordings, meeting one-one with participants to assist them with completing their photo reflections, uploading and organizing data in NVivo 10 (a qualitative data analysis program), updating the literature review, and developing project's logo and website.

Knowledge Transfer and Exchange Activities

- Maya Alonso presented an overview of the research partnership at the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Conference in Winnipeg, Sept. 2013.
- Colleen Reid presented an overview of the project to the Douglas College TR Advisory Committee in March 2014.
- Colleen Reid and Maya Alonso presented an overview of the project at the annual Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association Conference in Banff, May 2014.

The *Imagining Inclusion* Photo Exhibit will be profiled at the *Project Everybody* Series:

Project Everybody Film Art and Culture Festival September 10th, 2014 - Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews

Project Everybody Recreation, Health and Wellness Fair October 5th, 2014 – Creekside Community Centre, 1 Athlete's Way

Project Everybody Youth Forum & World Café Event October 26th, 2014 – Creekside Community Centre, 1 Athlete's Way

Project Everybody Diversity & Inclusion Employment Forum November 14th, 2014 – Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews

Project Everybody proudly presents the **Community Celebration Highlighting the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities** December 3, 2014 – Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews