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The Hamilton Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) Report 2020/2021

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Summary

The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) in Hamilton is administered by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) and directed by the Hamilton CAPC Council, a group of volunteers with lived experience. Service is provided in the Davis Creek, McQuesten, Riverdale West, and Riverdale East neighbourhoods, and agencies that facilitate CAPC programming are: Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, Catholic Family Services, Hamilton Public Library, Home Management Program (City of Hamilton), Immigrants Working Centre, Today's Family, Wesley, and the SPRC.

This report summarizes research to investigate the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on CAPC programming for the program year April 2020-March 2021. Interviews were conducted with staff at all agencies that facilitate CAPC programming for a total of ten interviews. Thematic Analysis was used to analyze data, with deductive and inductive coding. The impact of COVID-19 on programming and specific program innovations are explained for each agency, while other themes are presented as a summary. Themes are: Positive Impacts; Difficulties in System Navigation; Lack of Human Connection; Reporting and Programming Challenges; Service Provision Gaps; Barriers to Accessing Services, and; Impact on Agency Staff.

Participants were asked if they believe their CAPC programming could be used as a vector for public health information, specifically to address vaccine hesitancy. Many participants shared they feel they have the necessary relationship with service users, as well as the network and resources to host an information session or to link service users with public health. Concerns were noted about programs that do not work directly with the target population and method of information delivery, and some participants shared that these conversations are already taking place, about COVID-19 vaccines and childhood vaccines.

This research found that the COVID-19 pandemic has both hindered the ability of agencies to provide service and intensified the need for service in the community. A wide array of program innovations have been utilized to meet the demand for service. Despite the many challenges, resilience was the overwhelming theme of key informant interviews with program staff.

Recommendations for strategies to help mitigate barriers to service during periods of severe disruption, such as a pandemic are as follows:

1. **Encourage communication within the CAPC network.**
2. **Establish a process for assessing and addressing service users' basic needs.**
3. **Share agency resources.**
4. **Establish a database of contact information for service users when it is appropriate to collect this information.**
5. **Provide joint programming.**
6. **Consider the gender gap.**

Hamilton Community Action Program for Children Overview

The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) is a national program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. CAPC supports community programming that promotes the healthy development of children, up to age 6¹.

CAPC in Hamilton is administered by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) and directed by the Hamilton CAPC Council. The Hamilton CAPC Council is a group of volunteers who reside in the area where CAPC programming is provided and have “lived experience of the services and opportunities needed to raise their children”². CAPC Programming is provided in the Davis Creek, McQuesten, Riverdale West, and Riverdale East neighbourhoods.

This funding fully or partially supports programs facilitated by Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, Catholic Family Services, Hamilton Public Library, Home Management Program (City of Hamilton), Immigrants Working Centre, Today’s Family, Wesley, and the SPRC.

CAPC Programming runs April through March, this report reflects the year April 2020-March 2021.

Methods

For the program year April 2020-March 2021, this evaluation wanted to investigate the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on CAPC programming. This research project was undertaken by a third-party evaluator (AB), which included developing an interview guide in consultation with SPRC staff, conducting interviews with staff at all previously mentioned agencies that facilitate CAPC programming for a total of ten interviews, analyzing the results and preparing this report.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom or over the phone, with any staff who were interested in participating. Interviews were generally with one staff, although in some interviews two or three staff participated. The staff directly responsible for CAPC programming were always present, and in some cases program supervisors, managers and/or executive directors were present as well.

Thematic Analysis³ was used to analyze interview notes: data was coded, codes were then grouped into themes which are described in this report. Coding was both deductive (directed by themes generated previous to interviews) and inductive (generated specifically from data). Deductive themes were derived from the interview guide.

Interviews

Summarized below is the impact COVID-19 had on the CAPC programming facilitated by each agency, and the different strategies/programming innovations utilized to continue programming during the pandemic. The rest of the interview topics (including barriers to access and gaps in programming) are summarized by theme in the next section, due to similarities across agencies.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton

CAPC-funded programming via the Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton is made up of Lunch and Learn Programs and Parent Education sessions (previously known as Cultural Family Time). Previous to COVID-19 these were provided multiple days a week at multiple locations.

Impact of COVID-19

Programs were shut down for 3 weeks in March 2020, resulting in brief part-time and full-time staff lay-offs, with staff being re-hired on to support the re-launch of services. Boys and Girls Clubs created privacy protocols for staff to access client information from home to make calls via personal cell phones to support staff, to complete wellness checks and receive permission to contact them with program information moving forward.

Programs were completely virtual from April to August 2020, then were in-person for periods of indoor/outdoors and exclusively outdoor programming depending on government regulations.

Programming Adaptations

- A weekly newsletter was started, including activity sheets (by age, including outdoor activities). The newsletter continued once a month when sites were opened again.
- Circle Time, Parent Education sessions (previously known as Cultural Family Time), Physical Literacy, Programs for Infants, Science Fun, Infant Massage, Mother Goose, Little Explorers, Grab & Go packages, baking kits and more programming was provided virtually.
- One-on-one virtual appointments with families were provided.
- In November 2020 staff started providing hot food via curbside pick-up, which includes a recipe, ingredients and the Zoom link for the following week when they would gather to talk about the next meal and another parenting topic.
- Recorded videos for families to watch any time for those unable to attend Zoom sessions or those wanting extra programming.
- Grab and go kits with crafts and snacks were created, and programming is led by staff (with the same materials) over Zoom sessions.
- The agency website and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) has been utilized to reach families.

Catholic Family Services

The Young Parent Transitional Worker works directly with young parents who are planning to attend or are attending school to provide the following services: one-on-one support including system navigation, direct work with Section 23 (Alternative Education)/Care and Treatment, or their specific educational facility regarding their progress and/or challenges.

Due to the long-term case management structure of this program it has the capacity to serve 6 families annually, which was achieved in 2020/2021.

Impact of COVID-19

Staff reported that COVID-19 negatively impacted the comfort level parents have sending their children to daycare. However, a contrary benefit was that spots became available in some daycares when they reopened.

Programming Adaptations

- Staff has moved to meeting with clients virtually, via phone or outdoors, when appropriate in terms of lockdowns/weather.
- Staff have upgraded technology in terms of software and staff skill level.
- Staff and clients have been filling/completing forms over the phone and reviewing virtually.
- Staff checked in with service-users in the early stages of the pandemic and were able to do food drop-offs as needed.

CAPC Systems Navigation Program

The CAPC Systems Coordinator works in the community providing one-on-one support to families with children ages 0-6 from diverse cultural backgrounds. This involves providing information, support and system navigation.

Impact of COVID-19

Service numbers and community need have increased, and the issues brought to the Systems Coordinator have changed in line with the pandemic. This past year service users placed a much greater focus on what services and financial supports are available to them. New COVID-19 related scams have also been seen in these communities.

While previously in this program the Systems Coordinator would have met with service users in-person, it is now a more lengthy and complicated process to provide frequently requested support with applications, including obtaining supporting documents and reading/explaining correspondence to service users.

Programming Adaptations

- Using phone and file sharing app to continue to support clients.

The Baby Depot

The Baby Depot delivers hampers with clothing and essentials to families with new babies. The Baby Depot partners with programs who refer clients to this service, this includes the CAPC Systems Coordinator. The Baby Depot does not receive funding from CAPC.

Impact of COVID-19

The Baby Depot did briefly stop operating in March 2020 due to uncertainty about how to function in a pandemic, but ultimately programming was able to continue by pausing in-person volunteer work; dropping off hampers without entering homes; and having staff outfitted in personal protective equipment (PPE) when dropping off hampers. Service provision actually increased this past year as the need for support in the community was so great and The Baby Depot was able to expand their capacity in part due to additional grant funding received this year (non-CAPC).

Programming Adaptations

- Previously, due to the need in the community The Baby Depot assisted a child one time only. An exception to this was made in 2020/2021 when 'COVID Kits' were created to support families (clothes, diapers, etc.). These were delivered to any family in need even if the child had been assisted previously.

Home Management Program, City of Hamilton, Healthy & Safe Communities Department

CAPC programming provided by the Home Management Program is a Home Management Worker (HMW) assisting caregivers with children aged 0 to 6 with system navigation, life skills development, support, encouragement and education. HMWs will also attend visits to doctors and the legal clinic with service users, and make referrals and assist with applications, including the child care subsidy for attending day care full time, summer programming, and/or therapeutic daycare, as well as Early Words who may refer on to Ron Joyce Centre if children are showing signs that they may have special needs. CAPC-specific programming is comprised of a HMW attending the Lake Avenue EarlyON Centre and providing home visits.

Impact of COVID-19

Previous to COVID-19 an HMW would visit the Lake Avenue EarlyON Centre two mornings per week, but this centre was closed. Additionally, this program provides support with registering participants for City of Hamilton Recreation programs, but these were cancelled for most of the year.

Staff reported that service numbers decreased, as they did not have contact information for all clients, they were unable to check in with all previous service users. However, referrals into this program were still received throughout the year.

As HMW are City of Hamilton Staff they were redeployed for some of last year spending half of their time on their own assignments and the other half on COVID-19 focused work. In early August, all 7 HMWs started working on the Vulnerable Supports Team (delivering supplies to COVID-19 positive individuals in isolation).

Programming Adaptations

- Staff have been reaching out via phone to service users.
- Staff are using Webex to meet face-to-face and share documents.
- Staff have contacted other agencies to see what strategies they are using.
- Additional grants are currently being sought to support future programs, potentially the creation of YouTube videos about life skills and activity kits.

Hamilton Public Library

The Hamilton Public Library (HPL)-facilitated CAPC programming includes: Get Ready for Kindergarten program, which provides families with the early literacy basics required to help prepare their children for school; the Summer Reading Club provides literacy-based programs in community locations across east Hamilton; and Storytime for Newcomer and Hamilton Families provides newcomer caregivers with young children with an early literacy program. Previous to COVID-19 these programs would be provided in library branches within the CAPC catchment area, and outreach in the community would be provided, including at EarlyON centres.

Impact of COVID-19

Programming has been able to pivot online via the website and YouTube. The service numbers do seem consistent with previous programs, although they are now more difficult to track. Due to COVID-19 some staff have been seconded to public health, and there was no summer student program.

Programming Adaptations

- The HPL website has been updated to provide storytime online, TumbleBooks platform for interactive picture books, the Early Literacy Calendar which includes activities to do at home with kids to develop literacy skills.
- Some programs were broadcast on Cable 14 to try to overcome technology barriers for service-users.
- The library partnered with the City of Hamilton Recreation Department and made at-home fitness videos, which were promoted through the library website.
- In early 2021, HPL gained access to Languages Other Than English (LOTE) online for kids; ebooks in 25+ languages with English translations.
- Staff recorded videos of programs including storytime, puppet shows, Songs and Rhymes, ABCs and 123s and shared via YouTube.
- The Storytime Walks program was provided in the winter: signs were placed around a park simulating pages of a storybook.
- The Grab and Go program was created, where parents can submit a form or call and request a certain amount of books about specific topics.
- The Dial-a-story service, books read via phone, is also available.

Immigrants Working Centre

The Immigrants Working Centre CAPC-supporting programming holds Information Sessions on a variety of topics that address family health. Workshop topics in 2020/2021 included: housing, income tax, mental health, CRA benefits, and immigration. Additionally, some sessions were repeated in Arabic.

Impact of COVID-19

While in previous years these sessions were provided in-person, due to COVID-19 the IWC has been using Zoom to deliver them online. This change means instead of 4 presentations a month (one for each location), only one presentation is delivered. Staff report an increase in attendance, as there are no capacity limitations for the virtual presentation; space was a limiting factor with in-person presentations.

Programming Adaptations

- Delivering information sessions via Zoom instead of in-person.
- Staff have been provided with cell phones and an online client database has been created.

Hamilton Tastebuds Student Nutrition Collaborative

Tastebuds is a partnership of community agencies and community members that supports and facilitates local student nutrition programs (SNPs) for children and youth in Hamilton. Tastebuds is coordinated by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC); and in partnership with the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board; the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic school board and Hamilton Public Health. Tastebuds also works with the Public Health inspectors and dieticians. Tastebuds program is primarily run by volunteers

In a typical year 25,000 students are served in school and community settings every school day across Hamilton. Students can access food through their schools' nutrition program which could be delivered either as a sit-down breakfast, bin system or grab and go.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 had a huge impact on this program, as schools were closed or anticipating closures, and volunteers were limited or not permitted. Tastebuds staff were unable to conduct site visits, and funding transfers from Tastebuds to schools (usually 75% of the annual budget in the fall and 25% in the spring) were complicated by closures and uncertainty about potential closures. Staff usually visit schools and provide support by troubleshooting any number of issues that arise and this year that connection was lost.

Programming Adaptations

- Grocery store gift cards were sent out to families via an additional grant from the Breakfast Clubs of Canada.
- Tastebuds started the 'Buddy Box' initiative partnering with 7 local food banks: a box of food (ex. cheese strings, vegetables, hard boiled eggs) would be given to families in addition to the food bank allowance. This ran through the summer, when usually there is no programming, until the end of September. This initiative provided food to an estimated 15 000 families.
- In September 2020, Tastebuds used a strategy where, instead of distributing funds to schools, the program directly paid school food vendor costs. This allowed for greater flexibility to access funds for alternate initiatives in the event of school closure. In addition to this, food gift cards were provided directly to families identified by the schools.
- In-lieu of in-person training for schools, staff created videos on how to use the Tastebuds portal software and posted them on the website.
- When the in-person, annual fundraiser had to be canceled, staff created an online fundraiser (Breakfast Buddies Fundraising) which did very well and may be carried forward in the future.
- The Great Big Crunch event for nutrition month (March) was also cancelled; however, staff ran online events all month including activity booklets, recipes. People shared their support on social media and over 27 000 'crunchers' participated.

Today's Family, Early Learning and Childcare

Licensed Home Early Learning and Child Care is a program that assists individuals to provide licensed childcare in their homes (referred to as 'providers') for fee-paying and childcare subsidy-eligible families.

Impact of COVID-19

Due to the essential nature of child care, home child care providers were able to keep operating with PPE and screening tools. There was a shift in service users this past year, as some families were home and no longer required child care, and essential workers needed a new child care provider during closures. Some of these new families were not previously aware of the program and the difference between licensed and unlicensed child care. As a result, service numbers stayed the same or increased. Due to government regulations, all

child care centres were closed and their staff were laid off. Some of those staff went on to become home child care providers through this program.

Programming Adaptations

- Parents can no longer go into the home for drop-offs/pick-ups, and the initial meeting between Today's Family staff and the family now happens virtually.
- This program provided virtual support to home child care providers and opened more child care providers during lockdown.
- Staff have been using Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp, and other systems that families/providers are using to meet the need. Phone calls are a last resort as staff are trying to maintain a face-to-face connection as much as possible.

Wesley

CAPC funding supports Wesley's Early Learning and Parenting Program at an EarlyON Centre at Lake Avenue School. Early Childhood Educators facilitate child development focussed programming for families. This includes bringing in additional supports to programming such as a librarian or home management worker.

Impact of COVID-19

This location was closed for several months due to COVID-19. Some centres were ultimately given permission from the City of Hamilton to re-open, this centre was not. This past year reductions were made in staffing: staff were asked about being laid off or staying on (some could not work due to personal childcare limitations). Service numbers significantly decreased as a result of the pandemic.

Programming Adaptations

- Staff connected with families via phone, created newsletters and information packages, and increased use of social media.
- Staff developed virtual programming. All families involved in EarlyON are invited to participate in these with multiple opportunities to participate per day. These programs require registration, as a result staff are aware of the geographic area being served.
- Staff developed 5-10 minute, age-appropriate, program-based YouTube videos. Multilingual staff are working towards preparing videos in languages other than English.
- Staff working on this program ensure other Wesley staff know about these resources in order to share the information with as many families as possible.
- Staff have used extra time to catch up on professional development.
- Staff created a system of once-weekly hamper pick-ups where families can get craft supplies, snacks, and any other supplies to be used in the virtual summer camp program.
- Flexibility has been required to shoot videos, develop new policies online, external contractors have been required in some cases.

Interview Themes

As noted previously, interview notes were individually coded, and those codes were grouped into themes. Themes were consistent throughout responses with little variation within interviews. Staff participating in interviews on behalf of agencies facilitating CAPC programming are subsequently referred to as 'participants'.

Positive Impacts

Many participants reported that there were some positive impacts this past year as a result of COVID-19: new funding opportunities; increase in dads participating along with children in programming; an opportunity to focus on agency and staff resource development in terms of hardware, software, and skills; a sense of achievement and connectedness in and amongst staff.

- Some participants reported several new funding opportunities specific to COVID-19 which allowed them to continue or expand programming this past year.
- Participants noticed an increase in dads involved in programming. Participants attribute this to the shift to working from home for many people combined with the shift to virtual programming.
- Agency goals that had previously been low priority were suddenly essential. These included upgrading hardware and software, initiating/expanding work from home capacity, including updating policies; as well as training staff and developing/increasing use of both software and social media presence. Participants in some agencies reported that they were better able to engage in professional development this year. Many agencies shared that they will continue to use at least some of the adaptations (ex. virtual programming, working from home) post-COVID-19.
- Participants also shared that in some cases they felt empowered by their successes in such challenging circumstances and felt more connected to their teammates and the network of CAPC agencies. Many participants shared that they had reached out within the CAPC network for ideas for program adaptations.

Difficulties in System Navigation

Some participants noted that there were difficulties this past year with system navigation at the agency level. Certain programs in new or existing partnerships were slow to respond or difficult to connect with and, in some cases, new partnership agencies were found to be under-resourced and difficult to communicate with as a result. Additionally, phases of government closure impacted some programs, such as recreation programming in Hamilton, for which some CAPC programs assist parents in registering.

Lack of Human Connection

Participants noted that being unable to meet in-person or provide in-person programming deeply impacted service users and staff in terms of: service user peer support; building trust with service providers, and; participants themselves feeling isolated.

- Some participants noted that parents were not getting the same level of peer support that they received while attending in-person programming. At many CAPC programs prior to COVID-19 parents would be able to socialize during programming. One participant noted that parents learning English would take this opportunity to practice their language skills.
- Participants were concerned overall about the lack of personal connection and trust-building with service users. Some participants shared that the relationship between service provider and service user is very important as service users often have to share large amounts of personal information (and documentation) throughout system navigation. Participants shared that with virtual communication it has been difficult to demonstrate that they are invested in both the well-being of the service user and in building a foundation of trust.
- Many participants shared that they themselves miss being in-person with their colleagues and with service users. Many shared that they feel isolated, and that extra effort is required to make a connection with others virtually, which can be tiring.

Reporting and Programming Challenges

CAPC programming is defined by a geographic area in Hamilton. The move to virtual programming has impacted the ability of service providers to track from where service users are attending. While it was noted that pre-COVID-19 service users could be commuting from outside the catchment area to attend some programs, the change is still significant. Virtual programming at one agency requires registration, so participant location is collected. However this programming has had a decrease in service users since moving online, potentially because of the registration requirement in place of the previous, spontaneous drop-in format.

Service Provision Gaps

Several gaps, ways in which programs are unable to meet service users' needs, were noted by participants as a result of COVID-19: lack of child-led programming; inability of some agencies to maintain virtual and in-person programming; lack of contact information for some service users. Participants noted concern that inequities in the community would be exacerbated by programming gaps.

- Some participants noted that in-person programming would be child-led and responsive to the needs and interests of the children present. Now that programming is provided virtually, staff must plan activities in advance.
- Most agencies have spent considerable effort adapting programming to be online, but as in-person programming resumes, this past year during periods of changing government regulations, and looking forward to post-COVID-19, there is pressure to maintain at least some virtual programming so as not to create gaps if some service users are unable to attend in-person programming. This places a burden on staff.
- Some participants shared concern about not being able to reach service users due to not having their contact information. This information is not kept for all programs, or not accessible in work from home situations. Creative solutions have been applied to try to locate this information and/or reach service users via social media or agency websites.

Barriers to Accessing Services

Barriers, factors that inhibit service users' ability to access services, were identified by participants: low uptake of one-on-one video chats; lack of drop-in programming; increase in screen time for children, and; access to/knowledge of technology. Just as with service gaps, participants noted concern that inequities in the community would be exacerbated by barriers to accessing services.

- Participants shared that some service users are hesitant to meet via video. Some participants theorized that this could be due to service user hesitation to share their home setting with service providers. Phone calls are offered as an alternative.
- In the case of live virtual programming (as opposed to asynchronous videos on the website or YouTube) just 'dropping-in' spontaneously has become more difficult. Some participants shared that for drop-in programs, service users would attend as they were able, as with small children it can be challenging to attend at a specific time or at all. Live virtual programming requires that the service user access via a link and must have a space where the child can play which can be limiting.
- Some participants shared that the move to virtual programming sends mixed messages about screen time: usually parents are advised to limit screen time and may now worry about the amount of time children spend watching screens while balancing stimulation and connection via programming.

- All participants identified technology as the biggest barrier with service providers and service users alike working and attending programming from home. Specific challenges include unstable internet and lack of knowledge of how to use software (such as Zoom). Participants noted that some people who previously would attend in-person programming have not been seen in virtual programming (ex. grandparents). Staff theorize that technological and in some cases language barriers are preventing all from taking advantage of virtual programming.

Impact on Agency Staff

Participants reported that staff have been extremely resilient and have made considerable efforts to support each other and service users. Participants reported taking extra time to check in with each other and that they relied heavily on the connections with community partners.

Participants also shared that they miss working in-person with children, parents and each other. Many participants also shared that they feel stress from not meeting the need in the community.

Vaccine Hesitancy

SPRC staff requested that as part of this research, participants be asked if they feel like their CAPC programming could be used as a vector for public health information, specifically to address vaccine hesitancy. All CAPC agencies work with public health in some capacity, and many host information sessions already.

Many participants shared that they are certainly willing to do this; they have built a relationship of trust with service users, they have the network and resources required to plan, advertise and host an information session, or to link service users and public health.

Some participants shared that these conversations are already happening; service users are unsure of what to do and are approaching people they trust, which is often service providers, for information. The need to talk to people about their fears was emphasized. One participant shared that they have already helped book vaccine appointments for service users at their request. Some participants shared they already discuss childhood vaccinations with service users.

Some participants shared concerns about providing opinions or coaching people with respect to getting the vaccine. They also shared that they might not have the appropriate network for distributing information due to the structure of the program (working with volunteers and not service users directly).

Conclusion

All CAPC programming in Hamilton was significantly affected by COVID-19 in the program year April 2020 through March 2021. Virtually all programming prior to COVID-19 was provided in-person, and while some agencies have been able to continue programming in-person consistently where contact is minimal or essential, some have had periods of in-person programming depending on changing government restrictions throughout the year, and some have been unable to provide any in-person programming. The COVID-19 pandemic has both hindered the ability of agencies to provide services and intensified the need for service in the community. A wide array of program innovations have been utilized to meet the demand for service. Adaptations include connecting with families virtually, by phone or by meeting outdoors and developing virtual programming via videos, newsletters and activity kits. Participants generally felt that CAPC-facilitated programs were well situated to provide information via Hamilton Public Health about COVID-19 vaccines in an effort to combat vaccine hesitancy.

Despite the many challenges, resilience was the overwhelming theme of key informant interviews with program staff. This interruption in normal service provision also allowed for development outside the normal programming, in terms of innovative solutions, as well as agency and staff development in terms of professional development, social media, software and hardware improvements, and policies. Without diminishing the hardship of the pandemic for service users, services providers and agencies as a whole, interviews were often positive and focused on the future.

Recommendations

SPRC staff requested that recommendations for strategies to help mitigate barriers to service during periods of severe disruption, such as a pandemic, be included as part of this report.

Recommendations are as follows:

1. **Encourage communication within the CAPC network.** Participants often cited the partnership with CAPC program staff at other agencies, relying on this network for information, ideas, resources and referrals.
2. **Establish a process for assessing and addressing service users' basic needs.** Several participants shared that their agencies had delivered food and other essential items to service users, even when this was not within the normal scope of programming.
3. **Share agency resources.** COVID-19 presented challenges in working from home, requiring updates to privacy policies, new software, etc. The CAPC network could potentially share the cost of Human Resources/lawyer consultation, or specific software.
4. **Establish a database of contact information for service users when it is appropriate to collect this information.** Several participants reported difficulties obtaining service-user contact information, and in some cases no information is kept at all. Consideration must be given to privacy and anti-spam legislation, as well as safety in the event of intimate partner violence. This is a complicated and nuanced task, but COVID-19 has demonstrated that being able to contact service users in periods of disruption is essential.
5. **Provide joint programming.** Interviews revealed that utilizing more methods to reach service users (ex. phone, Zoom, newsletters, live virtual programming, pre-recorded videos), enabled more service users to participate. However, this places a substantial burden on staff that could be mitigated by collaboration.
6. **Consider the gender gap.** According to a rapid review looking at the impact of COVID-19 on families by the National Collaboration Centre for Methods and Tools, mothers and fathers have been impacted differently. Among parents able to work from home, mothers have been more likely to reduce working hours, especially mothers of primary school-aged children. Outside of those who can work from home, women were more likely than men to face reduced hours or job losses⁴. As part of PHAC-mandated CAPC programming data collection the number of male caregivers are recorded (the SPRC additionally records those who identify as non-binary caregivers). This means the inverse is captured as well: how many women caregivers are present. In light of the aforementioned gendered impact of the pandemic, this can be considered in program design and advocacy in periods of severe disruption, and in times of normal service provision as well.

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