HRI HOMEWOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# Evaluation of the Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (GEEK) Program

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## About HRI

Homewood Research Institute (HRI) is a registered Canadian Charity dedicated to transforming mental health and addiction treatment through research. We partner with leading scientists, universities, patients, and clinicians to improve care, services, and outcomes. HRI's charitable registration is # 86307 3334 RR0001.

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# Executive Summary

The Ontario Brain Institute's Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (GEEK) Program was established in 2017 to provide evaluation expertise, support, and funding to community-led programs and services for brain health and people living with brain disorders. Since 2018, twelve community-led programs have participated in the GEEK Program.

In October 2023, OBI contracted HRI to assess performance and impact of the GEEK Program and to identify areas for improvement. As a process and outcome evaluation, key questions included:

1. To what extent is the GEEK Program achieving its expected outcomes?
2. What factors facilitate or inhibit the achievement of program outcomes?
3. What changes could be made to the program to enhance its efficiency and/or effectiveness?

For this evaluation, HRI used previously developed evaluation tools to inform its choice of methods, which included a document review, GEEK participant survey, and success case interviews. Results from each of these methods were triangulated to formulate answers to the key evaluation questions.

Noteworthy evaluation findings included:

GEEK Program Applicants

- With the exception of its 2023 funding round (Cohort 5), the GEEK Program has received letters of intent from 66 programs since 2018. The total budget requested from these programs ranged from $12,000 to $587,480, with a mean of $130,804.59.
- Out of the 66 programs that submitted a letter of intent, 23 were invited to complete a full application with support from an external evaluator, 12 of whom were successfully funded and are described in detail in the report.

Extent to which the GEEK Program is achieving its Expected Outcomes

- Overall, GEEK participants reported a high level of satisfaction with their overall experience, including the evaluation support provided during the application process, and the support provided by the GEEK program staff during the application process and throughout the funding period.
- The majority of participants also responded that without GEEK funding, their program's delivery would have been of lesser quality, and that the evaluation and sharing of knowledge from it would have never happened.

- One of the GEEK Program's goals is to increase knowledge, capacity, and commitment to evaluate programs and generate knowledge/ evidence. From this evaluation we found very strong evidence suggesting that the GEEK Program is achieving this outcome.

- With respect to the GEEK Program's goals around knowledge generation and translation, we found that all participants were able to complete their evaluations to the expected level of quality and within the required timeframe, but that less focus was given to knowledge translation efforts.

- With respect to how evaluation results were used, GEEK participants were able to provide concrete examples of how they contributed to improvements in program design and delivery. Overall, the GEEK Program has successfully enabled participants to apply their evaluation knowledge and skills to improve their programs, and subsequently, increase client benefits.

- Based on survey responses, approximately half of GEEK participants were able to use findings to enhance their program's reach or support program sustainability. Overall, participants had limited ability and opportunity to support the scaling and spread of their program, internally and externally.

Factors that Facilitate or Inhibit the Achievement of Program Outcomes

- GEEK participants identified internal facilitators to success at both organization and program levels. Examples included having the endorsement and commitment from leadership to deliver and evaluate an evidence-based program, and working within a team with a demonstrated commitment to personal and professional growth

- Identified external facilitators to building and sustaining evaluation capacity included: introduction and work with an experienced evaluator, the development of evaluation tools, the GEEK Program's required reporting, funding structure, and overall support they received from OBI.

- Identified barriers to building and sustaining evaluation capacity, as well as generating, sharing, and using results, included: unexpected challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, time constraints, and project specific resourcing.

- Identified facilitators to knowledge generation and sharing included: external accountability, ongoing development of knowledge products, and access to internal supports.

GEEK participants also provided valuable recommendations to enhance the program's efficiency and effectiveness. HRI expanded upon these recommendations to include the following:

1. Build up a Community of Practice to equalize evaluation capacity opportunities and to bolster GEEK participants' ability to translate knowledge gained.

2. Explore different strategies to better prepare GEEK applicants for a smoother, more successful program delivery and evaluation experience.
3. Seek to further understand the needs of GEEK participants, particularly around utilizing knowledge to support scaling, spread, and sustainability.
4. Plan next steps for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the GEEK Program.

Overall, findings from this evaluation of the GEEK Program describe the transformative role it has played as a funder of community-led programs and services. The recommendations made by HRI will only strengthen the program's ability to support the growth of evidence-based programs and services that serve brain health and Ontarians living with brain disorders.

# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ABI | Acquired Brain Injury |
| CBT | Cognitive behavioural therapy |
| CFIR | Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research |
| CoP | Community of practice |
| GEEK | Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation |
| HRI | Homewood Research Institute |
| IDD | Intellectual and developmental disabilities |
| JIAS | Jewish Immigrant Aid Services |
| LOI | Letters of intent |
| MMW | Mashkikiiwininiwag Mazinaatesijigan Wichiiwewin |
| OBI | Ontario Brain Institute |

# 1. Background

The Ontario Brain Institute's (OBI) Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (GEEK) Program was established in 2017 to provide evaluation expertise, support, and funding to community-led programs and services (i.e., outside the formal healthcare system) for brain health and people living with brain disorders. The GEEK Program provides successful applicants with 2 to 3 years of funding ($50-75K per year), including evaluator support, to promote evaluation capacity building, with the ultimate goal of evidence-based programming in the community.

Since 2018, and at the time of reporting, eight community-led programs have 'graduated' from the GEEK Program. Four programs are currently enrolled/receiving funding, with three of them nearing the end of their funding term. These 12 programs and their GEEK-funded evaluations are described in the Findings section of this report.

# 2. Evaluation Purpose

In March 2023, OBI contracted HRI to develop evaluation tools for the GEEK Program, followed by an agreement to have HRI conduct a fulsome evaluation from October 2023 to March 2024. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess performance and impact of the GEEK Program and to identify areas for improvement. As a process and outcome evaluation, key questions included:

1. To what extent is the GEEK Program achieving its expected outcomes?
2. What factors facilitate or inhibit the achievement of program outcomes?
3. What changes could be made to the program to enhance its efficiency and/or effectiveness?

Findings and recommendations from this evaluation will help inform the future of the GEEK Program. Documenting the GEEK Program's structure and outcomes also serves as an example of how funders can effectively support community-led organizations. This final report includes the evaluation planning and data collection tools that HRI developed to address the questions above, as well as findings. All tools shared within this report were developed with input from OBI.

# 3. Methods

HRI worked with OBI to develop a Logic Model (**Appendix A**), Theory of Change (**Appendix B**), and Evaluation Framework (**Appendix C**). Each of these tools informed the choice of methods for this evaluation, which included a document review, GEEK participant survey, and success case interviews. Results from each of these methods were triangulated to formulate answers to the key evaluation questions that are as credible and comprehensive as possible.

The methods described in this section were reviewed and approved by the Community Research Ethics Board on December 5, 2023 (CREO341).

## 3.1 Document Review

OBI provided documents for HRI's review throughout the evaluation. Documents reviewed included:

- GEEK Program documents (e.g., slides from introductory webinar outlining principles, priorities, and application process);
- letters of intent (LOIs) and funding proposals (which include a Logic Model, Theory of Change, and budget) from applicants;
- submitted quarterly progress reports from GEEK participants; and
- evaluation reports from GEEK-funded projects.

HRI used a data extraction sheet to collect relevant information for this evaluation, which are presented in the Evaluation Framework. Examples of relevant outcomes of interest and indicators included:

- knowledge of and capacity in conducting evaluations within community-based programs (Indicators 1.1.2, 1.1.3);
- generation and translation of knowledge/ evidence to support community-based programs (Indicators 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4);
- utilization of knowledge/ evidence to refine/ improve community-based programs (Indicators 3.1.1, 3.1.2); and
- utilization of knowledge/ evidence to support the scale, spread, and/or sustainability of community-based programs (Indicators: 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4).

These outcomes are addressed in detail in the Findings section of this report.

## 3.2 GEEK Program Participant Survey

A post-funding survey (**Appendix D**) was developed to address the same indicators as those listed above, in addition to several others, such as perceived facilitators and barriers to building/ sustaining evaluation capacity (Indicator 1.3.1), generating and/or sharing evaluation results (Indicator 2.2.1), knowledge use (Indicator 3.3.1), and recommended changes to improve the GEEK program (Indicators 1.4.1, 2.2.3, 3.4.1). Survey questions were presented in five categories: organization/ program characteristics, administration and overall satisfaction, evaluation capacity, knowledge generation/ translation, and knowledge utilization.

The survey was created in *Voxco* and shared electronically with a request for completion by Kaela Scott (Program Lead, Knowledge Translation in Integrated Discovery & Informatics, OBI). The survey was administered to GEEK graduates (N=8) from December 8, 2023 to January 15, 2024 and GEEK participants (N=4) from January 4 to 15, 2024.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and report findings from the survey. Thematic analysis was used to summarize responses to open-ended questions in the survey.

## 3.3 Success Case Interviews

Information collected through the document review and the post-funding survey were used to identify and invite four community-led programs to participate as success case studies. HRI invited these GEEK participants to reflect on their experience through interviews following a semi-structured approach (**Appendix E**). The interview guide was developed and informed by the success case method (Brinkerhoff, 2003; MacFarlan & McGuinness, 2021) as well as the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) domains and constructs (Damschroder et al., 2022), specifically their definitions of a project's outer and inner settings and how they influence implementation. These community-led programs were explored in greater depth to understand "When the program works, how well does it work? What is working and what is not?" The rationale for this method is that by examining and documenting the most extreme cases, you can identify and understand the factors that enhance or impede impact.

Interviews were conducted via *Zoom* and recorded with participants' consent. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically using the qualitative data analysis software *NVivo 10* to code and categorize data.

# 4. Findings

Findings presented in this section of the report, which follow the GEEK Program Evaluation Framework, were written using information from:

- the document review (66 LOIs, 23 full applications (with a Logic Model, Theory of Change, project plan, and budget), and 8+ quarterly project status reports and evaluation reports from each of the 12 funded programs);
- survey responses from eight programs (67% response rate); and
- the six semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the selected 4 GEEK Success Cases from February 5 - 20, 2024.

Data sources are mentioned wherever possible.

## 4.1 GEEK Program Applicants

With the exception of its 2023 funding round (Cohort 5), the GEEK Program has received LOIs from 66 programs since 2018. The total budget requested from these programs ranged from $12,000 to $587,480, with a mean of $130,804.59.

Applicants were asked how they first learned about the GEEK Program. Approximately half of them first learned about the GEEK Program through an OBI communication channel or an OBI research program/ initiative. Other ways that applicants first learned about the GEEK Program are summarized in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** How applicants first learned about the GEEK Program (n=63)

| | **n (%)** |
|---|---|
| OBI Network<br>Email/ Brainnovations Newsletter<br>EpLink<br>OBI social media<br>Ontario Neurodegenerative Disease Research Initiative (ONDRI)<br>Past or current recipient of GEEK funding<br>OBI Patient Advisory Committee Meeting<br>OBI website | 31 (49)<br>17<br>4<br>3<br>2<br>3<br>1<br>1 |
| Word of mouth/ colleague/ partner | 11 (18) |
| CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research/ McMaster University | 8 (13) |
| Toronto Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Network | 3 (5) |
| Internet search | 2 (3) |
| Epilepsy Ontario | 2 (3) |
| Neurological Health Coalition of Canada (NHCC) | 2 (3) |
| Other: Community Living Ontario, University of Ottawa's Institute of Mental Health Research (IMHR), U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research, Cundill Centre for Child and Youth Depression at CAMH | 4 (6) |
| **TOTAL** | 63 (100) |

Note: Three applicants either did not respond to this question or their response was uninterpretable.

Out of the 66 programs that submitted a LOI, 23 were invited to complete a full application with support from an external evaluator, 12 of whom were successfully funded.

## 4.2 Organization and Program Characteristics of GEEK Program Participants

**Table 2** provides a high-level overview of the 12 GEEK Program participants. The table includes details about each program's funding, a brief program description, and evaluation type. The table also shows the four Success Cases that were invited for interview. The Success Cases represent a range in funding received and diversity with respect to their program and evaluation types. A more detailed profile of each GEEK Program participant is included in **Appendix F**.

**Table 2.** Overview of GEEK program participants

| Organization | Program | Funding period | Awarded funding | Program description | Evaluation type[o] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) | Brief Intensive Case Management – Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) | 1: 2019-2021 | $ 139,200.00 | The Brief Intensive Case Management – ABI program connects individuals living with acquired brain injury and co-occurring diagnoses of addictions and/or mental health to primary care and other services. The program uses an integrated model of care to make connections across sectors and provide comprehensive complex case management. | O |
| 2. Karis Disability Services (formerly Christian Horizons) | Educational Pathway to Employment | 1: 2019-2021 | $ 80,223.00 | The Educational Pathway to Employment program develops career specific post-secondary education programs for people with developmental disabilities as well as mental health challenges, giving them the opportunity to gain the education and skills needed to access employment. | O |
| 3. Kids Can Fly | Peer-Administered CBT-Informed Support for Postpartum Depression | 2: 2020-2022 | $ 99,576.00 | The Peer-Administered CBT-Informed Support for Postpartum Depression program supports women experiencing post-partum depression through cognitive behavioural therapy sessions delivered in a peer-to-peer model. The program allows new mothers to develop effective strategies and take concrete steps towards building fulfilling lives for themselves, their children, and their families. | O |
| 4. Alzheimer's Society of Ontario | UFirst! For Care Partners | 2: 2020-2022 | $ 128,200.00 | The UFirst! For Care Partners program is an education program for those providing unpaid support for someone experiencing behaviour changes as a result of dementia or other cognitive impairment. The program will help enhance the well-being of care partners, reduce responsive behaviours, and improve collaboration among all care team members. | P, O |
| 5. Surrey Place | **SC:** The Aging & IDD Education Program: an extension of the MMW Clinic | 2: 2020-2023 | $ 293,003.00 | The Aging & IDD Education Program is developing a curriculum for the caregivers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in rural communities to help support people in continuing to live in their homes and community for as long as possible (aging in place), to be delivered through videoconferencing technology and in-person visits. | N, P |
| 6. Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre | Family Navigation Project | 3: 2021-2023 | $ 159,510.00 | The Family Navigation Project provides free-of-charge expert health care system navigation for youth ages 13-26 with mental health and/or addictions concerns and their families, living in the Greater Toronto Area. Recognizing the difficulties youth experience in accessing needed care, their program goal is to engage more youth effectively by implementing a youth engagement strategy. | P |

| Organization | Program | Funding period | Awarded funding | Program description | Evaluation type[º] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Vista Centre Brain Injury Services (Ottawa) | **SC:** ABI Transition Program | 3: 2021-2023 | $ 56,400.00 | The ABI Transition Program is built on a unique collaborative partnership between the hospital and community programs supporting ABI individuals to ensure they have a safe transition from the hospital to the community. It minimizes safety risks and coordinates ongoing supports and services. | P |
| 8. Epilepsy Ontario | UPLIFT | 3: 2021-2023 | $ 127,354.00 | The Epilepsy-specific Mental Health Program delivers remote-based mental health services, principally the UPLIFT program, a virtual program rooted in mindfulness-based cognitive behavioural therapy, as well as coordinating service delivery to clients across traditional geographic boundaries and supporting those agencies working to integrate mental health programs into their services. | P, O |
| 9. Health Nexus Santé | Indigenous Brain Story | 4: 2022-2024 | $ 247,280.00 | The Indigenous Brain Story program will create a revised curriculum for brain neuroscience training by adapting the Brain Story course to Indigenous contexts and implementing the course in up to 5 communities. The curriculum on brain science will be co-developed and co-led with Indigenous partners, and targeted to Indigenous youth, pregnant individuals, and recent parents with the goal of promoting brain health. | P |
| 10. March of Dimes Canada (MODC) | Living with Stroke - Virtual Delivery in Community Settings | 4: 2022-2024 | $ 149,510.00 | The Virtual Living with Stroke program is a community-based support and education program for groups of people impacted by stroke, delivered virtually by MODC facilitators including peer mentors and MODC staff. The goal is to scale the program across Ontario to help participants gain confidence to manage the challenges of living with stroke, and to meet others going through a similar experience. | D, O |
| 11. Epilepsy Toronto | **SC:** Functional Seizure Program | 4: 2022-2024* | $ 108,300.00 | The Functional Seizure Program is an individual evidence-based psychotherapy program for people living with functional seizures that is delivered in a community setting by trained counsellors. The program focuses on increasing a person's sense of agency as it relates to their condition so as to better their quality of life. | P, O |
| 12. JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto | **SC:** Mental Health Supportive Initiatives for Vulnerable Newcomers Program | 4: 2022-2024 | $ 115,000.00 | The Mental Health Supportive Initiatives Program provides mental health programs for vulnerable newcomers to teach tools to use while experiencing difficult emotions. Different programming methods are used based on the group needs and has previously included a psychoeducational group and teaching skills to help cope with anxiety and stress. | N, P |

**SC:** Success Case

* Awarded an additional two years of funding that is not represented in this report

º Evaluation types: N = needs assessment; D = developmental; P = process; O = outcome

Additional characteristics of GEEK funded organizations and programs:

- Funding awarded ranged from $56,400 to $293,003, with a mean of $141,963.
- The majority of awarded organizations have a provincial (37.5%) or regional (37.5%) focus (**Table 1**, **Appendix G**).
- Similarly, the majority of GEEK funded programs had a regional (50%) or provincial (37.5%) focus (**Table 2**, **Appendix G**).
- Half of the awarded organizations have fewer than 50 full-time and part-time employees (**Table 3**, **Appendix G**).
- Half of the awarded organizations had 1-4 full-time and part-time employees directly supporting the funded program, while the other half had five or more employees (**Table 4**, **Appendix G**).
- The majority of awarded programs had 1-5 full-time and part-time employees that were directly supported by GEEK funding (**Table 5**, **Appendix G**).

## 4.3 Extent to which the GEEK Program is achieving its Expected Outcomes

Findings in this section are organized by GEEK's expected outcomes as they relate to overall satisfaction with participation, evaluation capacity, knowledge generation and translation, and knowledge utilization.

With respect to overall satisfaction, all of the GEEK participants who responded to the survey (n=8) were "extremely satisfied" with the experience (**Table 3**) and "would recommend the GEEK program to their colleagues or another organization." Table 3 also shows that GEEK participants were "very" or "extremely satisfied" with the application process, the evaluation support provided during the application process, and the support provided by the GEEK program stuff during the application process and throughout the funding period.

When asked about GEEK hosted workshops and the community of practice, the majority of GEEK participants were "very" or "extremely satisfied." Notably, the other three GEEK participants said they were "moderately satisfied" with these experiences or chose "not applicable." These responses were consistent with the feedback provided from Success Cases, which are elaborated upon in **Section 4.5** of this report.

**Table 3.** Participant satisfaction with specific aspects of the GEEK Program (n=8)

| | Not at all satisfied | Slightly satisfied | Moderately satisfied | Very satisfied | Extremely satisfied | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The overall experience | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 (100) | 0 |
| The application process | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 (25) | 6 (75) | 0 |
| The evaluation support provided during the application process | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 (25) | 6 (75) | 0 |
| The support provided by the GEEK program staff during the application process | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 7 (87.5) | 0 |
| The support provided by the GEEK program staff throughout the funded period | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 7 (87.5) | 0 |
| The GEEK hosted evaluation learning events/ workshops (e.g., key performance indicators) | 0 | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 4 (50) | 2 (25) |
| The GEEK hosted community of practice (e.g., annual event) | 0 | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 4 (50) | 2 (25) |

When GEEK participants were asked to rate how successfully their GEEK funded program met their expectation or objectives, 75% of respondents chose “extremely successful” and 25% chose “moderately successful” (**Table 4**). The two GEEK participants who chose “moderately successful” cited a number of challenges they had to overcome in order to deliver and evaluate their programs, which may help explain their response. For example, because one of the program’s funding period coincided with COVID-19, significant adjustments were made to how the program was delivered. The other program faced challenges with low participation rates in their evaluation, which compromised their ability to learn from the data collected and required adjustments in their project deliverables. Factors that facilitate and inhibit the achievement of program outcomes are discussed in **Section 4.4** of this report.

**Table 4.** Extent to which GEEK participant would consider their GEEK funded program a successful experience (i.e., meeting their expectation or objectives) (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| Not at all successful | 0 |
| Slightly successful | 0 |
| Moderately successful | 2 (25) |
| Very successful | 0 |
| Extremely successful | 6 (75) |

**Table 5** shows the likelihood that the delivery, evaluation, and sharing of knowledge generated from the evaluation would have taken place without funding from the GEEK Program. The majority of GEEK participants responded that the program's delivery would have been of lesser quality without funding (62.5%), and that the evaluation and sharing of knowledge from it would have never happened (62.5%).

**Table 5.** Likelihood that work would have taken place in the absence of the GEEK funding received (n=8)

| | Never happened | Been delayed | Not been as of high quality | Would have happened anyway |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Delivery of the program | 3 (37.5) | 0 | 5 (62.5) | 0 |
| Evaluation of the program | 5 (62.5) | 2 (25) | 1 (12.5) | 0 |
| Sharing of knowledge generated from the evaluation | 5 (62.5) | 1 (12.5) | 2 (25) | 0 |

Interviews with Success Cases supported these findings. Epilepsy Toronto, for example, expressed that they would not have been able to launch their program, a clinical treatment program to an underserved population, without GEEK funding. As an alternative, they might have compromised with an education session or support group for their clients, which they believed would be meaningful, but not as impactful as what they were able to deliver with GEEK funding. Similarly, JIAS Toronto shared that they had long recognized the need for mental health supports during the transition period for newcomers to Canada that they support. GEEK funding allowed them to conduct a proper needs assessment that led to the planning and delivery of an evidence-based program, something they would not have been able to deliver at the same level of (high) quality without GEEK funding.

## 4.3.1 Evaluation Capacity

As articulated in the GEEK Program's Theory of Change, a desired outcome is "Increased knowledge, capacity, and commitment to evaluate programs and generate knowledge/ evidence." The related assumption and risk to this outcome is that participants can apply the evaluation skills they have gained through participating in the GEEK Program to other programs and organizations, rather than relying exclusively on evaluation experts. Based on the reviewed reports submitted to OBI, survey responses, and success case interviews that are presented in this section of the report, the GEEK Program is achieving this outcome.

**Table 6** shows the type(s) of evaluation that were conducted as part of the GEEK funding. Most projects used two types of evaluation, with process and outcome evaluation being the most common.

**Table 6.** Type(s) of evaluation conducted as part of the GEEK funding (n=8)

| | n (%) | % of cases |
|---|---|---|
| Needs assessment (i.e., aims to uncover and prioritize the need of a program in order to support the planning process) | 2 (11.76) | 25 |
| Developmental evaluation (i.e., aims to support the development of a new program or innovation) | 3 (17.65) | 37.5 |
| Implementation evaluation (i.e., aims to examine the process of implementing a new program or service, including fidelity to an established model) | 2 (11.76) | 25 |
| Process evaluation (i.e., aims to examine the routine delivery of a program) | 6 (35.29) | 75 |
| Outcome or impact evaluation (i.e., aims to examine the extent to which intended results of a program have been achieved) | 4 (23.53) | 50 |
| **TOTAL** | 17 (100) | 212.5 |

According to the document review, 10 of the 12 GEEK funded programs worked with an external evaluator. In a few cases, the external evaluator had a pre-existing relationship with the funded organization. Conversely, in most cases, the GEEK Program paired the external evaluator with the program. **Table 7** shows which evaluation activities were primarily conducted by an external vs. an internal member of the program team. The results in Table 7 suggest that evaluators provide the most support during the planning, data analysis, and reporting stages of an evaluation, while internal members of the program team were consistently involved throughout the different stages of the evaluation.

**Table 7.** Evaluation activities that were primarily conducted by an external member of the program team (i.e., an independent evaluation consultant) (n=7) vs. an internal member of the program or organizational team (n=8)

| | External | | Internal | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | n (%) | % of cases | n (%) | % of cases |
| Planning/ development (i.e., identifying evaluation questions, approach, design, etc.) | 4 (26.67) | 57.14 | 7 (29.17) | 87.5 |
| Data collection (i.e., record reviews, interviews, focus groups, surveys/ questionnaires) | 2 (13.33) | 28.57 | 7 (29.17) | 87.5 |
| Data analysis (i.e., secondary and/or primary data analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data) | 4 (26.67) | 57.14 | 4 (16.67) | 50 |
| Reporting (i.e., interpreting results, identifying recommendations, providing reports and/or presentations) | 5 (71.43) | 71.43 | 6 (25) | 75 |
| **TOTAL** | 15 (100) | 214.29 | 24 (100) | 300 |

**Table 8** shows the degree to which GEEK participants observed evidence of increased knowledge and capacity to conduct evaluation. Overall, over 75% of GEEK participants observed benefits related to evaluation capacity to a “strong” or “very strong degree.” The GEEK participant who saw no changes in their knowledge of or ability to plan an evaluation

commented that because they had a Credentialed Evaluator leading their effort, they had strong evaluation capacity coming into the GEEK Program.

**Table 8.** Degree to which participation in the GEEK program has resulted in benefits to the GEEK participant, their program, or their organization (n=8)

| | Not at all | To a slight degree | To a moderate degree | To a strong degree | To a very strong degree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Greater awareness in the importance or value of program evaluation | 0 | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 4 (50) | 3 (37.5) |
| b) Greater knowledge of program evaluation (e.g., approaches, methods, tools, etc.) | 1 (12.5) | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 4 (50) | 2 (25) |
| c) Enhanced ability or competency in planning program evaluation | 1 (12.5) | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 0 | 6 (75) |
| d) Enhanced ability or competency in conducting program evaluation | 0 | 0 | 2 (25) | 2 (25) | 4 (50) |
| e) Enhanced ability or competency in integrating program evaluation findings into practice | 0 | 0 | 2 (25) | 2 (25) | 4 (50) |
| f) Greater intentions to conduct future or ongoing program evaluation | 0 | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 6 (75) |
| g) Increase in dedicated resources or infrastructure to support program evaluation (e.g., staff, software, database, etc.) | 0 | 1 (12.5) | 1 (12.5) | 3 (37.5) | 3 (37.5) |

The responses presented in Table 8 were consistent with Success Cases shared when asked *how* the GEEK Program contributed to program success. For example, Surrey Place shared that being a GEEK participant allowed them to take a more methodological and evidence-based approach to program development than they would have done without the support of an external evaluator and GEEK funding. Epilepsy Toronto shared that the skills their team had acquired through the evaluation process could now be applied other programs within their organization. Vista Centre spoke of the efficient process they now had for ongoing monitoring of their ABI Transition Program with their partners at the Robyn Easey Centre. Finally, JIAS Toronto shared that GEEK funding allowed them to deliver a consistent, more thoughtful small-scale program for their clients (i.e., newcomers to Canada), organized by population group in order to address each group's unique needs and preferences. In addition, they were able to deliver several iterations of their program, each time applying new learnings from the process. The following quotation from JIAS Toronto speaks to their observed growth and ability to think evaluatively:

> "I think the biggest takeaway was … being more consistent about using evaluation … we didn't have a systematic way of doing that every time … And now we have an internal evaluation person … it's going to be a part of my workflow to do evaluations with her … a lot of my work is logistics, and sometimes, on the day of these programs, it can get so chaotic. I think having evaluators there taught me to be a little bit more about being mindful … group size, communication, expectations … and to be very honest about the limitations of the program, what can or can't be offered." - **JIAS Toronto's Mental Health Supportive Initiatives Program**

In addition, the quotation illustrates the impact of having an internal role dedicated to evaluation. With GEEK funding and in partnership with their external evaluator, JIAS Toronto was able to bolster their evaluation capacity by organizing three meetings to train their internal data and evaluation team.

### 4.3.2 Commitment to a Culture of Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement

Most of the benefits included in Table 8 address evaluation capacity; however, benefits a, f, and g speak to perceived changes in commitment to a culture of evaluation and continuous quality improvement. Success Cases shared examples of how participating in GEEK contributed to positive changes in this respect. Surrey Place observed a change in people's perception on how to work and how work can be improved from a research and evaluation lens. As conveyed in the following quotation, Surrey Place's Aging & Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Education Program benefited from the systematic approach that was taken in their needs assessment, setting an example for other programs in their organization:

> "I think it's a general trend in the organization, but [participating in the GEEK program] helped to kind of open people's minds to evaluation … evidence in program planning and just that whole process. I think it's a model, really, for how things should be done … I think the GEEK project kind of set the example a little bit … it was a bunch of things that came together to do that and I think GEEK was part of it." - **Surrey Place's Aging & IDD Education Program**

In addition to having a model to follow, Surrey place was able to support a permanent program evaluation coordinator position, which remains. They also learned valuable lessons in how to engage and collaborate with their Indigenous partners in a meaningful way.

Similarly, Vista Centre shared that without funding from GEEK, their hospital to community transition program would have carried on without evaluation. Clients would have continued going through a process that was inefficient. They found that participating in the GEEK Program encouraged more reflection and discussion with their project partner. The external evaluator they worked with introduced measures to understand client and caregiver needs that would not have been considered otherwise, making continuous quality improvement possible.

Overall, there was limited amount of information gathered related to how the GEEK Program influenced each organization's culture of evaluation. It is recommended that a more explicit question about this outcome is added to the end-of-year report to encourage GEEK participants to share concrete examples of any observed changes.

### 4.3.3 Knowledge Generation and Translation

The most common types of evaluation conducted by GEEK participants were process (58%) and outcome (58%) evaluations. The majority of programs conducted their evaluation using a mixed methods approach, with client data reviews, surveys, interviews, and focus groups being the most common ways to collect data. Most of the programs used the pre-post survey design, followed by interviews or focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of any observed or self-reported changes. This is a very practical strategy for conducting an evaluation within a short timeframe. Notably, the two GEEK participants who conducted a needs assessment received either three years of funding or a funding extension.

With respect to the types of indicators used to measure change, the majority of GEEK programs used self-reported measures, such as perceived changes in behaviour, improvements in knowledge, skills, and confidence in a specific area, etc. Less than half of the GEEK programs used clinical outcomes or validated scales (e.g., WHOQOL for measuring quality of life) to measure change.

**Table 9** shows the number of ways that GEEK participants have shared their evaluation findings. Presentations and reports were the most popular formats for sharing results, whereas few GEEK participants used other mediums. This finding was supported by two Success Cases who shared that they would like to pursue an academic publication. However, the task is low on their list of priorities and they have not had the capacity to follow through.

**Table 9.** Ways that evaluation results have been shared (n=8)

| | n (%) | % of cases |
|---|---|---|
| Presentation(s) | 7 (41.18) | 87.5 |
| Reports | 4 (23.52) | 50 |
| Academic publications | 2 (11.76) | 25 |
| Webinar | 2 (11.76) | 25 |
| Newsletter | 1 (5.88) | 12.5 |
| Social media | 1 (5.88) | 12.5 |
| **TOTAL** | 17 (100) | 212.5 |

The review of submitted reports to OBI showed that evaluation results were successfully shared internally with program teams and organizational leadership. The majority of GEEK participants were also able to include their results in a new grant or funding application (**Table 10**). However, evaluation results were seldom shared with academic, governmental, or public audiences.

**Table 10.** Ways that evaluation results have been presented (n=8)

| | n (%) | % of cases |
|---|---|---|
| In a report/ presentation to the program team | 6 (30) | 75 |
| In a report/ presentation to the organizational leadership or board | 3 (15) | 37.5 |
| In a report to a current funder | 5 (25) | 62.5 |
| In a new grant or funding application/ request | 6 (30) | 75 |
| **TOTAL** | 100 | 250 |

Based on the gathered evidence, the majority of GEEK participants are leaving their knowledge translation efforts until the very end of their projects when remaining time and resources are limited. In order to encourage greater sharing of evaluation results, internally, and externally, please see our suggestions in the Recommendations and Conclusion section.

## 4.3.4 Knowledge Utilization to Refine and Improve

GEEK participants who were able to share their evaluation findings with other community-based programs or service organizations did so with good results (**Table 11**). Although Success Cases mentioned a few barriers to sharing the evidence generated (see Section 4.4), they strongly believed that other community-based programs would find their learnings useful. These findings were consistent with what was found through the document review.

**Table 11.** Degree to which evidence generated from evaluation will be or has been useful to other community-based program (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| Not at all | 0 |
| To a slight degree | 0 |
| To a moderate degree | 2 (25) |
| To a strong degree | 2 (25) |
| To a very strong degree | 4 (50) |

With respect to how evaluation results were used, GEEK participants were able to provide concrete examples of how they contributed to improvements in program design and delivery (**Table 12**). Overall, the GEEK Program has successfully enabled participants to apply their evaluation knowledge and skills to improve their programs, and subsequently, increase client benefits.

Examples of improvements to **program design** included the creation of new intake forms for clients, addition of a virtual teaching element as opposed to more in-class learning, and overall design of online training modules as informed by a needs assessment.

One of the most noteworthy improvements related to **program delivery**, were GEEK participants' examples of having a data system and supporting workflow to facilitate ongoing monitoring of their programs, enabling continuous quality improvement. In a submitted report to OBI, one GEEK participant shared how the act of gathering feedback from clients on an ongoing

basis and using that information to modify their services was now embedded in their work culture.

**Table 12.** Ways that GEEK funded evaluation have been used (n=8)

| | n (%) | % of cases |
|---|---|---|
| Improve your program's design (e.g., develop new program modules, extend or shorten a program's length, etc.) | 7 (47) | 87.5 |
| Improve your program's delivery (e.g., enhance staff training, develop/test a new delivery model, offer more frequent/timely programs, etc.) | 8 (53) | 100 |
| **TOTAL** | 15 (100) | 187.5 |

Additional examples of how some of the Success Case are continuing to use their developed evaluation tools and evaluation findings are described below:

**Surrey Place:** The evaluation framework that was developed with GEEK funding will continue to get used to guide ongoing program monitoring activities. The program team is using their evaluation results to inform the next iteration of their training program for caregivers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Vista Centre:** The ABI Transition Program team is refining their partnership evaluation framework and continues to use the tools developed with GEEK funding to serve their clients—tools that they were not taking advantage of before. Because of the GEEK experience, the Vista Centre is now allocating a minimum of 10% of project budgets to evaluation. Evaluation findings have provided their ED with data to support decision-making. Evaluation findings have also been and will continue to be included in future funding applications. Program staff's positive experience with GEEK has encouraged them to continue learning and seeking ways to improve their program.

> "Thanks to this funding, it's made the transition process way better … Without this funding, it would have been like, you know, we just keep functioning the way that we function. To stop and look at this is very important. It's beneficial for the organization and the client. At the end of the day, we want to improve their quality of life." - **Vista Centre's ABI Transition Program**

**JIAS Toronto:** Through the GEEK Program, JIAS Toronto has gained a better understanding of the clients they serve. The program team were able to share the findings from their needs assessment with their organization's caseworkers and in-house therapist, who work directly with their clients. Evaluation findings are being used to plan future programs, both group and individual services for vulnerable newcomers. By sharing their evaluation findings, JIAS Toronto was able to secure more funding from their donors and a one-year grant to support further mental health programming.

## 4.3.5 Knowledge Utilization to Support Scaling, Spread, and Sustainability

For the purpose of articulating and measuring the GEEK Program's expected outcomes, the following definitions were used to guide data collection and interpretation:

- Scaling: Increased program impact by enhancing or expanding reach to include more clients.
- Spread: Increased program impact by informing or supporting further program implementation internally or externally.
- Sustainability: Program continuation that has been enabled by funding, knowledge, and processes.

**Table 13** shows the extent to which GEEK participants used their evaluation findings to achieve these outcomes. The survey responses suggest that half of the GEEK participants were able to use findings to enhance their program's reach or support program sustainability, but that participants had limited ability and opportunity to support the scaling and spread of their program, internally and externally. This finding was consistent with the information extracted from the document review.

**Table 13.** Ways that GEEK funded evaluation have been used (n=8)

| | n (%) | % of cases |
|---|---|---|
| Enhance or expand your program's reach (e.g., to include more clients within your catchment area, extend to clients beyond your catchment area, expand to clients beyond your initial target population, etc.) | 4 (36) | 50 |
| Inform or support the implementation of your program within or across your organization. | 1 (9) | 12.5 |
| Inform or support program adoption outside of your organization (e.g., uptake from another organization). | 2 (18) | 25 |
| Inform or support program sustainability (e.g., report to a funder/ decision maker, attract or apply for new program funding, etc.). | 4 (36) | 50 |
| **TOTAL** | 11 (100) | 137.5 |

The results shown in Table 13 may be a reflection of the ongoing knowledge translation work that GEEK participants are doing to utilize their evaluation findings. When GEEK participants were asked to describe any steps they have taken or will be taking to make the most of their evaluation, several shared that they are in the process of summarizing their findings to inform future program design and/or pursuing opportunities to share their work through conference presentations or a journal publication. GEEK participants also shared their commitment to continue evaluating trends, sharing their lessons learned, and participating in any additional training or information sessions to build internal evaluation capacity.

With respect to **reach**, findings from the document review suggest programs that successfully enhanced their program's reach did so by working with community partners or by delivering their program online, which made it accessible to more people.

With respect to **sustainability**, 75% of survey respondents indicated that they have applied to a new grant or funding request. Three GEEK participants have successfully secured more funding (including an extension from OBI), which has ranged from approximately $28,000 to $133,000. Two GEEK participants have applications under review. One GEEK participant's application for further funding was declined.

When Success Cases spoke on program sustainability, their responses reinforced that sustainable programming can be interpreted in multiple ways. For example, Epilepsy Toronto shared that their participation in the GEEK Program emphasized how important it is for them to allocate resources to program development and evaluation. For smaller agencies, like their own, the attention and focus tends to be on program delivery, which is an unsustainable way to work:

> "I think that that in small agencies, everyone's so busy all the time, right? There's always so much need … [the GEEK program] required us to pause and reflect on 'Hey, what are our successes? What are the challenges that we're facing? And how do we want to move forward?' And really think critically about those questions. And that's helped us land on something, you know, a path forward … delivering something that is meaningful and sustainable. And that was, you know, a result of participating in the program." - **Epilepsy Toronto's Functional Seizure Program**

Similarly, JIAS Toronto spoke about how they were continuing to use the structure and tools that were introduced to their program by their external evaluator. With evaluation activities becoming integrated with their ongoing practice, they had gained confidence in their ability to scale and spread their programming. In addition, because the GEEK Program was initially perceived as a non-traditional funder for their organization, they have since expanded their search criteria when it comes to future funding opportunities:

> "It's forced us to think a little bit more outside the box about sort of non-traditional funders of social services. GEEK is not something that I would necessarily have looked at and thought, 'Oh, this is obvious to fund settlement services for new immigrants.' … but there was a really good fit once it started." - **JIAS Toronto's Mental Health Supportive Initiatives for Vulnerable Newcomers Program**

Vista Centre highlighted the role of partnerships when it comes to program sustainability. Vista Centre credited their success as a GEEK participant to having a partnership framework and a strong working relationship with their partner Robyn Easey Centre, which has led to a more efficient hospital to community transition process, better outcomes for their clients, and savings for the healthcare system. In addition, the GEEK Program helped Vista Centre foster relationships with external researchers and evaluators, relationships that support Vista Centre's ability to attract new funding and its goal of providing quality care for their clients:

> "Because of these relationships that we've created … having researchers from the University of Ottawa … we're pitching ideas to them for research projects. and it's paying off … it helps us to think of projects, how we're going to do the projects, and how to be successful. But it also helps us in order to make a case

> [for funding] … [they] make us much better in terms of what we do or what we deliver." - **Vista Centre's ABI Transition Program**

Overall, there was a limited amount of information that could be retrieved from the document review that addressed the extent to which evaluation findings have enabled GEEK participants to scale, spread, and sustain their programs. This finding may be a reflection of several factors: 1) the onus is on GEEK participants to spearhead this effort typically after their funding period has ended; 2) as a medium-term outcome, impact in this area can take 3-4 years to observe; 3) the GEEK Program has placed less emphasis on this intended outcome than others, such as building evaluation capacity. That said, there is still promising evidence that the GEEK Program has encouraged a few programs to scale, spread, and become more sustainable in ways that would not have been possible without participation, as described by the Success Cases. Suggestions for how further evidence on this outcome can be collected in the future are provided in the Recommendations and Conclusion section.

## 4.4 Factors that Facilitate or Inhibit the Achievement of Program Outcomes

Success Cases were asked to reflect on **internal facilitators** to their success as they related to sustaining evaluation capacity, generating and sharing results, and utilizing knowledge. Success Cases consistently mentioned the following as being critical to their achievements:

a) At the organizational level:

- The endorsement and commitment from leadership to deliver and evaluate an evidence-based program.
- Strong partnerships defined by shared respect, openness to feedback, willingness to innovate, communicate, etc.

b) At the program level:

- A positive team dynamic with project champions leading with enthusiasm.
- Having team members with diverse areas of expertise.
- A "growth mindset"/ demonstrated commitment to personal and professional growth.
- Having a shared commitment to listening to and understanding clients' needs and perspectives.

Other facilitators to success as they relate to sustaining evaluation capacity, generating and sharing results, and utilizing knowledge are elaborated upon below.

### 4.4.1 Facilitators and barriers to building and sustaining evaluation capacity

When asked **what things helped**, if any, to enhance and/or sustain evaluation capacity, survey respondents and Success Cases cited the following **external facilitators**:

**a) Introduction and work with an experienced evaluator:** GEEK participants cited the valuable contributions of the external evaluator they worked with—their role 'kept evaluation at the forefront,' which often brought needed structure and documentation to the program planning and delivery process.

> "Organizationally, we're still a small agency, with a limited amount of capacity. I don't know if we necessarily will engage in like, the rigorous process we have in the program … but certainly … there's lessons learned, and we can like take from this process and really reflect on 'what do we want to get out of program X, Y, and Z? And how are we going to measure that? And how can we highlight our successes for potential funders?'" – **Epilepsy Toronto's Functional Seizure Program**

**b) Development of evaluation tools:** GEEK participants appreciated the requirement to submit a logic model and project plan as part of their application to the GEEK Program. These tools were useful for sharing with others across the organization, to both communicate what their project was about and to serve as an example for thoughtful program planning.

**c) Required reporting:** GEEK participants also appreciated the structure of the quarterly reports as they: acted like a guide for developing the project, provided insight to how much progress had been made, and they allowed participants to celebrate their wins and feel motivated to continue.

> "The reports that we had to submit, really gave us an insight of how far we'd come. Now, we still have ways to go, but how far we've come, and to kind of really look at each other and celebrate … we are now looking to have more dollars or more robust evaluation of what we've actually done … we see the good that it accomplishes." – **Vista Centre's ABI Transition Program**

> "…the way each report required us to include the activities that we already reported on last time, plus, what we've added since the last report six months earlier … It was easier for me to see that and to show our team, like 'look how much you've accomplished,' which I think is motivating to continue." – **JIAS Toronto's Mental Health Supportive Initiatives for Vulnerable Newcomers Program**

**d) GEEK's funding structure:** Success Cases appreciated how funding covered program delivery and evaluation so that they did not need to apply to multiple pools of funding to do both. Several participants also expressed how timely the emphasis on evaluation was for their organization and/or program, making it an easy decision to apply.

**e) Support received from OBI:** GEEK participants were unanimous in their appreciation for the support they received from OBI as experienced through frequent check-ins and enthusiasm about progress that had been made. They also appreciated OBI's flexibility when unforeseen project changes impacted the budget and reallocation of money was needed.

> "There was a real level of flexibility that was really needed because the project got off during COVID, and that required a lot of changes to the way we were doing it. And I think just the willingness of OBI to kind of work through that and, and support us through making those changes was huge." - **Surrey Place's Aging & IDD Education Program**

> "[OBI's] mindset, you really feel that they care about the people really, that's the end goal. It's, you know, are you making an impact? And how can we help? … That really came through, the actual genuine care for humans." - **Vista Centre's project partner Roby Easey Centre at The Ottawa Hospital**

When asked **what barriers**, if any, got in the way of building and/or sustaining evaluation capacity, GEEK participants raised the following:

**a) Unexpected challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic:** Some of the GEEK participants whose funding period coincided with the pandemic were forced to make significant changes to their proposed programs. For example, Surrey Place had initially planned and budgeted to develop and deliver an in-person curriculum for caregivers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in rural communities. Because of the pandemic, their curriculum and evaluation activities (e.g., focus groups) were done online. Given some of the unexpected challenges that GEEK participants in Cohort 2 needed to overcome in order to deliver their program, time spent building evaluation capacity was limited.

**b) Time constraints:** Multiple GEEK participants described their experience of planning, implementing, and evaluating a program within two years as challenging and intense. Conducting an evaluation itself can be a time consuming process for an experienced evaluator, let alone bringing others along the way to build internal capacity.

**c) Project specific resourcing:** One GEEK participant found it difficult to sustain evaluation capacity given that a limited number of staff had direct experience with the GEEK funded program. If an organization is not committed to fostering a culture of evaluation, opportunities for project staff to continue building on and practicing their evaluation knowledge and skills will be hard to come by.

Finally, a mentioned barrier that is not specific to the GEEK program included the observation that it is challenging to find funding that will support ongoing program evaluation activities and internal evaluation capacity building, as grants typically favour the development of new programs and/or use of an external evaluator.

### 4.4.2 Facilitators and barriers to generating, sharing, and using results

When GEEK participants were asked what barriers got in the way of generating, sharing, and using results from their evaluations, they cited the same barriers as those to building and/or sustaining evaluation capacity.

With respect to **what helped** with knowledge generation and sharing, however, GEEK participants mentioned the following:

**a) Knowledge sharing as a GEEK requirement/ external accountability:** Two GEEK participants responded that being held accountable for sharing their evaluation results helped them stay focused on this goal. By sharing their results, GEEK participants helped similar organizations and gained recognition in their sector.

**b) Ongoing development of knowledge products that could be shared internally and externally:** By actively documenting their progress throughout the GEEK Program, participants were able to easily create knowledge products (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, conference poster) for others to learn from.

**c) Access to additional internal supports:** One GEEK participant worked with their internal communications team to create an infographic that was published on their organization's website.

GEEK participants mentioned few facilitators for integrating the results of their evaluation within their program and organization; these included: using the logic model as a communication tool, as well as having a highly collaborative relationship between staff who were responsible for delivering the program and staff who are responsible for evaluation.

## 4.5 Recommended Changes to Enhance the GEEK Program's Efficiency and Effectiveness

During their interviews, several Success Cases shared some of the risks they had identified or experienced as participants. While some of these risks are also articulated in the GEEK Program's Theory of Change and are outside of its sphere of influence (e.g., staff turnover within a GEEK funded organization), others provide opportunities for change. Suggested strategies to enhance the GEEK Program's efficiency and effectiveness include:

**a) Conduct a transparent process for matching programs with an external evaluator:** One GEEK participant had a mixed experience when it came to working with external evaluators, as the evaluator they were initially paired with and had established a positive working relationship with, had to step away from their commitment more than half way through the project. While OBI was able to find another external evaluator to step in, the GEEK participant found that the second evaluator's lack of experience in the brain injury field resulted in an end product that did

not reflect their program as accurately as they would have liked. To ensure that an external evaluator is a good fit for the program, a participant suggested that OBI:

- consider the evaluator's background;
- arrange an opportunity for the program team to meet with the evaluator to establish fit; and
- provide guidance to the applicant on finding an evaluator, as there may be internal or external options who are already familiar with their program or field of work.

Since GEEK participants were not aware of how OBI matched their program with an external evaluator, a more transparent process for how matching occurs could help both evaluators and GEEK participants prepare to make the most of the experience.

**b) Provide an additional resource to support the application process:** A few GEEK participants thought that the application process could be streamlined and shortened, although they did not provide specific suggestions on how to do this. What was conveyed more clearly was the desire for OBI to provide a resource to help interested applicants better understand community-based evaluation. For example, what is reasonable to accomplish within a 2-3 year timeframe, how the integration of measurement in daily activities is necessary for them to maximize their impact in the community, and all the ways that building evaluation capacity will benefit their organization.

**c) Provide an opportunity for mentorship:** Some GEEK participants described how they were excited to receive funding, but that they also felt overwhelmed and stressed in the early phases of their project. One suggestion to address this is to connect each awardee with an organization/ program lead who previously received GEEK funding so that they can provide some informal guidance, particularly at the beginning of the project.

**d) Build up a Community of Practice (CoP):** Participants recalled that there were some OBI events offered early on but could not remember participating in them. GEEK participants shared that they would appreciate more opportunities to connect and learn from one another, and more specifically a CoP where they could share their program development and evaluation-related challenges, ask questions, and brainstorm possible solutions together. One GEEK participant suggested that this CoP would be most effective as a small group that met on a monthly basis with facilitation by an experienced evaluator. Meetings could be used for GEEK participants to take turns presenting their work, highlighting a particular problem or challenge they are working through as a topic for discussion.

The CoP could also be brought together to participate in workshops/ learning events on topics of interest to them. When GEEK participants were asked to provide feedback on how OBI could better support evaluation capacity building, knowledge translation, and knowledge utilization, the most popular suggestion was to provide workshops on these topics presented in "chunks" or modules that drew from previous or current GEEK programs as examples.

**e) Provide additional supports for translating and sharing knowledge:** GEEK participants found it challenging to complete knowledge translation activities within their funding period. To

address this, one GEEK participant suggested the addition of an interim requirement to publicly share about their program and any findings or lessons learned to date. In addition, Success Cases spoke about their limited capacity to write and submit a publication, especially post-funding. An opportunity to apply for extended funding to support knowledge translation activities, such as manuscript writing, could be welcome. Alternatively, GEEK could consider bringing multiple programs together to collaborate on a publication or conference presentation/ symposium.

Finally, Success Cases were asked to share any lessons learned or **advice for another community-led organization** interested in applying to the GEEK Program. Their advice pertained to the application process and delivery of a successful program.

Application process:

- Apply even if your program may not seem like the best fit.
- Start planning and working on the proposal early as it requires time and thought to make the most of this opportunity.
- Seek support from any internal or external evaluators within your network to develop the proposal.

> "A lot of social service agencies are not experienced in evaluation … Finding a partner to work with early on will make a significant difference … it'd be hard to apply for something that is asking about evaluation at the outset, right? That's the purpose [of the GEEK Program]." – **JIAS Toronto's Mental Health Supportive Initiatives for Vulnerable Newcomers Program**

Program delivery:

- Prepare to be flexible with your implementation and evaluation plan.
- Keep OBI informed, as they are there to help you work through any issues.
- Be open to adopting a new process, evolving with it as you learn more about client needs.

> "Use the evaluator to the best of your capacity, because that's what they're there for … Even a person that's confident in their evaluation capacity can learn from another evaluator." – **Epilepsy Toronto's Functional Seizure Program**

# 5. Recommendations and Conclusion

Findings from this evaluation of the GEEK Program describe the transformative role it has played as a funder of community-led programs and services. The GEEK Program provides more than monetary support; it has successfully facilitated evaluation capacity building within GEEK-funded organizations and enhanced their ability to use evidence to support their work.

The evidence that was gathered through the document review, GEEK participant survey, and success case interviews highlight the specific components of the program that have had the greatest impact from a participant perspective. They also shed a light on ways that the GEEK Program could be strengthened.

As the GEEK Program continues to support its latest cohort of participants, HRI would like to make the following recommendations for enhancing its impact in the community.

**1. Build up a CoP to equalize evaluation capacity opportunities and to bolster GEEK participants' ability to translate knowledge gained.**

As recommended by GEEK participants, an active CoP would provide an ideal avenue to provide more support on topics of interest, particularly as they relate to knowledge translation. Knowledge translation activities are often left until the end of a project with whatever time and resources remain. The GEEK Program can help participants mitigate this risk by dedicating a series of CoP meetings to knowledge translation planning. Through this effort, participants may identify shared audiences they want to reach, examples of formats that would serve their message best, as well opportunities to share across their networks. Examples of resources that can be used to guide participants through this process as a group include the Knowledge Translation (KT) Planning Primer from the Public Health Agency of Canada (2012) and Health Canada's Knowledge Translation Planner (2017).

Furthermore, a CoP would help mitigate the risk of some evaluators playing a more active role in capacity building than others. The GEEK Program can invite evaluators that have previously done an outstanding job in building evaluation capacity to facilitate learning events. An accompanying resource library or shared folder that all GEEK participants can access and contribute to could also be created to encourage further learning. Whenever possible, the GEEK Program should seek to extend learning opportunities to previous GEEK participants.

**2. Explore different strategies to better prepare GEEK applicants for a smoother, more successful program delivery and evaluation experience.**

The gathered evidence suggests that GEEK applicants find it challenging to scope their projects to meet the GEEK Program's requirements. Organizations with limited evaluation experience, in particular, may have a difficult time estimating the amount of time and resources that are needed to conduct evaluation activities. In addition, each type of evaluation also varies in how resource-intensive it is. In order to support GEEK applicants in preparing proposals that have great potential impact, and yet are also timely and realistic, HRI suggests that the GEEK Program explores the following strategies:

a) Develop a **guiding document** that outlines the different evaluation types, their purpose, typical activities that might be carried out in each, and an example timeline and budget. Profiles of previous GEEK participants and their evaluations can be included as examples. The guiding document should draw from (and link to) existing evaluation resources.

b) Adopt a **tiered-evidence or staged approach to funding** where applicants apply to a tier based on their project stage, how much evidence they have to support it, and the funding

required. For example, typical tiered-evidence grant programs includes three tiers: development tier, validation tier, and scale-up tier. The development tier would be for organizations conducting a needs assessment or developmental evaluation to inform and launch a new program. The validation tier would be for organizations seeking to refine and improve an existing program by conducting a process and/or outcome evaluation. The scale-up tier would be for organizations with a program that it is mature enough to conduct an outcome evaluation and where scaling and spread are the main objectives.

It is expected that by providing more guidance to GEEK applicants upfront, the GEEK Program will receive proposals of a higher quality, which in turn gives decision makers more confidence when ranking applicants, as well as preparing participants for a smoother, more successful experience when they receive funding.

**3. Seek to further understand the needs of GEEK participants, particularly around utilizing knowledge to support scaling, spread, and sustainability.**

As discussed in Section 4.3.5, there was a limited amount of information collected that addressed the extent to which evaluation findings have enabled GEEK participants to scale, spread, and sustain their programs. If this continues to remain a priority for the GEEK Program, we recommend consulting implementation science literature as well as focused discussions with previous and current GEEK participants on this topic to better understand their needs. Another way to address this goal would be through a funding opportunity that is specific to scaling-up, such as the scale-up tier in the aforementioned adoption of a tiered-evidence approach to funding.

On a smaller scale, the GEEK Program can encourage greater sharing with external organizations and the public by hosting a virtual showcase for GEEK participants to present their work at the end of their funding round. This type of event will allow GEEK participants to celebrate their accomplishments, provide an avenue for them to share their findings to their respective communities, and raise more awareness for the GEEK Program overall.

**4. Plan next steps for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the GEEK Program.**

As the GEEK Program evolves and grows, we encourage the continued use of interim and final reports to capture outcomes of interest. We suggest incorporating some of the questions used in the GEEK Participant Survey (**Appendix D**) as well as the Success Case Interview Guide (**Appendix E**) into report templates.

In addition, given that developing a logic model and theory of change are not a one-time activity (Gugiu & Rodrigueze-Campos, 2007), we encourage the use of the following questions (adapted from McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999; Millar et al., 2001) to prompt future reflection and discussion:

Verify the logic model

1. Is the logic model detailed enough to create understandings of the different elements and their interrelationships?

2. Is the logic model complete (i.e., key elements are accounted for)?
3. Do the relationships proposed in the logic model occur as planned?

Develop an action plan

1. Is reasonable progress being made along the different paths to outcomes? And what information is (or can be made) available to measure this progress?
2. Which activities are critical to achieving outcomes?
3. Do any existing activities require modification? Who will be responsible for these changes? How long will they take?

Note: “Evaluation findings are perceived as useful” has been added as an assumption to the GEEK Program Theory of Change (**Appendix B**).

By contracting this evaluation, the GEEK Program’s commitment to refining and improving its own work is clear. HRI is confident that the GEEK Program will continue playing an impactful role in the growth of evidence-based programs and services, and the improved health and wellbeing among all Ontarians, for years to come.

# References


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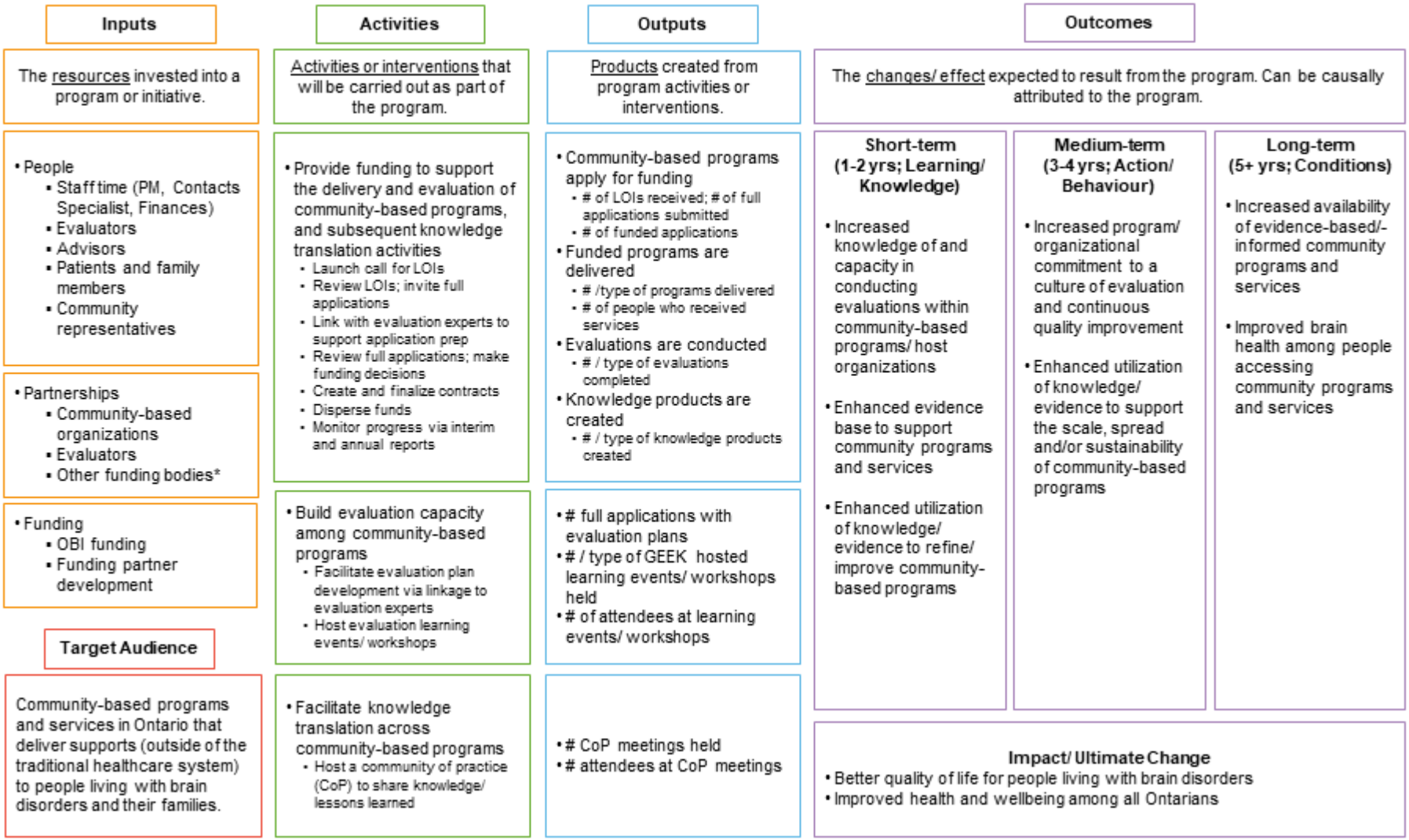
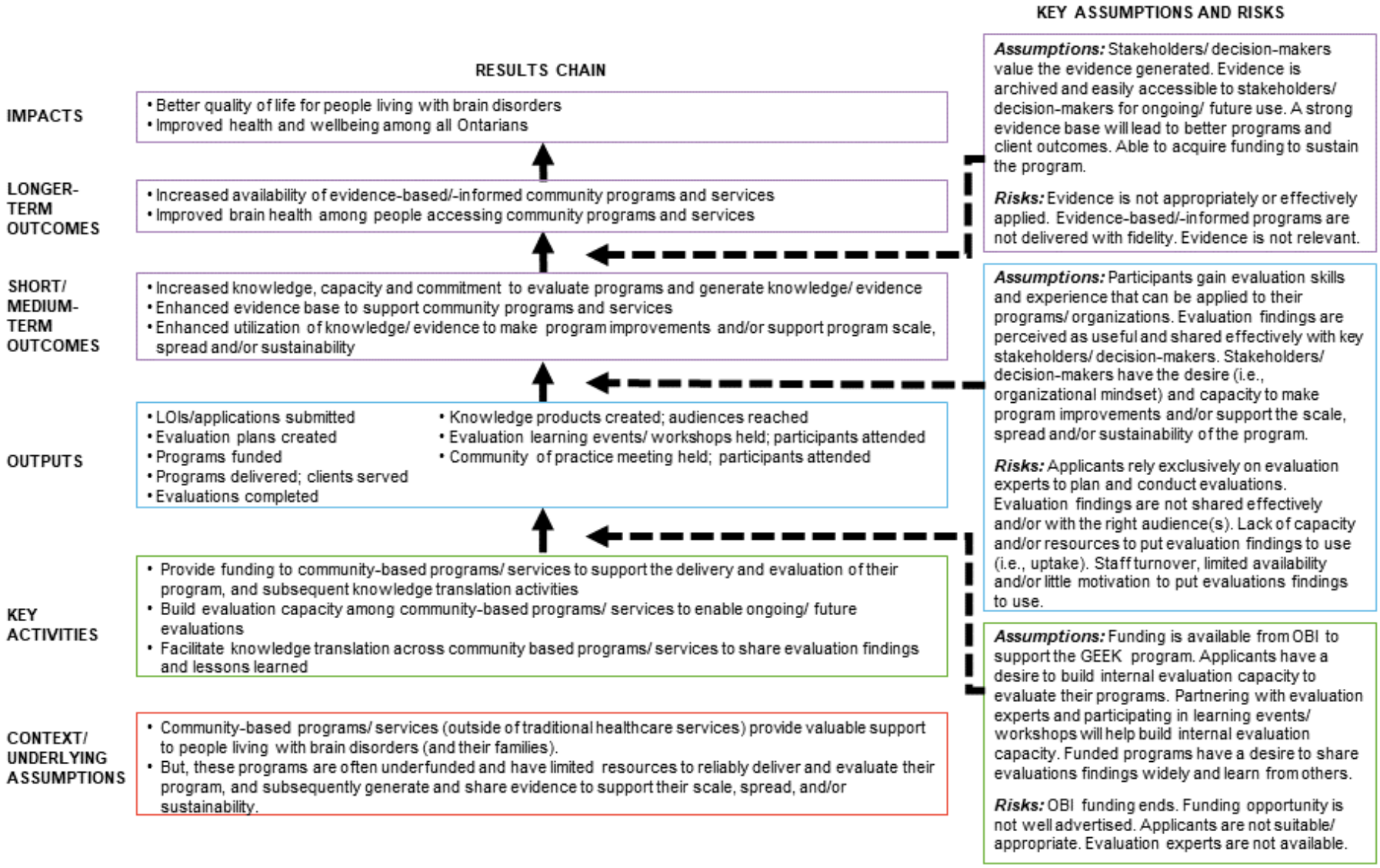
# Appendix A. GEEK Program Logic Model

**Program Goal:** To support the scale, spread, and sustainability of community-based programs and services through evaluation capacity building and evidence generation.



# Appendix B. GEEK Program Theory of Change



# Appendix C. GEEK Program Evaluation Framework

| | | | INDICATOR | METHOD | DATA SOURCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.0 Evaluation Capacity** | | | | | |
| 1.1 | …knowledge of and capacity in conducting evaluations within community-based programs/ host organizations? | 1.1.1 | # and % of applicants with an evaluation plan; and type of evaluations | Existing Record Review: Application/ Evaluation Plan; if missing, Post-Funding Survey | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | 1.1.2 | Perceived change in knowledge | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 1.1.3 | Perceived change in ability/ competency | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| 1.2 | …program/ organizational commitment to a culture of evaluation and continuous quality improvement? | 1.2.1 | Perceived importance of evaluation | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 1.2.2 | Perceived intentions to conduct future/ ongoing evaluations (not limited to GEEK funded program) | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 1.2.3 | Perceived change in dedicated resources and infrastructure to support evaluation (e.g., staff, database, etc.) | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| 1.3 | Barriers/ facilitators to building/ sustaining evaluation capacity | 1.3.1 | Perceived barriers and facilitators | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 1.3.2 | Perceived barriers and facilitators | Case Study Interview | Semi-structured interview guide |
| 1.4 | Changes to improve efficacy and/or effectiveness | 1.4.1 | Recommended changes | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| **2.0 Evidence-based/ Knowledge Generation** | | | | | |
| 2.1 | …generation and translation of knowledge/ evidence to support community-based programs? | 2.1.1 | # and type of evaluations planned | Existing Record Review: Application/ Evaluation Plan | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | 2.1.2 | nature/quality of evidence generated | Post-Funding Survey | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | 2.1.3 | # and type of knowledge products developed | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | 2.1.4 | # and type of intended audience/ key stakeholders reached | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |

| | | | INDICATOR | METHOD | DATA SOURCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.2 | Barriers/ facilitators to generating and/or sharing evaluation results | 2.2.1 | Perceived barriers and facilitators | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 2.2.2 | Perceived barriers and facilitators | Case Study Interview | Semi-structured interview guide |
| 2.3 | Changes to improve efficacy and/or effectiveness | 2.2.3 | Recommended changes | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| **3.0 Knowledge Utilization** | | | | | |
| 3.1 | …utilization of knowledge/ evidence to refine/ improve community-based programs? | 3.1.1 | % who made changes to the **design** of the program as a result of evaluation findings | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 3.1.2 | % who made changes to the **delivery** of the program as a result of the evaluation findings | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| 3.2 | …utilization of knowledge/ evidence to support the scale, spread and/or sustainability of community-based programs? | 3.2.1 | % who used evaluation findings to enhance program **reach** | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 3.2.2 | % who used evaluation findings to support program **implementation** across the organization | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 3.2.3 | % who used evaluation findings to support program **adoption** outside of an organization | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 3.2.4 | % who used evaluation findings to support program **sustainability** | Existing Record Review: End-of-Year Report | Data Extraction Sheet |
| | | | | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| 3.3 | Barriers/ facilitators | 3.3.1 | Perceived barriers and facilitators | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |
| | | 3.3.2 | Perceived barriers and facilitators | Case Study Interview | Semi-structured interview guide |
| 3.4 | Changes to improve efficacy and/or effectiveness | 3.4.1 | Recommended changes | Post-Funding Survey | Post-Funding Survey |

# Appendix D. GEEK Participant Survey

**Introduction and Consent**

As a former recipient of funding from the OBI GEEK program, we invite you to complete a survey about your experiences participating in the program. We are also interested in learning about any potential benefits (intended or unintended) you or your organization may have experienced as a result of the GEEK program. Homewood Research Institute (HRI) has been contracted by OBI to conduct this survey as part of its evaluation of the GEEK program. Your response will help HRI and OBI assess performance and impact of the GEEK program and to identify areas for improvement.

If necessary, this survey can be completed by consulting with other colleagues (e.g., program coordinators) who were involved in the GEEK funded activities and familiar with any potential impacts. The survey will take you approximately 25 minutes to complete.

**Additional details:**

- You participation is voluntary. You may skip any question you do not want to answer. You can also stop or close your browser at any time you like without consequence. However, once you submit your survey response, we cannot remove your answers.
- Your response will be kept confidential and will not be shared with other participants. The information collected will be used for OBI's reporting and evaluation purposes. Any feedback that you provide will not be attributed to you or your organization. Your name will not appear in any publications.
- Your answers will be stored on a secure, password protected server used by the organization. However, because the survey is being completed over the internet, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- There are no anticipated risks to participating in this evaluation.
- If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or this evaluation, please contact Stephanie Lu (SLu@hriresearch.com).

By entering this survey, I indicate that I have read the information above and agree to participate.

- Yes – continue below
- No – please close your browser

We look forward to your feedback!

**Organization/ Program Characteristics**

Project title:

These next questions will ask you to tell use more about the organization and/or program that received funds from the OBI GEEK program.

1. Which best describes the catchment area your **organization** intends to reach?
   - National (i.e., all of Canada)
   - Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario)

- Regional (i.e., North East, North West, East, Central, Toronto, West) – please specify which region:
    - North East (i.e., serving Parry Sound to Sault Ste. Marie to the Hudson Bay and James Bay Coasts)
    - North West (i.e., serving communities from Thunder Bay to Kenora to the Hudson Bay Coast)
    - East (i.e., serving communities from Scarborough to Deep River to Hawkesbury)
    - Central (i.e., serving communities from Mississauga to Huntsville and Orangeville to Markham)
    - Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto)
    - West (i.e., serving communities from Waterloo to Windsor and Tobermory to Niagara Falls)
- Local (i.e., city or municipality) – please specify which city or municipality:

2. What is the approximate total number of employees (full-time and part-time) at your **organization**?
    - 1-19
    - 20-49
    - 50-99
    - 100-249
    - 500-999
    - 1,000-2,500
    - Over 2,500
    - I don't know

3. Which best describes the catchment area the **funded program** intends to reach?
    - National (i.e., all of Canada)
    - Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario)
    - Regional (i.e., North East, North West, East, Central, Toronto, West) – please specify which region:
        - North East (i.e., serving Parry Sound to Sault Ste. Marie to the Hudson Bay and James Bay Coasts)
        - North West (i.e., serving communities from Thunder Bay to Kenora to the Hudson Bay Coast)
        - East (i.e., serving communities from Scarborough to Deep River to Hawkesbury)
        - Central (i.e., serving communities from Mississauga to Huntsville and Orangeville to Markham)
        - Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto)
        - West (i.e., serving communities from Waterloo to Windsor and Tobermory to Niagara Falls)
    - Local (i.e., city or municipality) – please specify which city or municipality:

4. What is the approximate total number of employees (full-time and part-time) who directly supported the **funded program**?
    - 1-4
    - 5-9
    - 10-14
    - 15+
    - I don't know

5. How many of the **organizations/ programs** employees were directly supported with funding you received from the OBI GEEK Program?

## Administration and Overall Satisfaction

These next questions are going to ask you to tell us about your overall satisfaction with the OBI GEEK program.

6. How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the GEEK Program?

   0=not at all satisfied; 1=slightly satisfied; 2=moderately satisfied; 3=very satisfied; 4=extremely satisfied; N/A=not applicable

   a) The overall experience
   b) The application process
   c) The evaluation support provided during the application process
   d) The support provided by the GEEK program staff during the application process
   e) The support provided by the GEEK program staff throughout the funded period
   f) The GEEK hosted evaluation learning events/ workshops (e.g., key performance indicators)
   g) The GEEK hosted community of practice (e.g., annual event)

7. Based on your experience, would you recommend the GEEK program to your colleagues or another organization?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

8. Overall, to what extent would you consider your GEEK funded project to be a successful experience (i.e., meeting your expectation or objectives)?

   0=not at all successful; 1=slightly successful; 2=moderately successful; 3=very successful; 4=extremely successful; N/A=not applicable

9. In the absence of the GEEK funding you received, the delivery of your program would have…?

   0=never happened; 1=been delayed; 2=not been as of high quality; 3=would have happened anyway

10. In the absence of the GEEK funding you received, the evaluation of your program would have…?

    0=never happened; 1=been delayed; 2=not been as of high quality; 3=would have happened anyway

11. In the absence of the GEEK funding you received, the sharing of knowledge generated from your evaluation would have…?
    0=never happened; 1=been delayed; 2=not been as of high quality;
    3=would have happened anyway

12. Please provide any feedback on how you think the experience as a GEEK applicant/ recipient may be improved in future:

| |
|---|
| |

## Evaluation Capacity

These next questions are going to ask you about the evaluation capacity that may have been leveraged and/or provided as a function of the OBI GEEK program.

13. Which of the following best describes the type of evaluation that was conducted as part of the GEEK funding? (select all that apply)
    - Needs assessment (i.e., aims to uncover and prioritize the need of a program in order to support the planning process)
    - Developmental evaluation (i.e., aims to support the development of a new program or innovation)
    - Implementation evaluation (i.e., aims to examine the process of implementing a new program or service, including fidelity to an established model)
    - Process evaluation (i.e., aims to examine the routine delivery of a program)
    - Outcome or impact evaluation (i.e., aims to examine the extent to which intended results of a program have been achieved)

14. Which of the following evaluation activities were primarily conducted by an **external member** of your program/ organizational team (i.e., an independent evaluation consultant)? Check all that apply.
    - Planning/ development (i.e., identifying evaluation questions, approach, design, etc.)
    - Data collection (i.e., record reviews, interviews, focus groups, surveys/ questionnaires)
    - Data analysis (i.e., secondary and/or primary data analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data)
    - Reporting (i.e., interpreting results, identifying recommendations, providing reports and/or presentations)

15. Which of the following evaluation activities were primarily conducted by an **internal member** of your program/ organizational team? Check all that apply.
    - Planning/ development (i.e., identifying evaluation questions, approach, design, etc.)
    - Data collection (i.e., record reviews, interviews, focus groups, surveys/ questionnaires)
    - Data analysis (i.e., secondary and/or primary data analysis of quantitative and/or qualitative data)
    - Reporting (i.e., interpreting results, identifying recommendations, providing reports and/or presentations)

16. To what degree has participation in the GEEK program resulted in any of the following benefits to you, your program or your organization?
    0=not at all; 1=to a slight degree; 2=to a moderate degree; 3=to a strong degree; 4=to a very strong degree; N/A=not applicable

    a) Greater awareness in the importance or value of program evaluation
    b) Greater knowledge of program evaluation (e.g., approaches, methods, tools, etc.)
    c) Enhanced ability or competency in planning program evaluation
    d) Enhanced ability or competency in conducting program evaluation
    e) Enhanced ability or competency in integrating program evaluation findings into practice
    f) Greater intentions to conduct future or ongoing program evaluation
    g) Increase in dedicated resources or infrastructure to support program evaluation (e.g., staff, software, database, etc.)

17. What **barriers**, if any, got in the way of building and/ or sustaining evaluation capacity within your program and/or organization:

| |
|---|
| |

18. What things **helped**, if any, to enhance and/ or sustain evaluation capacity within your program and/or organization:

| |
|---|
| |

19. Please provide any feedback on how you think the GEEK program could better support evaluation capacity building among community-based programs/ services:

| |
|---|
| |

## Knowledge Generation/Translation

These next questions are going to ask you about the any findings that were generated and shared from the funded evaluation activities.

20. Please describe the evaluation you conducted and results that were generated. Please refer to your evaluation plan and/or end of funding report:
    a) Study design:
    b) Method(s) used:
    c) Sample size:
    d) Type of data generated: **select one**
        - Quantitative (i.e., can be counted, measured, and expressed using numerical values)
        - Qualitative (i.e., is descriptive in nature, expressed in terms of language rather than numerical values)

- Both quantitative and qualitative

e) Key indicators measured:
f) Key findings:

21. In what ways have you shared the results of your evaluation? (select all that apply)
    - Presentation(s)
    - Reports
    - Academic publications
    - Newsletter
    - Social media
    - Webinar
    - Other, please describe:

22. With what types of audiences have you shared the results of your evaluation? (select all that apply)
    - Program team
    - Organizational leadership
    - Other community-based services
    - Academics/ researchers
    - Governmental agencies
    - Other funding agencies
    - Public
    - Other, please describe:

23. To what degree do you think the evidence generated from your evaluation will be or has been useful to other community-based programs?
    0=not at all; 1=to a slight degree; 2=to a moderate degree; 3=to a strong degree; 4=to a very strong degree; N/A=not applicable

24. What **barriers**, if any, got in the way of generating and/or sharing results from the funded program evaluation within your program and/or organization:

25. What things **helped**, if any, to generate and/or share results from the funded program evaluation within your program and/or organization:

26. Please provide any feedback on how you think the GEEK program could better facilitate knowledge translation across community-based programs/ services:

**Knowledge Utilization**

These next questions are going to ask you about how, if at all, findings from the funded evaluation activities were used.

27. Did or will your program use the results from the GEEK funded evaluation to…? (select all that apply)
    - Enhance or expand your program's reach (e.g., to include more clients within your catchment area, extend to clients beyond your catchment area, expand to clients beyond your initial target population, etc.)
    - Improve your program's design (e.g., develop new program modules, extend or shorten a program's length, etc.)
    - Improve your program's delivery (e.g., enhance staff training, develop/test a new delivery model, offer more frequent/timely programs, etc.)
    - Inform or support the implementation of your program within or across your organization. Please describe:

    - Inform or support program adoption outside of your organization (e.g., uptake from another organization). Please describe:

    - Inform or support program sustainability (e.g., report to a funder/ decision maker, attract or apply for new program funding, etc.). Please describe:

    - Other:

28. What steps have you taken or will you need to take make the most use of the results of your evaluation?

29. Have you used the results of your evaluation …?
    - In a report/ presentation to the program team
    - In a report/ presentation to the organizational leadership or board
    - In a report to a current funder
    - In a new grant or funding application/ request
        - If yes, was the application/ request successful?
        - If yes, how much funding was awarded?
    - Other:

30. What **barriers**, if any, got in the way of using and/or integrating results from the funded program evaluation within your program and/or organization:

31. What things **helped**, if any, to use and/or integrate results from the funded program evaluation within your program and/or organization:

32. Please provide any feedback on how you think the GEEK program could better facilitate knowledge utilization across community-based programs/ services:

# Appendix E. GEEK Success Case Interview Guide

Good morning/ afternoon. As a former recipient of funding from the OBI GEEK program, we are interested in learning about your experiences participating in the program. We would particularly like to learn what makes you a 'success' case. We want to answer questions such as 'When the GEEK program works, how well does it work? What are the factors that enhance or impede the GEEK program's impact?'

I have a series of questions for you to which there are no wrong answers. If there's a question you do not wish to answer, please let me know, and we can skip it. If you would like to end this interview early, please let me know. I also want to remind you that we will be recording this interview for research purposes. Given that we will be featuring your program in our reporting, your responses will be not be anonymous. However, we will not use your name in any of our reporting or any other identifiable information.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Do I have your consent to record this conversation? (If a participant says "No," the HRI

Research Associate will take notes.)

| Domain | Question | Prompts |
|---|---|---|
| Verifying program characteristics | **Ask only if any information is missing from post-funding survey:**<br>Based on the information we have, we understand that your program aims to: [summarize goals]<br><br>Can you provide me with some more details about: [identified information gaps]<br><br>Thank you for providing that important context about your program. | |
| Defining success | 1a) Can you start off by describing how the GEEK program contributed to your program's success?<br><br>b) Why are the results you achieved important? | What need(s) did the GEEK program help fulfill? |
| Internal facilitators to success<br><br>(CFIR: Inner Setting Domain, Individuals Domain) | 2) When reflecting on your experience in the GEEK program, what do you think contributed to your success with respect to:<br>• Your organization? Leadership?<br>• Your program?<br>• Your team?<br>• Your clients?<br>• Other?<br><br>Please provide specific examples if you can. | What is unique to your program that allowed it to be a successful GEEK graduate? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| External facilitators to success<br><br>(CFIR: Outer Setting Domain, Implementation Process Domain) | 3) Similarly, how did being a GEEK participant contribute to your success with respect to:<br>• Application/ proposal writing process?<br>• Introduction and work with an experienced evaluator?<br>• Planning and execution of evaluation?<br>• Required reporting to GEEK?<br>• Awarded funding?<br>• Participation in Community of Practice<br>• Other?<br><br>Please provide specific examples if you can. | What is unique to the GEEK program that allowed you to be a successful community-led program? |
| Evidence of impact/ long-term outcomes | 4a) What happened after you graduated from the GEEK program and your evaluation was completed? Did the evaluation findings get used in any way?<br><br>4b) If yes, how did those evaluation findings contribute to your success? | |
| | 5) What other changes (positive or negative) have you observed that are a result of your participation in the GEEK program?<br><br>Please provide specific examples if you can. | Observed changes could be related to:<br>• Program delivery<br>• Evaluation capacity<br>• Generation of knowledge<br>• Partnerships<br>• New or renewed funding opportunities<br><br>Why are these changes important? |
| | 5) Have you observed any adverse or unintended impacts from participating in the GEEK program?<br><br>Please provide specific examples if you can. | |
| Lessons learned | 6) If another community-led organization was looking to apply to the GEEK program, what advice would you give them? | Recommendations could be related to:<br>• Working with OBI or GEEK staff<br>• Working with an evaluator<br>• Participating in the GEEK community of practice<br><br>What can be done to help other community-led programs be successful? |
| **Reflection and conclusion** | As we come to the end of our interview, I'd like to summarize what we've discussed so far. [Insert summary.]<br><br>7) Does that summary accurately reflect what we've discussed today? | |
| | 8) Do you have any final or additional comments you would like to make? | |

# Appendix F. GEEK Participant Profiles

Notes:

- Catchment area that the funded program is intended to reach is only reported for organizations that responded to the survey
- Profiles for organizations #8-12 were completed with as much detail as possible using the available information (i.e., survey responses, submitted 18-month progress reports). End-of-project and final evaluation reports were not available for these organizations at the time the document review was completed.

## 1: Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA)

**Program:** Brief Intensive Case Management – Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

**Funding period:** Cohort 1: 2019-2021

**Awarded funding:** $ 139,200.00

**Program description:** The Brief Intensive Case Management – ABI program connects individuals living with acquired brain injury and co-occurring diagnoses of addictions and/or mental health to primary care and other services. The program uses an integrated model of care to make connections across sectors and provide comprehensive complex case management.

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the outcome evaluation was to measure client outcomes related to quality of life, family function, and service utility.

***Methods used:*** Client survey, partner survey, caregiver survey, client-structured interviews, partner and caregiver focus groups, systems mapping dataset, document review

***Key themes:*** OBIA as a lifeline, OBIA's key areas of support, tailoring of supports and services to meet individual needs, staff providing skill-building supports, staff being caring and accessible for clients, supports for caregivers, pivoting services during COVID-19, OBIA's key challenges in supporting clients

***Key findings:*** Collected client stories showcased the different ways that OBIA helped their clients with brain injury navigate overwhelming and difficult life challenges, while also advocating on their behalf when needed, and providing social-emotional support. The ABI program has been a lifeline to clients (and their caregivers); they provide a wide range of services and supports, while also taking a personalized approach. OBIA's key areas of support include: system navigation, medical supports, legal supports, housing, funding, social emotional support, life management, and education. Some of the key challenges facing the program includes working within a healthcare system with limited capacity (particularly in the North Eastern region), the broad location of OBIA clients, the unique stressors that caregivers face, the limitations of online supports (accessibility and preference), and how the system need surpasses available services.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- By working with an external evaluator, staff gained knowledge and understanding of the evaluation process, tools used, and the types of questions and interview skills that are required to conduct a formal evaluation
- Midterm and final evaluation reports contributed to the organization's commitment to ongoing evaluation; OBIA acknowledged that more time and resources need to be allocated to the evaluation process moving forward

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Ten knowledge translation products were developed
- OBIA worked with their community partners to expand the program's reach and the number of people who could receive education
- Evaluation process led to program-level changes, such as the creation of a new intake form, service review, and program outline
- Recommendations from the evaluation reports were acted upon by the organization; for example, OBIA began developing a strategic plan and enhancing staff policies and procedures to strengthen future grant applications and reporting to their Board of Directors and funders
- Evaluation experience helped OBIA successfully secure more funding

## 2: Karis Disability Services (formerly Christian Horizons)

**Program:** Educational Pathway to Employment

**Funding period:** Cohort 1: 2019-2021

**Awarded funding:** $ 80,223.00

**Program description:** The Educational Pathway to Employment program develops career specific post-secondary education programs for people with developmental disabilities as well as mental health challenges, giving them the opportunity to gain the education and skills needed to access employment. The 9-month program includes 3 components: Introduction to the Workplace, Culinary Lab, and Field Placement.

***Catchment area:*** Regional - Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto)

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the outcome evaluation was to measure how the program contributed to participants' job knowledge, readiness, ability to obtain employment, financial stability, and their quality of life.

***Methods used:*** Pre-post survey completed for 9-month program participants, focus groups, program tracking

***Key indicators:*** Multiple indicators related to job readiness (skill, knowledge, and confidence), career/education planning, and social connection improvement

***Key findings:*** A total of 66 individuals participated in the program and 13 providers were trained. While there was difficulty testing for statistical significance due to the small sample size, participants reported improvement in the following dimensions: resume knowledge, interview skills, knife and safety skills, knowledge in listening and following directions, teamwork, problem solving, managing emotions and feelings, professional skills, and general sense of increased confidence. Participants unanimously agreed that the following facilitated student's learning in the program: small class sizes, having a restaurant placement to practice skills, having support from a chef, having an employment teacher/coach, and having learning accommodations. Participants indicated that this learning model should be applied to other courses for baking, working in an office etc.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Thirteen staff participated in the evaluation process, which allowed them to acquire new knowledge and skills
- One staff member joined the organization's Evaluation Committee, which provided an opportunity to share and apply learnings from the GEEK Program to other programs in the organization
- Gathering and using feedback became to improve and refine programming became a regular practice
- Participation in the GEEK Program also contributed to the organization's overall commitment to evaluation, as demonstrated by them taking an active role in identifying and addressing knowledge gaps and applying evaluation skills to their strategic planning process

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Seventeen knowledge translation products were developed
- Developed logic model was shared with organization leaders and was used to support grant writing
- Evaluation process led to the addition of a virtual soft skills teaching element, plus the overall change to virtual learning instead of in-person
- Evaluation findings helped clarify where to focus staff time and energy in the program to ensure that program goals were met
- Evaluation experience helped Karis successfully secure more funding

## 3: Kids Can Fly

**Program:** Peer-Administered CBT-Informed Support for Postpartum Depression

**Funding period:** Cohort 2: 2020-2022

**Awarded funding:** $ 99,576.00

**Program description:** The Peer-Administered CBT-Informed Support for Postpartum Depression program supports women experiencing post-partum depression through cognitive behavioural therapy sessions delivered in a peer-to-peer model. The program allows new mothers to develop effective strategies and take concrete steps towards building fulfilling lives for themselves, their children, and their families.

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the outcome evaluation was to measure how the program contributed to women's mental health and maternal relationships.

***Methods used:*** Pre-post assessment for women receiving peer-administered group CBT vs. women on waitlist (control) using self-reported measures (validated scales)

***Key indicators:*** EPDS (4), MINI, GAD-7 scores, Maternal Attachment Inventory (12), Infant Behaviour Questionnaire, Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), Social Provisions Scale

***Key findings:*** A total of 74 (37 in intervention group; 37 in control group) women participated in this evaluation. Scores on the EPDS dropped 5.99 points with participation in the online peer-delivered CBT group. Post-intervention, there was a clinically significant reduction in anxiety among participants, as well as statistically significant improvements in: mother-infant relationships, infant temperament, and reported social support.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Participating in the GEEK Program helped formalize a relationship with Dr. Van Lieshout (McMaster University) who trained Kids Can Fly staff in measuring relevant outcomes and interpreting data in a meaningful way

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Four knowledge translation products were developed
- Evaluation findings were used to apply for grants to expand this project, including the assessment of long-term impacts of participation

## 4: Alzheimer's Society of Ontario

**Program:** UFirst! For Care Partners

**Funding period:** Cohort 2: 2020-2022

**Awarded funding:** $ 128,200.00

**Program description:** The UFirst! For Care Partners program is an online, self-paced, e-learning course for those providing unpaid support for someone experiencing behaviour changes as a result of dementia or other cognitive impairment. The program aims to enhance

the wellbeing of care partners, reduce responsive behaviours, and improve collaboration among all care team members.

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the process and outcome evaluation was to measure how satisfied care partners were with the education delivered, as well as how the program contributed to care partner's knowledge, confidence, ability to collaborate with a care team, and their perceived wellbeing of the person they care for.

***Methods used:*** Pre-post training surveys, and interviews with facilitators, informal care partners, and healthcare providers

***Key indicators:*** Self-reported knowledge, skills, and confidence; perceived severity of behaviour changes; stress levels and wellbeing; program satisfaction

***Key findings:*** In total, 185 care partners (family and friends) and 37 healthcare providers participated in this program. 78% rated the program as very or extremely useful immediately following the program and this increased over time with 86% rating the program as very or extremely useful at 6 months. 60% of participants that reported very high or high stress levels before the program reported decreases in stress 6 months after the program. 100% of participants that reported very low or low well-being before the program reported improved well-being 6 months after participating in U-First! 94% agreed or strongly agreed that the program made them feel "not so alone" 4-6 weeks following the program. 100% of participants that reported below average communication scores before the program reported improved communication at 6 months.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Two ASO staff learned best practices from working closely with the external evaluator; staff are now equipped to continue administering surveys periodically to support ongoing evaluation
- Participating in the GEEK Program provided valuable experience with how to adapt plans as circumstances change

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Seven knowledge translation products were developed
- Through the evaluation process, the intake and assessment forms were refined and standardized for use by local Societies in Ontario

## 5: Surrey Place

**Program:** The Aging & Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Education Program: an extension of the MMW Clinic

**Funding period:** Cohort 2: 2020-2023

**Awarded funding:** $ 293,003.00

**Program description:** The Aging & IDD Education Program aimed to develop a curriculum for the caregivers of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in rural communities to help support people in continuing to live in their homes and community for as long as possible (aging in place). The curriculum was designed for delivery through videoconferencing technology and in-person visits.

***Catchment area:*** Regional - North West (i.e., serving communities from Thunder Bay to Kenora to the Hudson Bay Coast)

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the needs assessment was to understand the learning needs of caregivers of adults with IDD. The process evaluation was conducted to examine referral success and program accessibility. Learning outcomes for participating caregivers were also measured.

***Methods used:*** Client data review, tracking of referrals, online pre-post learning assessment survey of learning outcomes, focus groups

***Key indicators:*** Overall satisfaction with workshop with respect to: case study and discussions, facilitators, topics covered, program length, videos, activities, etc. Self-reported understanding of aging, IDD, confidence in caregiving, etc.

***Key findings:*** In total, 157 people (146 survey respondents, 13 focus group participants) participated in the evaluation. Approximately 67% of training recipients reported to have learned something new from the program. Overall, participants (from Fort Frances and Windigo) were very satisfaction with the workshop components, including the case study and discussions, facilitators, program length, and topics covered. 70% of participants found the content useful. 80% of participants from Fort Frances were satisfied with the Menti activities. In addition, participants' self-rated understanding of aging and IDD, and confidence in their caregiving abilities and managing clients' behaviours, all increased after receiving the developed curriculum. Identified areas for improvement include: further discussions on coping with aggression, communicating with family members, signs and symptoms of aging, and the ability to share personal experiences from working with aging adults with IDD.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Through the GEEK Program, the project team gained experience in online engagement and Indigenous engagement for research purposes
- Clinical staff gained experience in collecting and applying evidence from a needs assessment
- They also learned how to plan a mixed methods quasi-experimental evaluation, which involved developing measures, interpreting, and applying data
- Staff can now use Power BI to create surveys and provide real-time reporting of results
- A Program Evaluation Coordinator was hired to support this project and was made a permanent position

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Six knowledge translation products were developed
- Findings from the needs assessment gave staff a clear picture of their target audience and their learning needs, particularly the need for an improved understanding around Indigenous concepts of aging
- Information gathered played a significant role in shaping the development of the training modules, which are still being refined and improved using the evaluation findings with the goal of offering the training across the province through partner organizations
- Developed survey tools will be used to continue evaluating the program
- Findings from the needs assessment were also used to apply for more funding

## 6: Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

**Program:** Family Navigation Project

**Funding period:** Cohort 3: 2021-2023

**Awarded funding:** $ 159,510.00

**Program description:** The Family Navigation Project provides free-of-charge expert health care system navigation for youth ages 13-26 with mental health and/or addictions concerns and their families, living in the Greater Toronto Area. Recognizing the difficulties youth experience in accessing needed care, their program goal is to engage more youth effectively by implementing a youth engagement strategy.

***Catchment area:*** Regional - Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto)

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the process evaluation was to assess youth engagement in the implementation of a Youth Advisory Committee for the Youth Navigation Program, as well as to evaluate engagement in the program itself.

***Method used:*** Survey of navigators, interviews with youth with lived experience who were on the Youth Advisory Committee

***Key indicators:*** Youths' motivations, expectations, goals, and level of satisfaction related to their engagement in the Family Navigation Project

***Key themes:*** A total of 1388 (of which 289 were youth who reached out on their own) clients benefited from the youth engagement strategy. Key themes identified through semi structured interviews (N=8) included: providing opportunities for youth learning and growth, platforming youth, empowering youth, embracing youth leadership and promoting youth-driven change. Findings illustrated that youth came into the Youth Advisory Committee motivated to create positive change in the mental health system, take on leadership roles and had high expectations for organizational support. Performed analyses included insights for other organizations

planning and implementing Youth Advisory Committees in the mental health and/or addiction sector with the goal of best supporting youth in driving positive change across the system.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Observed greater appreciation for research and evaluation from staff over the course of OBI-funded work, including greater investment in providing complete and accurate data, which had previously been a challenge
- Research Coordinator developed new skills (e.g., survey design, qualitative data analysis, report writing) by working with an external evaluator and from participating in the GEEK Key Performance Indicators workshop delivered by HRI
- Members of Youth Advisory Council and Family Advisory Council took part in the Program Evaluation Working group
- The FNP team learned about evaluation through a workshop delivered by YouthREX

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Eighteen knowledge translation products were developed
- Evaluation findings were shared with the Sunnybrook Senior Leadership, Youth and Family Advisory councils
- Evaluation findings were used to support the outreach strategy and to leverage further funding

## 7: Vista Centre Brain Injury Services

**Program:** Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Transition Program

**Funding period:** Cohort 3: 2021-2023

**Awarded funding:** $ 56,400.00

**Program description:** The ABI Transition Program is built on a unique collaborative partnership between the hospital and community programs supporting ABI individuals to ensure they have a safe transition from the hospital to the community. It minimizes safety risks and coordinates ongoing supports and services.

***Catchment area:*** Local - Ottawa

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the process evaluation was to understand how the transition of clients from the hospital to community setting could be improved, as well as to develop and evaluate the partnership model between the hospital and its community partner.

***Methods used:*** Document and database review, interviews with partners, patient and caregiver satisfaction survey

***Key indicators:*** Effectiveness of program and partnership with respect to system variables, clinical outcome variables, goal achievement; patient and caregiver satisfaction

***Key findings:*** The transition program is unique. Having a hospital-based employee and a community-based employee working together to diminish the transition time for the patient enhances the process, making it faster and more economically viable overall.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Support from external evaluators led to the successful creation and adoption of a comprehensive database that captures program effectiveness using variables of interest, increasing the organization's capacity for collecting data systematically
- Staff are equipped to evaluate patient flow, client satisfaction, and the partnership between the rehabilitation and community settings

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Five knowledge translation products were developed
- Defined partnership model between hospital and community services and data collected in comprehensive database have contributed to a better service provided to clients; they are spending less time transitioning from a hospital/rehab setting to a community service provider
- With knowledge translation efforts, program and partnership model can be replicated potentially adopted elsewhere in Ontario

## 8: Epilepsy Ontario

**Program:** UPLIFT

**Funding period:** Cohort 3: 2021-2023

**Awarded funding:** $ 127,354.00

**Program description:** The Epilepsy-specific Mental Health Program delivers remote-based mental health services, principally the UPLIFT program, a virtual program rooted in mindfulness-based cognitive behavioural therapy, as well as coordinating service delivery to clients across traditional geographic boundaries and supporting those agencies working to integrate mental health programs into their services.

***Catchment area:*** Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario)

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the process and outcome evaluation is to document the creation and acceptance of the Indigenous brain story curriculum, as well as to evaluate knowledge uptake.

***Method used:*** Participant satisfaction survey

***Key indicators:*** Improved Quality of Life, Program Effectiveness, Reduced Healthcare System Usage

***Key findings:*** A total of 27 people participated in the program, 16 of whom participated in the evaluation. Participants were from all over Ontario, with the majority of them living in the underserved part of North Eastern and North Western Ontario. Overall, participants had positive experiences with the UPLIFT training. They appreciated the opportunity to develop new skills and connect with others with similar lived experiences. They cited that the training had a positive impact on their skills related to stress, being thankful and mindful, and also had a positive impact on their general quality of life. Participants asked for additional sessions and continued support. All participants indicated that they would recommend the training to others.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity was built:**

- Working with external evaluator helped Epilepsy Ontario staff learn and practice new skills
- Program staff learned the importance of building evaluation into any project and that findings contribute to quality programming for clients

**Overview of how knowledge was used:**

- Evaluation findings demonstrate (unbiased) program effectiveness; process also provides credibility which will be important when applying for further funding

## 9: Health Nexus Santé

**Program:** Indigenous Brain Story

**Funding period:** Cohort 4: 2022-2024

**Awarded funding:** $ 247,280.00

**Program description:** The Indigenous Brain Story program will create a revised curriculum for brain neuroscience training by adapting the Brain Story course to Indigenous contexts and implementing the course in up to 5 communities. The curriculum on brain science will be co-developed and co-led with Indigenous partners, and targeted to Indigenous youth, pregnant individuals, and recent parents with the goal of promoting brain health.

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the process and developmental evaluation are to examine the effectiveness of the program and its impact on participants.

***Methods used:*** Project advisory circle, key informants, design sprints (methodology for co-design in groups), survey

***Preliminary findings:*** A diverse group of key informants (e.g., community leaders, frontline workers, families) were consulted on The Brain Story (renamed Indigenous Relational Science)

curriculum and how to co-design it into a new curriculum. Design sprint sessions were conducted to discuss detailed approaches for considering specific populations, programs, and community needs. Findings from these sessions were being synthesized at the time of this review. A request for feedback on the new curriculum was also being planned.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity is being built:**

- Guidance from external evaluator (and collaborating Indigenous evaluator) has equipped staff to conduct evaluation activities, including using developed evaluation tools (i.e., logic model, evaluation framework)
- Evaluation findings are being shared more widely within the organization, promoting a culture of learning and continuous improvement, while also following the OCAP principles

**Overview of how knowledge is being used:**

- Findings were used to successfully secure additional funding from Grand Challenges Canada to continue supporting program delivery

## 10: March of Dimes Canada

**Program:** Living with Stroke - Virtual Delivery in Community Settings

**Funding period:** Cohort 4: 2022-2024

**Awarded funding:** $ 149,510.00

**Program description:** The Virtual Living with Stroke program is a community-based support and education program for groups of people impacted by stroke, delivered virtually by MODC facilitators including peer mentors and MODC staff. The goal is to scale the program across Ontario to help participants gain confidence to manage the challenges of living with stroke, and to meet others going through a similar experience.

***Catchment area:*** Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario)

**Evaluation type and description:** Developmental, outcome. Developmental evaluation on implementation and effectiveness of this program virtually. And evaluate program impact on participants

***Methods used:*** Survey, focus groups

***Key themes:*** Increase in knowledge and confidence to manage health and cope with stroke; increased confidence to advocate for themselves; increased psychosocial support; reduced barriers to accessing stroke programming as a result of the virtual platform; program access that is safe and secure from data breaches; program delivered in the appropriate timeframe (8

weeks, 90 minutes each); facilitators are knowledgeable and confident in delivering the program virtually

***Preliminary findings:*** Approximately 250 clients participated in a focus group. A theme that was identified early on was that that the virtual program increased psychosocial support and access to a wider network of people with shared experiences. Approximately 70% of the participants indicated that their sense of psychosocial support increased during the program. Many clients highlighted that one of the unintended outcomes of stroke is isolation (e.g. not being invited to certain functions, changes in family and friendship dynamics). They highlighted not feeling understood by a variety of people in their circle of care (i.e., family, friends, and healthcare support staff). Many clients mentioned that people in the cohort "got it"/they understood. Clients mentioned feeling safe to share their experiences and their vulnerabilities. Clients also mentioned that they found friends through the program, and many noted plans to maintain social connections formed through the program.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity is being built:**

- The GEEK Program helped support the validity of the project (given that their team is led by a Credentialed Evaluator) and allowed them to hire two staff who completed the Canadian Evaluation Society's Essential Skills series to increase evaluation capacity
- The evaluation process is being used as an example in staff training to demonstrate the importance of outcome-based thinking, practice, and evidence-driven programming

**Overview of how knowledge is being used:**

- Qualitative findings are shared with the Program Coordinator and facilitators at the end of each quarter, with an opportunity for them to ask questions, provide context, provide suggestions for next cohort/round of focus groups, with the ultimate goal of refining and improving the program

## Organization 11: Epilepsy Toronto

**Program:** Functional Seizure Program

**Funding period:** Cohort 4: 2022-2024

**Awarded funding:** $ 108,300.00

**Program description:** The Functional Seizure Program is an individual evidence-based psychotherapy program for people living with functional seizures that is delivered in a community setting by trained counsellors. The program focuses on increasing a person’s sense of agency as it relates to their condition so as to better their quality of life.

***Catchment area:*** Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario)

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the process and outcome evaluation was to examine and document program implementation, understand participant satisfaction with the program, and measure outcomes related to their condition and quality of life.

***Methods used:*** Review of administrative data, participant self-assessments (including weekly seizure logs), participant survey, standardized surveys (GAD-7, PHQ-9, Kessler psychological distress, WSAS, WHO-QOL (Brief)), focus groups

***Key indicators:*** Adherence to program delivery as intended, participants' self-reported knowledge and coping skills related to functional seizures, and participants' self-reported frequency and intensity of seizures and related impacts on psychosocial functioning and quality of life

***Preliminary findings:*** Overall, the program is being delivered as intended. 100% of participants were seen virtually. Approximately 50% of participants who started the program did not complete the program, a mismatch between participant need and what the neurobehavioural therapy program can offer. This makes the program very expensive to run for a small community agency like Epilepsy Toronto and highlights what is already known about serving this patient population: they are best served in an inter/multi-disciplinary setting. For those participants who do complete the program, there has been a significant decrease in seizure frequency and intensity on average. There has been no significant change in other measured indicators (i.e., symptoms of anxiety, depression, quality of life, psychological distress). Almost all participants articulated a positive shift in their locus of control and sense of agency and attitude regarding their seizure condition – a being meaningful to them.

## 12: JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto

**Program:** Mental Health Supportive Initiatives for Vulnerable  Newcomers Program

**Funding period:** Cohort 4: 2022-2024

**Awarded funding:** $ 115,000.00

**Program description:** The Mental Health Supportive Initiatives Program provides mental health programs for vulnerable newcomers to teach tools to use while experiencing difficult emotions. Different programming methods are used based on the group needs and has previously included a psychoeducational group and teaching skills to help cope with anxiety and stress.

***Catchment area:*** Regional - Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto)

**Evaluation type and description:** The purpose of the needs assessment and process evaluation are to understand the supports needed by clients, how programming affects client outcomes, as well as to identify ways to improve the program.

***Study design:*** Pre-post client focus groups

***Methods used:*** Focus groups

***Key themes:*** Familiarity with mental health services, coping mechanisms, needs and challenges with regards to mental health, client experience in the program, client desires for future programming

***Preliminary findings:*** Groupings of clients needs to be considered carefully based on culture to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and confident in participating in group mental health programs. Practicing coping skills with clients is important. Clients appreciate embedded approach to learning about mental health while also being oriented to life in Canada. They like having a space to talk about their own experiences and challenges.

**Overview of how evaluation capacity is being built:**

- Experience in the GEEK Program has solidified organization's commitment to invest in internal evaluation capacity in order to apply gained knowledge and skills across all of the organization's programming

**Overview of how knowledge is being used:**

- Currently summarizing all of the findings into a brief to inform future program design

# Appendix G. Characteristics of GEEK Program Participants

**Table 1.** Catchment area that organization intends to reach (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| National (i.e., all of Canada) | 1 (12.5) |
| Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario) | 3 (37.5) |
| Regional (i.e., North East, North West, East, Central, Toronto, West)<br>• Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto) | 3 (37.5) |
| Local (i.e., city or municipality) | 1 (12.5) |

**Table 2.** Catchment area that the funded program is intended to reach (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| National (i.e., all of Canada) | 0 |
| Provincial (i.e., all of Ontario) | 3 (37.5) |
| Regional (i.e., North East, North West, East, Central, Toronto, West)<br>• North West (i.e., serving communities from Thunder Bay to Kenora to the Hudson Bay Coast)<br>• Toronto (i.e., serving 73 unique urban neighborhoods across Toronto) | 4 (50)<br>1<br><br>3 |
| Local (i.e., city or municipality) | 1 (12.5) |

**Table 3.** Approximate total number of employees (full-time and part-time) at organization (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| 1-19 | 2 (25) |
| 20-49 | 2 (25) |
| 50-99 | 1 (12.5) |
| 100-249 | 0 |
| 500-999 | 1 (12.5) |
| 1,000-2,500 | 1 (12.5) |
| Over 2,500 | 1 (12.5) |
| I don’t know | 0 |

**Table 4.** Approximate total number of employees (full-time and part-time) who directly supported the funded program (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| 1-4 | 4 (50) |
| 5-9 | 1 (12.5) |
| 10-14 | 1 (12.5) |
| 15+ | 2 (25) |
| I don’t know | 0 |

**Table 5.** Number of employees that were directly supported with the funding received from the GEEK Program (n=8)

| | n (%) |
|---|---|
| 0 | 2 (22.22) |
| 1 | 3 (33.33) |
| 3 | 2 (22.22) |
| 5 | 1 (11.11) |