

Compassionate Community Case Study

Music Therapy

New Westminster, BC

| What you need to know | |
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| Organization | Camp Kerry |
| Website | https://campkerrysociety.org/ |
| Contact information | Dr. Heather Mohan, Executive Director - heather@campkerry.org |
| Target Audience | Children, youth and young families affected by grief, loss and illness |
| Goals | Building Compassionate Community through music and music therapy – music and mindfulness workshops for those living with illness, grief and loss |
| A story to share | Many stories of shy people returning to their communities joining choirs or even starting them |
| Needs/Rationale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Kerry was established in 2007 in British Columbia as Canada’s first family bereavement retreat program, originally under umbrella of Lions Gate Hospital; grew out of simple music therapy relationship with a woman named Kerry. • For those grieving the death of a loved one, it’s a place to find connection, healing & hope. • Since then Camp Kerry has grown to multiple locations including other parts of BC, Ontario and Atlantic Canada. • Year-round working with grief, loss and illness with a focus on children, youth and young families. • Brings people through grief in intensive workshops, day camps (up to 4 days) and other gatherings while also building community. • Residents at camp participate in hiking, fishing, high ropes/climbing, drumming, etc. These elements, plus simple things like walking to the beach, build and reinforce Camp Kerry’s safety net of trust. • Team of music therapists staff events and camps. • Choirs have transformative outcomes (recently highlighted on CBC) – have family component despite two groups - Childrens’/Teens’ Choir, Adults Choir. • Camp Kerry alumni are encouraged to continue to network after events/camps through online private network; builds and reinforces bonds. |

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| Outcomes/Results | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants report feeling connected, reduction in feelings of isolation, increased coping skills • Builds community and sense of community • Also, many participants join choirs or start them when returning to home communities |
| Cost to Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free to attend |
| What is needed to initiate a similar activity? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music therapist or enthusiast • Opportunities to get together and sing • The right attitude |
| Existing Toolkit/Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://campkerrysociety.org/ • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StQOW56WD28 – The Story of Camp Kerry • https://vimeo.com/159270174 - Camp Kerry Story • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6zirTWWJHU – Camp Kerry Atlantic • https://globalnews.ca/video/3919337/month-of-giving-back-camp-kerry - Month of Giving Back – Interview with Dr. Heather Mohan – Global News • Descriptive PowerPoint slides |
| Evaluation/Progress | Participants report feeling connected, reduction in feelings of isolation, increased coping skills |
| Challenges/obstacles | Challenge: it was hard to get the word out at first. |
| Learnings/Surprises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Speed at which community is built through song is incredible” – Dr. Heather Mohan • “Seeds get planted” (Dr. Mohan) – many people decide to join or form choir when they return home, despite no experience beforehand • Singing transcends - physical, emotional, spiritual • There has been a gender shift – more young dads as time has gone on (possibly a societal shift) |
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music allows for creative expression, allows for better coping and engagement across ages • Any opportunities to get together and sing could be explored |

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