JOIN GROUNDED SPACE

We're Grounded Space.
We're a collective of organizations working across ...

#family & children

#immigration
& refugees

#seniors

social service
provider

#disability

community
service
provider

social service
provider

community
group

#homelessness
& addiction

social
enterprise

backbone
organization
(InWithForward)

What's Grounded Space?

Fred drinks to take the edge off the shelters he calls home. **Mark** hasn't left his apartment in days. **Tracey** wakes up worrying if today is the day her kids will be removed. **Billie** is tired of taking the people she supports to the same bowling alley. **Alisa** has ideas for a new way to work with families, but doesn't know where to start.

Humans are always in flux, so how do we enable our human services to grow and develop too? That's the purpose of Grounded Space.

Grounded Space is a collective of social and community services who want to disrupt stuckness and enable flourishing.

All of us share the belief that flourishing isn't enabled by one-off project or workshop. Instead, **what's called for is a culture of experimentation**: the adoption and sustaining of a collection of practices by people like Alisa, and Billie, as well as Tracey and Fred.

To get there, **we're building a Research & Development function within and between organizations** who share issue areas or geography. Today, Grounded Space is active in Ontario and British Columbia, with organizations working across homelessness, disability and family services. Tomorrow we're hoping to see many more R&D collectives across Canada.

But where most private sector companies invest in their own R&D, few social organizations have the resources or capacity to do the same. Their innovation happens on the fly, rather than with intention and rigour. **In the collective, organizations gain access to learning, inspiration, coaching, and talent brokering** provided by backbone organization InWithForward.

Core to Grounded Space are **three principles:**
1) Embed roles and routines, not just methods & tools.
2) Make space to stop and mourn old practice, not just to celebrate the new.
3) Focus on better lives, not just better services.

Grounded Space is a journey...

1. Open Events *(p6)*

Open learning events to get staff curious and exposed to new ideas. Get in touch with like-minded professionals and organizations serious about change.

2. Quick Dive *(p7)*

Interested to continue the journey? In this stage your organization goes through a taster of R&D methods in your own context.

3. Deep Dive Setup *(p8)*

Committed? This is where you are setting-up the roles, routines, and narratives for ongoing R&D.

A new space...

Moving towards embedded R&D sure isn't easy. Social services weren't designed for uncertainty and change. They were designed for safety, security, and predictability. That's reflected in the way money flows, the way people are hired and managed, and the rules and procedures to which we're bound.

We need not only a new space that allows for experimentation - but also a way to shuttle back and forth between 'what is' and 'would could be.' Grounded Space enables organizations to build the foundation required for developing alternative practices, services, and systems. At the same time, we help organizations ground these solutions in every day realities.

From open learning to grounding practices

4. Deep Dive (p9)

Your new internal research team will do bottom-up research to find out where could be the starting points for change.
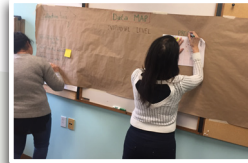
5. Develop & test (p10)

Your internal team goes on a mission around pain points and opportunities identified in the Deep Dive.

6. Grounding (p11)

Embed new solutions in your organization, and internalize new practices and values.

... with a new infrastructure

To support ongoing experimentation, we help organizations build core infrastructure. By that we mean the staff roles, weekly routines, and data systems that enable research, design, and development - alongside delivery. The two new roles every member organization creates are Culture Curators and Embedded Researchers.

Culture Curators are leaders within member organizations with a remit to hold the space for R&D. They guide internal teams to re-frame challenges, conduct research, generate ideas, test new practices, grieve the loss of old practices, and embed change.

Embedded Researchers are staff and end users of member organizations trained to ask questions, observe practice, identify opportunities, and further the conditions for R&D.

Behind the scenes...

What do we mean with 'a culture of experimentation'?

In Grounded Space, we define 'experimentation' as a set of behaviours:

1) asking questions
2) understanding gaps between outcomes & practices
3) designing alternatives
4) making and testing
5) spreading learning

So what does experimentation lead to?
It leads to new roles, new tools, and new service models.
- New roles like *Ask a Dude*: a set of peer-to-peer videos and facilitated conversations for people with developmental disabilities to talk frankly about love, sex, and relationships.
- New service models like *Kudoz*: a catalogue of learning experiences hosted by community members (not professionals)

To support experimentation, it's not enough just to ask or teach a set of skills. From dr. Susan Mitchie's[3] work around behaviour change, we know that there are three conditions for people to adopt a new behaviour or to change an old one: Motivation, capability and opportunity.

Capability: skills, practices and routines oriented towards critical thinking & creative making
Opportunity: external factors like having the space, time, agency and power to try new things
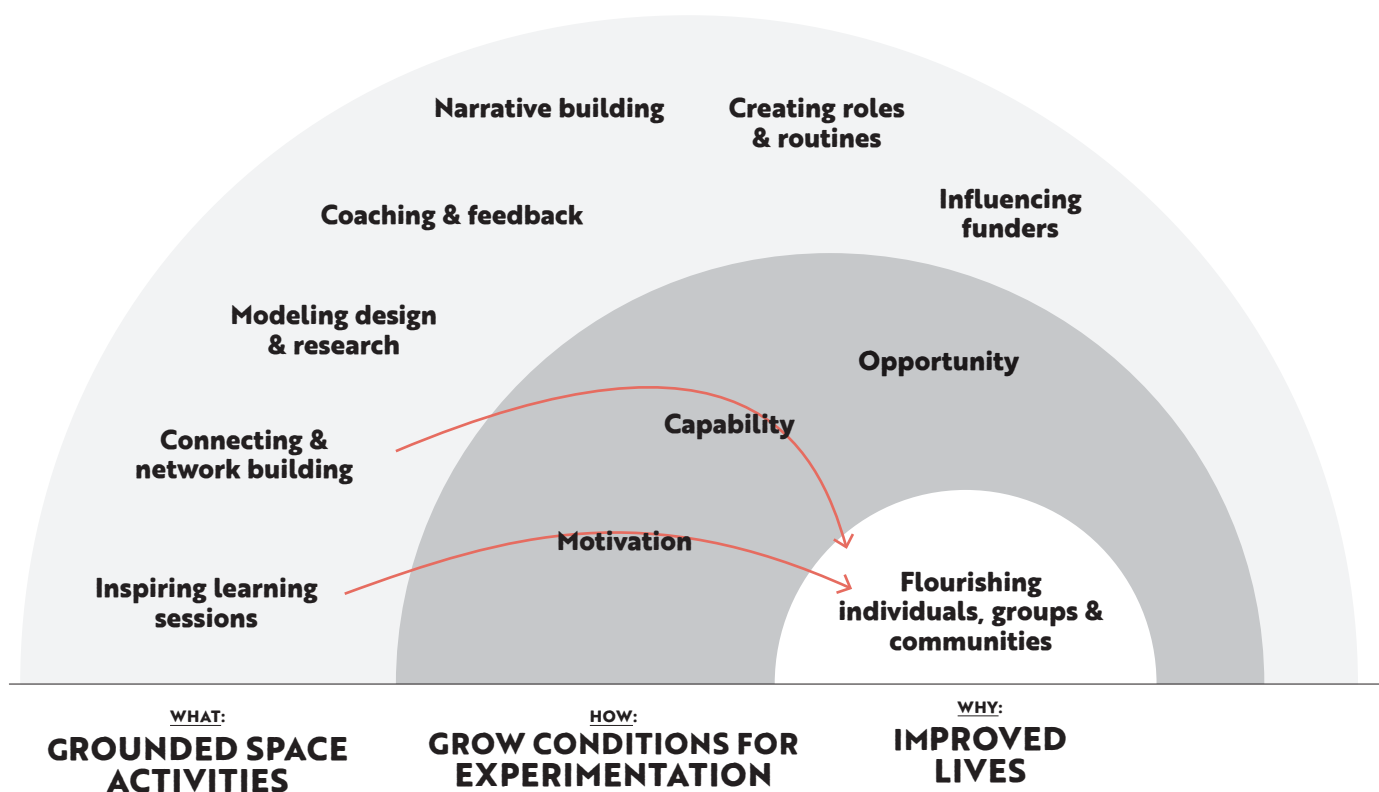Motivation: values and an identity oriented towards novelty, being all-right with challenge and not knowing everything

Why social and community organizations?

In our earlier work we've seen lots of new services and programs been developed externally. Some worked well, others didn't. But what we've really learned is that the hard part is to get to change on a bigger scale. The replicating and scaling of good new practices doesn't often happen, and when it does there's a real risk to loose the original intent.

We believe that social and community organizations are well-positioned to do social research and development, to make and test new solutions and practices. Not only are they close to end-users, and intimately know the realities and challenges. Collectively they also can influence funders.

Narrative building

Creating roles & routines

Coaching & feedback

Influencing funders

Modeling design & research

Opportunity

Connecting & network building

Capability

Motivation

Inspiring learning sessions

Flourishing individuals, groups & communities

WHAT:
GROUNDED SPACE ACTIVITIES

HOW:
GROW CONDITIONS FOR EXPERIMENTATION

WHY:
IMPROVED LIVES

From activities, to conditions, to flourishing

Each Grounded Space stage is designed to move closer to flourishing. Take the Open Events…

☞ With the learning sessions we're trying to expose people to new ideas, and through inspiration build people's orientation towards novelty (motivation). Our assumption is that forms a basis for people to change practice, towards behaviours that enable flourishing lives.

☞ The learning events are also meant to build a network with people with different skill-sets (capability) needed to make the work happen. Think about people like designers, researchers, data specialists, developers and even documentary film makers, that most organizations don't have on staff. Through the events we're building the Grounded Space network, a pool of professionals all members have access to for experimenting.

1. Open Events
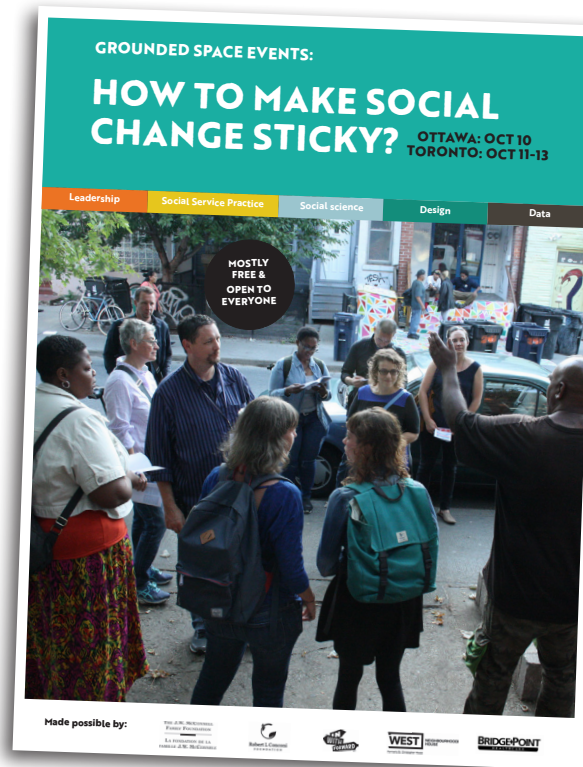
What are these events for?

This Learning Catalogue offers bite-sized introductions to the mindsets and methods behind Social R&D. They are meant for curious individuals and intrigued organizations. All so we can curate a community of practice, and get social organizations contemplating how they might engage as members of the collective.

Not just another workshop

We are not big fans of workshops. We believe that often it's the lived experience, the knowledge from outside the room that has to be brought in for a different perspective, or to make a different version of the same idea work. These events are an attempt to stimulate this. All concepts taught are blending different kinds of knowing: recent literature, our experience, and most importantly: your own practice. We believe that without grounding new ideas in daily practice, it is really hard to make them your own.

With this series events we're aiming to inspire frontline staff, managers, leaders at all levels, policymakers, designers, researchers and everyone who is serious about social change. We recognize that we need all hens on deck to make change happen. Curious? Join an event of your choice!

2. Quick Dive (2 wks)

Considering a move into Grounded Space? We help you gather the resources and supports for the journey. Over a two week period, we get to know your organization's context, listen to your stakeholders, and play back reflections. All with the intent of gaining momentum for longer-term change.

Interactions in this stage have 3 goals:

1) to give people a taster of the process
2) to start to test readiness for change
3 to play-back findings to people, to reflect on their own behaviour

What's does the Quick Dive look like?

The Quick Dive is about getting an idea if the methodology and ideas resonate with your organization, your leadership team and yourself. Our external research team will come in and use various research tools with staff and end-users. You can choose which topic is of most interest to you (*see modules on the next page*).

Research activities will often happen in several steps. For example, members of a staff team choose from a set of cards which values they find the most important in their work. We'll then have a discussion with the team about similarities and differences, and how those relate to experimentation. We'll document differences between teams and present conclusions visually on a dashboard.

We'll help you make the case for Grounded Space if you want to continue.

The Dive Modules

These are 2-week expeditions into organizational readiness, to identify promising starting points. They are part of the Quick Dive & Deep Dive stages, and include coaching, tools, and reflection.

Modules are guided tours of a thematic area critical for R&D such as Human Resourcing or Partnerships. Through coaching, the introduction of research tools, and facilitated workshops with staff, we'll surface insights, create empathy-building stories, name gaps between intentions and practices, and highlight promising starting points for change. Modules shed light on organizational readiness for change work, in a given area.

Organizations choose one module for their first introductory Quick Dive, and three more when they begin their Deep Dive.

Overview of modules for the Dive stages

Partnerships
Better understand your stakeholder relationships and the formal & informal resources your organization might leverage for bigger change. Examples of research tools:

- Stakeholder Interview
- Day-in-the-Life notebook
- Eco System Mapping Workshop

Users
Make visible the daily experiences of one user group to suss out motivations and appetite for change. Examples of research tools:

- Day in the life observation
- Practice interviews
- Fake services cards

Data
Find out what data your organization has, what it tells you, and what it would look like to systematically measure what matters to users. Examples of research tools:

- Case notes analysis
- Data flows worksheet
- Data ethnography

Human Resources
Get to know the journeys of your staff, and where there is space for unleashing team motivations and passions.

- Roles & identity notebook
- Practice interview
- Journey mapping workshops

Services
How do some of your services or programs really work for end-users and staff? Find out what happens before, during and after, and get underneath change mechanisms.

- Staff shadowing
- Space mapping
- Service user interviews

Team Practices (see next page)
Get a feel for the different team cultures that make up your organization, and figure out where there are already helpful routines for creativity, curiosity, and bottom-up change.

- Interviews with staff
- Staff Story Station
- Staff games

An example...

In the Team Practice module, we want to help you understand your team cultures, and to cultivate openness and creativity

Contrary to the romantic myth of the charismatic entrepreneur, innovation is a team sport and not a solo game. How do teams work in your organization? What are some of the different team cultures and discourses? Where is there appetite for change? What team routines and practices can be built on? What might be getting in the way of creativity? How might creativity and generativity be brought to the surface?

In this module, we'll spend two weeks exploring questions like:

> *What are the different 'collaborative intelligences' in teams?*
> *What is modeled and mirrored from the top of the organization down?*
> *What are communication flows? What is talked about?*
> *How are decisions made? What is prioritized?*

To what end?	At the end of the module, we hope teams will feel listened to and heard. Plus, we'll have hosted a collective conversation about what the conditions are for development and change. We also hope we have identified some opportunity areas for team practice.
What will it look like?	We'll spend two weeks in your context, getting to know your staff, users, and their communities, to understand their realities. Here's some of the tools we'll show and adapt: > **Interviews with Staff** about their perceptions of power & communication > **Shadowing staff** to understand networks > **Staff Story Station** to collect the great team moments and creative moments > **Staff Games** to surface priorities, values, and needs
What will we have at the end?	• 6 stories: 2 stories each about staff, users, and their family/friends • A sense-making session for staff • List of opportunity areas and pain points for possible missions • Material for funding proposals or stakeholder communications • A sharing session to invite stakeholders to read stories and join you in raising and reflecting on insights

3. Deep Dive Setup (8wks)

Ready to become a member of Grounded Space? We work alongside you to build start to build a sustainable R&D infrastructure. This looks like rallying leadership at all levels within your organization, creating a narrative for change, setting-up new roles, team routines and systems.

What's the Deep Dive Setup for?

In this stage we'll start to work with your organization at all levels. We help you host a kick-off event to communicate widely what's going to happen. Around that time we'll work with the leadership to create a clear narrative for change, and how it related to the mission and history of your organization.

We'll also help you hire and train staff in the role of Culture Curators and Embedded Researchers to start to setup your own R&D team with their own space and routines.

Training

Culture Curators are trained in areas such as conflict resolution, communication and influencing. They are going to keep the space in your organization for people to feel encouraged to experiment and learn. The Embedded Researcher will be trained in observation, interviewing and generative research techniques.

By the end of this stage, you'll choose the modules for your new research team to take into the Deep Dive.

4. Deep Dive (12 wks)

Get your new research team to work! In this stage they'll do the observation, interviews and sense-making, coached by Grounded Space. We'll look at readiness from different perspectives and identify pain points and opportunities, identifying specific missions for change.

What's the Deep Dive for?

The objective of the Deep Dive is to build a rich picture of readiness in your organization, and to start to formulate a specific design mission. During the Deep Dive, your research team will also meet with teams from other member organizations in the geographic or issue area.

What's does it Quick Dive look like?

Also this stage starts with a kick-off event. For a period of 3 months your internal team will work on two of the modules they chose (see previous spread). Apart from their research activities, there will also be an organization-wide survey, and a story station to collect data at different points in time different and places.

5. Develop & Test (ongoing)

This is where the design mission starts. Using an iterative process of research, designing, making and testing, your team will develop solutions for the challenge identified in the Deep Dive.

What's Develop & Test for?

This is where the real design work starts on a specific brief. You'll develop new roles, new tools, and new service models that are feasible to implement, attractive to staff and users, and that are contributing to the change you want to see. Coaching in this stage focuses on coming up with ideas, making them tangible, prototyping and testing them, and being able to package them in a new product or practice. Grounded Space has three designers on staff who can support you with this.

What does it look like?

This stage will likely be broken down in smaller, two-week 'design sprints'. In each sprint you'll set a goal and work with your team to the next iteration of your solution: new roles, Depending on the type of problem, you may want to add members to your team with specific experience or skills, such as data analysis or software development. Whatever you develop, you'll be testing regularly to make sure that what you design is still feasible, attractive and actually solving the problem you identified.

6. Grounding (ongoing)

Too often great new solutions end up on the shelf. Embedding and internalizing new practices is a stage in itself and takes continued time and effort. And it's not just the practice we're seeking to spread, but also the learning.
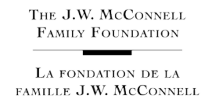

What's Grounding for?

Arguably this is the most important stage. If your new solution isn't actually used in the organization it isn't getting any closer to improving people's lives. You'll have to find out how you can get people to start and keep using the great new practice you developed. In this stage you may have to create a training, instructions, and continuous support for people using it. That usually takes time, months if not years.

What's does it look like?

The support Grounded Space can give at this point is about packaging your solution in the best way and, connecting you with people who could open doors, including funders. At this point other Grounded Space members who are interested could also try out your solution, helping to find ways to adopt it.

Who is in Grounded Space?

At this moment there are five organizations taking part across Canada, with the kind support of the Robert L. Conconi Foundation and the McConnell Family Foundation. We're open for up to five more organizations to join in 2018.

posAbilities

Kinsight⟩

BACi

WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
Formerly St. Christopher House

THE VENTURE

Robert L Conconi
FOUNDATION

THE J.W. McCONNELL
FAMILY FOUNDATION

LA FONDATION DE LA
FAMILLE J.W. McCONNELL

IN WITH FORWARD

Who is backbone organization InWithForward?

InWithForward is a social design shop with a big ambition: to turn our social safety nets into trampolines and enable people on the margins to flourish. They're bringing community and social services together to launch Grounded Space: Canada's first Research & Development collective. InWithForward's experience is based on over a decade of attempts to achieve deep social change in the lives of people, organizations and systems. The team has worked in over 10 countries with children and families, street involved adults, older people, young people, people living with disabilities, and everyone in between.

Your backbone team

dr. Sarah Schulman
Lead social impact

As a sociologist, Sarah is fascinated by what makes individuals, families, and policymakers tick. She worked with federal, regional, and local governments in 6 countries to shift how policies are made and measured. From 2010-2012, Sarah co-ran InWithFor and worked with The Australian Centre for Social Innovation to launch 3 new social solutions including the award-winning Family by Family. From 2008-2009, she was Project Lead at Participle, one of the first social design shops in the world. Sarah holds a Doctorate in Social Policy from Oxford University, where she was a Rhodes Scholar, and a Masters of Education from Stanford University.

**#families #disability
#policy #sociology**

dr. Jennifer Charlesworth
Lead of organizational change

Jennifer has worked as a front line youth worker, child day care worker, policy analyst, fund developer, professor, researcher, advocate, Cabinet advisor, and CEO. Along the way she had a few crises of faith that left her trying to figure out what she could do differently to bring about deep social change. This lead Jennifer to do an interdisciplinary PhD from the University of Victoria. Serving on the Premiers Advisory Council on Social Innovation inspired her to pursue a Global MBA in the UK. For the past 6 years Jennifer has been co-designing and co-delivering transformational leadership programs for people working in Indigenous and non-Indigenous social care organizations.

**#children #families
#leadership #government**

Maggie Vilvang
Lead animator

Maggie has worked in support of people with disabilities and their families in many different roles. In her role as an animator she guides community groups and organizations with reflective practice. Next to her role at InWithForward, Maggie is the Principal of the Community Living Innovation Venture, hosted by the VanCity Community Foundation. Maggie approaches her work through a social innovation framework and believes that partnerships forged between dedicated entrepreneurial leaders from both the corporate and social realms will achieve positive social change. Maggie started over thirty-five years ago as a frontline worker.

**#community #disability
#reflection #government**

dr. Daniela Kraemer
Lead ethnographer

Daniela is focused on understanding the lived experiences of marginalized populations, and uses the data and insights to push for social change. Over the past 10 years she has led research projects in Africa, the South Pacific and Canada. She has co-written a book on the exploitation of paid domestic workers, produced a documentary about a gang of urban young men, and her articles on social transformation and urbanization are regularly published in academic journals. Daniela has a PhD in Social Anthropology from the London School of Economics and teaches applied anthropology and qualitative research methods in Ontario universities.

**#homelessness #poverty
#anthropology #teaching**

Muryani
Lead design researcher

Muryani leads up design research in Grounded Space. She supports and coaches teams in social services agencies in design methods. She received her Masters degree in Industrial Design Engineering from Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. She loves to use social psychology theories to design services that would work for marginalized groups of people. This has brought her to work on projects like the Tinytask with DIOPD to design for happiness and well-being, and designing a novel mobility device in Gujarat, India. She enjoys doing ethnographic research, visualizing complex ideas, and creating good content to prompt meaningful conversations (like Invisibilia podcasts!)

**#domestic violence #disability
#design #coaching**

Natalie Napier
Lead coach

Natalie Napier is Lead Trainer. She has worked in community economic development for over ten years, where she has helped found social enterprises and cooperatives. The ways that communities produce different opportunities, experiences, and connections is, in her opinion, just gripping. In one of her roles Natalie was coached by InWithForward and experienced first hand what social science and design methodologies can bring to the table. She decided to join the team to help build the Grounded Space. Natalie holds a BA in International Development, an MA in (Canadian) History, and abandoned an all-but-thesis MA in Philosophy of Education.

**#unemployment #economic development
#training #education**

Get in touch!

Did we trigger your interest? We'd love to hear from you.
We're happy to talk about specific aspects of Grounded Space. Or we can get you in touch a members organization to hear first hand what their journey has been like.

Grounded Space Studio

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