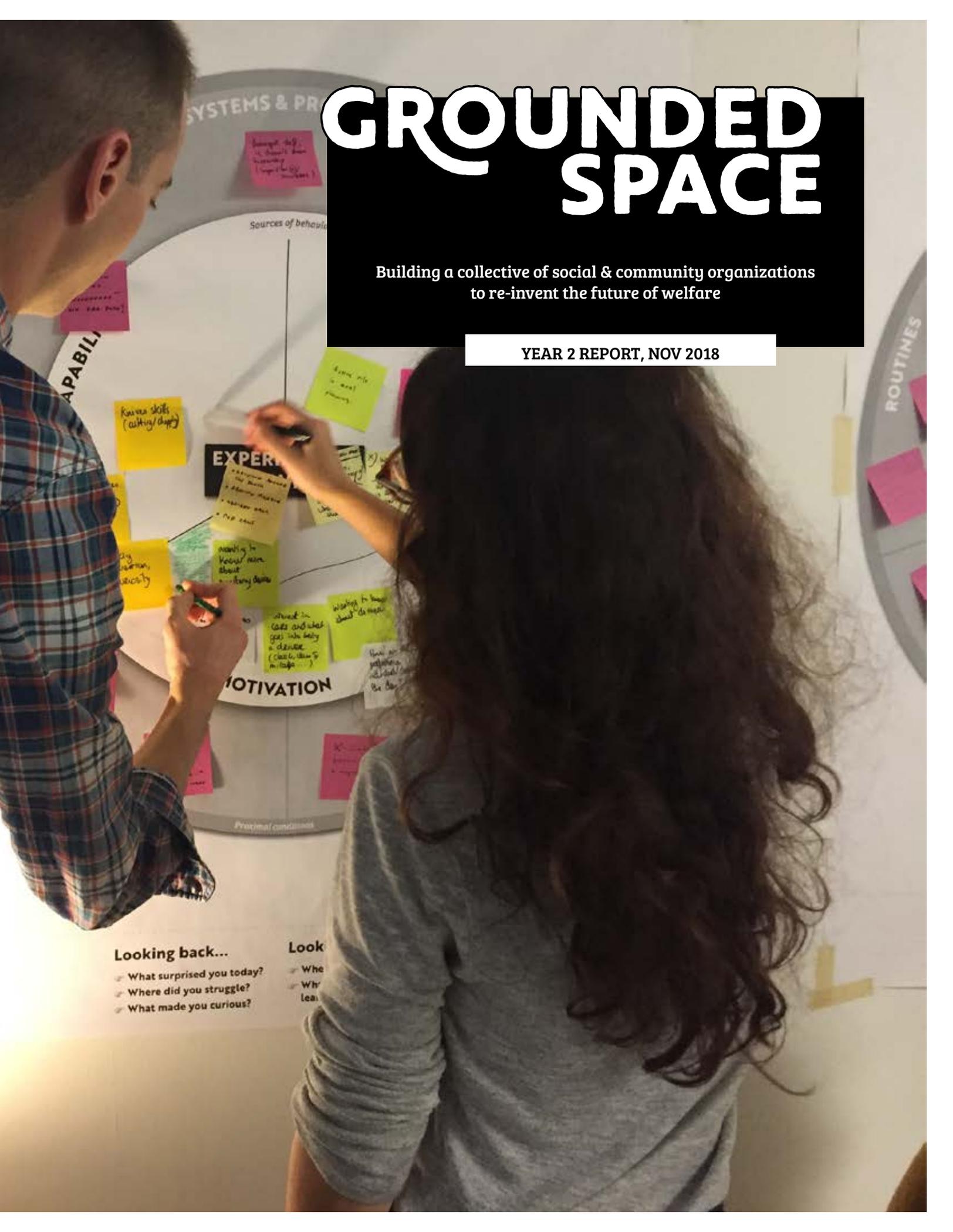


GROUND SPACE

Building a collective of social & community organizations
to re-invent the future of welfare

YEAR 2 REPORT, NOV 2018



Looking back...

- What surprised you today?
- Where did you struggle?
- What made you curious?

Look

- When
- Why
- Learn

In this publication, we look back at two years of Grounded Space: our ambition, process, products, results and reflections. We want to share the learning widely and leverage this experiment to do more purposeful social Research & Development across Canada and the world.

Table of contents

1) Background:

What's Grounded Space 1.0?

| | |
|--|----|
| The big idea? | 5 |
| Breaking collective ground | 6 |
| A culture of experimentation | 8 |
| From experimenting to flourishing | 9 |
| From 'best' to 'next' practice | 10 |
| Principles for experimenting | 11 |
| The outcomes we're after | 13 |
| The origin story | 16 |
| Who is in Grounded Space? | 18 |
| We tested six stages of a two-year journey | 20 |

2) Process:

What did we do?

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| 1. Open Events | 24 |
| 2. Quick Dive | 26 |
| 3. Deep Dive Setup | 32 |
| 4. Deep Dive | 38 |
| 5. Make & Test | 44 |
| 6. Grounding | 52 |

3) Portfolio:

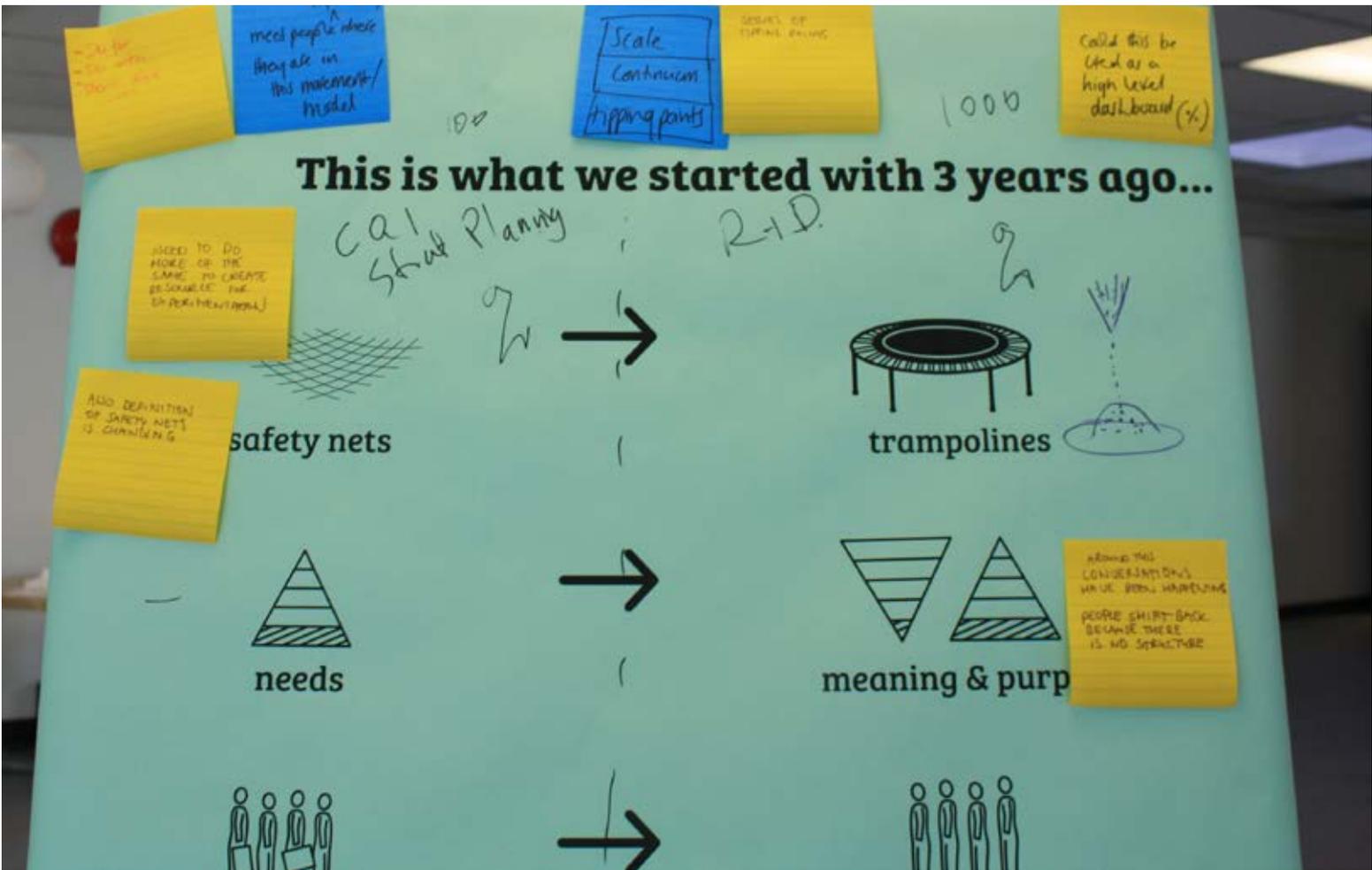
What did we produce?

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Experiential library Meraki | 61 |
| KEA, Kinsight Events & Adventures | 71 |

4) Reflection:

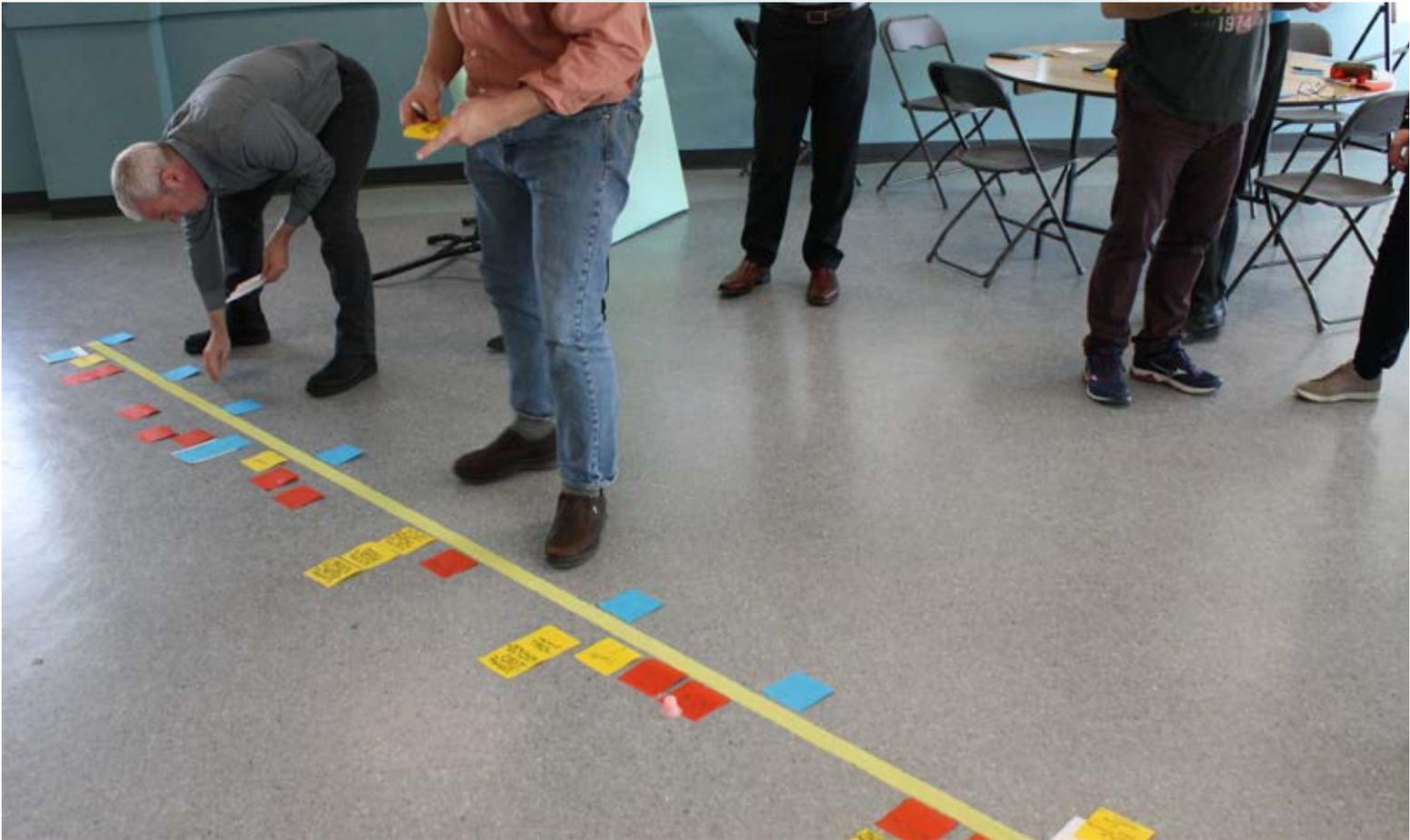
Learnings from the crews

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| posAbilities' guided reflection | 82 |
| posAbilities' individual reflections | 84 |
| BACI's Guided reflection | 88 |
| Kinsight's individual reflections | 90 |
| InWithForward's key learnings | 95 |



Reinforcing the ideas behind Grounded Space in a co-design session in February 2017

Planning key activities in the Grounded Space journey with leaders of the first Grounded Space cohort



1) Background: What's Grounded Space 1.0?

Written by InWithForward

The big idea?

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. Frontline worker **Alisa** has ideas for a new way to work with families, but doesn't know where to start.



Over the past 100 years, Canada has invested in public infrastructure and built welfare systems to improve living standards and elongate lives. Now, it's time to improve the quality of those lives. Social isolation, anxiety, and depression are at historic highs. We must increase belonging, meaning and purpose to enable more people to thrive, not just survive. That's the big,

hairy and audacious goal of Grounded Space. We work with the delivery arm of the welfare state -- with the organizations who provide social services to people -- to help them function a little more like trampolines. Together, we imagine what it would look like if supports didn't just stop people from hitting rock bottom, but resourced people to bounce-up and flourish.

Breaking collective ground

Enter Grounded Space: Canada's first collective of social and community organizations dedicated to ongoing Research & Development. Pilots and one-off innovation projects won't move us from the welfare state of the past to the welfare state of the future. What's called for is a culture of experimentation that constantly churns out new models designed with and for Fred, Mark, Billie, Tracey, and Alisa.



The question is: how do we shape culture and increase organizational desire and competency to experiment? **We set out to build a Research & Development function within and between social service organizations** in order to create the conditions to ask critical questions, collect new kinds of data, test alternative service models, and generate versus manage resources. This is what we call social Research & Development (R&D) capacity.

Where many private sector companies invest in R&D to stay relevant and have a stake in the future, few social services have the scope to do the same. Their innovation happens

on the fly, rather than with intention and rigour. **In the Grounded Space collective, organizations gain access to learning, inspiration, coaching and talent brokering** provided by InWithForward, which plays a backbone role.

Since 2017, Grounded Space has been active in Ontario and British Columbia, with six organizations working on homelessness, disability, employment, arts, and community development. Our work has been kindly supported by the Robert L. Conconi Foundation, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, and The Community Living Venture.

Why social and community organizations?

Grounded Space builds organizational motivation, capability and opportunity to continually develop interventions that contribute to flourishing lives.

We've seen plenty of interventions developed from the top-down and imposed on organizations. We've also seen plenty of clever bottom-up practice borne out of necessity. What we've seen far less of is dedicated time and space for purposeful re-invention of practice alongside users. Too often, the shine of a new intervention rubs off and loses its original intent. Prevailing

incentives, norms and protocols take over. And yet, social and community organizations are uniquely positioned to re-negotiate those incentives, norms and protocols because they are at the nexus of end user needs and system demands.

Not only do organizations have direct relationships with end users, they have direct relationships with funders. By bringing organizations together, we can amplify their voice up and re-define their engagement down.

This is the value proposition we tested with new member organizations:

capability

Better understand the unmet needs of population groups on the margins, and how to engage these groups to co-create change.

motivation

Build internal teams who can and want to do original research, generate and visualize ideas, prototype concepts and embed changes.

opportunity

Unlock resources through relationships with other orgs, sectors and disciplines such as design, anthropology, data science, and business.

interventions

Develop breakthrough models and practices that measurably improve lives for people.

We designed Grounded Space with six **organizing principles** in mind:

1) Embed roles and routines.

We transfer roles and routines to people we work with, not just methods and tools.

2) Create infrastructure.

We try and create the HR processes and systems for ongoing experimental practice.

3) Focus on conditions.

We recognize that change isn't just about new interventions. We focus on the conditions required for interventions to be adopted.

4) Work inside-out.

We build teams inside organizations that can take a user-centered point of view.

5) Go slow(er) & deliberately.

We take time for people outside the team to taste test and contribute to the process.

6) Scale deep.

We spread the underlying frameworks, values and practices for interventions to grow and stick.

A culture of experimentation



A Real Talk screening, with the 'party facilitator' prompting new kinds of dialogue.

Since humans are always in flux, we think the social services that support them must constantly change too. **We define 'experimentation' as a set of change behaviours.** These behaviours can be recognized and supported. They include:

- 1) asking hard, counter-factual questions
- 2) understanding gaps between outcomes and current practices
- 3) co-designing alternative practices
- 4) making and testing interactions
- 5) spreading stories of change

What does experimentation yield? New roles, new tools and new service models, all underpinned by novel theories of change.

- **New roles, like Real Talk:** videos & watching parties to spark frank & honest conversations about sex, love and relationships between people with developmental disabilities, their family and staff.
- **New tools, like Curious Conversations:** a deck of cards that prompt deeper conversations about change with people in homeless drop-in centres, where lots of staff time goes towards urgent practicalities like bed bugs and laundry.
- **New service models, like Kudoz:** a catalogue of learning experiences hosted by volunteers in the community -- rather than the current model of diversionary programs hosted by staff in buildings.

From experimenting to flourishing



GROUNDED SPACE ACTIVITIES

Open events
Access to learning & inspiration

CONDITIONS FOR EXPERIMENTATION

Motivation:
Build orientation towards novelty

Capability:
Increase discernment

Opportunity:

GROUNDED SPACE OUTCOMES:

Experimentation:

- Asking questions
- Understanding gaps
- Designing alternatives
- Making & testing
- Spreading learning

IMPACT

Flourishing individuals, groups & communities

Our assumption: how open events contribute to experimentation.

Grounded Space was designed as an ongoing journey for organizations, their staff, end users and communities. Often, innovation is treated as a fleeting phenomenon. People are invited to workshops with post-it notes and play-doh, without understanding what it takes to act on what emerges. From the work of Dr. Susan Mitchie on 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.³ To experiment, what's needed is:

- 1) Capability:** skills, practices and routines oriented towards critical thinking & creative making.
- 2) Opportunity:** external factors like having space, time, agency and power to try things counter to current dogma.

- 3) Motivation:** values and an identity oriented towards novelty, adventure, learning and humility.

We've tried to bring behaviour change theory into the design of Grounded Space. Take our open events:

- **Motivation:** We offer experiential learning sessions to expose people to new ideas, and through inspiration, build comfort for novelty. We see these short provocations as the start of people asking critical questions.
- **Capability:** Our learning events are also meant to introduce people with diverse skill sets -- such as designers, researchers, data specialists, developers and documentary filmmakers -- to organizations who typically lack this talent on staff.

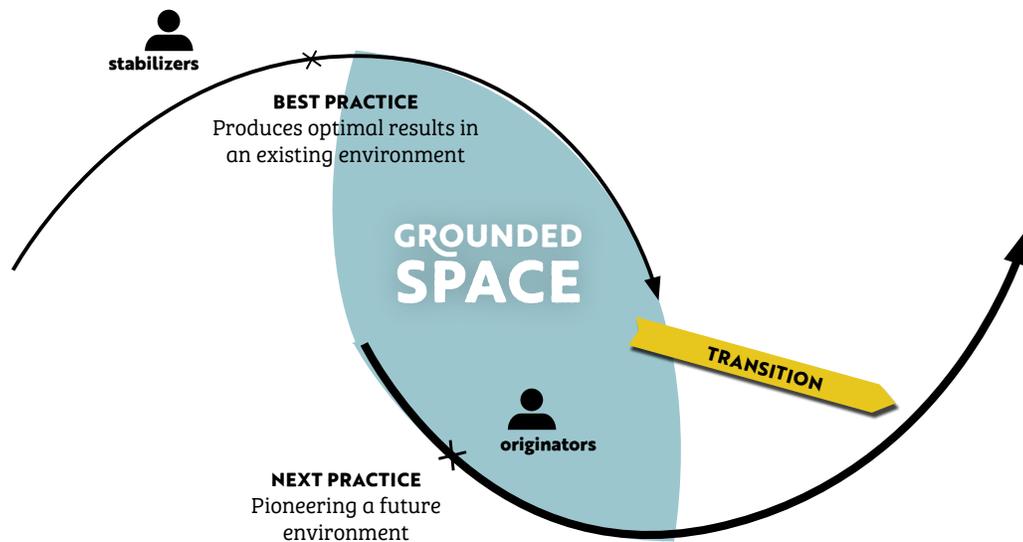
From 'best' to 'next' practice

What kind of practice makes up a trampoline rather than a safety net? **We've adopted the term 'next practice' to describe practice based on assumptions about the future, not the present.** This is opposed to 'best practice' which describes better or more optimal versions of what already exists.

We believe that next practice confronts the hidden assumptions and unspoken ideologies that keep the status quo intact. All best practice will eventually become obsolete

as the environment changes -- the question is when, and will there be anything ready to replace it? (Think: Video stores versus Netflix)

Indeed, next practices are always based on value sets and roles different from the dominant system, which makes them easy to reject. Grounded Space brings to life these alternatives, and supports the transition to new environments. Real Talk, Curious Conversations and Kudoz are examples of next practices.



We developed a set of **intervention principles** to recognize next practice:

1) Drawing on capabilities.

What we make draws on and develops people's capabilities to love, to think, to feel, to play, to work, to learn, to change.

2) Strengthening relationships.

What we make forges & strengthens the kinds of relationships that nurture and inspire people; that help them to feel honored and heard.

3) Growing rootedness.

What we make grows people's sense of rootedness and expands their sense of possibility.

4) Eliciting emotions.

What we make awakens a sense of joy, awe, curiosity, compassion and forgiveness - but also acknowledges that frustration, anxiety, fear and shame are part of the human experience.

5) Engendering purpose.

What we make re-engages people with purpose, embracing the notion that existential needs (having a reason for being) is as important as physiological needs (for food, shelter).

Principles for experimenting

Not all experimentation is equal. We think it matters how the work is done, what roles stakeholders play, and most of all, the value set from which we ask questions and imagine alternative realities.

The following principles underpin the research and development work done in

Grounded Space, including the design of Grounded Space itself.

We believe they make us different from the many organizations who have co-opted the language of innovation, without meaningfully revisiting the ethical basis for what they do and why.

Core to Grounded Space are ten **process principles**:

1) Starting with people.

We deeply engage people on the margins to amplify their motivations, capabilities and opportunities so they can flourish.

2) Going to.

We work in context to understand lived experiences. We see and hear first hand what's happening on-the-ground so that we can generate ideas that close the gap between 'what is' and 'what could be.'

3) Making real.

We move beyond meetings and talk to making our ideas tangible and testable. We mock-up concepts early and often, ask for feedback, and are open to getting things wrong before getting them closer to right.

4) Being vulnerable.

We foster the conditions for experimentation, seeing experimentation as a rhythm and routine that requires us to embrace curiosity over compliance and vulnerability over certainty. It's OK not to have the answers and not to jump to solutions.

5) Valuing beauty.

We bring beauty & delight into and out of the everyday, recognizing its power to transform human lives.

6) Finding exceptions.

We seek inspiration in 'exceptions' to the norm; that is, the people and practices within communities and organizations demonstrating their own clever workarounds to challenges.

7) Mobilizing resources.

We recognize and mobilize untapped intelligence and energy amongst individuals families, community members and staff. This compels us to think beyond delivering social services to building tools & platforms that can catalyze this collective talent.

8) Connecting dots.

We connect disciplines (design, social science, humanities, organizational change) and sectors to broaden our reference points and spark cross-pollination of ideas and methods.

9) Seek to understand.

We try to map the patterns and trends of the wider landscape, and model open inquiry and creativity in how we engage with others.

10) Holding space.

We expose organizations to all of the above, and help them to hold the inherent tensions between development & delivery; accountability & learning; emergence & structure.



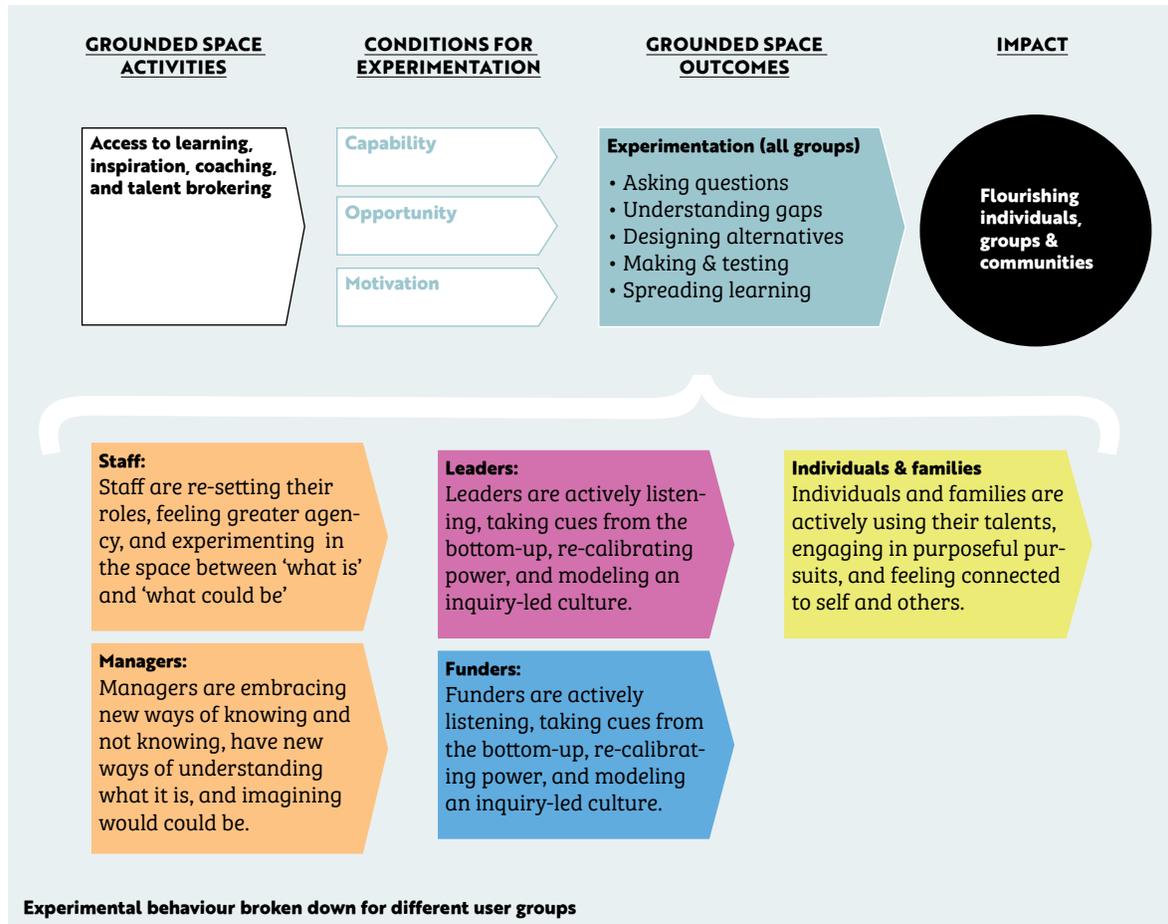
A working session with the member organizations in March 2017

Gayle walking through the first version of the Grounded Space journey in April 2017



The outcomes we're after

Grounded Space wants to bring about more experimental behaviour -- amongst individuals & families, staff, managers, leadership and funders. In the diagram below, we summarize what those behaviours mean for each group.



We've further detailed outcomes by each stage of Grounded Space. On the next spread, you'll see an overview of all outcomes, colour coded by group, and categorized in themes:

- **Team practice**, e.g. Staff and managers set a steady rhythm for experimental practice that embraces critical inquiry, internal reflection, and external inspiration.
- **Mindset**, e.g. Leadership signals openness and offers permission to surface bottom-up insights, whatever they reveal.
- **Eco-system**, e.g. Designers and social scientists recognize the opportunity to work alongside non-profits, and gain a language and proficiency to do so.
- **Organizational change**, e.g. Staff, individuals and families increasingly see their orga-

nizations as places where bottom-up insights drive new practices. They have opportunities to participate in research and design sprints, and feel more they have ownership.

- **Understanding humans**, e.g. Staff crews can describe some of the determinants of human behaviour, and can use social science theory in a creative way.
- **Design**, e.g. Crews visualize ideas to test. They see ideas as journeys with front-stage & back-stage components, and can make touchpoints. They involve other disciplines and external designers as needed.
- **Research**, e.g. Staff can come up with hard-hitting research questions and use a range of methods (ethnographic & projective) to surface the perspectives of multiple stakeholder groups.

1. Open Events

Eco-system: Grounded Space sources cross-sector organizations and people who are not satisfied with the status quo. We swap examples and inspiration of a new kind of social contract and welfare state.

1.1

Eco-system: Influencers are coming to the learning table and identify opportunities to experiment with their language & practice.

1.2

Eco-system: Designers, social scientists, etc. increasingly recognize the opportunity to work alongside non-profits, and gain a language and proficiency to do so.

1.3

Eco-system: Grounded Space is identifying new talent and finding ways to bring them into the fold.

1.4

Eco-system: Grounded Space is growing their collective reference points, examples theories, and concepts - and advancing the intellectual underpinnings of the change work.

1.5

2. Quick Dive

Eco-system: Funders agree to free up some resources to enable organizations to build design and research capacity.

2.1

Mindset: Leadership, Staff & Influencers see their context and users through new eyes. They are starting to see positive deviants and latent community resources.

2.2

Mindset: Leadership, Staff & Influencers gain new insights from thick data; they acknowledge other ways to look at challenges and are open to deeper knowledge bases.

2.3

Research: Leadership, Staff & Influencers are able to compare ethnographic ways of knowing with their typical ones. They see how these contribute to social problem-solving.

2.4

Understanding humans: Leadership, Staff & Influencers can see theory in a creative way, as a tool for coming up with ideas, not validating findings.

2.5

Understanding humans: Leadership, Staff & Influencers re-imagine boundaries between services, and look at human needs and aspirations differently.

2.6

Organizational change: Leadership is recognizing the power of visual & emotive storytelling to spark curiosity and energy.

2.7

3. Deep Dive Set-up

Mindset: Funders demonstrate flexibility and help organizations overcome their barriers to participation – or at least not standing in the way.

3.1

Mindset: Leadership is learning to articulate why they want to build deep experimentation capacity, and is signing-up aware of the commitments required and what they'll have to say no to.

3.2

Mindset: Leadership signals openness and offers permission to surface bottom-up insights, whatever they reveal.

3.3

Research: Staff crews & Leadership can name different ways of producing knowledge, and using ethnographic data. Research helps crews inform what to design.

3.4

Organizational change: Leadership sees the power of stories to link innovation to their origin story.

3.5

Organizational change: Leadership is finding and engaging usual and unusual suspects: Staff who are open, curious, and wanting to see something different.

3.6

Understanding humans: Staff crews can describe some of the determinants of human behaviour, and are gaining comfort working with theory in a creative way.

3.7

Understanding humans: Staff crews recognize their own biases and values and how that shapes what they see and ask.

3.8

Design: Staff crews can see services as series of interactions that can be designed for different outcomes. They try-out experience design and are able to work alongside trained designers.

3.9

Team practice: Staff crews are explaining what they do, and why. Culture Curators advance the narrative.

3.10

Team practice: Staff crews are setting-up a physical studio space to advance non-didactic ways of meeting; reinforce visualizing, making, and collaborating.

3.11

Outcomes for each stage of Grounded Space, colour coded by user group:

Staff & Managers Leadership Individuals & families Others

4. Deep Dive

Team practice: Staff, individuals and families feel listened to, validated, and heard. They slowly offer perspective, pain points and hopes. They release fear, instead of being defensive or saying what they 'should'.

4.1

Design: Staff crews make and prototype different kinds of research tools for multiple user groups. They surface and visualize patterns, segmentations and opportunity areas that emerge.

4.7

Organizational change: Leadership & Staff crew find ways to embrace vulnerability and are aware of how their limiting beliefs, fear, and cynicism gets in the way of interpreting & acting on data.

4.2

Design: Staff and managers are using the conditions framework not only analytically, but generatively to name opportunity areas.

4.8

Mindset: Leadership & Staff crews have opportunity to look at own work practices in fresh ways, ask critical questions, do research, and see opportunities.

4.3

Design: Staff crews can write, map, and draw their insights and learning. They can set-up environments for sharing back that invite staff & user curiosity.

4.9

Research: Staff crews can debate data ethics, and appreciate both the sensitivities and possibilities of data. Leadership distinguishes data for accountability and data for learning.

4.4

Team practice: Staff crews are seeing value in their role, and they are feeling increasingly confident to identify existing experimental practices and learn from them.

4.10

Research: Staff crews see a research question in terms of its multiple user groups, and can intentionally balance 'end' user needs from other user needs.

4.5

Team practice: Staff crews start to set a rhythm that's steady, builds momentum, and is demarcated by routines that enable critical inquiry, internal reflection, and external inspiration.

4.11

Understanding humans: Staff crews are gaining a language to talk about culture, values, and beliefs and to identify where the disruptive influences might be. They see gaps between values & practices as opportunities.

4.6

5. Make & Test

Mindset: Staff, individuals and families are bought into ideas and opportunity areas. They participate along the way, and they recognize that pain points are being addressed.

5.1

Understanding humans: Staff crews use mechanisms of change and behaviour change theory. They are moving from opportunity areas into ideas. They construct theories of change that can be tested.

5.7

Organizational change: Leadership is holding space for risk and failure: for things to not work, and to learning how to communicate the value of iterations.

5.2

Understanding humans: Staff crews spend time thinking about how to bring values and intentional cultures into being; they are able to draw on history and international examples.

5.8

Organizational change: Leadership is strategically bringing in stakeholders and key decision-makers into the prototype, to sensitize new ways of doing.

5.3

Research: Staff crews identify research questions, assumptions behind ideas, and develop tools to deepen their understanding. They Imagine possibilities and test with people impacted by change.

5.9

Organizational change: Leadership & Staff crew (Culture Curators) are holding off structuring or operationalizing ideas too early. They are creating space for exceptions.

5.4

Design: Staff crews visualize ideas to test. They see ideas as journeys with frontstage & backstage components, and create touchpoints. They involve other disciplines and external designers if needed.

5.10

Mindset: Leadership & Staff crews are OK not knowing what solutions will look like, not having a definitive plan, and allowing for emergence. They have examples of alternative ways to project manage.

5.5

Team practice: Staff crews are documenting what they've tried and learned and are developing a new narrative around the solutions. Leadership is reinforcing this narrative.

5.11

Eco-system: Staff crews are creatively leveraging informal and formal resources, community members, experts, designers, coders, whoever they need to make their prototypes reality.

5.6

6. Grounding

Organizational change: Staff, individuals and families increasingly see their organizations as places where bottom-up insights drive new practices. They have opportunities to participate in research and design sprints and feel ownership and responsibility.

6.1

Understanding humans: Staff crews are aware of different measurement traditions, and try out metrics aligning with their values and philosophy. They use multiple modalities. They set-up feedback loops.

6.7

Organizational change: Funders are shifting their usual practices to accommodate – or at least not shut down – fledgling models.

6.2

Design: Staff crews have frameworks to think about fidelity and adaptation – and how to codify designed interactions with identity.

6.8

Organizational change: Leadership is cordonning off ongoing resources to support the work and/or doggedly pursuing other resource bases. They are making the case.

6.3

Design: Staff crews know how to make system-facing touchpoints as needed. They see implementation as a part of a research & design process, and continue to take a prototyping approach.

6.9

Organizational change: Leadership & Staff crew (Culture Curators) identify barriers to implementation, and develop workarounds. They are building research and design sprints into their yearly cycles.

6.4

Team practice: Staff crews learn how to capture the intentionality behind their designs. Leadership is weaving the new solutions into their broader narrative, and reinforcing / incentivizing more of this.

6.10

Organizational change: Staff crews are able to make a business case for the new interventions, and can identify the right model of spread for their interventions.

6.5

Organizational change: Staff crews (Culture Curators) steward fledgling inventions and they are encouraging co-creation with staff/users.

6.11

Research: Staff crews have scope to test implementation factors like staff roles, protocols, systems, and processes.

6.6

The origin story

Grounded Space emerged from two meaty questions: What kind of solutions move us from safety nets to trampolines? And, how do we create the conditions for solutions to stick?

2014: A small team creating solutions

We came to these questions after 10+ years of trial, error, small wins, and big frustrations. For all of the promise of social innovation, design thinking, hubs and labs, we had few examples in our portfolio of changing mainstream thinking and doing.

A window of opportunity opened in 2014, when we were invited to Canada by three social service providers -- Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, posAbilities, and Kinsight -- who, like us, were troubled by the gap between the rhetoric of innovation and the realities of its practice.

That's how we found ourselves boarding a plane from Amsterdam to Vancouver, and moving into a social housing complex in Burnaby, B.C. In those early days, 'we' meant a team of six people.

Three of us were designers; one was a social scientist; and the other two worked on the frontlines of disability services. We spent our time collecting stories, listening to

the experiences of our neighbours, some of whom used services, and many of whom did not. And while we shadowed frontline workers, our goal was simply to observe, not to sign them up to a change process or build their capacity for different practice. We didn't fully understand their organizational context, or some of the larger forces shaping their behaviours.

Compartmentalization meant we were able

to move fast. In two months, we went from deep research to ten visualized ideas -- some big, some small, some disruptive, some incremental. But, what we gained in early speed, we perhaps lost in deep support. It's taken us three years to move one of those big ideas, Kudoz, into implementation and scale.

We always knew one new solution would not be enough. One solution wasn't going to turn around lonely lives. One solution wasn't going to raise staid expectations or shift relationships. Plus, new always wears off. Without ongoing capacity to iterate, all new solutions will stagnate, resigned to the same fate as the current service system.

2015 : Dedicated development time for cross-agency teams

That's how we found ourselves in 2015 inside of existing services, with 30 staff, building cross-agency teams. Inspired by Google and other tech giants, we instituted 20 percent time. Teams of staff had one-day a week for six months to step outside their every day jobs, ask questions, generate ideas, and test new solutions. We called this HR experiment, Fifth Space.

Again, we moved fast. Over six months, we transitioned from problem statements (e.g. too many adults with developmental disabilities lack sexual health resources) to ethnographic research to six tested ideas. But allocating only one-fifth of the week to new solutions proved taxing. Participants found the pacing hard. They were burning out, try-



ing to keep up with their day jobs and come up with solutions that might fundamentally change their day jobs. Just like before, only one of the six solutions progressed from ideation into implementation. Most of the 30 staff returned to their delivery contexts; less than a 1/3 of them incorporated the thinking and the methods into their daily practices.

2016: Zooming into smaller practices

In 2016, we worked with another 35 staff, across the social and public sectors. Rather than emphasize new solutions, we zoomed into smaller practices - for example, how services do intake, or onboard staff, or solicit feedback from users. We wondered if making ideas less big and less provocative would increase their likelihood of implementation.

No, was mostly the answer.

The dominant culture of the social service system was eating both whole solutions and small changes in practice for breakfast. This was largely a culture of risk aversion – not risk taking. This was largely a culture of careful planning – not quick prototyping. This was largely a culture of resource scarcity – not resource generation.



2017: Grounded Space, an ongoing process to build culture and capabilities

Out of this history grew Grounded Space. The big idea was that Grounded Space would be less about coming up with solutions to problems, and more about understanding the culture & capabilities that support new solutions to emerge and evolve. Rather than a time-limited team and short-term process, we intentionally talked about a permanent team and an ongoing process. We wouldn't try to squish everything into a discrete six month period. Instead, we sought to build

what we called infrastructure for research & development. By that, we meant the roles, the routines and the work processes required for repeated loops of inquiry, idea generation, prototyping and implementation.

Again, we looked to the private sector for reference points. Bell Labs was one of the most prolific progenitors of new ideas in the 20th century. The fact we now have cell



phones and computers has much to do with their foresight. They invested in early stage research. They turned much of that research into inventions. And they brought to life the most promising inventions, selling and scaling the profitable ones. They had dedicated teams for research, invention and implementation, recognizing that the people good at early stage inquiry were not the same people good at translating new ideas to the marketplace. They used bespoke methods, bringing together design and engineering. And they set-up distinct work flows and systems to keep track of their insights and results.

All of this unfolded in a culture oriented towards creating a future that didn't yet exist - rather than managing the realities of the current day. And while the Bell Labs R&D model - which was organizationally focused and resource intensive - has given way to a more networked R&D model, the notion that you need distinct roles and ways of working in order to re-invent tomorrow still remains true.

As we constructed Grounded Space, we wondered what a more networked version of Bell Labs could like for the social sector. That's how we came to building R&D teams inside of social organizations, with a network between social organizations for learning and for sharing.

Who is in Grounded Space?

Meet the crews from the four organizations who moved through the Grounded Space 1.0 journey, as well as the InWithForward team coaching and building Grounded Space.

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Jessika Thickson
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Gord Tulloch
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Embedded Researcher



Asia Hollingsworth
Embedded Researcher



Gina Rowan
Culture Curator



Gerry Fremming
Culture Curator

Kinsight crew



Michelle Mastrandrea
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Krista McGrath
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Julian Avelino
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Angela Kim
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Gareth Williams
Culture Curator

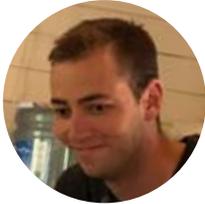


Ashlee Daidone
Embedded Researcher

Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) crew



Lisa Thomson
Culture Curator



Matthew Theoret
Embedded Researcher



Dean Renning
Embedded Researcher



Heather Johnstone
Culture Curator



Charlotte Secheresse
Embedded Researcher



Shanna Kennedy
Embedded Researcher



Lisa-Joy Trick
Embedded Researcher



Micha Price
Embedded Researcher



Karey Degenova
Culture Curator



Kama Guezalova
Embedded Researcher



Breanne McDaniel
Embedded Researcher

West Neighbourhood House crew



Diana De la Cruz
Embedded Researcher



Ildiko Franyo
Embedded Researcher



Monica Nogueira
Embedded Researcher



Sabrina Santos
Embedded Researcher



Shamair Garib
Embedded Researcher

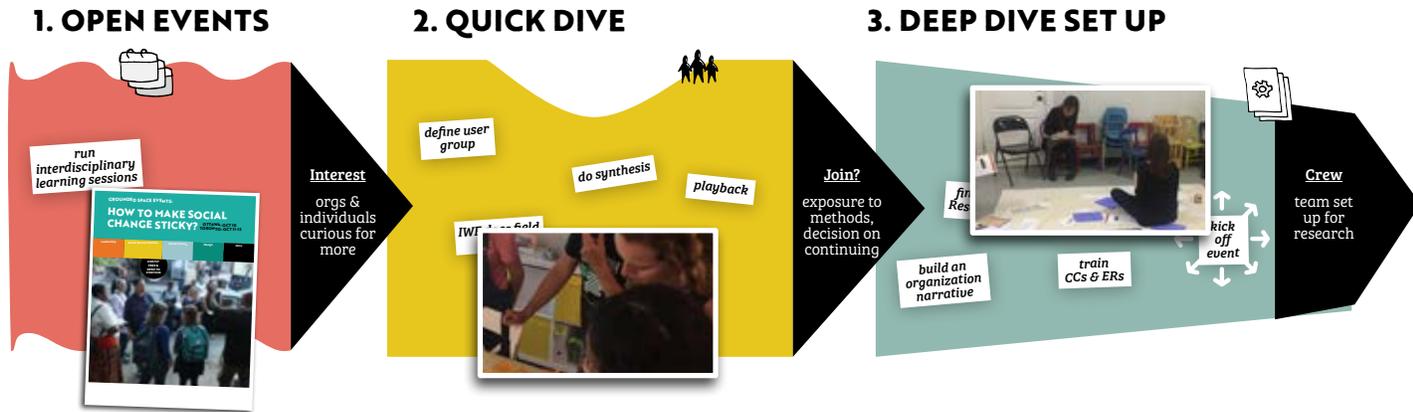


Lynne Woolcott
Culture Curator



Isabel Palmar
Culture Curator

We tested six stages



1. Open Events

Open learning events are designed to amplify staff curiosity and exposure to new ideas. They are also a forum for connecting with likeminded professionals and organizations serious about change. We tested the Open Events in Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa.

2. Quick Dive

A 3-week introduction to user-led research & design. Grounded Space’s team models data collection from the ground-up, alongside the organization’s staff team. Products include original data, reframed problem and opportunity areas, and hopefully momentum to move forward. We tested this with Options Community Services and Massey Theatre.

3. Deep Dive Setup

Over a 3-month period, an embedded research & design team is set up within a member organization. Teams consist of 3-10 staff with dedicated time for research and co-design. We tested this stage, and the three following stages, with 4 organizations: BACI, posAbilities, Kinsight and West Neighbourhood House.



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.

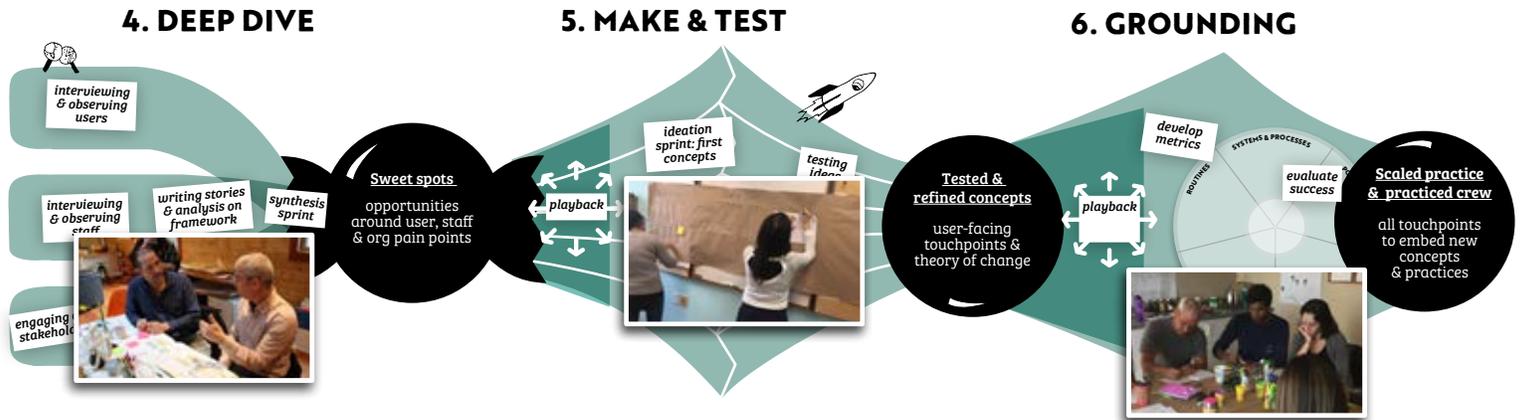
We need not only a new space that allows for experimentation - but also a way to shuttle back and forth between ‘what is’ and ‘would could be.’ Grounded Space enables organizations to build the foundation required for developing alternative practices, services, and systems. At the same time, we help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

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. Member organizations created two new roles:

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

Embedded Researchers are staff of member organizations trained to ask questions, observe practice, identify opportunities, and

of a two-year journey



4. Deep Dive

Embedded research teams are trained to conduct bottom-up research in their organizations and identify starting points for change. Research results in sweet spots: pain points shared by end users, staff and managers. Sweet spots are played back to the organization to secure a mandate for change. Teams generate big and small ideas to address shared pain points.

5. Make & Test

Promising ideas are taken forward as prototypes. Embedded research teams are coached to rapidly build out concepts, practices and models, learning how to test their desirability, feasibility and impact. Four concepts emerged: Meraki, KEA, New Bee and Your Blueprint. Teams tap into the Grounded Space network of designers; evaluators; and social scientists.

6. Grounding

This is an ongoing process to embed new inventions within organizations, and create fit-for-purpose structures and policies to support iteration. Embedded research teams are supported to continue using their skills and are encouraged to tell the story of the lessons gleaned along the way.

pos)Abilities



Kinsight)

further the conditions for R&D.

Community organizations and social services join a cohort of other members engaged in mutual learning and practice sharing. As members of Grounded Space, they are supported to build embedded teams who can do user-led research, generate ideas, rigorously test and scale ideas.

With their membership fee, each organization receives 1:1 coaching, access to learning modules & field trips, and engages with our network of designers, social scientists, and organizational change experts.

We were designing the process as we went along, prototyping elements in real time. We didn't know how long it would take crews to find meaningful insights, or to share back results with their organizations.

That meant that while the Grounded Space journey was designed at a high level in the spring of 2017, actual activities and sprints were detailed only weeks before they happened. On the plus side, this allowed us to be responsive. But, for some crews, the ambiguity was a challenge. Staff in structured roles found the transition to such fluidity difficult. Scheduling became a barrier to consistent engagement.

26
open events

344
people engaged

6
Quick
Dives

130+
ethnographies

100+
stakeholders engaged

4
Crews
set-up

12
culture
curators

24
embedded
researchers

4
Deep
Dives

85+
ethnographies

400+
hrs of observation

40+
pain points surfaced

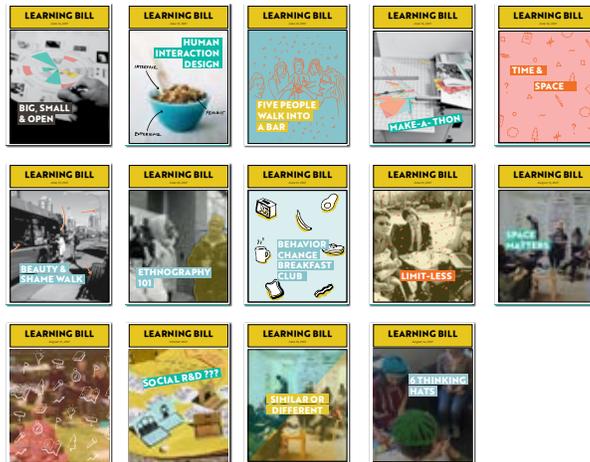
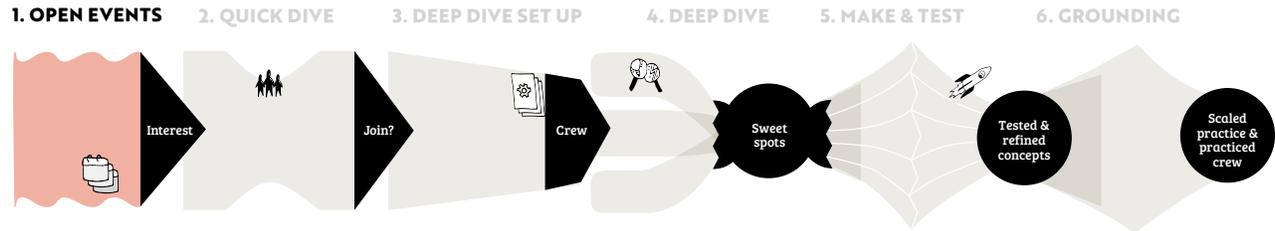
150+
ideas generated

2) Process: What did we do?

Written by InWithForward

1. Open Events

Open learning events offer bite-sized introductions to the mindsets and methods behind Social R&D. They are meant to attract curious individuals and intrigued organizations -- all with the intent of curating a community of practice, and enabling social organizations to contemplate joining the collective.



What is this?

We aim to inspire front-line staff, managers, policymakers, designers, researchers and anyone serious about social change. Our goals? To find new member organizations and grow a diverse network. We recognize that we need all hands on deck to make change happen. We ran event series in Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa around 5 themes: Leadership, Social service practice, Social science, Design and Data. All open events are held in-person. Most are free, some ask for a contribution.

Not another workshop

We are not a fan of workshops held out of context, talking about concepts in the abstract, rather than getting out and experiencing

them. Our core principles include: 'Starting with people' and 'Going out.' Rather than just bring lived experience into the room, as tokens, we send people out of the room and out of their comfort zones. The challenge is: how to do that in the time frame of a few hours?

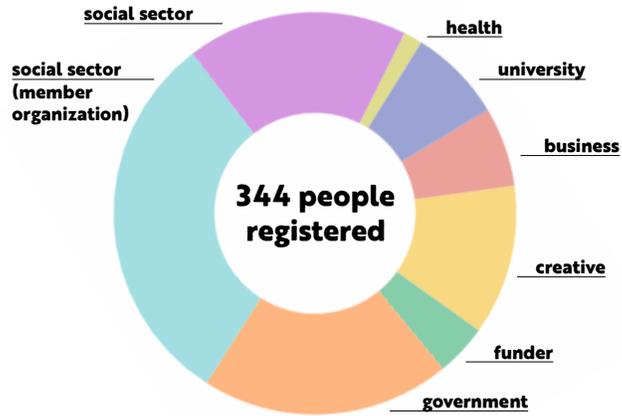
We teach all concepts using a blend of empirical literature, firsthand experience, and participant's know-how. Without grounding new ideas in daily practice, it is really hard to own them. For design sessions, we asked people to be an end user themselves, before zooming into an interaction they had experienced. For social science events, we used ethnographic stories and short observational exercises drawn from our body of work.

Curious? Check out [the learning bills](#).

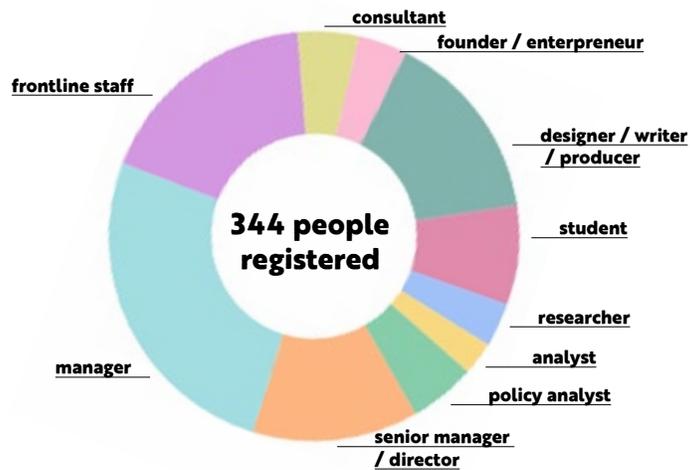
Some reactions on social media:



Which sectors do people come from?



Which professional roles do people have?



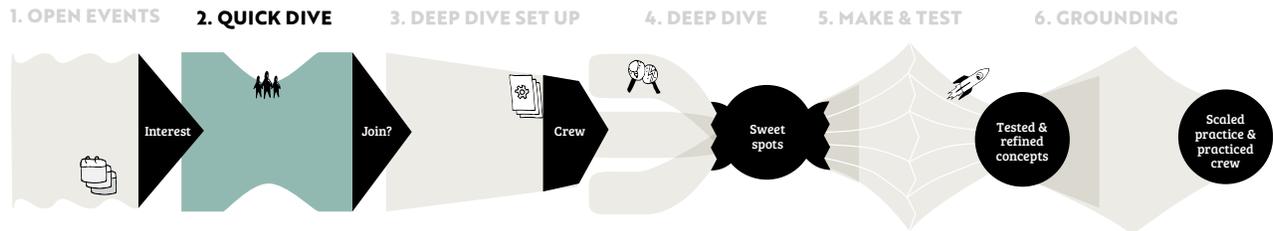
From June to November 2017, we ran a total of 28 learning events between Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa. Online, 344 people registered, that’s an average of 13 people per event. Most popular were *Five people walk into a bar* (25 and 26 registrations), and *Human interaction design* (25 registrations). The least popular was *Put your thinking caps on* (4 registrations). Nearly, half of the registrations were from social sector participants, about 50% of whom were from organizations already in Grounded Space. A handful of leaders from other social sector organizations signed-up. In Ottawa, there was appetite from senior civil servants from IRCC, ESDC, Privy Council, as well as

from the Canadian School of Public Service. The most well attended event was ‘Research & Development: What do we mean?’

These events did expand our network. We met a designer and an evaluator who later joined our team. We also met two organizations who have partnered with us to do Quick Dives -- but who have been unable to pull together resources to join Grounded Space. While Open Events did not serve as recruitment for Grounded Space, then, they did help us hone our messages and shape some of the broader discourse around experimentation.

2. Quick Dive

Quick Dives are immersive orientations to social R&D. Over a two to three week period, we do original research: modeling new ways of collecting data, using theory to analyze insights, and generating opportunities. The intent is to test the appetite for longer-term change and build momentum for further inquiry and exploration.



What is a Quick Dive for?

Quick Dives offer a hands-on demonstration of social R&D values and methods. The goal is to:

- 1) Give organizational leaders, staff, and stakeholders a taste of thick data and human-centered design.
- 2) Surface useful insights about people to re-frame problems.
- 3) Generate data to make the case for co-designing new practices and interventions.
- 4) Inform decisions on joining Grounded Space.

Our team (made up of a designer, anthropologist, and community mobilizer) spends 10 days on-the-ground collecting ethnographic stories in communities. The potential mem-

ber organization chooses the population group and neighbourhood to start with, and frees up staff to bear witness to the process.

This data helps elucidate the gap between flourishing outcomes and every day realities. It is collected in the contexts in which people live and work. Such data comes in story form, and is visualized to unearth trends and patterns. It's different to service usage, financial, or performance data. It's data that can help us hone in on what questions to ask, and the opportunities for action. We have found that the way organizations respond to this kind of data reflects their desire and readiness for change. Do people shut down results that do not feel true to them? Or are they cautiously curious, and willing to entertain multiple perspectives?

| Structure: | Key activities | Frameworks & tools | Product |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Sprint #1: Planning & Kick-off (2 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • event organizing • explaining ethnography • literature search for constructs | | |
| Fieldwork (10 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community mobilization • design research tools • ethnographic research | Look, Listen, Engage* Prompt cards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual research update • 15-20 profiles of people |
| Sprint #2: Synthesis and Playback (4 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synthesis • story return • idea generation | Segmentation Stages of Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segments, pain points, themes, opportunity areas • International examples • 2-page summary |



Kick-off event to start research on long-term unemployment

An excerpt of a profile (people are anonymized)

Meet Fern & Robbie



Fern frequently feels alone, and lonely. She calls us twice a day to take Robbie for a walk (even though Robbie has already been walked) and has requested ice-cream for a bad day. "It feels sad to be alone," she says. Fern is lonely despite (or because of?) the constant stream of people coming and going from her apartment.

It's not just her life-skills worker and support worker. She has additional home health help right now, since she got of the hospital. Twice a day a home health aide from St. Elizabeth comes by to get her up from bed, heat-up her food, and put her to bed. It's generally a different person each time. Tonight, Salima has the evening shift. She knocks on the door at 5pm. And does not introduce herself. Fern has clearly been in this type of interaction, many many times before. She immediately instructs Salima to take the frozen chicken dinner out of the fridge and put in the microwave. Salima has been a home health aide for 10 years, she sees 8 to 9 people in a day, in 45 minute increments. Food is for survival. Not pleasure, or connectedness.

"It feels sad to be alone,"

Quick Dive structure

Sprint #1: Planning & Kick-off

Quick Dives start with the organization setting a research question about how a population group in a particular community is faring: Who is doing well? Who isn't? Where are the emergent & unknown needs? Because Grounded Space is about better lives, not just better services, we try to capture the every day experiences of people and frame things from their perspective.

We gather stakeholders from the organization to tap into their expertise: what do they already know about the people who access their supports, and those who do not? Where are their curiosities? Where might we go to meet people on their terms?

At the same time, we do a literature search to unearth concepts to explore with people. These might be concepts like emotional loneliness and gerotranscendence.

Fieldwork

We recruit people at grocery stores, bingo halls and malls -- anywhere people go. Then, we follow-up to collect people's stories, extract themes, and generate ideas. Our goal is to find the unusual suspects. That is, people on the extremes of the spectrum: those with poor outcomes, or those doing surprisingly well despite similar challenges.

We want to learn what shapes outcomes.

We dive deeper with about 10 people, literally 'hanging out' with them, and where possible, shadowing them for a day. Along the way, we combine different research methods from our **Look, Listen, Engage framework**. We'll accompany people to a service or sit on the couch watching TV. We'll have a conversation about their perceptions of what helps or hinders change. And we might bring in a card set with prompts to gauge their reactions to future ideas. All along the way, we offer professional development opportunities for staff of the organization to sample the methodology.

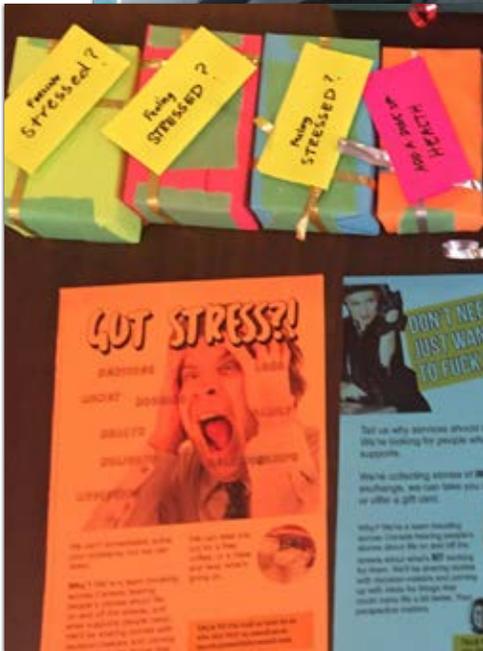
Sprint #2: Synthesis and Playback

From our field work, we write up profiles of everyone we've met. Using **segmentation**, we try grouping people in many different ways, based on demographics (e.g. age, gender), behaviours (e.g. early riser, late riser) and psycho-social characteristics (e.g. motivations, needs). Doing this, we'll find clusters of people with similar characteristics, for whom we can brainstorm a distinct opportunity space.

The Quick Dive ends with a multi-stakeholder event in which we share back stories and reflect on our mutual learning. Inviting staff and partners to this playback event can help build momentum for a Grounded Space journey.

Quick Dive activities

Kick-off session with staff to figure out what we already know about the population



Using different ways to open up conversations and recruit unusual suspects as participants

Using prompt cards to talk about life patterns over a coffee in a mall

We tried the Quick Dive with two organizations: Options Community Services and Massey Theatre. We engaged more than 200 staff and end users, spent over 300 hours doing fieldwork, and created 50 profiles of people and places, but this wasn't new to our team. What was new was using the research as a taster for the deeper Grounded Space journey.

Options focused on the daily experiences of people living in and around a social housing complex. With Massey Theatre, we focused on the relationship between the arts and mental health for young people and families. With Options we were able to demonstrate our methods, but the resource scarce context didn't allow for continuing the Grounded

Segmenting people we met in the research: each sticker represents a person



Posters used at the playback event, showing segmentations of service users and staff, top themes, and opportunities



Staff looking at the posters with opportunity areas during the playback session



Returning people's profiles creates a moment for reflection, and a possibility to test if early ideas resonate

Space journey. After a year of continued conversations, we found a way forward with another part of their organization. In September 2018, Options joined Grounded Space, zooming into a different population – older newcomers – as part of a two year project funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. We'll do a new Quick Dive.

With Massey Theatre, we've come up with

8 opportunity areas that were presented to their board and to the city. Massey Theatre is seeking funding to take two of the opportunity areas to the Make & Test stage.

Neither organization paid for the Quick Dive – but moving forward, both organizations are leading the fundraising efforts to join Grounded Space.

Quick Dive frameworks & tools

Listen, Look and Engage

We collect data in three ways: by listening, looking and engaging. Listening includes interviews and conversations to hear what people say, and what's left unspoken. Looking

is about what people do: how they use a space, how they organize their time, the people they interact with, etc. Engaging is probing deeper into people's hopes, fears and dreams. We get the best results when we combine all three research methods.



e.g. shadowing a service user and their staff



e.g. an interview at Tim Horton's

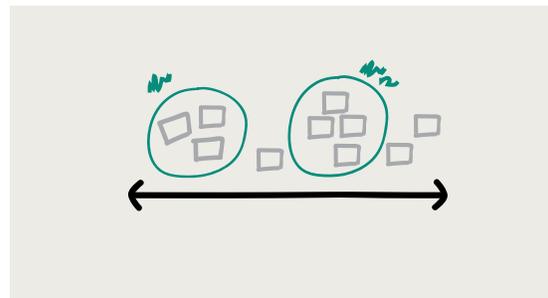


e.g. choosing cards with words describing how you see yourself now and in future



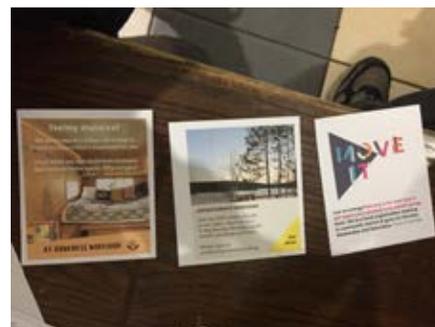
Segmentation

Segmentation is the process of re-organizing a population into clusters with similar needs, wants, and motivations. By segmenting, we can identify subgroups that reveal something about how to attract and engage people within that grouping.



Projective prompts

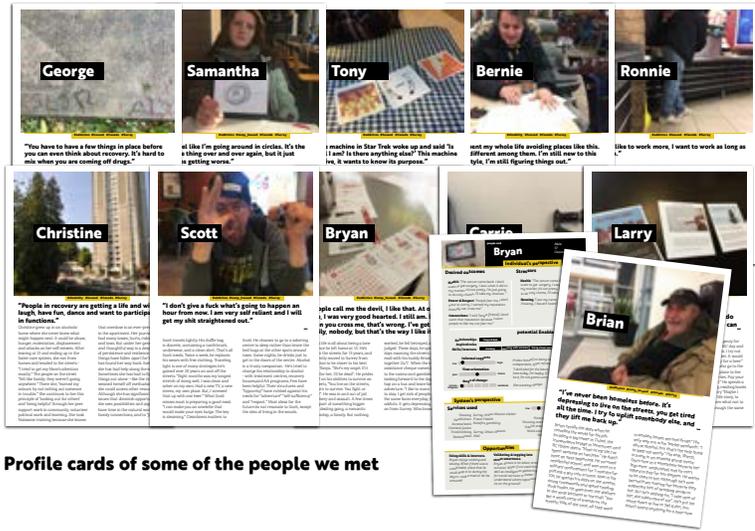
One of our favorite engage tools are cards with various unusual services offers, including reflection trips, home decoration, and pet therapy. Some of the services exist; others do not. We ask participants to choose which ones appeal to them. The reasons why they choose certain cards over others can open up new parts of the conversation. Many people find it hard to articulate latent needs, so a deck of cards can help to surface them.



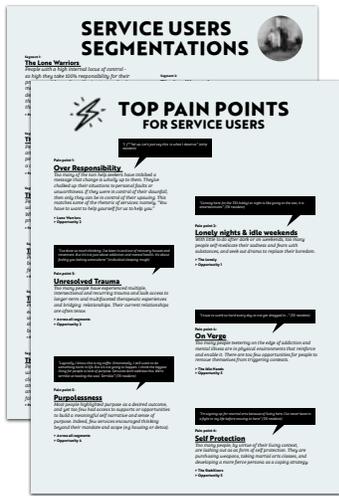
Quick Dive products



Visual update of the research



Profile cards of some of the people we met

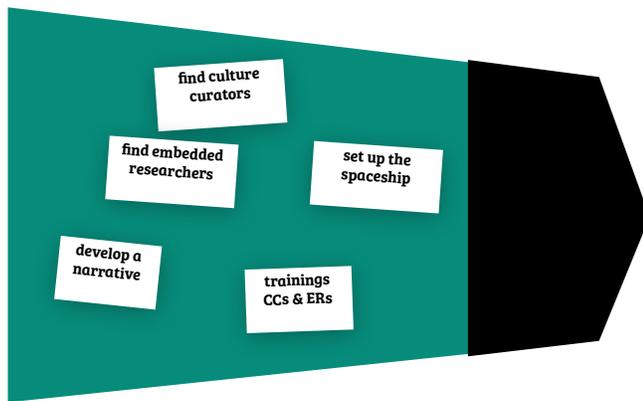
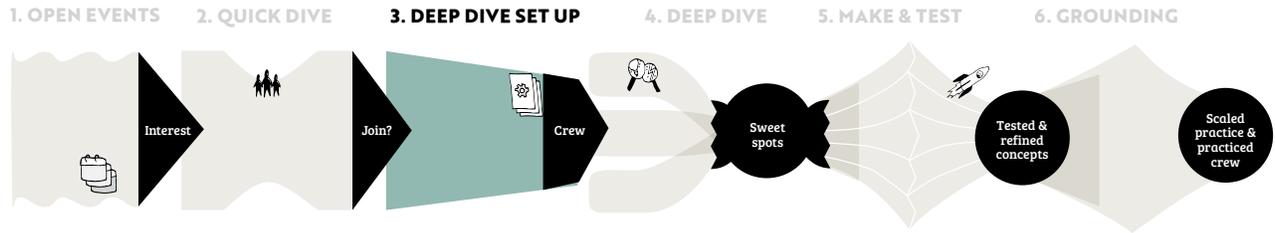


2 page summary of the research, including methods, segments and opportunity areas



3. Deep Dive Setup

With organizations ready to become a member of Grounded Space, we start building their R&D infrastructure. We help the organization set-up a team with new roles and routines, rallying leadership at all levels of the organization, and spreading a narrative for change. Why Grounded Space? Why now?



What's the Deep Dive Setup for?

In this stage, we are working with member organizations to form an embedded research & design team. The role of InWithForward changes from doers to coaches. A Memorandum of Understanding is signed to outline the relationship of the new member to the collective. This is also the point where an organization starts paying, or sources funding to cover the costs of their Grounded Space

membership. This stage has five big parts:

Commitment ceremony

The commitment ceremony is where we introduce Grounded Space to the leadership of an organization, and see who in the organization wants to take part. We work with organizations to create a timeline that connects Grounded Space to their history and frames experimentation over time.

| Structure: | Key activities | Frameworks & tools | Product |
|--|--|--|--|
| Commitment ceremony | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> timelines & narrative building | | Memorandum of understanding |
| Narrative building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coaching leaders to produce a narrative | | Video prompt cards, dice, etc. |
| Inviting & training Culture Curators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> internal recruitment training and onboarding choose research modules | Three voices framework Behaviour change wheel | Tools for each module |
| Inviting & training Embedded Researchers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> internal recruitment training and onboarding space set-up | Double diamond | Fit-for-purpose space Team routines & slack channel |

Narrative building

At the same time, we work with the leadership to craft a narrative for change, and articulate how Grounded Space links to the mission and history of the organization. The literature (and our experience) tells us that spreading a compelling rationale for experimentation is critical to reduce skepticism and increase buy-in. Our intention was to support leaders to create a video to share with staff. Most chief executives disliked video as the medium for their narrative.

Inviting & training Culture Curators

Culture Curators were chosen by the leadership team. Their role was to hold the space in their organization for people to experiment and learn by doing. Over 3 days, we offered training in choreographing creativity, conflict resolution, and communication. We introduced the **Three voices framework** from Otto Scharmer. At the end of the training, Culture

Curators came together to select a focus for the Deep Dive: two research modules and a user group within the organization.

Inviting & training Embedded Researchers

Frontline staff and managers within each organization applied to be Embedded researchers. Embedded researchers received training in observation, interviewing and generative research. Over the course of a week, they did research, analyzed results, and received feedback, using the **Behaviour change framework**. To learn the framework we put it on a big carpet, mapping the factors that enable or prevent experimentation. We introduced the **Double Diamond** framework to explain a design processes, and used it to shape the sprint itself. By the end of the week, emerging findings had been visualized in a dashboard and used to reframe questions going forward.

Research modules

To help focus the research in the Deep Dive with an inexperienced team, and to be able to compare research findings across organizations, we created highly structured modules with templated research tools. In this stage, we asked organizations to choose two modules. We later replaced the six modules with three lenses and self-made tools.

Partnerships

Better understand relationships and the formal & informal resources to leverage for bigger change. This includes stakeholder interviews and eco-systems mapping.

Users

Make visible the daily experiences of an end user group to understand motivations and appetite for change. Research tools combine look, listen and engage tools.

Data

Find out what data is available, what it says, and what it could look like to measure what matters to end users. Research includes mapping data flows and case notes.

Human Resources

Get to know staff's journeys, and identify where there is space for unleashing team motivations and passions. Tools include practice interviews and journey mapping.

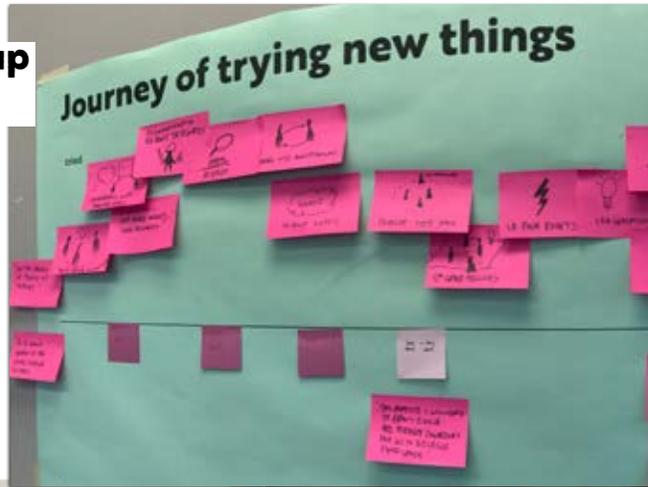
Leadership

How does leadership show up in the organization, and help or hinder experimentation? This module takes a closer look at interactions between leaders, managers and staff.

Team Practices

Get a feel for different team cultures that make up the organization, and document the helpful/unhelpful routines for creativity, curiosity, and bottom-up change.

Deep Dive Setup activities



Recording a video narrative with leaders, linking experimentation to their agency's mission



Embedded researchers setting up their 'Spaceship', their new work space in their agency

What happened?

This stage, as its name suggests, sets the stage for deeper research and co-design, giving us clues about the organization's readiness for experimentation and disruption. Where are the most promising places to start experimenting?

Although each organization chose two modules and a population group to start with, choices felt arbitrary. The process became overly structured and technocratic, losing some of the opportunism that characterizes this work. We took an overly analytic lens, separating research training from design too much, and losing some of the value of a



Planning and choosing research modules for the Deep Dive



Researcher training: using a carpet with a person in the middle to explain the behaviour change framework

blended and interdisciplinary approach.

Modules were interlinked, and so we created some false boundaries through the selection process. As much as we wanted to use the deep dive set-up to gauge organizational readiness, what became clear is no organization was ready, and yet, leadership still wanted to act.

Despite that commitment from leadership, few leaders wanted to front a narrative

video. Using a deck of question cards and a dice, we worked with leaders to develop a storyline to explain their engagement. We recorded and transcribed our conversations, before returning with a film crew. But, leaders were skeptical about the story being told from their perspective. While they wanted more voices in their narrative, staff and stakeholders wanted more clarity from the top about why their organization was engaging in Grounded Space.

Deep Dive Setup frameworks & tools

Behaviour Change framework

(after Dr. Susan Michie)

The Behaviour Change Wheel is a practical framework for designing and evaluating behaviour change interventions and policies, developed by Dr. Susan Michie. It describes the three sources needed for any behaviour change: capability, opportunity and motivation. We placed 'experimental behaviour' in the centre, which is the behaviour shift we want to see in Grounded Space. Based on a literature search, we added a ring with 'organizational conditions' for experimental behaviour: Power, Systems & processes, Routines, Values & beliefs and Roles & identity. We used this framework as we collect data, to help us explore where the conditions are ripe for developing alternatives to the status quo.



Three Voices framework

(Dr. Otto Scharmer)

Based on 20 years of research, Otto Scharmer developed a model to understand why many of our attempts to address the challenges of our time fail - and what we could do differently. Within his model, Theory U, he described three voices: the Voice of Judgment, the Voice of Cynicism, and the Voice of Fear. Each of these are responses that may give the impression of being 'reasonable' and 'pragmatic' but in practice will act to shut down our minds, hearts and capacity to act. They help to sustain the status quo (the familiar being better than the unfamiliar) and ensure that the responsibility for change is shifted away from self to others. We have further developed the concept of the three voices to better understand communication dynamics and options.

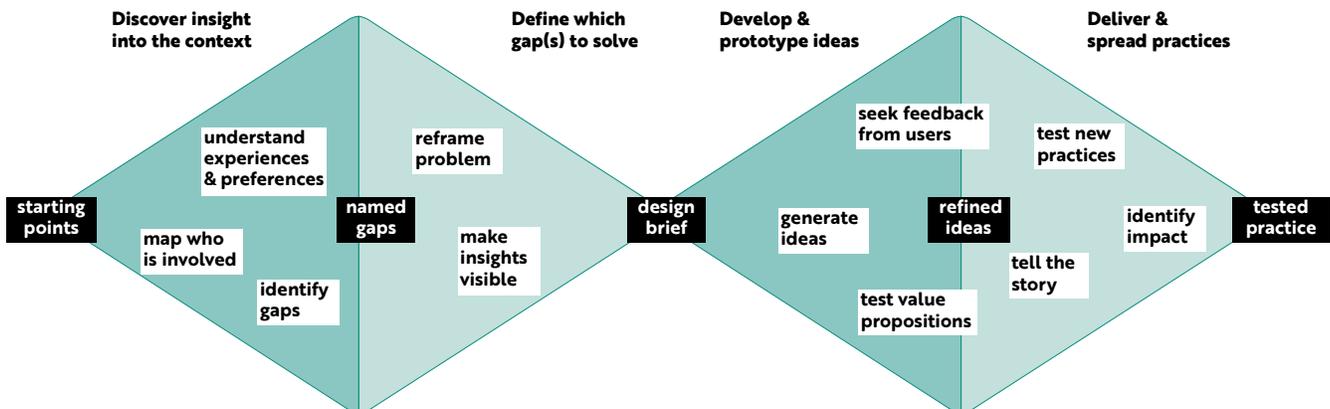


Double Diamond framework

(after the British Design Council)

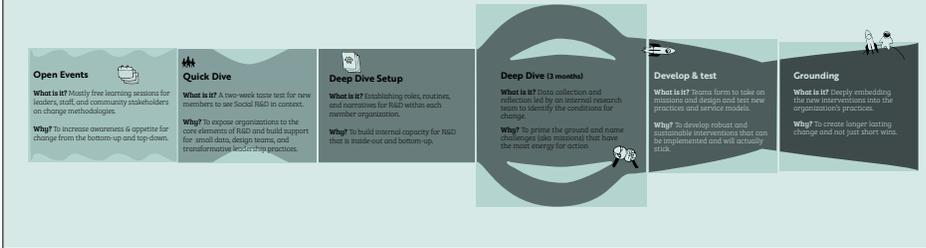
The Double Diamond describes the design process as a series of stages of divergence and convergence. Divergence is where lots of different insights and ideas are thrown up, before refining and narrowing down (converging).

When going from a problem to a solution, this cycle of divergence and convergence happens at least twice - once to better define the problem and the other to generate the solution. Realistically, you'll likely go through cycles within each research or design activity. We changed the language to reflect that we develop practices rather than (stand alone) products, and to include social impact.



Deep Dive Setup products

The Grounded Space journey



Overview of the activities and deliverables of the Grounded Space journey



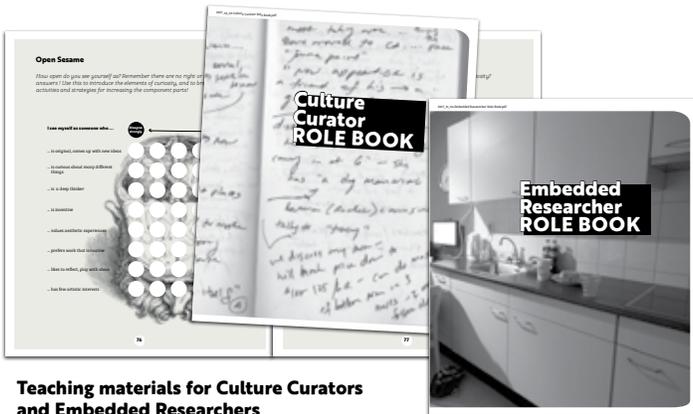
posAbilities' change narrative:
<https://youtu.be/RiTJnOVKpC4>



Change narrative of Kinsight:
<https://youtu.be/POeWR5UC504>

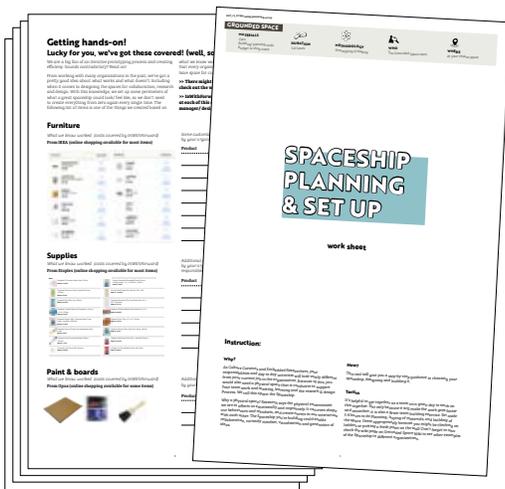
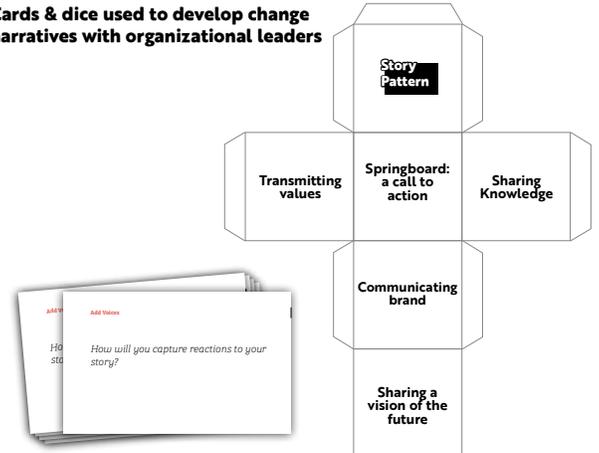


West Neighbourhood House's change narrative:
<https://youtu.be/j9XxVjR2so>



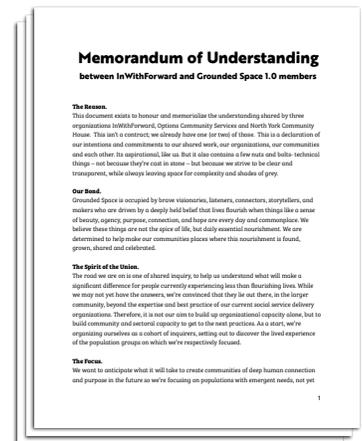
Teaching materials for Culture Curators and Embedded Researchers

Cards & dice used to develop change narratives with organizational leaders



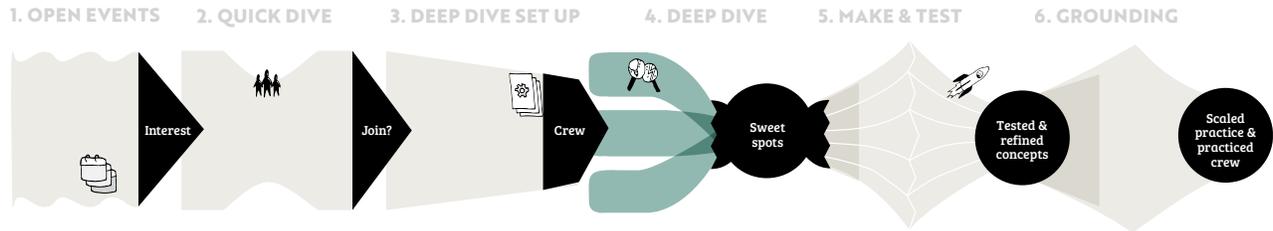
A version of the Memorandum of Understanding with organizations

Guide for creating a fit-for-purpose team space under \$500 with materials sourced at common stores across Canada



4. Deep Dive

Over a four to six month period, Embedded Researchers spend time in the field, using ethnographic research methods, to find starting points for change. This results in sweet spots: opportunities that addressed needs of three concurrent user groups: end users, staff and managers. Research findings and sweet spots are shared back to organizations to choose a 'mission' to take forward.



What's the Deep Dive for?

In this stage, Embedded Researchers spend their time shadowing and interviewing staff and service users.

Structure of this stage

Sprint #1: Kick-off

The idea of the kick-off was to share the big idea of Grounded Space with colleagues and invite staff to participate in the research. We wanted to find allies and resources.

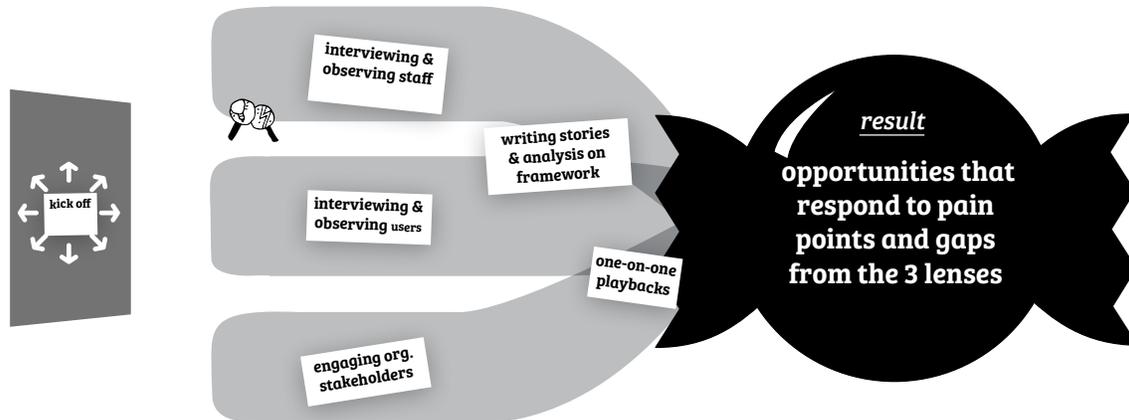
For the first time, Embedded researchers

presented the work and served as the spokes-persons, branding themselves as their agency's Grounded Space crew. Each crew created an installation with posters and artifacts to support the story. While the building of this took more time and effort than we'd allocate in future, this activity worked well for building team camaraderie.

Fieldwork

After practicing ethnography on each other, Embedded researchers went out and started interviewing and observing staff. As none of the organizations had chosen the user module, all four organizations did research that

| Structure: | Key activities | Frameworks & tools | Products |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| Sprint #1: Kick-off | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • event organizing | | |
| Fieldwork (3 months) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • user outreach • profile writing • story return • staff survey • staff shadowing | Look, listen, engage | |
| Sprint #2: User sprint (4 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synthesis • story return • idea generation • tool making • interviews | Information design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pain points - Opportunity areas, incl 3-4 top 'mission possibles' |
| Sprint #3: Synthesis (2 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • segmentation | Sweet spots | |
| Sprint #4: Playback | | 'Yes and' mash-ups | |



was heavily weighted towards understanding the experience of other staff and leadership. This was a missed opportunity.

Sprint #2: User Sprint

After three months of fieldwork, we refocused our research. The lack of a user perspective rubbed against our core values. We added a user research sprint. By this time, we had also concluded that our structured modules & tools were too prescriptive and that a concentrated sprint of 3-5 days was a better way to sustain crew momentum. Crews learned about constructs and designed bespoke research tools. But, the four day sprint was not enough time to create particularly sophisticated tools -- and with the end user group, people with developmental disabilities, multiple iterations of tools are required for quality insights. Each crew met 3-4 users, a small number compared to their staff ethnographies. To harvest as much as we could, we ran a joint analysis session between crews, doing segmentation exercises and extracting opportunities.

Sprint #3: Synthesis

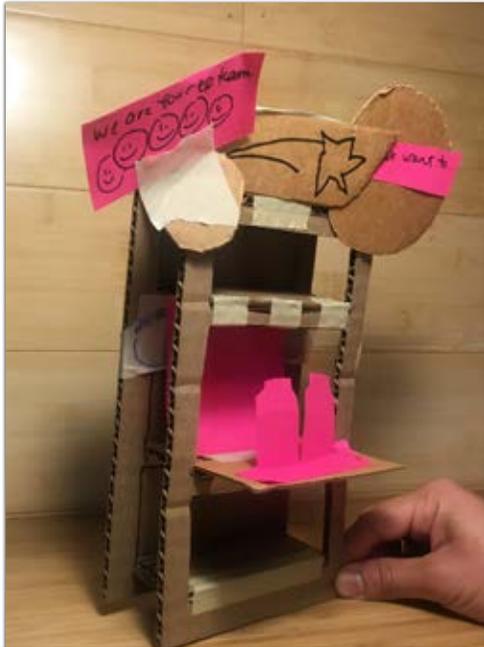
In this sprint, we combined research findings from the lenses of staff, users and organizational stakeholders. Crews identified every experimental behaviour they witnessed or heard. Many behaviours were incredibly incremental, like staff at a group home experimenting with buying cream instead of milk. Crews used **information design** techniques to draw up dashboards visualizing findings. We segmented everyone we met. We linked

pain points and opportunities between user groups to find **Sweet Spots**. By the end of the sprint, each crew produced a summary board with their top research findings, including a distilled set of barriers and enablers for experimenting.

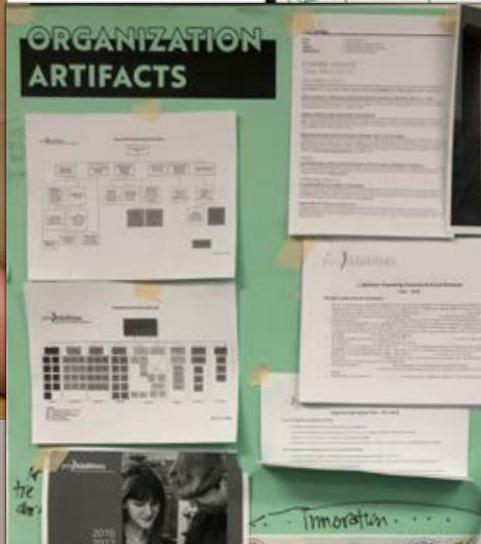
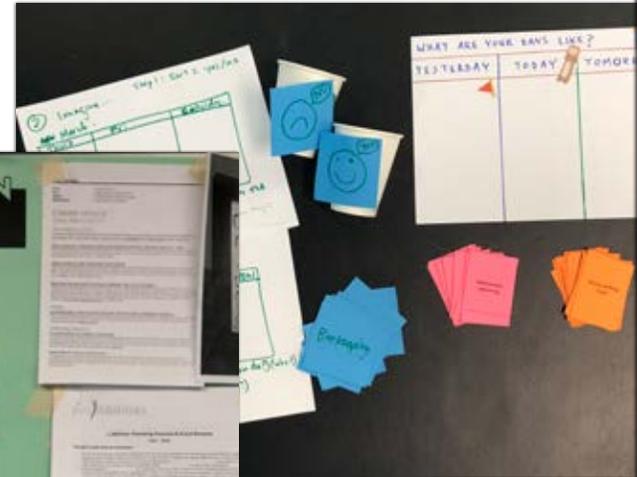
Sprint #4: Playback

Here, crews came together for a three day sprint to conceptualize and produce an exhibition for the organization. The goal was to make the research findings concrete and shareable, and to test which opportunity areas (which we called, missions) resonated. Staff across all organizations affirmed the research results, saying the pain points felt true. Mid-level managers reacted differently. Some rejected the findings as 'untrue;' they conflicted with their point of view. Interestingly, this sentiment reflected a research finding: power and hierarchy plays out in which information and ideas are acted on, and which are ignored or dismissed. These tensions exposed some of the core epistemological beliefs of Grounded Space: namely, that there is no one truth, only different versions of a story, and that understanding those discrepancies is constructive and generative. Indeed, they can help us slay sacred cows and ask bigger questions, like: "What if teams were self-organizing?" Through the playback, we set out to (1) acknowledge the different realities in an organization, without judgment; (2) create a space for dialogue and creativity; (3) involve more people in sense-making, so as to prompt curiosity and (4) Gauge the energy: Which missions are people talking about?

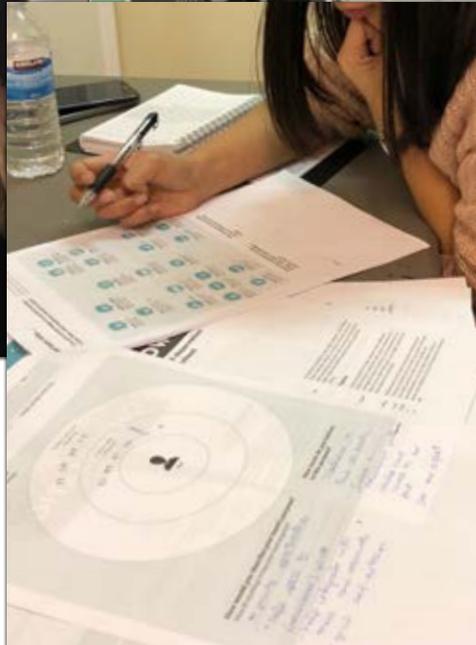
Deep Dive activities



Teams producing their own tools during the user sprint to be used the next day

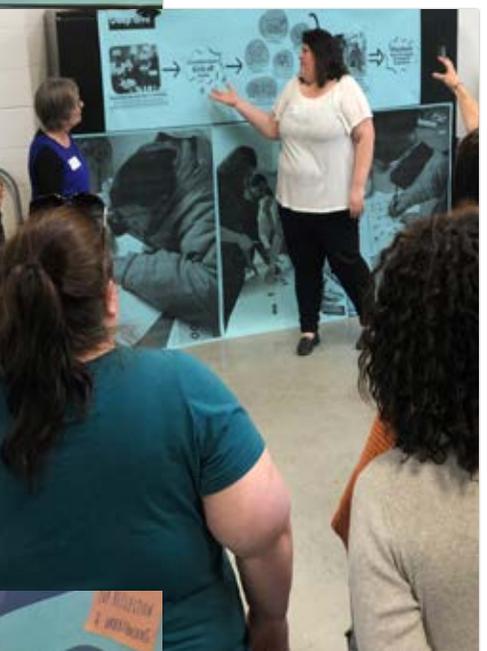
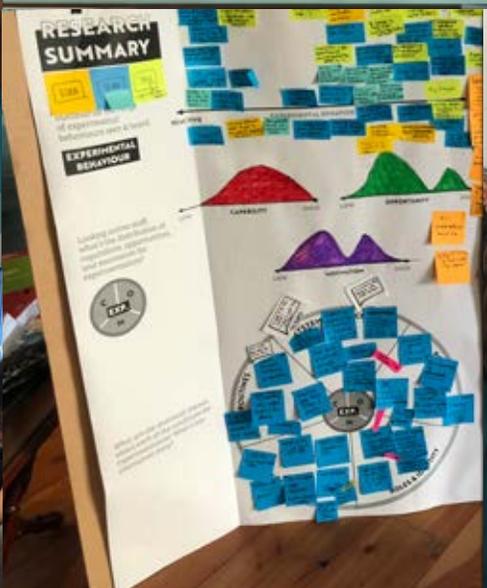
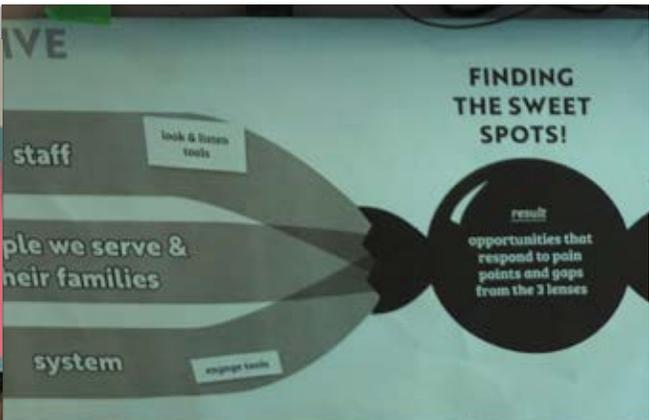
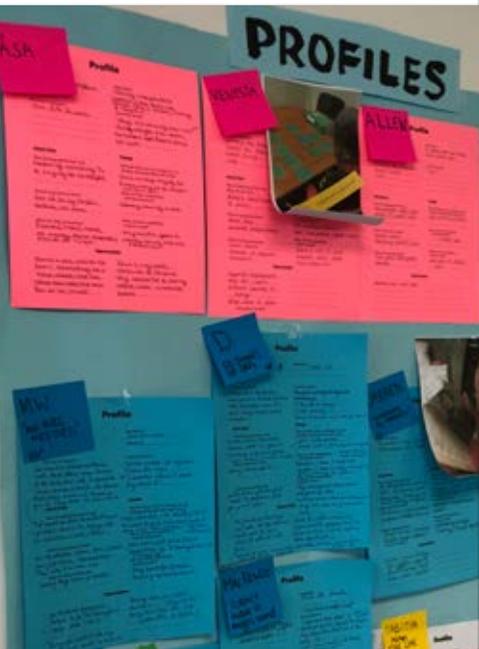


The Kinsight crew introduced Grounded Space with a roaming kick-off, visiting four locations



Using interview & observational tools from the team practice module. These tools were overly structured, and lost some of the magic of ethnography





The posAbilities crew shares opportunity areas at the Deep Dive playback, and asks colleagues to vote on pain points that resonate



Staff listen to research insights at BACI's Deep Dive playback

Making segmentations of service users and staff at the West Neighbourhood House synthesis sprint

Deep Dive frameworks & tools

Sweet spot

A sweet spot is an opportunity that brings together pain points and resources from multiple user groups. That's the thing about the social sector -- there are multiple, sometimes competing user groups: staff, users, managers, funders. If we can design interventions that respond to the needs and wants of multiple groups, the likelihood of adoption grows. For example: we found segments of users and staff who are bored (shared pain point). We also found staff with hidden talents and passions (resource). The sweet spot is finding a way for staff tap into their passion at work, to liven up interactions with people they work with.



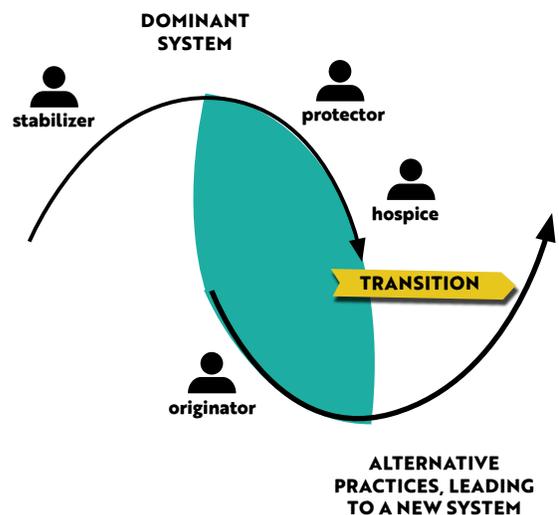
Information design

A picture can really be worth a thousand words. Combining pictures, symbols, and colors often tells a powerful story, and cut through the imprecision and ambiguity of lots of words. Infographics are a form of visual storytelling, which use shapes, sizes, patterns, and color to communicate overarching ideas. They can help illustrate relationships between things and provide a snapshot of changing systems. Intentionally choosing hierarchy, types of representation, and structure are techniques that convey complex meanings in more elegant ways.



The two loops model

This framework explains a transition from one social system to the next. For example, take institutions as a system of care for people with disabilities. At the height of a dominant system, isolated alternatives slowly emerge based on different values and logics. Like any living system, the dominant system responds: trying to rid itself of beliefs and practices that at odds. But, as originators of the alternative models band together and gain legitimacy, they are hard to ignore. In our example, self advocates and families originated new models of community living. Over a thirty year period, those new models gave rise to the community living system. The question is, what are the alternatives to the now dominant community living system? We see Grounded Space as creating the conditions for alternatives to arise. Embedded Researchers act as originators, experimenting and pioneering next practices. Culture Curators have undoubtedly the trickiest role: trying to keep the dominant system going, whilst creating space for the transition between old and new. They are also the 'hospice' providers, showing care and compassion to systems that are dying. And so the cycle continues.



Deep Dive products



Poster to introduce Grounded Space within organizations at kick-off event

A guide to build an interactive installation at kick-off events

What's different?

* This isn't just talk. We're committed to action and we're using design methods to make & test ideas, just like Google and Facebook use to develop new products & services.

* This is staff-to-staff. We're your peers. We're working with and for you without judgement or a hidden agenda.

* What comes out of this won't be a workplan that gathers dust on the shelf but **actual workable practices**.

Get in touch! karey.degenova@gobaci.com

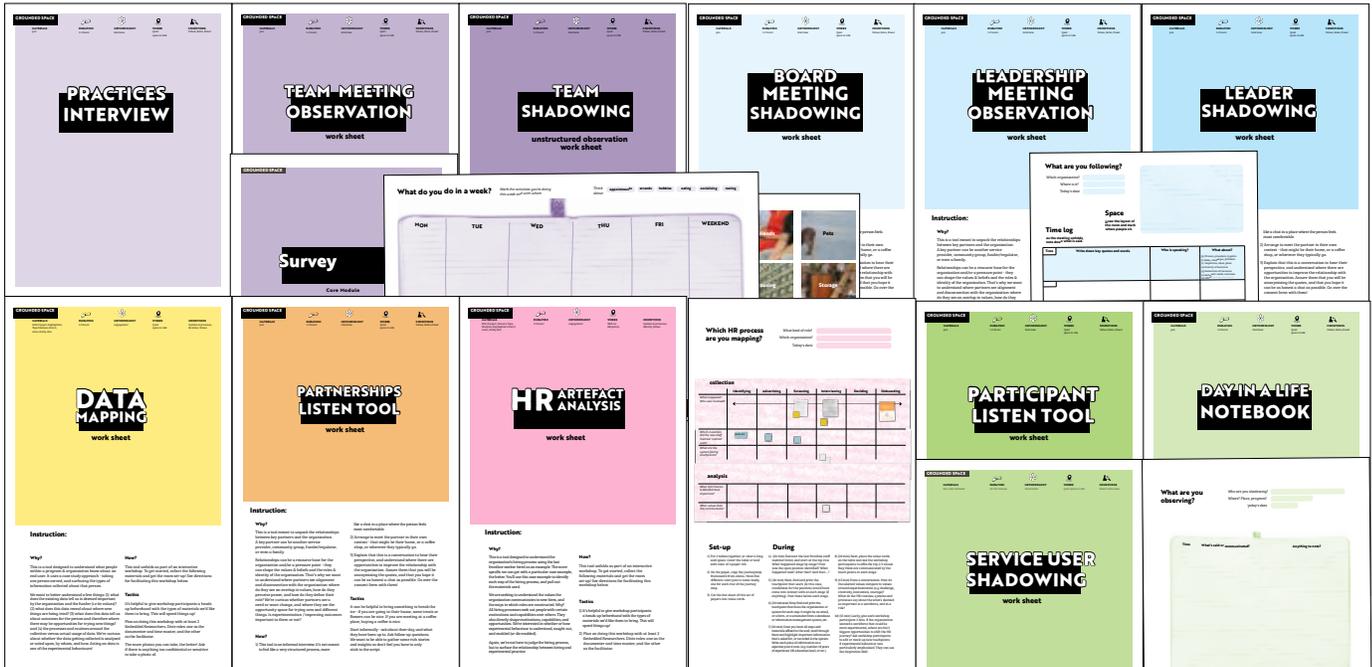
2 roles in Grounded Space:

Culture Curators guide BACI's journey in Grounded Space. They act as coordinators, ensuring good communication and that all people involved are brought in to the conversation to share their experiences, learning and knowledge.

Embedded Researchers are from across BACI & trained in research methods. They'll spend time with you, listening to your experiences & understanding your day to day reality. We think the best ideas for change will come from the bottom-up, not the top-down.

See you soon!

We are your Grounded Space team! And we want to hear from you!



The suite of templated research tools for the six different modules

Posters with research numbers & opportunity areas for the playback event

OUR RESEARCH IN NUMBERS



WHAT IF THERE ARE OPEN & TRANSPARENT WAYS FOR STAFF & PERSONS SERVED TO SHARE AND TRACK IDEAS FOR CHANGE?

FOR WHOM?

- The Unheard Herd** (TEAM MEMBERS): A platform for staff to share ideas and concerns.
- The Broke Waiters** (TEAM MEMBERS): A platform for staff to share ideas and concerns.
- Fearfully Wanting More-ers** (PERSONS SERVED): A platform for clients to share ideas and concerns.

WHAT IT COULD LOOK LIKE...

- Dragon's Den Open Innovation Platform**: A platform for staff to share ideas and concerns.
- Fed-ex style ideas tracking**: A platform for staff to share ideas and concerns.
- An Idea Liaison**: A platform for staff to share ideas and concerns.

MISSION POSSIBLE #1

Written up stories from staff interviews

Shamair
by Saba Froese - February 2018

Setting the scene
Wednesday morning and I am getting closer to Shamair's work place. She works in the back kitchen of West Neighbourhood House, on the Dundas west side, at the very end of the building. We get the house clean, we're all going to do the cleaning routine as the expected one. As I am entering in the area through a closed door, I see Shamair. I remember, she's the only full-time worker in the March on Wheels program. She goes full plastic bags on the floor and that team can carry to another office from the phone and Shamair is on the phone. After she finishes the call, she welcomes me with a big smile and a warm hug.

The place of the 2 programs and the work area for 2 and a half (3 full time and 2 part time) program workers is small. Angie, the coordinator, Kelly who is running the March on Wheels program, and Shamair, who is responsible for the transportation program. She is in a quiet area driver position, but she is able to help in pretty much everything. In the March on Wheels program place there are

Flyers used to recruit end users

NEED CAT BRE
HOW'S YOUR JOB YOU FEELSTRESS, TO HEAR FROM US

GET A GIFT CARD TO SHOPPER'S DRUG MART!
FREE!

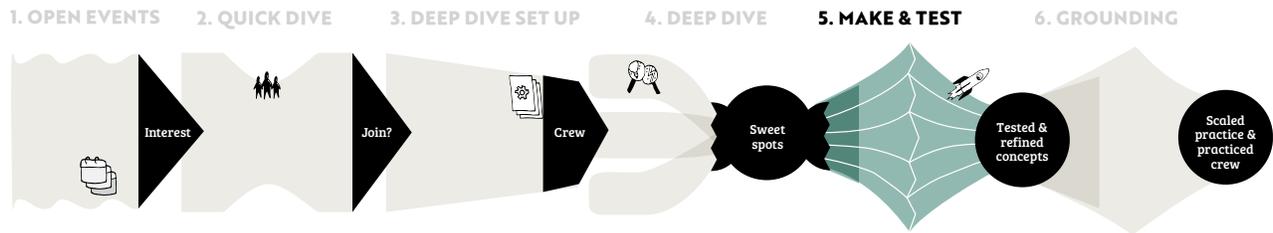
UNEMPLOYED? USING WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES?

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR JOB SEARCH EXPERIENCE!

CONTACT US BEFORE APRIL 15th @ 416-593-6577 OR SHAMAIR@WEST190

5. Make & Test

In the Make & Test stage, crews start their design mission. Using an iterative process of researching, designing, making and testing, they develop solutions for the challenge identified in the Deep Dive.



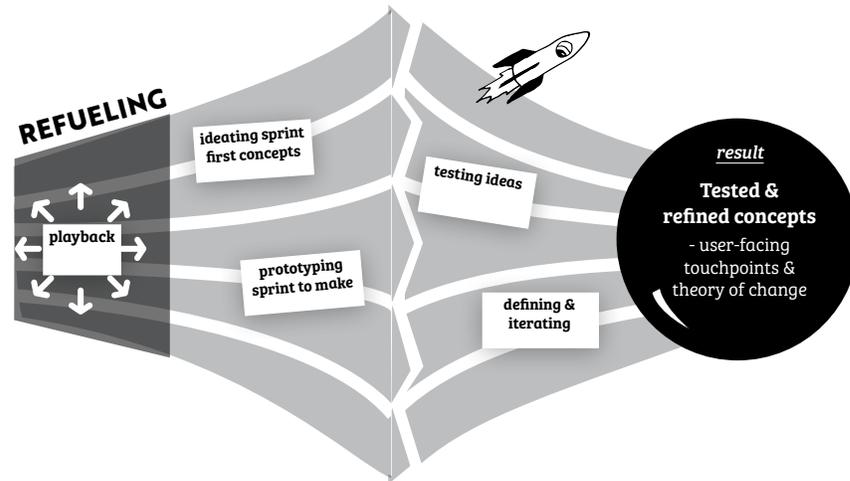
What's Make & Test for?

This point in the Grounded Space journey marks the transition from research to design, or from identifying *what is* to developing *what could be*. Starting with the broad mission or opportunity area chosen after the Deep Dive, one of the first things crews do is to articulate desired outcomes for end users & frontline staff. We then work backwards to refine missions and come up with ideas for new roles, tools, and support models with elements of next practice. Crews go through multiple rounds of making and testing their concepts with end users and staff, developing a theory of change and blueprint to capture what works, for whom, when.

What does it look like?

The work in this stage is organized in design sprints: intensive work sessions of 2-5 days in which crews mock-up and iterate their solution. Sprints are make-fests, not talk-fests. Coaching in this stage focuses on idea generation, story boarding, prototyping, and packaging ideas as new products or practices. Grounded Space supports the work with access to expert designers. Crews also add members to the team with skills related to the mission such as data analysis or HR. Each crew is out of the room, testing with users regularly, to make sure what they design is feasible, attractive, and actually addressing the identified problem.

| Structure: | Key activities | Frameworks & tools | Product |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Refueling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transition from research to design crew member recruitment | | Calendar with sprints Self-assessment tool |
| Sprint #1: Ideas (3 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ideation visioning storyboarding preparing prototyping | Diamonds in the Rough Prototyping cycle Logic models | Ideas Journey maps Theory of change |
| Sprint #2: Key interactions (2 days) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> writing a design brief storytelling role playing field trips | Prototyping dimensions Interaction framework | Design brief Name and logo Prototyping plan |
| Sprint #3: Testing (3 days) | | | Explanation documents Physical touchpoints / props Instructions / scripts Roles Prototyping learnings |



Refueling

At the start of the Make & Test stage crews took a few days to reflect on their outcomes and key learning. They self-assessed the skills they gained. They explored adding crew members to their team with specific skills.

Sprint #1: Ideas

On reflection, we felt many of the missions articulated at the end of the Deep Dive pointed to best practice more than next practice. In other words, they improved the dominant service system, rather than helped build the alternative. In hindsight, this was not so surprising as missions originated from research heavily weighted towards staff. People are less likely to generate paradigm-shattering ideas within the dominant system. To shift our focus towards next practice, we ran a visioning exercise, creating dioramas from the year 2030 based on fresh values and logics. We then extracted elements from the dioramas to flesh out each mission. For instance, in 2030, one crew imagined a world without day programs in buildings, and not wedded to prescribed structure.

To move from big concepts to concrete ideas, we played a game called **Diamonds in the Rough**. In this game, crews link a chosen outcome with a randomly chosen **Mechanism of Change** card and a modality card (e.g online, book, event) to develop mash-up

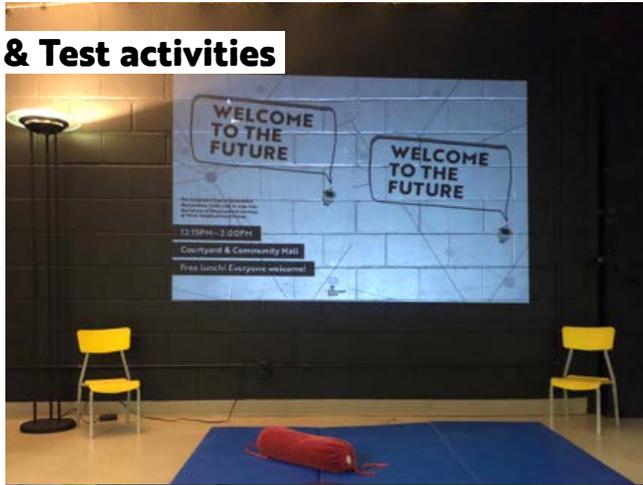
ideas in a short amount of time. Ideas were selected based on their potential impact, feasibility, and appeal to users. For example, one of the ideas that came up was a new role called Maestro: a person driving around in a van to support staff and end user to be creative. For each idea brainstormed, we sketched a rough **logic model**. Crews made outcomes explicit by writing a story about what people would be doing, saying and thinking if the idea were real.

Sprint #2: Key interactions

Every idea can be unpacked as a journey with multiple interactions for end users and staff. How do people find out about the idea? What happens next? After that? During this sprint, crews crafted a believable story of their top ideas. They articulated the core value propositions for users as well as the 'make or break' interactions. Using the **dimensions of prototyping framework**, crews wrote research questions. Prototypes, after all, are another form of research.

Crews reformulated their missions into design briefs, naming the problem to be addressed (pain point), the user groups feeling the pain (segments), and what they needed to see to know their idea addressed the challenge (outcomes / metrics)? During the sprint, crews learned how to gain actionable feedback from their prototypes. They role played with each other, and honed their testing techniques. For outside inspiration, we organized field trips for crews to see how a core interaction

Make & Test activities



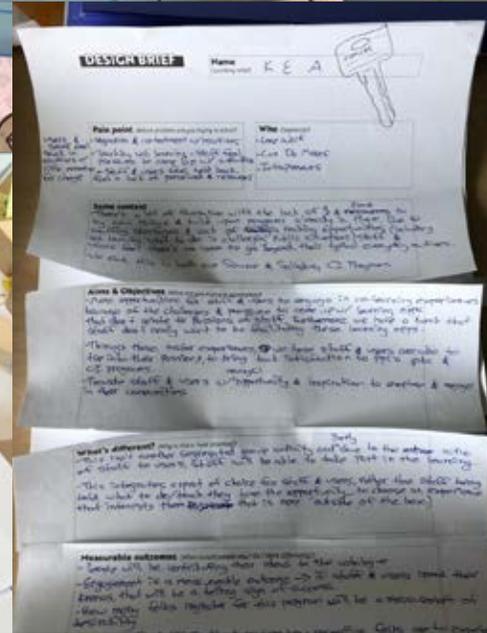
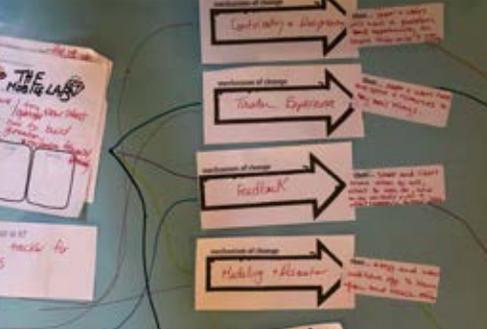
Using role play to explore ideas



Playing back a future scenario to pull out principles



First sketch of a user journey through a designed intervention



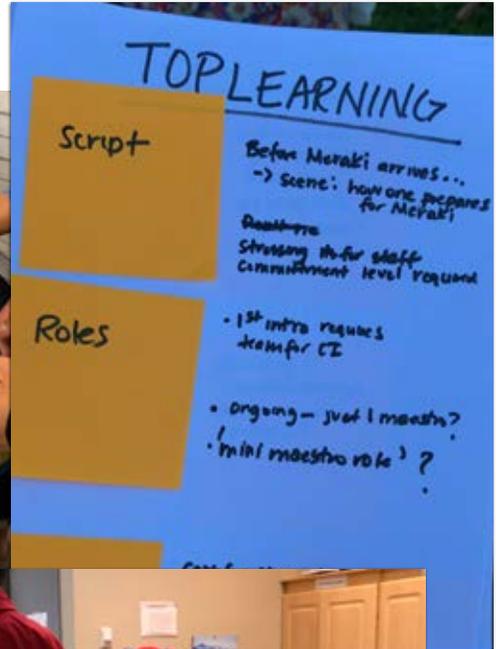
played out in another (lateral) setting. One crew went to a toy store to learn how to package a delightful experience. Another went to Vancouver Water Adventures to see how they support people of different ages and abilities to learn together. Still another went to a hairdresser to see how they prompted people to make changes to their look.

Sprint #3: Testing

During this sprint, crews were mostly out testing interactions on location in group homes, day programs, and employment services. Before going out, each Embedded Researcher filled in a permission slip to give themselves explicit permission to suspend disbelief. When



Collecting user feedback on Meraki boxes, mocking up the cover of boxes to test the value proposition for users



Testing early versions of interventions in context with with end users in a day program



Making the physical touchpoints of the service before testing in context

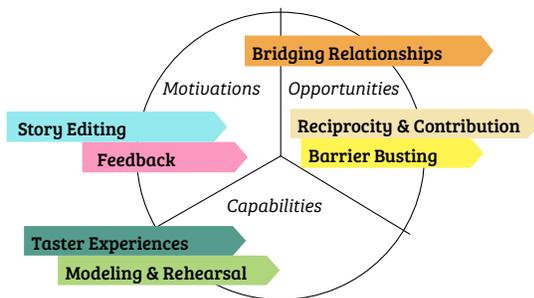
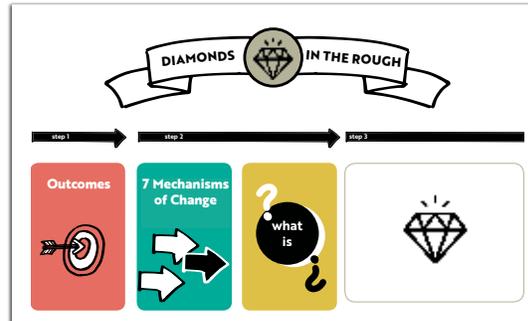
crews returned, we documented learning against their research questions and split into pairs to produce the next versions of touchpoints. This means that crew members got their laptops and felt tips out to write copy for signs, flyers, and brochures. They also built sets, found costumes, and wrote scripts.

By the end of the third day, we brought all crews together for beer in the park. Most crews had completed at least two rounds of testing. Some ideas were promising; others flopped. We normalized failure. That's why we test!

Make & Test frameworks & tools

Diamonds in the Rough: generating relevant ideas

This exercise helps teams of inexperienced designers generate relevant ideas, working backwards from desired outcomes (the 'why'). Participants pull two cards: a mechanism card (the 'how', see the mechanisms below), and a modality card (the 'what', e.g. a platform, a rule, a game, etc.) and then rapidly brainstorm interventions. We call these ideas diamonds in the rough.

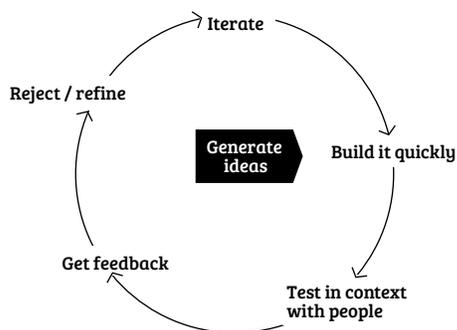
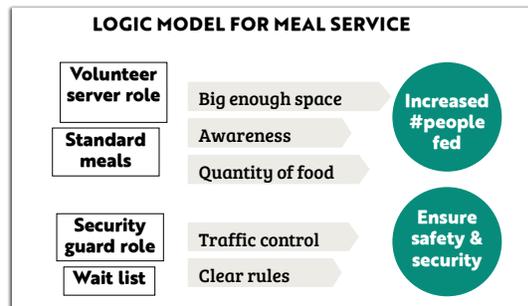


7 Mechanisms of Change

There are 7 types of interactions that contribute to a change in outcomes. We call these interactions 'mechanisms of change' and categorize them using the sources of behaviour change from Susan Michie's Behaviour Change Wheel. Source: [An argument for Grounded Change, Sarah Schulman \(2015\)](#)

Logic Model

We use logic models to show the link between what we make and the change we are after. In the design stage, we work backwards from desired outcomes (teal circles) to designed interventions (white squares). In the evaluation stage, we test if these interventions indeed lead to desired outcomes, and if our determinants (gray arrows) are the right ones. The way we present logic models is distinct in two ways: (1) we disaggregate interventions into interactions, while usually an entire program is listed, and (2) we identify the determinants or factors that lead to change.

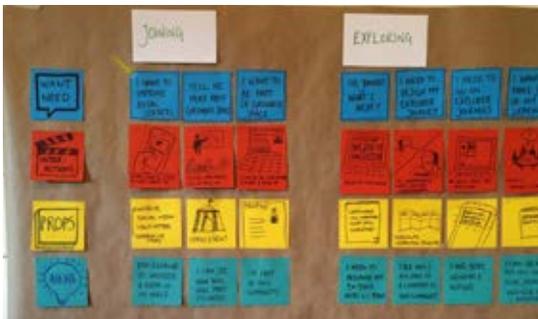


Prototyping cycle

The only way to know if an idea is worth pursuing is to test it out. Prototyping is bringing to life an early version of an idea to collect feedback from (potential) users. It is a mindset as much as a method: you can prototype everything from a poster to a policy. In an early stage, you can test aspects of ideas to find out if it appeals to users, if it's feasible, and if it's likely to lead to impact. You can prototype by role playing interactions, asking users to respond to flyers with alternative propositions, and delivering a small-scale version of the service. The whole point is to learn as much as possible, as early on as possible, before investing too many resources. Rejecting ideas is very much part of the process.

Interaction framework: roles, setting, script, props

Practices and services are a lot less tangible than websites or products so it can be hard to see which elements are designed. We use the theatre as a metaphor to illustrate what can be made. Just like a play, a service takes place in a specific place (setting), actors have named roles, each with their own script (codifying what an actor says and does) and props (physical items they use on stage). For each interaction, we specify setting, roles, script and props and we iterate these components multiple times.

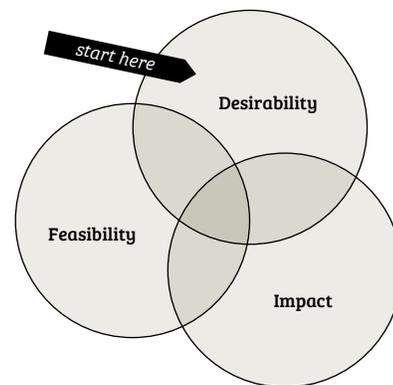


Journey maps

Journey maps show the sequence of interactions a user experiences when going through a service or intervention. In the Make & Test stage, we use these maps as a tool to visualize a future state (but they can also be used as a research tool to visualize a current state). On this map, every interaction is described step-by-step from the perspective of the person using the service or intervention. For each interaction, we outline settings, props, roles and scripts.

Dimensions of prototyping: desirability, feasibility, impact *(adapted from IDEO's Human Centered Design framework)*

A social design intervention has to fulfill multiple criteria. The value proposition, look and feel have to be attractive to users (desirability). It has to be technically and economically feasible to run (feasibility). And it has to contribute to the desired outcomes (impact). Only interventions that satisfy all three criteria can work. A great place to start is desirability: there's no point implementing something nobody wants.

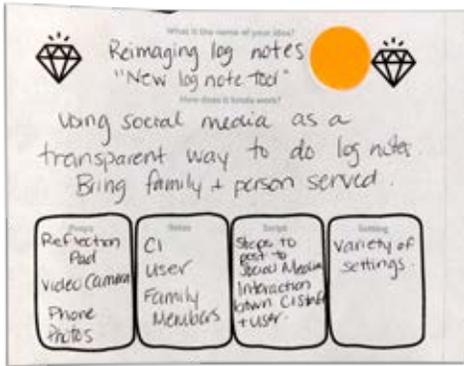


**Yes
AND...**

Improvisation techniques

“Yes, and...” is one example of a technique in improvisational comedy we use. It asks that a participant accept what another participant has stated (“yes”) and then expand on that line of thinking (“and”). It is used to improve the effectiveness of brainstorming by fostering the free sharing of ideas. Saying “yes” encourages people to listen and be receptive to the ideas of others. Rather than immediately judging the idea, we help crews go wacky and expand on each other’s idea without limitations. Later in the process, we’ll add a hefty dose of discernment and assess the value of each idea. During the initial generative phase, we’re going for quantity over quality.

Make & Test products



First description of an idea from the Diamonds in the Rough game



Diorama illustrating the vision for a future world in 2030 to distill elements of next practice



Storyboard for Meraki, showing settings, roles and props for three key scenes of the concept

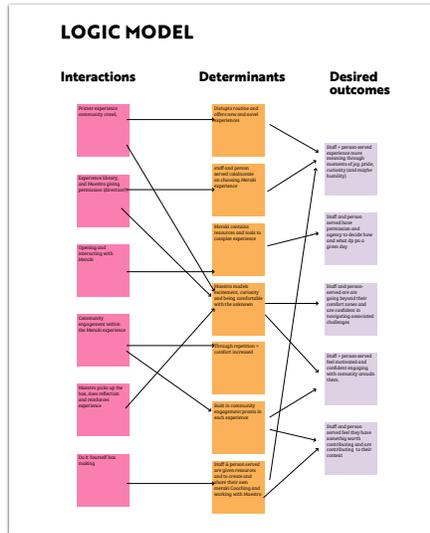


Journey map depicting all interactions for before, during and after the KEA team runs an adventure

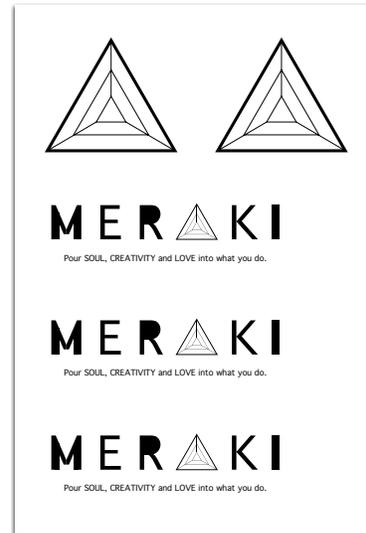
Normalizing ideas not working and helping to articulate assumptions



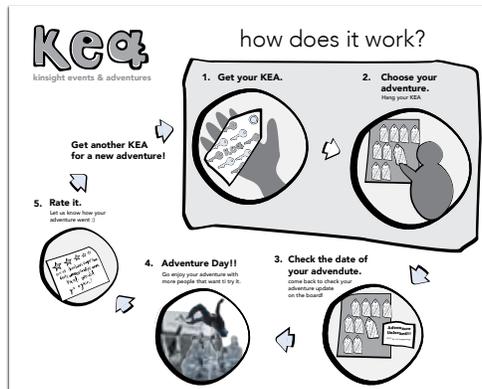
2nd version of a logic model, linking elements of a designed intervention to desired outcomes



Each concept is brought to life with a name, a logo and simple branding



Poster to explain the KEA concept and test clarity and appeal with users



Cards for staff and users to test usability of instructions on a Meraki box

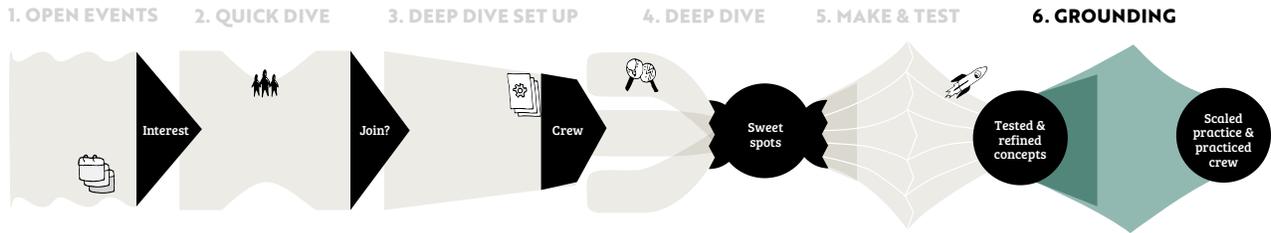
Testing choosing and booking of experiences through a physical 'key board' that comes to day programs



Meraki boxes that were used to test desirability and feasibility with users and staff in programs

6. Grounding

Too often promising new solutions end up on the shelf. Embedding and internalizing new practices is an ongoing process taking continued time and effort. And it's not just the practice we're seeking to spread, but also the learning.



What's Grounding for?

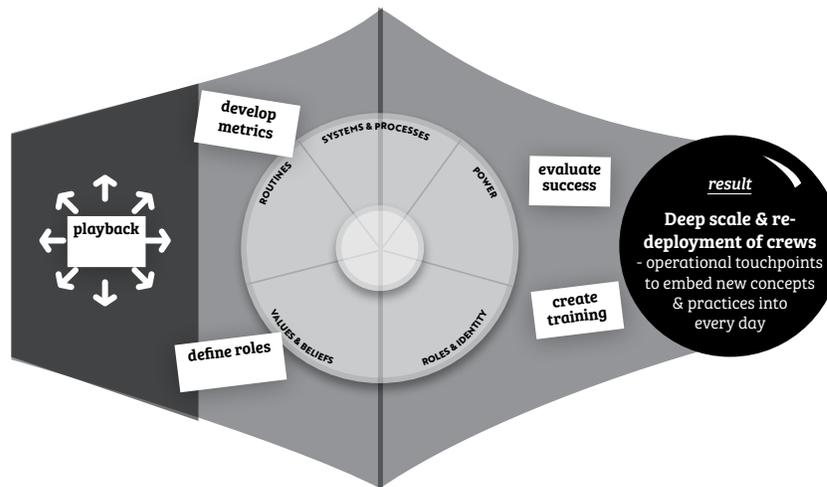
Arguably this is the most important stage of Grounded Space. If a new solution is not adopted, we are no closer to improving people's lives. Crews look for ways to help colleagues incorporate newly developed practices. They apply lessons about the organizational conditions for experimentation. HR is often a leverage point: shaping hiring and training. Data may be another leverage point: introducing a new metric or documentation system. Team practice is yet another leverage point: transforming team meetings and communication routines. Although we time bound this stage to a few months (because of our own resources), in reality, grounding new practice will take years. Our assumption

has been that because crews are drawn from the organization, we will have ready-made champions able to keep up the fight.

What's does it look like?

Crews codify and document the solutions they develop. What happens step by step? What's the delivery model? What resources are needed? What are the desired outcomes and how do they link to the solution? What are the design principles? Grounded Space supports crews to package solutions and connect with future funders and resources. Grounded Space members can try out each other's solutions, and in doing so help to find ways to spread and scale them.

| Structure: | Key activities | Frameworks & tools | Product |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Sprint #1: Codifying | Codifying of user journey | | Blueprint Design principles |
| Sprint #2: Codifying continued | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codifying of staff roles, support processes and systems | Prototyping dimensions MVP | Social business plan v1.0 Logic Model v2.0 |
| Sprint #3: Narrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Reflecting Consolidating | Guided reflection | Social business plan v1.1 Role descriptions |



Sprint #1: Codifying

In this first sprint, crews started documenting their tested solutions. They looked critically at the lessons from prototyping and summarized them in a narrative. What did they learn about desirability, feasibility, and impact? And how do we know that -- what did crews see and hear as evidence?

Crews also shifted from describing their concept as a journey of user-facing interactions, to a journey with back-stage interactions. Backstage interactions are those required for implementation. They worked on large sheets of paper to identify staff roles, protocols, systems, and processes needed to deliver the front-end experience. We call these **blueprints**.

We see implementation as a part of a research and design process, and we continue to prototype throughout the Grounding stage. In their blueprints, crews flagged magical moments (highlights in the user's experience), critical moments (critical to achieve intended outcomes), and barriers. The goal was to start to assemble an implementation strategy.

It is during implementation that new concepts risk being watered down to make them more manageable. Intentionality can

be quickly lost. Using examples of design principles of Disney, Green Homes and Reggio Emilia schools, crews articulated design principles to anchor the intent of their solution in writing.

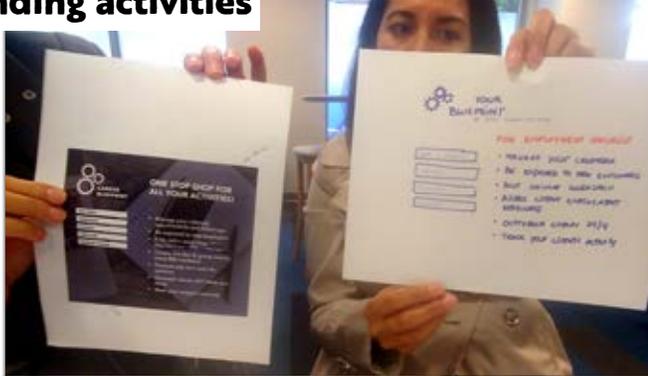
Sprint #2: Codifying continued

Documenting and codifying takes longer than a few days. This second sprint started with writing elements of a social business plan: what the 'product' is, the underlying research, how it works, intended impact, and feasibility requirements.

We looked at the current conditions enabling or threatening the adoption of the idea and applied dr. Susan Michie's behaviour change wheel. Are the conditions that are needed to implement the solution present?

A crucial part of the business plan is the revenue and costing model. We looked at the resources needed for a minimum viable product (MVP), with just enough features to satisfy early users and to provide feedback for future development. We also looked at resourcing strategies including reallocating current staff, attracting new human resources such as volunteers, generating revenue from sales, and finding external funding.

Grounding activities



USER INTERACTION

FRONTSTAGE

All the steps/moments a person served takes/experiences as part of the idea.

STAFF ACTIONS



Presenting the next version of the Theory of Change: how the designed intervention is to lead to desired outcomes

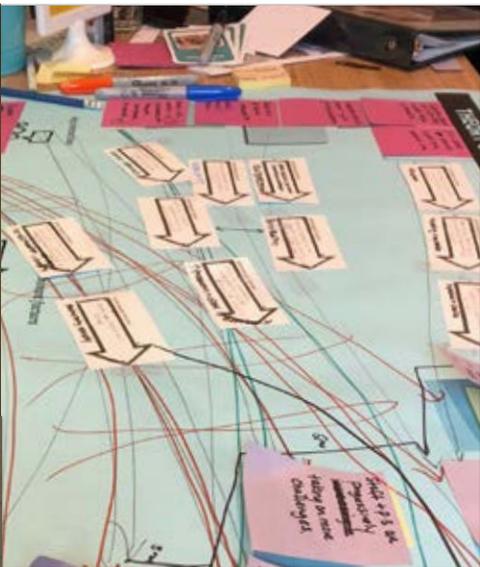


Documenting the design and learnings of the intervention in a portfolio

Sprint #3: Narrative

In the last sprint of Grounded Space 1.0, we took stock of our social business plans. Crews spent a full day adding sections describing the product, target groups, key insights from the research, the resourcing model and an improved theory of change.

We then asked crews to look back at their Grounded Space experience, using **guided reflection**. Drawing on artifacts from throughout the two years, like the original video narratives and communication tools, we tried to jog people's memory. Crew members talked about big and small moments



Teams reflecting at the end of a sprint day; the giant ball works as a talking stick



Reflection meets humour: a puppet show to show what helped/hindered a team process



A dinner with the B.C cohort to mark the end of the first cycle

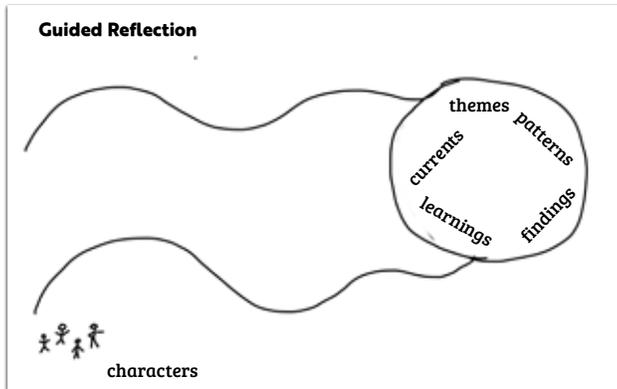
Summarizing a guided reflection exercise, looking back over a year

they remembered, and annotated a big poster. They then looked for patterns, currents, findings and learnings between it all. What have we learned about what is the ground for experimentation? What are the conditions helping or hindering Grounded Space?

brainstormed titles for stories worth writing about Grounded Space. After voting, people pitched their favorites, and wrote six of them. For a list of all possible stories, flick through the last page of this section. To read the six individual stories and summaries of the Guided Reflection, skip to section four.

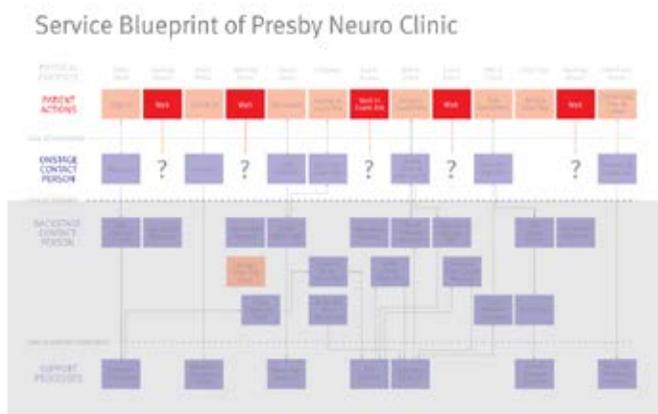
On the last day of the sprint we collectively

Grounding frameworks & tools



Guided Reflection

Guided Reflection is a group reflection exercise. In the first part, the group remembers what happened. Who was involved in the process? Which moments stand out? We show photos and video to jog people's thought process. Everything is written down on a big poster. After this, the team identifies currents, recurring themes, patterns, learnings and core findings. The poster is an important artefact as the visual notes of the shared conversation.



Blueprint

The blueprint is an operational tool that gives an overview of a solution in enough detail to verify, implement and maintain it. Blueprints display the interactions experienced by users and align them with the invisible back stage processes, systems and roles needed to deliver the user experience.

43 titles for Grounded Space stories, imagined by crews at the last sprint:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Pride & possibilities</i> | <i>Shifting relationships</i> | <i>Sprinting through speed bumps</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Painful playbacks</i> | <i>Bumping tables</i> | <i>Fabulous failers embrace change: we hear you, the routine trap, fight or flight, groundhog day, the littlest spark, following the energy</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Find your sweet spots</i> | <i>Our default is “we believe you”</i> | |
| ∞ | ∞ | |
| <i>Taking a deeper look</i> | <i>Donkey won’t go</i> | <i>Experimenting with friction</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>The coffee grounds for experimentation</i> | <i>So what?</i> | <i>The feasibility trap</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Houston, we have a problem</i> | <i>Clouds to the north star</i> | <i>We’re still here</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Misunderstood in space</i> | <i>Protecting our status quo</i> | <i>What’s love got to do with it?</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Beautiful disasters</i> | <i>Started from the bottom now we are here</i> | <i>Infertile grounds</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>The survey says</i> | <i>Post analysis</i> | <i>Birth of Meraki</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>From mission possible to mission shift: how we learned to love and hate design thinking!</i> | <i>Are we there yet?</i> | <i>Meraki miracle</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>The struggle is real!</i> | <i>Finding the north star</i> | <i>Philosopher boxes</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>In the dark</i> | <i>Energize! Engage!</i> | <i>Systems in question</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Tension points</i> | <i>The pitfalls of planning & thinking & the value of doing</i> | <i>The amorphous beast</i> |
| ∞ | ∞ | ∞ |
| <i>Blood sweat and tears</i> | <i>The new guy/gal</i> | <i>Fresh air & wind in our sails</i> |
| | ∞ | ∞ |
| | <i>It’s not a box</i> | <i>Sans-uision</i> |

3) Portfolio: What did we produce?

Written by crews

**Have you ever gotten into a box
to get out of the box?**



MERAKI
Soul + Creativity + Love

Experiential library Meraki

What is Meraki?

Meraki is a library of experiences to prompt trying something new or put a twist on something old – from rolling sushi with neighbours to natural dye making. All to create more moments of beauty, meaning and connection. Sometimes the experience will go exactly as planned; sometimes it may be a beautiful disaster. Whatever happens, it spices up the day with more heart, soul and creativity!

Each experience comes with materials, explanations, and permissions to get going. Rather than a librarian, Meraki is delivered on-site by the 'Maestro', who also addresses barriers as they arise, and draws out learnings. The Maestro also helps to grow the library, and supports people to add their own experience, bringing ideas into fruition.

Adding spontaneity to routine

Both residential and day services are tied to routine and recurring events. There is not often space in the day for spontaneity or fortuity – let alone the time to do the prep work required for brand new experiences to unfold. This is where Meraki comes in:

- **It's a joyful disruption** Breaking routines with a mindset of novelty and wonder.
- **It's non-hierarchical** Giving support workers the opportunity to do something new without having to seek permission.
- **It provides inspiration** Allowing support workers and persons served to experience fresh ways of engaging in the community.
- **It's accessible** and incorporates multiple modalities and learning styles in every experience.

Research & testing

4

Programs shadowed

32

Hours of ethnography with people served

51

Hours of staff ethnography

17

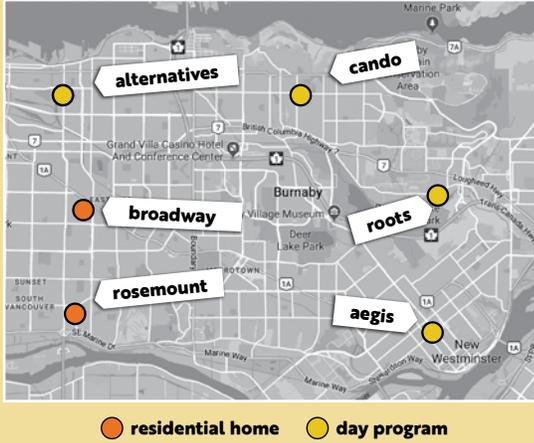
Interviews

61

Survey responses

100+

Staff participating in playback



In context research

As a research team, we spent three months in context with staff and persons served in programs to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of day-to-day experiences. Blending ethnography and design research, we were able to gather people's stories and learn more about what shaped their thinking and drove their behaviours. This allowed us to uncover groups of people with common frustrations and motivations, and understand the organizational conditions affecting the adoption of new things.

Key insights that contributed to Meraki:

- Persons served felt they had to stick with routines; some were not aware of other options and had limited exposure to novel things.
- Support workers felt skilled and motivated to try new things, but felt little opportunity to do so.
- Persons served & support workers operated in a permission-seeking environment, where not having explicit permission to do things worked as a deterrent

Some context

Safety and comfort are important values of the existing service system. For many persons served and their support workers, routines are predictable and controlled. Breaking out of routine can be perceived to be risky -- and hindered by a culture of compliance and a lack of resources.

Hierarchy can also be seen as a barrier; support workers may not feel they are allowed to alter the schedule and do something different. Meraki provides the materials, permissions and resources to bring spontaneity to people's days and their ideas to fruition.

Meraki is designed for:

- Staff who feel held back by permissions and/or lack of resources
- Staff who have ideas to offer, but no format for sharing
- Persons served who would like to or would benefit from breaking out of routines and adding new elements to their days

3

Rounds of prototyping

9

Meraki boxes tested

5

Programs helped with prototyping



During initial prototyping, we found that for Meraki to have real impact, coaching and reflection needed to be integrated into boxes. So we developed and tested the role of the Maestro, who delivers Meraki boxes, addresses barriers that arise, and draws out emergent learnings. We learned that gentle prodding and encouragement was necessary. Meraki boxes could be lost in the shuffle as staff left for vacation, when shifts changed, or when temp staff filled in.

Desirability, feasibility & impact

First of all, we wanted to test if the Meraki concept appealed to users. If it didn't, there would be no point in investing our energy into it. For 9 different boxes we created the cover, to learn which ones would appeal to whom. We visited day programs and residential homes, and with over 50 people subscribing to try a box, desirability was high.

Next, we tested 'feasibility', if it was possible for staff and persons served to use the boxes, with the materials provided. We returned to 3 programs (day programs and residential homes), and 6 people who had subscribed to try. This time, we moved beyond mocking-up the exterior of boxes to creating the content of each box. We tested how materials were

displayed, how directions were communicated, and how to get across the spirit and intentionality of Meraki. One of the many things we learned is that boxes were overwhelming and the directions too complex.

In the third prototyping round, we addressed these issues, improving the information design and how objects were displayed. This time around, we wanted to learn how the boxes would be used in day programs and residential houses and whether they would actually lead to more moments of joy, creativity, love, connection. The Maestro followed-up with participants to gather reactions and track impact. We captured stories of laughter, confusion, humility, and surprise and were able to adjust our Theory of Change.

Inside a Meraki box



Meraki comes to you
packaged as a delightful
gift to be unwrapped



Four core components
of each Meraki box:

1.



Ready to go

Each box comes with materials to get you started, and a list of additional supplies that can be sourced in community and turned into adventures!

2.



Mobilization prompts

prompts people to reach out and involve others, inviting them to the experience, offering a gift, or suggesting conversational prompts.



MERAKI
Soul + Creativity + Love

3.

HACK IT!!
Meraki encourages people to make the experience their own by encouraging to make hacks and adaptations, such as hand-drawing materials to for the experience yourself.

4.

Easy to access
Each experience comes with instructions for those who want it. Written with simple language, broken down into easy-to-follow steps, and provides lots of photos and illustrations for folks with low literacy. Also, the boxes are organized into compartments, making it less overwhelming and tactile!

The experience, step by step

Follow how a person might interact with Meraki, and see the core interactions that make up the intervention.

Primer experience (first time)



Meet the Maestro

Maestro visits a day program to drop off a prompt cards set to get people to explore their local area. It's a short and sweet taster to prime people for Meraki, and comes with ice cream.



Community Crawl

Equipped with the community crawl cards, persons served and staff get out of the door. They explore the area around the program using question cards.

Ongoing Meraki cycle



Experience library

Maestro returns with a choice of boxes, and to model a mindset of curiosity and creativity. He underscores that staff and persons served have permission to choose, to use, and to adapt content.



Opening

Staff and persons served receive the gift wrapped box they chose from the Maestro. The box sparks curiosity to try new things, while messaging is honest: "Doing this may not be easy or fun all the time".

Primer experience happens once to engage the group, and gauge how best to coach



Reach out

Persons served and staff mail or drop off the invitations, using them as an excuse to (re)introduce themselves and connect. They also source the fresh ingredients needed for the experience.



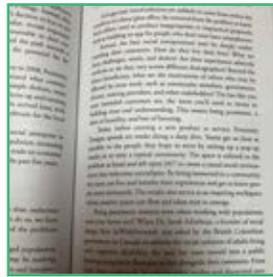
Experience

Everyone comes together to do the Meraki experience, using all the materials and resources contained in the box. Folks are encouraged to hack and add their own creative flair.



Check-in

Maestro calls-in to see how it's going, and to plan a time to pick-up and swap Meraki boxes -- or to offer a nudge and some helpful advice, if needed.



Pick-up & deepen

Picking up of the box is a reflection moment. The Maestro creates the space to listen to reactions and to reinforce learning. This is also the moment to choose the next Meraki experience.



Meraki buzz

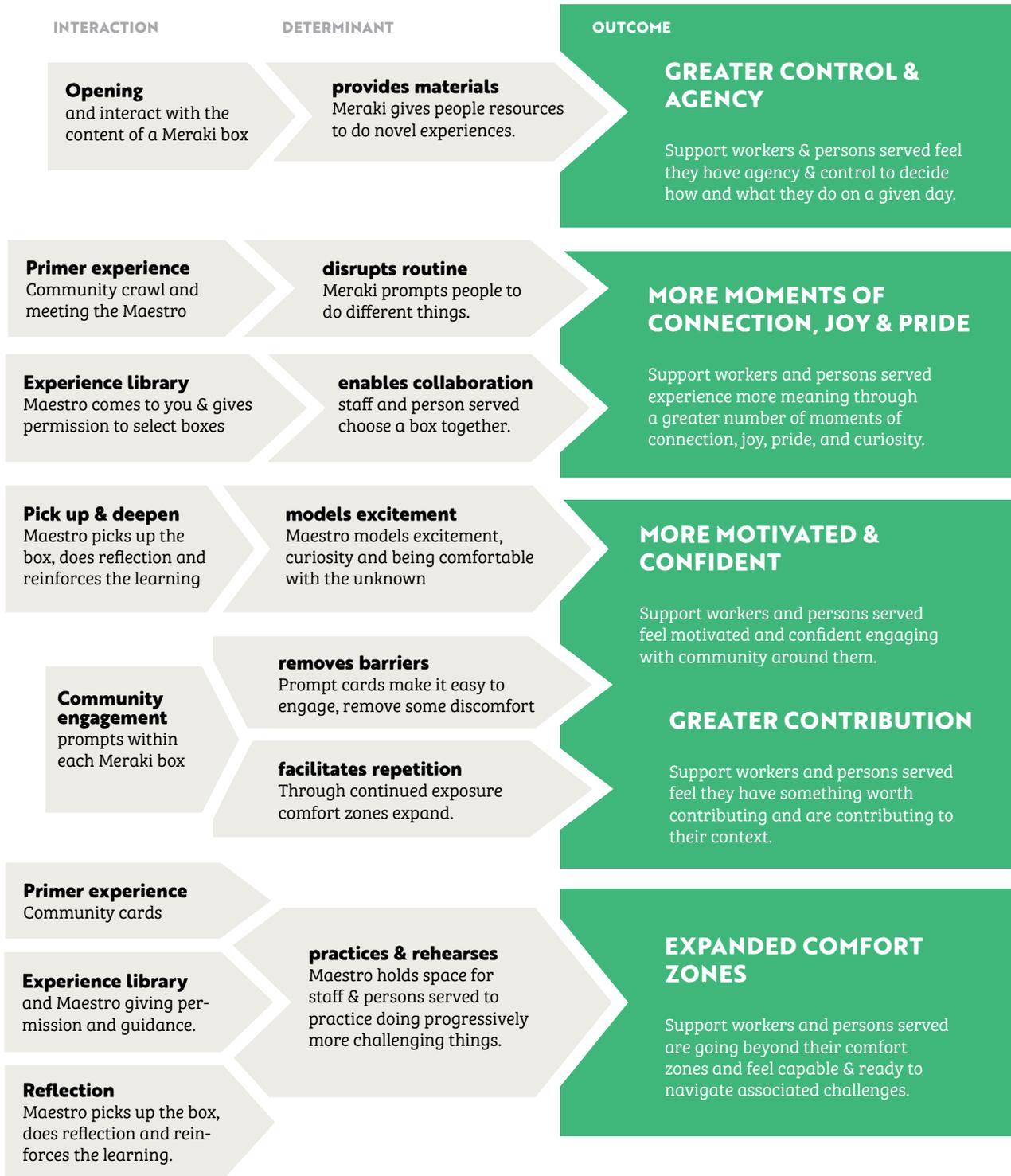
The Maestro emails a photo update to all programs, which is automatically added to their digital picture frame. He collates use data and ideas for future boxes, visiting programs to further co-develop the content.

Once a Meraki experience is complete a new box can be signed out. This cycle can be repeated indefinitely.

How Meraki creates changes

The Theory of Change diagram below shows how Meraki’s designed interactions are linked to our desired outcomes. A part of this theory is tested during prototyping.

OUTCOME: a desired result of Meraki
INTERACTION: a core activity of Meraki
DETERMINANT: how an interaction links to an outcome by shaping people’s motivations, capabilities, or opportunities for change.



Testing Meraki at Broadway House

test
3.12



Sunday 5:45pm

It was dinner time at Broadway House. Evening support worker Mary was waiting for her colleague Pam to come back home from her outing with one of the residents. They were planning to do the Sushi Meraki box that evening. Over the last few days other support workers had made rice and gone grocery shopping with persons served to get ingredients needed. The residents of Broadway House didn't seem all that interested in making sushi, but they were curious and wanted to be around to see it all play out.

Had the support workers ever made sushi? Never. "Who ever makes sushi?" they asked. "If you want sushi, you just go buy it."

Not surprisingly, Mary and Pam were a bit anxious. The Meraki Box had clear instructions and many of the ingredients required to make sushi. With a tight time crunch and people hungry at the table, they curiously unloaded the box, hoping to be on their way to sushi land.

One hour later...

Did they have a sushi or something that resembled sushi?

NO.

But they had a hearty laugh.

In their words, "It was a beautiful disaster." Everyone ate what looked like "sushi from the war zone." More laughter followed, and surprisingly "[the residents] all gave us kudos for our efforts."

Their advice to others?

Would staff and persons served recommend Meraki? They all said, "Yes, do it.. you may like it, but just don't sweat it!!"

Breaking out of routines, and stepping out of comfort zones is not easy, but when you do, you redefine To-Do tasks into Ta-Da moments. You create opportunities for soul, creativity and love, which is the experience we want Meraki to prompt.

Interested in Meraki?

Want to know more or be involved with further prototyping? [Download the portfolio](#) or email peter.greenwood@posabilities.ca



Meraki

KEA is all about shared human moments between persons served, staff, managers, community members & businesses.

We believe that small moments can invite us to take time to reflect and to change the way we view our work, our lives, ourselves.



KEA, Kinsight Events & Adventures

What is KEA?

KEA prompts human moments between service users and staff who feel stuck in their day program. To do that, it uses community adventures. It has two parts:

- **Adventure:** staff and persons served participate in an experience as co-learners, and then share with others at their program.
- **Mission Shift:** during adventures managers backfill for the staff person going out.

KEA's collection of community adventures includes experiences from pottery to parkour, and from circus school to culinary activities. With KEA, all staff and users receive a key. Only when at least 2 keys are redeemed for the same experience from the menu, will the adventure happen.

Space for new relationships

KEA touches on a sweet spot. It brings joy, excitement and new experiences into persons served and staff lives who feel in a rut. They can participate in adventures without having to find extra funding, or extra time to research and prepare. It builds new relationships between places and people in the community with staff and persons served. At the same time it provides space for a new relationship between managers and staff to form.

Research & testing

60

Hours of shadowing staff/ person served

50

Hours of staff interviews

16

Interviews

24

Hours of synthesis

3

Playback sessions

30

Staff participating in playback events



In context research

We spent three months in context with staff and persons served to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of their day-to-day experiences, inside and outside of day programs. Using ethnographic and design research, we were able to gather people's stories and learn more about what shaped their thinking and drove their behaviours.

We uncovered groups of staff with shared frustrations and motivations, and learned about conditions within the organization affecting people's adoption of new things. We framed 'How could we' questions to open up opportunity areas for Next Practices.

Key insights

Everyone learns One key challenge is staff feeling they are expected to facilitate learning without being trained as teachers/coaches. This also sets up a divide between teaching and learning, between staff and person served..

> *How could we see staff and users as co-learners?*

Resource abundance Staff have perception of resource scarcity. Frontline staff felt there were limited resources to do anything new, and that out-of-pocket spending was often required.

> *How could we create a sense of resource abundance?*

No barriers It takes time, effort, and lots of assumed knowledge to plan what to do. Without time or tools for planning, it often doesn't happen.

> *How could we do planning with and for you?*

Walk in each other's shoes Perceived power hierarchies came up often in the research. Many frontline staff had a narrative of feeling unrecognized and misunderstood.

> *How could we signal to staff that their experiences are understood, and give managers an opportunity to continue to see and feel the frontlines for themselves?*



We tested a menu board to choose adventures and respond to the pain point of not getting stuck in repetitive schedules.

With Mission Shift, managers fill in for frontline staff on a KEA adventure. This was logistically difficult and whilst we hoped a clear value proposition might help make the case, not everyone was convinced.



During initial prototyping, we found that for KEA to have real impact, we needed to prime people before they went on experiences.



When staff and end users return from their adventures, we used photos to prompt reflection and discussion - creating an analog version of Instagram!



We sourced many adventures and learned that local businesses are willing to adapt their programs to allow all people to enjoy.

Desirability, feasibility & impact

A total of 43 people signed up to do KEA, 25 people served and 18 staff. We've prototyped two KEA adventures, with 5 people so far: a pottery workshop and meeting unusual animals at the animal shelter.

We heard that KEA provides agency and choice. The role shift of staff and people-served going on an adventure and learning together (instead of being teacher and student) was also appreciated. We observed people suggesting adventures to others or finding more people, as they needed more people to join to 'unlock' an adventure.

Top Features of KEA



Menu board to choose adventures

Responds to pain point of not getting stuck in the same schedules, and the reality of staff not having time to plan or set-up new experiences.

Characteristics:

- Novelty: new adventures or events
- Location: within local community
- Crowd sourced: ideas come from adventurers (over time)
- Variety: arts, fitness, culinary, animals

During prototyping: We found a high number of adventures. We learned that local businesses are open and willing to adapt their programs to allow all people to derive enjoyment.

1.



Mission Shift

Responds to the pain point of schedules & ratios being a barrier for learning. Also responds to the perception of the power divide between staff and managers.

Characteristics:

- Managers block off a chunk of time per adventure (3 hrs up to ½ day)
- Managers take on the role of CSWs during their shift
- The shift is framed - by KEA crew and a pledge signed by all staff and managers - as an opportunity for managers to reconnect with users and feel the current realities of front line work; everyone is encouraged them to take a curious and open attitude (and have reflective, non-performance related conversations).

During prototyping: Mission Shift was logistically difficult. Managers obviously have many other responsibilities, and whilst we hoped a clear value proposition might help make room, not everyone was convinced.

2.



The adventure experience

The KEA adventure allows for co-learning where staff and persons served can create more of a peer relationship: they learn something new, at the same time. Instead of staff in the role of caregiver and persons served in the role of client, KEA experiences enable both to enter an experience as learners. It responds to staff feeling they were often asked to be in the role of teacher/caregiver, without always having the know-how and background skills.

It also responds to pain points of staff and users wanting new learning opportunities -- without worrying about time to plan, or enough money to go.

The goal? For adventures to renew relationships, and spark an interest or passion.

Characteristics:

- First times: something new to both adventurers
- Free: No cost to users (covered by KEA)
- Pre-planned: No planning required
- Externally facilitated: Run by host business/org

During prototyping: staff and persons served expressed appreciation and excitement toward KEA. It brought out different emotions (e.g. enjoyment) and created a spirit of acknowledgment of their pain points and challenges. For Simcoe: responding to the lack of time they have to prep for their “learning opportunities” that they’re required to facilitate. For Salisbury: responding to the perceived lack of resources to do new things.

For one staff, the ceramics course brought back forgotten childhood memories! Once she felt the clay turning in her hands, she remembered the feeling of making pottery when she was a kid.

A person served had her first encounter with a rat at the animal shelter. She had a great connection, was a natural in caring for the rat, and excited to discover this bond. She was curious about a future pet rat!

These experiences show that participants were excited and able to be co-adventurers, because it was something outside of their routine, and it was new to them and/or something they wanted to try.

3.



After party

After a KEA adventure, it’s time for a party to swap experiences to see if we addressed the pain points by coupling adventures and mission shifts. We want to make space to learn what worked well, what didn’t, what can we iterate?

The party has two parts:

1. Have people who went on the adventure put up pictures and annotate with captions and rate. Important to make it clear to staff to reflect on their own experience.
2. Bring in participants from the broader program to talk about the photos and managers experience back at the program.

Characteristics:

- Rank and Rate: Time to get feedback on the adventures
- Visual and Interactive: Digital and printed photos are the key to conversation

4.

The experience, step-by-step

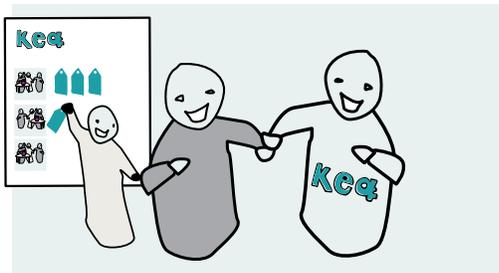
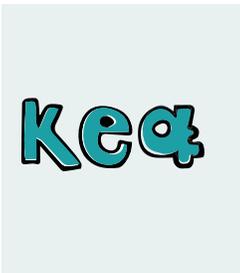
The following journey displays the interactions staff and end users have with KEA, and the interactions managers and staff have with Mission Shift. For the service to be coherent and impactful, both sets of interactions have to be in concert with one another.

Intention: break down silos and create new relationships between staff and people-served that don't typically work together.

- Touchpoints:**
- Brochures
 - Adventure board with invite keys
 - team shirts

Intention: remove logistical barriers by working out schedules, keeping adventures close to home base, and covering costs.

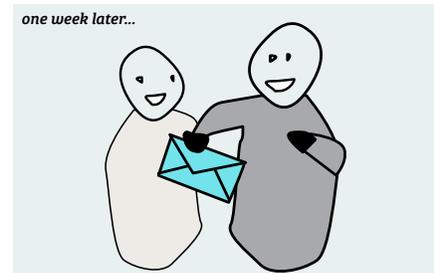
- Touchpoints:**
- Status board
 - Confirmation



Sign-up

KEA shows up at day programs. Persons served & staff receive a KEA key to sign up to an adventure.

"I chose pottery, and it got unlocked when three of us signed up!"



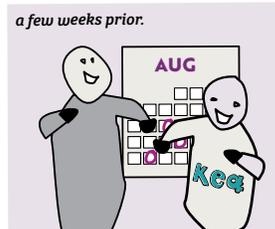
Invite

When an adventure is confirmed, the people who booked receive an invite.

"Oooh, for me?!"

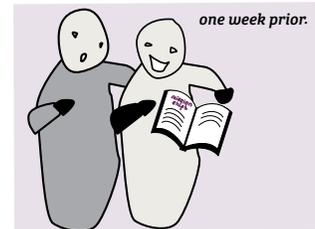
Sign-up

Before the adventure day



Schedule

Kea crew connects with a manager to book their 3-hr Mission for the month.



Orientate

Managers then receive an orientation to ensure they know the needs of the people they'll support.

Intention: remove logistical barriers by working out schedules between staff & people served and managers/ supervisors.

Intention: KEA shifts roles from staff and people-served to co-learners. The pack help to get in the mindset.

Touchpoints:
• Swag bag

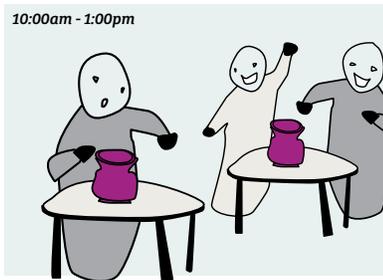


Get the pack

Before going out participants receive a bag with information and a camera.

Intention: Adventures are small and intimate events to enable quality peer-to-peer interactions.

Touchpoints:
• Smartphone for pictures
• Adventure location



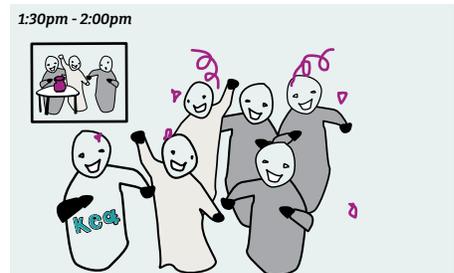
Go on adventure

Adventures are community activities open to all. Staff and person-served both participate in the activity as learners.

"We all got to make our own mugs and learn how to use the pottery wheel!"

Intention: KEA wants staff to feel appreciated, and to use relief time to collaborate with management.

Touchpoints:
• 'Kelp' rating board
• Kinstagram photo board



After party & Rate

After the adventure there's an event at the program. Photos are shared on a photo board.

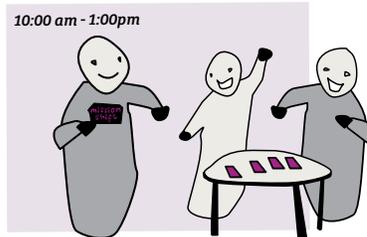
"We told the stories of our trip to everyone at our program. We got to rate our adventure."

KEA adventure day



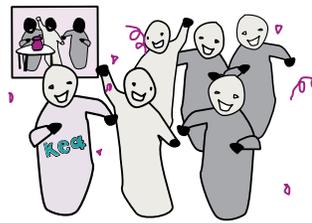
Get the pack

Managers receive a pack to encourage critical thinking. They are invited to sign a pledge around the intention of the shift.



Shift time

During Mission Shift, managers embody their new role and take time to observe what is happening.



After party

As participants adventurers come back, people in the program gather to hear about their experience.



Reflect

After people leave, the KEA crew invites participants to talk about their experiences and human moments.

Intention: Mission Shift creates meaningful moments and interactions between people (persons served, staff and managers) on more equal ground.

Touchpoints:
• Mission shift pack
• Pledge

Touchpoints:
• 'Kelp' rating board
• Kinstagram photo board

Touchpoints:
• reflection props

How KEA creates change

The Theory of Change diagram below shows how KEA's designed interactions are linked to our desired outcomes. A part of this theory is tested during prototyping.

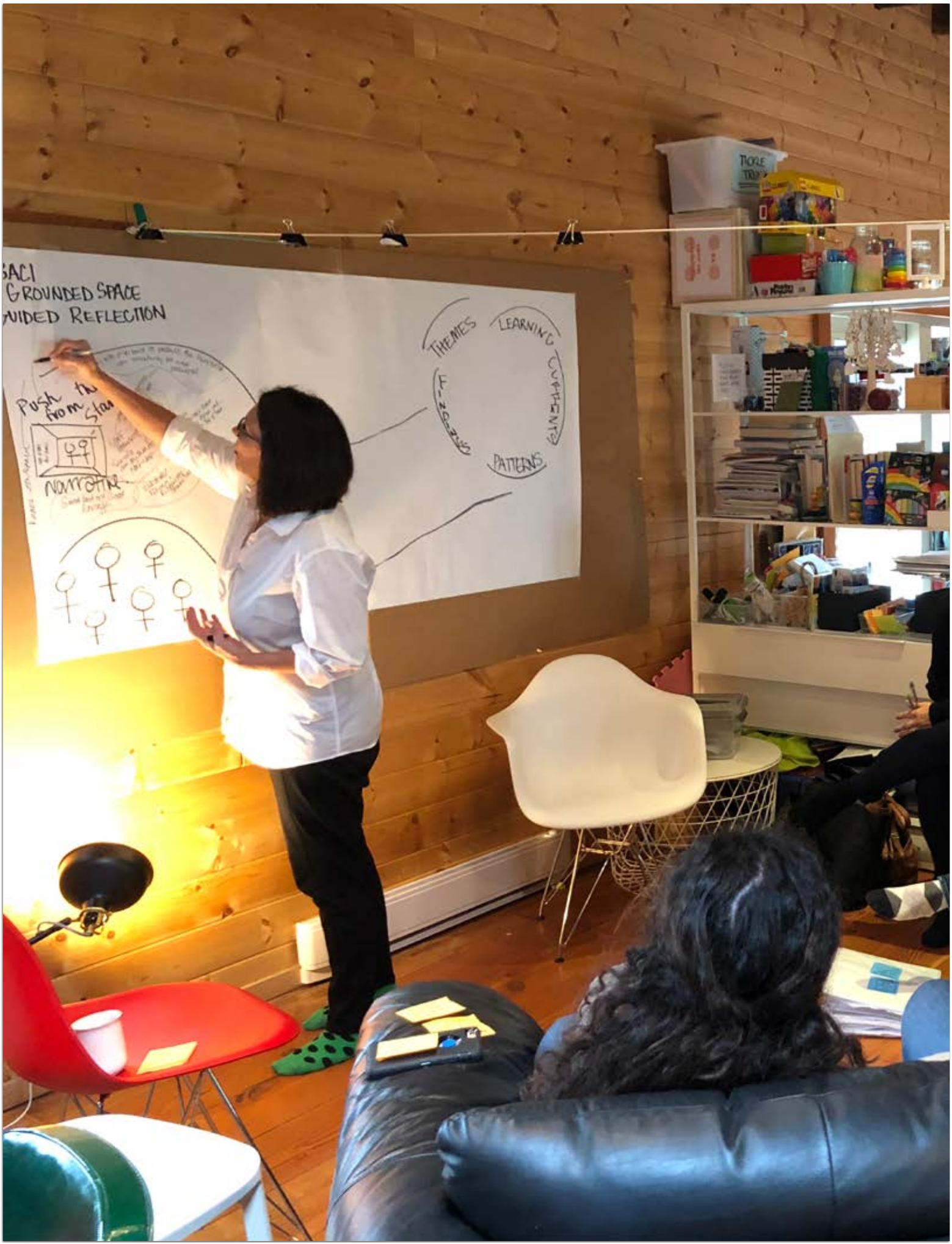
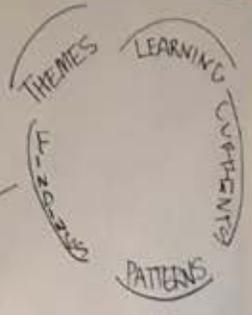
OUTCOME: a desired result of KEA

INTERACTION: a core activity of KEA

DETERMINANT: how an interaction links to an outcome by shaping people's motivations, capabilities, or opportunities for change.



SACI GROUNDED SPACE
GUIDED REFLECTION



4) Reflection: Learnings from the crews

Written by crews

posAbilities' guided reflection



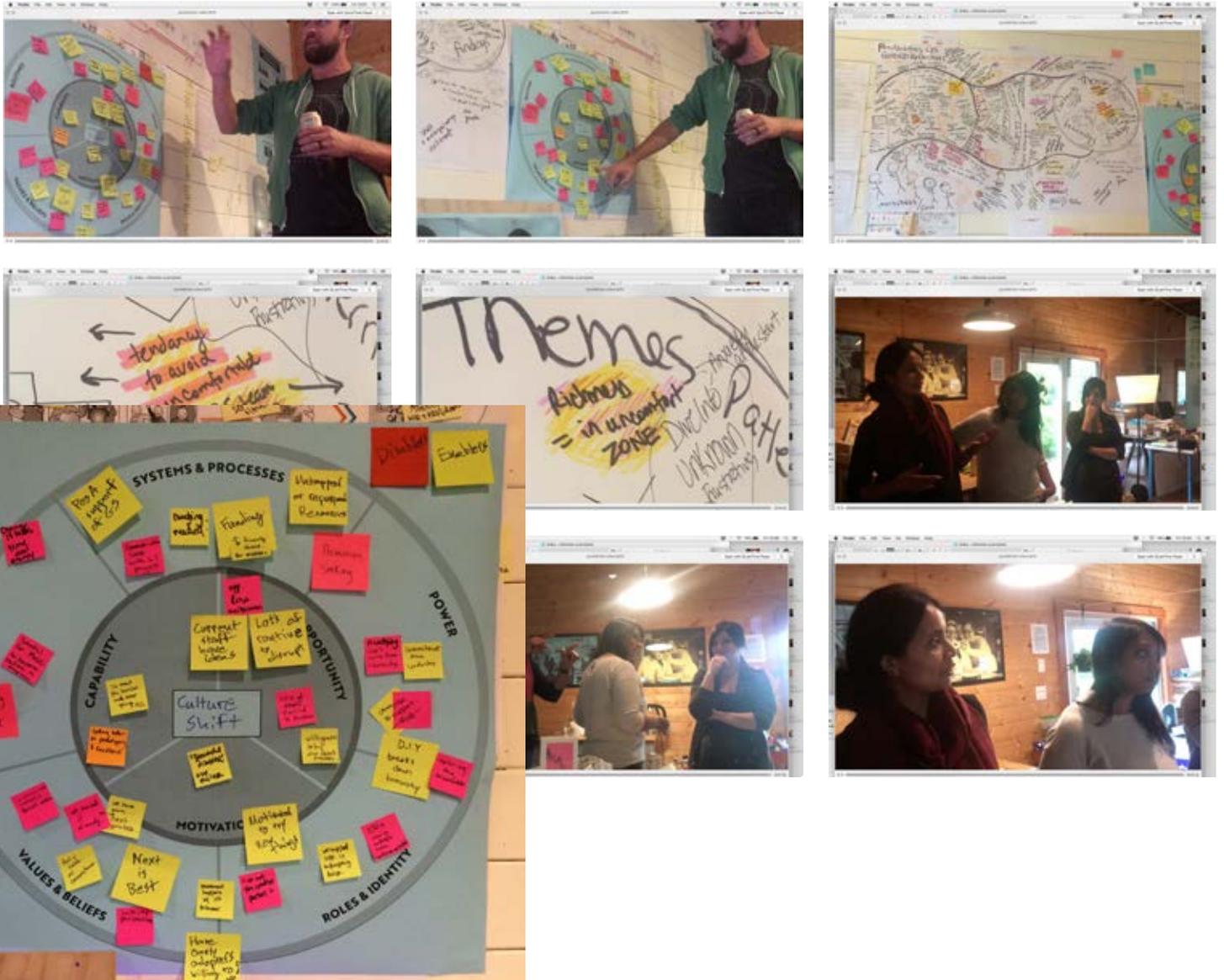
We realised that our core mission, outside of spreading the solution (Meraki), is shifting culture in our agency. We recognize the next practice Grounded Space is all about, and how big a shift that is from how things work today. One of our most significant leanings is about what actually makes up our organizational culture. And that even when we've finally shifted, there will always be a next shift to make... So it's never ending.

There's lots of routine to disrupt, and there are plenty of people who like those routines. This will need continued nudging through many interventions such as Meraki. We have met real champions in the agency for next practice -- and, for many others, there's a

rub: "Do we really need to figure out what's next if what we do is already best?"

So we introduce Meraki, at least for now, as a lightly disruptive experience. We're trying to help people make the leap to the new world, without it being so scary. We want to hold hands and guide people over the edge.

When we tested Meraki boxes in one of our day programs, someone called the sushi they made "a beautiful disaster." We think that's exactly right! They had a new experience and took something away, even if it didn't go to plan. We continue to identify early adopters, willing to try something new, who are the culture shifters. We also want to be really



intentional about the origins and intentions of Meraki. We see Meraki as just one tool to move us towards a culture more comfortable with experimentation and colouring outside of the lines.

Questions we still have:

- Asking people to do things differently is hard, and people like to do what they know and think is required. Could and should we make this more comfortable?
- How embedded and peer-led can we really be when power & hierarchy is a reality?
- What will it take to keep us going, even when things fall flat? There have been so many things that didn't succeed in Grounded Space such as our first kick-off

event during the December holidays. Yet, we've kept trying. Why? What does that say about our motivation, and how do we unlock that for more people?

Interestingly, the pain point behind Meraki is that staff feel they have ideas, and are motivated to try new things, but don't have the power or opportunities to do so. We found several other pain points in the research. There is enthusiasm to address those. The question is: where to next?

If we had to summarize what we have learned for sure, it's that 2030 is only 12 years from now, and we want the future to be different than today.

posAbilities' individual reflections

Just roll with it

Written by Kavita

It was Sunday evening and almost time for dinner. Mary, the evening staff, was waiting for Pam, the other staff, to come back home from her outing with one of the residents. They were planning to Sushi Meraki box that evening. Staff had made the rice the previous day and another staff had gone grocery shopping with Mike.

Were the residents of the house interested in making sushi? Not particularly, but they were curious and wanted to be around to see how it would play out.

Had the staff ever made sushi? One said: "Never!! Who ever makes sushi? If you want sushi, you just go get it!"

They were nervous and anxious as they followed the instructions on the Meraki box. The mat to roll sushi, vinegar, and chopsticks were all included in the box. With a tight time crunch and people hungry, everyone thought they were on their way to sushi land. All the while, the residents were examining the items in the box and on the table.... They weren't the usual ingredients.

One hour later... did they have sushi or something that resembled sushi...? No! But they all had a good laugh. A staff member said, "It was a beautiful disaster." Everyone ate what looked like "sushi from the war zone." More laughter followed, and surprisingly, staff reported that "the residents all gave kudos to our efforts."

What is their advice to others? Would they recommend Meraki? They said, "Yes, do it... you may like it but just don't sweat it!!"

Breaking out of routines and stepping out of comfort zones is not easy. But when you do, you redefine To-Do tasks into Ta-Da moments and create opportunities for discovery, laughter and learning. That's the Meraki experience.

Sarah Schulman, 12:55 AM Sep 25

This is an amazing quote - and should be the title of the story!

Gord Tulloch, 8:35 PM Sep 25

Agree. I love it.

What happens next?

Written by Irene

(Draft -- the idea is that the story is from the point of view of an Embedded researcher still in thought)

At this point in the Grounded Space journey, when I am in a state of reflection after a sprint with my Grounded Space teammates, a question comes to mind: What happens next? And what if nothing happens? What if all the hard work was for nothing? Is it a huge waste of time and money? Do we have a great solution that will unfortunately never be utilized? I am feeling in limbo while waiting for the moment in the future when things will change. Here we are trying to promote experimental behaviour, while at the same time lacking control over the outcome.

Harsh critics may legitimately ask all these questions. These questions also reflect my internal dialogue and self doubt. Then, there is the ultimate question I have heard many times while trying to explain Grounded Space to my colleagues in day programs: what's the point of it all?

There are no straight answers. Even if nothing more happens with our solution, my more optimistic side can say that some changes have already happened: words such as "change," "breaking the routine" and "trying new things" are said and heard more often by staff; and doing research and prototyping in the field had impact in the programs and amongst management.

I learned things we cannot unlearn. The journey was a force that impacted different layers of the agency, and I do think we caused a ripple in a big pond. And then there's my many personal experiences on how to see and do things differently, how to ... (unfinished).

Melanie Camman, 2:33 AM Oct 6

I really like the premise of this story, I would like to see it complete and flushed out a bit more, the voice of our inner critics countered by the voice of vision for the future. Irene please keep writing this one. Lets add and edit this one so it gets to a completed stage.

Sarah Schulman, 1:06 AM Sep 30

Legitimate questions. One of the reasons we started Grounded Space was to put less focus on the solution, and more on the cultural conditions that give rise to solutions. So I wonder what has happened around that - I see a lot of promise, as an outsider, with the fact that the managers of the day programs were part of the creation process, the fact you grew your team during prototyping, the fact there was so much appetite for Meraki. What if the key to change is NOT getting so wedded to a single solution? But to the thinking that gives rise to new solutions.

Gord Tulloch, 8:31 PM Sep 30

Great questions and conversation. I suspect that it will be difficult for an organization to NOT get wedded to solutions because that is its raison d'être. We are the mechanical engines that run solutions. That said, I am curious about how to provoke a thirst for new solutions (not so much that we choke on them, which is quite possible as infants in this new space). Is the thinking that gives rise to new solutions compatible with the sort of thinking required to run them?

Gord Tulloch, 8:34 PM Sep 25

I think changing the things we talk about can change everything. It presents new perspectives, possibilities and can bring about new kinds of vision and common will.

Boldly Going Where?

Written by Peter

Most stories have an arc, the characters are known, the conclusion is succinct and the audience goes home content with what just transpired. Most stories don't leave out the middle part: the guts and glory; the high point of the arc; the zenith that a hero gracefully falls, rolls or climbs down. The middle of the story is what really matters. The middle is where all the learning, growth and excitement happens. Yet, here I am, with a beginning and an ending, but no middle. So maybe this isn't a story? Maybe this is a call to arms: a glimpse of a dream we believe must become reality.

It is the year 2018 and a year of research and development within posAbilities is coming to an inflection point. It is not the conclusion of our work, but this rendition and the partnership with InWithForward will take new forms. So as much as this is a kind-of ending, we all know it is really just the beginning.

We were tasked with discovering the grounds for experimentation within posAbilities. We spent months observing and interviewing staff and end users in multiple programs. We grouped our findings to discover commonalities and sought out sweet spots where we could test new ways of thinking, doing and being. We fell flat sometimes, had our hopes dashed, and started from scratch over and over again. Yet, we remained committed and with hard work ended up with a solution we call, Meraki Experiences. It is a new method for shifting not just the culture of posAbilities, but the culture of the world.

Gord Tulloch, 8:19 PM Sep 25

Our ambition is about changing interactions that will have a cumulative effect on changing culture. I'm not sure we will change the culture of the world, but hopefully, of these immediate worlds of the people we support and our employees.

Peter Greenwood, 11:55 PM Sep 25

By the end of this piece I felt like it was more of a call to action and rationale for the methods GS uses. I'm not sure if it works as well if I tailor it strictly to Meraki, maybe it does?

Maybe this isn't even the beginning of the story; it may just be the prologue.

So there you have it: the beginning of the story. This is supposed to be the middle of the story... only there's nothing here because it hasn't been written, it hasn't happened yet, and we refuse to assume or even speculate what it will look like once it does happen. This brings me to the most essential requirement of doing the hard work of research and development (R&D): you must forget what you've done in the past; you must assume nothing and be comfortable with diving into the unknown. We have exhausted the iterations of disability services and supports we can provide based on what we already know to be true. This leaves us with no choice but to find a new approach, if we are going to achieve our mission of all people living deep, meaningful and thriving lives.

We are now at the end of our story. It is the year 2030 and we've taken bold step after bold step into the unknown. We've found, designed and implemented things we never could have imagined and shifted our reality to be closer to the dream of trampolines, not just safety nets. We had our beginning and are living our end. We co-wrote our middle.

Sarah Schulman, 1:03 AM Sep 25

Why is there nothing in the middle? Is it because you need more time to let things develop, because that's the trick that the middle always has to be re-developed, rather than preset?

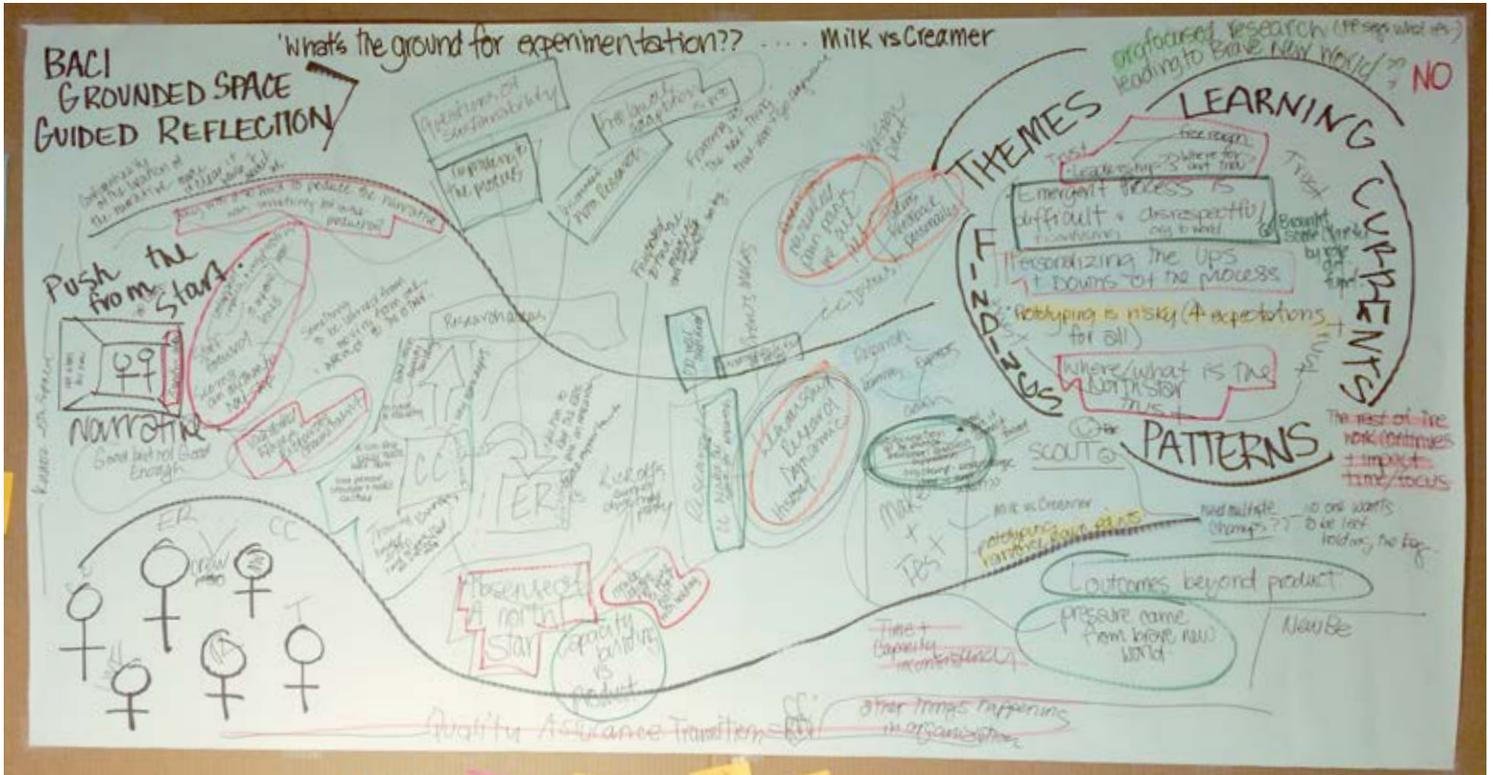
Gord Tulloch, 8:16 PM Sep 25

I think, because we have a vision for 2030, and some new learning/competencies/ ideas for getting there, but we haven't gotten into the thick of it yet. It's an interesting approach. This would need to be a little more tightened up. The beginning is the story of Fifth Space and Grounded Space, the end of the story will hopefully be a brave new world in 2030. But the writing of the middle piece has yet to happen.

Peter Greenwood, 11:53 PM Sep 25

This is definitely in rough draft form, its in my head, but I haven't completely nailed it down on paper. To me the middle of the story is the research, the unearthing, finding the diamond on the rough and to find that we must release all our assumptions and be truly open to what we find. Also trying to get at the point that the only way we can create the new world is through a new route, through new learnings and new ways of thinking. Once this is hammered out it could be a good tool in explaining why we are using the methods we are using and explain why we are comfortable with the fact that we don't know exactly what we are doing.

BACI's Guided reflection



We found this guided reflection a good way to see our journey and the key learning points and break points. We mapped them in chronological order and on Susan Mitchie's behavioural change wheel. Let's use the latter to summarize.

Motivation

A pivotal moment came with making the diorama of 2030 and the 'Brave New World' showcasing the *next practice* we wanted to see. Our diorama was about everyone being equal, people not having roles and exchanging ideas. But the ethnographic research we did was all about power dynamics and not being heard/ listened to. It did not point to a Brave New World. We felt pressure to respond to what we learned from the research -- and the disconnection with the future displayed in the diorama felt way too big to close. We felt stuck in forcing a connection between the two.

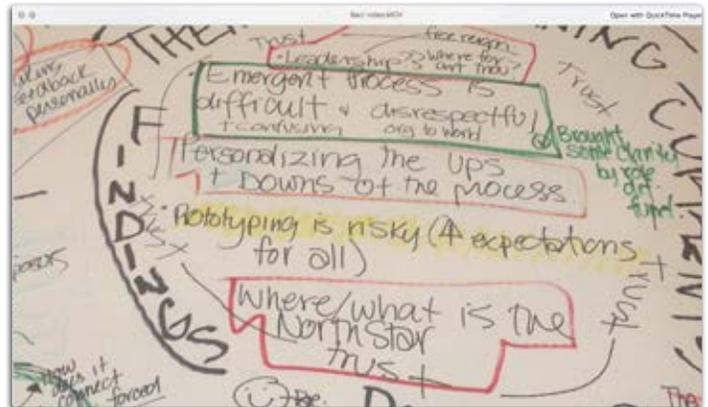
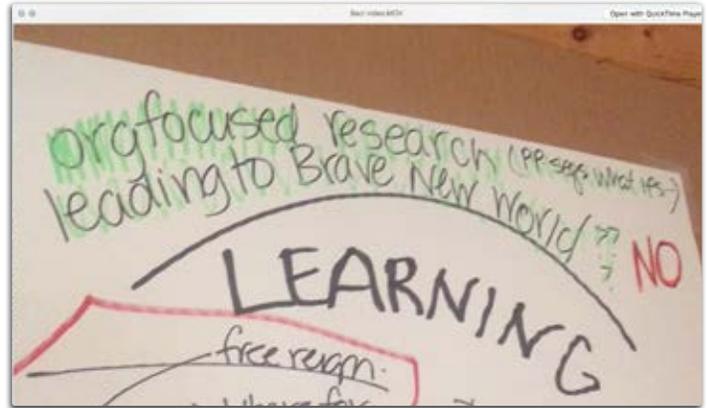
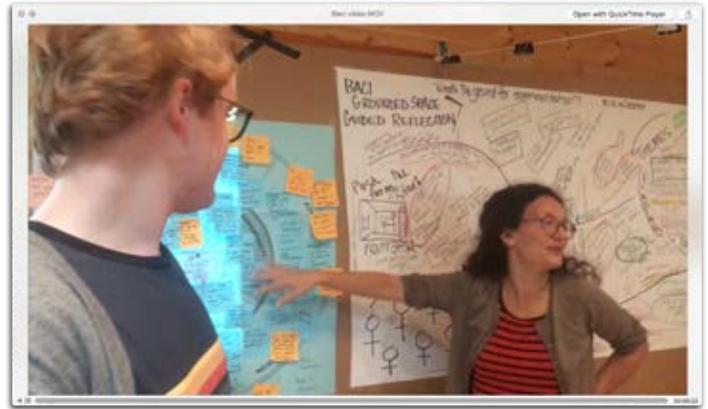
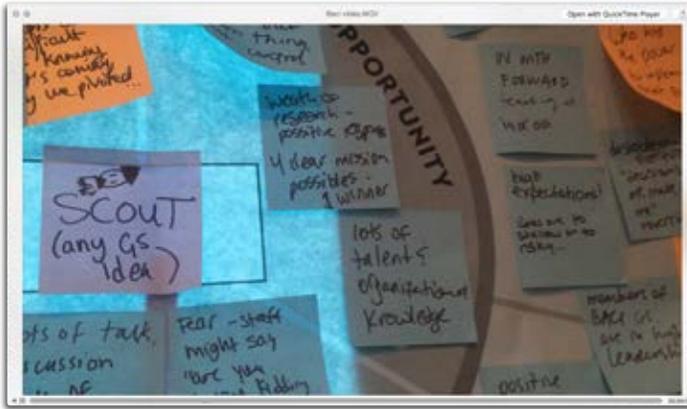
Eventually we made the decision to address

the research pain points. It didn't sit well with our team to propose a next practice when we still needed to get to best practice. We were afraid to propose an idea that someone might say, "Are you fucking kidding me?" But if you don't have anyone saying anything it's hard to know where to go...

Capability

We found that it takes a huge communication effort to maintain our big Grounded Space team. At one point, there was lots of discussion, but far less action. Booking off time for sprints was another challenge. As people were often not there, we had to figure out how to deal with people coming in and going. We managed to re-frame this as a useful prompt, rather than annoying problem. It made us make an effort to recap decisions and explain our shifts in thinking, so others could join.

With big teams, ideas can get watered down and become everything and nothing... "yes



and..” Sometimes we had the feeling that our team wanted to go to another direction than IWF.

Opportunity

On the one hand, we have time allotted and have been given the space by our Executive Directors to participate in Grounded Space. They have backed-off and did not control the process. On the other hand, we didn't know the vision of the Executive Directors. We felt, at times, we did not have a clear North Star. We developed four clear Mission possibilities

(or opportunities). Scout was a go-to person for staff and end users, who could solve problems and link you to things to do. The challenge with Scout was that we were trying to solve too many problems with a single intervention and did not have a shared/clear vision. Ultimately, we killed Scout. We couldn't reach a consensus on what it was. After taking a break to recharge, our team took the initiative to go back into idea generation. We came up with a new idea, that has felt more doable and right to prototype.

Kinsight's individual reflections

Story 1

Written by Julian and Michelle

Once upon a time, there was a team of five people on a series of quests. The base for these quests was centered on finding the grounds for experimentation, but was plagued with questions and concerns about feasibility. The team began their mission by searching for where the grounds for experimentation are within the realm of Kinsight's Community Inclusion Program. What they soon came across, but didn't put a name to it until much later was..... The Feasibility Trap. This was a treacherous trap, but one that the team knew could be overcome. Time and time again, as the team moved forward on their quests, they came across this horrifying monster, which we soon learned was an alien (after all, we are in space...). The Alien Monster did rear his head very early on in the journey in minor ways, but his first prominent showing was shortly after the beginning of the design process.

The First Encounter

The first quest was to collect data about experimental behaviour in day programs so the team decided to have conversations with staff from Community Inclusion Land. When scheduling these conversations, your heroes got their first glimpse of the evil eyes of the Alien Monster that is the Feasibility Trap. For staff are scarce in Community Inclusion Land, and so the heroes had to step in and become temporary stewards of Community Inclusion land for the conversations to take place. As your heroes were scrambling to figure out and align their schedules, they could always hear the evil laugh of the Feasibility Trap cackling in the back of their minds.

Sarah Schulman, 1:00 AM Sep 25

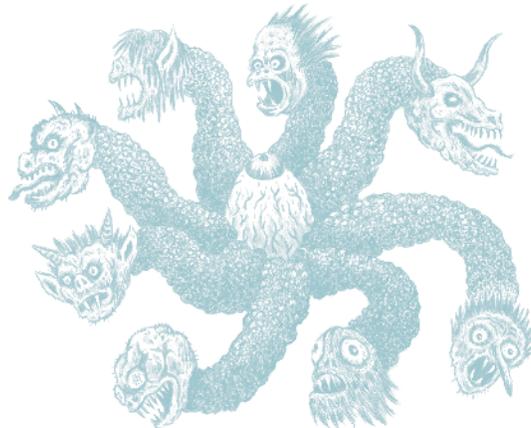
I am curious about positioning yourselves as heroes. How do you think that might be perceived? Are you heroes – or is it the staff and end users who were brave enough to take part in the prototypes?

Feasibility Trap from Within

The team chose to accept the second quest, which involved translating the data found into missions alongside the people of Community Inclusion Land. These missions, seemingly workable on paper, brought to light some constraints that were reflective of the Feasibility Monster from within the team. Your heroes had to reflect on the design principles of each potential mission. From there they realized that these missions could only go forward if the people of Community Inclusion Land took interest. At this point, the heroes decided to push forward and silence the Feasibility Alien Monster from within by displaying the missions regardless of their Alien Monster narrative.

The People of Community Inclusion Land Speak!

A mission was set, and all the peoples of all the lands called it KEA. Such a mission allowed the people of Community Inclusion Land to go out on adventures and learn new and exciting skills and trades. At first glance, this mission's flaws were hard to identify. But upon closer inspection it was clear that The Feasibility Alien Monster infiltrated the heroes' plans. Much like the previous mission, your heroes had to come up with a way in which the people could go on these adventures while still maintaining an adequately staffed garrison for Community Inclusion Land. It was at this moment that your heroes developed and created Mission Shift. The team believed that Mission Shift was what would solve this particular feasibility challenge, but they soon came to learn, the Feasibility Alien continue to lurk in the shadows.



Kinsight Kinsight, 10:39 PM Sep 24
clearly the title

Sarah Schulman, 12:48 AM Sep 25

Love the honesty - what kind of impact did they have on you? Can you be more specific and emotive? What did these conversations change for you - in terms of how you saw things before vs. after?

ARE WE THERE YET? Who Cares!

Written by Krista and Angela

Opening Scene: The Grounded Space crew are at a crew huddle in our Space Station hovered over a giant schedule. Half are frantically shaking their heads, while the other half are busy writing emails. We are trying to schedule our next two KEA adventures before the InWithForward envelope of safety implodes.

Narrator: Maybe Snoop Dogg?
[Zoom in on each crew member]

“Meet Julian - aka Jules, aka The Barrier King! When it comes to feasibility, he’s the one that can point out how things can go wrong from a mile away.”

“Meet Michelle - aka KeaKea from the SIX”

“Meet Angela - aka The Crafter, The Snacker, The Coffee Fetcher.”

“Meet Krista - aka Purple Ninja.”

“Meet Gareth - aka Our Voice of Reason.”

Where are we!? How did we get here!? (Flash-back bubble.....)

Coming into Grounded Space, we thought that it would be a quick and easy task.... boy, were we wrong! We assumed we would be starting off with a couple target areas; but soon realized that this was going to be a much bigger undertaking. We thought this would be easy - having conversations with staff, coming up with a brilliant idea, and

solving all the world’s problems - once again, oh yes, we were wrong.

Intensive crash course in ethnographic research... do you know what anthropologists do? Yeah, we didn’t either. But we learned it... kind of... something about lenses, asking questions, and contexts. Seems like something that occurred long long ago - just a hazy memory now... We had some intimate conversations, got some hard to digest information - even with the probiotics, we weren’t able to minimize the impact that these conversations had on us.

We initially had our sights set on staff, but with a persistent knock at our door, we had no choice but to look at the people we serve too. This inevitably led us to look at managers and community members as well and how we can strengthen all of those relationships. That is where KEA and Mission Shift was born.

Our hopes for change and innovation do not end here.... It has only just begun and we have many more volcanoes to shake up and disrupt.

The journey never ends; but we’ve developed some pretty cool attractions along the way! We may not know what the destination is.

We are working on disruptive innovations.... There has been a lot of change... This whole process has been an experiment...

How fun is the vehicle you are using to get there? What is the vehicle propelling us to? What is the best vehicle to get there?

Starting from the bottom: A rebirth story

Written by Gareth

In our quest from best to next practice, we've discovered that the path wasn't just about developing a new service or intervention, but is founded on the quality of relationships and shared small moments.

We started with a big ambition to reclaim the path of our original founders (families), yet we knew little about where to start. But we did know that we needed to start from a different place. A place where the people we serve and the staff who support them occupy a more equal space on a daily basis.

We stumbled and we slipped as we began to find our way. It started out with the staff survey and a goal of returning 100 responses by December. While the response was disappointing -- only 36 completed -- it was an early indication of our own hubris and faith in tools to help us. Next, we ran interviews with staff and bumped into scheduling and staffing challenges. Yet we drove forward trusting each other and not wanting to let each other down.

In our playback, where research findings were shared, there was some push back and some things that were tough to hear. Yet we carried on into prototyping. We had the challenge of finding the sweet spot of an idea that would bring value to all: the people we serve, staff, managers and the community. Yet we drove on...

With each test, we got closer to our aim of creating new relationships within and without Kinsight. These are relationships built on curiosity, honesty and reciprocity.

And they were the relationships that were built throughout Grounded Space. And they are the relationships that need to exist to get us to next practice.

These are the foundations to building a new way of interacting so that it's less about roles of staff, persons served and community, but more just about community. This is the way our founders saw the world.

Sarah Schulman, 12:40 AM Sep 25

What was the path of your original founders?

Sarah Schulman, 12:44 AM Sep 25

I wonder if we want to use the word push back, or perhaps a statement like: there were some concerns about whether what we heard from staff and end users was 'the' truth - with a big T. We hit up against this idea that there is a singular truth and implicit mistrust in what the other says. Sometimes, it was hard for people to listen to things they already considered to be false, biased, or untrue to their own experiences.

Sarah Schulman, 12:45 AM Sep 25

For example, xxx... the rats (Would be nice to move from a lovely abstract statement to a concrete story that demonstrates what those relationships are about ... I imagine many people might argue that relationships already exist, so what's different about the relationships you've tried to build, to what ends...?)

Sarah Schulman, 12:45 AM Sep 25

Love both stories Team Kea! My biggest question as a reader what's the moral of the story? The honoring your origin story has a clearer point to grasp, that it's all about relationships ... But still could be strengthened ... What am I to take away? The so what factor? Did you just do all of this work, and conclude it can't be done, or you've done all this work, and gained glimpses of things, what will you continue to nurture, what is important to continue, what cannot be forgotten, etc.?



“It has definitely been a struggle trying to balance Supported Child Development work and Grounded Space work, but with the right time and space to learn and engage in this work, amazing things were done! I have learned so much about the importance of ethnographic research and how to do it. I have enjoyed spending time at the Community Inclusion Programs and getting to know the wonderful staff and individuals there. I am looking forward to working on our next mission and to see what other adventures are to come!”

**~ Angela Kim,
Kinsight Embedded Researcher**

“Having worked in the Community Inclusion program for some time, the Grounded Space Research we Embedded Researchers have done is very important to me. The process of undertaking this research, albeit new, was work that brought me back to the work site of my former role. Having the opportunity to engage in conversation with my previous colleagues was extremely interesting, as it provided them with a space for them to share their experience working in Community Inclusion with me.

**~ Julian Avelino,
Kinsight Embedded Researcher**



“Curiosity, excitement, challenging, engaging, are some words that can describe my Grounded Space experience. It’s been an interesting process and I am beginning to make connections to the work I do with Supported Child Development. I have enjoyed spending time at the Community Inclusion Programs as well as having the opportunity to hangout with the staff and individuals. I am looking forward to what this has in store for the future of Kinsight!”

**~ Michelle Mastrandrea,
Kinsight Embedded Researcher**

InWithForward's key learnings

So, what do we make of it all?

We set-up Grounded Space as a prototype: How could we build social service capacity to experiment with and re-invent the future?

Over the past 18 months, we have tested the desirability, feasibility and impact of Grounded Space, making multiple iterations to the journey map, the framing, the roles, the methods and the pacing.

Our conclusion? Yes, it is possible to build social service capacity to experiment -- the question is, for what? Our intent was to create a model that brought together ends and means; that positioned Research & Development as a means to a bigger end: a future welfare state predicated on human flourishing. And yet, all too quickly, bringing R&D into organizations became our focus. Frustrated by the lack of stickiness of prior innovations, we sought to identify the organizational conditions for solutions to take root and grow. But by taking the organization as our primary setting, and using an overly structured set of modules & tools to understand organizational dynamics, we found ourselves entrenched in the very systems, processes and protocols we were seeking to re-imagine.

Rather than spend time with the end users of the welfare state, in their contexts, the R&D teams we curated spent most of their time with frontline staff, inside of their organizations. That meant that most of the intelligence and insights centred on organizational tensions: on managerial pain points and administrative opportunities. It's not that this isn't a fruitful space for innovation. There is plenty to be done to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human resourcing, service delivery, accountability and funding regimes. And yet, by taking the managerial paradigm as a given and operating within its purview, we

weren't able to gain enough critical distance to come up with future practice underpinned by alternative assumptions and values. We weren't able to fully occupy that transitional space between best and next practice.

The space between

The history of the community living sector offers us a compelling reminder for why we need transitional space. For well over one-hundred years, until its end in the 1970s-90s, institutions were best practice. Doctors encouraged families to institutionalize their sons and daughters born with significant disabilities. By centralizing expertise in one place, the thinking was people would receive the most advanced care and support. Over time, not only was that premise questioned, but we understood its consequences: isolation, stigma, and in too many cases, great harm and abuse. Families began to organize, and use their lived experiences to demand the closure of institutions. They wanted their children living at home, within communities, supported to learn, play and grow alongside their peers. They set up associations and groups to pool resources and create alternative models. And yet, some of the same logics were imported over -- as staff migrated from the big institutions to smaller group homes and day programs. Without a transitional window to invest in best to next practice, when the environment suddenly shifted, there wasn't a robust alternative system ready to go. The ambitions of families, in some cases, was stymied by the persistence of limiting narratives of risk and safety, vulnerability and protection.

Grounded Space, we hoped, could occupy the space between here and there: it could be where we tested and iterated models based on different logics, in advance of environmental shifts, and not just in the disability sector, but in the broader

social sector. Building a future predicated on different truths than the present is understandably scary. It also doesn't address real and urgent everyday pressures. That created a conflict with our choice of teams and locations. By choosing to situate Grounded Space within organizations, staff crews with organizational insiders, and listen to the experiences of its current stakeholders, we found ourselves compelled to solve things in the here and now. Indeed, Grounded Space crews got caught up in one of the dominant logics of the managerial paradigm: fixing problems versus opening up possibilities.

Accepting tension

Tension and ambiguity are antithetical to good management, and essential to good experimentation. Organizations create structures, organize people in hierarchies, establish reporting lines, put in place protocols and processes, and parcel out tasks in order to maximize compliance and align behaviours.

Experimentation, on the other hand, is all about maximizing divergence. To discover the unknown, we must ask questions that depart from the current consensus, test hunches, fail, and try again. Trying to impose order on the messiness too soon thwarts distinct logics from surfacing-- and that's what we need if we want to develop a future that doesn't run like the present; that's not just a slicker and digitized version of what we already do, but a fundamental rethink of our social contract.

One of the more difficult days of Grounded Space was hearing a handful of managers from an organization reject the research findings of their Embedded Research crew. The crew had collected over 50 hours of interview and observational data with frontline workers, trying to hear their perspectives and see their day-to-day

realities. The resulting themes did not reflect these managers' own perspectives and realities. The insights did not hold true for them -- and therefore they simply were not true. Rather than entertain the notion that both truths could reflect reality, the managers needed to call into question the research methods and poke holes in the process. We got mired in a fight for legitimacy, which put us in a defensive posture. We inadvertently created more tension, and failed to create the conditions to hold the tension.

And that, perhaps, is our biggest lesson from Grounded Space, iteration #1: how to move from an "either/or" to a "yes, and" world. Operating in the present whilst re-imagining the future means embracing:

- >order and disorder
- >structure and emergence
- >risk mitigation and risk taking
- >planning and improvising
- >controlling and letting go
- >resource allocation and opportunism

We need both ends of the continuum. And we need to learn how to accept and get comfortable with polarities, rather than battle for one side over the other. We need to somehow rid ourselves of the managerial tendency to placate and streamline, and instead, toggle between two operating systems. To take an analogy, we need to be able to work in both a Mac and Windows world, without trying to make one look more like the other. Our two operating systems -- call them Present and Future -- have different functions, and maintaining those differences is not only OK, but necessary.

Indeed, far too early in the Grounded Space journey, experimentation became an organizational change exercise. The way we developed modules and research tools exacerbated this tendency. It became about bringing this new way of working *inside* organizations, rather than allowing for two ways of working to co-exist. Much of crews

time went to communicating within their organizations, running events and showing up at meetings, before they had enough experimental practice to show -- before you could see and touch this alternative world of making, testing and iterating. Yes, we want to invite staff, end users and community members to dip their toes in the experimental waters, but first we must build the pond. We don't need to reconcile the differences between the two opposing landscapes. We need to make both worlds inhabitable and purposeful.

Along the way, there have been promising glimpses of not only making room, but embracing tension. Meraki is a small

intervention to emerge from Grounded Space, but the content in the boxes (be it a sushi making kit or word games) can be subtly disruptive, introducing the idea of spontaneity and fortuity to a group home and day program context that is structured and routinized. Rather than try and smooth over the differences between the present and future operating systems, Meraki is unapologetically opening up a door for both to exist.

We need more doors and more windows. Stay tuned for Grounded Space 2.0.

Questions we asked & answered with Grounded Space 1.0

Feasibility

- *How does the placement of the crew affect political and resourcing requirements?*
- *How much organizational resource is required? How long can that be sustained?*
- *How long does it take to get through the process? What's the optimum length? Pace?*
- *How much IWF resource is required?*
- *What are the key support roles in Grounded Space? Can IWF staff do them?*
- *Can do organizations handle the strain?*

Desirability

- *Why would an organization join?*
- *Can/how do we find organizations who want to take part?*
- *Can/how do we find staff who want to do take part as crews?*
- *How does organizational motivation shift over time?*

Impact

- *What's an organization's journey to grow capacity?*
- *Can crews do insightful enough research to drive change?*
- *Can we get to desired outcomes? What does it take?*
- *How much dosage is required to see outcomes?*
- *How does understanding conditions help?*
- *Can we see internal ownership and buy-in of the process? What does it take?*
- *Can organizations actually hold space for bottom-up change?*

Desirability/ staff crews

- *Can/how do we find staff who want to do take part as crews?*

The majority of Embedded Researchers (75%) are embracing the role; with about half of them expressing the desire to do more. They would like more time and permission to bring these methods into the every day.

Culture Curators have had more mixed experiences and express frustration with understanding the role. Asking managers and stewards of the existing system to hold space for disruption is not only emotionally hard -- there also is no road map for how to do it. Culture Curators who have taken part in the research & co-owned the results fare better.

“I’m pretty certain InWithForward has helped me stumble upon my life’s work.”

~ Peter, Embedded Researcher

“I never thought I could bring in my past experience in this way.”

~ Matt, Embedded Researcher

“You have to fully emerge yourself in the research when you’re doing ethnography. It’s not 9 to 5 type of work. I wanted to keep doing it.”

~ Shamair, Embedded Researcher



Feasibility

- **How does placement of the crew affect political & resourcing requirements?**

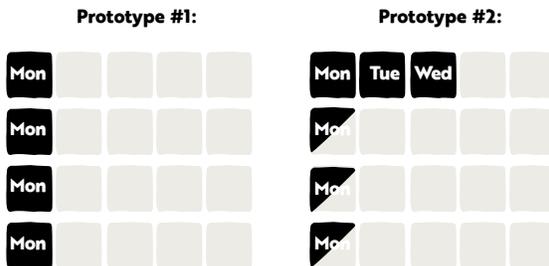
We placed crews within the centre of their organizations, where they focused the majority of their research on staff pain points and organizational conditions. Protected by the creators and sustainers of the existing culture, we now realize we were unrealistic in expecting next practices to emerge.

Instead of embedding researchers inside organizations, going forward, we would like to embed researchers in community. We see organizations as one part of community.

We found it was hard for crews to come up with fresh ideas that both responded to immediate staff pain points and had elements of an alternative future when they were still so immersed in present-day realities.

- **How much organizational resource is required? How long can that be sustained?**

Initially, we established a weekly rhythm with organizations, who committed to freeing-up 10-16 hrs per week of each Embedded Researcher's time. In January 2018, we pivoted to a sprint rhythm to address the lack of focus and potency. This worked much better from a team dynamic perspective, but was much harder for senior managers to schedule and participate.



- **How much InWithForward resource is required?**
- **What are the key support roles in Grounded Space? Can InWithForward staff do them?**
- **Can do organizations handle the strain?**

We developed the first versions of three new support roles. Relationship Managers guided the process, together with a Design Coach and a Social Science Coach, who taught their respective methods. Relationship Managers worked closely with Culture Curators, while Coaches worked closely with Embedded Researchers.

We now think that it's possible to combine the Culture Curator and Relationship manager roles into one new position -- the Impact Producer -- sitting between the organization and Grounded Space. We also would like to shift the Coach from being a teacher to a fellow team member modeling (versus teaching) experimental behaviour. To do this, InWithForward needs about 14 days a month with each organization. With cohorts, InWithForward can make slightly more efficient use of staff. In sprints, both Design & Social Science Coaches are needed and can support several crews at once.

- **How long does it take to get through the process? What's the optimum length? Pace?**

It has taken 12-15 months for the four organizations to move from Deep Dive Set-up to Grounding. These 4 organizations skipped the Quick Dive. The first stages felt slow. Crews spent months introducing themselves and doing research before making and testing interventions. That's meant we haven't had enough concentrated time to support the slower and more diffuse Grounding stage. If we continue the rhythm of monthly sprints, 15 months is short. To get to independently running crews, a better length might be 18-20 months.



**Grow awareness
through open events**



**Grow urgency & need
through Quick Dives**



**Grow research skills
through Deep Dives**



**Grow design capacity
through Make & Test**



**Grow innovation capacity
through Grounding**

How far did we get towards our desired outcomes?

1. Open Events

Eco-system: We engaged with cross sector group of people, but there it was more InWithForward sending than two-way sharing.

1.1

Eco-system: We met two funders that we (as of November 2018) have worked with on Grounded Data projects (similar to the Quick Dive stage. We continue conversations with existing funders.

1.2

Eco-system: A number of people have met through our events.

1.3

Eco-system: idem

1.4

Eco-system: We've not accomplished this.

1.5

2. Quick Dive

Eco-system: We have received funding for future Quick Dives.

2.1

Mindset: While we increased people's notion of positive deviants, there is still room to go into tapping into that resource base.

2.2

Mindset: EDs have used and re-used with boards to raise visibility of the possibility of a different way of working.

2.3

Research: No data to indicate.

2.4

Understanding humans: We have not made the link clear enough

2.5

Understanding humans: Defenately with some Grounded Space members, where leadership is rethinking boundaries between activities.

2.6

Organizational change: no, storytelling is seen as a marketing tool and sometimes treated with suspicion. Not spomething that's used to advantage.

2.7

3. Deep Dive Set-up

Mindset: Provincial funder has allowed flexible use of budgets to allow staff to participate

3.1

Mindset: This is still difficult to articulate.

3.2

Mindset: While CEOs have ncourages staff, we hit more road blacks with mid-leel managers.

3.3

Research: Crews haven't always been able to draw on research.

3.4

Organizational change: Absolutely not. it has been difficult to find connection between the two and articulate it.

3.5

Organizational change: This is happening in about half of the organizations, best example being an ER freed up from frontline work to support social R&D efforts

3.6

Understanding humans: People are engaging more in this then they have before. This is happening ore in the Deep Dive.

3.7

Understanding humans: There was reflective space that people have used to think about this.

3.8

Design: Yes, albeit in a different stage - Make & Test - to design their own intervention.

3.9

Team practice: Embedded Researchers led one kick-off event and later would do more events in their organization.

3.10

Team practice: Three out of four crews have set up and used fit for purpose spaces.

3.11

Outcomes for each stage of Grounded Space, colour coded by how far we got:

Quite far Half way Not really

4. Deep Dive

Team practice: Staff feel listened to; families and individuals likely not, as we didn't do enough user research with them.

4.1

Design: Staff crews started to make tools for the User sprint. They did design and produce research tools but there was little time to iterate and reflect on the design.

4.7

Organizational change: Roughly half of the crews were embracing not knowing and being vulnerable. Leadership had less of an opportunity

4.2

Design: Crews have used the conditions framework for analysis and to generate opportunity areas.

4.8

Mindset: Crews: yes. Leadership didn't get involved at this level.

4.3

Design: All crews have shared back their findings through a playback event and posters.

4.9

Research: Crews have used and visualized data to support making sense of the research.

4.4

Team practice: Staff crews have not felt very confident in their role as researcher, and the identified experimental practices were small.

4.10

Research: Yes, albeit more through the prototyping with multiple user groups in the Make & Test stage.

4.5

Team practice: Staff crews have set up a rhythm that many are continuing.

4.11

Understanding humans: Through gap analysis, embedded researchers came to ideas and opportunities, and learnt to look in this way

4.6

5. Make & Test

Mindset: It's been hard to gauge which opportunity areas resonated most with people. This has been more stronger through the prototyping, where they could experience a new idea.

5.1

Understanding humans: Staff crews have used mechanisms of change and have moved from opportunity areas into ideas. They constructed theories of change that they tested.

5.7

Organizational change: Leadership have held the space for risk and failure, for example during sharing events. They have not been able to communicate the value of iterations.

5.2

Understanding humans: No data about this: staff crews spend time thinking about how to bring values and intentional cultures into being; they are able to draw on history and international examples.

5.8

Organizational change: With some of the members this has certainly happened, as leaders are connecting with funders to progress some of the concepts coming out of the journey.

5.3

Research: Staff crews identify research questions, assumptions behind ideas, and develop tools to deepen their understanding. They Imagine possibilities and test with people impacted by change.

5.9

Organizational change: Ideas were operationalised mainly in the Grounding stage. In this stage many aspects have been tested and explored.

5.4

Design: With help, staff crews have visualized ideas to test. They have seen ideas as journeys with frontstage & backstage components, and created touchpoints.

5.10

Mindset: Most of the Staff crews have continued to feel uncomfortable not knowing what solutions will look like, or not having a definitive plan. They don't have examples of alternative ways to project manage.

5.5

Team practice: Staff crews have documented what they've tried and learned, but have not developing a new narrative around the solutions yet.

5.11

Eco-system: Staff crews have leveraged the InWithForward resources for design to make their prototypes happen.

5.6

6. Grounding

Organizational change: We didn't get to implement any of the concepts yet.

6.1

Understanding humans: No data about this: staff crews are aware of different measurement traditions, and try out metrics aligning with their values and philosophy. They use multiple modalities. They set-up feedback loops.

6.7

Organizational change: We are having conversations with funders to shift their usual practices to accommodate – or at least not shut down – fledgling models.

6.2

Design: Staff crews don't have frameworks to think about fidelity, but they have codified interactions and the intentionality if them.

6.8

Organizational change: Leadership of at least two member organizations have cordoned off ongoing resources to support the work.

6.3

Design: Some staff crews continue to make organization (not system)-facing touchpoints as needed. They see implementation as a part of a research & design process, and continue to take a prototyping approach.

6.9

Organizational change: Leadership & Staff crew (Culture Curators) have identified barriers to implementation. But they are not yet building research and design sprints into their yearly cycles.

6.4

Team practice: Staff crews have captured the intentionality behind their designs through logic models. Leadership is not yet weaving the new solutions into their broader narrative.

6.10

Organizational change: Staff crews have made a business case for the new interventions, but haven't given much thought to the right model of spread for their interventions.

6.5

Organizational change: Some staff crews (Culture Curators) are stewarding fledgling inventions and are encouraging co-creation with staff/users.

6.11

Research: Most staff crews are identifying implementation factors like staff roles, protocols, systems, and processes.

6.6

Looking forward to more beautiful disasters of our own as we go through continue with this journey.

Thank you for everything

I was so unsure about all of this when the idea was first introduced but it is one of the best decisions that I have made all year! The amount that I have learned + grown over the last year is priceless! Thank you everyone!

FROM POWER POINTS TO DELIGHTFULLY CRAFTED PROTOTYPES, WE CAME TO SEE THE BEAUTY & THE JOY IN OUR WORK

Stay Gold
Grounded
Space
Peeps!

It was a pleasure to dive back into the world of prototyping and experimentation. The experience was challenging, inspirational, mind-opening, painful and ultimately wonderful! As a great man one said: Forwards not backwards, upwards not backwards and always twirling, twirling towards freedom.

THIS WAS AN AMAZING JOURNEY WITH A FANTASTIC GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WORKED HARD UNDER SOME TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES

Don't change, or actually change everything again again....

1 Year... what an adventure, with help, quest, mysterious chest, road companions and so much more (including new role, props, script, setting as the story unfolds...)
Can't wait to see how this ~~full~~ ^{new} tale will develop (but never end?!)
Cheers to all the bold and courageous team members!

It's amazing to see what comes out of these crazy otherworldly experiences! Add awkward skits, singing, being put on the spot and endless piles of post-it notes, and here we are a year later with lots more questions + endless curiosity...! Thanks for all the inspiration!
-Hannah

Not sure what to say! The presence and support from GS crews and IWF

Way! is nothing short of amazing. 100% serious, the course of my life has been significantly altered more than I/you know! Thank You X100!

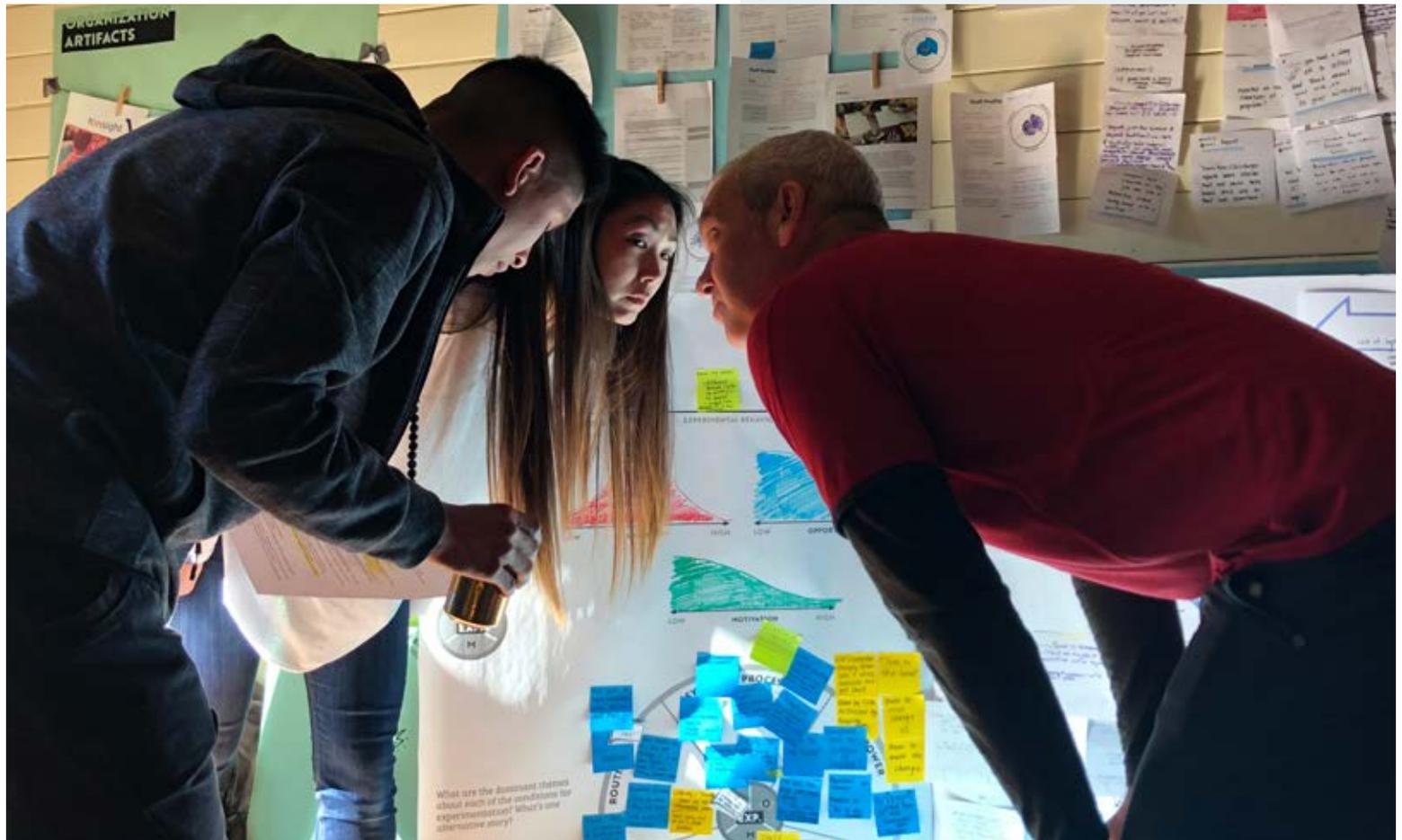
Wow! The journey over this passed year has been nothing short of incredible! Despite us all coming from different departments and agencies, we've all shared the common goal of starting the process of "next practice". To team BACE and Team posA, thank you so much for sharing your learnings and projects with us. Sprints at the sled would not have been the same without you all. To my squad at Team Insight, I'm forever in your debt for dealing with my likelihood to create barriers to our ideas. I wouldn't have chosen any other Insight staff to share this journey with! (over) →

And to the folks who made this all happen - our beloved IWF peeps. Thank you does not do justice for the gratitude I have for all of you. You all have taught me so much about so many different things over this passed year, and for that, and so much more, I'm forever grateful. A special shout out to your Fearless Leader: Sarah, you've been not just a mentor to me, but an inspiration to people in the sector. Thank you so much for all you've done for me and my team. Working with you has truly been an honour. Started from the bottom... Now We Here! -Julian



The BACI team is distilling insights in the end of the synthesis sprint

Part of the Kinsight team huddling at the synthesis sprint





West Neighbourhood House's Embedded Researchers on the Grounding sprint

posAbilities crew members documenting Meraki during the last Grounding sprint

