



Moments Matter

Evaluating Curiko's Theory of Action in 2024

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At the heart
of it all

Forward

We are at a moment of profound political & economic volatility. As government deficits rise, trade wars loom and revenue declines, social service budgets are on the line. The inclination is to return to basics. Cut the fat. Fund just the essentials: food, housing, and safeguards for vulnerable persons. Community building and quality of life interventions are nice-to-haves, not must-haves.

This kind of thinking is at the heart of utilitarianism: take the course of action that maximizes safety and minimizes suffering for the most number of people.

As familiar as this logic is, time and again, it proves to be costly. **Safety** isn't simply the product of more safeguards, risk mitigation strategies, and professional support. It's also the product of being encircled by community -- by people who aren't just paid to care, but who see and value you, and who reach out when something feels amiss. Suffering isn't only the product of material deprivation - of not having food, shelter, or income. **Suffering** also comes from feeling like you don't belong, you don't matter, and that your life makes little sense.

When we invest only in essential services, we end up in a perpetual negative feedback loop. We try to keep people alive, but are unable to satiate their underlying needs for love, care, and connection. These unmet existential needs fester, worsening social isolation and mental health, and over time, deplete physical health. Recent research shows social isolation is as

deadly as smoking.¹ At the same time, the more we only resource basic services, the more we reinforce the idea that it's not the community's job to connect and care. Rather than talk with our neighbours, we call on professionals to sort things out. We don't know how to engage across lines of difference.

There is a different logic that leads us to a different course of action. It is the logic of communitarianism. Communitarianism focuses on building shared values and relationships, recognizing that the route to individual well-being is through community. Where utilitarianism judges what is good based on individual outcomes, communitarianism evaluates what is good based on collective care & belonging. This logic is at the heart of Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being.

Ten years ago, a team of social designers & community developers moved into a social housing complex in Burnaby, British Columbia to learn about everyday experiences of social isolation and loneliness. About a quarter of the building's residents lived with developmental disabilities, supported by paid staff. While residents with developmental disabilities received adequate care, few had meaningful relationships with non-paid staff, and even fewer had opportunities to learn, grow, and connect. The paucity of opportunities for novelty & connection was also true for

¹ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/loneliness-poses-health-risks-as-deadly-as-smoking-u-s-surgeon-general-says>

residents who did not identify as having a disability. A utilitarian approach - focused on maximizing individual outcomes - was unlikely to build a shared responsibility for each other's wellbeing.

Enter the idea for Kudoz: a learning platform connecting people with and without disabilities to novel 1:1 experiences.

Over five years, Kudoz grew from a small-scale prototype with 20 community members to a platform engaging hundreds of people with and without disabilities. Then, the pandemic hit. The team pivoted: renaming Kudoz, Curiko; expanding the online and in-person offerings on the platform; and creating more meaningful roles for people with and without disabilities. Now that Curiko has been in operation for three years, we're asking: how does Curiko foster connection and contribute to wellbeing?

That is the subject of this evaluation.

Rather than revert back to the individualism of utilitarianism, the evaluation embraces the relationality of communitarianism. That means, it centers the connections community members report having with themselves, others, and the world around them. It might be easy to disregard this kind of measurement -- to focus only on costs and objective measures -- but doing so would fail to capture what makes a life worth living. This is another goal of the evaluation: learning how to measure what matters to people. Beyond the results Curiko delivers, Curiko is a space for ongoing learning and experimentation, testing new practices, roles, structures, and metrics. This is the spirit with which we invite you to engage with the findings below.



community members visiting the Vancouver Art Gallery

Moments defined

Curiko is an experience platform for people with and without disabilities. It connects people whose bodies and brains work in beautifully different ways to 1:1 and group experiences so that they may experience more moments of connection. Experiences are run by community members with and without disabilities. Some are online and some in person.

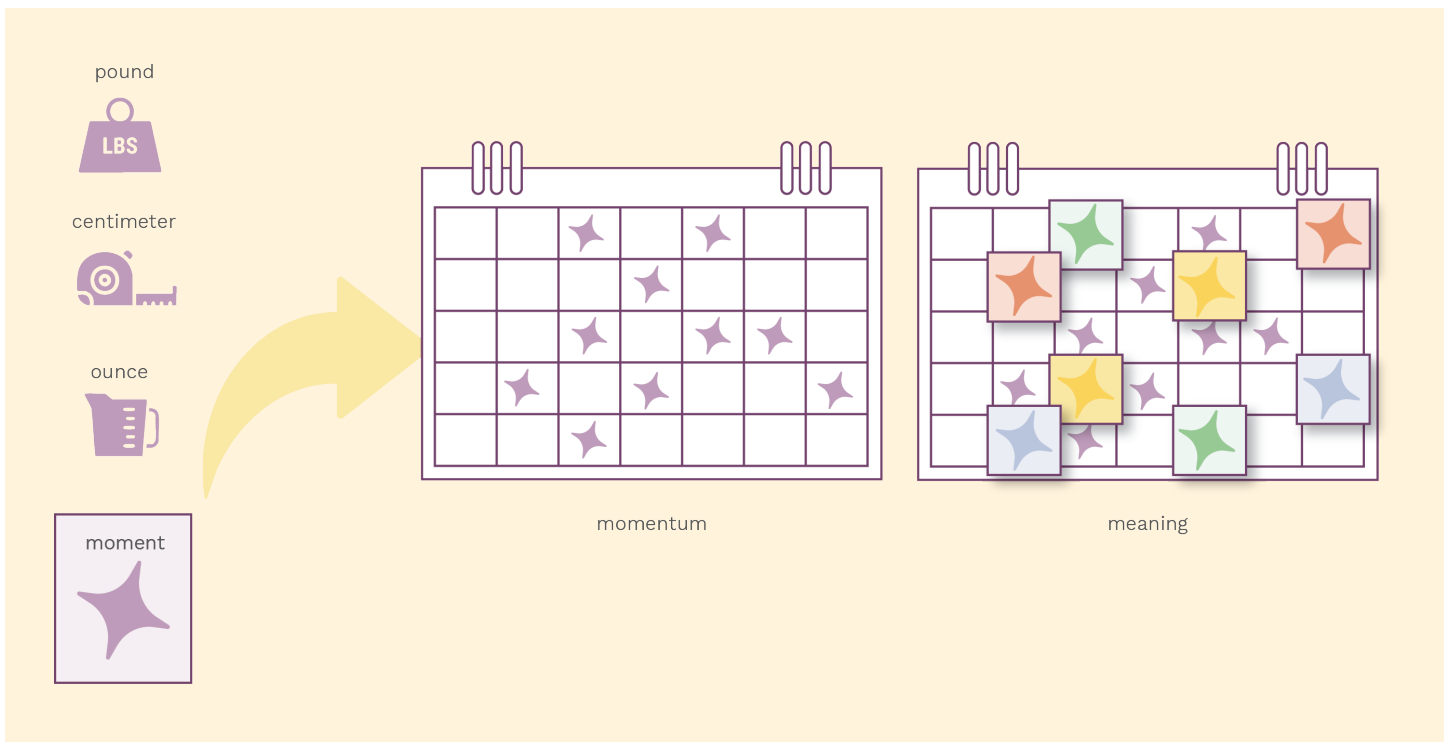
The purpose of this evaluation is to learn whether Curiko's theory of action is playing out, for whom, and under what conditions. A theory of action is a set of assumptions about why a set of activities will lead to desired outcomes.

Why is Curiko's desired outcome more moments of connection? Because we want people to thrive and live flourishing lives. One way to describe 'flourishing' is through the idea of 'wellbeing'. Our research has shown that wellbeing is more than the absence of illness or the presence of material wealth; rather, wellbeing is both personal and relational, rooted in the different connections we feel: to ourselves and our bodies, to families, community, and friends, to culture, to the sacred, to place, and to the human project of finding purpose and self-actualization. As a platform, Curiko is set up to create the conditions to form meaningful connections in all of these areas, for people with and without disabilities. Through this evaluation, we are asking: in what ways does Curiko enable people to form meaningful connections

and contribute to people's capacity to live flourishing lives?

Moments are the unit of measurement for connection

In order to assess, measure, or evaluate something, one requires a unit of measurement and a standard or, in our case, an ideal state to measure the object of assessment against. Physics has introduced units of measurement for weight, height, volume, sound, speed, and so on. What we commonly treat as "objective" measurements are mostly related to characteristics of the physical world. While connection to place and some degree of material wealth are arguably integral to a state of flourishing, most other types of connections occur within the social world or in the spiritual realm. Connection as the object of assessment is not as easily quantifiable. One may count how many places, people, or cultures one feels connected to, but that number alone says very little about the quality of connection, nor whether it is the right kind of connection at



the right time. For example, gang members are highly connected.² Connection is a somewhat elusive concept. It is both an internal experience and shared between people.³ The experience of feeling connected is highly subjective. There is no straightforward way to measure it. In order to evaluate to what extent Curiko is supporting community members to live flourishing lives, we are using the unit of moments.

A moment is a unit of time and a structure of human experience

What is a moment? Most commonly understood, a moment is a brief period of time. It is fleeting and short-lived. Moments are impermanent. They do not last. A moment describes a fixed point in time with a distinct

beginning and end. The passing of time can be described as a sequence of moments. Aligning one after another. Conceptualized in this unambiguous way, moments are a unit of time. Their nature is temporal.

A moment can also be understood as a structure of human experience. Phrases like “it was nothing but a moment” or “the moment of a lifetime” refer only secondarily to time. In these cases, the word moment signifies the personal meaning attached to a particular experience. Moments, then, are both temporal and experiential—they mark not just when something happens, but also how it is experienced and remembered on a personal level.

When we think about moments in human experience, they aren’t always as clear-cut as they seem. Two people might experience the same situation but make sense of it differently—one might say it was one moment, while the other might break it into two or three moments. Even the beginning and end of that

² Gabbidon, Shaun L. “Critical Race Theory and Criminology.” Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Oxford University Press, 28 Aug. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.436>.

³ and other beings but not relevant in the context of this evaluation



community members co-writing a song

moment might feel different for each person. This shows that moments, in lived experience, are often flexible and overlapping—not fixed or singular.

Considering moments from an experiential perspective complicates the notion of time itself. While a moment might describe a past experience, the impact of that moment or even the impact of a moment imagined and not yet realized, have the power to shape a person's present state of (well)being. Past moments might be carried into the present so that their short-lived character stretches. Some might even last a lifetime. Future moments, if imagined, have the ability to conjure motivation or evoke fear, thereby shaping the present moment. For example, one Curiko community member shared the moment when a secondary grade school teacher called her out as having a learning disability in front of the whole class. S, who does not identify as having a learning disability, has spent most of her life advocating

for herself and other people with disabilities. Carrying the past moment into the present has shaped her resilience over time: "I am very stubborn. Sometimes that's a barrier, but it's also a strength." S' example shows that, rather than looking at time in a linear way, we can consider the past, present, and future as interconnected.

Change is not an outcome but the nature of human experience

Within a linear notion of time, moments occur in sequence. One moment begins and ends; another follows. As time passes, we come to expect change as a natural outcome. Traditional coaching relies on this logic: to reach a specific goal, the coach and coachee create a step-by-step plan, outlining a series of actions and moments that are expected to lead to the desired result. The limitation of this logic is that it defines change as an outcome, based solely on a linear understanding of time and a limited definition of moments by only their temporal nature. When we consider moments as both temporal and experiential- and time as circular rather than linear- then change is no longer a result but the very nature of human experience.

The problem with trying to measure change, if we think of it as a desired outcome, is that we cannot actually observe it. For example, is it possible to observe a child grow? What we can observe are the physical and behavioural changes ("milestones"), but the process of change itself remains obscure. What we commonly refer to as "change" is not actually change but a snapshot of the process of change as it is unfolding. Rather than being the result of a sequence of moments occurring over time, change is always happening and

never lasting. In this sense, change might be measurable as an ongoing process rather than as a fixed outcome.

Within the context of evaluation, what often happens is that a set of predetermined outcomes is labeled 'good' and then referred to as the desired change that one measures against. If change, however, is the nature of human experience- always ongoing and never lasting- and if moments structure human experience, then moments are our best bet at capturing change as it is unfolding in real time.

Curiko values moments of connection because we believe connections to the self, body,

family, friends, community, the sacred, the land, culture, and the human project are at the core of wellbeing. The purpose of this evaluation is to learn the extent to which Curiko is supporting its community members to form connections to all of the above and lead flourishing lives. We propose "moments" as our unit for measuring change - both as a measure of time and a descriptor for human experience. Change, in our view, is always unfolding. It is the very nature of human experience. We are always changing, yet we cannot observe the process of change itself. By capturing moments, we intend to observe and measure change as it unravels over time.



Simon and Caroline hosting Hao, a community member, in their home for bath bomb making

Summary of insights

- Curiko is reaching its volume & engagement targets - delivering 1106 experiences and 573 hours of coaching, enabling 10,841 instances of participation through the platform in 2023-2024.
- Curiko's theory of action is successfully playing out for 81% of the community members we spoke with. Among the 19% for whom it is not, the only common denominator is inconsistent engagement with the platform. Our data shows that Curiko consistently strengthens motivation, builds skill, bridges difference, and increases opportunity for people with and without disabilities. Curiko deepens narratives less consistently.
- These determinants - motivation, skill, opportunity, and narrative -- are working bi-directionally with Curiko's desired outcome: more moments of connection, meaning that determinants and outcomes positively reinforce each other.
- We have an increasing body of evidence that moments of connection can build on one another, producing momentum that moves community members closer to what they value.
- Moments of connection map well to existing evaluative frameworks in the community living sector, in particular Dr. Robert Schalock's Quality of Life model, offering a granular picture of wellbeing unfolding over time, rather than just at one point in time.

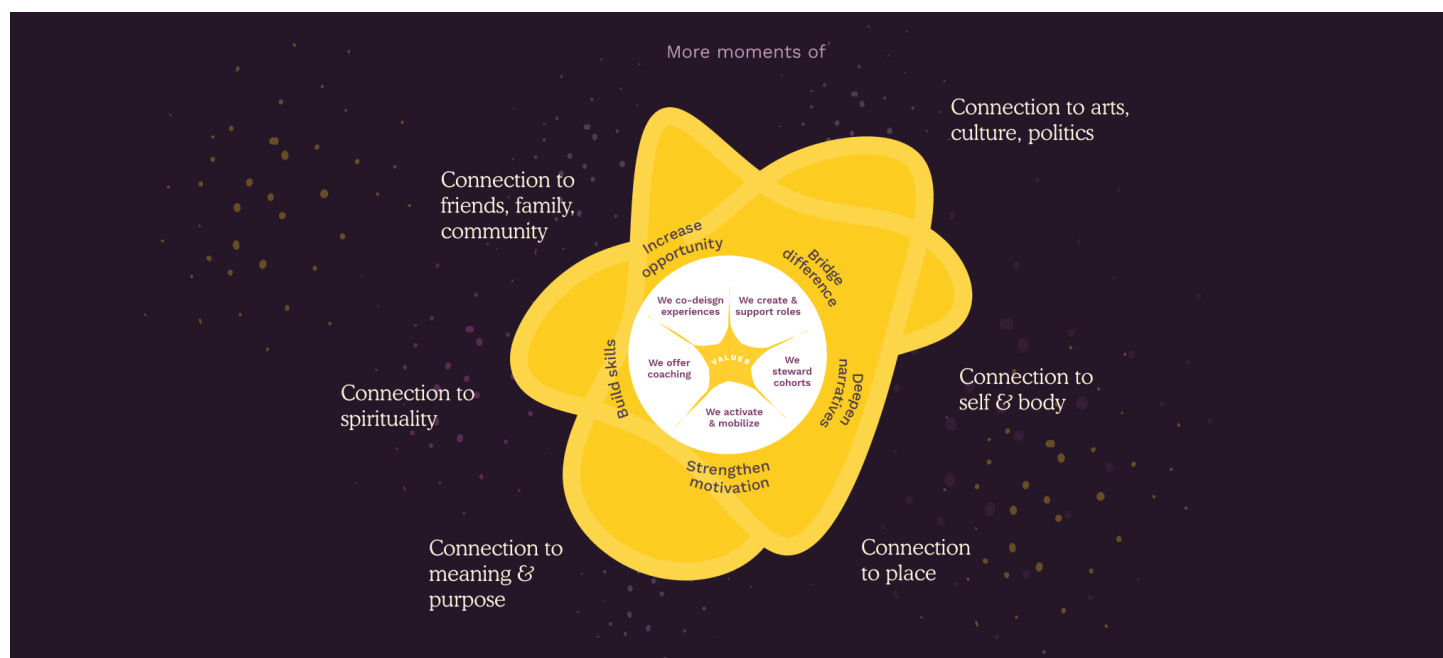
What we measure

Curiko's Theory of Action

As a structure of human experience, moments are highly subjective. What a moment is and which significance or meaning it is imbued with not only varies from person to person but also over time. What one might describe as a significant moment today may feel like two rather insignificant moments tomorrow. While traditional evaluation aims for 'objective' measurement, such objectivity is both unattainable and also undesirable in a social context. The subjective character of moments is, in fact, helpful because we intend to support people in creating a life that is fulfilling to them. There is no one size fits all definition of what a flourishing life is supposed to look like.

In the same way, Curiko is not prescriptive about what kind of connection will be

meaningful for each person at any given time. For example, we recognize that employment may provide someone with a sense of connection to the human project, which includes a sense of purpose, growth, and potential, but it is equally possible that it might not, or that an unpaid role could be more effective in that regard. We also acknowledge that our needs for different types of connection vary from person to person but also over the course of our lives. Connection to the human project may be very important to a person at one stage, and less so at another. Due to the huge variability in what might be a good outcome for whom at any given time in their lives, Curiko focuses on cultivating the determinants of flourishing, rather than on preset or universal outcomes.



Theory of Action

Our evaluation has been designed to sense check our theory of action, and learn more about if and how it is playing out, for whom, and under what conditions. A theory of action is a set of assumptions linking what we do (activities) to what we hope to see in the world (outcomes). Our theory of action identifies a set of factors (determinants) that shape whether and how people form different kinds of connections in pursuit of a meaningful and fulfilling life.

We can read the Theory of Action from the centre out:

Values



At the heart of Curiko are six humanistic values:

- We're all equal and wonderfully different
- We can all learn and grow
- Novelty and discomfort are yummy nutrients for learning and growth
- Love, belonging, and purpose are as essential as food, shelter, and safety
- We are only free when each of us lives free of prejudice and oppression

- Meaningful inclusion is rooted in relationships of respect and reciprocity

Activities



As its name suggests, theories of action are driven by the things we do. Curiko delivers five main types of activities: Within each activity type are a robust set of interactions that have been tested and iterated.

- Experiences: At its most basic level, Curiko is an experience platform, meaning we run experiences at Curiko. The intention is for people with and without disabilities to come together, share passions, and learn from each other. Anyone can host an experience. Signing up to Curiko is quick and easy. There is no mandatory referral or intake process. Curiko prioritizes the openness and accessibility of its platform. People can attend experiences without logging in, ensuring a minimum of barriers to participation. Curiko has made this choice to differentiate itself from a program and send the message that Curiko is not simply a disability service but a community of choice drawing people with and without disabilities from many walks of life.
- Activations: Curiko works to creatively identify and energize individuals living



community members sharing stories of connection at Reflection Cafe

with disabilities, schools, services, neighbours, retirees, students, artists, and hobbyists. These activations are designed as both a means and an end: a means to bridging people across lines of difference to the platform, and a convivial & reflective encounter in their own right.

- **Coaching:** Sometimes, technical difficulties or social fears can get in the way of people experiencing moments of connection. In order to support people and remove barriers that get in the way of living life the way one wants to, Curiko offers coaching. Coaches work with community members on a 1:1 level and in groups. At its best, coaching assists community members in navigating the discomfort that comes with growth and in reshaping stories of limitations that they might have about themselves.
- **Roles:** In Curiko, roles are presented as an important way in which people can foster their own sense of purpose and contribution, feel connection and

belonging, and explore different aspects of themselves. Community members can choose between being a participant or host for experiences; they can be co-hosts, moderators, tasters, peer coaches, or a concierge. Co-hosts and moderators are unpaid roles. Tasters, peer coaches, and the concierge are paid team roles, which require deeper training, support, and oversight. Curiko is supposed to be a space where its members can contribute in ways they feel most motivated and drawn to.

- **Cohorts:** Cohorts are different from regular experiences as they run regularly over a set period of time and work as a closed group. While having the freedom to drop in and out of an experience at random is an important motivator and accessibility feature for some members,

4 Michie S, Atkins L, West R. The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions. Silverback Publishing, London, 2014. www.behaviourchangewheel.com.

others prefer more consistency. Cohorts are closed groups (that anyone can sign up for) which means they offer more social cohesion, predictability, and the potential to build deeper relationships than one off meetings

Determinants

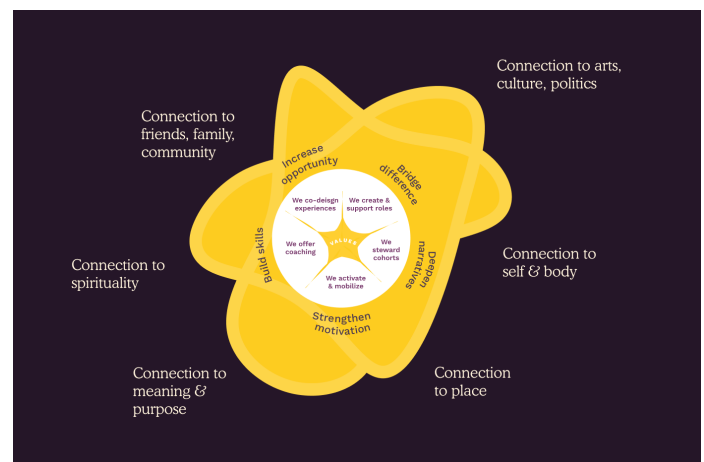


Curiko's determinants are based on Susan Michie's framework: The Behaviour Change Wheel.⁴ Michie argues that we are more likely to shift how we think and what we do when we grow our motivation and desire, when we increase our sense of competency and self-efficacy through skill building, and when we have opportunities to practice those skills and motivation. For our theory of action, we added a fourth determinant, 'deepen narrative'. We have found that, in the disability sector, the story that people tell about themselves and that others tell about them is consequential in influencing people's motivation, what they think they are capable of, and the opportunities others afford to them. The logic of the behavior change wheel suggests that if we create the conditions for people to have more opportunities, to build skill, to attune to their own narrative and have some authorship over it, and to build motivation, then people experience wellbeing.

The determinants are bi-directional. The theory

of action, in reality, does not play out in a linear way. For example, when a community member shows up for an experience and feels connection to others, then this moment of connection might spark motivation and/or a reshaping of the narrative they hold about themselves. This encounter might lead to more opportunities for connection. So, moments of connection, which are framed as outcomes in our theory of action, are themselves vehicles for the determinants. And, the determinants are also vehicles to experience more moments of connection. Outcome and determinant reinforce each other.

Outcomes



A flourishing life isn't some final destination we arrive at, it's a dynamic process of exercising, developing, and enjoying all of our capabilities — to exist, to think, to feel, to sense, to move, to imagine, to have voice, to decide, to fail, to learn, to play, to relate, to contribute, to experience beauty. We are flourishing when we are connected to ourselves and our bodies; to friends, family and community; to place and nature; to culture and politics; to the larger human project of learning and exploring our potential; and to the spiritual, or sacred.

What are we measuring?

We include determinants in our theory of

action because what is a good outcome varies across people and time. Determinants are what enable people to achieve the kind of outcome that is most meaningful to them at any given time. Because moments are our unit of measurement for connection, our evaluative practice consists of documenting moments that give us insight into a person's relationship to any of the four determinants. Are people experiencing moments of strong motivation? Are people experiencing moments where they deepen narrative or take up opportunities? Who, within the Curiko community, is experiencing these moments, and who is not?

Where it is possible, our evaluative practice also ought to shed light on to what extent Curiko is supporting community members to live flourishing lives. Are people experiencing more moments of connection at or through Curiko? And, more importantly, are people experiencing the kinds of connection they most desire at any point in time?

In the context of our evaluative practice, it means that there are three levels of moments that we are most interested in:

1. Moments where community members experience any of the four determinants (i.e. strengthen motivation, build skill, increase opportunity, deepen narrative)
2. Moments where people experience connection to the body, self, family, friends, community, the land, culture, the sacred, or the human project
3. Moments where a sense of connection aligns with what someone most values and/or desires at that point in time



Curiko's Poetry Anthology Launch

Frameworks for measuring outcomes

The Quality of Life Model and the Wellbeing Wheel

While many evaluative practices focus primarily on outcomes, our evaluation also pays attention to the determinants that shape outcomes. Determinants are often more reliable indicators of the effectiveness of our theory of action since desired outcomes greatly vary by person and across time. That said, we recognize that determinants work bi-directionally with outcomes -- they enable and support each other.

Our research suggests that flourishing is not a fixed state but an ever evolving condition that is shaped by an interwoven network of meaningful connections: to the self and body, to family, friends and community, to culture, to the land, to the sacred, and to the human project of finding purpose and belonging.⁵ Flourishing is not a linear process or a checklist of predefined categories. We understand it as a winding journey—less like a

path and more like a river. While rivers seem to have a clear beginning and end, they are in fact part of a cyclical system, always in motion.

Living well means being embedded in this flow of meaningful connections. Like water, connections ebb and flow. Some last for a long time, some only momentarily. Each can be equally meaningful. Assessing someone’s state of wellbeing is not as straightforward as making a checklist of all six types of connection and ticking them off one after another. Being in dynamic, always changing relationships with oneself, others, the world around us and beyond is a complex matter. So is trying to measure it. That is why our evaluative practice mirrors the relationality it is intending to assess.

5 InWithForward. Speculative Stories of the Soulful City. InWithForward, Edmonton/Vancouver, 2020.

Connection to...	What this might look like
Body & self	Feeling a sense of agency, resting, movement, ...
Family, friends, community	Feeling listened to and understood, trust, sharing grief,...
Culture	Accessing traditional knowledge, belonging, ...
The land	Celebrating the seasons, feeling at-home, ...
The sacred	Worship, prayer, chanting together, feeling awe, ...
The human project	Sense of contribution or purpose, mastery, learning, ...

Because Curiko operates within the larger context of the disability sector, our understanding of what constitutes a good outcome needs to be situated in the wider conversation about what it means for people with intellectual disabilities to live a good life. While Curiko uses the language of flourishing and wellbeing to define what a good outcome is, the more widely utilized approach within the disability sector has been to measure outcomes within the conceptual framework of the Quality of Life model.

Quality of Life, as developed by Robert Schalock, is both a theoretical concept and a measurement for service delivery outcomes. Programs that operationalize the model assume that their services increase the quality of life as it is perceived by persons served. Generally speaking, a person is assumed to enjoy quality of life if their needs are met and if they are able to make choices about their lives.⁶ Though Schalock’s model is primarily employed in the disability sector, the concept applies to anyone, regardless of whether one identifies as having an intellectual disability or not. Schalock structures the concept of Quality of Life into eight parts, so-called “domains”:

- Personal development
- Self-determination
- Interpersonal relationships
- Social inclusion
- Rights
- Emotional wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing
- Material wellbeing

Each domain is further defined by a set of indicators. For example, a person’s quality of life in the domain of ‘self-determination’ is

gauged by how many choices they can make to improve their lives or by how capable they feel to do things they have set goals for. Schalock recognizes that specific indicators and the way they are weighted might vary greatly from one person or context to another. To offer guidance nonetheless, he lists the three most commonly cited indicators in each domain across existing literature (see table below⁷).

Quality of Life Framework	
DOMAIN	INDICATORS
INDEPENDENCE FACTOR	
Personal development	- Education - Personal competence - Performance
Self-determination	- Autonomy - Goals and Values - Choices
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION FACTOR	
Interpersonal relationships	- Interactions - Relationships - Supports - Recreation
Social inclusion	- Community integration - Community roles - Social supports
Rights	- Human - Legal
WELL-BEING FACTOR	
Emotional well-being	- Contentment - Self-concept - Lack of stress
Physical well-being	- Health - Activities of daily living - Physical activities
Material well-being	- Financial status - Employment - Housing

The Quality of Life model focuses on the individual as a separate entity with relationships to others and the world around.

⁶ Schalock, Robert L., and Miguel Ángel Verdugo. Handbook on Quality of Life for Human Service Practitioners. American Association on Mental Retardation, 2002.

⁷ Taken from “An Introduction to Include me!”. CLBC.

While those relationships are crucial to the individual's quality of life, they are only one part of what constitutes a person's quality of life. Herein lies the most significant conceptual difference to Curiko's flourishing framework.

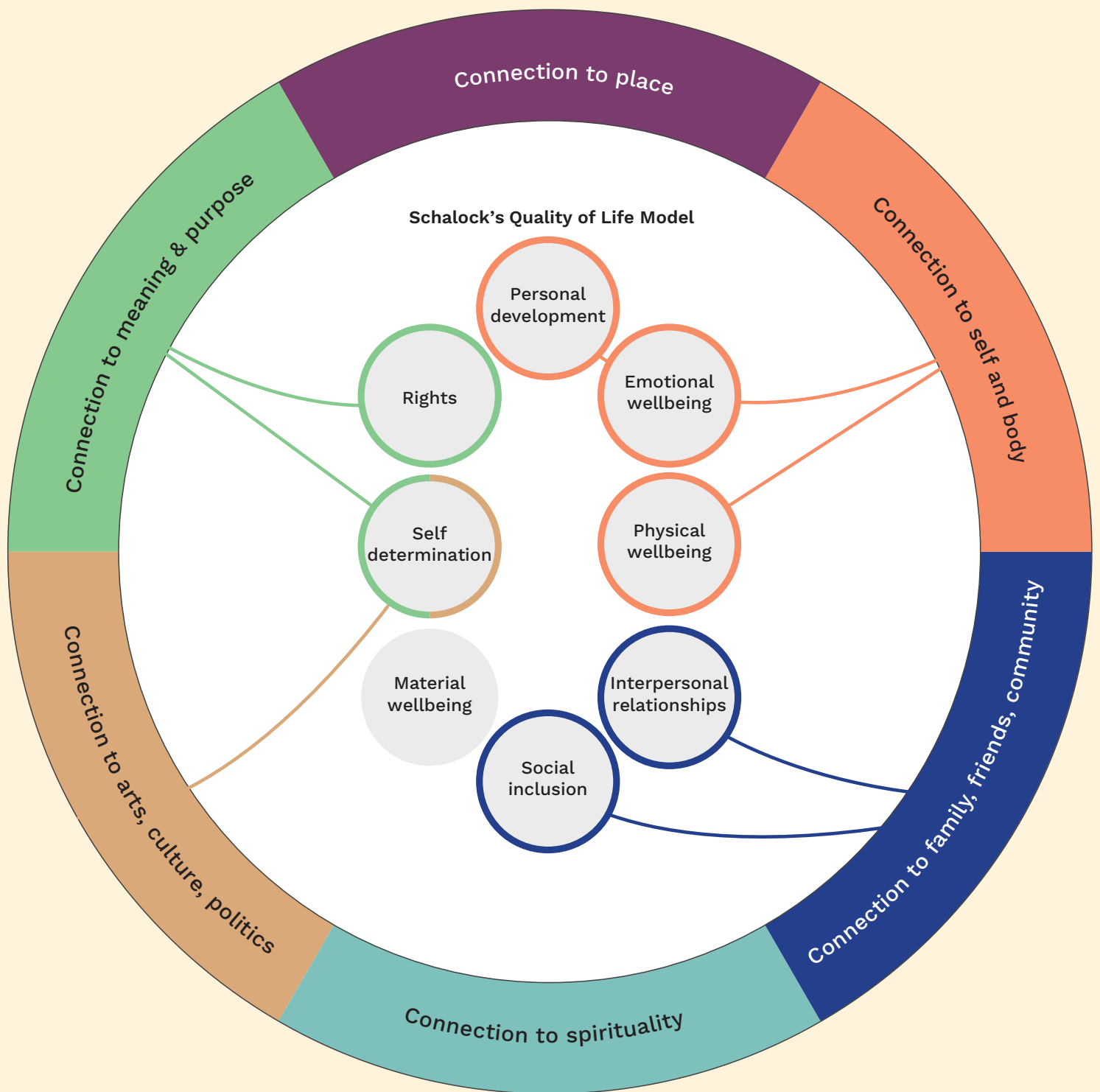
At Curiko, we see the individual and their wellbeing as constituted by their relationships to others and the world around them. They are, in fact, inseparable. We understand people as always embedded in context and relationship. That is why half of the flourishing framework is concerned with connection to the land, culture, and the sacred. In his writings on cross-cultural validity of the Quality of Life model, Schalock recognizes that indicators and the way they impact one's quality of life vary greatly between cultures.⁸ And yet, contextual factors like culture or ethnicity are not explicitly integrated into the QoL model.

Another difference between the flourishing framework and the Quality of life model is how they treat materiality. Material wellbeing, in our flourishing framework, is only a means to any of the other six types of connection. For example, having access to transit is a material resource that allows a person to meet up with friends or do grocery shopping. The material resource becomes a tool to actualize the person's desire for independence and/or social connection. Schalock, on the other hand, identifies material wellbeing as a separate domain of Quality of Life that ought to be measured. Ironically, this difference is rooted in the shared recognition of the variability of subjective measurement. Asking a person how satisfied they are with, for example, their physical wellbeing will change over time. Schalock thus introduces 'objective' measurements such as financial wealth or state of housing in order to give a more stable sense of someone's overall

quality of life. Curiko navigates the variability of subjective judgement by accepting change as the unavoidable nature of human experience, rather than trying to control or manage it.

Despite these conceptual differences, Schalock and Curiko both share the same intent: To support people with (and without) disabilities to live well. Both frameworks are designed to measure personal outcomes and acknowledge that people value different aspects of living well—at different times and in different ways. Although our flourishing framework considers the individual within their relationships, there is a significant amount of overlap between the categories "connection to body and self", "connection to the human project", and "connection to family, friends, and community" and the Quality of Life domains. It will therefore be possible to translate many of the Curiko evaluation findings into the Quality of Life model.

⁸ Schalock, Robert L., Miguel Ángel Verdugo, and Laura J. Gomez. "Cross-Cultural Validation of a Quality of Life Model." *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, vol. 49, no. 10, 2005, pp. 728–733. PubMed, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15941366/>.



How we measure

Methods

In this evaluation, we ask ‘what can we know?’ on the basis of the data we have and are currently collecting. Given its relatively short history, Curiko’s dataset is also a work in progress. We began the process of evaluation in early 2024, and developed a research plan to complement the data sources we already had.

Data source	Information collected	Frequency	Collected since	Constraints
Curiko.ca platform	Quantitative: How and when users are engaging with the website (volume, frequency, type of engagement)	Ongoing	January 2023	Only collects user level data when users consistently log in to the platform, which they are not required to do
Most Significant Moments Database	Qualitative: Microstories recorded by Curiko staff and users about observed a shifts towards or away from Curiko’s valued moments	Collected weekly	March 2022	Only a minority of stories have are sharable because the subject has not given consent for public use
Evaluation Interviews - A diverse sample size of 26 in first interview and 17 in second interview.	Qualitative: Self-reported priorities, perceptions, and beliefs	Collected through two interviews, 3 to 6 months months apart	December 2023- June 2024	Relied more on self-reflection and expression, the capacity for which varies among interviewees and topics
Staff record keeping	Qualitative & quantitative: Coaching hours and numbers	Ongoing	2021	Relies on staff observation

A closer look at methods by source...

Source: Curiko.ca platform

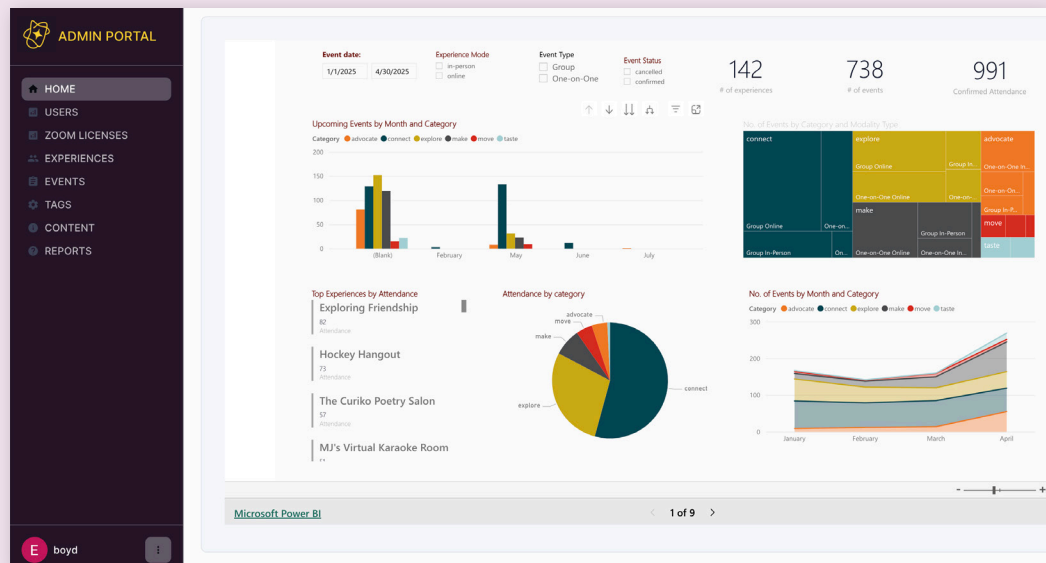
Type: UX data
- quantitative
analytics on
site usage

**Source of
legitimacy:**
Automatic,
objective usage
tracking

How collected:

If users choose
to log in, their

actions are seamlessly tracked with their consent but without their express engagement. Thus, the data collection does not contribute to research fatigue, nor does it produce any additional user benefit.



What it can and can't tell us: To ensure that the Curiko platform is accessible to people with developmental disabilities who might struggle with memory or literacy, we do not require logging-in to attend online group experiences. That means that we forgo a set of individual user data in favour of aggregated volume data. Rather than showing how an individual's use changes over time, it can show us the overall number of users, which online experiences are attended via zoom, along with which 1:1 experiences are booked. It is used to see patterns of usage, decide what experiences to create more of, or less of. It can't tell us why people do what they do, but it can tell us about how they behave on the site, and that is helpful for UX design.

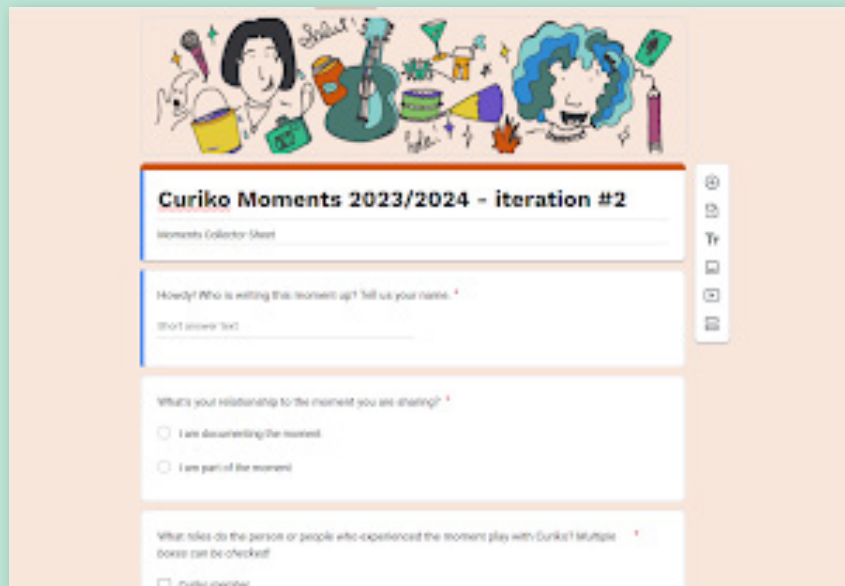
Source: Most significant moments database

Type: qualitative

Source of legitimacy: Based on the Most Significant Change (MSC) methodology, this story-based evaluation tool emerged in the international development sector to challenge top-down approaches to priority setting and meaning-making. Instead of relying solely on predefined metrics, MSC invites staff and direct participants to identify stories that reflect meaningful shifts toward—or away from—program outcomes. These stories are then reviewed at

various levels of the program's structure, with each group selecting those that offer the most significant learning about what success looks like—or doesn't. That is, the stories they most want more of or less of. Deliberation and dialogue are an integral part of the process, producing a set of stories that provide clearer direction for people at all levels of the initiative. This process of collective storytelling and deliberation generates insight into what is working, for whom, in what context, and why.⁹

How collected: At Curiko, stories can be submitted by staff and participants using an online, written form. Sometimes staff and participants submit a moment together. The



The image shows a Google Form titled "Curiko Moments 2023/2024 - iteration #2". The form is set against a light orange background. At the top, there is a colorful illustration of a person with dark hair, a person with blue hair, and various objects like a microphone, a camera, and a lightbulb. Below the illustration, the title "Curiko Moments 2023/2024 - iteration #2" is displayed in a blue box. Underneath the title, there is a text input field labeled "Moments Collector Sheet". The next section is a text input field labeled "Howdy! Who is writing this moment up? Tell us your name." with a red asterisk indicating it is required. Below this is a text input field labeled "What's your relationship to the moment you are sharing?" with a red asterisk. There are two radio button options: "I am documenting the moment" and "I am part of the moment". The final section is a text input field labeled "What roles do the person or people who experienced the moment play with Curiko? (Multiple boxes can be checked)" with a red asterisk. Below this is a checkbox labeled "Curiko member". On the right side of the form, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for undo, redo, clear, and other editing functions.

Significant moments are collected via a google form

⁹ Dart, Jessica, and Rick Davies. "A Dialogical, Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The Most Significant Change Technique." *American Journal of Evaluation*, vol. 24, no. 2, June 2003, pp. 137–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109821400302400202>.

form asks what happened, why it is significant, how it relates to Curiko values and determinants (eg. conditions or factors that enable flourishing), if those involved want more or less of these moments, and in what ways the story can be shared. Curiko has altered the prompt from ‘most significant change’ to ‘most significant moment’ to reflect the theory of action. Ideally, the story is recorded following a moment of reflection, or, if recorded by an observer, leads to a moment of reflection that might produce meaningful insights for a participant.

What it can and can’t tell us: Curiko is still developing its practices for recording stories, and is currently designing a process for collectively reviewing the stories submitted, as this is an important part of coming to a consensus on what is ‘significant’. Currently, there are two main, and connected, limitations of the stories: the first being that the majority are submitted by staff, and the second being that consent to share has not been obtained for most stories. Performing this evaluation has given rise to the need for a fuller process to determine which stories are truly significant to the Curiko community and its supporters. For now, it tells us about what kinds of moments claim the attention of staff, and in some cases participants, and are seen as evidence of Curiko’s theory of action coming alive, or being challenged.

Source: Evaluation interviews

Type: qualitative, two interviews held three to six months apart

Source of legitimacy: The interviews used design research methodology, offering interviewees a range of custom designed prompts to help them reflect, express, and project. Social design agency InWithForward collaborated with Curiko to design for accessibility, and built on years of experience testing the boundaries of conversations about values, perceptions, and desires in the disability space. This method aims to get underneath what people know to say - a script that has previously satisfied others or unlocked support and resources - to open up space for reflexivity, exploration, and meaning-making. By holding interviews three to six months apart, the process was able to examine how and to what degree people's ideas, experiences, and preferences shift, as well as control somewhat for passing moods that might influence each interview.

How collected: The interview process was designed to bring Curiko's values and theory of action to life; including, moments of critical awareness, moments of authentic connection, and seeing oneself in new ways.



Interviewers received feedback from participants that:

- The interviews were helpful for reflecting on their experiences and making sense of their personal journeys;
- They felt that their voices were being heard and that their experiences were valued by the interviewers;
- They gained new insights about themselves and their relationship to disability through the interview process
- The conversational tone of some interviews felt more like a dialogue than a formal evaluation.

What it can and can't tell us: There is no perfect interview methodology that can ensure everyone understands the questions the same, has equal access to their own inner workings, and the ability to express what they know. This limitation of all interviews often goes unremarked. With a sample as diverse as the interview participants in this evaluation, many of whom identify as having a range of cognitive disabilities, and/or as neurodivergent, the variation is even more apparent. Interviewers had flexibility to introduce topics in any way that might make most sense to participants, and sometimes noted that a certain concept didn't seem to resonate with an individual, or was a source of confusion. Other times participants answered with confidence and interviewers were struck with inconsistencies between the narrative shared and the evidence provided. In these cases, which are normal in any dataset, interviewers would try to probe these inconsistencies to reach a better understanding, but sometimes felt unsuccessful. The capacity for reflective interactions, or critical awareness, is one determinant of flourishing that Curiko works to enable; the evaluation is one opportunity to flex and grow this capacity.

What it looks like: Interviews happened in person at the Curiko studio and online. They ranged from one to three hours, the length determined by the ways in which interviewees expressed themselves, their desire for dialogue, and stamina.

Source: Staff records

Type:
quantitative

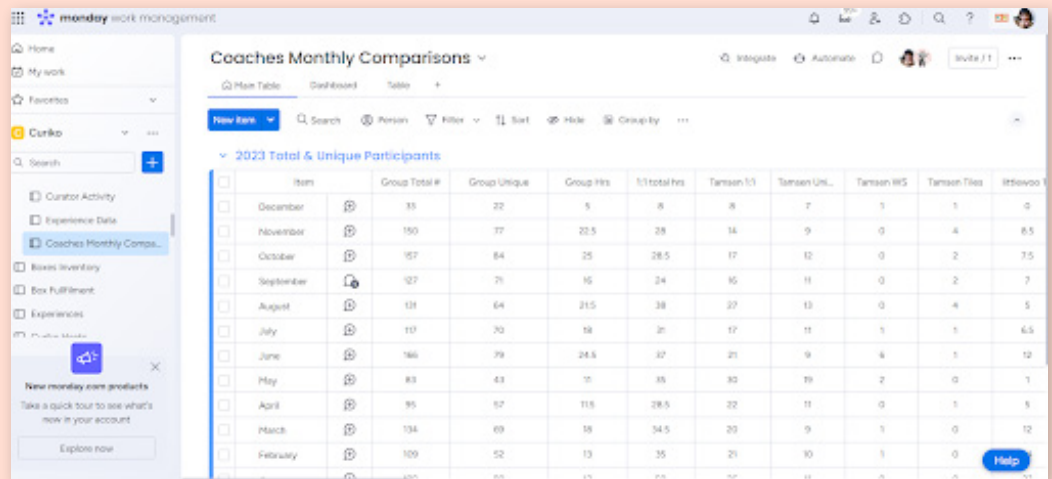
Source of legitimacy:
hard data
tracked and
reported
monthly

How collected:

Coaches track their own offerings. Staff may be more likely to increase the frequency, number, or length of their offerings or encourage members to try coaching because they are tracking hours as a metric.

What it can and can't tell us: This data can tell us what coaching formats and topics are best attended at a point in time and over time and quantify individual coach performance. However, this data can't tell us why participants select coaching events or who is selecting which options, as it is aggregated and purely quantitative. It does distinguish unique participants from repeat participants.

What it looks like: We use Monday.com tables to track these numbers.



The screenshot shows a Monday.com table titled "Coaches Monthly Comparisons". The table lists coaching metrics for each month from December to February. The columns include: Item, Group Total #, Group Unique, Group Hrs, 1:1 Total Hrs, Tansan 1:1, Tansan UML, Tansan WIS, Tansan Ties, and Hobbies. The data is as follows:

Item	Group Total #	Group Unique	Group Hrs	1:1 Total Hrs	Tansan 1:1	Tansan UML	Tansan WIS	Tansan Ties	Hobbies
December	35	22	5	6	8	7	1	1	0
November	150	77	22.5	28	14	9	0	4	8.5
October	157	84	25	28.5	17	12	0	2	7.5
September	127	71	16	24	16	11	0	2	7
August	131	64	21.5	38	27	13	0	4	5
July	117	70	18	30	17	11	1	1	6.5
June	166	79	24.5	37	21	9	4	1	12
May	83	43	10	16	10	19	2	0	1
April	95	57	11.5	28.5	22	11	0	1	5
March	134	69	18	34.5	20	9	1	0	12
February	109	52	13	35	21	10	1	0	5.5

Interview Design

Evaluation interviews formed the richest source of data because interviewers were able to ask people about how they interpreted and understood their own experiences, and ask follow-up questions for better understanding. Conducting two separate interviews, in most cases, provided a lot of additional context about factors influencing people's choices and trajectories, rather than assuming Curiko was the main factor.

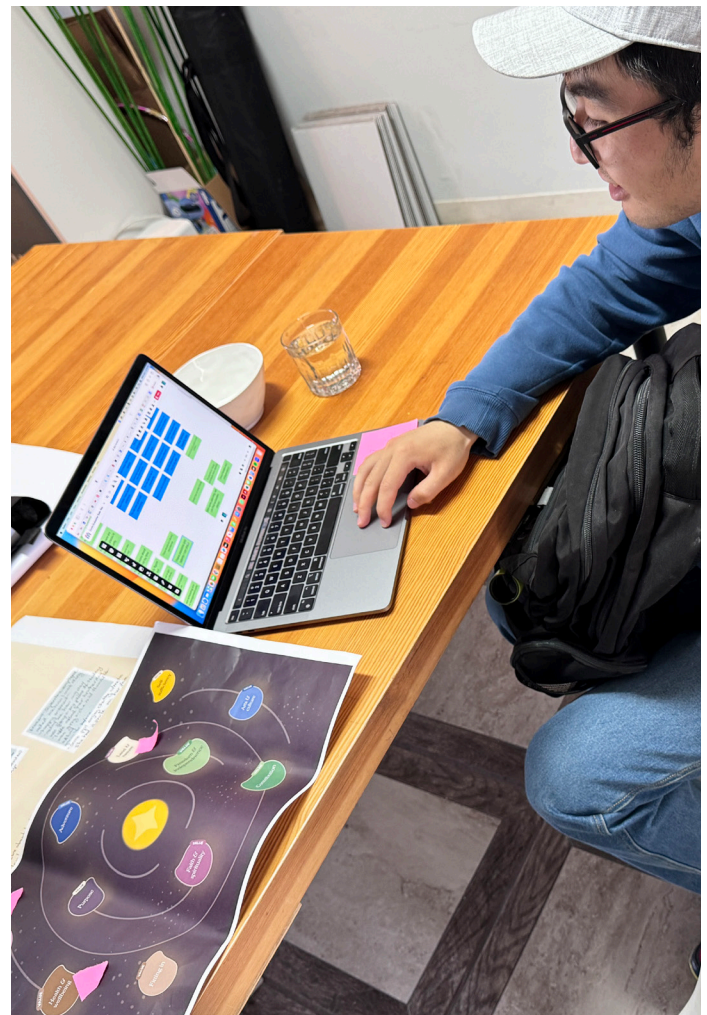
Design Research

Design research gathers information with the specific intent of inspiring, guiding and providing context for future designs. It focuses on understanding user needs, experiences, context, and behaviour. It is concerned with understanding participants on a granular level and often asks people to move from abstract concepts, for example, values, to specific and concrete examples from their own lives, such as moments when the value is experienced. To this end, design research seeks to draw out the nuance in people's preferences, their assumptions about how things will happen or need to happen (eg. order of events), their perceived barriers and enablers, and pain points. Interviewers will frequently ask follow-up questions about the best and worst instances of something, the steps to make something happen, what people come into contact with on a regular basis, etc. This approach provides rich data for designing alternatives.

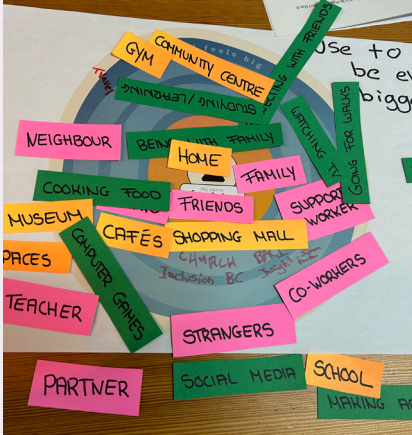
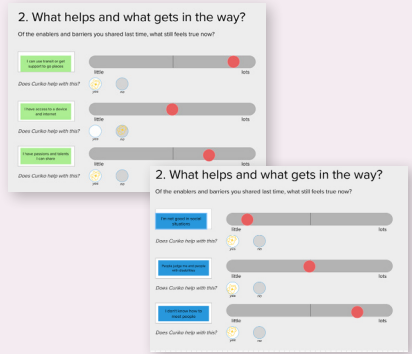
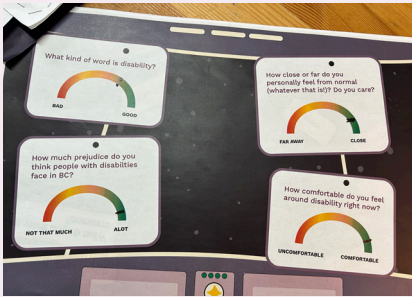
Interview Interaction Design

Interaction design asks us to think about the

user or participant experience, something that is often an afterthought or unambitious element of evaluation design. In the case of interviews, we are attentive to questions of agency, power dynamics, conventions that shape expectations about what can or should be said/shared, active vs. passive roles, and feedback. Interviewers set the stage with two-way conversations, encouraging participants to ask their own questions. The materiality and aesthetics of interview tools, with lots of colour, emojis, stickers (in person), and elements that draw from popular games, invite playfulness and hands-on involvement. Designed tools allow participants to express themselves more easily, to take a more active, hands-on role in the interview, and to see and contribute to what is being documented.



community member during evaluation interview

Tool	What it does	Purpose
The Curiko Galaxy 	The Curiko galaxy mat displays a set of 11 values in the form of small planets. Cruising around the galaxy, people are invited to choose the top 3 values that are most important to them at that point in time.¹⁰ Participants are then asked to define said values and to give examples of moments when any of these values comes to life for them.	Gaining a better understanding of what motivates Curiko community members and sense-checking if Curiko's core values that are at the centre of our theory of action align with what matters most to the community
Worlds 	Participants were presented with three different sizes of worlds. They were asked to choose whichever size most accurately represents how big or small their world feels at that point in time. Participants then were asked to fill their worlds with connections they have to people, places, and activities. The deeper or more important a connection felt, the closer it was placed in the middle. Looking at their web of connections, people were asked to compare their current world to their ideal size of world.	Mapping social networks & connections, and identifying gaps between people's present and desired future connections - both in terms of quantity and quality.
Enabler and Barrier Blocks 	We presented participants with a set of wooden blocks that displayed positive and negative belief statements. Participants were invited to select the belief statements that most resonated with them and arrange them in relationship to each other.	Surfacing the beliefs that enable or hinder people to life a life they experience as fulfilling
Dashboard- Your Relationship to Disability 	Three different dashboards showed participants different temperature scales that asked them to position themselves to questions about their relationship to disability. We asked, how comfortable do you feel around disability? What kind of word is disability (good, bad, neutral)? Do you think people with disabilities face judgment in BC? And, what is your relationship to the idea of 'normal'?	Engaging community members in a conversation about disability to understand what narratives they hold about having a disability and being around others with disabilities

¹⁰ These eleven values are meant as a starting point, not as a definite set. Participants can add values that are not included here.

Curiko by the numbers

Curiko has been set-up as a platform, not a program. Rather than directly delivering support to people with disabilities, Curiko catalyzes community members with and without disabilities to support each other through designing & hosting learning experiences. The goal is to generate community resources and foster meaningful community inclusion. One way to evaluate Curiko's theory of action is how well it generates experiences and enables engagement. In other words, is Curiko actually doing what it says it does: activating community, co-designing experiences and cohorts, offering coaching, and creating new valued roles?

The volume and participation numbers from the period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 indicate that yes, Curiko is meeting (and in many cases, exceeding) volume targets -- with the exception of the number of coaching hours offered through the platform. Coaching hours were lower than projected because the Curiko coaching team engaged in intensive professional development to become accredited life coaches.

Here's what the numbers show:



Curiko experience in Vancouver

Activating community

Curiko engages people with and without disabilities through a range of public space activations, outreach events, online and in-person experiences, coaching sessions, and reflection cafes hosted by fellow community members.

- Public space activations & outreach events are designed to foster convivial encounters between people across lines of difference at parks, festivals, transition fairs, schools, farmers markets, and more. They are a way to raise awareness about the Curiko platform and recruit new hosts -- and in the process, spark spontaneous moments of connection.
- In-person and online experiences, along with coaching sessions, are ways community members with and without disabilities engage via the platform.
- Reflection cafes are community building events, held at local cafes, designed as a space for people who use the Curiko platform to come together, swap stories, and process their experiences. The public can drop-in too!



Exploring spirituality cohort gathering

Type event	Actual numbers	Targets
Number of recruitment and outreach events hosted	76 events	2
Number of Curiko open house events	20 events	2
Number of welcome sessions ¹¹	121 welcome sessions	
Online experiences	9861 times people participated	
In-person experiences	980 times people participated	
Reflection cafe	43 unique participants	
Coaching experiences ¹²	201 unique participants 1919 times people participated	
Cohorts ¹³	54 unique participants	
Newsletter subscribers	1,114	

targets exceeded

¹¹ Curiko offers optional Welcome Sessions for new participants.

¹² Coaching can occur in a 1:1 or group format, both in person or online.

¹³ This includes 2 e-commerce cohorts, a healing stories cohort, and art journaling cohort.

Co-designing experiences

Curiko actively supports community members with and without disabilities to design and host in-person and online experiences. The Curiko team includes a role we call the ‘Curator’ who works with community members to identify & turn their passions into 1:1, group, or box experiences. Box experiences are self-contained experiences where all of the materials required to engage in a new hobby or pursuit are included, with directions, in a box mailed to the community member’s home.

Type of Experience	Actual numbers	Targets
Number of host experience planning sessions	127	
Total number of experiences run on the platform	1106	1100
Number of group online experiences	745	
Number of in-person experiences	179	
Number of 1:1 experiences	174	
Number of box experiences	24	

targets met targets exceeded



Host Aaron planning his experience with Sarah, a Curiko Curator

Offering coaching

Curiko recognizes that there are often a range of barriers that prevent people from engaging in novel experiences and connecting with others. People may hold limiting beliefs about themselves, not feel competent, and express a range of social anxieties. Curiko Coaches walk alongside community members to bust these barriers and build motivation, using the platform as a fertile training ground.



Cindy meeting with Tamsen, a Curiko Coach

Type of Experience	Actual numbers	Targets
Coaching sessions delivered	573 hrs ¹⁴	750hrs
Reflection cafés run	8	
By municipality:		
Vancouver	4	
Burnaby	3	
Tri-Cities	1	

targets met
 targets not met

Supporting valued community roles

Curiko isn’t simply a platform delivering experiences to people with and without disabilities, it is also a platform delivered by people with and without disabilities. Community members take on a range of supported volunteer and paid roles - from hosting and moderating experiences to being peer coaches and platform coordinators (a role we call ‘Curiko Concierge’). In this way, Curiko is co-produced by the community. The goal is for these roles to foster a deeper sense of contribution, and create more opportunities for leadership and skill building.



Bella, a Curiko peer coach, with a community member

¹⁴ In 2023-24, Curiko coaches went through a formal training & accreditation process to become certified coaches. This reduced coaching availability.

Type Role	Actual numbers
Number of paid peer roles (this includes paid peer coaches and Curiko concierge)	4
Number of volunteer moderators	9
Number of community hosts	75

While this quantitative data provides an overview of the number and types of activities taking place on the Curiko platform, it offers no insight into how meaningful these experiences are for community members. A full calendar can still be a mere means to pass time if activities lack intention and purpose. Curiko's aim is not just participation, but meaningful connection—to purposeful pursuits, people, and places. To learn more about how Curiko is supporting community members in their

pursuit for connection, we invited members to reflect with us on their Curiko engagement in more depth.

Curiko's aim is not just participation, but meaningful connection—to purposeful pursuits, people, and places.



a Curiko cohort celebrating the binding of their collective comic book

Analysis of our evaluative practice by tool

43 Reflective Conversations

The bulk of qualitative data for this evaluation report was collected over a series of 43 reflective conversations with a wide range of Curiko community members. The purpose of these in-depth, one-on-one conversations was to learn more about what matters most to the community, what makes up their world, what gets in the way of living a flourishing life, and how people understand their own relationship to disability.

Because we intend for our evaluative practice to reflect Curiko's spirit of respect and reciprocity, we opted for open-ended conversations in settings chosen by community members, rather than traditional interviews in a professional setting. While a team member always offered an overall structure for the conversation, it was very much up to each community member to decide which areas they would like to reflect on and where the focus of the conversation would be. Instead of feeling like a one-way

interview or extractive data collection, we encouraged everyone to return questions to team members. Honouring people's agency and grounding conversations in reciprocity is our attempt at anchoring evaluative practice in relationship building with community members.

Who did we talk to?



27 community members



22 members identify as having a disability



5 members identify as not having a disability



12 members are CLBC eligible



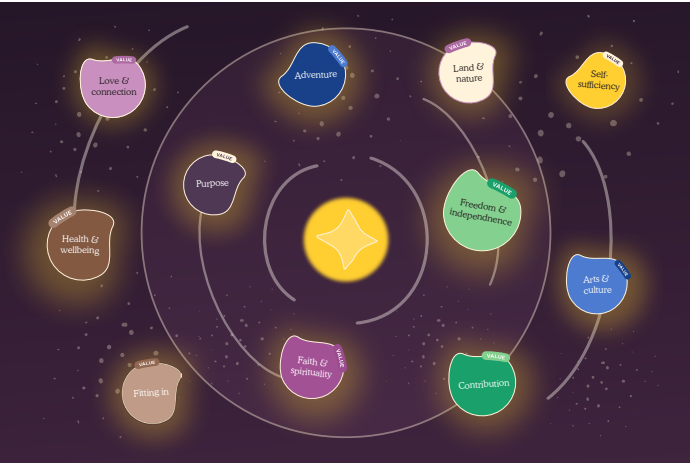
10 members are very frequent users of the Curiko platform, 8 are infrequent participants, and 9 are average-frequency users



13 members are taking on or have taken on the roles of both host and participant, 14 members are either a host or a participant

Tool 1: Values

The conversations were framed as going on a journey together through the Curiko universe. We started quite far-out, in the Curiko galaxy. The Curiko galaxy mat displayed a set of values that community members could sort and rank as they were reflecting on the question “which values are most important to you at this moment?”. After narrowing their choices to a top three, we asked community members to share examples of moments when they felt connected to these values -- both in an ideal world and in their personal life at the time.



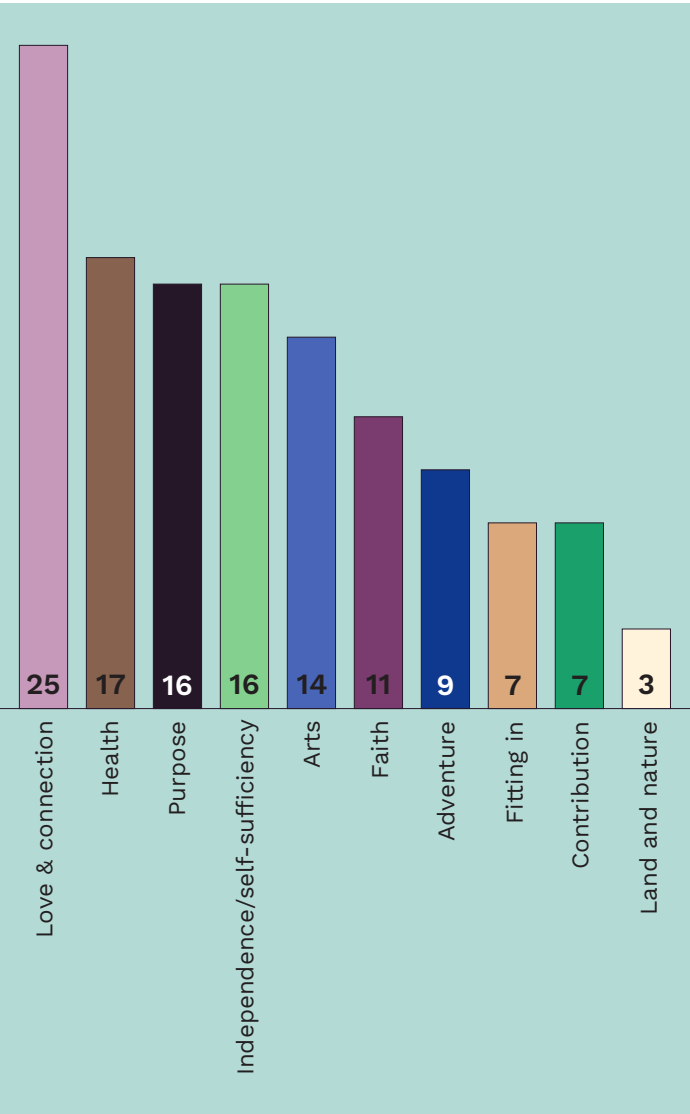
Galaxy placemat tool to understand members’ values

We chose to open the conversation with a reflection on values as a way to give community members the opportunity to have a say in what Curiko is all about. While Curiko has a set of core values¹⁵,

¹⁵ Curiko’s core values: We’re all equal and wonderfully different ** We can all learn and grow ** Novelty and discomfort are yummy nutrients for learning and growth ** Love, belonging, and purpose are as essential as food, shelter, and safety ** We are only free when each of us lives free of prejudice and oppression ** Meaningful inclusion is rooted in relationships of respect and reciprocity. For reference see: <https://www.curiko.ca/about/values/>

we think it is important to sense check with the community if they share those values, or if not, our values need to be amended. It was also important to start the conversation with an inquiry into what matters to each person because we do not assume that the same things matter to everyone and we recognize that people’s values shift over time.

Learnings about what currently matters most to community members:



Across 43 conversations, more than half the people we spoke to value love and

connection as one of their top three values. 50% identify purpose and contribution as a second top value. About a third of our conversation partners name independence as a third top value. Love and connection, purpose and contribution, and independence all were consistently ranked top values without many shifts occurring between the baseline conversation and the follow up three to six months later. A third of the community members who participated in the reflective conversation identified health as an important value, though it was subject to fluctuation in a way that the other three top values were not. In most cases, health was ranked as a top value in the context of (and maybe as a response to) an acute health concern. There was no significant difference in top values between CLBC eligible and noneligible community members.

Love & Connection

Our Curiko values state that “love, belonging, and purpose are as essential as food, shelter, and safety”. The findings in our conversations with community members strongly affirm this point of view. Love and connection is consistently chosen as people’s number one value by the majority of community members. When asked about where members experience love and connection, besides family and friends, Curiko is named as the primary locus. For example, one community member shared that he enjoys hosting in-person experiences at Curiko because he gets to meet different people

and engage in conversations: “I’m finding hosting a lot more fun and interesting. I’m communicating more to people in Curiko and out in the community too. I feel more confident. I feel great at hosting.” The sense of connection extends beyond spaces curated by Curiko. When asked about a recent significant moment, he talked about running into one of the Curiko team members at City Square: “It was a happy moment- a little bit weird too. It could be happy and exciting too. I saw her at a grocery store. I felt surprised. It felt really great to see her.”

Love and connection is consistently chosen as people’s number one value by the majority of community members.

Purpose

Community members across all conversations affirmed that Curiko is a place where they can contribute meaningfully and find purpose. A third of our participating community members, particularly those who identify as not having a disability, describe having a sense of purpose as being able to contribute to the Curiko community. One community member who identifies as having a disability shared that after taking on a new role at Curiko, purpose and contribution became more important to

her: “As the Curiko concierge, I now have to communicate with so many people. It’s intimidating, but also good.” Another member explained that “purpose drives everything for me”. He is a frequent host at Curiko and says, “we have a blast at these experiences, but once it’s done, it’s over. I’m looking for something that lasts longer than an hour. I have a curiosity about what else I can do, how else I can contribute. I want to take the next step.” For him, Curiko offers opportunities for personal development and growth.

Independence

About a third of the community members identified independence and self sufficiency as one of their top values. Though unsurprising at first, the conversations quickly revealed that “independence” is not necessarily tethered to objectively measurable outcomes like ‘having a job’ or ‘being able to use transit’. Rather, the majority of community members described experiencing moments of independence when they “have a voice” and are able “to make decisions”. One of our long-time community members, for example, said about hosting an experience: “I feel proud. I was able to lead, to choose places to meet and to choose how long it will take. I felt like a leader. You just need a little support sometimes.” Interestingly, the same community member, at a later point, shifted away from “independence” as his top value because he saw himself as “halfway independent” at that point. Sometimes, “halfway there” is good enough.

Learnings about what currently matters most to the community over time:



Fluctuations in Value Importance

Our follow-up evaluation interviews revealed that the relative importance of values can fluctuate over time, influenced by personal experiences, life circumstances, and evolving perspectives. Janette, for example, notes that “health and well-being” became more prominent for her after experiencing significant health challenges. This heightened awareness of her physical and mental well-being led to a reassessment of her values, elevating health to a level comparable with her other core values, such as “faith and spirituality” and “arts and culture.” Similarly, Sandra describes a shift towards

prioritizing “health” after a wrist injury forced her to re-evaluate her physical well-being and make dietary adjustments. This suggests that challenging experiences can prompt individuals to re-prioritize values, highlighting the dynamic nature of personal growth.

Refining Value Interpretations

The sources also demonstrate that individuals may maintain the same core values while refining their understanding and expression of those values over time. Bria, for instance, consistently identifies “faith and spirituality” as her top value. However, her interpretation of this value has evolved to embrace “freedom and independence” within her faith community, moving away from rigidity and embracing a more personalized approach to her spirituality. This refinement suggests a deepening understanding of her values and a commitment to aligning her life with her evolving beliefs.

Connecting Values to Action

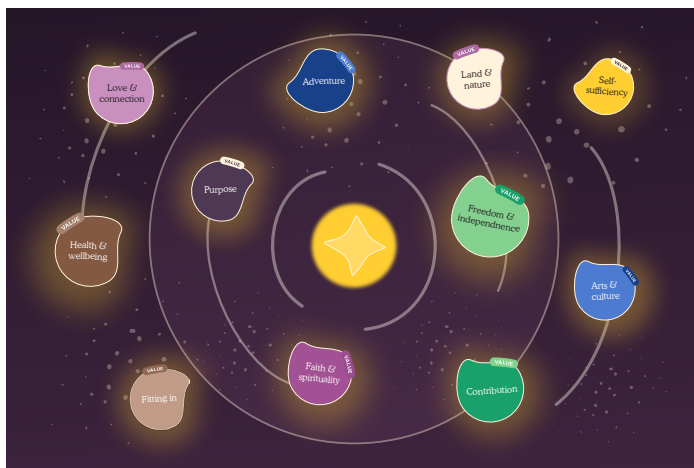
Curiko emphasizes the significance of connecting one’s values to concrete actions and meaningful experiences and offers many opportunities to actualize, reflect on, and recognize this kind of alignment. Kristina, for example, demonstrates a strong ability to link her values of “purpose” and “contribution” to specific moments in her life, such as engaging in meaningful work and volunteering. Sometimes, in an attempt to connect values to action, a participant intentionally adopts a new strategy. For example, Sandra mentions that her focus on “fitting in” has shifted towards “putting attention into the groups where she feels most aligned”. This suggests that Sandra is thinking about who she values fitting in with and how she can set herself up for success. This connection between values and lived experiences fosters a sense of alignment and reinforces the importance of actively living one’s values.



Tool 2: World

From the Curiko galaxy, we moved the conversation back to earth. We see people not as isolated beings but as always embedded in relationship with the world around them. We are interested in the kinds of connections to people, places, and activities that make up the community members' worlds. We are also interested in how big or small community members perceive their world to be and how that compares to the ideal size of their world. We want to learn about people's worlds beyond Curiko because we are hoping to understand more about how Curiko relates to other contexts community members feels connected to.

Learnings about what makes up people's worlds:



Galaxy placemat tool to understand members' values

Of 27 participating community members, 85% feel connected to friends, 80% to family, and 80% to Curiko. The top two places members feel connected to are 'home', with over 80%, and nature (about half). When asked where and whom people feel connected to, community members

largely overlapped in their responses. When asked about activities that make up people's worlds, members answered more distinctly. The top three activities that about 50% of participating members shared were: being with friends, doing arts and crafts, and going on walks. Reading, working out, social media, watching TV, and work were also popular activities.

Of 27 participating community members, 85% feel connected to friends, 80% to family, and 80% to Curiko.

Not a one-size fits all

Although we were curious to learn about how Curiko fits into people's worlds, what turned out to be more insightful was how the quality and number of connections overall compared to each person's desired size of world. It became quite clear over the course of our conversations that more connections and bigger worlds are not a good outcome for everyone. Rather, community members defined a good outcome as alignment in number and quality of connections with the desired size

16 This was equally true for people with and without disability.

of their world. We asked: Does your world currently feel big? Small? Or medium? Do you wish it was bigger or smaller? Or, are you happy the way it is? While we received a mix of preferences, the overall consensus was that a good outcome is more complex than simply increasing the number of activities, people, and places one feels connected to.¹⁶ To get a better sense of what a good outcome is for different community members, we segmented them into groups.

The ‘Myth of More’ Busters

Our first segment most strongly contests the idea that ‘more’ equals ‘better’. This group of community members experiences a growing world as overwhelming because they do not feel confident about making sense and meaning of growing connections. For example, four community members stated explicitly that “too many connections feel overwhelming”. One member described their world as too “heavy”, saying, “I wish the pieces were broken up more so I can manage them better.” Two people felt mentally drained and burnt out from the large number of connections they were maintaining in their lives. Rather than being a source for flourishing, these community members perceive too many connections as responsibilities and (unwanted) commitments.

The Gardeners

More than the number of connections, it is the quality and depth of the right kind of



a host and community member building a birdhouse

connection that seem to determine how comfortably one moves through the world. One segment of community members are intentionally pruning their world to ensure they can focus on what matters to them and deepen their experiences. As one community member explains, “I prioritize quality over quantity. I focus on the connections with people who accept my quirks and weirdness. Acceptance plays a big role.” Another community member is more discerning about her connections and how she engages with people. She says that she now practices listening to people’s stories as a way to learn something about them and herself. This segment of community members is applying discernment and intentionality to the connections they choose to uphold as a way to either manage a too large number of connections or to deepen the number of connections they already have.

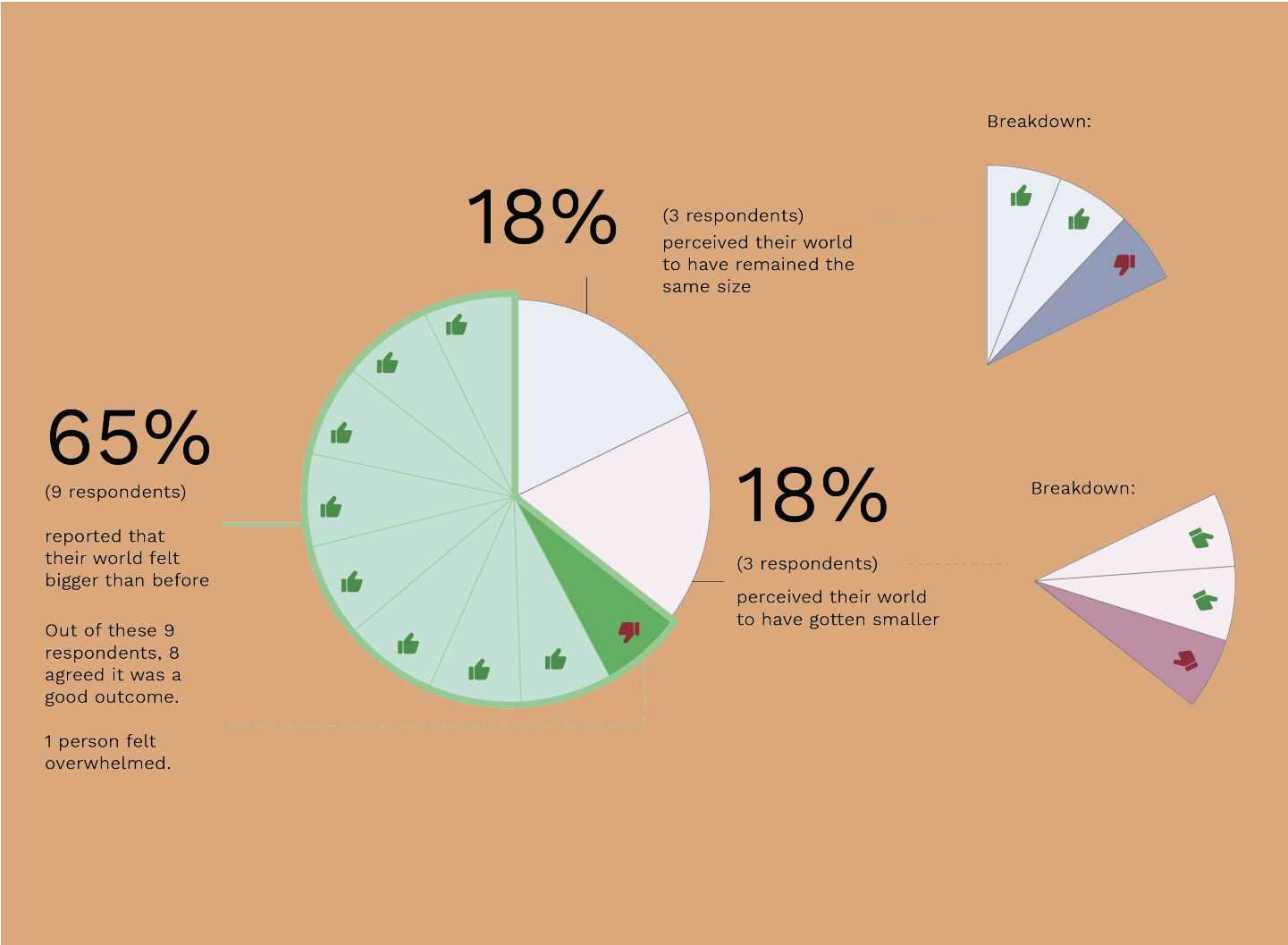
The Novelter Seekers

There is a segment of participants for whom growing exposure to new things and people is exciting and welcome in and of itself. This may be especially true when people are discovering or re-evaluating their preferences after a life change. These novel connections were most often pursued by individuals seeking personal growth. For example, one community member recently experienced a significant shift in her life after her husband passed away. Her world has grown since she stopped being the primary caretaker for her husband. She is now able to explore new places and connect with friends more.

Another one of our long-time community members expressed a lot of excitement about having grown his world ever since he took on a hosting role at Curiko: “I want my world to keep growing and growing. I want to grow more confident in communicating with people. Some people enjoy chatting with me too.”

Learnings about how worlds change over time:

In our follow up conversation, we asked community members if the size of their world had changed. 65% reported that their world felt bigger than before and



largely agreed that the growth in size was a good outcome. Only one person felt overwhelmed by the size of their world and wished it to be smaller. 18% of participating community members perceived their world to have remained the same size. The stability in size was deemed a good outcome for all but one participant who expressed a desire to pursue more meaningful activities as a way to grow his world with intention. About 18% felt that their world had gotten smaller since the last time we talked. These community members appreciated the decrease in size. One person whose world had shrunk significantly due to health issues outside of her control wished her world was bigger.

Though two-thirds of community members favoured expanding their worlds, our conversations have surfaced the desire to cultivate rather than simply grow one's world. While there is no one size of world that feels ideal to everyone, community members all shared a desire to cultivate

65% reported that their world felt bigger than before and largely agreed that the growth in size was a good outcome.

their worlds with intention. For some, that means pruning and decreasing the number of connections to a more manageable lot. For some, cultivating means adding new connections to people

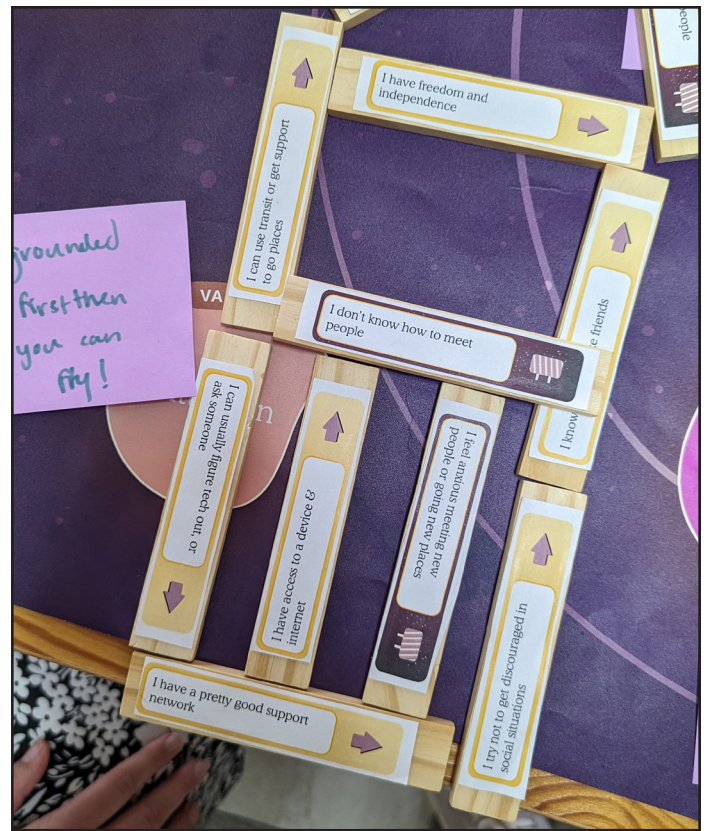
and places that bring novelty to people's lives. Sometimes, cultivating one's world is about deepening existing connections and growing roots rather than expanding. Whether a community member identifies as having a disability or not, intellectual or otherwise, does not seem to impact people's preference for world size or desire for change (in either direction). What kind of change someone wishes for, and if at all, shifts over time and can only be inferred in conversation with community members. An ongoing evaluative practice is therefore needed in order to support Curiko's community in cultivating their worlds.



Curiko members exploring the Vancouver Opera

Tool 3: Enablers and Barriers

Moving the conversation from a birds-eye-view on people's worlds to being back on earth, we invited community members to build a spaceship launching pad. We used wooden building blocks displaying negative and positive belief statements as the building materials. The tactility of the blocks served the purpose of facilitating a shift in thinking from external connections to internal belief systems. We asked community members: What are the beliefs that build you up? What are the ones that get in your way? Each person then chose the building blocks that displayed a positive or negative belief they hold about themselves. Our assumption is that our internal beliefs impact our motivation to pursue a life that we experience as fulfilling: Positive beliefs about oneself and one's abilities strengthen motivation; Negative beliefs get in the way of seizing opportunities and building skills. In this part of the conversation, we were hoping to get a better sense of how confident community members feel about their ability to make changes and move towards wellbeing (i.e. a better quality of life).¹⁷



Learnings:

Personal: Self-efficacy and openness

In the personal realm, we explored community members' sense of self-efficacy and their openness to new experiences and learning. We specifically asked how each person assesses their ability to learn new skills and how well they tolerate discomfort as part of learning.¹⁸ Out of the 25 members who engaged in this part of the conversation, half feel confident

¹⁷ People's capabilities to better their lives are an important determinant of wellbeing and quality of life. Capability is not the same as confidence or motivation, though both are necessary preconditions for capability to develop. Amartya Sen defines capability as a person's real freedoms to achieve what they deem valuable. It means having the ability and freedoms to convert resources and opportunities into desired outcomes. Reference: Amartya Sen. "Capability and Wellbeing." *The Quality of Life*, edited by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, Oxford Scholarship online, 1993, pp.30-53.

¹⁸ Constraint: We asked community members to share their general sentiment. The answers lack context and we anticipate more variation and nuance if we were to contextualize the question. That being said, the data serves as a starting point.

about their ability to learn new skills and two thirds report a positive attitude towards encountering discomfort as part of learning. About one third felt neither particularly confident nor unconvinced about their capability to learn. Only 16% express doubts about their sense of self-efficacy, meaning they do not feel confident about their ability to engage with a new or difficult task. Out of these doubtful community members, only one identifies as having an intellectual disability. Everyone else identifies as neuro divergent.

When looking at the relationship between enabling and hindering beliefs, even the 16% of community members who do not feel confident about their ability to learn new skills still all express willingness to tolerate the discomfort that comes with the difficulty of learning. While the majority of community members hold positive beliefs about their ability to learn and to engage with novelty, everyone, regardless of their level of confidence, is willing to accept and move through the discomfort that comes with learning a new skill. This willingness to accept discomfort suggests a general openness to learning even if one has a limited sense of self-efficacy. The responses also highlight the importance of strengthening people's internal belief about their ability to learn new skills as part of the process of skill building.¹⁹ Overall, the conversations indicate that community members share one of Curiko's core

beliefs: We can all learn and grow.

Community members share one of Curiko's core beliefs: We can all learn and grow.

Communal: Ability to contribute

On a communal level, we asked if people have talents and passions that they can share with others, or if they feel like they do not have much to contribute. 76% of community members we spoke with report a strong sense of contribution. Regardless of whether a member was actively hosting experiences on the platform at the time, three quarters of community members think they have passions to share with others. Only two members expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to contribute. Both identify as having an intellectual disability. At the time of the conversation, one community member was preparing to host his very first experience on Curiko. His belief about not having much to contribute, however, had not changed at the follow up conversation. Two community members shared feeling like they have passions to share while also feeling doubtful about their ability to contribute to a community. Both community members identify purpose as their top value and contribution as a way that purpose can come to life. Sharing passions and talents might not be the

¹⁹ Reminder: Building skill is one of the five determinants in Curiko's theory of action.

kind of contribution that feels meaningful or big enough to them. Both identify as neurodivergent.

As an experience platform, Curiko invites anyone on the platform to share their passions with others in the form of hosting experiences. The idea is to move away from labels like “intellectual disability” and create spaces where people connect on the basis of shared interests, rather than shared labels that someone else assigned to them. What we learnt from previous moments in our conversations is that a significant number of community members value purpose and contribution, reflecting Curiko’s own core value.²⁰ While there is more opportunity to learn about how to best support our two community members who do not feel like they have much to contribute, the majority of our community feels like they have passions to share and like hosting experiences on Curiko is one effective way to bring their sense of contribution and purpose to life. As one of Curiko’s frequent hosts shares: “Purpose drives everything for me. My world looks small from the outside but its roots are growing. Curiko started this domino effect.”

76% of community members we spoke with report a strong sense of contribution.

Social: Connection to others

Social unease is one of the most commonly reported barriers among community members. Two-thirds of the people we spoke with expressed anxiety about meeting new people or visiting unfamiliar places. Nearly half said they feel unprepared to navigate social situations in general, and one-third shared that they don’t know how to meet others. Everyone in this last group reported experiencing some level of social isolation. While most community members describe social unease as anxiety or heightened self-consciousness in social situations, for some, it leads to profound social isolation. One person shared: “I cannot remember having a moment of connection. I push a lot of people away. Even my family members ignore me. Sometimes, it feels like the whole world rejects me. I feel like people humour me, but I don’t know who is my friend.” These challenges are reflected in Community Living British Columbia’s 2019/2020 Include Me! survey results, which show that “social inclusion” and “interpersonal relationships” consistently received the lowest quality of life scores from 2017 to 2020.²¹

Curiko was originally created to address social isolation experienced by people with intellectual disabilities, though, in our

²⁰ Core value: “Love and purpose are as important as shelter, safety, and food”

²¹ Community Living British Columbia. 2019-20 include Me! Results. Community Living BC, 7 Apr. 2021, www.communitylivingbc.ca/provincial-projects/include-me-a-quality-of-life-focus/what-weve-le

100% of the community members who reported feeling anxious in social situations also said that Curiko helped reduce those barriers.

findings, community members with and without disabilities face social barriers to the same extent. Notably, 100% of the community members who reported feeling anxious in social situations also said that Curiko helped reduce those barriers. Keeping in mind some of our earlier learnings, most of our members consistently identify love and connection as their most important values. If we consider social barriers in relationship to people's top values, we could infer that Curiko resonates with individuals who deeply value connection to others but face significant challenges in achieving it. Two thirds of those community members who report feeling challenged in social situations also insist that they try not to get discouraged. Recognizing the community's resilience and willingness to engage on the platform despite fear, Curiko supports members in taking on different roles to help overcome some of these social barriers. One community member captured addressing her social fears by sharing her surprise and excitement after successfully hosting an experience: "I

didn't think I would be that confident. I don't have confidence on a daily basis... I shocked myself because I am normally scared around people that I don't know ... maybe I am getting over my people anxiety."

While a moment such as successfully hosting an experience can spark confidence and motivation, we recognize that more is needed to create momentum. Part of Curiko's theory of action focuses on providing the supports that enable community members to overcome internal barriers that get in the way of living a fulfilling life. Curating a warm and welcoming space is a key part of how Curiko tries to bring the idea of social inclusion to life. In our conversations, 80% of participants said they believe there are welcoming places in community, with Curiko being one of them. Considering that the large majority of our members believe that there are welcoming places and yet almost equally as many feel challenged in social situations, we can conclude that while welcoming spaces matter, they alone are not enough to shift the social barriers people face.

Societal: Judgment and stigma

Feelings of judgment and stigma continue to shape how many people with disabilities experience the world around them. In our conversations with community members, these perceptions emerged as a significant and recurring theme. Nearly 70% of participating community members report

feeling judged because of their disability. Every member who identifies as having a disability sees societal judgment as a major barrier in their lives. Among those with intellectual disabilities, responses were either “yes” or “I don’t know” to the question if they feel judged by others because of their disability. Notably, all but one of the “I don’t know” responses came from people with intellectual disabilities, which may suggest discomfort discussing disability — a pattern the last part of the conversation will explore in more detail.

The experience of social judgment and stigma has had a strong influence on some members’ confidence. For example, one community member expressed feeling judged based on his physical movements and communication style, while another noted that her experiences of being treated differently in childhood contributed to a sense of shame and discomfort surrounding her disability. Fear of judgment leads one community member to say: “I keep my circle of friends very close”. People’s experiences of judgment and at times internalized stigma are limiting their opportunities for meaningful social connection and participation in community.

About half of community members believe that disability-related stereotypes can change. However, only two of those holding this positive belief identify as having an intellectual disability. With one exception, all participants say that Curiko helps challenge disability stereotypes

and reduces feelings of judgment.

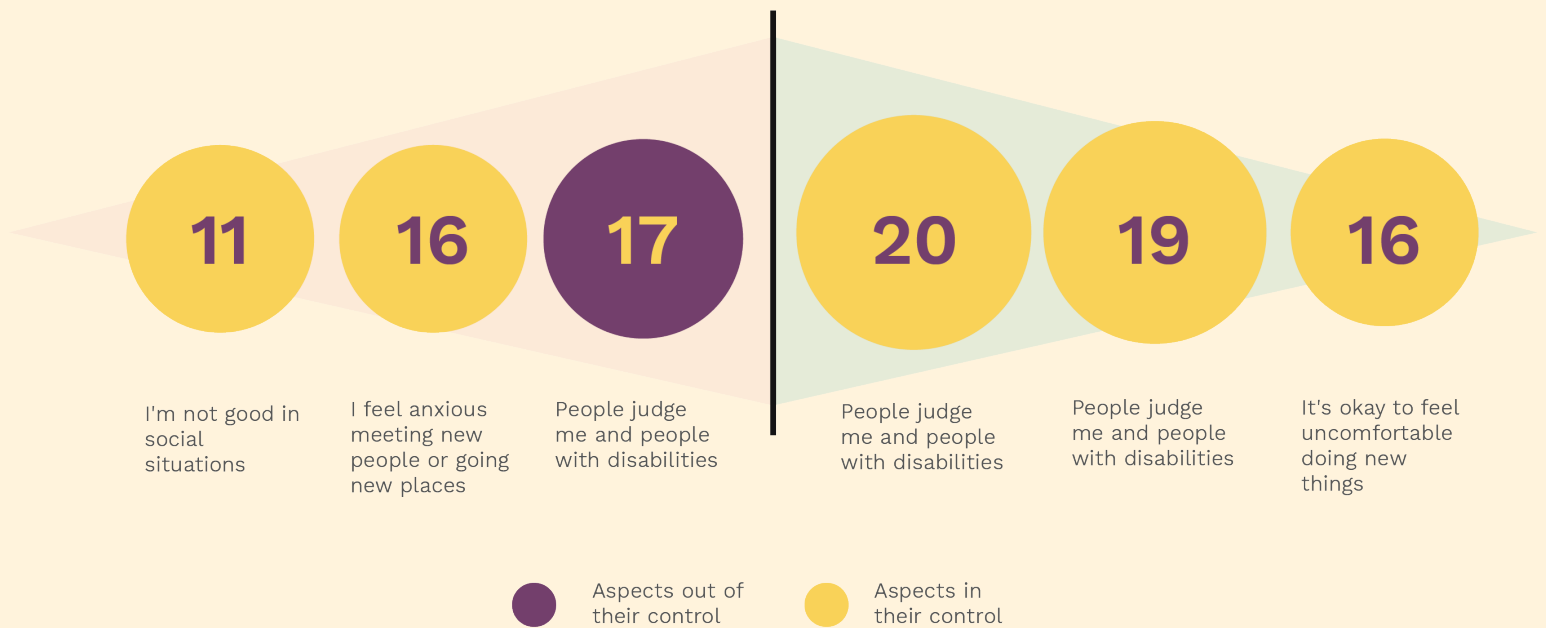
One community member, for example, identifies having a good support network as a significant enabler, noting that Curiko has helped her connect with individuals who understand her experiences and provide encouragement. These supportive relationships serve as a buffer against the negative effects of social judgment and isolation, empowering individuals to navigate challenges and pursue their goals. Still, only one person reported a positive shift in belief over time. Everyone else who felt judged during the baseline conversation still felt judged during the follow-up. These findings suggest that while supportive environments like Curiko can foster networks of social support as a means to resist external judgment, shifting deeply internalized beliefs about disability requires deeper work to surface and re-write personal narratives.

**With one exception,
all participants say that
Curiko helps challenge
disability stereotypes
and reduces feelings of
judgment.**

Top 3 Barriers

V.S.

Top 3 Barriers



Tool 4: Relationship to disability

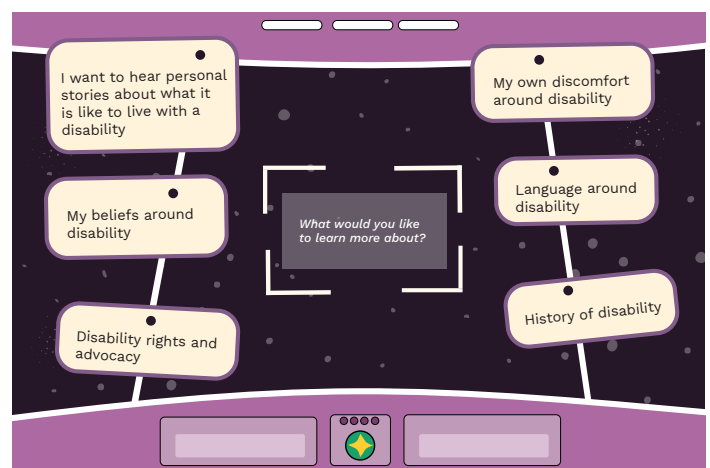
As the final part of our conversations, we invited community members to reflect on and express their personal narratives around disability. Deepening narrative is one of the determinants in our theory of action that leads to more moments of meaningful connection. The ability to identify, question, and take authorship of one's personal stories allows individuals to challenge dominant ideas about what is 'good' or 'normal'- ideas that we may have internalized over time. At Curiko, we aim to create the conditions for people to show up fully as themselves, believing that we are able to connect more meaningfully with others that way. This part of the conversation was designed as an opportunity for all of us to surface our beliefs about disability and to engage in a conversation about it. We treat narrative as a powerful catalyst for changing behaviours and perspectives. Before one is able to shift a narrative, however, it has to be made explicit. To better understand the community's current narratives, we asked: how do you relate to the word "disability"? Is it a good word, a bad word, or somewhere in between?



part one



part two



part three

Learnings:

Comfort or Conformity?

Community members' responses to the question how comfortable they feel around disability revealed a notable ambiguity. While 96% of the community members we were in conversations with report feeling comfortable around disability, some members who identify as having an intellectual disability visibly displayed discomfort when engaging with the question. It is difficult to know if people's reported self-perception fully reflects how they personally feel. Because it was intended as a simple starting point, the questions we asked did not explicitly encourage members to engage in a more nuanced reflection about their potentially ambiguous feelings towards disability. As earlier learnings point out, the large majority of community members associate disability with stigma and prejudice. Asked again, 92% of community members affirmed that they believe that people with disabilities face significant social barriers in BC. That and/or the positive bias towards being accepting in inclusive spaces like Curiko might shape how openly people report their comfort or discomfort around disability.

More than at any other time in the conversation, whether someone identified with an intellectual disability or not appeared to influence how openly they spoke about disability. While 96% of the

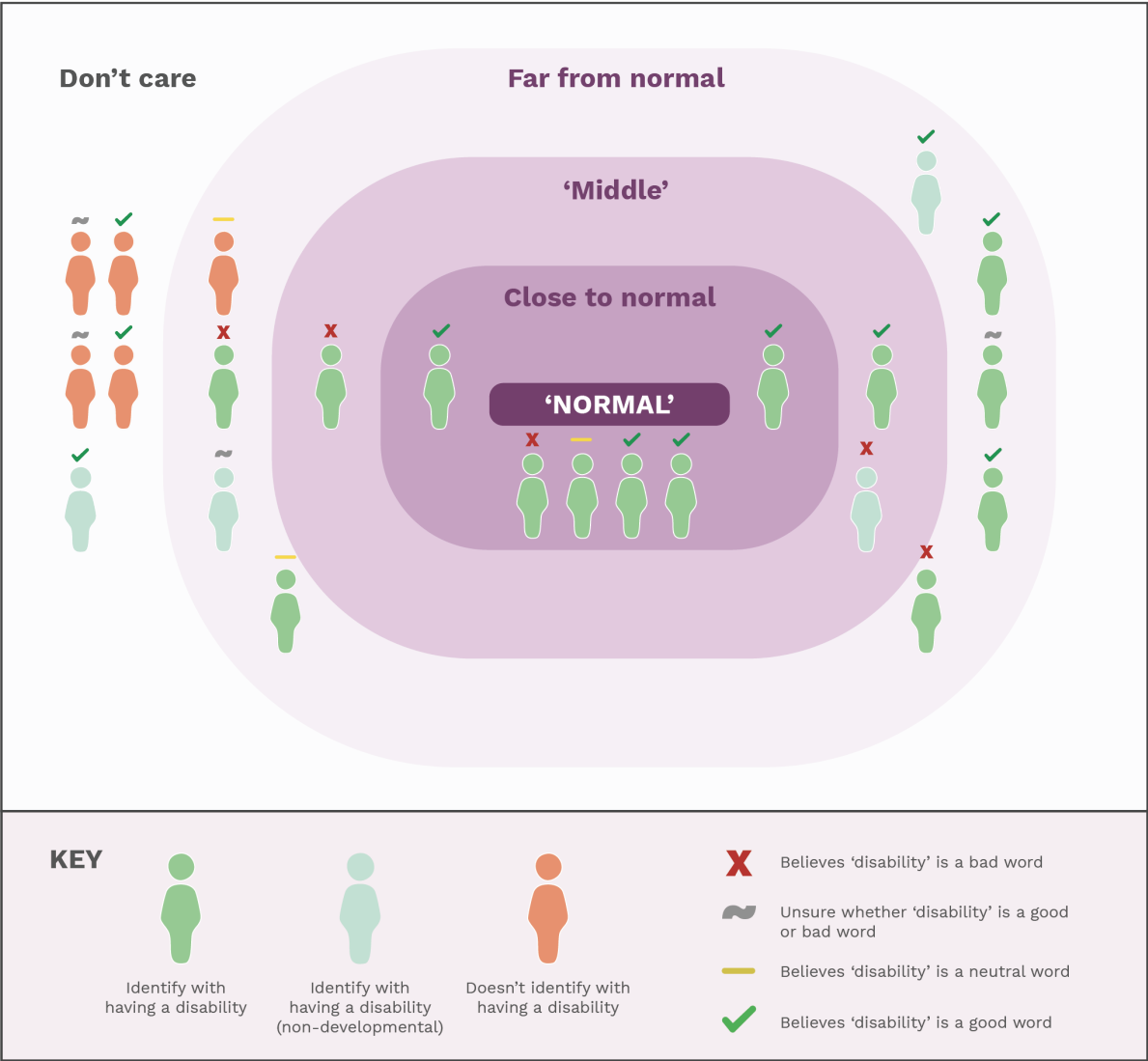
people we spoke with reported feeling comfortable around disability in general, talking about disability, potentially one's own, turned out to be more difficult for some. About half those who declared having an intellectual disability either avoided the topic by responding 'I don't know' or displayed visible discomfort when asked to engage with it. For example, one community member picked up the printed dashboard and moved it off the table, saying she did not want to talk about disability. Another community member shyly admitted, "I have a disability. I don't like to talk about it." Notably, that same community member engaged much more openly in a conversation about disability at our follow up meeting. Though it is difficult to know why, it is worth noting that he experienced a significant period of personal growth ever since stepping into hosting roles at Curiko.

92% of community members affirmed that they believe that people with disabilities face significant social barriers in BC.

While community members with intellectual disabilities sometimes expressed hesitation or discomfort when talking about disability, people without disabilities and disabilities

other than intellectual generally felt more at ease talking about disability. Their level of comfort being around others with disabilities, while generally high, revealed more subtle distinctions than the level of comfort reported by community members with intellectual disabilities. One community member, for instance, shared that the level of comfort she experiences when being around someone else with a disability depends on how much she trusts that person. Another member explained that she feels more comfortable around people with intellectual disabilities than people with

physical disabilities, particularly when their bodies diverge significantly from societal norms. For her, having an intellectual disability simply means making sense of the world differently which is what we all do to some extent. A third member shared that he feels comfortable around people with intellectual disabilities, but also notices moments of frustration when communication styles differ. Rather than withdrawing, he described approaching those moments with curiosity, seeing them as opportunities for learning and personal growth.



Mind the Gap - Perceptions of 'normal'

Given how consistently community members report feeling judged by others and limited by internal fears of judgement, we steered the conversation towards an exploration of community members' relationship to the idea of 'normal'. We are interested in the idea of 'normal' because we assume that judgement often arises as a reaction to non-conformity to social norms, and that such judgement can eventually turn perceived differences into a marker of social exclusion. So, we asked what 'normal' means to each person- if it is meaningful at all- and how close or far away they personally feel from it. We were wondering, do community members feel normal? And, if not, does feeling different from normal get in the way of connecting with others (or themselves)? One of the determinants in Curiko's theory of action is "bridging difference"- the idea that fostering connection across real or perceived differences creates the conditions for meaningful social inclusion. By exploring each person's relationship to the idea of 'normal', we aimed to better understand whether, and to what extent, people feel different from others and how that perception impacts their ability to connect.

When asked how close or far away from 'normal' community members feel, 30% report feeling close to normal, 40% feel far away, about 10% feel somewhere in the middle, and 20% say they don't care. 100% of the people who feel close to

normal also report having an intellectual disability. Of the community members who say they do not care, 100% identify as not having any disability.²² In contrast, the 50% of community members who either feel far away from normal or somewhere in the middle represent a broader mix of community members, including individuals with and without disabilities.

If we assume that being perceived as 'normal' by others positively impacts one's experience of social inclusion, then these findings suggest that there might be a gap between how close to normal community members perceive themselves to be and how they are perceived by others. 100% of the community members who think of themselves as 'normal' also identify as having an intellectual disability. While all but one of these members agree that people with disabilities face lots of discrimination, their self-perception as 'normal' appears to render them more resilient against external judgments. Everyone in this group has positive associations with the word disability- two people specifically associate "being strong" with having a disability. Another community member thinks that discrimination is part of everyone's life to some extent so he does not take it to heart: "A lot of people with disabilities get discriminated or get swore at. I don't feel like I get

²² Without going into further detail, we can assume that in a dominantly ableist society, not having any kind of disability bestows privilege and thus allows some individuals to disengage from the pressure to conform to ideas of normalcy.

discriminated. Sometimes, I get swore at- that's just life. Even people without disabilities get swore at. It could be that the person has a mental health problem or a drug problem.”

The fact that only community members with intellectual disabilities described themselves as “normal,” while those without disabilities or with other types of disabilities positioned themselves further away from it, raises the question of whether members responded to the question holding fundamentally different meanings for ‘normal’. Those who saw themselves far from normal often described it as a social ideal—something they felt they had failed to achieve. Aware of the unattainability of these ideals, some participants disengaged from the concept entirely. As one member put it, “I’m not normal, but that’s okay because nobody is. Just a very small percentage of people.” Another echoed this sentiment, stating, “Normal is whoever most likely fits into a given system.”

Community members who felt far from “normal” but did not question or critique the ideal they associate with it often expressed a deeper struggle with feeling included. One community member explained, “I don’t drive. I don’t have a full-time job. I haven’t traveled the world. I don’t have siblings. I’m not married.” She concluded that these differences made it difficult for her to relate to others or feel a sense of belonging. These internalized

feelings of being different appear to contribute to more frequent and deeper experiences of social exclusion.

Community members who described themselves as closer to “normal” tended to define the term not through social ideals, but through everyday human sameness. One participant, slightly puzzled by the question, explained: “I go for walks. I eat breakfast. I do sports. I do normal things,” concluding that he must therefore be a normal person. This inquiry into how close or far from “normal” people feel reveals that perceiving oneself close to ‘normal’ might play a role in strengthening people’s resilience against internalized social stigma—and is not determined by disability status. In fact, those who, from a societal standpoint, face the greatest exclusion often feel closest to “normal” and report being less personally affected by social judgement.



Learnings about determinants and outcomes

In Curiko's theory of action, determinants are the mechanisms that enable individuals to achieve the outcomes that they desire at any given time. Curiko identifies five core determinants for change: strengthening motivation, increasing opportunity, building skill, bridging difference, and deepening narrative. In our evaluative practice, we sense check whether and for whom these determinants lead to more moments of meaningful connection, or, in Schalock's terms, improvements in perceived quality of life.

We understand determinants and outcomes as working bi-directionally:

while determinants are the mechanisms for generating desired outcomes, these outcomes may in turn reinforce and strengthen the underlying determinants. In Curiko language, we refer to this positive feedback loop as: "moments build momentum over time."

In Curiko language,
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For whom Curiko works	For whom Curiko doesn't work
Anyone who is curious about learning new skills	People who do not value learning
Anyone who is willing to tolerate discomfort as part of learning	People who engage inconsistently
Anyone who is open to sharing an interest or passion with others	Members who are unwilling to examine internal barriers such as limiting beliefs about themselves or others
Anyone interested in taking on (co-) leadership	
Anyone looking for connection or community	

Determinant: strengthen motivation

Curiko aims to strengthen motivation in order to enable community members to move from intention to action. As a values-driven platform, we intend to support community members to actualize what matters most to each person and to pursue connections that feel meaningful. Strong motivation is a key factor in translating personal intention into purposeful action.

How does Curiko strengthen motivation?

through hosting experiences

through offering novelty

by supporting people in achieving personal growth

through coaching

through building a social network and thereby countering social isolation

Stories of strengthening motivation:

Community member and host, B, called to talk about his experience coming to an end. B shared that he would be retiring his experience to make time for new learning opportunities.. When asked why it was important to host, B shared: “In the past, people have second guessed me when I’ve expressed a desire to find a job. They gave up on me after learning that I have autism. But my current employers gave me a chance. I host the ‘Good Doctor’ experience because I’m autistic. I wanted to show other people who are autistic a story about a doctor like us. The story is inspiring and touches my heart; it shows me there’s somebody advocating for people with autism. Some storylines are difficult to watch, but together we have a chance to consider them and why they’re challenging. Look at what people with autism are doing in this world. Don’t give up because of what people say. We can do it too.”

through hosting experiences

L first tentatively joined Curiko through another community member's invite to a Curiosity Trip to the Vancouver Art Gallery. Over the course of several more curiosity experiences, L was always engaged with the experience (the sights, sounds, art etc) but hadn't directly conversed or connected with other members. When a coach invited him to attend Curiko's Reflection Cafe to experience more direct conversations, he was willing to try something different. While discussing intentions for 2024 at RCafe, L shared that he wanted to be more proactive in taking action towards his wishes and desires (which included connecting socially). He has since made great efforts to participate at all the Vancouver Reflection Cafes, increasing his direct engagement with others, in the discussions/story sharing and even making direct connections with other members by offering his help.

through offering novelty

Community member J hosted for the first time. She has been planning a 1:1 in-person experience for a little over a month and felt ready to have the experience tasted. She was nervous going in and practiced how she would introduce the experience and what she would say with her mom the day before. Two of Curiko's tasters joined J's experience - Create with J - at the Curiko Studio. They both fully participated. After some mediation and listening to music the three did some collaborative painting switching canvases every 10 - 15 minutes. The group met with a curator the next day for a debrief where J shared more about how she felt really confident after the experience. When chatting about what was unexpected or surprising during the tasting J said "I didn't think I would be that confident. Don't have confidence on a daily basis... Shocked myself because normally scared around people that I don't know ... shocked that maybe I am getting over my people anxiety."

by supporting people in achieving personal growth

Long time community member K wrapped up her 9 week coaching journey. K started coaching to talk about her medical episodes. She felt like she didn't have any control, and was struggling with her episodes limiting what activities she could do and where she could go. Together, coach and K worked on creating a toolbox with many different strategies to help her when she is struggling, including somatic coaching, breathing techniques, and drawing what stress and anxiety look like as monsters and how to send them away. K and her coach decided to each keep journals for a month. While they didn't share what they wrote, co-journaling was a great way to hold each other accountable and bond. Recently, K shared with the coaches that her episodes haven't happened for 17 days! When asked if any of the tools were helpful, K said, yes, particularly the journal and progressive muscle relaxation. K has practiced such resilience and it has paid off. Over time, coaches observed K take more control over her medical decisions and try tools on her own to help her self-regulate.

**through building a social network and
thereby countering social isolation**

Strengthening motivation: limitations & opportunities going forward

Hosting always bears the risk of disappointment. How many people will show up for an experience depends on a wide range of factors, some, like weather, quite unpredictable. Community members who struggle with feelings of rejection or social anxieties might require emotional support and or coaching when an experience does not happen as planned.

Community member T is not religious but has developed a passion for the stories of catholic saints. As Curiko started to offer more experiences in the realm of spirituality, T decided to host her first ever experience on prayer. When only two people showed up for her in-person experience, T felt rejected and validated in her belief that others are not interested in being her friend. After the initial disappointment had passed, T decided to join coaching as a way to work on her negative thought patterns and to find support in publishing her poetry. Though T has not been open to hosting experiences so far, she has found great joy and motivation in working on her poetry.

Strengthening motivation is not a linear process. Setbacks and moments of demoralization can be re-balanced through trusting relationships and coaching.

J met with a coach at La Casa Gelato on a Friday evening for a celebration of her coaching journey, one that had spanned 8 sessions over 3 months. It was a chance to reflect and share what the process had been like for both, and what J's biggest take-aways were. At the time of meeting, J showed up emotionally distressed. Together, they walked towards a park nearby while J shared some conflict in her personal life. It took a good 45 minutes before she had emptied out what were some really dark feelings about a really heated situation with a family member. The coach felt out of their depth and wasn't sure how to help. Among J's frustrations was this feeling of being exactly where she was at the beginning of her coaching journey. Despite leaving every session feeling excited and empowered and eager to keep building on the work, in this moment, she was extremely demoralized. Over the course of the conversation, J remembered the things she'd learned and said about herself, of the art and practices she'd created as a result of the coaching work, of the insights and experiences she'd opened up about and entered into, that reaffirmed her identity as someone who is capable of learning and flourishing. Once she had moved through the emotions and was more present to the planned celebratory experience, they got some gelato and went for a walk to reflect on everything they'd explored together. The celebration didn't start on a positive note, but by the end, J shared how grateful she was for her coaching journey.

Determinant: Increase opportunity

Without the right kinds of opportunities, even the most motivated members may not be able to engage in meaningful ways. In order to increase opportunity, Curiko creates welcoming spaces and supports community members to overcome both external and internal barriers that might get in the way of participating in experiences.

How does Curiko increase opportunity?

By offering opportunities to share interests and passions in the form of experiences

By providing onboarding and welcome sessions

By supporting people to actualize their values, (e.g. purpose and contribution)

By connecting people and opening doors beyond Curiko

By creating spaces where people can connect with others on the basis of shared interests rather than diagnostic labels

By removing financial barriers: experiences are free

By offering a variety of roles people can step into

Stories of increasing opportunity:

When A joined Curiko as an Ambassador (a peer role) for our open house, she was invited to share a story of how Curiko has impacted her.

A fell back in love with Hip Hop and art through Curiko. “I was scrolling through Facebook and saw an ad for the Curiko Hip Hop experience with Kelly. I met lots of new people and even got to meet some of my hip hop idols. I’ve gotten back into art, learning how to draw & write graffiti too.” She added, “My world opened up and doors kept opening, so many doors that I have to decline things now because I’m so busy. Different programs that others were involved in wanted me to join, like the social media fellows”

And just like that, B-Girl A was born. “B-girl A is my persona, but also like it brought me a sense of hope and something to do when I got older. “I had grown up with a lot of traumas and I was not a very happy kid, and the hip hop, let’s just say it gave me my identity of who I am now.”

At the open house, A enjoyed receiving feedback from people attending and said it was “empowering” to hear how much people liked her art and story. “They even suggested I sell t-shirts!”

By connecting people and opening doors beyond Curiko

Community member D joined the art journaling cohort and Curiko in general when she was in need of a community. At the time, D was going through a nasty break up, dealing with immigration, and moving out of her house. When D left her partner, she felt very alone in a country where she did not know anyone. D could not afford to make connections through other programs and did not have money to buy art supplies. Curiko was a way to engage and join a community. Being on zoom allowed D to connect without needing to leave the house. Art journaling seemed like a way to get creative without focusing on her own trauma and instead to focus more on meeting people. Or D, art journaling was light and joyful. Now D is interested in engaging in Curiko in other ways: There are so many different experiences to try so it doesn't feel like you are trapped. "You can choose what you are feeling like doing each week, whether cooking, to artsing, or going to festivals."

D likes the idea of joining a community that is open for people with and without disabilities. Curiko's openness, to her, removes many barriers. D says that at Curiko, people focus on being connected by an activity, not a label. Growing up, D was often assigned the role of caregiver to her younger brother with disability. D appreciates that Curiko doesn't have caretaking roles and rather gives her the space to take a breather from all labels she has been associated with: anxiety, trauma, refugee, survivor. D feels like she has outgrown most of these labels.

Joining the creative environment at Curiko has also helped D to grow her career as an artist. She is able to use her favourite paintings for her art business and has connected with community members outside of Curiko.

By creating spaces where people can connect with others on the basis of shared interests rather than diagnostic labels

Increasing opportunity: limitations & opportunities going forward

While Curiko offers a wide range of opportunities, not all community members are equally ready to engage. Internal barriers such as social fears or internalized stigma are complex and sometimes hard to move past even with the right kinds of supports.

A segment of community members does not seek 'more' opportunities for connection but seeks to be more intentional about choosing the right kinds of connections. This evaluation has shown that while increasing opportunity matters, what matters more is creating the right number and kind of opportunity for the right person.

Determinant: Build skill

To enable more moments of connection, Curiko supports community members in building a range of skills. In some cases, this means developing practical skills such as navigating technology, managing schedules, or using public transit to access experiences. At other times, it involves strengthening social and emotional capacities—like engaging in conversations, managing social anxiety, or building confidence in group settings.

How does Curiko build skill?

By supporting people grow into new roles and develop better communication skills

By offering a tool box to deal with difficult emotions

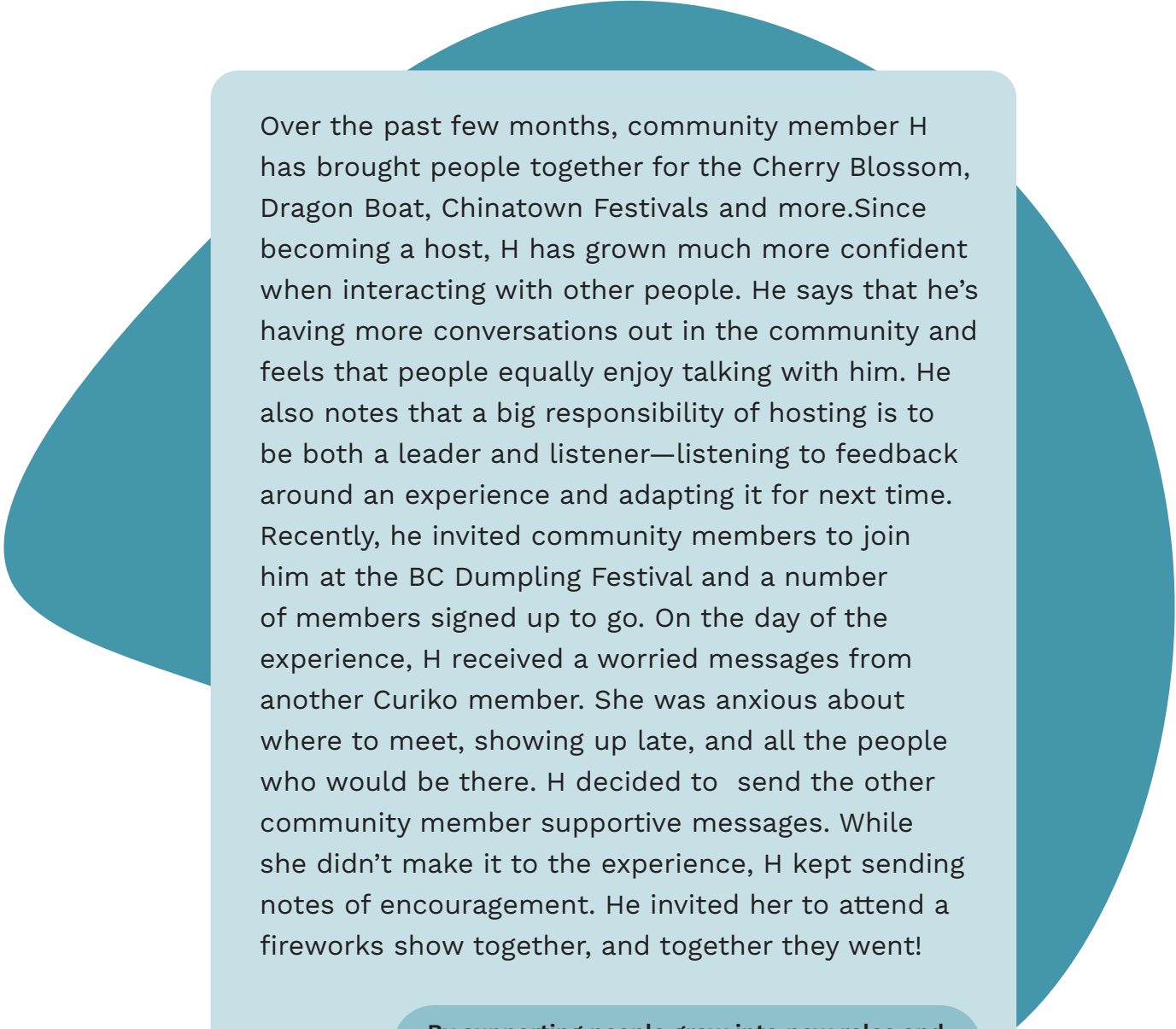
By holding community members accountable

By supporting community members in honing tech skills

Stories of building skill:

When D started his coaching journey, he was mostly looking for a trusted listener who would make him feel seen and heard. Before joining Curiko as a coachee, he used to fight, flight, or freeze in social situations that got him worked up. Through coaching, he practiced being less reactive. In one instance, he managed to pause and breathe and disengage from a person with whom he experiences lots of conflict. While he used to hold many limiting beliefs about things that seemed impossible or out of reach for him, D has grown more optimistic and open to new possibilities through coaching.

By offering a tool box to deal with difficult emotions

The background features large, overlapping teal shapes that frame the central text box. A light blue rounded rectangle contains the main text.

Over the past few months, community member H has brought people together for the Cherry Blossom, Dragon Boat, Chinatown Festivals and more. Since becoming a host, H has grown much more confident when interacting with other people. He says that he's having more conversations out in the community and feels that people equally enjoy talking with him. He also notes that a big responsibility of hosting is to be both a leader and listener—listening to feedback around an experience and adapting it for next time. Recently, he invited community members to join him at the BC Dumpling Festival and a number of members signed up to go. On the day of the experience, H received a worried messages from another Curiko member. She was anxious about where to meet, showing up late, and all the people who would be there. H decided to send the other community member supportive messages. While she didn't make it to the experience, H kept sending notes of encouragement. He invited her to attend a fireworks show together, and together they went!

By supporting people grow into new roles and develop better communication skills

H is a longstanding community member who hosts many experiences throughout the year, and his main goal is to find employment. Recently, he was invited to be an advisor on the new Ambassador role, and paid an honorarium to do so. The day before he was to assist with developing the role, H called to share that he had booked a job interview and would not be showing up as a result. He did not seem to realize how failing to follow through on paid work impacted others. H is very eager to get a job and felt that neglecting this commitment was a reasonable thing to do. A few weeks prior to this, H had also failed to follow through on co-hosting an in-person experience that had been weeks in the planning, to instead go to his other volunteer job, stating “the show must go on.” These actions seemed contrary to how H has previously conducted himself, as in the past he has been very considerate and accommodating in all his interactions with Curiko. A curiko coach had a conversation with H who eventually realized that he was not honouring his commitments and agreed to planning more carefully in the future. H chose to move the interview, even though he was worried about losing the opportunity, trying to honour his previous commitment to Curiko. He said, “ah, I get it now”

By holding community members accountable

Building skill: limitations & opportunities going forward

Not everyone feels confident about their ability to learn new skills but most community members are open to tolerating the discomfort that comes with learning. Curiko can harness this willingness in order to encourage people along the path of gaining more confidence in their self efficacy.

A segment of community members is interested in selecting the connections more intentionally, potentially even cutting those out that do not feel meaningful to them. There is an opportunity for Curiko to support people in sharpening their sense of discernment and support community members in cultivating meaningful connections with more self awareness.

Determinant: bridge difference

One of Curiko's core values states that we are all wonderfully different and equal. Curiko aims to connect community members across lines of difference - perceived or real. Inviting everyone to encounter each other from a place of curiosity and openness, bridges differences and can strengthen the social fabric of the Curiko community.

How does Curiko bridge difference?

By challenging dominant ideas of 'normal'

By inviting a variety of modes of communication to each experience

By curating warm, welcoming spaces

Through restorative practices

By enabling moments of experiencing shared humanity: through laughter, curiosity, and inviting in the unexpected

By encouraging reflection, empathy, and perspective taking

Stories of bridging difference:

Y heard about Curiko coaching at a Vancouver Community College presentation. He booked the experience, Autism Discussions, because he has long wanted to have a space to talk candidly with an Autism advocate. He says, "It's important to talk to an autism advocate, because it's important to understand how to advocate...advocates help people fight for a place to belong. Y shared some experiences he had in high school, feeling excluded and not welcome. Especially communities he's always wanted to be a part of -- like sports teams. "I wanted to be on the team so bad but I wasn't good enough... Instead of finding a different spot for me like getting the water or being a ball boy they didn't offer anything. I didn't know how to advocate. Y is excited to be a part of a welcoming community which he defines as, "An inclusive environment, not being teased."

By curating warm, welcoming spaces

Community member J reached out to the Curiko team for help with a situation involving another community member. She was concerned as they are both in the E-commerce Cohort and the next session was that afternoon. In a last minute coaching session, J shared her upsetting experience interacting on a date with that member. The coach acknowledged J's feelings and needs, and they spent most of the session defining new boundaries and decisions on how to proceed in the Ecommerce Cohort. The coach also encouraged J to take the other member's perspective by explaining that a person may struggle with communications or be awkward due to anxiety on a date and may not understand cues from the other person.

The next week, J contacted the team again as she felt that she had not been supported during her coaching session and was considering not coming to any more Curiko experiences in light of overall not feeling safe or supported. The coaches arranged a restorative circle as a response. When J felt like her concerns were taken seriously and taken in by the team without any signs of defensiveness, the circle ended in a round of appreciation and gratitude. In fact, J started joining Curiko's compassion circle experience afterwards to learn more about restorative practices.

Through restorative practices

Bridging difference: limitations & opportunities going forward

When community members do not share Curiko's core values, the roles they can take on might be limited.

Community member T showed up in a way that does not align with Curiko values. When confronted, T was able to expand on what was really going on beneath her language and open up on a more personal level. T expressed that she does not care about other people's feelings arguing that it is a reaction to other people not caring about her. When a curator reassured her that "this community cares about your feelings", she replied "I don't trust anyone. Pressed further, the curator said, "I care about your feelings, do you believe me?" She paused and seemed to let it sink in.

T wanted to host a haiku experience on Curiko. When asked what she would do as a host if someone shared their feelings-good or bad- she said she wouldn't do anything. The curator was able to share why this might pose challenges as a host, and T eventually agreed. T was able to see that hosting might not be the best fit for her at this point in time.

Going forward, as a means to bridge differences, there is an opportunity for Curiko to support community members in forming an understanding of 'normal' as our shared human experience rather than a set of imagined social ideals.

Determinant: deepen narratives

Curiko encourages community members to deepen narratives that they hold about themselves and others. The stories we hold shape how we see the world, what we think is possible, and how we relate to one another. Deepening narratives about disability might help us move past stigma and internalized judgements and live more fulfilling lives.

How does Curiko deepen narratives?

Through reflective experiences like compassion circle

By surfacing and questioning implicit narratives about oneself or others (for example during coaching sessions)

By challenging dominant narratives around disability

Stories of deepening narratives:

Z, a Curiko host, and I met to debrief their “Let’s Make Love Music” experience, which was all about the intersection of sexual identity and music. We used the experience debrief slides to look back and discuss how things went... During the conversation, Zell shared some reflections about a specific participant who is not especially verbal, saying, “I’m never sure how folks in the disability community respond.” Afterwards, we reflected on how everyone including participants with disabilities took part in music making. We discussed the issue of infantilization of people with disabilities as it came up as a topic in their experience, and explored how it could be showing up through some of their assumptions. The host connected to our sister initiative, Connecting Queer Communities, to continue the exploration of sexuality and disability.

By challenging dominant narratives around disability

At Compassion Circle, community member R chose to tell a long-ago story that he said he had never told anyone else, except for one family member. It was a story of a long and difficult day he had, where things were going wrong all day long, some relating to his job and his home too. As he shared each part of the story, he was trying to piece together the narrative of what actually happened that day and with the circle's support, he started to see that things had somehow worked out despite all the challenges and stressors that day. His narrative about that day and thoughts about himself shifted, and he was also able to find more self-compassion.

R's initial narrative was about making many mistakes and being quite hard on himself. He recounted some similar sentiments shared by the one family member whom he had told this story to. As we each responded through the compassion circle process, R started to shift his narrative about mistakes or being hard on himself, as he realized that everybody makes these types of mistakes from time to time and we all have days where everything seems to go wrong. We talked about Murphy's law and other ideas that show that this is a common experience. After receiving understanding and empathy from the group, he was expressing self-compassion.

Through reflective experiences like compassion circle

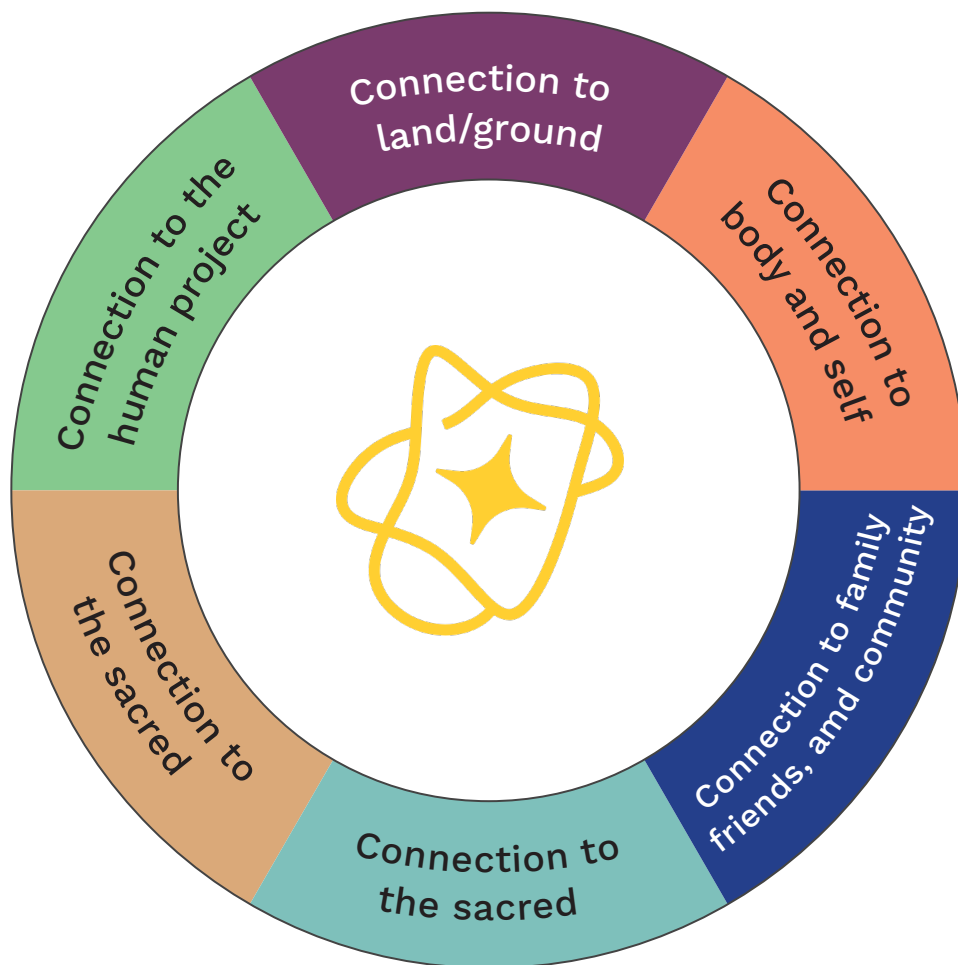
Deepening narratives: limitations & opportunities going forward

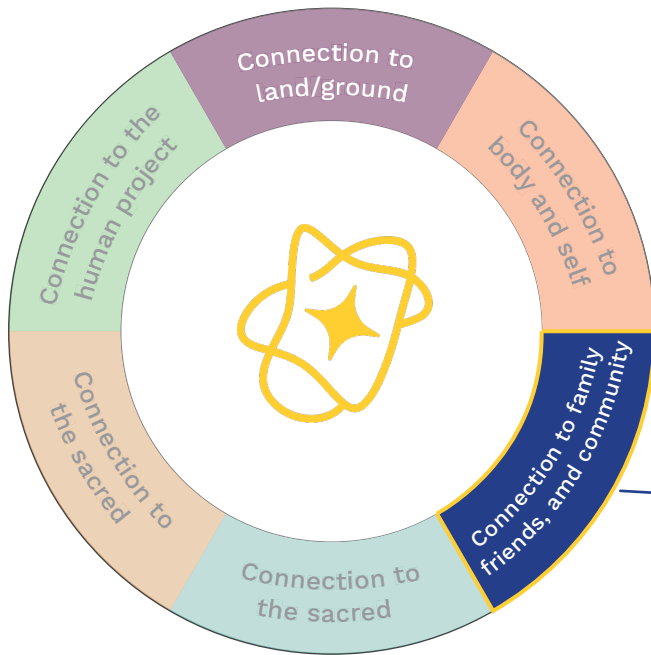
Going forward, there is opportunity for Curiko to work with community members with and without disabilities to deepen personal narratives about their relationship with disability.

Going forward, there is opportunity for Curiko to explore and deepen narratives around stigma and social judgment associated with disability—both external and internalized judgments.

Outcomes

Looking across all evaluation interviews and stories of meaningful moments, we see evidence that Curiko contributes to wellbeing by fostering moments of connection to self & body; friends, family & community; culture; and the human project of purpose & self-actualization. We see emerging, but weaker evidence that Curiko prompts stronger connection to land and the sacred. Below we summarize what our interviews reveal about how Curiko fosters connection to each area of the wellbeing or flourishing wheel.

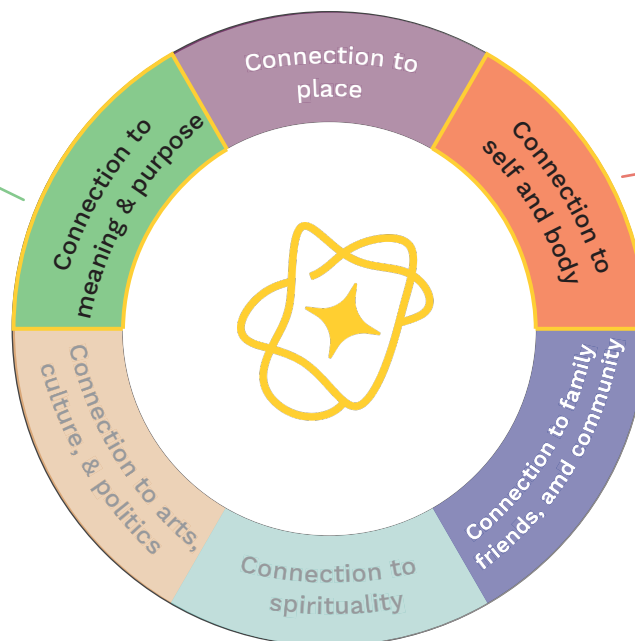




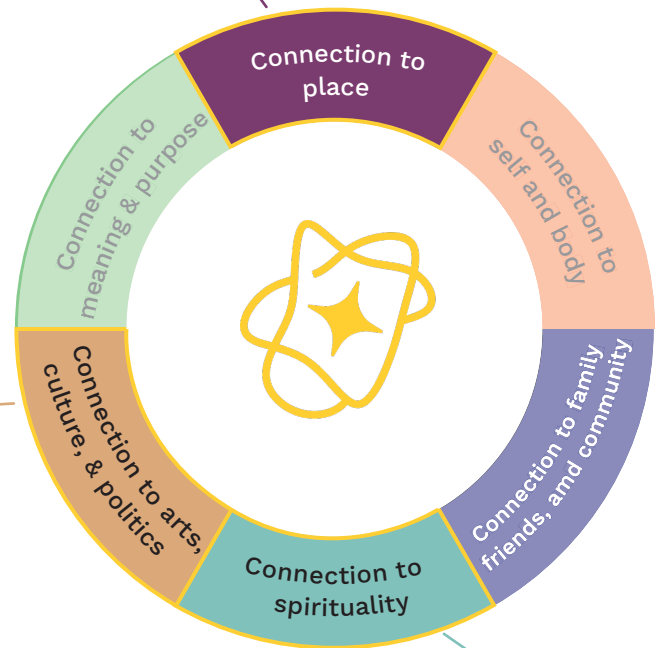
- Curiko enables community members to form meaningful connections with others by reducing social barriers (feeling anxious, fearing judgment)
- Curiko creates the conditions for connection to community by curating warm and welcoming spaces
- Curiko facilitates encouraging support networks. These supportive relationships serve as a buffer against the negative effects of social judgment and isolation.
- Curiko members identify Curiko as a place where they experience love and connection
- For some community members, Curiko sets off a domino effect- serving as a launching pad for building friendships that extend beyond the platform.
- Curiko resonated with individuals who deeply value social connection but face significant challenges in achieving it

- Community members with and without disabilities describe Curiko as a place where they can contribute meaningfully and find purpose.
- Community members describe exercising agency and making decisions in co-design sessions and through governance opportunities
- Curiko holds reflective conversations with community members to surface and learn more about what matters most to each person and how best to bring these values to life on the platform

- Curiko contributes to reducing internalized stigma and fears of judgment associated with disability
- Hosting experiences is an opportunity for community members to practice decision-making, to take the lead, and actualize a sense of independence
- Curiko's coaching offers support community members in their pursuits of personal growth
- Curiko experiences like "photography and mindfulness", "transit adventures", "breathwork", "Laughing yoga", "ASL learning" and more invite community members to connect with their bodies and senses in new ways



- Curiko offers nature-based experiences like nature walks, outdoor art making, gardening, or neighbourhood explorations
- Many of Curiko's in-person experiences connect community members to the lower mainland and the wider Vancouver metro urban community



- Curiko's experiences often include outings to different cultural festivals around Vancouver, cooking traditional foods, or sharing art and storytelling that invites community members to share their cultural heritage
- Co-designing and hosting experiences allows community members to centre their cultural identity if they wish to do so
- Curiko's focus on bridging differences and deepening narrative invites and encourages cross-cultural understanding in all interactions across the platform

- Curiko hosts experiences that explore spirituality in the wider sense, e.g. "finding awe in the ordinary." During the evaluation period, Curiko hired a Peer Spirituality Explorer, to grow experience offerings around spirituality. Given the newness of the role, we are still learning what outcomes emerge.

At the heart of it all

This evaluation has been designed to help us learn if Curiko's theory of action is playing out as intended, for whom, and how. Curiko seeks to cultivate the conditions for more people with and without disabilities to lead flourishing lives.

This theory of action has led us to ask: what makes up a good or flourishing life?

Try as we might, we cannot reduce a good life to a set of one-size-fits-all measures. That's because a good life is a life aligned with what matters to you - where you have the resources to use, enjoy, and develop your capabilities to connect with what you value.

In place of a universal set of outcome measures, our research suggests a good life is a life of connection to self & body, friends, family & community, culture, land, the sacred, and the human project of self-actualization and purpose. What an ideal quality or quantity of connection within each of these domains looks like varies widely. For one person, a job at a local grocery store might help fulfill a sense of connection to community and purpose. For another person, that same job might stand in the way of connection to community and purpose. Rather than assume that the presence or absence of particular resources - i.e. a job, a house, access to services -- equates to wellbeing, we've been developing methods to understand what people themselves value,

and to explore how Curiko contributes to people's own baseline, also recognizing that what people value changes over time and with exposure to new things.

In place of a fixed set of outcomes, we set out to measure whether people are moving closer to what they value, or changing what they value, through (1) the moments of connection they experience via the Curiko platform and beyond; and (2) the factors or determinants that enable people to connect to what matters to them. These factors include strengthening motivation, increasing opportunity, building skill, forming relationships across differences, and deepening narratives.



So, what did we learn?

- **The majority of community members within our evaluation sample identified love & connection to others as their top value, and more than 80% of these respondents say Curiko serves as a welcoming space for connection to others.** Interestingly, the number and type of connections that individuals desire varies greatly. Some community members are looking to grow the number of connections they have. Others are wanting to prune the number of connections they have. Rather than assume that social network size is a proxy for desired connection, intentionality of connection matters more.
- **Curiko is stronger at catalyzing moments of connection to body & self, friends & community, culture, and the human project of self-actualization than it is at catalyzing moments of connection to nature and the sacred.** But, a new role on the team, the Peer Spirituality Explorer, has been introduced to shift that.
- **Curiko's theory of change is playing out for 81% of our evaluation sample** -- meaning that we see evidence that most respondents strengthen one or more of the determinants or factors that underlie a sense of connection, regardless of how that sense of connection is defined by the individual.
- **Curiko is more effective at building motivation, opportunity, skill and bridging differences than it is at deepening narratives.** This speaks to how entrenched individual narratives about disability, capability, and normality can be - and the ways in which personal narratives are shaped by broader family and societal narratives. Indeed, our data points to an extreme divergence of narratives. There was no discernable pattern around whether people with disabilities identified as having a disability, if disability was perceived as good or bad, or whether normality was something to be desired, rejected, or redefined.

- **When we look at the 19% of our evaluation sample for whom the theory of change is not playing out, the common denominator is their infrequent use of the Curiko platform.** Even though for this segment, we see less evidence of strengthened motivation, opportunities, skills, relationships across differences, or deepened narratives, that does not mean there is no value to their engagement with the Curiko platform. The database of ‘significant moment’ stories Curiko collects tells us one-off experiences can generate moments of connection, spark insight, and plant seeds for future engagement. We have good anecdotal evidence of community members dipping their toes into Curiko, and months or years later, re-engaging more consistently. Going forward, we have developed a ‘moment capture’ tool to help us better document the moments people experience in real time. Each month, Curiko team members will reach out to community members who have hosted or participated in experiences to elicit meaningful moments, and help us learn about what kinds of experiences are better at fostering connection.
- The evaluation affirms that moments matter both in themselves and as a collective -- as moments build up energy and bring about change. Community members use Curiko both as a platform to connect with others through shared interests and experiences and as a catalyst for learning and growth. **For 25% percent of our evaluation sample, being part of Curiko sparked a domino effect of building relationships and capacities on and beyond the platform, opening up or deepening people’s worlds.** We call this domino effect, momentum. The redesigned ‘moment capture’ tool described above aims to help us better pinpoint how moments accumulate over time and gather energy, propelling people towards what they value.

What this evaluation cannot tell us is how much Curiko contributed to people's sense of connection and to strengthening determinants. Attribution is notoriously difficult to establish in non-laboratory environments, given the sheer number of variables at play. Our goal has not been to quantify the impact of Curiko, but to understand how Curiko sits within people's everyday worlds, and the ways in which people experience meaning through their engagements. Unlike a program, Curiko does not control engagement -- there is not a single intake process, and people can choose when, how, and how much to engage in the platform to advance what matters to them. While this makes a standardized measurement process more difficult, the feedback we received from doing this evaluation has been that open-ended conversations that start with what people value - rather than with what a program values - feels meaningful. Indeed, the evaluation conversations in and of themselves proved to be a kind of motivational intervention, helping people to reflect on what matters to them. By serving as a moment of connection in and of themselves, evaluative conversations can serve dual purposes: helping individuals and Curiko to learn. Learning and growth, Curiko believes, is at the heart of it all.



