

Strengthening a community of practice during the COVID-19 pandemic: A co-created podcast series for Indigenous mental health promotion in Canada



Caroline Bec, LTOA team and community partners and LJ Kirmayer



Background

Listening to One Another to Grow Strong (LTOA) is a culturally adapted family centered program for Indigenous youth in Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for community driven mental health promotion programs like LTOA.

Due to pandemic restrictions, Indigenous community partners across Canada have been unable to deliver the LTOA program. With programming on temporary pause, the LTOA team and partners have reflected on ways to use this hiatus to strengthen and expand the LTOA community of practice.

In collaboration with community partners, we created a podcast series to examine processes involved in the cultural adaptation, implementation and delivery of the program.

Visit the LTOA website for more info: <https://www.mcgill.ca/mhp/>

Aims

- 1 To reflect on the ability of the podcast series to continue conversations between community partners, facilitators and Elders involved in LTOA implementation and delivery as well as the research team that supports the process.
- 2 To provide insights on the processes behind co-creating a podcast series with community partners.

Methods

- We conducted participant observation to examine the process of podcast development and delivery.
- The first author participated in team and partner meetings and interviewed team members about their perceptions of the process and its impact.

The LTOA community of practice and podcast

What is a Community of practice (CoP):

a group of people with shared concerns who work together to deepen their knowledge and expertise in an area of practice.

CoP in the LTOA program:

interactions and knowledge are shared throughout the program implementation cycle. Decisions on how to best move forward are taken together.

Who is involved in the LTOA CoP?

- Community partners, facilitators and Elders; LTOA team members;
- Wider network community-based practitioner and researcher.

Podcasts and CoP:

- Podcasts are easily accessible, free and shareable media (1);
- Podcasts can increase the depth of engagement and connection in CoP;
- Podcasts can bridge community-academic partnerships (2);
- Podcasts can widely share the voice of more marginalized voices in programming (3)

1 Smith, R et al (2021). 'Like, what even is a podcast?' Approaching sport-for-development youth participatory action research through digital methodologies. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(1), 128-145.
 2 Balls-Berry, J et al. (2018). Linking podcasts with social media to promote community health and medical research: feasibility study. *JMIR formative research*, 2(2), e10025.
 3 Ferrer, I. et al (2020). Podcasting for social justice: exploring the potential of experiential and transformative teaching and learning through social work podcasts. *Social Work Education*, 39(7), 849-865.

Discussion and Implications

Impact of the podcast series: growing the community of practice

The podcast series provides a vehicle for collaborative knowledge translation and multi-directional conversation between researchers, Indigenous program partners and the larger community-based practitioner community.

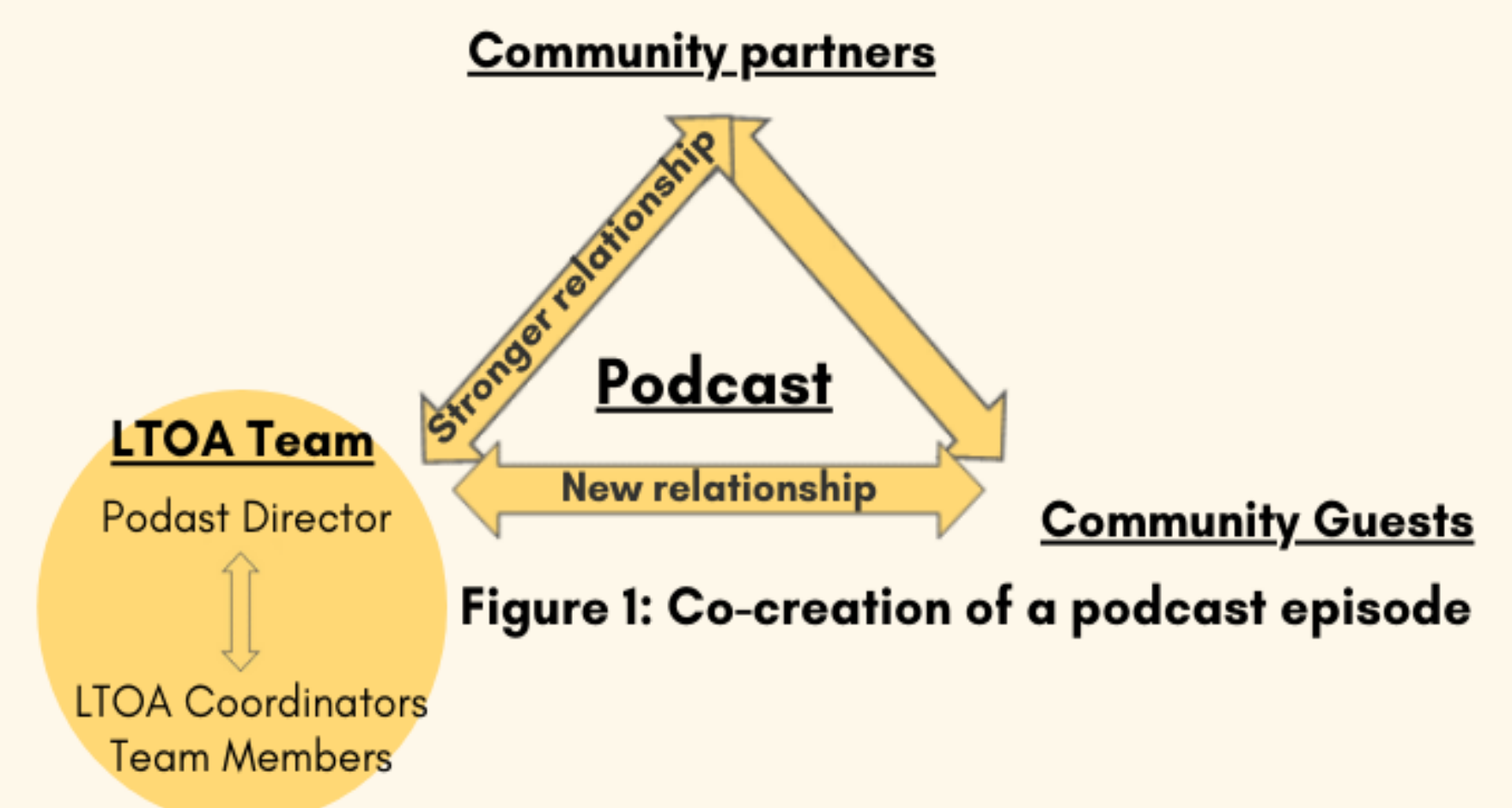
Podcast guests are invited to engage in reflexive dialogue and the process creates a space where broader issues related to mental health, service delivery, and lived experiences can be discussed and shared.

The collaborative nature of the podcast seeks to convey respect for different worldviews underlying the LTOA program to inspire and grow the program's community of practice.

The collaborative way of working has multilevel and multidisciplinary relevance as reflected in the diversity of social media responses to the first episode. We received positive feedback and interest for future episode from community organisation, students, researchers, and mental health practitioners.

Insight from our co-creation process:

Co-creation takes time. A back-and-forth collaborative effort between the LTOA team and partners is needed to decide podcast themes, storyline, review and publication.



The podcast strengthens and creates new relationships between the research team and community partners. It enables the research team to gain more insight about local realities and how to better support community needs. It also increases the CoP by putting in contact for the first time community guest and LTOA team.

Our main learning of the co-creation process is to be mindful of partners time and to be flexible.

Co-creating a podcast series with Indigenous community partners requires commitment to collaborative efforts and flexibility.

Outreach:

INCREASED
 Direct contact about LTOA program
 Direct contact to participate to podcast
 Amount of Twitter and Instagram Followers

Podcast shared via social media in **6+ countries**
 Canada, USA, UK, Australia, France, India..

Next, on the Listening to One Another podcast series:

Programming during COVID-19 pandemic: insights from the LTOA team; navigating online training with new partners ...

