CCS
Catholic Crosscultural Services

Digital Literacy

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Who We Are

- Founded in 1954, Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS) is a Greater Toronto Area-based national non-profit, helping immigrants and refugees develop skills and acquire the knowledge necessary to fully integrate and prosper in Canada.
- We provide assistance for free to all newcomers regardless of religions, races, countries of origins, sexual orientation, immigration status, or political affiliation.
- CCS believes in the power of diversity and inclusion to foster change, nurture progress and move society forward.

History

- Since 1954, CCS' service delivery model has been seeing clients and providing services in-person
- Prior to the pandemic, we began our discussion on whether a hybrid model would be feasible for CCS to make our services more accessible. We discussed what technology, talent and training would be required, how would it work for each program and much more
- Before we could pilot this idea, the pandemic hit and we pivoted our services to completely virtual

Approach for Digital Literacy at CCS - Staff

As we pivoted to online service delivery, digital literacy for our staff became integral part of what CCS does.

Step 1: Technology Capacity and Resource Assessment

Step 2: Developing Staff Baseline for Training and Capacity Building

- We equipped staff with in-house tools and training on Zoom/ Teams and any other platform they might use to connect with clients

Step 3: Gathering resources and organizational wide training

- We implemented train the trainer model and used available resources to enhance virtual program delivery. We delivered over 20 training courses

Approach for Digital Literacy and Cyber Security

Understanding cyber security was another big part of our digital transformation. Therefore:

- We established guidelines for navigating the virtual world of service delivery
  - We developed and implemented a staff and client guideline on using digital platforms to ensure everyone understood the do's & don't
- We invested in Cybersecurity assessment + training
  - Our IT department conducted a simulated phishing security attack to determine what our vulnerability would be if a real phishing attacks were to happen to us. Based on the results, we contracted an external agency to develop and provide a cyber security training for all CCS staff (KnowBe4.com)

Approach for Digital Literacy and communication at CCS

Communication and feedback is a must to understand the needs of our staff and clients. Therefore:

- Regular communication and feedback mechanisms were implemented
  - Since the start of the pandemic, we have conducted several surveys to understand the digital needs of our staff and what types of support is required for them
  - Every month, through our all staff meetings, we discussed and communicated changes/ asked for feedback on the process of implementation

Approach for Digital Literacy at CCS – Clients

As we pivoted our service delivery to completely online/ virtual, we made procedural changes to ensure clients were well trained in digital literacy so they could receive our services appropriately. Therefore:

- After training our staff, our staff began training their clients. Additional time and language requirements were considered for client training to make it accessible and inclusive.
- As we began training our clients, we realized there was a high need for equipment and access to technology itself, therefore we partnered with organizations/libraries/ local small businesses (Renewed Computer Technology) to offer free or affordable computers, internet and more to our clients
- Regular communication and survey of clients were done to ensure we were providing services the way clients wanted to receive it

Approach for Digital Literacy at CCS – Clients Cont.

We enhanced and continue to enhance programs through new activities and hiring of appropriate staff.

- As we continued to provide our services online and collected feedback, we realized that we needed to implement innovative activities such as Digital Storytelling and Arts Media across our respective programs
- We also hired Digital Navigators that would focus on supporting newcomer clients to get familiar, understand, be able, and comfortable using virtual and remote services, with particular focus on the Language Instruction (LINC) and Employment Access Programs.

Approach for Digital Literacy at CCS – Website + Digital Tools

We used our website and other digital tools as a way for CCS clients to further connect with us:

- We launched soft phones which allowed staff to make and take internal and external phone calls on their laptop, desktop, and personal mobile devices
- We implemented a “Chat” function on our website and designated staff to be available to connect with clients very quickly and conveniently
- Through the pandemic, we saw the impact of job loss for our newcomer communities. Keeping that in mind, we have developed a digital employment intervention that will address a gap for newcomer community. Once in full function, an announcement will be made
- We are also exploring digital transformation and developing strategies for the short and long term, beyond the pandemic

Learnings

The pandemic has truly taught us many lessons that we can carry with us post-pandemic as well.

- Cyber-security training is a must
- While hybrid-models are great, first find out what are the technological needs of your specific program/ services/ department. Develop plans to address these needs
- Always follow up with communication and always collect feedback: both internally and externally
- Expand efficiencies by partnering and collaborating with other organizations and groups
- Create a repository of best practices and share it

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Thank you!
Questions? Comments?