



# Essential Conditions for Partnership Collaboration within a School-Community Model of Wraparound Support

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## Abstract

Children and youth often face barriers that hinder their ability to engage in school, such as poverty, family challenges, and maltreatment. For this reason, children require additional supports if they are to be set up for success in school and life. Collaborative school-community models of wraparound support have been demonstrated as effective approaches for supporting vulnerable children and families to foster positive outcomes. Such models rely on collaborative partnerships between schools and community agencies to coordinate services for children and families. Accordingly, there is a need to understand factors that influence this collaboration in school settings. This study explores partnership collaboration between school and community partners through the case of All in for Youth, a school-based wraparound model of support in western Canada. Focus groups of  $n = 79$  partners across eight schools were analysed, guided by qualitative description methodology. Five essential conditions were identified for partnership collaboration, including *value-based training*, *mutual recognition of expertise*, *school leadership*, *established and flexible communication channels*, and *appropriate staff resources*. These conditions can be used to help inform the implementation of similar school-community models of support to foster collaborative partner processes and promote positive outcomes among children, youth, and families.

**Keywords** Partnership collaboration · School-community partnership · Wraparound · Integrated student support · School intervention

## Highlights

- Explored factors that impact partnership collaboration in school-community models of support.
- Focus groups conducted with 79 school-community partners across eight schools.
- Identified five essential conditions for school-community partnership collaboration.

Graduating from high school is associated with employment, income security, and health in adulthood (Belfield & Levin, 2007). However, children and youth often face

barriers that hinder their ability to engage in school. Poverty and food insecurity are prevalent issues faced by children and youth, with an estimated 8.5% of children living in poverty in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022a; 2022b). Other barriers include neglect, abuse, or trauma (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018), family discord (Fryers & Brugh, 2013), and mental health or learning challenges (Duncan et al., 2021; Hale et al., 2015). These issues have become a growing concern (World Health Organization, 2022), and children and youth affected by challenging circumstances require supports beyond basic academic instruction if they are to be set up for success in school and life (Yu et al., 2020). Collaborative school-community models of wraparound support have been demonstrated in the literature as effective approaches for supporting children, youth, and

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families who face added vulnerability and complex behavioural health needs in order to foster positive outcomes (Eber & Nelson, 1997; Hill, 2020; Yu et al., 2020).

The term “wraparound” reflects a values-driven and collaborative process of coordinating and delivering supports for children and families with complex needs (Burns & Goldman, 1999). There are a number of models and approaches under the wraparound umbrella, and in the school context, supports can be coordinated through large-scale school-community partnerships. Accordingly, this research focuses on wraparound supports operationalized through school and community agency collaborations; in which, wraparound teams are comprised of the child and family, school personnel (e.g., teachers, educational assistants, and administrative leadership), and agency service providers (e.g., social workers, mental health professionals, community organizations, and cultural brokers). These school-community partners work with the student and family and together to identify and coordinate targeted supports that *wrap around* children experiencing vulnerability (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999).

Central to wraparound is the recognition that children and families often have needs that extend across multiple sectors (e.g., education, healthcare, welfare, justice; Burns & Goldman, 1999). Traditionally, agencies operate independently of each other in different sectors; however, this can limit their scope of impact and decrease program efficiency (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Burns & Goldman, 1999). Families may struggle to navigate different social service systems and receive fragmented support (Burns & Goldman, 1999). Alternatively, with intersectoral school-community partnerships, holistic supports can be coordinated for children and families based on needs (Burns & Goldman, 1999). This collaboration can also benefit schools, which are frequently underresourced and struggle to address multifaceted student challenges (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). By leveraging shared resources, schools and community partners can better address unmet needs and set children up for success (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Yu et al., 2020).

Partnership collaboration is critical to school-community models of wraparound support (Walker et al., 2003). Intersectoral school and community partners must work with the family and together to coordinate supports, and if they are unable to collaborate effectively, this will limit the model’s impacts (Walker et al., 2003). However, there is dearth of research on partnership collaboration in school settings. Accordingly, this study addresses this gap by exploring All in for Youth (AIFY), a collaborative school-community model of wraparound support in a large city in western Canada. Based on discussions with frontline school and community partners, five essential conditions were identified for partnership collaboration, which will help to

inform the implementation and operation of similar school models of support and foster the wellbeing of children, youth, and families.

## School Wraparound Supports

School wraparound models are promising for addressing the complex needs of students and families (Eber & Nelson, 1997; Yu et al., 2020). Literature shows that such models are associated with improved school outcomes (Fries et al., 2012; Olson et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2020), reduced school dropout rates (Lee-St. John et al., 2018), and improved socio-emotional wellbeing (Cumming et al., 2022; Hill, 2020; Suter & Bruns, 2009). School support interventions have also been demonstrated to be cost effective (Bowden et al., 2020). When schools and agencies work together, they are able to leverage existing resources in more effective ways than they would through independent efforts and reduce service duplication (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004; Burns & Goldman, 1999). Information sharing also allows for richer knowledge of local contexts and more targeted supports (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, 2004). Furthermore, early interventions can reduce later socio-economic spending over the long-term (Bowden et al., 2020). In fact, a cost-benefit analysis of a comprehensive school support model in Boston found that the benefits of the support model exceeded the costs, with a return on investment of \$3 for every \$1 spent through reduced spending on healthcare, welfare, and criminal justice (Bowden et al., 2020). With adequate supports early on, children are better positioned to graduate, become employed, pay taxes, and contribute back to their communities as adults (Belfield & Levin, 2007; Bowden et al., 2020).

Along with wraparound, there are several other similar intervention approaches that provide comprehensive supports in schools (e.g., integrated student supports, comprehensive school supports, and community schools; Bartlett & Freeze, 2018a; Bowden et al., 2020; Maier et al., 2017). Although related, wraparound is unique in its care philosophy and person-centred approach to service provision (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999).

## Wraparound History and Principles

Wraparound originated in the field of behavioural health as a system of care for children with acute emotional and behavioural challenges (Bruns & Walker, 2008). It can be traced back to the 1960s Brownsdale programs in Canada, where group homes with individualized supports were established for children experiencing emotional problems, as an alternative to institutionalization (Burns &

Goldman, 1999). By the 1990s, programs utilizing wraparound approaches were implemented more widely across North America (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Sather & Bruns, 2016), with schools becoming key sites for wrap-around due to their central role in children's lives (Eber et al., 2002; Yu et al., 2020).

Wraparound is grounded in a philosophy of care that takes a holistic and person-centred approach to service care planning (Burns & Goldman, 1999; Yu et al., 2020). Ten principles were developed to operationalize wraparound (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999). In practice, wraparound initiatives may be defined and applied more flexibly (Prakash et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2003); however, research shows that higher quality services are associated with adherence to these ten principles (Bruns et al., 2005). The ten guiding principles include: family voice and choice, team based, natural supports, collaboration, community based, culturally competent, individualized, strength based, unconditional, and outcome based (see Bruns & Walker, 2008). Notably, these principles speak to the collaborative and integrated nature of wrap-around, which involves child and family engagement, as well as teamwork among different professional and community supports (Bruns & Walker, 2008).

In the school context, wraparound is often implemented through large-scale school-community partnerships, as well as a multi-tier system of support according to the Positive Behavioural Intervention System (see Eber et al., 2002; Eber et al., 2021; Scott & Eber, 2003). Coordinating highly individualized wraparound supports for each student in a school is costly and time-consuming, and often unrealistic to achieve (Scott & Eber, 2003). With a multi-tier approach, students and families receive an escalating degree of support based on identified and evolving needs (Prakash et al., 2010; Scott & Eber, 2003). At the primary level, universal or school-wide supports are implemented, involving collaboration across partners on the delivery of services (Scott & Eber, 2003). At the secondary level, increased supports are provided for students and families with greater needs, such as small group interventions (Scott & Eber, 2003). At the tertiary level, highly targeted and individualized wrap-around supports are coordinated for students and families with the highest levels of complex need (Scott & Eber, 2003).

School wraparound models have been adopted widely in the United States and to a limited extent in Canada and internationally (Bartlett & Freeze, 2018a). Despite the expansion of wraparound models and their potential for fostering positive outcomes among children, there remains a lack of research on the implementation of such models in school settings and on collaboration between school-community partners; therefore, more research is needed to

guide the operation of these models (Bartlett & Freeze, 2018a).

## Partnerships within Wraparound

Wraparound models rely on partnership collaboration to coordinate supports for child and family success (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Walker et al., 2003). Within school-community models, wraparound teams are comprised of intersectoral school and agency partners who must work with the child and family and function together to plan, administer, and monitor supports and services (Prakash et al., 2010). Guidelines have been developed for the practice of wraparound models, all of which emphasize the importance of a collaborative team approach (see Bruns & Walker, 2008; Burns & Goldman, 1999; Coldiron et al., 2016; Walker et al., 2003); however, in practice, there are barriers that can mitigate optimal partnership collaboration (Prakash et al., 2010).

Specifically, wraparound literature shows that a lack of shared team expectations and goals can impede partnership collaboration (Prakash et al., 2010; Bruns & Walker, 2008). It is difficult to leverage different partner resources for integrated student support plans if partners do not share an understanding of the wraparound purpose or feel an ownership in the work (Prakash et al., 2010; Bruns & Walker, 2008). Implementation science literature similarly emphasizes the importance of a shared commitment among (Fixsen, 2005; Moir, 2018). Specifically, to support the high-quality implementation of programs and practices, stakeholder buy-in is needed; otherwise, a program may not be implemented to its full extent or achieve sustainability (Fixsen, 2005). A lack of a shared team commitment may occur due to insufficient knowledge and training on an initiative's values and practices (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Fixsen, 2005; Prakash et al., 2010). Additionally, a lack of strong leadership for an initiative can undermine its implementation and partner collaboration (Fixsen, 2005).

Disparate policies and approaches among intersectoral partners can also make collaboration more difficult to achieve (VanDenBerg & Mary Grealish, 1996). Different organizations are beholden to specific organizational protocols and funding mechanisms, which can make it challenging for partners to integrate their policies and procedures to jointly administer wraparound supports (VanDenBerg & Mary Grealish, 1996). In fact, some authors argue that different partners may be too independent in their approaches and institutional policies to fully partner in collaborative initiatives (VanDenBerg & Mary Grealish, 1996). Additionally, institutional barriers can be a particular challenge in school settings, which are subject to specific guidelines for student conduct and procedures.

Due to the importance of partnership collaboration, a closer analysis is needed of factors that impact it within school-community models of wraparound support, comprised of intersectoral agency and school partners. Accordingly, this study explores collaboration within the context of All in for Youth (AIFY), a school-community wraparound model in western Canada. The analysis focuses on teamwork between frontline school and agency partners who are involved in direct service provision at a professional level, as opposed to collaboration between service providers and families or within organizational leadership.

## The All in for Youth Initiative

AIFY is a school-community model of wraparound support in Edmonton, a large city in western Canada. It is intended to support children and families who have been systematically underserved and have experienced added vulnerability to achieve positive outcomes, including wellbeing and resilience, school engagement, and high school completion (Community-University Partnership [CUP] & AIFY, 2020; 2021). It is implemented in eight high-risk school communities in Edmonton, which consistently rank as some of the most socially vulnerable, experiencing high rates of poverty, food insecurity, mobility, and single parent households (CUP & AIFY, 2022; 2023).

AIFY was established in 2016, when local school divisions and community organizations working with vulnerable children and families determined that they would have greater impacts in the lives of children and families if they worked together in partnership. Consequently, the AIFY school-community partnership was formed, comprised of school divisions (Edmonton Public and Catholic Schools), local agencies responsible for the provision of supports in schools (Boys and Girls Club Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area [BGCBig], Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation [e4c], and The Family Centre), operating partners who support program management (The United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and REACH Edmonton), and backbone funders (The Edmonton Community Foundation and the City of Edmonton Family and Community Support Services Program). Program costs are also supported by private and corporate fundraising, as well as in-kind donations from the agencies. Together, all partners collaboratively plan and deliver school-based wraparound supports and contribute to the functioning of the model.

To support children and families, six primary areas of support are provided: (1) Nutrition supports, with in-school meals and snacks; (2) Mental health therapy, with one-on-one or group therapy for students and families to address complex needs and support socio-emotional development

(see Haight et al., 2023 for research on the impact of these mental health supports); (3) Success coaching, with coaching to support students with school success, socio-emotional wellbeing, and resilience; (4) In-home family support, with in-home support to promote overall family wellbeing and access to needed resources; (5) Student mentoring, with peer, community, and corporate mentors to support academic and/or socio-emotional growth; and (6) Out-of-school time care, with programming on arts and culture, emotional and physical wellness, leadership, and/or academics. These supportive domains were developed based on school systems literature on common areas of vulnerability in the lives of children and best practices for addressing these areas (see CUP & AIFY, 2020). Three AIFY partner agencies deliver these services in schools (i.e., e4c provides nutrition supports, The Family Centre provides mental health supports, and BGCBig provides mentoring and after school programs). Beyond these primary services, AIFY partners have also built formal and informal community networks to connect students and families with additional or more targeted supports as needed. All school-community partners also receive value-based training to foster shared school cultures of strength-based care and positive child-adult engagement (CUP & AIFY, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023).

At the school level, supports are coordinated in collaboration with the student and family by school wraparound teams, comprised of frontline school administrators (principal and assistant principal), AIFY agency staff (mental health therapists, success coaches, family support workers, mentoring facilitators, and out-of-school time coordinators), and other partners (e.g., teachers, school staff, and other community partners). These wraparound teams connect through weekly meetings, referred to as “huddles,” to collaborate on targeted supports for students. Service plans are developed with the student and family based on their individual preferences, and are facilitated by agency staff with the larger wraparound team. School administrators oversee the wraparound process by providing strategic direction for the wraparound teams and building infrastructure to support wraparound processes.

Specifically, service provision operates through a multi-tier framework (Scott & Eber, 2003), in which supports and services are triaged in response to individual needs. Universal supports are provided for all students at the primary level (i.e., students are supported by a school culture of strength-based and positive development practices and nutrition supports), while targeted supports are triaged for individual students and families with greater needs at the secondary and tertiary levels (e.g., mental health therapy, success coaching, mentoring, out-of-school time programming, in-home family support, and/or other additional supports needed). Frontline school and community partners

work with families and together closely through these integrated and intersectoral wraparound teams to identify and coordinate targeted supports and services.

At the organizational levels of the AIFY model, agency supervisors oversee the work of frontline agency staff and provide guidance and support. Agency supervisors and school administrators meet regularly to discuss school community needs and best practices for providing supports. Key representatives from the agencies, school divisions, and operating partners meet monthly through an operations and evaluation committee to discuss the operations of AIFY in schools, evaluate practices and the impact of AIFY, and identify and address challenges. Finally, a steering committee comprised of key representatives from each of the 10 AIFY partners (agencies, school divisions, operating partners, and funders) review operations and evaluation findings and provide high-level strategic direction for AIFY (see CUP & AIFY, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023).

## Methods

The present study explores professional partnership collaboration between frontline agency and school staff within AIFY, a school-community wraparound model of support. Annual evaluations have been conducted on the impacts of the AIFY initiative since inception, according to its theory of change and logic model to foster success in the lives of children and families in school and life beyond school (see CUP & AIFY, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023). As part of these evaluations, interviews and focus groups were conducted with key school-community partners each year (i.e., families and frontline school and agency staff and leadership). For this study, qualitative data generated with school and agency staff participants during the 2021–2022 school year were analysed. Qualitative description was used to guide this study (Sandelowski, 2000; 2010). The concept behind qualitative description is to provide a comprehensive description of events, embracing “everyday language” and adhering closely to the data or meanings of participants, rather than taking a highly conceptual lens (Sandelowski, 2000). This approach is ideal for the purpose of this study to develop a thorough and complete description of partnership integration with a program (Sandelowski, 2000).

Institutional ethics approval was obtained from the [University of Alberta] (Pro0007079) in 2017 and renewed each year since, including 2022 and 2023. Written informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

## Participants and Data Generation

Group debriefs and focus groups were conducted between April and June 2022. Overall, data from  $n = 79$  individual participants were analysed. First, group debriefs were conducted with the team of agency staff, school administrators, and other partners who took on the primary role of coordinating and delivering supports and services for families at school. Group debriefs were short sessions which took place immediately following school-community partner team meetings (referred to as “huddles”). This design allowed for the day-to-day process of collaboration and decision making to be better captured. Following group debriefs, more in-depth focus groups were conducted with agency staff, school administrators, and relevant partners. These sessions typically built on group debriefs and provided an opportunity for a more focused discussion. Separate focus groups were also conducted with teachers, other school staff (e.g., education assistants, special education teachers, librarians), and school administrators. Most research participants attended multiple data generation sessions. For instance, most agency staff attended multiple sessions at their school (i.e., attended an initial group debrief and a follow up focus group). Some agency staff also worked at two schools and attended sessions at both schools (i.e., attended a group debrief and focus group at two schools). In these cases, staff were able to give unique and valuable insight into how processes differed across school sites. The total numbers of data generation sessions and participants for each partner group is provided in Table 1.

Data generation sessions took place at all eight AIFY schools, including four elementary schools (kindergarten–grade 6), two combined elementary-junior high schools (kindergarten–grade 9), one junior high school (grades 7–9), and one high school (grades 10–12). It was important to include perspectives from partners at each school to capture both common and site-specific strategies and experiences. Furthermore, three schools were new to

**Table 1** Overview of participants and data generation sessions

| Partner group  | # of Sessions | # of Participants |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| Group Debriefs (“Huddles”) with Agency Staff and School Administrators | 8             | 36                |
| Agency Focus Groups with Agency Staff and some School Administrators   | 7             | 33                |
| School Focus Groups with School Staff and some School Administrators   | 7             | 53                |
| Total  | 22            | 79                |



AIFY as of 2021 and brought unique perspectives of being in the early stages of consolidating partnership processes. Most schools participated in three to four staff data generation sessions (6 schools), while some schools participated in one to two sessions (2 schools). Nine sessions took place in person, whereas 13 sessions were held virtually, using the online video-chat platform Google Meets.

Group debriefs and focus groups were semi-structured, which meant that facilitators asked preplanned questions on the topic of the AIFY model and partnership functioning, while also having the flexibility to diverge from the guide to explore participants' contributions in more detail (Gill et al., 2008). In all sessions, participants were invited to share their insights on AIFY more broadly, such as the perceived impacts of the support model on their work and the lives of children and families. They were also asked more specific questions related to partnership functioning and the process used to coordinate supports and services. Staff participants were purposefully sampled based on their role or experience with wraparound supports in their school (Mertens, 2020); a technique that aligns with qualitative description (Sandelowski, 2000). This purposeful sampling process was primarily facilitated by school administrators and sessions were arranged for times that would not be overly disruptive to school activities. Focus groups were facilitated by the research team. Some school administrators also co-facilitated sessions with the research team to build the evaluation capacity of school partners. Group debriefs lasted an average of 25 min, while focus groups lasted an average of 50 min. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the lead author with the assistance of the transcription service Otter.ai (2022).

## Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis is an approach to qualitative data analysis which places value on the researcher's reflexivity as a strength for building data interpretations (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Thematic analysis is also well-suited to use with qualitative description (Sandelowski, 2010). Specifically, data analysis was implemented according to Braun & Clarke's (2006) multi-phase process of (1) immersing yourself in the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) developing preliminary themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining themes, and (6) writing out findings. Additionally, data were analysed across two broad stages. First, data were analysed by session type (i.e., agency group debrief, agency focus group, and school staff focus group) and then data were assessed for divergence and convergence and integrated together.

To become immersed in the data, the lead author transcribed the group debriefs and focus groups, with the assistance of

Otter.ai, and re-read the transcripts multiple times. Following this, coding was completed by the lead author on the software platform NVivo 14 (QSR International, 2023). Codes were assigned to data segments that represented the meaning of those data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding was based on an inductive approach, in which observations were primarily data-driven as opposed to being guided by a pre-existing framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analyses were also guided by underlying assumptions corresponding to constructivism, which propose that knowledge is socially constructed by the researcher and participants (Allen, 1994; Mayan, 2016). Codes were then organized into emerging themes, using tables to visually represent and organize the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Emerging themes were iteratively reviewed by the lead author for internal homogeneity (i.e., the data fit well and represent a theme) and external homogeneity (i.e., the data are distinct from other themes) (Mayan, 2016). Emerging themes were discussed and peer-reviewed by the research team (second author, fourth author, and fifth author) to promote researcher reflexivity and the richness of data interpretations, as well as the verification and dependability of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, an audit trail was maintained of key decisions throughout the data analysis process to enhance the trustworthiness of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## Results

School-community partners (i.e., teachers, school staff and administrators, and AIFY agency partners) provided valuable insights into professional intersectoral partnership collaboration within a school-community model of wraparound support. Based on qualitative data, five themes, termed essential conditions, were identified to be essential for successful partnership collaboration. In the descriptions provided below, participants are only identified by their role, using the terms "school administrators" to refer to principals, assistant principals, and key administrative staff, "school partners" for teachers and other school staff (i.e., education assistants, special education teachers, and librarians), and "agency partners" for AIFY agency staff and relevant community partners.

### Value-Based Training

School-community partners frequently discussed the importance of value-based training for fostering a culture of supportive, strength-based, and collaborative practices. Within the AIFY model, training is provided to school and agency partners on value-based practices that are trauma-informed and foster family resilience, reflecting core principles of wraparound. Specifically, partners receive training on understanding family trauma, fostering child resilience, providing strength-based care, supporting positive child-

adult interactions, and the wraparound values for AIFY. Partners shared that this training not only benefits students and families through the integration of supportive practices, but also serves to facilitate a shared investment in student care, leading to greater collaboration among school-community partners.

It was acknowledged that individual partners come to schools with different backgrounds, and for some, the AIFY model of strength-based and collaborative wraparound supports may be a departure from previous experiences. Therefore, value-based training was frequently described to produce a shift in school culture. As one school administrator explained, “our vocabulary, the way we work with kids, has greatly changed, because we have that trauma informed viewpoint.” Another agency partner commented, “I see...staff changing the way that they have conversations with kids, changing the way that they are using their language or their activities to meet the needs of the kids in a more holistic way.”

Accordingly, partners made it clear that when all partners in school buildings receive value-based training, collaboration is easier to achieve because partners hold shared values, knowledge, goals, and expectations regarding student care. An agency partner described this, “[by] learning about [trauma and resilience], it became all our work, and our collective why and our how to support these kids and how to wrap around them.” Specifically, school partners described feeling better equipped to identify student concerns and collaborate with agency partners, “it also built my own professional capacity to support my students” (School Partner). Additionally, through working with school partners, agency partners felt that they were embedded in school practices and were able to make a greater contribution to student care, “we’re part of it [school community]. We’re not just like oh, You’re over here...It’s like we’re all together.” A school administrator described this shift in collaboration following value-based training:

As we began...learning about [trauma and] resilience, we began to think about okay, in what ways can the teachers also support the work? So, it moved towards the AIFY [agency partners] and teachers working together to provide for the students. ... So then it became about, ‘I could do this in my classroom,’ and ‘they the AIFY [agency partners] can do this to also support [students]. So then it became that collaboration of working together based on what teachers were noticing, what [the] admin was noticing about students...or the AIFY [agency partner] team.

Another agency partner added:

I started here the year after the [AIFY] project started. ...And I remember...frustration with our [agency] team. ...There was this feeling of ‘yeah, like they’re

[school partners] coming to us for the answer.’ But the shift with [training]...was so incredible, because it went from, you know, this sort of [school partners] come to us [agency partners] for the answers to an empowerment model. ...Instead of, you know, us trying to solve it, we’re going to work as a team. We just added, you know, teachers to our team. So, they’re empowered to help, they’re part of the conversation. ...And that shift I felt like was amazing.”

Consequently, value-based training empowered different school-community partners with shared knowledge, expectations, and tools to collaborate on student care and support, so that work “became very shared” (School Administrator). Due to the importance of value-based training, partners stressed that gaps in training made collaboration less straightforward due to disparate expectations and approaches. Therefore, partners indicated that training needs to be widely available to all partners in schools on an ongoing basis.

### Mutual Recognition of Expertise

As described above, value-based training was identified to be essential for fostering shared understanding and expectations among partners. However, in the same vein, school-community partners also emphasized the value of their different backgrounds, which offer rich and diverse expertise and experience when it comes to student care. Partners expressed that coordinating wraparound supports for students and families was most successful when different partners recognized one another’s mutual expertise and experience, as this encouraged partners to reach out to each other and work in collaboration.

Partners often discussed the value of one another’s different specialized backgrounds and expertise for collaborating on student care (e.g., teaching, psychology, child development, human services). Specifically, school partners discussed reaching out to agency partners for input in areas of child and family wellbeing. One school partner explained, “I’ve had students disclose things to me that have been really hard for myself to hear. ...But I’m not qualified in the way that like our therapist is...to support those kids...so it’s been really fantastic working in partnership.” Another school partner shared:

Every week I’m dealing with some type of crisis in my classroom and to, you know, be able to just pop over to the therapist and get her advice on a situation is incredibly helpful. ...Like it’s hugely, hugely important that we have these workers [agency partners] so close to us and so accessible, and you

know, help kids deal with things that sometimes as teachers we're not equipped to deal with, you know, we're not social workers, we're not therapists.

Similarly, agency partners explained that school partners play a central role in the lives of students and are often the first to observe student concerns and changes in student behaviour. Therefore, agency partners emphasized the importance of collaborating with school partners, "the teacher is always the first stop. Like [if] I noticed something [with a student]" (Agency Partner). Additionally, school partners can bridge agency relationships with students and families, as described by an agency partner, "teachers, [they're] always bridging me with parents. ...A lot of teachers have close relationships with the parents so they can introduce me to the parent."

As illustrated above, when different school-community partners recognized one another's experience, they were more likely to reach out to one another to discuss student concerns, collaborate on wraparound plans for student care, and learn from one another. Alternatively, if partners did not feel that their expertise was recognized, they said their input and contributions were more limited. An agency partner commented on this, "our team [is] a tool...when they pick the tool up and you go here, thrive and have a voice and be a part of the community, it really, really makes a huge difference." Consequently, partner collaboration was best supported when all partners' expertise and experience was recognized, sought out, and honoured.

## School Leadership

Beyond the training, knowledge, and experiences of school-community partners, structural factors such as school standards and procedures were described to impact partnership collaboration. Specifically, partners emphasized the key role that school administrative leadership (i.e., principal, assistant principal, and office administrators) plays in building a culture for collaboration. Partners said that school administrators are able to both remove barriers and create platforms for shared collaboration by adopting standards and procedures that foster access and communication across students, families, teachers, school staff, and AIFY agency partners.

The student referral process (i.e., referring students and families to support) is a good illustration of school leadership. Partners shared that referral processes were most efficient when families and school partners were able to directly speak to agency partners to refer students for support and collaboratively plan student care. Alternatively, at some sites, administrative procedures required referrals to go through administration first for approval, as described by an agency partner, "the admin really wants the teachers to

go to the admin and the admin bring it to this [agency] team, they discuss it, and then the admin takes it back." This process was described as impeding partner collaboration and delaying the process of implementing student care, "principals are busy people and so that slows down the process a lot" (Agency Partner). Another agency partner shared:

Direct contact with the kids and the teachers would help me, and I'm sure most of the team, better support new students. ...Getting referrals through was a very hard process. ...I wish I could have supported way more students. I had the capacity to support so many more kids than...I did end up supporting. ...That's a huge thing to be able to do my job, [to] build that capacity through teachers and students.

Alternatively, through direct referral processes, agency partners were able to engage in firsthand conversations with school partners to understand unique student concerns as observed in the classroom and discuss appropriate plans for support. Referrals were also streamlined and addressed in a timelier manner. A school administrator described the benefit of implementing direct referral processes at school:

Teachers know that they're going to go where the support is [agency partners]. And they do not have to come through myself [principal] or [the assistant principal] before that can happen. I just don't see how that would be effective. ...We have that culture where staff are always talking to each other. Teachers are always talking to our AIFY [agency partners].

As illustrated above, school leadership is able to optimize partnership collaboration by adopting standards and procedures that remove barriers and empower relationship building and connection among school-community partners. In cases where school leadership implemented processes that promoted school-community partnership collaboration, such as with direct referral processes, partners recognized and appreciated this. One agency partner emphasized, "I think the biggest thing is our admin sets the tone for that relationship." Another agency partner also spoke about the value of effective school leadership, "I feel very trusted and empowered by the admin here. And I think everyone on the [agency partner] team does, to do our work and be a part of the school community."

## Established and Flexible Communication Channels

Communication channels embedded in school practices were identified as essential for school-community partnership collaboration. Participants shared that channels for



communication in schools need to be both established and flexible in order to best support partnership collaboration. Established channels of communication refer to formal touchpoints or meetings for contact between partners. Within the AIFY model, formal partnership meetings (referred to as huddles) take place on an ongoing basis, with different school and agency partners (i.e., school administration and agency partners, and some teachers, school staff, and community partners). Partners said that these formal meetings are essential for the high-level coordination and management of wraparound processes in their schools. One agency partner explained, “Our huddle keeps things organized, it keeps everybody in the loop. ... It’s just a place marker for us, which is really helpful.” Another school administrator shared:

Our huddle is our main mechanism as a team where we really talk through, and essentially, triage needs. ... We do sometimes more of... an inventory of what’s happening. Where do we need to go? What’s our goal? ... What are those needs that we’re triaging right away? ... Our huddle... is where we align things. And where we ensure, collectively, we’re all on the same page. (School Administrators)

Despite the importance of formal meetings for anchoring high-level decision-making, partners also emphasized that partner contact should not be limited to only taking place in formal meetings. Specifically, partners said that flexible modes of communication outside of formal meetings, such as day-to-day hallway conversations, classroom check-ins, and email updates, are also essential for collaboration. One agency partner explained, “the team is talking constantly, as things are arising. ... Certainly we don’t save it for the huddle.” Another agency partner shared:

We have such a collaborative relationship with the admin, the school, the teachers. And between huddles, as teachers and the [agency] team, we’re always talking. ... So we’re always talking about kids and emailing or just having little conversations in the hallway.

Specifically, flexible communication channels were described to be important for enhancing the visibility of different partners. When the presence of agency partners is not known in the school, it is unlikely that school partners will reach out to collaborate with agency partners on student concerns, as described by a school partner, “we’re a very busy school with a lot of wraparound supports... it’s hard to keep track of it all if you don’t interact with them [agency partners] on a regular basis. ... You don’t even realize this person could help.” Therefore, it was emphasized that agency partners need to be “visible” through informal channels, such as “get[ting] into

classrooms” (School Administrator). In turn, this allows agency partners to become more integrated in the school, build trusting relationships with school partners, and create space and opportunities to collaborate. A school partner commented, “They make themselves known [agency partners]. They come into the class, they come and do things. ... They’re always in the hall when it’s transition time. ... And I think that’s huge.” A school administrator also shared:

The whole entire [agency partner] team, I think why it works so well here is because they’re here and they live with us. And they’re with us each and every day. And they’re just part of our community. They’re part of our staff. They’re a part of our school family. And I think that’s the key to success is that they walk alongside us every single day.

Furthermore, flexible communication channels were described to be essential for different partners to share information and coordinate student care. An agency partner explained that “closely emailing, communicating, checking in, in classrooms” with school partners is critical to, “get updates on kiddos, to know how they’re doing in the classroom. Just to be able to track their behaviours, understanding if the strategies are working, maybe we need to make some adjustments.” Another agency partner described working with a teacher on student care, “me and [student’s] teacher will meet every day, at the end of the day, and just talk about how [the] day went.”

Consequently, partners indicated that both established and flexible channels of communication are needed for partnership collaboration. Established channels are needed for the high-level management of wraparound and collaborative processes. In between these formal touchpoints, flexible channels, such as hallway conversations and updates, are needed for partners to build recognition and relationships with one another, as well as collaboratively implement, adjust, and monitor student care in practice.

The huddle times are a good opportunity for all of us to review and talk about what’s been happening and to do that touch base, but our staff [agency partners] are very good about reaching out and talking and communicating and visiting classrooms. I mean the AIFY [agency] team is in the classrooms all the time talking to kids, talking to the teachers, and I think that’s so amazing about our school culture. (School Administrator)

### Appropriate Staff Resources

Finally, partners discussed the impact that staff resources have on student support and partnership collaboration.

Partners explained that their work and partnership collaboration is best supported when staff resourcing is proportionate to the level of student and family needs in schools. Unfortunately, partners said this was not often the case and they discussed struggling to meet high student needs and limited capacity among agency partners to support students. One agency partner explained, “The need is there but the access and the availability of it [support] is not where we need to be.” Another agency partner commented, “the AIFY schools need like double the amount of staff.”

When there is limited staff capacity, partners explained that the overburden of demands can lead to burnout among school and agency partners, “It becomes a challenge for staff too, right? ...It’s heavy work” (School Administrator). In turn, this burnout may result in the departure of staff from the school, “We have lost so many great staff because the toll of this job, people leave. And I get it, I understand. And vicarious trauma is real” (School Partner). In fact, one school administrator shared, “we had this cycle of this person’s here [agency partner], this person’s not...I think we had averaged three people a year.” Partners explained that this is concerning because high staff turnover makes it more difficult to build relationships with students and families, as well as to establish collaborative teamwork among partners. One agency partner commented:

The team constantly keeps switching and switching. And even like the first few months, it took a lot it took a bit for some of the kids to adjust. ...From my end, that’d be nice to see AIFY [agency partners] kind of have the consistency with the workers that are going to be in this position.

Specifically, with high turnover, school partners may not know who they can go to coordinate supports for struggling students. This is described by a school administrator, “We’ve had inconsistent staff. And I think that’s made it hard. So right now we’re on our third mental health therapist. ...I mean, staff don’t even know who that person is, at this point. Right?” Additionally, school partners may view supports as too unreliable to use. One school partner shared, “I haven’t had one person in AIFY working with any of my students, because we’ve attempted a few times, but they tried to take them once, and then they don’t work there anymore.”

Alternatively, when there are sufficient staff resources and stability among agency partners, this was described to promote connectivity and partnership collaboration on student care, as described by a school partner, “I think the success piece is consistency.” A school administrator also shared:

When you have sustainable support, you’re able to create consistency of practice, you’re able to build capacity of

practice for new educators, but you’re also able to be responsive in veteran educators’ classrooms, you’re able to use your environment strategically.

Consequently, adequate staff resources were described to be critical for school-community partnership collaboration. As expressed by a school administrator, “you got to build capacity in order for that to work effectively.”

Together, all five conditions are essential for partners to work together in collaboration, within a school-community model of wraparound support. The implications of these conditions and recommendations for practice are discussed in the next section.

## Discussion

Partnership collaboration is critical to the success of school-community models of wraparound support as such models rely on intersectoral school and community partners to work together and with the family to identify and coordinate services for children and families (Walker et al., 2003). Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore factors that impact this professional partnership collaboration between frontline school and agency staff. Five essential conditions were identified, which included *value-based training*, *mutual recognition of expertise*, *school leadership*, *established and flexible communication channels*, and *appropriate staff resources*.

*Value-based training* was identified by all school-community partners to be essential for creating a shared foundation upon which professional partnership collaboration was possible. Within the AIFY model, school and agency partners receive training on value-based practices that are trauma-informed and foster family resilience, reflecting wraparound principles. Partners said that the shared knowledge and expectations that they acquired through value-based training made collaboration easier to achieve, whereas an absence of this training made teamwork less straightforward due to disparate values and approaches among partners. This finding builds on previous literature which similarly identifies the importance of training and shared understanding for inter-agency collaboration (Cooper et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2019; Nootboom et al., 2021; Walker et al., 2003). Wraparound literature affirms that training is needed to promote shared knowledge and understanding and a positive outlook towards teamwork (Cooper et al., 2016; Walker et al., 2003). Implementation science literature also emphasizes that shared knowledge and commitment among stakeholders improves the high-quality implementation and practice of programs (Aarons et al., 2011; Fixsen, 2005; Moir, 2018).

Specifically, the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, and Sustainment (EPIS) framework focuses on factors that support the implementation of programs across different phases, as well as contextual factors that impact this implementation, such as outer contextual factors (e.g., service and policy environments and inter-organizational dynamics) and inner contextual factors (e.g., intra-organizational characteristics, leadership, internal policies, etc.) (Aarons et al., 2011). Notably, the EPIS framework identifies the culture of an organization, with expectations and values receptive to an intervention, as an inner factor supporting the implementation and sustainment of programs, consistent with this study's findings (Aarons et al., 2011).

Although shared training and understanding is needed for collaboration, partners also emphasized the importance of their unique and diverse expertise and experience. *Mutual recognition of expertise* among different school-community partners was another essential building block for partnership collaboration. When partners felt that their expertise was valued, they felt that other partners were more likely to recognize and seek out their input, fostering collaborative processes. Previous literature has also emphasized the importance of mutual recognition of expertise for partnership collaboration (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Cooper et al., 2016; Nooteboom et al., 2021; Rothi & Leavey, 2006; Walker et al., 2003). Specifically, wraparound literature underscores the importance of respect and equitable inclusion of all team members as integral to wraparound processes, with particular emphasis on the inclusion and respect for the child and family (Bruns & Walker, 2008). Additionally, a systematic review of inter-agency collaborations identified “mutual valuing, respect, and trust” as a key facilitator for collaboration (Cooper et al., 2016, pg. 337). Another systematic review emphasized the importance of “trust, respect, and equality” for inter-agency collaboration (Nooteboom et al., 2021, pg. 99). However, these values are not always upheld in practice (Cooper et al., 2016; Rothi & Leavey, 2006). For example, one study of an inter-agency collaboration found that some partners felt that their expertise was “undervalued,” and, in turn, these partners were not invited to fully participate in student care plans (Rothi & Leavey, 2006, pg. 37). Therefore, a lack of this condition risks partner exclusion and has the potential to undermine collaborative partnership processes (Rothi & Leavey, 2006).

*School leadership* (i.e., principal and assistant principal) was described to be essential in setting the stage for collaboration among school-community partners. Partners said that school administrators are able to facilitate or impede partnership collaboration through the school procedures they implement for communication and protocols across partners. In the context of AIFY school environments, service plans for children and families are coordinated with

the child and family by agency staff in collaboration with the wraparound team; however, it was made clear by partners that school administrators take on the key role of supervising and guiding this provision of wraparound supports among school-community partners. Although school administrators need to provide oversight of student supports provided in their schools according to institutional protocols, partners stressed that managerial procedures focused on administrative approval functioned to gatekeep available supports and mitigate collaborative procedures. Instead, partners explained that school administrators can promote partnership collaboration through the adoption of procedures that foster communication and contact among partners, such as direct referral processes and the inclusion of different school-community partners in collaborative spaces. This aligns with previous research which underscores the importance of supportive leadership for wraparound processes (Coldiron et al., 2016; Cooper et al., 2016; Walker et al., 2003), with particular emphasis on the influential role of school leadership in school settings (Bartlett, 2018b; Cumming et al., 2022). The EPIS framework also emphasizes the importance of leadership as an inner context factor supporting program implementation; in which, leaders are able to support buy-in among staff, support collaboration, and set clear strategic directions (Aarons et al., 2011).

*Communication channels* embedded in school practices were another essential mechanism for partnership collaboration. School-community partners said that established channels of communication, such as formal meetings, are needed for the high-level management of student supports and wraparound processes (Bruns & Walker, 2008). Outside of these formal touchpoints, partners also emphasized the importance of flexible channels of communication, such as hallway conversations and classroom check-ins. Partners explained that in utilizing these informal channels, they felt that different partners became more visible in school spaces, which allowed them to build recognition and trusting relationships with one another. Previous research has recognized the importance of trusting relationships for collaboration, with one study identifying it as the “most important facilitator” for inter-agency collaboration (Morgan et al., 2019, pg. 1028).

Partners also explained that informal check-ins also allowed them to collaboratively monitor student progress and make needed adjustments to student care. Monitoring and evaluation of student care plans is a best practice for wraparound models (Bruns & Walker, 2008). Although partners acknowledged that communication improved their ability to monitor student plans, it should be noted that school-community partners did not speak directly to the importance of the evaluation practices or mechanisms to ensure accountability, a theme which has emerged in other

wraparound literature (see Walker et al., 2003) and is a key inner contextual factor for program sustainability as outlined by the EPIS framework (Aarons et al., 2011). This may not have emerged as a theme because evaluation may be perceived by partners to be a standard practice rather than a unique aspect of wraparound, as it is incorporated in day-to-day practice and forms of communication (e.g., huddle meetings, and school agency reporting mechanisms) within the AIFY model. While not described by partners, it is notable that monitoring and reporting occurs at frontline and organizational levels of AIFY and an annual evaluation is performed on the AIFY each year on its impacts and adherence to its theory of change and logic model outcomes (see CUP & AIFY, 2020; 2021; 2022; 2023).

Finally, partners also emphasized the importance of *appropriate staff resources* for partner collaboration. Partners explained that when staff are under-resourced, they can become quickly overburdened by high needs, which may lead to burnout and turnover (Nooteboom et al., 2021). High turnover among school-community partners means that partners will have less familiarity with each other and are less likely to have established relationships. As described by one school partner, staff may even see community partners as unreliable and feel hesitant to work together in partnership. Therefore, partners explained that collaboration is best supported through stable, long-term relationships, which requires an investment of adequate staff resources (Morgan et al., 2019). Previous literature on wraparound and implementation science also emphasizes the importance of funding and resources for supporting programs (Fixsen, 2005; Morgan et al., 2019), with the EPIS framework identifying funding support as a key outer contextual factor for program implementation and sustainment (Aarons et al., 2011). Accordingly, insufficient resources for a program may undermine the effectiveness and continuation of otherwise high-quality programs, resulting in suboptimal outcomes (Moir, 2018).

In summary, these five conditions were identified as essential for partnership collaboration. When it comes to service provision under the framework of a multi-tiered system of support (Scott & Eber, 2003), these five essential conditions apply to all levels of support (Scott & Eber, 2003). Specifically, these essential conditions need to be active at the primary level of support to necessitate collaboration at secondary and tertiary levels (Scott & Eber, 2003). Furthermore, these essential conditions align with the key principles of wraparound support that underlay the importance of team collaboration (Bruns & Walker, 2008) and components of implementation science related to the implementation and sustainment of programs (Aarons et al., 2011; Fixsen, 2005).

## Implications for Practice

Implications for practice were drawn from discussions with participants and informed by the literature. See Table 2 for a review of the five essential conditions and practice recommendations. Study findings underscore the importance of comprehensive value-based training, which is needed to develop shared knowledge and values to support partnership collaboration (Cooper et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2019; Nooteboom et al., 2021; Walker et al., 2003). Due to this importance, value-based training should be available on an ongoing basis to account for staff turnover, as well as to actively refine practices and maintain accountability within the wraparound model. Findings also revealed that this training should include a focus on mutual valuing and recognition of expertise among partners and the child and family, to promote partner inclusion, trust, and respect in the wraparound process (Bruns & Walker, 2008; Cooper et al., 2016; Nooteboom et al., 2021; Rothi & Leavey, 2006). To further uphold these values, they need to be championed by school leadership, which plays a key role in setting values and shaping wraparound supports and partnership collaboration within school-community models. Specifically, to foster collaborative spaces, school leadership can adopt processes that promote partnership contact and communication (e.g., direct referral processes). One such mechanism that supports partnership collaboration was identified to be established and flexible communication channels. Partners stressed the need for established channels of communication to ground high-level decision-making, as well as flexible communication channels to build relationships and monitor and implement wraparound plans in practice. Finally, partners also identified the need for appropriate staff resources to support long-term relationship building and partnership collaboration within school models of support (Cooper et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2019). Therefore, findings underscore the importance of investing resources into early intervention programs in order to promote inter-agency collaboration and ultimately promote positive outcomes among children and families (Cooper et al. 2016).

## Strengths and Limitations

This study had strengths and limitations. In terms of strengths, the study sample size was substantial ( $n = 79$  partners), representing a considerable number of school-community partners. Furthermore, the study sample included both new and well-established AIFY schools (i.e., three schools were new to AIFY, while five schools were in their sixth year of the wraparound model). This meant that partner perspectives were included from schools in the early stages of consolidating partnership processes, as well as schools with long-term partnerships, allowing for a more complete



**Table 2** Essential conditions for partnership collaboration and associated recommendations

| Essential condition                             | Description  | Recommendation   |
|---|--|--|
| Value-based training                            | Value-based training promotes shared knowledge and understanding which makes collaboration easier to achieve, whereas an absence of this training makes teamwork less straightforward due to disparate values and approaches.  | Comprehensive and ongoing value-based training for all school and community partners to promote shared understanding.          |
| Mutual recognition of expertise                 | Mutual recognition of expertise among partners means that partners valued one another's contributions, which fostered collaboration through partners reaching out to one another for input and collaboration, without this, different partner contributions may be undervalued and excluded. | Values for mutual recognition of expertise are incorporated in training and modelled by school leadership.                     |
| School leadership                               | School administrators can remove barriers to and create platforms for collaboration by adopting standards and procedures that foster access and communication among school-community partners.   | School leadership adopts procedures that maximize communication between school-community partners.                             |
| Established and flexible communication channels | Established channels of communication, are needed for high-level management of wraparound processes. Flexible channels of communication are needed for partners to collaboratively monitor and adjust student care, and increase partner visibility and relationship building.               | Regular established and flexible channels of communication are adopted for access and contact among school-community partners. |
| Appropriate staff resources                     | Staff resources and workforce stability promotes inter-sectoral collaboration through the development of long-term relationships and connections.  | Resources and funding are invested in school-community models to promote workforce capacity and stability.                     |

understanding of partnership functioning over time. However, a limitation of the study is that some schools were represented less in the data, with two schools participating in one to two data generation sessions (including one new school and one established school) and six schools participating in three to four sessions (including two new schools and four established schools). This is notable because the limited capacity of some schools to participate in data collection activities may be indicative of greater themes, such as school and agency staff feeling overburdened by student and family demand for support, and the ability of wraparound supports in schools to meet these demands. It would be beneficial for future studies to engage schools at equivalent rates to promote site-specific representation and address circumstances unique to different sites. Additionally, the present study focused on the perspective of frontline school-community partners in terms of professional inter-sectoral partnership collaboration. It would be beneficial for future studies to explore the perspectives of the children and families that these partners are collaborating with and serving. We have forthcoming manuscripts that will prioritize the child and family perspective. Finally, the study is grounded in the context of the AIFY school-community model of wraparound support in a large city in western Canada; therefore, the study findings should be applied to other settings with consideration for the unique context and strengths of different sites (Burns & Goldman, 1999). Furthermore, future studies should be conducted to confirm the importance of these five essential conditions for partnership funding in other school-community contexts.

## Conclusion

Collaborative school-community models of wraparound support have been increasingly recognized in the literature as effective approaches for supporting vulnerable children and families (Hill, 2020; Yu et al., 2020). Due to the importance of collaboration for coordinating student care within these models, there is a need to understand the factors that impact this type of large-scale school-community collaboration (Walker et al., 2003). The present study identified five essential conditions for professional partnership collaboration among school-community partners which underscore the importance of comprehensive training and shared understanding, mutual recognition of expertise and partnership inclusion, administrative leadership support, regular established and flexible channels for communication, and adequate partner resources and workforce stability. These essential conditions can be used to help inform the implementation of similar school-community models of support to foster collaborative partner processes and ultimately promote positive outcomes among children, youth, and families.



## Data availability

Study participants were assured raw data would remain confidential and would not be shared.

**Author Contributions** Jason Daniels, Jessica Haight, and Maira Quintanilha contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation and data collection were performed by Jason Daniels, Jessica Haight, Maira Quintanilha, and Matana Skoye. Data analysis and the first draft of the manuscript was completed by Jessica Haight, in consultation with Jason Daniels and Rebecca Gokiart. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

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## Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interest** The authors declare no competing interests.

**Ethics Approval** Institutional ethics approval was obtained from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board (Pro0007079) in 2017 with subsequent annual amendments and renewals each year, including 2022 and 2023. The study was performed in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

**Informed Consent** Written informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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