

PROJECTS – YOUNG PARENT NETWORK CARE PATHWAY



In 2013 Information Hamilton joined an existing partnership between a McMaster University program and the Young Parent Network (YPN). The network is a collaboration between three services serving young pregnant women and mothers -- Angela's Place, Grace Haven, and St. Martin's Manor -- who were keenly interested in providing reliable and accessible information about community supports to the women they served. The program at McMaster, which matched research students with community agencies in a community-based participatory research (CBPR) project, provided a framework to pursue an evidence-based approach to YPN's goal. Prior to Information Hamilton's involvement two research students, over two terms, had completed extensive research, consultation, and collaborative development using the CBPR model where young pregnant women and mothers guided the project throughout.

At the end of the second year a comprehensive report on how best to support young mothers' understanding of the complex landscape of services available to them had been produced, with focus on identified metrics critical to adoption like ease of access,

trust, method of access, and protection privacy. Collection of the basic contact information for an initial inventory of services was in its infancy when the possibility of a partnership with Information Hamilton was raised. Instead of a period of painstaking gathering of basic contact information, a full inventory of detailed service data was provided based on the project's inclusion criteria. Through Information Hamilton's daily data update activities, this data set would stay accurate throughout the pilot project and beyond it, addressing a significant sustainability challenge (keeping data accurate) that the project had not yet resolved.

Student researchers identified a *care pathway* as the model for presenting services information and allowing users to navigate it according to a set of present needs. Not only was Information Hamilton able to provide the data that was the foundation of the pathway, it was able to incorporate the technical development of the care pathway interface into the existing software development project to create a new Information and Referral (I&R) management platform -- Phoenix I&R -- and the community database it would support -- The Red Book of Hamilton.

The focus of the technical aspect of the project was sustainability. First, the development team separated the roles of graphic design, implementation, management of the pathway, and management of the underlying data. Once created, the look and functionality of the care pathway would remain the same. At this point the time-limited human resources (graphic designers and programmers) could depart the project without affecting its flexibility or sustainability. What remained was an interface for management of the care pathway -- which existing or new student researchers and YPN staff could use with minimal training -- and management of the underlying data, a task done by Information Hamilton staff and transparent to the project.

A planned consequence of the project was that the pathway model, depicted above, became a generic interface to information that is part of the Phoenix I&R software platform and can be customized and deployed in future projects targeting new communities of need.

<https://informationhamilton.ca/projects/ypn>