A CASE STUDY IN COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION

EMERGING MINDS: Illuminating the Path to Mental Wellness
Health Care can be Complex

Health care is positioned to service some of our society’s greatest challenges...cancer, mental illness, aging well and opioid use disorder are areas we have chosen to focus on at Guidewell Innovation over the past few years. The complexity of the health care system requires a sustained and coordinated effort among many stakeholders in order to discover solutions effectively while preserving resources for fiscal stability.

Our Response

Due to this rising complexity in health care, people are trending towards open, collaborative tools and knowledge sharing for complex problem-solving together. When organizations move outside their silos and collaborate across the industry, resources are leveraged and solutions are more viable because there is deep buy-in from multiple stakeholders. At GuideWell, we believe we’re smarter together. We strengthen the ecosystem through deep listening, perspective-taking and fostering ideas together - advancing innovation and promoting new and unique solutions in the healthcare system. This is what we call collaborative innovation.
What is Collaborative Innovation?

Collaborative Innovation is about unlocking valuable insight and then applying those insights in a mutually beneficial way for all stakeholder groups to create solutions participants feel vested in. It involves many steps from perspective-taking across all stakeholder groups affected by a healthcare problem to co-creation of solutions. This empathy-based perspective-taking and co-creation lends a humanizing effect to program experiences - increasing adoption, compliance and overall program effectiveness.

Collaborative Innovation is a process in which multiple players or stakeholders work together to address a common goal or problem by developing a collective vision and sharing ideas, information and work. Stakeholders contribute and cooperate towards creating and developing new products, services, processes and business solutions and share in collective learning.

We Engage in a Systematic Approach

We use a highly effective approach supported by divergence and convergence. These two methods of thinking are basic foundational premises of creativity, inquiry, innovation and design. This approach involves seeing something known from a new or unique perspective. We activated this skill by first diverging, which is becoming aware of the present, opening the mind to the new, exploring topics from various vantage points, and then converging by making decisions about themes, gaps and common grounds.
A CASE STUDY

EMERGING MINDS
ILLUMINATING THE PATH TO MENTAL WELLNESS

Forty million Americans have some form of mental illness.

This statistic alone paints a very clear picture of the problem and why we chose to tackle this very important issue. We designed a process intended to bring transparency to the underlying issues in mental health care from the perspective of people living with mental illness and their families, employers, providers and communities. An expert group from around the nation participated in a collaborative innovation experience where they were asked to actively apply empathy to a particular person living with mental illness by stepping into their shoes through a series of workshops to gain dimension in their understanding of their problem(s).

Shifting perspectives to look at the world from the vantage point of someone with mental illness was a powerful and moving experience even for participants who have worked in mental health for years. Participants experienced the distinction and separation of reality versus perspective to better contextualize their skills and experience with one another. This contributed to a deeper, broader, more dimensional and collective approach to finding solutions.

Participants gained common language and understanding of the problems and opportunities around mental wellness innovation. This common ground allowed them to reduce complexity and increase efficiency in bringing solutions to market in the context of the whole ecosystem, rather than siloed and disjointed individual efforts.

These sessions gave each of us an opportunity to share our knowledge and importantly our lived experience with mental illness to the group imparting nuggets of information that I hope will continue to grow into action. The networking with individuals from companies and organizations that I had never met with and will collaborate with in the future is invaluable.

I got much more out of the experience of (collaborative innovation) than I expected. While I anticipated learning more about mental illness, I did not expect to gain as much empathy as I gained for patients with mental illness, or appreciate how much more I can do in a position of leadership in my company to promote access to healthcare benefits for those with mental illness.

Following the initial convening, we stayed engaged with the Emerging Minds ecosystem. This allowed synergistic alignment and support between stakeholder groups and helped prevent redundancy and lost opportunities for synergizing complementary efforts to achieve greater impact, greater reach and participation, and stronger viability of new solutions.
Activation of Themes: Success Stories

Following the event, the data and insights from the program were thoroughly analyzed and assimilated. What emerged were key themes that would have the greatest impact on shortening the path to diagnosis and treatment and improving the health and quality of life for a person with mental illness.

These included:
• Create an Integrated Model of Care
• Provide Tools to Self-Manage Symptoms and Access Social Support
• Build Systems for Early Detection and Intervention
• Work Toward a Common Understanding and Positive Language

Our process of collaborative innovation enabled many of our colleagues and partners to leverage and apply the perspectives they gained to their businesses, approaches and lives to elevate their roles in helping those living with mental illness.

Create an Integrated Model of Care

Reena Pande, M.D. serves as Chief Medical Officer for AbleTo, a technology-enabled mental health provider offering next-day access to a nationwide network of more than 400 highly trained, clinically supervised therapists (LCSW) and behavioral coaches. Dr. Pande is a physician (cardiology) by background who noticed many of her patients were also dealing with mental health issues. “It became very clear that the system wasn’t working sufficiently to address the overall needs of these patients,” says Dr. Pande.

The theme of the connection between physical and mental health care was discussed in great length during the Emerging Minds event reaffirming Dr. Pande’s attention on developing solutions focusing on integration of care as a continuum. “Health is health. We’ve spent too much time isolating physical and mental health,” continues Dr. Pande. In March 2018, AbleTo published a peer reviewed paper in Psychiatric Services titled “Promoting High Value Mental Health Care.”

Provide Tools to Self Manage Symptoms and Access Social Support

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. Christine Rohan, managing director of innovation for BCBSA oversees a team responsible for accelerating innovation across BCBS with the goals of improving outcomes, increasing access and lowering health care costs. Following her participation in the Emerging Minds event, Christine and her colleagues discussed several key themes with their behavioral health leaders and committed to supporting two collaborative efforts in 2018.

The first was hosting a Self-Directed Depression Tool Demo Day including 16 vendors/suppliers, 15 Blue plans and others. They focused on featuring tools supporting early detection and prevention. The plans that participated came away with a list of suppliers to potentially engage by launching collaborative pilot programs. In addition to the Self-Directed Depression Tool Demo Day, BCBSA is working with the plans to explore the focus of an Integrated Health Care Design Thinking Workshop in the fourth quarter of 2018.
New Directions Behavioral Health promotes positive health outcomes by providing the structure and processes needed to monitor, evaluate and improve the behavioral health of its members. Through its participation in Emerging Minds, New Directions provided insights into the importance of recovery and the self-management of symptoms. “Some people experiencing mental illness want support to assist them in regaining their life and participating in their community,” said Ann Boughtin, senior vice president, general manager for New Directions Behavioral Health. “To provide that support, New Directions is exploring using peer providers in emergency rooms as well as outpatient mental health settings. The goal of the program is to help those diagnosed with mental illness meet people who can assist them in shaping their own paths.”

Work Toward a Common Understanding and Positive Language

Susan Moore Vosseler is a certified counselor and behavior specialist consultant based in Orlando, Fla. with more than 20,000 hours of experience across two decades. Following the Emerging Minds event and the profound impact it had on her view of mental wellness, she spent the rest of the year clarifying vision and purpose both personally and professionally. She realized that many people’s experience is not a singular event, but rather an ongoing state of being. This led her to an increased focus on celebrating small, individual and cumulative successes with her clients. This new approach led to Susan launching an all-new website for her practice and the publishing of a new book titled “Give Me the Red Cup: Knowing Joy in Autism.”

SUMMARY

Our goal for Emerging Minds was to be a catalyst and conduit for powerful discussion, collaboration and ideation. Through the event and subsequent journey, we challenged ourselves, as well as our partners/collaborators from across the mental health landscape, to not only identify deeper insights from all perspectives, but to also bring impactful ideas to the table. This collaborative process allowed us to unearth several key focus areas and, ultimately, surface and evaluate multiple potential solutions.

You can download the detailed “Emerging Minds White Paper” at www.GWIMind.com. We encourage you to stay connected with us and share any successes, challenges or questions that you might have by visiting this site.