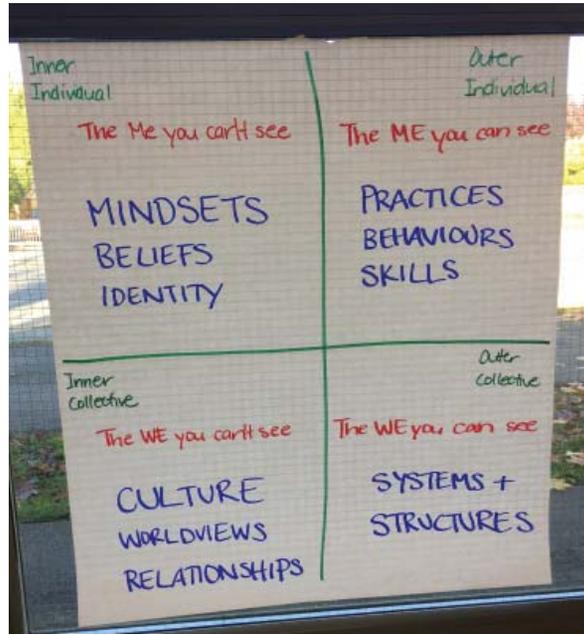
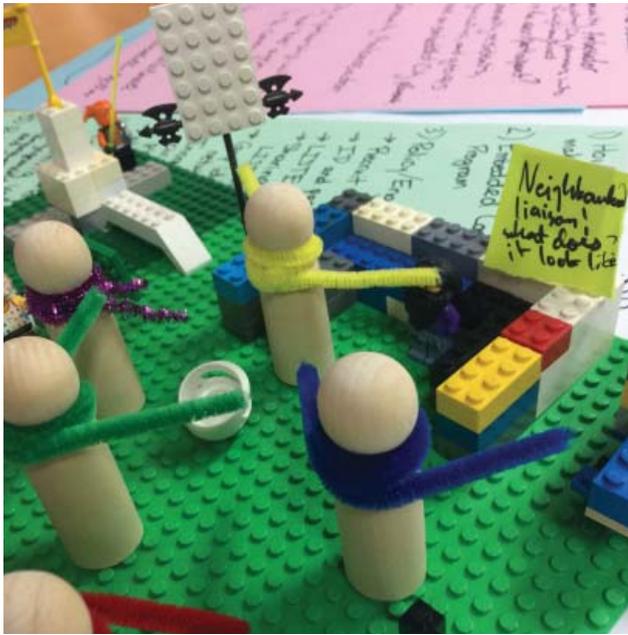


# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS + RESILIENCE LAB

## CO- EMBODYING WORKSHOP

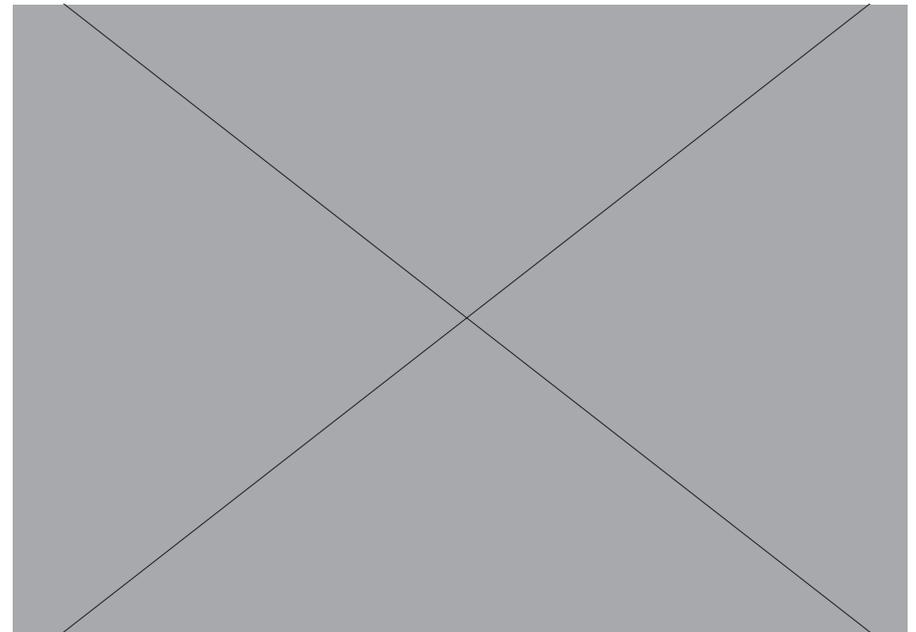
December 2018





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# SUMMARY

## Background

This report tells the story of the Connections + Resilience Lab, which brought together diverse community partners, residents and City of Vancouver staff to explore the question of “How might we increase belonging, connectedness and resiliency in a neighbourhood with increasing gentrification and densification?” Our intention is to share our learnings to inform others who are doing this work, as well as to inspire more people to connect in deeper ways. This is a story that is still taking place. We hope you will join us for the journey.

## Acknowledge territory:

We acknowledge that this work takes place on the unceded, occupied, ancestral and traditional lands of the x məθk əy əm (Musqueam), S wx wú7mesh (Squamish), and səl ilwəta (Tseil-Waututh) nations. This has been a place of abundance, food and knowledge-sharing from time immemorial, where Indigenous peoples have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next. Our neighbourhood is committed to unpacking and addressing the ways in which colonization still exists in our communities, and to re-imagining our community development work to listen, learn, and building sustained relationships of mutual respect and understanding with local Indigenous communities.

## Contacts:

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# STORY OF THE CONNECTIONS + RESILIENCE LAB

## Background:

Renfrew Collingwood is a neighbourhood going through significant changes. Local shops along Kingsway are being replaced by condos and unaffordable rental rates. There are fewer rental units available as the unaffordability of the region squeezes more people in to fewer housing units. With many towers already built, the City of Vancouver has targeted this neighbourhood for increasing density around the Joyce SkyTrain station, despite organized opposition by residents. And underneath all of this is a crisis in connectedness and belonging.

Although Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) has been working to increase connectedness in the neighbourhood since it opened its doors, this focus has increased in recent years given the context of increasing density, growing diversity, ongoing gentrification and increasing social isolation. Our explorations of how to support increased place-based connections through different methodologies through the You Count initiative led to a deepening curiosity:

What if we were to change the **ways** that we were working not just in the places we were working? What would happen if we tried to collaborate with the City of Vancouver and other community partners in new and creative ways?

In April of 2017, a group of community members, service providers, universities, business and others came together in Renfrew Collingwood to look at how they could deepen the exploration of how to increase resiliency in the neighbourhood. Stepping in and saying “yes”, this group agreed to initiate a lab to bring together different stakeholders in Renfrew Collingwood to explore the question: “How might we increase belonging, connectedness and resiliency in a neighbourhood with increasing gentrification and densification?”

This set the stage for the birth of the Connections + Resilience Lab in partnership with the City of Vancouver’s Solutions Lab



## What's a Lab?

The Solutions Lab is seeking **breakthrough, transformative solutions** to some of the city's most complex problems. It's a place where City staff, community members and stakeholders **collaborate to deeply understand complex challenges** from the points of view of the people most affected by them, and where we **rapidly prototype and test innovative responses** to see what we can learn through co-creation and some risk taking. It's an exciting place where we dialogue and listen deeply, try new processes and collaboration tools, and learn and have fun together.



## Team members:

Facilitated by Collingwood Neighbourhood House and City of Vancouver staff, a diverse group of stakeholders formed the team that went through the Lab process, including:

- Collingwood Neighbourhood House  
- food security, celebrations, You Count
- City of Vancouver - Sustainability, Emergency Management, Social Planning
- Vancouver Public Library - Collingwood Branch
- VCH Evergreen Clinic
- Collingwood Community Policing Centre
- Neighbourhood Small Grants
- Still Moon Arts Society
- UBC Centre for Engaged Learning
- Windermere Community Schools
- Developmental Disabilities Association
- Constituency Office of Don Davies
- Renfrew Collingwood Seniors Society
- Collingwood Business Improvement Association
- Renfrew Park Community Centre
- Vancity Collingwood Branch
- Constituency Office of Adrian Dix

## What we did

Over the course of a year and a half, a fluid group of stakeholders met regularly as the Connections + Resilience Lab to come up with solutions to the core question of:

How might we increase belonging, connectedness and resiliency in a neighbourhood with increasing gentrification and densification?

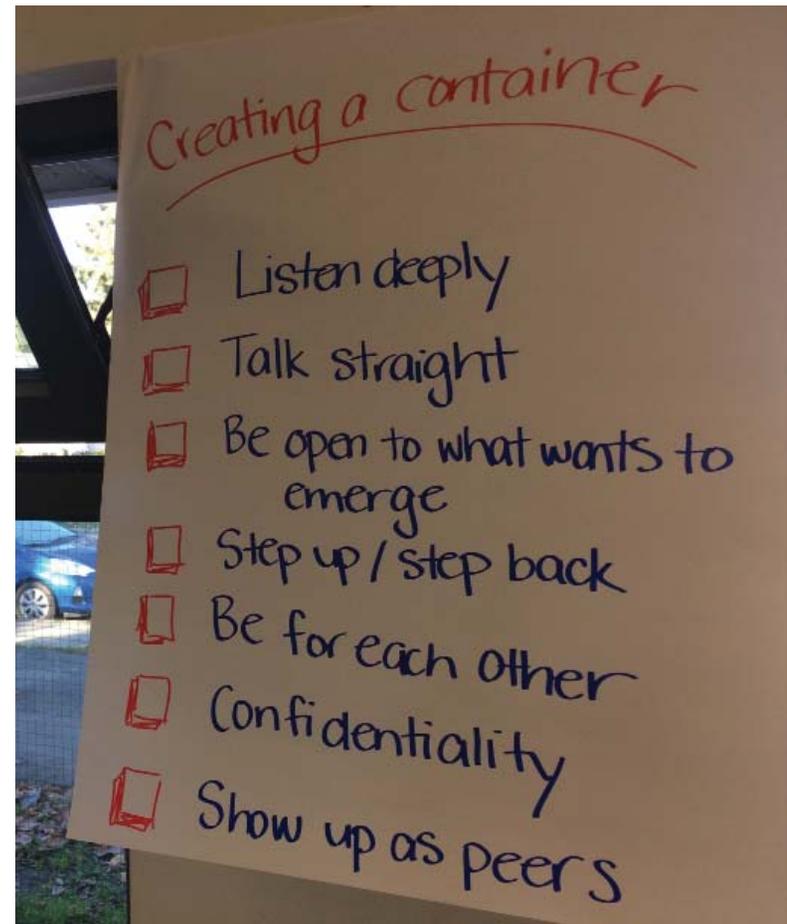
Using a combination of Theory U and Design methods (see *Appendix 1 and 2*), we came together in creative ways with a mindset of curiosity, openness and experimentation. We built on the incredible skills of people in the neighbourhood to build a space where we could try new ways of working together and out in the community.

Community partners, residents, City of Vancouver staff and other stakeholders worked together to understand the complex challenge of resilience and belonging from the points of view of the people most affected by them. We prototyped and tested innovative responses to see what we could learn through co-creation and some risk taking. We engaged in dialogue and deep listening, tried new processes and collaboration tools, learned and had fun together.

### Team Guidelines:

The team guidelines that informed the process reflected a different way of working that invited the whole self of participants and the neighbourhood to be a part of the experience.

### Team Guidelines:



## Co-Initiating

**Co-initiating stage:** Where a lab team convenes for the first time around a powerful, creative question and begins to understand the question, and each others' perspectives and experiences, in thoughtful, creative and generative ways. Where a sense of possibility and a different quality of time and space is co-created.

### When + Where:



- April 26, 2017 Idea Jam @ Collingwood Neighbourhood House

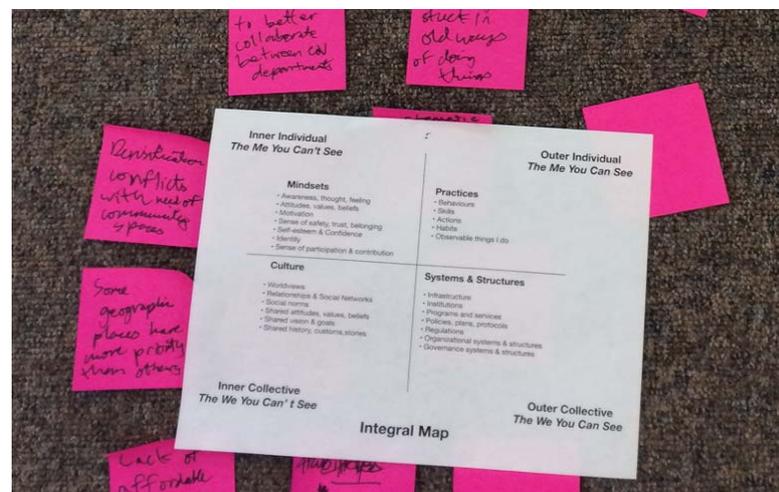
- June 22, 2017 @ Developmental Disabilities Association with the Renfrew Collingwood Area Services Team
- September 26, 2017 @ 5050 Pop-up Art Space with the Lab Team
- Practices: integral mapping, profiles (journey mapping), iceberg model, theory U



### Why:



- Spark curiosity and interest in a CC+R Solutions Lab;
- Create an experiential process based on Theory U and social innovation labs that gives participants a sense of how a lab works, looks, and feels different than other ways of working;
- Build a deeper and shared understanding of the CC+R lab challenge and identify compelling questions to explore further together; and
- Create a safe and coherent container among lab participants for work into the future
- Begin to map the system of connections and resiliency in relation to current practices, mindsets, culture and systems.



## Co-Initiating - Continued

### What:



- Tested the idea, possibility, interest, and focus on the lab with key collaborators in the community.
- Formed a creative question, a design brief, and an invitation for people to participate in the CC+R lab.
- Used tools like:
  - » Integral mapping (see *Appendix 3*), to see the system of connection and resilience from different perspectives;
  - » Ground rules to clarify how we were committed to work with one another;
  - » The “lenses” through which we each see the world to better understand our own biases and each others perspectives;
  - » Speed dating to get to know one another’s experiences with CC+R;
  - » Storytelling;
  - » Systems mapping, using the iceberg model (see *Appendix 4*), to uncover behaviours, systems, structure and mindsets at play in our challenge; and
  - » Personas, to create different character archetypes to help us understand the diversity of different experiences of CC+R.
- Shared our highest hopes for the lab, and learning and insights from the co-initiating sessions.



## Co-sensing

**Co-sensing stage:** *Where we embrace divergent and exploratory thinking. Where we suspend our habitual ways of seeing, thinking, feeling and knowing. Where we channel an explorer mindset, seeking what we don't yet know. And all in order to find different, emergent, and better ideas that we could not see before.*

### When +Where:



October 30 + 31, 2017  
@ Slocan Park field house

### Why:



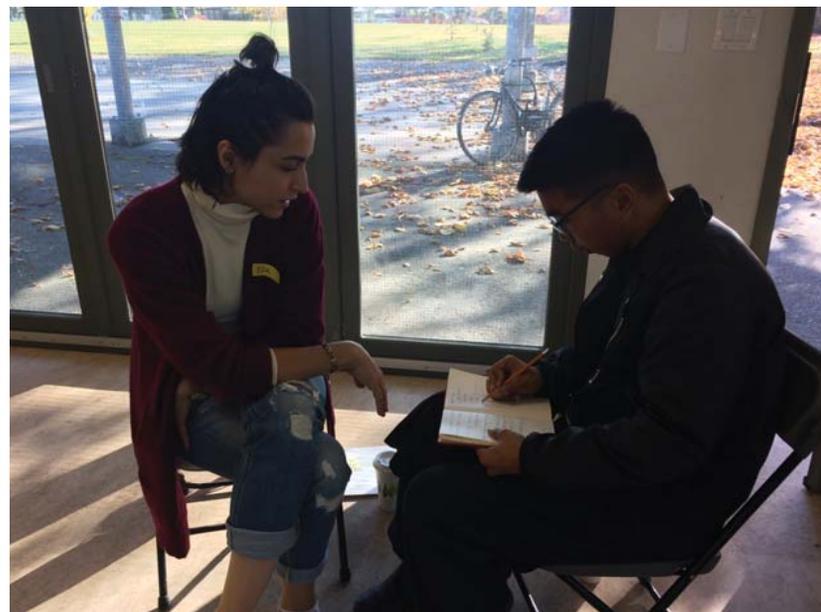
- Deepen our shared understanding of the neighbourhood, and challenges and opportunities for CC+R;
- Build relationships with and enhance awareness of different perspectives of the stakeholders and participants in the system;
- Experience the system from the points of view of different stakeholders in order to break-through patterns of seeing, knowing and listening;
- Begin to identify patterns that help us define the challenge(s) we hope to influence and give us clues to possible leverage points for change; and
- Foster creativity in understanding and engaging with the system.

### What:



- Four levels of listening, with a focus on empathic listening (listen to the feelings and experiences of the other) and generative listening (something new is created in the exchange);

- Learning journeys (see Appendix 5), where lab team members go out into the community to connect with people who experience the CC+R system from different and highly relevant points of view in order to expand our understanding and sense of possibility;
- Embodiment practice to let the deep listening and learning journey experiences settle into our minds, hearts and bodies so that we can tune in to what we hear and understand anew through that experience; and
- Creative questions (see Appendix 6) that capture the insights, energy, potency, and sense of possibility that is beginning to emerge through the work of the lab so far.



## Co-presencing

**Co-presencing stage:** Where we go “through the eye of the needle” and transition from a deeply research, systems, and sensing oriented experience into a creative and action-oriented process. Where we connect deeply to one another, and to our sources of knowing, being, and inspiration into order to bring forth what we are being called to do together.

### When + Where:



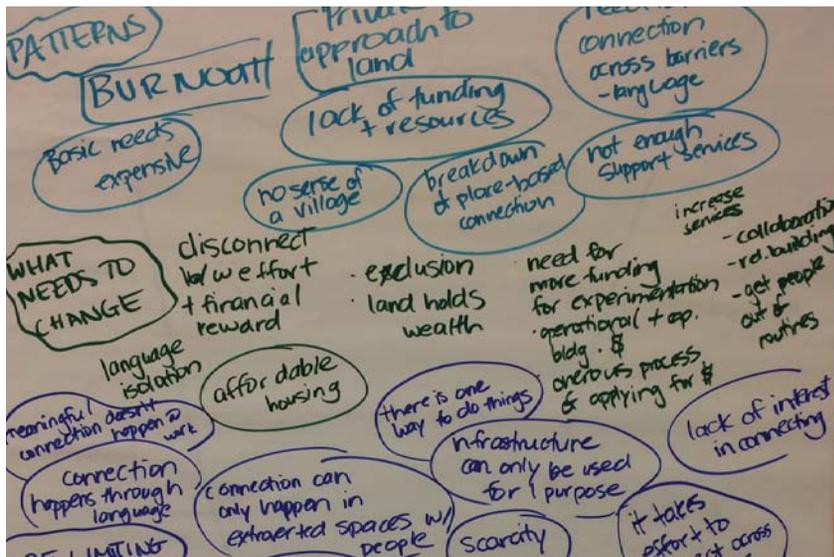
January 24, 2018 @ Renfrew Fire Hall

### Why:



- Make sense and shared meaning of insights from our previous sessions, and use this in reframing our creative question about CC+R;

- Crystallize our individual and shared vision and intentions that will guide the development of the prototype solutions we will be testing and experimenting with; and
- Come to agreement on 3-4 theme areas that the group will prototype around.



### What:



- Pattern finding, where we reviewed all of the artifacts created through our lab process so far, and sought out interconnections, patterns, and stuck parts of the system;
- Reframing, where each lab team member picked a stuck pattern that was identified and reframed it into a potent, creative possibility for intervention. These possibilities were captured in the form of a new set of creative questions;
- Voice dialogue where we put words behind the voices of fear, judgement, cynicism, neutrality, possibility, and the future that is trying to emerge in order to help us shift into the solution- and action-oriented part of the lab; and
- Prioritising and clarifying creative questions with the most potential, interest, energy, and possibility to create change. Six creative questions, each with a small team of 2-4 lab participants, were created to lead into the subsequent session.



## Co-creating: Ideation

**Co-creating - ideation stage:** Where we shift into creating, making, ideation, play and solution-finding. Where the perspectives gained during the first three stages of the lab are turned into tangible, testable, and actionable solutions. Where we evaluate ideas based on their potential to shift the stuck parts of the system, and make a systemic shift related to our convening question.

### When + Where



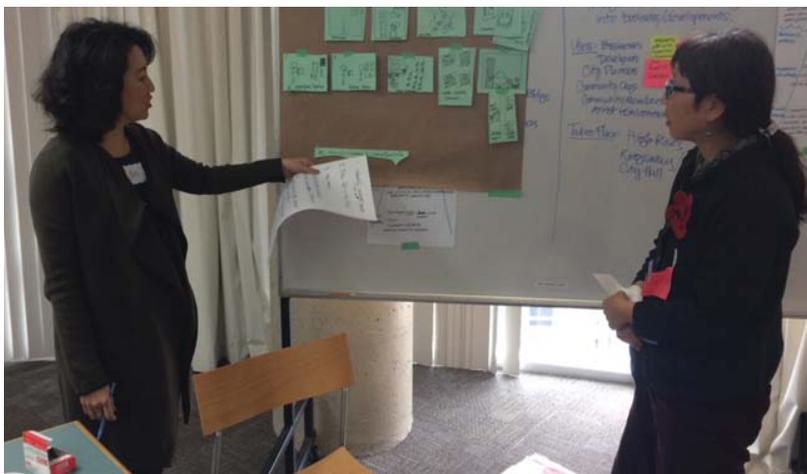
- February 7 + 27, 2018  
@ Renfrew Library

### Why:

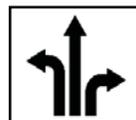


- Respond to stakeholders who are most impacted by the challenge, as well as opportunities and possibilities that currently exist in the system/ neighbourhood;

- Develop coherent, testable and important possible solutions that will make lives and community better;
- Ensure solutions that reflect insights from the whole system, and highest wisdom from participants and the future that wants to emerge; and
- Connect solutions into the individual and shared purpose and ambition of the group.



### What:



- Creative warm-up's, like free writing, energy toss, yes...AND, and yes... Let's! to build energy, momentum, and enter a playful solution-seeking mindset;

- Ideation, where we used a variety of creative prompts to generate ideas in response to each of the six reframed creative questions;
- Theming and prioritisation, where the long list of possible solutions was evaluated based on impact and input to help decide which idea to move forward with;
- Creating a pitch to explain the idea, including a strong creative question, a brief description of the solution and who it's for, and a storyboard describing how the solution works. These six pitches were then shared back with the whole team, feedback was shared, and three were prioritised to move forward with into prototyping.



## Co-creating: Prototyping

**Co-creating - prototyping stage:** Where we test our concepts with the people who they are meant to serve, listen and observe deeply, and iterate our concepts based on their feedback. Where we continue to connect our practical, quick, and light prototype testing to the deeper systems we are trying to shift.

### When + Where

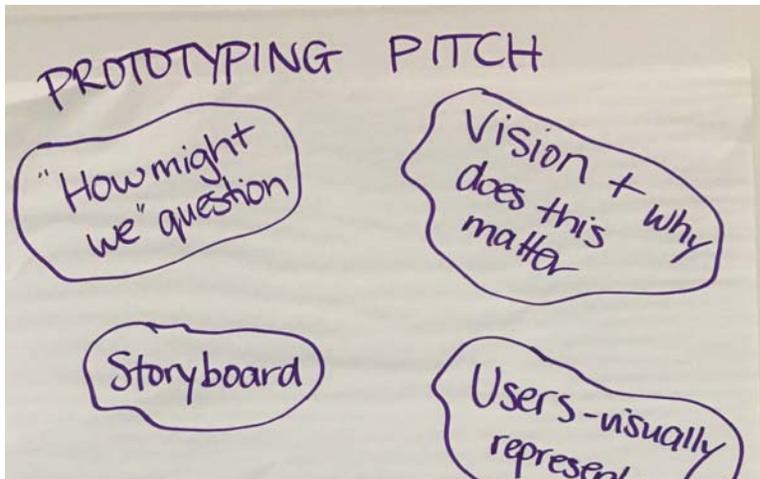


- April 11, 2018 @ Renfrew Library + out in community

### Why:



- Review 3 top ideas developed at the last lab on Feb 27
- Detail out the idea for creating connections and resilience
- Build a prototype using role play, lego, playdough, or other materials
- Get feedback from the broader group about the prototype
- Develop a plan for how to test and iterate the prototype idea, as well as how the group can oversee the testing of the prototype



### What:

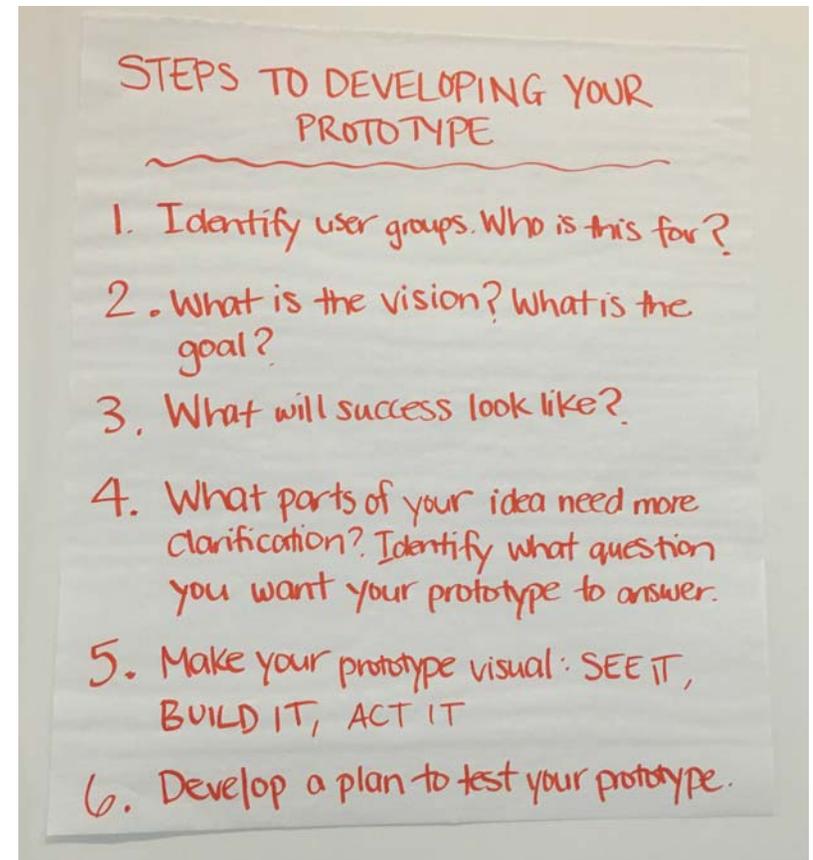


**Prototype 1: Skill Share** (see page 13)

**Prototype 2: Community Ambassador** (see page 14)

**Prototype 3: Social Infrastructure** (see page 15)

**Prototype 4: Community Innovation Lab** (see page 16)



## Co-creating: Prototyping - Continued



### Prototype 1: Skill Share

*Refined question:* How might we identify and create leadership opportunities for neighbours so they can help other neighbours in order to increase resiliency and connection?

*Prototype concept:* Create a network of individuals with skills, experience, and/or knowledge willing to share their expertise with others. Connect with existing programs and networks to test interest in idea.

*User testing + insights:* Connected this prototype in with the Hey Neighbour program which is being piloted at the same time as the lab work. Approached building convenor with skill share idea and they pushed back, wanted ideas to come from residents themselves. Had a few ideas for what to do (home insurance, language sharing) - liked idea of a person sharing skills with a group rather than one on one. Feedback was to consider “FOMO” (fear of missing out) – don’t run multiple sessions concurrently, but rather set it up as a series. Choose an ongoing day/time, to create predictability and consistency. Start with just one session, but consider branding from the outset to create expectations that there will be more. There is less comfort in hosting these in private spaces than in shared community amenity spaces.

*What’s next:* Applying for a Vancouver Foundation grant to continue and grow Hey Neighbour program beyond City pilot which would begin in January 2019.

## Co-creating: Prototyping - Continued



### Prototype 2: Community Ambassador

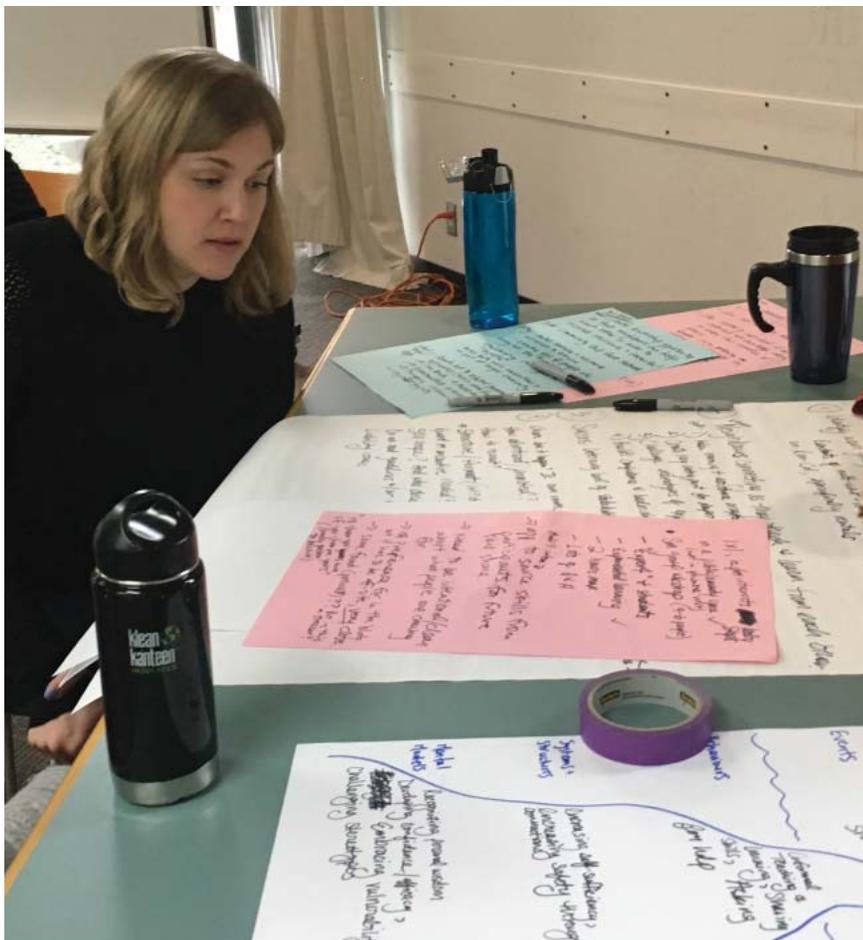
*Refined question:* How might we decentralise decision-making in planning processes?

*Prototype concept:* Embed a community planner from the City of Vancouver into the neighbourhood to be more responsive to, and understanding of, what's going on in the neighbourhood. Democratises knowledge and supports grassroots input.

*User testing + insights:* Tested receptivity of residents to the concept at the Collingwood Days festival, and with several groups who access Collingwood Neighbourhood House. In order to test the concept, lab members played the role of community ambassadors to simulate that experience. There was positive feedback about the prototype. There was a hunger for more in-person communication between the City and neighbourhood. Lots of ideas were generated but there was the realization that the scope of a community ambassador would need to be clearly defined as the ideas shared included everything from more gardens to technology hubs to changes in development policy. Going out into the community, particularly to key community events, was a very effective way of connecting with a diverse audience.

*What's next:* How would a role/structure support responding to all of the different and complicated things that community members want to find out more about? Is there potentially an ongoing community development activity related to the neighbourhood ambassador idea?

## Co-creating: Prototyping - Continued



### Prototype 3: Social Infrastructure

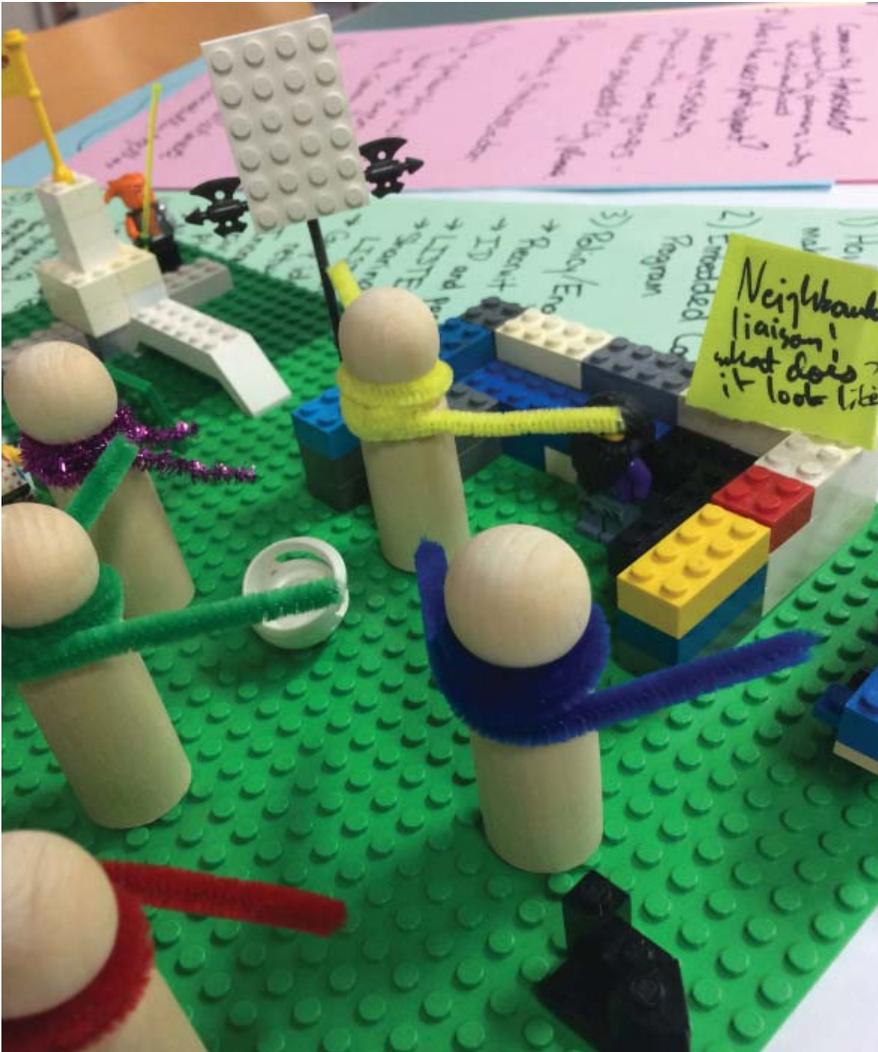
*Refined question:* How might we require community space in all new development?

*Prototype concept:* Invite a developer, City, and neighbourhood organisations into a dialogue together prior to a concept being proposed for a new development site to see if people will have an open, candid, and co-creative dialogue with one another. If there is traction, there is an opportunity to connect this idea in the Social Infrastructure Plan under development at the City.

*User testing + insights:* Developer did not respond to invitation. Prototype team didn't pursue idea from here.

*What's next:* More opportunity now for this than a year ago, particularly as the province is open to community amenity contributions (including both capital and cash contributions) and with ongoing development activity in the neighbourhood, particularly around Joyce station. Opportunity now to collaborate with other community serving organisations to advocate for community infrastructure and ongoing funding to run community spaces.

## Co-creating: Prototyping - Continued



### Prototype 4: Community Innovation Lab

*Refined question:* How might we embed social innovation infrastructure into the heart of the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood to support more responsiveness to the social isolation and resiliency that neighbours and community organizations experience?

*Prototype concept:* Though iteration, testing, and reflecting on the first three prototypes and what happens after the lab, a fourth prototype about building innovation infrastructure was developed. It intends to continue to build the capacities of neighbourhood organisations to use social innovation and design methods to respond to connections + resilience challenges in the neighbourhood.

*User testing + insights:* User testing with the rest of the lab's prototyping team and a grants manager from the Vancouver Foundation provided useful feedback. This concept continues to be tested and developed as a result of the lab, and is described further in the "Dear Future" section at the end of this story.

## Co-embodiment

**Co-embodiment stage:** *Where we make meaning of the work we've done together, and bring the parts of the journey back together into a cohesive whole for each of the lab team members as individuals, as well as for our collaborative work together. Where we ask ourselves "now what?".*

### When + Where:



- October 23, 2018 @ Collingwood Neighbourhood House Annex

### Why:



- Look back at the arc lab and building a shared story about what was learned
- Understand where we're at now, including what are the different processes and projects that are related to the work of connections and resilience in the neighbourhood
- Map the current processes that are related to connections and resilience work, who is doing the work and how it is all connected
- Look ahead at how individuals and organizations will take this work forward
- Invite participants to continue to be engaged as new prototypes emerge

### What:



- Shared back final work and reflections from each of the prototyping teams
- Built a shared story of the whole lab process
- Reflected on our individual learning, how the lab experience has changed perspectives, and what possibilities have emerged for future work together
- Discussed ideas around prototype 4, and continuing on with building the social innovation infrastructure in the community
- Shared reflections and evaluation about lab process (see "Impressions That Remain" section for more detail here)



# IMPRESSIONS THAT REMAIN

## Some questions that remain include:

- How do we integrate lab ways of working in our current work, particularly with marginalized groups.
- How can we do the good work we are already doing and engage with an experimental mindset?
- How can we build on the work and the relationships that have been created?

Although the Lab has been completed in its current format, the process remains alive. After a year and a half together, it is certainly not the end, but rather the beginning of the next phase.

Through this process, there has been a strengthened, deepened and broader collaboration with City and community stakeholders in looking for possibilities for change. There are new skills and methodologies available to experiment with.

## Here's what some of our participants say:

- I've jumped onto the social innovation bandwagon
- I enjoyed the enthusiasm and fun that people engaged with
- It was cool to dream together
- We created a sense of team beyond our organizations and roles
- There is a lot of power in building a shared understanding of the system
- Getting to know community members on the ground shifted how I understand the system
- Innovation and connecting neighbours is really hard and takes a lot of time
- Creating characters of people who could live in our neighbourhood allowed me to put a human face on the work

## DEAR FUTURE:

As we look to the future, we imagine that the Connections + Resilience Lab will continue to be a shared learning platform for diverse stakeholders in the neighbourhood to come together to dream, re-imagine, go deep, experiment, and find new solutions for the challenges that we all face. Ultimately, this is a place where we transform how we are together and transform the kind of change we are trying to create.

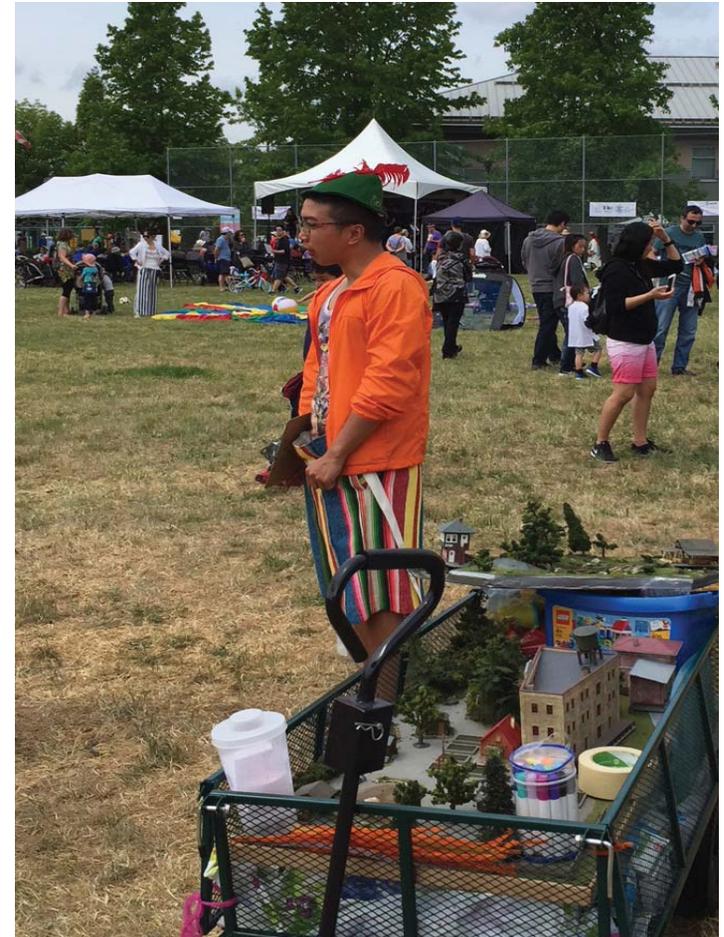
### There are many possibilities that we see in the future:

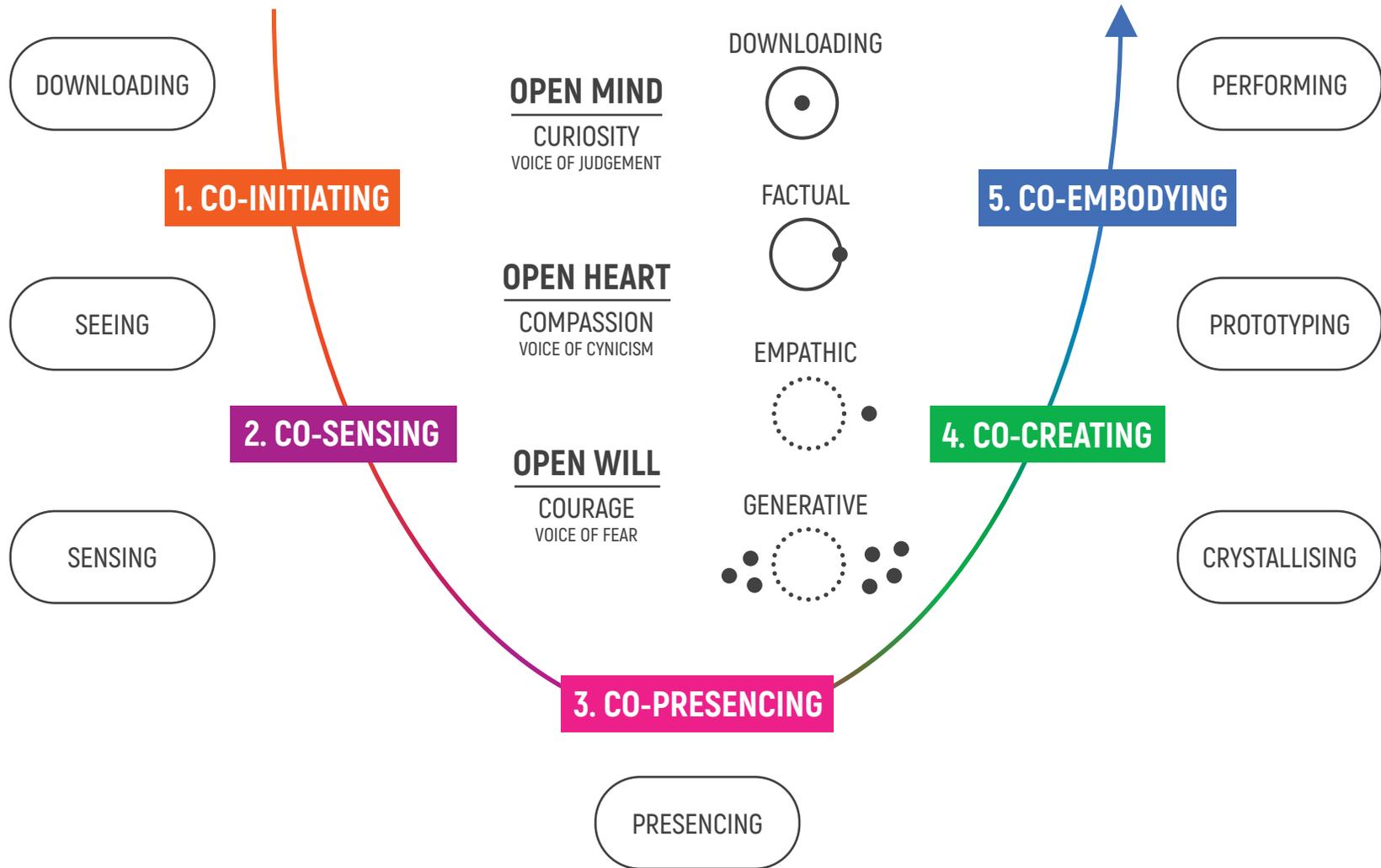
- How might the Area Services Team be reformulated to become a community of practice where members come together intentionally to learn how to do the work of resiliency and community building?
- How might the Community Development team at CNH build a space to bring in community members creatively and to build the capacity of everyone in the neighbourhood?
- How can we codify what we know works really well?
- What elements of the story do we want to pull forward into the stories to come?

We hope that you will take the learnings and questions that we have been exploring into your own work and life, and that together we will carve out a future where connectedness, belonging and resiliency is embedded in each part of our neighbourhoods. We look forward to seeing what the future brings, and to continuing the journey together.

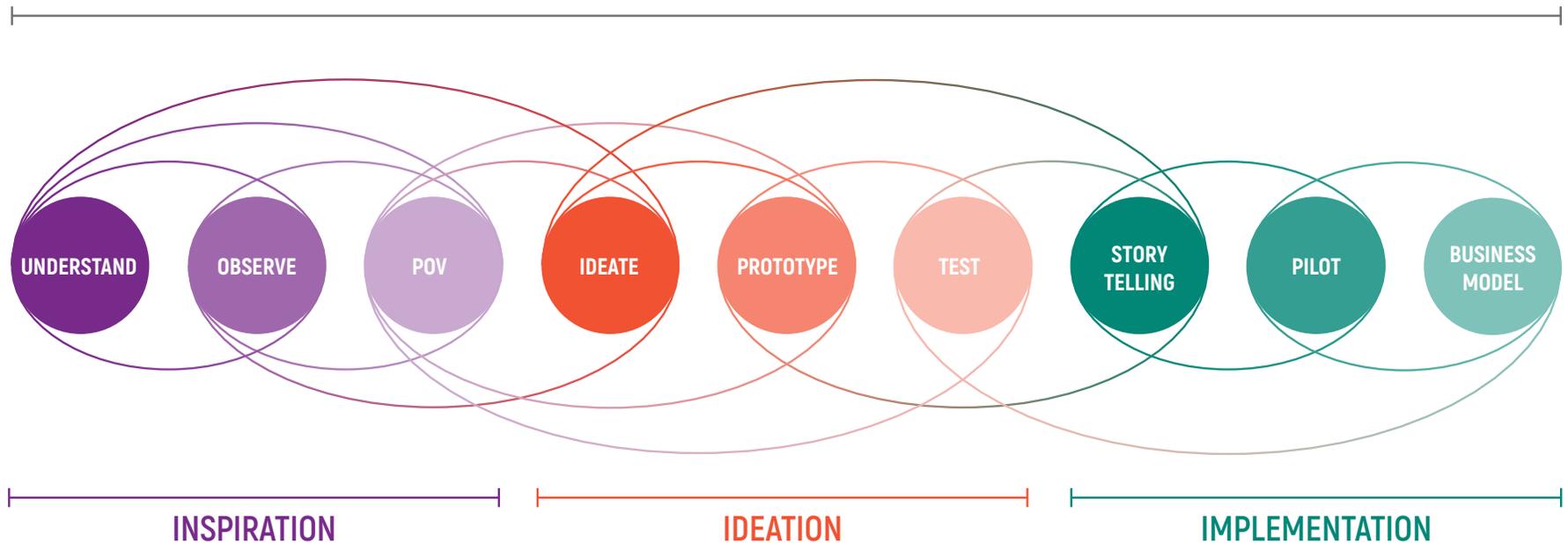
Sincerely,

The Connections + Resilience Lab team





## THE DESIGN THINKING PROCESS



## APPENDIX 3: INTEGRAL MAPPING

### Essence:

Integral mapping is one of many tools that can help build our systems thinking capacities. It comes from the field of integral theory and **helps us to pay attention to both the exterior and interior aspects of system or issue**, as well as the **individual and collective aspects**. It encourages us to see our self as part of a system, and reflect on our own personal experiences and how we are responsible for the work we do.

### When to use this tool:

We know that to innovate on complex challenges, it's necessary to find ways to see, understand, and interact with systems: to see more of the whole and parts, to surface the relationships and the dynamics at play, to identify what is driving the problem and what's holding it in place, and to find opportunities for very strategic interventions that might really make a difference. When a team is in the **early days of exploring a complex challenge, and they are trying to identify the points in a system that are stuck** or creating tension, this tool can help to look at a system from different perspectives as a way to open up thinking, understanding, and possibilities.

### How it works:

Map the four quadrants on the floor or walls.  
**(See following page.)**

Divide into four equal groups, with each one going to one quadrant, and orient each group to the perspective represented in their quadrant.

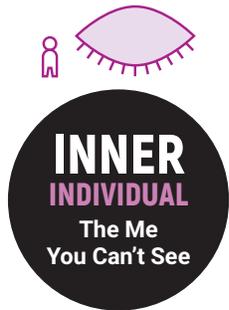
Each group discusses: What do we need to pay attention to or be aware of in this quadrant? How do I experience this in relation to the challenge/system we're working on? Is this something that we usually pay attention to in our work? What are some of the tensions and catalysts at play in this quadrant?

Groups switch quadrants, moving diagonally with their same group, and discuss the same set of questions from this new orientation.

Large group debriefs the conversation: What usually gets most of our attention in the work that we do? How did it feel to change perspectives, to work in a different quadrant? How do we work skillfully with this expanded awareness of the whole and the parts, and to bring this awareness to key interventions? Were there any leverage points that stood out? How can we hold more than one perspective in doing the work that we do?

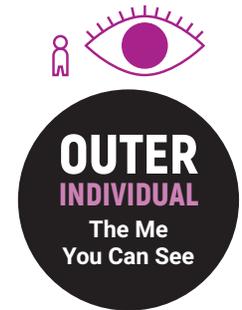
### Resources referenced:

Stacy Barter with SHIFT Collaborative; Lisa Gibson with Living in Community



## MINDSETS

- Awareness, thought, feeling
- Attitudes, values, beliefs
- Motivation
- Sense of safety, trust, belonging
- Self-esteem & Confidence
- Identity
- Sense of participation & contribution



## PRACTICES

- Behaviours
- Skills
- Actions
- Habits
- Observable things I do



## CULTURE

- Worldviews
- Relationships & Social Networks
- Social norms
- Shared attitudes, values, beliefs
- Shared vision & goals
- Shared history, customs, stories

## SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

- Infrastructure
- Institutions
- Programs and services
- Policies, plans, protocols
- Regulations
- Organizational systems & structures
- Governance systems & structures



# APPENDIX 4: ICEBERG



## APPENDIX 5: LEARNING JOURNEYS

### Essence:

Learning journeys pull the lab team out of their regular routines and ways of knowing in order to experience the system challenge from other points of view. Learning journeys are meant to take the lab team to the edges of their experience; to go to the places, people, and experiences that are relevant to the system challenge and that they know the least about. It's much more than a field trip or interview – it's a sensing experience.

### When to use this tool:

- To **break through patterns** of seeing, listening and knowing by stepping into different and relevant experiences and perspectives.
- To build the capacities of the lab team to see and work from the **whole system**, and to use this to generate new ideas.
- To **build relationships** with people who may be a part of co-creating and testing prototypes, and implementing new solutions.
- To produce a **mindset shift** in the lab participants that is more profound than is possible within a typical workshop environment.

### How it works:

1. **Plan.** Clarify the curiosities and lines of inquiry you have about the person/place you are visiting to help guide your conversation. Figure out how you're going to get there, how/who will lead the conversations, how you're going to record what you're seeing, learning, hearing, and feeling, how you're going to stay on time, and any other logistics needed.

2. **Mindsets and Biases.** Take a few minutes to individually write down the assumptions about what you expect to hear and see from each person/place you are visiting in order to surface your mental models – be honest. Share these with each other to deepen understanding of where each of you is coming from. Refine your plan if needed.
3. **Journey!** Set off on your journey, with a focus on deep listening, keeping your minds and hearts wide open, and having fun. Access your curiosity, beginners mind, and the wonder and joy of discovery. Use your questions as a guide, but follow the flow of your attention and the conversation to take you to what's emerging and being generated. Be sure to record what you're learning, and collect some artifacts as you go.
4. **Reflect.** After your learning journey is complete, take some time immediately afterwards to individually journal about your experience. What did you observe? What was surprising or stood out to you? What ideas or insights were generated? What did you notice about yourself, your assumptions, and your attention? Share these with your learning journey partners.
5. **Report back.**
  - a. What were the high points, pain/frustrating points, insights, and themes that you gathered?
  - b. Share back some artifacts - photos, other things you may have collected.

### Resources Referenced:

U.Lab 1X Sourcebook, 2016 V.4

# APPENDIX 6: GENERATING CREATIVE QUESTIONS

## Essence:

This tool leverages the insights from sensing research and experiences into generative, potent questions that bridge to co-creation work. Should be grounded in the original design brief and problem statement, but these should be transformed based on the sensing experience. They should resonate deeply with the group's sensing experiences, and provide direction, hopes, stretched boundaries, and launch points for generating many new ideas in a new solution space.

## When to Use This Tool:

- To get to the real problem to be solved.
- To create a potent starting point to generate ideas.
- To disrupt the current system.

## How it Works:

1. Take a moment to centre and quiet your active, analytical mind. This could be a short meditation, moving into silence, some physical movement. Allow yourself to engage your heart and will, along with your mind, and sense into what is trying to emerge.
2. Formulate creative questions beginning with “how might we...” or “what if?” based on intriguing insights, user experiences, and inspirations. Use this formula: “How might we [action verb] for a [user] who [insight] and/or with [need]”.
3. Aim to have your cake and eat it too - find the right level of tension and potency for the creative question to stimulate creativity.
4. Take an unreasonable stance to stimulate radical, rather than incremental, innovation.
5. Pick the right level of abstraction
6. Make sure not to include or imply a solution in the creative question.

## Resources Referenced:

- THINK School of Creative Leadership

