THE CATALYST

Knowledge Translation: Myth vs. Reality

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When I first began my position as a Knowledge Broker, many times I found myself smirking at loved one's reactions when I attempted to explain my job and the work that I do.

Claiming that "I deal in knowledge," isn't always the wisest way to explain the need for Knowledge Translation (KT).

You see, after I finished grad school, I decided to intentionally "do" theory by throwing myself into front-line work. I was frustrated with the reality that a lot of the knowledge that we were being taught in school simply remained within our classrooms. This was confirmed when I was a front-line worker within women's shelters. Sadly, I discovered that most of the theory that I studied in school *wasn't being implemented within* the shelters! And there my friends, is a perfect example of knowledge translation.

In short, KT is bridging the two worlds of knowledge and action together.

"Innovation to Implementation Guide (I2I)" explains KT in the following way*: "Research has established that there is a substantial gap from the time new knowledge is created to when it is put into practice. The field of Knowledge Translation (KT) has emerged as a response to this gap."*

Believe me, it took much trial and error to get a grasp on a fuller picture of what KT is and why we need it. Here are a few tips that I have learned along the way that clarifies KT myths from reality.

Myth #1

KT is only for researchers in academia.

Reality:

Anyone can use KT! KT is a valuable tool that acts as a bridge for knowledge to influence practice.

Past *SPARK* participants have showcased the diversity of KT through their different projects. Whether it was through creating a support group for newcomer Muslim mothers, or working towards more effective strategies to help problem gamblers, their work demonstrates the diversity of KT.

Myth #2

KT can only be used within the Health field.

Reality:

KT can be used across many fields and disciplines. KT invites us all to put valuable knowledge into practice in order to bring about transformative change. For example, past *SPARK* participants have tackled diverse topics such as a focus on the Corrections and prison industry, and the exploration of new methods to train peer supporters within marginalized communities. Their ideas were inspired by the desire to transform the populations that they worked with.

Myth #3

KT is only necessary to meet grant application requirements

Reality:

KT is not limited to assessments or applications! KT can be used in countless ways; in community organizing, to improve services and policies within organizations etc. The best thing to remember is that *KT turns knowledge into action*. If you consider KT within this mindset, you can practically apply this process to any project that needs to move from theory into practice. KT is about "doing knowledge", not so much about "showing how you will incorporate knowledge." Don't get me wrong, *we love* grant applications! But KT is not restricted to them alone.

Now that you have learned a little more about KT, what's stopping you from using it within your own work?

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