

Building the bridge for holistic hearing healthcare in Canada: Empowering audiologists to appreciate their integral role in primary care

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Background

From a global perspective¹, audiologists have limited integration in interprofessional primary care teams. National efforts are underway around a Canadian primary health care reform, aimed at **multilevel improvement in patient experience, health outcomes, clinician well-being, health equity, and health care efficiencies**.² This expanded care model provides the opportunity to prioritize holistic and whole person care, integrating hearing healthcare services within Canada, and empowering audiologists to appreciate their integral role in system change.

Elements of a high-performing primary care system³:

- ✓ Interprofessional collaboration
- ✓ Comprehensive, continuous & person-centred care
- ✓ Mobilization of healthcare resources
- ✓ Patient navigation of health care system

Objectives

Members of the Canadian Community of Practice:

- Patient voices
- Hearing professionals
- Regulators
- Learners & educators
- Industry leaders

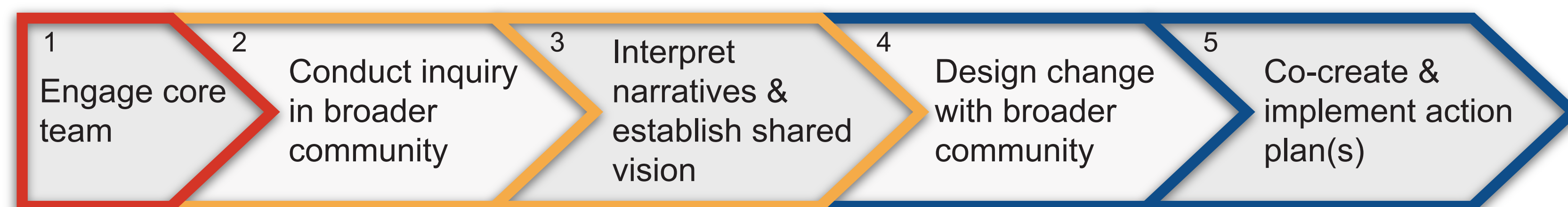


This poster highlights the initial phases of the creation of a community of practice (CoP) including the **integration of shared narratives and a co-created vision for holistic hearing healthcare from multi-level perspectives**. The use of appreciative inquiry (an approach to systems change, emphasizing positive and collaborative idea generation⁴), will draw on professional strengths and growth opportunities to guide co-creation.

Methods

The Appreciative Inquiry process (Discover, Dream, Design, and Delivery) was used for all steps of the project (Fig. 1). Guided by a leadership team, Step 1 engaged the core member team around the purpose of “building the bridge for holistic hearing healthcare”. Steps 2 & 3 conducted a group inquiry of the shared meaning of holistic hearing healthcare within the Canadian context ($n = 13$), based on narratives of experiences, opportunities, and challenges. The resulting collection of narratives (using XLeap software) were qualitatively analyzed, with member checking. Inquiry questions were then refined for use with broader community members (future iteration of Steps 2 & 3).

Figure 1. Project defined steps of the Appreciative Inquiry process (red: complete, yellow: in progress, blue: upcoming).

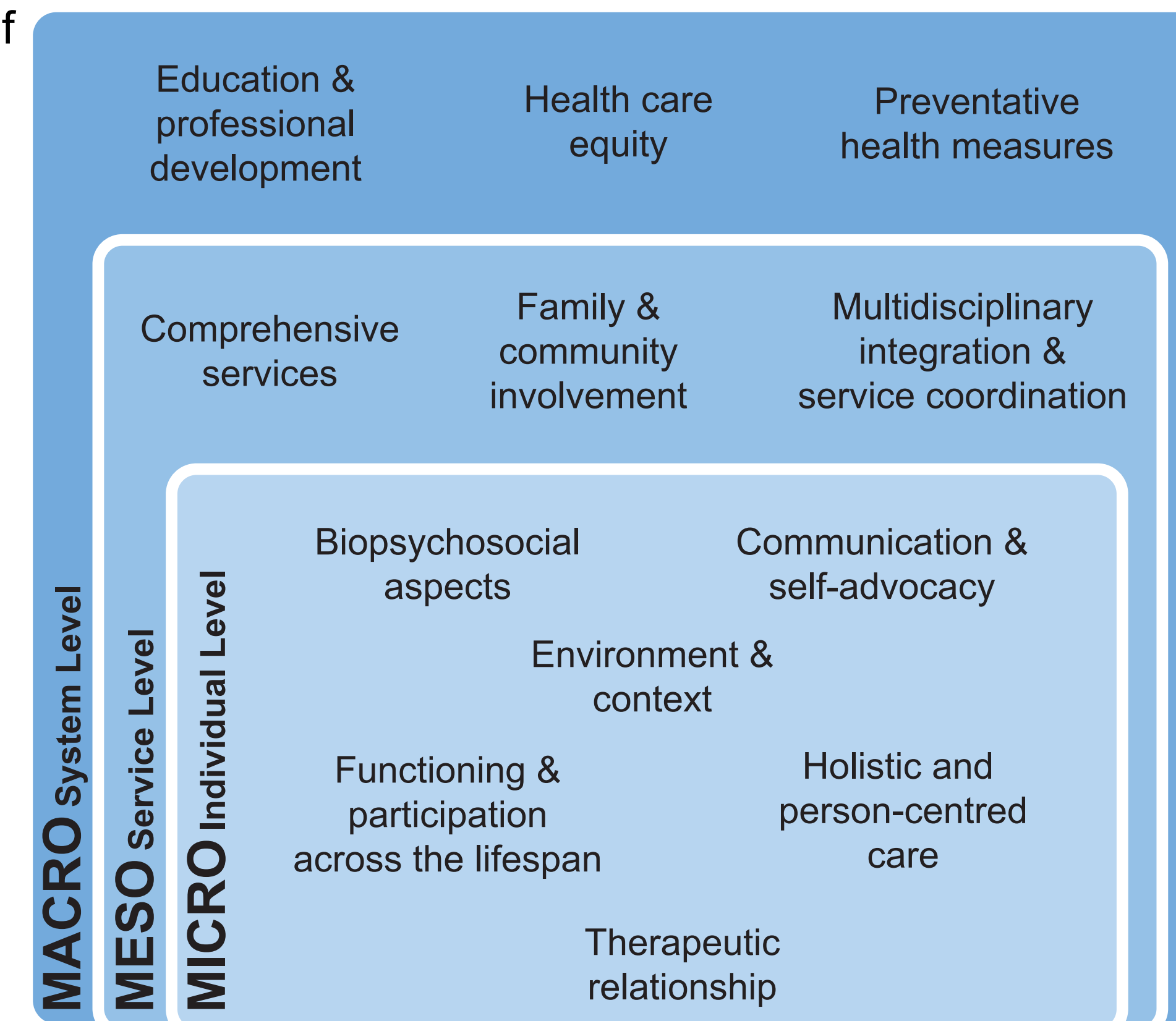


Results

Group brainstorming around the meaning of holistic hearing health care resulted in 12 themes (Fig. 2). Key factors perceived to influence multi-level integration:

- Sharing experiences (e.g., CoP, special interest groups, learning together)
- Reframing “failure”
- Access to funding/resources
- Graduate-level/continuing education (CE) opportunities (examples in footnote)
- Reflective practice & lifelong learning
- Integration of information sharing mechanisms (e.g., electronic medical records)
- Collaboration within audiology and interprofessionally

Figure 2. Multi-level, thematic representation of the meaning of holistic hearing healthcare.



Conclusion

Findings from this initial inquiry process suggest gaps in the provision of holistic hearing healthcare in Canada and limited lived experience. As we continue to collect and interpret narratives from our communities, we will refine our shared vision, including change mechanisms and implementation strategies. Through this shared vision we will continue to develop our CoP, consisting of champions in holistic and interprofessional hearing healthcare and the broader community. Through this work we aim to empower audiologists in Canada to appreciate their role in primary care.

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References

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