The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF) as lead applicant along with the University of Washington (UW), the Meridian (ID) Library District (MLD), and the Charles County (MD) Public Library (CCPL) proposes a three year, $249,743 IMLS National Leadership **implementation** initiative, *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health.* By expanding library staff's ability to **co-design** (a hands-on process which focuses on designing *with* teens instead of *for* teens) **spaces to reinforce positive teen mental health,** this initiative aligns with IMLS NLG goal 2, "Build the capacity of libraries and archives to lead and contribute to efforts that improve community well-being and strengthen civic engagement" and objective 2.1, "Develop or enhance replicable library programming, models, and tools that engage communities and individuals of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds...." As a project focused on teen mental health, which we define as the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of youth 12-18, library staff across the United States will engage in efforts that "improve community well-being." This will be achieved by creating a co-design framework for mental health and using this framework as the foundation of training with library staff so they are able to create programs that co-design mental health activities, focused on space, with adolescents. Together teens and library staff will discover techniques and create spaces that support positive mental health for the age group. Through the project website and materials posted there - including co-design tools and a co-design framework of essential mental health, teen space, and co-design principles - library staff around the country will have access to resources designed and iterated as a part of this work. These materials will be customizable to leverage assets and meet specific needs of local teens. This initiative will increase access to opportunities and resources for library staff to learn how, through co-design of virtual and physical spaces, to regularly engage with teens in building positive mental health.

Project Justification

Teen Mental Health

Today's teens will become tomorrow's designers, educators, and healthcare workers. Positive teen mental health is critical for a successful future. However, we are currently facing a teen mental health crisis in the U.S. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in adolescents. (CDC) "Ensuring that adolescents are fully supported in all facets of life, including their mental health and well-being, is critical for fostering this transition [childhood to adulthood] and laying the foundation for healthy and productive adulthoods." (UNICEF)   Unfortunately, the pandemic brought with it an increase in "rates of psychological distress among young people, including symptoms of anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders, have increased. Recent research covering 80,000 youth globally found that depressive and anxiety symptoms doubled during the pandemic" (U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, 2021) in part resulting from social distancing and stay-at-home orders. Similarly racial and ethnic minority youth faced extra challenges during the pandemic including hate crimes and harassment and loss of family members due to COVID-19.. (U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, 2021, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2021, Inseparable, 2022) The United States must acknowledge youth related mental health conditions because those youth suffering from poor mental well-being "...often struggle in school and at home—and are more likely to encounter challenges as adults." Despite how common mental health conditions are in youth, many do not get the services they need (Inseparable, 2022). Public libraries have a unique and timely opportunity to join the mission to support teen mental health.

Libraries Supporting Teen Mental Health

Recognizing that teen mental health suffered as a result of the pandemic, in the fall of 2020, SPL digital media and learning (DML) staff launched the IMLS-funded project, *Caring for Teen Mental Health.* With a focus on co-designing VR mental health experiences with and for teens, this project mitigated the social isolation resulting from the pandemic while increasing teen conversations and knowledge about mental health. Each partner library (SPL, the D.C Public Library, and the Fayette Public Library, Museum and Archives, in La Grange TX) facilitated a series of approximately 13 co-design sessions and two design sprints with teens. Design sprints bring teams together to solve problems through designing, prototyping, and testing ideas. They help teams define a shared vision, goals, and deliverables (Design Sprint Kit). These activities enabled teens to build mental health awareness, learn about VR, and then design a mental health-based VR experience. Results of the project, including tools for library staff to use to build their own VR focused co-design for mental health teen program, are available on the VRtality website. (Even the name VRtality was suggested by a teen in the project as a combination of VR and vitality). The *Caring for Teen Mental Health* project team discovered that in order to serve teens in support of positive mental health, several areas require attention:

1. **Increased awareness of library staff's role for supporting teen mental health**: There is a need for library staff to have an improved understanding of their role engaging in authentic mental health support for and with teens.

This authentic support must acknowledge the role that co-design processes centered on library spaces play in bolstering teen mental health. Beyond offering materials and hotline numbers to teens in crisis, libraries must help teens before crises occur by giving them opportunities to de-stress through co-design activities. As noted by a *Caring for Teen Mental Health* library partner, "I think that's what libraries can benefit from learning [through co-design] how do we include mental health conversations in a real consistent way within our programming."

2. **Open and honest conversation among library staff and teens**: As the library is an ideal environment for teens to build quality mental health, teens and library staff require opportunities to work cooperatively, build relationships, and talk honestly with each other about mental health challenges. While the vulnerability that is required in order to achieve this may be challenging to library staff, through co-design, these conversations happened organically in the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* project. As a result, teens and library staff felt more confident in understanding and talking about their own mental health and we saw stigmas around mental health decline.

3. **Recruitment strategies focused on BIPOC and marginalized youth**: Libraries must build equitable mental health services so as to reach youth throughout the entire community. The pandemic served to highlight the mental health needs of BIPOC teens (Center for American Progress, 2020). It is imperative that libraries ensure that their focus is not only on privileged teens, who tend to be traditional library users (Pew Research Center, 2016), and intentionally connect with communities of color so as to buttress the mental health of teens needing the most support. We learned from the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* initiative that with intentionality and relationship-building it is possible to connect to and support youth of color and non-dominant youth in a community. For example, project partner DCPL recruited teens who previously participated in a librarian's internship program. These teens then recruited some of their friends/relatives. Library staff also recruited from a public high school that specializes in technology. Once the program concluded, DCPL staff reported "the representation of young people we were looking for; they were young people of color."

4. **Public libraries are a community-centered organization ideal for engaging with teens to bolster their mental health**: In addition to access to digital and physical learning opportunities for teens, libraries can provide space to gather and connect with peers, and activities, as well as adult mentoring and coaching, all of which support this conclusion. As a *Caring for Teen Mental Health* team member noted, "We learned that having a space such as the library to escape stress, along with adults who can say, 'It's OK we know this is difficult, we will work through it together,' has great impact."

Figure 1
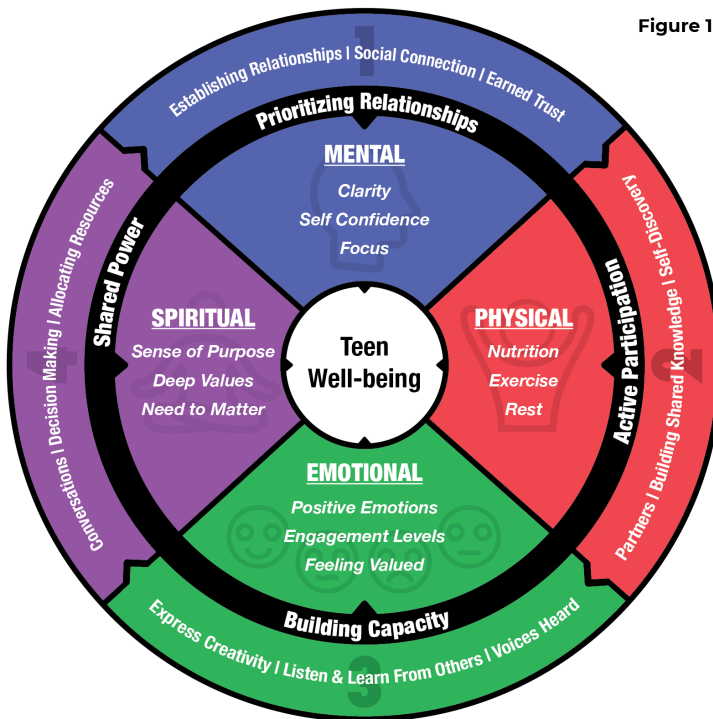
Through the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* initiative SPL and project partners (libraries mentioned above and University of Washington) recognized that the current work is only a starting point in mitigating the mental health consequences of the pandemic on adolescents. The new *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* initiative will engage library staff and teens in sustainable opportunities to re-imagine the library spaces designated for teens. Recent research suggests a strong connection between a well-designed built environment and the wellbeing of users. (Evans, 2003) In this initiative, spaces that teens and library staff co-design together will be virtual and/or physical spaces. Spaces re-imagined may include library teen spaces, spaces in the community in which teens spend time, or virtual spaces such as Minecraft or apps like TikTok. It was clear that teens recognized the impact of space on mental health in the previous Caring for Teen Mental Health IMLS-funded project. Three groups of

teens from Seattle, La Grange, TX, and Washington DC separately co-designed VR mental health experiences. Each group created an experience in which spaces in nature were a central focus. Teens saw these spaces as a place where they could vent frustration and disperse negative energy which, through the VR experience, was converted into positive and nurturing energy for growth. The *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* initiative will recognize that teens do acknowledge space as a part of their mental well-being by giving teens the chance to design environments that they see as helpful in achieving and maintaining positive mental health. Co-designing spaces with teens harnesses opportunities for positive mental health as the [co-design process encourages teen youth voices, power sharing and overall engagement](), leading to a decline in stress among teens. This is apparent in the reflections posted by teens in the previous SPL VR co-design process. As one participant wrote, "Just having fun can help your mental health which VR definitely did" and "I'm much more conscious of my mental health and creative ways to learn about it." The four facets of mental health, defined by SPL staff as a part of previous mental health initiatives, clearly connect to co-design practices, as seen in the Figure 1. Similarly each facet - mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual - cannot be achieved without compatible spaces to build and grow each and every aspect of positive mental health.
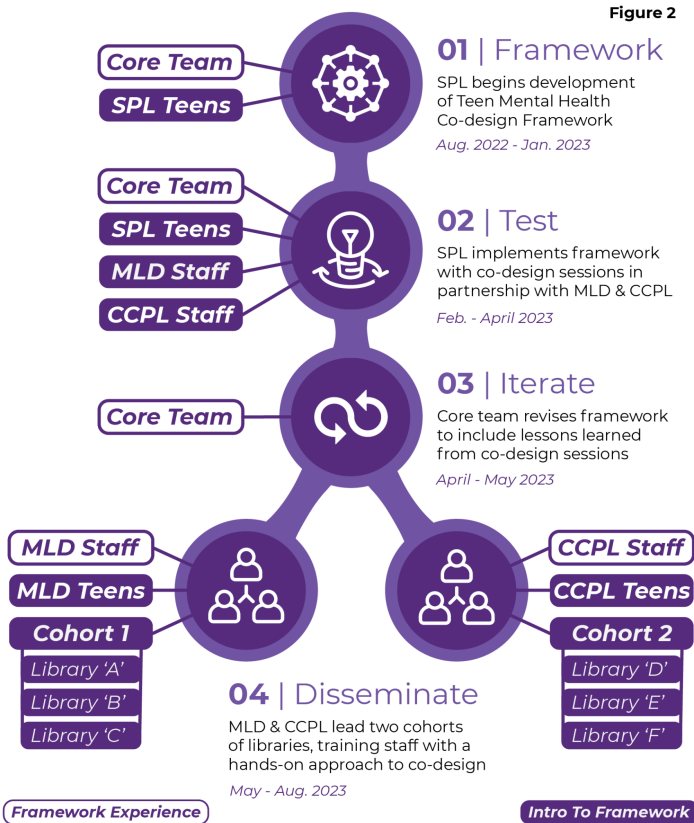
Related Prior Work: We see that the learning from the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* initiative extends and enhances the work of other youth-oriented projects that are mental health focused or IMLS-funded. One example is [*Tilted,*]() a partnership between The Seattle Public Library, the University of Washington, Connected Camps, and the North American Scholastic Esports Federation (NASEF). At the core of *Tilted* was a co-design process that gave teens the chance to critically think about gaming and mental health. Seattle Public Library staff are able to take their learning from work on *Tilted* to the co-design processes used in this initiative. Other projects that serve to inform and extend the work of this proposed initiative include the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC SILS), *Future of Youth Public Librarian Education Project.* The UNC SILS initiative centers on better understanding the skills, mindsets, and expertise that youth services staff require to design new curriculum that best prepares librarians for work in public libraries. The UNC SILS findings on these necessary mindsets and expertise will inform our work as we will explore those in the library staff co-design training. Similarly, two current connected learning focused IMLS-funded projects, *Transforming Teen Services for Equity Diversity and Inclusion,* an initiative at the University of California Connected Learning Lab, and the *ConnectedLib,* a project of the University of Washington and the University of Maryland, directly relate to this proposal. The key ideas of connected learning - youth agency, interests, relationships, and opportunity - are critical to the co-design process that will be used in our work. In that way, *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* extends the work of the other connected learning initiatives and ultimately can be included in websites and publications developed as a part of each of the related projects.

Work Plan

Creating Space for Teen Mental Health (see Figure 2) addresses areas of need by designing training and materials including a co-design framework for mental health that can be used throughout the United States and that will: 1) Build capacity of library staff to guide teens, through design of physical and virtual spaces, on how to manage their personal stress/stressors in support of positive well-being. 2) Reduce the stigma library staff and teens place on mental health and create opportunities for authentic conversations related to well-being. As a library staff member in the current project stated, "This project helped me realize that mental health is an everyday thing and we talk naturally about that with teens." 3) Expand ways in which library staff see the role they play in helping teens to engage in mental health activities. Activities that occur nationwide will take place via Zoom. Participating local libraries will determine, based on needs and assets of their communities, if activities occur via hybrid, virtual, or a

Figure 2

01 | Framework
SPL begins development of Teen Mental Health Co-design Framework
Aug. 2022 - Jan. 2023
- Core Team
- SPL Teens

02 | Test
SPL implements framework with co-design sessions in partnership with MLD & CCPL
Feb. - April 2023
- Core Team
- SPL Teens
- MLD Staff
- CCPL Staff

03 | Iterate
Core team revises framework to include lessons learned from co-design sessions
April - May 2023
- Core Team

04 | Disseminate
MLD & CCPL lead two cohorts of libraries, training staff with a hands-on approach to co-design
May - Aug. 2023
- MLD Staff
- MLD Teens
- Cohort 1
  - Library 'A'
  - Library 'B'
  - Library 'C'
- CCPL Staff
- CCPL Teens
- Cohort 2
  - Library 'D'
  - Library 'E'
  - Library 'F'

Framework Experience   Intro To Framework

face-to-face model. In the first year of the project, SPL, MLD, and CCPL libraries will each receive 10 Chromebooks for their work with teens. Co-design activities with Chromebooks will provide opportunities to build teen positive mental health through creative activities including drawing and game play. The core project team will explore how these Chromebooks are used to 1) Mitigate the digital divide in each of the communities. 2) Understand each of the advantages of analog and digital forms of space-based mental health co-design activities. The knowledge gained through the use of the Chromebooks in year one will help the project team recruit and inform libraries that apply to be a part of the year two cohort. For example, recruitment materials will specifically note the ways in which project activities can be accomplished through analog practices and how technology tools may be harnessed, but not necessarily required, for project activities.

Project Team:
- **Lead PI,** Juan Rubio, Digital Media and Learning Program Manager at SPL and PI of the IMLS-funded *Caring for Teen Mental Health* initiative, brings expertise in building library staff skills through co-design and digital processes.
- **Co-PI: Jin-Ha Lee,** Associate Professor, UW iSchool, is an expert in co-design in digital and analog spaces.
- **Co-PI: Elin Björling,** Senior Research Scientist, UW, Department of Human Computer Design and Engineering, brings her background in nursing science and psychology, along with expertise in co-design for mental health to this initiative.
- **Co-Design Expert: Luis Gonsalez,** Digital Media and Learning Program Coordinator at SPL, brings vast expertise in design and delivery of activities for and with library staff and teens.
- **External Evaluator, Caitlin K. Martin, is** a learning sciences research consultant and project evaluator.

These five team members make up the core project team.

This project team will also work with an adolescent mental health practitioner who will help in the co-design of the framework (see description below), provide support to participating library staff, and be involved in feedback processes for materials developed. MLD and CCPL staff bring experience in community partnerships and staff development as project partners. The partnership between SPL and both MLD and CCPL will expand communities served to include BIPOC and non-dominant youth.

Project Advisors: Advisors were selected for their knowledge and expertise in co-design, library teen services, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Members of the advisory board will play an instrumental role in designing the *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* co-design framework and providing feedback on the work of the project throughout the three years:
- Allison MacKenzie, Director, Fayette Library, Museum and Archives and a partner in the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* IMLS-funded initiative.
- Sandra Hughes-Hassell, Professor at the University of North Carolina Library and Information Science Graduate School and the PI of the IMLS-funded *Project Read*y initiative as well as a core team member on the IMLS-funded *Future of Youth Public Librarian Education Project*
- Laura Garcia Cardona, Director of Clinical Design at Found, a Clinical Psychologist with a strong passion for the development of platforms that can support an individual's mental health.

The following outlines the work designed and implemented during each year of this initiative. Throughout the description below, the phrase *partner libraries* is used to refer to SPL, MLD, and CCPL and the phrase *cohort libraries* is used to refer to libraries that join the project in year two.

Year 1: August 2022 - July 2023

The first year of the initiative is a building year with the project team, advisors, and partner library staff designing the co-design framework, testing and iterating training for library staff, testing implementation, and revising resources.

Designing the Co-Design Framework: The project begins with the design of a *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* co-design framework. This process will examine the essential elements necessary to support a teen library program centered on creating spaces for positive mental health. These elements may include: creating a library and community culture for positive teen mental health; ingredients of positive mental health (i.e. mindfulness, emotion regulation, stress

tolerance); and intersections of mental health and space design (i.e. colors, furniture, textures). This co-design framework will provide educational components to support library staff in conducting their own creating space design sessions with teens. To delve into this exploration, the project team will participate in two co-design sessions and a design sprint (facilitated by Rubio and Gonsalez) to develop the co-design framework. Prior to launching the co-design framework with year one partner libraries, the project advisors and Ryther | Where Kids Find Healing and Hope | Seattle, will review the material developed and provide feedback. Once revised following advisor feedback, the co-design framework will be presented to and used with library staff as a deck of cards (sample cards Figure 3) that will allow for mixing and matching of elements. This enables local library staff to create a co-design experience that works best for their particular community. The mix and match approach leverages one of the findings from the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* IMLS-funded initiative: As the project evaluator noted, "There is a need for flexible resources and materials that support the library and library staff and teens to have agency and make choices to fit their unique situation

Figure 3

and that scaffold options for expansion and complexity as they build confidence and see what is possible." The co-design framework will be completed by the end of the second quarter of year one and will be a foundational tool for planning and facilitating mental health focused co-design sessions with teens in subsequent phases of the initiative.

Recruiting and Selecting Partner Library Staff: In the second quarter of year one, the core project team will begin to recruit library staff at partner library sites who will take part in planning and facilitating co-design sessions with teens. Three library staff will be selected by library administrators from each library. The criteria administrators will use for selection include accounting for time/availability for full participation in the project (approximately two hours per week on average); support from the staff member's supervisor; relationships with and connections to teens from diverse backgrounds (including socio-economic diversity, racial diversity, ethnic diversity); and an interest and commitment to learning about teen mental health and co-design. Core project team members will have 1:1 conversations with interested library staff in order to best determine how well they meet the selection criteria. Partner library staff will be selected by the end of the second quarter of the year. The project team recognizes that capacity of library staff and libraries is sometimes challenging, which is why the recruitment and selection process will ask potential participants to consider how the initiative fits into their current work and how it can be leveraged to improve the work they are already doing with youth, families, neighborhoods, and communities.

Partner Library Staff Training: Using the previously developed co-design framework as a core training element, selected partner library staff will be trained by Rubio and Gonsalez during the second and third quarters of the year. Staff will learn how to plan and facilitate space-focused mental health co-design sessions. The virtual hands-on approach used will leverage learnings from the IMLS-funded *Supporting Intergenerational Participatory Design Groups for Librarians and Youth,* which fostered an understanding of best practices for co-design based library staff training. Prior to each of the first three co-design sessions, Rubio and Gonsalez will facilitate a planning session that demonstrates to partner library staff how planning for co-design occurs and how to integrate the co-design framework into the design of programs and services for teens. Partner library staff will then attend each of the first three co-design sessions offered to a group of

teens, observing how Rubio and Gonsalez put planning into practice. Participating partner library staff will then also attend debrief events to learn how Rubio and Gonsalez reflect and iterate on their processes and will also have the opportunity to ask questions about what they observed. After the first three sessions, partner library staff will take the lead on the next three sessions - planning, facilitating, and debriefing - with Rubio and Gonsalez providing ongoing support and feedback.   See table below for overview of year one training implementation strategy.

Session #(s)	Who Plans	Who Facilitates	Who Supports
Sessions 1-3	Rubio & Gonsalez with MLD & CCPL Staff Observing & Learning	Rubio & Gonsalez with MLD & CCPL Staff Observing & Learning	
Session 4	MLD & CCPL Staff	MLD & CCPL Staff	Rubio & Gonsalez
Session 5	CCPL Staff	CCPL Staff	Rubio & Gonsalez
Session 6	MLD Staff	MLD Staff	Rubio & Gonsalez

Partner Library Staff Practice: After working with Rubio and Gonsalez on the Seattle-based *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* co-design project, year one partner library staff will implement their own four to six week co-design series (which can be facilitated virtually or face-to-face). Rubio and Gonsalez will assist in determining the framing for the series which might include virtually working with teens to design a calming space in Minecraft or using cardboard in the library to create a prototype of a calming space that might be actualized at home, in the library, or at school. Partner library staff will go through all of the steps that Rubio and Gonsalez modeled, including deciding recruitment and retention strategies, embedding elements from the co-design framework into activities, determining what technological or physical tools to use (i.e. Minecraft or cardboard), testing tools, etc. They will have opportunities to reflect on their experience, as well as benefit from the ongoing coaching provided by Rubio and Gonsalez. Partner libraries will complete their own *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* experience by the end of year one.

Co-Design **Framework Iteration:** As the participating library staff engage in facilitation of co-design for teen mental health programming, they will regularly reflect on the ways in which the co-design framework developed for this project supports their work. Tools will be provided for this reflection, including a web-based reflection form, so that the core project team can gather ideas, iterate the co-design framework, and release those iterations to participating library staff for continued feedback.

Year 2 Cohort Recruitment and Selection: In the fourth quarter of year one, the core project team will develop recruitment and selection materials to bring six more libraries from across the United States to learn how to plan and facilitate space-based co-design for teen mental health activities through their libraries. Recruitment materials will be disseminated widely, including through the Young Adult Library Services Association communication channels, state library administrative agency listservs and youth services groups, LIS programs, and state and regional library associations. Criteria for selection will include those used for selection of partner library staff, with special attention paid to recruiting libraries and library staff that are engaged with youth of color in communities serving non-dominant populations. The application materials that library staff will be requested to submit will ask applicants to describe their communities and their experience in connecting with and reaching youth of color and non-dominant populations. Year two cohort library staff will be selected by the end of year one of the initiative.

<u>Year 2: August 2023 - July 2024</u>

In year two, the project will expand to more libraries across the United States, expand the knowledge and skills of the partner libraries - who will coach and mentor the new library staff - and provide more opportunities for iterating on materials developed.

Onboarding Cohort Library Staff: In the first quarter of year two, the six cohort libraries participating in the project will meet virtually with the core project team and the partner libraries to begin to build relationships, be introduced to the

Creating Space for Teen Mental Health co-design framework, and learn more about the process they will engage with over the next two years.

See table below for overview of year two training implementation strategy (to be implemented with one partner library working with two cohort libraries)

Session #(s)	Who Plans	Who Facilitates	Who Provides Overarching Support
Sessions 1-3	SPL, MLD & CCPL library staff each working with two newly added library participating staff	SPL, MLD & CCPL library staff each facilitating with teens in their area with newly added libraries observing	Rubio & Gonsalez
Session 4	Two newly added cohort library staff plan together with support from their year one library partner coaches either SPL, MLD, or CCPL] (See fig 2)	Newly added cohort library staff facilitate together with support from their year one library partner coaches either SPL, MLD, or CCPL (See fig 2)	Rubio & Gonsalez Partner library staff
Session 5	Library staff from one added cohort institution with support from their year one library partner coaches either SPL, MLD, or CCPL (See fig 2)	Library staff from one added institution with support from their year one library partner coaches either SPL, MLD, or CCPL (See fig 2)	Rubio & Gonsalez Partner library staff
Session 6	Library staff from other added institution with support from their year one library partner coaches either SPL, MLD, or CCPL (See fig 2)	Library staff from other added institution with support from their year one library partner coaches either SPL, MLD, or CCPL (See fig 2)	Rubio & Gonsalez Partner library staff

Partner Library Co-Design Facilitation and Cohort Library Training: Leveraging the model used in year one of the project, the partner library staff from SPL, MLD, and CCPL will each mentor and coach staff from two cohort libraries. The core project team will work with partner library staff and cohort staff to determine the best pairings and will consider similarities in communities, staff skills and interests, and time zones when setting up pairings. Mentoring and coaching between partner and cohort staff will include implementing and building skills in co-design and facilitation in support of positive teen mental health. SPL, MLD, and CCPL libraries will each schedule a second four- to six-part virtual co-design for teen mental health virtual series in their communities. Partner staff will each host and facilitate half of the planning sessions, co-design sessions, and debrief sessions which will be attended by the cohort libraries they are working with. Cohort staff will then take the lead and plan, facilitate, and debrief the last sessions with the partner staff providing coaching and mentoring along the way. This process will support partner library staff continuing to build confidence and competence in their skills and abilities.

Year Two Library Facilitation: Following their participation in the co-design process with partner library staff, year two cohort libraries will host and facilitate their own four- to six-week co-design for teen mental health series. The partner library staff that these libraries worked with will continue to act as coaches and mentors to the cohort staff and assist in the design and implementation of their projects on an as-needed basis.

Mastery Coaching: In year two, Rubio and Gonsalez will work with both partner and cohort staff to support confidence and competence. This coaching will occur through virtual 1:1 meetings and bi-monthly full group Zoom sessions at which library staff learn from each other, with Rubio and Gonsalez facilitating the discussions. The team will also create a Slack workspace for all participating libraries for the purposes of coaching and mentoring, asking questions, exchanging resources, and highlighting successes.

Co-design Framework Iteration: During year two of the project, all participating library staff will be asked to continue to use and reflect on the co-design framework developed and iterated during year one. The project team will use the reflections and feedback to design a final version of the co-design framework card that will be disseminated broadly in year three.

Year 3: August 2024 - July 2025

In year three all libraries will embed more deeply co-design for teen mental health practices in their communities. They will coach and mentor each other during the year and the project team and partner and cohort library staff will publish articles, facilitate conference sessions, and build a website so that library staff across the United States are able to gain knowledge and skill as a result of this initiative.

Ongoing Co-Design Planning and Facilitation: Each of the participating libraries from the previous two years of the project will continue to plan and facilitate co-design activities with teens in their communities. The core project team will continue to engage with the group through monthly virtual Zoom sessions and 1:1 coaching. The monthly Zoom sessions will focus on themes and topics surfaced through year two activities, ideas brought to the fore by participating library staff, and conversations during 1:1 coaching.

Session #(s)	Who Plans	Who Facilitates	Who Provides Overarching Support
Sessions 1-6	Each participating library - partner and year two - plan sessions for their own communities	Each participating library - partner and year two - facilitate sessions for their own communities	Rubio & Gonsalez Partner library staff Cohort library staff

Dissemination: A key component of project dissemination will be a website which will serve as a repository of materials designed and developed as a part of this initiative. At the center of this set of materials will be the co-design framework card deck which library staff will be able to download for use locally ([Sample card deck](#) used for inspiration for this work.). Along with the card deck, the website will house all co-design materials developed as a part of the project, as well as examples of activities designed and implemented by participating library staff throughout the life of the initiative. The project team will record videos for the website serving as models of how to use the co-design framework card deck in library settings. Videos of planning sessions with all participating library staff will also be recorded to enable others to look in on the planning process and better understand how co-design planning processes work. Similarly, CoP sessions will be recorded and portions of those will be also made available via the project website so other library staff can learn about co-designing for teen mental health best practices. Project partner ALA Public Programs Office (PPO) will collaborate on dissemination activities beginning in late 2024 and early 2025. PPO will develop and execute a comprehensive marketing plan to share the resulting website and card deck with the library field. The core project team will focus dissemination efforts beyond the library world with a specific focus on mental health organizations such as Mental Health First Aid, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the National Council on Mental Wellbeing. They will also work with the National Library of Medicine to expand already available training for teen library services staff. Through connections to mental health advocates and professionals, the project will expand its reach and build opportunities for libraries to support their communities in visionary and expansive ways. UW initiative partners will also conduct research throughout this initiative and publish articles that highlight their findings related to library implementation of co-design activities for and with teens with a mental health focus and manifested through design of virtual and physical spaces.

External evaluation: The proposed evaluation is both formative and summative, providing information that can guide project decision-making, suggest ways the project might be improved, and provide evidence to demonstrate success, including broader impacts emerging from this work. The evaluation takes a culturally-responsive approach (Hood,

Hopson, & Kirkhart, 2015), considering cultural and contextual dimensions to interpret success and privileging multiple perspectives. Central evaluation questions will focus on themes of outcomes, reach, and replicability.

- Outcomes-related questions: *In what ways and to what extent do library staff increase knowledge of and confidence about supporting teen mental health through codesign? Do library staff shift their perception of the role they play in supporting teen mental health and wellbeing?*
- Reach-related questions: *To what extent does the intervention reach and retain libraries, library staff, and teens? What barriers to use/participation do libraries encounter? How might these barriers be reduced or removed?*
- Replicability-related questions: *To what extent is the design of the materials and resources appropriate to meet needs of partner libraries and communities? In what ways is the intervention (or aspects of its design or activities) likely to be valuable in other settings?*

The evaluation will employ a mixed methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative measures (Greene, 2007). Qualitative data collection will focus on understanding the diverse perspectives and values of stakeholders and exploring adaptations and lessons learned. Methods will include observations of select meetings and workshops; artifact review (both from project leadership and partner libraries); individual interviews; and guided focus-group conversations. Quantitative data will focus on tracking progress in achieving goals and outcomes and examining the relative frequency of different attitudes, knowledge, and experiences among stakeholders. Strategies will include library staff surveys with a combination of multiple choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions; and web-analytics tracking access and downloads of project-related information and materials.

Time/Financial Resources: Funds requested include salaries for staff from partner libraries, researchers and evaluation fees, mental health expert consultants, stipends for cohort libraries in year two, website development and card deck design. It also includes equipment and printing costs.

Diversity Plan: Diversity is embedded into this initiative in several ways. First year partner libraries were selected because staff are committed to connecting to diverse populations. Seattle library staff will connect with racially diverse neighborhoods that are made up of Black, Asian, Hispanic, and East African populations of varied socio-economic status, educational attainment, or abilities. The Meridian Library District is a small city library with a population growth that makes it one of the [fastest growing cities in the country](). That growth brings challenges to libraries and communities as demographics grow and change. MLD will work with non-dominant youth who are from a variety of settings and backgrounds including low socio-economic status, youth of color, and varied abilities. The racially diverse rural setting of the Waldorf West Branch of the Charles County Public Library will bring in often less targeted rural teens who may have mental health needs and experiences not often explored in initiatives of this type.

Following the initial year we will expand the reach of this work across the United States, enabling the project team to expand to libraries in communities in which youth, in a variety of community settings, represent racial and ethnic diversity and are of varying socio-econonmic status, educational levels, and abilities. Our recruitment and application processes will ensure that we intentionally bring a diverse set of communities to this work. As we select participating libraries in year two, we will pay close attention to each applicant's statement of commitment to reaching equity and their plan for connecting with racially and ethnically diverse youth. The project team will then be able to iterate project materials to ensure they meet the needs of library staff and teens in a wide variety of settings.

The backgrounds and experience of our team of project advisors supports our diversity focus. As mentioned above, Sandra Hughes-Hassell's work is steeped in equity and includes the IMLS-funded *Project Ready* initiative that aims to build library staff skills in supporting equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in their communities. The intentional process by which that website was developed is seen in the diverse group of people Hughes-Hassell brought together for that work (as reviewers and content creators) and the continued growth in access and use of the site. In 2021 the *Project Ready* website averaged 12,000 hits per month. Laura Garcia Cardona has both depth and breadth of experience working with Latino communities to understand factors associated with positive mental health. Her

experience specifically working with Latino communities will aid the project team in centering their work on racially and ethnically diverse communities. Allison MacKenzie brings to this work experience working inside communities to serve specific needs of socio-economically and educationally diverse populations. Her experience will expand the ways in which the project team recognizes and thinks about diversity.

Project Results: Through this initiative, library staff will be poised to effectively and continually help teens build positive mental health. This will, in the long-term, improve communities across the United States. Library staff trained as a part of this project will build capacity to continue the work and engage with colleagues to train them in co-design for teen mental health practices. As the [mental health of teens is of concern across the United States,](#) the ability of library staff to help teens build positive mental health is of critical importance. Library staff that engage with this initiative's materials and activities will be able to take skills gained to build equity and community-based experiences beyond a mental health specific focus. For example, staff with skills in co-design will be able to embed those practices to build programs and services to advance equity in summer learning, for design and delivery of programs and services for unstably housed community members, or in support of services to leverage assets and meet the needs of immigrants and refugees. A library staff member in the *Caring for Teen Mental Health* project noted, "Co-design is also a process that library staff can take into their work in other ways… I'm using some of the pieces of co-design in my work with staff. Like collaborative brainstorming–taking snippets of ideas from the design sprint, so that everyone understands that our work is collaborative,..." Once library staff are skilled in facilitating co-design activities, the potential for embedding those practices in a variety of decision-making and implementation processes is a powerful way to advance library services for diverse communities across the United States.

Sustainability A project website that will continue to be maintained for a minimum of two years once IMLS funding is complete, will house all project materials providing easy access for library staff to learn how to bring space-based mental health co-design practices to their own institutions. The co-design framework, available in an engaging card deck format, will empower the nation's library staff to start mental health programs and services for and with teens in a way that best meets the needs of local communities and the expertise of library staff. By using the card deck format, library staff will be able to try out a wide array of different approaches for supporting teen mental health space needs via a co-design approach. Similarly, the card deck format will help library staff to approach this work with mindsets of flexibility (as different cards can present different types of results) and opportunity (as different cards will help to build teen spaces for mental health in ways that connect specifically to a local group of teens). As a result of the co-design training process, the core project team will provide library staff with ongoing skill development, planning, and implementation tools that they can harness as they embark on similar projects. Library staff nationwide will be able to customize and adapt all materials developed through this project - including the co-design framework and sample activities and lesson plans - so as to best meet the needs and assets of the local area for years to come.

Ultimately, through the activities library staff are able to implement as a part of the *Creating Space for Teen Mental Health* initiative, teens will be empowered to move forward with strategies for positive mental health throughout their lives, and with skills that will help them in the classroom, in their families, in their communities, and in future workplaces.

Year 1 August 2022-July 2023												
	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Project team and partner staff launch project	X											
Project staff and partner staff co-design framework	X	X	X									
Project advisors provide feedback on framework			X									
Framework revised based on advisor feedback			X									
Recruitment and selection of partner staff to participate in the project				X	X							
Co-design sessions held with Seattle teens and participating staff are trained					X	X	X	X				
Partner library staff facilitate their own creating space for teen mental health sessions										X	X	X
Design of recruitment materials										X		
Design of selection criteria										X	X	
Recrutment materials disseminated widely											X	
Selection of year two libraries/library staff												X
Iteration of the framework based on feedback and use											X	X
Evaluaton protocols developed	X	X	X									
Evaluation protocols implemented		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Year 2 August 2023-July 2024												
	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Year two launch/onboarding added library staff	■											
Coaching/training pairings established	■											
CCPL, SPL & MDL facilitate co-design sessions with new participating libraries		■	■	■								
Implementation in all participating libraries: years one and two					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mastery coaching		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Bi-monthly full group coaching & learning sessions		■		■		■		■		■		■
Framework iteration											■	■
Evaluaton protocols iterated	■	■										
Evaluation protocols implemented	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Year 3 August 2024-July 2025											
	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Ongoing implementation in all participating libraries: years one and two					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mastery coaching	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bi-monthly full group coaching & learning sessions		X		X		X		X		X		X
Final framework iteration						X	X					
Launch of website development process	X											
Website development		X	X	X	X							
Website testing					X	X						
Website launch						X	X					
ALA Public Programs Office launches and implements dissemination plan		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Project team submits proposals and articles and presents at events and conferences		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evaluaton protocols iterated	X	X										
Evaluation protocols implemented	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

APPENDIX 4: DIGITAL PRODUCT PLAN

TYPE

Teen Mental Health Co-Design Framework: A document and visual-based framework "cards" for creating and facilitating co-design sessions centering teen mental health. The framework will deliver an in-depth, scalable, and agnostic model for libraries of varying sizes and locations (urban/rural) to replicate.

Framework Cards: The framework cards, available in digital and print formats, will describe and provide best practices for libraries to incorporate co-design activities catered to the needs and interests of local communities while centering teen mental health. The complete framework card deck will include 52 individual cards including categories ranging from co-design activities to teen mental health resources and other themes we identify through the creation of the framework.

Framework Website: The framework website will serve to disseminate the Teen Mental Health Co-design Framework nationally and also as a repository for all the framework digital assets, resources, and examples for libraries to have readily available.

Additional Assets/Products: 10+ Miro Boards (a co-design online tool), 15+ Google Doc Sample Session Plans, & 15+ CoSpaces EDU Online Spaces (virtual world builder).

Digital File Formats: Digital file formats included in this project include PDF, MP4, PNG, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. We plan to meet or exceed current recommended standards for PPI resolution of images, and use MP4 video format to ensure compatibility across a variety of web and mobile devices. Our framework website code (HTML, CSS, and JavaScript) will all follow modern website best practices to ensure accessibility and usability.

AVAILABILITY

Open Online Availability: We intend our framework website and associated resources/digital assets to be freely available to anyone online for any non-commercial use. The single condition imposed on the use of our content will be a proper attribution associated with any reposting or re-purposing of any content contained within the framework website. Potential users of our content will be notified of relevant terms and conditions via a statement on the framework website.

Accessibility: The framework website and all associated resources/digital assets will be readily available to anyone with internet access, internet browser, and PDF reader. No special software or tools will be required to access any of the digital assets created. We will also conduct accessibility tests to ensure inclusivity, working to break down barriers that would prevent those with visual impairments and socio-economic restrictions on bandwidth and speed from having equal access to information and functionality on our site.

Discoverability: We will rely on the power and scale of Google Search to facilitate the widespread discovery of our digital content. We will place a large emphasis on Google SEO to ensure the digital content, resources, and assets created during the project will be made available and accessible to the widest audience possible.

Metadata: We will follow modern website metadata standards during and after the development of the framework website. These standards have been set forth by Google for their Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to allow for better discoverability of websites and information published on the Internet. We will include keywords that highlight the information provided on the framework website to allow for easy discoverability and widespread access to that information. Our project will not produce data models or digital assets that would require a specific metadata structure.

ACCESS

Creative Commons License: We fully intend to have our framework website be freely available and shared on SPL and project partner sites and web platforms via a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This license ensures the framework website may be viewed, reused by others (with proper attribution), transformed, and shared but not used in any commercial capacity. We will promptly display the Creative Commons license logo on the digital products developed through this project. In addition, we will post information on access and use via a statement on the framework website.

Privacy & Cultural Sensitivities: Our framework website may include photos and videos of adult participants. All participants will be required to sign a photo/video release giving permission to SPL and project partners to use their likeness in our framework and other digital materials. Participation in this documentation is completely voluntary. Participants are free and welcome to opt-out of having their likeness be included in any framework documentation and website. If a participant chooses to opt-out they will be explicitly informed they can still fully participate in the project with no negative repercussions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability: We plan to preserve and maintain the digital assets of this project during and after the award period in accordance with how SPL currently stores and manages other Digital Media & Learning program digital assets. The framework website will be hosted through a third-party vendor to ensure optimal performance and uptime of digital assets.

Digital Product Curation: We view the framework website, resources, and card deck as living digital assets. Video instructions will be provided for how to use the framework card deck, when a library or organization use the cards, we will provide a link to a short survey for feedback to help us revise and continue improving our framework cards. SPL is committed to the continued development and success of these programs and similarly commits to offsetting any costs of this process not funded through the award.

Organizational Profile – The Seattle Public Library

The Seattle Public Library's mission is to bring people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and build community. Our vision for Seattle is a city where imagination and opportunity thrive. Our strategic direction supports our mission and our vision.

Find out more about our strategic direction here:
https://www.spl.org/about-us/the-organization/strategic-direction

The mission statement and vision and strategic plan were adopted in 2011, approved by the Library Board of Trustees.

To read about our Library's response during the COVID-19 pandemic, read our 2020 Impact Report. Visit the Library's Road to Reopening page for more information on current Library services.

The Seattle Public Library is a department of the City of Seattle, and the Chief Librarian / Executive Director also holds a mayoral cabinet level role on the City of Seattle Mayor's Office leadership team.

A five-member board of trustees governs The Seattle Public Library. All trustees are appointed by Seattle's mayor and confirmed by the Seattle City Council. Board members serve five-year terms without pay. The board meets monthly to discuss issues and make decisions related to our services and operations.

You can find out more on this page.

We serve people who work, live and own property in the city of Seattle. Seattle has a population of about 740,000, according to the most recent census data.

You can find more information about our demographics here:
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/seattlecitywashington

We also serve the city of Bothell, and most of King County. Patrons of most neighboring systems can also use our library system according to reciprocal agreements. Find out more on our Library Card FAQ page:
https://www.spl.org/using-the-library/get-started/get-started-with-a-library-card

In some cases, we partner with other library systems to serve people beyond our service boundaries. For example, Your Next Job is a regional service we developed with neighboring libraries and partners, this service is available for anyone who lives in western Washington, and is specifically aimed at people with barriers to unemployment. We do not require a Library card to use Your Next Job.

You can find a link to our history here:

https://www.spl.org/about-us/the-organization/our-history/detailed-history