When Collective Impact has Impact: The Collective Impact Field-Wide Evaluation

A Tamarack Learning Centre & Vibrant Communities Webinar Series featuring:

Lauren Gase and Terri Akey, with Galen MacLusky

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Questions/Discussion: We will begin with questions from the audience that were sent in advance of today's event. Please use your Go To Control chat box to submit your additional questions.

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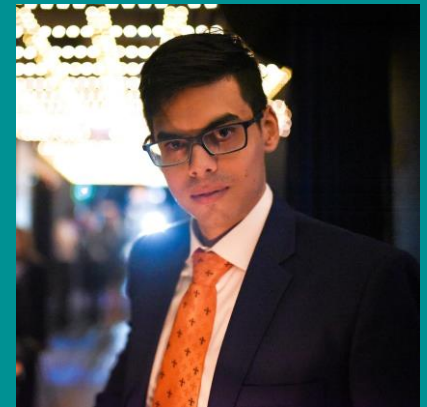**Lauren Gase and Terri Akey, with Galen MacLusky**

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TODAY'S WEBINAR SPEAKERS:

Lauren Gase
Senior Researcher
Spark Policy Institute

Terri Akey
Director
ORS Impact

Galen MacLusky
Director
Tamarack Institute

WHEN
COLLECTIVE IMPACT
A CROSS-SITE STUDY OF 25 COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES   HAS AN IMPACT

Terri Akey, ORS Impact
Lauren Gase, Spark Policy Institute

ORSIMPACT

SPARK POLICY INSTITUTE
igniting public policy and community change

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

▶ Five primary questions: when and how collective impact approaches lead to systems and population change.

▶ Secondary questions: how collective impact was being deployed (conditions and principles) and the contexts, challenges, and barriers experienced by collective impact initiatives.

# STUDY SAMPLE

STUDY SITES ⬤

Colorado (2)

Connecticut (2)

Kentucky (1)

Michigan (1)

Nebraska (1)

New Brunswick, Canada (1)

New Mexico (1)

Ohio (1)

Ontario, Canada (1)

Pennsylvania (1)

Saskatchewan, Canada (1)

Vermont (1)

SITE VISIT SITES ◆

California (2)

Colorado (1)

Connecticut (1)

Massachusetts (1)

Tennessee (1)

Virginia (1)

Wisconsin (1)

EQUITY DEEP-DIVE SITES ★

Alaska (1)

California (1)

Texas (1)

2 SITES

2 SITES

LEGEND

⬤ Study sites

◇ Site visit sites

★ Equity deep-dive sites
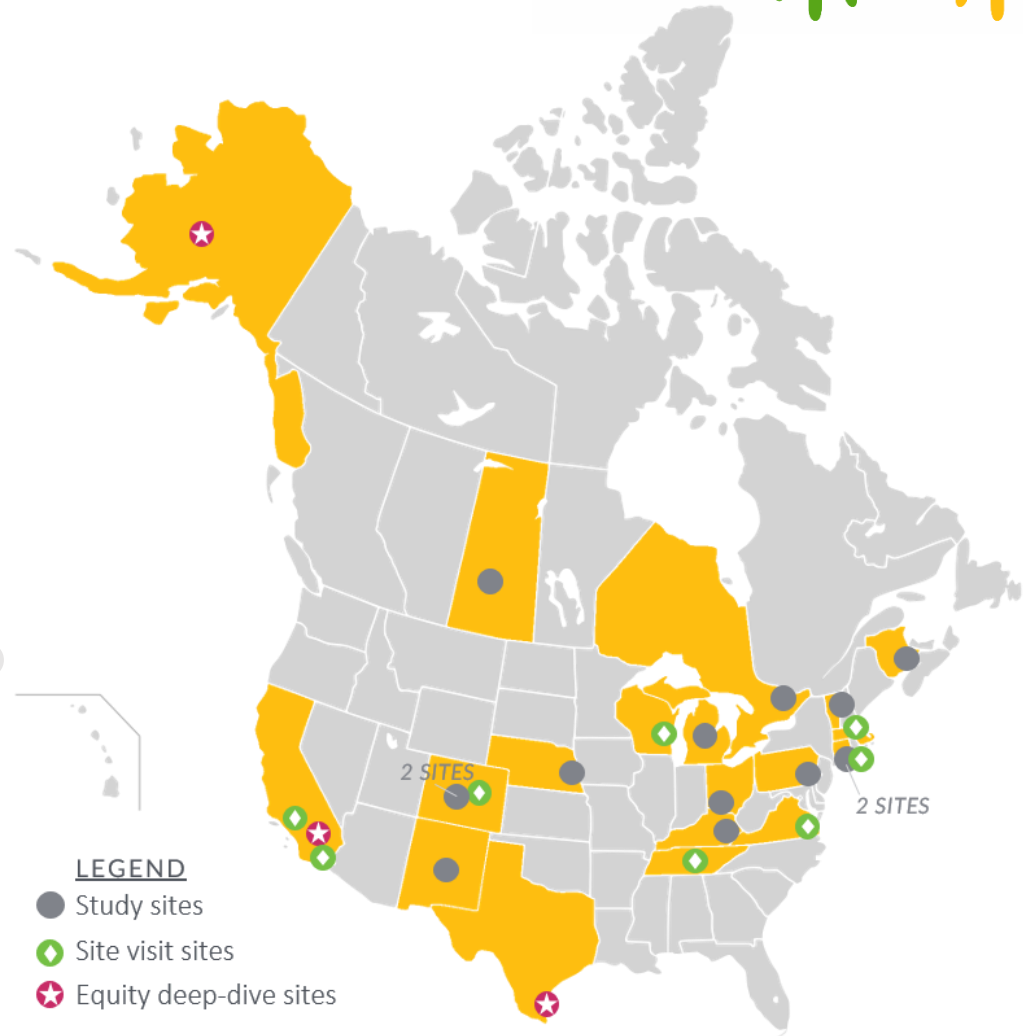
DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- Two in-depth interviews and document review *(25 sites)*
- Site visits that included three different stakeholder dialogues *(8 sites)*
- Focus group around equity practices and outcomes *(3 sites)*

ANALYTICAL METHODS

- Rubrics to assess collective impact implementation, equity actions and outcomes, systems changes, and population changes
- Process tracing to understand the extent to which collective impact contributed to change
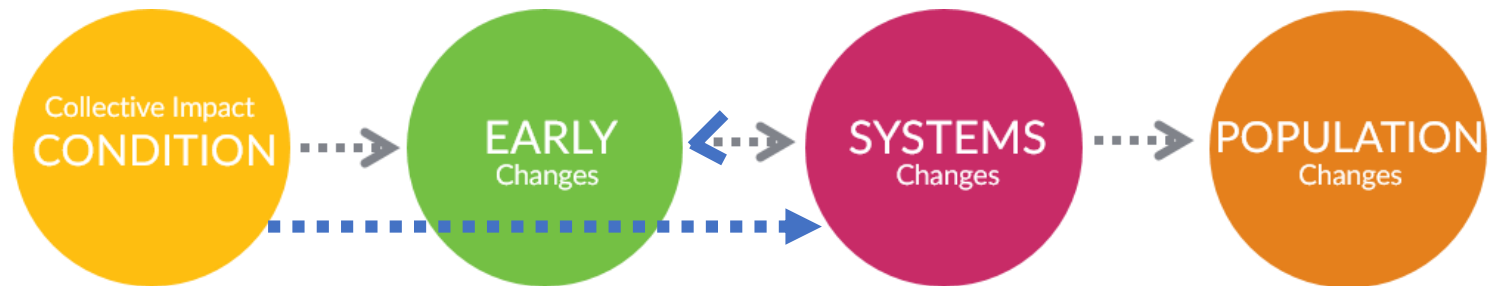- Thematic analysis

OVERSIGHT

- Advisory Committee informing sample, study design, presentation of findings
- Steering Committee informing detailed design decisions along the way

EXPLORING THE **STUDY FINDINGS**

Collective Impact
CONDITION

EARLY Changes

SYSTEMS Changes

POPULATION Changes

➤ For all eight site visit sites, collective impact undoubtedly contributed to the desired population change

- Three sites: low plausibility of an alternative explanation

- Five sites: collective impact was necessary, but not sufficient

➤ Sites are achieving a range of early changes that are logically linked to collective impact conditions and set the stage for further out systems changes and population changes

➤ Critical components of early work:

- Building and enhancing collaboration (e.g., collaborative structures; products that reflect shared priorities)

- Strengthening the quality of partnerships (e.g., trust, deepening relationships)

- Increasing visibility or changing the way the issue/collaborative was framed or viewed

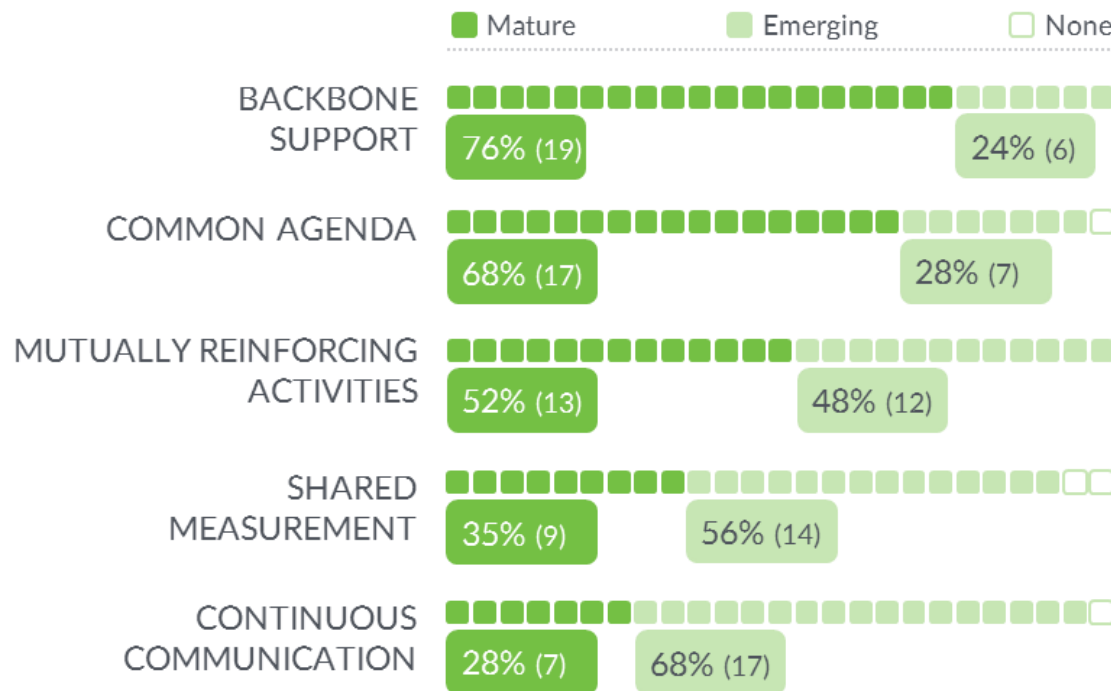- Building political will (e.g., influential champions, key leaders)

- Systemic change is an avenue through which to influence population change

  - Systemic change was the direct result of CI conditions and/or influenced by early changes

- Types of systems changes prioritized by site visit sites:

  - New or enhanced services: adoption/scaling of programs, program redesign

  - Improved practices: changing criteria or way work is done, common framework, system integration, coordination or alignment

- Different ways to think about systems change

  - Formal vs. informal

  - One organization, similar organizations, vs. diverse organizations

Study sites generally evidenced stronger implementation of the Backbone Support and Common Agenda conditions and emerging or no implementation of the Shared Measurement and Continuous Communication conditions.

	Mature	Emerging	None
BACKBONE SUPPORT	76% (19)		24% (6)
COMMON AGENDA	68% (17)	28% (7)	
MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES	52% (13)	48% (12)	
SHARED MEASUREMENT	35% (9)	56% (14)	
CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION	28% (7)	68% (17)	

What makes a strong backbone?

- One or more orgs with committed staff designated to perform backbone functions
- Well-functioning leadership structure established, responsible for governance & decision-making
- Backbone infrastructure coordinates & supports core initiative activities
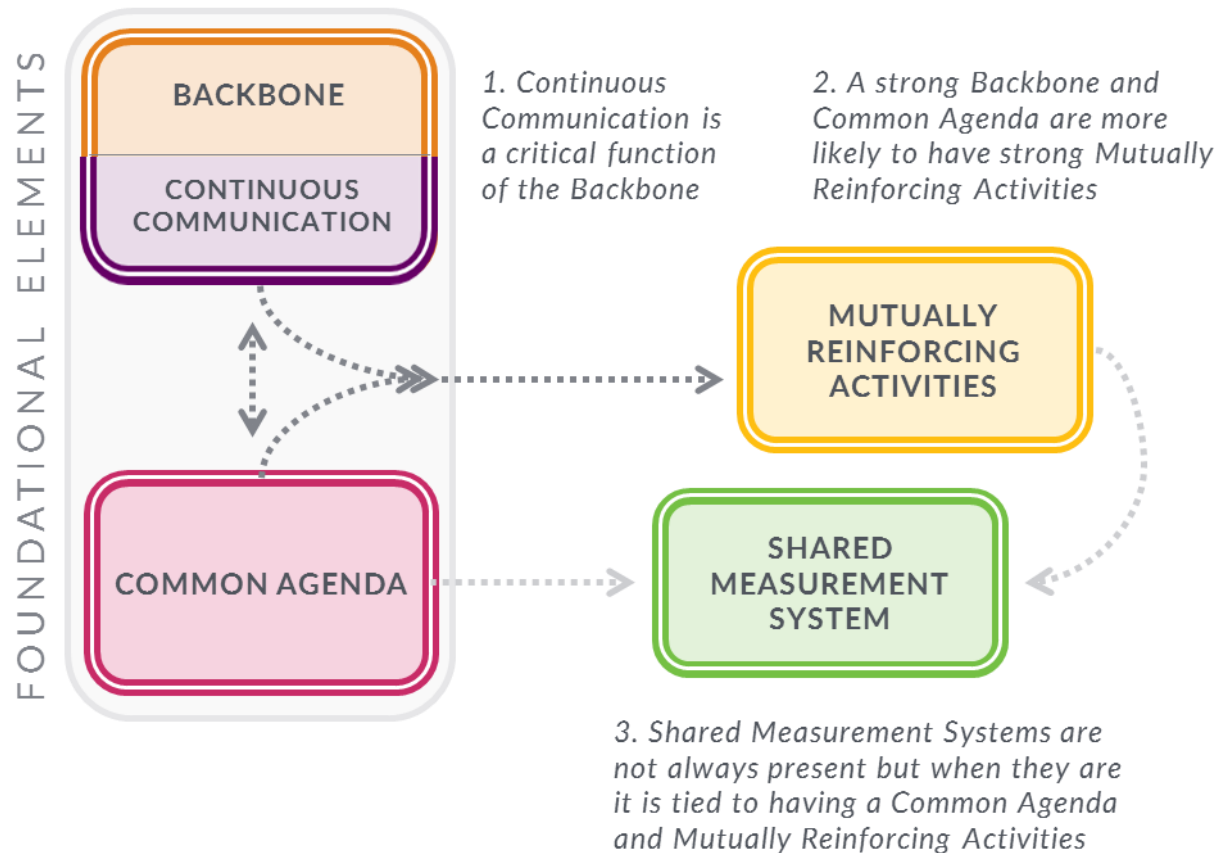- Backbone staff have appropriate skills & credibility to perform backbone functions

What makes a strong common agenda?

- Identifiable overarching goals & vision for initiative within clearly defined, bounded/actionable problem space
- Partners have common understanding of problem
- Partners have clearly articulated approach/set of high-level strategies to solve problem
- Partners have high level of buy-in to shared vision for change, agreed-upon goals & approaches

- **Backbone** and **common agenda**: drivers of systems and population change

- **Shared measurement**

  - Sites were challenged by data availability, types of indicators examined, and culture of data use

  - When present, important resource for facilitating and measuring change

- **Communication** challenges center around finding effective opportunities for internal and external engagement and feedback

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

BACKBONE

CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

COMMON AGENDA

MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

1. Continuous Communication is a critical function of the Backbone

2. A strong Backbone and Common Agenda are more likely to have strong Mutually Reinforcing Activities

3. Shared Measurement Systems are not always present but when they are it is tied to having a Common Agenda and Mutually Reinforcing Activities

Definition of Equity in this Study

*Equity is fairness achieved through **systematically** assessing **disparities in opportunities and outcomes** caused by structures and systems and by addressing these disparities through **meaningful inclusion** and representation of affected communities and individuals, targeted actions, and **changes in institutional structures and systems** to remove barriers and increase pathways to success.*
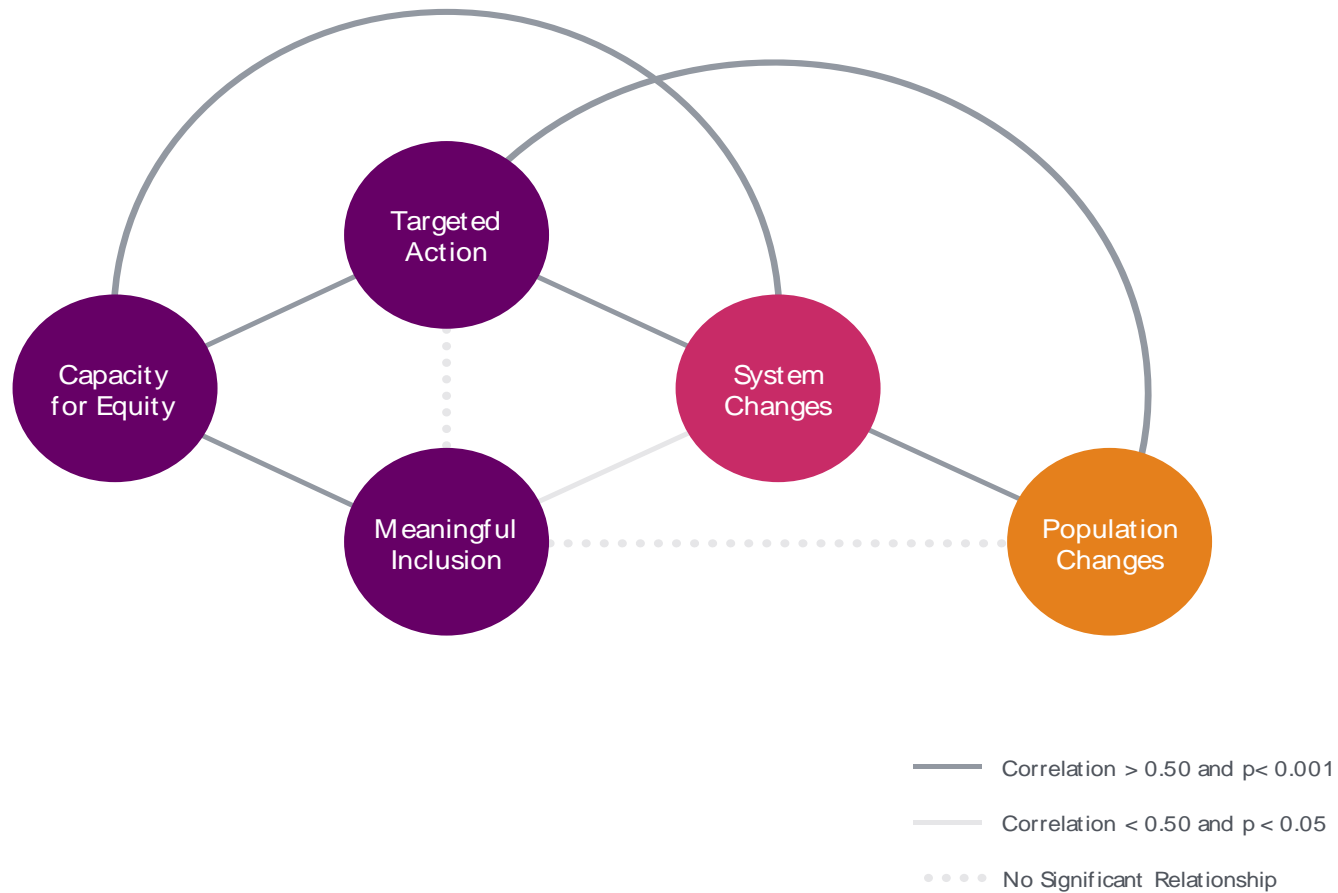
When looking at how initiatives approach equity in their work, about a third had equity capacity/intent and focused actions, but many struggled with meaningful inclusion.

Capacity to engage in equity action	• 1/3 of sites (8) have strong equity capacity • 1/3 of sites have emerging equity capacity
Equity-focused actions	• Often seen in a mix of data and communications strategies • Few sites focused on root causes of inequities
Representation and meaningful inclusion	• Two sites with strong grassroots organizing approaches • Most sites struggled with this

Targeted Action

Capacity for Equity

System Changes

Meaningful Inclusion

Population Changes

——— Correlation > 0.50 and p< 0.001

——— Correlation < 0.50 and p < 0.05

· · · · · No Significant Relationship

EQUITY IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Initiatives with strong and emerging equity focus showed promise in their equity outcomes; those with no focus typically did not see results that advanced equity, with a few exceptions.

7 Sites: Stronger equity intent/action leading to systems changes and then to population change

EQUITY OUTCOMES

CAPACITY	ACTION	REPRESENTATION	SYSTEMS CHANGES	POPULATION CHANGES

10 sites: Emerging equity intent/action that has yet to lead to deep equity impact change

Commitment
- Strong evidence
- No evidence

Equity Impact
- Clear evidence
- Some evidence
- No evidence

4 sites: Equity outcomes **in absence of equity approach and intent**

EQUITY OUTCOMES

CAPACITY	ACTION	REPRESENTATION	SYSTEMS CHANGES	POPULATION CHANGES

4 sites: No equity focus or impact

IMPLICATIONS

IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTORS

Laying a Foundation	• Define the target population • Be patient—lay a strong foundation via the backbone and common agenda
Long-Term Focus	• Assess your capacity and take time to build it
Iterative Nature	• Prioritize your actions—there is no "right" answer, but rather many different changes that are worth trying
Advancing Equity	• Help to define the problem to include equity • Focus on action WHILE building capacity and representation
Consider the Role	• Be context aware and intentional about the role or position the initiative may take in the broader environment—remember, it may be more effective to support than to lead

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

Laying a Foundation	• Assess the potential for success—is the initiative being participatory in foundational steps—selecting the backbone and common agenda • Improve the process—be a strong voice for slowing down the process to do it right
Long-Term Focus	• Be patient, but also maintain the sense of urgency—lasting solutions won't come quickly, but losing the urgency can also stall the work—help with this balance
Iterative Nature	• Be a data user, not just a recipient of the information—encourage all stakeholders to have a role in learning from and taking action in response to data and experiential learning
Advancing Equity	• Support action to advance equity WHILE building the initiative's capacity and representation
Consider the Role	• Create awareness of existing work that the initiative can compliment and support—help the initiative avoid competing with or consuming other efforts

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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UPCOMING WEBINAR

When Collective Impact Has Impact

The webinar series exploring the ORS and Spark report, "When Collective Impact has Impact", continues with two follow-up sessions exploring the Canadian collective impact case studies, and lessons learned by Vibrant Communities.

Session 2: Canadian Collective Impact Case Studies | May 8th, 1:00 – 2:00 ET

Session 3: Lessons Learned from Vibrant Communities | June 7th, 1:00 – 2:00 ET

Register: http://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/when-collective-impact-has-an-impact

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June 12-13, 2018
Vancouver, BC

Join Tamarack in Vancouver, BC and meet allies, access new tools, and discover emerging and innovative practices with leaders from across the nation. Together, we will celebrate our successes and will co-generate impactful solutions to eliminating poverty nationwide.

Registration and Event Info:
http://events.tamarackcommunity.ca/crp-west

Thank you!

Please send questions, comments, and feedback about this webinar to:

Natasha@tamarackcommunity.ca

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