

ISANS' people-focused culture fostered smooth operations during the pandemic.

Background

An evaluation of ISANS' operations during COVID-19 was conducted between November 2020 and March 2021. It involved the consultation of a Project Steering Committee and data was collected through document analysis, the ISANS database, surveys, focus groups, email correspondence, and a targeted interview with the organization's CEO.

Staff had Flexible Hours

ISANS continued to receive support from key federal and provincial funders during the pandemic, which enabled ISANS to support staff by offering flexible working hours. This option was a major support for staff who were balancing work with new responsibilities at home, such as daytime childcare.

Accessibility of Services Increased

ISANS decided to transition most of its services to online platforms during the pandemic. This allowed clients to continue using ISANS' services and allowed clients with childcare or transportation issues to access services from their homes.

Feedback Informed Protocols

ISANS sent a survey to staff to assess their comfort level on returning to the office, and survey feedback informed ISANS' protocols for in-person services. Additionally, staff who were concerned about returning to the office could participate in a workshop to discuss their concerns and potential solutions.

Connect Supported Staff

Connect, ISANS' intranet system, contained work-related resources to support staff during the pandemic. Additionally, digital events on Connect, such as lunch gatherings and cooking competitions, helped staff to stay connected and added a degree of normalcy to individuals' daily routines.

Called Vulnerable Clients

ISANS identified over 800 vulnerable clients at the beginning of the pandemic and proactively called them in their first language to check-in, to update them on the COVID-19 situation, and to ensure that their needs were being met.