



Knowledge Translation Planning Tools for Addiction and Mental Health Researchers

Alberta Health Services
Addiction & Mental Health
Knowledge and Strategy
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Introduction

Knowledge translation (KT) has been defined in various ways. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) define KT as “*a dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically-sound application of knowledge to improve the health of Canadians, provide more effective health services and products and strengthen the health care system*”¹. This involves a variety of stakeholders, ranging from researchers to policy makers to the general public. Ideally, a change in practice will result from the transfer of research knowledge. Since there are many aspects of KT to consider, these planning tools will assist you in considering all aspects of KT as they relate to your research.

When considering KT as it relates to your addiction and/or mental health research, there are a few questions that are important to consider:

What are the most important aspects to consider when developing a KT strategy?

What information will your research garner and who might use it?

What is the most effective way to get this knowledge to clinicians and/or policy makers?

What do the users of this knowledge need to know about your research in order to utilize it?

The following tools will help you to answer these questions and set you on the path toward an effective KT plan.

¹ Canadian Institutes of Health Research website: <http://www.cihr.ca/e/29418.html>

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Section 1 – Knowledge Generation

1.1 Including KT in the Early Stages of Your Research

This section will help you identify information you could gather from different stakeholders (potential users) potentially interested in your research outputs. This information should be considered at the beginning of the research project (*i.e.*, before or during the preparation of your grant proposal).

IN DEVELOPING YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER :	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA*	BY WHOM	WHEN
Using ideas and information obtained through collaboration with other researchers				
Using ideas and information from generalists and specialists in your topic area (e.g. clinicians, psychiatrists, addiction counsellors)				
Using ideas and information from affected individuals and their families, patient organizations, addiction or mental health based organizations and community groups				
Using ideas and information from policy-makers involved in decision-making related to your research area				
Using ideas and information from business magazines, patent databases, industry newsletters, industry associations and technology transfer organizations				

*NA = not applicable

1.2 Assessing the Outputs from your Research

This section will help you identify the outputs from your research project.

CONSIDER PROJECT OUTPUTS:	NOTES
<p>List potential outputs generated by your research project (e.g., concepts, theoretical frameworks, methods, findings, technologies, syntheses):</p>	
<p>Describe the groups with which you will want to share your outputs, how to engage them in your research project and in what capacity:</p>	

CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT YOUR PROJECT WILL ADD TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE BY:	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Validating or contradicting previous knowledge in addiction or mental health				
Shedding light on fundamental understandings about addiction or mental health issues				

1.3 Evaluating Project fit with your funding Agency's Research Objectives

This section highlights areas that might be important to your funding agency.

WHEN CONDUCTING YOUR RESEARCH, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF:	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Developing new products, processes and services resulting in socio-economic or clinical benefits				
Developing strategic alliance with government or community agencies				
Forming collaborations with other researchers in Alberta to enhance the quality and use of the research outputs				
Improving or developing practices that result in improvements in your research area				
Contributing to management and policy decisions in your research area				

NOTES:

Section 2 – Knowledge Transfer

2.1 Sharing Research Outputs

This section highlights activities that could maximize potential use of your research results (outputs).

TO EFFECTIVELY DISSEMINATE YOUR RESEARCH OUTPUTS YOU SHOULD	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Share results with your funding agency				
Share outputs with other researchers				
Share outputs with students				
Share research results with individuals and their families and with patient and research funding organizations				
Share outputs with all project stakeholders and the general public				
Share outputs with health care decision-makers and government policy-makers				
Share outputs with stakeholders and organizations outside the scholarly community				
Facilitate the exchange of expertise between members of your team and organizations outside the scholarly community (e.g., staff exchange)				

Some potential formats to disseminate your research results include:

- Journal articles, Case studies, Newsletters or Bulletins
- Care pathways
- Presentations and Seminars
- Websites and Listserves
- Patient and/or professional educational tools; Storyboards
- Mainstream media or social networking tools

2.2 Assessing Research Users' Skills

This section will help you to assess if the potential users of your research are able to understand your research outputs so you can translate your outputs into a format that they will understand (e.g., Are they familiar with statistics? Do they understand the terminology you use?)

IN ORDER TO ASSESS RESEARCH USERS' SKILLS YOU SHOULD:	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Identify the users' capacity to interpret technical aspects of research reports (e.g., statistics)				
Determine whether potential users will have the skills, attitudes and awareness needed to benefit from research outputs				
Determine the potential users' regular vocabulary and take it into consideration when presenting your research outputs (e.g., are you using acronyms they would not understand?)				

NOTES:

2.3 Keeping in Touch with Users

This section will help you develop a strategy for effective communication between your research team and the potential users of your research outputs throughout the project.

TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH USERS YOU SHOULD:	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Develop a plan to build and maintain direct relationships with intended users throughout the project (this may include: conferences, meetings, informal contacts, electronic mail, regular mail, phone and other means)				
Have periodic briefings and produce progress reports during the course of the study to generate interest in the research outputs				
Have person-to-person contact with potential users to ensure that the research outputs are clearly related to users' needs				
Develop clear-language tools for users based on their needs				
Identify leaders inside user organizations who can initiate change at every level of the organization and if possible, actively involve these people in the project				

2.4 Connecting Research Outputs with Potential Users of the Research

This section will help you tailor your research outputs to users' abilities

IN ADAPTING RESEARCH RESULTS FOR DISSEMINATION YOU SHOULD:	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Customize research results to targeted user groups (e.g., journalist, general public, other researchers, clinicians, decision-makers)				
Summarize research outputs in lay language (e.g., an executive summary, relatively brief text and appendices documenting detailed methods, data and analysis)				
Emphasize key messages and recommendations so that users know how to take concrete action				
Include “real world” examples: use storytelling or conduct demonstrations on how to use the research outcomes (bring your findings to life!)				
Develop reports and products appealing to specific target audiences (e.g., use illustrations, colour, humour, and packaging as appropriate)				
Ask for feedback from potential users before providing the final reports to the funder				
Provide technical assistance to make it easier to understand the implications of using the research outputs (e.g., information help-lines)				

Section 3 – Knowledge Uptake

3.1 Assessing Current Practices in the Field you are Researching

This section focuses on the uptake of research and how it can contribute to improving current practices in the field you are researching.

TO VALIDATE WHETHER OR NOT YOUR RESEARCH OUTPUTS CAN IMPROVE YOUR RESEARCH AREA YOU SHOULD	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Assess the feasibility of implementing improved practices				
Assess the benefits of the proposed practices in comparison with current practices				
Make plans to facilitate the uptake of research outputs				
Suggest specifically how proposed changes in practice will result in better outcomes in your research area				

3.2 Assessing Management and Policy-Decision Improvements

This section highlights how your research outputs can contribute to management and policy decisions

IN ORDER TO SEE THE POTENTIAL APPLICABILITY OF YOUR RESEARCH OUTPUTS TO MANAGEMENT AND POLICY DECISIONS YOU SHOULD:	DONE	TO BE DONE OR NA	BY WHOM	WHEN
Assess if your research outputs shed light on issues related to management and policy decisions				
Compare the current situation to a situation where your research outputs were implemented in the past				
Consider whether or not your research outputs validate and support previous management and policy decisions				
If appropriate, work with key decision/policy-makers in organizations, government and community groups				

GUIDE TO END-OF-GRANT KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

END-OF-GRANT KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION PLAN WORKSHEET		
FACTORS	KEY QUESTIONS	OPTIONS
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the broader KT goals of raising awareness and promoting action divided into specific, clear, concrete and well-justified outcome and impact statements relevant to your research findings? • Are your KT goals appropriate to the research findings and target audience(s)? 	<p>KT goals could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> increase knowledge/awareness <input type="checkbox"/> inform future research <input type="checkbox"/> inform/change attitudes <input type="checkbox"/> inform/change behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> inform/change policy <input type="checkbox"/> inform/change practice <input type="checkbox"/> inform/change technology <input type="checkbox"/> other:
AUDIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the plan consider all potentially relevant audiences? • Are the audiences precisely defined in terms of their sector, roles, responsibilities and decision-making needs/opportunities? • Does the plan demonstrate a thorough understanding of the proposed target audience(s), including the current state of their knowledge in the research area and their needs and preferences for using knowledge? 	<p>Target audiences could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> clients <input type="checkbox"/> community-based and not-for-profit organizations <input type="checkbox"/> general public <input type="checkbox"/> healthcare professionals/service providers <input type="checkbox"/> health system administrators/managers <input type="checkbox"/> media (print, TV, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> patients/consumers <input type="checkbox"/> policy-makers/legislators <input type="checkbox"/> private sector <input type="checkbox"/> research funders <input type="checkbox"/> researchers <input type="checkbox"/> others:
STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the strategies appropriate to achieve knowledge diffusion with little customization of the research evidence; dissemination of tailored messaging to specific audiences; and/or application and use of evidence? • Does the plan take into consideration the context in which the knowledge is to be used? • If appropriate, is there a plan to adapt the knowledge for each specific audience? • Have mitigating factors been 	<p>Strategies could include:</p> <p>Diffusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> conference presentations <input type="checkbox"/> non-peer reviewed publications <input type="checkbox"/> peer reviewed publications <input type="checkbox"/> technological provision/upgrade <input type="checkbox"/> web-based activities (open access journal/repository postings, wikis, blogs, podcasts, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> other: <p>Dissemination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> arts-based KT activity (e.g. digital storytelling) <input type="checkbox"/> communities of practice

END-OF-GRANT KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION PLAN WORKSHEET

FACTORS	KEY QUESTIONS	OPTIONS
	<p>considered that might affect the applicability of the research findings or the effectiveness of the planned KT activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the plan consider barriers and facilitators to knowledge use? • Are key messages clearly identified? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> dissemination events/courses (e.g., conference, symposium, CME) <input type="checkbox"/> engage champion(s)/opinion leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> interactive small group meetings/workshops <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge broker involvement <input type="checkbox"/> media release/outreach campaign <input type="checkbox"/> networks/networking <input type="checkbox"/> reminders <input type="checkbox"/> social marketing <input type="checkbox"/> summary briefings to stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> other:
EXPERTISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all necessary participants involved to achieve the stated goals? • Is there sufficient description of participants, KT expertise, and/or past activities to assess the team's ability to execute the proposed strategies? 	<p>Expertise required could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> communications, media and marketing <input type="checkbox"/> information and communications technology <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge brokering <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge translation <input type="checkbox"/> management <input type="checkbox"/> other:
RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the budget allocate adequate financial support to implement the plan? 	<p>Necessary resources could include:</p> <p>Personnel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> design/layout <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge broker <input type="checkbox"/> KT specialist <input type="checkbox"/> public relations/marketing <input type="checkbox"/> writer/editor/copy editor <p>Consumables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> mailing and postage <input type="checkbox"/> media development and release <input type="checkbox"/> open access publication fees <input type="checkbox"/> production/printing <input type="checkbox"/> teleconferences/travel/consultation <input type="checkbox"/> videoconferencing costs <input type="checkbox"/> web-related costs (blogs, podcasts, wikis, website development/maintenance) <input type="checkbox"/> workshops/meetings/networking costs <input type="checkbox"/> other: