

Provincial Addiction & Mental Health

Creative Knowledge Translation: Ideas and Resources for AMH Research

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Introduction

Knowledge translation (KT) is the production, exchange, and application of research with the goal of improving health systems and the wellbeing of Canadians (Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], 2016). KT activities help communicate research findings to ensure that evidence is used in practice. When considering which KT activities to use, it is important to consider the needs of stakeholders involved (CIHR, 2016). For example, health service researchers may create briefings for policy makers because they are quick and easy to read. It is also important to use timely and innovative KT activities, as doing so can lead to more effective engagement with stakeholders (Mallidou et al., 2018).

This document describes several current and creative KT activities through an addiction and mental health (AMH) lens. It may be useful for internal and external Alberta Health Services (AHS) stakeholders (such as AHS clinicians and researchers, academia, not for profit organizations) to help translate research into practice and inform AMH initiatives at AHS. Although it is not exhaustive, it provides a starting point for individuals and organizations.

KT activities discussed include:

- Videos and virtual presentations
- Infographics
- Websites
- Social media
- Arts
- Other approaches, including podcasts, QR codes, and maps

This document also provides some examples of software applications that can be used to develop KT activities. AHS does not endorse or recommend any of the websites or applications listed in this document. Although some of these applications and their features are free, some may require purchasing.

Considerations are also given in this document to how KT activities can promote Indigenous sovereignty and reconciliation. Although Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge are different, their underlying values and principles can intersect and complement one another (Jull, Morton-Ninomiya, Compton, & Picard, 2018). For Indigenous peoples, stories and teachings are rooted in relationships. Similarly, Western KT activities can involve stakeholders as equal partners (CIHR, 2016; Jull et al., 2018). Both Indigenous and Western knowledge also emphasize contextual information in the creation and use of knowledge (Jull et al., 2018). Where appropriate, it is suggested that the KT activities discussed in this document be adopted in ways that honor Indigenous worldviews (Jull et al., 2018).

Videos and Virtual Presentations



Videos

Videos are a great way to present research because they can use film, photography, animation, and graphics all in one place.

Videos can be particularly relevant for KT involving Indigenous communities. For example, digital storytelling - video narratives that integrate audio, graphics, text, music, and film - can be a culturally meaningful approach that weaves together Western and Indigenous knowledge (Ward & de Leeuw, 2018).

AHS videos can only be hosted on the [AHS YouTube channel](#). Please consult with AHS communications prior to starting any video projects, and ensure that you meet branding requirements. Third party platforms should only be used if AHS does not already have a platform for use, and require an IT privacy and security impact assessment.

Did You Know?

The Alberta Health Services Indigenous Wellness Core created a digital storytelling video to explain the historical truth of “Indian Hospitals” in Canada. [Watch the YouTube video](#).

Virtual Presentations

Virtual presentations are useful for presenting research to stakeholders in different geographic areas. Live virtual presentations can be given by screen sharing slideshows on video conferencing tools like [Microsoft Teams](#). While live virtual presentations are useful for interacting with stakeholders in real time, recorded presentations can be viewed later.

It is also possible to add recorded voice narratives on top of [Microsoft PowerPoint](#) slides for pre-recorded presentations, such as for uploading to virtual conference platforms. Virtual conferences have become increasingly common due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result, a number of virtual event platforms have been developed for attendees to view presentations and network with one another.

Did You Know?

Alberta Health Services hosts an online Knowledge Bites Lunch and Learn Series. The live sessions are recorded and uploaded to YouTube. [View the Lunch and Learn YouTube channel](#).

Storing and Sharing Videos and Virtual Presentations

[YouTube](#) channels can be used to store and share videos and virtual presentations. These URLs can then be embedded on websites and/or shared on social media platforms. For videos

on AHS platforms, video files must be submitted to AHS for review and upload to the [AHS YouTube channel](#) (as an unlisted video).

Infographics



Infographics (short for information graphics) blend text and visuals to communicate key research findings. They often use charts and tables, call-out or feature boxes, and icons and images. Evidence shows that stakeholders may be more likely to understand and recall information that is accompanied by images, and mixing data with images can make research more accessible to a wider audience (Schubbe et al., 2020).

Did You Know?

Alberta Health Services Addiction & Mental Health Knowledge Exchange develops infographics to help stakeholders learn about research and evaluation. [View the infographics.](#)

Seven principles of effective infographic design, called the GRAPHIC Guidelines, are shown below (Stones & Gent, 2015). The key message is to keep infographics simple and to refrain from over-designing.

- ¹G** – Get to know your audience to define your key message
- ²R** – Restrict your colour palette to 3-5 colours
- ³A** – Align elements by using a grid system
- ⁴P** – Prioritize parts by creating a focal point
- ⁵H** – Highlight the heading through its design and content
- ⁶I** – Invest in imagery by selecting appropriate graphics
- ⁷C** – Choose charts carefully by keeping it simple

Alberta Health Services (2021) has also created a toolkit on developing and using infographics for addiction and mental health KT purposes. The document provides design resources, tips, and tricks. [View the toolkit.](#)

Infographics can be created using a variety of software, such as [Adobe Illustrator](#), [Microsoft Word](#), and [Microsoft PowerPoint](#). Please consult with AHS communications prior to starting any infographics to ensure that you meet branding requirements.

Websites



Websites are great for presenting research findings because they allow stakeholders to interact with many types of data and information. Interaction can help increase interest in and comprehension of research.

Websites can provide stakeholders with self-learning links, factsheets, and video modules on a variety of addiction and mental health topics. Getting stakeholders involved in the development of websites can also increase excitement and engagement.

Many platforms are available to create website domains. However, it is important to consider the cost of purchasing and maintaining a domain name when building a website. In addition, AHS webpages can only be hosted on AHS platforms. Please consult with AHS communications prior to starting any webpages, and ensure that you meet branding requirements.

Did You Know?

Alberta Health Services has an Addiction and Mental Health Research Hub webpage that has information for researchers and health professionals.

[Visit the website.](#)

Social Media



Social media is a powerful way to share information and ideas with many people. It can increase dissemination of important information and help reach diverse audiences. Social media applications include web-based platforms (for example, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)), as well as blogposts, mass emails, and newsletters.

Social media is highly participatory as it includes user-generated content. User-generated content includes posting content on the internet, commenting on content that other users have created or posted, and downloading and sharing content.

In addition, social media is just one tool in a larger communication strategy. It is important to consider overarching communication goals when developing social media activities. Some key aspects of an effective social media presence, as shared by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2021) include the following:

Did You Know?

Alberta Health Services produces a number of research-focused newsletters, such as the Bridging the Gap Newsletter.

[View the newsletter.](#)

- ✓ Identify your target audience
- ✓ Determine your objective
- ✓ Select the appropriate channel for your message
- ✓ Decide upfront how much time and effort you can invest

[View the CDC's guidelines](#) on using social media for KT, and [learn more about AHS social media](#). Please note that any new AHS social media activities must be approved by a communications advisor and through the Story Hub.

Arts



Arts-based approaches to KT such as theatre, visual arts, music, and dance are multidisciplinary and can engage diverse audiences.

Theatrical and Live Performances

Theatrical and live performances can have an emotional impact on stakeholders. They include improvisation, theatre plays, and pop art performances.

For example, Sarasvati Productions (n.d.) in Manitoba is an experimental and transformative theatre focused on drawing attention to prominent social issues, facilitating community collaboration, and supporting emerging artists in Canada. *Breaking Through*, their community-based theatre performance, compiled stories and input from almost 400 people to shed light on mental health challenges and reduce mental health stigma. [Watch the *Breaking Through* premiere](#).

Visual Art

Visual art gives stakeholders an opportunity to imagine the perspectives of others and can be therapeutic.

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Visual art includes painting, drawing, ceramics, photography, and more. In addition to physical art projects, modern web applications may be used to create digital art. Please consult with AHS communications prior to starting any visual art projects, and ensure that you meet branding requirements.

Music and Dance

Music and dance can be a memorable and engaging way to convey research information. A song with catchy music or lyrics can improve recall and allow individuals to think about the content again later. Several platforms, such as [YouTube](#), have made it easy to share music and dance for KT purposes. Please consult with AHS communications prior to starting any video music and dance projects, and ensure that you meet branding requirements. Third party platforms should only be used if AHS does not already have a platform for use, and require an IT privacy and security impact assessment.

Dance can be in the form of a performance, or it can be interactive such as by teaching simple moves to others. An example of music and dance is from Jayli Wolf (Wolf, 2021). Wolf's song and music video *Child of the Government* relays an important message about the thousands of Indigenous children that were taken from their families and communities from the 1950s to the 1990s in Canada. [View the song and music video.](#)

Other Approaches

Podcasts



Listening to podcasts can provide a unique space for stakeholders to learn about addiction and mental health issues and gain valuable insight about the experiences of others. However, as with other KT activities, it is important to know one's audience when creating a podcast.

For example, Alberta Health Services Communications hosts podcasts on a regular basis aimed towards health professionals. The podcast was created to discuss a variety of health-related topics, including addiction and mental health issues of interest to AHS employees (AHS Communications, 2022).

Did You Know?

Leah Hannel, a staff photographer for Alberta Health Services, has created a photo book of her work documenting the unprecedented experiences of citizens, doctors, nurses, and clients in Alberta during the COVID-19 pandemic. [View the news release.](#)

Did You Know?

The Alberta Health Services Communications podcast has an episode on nursing and mental health. [Listen to the podcast.](#)

An example application used by AHS to make podcasts is [Sound Cloud](#). For general information about how to start and launch a podcast, [learn more](#).

QR Codes



QR codes are often printed on posters, bulletins, and newsletters. Stakeholders can instantly capture relevant information on their personal electronic devices. “QR,” meaning “quick response,” is a reference to the speed at which large amounts of information from codes can be obtained by scanners.

QR codes are a low cost option to translate research findings and can be scanned by a range of devices. There are many online applications that generate QR codes, and some internet browsers have this capability available directly within them (e.g., in toolbars). AHS also has their own QR code generating process and support team. AHS staff should request AHS QR codes for AHS websites, as non-AHS QR codes are not allowed.

Maps



Maps are an effective tool for presenting geographic data, such as the number of health care providers by region. Information can be color coded to make the findings easy to interpret, for example, a heat map where darker colors represent greater density. By providing the option to customize which information is displayed on interactive maps, stakeholders can create their own visualizations. Maps can be made using a variety of applications, such as [Microsoft Power Map](#) or [Tableau](#).

For example, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2012) created the National Inventory of Mental Health and Substance Use Services and Supports. The inventory is a directory of community-based mental health and substance use services and supports across Canada for people who are transitioning from the criminal justice system into the community. [View the inventory](#).

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