Alberta Health Services

Knowledge Bites Lunch 'n' Learn

May 11, 2022

Building a Tent in a Tempest

Lessons Learned Implementing
an e-Mental Health Platform
during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Photo by Ed Burke, Lake George

Outline

"Data! Data Data!
I can't make bricks without clay!"
– Arthur Conan Doyle,
Writer & Physician

Project Overview

e-Mental Health for Youth and Young Adults in Alberta

- An **Implementation Science** project – part of a broader movement to shorten the know/do gap in bringing evidence-based practice into the front line

- Partnership project between **AHS** Provincial Addiction & Mental Health and the **University of Calgary**, with research and implementation support from the **Brain & Mind Centre** at the University of Sydney, Australia

- Trial and evaluate an **e-Mental Health Platform** in varied settings, including AHS AMH Clinics, Primary Care, Schools, and other Mental Health Service Providers

Communities

- Bonnyville/Cold Lake

- Foothills County

- Tri-Area (Parkland/Spruce Grove, Stony Plain)

- Siksika

- Tsuut'ina

- Camrose

- Airdrie

- Lethbridge

- Peace River

Project Timeline
July 2020 – September 2023

July –
December
2020

January
2020 –
January
2021

January
2020 –
February
2021

January
2020 –
September
2023

July
2021 –
September
2023

October
2022 –
September
2023

Community
Engagement

Platform
Customization

Pre-
Implementation
Research

Plan, Launch
and Sustain

Post-
Implementation
Research

Sustainability
Planning

eMH for YYA in AB 2021

Youth Voice Video
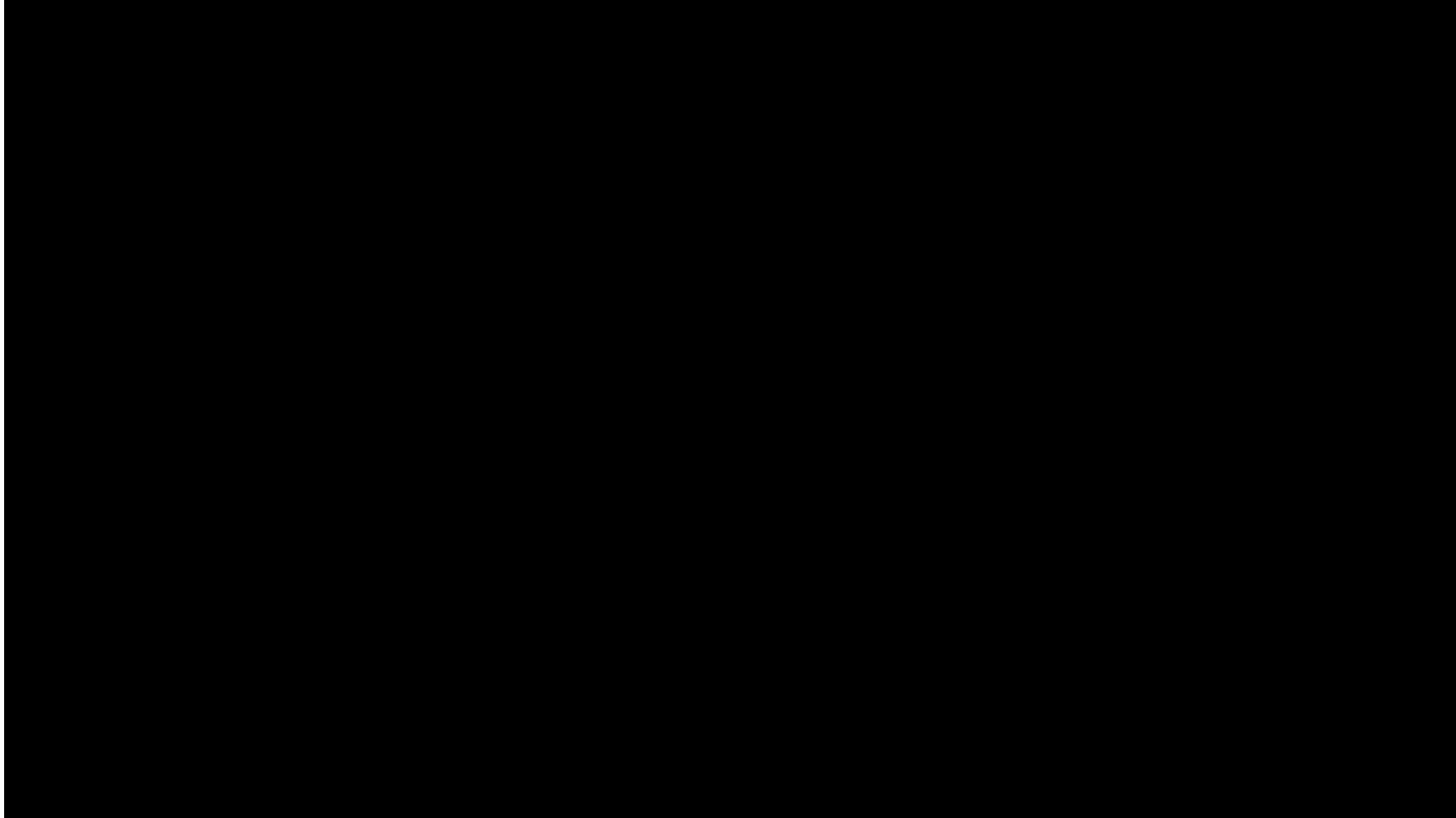
How can e-Mental Health enhance mental health care for youth and young adults?

Prioritize

Most effective and least intensive care options.

Self-Management

Place resources in the hands of youth.

Accessibility

98% of youth access the internet daily.

Measurement Based Care

Measurement Based Care is the routine systematic assessment of client outcomes in treatment using validated measures, such as reported symptom rating scales, before or during a clinical encounter to inform decision making about treatment.

Over 20 years of academic review, with several advantages identified, including:

- More time for treatment

- Aid clinician judgment

- Better youth outcomes

- Increased team approach

- Transtheoretical and transdiagnostic approach to care

- Clinic-level data

Core Functions

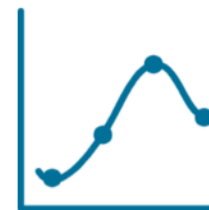A brief overview of Innowell

Self-assessments across 20 psychometric domains

Patient-directed care options

Connections to evidence-based apps and e-tools

Monitoring of health outcomes

At a Glance: Innowell

An e-Mental Health Platform

Questionnaires

Innowell

Back | Zoey Test Youth ∨ | Download PDF

MENTAL HEALTH (2 out of 3)

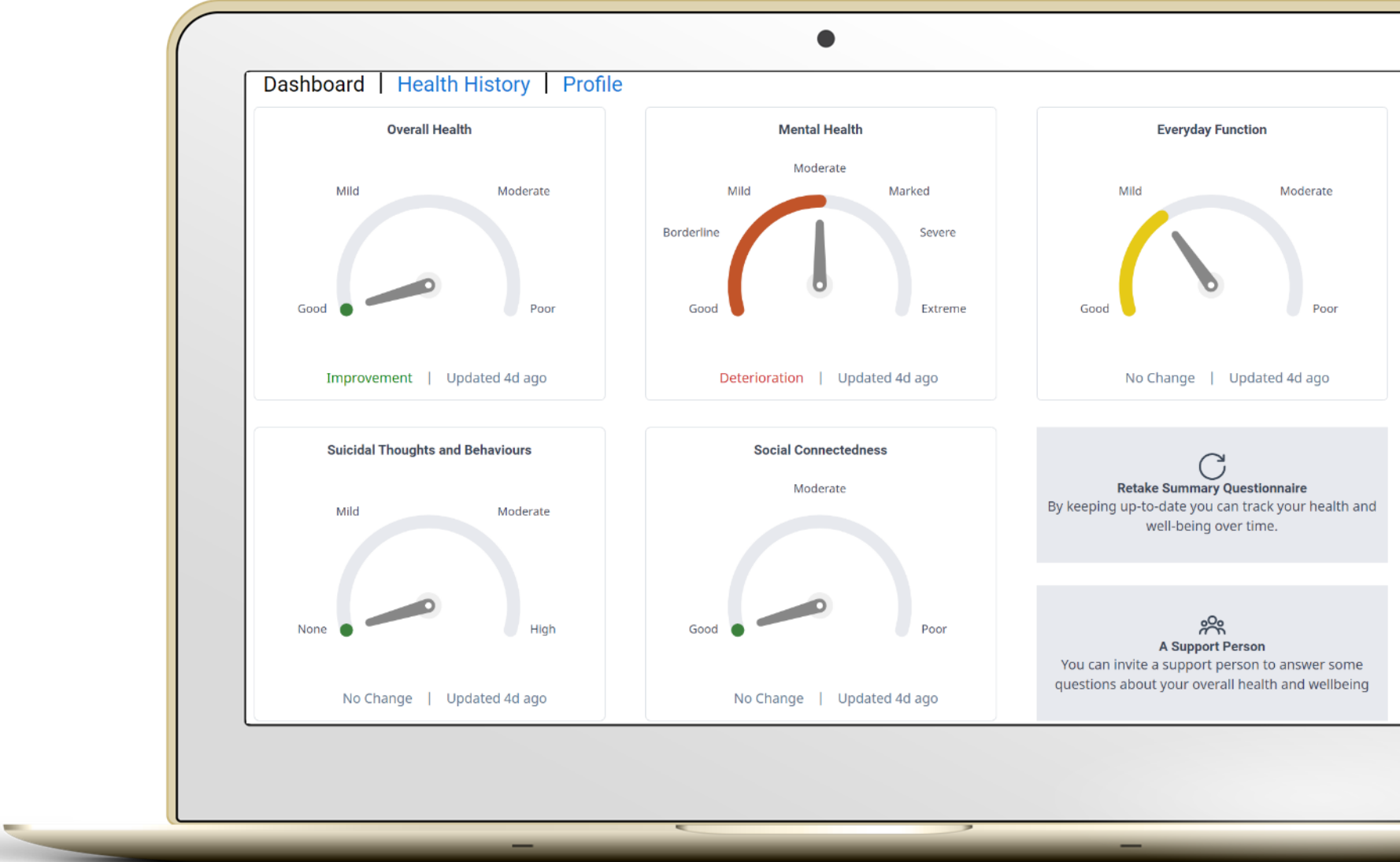🕐 approx. < 1 min to complete | 🔒 secure and confidential | 💾 saved automatically
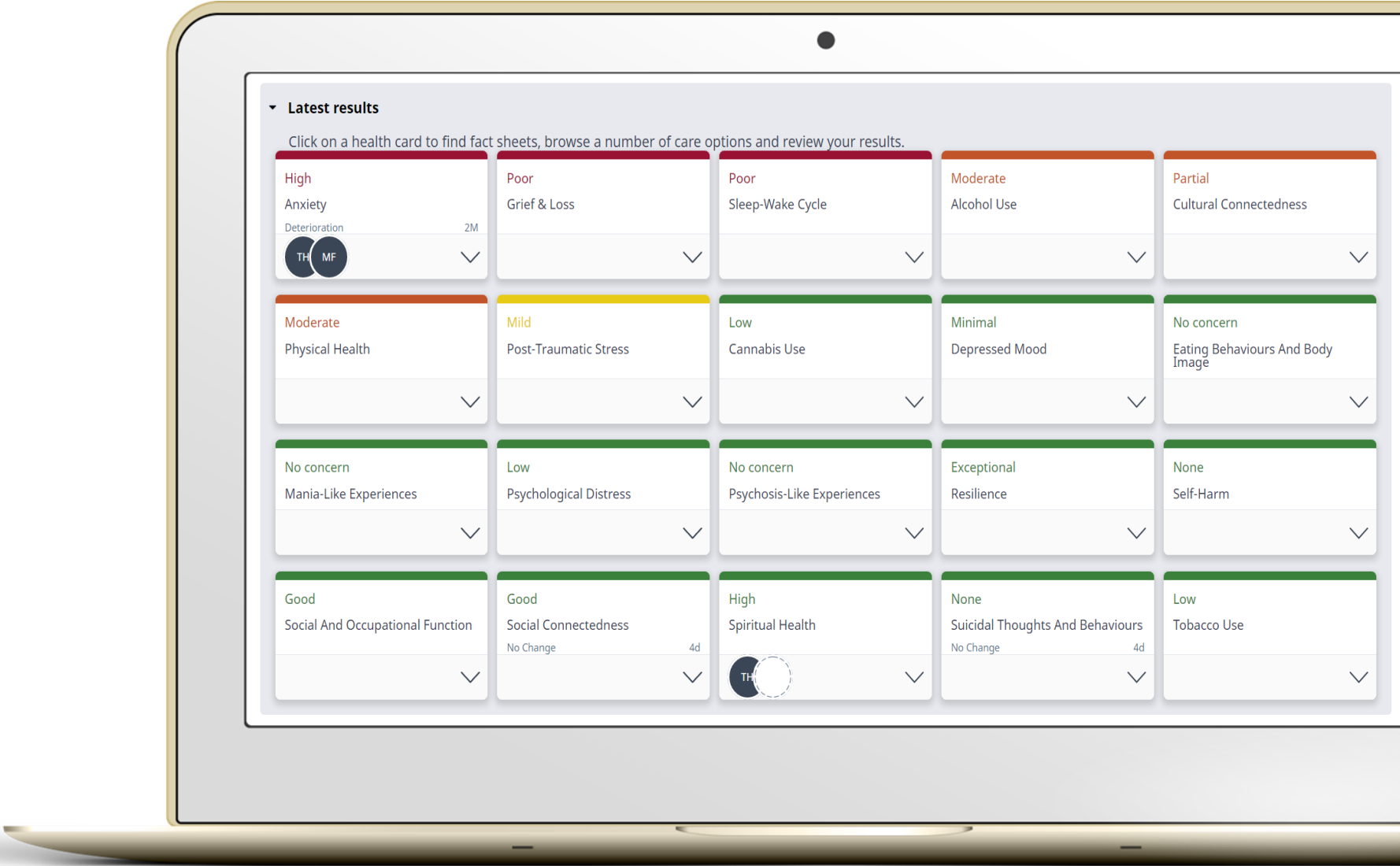
Question 1

Considering your total clinical experience with this particular population, how would you rate their mental health at this time?

- ◯ Normal, not at all unwell
- ◯ Borderline unwell
- ◯ Mildly unwell
- ◯ Moderately unwell
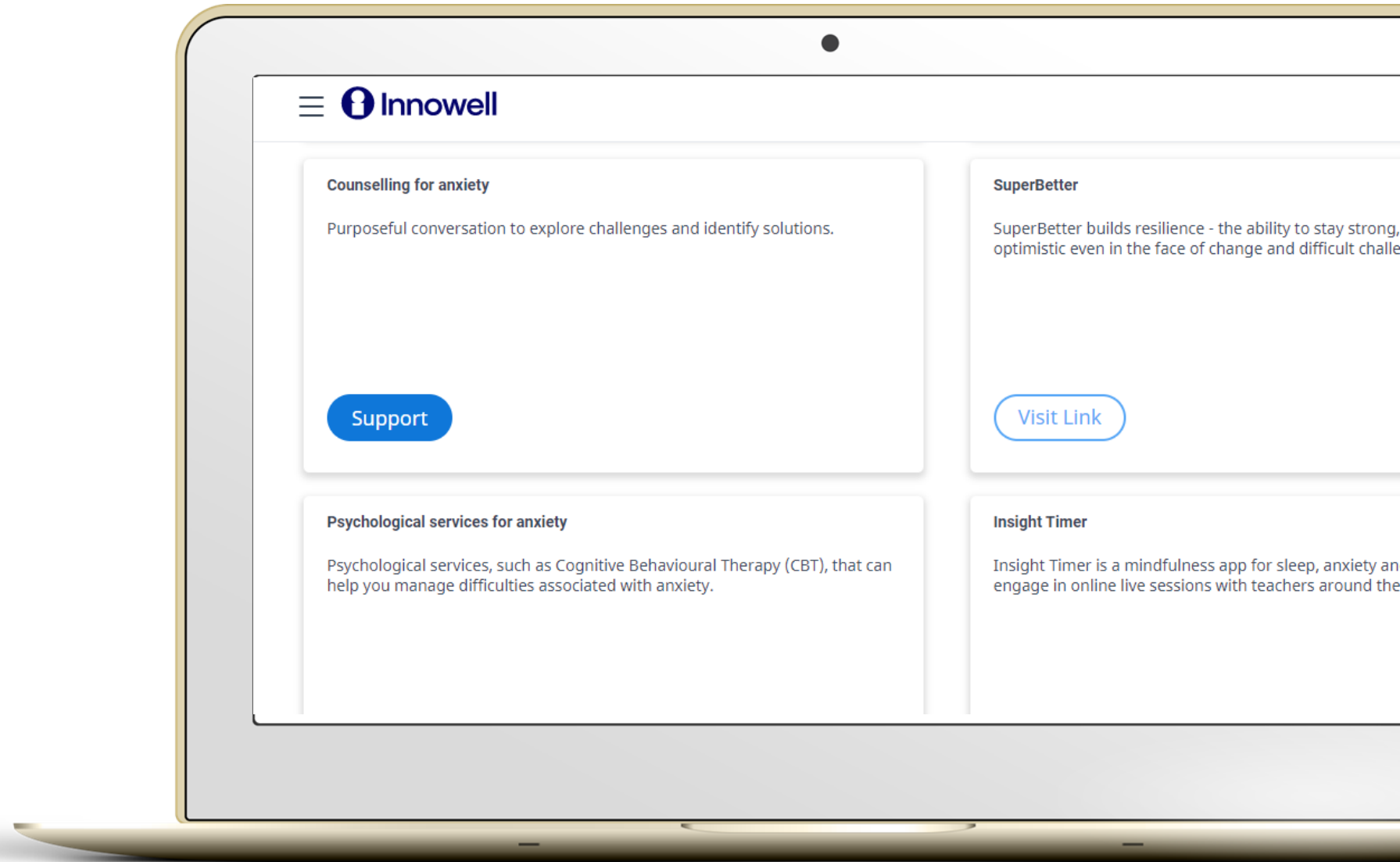- ◯ Markedly unwell
- ◯ Severely unwell
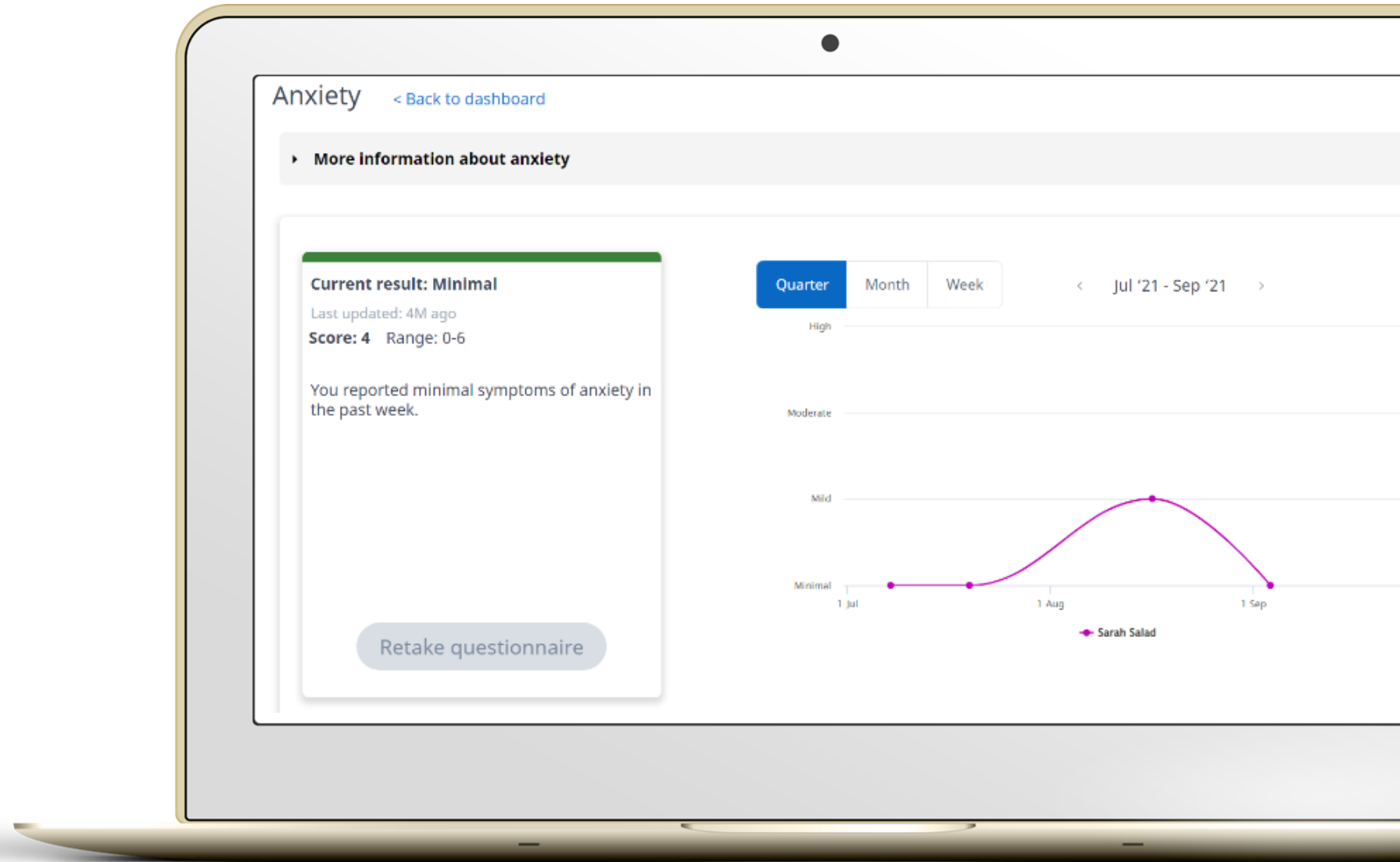- ◯ Extremely unwell

The Summary Dashboard

The Full Dashboard

Latest results

Click on a health card to find fact sheets, browse a number of care options and review your results.

High **Anxiety** Deterioration · 2M TH MF ⌄	Poor **Grief & Loss** ⌄	Poor **Sleep-Wake Cycle** ⌄	Moderate **Alcohol Use** ⌄	Partial **Cultural Connectedness** ⌄
Moderate **Physical Health** ⌄	Mild **Post-Traumatic Stress** ⌄	Low **Cannabis Use** ⌄	Minimal **Depressed Mood** ⌄	No concern **Eating Behaviours And Body Image** ⌄
No concern **Mania-Like Experiences** ⌄	Low **Psychological Distress** ⌄	No concern **Psychosis-Like Experiences** ⌄	Exceptional **Resilience** ⌄	None **Self-Harm** ⌄
Good **Social And Occupational Function** ⌄	Good **Social Connectedness** No Change · 4d ⌄	High **Spiritual Health** TH ⌄	None **Suicidal Thoughts And Behaviours** No Change · 4d ⌄	Low **Tobacco Use** ⌄

Care Options

On the laptop screen:

Innowell

Counselling for anxiety

Purposeful conversation to explore challenges and identify solutions.

Support

SuperBetter

SuperBetter builds resilience - the ability to stay strong, optimistic even in the face of change and difficult challe...

Visit Link

Psychological services for anxiety

Psychological services, such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), that can help you manage difficulties associated with anxiety.

Insight Timer

Insight Timer is a mindfulness app for sleep, anxiety an... engage in online live sessions with teachers around the...

Outcome Monitoring

Benefits

For Clinicians

- supports clinical judgement

- allows for earlier detection of deterioration or improvement

- supports multiple therapeutic modalities: measurement-based care identifies areas of risk or concern, while clinical expertise shapes therapeutic interventions and programming

- identifies areas of strength and risk

For Patients

- clearer monitoring of symptoms, recovery, and decline

- can provide young people with support while they wait to see a clinical service provider

- encourages active participation in treatment and care planning

- allows patients to suggest care options

For Operations

- ability to screen and prioritize young people who are at greater risk or need by viewing assessment results

- simplifies quality improvement by identifying aggregate trends

- provides compelling, data-driven rationale to help shape resourcing, training, and staffing needs

Research:
Findings
& Adjustments

What we learned.
What we did.

Research Measures

Uptake of the eMH platform by clinical service providers and youth

Impact on the experience of delivering and receiving care

Clinical outcomes for youth and young adults

Emergency department visits and billing codes for mental health issues & acute crisis

Qualitative Research to Date

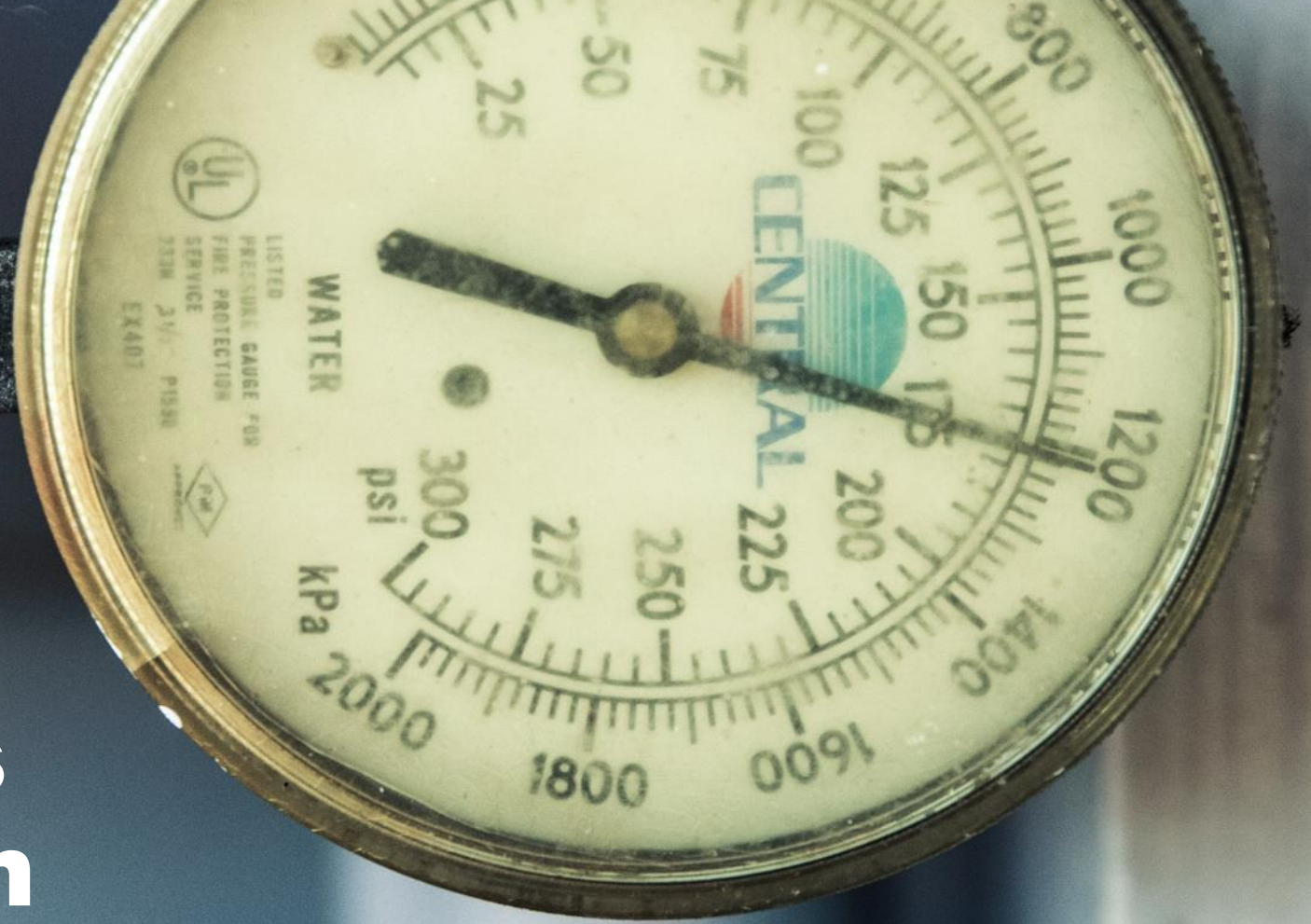Pre-Implementation Focus Groups

164 clinicians

33 youth

Distress Protocols & Crisis Escalation

Measuring Risk & Providing Support

Photo: Ekaterina Belinskaya, Pexels

Distress Protocols & Crisis Escalation

Key Findings

Responsibility & liability

Opening the Floodgates

Capacity for Crisis Support

Distress Protocols & Crisis Escalation

Strategic Adjustments

- Working with teams to co-design site-wide response

  - Process mapping

  - Response template

- Enhanced training

- Speaker Series topic: Suicidality and eMH

- Community of Practice to facilitate sharing practice stories

The Right Client

Who should I use this tool with?

Photo: Tom Fisk, Pexels

The Right Client

Key Findings

Mental Health Complexity

Cognitive Impairment

Cultural & Language Barriers

Access to Devices & Internet

The Right Client

Strategic Adjustments

- Enhanced training that emphasizes platform as universal tool with ongoing multi-dimensional assessment and outcome monitoring

- Community of Practice

- Sharing feedback from Youth Leads

- Developed Youth Lead video

It's Not About Software

Gaps, Cracks, and Capacity

It's Not About Software

Key Findings

Platform Issues Point to Clinical Issues

Implementation Can Reveal Gaps

Fitting the Platform into Practice

It's Not About Software

Strategic Adjustments

- Build clinician comfort and comprehension of Measurement Based Care through training revisions

- Reframing: The question isn't "how do I change my practice to use this?" it's "how does this tool fit into what I'm doing?"

Strategic Turn: Re-Engagement & New Partnerships

Re-evaluating Our Approach, One Year In

Photo: Claire Thibault, Pexels

Re-engagement & New Partnerships

Considerations & Adjustments

- Old EOI was signed in 2019, pre-COVID

- Leadership matters: vertically-aligned vision across all levels

  - This finding is supported through formal research in the Australian context, and our own findings

- Focus on solving the **data gap** in mental healthcare

  - We can't resource what we don't count

- Examining other implementation scenarios (e.g. triage, while you wait, post-discharge)

Questions?

Thank You

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emh@ahs.ca with the subject line "EOI"

e-Mental Health For Youth and Young Adults in Alberta

Grateful for the generous funding from:

eMH for YYA in AB 2021