

Provincial Addiction & Mental Health

Addiction & Mental Health (AMH) Knowledge Bites Lunch & Learn: Event Catalogue

A Commitment to Continuous Knowledge Sharing

January 2024

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What’s Inside

The Addiction & Mental Health (AMH) Knowledge Bites Lunch & Learn Series is a quarterly event hosted by the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Provincial AMH team. This series is intended for evaluators, researchers, decision makers, health professionals, and others with an interest in addiction and mental health-related evidence topics.

Explore past presentations below and on the [AHS YouTube](#) channel. Printable copies of past presentations can be requested at amh.knowledgeexchange@ahs.ca.

To be notified of future events, subscribe to our [mailing list](#).

2023 Presentations

Innovating Services for Justice-Involved Individuals with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



Melissa Tremblay

Associate Professor,
Faculty of Education,
University of Alberta



Donna Kristiansen

Network Manager,
Northwest Central Alberta
FASD Network

Given the general lack of FASD awareness and limited FASD supports in correctional settings, there is a critical need for improved access to FASD diagnostic assessments and FASD education in corrections facilities. In response to this need, the Northwest Central Alberta FASD (NWCFAFSD) Network has developed and implemented the In Reach project, with aims to:

- Provide training for corrections staff to increase their FASD knowledge.
- Provide sharing circles for justice facility residents to foster FASD awareness.
- Administer FASD assessments in corrections facilities.
- Offer transitional mentorship for residents upon release.

Through this presentation, we share In Reach evaluation findings, including areas for project refinement and learnings relevant to project expansion.

View the presentation [here](#)

Educational Needs and Perceptions about Psychedelic-Assisted Psychotherapy among Mental Health Professionals within AHS: A Brief Introduction to Psychedelics in Practice



Dr. Kevin St. Arnaud, Ph.D., R.Psych

Registered Psychologist and former Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology

Psychedelic-assisted therapy (PAT) is a novel treatment currently receiving increased attention for its potential to treat a range of mental health conditions. Given the growing interest in this topic, a survey of Alberta Health Services (AHS) employed allied health professionals' (i.e., social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists) was conducted to establish practitioner needs and inform the development of educational offerings for AHS practitioners. This presentation discusses the findings of this survey and overview key educational domains regarding PAT, including: potential benefits, contraindications and risks, properties of different psychedelic medicines, medication interactions, legal regulations, and how to conduct PAT.

View the presentation [here](#)

Using Canada's Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines in Clinical Practice



David C. Hodgins, Ph.D., FCAHS

Director, Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Calgary

Coordinator, Alberta Gambling Research Institute

Alberta-based Clinical Psychologist

Founding member of CRISM Prairies

This presentation describes how Canada's empirically based lower risk gambling guidelines were developed. The guidelines are promoted by provincial gambling agencies across Canada as a public health message to prevent harm, but they are also useful in helping clients who want to address gambling problems to identify appropriate personal goals. This presentation provides a quick overview of gambling disorder, gambling screens, and some clinical tips.

View the presentation [here](#)

Critical Opportunities in the Emergency Department for People Who Use Substances



Kathryn Dong, MD
Physician, Addiction Recovery and Community Health Team, Royal Alexandra Hospital and AHS Chair in Emergency Medicine Research, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Alberta



Chris Cardinal
Peer Support Worker, Addiction Recovery and Community Health Team, Royal Alexandra Hospital

People who use substances frequently seek care in emergency departments (EDs). These interactions provide a critical opportunity to talk to people about their substance use and offer evidence-informed interventions.

This presentation focuses on how care in EDs has evolved based on findings from local research and with input from people with lived and living experience. Future areas of inquiry designed to improve care in the ED are discussed.

View the presentation [here](#)

2022 Presentations

Blackfoot Confederacy Partnered Research on Opioid Use Disorder Treatment



Bonnie Healy
Health Director, Blackfoot Confederacy



Rita Henderson
Assistant Professor,
Community Health Sciences and Family Medicine, University of



Patrick McLane
Assistant Scientific Director,
Emergency SCN AHS

Adjunct Associate Professor,
Emergency Medicine, University of Alberta

This presentation provides an overview of two projects the Blackfoot Confederacy is conducting in partnership with academic researchers in the area of opioid use disorder treatment. Bonnie Healy (Aapooyaaki) has a background as a Registered Nurse in emergency department (ED) trauma training in the USA and is from the Kainai Nation. She is founding inaugural board member and former Chair of the First Nations Information Governance Centre, and currently the Health Director of the Blackfoot Confederacy. With Patrick McLane, Bonnie discusses efforts to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on opioid addiction treatment across EDs and addiction clinics, for Albertans and Blackfoot people in Alberta. Their project created the first research data set bringing together opioid treatment data from EDs, and AHS and non-AHS addiction clinics. With Rita Henderson, Bonnie discusses provincial efforts to create a strategic hub to address the opioid crisis for First Nations members.

View the presentation [here](#)

Psychological Interventions with Youth at Risk of Psychosis



Jean Addington, Ph.D.

Professor, Department of Psychiatry
and Cumming School of Medicine,
Novartis Chair in Schizophrenia
Research, University of Calgary

Our research group in the Mathison Centre at the University of Calgary has focused on youth who appear to be at risk of developing psychosis based on attenuated symptoms. The overall goal of high-risk research is to determine predictors and mechanisms of developing a psychotic illness. Our research has demonstrated that these young people have heterogenous outcomes, only one of which is the development of a psychotic illness.

This talk presents information on youth at risk of psychosis and the difficulties they experience, the different long-term outcomes that have been observed in our research, and the ongoing studies on psychological treatments to improve outcomes.

View the presentation [here](#)

Building a Tent in a Tempest: What We've Learned Implementing an e-Mental Health Platform during the COVID-19 Pandemic



**Gina Dimitropoulos,
Ph.D.**

Associate Professor,
Faculty of Social Work,
Department of Psychiatry,
Department of Pediatrics,
University of Calgary



**Jason Gondziola,
MBA**

Senior Project Manager,
Alberta Health Services

[E-Mental Health for Youth and Young Adults](#) is an AHS/University of Calgary Implementation Science research project, which seeks to evaluate an e-Mental Health platform, InfoWell, in clinical, primary care, high school, and post-secondary settings. The e-Mental Health project engages 10 communities across Alberta. The platform empowers youth and young adults to participate more deeply in their care plan by providing mental health evaluations in 20 different areas (e.g. depression, anxiety, and social connectedness), as well as online resources, including apps, e-tools, and crisis line options.

As the project entered its second year, there has been significant learnings around the successful implementation of this shared digital clinical tool and the clinical practices that support its use. In this talk, we introduce the project, present preliminary findings from 13 focus groups, and discuss implications for practice.

View the presentation [here](#)

“You’re so lazy”: Stigma and Self-stigma in ADHD



**Emma A. Climie, Ph.D.,
R.Psych**

Associate Professor,
School & Applied Child
Psychology,
Werklund School of Education,
University of Calgary



Kristina Jelinkova, B.A.

MSc Student
School & Applied Child
Psychology,
Werklund School of Education,
University of Calgary

Stigma is the discrimination of an individual or group based on a distinguishing characteristic. While stigma is often associated with mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, or schizophrenia, individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) also experience stigma in their every day lives. In particular, the idea of self-stigma, or stigmatizing views towards oneself, is becoming more prevalent in the literature.

This presentation highlights the current literature on the stigmatizing experiences of individuals with ADHD. Current research in our lab examining the link between self-stigma and self-esteem in children/youth with ADHD will also be highlighted. Implications for practice is discussed.

View the presentation [here](#)

2021 Presentations

A Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Intervention for Caregivers of Those Who Are Experiencing Substance Use Disorders



Dr. Jacqueline Smith
Assistant Professor,
University of Calgary,
Faculty of Nursing



Jennifer Smith
Registered
Psychologist &
Research Associate,
University of Calgary,
Faculty of Nursing



Heather M.
Parent with lived
experience



Derek Luk
Consultant, Alberta
Medical Association

This presentation is an overview of a pilot study conducted among female caregivers of youth with substance use disorders, which explores the impact of an 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program on perceived stress and self-compassion.

The presentation includes qualitative and quantitative findings from the pilot study, as well as a MBSR participant's insight into how the program impacted their ability to manage continuity of care for self and others. Implications for practice among patients, families, and healthcare practitioners are discussed.

View the presentation [here](#)

Am I Enough? Exploring Alberta Families' Journeys Parenting a Child with Mental Health Challenges Through Multimedia



Dr. Dorothy Badry

Professor, University of Calgary,
Faculty of Social Work



Greta Gerstner

CASA Family Advisory Council
member

Executive Director, Strategic
Alliance for Alberta Students with
Learning Challenges



Melissa Appleton

CASA Family
Advisory Council member

Parent with lived experience
and professional photographer

This presentation provides an overview of the CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Am I Enough? Photovoice Project in Edmonton, Alberta.

Six parents from the CASA Family Advisory Council were involved in this project and collaborated to answer the key research question about parenting children with mental health challenges: Am I enough? The parents created a multimedia presentation combining text, narration, and photos to depict their journey. This project began just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has magnified the challenges faced by families in every facet of daily life. The project videos have been viewed by over 34,000 people since June 2020.

This event explores the research process and results, as well as critical insights from the families' experiences.

[View the presentation here](#)

2020 Presentations

Staying Connected: Consumer Experience of the Recovery Journey and Long-Term Engagement with a Rural Mental Health Clinic



Lyuda Krupin, MA

Family Therapist Generalist Psychologist
Calgary Zone Addiction & Mental Health

While there has been much interest in recent years about the potential impact short-term therapy can have on those needing mental health support, relatively little attention has been paid to the needs of those who require longer-term support.

This presentation reviews a phenomenological study exploring six long-term clients' experiences of the recovery journey and the role of rural mental health support in facilitating that journey. Emerging findings highlight themes of:

- Contending with extreme violence.
- The importance of accessible ongoing support.
- Finding a reason to go on in the wake of devastating personal experiences.

Implications of these findings and recommendations for next steps are discussed.

View the presentation [here](#)

Peer Support Pilot in Five Community Services

Beverley Thompson

Director, Forensics & Urban Addictions,
Calgary Zone Addiction & Mental Health

Donna L. Rutherford

Evaluation Analyst, Decision Support Team,
Calgary Zone Addiction & Mental Health

Yvonne Benson

Peer Support Worker, Carnat Centre
for Mental Health Rehabilitation,
Calgary Zone Addiction & Mental Health

Michael McComb

Senior Project Manager, Forensics,
Urban Addictions & Adult Northwest,
Calgary Zone Addiction & Mental Health

In January 2017, with funding from an Alberta Health grant, four peer support workers were introduced to the Northwest Clinic, Northeast Clinic, Carnat Centre, Airdrie/Didsbury Addiction & Mental Health Clinics, and with the Assertive Community Treatment team in Calgary. The key goals for this project were to:

1. Strengthen and enhance clinicians' understanding and application of the recovery model.
2. Support the personal recovery of clients.

Several key learnings resulted from this work, including: positive impact on client care, improved therapist confidence, improved understanding of peer support, increased use of recovery-based treatment, and positive peer support worker engagement.

View the presentation [here](#)

Increasing Access to Care for Individuals Living with Opioid Use Disorder: Evaluation Results from a Primary Health Care Focused Approach in Alberta (no video available)



**Sarah Fotheringham
Ph.D., RSW**
Research & Evaluation
Consultant



Judith Krajnak Ph.D.
Director, Evaluation and Analytics
Provincial Primary Health Care
Alberta Health Services

The Primary Health Care Opioid Response Initiative (PHC ORI) was a complex two-year intervention, involving provincial partnerships, new planning based on zone-level considerations, and practice-level change. The Alberta College of Family Physicians (including the Patients Experience Evidence Research team), Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health Services, and Zone Primary Care Networks Committees collaborated to lead this essential work that continued through March 2020.

A collaborative evaluation approach underpinned the initiative and was used to build evaluation capacity for primary care in the area of addiction and mental health. This presentation shares outcome results from this intervention including meaningful engagement of patients with lived experience. Practice implications for smoother transitions of care between Addiction Mental Health programs with Primary Care are highlighted.

Congruence Couple Therapy: An Integrative Approach in Addiction and Concurrent Disorder Treatment



Dr. Bonnie Lee
Associate Professor,
University of Lethbridge,
Faculty of Health Sciences,
Addictions Counselling
Program



Korie-Lyn Northey
Community Addiction Services
Administrator (CASA), Grand
Prairie and Area Outpatient
and Prevention Services Office

Family engagement is a priority in addiction and mental health services, although compelling concepts and processes to involve families remain inadequate. Couple therapy is ostensibly missing in the menu of services available. To address this gap, the systemic principles and concepts of Congruence Couple Therapy integrate the treatment of adverse childhood experiences and addiction by working with the couple interaction.

This presentation encourages thinking and conversation on the importance, merits and barriers of placing couples and parents more centrally in treatment and evaluation, showcasing the voices and viewpoints of patients and counsellors who participated in a randomized controlled trial at two treatment sites in Alberta Health Services. A summary of the clinical outcomes from the trial is shared.

View the presentation [here](#)

A Coherent and Effective Performance Measurement Framework for Mental Health and Addictions in Canada: Inevitable or Impossible?



Dr. Carol Adair

Adjunct Professor, University of Calgary, Departments of Community Health Sciences and Psychiatry

Principal Consultant, Humetrics Research Inc.

Stakeholders have been calling for more effective measurement and reporting on progress in mental healthcare reform for more than two decades, but despite an increasing policy emphasis on mental health and addictions (MHA) system improvements, an effective and coherent approach remains elusive. In the past decade, the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) has managed to build a comprehensive approach which has most of the characteristics of a quality system that mental health and addictions advocates, and experts consider to be important for MHA.

This presentation highlights some key findings of a review of MHA performance measurement policies and practices in Canada. Advice obtained through structured interviews with 30 experts (including people with lived experience) from across the country on how to achieve such a framework is outlined.

View the presentation [here](#)

2019 Presentations

Engaging Youth in Evaluation of Mental Health Services



Maria Kim

Research & Evaluation Coordinator,
Decision Support Services, AHS Edmonton Zone

ACCESS Open Minds is a five-year pan-Canadian research and evaluation initiative to innovate how mental health services are provided to youth and young adults. The Edmonton site is one of 14 sites across Canada. Using a walk-in model of care, our clinic provides an array of services to young adults aged 16-25 who are experiencing mental health concerns. The primary source of our data comes from participants who are recruited into the study. However, recruitment can be a very tricky task: it requires smooth integration of clinical processes with welcoming and engaging client interactions, all while balancing the personal and ethical needs and rights of clients.

Our team has planned, piloted, and tweaked different recruitment methods to use in our clinic, and we are now the top site of all 14 in terms of active recruitment. This presentation highlights key challenges, solutions, findings and next steps in engaging youth and young adults in mental health service evaluations.

View the presentation [here](#)

Mentalizing in Mental Health



Dr. Daniel Rochman

Registered Psychologist, AHS Eating Disorders Team (UAH)

Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Alberta

Mentalizing is about how we do therapy. It is about the process rather than the content of treatment. Defined as the capacity to understand human behaviour in terms of thoughts, emotions, intentions, etc., mentalizing is essential to any meaningful human interaction. When it goes off-line, we are left with a sense of uncertainty, poor emotion-regulation, catastrophic relationships, and a generalized reluctance to learn from others (including a therapist!).

This presentation discusses techniques to strengthen mentalizing and minimize non-mentalizing. This approach, empirically supported and originally used to treat borderline personality, has recently been extended to other areas (such as trauma, substance abuse, mothers-at-risk and eating disorders). Mentalizing is rooted in developmental psychology, social cognition, neurobiology and attachment theory. It is a highly flexible approach, compatible with a range of therapies.

View the presentation [here](#)

Identifying “At Risk” Young Adults using Routine Outcome Monitoring during Acute Inpatient Hospitalization



Dr. Graham Gaine

Professional Practice Lead, Edmonton Zone, AHS

The presentation outlines the implementation of routine outcome monitoring on a young adult psychiatric inpatient unit and the development of a clinical decision-making tool for identifying “at risk” cases. The Young Adult Evaluation, Treatment, and Reintegration Service (YAETRS) at Alberta Hospital Edmonton provides inpatient services for young adults ages 17 to 26 with acute and complex mental health needs. Over the past two years, outcome monitoring procedures have been implemented as part of routine clinical practice to identify how each patient is responding to the therapeutic milieu. Specifically, patients complete a brief self-report measure of symptoms and functioning (i.e., BASIS-24) at admission and then weekly until discharge. Advanced statistical analyses of the BASIS-24 scores across treatment identified four subgroups, including two groups of treatment responders (i.e., fast and gradual) and two groups of non-responders (i.e., high-distress and low-distress). These groups were further differentiated by gender, involuntary admission status, HoNOS scores, engagement with outpatient services, and risk of readmission to emergency department and hospital in the following six months. Results suggest that the non-responding groups are “at risk” and may require different and/or more intensive interventions to achieve improved outcomes.

The presentation describes the use of a clinical decision-making tool to assist inpatient clinicians in identifying “at risk” cases and taking corrective actions. The use of routine outcome monitoring in other clinical settings is discussed, with special attention to use of the CORE patient-completed tool that is built into Connect Care.

View the presentation [here](#)

Supportive Text Message Interventions in Addiction and Mental Health: Closing the Psychological Treatment Gap in Alberta



Dr. Vincent Agyapong

Edmonton Zone Clinical Section Chief, Community Mental Health, AHS

Clinical Professor, University of Alberta Department of Psychiatry

Many addiction and mental health patients in Alberta face barriers to accessing psychological and counselling services, including long waitlists and geographical barriers (e.g., underserved communities in Northern Alberta). Results from two randomized controlled trials in Alberta suggest that supportive text messages could be used to close the psychological treatment gap for patients seeking counselling services for an addiction or mental health concern. This presentation discusses these results, as well as the response to the Text4Mood program, which was recently launched at the population level in Northern Alberta. High user satisfaction rates are expected with the recent launch of the Text4Support program in the Edmonton zone. Healthcare implications in Alberta are discussed.

View the presentation [here](#)