

International Symposium

Voices of Community Collaboration on Youth Mental Health



November 17, 2023

9:30am – 4:30pm

Hybrid Event

Holiday Inn &
Suites Conference
Centre

Grande Prairie

Alberta, Canada

CYMH Project:
<https://www.childrenandyouthmentalhealth.com/>

This Symposium is aimed at bringing interested partners together to promote youth mental wellness and share best practices in prevention and early intervention on youth mental health.

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**CYMH International Symposium:
Voices of Community Collaboration on Youth Mental Health
Acknowledgements**

Thanks go to the funding support by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; the Communities Building Youth Future Program, City of Grande Prairie; the Family and Community Support Services, County of Grande Prairie; and the Faculty of Social Work, the School of Public Policy, and the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary.

Appreciation goes to the following non-profit community organizations sponsoring their staff time to present at the Symposium:

- Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region, Alberta, Canada
- Hull Services, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- Hythe Regional School, Alberta, Canada
- Kindred Connections Society, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- Knowledge Institute on Child & Youth Mental Health & Addictions, Ontario, Canada
- Mental Health Literacy Org., Canada
- Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada
- St. James Settlement, Hong Kong, China
- TOUCH Community Services, Singapore

We express our gratitude to all CYMH project assistants, volunteers, practicum students/interns, community partners, friends/supporters, and the following partners:

- ASSIST Community Services Centre, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lethbridge and District, Alberta, Canada
- Center for Young Parents, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada
- Diversecities, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, Canada
- Family and Community Support Services in the County of Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada
- Hull Services, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Lethbridge and areas, Alberta, Canada
- Positive Education (Research) Laboratory in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, City University of Hong Kong, China
- School of Health Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences, Western University, Canada
- School of Social Work, University of British Columbia, Canada
- Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Canada
- Wood’s Homes, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Last but not the least, the CYMH International Symposium Task Group members, who make this Symposium not only possible, but wonderful:

Anna LaPerle, Candice Menzies, Dana Selk and Anders Snow (youngest supporter of this Project), Devasish Joseph, Jensyn Wallan, Julia Kao, Kenneth Livesey, Melodie McCracken, Milly Nie, Portia Wang, Sara Yamamoto, Tara Collins, Victoria Wood, and Dora Tam (Project Lead)

More about the CYMH Project: <https://www.childrenandyouthmentalhealth.com/>

Land Acknowledgment

On behalf of the Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Project team, we respectfully acknowledge the Beaver, Cree, Dene, and Metis people as the original caretakers of these Lands and surrounding areas. We are grateful to live, learn, work and play on Treaty 8 territory within Turtle Island and acknowledge these Lands have been home to diverse and sovereign First Nations and Inuit Nations since Time Immemorial.



Objectives of the Symposium

This Symposium is part of the international collaboration between the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work and the Graduating Institute of Public Administration. These two institutions have signed an agreement to facilitate annual/biannual knowledge exchanges in January 2015. Multiple exchange visits have already been conducted in the last two years. This international collaboration aligns with the University of Calgary's Eyes High Strategy (2017-2022) to: 1) educate students to become community-builders; 2) conduct research that benefits the well-being of individuals, families, and communities; 3) and advance social work education and practice nationally and internationally. The long-term goal is to facilitate and support collaborative and innovate research, teaching, and evidence-informed practice for enhancing the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, and to provide a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration from local to international.

Dora Tam, Ph.D.
 Professor, Symposium Organizer
 Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary

Project Background: The Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Project is proudly present this International Symposium on Voices of Community Collaboration on Youth Mental Health. The three-years CYMH Project is primarily funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the University of Calgary along with the support of 15 community and institutional partners. The CYMH Project is being implemented in Alberta, Canada and Hong Kong, China. Overarching goal of this international partnership project is to engage youth, parents, and community partners in the development of service user-focused initiatives for the promotion mental wellness (i.e., healthy physical, emotional, and social development) among youth aged 12-17 the two countries. We believe that promoting youth mental wellness has no socio-political boundary.

Theoretical Assumptions: The CYMH Project is implemented in the cities of Lethbridge and the County of Lethbridge, Calgary, Grande Prairie and the County of Grande Prairie in Alberta, and the city of Hong Kong in China. We are aimed to examine if geographical and socio-demographical factors play any role in terms of mental health challenges among youth and service needs. We adopted the Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000)¹ and Pathways to Participation Framework (Shier, 2001)² to guide the activities of this project. We believe that young people are able to self-regulate and develop skills related to coping, self-efficacy, and resilience (i.e., better mental health) when they are provided with opportunities and encouragement to develop their intrinsic motivation or interest.

Project Achievements: Main activities of the CYMH project include the facilitation of six photo storytelling groups each in Alberta and Hong Kong, four Web-based application co-creation focus groups in Alberta and six in Hong Kong, and three community forums in Alberta, and one forum held in Hong Kong. Total of 367 youth, parents/guardians, service providers, and community partners had participated in these three main activities in the two countries. In those Photo Storytelling Groups, youth shared their views on mental health and wellness through photo stories; whereas, on the Web Application groups we involved youth in the co-creation of a Youth Mental Health and Wellness Web-based App. In the community forums, we engaged diverse community members and partners to share about mental health challenges among youth and brainstormed suggestions to support youth mental wellness. On top of all these, we have mentored 17 youth/young adults, age between 15 and 25, in the project as advisory committee members, volunteers, interns/practicum students, and/or project assistants. They are champions on youth mental health. For more information on the CYMH project, our partners and activities, you may visit the Project Website: <https://www.childrenandyouthmentalhealth.com/>

The CYMH International Symposium is being organized to crown the efforts of the CYMH project, and invite local, national and international speakers to share insightful works that could promote youth mental wellness and provide research informed intervention. Purposes of the symposium are:

1. To connect youth, parents/guardians, service providers, educators, government officials, policy makers and researchers;
2. To facilitate learning on how to better promote youth mental health and wellness;
3. To empower youth and their families through resource sharing, participation and collaboration; and
4. To build network among interested partners for future collaborative work.

¹ Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.

² Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Openings, opportunities, and obligations. *Children & Society*, 15, 107-117. doi:10.1002/CHI.617

CYMH International Symposium: Voices of Community Collaboration on Youth Mental Health

(The time indicated below is Edmonton, Alberta, Canada time, for international audience please convert to your local time)

| Time | Program | Moderator/Speaker/Facilitator |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 8:45 – 9:30am | Registration and Networking Project Findings Display throughout the Day | Everyone |
| 9:30 - 9:40am | Welcome and Land Acknowledgement | Moderators: Jensyn Wallan & Julia Kao |
| | – Tammy Wentzell, Director, Community Social Development City of Grande Prairie – Kathleen Turner, Director, Family and Community Support Services, County of Grande Prairie | |
| 9:40 – 9:55am | Dance Performance | HRS Junior Jiggers, Hythe Regional School, Alberta |
| 9:55 – 10:30am | Project Overview Alberta Canada, and Hong Kong China | Dr. Dora Tam and Dr. Sylvia Kwok, CYMH Project Team |
| 10:30 – 11:00am | Do You M.I.N.D.: A Mental Health Literacy Program | Joel Wong and Jennifer Koh, TOUCH Community Services, Singapore |
| | Mental Health Literacy Resources for School Students | Andrew Baxter, MSW, Mental Health Literacy Org. |
| 11:00 – 11:15am | Break | |
| 11:15am – Noon | Supporting Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Health in Ontario | Dr. Amy Porath, Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions, Ontario |
| | Equipped, online mental health courses and resources for young adults | Ashley Lamantia, Canadian Mental Health Association, Calgary, Alberta |
| | Sharing by Parent | Jerry Firth, father of neurodiverse teen children |
| | Morning Session Q & A | Discussant: Candice Menzies |
| Noon - 12:45pm | Lunch | |
| 12:45 – 1:30pm | Importance of Shared Spaces on Youth Mental Health and Wellness | CYMH Youth Work Group |
| 1:30 – 1:45pm | Photo Story Sharing | Alan, Donia, Kelvin, and Sanly, youth group from Hong Kong Mentor: Eric Tsang |
| 1:45 – 2:00pm | Sharing by Youth and Parent | Anna, Candice, Dev & Kayson in Alberta Facilitator: Sara Yamamoto |
| 2:00 – 2:15pm | Break | |
| 2:15 – 3:45pm | Refugee and Immigrant Counselling in Schools Program | Peter Driftmier, Kindred Connections Society, Calgary, Alberta |
| | Family and System Support Program | Tammy Monro, Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention, Grande Prairie, AB |
| | Open UP: Online Youth Emotional Support | Connie Cheung, St. James Settlement, Hong Kong |
| | Use of Unified Protocol with Children in Therapeutic Group Home | Dr. David Lindenbach, Hull Services, Calgary, Alberta |
| 3:45 – 4:00pm | Overall Takeaway and Future Outlook | Dr. Siu Ming Kwok & Victoria Wood |
| 4:00 – 4:30pm | Networking | Everyone |

**International Symposium:
Voices of Community Collaboration on Youth Mental Health
November 17, 2023 (Friday), 9:30am to 4:00pm (Edmonton, Canada Time)**

**Session One: 9:30am – 10:30am (Nov 17/2023 Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
0:30am – 1:30am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)**

**Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
Moderators: Julia Kao and Jensyn Wallan**

Julia Kao is a 3rd year BSc Psychology student at UBC Okanagan. Julia has joined the CYMH Project since the summer 2021 as a volunteer advisory committee member. She is currently a research assistant on the CYMH Project, where she has assisted in engaging with youth through focus groups and mentorship. Julia would like to pursue a career in child development and youth mental health.

Jensyn Wallan (she/her) is a 2nd year social work diploma student at MacEwan University. Jensyn has been a part of the Children and Youth Mental Health Project for close to 3 years, starting out as a youth volunteer. She is now a project assistant, where she has co-facilitated focus groups as well as round-table discussions with community partners. In the future, Jensyn wants to continue her education and receive her master's in Social Work.

**Dance Performance
Junior Jiggers, Hythe Regional School, Alberta, Canada
Teacher/Coach: Marlene Letendre**

This dancing group will performance 2 – 3 dances with music on "Red River Jig" by John Arcand; "The Infinity Dance" (Heel & Toe Polka) by Reg Bouvette; and/or "Drops of Brandy" by John Arcand.

In March 2022, the Junior Jiggers was born. The group was started by **Marlene Letendre** with only eight beginning dancers, so it was new to all. The group continued to thrive, and interest spread to others. Our HRS Junior Jiggers is now proud to have grown to fourteen young dancers in grades 3 to 6. Jigging is great for the participants mental health, builds self-esteem, comradery, amongst peers, and also allows them the chance to connect with students they may not have prior contact with. As well, jigging exposes and enhances the Indigenous culture through dance to all students involved.

CYMH Project Overview

Dr. Dora Tam, University of Calgary, Canada, & Dr. Sylvia Kwok, City University of Hong Kong, China

Dr. Tam will provide a summary on what the CYMH Project has achieved in the past three years, specifically the learning on youth mental health and wellness from youth, parents/guardians, and service providers/community partners through the CYMH photo storytelling groups, web-based application co-creation groups, and community forums in Grande Prairie, Calgary, and Lethbridge in Alberta.

Dr. Kwok's presentation includes youth's perspectives on the challenges that impact their mental health, how they cope with those challenges, and what community support they regard as helpful for them in Hong Kong. The adults' views (including parents, social workers, teachers, counsellors, academics) on youth mental health issues, challenges and coping by youth, and suggested support will also be presented. Feedback of the participants on the photo storytelling groups will be discussed. Some evidence-based programmes to promote youth mental health and wellbeing in Hong Kong will also be presented.

Dr. Dora Tam is a social work Professor at the University of Calgary. In the past twenty years, Dr. Tam has extensive research experiences with newcomer families, and women and children who are impacted by domestic violence, specifically those from racialized communities. Dr. Tam is the Principal Project Director of this 3-year international collaborative project to examine promising practices for children and youth mental health (CYMH Project) being implemented in Alberta Canada and Hong Kong China.



Dr. Sylvia Kwok is a Professor and Associate Head in the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the City University of Hong Kong, her research mainly focuses on the family ecological and positive psychological factors that are related to anxiety, depression, suicide, and wellbeing of children and adolescents. She has published over 70 papers related to



children and adolescent mental health issues, parenting and wellbeing education in high-impact international refereed journals. As the convenor of the Positive Education Laboratory, they have collaborated with over 300 local schools, social welfare agencies, and corporations to promote positive education for the students, teachers, parents, employees, and the community in Hong Kong.

**Session Two: 10:30am – 11:00am (Nov 17/2023 Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
1:30am – 2:00am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)**

**Do you M.I.N.D? A school-based mental health literacy programme for youths
Joel Wong and Jennifer Koh, TOUCH Mental Wellness of the TOUCH Community
Services, Singapore**

The programme aims to educate youth aged 12 to 17 about prevalent youth mental health issues, namely depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and self-harm behaviours. Youths are also equipped with information on community resources and healthier coping approaches to strengthen their mental health and that of their loved ones. That include taking practical steps to:

- M – Moderate eating habits and strive towards a balanced, healthy lifestyle;
- I – Include persons with mental health issues in their social circles and build healthy relationships;
- N – Notice preliminary signs and symptoms of mental health issues in their peers and loved ones; and
- D – Defend themselves and their friends against self-harm, instead of glorifying it.

The learning experience is facilitated by trained mentors who guide students through experiential station activities and immersive virtual reality videos with mental health content.

An evaluation study, conducted in collaboration with Singapore’s Institute of Mental Health, has shown that the programme was effective in achieving its intended outcomes. Furthermore, enablers and barriers to implementation were identified. Collectively, these findings informed refinements to the programme’s design and implementation for impact.

Mr. Joel Wong is a full-time social worker at TOUCH Wellness Group, a service

group of TOUCH Community Services. Joel has been working with youths since 2015 through educational programmes, as well as engaging and providing counselling and intervention work for at-risk youths. Together with his team, he developed and runs the mental health education programme for secondary schools, “Do You M.I.N.D.?”, which incorporates virtual reality components to educate youths in Singapore about the importance of mental wellness.



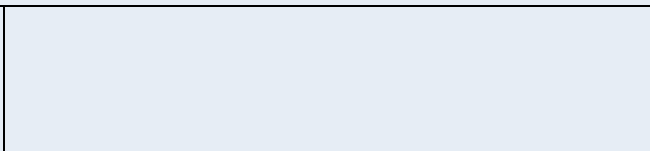
Ms. Jennifer Koh is the Assistant Manager of the Impact & Research department, TOUCH Community Services. Through her work in TOUCH over the past 7 years, she has developed a critical appreciation of social issues affecting the vulnerable populations. That, coupled with an empathetic belief that solutions may be found within the communities, inspires her to journey with TOUCH’s direct services, academic and community partners for research collaborations as well as evidence-informed programme design, monitoring and evaluation to impact lives.



**Mental Health Literacy Resources for School Students
Andrew Baxter, Alberta Health Services, Canada**

This session will provide an overview of mental health literacy approaches and examine how it can enhance understanding and attitudes of both students and educators when it comes to mental health, including knowledge about mental health states, comprehension of disorders and treatments, reducing stigma, boosting the effectiveness of seeking help, and taking actions to support positive mental health. It will examine how we incorporate feedback from young people, parents, and educators to tailor our approach and resources to meet the community's specific needs and create evidence-based resources.

Andrew Baxter, MSW RSW, has worked in school-based and community mental health for over 18 years. During his time



with Alberta Health Services, he has provided direct treatment for students from K-12, as well as consultation for their families and teachers. Andrew currently serves as the Team Lead for mentalhealthliteracy.org. In these roles, he has worked to promote school mental health literacy among students, educators, parents, and mental health professionals at provincial, national and international levels. Andrew has delivered mental health literacy training to over 10,000 educators and supported school leaders from across Alberta and beyond in implementing the mental health literacy approach in their school districts to better address youth mental health needs. Andrew provides professional learning for educators through the University of British Columbia Faculty of Education Mental Health Institute and is an Adjunct Lecturer with the University of Calgary Department of Psychiatry. Andrew is actively making parenting mistakes with his two children.



**Break: 11:00am – 11:15am (Nov 17/2023, Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
2:00am – 2:15am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)**

**Session Three: 11:15am – Noon (Nov 17/2023, Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
2:15am – 3:00am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)**

**Supporting Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Health in Ontario
Dr. Amy Porath, Knowledge Institute on Child & Youth Mental Health &
Addictions, Ontario, Canada**

For nearly 20 years, the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions has supported community-based child and youth mental health and addictions agencies in Ontario in delivering high-quality care to children, young people and their families through leadership in research, knowledge mobilization, implementation, evaluation and quality improvement. This presentation provides an overview of our supports to the sector and presents some case examples of initiatives. It also provides a

list of suggested resources for those looking to support the mental health and well-being of young people and their families.

Dr. Amy Porath is the Director of Research and Knowledge Mobilization at the Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions. In this role, she leads efforts to identify and respond to the knowledge needs of the child and youth mental health and addictions sector and others who shape policy and practice in this area. This includes advancing and mobilizing knowledge through applied research initiatives and the development of knowledge products and quality standards. For the past 22 years, Amy’s program of research and knowledge mobilization has focused on substance use health, addictions and mental health with the view to advancing policy, practice and programs.



EQUIPPED:

**How CMHA Calgary is “Equipping” Youth with Online Mental Health Awareness
Ashley Lamantia, Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region, Canada**

The young adult years are a critical time in the promotion of life-long emotional wellness, and many mental health concerns first begin during adolescence. For youth in particular, the social stigma, lack of accessible resources, and inaccurate information surrounding mental health also create monumental barriers in finding appropriate, timely interventions and supports. As evidence suggests that youth currently seek out the majority of their information from online sources, the Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary) will help to break down these barriers by sharing their new, free, online self-directed resiliency-focused mental health education platform “EQUIPPED”, which is specifically focused on the unique mental health learning needs of young people.

Ashley Lamantia (she/her) is a dynamic educator and non-profit manager, leading meaningful mental health literacy, anti-stigma, and prevention and promotion

initiatives in Calgary. Ashley's work has been recognized internationally and has been proven to increase knowledge of mental health topics, start important conversations, and encourage positive help-seeking behaviours within schools, communities, and workplace settings. Having completed a Master of Teaching Program, Ashley is passionate about the art of teaching and learning. Ashley joined the Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region in 2010 and is currently the Senior Program Manager - Community Education and Wellness. In this role, Ashley leads a team of top-quality facilitators and curriculum developers and is responsible for the overall management, design, planning, and implementation of several in-person and virtual education programs which teach, empower, and inspire more than 25,000 youth and adults each year.



Parenting neurodiverse children authentically
Jerry Firth

Parenting is a journey with many paths and without a map. The only way to move through this journey is authentically, even when it's difficult along the way.

Jerry Firth is a social worker and a father of neurodiverse teen children. He has sat on the Advisory Committee of the CYMH project for the past 3 years.

Lunch Break: Noon – 12:45pm (Nov 17/2023, Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
3:00am – 3:45am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)

Session Four: 12:45am – 2:00pm (Nov 17/2023, Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
3:45am – 5:00am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)

Importance of Shared Spaces on Youth Mental Health and Wellness
CYMH Youth Group: Anna, Dev, Kenneth, Milly, and Portia

Group Mentors: Julia Kao and Jensyn Wallan

Anna, Dev, Kenneth, Milly, and Portia are middle-high school students or a recent graduate from High school in Alberta. They have been involved in the CYMH project with various capacities that include group participant, volunteer, and project assistant. The activities they have been participated consists of the photo story group, web-based application co-creation focus group, community forum, data analysis on the data gathered from the photo story groups and the web app focus groups, and most importantly the development of this CYMH Symposium. They have brought in insightful youth perspectives and youthful energy to the CYMH project. They are champions of youth mental health and wellness!

In this youth led session, the youth group will share with the audience of why shared spaces (a.k.a. third spaces) is important for young people, specifically youth from the equity deserving groups, who are girls, Indigenous youth, racialized minorities youth, youth with (dis)abilities, and youth from the LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Voices that are Untold - Understanding Mental Health of Hong Kong Teenagers
Alan, Donia, Kelvin, and Sanly
CYMH Project Assistant: Eric Tsang

Alan, Donia, Kelvin, and Sanly are middle-high school students in Hong Kong. They have been involved in the CYMH project as participants of the Photo storytelling group. School students in Hong Kong often find themselves marginalized and silenced, resulting in their mental health being rarely acknowledged nor discussed. The activities in the Photo storytelling group gave them opportunities to express their perspective of mental health through the lens of the camera. Adolescence can be a challenging time, with academic demands and heavy workload adding to the stress, these students have found ways to navigate through these difficulties by pursuing their interests. The emotional and mental well-being of teenagers in Hong Kong is closely related to their academic responsibilities. Through their own interests and hobbies, these students have found ways to tackle the challenges of growing up while maintaining a healthy and balanced life.

Mr. Eric Tsang Man Yiu is a registered Social Worker in Hong Kong and Project Coordinator of Positive Education Laboratory (Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences, City University of Hong Kong). Experienced and specialized in Positive Psychology and strength-base approaches to improve mental health of children and adolescents, Eric supports the CYMH Project as Project Coordinator in Hong Kong and is the mentor for this youth group to prepare for this presentation.

Sharing by Youth in Alberta
Anna, Dev, and Kayson
CYMH Project Assistant: Candice Menzies

Anna, Dev, and Kayson are youth volunteers and project assistants on the CYMH Project. The activities they have participated in consists of the photo story group, web-based application co-creation focus group, community forum, and the Symposium Task Group.

Candice is a mother of two, has a social work training background, and have been working in the educational and social services sector for over 15 years. Candice was a former social practicum student on the CYMH Project, while completing her undergraduate degree in social work. Candice continues on as the CYMH Project as project assistant and is one of the three co-organizers of this Symposium.

This youth group will share some observations they have among their peers or through their involvement in the CYMH Project on the areas of:

- 1) what mental health challenges young people face these days?
- 2) what coping methods to address mental health challenges you think is workable for youth?
- 3) if you have something to tell the adults (e.g., parents, teachers, school counsellors, etc.) what they could do to promote youth mental wellness, what would you say?
- 4) Anything they would like to say about youth mental health.

Candice will share from a parent of teen children perspective on those areas.

**Break 2:00pm – 2:15pm (Nov 17/2023, Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
5:00am – 5:15am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)**

**Session Five: 2:15pm – 4:00pm (Nov 17/2023, Edmonton, Alberta Canada Time)
5:15am – 7:00am (18 November 2023, Hong Kong/Singapore Time)**

**Refugee and Immigrant Counselling in Schools Program:
Innovating ways to address gaps in service for immigrant and refugee teenagers
in schools**

Peter Driftmier, MSW, Kindred Connections Society, Calgary, Alberta

The immigrant and refugee student population in Calgary schools has grown rapidly in recent years, but mental health supports tailored to these students' unique needs has not kept pace. Kindred Connections Society recently launched its Refugee and Immigrant Counselling in Schools (RICS) program as a pilot across selected junior and senior high schools throughout Calgary. This presentation will describe some of the unique successes and challenges RICS students and their families face with mental health and some of the lessons learned by RICS staff.

Peter Driftmier, MSW, RSW, is a counsellor with Kindred Connections Society's new Refugee and Immigrant Counselling in Schools pilot program. He completed his master's degree in Social Work with a clinical focus on mental health and addictions, and has other community work experience in human rights, as well as economic and social justice. What he loves most about working with youth mental health is hearing the interesting, thoughtful, and brave ideas articulated by students about making our world a more compassionate and caring place.



Family and System Support Program

Tammy Monro, Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Family and System Support Program is a program that supports parents and caregivers through their child's mental health journey. This program focuses on providing reliable and accurate information about each family's unique situation such as information about communication, counselling options, specific diagnoses, and receive help navigating and understanding community services. Parents and caregivers will be provided with an opportunity to meet with a community navigator with lived experience of having a child with mental health concerns to gain a better understanding of the supports and resources available to them in the Grande Prairie community. This program also offers caregivers and families a monthly support group focusing on creating a safe and open space to learn from the experiences of others in similar situations.

Tammy Monro is the Public Education and Outreach Director for the Resource Centre for Suicide Prevention where she oversees the development of the Connect and Youth programs. Tammy has a background in Psychology and Crisis Intervention with over 10 years of experience in the field supporting individuals in crisis and bringing awareness to mental health and suicide prevention. Born and raised in the Grande Prairie area, she has chosen to



remain here to work and raise her two teenaged children. Tammy has lived experience with mental health challenges of her own and supporting her children with theirs, which is what led her to field of mental health and helping others in similar situations.

**Open UP: Online Youth Emotional Support
Connie Cheung, St. James Settlement, Hong Kong, China**

Youth service partitioners make use of innovative projects and programmes to reach out to and engage young people who might not be keen in conventional mainstreaming services. It has been found that NGOs in Hong Kong are collaborating to provide online text-based crises and emotional support services for young people in Hong Kong with the purpose of encouraging help-seeking behaviours. In order to meet the emotional needs of young people, online-to-offline services transition for follow-up and interfacing with mainstream services were also found by using medium that close to youth trends.

Connie Cheung, Senior Manager, has over 18 years of experience in youth services in Hong Kong. She is supervising the Youth Services at St. James' Settlement, including the "Open Up" and "Cyber Youth Support Team". Apart from offering professional counselling services, the teams also conduct gatekeeper trainings in secondary schools and community in suicide prevention, facilitate services interfaces between mental health service providers in Hong Kong, and establish online-to-offline collaboration mechanism that promote comprehensive support for service users.



**Use of Unified Protocol with Children in Therapeutic Group Home
Dr. David Lindenbach, Hull Services, Calgary, Alberta, Canada**

This presentation will share the success and learning on the adaptation of the Unified Protocol, which is one of the most popular forms of cognitive behavioral therapy, for use with children living in a therapeutic group home at Hull Services in Calgary. Surveys and interviews were conducted with children, caregivers and staff to understand how to adapt

the program and whether the modifications were successful. Several changes were made to make the UP program more trauma-informed, such as using the term “caregiver” instead of “parent” since many children did not have parental involvement in their life. Additionally, frontline staff in the group home supported the children in practicing UP skills when caregivers were unavailable. Results show reduced anxiety among children after taking part in the program, providing preliminary evidence for the program’s effectiveness. These data suggest that the UP can be successfully adapted to support high needs youth living in a group home setting.

Dr. David Lindenbach is a Senior Research Scientist in the Pathways to Prevention centre at Hull Services and was recently approved for an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychiatry position at University of Calgary. His research focuses on how to prevent and mitigate the impact of developmental trauma on children and youth. He also has a keen interest in identifying how to adapt evidence-based programs for specialized settings.



Future Outlook Dr. Siu Ming Kwok and Victoria Wood

Dr. Kwok and Victoria will provide a high-level take-away from this Symposium.

Dr. Siu Ming Kwok is a Professor and Associate Director of the School of Public Policy in the University of Calgary. He is also a Co-Investigator on the CYMH Project. Dr. Kwok’s research interest is around youth in conflict with the law, specifically racialized youth in Canada. He is an advocate for university-community collaboration on promotion and early intervention as well as proper policy and program development towards youth mental wellness. All these efforts are considered as prevention from youth mental health problem, addiction, and potential involvement in criminal activities.



Victoria Wood is a Master of Social Work Student at the University of Calgary focusing on international and community development. She is from Ghana. Victoria is currently completing her social work practicum on the CYMH Project. She has brought valuable cultural and critical intersectional lens in addressing youth mental health issues, specifically for youth coming from the African Canadian communities.

