

Our world. Made better. Through mental health research.



Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) is a national, charitable organization that is dedicated to advancing new and existing mental health knowledge to better the lives of Canadians.

Collaborating to deepen the national impact of MHRC

This past year has been an exciting time of growth for Mental Health Research Canada, underpinned with planned investments and strategic partnerships to support our evolution. We have significantly reduced our operating costs while at the same time broadening our reach across Canada. Stakeholders – and in particular those who will benefit most from research – are our main focus to ensure that our work is relevant, useful and poised for impact. We aim to build bridges – between research and practice, between our organization and others in the sector, and between people with lived experience and funders.

To share knowledge, reduce costs, avoid duplication and strengthen outcomes, we collaborate with other like-minded organizations and partners. We believe that now, more than ever, our sector needs true collaboration for deep and broad impact.

Many important and exciting partnerships have taken root this business year; we have engaged with many respected organizations such as our federal and provincial governments, Research Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health, Mitacs and the Institute for Advancements in Mental Health. Together, we are stronger and more effective in advancing our shared goal of bettering the lives of Canadians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Akela Peoples".

CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Lian".

Chair, Board of Directors

TWO \$50,000 GRANTS AWARDED

In Partnership with the Institute for Advancements in Mental Health (IAM)

The result for Canadians: the advancement of two unique projects designed to increase resiliency among youth to reduce instances of suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people in Canada; yet Canada is the only G8 country without a youth suicide strategy.

Using *HARRY POTTER* to teach coping skills & resiliency to middle schoolers



**PRIZE-WINNER:
DR. MARK SINYOR**

*Assistant Professor of Psychiatry,
University of Toronto; and
psychiatrist at Sunnybrook Health
Sciences Centre*

A free three-month literature curriculum based on *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* does double duty: it also teaches coping skills and resiliency to middle schoolers. That's because the book is embedded with J.K. Rowling's use of cognitive behavioural therapy to overcome depression. Sinyor and his team have been developing this curriculum for four years in partnership with educators and students. Thanks to support from Google, an online version is now being developed, which gives this curriculum the potential to impact middle schoolers Canada-wide. Six countries have already implemented this powerful resource.



Preliminary research findings related to the curriculum's use have shown statistically significant improvement in students' overall coping and the reduction of anxiety and depression scores. Sinyor's research will evaluate the online curriculum's effectiveness by assessing the students before and two periods after its completion.

Giving remote communities a BOOST online through peer support

Be Outspoken and Overcome Stigmatizing Thoughts (BOOST), developed by Bowie and his team, is a group intervention for young people with psychosis that mixes cognitive behavioural therapy with peer support to overcome internalized stigma, and enhance their self-esteem and quality of life.

Co-created and co-facilitated by people with lived experience, the therapy consists of eight online sessions delivered to individuals living in underserved communities in multiple provinces. Bowie will expand this intervention to include therapeutic methods that address suicidality, incorporate materials for family and friends of the person with psychosis, and undertake follow-up assessments over the long term.



PRIZE WINNER: DR. CHRISTOPHER BOWIE

*Professor, departments of Psychology & Psychiatry,
Queen's University in Kingston; and Head Consulting
Psychologist for Heads Up!*



MHRC funds Canadian component of global study on mental health research funders

This first-ever global study, by the **International Alliance of Mental Health Research Funders**, examines mental health research spending. We are pleased to fund the Canadian component of this study, which will provide a baseline of how much is being spent on mental health research, what areas are being funded, and how much is being spent on research activities. Report of the study's findings is due in fall 2020.

Collaboration with the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child & Youth Mental Health on three \$100,000 grants

Mental illness affects 1.2 million children and youth in Canada and at least one in five children and youth in Ontario; five out of six these children and youth will not receive the treatment they need in the province. The solutions will require, at least in part, innovative technological approaches.

A joint call for proposals on e-mental health solutions was launched in early 2020. An esteemed Advisory Group was struck to make recommendations on the proposals that have the potential for the greatest impact on children, youth and their families in Ontario – and ideally beyond. Award recipients will be announced in summer 2020.



PURNIMA SUNDAR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ONTARIO CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR
CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

"It has been a real pleasure - and extremely valuable - to partner with the MHRC team to develop and jointly launch our Child/Youth e-Mental Health Impact Grants. We look forward to collaborating with MHRC again on our next grant. This will enable us to leverage MHRC's expertise and national connections to support innovation and 'scaling up' within the province and across Canada."

www. Our workplaceMH.ca Initiative

70% of businesses in Canada lack a workplace mental health strategy

One in five Canadians lives with mental health challenges. The hardest hit are employed Canadians in their early and prime working years. Employers also feel the effects of poor mental health on their business – via absenteeism, decreased productivity and increased health care costs. Despite this, 70% of businesses in Canada do not have a workplace mental health strategy in place, even though for every \$1 invested there is a return of \$1.62, according to a 2019 Deloitte study.

We responded by:

- Scheduling important convenings in multiple provinces with employers to gain insight and inform our path forward.
- Reaching out to respected partners across Canada's mental health landscape to curate and share their evidence-based resources. Instead of creating new knowledge, we chose to collaborate and help mobilize the useful knowledge that already exists.
- Creating **workplaceMH.ca** to promote these resources.
- Establishing Canada's first annual **Workplace Mental Health Day** on the third Wednesday in April.

Due to COVID-19, this initiative was paused; when it is safe and appropriate, we will re-launch.

OUR RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC:

Partnering on COVID-related national polling & research calls

When the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic, we stepped up to the challenge of the global crisis, which has sweeping implications for mental health. MHRC assessed needs and, being nimble and collaborative, was able to pivot quickly, pressing “pause” on some initiatives and granting announcements in favour of more urgent work.

Making sound funding and policy decisions requires good, timely data so we consulted with many stakeholders to assess what would be needed. We developed a national poll to assess COVID-19's impact on the mental health of Canadians and sourced funding to continue polling over the next year. In a matter of weeks, we also began work on a research call on COVID-19's impact on the mental health of children, youth and families in multiple provinces: Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Ontario, Newfoundland/Labrador, Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

2019-2020 FINANCIAL & OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

MHRC is a newly national organization, with a 55-year provincial history. As such, we are in a Board-approved, capacity-building phase to invest in our growth.

294% **INCREASE** IN
TOTAL FUNDRAISING REVENUE



In the fiscal year 2019-2020, we moved to deferred accounting from revenue accounting. As we build research calls and project teams to support these efforts, all funds raised for research may not be recognized until the next fiscal year when fund disbursement begins.

14% **OVERALL DECREASE**
IN OPERATIONAL EXPENSES
DESPITE GROWTH



4 **NEW MEMBERS** APPOINTED
TO NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5 **NEW RESEARCH GRANTS**
TOTTALLING \$400,000



4 of 5: **Bilingual**



A **NEW COMMITMENT** TO CO-FUND
UP TO 10 \$15,000 **STUDENTSHIPS**
PER YEAR FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS



FOUNDATIONS LAID FOR
10+ **NEW PARTNERSHIPS**
CANADA-WIDE



200+ **ORGANIZATIONS & NGOS** ENGAGED
IN ALL PROVINCES & TERRITORIES



UP TO 87% **INCREASE**
IN FOLLOWERS ACROSS
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Our complete audited Financial Statements are available on our website (www.mhrc.ca/annual-reports).

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Your increasing support fuels our activities and deepens our impact in the lives of Canadians.

IN HONOUR OF:

Julio Arboleda-Florez
Nelda Faye Brown
Christopher Coogan
Rocco Frangiapane
Ryan Forsyth
Audrey Sarah Bernice Hurley
Margaret Green
John Leyzer
Daniel Mark
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THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS CANADA-WIDE

We are grateful to work with – or receive support from – organizations across Canada to advance mental health research.



Ontario Centre of Excellence
for Child & Youth Mental Health
Centre d'excellence de l'Ontario en santé
mentale des enfants et des adolescents



Institute for
Advancements in
Mental Health



Queen's
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Psychological health and
safety in the workplace —



Prevention, promotion, and guidance
to staged implementation



International Alliance of
Mental Health Research Funders



United Way
Centraide
Canada



Workplace Strategies
for Mental Health

Compliments of Canada Life

The Working Mind



ELEPHANT
IN THE ROOM
ANTI-STIGMA
CAMPAIGN



Mood Disorders
Society of Canada
Société pour les troubles
de l'humeur du Canada