

Network News

Provincial Mental Health & Substance Use Network

Welcome to the December 2022 issue of Network News!



About the Network

The Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Network (the Network) is an initiative stewarded by BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services (BCMHSUS).

It advances system-level improvements in complex mental health and substance use care in B.C. By bringing together a wide range of stakeholders — including people with lived and living experience (PWLLE), families, health-care professionals and representatives from related sectors — the Network identifies issues, shares ideas and facilitates knowledge translation and exchange to advance system-level improvements in complex mental health and substance use care in B.C.

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Network in action

Launch of the Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use ECHO

The Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use ECHO is a collaborative virtual learning community dedicated to building capacity to enhance services, improve care and address unmet needs of people with mental health and substance use challenges in B.C. ECHO works to **democratize knowledge, building competence and confidence among care providers from across disciplines, settings and sectors**. Each free, online ECHO session includes a presentation by a subject matter expert, a case presentation by one of the participants, and a collaborative discussion to develop recommendations that can be applied in practice.



ECHO launched this fall, with three sessions focused on important, foundational topics. Two series will be launched in winter 2023, aimed at providers supporting people in 1) complex care housing (CCH) settings and 2) health-care settings. [View the ECHO fall 2022 schedule.](#)

We encourage anyone interested in joining this community of practice to [register](#) for the Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use ECHO. For more information, visit BCMHSUS.ca/echo or contact echo_bcmhsus@phsa.ca

Needs assessment

A new housing and health-care [framework](#) that aims to provide enhanced supports for people with complex needs related to mental health and substance use issues is currently being implemented in B.C. **The Network is leading a needs assessment to better understand the diverse needs of care providers** working in this sector — known as complex care housing — to ensure they can appropriately support people with complex needs. The primary purpose of the needs assessment is to help shape and inform workforce capacity development initiatives so that they are **relevant and useful to their intended audiences**.

An ongoing consultation process — including surveys and interviews — has been conducted with housing and healthcare providers across three B.C. health authorities. Findings from the responses show that:

- **Half of those who work in complex care housing settings have less than two years of experience**
- **Most (~90%) do not have formal clinical training**
- **Many expressed a strong interest in educational opportunities**



A range of barriers have also been identified — varying between housing provider and health authority staff, as well as by region and geography — that greatly impact access to training. There was also variation with respect to respondents' perceived value of learning opportunities focused on principles and ideas, versus training to enhance and apply practical skills and knowledge in their day-to-day work. Further, while several skills were identified as fundamental for providers working with people with complex mental health and substance use needs, confidence in the ability to use these skills varied significantly among respondents.

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Complex care housing workforce capacity development

These initiatives present a variety of **training and education opportunities for housing and health-care providers**, and have been developed to offer something for everyone. These professional development opportunities will be accessible in a range of formats, including virtual presentations from subject matter experts, collaborative case discussions, and self-paced learning modules. The Network's ongoing needs assessment directly informed many of the topics and areas covered in these offerings.

Initiative	Description	Schedule	Contact
<u>Concurrent Disorders (CD) Competency Framework & Toolkit</u>	Competency-based virtual learning resource with modules, cases, tools, resources and simulations to improve skills for working with people with CDs.	The <u>Competency Framework</u> is live	<u>rumel.johal@phsa.ca</u>
<u>Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use ECHO</u>	Evidence-based virtual professional learning model that includes presentations, case-based learning, and discussion between participants and experts to build knowledge, competence, and confidence among service providers to improve the delivery of care. Recording of presentation available after each session.	Join via Zoom for bi-weekly sessions on Wednesdays from 12-1 pm	<u>ECHO bcmhs us@phsa.ca</u>
<u>Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Learning Rounds</u>	Virtual learning series on CDs and system-level concepts to support service delivery. Recording available after each session.	Join via Zoom on the 2nd/4th Thursday of the month from 12-1 pm	<u>LEARN.bcmhs us@phsa.ca</u>
<u>Therapeutic and Relational Security</u>	Trauma-informed practice model to promote safety and support at-risk clients in complex care housing settings.	Phased roll out with select providers; program expansion March 2023	<u>LEARN.bcmhs us@phsa.ca</u>

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Learning Health Systems

Learning Health Systems (LHS) facilitate ongoing knowledge translation and exchange, which generates **new learning and faster implementation** within the organizations that form the system. For the Network, this includes identifying, summarizing and sharing relevant evidence. This evidence is generated by the wisdom of lived/living experience, clinical expertise and research, and pertains to system-level gaps and issues in services and supports for people with mental health and substance use issues in B.C.. In addition, the Network helps to advance ideas and solutions to address these problems and better meet the needs of people who require complex mental health and substance use care.

Features of a LHS include

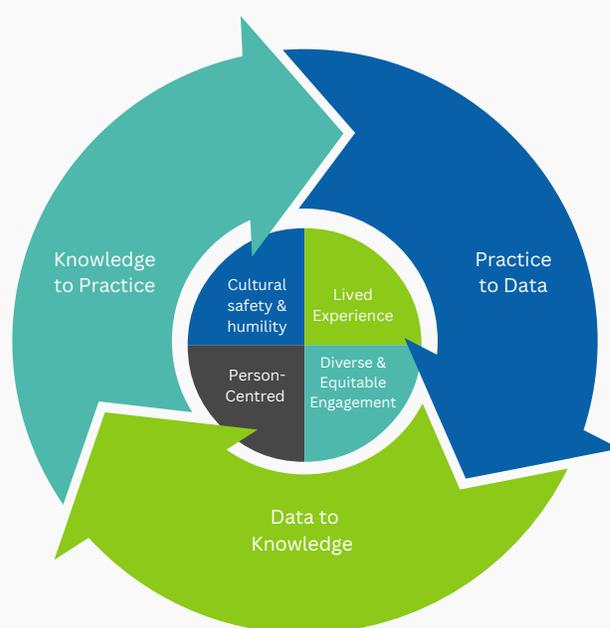
- A structural commitment to a two-way feedback loop between members of the system
- A partnership between research and clinical operations
- A robust data infrastructure
- Analytical capabilities to make use of existing clinical data
- A means by which to integrate new knowledge into the delivery of care

Core values and principles should also underpin a LHS. For the Network, these focus on being person-centred and ensuring the lived experience perspective is present and integrated into its collective decision-making and priority-setting. Other Network values include commitments to cultural safety and humility, and diverse and equitable engagement.

A collaborative ecosystem of partners and organizations, an infrastructure that draws together research, clinical practice, data and lived experience and a set of core operational values and principles all come together to create a LHS. When these co-exist, the LHS can perform meaningful, impactful engagement with its members, in which data is generated and deployed to improve care for those served by the system.

The Network, is structured in such a way that it **accelerates knowledge translation and exchange** among its diverse membership. In doing so, it is actively advancing and supporting each of the initiatives and projects described in this newsletter, as well as its broader strategic goals.

To learn more about LHS, please access the recording of the [November 24 Provincial Learning Rounds](#).



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The lived experience perspective

Evidence shows that supporting patient/client-identified priorities leads to better outcomes. That's why the Network established the Lived Experience Advisors and Partners (LEAP) team. The self-named team plays a critical role in ensuring the perspective of people with complex needs related to mental health and substance use issues inform the Network's activities. In alignment with "nothing about us, without us", the LEAP team plays an integral role in ensuring that the perspective of people with lived and living experience inform the Network's activities.

Co-chaired by Anita David, lived experience strategic advisor, and Krista English, senior Network lead, the LEAP team is made up of five remarkable humans. See below to learn a little more about each of them.



Chris Lamoureux



Mark Brady



Mo Korchinski



Pam Young



Shirley Paulsen

What do you like about being part of the LEAP team?

Chris: I love the conversations we have in LEAP. We discuss the difficulties in navigating complex systems and barriers to accessing services.

Mark: I am enthusiastic about the Network concept, with all participants interconnected and able to contribute their unique thoughts and experiences. Also, while I have significant lived experience with both mental health and addictions, I benefit and gain knowledge from participating with professionals in this field.

Mo: What I like about being part of the LEAP team is that my voice is heard and getting to work with people who have a passion to improve and help others with their mental health and/or substance use.

Pam: I love being a part of the LEAP team and meeting with other like-minded people who want to improve the care of folks who struggle with mental health and/or substance use.

Shirley: I like working with people who understand stigma and the complicated work of trying to resolve an issue bigger than any of us. There's a camaraderie; a common sense of purpose.



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Is there something you want people to know about the impact of this work?

Chris: I'd like people to know there's hope. There are folks advocating for them. We know the difficulties faced and are here to help.

Mark: In this work, we are essentially making efforts to address a need by providing input into the development of health improvement programs. As a group, if we take an idea and develop it from the "talk" stage to the "action and implement" stages, then we will have achieved a small success.

Mo: Having people with lived experience gives a different perspective and a passion to improve services to better serve individuals who are struggling with mental health and/or substance use issues.

Pam: Patient and family partners add a valuable knowledge of lived experience to the work and can have a great impact on the work by identifying issues someone without lived experience might not identify.

Shirley: Change is constant. Making positive change is difficult in an environment that is not static on one hand, and very stubborn on the other. We are demonstrating the positive effects of collaboration.

Tell us a fun fact about yourself!

Chris: I spent six months on the east coast using my carpentry skills assisting with the build of a 12-bed residential treatment centre.

Mark: The subject matter we discuss is serious. However, the occasional injection of humour is worthwhile to ground us all. I try to provide that relief.

Mo: I own a ceramic shop ([The Create Shop](#)) which I run with my daughter and granddaughters in Maple Ridge.

Pam: Saturdays are my favourite day of the week as I spend the day with my five-year-old granddaughter, who is a huge breath of fresh air after a busy work week.

Shirley: I am a certified (unlicensed) private investigator.

STAY TUNED

For the release of the inaugural **LEAP Report**, which summarizes dialogue + perspective sessions with the LEAP team and other PWLLE over the last year.

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LEAP team evaluation

Evaluation is critical to assess the effectiveness of policies, programs and initiatives; to identify what is working well and where improvements can be made. The Network's LEAP team members were recently asked to provide feedback on how effectively the Network is integrating their role and experience into its activities and operations.

The LEAP team identified several key strengths in terms of their engagement in Network initiatives.

What keeps you coming back?

- Strong focus and direction
- Topics are relevant
- Strong group facilitation
- Input into issues
- Knowledge exchange
- Peers

"I like that we have a direction, a set purpose. The topics are all dear to my heart. Organizations need to understand the real challenges."

Areas to improve included a desire to have more time to work together (in person), more opportunities to share and reflect on system-level issues and to ensure the role of LEAP is understood by other stakeholders.

The Network team appreciates the ideas and insights brought forward by this evaluation, and is committed to using these to inform the LEAP team's role and involvement in the Network's future activities.

Network team updates

BCMHSUS has two new staff members who coordinate and manage the Network's activities.

Richard (Rich) Taylor, BA, MA, is a project manager supporting the Network, including the production of this newsletter, and ECHO. Rich has previously worked in mental health and substance use policy with BCMHSUS and the provincial government. He's passionate about supporting system-level innovation and improvements in services, to better meet the needs of people experiencing complex mental health and substance use challenges.

Natalie Buglioni, BSc, MPH, is the Network's project coordinator. She's passionate about supporting community-based public health projects. Natalie brings a social determinants of health and health equity lens to her work and has experience working in research, community engagement and outreach. She's looking forward to partnering with the Network's stakeholders to elevate voices of community members.

The Network team thanks and sends its best wishes to former team members Patrick Crossman (communications specialist) and Ashley Radomski (Network lead), who have both recently moved on to new opportunities.

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Upcoming events

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Fall 2022

- [Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use ECHO:](#)
 - December 14: *Managing Challenging Behaviours* with Erika Penner, PhD, Provincial Assessment Centre, Community Living BC
- LEAP Team One-Year Anniversary Celebration:
 - Release of the *LEAP Report*; summarizing dialogue + perspective sessions with LEAP over the last year
 - In-person gathering to acknowledge the dedication, milestone and significant contributions of the LEAP team members



Winter 2023 - Engagement Opportunities

- Regional *Dialogue + Action* sessions:
 - The Network will be meeting with regional health authorities, PWLLE and other cross-sectoral stakeholders in a series of regional engagement sessions. These events will focus on better supporting people with complex needs related to mental health, substance use and other issues. Sessions will be held in communities across B.C. The dates are to be confirmed.
 - Contact NETWORK_bcmhsus@phsa.ca if you're interested in participating.
- Regional Focus Groups:
 - The Network is inviting focus group participation of PWLLE, including families, with complex needs due to severe MHSU issues or MH and/or SU issues and:
 - developmental/ intellectual disabilities;
 - acquired brain injury;
 - histories of extreme violence and/or current aggression or;
 - involvement with criminal justice system
 - The focus groups will aim to equitably include people from all regional health authorities, will be 90 minutes, held in mid-January and facilitated over zoom (camera and stable internet are required) by Anita David, lived experience strategic advisor. Honorarium will be provided in line with PHSA's compensation playbook. We will ask about perspectives on topics like: transitions between services, housing and housing supports and person-centered care etc. If you are interested, please email NETWORK_bcmhsus@phsa.ca before Jan 4, 2023.

Get in touch

