BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services
Research Challenge | Mentorship & the Role of the Mentor

The Research Challenge is an opportunity for BCMHSUS direct care staff to learn about research by doing it. This is accomplished through carrying out small research projects. Activities include forming a team that includes at least two additional members and a patient partner, attending research methods workshops, being paired with a research mentor and writing a proposal for funding of their clinical research project. Each funded team is awarded $5000 and has two years to complete the Research Challenge with assistance from their mentor.

Here's where you come in: We are seeking mentors for the teams participating in the next cohort of the BCMHSUS Research Challenge. The Notice of Intent (NOI) is due January 26, 2024.

What's in it for you? Besides the satisfaction of working with a team of point-of-care practitioners and helping them engage with research, there are many professional and academic benefits.

- You will have the chance to shape and provide input into allied health research projects that are directly relevant within various BCMHSUS clinical settings.

- You will be able to guide Research Challenge teams towards presenting their completed research at an event (e.g., Learning Rounds, Research Day, etc.), and perhaps publish their findings in peer-reviewed publications.

- You may be able to submit and present the project to your own professional associations.

- You will have valuable networking opportunities that may open the door for future research collaborations within BCMHSUS.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor:

1. Be available as a resource to your team members at various points throughout the research process.

2. Work with your team to refine the research area or question.

3. Meet with your team between the research methods workshop (Spring) and the proposal due date to develop their research proposal, choose research methods/study design/develop an appropriate timeline, and ensure their research project proposal is ready for submission. The team leader, NOT the mentor, is responsible for organizing these meetings.

4. Write a paragraph regarding your involvement in the development of the proposal, as well as your anticipated involvement in the project (if funded), to be attached to the proposal for funding.

5. Assist the team with the ethics application process, if funded (note: we will be offering hands-on ethics application workshops for funded teams).

6. The extent of involvement and the frequency of meetings is to be negotiated between the team lead, patient partner and the mentor. The team leader, NOT the mentor, is responsible for organizing these meetings.

7. Continue to meet with your team while they conduct all phases of the research project, including data collection and analysis, as well as the final report.

Note that other members of the Research Challenge Advisory Committee (RC-AC) will be available to the mentors (and to teams), should you have questions during this process.

What is NOT expected of the mentor:
1. To act as Team Leader – the team leader's responsibility is to coordinate the work of the team, including:
    a. identify team members and patient partner(s);
    b. develop initial and final drafts of the research question, initial and full application form;
    c. call and conduct team meetings;
    d. with the team, conduct the research and interpret the findings;
    e. draft the final report.
2. Be accountable for the quality of the research project – the mentor should provide advice that will contribute to the quality of the work, but the work belongs to the research team.

Time Commitment:
1. While there is no defined time commitment, as noted above we recommend that teams meet with their mentor regularly, especially during the proposal preparation phase and the ethics application phase.
2. The mentor should negotiate with the team leader/team how they will work together, for example:
    a. What type of meetings, how often, and for what purpose
    b. Mode of giving feedback on documents (usually by email) – what turn-around time is appropriate; expectations regarding responding to comments
    c. Extent of mentor's involvement in problem-solving - potential issues include completing consent requirements; low subject recruitment; need for timeline extensions; changes in team personnel; conflict with other commitments; leadership commitment. No single solution is likely to exist – what is needed is a process to negotiate with the team leader whether and how the mentor could be helpful to problem solving.

(Guidelines adapted from The Providence Health Care Practice-based Research Challenge with kind permission of Aggie Black, Research Leader for Professional Practice)