

# BCMHSUS RESEARCH

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## Message from the Executive Director



Dear BCMHSUS Research Community,

We are delighted to share with the broad research community our [BCMHSUS Research Plan](#).

Developed based on extensive reviews and consultations with researchers and clinical and operational leadership across BCMHSUS.

We are excited to move toward a vision that is much more provincial in nature, more closely aligned with the clinical mandate of BCMHSUS, and emphasizing the importance of knowledge translation and exchange and the value of lived experience. We have already made steady progress toward some of our key priorities to advance this vision, and look forward to partnering with you all for more!

Please share widely and send any feedback you have to [BCMHSUS\\_research@phsa.ca](mailto:BCMHSUS_research@phsa.ca).

Sincerely,

Jehannine



Need extra support during COVID-19?

PHSA: Visit Workplace Wellness: [Coping with COVID-19](#)

UBC: Visit <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/cov-id-19/#expressed> and <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits/liv-ing-well/mental-health/staff-faculty/>

## Comings & Goings



### Welcome to our new Knowledge Exchange Lead, Clayton Hamilton



We are thrilled to announce we have created and filled a brand new (second) Knowledge Exchange (KE) position at BCMHSUS. Clayton Hamilton started with us on September 19th, reporting to Deborah Ross and working in close partnership with Miriah Hodgins, our existing KE Lead, and others across BCMHSUS.

Clayton has worked within a variety of healthcare contexts across BC, providing leadership and support for evaluation within primary care at the Ministry of Health; knowledge translation, research, evaluation, and quality improvement within long-term care at Fraser Health; and, most recently, as the manager of policy, learning, and evaluation under the Community Action Initiative. Clayton is passionate about evidence and partnerships shaping the health system and the delivery of services, he brings a range of relevant experience and skills to his new role to strengthen our investment and capacity for knowledge translation and exchange.

Outside of work, Clayton enjoys spending time with his wife and three children, running 5Ks and watching movies. He plans to take up tennis in a few weeks and welcomes your advice on getting started!

Welcome Clayton to BCMHSUS!

### Introducing our new Research Data Management Coordinator, Leo Goudal



Leo obtained a Bachelors of Science in Biology from the University of British Columbia and recently completed a Master of Public Health from the University of Western Ontario. Prior to this opportunity, he worked at Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families in the knowledge mobilization portfolio. He has worked and volunteered with Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health within the area of harm reduction and crisis counselling. In this role as Coordinator,

Research Data Management - Mental Health, Leo will be providing REDCap support on research and QIQA projects. In Leo's words "I look forward to meeting and working with all of you!"

Welcome Leo!

## News & Announcements

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

Since the inaugural meeting of the Oak Street Campus Research Institutes Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) working group in December 2021, members have focused on improving community engagement, conducting a needs assessment and examining research in EDI.

This group aims to identify strategies that will benefit the research community while working in conjunction with the activities being supported at the PHSA and university levels. [Read more](#)

We are now requesting your help in assessing the EDI needs of our research community. If you are a trainee, lab staff, admin staff, researcher or in any other way affiliated with BCCHR, WHRI or BCMHSUS Research, you are invited to fill out the [needs assessment survey](#) by November 30.

For more information on this work, please contact [Research.EDI@cw.bc.ca](mailto:Research.EDI@cw.bc.ca).



## Highlighting Research

### Featured Researcher



#### Who are you?

I am a board-certified genetic counsellor and I am currently doing a PhD at UBC in Interdisciplinary Studies. My field of research is a mix of genetic counselling and health systems research. I am interested in implementation science and how our research can lead to better patient care and more sustainable healthcare delivery.

**Kennedy Borle**

#### What are you working on?

My doctoral research project is about understanding the unmet need for clinical genetic services in Canada and trying to develop strategies that improve equitable access to care. I am planning on conducting a national-level survey to estimate the prevalence of unmet need and explore factors that might be associated with unmet need. I am also going to do follow-up interviews with some survey respondents to get more information about the barriers to genetics healthcare that they have faced.

#### Who are you working with?

The I am co-supervised by Dr. Jehannine Austin and Dr. Larry Lynd. I work within the Translational Psychiatric Genetics Group in Dr. Austin's lab. My committee also includes Dr. Alison Elliott, Dr. Emmanuela Ojukwu, and Dr. Liisa Galea.

#### Why this project?

I am currently in the second year of my PhD, I have just submitted my research ethics board application. After I receive ethics approval I will be piloting my survey and then translating it into French, with the hope of sending it out in early 2023.

#### Fun fact:

I received a CIHR Health Systems Impact Fellowship so I will be spending the next year working with the BC Ministry of Health on a project related to the genetics workforce and regulation of genetic counsellors. I am super excited for the chance to learn a little bit more about how health systems and policy work in the real world!

### Recent Publications from BCMHSUS Researchers

- **Association of total peripheral inflammation with lower frontal and temporal lobe volumes in early stage bipolar disorder: A proof-of-concept study.** Bond DJ, Andrezza AC, Torres IJ, Honer WG, Lam RW, Yatham LN. *J Affect Disord*. [Read more](#)
- **Primary care for individuals with serious mental illness (PrSMI): protocol for a convergent mixed methods study.** Grudniewicz A, Peckham A, Rudoler D, Lavergne MR, Ashcroft R, Corace K, Kaluzinski M, Kaoser R, Langford L, McCracken R, Norris WC, O'Riordan A, Patrick K, Peterson S, Randall E, Rayner J, Schütz CG, Sunderji N, Thai H, Kurdyak P. *BMJ Open*. [Read more](#)
- **Differences in those who prefer smoking cannabis to other consumption forms for mental health: what can be learned to promote safer methods of consumption?** Lo LA, MacCallum CA, Yau JC, Barr AM. *J Addict Dis*. [Read more](#)
- **Impact of medications, mood state, and electrodeplacement on ECT outcomes in treatment-refractory psychosis.** Ainsworth NJ, Avina-Galindo AM, White RF, Zhan D, Gregory EC, Honer WG, Vila-Rodriguez F. *Brain Stimul*. [Read more](#)
- **Fever and Abdominal Pain in a 10-year-old with Autism.** Dunn CL, Wessler JM, Pragani JK, Stewart SE. *Pediatr Rev*. [Read more](#)
- **Altered activity in functional brain networks involved in lexical decision making in bipolar disorder: An fMRI case-control study.** Kusi M, Wong STS, Percival CM, Zurrin R, Roes MM, Woodward TS, Goghari VM. *J Affect Disord*. [Read more](#)
- **Functional Neurocognitive functioning in bipolar disorder: What we know and what we don't.** Keramatian K, Torres IJ, Yatham LN. *Dialogues Clin Neurosci*. [Read more](#)
- **Amisulpride Augmentation of Clozapine in Clozapine-Resistant Schizophrenia: A Case Series.** Poonia S, Sharaf M, Procyshyn RM, White R, Rafizadeh R. *Can J Hosp Pharm*. [Read more](#)
- **Real-Time Symptom Capture of Hallucinations in Schizophrenia with fMRI: Absence of Duration-Dependent Activity.** Gill K, Percival C, Roes M, Arreaza L, Chinchani A, Sanford N, Sena W, Mohammadsadeghi H, Menon M, Hughes M, Carruthers S, Woodward TS. *Schizophrenia Bulletin Open*. [Read more](#)

## Summer Studentship Research Projects Wrap up

Every year we invite [applications](#) for Research Studentships in a health-related research area that has direct relevance to improving the health of individuals across the lifespan, at risk for, or experiencing mental health and/or substance use issues.

This year we are highlighting three students who worked alongside BCMHSUS researchers, gaining valuable skills and experience in the process.



### Max Hemmerich (supervisor Dr. Christian Schütz)

#### Effects of Cannabinoids on State Impulsivity: A Pilot Study (*in progress*)

My research project aims to understand how cannabis might affect choice impulsivity after acute psychosocial stress. Choice impulsivity, the ability to delay gratification, is associated with psychosocial problems including substance use disorders and compromised treatment outcomes.

Participants are recruited to undergo three experimental conditions and as this is a pilot study and not complete, the results will provide information on areas for further investigation and procedure and protocol feasibility, including recruitment rate, appropriate dosing of cannabinoid products, adverse effects of cannabinoids, and power analysis for future studies.

“Thanks to the support provided by BCMHSUS, I was able to devote my time and make significant contributions to this exploratory research project. As I had hoped, this research solidified my plans to pursue graduate studies in psychology. I will continue with this project at the Behavioural Reward Affect & Impulsivity Neuroscience (BRAIN) Lab until I complete my BSc in April 2023”.



### Kyle Hui (supervisor Dr. Todd Woodward)

#### Functional Brain Networks Underlying Deficiencies in Impulse Inhibition in Schizophrenia

Impulsive behaviours have been associated with aggression in schizophrenia and may contribute to psychiatric hospitalization. However, the neural basis underlying these behaviours are not well understood. This study examined the functional brain networks underlying the two visual task experiments, a probabilistic reasoning task and an evidence integration task, in healthy controls and schizophrenia patients. Group differences were observed in the response network, a commonly activated network when a motor response is elicited, demonstrated by hyperactivity for schizophrenia patients in the probabilistic reasoning task followed by reduced suppression in both tasks. Hyperactivity and reduced suppression in the response network is concurrent with previous literature indicating this response may be related to impairment in impulse inhibition.

“For my future plans, I want to continue with my academic studies in addition to mental health research with the goal of helping to develop new therapeutic routes for patients suffering from mental health illnesses. I was initially drawn to the Cognitive Neuroscience of Schizophrenia (CNoS) Lab due to my interests in how brain imaging could be used in to quantify thought processes. Although this initial interest is still there, it quickly developed into much more. I am excited to use other tools to conduct research to look for trends in biopsychosocial factors that impact health”.



### Ariel Qi (supervisor Dr. Evelyn Stewart)

#### COVID-19 Era Psychiatric Illness among Canadians: Exploring Intersectionality of Vulnerability Factors

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians faced unprecedented life challenges. The Personal Impacts of COVID-19 study (PICS) examined predictors for clinically-relevant mental health outcomes following the first Canadian pandemic wave. PICS identified socioeconomic disadvantage, LGBTQ2S+ status, and lifetime medical diagnoses as predictors. Given the complexities in mental health determinants, there remains a need to investigate COVID-era mental health outcomes among Canadians through an intersectionality lens, that is, how social identities combine to create unique vulnerability profiles.

Outcomes were defined as presence or absence of probable depression, generalized anxiety disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder with functional impairment, and/or pandemic-era suicide attempt.

“There is limited research on the intersectionality of mental health determinants; and quantitative methods to assess intersectionality requires further standardization. Future work could explore how intersectional vulnerable identities fair over time with regards to mental health outcome. Additional work could also investigate explanatory factors for intersectional inequalities in mental health outcome”.

## Awards, Grants & Honours

### Congratulations to the successful proposals for the BC Mental Health Foundation

In efforts to revitalize the BC Mental Health Foundation, BCMHSUS leadership invited the Research Institute to put forward their proposals and we are excited to announce our two successful candidates.



**Dr. Christian Schütz**

**Project:** "Craving Associations to Relevant Electroencephalography Signals (CARES)"



**Dr. Tonia Nicholls**

**Project:** "R3: Recidivism Reduction and ReHUBilitation Project"

### Congratulations to Dr. Amanda Butler, Recipient of a Michael Smith Health Research BC 2022 Trainee Award!



The award will support her study, titled *Transforming prisons and improving health outcomes for people who use drugs: An evaluation of BC's prison-based therapeutic community*, which aims to identify the therapeutic communities-related mechanisms of change associated with health and criminal justice outcomes, and will involve three main components: a survey with therapeutic communities clients, interviews with therapeutic communities and correctional staff, and linked administrative data analyses. This study has the potential to identify promising approaches to supporting people with substance use disorders (SUD) who experience incarceration, and will add meaningfully to the policy initiatives in BC focused on reducing overdose and increasing access to SUD care.

Dr. Butler recently completed her PhD in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, and will be joining the Department of Psychiatry, UBC and BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services as a postdoctoral trainee under the supervision of Dr. Tonia Nicholls and co-supervisor Dr. Jason Sutherland. [Read more](#)

## Research Opportunities

### Attention Research Assistants and Research Coordinators!

Join the CRCNet and connect with the clinical research community at BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre.

The CRCNet is designed to share information and resources to the C&W Research Community, where group members are able to send and receive emails, to and from the group. This may include information related to research protocols, processes, regulations, ethics, recruitment, training, education and relevant job postings.

To subscribe and for more information, please contact [reseduc@bcchr.ca](mailto:reseduc@bcchr.ca).

## Patient & Family Engagement

### Using co-design to improve research and care

By Katie Mai, Leader, Patient Experience and Community Engagement, BCMHSUS



"Co-design", or collaborative design, is the process of actively creating a solution in partnership with the people who are affected by the problem. It involves the use of creative and participatory methods to facilitate dialogue, ideation, testing and development of potential solutions. Compared to traditional problem-solving methods in healthcare and research, the process of co-design leverages insights from the population to rapidly prototype, iteratively refine, and ultimately, develop the best-fit solutions. Examples of co-design tools include storyboards and journey mapping.

Co-design is...

Moving From	To
Making decisions for people with lived and living experience	Making decisions with people with lived and living experience
Valuing professional expertise above all	Valuing professional and lived experience
Engaging only at councils and committees	Embedding co-design in everyday practice
Rushing to solutions	Slowing down to listen, connect, learn

Sometimes there are projects where there may be an aspect of co-design, where people with lived experience are invited to provide feedback or give input, but for something to be truly co-designed, people with lived experience are involved in **all phases** of a project, have a role in decision-making, direct the outcome of the project, are compensated and fully acknowledged for their contributions, and play a role in the implementation and evaluation.

To learn more about co-design, including how the process and tools can benefit your research, reach out to the Patient Experience and Community Engagement team at [engage\\_bcmhsus@phsa.ca](mailto:engage_bcmhsus@phsa.ca).

# The Knowledge Exchange

## New resources available to support knowledge translation and exchange planning

The BCMHSUS Knowledge Exchange team recently created a Knowledge Translation and Exchange (KTE) Plan [Worksheet and Guide](#) to support researchers and project teams across BCMHSUS to integrate KTE throughout their research or project lifecycle.

### Why create a KTE plan?

A good KTE plan increases the likelihood of your research having real-world impact. Planning for KTE helps you take a practical and evidence-informed approach to disseminating and implementing knowledge.

A KTE plan can also help you when applying for funding. Whether a KTE plan is explicitly required as part of your application or not, incorporating information from your KTE plan into your application can result in a higher quality application that clearly demonstrates how your initiative will engage key stakeholders and contribute to improvements in the health care system.

### What's included in a KTE plan?

The contents of your KTE plan will vary according to what's needed for your particular project or to meet the requirements of funding agencies. You may have been provided with a KTE plan template by your funding agency, but if not you can access the BCMHSUS KTE Plan Worksheet and KTE Plan Guide on our [website](#).

The BCMHSUS KTE Plan will walk you through answering the following questions:

- What is your main message? What problem are you trying to address? What practice are you trying to improve?
- Why does this message need to be shared? Why does the problem addressed by your research matter?
- Who are your project partners? Have you involved all stakeholders needed to achieve your stated goals/
- Who are your target audiences? What is important to know about each audience? Have you involved them?
- What barriers or facilitators exist? Why aren't people already doing the desired activity?
- How will you share your main messages? Do your strategies fit the context and needs?
- When will you implement your plan? What opportunities already exist for sharing this knowledge? What resources will you need?
- How will you know if you've been successful? What will be different after your KTE plan is implemented?

A KTE plan is not meant to be set in stone. As with the research process, KTE planning may evolve and be adapted. Be prepared to adapt and be flexible as you learn from and with your project partners.

### What's next?

Look for KTE-related workshops, coming in the new year!

## Upcoming Events

### Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Learning Rounds: Fall Schedule

Join Provincial MHSU Learning Rounds are virtual and take place on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month (except July/August), from noon-1:00 p.m. PST.

Please contact [learn.bcmhsus@phsa.ca](mailto:learn.bcmhsus@phsa.ca) for Zoom Meeting details.

Date	Title	Presenters
27-Oct	The whys and hows of cognitive assessment in complex and concurrent psychiatric disorders	Dr. Ivan Torres
10-Nov	Therapeutic Programming in Corrections	Leanne Kristofferson
24-Nov	Learning Health Systems	Dr. Lindsay Hedden
8-Dec	Lightning Talks	TBD



Interested in research opportunities at BCMHSUS? Get involved! Visit the following [link](#) and become a member.