

Guidelines

BCMHSUS Practice-Based Research Challenge 2024



BC MENTAL HEALTH
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES
Provincial Health Services Authority

What is the Research Challenge?

The Research Challenge is a structured process for direct care providers to learn about research and evidence-informed practice by conducting a small scale, practice-based, patient-oriented research project over an estimated 18-month period.

What kind of supports are offered through the Research Challenge?

Research Challenge participants are supported by education, mentorship, protected time (education straight time or backfill), and, for those teams who are granted an award to conduct their project, up to \$5,000 to cover the costs of their project.

Who can be involved?

BCMHSUS staff and physicians who have little to no research experience* and have an idea for a research project. Teams must include a team leader, 2+ other staff, and a lived experience partner. **Team leaders must hold a permanent 1.0 FTE direct care role with BCMHSUS.** Other staff may be part-time (0.5+ FTE).

*Research experience is defined as substantive past involvement one or more research projects (e.g., as research assistant, co-investigator, volunteer, etc.) that received funding and/or resulted in at least one academic publication.

I have research experience. How can I be involved?

The Research Challenge is intended to build foundational research-related knowledge and skills among direct care staff with little or no formal training or experience in research. For those of you with research experience, consider being a mentor or co-mentor for eligible teams! Mentors/co-mentors should be seasoned researchers who are either BCMHSUS staff or affiliated researchers.

I want to be involved, but I do not have a team. Can I apply?

Please email BCMHSUS_Research@phsa.ca and tell us about your areas of interests/specialization and we will try to match you with a team from your site/ program with shared interests.

Why should I participate?

For many reasons! The Research Challenge is a great way for interested staff to learn the basics of research in a supported and applied learning environment. We know that clinicians often don't have capacity to meaningfully engage in research or develop related skills. It is also an exciting opportunity to bring clinical experience/expertise together with that of people with lived/living experience to undertake research that reflects the needs of the population we serve, and has potential to improve practice.



How can I apply?

Interested teams must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) [form](#) by **January 26, 2024**. For questions and more information: BCMHSUS_Research@phsa.ca

What will be expected of Research Challenge team members?

Following the submission of an NOI, we will ensure that teams have support from operational leadership, provided all required information, and that they are eligible.

[All team members with accepted NOIs will attend a mandatory series of workshops covering the fundamentals of research \(see page 4 for details\).](#)

With guidance from their research mentor, teams will conduct a literature review and develop a research proposal by **June 28, 2024**. Proposals will be reviewed by a committee that includes researchers, clinical leaders, and people with lived/ living experience. Reviewers will assess for feasibility, relevance, and alignment with BCMHSUS mandate and priorities. Funding awards will be granted to most highly rated proposals.

Teams are expected to provide quarterly status updates to identify any obstacles and collaboratively facilitate ways to address them. Once projects are completed, teams will be invited to present their projects and related findings at a celebratory event!

We ask that all team members complete periodic evaluation surveys so that we can continue to learn and improve the experience for future participants.

How much time will my participation in the Research Challenge involve?

[The Research Challenge requires not only your time, but also commitment and motivation!](#)

Research Challenge participants should expect to spend time over 18 or so months on the following:

1. Attend all workshops (see page 4 for details)
2. Conduct literature review
3. Develop a research proposal
4. Submit for and obtain ethics and institutional approvals
5. Data collection and analysis
6. Develop Knowledge Translation and Exchange plan
7. Complete brief evaluation surveys
8. Provide quarterly status updates

You will also need to make yourself available for regular (e.g., weekly) team meetings and check-ins with your mentor(s). While some of this may be covered by educational straight time or backfill, you can expect to spend some time [beyond your scheduled work hours \(potentially an additional 5-10 hours per week\)](#). Remember that you are not doing this by yourself but as a team and a cohort, and with guidance from your research mentor. Team work makes the dream work! Our admin team is also available to support you with applicable processes, as you navigate this Challenge.



How do I find a mentor and/or a lived experience partner for my team?

If you have a pre-existing working relationship with a researcher or lived experience partner*, please approach them to see if they are interested in participating. Otherwise, we will match you with one, based on the information included in your NOI.

*Lived experience partner(s) cannot be a current client at BCMHSUS as it is considered a conflict of interest.

Why is partnership with lived experience partners important?

Engagement with patients, and their families and/or caregivers as partners throughout the research process enables the production of research findings that are relevant, accessible, and catered to the target patient population! Substance use research has typically been conducted without the involvement of people who use(d) substances, which often intensifies stigma. Information about how to involve lived experience partner(s) will be explored later on in the workshop series.

What will the Research Challenge funding cover?

Research Challenge awards are granted to teams whose proposals are most highly rated by the review committee. Funds are released to support research costs, once ethics and institutional approvals have been obtained. Eligible expenses may include: honoraria for lived experience partners and study participants; research assistant compensation; consultation fees (e.g., for data analysis); supplies; software or survey licenses; study travel costs; backfill or protected time for team members (pending operational approval). **All expenses must adhere to applicable ethics and financial guidelines.**

I need more support – who do I contact?

If you encounter any roadblocks or require additional assistance with regards to your research study or related processes, please connect with your mentor and/or email our admin team at BCMHSUS_Research@phsa.ca! We will do our best to ensure you are effectively supported.

Can team members be compensated for time spent on the Research Challenge workshops?

Protected time to attend workshops/training for the Research Challenge may be provided through educational straight time or backfill.

There are a lot of workshops, do we need to attend them all?

The Research Challenge workshops are designed to help your team build research capacity to conduct your practice-based project. **All workshops are mandatory.** If you require more support during the workshops, please connect with our admin team.

***If a member of your team has already completed [Tri-Council Policy Statement-2 training \(TCPS2, which is mandatory for ethics approval\)](#) and has a record of completion, there is no need to complete it again.** TCPS2 training is only required for team members who are actively involved in the research process (e.g., recruitment, data collection). It is optional for team members who play an advisory role. Please connect with our admin team if you have any questions.

Research Challenge Process

Winter 2024

January 26, 2024

Submit Notice of Intent application form

March 2024

Teams are matched with a mentor & patient partner if not yet completed

Spring 2024

April - May 2024

Attend educational workshops:

1. Launch Meeting (April 2024 - 1 hour virtual)
2. POR Modules (April 2024 - 1.5 hours virtual)
3. Workshop Day (May 2024 - full day in-person)
 - Literature search
 - Research methods
 - Proposal development & budgeting
 - Indigenous research paradigms

May - June 2024

Conduct literature review

POR Panel (June 2024 - 1 hour virtual)

Develop research proposal

Summer 2024

June 28, 2024

Submit research proposal

July 2024

Funding decisions made

Fall 2024

August-
December 2024

Attend research ethics workshops:

1. TCPS2 training (August-September 2024 - 4 hours virtual)
2. Ethics application overview (September 2024 - 1 hour)
3. Ethics application walk-through (September 2024 - 1 hour virtual)

Write research protocol

Submit request for ethics approval

Winter 2025

January -
December 2025

Conduct research, meet with your team (as needed) & provide quarterly progress updates

Attend Knowledge translation & exchange workshops (November 2025 - 2 hours virtual)

Winter 2026

January 2026

Present at knowledge exchange celebration event