



### Graduate Students and Interns at the Centre for School Mental Health

Front Row, L-R: Elizabeth Thornley, Marie-Michelle Boulanger

Back Row, L-R: Alexandra Smith, Melissa Read, Bradley Daly, Bridget Houston, Maria Ibanez, Cassandra Trevisani

Not pictured: Jessica Sommers, Courtney Cadieux, Elsa Trovarello, Amanda Kerry, Caely Dunlop, Arely Rodriguez Alcocer

### OUR GRADUATE STUDENTS & PSYCHOLOGY INTERNS...

are engaged in a number of enriching learning opportunities at the Centre including, but not limited to: research project experience, mentoring, and field experience in various parts of the country where they collect data and interact with youth. In addition, students are invited to apply throughout the year to participate in conferences such as the annual Banff International Conferences for Behavioural Science. Each of these experiences further the important work of the Centre for School Mental Health as well as the students' own academic studies at the Master or PhD level.



*My work at the Centre for School Mental Health has made a significant difference in my abilities as an applied researcher. Not only have I been granted the opportunity to collaborate with several mental health-related initiatives at the community and government levels, these experiences have culminated into a wealth of knowledge and skills that have driven my personal and career growth. Under the guidance of Dr. Claire Crooks, I have recently published an article on preventing problematic substance use through positive youth development.*

- Courtney Cadieux, Year Two MA Candidate

# NATIONAL TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROJECT ANNOUNCED



Peter Fragiskatos, MP for London North Centre announced on Wednesday, February 13 that Claire Crooks and her team have received \$5 million in funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health.

The project, a healthy relationships approach to violence prevention and mental health promotion with vulnerable youth will work over the next five years to address gaps in the area of violence prevention and mental health promotion programming for under-served populations. The project will

develop, implement, and evaluate programming for high-risk youth, LGBT2Q+ youth, Indigenous youth, and newcomer youth.

Programming will be adapted from the Healthy Relationships Plus (HRP) Program, an evidence-informed small-group program that promotes skills and protective factors required to prevent gender-based violence.

The focus of the funding is on teen dating violence prevention; however, the positive youth development approach taken by the HRP promotes positive relationship behaviours and prevents problematic substance use. Dr. Crooks comments, *"Our programming has been shown to reduce teen dating violence, but its impact is much broader. Our positive youth development approach gives youth the skills they need to develop healthy relationships, improve their mental health, and minimize problematic substance use."*

The funding will allow for scale-up and evaluation of program training in Ontario, Alberta, and Northwest Territories to serve under-served populations by implementing the tailored original HRP to meet the needs of these various in-need groups. Several mixed methods research components will contribute to building the field by addressing important gaps in current knowledge. National collaborators outside of province- and territory-specific areas will offer training, resources, and knowledge mobilization activities to other service providers and educators from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

The project is set to engage more than 2600 youth (in the evidence-informed programming), and provide training and resources to 540 facilitators and 875 pre-service educators.

To learn more about this project, click [here](#).

To read the official Government of Canada news release, click [here](#).



L-R: Juan Luis Suárez (Associate Vice President of Research at Western University), MP Peter Fragiskatos, London North Centre, Kathryn Eggert (Executive Director, Anago - Community Partner in Project), Claire Crooks (Director, Centre for School Mental Health), & Vicki Schwan (Dean, Faculty of Education)



# PARTNERSHIPS

Our team is excited to be starting a new partnership with the **Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU)**. TBDHU is spearheading a multi-year scale up project to bring the Fourth R to schools throughout the Thunder Bay district. They are working with Indigenous, community, and educational partners to make adaptations to the program to make it culturally relevant for their communities. They are partnering with the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Lakehead University to document lessons learned. In January some of our team travelled to Thunder Bay to participate in their first stakeholders meeting and learn more about how we can support this exciting project.



*Team members from Thunder Bay District Health Unit and Centre for School Mental Health*



*L-R: Alicia Lapointe, Claire Crooks, Susan Dale, and Meghan Fournie*

**Andrew Johnson**, PhD is an Associate Professor within the School of Health Studies at Western University. Most recently, Andrew joined the Centre for School Mental Health as an affiliated academic researcher and school mental health professional.

One of Andrew's primary research interests is in the area of lived experience of individuals with concussion. This general interest has resulted in a diverse portfolio of research projects, including policy analysis

within Ontario school boards, concussion treatment pathways in school-age children (at both the elementary and secondary school level), standardized methods for planning and pacing in return-to-work programming, and identification of barriers to reporting concussions among both adolescents and professional athletes. He has published in a number of domains related to concussion, having authored or co-authored more than two dozen articles related to the cognitive or psychosocial challenges experienced by individuals with neurological impairment, and another dozen or so articles directly related to brain injury and concussion.



Want to learn more about Andrew's research? Visit his [biography page](#) or contact him by email at [ajohnson@uwo.ca](mailto:ajohnson@uwo.ca).



To learn more about our affiliated academic researchers and school mental health professionals, click [here](#).

# PROJECT UPDATES

## Teach Mental Health

Mental illness most often begins in adolescence; yet the people who work with teenagers on a daily basis are often unprepared to recognize and understand mental illness. Teacher education programs rarely address mental health literacy, resulting in teacher candidates who are at a disadvantage when they enter the workforce. [TeachMentalHealth.Org](#) was developed to address this need based on the results of a National Scoping Exercise and input from more than 30 educational institutions and organizations across Canada.

Through a partnership with Faculties of Education from St. Francis Xavier University, Western University and University of British Columbia, TeenMentalHealth.Org has built a comprehensive mental health literacy learner resource for pre-service and practicing teachers.



Dr. Susan Rodger, Principal Investigator has worked closely with Teach Mental Health in support of the design, implementation and evaluation of the modular online curriculum. Dr. Rodger currently leads a team of researchers to improve the way we develop mental health literacy in teacher candidates through enhancing our course curriculum with online Teach Mental Health resources. This research helps us better understand how we can support teachers do what they do best, fostering healthy learners.

Are you a Canadian pre-service or practicing teacher looking for support your mental health literacy? Let this FREE course guide you through developing and expanding your knowledge. To register, click [here](#).

To learn more about Teach Mental Health, click [here](#).

## The Screen Challenge: Youth, Social Media and Safety

We all have the same goal in mind – the health, well-being and safety of our children.

The Screen Challenge: Youth, Social Media and Safety is a 60 minute live presentation for parents (and interested educators) to help address current issues and conversation starters associated with youth engaged in social media. Customizable to each audience, the following related topics are available for discussion: cyberbullying, sexting, self-esteem, sleep, addiction, and mental health. It's time to take action on understanding how to have appropriate and encouraging conversations with youth about positive behaviours in the digital world. This engaging presentation includes up-to-date statistics, current popular social media apps, and new and upcoming trends.



Erin Mills Connects in Mississauga hosts a presentation for their local community schools.

***"Adults don't need to argue. They need to listen, to pose scenarios, offer information without exaggeration, and try to guide – rather than yank - teenagers to safe choices." - Globe and Mail***

Parent and school groups -  
the future is here... get educated!

**NOW BOOKING PRESENTATIONS.**

To book a presentation, click [here](#).



# Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)



The STRONG program is a 10-week school-based intervention that was developed by experts from the National Center for School Mental Health in Maryland. The program was recently successfully piloted from April to June 2018 in five schools within two school boards in Ontario. As a whole, the pilot had many successes and was well-received. The program met an important need that was identified by schools prior to the program and there was a strong appreciation for this toolkit for newcomer students. The program is described as a good fit for the needs of the new students and there was a deep impact from youth connecting together, development of new skills, higher positive self-concept, and better overall functioning.

To read more about the findings from the pilot study, click [here](#). We are currently starting an expanded field test with revised manuals. Stay tuned!



# Preventing Problematic Substance Use Through Positive Youth Development

*Supporting Canadian school stakeholders to build on programs that work for positive youth development and prevention of problematic substance use*

The purpose of this project, in collaboration with Public Health Agency of Canada is to engage Canadian administrators, educators, and support staff in the use of upstream risk and protective factors that relate to early and frequent use of cannabis, broader problematic substance use, and other adverse social and health outcomes, such as violence and risky sexual behaviours.

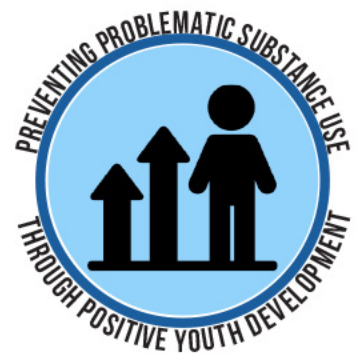
Aimed at youth between 11 and 18 years of age, the school-based prevention efforts specifically include shaping students' attitudes, social skills, and self-management skills, each of which are foundational for healthy development.

Members of the National Steering Committee for this project formed key messages together that educators and administrators should consider when preventing problematic substance use and encouraging positive youth development among youth. These upstream factors include strategies in the school and classroom for promoting well-being, ensuring a welcoming environment, and using effective programming.

Project leads Claire Crooks, Alicia Lapointe, and Courtney Cadieux hosted a number of consultations in Northwest Territories, London, Toronto, and Ottawa where participants from the education and public health sectors analyzed and discussed the developed Knowledge Translation (KT) products pertaining to the key messages. These groups were brought together for the opportunity to provide a diverse set of structured comments and feedback for the deliverables as well as recommend dissemination opportunities for the KT products.

KT products developed include: research briefs, newsletters, an infographic, and whiteboard videos. The project is currently in the review process and the KT products will be disseminated starting this spring.

To learn more about this project, click [here](#).





# THE FOURTH R

## Response to Ontario Government's Proposed Health and Physical Education Curriculum changes

The Fourth R does not believe that it is in the best interest of the well-being of Ontario students to revert back to the 1998 sexual health curriculum. This outdated curriculum does not explore many issues faced by students today nor does it equip our youth with the knowledge and skills to develop healthy relationships and explore the many concepts connected with mental health. Although we always welcome the opportunity to contribute to curriculum consultations and think it is a good idea to improve on existing curriculum, we do not think it should be done when it compromises our students' learning and development. We urge the Ontario Government to keep the current Health curriculum (including the Human Development and Sexual Health content) in place until after the proposed review is completed.

## 2017-18 FNMI Student Leadership Council Artwork unveiled

Indigenous students from the Thames Valley District School Board are invited each school year to apply for the FNMI Student Leadership Council - a culturally relevant leadership and personal growth opportunity for students as they work together on projects that build cultural awareness across TVDSB.

The council represents nine TVDSB schools including: Central Elgin, Parkside, Beal, Laurier, Glendale, Banting, Montcalm, Clarke Road, and Saunders. The council wraps each year up with a culminating group project; last year, students chose to create a polyptych painting - an artist creation of nine individual paintings (representing each school) that comes together to create one larger image.



*"As an artist I wanted to express myself in a way that incorporates my culture and heritage. We are connecting with our culture and in doing so, we are finding out who we are as well as getting to know each other. Something like this was very important because it helped us grow as individuals, helped us connect with our culture, raise awareness for FNMI youth, and allowed us to express who we are. I wanted to know more about who I am and this art project helped me do that" - Student, FNMI SLC 17/18*

## "What is the Fourth R?" Whiteboard Video

The Fourth R began in 2001 and was developed by a consortium of researchers, educators, and psychologists in London, Ontario, Canada. This whiteboard video shows our journey over the past two decades - the growth, the promises, and the associated research outcomes. We are currently in the process of translating the video to create French and Spanish versions!

Watch now! Click [here](#).





# RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

## Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

Hosted by the National Center for School Mental Health, Maryland in Las Vegas, Nevada  
October 11-13, 2018



L-R: Patricia Marra-Stapleton, Maureen Mackay, Kathy Short, Claire Crooks, Sharon Hoover pose for a photo following their presentation on STRONG



Alicia Lapointe (and Claire Crooks, not pictured) presents reasons for the development of the HRP for LGBTQ+ program



Alicia Lapointe and Claire Crooks

Hosted by the National Center for School Mental Health and the National Community of Practice on Collaborative School Behavioral Health, this annual conference offered participants a number of opportunities to advance their knowledge and skills related to school mental health practice, research, training, and policy. With an emphasis on a shared school-family-community agenda, speakers presented high-quality and evidence-based mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention strategies to deliver to students and families. Approximately 1,200 people attended the conference including clinicians, educators, administrators, youth and family members, researchers, primary care providers, advocates, and other youth-serving professionals.

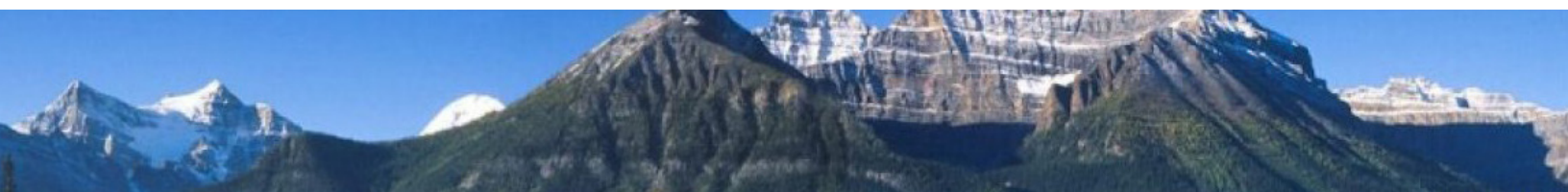
To learn more about our presentations at the Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health, click [here](#).

## Banff International Conferences on Behavioural Sciences: *Equipping Schools and Communities to Support Student Mental Health*

March 17-20, 2019

The 2019 Annual Banff International Conferences on Behavioural Science will be held March 17-20, 2019 at the Banff Centre in Banff, Alberta. The conference provides a forum where researchers, practitioners and policy makers can interact to discuss contemporary practice and research. This year, the conference will highlight both the challenges and opportunities of school mental health, with an emphasis on identifying implications for mental health professionals, educators, administrators, and researchers. A number of workshops and plenary keynotes will be led by leaders from across Canada and the US.

Are you planning, implementing, or evaluating mental health services for students in elementary and secondary schools or a community partner who supports this work? If so, learn more about the Banff International Conferences on Behavioural Science, by clicking [here](#).







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