



With an eye to helping youth forced to flee the war in Ukraine, a collaborative team including Dr. Claire Crooks, the director of the Centre for School Mental Health, travelled to the Czech Republic to train a group of social workers and psychologists on the mental health program STRONG (Supporting Transition Resilience of Newcomer Groups).

Crooks, along with Dr. Sharon Hoover of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and Dr. Jeff Bostic from Georgetown University, shared STRONG with 34 mental health professionals engaged in helping children and teens traumatized by the war.

Since February, an estimated 130,000 school-age youth have entered the Czech Republic from Ukraine with varying degrees of psychological distress due to the Russian invasion. More are internally displaced, staying within Ukraine's borders but forced to leave their homes.

Amid resettlement in different cities or countries, the children and teens now have to adjust to new environments and navigate the mental health effects of war, in addition to maintaining their education. It's a combination that can lead to difficulties with school attendance, learning and social adjustment.

"Fleeing war is not a usual human experience," explained Crooks. "So helping children understand how they can process the feelings and reactions to their experiences is crucial to their ongoing development."

Continue reading
**Researchers collaborate on
mental health training to
support Ukrainian children.**





PARTICIPATING IN CULTURAL TRADITIONS: PARTNERSHIP FOR CREATING A CULTURALLY ADAPTED HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM

The RISE-R project aims to address identified gaps in the areas of violence prevention and mental health promotion through healthy relationship programming.

As part of RISE-R, staff from the Centre for School Mental Health (CSMH) visited partners in the community of Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation (ANSN). Community members and CSMH have been exploring the creation process of a culturally relevant version of the Healthy Relationships Program-Enhanced.

In partnership with ANSN Social Development Youth Hub, ANSN School, the Trauma-Response Advisory Team, Community Elders, Spiritual Leaders and Knowledge Keepers, the three-day visit at ANSN grew from two years of partnership work and began the process of creating a cultural adaptation of the strengths-based youth relationships program for the unique context and culture of this Nakota First Nation community.

Although meeting online regularly for many months, this was the first in-person gathering and featured several days of learning about and participating in traditional teachings and important aspects of a cultural adaptation: community values, history, and language.



Claire Crooks and Andrea Delaney (CSMH, left and centre) gifting artwork by Mike Cywink, Thunder Day Visions, to Sherry Letendre (ANSN, right).



Adaptation Day at ANSN, with Elders, Spiritual Leaders and Knowledge Keepers sharing their insights on adapting the Healthy Relationships Program.



As part of Adaptation Day, graphic artist Aaron Russell (right) captured the voices of Elders into a large-scale piece of artwork; Russell is pictured with Sherry Letendre.

Since the spring visit to ANSN, community member Sherry Letendre travelled with her sisters to London to speak about her experiences working with CSMH.

Taking part in RISE-R Partner Day in September, alongside CSMH Indigenous Projects Manager Andrea Delaney, Letendre shared principles of creating a cultural adaptation and stories as examples of the ANSN-CSMH partnership and journey.

Our deepest gratitude and appreciation are extended to the Letendre family and the ANSN for inviting and welcoming CSMH to their community.

For more information about RISE-R, visit the [RISE-R Project page](#).

PROMOTING EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES IN SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

The Innovation and Scale Up (ISU) Lab is a partnership between CSMH and School Mental Health Ontario that aims to increase the uptake of high-yield school mental health innovations in the province.



With a mission to examine and advance evidence-based and implementation-sensitive approaches in school mental health, part of the ISU Lab's work is to mobilize research evidence to enhance the quality and sustainability of these student programs.

The Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health is publishing a special issue dedicated to sharing lessons from promising approaches to school mental health, authored by researchers and practitioners who support students' mental health and wellness.

A selection of the issue's articles are freely available online, including:

A Structured Conceptualization of Implementation-Sensitive Interventions for School Mental Health

Authors: Claire Crooks, Caely Dunlop and Kathy Short

Implementation-sensitive approaches to school mental health have been proposed as being responsive to the needs of the education system. The authors worked with a group of expert stakeholders to identify a wide range of characteristics of implementation-sensitive approaches.

Partnering to Support a Mindfulness-Informed Social and Emotional Learning Program in Elementary Schools: Strategies Aligned with the Quality Implementation Framework

Authors: Andrea Delaney, Claire Crooks, Karen Bax, Sandra Savage and Terry Spencer

In this case study, the authors use the Quality Implementation Framework (QIF) to identify implementation strategies within the context of a six-year university-school board partnership that implemented and evaluated the MindUP program in Southwestern Ontario. Attention to all four phases in the QIF were found to contribute to the success of the initiative.

Implementing a Brief Evidence-Based Tier 2 School Mental Health Intervention: The Enablers and Barriers as Seen through a Clinical Team Supervisor Lens

Authors: Claire Crooks, Alexandra Fortier, Rachelle Graham, Morena Hernandez, Eve Chapnik, Courtney Cadieux and Kristy Ludwig

This paper describes the implementation of BRISC, a brief evidence-based intervention within an implementation framework; the authors provide a five-year retrospective on the successes and remaining gaps of the approach.

Learn more about the ISU Lab on the CSMH website.

CELEBRATING THE 2022 RAY HUGHES FOURTH R CHAMPION AWARD RECIPIENTS

Dianne Lafferty and Michele Van Barga, two exemplary leaders in education, have been presented with this year's Ray Hughes Fourth R Champion Awards.

Conferred annually, these awards recognize individuals and/or groups who steward the implementation of a Fourth R program in their school or community to foster healthy youth relationships and reduce risk behaviours.

Lafferty is the principal of the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School that serves Behchoko, the largest Dene community in the Northwest Territories. For more than a decade, she has advocated for Fourth R programming — both in administrative roles and as a teacher. Lafferty brought the Fourth R to her region and has organized countless training and information sessions for school administrators and senior officials at the Department of Education. "Dianne introduced the Fourth R to one single school and today, because of her determination and commitment, the Fourth R is in every school in the Northwest Territories. She truly is a community champion," added Ray Hughes, one of the co-founders of the Fourth R and a former educator with 30+ years' teaching experience.

Van Barga has been an educator for almost three decades, focused on health and physical education for most of her career. Currently the department head of Health and Physical Education, she's long been a proponent of the Fourth R, having been involved with the program since the late 1990s. Van Barga has also trained other educators across Canada on the Grade 9 Fourth R framework. "Michele is a strong advocate of the Fourth R and believes it makes a difference in the lives of youth," explained one of Van Barga's colleagues when nominating her for this year's award.

Congratulations to the 2022 Ray Hughes Fourth R Champion Award Recipients!



Dianne Lafferty



Michele Van Barga



The Fourth R is a program designed for educators and other frontline professionals working with youth.

Created by David Wolfe, Claire Crooks, Peter Jaffe and Ray Hughes — the awards' namesake — Fourth R initiatives use best-practice approaches to target forms of violence, including bullying, dating violence, peer violence and group violence, and provide opportunities to engage students in developing healthy relationships and decision-making skills.

For more information about the Fourth R, visit YouthRelationships.org.

UNITING OUR NATIONS

As **The Fourth R: Uniting Our Nations program** for Indigenous youth continues with local elementary and high schools, program liaison and student mentor Mike Cywink also devotes his time and energy to art as a way to share stories from Indigenous communities.

On September 30, as part of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day, a **seven-panel mural** that Cywink helped paint was unveiled.

The “We Are Still Here” outdoor mural is displayed at the N’Amerind Friendship Centre in London, and each panel tells its own story to honour the legacy of residential school survivors and the children who were lost through Canada’s residential school system.



“We Are Still Here” unveiling, September 30.



CREATING EQUITABLE SPACES FOR 2SLGBTQIA+ YOUTH

The strengths-focused Healthy Relationships Program (HRP) for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth helps build resiliency and promotes well-being among gender, sexual, romantic, and sex-characteristic minority youth. Educators and youth workers deliver the program in Gender and Sexuality Alliances, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth group settings, or in formal learning spaces that align with curricular expectations. Program sessions or activities can be integrated into everyday teaching and learning practices to cultivate and maintain equitable spaces.

CSMH research scientist, Dr. Alicia Lapointe, took part in PREVNet’s annual meeting in September, where they facilitated **a workshop** on infusing queer- and trans-informed resources, such as the HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth, in school and community learning environments. A tip sheet related to this workshop on creating equitable spaces will be available on the PREVNet website.

Learn more about the HRP for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth.



**RECENTLY
PUBLISHED!**

**The online environments
of sexual and gender minority
youth: Contexts of risk
and resilience.**

Journal of Family Strengths.

**Promoting 2SLGBTQIA+
affirmative and equitable
teaching and learning
practices.**

BCTF Teacher Magazine.

CENTRED ON STUDENTS

Graduate students are a vital element of CSMH. They support research initiatives centred on youth mental health and through their passion for positive social impact, bring fresh insights to the team.

For several of our students, this past summer meant successfully defending their theses and capping off graduate research work with CSMH.

Congratulations to Alexandra, Amal, Emily, Euan, Katarina, Nicole and Sue on their successful defences!



Alexandra Smith, PhD



Amal Baobaid, MA



Emily Barry, MA



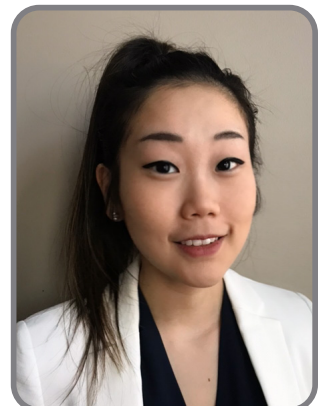
Euan Fraser Tait, MA



Katarina Guillen, MA



Nicole Schilling, MA



Sue Kim, MA

SUMMER STUDENTSHIPS AT CSMH

Student experiential learning is a key element of Western's Faculty of Education strategic plan, aligning with its *Professional pathways and academic excellence* pillar. As part of the faculty, CSMH strives to embed experiential learning across a breadth of research opportunities.

Demonstrating this commitment to connecting theories and knowledge with real-world applications, for the first time this summer, CSMH offered eight studentships to nurture interest in youth mental health research.

Through this program, undergraduate and graduate students gained practical research experience and collaborated with faculty members across a range of project areas:

- Trauma-informed training: Evaluating the impact on child and youth mental health outcomes
- The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health needs and services of children and youth
- Emotion regulation in clinically referred high-risk babies, toddlers and preschoolers
- Screen time use in toddlers and school-aged children during the pandemic: A scoping review
- A qualitative analysis of teacher candidates' use of psychoeducational reports
- Perceptions of inclusion in informal education settings
- Developing a Daily Physical Activity (DPA) toolkit for elementary school teachers
- Young people, mental health, and digital technologies during COVID

In September, the students presented their summer projects and learnings at a special research day event.

With faculty, research supervisors and CSMH staff in the audience, the students shared outcomes of their work and took part in a panel to discuss their projects' research methodologies, key learnings and next steps.



2022 CSMH Summer Research Studentship recipients and Research Day panellists (left to right): Tatiana Dimos, Aide Chen, Eve Chapnik, Sue Kim and Abigail Withers.



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