

THE RESEARCH NOOK

A Waypoint Research Institute Newsletter

In this edition of *The Research Nook*:

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SHINE THE LIGHT FUNDRAISING GALA: A SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

The WRI is delighted to be featured at Waypoint's 2023 Shine the Light Gala on Friday, December 8, 2023 at 6PM at the Midland Cultural Centre.

Over the last 18 months, the WRI has doubled in size from 20 staff to over 40 staff. We've secured over \$1.5 million in new research grants and expanded projects in forensic mental health, substance use, child and youth mental health, and patient-oriented research. We've also brought on an Implementation Scientist to support the more rapid uptake of research evidence into practice throughout the hospital.

With the funding raised through this year's Gala, we will...

- Build our capacity to conduct patient-centered clinical trials research
- Expand our research in supporting people impacted by intimate partner violence
- Use research evidence to find community-based solutions to substance use and gaps in care
- Continue to build authentic partnerships with patients and families to design and conduct research projects that are meaningful to them
- Apply for a major, five-year grant through Mitacs to leverage applied research projects, accelerating the use of research evidence and health data in real time to improve care and health outcomes

To learn more about this event, visit <https://www.givewaypoint.com/events>.

We look forward to seeing you on December 8th!

– **Christopher Canning, Director, Research & Academics**



OPPORTUNITIES IN RESEARCH



ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTHCARE FOR BIPOC (BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR) ✨

WAYPOINT STAFF AND PATIENT RECRUITMENT

This study aims to illuminate narratives of BIPOC patients who have been restrained and/or secluded (R/S) at Waypoint. By learning from patients and staff, this study will generate new knowledge to inform future patient-oriented projects and help improve culturally sensitive care for BIPOC patients.

The opportunity: Waypoint staff working in high secure forensic units who have been involved in a R/S event in the last year can participate in an interview or online survey related to the study topic. Waypoint patients from high secure forensic units who have experienced a R/S event in the last year and who identify as BIPOC can participate in an interview.

Learn more: Email **Natalie Rajack** at nrajack@waypointcentre.ca or call Helen Bolshaw-Walker from PCFC at x2181.



INCREASING CAPACITY IN FORENSIC PATIENT-ORIENTED RESEARCH (POR) ✨

WAYPOINT STAFF RECRUITMENT

POR uses an inclusive approach that actively engages patients and their families as partners and leaders in the research process. By learning from Waypoint patients and staff, this study aims to help identify strategies to build the organization's capacity to do POR in forensic settings.

The opportunity: Waypoint staff who work on the frontline with forensic patients, security or research staff, or those who hold leadership positions at Waypoint can participate in an interview or an online survey related to the study topic. Waypoint patients from high secure forensic units can participate in an interview. Participants will be compensated.

Learn more: Email **Christopher Canning** at ccanning@waypointcentre.ca or call Amber Scott from PCFC at x2751.



A PREVENTATIVE ONLINE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR YOUTH (POMHPY) ✨

YOUTH (AGES 12 to 25) RECRUITMENT

In this quality improvement project, youth between the ages 12 and 25 living in Ontario are invited to participate in POMHPY, a 6-week Preventative Online Mental Health Program for Youth. POMHPY helps youth improve their mental, physical, and social wellbeing through fun, peer-based, and interactive activities.

The opportunity: Youth living in Ontario who are between the ages 12 and 25 can participate in POMHPY and provide feedback via surveys and/or a 90-minute focus group. Participants will be compensated and can earn a number of perks, including a POMHPY Wellness Certificate.

Learn more: Email **OurYouthWellbeing@waypointcentre.ca** or visit OurYouthWellbeing.com



The Patient/Client and Family Council (PCFC) is involved in a number of research projects with the WRI, particularly ones focused on patient-oriented research (POR).

Patient-oriented research (POR)

POR recognizes that patients have lived expertise of their health condition(s) and the relevant health care systems. POR values this knowledge and engages patients as equal partners to conduct research that is relevant to them. This ultimately leads to better patient outcomes!



Here are some of the projects we're currently supporting and examples of how we're supporting them:

INCREASING CAPACITY IN FORENSIC POR

This project aims to answer the question, "How can we best adapt guidelines and best practices for patient-oriented research in the forensic context?"

Current PCFC activities:

- Engaging and building trusting relationships with patients
- Recruiting patient partners to support the project
- Gathering and summarizing patient feedback to guide the WRI's approach to POR



ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTHCARE FOR BIPOC (BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR)

This project aims to answer the question, "How do BIPOC and hospital staff in forensic inpatient settings describe their experiences with restraint and seclusion, and the factors that lead to their use?"

Current PCFC activities:

- Recruiting patients to participate in the study
- Conducting patient interviews



THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 MEASURES ON THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO USE OPIOIDS AND THOSE CLOSEST TO THEM

This project aims to answer the question, "How did COVID-19 public health measures affect people who use opioids, and those closest to them, in the North Simcoe Muskoka region, and a Toronto centre?"

Current PCFC activities:

- Co-designing important documents including consent forms and interview guides, ensuring they are appropriate and in plain language
- Identifying appropriate research methods to use



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Ham, E., Hilton, N. Z., Crawford, J., & Kim, S. (2023). Psychiatric inpatient services in Ontario, 2019–2021: A cross-sectional comparison of admissions, diagnoses and acuity during the COVID-19 prerestriction, restriction and postrestriction periods. *CMAJ Open*, 11(3), E1-E7. <https://doi.org/10.9778/cmajo.20220158>

Konkoly Thege, B., Moore, A., Szabo, G. S., Fitzgerald, M., Hodgins, D. C., & Kim, H. S. (2023). Psychometric properties of the generalised version of the Screensaver for Substance and Behavioural Addictions (SSBA-G): A comprehensive screening tool for substance-related and behavioural addictions. *Psychiatric Research*, 328, 115459. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2023.115459>

Penney, S. R., Lam, A. A., Kolla, N., Martin, K., Belfry, K., & Simpson A. I. F. (2023). Homicide in the context of psychosis: Analysis of prior service utilisation and age at onset of illness and violence. *BJPsych Open*, 9(5), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjo.2023.567>

WRI IN THE NEWS



LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO MAKE CARE SAFER FOR MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS

July 24, 2023. This article is available directly on the [Waypoint website](#).



WAYPOINT RESEARCHERS LAUNCH CROSS-CANADA PROJECT TO ADDRESS INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

August 31, 2023. This article is available on the [Health Research Innovation \(HRI\) Portal Daily Media Digest](#), or directly on the [Waypoint website](#).

THE CONVERSATION

POLICE-ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS COULD HELP TACKLE THE CRIME OF COERCIVE CONTROL

September 4, 2023. This article is available on [The Conversation](#).



CLINICIANS AIM TO DEVELOP AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR MENTAL HEALTH

August 23, 2023. This article is available on [Canadian Healthcare Technology](#).



ENDOCANNA HEALTH AIMS TO FLAG CANNABINOID SAFETY RISKS WITH DNA TEST

August 31, 2023. This article is available on [Precision Medicine Online](#).



GEORGIAN COLLEGE'S COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE OFFERS PATHWAYS TO COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

This article is available on [OrilliaMatters.com](#).

WRI SPOTLIGHTS

➤➤➤ 6,000+ ONTARIO DOMESTIC ASSAULT RISK ASSESSMENT (ODARA) 101 CERTIFICATES ISSUED!

Since the re-launch of **ODARA 101** in early 2019, more than 6,000 professionals from almost 20 countries, 10 Canadian provinces, and over 40 US states have successfully completed the training and certification modules of the e-learning program. This year alone more than 1,500 professionals have already been certified. Individuals taking the training are professionals from a variety of services, including child protection, child/youth and family counselling, community corrections, court and legal services, law enforcement, health care and offender treatment providers, shelters and women's services, and researchers or policy analysts.



ODARA 101 is the electronic training program for the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA), which is an actuarial tool for estimating the risk that an individual who has assaulted their intimate partner will do so again. It was created by researchers at Waypoint in collaboration with the Ontario Provincial Police Behavioural Sciences and Analysis Section. ODARA scores indicate how an individual compares with others in terms of risk for domestic violence re-offence. Higher scores are related to frequency and severity of future assaults and shorter time until re-offence. The ODARA is easy to score and interpret. It has also shown excellent inter-rater agreement, and scoring accuracy improves with brief training via ODARA 101.

You can learn more about the ODARA 101 eLearning by visiting <https://odara.waypointcentre.ca>

➤➤➤ A RECENT PRESENTATION ON A RAPID SCOPING REVIEW OF STRATEGIES AND FRAMEWORKS FOR SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



Dr. Christopher Canning and **Tyler Szusecki** presented at the Mental Health Commission of Canada: National Action Plan Development Advisory Committee Meeting to several national policy makers, leaders, and experts in the field of criminal justice and mental health. The two shared preliminary findings from their project on examining existing strategies and frameworks for supporting the mental health of people who work in the criminal justice system. The presentation was engaging and elicited valuable feedback and support from the meeting attendees. The research team plans to refine their report based on the advice from the advisory group with the goal of submitting a final report in early 2024.

➤➤➤ FORENSIC SCIENCE INTERNSHIPS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MISSISSAUGA

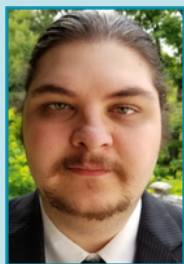
The department has partnered with the University of Toronto Mississauga to have some of WRI's Research Scientists provide mentorships to students in their fourth-year capstone experiential course in the Forensic Science undergraduate program. For this mentorship, students will work with a mentor to conduct research on a topic relevant to the mentor's expertise. The students will have the opportunity to meet with their mentor on a weekly basis and can engage in networking or work-related experiences (e.g., touring the hospital), as well.



WRI SPOTLIGHTS

OUR TEAM IS GROWING!

We are thrilled to be welcoming six fantastic new team members to our department!



CHAZ ROBITAILLE ✨

Formerly a student with the WRI, Chaz is now a Research Analyst supporting **Dr. Barna Konkoly-Thege**'s project on **using diet and nutrition to manage aggression in children and youth**.



LUJAYN MAHMOUD ✨

Lujayn is a Research Analyst supporting **Dr. Barna Konkoly-Thege**'s project on **using diet and nutrition to manage aggression in children and youth**, alongside Chaz.



FLORENCE TANG ✨

Florence is a Research Analyst supporting **Dr. Heather Bullock**'s project on the Centre of Excellence and its advisory structures with rapid access to accessible, actionable evidence.



DR. KATIE BINGHAM ✨

As psychiatrist at Waypoint, Dr. Bingham will also be contributing to the WRI on a Scientific Appointment. Her research focuses on cognition in late-life depression and clinical measurement methodology.



DR. HEATHER BULLOCK ✨

As the Vice President of Partnerships & Chief Strategy Officer at Waypoint, Dr. Bullock will also be contributing to the WRI on a Scientific Appointment. Her research focuses on health policy and implementation science.



DR. JENNIFER CRAWFORD ✨

As the Director of Data Analytics & Health Information Management at Waypoint, Dr. Crawford will also be contributing to the WRI on a Scientific Appointment. Her research focuses on advanced analytics, big data, and digital transformation.

DR. JUNQIANG ZHAO, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (STATUS-ONLY) ✨

Over the past year, **Dr. Junqiang Zhao** has been making a major impact at the WRI and beyond. In August of 2023, Dr. Zhao received an academic appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor, Status-Only at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health (DLSPH), University of Toronto for a three-year term. The DLSPH offers Status-Only appointments to individuals who are deemed qualified to make a significant contribution to the educational and research activities of the university. Congratulations, Dr. Zhao, on this accomplishment!



THE WRI IS HIRING!

We are currently recruiting for the following position(s):

- Research Analyst (Permanent full-time)
- Post-Doctoral Fellow (Temporary full-time)

Keep an eye on our [Careers Page](#), as we are continually offering exciting employment opportunities within the department!

WAYPOINT RECRUITMENT NETWORKING EVENT



Join us at Waypoint on October 25, 2023 from 5:00 to 7:30pm to engage directly with WRI staff, learn about our research projects, and explore unique employment opportunities with us. All interested individuals, including students, professionals, and community members, are invited to register [here](#).

RECENT EVENTS

WAYPOINT TALKS

WAYPOINT TALKS

Dr. Zoe Hilton, Elke Ham, Dr. Soyeon Kim, and Dr. Meghan Weissflog presented on “*Coercive control in intimate relationships - Recent research and practical implications*”. A recording of the event can be found [here](#). More information on the group’s CELIA project can be found [here](#).

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL UNION FOR PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES (NUPGE)



Dr. Christopher Canning led a presentation entitled “*Rapid scoping review of strategies and frameworks for supporting the mental health of people who work in the criminal justice system*”.

5TH BRAZILIAN CONGRESS OF SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS



Dr. Barna Konkoly-Thege was invited to present virtually on “*Opportunities and challenges of empirical research on family/systemic constellations*”.

CANADIAN ACADEMY OF PSYCHIATRIC EPIDEMIOLOGY



Research Analyst, **Natalie Rajack**, prepared and presented a poster entitled, “*Social factors associated with involuntary psychiatric admissions for patients with substance use disorders in Ontario*”.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

We want your input. What stories or updates would you like us to profile in our next edition? If you have any suggestions or would like to contribute to writing for our newsletter, please email us at waypointresearchinstitute@waypointcentre.ca



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