



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

### FOR

## Child & Youth Mental Health Impact Grant: Influence of COVID-19 on the mental health of vulnerable populations

COVID-19 is having a tremendous impact on Canadian life. The Secretary General of the UN released a statement in May 2020 highlighting in particular COVID-19's extensive impact on mental health, and how critical mental health is to our collective wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> In this global crisis, anxiety, depression, and social isolation affect all Canadians and those with more acute needs struggle with reduced engagement with their mental health services. Children, youth and families who are now dealing with disrupted routines, isolation from friends, potential job losses among parents, and the struggles of maintaining a quality of education from home are a particularly affected group.

Even in normal times, mental illness affects 1.2 million children and youth in Canada. Recent statistics show that in Ontario, **1 in 5 children and youth** experience some form of diagnosed mental health problem; **5 out of 6 of these children and youth** do not receive the treatment they need.<sup>2</sup> The impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health of this population is not yet well understood. At this critical life stage, a lack of appropriate, timely supports for these children and youth can impact their future success in school, personal relationships, and career choices. Those from vulnerable populations, i.e. those that are at already greater risk for poor mental health outcomes and/or who have limited access to mental health services based on their membership and/or identification with a particular group, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of this crisis.

Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) and the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (the Centre) are partnering **on three grants of up to \$100,000 each** to advance both our understanding of the mental health impact of COVID-19 on families in Ontario, with a particular focus on families from vulnerable groups who experience issues with accessing or receiving high quality mental health care.

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<sup>1</sup> Guterres, A. (2020). Launch of the policy brief on covid-19 and mental health: "Mental health services are an essential part of all government responses to COVID-19". *United Nations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/mental-health-services-are-essential-part-all-government-responses-covid-19> [Accessed 2020-07-17]

<sup>2</sup> Flett, G.L., Hewitt, P.L., Nepon, T., & Zaki-Azat, J.N. (2018). Children and adolescents "flying under the radar": Understanding, assessing, and addressing hidden distress among students. In *Handbook of School-Based Mental Health Promotion* (pp. 357-381). Springer, Cham.



**The Research Challenge:**

**Assess the mental health impact of COVID-19 on Ontario's children, youth and families in vulnerable groups**

**HOW MUCH IS THE GRANT?**

Three different projects will be awarded a grant, valued at up to \$100,000 each.

**WHAT IS THE TERM OF THE GRANT?**

The term of the grant is 12 to 18 months.

**ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?**

To be eligible for this grant, the applicants leading the project must be **co-principal investigators** who are landed immigrants or Canadian citizens and who are supported by a **team**.

The **co-principal investigators** must be:

- A. A researcher/academic\* **AND**
- B. A leader or member of **one of Ontario's lead or core service providing agencies (those who receive funding from the Ministry of Health for children's mental health programming – if you are unsure if your agency are eligible, please contact [grants@mhrc.ca](mailto:grants@mhrc.ca))**

In addition to the co-principal investigators, your **team** must include a child, youth and/or family member who has received services from these community-based agencies

You can also choose to involve other health care providers, community organizations, additional researchers and possibly entrepreneurs to enhance the depth and scope of your team and support your proposed activities.

**\*Researcher/academic:** defined as an individual who has an academic or research appointment within an Ontario-based university or college, and who can pursue the proposed research project as part of the duties of their appointment.



## WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

### **Stage One: (est. 2-4 weeks)**

Eligible applicants are invited to submit a Letter of Intent highlighting the following:

- **Two pages maximum** articulating:
  - **Research question:**
    - Clearly state your research question and goals
  - **Need and Relevance:**
    - Comment on how the current project will complement (and not duplicate) work that is already underway.\*
    - Describe how the project will ensure meaningful input from the target audience at every stage.
  - **Merit/Methodology:**
    - The project workplan is reasonable and feasible given proposed objectives, timelines and budget.
    - The proposed initiative must be informed by evidence, but also stretch the boundaries of the status quo (existing knowledge or practice), using novel (promising) concepts, approaches, tools or intervention.
    - Describe plans for evaluation, collaboration, and meaningful engagement with the broader community/service area (e.g., among lead and core service agencies and/or with cross-sectoral partners).
  - **Potential for Impact:**
    - Preference will be given to proposals with potential for scaling within and beyond the province of Ontario.
    - Articulate short-term and long-term plans to mobilize knowledge
- **One page maximum** budget **using the provided template** (see Appendix A or download from [INSERT LINK])
  - Budget appears reasonable for work being proposed, with no more than 10% included for administration. (Note: technology and travel costs will not be funded).
- **One page maximum** description of team members in terms of their qualifications and expertise relevant to the project

*\*Please cite sources in a (Author Name, Year) format. A full reference list is not necessary.*

Up to six applicants will be invited to participate in Stage Two.

### **Stage Two (by invitation only):**

Those invited to Stage Two will be asked to submit a more comprehensive proposal expanding on plans for study development, implementation, evaluation, and knowledge mobilization, and other evaluation criteria posted at [INSERT LINK].

Invited applicants will have two/four weeks to submit their expanded proposals.



## HOW DO YOU APPLY?

Visit the website of Mental Health Research Canada ([www.mhrc.ca](http://www.mhrc.ca)) to apply via MHRC's Submittable portal and fill out the application form. Provide supporting documents, if applicable.

An independent Advisory Group, members of which will be jointly selected and approved by MHRC and the Centre, will assess the proposals and make recommendations for funding.

## WHAT RESOURCES SHOULD YOU ACCESS?

The following resources may be useful in preparing your proposal:

### **Ethics, respect & inclusivity:**

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans  
[https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique\\_tcps2-eptc2\\_2018.html](https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html)

### **Youth engagement:**

<https://www.cymh.ca/en/projects/youth-engagement.aspx>

### **Family engagement:**

<https://www.cymh.ca/en/projects/family-engagement.aspx>

### **Knowledge mobilization:**

Doing more with what you know: Knowledge Mobilization Toolkit  
[www.kmbtoolkit.ca](http://www.kmbtoolkit.ca)

### **Evaluation:**

Program evaluation toolkit: Tools for planning, doing and using evaluation  
<https://www.cymh.ca/Modules/ResourceHub/?input=evaluation>

### **Implementation:**

Implementation guide: CIHR module  
<https://www.nccmt.ca/registry/resource/pdf/159.pdf>

## REPORT-BACK MECHANISM FOR WINNING PROJECT TEAMS

There will be multiple check-ins at various points with MHRC and the Centre, as well as a requirement to report back on the evaluation findings and key outcomes.

MHRC and the Centre will provide guidance and support as needed to ensure the success of each project.



### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

All rights to any inventions and/or research reside solely with the applicant. Neither MHRC nor the Centre possess ownership of, or equity in, the winning submissions; however, applicants will engage with both organizations to ensure mobilization of relevant knowledge that emerges from successful projects.

### **MHRC & THE CENTRE'S RIGHT TO A SECOND CALL**

MHRC and the Centre reserve the right to put forth a second call for proposals if the submissions received do not fulfill the criteria of the grants.



## **ABOUT THE GRANT FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS:**

### **Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC):**

MHRC is a national, charitable organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of the one in five Canadians – over 7 million people – living with mental illness. The impact is profound: mental illness affects their physical well-being, their relationships with family and friends, and their ability to work. MHRC is here to change that. We advance mental health research that is problem-solving, cost-effective and usable in the real world, transforming treatments and prevention in creative and collaborative ways. We are building on the 55-year legacy of our predecessor organization, the Ontario Mental Health Foundation, which had invested \$34 million to fund 332 mental health research projects over a 10-year period. Because we are committed to building knowledge that will have practical application and deep impact, we begin with those who will use it – people with lived experience. We also consult and partner with other stakeholders, including other mental health organizations, social agencies, entrepreneurs, business and government. We funded 10 innovative research projects over the last year. [www.mhrc.ca](http://www.mhrc.ca)

### **The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (the Centre):**

The Centre brings people and knowledge together to strengthen mental health care for Ontario's children, youth and families. We work across relevant sectors to share knowledge, build capacity and create the connections needed to improve mental health care for children, youth and families across the province. Our work is focused on identifying crucial knowledge gaps in child and youth mental health and then on assembling the best teams and relevant information required to fill these gaps. We also maintain a valuable collection of resources to continue to guide our work, inform decision-makers and help agencies ensure high-quality mental health services and tools. We collaborate with individuals and organizations from a range of care settings, to align our efforts and produce the best outcomes for Ontario's children, youth and families. [www.cymh.ca](http://www.cymh.ca)



**Appendix A: Summary Budget Template**

Please state total costs for each category for this project as per the categories below (highlighted yellow cells **must** be completed). A more detailed budget will be required in Stage Two should you be invited to apply. **Note that travel and technology/hardware costs are ineligible for funding.**

SUMMARY BUDGET FOR PROJECT: [INSERT TITLE]		
<b>A. Employment and Compensation (including salaries, hourly wages, stipends, etc)</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Amount from other sources</b>
<b>TOTAL Employment and Compensation</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>B. Goods and Services</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Amount from other sources</b>
<b>TOTAL Goods and Services</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>C. Gifts, Honoraria and Incentives</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Amount from other sources</b>
<b>TOTAL Gifts, Honoraria and Incentives</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>D. Administration (Max 10% - note you will be asked to detail specifics in Stage Two)</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Amount from other sources</b>
<b>TOTAL Administration</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>E. Other (specify)</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>	<b>Amount from other sources</b>
<b>TOTAL Other</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR THIS PROJECT</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>