

eMental Health for Youth and Young Adults

March 10, 2020

What's this project about?

The health system in Alberta is currently challenged to meet the needs of youth and young adults with anxiety, mood and substance use disorders. There is increasing demand, long waitlists, limited rural access, and stigma attached to accessing services. The prevalence of mental health problems and limited access to in-person, one-on-one counselling in a clinic setting provides an opportunity to introduce innovative online technologies as an additional service delivery approach to prevention, early detection, assessment and therapies for youth and young adult population with low to moderate need.

The use of eMental Health (eMH) services, delivered via the Internet or other innovative technologies, to youth and young adults with mental health and addiction issues will be implemented and evaluated. By implementing eMH we will improve access to services and support, as well as clinical outcomes including mental health and wellbeing.

How will we do this?

We will focus on youth and young adults between 14 and 24 years and will look at internet delivered 1) screening & assessment 2) peer-to-peer & family support 3) Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and 4) brief interventions. Targeted groups are those living in selected urban, rural, and remote locations and will include those of Indigenous backgrounds. We will look at clinical outcomes, the economic impact and the benefits to the overall health system.

Where are we now?

With the help of youth and their families, we are designing what the integration of eMH can look like. Ten communities across Alberta have been selected for implementing eMH, and we have collected baseline data for the study. We are currently finalizing the research design and outcomes measurement framework for this research study and have applied for funding through Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Health System (PRIHS).

Who is involved?

Collaboration and co-creation is key to success. We have partnered with: University of Calgary; University of Alberta; University of Sydney; AHS Zone Operation Leadership; RCSDs; PCNs; and Indigenous communities; and a cohort of people with lived experience (PaCER).

For more information on this project, please contact the Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network™: AddictionMentalHealth.SCN@albertahealthservices.ca

