

December
2014

Online Therapy USER Update

Online Therapy USER

The Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education, and Research (Online Therapy USER) is led by Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos from the University of Regina and makes use of online therapy programs that were initially developed in Australia.

The Online Therapy Unit allows trained therapists to provide Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to residents of Saskatchewan who have difficulties with depression, generalized anxiety, and/or panic. The Unit also provides education and training to diverse registered health professionals and students on how to deliver services online. This unit is also responsible for conducting research on how to best train therapists and deliver online-CBT in Saskatchewan.



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Director and Coordinator's Message

As everyone is gearing up for the holiday season, we would like to provide you with an update on what is new in the Online Therapy Unit for Service Education and Research (USER).

Our first year of treating clients using The Wellbeing Program is now complete. In the last year, 336 individuals completed the Online Screening and 262 of them went on to receive treatment from either community or student providers. These numbers surpassed our initial estimates and we are more than thrilled!

It appears by these numbers that our advertising efforts within Saskatchewan are paying off. In September and November, we were featured on CTV News, the Leader Post, and Global News. We also had community therapists advocating on our behalf in local newspapers (e.g., Moose Jaw Herald). We have included these articles on Page 3 of this newsletter along with information regarding the recent Mental Health Strategy that was released in our province earlier this month. You can also find tips on how to help us spread the word about online therapy in Saskatchewan.

At this time, we would like to thank everyone who has helped us make the Online Therapy USER a success over the last year. We are doing our best to help as many Saskatchewan residents as we can and we could not have done it without your help. So thank you for your support and extra special thank-you to the new and returning therapists for your time, enthusiasm, and feedback. We are excited to see what the next year brings!

On a final note, we are pleased to announce that our Coordinator, Marcie Nugent, had a beautiful baby girl. Mom and baby are doing very well and we cannot wait for Charlie to join the Unit as a therapist in 20 or so years.

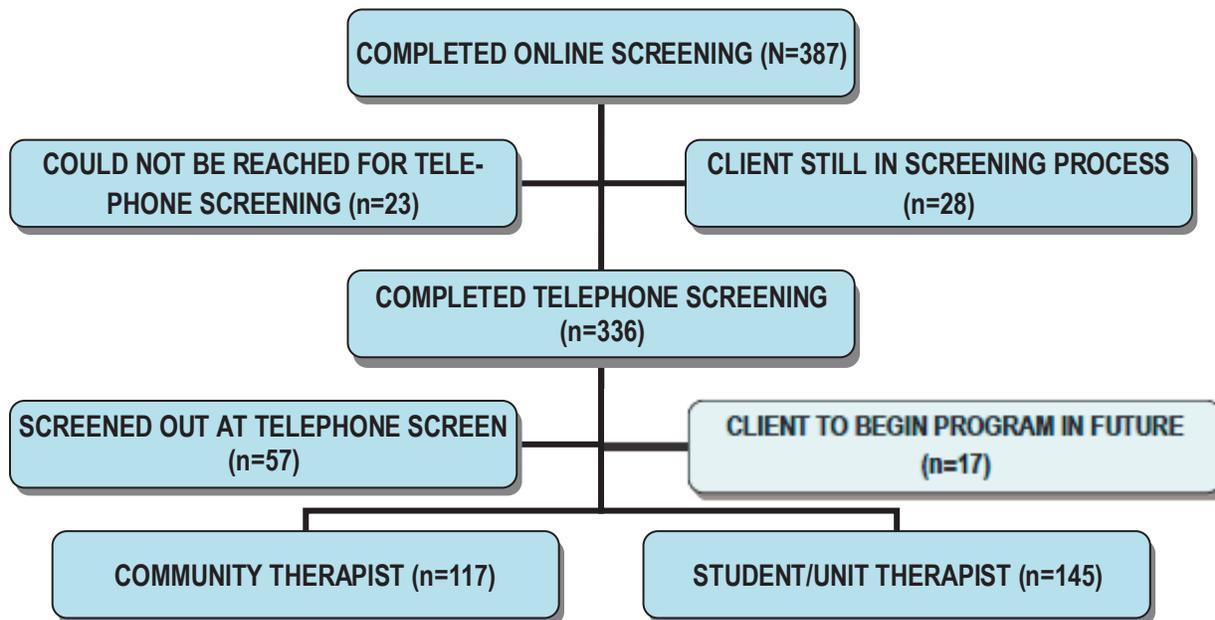
Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns or would like any further information.

We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season!

Heather Hadjistavropoulos, Director, Online Therapy USER
Nichole Faller, Acting Coordinator, Online Therapy USER



Summary of Online Therapy Unit Utilization November 13, 2013–November 30, 2014



A total of **262 clients** have been assigned to the Wellbeing Course since the beginning of November, 2013. We are delighted that the vast majority of clients who complete the screening are appropriate for our service (82% acceptance). When clients are not a good fit for our treatment (e.g., because their concerns are more appropriate for face-to-face services), we have been making an effort to assist clients in finding alternative services.

Of those who have been offered the Wellbeing Course, approximately 190 clients have now completed treatment. Our large increase in clientele began in November, when Heather was featured in the Leader Post discussing online therapy. This led to a spot on the CBC morning news and a feature in the Moose Jaw Times Herald. Since this media exposure, the Online Therapy Unit has received a record number of clients (80) completing the online screening form in one month (November).

Wellbeing Course Utilization

Once enrolled in treatment, clients are highly engaged with the treatment process. On average, clients log on to the website 22 times (SD=15.66). They send on 4.88 messages to their therapist (SD = 4.94) and receive 9.22 messages (SD = 3.59) from their therapist. Within 10 weeks of starting the program, 72% of clients complete all 5 lessons and 80% of clients complete at least three lessons.

Check out our
Facebook page!



Like Online Therapy
USER to keep up-
dated on what's hap-
pening in the unit!

Follow us on
Twitter!



@TherapyUser

Wellbeing Course Client Profile

Wellbeing Clients are on average 37.76 years of age, but there is a wide age range from 18 years of age to 73 years of age. Approximately, 75% of clients are females. We have had clients from all over Saskatchewan (with only Athabasca health region not represented). Approximately, 40% of our clients come from RQHR, which suggests we need to do some more work to advertise the Unit in other health regions. On a positive note, over half of our clients are from small cities or small towns. Approximately 66% of clients are married or in a relationship. Most clients have at least a high school education and 63% of clients are working full or part-time. Of note, 60% of clients are taking medication for their mental health concerns and 43% are in receipt of some mental health care already but are still interested in the Wellbeing Course.

To Find Out More About Online Therapy in Saskatchewan

Call: 306-337-3331

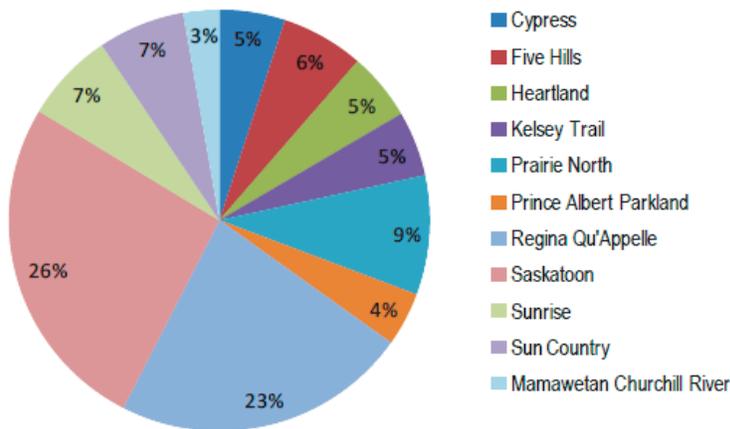
Email:

Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca

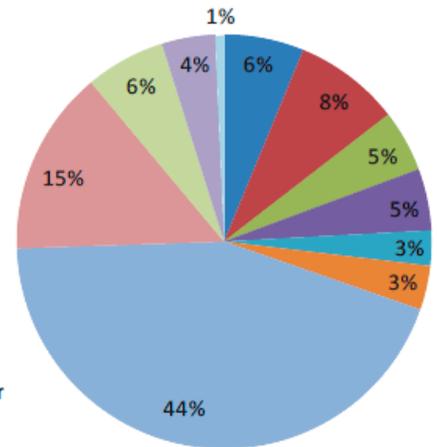
You can also view a video that describes the Wellbeing Course by visiting www.onlinetherapyuser.ca

You can also register online now if you want your name on our contact list

Percentage of Saskatchewan Population by Health Region



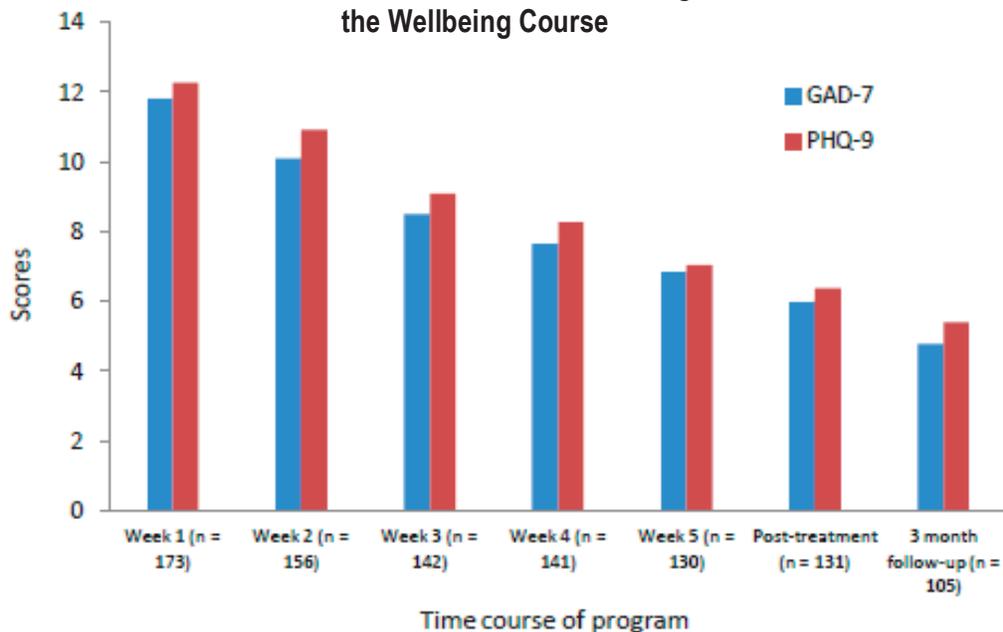
Percentage of Clients Enrolled in the Wellbeing Course by Health Region



Effectiveness of the Program

Approximately 70% of clients have completed outcome measures at the end of course. These clients are reporting very large reductions in depression and anxiety. Furthermore, 97% said they would refer this program to a friend, and 96% felt it was worth their time. Further, 87% of clients indicated that the course increased their confidence in their abilities to manage their symptoms.

Scores on the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 throughout the Wellbeing Course



U of R Program Offers Online Therapy—Regina Leader Post

A recent article by Ashley Martin features the Unit in the Leader Post. The article outlines the process for applying and entering into the program, who the program is best suited for, and a bit of what the program entails. In her interview, Heather emphasized the benefits of online therapy: for example, people with anxiety or depression can get help from Saskatchewan therapists without leaving their home. Ms. Martin emphasized that the program can be accessed by people in urban and rural areas and is especially beneficial for those who cannot access in-person mental health services.



The article served to bring awareness to mental health issues in Saskatchewan and their under-treatment. "It's a big issue and it's one that we want to address, just like we want to address cancer and cardiovascular disease. ... There's a big problem with mental-health issues being undertreated," said Heather Hadjistavropoulos.

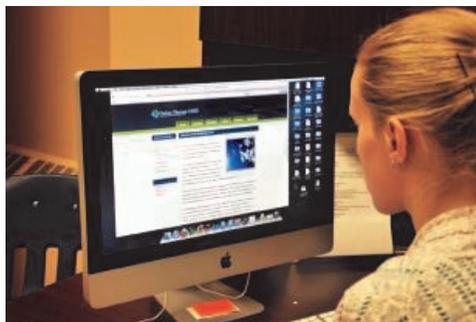
Please follow the link below to read the full article:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/health/program+offers+online+therapy/10348236/story.html>

It turns out Internet-based cognitive therapy is just as effective as face-to-face therapy

A second article was published shortly thereafter in the Moose Jaw Herald. In her interview with Lisa Goudy, Cara McDavid, therapist and senior social worker in the FHHR emphasized the ease with which one can participate in online therapy, and it's effectiveness compared to face-to-face treatment.

Cara also emphasized the need for more mental health treatment options in Saskatchewan. "[Anxiety and depression] are very common and prevalent," said McDavid. "It's nice to have options to offer people based on their comfort level to meet their needs."



Please follow the link below to read the full article:

<http://www.mjtimes.sk.ca/section/2014-11-04/article-3928749/Learning-online-to-cope-with-anxiety/1>

How to advertise in your community

For promotional material to post in your community (e.g. Physician offices, public libraries, etc) , contact Nichole for materials that you can distribute.

Nichole.faller@uregina.ca or phone (306) 337-3331.

USER staff can also help you if you want to contact your local media to inform them of the service - Newspapers, radio, television.

Reminder:

Anyone on a waitlist for in-person therapy can be referred to the Wellbeing Course. This is a great way for clients to learn cognitive behavioural skills before seeing someone in-person.

Saskatchewan Mental Health & Addictions Action Plan

Our recent news coverage fits in well with the recent unveiling of the 10 year Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan submitted to Health Minister Dustin Duncan by Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder.

The Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan outlines 16 recommendations that fall into seven categories:

- Enhance access and capacity, as well as support recovery in the communities;
- Focus on prevention and early intervention;
- Create person and family-centered and co-ordinate services;
- Respond to diversities;
- Partner with First Nations and Métis Peoples;
- Reduce stigma and increase awareness; and
- Transform the system and sustain the change.

The report was compiled over the last year as Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder travelled across the province and heard from over 4000 workers and patients in the health, education, justice, corrections and social services sectors.

Of particular interest to our group, was the following recommendation:

2.2. Provide online clinical treatments for depression and anxiety to increase accessibility to treatment. *Depression and anxiety are the two most common mental health issues. Online treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy have been successful at treating these conditions, and can be quick and easy to access for many people.*

In the report, our Unit was also highlighted on page 21:

The University of Regina is piloting a program where CBT is offered through the internet (iCBT). Research shows that iCBT is effective at improving symptoms at relatively low cost. Other jurisdictions such as Australia have successfully offered these services through online platforms. Evidence shows other benefits include increased access to mental health services; efficient and evidence-based care; reduced travel costs and time for service users and clinicians; increased service user engagement in health promotion, prevention, and treatment; and practitioners sharing their knowledge and experience, encouraging mentorship relationships, and evidence of lower treatment and education costs.

We are delighted that the work we are doing is being recognized and acknowledged and that Online Therapy is seen as an important strategy for addressing mental health issues in the province. We look forward to 2015 and seeing what implications this recommendation may have for the Online Therapy Unit.

Please follow the link below to read the full article:

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2014/december/01/mental-health-action-plan>

Is Online Therapy for You?

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Are you a Saskatchewan resident?
- Do you have access to a computer and printer in a space where you could work on the Wellbeing Course online?
- Do you have Internet access in a private space?
- Do you feel comfortable using the Internet and writing emails?
- Do you have symptoms of Generalized Anxiety, Panic, and/or Depression?

If you answered "Yes" to all of the above questions, then you may qualify to participate in Online Therapy.

Recently Completed Student Projects

Nicole Alberts

Nicole Alberts successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on August 1, entitled:

“Transdiagnostic Internet-Delivered Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy for Recent Cancer Survivors: A Feasibility Trial and Examination of Clinician Perspectives.”



She conducted two studies as a part of her research. Study 1 involved offering treatment for anxiety and depression to individuals recently recovering from cancer treatments. She demonstrated that ICBT was an effective and acceptable form of treatment for anxiety and depression among recent cancer survivors. Study 2 involved gathering feedback on the program from community clinicians currently providing supportive care within oncology settings in Saskatchewan. Findings showed that clinicians view ICBT as an acceptable and useful treatment option for cancer survivors.

Shannon Jones



Shannon Jones successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on September 4, entitled: “An Efficacy Trial of Therapist-Assisted Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Older Adults with Generalized Anxiety.”

The first component of her study randomized adults aged 60 years and older to receive ICBT or to a 10-week waiting list. She demonstrated that participants who received ICBT improved at a faster rate on measures of anxiety and depression,

and had improved quality of life as compared to those in the waiting list group. ICBT participants continued to improve during the four-week follow-up period. The second component of her study identified that ICBT participants who rated the credibility of treatment higher before starting treatment, improved at a faster rate on a measure of anxiety. Completing more treatment modules, sending more e-mails to the therapist and writing more to the therapist in the weekly Check-In page was predictive of lower anxiety scores at follow-up, whereas writing more to the therapist in e-mails and taking longer to complete ICBT was predictive of higher anxiety scores at follow-up. The qualitative component of her study identified numerous positive experiences and challenges faced by older adults using 'GAD Online for Older Adults' that will help to inform revisions of existing or future ICBT programs for this age group.

To participate in online therapy in Saskatchewan, visit:

www.onlinetherapyuser.ca

1. Complete online screening located on the website.
2. Receive an email confirmation that your online screening has been received and request an appointment time to speak with staff on the phone.
3. Take part in a telephone conversation with a Unit staff member to discuss if the Wellbeing Course or if another treatment method would best meet your needs at this time.

2014 Peer-Reviewed Presentations:

Alberts, N., **Hadjistavropoulos, H.D.**, Dear, B. & Titov, N. (2014, October). Wellbeing after Cancer: A feasibility trial of a transdiagnostic internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy program of cancer survivors. Symposium presentation accepted to the International Society for Research on Internet Interventions 7th Scientific Meeting, Valencia, Spain.

Hadjistavropoulos, H.D., Nugent, M., Dear, B. & Titov, N. (2014, October). From Australia to Canada: Establishing the generalizability of a brief transdiagnostic internet-based therapy for depression and anxiety. Poster presentation accepted to the International Society for Research on Internet Interventions 7th Scientific Meeting, Valencia, Spain.

Pugh, N. & **Hadjistavropoulos, H.D.** (2014, October). Reaching out to Women with Postpartum Depression: An Efficacy Trial of a Therapist-Guided Internet-Delivered Therapy for Postpartum Depression. Symposium presentation accepted to the International Society for Research on Internet Interventions 7th Scientific Meeting, Valencia, Spain.

Pugh, N., **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.**, Korol, C., & De Gagne, T. (2014). eMental Health for Postpartum Depression: Increasing capacity, accessibility, and individualized care. Poster presented at the Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists Scientific Meeting, Vancouver, B.C.

Dirkse, D., **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.**, & Owens, V. (2014, June). Linguistic analysis of communication in a therapist-assisted Internet cognitive behaviour therapy program for individuals with generalized anxiety disorder. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.

Fuchs, C., Alberts, N. & **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, June). Development and initial evaluation of a psychoeducational resource to facilitate social support for cancer survivors. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N., **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** & Fuchs, C. (2014, June). Internet therapy for postpartum depression: an illustration of emailed therapeutic assistance. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N., & **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, June). Evaluating the efficacy of a therapist-assisted Internet therapy program for postpartum depression. Oral presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N., **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** & Hampton, A. (2014, June). Client experiences of guided Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Postpartum depression: A qualitative study. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.

Schneider, L., & **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, June). Initial perceptions of internet-based cognitive-behaviour therapy for chronic pain among potential users: Examining perceived strengths and limitations. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N. & **Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, February). Development and pilot evaluation of a Therapist-Assisted Internet Cognitive-Behavioral program for Maternal Depression. Information Session presented at the Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies: New Research and Best Practices Conference, Vancouver, B.C.

Is Online Cognitive Behavior Therapy right for everyone?

The support provided through online therapy is not appropriate for all clients.

Online therapy is not appropriate for clients who:

- Report plans to harm oneself or others
- Have recently harmed themselves or others
- Report delusions or hallucinations
- Are experiencing mania or hypomania
- Report primary problems with drugs or alcohol

Clients who are not appropriate candidates for Online Therapy are referred to other services.

2014 Invited Presentations/Workshops:

- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, December 4). *Disseminating therapist-assisted Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in Saskatchewan: Triumphs and Tribulations*. University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H.D.** (2014, June). *Review and reminders on the delivery of Therapist-assisted transdiagnostic Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy*. Workshop to community providers Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Regina, SK.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, June). *Therapist-assisted Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: From research to practice*. Invited Preconvention Workshop at the Canadian Psychological Association 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, June 5). *New technologies in psychological treatments: A focus on graduate student contributions to the literature*. Symposium Discussant at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.** (2014, May 7). *Using the Internet to improve emotional wellbeing: Introducing the Online Therapy Unit*. Oral presentation to the Canadian Mental Health Association Weyburn Division Mayor's Luncheon. Weyburn, SK.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H.D.** (2014, March 19). *Strengths and Challenges of Integrating Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy into Mental Health Clinics in Saskatchewan*. Oral presentation Executive Directors of Mental Health, Regina, SK.

2014 Saskatchewan Training Sessions:

- Online Therapy Unit (2014, December 4). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Workshop*. Workshop given at the University of Regina, Regina, SK. (Audience: 5 community providers; 1 graduate student)
- Online Therapy Unit (2014, September 30). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*. Workshop given Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (Audience: 6 community providers)
- Online Therapy Unit (2014, January 15). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy student workshop*. Workshop given at the University of Regina, Regina, SK. (Audience: 3 graduate students)
- Online Therapy Unit (2014, January 13 & 21). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy community therapist workshop*. Workshop given at Healthline, Regina, SK. (Audience: 5 Healthline providers)
- Online Therapy Unit (2014, January 7 & 8). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy community therapist workshop*. Workshop given in Cypress Health Region, Swift Current, SK. (Audience: 14 Cypress Health Region providers)

2014 Implementation/Knowledge Exchange Meetings

- Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region: May 1, 2014; May 29, 2014
- Five Hills Health Region: February 19, 2014, September 9, 2014; October 7, 2014
- Saskatoon Health Region: September 29, 2014
- Sun Country Health Region: February 26, 2014, November 10, 2014
- Cypress Health Region: January 3, 2014; February 19, 2014; March 10, 2014; April 22, 2014; October 6, 2014
- Prince Albert Parkland Health Region: February 26, 2014, September 17, 2014
- Kelsey Trial: November 4, 2014
- HealthLine: February 14, 2014, November 27, 2014
- Online Therapy Unit Community Advisory Panel—September 10, 2014
- Online Therapy Unit Staff & Students September 19, 2014; November 21, 2014; December 12, 2014

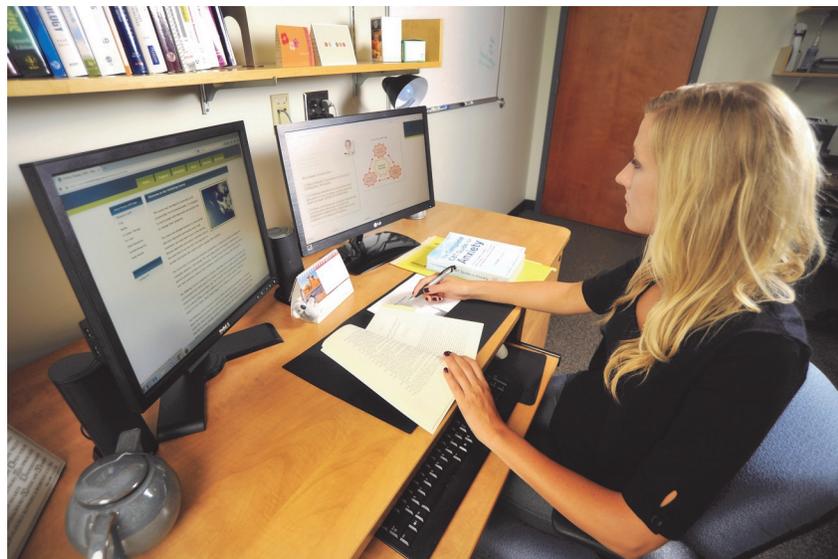
Online Therapy
USER
Community
Partners

Current Partners

- Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
- Saskatoon Health Region
- Five Hills Health Region
- Sun Country Health Region
- Cypress Health Region
- Prince Albert Parkland Health Region
- Kelsey Trail Health Region
- HealthLine
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Health

2014 Online Therapy Unit Publications:

- Dirkse, D., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Hesser, H., & Barak, A. (2015). Linguistic analysis of communication in therapist-assisted internet-delivered cognitive behavior therapy for generalized anxiety disorder. *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, 44*, 21-32.
- Friesen, L., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., & Pugh, N. (2014). A qualitative examination of psychology graduate students' experiences with guided Internet cognitive behaviour therapy. *Internet Interventions, 1*, 41-68.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Pugh, N. E., Nugent, M., Hesser, H., Andersson, G., Marchildon, G. P., et al. (2014). Therapist-assisted Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for depression and anxiety: Evidence to practice. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Alberts, N., Nugent, M., Marchildon, G. (2014). Improving access to psychological services through therapist-assisted Internet cognitive behaviour therapy. *Canadian Psychology, 55*, 303-311.
- Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., & Fuchs, C. (2014). Internet therapy for postpartum depression: A case illustration of emailed therapeutic assistance. *Archives of Women's Mental Health, 17*, 327-337.
- Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Hampton, A., Bowen, A., & Williams, J. (2014). Client experiences of guided internet cognitive behavior therapy for postpartum depression: A qualitative study. *Archives of Women's Mental Health*.
- Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Klein, B., & Austin, D. (2014). A case study illustrating therapist-assisted Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for depression. *Cognitive Behavioral Practice, 21*, 64-77.
- Schneider, L. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014). When in doubt, ask the audience: Potential users' perceptions of Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for chronic pain. *Pain Research and Management, 19*, 173-178.



Online Therapy Unit Team

Principal Investigator: Heather Hadjistavropoulos (Psychology U of R)

Coordinators: Marcie Nugent (Psychology U of R), Nichole Faller (Psychology U of R)

Co-investigators: Cory Butz (Computer Science U of R), Greg Marchildon (Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy U of R), Thomas Hadjistavropoulos (Psychology U of R), Nuelle Novik (Social Work U of R), Gil White (Medicine U of S)

International Collaborators: Nick Titov & Blake Dear, Macquaire University, Sydney Australia; Gerhard Andersson, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden

Provincial Collaborators:

Terry Gudmundson, Kathy Willerth, Lorne Sier, Saskatchewan Health
Dave Nelson, Saskatchewan Division, Canadian Mental Health Association
Bonnie Brossart, Health Quality Council

Statistical Consultant: Rob Cribbie, York University

Online Therapy Unit Staff/Students: Dale Dirkse, Nichole Faller, Lindsay Friesen, Seint Kokokyi, Marcie Nugent, Tori Owens, Andrea Scerbe, Luke Schneider, Joelle Soucy, Kirstie Walker

Web Development Team: Max Ivanov, Saqib Noman, Rachel Poppa, Eden Rohatensky

Online Therapy Unit Volunteers: Aeliesha Brooks, Carmen Dobson, Chantalle Fuchs, Kirsten Gullickson, Kadie Hozempa, Shannon Kydd, Laura Marks, Kat Mazenc, Maureen Schaefer

Student Therapists: Nicole Alberts, Clair Barefoot, Margie Brown, Kayla Callele, Sarah Chan, Scott Dakiniewich, Chelsea Delparte, Jasmin Dhillon, Dale Dirkse, Sophie Duranceau, Heather Eritz, Mathew Fetzner, Lindsay Friesen, Michelle Gagnon, Bethany Gelinis, Omeed Ghandehari, Jenna Hesse, Samantha Horswill, Shannon Jones, Jocelyn Leclerc, Eli Lee, Dufton Lewis, Michelle Makelki, Colleen McBride, Katherine McMillan, Myriah Mulroque, Christina Orest, Daniel Peluso, Nicky Pugh, Sarah Reiser, Luke Schneider, Norine Schewchuk, Michael Thibodeau, Kristie Walker, Patrick Welch, Pamela Vorstermans, Kim Zorn

Registered Providers: Ralph Aman, Collette Beaubien, John Brown, Lindsey Bruce, Ruth Card, Patty Crassweller, Chelsea Delparte, Gina Kempton-Doane, Sandra Dobra, Carolyn Van Dyck, Diana Boy-Fanandez, Sierge Fehr, Can Friesen, Linda Gardner, Barbara Golden, Hema Harrison, Breann Heatherington, Mike Hodson, Dawna Karalash, McKenzie Mann, Michelle Marce, Wendy Martin, Cara McDavid, Kelly Measner, Rosalic Meyer, Gwen Moyse, Shahlo Mustafaeava, Nuelle Novik, Fronc O'Conna, Krista Olsen, Joan Ortman, Katherine Owens, Gloria Patrick, Kelly Pierson, Bronwen Porcina, Yvonne Racotte, Susan Rader, Margaret Ralston, Mary Renwick, Jai Richards, Danaka Safinuk, JoAnne Salido, Danaka Shindelka, Chelsic Shier, Sheila Szakacs, Stacy Taylor, Victoria Walton, Meghan Woods

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Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF; \$120,000)