



The U of R Online Therapy Psych'lists participating in the Great Cycle Challenge to support the fight against kids' cancer.

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Online Therapy Unit

The Online Therapy Unit 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 or guides to provide Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to individuals who have difficulties with depression, generalized anxiety, and other health conditions. The Unit provides education and training to diverse registered health professionals and students

DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Happy summer everyone! There are so many new and exciting things happening and we are pleased to have the opportunity to share them with you in our 11th newsletter.

We would like to thank the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health for their continued support of the Online Therapy Unit (OTU). With their support, we are continuing to improve access to mental health care for residents of Saskatchewan. Most recently, Saskatchewan Health provided funding to support the creation of the Saskatchewan Health Authority Online Therapy Team. This team will be working to promote online therapy in Saskatchewan and also delivering the Wellbeing Course via the Online Therapy Unit. This ultimately increases the number of clients who can access online therapy in Saskatchewan.

We are excited to share that our team has grown the last few months! We have recently hired two new full-time staff members and two summer students to help provide increased support to the community. Lee Bourgeault has

a background in Psychology and Nursing and is assisting with various clinical and research duties this summer. Finally, Aleiia Asmundson has joined our team as a research assistant over the summer and has been working on a project helping us to better understand primary client concerns at intake. It has been wonderful having all of these individuals join our team.

In terms of other news, we also recently launched a new program called the Chronic Conditions Course. This course targets emotional wellbeing among those with diverse chronic health conditions. Rather than being disorder-specific, the course is designed to be appropriate for anyone who has a chronic health condition and experiences symptoms of depression and anxiety. This course is part of a research trial and is not "therapist-assisted" and thus can be offered to anyone in Canada.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter, this message is always too short to do all of the great work justice. We hope you are able to learn more about what has been happening

HAPPY TO SHARE ONLINE THERAPY OUTCOME REPORT 2013-2017 available on our website.

<https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/storage/app/media/Newsletters/2018/Welbeing%20Outcome%20Report%202013-%202017.pdf>

In 2013, the Online Therapy Unit received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, and Rx&D Health Research Foundation (\$708,000). The purpose of this funding was to overcome barriers and foster innovation in the use of Online-CBT for depression and anxiety in Saskatchewan.

With the funding, the Unit specifically began to offer and evaluate a 5 lesson transdiagnostic Wellbeing Course developed at Macquarie University. This course is appropriate for addressing both symptoms of anxiety and depression. The 2013-2017 report summarizes the utilization and outcomes of Online-CBT using the Wellbeing Course in Saskatchewan. We hope you will take some time to review the report and learn about the excellent outcomes.

Some highlights:

- Utilization of Online-CBT in Saskatchewan has steadily grown since inception in 2010. The number of clients enrolled in Online-CBT has increased from 120 in 2013 to 844 in 2017 (703% increase).
- There is a large effect of treatment on symptoms of both depression and anxiety, with similar outcomes obtained for therapists working in the Online Therapy Unit and therapists in the Saskatchewan Health Authority.
- Scores show high levels of satisfaction with treatment, and with emails and phone calls provided. The overwhelming majority of clients who complete treatment report that the treatment was worth their time and they would recommend the treatment to a friend

SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH FUNDING RENEWED – We are pleased to report that Saskatchewan Health will continue to support the delivery of Online-CBT in Saskatchewan in the 2018-2019 year. Our target is to increase capacity and work with 1500 clients this fiscal year (up from 1000).

NEW FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ONLINE-CBT FOR SUBSTANCE USE AND MISUSE:

We obtained additional funding from Saskatchewan Health to explore the development of Online-CBT for adults with substance and alcohol use and misuse issues. During the upcoming year, we will: 1) review the literature for best practices; 2) conduct stakeholder interviews to understand how Online-CBT best integrates with existing



Clients describe a number of benefits to our online therapy courses:

There is no cost

You can keep the material

Read course material at your convenience

Work on the course in the privacy of your own home

No travel or in person meetings required

SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH AUTHORITY ESTABLISHES ONLINE THERAPY TEAM

Greetings from the new SHA Online Therapy Team (OTT)

We are really pleased to be embarking on an adventure! This new team is an extension of the partnership that has been so successful in the past between the Online Therapy Unit and Saskatchewan community clinicians. With new targeted funding from the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Health, the OTU and OTT teams, we will be able to offer more treatment spots than ever before. Our new unit came to be in January of this year with the hiring of the unit clinical lead, Dr. Katherine Owens, a registered PhD psychologist and senior psychologist at the Regina Mental Health Clinic (MHC). The office space for this group is located here in Regina at the MHC. We began working with ICBT clients in April with the hiring of our first full time OTT clinician, Kim Bell, a registered social worker. Kim and Katherine are passionate about this work—our focus will be mainly on promotion and service provision. Over time we plan to expand to

3 or 4 full time ICBT therapists and will have the capacity to offer this important service to more than a thousand Saskatchewan residents each year. If you would like to know more or would like to receive promotional materials ranging from an in-person presentation to take-away cards for clients, please feel free to contact us anytime at katherine.owens@saskhealthauthority.ca

All our best for a wonderful summer—
Katherine and Kim



NEW TRIALS UNDERWAY

PAIN COURSE FOR OLDER ADULTS

Ainsley MacIntyre (under the supervision of Thomas and Heather Hadjistavropoulos) has started a new trial to examine use of the Pain Course (Online-CBT) in older adults. It is well known that severe pain is more common in older adults than it is in younger persons. Older adults, however, may not have access to traditional face-to-face self-management programs, which are recognized as valuable in chronic pain management. Online self-management programs have the potential to address pain under management in older

CHRONIC CONDITIONS COURSE

The Online Therapy Unit is now offering the Chronic Health Conditions Course. This Online Course aims to provide good education and guidance on simple and effective techniques for managing symptoms often experienced by those with chronic health conditions. Very broadly, the course helps people with thoughts, behaviours and physical symptoms related to pain, depression, and anxiety. Research shows that it helps people gain control over their symptoms, improve their confidence, and get

Mental Health
is just as
important as
physical health.
Remember that.





NEW FINDINGS

Participant perspectives of internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy for psychosocial issues post-spinal cord injury

Honours Thesis Results, Danielle Earis, 2018

Individuals with a spinal cord injury (SCI) confront numerous physical and psychological adjustments. Many report clinically significant depression and anxiety disorders post-SCI; thus, attention to psychological distress is crucial. ICBT has significant potential to increase access to psychological services. The purpose of this study was (a) to evaluate participant view on the acceptability of an eight-week guided ICBT course (Chronic Conditions Course for Persons with SCI) and (b) to gain understanding of SCI experiences that may impact ICBT. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants (n = 8). Interviews provided insight into SCI outcomes and support ICBT acceptability with identified strengths (e.g., accessibility, flexibility, guided support). Suggested changes to ICBT included expanding the breadth of case stories related to ICBT, course timeframe, and support from the guide. This research provides a better understanding of ICBT as an acceptable treatment for psychosocial issues post-SCI. Participant feedback provided valuable information for improving and tailoring the ICBT course to the SCI population and in understanding SCI experiences.

A randomized trial of technician-guided and self-guided ICBT: Wellbeing After Cancer

Doctoral Dissertation Results, Dale Dirkse, 2018

Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy (ICBT) has only recently been used to treat anxiety and depression within a cancer population but has demonstrated promising results. The focus of this study

After Cancer included education about depression and anxiety, strategies to identify and modify unhelpful thoughts, manage physical symptoms of anxiety and depression, overcome avoidance, cope with uncertainty, and maintain improvements after treatment. The course was administered to a randomized group of cancer survivors; 42 individuals who were guided by a technician and 44 individuals who independently progressed through the course. The findings were very encouraging. The results of this study showed that participants' symptoms of anxiety and depression improved significantly from pre to post treatment. Participants also reported strong satisfaction ratings with the program. Furthermore, there was no difference in anxiety or depression symptom improvement or overall satisfaction between those who were guided by a technician or those who independently progressed through the course. Participants also improved on secondary measures of fear of cancer recurrence and quality of life. Results from this study demonstrate the ability to provide effective treatment to Canadian cancer survivors with symptoms of anxiety and depression from one centralized site. Providing ICBT has the potential to change the mental health care landscape for cancer survivors across Canada. Future research should focus on best practices for implementation of ICBT.



To Find Out More About Online Therapy

Call: 306-337-3331

Email:
Online.Therapy.USER@regina.ca

Watch the course videos on our website:
www.onlinetherapyuser.ca



Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for chronic health conditions: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Mehta, S., Peynenburg, V. A., & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D.

This trial provided us with foundational knowledge before launching the new Chronic Conditions Course developed at Macquarie University. We pooled the results from twenty randomized controlled trials evaluating the effectiveness of internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy (ICBT) for persons with chronic health conditions. The study found that ICBT was effective in improving symptoms of anxiety and depression in a pooled sample of 2,421 participants. Both therapist- and self-guided approaches resulted in improvements in anxiety and

depression symptoms. However, therapist guided ICBT had larger effects on anxiety and depression than self-guided approaches. ICBT was found to be as effective as face-to-face group cognitive behaviour therapy or acceptance and commitment therapy. However, ICBT was more effective than treatment as usual, attentional control, online discussion, and wait-list control groups. No difference in outcomes were seen between studies that provided telephone versus email support. The study also found that ICBT was effective in improving condition specific secondary outcomes including pain severity, disability, and insomnia. This review informed us of the applicability of ICBT among those with chronic health conditions, and it highlighted gaps in evidence regarding the efficacy of transdiagnostic ICBT approaches among those with chronic health conditions. Furthermore, it demonstrated the need to evaluate team guided approaches in order to reduce potential therapist burden and costs. This paper has been submitted for publication.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

The Online Therapy Unit's Community Advisory Panel (CAP) met on May 28th to brainstorm ideas and discuss the current and upcoming projects of the Unit. A guiding principle of the CAP is to foster and promote community informed research, where mental health service consumers and providers are active participants in research and knowledge exchange. The CAP consists of a great group of people with diverse backgrounds, life experience and skills. We are excited by the ideas and guidance arising from the Community Advisory Panel meeting, and we look forward to continued collaboration.

The CAP team consists of Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos (Online Therapy Unit Principal



To participate in a course, visit:

www.onlinetherapyuser.ca

1. Click Apply Now for the course you wish to enroll in and complete the online screening.
2. Take part in a telephone conversation with a Unit staff member to discuss if the course, or another treatment method, would best meet your needs at this time.



NEW MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM



Lee Bourgeault
Clinical Research Associate

Lee Bourgeault holds a master's degree in Counselling Psychology from McGill University and has experience providing counselling services to both adults and adolescents. Prior to her graduate degree, Lee attained an Honours Psychology undergraduate degree from the University of Regina. During that time she completed a research project on motivation and was part of the Online Therapy Unit team as a Research Assistant.



Andrew Wilhelms
Research Associate

Andrew Wilhelms joined the Online Therapy Unit team as a Research Associate, assisting in the development of an alcohol misuse/addictions course. Andrew recently finished his undergraduate studies at the University of Regina, earning a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Psychology. He enjoys helping people and is excited to assist others with the Online Therapy Unit. He hopes to gain valuable research and work experience in the field of psychology before applying to a Master's program in the future. Andrew's personal interests include going to the beach, learning French, and weightlifting.



Cynthia Beck
Research Assistant

Cynthia Beck joins the Online Therapy Unit as a student Research Assistant. She is currently working on her Honours Degree in Psychology and plans to pursue Graduate studies in Clinical Psychology. Cynthia brings wonderful experience to the OTU from her background in communications and media. She also currently provides rural suicide intervention response services. Cynthia enjoys farm life and camping with her husband and children.



Aleiia Asmundson
Research Assistant

Aleiia Asmundson joins the Online Therapy Unit team after finishing her first year of university at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she is majoring in Psychology. Aleiia plans to attend grad school back in Canada once she is finished her undergrad. A rower for the Regina Rowing Club, Aleiia was awarded a scholarship for rowing to Duquesne in the fall of 2016. During her first year of university, she had the opportunity to travel to many places around the United States with the rowing team. While home for

Current Online
Therapy Partners





VISITOR

May-July 2018 Annemieke Kidd, Deakin University, Australia

Meeks is an undergraduate student from Melbourne, Australia. She is interning with us this summer through the MITACs Research program. Her primary focus is on assisting with the study examining guided internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for persons with spinal cord injury but she is also gaining experience with a number of other related projects while she is in Canada (e.g., alcohol misuse literature review, qualitative coding, screening, recruitment). Back in Australia, Meeks is majoring in Psychological Science and Nursing at Deakin University, and works monitoring participants in pharmacology trials. In her spare time, she likes doing circus skill classes, fostering kittens and listening to music. While in Regina, Meeks has discovered a love for kayaking and doing yoga at the cat café.



NEW GRADUATE STUDENT JOINING TEAM

2018-present Hugh McCall (CGS funded)

Hugh completed a Bachelor of Arts in psychology at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2017, and will be joining the Master's Program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Regina in 2018. As an undergraduate, Hugh became very interested in Internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy (ICBT) during his work on a study evaluating an ICBT intervention for social anxiety. Inspired to conduct further research on ICBT, Hugh is currently in the early stages of planning his Master's thesis under the supervision of Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos.

THE NEXT PHASE

This summer the Online Therapy Unit bids a fond farewell to PhD candidate, Luke Schneider, as he prepares to begin his one-year pre-doctoral clinical residency in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia. Luke began volunteering for the Unit in June of 2009, shortly after he obtained his Honours Degree in Psychology. Luke quickly became fascinated with Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy and joined the Unit as a staff member in 2010, where he helped to launch the Unit's web platform and first online therapy trial. Luke's passion for online therapy grew as he learned more about the emerging field, which lead him to apply to work with Dr. Hadjistavropoulos as a graduate student in the Clinical Psychology Program. Luke was very pleased to be admitted to the graduate program in 2011 and, since then, has been very active in the Unit as well as the field of Internet-delivered therapy. As Luke prepares to complete his clinical residency, he would like to thank Dr. Hadjistavropoulos for her mentorship and guidance throughout the years. He would also like to thank the many Online Therapy Unit staff that he has had the opportunity to work with. Luke is looking forward to continued collaboration with the Online Therapy Unit and is very excited to see the next phase of development as the Unit continues to grow.

While away on residency, Luke will obtain a full year of clinical experience working in both inpatient and outpatient settings and with clients across the lifespan in a



Is Online Therapy for You?

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Do you have Internet access?
- Do you feel comfortable using the Internet and writing emails?
- Do you have access to a computer and printer in a space where you could work on the Course online?
- Do you have symptoms of anxiety and/or depression?

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



Dr. Nick Titov



Dr. Viktor Kaldo



Dr. Susanna Jernelöv

It is our great honour to welcome 3 Global Leaders to the Online Therapy Unit on June 25 and 26, 2018. Welcome to: Dr. Nick Titov, MindSpot Clinic & PORTS, Macquarie University, Sydney, AUSTRALIA; Dr. Viktor Kaldo, Linnaeus University, Växjö, SWEDEN & Internet Psychiatry Clinic, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, SWEDEN; Dr. Susanna Jernelöv, Internet Psychiatry Clinic, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, SWEDEN. We look forward to discussing current & future research directions for improving access to online mental health services.

Total Direct
Funding
Received by the
Online Therapy
Unit to 2021:

\$ 3,961,734.50

Thank you to
our supporters!



PRESENTATIONS

January – June 2018

- Edmonds, M. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (June, 2018). [Are therapist factors related to patient outcomes for Internet-delivered, therapist-assisted cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety and depression?](#) Poster accepted at the International Congress for Applied Psychology. Montreal, Quebec.
- Faller, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. & Hampton, M. R. (June, 2018). [Influencing perceptions of mental Health disclosure in the workplace.](#) Symposium conducted at the International Congress on Psychology, Montreal, Quebec.
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Titov, N., Kaldo V., & Christensen, H. (June, 2018). [Online and telephone delivery of mental health services in routine clinical care: Implementation findings, challenges and opportunities from Australia, Canada, Sweden and Europe.](#) Symposium conducted at the International Congress for Applied Psychology. Montreal, Quebec.
- Owens, V. A. M., Soucy, J. N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Faller, N. Y., & Klatt, A. (May, 2018). [Client feedback regarding perceived strengths and areas for improvement following Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy.](#) Poster session at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Cognitive Behavioural Therapies, Vancouver, B.C.
- Peynenburg, V., Mehta, S. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (May, 2018). [Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for chronic health conditions: A meta-analysis.](#) Poster session at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Cognitive Behavioural Therapies, Vancouver, B.C.
- Soucy, J. N., Owens, V. A., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Peynenburg, V. (May, 2018). [Development of online motivational interviewing for enhancing engagement in Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy.](#) Poster session at the annual conference of the Canadian Association

Schneider, L. H. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (March, 2018). [Putting chronic pain management online: Effectiveness, benefits, and challenges of an Internet delivered course for coping with chronic pain.](#) Symposium presentation given at the Interprofessional Education in Pain Management Conference. Regina, SK.

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (January, 2018). [Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in clinical practice: In search of the optimal delivery method.](#) Colloquium Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, B.C.

PUBLICATIONS

January – June 2018

- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Faller, N., Klatt, A., Nugent, M., Dear, B. & Titov, N. (in press). [Patient perspectives on strengths and challenges of therapist-assisted Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy: Using the patient voice to improve care.](#) *Community Mental Health*, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-018-0286-0>
- Talbot, F., DaPonte, D., Titov, N, Dear, B. F., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Hadjistavropoulos, T., & Jbilou, J. (in press). [Improving access to the treatment of anxiety and depression in linguistic minorities: A feasibility open trial of Internet-delivered transdiagnostic cognitive behavioural therapy among French Canadians.](#) *Behaviour Change*
- Edmonds, M., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Schneider, L., H., Dear, B., & Titov, N. (2018). [Who benefits most from therapist-assisted Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in clinical practice? Predictors of symptom change and dropout.](#) *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*.54, 24-32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2018.01.003>
- Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Schneider, L., Klassen, K., Dear, B. F. & Titov, N. (2018). [Development and evaluation of a therapist-assisted Internet-delivered cognitive](#)



There is no
health without
mental health.