

Concurrent Sessions – August 22

Exploring the Evidence - Presentations and Conversation

Five concurrent workshops will be offered in thematic areas to engage discussion on the growing body of evidence about the importance of promoting mental health for children and youth. Each session will feature three presenters, who will present their findings and implications for policy and/or practice. The presentations will be followed by general discussion on the question: *What are the implications for “upstream” policies and programs?*

Responses to the discussion questions will be submitted to the Writing Room and contribute to the Call to Action that will conclude the program of ASI 2017.

Session 4: Parent, Caregiver and Mentor Engagement

a. *Assessment and Promotion of Teacher-specific Mental Health Literacy regarding Children of Parents with Mental Health Issues*

Stefanie Harsch

In Germany, it is estimated that one quarter of all students experience a parental mental health issue in their life. We conducted this research because those children represent one of the populations at highest risk for developing mental disorders themselves. In the community, teachers play a key role in identifying mental health problems in children and for first aid interventions. To shed light on teachers’ competencies regarding COPMIs, we conducted a multi-method study to explore the teachers’ Mental Health Literacy (MHL), with the aim to develop a teachers’ training program: a) scoping review in 2015, b) teachers’ interviews (n=26) in 2016, and ongoing c) quantitative online-survey (intended n=2,500). The scoping review resulted in three studies and revealed a research gap. The interviews showed that teachers are in general not sufficiently trained and feel uncertain about their own role e.g. in noticing and interacting with COPMIs, in communicating with affected parents and the support systems. Furthermore, institutional means and resources are missing. Such a mismatch can result in inadequate support and little use of available programs for children at risk. Based on these results, our team (2 universities, 4 staff members) develops a teachers’ training.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Like this year’s theme, the project “Teacher-MHL” targets children and youth by focusing on teachers’ knowledge and skills. It addresses the lack of scientific evidence of teachers’ role concerning COPMIs by assessing teachers’ MHL and by applying evidence to practice through the development of a training which improves teachers’ MHL to promote MH of COPMIs. Addressing teachers’ MHL is highly innovative and gives reason to expect a high degree of effectiveness of the program.

What will others learn from your project?

From our project, others can learn about the procedure of assessing teachers' MHL by using a mixed-method approach and the lessons learned. Next, by presenting the main results, others become aware of the most relevant aspects of teachers MHL on the individual, classroom, school and society level. Finally, others get insights into evidence-based interventions which aim to improve the teachers' MHL in order to promote mental health of COPMIs.

How does your project demonstrate evidence of promising collaborative practices, policies, research?

The results and program presented are from the project "teacher MHL" which is one of 10 subprojects of an international research project on "Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence" (HLCA). This subproject, a cooperation between the University of Bielefeld and the University of Education in Freiburg, benefitted from the expertise and other findings within HLCA and from the collaboration with the Center of Bildung which will implement the teachers' training in large scale in 2018.

Presenter

Stefanie Harsch, M.A.

Academic assistant, Institute of Sociology, University of Education in Freiburg Germany, working in the project "Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence"

Since April, 2017, I have worked as an academic assistant at the University of Education in Freiburg (UoEiF) in Germany. I'm part of an international research project on Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence which started in 2015. I finished my Master's program in Health Education and Health Promotion in March 2017. Since November 2014, I have worked as a student academic assistant at the UoEiF. Between October 2010 and July 2014, I studied at Philipps-University in Marburg psychology and educational sciences. In 2009, I graduated from high school and spent a year in North America, doing an internship in social organizations.

b. ***Triple P – A Population Health Approach to Parenting with Significant Mental Health Impacts***

Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl and Laura Quinn Graham

The Triple P-Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) is a well-established, evidence-based program that utilizes a population health approach to promote child and family well-being, and to prevent mild, moderate, and severe behavioral and emotional problems in children up to age 16. Key tenets of Triple P are de-stigmatization of help-seeking and provision of programming of minimal sufficiency for effectiveness in multiple modalities - one-on-one, group, online- with five levels of program intensity to help parents manage mild to severe parenting challenges. In 2010-11, the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention held a series of Think Tanks that engaged 125 government/community sector professionals to identify parent support needs and programming gaps. From these consultations, Triple P emerged as the program best suited to meet these needs, given its strong evidence-base and comprehensive approach. To date 87 service providers have been accredited to deliver one or more of nine Triple P programs currently on offer, including programming for parents of children with a disability. The PEI government has begun implementation of the final two years of a five year implementation plan that includes programming for parents with intensive support needs. Lessons learned and experiences of a practitioner will be shared.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Triple P has been documented to significantly reduce behavioural disorders, anxiety and depression in children and youth, and to reduce child maltreatment injuries and out of home placements which also impact children's mental health. Parental impacts include significant reductions in anger, inter-parental conflict, anxiety and depression.

What will others learn from your project?

Session participants will learn about the benefits of an evidence-based, population-level, public -health approach to parenting that de-stigmatizes help-seeking and improves child and youth mental health by providing programming of varying intensities in multiple modalities to accommodate parenting learning styles.

How does your project demonstrate evidence of promising collaborative practices, policies, research?

PEI Triple P implementation is a collaborative effort of government and community with funding from four government departments: Health and Wellness; Family and Human Services; Education, Early Learning and Culture; and Justice and Public Safety, all of whom will benefit substantively from improvements in children's and parent's mental health. Of the 87 PEI Triple P practitioners, 22 are in the four funding departments, 51 are in Health PEI and 14 are in community organizations

Main Presenter

Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl, Ph.D.

Family Violence Prevention and Community Development Coordinator, PEI Provincial Government

Dr. Wendy Verhoek-Oftedahl, Ph.D. is the Family Violence Prevention and Community Development Coordinator in the Department of Family and Human Services. She is an epidemiologist with over 20 years of experience working in various aspects of family violence prevention across the life course. She serves as resource for the Premier's Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention and serves on the Provincial Triple P Positive Parenting Steering Committee. She holds an appointment as Assistant Professor of the Practice of Epidemiology at Brown University.

Co-Presenter

Laura Quinn Graham

MEd, PGDE, BA, RECE, Executive Director Family Place Summerside, PE

c. ***Handle with Care... promoting the mental health of children... every day!***

Sonya Hooper

Handle with Care is a simple, culturally-relevant interactive program designed for parents and caregivers to promote the mental health (social and emotional well-being) of young children and their families.

It is designed to reduce inequities and build on individual strengths, knowledge and traditions. The Hincks-Dellcrest Institute, received funding for the program through the Public Health Agency of Canada's Innovations fund. They completed a rigorous evaluation of the program which showed it to be compatible with the needs of individuals and communities with various socio-demographic characteristics who experience mental health risk factors such as low income, social isolation, low sense of belonging and a sense of stigmatization.

Mental health or social and emotional well-being is an integral part healthy development. We know the foundations of mental health are shaped from the earliest days. Since brain development in the early years is known to set neurological and biological pathways that affect health, learning and behavior, the purpose of delivering HWC programs on PEI is to mobilize Islander to improve children's social and emotional well-being.

The first round of research conducted from 2011 to 2015 saw 75 parents from across PEI participate in 8 sessions affecting 215 children. In 2015 to present more than 279 more families have signed up for the program affecting 754 additional children.

How does your project make a connection with the theme Promoting Child and Youth Mental Health: Moving Evidence to Action?

Data from Qualitative and Quantitative research across Canada concludes:

- Positive effects on parents' and care-givers mental health (flourishing), even in the case of known mental health issues.
- Greater sense of parenting competence in parenting practices and in developing relationships with their children and others.
- Increased self-care and wellness practices on the part of parents.
- Growth in community capacity and support systems.

Ongoing research of Handle with Care indicates it is an appropriate and accessible program for participants from various backgrounds and reinforces its participatory approach rather than didactic, building on participants' strengths and ways of knowing by promoting information sharing and mutual support and respect.

What will others learn from your project?

As PEI's host site, the Early Childhood Development Association (ECDA) of PEI will join with PEI Family Violence Prevention Services, a valued partner and facilitator of the program to share examples of how HWC supports their respective organizations in reaching goals in fostering social and emotional development in children and families.

Facilitators will share lessons learned locally in promotion of the program; collaborative practices and influencing policy development.

Moving Forward:

Goal: To ensure Handle with Care parent program is accessible to every Island family to use in promoting the social and emotional well-being of their children, every day!

Key Messages:

Handle with Care:

- Strengthens abilities of parents, caregivers and communities to foster social and emotional well-being
- Is offered in communities across the province by trained facilitators who live and/or work there.
- Has no cost to parents
- Is a Canadian program, developed by people who have extensive knowledge of child development and, work experience with children and families
- Is flexible and can be adapted for delivery in different communities and diverse cultures
- Is compatible with provincial wellness strategies

Presenter

Sonya Hooper

Sonya Hooper, MEd: Sonya is an early childhood educator working as the Executive Director of the Early Childhood Development Association of PEI since 2003. Sonya is a trained HWC facilitator and has been involved with this project in various capacities, but above all believes this program inspires positive changes for families.