



## SESSION 2: MAY 13, 2022

# CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS FOR THE FUTURE

TEAM COMPOSITION - TRAINING AND EDUCATION - SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

## BRIEF BACKGROUND

The 2022 Child & Youth Mental Health Leadership Summit is a series of conversations led by Children's Healthcare Canada providing a platform for Canadian leaders in child and youth mental health to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of this population and the systems they work in.

The kick-off event on April 7 provided a high-level view of data and HHR issues, and included voices of individuals with lived experience of child and youth mental health services. ([Link to summary report](#)). Child & Youth Mental Health Teams for the Future is the first of a series of consultations to be held throughout 2022 taking a deeper dive into the priorities identified in the April event summary.

Mental health teams depend on a variety of professions. One key message from April's Leadership Summit was the importance of mental health nurses in all service settings. This 90-minute consultation centred on the role of nurses and mental health training as a pillar for the workforce of the future.

**OBJECTIVES:** Event objectives included sharing strategies for:

- Retention, recruitment and continuing education for nursing leaders in mental health
- Connecting programs and organizations that provide mental health services with schools of nursing to foster relationships

## WHAT WE LEARNED

### SETTING THE STAGE

System leaders Jacques Lovely, Bonnie Fleming-Carroll and Irene Drabik shared their perspectives and experience with mental health nursing at the system, organizational and individual levels. ([Read their bios here](#)).

## NURSING WORKFORCE: NATIONAL TRENDS

Jacques Lovely provided some context, reviewing data and trends related to the nursing shortage from pre-pandemic to present.

Although we have seen year-over-year growth, it has not been enough to keep up with demand. This nursing shortage was predicted over 20 years ago and the shortage has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been nursing shortages over time for a variety of reasons.

AGE	SEX	EMPLOYMENT
Since 2010 ... Early Career (< 35) ↑ 7.5% Late Career (> 55) ↓ 3.2% Mid Career (35-54) 48% fit this category	In 2019 ~ 91% of regulated nurses are female in Canada. The supply of male regulated nurses grew 15.4%	58.5% In hospital 15.6% in community health 15.5% in LTC/Nursing Home 10.5% Other 58% FT, 32% PT, 10% Casual

*Demographics of the 2019 workforce*

Canadian Nursing Schools saw a surge of interest from high caliber candidates amidst the pandemic however:

- There remains a limited number of seats in Canadian nursing programs.
- Limited number of practical/hands-on learning opportunities
- Vacancy rate of 1.6% for full-time nursing positions
- Higher rate of PhD-qualified nurse educators retiring than entering

**Although Canada saw an increase in the supply of healthcare workers (overall trend); there is still a strain on the system due to the "The Great Resignation and The Great Exhaustion".**

### The Great Resignation

Health systems are dealing with one of the tightest labor crunches in quite some time

### The Great Exhaustion

Of those working in healthcare settings, 33% reported fair to poor mental health

The pandemic placed unprecedented demand on Canada's Healthcare system. Jacques discussed potential solutions to provide relief to workforce nursing challenges.

5 Potential Solutions to provide relief to workforce nursing challenges:

1. Identify the specific challenges and communicate – focus on retention
2. Have a deliberate strategy – cater to needs
3. Offer better benefits – focus on professional growth
4. Optimize technology – use automation and technology to address shortages
5. Seek government support – targeted scholarships, loan forgiveness, job development

## BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH THE ORGANIZATION WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

Bonnie Fleming-Carroll, Associate Chief, Nursing & Interprofessional Education at SickKids spoke to the lessons learned during the development and implementation of a new mental health strategy at her organization; focused on developing mental health literate clinicians through a new education initiative.

Leadership at SickKids recognized that the hospital is great at addressing the medical needs for complex children, but found healthcare professionals lack confidence in treating mental health needs of the patients they see. “Focus on Advancing Care for Pediatric Mental Health” was launched in the fall of 2019, led by Christina Bartha. The goal is to achieve unprecedented outcomes in child and youth mental health through collaborations, innovations and partnerships.

**SickKids 2025**

**BETTER MENTAL HEALTH. A BETTER WORLD.**  
Healthier Children. A Better World.™

- TRANSFORM MENTAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY**
  - Integrate mental, physical and behavioral health care delivery
  - Improve access to mental health supports across the care continuum
  - Build integrated services and seamless transitions among providers, sites, and systems
  - Support patients, families and providers with digital tools and virtual care
- ACCELERATE MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH**
  - Improve the integration of mental health research and care
  - Lead precision child and youth mental health research and knowledge translation
  - Support the evolution of clinician researchers
  - Collaborate to inform practice, policy, and research
  - Design and incorporate a measurement-based evaluation framework
- PRIORITIZE CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY NEEDS IN ALL THAT WE DO**
  - Co-design research, education, and care with children, youth, and families
  - Build pathways for caregivers and siblings to access supports and interventions
  - Promote equity, diversity and inclusion
- ACHIEVE MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY FOR ALL**
  - Act as a source of expertise for mental health literacy tools
  - Build mental health into the curriculum of all health professionals
  - Leverage technology to foster continuous learning and education
  - Tailor mental health information to family needs
- CHAMPION EVOLUTION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM**
  - Synthesize and disseminate best practices for screening, treatment and navigation
  - Build capacity for mental health prevention and health promotion
  - Advocate for equity and action on the social determinants of health
  - Purposely partner and lead to drive system transformation

COMPASSION | INTEGRITY | COLLABORATION | INCLUSION | INNOVATION | EXCELLENCE

ACHIEVE UNPRECEDENTED OUTCOMES IN CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH COLLABORATIONS, INNOVATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS.

[Click to view online](#)

**The new generation of nurses has many strengths – one of which is that they are looking for growth opportunities. Organizations need to create career and leadership advancement opportunities in the clinical setting. SickKids is creating a new career pathway program for accelerated learning that includes micro credentialling.**

## **CASE STUDY: A NURSING STUDENTS' AVENUE TO LEADERSHIP**

Irene Drabik, Program Manager at the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, spoke to building capacity and mentoring nurses to succeed in their positions and careers. Irene described strategies to support nursing students and emerging leaders who want to explore leadership opportunities while developing clinical skills. She acknowledged the challenges and risks inherent in the time, energy and resources required to develop new leaders who may leave for other positions after that investment. Irene provided a narrative of an experience with one individual and how she has been able to support growth, advancement and capacity for the individual and the organization.

### **Investing in emerging leaders in mental health nursing is an investment in children and youth**

Leadership facilitated the following strategies/opportunities for the emerging leader:

- Listen to understand the individuals' goals to facilitate mentorship
- Create opportunities to develop systems and critical thinking through additional responsibilities reinforcing skills learned in training.
- Provide occasions for growth through presentations to senior leaders, exploring authorship opportunities, etc.
- Allow individuals to assume leadership through phone call management for crises and acute care
- Leverage provincial funding available for professional development
- Provide opportunities to allow for pathway selection, critical thinking, use of skills outside of day-to-day clinical skillset

**Emerging leaders AND the organization/ management team have a shared commitment and responsibility to the individual's growth through clinical practices, continuing education, and other leadership skills.**

# THE CONVERSATIONS

## How can hospital and community mental health services better engage with nursing programs/ schools of nursing?

### Key insights:

- Many of the hospitals are affiliated with nursing programs, accept students for placements and recruit from them. Creating new touch points was an area for opportunity that was explored.
- Hospital and community programs provide presentations to nursing students. Consider introducing the topic of child and youth mental health as a core component for all nursing work.
- Consultations between schools, professional organizations and clinical organizations to create a better understanding of the needs of all three in regard to clinical needs and experience.
- Need for competency building in graduates to enhance mental health literacy.
- Clear communication that psychiatric/mental health nursing should not be seen as career limiting but as a transferable skill set.

## How have you built a culture of growth and learning to retain current staff?

### Key insights:

- Investments in mental health nursing education for new hires and experienced staff; including broadening mental health system perspectives through training and education
- Providing support for nurses' own mental health needs and working to remove stigma around the need for help
- Developing mental health skills in other acute system disciplines to ensure patients with mental health needs aren't being further traumatized while their acute needs are being met. This can be done through cross-training to empower bedside nurses
- Strategically recruiting from other disciplines by offering opportunities for education and career growth
- Identifying and promoting examples of staffing successes with pan-Can institutions

## Given the challenges over the last few years, how can we inspire nursing students, new grads and established nurses to make a career in child and youth mental health?

### Key insights:

- Capacity Building
  - Provide structured mentorship programs built into onboarding, and through continuing education at the organizational level
  - Engaging in early and mandatory mental health training
  - Switching perspectives by educating on opportunities and career pathways - nursing can follow many avenues
  - Grow capacity through expansion of available seats within nursing schools

- Continue to advocate for a cultural shift in health care delivery
  - Create healthier work environments; both physical, emotional and spiritual
  - Understand the changing needs, values and expectations of the incoming workforce
  - Support work-life balance through flexible scheduling, shift options and start times for nurses
  - Leaders must address burnout, distress and fatigue
- Marketing and Communication
  - Schools of nursing and organizations that hire nurses need to review how the profession is currently promoted and find new ways to encourage nursing as a career choice. Promote the value of not just the “sacrifice to service” but what tangible and intangible benefits come through this career, the different pathways and experiences, and the opportunities for growth and advancement.

### **The nurse staffing crisis has no simple fix.**

*“The nurse staffing crisis has no simple fix. Research shows that optimized nurse staffing is integral to high-level patient care, better patient/family experiences and nurse well-being. Adequate investment in appropriate nurse staffing is also essential to a health care institution’s performance, reputation and financial viability.....Nurse staffing is a complex process that is affected by the health of the work environment and changes in the workforce, including nursing shortages, turnover and nurse competencies. Additionally, the economic pressures on the health care system pose challenges to appropriate staffing.”*

*Resource: [Nurse Staffing Think Tank: Priority Topics and Recommendations](#)*

## **WHAT NEXT?**

We look forward to convening leaders in child and youth mental health for discussions on all priority areas for this community. Stay tuned for more details regarding upcoming monthly consultations during the Child & Youth Mental Health Leadership Summit Series; a year-long discussion on the challenges facing the children's mental health system as the country recovers from the pandemic.

**THE DISCUSSIONS FROM THE 2022 CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT SERIES WILL HELP INFORM CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE CANADA'S FUTURE WORK.**

**[SESSION RECORDING AVAILABLE HERE](#)**