

Event Brief

Webinar: Mental Health Promotion in Canada

Leveraging global and local assets to accelerate our progress and impact

May 31, 2021

A [recording](#) of this webinar is available.

Purpose

The need for mental health **promotion** (MHP) has never been greater and it's least developed on the mental health continuum. This webinar featured the Public Health Agency of Canada's Mental Health Promotion Innovation Fund (MHP-IF) as a multi-year, multi-phase approach for advancing MHP in Canada. Participants learned about local assets within the MHP-IF; 20 projects funded through the program, all with a shared interest in MHP, with diverse populations and in over 120 places across Canada. They learned about national assets within the MHP-IF, including the KDE Hub and goals for advancing policy and other system supports for MHP. The main global asset described was the recently released position statement on MHP from the International Union of Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE). Participants were invited to consider the opportunity for leveraging these local, national, and global assets to advance MHP in Canada.

Participants

This open webinar welcomed participants from the MHP-IF community and those with shared interests. The webinar was hosted by the KDE Hub Secretariat. Of 158 registrants, the webinar was attended by 107 participants, from MHP-IF project teams, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, various community and provincial organizations (working in mental health, public health, education, child and youth services, and more), and the Hub team.

Meeting structure

- Barb Riley, Hub Scientific Director, gave opening remarks and introduced her fellow panelists: Shannon Bradley Dexter (PHAC MHP-IF), and Emily Jenkins (Co-author of IUHPE position statement on health promotion; MHP-IF Project Lead), who spoke to the community, national, and international assets for mental health promotion.
- A [PDF of the presentation slides](#) is available.
- In the second half of the webinar, panelists discussed questions submitted by the attendees before and during the webinar.

What did we learn?

- The webinar began with a brief description of the many entry points or doors through which individuals and organizations come for advancing MHP. Those who act on any of the determinants of (mental) health are influencing MHP outcomes at individual through system levels.
- Barb Riley began the first of three presentations with a focus on local assets; she introduced the 20 MHP-IF projects and highlighted the recently released [project infographics](#) that describe the who, what, where, why, and how of each project. Barb introduced the infographics using [a brief 2.5-minute animated video](#).
- Shannon Bradley Dexter described the design of the MHP-IF, the thinking behind it (including some results from the PHAC Innovation Strategy, precursor to the MHP-IF), the KDE Hub as a new program component, and upcoming program phases.
- MHP-IF program goals are part of a broader MHP agenda within PHAC: build collective action for positive MHP, increase capacity for population health intervention research, connect impact and results of funded projects to decision makers, and contribute to the national and international development of population mental health.
- Emily Jenkins highlighted the global context for MHP, with a focus on the [IUHPE's position statement](#) on critical actions for MHP.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the field of MHP in some known and some uncertain ways. There is a window of opportunity for strengthening a focus on upstream determinants with new public awareness and understanding about mental health, inequity, and systemic issues. For how long this window may be open and with what competing priorities are yet to be seen.
- There is a strong and emerging evidence base for MHP that can be used to guide action. Evidence from within and across MHP-IF projects will add to this evidence.
- Many professions have important roles to play in MHP even though they may not have an explicit focus on it.
- In response to comments and questions not addressed in the webinar: PHAC's MHP-IF involves Indigenous communities both on- and off-reserve. The Hub will explore project interest in a train-the-trainer approach for others to engage with them. Service clubs and schools are examples of assets promoting mental health, even though it's not their primary mandate.
- This open webinar is one of many steps in making connections within and across many communities that advance MHP, directly or indirectly.

How will learnings from this event be used?

- A blog post further exploring the contexts of MHP will be posted to [kdehub.ca](#).
- The feedback from this first open webinar will inform future communications and engagement with the broader MHP community in Canada and beyond.
- Those interested in learning more about the MHP-IF projects are invited to view the [project infographics](#). Those seeking other information can contact the Hub through its website ([kdehub.ca](#)) or email (kdehub@uwaterloo.ca).

