

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 to provide Internet-delivered 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 and conduct research on how to best deliver online-CBT.



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Director and Coordinator's Message

SUCCESS! This is the word that best describes the last few months at the Online Therapy Unit. We have so many things to be grateful for as we move forward and we owe it all to the people that have worked tirelessly in support of Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (ICBT) both in the community and in the Unit. None of this would be possible without you. With your help we truly have become the little unit that could.

So much has happened since our last issue, without providing too many spoilers, a few highlights that you can look for this issue are: We are excited to announce that we have been awarded a 4 year grant from CIHR totaling \$971,552 based on the proposal we put forward last fall. The work proposed in this grant is extremely important in advancing the field and answering the questions we have about the best way to offer ICBT. Over the next few months we will be busy getting things organized so that we are ready to start this important work. The proposed research will be described in greater detail later in this issue.

In the last issue we announced that the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health provided funding to the unit for the 2016 to 2017 fiscal year. We are excited to let you know that that funding has been renewed for the 2017 to 2018 year and provided the unit with \$356,000. This support allows us to continue to freely offer the Wellbeing Course to individuals in Saskatchewan and support therapists in the community as they learn to incorporate Internet-delivered Cognitive Behavior Therapy into their practice.


We hope you enjoy the newsletter and are able to take some time to learn more about what has been happening in the Online Therapy Unit. It truly is remarkable how much work can be achieved by a small number of dedicated individuals. We wish you and yours a safe happy and healthy summer. Take care,

Heather Hadjistavropoulos, Ph.D.
Director, Online Therapy Unit
 &
Marcie Nugent, M.S.W.
Coordinator, Online Therapy Unit

Online Therapy Unit Awarded CIHR Grant !

'The most effective way to do it, is to do it'

- Amelia Earhart

 Online Therapy USER

 @TherapyUser

We are so pleased to announce that our proposed project '**Advancing Mental Health Care by Improving the Delivery of Therapist-guided, Internet-delivered Cognitive Behavioural Therapy in Clinical Practice**' was selected by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to receive \$971,552 of funding over the next four years. Out of 2887 applications, 475 received funding. This project was rated 2nd out of the 99 applications in its cluster with a final rating score of 91.13. This high rating from CIHR reflects both the importance and quality of our work in the Online Therapy Unit. Congratulations and thank you to all therapists, managers, staff and students for the work you do for the unit. Special thanks and recognition to our primary investigator Heather Hadjistavropoulos and Research Team: Nick Titov, Blake Dear, David Gerhard, Harminder Guliani, Julia Witt Amy Zarzecsny, Nuelle Novik as well as the Knowledge User Team: Kathy Willerth, Lorri Carlson, Mary Lee Both, Dori Gaudet, Tracy Muggli, Chad Sayers. Here is a brief abstract from our application:

Depression and anxiety are prevalent and disabling conditions that often go untreated. Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (ICBT) is a relatively new approach to treatment that is a convenient way for patients to access care. ICBT is highly standardized and involves patients reviewing weekly lessons over the Internet. Patients also receive brief weekly support from a therapist via secure emails or phone calls. Past research shows that ~75% of patients complete ICBT and report large symptom improvements. Although these results are very promising, research also suggests that ICBT could potentially be improved by being

more personalized in terms of treatment duration and amount of therapist contact, especially for clients with more severe symptoms. We will conduct three studies to evaluate personalized ICBT. The first trial will involve therapists who work in the online therapy unit that specializes in ICBT. Over 18 months, we will randomize 440 patients with depression and/or anxiety to either receive standardized (5 lessons completed in 8 weeks; weekly therapist contact) or personalized ICBT (5 lessons; personalized duration and therapist contact). In the second study, 440 patients will be treated by therapists working in community mental health clinics in Saskatchewan. We will compare outcomes of 220 patients treated with standardized ICBT in one year to outcomes of 220 patients treated with personalized ICBT the following year. In both trials, we will compare patients who receive personalized and standardized ICBT on outcome measures, intervention usage, satisfaction measures and costs. In the third study, we will interview therapists and managers to learn about strengths and challenges of delivering personalized ICBT. The research will ultimately advance how ICBT is used in clinical practice and is expected to lead to improvements in mental health outcomes and mental health care.



Renewed Funding From Saskatchewan Ministry of Health

We are pleased to announce that the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health has renewed funding for the Online Therapy Unit for the 2017-18 fiscal year. A total of \$ 356,000.00 will be provided with a treatment target of 752 Saskatchewan residents which reflects a 25% increase in clients treated compared to the 2016-17 fiscal year. The details of the 2017-18 target are shown in the accompanying table.



OTU Staff Therapists	17/18 Annual Treatment Target (25% increase)
4 Therapists	416
Health Region Therapists	17/18 Annual Treatment Target (25% increase)
Cypress	15
Five Hills	30
Heartland	TBD
Kelsey Trail	18
PA/Parkland	22
Prairie North	24
RQHR	107
Saskatoon	72
Sun Country	12
Sunrise	36
Health Region Total	336
GRAND TOTAL	752

To Find Out More About Online Therapy in

Call: 306-337-3331

Email:
Online.Therapy.USER@uregina.ca

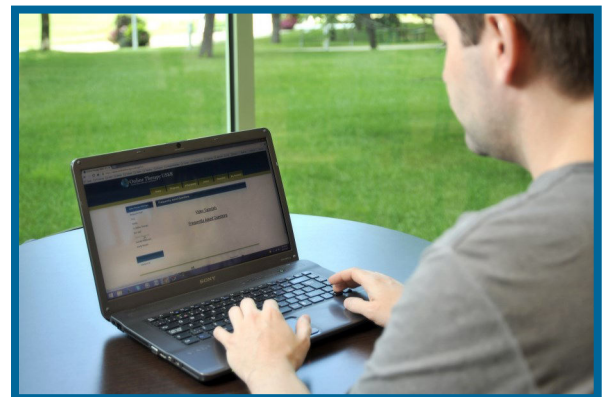
Watch the course videos on our website:
www.onlinetherapyuser.ca

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. —Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Saskatchewan

Increasing Number of Therapists Available to Provide ICBT

In May, Online Therapy Unit staff members provided training in the delivery of Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Twenty-nine therapists participated in the training and were from seven health regions including: Prairie North; Sunrise; Regina Qu'Appelle; Five Hills; Saskatoon; Prince Albert/Parkland; and Heartland Health Region. Since completing e-therapy training, seven of these therapists have already begun taking new, internet-based clients. Welcome all new e-therapists! We look forward to working with you.



Hello From Australia!

Online Therapy Unit researcher Luke Schneider has embarked on a unique research opportunity. Luke was recently awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship to study with our online therapy research partners at Macquarie University in Australia. Luke left Canada on May 30th and he will return on September 1st.

While away, Luke will focus on strengthening

existing ties between our two universities by conducting collaborative research projects with the eCentre Clinic and obtaining an in-depth understanding of the daily operations of the Mindspot Clinic, which delivers online therapy to Australians on a national level. Luke has received a warm welcome from the team at Macquarie University and is looking forward to integrating himself within their team.



Some Recent Interesting Findings

Patient Perspectives on Strengths and Challenges of Therapist-assisted Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: Using the Patient Voice to Improve Care. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research.*

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Klatt, A., Faller, N., Nugent, M., Dear, B. & Titov, N. (2017).

This study aimed to understand patient preferences and recommendations for improving a Therapist-assisted-Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy (ICBT). We examined an open-ended survey available to 225 consecutive participants at the end of an 8-week T-ICBT course for depression and anxiety. 70% of comments were strengths, while 30% represented opportunities for improvement. Most-appreciated features included being able to download and retain content for future use, hearing about other participants' experiences, and general content of lessons. Patients made suggestions for improving the breadth of patient stories, timeline of the course, and matching availability of the therapist to patient need. Patient feedback regarding preferences provides valuable information for improving the patient-centered nature of T-ICBT.

Predictors of symptom change and drop out in an internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy program targeting anxiety and depression. Poster presentation CACBT, Ottawa, Canada.

Edmonds, M. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (May, 2017).

This study provided an in-depth analysis of the anxiety and depression symptom data collected from 466 patients who were admitted to our five week Wellbeing course. 74% of patients completed the course and patients who were older were more likely to complete the course. People who had high distress ratings at screening, those who were unemployed, and those who did not hold a university degree started the course with higher symptom scores on average, but then showed greater improvement in symptoms over the course of therapy. Gender, city or rural residence, and relationship status did not predict symptom scores.

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 with a scheduling request for 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.



Online Therapy Unit Community Partners

Current Partners



Canadian Institutes of Health
Research



Ministry of Health

Health Regions:

Regina Qu'Appelle

Saskatoon

Five Hills

Sun Country

Cypress

Prince Albert Parkland

Prairie North

Kelsey Trail

Heartland

Sunrise



Open Trial of Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behavioral Pain Management Program in a Routine Online Therapy Clinic: Effectiveness, Acceptability and Feasibility

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Schneider, L. H., Hadjistavropoulos, T. Dear, B., Titov, N. (2017).

We recently explored the effectiveness, acceptability and feasibility of a previously developed Internet-delivered cognitive behavioural pain management course, the *Pain Course*, when offered in the Online Therapy Clinic.

The 5-lesson course was delivered over 8 weeks and was accompanied by brief weekly contact with a coach via telephone and secure messages. ($n=55$). Results were highly comparable to past studies of the *Pain Course* showing improvements on primary measures of disability, depression and anxiety at post-treatment that were maintained at follow-up.

Completion rates (76%) and course satisfaction ratings (85% would recommend course) were high. Coach time per week was estimated as $M = 12.67$ ($SD = 6.53$) minutes. The findings add to existing literature on the *Pain Course* demonstrating for the effectiveness, acceptability and feasibility of Internet-delivered cognitive behavioural pain management programs for adults with chronic pain in the Online Therapy Unit.

Examining Change in Health Anxiety Symptoms Resulting from Transdiagnostic, Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Poster presentation CACBT, Ottawa, Canada.

Owens, T., Schneider, L., & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (May, 2017).

The present study examined changes in health anxiety symptoms between clients receiving two different levels of Transdiagnostic ICBT therapist support; therapist-initiated contact (weekly messages from therapist) or client-initiated contact (client was required to initiate contact with their therapist). Results indicated that health anxiety significantly reduced following transdiagnostic ICBT; further, health anxiety reduced equally across both levels of therapist support. Differences in terms of treatment engagement between clients were observed, wherein clients receiving therapist-initiated contact accessed more lessons and completed more measures than those receiving client-initiated contact. These findings suggest transdiagnostic ICBT is effective in reducing health anxiety symptoms. Future research may examine differences in treatment engagement based on level of therapist support provided (therapist-initiated vs. client-initiated).

What you tell yourself everyday
will either lift you up or tear you down.



Invited Presentations January - June 2017

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2017, June 1). *Evaluating benefits of investing in therapist-guided Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in Saskatchewan*. Presentation to Innovative Medicines Canada's Health Research Foundation, Regina, SK.

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2017, May 19). *Developing competency in therapist-guided Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy*. Invited workshop annual convention of the Canadian Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies, Ottawa, ON.

Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2017, May 12). *Online Therapy Unit: Background, Utilization, Outcomes, Future Directions*. Presentation to the Saskatchewan Health Provincial Leadership Team, Regina, SK.

Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2017, May 12). *Update on the Online Therapy Unit*. Presentation to the Saskatchewan Mental Health Action Plan Reference Working Group, Regina, SK.

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2017, May 3). *Lessons learned implementing therapist-assisted internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy*. Distance presentation at the meeting of the Beacon Advisory Board, Toronto, ON.

Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2017, May 4). *Delivering therapy online: What you may need to know about creating and implementing an online service*. Presentation at the meeting of the ACES Alberta Research Program University of Calgary, Calgary, AB.

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2017, April 18). *Disseminating Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in Saskatchewan: History, Organization, Utilization, Outcomes, and Future Directions*. Video presentation to Ontario Telemedicine Network, Ontario, Canada. at

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. & Schneider, L. (2017, March). *Putting chronic pain management online: Effectiveness, benefits and challenges of an Internet-delivered course for coping with chronic pain*. Inter-professional Education on Pain Management Conference, Regina, SK

Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2017, January 28). *Integrating Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in the Mental Health System in Saskatchewan: Lessons Learned*. 6th Annual e-Mental Health Conference, Vancouver, B.C.

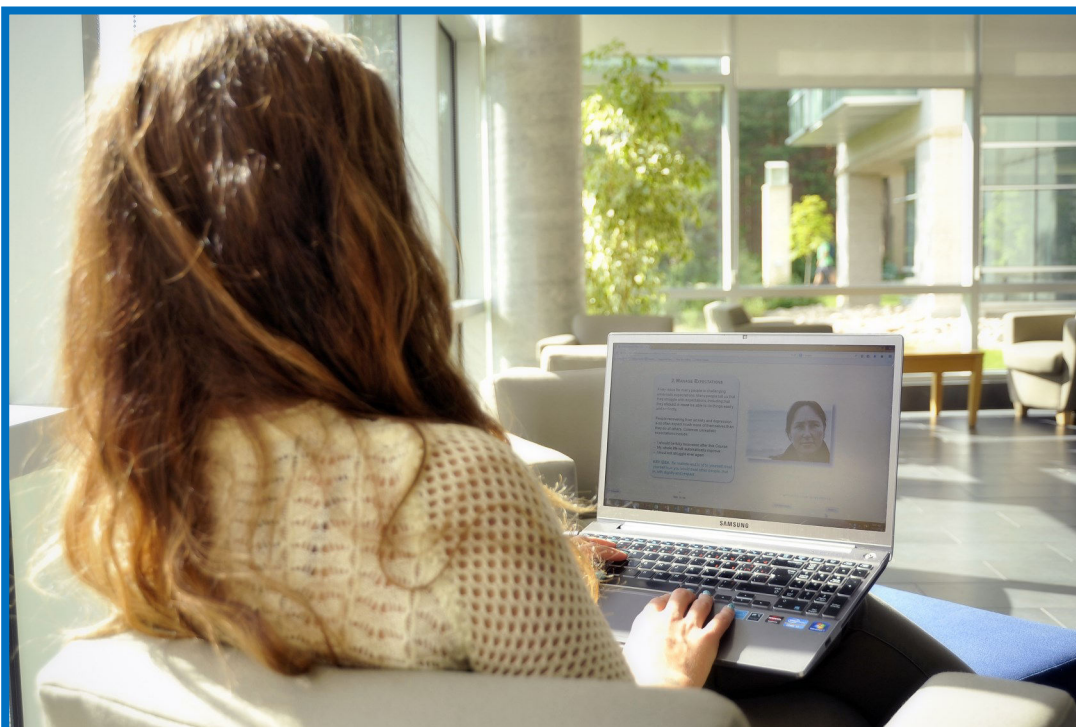
Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2017, January 27). *Disseminating Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in Saskatchewan*. Presentation at the federal/provincial/territorial roundtable concerning "Addressing the Access Gap: Leveraging the Potential of e-Mental Health in Canada". Vancouver, B.C.

Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2017, January 19). *Highlights of Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy in Saskatchewan*. Presentation to Minister Kristy Duncan, University of Regina, Regina, SK.

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.



Welcome to New Unit Members

Giuliano La Posta has joined the Online Therapy Unit as a Student Research Assistant. Giuliano is working on his Honour's Degree in Psychology and is interested in Clinical practice regarding anxiety disorders.

Kerry Spice will be joining the unit in August as a Clinical Research Associate. Kerry is a Registered Psychologist who works in both educational assessment and counselling settings. She has a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology (University of Regina) and research experience in the areas of Pain and Continuity of Care, Health Anxiety and Teacher Job Satisfaction. She is excited to add ICBT to both her clinical practice and research endeavors! Kerry enjoys the outdoors and spending time with her children. She enjoys sports and horseback riding in her spare time.

Lori Abbott joined the Unit as a Clinical Research Associate and is a Registered Social Worker with the SASW. Lori is currently working on a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Regina (to Convocate Fall 2018). Lori has worked in the human services field for over 20 years, in the community of Regina, as well as in Northern Manitoba. Throughout her career, Lori has been privileged to practice in a variety of areas including: services to children, adults and families, intensive supports with at-risk populations, community work and advocacy, delivering educational workshops, and providing mental health supports and services. Lori is the proud mother to four children and one step-daughter, and outside of enjoying time with family and pets, loves the outdoors and being physically active.

Shelley Adrian-Taylor joins the Unit as a Research Associate and holds a Masters Degree in Applied Social Psychology (University of Saskatchewan). Shelley has worked in various sectors including federal and provincial government, health, post-secondary education, community-based organizations and the private sector. Shelley specializes in the development of individuals, teams and organizations through her work as a coach, mediator, evaluator/applied researcher and an organizational effectiveness consultant. Her next steps include furthering her education in order to become a registered psychologist. Her passion is to assist people who have experienced and/or been affected by anxiety and depression.



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

\$ 3,170,735.00

**Thank you to our many
supporters!**

Current Online Therapy Unit Team

Director:

Heather Hadjistavropoulos (Psychology U of R)

Coordinator:

Marcie Nugent (Psychology U of R)

University of Regina Collaborators:

Gordon Asmundson (Psychology), David Gerhard (Computer Science), Harminder Guliani (Economics), Thomas Hadjistavropoulos (Psychology), Lynn Loutzenhiser (Psychology), Nuelle Novik (Social Work), Anne-Marie Urban (Nursing), and Amy Zarzeczny (Johnson Shoyama School of Public Policy)

International Collaborators:

Nick Titov & Blake Dear, Macquaire University, Sydney Australia

Provincial Collaborators:

Kathy Willerth, Lorne Sier, Saskatchewan Health, Dave Nelson and Phyllis O'Connor, Saskatchewan Division, Canadian Mental Health Association

Web Development Team:

Max Ivanov, IT, University of Regina

Community Advisory Panel:

Dianne Ouellette, Catherine Fenwick, Justin Waldrop, Elita Paterson, Sandy Devine, Phyllis O'Connor

Online Therapy Unit Staff:

Kelly Adlam, Amber Klatt, Kim Larson, Adriana Mora Arias, Shelley Adrian-Taylor, Giuliano La Posta, Lori Abbott, Kerry Spice (August)

PostDoctoral Research Fellow:

Swati Mehta

Online Therapy Unit Students:

Dale Dirkse, Mike Edmunds, Tori Owens, Luke Schneider, Joelle Soucy, Vanessa Peynenburg, Dani Earis

2016 Community Providers:

Sarah Chan, Amy Janzen Claude, Chelsea Delparte, Carolyn Van Dyck, Sheryl Fehr, Renee Fesser, Erin Fogarty, Haley Francis, Cam Friesen, Barbara Golden, Hema Harrison, Breann Hetherington, Mike Hodson, Dawna Karalash, Vanessa Kavalench, Corinna Kuntz, Jory Lafrentz Jody Larsen, Shelly Luchenski, Deanna Nilson, JoAnne Salido, Tasha Skorlatowski, Taneil Stevens, Wendy Martin, Stacy Moskalyk, Rosalie Meyer, Katherine Owens, Marisa Pavelich, Deandra Pimentel, Margaret Ralston, Jai Richards, Kavita Ram, Emily Ro-

