



THE ROYAL'S OpenDoors

A newsletter for staff and volunteers

Creating Safety Together



Back row (L to R): Jessica Graham, Diane Hoffman Lacombe, Annie Charlebois, Anita Bloemen, Jim King. Front row (L to R): Dr. Ward, Sherry MacDonald.

At The Royal we're always looking for ways of improving, always striving for excellence in world-class care. While change isn't easy, we know that change is the key to ongoing success.

All assessment staff members in the Forensic Program in Ottawa have recently been trained in Trauma-Informed Care. Being that trauma is a contributing factor to mental illness and 86 per cent of clients in our Forensic Program have experienced one or more types of trauma, creating a culture that is trauma-informed is hugely important.

Being trauma-informed means a few different things. "We're treating people using an approach that understands

Continued on page 2..

...Creating Safety Together continued

and accepts that many people who become our clients have experienced some type of trauma in their lives,” says Dr. Helen Ward, Clinical Director, Forensic Treatment Unit, Ottawa.

Experiencing trauma impacts the way clients behave and react to caregivers. In order to deliver the best possible care and reduce agitation and aggression for clients, we need to understand what their trauma experiences have been and how we can help them manage in future situations where their reactions may be influenced by the original trauma. It's important for staff to recognize that some clients' aggressive actions may come because the client has experienced trauma in the past.

“We know that people who have had legal involvement tend to have strong histories of trauma. These traumas may have been experienced in their interactions with police or from being incarcerated as well as all of the other types of trauma that other people experience,” says Dr. Ward.

The goal of this training is to reduce incidents of aggressive behaviours on the forensic assessment unit and improve quality of care.

The traditional view says that when a person with a mental illness is agitated or aggressive it is a result of their mental illness and what is internal to them and doesn't have much to do with what is going on around them. That has been examined a little closer over the past couple of decades and the thinking has changed. Trauma-informed care is based on the idea that the type of environment and the type of interactions that someone has can have a great impact on how well they do.

To put this into practice, here's an example of delivering non trauma-

Informed Care versus delivering trauma-informed care. An interaction that's not trauma informed would be when a client is raising their voice and yelling about something and staff approach them and tell them that it's unacceptable

that may help you. Would you like to try those things?” This helps the client regain control of their behaviour.

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— Dr. Helen Ward, Integrated Forensic Program, The Royal

behaviour and to stop doing that or we will have to bring in other staff or give medication. “That's a fairly standard response but it's also a very generic response and it doesn't recognize that the person probably has a lot of difficulty with self control and doesn't recognize that the person had already previously had the kind of experience and found it traumatic,” says Dr. Ward.

An example of a different type of approach would be responding in a way that is trauma-informed and referring to a comfort plan for strategies for reducing the aggression. Comfort plans are going to come with this initiative - at assessment, staff will work with the client to develop a comfort plan that includes things that work for them to help de-escalate a situation or relax. It's a toolkit that helps staff support them in times where they are starting to have difficulty with self control. These things might include feeling textures of clothes or materials, weighted blankets, using a glider rocker chair, relaxing music, or going to a quiet room.

A trauma-informed way to approach a client who is behaving aggressively would be to say something like, “You seem quite upset and I know from your comfort plan there are a couple things

we have to keep in mind that if they've experienced trauma, they need more help than others. It needs to be about giving them options that really work for them,” says Dr. Ward.

While the initial Trauma-Informed Care training has been completed, this type of change will require many different elements. “Incorporating Trauma-Informed Care into practice at assessment is going to take time, it's really a culture change,” says Dr. Ward. The concept of Trauma-Informed Care comes from very well researched and funded initiatives in the United States and in England that have implemented this culture and have managed to reduce aggression and need for chemically or physically restraining clients on inpatient units.

“We all want things to get better but they can't unless we change. I already see changes in the way staff members are thinking about helping clients when they are agitated. If we can do this in Forensic assessment where clients tend to be more highly aggressive, it should be something we should consider implementing in other programs. Our hope is that this will improve the experience for both staff and clients,” says Dr. Ward.

Meet our Psychology Residents



Jennifer Douglas, Erin Fallis, Rebecca McDermott, Philip Grandia and Mathew Fetzner.

Psychology Residents compete annually across Canada and the U.S. for positions in The Royal's Residency Program in Clinical Psychology. Each resident typically brings 1,000 to 7,000 hours of supervised experience in clinical care and research to The Royal's programs in both Ottawa and Brockville.

The Residency Program is led by Dr. Susan Farrell, Director of Training and Dr. Sarah Bertrim, Assistant Director of Training in consultation with Training Committee Members. Ms. Cathie Massel provides administrative support.

Let's meet our outstanding Psychology Residents.

Jennifer Douglas is a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at Simon Fraser University. She is completing rotations with the Forensic Treatment and Secure

Treatment Units in Brockville, and the Youth Psychiatry program in Ottawa. Her clinical interests include the assessment and treatment of persistent, serious mental illness, specialized forensic assessments, and working with youth experiencing emerging mental health concerns. Her research focuses on the strengths and needs of individuals involved with the justice system or forensic mental health system. Her dissertation examines changes in dynamic risk factors for reoffending among youth on probation.

Erin Fallis is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of Waterloo. She is completing rotations in the Anxiety Disorders program, the Mood Disorders program, and the Community Mental Health program. Her clinical interests include adult psychopathology, with an

emphasis on anxiety and mood disorders, and couples therapy. Erin's research focuses on romantic relationships, particularly couples' communication and sexuality. Her doctoral dissertation examined the longitudinal association of relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction and the impact of communication on this association.

Rebecca McDermott is a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Western Ontario. She is completing rotations in the Operational Stress Injury Clinic, the Anxiety Disorders program, and the Youth Psychiatry program. She has previous clinical experience in community, organizational, and hospital based services working with a wide variety of clinical presentations. She is particularly interested in treating a range

Continued on page 4...

...Psychology Residents continued

of anxiety and anxiety related disorders (i.e. PTSD and OCD). She is also interested in understanding and applying a broad range of evidence-based interventions for optimal patient care.

Rebecca's research interests focus on the prevention of mental illness and reducing relapse. For her doctoral work, she ran a randomized control trial looking at the usefulness of an online cognitive behavioural therapy tool (MoodGYM) for preventing the first onset of Mood and Anxiety disorders.

Philip Grandia is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at the University of Ottawa. His primary clinical interest is in

assessment, intervention, and consultation for persons with a dual diagnosis (intellectual disability and mental illness). Philip also has an interest in program evaluation related to dual diagnosis services. He will be completing a primary rotation at the Community Mental Health program and secondary rotations at the Schizophrenia program and the Secure Treatment Unit.

Philip's research interests include dual diagnosis, adults with an intellectual or developmental disability, social inclusion, integration of psychology in primary health care, and international standards for education and training in psychology. His dissertation explores behaviour change in the context of self-management strategies for depression.

Mathew Fetzner attended his graduate studies in clinical psychology at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan. His primary rotation is in the Operational Stress Injury clinic, with minors in the Mood and Anxiety Disorders programs. Matt's clinical interests include the assessment and treatment of trauma-related, mood and anxiety disorders, particularly among military and police populations. His research interests focus on consequences of trauma, particularly posttraumatic stress; and novel and adjunctive treatments for trauma and anxiety. Matt's dissertation examined the treatment potential of aerobic exercise for posttraumatic stress disorder.

New Faces at The Royal



Alana Bissonette
Human
Resources Officer

Alana has over 15 years of human resources leadership expertise in the areas of salary, pension, benefits, recruitment and retention, safety, and employee and labour relations. She is also currently working towards a Bachelor of Social Science with a Concentration in Human Resources at the Capella University online. Alana is enjoying her time at The Royal so far: "Everyone is so welcoming. Brockville is a really nice community." An avid hockey lover, she is the cousin of past NHL player Mario Lemieux. She also loves to ski and spend time outdoors.



Tracy Wrong
Director of
Quality, Patient
Safety & Risk
Management

Tracy joins The Royal's Quality and Patient Safety team after almost 15 years of providing corporate leadership in quality and patient safety at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO). She has her Masters in Health Administration from the University of Ottawa and is also currently a part time professor in the Telfer School of Management. Tracy has a strong interest in mental health which she developed while working at the Centretown Community Health Centre prior to joining CHEO. Outside of the office, Tracy loves golfing, cross country skiing, and spending time with her family.

EMR now live in Recovery, Youth and Central Intake



Congratulations to the Recovery, Youth and Central Intake Programs, the latest units to go live with Electronic Medical Record (EMR). Thank you to all who were involved in this recent achievement and all those who continue to be involved in the rollout of the EMR at The Royal.

IMHR presents Graduate Student Research Awards

The Royal's Institute of Mental Health Research Graduate Student Research Awards are presented annually to fund research and education experiences of promising graduate students with a focus in the area of depression research. This year's awards were presented to Masters student Kristin Delcellier and PhD student Mohammad Ebrahimzadeh at a special luncheon hosted at The Royal on October 27. Studies were selected based on the degree to which the requested opportunity would enhance the student experience at the IMHR.

Kristin Delcellier, a Masters student with the Department of Neuroscience at Carleton University, works in Dr. Zul Merali's lab at The Royal. Dr. Merali's lab has been testing a botanical natural health product, an extract blend of the South American vine *Souroubea sympetala* and *Platanus occidentalis* (Sycamore bark). Although it has typically been used as an anti-anxiety medication, Kristin believes this natural extract blend could be a very potent pre-treatment for depression; especially in cases of chronic and prolonged stress. "As everyone knows, there is a huge comorbidity of depression with PTSD," noted Kristin upon accepting the award. "My research is focusing on the effects that this specific plant extract can have on the different stressors that can affect depression." If her study is successful, it could have a significant impact on individuals at risk of developing depression. Kristin's study includes single prolonged vs chronic stress testing in rats, investigating whether the plant extract can lessen the effect of depression from the stressors. One element of testing includes exposing rats to multiple different stressors in one day, followed by a one week period of no



Left to right: Andree Steele, Ben James, Melissa Krayne, Mohammad Ebrahimzadeh, JD Lees, Kristin Delcellier, John Waddington, Pamela Waddington, David Lees, and Dr. Zul Merali.

induced stressors. They are then tested for depressive symptoms using a forced swim test in which they will either swim or simply float, with the latter acting as a depressive indicator. "We're hoping that by pre-treating the rat, we will not see this depressive indicator after stressors," explains Kristin.

Mohammad Ebrahimzadeh, a PhD student with the Department of Neuroscience at the University of Ottawa, in Dr. Pierre Blier's lab at The Royal. Mohammad's study recognizes that although the serotonergic system has frequently been the target in the development of antidepressants, some significant barriers remain in utilizing serotonergic compounds to treat depression. "The brain is very dynamic when it comes to the signals it receives," explains Mohammad. "The challenge we face is, when we want to increase serotonin transmission, sometimes there is a break that is activated in the brain which will

actually cause a decrease in serotonin levels."

Mohammad describes that certain drugs such as bupropion and aripiprazole don't initiate breaks. His study proposes investigating at the molecular level to discover whether certain drugs disable breaks by reducing the number of break receptors or by altering the receptors themselves. This is achieved by isolating recording of a single neuron (via running qPCR assays with single unit electrophysiological recording). Mohammed hopes that his findings will have an impact on how future treatments are developed. "Right now the drugs we are using are targeting the receptors on the cell surface," he explains. "If we can determine whether altering these receptors or reducing their numbers can work to our advantage, we can shift our efforts to designing drugs that take this into account."

Long Service Awards

A lot can change in 35 years. The Royal has gone through many changes throughout the years but what hasn't changed are the dedicated and compassionate staff. Last month we celebrated employees who have devoted many years of service to improving the lives of individuals with mental illness and their families. The Long Service Awards celebrated employees who have worked at The Royal for five to 35 years (they are awarded in five year increments). Among those celebrating 35 years are Shirley Brathwaite, Tim Corkery, Tim Dudley, and Dr. Reghuvaran Kunjukrishnan.

We thank all of this year's Long Service Award recipients for their unwavering commitment to providing our clients with the best mental health care possible and for contributing to mental health advocacy, research and education.



Dr. Raj Bhatla presents Dr. Reghuvaran Kunjukrishnan with his 35 year award.



Marnie Colter receiving her 15 year award from Gail Farrell.



The Brockville Mental Health Centre celebrated its 120 year anniversary this past fall. Thank you to all staff and volunteers, past and present, for the dedicated care and support you have provided to all of our patients over the years!



2015

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Holiday Celebrations



Thanks

"This is a special thanks to my doctor for helping me recover so quickly from my severe depression. Also, for recognizing the benefits that the program would have for me in prevention of further reoccurrences. Thank you for putting me in the program so promptly. This excellent group of people have given me the tools, knowledge, and life skills to prevent a reoccurrence of my illness. This program also allowed me to meet and share my experience with fellow friends. It has been a privilege to have been able to attend this helpful and organized program. Everyone is cheerful and happy and it is obvious that they enjoy their jobs. You could not help but get strong and well again. Thank you all so much for contributing to my wellbeing. My family and I will always be grateful for your excellent care."

- From our comment boxes



Royal Ottawa Place, which houses The Royal's Recovery program and Long Term Care program, turned 10 years old this Fall. Staff gathered to celebrate a decade of helping, learning and growing.

The Royal's 29th Annual Christmas Tree Sale to Support Patient Comfort and Care

Sale hours:

Monday to Friday: 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, December 6 to Monday, December 24 or until the trees are sold out.

Prices:

\$45 for 5-feet tall • \$50 for 6-feet tall • \$5 for each additional foot in height



New Chair in Suicide Prevention



A generous gift of \$2-million from DIFD and the Mach-Gaenssler Foundation has allowed The Royal to create a new Chair in Suicide Prevention Research. The IMHR is launching a search for a world class clinician-researcher to fill the position and we look forward to welcoming that person to The Royal.

Addressing High Demand for Child & Youth Mental Health Services

There has been a dramatic and sustained increase in demand for child and youth mental health services over the last four years. So CHEO and The Royal are working together to develop a strategic plan to guide our Child and Youth Specialized Psychiatric and Mental Health Services (CY-SPMHS) over the next five years and to help us adapt to these new challenges.

We will be consulting our teams at CHEO and The Royal, as well as youth, families, community partners and stakeholders to examine what has changed in our environment and how the changes impact our services. We'll also look at the issues and how to best address them.

Stay tuned for more information.

Women in Mind 2014



Hundreds of women gathered for our Girlfriend's Guide to Bouncing Back with Olympic legend Silken Lauman, The Royal's Dr. Alison Freeland, and CBC's Rita Celli, our host for the evening. Guests heard Silken's inspiring story of resiliency and received tips and strategies for taking care of their own wellbeing from Dr. Freeland.



Mental Health - Care & Research
Santé mentale - Soins et recherche

OPENDOORS

OpenDoors is
the internal newsletter
for the staff and
volunteers of The Royal.

If you have any ideas, stories or
articles for submission,
please contact:
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