

Welcome to the Perinatal Mental Health Working Group!

The Women's Health Research Cluster (WHRC) is a multidisciplinary network of researchers, clinicians, community partners, and trainees dedicated to advancing the health outcomes of girls and women worldwide. Through the Perinatal Mental Health Working Group, we foster meaningful connections, share knowledge, and tackle key challenges to drive real impact. The work of the WHRC Perinatal Mental Health Working Group is guided by a shared vision of improving mental health outcomes for parents and families, ensuring better support and care during this critical stage of life, with a focus on Canada.

Who to Contact

We'd love to hear from you! Whether you have a question, are interested in getting involved, or need more information about our initiatives, please reach out to Emily Anne Opala at communications@womenshealthresearchcluster.com.

Mission Statement

The Perinatal Mental Health Working Group (PMHWG) is dedicated to enhancing the quality of perinatal mental health care by facilitating rigorous research, effective knowledge transfer, and advocacy. We aim to promote the well-being of parents and families during pregnancy and the postpartum, ensuring that mental health support is accessible, informed by the latest evidence, and integrated into practice to foster optimal care delivery and overall health.

Mandates

Education and Awareness

1. Educate the public and healthcare professionals about the importance of perinatal mental health, available resources, and ways to reduce stigma. We will produce accessible information, science communication materials, and host community events to raise awareness about mental health during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Collaboration and Knowledge Mobilization

2. Foster strong collaborative networks between researchers, clinicians, and advocates to ensure that new findings and best practices are effectively translated into policies and implemented in clinical settings. By harnessing our collective expertise, we aim to improve access to mental health care for all pregnant and postpartum individuals and their families across Canada, providing continuous support throughout the perinatal period.

Research and Innovation

3. Support multidisciplinary research focused on identifying effective mental health care strategies for individuals during the preconception, prenatal, and postpartum periods. Our commitment includes exploring innovative, community-based solutions that directly address the needs of those affected by perinatal mental health issues.

Projects

Project 1: Funding for Planning & Dissemination

In order to provide further support for PMHWG activities, we prepared and submitted a CIHR Planning and Dissemination grant. This application proposed leveraging the existing PMHWG collaborations to build and disseminate knowledge, create new partnerships, and raise awareness among healthcare providers, policymakers, and the general public about the importance of mental health during pregnancy and the postpartum period. We are actively seeking other funding opportunities. The PMHWG aims to capitalize on grant initiatives to promote evidence-based practices, which will be translated into real-world applications, ultimately improving the mental well-being of mothers and their families across Canada.

Project 2: Networking & Strategic Meetings

The Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Working Group of the Women's Health Research Cluster plans to collaborate with the [Marcé of North America \(MONA\)](#) via a one-day, pre-conference networking and strategic meeting, for mental health scientists and trainees to meet and exchange ideas related to key clinical and research initiatives in Canada. The focus of this perinatal mental health networking event is on research and clinical initiatives in Canada - non-Canadian scientists and trainees are encouraged to attend. The working group aims to promote the development of new research collaborations and partnerships as well as to support trainee mentorship,

resulting in professional growth. It is expected that the creation of this event will contribute to strengthening the Canadian perinatal mental health scientific community to advance perinatal mental health research in Canada. As part of these collaborative networking and dissemination activities, we can capitalize on MONA to set research priorities with key stakeholders and engage in collaborative action items (i.e., grant applications, scholarly publications, SciComm, etc.). As a longer-term objective, this networking event aims to contribute to the development of innovative mental health solutions, and improve access to care, especially among marginalized and underserved communities. Tasks for this project involve securing funding, liaising with event organizers, and organizing event logistics to ensure the success of the pre-conference event.

Project 3: Science Communication

To help achieve our mandate of education and awareness, the PMHWG is currently preparing a series of Blog posts for the WHRC Website. The goal is to provide accessible, evidence-based information on perinatal mental health and resources with wide reach and high potential for impact. It also seeks to engage both the public and healthcare professionals by promoting both a better understanding of perinatal mental health and advocacy for accessing supports during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Tasks for this project include generating ideas, reviewing literature, verifying resources, plain language writing, reviewing or copy-editing, and advertisement.

Guiding Principles and Member Responsibilities:

We strive to be accessible, supportive, and low barrier for those looking to get involved. As a group, we acknowledge systemic inequities and internal bias (unintentional or otherwise) to create a space where all experiences can be addressed.

We encourage members to contribute to discussion, listen with an open mind, ask questions, and be collaborative. Members are expected to be respectful, considerate, and inclusive of others.

The general PMHWG meets once monthly, and sub-working groups for projects may meet in between. PMHWG meetings are open to those who are interested and new members will be introduced 3x per calendar year.

We encourage working group members to volunteer to support at least one project. However, we recognize members may have differing capacities that may change with the seasons of life. Engagement can include information gathering, reviewing materials, providing feedback via email or participating in discussions, completing surveys, reading meeting minutes, or short research presentations etc.

When members volunteer to take on a project, members are expected to be communicative and timely. When volunteering for a task, members are expected to carry out the tasks and within the time frame agreed.

We welcome members to share their ideas for how they can best contribute their skills and knowledge to the working group, and how the working group can support them.

PMHWG Member Profiles:



Dr. Anna MacKinnon

anna.mackinnon@umontreal.ca

Assistant Professor, Université de Montréal

Co-Chair, Perinatal Mental Health Working Group

Dr. Anna MacKinnon's research focuses on social determinants of child health and development, risk and resilience for perinatal mental health, as well as intervention programs for psychological distress and parenting. She recently completed her postdoctoral work at the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute, in the Departments of Psychology and Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary. She is a registered clinical psychologist, who received her PhD from McGill University and completed a CPA-accredited residency at the London Health Sciences Centre, with training in treatment for children and families from diverse backgrounds.



Dr. Tina Montreuil

tina.montreuil@mcgill.ca

Associate Professor, McGill University

Co-Chair, Perinatal Mental Health Working Group

Dr. Tina C. Montreuil is an Associate Professor in the department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and an Associate Member of the Departments of Psychiatry and Pediatrics at McGill University, as well as the director of Childhood Anxiety and Regulation of Emotions Laboratory C.A.R.E. Research Group. She is a Scientist at the Research Institute of McGill University Health Centre, a Regular Investigator of the Research Unit of Children's Psychosocial Maladjustment (GRIP), and a Full member of the McGill Centre for Research on Children and Families (CRCF). She is a recent awardee (September 2021) of the regarded Canadian Child Health Clinician Scientist Program (CCHCSP) that offers an interdisciplinary mentorship to early-mid career researchers working on improving child health and well-being. She has gained recognition as a child well-being (i.e., emotion regulation, stress and anxiety), and parenting expert for the work that she leads in prevention and child development.



Yasmine Tremblay

yasminetremblay15@gmail.com

Student, University of British Columbia

Yasmine Tremblay is an undergraduate researcher with a strong interest in maternal and perinatal mental health. She is currently involved in a scoping review on maternal mental health in low- and middle-income countries, focusing on anxiety and depression during postpartum period. Through her work, she aims to contribute to evidence-based policies and interventions that improve health outcomes for women and children.



Professor Christine Ou

christineou@uvic.ca

<https://parentchildlab.ca/>

Assistant Professor, University of Victoria

I am a pediatric nurse and assistant professor at the School of Nursing. I study perinatal anger in connection with sleep quality, perinatal depression, and parental gender inequity.



Dr. Larissa Rossen

larissa.rossen@twu.ca

<https://www.be-counselling.ca/>

Assistant Professor, Trinity Western University

Larissa Rossen is a core faculty member in the MA Counselling Psychology Program at Trinity Western University. Her research interests span the early developmental years and focus on perinatal mental health, perinatal loss and grief, maternal identity, maternal attachment and bonding, emotional availability, family systems, and development. She is a Registered Clinical Counsellor in private practice in West Vancouver, BC, where she predominantly uses the Internal Family Systems (IFS) modality. Please refer to her practice website for more information: [be-counselling.ca](https://www.be-counselling.ca)



Shayna Pierce

pierces3@myumanitoba.ca

PhD Candidate, University of Manitoba

Shayna is a Ph.D. Candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Manitoba with a psychology, biology, and health studies background. Clinically, she holds expertise in women's health psychology. Beyond her clinical work, Shayna conducts research focused on determining the unmet mental health support needs of birthing people and their healthcare providers to inform the development of accessible and acceptable perinatal mental health services and improve perinatal mental health literacy.



Eliana Zhao

elianawannazhao2004@gmail.com

3rd Year Undergraduate Student, University of British Columbia

Eliana is an undergraduate student at UBC studying neuroscience, physiology, and public health. This summer, she'll be joining BC Women's as a research assistant, focusing on recurrent pregnancy loss. She looks forward to further contributing to meaningful advancements in maternal mental health.



Christina Cantin

ccantin@cheo.on.ca

Nursing Research Scientist, CHEO Research Institute

Christina Cantin, RN, PNC(C), BScN, MScN, PhD(ABD) is a Nursing Research Scientist at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Research Institute. Her program of research is focused on the mental health, addictions, and substance use health of childbearing families and their newborns. She was a co-author of the SOGC Perinatal Mental Health guideline, providing nursing expertise as a representative of the Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses (CAPWHN). She worked as a Perinatal Consultant for the Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program (CMNRP).



Dr. Catriona Hippman

catriona.hippman@ubc.ca

<https://www.catrionahippman.com/>

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Simon Fraser University

Dr. Catriona Hippman, PhD, CGC, is a CIHR Health Systems Impact Fellow with the BC Ministry of Health and Simon Fraser University, Adjunct Professor in the UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and a postdoctoral fellow with the BC Women's Reproductive Mental Health Program. Her research work aims to improve perinatal mental health through research and advocacy. Recent fellowship work aims to elucidate strategies best suited to the Canadian context for the care of women and birthing people experiencing postpartum mental illness that requires hospitalization.



Amanda Acauan

amandaacauan@hotmail.com

Psychology Student, Capilano University

A 3rd-year Psychology student at Capilano University in British Columbia, Amanda's intention is to focus time and effort in rethinking health care systems and public policies with an emphasis on women's perspectives. By promoting healthy behaviours, she advocates for the importance of an Integrated Psychosocial Care (IPC) in these settings.



Dr. Kristin Reynolds

Kristin.Reynolds@Umanitoba.ca

<https://healthinfoexchangelab.ca/>

Associate Professor, University of Manitoba

Dr. Kristin Reynolds is a Registered Clinical Psychologist, Associate Professor, and Director of Clinical Training in the Department of Psychology at the University of Manitoba, and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychiatry. She is a Scientist with the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba and Director of the Health Information Exchange Laboratory, where her research aims to decrease gaps in the translation of health-related knowledge to the public and increase access to health-related information and services.

Other Members

- Shela Hirani
- Nichole Fairbrother
- Lianne Tomfohr-Madsen
- Bryn Stagg
- Samantha Dawson
- Catherine Herba
- Beth Clark
- Kamala Adhikari
- Melina Albanese
- Jon Barrett
- Katie Chaput
- Fanie Collardeau
- Lisa Currie
- Madison Hardman
- Jasleen Kaur
- Sonia Semenic
- Yohann Courtemanche
- Claudia-Beatrice Ratte
- Sepideh Zaeri
- Michelle Carter
- Jummy Ojeleye
- Gillian Hanley
- Natalia Szejko
- Sukhman Gosal
- Elizabeth Keys
- Dana Elliott
- Kristianni Bance
- Taniya Nagpal
- Carina-Julia Koeppel
- Mahtab Matin
- Lila Amirali
- Ariya Bhuiyan
- Jasmin Johal
- Summer Fulford
- Hsing-Fen Tu
- Sophia Robertson
- Georgia Yee
- Candace Oghide
- Fatima Mazhar