

August 21, 2018

## **Concurrent Workshops**

### *Developing skills to foster mentally healthy communities*

5 concurrent workshops will be offered to enhance skills in the use of tools and methods for practice and policies that support population child and youth mental health promotion.

#### **4. Using evidence-based mental health information in peer-developed board games to foster youth mental health literacy: TeenMentalHealth.org's Know Before You Go and Transitions**

Presenters: Cat MacIntyre, Olivia Huybers and Chris Gilham, Saint Francis Xavier University

The workshop will focus on playing unique board games created by young adults using content of TeenMentalHealth.org's youth oriented life skills resources, Know Before You Go and Transitions. The purpose of Know Before You Go is to support high school students as they prepare to make the transition to post secondary education. The purpose of the Transitions resource is to support students in their first years of post-secondary education. Both of these resources aim to support students in building their life skills (budgeting, conflict resolution, metacognition, etc.) as well as their mental health literacy and help-seeking efficacy to better support themselves and others. With our peers, we created the two board games, with the intention of supporting the resources. This workshop will allow participants to engage in the evidence-informed content of the resources by playing the board games. Additionally, the board game play supports social skills and connections to others. We hope participants will provide us with rich feedback to enhance our board games as well as bring to light the challenges youth face transitioning from high school to university life.

##### Connection with the ASI theme:

Through game play, students are challenged with difficult life events, and they must consider what are appropriate, healthy responses to these events or scenarios. They do this by engaging with evidence-based best practice life-skills. This encourages the metacognition of students, to help participants realize what skills and strategies work best to support them in challenging times. The game is a pro-active way of developing resiliency in students for the future challenges they may experience.

##### Participants will learn:

Participants in the workshop will first learn key content of Transitions and Know Before You Go, as well as how to access these resources. Furthermore, participants may explore how these resources can support their own work, as they are geared to youth. Participants may learn how to use the board games to support student's social emotional learning, and mental health literacy.

##### Lessons for scaling up or delivering policies and programs:

Pilot research in a NS university (Gilham, C., Austen, E., Wei, Y. & Kutcher, S. (in press). Improving Mental Health Literacy in Post-Secondary Students: Field Testing the Feasibility and Potential Outcomes of a Peer Led Approach. Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health) and in two NS high schools is intended to inform future scale up in other locations. Findings show the content may need to be embedded in school curriculum for fuller engagement and learning. Departments of education may consider implementing the resources into school curriculum.

Presenter:

Cat MacIntyre  
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As recent graduates of the Bachelor of Education program at St. Francis Xavier University, Olivia and Cat are just entering a profession which is focused on the well-being of youth. We have had an incredible opportunity to develop a teacher friendly mental health literacy resource and are passionate about building mental health literacy and life skills in youth, as well as supporting teachers to support youth. With the support of Dr. Chris Gilham and Dr. Erin Austen, of St. F. X. University, we were able to develop and pilot our resource. We are excited to share it with you!

Co-presenters:

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