

Donations @work



CANREACH

Expanding support

Thanks to generous supporters like you, young people and their families are able to receive urgent mental health support where and when they need it. CanREACH training has made it possible for hundreds of primary care providers to feel more comfortable – even confident – diagnosing and treating mental health concerns in children and youth in their home communities, reducing the need for referrals to specialists who often have lengthy wait times. This means more kids are receiving help sooner, and closer to home, which reduces strain on the healthcare system as a whole.

Thank you for supporting the advanced education of our healthcare workers, and, in turn, the mental health of children and families in need.

Reaching more frontline workers, reaching more children

The number of families seeking support for mental health concerns has been on the rise for some time, however the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand even more dramatically, says Dr. Eden McCaffrey, CanREACH program facilitator.

“Mental health is truly in crisis,” she says. “We are seeing it across the whole system right now with admissions.”

Fortunately, CanREACH is equipping caregivers with specialized training to help them identify mental health concerns in kids and plan and manage their treatment paths.

Last year, 120 caregivers took part in the training including 100 physicians – 90 family doctors and 10 pediatricians – as well as

additional allied health support workers, such as nurse practitioners, behavioural health consultants, psychologists and social workers.

“It’s really important those allied health workers also have access to the training,” says Dr. McCaffrey. “Then everyone is speaking the same language.”

Due to the pandemic, the intensive three-day conference – normally held in person – was moved online, and this actually opened access to frontline workers who otherwise would have been unable to attend.

“We had a lot more uptake from areas around the province where patients don’t have easy access to big hospitals and specialized care,” says Dr. McCaffrey. “This means we are catching kids upstream – in their home communities – before they are needing intensive services. We are seeing lots of improved outcomes from CanREACH-trained areas around the province.”

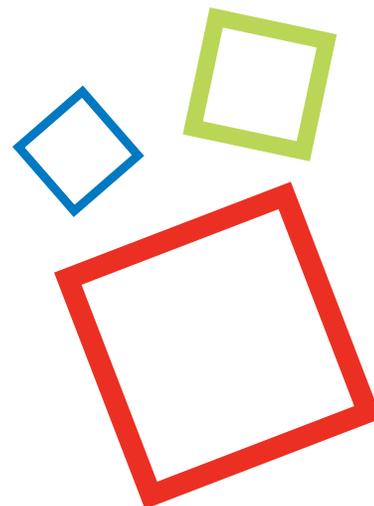
Proven success

Building off a 2017 paper that showed CanREACH training results in improved knowledge and abilities for frontline staff and identification and intervention for their patients, the team has now published a follow-up paper in a peer-reviewed medical journal demonstrating further success.

“We re-examined the original findings with a larger sample size and added the larger impact, including improved healthcare delivery and cost savings,” says Dr. McCaffrey. “We are so impressed and so proud with the difference this program is clearly making for both caregivers and families in our province.” ♥

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– Dr. Eden McCaffrey





Dr. Elaine Desnoyers

Dr. Elaine Desnoyers runs a family practice in Lake Louise and also works at the urgent care centre in Cochrane. She estimates up to 40 percent of the patients she sees are seeking help for a mental health-related issue, and thanks to her CanREACH training, she feels much more comfortable addressing many of those concerns herself.

“It made an immediate impact in an area where my previous training was very limited,” says Dr. Desnoyers. “As family physicians, we are sometimes hesitant to make a diagnosis since we are not psychiatrists, but where I would hesitate before, I don’t anymore. There are so many tools I didn’t know about and now, not only do I have a good idea of what tools are out there, I know how to use them. This is an ‘I-wish-I-had-done-this-years-ago’ type of course.”

Beyond the intensive training, Dr. Desnoyers says the regular follow-up meetings to discuss questions and case studies have been incredibly helpful.

“The continued support from peers and mental health experts has been invaluable,” she says. “I know I have a vast pool of resources to fall back on and it helps me create real plans for real people in my practice.” ♥



Dr. Michelle Klassen

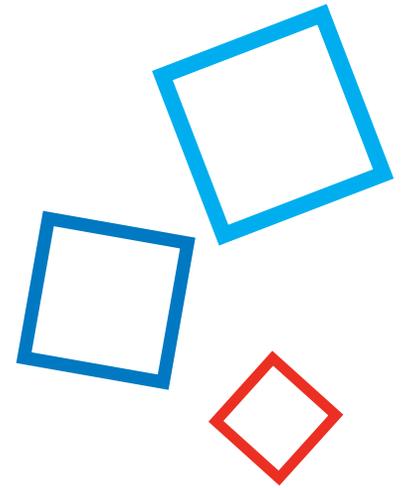
Dr. Michelle Klassen is a family physician who, prior to taking part in the CanREACH program, already had some extra education in psychiatry. Earlier this year, she opened a virtual practice based in Calgary with a focus on mental health, meeting with patients via phone or video conference.

However, despite her past training and experience, she found herself questioning some specific situations and decisions she was required to make.

“The biggest thing CanREACH gave me was more objective screening tools for diagnosis and for following the efficacy of treatment,” says Dr. Klassen. “It opened my eyes a little more in terms of best practices.”

While Dr. Klassen has lots of previous experience prescribing medications for adolescents, CanREACH gave her the confidence she needed to recommend medications where it would be beneficial for younger children.

“All parents want to do the right thing for their kids,” she says. “CanREACH has helped me have more informed conversations with parents and explain the medical evidence in a way that makes sense to them.” ♥



A family’s testimonial

Last year, our son’s third grade teachers reached out to us after noticing he had some anxious tendencies and seemed to be having a hard time. We knew we needed to find out what was causing these challenges for him and a friend suggested we try Dr. Klassen’s family practice. We got an appointment booked for the following week! I was shocked we didn’t have to wait months to get in, given wait times are long for everything these days.

Our son began having regular appointments with Dr. Klassen and developed rapport and trust with her. Through their sessions, she did several assessments and gave us exercises and skills to practice at home. She also worked with his teachers to ensure he would be successful at school.

Our son was diagnosed with ADHD, however, we feel the early intervention prevented any escalation and made an immediate impact for him. It’s made a huge difference for him in the classroom and with his friends. He told us, ‘When I notice that I’m starting to feel emotional or stressed, I can control how I feel much better.’

To have access to this type of expertise and support through a family doctor is amazing. It’s been a game-changer for our family to be able to see changes so quickly.

-Grateful parent