



SCHIZOPHRENIA
SOCIETY OF CANADA



SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE
DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE

The Schizophrenia
Society of Canada and
The Schizophrenia
Society of Canada
Foundation

2020
2021

ANNUAL REPORT



The Schizophrenia Society of Canada

2020-2021 SSC Executive Committee

Hazel Meredith – President

Florence Budden – Past President

Joan Baylis – Treasurer

Dr. Chris Summerville – Ex-Officio

SSC Team

Dr. Chris Summerville, Chief Executive Officer

Paola Matheson, Administrative Assistant and Accountant

Catherine Willinsky, Project Manager, Cannabis and Psychosis Project

Sarah Roht, Marketing Manager, Cannabis and Psychosis Project

Wilma Schroeder, Family Recovery Journey Editor

Amelia Chant, Social Media and Website

Cat Horbatiuk, Designer

Will Greene, Impact Public Affairs, Advocacy

2020-2021 SSC Board of Directors

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The Schizophrenia Society of Canada works in a collegial partnership with the following sister organizations across Canada. Our respective organizations strive to increase awareness and understanding about early psychosis and schizophrenia, treatment options, and the recovery process. We advocate for person-centred, recovery-oriented public policies that support easy access to tailored mental health treatment options, community support and social inclusion. The top executive leaders of each of the following organization have joined together as "The Early Psychosis and Schizophrenia Leadership Network."

- British Columbia Schizophrenia Society
- Peer Connections Manitoba
- Mental Health Recovery Partners
- Schizophrenia Society of Alberta
- Schizophrenia Society of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Schizophrenia Society of New Brunswick
- Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia
- Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan
- Société Québécoise de la schizophrénie
- Institute for Advancements in Mental Health

Our Mission

Build a Canada where people living with early psychosis and schizophrenia achieve their potential.

Construire un Canada où les gens qui sont dans les premiers stades de la psychose et de la schizophrénie atteignent leur potentiel.

A Message from the SSC President, Hazel Meredith and SSC CEO, Dr. Chris Summerville

On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization was informed of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause in Wuhan City, China. The first reported death from what would be called “Covid 19” took place on January 11, 2020. WHO declared the outbreak a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” on January 30, 2020. A global pandemic was declared on March 11, 2020.

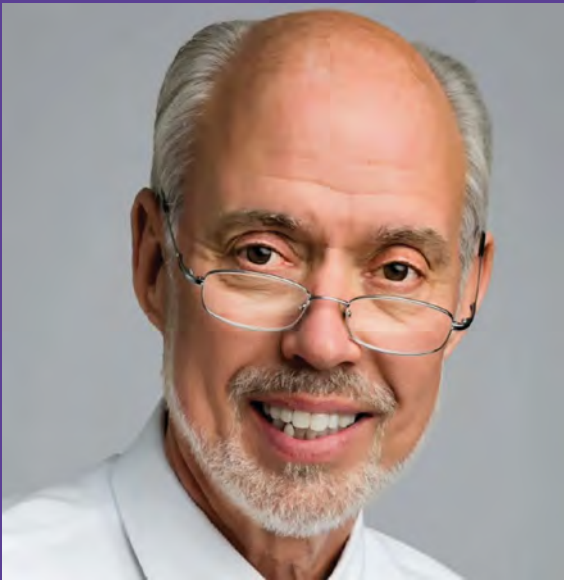
As the Schizophrenia Society began its 41st fiscal year on April 1, 2020, the Board of Directors knew that it would be a very unusual year, but it had no idea how unusual it would be. The year was unprecedented in the need to react and adapt to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions, and isolation have been a challenge unlike any of us have experienced. One thing for certain, mental health has become a top issue for Canadians. During this period most Canadians have reported high levels of stress and distress creating unprecedented mental health problems and challenges.

Through the pandemic, SSC remains committed to bringing insight and wisdom to families whose loved ones have received a diagnosis of early psychosis or schizophrenia. Once known as “the kiss of death diagnosis,” outcomes for those living with early psychosis and schizophrenia today are miraculously much better than when SSC was established in 1979.

For those with pre-existing mental illness entering the pandemic, finding resources and being able to access mental health treatment, supports, and services have been much more difficult. Adjusting to a “new normal” has meant finding a new way of living and going about life, work, and interacting with other people. To that end, SSC prioritized its need to respond timely to the increased number of phone calls, emails, and messaging through its social media flat forms from those seeking help during year one of the pandemic. An average of 2 to 3 hours were spent each working day in responding to queries.

More than 360,000 Canadians have some form of schizophrenia and three percent of the population will experience psychosis at some time in their lives. All these people have family members, significant others and friends who are also affected by their illness.

Be assured that in addition to on-going initiatives and activities which focused on reducing stigma, increasing education, providing support to individuals and families, as well as engaging in systemic advocacy and research, the SSC continues to provide national leadership and presence for the "schizophrenia recovery movement" and supporting the "peer support movement" for families and people living with schizophrenia and psychosis. On behalf of the SSC Board of Directors, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our funders and the individuals and families who have made donations to SSC. We continue to adapt to the many restrictions and new safety protocols brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. We know next year other challenges will be encountered, but working hand in hand, we will continue to succeed.



Dr. Chris Summerville
SSC CEO

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. Summerville".



Hazel Meredith
SSC President

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hazel Meredith".

SSC Initiatives Highlighted

SSC and the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH)

Both as a member of the CAMIMH and on its own, SSC pursued opportunities to advocate for improved funding for and access to treatment and services by working with various federal departments, groups and organizations throughout the year. (Mental Health Commission of Canada, Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis, Canadian Institute for Health Research, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, Canadian Research Network for Early Psychosis and Schizophrenia,

Disability Tax Credit Fairness Campaign, etc.)

SSC and SSC Foundation board member Florence Budden provided passionate leadership as one of the Co-Chairs of CAMIMH, while our CEO, Chris Summerville worked with the Advocacy Working Group of CAMIMH.

As a longstanding member of CAMIMH, SSC gave leadership to the CHAMPIONS of Mental Health initiative during Mental Health Day

in May of 2020 and with the FACES of Mental Illness Campaign in October of 2020.

Through the use of virtual technology CAMIMH members shared with Parliamentarians and the Government of Canada the following recommendations aimed at transforming the way in which we care and support people affected by poor mental health and mental illness.

5 Key Recommendations

1

That the federal government enshrine national standards for access to mental health and addictions services through an amended Canada Health Act or the introduction of a new Mental Health Parity Act.

2

That the federal government increase its cash contribution to the provinces and territories by a minimum of \$277.5 million a year to improve timely access to mental health services.

3

That the Canadian Institute of Health Information have adequate resources to work collaboratively with the provinces and territories, as well as other stakeholders, to develop an up-to-date national public and private health expenditure series in mental health.

4

That the federal government implement a national universal pharmacare program.

5

That the federal government provide long-term funding to CIHR to ensure mental health research funding across its Institutes and its four pillars that is proportionate to mental health's burden of disease.

By being at the CAMIMH table, SSC is able to network with these 13 national mental health organizations:

- Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association
- Canadian Federation of Mental Health Nurses
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Psychological Association
- HealthCareCAN
- Medical Psychotherapy Association of Canada
- National Initiative for Eating Disorders
- National Network for Mental Health
- Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada
- The College of Family Physicians Canada

Mental illness was the hardest thing I have ever had to overcome. You need to work hard to keep your loved ones close. Remember you're not alone. Reach out and talk about your struggles. If I can do it, so can you. Remember through all the hard times there's always hope.

Keith Lyon

2020 Face of Mental Illness



Recovery Colleges

SSC continues to partner with Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences to research the development of recovery colleges in Canada. A Recovery College is a place to learn about mental health, recovery and well-being. Recovery Colleges operate in a similar way to adult learning centres but with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

Family Recovery Journey

The SSC's family psychoeducation materials called, "Strengthening Families Together" was revised by past SSC board member and president, Wilma Schroeder. She created the new material of six modules from her experience as a family member, a nurse practitioner in the "Schizophrenia Treatment and Education Program" at Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg, and as a family therapist and teacher at Red River College in Winnipeg.

Hope and Recovery: Your Guide to Living with and Beyond Schizophrenia

The user-friendly guideline for individuals and families was completed in 2020. It was based upon the "Clinical Practice Guidelines for Treating Schizophrenia" developed by the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

Scenario training To Improve Interactions Between Police and Individuals in Mental Health Crisis: Impacts and Efficacy.

This is an on-going 5 year project which SSC is playing a key role in developing evidenced-based, scenario de-escalation training materials.

Cannabis and Psychosis: Exploring the Link cannabisandpsychosis.ca

Extensive reporting on this three year project can be found within this report. The information and materials on the website has benefited millions of Canadians over a number of years.

Mental Health Commission of Canada. Through you CEO, SSC has had input to the following MHCC initiatives:

- Guidelines for Recovery-Oriented Practice – Implementation Toolkit. The development of an implementation toolkit for the Guidelines for Recovery-Oriented Practice. The project team is working to collect feedback from people with lived/living experience, service users, caregivers, service providers, and healthcare leaders, and administrators.
- Structural Stigma. Structural stigma, unlike interpersonal stigma, is the stigma that is embedded through policies, programs, etc. within these organizations.
- Hallway Group. Our "lived and living experience" as advisory to the MHCC and its work.
- Mental Health First Aid. (MHFA) A two year project, our CEO is part of the working group of completing the updating of MHFA.

Patient Voice

SSC was able to assist a new social media platform called "Patient Voice" created by Atlas Studios. SSC has worked with Atlas before. Corey Maruca was profiled. Corey is a peer support worker living with schizophrenia who helped us with Your Recovery Journey that we developed in 2008. Patient Voice can be found on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/patientvoiceca>. We are very proud and honoured by Corey's contribution to SSC!!!

Recovery Orientation Tool Kit

SSC was invited by Dr. Myra Piat of the Douglas Hospital in Montreal and McGill University to become a partner in a pilot research project studying how to develop and implement a recovery orientation tool kit. Five pilot sites were chosen across Canada. The goal is to take the results and to develop a state of the art, evidenced-based tool kit for organizations to use in transforming their organization and services to being truly recovery-oriented.



The Schizophrenia Society of Canada: Who We Are and What We Stand For

Our Mission Statement

Build a Canada where people living with early psychosis and schizophrenia achieve their potential.

This mission statement describes the SSC's core purpose and function as an organization and our unique contribution as we strive to achieve our vision. The mission is not exclusive to those who we serve but should be embraced by all Canadians. We are seeking to build a geography with less prejudice and stigma with the goal of reducing discrimination and increased social inclusion of those we represent.

The phrase in the mission statement "people living with early psychosis and schizophrenia" was clarified as composing two groups:

1. The person living with the mental illness.
2. The family members and friends living in association with schizophrenia.

Again, this statement **encompasses both individuals and families** by saying "people living with early psychosis and schizophrenia."

And the focus is on helping them to be their best selves, whatever that might be, that's why we went with "achieve their potential," so that it

is open-ended and many people can see them-selves there, and it is achievable, yet aspirational. This statement is deliberately flexible on the "how" so we have room to make it our own and move forward in a variety of ways. The goal of recovery is achieving one's potential in spite of limitations associated with a mental illness and living a satisfying life with the support of family, friends, service providers, and the community at large.

Our Target Audience

Our target audiences serve as lenses for the design of the mission and brand tools. They are ways for SSC to think about for whom the mission and brand are defined. We concluded that our target audience includes:

Other National Mental Health Organizations

Such as CMHA, Mood Disorders Society Canada, Mental Health Commission of Canada, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis, PSR Canada, and members of the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health.

People or Groups Who Can Influence Policy and/or Funding

(Such as MPs, Senators, and Deputy Ministers.) We should target politicians connected to mental health regardless of political affiliation, keeping in mind that Senators hold a longer term and Deputy Ministers handle the money.

Corporate/Employer Organizations

These present opportunities for donations and increased awareness.

Younger Audiences

Younger audiences tend to be more receptive to diverse ways of understanding and discussing mental health. Younger audiences of the general public are the SSC's priority. There is a need to bring the thoughts and influence of Millennials and Generation Z into the work of SSC.

Our Differentiating Brand Competency

Transforming how people think, with knowledge and youthful enthusiasm.

Differentiating Competency is something that an organization is really good at, or admired for, that other's lack. As a national mental health organization SSC feels that its differentiating competency is:

Knowledge speaks to the content we offer that is person-centred, family engagement oriented, strengths based, and recovery focused.

Youthful enthusiasm speaks to our attitude. We desire to address the needs of early psychosis families and millennials who have parents living with schizophrenia.

We have come a long ways in our understanding of early psychosis and schizophrenia and its heterogeneity from one person to another, including treatment options, environmental and ethno-cultural influences.

The lived experience of the person, the lived experience of families are diverse. A knowledge of various demographics is important. For example, millennials who are becoming caregivers to their baby-boomer parents. SSC wants to be transformative and also be seen as transformative in how people think through our knowledge and youthful enthusiasm.

Our Brand Character

An inspirational visionary.

Our brand character is a statement that describes the SSC's aspirational personality of the brand. If SSC had a personality, what would it be? As a leading national organization we want be known as an inspirational visionary. With schizophrenia been the most stigmatized mental illness, we want to communicate a vision of hope! Hope changes everything.



Our Brand Essence

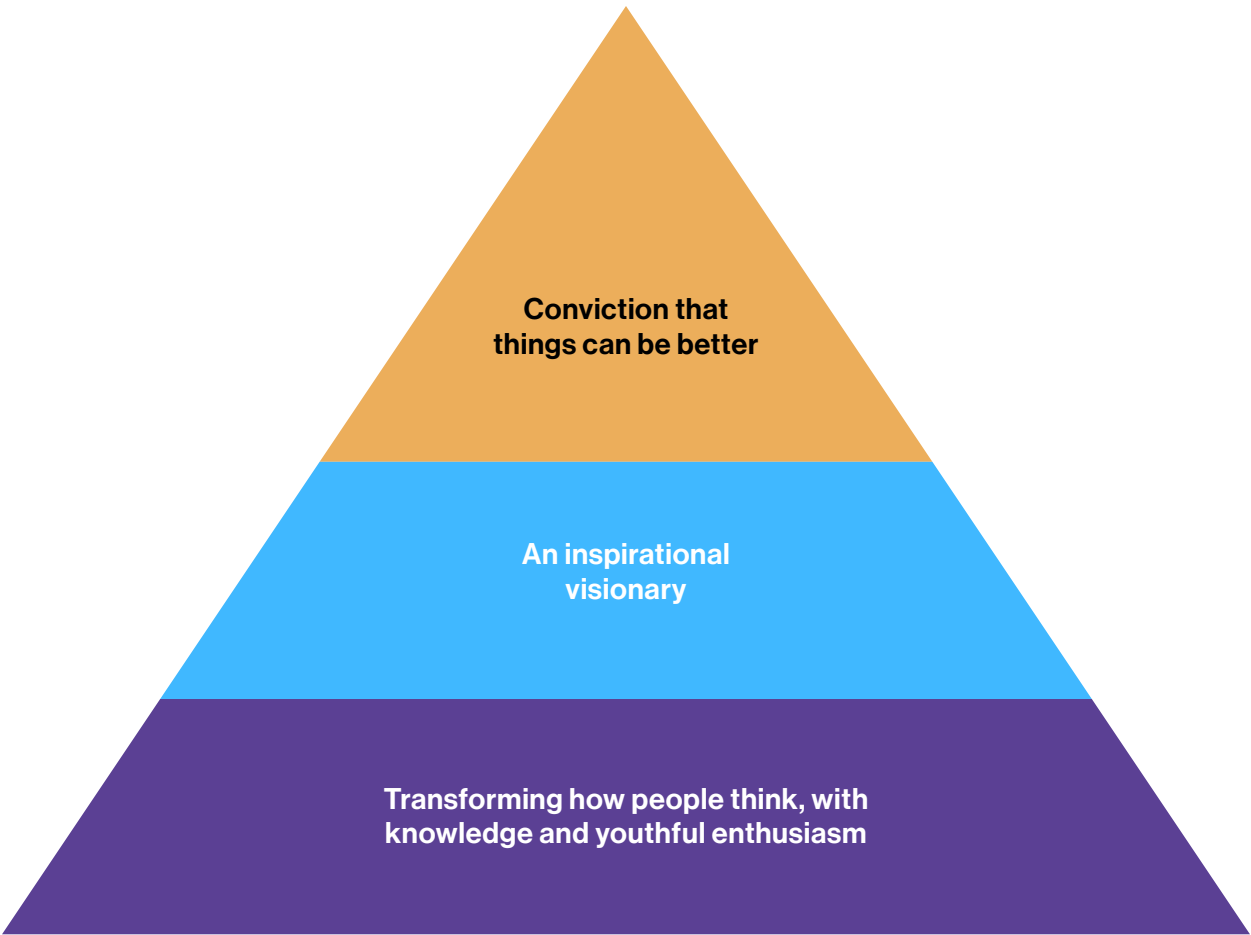
Conviction that things can be better.

Brand essence is the heart and soul of the brand, or the brand's most fundamental nature or quality. It is the ingredient without which, all other aspects of the brand would fall apart. SSC lives by the conviction that a recovery-oriented and person-centred mental health system would serve individuals and families much

better as the emphasis would not just be on symptom reduction but helping the person to live a quality of life in the community.

This applies to people impacted by early psychosis and schizophrenia, but it is also a deeper idea than that. It is a world view, a philosophy. It is

the heartbeat of SSC as a national leader. It's the key message of our advocacy. When we create better mental health care in partnership with primary health care and social health care, then we can "Build a Canada where people living with early psychosis and schizophrenia achieve their potential."



SSC Core Values

The SSC values provide further clarity on what the Society stands for and what it sees as important we seek to “Build a Canada where people living with early psychosis and schizophrenia achieve their potential.”

- Early psychosis and schizophrenia are medical illnesses that, like other medical illnesses, have variable expressions and effects of symptoms, function and response to treatments.
- Early psychosis and schizophrenia are caused by a number of different factors, from multiple genetic and environmental factors.
- The SSC fully supports the important role of research in all areas related to early psychosis and schizophrenia and (biological, psychological, spiritual, and social determinants of health, etc.).
- Persons with early psychosis and schizophrenia are entitled to person-centred, recovery-focused, efficient multi-disciplinary and integrated evidence-informed treatments and community support services.
- Persons at the early phases of their illness are entitled to real secondary prevention (early intervention and treatment) through specialized first episode psychosis clinics and their collaborators.
- Persons with early psychosis and schizophrenia and psychosis are to be included as full citizens in accessing education, employment, housing, medical services, recreation and social supports.
- Whenever possible families are essential partners in the care and the treatment and recovery plans of persons with early psychosis and schizophrenia, and deserve respect and support.
- Persons with early psychosis and schizophrenia must be included in their treatment planning, care and recovery plans using a shared decision approach.
- Persons with early psychosis and schizophrenia and their families are not to be blamed for this illness.

The Schizophrenia Society of Canada Foundation

2020-2021 SSCF Board of Directors

Florence Budden (Chair), Newfoundland and Labrador

Joan Baylis (Treasurer), Saskatchewan

Dr. John Gray, British Columbia

Hazel Meredith, British Columbia

Gregory Zed, New Brunswick

Chris Watkins, Alberta

Dr. William Honer, British Columbia

Dr. Trina Montreuil, Québec

Laura Burke, Nova Scotia



A Message from the SSCF Chair —Florence Budden

The Schizophrenia Society of Canada Foundation (SSCF) was established in 1994 when the late Dr. Michael Smith made a generous donation of half of his Nobel Prize Laureate monies to the SSC. The donation helped form an endowment fund to which others could contribute and support research, now the SSCF. We are forever grateful for Dr. Smith's generosity. His legacy is an inspiration to others to invest in research initiatives.

The Foundation has another research fund which is called the General Research Fund which can be utilized for psychosocial research.

Research to better understand the biologic basis, psychosocial determinants, as well as pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatment options for schizophrenia is absolutely vital. The SSC Foundation is committed to fostering and supporting research in all areas related to schizophrenia (e.g. biological, psychological, and social) to ensure that recovery is possible.

I wish to highlight three initiatives the Foundation pursued this year:

Cannabis Use and Psychosis in Adult Populations

As part of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's "Integrated Cannabis Research Strategy," the SSC Foundation entered into a partnership with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to further address the knowledge gaps in cannabis and mental health. The SSC Foundation contributed \$50,000 to fund research on the relationship between cannabis use and adult early psychosis. The MHCC contributed \$65,000 for a total of \$115,000. The name of our research project is "Cannabis Use and Psychosis in Adult Populations" and is described below.

Research into the relationship between cannabis use and early psychosis and schizophrenia in adult populations. Factors explored may include reasons for use, social determinants of health, impact of cannabis use on relapse of psychosis or schizophrenia, and mental health and wellbeing as related to the recovery process. Research should contribute to effective intervention, prevention and mental health promotion among adults living with psychosis and schizophrenia.

There is strong evidence that cannabis use increases the risk of psychosis. Risk and vulnerability factors include age of first use, frequency and potency, and family history. However, the relationship between cannabis use and early psychosis is not well understood, including the potential harms and/or benefits of cannabis use for people living with psychosis.

The successful principle investigators of the project are Dr. Kelly K. Anderson who is Associate Professor and Graduate Chair at University of Western Ontario and Sarah J. Bromely who is Clinical Manager at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto.

Canadian Network for Research in Psychosis and Schizophrenia

On Friday, January 24, 2020, the SSC participated in the first meeting of the Canadian Network for Research on Schizophrenia and Psychoses (CNRSP) which was held in Montréal. This event was attended by over 50 professionals from the health network and academia as well as people living with schizophrenia or psychosis and their loved ones. The network's goal is to bring together stakeholders from the schizophrenia and psychosis community to develop ongoing partnerships and advance science.

The CNRSP aims to offer the structure for the coordination of schizophrenia research nationally, with the following vision: Recovery is possible for people with schizophrenia and psychosis.

As a founding member, SSC supports the threefold mission of CNRSP:

- To raise awareness that continued research in schizophrenia and psychotic disorders is needed and greatly contributes to improving the recovery and quality of lives of people affected (individuals and their families), with a resulting decrease in health and social costs related to these disorders.
- To improve the impact of Canadian schizophrenia research by fostering interdisciplinary collaborative efforts and creating momentum to generate resources needed to answer current gaps and needs as determined by multiple stakeholders including researchers, clinicians, families, and people with lived experience.
- To acknowledge the importance, and further expansion, of policy development and knowledge translation, integral to Canadian research efforts in schizophrenia and psychosis.

CCEIP Virtual Care Research Project

The Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention for Psychosis (CCEIP) approached the SSC Foundation seeking a grant to gain a better understanding of how virtual care impacts service delivery and patient outcomes. Limited knowledge exists on telepsychiatry in specialized services for first episode psychosis (FEP), despite its potential for improving service access. Through a series of focus groups with young persons with lived experience, the CCEIP will explore access and use of technology, obstacles to attending clinic appointments, and perspectives of young adults with FEP on using telepsychiatry as part of outpatient services. CCEIP will conduct focus groups with clinicians to understand administrative, technological and clinical gaps and barriers to delivering virtual care to meet patient defined outcomes. Information collected from the focus group series will be published and presented to the early psychosis community with an emphasis on best practices for virtual care. Key learning and outputs from the focus groups will also be shared with partner groups including EPION, AQPPEP, Advanced Practice Panel British Columbia, CPA and SSC.



The total cost for this qualitative research project is \$144,584.63. The SSC Foundation awarded CCEIP a \$35,000 partnership grant.

I wish to thank the board members for this opportunity to serve as President of the Foundation. I close with a quote by Charles F. Kettering: "Research means that you don't know, but are willing to find out."

— **Florence Budden**, *SSCF Chair*



SSC and SSCF Treasurer's Report —Joan Baylis

I am pleased to report on the Schizophrenia Society of Canada financial statement for the year ending March 31, 2021. Revenue for the year was \$742,419. Expenses were \$716,052. Net assets at the end of the year were \$201,755.

The financial position of the SSC Foundation as of March 31, 2021 is as follows:

Revenue for the Year:	\$220,152
Expenses:	\$58,748
Net assets for the Michael Smith Research Fund:	\$1,503,688
	\$1,572,877
Net assets for the General Research Fund:	\$200,064
Total net assets:	\$1,703,752

Working with ScotiaWealth Management, Edward Jones, and the Investment Policy Statement for SSC and SSCF, the two Boards continue to look for ways to diversify and expand our base of individual, corporate, and government funders. SSC continues to support individuals and family members with an array of innovative programs and initiatives for those living with schizophrenia and other related mental illnesses. While SSC continues to be conservative in its spending, the CEO and board continue to look for ways to increase the revenue in our society to allow improvement in the cash flow thus allowing the society to have continued growth and fulfill its Mission Statement.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. This has adverse impacts in Canada and on the global economy. As this continues, there could be further impact on the Society, its funders and community of service. Management is actively monitoring the effect on its financial condition, liquidity, operations, suppliers, industry and workforce. Given the daily evolution of the pandemic and the global responses to curb its spread, the Society is not able to estimate fully the effects at this time.

I wish to thank our CEO, staff and Board Members for the opportunity to serve on the Board. A copy of the SSC and SSC Foundation audited Financial Statements for the year ending March 31, 2020 can be found at www.schizophrenia.ca.

For more information on the Schizophrenia Society of Canada and the Schizophrenia Society of Canada Foundation, please contact us at:

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Twitter: [@SchizophreniaCa](https://twitter.com/SchizophreniaCa)

CANNABIS & PSYCHOSIS

EXPLORING THE LINK



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Well that was quite a year!

Although we couldn't get together in person, our project fared well through the shift to becoming fully online due to COVID-19. The project's Youth Action Committee shifted our focus from our original plans to create a public transit-based national awareness campaign to an online course for Canadian youth exploring the relationship between Cannabis & Mental Health. We partnered with YouthREX and the Mental Health Commission of Canada to produce a comprehensive, youth-led, online course for young people aged 14-25 to launch in late Fall 2021!

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OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

NEW TEAM MEMBERS





CANNABIS & MENTAL HEALTH

About The Project

In collaboration with YouthREX and the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Cannabis and Psychosis team is developing an engaging self-led course for youth, by youth. We're creating evidence-based and engaging curriculum addressing the relationship between cannabis use and mental health. The course explores a range of key issues, from understanding why people choose to use, the impact of cannabis legislation on diverse communities, harm reduction basics and more.

Our Youth Action Committee, along with Research Assistants from YouthRex, have worked together closely to developing relevant and impactful content for the course that will resonate with our target demographic, youth between the ages of 14-25.



Teen Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Cannabis and Mental Health Project recruited a group of 12 teens across Canada (aged 16-19) to review the content and design of the course. A total of five sessions were held where participants provided insightful comments and feedback on course content and design. Further engagement with TAC will occur throughout the project.

Next Steps

The course is set to launch in late Fall 2021

WHERE WE ARE AT!

- Content reviewed by Researchers, Youth Workers, Educators, Youth Action Committee and Teen Youth Committee.
- Ongoing outreach with youth-focused and educational organizations
- Outreach and Sustainability workgroups created
- Establishing dissemination and sustainability strategy



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada
Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada



ASK THE EXPERT SERIES

In-Depth Conversations

Our Ask the Expert Series features a range of experts, including people with lived experience to discuss all things cannabis and mental health-related, sharing their knowledge with our growing audience!

We've facilitated a wide range of discussions through our Ask The Expert series, which is moderated by members of our Youth Action Committee. Several of our panels have been coproduced with YouthRex and VoxCann.

Discussion topics include:

- Racial (in)justice and Cannabis
- Growing Cannabis Smart and Safer
- A Mother-Daughter Conversation on Cannabis
- Through Our Eyes- Lived Experience with Cannabis and Psychosis

Please check out all of our videos:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZvfbefZk_UrMWRao-T4TWg/videos



ASK THE EXPERT
Racial (in)justice and Cannabis Panel

THROUGH OUR EYES



LIVED EXPERIENCES WITH CANNABIS AND PSYCHOSIS

For our fourth and fifth Ask The Expert episodes, we held a candid discussion with our "Through Our Eyes" panelists, answering questions about their lived experience with cannabis and psychosis.

The following Ask The Expert, hosted by VoxCann, focused on International Perspectives on cannabis. Stay up to date on our Ask The Expert events by signing up to our mailing list and checking in with Cannabis & Psychosis on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

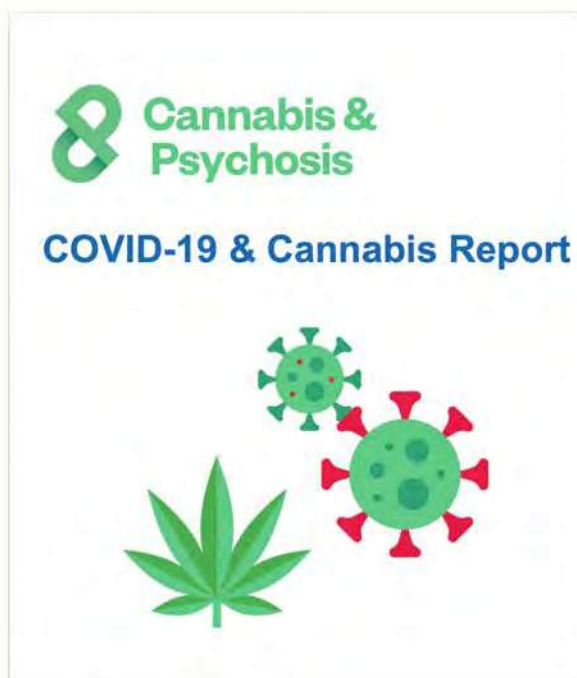
OTHER PROJECT UPDATES

Our New Website Survey



We're interested in finding out what Canadians have to say about their cannabis use. When participants complete the survey, they receive the 5 FACTS about Cannabis & Psychosis infographic, created by our Youth Action Committee.

Looking Back - Thinking Forward + COVID-19



The COVID-19 Pandemic caused unprecedented changes in the lives of Canadians and has significantly affected the mental health of many in a multitude of ways.

Here at C&P, we are interested in learning about how people's relationship with cannabis changed as we transitioned from normal life to lockdown from April - July 2020.

We surveyed visitors to our site who elected to complete our survey. Overall, 37 participants across 10 provinces and territories across Canada completed the survey. See below for highlights!

COVID-19 & CANNABIS REPORT

- Most (81%) were recreational users
- About half said they consumed cannabis to self-medicate
- Two-thirds of respondents reported a change in their mental health-related to cannabis after the onset of COVID-19
- 60% of respondents reported their consumption increased during April-July
- About half of respondents did not employ any harm-reduction methods in their consumption
- <https://cannabisandpsychosis.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Covid-Cannabis-Report.pdf>

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

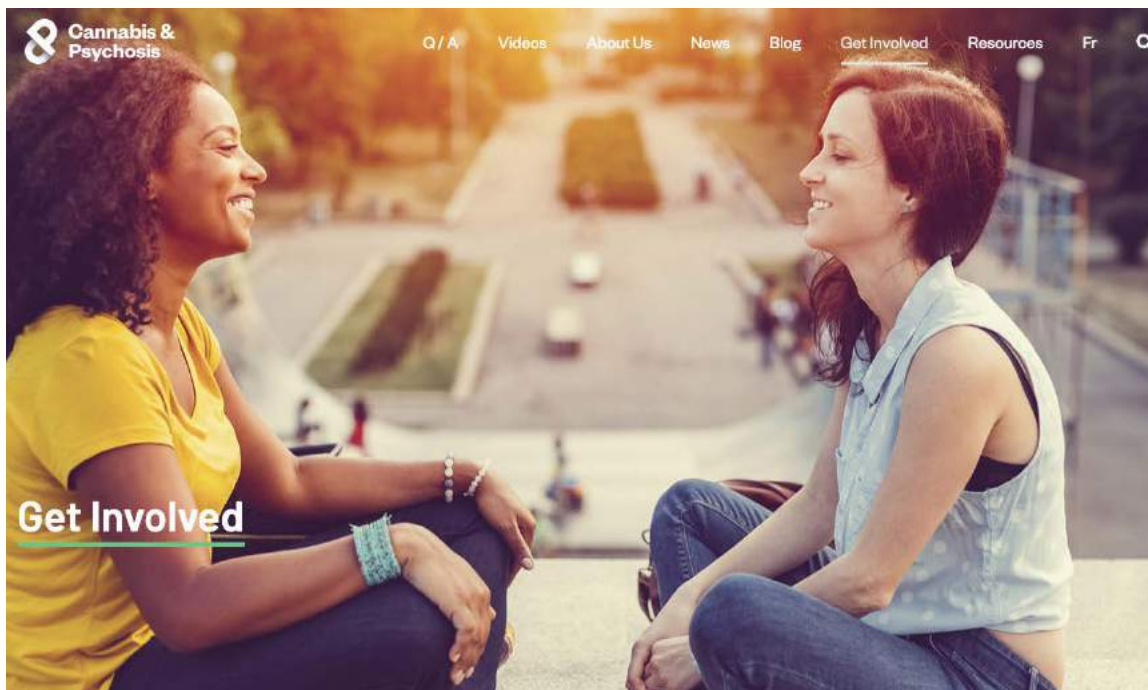


#ResearchRoundUp

To increase engagement with diverse audiences over the pandemic, we have launched a new knowledge translation initiative. [#ResearchRoundUp](#) is a public engagement campaign that shares evidence-based information about cannabis and mental health. This innovative campaign includes sharing summaries of scientific publications in a unique visual format to make information more accessible and appealing for diverse audiences.



GET INVOLVED!



We're excited to announce the latest addition to our project website: <https://cannabisandpsychosis.ca/get-involved> ! In keeping with our mission to engage and amplify youth voices, we have launched the Get Involved page. This page enables other young people to be a part of the conversation surrounding cannabis and mental health by submitting a story, an opinion piece, feedback, and helpful resources to our team. We hope to use these submissions to continue to inform and strengthen the project and our commitment to youth-led mental health education.

OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

PARTNERSHIPS

In collaboration with the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and HyperActive, the Exploring the Link team has created a youth-friendly animated video on the effects of cannabis on the endocannabinoid system, it will be featured on the Cannabis and Mental health site as well as Cannabis and Psychosis site: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Z85P9-XvYNRr78Lz2c_AqJOnFLM73fq0/view?usp=sharing.

Cannabis & Psychosis is funding the production of a community-based "zine" (a short, independent magazine) by Bloom, centred around individual experience with harm reduction and healing. It's now available <https://www.bloomyvr.com/zine/002-summer2021>. Below is a section from the Zine by "RANGREZA"(she/her) and an Illustration by Alistair (they/them)



Some days
If I freeze just so; glaze squinted eyes.
If I pause my being just gently enough, quietly enough,
stretch my spirit through my silence.
I imagine earth's heartbeat is scrambling my mind
So I may be a little more fluid, so I might feel more than my own
body again.
Some days. I lose track of months and weeks In frantic searches for
pills that might make permanent, that colour I've accessed.
Some days. I paint.
I think of the people who've added colour to my life.
I wonder if they too, are trying somehow
to access colour they've gifted others but not themselves
I hope we find what we're all looking for.
I hope that colour reaches us.
Fills us.

OUTREACH & SUSTAINABILITY

We are working hard on a number of fronts to ensure the project's work will sustained and our impact will continue to grow. By developing and cultivating partnerships with organizations who are providing both in-kind and financial support for our work, we are looking beyond the current funding period to leverage resources and raise awareness to pave the way for our work to continue.

In addition to our partnerships with MHCC, YMCA, CNA and CAMH, we have built partnerships with VoxCann, an amazing Québec-based cannabis education organization, and a range of organizations serving Indigenous communities, LGBTQ+ youth and educators.

To stay up to date on our latest partnerships, projects, and events, follow us on our socials!



NEW TEAM MEMBERS

WILL LANDON

Indigenous Outreach Coordinator

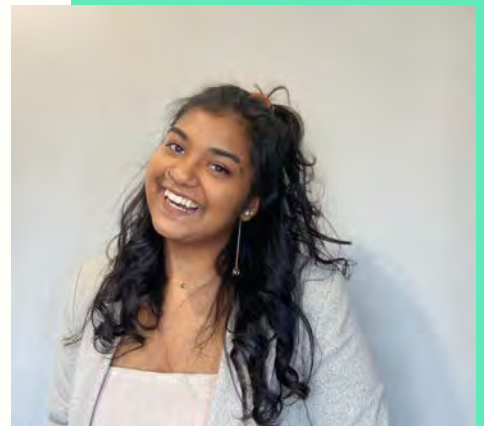
Waabishkigaabo (Will Landon) is a citizen of Wauzhushk Onigum Nation which is on the northern shores of Lake of the Woods in Ontario, he is of the Lynx Clan, and is Seventh Generation from the signing of Treaty #3. He is the proud father of a daughter. Waabishkigaabo studied Political Studies at the University of Manitoba and represented Indigenous students as the Indigenous rep on the Student Union. From University he was elected to multiple youth representative positions at Grand Council Treaty #3, Ontario First Nation Young Peoples' Council, and AFN National Youth Council. Holding multiple portfolios but focused primarily on mental health, social policy, and health policy. Waabishkigaabo utilizes his experience in low context and high context culture relationship building to help build bridges between Canadian organizations and First Nations' communities and people.



MALEESHA PASKARATHAS

Cannabis and Mental Health, Project Researcher

Maleesha is currently completing her degree in Global Health, specializing in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at York University. She studies the social determinants of health and understandings of the broader influences that shape one's health. Maleesha is passionate about mental health and hopes to work in further strengthening the connection in fostering better mental health support and awareness amongst youth and families of various backgrounds such as immigrant, refugee, diaspora, and racialized individuals. With lived experience of challenging mental health issues herself and her brother who was diagnosed with Schizophrenia, Maleesha sees the importance of better connection in mental health services and cultural understanding on creating healthier societies.



CONNOR LAFORTUNE

Youth Action Committee, Outreach

Nimkiins ndizhinikaaz bineshiinh ndondem Okidendawt ndonjiibaa Anishinaabe nini ndow.

Connor "Little Thunder Spirit" Lafortune is a second-year student of the Indigenous Studies program with a double major in Law and Justice as well as Race and Gender Studies. He is the Male Traditional Coordinator and Vice-President on the Indigenous Student Circle at Laurentian University. He occupies various roles on boards in Sudbury Ontario as both a Francophone and Indigenous person. He is currently working for the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation to create Life Promotion Toolkits for Indigenous peoples. Since high school, Connor has been a youth facilitator for La Fédération de la Jeunesse Franco-Ontarienne, where he runs workshops, activities, and speaks on panels for Franco-Ontarian high school students. In high-school, Connor sat on the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit council for his school board, where he still sits as a community member and had acquired an internship on his First Nation working alongside O'gema and council.



KIAH ELLIS-DURITY

Cannabis and Mental Health, Project Facilitator

Kiah (she/her) holds a degree in Comparative Religion, Culture and Political Science. She currently sits on the national board of Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy. With Exploring the Link, she works as a Project Facilitator for the Cannabis and Mental Health Project. Through her work Kiah aims at normalizing discussions around cannabis while empowering youth to make educated, well-informed decisions.



NEW TEAM MEMBERS

NATASHA TAYLOR

Practicum Student – University of New Brunswick

Natasha is entering the final year of her Psychology (B.Sc.) degree at the Saint John campus of the University of New Brunswick, minoring in Criminal Justice and Biology. She is passionate about promoting mental health awareness, making knowledge accessible, and giving a voice to individuals with lived experience. She is currently working as a research assistant at the Housing, Mobilization, Engagement and Resiliency Lab (HOME-RL) at the University of New Brunswick.



CANNABIS AND MENTAL HEALTH

KATARINA GLIGORIJEVIC

YouthRex Research Assistant

Katarina Gligorijevic (she/her) is a Research Associate at YouthREX, where she supports knowledge translation, as well as research and evaluation projects. She is committed to using data to drive social change and has worked to advocate for cultural and youth-friendly urban spaces. Katarina studied Sociology at McGill and went on to obtain a Master of Arts in Human Geography from the University of Toronto. Katarina has been working with the team on our Cannabis and Mental Health Project.



CHANTAL PHILLIPS

YouthRex Research Assistant

Chantal Phillips is a medical student at the University of Toronto. Her research and advocacy interests include addressing oppression, with a specific focus on harm reduction and anti-Black racism in academic, political, and health-based contexts. She is currently working as a research assistant for YouthREX and project manager of the Black COVID Resilience Health Promotion Project with Black Health Alliance.



PAST STRATEGIC ADVISOR

KIRA LONDON-NADEAU

Cannabis and Psychosis, Strategic Advisor

We were sorry to say farewell to Kira, who has been integral to every aspect of the project. She will be missed! We wish her well on her continued work with cannabis and hope our paths cross again!

