First Name: Jami-Rae

Last Name: Crego

Student ID: T00015124 Start Date of Project: 15/04/2023 (DD/MMM/YYYY)

Please complete all sections of this application form.

1. FACULTY MENTORS INFORMATION
   1. Who is your Primary Faculty Mentor? Dr. Oleksandr Kondrashov
   2. Who is your Secondary Faculty Mentor? Dr. Kathie McKinnon

*NOTE: Your Primary and Secondary Faculty Mentors must each complete a Faculty Mentor Support Form. Forms can be found under the attachments tab within your TRU Romeo UREAP application and on the TRU UREAP webpage under information and Forms for Faculty Mentors..*

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Provide an abstract of your proposed research: (maximum 1500 characters)

This project explores the barriers men face accessing mental health services and asks men what mental health services they feel would be the most appealing and effective. The study is meant to use qualitative data to identify more specific areas of gender-specific services for men; men’s input is essential in meeting service needs. Men make up half the population, commit suicide at three times the rate as females, yet social services have limited male-specific services (Shafer & Wendt, 2015).

Literature reviews show that men frequently struggle with mental health but are resistant to help-seeking behaviours especially from formal, medicalized, or feminized settings (Scholz et al, 2022; Woodhead, 2022). Mental illness is directly linked to crime, domestic abuse, intimate partner violence (IPV), and family abuse (Barry et al. 2019; Shafer & Wendt, 2015; Shorey et al., 2012); the CASW Code of Ethics core value of promoting social justice for all (CASW, 2005) requires social workers to consider these connections and respond with more accessible and genderized programs to address men’s mental health concerns (Robertson et al., 2018)

Marginalized men are less likely to seek help in formal settings due to previous negative experiences (Sharp et al, 2012). Men often have difficulty finding services that meet their needs. Hegemonic masculinity and stigma large barriers to mental health services: masculine stereotypes have conditioned men to remain stoic and independent.

2.2 Provide a brief literature review for your proposed research: (maximum 3500 characters)

Although transformative service approaches have gained traction, programs specific to male needs are largely undeveloped. An exploration of men’s health services found men are “doubly marginalized due to the norms of masculinity pressuring men to never admit ‘weakness’…and negative stereotypes”; stigma was a major barrier to service access (Scholz, 2022).

Gender has been established as a social determinant of health (Sharp et al., 2022). Men are less likely to access services despite health disparities- an indication programs that are more appealing, accessible, and effective for men are needed. The traits encouraged through hegemonic masculinity in Canada are the same traits that discourage help-seeking, but often “increase (men’s) risk of disease, injury, and death” (Courtenay, 2011).

Suicide and homicide are the largest disparities between men and women; homicide kills them at fourfold the rate, and suicide thrice as much on average (2011l; Statistics Canada, 2022). Certain disorders and addictions, such as schizotypal disorders and substance abuse, are prevalent in men (Courtenay, 2011). Violence against women may prevail in the media, but evidence demonstrates that men are at a higher risk of experiencing violence and abuse within their lifetime (Courtenay, 2011). 5% of boys have experienced sexual abuse; those who have are twice as likely to abuse substance and suffer emotionally(Courtenay, 2011).

Men gravitate to avoidant and unhealthy responses to stress, that may lead to psychological disorders and detriments to physical health. Boys are often taught from childhood that anger is an acceptable emotion to express; they often do not receive comfort when distressed (Courtenay, 2011).

That men do not receive support and may externalize their suffering has a negative impact on those around them. Intimate partner violence is experienced by 20% of women (Shorey, et al. 2012). Although poor mental health does not guarantee violence, there is a positive correlation “between depressive symptoms and IPV perpetration” and more aggression seen in those with a mental health diagnosis (Shorey, et al. 2012). The emotional dysregulation experienced alongside depression and anxiety can also lead to abuse (Shorey, 2012).

The mental health services available often don’t appeal to men; current research finds that “gender-sensitized programs and… healthy lifestyle interventions targeting physical activity” are more likely to engage men (Sharp et al., 2021). 10% of Canadian men are expected to experience a severe mental illness over their lifetime, and “approximately one million men suffer from major depression each year” (Sharp, et al. 2021). Interventions have been most successful in an informal, men-only group format, “encouraging humor, banter, and friendly competition”; they’ve been seen as necessary in garnering commitment to the program. Focusing on an activity, rather than mental health, is also more acceptable to men; they want “belonging and camaraderie” (Sharp et al. 2021). Focusing on participant involvement and positive masculine traits, such as dedication to family, have also encouraged engagement (Robertson, et al. 2018).

There is a substantial knowledge gap regarding program creation and engagement in “mental health promotion interventions for men” (Robertson et al., 2018). Involving service users in program creation is beneficial as their priorities are focused on need (Lester & Tait, 2018).

2.3 What is the hypothesis or research question for your proposed research? Include any specific objectives: (maximum 500 characters)

My research is meant to explore the barriers adult men aged 25-64 experiencing psychological distress face when accessing services and identify programs they would find most effective and accessible.

2.4 Provide a description of the research methodology/methodologies and analysis that you intend to employ in completing this research: (maximum 1500 characters)

This study uses qualitative research to access the target population’s expertise. It uses a nonprobability sampling method and utilizes working-aged men (men aged 35-64 account for the most suicides according to multiple reports ([Roy et al., 2018; Statistics Canada, 2022]), from cafes, gyms, and sport centers to reach a diverse demographic and use multiple cluster samples. Men at each chosen location will have the option of filling out a survey and/or participating in an interview to share about their needs and past experiences with mental health. Gyms were included as there is a connection to focus on physique and mental health issues; plus, it is a socially acceptable way to work off stress (Robertson et al., 2018; Sharp et al., 2021).

The data would be analyzed to identify recurring themes regarding barriers and treatment. Narrative individual case studies narratives would be compared with the survey results. Critical issues identified in men’s health are suicidality, depression, and substance abuse; men commit 80% of suicides in Canada (Bilsker et al., 2018). Survey results would be analyzed separately from the narratives and identify patterns within the information that could guide future research and programs that would address these issues.

The researcher is a thirty-year-old female university student, who worked on crews with men for a decade prior to starting the BSW program. Men have been comfortable confiding to her in the past.

2.5 Provide a description of how your research will significantly impact your field of study:

(maximum 1500 characters)

Many social services are dedicated to helping women and families who are suffering from domestic abuse, violence, or IPV. These approaches treat the symptoms but not the cause, such as men’s mental health issues. Men are “victimized at… high rates in their intimate relationships (increasing) their mental health symptomology” (Shorey, et al., 2012).

Portrayals of men as ‘privileged’ produce “dominate norms (that) perpetuate an idealized masculinity very few men actually meet” (Abrams, 2016). Men face structural and attitudinal barriers to services; service providers may lack awareness of men’s needs, and “socialized masculine ideals (may) obstruct men’s pathways to care” (Seidler et al., 2018, p.107). Feminized services deter men; settings they require for disclosure are usually “juxtaposed to mainstream services” (Robertson et al., 2018). Hegemonic masculinity reinforces stigmas; research could undermine them (Scholz et al., 2022).

Men’s suicide remains “overlooked as a social problem” (Roy et al., 2018). With growing economic instability, this problem could worsen as unemployment is linked to increased suicidality (Roy et al., 2018). Physical health interventions show improved mental health benefits; further research could lead to alternative programs that are more accessible and effective (Robertson et al., 2018). Considering the needs of men’s mental health is necessary, as it has an enormous impact on “individuals, families, and communities (Shafer et al. 2015)

2.6 Describe your plans to disseminate your research findings: (maximum 500 characters)

I would like to use the results of this research to encourage further exploration and program development in men’s mental health. Along with applying it to my future practice, I would like the findings to be available through the TRU library and submit it to a relevant peer-reviewed journal or through the BCCASW website to raise awareness and encourage others to explore this subject further.

2.7 List the references that you have citied throughout your research proposal observing the appropriate citation style for your discipline: (maximum 3500 characters)

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in Psychiatric Treatments. Vol. 11 (13). Cambridge University Press. Web retrieved https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/advances-in-psychiatric-treatment/article/encouraging-user-involvement-in-mental-health-services/B0C178BAE0EB489356DF4C69A5C4E747#

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Successful mental health promotion with men: the evidence from “tacit knowledge.” Health Promotion International, 33(2), 334–344. https://doi-org.ezproxy.tru.ca/10.1093/heapro/daw067

Scholz, B., Lu, V. N., Conduit, J., Szantyr, D., Crabb, S., & Happell, B. (2022). An exploratory study

of men’s access to mental health services. Psychology of Men & Masculinities, 23(4), 412–421. https://doi-org.ezproxy.tru.ca/10.1037/men0000404.supp (Supplemental)

Shafer, K., & Wendt, D. (2015). Men’s Mental Health: A Call to Social Workers. Social Work, 60(2),

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M. (2022). “People say men don’t talk, well that’s bullshit”: A focus group study exploring challenges and opportunities for men’s mental health promotion. PLoS ONE, 17(1), 1–17. https://doi-org.ezproxy.tru.ca/10.1371/journal.pone.0261997

Sharp, P., Stolp, S., Bottorff, J. L., Oliffe, J. L., Hunt, K., & Caperchione, C. M. (2021). Can lifestyle

interventions improve Canadian men’s mental health? Outcomes from the HAT TRICK programme. Health Promotion International, 36(4), 943–951. https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daaa120

Shorey, R. C., Febres, J., Brasfield, H., & Stuart, G. L. (2012). The Prevalence of Mental Health Problems in Men Arrested for Domestic Violence. Journal of Family Violence, 27(8) 741–748.

1. PROJECT TIMELINE WITH BENCHMARKS

3.1 Provide a timeline for your project that includes key benchmarks: (maximum 1000 characters)

April:

-Create survey form and interview outline with guiding questions

-purchase incentives for participants

-coordinate with other parties regarding venue/days to set up at venue (school, gym, etc. to speak with people and hand out surveys)

-Select locations for one-on-one interviews (in two cities- Kamloops and Williams Lake)

-Hand out surveys in selected areas/ ask likely businesses or workplaces for permission to hand

out surveys and conduct brief interviews.

-Beginning of data collection via surveys and interviews

May:

-Review current data collected

-Request more surveys to be filled or more interviews if more information needed; check for

experimenter errors

-Once interviews and all surveys completed, prize draw if people not compensated individually

June:

-Final analysis of all data.

-identify recurring patterns of themes in data

-compare results to preexisting literature

July:

-Synthesis of information from both surveys and interviews.

-Typed report of result

*NOTE: Please refer to the UREAP Help Guide for a project timeline example. Students must demonstrate a willingness to engage in 12 weeks or equivalent of sustained research per the Terms of Reference.*

1. OPERATING GRANT BUDGET PROPOSAL

4.1 The UREAP award offers up to $1000 toward direct research expenses. These expenses must be preapproved by the UREAP committee in the adjudication phase. Use the provided template under the Attachments tab in the TRU Romeo UREAP application to complete your budget proposal. Copy amount from the TOTAL AMOUNT line of the budget here. Total Amount: $ 770

4.2 Additional budget information: (maximum 500 characters)

1. CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL GOALS

5.1 Describe how this project will contribute to your academic and/or professional goals:

(maximum 1000 characters)

My project contributes to my academic and professional development by helping me build the necessary skills for research alongside a more competitive application for a MSW or law school. Research and effective program creation is my primary interest in the social work field; I am excited for any activities relating to this as it furthers my goal to create beneficial programs and expand professional knowledge. I hope that the results of this project will lead to further research, by myself or others, to create effective and accessible services.

I believe that to heal society, we need to treat the disease and not the symptoms; there is concern regarding aggressive and addictive behaviors in men struggling with psychological distress, especially of its impact on families. A combination of my past experience of assaults, and discussions with male acquaintances led to the conception of this project.

*NOTE: Include your role in conceiving of the project, your role in the implementation of the project, and your overall academic objectives – explaining how this project will help to advance those objectives.*