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## Research and Social Innovation

*YEAR IN REVIEW*  
2022-2023

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# Developing a Best Practice Model for Mental Health Crisis Care: A Community-Engaged Approach

By: Danielle Pomeroy, Polly Ford-Jones, and Sheryl Thompson



Emergency response to mental health calls has recently gained significant attention, recognizing that these interactions may have substantial, potentially life and death consequences for those already in distress. Current responses to mental health emergencies may involve 9-1-1 dispatchers, paramedic services, police services and hospital emergency department (ED) services. In Ontario, mental health-related visits to the ED increased by 21% between 2011 and 2016. Across Canada, for those aged 5-24, mental health related emergency department visits increased by as much as 75% since 2006.

Many of these individuals experience repeat visits to the ED where prior needs have been unmet. For ongoing mental health support, community-based organizations are a critical support for those with mental health needs, yet many current models of care appear to consistently fall short of adequately serving people during a mental health crisis. In order to address this issue, it is crucial to have input from a diverse array of stakeholders including emergency first responders, ED staff, practitioners, community organizations who currently provide mental health care, and service users themselves.

This project aims to develop a best practice model for mental health crisis care in Ontario. It explores the ways in which community-based organizations and acute care institutions can collaboratively inform emergency mental

health response. Of particular interest for this project are non-traditional, non-medicalized approaches to mental health support, including peer support, and approaches that account for the social determinants of health to support members of the community in need of emergency mental health care. In this project, researchers aimed to develop practices to support members of the community in need of emergency mental health assistance, with particular attention to those of lower socioeconomic status, Black and Indigenous communities, racialized people, 2SLGBTQ+ and immigrant communities. Members of these communities are disproportionately affected by intersecting structures of oppression that negatively affect their mental health and are at greater risk for negative interactions with emergency services.

Pomeroy, Ford-Jones, and Thompson's research was comprised of input from a multi-disciplinary, multi-sector team made up of scholars, clinicians, and partnerships with community organizations. The research team brings frontline work and scholarly experience in the areas of paramedicine, police foundations, emergency telecommunications, emergency department nursing, social work, and counselling. This team is partnered with TAIBU Community Health Centre, Middlesex London Paramedic Service, and has received formal endorsement from Mental Health Research Canada. This study is funded by the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) College and Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF).



## Introducing Inaugural CSI, Director – Elizabeth Dove

We are very pleased to announce that Elizabeth Dove has joined us as the inaugural Director of the **Centre for Social Innovation (CSI)**, as of Monday September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Elizabeth is a recognized leader in corporate social responsibility and has pioneered innovative strategies and worked to build solid external and internal partnerships that enable corporate citizenship and social and sustainability impact. Elizabeth has over 20 years of professional experience spanning from corporate partnerships, strategic consulting, to non-profit leadership.

Elizabeth joins Humber from Volunteer Canada where she was the Director of Corporate Citizenship. Elizabeth is also a lecturer and mentor in the post-secondary environment. She previously taught Adult Learning & Training and NGO Management in the Longo Faculty of Business. Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in International Development and Consumer Studies from the University of Guelph and a Master of Management (MM) with a social impact concentration from McGill University in the McGill-McConnell Program for National Voluntary Sector Leaders.

As the inaugural Director of the CSI, Elizabeth will be responsible for ensuring that all social innovation activity is focused on the co-creation of processes, solutions, and the removal of barriers to address issues that impact our communities on a local, national, and global level. The Director is responsible for leveraging existing and creating new internal and external strategic networks

and partnerships, which lead to the development, implementation, and delivery of a wide range of innovation projects and activities.

[The Centre for Social Innovation \(CSI\)](#) is part of the larger Humber Centres of Innovation (COI) network, which comprises of five COIs that focus on key areas of proven strength and industry sector growth. The CSI focuses on multidisciplinary approaches to facilitate the removal of barriers and community capacity building through the co-creation of solutions that address current societal challenges.

Elizabeth will work collaboratively with the FSCS administration team as well as Humber's team of academic leaders, the CSI Steering committee, the CSI Advisory Committee, and the COI Network leadership team.

Please join me in extending a heartfelt welcome to Elizabeth as she begins her journey at Humber College.

## Humber talks Social Innovation and Community Engagement with CiCan

Earlier this semester, FSCS Senior Dean and Lakeshore Campus Principal, June MacDonald-Jenkins, joined with Tyler Charlebois, Director of Humber's Centres of Innovation Network and Partnership Development to chat with Colleges and Institutes Canada (CiCan). June and Tyler discussed the plans for the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), including Humber's commitment to research and address current community issues including affordable housing in South Etobicoke. The article outlines Humber's dedication to advancing education and ensuring graduates leave Humber as systems thinkers, with an imbedded lens for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Read the full article [here](#).





*Q Summit Project Team: Lakeshore Arts and Rex Pride workers and FSCS student mentors: Lexi and Rendel.*

**The Faculty of Social and Community Services (FSCS)** was awarded a grant from the Community Partnership Fund under the leadership of professor Linda Hill. The project entitled *Q Summit: Creating Safer Space Through Art* is a partnership between FSCS, **Lakeshore Arts** and **Rex Pride**.

The Q Summit Project is an arts-based initiative that engages high school students and young adults from the LGBTQ+ community. A workshop series using mixed media (clay, paint, collage, etc.) is being facilitated weekly throughout the Winter 2023 semester, culminating in a weekend Art Retreat in May that will include 20 youth,

art educators and FSCS students who are working as Peer Mentors using a community development approach to engage youth. The Spring Art Retreat will bring participants together at the North Campus and include a three-day residence experience. The retreat will enable youth to celebrate their accomplishments, take leadership workshops, network and experience campus life. The event will expose equity-seeking youth to post-secondary education to build youth confidence that they can find and foster safer spaces on campuses, feel a sense of belonging and see post-secondary opportunities for themselves.

Follow us on Social Media!



For information on this project, contact:

**Linda.Hill@humber.ca**





# CSI Challenge Winners

The Mount St. Mary's Criminal Justice Association's Officers, and the Frederick Police Department in the state of Maryland, worked hard to provide a realistic and stimulating crime scene investigation that tests students' abilities at critical thinking, teamwork, crime scene proficiency, forensic knowledge, and collegiality. On February 25, 2023, 18 teams competed in the Robert Fram CSI Challenge. Each team had to proceed to the 'Briefing Room'.

In the 'Briefing Room', each team received an evidence kit for use in collecting, preserving, and identifying evidence. Additional bags and envelopes for collecting evidence were provided. Teams received a packet of instructions with dispatch information and location concerning the call to service they were investigating. This was followed by an oral briefing in which additional questions could be asked and answered. All teams were dispatched to their respective crime-scenes simultaneously and from the time they arrived, they had 50 minutes to process the crime scene and interview witnesses. Judges (Frederick Police Department Crime Scene Investigators) were located at the crime scene and outside the crime scene to observe and grade the actions of the team.

When the time has elapsed at the crime scene, teams had to leave their scenes, and transport all written materials, designated evidence, photos, sketches, etc. to adjacent rooms marked 'Squad Room' for completing the final phase of the challenge. In the Squad Room, each team had to complete a final report of their crime scene investigation and submit it for judging. Teams also submitted a crime scene rough and final sketch, evidence collected, and show the judge photographs taken, explaining how and why they were taken. Teams had 50 minutes to complete this phase of the investigation.

Upon completion of all teams, scores were tallied and the final marking was completed. The Humber College **Forensic Identification** (FI) graduate program had two teams enter in the competition.

**Of the 18 teams competing, Humber College placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

Team names:

**T.O. TRIO – 1<sup>st</sup> place**

***Nick Popov, Cora Pouliot and Romina Saramout***

**InvestaGators – 2<sup>nd</sup> place**

***Victoria Purnwasi, Ryan Trenton and Megan MacNeil***



## CSI Challenge Winners (cont'd)



### VICTORIA T PURNWASI

"The Robert Fram CSI Challenge was an amazing opportunity to further develop the foundational skill set that the Forensic Identification Program offers. Weekly training and practice with the faculty and the team was not only informative and constructive, but also a lot of fun! Now I have more confidence in my abilities and have gained great experience in team building and application of knowledge. Accomplishing our goal and measuring up against schools across North America leaves me with no doubt that this program and this extra-curricular opportunity has set me up for future success in the field of Forensics."

### CORA POULIOT

"Participating in Mount St. Mary's University CSI challenge has been an unforgettable experience. Not only has this opportunity, expanded my knowledge and passion for the field of Forensics, but with it, I was able to form great friendships and memories that will last a lifetime. Aside from our successful outcome, the opportunity to challenge ourselves and utilize our learned knowledge in such a unique situation felt especially rewarding. All six of us worked exceptionally hard both in training and in competition, and our success was well-earned. However, we could not have succeeded without the profound support and guidance from our program's faculty and professors."

# Exploring Social Innovation at Humber



Over the course of the Winter 2023 semester, the **Centre for Social Innovation** hosted its inaugural Social Innovation Workshop Series. The events on March 1, March 22, and April 3 brought together over 125 students, faculty, and community members to engage in conversation and learning. The workshops highlighted that social innovation truly is everywhere, as participants heard from faculty, students and community organizations about initiatives and research that they are championing and why this work matters to their community.

Through facilitated workshops, participants worked with presenters to share feedback, ideas, and experiences related to their workshop theme. Topics included affordable housing, the new world of work, mental health crisis care, employment for individuals with developmental disabilities, police partnerships with the community, and more.

As the newest in the **Centres of Innovation (COI) Network** at Humber, the Centre for Social Innovation began activities in 2022. Our aim is to address systemic social barriers and open up social opportunities. We do this by working alongside equity-deserving populations and the community organizations that support them.

For more information about the Centre for Social Innovation and our future events, please visit [www.humber.ca/socialinnovation](http://www.humber.ca/socialinnovation).

## OUR WORKSHOPS:



### Looking for Answers Within: How the Non-profit Sector Can Take an Asset-Based Approach to the Privatization Crisis

*Benjamin Miller (Ontario Non-Profit Network)*

Countless critical services, from long-term care to childcare, are being turned over to for-profit actors, who are incentivized to spend as little as possible on quality and cease services when it becomes more profitable to sell critical infrastructure. Expanding the delivery of these services by nonprofits would have several advantages, but a lack of capital and workforce is in the way. In this workshop, students, community members, and faculty with a wide range of experience discussed how the nonprofit sector could draw on its own resources to overcome these barriers in new and innovative ways.



## OUR WORKSHOPS (cont'd):



### Developing a Best Practice Model for Mental Health Crisis Care: A Community-Engaged Approach

*Polly Ford-Jones, Danielle Pomeroy, and Sheryl Thompson (Humber College)*

This workshop shared a brief summary of the project's research goals, process, and current findings regarding response to emergency mental health calls. The perspectives of emergency services, community-based organizations, and community members with lived experiences were highlighted.



### Highlighting the Indigenous Economy through the Power of Storytelling

*Audrey Wubbenhorst, James Henebry, and Patrycja Szkudlarek (Humber College)*

The Insights team presented their collaborative work, which is being completed in partnership with the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. These include case studies on Indigenous entrepreneurs, which are open educational resources available for free at [www.insights.ca](http://www.insights.ca).





## OUR WORKSHOPS (cont'd):



### **Policing and Community Partnerships: Learning From Each Other**

*Emma Smith and Doug Thomson (Humber College)*

In partnership with the Toronto Police Service, Humber College has helped to analyze and enhance the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Community Officer Program (NCOP) throughout select neighbourhoods in Toronto. The Neighbourhood Community Officers aim to move away from the traditional policing model of crime control and more towards community wellness and engagement.



### **Aging in Place: Examining Community Care Resource Needs**

*Alexa Christopoulos and Lisa Post  
(Humber College)*

Humber Community Development students, Alexa Christopoulos and Lisa Post presented their capstone project. This research project explores what resources a community care model would have to provide to allow seniors to age in place safely and independently. Their workshop aimed to shift perceptions of aging and inspire future research in the sector.

Read online at [communityservices.humber.ca/news](https://communityservices.humber.ca/news)



## OUR WORKSHOPS (cont'd):



### Engaging and Educating Young-Adult Cannabis 2.0 Consumers

*Daniel Bear (Humber College)*

Public education campaigns about drugs have often relied on fear and stigma to dissuade drug use, but doing so rarely works, and leaves consumers without evidence-informed information about how to reduce potential harms. Instead, we developed Weed Out Misinformation, a harm-reduction and benefit maximization campaign for cannabis consumers. We utilized a human-centred design approach, and, at the workshops, asked participants to help us develop improved methods of connecting with stakeholders in future work.



### New World of Work

*Jeremy Staples (Humber College)*

This workshop explored the impact of exponential change driven by the pandemic, inflation and technology on organizations. As organizations are trying to navigate this New World of Work (NWOW) the ORI research team is looking to measure the impact of building Organizational Health (OH) capacity in organizations so that they are more effective at responding to rapid change.



### Sexual Assault and Police Reporting - What Data Can & Can't Tell Us

*Sevval Ogutcu & Izabella Dulinska  
(Humber Students – Bachelor of Social Science.  
Criminal Justice)*

This session discussed the shift that occurred during Covid-19 lockdowns, where communities and law enforcement agencies saw sexual assaults move from public spaces to inside the home. Our research focused on factors, such as economic instability and social distance, that further “trapped” and victimized women experiencing sexual assault. We compared crime patterns in 11 neighbourhoods in Toronto and examined the occurrence versus reported sexual assault crimes. Our research displayed an alarming wait time for victims to report sexual assaults, prompting us to predict a future spike in reporting of sexual assaults from our time in lockdowns.





## OUR WORKSHOPS (cont'd):



### Community Agency Partnerships: Best Practices for the Creation of Healthy Communities

*Ann Wallington (Humber College)*

This workshop explored research completed in partnership with the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan and Street Culture Project Inc. which examined the characteristics of effective community agency partnership networks. Ann spoke to the group about data on current best practices within existing community agency partnership networks and engaged attendees on how we can continue to strengthen these partnerships and ensure agencies are offering trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and antiracist programming that is also committed to reconciliation.



### Community-Based Participatory Research and Housing Affordability

*Salomeh Ahmadi (Humber College)*

The **South Etobicoke Housing Affordability** project is a partnership between the LAMP Community Health Centre and Humber College. Using community-based participatory research we uncovered cost of living issues for renters. Our work involved gathering input from marginalized community members to assess housing affordability, co-develop strategies and solutions around housing affordability, and advocate for the building of affordable housing through social policy change.



### Employment for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

*Inés E. de Escallon  
(Family Support Network for Employment)*

In Canada, 26% of individuals with intellectual disabilities are working, compared to 53% of those with other disabilities. The family-led coalition, Family Support Network for Employment, facilitated an understanding of where stakeholders fit into the Relationship-Consultative-Selling with Third-Party Support Representation Employment Model, aiming to inspire investments in a social innovation system shift.



### Social Services in a Time of Crisis: What Can Nonprofits Learn From Their COVID Response

*Saadia Akram-Pall & Nasrin Hotaki  
(Rexdale Women's Centre)*

The pandemic was an unprecedented global phenomenon that starkly increased the need for social services and strained many non-profit organizations. This workshop examined how the Rexdale Women's Centre navigated the pandemic and how those lessons can be applied moving forward.