

June

2014

# Online Therapy USER Update

## Online Therapy USER

The Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education, and Research (Online Therapy USER) is led by Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos from the University of Regina and makes use of online therapy programs that were initially developed in Australia.

The Online Therapy Unit allows trained therapists to provide Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to residents of Saskatchewan who have difficulties with depression, generalized anxiety, and/or panic. The Unit also provides education and training to diverse registered health professionals and students on how to deliver services online. This unit is also responsible for conducting research on how to best train therapists and deliver online-CBT in Saskatchewan.



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## Director and Coordinator's Message

We hope you are all enjoying the return of the warm weather. As everyone is gearing up for the summer, we would like to give you an update on how things have been evolving in the Online Therapy Unit for Service Education and Research.

Overall, we think we have made great progress and the second phase of research on Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is now in full swing. As you likely know, the online screening and the Wellbeing Course are now fully in use. Preliminary feedback is excellent!

We have been busy letting Saskatchewan residents know about the Wellbeing Course through presentations in the community and the creation of an informational audiovisual presentation to help people more conveniently learn about this service. The presentation has been posted on our website [www.onlinetherapyuser.ca](http://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca) with a brief survey attached for you to provide your feedback. We hope you will take some time to check it out. Overall, we have been really impressed with the response we have received from individuals in the community wanting to take part in the new Wellbeing Course.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have helped us make the second phase of this project a reality with an extra special thank-you going to the new and returning therapists for your time, enthusiasm, and feedback as you provide this service to clients. We are excited to see what we can accomplish in the next six months.

As many of you are aware, Marcie will be leaving us for a year in September as she prepares for her second child. We are happy to welcome Nichole Faller as the new Coordinator during this time. We hope you will all join us in welcoming Nichole to the Online Therapy Team.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns or want any further information other than what we have provided in this newsletter.

We wish you all a safe and happy summer!

Heather Hadjistavropoulos, Director, Online Therapy USER

Marcie Nugent, Coordinator, Online Therapy USER

Nichole Faller, Acting Coordinator, Online Therapy USER

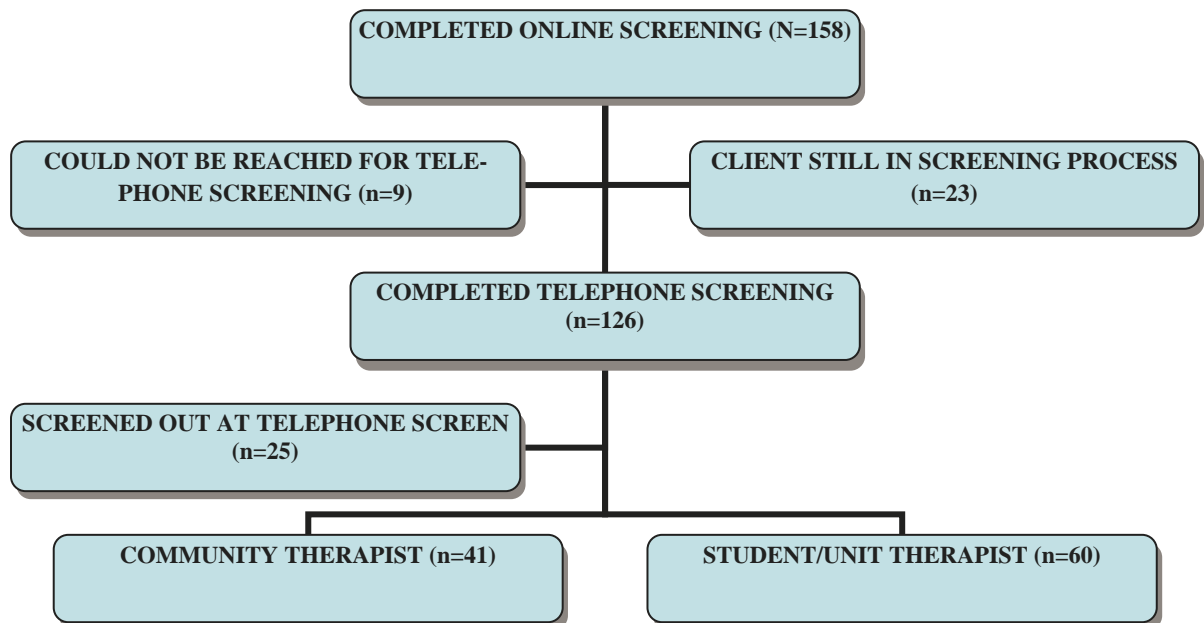
**Online-Cognitive  
Behaviour  
Therapy  
Increasing  
Access to  
Mental Health  
Care in  
Saskatchewan**

Online-CBT has many advantages including being more available, convenient, and efficient than CBT delivered in person.

Clients with limited time, mobility concerns, living in rural and remote areas have the potential to benefit from this service.



## Summary of Online Therapy Unit Utilization November 13, 2013- May31, 2014

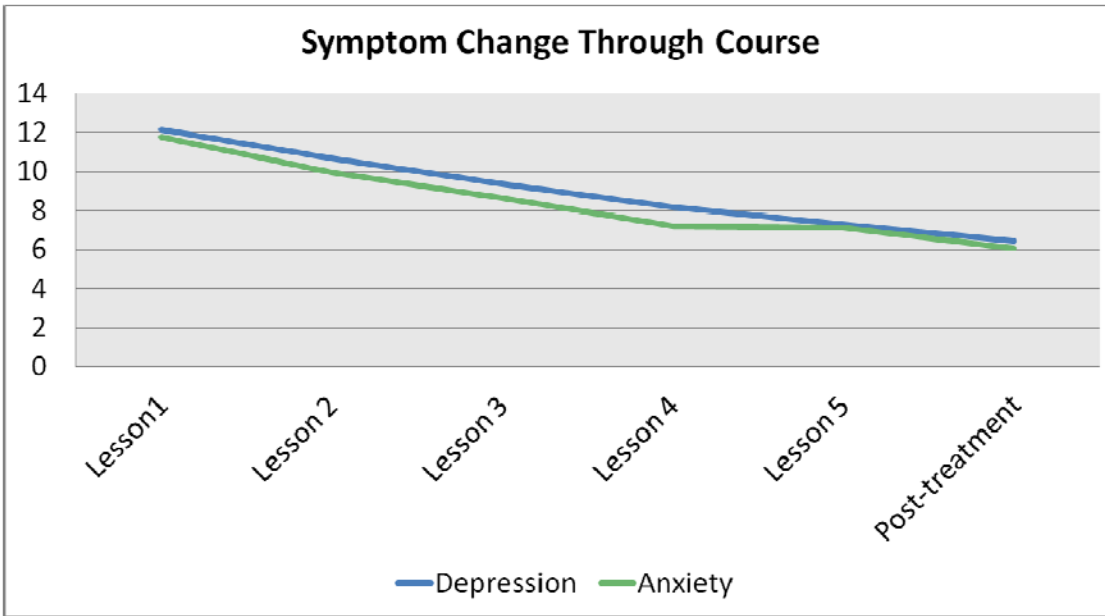


Since November 2013, 158 individuals have participated in the Online Screening. Of these, 126 went on to complete a Telephone Screening to determine eligibility and fit for the program.

A total of **101 clients** have been assigned to the Wellbeing Course, of which 41 have been treated by community therapists, while 60 have been treated by graduate students or staff of the Online Therapy Unit. Since beginning in November, 66 clients have fully completed the Wellbeing Course.

As indicated in the chart on the next page, most clients who complete the program experience a significant reduction in depression and anxiety. Of those who have completed the program, 96% said they would refer this program to a friend, and 94% felt it was worth their time.

Based upon feedback after the course, most people said they enjoyed the course materials, but some participants felt the course was too short. When asked what advice clients would give to someone starting the course, their main comment was to make time to complete all of the course activities and practice the skills often.



## Wellbeing Course:

The Course aims to provide good education and guidance on simple but effective techniques for managing symptoms. Very broadly, the Course helps people with thoughts, behaviours and physical symptoms of depression and anxiety.

The Wellbeing Course is comprised of 5 lessons. Depending on the complexity of the lesson, it is recommended that clients spend 1 to 2 weeks on a given lesson. Lessons consist of educational materials that are accessed online, and "Do it Yourself" (DIY) activities and resources that are to be reviewed offline, as well as additional resources for common concerns. With the suggested time frame, clients should engage in the Wellbeing Course for 8 weeks.



The Wellbeing Course is therapist-assisted. Clients are asked to email questions or comments about the lessons and exercises to the therapist through the website, so that the therapist can review the client's progress and address any concerns. Clients can contact their therapist when they like by secure message system, and their therapist will respond once weekly over the 8 weeks of treatment. <https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/wellbeing/welcome/>

## Pain Course for Fibromyalgia:

Lindsay Friesen, a PhD student in Psychology, is offering a Pain Course for Fibromyalgia. Similar to the Wellbeing Course, the Pain Course for Fibromyalgia is comprised of 5 lessons consisting of educational materials that are accessed online, and "Do it Yourself" (DIY) activities and resources that are to be reviewed offline. With the suggested time frame, clients should engage in the Pain Course for Fibromyalgia for 8 weeks.

The Pain Course for Fibromyalgia is primarily self-guided. Participants are asked to email questions or comments about the lessons and exercises to the coordinator Lindsay Friesen through the website. The coordinator calls once a week to answer questions throughout the 8 week course. Email: [onlinepaincourse@gmail.com](mailto:onlinepaincourse@gmail.com)  
Phone: 306-585-4203

## Wellbeing Course

The website has been updated to include the 5-module Wellbeing ICBT Course materials. We've also updated the website to include automated reminder messages sent to clients as they work their way through the program.



## Maternal Depression Online (MDO):

Maternal Depression Online (MDO) was made available to Saskatchewan women from May 2012-February 2014. The therapist-assisted Internet delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy program was designed specifically for the treatment of postpartum depression. MDO consisted of 7 interactive modules including text, graphics, animation, audio and video, and covered: (a) psychoeducation on maternal depression, (b) activity planning, (c) relaxation, (d) thinking styles, (e) cognitive restructuring, (f) problem solving, and (g) relapse prevention. Using a randomized control design, 50 women with mild to moderate postpartum depression either received MDO or waited for treatment. Results were very promising. Symptoms of postpartum depression decreased more quickly for women participating in MDO when compared to those who waited for treatment. These results were maintained at four-week follow-up, providing preliminary support of the durability of the program. Participants who received MDO also demonstrated a reduction in symptoms of postnatal anxiety, general stress, and parental distress and an increase in quality of life when compared to participants who waited for the treatment. Participants reported high satisfaction with MDO and indicated that they enjoyed working with their Internet therapist. Discussion for future implementation of this program is underway.

Nicky Pugh was selected as this year's recipient of the Canadian Psychological Association Ken Bowers Student Award. She submitted a brief paper based on her dissertation: "A randomized controlled trial of a therapist-assisted internet cognitive behaviour therapy (ICBT) program for women with postpartum depression .



## Perceptions of Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy for chronic pain



Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (ICBT) may be a suitable treatment option for chronic pain but currently there are no formalized programs in Canada. Before such programs are implemented, it is important to understand how this type of treatment would be perceived by individuals with chronic pain. From January to April 2013, Luke Schneider conducted research comprised of 129 people with chronic pain who completed a survey assessing perceptions of ICBT as well as other variables that may influence ICBT perceptions. The results showed that most individuals perceived ICBT as a potentially valuable service and the majority of participants said that they would use ICBT if it were available. Participants also endorsed statements to suggest that they could form a relationship with a therapist online and trust a therapist to keep their information secure. Additionally, being female, having greater pain severity, and being more comfortable with computers were correlated with interest in receiving ICBT. This study provided beneficial information that could assist with future attempts to deliver ICBT.

## 2014 Peer-Reviewed Presentations:

Dirkse, D., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., & Owens, V. (2014, June). Linguistic analysis of communication in a therapist-assisted Internet cognitive behaviour therapy program for individuals with generalized anxiety disorder. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.

Fuchs, C., Alberts, N. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, June). Development and initial evaluation of a psychoeducational resource to facilitate social support for cancer survivors. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. & Fuchs, C. (2014, June). Internet therapy for postpartum depression: an illustration of emailed therapeutic assistance. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N., & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, June). Evaluating the efficacy of a therapist-assisted Internet therapy program for postpartum depression. Oral presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. & Hampton, A. (2014, June). Client experiences of guided Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Postpartum depression: A qualitative study. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.

Schneider, L., & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (accepted for 2014, June). *Initial perceptions of internet-based cognitive-behaviour therapy for chronic pain among potential users: Examining perceived strengths and limitations*. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75th Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.

Pugh, N. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, February). *Development and pilot evaluation of a Therapist-Assisted Internet Cognitive-Behavioral program for Maternal Depression*. Information Session presented at the Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies: New Research and Best Practices Conference. Vancouver, B.C.

## Online Therapy 2013-2017 Team

### Researchers

Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos  
University of Regina

Dr. Cory Butz  
University Of Regina

Dr. Greg Marchildon  
University of Regina

Dr. Thomas Hadjistavropoulos  
University of Regina

Dr. Nuelle Novik  
University of Regina

Dr. Gill White  
University of Saskatchewan

### Knowledge Users

Lorri Carlson  
Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region

Rudy Bowen & Karyn Kawala  
Saskatoon Health Region

Terry Hutchinson  
Five Hills Health Region

Terry Romanow  
Sun Country Health Region

Christopher Bohan  
Cypress Health Region

Kathy Willerth & Lorne Sier  
Community Care Branch  
Saskatchewan Health

Roberta Wiest  
Saskatchewan Healthline

## To Find Out More About Online Therapy in Saskatchewan

Call: (306) 337-3331

Email: [Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca](mailto:Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca)

Or

Visit: [www.onlinetherapyuser.ca](http://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca)

## 2014 Invited Presentations:

1. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, June). Review and reminders on the delivery of Therapist-assisted Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered cognitive behaviour therapy. Workshop to community providers Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, Regina, SK. (Audience: community providers)
2. Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, June). Therapist-assisted Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: From research to practice. Invited Preconvention Workshop at the Canadian Psychological Association 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, Vancouver, B.C. (Audience: students, professionals)
3. Online Therapy Unit (2014, January 15). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy student workshop*. Workshop given at the University of Regina, Regina, SK. (Audience: 3 graduate students)
4. Online Therapy Unit (2014, January 13 & 21). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy community therapist workshop*. Workshop given at Healthline, Regina, SK. (Audience: 5 Healthline therapists)
5. Online Therapy Unit (2014, January 7 & 8). *Transdiagnostic Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy community therapist workshop*. Workshop given in Cypress Health Region, Swift Current, SK. (Audience: 14 therapists Cypress Health Region)
6. Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, May 1). Update on Wellbeing Course Delivery in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. Oral presentation to the RQHR Adult Mental Health Management Team. Regina, SK.
7. Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, June 5). *New technologies in psychological treatments: A focus on graduate student contributions to the literature*. Symposium Discussant at the Canadian Psychological Association's 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. Vancouver, B.C.
8. Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2014, May 7). *Using the Internet to improve emotional wellbeing: Introducing the Online Therapy Unit*. Oral presentation to the Canadian Mental Health Association Weyburn Division Mayor's Luncheon. Weyburn, SK. (Purpose: Education: Audience: Weyburn Community).
9. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, March 19). *Delivering Services Online*. Oral presentation. Regina, SK. (Purpose: education/consultation: Audience: Community Presentation).
10. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, March 19). *Strengths and Challenges of Integrating Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy into Mental Health Clinics in Saskatchewan*. Oral presentation Executive Directors of Mental Health, Regina, SK. (Purpose: development: Audience: Executive Directors of Mental Health in Saskatchewan).
11. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, February 26). *Overview of the Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education and Research: Collaborating with Cypress Health Region*. Oral telephone presentation to Cypress Health Region, Regina, SK. (Purpose: Education and development: Audience: Cypress Health Region).
12. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, February 26). *Overview of the Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education and Research: Collaborating with Sun Country Health Region*. Oral telephone presentation to Sun Country Health Region, Regina, SK. (Purpose: Education and development: Audience: Sun Country Health Region).
13. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, February 26). *Overview of the Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education and Research: Collaborating with Prince Albert Parkland Health Region*. Oral telephone presentation to Prince Albert Parkland Health Region working group, Regina, SK. (Purpose: Education and development: Audience: Prince Albert Parkland Health Region).
14. Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. (2014, January 10). *Overview and Future Directions of the Online Therapy Unit for Service, Education and Research*. Oral presentation to the Saskatchewan Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan Commissioner, Regina, SK. (Purpose: Education and development: Audience: Commissioner and staff of the Mental Health and Addictions Plan of Saskatchewan).

### Is Online Cognitive Behaviour Therapy right for everyone?

The support provided through online therapy is not appropriate for all clients.

Online therapy is not appropriate for clients who:

- Report thoughts about harming oneself or others
- Have recently harmed themselves or others
- Reports delusions or hallucinations
- Experiencing mania or hypomania that is not currently being managed
- Report primary problem with drugs or alcohol
- Are currently receiving psychological treatment

Clients who are not appropriate candidates for Online-CBT are referred to other services. In our study, approximately, 32% of patients we exclude from our research have problems that are considered too severe for ICBT. Approximately, 18% of patients who are excluded from ICBT, however, have problems that are considered too mild for ICBT.



## Online Therapy USER Community Partners

### Current Partners

- Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region
- Saskatoon Health Region
- Five Hills Health Region
- Sun Country Health Region
- Cypress Health Region
- HealthLine
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Health
- Saskatchewan Health Quality Council

### Future Partners

- Keewatin Health Region
- Prince Albert Parkland Health Region
- University of Saskatchewan –Support Services
- Canadian Mental Health Association- Saskatchewan Division

## Most Recent Online Therapy Unit Publications:

1. Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., & Fuchs, C. (in press). Internet therapy for postpartum depression: A case illustration of emailed therapeutic assistance. *Archives of Women's Mental Health*
2. Schneider, L. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (in press). When in doubt, ask the audience: Potential users' perceptions of Internet-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for chronic pain. *Pain Research and Management*.
3. Friesen, L., & Hadjistavropoulos, H.D. & Pugh, N. (in press). A qualitative examination of psychology graduate students' experiences with guided Internet cognitive behavior therapy. *Internet Interventions*.
4. Hadjisatvropouls, H.D., Alberts, N., Nugent, M., Marchildon, G. (in press). Improving access to psychological services through therapist-assisted cognitive behavior therapy. *Canadian Psychology*.
5. Pugh, N., Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. Klein, B., & Austin, D. (2014). A case study illustrating therapist-assisted Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Depression. *Cognitive Behavioral Practice*, 21, 64-77 doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2013.08.002>
6. Alberts, N. & Hadjistavropoulos, H. D. (2013). Wellbeing after cancer: Exploring the use of the Internet for providing psychological care to cancer survivors. *Psynopsis*.
7. Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Thompson, M., Klein, B., & Austin, D. (2012). Dissemination of therapist-assisted Internet Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: Development and open pilot study of a workshop. *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*, 40-230-240. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/16506073.2011.645550
8. Hadjistavropoulos, H. D., Thompson, T., Ivanov, M., Drost, C., Butz, C., Klein, B., & Austin, D. (2011). Considerations in the development of a therapist-assisted internet cognitive behavior therapy service. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 42, 463-471. doi: 10.1037/a0026176

## Is Online Therapy for You?

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Are you a Saskatchewan resident?
- Do you have access to a computer and printer in a space where you could work on the Wellbeing Course online?
- Do you have Internet access in a private space?
- Do you feel comfortable using the Internet and writing emails?
- Do you have symptoms of Generalized Anxiety, Panic, and/or Depression?

If you answered "Yes" to all of the above questions, then you may qualify to participate in Online Therapy.

## Online Therapy Unit Team

**Principal Investigator:** Heather Hadjistavropoulos (Psychology U of R)

**Coordinator:** Marcie Nugent (Psychology U of R) Nichole Faller (Psychology U of R)

**Co-investigators:** Cory Butz (Computer Science U of R), Greg Marchildon (Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy U of R), Thomas Hadjistavropoulos (Psychology U of R), Nuelle Novik (Social Work U of R), Gil White (Medicine U of S)

**International Collaborators:** Nick Titov & Blake Dear, Macquaire University, Sydney Australia; Gerhard Andersson, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden

**Provincial Collaborators:**

Terry Gudmundson, Kathy Willerth, Lorne Sier, Saskatchewan Health  
Dave Nelson, Saskatchewan Division, Canadian Mental Health Association  
Bonnie Brossart, Health Quality Council

**Statistical Consultant:** Rob Cribbie, York University

**Online Therapy Unit Staff/Students/Volunteers:** Marcie Nugent, Nichole Faller, Max Ivanov, Shannon Jones, Nicole Alberts, Nicky Pugh, Lindsay Friesen, Luke Schneider, Dale Dirkse, Chantalle Fuchs, Tori Owens, Kirstie Walker, Andrea Scerbe

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Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR; \$294,118);

Rx&D Health Research Foundation (HRF; \$294,118)

Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF; \$120,000)

## TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE THERAPY IN SASTACHEWAN, VISIT:

[www.onlinetherapyuser.ca](http://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca)

1. Complete online screening located on the website.
2. Receive an email confirmation that your Online screening has been received and request an appointment time to speak with staff on the phone.
3. Take part in a telephone conversation with a unit staff member to discuss if the Wellbeing Course or if another treatment method would best meet your needs right now.

**For more information:**  
call 306-337-3331 or email [Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca](mailto:Online.Therapy.User@uregina.ca)