



# Backgrounder: Stepped Care 2.0 Demonstration Project

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## Backgrounder

From [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)

### What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the demonstration project was to identify ways to improve access to publicly funded mental health services through the implementation and evaluation of Stepped Care 2.0.

Led by a multi-stakeholder team, under the expertise of [Dr. Peter Cornish](#), associate professor at Memorial University, the 18-month test period was carried out at 15 mental health and addiction clinics and two primary care sites across Newfoundland and Labrador.

The *Newfoundland and Labrador Stepped Care 2.0 E-Mental Health Demonstration Project* report offers a full account of the results, which provide a foundation for guiding the implementation of Stepped Care 2.0 in other jurisdictions across Canada.

### Why the project was needed

Timely access to mental health and addictions services in the province was a significant and worsening problem.

Between 2014 and 2016 the number of people waiting for mental health and addiction counselling services rose by about 56 per cent, with 20,000 annual referrals, 12,000 calls to the provincial Mental Health Crisis Line, and 3,000 admissions to inpatient mental health and addiction services, 15 per cent of which were for concurrent mental health and substance use disorders.

In addition, due in part to the stigma related to mental health and addiction, up to two-thirds of adults and three-quarters of children and youth do not access services to address these concerns. A survey into the issue found that only 44 to 54 per cent of Newfoundland and Labrador residents would be likely to even discuss mental health and addiction problems.

### What is Stepped Care 2.0?

Stepped Care 2.0 provides rapid, same day, flexible access to wellness and mental health resources that include e-mental health apps, online self-help services, and behavioural prescriptions. It's an evidence-based system that organizes care according to the least intensive and most effective options to give patients the greatest likelihood of improvement. Treatment intensity is "stepped up" or "stepped down" based on the level of patient distress or need.

## Findings from the project

The Demonstration Project was a contributing factor in the substantial reduction in provincial wait times for mental health and addiction counselling services: wait times across the province were reduced by 68 per cent and, in some areas, eliminated entirely since 2016.

Along with this result, clients and providers were both highly receptive to the evidence-based model and the programming options it made available:

## Client satisfaction

- 67 per cent rated the quality of e-mental health tools as “good” or “excellent.”
- 79 per cent reported that e-mental health tools met at least some of their needs.
- 62 per cent said the e-mental health programs helped them deal with their problems.

## Provider satisfaction (after training)

- Significantly more familiarity and comfort with e-mental health programs.
- Saw stepped care 2.0 as evidence-based and effective in helping their practices evolve.
- Much greater knowledge of Stepped Care 2.0, along with the stages of change and self-efficacy to enact it.

## Participating community sites

- Bonavista
- St. John’s
- Clarenville
- Harbour Grace
- Grand Falls- Windsor
- Lewisporte
- Springdale
- Corner Brook
- Deer Lake
- Stephenville
- St. Anthony
- Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Labrador City

## Organizations participating in the project

- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Memorial University
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

- Newfoundland and Labrador regional health authorities:
  - Eastern Health
  - Central Health
  - Western Health
  - Labrador-Grenfell Health
- Consumers' Health Awareness Network of NL (CHANNAL)

## Project team members

### Core team

- Peter Cornish, PhD, e-mental health/stepped care implementation and research project lead, MUN Student Wellness and Counselling Centre
- Niki Legge, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador co-lead
- Paula Corcoran-Jacobs, lived-experience lead, CHANNAL
- AnnMarie Churchill, coordinator, MUN Student Wellness and Counselling Centre
- Lisa Fleet, evaluation lead, MUN Faculty of Medicine
- Sarah Pegrum, clinical lead, Eastern Health clinical psychologist
- Josh Rash, fidelity lead, MUN Psychology Department
- Heather Hair, single session lead, MUN School of Social Work
- Brad Yetman, research assistant, MUN Student Wellness and Counselling Centre
- Mike Herrel, lived-experience representative, CHANNAL
- Alicia Raimundo, lived-experience representative, Foundry
- Meghan Churchill, e-mental health manager, Eastern Health
- Byron Boyd, e-mental health manager, Central Health
- Tracey Wells, e-mental health manager, Western Health
- Victoria Kearney, e-mental health manager, Labrador-Grenfell Health

### MHCC team

- Nicholas Watters, director, Access to Quality Mental Health Services
- Danielle Impey, program manager, Access to Quality Mental Health Services
- Galin Kora, monitoring and evaluation specialist

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