



*Making Mental Health and Addictions  
Research Relevant*

**IMH Strategic Plan  
2019-2024**

**Institute of Mental Health  
Department of Psychiatry  
Faculty of Medicine  
University of British Columbia**

## Message from the Director



Since its establishment in 2006, the UBC Institute of Mental Health has been driven by a singular mission: To advance leading-edge research which will transform care for those impacted by mental disorders and addictions. When I was appointed as the IMH Director in 2018, I assumed this leadership role with a strong commitment to remain focused on this core mandate, while also embracing the opportunity to explore a renewed approach to achieving it.

With consultation and input from diverse stakeholders, including academic scientists, donors, business leaders, and prominent members of the community, together we revised the key priorities of the Institute for the future, mapping a blueprint for implementation around three strategic pillars: creating research capacity, advancing research knowledge, and knowledge translation. Titled *Making Mental Health and Addictions Research Relevant*, the finalized IMH Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 is a dynamic framework outlining a fresh set of strategies and initiatives built around the three pillars, all of which aim to deliver on a new IMH vision and promise: *Advancing Knowledge – Transforming Lives*. Importantly, the strategic priorities and desired outcomes detailed in the Plan will serve as a concrete benchmark by which the Institute will measure its successes over the next five years.

The Institute strives to lead in translational mental health research and education in Canada, bringing together a network of exceptionally talented experts, scientists, and learners from the UBC Department of Psychiatry and other UBC departments, as well as from top mental health centres across Canada and around the world. As high-quality research and training lie at the heart of transformative, evidence-based practice, the Institute will seek to establish stronger relationships with the BC Ministries, the Health Authorities, and other public health care partners in order to inform key funding and policy-making decisions. This effort will ultimately have major impact on frontline care, as our populations' mental health and addiction treatment needs grow more urgent.

With this revitalized IMH Five-Year Strategic Plan in place as a solid foundation, I am excited to embark on a new phase of activity and progress. We are beholden not only to our vibrant research community, but also to our donors for their generous contribution and support. In keeping with the founding mission of the UBC Institute of Mental Health, I remain committed to providing strategic leadership as we set a new course for the future in pursuit of our higher objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Yatham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Lakshmi N. Yatham  
Director, Institute of Mental Health  
Head and Professor, Department of Psychiatry  
University of British Columbia

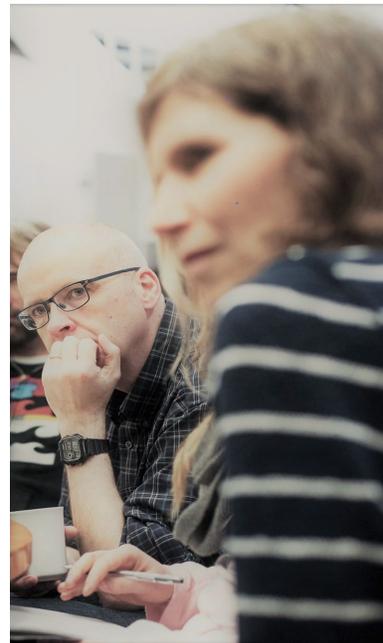
## Foreword

The Institute of Mental Health (the Institute) was established in 2006 with the generous assistance of the Sauder family and with a mandate to provide leadership in creating, applying and disseminating knowledge to improve diagnosis and treatment of mental illnesses at all ages. The Sauder family's commitment encouraged the provincial government to match their investment, allowing the creation of the Institute.

The Institute is affiliated with the University of British Columbia's Department of Psychiatry. It is focused on supporting innovations in research and education, engaging faculty, and building partnerships with local, national and global communities in order to transform mental health care and the lives of people with mental illnesses and addictions.

The Institute's previous five-year Strategic Plan, *Putting Research to Work* (2013-2018), established a set of enduring values to guide its development and set out its pledge to student learning, research excellence and community and international engagement. The Plan also committed to ensuring that education and research occurred both on campus and across the province through its distributed sites and, importantly, to ongoing sustainability.

In 2019, a new five-year planning process for 2019 to 2024 was commenced under the leadership of Dr. Lakshmi Yatham, Director of the Institute, Professor and Head of the UBC Department of Psychiatry. A joint planning session of the Institute's Advisory Board (Appendix A) and Executive Committee (Appendix B), as well as a number of guests, provided the opportunity to take stock of the Institute's accomplishments to date and reaffirm its core purpose and priorities.



At the same time, the Board and Executive Committee identified some of the new and important opportunities arising across the quickly-evolving mental health sector and, in response, began the process of charting a refreshed five-year strategic plan. The new plan upholds the integrity of the core priorities established with the founding of the Institute and further augments them with a refreshed Vision and a set of new Strategic Pillars that establish a stronger and more focused framework for its next stage of evolution.

## Looking to the Future

Over the next five years (2019 to 2024), the Institute is committed to further investing in developing mental health and addictions research capacity, infrastructure and knowledge translation. *“Making mental health and addictions research relevant”* is a key focus. The Institute will strive to create knowledge with the promise of direct and meaningful application both to the care of individuals and their families and to society at large. The directions set out in this new Strategic Plan will guide this movement.

While continuing to support and maintain excellence in research, the Institute also will invest in the mental health and addictions researchers of tomorrow by providing outstanding training and education opportunities. It will also ensure its relevance by supporting the transfer of research findings to a wide range of clinical practice settings and public mental health policy.

Further, the Institute will continue to make a conscientious effort to promote mental health with the public, encouraging and supporting better understanding of mental illness and addiction, and helping to reduce stigma and normalize seeking treatment and support. It will continue to build on its partnerships, including taking a greater role in provincial mental health and addictions policy.

The Institute recognizes that its existence relies primarily on the generosity of its donors. It will renew efforts to ensure that its work aligns with their interests and at the same time seek out new funding opportunities to further the work that was initiated through their generosity. To ensure their trust, the Institute commits to being financially responsible, transparent and sustainable by aligning its resources with an agreed plan.



## Our Vision: Advancing Knowledge – Transforming Lives

The Institute’s Vision for the next five years - Advancing Knowledge – Transforming Lives - signals the Institute’s strong intent to *make a difference* in the lives of patients, their families, and their communities.

While the Institute’s focus is on building research capacity and conducting world-class innovative mental health and addictions research, it also acknowledges the critical importance of research findings being translated into knowledge and in turn, into clinical practice that reaches individuals, their families and society, and truly transforms the lives of those affected with mental illnesses and addictions.

## Our Values

### Academic Freedom

The Institute cherishes and defends free inquiry and scholarly responsibility. It supports academic pursuits that contribute to knowledge and understanding within and across disciplines, and seeks every opportunity to share them broadly.

### Integrity

The Institute of Mental Health acts with integrity, fulfilling promises and ensuring open, respectful relationships. It strives to embody the highest standards of service and stewardship of resources, and works within the wider community to enhance societal good. Through its students, faculty, and staff, the Institute strives for excellence and educates students to the highest standards.

### Transparency

The Institute’s decision-making is open and honest, supporting a climate of collaboration, cooperation, and open and transparent decision making across faculty and students, and with its donors.

### Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The Institute holds equity, diversity, and inclusiveness as critical to supporting healthy people and healthy communities. It also recognizes these values as fundamental to personal, professional, and organizational growth within the organization. The Institute promotes compassion and inclusiveness and actively works to reduce stigma of mental health, valuing diversity and the understanding of differences. It seeks to provide opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse related to these values.

## Three Strategic Pillars

The following three strategic pillars, each including clear goals and priorities, will advance the Institute's Vision during the next five years.

### Strategic Pillar One: Create Research Capacity

**Goal:** *Cultivate future research capacity that will support better understanding and treatment of mental illnesses and addictions and lead to improvement in people's lives.*

#### Strategic Priorities:

1. Support the continuous development of new researchers who have a sustained interest and expertise in mental health and addictions.

The Institute will work to ensure that fellows, graduate students and post-doctoral students have the opportunity and financial support to receive high-quality training in translational mental health research. We will build research capacity by supporting our trainees through first class teaching, mentoring, and meaningful research experiences. We believe from these opportunities, our trainees will develop the skills and interests to establish their own innovative research agendas. These efforts reflect the Institute's commitment to and investment in the mental health and addictions research workforce of the future.

2. Build research capacity in the priority areas and in areas of significant unmet need in order to promote world-class research and evidence-based care.

Establishing a Research Chair in geriatric psychiatry was a foundational priority for the Institute. With growing older adult populations around the world, and given the limited research in this area, supporting the recruitment of an academic faculty member in geriatric psychiatry to advance mental health research will remain a priority.

In addition, the Institute intends to leverage funding from other sources to support recruitment of additional faculty. The priority areas for the institute will include high risk population and early intervention, precision medicine/biomarkers, concurrent disorders, virtual care strategies and applied mental health research.

3. Establish research infrastructure to support and advance world-class research.

The Institute will partner with the Department of Psychiatry to provide resources to facilitate research, such as access to research training (including a Masters program in translational psychiatry), research space, research equipment, research platforms, statistical services, and research consulting services. We will ensure researchers receive

assistance with grant preparation and ethics review processes and will help facilitate the administrative processes on grant applications within the Institute, Faculty and University.

Together, the Institute and UBC Department of Psychiatry offer a world-class faculty of educators and researchers. We will leverage on the increased philanthropic opportunities to improve our current laboratory facilities and equipment to further enhance support for our researchers and their work.

### Key Metrics:

- Numbers of graduate students and fellows supported and trained
- Number of trainees pursuing research in mental health and addictions areas after completion of their funding support from the Institute
- Number of new faculty recruited/supported
- Number of researchers/trainees that accessed resources
- Number of grants obtained by IMH-supported trainees and faculty
- Enhanced current physical infrastructure and equipment through philanthropic opportunities

## Strategic Pillar Two: Advancing Research Knowledge

**Goal:** *Advance knowledge through supporting innovative research and fostering collaborations*

### Strategic Priorities:

1. Create opportunities to advance world class innovative research.

The Institute will provide seed funding to support innovative high-risk research studies to enable researchers to obtain pilot and proof of concept data, particularly in the priority areas. Innovative research has the potential for a very high yield but is also risky and less likely funded by peer-reviewed grant funding agencies without preliminary data.

2. Facilitate research collaborations and development of research clusters/networks.

We will focus efforts on fostering research collaborations not only within the Institute and the UBC Department of Psychiatry but also across the Faculty, the UBC community, with external organizations and partners, as well as with national and international organizations. The Department has existing research and educational collaborations with numerous institutes, hospitals, and universities in China, India, and the United States, among other countries, and further partnerships are being explored.

The Institute will leverage these partnerships to support the development of core research groups and clusters to advance innovative research.

3. Prioritize building research strengths in high impact and high yield areas.

Technology, artificial intelligence and big data analytics have enormous potential to change the way mental health care is delivered in the future. Similarly, the public is demanding personalized medical care in mental health, and pharmacogenomics and biomarkers have the potential to revolutionize mental health care in this regard.

The Institute will not only prioritize investments in these areas but also actively explore building partnerships with other stakeholders in order to facilitate discoveries that will enhance personalized care.

**Key Metrics:**

- Number of seed grants funded
- Number of research grants with seed funding
- Number/size of research teams
- Number of new research partnerships
- Value of research grants and awards won by Institute faculty
- Number of publications by Institute faculty

**Strategic Pillar Three: Knowledge Translation**

**Goal:** *Translate research findings to frontline clinical practice and promote implementation of evidence-based mental health care models and services across BC in partnership with Ministries and Health Authorities.*

**Strategic Priorities:**

1. Build expertise in applied mental health research.

The Institute will facilitate the development of a core group of researchers with expertise in applied mental health research. This may include the recruitment of a new faculty member with specific expertise in mental health and addictions research applied to services, systems, and policy, who can provide foundational support for building the group with expertise in this area.

Such expertise will enable the Institute and UBC Psychiatry to build close working relationships with the BC Ministry of Health and Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions, and to assist with provincial mental health policy development, including a robust mental health and addictions service model framework for BC. Similarly, such expertise will develop and consolidate partnerships with Health Canada, other National Governments, as well as multi-lateral organizations, tapping into the increased funding available at the global level due to the push for scale-up of mental health and substance use services in order to meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Foster partnerships with Health Authorities and other service providers to promote evidence-based practice.

The Institute will establish collaborations with Health Authorities and other service providers to support recruitment of academic faculty for partner track appointments. These academic faculty members will champion evidence-based care through role modeling and supporting continuous professional development of frontline clinicians. In addition, the Institute will continue to support the UBC Department of Psychiatry's Research Day and will also organize additional events that will facilitate translation of research findings to frontline clinical practice.

3. Increase community and public education on mental health and addictions.

The Institute will focus on reducing stigma associated with mental illness and addictions through community and public education. This will include supporting the already established and popular *Frames of Mind Mental Health Arts & Film Festival* as well as additional conferences and workshops on public education, partnership with consumer organizations, and social media strategies.

### Key Metrics:

- Number of researchers with expertise in applied mental health research
- Number of funded projects in partnership with policy- and decision-makers at the local, provincial, national, and multi-lateral level (Health Authorities, BC Ministries, Health Canada, WHO, PAHO, others)
- Number of partner track faculty recruited
- Number of professional development events organized
- Number of public education partnerships and events organized



## Appendix A IMH Advisory Board

### Mandate

The mandate of the IMH Advisory Board is to provide advice and support to the Director/s of the Institute on matters relating to vision, strategic direction and fundraising activities.

### Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of the Advisory Board are as follows:

- To advise on the UBC Institute of Mental Health's mission, vision, goals and strategic initiatives, and be a sounding board for these initiatives.
- To assist with fundraising activities benefiting and sustaining the UBC Institute of Mental Health.
- To assist in enhancing the UBC Institute of Mental Health's public profile.
- To facilitate links between the Institute and external communities, including family and patient advocacy groups, appropriate government bodies, mental health professionals, and provincial, national and international partners.
- To bring external viewpoints and suggest approaches regarding the challenges and opportunities facing the UBC Institute of Mental Health.

## Appendix B IMH Executive Committee

### Mandate

The IMH Executive is advisory to the Director; the executive provides advice and support to the Director on operational aspects of all activities of the institute. In addition, the executive provides advice and guidance to the Director/s of the Institute on matters relating to development and execution of vision and strategic priorities as well as fund raising activities.

### Responsibilities

The specific responsibilities of the IMH Executive are as follows:

- To participate in the development of a strategic plan and support the Director in identifying a clear vision and strategic priorities for the Institute.
- To advise and assist the Director on operationalizing the implementation of strategic priorities of the IMH .
- To advise the Director on decisions related to operational aspects of the IMH.
- To assist in enhancing the UBC Institute of Mental Health's public profile.
- To assist with fundraising activities benefiting and sustaining the UBC Institute of Mental Health.
- To facilitate links between the Institute and external communities, including family and patient advocacy groups, appropriate government bodies, mental health professionals, and provincial, national and international partners.
- To bring external viewpoints and suggest approaches regarding the challenges and opportunities facing the UBC Institute of Mental Health.