

Sharing What We're Learning

CURA Students



The CURA students for the 2008 summer term have been working on the CURA evaluation. They are Sherry McGee, (pictured left), Karolina Korsak (not in picture), and Rachel Fayer (right).

Evaluating CURA Demonstration Projects

After three and a half years of community based research on how to understand the roles and influence of culture and power in community mental health practices, 12 demonstration projects have been developed. At the heart of each project is a change in reciprocal collaboration between individuals and organizations representing the mental health system and cultural-linguistic communities. These changes in relationships, in turn, are intended to lead to changes in the attitudes, knowledge and practices of mental health practitioners and leaders of cultural communities. Currently the CURA Initiative is moving to evaluate these projects. The purpose of the evaluation is to test and refine the CURA's emerging theoretical framework (described in the previous edition of CURA Findings) based on practice. The evaluation focuses on learning about the community processes of developing innovative programs and on identifying relationship, culture, and power outcomes for both cultural communities and mental health systems.

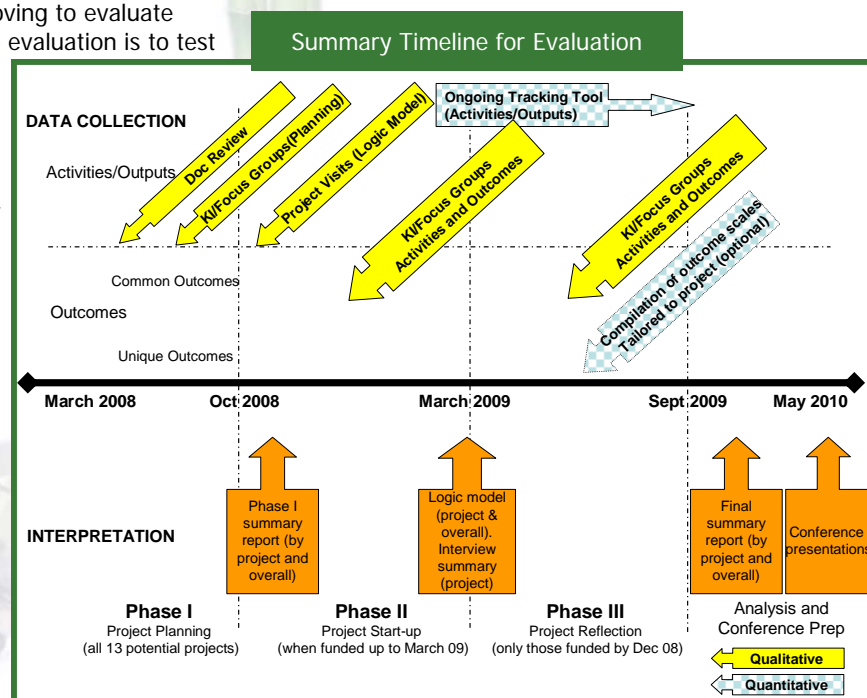
The evaluation of CURA demonstration projects includes three phases.

Phase I: The purpose of Phase I is to look at processes, values, and actions related to planning for each demonstration project and proposal development. Key informant interviews and focus groups

are being held with project partners. The interviews will explore the relationships among mental health agency partners and diverse community members involved in project development. All twelve proposed demonstration projects are included in the first phase of the evaluation.

Phase II: Phase II will involve multiple methods. First researchers will visit each of the project sites to collaborate with staff in developing a logic model that will describe in detail expected activities and outcomes for each project. Next, researchers will start gathering data to measure the actual program activities and outputs. Also, key informants will be interviewed to explore relationship development among partners as well as outcomes associated with power and culture. The second phase of the evaluation will focus on the start-up of the demonstration projects that have been funded.

Phase III: The final stage of the evaluation involves looking back and reflecting on each of the demonstration projects' achievements. Interviews with key informants, focus groups with agency staff and program participants, and other methods will be conducted for all funded projects to again look at program processes, values, actions, and all the outcomes that occurred during the implementation of these innovations.



CURA Demonstration Projects

The following list identifies all proposed demonstration project ideas that will be involved in the first phase of the evaluation.

Toronto Project Ideas

Canadian Mental Health Association - Toronto *Reciprocal Collaboration in Organizational Change*

This project will engage external and internal stakeholders to further advance the level of diversity awareness and organizational capacity for working with diverse communities.

Supportive Housing and Diversity Group *Cultural Competency Training in Supportive Housing*

The intention of this project is to increase awareness among supportive housing service providers about mental health and addictions needs of diverse ethnic communities.

St. Joseph's Health Centre and Cultural-Linguistic Groups in the Parkdale district *Organizational Change*

This project hopes to facilitate increased communication between cultural groups located in south-west Toronto and mental health practitioners at the St. Joseph's hospital.

Punjabi Community Health Services *Mental Health and Addictions Supports*

This project is intended to provide cultural-specific mental health and addictions supports while promoting community capacity-building. This project is further described in the current issue of CURA News.

Somali Settlement and Mental Health *Making the Link*

The purpose of this project is to provide service-bridging, solution-focused counseling and referrals to relevant community services for people with Somali backgrounds living in Toronto.

Waterloo Region Project Ideas

Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre *Strengthening Mental Health in Cultural-Linguistic Communities*

The focus of this project is to link cultural-linguistic communities with mental health services in Waterloo

Region. It will also provide mental health education and leadership training for 21 community members. Seven mental health navigators will be hired in the second year. This project is further described in the current issue of CURA News.

Canadian Mental Health Association - Grand River Branch

Self-help for members of cultural linguistic communities

This project under development hopes to provide opportunities for cultural community members to form self-help / mutual aid groups.

Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA *Supporting Kitchener-Waterloo Immigrant Seniors*

This project intends to promote mental health and mutual support through increased connections within and across cultural communities and mental health providers.

Centre for Community-Based Research and MT Space

Province-wide Leadership Development Events

This project will provide leadership development opportunities for cross-sector groups including senior staff in mental health organizations and cultural-linguistic community members in 14 health regions across Ontario. A theatre component will be included in each of the 14 events.

Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre *Women's and Men's groups*

This project will facilitate gender-specific support groups to promote the mental health and positive settlement of culturally diverse men and women. Groups will be client-directed based on the ongoing needs identified by group participants.

Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA & MT Space Theatre *Youth in Schools*

This project will promote discussion and dramatic portrayals of mental health issues among culturally diverse youth in a local high school. The intention is to increase mental health awareness and cultural competence among youth.

Centre for Community-Based Research *Environmental Service Scan*

The purpose of this project is to use Waterloo and Wellington regions as a national case study to demonstrate responsiveness to cultural diversity. This project will first influence the mental health system, then organizations, and finally individual practitioners.

Next Steps

- Demonstration projects continue to be funded and implemented.
- Phase One of Evaluation finalized. (Fall 2008)
- Phases Two and Three of Evaluation finalized and implemented. (Fall 2008 - December 2009)
- Final international conference to present the overall CURA study findings and the evaluation results of the demonstration projects. (May 2010)