

Sharing What We're Doing

As the CURA project nears the end of its third year, the focus has shifted from exploratory research to developing and evaluating innovative policy and practice.

To recap, the five-year study has three phases:

Phase I: Exploring Conceptualizations of Mental Health Problems and Practice (2005-2007)

A wide range of perspectives has been collected throughout this first phase by speaking with over 300 individuals through focus groups, key informant interviews, case studies, a provincial online survey, and several community forums. In addition an extensive literature review has been conducted (see annotated bibliography at www.takingcultureseriouslyCURA.ca). The CURA partnership has developed an emerging framework, based on all the data, for more culturally responsive mental health policy and practice. This emerging framework is a living document that has been shared widely and refined using community input over the last year. Two papers are currently submitted: one on the process and another on the content aspect of this phase. It will continue to be fine-tuned and shaped throughout the remainder of the project by the partnership of community, academic, and organizational representatives.

Phase II: Developing Culturally Effective Practice (2007-2008)

Currently the efforts of this CURA project is in developing demonstration projects that build on what was learned in the first phase.

CURA partners from the five cultural linguistic communities in Waterloo Region and Toronto (Mandarin, Sikh Punjabi, Polish, Latin American, Somali), together with leading academics and organizations, have been collaborating to develop proposals for new and innovative projects that implement the emerging framework and promote reciprocal collaboration between cultural linguistic groups and mental health service providers. Nine proposals have already been submitted and others are in development stages.

The lead organizations that have submitted proposals to funders on behalf of CURA in Toronto include:

- Canadian Mental Health Association, Toronto Branch
- Punjabi Community Health Centre
- Supportive Housing and Diversity (SHAD) Group
- Dejinta Beesha Somali Multi Service Centre

Waterloo Region proposals include:

- Canadian Mental Health Association, Grand River Branch
- Centre for Community Based Research
- Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre, on behalf of the five Waterloo cultural-linguistic communities involved in the CURA initiative
- Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre
- Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA Cross Cultural and Community Services

Phase III: Researching Demonstration Projects (2008-2009).

At the same time that CURA demonstration project proposals are being developed and submitted, a CURA Evaluation Sub-Committee has been developing an Evaluation Framework that will be used to evaluate these projects over the next two years.

This Evaluation Framework is currently in development and it will guide an over-arching evaluation of all demonstration projects.



Some members of the Evaluation Subcommittee pause for a team huddle. From left: Anne Westhues, Joanna Ochocka, Hsiao D'Ailly, Geoff Nelson, Rich Janzen (in foreground), and Andrew Taylor.

Community Researchers / Co-Facilitators

The research role of the CURA community researchers / co-facilitators is coming to a close. Some individuals will become involved in supporting the demonstration projects.

This fall, one of the last activities of this group was to lend their expertise to a project involving case study data. The Community Researchers met with CURA student Lawrence Martis to discuss the main themes that

surfaced out of the Case Studies. These main themes will be presented in a project led by Sarah Maiter to produce an educational booklet for students in professional health care fields.

On behalf of the entire CURA Partnership Group, a big thank-you goes to the Community Researchers for your dedication and hard work. Thank you to Halima Abdilkadir, Irene Altimira, Harjit Singh Bains, Angela Gao Karolina Korsak, Ana Luz Martinez, Hanna Mlodzianowska, Helen Song, and Jatinder Saggi.



CURA Student Elin Moorlag, together with her son Lochlan at the Centre for Community Based Research.

CURA Partner Updates

- Students working on CURA for the 2007/2008 academic year are: Shannon Cushing (M. Community Psychology, WLU), Karolina Korsak (B. Psychology) Lawrence Martis (PhD Social Work, WLU, and Elin Moorlag (PhD Sociology, UW).
- Don Roth, CURA Partner, has started in a new role as Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Grand River Branch.
- Sarah Maiter, CURA partner joined the Faculty of Social Work at York University in the summer.
- The CURA lead organization changed its name to Centre for Community Based Research (formerly Centre for Research and Education in Human Services). New site: www.communitybasedresearch.ca
- The CURA web address has been updated to www.takingcultureseriouslyCURA.ca

Recent Conference Presentations

- Janzen, R. (2007). Taking Culture Seriously in Community Mental Health: Overview of a CURA. Poster presentation at the *Canadian Evaluation Society Conference*. Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- Moorlag, E. (2007). Participatory Action Research with Diverse Communities: A Case Study Example of Policy Development through Public Engagement. Presented at the *Annual Meetings of the Canadian Sociological Association (CSA)*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
- Ochocka, J. (2007). Using Research to Mobilize Communities for Collective Action and Change. Presented at the *Second European Community Psychology Association Seminar*. Seville, Spain.
- Ochocka, J. (2007). University-Community Partnership: Global Networking Platform for Social Action Research. Presented at the *Society for Community Research and Action*. Pasadena, California.

Recent Workshop Presentations

- Janzen, R., Ochocka, J., Maiter, S., Jacobson, N., Westhues, A. & MT Space. (2007). Recovery and Diversity Workshop. Presented at Hamilton Mental Health and Addiction Network, Hamilton, Ontario.
- Ochocka, J. & Janzen, R. (2007). A Local Diversity Initiative. Presented at *Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network Champions of Change Symposium*. Kitchener, Ontario.

Recent Journal Publications

- Janzen, R., Ochocka, J., Jacobson, N., Maiter, S., Simich, L., Westhues, A., Fleras, A. and the Taking Culture Seriously Partners (submitted). Synthesizing Culture and Power in Community Mental Health: An Emerging Framework. *Social Science and Medicine*.
- Maiter, S., Simich, L., Jacobson, N. & Wise, J. (in press). Reciprocity: An ethic for participatory action research with culturally diverse communities. *Action Research*.
- Ochocka, J. & Janzen, R. (in press). Blending commitment, passion and structure: Engaging cultural-linguistic communities in collaborative research. *Researching with Communities*. In A. Williamson & R. DeSousa (Eds.) Wairua Press. Waitakere City, New Zealand.
- Simich, L., Maiter, S., Moorlag, E. & Ochocka, J. (submitted). 'Taking Culture Seriously': Ethno linguistic community perspectives on mental health. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*.
- Westhues, A., Ochocka, J., Jacobson, N., Simich, L., Maiter, S., Janzen, R. & Fleras, A. (in press). Developing theory from complexity: Reflections on a collaborative mixed method participatory action research study. *Qualitative Health Research*.

Next Steps

- Demonstration project proposals are finalized; proposals are submitted to funders (December 2007 — April 2008)
- Funded demonstration projects are implemented and evaluated (December 2007 - December 2009)
- Final international conference to present the overall CURA study findings and the evaluation results of the demonstration projects (December 2009)