



Connected Care: Adaptation and Pilot Implementation of a Digital Mental Health Literacy Program

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Background

The Digitization of Mental Health Care

- 70% of Canadians reported using digital mental health tools in 2021 (Shen et al., 2022)
- Benefits to using digital tools may include better access to care, empowerment, and engagement

Growing Digital Divide

- Significant disparities exist between people who can access and use digital technology and those who cannot (Arias López et al., 2023)
 - **First divide:** access to technology and internet
 - **Second divide:** digital literacy, i.e., the skills/knowledge to use digital tools
- For people with serious mental health conditions, digital literacy is one of the largest barriers to using digital technology (Spanakis et al., 2024)
- **Digital literacy** has emerged as a **super social determinant of health**, meaning it shapes access to wider social determinants of health and plays a key role in health equity (van Kessel et al., 2022)

The DOORS Program

- The Digital Outreach for Obtaining Resources and Skills (DOORS) program: 9-week digital literacy program developed in Boston, USA (Camacho & Torous, 2023)
- Teaches people living with mental health and substance use health conditions how to use their smart devices
- Empowers use of technology for mental health care goals

Unlocking Local Opportunities

- Tailor the DOORS program to meet the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) community's needs

Goals

Through collaboration with people with lived and living experience (PWLLE), the aim of this project is to co-adapt, implement, and evaluate the DOORS program at CAMH's Collaborative Learning College (CLC)

Methods

1

Needs Assessment

- Knowledge user engagement (14 internal/external discussions) to understand digital health literacy needs
 - Clinical teams, divisions, and councils
 - Lived experience and caregiver advisory committees
 - Community organizations

2

Co-Adaptation

- Trial implementation of the original DOORS curricula to understand how we might adapt the DOORS program for the implementation context
 - Eight PWLLE participants with low digital literacy
 - Four 3-hour classroom session plus three 3-hour focus groups
- Recruitment of 2 program designers to support adaptation
 - Modification of modules, materials, and activities using needs assessment and trial implementation findings

3

Pilot (Implement)

- Nine-week program to launch in February 2026 through the CAMH CLC
- Program co-facilitator recruitment and training
- Recruitment of 10-12 students
- Device procurement (12 Android tablets) to ensure access and consistency

4

Pre-post Evaluation

- Collaborative design of mixed-methods pre-post formative evaluation with PWLLE to assess the program's impact on participants' technology skills, confidence, satisfaction, and engagement
- Data collection through: (1) pre-program surveys, (2) in-program journal logs, and (3) post-program surveys and semi-structured interviews

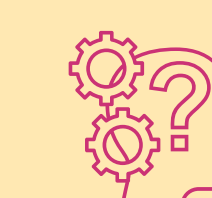
Results & Impacts

Phase 1 Results

Needs assessment with knowledge users identified the following themes:



Concerns around PWLLE device insecurity and account loss



The need for critical thinking and online safety capacity-building



The importance of a trustworthy lived experience-informed learning environment for building digital literacy

Phase 2 Results

Phase 1 findings and the trial implementation with PWLLE informed the following key program co-adaptations:

- **Restructured into two tiers:** DOORS 1 (Foundations) and DOORS 2 (Skills for Life)
- **Centering lived experience:** emphasizes “shared struggle” (peer support) and frames technology as adaptable to diverse needs rather than requiring conformity
- **Gamified exercises:** “Scam-o-Rama” (scam-recognition) activities, device gesture (pinching, tapping, swiping) practices, etc.
- **Expanded content** RE: account security and analog backup strategies
- **Visual accessibility** modifications: (colours, fonts, layout)

Coming Soon: Phase 3 and 4 Results!

*Anticipated outcomes include enhanced digital literacy, technology confidence, and digital mental health engagement for students

References

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