

Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health

Faculty of Health
York University



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About Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health Office

As the inaugural Chair, since 2008, Dr. Nazilla Khanlou has set up and led the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health at York University.

The Office aims to promote community-based research on women's mental health and wellbeing. We focus on identifying risk factors related to marginalized populations, and promote community-based approaches, prioritizing the involvement of community members in research.

Our goals are to:

- 1) Conduct interdisciplinary scholarship toward enhancing the mental health of Ontario's and Canada's women, children and youth.
- 2) Develop new models of faculty-student and faculty-faculty collaboration on scholarly initiatives.
- 3) Contribute to York University's Faculty of Health's advancement and initiatives from local to global levels.



Office Lead



Nazilla Khanlou, RN, PhD, is the Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University and Professor in its School of Nursing. She is the Academic Lead of the Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Scholars Program. Professor Khanlou's clinical background is in psychiatric nursing. Dr. Khanlou's overall program of research is situated in the interdisciplinary field of community-based mental health promotion in general, and mental health promotion among youth and women in multicultural and

immigrant-receiving settings in particular.

Dr. Khanlou applies intersectionality-informed frameworks, using diverse research methods, in community-based research. She is founder of the International Network on Youth Integration (INYI), an international network for knowledge exchange and collaboration on youth, and Editor-in-Chief of INYI Journal. She has published articles, books, and reports on immigrant youth and women, and mental health.

Research Coordinator



Luz Maria Vazquez, MSc, PhD (Sociology) is the research coordinator of the Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health in the Faculty of Health at York University. She is also a contract faculty at the Department of Social Science and at the Department of Human Rights and Equity Studies at York University. She brings more than ten years of experience in a research center in Mexico where she acquired strong research skills based on extensive ethnographic and qualitative work in Latin American contexts – Mexico, Belize and Guatemala.

Post-doctoral Fellow



Attia Khan, MBBS, MSPH, PhD (Health Policy and Equity) is a Postdoctoral Visitor at the Office of the Women's Health Research in Mental Health, Faculty of Health, York University, examining social support for racialized families with developmental disabilities, and exploring Asian-Canadian youth identity in the context of the Pandemic. Dr. Khan is an internationally trained medical doctor, and also teaches as a contract faculty at the University of Toronto and York University.

Doctoral degree completed



Congratulations to **Candice Christmas (MA, PhD)** for successfully completing her doctoral studies in Health Policy and Equity at York University! Dr. Christmas was Dr. Khanlou's doctoral student. Her dissertation research is titled "*Don't Let Things You Have Done Define You!*" Dr. Christmas has been a recipient of the Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Scholarship and the Penelope Jane Glasser Award. Candice is currently the Project Engagement Manager for a Health Canada funded initiative called "Support Not Stigma."

Students

The Chair actively promotes the involvement of students in different academic and research activities. She is the Academic Lead of the Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Scholars program, an initiative that provides scholarships to students examining maternal-child health. Dr. Khanlou supervises students from undergraduate to postdoctoral levels and research personnel from diverse disciplines (such as health, nursing, psychology, sociology, law).

Doctoral Students



Josephine Mary Violet Francis Xavier, MA, PhD (Candidate) is a doctoral student in the School of Nursing at York University. Her doctoral research is titled "fathering and fatherhood in the perinatal period: A Straussian Grounded Theory approach." Josephine is also a nurse educator with 24 years of teaching experience in India, Kuwait, and Canada.



Danielle Washington, MScN, PhD (Candidate) is a doctoral student in the School of Nursing at York University. She recently received a Canada Graduate Scholarship Doctoral Award Doctoral Research Award (CGS-D) accompanied with 3 year of funding. Danielle's nursing background is in the areas of mental health, long term care and academia. Her doctoral research is titled "Exploring the Mental Well-Being of Black Women Living in Poverty and at Risk of Intimate Partner Violence."

Doctoral Students continued



Deanna Black BA, RN is a second-generation Registered Nurse. Deanna would later pursue a Master's in Nursing at York University where she was one of Professor Khanlou's students. Like Professor Khanlou, she is very passionate about women's mental health and navigating some of the socio-cultural and systemic barriers they face. She is a nurse at a primary care clinic in Ontario. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Nursing and being supervised by Professor Khanlou.

Master's Students



Nasteho Hasan BSc (Psychology), BScN is a Master's Thesis student in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University. Nasteho is currently working as a Public Health Nurse in Toronto, focusing on chronic disease prevention among school age children and youth. Her Master's thesis is titled "Asian Adolescent Experiences of Health-Related Stigma During the COVID-19 Pandemic."



Olivia Brown, RN, is a Master's thesis student in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, York University. Olivia has over 10 years of diverse mental health experience and is currently working towards the completion of her master's thesis.

Lillian Meighen Wright Foundation

Scholars

The Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Graduate Scholarship is awarded to graduate students in the Faculty of Health who have a minimum A average in their graduate courses, or for new graduate students in their first year of study and for incoming graduate students, a cumulative grade point average of 7.5 based on undergraduate courses. Area of research study may include, but are not limited to:

- * Maternal-child health
- * Maternal-child mental well-being
- * Early child development
- * Mother-infant relationships
- * Mothers, stress and coping
- * Developmental pathways in infants and young children
- * Pre-natal and post-natal interventions
- * Health promotion for mothers and children
- * Environmental considerations in infant/child health and development
- * Patient safety issues relating to maternal-child health
- * Health policy and practice in relation to mothers, infants and children and other topics in maternal-child health

Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellowship



Dr. Joyce Kamanzi MScN, PhD recently completed her Postdoctoral Fellowship in Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health. Dr. Kamanzi completed a PhD from Faculty of Nursing, University of Alberta, Canada. She is a nurse and previously worked as Quality Manager in Rwanda. As a Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Scholar Dr. Kamanzi's research focused on *Exploring the disability experiences of immigrant families living with HIV in Toronto in Canada.*

Knowledge Transfer

The Office creates, organizes, and promotes a range of knowledge transfer (KT) activities directed at diverse audiences, including community organizations, students, faculty, service providers, and policy makers. KT activities include Women's Mental Health Research Speakers Series, community forums, information sheets, learning institutes, conferences, media, and publications and presentations in peer-reviewed venues. Dr. Khanlou has produced over 100 publications, including books, book chapters, refereed articles, invited articles, editorials, research information briefs, and research-practice tools. Her Google Scholar Google Scholar h-index = 29; i10-index = 62, citations = 3753 (as of 5 December 2023). She has conducted over 270 presentations and made over 50 public appearances via media.

Peer Reviewed Publications

**Names of students/research personnel are underlined*

Khanlou N, Khan A, Kurtz Landy C, Srivastava R, McMillan S, Vandavelde-Coke S, & Vazquez LM. (2023). Nursing care for persons with developmental disabilities: Review of literature on barriers and facilitators faced by nurses to provide care. *Nursing Open*, 10(2), 404-423. (Published online August 2022).

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/nop2.1338>

Khanlou N, Vazquez LM, Khan A, Oraziotti B, & Ross G. (2022). Readers Theatre as an arts-based approach to education: A scoping review on experiences of adult learners and educators. *Nurse Education Today*, 116. 10544.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105440>

Khanlou N, Vazquez LM, Pashang S, Connolly JA, Ahmad F, & Ssawe A. (2022). 2020 Syndemic: Convergence of COVID-19, gender-based violence, and racism pandemics. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 9, 2077-2089. (Published online October 2021).

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-021-01146-w>

Peer Reviewed Publications Continued

Pashang S & Khanlou N. (2021). The changing face of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic: Unmasking virtual identities. *Journal of Concurrent Disorders*: <https://concurrentdisorders.ca/2021/12/30/the-changing-face-of-gender-based-cyber-violenceduring-the-covid-19-pandemic-unmasking-virtual-identities/>

Khanlou N, Vazquez LM, Pashang S, Connolly JA, Ahmad F, & Ssawe A. (2021). 2020 Syndemic: Convergence of COVID-19, gender-based violence, and racism pandemics. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-021-01146-w>

Book Chapter

Khanlou N, Vazquez LM, & Pashang S. (2023). Chapter 10: Gender-based violence and COVID-19 pandemic: Addressing a pervasive public health issue through an upstream multi-systems approach. In Santos L. (Editor). *Cultures of silence: The power of untold narratives*. Oxfordshire: Routledge (Taylor & Francis). (pp. 172-189)

Editorials, Book Reviews, Letters to Editor

Khan A. (2023). Editorial: Mothering in the academia during a pandemic: Structural gender inequalities and family wellbeing. *INYI Journal Volume 12, Issue 1*.

<https://inyi.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/default/article/view/139/124>

Khanlou N. (2021). Introduction. *International Network on Youth Integration Newsletter, Volume 11, Issue 1*.

<https://inyi.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/default/article/view/104/85>

Khanlou N. (2020-2021). Introduction. *International Network on Youth Integration Newsletter, Volume 11, Issue 1 and 2*.

<https://inyi.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/default/article/view/17/17>

International Network on Youth Integration (INYI)

The INYI is an international network for knowledge exchange and collaboration. Activities of the Network includes, amongst others:

1. Exchange of information about members' and other's publications.
2. Organization of Visiting Scholar/Post-doctoral exchanges between members' institutions.
3. Collaboration on new proposals (with different members of the INYI taking the lead, depending upon source of funding and research focus).
4. Collaboration on workshops/presentations at international conferences.
5. The INYI offers Online First publication. Once proof have been corrected and finalized, the article is published online, is searchable, and can be cited using their unique DOI (Digital Object Identifier).

As part of the Network's activities, we have published 12 issues of the INYI Journal.



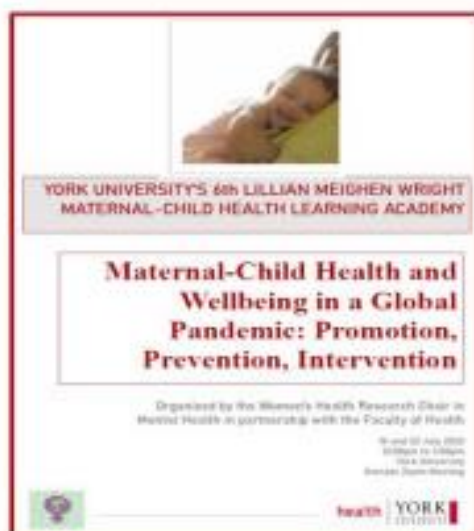
Monographs, Reports, Policy Briefs

Khanlou N, Khan A, Pashang S, Vazquez LM, Gateri H, Hutchison N, & Ohiku T. (2023). Policy Brief. Guidelines to Address Pandemic Health Disparities Experienced by Racialized Families with Developmental Disabilities. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Exchange – Kmb Grant. York University. Policy Brief- Social Support for Racialized families with DDs.Aug2023. <https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/08/Policy-Brief-Social-Support-for-Racialized-families-with-DDs.Aug2023.pdf?x46752>

Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez LM, Pashang S, Gateri H, Ohiku T, Hutchinson N, Alawiye R. (2023). Information Sheet 19: Social support for racialized families of children and youth with developmental disabilities: COVID-19 pandemic inequities. Toronto, ON. York University. Info Sheet 19.June 2023. <https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2023/06/Info-Sheet-19.June-2023.pdf?x46752>

Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez LM, Nunes F, Felice S, Gateri H, Srivastava R, McMillan S, Francis Xavier JM. (2022). Information Sheet 18: Health inequities experienced by people with developmental disabilities. Toronto, ON. York University. Info-Sheet-18-MRG-Dec2022.pdf. <https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2022/11/Info-Sheet-18-MRG-Dec2022.pdf?x46752>

6th Lillian Wright Learning Academy



We are pleased to announce that on July 18 and 22, 2023, we held a very successful Learning Institute titled “Maternal-Child Health and Wellbeing in a Global Pandemic: Promotion, Prevention, Intervention.

Research

The Office implements community-based approaches to the study of marginalized populations. Important goals are to promote research that may be translated into concrete practice and policy recommendations, and to conduct knowledge transfer activities to disseminate research findings and recommendations.

Team researchers promote the involvement of key stakeholders (e.g., community members, health and social service providers) into research planning, design and implementation.

Current areas of research focus include gender-based violence impacted by intersecting factors, youth Identity in a rapidly evolving social and environmental landscape, youth with developmental disabilities accessing social support and application of intersectionality to population health.



Our Office affiliates Josephine and Attia presented at the Department of Psychiatry Research Day Conference.

Our Office's ongoing and recently completed Research Projects

Equity-informed intersectoral KMb to address pandemic health disparities experienced by racialized families with developmental disabilities

Funded by: SSHRC KMb Exchange Grant (2022-2023)

Team: Dr. Nazilla Khanlou (PI), Deborah Davidson, Lorne Foster & Fernando Nunes.

The main aim of the project was to advance equity-informed intersectoral knowledge mobilization (KMb) on pandemic health disparities experienced by racialized families of people with DDs.

Major objectives were to:

- *Develop* content for a Virtual Community Workshop on COVID-19 Health Equity for Racialized Families with Developmental Disabilities, with input of the project's Advisory Committee.
- *Conduct* the Virtual Community Workshop, with participation of racialized disability advocates, service providers, and racialized families with DDs.
- *Engage* in knowledge translation and KMb for and with racialized families with DDs.

We held a Virtual Community Workshop with members of racialized families of persons with DDs, disability advocacy organizations, service providers serving racialized communities with DDs, practice and policy sectors, and academia (researchers, educators, students). The purpose of the Virtual Community Workshop was to:

- Promote* knowledge, practice, and research exchange on pandemic health inequities experienced by racialized families with DDs.
- Create* networking opportunities across families, sectors, and service providers.
- Provide* emerging knowledge of how to address pandemic health inequities experienced by racialized families with DDs.

Research projects continued

Social supports for racialized families of youth with developmental disabilities: Intersectionality informed research

Funded by: SSHRC Insight Development Grant (2022-2024)

Research Team: Nazilla Khanlou, PI (York University), Deborah Davidson, Lorne Foster, Fernando Nunes.

Collaborators: Bingham R, Gateri H, Lum L, Pour Ebrahim Alamdar N, & VanDeVelde-Coke S.

This project explores the barriers to social support faced by racialized families of youth with developmental disabilities (DDs) in the pandemic through an ecological systems lens. Through intersectionality we examine how the youths' identity markers impact equitable access to social support.

Our research questions are:

- What inclusive strategies of social support racialized families of youth with DDs find helpful?
- How access to social support at the macro (policies), meso (community) and micro (individual and family) levels can be strategized from the lessons we learned from the pandemic.

We completed a scoping review of literature on the barriers and facilitators of social support for racialized families of youth with DDs (ages 16-29 years). We are currently interviewing racialized youth with DDs (e.g., Black, East Asian, or South Asian and their family caregivers on inclusive social support during and beyond the pandemic are ongoing and disability advocates and service providers from community organizations to seek their views on existing and recommended social support.

Research projects continued

Asian-Canadian youth identities in a pandemic era: Arts-based research

Funded by: SSHRC Insight Grant (2022-2025)

Research Team: Nazilla Khanlou (PI), Deborah Davidson, Fernando Nunes, Lisa Seto Nielsen, Michelle Skop.

Collaborators: Kim H-S, Santos Silva L, & Zangeneh M.

The aim of the project was to examine how the pandemic has impacted Asian-Canadian youth's identities, sense of belonging, and agency.

The specific objectives are to:

-Examine Asian-Canadian youth (16-24 years old) identities through arts-based methods: 1) individual interviews using two visual arts methods: Self-Portraits, and Relational Maps; and 2) group drama: Readers Theatre.

-Evaluate findings from in-person and online methods of data collection.

-Engage youth in participatory and digital knowledge transfer activities.

-Inform youth-centred practice, policy, and scholarship through an equity-informed lens addressing exclusionary discourses and discriminatory practices during the pandemic's response and recovery phases.



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