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Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health

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Office affiliates at the Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health, Faculty of Health, York University

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Hello everyone,

We are grateful for all the collaborative networks of colleagues, students, and community members who are interested and involved in our Office's activities. One such member (in picture above) is Dr. Fernando Nunes, Associate Professor, Department of Child & Youth Study, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, who visited our Office in February 2025.

We invite you to look at the scholarly activities of our Office's affiliates over 2025, some of which are outlined in this e-Newsletter. We congratulate them on their accomplishments and are grateful for their contributions.

Nazilla Khanlou
Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health
Faculty of Health, York University

SECTION 1. OUR OFFICE AFFILIATES' SCHOLARLY WORK

A. Participation in a Workshop on Climate Change



Dr. Luz Maria Vazquez

Gender and Climate Change

Informed by political ecology approaches to climate change, my ongoing research project titled *Gender and Climate Change: Vulnerabilities and Adaptation in Coastal Communities in Costa Rica* (CUPE research grant, York University) aims at understanding the gender differentiated vulnerabilities, impacts, and capacities to adapt. Climate change is among one of the most urgent issues facing the planet (IPCC, 2022). Climate related disasters are impacting the livelihoods of vulnerable people (Rossing, & Rubin, 2010). Latin America and the Caribbean are among the regions of the world that are most prone to climate-related hazards. Specifically, Central America is defined as one of the regions most exposed to climate change (droughts, hurricanes) (Imbach et al., 2018). Furthermore, it is widely recognized that women are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change (Andersen & Wiebelt, 2017; Bee, 2013).

On November 2025, I was invited to present research findings in the Workshop titled *Critical Social Science Perspectives on Coastal Erosion*, organized by Dr. Prof. Dr. Silja Klepp, Professor of Human Geography, at the Department of Geography, Kiel University, Germany. I presented the paper titled *Women and Coastal Erosion: Vulnerability and Adaptation in Coastal Communities in Costa Rica*. The objective of the presentation was to discuss qualitative research

findings on women's perceptions of coastal erosion. The question of how to understand, prevent, and adapt to coastal erosion is receiving worldwide attention. Coastal erosion is a widespread problem that is linked to global climate change. Coastal erosion is a phenomenon that occurs when a beach loses its sediment (Anthony, 2013); it is the landward displacement of a given point between the ocean and the continent, resulting in "the encroachment upon the land by the sea" (Doody et al., 2004, p. 4). Coastal erosion has been characterized as a hazard for the people that inhabit coastal areas around the world, for their economies, and for natural ecosystems that are at risk of disappearing (Vazquez & Vandergeest, 2022).

There is a consensus in the literature that successful environmental and development planning interventions that aim to assist local communities adapt to coastal erosion need to take into account the local context, and require the participation of coastal communities (Fischer, 2018; Karlsson & Hovelsrud 2015). Scholars also argue that different and sometimes incompatible perceptions of environmental issues constitute barriers to the implementation of good governance practices (Dewulf et al., 2011).

My research looks at the social understandings of coastal erosion in a coastal community in Costa Rica. I analyzed women's perceptions about the lack of sustainable sources to make their livelihoods, about poverty and marginalization in the context of their community which immerses in a natural protected area. In the interviews women shared their feelings of anxiety about climate related impacts including concerns related to their identities as farmers and their culture. Women explained that coastal erosion have had a negative impact on their community. In my presentation I argued that local narratives about coastal erosion are complex and locally embedded, they are shaped by local communities' long-term struggles with different powerful actors like the state.

Selected reference

Vázquez, L. & Vandergeest, P. (2022). Coastal erosion narratives in the Gulf of Mexico: implications for climate change governance. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 29(1), 705–724. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2458/jpe.5375>

B. Welcome to our New Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellow



Dr. Amelia Eppel

Amelia Eppel is the new Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellow in Maternal-Child Health. Dr. Eppel completed her doctoral studies in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. She is a birth and postpartum doula and has 16 years experience working with children and families as a nanny and early childhood educator.

About my research

My doctoral research focused on the experiences of young women who had experienced child welfare involvement as children as they became mothers. Youth involved in Quebec's child welfare system have a much higher rate of teenage pregnancy and early parenting than their peers who have not had welfare involvement. There are very few studies which examine this disparity, and even fewer which take into account participants' own sensemaking of this experience. My dissertation determined the experiences and supports that four young parents with child welfare histories identified as pivotal along their path to parenthood. Employing a desire-centred approach based in a decolonizing framework, this project sought to consider the

complexity, contradiction, and self-determination of the participants.

The method for the project was a participatory arts-based method created on youth participatory action research principles. This was a novel method based on a prenatal artmaking program called *Birthing From Within* in which participants made drawings that explored themes related to becoming parents as they prepared for the birth of their child. Using this data, the young parents who took part engaged in group participatory data analysis, making connections between each other's stories. Together the participants used the data to consider questions of where interventions might be most useful for young people becoming parents, in order to support them in building the lives they desire for themselves and their children.

Key insights included that nearly all participants described wanting a child, sometimes for a long time before becoming a parent, of feeling that this was a healing journey for them, and the importance that both positive and negative role models had on their parenting. Some of the most significant findings highlighted the failings of foster care; traumas experienced by the mothers reflected the lack of support provided to foster families and the lack of oversight of education for foster carers.

My postdoctoral research goals are to conduct a study with a larger group of young mothers in Ontario, focusing further on the potential of birth art preparation group sessions as a community-building, supportive intervention during the perinatal period.

Selected references

- England, P. and Horowitz, R. (1998). *Birthing from Within: An extra-ordinary guide to childbirth preparation*. Albuquerque, NM: Partera Press.
- Lambert, G., Haley, N., Jean, S., Tremblay, C., Frappier, J-Y., Otis, J. and Roy, E. (2013). Sexual health of adolescents in Quebec residential youth protection centres. *Revue Canadienne de Santé Publique*, 104(3), 216-221.

C. Participation in TEAMS Scholarship Day Conference

Last month (November) our Office's affiliates presented their posters at the 2025 Toward Equity & Advocacy in Mental Health (TEAM) Scholarship Day, University of Toronto, Department of Psychiatry held at the Schwartz Reisman Innovation Campus.

Nasteho Hasan presented a poster on her master's thesis titled *Experiences of Asian Canadian Adolescents Navigating Stigma During COVID-19 Pandemic*. See below.



Danielle Washington presented a poster on her doctoral thesis (work-in-progress) titled *Exploring the Mental Well-Being of Black Women in Canada Experiencing Poverty and Intimate Partner Violence: A Grounded Theory Study*. See below.



SECTION 2. OUR OFFICE'S PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVISM AND ADVOCACY

The UN Women marked 25 November to 10 December 2025 as 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. This year's campaign titled "There is #NoExcuse for online abuse" aimed to bring the world's attention to the alarming increase of online abuse. Our Office shared the following with our networks to recognize the 16 days of activism against online Gender-Based Violence and to "rally for a world where technology is a force for equality – not harm" (UN women, 2025).

Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health Faculty of Health, York University

Gender-Based Violence Experienced by Racialized and Refugee Women and Girls

Attia Khan, MBBS, MSPH, PhD; Luz Maria Vazquez, PhD; and Nazilla Khanlou, RN, PhD

December 2025

It has been 3 decades since the pivotal Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women demanded for advancing gender equality—equal rights for ALL women. The conference also sparked a global commitment for ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through legal protection and empowerment for women and girls, and service and supports for survivors (UN Women, 2025). GBV is violence inflicted on persons based on their "gender expression, gender identity or perceived gender" leading to psychological, physical, or sexual suffering or harm (Status of Women Canada, 2018). GBV affects one in three women globally (UN Women, 2025).

This year, the UN Secretary-General's campaign "**UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls**" focusses on digital violence against women and girls, a rapidly escalating form of abuse (UN Women, 2025). Online GBV is a deeply rooted human rights violation facilitated through technology and involving a spectrum of harmful behaviours such as harassment, sexual abuse and violence (Hicks, 2023). The 16 Days of Activism under the theme to mark End Gender-Based Violence began on 25 November (beginning of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and ends on 10 December 2025 (Human Rights Day).

As the Chair of the Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health (OWHC), Faculty of Health, Dr. Nazilla Khanlou has been leading funded equity-focussed research projects directed at promoting health and mental wellbeing of racialized women and girls including studies addressing GBV. At our Office we have conducted studies providing policy recommendations to address GBV. Our most recently funded project, titled "**Online Gender-Based Violence: Youth Voices in Addressing Mental Health Harms and Solutions to Prevent**", will focus on online GBV experienced by youth.

In 2020, we conducted a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funded knowledge synthesis project titled "**COVID-19 Pandemic Guidelines for Mental Health Support of Racialized Women at Risk of Gender-Based Violence.**" The goal of the study was to advance trauma-informed mental health care for racialized women at risk of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic's response and recovery phases.

We found that racialized and marginalized women were disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of the pandemic as a result of historic and systemic health inequalities. The experiences of Indigenous, Black, Asian and other racialized communities highlight the differentiated risks and marginalization they face, which have been always present, and were further amplified in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our synthesis of literature explicated the impact of the social determinants of mental health of racialized women and girls at risk of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. We invite you to read the following knowledge transfer outcomes from this study:

Read our Office's full report here: <https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2025/12/Addressing-GBV-OWHC-Office.Dec2025.pdf?x11491>

SECTION 3. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK ON YOUTH INTEGRATION (INYI) JOURNAL Vol 14 2025

We are pleased to announce that INYI Journal Volume 14, 2025 titled: **Impacts of Human and Natural Disasters: Experiences of Trauma by Individuals, Families, and Communities** was published in September 2025.

The open access journal articles are available on the INYI journal website: <https://inyi.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/default>.

- ✚ **Guest Editorial: Impacts of Human and Natural Disasters: Experiences of Trauma by Individuals, Families, and Communities**
Lojain Hamwi and Meaghan Hall
- ✚ **Research Article: Comparative Analysis of Child Protection Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: Review of Four Countries with Implications for the Practice of Social Workers**
Ayuk Nyakpo Orock, Pavel Navratil, Susantha Rasnayake, Eun Koh and Theogene-Octave Gakuba
- ✚ **Research Article: Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Afro-Caribbean Canadian Youth's Mental Health and Well-being**
Fiona Chrislyn Edwards
- ✚ **Research Article: Mental health related experiences among African Caribbean, and Black immigrant and refugee families living with HIV/ AIDS in Greater Toronto Area, Canada**
Joyce Kamanzi, Nazilla Khanlou, Fanta Ongoiba and Attia Khan
- ✚ **Research Article: A Place Called Home? "Aging out" of Care in the Housing Crisis in Toronto**
Amy Barlow and Fiona Edwards
- ✚ **Commentary: Racial Trauma Unfolds: The Spectacle of Witnessing George Floyd's Murder**
Donna Richards and Paul Banahene Adjei
- ✚ **Commentary: York University's 7th Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Learning Academy: Impacts of Natural Disasters on Maternal-Child Health**
Attia Khan

Racialized caregivers of youth with developmental disabilities: Barriers to trust of formal systems and recommendations for effective strategies

Thompson F, Khan A, Choi, Ji Yon (Amy), Hasan N, & Khanlou N

Introduction

This Information Sheet reports on select findings from our scoping review study (Khan & Khanlou, 2025), which examined effective strategies to address Triple Trauma in racialized parent caregivers of youth with DDs.

We define Triple Trauma as arising from experiences of caregiving, disability, and racism among racialized parent caregivers of youth with DDs (Khan & Khanlou, 2025). We consider how these experiences may affect access to essential resources and services needed to support their youth with DDs, and in relation to their overall health and well-being.

Many formal systems exist that shape an individual's experience in society. Formal systems that significantly impact supporting caregivers of youth with DDs include healthcare, education, and social services, which must work collaboratively to offer comprehensive care (Crossman, 2025). Healthcare, education, and social service systems work independently and collaboratively to provide essential support for caregivers and youth with DDs, including early diagnosis and intervention, tailored therapies,



and access to government funding and resources. Current literature indicates a gap in culturally responsive care within formal systems.

Our Study

Using Arksey and O'Malley's Framework (2005) for conducting scoping reviews, we searched for peer-reviewed articles and grey literature published between January 2010 and August 2025 that focused on caregivers with racialized youth with developmental disability from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.

Lack of trust of formal systems emerged as a key theme during the data extraction stage. We identified six articles (Burke, 2025; Dababnah, 2022; Espinosa, 2025; Khalil, 2025; Iadarola et al., 2019; Searing, 2015) from our literature search that showed lack of trust in formal and culturally appropriate systems among racialized caregivers of youth with DDs. Our findings show that many racialized caregivers do not trust formal systems and rely on informal systems.

Challenges faced by Black mothers of children with developmental disabilities

N Khanlou, U Niel, LM Vazquez, A Khan, T Filler,
H Gateri, FM Dastjerdi, and G Jones

Introduction

Caring for children with developmental disabilities (DDs) can be challenging for a number of reasons, including social stigma, financial burdens, insufficient funding and programming, social isolation and limited social support from families and from communities as a whole. However, the challenges of raising children with DDs are even greater and complex if the families are from a racialized background.

Racialized mothers experience even greater stress. The stress of caring for a child with DDs is amplified as a result of racism, prejudice, stigma, and discrimination experienced by racialized families. We learned from our studies that racialized youth with DDs face barriers in key aspects of their lives, including health, mental health, education, work, and challenges of integration and community participation (Khan et al., 2025; Khanlou et al., 2024). Racialized families' distress is rooted in historic inequities they experience in healthcare, income, housing, education and social challenges, racism, and discrimination. For example, in Canada, Black families report experiencing higher rates of unemployment and income inequality, compared with the national average (Graham, 2025). They experience discrimination in employment, housing, education, and food insecurity (Graham, 2025).



Our Study

This Information Sheet reports on findings from our study that explored health promotion strategies for racialized mothers of children/youth/ and emerging adults with DDs. We addressed the research question: What is an inclusive approach to health promotion for racialized mothers of school-age children and youth or emerging adults with DDs?

We conducted in-depth, qualitative, semi-structured interviews between January and December 2018. We interviewed seven Black mothers of children with DDs and three service providers. We asked questions related to racism, and about incidents mothers may have experienced while seeking or obtaining health care for their children or for themselves. We also asked about the challenges they face in promoting their families' health and well-being. Service providers' interviews focused on documenting their perceptions of the factors that are effective in promoting the health and well-being of racialized populations.

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<https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/>

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See the full Information Brief here: [Info-Sheet-23-Black-Mothers-and-Children-with-Developmental-Disabilities.July2025.pdf](#)

Asian Canadian adolescents' experiences of COVID-19-related stigma in healthcare

Hasan N, Khanlou N, Khan A, Epstein I, & Seto Nielsen L.

Introduction

The Global COVID-19 pandemic saw a rise in health-related stigma directed towards those who may be carrying the COVID-19 virus. The term stigma, studied by sociologist Erving Goffman refers to “an attribute that links a person to an undesirable stereotype, leading other people to reduce the bearer from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (Goffman, 1963, p. 11). Health-related stigma (HRS) refers to the stigmatization experienced due to a health condition or disease (Scrambler, 2009). HRS poses significant harms to individuals and society, including:

- Hindering the broader control of infectious outbreaks because stigmatized people may be less likely to report their illness for fear of backlash, making it difficult to receive information necessary to comply with public health measures (Fischer et al., 2019).
- Negative consequences on the mental health of a person, their families, and significant others (Sahoo et al., 2020).
- Fueling of xenophobia and racism by erroneously associating certain nationalities and ethnicities with a disease (Dhanani & Franz, 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, those with COVID-19 experienced stigmatization due to their health status from those around them due to fear of judgements of being reckless (Lohiniva et al., 2021).



Similarly, Asian Canadians experienced upticks in racism and xenophobia due to beliefs that Asians were responsible for spreading the virus (Kong et al., 2021). Therefore, Asian Canadians who contracted COVID-19 experienced intersecting stigmas during the pandemic due to their health status and their racial identity. In this information sheet, we will discuss some of the experiences of stigmatization Asian Canadian youth experienced during the pandemic after contracting COVID-19. Specifically, the information sheet will review stigmatization experienced during interactions with healthcare workers.

The study

In this study, we used Interpretative Description methodology (Thorne, 2026) to explore Asian Canadian adolescents' experiences of COVID-19-related stigma during the pandemic and how it intersects with their ethnic identity as well as identifying interventions to mitigate stigma. The findings are from Hasan's (2024) MScN thesis. This study was needed due to the unique challenges the pandemic brought up for those who contracted the disease, within? the prejudicial social environment experienced by Asian Canadians.

SECTION 5. PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

JOURNAL ARTICLES/POLICY BRIEFS/REPORTS

- ✚ **Khan, A., Khanlou, N., Vazquez, L. M., Epstein, I., Srivastava, R., & VanDeVelde-Coke, S. (2025).** Nursing care for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the times of COVID-19: Toward a Nursing Practice Competency Framework. *International Health Trends and Perspectives*, 5(2), 289–311.
<https://doi.org/10.32920/ihtp.v5i2.2470>
- ✚ **Kamanzi, J., Khanlou, N., Ongoiba, F., & Khan, A. (2024).** Mental health related experiences among African Caribbean, and Black immigrant and refugee families living with HIV/ AIDS in Greater Toronto Area, Canada. *INyI Journal*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.25071/1929-8471.137>
- ✚ **Khan, A. (2024).** York University's 7th Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Learning Academy: Impacts of Natural Disasters on Maternal-Child Health: Commentary. *INyI Journal*, 14(1).
<https://doi.org/10.25071/1929-8471.153>
- ✚ **Thompson F, Khan A, Choi, Ji Yon (Amy), Hasan N, & Khanlou N. (2025).** Information Sheet 24: Racialized caregivers of youth with developmental disabilities: Barriers to trust of formal systems and recommendations for effective strategies. Toronto, ON. York University. [Info-Sheet-24-Racialized-caregivers-of-youth-with-developmental-disabilities.Oct2025.pdf](#)
- ✚ **Khanlou N, Niel U, Vazquez LM, Khan A, Filler T, Gateri H, Dastjerdi FM, & Jones G. (2025).** Information Sheet 23: Challenges faced by Black mothers of children with developmental disabilities. Toronto, ON. York University. [Info-Sheet-23-Black-Mothers-and-Children-with-Developmental-Disabilities.July2025.pdf](#)
- ✚ **Hasan N, Khanlou N, Khan A, Epstein I, & Seto Nielsen L. (2025).** Information Sheet 22: Asian Canadian adolescents' experiences of COVID-19-related stigma in healthcare. Toronto, ON. York University. [Info-Sheet-22-Asian-Canadian-Adolescents-Covid-Stigma.June2025.pdf](#)

PRESENTATIONS

- ✚ **Khanlou N. (2025 December 8).** VIRTUAL PANEL SEMINAR. Promoting Collaboration in Research and Education. Research and Awards Committee, School of Nursing, York University
- ✚ **Hasan N, Khan A, Epstein I, Seto Nielsen L, & Khanlou N. (2025, November 13).** Experiences of Asian Canadian Adolescents navigating stigma during the COVID-19 Pandemic. TEAM Scholarship Day. Department of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.
- ✚ **Washington D, Khan A, Foster L, Rodney R, Khanlou N. (2025, November 13).** Exploring the Mental Well-Being of Black Women in Canada Experiencing Poverty and Intimate Partner Violence: A Grounded Theory Study (Work-in-progress). TEAM Scholarship Day. Department of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.
- ✚ **Charalampopoulou M, Ibrahim A, Eddy E, Panetta L, Prime H, Brown H, Desai S, Khanlou N, McMorris C, Tilleczek K, Tint A, Ritvo P, & Weiss JA. (2025).** "It fostered a greater appreciation for my little corner of the world": Feasibility of therapeutic photography intervention for the well-being of Autistic youth. International Society for Autism Research (INSAR), United States.
- ✚ **Khanlou N, Khan A, Vazquez LM, et al., with Centre of Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion. (2025, March 3).** *YouthAre* Conference: Centering youth cultural identities through participatory action research – Learnings from Asian-Canadian youth engagement through Readers Theatre. Inclusion Week 2025. York University.

MEDIA

- ✚ L'exercice physique pour soigner la depression. <https://l-express.ca/>. (26 November 2025). **N Khanlou** interviewed. <https://l-express.ca/lexercice-physique-pour-soigner-la-depression/>

EVENTS ORGANIZED

- ✚ Haghiri-Vijeh R & **Khanlou N** (Co-organizers). (2025, December 8). VIRTUAL PANEL SEMINAR. Promoting Collaboration in Research and Education. Research and Awards Committee. School of Nursing, York University.
- ✚ Haghiri-Vijeh R & **Khanlou N** (Co-organizers). (2025, November 28). VIRTUAL WEBINAR. Research and Awards Committee School of Nursing, York University.

HONOUR AWARDS

- ✚ **Khanlou N**. 2025: Outstanding Reviewer; Canadian Institutes of Health Research (Fall 2024 Project Grant)

NEW FUNDING

- ✚ Vitoroulis I (PI), Ryder AG, Brown DT, Sylvestre JC, Santo J, Cénat JM, **Khanlou N (Co-I)**, Racine NM, & Corsini-Munt SA. A partnership approach to supporting migrant families' integration. SSHRC Individual Partnership Development Grant. (2025-2028)
- ✚ **Khanlou N (PI)**, Connolly J, & **Alamadar N**. Online Gender-Based Violence: Youth Voices in Addressing Mental Health Harms and Solutions to Prevent. La-Marsh Centre for Child and Youth Mental Catalyst Grant. Funded by Co-operators. (2025-2027)
- ✚ **Khan A & Khanlou N**. Exploring impact of lifelong caregiving: A scoping review of effective strategies to address triple trauma in racialized parent caregivers of youth with developmental disabilities. Funded by SSHRC Explore Grant, York University. (2025-2026)
- ✚ **Khanlou N (PI)**. 24-25 Graduate Assistant Training Fund Award. Funded by Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University. (2024 -2025)

SECTION 6. ONGOING RESEARCH

Professor Nazilla Khanlou, Chair of this Office, along with colleagues engaged in research for the following projects:

- ✚ **SSHRC Explore Grant**. Exploring Impact of Lifelong Caregiving: A Scoping Review of Effective Strategies to Address Triple Trauma in Racialized Parent Caregivers of Youth with Developmental. (2025-2026)
- ✚ **SSHRC Insight Grant**. Asian-Canadian youth identities in a pandemic era: Arts-based research. (2022-2025)
- ✚ **SSHRC Insight Development Grant**. Social support for racialized families of youth with developmental disabilities: Intersectionality informed research. (2022-2024)

SECTION 7. OUR OFFICE AFFILIATES' ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We are proud to share the academic and research accomplishment of our Office's affiliates. Congratulations to our affiliates!

- ✚ **Dr. Attia Khan**, is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Office of Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health (OWHC), and contract Faculty in the School of Health Policy and Management, York University. This year Dr. Khan received a research fund from SSHRC Explore Grant (2025-2026) titled *Exploring Impact of Lifelong Caregiving: A Scoping Review of Effective Strategies to Address Triple Trauma in Racialized Parent Caregivers of Youth with Developmental*. The study is ongoing.
- ✚ **Allan Galli Francis** is a Research Assistant at OWHC, Faculty of Health at York University and Consultant at HS Advisory. He recently graduated from the Master of Management in Artificial Intelligence at the Schulich School of Business, York University. Currently, Allan is developing a digital space to showcase findings from the *YouthAre* project. He is also a Youth Peer Leader and serves on the project's Advisory Committee.
- ✚ **Dr. Chang Su** is a former Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellow in Maternal-Child Health. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Faculty of Science in Brandon University. She recently published the following works: 1) Su, C. et al., (2025) *The impacts of belongingness on the well-being of international students in Canada during COVID-19: The mediating role of perceived stress and acculturation stress* in *Psychology and Mental Health Care* journal; and 2) Su, & Flett, G. L. (2025). *Anti-mattering, fear of not mattering on psychological well-being on international students in Canada under COVID-19* in the *Open Journal of Trauma*.
- ✚ **Danielle Washington** is a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Nursing at York University. Her doctoral research, titled *Exploring the Mental Well-Being of Black Women in Canada Experiencing Poverty and Intimate Partner Violence: A Grounded Theory Study* received renewed ethics approval in October 2025. Danielle also received the second letter of permission to begin on-site participant recruitment at a Violence against Women emergency shelter for her PhD dissertation study. Danielle presented her poster *Exploring the mental well-being of Black women in Canada experiencing poverty and intimate partner violence: A grounded theory study* (work in progress) at the TEAM Scholarship Day, Department of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.
- ✚ **Deanna Black** is a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Nursing at York University supervised by Professor Khanlou. Deanna successfully completed her PhD comprehensive examinations in November 2025. Her work included both a research proposal and cognate paper defense. Earlier this year, in May 2025, Deanna also received the June Awrey Lecture Award from the York University School of Nursing for her work focusing on health equity and the health outcomes of Black communities in Canada.
- ✚ **Lojain Hamwi** is the Student Co-Chair, Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Scholars Program. Dr. Nazilla Khanlou is the Academic Lead of the Meighen Wright Foundation Maternal Child Health Scholars Program Faculty of Health, York University. Lojain is also a PhD student in the Clinical Developmental Psychology program. Lojain was recently awarded the CIHR Canada Graduate Scholarship to Honour Nelson Mandela. She was awarded for Outstanding Master's Research in Clinical Health Psychology (November 2025); and Highest-Ranking Trainee Poster in the Basic Sciences at the International Symposium on Pediatric Pain (ISPP) 2025. Lojain published from her MA thesis on *Machine learning classification of EEG responses to pain-related vs non-pain related stimulus in preterm infants* in the journal *Pain Reports*. She also published a Conference Abstract: *Exploring the impact of parental stress and distress on infant pain responses over time*, in *Canadian Journal of Pain*. Lojain presented posters at two international conferences: 1) on *Machine learning classification of pain-related EEG activity in preterm infants* at the International Symposium on Pediatric Pain (ISPP) conference, Glasgow, Scotland (2025, June); and 2) on *Effects of parental acculturation on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses during child immunization* at the Pediatric Academic Society (PAS) Meeting, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

- ✚ **Dr. Luz Maria Vazquez** is a contract Faculty and Research Coordinator at the OWHC. Recently Dr. Vazquez presented a paper titled *Women and Coastal Erosion: Vulnerability and Adaptation in Coastal Communities in Costa Rica* at Critical Social Science Perspectives on Coastal Erosion, a workshop organized by Dr. Silja Klepp, Professor of Human Geography, Department of Geography, Kiel University, Germany.
- ✚ **Josephine M Francis Xavier** is a Doctoral Candidate 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*. Her recent submission is a manuscript on *Exploring the Future: The Role of Fathers in Strengthening Maternal-Child Health during Flood-Related Disasters* in the INYI Journal, York University, Toronto, Canada.
- ✚ **Maisha Adil** is a Master of Public Health student at the University of Chicago. Her capstone research will focus on post-acute sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC). Maisha is a Youth Peer Leader and serves on the *YouthAre* project's Advisory Committee at York University. **Maisha and Allan** collaborated on a reflection piece for the upcoming special issue of INYI Journal: Adil, M., Galli Francis, A., Alamdar, N., & Madzima, S. (2025). *Implementing Readers Theatre in Arts-Based Research on Youth Identities: Reflections from Youth Peer Leaders and Facilitators*.
- ✚ **Meaghan Hall** is the Student Co-Chair, Lillian Meighen Wright Maternal-Child Health Scholars Program. She is also a PhD candidate in Clinical Developmental Neuropsychology at York University. She recently published a manuscript: Hall, M. (2025). *Prenatal glyphosate and AMPA exposure and child neurodevelopment in a Canadian birth cohort study* in the Environment International Journal. Meaghan also presented a poster, *Prenatal fluoride exposure and child IQ: Is tea a key source of fluoride?* At the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology, Atlanta, United States (2025, August 20th). She also presented an oral presentation on *Steeped in risk: Tea, fluoride, and child IQ [Ignite Talk]* at the International Society for Children's Health and the Environment Retreat, Lake Arrowhead, California, U.S.A.(2025, June 4th). Along with **Lojain Hamwi**, **Meaghan** Guest Edited an issue in the INYI Journal: Hamwi, L., & Hall, M. (2025). *Impacts of Human and Natural Disasters: Experiences of Trauma by Individuals, Families, and Communities*.
- ✚ **Nasteho Hasan** is a Research Assistant at OWHC and supports various projects at the Office. She is also a Public Health Nurse in Toronto, currently working in Child Health and Development, supporting new parents with navigating pregnancy through the first 6 years of their children's lives. Nasteho published from her master's thesis as lead author in Information Sheet 22: *Asian Canadian Adolescent's Experiences of COVID-19-Related-Stigma in Healthcare* (see page 9 of this e-newsletter). She recently presented a poster on her master's thesis titled *Experiences of Asian Canadian Adolescents navigating Stigma During COVID-19 Pandemic* at the TEAMS Scholarship Day, University of Toronto, Department of Psychiatry.
- ✚ **Dr. Negar Alamdar** is a former Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellow in Maternal-Child Health. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the School of Child and Youth Care at Toronto Metropolitan University. Dr. Alamdar is also a Gender-Based Violence Mental Health Counsellor at Achêv and implements trauma-informed practices to enhance the quality of care and support she provides. She recently certified in "applied suicide intervention skills training" and "re-risk identification and safety assessment tool" by Western University center for research and education on violence against woman and children. She is also working on a book called *Race relation within the field of child and Youth care*.
- ✚ **Sheena Madzima** is a Women's Health Research in Mental health Office affiliate. She assisted in several projects throughout her studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology at York University, class of 2020. She was honoured to be the recipient of multiple awards including the Dr. Eric Jackman Award and Lillian-Meighen Wright Award. Sheena is the founder of TOWR Youth Development & Well-being Initiative.

INTRODUCING OUR OFFICE'S NEW AFFILIATES

- ✚ **Dr. Amelia Eppel** is the current Lillian Meighen Wright Postdoctoral Fellow in Maternal-Child Health. Dr. Eppel completed her doctoral studies in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. She is a birth and postpartum doula and has 16 years experience working with children and families as a nanny and early childhood educator. Her doctoral research focused on the experiences of young women who had experienced child welfare involvement as children as they became mothers. This was conducted using a novel arts-based methodology created by Dr. Eppel based on a prenatal art making program.
- ✚ **Fitzroy Hugh Thompson** started his PhD in Nursing student at York University this year and is involved with one of our projects on *Exploring Impact of Lifelong Caregiving: Effective Strategies to Address Triple Trauma in Racialized Parent Caregivers of Youth with Developmental Disabilities*. Fitzroy will present his poster titled *Experiences of Racialized Caregivers of Youth with Developmental Disabilities: Findings from a Scoping Review* at the 5th Annual Canadian Health and Wellbeing in Developmental Disabilities (HWDD) conference in February 2026. Fitzroy is also the lead author of the Office's Information Sheet 24: *Racialized caregivers of youth with developmental disabilities: Barriers to trust of formal systems and recommendations for effective strategies* (see page 7 of this e-newsletter).

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter!