

# RESEARCH CONNECTION

## Getting to know the Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health

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### Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health

#### Why this research is important

Although rural communities are diverse, many rural communities lack access to mental health services, including general practitioners, counselling services, and specialists. Services in urban centers may not be culturally relevant and often fail to provide continuity of care. Rural people often face stigmatizing attitudes toward mental illness from other members of their community, and they experience poorer determinants of health (e.g., lower levels of education, lower incomes, lack of opportunities to find decent work, and higher levels of work stress). In addition, many of the political and economic decisions that shape rural futures are made far outside of rural communities, denying rural people opportunities to exercise power in decisions that have a great influence over their well-being. Research also tends to focus more on urban centres than rural settings. The Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health seeks to address these challenges through

#### What you need to know

The [Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health](#) (CCSRMH) brings together researchers, students, and a wide variety of partners to focus on improving mental health in rural areas in Manitoba and across Canada. The CCSRMH conducts research with the aim of addressing the unique needs and challenges of rural communities. We share this research to shape education, policies, and practices that support mental health and wellness.

community-engaged research that recognizes not only the challenges rural communities face but also the strengths of rural communities, such as strong social bonds (for some people) and access to natural resources.

#### How the research is conducted

We work with researchers and students in the sciences, arts, education, and health studies, as well as a broad range of partners outside the university, to develop solutions to rural mental health needs. This includes partnerships with Brandon Friendship Centre, Brandon School Division, City of Brandon, Do More Ag, Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program, Mood Disorders of Manitoba, Prairie Mountain Health, the Suicide Prevention

Intervention Network, and Westman Immigrant Services, just to name a few.

Through a series of meetings with community partners, the CCSRMH identified four strategic research areas that guide some of our research activities:

- Indigenous mental wellness
- Resources/services for mental health
- Rural work (e.g., agriculture, fishing, and forestry) and mental health
- Substance use

Because different topics and questions require different research approaches, our work involves a broad range of methods, such as analyzing policies, interviews, focus groups, diaries, and surveys to understand rural mental health needs as well as what systematic changes can be made to improve care and quality of life in rural places. Using this broad range of tools allows us to centre lived experiences of mental health and mental illness while also seeing connections to broader system challenges and opportunities.

### How this research can be used

The research of the Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health has been used to develop health promotion videos, policy briefs, podcasts, seminars and scholarly articles. We share this information in different ways to promote learning and changes in policy and practice. Sometimes, our research can help partners advocate for more funding or the continuation of a program that supports rural residents. We work with partners to put knowledge into action and provide forms of information that are useful for their community.

### Centre members/researchers

The centre currently has over 40 members. To learn more about the benefits of being a member, please visit

<https://www.centreforruralmentalhealth.com/our-members>

### Keywords

Mental health, rural, communities, well-being

### Publications

To learn more about research happening at CCSRMH or to read our recent publications, please visit

<https://www.centreforruralmentalhealth.com/research-1>

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