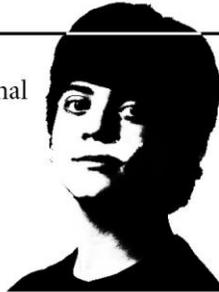




Transformational  
Research in  
Adolescent  
Mental Health



Recherche  
transformationnelle  
sur la santé mentale  
des adolescents

## Transformational Research in Adolescent Mental Health

A partnership of the  
**Graham Boeckh Foundation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research**

### Phase I:

### Call for Expressions of Interest

Responses due: April 30, 2013

Interested in participating? Contact:

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# Executive Summary

## What is TRAM?

Transformational Research in Adolescent Mental Health (TRAM) is a partnership of the Graham Boeckh Foundation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

TRAM's goal is to work with mental health communities over the next year **to collectively build one unique pan-Canadian research-to-practice network**. Together the partners will invest \$25M over a period of five years.

TRAM is a core initiative under CIHR's [Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research \(SPOR\)](#) – transforming the health system through provincial/territorial and stakeholder partnerships which create high-impact research.

## What will the funded network do?

Through research and implementation of transformative intervention approaches, **the network will catalyze fundamental change in youth and adolescent mental health care in Canada**. In five years, new approaches, proven in at least one setting, will be substantially increasing the number of 11-25 year olds who are identified as in need of services and who subsequently will receive quality, timely and appropriate care.

## What will the network development process look like?

Over the coming months, a unique, iterative development process will link and connect the innovative ideas and people to prepare complete pan-Canadian network proposals, and ultimately, select one to fund. Through this three-phase process, a network will emerge:

<b>Phase I:</b>	<b>Expressions of Interest</b> and <b>Strengthening Workshop</b>	<b>April 30, 2013</b> June 26-28, 2013
<b>Phase II:</b>	<b>Letters of Intent</b>	September 2, 2013
<b>Phase III:</b>	<b>Full proposals</b>	January 13, 2014

## Who is eligible to apply to this call for Expressions of Interest?

Expressions of Interest can come from two kinds of participant groups:

1. Proponents of a nascent proposal for a full pan-Canadian research-to-practice network
2. Teams which could become part of a pan-Canadian research-to-practice network

All Expressions of Interest **must include** active participation from stakeholders with a direct interest in the mental health needs of 11-25 years olds, including: 1) patients/family representatives; 2) policy makers; 3) researchers; 4) service providers; 5) community organizations, and other stakeholders as appropriate. While leadership can come from any stakeholder group, we encourage co-leadership models.

## What should you expect if you submit an Expression of Interest?

In Phase I, the intent is to identify the key groups, resources and ideas which may be important components of a pan-Canadian network. The intent is to ensure that great ideas and teams all have a chance to participate in the Network development process, even if they are not yet integrated into a pan-Canadian network. In Phase I, participants **are applying to partake in a network development process, not for traditional grant funding**.

The leadership of applicant groups making proposals that are selected through the Expression of Interest **MUST** participate in the TRAM Strengthening Workshop, scheduled for June 26-28, 2013.

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# 1. Introduction

## What is TRAM?

[Transformational Research in Adolescent Mental Health \(TRAM\)](#) is a partnership of the [Graham Boeckh Foundation](#) (GBF) and the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#). GBF and CIHR have combined their financial and intellectual resources in order to support highly-innovative approaches to making a real difference in improving mental health outcomes for young people in Canada within five years.

Through TRAM, the Partners will work hand-in-hand with mental health communities across Canada over the next year, to collectively build one unique pan-Canadian research-to-practice network. The Network will unite patients/family representatives, policy makers, researchers, service providers, community organizations and other stakeholders to move innovative interventions, practices, therapies or policies out of the research environment and into common use in the real world.

Together the partners will invest \$25M to support one selected network for five years. This partnership with the Graham Boeckh Foundation is a key CIHR initiative under its [Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research \(SPOR\)](#) – a new way of working collaboratively with the provinces/territories and like-minded partners to transform the health care system through meaningful high-impact research.

## Who is guiding TRAM?

TRAM involves several key partners. The **Graham Boeckh Foundation** is a private foundation created by J. Anthony Boeckh and his family to fund transformational initiatives in the area of mental health and other related disciplines. The **Canadian Institutes of Health Research** is the Government of Canada’s health research investment agency. CIHR’s **Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction** is providing key scientific leadership in this initiative.

The **TRAM Collaborating Selection Panel** will work with participants to help build stronger network proposals, and will monitor and mentor the successful Network post-award. This international panel brings together representatives with diverse and complementary perspectives and experiences of mental health: it is composed of patient representatives, individuals with extensive mental health policy and service delivery experience and internationally-renown scientists with expertise in patient-oriented mental health research and knowledge translation.

This network development process is supported by the TRAM “**Partnership Team**” working to facilitate communication between the mental health community and the Partners; it will ensure that stakeholders across Canada become aware of this Call, and support their efforts to participate in the network development process. [Connect with the Partnership Team.](#)

## Why do we need TRAM?

Seventy five percent of mental health problems and illnesses begin prior to the age of 25 years, more than 50% between 12 and 25 years. Young people are more likely to experience mental health disorders than any other age group, and yet they have the least access to mental health care. Existing services are designed for younger children and older adults: the system is weakest where it should be strongest. So while we know that early intervention is key, youth are the least likely of all people to have any contact with the health care system and get the care they need. As a result, mental illness takes an enormous toll on youth and their families, with high levels of preventable morbidity, mortality, and life-long illness.

There is therefore a need for transformational change in addressing adolescent and youth mental health and wellbeing. The gap between research evidence and practice must be bridged if patients and families are to benefit from effective interventions across human service domains (e.g. health, education and social services). Many promising interventions that are found to be effective are only implemented within the academic settings in which they were developed and may often fail to translate into meaningful and scalable patient care outcomes. Further, we need a new wave of therapeutic innovation and translation in both biological and psycho-social therapies. ([See TRAM Fact Sheet](#))

The coordinated involvement of all stakeholders - patients/family representatives, policy makers, researchers, service providers, community organizations and others – is critical to ensure that evidence-based findings are effectively implemented across jurisdictions, in new cultures of care, and across a wide range of contexts to achieve success on a national scale.

### What is different about TRAM?

TRAM is focused on having real world impact. In this context, research is a key tool and a means to an end, but not an end in itself. Research findings published in high profile journals will be valued but they will not, in themselves, signal the success of the initiative. TRAM is:

- An ongoing, iterative process to collectively develop network proposals, in which the funders as well as researchers and mental health stakeholders are all active participants.
- Focused on achieving demonstrable systems change and better health outcomes in five years.
- Metric driven: the Network will clearly define its specific goals and how it will measure progress.
- Network-based, national, multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary and collaborative, intended to break down silos, build collaboration and place patients squarely in the centre of the initiative.
- Co-created: led by CIHR and a charitable foundation, the Graham Boeckh Foundation, it is a new kind of partnership that connects private and government funding to achieve a clear and important goal.

## 2. The Network to be created through this process

### Network Goal and Objectives

Through research and implementation of transformative intervention approaches, **the Network will catalyze fundamental change in youth and adolescent mental health care in Canada**. In five years, new approaches, proven in at least one setting, will begin to substantially increase the number of 11 to 25-year olds who are identified as in need of services and who will receive quality, timely and appropriate care. Implementation science will inform this transformation and scale-up in other settings.

Specific objectives for the Network are to:

1. Conduct research on the effectiveness of known, and as needed novel interventions in broad settings and populations and demonstrate their impact on patient mental health.
2. Develop new methods for implementing evidence-informed practices, policies and programs and demonstrate how these can improve patient outcomes and satisfaction, access to care, and efficiency and value for the health care system.
3. Conduct research involving many researchers and centres linked nationally within the Network to generate evidence and innovations that advance practice and policy changes leading to

identifiable and measurable improvements in patient health, health care and efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

4. Ensure these first three objectives are clear, measurable and impactful, the Network will articulate a set of clear, measurable milestones as well as metric-driven challenges to document impact on specific target problems.

## Network Scope

The Partners recognize the inherent challenge in building a pan-Canadian network which integrates patients/family representatives, policy makers, researchers, service providers, community organizations and other stakeholders as partners; addresses complex systems change; and demonstrably improves health outcomes in just five years. Many important and valuable ideas will simply not be able to be pursued through this initiative so careful identification of the Network strategy and focus will be necessary to achieve success in a five year time frame.

### Target population

The Network will focus on the population with the greatest need for better care: youth and adolescents between the ages of 11-25. While youth “at risk” are unquestionably in need of better services, the network will specifically address youth who are *already experiencing* mental health challenges of some kind, even in their earliest forms. Its target therefore is to find and/ or serve those who *are* - or who *should* be - patients of the mental healthcare system **regardless of whether they have been, or currently can be, clearly identified as experiencing a specific mental illness.**

### Research scope

The Network will seek to make better use of existing research in order to transform service delivery to youth. However, research may also address new or enhanced interventions if needed to achieve the goals set out, and where doing so is feasible in the five-year time for impact. The Network will need to be adaptable and flexible in integrating new approaches as new evidence becomes available.

The Network will focus on the target population and the spectrum of their mental health needs, rather than any specific disease. It must pay great attention to identifying and working with the settings in which young people can be found; it must be acknowledged that these are not typically within the health care system. The TRAM partners and Collaborating Selection Panel will be looking for new approaches, proven in at least one setting and accompanied by research and findings from implementation science to inform transformation and scale-up in other settings.

## Network leadership, structure and governance

TRAM does not define a specific required network structure or governance model; instead, network models are expected to emerge from the Network development process. The eventual structure and governance of each proposed network should be appropriate to achieve their defined goals, and justified using evidence of what works and does not in successful research-to-practice networks. Even participants who start with a pan-Canadian network concept in their Expression of Interest should be prepared to evolve their proposals to incorporate new ideas and people during this process.

It is expected that, the successful Network structure will:

- Provide a coherent and shared vision which guides selection of network participants/ activities.
- Define a leadership model, ideally shared, designed to support achievement of the defined goals.

- Build its team as an equal partnership between researchers and key stakeholders, where each has defined roles and responsibilities, and brings different but essential expertise and resources.
- Integrate and effectively engage all the key stakeholder groups: 1) patients/family; 2) policy makers; 3) researchers; 4) service providers; 5) community organizations, and others as needed.
- Involve multiple jurisdictions, including international partners if appropriate.

### What we are looking for in a network

In selecting the one final network to be funded in Phase III, the Collaborating Selection Panel will focus on the strength of the evidence in the proposal that the Network integrates the right people in the right way, focused on the right goals, to make transformational change in five years. In particular, evidence that:

- a) The Network is a real partnership between 1) patients/family; 2) policy makers; 3) researchers; 4) service providers; 5) community organizations and others, with shared leadership, pooled resources, and equal commitment to success demonstrated by all key participants.
- b) The Network's strategy is creative, innovative, focused, and has high potential for transformational change within the five-year timeframe.
- c) The strategy is practical and demonstrates an understanding of the realities of health care financing, politics, policy and practice, and how change actually happens.
- d) The Network attracts and integrates the people, resources, investments and organizations - within and outside the health care system - most needed to realize and sustain the proposed transformation: the network must be positioned to influence the key levers of change.
- e) The Network structure will effectively support research into implementation needed to catalyze the wide-spread uptake of intervention approaches.
- f) A path to transformation is articulated, defining how progress towards change will be measured at five years, including evidence that the strategy has worked in at least one province.
- g) The Network has responded to the "metric challenge", by providing meaningful and measureable quantitative targets and indicators of how its outcomes can be evidenced.
- h) The Network will use TRAM funds, participant resources, and leveraged investments in ways most likely to improve the mental health outcomes of 11-25 year olds over the next five years.

### 3. The network development process

An Expression of Interest process has been designed to encourage a wide range of creative mental health leaders to share innovative ideas and to indicate the role they envision for their possible participation. Because Phase I is foremost about identifying key people and opportunities, Expressions of Interest can be submitted by either nascent pan-Canadian networks, or smaller teams which might ultimately be merged together or with a larger proposal. Over the coming months, a unique, iterative development process will link and connect these ideas and people to prepare complete pan-Canadian network proposals, and ultimately, select one to fund.

The intent of this process is to encourage dialogue between applicants to create the strongest possible network proposal. TRAM's innovative and proactive approach to building a successful network included substantive input from the Collaborating Selection Panel in the design of the Call, and a Strengthening Workshop built into the selection process to bring together applicants, Collaborating Selection Panel members and other stakeholders. **Through this three-phase process, a network will emerge.**

## Phases and Timeline

Phase	Major steps	Key points	Deadline
Phase I	<b>Expressions of Interest due</b>	Welcomes <u>two</u> kinds of proposals: 1) a nascent pan-Canadian research-to-practice network 2) a team which could become a part of a full pan-Canadian research-to-practice network	April 30, 2013
	Collaborating Selection Panel provides Expression of Interest decisions and advice	Panel will provide early feedback to applicants regarding potential mergers, expansions and other changes	May 31, 2013
	<b>Strengthening Workshop</b>	Mandatory for all Expression of Interest groups selected to participate in the network development process	June 26-28, 2013
Phase II	<b>Letters of Intent due</b>	Letters of Intent from Workshop participants for a <u>pan-Canadian network</u>	September 2, 2013
	Collaborating Selection Panel provides Letter of Intent decisions & advice for development	Panel provides feedback to successful Letter of Intent applicants to support the next phase of development	October 1, 2013
Phase III	<b>Full Proposals due</b> (from short-list of Letter of Intent applicants)	Applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal will receive a development grant of up to \$25k	January 15, 2014
	Final decision	<u>One network</u> will be chosen for support	March 15, 2014

### Phase I: Expressions of Interest and Strengthening Workshop

#### What we are looking for

In Phase I, the intent is to identify the key groups, resources and ideas which may be important components of a pan-Canadian network. In Phase I, submissions will be accepted from both **nascent pan-Canadian** research-to-practice networks and **teams that could become a part of** a full pan-Canadian network. The intent is to ensure that great ideas and teams all have a chance to participate in the Network development process, even if they are not yet integrated into a pan-Canadian network. In Phase I, participants **are applying to partake in a network development process, not for traditional grant funding.**

#### How submissions will be judged

In Phase I, TRAM is looking for good ideas that could be or be part of a pan-Canadian network. A five-page submission will be judged primarily on the importance and relevance of the ideas presented, the potential of the ideas to contribute to transformational systems change and better mental health outcomes in five years and the quality and breadth of the group submitting the Expression of Interest (if applicable).

## **How submissions will be integrated**

Applicants who respond to the Call for Expressions of Interest will be provided with guidance and advice from the Collaborating Selection Panel regarding potential approaches to merging and integrating with other groups who also submitted Expressions of Interest.

The Panel will select the groups invited to continue participating in the Network development process. The leadership of each selected group, representing all necessary stakeholder perspectives, will be required to participate in a three-day strengthening workshop (June 26-28, 2013) where they will present their ideas. This workshop will provide substantial opportunities for exploring potential synergies and partnerships with other participants. The purpose of this workshop is to assist shortlisted applicants to strengthen their proposals in ways that ensure the desired transformative change is successfully delivered in this ambitious timeframe. Participants will also learn more about the specific objectives of the TRAM Partners, and what they expect from a “metric-driven” driven network. TRAM is currently developing a travel policy for participant groups.

## **Phase II: Letters of Intent**

### **What we are looking for**

In Phase II, the Partners will accept Letters of Intent from proposed networks which have emerged through the Phase I process to date, and have achieved pan-Canadian scope.

Given the potential complexity of the ideas, strategies and proposal requirements which must be integrated to move from Phase I to a Full Proposal, and the potential investment of energy to do so, TRAM includes this Letter of Intent step to ensure that only those with a reasonable chance of building a competitive full application proposal move forward.

Post-workshop, groups will have an opportunity to describe their newly shaped network proposal and be assessed for their ability to meet TRAM's goals *before* investing the time needed to fully build the partnerships and structures required for a successful full proposal.

### **How submissions will be judged**

The Collaborating Selection Panel will be looking particularly for a vision and strategy with high potential for transformative change in mental health care delivery and outcomes in five years. The Panel will assess whether the described network leadership, structure and team(s) seems to include the appropriate people and organizations to make and sustain the proposed changes. The panel will be looking for evidence that the proposed network understands the goals of TRAM, and is based on compelling logic for how the proposed activities of the network will lead to the intended impacts on patients.

**Those groups which are invited to submit a Full Proposal will be provided with a development grant of up to \$25,000 each to build their network, partnerships and full proposal.**

Details of the application procedure will follow at a later date.

## **Phase III: Full Proposals**

In the final stage of the process, full proposals will be reviewed by the Collaborating Selection Panel, using selection criteria which will be based on the guiding principles outlined in this document.

Details of the application procedure will follow at a later date.

## 4. How to apply in Phase I

### Eligibility to Apply to Phase I: Expressions of Interest

Unique to Phase I of the Network development process, Expressions of Interest can come from **TWO** kinds of participant groups:

1. Nascent networks which might form the base of a Phase II Letter of Intent
2. Smaller teams which might evolve to become a component of a network by Phase II

All Expressions of Interest (both small teams and larger networks) **must include** active participation from all stakeholder groups with a direct interest in the mental health needs of 11-25 years olds including: 1) patients/family representatives; 2) policy makers; 3) researchers; 4) service providers; 5) community organizations, and others as appropriate. While leadership can come from any stakeholder group, we encourage co-leadership models.

### Key elements of an Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest should be no more than five pages long. It should include the following:

#### 1. Problem/ opportunity

- Describe the need which would be addressed by the proposed team/ network

#### 2. Leaders and partners

- Identify whether the proposal is for (1) a nascent pan-Canadian network, or (2) a smaller team which could be merged with other teams or integrated into a larger proposal
- Identify the leaders and describe their roles
- Identify the main people and/ or organizations from each stakeholder group, and the roles they would play in the team/ network. Describe why they are needed in the team/ network, what they gain from participating, and the expertise and resources they bring to the group

#### 3. Research and implementation strategy

- Broadly describe the current situation, what the group would change, and how it would make the change happen
- Describe potential indicators of change, and how they could be measured

#### 4. Contribution to a pan-Canadian network

- Describe what the team or nascent network could contribute to a pan-Canadian effort to transform mental health care and improve outcomes
- What other expertise or efforts could this group most usefully link with? Where are the most exciting opportunities for synergy?

#### 5. Annex (*maximum 2 additional pages for a team and 4 additional pages for nascent network*)

- Resources available to the team/ network (such as clinical or other facilities, infrastructure, etc)
- Bios for main proposed team/ network members in each stakeholder group

## Selection Criteria for Phase I: Expressions of Interest

Submissions will be reviewed for the importance and potential impact of the ideas they propose, and the relevance and potential role of the suggested team or network in a pan-Canadian approach to transforming mental health care. The same criteria will be used to assess all submissions, whether they are for a nascent network or for a smaller team. However, in ranking and selecting groups to participate in the network development process, teams will be considered in relation to other teams, and nascent networks compared to other networks. Specifically, the Collaborating Selection Panel will assess:

### 1. Importance of issue addressed

- Scope and scale of the problem being addressed; who is affected, how much

### 2. Relevance to goals of TRAM

- Clarity of the group's vision, rationale and priorities, and relevance to TRAM
- Clarity of focus on innovation and transformational change in mental health care and outcomes
- Ability to articulate indicators of change and how to measure them

### 3. Potential impact of proposed strategy

- Engagement of the right leaders and stakeholders; demonstration of their shared commitment
- Likelihood of the proposed approach to have a substantive and measurable impact on patient outcomes in five years; focus on patient-relevant outcomes
- Potential to engage people and leverage resources needed to sustain transformational change

### 4. Potential added value to a pan-Canadian effort

- What unique value does the group bring as either the base of, or a component of, a national network proposal?
- How well can the group articulate a role for itself as part of the larger effort?

## Conditions of Participating

The leadership of applicant groups making proposals that are selected through the Expression of Interest MUST participate in the TRAM Strengthening Workshop, scheduled for June 26-28, 2013.

## Performance measurement

TRAM will require the successful Network to provide annual reporting on agreed performance measures. TRAM will also require the successful Network to provide annual reporting to the Partnership Governance Committee (PGC) on agreed performance measures. Based on the recommendations of the PGC, the Parties may decide to withhold funding if appropriate milestones are not met by the Network, pending action to remedy the situation.

The Network will also be required to participate in any other evaluation or performance measurement activities deemed necessary by TRAM. These include, but are not limited to: completion of a CIHR end of grant report using the Research Reporting System; participation in an overall evaluation of CIHR's Strategy on Patient-Oriented Research Initiative; and any other evaluative activities mandated under the Treasury Board of Canada's Evaluation Policy (2009).

Longer-term effectiveness of the Network's activities will be assessed in follow-up research studies after the end of the funding period.

## Where to send your Expression of Interest

**Completed electronic Expression of Interest submissions and any questions regarding the Expression of Interest process should be directed to:**

Mary Fraser Valiquette  
Strategic Programs Design and Analytics  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Email: [Mary.FraserValiquette@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:Mary.FraserValiquette@cihr-irsc.gc.ca)  
Phone: (613) 941-4394

## Who to call for information and help

For questions about this initiative and research objectives contact:

Jacques Hendlisz  
Partnership Lead, TRAM Initiative  
Telephone: 613-954-2474  
Email: [j.hendlisz@icloud.com](mailto:j.hendlisz@icloud.com)  
<http://tramcan.ca/>

## 5. The TRAM partners

### **Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)** ([www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca](http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca))

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's health research investment agency. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to enable its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 14,100 health researchers and trainees across Canada.

### **Graham Boeckh Foundation (GBF)** <http://www.grahamboeckhfoundation.org/>

The Graham Boeckh Foundation (GBF) is a private foundation created by J. Anthony Boeckh and his family to fund initiatives in the area of mental health and other related disciplines. GBF aims to improve mental health care in Canada by strategically leading and funding projects in basic research, research translation, and community outreach.