



# THE AHA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER · AUGUST 2020

The summer months are flying by in a whirl and taking a moment to reflect on the past two months is a much needed and appreciated deep breath. It is with gratitude that I can report that we are busy working on our many projects and connecting with the incredible individuals and organizations that we work with and support. The AHA Centre is so much more than the factsheets and presentations on our website. Our fabric is held together by master quilters who are inspired by our network of networks – every individual that we cross paths with leaves a footprint on our work in one way or another. To the many individuals who partner with us, help us with peer review, inspire us with their ideas and stories, thank you!

## **Meetings with our Governing Bodies**

We met with our Governing Council and with NARAC (National Aboriginal Research Advisory Committee) at the end of June. Our in-person meetings were penciled in for the end of May but were, of course, postponed indefinitely. Without the option to meet in person, we are doing our best to delicately manage the collaborative work that we do and appreciate everyone's flexibility and patience.

## **Indigenous Peoples Networking Zone. AIDS 2020: Virtual Global Village and The International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS.**

The AHA Centre 2.0 was presented in the Global Village in the Indigenous Networking Zone, in rotation. This presentation is an introduction to the AHA Centre for those who are curious about who we are and what we do.

[CAAN's Roadmap to Policy and Community Leadership: An AHA Centre Perspective](#) was presented during the International Indigenous Pre-Conference on HIV and AIDS. This was part of a panel presentation along with other staff at CAAN and ViiV Healthcare Canada. We focused specifically on the AHA Centre's partnership with ViiV and Impact Public Affairs and how it is informing our engagement with social media, policy work and knowledge translation. Our presentation begins around the 1:13 mark, but we recommend that you check out the entire panel session.

While you're there, you might consider exploring other Wise Webinars sessions from the International Indigenous Pre-Conference too. WISER Webinar series covers a variety of topics relevant to Indigenous people affected by HIV/and AIDS globally in a safe (virtual) space for sharing, capacity building, and empowerment.

## JIHR (Journal of Indigenous HIV Research)

We are happy to announce that we have received an unprecedented number of submissions for this year's JIHR special issue dedicated to the theme of allyship. We were equally thrilled by the response to our call for peer reviewers. We've heard from many first-time reviewers this year which got us thinking about how to best support someone new to the peer review process. With that in mind, we've developed a Peer Review Tips fact sheet (to be shared online soon) and reached out to our more experienced peer review committee members to gauge their willingness to mentor/support our budding peer reviewers. We are happy to report that everyone was quick and generous to offer support and mentorship to those first-time reviewers—you've helped our vision for our peer review mentorship network beautifully fall into place.

A huge thank you to our partners at REACH 3.0 and PAN for helping with advertisement and recruitment for this upcoming volume, and to everyone who is lending their time to the JIHR.

## Community Engagement Fund

This year we received three applications which are currently under peer review. Successful projects will be announced on the website, once peer review is complete. The call for applications is launched annually (typically at the end of winter/early spring) so keep an eye out for it in 2021! We offer up to \$10 000 per project. Visit the [Community Engagement Fund](#) page on the website for more information.

## Good News to Share

Congratulations to our friend and colleague [Dr. Ciann Wilson](#) for her recent tenure track position at Wilfrid Laurier University. Dr. Wilson has over a decade of experience working within racialized communities across the Greater Toronto Area, first as a youth programmer and now as a health researcher who has expanded her research across Canada. Dr. Wilson aims to use research as a way to share stories and realities of Black, Indigenous and people of colour communities

for the improvement of the health and wellbeing of our communities.

We are equally excited to share the news that [Dr. Sarah Flicker](#) has just received a Research Chair (Tier 2) in Community-Based Participatory Research at York University. You may know Sarah from her work with members of the CAAN Youth Council on the [Taking Acton 4 Youth](#) research projects. Dr. Flicker has a background in community development, public health, HIV and adolescent development. Her current program of research focuses on teen HIV prevention and support.

## Online Training Module

The BC NEIHR has created a short 12-minute online training module for students.

[Graduate Student Proposal Writing: Advice & Suggestions from Academic Mentors](#) featuring Dr. Charlotte Loppie, Dr. Jeffrey Reading, and Dr. Margo Greenwood.

## Suggested Reading

**How to Have Sex in an Epidemic Redux: Reinforcing HIV Prevention in the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Peter A. Newman, Adrian Guta

[https://www.academia.edu/43724030/How\\_to\\_Have\\_Sex\\_in\\_an\\_Epidemic\\_Redux\\_Reinforcing\\_HIV\\_Prevention\\_in\\_the\\_COVID\\_19\\_Pandemic?auto=download&email\\_work\\_card=download-paper](https://www.academia.edu/43724030/How_to_Have_Sex_in_an_Epidemic_Redux_Reinforcing_HIV_Prevention_in_the_COVID_19_Pandemic?auto=download&email_work_card=download-paper)

Sexual health is a fundamental determinant of health and wellbeing [1]. All persons—including gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM)—have the right to enjoy a safe and pleasurable sexual life with access to comprehensive information, affirmative care, and an enabling legal and sociopolitical environment [1]. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to disrupt HIV programs and global progress toward UNAIDS 90–90–90 targets [2, 3]. The unprecedented repurposing of health services and resources to address COVID-19, along with necessary restrictive public health measures [4], present a spectrum of psychological, sociocultural, structural, and

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biomedical concerns for sexual health and HIV prevention [5]. In this Note, we draw on lessons learned from four decades of the HIV response with GBMSM communities, and our respective programs of research, to advocate carefully recalibrated, community- engaged approaches to reinforcing HIV prevention in the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Contact Us

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments, or if you want to learn more about research:

<http://www.ahacentre.ca/contact-us.html>

