



# Substance Use and Addiction Education Symposium

## Executive Summary

June 25, 2021

### Introduction

UBC Health facilitates connections and joint ventures across academic units and with external partners. Through the Collaborative Health Education Symposia series, we aim to foster a culture of purposeful collaborations to advance our strategic objectives of education innovation, expanded placements, and an education ecosystem of team-based care. The Collaborative Health Education Symposia are designed to activate and channel the health assets of the university towards our collective aims. By bringing together interested partners around educational issues of common concern, the symposia:

1. Facilitate knowledge exchange and synergies
2. Mobilize and coordinate partners
3. Create an impetus for internal collaboration

### Substance Use and Addiction Education Symposium Overview

On June 25, 2021, UBC Health hosted a virtual Substance Use and Addiction Education Symposium in partnership with the [BC Centre on Substance Use](#) (BCCSU). The symposium brought together UBC faculty from a variety of health professional programs across both campuses, clinical partners, students, and community members interested or involved in substance use and addiction education to discuss and identify opportunities to enhance existing substance use and addiction offerings both uni-disciplinarily and collaboratively.

The goal of the symposium was to provide key partners with an opportunity to:

- Learn about the partnership between UBC Health and BCCSU and existing resources that can be leveraged to enhance substance use and addiction education content
- Discover how health professional students at UBC are currently being supported to learn about this pressing health topic
- Share ideas and discuss opportunities to enhance existing substance use and addiction curriculum
- Connect with other faculty who are involved in substance use education and training

The symposium was facilitated by Donna Drynan, Director of Education at UBC Health, with opening remarks provided by Cheyenne Johnson, Executive Director of BCCSU. Liz Yue, Substance Use and Addiction Partnership Manager at UBC Health and BCCSU presented a summary of a substance use and addiction [environmental scan](#), as well as an overview of existing educational resources offered by the BCCSU that can be leveraged by programs (see Appendix 1). Participants also heard a PharmD student who attended the 2021 BC Substance Use Conference share her reflections from the conference and thoughts on how substance use education could be enhanced at UBC.

After the presentations, participants were split into small groups to discuss the following questions:

## **What opportunities exist to enhance substance use and addiction education in:**

- 1. University-based curriculum**
- 2. Placements**
- 3. Interprofessional opportunities (classroom/placements/other)**

Breakout room facilitators recorded the discussions in each room and then reported back to the larger group, with several calls to action being proposed.

## **Discussion Highlights**

### **1. What opportunities exist to enhance substance use and addiction education in university-based curriculum?**

- Include more explicit substance use and addiction content in core curriculum
  - Limited hours in curriculum result in students not being prepared for practicum placements
- Important to hear from people with lived and living experience (PWLLE)
  - Include early in the curriculum to help contextualize the learning
  - Modules are helpful, but not as valuable as the lived experience
  - Include patient partners to assist with skills based learning
  - However, resource challenges exist and can be a barrier to including PWLLE
- Students need Motivational Interviewing skills – students may not know how to have conversations with people who use drugs
- Curriculum should reflect the continuum of substance use harm reduction, treatment and recovery and recognize that recovery looks different for each person and abstinence is not always the end goal
- Many students have personal experiences with substance use, and we need to ensure substance use and addiction content is taught in a trauma informed way, with special attention paid to language used
  - Students with lived and living experience can feel ostracized in class
  - Due to the prevalence of stigma around substance use, students may not always feel safe
  - There is opportunity to consider how we are supporting students and share resources for students (e.g. the Student Recovery Community)

### **2. What opportunities exist to enhance substance use and addiction education in placements?**

- Build specific substance use and addiction learning requirements for students on placements
- Build capacity for mandatory clinical placements in substance use
- Prepare students before the placement, and include a debrief or reflection piece after the placement
  - Create a safe space with protected time for students to reflect on clinical experiences and share with each other, with a coach to facilitate the discussion
- During placements, students could follow preceptors from other disciplines to get exposure to other professions
- Support students and practitioners to understand roles, expertise and perspectives that other disciplines bring

- Shift the lens from mental health to substance use and addiction

### 3. What opportunities exist to enhance substance use and addiction education in interprofessional opportunities (classroom/placements/other)?

- Create a list of substance use-related courses available for all disciplines
  - Consider making electives less siloed, open to students from other disciplines
- Find opportunities for interprofessional education (IPE) in clinical years
- Integrate this topic into existing IPE workshops
- Bring professionals and those with lived experience (as a facilitator) together with an interprofessional group of students to work through a case and learn about each person's role
- Consider creating an interprofessional mini-conference / education day focused on substance use

## Calls to Action

As highlights from the small group discussions were shared, the following calls to action were proposed:

- Preceptor & instructor development – support teachers to lead substance use and addiction education in a safe, trauma informed way, recognizing that many students experience substance use issues
- Leverage existing free educational programs from BCCSU (e.g., [ACTOC](#) and [POATSP](#) modules)
- Involve PWLLE in curriculum
  - This is very important, however there are resource challenges
- Create support documents on:
  - Resources
  - General continuum of care
  - Role clarification
  - System navigation/services across settings
- Explore making substance use electives more open to students across disciplines
  - Create a list of electives that are available
- Review existing curriculum and ensure substance use and addiction content spans the continuum of care, and recognizes that recovery or abstinence is not always the end goal for patients
- Address the stigma that exists within our own institution

## Next Steps

UBC Health, in partnership with BCCSU, will continue to work with interested partners to identify strategies for advancing the calls to action. UBC Health has created a special interest group to support the development of a community of practice for those interested in substance use and addiction education at UBC. Please sign up at [bit.ly/ubchealthsuasig](http://bit.ly/ubchealthsuasig) to receive updates, resources, and event notifications about substance use and addiction topics.

## Appendix: BCCSU Educational Resources

1. **The Addiction Care and Treatment Online Certificate (ACTOC)** is a free online certificate course targeted at health care professionals interested in learning more about providing care to patients with various substance use disorders. <https://www.bccsu.ca/about-the-addiction-care-and-treatment-online-certificate>
2. **The Provincial Opioid Addiction Treatment Support Program (POATSP)** is a free online course targeted towards opioid agonist treatment prescribers, however all health care providers can benefit from the online education modules. <https://www.bccsu.ca/provincial-opioid-addiction-treatment-support-program>
3. **Addiction Practice Pod** is a podcast focusing on addiction and substance use care for health care providers in British Columbia and Yukon. Offering practical tips and guidance to health care providers seeking to improve their skills in addiction care. <https://bcechoonsubstanceuse.ca/podcast>
4. **BCCSU Clinical Care Guidance Documents** supports primary care clinicians and other health care providers across the province in utilizing more effective approaches to addiction and substance use screening, assessment and treatment. <https://www.bccsu.ca/clinical-care-guidance>
5. **What's New Lectures** is a lunch time lecture series featuring local and international experts, clinicians, and researchers who will deliver the latest research and information on novel, evidence-based addiction medicine topics. <https://www.bccsu.ca/whats-new-lectures>
6. **BC ECHO on Substance Use program** brings together primary care providers and interdisciplinary addiction experts in a virtual network. Providers hear expert advice guided by the latest evidence, share resources, expand collective knowledge, and enhance expertise in the treatment and management of substance use disorders. <https://bcechoonsubstanceuse.ca>
7. **BCCSU FLEX projects** are open to current medical students enrolled at the University of British Columbia as a part of their Flexible and Enhanced Learning (FLEX) curriculum. They have been designed for highly motivated students who are interested in potentially pursuing a career in addiction medicine and/or epidemiology research. <https://www.bccsu.ca/flex-project>
8. **The Interdisciplinary Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program** includes positions in medicine, nursing, nurse practitioner, social work, pharmacy and research. The program is a multidisciplinary fellowship that strives for excellence in clinical training, scholarship, research, and advocacy and includes specialty training in inpatient and outpatient addiction management, as well as related concurrent disorders training. It prepares Fellows to work as experts in the field of addiction medicine and take leadership roles in clinical, academic, and/or research settings. <https://www.bccsu.ca/addiction-medicine-clinical-research-fellowship-overview>
9. **Enhanced Skills Training.** Family Physicians practicing in British Columbia who are interested in developing additional clinical skills in addiction medicine can apply for 3-6 months of postgraduate training offered through the BC Centre on Substance Use, the BCCSU Addiction Medicine Fellowship, and the University of British Columbia (UBC) Family Medicine Enhanced Skills Program (Category 2). <https://postgrad.familymed.ubc.ca/enhanced-skills-program/training-programs/#AM>
10. **The annual BC Substance Use Conference** brings together stakeholders from across the province to share clinical expertise, lived experiences and the latest evidence relating to substance use. [www.bccsu.ca](http://www.bccsu.ca)