

INLIGHT STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH  
RESEARCH INITIATIVE

# 2024 ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



May 7th, 2024  
Massey College  
4 Devonshire Place, Toronto, ON



UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO



**INLIGHT** Student Mental  
Health Research

WELCOME TO INLIGHT'S

# ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM!

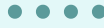
The 2024 Inlight Annual Symposium will provide the opportunity for students, staff, and faculty engaged in post-secondary mental health and wellness to connect and learn from each other about many of the innovative research activities happening across our community. The symposium aims to:

- Support networking of Inlight collaborator groups
- Enhance student engagement and knowledge user partnerships for post-secondary student mental health and wellness
- Enhance multi-disciplinary research by raising awareness of the breadth of research relevant to student mental health and wellness across UofTs campuses and divisions

## ABOUT INLIGHT

The Inlight Student Mental Health Research Initiative is a tri-campus University of Toronto Institutional Strategic Initiative based at the Lawrence Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing. Inlight supports collaborative research that prioritizes student engagement. Inlight's mission is to improve student mental health and wellness outcomes by investing in high-quality, impactful research and driving scalable research innovations.

## Letter of greeting from UofT's Provost Trevor Young



Tuesday May 7

It is a matter of great personal pride and professional honour for me to see the inaugural Inlight Annual Symposium come to fruition.

As Chair of the University of Toronto's Task Force on Student Mental Health, I was keenly aware of the tremendous potential of U of T to not only improve the mental health services we offered to our students, but to reimagine them.

Inlight is a central part of this reimagining – an institutional strategic initiative that leverages our immense capacity for research and the wealth of experience and knowledge in our diverse student body to drive better mental health and wellness outcomes.

We know that student mental health is a central societal challenge. Even before the pandemic, rates of anxiety and depression among young people were on the rise. Inlight, with its model of participatory research, puts the student voice at the centre of research that works to enhance student well-being across post-secondary campuses.

Inlight's vital work will help us scale our capacity to take care of students by contributing research that supports change at a structural and curricular level – change that will help students thrive. Perhaps most exciting, Inlight's research model empowers students and trainees to gain the skills and capacity to support better mental health and wellness going forward.

The 2024 Inlight Annual Symposium represents the remarkable dedication and commitment of the Inlight team. It offers an important opportunity for mental health researchers, students, educators, and clinicians to connect and share their learnings and contribute meaningfully to the improvement of treatment, care, and support for student mental health.

I wish you a wonderful symposium and look forward to hearing about the ideas and initiatives that emerge.

Warmest regards,

Trevor Young  
Vice-President and Provost  
University of Toronto

# AGENDA

8:15 REGISTRATION IN THE FOYER - BREAKFAST AVAILABLE IN DINING HALL

## MORNING SESSION - 9AM

9:00-9:30am Dining Hall	<p><b>Welcoming Remarks</b></p> <p>Professor Kristin Cleverley, Director &amp; Chair, Inlight Professor Sandy Welsh, Vice-Provost, Students Dinarshan Chandrakumar &amp; Delaram Farzanfar, Student Advisory Committee Members, Inlight</p>
9:30-10:30am Dining Hall	<p><b><u>Panel 1 - When Knowledge Isn't Enough: Closing the loop in implementing evidence-based changes</u></b></p> <p>Moderated by Professor Amanda Uliaszek, Associate Director, Research, Inlight &amp; Delaram Farzanfar, Student Advisory Committee Member, Inlight</p>
10:30-10:50am Dining Hall	<p><b>HEALTH BREAK &amp; NETWORKING</b></p>
10:50-11:20am Dining Hall	<p><b><u>Prioritizing Student Voice in Mental Health Research</u></b></p> <p>Facilitated by Rya Buckley &amp; Kate Kim, Student Advisory Committee Members, Inlight</p>
11:20-12:20pm Common Room Upper Library	<p><b><u>Lightning Tables: Inlight Researchers and Fellows</u></b></p> <p>(Refer to page 7)</p>
12:20-1:20pm Dining Hall	<p><b>LUNCH &amp; NETWORKING</b></p>

## AFTERNOON SESSION - 1:20PM

1:20-2:20pm Dining Hall Common Room Upper Library	<p><b><u>Grand Challenges Breakout Discussions</u></b></p>		
	<p><i>Breakout 1: Integrating EDIAI considerations into research design</i></p> <p>Facilitated by Professor Linda Iwenofu &amp; Maya Amestoy</p>	<p><i>Breakout 2: Expanding the lens on research that promotes mental health and wellness</i></p> <p>Facilitated by Professor Antje Budde &amp; Xue (Sunny) Xiang</p>	<p><i>Breakout 3: Maximizing opportunity around UofT data sets and beyond</i></p> <p>Facilitated by Dr Sarah Brennenstuhl &amp; Andrea McCracken</p>
2:20-2:35pm Dining Hall	<p><b>Facilitators Report Back on Breakout Sessions</b></p>		
2:35-2:50pm Dining Hall	<p><b>HEALTH BREAK &amp; NETWORKING</b></p>		
2:50-3:45pm Dining Hall	<p><b><u>Panel 2 - Fostering Compassionate Learning Environments: Evidence-Based Pedagogical Strategies to Support Student Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Classroom</u></b></p> <p>Moderated by Professor Julius Haag, Associate Director, Training &amp; Education, Inlight &amp; Ananya Bhattacharjee, Student Advisory Committee Member, Inlight</p>		
3:45-4:00pm Dining Hall	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Professor Kristin Cleverley, Director &amp; Chair, Inlight Dinarshan Chandrakumar &amp; Delaram Farzanfar, Student Advisory Committee Members, Inlight</p>		

4:00-5:00 PM - NETWORKING RECEPTION & LIGHT REFRESHMENTS IN THE UPPER LIBRARY

9:30-10:30 AM

### When Knowledge Isn't Enough: Closing the loop in implementing evidence-based changes

Facilitators: Professor Amanda Uliaszek & Delaram Farzanfar

For too long student mental health research was not centered on student voices and student experiences; instead, researchers were the ones formulating questions, designing studies, and disseminating knowledge primarily within the scientific community. Inlight has developed research and fellowship programs highlighting student engagement and supporting research that reflects student needs and priorities. Further, many of these studies have connected with other knowledge users (e.g., university staff; clinicians) to further impact the relevance of research questions and designs. The result are research projects with the potential for significant impact. A remaining piece of the puzzle is the engagement of those in university leadership positions to help researchers and knowledge users translate the findings into university level impact. This panel will highlight the important role of different knowledge users in the creation and execution of a student mental health research program, with the intention of understanding and discussing what a “high impact” research project might look like. We will use the example of an Inlight-funded study focused on accessibility services to explore these roles, with a specific focus on how to take evidence-based outcomes can actually impact university policy.

10:50-11:20 AM

### Prioritizing Student Voice in Mental Health Research

Facilitators: Rya Buckley & Kate Kim

Inlight leads from the guiding principle of “Students as Collaborators”. Over the last several years, Inlight has collaborated with undergraduate and graduate students from all three campuses to embed student voice in all funding program, knowledge mobilization, and governance activities across the initiative. In order to advance meaningful student engagement in mental health research, Inlight aims to ensure we are effectively supporting students to engage as research partners and appropriately resourcing researchers to implement student engagement activities in their Inlight-supported projects. This session will overview student priorities in student mental health research, including future areas of research and identified needs to support student pathways into this critical area of work. Importantly, the session will discuss the recent Inlight Student Engagement Day planned and led by the Inlight Student Advisory Committee. Finally, this session will overview the resources and programming co-developed by Inlight and the Student Advisory Committee to support scaling student engagement practices in research across our campuses.

2:50-3:45 PM

### Fostering Compassionate Learning Environments: Evidence-Based Pedagogical Strategies to Support Student Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Classroom

Facilitators: Professor Julius Haag & Ananya Bhattacharjee

Postsecondary institutions are facing increasing demands for student mental health resources. Addressing these challenges and promoting student mental health and well-being is a central concern for researchers, faculty, staff, and administrators. In response, institutions have implemented various forms of campus-based support and interventions. As a primary site of student activity and engagement, research suggests that classroom-focused support represents a vital component of a comprehensive approach to promoting student well-being. This panel will engage with student and faculty knowledge users and key stakeholders to discuss evidence-based pedagogical practices to support student mental health and well-being. The discussion will focus on identifying emerging opportunities, implementing practical and flexible strategies, knowledge sharing, and identifying relevant resources for classroom-based approaches.

**1 Dining Hall****Navigating the Intersection of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Indigeneity (EDIAI) and Research Design**

Facilitators: Professor Linda Iwenofu & Maya Amestoy

During this breakout session, participants will be provided a brief overview of the background and rationale for integration of principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Indigeneity (EDIAI) into all phases of research design, from conception to implementation and knowledge translation. Participants will be invited to share perspectives of their current competencies and available resources that serve as foundations for integration of EDIAI considerations at various levels relevant to research implementation (e.g., individual researcher level, research team, research administration). Additionally, session participants will be guided in co-constructing a summary of the diversity of opportunities that exist, as well as aspirations that they hold, for building on existing foundations and improving their capacity for effective integration of EDIAI principles into research, using mind maps and collaborative brainstorming. Knowledge co-created from this session will highlight the complexities and possibilities inherent in EDIAI integration into research design.

**2 Common Room****Breaking out/Moving in - Expanding the lens on research that promotes mental health and wellbeing**

Facilitators: Professor Antje Budde & Xue (Sunny) Xiang

Mental health and wellbeing are concerns of broad societal importance that benefit from a diversity of approaches, philosophies, and traditions. Cultural communication and translational skills are crucial for breaking out of the familiar, and moving in landscapes of unfamiliar knowledge(s). Through three playful exercises, using the guiding principles of sharing, solidarity, and playfulness, we will offer opportunities for friendly exchanges, open-minded curiosity, and re-considering perspectives informed by individual and disciplinary context in a round-table, collaborative setting. The desired outcomes of this session include inspiring new connections and relationships, expanding and respecting the wealth of knowledge represented by all participants, and providing concrete possibilities for knowledge-making interaction.

**3 Upper Library****Maximizing opportunity around UofT data sets and beyond**

Facilitators: Dr Sarah Brennenstuhl & Andrea McCracken

Student mental health (SMH) data has begun to proliferate across UofT and beyond, including data being collected through academic research projects, institutional administrative data and data collected at provincial and national levels. However, there exists no mapping of available data, making it hard to navigate the space. Moreover, frameworks are lacking to assess the usefulness of existing data. During this session, we will discuss how to maximize opportunities for the creation of new knowledge using existing SMH data. Building on an initial mapping of existing sources of SMH data and a framework for assessing data usefulness, we will discuss strategies to facilitate navigation of data sources, student engagement, and challenges with using existing data sources. Ultimately, this discussion will support the development of ideas for leveraging existing datasets to support high impact projects.

# LIGHTNING TABLE CHART

<b>INLIGHT'S RESEARCH FELLOWS</b>	<b>ROOM</b>
<p><b>Yiyi Wang - University of Toronto Mississauga</b> Student-Centered Approach to Well-being Assessment and Mental Health Interventions</p>	<b>CR</b>
<p><b>Maya Amestoy - University of Toronto Scarborough</b> The role of positive school support in enhancing psychological well-being and reducing internalized stigma in LGBTQ+ postsecondary students</p>	<b>CR</b>
<p><b>Andrea McCracken - Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy</b> How Undergraduate Students Understand, Learn about and Act in Support of their Wellbeing: A Narrative Inquiry</p>	<b>CR</b>
<p><b>Sunny (Xue) Xiang - Rotman School of Management</b> Time in liminality: How post-secondary students' liminal experience facilitates recovery and well-being</p>	<b>UL</b>
<p><b>Rya Buckley - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education</b> Seeking supports on campus: The unique experiences of racialized university students</p>	<b>UL</b>

<b>INLIGHT FUNDED RESEARCHERS</b>	<b>ROOM</b>
<p><b>Prof Antje Budde - Faculty of Arts and Sciences</b> Learning Resilience, envisioning well-being: Syncing mental health discourses and synthesizing knowledge</p>	<b>CR</b>
<p><b>Prof Linda Iwenofu - Ontario Institute for Studies in Education</b> Anti-Black Racism and Mental Health in Higher Education: Perspectives of Current and Prospective Post-secondary Students in a Canadian Context</p>	<b>CR</b>
<p><b>Prof Daniel Grace - Dalla Lana School of Public Health</b> Mapping Services to Support the Mental Health Needs of Diverse 2SLGBTQ+ Students Across the University of Toronto</p>	<b>UL</b>
<p><b>Prof Catherine Sabiston - Faculty of Kinesiology &amp; Physical Education</b> Exercise for Mental Health</p>	<b>UL</b>
<p><b>Prof Janelle Joseph (Represent by Zeana Hamdonah) - Faculty of Kinesiology &amp; Physical Education</b> A Critical Race Analysis of Institutional Factors that Impact Mental Health, Retention and Academic Success Among Racialized Graduate Students – A Mixed Methods Study</p>	<b>UL</b>

<b>INLIGHT ASSOCIATED RESEARCHERS</b>	<b>ROOM</b>
<p><b>Dr Lexi Ewing - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health</b> NavigateCAMPUS: Evaluation of a Hospital-University Navigation Pathway to Enhance Post-Secondary Students' Acute Mental Health Care Transitions</p>	<b>CR</b>
<p><b>Dr Sarah Brennenstuhl - Student Mental Health Research &amp; Inlight</b> Student Mental Health Evaluation: Current Project and Future Directions</p>	<b>UL</b>

**CR** = Common Room; **UL** = Upper Library

**PROF LINDA IWENOFU**

*Anti-Black Racism and Mental Health in Higher Education: Perspectives of Current and Prospective Post-secondary Students in a Canadian Context*

Exposure to anti-Black racism (ABR) in institutional and community contexts is associated with negative mental health and educational outcomes (e.g., depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor academic self-concept, premature dropout) for youth and emerging adults seeking higher education. In a collaboration between UofT and a youth-serving community organization, the purpose of this project is to explore current and prospective Black postsecondary students' perceptions and experiences of racial discrimination within university contexts, identify ways in which these experiences impact their mental health, and explore their experiences of on-campus mental health supports for coping with ABR. This will aid with the identification of culturally responsive opportunities for improvement of campus mental health supports and advance knowledge on effective ways to prepare and support Black students aiming to attend university.

**PROF ANTJE BUDDÉ**

*Learning Resilience, envisioning well-being: Syncing mental health discourses and synthesizing knowledge*

This project explores potentials of arttech for well-being with a focus on student mental health at U of T. The Digital Dramaturgy Labsquared (DDL2) will test two prototypes of performance-based interactive and participatory interfaces/interspaces designed to help students engage in a playful and game-based self-learning process and better understanding of their status of mental health and well-being through active psycho-physical engagement. Through student interaction with these interfaces/interspaces, group feedback and mixed quantitative-qualitative interviews/surveys we hope to determine to what extent U of T students of diverse backgrounds finds these game-based and holistic interactions useful in understanding and maintaining good mental health in the challenging environment of a competitive university but also find a space for mindfulness, community and self-care.

**MAYA AMESTOY**

*The role of positive school support in enhancing psychological well-being and reducing internalized stigma in LGBTQ+ postsecondary students*

This project bridges the path toward a deeper understanding of how positive school support can be advanced to strengthen the mental well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) postsecondary students. Specifically, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach to explore the relationship between positive school support and internalized stigma and psychological well-being in LGBTQ2S+ students at the University of Toronto. This work will also provide a thorough understanding of experiences with positive school support on campus and recommendations from LGBTQ2S+ students to foster stronger positive school support across postsecondary institutions.



## DR LEXI EWING

*NavigateCAMPUS: Evaluation of a Hospital-University Navigation Pathway to Enhance Post-Secondary Students' Acute Mental Health Care Transitions*

The surge in post-secondary students (PSS) reporting mental health concerns, coupled with increased access to hospital-based mental health care, highlights a need to understand effective acute mental health service (AMHS) discharge interventions to ensure continuity of care. To address this system gap, the University of Toronto (UofT) and CAMH collaborated to implement a Navigator Model. The model introduces care navigators to facilitate PSS transitions from AMHS to community or campus mental health care. The purpose of the NavigateCAMPUS project is to evaluate use of the Navigator Model for PSS. The study will recruit UofT PSS who have used the Navigator Model. The study uses a multi-methods approach: (1) a longitudinal quantitative evaluation, and (2) a qualitative evaluation. A series of success indicators will be evaluated, including transition success and health outcomes. The project will inform clinical practice, system integration, and provide a framework for scalability of the Navigator Model.

## ANDREA McCRACKEN

*How Undergraduate Students Understand, Learn about and Act in Support of their Wellbeing: A Narrative Inquiry*

Going through life changes and transition places post-secondary students in a unique area of life where emphasis on promotion of mental health alongside treating the symptoms of mental illness might require specific age-related care. This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of post-secondary students' experiences with psychotropic medication management for mental illness. Study findings will increase understanding about how pharmacists within the primary health care ecosystem can care for students' mental health during the time of transition to adulthood. New programs will be developed, evaluated and if beneficial, scaled up across pharmacy and other primary health care settings.

## YIYI WANG

*Student-Centered Approach to Well-being Assessment and Mental Health Interventions*

This project aims to investigate the meaning of wellbeing for postsecondary students and develop an intervention program that caters to their unique perspectives. The researchers argue that current assessments of wellness overlook students' diverse definitions of wellbeing. The study has three specific goals: 1) collaborate with students to broaden their understanding of wellness and assess the significance of using metrics informed by students versus universal metrics, 2) determine the efficacy of customized mental health training resources for students, and 3) examine whether a chatbot-based platform is more effective in enhancing students' ability to cope and improve their wellbeing.

## PROF JANELLE JOSEPH & ZEANA HAMDONAH

*A Critical Race Analysis of Institutional Factors that Impact Mental Health, Retention and Academic Success Among Racialized Graduate Students – A Mixed Methods Study*

This project is seeking to examine the institutional factors that shape the intersectional barriers faced by racialized graduate students across health departments at the University of Toronto (Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education and Dalla Lana School of Public Health) on their mental health, and throughout their academic journey (i.e retention, academic success). Engaging in collaborative research, this study is guided by the feedback of the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) that is comprised of 11 racialized graduate students across the two faculties who were selected to support the study through review of the various study phases. The counter-narratives provided by racialized students participating in this study will be used to inform evidence-based recommendations as part of the study report.

## PROF DANIEL GRACE

*Mapping Services to Support the Mental Health Needs of Diverse 2SLGBTQ+ Students Across the University of Toronto*

This project seeks to address the gaps in data regarding the unique mental health needs of diverse Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (2SLGBTQ+) students at the University of Toronto. Working with and alongside students, this project aims to understand to what extent the university has been able to meet the mental health care needs of 2SLGBTQ+ students and to understand how other aspects of students' identities, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status impact care. In addition to generating new data, this project will work with students directly to co-create accessible mental health resources for 2SLGBTQ+ students and will raise recommendations for how to increase and improve mental health services at the university.

## PROF CATHERINE SABISTON

*Exercise for Mental Health*

Exercise is an alternative therapy for acute care of mental health symptoms among students. Individualized and supervised exercise programs are supported and deemed acceptable by on-campus professionals and help-seeking students, and we have developed a referral pathway. We have found significant improvements in mental health symptoms following six-week exercise programs. However, the long-term effects are unknown and less resource-intensive exercise programs may be beneficial. This study aims to address these important gaps for on-campus lifestyle management of student mental health by testing equivalence of group to individual exercise programs, examining exercise effects on mental health over time, and completing a process evaluation.

## DR SARAH BRENNENSTUHL

*Student Mental Health Evaluation: Current Project and Future Directions*

Along with partners, including Inlight and the campus health centres, the Tri-Campus Student Mental Health Team leads initiatives to enhance and expand access to mental health services organized by a Stepped Care Model. Student engagement and representation in ongoing evaluation is a top priority. In 2022, the Student Perception of Mental Health Care survey was launched. In the first iteration of this repeated cross-sectional survey, data from over 500 students was analyzed. The median for most items was 4 (/5). Satisfaction was higher for in-person visits, repeat users, and graduate students. For some subscales, satisfaction was lower for 2SLGBTQIA+. The second iteration of the survey will be launched Fall 2024 with student-led adaptations to increase engagement and response rates. Evaluation of same-day counselling is a second key project slated to occur on all three campuses this summer. Student consultations are currently underway to finalize the repeated measures evaluation model.

## XUE (SUNNY) XIANG

*Time in liminality: How post-secondary students' liminal experience facilitates recovery and well-being*

This research project investigates how students can improve their well-being by engaging in liminal activities - those not part of their social role responsibilities (e.g., exercise, commuting). These activities offer a chance for reflection, which can provide self-clarity and result in recovery and well-being. However, rumination during these activities can prevent individuals from capturing these benefits. My study explores this mechanism and how it affects students' well-being with a culturally sensitive lens. I examine whether cultural backgrounds affect the need for these experiences and the experiences themselves. This research has important implications for improving the well-being of students from diverse backgrounds.

## RYA BUCKLEY

*Seeking supports on campus: The unique experiences of racialized university students*

While it is known that racialized postsecondary students access campus-based mental health supports at lower rates than their non-racialized peers, little is known about the experiences of racialized students who do access support. To better understand their experiences, the present study examines the experiences of racialized students accessing wellness and mental health supports at a Canadian university. This was done by interviewing 31 racialized undergraduate students. Interviews are currently being analyzed using methods that harnesses researcher subjectivity and considers participants' multiple identities. Results will provide a greater understanding of the mental health needs of racialized university students.

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## SPEAKER BIOS



### Sandy Welsh

Vice Provost, Students

Professor Sandy Welsh began her term as Vice-Provost, Students, on July 1, 2015. As Vice-Provost, Students, Professor Welsh is responsible for working closely with Principals, Deans and academic divisions across our three campuses to enhance the student experience at University of Toronto – including Student Life programs and services on the St. George Campus, student health and wellness, international student services and study abroad programs, and Hart House. She is also responsible for University-wide policies and procedures affecting students.



### Kristin Cleverley

Inlight Director & Chair

Professor Kristin Cleverley is the CAMH Chair in Mental Health Nursing Research and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Nursing and Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and Senior Scientist in the Margaret and Wallace McCain Centre for Child, Youth & Family Mental Health at CAMH. She is the Chair of the University of Toronto Student and Youth Mental Health Research Initiative and Co-Chaired the Ontario Health Quality Standard on Youth-to-Adult Health Care Transitions. Prof. Cleverley's research engages students, youth, and caregivers in the co-design of novel clinical and health system interventions to improve continuity of care.



### Delaram Farzanfar

Inlight Student Advisory Committee Member 2023-24

Delaram Farzanfar is a PhD student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on understanding brain activity during creative experiences and their implications for improved well-being. Dela is a registered psychotherapist in Ontario and has experience working in mental health in public institutions in Toronto. She is a junior fellow at Massey College, graduate fellow at the School of Cities, and serves on the Program Committee at the International Neuroethics Society. She hopes to improve long-term access to psychotherapy in Canada.



### Dinarshan Chandrakumar

Inlight Student Advisory Committee Member 2023-24

Dinarshin Chandrakumar is a first year undergraduate student with a burning desire to make positive change in the field of mental health. He aspires to become a psychiatrist and is driven by a deep commitment to helping individuals overcome their mental health challenges. Currently, he has dedicated his time to helping the community through roles as a Bridging Pathway Mentor and a Health & Counselling Volunteer.

## PANEL 1



### **Professor Amanda Uliaszek**

Inlight Associate Director, Research

Amanda Uliaszek has been the director of the STEPP (Study and Treatment of Emotion Dysregulation and Personality Pathology) Lab at the University of Toronto since 2011. She received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Northwestern University and completed her predoctoral residency at the University of Illinois Chicago Medical Center. Prof. Uliaszek has obtained international recognition for her research on psychotherapy mechanisms and outcomes, with a specific focus on improving treatments for children, youth, and university students. Prof. Uliaszek is a registered psychologist in Ontario, with an expertise in the delivery of dialectical behavior therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy.



### **Shari Russell Opara**

Director of Health & Wellness (UTSC)

Shari Russell Opara is the Director of Health & Wellness at University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus. Shari holds a Master of Education in Leadership and Community Development, a post-graduate certification in Human Resources Management, and a post-graduate diploma in Art Therapy. She brings a unique and diverse skill set to team building and leadership. Her experience in healthcare, understanding of human behaviour and organizational dynamics, and her deep interest in the therapeutic potential of creative expression as a means to improve mental health outcomes, allows her to foster inclusive environments.



### **Fatima Khalil**

Undergraduate Student & Student Advisor

Fatima Khalil is an undergraduate student in the Department of Physical and Environmental Science at UTSC. She served as Co-Chair of the Mental Health Advisory Committee in 2019, and is currently a student advisor at the STEPP Lab.

**With Delaram Farzanfar & Sandy Welsh.**

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT SESSION



### **Rya Buckley**

Inlight Student Advisory Committee 2023-2024 & Research Fellow 2022-23

Rya Buckley is a first-year PhD student in the School and Clinical Child Psychology program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Her research interests are broadly in the area of marginalized students' mental health and support-seeking experiences. Her master's thesis work focused on the experiences of racialized university students accessing wellness and mental health supports on campus. She is a recipient of the 2022 Inlight Research Fellowship.



### Kate Kim

Inlight Student Advisory Committee 2023-2024



Kate Kim is a fourth-year student at UofT St. George with a Psychology specialist and has been involved in a developmental psychology lab for almost 2 years. Due to her dual passion for combining human mental health and technology together, Kate is learning coding for UI/UX with the hopes of creating a middle ground. Kate is especially interested in the association between mob mentality and conformity, and the harmful romanticization of mental health issues as an unfavourable coping mechanism in the younger generation. Kate aspires to launch a platform that can work as an intermediary for mental health and therapists.

## BREAKOUT SESSION

### Professor Linda Iwenofu

Assistant Professor



Linda Iwenofu is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Psychology and Human Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Prof. Iwenofu's scholarship focuses on understanding the ways in which individual differences such as race, ethnicity, poverty, immigration and exposure to adverse events impact child and youth trajectories toward health and wellness. She teaches courses in psychoeducational assessment, clinical child and adolescent psychology and clinical assessment and intervention with culturally and linguistically diverse children, youth and families.

### Maya Amestoy

Inlight Research Fellow 2022-23



Maya Amestoy is a PhD student in the Department of Psychological Clinical Science at the University of Toronto Scarborough. In this department, she is conducting impactful research focusing on the influence of stigma on mental health and well-being in diverse groups of individuals. During her undergraduate degree, she was involved in various projects exploring postsecondary students' stress levels, as well as individual difference factors, such as their sleep and eating habits, which may impact mental health. Her Master's thesis aimed to explore the existence of borderline personality disorder stigma in the general population using a vignette-based study. The findings from this research have been presented at an international conference and are in press to be published in a high-impact journal. Supported by her Inlight fellowship, Maya is conducting a mixed-method study to gain deeper insights into the experiences of positive school support, internalized stigma, and psychological well-being among 2SLGBTQ+ postsecondary students. Her aim is for these findings to contribute towards promoting equity, cultivating inclusive school environments, and bolstering the well-being of 2SLGBTQ+ students.

### Professor Antje Budde

Associate Professor



Antje Budde is a queer-feminist scholar-artist, the artistic research director of the Digital Dramaturgy Labsquared (DDL2), and works as an Associate Professor of Theatre Sciences, Cultural Communication and Modern Chinese Studies at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Toronto. Antje is the founder of (DDL)2 or (Digital Dramaturgy Lab)squared – a platform for experimental explorations of digital culture, creative labor, the integration of art and science, technology in/as performance, researching at the intersection of science, art, engineering, computer science, committed to urgent matters of social justice.

## SPEAKERS (cont)



### **Xue (Sunny) Xiang**

Inlight Research Fellow 2022-23

Sunny Xiang is a second-year PhD student in Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. Prior to starting her PhD, she obtained her Bachelor of Commerce at Rotman Commerce, University of Toronto, with a specialist in management and a major in psychology. Her Inlight fellowship examines the identity transition and suspension students experience when performing or not performing certain social roles (e.g., as a student, member of their household), specifically if and how performing activities in their liminal space, a space where all their social roles are suspended, can facilitate their recovery and well-being.



### **Dr Sarah Brennenstuhl**

Student Mental Health Research, Vice Provost Students & Inlight

Sarah Brennenstuhl is the Senior Research Associate and Data Strategy & Evaluation Lead with the Student Mental Health team at the University of Toronto, and is cross-appointed with Inlight. She holds a master's degree in social work and a PhD in Social and Behavioural Health Sciences. Her work focuses on designing and implementing evaluations of the mental health services offered at UofT, with direct applications to student mental health research more generally, as well as designing methods for capturing data, and determining how data can inform the work of the Student Mental Health team. Her broader research focuses on using existing data to create new knowledge, with a focus on inequalities in mental health service access and outcomes.



### **Andrea McCracken**

Inlight Research Fellow 2022-23

Andrea McCracken is currently pursuing a Masters in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto. She previously earned her honours Bachelor of Science from the University of Toronto. Her research interests involve supporting interventions and collaborative practices that can improve mental health care delivery and medication management in pharmacy, specifically with post-secondary students. Medication use can be challenging on its own and there is little information about the associated experiences and needs of post-secondary students with psychotropic medication management. Identifying these needs from post-secondary students' perspective will help determine psychotropic medication management challenges that could be addressed by pharmacists.

## PANEL 2



### **Ananya Bhattacharjee**

Inlight Student Advisory Committee 2023-2024 & Research Fellow 2023-24

Ananya Bhattacharjee is a PhD candidate in Computer Science at the University of Toronto, focusing on digital mental health interventions. His work, closely developed with Mental Health America and specialized clinicians, has impacted over 2,000 individuals through tailored, digital platforms. Ananya is the creator of the SPARK platform, which employs GPT-4 technology to assist students facing procrastination issues. His global partnerships with mental health helplines further enhance his multifaceted understanding of mental health needs in various populations. He is also a recipient of prestigious accolades, including the Wolfond Fellowship and a best paper award at CHI.

### **Professor Julius Haag**

Inlight Associate Director, Training & Education



Julius Haag is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream in the Department of Sociology at UTM, where he teaches courses in policing, urban life and public policy, and youth gangs. Prior to joining Inlight, Prof. Haag contributed to several campus-based initiatives, including as the session lead for Race Based Data Collection at the National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and as a review panel member for the U of T review of the Role of Campus Safety Services in Student Mental Health. His research interests include policing, youth justice, gangs, racialization, ethnicity, criminalization, and teaching and learning.

### **Professor Jordana Garbati**

Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream



Jordana Garbati, PhD is Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy and Director, Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) at the University of Toronto Mississauga. She has worked in the field of education for over 20 years, and began at UTM in 2020. She now teaches courses on academic writing and intercultural communication, and she is currently developing a second-year course on emoji communication. At the RGASC, she oversees academic programming in the areas of writing, numeracy, and learning strategies for undergraduate and graduate students as well as educational development for instructors.

### **Mohi Reza**

PhD Student



Mohi Reza is a Ph.D. candidate in Computer Science at the University of Toronto working with the Intelligent Adaptive Interventions group at the DGP lab. His research in Human-Computer Interaction is focused on building interfaces powered by AI, crowd-sourcing, and field experimentation that improve learning, well-being, and collaboration in online environments. Mohi's work has been recognized and supported by the Robert E. Lansdale/Okino Computer Graphics Graduate Fellowship (2024), the XPRIZE Foundation as a leading graduate student of the grand-prize-winning team in the million-dollar Digital Learning Challenge (2023), and the Wolfond Scholarship (2022). He has earned an M.Sc. in Computer Science from the University of British Columbia in 2020 and a B.Sc. in Computer Science and Economics from BRAC University in 2017, where he was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Gold Medal for ranking first in the CS program.

### **Cristina Didiano**

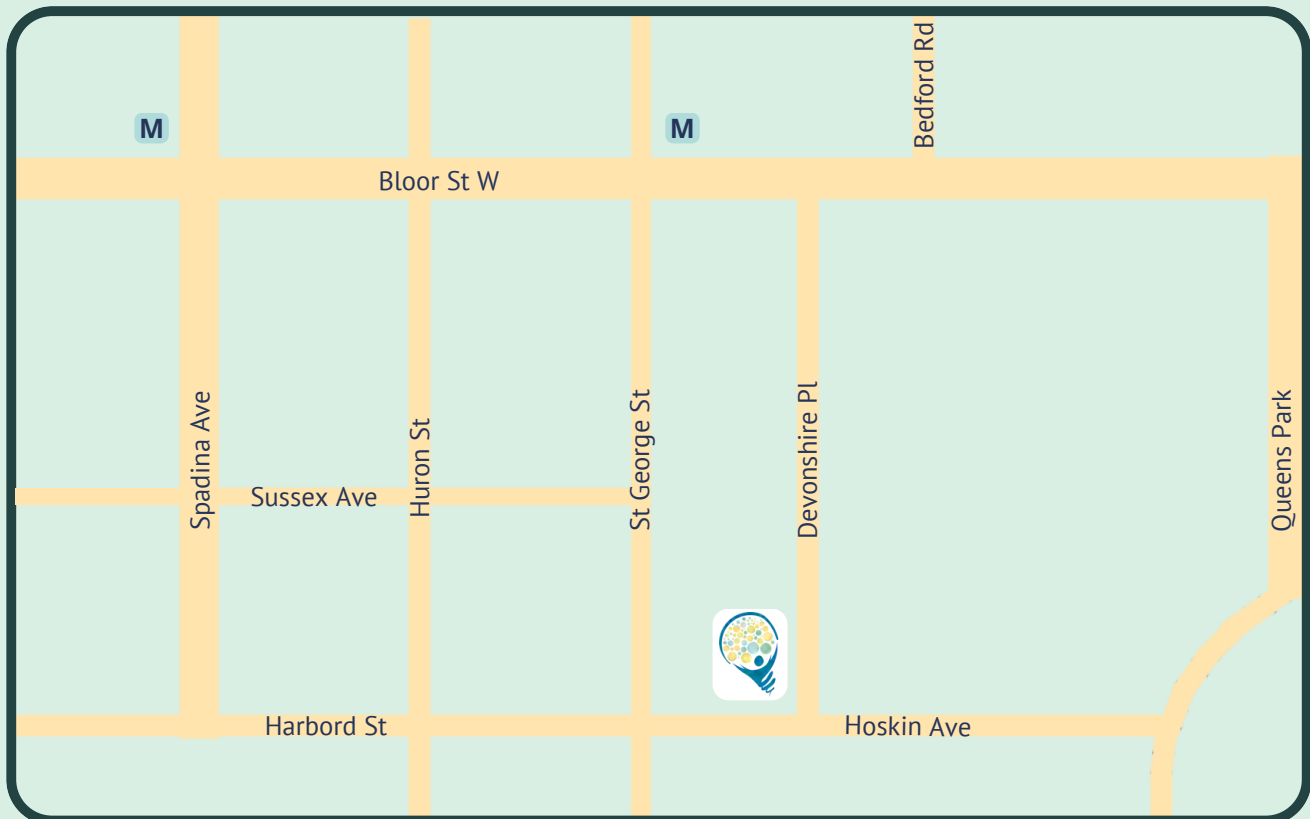
Undergraduate Student & Student Advisor



Cristina Didiano is a graduating student from the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM), specializing in Sociology. Her primary research interests reside within Canadian mental health care policy, stigma theories, intersectionality, and the institutionalization of mental health care. Cristina provides valuable insights on how UTM students choose to express their mental health concerns through an anonymized social media platform. Her most recent work looks at how the public Canadian mental health care system perpetuates barriers to psychotherapeutic resources. Cristina will continue to foster her research interests as an MA candidate in Sociology at the University of Toronto.

## MASSEY COLLEGE

4 Devonshire Place  
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Enter the gate on Devonshire Place, proceed through the quad and use the entrance on your left to find the Research Symposium registration desk.

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**Ondaatje Dining Hall** is located on the second floor.

All-gender washrooms are on main level beside foyer.



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