

Final Evaluation Report (2021-2024)

Executive Summary



CBT Skills Groups Spread Initiative

This summary presents evaluation findings from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2024, of the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Skills Groups Spread Initiative, an initiative offered through Mind Space (formerly the CBT Skills Groups Society) and UBC Continuing Professional Development and funded by the Shared Care Committee (SCC), a joint collaborative committee of the Doctors of BC and the Ministry of Health.

About the CBT Skills Groups Spread Initiative

The initiative aims to spread the CBT Skills Groups, a psychoeducational and skills training program, across British Columbia, with the following goals:

- Improve physician wellness through CBT training via UBC Continuing Professional Development
- Train physicians to deliver CBT skills to patients in group settings through Advanced Facilitator Training via Mind Space
- Increase patient access to CBT-informed treatment

Initiative implementation – Physician training

The original goal of the initiative was to enrol 240 physicians to complete Physician Wellness training and enrol 100 physicians to complete Advanced Training to become CBT Skills Groups Facilitators. The initiative exceeded the original Physician Wellness training target and is on track to meet a revised target for Advanced Training.

Physician Wellness Training

686

physicians, residents, and nurse practitioners completed Physician Wellness training

As of December 31, 2024, **the initiative has achieved 91% of the training target of 750** (increased from 240 in Year 2 of the initiative due to popular demand). The initiative exceeded its original target and is on track to achieve 750 by March 2025.



Of the 620 individuals who completed Physician Wellness Training and identified their practice type, **76% are family physicians and 18% are specialist physicians.**

Individuals from 97% (35 of 36) of Divisions of Family Practice (DoFP) in BC participated in the training. The greatest number of individuals who completed the training are from the Vancouver DoFP.



Advanced Facilitator Training

33

individuals have completed Advanced Facilitator training; 25 are currently in the training.

As of September 30, 2024, **the initiative has achieved 45% of the training target of 73** (decreased from 100 in Year 3 of the initiative based on lessons learned). The initiative is on track to achieve 73 by December 2026.



Of the 33 individuals who have completed training, 17 are in the Vancouver Coastal Health region.



Of the 25 individuals currently in Advanced Facilitator training, 9 are currently in training and 16 are in the process of being scheduled.

Initiative implementation – Referrals and participants

Mind Space offers a wide variety of CBT Skills groups. The initiative trains physicians to deliver the CBT Skills Foundations group, an entry level group which, as of 2023-24, accounts for 48% of the total groups offered by Mind Space. Comparable to similar CBT programs, on average 50% of referred patients register for a group.

Referrals to Mind Space groups

9373 unique referrals were made to all Mind Space groups in 2023-24, over double from baseline (4304 in 2020-21).



The number of primary care providers referring patients doubled from baseline (1031 to 2194 in 2023-24), particularly from Kootenay Boundary, qathet, North Peace and Shuswap North Okanagan.



Most referrals are from Victoria, South Island and Vancouver. About 22% (n=5944) of patients referred are on a waitlist for another mental health service, typically a health authority service.

Unique patient participants

2874 unique patient participants registered for a CBT Skills Foundations group in 2023-24, an increase of 73% from baseline (1662 in 2020-21)



The total number of CBT Skills Foundations groups offered has increased from 138 at baseline to 211 in 2023-24.



The total number of CBT Skills Foundations facilitators has increased from 21 at baseline to 52 in 2023-24.

Impact of the Training

The initiative has positively impacted physicians who participated in Physician Wellness Training and those who went on to pursue Advanced Facilitator training to become a CBT Skills Groups facilitator. The key impacts on trainees over the course of the evaluation are outlined below:

Physician Wellness / Phase 1 Participants

Participants (n=158) experienced statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) **improvements in feelings of professional fulfilment, work exhaustion, interpersonal disengagement and resilience.** Scores remained stable over time indicating these improvements are sustained post training.

98% (n=452) and **95%** (n=451) of Physician Wellness / Phase 1 survey respondents agreed they **will use CBT skills in their personal and professional life**, respectively.

96% and **94%** of Physician Wellness / Phase 1 survey respondents (n=453) agreed they **are going to recommend the program to colleagues and patients**, respectively.

“This program is so valuable in supporting physicians on their journey in providing not only care for their patients, but care for themselves.”
- Physician participant

Advanced Facilitator Trainees

100% of trainee survey respondents (n=18) **agreed the training improved their confidence to provide care** and their ability to provide care and manage the condition.

100% of trainee survey respondents (n=18) and 100% of trainer survey respondents (n=5) **agreed the training was a valuable use of their time.**

95% of trainee survey respondents (n=18) and 100% of trainer survey respondents (n=5) **agreed the training program energized them in their work.**

84% of trainee survey respondents (n=18) and 100% of trainer survey respondents (n=5) **agreed the training program made them feel more connected to their colleagues and professional community.**



Impact of the Groups

Patient CBT Skills Groups participants

Of patients registered for a CBT Skills Foundations group (n=8603), **74% of participants completed the group** (attended 6 or more sessions).

Patient participants experienced statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) **improvements in depression, anxiety, and resilience scores.**

Based on pre/post scores to the Patient Health Questionnaire 8 (n=2279), Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (n=2291), and Brief Resilience Scale (n=1699).

87% (n=4982) and 96% (n=5080) of survey respondents agreed the program **improved their ability to manage their condition** and **would recommend the program** to friends and family, respectively. These findings were consistent across respondents from diverse racial backgrounds.

"I'm able to deal with life a lot better and I feel stronger, more empowered with dealing with my emotions than I had ever felt in the past." -Patient

Referring providers

89% (n=74) and 80% (n=75) of referring provider survey respondents agreed **the program gave their patients greater access to mental health care and got their patients the help they need faster** than other mental health services, respectively.

82% of referring provider survey respondents (n=81) agreed **the program improved their ability to work with patients** to achieve their health goals and **decreased the frequency and urgency of their patients' appointments.**

92% of referring provider survey respondents (n=81) reported that **the program was valuable to their practice.**

*"[The program] allowed [my patient] to use CBT skills to **challenge their own thoughts and get procedures done that they otherwise would have avoided**".*

-Referring provider

Discussion

The initiative met several goals, including **significant expansion across BC.** The evaluation suggests the following initiative-, program-, and health-system level recommendations to sustain and build on these impacts:

Initiative-level

- Develop a strategy to secure long-term funding for program innovation and leadership
- Explore a permanent partnership to deliver the Physician Wellness training

Program-level

- Increase program awareness and promotion
- Continue to monitor patient demand and uptake for Mind Space groups and adjust accordingly
- Continue to support trained Mind Space facilitators to innovate and increase services for patients

Health system-level

- Strengthen relationships with Divisions of Family Practice, Primary Care Networks and regional health authorities and explore ways of partnering to increase patient access to Mind Space groups

Conclusion

The initiative succeeded in expanding the program across the province, doubled the number of CBT Skills Foundations groups offered, and positively impacted physicians, patient, primary care providers, and the wider BC health care system.

The initiative exceeded the original target for Physician Wellness training and is on track to meet the revised goal for Advanced Training; the evaluation found the original goal was ambitious as it would have required quadrupling the number of CBT Skills Foundations groups offered.

To continue sustaining the impacts of the initiative, the evaluation recommends securing long-term funding to support program innovation, increasing program awareness and promotion, and continuing to build partnerships with primary care and mental health care organizations.