



Canadian Institutes of
Health Research
Instituts de recherche
en santé du Canada

Protecting Those Who Protect Us: Supporting Mental Health in Public Safety Personnel

CAHS 2022 Forum – Keynote Address

September 8, 2022

Presented by: Dr. Samuel Weiss, Scientific Director
CIHR Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction



Minister of Mental Health and Addictions

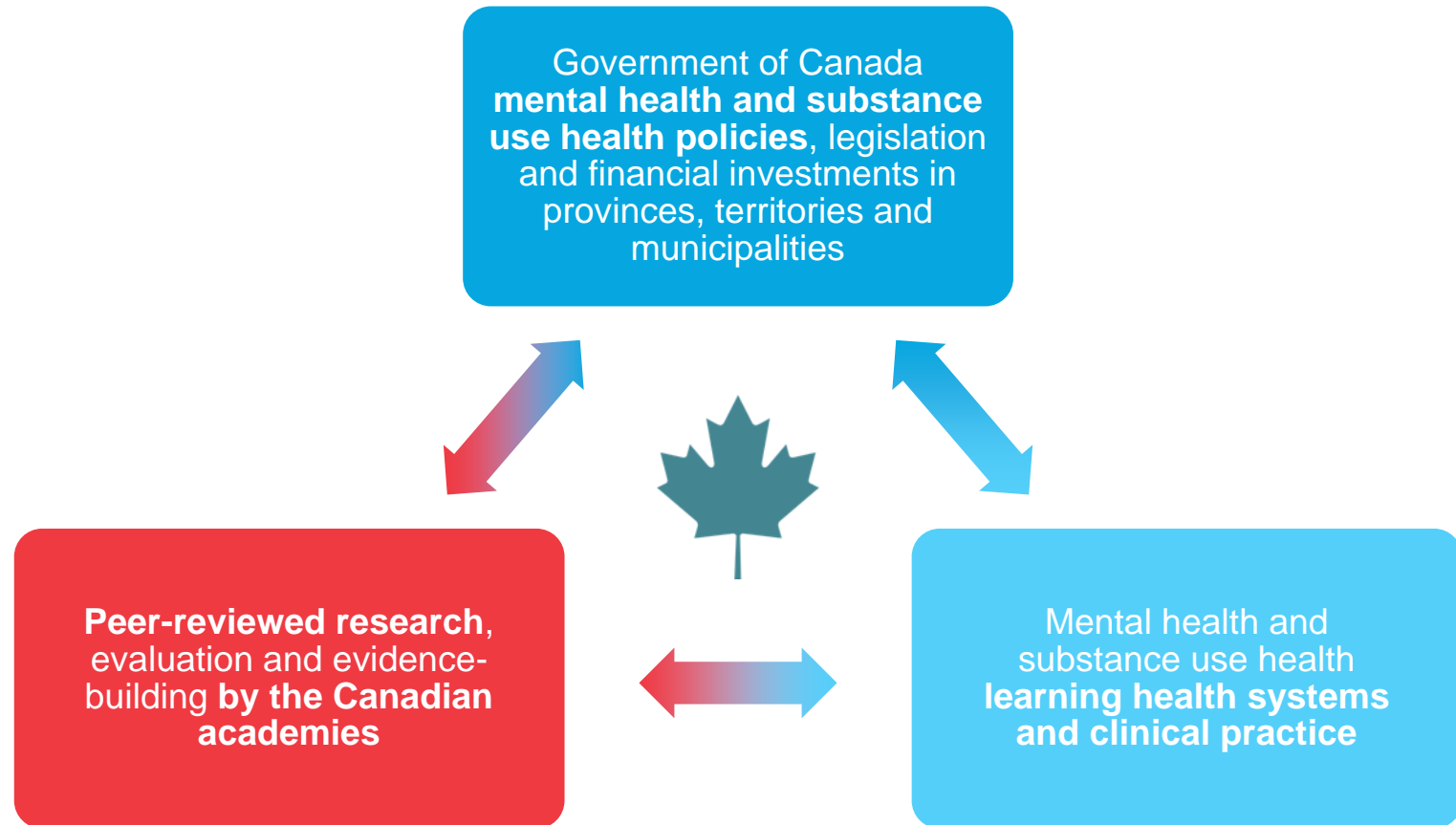
On October 26, 2021, the Government of Canada announced the appointment of Carolyn Bennett as the **first federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions**, as well as the Associate Minister of Health



Mandate Letter

- **Commitments in the Prime Minister's Mandate Letter** to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions include:
 - Support the Minister of Public Safety to continue **advancing Canada's first-ever National Action Plan on Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries**
 - Support the Minister of Veterans Affairs to ensure Canadian Armed Forces members and Veterans have **access to adequate mental health resources, services and training programs** tailored to their specific needs
- Underlying all the commitments was the need to **use the science and make decisions based on evidence**

Triangulation of Evidence, Practice and Policy



PTSI in PSP Initiative

Federal Budget 2018 announced an investment of \$20 million over five years to support a new **national research consortium** between CIHR and CIPSRT to address the **mental wellness of public safety personnel**



Public Safety
Canada

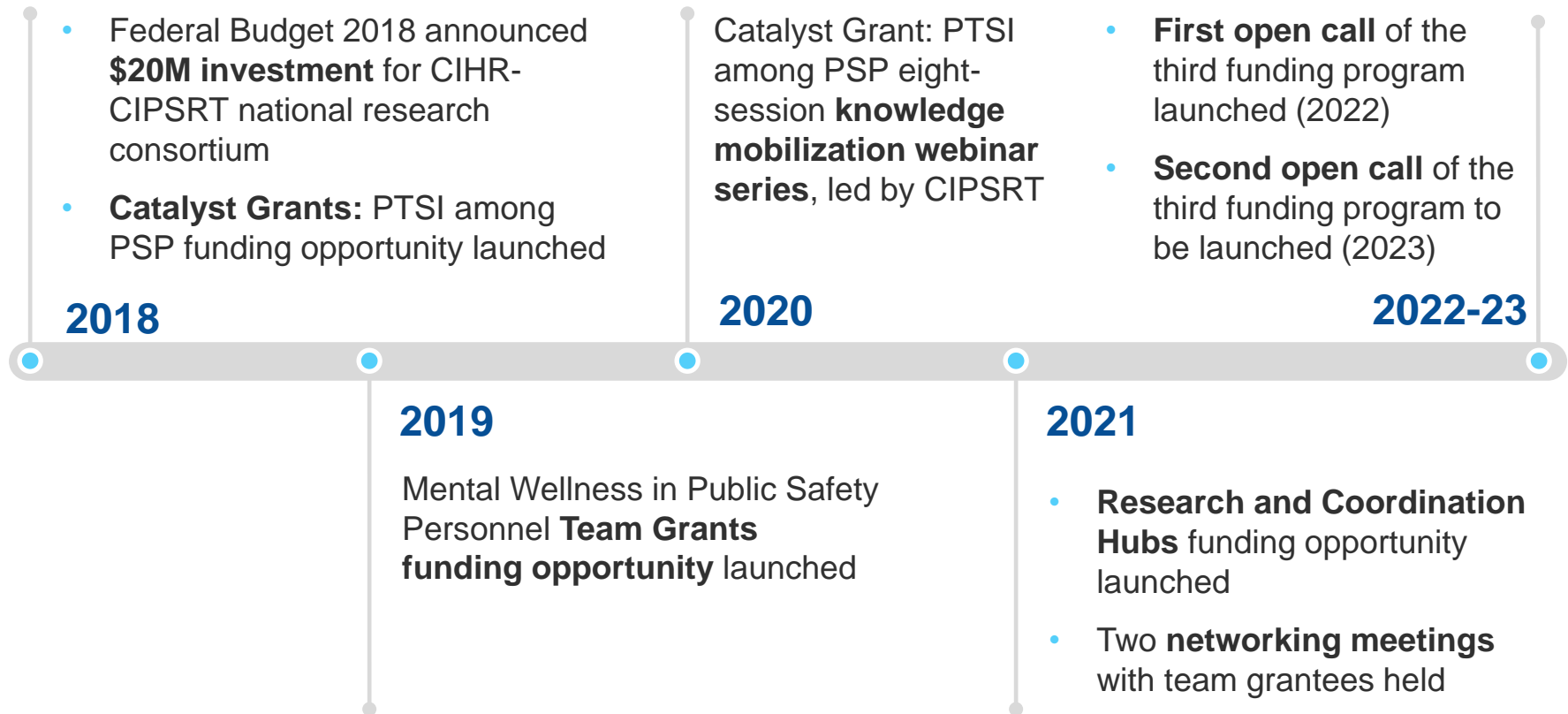
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PTSI in PSP Initiative

- The **National Research Consortium** builds the evidence base related to PTSI among PSP, under the guidance of a Public Safety Steering Committee (PSSC)
- This investment supports research and knowledge mobilization through **CIHR-led strategic funding opportunities** and a **knowledge exchange hub led by CIPSRT**



PTSI in PSP: Initiative Timeline



PTSI in PSP: Research Investments to Date

Catalyst Grants in PTSD among PSP (2018)

- 22 one-year grants were funded to address research on **PTSD and adverse mental health outcomes among PSP**

Mental Wellness in Public Safety Team Grants (2019)

- Eight multi-year team grants were **funded to address PTSD among PSP**, including dedicated teams studying police and corrections personnel

Research and Coordination Hubs for Public Safety (2021)

- Informed by PSSC priorities on **suicide prevention and peer-to-peer support**
- Funding to establish **two research and coordination hubs** at CAMH (CSPS) and McMaster University (OnCall app)

Investments to date are **supporting researchers at more than 22 universities** who are working with **over 18 community organizations** and many individual PSP

PTSI in PSP: Knowledge Mobilization

- **CIPSRT** acts as a knowledge exchange hub
- **Brings together the research teams with relevant stakeholders** to coordinate activities and move the knowledge created into policy and practice
- **During the COVID-19 pandemic, increased activities**, knowledge mobilization, and delivered virtual services for PSP

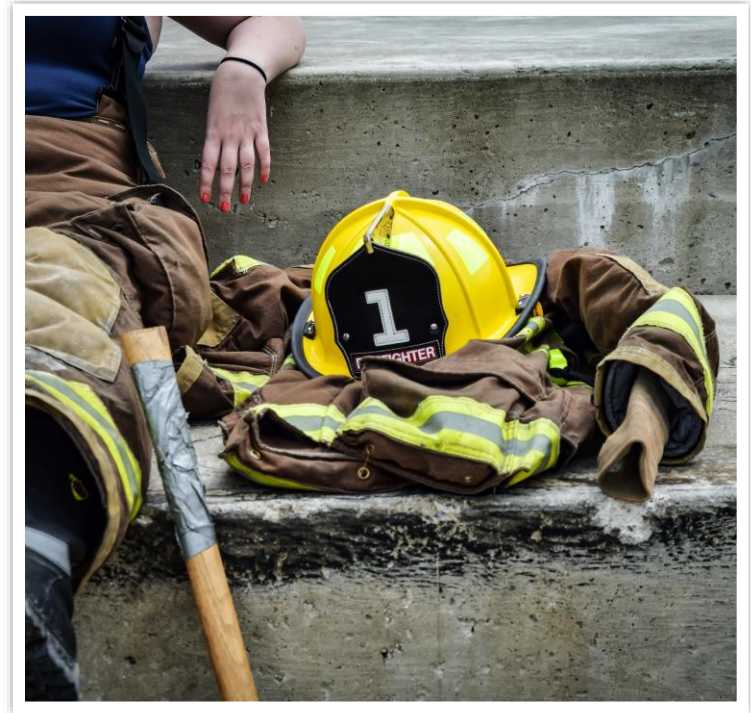


PTSI in PSP: Impact

Knowledge User: Captain Steve Fraser, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services

Catalyst Grant: Evaluation of a training program to protect firefighters' mental health from the effects of traumatic incidents

Project Leads: Dr. Joy MacDermid, Captain Steve Fraser, Dr. Amanda Brazil



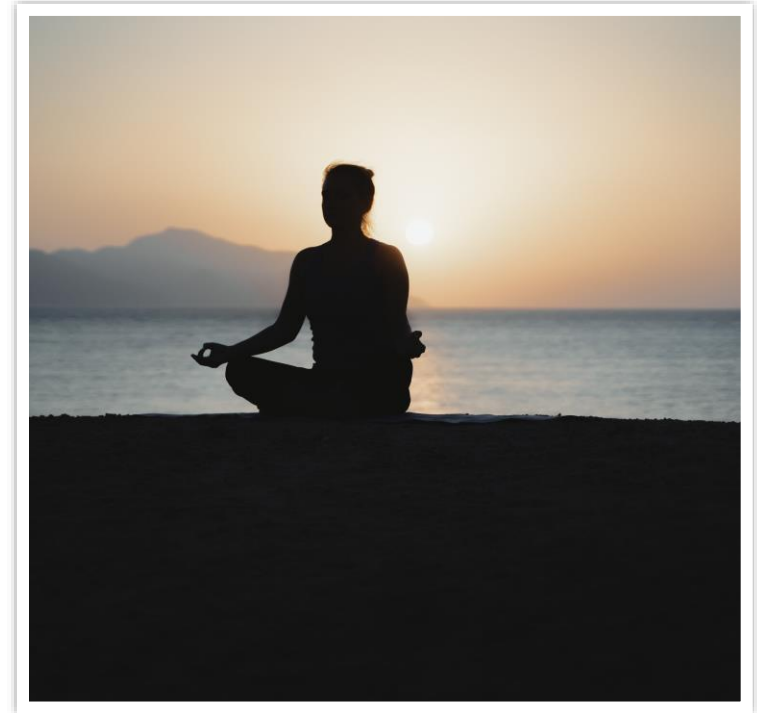
Captain Fraser knew that research was the only way to demonstrate that the Resilient Minds training program for firefighters improves skills and is retainable over time. He wanted to ensure that the program wasn't just ticking an organizational box; the only "right way" to do that was through research.

PTSI in PSP: Impact

**Knowledge User: Detective
Constable Steve Stoken, London
Police Services**

Catalyst Grant: The SKIP study:
Sudarshan Kriya yoga in posttraumatic
stress injury (SKIP), an RCT for public
safety personnel

Project Lead: Dr. Akshya Vasudev



Since participating in the SKIP study, Detective Constable Stoken has become an advocate for research within his organization. He actively seeks out researchers and recruits other officers to research programs in the hope that, like him, they will find help.



Catalyst Grant: Crisis Line and App-based Support for Public Safety Personnel



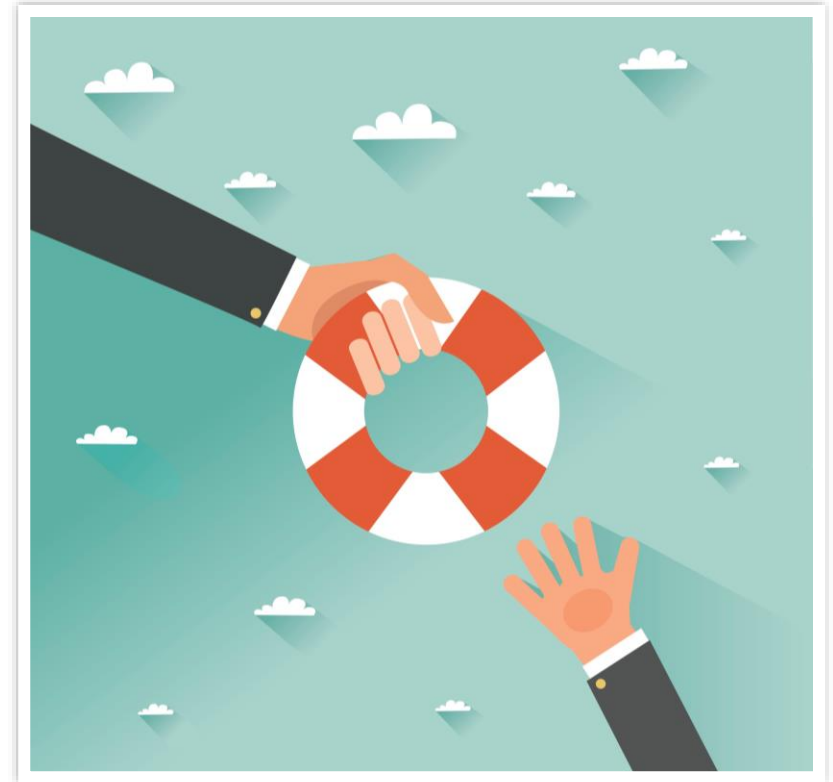
For more information visit the [INMHA Initiatives webpage](#)



The Way Forward

Foundations to build on

- **Unprecedented opportunity to use research evidence** to guide health policy and practice, and trauma-informed care (e.g., PTSI and PTSD)
- **Collaborative partnerships are informing paths to wellness** for individuals living with PTSI, their families and communities



Thank you

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