

MAP Rounds

# 7 BIG QUESTIONS

WITH DR. FLORA  
MATHESON



ST. MICHAEL'S  
UNITY HEALTH TORONTO



Centre for  
Urban Health  
Solutions



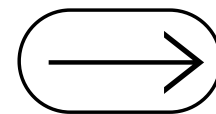
# INTRODUCING DR. FLORA MATHESON

- Scientist - MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions
- Chair, Homelessness, Housing & Health - Unity Health Toronto
- Associate Professor - University of Toronto
  - Dalla Lana School of Public Health
  - Centre for Criminology & Sociolegal Studies
  - Institute for Medical Science
- Senior Adjunct Scientist – ICES



# WHY COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH?

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01

## Trained as a Sociologist

- Grounded in crime & deviance, gender, community, belonging, and social determinants of health
- Early intention to work directly with people, not solely in academia

02

## Foundational Community & Justice Experience

- Volunteer parole officer (Correctional Service of Canada)
- Volunteer recreational facilitator in a secure forensic unit (CAMH)
- Research position at Ontario Board of Parole

03

## Community-based Research

Allowed me to:

- Reconnect with people and communities
- Build meaningful, community-driven research
- Focus on solutions, not just documenting problems

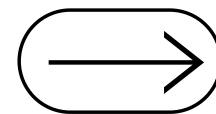
# WHO I AM & HOW I CAME TO THIS WORK





# **DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL RESEARCH PROGRAM & KT GOALS**

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# CRIMINAL LEGAL INVOLVEMENT

## Core Orientation

A commitment to understanding hidden harms in underserved communities, and developing community-informed solutions.

## Our Goal

Listen to community partners, document what's happening, and work collaboratively to build realistic, meaningful solutions.

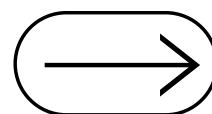
# PROBLEM GAMBLING, HOMELESSNESS, & POVERTY





**WHAT'S ONE BIG RESEARCH  
QUESTION YOU ARE TAKING ON  
AT MAP?**

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# WHY BRAIN INJURY? WHY BAIL? WHY NOW?

How can a Navigator program support people with brain injuries at the earliest point of their involvement with the bail court?



What is the prevalence of brain injury among women at the TRBC?



How do system actors understand—or misunderstand—brain injury?



Where do supports break down?



What would a truly effective Navigator program require in order to help people succeed?



# **A TRUSTED PARTNERSHIP**

## **ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY TORONTO**

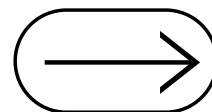
- An organization deeply rooted in supporting women affected by Canada's criminal legal system
- Working to amplify voices that too often go unheard and to create research that honours women's experiences and advances meaningful change





**WHAT METHODS ARE YOU USING  
TO INVESTIGATE THIS QUESTION?**

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# METHODS

## HOW WE'RE INVESTIGATING THE QUESTIONS



### Quantitative Work

Tracking:

- BI screening
- referrals to services
- access to brain injury diagnosis
- access to financial supports
- breaches, rearrest, other outcomes



### Qualitative Work

Interviewing:

- 2 navigators about challenges they see and what it's like to carry out their roles
- 15 women navigating bail or recent release



### Community-Based Participatory Approach

Guided by a community-based participatory research framework



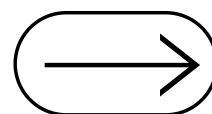
### Bringing It Together

- The numbers show us the size of the problem
- The stories show us how it plays out



**SHARE CHALLENGES YOU'RE UP  
AGAINST & WINS THAT HAVE  
MOVED THIS WORK FORWARD**

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# CHALLENGES



**Funding**



**Stigma**



**Politicization**

# WINS



**Brain Injury Bail Court  
Navigator Program**



**Prevalence Studies**

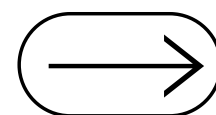


**Community Engagement**



**WHAT STATISTIC WOULD YOU  
SHOW EVERYONE IN CANADA  
ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH?**

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# NAVIGATOR PROGRAM PRELIMINARY STATISTIC



**198**

Conversations had with  
women

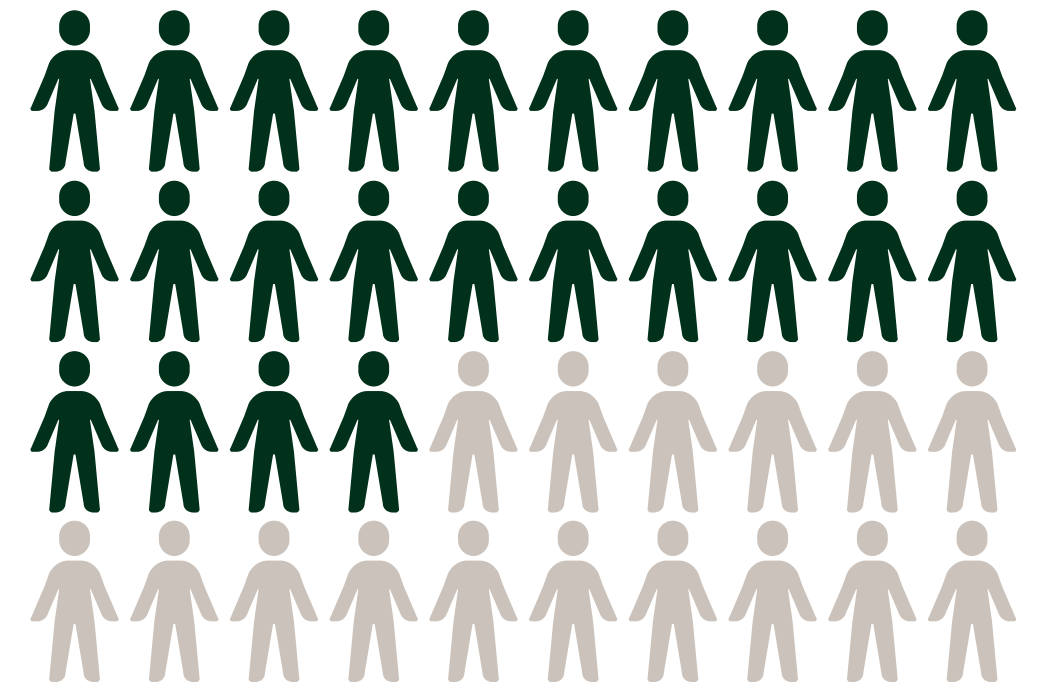


**104**

Agreed to complete the  
HELPS Brain Injury  
Screening Tool

**60%**

of women screened  
positive for brain  
injury





# CLOSING THOUGHTS



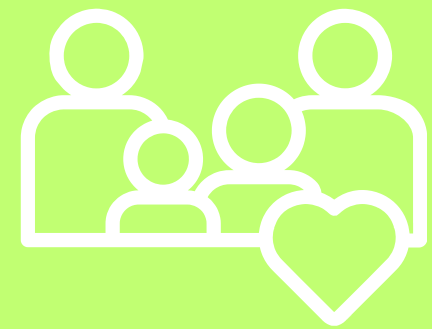


**LISTEN FIRST.  
CO-CREATE SOLUTIONS.  
PUSH THE SYSTEM TO BETTER  
SUPPORT PEOPLE WHO ARE  
TOO OFTEN LEFT BEHIND.**

**“We criminalize people for being homeless, then act surprised when homelessness becomes a pipeline to prison.”  
— Anonymous**

# BREAKING THE CYCLE NETWORK MEMBERS

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS



Mothers Offering Mutual Support

## JUSTICE AND EQUITY RESEARCH LAB



## PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE



## JUSTICE SYSTEM PARTNERS



## COMMUNITY JUSTICE & RE-ENTRY SERVICE AGENCIES



## TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS



# FUNDERS



**Social Sciences and  
Humanities Research  
Council**

**St. Michael's  
Foundation** / ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL  
PROVIDENCE HEALTHCARE



**Canadian Institutes of  
Health Research**



**Meighen Family Foundation**



**Ontario**





**THANK YOU**  
**FOR YOUR ATTENTION**  
**QUESTIONS?**



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