

# VIRTUAL SPARK APPLICATION GUIDE

This guide is intended to help you complete your application to the Mental Health Commission of Canada's (MHCC) SPARK training program. Each application will be assessed by two peer reviewers.

Tips for a better chance at success:

- Answer every question
- Provide complete and specific responses
- Take your time and think through your proposal with another person if needed
- Ask another person to read over your application before submitting it to make sure that it makes sense to the reader
- Check your application for errors (spelling, grammar, etc.)
- Consider including supporting documents to help us contextualize your project proposal by uploading documents and attaching them to your application

## Registration Fees

We offer three levels of registration rates. Please see below for the breakdown:

- Registration fee: CAD\$750.00 plus applicable taxes
- Student discount (up to 2 spaces available): CAD\$375.00 plus applicable taxes (a 50% discount)
- Reduced fee (up to 2 spaces available): CAD\$75.00 plus applicable taxes (a 90% discount)  
Reserved for persons with lived experience with limited resources

There is a dedicated section within the application form for the discounted fee application. Each application form will be reviewed based on criteria that will ensure an equitable distribution of discounted fees.

**N.B.** Fees are due upon registration into the program.

The fee includes the following:

- A month-long training workshop in a virtual setting delivered by Knowledge Translation experts and mentors
- Workshop materials
- One year of mentorship and follow-up support related to your SPARK project

## PART ONE: Personal and Professional Information

**1.1 & 1.2** Please complete all the information requested, including contact details and the area that

best describes your work or area of interest. If you are applying as a part of a team, we ask that each team member applies individually.

**SPARK Discounted Fee Section** Discounted fees are available to people who otherwise would not be able to participate in the SPARK program, such as students, or people with lived experience who are unemployed and underemployed. Please note that:

- Preference will be given to people with lived experience of mental illness and caregivers
- Geographic representation will be taken into account
- Your SPARK proposal must have been accepted

If you would like to apply for a discounted fee, please ensure you complete this section.

**1.3** The SPARK workshop is intended for a beginner/intermediate audience. A beginner would be someone who has no experience in creating and implementing knowledge translation (KT) plans. You may or may not have an understanding of the idea of knowledge translation and how it can be used. Someone at an intermediate level may have some experience in creating and implementing KT plans and a general understanding of the use of KT. **The workshop is not suitable for people with an advanced level of experience in knowledge translation.** (Advanced experience would include already working in a knowledge translation, exchange or broker role.)

**1.4** The SPARK training program is intended to build capacity among individuals, organizations and networks of people. For employees within organizations, it is more likely that your KT project will succeed if you have the support of your immediate supervisor.

**1.5** Please share with us why you are applying to the SPARK training program.

**1.6** Participating in the SPARK training program requires commitments beyond the workshop dates. It is important that you are able to participate in these for two reasons:

- To ensure that you receive adequate support to follow-through on your plan to create positive change in the area of mental health; and
- To help us to evaluate the effectiveness of the SPARK training program

We will provide follow-up support individually and through the small groups, which will be led by mentors. The follow-up commitments are:

- a) **Submit a Knowledge Translation plan within two to three months of the workshop.** SPARK is essentially a skills-building program. The workshop will provide you with not only important information about KT, but also a chance to increase your skills in creating KT plans. The follow-up part of SPARK gives you the opportunity to receive feedback from a mentor on your plan as well as ongoing advice on implementing it in your organization or community.

- b) Submit a short evaluation report (one page) on the implementation of your KT plan within twelve months of the workshop.** This will enable you to evaluate the effectiveness and reach of your KT plan.
- c) Participate in short online surveys** to help evaluate the SPARK training program, identify strengths and make suggestions for improvement.
- d) Attend two follow-up teleconferences or one-to-one calls with your mentor.** The purpose of the teleconferences is to meet with others in your small group and share progress on your KT plan and benefit from advice and suggestions.

Please indicate on your Application Form if you are available to participate in SPARK follow-up activities.

**1.7** For this section, please let us know what you are hoping to learn at the SPARK workshop. A complete answer should include how you will use what you have learned in your daily work and/or life.

**1.8** Please tell us how you heard about the SPARK training program. This helps us with our marketing efforts.

## **PART TWO: Proposal Themes and link to the *Mental Health Strategy for Canada***

The first two questions in this section focus on the theme of your proposal and how it links to the [\*Mental Health Strategy for Canada\*](#).

**2.1** We are seeking proposals in thematic areas that align with the MHCC's own areas of work. Please select up to three thematic areas that most closely align with your proposal.

**2.2** In addition to aligning with one of the thematic areas, your proposal should support one of the six key strategic directions of the *Mental Health Strategy for Canada*. Each strategic direction focuses on one critical dimension and together they combine to provide a comprehensive blueprint for change. These strategic directions are general statements and it is likely that your proposal will clearly align with one of them:

- 1.** Promote mental health across the lifespan in homes, schools, and workplaces, and prevent mental illness and suicide wherever possible.
- 2.** Foster recovery and well-being for people of all ages living with mental health problems and illnesses and uphold their rights.
- 3.** Provide access to the right combination of services, treatments and supports, when and where people need them.
- 4.** Reduce disparities in risk factors and access to mental health services and strengthen the response

to the needs of diverse communities and Northerners.

5. Work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis to address their mental health needs, acknowledging their distinct circumstances, rights and cultures.
6. Mobilize leadership, improve knowledge, and foster collaboration at all levels.

Please consult our website for more information and to gain a better understanding of these strategic directions. A summary of the [Mental Health Strategy for Canada](#) can be found here.

### Proposal Template

The proposal template allows you to explain your ideas for your KT project. It is important to think through these ideas to ensure that they are realistic and answer a true need among your target group.

**2.3** We want to see that you have considered the overall goal of your project and are clear about the change you want to see as a result of your project. It is important to highlight the problem you are hoping to address with your project along with your objectives.

**2.4** What practice or policy you are trying to improve? For example, is there a best practice you would like healthcare providers to implement? Are you looking to ask government to make policy changes to improve the mental health system?

**2.5** You should be able to describe the service, product or action you would like to encourage others to use. (e.g. new guidelines, evidence-based practices, or new assessment tools)

**2.6** Clearly identify evidence to support the effectiveness of the service, product or action you want people to know about. You should be able to explain how you know the service, product or action will make a difference. What is the evidence that it actually works?

**2.7** It is important to consider your stakeholders. Who needs to be engaged to make it happen? Have you already connected with stakeholders to bring them on board? Think about the people who will help you in this process and not just the target audience. Be specific about specific groups, organization or people you think would be important to engage or have already started connecting with and highlight the reasons why they should be included.

**2.8** We have found that projects that already have funding are more likely to be implemented. Funding can include internal or external resources, including your time at work. This does not preclude us from accepting proposals that are not already funded, but if you have access to funding and resources, this will improve the chance of your application being accepted.

**2.9** Finally, you will have an opportunity to provide any additional information about you or your proposal that you would like us to know but was not captured by the previous questions.

N.B. You may submit supporting documentation to help us contextualize your project proposal by uploading documents and attaching them to your application. Please note that this is not

mandatory.

If you have any questions about the application form and process, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at [SPARK@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:SPARK@mentalhealthcommission.ca).

We look forward to receiving your application. Good luck!