



RADICAL MENTAL HEALTH DOULA (RMHD) NEWSLETTER

Pilot Project Update

In June, we began piloting our first cohort of Radical Mental Health Doulas. Eight RMHDs completed the five-day training and were matched with two clients each for a period of six months.

Over the last few months, the research team has collected data from RMHDs and their clients through check-in interviews and monthly surveys on Zamplo. We have learned that RMHDs are supporting their clients through a wide arrange of needs and using many different modalities. Whether through in-person meet-ups, text messages, phone calls, or videocalls, and whether through weekly meet-ups or regular check-ins, RMHDs are providing flexible and continuous care that is free of structural constraints and is tailored to the needs of their clients.

Thus far, RMHDs have been particularly instrumental in helping clients with system navigation, peer support, resource sharing, setting employment and career goals, building community connection, and acting as a sounding board. Since working with RMHDs, clients' have expressed an overall improvement in their wellbeing and have had a diminished need for accessing professional interventions.

We have received tremendously positive feedback from community partners whose clients are being served by our doulas and have received requests for RMHD support to be offered to clients beyond the pilot project. We have also received numerous inquiries from people far and wide who are interested in training to become a RMHD or to be supported as a doula client. After we wrap up the first pilot project at the end of November, we will be working through the winter to update the doula training curriculum and will begin planning for our second RMHD pilot next Spring. As we look towards scaling the RMHD service, we are also expanding our community partnerships beyond Calgary and working on a few federal grant applications to support expanding our scope and reach.

As always, we thank our community partners, funders, and the UCalgary community that have supported and continue to support us. A huge shout out as well to our RMHDs and their clients for their courage, patience, and kindness. We are privileged to learn from you and to grow together with you through this exciting project!



Doula Spotlight

Each newsletter, we will profile our doulas and the amazing work that they do.

"My name is Ian Glen Kinney, or e - I go by he/him or they/them pronouns and I live and care for (those on) Treaty 7 land. I also live with a cluster of chronic conditions related to my recovery from a seven storey fall in 2008. For me, some of the most important care that I have received has been offered up by those in my community with a kind heart and an open mind. That service has complimented the care provided to me by Alberta Health Health Services in ways that I can never repay, but I do feel that I can pay it forwards, if I may, as a Radical Mental Health Doula. We all have our stories, and if more of us found moments to share empathy, presence and resources with one another, then I feel that we could make our lives a lot more bearable. Also, I am an author and included a link to my book, "Air Salt".

https://press.ucalgary.ca/books/9781773851129/?fbclid=IwAR1I54EMRI-wQi2nfEwEarrqQkJ1dvL933_yqNPOScXaOgMSr_RszTL4bsY



Ian, RMHD (Cohort 1)



"I am a doula specializing in implementing customized plans for my clients to enhance their lives. As part of this process, journaling is personalized based on each individual's unique situation, aiming for optimal outcomes. Reflection and journaling have significantly enhanced both my life and my clients'. Together, we prioritize tasks during journaling sessions, addressing challenges collaboratively to resolve conflicts efficiently, fostering qualities like confidence, patience, tolerance, and a positive mindset. We also work together to establish clear, measurable goals with defined timeframes, leading to efficient daily routines and improved task management, aided by tools like the iPhone calendar. Additionally, we declutter to create physical and mental space, often through donations, contributing to increased happiness and focus."

Maryam, RMHD (Cohort 1)

Upcoming Events

RMHD Lunch and Learn

Friday, October 27, 12:00-1:00pm

Location: The Social Innovation Hub at Unit 290, 3553 31 St NW, Calgary, and by **Zoom**

Join us to hear about the latest pilot project update!

BYOL (Bring your own lunch) - coffee, water and light snacks will be available.

Register for the event here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rmhd-lunch-and-learn-tickets-737558245567?aff=oddtcreator>

Once you are registered, **please scroll to the bottom** of your e-ticket to find the parking code and zoom link.

A Community of Connections: Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy Forum

Monday, November 6th, 2023

Members of the RMHD Research team are attending this forum to present a poster with our latest findings to the City of Calgary community.

Other Project Announcements

We have three new **senior undergraduate practicum students** who have joined the team! Please join us in welcoming Simerta Gill, Maria Escobedo and Madalyn Hart who will be working on the project over the coming year.

Our **website** is now live! Visit the link below to learn more about the team and our doulas.

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/research/radical-mental-health-doula/home>

"The radical mental health doula helped me lessen my mental load and burnout by allowing me to receive counselling, find techniques for managing ADHD and keep me accountable by providing weekly check-ins."



Shakiba,
RMHD Client (Cohort 1)

