



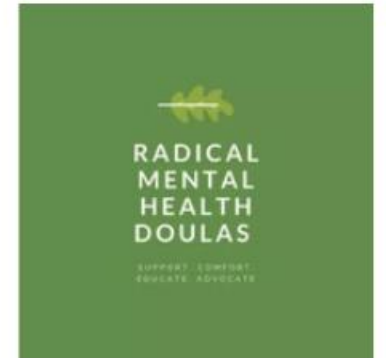
Community-Based Research Responding to Crises:

The Radical Mental Health Doula Project - Using Participatory Action Research as Community Outreach

12-1pm Eastern Time | December 12, 2024

Presented by:

Mary-Anne Parker & Members
of the RMHD Project



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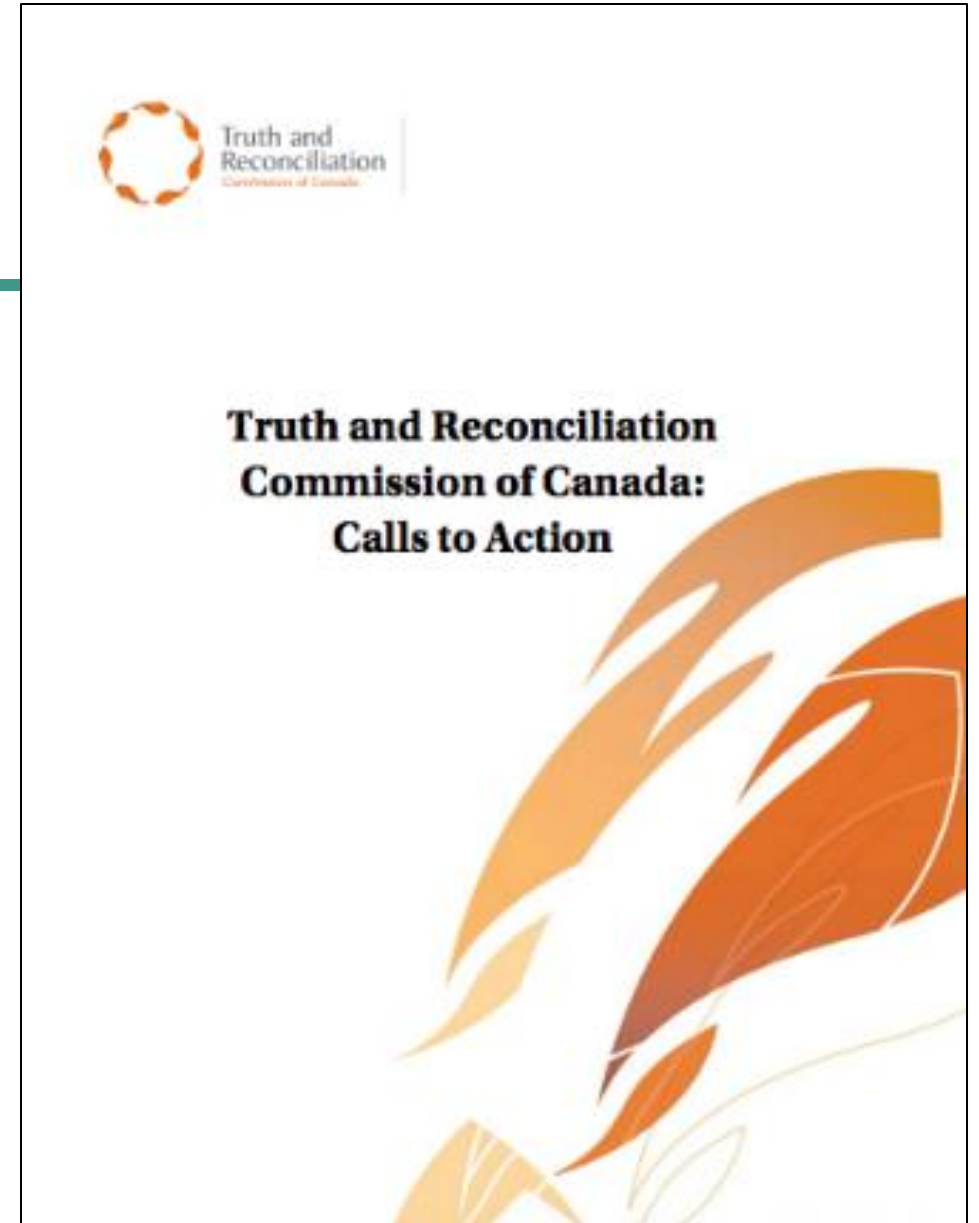
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Call to Action #22

“We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients”



Agenda



Opening



Presentation



Q&A



Closing

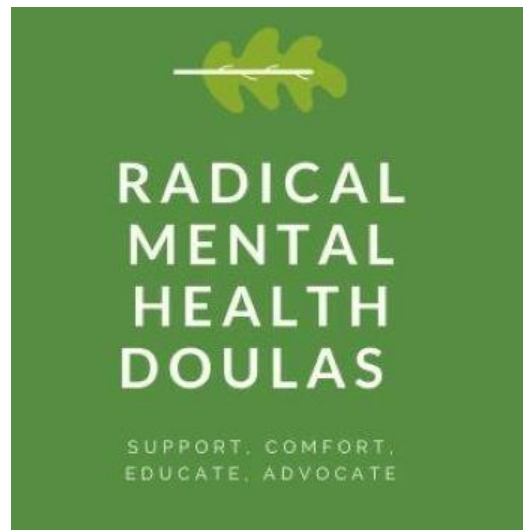
Presenters



Mary-Anne Parker
Co-Researcher



Kimberly Buckley
Doula



**CONCEPTUALIZING THE ROLE OF A RADICAL MENTAL
HEALTH DOULA:
A NEW APPROACH TO CARE**



Dr. Joanna Rankin

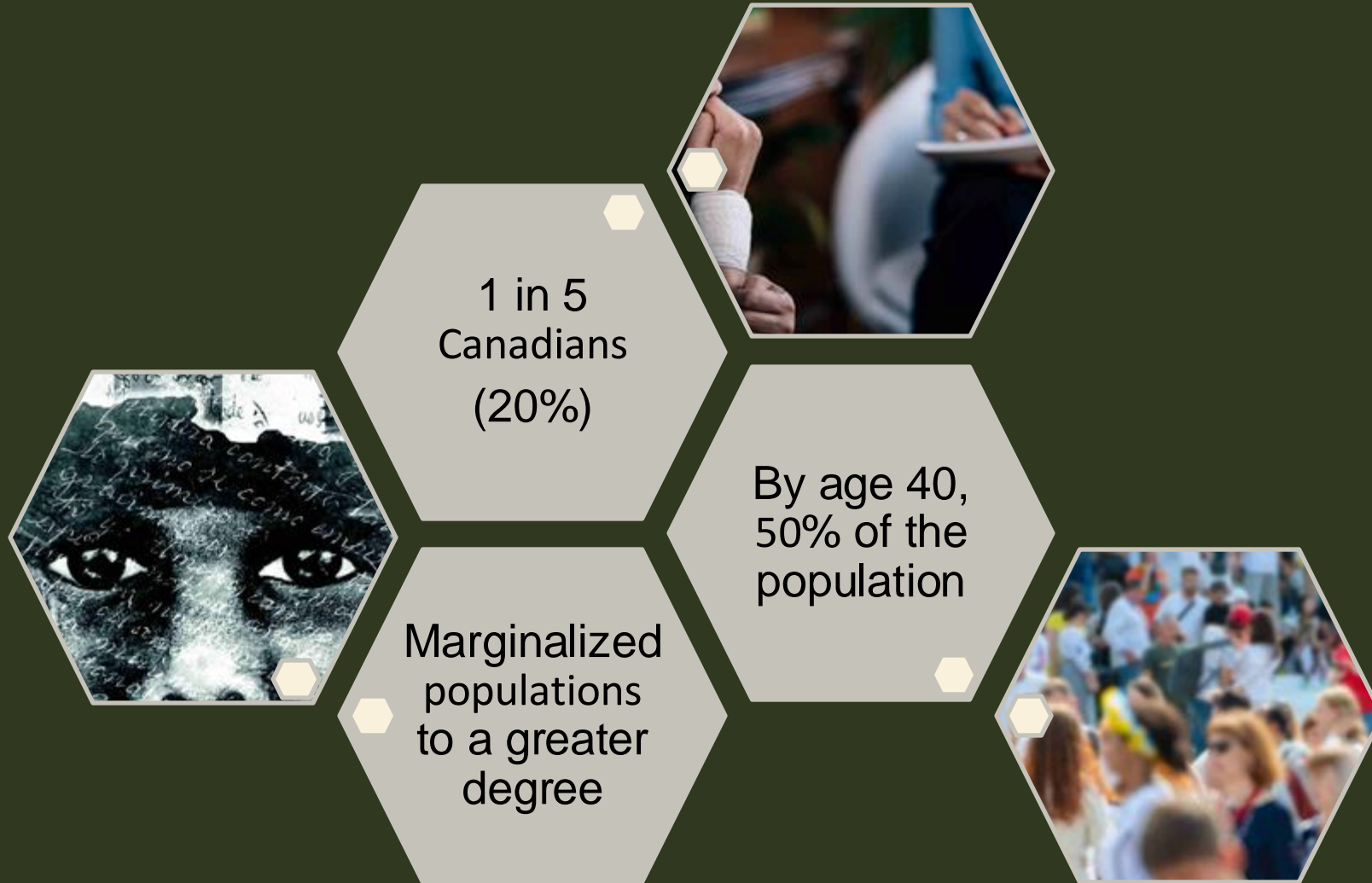
Mary-Anne Parker

University of Calgary

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WE'RE TRYING TO FIX?

- ❖ Mental health services exist within a **fragmented** institutional framework that does not adequately consider the multi-dimensional aspect of mental illness
- ❖ For example, Canadian women **consistently** report low levels of mental health and a failure of the current mental health care system to address their needs (Moyser, 2020).
- ❖ Needs for mental health support skyrocketed during COVID-19 and continues as we navigate a post pandemic, virtual as well as physical world

Who is affected by mental health challenges?



Initial consultations

~

May - August 2021

&

May - June 2022



“I think you should be treated with respect and not stigmatized by your illness”

“A person that is there from moment to moment.. to answer questions and give guidance and tell you that you’re okay”

“Just having a mental health doula to just be there for you and to provide you with that one-on-one, support and just a non-judgmental way I think is going to be amazing.”



RMHD curriculum development consultations

~

July 2022 - August 2022



“You don’t get a choice, you just don’t get a choice”

“It is like trying to figure out a new city via public transit and not having a map”

“I relate more with a person that’s been through the trenches”



A (RADICAL) SHIFT IS NEEDED

- ❖ There is an urgent need for inclusive **gender and culturally informed** mental health policies, services, and therapeutic options
- ❖ **Our grassroots approach:** focus on access, equity, participation, and social justice



RADICAL
MENTAL
HEALTH
DOULAS

Support.
Comfort. Educate.
Advocate.

Why radical?

- ❖ Continuity of Care
- ❖ Diversity & Intersectionality
- ❖ Anti-Racist
- ❖ Anti-classist
- ❖ Feminist
- ❖ LGBTQ2+
- ❖ Social Justice





OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Individualized Support Based on Lived Experience
- ❖ Freeing up Limited Healthcare and Professional Resources
- ❖ Privileging otherwise unheard voices

RMHD CORE VALUES

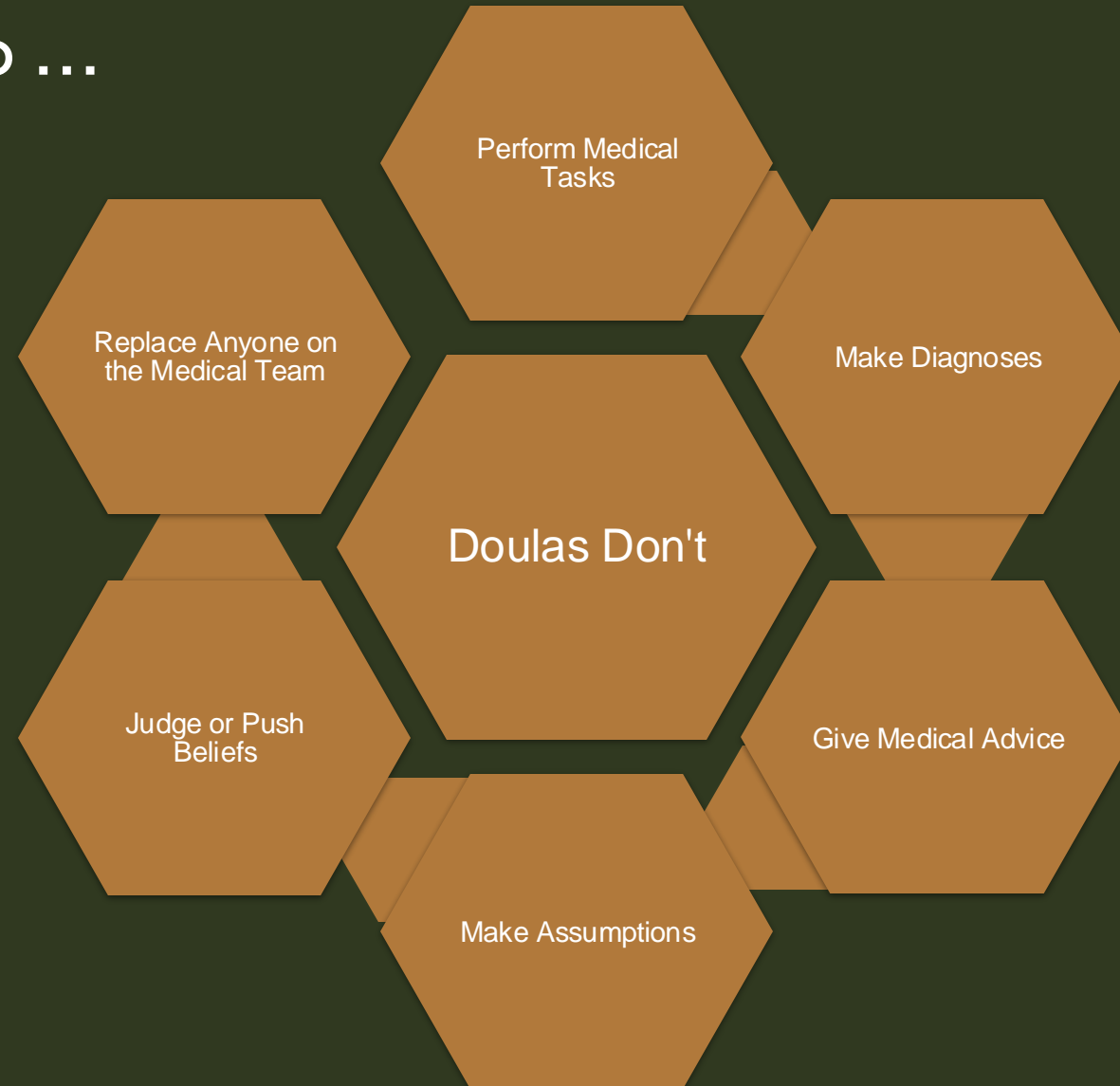
- ❖ **Support**
- ❖ **Comfort**
- ❖ **Educate**
- ❖ **Advocate**

*“I need someone to
ride the wave with me”*

What we do ...



What we don't do ...





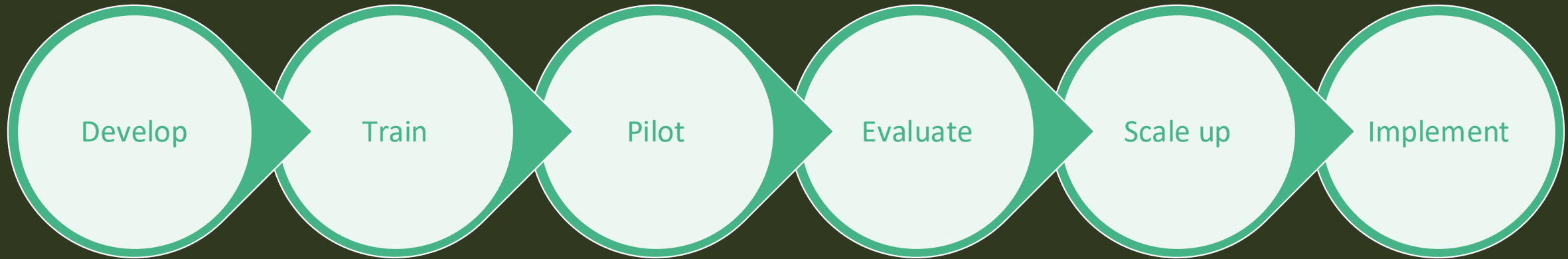
Participatory action research (PAR)

- ❖ Individuals with lived experiences as co-researchers
- ❖ Regarding lived experience as expertise
- ❖ Breaking down power dynamics
- ❖ Change-focused



Let's hear from a doula!

OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS



To date we have:
36 trained Radical Mental Health Doulas
60+ clients supported
1200+ service hours

Preliminary Observations

- **The informal nature of the role is appealing to the majority of the participants (doulas included)**
- **Supports come in the form of finding resources for a specific problem, navigating health care systems together (i.e. attending appointments, picking up food bank packages), going for walks, and listening.**
- **Relationships that have formed between doulas have ranged from the occasional supportive text to full blown friendships.**
- **Finding a place to support doulas and recruit clients is key to this success of this role.**

SMALL THINGS TELL A HUGE STORY

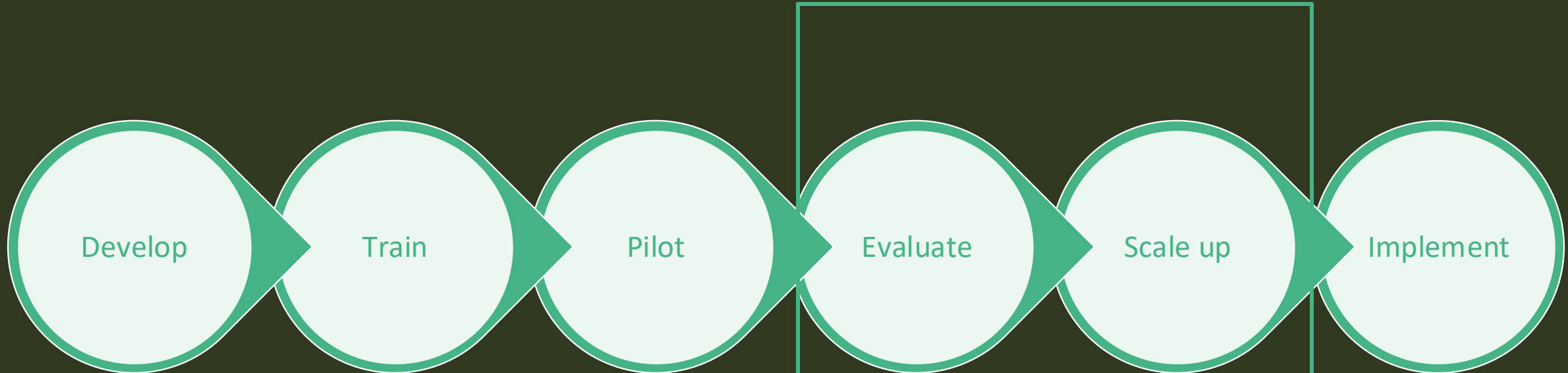
“It meant so much to me to have her go with me to that first appointment and sit with me while I waited. I was so nervous, but she made it fun and now I know what to expect”

“I thought I was the only one to feel this anxious about going to _____. I really feel like my doula got me and now I don't feel as weird.”

“My client has really felt validated by my support. She feels she's come along way in the few months we've been together and is already making plans for doing things on her own. I'm really proud of her.”

Source: 2024 RMHD survey data

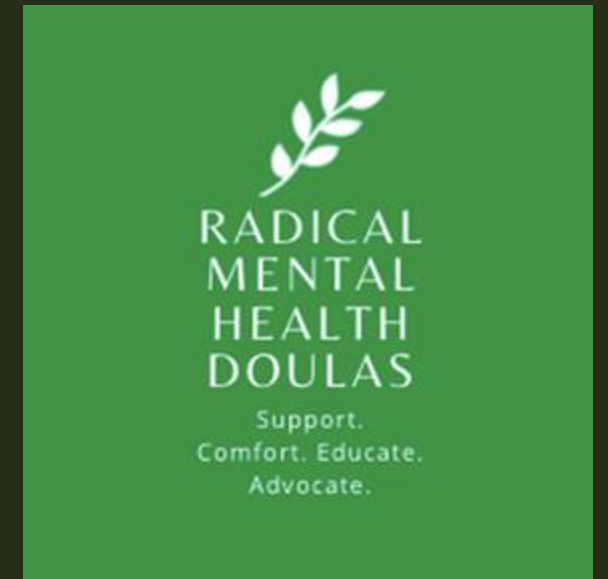
NEXT STEPS



1. Evaluate the data
2. Tell the stories (knowledge translation)
3. Present to interested funders
4. Grow the program

THANK YOU

- Dr. Joanna Rankin, Co-PI
 - Dr. Tiffany Boulton, Co-PI
 - Dr. Xiao Yang Fang, Project Manager
 - Amanda Denis, Graduate Student Researcher
 - Mary-Anne Parker, Research Associate
 - Kali Hoogenboom, Undergraduate Student Researcher
 - Eleni Moumos, Undergraduate Student Researcher
- and our 35 trained Radical Mental Health Doulas



For questions, please contact: rmhd@ucalgary.ca

Community partnerships



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Question and Answer



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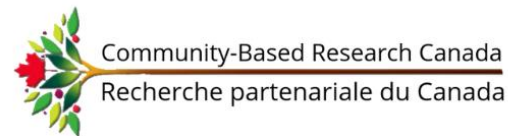
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Responding to Crises:

What is the value of community-based research?

Sept 2024-Jun 2025

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Thank You!

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