

MARCH 2026

FREEDCAN NEWSLETTER

The logo for FREEDCAN is a red circle with the word "FREED" in white, bold, sans-serif font, slanted upwards to the right. Below "FREED" is the word "CAN" in a smaller, white, bold, sans-serif font, also slanted upwards to the right. The logo is centered within a larger white circle that has a subtle drop shadow. A thick red ribbon-like shape curves around the left and bottom edges of the white circle.

In this Issue:

- New publication on Early Intervention for Eating Disorders
- Eating Disorder Awareness Week Features
- A Big Thank-You to Our UK Partners!
- Upcoming EDAC Presentations
- Building Inclusion in Motion: Event Activity Insights
- FREEDcan Team Member Update
- Upcoming Townhall
- Psychoeducation: Social Media and Apps- Friends or Foes?
- Happy Spring!

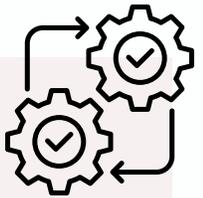
Knowledge Mobilization

New publication on Early Intervention for Eating Disorders!

Summary



FREEDcan: an integrated early intervention for eating disorders care model for community and primary care settings in Canada



We recently published a paper about FREEDcan in *Translational Behavioral Medicine*. The paper provides an overview of our co-adaptation process and outlines FREEDcan's three pillars (early identification, initial response, and evidence-based interventions for early-stage eating disorders). It also highlights considerations for getting FREEDcan "on the ground" as an integrated systems care model. Throughout the paper, we emphasize the importance of partnerships across sectors and settings. Because FREEDcan is designed as a community-driven and integrated systems care model, these partnerships are essential to delivering on FREEDcan's promise. Overall, we anticipate that FREEDcan will, like FREED UK, reduce duration of untreated illness by building rapid response and access to evidence-based interventions into the continuum of care for eating disorders. We will continue to learn about the model as it is implemented in different communities across the country and use this learning to inform iteration on FREEDcan as we spread and scale.

[VIEW PUBLICATION HERE](#)

Knowledge Mobilization

EATING DISORDER AWARENESS WEEK FEATURES

A new CIHR story features Dr. Nicole Obeid's work at the CHEO Research Institute to strengthen care for youth with eating disorders. These illnesses affect an estimated 1.4 million young people in Canada, and the pandemic highlighted the urgency of the issue, with a 126% rise in ER visits and a 60% increase in hospital admissions. Dr. Obeid's team led the first national study examining the social and economic impacts of eating disorders and is now moving forward with a pan-Canadian surveillance strategy. The team is also implementing FREED, an early-intervention model designed to help young people access specialized care sooner and improve treatment outcomes.



Scan to read article

[Click here to read the article](#)



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institut de recherche en santé du Canada



Scan to read article

[Click here to read the article](#)

A recent Ottawa-based story highlights the urgent need for earlier intervention for youth with eating disorders. The story features the lived experience of Christopher Vallee, who spent six years in and out of CHEO receiving treatment for severe anorexia. Now recovered, he is working with researchers to help improve care for others. CHEO psychologist and researcher Dr. Nicole Obeid emphasizes that the current system often treats youth only once illness is severe, comparing it to treating cancer only at stage four. With 1.4 million young Canadians affected and only a quarter receiving timely treatment, she underscores that earlier detection and rapid access to support are key to transforming outcomes.



International Collaboration

A BIG THANK-YOU TO OUR UK PARTNERS!



Images courtesy of FREED UK's Instagram

We're excited to share that our UK partners recently highlighted our project on Instagram through a beautifully designed carousel showcasing our progress and shared goals. We deeply appreciate this gesture and the strong collaboration that continues to support our work.

 **View FREED Instagram post here :** https://www.instagram.com/p/DU0M2NUClwn/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D

Translating Evidence Into Practice

UPCOMING EDAC PRESENTATIONS

Plenary Panel

Topic: FREEDcan - A Canadian Adaptation of Early Intervention Service Models Designed to Improve Timely Access to Care

Dr. Nicole Obeid, PhD (she/her), lead scientist of the CHEO Eating Disorders Research Lab and associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa, presented the FREEDcan initiative.



Dr. Obeid will be presenting her work on early intervention for eating disorders at the upcoming EDAC conference. Her research focuses on understanding the factors that contribute to eating-disorder risk, improving early-intervention models, and using screening and costing data to support better health-policy decisions. She will also highlight how the UK's successful FREED model is being adapted within the Canadian healthcare system to shorten wait times and improve early access to specialized care.



Paper Presentation

The Potential of Single Session Interventions as Early Interventions for Eating Disorders.

Presenters: Andrea LaMarre & Nicole Obeid

We will be discussing the evidence for single session interventions (SSIs) and how they might be used for early intervention. This presentation is based on an evidence brief developed to inform the FREEDcan menu selection of interventions.

If you are attending the EDAC Conference this year, please join us for these sessions!

Building Inclusion in Motion: Event Activity Insights

FREEDCAN ANNUAL EVENT ACTIVITIES

Key Values for FREEDcan- Activity Overview

At our October event, FREEDcan network members joined discussions about key values for FREEDcan. The top values were collaboration, adaptability, co-creation, equity, hope, and inclusion. This set of values illustrates the importance of including diverse voices in FREEDcan's work, with an aim of creating a system that is both informed by diverse perspectives and designed for diverse populations.



In discussion, participants explored how living into the value of equity would traverse different levels of our work—from hiring practices to exploring access to services in line with community demographics to designing programming that aligns with the needs of diverse populations. A core part of realizing this value is making space for and truly hearing critical feedback on who FREEDcan is working for, and who it is not. To this end, we have been designing our evaluation framework to integrate equity metrics. In exploring our menu selection of interventions, we consider who the research evidence exists for, who it doesn't exist for, and how we can draw on practice-based evidence from clinical colleagues to better understand gaps and how we might address them.

Overarchingly, we believe that early intervention is an equity issue, and we envision a world in which support and treatment is available for all who need it, wherever and whoever they are.

FREEDcan Team Member Update

ABOUT ME

I'm Omowonuola (Wonu!), the Project Coordinator for FREEDcan. I joined the team in January 2026 and I'm excited to be supporting this incredible work in early intervention for eating disorders. With my background in public health and a passion for health equity, I'm thrilled to help coordinate our multi-site implementation and keep all our amazing partners connected. Every day I'm learning from this talented team!

MEET



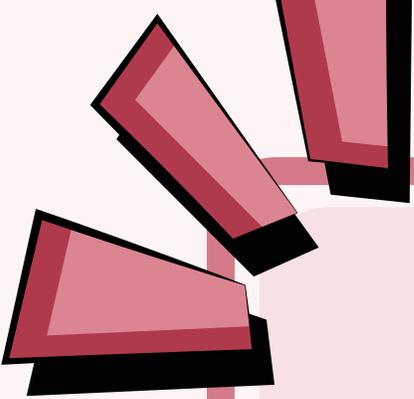
Omowonuola Aluko
Project Coordinator

HOBBIES

I love cooking and staying active with long walks!

FUN FACTS

I have lived in three continents! 🌍

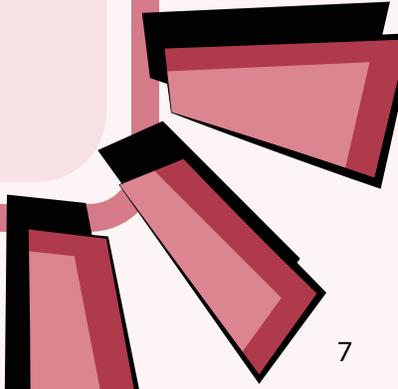


UPCOMING TOWNHALL

We are pleased to announce that we will be launching our first partner town hall in **June 2026**.

This new meeting series will bring our partners together twice a year for interactive discussions that share project updates, highlight progress, and outline upcoming priorities. These town halls will also open the door to dynamic, two-way conversations—creating a space where partners can explore the science within the project, ask early intervention related questions, and help shape future ideas and directions.

The date for this town hall has not yet been set, but it will be shared in our next newsletter along with additional meeting details.



Psychoeducation

Social Media and Apps- Friends or Foes?

This booklet is adapted from a resource originally developed by a UK outpatient eating-disorders program and its communications team. We've tailored it to better reflect the needs and experiences of young people in Canada who are navigating eating concerns, disordered eating, or eating disorders. The booklet doesn't ask you to stop using social media. Instead, it encourages reflection on how certain apps or content may impact eating challenges or recovery. It also offers practical suggestions for using social media in healthier, more supportive ways.

Ce livret est adapté d'une ressource initialement développée par un programme ambulatoire de troubles alimentaires au Royaume-Uni, en collaboration avec leur équipe des communications. Nous l'avons ajusté afin qu'il reflète mieux les besoins et les expériences des jeunes au Canada qui vivent avec des préoccupations alimentaires, une alimentation perturbée ou un trouble alimentaire. Le livret ne vous demande pas d'arrêter d'utiliser les médias sociaux. Il vous invite plutôt à réfléchir à la manière dont certaines applications ou certains contenus peuvent influencer vos difficultés alimentaires ou votre rétablissement. Il propose également des pistes concrètes pour utiliser les médias sociaux de façon plus saine et plus positive.



[VIEW IN ENGLISH](#)



[VOIR EN FRANÇAIS](#)



Happy
SPRING

As spring arrives, we look forward to a season of growth, fresh perspectives, and renewed energy!



Call for Content and Network Sign-Up!

Share Your Work!

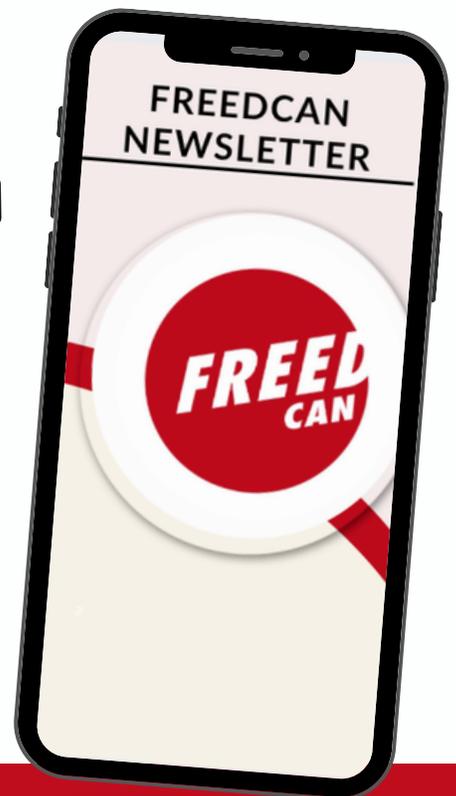
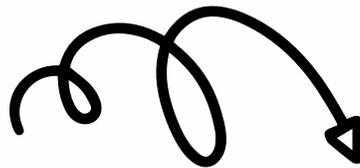
Have articles, insights, or updates related to the FREEDcan model? We'd love to feature them in our quarterly newsletter! Send your content to freedcan@freedcan.ca.

Stay Connected with FREEDcan: Our recorded events are located on our website and are available to all network members. Please email freedcan@freedcan.ca to receive the password for our recordings.

Not part of our network?

Join our network to receive our quarterly newsletters!

[FREEDcan Network](#)



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**FREED
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Thank You



Email

freedcan@freedcan.ca



Website

<https://www.freedcan.ca>

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