Building student resilience through participant-oriented research
Jennifer Thannhauser, University of Calgary

Post-secondary students are experiencing increasing levels of psychological distress (American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment, 2016; Cairns, 2015; Stallman, 2008) including increased levels of depression, anxiety, stress, suicide attempts and serious thoughts of suicide. Given that wellbeing is essential to academic success, the University of Calgary Student Wellness Services (Alberta, Canada) strives to offer comprehensive, culturally-appropriate, holistic and accessible programs and services that promote student health and wellbeing. Roots of Resiliency is one such program that empowers students to actively maintain their health and wellbeing. Roots of Resiliency is an innovative 7-week holistic, multi-disciplinary program based on Hettler’s 6 dimensions of wellness. Through patient-oriented research and intercultural dialogue, students and facilitators collaborated to enhance program effectiveness, with specific attention to cultural relevance for Indigenous students. Preliminary findings suggest the program is effective in enhancing resilience and decreasing depression and anxiety for post-secondary students. This session includes a description of the program, program evaluation outcomes, and discussion about the unique program development process completed in collaboration with key stakeholders (e.g., student research assistants, program participants, student advisory committees, indigenous elder).

Learning outcomes
- learn about using student advisory panels in program development;
- acquire examples of effective resilience program content;
- explore means for integrating indigenous ways of knowing and learning into mental health programming.

Presenter
Jennifer Thannhauser, University of Calgary

Jennifer Thannhauser, PhD, is a registered psychologist and Associate Director (Counselling) with Student Wellness Services at the University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada. She specializes in wellness and resiliency programming that supports the health and wellbeing of post-secondary students. Jennifer has worked in post-secondary counselling for over 9 years, during which she has been involved in university and regional initiatives that support post-secondary students’ mental health. Jennifer was previously a lecturer and Assistant Professor with the University of Lethbridge, and continues to serve as Sessional Instructor for Athabasca University.