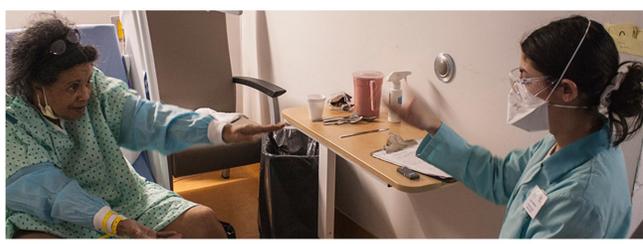


Collaborative partnership between the Hospital Elder Life Program and McGill University

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The Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) is an evidence-based, innovative model of care in which **highly trained volunteers** perform structured, personalized interventions with older hospitalized adults to **prevent delirium and functional decline**.



1. Background

HELP has been implemented at the Jewish General Hospital (JGH) since 2017.

Increasing evidence demonstrated benefit to users and a positive learning experience for volunteers, most of whom were students in the early stages of their professional education.



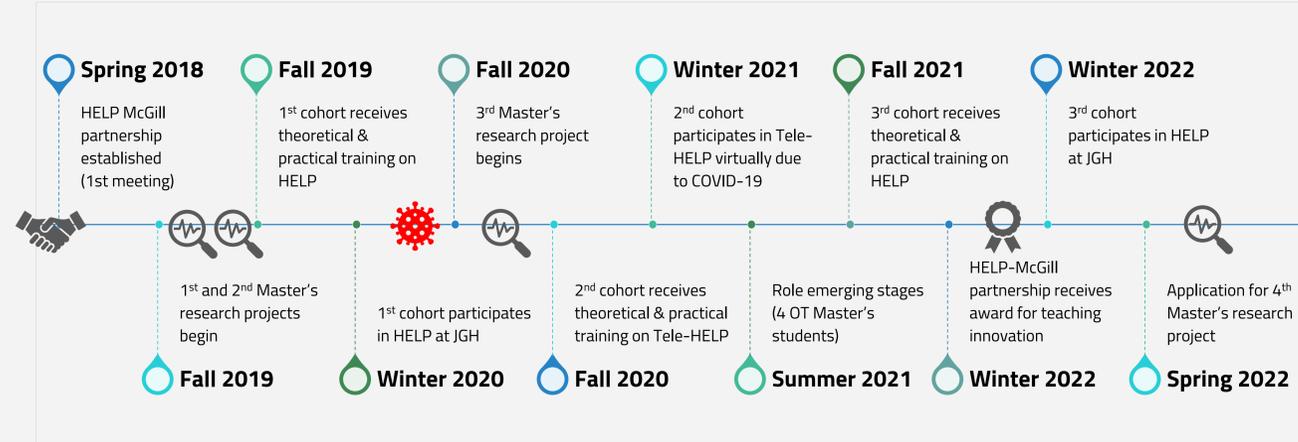
In Spring 2018, a partnership was initiated between HELP and the McGill School of Physical and Occupational Therapy (SPOT). The idea was that first year undergraduate OT & PT students participate in HELP at the JGH as part of their formal curriculum.

2. Purpose

- ✓ Optimize HELP with a sustainable flow of volunteers / students;
- ✓ Provide students with practical skills that build on professionalism and professional identity;
- ✓ Challenge ageism;
- ✓ Increase interest in working with older adults;
- ✓ Promote person-centered care and interprofessional collaboration;
- ✓ **Conduct research to understand student and user perspectives of HELP.**

3. Process

There was over 1 year of planning between HELP and McGill SPOT prior to the involvement of the first student cohort and subsequent revisions.



4. Results

I. HELP interventions

	2019-20	2020-21 (Tele-HELP)	2021-22
Students	79 students	87 students	80 students
Sessions	8 sessions x 3 hrs / student	4 sessions x 1 hr / student	5 sessions x 3 hrs / student
User Visits	909 user visits	303 user visits (virtual)	665 user visits

II. Research projects

1. Participation in a curriculum-integrated Hospital Elder Life Program as part of undergraduate training: Occupational and Physical therapy student experiences in a Quebec hospital (2020)³

- Qualitative study - Survey and semi-structured interviews with students about their experience in HELP.
- Results were analyzed using content, competency and thematic analysis.
- **Results:** HELP allowed students to have a positive learning experience and reinforced expected professional competencies in Occupational and Physical Therapy.

2. Exploring patient and family perspectives (2020)⁴

- Scoping review - Literature search, thematic analysis and critical appraisal of articles.
- **Results:** Users and families participating in early prevention programs such as HELP value the experience and view their participation as health enhancing.

3. Student perspectives of older adults following participation in Tele-HELP (2021)⁵

- Mixed methods design - Students completed a survey pre and post Tele-HELP about their perceptions of older adults.
- Responses were analyzed quantitatively using inferential statistics and interpretive synthesis.
- **Results:** Slight but insignificant shifts in student perceptions of older adults. However, positive student reflections suggest that Tele-HELP may provide valuable experience working with older adults, increase awareness of ageism in healthcare, and increase willingness of students to work with older adults.

Diverse opportunities exist for research.

A **collaboration** between clinicians and university programs **brings richness to intended research**, contributing to enhanced user experience and program development.

Recipients of the 2022 Learner and Faculty Award for Teaching Innovation Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences



(Top row) Aisha Khan, Isabelle Lamontagne and Marie-Lyne Grenier; (Bottom row) Maxine Lithwick, Crystal Garnett and Cynthia Perlman



I found, this was an amazing addition to the program. I am really grateful, that I have this opportunity in my first year to interact with patients, for that's really unheard of.

- U1 student (Research project #1)

"Now, I am much more intrigued by [working with older adults]. I could not really understand how it would be as fun and interactive like working with children, but after Tele-help, I do."

- U1 student (Research project #2)

I have so enjoyed the visits from the volunteers and trainees from the HELP program. I am steadily improving while I am awaiting surgery. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to meet the students.

- Participant

5. Conclusion

Partnering with a university can be mutually beneficial to the clinician/center/user as well as to the educational institution/program/students.

There is great potential to expand HELP to other professional schools within McGill, to other universities and to other healthcare institutions.

Future research areas include :

- ✓ Understanding user perspectives of HELP;
- ✓ Evaluating HELP's impact on clinical outcomes.

Acknowledgements

- JGH Foundation (Jewish General Hospital)
- Bessy Bitzas, Dr. Ruby Friedman, Mary Lattas (Jewish General Hospital)
- Liliane Asseraf-Pasin, PhD., Patricia Belchior, PhD., Zachary Boychuck, PhD., Sara Saunders, PhD., Frangiska Xenopolous and Hiba Zafran, PhD. (McGill University, SPOT)

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Further information

- <https://www.jgh.ca/care-services/specialized-approach-to-senior-care/hospital-elder-life-program-help/>

