

# CHRD 2024: Abstract Submission Form

**Presenter Name**

Michaela Bourque

**Presenter Status**

PhD Student

**Role in the project**

Design  
Perform Experiments  
Analyze Data  
Write Abstract

**Research Category**

Community Health / Policy

**Title**

Identity and Mental Wellbeing: Exploring the Impact of 'Survivor' Labels on Canadian Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer

**Background**

Each year, approximately 7,600 Canadians aged 15-39 are diagnosed with cancer. With this often comes identity-anchored labels like "survivor" or "fighter." However, little is known about how adolescents and young adults (AYAs) internalize and embody these terms.

**Objective**

Using a youth-centred co-design approach, this research aims to investigate how identity-anchored cancer labels, including "survivor" and "fighter," influence the identity and mental well-being of AYAs facing cancer across the disease trajectory.

**Methods**

Patient advisory group engagement and a scoping review will inform priority topics on language, identity, and common identity labels in cancer care to be explored empirically. Between 10-15 participants aged 15-27 with hematological cancer in Manitoba will be recruited. Longitudinal data collection in a multiphase, concurrent design will employ visual mixed-methods data collection tools (i.e., Circle of Importance, Timelines) over three 2-month intervals, using semi-structured interviews and surveys to uncover narratives of AYA cancer journey experiences. Inductive thematic and statistical analyses will explore how the identity-anchored cancer labels influence identity and mental wellness. Additionally, an arts-based knowledge translation (KT) resource, collaboratively developed with participants and artists, will convey the relationship between cancer, labels, identity, and mental wellness in AYAs.

**Results**

This project is at the proposal stage, with preliminary results expected in winter 2026.

**Conclusion**

By addressing the psychosocial dimensions of cancer care for AYAs, this study will shape clinical practice by providing guidance to healthcare professionals on utilizing language that bolsters the mental well-being of AYAs confronting cancer. It will advance theoretical understanding by delving into the psychological ramifications of cancer-related language on AYAs. Furthermore, it will influence policy-making by advocating for the adoption of guidelines endorsing inclusive terminology in cancer care settings, thereby fostering improved outcomes and enhanced support for young cancer patients. Lastly, this work will support the continued methodological advancement of innovative mixed-method research techniques.

**Do you have a table/figure to upload?**

No

## Authors

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