



From left to right: Joan Bottorff, Carole Robinson, Associate Professor, Nursing, Barbara Pesut, Assistant Professor, Nursing and Peter Hutchinson, Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Postdoctoral Fellow

Partnering for Healthy Communities

JOAN BOTTORFF, DIRECTOR, RESEARCH CENTRE for HEALTHY LIVING and CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

From interventions related to smoking and exercise, to exploring the influence of physical and social environments on healthy living, research projects within the Centre reflect a commitment to working with community partners to address some of our most important health problems.

Research that helps people enjoy healthier lives is at the heart of the Centre for Healthy Living and Chronic Disease Prevention at UBC Okanagan.

“As the population ages, healthy living is among the top priorities of a number of government agendas,” says Joan Bottorff, health behaviour researcher and director of the Centre. “The interest in prevention to reduce the incidence and morbidity associated with chronic disease has become increasingly important.”

With these trends in mind, Bottorff and colleagues are working towards making sure that healthy living is a part of everyone’s life. The Centre is engaged in fostering multi-disciplinary and collaborative research to develop innovative, integrated approaches to combat major preventable chronic diseases, as well as disease-specific interventions to prevent diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases.

Collaborations and partnerships extend far beyond the Centre’s walls; the goal is to involve a wide range of public health and healthcare organizations, social service programs, community groups, policy makers, private organizations and community members in research projects.

“In addition to leading research to support healthy lifestyles and reduce the impact of chronic disease through prevention efforts, the Centre’s activities support training of new researchers and building research capacity in communities,” says Bottorff.

Partnerships at the community level are of particular importance to the Centre’s mandate. In addition to ensuring that the research addresses important health issues and problems, such partnerships empower communities to take steps to improve their health. With community involvement, results see a greater chance of being translated into effective and sustainable prevention programs, policies and practices to benefit individuals and whole communities in both urban and rural settings.

A catalyst for teamwork opportunities, the Centre also offers a rich training environment for emerging researchers and students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

“Students really help increase what is possible to do in a research program; they bring fresh ideas and great energy,” says Bottorff.