

Call for Papers (Deadline April 1, 2023)

## Looking Back, Imagining Forward: Whither Urban Design and Mental Health?

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“[W]e must recognize ourselves and our conceptual debates as always already part of the world.” (Austin Zeiderman, 2018)

Comprising separate but converging and diverging disciplines, the field at the intersection of urban design and mental health is a niche area with considerable potential within “Mode 3” research (after “Mode 1” and “Mode 2” as explicated by sociologist Pekka Sulkunen (2008)), characterized by (co-)constructivist approaches and the rise of community-engaged research (CEr), patient-oriented research (POR), participatory action research (PAR), and research partnership. Hessels and van Lente (2008) summarized trends in knowledge production as a move towards application, transdisciplinarity, heterogenous sites of knowledge production, greater reflexivity and social accountability, and a rethinking of traditional quality control.

These are hallmarks and aspirations of Fellows of Urban Design and Mental Health (UDMH) at the Centre as we transition into the next phase of knowledge production in this applied transdisciplinary field for community impact. At a recent series of meetings, UDMH Fellows expanded on our shared mission: “to drive interest, advocacy, and action” “to design better mental health into [our] environments” by holding “space for diverse and interdisciplinary ways of knowing through scholarly exchange between urban design and mental health disciplines.” The act of holding space is underscored by the participatory nature of our work.

Facilitated by the co-editorship of psychologist Colin Ellard and urbanist Daniel Gan, the Journal seeks to complement this focus by serving as “a repository of information and point of departure for [creative] research, theoretical and applied, focused on mental health, well-being and the urban environment.” We do so by amplifying our City Case Studies section with peer review, and introducing a new Dialogue section to give voice to diverse ways of knowing in this interdiscipline. The Dialogue article is a multi-authored compilation of viewpoints on a timely topic or question, with opportunities to respond to co-submitters while illustrating our unique positions, perspectives, and “styles of reasoning” (Sulkunen, 2008) along the academic-practitioner continuum within primary disciplines of Urban Design or Mental Health.

In the next themed issue, we invite Fellows and colleagues to reflect on the question “Whither Urban Design and Mental Health?” while considering implications of our disciplinary diversity, evolution, and trajectories for the field from your positionality, including socio-geographic location and career stages. We invite contributions drawing on:

- (auto)biographical accounts of researchers or research groups,
- critical (co-)evaluations of research projects or a series of projects, and/or
- close examination of the challenges issued in a seminal article, whether met, partially met, or unmet.

Contributions to the Dialogue article should contain a cogent argument or thesis statement and relate to existing questions in the field, and could range from 1000-2000 words, excluding 5-15 key references.<sup>1</sup> Lengthier contributions with fuller literature review

and analysis on this topic or other topics may be submitted as stand-alone Research Articles (previously Research and Analysis).

We especially encourage critical, reflexive, and transformative writings with creative outputs (e.g., Harjo, 2019; Williams, 2016). What remained undisputed in scholarly discussions on “Mode 2” science was greater reflexivity among researchers and increasing social accountability of universities as the dominant site of knowledge production (Hessels & van Lente, 2008), which arguably ushered in the ethos of Community-Engaged Research and University-Community Research Partnerships today. The culmination of these trends are signified by widespread adoption of the Carnegie Elective Classification of Community-Engaged Institutions,<sup>2</sup> and the establishment of Research Partnership<sup>3</sup> funds in what we call “Mode 3” knowledge production since the 2010s.<sup>4</sup>

We believe that Urban Design and Mental Health is a productive entry point to place-based Community-Engaged Research and University-Community Research Partnership because mental health (as opposed to physical health) is the main way neighbourhoods affect health (Gan, 2017). Psychosocial characteristics of places can have profound, lasting impact (Ellard, 2015), and may be the key to more humane, caring, and just worlds as cities worldwide urbanize (Barros et al., 2019; Williams, 2016). We are limited, perhaps, only by our praxis, daring, and imaginations (Boland et al., 2017; Harjo, 2019; Zeiderman, 2018).

We hope this themed issue will provide directions and serve as a springboard for creative explorations, as we reimagine the next phase of (participatory) knowledge production in this niche field and develop new avenues to promote research-creation.

#### Notes:

1. Please use in-text citations and APA reference formatting style. A submission template is available online.
2. See <https://carnegieelectiveclassifications.org/the-2024-elective-classification-for-community-engagement/>
3. See <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/browse-our-areas-of-investment-and-support/uk-research-partnership-investment-fund/>
4. See Bresnen and Burrell (2012) for critical perspectives.

Daniel Gan and Colin Ellard  
Co-Editors  
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