



# A new ecosystem of care for survivors of intimate partner violence and traumatic brain injury: occupational therapy's expertise essential from the earliest stages of development

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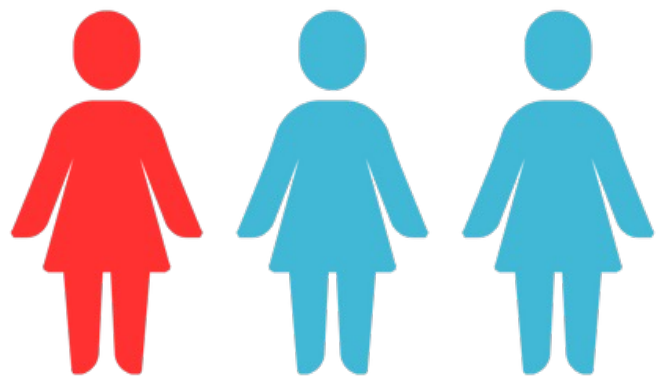


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# Introduction



One in three women worldwide will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

*WHO, 2021*



Physical violence -> high risk of traumatic brain injury (TBI).

*Haag et al., 2019*



Few women have access to TBI screening and rehabilitation, including Occupational Therapy, exposing gaps in specialized rehabilitation pathways.

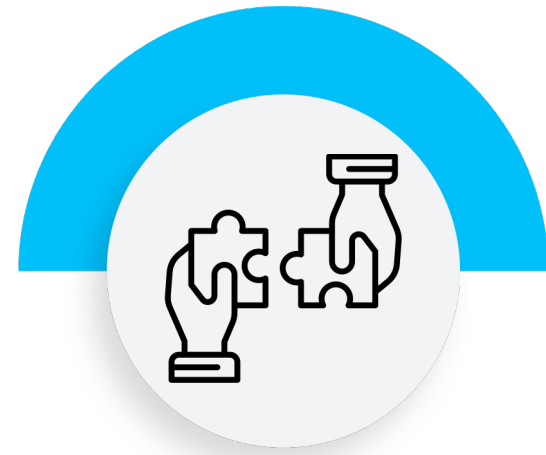
*Haag et al., 2022;  
Omar et al., 2024*

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**IPV-related TBI identified as a key unaddressed issue by women's shelters**



**New collaboration established in 2022**

UdeM + Alliance MH2



**OT student internships in women's shelters**

To understand the reality of women victims of IPV with probable TBI



**TBI screening challenges identified by shelter workers:**

- Why and how to screen for a TBI?
- What should be done with the results of the screening?

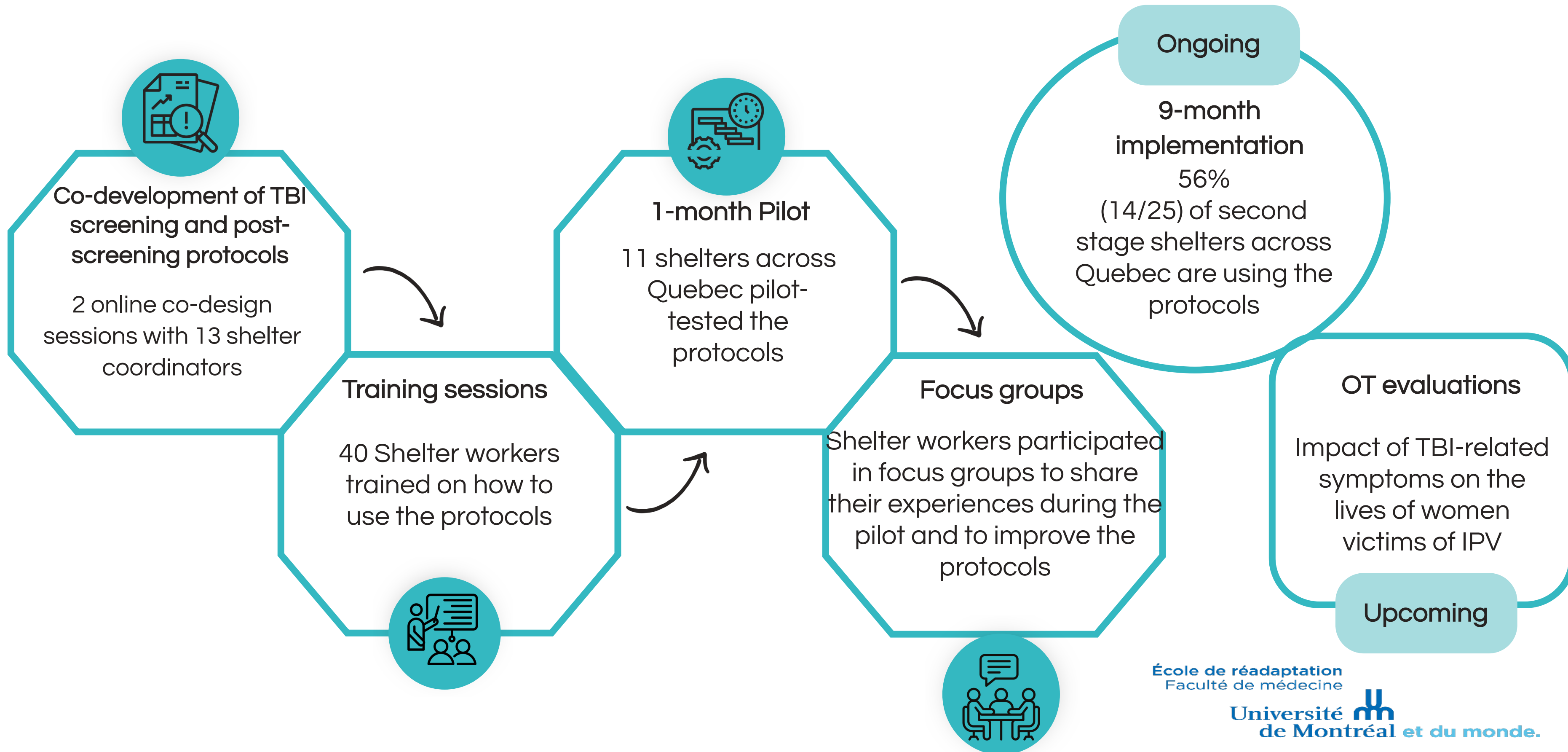


# Objectives of our study



Co-design TBI screening and post-screening protocols, increase TBI detection in women's shelters across Quebec, Canada;

# Methods



# Results – New TBI screening protocol for shelter workers



1

Information about TBI and IPV for shelter workers with link to existing resources.

2

Observation of women's daily functioning and the potential consequences of the physical violence they experienced (ex: difficulty completing tasks.)

3

Individual meeting with the woman to share a summary of observations and introduce the TBI screening (HELPS + Neurobehavioral Symptom Inventory)

# Results – Challenges and lessons learned



## Challenges

Embedding screening practice within shelters

Referral to the healthcare system of women who test positive

Finding the optimal time to screen the women and inform them of the results

## Lessons learned

Screening protocol is easy to use and has helped shelter workers understand TBI symptoms and the

Importance of screening at the earliest possible time, all women living in second stage shelters, even those not reporting symptoms

Expressed need for development of a post-screening protocol

# Results – New TBI Post-screening protocol



Follow-up interventions for those who screen positive for TBI

Means of facilitating referrals to the healthcare system

Adapting shelter services (personalized)

Education: Healing process / self-care strategies

# Results – Impact of protocol implementation to date



## Implementation of OT services

- A first OT position was created in one of the shelters, and a second position will be opening soon!
- Thanks to the presence of the OT, women are being accompanied on medical visits, obtaining a TBI diagnosis, and increasingly being referred to appropriate rehabilitation services;
- Several shelters are adapting their services to limit the aggravation of TBI symptoms, facilitating participation in shelter programs in consideration of symptoms and helping women understand their challenges and regain autonomy.

# Next Steps



## Improve post-screening protocol

Focus groups with shelter workers to explore their experience using the protocol and their perspectives on referring women to healthcare services.

## Document the impact of TBI-related symptoms

Individual interviews with women victims of IPV with possible TBI

# Conclusion



This social innovation project is, one step at a time, creating new ways of supporting survivors of IPV and TBI by combining OTs' expertise in community TBI rehabilitation with the knowledge of women's shelter workers in IPV.



# Thank you for your attention!

If you'd like to continue the conversation, please contact me at:

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