

Provincial Addiction & Mental Health

# Infographic Toolkit for AMH Research

September 2021

# Contents

Purpose .....	4
Part 1: Design resources.....	4
AHS branding.....	4
Other resources .....	4
Part 2: Infographic tips & tricks.....	6
Collect data .....	6
Create a narrative .....	6
Develop a hierarchy .....	6
Determine infographic format .....	6
Determine infographic layout.....	7
Visual approach .....	7
Find examples .....	7
Choose colours.....	8
Choose fonts.....	8
Structure information.....	8
Ways to represent data .....	9
Using icons .....	9
Using images .....	9
Attributes of good infographics .....	9
Attributes of not-so-good infographics .....	9

## Project team

---

**Project Manager:**

Neha Batra-Garga, Manager  
Knowledge Exchange  
Provincial Addiction and Mental Health  
Alberta Health Services

---

**Prepared by**

Cassandra Churchill, Knowledge Management Coordinator  
Knowledge Exchange, Provincial Addiction and Mental Health

Anye Juressen, Consultant  
Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network™

---

## Contact

Knowledge Exchange, Provincial Addiction and Mental Health  
Alberta Health Services  
[amh.knowledgeexchange@ahs.ca](mailto:amh.knowledgeexchange@ahs.ca)

© 2022 Alberta Health Services, Provincial Addiction & Mental Health – Knowledge Exchange.



This work is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivative 4.0 International licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). You are free to copy and distribute the work (including in other media and formats) for non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to Alberta Health Services, do not adapt the work, and abide by the other licence terms. To view a copy of this licence, see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>. The licence does not apply to Alberta Health Services trademarks, logos or content for which Alberta Health Services is not the copyright owner.

This material is intended for general information only and is provided on an "as is", "where is" basis. Although reasonable efforts were made to confirm the accuracy of the information, Alberta Health Services does not make any representation or warranty, express, implied or statutory, as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness, applicability or fitness for a particular purpose of such information. This material is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health professional. Alberta Health Services expressly disclaims all liability for the use of these materials, and for any claims, actions, demands or suits arising from such use.)

*For citation purposes, use the following format:*

Alberta Health Services. (2022). *Infographic Toolkit for AMH Research*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

## Purpose

This resource has been designed to help addiction and mental health (AMH) researchers communicate the results of their research to broad audiences using infographics. Infographics are a great tool for providing a short and accessible research summary in a consumable format.

## Part 1: Design resources

### AHS branding

Materials produced for AHS should follow branding requirements, discussed below.

Resource and URL	Description
<b>AHS Brand Toolkit</b> <a href="https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/org/ahs-org-brand-toolkit.pdf">https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/org/ahs-org-brand-toolkit.pdf</a>	The AHS Brand Toolkit is a document that provides information on the importance of AHS branding.  It includes guidelines regarding logos, icons, images, typography, and colours.

### Other resources

For those producing materials external to AHS, the following resources may be helpful.

Resource and URL	Description
<b>Choosing colour combinations/schemes</b>	
<b>HTML Color Codes</b> <a href="https://html-color-codes.info/">https://html-color-codes.info/</a>	Easily find HTML colour codes/hex colour codes for use in your infographic using the colour chart and picker.  Convert between colour formats (HEX, RGB, HSL, HSV, CMYK) by inserting a colour code in the format you have.  Upload images from your computer or insert links to online images to access their colour codes.

<p><b>W3Schools HTML Color Picker</b> <a href="https://www.w3schools.com/colors/colors_picker.asp">https://www.w3schools.com/colors/colors_picker.asp</a></p>	<p>Easily find HTML colour codes/hex colour codes for use in your infographic, including hues and shades.</p>
<p><b>Adobe Color CC</b> <a href="https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel/">https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel/</a></p>	<p>Create and explore different colour schemes to use in your infographic. Create your own colour scheme or explore pre-made colour schemes.</p>
<p><b>Colors</b> <a href="https://colors.co/">https://colors.co/</a></p>	<p>A colour-scheme generator that allows you to create and save colour palettes. Create your own colour scheme or explore thousands of pre-made colour schemes.</p>
<p><b>Copyright free icons</b></p>	
<p><b>The Noun Project</b> <a href="https://thenounproject.com/">https://thenounproject.com/</a></p>	<p>Collection of copyright free icons. Although many of the icons are in black and white, they can be recoloured in PowerPoint, Paint, or other software.</p>
<p><b>Copyright free images</b></p>	
<p><a href="https://www.pexels.com/">https://www.pexels.com/</a></p>	<p>Collection of free images/photos for use in your infographic.</p>
<p><a href="https://unsplash.com/">https://unsplash.com/</a></p>	
<p><a href="https://pixabay.com/en/">https://pixabay.com/en/</a></p>	
<p><a href="https://www.freepik.com/">https://www.freepik.com/</a></p>	
<p><b>Infographic examples</b></p>	
<p><a href="https://www.designspiration.net">https://www.designspiration.net</a></p>	<p>Search these infographic and design sites for inspiration.</p>
<p><a href="https://www.behance.net">https://www.behance.net</a></p>	

## Part 2: Infographic tips & tricks

### Collect data

Collect data and determine the most important pieces of information to include in the infographic.

### Create a narrative

Create the narrative by asking:

- What is the purpose of my infographic?
- What do I want my audience to take away after viewing my infographic?
- What is the story I want to tell?
- Is my intent to inform, educate, summarize, or argue a point?

**Tip:**

If you're not a designer, note that a compelling narrative outshines a beautiful design.

In your narrative, identify the 'heroes' that will lead your story:

- The 'heroes' are critical pieces of data or information that serve as the key messages and will organize your infographic

### Develop a hierarchy

Using your narrative, create an outline of your infographic story:

- Identify the order in which you want people to interact with your information
- Organize your 'heroes' or critical pieces – this is the backbone of your hierarchical structure
- Arrange the supporting elements of information or data around your critical pieces to tell the rest of the story – this can be background information, supporting data sets, or any additional information to be included

### Determine infographic format

Consider the format your infographic will be displayed in:

- Will it be print or digital?
- What is the size of your infographic?

Consider your audience and the language you use:

- Is your audience internal or external to AHS?
- What level of knowledge do they have on the subject matter?

## Determine infographic layout

Set your margins and columns:

- Whichever program you are using to design the infographic, you must create a structure for placing your elements within

Set your margins anywhere from 0.5in x 0.5in to 1in x 1in

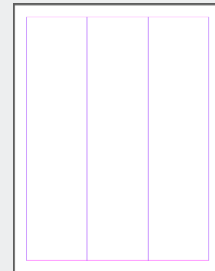
- Create columns to guide how you align your information
  - Choose between three or four columns
  - This creates balance and proportion

Align your infographic's elements with your margins and columns:

- Align visual and textual elements to your vertical columns
- Align your graphics with their accompanying text either horizontally or vertically
- Most users read left to right, so use middle aligned text sparingly – especially with large bodies of text

**Trick:**

Draw your columns and margins on your page so that they are easy to follow.



## Visual approach

Now that you have your narrative, hierarchical structure, format, and layout for your infographic, you can start the visual approach.

### Find examples

- Collect a few examples of infographics that can guide the look and feel of your infographic
  - Examples can also provide guidance on how to visualize data sets
- Search on Google or Pinterest
  - Either broadly by searching “infographics”, or more specifically, for example “cannabis infographics”

**Tip:**

If you have a project sponsor, ask if there are certain styles you must adhere to – colours, fonts, images, graphics, etc.

Also ask which logos must be included.

## Choose colours

- Select two to three colours to use in your infographic (two is recommended)
  - Use AHS branding colours if it is an AHS-only project
  - If there are non-AHS project sponsors, there might be more leniency as to the colours you can use
- Coloured text can be used for headings and call-outs
  - Avoid using coloured body text
- Use colour to purposefully draw attention

**Tip:**  
Use the colour red very sparingly.

## Choose fonts

- Use AHS branding fonts, unless allowed otherwise
- Assign fonts and font sizes to different levels of information (headings, body, call-outs) and use consistently throughout infographic

**Tip:**  
Stick to using three fonts or less – too many makes it busy.

## Structure information

- Create a bold and descriptive title for your infographic
- Using your hierarchical structure, create headings for each section of information
- Arrange your supporting elements of information and data under the headings
  - Group alike elements together
  - Utilize white space
    - White space signifies relationships and can be used to separate or group elements
    - White space is used to create comfortable silence and allows readers to breath throughout the infographic
- In blocks of text, ensure that there are no 'lonely' words in the last line
  - Reorganize your paragraph so that there are at least two words in the last line

**Tip:**  
Objects closer together are perceived as more related than objects further apart.

**Trick:**  
Use lines, coloured boxes, and shapes to assist in structuring elements.





## Ways to represent data

- Identify transformable data sets and turn them into charts, graphs, diagrams, etc. depending on which format works best

## Using icons

- Assign icons to information, lists, headings, categories, etc.
- Utilize the AHS icon catalogue (link in Resources section above)
  - Contact Communications for individual icon images
- Icons are popular and can easily be used alongside text to simplify complex information
- Ensure your icons have similar 'styles' (bold, thin, thick lines, thin lines, colours, black and white, 2-D, 3-D, etc.)

**Tip:**

If chosen correctly, icons are quick visual cues that aid in understanding and remembering.

## Using images

- If using images, ensure the 'style' of the images are the same
- Ensure images are high resolution
- Do not stretch images
  - Hold down shift button while enlarging / shrinking

**Tip:**

Use images sparingly.

## Attributes of good infographics

Good infographics have the following characteristics:

- Minimal and simplistic
- Consistency in icons, shapes, typography
- Minimal colour choice – nothing overly distracting
- Visual hierarchy clearly established in graphics – something jumps out at you and anchors the rest
- Varying levels of engagement offered – allow for quick scans as well as deep exploration
- Accurate data, represented in an appropriate way

**Trick:**

When you are done creating your infographic, print it out, look at the infographic as a whole, and note what your eyes are drawn to first.

If these are the 'heroes' then you are in good shape. If you find there are too many things popping out at you at once - reorganize your content.

## Attributes of not-so-good infographics

Ineffective infographics commonly have the following characteristics:

- Everything equal in scale and fighting for attention – if every element wants attention, then nothing gets it
- Many different fonts and colours