



## **Full-Time Research Assistant Position:**

### **Psychology, Mental Health, Mixed Methods Research, Patient Engagement**

Dr. Amanda Wurz

Assistant Professor and Michael Smith Health Research BC Scholar  
University of the Fraser Valley and BC Children's Hospital

Dr. Danielle Rice

Assistant Professor and Psychologist  
McMaster University and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

Dr. Brett Thombs

Professor and Canada Research Chair  
McGill University and Jewish General Hospital

Dr. Amanda Wurz, with Dr. Danielle Rice, Dr. Brett Thombs, and the Scleroderma Patient-centered Intervention Network (SPIN: [www.spinsclero.com](http://www.spinsclero.com)) are looking for a candidate to fill a **full-time research assistant position** within our team at the University of the Fraser Valley (though the option to work remotely or at one of McGill University or McMaster University is also available).

Scleroderma is a rare chronic autoimmune connective tissue disease characterized by abnormal fibrotic processes and excessive collagen production, which leads to substantial damage to the skin, blood vessels, muscles, and internal organs. Common problems faced by people with scleroderma include limitations in hand function and mobility, pain, fatigue, constant itch, depression, and body image distress from disfiguring aspects of the disease.

SPIN was created to bring together people living with scleroderma, healthcare professionals who care for them, and scleroderma researchers from around the world to develop and test accessible patient support tools for scleroderma patients, including psychological supports, self-management, rehabilitation, and educational tools. SPIN's mission is to help scleroderma patients live better lives with their disease and to serve as a model of a way forward for other rare diseases.

SPIN maintains an international patient cohort of over 1,400 patients from 8 countries and engages researchers with a range of backgrounds and expertise. To date, SPIN has developed or is finalizing development of several patient programs (e.g., a training program for individuals with scleroderma who lead patient support groups). SPIN also has numerous research projects (at various stages), including a mixed-methods study exploring resilience and its development in people with scleroderma.



A central component of SPIN's current research involves research on how patients can be best engaged as research team members and communicating research results to patients.

**The tasks of the research assistant may include:**

- Calling research participants
- Answering voicemail/email messages from research participants and resolving requests/problems
- Keeping track of patient progress by entering logs in an online system
- Helping to draft and review ethics and grant submissions
- Assisting with the development and testing of patient support interventions
- Helping with other organizational tasks related to SPIN projects
- Support in development of manuscripts and conference presentations

**The candidate must meet the following qualifications:**

- Degree in psychology, health sciences, social sciences, or related field with strong academic record
- Good interpersonal skills and strong capacity for teamwork
- Excellent computer skills
- Excellent organizational, communication, and time-management skills
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Initiative and flexibility
- Research experience in psychology or related discipline
- Should be able to commit for at least one and ideally two years
- Aptitude for working remotely, given the geographic location of extant research team members
- Fluency in French is an asset

**Salary:** To be determined based on institutional guidelines and candidate experience.

**Start date:** January/February 2025 (negotiable)

**To apply:** Applicants should send (1) a cover letter explaining their interest in the position and how this would support their career goals, (2) a curriculum vitae, (3) an unofficial transcript, and (4) an English writing sample and an additional writing sample in French (if possible), to Amanda Wurz at [amanda.wurz@ufv.ca](mailto:amanda.wurz@ufv.ca). Applications will be reviewed until the position is filled.