

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2009



Empowerment for families facing addiction and mental health issues.

Patricia Fleischmann

In November, the *Family Council* invited PATRICIA FLEISCHMANN, from the Toronto Police Service- Community Mobilization Unit in charge of Vulnerable Persons Issues to a meeting with our volunteers. The volunteers of the Family Resource Centre were able to have an informal chat and ask difficult questions about navigating the system when it comes to the police and a loved one. Two important programs that she mentioned were the Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams and the TPS Community-Based Mental Health Services “police only” Access Line. The Mobile Crisis Intervention Teams initiated in direct response to concerns raised regarding police response to calls involving mentally ill individuals. The MCIT is dedicated to dignified treatment and by partnering law enforcement and the medical profession, this unit strives to assist individuals before they enter a crisis. The TPS Access Line is a telephone line available to emotionally disturbed persons 16+ who are in the presence of a police officer and willing to access the service. If criteria is met, this “police only” line offers access to the following services:



- **Short-term residential beds**
- **Mental health and justice prevention program**
- **Information and referral to other community mental health services**

Visions Workshop

Management Advisory Services has provided the Family Council a facilitator to lead a process that will result in the strategic view of the future for The Family Council together with action plans to work toward that future. MAS has offered to assist in the process by facilitating a series of 4 workshops of 3 to 4 hour duration on **December 1 2008, January 12 & 19 and February 2, 2009**. We have completed the visioning workshops surrounding questions of *What will the Family Council look and feel like in 2/3 years time? What hurdles are preventing us from reaching our vision? What strategies can we undertake to overcome the hurdles to reach our vision?* These steps have lead us to a comprehensive action plan with many people taking part in its completion.

Members, CAMH staff and board members were all present to offer their insight about what they would like to see within the Family Council.

The outcome from these consensus building workshops is expected to be a clear understanding of what the Family Council is seeking to achieve and a sense of teamwork in working for what that achievement and commitment to take action. This is a very exciting and constructive time for the Family Council and we look forward to not only the future but also the steps we are taking to get there.

Thank you to all who took part!



Family Council Mission Statement

THE FAMILY COUNCIL STRENGTHENS AND SUPPORTS THE VOICE OF FAMILIES AFFECTED BY ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES BY FOSTERING EMPOWERMENT AND POSITIVE CHANGE.

Understanding crises and emergencies

Even the best planning can't always prevent a relapse. Sometimes a relapse develops into a crisis. A crisis may also occur with little or no warning. A crisis is any serious deterioration of a person's ability to cope with everyday life. It can be a turning point—for better or worse. It does not necessarily involve a danger of serious physical harm. **A crisis develops when people feel they cannot control their feelings and behaviour and have trouble coping with the demands of day-to-day life.** People in crisis may experience extreme despair, sorrow or anger. They may not be able to sleep, they may hear voices or they may believe that they have superhuman powers. Although people in crisis are not necessarily a danger to themselves or anyone else, in many crisis situations, outside help (the person's doctor or therapist, a mobile crisis service or crisis line) is needed.

An emergency is a situation in which there is an immediate danger that the person will harm either him- or herself or someone else (Chan & Noone, 2000).

Examples of emergencies:

- threats of suicide
- threats of physical violence
- extreme impaired judgment caused by problems such as psychosis or intoxication.

Before a situation turns into a crisis or an emergency, it may help to sit down with your family and discuss what you would do in an emergency. Don't try to deal with your family member when he or she appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or when family members are extremely upset. You may say things under the stress of the situation that you don't mean, or take action that just makes things worse.

When everyone is calm, you can focus on planning what to do if:

- the family notices that some of the symptoms of the substance use or mental health problem are reoccurring
- the situation has already become a crisis.

Developing a plan together ensures that your relative is an active participant in his or her own care. Planning all of this before a crisis happens can sometimes help avoid a crisis altogether. However, there are times when a crisis may not be preventable.

Here are some suggestions for information that you might include on a **Crisis Card**. Choose the information that would be most useful in your situation.

Emergency personal contacts

Primary contact

Name _____

Home phone# _____

Work phone# _____

Cell phone # _____

E-mail _____

Back-up contact

Name _____

Home phone# _____

Work phone# _____

Cell phone # _____

E-mail _____

Treatment providers

Family doctor

Name _____

Phone # _____

Case manager / therapist / substance use or mental health worker

Name _____

Phone # _____

Name _____

Phone# _____

Hospital or treatment centre

Name _____

Phone # _____

→ A list of the person's current medications, the proper dosage for each, and the times of day or night that they are to be taken

→ List of medications to which the person is allergic

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT



Employment Support and Development (ESD) is part of the Community Support and Research Unit (CSRU) at CAMH. It is also a member of the Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN), which is an initiative of agencies in the Toronto area that help people with disabilities find work and assists employers to recruit qualified candidates to meet their hiring needs. In addition ESD networks, and shares employment opportunities, with other staff offering employment services at CAMH, such as the Employment Specialists at the First Episode Psychosis Program, LEARN.

Employment is known to be an important social determinant of health, which can contribute substantially to the process of recovery for people with mental illness and/or addictions. Referrals to ESD come from the community as well as CAMH and people joining the program usually have the goal of finding competitive employment. Alternatively, they may need support around difficulties they are experiencing at their current job or they may be returning to work following an absence due to illness.

The program is driven by the needs of the clients and is flexible and individualized. Wide ranges of services are available, such as assistance with résumés, cover letters, interview skills, goal identification, development of employment plans, job search strategies, access to job leads, job development and job coaching.

Once a client is employed, ongoing support is available on an as-needed basis.

Through a partnership with the Toronto District School Board, Literacy and Basic Skills, as well as ESL training, are currently available at the Queen St Site. An onsite bridging program to college courses is also offered through a partnership with George Brown College. Instruction in basic computer skills training is available and the program facilitates

Distance Learning for clients who are unable to leave the site. Through a partnership with Foodshare, an organic garden, known as The Sunshine Garden, and the Sprouts program are operated at the Queen St Site and provide employment for twenty-eight clients each year.

The program receives approximately 350 referrals a year and during the last fiscal year over 125 clients started working. ESD is always looking for ways to increase their network to access employment opportunities for clients through the 'hidden' job market. If you have any ideas or contacts, ESD would welcome a chance to hear about them!

Wendy Nailer, Manager, Community Support and Research Unit



**For further information please call
(416) 535-8501 Ext 4876**

What the FAMILY COUNCIL offers

The Family Council gives information and support to family members. We are a point of contact for your family as you are your loved one travel the often-confusing road to recovery. We help by creating opportunities for advocacy, learning, participation and support.

Yes, I'd like to join The Family Council:

Name:

Telephone Number:

Address:

Email Address:

Please mail to
33 Russell Street Room 2043
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2S1



Family Resource Centre Placement for volunteers at CAMH

The Family Resource Centre is a unique volunteer driven program made up of special people who have or have had a loved one with primarily a mental health issue or concurrent mental health and addiction issue. The volunteers in this program understand what it means to love and/or care for someone who is experiencing a mental health and/or addiction issue. Volunteers in this program appreciate that families are often the primary support to their loved one. They recognize how important it is for family members/care givers to get support so that they are in a better position to help their loved one.

Volunteers in The Family Resource Centre have experience in accessing the often overwhelming and complicated mental health system. They share knowledge they acquired while making the emotional and stressful journey of caring for someone with a mental health issue. They offer printed material on CAMH and community services and have a lending library.

Volunteers need to have:

- experience as a family member or loved one of someone with mental health and/or addiction issues
- a strong belief in the importance of family as a resource for their loved ones
- a commitment to nurturing the strengths of family members
- empathy for people whose lives have been touched by mental health and/or addiction issues
- solid boundaries and judgment
- self-awareness
- the ability to work independently

PLEASE CONTACT THE FAMILY COUNCIL
COORDINATOR, SUSAN ALLEN, AT 416-535-8501 EX
6499

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES TOGETHER

The Toronto Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario offers this ten-week family education course co-taught by family members. **416-449-6830**

DISTRESS CENTRES OF TORONTO

Emotional support and crisis intervention provided over the telephone by trained volunteers. Available 24 hours a day. Also provide public education and skills training about the following topics: emotional support, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. For administration call:
416-598-0166.

FAMILY EDUCATION GROUP

North York General Hospital and F.A.M.E. (Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere) are offering a seven-week series starting Sept. 14, 2006 from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. at the North York General Hospital - Branson Division, 555 Finch Ave. West.
Contact Mary at **416-207-5032 x 29**
Rose-Marie **416-633-9420 x 6386**

FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY SERIES

The Family Outreach and Response Program, located at the Queen Street site of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health offers this free eight-week family education series.
Contact 416-535-8501 x 2011 or
karyn_baker@familymentalhealthrecovery.org

CRISIS INTERVENTION UNIT TORONTO EAST GENERAL

Emergency department crisis intervention for adults who are in serious distress or suicidal (24 hours/day);
Outpatient services: crisis on-call telephone resource and crisis outpatient counselling (Mon-Fri 9-5).

Adults 18 years and older who are suicidal or in serious distress. **416-469-6220**

