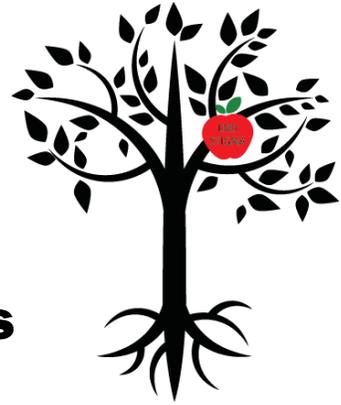


Flourishing: New Vision Gives Hope to Users of Valley Mental Health and Addiction Services

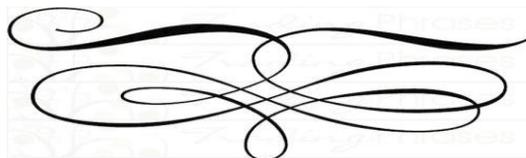


The five community health boards in the Annapolis Valley have highlighted mental health as their five year priority with improvements planned in the areas of access, treatment and health promotion. One means of achieving these goals and improving the health of our valley population is the use of a service transformation model known as CAPA, the choice and partnership approach. This model places the user at the centre of a collaborative practice where he or she is matched with the professional possessing the skills best suited to help them.

A recent interview with Gwenyth Dwyn, the Mental Health and Addiction Services Prevention and Health Promotion Team Lead, she detailed important changes in programs and services offered through AVH Mental Health and Addiction Services. Three new psychiatrists have been added to the staff including one who will spend 50% of his time in addiction services. These additions have broadened the areas of expertise available to

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consumers ensuring they will receive better treatment with less wait time. Mental Health and Addiction Services are focusing on the training and education of their health care professionals to ensure they can offer up-to-date therapies to their patients.

Another change in treatment practice offers initial contact with consumers in primary care settings such as doctor's offices. Addiction services are present in seven primary care offices between Wolfville and Bridgetown. Dwyn says this change is a response to research which indicates early identification and brief intervention is critical. Problems need to be addressed before they get worse. "We are reaching people who aren't going to get to our door," she added. This new treatment plan leads to more professional understanding and "plays a role in reducing stigma. This is a health issue, not a human failing."

Dwyn described a different approach taken for people with concurrent disorders. Since staff will be cross-trained in mental health and addictions, consumers can expect to be treated more holistically and effectively. She also explained that Mental Health and Addiction Services continue to be more involved in schools. If they choose, young people can attend appointments right in their own schools. "We work out what fits best," she stressed.

Improved access to programs includes placing rack cards in doctor's offices. These cards feature all the information needed for clients to get help as well as details of services provided, including the number for the crisis response line (678-2870 or 825-4825). A new website is currently under construction (www.GetHelpNow.ca). It is user friendly, describing every program offered at Annapolis Valley Health.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the whole process of change at AVH is the idea that everyone is working together to build healthy, happy and flourishing communities where problems of poverty and homelessness are addressed and where stigma has ended.

By Heather Frenette



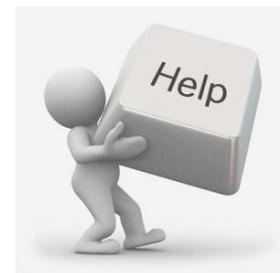
GetHelpNow.ca A Website for Those in Crisis

A mental health crisis can be overwhelming, but help is available. Annapolis Valley Health (AVH) has just released a website called **GetHelpNow.ca** for those affected by mental illness.

The website provides information on their services (which are free and non-referral), a contact information section and a FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) section. The "Get Help" section contains an "I'm In Crisis!" page which not only has a definition of a mental health crisis but also local and provincial contacts in case a mental health crisis occurs. There are also specific pages for parents, teens, adults, women and girls, and older adults and caregivers. The "Helping Resources" section has links to factsheets, self-assessment tools, reading lists, workbooks and other resources [one can check]. The "Contact Us" section has information on AVH local offices and how to contact them if one has any further inquiries or need more help.

GetHelpNow.ca is still a work in progress but it's a very good resource for those wanting more information or contacts that could help them. As such, it's an excellent service not only for the hundreds with mental illness but also for their loved ones who need peace of mind knowing that they can get help when needed.

By Melinda Cadarette



Effects of Stigma and Discrimination On People Living with Schizophrenia

Stigma. It can be more debilitating than the illness itself. People with schizophrenia are especially affected by it. Stigma is found in both society and the medical profession and can cause “loneliness, distress, and discrimination.” Discrimination leads to problems in obtaining housing, getting an education and finding employment. It can also create hopelessness and can cause people to avoid seeking help. It can make them reluctant to stick with treatment, and damages self-esteem and self-confidence. Stigma can interfere with recovery and can also be fatal (suicidal behaviour).

Discrimination against those with mental illness is basically a human rights issue. All people, including those with schizophrenia, have the right to equal treatment no matter what their situation is. Those with schizophrenia should be treated with respect and dignity, not as outcasts of society.

There are human rights laws in place to protect people from discrimination. These laws are not the whole solution. People need to know these laws and put them into practice. Many people in society break these laws and discriminate against those with schizophrenia.

Recovery is about well-being, being a part of the community, and being given the same opportunities as the rest of society. Stigma and discrimination result in human rights violations, cut people off from society, and take away opportunities that all members of society should have.

One way to help remove stigma and discrimination is by educating the public about mental illness. Creating awareness of the facts can make improvements in the quality of life for those living with schizophrenia. Working to change society's attitudes will reduce human rights violations, allowing people with schizophrenia to become a part of the community, and giving them the same opportunities as the rest of society. Better awareness can generate more funding for schizophrenia research thus improving the quality of life for those with schizophrenia.

By Tony Legere

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Schizophrenia: Recovery is Possible

Most people living with schizophrenia can manage their condition with medication and through psychiatric rehabilitation aimed at recovering meaning and value in one's life through work, education and socializing as well as increased autonomy. Long-term research demonstrates that over time individuals living with schizophrenia often do better in terms of coping with their symptoms. Recovery is possible for most, and although many effective treatments exist, more research is needed to promote greater understanding, more effective treatments, and the potential for a cure for schizophrenia and other mental illnesses.

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Canadian Mental Health Association – Changes Logo

By Laurel Taylor

** Some information taken from - CMHA Logo Use Guidelines Version 1.2



The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) logo has changed. If you are reading the printed 'paper' version of our newsletter it may not appear to be very different; however, if you are reading our electronic version the change should be more noticeable. The new logo was released in May 2012. Over the next one and a half years, all CMHA branches will be transitioning their signage to this new logo.

The changing logo heralds the emerging profile of Mental Health in Canada's health system and the minds of Canadians. "As we move to supporting our new strategic plan and strategic position of providing, ***Mental Health For All***, the new brand and updated logo will help CMHA convey a stronger presence focused on solution, hope and recovery." (CMHA Logo Use Guidelines)

The logo redesign represents an evolution of the existing logo. The colours have been modernized and they now include softer tones which suggest approachability. The Green represents CMHA having an earthbound quality, and having the ability to connect with the community. The Blue represents the sky and worldview, symbolizing a wider perspective with regards to ideas and thinking.



So please keep a lookout for our new logo, you never know where you might find it. And remember "Mental Health for all".

A Mental Health Perspective Mission Statement:

The purpose of this newsletter is to bring faith, hope and courage to members of the local mental health community of Kings County, Nova Scotia, as well as others who are involved with a mental, emotional or psychological condition.

Donations to support this newsletter and other important programs and services can be made to CMHA, 11 Opportunity Lane Suite 3 Box 10, Coldbrook, NS B4R 0A5
(Cheque or money order will be accepted).

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