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Strengthening Families Together

Strengthening Families Together is an 8-week psychoeducational group developed by the BC Schizophrenia Society. It was developed with the belief that Canadian families have a right to reliable educational information on serious mental illnesses.

This 8-session education program for family members and friends of individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses aims to increase accessibility to Canadian-based information on topics associated with living with mental illness. This program will be co-led by VCH Family Coordinator Jessica Wilkins and a family member.

Topics include:

- Information on mental illnesses;
- Treatment including information on medication;
- Understanding the mental health system;
- Addiction;
- Family Support;
- Advocacy.

VCH will be offering the Strengthening Families Together program beginning in May 2014.

Registration for the program is required, there are still spaces available.

If you would like to know more information, or if you would like to register, please contact:

Jessica Wilkins
604-736-2881
or
jessica.wilkins@vch.ca

**Details: 8 week program
Monday evenings,
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
May 5 - June 30**

Janice Lee Blue Wave Bursary

Heading to post-secondary education? The Janice Lee Blue Wave Bursary Can Help!

The **Janice Lee Blue Wave Bursary** is a fantastic opportunity for young people aged under 19. This year two bursaries of up to **\$700** each, will be rewarded to young people who have experienced a mental health or substance use problem and are going on to higher education. The vision of the Janice Lee Blue Wave bursary program is to invest in the resilience, wisdom and potential of young people and to reduce some of the barriers during the major transition from high school to higher education.

The online application form is available now, and the **deadline for applications is May 15, 2014.**

For more information, or to complete an application, please visit:

<http://www.ok2bbblue.com/janice-lee-blue-wave-bursary/>



*The **Janice Lee Blue Wave Bursary** honours the legacy of Janice Lee, an 18-year-old who struggled with depression and anxiety for six years and took her own life in 2006. The following year, Blue Wave was created by her family to help break the silence around mental illness in teens and to provide support earlier. The vision of the Janice Lee Blue Wave bursary program is to invest in the resilience, wisdom and potential of young people and to reduce some of the barriers during the major transition from high school to higher education.*

National Schizophrenia & Psychosis Awareness Day

Did You Know?

500,000 Canadians are caring for an adult diagnosed with a mental illness.

Join the BC Schizophrenia Society (BCSS) for a free presentation to learn how mental illness affects individuals, families and communities. People with firsthand experience of mental illness tell their personal stories about its impact on their lives. Four guest speakers talk about their own experience – a person with a mental illness, a family member with a loved one affected by mental illness, a mental health professional, and a police officer.

When: Saturday, May 24, 2014
2:00 - 4:00 PM

Where: Vancity Theatre
1181 Seymour Street
Vancouver, B.C.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY
Hope and Help for Families

This event is free and registration is not required. For more info, visit www.bcscs.org

MDA Stomp the Stigma Fundraiser

The MDABC is holding our 2014 Stomp the Stigma fundraiser and you are all invited!

On May 24, 2014 from 7pm to 11pm come join us for an evening of dancing, refreshments and entertainment as we work together to end the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.

The amazing event will be held at St. James Community Square (3214 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver).

Click on this link to take you to our Facebook event page to read more about the event, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1401406900125788/>.



MOOD DISORDERS ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

To buy tickets you can go to our website, www.mdabc.net or directly to Eventbrite, <http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/stomp-the-stigma-tickets-10861863125?aff=eac2>.

Spotlight on: From Grief to Action

Submitted by: Mae Burrows, President, From Grief to Action

From Grief to Action: is a voice for families who have a loved one with addiction or mental health issues, and frequently both. In the late 1990s we were struggling with the tragedy of family members suffering from addiction to illegal drugs like heroin. We met to support each other, mired in our feelings of shame, guilt, helplessness and grief. After about a year, we realized the disease wasn't the only problem. We faced a complex web of public attitudes, treatment shortfalls, overworked professionals and a lack of understanding at all levels of the seriousness of the problem in our society. We moved from our grief to action to publicize these issues and create positive change in the "system".

From Grief to Action brought a new face to addiction, throwing light on a problem which knows no socio-economic boundaries and can happen in any family. We were early supporters of Vancouver's Four Pillars Approach and INSITE. Today we organize public forums on topics ranging from mental illness and addictions in federal prison, to family inclusion, to the need for increased diagnosis and treatment for concurrent disorders. Our popular publication *The Coping Kit* helps families deal with the chaos that addiction and co-occurring disorders brings to their lives.

We believe that:

- Addiction is a chronic health problem, not a moral or criminal justice issue
- More resources are needed to identify concurrent disorders and provide a full spectrum of services, both to those with concurrent disorders and addiction.
- Families must be included whenever possible, to help with their loved ones treatment as well as to care for the families.

And remember – **You are not alone.**

You can download or order [The Coping Kit](http://fgta.ca) at fgta.ca, or get in touch with us at info@fgta.ca

St. Paul's Hospital Mental Health Education Day

St. Paul's Hospital Mental Health Program Presents:

Moving Forward: Mental Health Education Day 2014



May 21, 2014
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
St. Paul's Hospital
1081 Burrard Street
Vancouver
New Lecture Theatre



This year's focus is on Moving Forward. Moving forward reflects both the challenges we face and the strengths we use to persevere and move beyond them.

Sign up at: www.epl.com/MentalHealthEducationDay
 Registration fees are \$25 (\$10 for students) with a light breakfast and refreshments included.

Please register early as space is limited!

Willow Pavilion's 2nd Annual Mental Health Week

Mental Health Awareness Week is May 5 - 9 and Willow Pavilion is celebrating with its 2nd annual Mental Health week events.

Monday May 5th: Older Adult Display

Willow Pavilion First Floor (805 West 12th Ave, Vancouver)

A series of information boards which will describe the unique nature the older adult population.

Registration for this event is not required.

Art Studio and Willow Pavilion Artist Exhibit and Display

Willow Pavilion, First Floor (805 West 12th Ave, Vancouver) from 4-6 p.m.

Registration for this event is not required.

Thursday May 8th: Walk-A-Mile for Mental Health

Location: Heather Green Space at Willow Pavilion (10th and Willow)

Time: 10am-3pm

Walk-A-Mile is a star of a weeklong series of events. It has a history of bringing members, staff, and families together to celebrate Mental Wellness

Please RSVP by Apr 25th to join BBQ at noon to denice.dobinson@vch.ca.

Tuesday May 6th

Stand Up to Mental health

Willow Pavilion Multi-purpose Room (805 West 12th Ave, Vancouver) 1:30 pm

A number of seasoned comedians who have performed at a number of Mental health events over the years. Come share a few laughs and look at the lighter side of Mental health.

LEAP into Better Communication

Submitted by Isabella Mori

Research tells us that over 50% of persons with schizophrenia don't or only partially adhere to medication treatment. (This number was 40% for a large sample in a 2007 study of persons with bipolar disorder.) Within 7-10 days of starting medication, 25% are noncompliant, 50% are off medication after 1 year, up to 75% after 2 years. According to Dr. Xavier Amador, there are two predictors of long-term medication adherence: Awareness of being ill, and a relationship with someone who

- believes the person would benefit from treatment
- listens without judgment; and
- respects the person's point of view

Fortunately, the first condition (awareness of being ill) does not even always have to be there as long as the second condition applies - a good relationship that fulfills these three conditions.

How can family do this?

You can find Dr. Amador's suggestions on his web site, which also links to his books and seminars. Here are some of the main points, using the acronym LEAP - Listen, Empathize, Agree, and Partner.

LISTEN reflectively to what the person has to say. This includes taking the person's desires seriously, no matter how "silly" they seem. ("Okay, I hear you, you really want a dog.") Don't fear that by reflecting back what you hear you will make things worse. Stop pushing your own agenda. Listen for problems that you can BOTH work on together. Delay giving your opinion. ("I will tell you what I think and for now I'd like to hear more about your opinion. Is that OK?")

EMPATHIZE with delusional beliefs ("If I was afraid of being followed everywhere I go, I would find that very scary, too.") Empathize with the reasons for avoiding treatment, with fears and frustrations.

AGREE - e.g. to discuss the problems that THE PERSON PERCEIVES regarding drawbacks and benefits of treatment - again, don't push your own agenda here. Agree to disagree - "I hope that we can just agree to disagree. I respect your point of view and hope that you can respect mine."

PARTNER - Move forward on goals you both agree can be worked on together ("Okay, I really understand now that you don't want to see Dr. X anymore. You also say that you're ok with the rest of the people at the clinic. And that you'd like it if we went there together on Monday. Alright if we leave by 12?")

Want to learn more? Go to the Leap Institute at <http://www.leapinstitute.org/>. This is definitely not the only way you can improve communication with your loved one or help them get better through medication adherence, but it's one solution that you might just find helpful.

Calendar of Events

May 2014

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5 Strengthening Families Together Mental Health Week	6 VCH Eating Disorder Family Group	7	8	9 Parents Forever Support Group	10
11	12 Strengthening Families Together	13 MDA Family Support Group	14 Raven Song Family Support Group	15	16	17
18	19 Strengthening Families Together	20 VCH Eating Disorder Family Group	21	22	23 Parents Forever Support Group	24 Psychosis Awareness Day MDA Fundraiser
25	26 Strengthening Families Together	27 MDA Family Support Group	28	29	30	

Support Group Listing

Mood Disorders Association of BC – Mutual support groups for families of individuals living with a mood disorder. 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month, 7 - 9 p.m., Mount St. Joseph Hospital, 3080 Prince Edward St, Harvest Room A. Contact 604-873-0103

Raven Song Family Support Group– Support group for families who have a loved one living with mental illness. 2nd Wednesday of each month 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Raven Song Community Health Centre, 2450 Ontario Street, Vancouver. Contact 604-736-2881 or jessica.wilkins@vch.ca

VCH Eating Disorder Program – Family Support Group – for friends and family members of individuals living with an eating disorder. 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6 – 7:30 p.m., 3rd Floor, 2750 East Hastings, Vancouver. Contact Hella at 604-675-2531 ext 20689.

Parents Forever – Support group for families of adult children living with addiction. Group meets every 2nd Friday at St. Mary's Kerrisdale, 2490 W 37th Ave., Vancouver. Contact Frances Kenny, 604-524-4230 or fkenny@uniserve.com

SPH Family Support Group – 6 session closed support group for family members supporting a loved one with mental illness. Registration is required, call Pam at 604-682-2344 local 62403.

CMHA Chinese Family Support Group – Education sessions for Chinese families who have a loved one living with mental illness. Richmond Caring Place, 1 – 4:00 p.m., Room 345/50, 7000 Minoru Blvd, Richmond. Contact bessie.wang@cmha.bc.ca or 604-276-8834, ext 12. Or check out their blog at <http://cmhachinese.wordpress.com>