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Family Connections

EDITED BY JUSTUN MILLER

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What Is Family Connections!?

The family Connections Newsletter is a monthly resource provided by the Family Support and Involvement Team at Vancouver Coastal Health to inform families and friends of loved ones living with mental health and/or substance use issues of resources and up to date information for themselves and family.



What can you expect from the Family Connections Newsletter?

We know that when family members and/or loved ones first enter the health care system, whether due to mental health or substance use it can be a overwhelming time. It is the Family Support and Involvement team's goal to support, educate and reduce the confusion the family members and loved ones experience during this difficult time. We aim to do this by providing information, events, and announcements which address the concerns listed above.

As such, the names and numbers of the Family Support and Involvement Coordinators that can support and direct you are listed at the bottom left of this page. Please feel free to contact us, we are here to help and answer any questions you may have.

There are also a couple of important numbers below that can be used to access services:

Vancouver Adult Mental Health Intake (VAMHI): 604-675-3997

Children and Youth Mental Health: 604-675-3895

Older Adult Mental Health Intake: 604-709-6785

Access Central (Addictions Services): 1-866-658-1221

Please remember that if your loved one is at risk to themselves or others the best resources are your local **Emergency Department**, and **911**. Another resource available to you is the Mental **Health Emergency Services (MHES)** at : 604-874-7307

The Changing Family Support and Involvement Team



“Family” - Persons who are biologically or legally related, or significant others who are not related biologically or legally but who function in such a way that the client considers them to be a major support.

Hello, my name is Justun Miller and I am the newest addition to the Family Support and Involvement for Community Mental Health and Addictions Team at Vancouver Coastal Health. I am bringing with me a strong passion for holistic and collaborative practice/care. And I am looking forward to working with the Family Support and Involvement Team and families in the community.

I will be working alongside Becky Hynes, Coordinator of Family Support and Involvement for tertiary care, Isabella Mori, Coordinator, Family Support and Involvement for Vancouver Acute Care, and, Gloria Baker, Manager Family Support and Involvement. Each one of us focuses on the needs of families at each level of care - Community, Acute, and Tertiary, and we also work collaboratively across programs to encourage and promote family involvement in mental health and substance use programming. Additionally, we assist families to navigate and gain access to supportive programming in the community. Our programming focuses on families who live in the Vancouver Coastal Health area and/or have a family member with a mental illness or substance use issue that is receiving services as part of Vancouver Coastal Health.

One of my new responsibilities/privileges, is to continue to produce this family centered news letter for Mental Health and Substance Use which has well over 600 subscribers, and continues to grow.

The Family Support and Involvement team’s vision for the news letter is to keep family members of someone living with a serious mental Health illness and/or Substance Use issue connected to information, events, and, announcements of interest. As such, we welcome your feedback about the articles in the newsletter. If there is something that you would like to see included, please let us know!

Written by Justun Miller.

A Fond Farewell to Jessica Wilkins

As we extend a warm welcome to Justun Miller our newest member of the VCH Family Support and Involvement Team, I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of families, clients and staff, to express appreciation for the contributions of his predecessor, Jessica Wilkins. A few of Jessica's accomplishments include:

- Creating and editing the Family Connections Newsletter,
- Compiling the resource document "Community Supports for Families Supporting a Loved One Living with Mental Illness and/or Addiction: Counselling, Support Groups, and Education",
- Collaborating on the design and delivery of "Heart and Soul", VCH's ongoing staff education pertaining to embedding Family Involvement into every day practice
- Providing Family Education series in collaboration with community family members
- Making over 1,000 contacts with family members in her first year on the FSI team
- Assuming the role of co chair (along with family member, Janet Budreski) for the planning committee for the very successful 10th Annual Family Conference.

We will all miss Jessica for her professionalism, intelligence and the warm and helpful way she approached her work with families and her colleagues.

Thank you Jessica!

Written by the FSI team.

*Thank
You!*

10th Annual Family Conference



Recovery:
*A journey of
 healing and
 transformation
 enabling a person
 with a mental
 health or
 substance use
 problem to live a
 meaningful life in
 a community of
 his or her choice
 while striving to
 reach his or her
 potential.*

The 10th annual Family Conference was a great success. Attendance at the conference continues to grow every year. This year was no exception with over 170 family members, loved ones, and professionals in attendance.

Andrew McFarlane, Regional Program Director, Mental Health & Addiction and Director, Vancouver Community MH&A/Inner City Introduced the conference by highlighting his passion and vision for Recovery-orientated Services, identifying that the “system” is just a small part of recovery, and that Working collaboratively with families, community partners, and general practitioners, etc... is an important aspect of the recovery journey.

There were speakers from a very broad range of topics all connected with the conferences theme of Family Involvement in Mental Health and Addiction. The morning consisted of presentations from Sarbi Aujla and Susanne Hawkins representing the Vancouver Adult Mental Health Intake Team (VAMHI) highlighted VAMHI’s role as VCH’s Mental Health central intake service, and how anyone concerned about a mental health issue whether it be their own, or that of a family member and/or loved one can call the VAMHI office at **604 675-3997**. Angela Louie presented on Recovery: Beyond Illness to Growth. Frances Kenny, and Anita Haidar from Parents Together and From Grief to Action presented a very well received presentation on How Families are Affected by Substance Abuse and Mental Illness, and provided attendees with a Family Recovery Toolkit.

The interactive and informative presentations continued in the afternoon with Dr. Debbie Thompson speaking on Medications & Recovery: the journey from onset, to stabilization & Maintenance. Dr. Heather Fulton spoke on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): What it is and How Can Family Members Help an Individual Who is Doing This Therapy? And, Dr. Diane Frederikson, Fred Ott, and Laura Hansen from the Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) team shared their expertise on Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Program: Key Concepts. Metabolic Cognitive Remediation – A Roadmap for recovery.

Despite all the amazing presentations, conversations, and question/answer periods the morning had to offer, the day was not over! A family panel consisting of Holly Horwood, Gail and Tracy Windsor, Oskana Hoskins and her mother provided an opportunity for attendees to hear their unique recovery journeys and learn what the different “turning points” and insights for each of the courageous panel members was. The day finally came to a close as Jane Duval provided the closing words.

Do not worry if you were unable to make it to this years Family Conference, the Family Advisory Committee is already hard at work reviewing the valuable feedback provided by this years attendees and planning for next year. Make sure to save the date for the 11th annual Family Conference on Saturday April 23rd 2016!

Article written by Justun Miller

The Peer Navigators are Here!



The Peer Navigation Program is a brand new free program offered by Canadian Mental Health Association, Vancouver-Fraser Branch (CMHA, V/F) and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). We offer services for people in Vancouver who may have mental health concerns and may need assistance navigating the complex system of social services that are out there.

We are people with lived experience in mental health or substance use and are looking forward to connecting with our peers and working with them in order to find what they're looking for. Our core specialties are connecting people to resources in the city in areas of health, housing, legal

aid, income assistance and community connections. Together we will produce a "Navigation Plan" which will take your goals and dreams and break them down into smaller, easier to manage steps.

Our program is different from advocacy however. It is a capacity building program for individuals accessing the mental health system. We are meant to work with people who are searching for alternatives to improve their quality of life. We help them find their bearings, sitting down with them to search for and discuss resources they might need to move forward in their personal wellness.

We're hoping that in supporting people we will be empowering people and will transfer

knowledge and skills about system navigation to people who can then move on to better advocate for their own needs and share those skills with others.

You can contact us at **604-872-3148** to leave a message or email us at peer.navigators@cmha.bc.ca. We look forward to hearing from you!

Article written by Peer Support Navigators.

SMART Recovery Family & Friends Groups.



Did You Know?
500,000
Canadians are
caring for an
adult diagnosed
with a mental
illness.

Addiction impacts everyone. SMART can help

SMART Recovery® and Vancouver Coastal Health are proud to sponsor SMART Recovery Family & Friends Groups in the Lower Mainland. These groups are for the partners, family and friends of an individual with substance use problems. The Family & Friends Group has two key purposes: support and education for families, and how to support the individual with substance use issues. As anyone who has lived with addiction in the family knows, the impact of addiction on loved ones can be severe. Partners, friends and family members often feel over-

whelmed, confused, ashamed, guilty, or afraid, and may have little sense of what to do or where to turn.

The Family & Friends Group will be a place that people can find emotional and behavioral balance in life.

The SMART Recovery Tools have been working over the past decade for individuals who have substance use issues, and can be just as helpful for partners, family and friends.

SMART Recovery® is based on behavioural therapy models. There is more information available about SMART and how it works at: <http://www.smartrecovery.org>

SMART Recovery Family & Friends Group is run by vetted, trained volunteers in the community.

If you have any questions please call Oona Krieg, the Group Coordinator, at 604-714-3480.

SMART Recovery for Family and Friends

These groups are for the partners, family and friends of an individual with substance use problems. Your loved one does not have to be in recovery for you to attend these support groups

The Family & Friends Group will be a place that people can find emotional and behavioral balance in life.

The SMART Recovery Tools have been working over the past decade for individuals who have substance use issues, and can be just as helpful for partners, family and friends.

Article written by Oona Krieg

Would you like to receive the Family Connections newsletter via email?

The *Family Connections* newsletter is available electronically, direct to your email inbox each month. If you don't already receive *Family Connections* via email and would like to stay up to date about programs and services supporting families with a loved one with mental illness, sign up for our Consumer & Family e-distribution list.

Visit www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com



Then, scroll down to the bottom of the page, enter your email address and choose the type of information you would like to receive. You will receive an email confirming you have been added to the list.

Join the Consumer & Family E-list * Indicates required

Email Address *

First Name

Last Name

What type of info would you like?

Consumer focused information

Family focused information

Both Consumer and Family focused information

Email Format

html

text

Calendar of Events

July 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 Parents Forever Support Group (call to confirm)	4
5	6	7 SMART VCH Eating Disorders Family Support	8 Raven Song Family Support Group	9 GRASP Support Group (pls Register)	10	11 Richmond Chinese Family Support
12	13 MDA Family Support Group (Evergreen CHC)	14 SMART MDA (MSJ)	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 SMART VCH Eating Disorders Family Support Group	22	23	24 Parents Forever Support Group (call to confirm)	25
26	27	28 SMART MDA (MSJ)	29	30 SPH Family Support Group (Pls Register)		

Family Support Groups

Mood Disorders Association of BC (MDA) – 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. 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30pm at Evergreen Community Health Centre (3425 Crowley) .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 604-290-3817 or isabella.mori@vch.ca

SPH Family Support Group- Support for families who have a loved one living with mental illness. Last Thursday of each month, 6-7:30pm. St Paul’s Hospital, 1081 Burrard Street, Room 2B-169, 2nd floor, Burrard Building. To register, call Kaye 604-682-2344 local 68964

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

CMHA Chinese Family Support Group – Education sessions for Chinese families who have a loved one living with mental illness. 2nd Saturday of each month. , 1 – 4:00 p.m., Room 345/50, 7000 Minoru Blvd, Richmond. Contact bessie.wang@cmha.bc.ca or 604-276-8834, ext 12.

GRASP Support Group – GRASP offers peer-led mutual support groups for families or individuals who have had a loved one die as a result of substance abuse or addiction. 2nd Thursday of each month, 7-9 p.m. at Gilmore Community School 50 South Gilmore Ave, Rm 207. Please email graspvancouver@gmail.com to register.

SMART, Family and Friends - Support group for family and friends to learn and implement self care, boundary setting, and compassionate communication tools. Every Tuesday 6:30-7:30PM. Every other Friday 6:30-7:30 at Three Bridges Addictions 1290 Hornby Street, Rm 310. Call Oona @ 604-714-3480. Thursday 6:00-7:00PM at Ravensong 2450 Ontario street, 1st floor. 604-872-8441.