

## Family Involvement & Support - Mental Health & Addiction

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Edited by Jessica Wilkins

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## Update on Ravensong Family Support Group

Dear Families,

We would like to share some updates with you regarding the BCSS Vancouver-based support and education services, specifically the Strengthening Families Together education group and the monthly drop-in Support Group. VCH is committed to the ongoing provision of services to family members of individuals who live with mental illness. With this commitment in mind, the VCH Family Coordinators along with several staff and family members passionate about family support and involvement, have expressed a desire to work together to ensure these services continue.

Moving forward, we are pleased to announce that VCH will be collaborating with BCSS to continue to offer the family support group at Ravensong Health Centre, the second Wednesday of each month. The "Strengthening Families Together" series will also continue to be offered twice annually with the next available session starting in Spring 2014.

With respect to these and any other services to families, feedback is welcome. We are committed to involving families and clients in these initiatives as we strive to maintain the quality and accessibility to family support and education services.

With Many Thanks,

Family Support and Involvement Team  
Gloria, Jessica, Isabella & Sharon



## Spotlight On: HeretoHelp.bc.ca

**Here to Help** is a mental health resource information website that was created and is maintained by a group of seven leading mental health and addiction non-profit agencies in BC. The website offers quality information on mental health, mental disorders, and substance use problems and disorders including self help resources and links to professional help resources in BC.

For more information, visit [www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)



## Vancouver Mental Health Crisis Resources

The holidays can be a difficult time and especially so if you support a loved one living with serious mental illness. It is important to know that there are a number of resources in Vancouver that are available to you if you or your family is in significant distress or in crisis. Keep these phone numbers handy as we navigate what can be a bittersweet season.



**Mental Health Emergency Service (MHES)** - operates 24/7. Speak to a trained mental health professional if you are significantly concerned about your loved one's safety or mental health. They have the ability to do outreach. **604-874-7307**

**Vancouver Distress Centre** - operates 24/7. Volunteers are available to answer the phone and provide support to anyone in distress. **604-872-3311**

**Health Link BC** - operates 24/7. Speak with a nurse about health services and resources. Dial **8-1-1** from any phone in BC.

**Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service** - operates 24/7. This service is available to people across B.C. needing help with any kind of substance abuse issues 24 hours a day. It provides information and referral to education, prevention and treatment services and regulatory agencies. **1-800-663-1441**

## Trauma Informed Practice at BCMHA

*Submitted by Isabella Mori*

Recently, the Burnaby Center for Mental Health and Addiction (BCMHA) has begun a major initiative to ensure that all its services are carried out according to Trauma Informed Practice.

The newly released Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) Guide (available at <http://bccewh.bc.ca>) defines trauma as:

Experiences that overwhelm an individual's capacity to cope. Trauma early in life, including child abuse, neglect, witnessing violence and disrupted attachment, as well as later traumatic experiences such as violence, accidents, natural disaster, war, sudden unexpected loss and other life events that are out of one's control, can be devastating ...

Memory is often affected—people may not remember parts of what happened, but at the same time may be overwhelmed by sporadic memories that return in flashbacks. Nightmares, depression, irritability, and jumpiness are common.

A trauma-related response can be triggered at any time.

One example of TIP is how BCMHA approaches intake. When a person first comes in, one of the things BCMHA asks them to do is to have a shower. The disrobing that comes with that can trigger people who have been traumatized by sexual assaults. Therefore, BCMHA tries to be as respectful as possible, explaining what's happening along the way, as well as why, and ensure that the client has privacy and a feeling of safety.

Trauma informed practice is also interesting to families of adults with mental health and/or addictions. Perhaps you've always wondered why your loved one never wants to go to a particular part of town. It's possible that something traumatic happened in that location - maybe an assault, or an accident. Your loved one may never have told you about that incident, or they have and for whatever reason you were not aware of the significance. When I was a teenager hitchhiking all over Europe, I was once assaulted under very precarious circumstances. When I told my parents about it, I totally minimized it and told it more like a joke - it wasn't until years later that I realized how lucky I was that I had made it out alive. Had I been severely traumatized by that event, I don't know whether my parents would have made the connection because I had made no big deal of it when I told the story.

Here are a few more web sites if you are interested in trauma related topics:

<http://fittcenter.umaryland.edu/> - Family Informed Trauma Treatment Center

<http://trauma-informed.ca/> - A Canadian site on trauma informed practice

<http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/> - The trauma informed site of the US Substance Abuse and Mental Administration

## Unexpected Circumstance Grants - VCH

### Consumer Initiative Fund, Vancouver Coastal Health Unexpected Circumstance Grants

Unexpected circumstance grants are available to mental health consumers who are in need of financial support to cover costs due to an unexpected circumstance. In order to be eligible, individuals must be:

- Referred by a current health care worker who knows them well
- A mental health consumer
- 19 years or older
- A Vancouver resident
- Unable to cover costs due to an unexpected circumstance (i.e. a situation that is unforeseen and/or out of the ordinary)



*Grants are issued when all other funding sources have been exhausted.*

*Grants are not issued for chronic mismanagement of money.*

*There are a limited number of grants per month.*

*Grants up to \$75 will be issued.*

*Individuals are only eligible to receive one grant every twelve months.*

Application forms are to be completed by health care workers and can be downloaded at:

<http://www.SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/unexpected-circumstance-grants>

For more information contact Seema: 604-736-2033 ext 2239 [seema.shah@vch.ca](mailto:seema.shah@vch.ca)

## Celebration of Recovery Event

You're Invited . . .

**Celebration of Recovery**  
**Friday December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013**  
**6:45 - 8:45 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Building, 2750 E. Hastings**



Come celebrate resilient people in our community!

The newest graduates of Vancouver Coastal Health's Consumer Initiative Fund Project, "Sharing Stories (of Mental Illness & Recovery)" have spent eight weeks writing their stories and practicing speaking skills.

At this event, participants of the program will share their journeys through mental illness and their personal experience and definition of "Recovery." Presentations will be followed by time for audience members to ask speakers questions about these experiences.

Afterwards, join us for refreshments and celebrating.

**This event is free.**

## Gastown Vocational Services

*Submitted by Gastown Vocational Services*



**Vancouver Coastal Health**  
Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.

Gastown Vocational Services (GVS) has been providing vocational services since 1991. We specialize in working with people in mental health recovery with their employment, educational and career goals. Our services are based on rehab and recovery principles, focusing on each person's strengths and promotion of wellness. We are a multidisciplinary team composed of Occupational Therapists, Job Developers, Peer Support Workers and a Psychologist. We have two programs, one serving adults who live in two of our Vancouver catchment areas, through a contract with the Employment Program of British Columbia. The other program is aimed at supporting Youth and Young Adults, 16-29 years living in the Vancouver area.

We offer both one to one and group services. One-to-one services include pre-employment skill development, supported employment, supported education, and OT or psychological vocational testing. Some of the groups include a Wellness for Work group to develop pre-employment skills and wellness strategies for work, as well as a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy group, to support employment and education goals. Additionally, cognitive rehabilitation services are also offered as GVS -- in partnership with the Early Psychosis Intervention Program (EPI) and the UBC Psychology Department -- offer a Brain Fitness program as part of a research study. This is composed of both computer training, using Brain Fitness software, and a weekly group run by Occupational Therapists to provide education about the brain and ways to enhance brain function. Services are catered to client needs and individual vocational goals to support youth, young adults, and adults living with a mental health condition achieve either their employment or education goals.

If you have additional questions about GVS, please contact us directly at 604-675-2535.

## Family to Family Program at North Shore Schizophrenia Society

*Submitted by Melanie at NSSS*

Family-to-Family is a free, intensive, 12-week education course for families dealing with any serious mental illness. Offered by the North Shore Schizophrenia Society, the course covers all aspects of mental illness including symptomology, diagnosis, crisis management, and advocacy. Classes begin Tuesday, January 21, 2014, at 7 p.m.

Family-to-Family will be held at the North Shore Schizophrenia Society Family Centre in West Vancouver.

To register or for info, please call 604-926-0856 or email [info@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:info@northshoreschizophrenia.org).

## Calendar of Events

December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5 Talking With Your Doctor Workshop 4-7pm	6 Celebration of Recovery 6:45pm	7
8	9	10 MDA Family Support Group 7-9pm	11 BCSS Family Support Group 7-9pm	12	13	14
15	16	17 VCH Eating Disorder Family Support 6-7:30	18	19	20	21 Chinese Family Support Group 1-2:30pm
22	23	24	25 Christmas Statutory Holiday	26 Boxing Day Statutory Holiday	27	28
29	30	31				

## Support Group Listing

**Mood Disorders Association of BC** – Mutual support groups for families of individuals living with a mood disorder. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday each month, 7-9 p.m. 1450 - 605 Robson Street (at Seymour). Contact: 604-873-0103

**BC Schizophrenia Society & VCH**– Support group for families. 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month (except August) at Raven Song Community Health Centre, 2450 Ontario Street, Vancouver. Contact: 604-727-5997 or [jessica.wilkins@vch.ca](mailto:jessica.wilkins@vch.ca)

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

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

**CMHA Chinese Family Support Group** – In December, the Family Support group will be celebrating the holiday season with a pot luck on 21 December from 1 - 3 p.m. Location: Rm 345/50 7000 Minoru Blvd, Richmond Caring Place. For more information: [bessie.wang@cmha.bc.ca](mailto:bessie.wang@cmha.bc.ca) or 604-276-8834 ext 12.