

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- VCH Harm Reduction 2
- Access Central 3
- Assertive Community Treatment 4
- SMART 4
- Stages of Change 5
- Grief Recovery After Substance Passing 6
- From Grief to Action 6
- Harm Reduction and Motivational Interviewing 7
- VGH Outpatient Psychiatry 8
- Parents Forever 8
- Willow Pavilion Education Night 8
- Family Connections Group 9
- Family Support Groups Calendar 10

Your Family Support and Involvement Team

Justun Miller
Coordinator, Family Support & Involvement, Community
604-736-2881
Justun.Miller@vch.ca

Isabella Mori
Coordinator, Family Support & Involvement, Acute
604-290-3817
Isabella.Mori@vch.ca

Becky Hynes
Coordinator, Family & Consumer Involvement, Tertiary
604-313-1918
Becky.Hynes@vch.ca

Gloria Baker
Manager, Family Support & Involvement
604-736-2881
Gloria.Baker@vch.ca

Family Connections

EDITED BY JUSTUN MILLER

SEPTEMBER 2015

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.



This month the Family Connections Newsletter is focusing on raising awareness. August 30th was International Overdose Awareness Day, but why stop there? We thought that this was a great opportunity to keep the awareness raising ball rolling.



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

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



“The fatalities, harms and loss caused by overdoses can be minimized. Overdoses are preventable through education on overdose prevention, recognition and response.”

Vancouver Coastal Health Harm Reduction Programs

International Overdose Awareness Day is on August 31st each year and aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends remembering those who died or have experienced permanent injury as a result of drug overdose.

In 2014, there were over 330 accidental, illicit drug overdose deaths in BC, and permanent injury was associated with non-fatal overdoses. The fatalities, harms and loss caused by overdoses can be minimized. Overdoses are preventable through education on overdose prevention, recognition and response. If your family, friends or peers are at risk of overdose, being trained in overdose response demonstrates respect for life and dignity of your loved ones, reduces stigma associated with drug use and may just save a life.

In August 2012, naloxone became available as a prescription medication in BC through the [BC Take Home Naloxone \(THN\) program](#). Naloxone is a safe medication that restores breathing in the event of an opioid overdose. To date, the program has been implemented in 62 sites across BC; over 2700 people have been trained, 1500 kits dispensed and 160 overdose reversals have been reported.

Being prepared to respond to an overdose promotes healthy families and healthy communities. Those who self-identify as a current or former users of opioids are able to receive Take Home Naloxone at [participating sites](#).

Support your loved ones who are at risk of overdose in the spirit of International Overdose Awareness Day by becoming educated in overdose prevention, recognition and response with Take Home Naloxone.

Submitted by Alex Scott



What is Naloxone?

Naloxone is an antidote to an opioid overdose. It is a safe, prescription only medication that reverses the effects of opioids on the body. In the event of an overdose, naloxone restores normal breathing within 2-5 minutes of administration, but the effects wear off between 30-90 minutes. Naloxone cannot be abused, as it has no effect on the body in the absence of opioids.

Access Central

Do you have questions about a family member or friend struggling with addiction issues or know someone in need of detox services?

Access Central is considered the main hub for addiction services. One phone call connects adults (22+) and youth (21yrs and under) to Inpatient Withdrawal Management at Vancouver Detox and Harbour Light, Outpatient Home Detox, Daytox, Addiction Housing, and other related resources. Calls are answered by friendly professional health care workers from 9am -7:45pm daily, 365 days a year. All calls adhere to the strict VCH confidentiality guidelines.

We work on a self-referral basis, people requesting withdrawal management are screened immediately over the phone and given an appointment for the next available admission date. The average stay at Vancouver Detox Centre (VDC) and Harbour Light Detox Centre (HBL) is 5 days. The waitlist for a medical bed at VDC is approximately 2 weeks and 24-72 hours for non-medical detox bed at HBL. Youth calling for detox services are also screened and placed on a waitlist if no beds are available at the time of call. We do have a cancellation list for our detox centers and try our best to get people in as quickly as possible.

What can people do while they wait to get into detox?

- ◆ Connect with supports (family, friends, sponsor, A&D counselor, etc)
- ◆ Get an Alcohol and Drug Counsellor (Call us and we can help in connecting you to your local community health center)
- ◆ Start considering post detox options (treatment, support recovery, daytox, etc). There's many options, ask us and we can offer suggestions.
- ◆ Try and stay safe and use safely as well. Do not use alone.
- ◆ If you do not have a contact number for us to reach you then please feel welcome in checking in with us daily to see if an extra bed has become available.

Other programs we offer:

- ◆ Daytox – 6 week day program
- ◆ Addiction Housing (ARP, New Way, TTIP)
- ◆ Outpatient Withdrawal Management (home detox)

Please phone us for further information about any of our programs.

1-866-658-1221

Submitted by Natalie Markowitz

“Calls are answered by friendly professional health care workers from 9am -7:45pm daily, 365 days a year. All calls adhere to the strict VCH confidentiality guidelines.”



Assertive Community Treatment Teams (ACT)

“Our approach emphasizes relationship-building and active involvement in our clients’ lives.”

The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams are specialized programs designed to provide service to individuals who struggle with a serious mental illness and substance use disorder who also have very significant functional impairments.

ACT services are delivered by a multidisciplinary team who deliver the treatment, rehabilitation, and support services in the community. An ACT Team is comprised of a Clinical Supervisor, Psychiatrist, GP, Recreational/Vocational Coordinator, Social Worker, Counsellor, RNs/RPNs, OT, a Peer Support Specialist, Care Coor-

dinator, and Program Assistant. ACT services are delivered 7 days a week from 0800-2000hrs and utilize Mental Health Emergency Services (MHES) after-hours.

ACT services are individually tailored with each client to address and identify specific goals. Our approach emphasizes relationship-building and active involvement in our clients’ lives. To ensure continuity of caregiving and focus on the process of recovery our services are not time limited. Our low staff-to-client ratio and intensive services are key-stone to developing best outcomes for our clients.

The VCH ACT Teams adhere to the BC Provincial Standards to ensure successful implementation of services and improvements in client outcomes.

VCH ACT services are offered in Vancouver as a tertiary service with specific admission criteria. If you are interested in referring a loved one to ACT services, please contact your local Mental Health provider.

For more information, please visit www.act-bc.com for more information.

Article submitted by Neil Arao

“Partners, friends and family members often feel overwhelmed, confused, ashamed, guilty, or afraid, and may have little sense of what to do or where to turn.”

SMART/Families

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 overwhelmed, 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 submitted by Oona Krieg

What are the Stages of Change?

“MOST SUCCESSFUL SELF-CHANGERS GO THROUGH THE STAGES THREE OR FOUR TIMES BEFORE THEY MAKE IT THROUGH THE CYCLE OF CHANGE WITHOUT AT LEAST ONE SLIP.”

1) PRECONTEMPLATION STAGE

"IT ISN'T THAT WE CAN'T SEE THE SOLUTION. IT IS THAT WE CAN'T SEE THE PROBLEM"
Precontemplators usually show up in therapy because of pressures from others... spouses, employers, parents, and courts... Resist change. When their problem comes up, they change the topic of conversation. They place responsibility for their problems on factors such as genetic makeup, addition, family, society, destiny, the police, etc. They feel the situation is HOPELESS.

2) CONTEMPLATION STAGE

"I WANT TO STOP FEELING SO STUCK"
Contemplators acknowledge that they have a problem and begin to think about solving it. Contemplators struggle to understand their problems, to see its causes, and wonder about possible solutions. Many contemplators have indefinite plans to take action within the next few months.

"YOU KNOW YOUR DESTINATION, AND EVEN HOW TO GET THERE, BUT YOU ARE NOT READY TO GO YET"

It is not uncommon for contemplators to tell themselves that some day they are going to change. When contemplators transition to the preparation stage of change, their thinking is clearly marked by two changes.

First, they begin to think more about the future than the past.

The end of contemplation stage is a time of ANTICIPATION, ACTIVITY, ANXIETY, and EXCITEMENT.

3) PREPARATION STAGE

Most people in the preparation stage are planning to take action and are making the final adjustments before they begin to change their behavior. Have not yet resolved their AMBIVALENCE. Still need a little convincing.

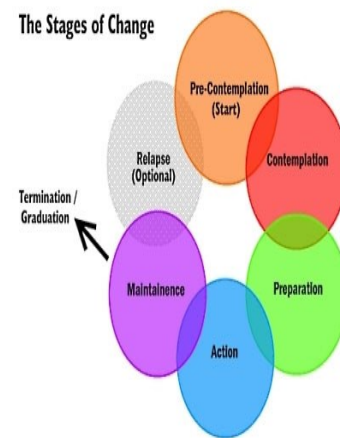
4) ACTION STAGE

Stage where people overtly modify their behavior and their surroundings. Make the move for which they have been preparing. Requires the greatest commitment of time and energy. CHANGE IS MORE VISIBLE TO OTHERS.

5) MAINTENANCE STAGE

Change never ends with action. Without a strong commitment to maintenance, there will surely be relapse, usually to precontemplation or contemplation stage.

MOST SUCCESSFUL SELF-CHANGERS GO THROUGH THE STAGES THREE OR FOUR TIMES BEFORE THEY MAKE IT THROUGH THE CYCLE OF CHANGE WITHOUT AT LEAST ONE SLIP. MOST WILL RETURN TO THE CONTEMPLATION STAGE OF CHANGE. SLIPS GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN.



Article retrieved from:

https://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/library/Articles_and_Essays/Stages_of_Change/Stages_of_Change.pdf

“I wanted to be with people who had lost someone under similar circumstances.”

Grief Recovery After Substance Passing (GRASP)

My 21-year-old son died last year after taking what he thought was Oxycontin, but it was actually a cocktail of drugs laced with Fentanyl.

I was devastated and didn't know where to turn for support. Recovery from grief in any circumstance is difficult but unfortunately when added with the stigma associated with a substance related death it makes it even harder.

I wanted to be with people who had lost someone under similar circumstances. I soon came to realize that there wasn't such a support group in the lower mainland or Canada for that matter.

Then I located Grief Recovery After A Substance Passing (GRASP). GRASP is a non-profit American peer lead grief support program. It was formed as a source of help, compassion and understanding for families and friends who have lost a loved one through substance abuse; to honor and to grieve the loss of their loved one.

I liked what I saw and so I formed the first Canadian chapter of GRASP. We meet the 2nd Thursday of each month 7-9pm at Gilmore Community School

50 S. Gilmore Avenue, Burnaby. Our next meeting will be held on September 10, 2015. Please contact me at graspvancouver@gmail.com or 604-936-3512 to pre register.

Submitted by Jennifer Woodside

From Grief To Action

From Grief to Action is a volunteer-based not-for-profit association in British Columbia. They are a voice and a support network for families and friends affected by drug use.

FGTA developed and published The Coping Kit for families. Available for free on their website, this toolkit offers practical advice and information for families who are supporting someone living with

addiction.

Topics addressed in the book include:

- Information about addiction
- Reliable information on drugs including risks, harm reduction, signs of overdose and withdrawal
- Communicating as a family
- Addiction treatment and support resource information
- How to find help
- Information about recovery

If you would like to receive a copy of this free resource, visit www.fgta.ca



Harm Reduction and Motivational Interviewing

An excerpt from Harm Reduction: A British Columbia Community Guide

The International Harm Reduction Association (2002) describes harm reduction as: Policies and programs which attempt primarily to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of mood altering substances to individual drug users, their families and communities, without requiring decrease in drug use.

Harm reduction is a pragmatic response that focuses on keeping people safe and minimizing death, disease and injury associated with higher risk behaviour, while recognizing that the behaviour may continue despite the risks. At the conceptual level, harm reduction maintains a value neutral and humanistic view of drug use and the drug user. It focuses on the harms from drug use rather than on the use itself. It does not insist on or object to abstinence and acknowledges the active role of the drug user in harm reduction programs. At the practical level, the aim of harm reduction is to reduce the more immediate harmful consequences of drug use through pragmatic, realistic and low threshold programs. ...

There are many reasons why people engage in higher risk behaviour and not all people are able to make the immediate changes necessary to refrain from such behaviours. Harm reduction is a set of non-judgmental policies and programs which aims to provide and/or enhance skills, knowledge, resources and support that people need to live safer, healthier lives. It encourages people to build strengths and to gain a sense of confidence.

Harm reduction can help move a person from a state of chaos to a state of control over their own life and health. For some people, abstinence is the most feasible way to reduce harm. Interventions that aim for abstinence and for safer drug use both have a place within harm reduction. Harm reduction saves lives and improves quality of life by allowing drug users to remain integrated in society. The alienation and marginalization of people who use drugs often compound the reasons why they engage in unsafe drug use. Harm reduction also reduces health care costs by reducing drug-related overdose, disease transmission, injury and illness, as well as hospital utilization.

Harm reduction can apply to drug use, as seen above, but also to other areas. Motivational interviewing, which puts

the person who is dealing with excessive use in the driver's seat, can be very helpful with harm reduction. For example, I still remember a client who was entirely unwilling to stop drinking. We went through her alcohol use step by step and discovered that one of the things she didn't like (i.e. a motivating force) was how much it upset her mother when she was drunk, especially when she also drove while intoxicated. We agreed that a) she would frequent a different liquor store, which was closer, so that she could walk to it and b) that she actually needed no more than a "mickey" to get the desired effect. At that level, she was also not so intoxicated as to behave disrespectfully towards her mother. She continued at that level.

Another client who was dealing with out-of-control binge eating was mortified by shame when he stole food from his work place. We simply started him with not doing that; he could eat as much as he liked otherwise. With more tweaks and other supports, his eating came down to a healthy level within two years, and continues to be so – i.e. the initial, small, reduction eventually led to abstinence from addictive eating.

Article submitted by Isabella Mori.

“Harm reduction is a pragmatic response that focuses on keeping people safe and minimizing death, disease and injury associated with higher risk behaviour, while recognizing that the behaviour may continue despite the risks.”



Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) Outpatient Psychiatry Team (OPT) provides interdisciplinary and comprehensive psychiatric assessment, consultation and time limited group therapy treatment to adults dealing with depression, adjustment and personality issues, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and panic disorders. The Outpatient Psychiatry Team also offers an additional stream of service to individuals who are living with a concurrent disorder. This stream is available to individuals who are interested in addressing their use of substances in addition to symptoms of mental illness. Individuals in the concurrent disorder stream have the opportunity to participate in time limited group therapy treatment as well as a comprehensive psychiatric assessment and consultation.

All referrals for the concurrent disorder stream at VGH Outpatient Psychiatry Team (OPT) go through Vancouver Adult Mental Health Intake (VAMHI). VAMHI accepts referrals from physicians, self-referrals, as well as referrals from friends and family members. If you would like to learn more about the program, or to make a referral, contact VAMHI at 604-675-3997.



Parents Forever

supporting families affected by substance use.

PARENTS FOREVER is a professionally supported, mutual support group for parents and family members of adult addicted children (18 years of age and up)

Every second Friday evening, PARENTS FOREVER provides a safe and confidential place for parents and family members to come together and share their experiences, their wisdom and their courage. With the support of the group, they learn new strategies and ways of coping, including how to remain Ever Hopeful, With No Expectations.

<http://www.parentsforever.ca/>

Willow Pavilion Family Education Session

Dear family members and caregivers,

You are invited to attend Willow Pavilion's upcoming Family Education Session on **Wednesday September 16th**.

This event is part of an ongoing series of monthly education evenings intended for families and friends of individuals experiencing serious mental illnesses.

The guest speaker will be Patience Lee, Social Worker with the Older Adult Program at Willow Pavilion. Patience will be talking about Advance Care Planning – writing down your beliefs, values, and wishes for future health care and having conversations with your close family, friends, and health care provider(s) so they know what your wishes are if there becomes a time you are not capable of expressing your own decisions.

The talk will include information on legal documents such as a Representation Agreement and Power of Attorney which can become part of your Advance Care Plan. The evening will include time for Questions & Answers as well as an opportunity to connect informally with other family members.

Date: Wednesday September 16, 2015 6-8PM

**Location: Willow Pavilion,
805 West 12th Ave, Vancouver**

1st Floor Multi-Purpose Room

Family Connections



Education Series for Families

The Family Support and Involvement program at VCH is excited to offer an 8 week psychoeducation program for the family and friends of individuals who live with mental illness or concurrent disorders. This series offers information on mental illness and concurrent disorders, and will be co-facilitated by a VCH Family Support and Involvement staff and a family member. The series will also feature guest presenters on various topics.

Topics Include, but are not limited to:

- Understanding and accessing mental health services;
- Tools for effective communication among family, service users and service providers;
- Family involvement in the circle of care;
- Information on mental health and concurrent disorders;
- Understanding medication;
- Family support and self-care.

Date: Thursday evenings, September 17th – November 19th, 2015

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Place: Raven Song Community Health Centre

This workshop is open to the family members and friends of individuals who live with mental illness or concurrent disorders. This is a closed group and registration is required.

To register, please contact: Justin.Miller@vch.ca
604-736-2881

Family Support Groups Calendar

September 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 SMART	2 VCHED	3	4	5
6	7	8 MDABC SMART	9 Raven Song	10 GRASP	11 Parents Forever SMART	12 Pathways
13	14 MDABC	15 SMART	16 VCH	17	18	19
20	21	22 MDABC SMART	23	24 SPH	25 Parents Forever SMART	26
27	28	29 SMART	30			

Mood Disorders Association of BC (MDABC) – 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 isa-bella.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 (VCHED)– Family Support Group – for friends and family members of individuals living with an eating disorder. 1st Wednesday 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

Pathways Clubhouse 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 bes-sie.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 Raven Song 2450 Ontario Street, 1st floor. 604-872-8441.

Willow Pavilion Education night (VCH). 805 West 12th Ave, Vancouver 1st Floor Multi-Purpose Room