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## Your Family Involvement & Support Team

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## You can 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](http://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

Subscribe

## Visions Journal – Seeking a Family Perspective

An upcoming issue of Visions magazine is focusing on **supporting a spouse or partner with a mental illness or addiction.**

Visions is looking for a perspective from an individual who can write about **the impact of addiction/substance use on their relationship.** Ideally it would include the perspective from both halves of a couple. This would include things like how the addiction began, stories, and insights for others on how addiction impacts a relationship. This could also include an co-existing mental illness.

Writers need to be living in BC (preferably in the Interior), and can be any age. Articles are written in plain language with an informal tone as our readership is very diverse and that's what makes the magazine unique. Visions is read by more than 15000 people; about a third of our readers are people with direct experience of mental health or addictions issues, another third are family members, and the last third are mental health and addiction and allied service providers.

The person doesn't have to be a "writer." If they can write an email, they can write for Visions!

The contributor of an approved article would get a \$75 honorarium and at least 5 free copies when the issue publishes in April.

If you are interested in submitting to Visions, please contact Paula at CMHA *before* you start writing. Paula can be reached at 604-688-3234 ext. 236.

**About Visions:** BC's Mental Health and Addictions Journal is an award-winning, policy-to-practice magazine of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. The BC Partners is a group of provincial mental health and addictions agencies in BC including AnxietyBC, BC Schizophrenia Society, Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division, Centre for Addiction Research of BC at UVic, FORCE Society for Kids' Mental Health Care, Jessie's Legacy Program of Family Services of the North Shore (provincial eating disorders prevention program), and Mood Disorders Association of BC.

The BC Partners and Visions Journal are funded by BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. Visions is available free to any resident of BC such as people with mental illness or addiction issues, their friends and family, mental health and addictions services providers, MLAs, other concerned citizen groups, libraries, academics and policy-makers.

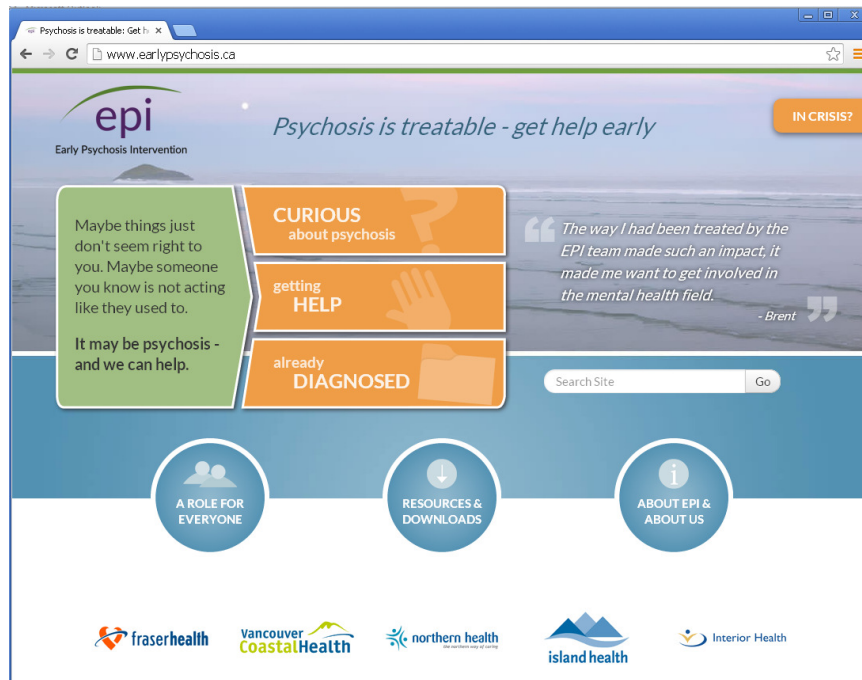
Be sure to check out back issues of Visions at [www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/visions).



## Just Launched! New youth & family resource for psychosis

A brand new online resource for youth affected by psychosis has been launched in BC; [earlypsychosis.ca](http://earlypsychosis.ca) This comprehensive website offers information on psychosis and early psychosis throughout BC.

The website offers information for youth, their families as well as professionals. It includes downloadable toolkits, fact sheets, as well as information about where to get help in local communities.



## Willow Bean Café at Willow Pavilion

*Submitted by Kelsey from the Canadian Mental Health Association . . .*



The Willow Pavilion is an 84 year old building located at Vancouver General Hospital. It was completely refurbished in 2012 and now offers support to 79 patients through its Tertiary Mental Health Program. Six months after the Tertiary Mental Health Program opened its doors, the Willow Bean Café opened as a social enterprise to serve mental health consumers, hospital support staff, and the community at large. We are a partnership between VGH & UBC Foundation, Sodexo and Canadian Mental Health Association. We hire Baristas with facing Mental Health challenges who are struggling to find employment and provide a six month supported training program for our baristas as they gain skills and support to enter the competitive employment market.

Willow Bean Café is in a new phase of our project and hiring new Baristas! Come meet Lorna and Dominic as they make you a delicious Vanilla Latte or provide pick up service for lunch orders.

**Willow Bean Café is conveniently located in the first floor of the Willow Pavilion. Come check us out Monday-Friday 8:00-2:30 at 805 W12th Ave Vancouver.**

## Research Participants Needed!

### What are the Thinking Skills groups?

- The Cognitive Neuroscience of Schizophrenia (CNoS) Lab at UBC is currently running a research study looking at two clinical group interventions for individuals who experience psychosis.
- The two groups are accessible to all participants. Each group targets different types of cognitive difficulties that are known to be challenges for people who experience psychosis.
- Group conversations and exercises allow members to learn new information about psychosis and some of the cognitive difficulties they might be having.

### Why are these groups helpful?

- Research has shown that these groups have a positive effect on a person's daily function by improving some of their thinking skills (such as attention and memory) or reducing some of the problematic thinking patterns associated with psychosis.
- Researchers at UBC are looking to better understand these treatment-related changes and improvements in thinking skills for individuals with psychosis by looking at changes in the brain.

### Who is right for the groups?

- You have a diagnosis involving psychosis (for example, schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, or a mood disorder with psychosis).
- You are between 19 – 60 years of age.
- You are fluent in English, and are interested in receiving free education and training sessions.



### When do the groups run?

- Groups are ongoing and run twice a week over 8 weeks, for a total of 16 sessions.
- Groups are currently running two afternoons a week at a VCH Outpatient Mental Health Team, and we may be adding additional times and locations depending on participant interest.



### What does the research involve?

- If you take part, you will be assigned to one of the groups and asked to attend 16 group sessions.
- You will be asked to take part in research assessments before, midway, and after participating in the first 16 sessions. These assessments include an interview, some tests and might involve mapping brain activity through magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and electroencephalography (EEG). You will be financially compensated for your time and transportation costs when you take part in the research assessment.
- The results of the experiment will be kept confidential and you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences to you.

**For further information or to discuss your eligibility for this study please contact:  
Sarah Flann at [cnos.lab@ubc.ca](mailto:cnos.lab@ubc.ca) or 604-822-7312.**

### *Feedback from past participants:*

“I learned so much from the group and it had a very positive impact on my mood and my ability to reason out a lot of my social anxiety issues and panic attacks. A more balanced point of view has been a great relief. The information about psychosis was greatly appreciated because it was info I had not come across before.”

“By questioning myself, I can recognize symptoms more readily and see experiences from different angles rather than seeing only my point of view. This group may not cure me, but it is a very useful wellness tool.”

## A Parents' Journey – VCH Eating Disorder Family Support

*Submitted by the VCH Eating Disorders Program*

When my husband and I learned of our daughter's eating disorder we sought every possible resource and found the VCH Family and Friends support group. Our journey in supporting our daughter found ourselves attending support group meetings religiously for over a year.



I recall our very first meeting and both of us breaking down in tears as we were overwhelmed, scared, confused, helpless, and truly devastated by what our daughter was going through. As there's often secrecy surrounding eating disorders, our daughter was one who withheld information from us.

Reflecting back at that first meeting, we were naive and disillusioned when we didn't receive 'quick fix' answers to our questions. It was through attending subsequent meetings that we learned the process of combining clinical information (provided by VCH staff) with practical information (provided by parents and friends) that became truly valuable. We relied on the experiences of others which helped us through the many phases of our daughter's illness. The knowledge and expertise from VCH staff gave us inspiration and overall perspective which enabled us to make appropriate decisions and empowered us in helping our daughter.

VCH support group meetings became our sanctuary where we could safely discuss our family situation with others in similar circumstances. From week to week the topics varied and if not relevant at the time to our immediate situation, became so at a later date. This was information that we could draw on as we struggled to cope with the magnitude and many phases of the eating disorder.

We are extremely grateful and forever in debt to Hella and Cindy and the VCH staff for providing their expertise and extending compassion and friendship to us. The community is very fortunate to have the Family and Friends Support Group as a resource. As much as we attended for our daughter, we also attended for ourselves to be able to support and walk alongside our daughter.  
-A and C

*The VCH Eating Disorder program offers a family and friends support group for those who are supporting someone who is living with an eating disorder. The group is open to any family or friends regardless of whether their loved one is receiving treatment.*

**The support group meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6 - 7:30 p.m., at 2750 East Hastings, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Vancouver.**

If you would like more information, please contact Hella at 604-675-2531 ext 20689.



## MDA's new groups

The Mood Disorder of BC (MDABC) will be offering a number of new cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) groups as part of their Mental Health Wellness Centre beginning in January-2015. Some of their new groups include:

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Bipolar Disorder
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Mindfulness Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Anxiety and Depression



MDA BC accepts self-referrals to their groups.

For a complete listing of groups offered, or for information on how to register, visit their website: <http://www.mdabc.net/cognitive-behavioral-groups>.

You can also call MDA BC directly at 604-873-0103

## Family Involvement in Mental Health & Addiction Services

Submitted by Isabella Mori . . .



### Involve Receive Inform Support

This is an acronym that has been developed help staff understand family involvement in mental health and addiction services, particularly the hospital setting. Here are some examples of how we suggest to staff this acronym can be applied:

#### Involve

- Treat family as part of the care team. Assume that family involvement is the default
- Recognize and value the unique contributions of family, their strengths and expertise
- Support family where you can; they are often the main, support for the client
- Look for opportunities for contact with family members.

#### Receive collateral information from them

- Receive information offered by family; clinical judgment will tell you what information is most helpful
- Actively solicit collateral information

#### Inform them of their loved one's status and general mental health facts

- No matter what the consent situation, you can always share general information about the nature of mental illness and associated issues
- Ensure family members understand the process of moving from one part of the health system to another
- Provide resource information to families

#### Support family so they can support their loved ones.

- Ask family if they have support to assist them through this difficult time
- What does family need to know to support the patient?
- Give them a copy of the Family Connections newsletter

Isabella would love to hear feedback from families about this acronym and how it relates to involving families in the care of their loved ones. You can reach Isabella at [isabella.mori@vch.ca](mailto:isabella.mori@vch.ca)

## Calendar of Events

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2 VCH Eating Disorder Family Support Group	3	4	5 Parents Forever Support Group	6
7	8	9 MDA Family Support Group	10 Raven Song Family Support Group	11	12	13
14	15	16 VCH Eating Disorder Family Support Group	17	18	19 Parents Forever Support Group	20
21	22	23 MDA Family Support Group	24	25 SPH Family Support Group (Please register)	26	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., 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. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:jessica.wilkins@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 Pam 604-682-2344 local 62403

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday at St. Mary's Kerrisdale, 2490 W 37<sup>th</sup> Ave., Vancouver. Contact Frances Kenny, 604-524-4230 or [fkenny@uniserve.com](mailto:fkenny@uniserve.com)

**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](mailto:bessie.wang@cmha.bc.ca) or 604-276-8834, ext 12.