



Family Mental Health Initiative

Initiative pour les familles touchées par la maladie mentale



FAMILY MATTERS NEWSLETTER

Our Mission: To provide support through education, training and referral to the family members of those individuals with serious and persistent mental illness difficulties. This will enable those families to adequately fulfill their roles in relationship to their family member(s), the mental health system and the community.

Notre mission : Offrir du soutien aux membres de la famille de personnes atteintes de troubles de santé mentale graves et persistants par l'entremise de l'éducation, de la formation et de l'orientation vers les services pertinents. Ce soutien vise à permettre aux membres de la famille de bien s'acquitter de leurs rôles à l'égard des autres membres de leur famille, du système de santé mentale et de la communauté.

Relationship Logo: The stylized individual represents the Family Mental Health Initiative of Simcoe County. The Initiative helps families fulfill their roles in relationship to their family member (s), the mental health system and the community. The three circles are representative of these relationships. The font chosen for the lettering has a very friendly appearance due to its curved lines. The letters themselves are narrow. This gives the feeling of togetherness.

March 2008

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From the desk of the Coordinator

So much has happened at FMHI and we are only a few months into the new year. I am pleased to announce a winning name has been chosen for FMHI's newsletter. The new name "Family Matters" is a creative play on words, this newsletter is focused on family matters and we at FMHI believe that families do matter! I thank all of you who submitted your name suggestions, we had several great names to choose from, the decision was not easy.

I am very excited to announce FMHI's launch of our first website. You can visit us at www.fmhi.ca A big, warm thank you to Laurie for making this website a reality, for without her, FMHI would not be online. This gift is greatly appreciated. We hope the site is user-friendly and full of useful information. If you have any suggestions, comments or observations regarding our new website, please share your thoughts with me, I always look forward to hearing from you.

Another big event has occurred for FMHI, we have moved to a new location: 151 Essa Road, Suite 202 in Barrie. Our phone number remains the same. Our fax number is 705-725-5496. Thank you to all who have been patient and supportive during the move.

All the best to you and your family, Tara Maxwell

Mental Health Crisis Line
1-888-893-8333

FMHI is sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Simcoe County Branch and funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

The views and opinions in these articles do not necessarily reflect those of the Family Mental Health Initiative of Simcoe County, its staff, Management Group or volunteers. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact the person who wrote the article. Thank you.

Contact us at:

151 Essa Road, Suite 202 Barrie, ON L4N 3L2

Phone: 705-725-0363 Toll-Free: 1-800-324-3252 Fax: 705-725-5496 Website: www.fmhi.ca

Families of Mentally Ill Network, Learn, Share Views at Conference

Wednesday November 21, 2007 -- Michelle Strutzenberger

Though the gathering at a recent conference for families of the mentally ill in Simcoe County was small, the benefit was that it resulted in more family input and networking, according to Tara Maxwell.

“(People) were able to talk openly and to network in a more relaxed environment,” says Maxwell, co-ordinator for the Family Mental Health Initiative (FMHI), which headed up the conference.

The conference agenda included a chance for families to provide their feedback on a number of issues, including their view of the ideal mental health system for families and friends. They were also asked to share their strategies for coping with a loved one who has a mental illness.

These questions triggered a deep and meaningful discussion with all attendees able to share, family-members asking one another for advice, and the start of some relationship building.

“There was a lot of that phone number exchange occurring,” says Maxwell, noting that some families discovered they lived in the same community.

Three presentations were made during the day-long event. The executive director of the Family Outreach and Response Program in the Toronto area spoke about the role of families in the recovery of persons with a mental illness. The director, Karyn Baker, identified factors that could help or hinder the recovery process and highlighted that recovery looks different for different people.

Nancy Cornwell, integration consultant for the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) presented about the LHIN, including its history to present-day development, and its potential impact on families. She also spoke about how families’ views are being heard at the LHIN level, particularly through the LHIN’s Mental Health and Addictions Regional Action Group, of which FMHI is a member.

A family-member shared her experiences with living with two different persons with mental illness.

“It was great for families to get that sense that they’re not alone, that somebody else out there is living the same

stuff day to day,” says Maxwell of the latter presentation. “It really opened up that connection and (the speaker) found people were more open to talk to her and share their stories with her afterward.”

The views families offered at the conference on the ideal mental health system for families and friends will be presented to various LHIN groups and representatives, according to Maxwell.

Some of the elements families would like to see in a family-supportive system include:

- One entry point to all services perhaps through a central phone number
- More psychiatrists, social workers, qualified service providers
- Co-ordinated transitional discharge, a very directed service
- Family support workers
- Family peer workers
- OHIP support to counseling services
- Mental health workers working with police
- A family resource drop-in centre
- The inclusion of mental health studies in the school curriculum from the elementary level through to post-graduate studies

For more about the Family Mental Health Initiative, contact 1-800-324-3252.

“This article appears here in its original form and with the permission of the North Simcoe Muskoka Local Health Integration Network.”



Family Member Forms Mental Health and Addictions Support Group in Midland

Friday December 7, 2007 -- Michelle Strutzenberger
Laurie Nielsen facilitates the Midland Family and Friends Mental Health Support Group, which meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. The group offers a place for families to share information, experiences and views. The Family Mental Health Initiative (FMHI) has helped Nielsen organize and set up the group.

The Initiative has a mandate to aid families in supporting and networking with one another. Having a mental health and addictions support group for family and friends that is run by a family member is the best way to go, says Tara Maxwell, FMHI co-ordinator. "When a family member comes in they can know that the person facilitating the group has walked in their shoes."

While the support group is not illness-specific, there is a common understanding that every person, including the facilitator, has mental illness in the family.

Maxwell says as a result people are more likely to talk openly and feel more comfortable sharing their experiences.

She points out that some families face challenges with the health-care system as well, which they may need to discuss with other families. They may feel uncomfortable doing so if the group facilitator is a service-provider, she says.

FMHI encourages family members in other parts of the North Simcoe Muskoka region who are interested in facilitating a family support group to contact the initiative for information and support.

As FMHI co-ordinator, Maxwell provides a range of services to family-members who want to start up a group, from developing a vision of what the group will be like, to marketing, to stepping in as facilitator if the need arises.

Two other groups, the Collingwood Family and Friends Mental Health Support Group, and the Barrie Family and Friends Mental Health Support Group, meet on the second Tuesday and third Wednesday of the month respectively.

Maxwell points out that FMHI has arranged for the support groups to be staggered throughout the month in order to make them more accessible to families throughout the county who are willing to travel and to those who want to meet more often.

For more information on existing groups or the creation of a new group, contact Maxwell at 800 324-3252 or (705)-725-0363.

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Mental Health 101:

Mood Disorders: Help for Partners and Families



Everyone has ups and downs in mood. Mood disorders, which include depression and bipolar disorder, are much more than this. They are serious medical conditions, affecting how people think, behave and function.

With bipolar disorder, people have mood swings that are out of proportion or totally unrelated to events in their lives. These mood swings consist of both depressive (low) moods and manic (high, euphoric) moods. The depressive moods resemble those of major depressive episodes. In major, or clinical, depression, a person's emotional state is abnormally low or sad, and the person cannot independently raise his or her mood.

When someone you love has a mood disorder

When someone in a family is ill, everyone is affected, not just the person with the illness. This is true whether the illness is diabetes or a mood disorder. A mental illness brings added pressures. Families often suffer for years before the symptoms are finally diagnosed. They might respond with disbelief or denial. Fearing prejudice, they can become isolated. It's natural for families to feel resentful or disappointed when mood disorders interfere with normal family life. Acknowledging the illness can help you feel less isolated and guilty and free your energy for caring for both your relative and yourself. Bipolar disorder will affect your relative's mood and behaviour. At times, the mood disorder can make your family member less able to manage the illness, and he or she may become less willing to work with you in solving problems.

How to relate to a family member with a mood disorder

Learn as much as you can about the mood disorder and its treatment.

How to respond to a person who is manic

- Reduce stimulation and noise.
- Have brief conversations.
- Deal only with immediate issues. Do not try to reason or argue.
- Discourage discussing feelings.
- Be firm, practical and realistic, with-

out being authoritative.

- Do not jump to the person's demands.
- Do not get caught up with the person's euphoria, or unrealistic expectations.
- Do not try to convince the person that his or her plans are unrealistic.

At the same time, take steps to ensure his or her safety (e.g., removal of car keys or credit cards).

How to respond to a person who is depressed

- Speak in a calm quiet voice.
- Focus on one subject at a time.
- Be patient and wait.
- Avoid quizzing the person about what made him or her feel depressed.
- Do not tell the person to "snap out of it."
- Pace yourself.

Take care of yourself

Caught up in concern and caring for the person who is ill, family members may not take proper care of themselves. They may give up their own activities and become isolated from their friends and colleagues. This may go on for some time before they realize they are emotionally and physically drained. The stress can lead to sleeping problems, exhaustion and constant irritability.

- Keep your own support network.
- Avoid becoming isolated.
- Recognize signs of stress in yourself.
- Know what situations within your family are most stressful in coping with the mood disorder.
- Keep up your interests outside the family.
- Consider having your own professional support.
- Take a little time each day just for you.

Being ready for a relapse or crisis

Families often avoid talking to their relative about relapses or crises. The best way to handle a crisis, or possibly avoid one, is to know what to do before it happens.

When your relative or partner is well, write out a plan of what to do if he or she should become ill:

- Could you visit the physician together to discuss the condition and how to deal with a possible crisis?
- If your family member becomes ill, do you have advance permission to contact his or her doctor?
- Do you have consent to take your family member to hospital? If so, which hospital?
- If the person becomes unable to decide on treatment, does he or she agree that you can make that decision?

Recovery

Clients, and their friends and families, need to understand a mood disorder and develop ways to manage it. Family members can play an active role in this process. Tips for supporting recovery

- Learn as much as you can about mood disorder -- its causes, signs and symptoms, and treatment.
- Encourage your family member to follow the treatment prescribed by the treatment team.
- Learn the warning signs of suicide. Take any threats that the person makes very seriously and get help immediately.
- Support recovery from an episode by recognizing that it is slow and gradual.
- View your family member's mood disorder as an illness, not a character flaw.
- Learn, with your family member, to distinguish a good day from hypomania and a bad day from depression. Like everybody else, people with mood disorder have good and bad days that are not part of their illness.

Adapted from **Bipolar Disorder: An Information Guide** © 2000, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and **Depressive Illness: A Guide for People with Depression and their Families** © 1999, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Source: http://www.camh.net/About_Addiction_Mental_Health/Mental_Health_Information/mood_disorders_partfamilies.html



Psychiatric Medication 101:

Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitor (MAOI Antidepressants)



Use: This medication is primarily used in the treatment of major depressive disorders and depression associated with manic Depressive Illness (Bipolar Disorder). It has also been approved in the management of atypical depression, phobic anxiety states or social phobia. Though not approved for these indications, MAOIs have also been found effective in dysthymia, panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

How Quickly Will The Drug Start Working? MAOIs begin to improve sleep and appetite and to increase energy within about one week; however, feelings of depression may take from 4-6 weeks to improve. Because antidepressants take time to work, **do not decrease or increase the dose or stop the medication** without discussing this with your doctor. Improvement in symptoms of atypical depression, phobic anxiety or social phobia, dysthymia, panic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder also occur gradually.

How Long Should You Take This Medication? Following the first episode of depression it is recommended that antidepressants be continued for a minimum of one year; this decreases the chance of being ill again. The doctor may then decrease the drug slowly and monitor for any symptoms of depression; if none occur, the drug can gradually be stopped. For individuals who have had several episodes of depression, antidepressant medication should be continued indefinitely. **DO NOT STOP** taking your medication if you are feeling better, without first discussing this with your doctor. Long-term treatment is generally recommended for atypical depression, phobic anxiety or social phobia, dysthymia, panic disorder or obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Side Effects: Side effects occur, to some degree, with all medication. They are usually not serious and do not occur in all individuals. They may sometimes occur before beneficial effects of the medication are noticed. If a side effect continues, speak to your doctor about appropriate treatment.

Common side effects that should be reported to your doctor at the next appointment include:

- Drowsiness & Fatigue
- Energizing/Agitated Feeling
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea or Heartburn
- Dry Mouth
- Blurred Vision
- Constipation
- Muscle Tremor, twitching, Jerking
- Sweating
- Loss of Appetite

Rare side effects you should report to your doctor **IMMEDIATELY** include:

- Persistent, Throbbing Headache
- Soreness of the Mouth, Gums, or Throat
- Skin Rash or Itching, Swelling of the Face
- Nausea, Vomiting, Loss of Appetite, Fatigue, Weakness, fever, or Flu-Like Symptoms
- Yellow Tinge in the Eyes or to the Skin; Dark-Colored Urine
- Inability to Pass Urine (more than 24 hours)
- Severe Agitation or Restlessness
- **Switch in Mood to an Unusual State of Happiness, Excitement, Irritability, or a Marked Disturbance in Sleep**

Let your doctor know **as soon as possible** if you miss your period or suspect you may be **pregnant**.

What Should You Do If You Forget To Take A Dose Of Your Medication? If you take your total dose of antidepressant in the morning and you forget to take it for more than 6 hours, skip the missed dose and continue with your schedule the next day. **DO NOT DOUBLE THE DOSE.** If you take the drug several times a day, take the missed dose when you remember, then continue with your regular schedule.

Interactions With Other Medication: Because antidepressant drugs can change the effect of other medication, or may be affected by other medication, always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking other drugs, including over-the-counter medication such as cold remedies and herbal preparations. Always inform any doctor or dentist that you see that you are taking an antidepressant drug.

Precautions:

1. Do not increase your dose without consulting your doctor.
2. Be aware of foods to avoid with this medication.
3. Take no other medication (including over-the-counter or herbal products) without consulting with your doctor or pharmacist. Avoid all products containing dextromethorphan.
4. This drug may interact with medication prescribed by your dentist, so let him/her know the name of the drug you are taking.
5. This drug may impair the mental and physical abilities required for driving a car or operating other machinery. Avoid these activities if you feel drowsy or slowed down.
6. Do not stop your drug suddenly as this may result in withdrawal symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, tingling in your hands or feet, nausea, vomiting, and dizziness.
7. Report any changes in mood or behaviour to your physician.
8. Store your medication in a clean, dry area at room temperature. Keep all medications out of the reach of children

Source: Bezchlibnyk-Butler, Kalyna Z., and Jeffries, Joel J. (2003) *Clinical Handbook of Psychotropic Drugs (13th Ed.)* Hogrefe & Huber Publishers pg. 276-278



Family Support Groups

The Barrie Family & Friends Mental Health Support Group:

Date: 2nd Tuesday of every month

Time: 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Location: 350 Grove St., East in Barrie (Grace United Church)

* Family Mental Health Initiative is pleased to sponsor this support group designed for family members, caregivers and friends of persons with a mental illness.

The Collingwood Family & Friends Mental Health Support Group:

Date: 3rd Wednesday of every month

Time: 6:00pm – 7:30pm

Location: 12 Erie St. in Collingwood (enter at door to the Consumer/Survivor Project)

* Family Mental Health Initiative is pleased to sponsor this support group designed for family members, caregivers and friends of persons with a mental illness.

The Midland Family & Friends Mental Health Support Group:

Date: 4th Wednesday of every month

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Location: 308 King St. in Midland (enter at side door of St. Paul's United Church)

* Family Mental Health Initiative is pleased to sponsor this support group designed for family members, caregivers and friends of persons with a mental illness.

The Barrie Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario Family Support Group:

Date: Last Thursday of every month

Time: 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Location: Zehrs Grocery Store on Bayfield St. in Barrie (Upstairs Community Room)

A Gathering Place (A Family Concurrent Disorders Group)

Contact: Pamela at 818-2488 or 725-1715

Date: Every Wednesday

Time: 7:00pm—9:00pm

Location: 350 Grove St., East in Barrie (Grace United Church)

Family Mental Health Initiative's quarterly newsletter and brochure are offered in both official languages (English and French) If you would like to begin receiving the French version of the newsletter, please complete the form on Page 8 of this issue and check the box stating your choice. Thank you.

Le bulletin trimestriel et la brochure de l'Initiative pour les familles touchées par la maladie mentale sont offerts dans les deux langues officielles (français et anglais). Si vous désirez commencer à recevoir la version française du bulletin, veuillez remplir le formulaire à la page 8 de la présente édition et cocher la case indiquant votre choix. Merci.

VISIT US
ON THE WEB!



www.fmhi.ca



Addiction & Mental Health Resource List

Mental Health Crisis Line – Simcoe County/Muskoka

Contact 705-728-5044

Toll-free 1-888-893-8333

Family Mental Health Initiative of Simcoe County

Contact 705-725-0363

Toll-free 1-800-324-3252

Canadian Mental Health Association, Simcoe County

Contact 705-726-5033

Muskoka-Parry Sound Community Mental Health Services

Contact 1-800-245-5036

Mental Health Centre, Penetanguishene (MHCP)

Contact 705-549-3181

Outpatient Services – MHCP

Contact 705-526-0567

Georgianwood Concurrent Disorders Program – MHCP

Contact 705-549-3181 x2122

Community Mental Health Services – Collingwood

Contact 705-444-6600

Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital – Mental Health & Addiction Program

Contact 705-327-9122

Royal Victoria Hospital – Mental Health & Addiction Program

Contact 705-728-9802 ext 47234

RVH – Withdrawal Management Services

Contact 705-728-4226

RVH – Mental Health Support Services

Contact 705-726-7490

Simcoe Outreach Services

Contact 705-726-7062

Seven South Street Treatment Centre

Contact 705-325-3566

Addiction Outreach Muskoka Parry Sound

Contact 705-645-1311

Wendat Community Psychiatric Support Programs

Contact 705-526-1305

Enaahdig Healing Lodge & Learning Centre

Contact 705-534-3724

B'saanibamaadsiwin – Native Mental Health (Muskoka)

Contact 705-746-2512

Consumer/Survivor Project in Collingwood

Contact 705-444-1844

Council of Consumer/Survivor & Family Initiative (Muskoka)

Contact 1-800-245-5036

Mary McGill Community Mental Health Centre (South Simcoe)

Contact 705-435-6281

My Friend's Place (South Simcoe)

Contact 705-435-0054

Catholic Family Life Centre North Simcoe

Contact 705-526-9397

Catholic Family Life Centre Simcoe South

Contact 705-726-2503

Orillia Depression, Anxiety and Manic Depression Self Help Group (DAMD) meets at Doolittle-Carson Recreation Centre (57 Neywash St., Orillia - side entrance) from 7:30pm—9:30pm the 2nd & 4th Tuesday each month. Contact: 705-325-2201 ext 3992 (leave a message) - family members welcome to attend.

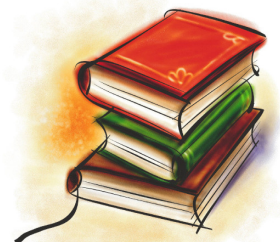
The Lending Library

If you are looking to learn more about a specific illness or topic, FMHI has many books, videos, audio cassettes, that family members, caregivers and friends can loan out from the library. The library is located at 39 High St. in Barrie.

Books are loaned out for 3 weeks at a time; DVDs, cassettes, videos, CDs are loaned out for 1 week at a time.

Come on in to have a look around, the library also has magazines, brochures and flyers of events, services and programs.

The Lending Library is open to everyone.





Wellness Kits Order Form

- Family Resource Kit** The kit contains brochures from mental health agencies in Simcoe County; tip sheets, as well as other useful information on specific mental illnesses.
- Native Wellness Kit** The kit contains information and brochures from aboriginal agencies in Simcoe County; as well as a resource list on other friendship centers, native treatment centers, and bands throughout Ontario and Canada; information on specific mental illnesses is also included.
- Concurrent Disorders Wellness Kit** The kit (Mental health & Addiction) contains information about specific mental health and addiction agencies in Simcoe County as well as fact sheets on concurrent disorders.
- Dual Diagnosis Wellness Kit** The kit (Mental Health & Developmental Delay) contains information about specific mental health and developmental delayed agencies in Simcoe County as well as fact sheets on dual diagnosis.
- Youth Wellness Kit** The kit contains fact sheets on various mental illnesses and brochures from local social services agencies. This kit has information to help young people understand what is a mental illness, written to their age, when they have a parent, sibling or friend who is mentally ill. The kit also provides information for parents whose youth is experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Women’s Mental Health & Addictions Wellness Kit** The kit contains mental health and addictions information specific to women; including fact sheets, agency brochures. The kit is also for people wanting to learn more about women’s mental health and addictions.
- Older Person’s Mental Health & Addictions Wellness Kit** The kit contains fact sheets on topics of mental health and addictions regarding the older person, and agency brochures.
- Early Psychosis Resource Kit** The kit contains information on the signs and symptoms of psychosis; fact sheets written for youth with a sibling experiencing a first episode and information on recovery.

**Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.
ONE KIT OF EACH PER ORDER**

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Mail to: Family Mental Health Initiative of Simcoe County 151 Essa Road, Suite 202 Barrie, Ontario L4N 3L2
 Ph: 705-725-0363 Toll-free: 1-800-324-3252 Fax: 705-725-5496

Please **UPDATE** my confidential mailing so that I may receive the **FRENCH VERSION** of this family newsletter.

If you would like to receive our quarterly Newsletter for free, please fill in your mailing/email information and send back to the Family Mental Health Initiative of Simcoe County. You will receive the next issue of the newsletter upon receiving your information. Thank you for your support and interest in this family newsletter

Please **ADD** my name to FMHI’s Confidential Mailing List, so that I may receive this family newsletter

- English Version French Version

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/Town: _____
 Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____

I prefer to have the newsletter sent to my email. Email: _____



Family Mental Health Initiative

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Toll Free: 1-800-324-3252
Fax: 705-725-5496
Website: www.fmhi.ca

“Families and friends caring together provide support, hope and recovery.”

I have had a change in address; please update my confidential mailing information.

NEW ADDRESS:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Old Address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Yes I would like to purchase the Circle of Friends **Resource Handbook: Your Guide to Navigating the System** - \$5.00 each + S&H. Within the handbook you will find: a list of services and a brief description of what that service offers; a list of self-help groups; definitions illnesses; types of medication; common legal forms; a family crisis plan and a glossary of terms.

Please make cheques payable to: CMHA, Barrie-Simcoe - FMHISC

Total number of handbooks purchased: _____

Cost of total number of handbooks purchased (\$5.00 each): _____

Shipping & Handling Charge (\$2.65 per handbook): _____

Total Amount: _____

ALL PURCHASE ORDERS WILL BE MAILED OUT ONCE PAYMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____