



Opening Minds Projects

July 2010

HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

1. ***Addiction and Mental Health (North Bay General Hospital, North Bay, Ontario)***: North Bay General Hospital is amalgamating three hospitals (one of which is a mental health hospital) into one new hospital and wants to reduce stigma before amalgamation takes place. This project is still in the development stage but will involve health care providers at North Bay General Hospital listening to consumers (persons with lived experience of a mental illness) tell their stories.
2. ***Brandon University Psychiatric Nursing Program (Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba, and University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba)***: As part of a fourth-year Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery course, students must complete a recovery narrative assignment. Recovery narratives demonstrate recovery and the inherent strengths of people who face the challenge of psychiatric disability. Students meet with an identified client over the course of the term (September to December) to construct a recovery narrative for that client. This program has taken place for the past 10 years at both the Brandon and Winnipeg sites.
3. ***Castlegar Mental Health and Addiction Services (Interior Health, Castlegar, British Columbia)***: This initiative will offer in-hospital programs for front-line staff (doctors, nurses, triage) in the emergency departments of six interior hospitals: Castlegar, Kelowna, Williams Lake, Penticton, Cranbrook, and Salmon Arm. The aim of the program is to reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with firsthand experience of mental illness, which will consequently improve services provided to these individuals. The program will be evaluated by Opening Minds to determine its effectiveness among health care providers and, if successful, will be shared with other hospitals across Canada.
4. ***Centre de formation et de preceptorat en santé mentale (Centre hospitalier universitaire, Sherbrooke, Quebec)***: This project involves a panel presentation with a consumer, psychiatrist, caregiver, and journalist, each discussing mental illness-related stigma. The consumer will share his or her story and the other panel members will offer their perspectives; this will be followed by a facilitator-led discussion. Participants will be health care providers or health care providers in training.
5. ***Changing Minds – Newfoundland (Canadian Mental Health Association – Newfoundland Division, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador)***: An innovative, multi-use, educational DVD about mental illness has been created to address a community need for mental health education, stigma reduction, and a better understanding of mental health and mental illness. The DVD contains the stories of 10 consumers and their experience of mental illness, and has been used to train health care providers.

6. ***Client-Educator Programme (Occupational Therapy Department, Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta)***: Over the course of eight weeks, first-year MScOT students in the Occupational Therapy program meet with consumers/client-educators with the goal of learning more about persistent mental illness and the myths associated with it.
7. ***Combating Stigma and Discrimination among Social Work Professionals and Students (School of Social Work, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, York University, Toronto, Ontario)***: This three-hour program takes place in a class for social work students and addresses different types of stigma. Two people serve as facilitators – one is a consumer, one is a social work instructor who may also be a consumer. The program includes a lecture explaining mental health, recovery, and information on mental health recovery as critical to social work. The “Extra Ordinary People” documentary (see below) is viewed, followed by a discussion.
8. ***Extra Ordinary People (Centre for Building a Culture of Recovery, Penetanguishene, Ontario)***: This 109-minute DVD documentary deals with the stigma and discrimination endured by people with a mental illness from a variety of backgrounds, such as aboriginal youth. It aims to show the power of dignity, spirit, and hope found in recovery.
9. ***Healthcare Professionals Champion an Anti-Stigma Approach (Progress Place and the University Health Network (UHN), Toronto, Ontario)***: Health care providers in three hospitals in the University Health Network will participate in this anti-stigma training program. The program, delivered by Clubhouse members from Toronto’s Progress Place, will take place onsite at each of the hospitals and will include members telling their personal stories of mental illness and the road to recovery.
10. ***Mental Health Services (Cape Breton Regional Health Authority, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia)***: Although still being developed, this program will be aimed at front-line staff in the hospital emergency department.
11. ***Mike’s Story (Montreal, Quebec)***: Mike Santoro has lived with schizoaffective disorder for 28 years and makes presentations, in both English and French, to various groups interested in his personal story. “The 80/20 Project,” a video Mike has created about his mental illness, spotlights the efforts he has learned to incorporate in his daily life – with the help of family, friends, and his health care team – so he can remain as healthy as possible and live his life to the fullest. After showing his video (or chapters of it) to an audience, Mike conducts a question/answer discussion. After he recently he spoke to health care workers at the Centre de la santé et des services sociaux (CSSS) de la Montagne in Montreal, OM surveyed the audience about the effectiveness of the program at reducing stigma.
12. ***Photovoice: Exposing Our Path to Wellness (Canadian Mental Health Association, Thunder Bay Branch, Ontario)***: Through a photograph presentation, audiences are educated about living with a mental illness and issues surrounding the recovery process. The photographs are a result of a group of consumers being given disposable cameras and asked to shoot photos which answer the question, “What is my experience of living with mental illness?” Five photos from each individual are

chosen, and a collage is created as a way of expressing what the images mean to those individuals and how they have experienced stigma. A discussion follows the viewing of the photographs.

13. **Recovery Education (The Self Help Alliance, Guelph, Ontario):** This venture involves a program led by a consumer and explores the theme of recovery. When making presentations, the consumer tells his or her personal story first, and then talks about the concept of recovery and the changes needed to organizational policies and services to enhance recovery for individuals with a mental illness. The speaker also explains what it is like being a consumer in the mental health system.
14. **Setting the Benchmark and Evaluating 18 ERs (The Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa, Ontario):** The program is in development stages but will involve health care providers at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and in 18 Emergency Departments at hospitals in the region. A consumer survey of ER users will be undertaken, and a program created to change attitudes and behaviours of ER health care workers.
15. **Stand Up for Mental Health (Stand Up For Mental Health, Vancouver, British Columbia):** In an attempt to use comedy to reduce stigma and discrimination, individuals with firsthand experience of mental illness are trained as comedians who joke about being diagnosed, taking medication, seeing counsellors, and surviving the health care system. Stand Up for Mental Health performs for second-year medical students at the University of British Columbia, and includes a video and a discussion between students and comedians. The program will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness at changing attitudes.
16. **Understanding the Impact of Stigma: Mental Illness and Addictions (Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), Markham, Ontario):** Consumers talk to frontline hospital workers about the impact stigma plays on their recovery and what helps make a positive difference. These firsthand stories complement and reinforce other content of the training course, such as video clips, interactive activities, and a discussion with a consumer.
17. **Walk a Mile in my Shoes (Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Whitby, Ontario):** An innovative video-based format presents simulations of interactions with patients who have mental illnesses. The educational content will be a cutting-edge recovery-based curriculum aimed at nurses and nursing students, and can be made available over the internet.
18. **IWK Health Centre (Halifax, Nova Scotia):** The IWK Hospital has offered to be a test site for anti-stigma efforts in an emergency department setting and to inform Opening Minds about the experiences of patients and their families, including how they feel about the treatment they receive from health care providers. The hospital will also introduce programs for health care providers to reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by patients and family members.
19. **The Mind Course (University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta):** The Mind course is offered to all second-year medical students at the University of Calgary; it discusses integrated clinical presentations of mental illness and includes contact with people who live with a mental illness. Students learn how to diagnose, investigate, and manage clinical presentations, such as substance abuse and addiction,

suicidal behaviour, panic and anxiety, psychoses, mood disorders, personality disorders, as well as family violence. This course is 96 hours in length, highly interactive, and has resulted in a high degree of interest in the psychiatry specialization following completion of the MD program.

20. **Youth Speak Program (Laing House, Halifax, Nova Scotia):** This youth-led initiative deals with stress, mental health, and mental illness and its accompanying stigma. The interactive, multimedia workshops are designed to increase knowledge and understanding around mental illness, provide information on resources and treatments available, and describe ways to reduce stigma and discrimination. The program is aimed at students from Dalhousie University Medical School and Dalhousie University Schools of Nursing, Social Work, and Pharmacy.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

1. ***Beautiful Minds/Beautiful Minds in Secondary Schools (Canadian Mental Health Association – Grand River Branch, Guelph, Ontario):*** Aimed at high school youth to increase their knowledge of mental health and reduce the stigma that surrounds mental health issues, this program includes a four-component package for teachers to adapt to fit the needs of their classroom. One component is a live presentation by a mental health facilitator and one or two consumers (persons with lived experience of a mental illness); consumers receive eight hours of training before participating. School support staff are required to be present to support students if needed. The program is most often delivered to grade 11 physical and health education classes.
2. ***Challenge Day (Canadian Mental Health Association – Caribou Chilcotin, Williams Lake, British Columbia):*** A six-hour facilitated, experiential workshop for high school teens designed to break down the barriers, such as stigma and racism, that separate a person from other individuals. Youth come in, play games, and get to know each other on an entirely different level; when they leave, they are connected by a true understanding of each other and a newfound respect for those around them. This program will be evaluated to determine if it is an effective tool for reducing stigma and discrimination among students.
3. ***Cobblestone Youth Theatre Project (Mixed Company Theatre, Toronto, Ontario):*** This approach offers a forum and a voice for youth who have experienced depression, mental health issues, homelessness, and street life. Working with a core group of 10 to 15 people who have experience with mental health issues and homelessness, each Cobblestone Youth Troupe is guided over a three-week period to develop a 75-minute play as a means of creative expression and to educate their community. The plays tour at community gathering places (hostels, shelters, job training centres) and national and international mental health, poverty, and activist organizations. The Troupe's use of Forum Theatre and actors from within the homeless community provides multiple perspectives, encourages understanding of different lifestyles, and helps make people aware of the consequences of their actions.
4. ***Durham Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) Coalition (Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Whitby, Ontario):*** A combination of education, protest, and contact with those living with

a mental illness, the program offers a five-day curriculum and accompanying material, as well as professional development workshops, for teachers. The program is delivered by representatives from community agencies, speakers who live with a mental illness (who tell their stories), and community volunteers. Also offered is a Stigma Summit, an event involving students and teachers from various high schools coming together for one day at a mental health facility to receive education, experiential exercises, and contact with speakers.

5. ***Health Literacy Comic Books (The Healthy Aboriginal Network, Vancouver, British Columbia):*** These comic books were created to specifically focus on health and social issues for youth. Topics covered are suicide prevention, gambling addiction, diabetes prevention, staying in school and, most recently, anxiety and child and youth mental health. The comics addressing mental health problems among youth, with a focus on aboriginal youth, will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness at reducing stigma among students.
6. ***Iris the Dragon Series and Brave New Minds Walk (Iris the Dragon (Charity), Perth, Ontario):*** The Iris books for children were designed to address children's mental health challenges in a non-threatening and supportive way. The books help educate readers about mental health and wellness, at the same time showing how a caring community can support children to reach their potential. The books tackle several topics, including Bipolar, Anxiety Disorder, ADHD, and Asperger's Syndrome.
7. ***Mental Health Matters (Digby Clare Mental Health Volunteers Association, Digby, Nova Scotia):*** This initiative goes into schools and offers panel presentations with a psychiatrist and two youth who have personal experience with mental illness. The presentation involves each member discussing mental illness-related stigma, with consumers sharing their stories with the audience as well as participating with other panel members. Following the presentation, a facilitator leads an audience discussion.
8. ***mindyourmind (Family Service Thames Valley, London, Ontario):*** This primarily online program provides accurate information, resources, and interactive coping tools created for and by youth who are at risk for stress, mental health disorders, suicide, and self-harming behaviours. Mindyourmind trains youth teams to develop resources, promote positive mental health, and assist in facilitating and developing community outreach and health promotion presentations. The school board in the area funds a computer-based program to improve the mental health of youth and reduce stigma. The course is used for grade 11 students and will be evaluated for its effectiveness at reducing stigma and other barriers to youth seeking help.
9. ***Partnership Program (Schizophrenia Society of Alberta, Calgary Chapter, Calgary, Alberta):*** This is a panel presentation for high school students that aims to reduce the stigma and misconceptions attached to mental illness. Teams of three people – a person living with schizophrenia, a family member who has an ill relative, and a mental health professional – share their personal stories; the presenter with the illness describes living with schizophrenia, the family member outlines the

impact of the disease on the family unit, and the mental health professional provides a clinical overview of the illness. A discussion follows.

10. **Partnership Program (Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan, Regina Chapter, Regina, Saskatchewan):** This is a panel presentation for high school students that aims to reduce the stigma and misconceptions attached to mental illness. Teams of three people – a person living with schizophrenia, a family member who has an ill relative, and a mental health professional – share their personal stories; the presenter with the illness describes living with schizophrenia, the family member outlines the impact of the disease on the family unit, and the mental health professional provides a clinical overview of the illness. A discussion follows.
11. **Partnership Program (Schizophrenia Society of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Chapter, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan):** This is a panel presentation for high school students that aims to reduce the stigma and misconceptions attached to mental illness. Teams of three people – a person living with schizophrenia, a family member who has an ill relative, and a mental health professional – share their personal stories; the presenter with the illness describes living with schizophrenia, the family member outlines the impact of the disease on the family unit, and the mental health professional provides a clinical overview of the illness. A discussion follows.
12. **Rendezvous in the Classroom (Workman Arts, Toronto, Ontario):** Within a 75-minute class, high school students screen short films that address mental illness, and then engage in discussion with a panel of people, including a filmmaker and those with personal and/or professional experience with mental illness. A resource guide is made available to teachers prior to the screenings. Students from Ontario, both with and without a diagnosis of mental illness, serve as curators to choose the movies included in “Rendezvous in the Classroom.” This program builds on the success of Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival’s youth program.
13. **Talk To Youth Lately (Family Outreach and Response, Toronto, Ontario):** Using a youth engagement approach, speakers are young people who have either experienced a mental health issue personally, or are a friend or family member of someone who has. Speakers, with the help of a facilitator who is also young in age, go to high schools and make a one-hour presentation to grade 11 and 12 students about their personal story, followed by a question and answer session.
14. **Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) (Canadian Mental Health Association, Hamilton, Ontario):** This program gives students in grades 7 to 12 the opportunity to hear stories of community members who have experienced mental illness, and also provides information about local resources that support youth coping with a family member or friend’s mental illness. The plan is designed to raise awareness, increase knowledge, provide early intervention, and bring about positive change in students’ attitudes about mental health, while reducing the stigma that surrounds it.
15. **Talking About Mental Illness (TAMI) (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Hamilton, Ontario):** This program gives students in grades 7 to 12 the opportunity to hear stories of community members who have experienced mental illness, and also provides information about local resources

that support youth coping with a family member or friend's mental illness. The plan is designed to raise awareness, increase knowledge, provide early intervention, and bring about positive change in students' attitudes about mental health, while reducing the stigma that surrounds it.

16. **Talking about Mental Illness/Parlons de la maladie mentale (Canadian Mental Health Association, Champlain East Branch, Cornwall/Ottawa, Ontario):** With the goal of using education to reduce mental illness-related stigma, the program's key activities are: organizing awareness presentations in local high schools and other community venues; supplying teachers/educators with appropriate materials and support to enhance learning from the awareness presentations; providing high school students with information about mental illness, local youth-friendly resources for support, and an opportunity to learn from people who have experienced mental illness firsthand; and offering opportunities for consumers of mental illness services to build their capacity and receive support in their recovery.
17. **The Dream Team (The Dream Team/Houselink, Toronto, Ontario):** This group of people with lived experience in mental health and addictions issues advocate for more supportive housing for people who live with chronic mental health and addictions issues in Ontario. By telling their personal stories, advocating for policy reform, conducting and presenting research, and educating the public on issues of stigma and human rights, the members of the Dream Team demonstrate the life-altering benefits of supportive housing and strive to create an environment where people with a mental illness can thrive. Dream Team members take their message to politicians, schools, universities, public servants, service agencies, and the general public to increase awareness about the lives of people with mental health issues and their contributions to the community.
18. **The New Mentality (Joint Project of Children's Mental Health Ontario and The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO, Toronto, Ontario):** This project engages youth from across Ontario (both consumers and non-consumers) to address the stigma associated with mental health and advocate for more accessible mental health services for children and youth.
19. **Youth Net (Mood Disorders Association of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia):** Situated in high schools, Youth Net involves discussions about mental health issues with grade 10 students in order to provide education and reduce stigma. The presenters are young people with a connection to mental illness and are recruited, trained, and paid to deliver the program's 90-minute workshop and offer their personal stories and experiences. The program takes place without the presence of a teacher, counselor, or adult presenter, and aims to help youth identify healthy coping skills, teach signs and symptoms so they may better recognize mental illness, emphasize that mental health is as important as physical health, and start youth talking about mental health and reducing stigma by exposing myths. The program will be evaluated for its effectiveness at reducing stigma.
20. **Youth Speak (Laing House, Halifax, Nova Scotia):** A peer-to-peer education approach is used to increase knowledge, awareness, and understanding of mental illness while decreasing the stigma and discrimination often associated with it. The interactive workshops, led by Laing House members

who are mental health consumers themselves, encourage the audience to seek help, speak out, and engage in dialogue to break down the barriers of mental illness.

21. **Key 56 (Louis H. Lafontaine Hospital, Montreal, Quebec):** A filmmaker was hired by the hospital and given a key (Key 56) to unlock the doors in the psychiatric ward. He followed two patients from the time they arrived on the ward until they were back in the community, and created several short episodes which can now be seen on YouTube. The hospital plans to screen the episodes for high school students to determine the film's effectiveness at reducing stigma.