



EVENTS

**Mental Health on
the Frontlines of
Justice**

- a one day work-
shop focusing on
mental health and
the criminal justice
system

**Calgary March 4
2010**

**Edmonton March 5
2010**

www.abcja.ca

**The 6th World
Conference on the
Promotion of Men-
tal Health and Pre-
vention of Mental
and Behavioral
Disorders**

Nov 17-19 2010

**Omni Shoreham
Hotel, Washington,
DC**

At Home / Chez Soi Launch



Toronto's national and local launch attracted a large crowd

The Commission's largest initiative was officially launched across the country on November 23, 2009.

Hundreds of guests participated in events in five research cities: Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. The Toronto launch doubled as the National launch. Each city's event included special elements, such as a choir made up of singers who have been homeless in Montreal, and an Aboriginal drumming ceremony in Winnipeg.



Key Commission leaders helped host the events. They included Chair Michael Kirby, President and CEO Michael Howlett, COO Louise Bradley, and Vice Chairs Dr. David Goldbloom and Madeleine Dion Stout.

The launch attracted significant media interest. Countless interviews were held with project members in all five cities. News reports began the morning of the launch, and continued throughout that day and week. There were numerous newspaper articles and many television and radio reports including national coverage on CBC and CTV.

The events left many of those who are involved with the initiative overwhelmed by the feeling of partnership. Research and service partners from across the country are central to the design of the project and to its ultimate outcome.

"I am so pleased to know that Canadians are very interested in our work," says Dr. Jayne Barker, Director of the At Home/

Chez Soi project. "We hope that the learning that comes from this unique national project will help inform political leaders, policy makers, community organizations and other decision makers, in the most effective ways to help people who are homeless and living with a mental illness," she says.

The At Home/Chez Soi project is looking for the best mix of housing and support services using the "Housing First" approach. This approach begins by offering people choice in a place to live, and then helping them with their mental and physical health issues.



At Home/Chez Soi Project Lead, Dr. Jayne Barker



At Home/Chez Soi Research Lead, Dr. Paula Goering



MHCC Chair, Michael Kirby

For more information on the specific projects in each of the five cities, please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit: the At Home section of the MHCC web site

Into the Light Conference a huge success

Hundreds of Canadians participated in the 'Into the Light' conference in Vancouver from November 29 – December 1st, 2009.

Hosted by the Vancouver Coastal Health and Simon Fraser University, the conference theme was "Transforming mental health in Canada." It brought together over 600 people representing Canada's mental health community including service providers, people with lived experience, researchers and health service planners.

There were several keynote presentations and events, such as the launch of "Towards Recovery and Well-Being," which is the framework for the development of the Commission's Mental

Health Strategy.

Participants also had the chance to test drive a new website connected to the Commission's Partners for Mental Health initiative. Close to 200 people took the opportunity to do so.

Numerous interactive break out sessions were held on a range of topics including Canadian mental health law, peer support, and stigma within the healthcare setting.

The conference opened with a special Aboriginal ceremony (pictured right), and closed with the event's poet in residence - Gregory Frankson. His insightful poetry reflected the themes and experiences at the conference.



Promoting MHCC's work



Dr. David Goldbloom, Vice-Chair of the MHCC, and Mary Bartam, Senior Advisor, Mental Health Strategy for Canada team, attended the AGM for the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Prince Edward Island division.

Dr. Goldbloom delivered the keynote address at a MLA breakfast attended by ministers and deputy ministers.

Mental Health Strategy team wants to hear from YOU!

Toward Recovery and Well-Being: A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada was launched in November 2009 at the Into the Light conference, Vancouver. Gillian Mulvale, one of the leading members of the mental health strategy team, and someone who has lived experience of mental illness, gave a presentation on the difference the Framework could have made in her life. Gillian said:

"When it comes to mental health and well-being we are all the same. There is no 'us' and 'them'. I believe that if we can change this thinking there will be tremendous hope for transforming the system." Many participants were moved to reflect on their own personal journeys.

The next phase of mental health strategy development will look at HOW to achieve the vision and

goals set out in the Framework. A series of roundtable discussions will be held throughout the spring and summer to begin to identify issues, options and priorities. Topics will range from population groups such as seniors, to sectors such as the workplace, to cross-cutting issues including human resources.

The strategy team will need input from people with a broad range of knowledge and experience: those living with mental health problems and illnesses, their families, service providers, researchers, policy-makers, and concerned citizens.

If you are interested in engaging in this process or you would like to read the Framework document, please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the Mental Health Strategy for Canada section of the MHCC web site.

The Mark of Stigma

In ancient times, it was common to place a mark on the skin of slaves and criminals so others would know to shun them, especially in public.

Today, it's no longer an accepted practise. However stigma itself has not disappeared.

Stigma is an attitude, specifically a negative attitude about people with mental illness. Discrimination is the resulting action.

Both stigma and discrimination can show up in any area of life – in families, in workplaces, in education. They can prevent someone from getting a job, getting promoted, getting housing and getting healthcare.

In fact, many people with mental health problems say stigma affects how they see themselves and can even negatively affect their willingness to ask for help.

More than 7 million Canadians will experience mental health issues each year and the Mental Health Commission of Canada has been given the mandate to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.

The goal is to foster a society where everyone is free to become as mentally healthy as possible and where those in need of help are comfortable getting it.

Extract from *Trial by Fire* (one woman's experience with stigma in the healthcare system):

"The doctor took one look at her and said: "Dora, you are not making sense. Go home and come back when you are able to make sense."

To read more, please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the *Opening Minds* section of the *MHCC* web site.

Hallway Group informs Opening Minds

The Hallway Group has been invaluable in putting forward the perspectives of people with lived experience within the *Opening Minds* initiative.

The group is currently helping to develop tools for measuring the effectiveness of the 38 anti-stigma programs selected for evaluation by *Opening Minds*. The tools will measure the attitudes of youth and health care workers towards mental health and illness before and after they participate in the programs. The health care worker questionnaire is unique as it focuses on recovery. The group is also being consulted on the development of a new *Opening Minds* web site and is putting forward their ideas for style, content and design.



Hallway Group members Karen Liberman and Eugene Le Blanc attended an orientation session in Toronto for the 38 anti-stigma programs selected for evaluation and Mike Santaro gave a presentation about the Hallway Group at the Into the Light Conference in Vancouver.

Partners for Mental Health

The Partners for Mental Health initiative will be officially introduced to Canadians this spring, followed by the announcement of a multi-year "Stand in the Light" national event, this fall.

The initiative is being designed as a national social movement focussed on bringing mental health into the spotlight through the voices and actions of Canadians. It will include a website that offers Canadians a chance to become part of it all. It contains areas for people to discuss issues and plan events.

The five year goal is to have one million Canadians actively involved in helping make changes to mental health policy and programs. It is hoped this will ultimately help revolutionize the way Canadians think, believe and act when it comes to mental health.

While the MHCC has a ten-year mandate, the Partners initiative is intended to become the Commission's legacy.

MHCC project targets police work

The MHCC's Mental Health and the Law Advisory Committee is conducting a project to improve understanding of how people with mental illnesses interact with the police.

The study is being carried out in British Columbia by the British Columbia Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission.

The study will inform police learning and Canadian guidelines will be produced for supporting the police in interacting with people who have severe mental illness. Focus groups are currently taking place in Vancouver with people living with a mental illness.

More information will be shared as the study progresses.



Stand in the Light
PARTNERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH



**MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION OF CANADA**
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The Mental Health Commission of Canada will:

- Be a catalyst for the reform of mental health policies and improvements in service delivery;
- Act as a facilitator, enabler and supporter of a national approach to mental health issues;
- Work to diminish the stigma and discrimination faced by Canadians living with mental illness;
- Disseminate evidence-based information on all aspects of mental health and mental illness to governments, stakeholders and the public.

New KEC Director



The Commission is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Director for the Knowledge Exchange Centre (KEC) initiative. Peter Levesque joined on January 4 2010.

Above: Peter Levesque, Director, KEC

Peter has more than 10 years experience within knowledge exchange and was most recently founder and Director of Knowledge Mobilization Works, an international consulting and research company based in Ottawa.

Peter was also Deputy Director of Knowledge Products and Mobilization for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Former Knowledge Exchange Specialist for the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

A few of Peter's interests are in aboriginal health, children and youth and seniors health.

Susan Hardie's achievements recognized in Vancouver



Susan Hardie, Senior Policy and Research Analyst for the Mental Health Strategy for Canada team received an award from Louise Bradley, Chief Operating Officer, at Into the Light, Vancouver.

The award honoured consumer peer researchers across Canada and also Susan's accomplishments over the 20 years she has worked in the mental health field. Susan's many achievements include playing a vital role in the psychiatric survivor movement, becoming the first coordinator of the National Network for Mental Health and earning her PhD last year.