

Family Connections



Education Series for Families

“I learned SO much about mental health . It was wonderful to connect with other families in the class”

The Family Support and Involvement team at VCH is excited to once again be offering its 8 week psychoeducational 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. The group will be co-facilitated by 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: March 1st – April 26th 2017 (Wednesday Nights). No group on March 29th.

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Place: CIBC Center for Patients and Families at the Jim Pattison Pavilion, Vancouver General Hospital, 899 W. 12th Ave (behind the Information Center)

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: Justun.Miller@vch.ca
604-736-2881

Change
is a
process,
not an
event

WHAT DOES change MEAN TO YOU ?

By Justun Miller.

Why is it that some people seem to be able to sail gently through all the changes that life throws at them, while others get upset if they have to change even the smallest of daily activities?

The key is in how you perceive change, and your ability to accept uncertainty.

As human beings it is *uncertainty* that we find the most difficult to manage, not change in itself. Very often, it's not the event, but the worry about 'what will I do?', or 'how will the family cope?' that people find the hardest to manage. But there are some simple skills that you can learn and develop that will help you to manage change in your life.

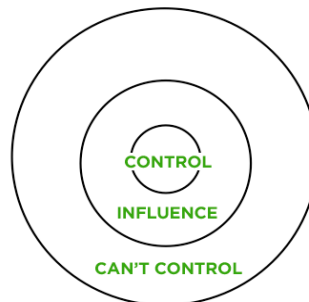
Accepting the Things That You Can't Change

One of the things which those who embrace change generally say that they do is to accept what can't be changed, and worry only about what they can change themselves. It can be very hard to let go of worrying, but there is no point in getting stressed about things over which you have no control. If you find yourself lying awake at night worrying about something, ask yourself:

- Can I do anything to change either the likelihood of this happening, or the outcome if it does happen?"

If the answer is 'No', then put the issue to one side, as something that may happen, or not, but over which there is no point in worrying.

Then, and this is important, find something else to occupy your mind instead!



Planning to Change the Things That You Can

The next step is to consider the issues and areas over which you do have control. Instead of worrying about the potential change, ask yourself two questions:

- Can I *Realistically* do anything to change the likelihood of this event happening, and if so what?
- Can I *Realistically* do anything to change the outcome to a more favourable one for me, and if so what?

The key word here is **realistically**: these have to be actions that you can genuinely take to change things, not general/non specific statements like “I will keep everything the way it was”.

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Realistic	Timely
What <u>specifically</u> do you want to do?	How will you know when you've reached it?	Is it in your power to accomplish it?	Can you realistically achieve it?	<u>When exactly</u> do you want to accomplish it?

Those who are able to accept and manage change well are those who are clear about what they want. They are able to decide what they cannot change, and to put it to one side. They are also effective in taking the necessary steps towards change and taking control of those elements that they can change.

Accept your decision and move on. Don't constantly worry/ruminate about 'what if', as that will undermine all of the good work you did in identifying and putting aside the things that you can't control. It doesn't even matter if the reason that you can't realistically do anything is 'I have too much else going on in my life to have time to deal with this'. It's fine. Give yourself a break, and accept your own wisdom.

Sadly, for many of us, managing change is not something that can be addressed in a 2 page article. There is a lot of work involved in the process. Managing change is just one of the many practical and valuable topics addressed in the support groups available to family members that are listed in the back of this newsletter

You can learn more about the tools mentioned in this article in the December 2016 newsletter that can be found here: <http://www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com/family-involvement-newsletter/>

Changes to the Family Support and Involvement Team

By Justun Miller

The Family Support and Involvement (FSI) team has undergone some changes of its own. Gloria Baker (our previous manager) has retired. So it is with sincere and heartfelt gratitude that we thank Gloria for her years of hard work and dedication to family involvement, and wish her all the best in the next chapter of her life.

As such, we are very excited to introduce our new team members, FSI team manager Jennifer Glasgow, and FSI Tertiary coordinator Zachariah Finley. Below are summaries of the great wealth of experience and knowledge that Jennifer and Zachariah are bringing to the team.

Jennifer Glasgow:

I graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Occupational Therapy in 2001 and completed my Royal Roads Masters of Arts in Leadership and Training (Health Specialization) in 2007. I've been with VCH since 2003: I worked at Gastown Vocational Services from 2003-2008 (as a life skills coach, job coach, and OT) and at the South MHT (which became MHSU in 2013) as Senior Mental Health Worker (Clinical Supervisor) since 2008. I'm passionate about client and family-centered, PSR-driven health care and also enjoy mentoring and supporting staff through personal development and systemic change. I became the manager of South MHSU in May 2016 and in January 2017 also became the manager for Kits MHT, the Family Support and Involvement program and the Familiar Faces program.

Zacharia Finley:

It's my pleasure to introduce myself as the Coordinator for Consumer and Family Involvement for Tertiary and Regional Programs. I'll be in this role for the next year, while Becky Hynes (whom some of you know) is away. I know that Becky has been an energetic and effective advocate for families, and for folks with lived experience of mental health concerns. I'll do my best to carry this important work forward for the next year.

I come to my new role from a background in clinical counselling and family support work, as well as advocacy for system change. For the last six years, I've worked on a community mental health team with Vancouver Coastal Health, providing mental health and substance use services to individuals, families, and groups. In the past, I've also worked in longer-term inpatient (a.k.a. "tertiary") and criminal justice-involved settings.

I wish you all the best and would look forward to hearing from you.

Warmly,

Zachariah Finley, MA, RCC

Change, Decision making and the Lifeline

By Isabella Mori

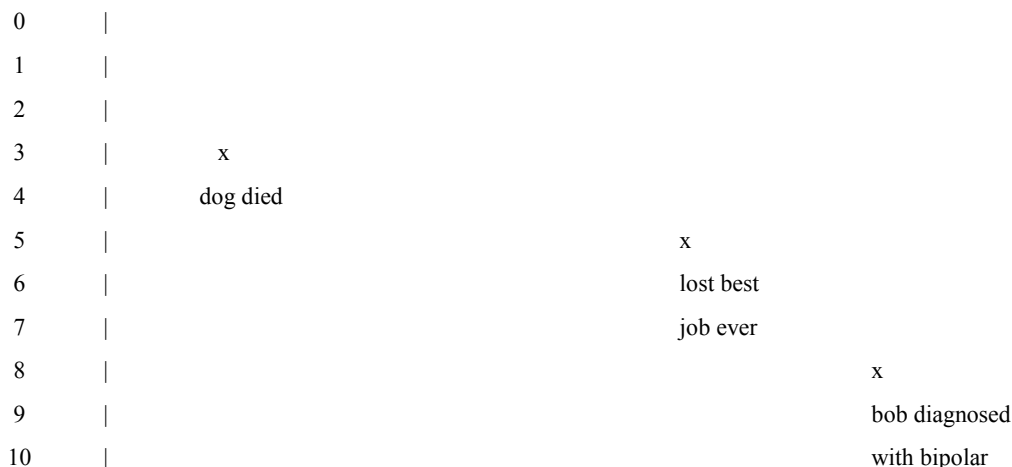
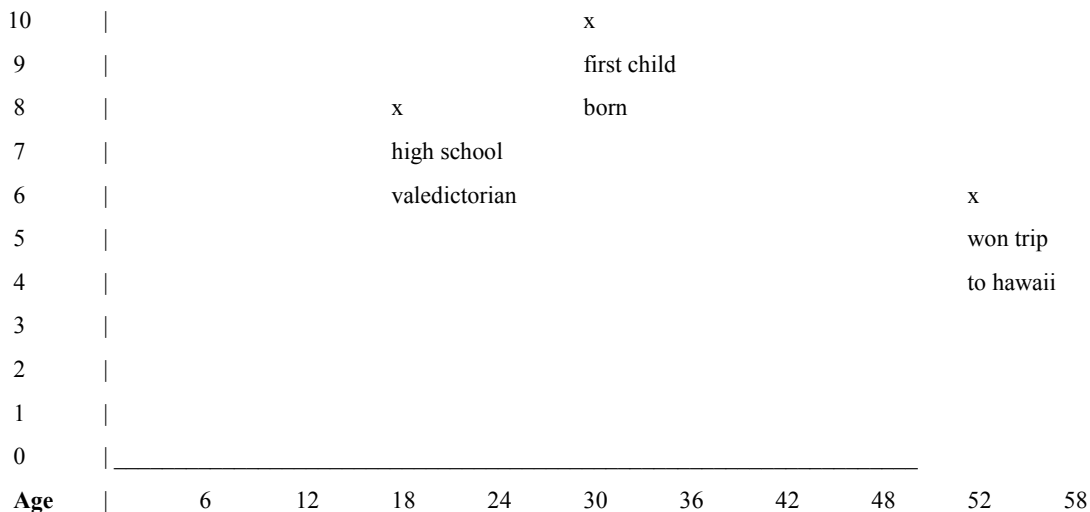
Reflecting on the topic of change, I was drawn back to a major change in my life, when I had ended an abusive relationship and embarked on studying counselling. In one of my counselling courses, we were presented with an exercise that I still find very helpful. It's called the Lifeline, and is a look back on when and how we experienced certain events in our lives, how we reacted to them and what intentional and not so intentional decisions we made in regard to those events. I highly recommend it if you want to better understand how you have dealt with changes in the past, and see whether you'd like to adjust your decision making in the midst of change.

Some of our decisions are really helpful and some aren't. Once I made a rash promise that took me many years to repair; a bad decision if there ever was one. It was helpful to go back and see what motivated me to make that promise (an overinflated ego, among other things), so that I can be on the alert when that same motivation crops up again. On the positive end of things, at the tender age of 15 I had a sudden insight that if I dream up a neat idea, I might as well try and see if I can make it a reality. Then and there I made the decision to organize that big party out in the countryside that until then I had only dreamed about. That was the beginning of many dreams turned reality; it's one of the reasons why I have this job.

So ... how do you make a lifeline? Below is an example. Use a blank piece of paper in landscape format – legal size or bigger is best. You don't want to overwhelm yourself, so start out with what you feel are the 12-20 biggest events in your life. Note a few ages on the horizontal line so that you have a gauge for when events happened. Write down events according to the ages when they happened (you can also use calendar years instead of ages). Judge each event on a scale of 1-10 in terms of "positive" or "negative." Then, on a separate piece of paper, write a little about each event. How did it change you? How did you react? What decisions did you make? Why?

Of course you want to use this as a tool for insight. Sometimes we're tempted to criticize ourselves when we look at our past. Please don't! Rather, use it as a learning tool. What can you learn about yourself, and how you handle change?

Positive



Negative



The Community Engagement Advisory Network (CEAN)

Use your voice to help improve the quality of healthcare at VCH.

What is CEAN?

CEAN is a group of volunteers who support patient and public involvement at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). They collaborate with VCH to improve the services we provide and enhance the health of our communities. CEAN has members from all areas of VCH. Visit www.vch.ca/ce for more info.

Why join CEAN?

Do you believe that the voice of patients and the public needs to be taken into account when VCH makes decisions that will affect healthcare? Do you want to make a difference, and use your knowledge and experience to improve healthcare for you and your loved ones? Then you should become a member.

What do CEAN members do?

- Participate in focus groups/workshops/forums
- Review a document to test its user-friendliness
- Sit on an advisory committee
- Review policies and give feedback
- Be a liaison between VCH and their communities
- Recruit other CEAN members

And more!

Who can join CEAN?

We welcome anyone who lives, works or receives services in the VCH geographic area – with the exception of people who are directly employed by VCH.

How do I join CEAN?

Visit www.vch.ca/ce and click on JOIN US, or give us a call: 604-714-3779. And we'll take it from there.



FAMILIES DEALING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Family-to-Family Education
An intensive 12-session course

February 8 — April 26, 2017

7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday evenings

NS Disability Resource Centre
3158 Mountain Hwy. North Vancouver

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDE:


- Symptoms of the illnesses - bipolar, schizophrenia, clinical depression, anxiety
- Medications and communication
- Problem solving
- Advice on working with the system
- Looking after yourself as a caregiver

OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE!

Register Early! Class size is limited.

For information and to register call:
Kathryn (604-926-0856)

Course outline and details:
[www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/
education/family-to-family-course/](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/education/family-to-family-course/)



The course is taught by trained family members who themselves have ill relatives and many years' experience dealing with the system. It will be of particular interest to families whose relatives have recently been diagnosed.



Hosted by North Shore Schizophrenia Society
in partnership with NSDRC
Funding provided by: Vancouver Foundation





First Nations Talking Circle

Carnegie Community Centre

401-Main Street/ Hastings.

Third Floor



Starts: Wednesday's at 10:00am.

Please join us for this weekly Talking Circle (Co-ed group for adults).

Coffee and snacks

Open to everyone

Come and learn more about culture, share, and express your thoughts, as well as experience traditional ceremonies.

Facilitator's Perry Omeasoo (VCH) 604-306-7474

Family Support Groups

Mood Disorders Association of BC – 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.

Contact Suemay Black @ 604-251-2179

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 Sally @ Tel: (604)270 7841 ext 2126

St Paul's Hospital 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 # 451, 4th floor, Burrard Building. Please pre-register by calling 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 Wednesday of each month, 6 – 7:30 p.m., 3rd Floor, 2750 East Hastings, Vancouver.

Contact Hella @ 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 Bessie.wang@pathwaysclubhouse.com
or 604-276-8834, ext 12.

Family Support Groups

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 graspvancouverarea@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 6:30-8:00PM at Three Bridges Addictions 1290 Hornby Street, Rm 310. Thursday 6:00-7:00PM at Raven Song 2450 Ontario Street, 1st floor. Call Oona @ 604-714-3480.

Family Connections Support Group —Every first Thursday and third Monday of the month in the CIBC Center for Patients and Families at the Jim Pattison Pavilion, Vancouver General Hospital, 899 W. 12th Ave (behind the Information Center) For questions or more information please contact: Isabella.mori@vch.ca, 604 290-3817 or Zachariah.Finley@vch.ca, 604-714-3771

First Nations Talking Circle - Weekly Talking Circle co-ed group for adult family and client's interested in learning more about First Nations Culture, sharing, expressing thoughts, and experiencing traditional ceremonies. Every Wednesday from 10:00 at the Carnegie Community Centre. Third floor 401 Main Street/Hastings, Vancouver. Contact Perry Omeasoo @ 604-306-7474



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 and/or addiction, sign up at www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com

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