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Your Family Support and Involvement Team

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Self-Care is a Priority and a Necessity, Not a Luxury

If you have ever travelled on an airline, you will have no doubt sat through the safety announcement at the beginning of the flight. Airline stewards inform us that in the unfortunate incidence of an emergency, you are required to pull down the oxygen mask and place it over your face. If you are travelling with children, you are instructed to place the mask on yourself first, and then offer assistance. Why? Because if you don't apply your own oxygen mask first, then you are no use to anyone else around you. In other words, if you don't look after yourself first, you won't be able to look after others effectively.

Below, I have listed some strategies for you and your family to try.

Reach out.

If you feel lonely or isolated, connect with community support groups, family, friends, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship.

Be realistic.

Life doesn't have to be perfect. Families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.

Exercise your brain.

Sometimes the answer to having a lot on your mind is to do something that takes your brain in a completely different direction. Stretch mental boundaries by listening to a lecture on your iPod (https://www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care), doing a crossword puzzle, or joining a book club, and checking out the latest best seller. Or take up a new hobby that keeps you active mentally and physically, whether it's gardening or hiking.



Sometimes providing the appropriate care for your loved one requires you to acknowledge that you are not able and/or capable of providing them with what they need.

Please remember that if your loved one is at risk to themselves or others the best resources are your local Emergency Department, and 911.

Other resources available to you are:

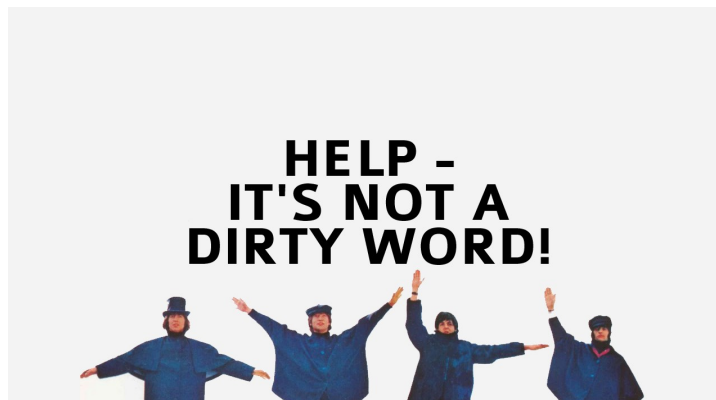
Mental Health Emergency Services (MHES): 604-874-7307

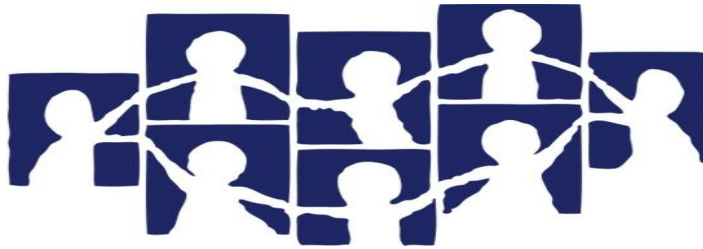
Vancouver Adult Mental Health Intake (VAMHI): 604-675-3997

Children and Youth Mental Health: 604-675-3895

Older Adult Mental Health Intake: 604-709-6785

Access Central (Addictions Services): 1-866-658-1221





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 for our Consumer & Family e-distribution list. Visit

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

FROM CRISIS TO HOPE

11th Annual Family Conference – April 23, 2016

By *Isabella Mori*

You are cordially invited to our 11th Family Conference! It will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2016, from 9am-4:30pm at the Paetzold Auditorium at the main VGH building, the Jim Pattison Pavilion.

This year's theme is "From Crisis to Hope". We will be offering information and tools for the journey that so many family members experience. It often starts with an inkling, until, unfortunately, we are suddenly faced with a full-blown crisis. **Monica McAlduff**, one of the Mental Health and Substance Use directors, will introduce the new Access and Assessment Center, which will help alleviate some of the crises experienced – it is a new approach to mental health/substance abuse emergencies, which will deal not only with psychoses and life threatening mental health/substance use crises but also give improved services for people who experience mental health/substance use problems which may not be as acute but still need an immediate response. She will be followed by **George Scotton**, who was directly involved with designing the AAC, and who will speak to the practicalities of accessing this service.

Dr. Diane Frederikson, Psychiatrist and head of the Early Psychosis Intervention Program, will speak to the so-called "medical system" and how, when it is well run, this system includes much more than just medication, including approaches to dealing with the challenges in thinking, or cognitive aspects, that tend to come with severe mental health issues. **Dr. Randall White**, Medical Director of the BC Psychosis Program, will be speaking about new ideas and research findings, including the use of Clozapine.

After lunch, we will have a panel led by **Sally Hull** from the BC Schizophrenia Society with the title "Giving Families What They Need", which will focus, among other things, on support systems and tools for families. One of the panel members will be a member of our team, the Family Support and Involvement Team.

As in every Family Conference, our last session will be a panel of family members, moderated by **Susan Inman**, with the title of "How Families Can Advocate For Improved Mental Health Care."

Registration will be open soon; please watch your emails, or contact Isabella Mori (isabella.mori@vch.ca) for details. We will have stipends

"We will be offering information and tools for the journey that so many family members experience."

So what does a Family Support Group look like ?

Below Isabella has provided a summary of the Family Connections support Group held on February 15, by herself and Anita Haidar.

I'd like to report two things from this group. One is that we did a little visualization exercise, to see if we can take off the edge just a tad when we feel so overwhelmed with the difficulties facing us.

Imagine you are standing in front of a compost heap
(in this case it was in the middle of the circle)

Open your hands in front of you as if you were scooping up water

Imagine you are putting your sorrows into your hands. You can also breathe into your hands to make the feeling stronger

Now throw your sorrows on the compost.

Imagine how unexpected goodness grows out of the compost – a potato, a pumpkin, a sunflower ...

The compost is a wonderful symbol of transformation (here's someone who speaks eloquently about it <http://students.smcm.edu/jrpaguirigan/spiritualgardening/CompostingRitual.html>). We put on it things that we don't want anymore. After a while it transforms all of this into beautiful, nutritious soil, and even brings us surprises!

The other thing we did was to discuss just for a short while Dr. Amador's book, "I'm not sick, I don't need help." His approach to communicating with loved ones who have different opinions about their mental health is outlined in brief here <http://ourhealthyminds.com/family-handbook/communication/Building-a-collaborative-relationship-leap.html>. He also has numerous videos out, here for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lstn6WNnCRc> . We will talk about this at greater length in a future session.

I hope all is well with you. See you soon! The next meeting is on March 7, 6-8pm at the CIBC Center For Patients and Families.

(This image here is entitled: Surprise Gift from the Compost Pile. See that tulip that decided to grow there?)



Mood Disorders Association of BC (MDABC) – 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. 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30-8:30pm at Evergreen Community Health Centre (3425 Crowley) .

Contact 604-873-0103

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

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 Kaye 604-682-2344 local 68964

VCH Eating Disorder Program (VCHED)– 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 at 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.

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 graspvancouver@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 6:30-7:30PM. Every other Friday 6:30-7:30 at Three Bridges Addictions 1290 Hornby Street, Rm 310. Call Oona @ 604-714-3480.

Thursday 6:00-7:00PM at Raven Song 2450 Ontario Street, 1st floor. 604-872-8441.

Family Connections Support Group (FCSP)—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 becky.hynes@vch.ca , 604 313-1918

Family Support Groups



March 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 SMART	2 VCHED	3 FCSP	4 Parents Forever	5
6	7	8 SMART MDABC	9 Raven Song	10 GRASP	11 SMART	12 Pathways
13	14 FCSP	15 SMART	16	17	18 Parents Forever	19
20	21	22 SMART MDABC	23	24 SPH	25 SMART	26
27	28	29	30	31		