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Making Connections



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ECDSS UPDATES

EI Sector Meeting for Region 6

Have you heard...
There is a Region 6 Early Intervention Sector Meeting this month.

Date: February 10, 2010
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Location: United Way of the AB Capital Region
15132 Stony Plain Road, Edmonton
(Downstairs in the community room).

RSVP to: region6.ei@gov.ab.ca
by February 5, 2010.

Family Day, Monday, February 15

With all the work you do to assist families in need of early intervention in our region, don't forget to take some time to enjoy special moments with your own family!

Taking time for yourself and your family is what helps relax and rejuvenate you!



"Working together for our children's future."

Dr. Bruce Perry, Sold Out

Due to overwhelming response, the February 25, 2010 conference has sold out!

We are thrilled to spend an entire day working with Dr. Bruce D. Perry M.D., Ph.D. from the ChildTrauma Academy in Houston, Texas. We will share in his expertise on child maltreatment, children's mental health, neurodevelopment and youth violence.

Over the last 15 years, Dr. Perry has been an active teacher, clinician and researcher in children's mental health and the neurosciences. His work has resulted in the development of innovative clinical practices and programs working with maltreated and traumatized children. He is the author of over 300 journal articles, book chapters and scientific proceedings and is the recipient of numerous professional awards and honours.

With over 400 participants registered, this session is fully booked. Please e-mail info@ecdss.ca if you didn't get a chance to register and we can add your name to the waiting list.



If you have registered and are no longer able to attend, please contact our office to cancel. We have others eager to fill your spot!

The staff of ECDSS are looking forward to seeing you on February 25.

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mental Health First Aid Training

This session will provide a comprehensive introduction to common mental health disorders that impact many of the families supported by Early Intervention programs. While practitioners are often well versed in physical first aid, there is often a lack of understanding related to mental health first aid. Four sessions will cover areas including common mental health problems, addictions, anxiety disorders, depression and psychotic disorders.

Date: February 11-12, 2010 (2 days)

Cost: \$78.75

Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Ages & Stages Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE)

This session provides the essentials of using the ASQ and the ASQ:SE tools. These questionnaires are flexible, culturally-sensitive systems for screening infants and young children for developmental delays or concerns in the crucial first five years of life.

Date: February 17, 2010 (1 day)

Cost: \$47.25

Kouzes and Posner Leadership Challenge

Backed by 25 years of original research and data from over three million leaders, The Leadership Challenge® is a leadership development program by bestselling authors Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner. Approaching leadership as a measurable, learnable, and teachable set of behaviors, this proven leadership model proclaims Leadership Is Everyone's Business.

Date: March 4-5 and 26, 2010 (3 days)

Cost: \$472.50

DESIGNED FOR YOU

ECDSS is dedicated to the advancement and professional development of all frontline staff who work within the field of Early Intervention. As part of an ongoing process, we update our existing training programs and we develop new sessions in order to address the needs of practitioners in this region.



Register Online at
www.ecdss.ca/events.php

Relationship Based Practice —Level I (Formerly known as Core Home Visitation Training)

This session focuses on building the knowledge and skills of relationship based practitioners, exploring values and beliefs, and gaining practical strategies for reaching, engaging and supporting hard to reach families. This training will increase awareness and knowledge of child abuse, duty to report, establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries. Practitioners will explore communication strategies, safety practices for working alone, confidentiality and self-care.

Date: March 15-19, 2010 (5 days)

Cost: \$255.00

Relationship Based Practice —Level II

This session focuses on deeper exploration of relationship based practices. Participants will explore interdisciplinary practices and how to collaborate with other professionals. Participants are challenged to look at their own values and beliefs and to explore the impact on their ability to support families. Participants will drill deeper into the topic of maintaining healthy boundaries, case-note writing, ethics and leadership.

Date: April 12-13, 2010 (2 days)

Cost: \$105.00

We offer customized half-day and lunch hour staff wellness presentations and refresher courses. We can provide onsite delivery to an audience of 10 or more.

Contact Tracy Bridges at 780-428-9465 or e-mail info@ecdss.ca for your training needs.

CHILDREN AFFECTED BY PARENTAL MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental illnesses touch the lives of all of us. Approximately 20% of individuals will experience a mental illness during their lifetime, and the remaining 80% will be affected by an illness in family members, friends or colleagues. Mental illness can have a major effect on relationships, education, productivity and overall quality of life. Factors that contribute to mental illness include genetics, biology, personality, socio-economic status, and life events.

Mental illnesses take many forms, including:

- mood disorders, such as depression and bipolar disorder, which affect how one feels;
- schizophrenia, which affects how one perceives the world;
- anxiety disorders which affect how fearful one perceives places, events or situations to be;
- personality disorders, which affect how one sees oneself in relation to others; and
- eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, which influence how one feels about food and one's body image.

We know that the environment in which children grow affects their development and emotional well-being as much as their genetic makeup does. Children are especially vulnerable to disruptive or traumatic events in their lives, such as the mental illness of a parent. Children whose parents have a mental illness are at risk of developing social, emotional and/or behavioral problems. Compared with adults, children have limited coping skills and strategies, are more dependent on the other people in their lives, and have fewer psychological defenses to help them through difficult situations.

The disruptive force of mental illness is often referred to as a family burden. With this family burden, children are at risk of developing a traumatic reaction that causes emotional and physical distress. They might even develop a posttraumatic reaction that persists for months or years and into their adult lives. Posttraumatic symptoms may include heightened fears and anxieties, recurrent images or thoughts, emotional numbing or constriction, loss of interest in normal activities, and withdrawal from other people. Also included in the family burden is the feeling of grief. Children may mourn for the parent they have known and loved before the onset of the illness, for the anguish of their family, and for the loss of their carefree childhood.



Fortunately, there is hope for children of parents with mental illness. Children can develop a resilient response to disruptive family events. Resilience is the ability to rebound from adversity and to prevail over the circumstances of our lives. One research study that focused on adults who had grown up with parents with mental illness, found that the majority of the study's participants found some positive results of their situation. They reported that they had become stronger people, with greater empathy and compassion. They developed more tolerance and understanding and a greater appreciation of life.



What Children Need to Know About Parental Mental Illness

1. Children need information about the illness and its meaning for their family. Inform children that their parents' illness is an illness, that it has a name, and that many people have. It has nothing to do with their actions or their parents' displeasure with them. There are treatments and medication for it, just like a heart problem. It is nothing to be shameful of and it is okay to talk about it. The more families talk about the illness together, the less fearful of the illness they will become.
2. Children need skills to cope with the mental illness and with its impact on their own lives. Tell them what behaviours they can expect and what to do and say if those behaviours are exhibited. Encourage them to discuss what is happening.
3. Children need support for themselves. Support can include family and friends, professionals and other service providers. They need to recognize that their own needs and desires matter. Often they deny or minimize their own needs in their effort to meet the needs of their family.

Continued on page 4...

Barriers to Families Getting Help

- The stigma attached to mental illness is the most significant barrier to accessing services. Some parents believe if they admit to a mental illness, their children will be removed from their care. Children believe they or their parents will get in trouble if they talk about what is happening to others.
- Services tend to be deficit-based, oftentimes available only when parents or children have diagnosable problems or when abuse or neglect have been documented.
- Perception of mental illness, parenting and care-giving roles are different across racial and ethnic groups. Many resources and programs are not effective for cross-cultural use.
- Services may be fragmented between systems and within systems, e.g., the mental health and child welfare systems. Research shows that providing programming to the family as a whole is effective.

The Stigma

Most individuals find ways to live with their illnesses but how they are treated by others often proves to be just as challenging. Stigma and discrimination are the key barriers that stop people from seeking help.

Self-stigma occurs when people with mental illness and their families internalize society's negative attitudes towards them, leading to self blame and low self esteem. Self-stigma:

- Prevents people from asking for help in the first place.
- Leads to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, when in fact, people can and do recover from mental illness.
- Impedes investment in necessary mental health services and research as policy makers and funders don't see the actual need for services.

Key Steps to Breaking Down Barriers, Getting Rid of the Stigma

- The general public, service providers, and families need to be made aware of and educated about the issues and strengths of parents with mental illness.
- Values and attitudes regarding parents with mental illness need to be clarified in professional training programs.
- Services must be relevant to the needs of parents and families. They should be family-centered and strength-based. Parents with mental illness are still parents, their road to recovery can be positively influenced by maintaining their parenting role.
- Collaboration across systems and with other service providers and professionals is necessary to ensure there are no gaps in service and that the family is being treated as a whole.

In October 2009, The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) has launched *Opening Minds*, an Anti-stigma/Anti-discrimination Initiative. The initiative is the largest systematic effort to reduce the stigma of mental illness in Canadian history. It is much-needed and long overdue!

Opening Minds will involve carrying out a targeted plan, based on the best available research. The plan will be evaluated over time.

In the first year, MHCC has chosen to target two specific groups:

- Youth aged (12 to 18) - early intervention can make an enormous difference over a lifetime. For more than 70% of adults living with mental illness, symptoms developed before they were 18 years old.
- Health care professionals - the medical front lines, doctors, nurses and emergency room receptions are where people seeking help say they experience some of the most deeply felt stigma and discrimination.

To follow the progress of the project, visit: www.mentalhealthcommission.ca.

“More than 7 million Canadians will experience a mental health problem in 2009. Many of these people will not seek help because of the stigma surrounding mental illness. In fact, people who live with mental illness tell us that the stigma is often worse than the disease itself.”

Honourable Michael Kirby
Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada

ONLINE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS

www.likeminds.org.nz

Like Minds, Like Mine
New Zealand's National Site to Reduce the Stigma of Mental Illness

www.likeminds.org.nz/file/downloads/pdf/file_44.pdf

Fighting Shadows, Self-stigma and Mental Illness

www.likeminds.org.nz/file/downloads/pdf/file_35.pdf

Friends and Family, What You Do Makes the Difference

www.amhb.ab.ca/Publications/publications/bouncebackbook/Pages/default.aspx

Alberta Health Services, The Bounce Back Book, Building Resiliency in Infants to Preschoolers

download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SVP05-0151B/SVP05-0151B.pdf

Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders, Training Guide for the Early Childhood Services Community

www.miaaw.ca/en/mental-illness/articles.aspx

Pathways to Healing:
A Mental Health Guide for First Nations People

www.mooddisorderscanada.ca

Resources to Support Families & Children
Reducing the Stigma

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/boarddocs/15507_MHCC_EN_final.pdf

Toward Recovery and Well Being, Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada

www.cmha.ca/mh_toolkit/intro/intro_1.htm

Mental Health Promotion Toolkit: A practical resource for community initiatives

www.cpa.ca

Canadian Psychological Association
What is Post Partum Depression?

www.canwetalk.ca

Compassionate Classroom
Reference Booklet for Teachers About the Mental Health Needs of Their Students

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/Strategy.aspx

Mental Health Strategy for Canada

www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca

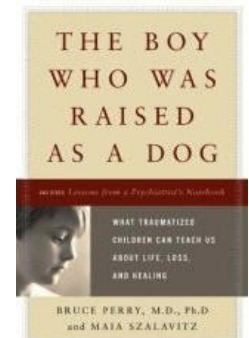
Canadian Mental Health Association, Edmonton

RECOMMENDED READING **The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog** Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D. and Maia Szalavitz

In beautifully written, fascinating accounts of experiences working with emotionally stunted and traumatized children, Dr. Perry educates readers about how early-life stress and violence affects the developing brain. He offers simple yet vivid illustrations of the stress response and the brain's mechanisms with facts and images that crystallize in the mind without being too detailed or confusing. The stories exhibit compassion, understanding and hope as Dr. Perry paints detailed, humane pictures of patients who have experienced violence, sexual abuse or neglect.

Dr. Perry invites the reader on his own journey to understanding how the developing child's brain works. He learns that to facilitate recovery, the loss of control and powerlessness felt by a child during a traumatic experience must be counteracted. Recovery requires that the patient be "in charge of key aspects of the therapeutic interaction."

He emphasizes that the brain of a traumatized child can be remolded with patterned, repetitive experiences in a safe environment. Most importantly, as such trauma involves the shattering of human connections, "lasting, caring connections to others" are irreplaceable in healing; medications and therapy alone cannot do the job. "Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love," Dr. Perry concludes.



SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES AFFECTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS

Canadian Mental Health Association, Edmonton Region (CMHA-ER) offers a variety of programming for individuals living with mental illness. Their programs include: recreation, housing, life skills, advocacy, women's programming, child and youth, and families, affected by mental illness.

Drop-in Family Peer Support Group

This program is specifically for relatives and friends of individuals who are living with a mental illness. It is a facilitated support group.

When: Every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 pm.

Where: 8 Floor, Harley Court Building,
10045 – 111 Street, Edmonton

Education Group

This group is for individuals who want to learn more about mental illness, how to support someone with a mental illness, how to take care of themselves and learn coping and problem-solving techniques. Individuals who complete this program will leave with skills and tools to help them in their daily lives. It will also present an opportunity for individuals to participate in the Drop in Family Peer Support Group as peer volunteers.

When: 2 hours per week for 6 consecutive weeks

Where: 8 Floor, Harley Court Building,
10045 – 111 Street, Edmonton

Cost: \$20.00 fee for the manual

Introduction to the Mental Health System

This monthly session provides participants with information about the range of services, supports and resources available for individuals with mental illness and their families in the Edmonton area, how these services/supports can be accessed, and when they are appropriate to access.

Cornerstone Counselling Centre, OASIS Program

This is a support group for those who live with, or love someone, who suffers from depression or other mental illness and seek the support of others facing similar challenges.

For more information please call the Cornerstone Centre at 780-482-6215.

For more information about the family support programs, call Lyn at 780-414-6311 or visit the website at www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca.

For more information on eligibility and registration in any of the children/youth programs, call Mallory at 780-414-6304 or visit the website at www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca.

Children's Saturday Programming

The CMHA Children's Saturday Recreation Program was developed to meet the recreational and social needs of children (age 6-12 years) who are presently diagnosed with, or are experiencing behavioral problems, or come from families experiencing mental health issues.

Cost: \$100.00 per 10 week session – subsidies may be available.

Week-long Children's Summer Fun Camps are offered in July and August.

Youth Life Skills Program

This program was developed for youth 13-15 years old, who are experiencing mental health issues and/or behavioral disorders. This program is aimed at life skills development through social recreation and fun!

Cost: \$100.00 per 10 week session – subsidies may be available.

The children & youth programs are social/recreational and they are not geared toward treatment. The main goal is to have fun. It is hoped the children and youth will also increase their sense of self worth, improve social skills, learn new activity skills, and benefit from contact with positive role models.

When: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month
7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

Where: Cornerstone Counselling Centre
302, 10140 - 117 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 1X3

Cost: Free

LOW OR NO COST FAMILY FUN

Hearts of Fire

Festival fun, fire and a mid-winter feast for inner city families. There will be story telling and music, snow play for kids, and warm campfires and free hot chocolate for everyone. Bring a mitten or take a mitten at the Share the Warmth tipi.

Date: Saturday, February 13, 2010
3:00 pm—7:00 pm

Location: Boyle Street Park, Edmonton

Cost: Free

For more information visit www.winterlight.ca.

Family Day Global Village

On family day, celebrate Edmonton's global family through beautiful music, playful activities, and fascinating performances. Join the Family Day Flag Parade, warm up by the 'fire monsters', and enjoy hayrides and free hot chocolate at Churchill Square. Then head over to City Hall to see the spectacular FuzzFly, Canada's only world-beat aerial circus.

Date: Monday, February 15, 2010
12:00 pm—4:00 pm

Location: Sir Winston Churchill Square, Edmonton

Cost: Free

For more information visit www.winterlight.ca.

Multi Cultural Family Day Concert

Edmonton Folk Arts Council presents a Family Day multicultural concert featuring the music and dance of Scotland, Ukraine, Mexico, French Canada, Greece, Italy, China, Sri Lanka, Hungary, Peru, Spain, India, Ecuador, Poland, and Serbia.

Balloons & Face Painting will be available free of charge to the public in the Main Lobby prior to the show.

Date: Monday, February 15, 2010
1:00 pm—4:00 pm,
Performance starts at 2:00 p.m.

Location: Winspear Centre Edmonton
4 Sir Winston Churchill Square

Cost: Free (with a donation to the Food Bank)

For more information visit www.winspearcentre.com or call 780-428-1414.

Families Read Together

Spend Family Day at your local library! All Edmonton Public library branches are open on Family Day and will have special activities the whole family can enjoy.

Visit www.epl.ca for activities specific to each branch.



Silver Skate Festival

Entering its 20th year, the Silver Skate Festival is the longest running winter festival in the City of Edmonton. Enjoy a weekend of artistic, cultural and outdoor activities inclusive of all ages and lifestyles.

Watch ice dance and theatrical performances, participate in recreational winter activities for family, children and youth, participate in fun skate races, watch the snow sculptors compete in the snow sculpting competition or try your hand at snow sculpting in the interactive area. Enjoy a sleigh ride through the park.

Parking is available at Hawrelak Park and Edmonton Transit has a stop at the entrance to the park.

Date: February 19-21, 2010

Location: Hawrelak Park, Edmonton

Cost: Free

For more information, visit the website at www.silverskatefestival.org.



DID YOU KNOW...

Nominations are Being Accepted for the Celebrate Mental Health Awards, Edmonton Region.

Do you know someone who makes mental health matter in the community? If so, you can nominate an individual or organization that makes a difference in:

- Health care settings
- Advocacy work
- Associations and non-profit organizations
- Community organizations
- Government
- Business
- Media
- Sports and recreation
- Performing, visual and literary arts
- Schools and early childhood education centres
- Post secondary institutions
- Faith communities

Nomination deadline is April 9, 2010.

Eight awards will be presented at Edmonton City Hall on May 6, 2010. For category details, nomination forms and additional information visit www.cmha-edmonton.ab.ca.

Baby Stroller Recalled

Elfe Juvenile Products of Canada has posted a recall notice for some models of their Graco Strollers. Approximately 28,430 of the recalled strollers were sold at various stores across Canada

The hinges on the stroller's canopy pose a fingertip amputation and laceration hazard to the child when the consumer is opening or closing the canopy. No incidents have been reported in Canada, but there have been reports of amputations and lacerations in the U.S.

Consumers may contact Elfe Juvenile Products to receive a free hinge cover to fix the problem.

Please mention this recall to any parents who come to your program sites with a Graco stroller.

Model numbers and pictures are available for printing from the Health Canada website at cpsr-rspc.hc-sc.gc.ca/PR-RP/recall-retrait-eng.jsp?re_id=948.



"Working together for our children's future."

Contact Us

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This newsletter is researched and produced by Nicole Vogel, Communication Consultant, ECDSS. We welcome your comments and topic suggestions, including research findings, fundraisers, events, resource connections, site visits, etc.

Please contact Nicole at nmv@shaw.ca with any suggestions.

Resources

Health Canada, Mental Health-Mental Illness [Online] Available http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/mental-eng.pdf

Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, Friends and Family, What You Do Makes the Difference. [Online] Available http://www.likeminds.org.nz/file/downloads/pdf/file_35.pdf

Nicholson, Joanne, Ph.D. et al, Critical Issues for Parents with Mental Illness and Their Families [Online] Available <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/KEN-01-0109/ch3.asp>



Edmonton & Area
Child & Family Services Region 6

Early Childhood Development Support Services is supported by funding through the Edmonton and Area Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA). This funding is provided to assist Early Childhood Development funded service providers with program delivery, program development, data collection, evaluation and training. Through ongoing collaboration with the CFSA, this newsletter is intended to provide information to service providers pertaining to these services.