

Our Voice



News from the NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone (Halifax area, Eastern Shore, and West Hants)

Do you **BELIEVE?**

Submitted by Starr Dobson, president & CEO, Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia

Over the past several years, I've had many opportunities to present at community sessions focusing on mental health and mental illness. Following these events, there are always attendees who approach to share their own stories.

About a year ago, I was profoundly affected by one of these encounters. Two women approached and asked if I knew of a place or program designed to help children who have *parents* living with mental illness. My answer was, unfortunately, no.

One of the women began to cry and told me a bit about her story. She talked about struggling with severe depression. She spoke of waking up in the morning and not being able to get out of bed for several days. She spoke of disappointing her children on a regular basis and worrying about the long-term effects of her illness on her family. She told me she lived with a feeling of unrelenting guilt that stayed with her, even on good days when her depression was in control.

Her comments have always stayed with me, and they've helped inspire an answer to this question. If this conversation had happened today, I would have been happy to give her a different response. I would have told her about Camp BELIEVE.

The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia is incredibly proud to make this camp possible. It's a direct result of my evening conversation with that open and candid mom. After meeting with the team at Brigadoon this past fall, Camp BELIEVE was born. We successfully launched the program at our November Compass Group Canada Festival of Trees event, and with the support of donors, we are able to send 20 children to the inaugural week of Camp BELIEVE.

Camp BELIEVE is new, a one-of-a-kind sleep away camp for children who have a parent living with mental illness. It's designed to be a safe place where children can get away from the worries of the world and just focus on being kids. It's a spot where young people can bond with peers who understand what it's like to hear Dad talking back to the voices in his head or watch Mom cry on those days when everyone else around her is happy. Simply put, it's a place where children don't have to pretend. They can talk openly about words that are a regular part of their daily life... words such as psychosis, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia and depression.

Camp BELIEVE will launch this summer at Brigadoon Village in Nova Scotia's beautiful Annapolis Valley. It's open to children between the ages of 8 - 17 and will run from July 24 to 29. Campers will experience true summertime fun while making new friends and learning healthy coping skills. They'll spend time paddling on the water, painting in the arts hall and singing around the bonfire. I don't know about you, but I can't think of a better way to let kids be kids.

Camp BELIEVE will run concurrently with Camp Kedoopsie (a bereavement camp for children and youth who have lost a loved one). There will be two certified child life specialists on site during the week to facilitate ses-





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Do you BELIEVE? (CONT FROM COVER)

sions each day of camp. They'll also be available anytime throughout the week to provide emotional support to campers when needed.



Now our focus is on spreading the word and connecting with children who would benefit from attending this summer. We encourage Nova Scotia Health Authority employees to direct families to this program. Children as young as 8 years old can attend and campers aged 16 and 17 are welcome to join the Leaders in Training Program. You can find all the information you need by visiting our website or Brigadoon's website (listed below). No child who qualifies will be turned away. Space is limited though, so please ensure families register their children soon.

Beyond the obvious advantages for the children who attend, I can't help but think their parents will benefit as well. I imagine the joy of knowing your child is having fun, meeting new friends who have shared experiences and being cared for by a team of trained counselors would be incredibly comforting. Perhaps it would even alleviate some of that unrelenting guilt I first heard of many months ago.

Living with mental illness is difficult enough without the added stress of worrying about its impact on your children. I believe Camp BELIEVE has the ability to truly make a difference in the life of a child and their family. I hope you believe too.

Visit <http://www.brigadoonvillage.org/> to learn more and register now.

Please reach out to <http://www.mentalhealthns.ca/> if you would like pamphlets for your workplace.



Quality Matters: *Quality Team in Action!*

Submitted by the NSHA Mental Health and Addictions Quality Council, Central Zone

The East Coast Forensic Hospital (ECFH) Quality Team includes representation from the following service areas: Inpatient Rehabilitation, Mentally Ill Offender Unit, Offender Health Services, Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit, and the Forensic Sexual Behaviour Program.

The co-chair of the Quality Team, **Pam Flight**, provided an overview of the team's work at the January 28th meeting of the Mental Health and Addictions Quality Council. This team has a variety of service-specific initiatives underway. A sample of these initiatives includes: implementation of the CIWA (Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol), community follow-up to improve continuity of care, implementation of Pyxis (Medication Management System), and improving transitions of care from ECFH to Recovery and Integration Services.

"Quality is not an act, it is a habit."
Aristotle

Some examples of initiatives underway that span all services of the ECFH are as follows:

- 1. Town Halls:** As a result of the Work Life Pulse Survey 2012, the team decided they wanted to hear additional feedback from staff. They accomplished this by implementing regular "Town Halls" where all staff are invited to discuss specific items from the survey and what could be done to improve on them. One significant change that was implemented as a result was a pilot of staff self-scheduling.
- 2. Staff Orientation Package:** An orientation package for new staff coming to the ECFH was developed to compliment the general Mental Health and Addictions Orientation. Its purpose is to ensure new staff to the facility are familiar with the policies and procedures specific to the ECFH. Also included in the package are checklists to ensure all aspects are covered in a timely manner.
- 3. Smoking Review:** An in-depth review was completed on smoking regulations at the ECFH to evaluate their impact on patients and the delivery of care. Policies from other similar facilities, and their effectiveness were also included in the review.

Thank you for the great work of this Quality Team and for sharing it with the Quality Council. We will continue to learn and share our successes and challenges as we move forward in our collective efforts to improve quality of care across the Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone.

To learn more information, please contact Laura Ankcorn, quality lead, at Laura.Ancorn@nshealth.ca.

The ECFH Quality Team members are: **Lisa Jeffers** (co-chair), **Pam Flight** (co-chair), **Sonja Svensson** (co-chair), **Amanda Crabtree**, **Joy Alexander**, **Ken Bowes**, **Brenda Mate**, **John Lillies**, **Aileen Brunet**, **Candy Miller**, and **Michelle St. Amand**.





The Housing and Homelessness Partnership website is live!

We are pleased to announce the new Housing and Homelessness Partnership website is live. Go to: <http://housingandhomelessness.ca/> to access information, news, and resources on housing and homelessness in the Halifax region.

The Housing and Homelessness Partnership is a unique coalition of eight organizations committed to working together to end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax. The parties include: Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, Halifax Regional Municipality, Housing Nova Scotia, Investment Property Owners Association of NS, IWK Health Centre, Nova Scotia Health Authority, and United Way Halifax.

Homelessness and Housing Poverty affects us all

133 people were chronically or episodically homeless in Halifax during 2014.

19,565 households in the Halifax region are living in deep housing poverty.

70% of the chronically and episodically homeless are male.

We've released our new Halifax Housing Needs Assessment.
[Click here to read more.](#)

FIND OUT MORE

- Housing Poverty Community Consultation
- Housing First Principles
- Housing Needs Assessment

Interesting Tidbits

Loving my bipolar husband: Some days it's terrifying. But there's no one in the world I trust more. For more on this story, go to: <http://goo.gl/DYRwIY>.

Mood Disorders Society of Canada

Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) is a national, not for profit, consumer driven, voluntary health charity committed to ensuring that the voices of consumers, family members and caregivers are heard on issues relating to mental health and mental illness; and in particular with regard to depression, bipolar illness and other associated mood disorders. To learn more, please go to: <http://www.moooddisorderscanada.ca/>.

Changing the Way People Think with Starr Dobson

The Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia has a radio show! "Changing the Way People Think with Starr Dobson" airs Friday mornings at 10:30 on Cobequid Community Radio, 97.5FM. The half hour show features the Foundation's President and CEO as host. It works to increase listeners' awareness and understanding of mental health and mental illness through interviews with experts, Q & A periods, and sharing relevant support information.



Our Staff

The following new staff started in February 2016:

- **Anne Blackler**, licensed practical nurse - Intensive Treatment Services, Addictions
- **Danielle Butler**, social worker - Connections Dartmouth
- **Pam Giffin**, registered nurse - Intensive Treatment Services, Addictions
- **Jenny MacDougall**, spiritual care coordinator - NSHA Mental Health and Addictions, Central Zone
- **Nicole Robinson**, board certified behavioural analyst - Emerald Hall
- **Tania Tassone**, occupational therapist - Bedford/Sackville Community Mental



Staff Volunteerism

This is a new section in our newsletter that highlights the good volunteer work that our staff are involved in outside of our organization. We would like to thank our colleagues for their dedication in helping others in their community and across the world.

Our first story comes from **Sherry Foster**, clerical support clerk, Connections Dartmouth.

Every year the Hillside Wesleyan Church in Cole Harbour goes on a mission trip to Haiti. In March 2015, my 15-year old son and I (pictured right, James and Sherry with village children) were part of a team of volunteers sent to Haiti to support the Sew Hopeful ministry which teaches the Haitian community in Babaco a trade in sewing. We also helped a building team to build benches for the local church.

On day two of our trip, we were eating lunch and sharing stories. A young Haitian man stood up to speak and his words will stay with me forever. He said, *"I thank God for you. Before you arrived, I felt like I had no meaning. You have provided me with skills that give me hope."* That evening, during our debriefing, my son said *"Today I learned something that I never realized before. How lucky I am to have teachers that teach me and that I can come to Haiti and share that knowledge."*

We often watched the children in the villages smile and laugh while they entertained themselves with a cardboard box with a photo of a tractor on it or an old bicycle tire and a stick. I believe that we have lost that **joy** in Canada.

It was a real wake up call for us. Our trip to Haiti completely impacted us. We are grateful to the people of Haiti for what they taught us while we were there. Our experience has shown us to be more thankful for the small things in life.

On March 8, 2016, eleven of us will travel back to Haiti. My son and I would like to thank those who have supported us to achieve our dream of returning to Haiti to continue to build relationships with the people and to provide hope!





Events and Education Sessions

NON-VIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION RECERTIFICATION

4 hours, 7:30 to 11:30 am

These sessions are open to all inpatient clinical staff in Mental Health and Addictions. These replace any of the Blitz sessions previously offered.

Upcoming sessions are scheduled for:

- March 9: NSH site, Marshall Building, Room B117

If you have any questions about the sessions listed above, please contact one of nurse educators below:

- **Kim Hiscock:** 902-464-3120
- **Jane Hughes:** 902-464-3168
- **Amy MacRae:** 902-464-3062
- **Laura White:** 902-464-3351

SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

October 27 and 28, 2016

World Trade & Convention Centre, Halifax

CALL FOR PROPOSALS!

The Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia, on behalf of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, welcomes submissions for the 2016 National Conference, themed "**Psychosis: New Perspectives, Bright Horizons**" in Halifax.

All proposals should be submitted through the conference website no later than Friday, March 11, 2016. For more information, please go to:

<http://ssc2016.ca/call-for-proposals/>.

LIBRARY TRAINING SESSIONS AVAILABLE FOR MARCH 2016

Sign up for classes in Searching Skills, Database Essentials, RefWorks Bootcamp, Computer Skills and more! Custom individual and group training sessions are also available. To request a session or a login, email the library at cdhalib@nshealth.ca.

The following session is available at the library located at The Nova Scotia Hospital site: Computer Skills Drop-in, March 31, 1:30 to 3:30 pm.

Online Learning at the Library: Check out our access to high quality training videos from Lynda.com and learn new software, business, and creative skills.

8TH ANNUAL ROAD TO RECOVERY WALK

Saturday, May 7, 2016, Halifax

Join us for our signature event! Walk together to raise funds, show support and increase awareness for the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia (SSNS). SSNS needs your help to continue to provide vital programs and services. Join as an individual, recruit a friend or family member, or put together a team from your organization and become the team captain. There will be great prizes for our top teams and individual fundraisers.

COMING SOON: A website to enable you to raise funds online (individually or with a team), to create awareness by sharing on social media and to have fun.

Stay tuned for more information!

SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA NATIONAL CONFERENCE
**PSYCHOSIS: NEW PERSPECTIVES,
 BRIGHT HORIZONS**

Keynote Speakers:
 Dr. Ashok Malla • Dr William J. Walsh

Legal Panel:
 Dr. Patrick Baillie • Justice Richard Schneider
 Professor Archie Kaiser • Judge Anne Derrick

Hosted by the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia
OCTOBER 27 & 28, 2016 • SSC2016.CA
 World Trade & Convention Centre • Halifax, Nova Scotia

A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.
 SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA
 SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHÉNIE
 UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR. DES MOYENS D'ENTRAÏNE

SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA
 2016 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA
 A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE