

Have a Heart for Mental Health



It seems like a week does not go by that the news headlines do not include a story about a famous person who has completed suicide. While every life lost is tragic, it seems more so when it is the loss of a young person to suicide.

Mental health problems are more prevalent in children and youth than most people realize. Ontario's children and youth are among those with mental health problems who are most at risk.

Did you know . . .

- 70% of adults with a mental health issue experienced their first symptom before age 18;
- The average wait time for children and youth seeking mental health services in Ontario is 10 weeks;
- Each year between 100 and 150 young Ontarians complete suicide;
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death of young people after motor vehicle accidents;
- At the end of 2009, there were 2,000 young people who waited over 1 year for mental health supports in Ontario; and
- 3 out of 4 young people with a mental health problem do not get the help they need.

The stigma of mental health problems is cruel and unkind to young people. It leaves them feeling ostracized, shunned by peers, and alone. And the myth that young people cannot experience mental health problems only makes the situation worse.

Mental health problems in young people are real and can have very real and negative consequences on their lives. In addition to isolation, mental health problems can lead to a disruption of studies at school, it can derail plans for the future, it can lead to feelings of lost dreams and lost hopes, and it disrupts the lives of families.

Mindful Minute

New Year's resolutions are times for new beginnings such as striving for a healthier lifestyle. But often it becomes difficult to remain committed to our resolutions. Here are a couple of suggestions to help you keep your promises to yourself. First, set realistic goals. Real change happens gradually. Second, allow for imperfection. You are not perfect. Learn from your misstep, adjust the plan if needed, and carry on.

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talk

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But research shows that early identification and treatment is highly effective. Early intervention and support is critical to the recovery of young people. At CMHA Toronto we have seen the positive effects that early intervention can have for young people in their recovery.

Our Early Intervention (MOD Team) and Transitional Youth Program (TYP) work with young people and support them in their recovery. The MOD Teams works with youth aged 16-35 who are in the early stages of psychosis and mood disorders. They coordinate treatment: provide education, case management services, and supports. The TYP supports young people ages 16-24 who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia or a mood disorder. The program focuses on education, employment, socialization and minimizing the impacts of mental illness on the lives of young people. In both programs, our clients' families are an integral part of the recovery process and are provided with support and counselling.

And just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to support a young person. We need your help to support our young clients. This Valentine's Day CMHA Toronto is launching its inaugural Have a Heart for Mental Health campaign. Proceeds raised through the sale of Valentine's cards will be used to support our EI and TYP programs. For as little as \$5 you can make the difference in the life of a young person living with mental illness.

Have a Heart for Mental Health

To order your Valentine's Cards
please call us at (416) 789-7957
or go to www.toronto.cmha.ca



CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
POUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Toronto Branch

It's Worth Repeating

This year CMHA Toronto presented The Honourable Bob Rae with a Public Service Award in recognition of his courage and commitment to move the mental health agenda forward in Canada. Due to parliamentary commitments Mr. Rae was unable to receive the award in person. However his life partner Arlene Pearly Rae accepted the award on his behalf and shared his inspiring acceptance speech which is worth repeating. Here is an annotated excerpt:

At the age of 24, I woke up one morning with a deep sense of anxiety and depression that was debilitating for the better part of a year. At times I could scarcely get moving through the day, and found talking to anyone difficult. I was paralysed by self doubt, cold sweats, and no reassurances of, friends and family could convince me that I had much self worth or hope for the future. Some friends trying to be helpful said "shake it off, you've got everything going for you". As well meaning as that advice was, it ignored the simple fact that I was struggling with an illness.

I took the "talking cure", and slowly began making decisions which allowed me to get back on my feet. I had the benefit of good friends who insisted I seek help. I had the support of a family that, while taken aback by my description of what was happening, gave me the love and support to find my way. I realize now how incredibly important those two things were.

I have tried in my political life to open people up to the realities of mental illness. Whether in opposition or government, I have done what I could to help people understand that treatment must be improved, that access to prompt and effective care must be ensured, and that above all we have to bring this issue out of the shadows.



The Honourable Bob Rae

The recent debate in the House of Commons on the need for a national suicide strategy was an eye-opening experience for all of us. Members came forward and shared their own experiences; there was no name calling, partisan chippiness or the usual antics that go with a House debate. There was a sense that we are all in this together.

The next step is to match the words with even more deeds. There is a desperate shortage of help out there, and families with children all too often feel they are on their own. It will take a greater commitment of dollars and resources to make things happen, and that's harder to do in tough times. But it can and must be done.

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What's Coming Up!

Have a Heart for Mental Health

This Valentine's Day show a young person living with mental illness that you care.

When you purchase your Valentine's cards from CMHA Toronto the proceeds go to support our Early Intervention and Transitional Youth Programs. For more information visit our website www.toronto.cmha.ca or call us (416) 789-7957 ext 237 or 257.

**Order your Special
CMHA Toronto
Valentine!**



Workshops

Face to Face: Understanding Mental Illness: March 22, 2012 at 9am - 4pm Cost \$95.

ASIST-Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training: February 8-9, 2012 at 9am - 5pm Cost \$190.

For more information on this workshop call us at (416) 789-7957.