



Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health

Issue 3

Newsletter for the Mental Health Community

February 2008



Message From Stan

Dear Friends of the Chair,

Our last newsletter (September 2007) focused on the work of our summer students, "Transitions" book, depression and suicide education training of IWK mental health staff, and the development of the Chair's website www.teenmentalhealth.org. In early November the Chair celebrated its one year anniversary with a well attended public presentation at the IWK Health Centre. This newsletter will highlight our work over the past few months and some of outline our plans for the upcoming year.

As the work and reputation of the Chair is expanding, I am starting to receive requests to partner with new organizations and institutions. The Alberta Mental Health Board has asked our team to update and contextualize "Mental Health First Aid" – a program first developed in Australia designed to give members of the public skills to help someone developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis situation. This has been a resource intensive activity and I want to acknowledge Jacqueline Boucher and the rest of our team for their hard work on this project.

Another developing partnership for the Chair is with the National Arts Centre, the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO, and MusicFest Canada. MusicFest is a week-long event in May full of music, learning and fun, that connects over 10,000 young

musicians from across Canada. This group is in its early planning stages and hopes to create a nation-wide competition and awards program to engage MusicFest youth in mental health promotion and awareness.

These partnerships are examples of the impact the Chair's work is beginning to have in Canada, but we are also focusing our attention internationally. Last summer our team was approached by Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN) to partner and produce a radio script on maternal and child depression. DCFRN is a Canadian-based, not-for-profit organization working in direct partnership with approximately 300 radio broadcasters in 39 African countries to fight poverty and food insecurity. DCFRN regularly produces a script package for broadcasters which focus on a variety of themes. Our script contribution appears in the November 2007 package which addresses a wide range of rural women's health issues, including maternal and child depression. Visit the DCFRN website at www.farmradio.org for more information.

Continuing our focus on international mental health projects, Dr. Chehil and I have completed work on a mental health for peer educators training program that is being integrated into a peer health education program for high school students in Africa. This project is being led by UNESCO. Right now the program is being piloted in Malawi, and plans contingent on funding are being made to eventually expand the program to other countries and institutions in Africa. The purpose of the peer education training program is to integrate mental health into the basic education innovation in Africa.

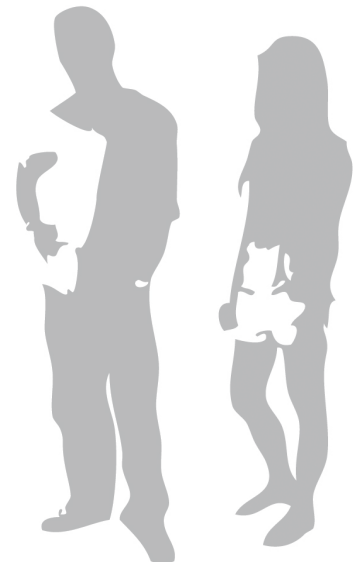
Looking ahead I will be involved in the process for writing a national child and youth mental health green paper for the National Mental Health Commission of Canada as an advisory committee member. I have also been invited (time permitting) to participate in developing a rural child and youth mental health strategy in Scotland, using

a step-care approach to improve mental health services. Finally, I am honoured to announce that I have been installed as a fellow of the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA). Election to the Fellowship is the highest recognition that the CPA offers and rewards members for excellence in their specialty.

Our next issue will focus on the second phase of development for our website, but in the meantime I would like to encourage you to visit our website at www.teenmentalhealth.org, and I welcome any feedback you have about the projects our team is working on. If you would like any more information on the activities of the Chair please contact David or Ricardo.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stan Kutcher



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