



THE CLIENT'S Voice

a newsletter of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre
Client Empowerment Council

Vision, Mission, Values, and Philosophy

Vision

Mental health and well-being for all

Mission

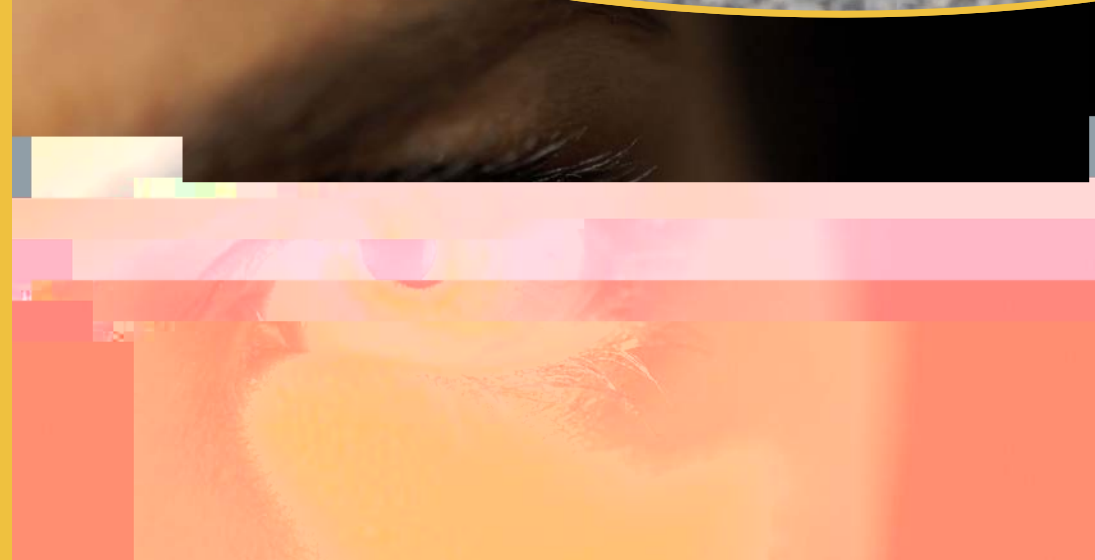
To be representative of the voice of the clients of the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre

Values

We believe that clients play a critical role in their care and in the delivery of mental health services

Philosophy

- We believe in a client-centred approach to care
- We believe that patients have the right to voice their concerns
- We believe that input from patients should be welcomed, encouraged, and responded to in a timely manner
- We believe that patients have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- We believe in advocating for changes in the system
- We believe in valuing people and humanizing the system
- We believe in open communication between care providers, consumers and their families



I am a Psychiatric Survivor and THIS IS MY STORY

During my childhood in the UK, I was abused and then humiliated in the courts.

After additional incidents of abuse while a teenager, now living in Canada, I made my first suicide attempt.

I was hospitalized but that did not result in a diagnosis and my unfamiliarity with mental illness did nothing to lead me towards any appropriate treatment.

I tried to give my life direction by joining the Canadian Forces. Even though struggling with my demons, I managed to hide my pain for many years.

Something a little more on the positive side: I did a lot of travelling with the Navy, island hopping throughout the Caribbean, I also stopped in at Columbia and Mexico, and found

out what real poverty is about, which was an eye opener. We also visited many ports up and down the east coast of North America and quite a few in Western Europe. These trips were most enjoyable.

Throughout the years I also became involved in the Boy Scout movement. For 28 years I found this to be a rewarding challenge first as a cub and through the decades as a leader and a program advisor.

It wasn't until a physical illness weakened my resolve that I broke down and exhibited more recognizable symptoms of mental illness. The military doctors were able to diagnose me with Major Depressive Disorder and Anxiety in the late 80's.

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Vision, Mission, Valeurs, et Philosophie

Vision

La santé mentale et le mieux-être pour tous

Mission

Pour être le représentant de la voix pour les clients du Centre de Santé mentale Royal Ottawa

Valeurs

Nous croyons que les clients jouent un rôle critique dans leur soin et dans la livraison de services de santé mentale.

Philosophie

- Nous croyons en une prestation de soins centrée sur le client.
- Nous croyons que les patients ont le droit d'exprimer leurs préoccupations.
- Nous croyons que l'opinion des patients doit être souhaitée et encouragée, et qu'elle doit faire l'objet d'une réponse en temps opportun.
- Nous croyons que les patients ont le droit d'être traités avec dignité et respect.
- Nous croyons qu'il est important de militer en faveur du changement au sein du système.
- Nous croyons qu'il importe de valoriser les gens et d'humaniser le système.
- Nous croyons en une communication ouverte entre les prestataires de soins, les consommateurs et les familles.



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After several years of hospitalizations and repeated suicide attempts, I had no alternative but to retire from the military and the Boy Scouts.

After a few more unsettled years, I finally had 6 years of improved health and had a chance to support my Family and we moved into a new home, where I had room for a workshop to continue on with my hobby. I find that wood-working is very rewarding for my recovery.

My own perception of mental illness was a barrier to my recovery. Even with a supportive spouse, I limped through fatherhood, and can never recapture those missed years with my children.

Since my retirement, I have found some satisfaction through volunteerism in several fields.

During the past 20 years I have had hospital admissions and suicide attempts too numerous to count. I've been on dozens of medication cocktails and have participated in a variety of therapeutic programs including ECTs.

Throughout my entire history with health care providers in Ottawa I have been counselled by the best and most compassionate people I could hope to have met.

The doctors and staff at the Royal Ottawa have worked tirelessly to successfully stabilize my depression.

After all the years of illness, I am relieved to be surviving and am currently enjoying family life.

I have been a member of the Client Empowerment Council since its inception 3 years ago.

I am profoundly grateful to the doctors and health care providers at the Royal Ottawa.

And I AM A PSYCHIATRIC SURVIVOR!

The words Thank You do not even come close to expressing my gratitude!!

Cooper

Client Empowerment Council 2009 Mental Health Symposium

The CEC hosted its first public panel at the 2009 Mental Health Symposium held on October 5, 2009. It was the first opportunity for some of the members to publicly address their own challenges with their mental illness. The panel also provided information on how the CEC has affected the lives of the clients being served at the ROMHC and how being a member of the CEC has helped them.

Panelists included:

Richard Cottingham	Mood/Anxiety/OSI Clinic
Jean Nolan	ACTT/Stepdown (Bank St)
Anna Nowecki	Youth
Shawn Thivierge	Youth & CEC Newsletter Editor
Denise Linnay	Intensive Assessment & CEC Treasurer

Evelyn Sparks
Chief of OT & Allied Health and ROMHC/CEC Liaison

Claude Lurette, Chair of the CEC, acted as moderator and provided background information on the CEC and briefly outlined the CEC workplan for the coming year.

The members of the panel would like to thank Evelyn Sparks, CEC Liaison, for her assistance and guidance in preparing for the Symposium and the Leaders of the Christopher Leadership Course, who put on a two day workshop this past August to prepare us for public speaking.

If you have any questions and/or comments about the 2009 Mental Health Symposium, or any other topic, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Destiny

*Y*our destiny is in your hands

As a potter molds clay

To form beautiful pottery

With wonderful patterns

Colours, shapes, designs

You mold and shape your life

As a master painter creates on canvas

His most spectacular work of art

With your very own paint brush

You paint whatever landscape

Or scene you desire

You are the architect of your reality

Drawing upon your own unique

Blueprint of life

You write your own story

Your special book of life

You are the writer, director

And producer of your own play

You are the captain of your ship

Steering your ship in whatever

Direction you wish

What a special role you have

To create whatever kind of life you want

Your life can be filled with

Beauty, happiness, love, and harmony

The creator of your reality

Master planner of your life

Your life is what you make it

Your future is in the palms of your hands

This is your true destiny

To create the most beautiful

Happy rewarding life for yourself

A magnificent masterpiece

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Message from the Editor

"The mental health community's voice is a quiet one. Not that we aren't shouting out; we just aren't being heard." I remember writing those words in a letter to the editor concerning the hurtful and discouraging misuse of the term "paranoid schizophrenic" in the latest Batman movie "Dark Night". Since then, my work on the Client Empowerment Council (CEC) has allowed me to make a difference clearing up misinformation, reducing stigma, advocating for positive change in the quality of life for clients, and helping with my own recovery.

I am often surprised by what the CEC can do. But I shouldn't be. Even though we are all clients, even though we come from all areas of the hospital, even though we have all survived difficult setbacks in our lives, even though we are unfairly labeled by many as "crazy", we are still talented, amazing, and great people! We are just like everybody else! We refuse to be defined by our illnesses. We are empowered by who we are. We have names, hobbies, passions, family and friends. Some of us have jobs, others volunteer positions, and others opportunities to help others. But most important of all: we are people! And shouldn't we be treated with respect, just like everyone else?

When the idea of creating a newsletter came up at one of our monthly CEC meetings, I was given the opportunity to become the editor. I was confident right from the get-go that our council could put together a marvelous newsletter. The message of the CEC is so important, and being the first client council of its kind, it is crucial that other client councils are created abroad in the future.

But our newsletter isn't just about us, it's about you too! Our readers are important to us. Newsletters are useless if no one reads them. That is why we want our readers to send us their questions, comments, and suggestions.

This is our first issue, and we are placing no limits onto what we can do with this newsletter. We are not afraid to expand and serve wider audiences. Education is the key to the elimination of shame and stigma surrounding mental illness. Our readers who are not clients are also important to us for those same reasons.

I am sure that you will be both inspired and satisfied by reading the articles in this issue of The Client's Voice. We have put a lot of effort into creating this newsletter. We took a lot of risks, and I would like to thank all of our members who took those risks, and those risks have definitely paid off. A special "thank you" goes out to Carol MacLeod in the Communications Department for her extensive help on the "Client's Voice".

As we finish up our first issue, I am already feeling some butterflies in my stomach and anticipation for the second issue. Please enjoy this first issue of the "Client's Voice", and we'll see you again in 2010!

Sincerely,

Shawn Thivierge

The Client Empowerment Council

The Client Empowerment Council was formed in April 2006 following a request from the leadership of the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group for a client based advisory council. The new council was to be in place by the opening of the new Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre in October 2006.

Members of the Client Empowerment Council are people who are currently receiving services or have received services from the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre in the recent past. We meet on a monthly basis to provide insight on quality of life and quality of care based on our personal experiences. We act as an advocacy council to lead changes in policy and practices and as advisors to the staff on systemic issues.

Members of the CEC sit on a number of committees within the ROMHC, including but not limited to:

- Performance of the Board
- Advocacy & Community Engagement
- Accessibility in the Workplace
- After-Hour activities
- Illicit Substance Task Group
- Smoking Task Group

MEMBERS

Chair

Claude Lurette

Treasurer

Denise Linnay

Liaison

Evelyn Sparks – Chief of OT & Allied Health

ACTT/Stepdown Bank Street

Jean Nolan

ACTT/Stepdown Catherine Street

Dave Mussivand

Geriatrics

Denise Linnay

Forensics Assessment & Rehabilitation

Mike Pinet

Intensive Assessment

Carole Baker, Blanche Cormier

Mood/Anxiety/OSI

Ann James, Richard Cottingham

Schizophrenia

Charles Black, Shawn Bradley

Substance Use & Concurrent Disorders

Andy Marsh

Youth

Anna Nowecki, Shawn Thivierge

Royal Ottawa Place

Bruce Albert

Volunteer Services

Nicola Benton

Members-at-Large

Accessibility: Nancy Burwash

IT/Internet/Intranet: Christopher Simpson

Message from the CEC Chair

Welcome to our first edition of "The Client's Voice". The Client Empowerment Council has grown over the past 3 years and one of the ways we've demonstrated our commitment to you, the clients, is to create a way to let you know what's going on and what you can do to help us to continue to be a strong presence at The Royal.

The CEC is beginning its 4th year of operation and we have a lot of things on the go. One of our primary goals is to learn and develop skills within our membership including leadership and risk taking. The CEC is in a transition stage now. Our experienced members have completed their 3 year term and we are recruiting new members to represent the clients at our monthly meetings. If you are interested, please

contact the CEC at cec@rohcg.on.ca or call us at 613.722.6521 ext 6767.

As we continue to grow, we are also saying thanks and best wishes to Bill Miller, Patient Representative and our first ROMHC Liaison. Bill began the Council in April 2006 and has been our "go-to guy" as we grew and developed. We would not be here if not for Bill's passion and commitment in advocating for the clients of The Royal. Thanks Bill.

We also take this time to welcome Evelyn Sparks, Chief of Occupational Therapy and Allied Health as our new Liaison. Evelyn has been helping and supporting us for the past couple of months and as our experience grows, so do our needs. Having direct access to the Management Team will ensure

that issues are brought to our attention and our experiences are brought to theirs.

I'd like to thank all the members of the Client Empowerment Council, both past and present, for their advice, passion and commitment to being the voice of the clients of The Royal. We have said goodbye to a few and welcomed new members. As we grow, the members are benefitting from all the work that those before them have done on your behalf.

So, sit back and enjoy "The Voice". Our editor-in-chief has put a dynamic team together to create this newsletter I've been looking forward to reading the first issue, much like I hope you are.

Claude Lurette

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

Mental Health Crisis Line

613.722.6914 or 1.866.996.0991

www.crisisline.ca

Mood Disorders of Ottawa

613.526.5406 www.mooddisordersottawa.ca

A Post Psychiatric Leisure Experience (APPLE)

613.238.1209 www.appledropin.om

Les Ateliers de l'Élan

613.744.2244 www.horizons-renaissance.com

Psychiatric Survivors of Ottawa

613.567.4379 www.psychiatricsurvivors.org

Odawa Native Friendship Centre Drop-in

613.722.3811 www.odawa.on.ca

Centre 454

613.235.4351 www.centre454.ca

Centre 507

613.233.5626 www.centre507.org

Frank Street Drop-in

613.564.4106 www.ottawa.ca

The Well (for women and children)

613.594.8861 www.the-well.ca

Champlain Mental Health Network (CMHN)

www.ementalhealth.ca

Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)

613.747.6784 www.champlainlhin.on.ca

Minister of Health and Long Term Care

1.866.532.3161 www.health.gov.on.ca

Connex Ontario

1.519.439.0174 www.connexontario.ca

Drug and Alcohol Registry of Treatment (DART)

1.800.565.8603 www.dart.on.ca

Mental Health Service Information Ontario

1.866.531.2600 www.mhsio.on.ca



Standing: Claude Lurette, Len Wall. Elke Beilze, June Ranger, Farhat Rehman, Lou Malouf. Seated: Cynthia Clark, Heather Menzies, Karen Poole. Absent: Mary Lou Davidson, Anne Overdulve, Phyllis Grant-Parker

Family Council Update

The Family Council provides a voice for the families/caregivers of clients for both the inpatient and outpatient services at the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre. We are an independent body of volunteers who have experienced the impact of mental health and addiction issues on our own family members and friends.

The council emerged from the conviction that families need to be part of the care team. The Family Council feels it has a role to play in the planning and policy making process, in how the hospital is run and of priority setting for treatment and other services. We focus on issues and opportunities at a systemic level that will positively impact clients and their caregivers. The council members work in collaboration with the Client Empowerment council, staff and the community to ensure that all concerns are understood and positive solutions are implemented.

The Council meets monthly but remains connected in-between meetings via email

correspondence. We provide the caregiver perspective and have established a working alliance with hospital clinical teams and administrative staff. We are project oriented and outcome focused.

Some examples of the Council's involvement are:

- successfully lobbying to make more information available to clients and families;
- promoting the development of comprehensive, team-based discharge planning;
- advocating for improved services for people being treated with Clozapine;
- obtaining a voice both on the board of the hospital and in the strategic planning process.

Family members have a lot to contribute. We act as an ongoing resource for staff and families. To find out more, contact us by email at FamilyCouncilAdvisor@rohcg.on.ca or by telephone at 613.722.6521 ext. 6919.

Contact Us

We would love to hear what you have to say about The Client's Voice. Feel free to call, write, or email your questions and comments to:

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 Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre
 1145 Carling Avenue, Room 1108
 Ottawa ON K1Z 7K4
 613.722.6521, ext. 6767
 www.rohcg.on.ca

Email:
 clientsvoice@hotmail.com (Newsletter)
 cec@rohcg.on.ca (Council)



Questions and Answers

Q: I thought that I had done everything I could in order to not get sick again – but, here I am again, recovering from another relapse. What did I do wrong?

A: You didn't do anything wrong! Sometimes life happens to us and each situation is a unique opportunity to learn something about ourselves and to grow. Don't blame yourself if your life is once again a struggle. Instead, investigate what was going on in your life that may have brought you here. First, do you need a medication adjustment? Check this out with your doctor. What is your stress level like? Has there been a recent loss, a major change in your circumstances, a fear-provoking event, an illness, work stress, or relationship difficulties? Treat yourself with compassion. Look at your symptoms. Do you have an action plan to deal with uncomfortable symptoms? For example, if you are suffering from insomnia, what have you done in the past that worked? What are other resources to find out ways of dealing with this? Talk to friends,

search the Internet or library, ask health service providers. There are so many sources of information. Take personal responsibility for educating yourself about your symptoms and your mental health issues. Be aware of your particular symptoms as they arise and deal with them. Change those things in your life that are in your control to bring you to greater well-being. Build up your support network – join a support group, take a course, volunteer, join a club. Relapses are temporary affairs. By asking your question, this shows that you are already on the road back to recovery! And remember; always seek professional help if you or others are in danger.

Good luck!

Denise Linnay

Note: The opinions I express come from my own personal life experience. They are in no way meant to replace or circumvent professional care.

