



**May 3-9, 2009
Children's Mental Health Week
"HOW LONG MUST I WAIT?"**

The Huron-Perth Centre is a community-based children's mental health centre funded by the Ministry of Children & Youth Services. The Centre also offers various youth justice funded by MCYS-Youth Justice Division and specialized adult services funded through other sources. On behalf of Huron-Perth Centre for Children & Youth we invite you to participate in "How long must I wait?," our workplace awareness campaign intended to increase understanding for the mental health needs of children & youth in our communities. Share this information in any way you can.

THE EXTENT OF THE NEED...DID YOU KNOW?

That 18.1% children between the ages of 3 and 17 have a diagnosable mental health disorder? That means one in five children and youth between the age of 3 and 17 are living with a treatable mental health problem.

They are all around us, trying to cope – at school, on the playground, and at home. The cost to everyone is high – to the children in need, to their families and to the com-

Left untreated, the mental health and behaviour of these children worsens. They may become bullies. They may disrupt classrooms or drop out of school. They could develop an eating disorder. They might even abuse drugs. Worse – far worse – they may attempt or commit suicide.

That Suicide is the leading cause of non-accidental deaths in 10 to 19 year olds?

4% of adolescents get seriously depressed. Most children and youth who suffer from depression also have another mental health condition. Depressions is a significant risk factor for suicide, especially among females.

That children and youth under age 16 from Huron-Perth-Bruce-Grey who need to be hospitalized for serious mental health concerns do not have any access to in-patient beds?

We can put a price tag on treatment, on dropping out of school or the societal impact of our children and youth who are not going to participate in the workforce.

We simply cannot put a price tag on this devastating loss of life.

That early intervention and treatment can ease the burden of the emotional and financial costs of mental illness?

We also know that the funding for children's mental health agencies has not kept pace with rising costs and increased demand for services.

Children and youth are subjected to long wait lists to receive treatment ~ The Huron-Perth Centre recognizes that our limited resources often means that families wait for our services.

Any wait is too long when children and their family are struggling.

In a balanced system of care for children there would be a full range of service that had the capacity to meet the needs of our children and youth. The Huron-Perth Centre with others continue to advocate locally, regionally and provincially toward this vision of an adequate system for children and youth.

Our children deserve better.

Across this province the harsh reality is that there are far more children who need help than there are resources to meet their needs. For every child who gets help there are at least two more who wait before services can begin. Huron-Perth Centre continues to examine ways in which it can better serve children, youth and families. The Centre has a long tradition of seeking partnerships with other agencies

in order to stretch the funding it receives for children's mental health services. The Centre also offers a weekly drop-in clinic in each county which provides a timely response to non-urgent concerns and a way to support families during the waiting period. The Huron-Perth Centre with others works locally, regionally and provincially to highlight the need for resources and the cost to children, youth and families when services are not available.

The need for acute care beds for children and youth under 16 remains a significant service gap for youth in serious distress and it places extensive burden on families, Huron-Perth Centre resources and other professionals who work with these children and youth. In 2007 a coalition to advocate for access to beds, the "Call to Action," was formed and citizens of Huron and Perth continue to sign petitions to indicate their support for action to bring resolution to this situation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Become aware of the statistics ~ With 1 in 5 children between the ages of 3-17 struggling with a diagnosable mental health concern, you know these children and youth! Think of the children and families you know and look for ways to show understanding and support. Despite their issues these children want to live normal, productive lives where they are valued for their strengths.

Seek ways to promote positive mental health ~ Help us to reduce the stigma and raise awareness by seeking ways to promote positive mental health in school and work environments and in your communities. For resources visit the following websites :

www.hpcentre.on.ca

www.kidsmentalhealth.ca

www.mindyourmind.com

USEFUL WEBSITE FOR PARENTS: parents@parentsforchildrensmentalhealth.org

Participate in the Coalition to Secure Inpatient Treatment for our children and youth ~ If you have not yet done so, sign the petition to indicate your support.

ATTEND "MUSIC FOR MENTAL HEALTH" ~ Friday, May 8 @ Central United Church in Stratford ~ 7pm; free will donation.

Host an event or consider individual donations ~ Your gifts will be used to help the Huron-Perth Centre meet rising costs and maintain service levels. Every little bit helps us to help families.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN "HOW LONG MUST I WAIT?" ~ Do not forget to tell us how you shared this information; complete the attached form and show your support to children and youth with mental health needs.

Workplace Awareness 2009 PARTICIPATION FORM

On behalf of Huron-Perth Centre for Children & Youth we thank you for participating in "How long must I wait?", our workplace awareness campaign intended to increase understanding of the mental health needs of children & youth in our communities. Tell us about your efforts to raise awareness:

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL/ORGANIZATION: _____

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HELP?

- shared information in print
- shared information in a staff meeting, public event or community meeting
- shared information in broadcast
- promoted positive mental health
- circulated "A Call to Action" – petition to secure access to acute care beds
- displayed poster for "Music for Mental Health" May 8, 2009 @ 7pm
- held a fund-raising event
- donated

Comments: _____

Approximately how many people may have read or heard this information? _____

Contact info: _____

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN "HOW LONG MUST I WAIT?"
Our children do deserve better.

FAX TO: HPC c/o 519-273-0892
Attention LRP Committee

URGENT!
The need for advocacy continues...
May 2009...

To Individuals and Organizations in Huron & Perth

A CALL TO ACTION – JOIN THE COALITION TO SECURE INPATIENT CARE FOR OUR KIDS!

Re: SERVICE GAP –

Acute care mental health beds for children and youth in Huron and Perth Counties

With the support of John Wilkinson – MPP for Perth–Middlesex and Carol Mitchell – MPP for Huron-Bruce, local stakeholders are asking individuals and groups to acknowledge this to be an unresolved problem, support the proposed solution and endorse that resolution of this concern should be a matter of priority.

The nature of the problem **NO ACUTE CARE BEDS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH - Unfortunately since 1971 children within Huron and Perth who are experiencing acute mental health concerns have not had access to dedicated child and adolescent mental health inpatient beds to treat them when in crisis. This is a serious gap in health care is evident in our counties and immediate action is required.**

The proposed solution – **3 BED UNIT LOCATED AT STRATFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL - A solution has been developed locally to address this serious gap. Service providers within Huron and Perth have collaborated on a proposal for 3 dedicated child and adolescent mental health inpatient beds to be located at the Stratford General Hospital site. This inpatient unit will provide crisis/emergency response, stabilization and brief treatment for children and youth with a serious mental health problem requiring hospital based intervention. Community-based children’s mental health services of the Huron-Perth Centre will work closely with this inpatient unit to ensure continuity of care back to the community.**

A Matter of Priority - One in five children in Ontario has a mental health problem. Today in Huron and Perth it is estimated that 3,800 children are dealing with a mental health problem, 85 of whom will require acute inpatient care that is currently unavailable. As of May 2007 Huron Perth and Bruce Grey counties remain the only counties in the province to be without access to acute inpatient psychiatric care for children and youth up to the age of 16 years!

Our MPPs have asked us to demonstrate community support that there is resolution to this service gap. YOUR SIGNATURE IS A WAY TO SHOW THIS SUPPORT.

WE the undersigned support the “CALL TO ACTION – COALITION TO ADVOCATE FOR INPATIENT BEDS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH UNDER 16 WHO ARE IN SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS”. By signing below we are **acknowledging this to be an unresolved problem, supporting the proposed solution and endorsing that resolution to this concern should be a matter of priority.** If you would like to share a personal example of how this affects you and children you know, please contact one of the Co-Chairs listed below.

Name (please print) Address (please print)

**ROUND THREE...Please be advised that your signatures will be included with all letters of support received in 2007 and 2008 and shared with your MPPs and the South West Local Integration Health Network.
Your help in this effort is important!**

Penny Cardno, Coalition Co-Chair
Terri Sparling, Coalition Co-Chair
Program Director Mental Health Services
CEO for HPC (273-3373 X230)

May 5th-9th is celebrated as Children's Mental Health Week

Intermediate/Elementary Content:

According to the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry one in five children and youth in Ontario has a diagnosable mental health disorder. You probably know someone. These disorders may be acute or chronic, mild to severe, environmental or neurobiological in origin. These disorders appear in every economic, educational, ethnic and racial group. And yes, these disorders are present in our communities.

Consider this scenario:

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

My name is Chelsea, I have OCD and it has affected my life in a major way, I have had it for a long time ever since I was about 6 but only recently has it really started to affect my behavior, health, and my social life. The only way I can describe my OCD is it feels like there is someone in my head making me worry about every little thing. Usually people make rituals to cope with the worry and fears they get from this voice. I used to do that and I absolutely HATED it! It made me feel abnormal, because in my eyes, who in the world that is normal counts their steps going up a flight of stairs, or washed their hands and even amount of times a day. So I just stopped. I stopped all my rituals, and eventually it got to me. As of about a month and a half ago I started to worry, but I didn't want to cope with it by doing my old rituals because I wanted to be normal, I mean it's human nature to worry so I thought that it would make me feel better. But it caught up to me, it got to the point where I got really tired EVERYDAY, no energy at all, I was sad, and I just wanted to sit on my couch all day. I felt like I was losing all my loved ones, my family, friends... all because of my OCD, anxiety, all my worry, and my depression, In my state of my depression I kept worrying all the time to which made my depression increasingly worse everyday, and I could feel it. Luckily my family is very supportive and my dad had OCD just like me, so whenever I have a brake down or a panic attack he's there for me, he knows exactly what to do to make me feel better.

Much can be done to dispel stigma historically associated with mental health disorders if we all choose to eliminate shame and blame; as well as develop the confidence to speak out.

The Huron-Perth Centre offers assessment and treatment services to children, youth and families for a variety of concerns related to distress in children – adjustment to change, depression, anxiety, behavioral issues and psychiatric concerns are all examples of the many kinds of issues brought to the Centre. The mission is “helping families solve problems”. Services are

can't make it on your own”.....that's when the Huron-Perth Centre may be able to help....

Consider this scenario:

Bottled up

When I was 6 my grand-dad (dads dad) died while I was at a friend's house for a sleep over. When I came home my mom told me. Since that day I've been very reluctant to go anywhere. I've gotten better but I still am one of those people that gets really really nervous about stupid things.

Then, later on, in about grade 5 (age 10) I had a lot of trouble with some of my friends. One of my friends was really violent and would hit me constantly. She would verbally and physically abuse me almost everyday however I would still call her one of my best friends. This went on threw grade 5 and 6. I started seeing a therapist, which would help a little. I figure one of the reasons I couldn't leave her was because she was friends with all my other friends as well, but I felt like I was the only one that she would hit or threaten. Then one day one of my other friends hit me and I freaked out at them. Since that day she didn't physically hurt me anymore. But the verbal continued, and yet I would still stick around.

Right now when I look back on my elementary days all I can remember are the bad things that happened. I can remember the worst memories all the way back to grade one. Which I hate about myself. It's weird because I always seem to focus on the negative, never the positives. I wish so much that I could focus on the positives. I also wish that I didn't feel so bad about being myself because I hate that I'm loud, I hate the way my body looks, I hate how all my friends are prettier then me, I hate so much about myself. My friends tell me that I'm beautiful, but all I can think is that you need to say that cause you my friends

Did you know:

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Become aware of the statistics...with 1 in 5 children between the ages of 3-17 struggling with a diagnosable mental health concern...you know these children and youth! Think of the children you know and look for ways to show understanding and support...

You can help us to reduce the stigma and raise awareness by seeking ways to promote positive mental health in school, at home and in our communities.

Secondary Content

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Consider this scenario:

[Tough Life by Michelle](#)

I am 17 years old and I am in grade 12. Sometimes it's hard to believe how many things can happen in such a short period of time. Since school started all I have been looking forward to is University.

Here is my story,

In July of this year I was taken in for a psychiatric assessment since counselors and my doctor recommended me because they thought I may have depression. Not only were they right, but I also have anxiety disorder and borderline personality disorder. So a month later in August I was put on Prozac. I never noticed much of a difference at first, except I kept experiencing terrible nightmares. By September I was happy. Everything seemed to be going well. I was looking into universities with my friends, trying my hardest at school and maintaining a relationship with my mom and dad. But then October hit. Everything seemed to be going down hill. I was depressed again, I would cry all the time over small things or even nothing at all, I started having thoughts of hurting myself again and I was starting to miss a lot of school because of it all. I have missed about maybe even a month of school by now because of all the problems in my life. As of Monday I am dropping out until next semester until I can straighten myself up. I hope for the best and cross my fingers that I have a bright and happy future to look forward to.

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The mission is “helping families solve problems”. Services are at no cost and confidential. “Sometimes you can't make it on your own”.....that's when the Huron-Perth Centre may be able to help....

Consider this scenario:

[Pain Inflicted](#)

I HAVE TO STOP CUTTING. I know I will carry my scars with me until forever comes around. I have accepted that. Each scar created to drown out the screaming, to suppress a memory, to hold back a tear, to know that I am alive, that this life is not a nightmare I cannot awake from cannot be consoled and calmed from. Each scar carries with it a memory I had tried to reject, but you cannot reject the past, you cannot escape it, as if imbedded in stone, and now in my flesh. Cover them up the voices have said, 'hide your scars, don't let them ask questions! They don't care they only patronize.' 'You're WRONG!' I yell every time, knowing I never believe it. 'They just want to help me, without knowing how.' I whisper to myself every time, hoping that one day I may believe my own positive thoughts. Only the negative remains, and yet I walk the halls at school with a shaded smile, it is a real smile, sometimes quivering but always real, and strong. I hold my head up and think that one day it will be better, and I still have laughter and friendship in my life, even though my house is unbearable, I know as long as I can live outside of my head for a few hours each day, I may be able to keep my sanity just long enough to get through this.

Did you know:

That one in five children and youth between the age of 3 and 17 living with a treatable mental health problem Suicide is the leading cause of non-accidental deaths in 10 to 19 year olds.

Early intervention and treatment can ease the burden of the emotional and financial costs of mental illness.

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These scenarios were taken as excerpts from mindyourmind.ca a resource supporting positive mental health.