New Guidelines for Treatment of Depression

The American Psychiatric Association has updated its guidelines for the treatment of depression for the first time in ten years. They are suggesting the use of medication, talk therapy, exercise, and alternative treatments, while urging doctors to closely monitor symptoms and to provide individualized treatments to meet the needs of each patient. The new guidelines were based on recent research and took five years to create. They recommend talk therapy -- in particular cognitive behavior therapy and interpersonal therapy -- for mild to moderate depression, along with medication if necessary. While talk therapy can provide some help for those with severe depression, it is best that it be combined with the use of antidepressant medication. For treatment resistant depression, they recommend ECT (electroconvulsive therapy), the use of older medications, TMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation), or vagus nerve stimulation. Long term maintenance treatment is also suggested, especially for those who have had three or more episodes of clinical depression. The new guidelines “represent a great step forward,” says Ian Cook, MD, director of the University of California, Los Angeles Depression Research and Clinic Program, who reviewed the guidelines.


Depression and Dementia

The fastest growing group in today’s society is older women. This is also the group most likely to struggle with clinical depression - twice as likely as men – possibly because of the stress of juggling multiple roles in life, including working and acting as the primary family caregiver, sometimes to both children and aging parents, as well as fluctuating hormones.
New research from Toronto is showing that experiencing recurring episodes of depression during a woman’s life can double the risk of developing Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia as she ages. Cognitive difficulties (problems with thinking processes) can be a symptom of depression and sometimes persist even when the depression lifts. This is one more reason to seek treatment promptly when depression is suspected.

http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/Health/20111019/depression-dementia-women-health-111019/#ixzz1bRZwdMnD

Aspartame and Psychiatric Conditions

Phenylalanine occurs naturally in many protein-rich foods, such as milk, eggs and beef. It is also found in the artificial sweetener aspartame. Aspartame can cause a rapid increase in levels of phenylalanine in the brain. Aspartame has been around for a long time and is generally considered safe, unless you have an illness called Phenylketonuria (PKU), certain other conditions, or a sensitivity to the chemical. However, it should also be used with care by people who take medications such as monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOI’s), neuroleptics (antipsychotics), or medications that contain levodopa, have tardive dyskinesia, have a sleep disorder, or have an anxiety disorder or other mental health condition. Ask your doctor if any of these risk factors apply to you or your loved one.

http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/phenylalanine/AN01552

Oxycontin – A Dangerous Addictive Drug – Has Been Replaced

Oxycontin is a powerful narcotic pain killer. Over the past number of years, there have been innumerable accounts across the country, across the province, of people becoming addicted to this drug after having it prescribed to them by a doctor to treat acute or chronic pain. Oxycontin was touted by its manufacturer as being a safer way to manage pain than other narcotics because it had less potential to become addictive. Purdue Pharma, the maker of Oxycontin has withdrawn the drug on February 15, 2012 and replaced it with OxyNEO on March 1, 2012 as a response to the numbers of addicted persons as well as the deaths caused by overdose. Health Canada believes that making the drug unavailable will reduce opioid-related deaths.

“OxyNEO is a tablet with the same active ingredients as OxyContin, but was chosen because it is more difficult to crush, and less likely to be abused through injecting or snorting. When melted, OxyNEO forms into a thick gel, preventing Oxycodone from being extracted for the purpose of injection.” It will also be more difficult to obtain a prescription as the drug will be funded only through the province’s Exception Access Program. This means that the client must be palliative or suffering from cancer. People already prescribed Oxycontin will be able to continue receiving the medication for the next month but all coverage will end on April 2, 2012.

This change will have considerable impact across the province. It will be challenging for those who need opiate treatment to access prescriptions, especially if they don’t have a family doctor. It will be especially difficult for those who are already addicted as they will not be able to get enough drug to avoid going through potentially severe withdrawal symptoms. It will also be harder to obtain the drug without a prescription. It is expected that there will be considerable impact on First Nations communities.

Finally, although OxyNEO, is more difficult to abuse, it can still be misused by taking large numbers of pills.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care release
Tour of Maple Village

“As soon as I walked through the door I knew that this was a home” says Cathie Gauthier, member of the Family Advisory Council. “A fresh clean smell, comfortable furniture with pictures and knick knacks, a friendly little dog, people who spoke to one another and an office door that was open, all told me this is a place where the residence are members of a small community. It filled me with hope!”

For many years, members of the Family Advisory Council have been advocating that one of the primary needs of a person who is being discharged from hospital is safe and affordable housing. Happily, the community is starting to respond. Last month, Council members Sandy Cerenzia, Carol Riddell-Elson, Livia Paglione and Cathie Gauthier and staff liaison Laurel Lamarre had the opportunity to visit Maple Village, which opened in June 2011. It is located at 722 Hamilton Road, at the corner of Hamilton Road and Hyla Street. We were fortunate to meet up with Jen Aitken, House Manager of Maple Village, who kindly provided us with a tour and answered our questions.

Maple Village is a type of supportive housing that strives to assist people who live on a limited income, many of whom live with a mental health challenge. It has a family-like atmosphere where residents can get the support they need. Maple Village has a total of 43 rooms for rent. People living in the residence are required to purchase a meal plan with options for three healthy meals a day. On the fourth floor of the residence, there are 9 rooms available that are supported 24 hours per day by WOTCH staff. The facility also has on-site security. The residence is currently approaching full capacity, but people are encouraged to come by for a tour.

During our tour, we met with several residents who stopped to chat with us and provide us with feedback on their housing needs as well as their experiences of living in this type of housing. Here are some quotes from residents of the home:

Susan: “I like to have people around me to help me keep busy and active. I organize a craft activity and it is an opportunity to have me organize an event which will help me when I go back to work.”

Maxine: “I have been living here about one month. I like the people and living here. I enjoy looking after another resident’s cat.”

After visiting Maple Village we are happy to see that there is a place in the community that is safe, friendly, warm and caring.

www.maplevillage.com
Get Out of the Car

An elderly Florida lady did her shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at the top of her lungs, “I have a gun and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!”

The four men didn’t wait for a second threat. They got out and ran away.

The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver’s seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition. She tried and tried, and then she realized why. It was for the same reason she had wondered why there was a football, a Frisbee and two 12-packs of beer in the front seat.

A few minutes later, she found her own car parked four or five spaces farther down. She loaded her bags into the car and drove to the police station to report her mistake.

The sergeant to whom she told the story couldn’t stop laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale men were reporting a carjacking by an elderly woman, described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, curly white hair, and carrying a large handgun. No charges were laid.

The moral of the story: if you’re going to have a senior moment … make it memorable.

The 13th Annual Research Half Day

If you are interested in the mental health research that is being conducted here in London, you won’t want to miss this event. Both oral and poster presentations of research efforts within RMHC London and St. Thomas will be highlighted. The event will be held at Regional Mental Health Care St. Thomas, in the Auditorium and the Blue Room on Wednesday, May 16, 2012, beginning at 11:30 to 4:00 p.m.

The day will feature the 8th Annual Tony Cerenzia Research Lecture by Sheilagh Hodgins, PhD, FRSC, and professor at the Institute of Psychiatry at King’s college, London, UK and the Département de Psychiatrie, Université de Montréal.

Professor Hodgins is the author of numerous articles, book chapters, and books on mental disorders and violence. Her research endeavours to understand the developmental mechanisms associated with stable patterns of aggressive behaviours in individuals who present different mental disorders and to use this information to inform specific interventions.
Free 7-Week Family Education Course

Do you have a family member or a friend with a mental illness and want to learn more about mental health? This course may be for you!

TIME: 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm
WHERE: Boardroom (Room A123) Regional Mental Health Care London

Experienced family members, individuals with lived mental health experience and professionals will speak on topics which include: Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Anxiety, Depression, Coping with Mental Illness, Advocacy, Communicating with your Loved One, Legal & Police Issues, Community Services, Medication, Recovery and Mental Health and Addictions.

To register contact: Laurel Lamarre (519) 455-5110 Ext. 47440
Register early, seats are limited!

Exploring Mental Health Issues (UWO)

Margaret Trudeau will be speaking at this lecture series on March 29, 2012 from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Alumni Hall at the University of Western Ontario. The former first lady will be talking about her personal struggles with Bipolar Disorder, advocacy, and stigma. She was the keynote speaker at the first Breakfast of Champions and delivers a compelling message. Admission is free and free parking is also available.

Easter Tableau

The 23rd annual concert will take place April 4 in the RMHC St. Thomas Auditorium, with performances at 1:30 and 7:30 pm. This will be the final Easter Tableau in the existing St. Thomas building before the move to the new mental health facility takes place next spring where, in the season of new beginnings, the creation of new Easter and Christmas concert experiences are being explored. Donations to Caring Cupboard will be graciously accepted at the door. Please contact Volunteer Services if you require reserved seating at ext. 47207.

Kite Festival in St. Thomas

This year the Kites Festival will be held on Sunday, May 27, 2012 on the South lawn at Regional Mental Health Care, St. Thomas. This is the 21st year of this festival! Event starts from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. Come out and enjoy this remarkable experience! For any questions, please contact Anne Sloboda at 519-455-5110 ext. 47749 or by email anne@gothicdesign.ca
Breakfast of Champions

TSN host Michael Landsberg will share his experience with depression at this year’s Breakfast of Champions

Diagnosed with depression more than 14 years ago, Michael Landsberg, host of TSN’s Off The Record, considers his ability to help reduce the stigma of mental illness as his most important professional calling.

“Because I have a platform, I have the power to share. And it is the most natural thing in the world for me to share what I know about depression.” On May 8, at the London Convention Centre, he will share his powerful story and message at the Breakfast of Champions event in London.

Hosted by St. Joseph’s Heath Care Foundation, in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Breakfast of Champions is an inspiring morning that aims to inspire conversation about mental illness and reducing the stigma that surround it. With keynote speaker, Michael Landsberg, a buffet breakfast, the presentation of the “Champion of Mental Health Award” and the perfect opportunity to connect with friends, this event is one that you are not going to want to miss out on.

Join us and get the conversation started. Tickets are $60 or $600 for a table of 10 (parking included) and are available at sjhcfoundation.org/events/breakfast-champions or by calling 519 646-6085.

Despite the profoundly disturbing nature of mental illness, Landsberg believes there still is little sympathy and understanding for people who are struggling every day.

Rock the Phoenix

On Friday, February 24, 2012, a group of well-known musically talented Londoners, including award winning local musician Sarah Smith, took the stage to promote one cause “Mental Health Awareness”. Other performers included Don Campbell, Sam Taylor and musicians from Music Balm such as; Mike Clancy, Moe Chile and Jessica Vanden Boomen.

The annual event, now in its second year, “Rock the Phoenix” is a concert organized by the Mental Health Promotions Committee; a community coalition of concerned citizens and professionals from a variety of mental health agencies and organizations. The committee’s mandate lies in creating opportunities for artists whose lives have been touched by mental illness to join together to share their work publicly - reducing stigma and discrimination toward mental illness. The proceeds from this event go to support Framing the Phoenix Art Show, Music Balm Concert and the Belong to Song Music Program.

This event sold out in three weeks, with over 200 people in attendance at the APK Live to see these fabulous performers. It was a lively crowd which included people from the general public, community agencies, family members and individuals living with a mental illness. For those of you who missed the “Rock the Phoenix”, this year, you certainly want to add it to your calendar for next year!
The Tillmann Family Resource Centre offers a variety of services for families, their loved ones, and mental health professionals, including:

- A resource library which contains current books, magazines, videos, audio tapes, and pamphlets on most mental illnesses
- An opportunity to meet one-on-one with another family member who has had a personal experience with mental illness and the mental health system
- Participation in a support group comprised of 5-10 family members affected by mental illness and facilitated by a trained family member (every second Tuesday)
- A free seven-week family education course offered twice per year (Spring/Fall)
- Speakers for community groups
- Membership on the Family Advisory Council
- A computer for family members to search for internet information on mental illness

We are located at Regional Mental Health Care London
850 Highbury Ave. N., Room A117
(down the left hallway off the main foyer of RMHC London).

The resource centre is open:
Monday to Friday: 8 am - 4 pm (unless otherwise posted)
Contact us at: 519 455-5110 Ext. 47440 or visit our webpage
http://www.sjhc.london.on.ca/mental-health-care/tillmann-family-resource-centre-and-family-advisory-council

Attention Family Members!

Did you know that we offer a FREE support group to family members who are supporting a loved one with a mental illness?

The Support Group meets every second Tuesday from 1:30 to 3:00, at Regional Mental Health Care London.
Interested in this group, call the Tillmann Family Resource Centre at 519-455-5110, Ext. 47440 for further details.
Here is a list of some upcoming activities happening involving the Family Advisory Council or other groups to educate or assist patients and their families. Contact the Family Resource Centre at 519 – 455-5110 Ext. 47440

**Family Education Course** - March 29, April 5, 11, 19, 26

- May 3, 10

**Margaret Trudeau** – March 29

**Easter Tableau** - April 4

**Good Friday and Easter** - April 6, 8

**Breakfast of Champions** - May 8

**Family Advisory Council** - April 16, May 14, June 11

**Research Half Day** - May 16

**Art submission for Framing of the Phoenix** - April 25 (1 to 4 pm in the Greenroom at RMHC London)

**Framing of the Phoenix** – May 1 to May 5

**Family Support Group** – March 27, April 10, 24, May 8, 22,

If you are interested in donating to Regional Mental Health Care:

Contact: Wendy Sanderson-Culley
Senior Development Officer
519-646-6100, ext. 65454

Donations for the Family Resource Centre can be made directly to:

St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation
Attn: Dr. Wm. A. Tillmann Memorial Fund
Resource Centre for Families
268 Grosvenor Street
London, ON N6A 4V2

This newsletter is intended to be used as a communication vehicle by the Family Advisory Council at Regional Mental Health Care with families who share common interests and concerns. The information herein is believed to be accurate; St. Joseph's Health Care, London, the Family Advisory Council, and the author(s) cannot be held responsible for any errors. It is the responsibility of the reader to work with professionals when making any clinical decisions.