

September 2016

## Mental Health and Addictions Peer Support/Consumer Survivor Initiatives Update

Peer support is an essential and valued component of a client-centred, recovery-oriented system of mental health and addictions care in the South West.

The South West LHIN is working with all of the Consumer Support Initiatives (CSIs) in the South West LHIN (six LHIN-funded and one non-LHIN funded), to facilitate stakeholder engagement in future planning, with a focus on enhancing peer support at the sub-region level (Grey Bruce, Huron Perth, London Middlesex, Oxford and Elgin).

### Since Last Communique...

Engagement has continued throughout the identified sub-regions.

- The local table in Huron Perth have been meeting monthly to explore co-location opportunities.
- The local table in Oxford has been meeting to explore a service and governance integration between CMHA Oxford and Oxford Self Help Network. The integration is to be complete in December 2016.
- The table in London/Middlesex/Elgin is meeting monthly to explore shared training opportunities, training standards, and possibilities for integrating peer support into the area mental health and addictions system.

### Key Messages

- Peer Support is recognized as an essential and valued component of a client-centered, recovery-oriented system of mental health and addictions (MH&A) care in the South West.
- There is a pressing need to better integrate existing CSIs (peer support programs) with other community MH&A services to improve client access to a coordinated range of services and supports and to address risks and challenges related to governance, financial controls, human resources and other back office supports currently experienced by CSIs within the South West LHIN.
- The Peer Support initiative aims to integrate 6 LHIN-funded and 1 non-LHIN funded grass roots consumer survivor organizations into the MH&A agencies (service, back office, governance integration). An integrated range of MH&A services will not only improve ease of access and navigation to community services for clients with MH&A concerns, but will lead to improvements in quality and achieve greater value for money and service sustainability.
- Peer support is associated with a reduction in hospitalization for mental illness, reduction in length of hospital stays, improved social supports and quality of life.

- We will transition from friendship models to intentional peer support model with formal matching of peers.
- We will strengthen the Peers Encouraging and Empowering Recovery Across the Southwest (PEERS) Network.
- We will standardize training and education standards.
- Improvements are based on promising practices found in peer support research

### Timeline and Next Steps

<b>Engagement</b>	
February-March 2016	One to one consultations validating the current state of services in each sub-region
March 2016	Local tables established in each sub-region
April 2016	Webinar held for all CSI/Peer Support providers in the South West LHIN
June 2016	Teleconference for all CSI/Peer Support providers in the South West LHIN to discuss potential training resources and standards
<b>Planning</b>	
April – August 2016	The South West LHIN develops a proposed model for peer support services in the South West.
September 2016	Proposed model for peer support services to be shared with all stakeholders
<b>Implementation</b>	
March 2017	Work to be completed

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is the plan to integrate peer support programs in the South West LHIN?**

**A:** Peer support will no longer be stand-alone organizations, but will be integrated into the mental health and addictions (MH&A) system so that formal matching of peer-to-peer can occur as people transition into and out of the MH&A system.

**Q: Why does the LHIN want to integrate peer support programs?**

**A:** Peer support has been recognized as a valuable component of the mental health and addictions system. However, across the South West LHIN, there is a wide variance in how the LHIN-funded and non LHIN-funded agencies provide peer support services. An integrated peer support system will improve access, enhance services, and ensure people can receive high quality support, wherever they live in the South West LHIN.

Identified gaps include:

- Inequitable peer support program delivery. There is a broad spectrum of models ranging from friendship models/informal support to intentional peer support and clinical care in clinical settings
- Lack of peer supports in workplaces and clinical settings
- Lack of peer supports for families or special populations
- Challenges in accessing services due to transportation, distance or location
- Inconsistencies in training, human resource plans, risk management and matching peers to peer supporters

**Q: How will the proposed integration benefit clients?**

**A:** The proposed integration of 6 LHIN-funded and 1 non-LHIN funded peer support agencies is all about improving access to services and providing a better experience for clients with mental health and addictions concerns.

By collaborating with larger organizations, consumer support initiatives/ peer support agencies would be able to strengthen the services they offer. This would not only allow them to respond to more people in need of support, but would let them benefit from the training, financial and other supports a larger organization could offer. This would ensure the sustainability of peer support for the future.

**Q: When will the integration work be complete?**

**A:** It is hoped that this work will be completed by March 31, 2017.

**Q: Will peer support services be lost or reduced by integrating?**

**A:** Peer-to-peer support will be enhanced, not lost. Integration of peer support in the MH&A system will ensure there is availability of peer support wherever individuals are in their recovery journey, or whether they are in the community, hospital, at work or school, or in urban, rural or remote locations.