

AT THE CENTRE

Summer 2003

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Letter from Wendy Nailer

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This column will be written from time to time by members of the CAMH staff with news and views to share with you. In this issue, we introduce Wendy Nailer.

As most people realize, CAMH is committed to providing programs and services that enhance a client's well-being. In Work Adjustment and Employment Support Services, we help integrate clients into mainstream employment and help clients develop skills needed for today's work environment.

Client-centred care means:

- focusing on the individual needs and strengths of clients/patients
- showing respect and collaborating
- promoting client participation.

Client-centred care has been the backbone of our program since we began 26 years ago.

Ours is just one of many outstanding programs and initiatives offered at CAMH that help clients achieve their goals and realize their potential.

Now you can read about this program in a client's own words.

Working It Out

By Bonnie Thorn

I can truthfully say that without Work Adjustment and Employment Support Services (WAESS), I wouldn't be here today. I had severe clinical depression. Over the past six years, I had many long hospitalizations. Among other things, the depression forced me to leave an executive position in a wonderful environment where I had been employed for 20 years. After my first discharge from hospital in 1998, CAMH staff guided me toward WAESS.

Back then my needs were simple—I needed understanding; I wanted to be connected to something; I wanted to be able to talk to others who were in the same position; and I didn't want to feel so alone.

WAESS was a safe haven. I attended group meetings once a week with other clients, who had similar experiences. I also met with my counselor. When I felt I was ready to return to the "real world," she worked with me to find the most appropriate work placement, based on my skills. She looked for an environment that would be understanding, compassionate

and non-judgmental. During my transition back into the workplace, I was able to set my own pace around work hours and amount of work.

That first work experience—three hours a day, three days a week—gave me pride in myself. I started to regain a sense of worth and self-respect. Initially all I was capable of doing was photocopying and other small chores, but gradually I took on more, and even became an integral part of the team.

Then I crashed again and was hospitalized for six months. When I came back, WAESS was still there for me. I was in and out of hospital several times in the next six years. The message was the same: "As long as you need us, we are here for you."

WAESS has a large network of companies and organizations that provide placement spots for clients. The compassionate and caring staff is a large part of the success of this program. The work experience restored my sense of purpose and gave me structure. It gave me a footing on solid ground.

Postscript:

After several years in a work placement arranged by WAESS, I am proud to say I was ready to return to work. And my timing was perfect; my former position became available, and my former employer made me an offer I couldn't refuse.

To contact WAESS, phone 416 535-8501, ext. 4876

Wendy Nailer, second from left, and the Work Adjustment and Employment Support Services staff—Karen Fournier, Diana Musson and Greer Slyfield Cook—assist clients returning to work.



Letting Voices Be Heard

By Joan Lewis,
Client Relations Co-ordinator

Client Relations helps clients and their family members have their voices heard at CAMH. We review each question, suggestion, complaint and compliment to see if there's something we need to do or change, and, if so, how to do it. If we find that a change is in the best interests of everyone involved, we will make the change and, where possible, reflect this change in CAMH-wide policies and practices.

For example, a client complained that front-line staff on different shifts were inconsistently applying "the rules" for clients, such as when to take medication or watch TV. We told the manager, who then made sure that the staff sorted out the rules, making it less confusing for clients.

Another example comes from Ontario's privacy laws. Family members sometimes call CAMH to inquire about clients. They might want to know if a loved one in crisis has made it to the hospital safely or where the client is living, in case they've lost touch. Because of the laws that protect a client's privacy, staff cannot give such information to the client's family members without the client's consent.

Client Relations staff now try to track the client down. We ask the caregiver to speak to the client about calling loved ones. A telephone call can be an enormous relief to the family members—just to know that the client is okay. We now ask clients, upon admission, if they would like to have phone calls forwarded to them while they are in hospital.

Since the Client Relations office was created two years ago, we have made a number of positive changes across CAMH that have made the lives of our clients better. We expect that as our role continues to evolve there will be even more improvements. If you'd like to know more about Client Relations at CAMH, please call: 416 535-8501, ext. 2028 or e-mail: joan_lewis@camh.net

The Important Role of Families

Although it's often an overlooked role, it can be very hard to be the family member of a person struggling with mental health or addiction problems. It's not easy to see your loved one struggle. It's nerve-wracking to watch for changing signs and symptoms. It's also time-consuming to keep up with the latest medical advances.

Despite this, families have a *huge* impact on clients' ability to deal with their illness and the work they undertake as they move towards recovery. Families get great satisfaction seeing their loved ones get better.

No one knows this better than Ana Herman. Ana's son was diagnosed with schizophrenia more than eight years ago. Soon after that, Ana got involved with the Family Resource Centre (FRC).

"I was not going to simply sit at home and tear my hair out," she says. She didn't want to passively accept her son's diagnosis. She says, "Instead I decided to become active—to seek out the best doctor and get involved."

Ana certainly did get involved. She and the other members of the FRC are

always available for one another. They give each other emotional support, reassurance and information about mental illness and resources available within the hospital and in the greater community.

Ana is relieved that families are no longer blamed for their children's illnesses. "We have come out of the dark ages, to the light, on that," she says. "When you admit that you have someone in your family with a mental illness or addiction, you are automatically an advocate. You *are* helping," she says.

While Ana no longer needs the FRC in the same way she did at first, she wants to help others. She says, "I show sympathy, love and hope. And I say, 'Don't give up—there are medical advances every day!'"

The FRC works out of the Family Council, a non-profit organization at arm's length from CAMH. The Family Council represents families on CAMH committees, and offers outreach, support, education, information-sharing and advocacy for family members.

Betty Miller, Co-ordinator of the Family Council, says, "Family members want to see families more included in services and plans for care for clients. They want to see more client-centred programs for both clients and families across the board. Most of all, we all want our voices to be heard."

To find out more about the Family Council, contact Betty Miller at 416 535-8501, ext. 6499. The FRC can be reached at 416 535-8501, ext. 4015

Active in the Family Resource Centre, Elsa Southam, front, Barbara Chatz and Ana Herman, volunteer their time to give support to families.



Correction Notice

The Shadows of the Mind Film Festival in Sault Ste. Marie attracted more than 2,000 attendees, not 200, as originally stated in the spring issue.

News Highlights at the Centre

Here's a brief roundup

of what's been happening lately at our Centre.

New Executive Structure at CAMH

Following the retirement of Ms. Jean Simpson Executive Vice-President (EVP) and Chief Operating Officer in June, a new executive structure has been developed to reflect the direction and focus CAMH will undertake over the next few years including a special emphasis on improving policy and planning. Three new EVP positions were created to help build stronger external relationships, integrate client care, education, research and prevention and health, and to add a focus on business development and alternate revenue generation.

The positions are:

EVP Corporate Services: Dev Chopra – Dev has been Vice President, Finance and Support Services and CFO at CAMH since October 2001. Prior to joining CAMH, Dev held several senior management and consultant positions with responsibilities in the areas of finance, human resources, information technology, facilities management, capital development, and corporate planning.

EVP Programs: Dr. Franco Vaccarino – Franco has been Vice President, Research at CAMH since 1998, and is a Full Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Psychology at the University of Toronto. He has been a strong voice for integrative approaches to research, care and prevention and has published over 100 papers in the addictions and mental health areas. He is committed to ensuring that advances in understanding and practice have a real life impact on care and prevention programs for CAMH clients.

EVP Policy and Planning: Gail Czukar, M.A., J.D. – Gail brings 30 years of experience to her new position plus an enthusiastic and passionate commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable people. She believes that CAMH is uniquely positioned to be a key driver of change because of its size and scope. She has been General Counsel and co-chair of the Policy Review and Development Committee at CAMH since September 2000. Prior to joining CAMH, Gail was a lawyer, Deputy Director of the Legal Branch and Policy Manager at the Ministry of Health and

Long-Term Care.

Support for SARS

An online Web-assisted support group for people dealing with the stress of SARS, www.sarssupportcentre.net, was recently launched by CAMH. SARS has been stressful both for people who have been personally affected by it and for members of the public. For those who have questions and concerns about the illness, they can now visit the new Web site to access sophisticated information as well as self-help tools and links to the latest information about SARS. After six months, the project will be evaluated to determine how effective this approach is when dealing with acute stressors.

Latest CAMH Publications

CAMH's Education and Publishing Department introduced the following resources recently:

- *Challenges & Choices: Finding Mental Health Services in Ontario* (available in French and English)
- *Is It Safe for My Baby? Risks and Recommendations for the Use of Medication, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding* (available in French and English)
- *First Stage Trauma Treatment: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals Working with Women*
- *Antisocial and Violent Youth, Volume II*
- *Brief Couples Therapy: Group and Individual Couple Treatment for Addiction and Related Mental Health Concerns*
- *Methadone Maintenance: A Counselor's Guide to Treatment*
- *When a Parent has Bipolar Disorder... What Kids Want to Know* (available in French and English)
- *Guidelines for Managing Patients with Developmental Disability in the Emergency Room*

For additional information on any of these titles or to order a copy, please call 416 595-6059 or 1 800 661-1111

Site Speak

CAMH continues to meet with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) on a regular basis as we work towards an approval of our Functional Program and Facilities Master Plan for the Queen Street site redevelopment proposal. Concurrent with the MOHLTC review, CAMH's Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments will be heard by Community Council (City of Toronto) at its September meeting.

At one of our regular meetings, the Ministry asked CAMH to assess alternative financing models, including a public private partnership (P3) for the Queen Street redevelopment. Although the MOHLTC hasn't given CAMH a final indication on a financing model for our site redevelopment process, we are aware that there are significant capital needs in the health care sector, which far outweigh the provincial government's available capital budget.

As a result, we know we have to be willing to look at new ways of financing the redevelopment because it will allow us to make the new facility—and better quality mental health and addictions care—a reality soon, when we need it. The redevelopment and related new programs and services that can be fully implemented on a consolidated site will allow us to better integrate clinical care, research, education and prevention. Other benefits include improved opportunities for collaboration and breakthrough treatments; comprehensive health promotion programs; and an enhanced ability to work with and share best practices with service providers across Ontario.

We are in the process of meeting with staff across the organization to help us develop values and principles that will guide our decisions as we move into the next phase of site redevelopment. This will ensure that at every step of the redevelopment process we are putting our core values first, including improving client care, working collaboratively with our staff and community partners, and supporting client and family initiatives.

For regular updates on the site redevelopment project, please visit our Web site at www.camh.net. You can contact us at 416 535-8501 ext. 1650, by fax at 416 583-1218 or by email at vision_feedback@camh.net

UPcoming events

CAMHfest

Sunday, September 21, noon to 6:00 p.m.
East side of the Queen Street site,
1001 Queen Street West, near Shaw St.,
Toronto

A big, fifth-anniversary celebration, with a music stage, a children's zone, games, food, an arts show and sale, information booths, displays and more.

For more information, visit the CAMH Web site at www.camh.net, and click on "Events"

Making Gains in Mental Health and Addictions: Research, Recovery and Renewal

Annual Conference
September 28 to October 1, 2003
Niagara Falls

Four leading organizations in mental health, addiction, and substance use in Ontario—the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division; the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health; the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs; and the Alcohol and Drug Recovery Association of Ontario—host this major conference.

Please note: The organizers are pleased to report that this conference is now sold out. If you wish to put your name on the mailing list for next year's fall conference, in Toronto, e-mail conference organizer Rachel Gilhooly at rachel@haliburtonhighlands.com or call 705 454-8107, or toll free at 1 877 372-2435

Community Information Forum: Struggling with Food and Addictions: Finding Help for Concurrent Eating and Substance Use Disorders

Free admission
Thursday, October 2, 2003,
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Meeting Centre (room 2039),
33 Russell Street, Toronto

Other upcoming forums will be held on
Tuesdays: Nov. 18, 2003; Dec. 9, 2003; Jan. 20, 2004; Feb. 10, 2004; and Mar. 9, 2004.

For more information, visit the CAMH Web site at www.camh.net, and click on "Events"

Honouring Extraordinary Ontarians

Seven extraordinary Ontarians were honoured at the tenth anniversary of the Courage to Come Back awards. The awards recognize people who have come back from the challenges of living with mental illness and addiction. These people, who now use their experiences to help others, are models of hope. The awards dinner, held on May 15, 2003, was hosted by the CAMH Foundation and presented by RBC Investments. It featured an address by The Honourable James K. Bartleman, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

Here is the story of one of the recipients; others can be found on our Web site, www.camh.net

Michael Armstrong was incorrectly diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 20. It took another 23 years before he received the correct diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder. Despite his condition, Michael completed his BA and law degree, articulated and was called to the bar. His journey has been tortuous and at times chronically painful. However, Michael's determination has allowed him to enjoy an extremely productive and varied life.

Psychotic episodes have often interrupted his career plans. When it became

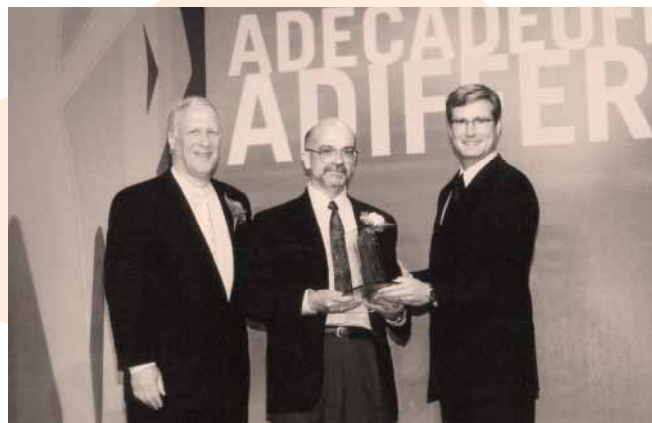
clear he could not get work as a lawyer, Michael did whatever else he could. This included teaching Grade 13 law as a supply teacher and getting a certificate to teach English as a second language.

Although Michael is very close to his family, about eight years ago he decided to move to a supportive living environment within the Catholic Worker community. In this community he has found many friends who are there to offer help when he needs it. He still worries about not having enough money to buy a pair of shoes, yet is content with making ends meet.

Michael shares his stories publicly to connect with people and break down the stigma around mental health problems. His optimism and confidence have allowed him to work with challenging youth and build relationships with them. He has also trained police officers to better understand people with mental health problems.

He recently published a book of meditations called *Stable in Bedlam*. This book will allow him to reach a new audience. Michael is also exploring his talents as a motivational speaker.

Michael Armstrong, centre, receives his award from Ernst & Young representative, Stephen Shea, right, and emcee Andy Barrie.



AT THE CENTRE, The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's external newsletter, is published four times a year to inform our stakeholders about current issues and events at the Centre.

EDITOR Deborah Etsten

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HIGHLIGHTS DISPONÍVEL EM PORTUGUÊS

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