

Complex Service Needs Newsletter

Issue 2

April 2014

Find Inside

- Communications Matter
- Community of Practice
- Specialized Learning Opportunities
- Sensory Processing Workshop
- From the Front-Line
- Spotlight on Resources
- Websites of interest
- Evaluation and Research

If contributing to a CoP is of interest to you and you work in the Edmonton area please take our survey:

[CoP Interest Survey](#)

Communications matter

This newsletter is only one way to communicate to staff, managers, supervisors, family members and others who work in the area of Human Services with a complex needs population. There is no right or wrong way to open up a conversation and not all conversations are face to face; what is important is that there is a sender and a receiver within every communication.

This newsletter is the sender and those reading it are the receivers...why is that relevant? We want to hear back from you so we can be sure the newsletter's messages we are sending out contain items that meaningful to you. We want to know:

- What do you want to know more about?
- How can this newsletter serve you to become more informed?
- What do you want us to pass along to others?

Another really cool and sometimes cutting edge newsletter that has the front line service provider as its target audience is an organization in Toronto—VITA. They serve individuals across the continuum of support needs and among that continuum is a challenging to serve complex population. Click on the below link for access to past and current editions.

[VITA Newsletters](#)

Another organization dedicated to communicating strongly with its membership is an organization in the UK – The Challenging Behaviour Foundation. Check out their newsletters.

[Challenging Behaviour Foundation Newsletters](#)

Community of Practice

The Edmonton area will be assembling two Community of Practice (CoP) groups in June. Establishing a Community of Practice is one way of facilitating multiple systems to bring them together in order to learn from one another and communicate in an ongoing and meaningful way.

A Community of Practice (CoP) is defined as: a group of individuals who share a

common interest, a set of problems or a passion and who increase their knowledge and understanding of these aspects through interpersonal relationships (Wenger et al., 2002).

A survey is taking place right now in the Edmonton Zone to gauge interest, discover types of topics that may be of interest and assess logistics.

Specialized Learning Opportunities

David Pitonyak presented in Alberta this past month. His most important message is...

Difficult behaviors result from unmet needs. In a sense, difficult behaviors are messages which can tell us important things about a person and the quality of his or her life. People with difficult behaviors are often missing:

- Meaningful relationships
- A sense of safety and well-being
- Power
- Things to look forward to
- A sense of value and self-worth

Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is an approach that the mental health community has adopted in recent years to attempt to deal with traumatic crises. Yeager, et al. define TIC as "Care that is organized around a contemporary, comprehensive understanding of the impact of trauma that emphasizes strengths and safety and focuses on skill development for individuals to rebuild a sense of

personal control over their life" (2013, p.595). "It is designed to be both **preventative** and **rehabilitative** in nature" (2013, p.65). This type of care is as much a philosophy as a service delivery approach.

Despite excellent intuition and deep compassion, many front-line workers are asked to provide trauma-related healing or treatment services for which they have not received training. There are a number of workshops and seminars offering

participants understanding, skills and practical application.

The following are a few moderately priced specialized workshops with a focus on Trauma informed practice.

[MANDT Trauma Workshop](#)

[Suicide Intervention Workshop \(ASIST\)](#)

[The Trauma-Addiction Connection: Spirals of Recovery and Healing](#)

Sensory Processing

Sensory Strategies in Action for staff who work with Individuals with Complex Service Needs
June 3, 2014—8:30-4:00
Videoconference Workshop

This workshop may be of interest to you if you serve an individual who has unique sensory needs.

Kim Barthel is an Occupational Therapist with 30 years of experience, specializing and presenting in neurological and developmental disabilities & Sensory Processing within unique populations. Kim will be presenting this workshop from Calgary through videoconferencing, her entire interactive workshop will be available throughout Alberta for

participants without the burden of travel.

This one day workshop will focus on providing information to service providers in how they can apply a detective process for understanding how sensory processing impacts behavioral challenges.

- Increase understanding of the neurobiology of developmental trauma as it overlays with developmental disability
- Begin to understand the interaction with sensory processing and behavior challenges
- Use cognitive strategies, sensory tools and environmental alternations in the development of self-regulation.

Please email your interest to attend the session: complexneeds@albertahealthservices.ca

Space is limited so indicate your interest early.

Confirmed locations:

Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton, St Paul, Slave Lake, Grande Prairie, with more locations to be announced.

Email confirmation will provide all location details.

From the Front-line



Launching "Max"

(pseudonym)

Max is an 18-year-old young man who was diagnosed with severe intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. He lacks a functional communication system and was living with his parents. He was referred to Catalyst Consultation for Complex Service Needs due to ongoing concerns about aggressive outbursts and intense periods of self injury and agitation. At the time of referral he had been admitted to an acute-care psychiatric unit due to his aggression.

A preliminary profile was developed to clarify areas for further examination related both to self injury as well as

aggression to help:

- clarify his diagnoses,
- communication needs, and
- his increasingly low frustration tolerance.

Emphasis in consultation occurred with family members as the critical informants who provided the much needed history and details so that Catalyst could obtain a clearer picture of his patterns of functioning, strengths, sensory concerns, struggles, agitation, soothing and communication skills. Concurrently, consultation occurred at the acute-care psychiatric unit to clarify staff's understanding of his nonverbal behaviours, verbalizations and vocalizations and to provide guidance about how to best respond and communicate to avoid escalating Max.

Understanding Max's unique communication is the key to helping Max

With his reputation for aggressive behaviour, staff required clear guidance about how to best understand him and to avoid becoming reactive in the face of

increased agitation or emotional arousal. Within a number of weeks of joint services, an appropriate wraparound service was found and the initial meetings which included PDD services, service provider staff and management, and parents and existing staff supports commenced.

Following successful stabilization in the acute-care psychiatric unit and visits with new staff plus a weekend stay at his new potential residence, he was released to the care of his new consulting team. A new chapter of life for Max and his parents begins to unfold in his new home.

Current and relevant client profiling and successful communication efforts were the essential keys to success for Max and his family.

"With his reputation for aggressive behaviour staff required clear guidance about how to best understand him and to avoid becoming reactive in the face of increased agitation or emotional arousal."

Spotlight on Resources

A series of You Tube videos have been produced by Patti Scott and Dave Hasbury of Neighbours International, Inc.

The selection of videos itemized here present David Pitonyak teaching and mentoring through the use of videos.

Jumping Into the Chaos of Things

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UX_gklnE

Being Needed by the Pack

<http://youtu.be/UYDFZ9i56ak>

Coverage vs Relationships

<http://youtu.be/AqPPGfO4Qsw>

Hardwired For Belonging

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc5rzCGK20>

The Work Of Adolescence

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sCUN2ueZQQ>

For additional information regarding Neighbors and the work they are involved in, visit their web site: www.neighbours-international.com

The below link contains the full collection of produced videos

<http://www.neighbours-international.com/our-videos.html>

Websites of interest...

Each edition of the Complex Service Needs newsletter will share websites as informational items. These websites and their content are not endorsed nor promoted by Alberta Health Services or GOA but are meant to point you to the many and varied resources that exist on the web—never be afraid to Google to find what you may not even know you are looking for.

Quality Behavioral Solutions to Complex Behavior Problems (Quality Behavioral Competencies™)

2-Day Train the Trainer Course to learn the tools you need to quickly and efficiently provide your staff with critical behavioral teaching skills

<http://www.qbscompanies.com/site/>

The International Certificate Programme in Dual Diagnosis

<http://www.brocku.ca/dual-diagnosis/course-offerings>

NADD - Essential Learning Accredited Online Training

<http://thenadd.org/membership/nadd-essential-learning-accredited-online-training/>

Research and Evaluation Notes

As Community Support Teams take shape in our province it is important to present evidence that the community teams are needed, are working as intended and are serving the need in the field. There are two distinct ways to provide this evidence—Research and Evaluation.

Research

Basic research advances knowledge in a study area and is the source of most new scientific ideas and ways of thinking about the world.

Applied research tries to solve specific policy problem or help practitioners accomplish tasks. Applied research usually has an immediate and practical use. (Newman, 1997)

Results of basic research are often generalized beyond the sample of participants.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a form of applied research. It applies research processes to assess social programs or initiatives regarding their:

Design – Is the program operating in a way that it was intended or designed to do? If not, how can it be improved?

Implementation - Was the program implemented as planned? If not, what changes need to be made?

Utility - Is the program providing benefit and achieving the goals or outcomes that were anticipated? Is the program providing a return on investment or is the benefit of the program worth its cost? (Standish et al., 1991 & Rossi et al., 1999, as cited in Valente, 2002)

Evaluation is being conducted currently to capture the experiences of staff, service providers and clients who have participated in or received services from the cross-ministry initiative and will capture short-term and intermediate outcomes of program delivery achieved by implementing the cross-ministry framework.

Research identifies for us some learning's we need to consider moving forward. There is some promising research that you can read and judge for yourself posted on our [Complex Service Needs Website](#)

Alberta Council of Disability Services (ACDS) Annual Conference The Complex Service Needs Initiative is presenting work so far...



ACDS
SPRING
Conference 2014

A Collaborative Approach to Supporting Individuals with Complex Support Needs (3D)

Sandy Marcynuk, AHS, Gloria Wesley, PDD

The challenge of providing effective services for adults with complex service needs has been an enduring issue for service systems in Alberta. Come and hear how Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) and Alberta Health Services (AHS) are working together to provide supports to individuals, families and service providers to assist individuals to live as independently as possible and thrive in their communities.

