

The Family Voice

What your Family Advisory Committee is doing for you

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VISION

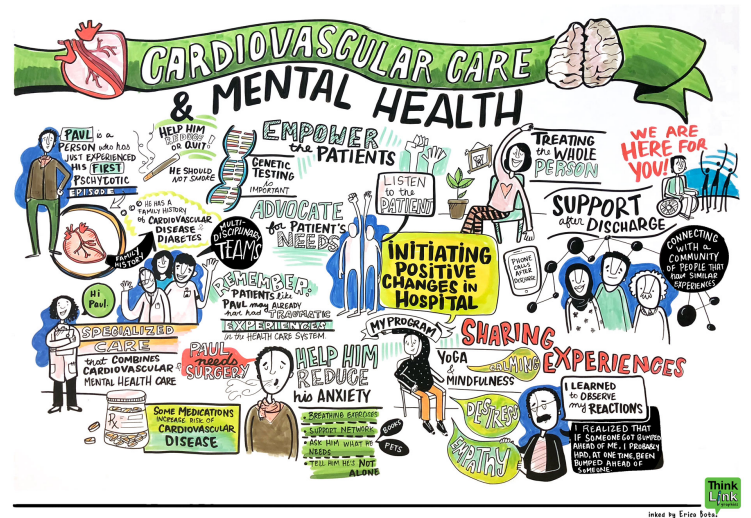
Family will be integral members of the recovery process and will be embraced by and actively engaged at all levels of the organization.

MISSION

The Family Advisory Committee (FAC) is a partnership between CAMH staff and family members affected by a family member's mental illness or addiction. The CAMH FAC will engage with families, patients, community members and care providers to improve client care and enhance the experience of both patients and their families at CAMH.

DEFINITION OF FAMILY

Any person or group of people someone identifies as belonging to their family or significant circle of support.



Art from the “Supporting medical care for people living with mental illness” conference, attended by FAC members

Taking our place at the table

An elderly couple arrives at the CAMH Emergency Department seeking help for the wife’s mental illness. They wait to see members of the clinical team and she has a comprehensive assessment. The team recommends that, given the patient’s advanced age and complex physical health needs, she be transferred to a general hospital ER for physical assessment prior to receiving psychiatric treatment.

Imagine the distress this couple felt as they experienced the separation of medical and psychiatric needs that happens so often in our health care system. Now, reimagine a system where we are able to treat the whole person without separating physical and mental health care needs.

The FAC sits on the Integrated Care Project (ICP) team at CAMH. According to Dan Harren, project lead, “The ICP is an initiative that is meant to bring

more physical care to our CAMH patients, so that they can receive faster care for their medical needs, while remaining at CAMH whenever possible. CAMH will never be a general hospital, and mental health will always be our focus. However, we recognize the need for supporting our patients' basic physical health needs. Our hope is that, through this project, CAMH patients will receive holistic and individualized treatment and we can prevent transfers to other hospitals as much as possible.”

Patients don't leave their physical health problems behind when they are admitted to CAMH, just as they don't leave their mental health problems behind when they are admitted to a general hospital.

For major initiatives like this at CAMH, it is important that the work be informed by the patient and family experience. We bring a unique perspective and ensure that the voices of patients and their families are heard during the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of these initiatives.

In November of 2018 the FAC was invited to participate in “Supporting medical care for people living with mental illness.” This conference explored quality improvements to manage medical conditions within the context of mental health. It was presented by CAMH and Janis Rotman, in collaboration with University Health Network Medical Psychiatry, Peter Munk Cardiac Centre, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and the Patient Engagement Program. In both of these initiatives, we are joined by the voices of patients themselves.

These are just two of the many initiatives we have had the opportunity to be involved in. Our own lived experience, as well as the stories you tell us, help to bring meaning to these initiatives and highlight the impact on patients and their loved ones. Please drop by the Office of Family Engagement if you would like to share your story, or drop by our monthly information tables at the College Street site in the main lobby. We love hearing from you.

—Susan Conway, Co-chair, FAC member



Ashley Bowe joins the Patient and Family Experience Team to integrate family member voices across CAMH

Message from the family engagement facilitator

In late 2016 CAMH invested in families by establishing the Office of Family Engagement (OFE). The doors opened in March 2017 with an advanced practice clinical leader, social work and nursing fellows, and a communications co-ordinator from Client and Family Education. Over the next two years a full-time OFE co-ordinator, social worker and FRC co-ordinator joined. This spring, CAMH hired new staff to create the Patient and Family Engagement Team: a patient- and family-centred care clinical specialist, three patient engagement facilitators, and a family engagement facilitator.

My role as the family engagement facilitator is to integrate the family voice across CAMH through working groups and committees, partner with staff to implement family engagement initiatives, and support quality improvement in patient and family experience. This work is done through the lens of lived experience as a family member supporting someone living with mental illness.

My relationship with the OFE began in 2017 when I volunteered in the Family Resource Centre (FRC). I quickly discovered my passion for working with families; I came by that naturally from my experience supporting my younger sister. I went from CAMH to the position of family separation and reunion co-ordinator at the Toronto Military Family Resource Centre, supporting families who were separated by nature of their military service. As the daughter of a medically releasing veteran, I frequently used my lived experience in my work there.

I'm looking forward to working with the FAC and furthering the amazing work they do! I also have the pleasure of joining *The Family Voice* newsletter subcommittee, whose members have shown me how passionate and dedicated they are to improving the family experience at CAMH. I am so grateful to be working with this team and excited for our future projects!"



Meet the member Q&A: Vivien Cappe

What drew you to the FAC?

As a parent of a loved one with mental health challenges I spent years trying to have my voice heard with very little luck, and I knew this was my opportunity to help make changes. It's my second year on the committee and I feel so positive about the work we are doing.

What's been the most rewarding thing you've done on the FAC?

There are two things that come to mind. The first is our creation of this newsletter, *The Family Voice*. I believe it is going to have such a positive impact on families: it's a way to connect with each other, to share information and find out what is going on for families at CAMH. The second thing is sitting on committees, hearing about the great work being done here, and having my input valued.

How long have you been supporting your family member?

One of my eight children has battled mental health challenges since he was a toddler. It has been a 28-year roller-coaster ride, with lots of ups and lots of painful downs. This past year he has been an inpatient at CAMH and our family has a lot to learn about that world.

FAC member list, 2018–19

*Robert Burns, Vivien Cappe, Co-Chair
Susan Conway, Mara Haase, Pauline Lefebvre Hinton, Gilda Martens, Mary Beth Odell, Shala Pezeshkzad, Leticia Urias, Nicole Waldron. CAMH: Co-Chair Miriam McCann; Carolynne Cooper, social worker liaison; Ashley Bowe, family engagement facilitator*



FAC members contributed to the creation of this poster, which you can see prominently displayed across CAMH

What would you say is the best piece of advice you received from another caregiver?

“Let other people help you.” You can be a rock for your loved one but let your friends and family be a rock for you. Let people in, let them pick up some of the hard work so you can make some time for yourself. It is hard letting go sometimes but it is crucial for your own mental health and that of your loved one.

Self-care corner: Anger management

Even the best caregivers get frustrated at times. Dealing with anger effectively is a self-care habit that will help you in many areas. This issue’s Self-care corner is a reprint from Wellness Module 5: Anger Management from Here to Help, a project of the B.C. Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information.

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-modules>

What can I do about my anger?

Anger is a sign you need to take constructive action. Anger is a source of energy to get things done and to solve problems. The goal of learning to manage anger is to minimize the negative consequences of this powerful emotion and maximize the positive ones. Strength lies in composure, not confrontation.

There are three main ways to manage anger:

1. Emotions

Relaxation. You can’t be relaxed and angry at the same time. Think of anger as your boiling point. If you turn down the temperature, you keep yourself from boiling over. Learning to relax can help lower your daily arousal level. Then, when you’re provoked, you have a much greater distance to travel before you get extremely mad. Visit www.heretohelp.bc.ca for more information about using relaxation skills and other tips on managing emotions.

Humour. It is also difficult to be angry when you’re laughing. It is easy to take life’s annoyances too seriously. Making an effort to see the humour in

your frustrations and aggravations can help to combat an automatic angry reaction.

2. Thinking Patterns

Manage your thoughts. A good way to lower anger is to manage angry thoughts about the situation. Take the following steps:

- Examine the evidence—What evidence supports your view of the situation?
- Look for alternatives—What are some alternative ways of viewing the situation or conflict? Can you think of some other explanations for why this has happened? What evidence supports the alternative explanations?

Empathy. You may feel angry when you think that the other person’s behaviour was intended to hurt you in some way. Often, other people’s behaviour has nothing to do with you personally. It usually reflects how they are coping with things in their own lives. To make empathy work for you, ask yourself: “What does this situation feel like for the other person?”

3. Behaviours

Problem solving. Anger management is a strategic and calculated confrontation aimed at solving a problem. The trick to managing anger well is to have a problem-solving goal. This means making sure that your response to your angry feelings is directed at solving the problem. Don’t take your feelings out on everyone around you, use them in a directed way to solve the problem.

Being assertive without being aggressive.

How you communicate depends on your goals. Your goals (even when angry) may include improving a valued relationship, maintaining your self-respect, solving a problem, making a request, communicating your feelings, showing understanding, and more.

Anyone can learn assertive communication skills. Being assertive does not mean behaving aggressively to get your own way. Genuine assertiveness is about respecting yourself, respecting others and learning how to communicate your feelings honestly and with care. You communicate your needs without hurting others.



A sense of belonging is what members value at Our Place Community of Hope

Spotlight organization: Our Place Community of Hope

While the reality of living with a mental illness is difficult, the stigma attached to it further isolates people, especially in big cities such as Toronto. In the 1970s and '80s, Ontario deinstitutionalized many mentally ill people with little or no support services for them in the community. Even today, there are insufficient resources to help those with mental illnesses in our community. They remain a compromised, too often forgotten and stigmatized population. And social isolation is a major barrier to mental health recovery.

Founded in 1969, Our Place Community of Hope (known as Our Place) is a community drop-in centre that addresses the social isolation and changing needs of people living with mental health problems. Our Place offers a wide range of social and recreational activities in a welcoming, supportive and safe environment. Members

have the opportunity to meet, connect, build relationships and practise skills for independent living. Some of the activities include bingo, movies, arts and crafts, a mental health peer support group, choir, Friday night dances, holiday and birthday celebrations, yoga, meditation, karaoke, and outings to such destinations as Centre Island and High Park. Our Place also offers a community meal program Tuesday through Friday where participants can enjoy a healthy dinner for \$1.

Membership in Our Place is free and does not require a medical referral or formal mental health diagnosis. Programs are voluntary and anyone can join. Almost all activities at the centre are offered free of charge (some outings may involve a nominal fee).

Our Place operates from 2:00 to 8:15 p.m., Tuesday to Saturday, and is located in the lower level of Galilee Korean Presbyterian Church, 1183 Davenport Road at Ossington Avenue. For more information, visit:

www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com

—Mara Haase, CAMH FAC member

Family learning: Building skills and hope with Family Connections

Families are often the first line of care for anyone living with a mental illness, yet family members are often reeling in disbelief and overwhelmed with the challenges mental illness brings to their lives. Depression, anxiety, harmful behaviours, suicide and impulsivity can occur when people have difficulty managing their emotions (known as emotional dysregulation). Although people with emotional dysregulation are often diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD), emotional dysregulation also occurs with other types of mental illness. The effects on caregivers supporting someone with emotional dysregulation is profound.

Family Connections (FC) is a free, evidence-based 12-week group that meets weekly for two hours to bring mental health education, support and life-changing communication skills to people with someone in their lives who is living with emotional dysregulation or BPD.

Sessions are held in a community setting and led by trained group leaders, who are usually family members with lived experience. Classes in Canada focus on issues specific to emotion dysregulation, and can include:

- education and research about emotional dysregulation
- skills training drawing on the tenets of dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT)
- family perspectives and environment management skills
- emotion regulation, effective communication and validation skills
- the opportunity to build an ongoing support network.

Family Connections is administered in Canada by The Sashbear Foundation. Mike Menu and Lynn Courey created Sashbear in 2011 to honour the memory of their daughter Sasha who died of suicide at age 20. Their mission has been to help others avoid going through the devastating pain that their family experienced. They are committed to providing this program free of charge to communities across Canada.

To register for the CAMH program call 416 535-8501 ext. 2. For more information call 416 535-8501 ext. 32437 or visit our website: <https://www.camh.ca/en/your-care/programs-and-services/psychoeducational-support-group-for-family-and-friends-of-people-with-bpd>

For Family Connections classes outside CAMH: <https://sashbear.org/en/family-connections/family-connections-2>

CMHA Toronto's Family Outreach and Response Program holds three FC groups a year.

Email: jlebel@cmhato.org

Tel.: 416 539-9449 ext. 228

—Mary Beth Odell, CAMH FAC member

WHERE ARE YOUR FAC MEMBERS?

FAC members are representing family interests here:

External committees

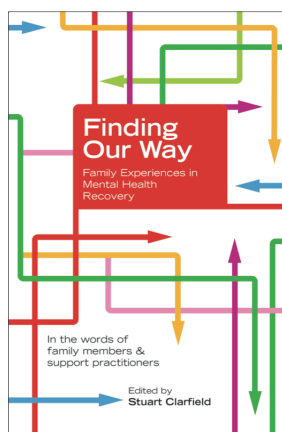
- OFCAN (Ontario Family and Caregiver Advisory Network): provincial
- Patient and Family Engagement Community of Learning: GTA hospitals
- Mental Health Commission of Canada – Engaging Families

Internal committees and work groups

- all three CAMH Program Quality Councils
- monthly Family Outreach Tables
- Emergency Assessment Unit (EAU) family room re-design
- Complex Care and Recovery Subcommittee
- Family Partners Subcommittee to co-create
- Access CAMH Education Sessions: review and advise on updated programming
- ED Optimization Project: Phase 2 of the Discharge Process
- Clinical Quality Committee of the Board
- Constituency Council
- TAHSN (Toronto Academic Health Science Network)
- Recovery College Advisory Committee
- Patient and Family Engagement Strategy Working Group
- Upskilling Working Group – Nursing
- Acute Care Program Family Engagement Quality Initiative
- ENCORE Therapeutic Neighbourhoods (for inpatients)

Reviews: Books, films and more

The FRC has a small curated collection of family-facing books available for borrowing. If you'd like to write a review for *The Family Voice*, or learn about volunteering at the FRC, please call, drop in or send us a note at family.engagement@camh.ca.



Finding Our Way: Family experiences in mental health recovery. Stuart Clarfield (editor). The Mission Media Company Inc., 2018, 173 pp. \$36.

The gist: *Finding Our Way* is a collection of stories from The Journey Home documentary, part of The Family Guide to Mental Health Recovery project. Family members, family workers and community leaders share their personal experiences about the journey of recovery from mental illness and addiction.

The good: I really enjoyed this book. Each story educated me further in my own journey on a profound level, giving me hope, validation and concrete advice. These first-person stories of families facing depression, PTSD, bipolar and more are told from the heart. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau contributed a chapter talking about his mother.

The bad: For family members experiencing the early stages of a loved ones' diagnosis, this book might be a tough read. Some stories may not resonate with all readers, but the structure of the book allows for skipping stories that don't apply or are too difficult to read.

The book and the DVD can be borrowed from the FRC library. The book is available directly at

www.familyguidetomentalhealth.com/finding-our-way, from Cavershambooksellers.com and possibly at the store: 98 Harbord St., Toronto ON M5S 1G8, 416 944-0962.

—Gilda Martens, CAMH FAC member



6 Balloons

The gist: *6 Balloons* is a 2018 drama from director Marja-Lewis Ryan. Over the course of one night, a woman drives across L.A. with her brother, who is addicted to heroin, in search of a detox center. www.netflix.com/ca/title/80130625

The good: *6 Balloons* is a brilliantly nuanced depiction of heroin addiction that deeply resonated with me. I appreciated that the focus was not on the parents, who are typically central to the narrative on the devastating impacts of drug addiction on families (understandably so). Instead, the film shows the ways in which we siblings are affected by and cope with the brutal reality of addiction, and experience the pain of loving someone we can't help. I also felt it did a good job of showing that someone with addiction is not a singular identity, and not confined to "skid row" or a particular category or class of people or their families.

The bad: Running a short 71 minutes, I felt that the film was somewhat clipped and abbreviated from the start, with many scenes cut down to their basic elements. I ended up feeling disappointed that the film didn't dive into the emotional texture as much as it could have. *6 Balloons* may be disturbing to watch for those who do not have an understanding of drug addiction or have never loved someone with addiction issues.

—Mara Haase, CAMH FAC member

Resources

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (FRC) at CAMH

The FRC offers a safe, welcoming space, with a child-friendly play area. There is a wide range of printed educational materials on mental health and addiction, a lending library, recommended resources and information on community supports, and a bulletin board where family-focused events are posted.

Drop in Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

100 Stokes Street (Bell Gateway Building) ground floor, room 1314

Tel.: 416 535-8501 ext. 33202

Email: family.engagement@camh.ca

www.camh.ca/families

ACCESS CAMH

Providing centralized information, intake and scheduling for most CAMH services, Access CAMH makes it easy for patients, families and medical professionals to find the help and services they need with a single phone call.

Access CAMH Family Line at 416 535-8501, press 2, then listen to the choices, wait until the end, and you'll be connected.

For community resources on a wide range of topics, check out: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/guides-and-publications/community-resource-sheets>

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION- FAMILY OUTREACH AND RESPONSE PROGRAM

Offers educational information, support services and referral to friends and family of people recovering from serious mental illness from the perspectives of health care professionals and people with lived experience.

416 539-9449

<http://toronto.cmha.ca/programsservices/family-support>

FAME (FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH EVERYWHERE) RECONNECT

FAME offers families ongoing monthly support groups across the GTA. The groups are a drop-in format and are facilitated by FAME staff. One-on-one support is also offered.

416 248-2050

<http://www.reconnect.on.ca/>

Family matters: We want to hear from you!

Family members—including relatives, partners, friends, co-workers and others who come forward in times of need—play an essential role in supporting the care and recovery of people living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.

Do you have an experience or story to share?

Do you have feedback about your experience at CAMH?

Your voice matters and we want to hear from you!

How to share feedback with CAMH's Family Advisory Committee (FAC):

- Phone: 416 535-8501 ext. 33202
- Email: family.engagement@camh.ca
- In person: CAMH's Family Resource Centre, room 1314, ground floor of the Bell Gateway Building at 100 Stokes Street on Queen Street site. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Monday to Friday.



The logo for CAMH (Canadian Mental Health Association) features the word "camh" in a large, bold, purple lowercase font. Below it, the words "mental health is health" are written in a smaller, purple, lowercase font, with "is" in a lighter shade of purple.