

It's Time To Talk Mental Health

Free Public Presentation On March 1st Will Shine Light on Mental Illness and Powerful Strategies for Recovery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PEMBROKE – It's time to talk mental health.

On March 1st, Mental Health Services of Renfrew County will shine a light on mental illness, local resources and powerful strategies for recovery as they host an informative free public presentation at Pembroke's Clarion Hotel (900 Pembroke St. E).

Featuring personal stories of recovery, a panel discussion, a question and answer session and a chance to learn more about Renfrew County Resources, *Living with Mental Illness: Powerful Strategies for Recovery* will benefit those living with mental illness, their family, friends and co-workers, health care providers and the general public who are seeking more information on mental illness and the support that is available.

"This event is not about any particular mental illness but is about starting the conversation, shedding the stigma that still exists and sharing a message of hope about recovery," said Mireille Delorme, Director of Mental Health Services of Renfrew County (MHSRC), a program administered by the Pembroke Regional Hospital.

"This event also provides an opportunity for the public to connect with and learn about Renfrew County's mental health and addiction service partners who will be on hand with informative displays and take away information," Mrs. Delorme said, adding that the free, public event, takes Wednesday, March 1st at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 6 p.m.

The presentation will begin with a keynote address by internationally renowned speaker and client advocate Pat Deegan who will share her own journey of recovery as someone living with schizophrenia.

Ms. Deegan is an Adjunct Professor at Dartmouth College's Geisel School of Medicine and is the founder of "Common Ground Academy" supporting individuals, families and psychiatrists in shared treatment decision-making. A recognized thought leader and disruptive innovator in the field of behavioural health recovery, Ms. Deegan lived her own journey of recovery after being diagnosed with schizophrenia.

A panel discussion will follow with brief remarks from those representing families, peers and health care providers, before opening the floor up to questions from those in attendance.

Panelists include:

Claude Lurette: Mental Health advocate, educator, collaborator, 2009 Inspiration Award recipient. Drawing from his recovery with addictions and bi-polar disorder, Claude contributed to numerous regional, provincial and national policy changes and systemic improvements to care that reflect best practice that ensures client treatment with dignity and respect.

Paul McIntyre: President of Mental Illness Caregiver Association of Canada, a peer lead organization supporting families with vocation, education, housing and other aspects of future planning.

August Mcree: Peer support worker for PRH Mental Health Services of Renfrew County. She draws from her lived experience with trauma, mental illness and poverty to challenge stigma. She believes that people have the ability and the right to define their own path to recovery.

Sabine Mersmann: PRH Vice-President of Patient Services for Seniors and Community Care. Sabine has spent the past 16 years at Pembroke Regional Hospital in progressive Clinical Director roles. Since July 2012, Sabine's responsibilities as a VP have included oversight for Renfrew County's Mental Health Services program .

For more information about the March 1st *Living with Mental Illness: Powerful Strategies for Recovery* event, please call 1-800-991-7711 or visit www.pembrokeregionalhospital.ca/mentalhealthservices. No registration is required.

MHSRC offers a full range of programs and services supporting mental wellness and recovery for individuals 16 years and older living with mental illness and/or addiction. Professional, compassionate, personalized care is offered at no cost, in-home and in the community to all service users, both as hospital in-patients or recovering at home in the community, on a voluntary basis.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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