

# May 3-9, 2009

## Children's Mental Health Week

### "HOW LONG MUST I WAIT?"

The Huron-Perth Centre is a community-based children's mental health centre funded by the Ministry of Children & Youth Services. The Centre also offers various youth justice funded by MCYS-Youth Justice Division and specialized adult services funded through other sources. On behalf of Huron-Perth Centre for Children & Youth we invite you to participate in "How long must I wait?," our workplace awareness campaign intended to increase understanding for the mental health needs of children & youth in our communities. Share this information in any way you can.

### THE EXTENT OF THE NEED...DID YOU KNOW?

**That 18.1% children between the ages of 3 and 17 have a diagnosable mental health disorder? That means one in five children and youth between the age of 3 and 17 are living with a treatable mental health problem.**

- They are all around us, trying to cope – at school, on the playground, and at home.
- The cost to everyone is high – to the children in need, to their families and to the community.
- Left untreated, the mental health and behaviour of these children worsens.
- They may become bullies.
- They may disrupt classrooms or drop out of school.
- They could develop an eating disorder. They might even abuse drugs.
- Worse – far worse – they may attempt or commit suicide.

**That Suicide is the leading cause of non-accidental deaths in 10 to 19 year olds?**

- 4% of adolescents get seriously depressed.
- Most children and youth who suffer from depression also have another mental health condition.
- Depression is a significant risk factor for suicide, especially among females.
- **That children and youth under age 16 from Huron-Perth-Bruce-Grey who need to be hospitalized for serious mental health concerns do not have any access to in-patient beds?**
- We can put a price tag on treatment, on dropping out of school or the societal impact of our children and youth who are not going to participate in the workforce.
- We simply cannot put a price tag on this devastating loss of life.

**That early intervention and treatment can ease the burden of the emotional and financial costs of mental illness?**

- We also know that the funding for children's mental health agencies has not kept pace with rising costs and increased demand for services.
- Children and youth are subjected to long wait lists to receive treatment ~ The Huron-Perth Centre recognizes that our limited resources often means that families wait for our services.
- Any wait is too long when children and their family are struggling.
- In a balanced system of care for children there would be a full range of service that had the capacity to meet the needs of our children and youth. The Huron-Perth Centre with others continue to advocate locally, regionally and provincially toward this vision of an adequate system for children and youth.

**Our children deserve better.**

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Across this province the harsh reality is that there are far more children who need help than there are resources to meet their needs. For every child who gets help there are at least two more who wait before services can begin. Huron-Perth Centre continues to examine ways in which it can better serve children, youth and families. The Centre has a long tradition of seeking partnerships with other agencies in order to stretch the funding it receives for children's mental health services. The Centre also offers a weekly drop-in clinic in each county which provides a timely response to non-urgent concerns and a way to support families during the waiting period. The Huron-Perth Centre with others works locally, regionally and provincially to highlight the need for resources and the cost to children, youth and families when services are not available.

The need for acute care beds for children and youth under 16 remains a significant service gap for youth in serious distress and it places extensive burden on families, Huron-Perth Centre resources and other professionals who work with these children and youth. In 2007 a coalition to advocate for access to beds, the "Call to Action," was formed and citizens of Huron and Perth continue to sign petitions to indicate their support for action to bring resolution to this situation.

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## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Become aware of the statistics** ~ With 1 in 5 children between the ages of 3-17 struggling with a diagnosable mental health concern, you know these children and youth! Think of the children and families you know and look for ways to show understanding and support. Despite their issues these children want to live normal, productive lives where they are valued for their strengths.
- **Seek ways to promote positive mental health** ~ Help us to reduce the stigma and raise awareness by seeking ways to promote positive mental health in school and work environments and in your communities. For resources visit the following websites :  
[www.hpcentre.on.ca](http://www.hpcentre.on.ca)  
[www.kidsmentalhealth.ca](http://www.kidsmentalhealth.ca)  
[www.mindyourmind.com](http://www.mindyourmind.com)  
USEFUL WEBSITE FOR PARENTS: [parents@parentsforchildrensmentalhealth.org](mailto:parents@parentsforchildrensmentalhealth.org)
- **Participate in the Coalition to Secure Inpatient Treatment for our children and youth** ~ If you have not yet done so, sign the petition to indicate your support.
- **ATTEND "MUSIC FOR MENTAL HEALTH"** ~ Friday, May 8 @ Central United Church in Stratford ~ 7pm; free will donation.
- **Host an event or consider individual donations** ~ Your gifts will be used to help the Huron-Perth Centre meet rising costs and maintain service levels. Every little bit helps us to help families.
- **THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN "HOW LONG MUST I WAIT?"** ~ Do not forget to tell us how you shared this information; complete the attached form and show your support to children and youth with mental health needs.

For more information about our services: [www.hpcentre.on.ca](http://www.hpcentre.on.ca) or call the office closest to you:  
STRATFORD 519-273-3373 LISTOWEL 519-291-1088 CLINTON 519-482-3931