

Communicating With People With Mental Health Disabilities: What Justice Sector Professionals Can Do To Remove Barriers

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Moderator: Trevor Tymchuk , P-HSJCC CKE Chair

HSJCC Webinar

- We will have a Q&A period at the end of our webinar. To ask a question, please type your question in the chat box.
- Power-point presentation will be emailed to you following the webinar.
- Please complete the brief evaluation survey following the webinar.



Presenter

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**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Toronto

Communicating With People With Mental Health Disabilities: What Justice Sector Professionals Can Do To Remove Barriers

An Introduction to A New Online Course

Living

Working

Belonging

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Today's webinar

Introducing a new online, multi-media training course:

Communicating with People with Mental Health Disabilities—What Justice Sector Professionals Can Do to Remove Barriers.

In today's webinar you will receive an orientation of this free online course and learn about its key features and how it might be used.



Audience: Who is this course for?

This course has been designed for people working in the Ontario justice sector, including:

- members of the judiciary
- tribunal members and staff
- lawyers
- paralegals
- professionals working in courthouses
- professionals working in legal or probation offices
- any other justice sector professionals who provide services to people with mental health disabilities



Why is this course important?

- People with mental health disabilities face barriers in all sectors of society.
- Justice sector professionals must understand these barriers and how to use effective communication to increase equal access to services.



Legal Obligations of Justice Sector Professionals

Justice sector professionals

- must communicate with people with mental health disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability and to provide communication supports on request.
- need information, understanding, techniques and strategies to meet these obligations.



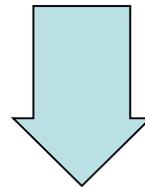
Goals of the Course

- increase awareness of the legal obligations of justice sector service providers to meet the communication needs of people with mental health disabilities
- increase awareness of mental health disabilities and related communication barriers
- provide practical information and strategies on identifying and removing barriers in order to offer effective communications and services to people with mental health disabilities.



Scope of the Needs Assessment

- Extensive province-wide consultations with 100 individuals
 - justice professionals
 - people with mental health disabilities who had been exposed to the justice system
- Comprehensive literature review



Similar themes emerged



Highlights of Identified Training Needs

- Develop knowledge of mental health disabilities
- Ability to communicate clearly about the legal system with those who have mental illness, most of whom are not legal professionals.
- Ability to direct those with mental illness to support resources which can assist them in navigating the justice system.
- Ability to understand the holistic challenges of people with mental illness encountered in the justice system.
- Understand the importance of equality and inclusion for all people, and the stigma faced by those with mental illness.



Communication Skills Training Needed

“All agreed that communications could be improved and that an effective training program available to all court professionals and other personnel would be an essential factor in achieving the necessary improvements.”

Training Needs Assessment, prepared for CMHA by Health Innovations Group, April 2013, p.5



Need for This Course

“In most cases very little training on communication had been offered. **All participants enthusiastically endorsed the importance of the envisioned training program.**”

Training Needs Assessment, prepared for CMHA by Health Innovations Group, April 2013, p.2



Course Structure

Module 1: Overview

Module 2: Social and medical models of disability
Common mental health issues and related disabilities

Module 3: Stigma and discrimination
Social determinants of health
Impact of trauma

Module 4: Communication strategies

Module 1: Introduction



Module 1: Introduction

- Goals
- Audience
- Structure
- Terminology
- Legal obligations
- Opening video montage
- Survey



Module 1: Legal Obligations

Ontario Human Rights Code

- protects the rights of people with mental health disabilities

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

- Customer Service Standard





Module 1: Spotlight

“As I reflect upon my years of practice, I realize that I could have done much more to accommodate the needs of many of my clients that I’ve represented who have mental health disabilities. This course will offer strategies to assist with accommodation, but will also encourage justice professionals to think critically and creatively about effective accommodation.”

- Justice Edward Kelly



Module 2: Mental Health, Substance Use and Other Disabilities



Module 2: Learning Objectives

By the end of Module 2 you will be able to:

- define disability and accommodation as it pertains to mental health
- describe the social and medical models of disability
- give examples of common mental health issues
- briefly explain related disabilities.



Module 2: Highlights

- Disability and accommodation
 - Resources that can help
- Social and medical models of disability
 - Systemic barriers vs. individual impairment
- Common mental health issues
 - Depression; anxiety; mania; psychosis
- Related disabilities
 - Addictions; concurrent disorders; dual diagnoses



Module 2: Myth Check

Most people with mental health disabilities and/or substance use problems need to hit “rock bottom” before they have a chance to recover.

Question: Is this a myth or a fact?



Module 2: Myth Check

This is a myth.

The fact is...

Mental health and addiction issues can be treated at any stage. In fact, it puts a person at greater risk to delay treatment until the related problems severely affect that person's life (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2005).



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Module 3: Social Impact on Mental Health and Addictions



Module 3: Learning Objectives

By the end of Module 3 you will be able to:

- provide examples of the social determinants of health
- describe the impact of the social determinants of health on people with mental health and addiction issues
- discuss the impact of stigma on people with mental health and addiction issues
- explain how trauma can impact a service user's experience and communication



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Module 3: Highlights

In Module 3, you will develop a deeper understanding of the social impact on mental health and addiction by exploring:

- Stigma and discrimination
- Social determinants of health
- Trauma



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Module 3: Practice Example

A service user needs services that counter staff cannot provide. They refer the person to duty counsel for assistance, but the person won't leave the counter.

In this situation, it can be helpful for staff at the counter to understand that the person might have been referred several times from one service provider to another, and consider how this can be a trigger for trauma.

Question: How might staff work with this service user?



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Module 3: Practice Example

Possible responses could include:

- A staff person might offer to walk with the person to the duty counsel to ensure service.
- Staff might engage a courthouse mental health worker, if available, who could talk with the person and assist in obtaining the services



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Module 4: Effective Communications



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Module 4: Learning Objectives

By the end of this module you will be able to:

- describe the importance of effective communication with people with mental health disabilities
- demonstrate understanding of the factors that can impact effective communication with people with mental health disabilities in the justice sector
- identify and apply strategies to enhance communication
- employ strategies to facilitate accommodation.



Module 4: Factors to Recognize

- A person's behavior might (or might not) be related to a mental health disability
- Other factors might be affecting a person's behavior and interactions



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Module 4: Factors to Consider

- The other person's experience and perspective
- The context and physical environment:
 - Where you meet
 - When you meet
 - How you meet
- Previous successful encounters



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Module 4: Accommodation Strategies

Three general types of communication situation considered:

- Speaking with someone
- Meeting with someone
- Gathering information from someone



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Module 4: A Few Strategies

- Express empathy
- Use concrete language
- Reflect and summarize
- Check for understanding
- Limit distractions and stay focused
- Invite inclusion of a support person
- Ask open-ended questions

...and many more practical tips and strategies!



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Module 4: Video

“Compassion, when you boil it down, is just treating the person with respect, listening to them, taking the time to explain things, understanding where they’re coming from, and not immediately discounting what they have to say because they are apparently suffering from a mental disorder. So I think when you add all of those things up, what you’ve got at the end of it is something that can be summarized as compassion.”

-The Honourable Justice Richard Schneider



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Additional Materials To Support Your Work

- Sample case studies
- Additional videos
- Additional quotes
- Glossary
- Tip sheets
- Additional resources



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How do I take this course?

This course is free and can be accessed at:

<http://www.mhjcc.ca>.

- 1) Create a user account by providing a username and email address
- 2) Click on the link in the upper left corner under My Courses: “Communicating with People with Mental Health Disabilities: What Justice Sector Professionals Can do to Remove Barriers”



Questions?



Thank you!

For information contact:

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For more information about the Provincial
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www.hsjcc.on.ca

