



Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2021
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present: Katie Almond (Co-chair) Riverdale Probation and Parole; Susan Davis, Gerstein Crisis Centre; Domenica Dieo HSJCC; Natasha Bartlett, Fred Victor; Debbie Lynch, CTYS; Judy Virgo, Fred Victor; Flora Matheson, Centre for Urban Health Solutions; Robin Cuff, CAMH Drug Treatment Court; Scott Skinner, Community Network of Specialized Care Toronto Region; Charlene Crews, Toronto Housing; Suzanne Lajambe, JHS Toronto; Courtney Miller, Operation Springboard; Deborah Rodolphe; City of Toronto; Ahmanhkyah Malcom-Witter, City of Toronto; Shane Rolland, Toronto Police Service (TPS); Catherine Wiseman-Hakes, Toronto Rehab Institute; McMaster University; Jeanette Blair, Sistering; Maya Rehou, Operation Springboard; Kaelen Boyd, Institute for Advancement in Mental Health; Nick Harrilall, Sound Times; Elaine Amsterdam, Gerstein Crisis Centre; Elizabeth Pereira, Legal Aid Ontario, Old City Hall; Jane Rumleskie, Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services(MCCSS); Barbara Domenech, Cota; Tricia Dunbar, CHIRS; Greg McInnes, Salvation Army

Regrets: Esther Daniel, Justice of the Peace; Mary Hogan, Judiciary; Gord Reid, Toronto Police Service(TPS)

Land Acknowledgement

Susan noted the Land Acknowledgement.

Welcome and Introductions

Katie welcomed new committee members Deborah Rodolphe and Ahmanhkyah Malcom-Witter, Youth Outreach Counsellor – Youth Justice with the City of Toronto.

Review of September 10, and November 5, 2020 Minutes

The minutes of September 10, 2020 and November 5, 2020 were approved.

Review Action Items:

Action items were reviewed and completed.

Lunch and Learns

Domenica reported on the virtual Lunch N’ Learn second session “Effectively Working with People using Crystal Methamphetamine” with Sanda Kazazic that took place on November 5th. Seventy nine people attended this session. All Local HSJCC members were invited to attend. No registration was required because the Microsoft Teams video link and/or call-in number was circulated with the invitation.

Domenica reported that the Provincial HSJCC established an Anti-Racism Committee. They are suggesting that the Local and Regional HSJCC tables to explore Anti-Racism content/ education and/or training in the activities that we are doing, for example, the Lunch and Learn sessions.

Next Lunch and Learn – Potential topic: Conversation with Dr Trevor Morey : Insights on working with the homeless population during COVID-19

Themes discussed: If each local develops Anti-Racism interventions, they can be duplicated. As well as there is value in working together with a common message. We may want to go beyond training and education and think about specific Anti-Racism actions.

What does Anti-Racism intervention look like?

The Committee was informed that the S-HSJCC is working on developing an Anti-Racism educational series. They had a meeting to brainstorm strategies to address Anti-Racism in the context of mental health and the justice sector. It was suggested we start with doing a session on defining anti-racism?

- The committee unanimously agreed to recognize and address challenges in racialized communities and enhance Anti-Racism education, as well as engagement and/or allocating funds for a comprehensive Anti-Racism training and educational platform.
- The committee unanimously agreed to incorporate as pillars for the workplan 2021/22 the following:
- To recognize and address emerging health equity challenges during and post COVID-19 by working collaboratively in identifying the gaps and needs of equity-seeking populations by focusing on Anti-Racism.
- To recognize, support and engage with Black and Indigenous communities by being self-aware and reflective about the equity impact of social determinants of health and how they may manifest in the work of the Downtown Toronto HSJCC.

Ahmanhkyah suggested names of people who do work on Anti-Racism. They are Chris Leonard and Nene Kwasi Kafele.

Review Workplan for 2020-2021

What we accomplished:

- Domenica reported that we are meeting regularly; information sharing continues, our virtual Lunch N' Learns are very successful which reflects that we are addressing relevant topics that reflect the needs and gaps of our membership.

What are the new gaps:

- COVID-19 has exposed inequities in the context of health equity and access to services due to not having resources and/or support i.e. physical space or access to the required technology- Internet, phone or computer.
- Virtual gaps will become permanent so how can we address this collectively?
- Several members noted similar concerns re how can we make sure that we maintain contact with people going through the justice system?
- Judy identified the importance for agencies to come together in identifying issues of how we can provide a good service under and/or after COVID, it is very important for service providers to be more intentional and specific with addressing the gaps and needs of the people we serve.

- Maya identified the importance to recognize that in custody and out of custody clients have different needs and how this affects individuals mental health.
- Robin noted the impact that isolation is having on client's mental health, as well as the drug supply changes is leading to more overdoses. As well as it is difficult to get housing providers to accept people with substance use issues.
- Elizabeth informed that clients are now getting bench warrants when they don't "attend" court - which is only being done virtually, as well as being able to obtain disclosure in their case. For some clients their challenge is lack of access to a phone; for others it is simply too difficult to wait on a phone line for lengthy periods of time until being called upon - it can be hours. When my office is contacted we assist with rescinding bench warrants, but even this process is difficult because it still means client has to virtually attend court to have the bench warrant rescinded.
- Flora informed that she has received a grant, with funding from CIHR and MOH, to conduct a COVID-19 study addressing service disruptions for clients with MH and substance use issues who have been released from custody. She will send the study summary for circulation to Domenica. She can present the study findings and recommendations to this committee.
- Catherine informed that she is providing on-going education, training and communication strategies to front line staff in the justice system at 311 Jarvis youth courthouse creating and building a community of practices. She suggested adding the term neurodisability and/or neurodiversity to the workplan given what we know about the prevalence of neurodisability and justice. Resources shared: Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) website: <https://access-to-justice.org>. She suggested we have a presentation by the ABI Justice. They produced an ABI justice tool kit. For more info click here <https://www.abijustice.org>.
- The committee agreed to continue with the same budget to support the TTC tokens and food vouchers at the College Park and Old City Hall courthouse. Food insecurity issues have increased due to drop-ins being closed during COVID. The distribution is overseen by Fred Victor and the Bail Program.
- The committee agreed to meet five times per year; May, September, November, January and March on the first Thursday of the month, unless there is a holiday from 8:30 am to 10:00 am. If so, the meeting will be scheduled for the 2nd Thursday of the month. We will continue to meet virtually until further notice.
- The committee agreed to have three Lunch N' Learns per year virtually until further notice.

Who is missing at the table?

Equity and racialized seeking communities.

How is COVID-19 affecting service delivery in your organization, sector and/or community?/Legal Aid barriers and challenges

See above

Agency/Organization Updates

Deferred to next meeting

Video Bail – no updates

Service Resolution/Coordination Issues:

Katie noted that there are top- up funds and that more information will be provided at the next meeting.

Updates from T-HSJCC and Provincial HSJCC:

Katie reported that planning has started for the virtual Provincial HSJCC 2021 conference. The Toronto Regional HSJCC meeting is scheduled to meet on January 25th.

Presenter for next meeting: TBA

Previous meeting: Robin noted the need to address issues at the planned Bail Centre; Specialized Courts, OW/ODSP changes; client's issues with access to services due to not having internet access, cell phones or computers.

Action Items: Domenica to incorporate into the 2021/22 workplan the following pillars: To recognize and address emerging health equity challenges during and post COVID-19 by working collaboratively in identifying the gaps and needs of equity seeking populations by focusing on Anti- Racism. To recognize, support and engage with Black and Indigenous communities by being self-aware and reflective about the equity impact of social determinants of health and how they may manifest in the work of the Downtown Toronto HSJCC.

Domenica will plan logistics for the next Lunch N' Learn.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 4, 2021 (virtually) from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.