

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 21, 2023
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present: Susan Davis (Co-chair), Gerstein Centre; Tammy Tinney, North York General Hospital; Domenica Dileo, HSJCC; Natasha Bartlett, Fred Victor; Patricia Pagnani, Toronto Bail Program; Sikora Bozena, Community Network of Specialized Care Toronto Region; Julie Osbelt, Toronto ABI Network; Tricia Dunbar, CHIRS; Dana Riley, E Fry Toronto; Imtiaz Mousalien, TAIBU Community Health Centre; Melissa Maguire, SolGen; Debbie Lynch, CTYS; Farzana Griffin, Toronto Bail Program; Sarah James, JHS Toronto; Tazio Clarke, City of Toronto; Rachel Bromberg, International Crisis Response Association; Brad Scarr, MNO.

Regrets: Scott McKean, City of Toronto; John McInnes, Judiciary; Carol O Neil, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.

Land Acknowledgement

Tricia Dunbar provided the Land Acknowledgement, recognizing the history of the Indigenous People and their contribution to the land we stand on. Members suggested that we share doing the Land Acknowledgement. Please email Susan or Domenica if you are interested before the next meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves by providing an in-depth introduction to the work they do. Brad noted that the MNO has expanded across the province. Susan acknowledged the importance of knowing what we do and being in one space; sharing issues is helpful and brings us together.

Review/Approval Minutes from June 8, 2023 Meeting

The motion to approve the June 8, 2023, minutes was made by Tammy and seconded by Melissa. The minutes were approved.

Action Items follow-up

In Progress: review Terms of Reference membership definition at the Local meetings.

Domenica circulated the Members' evaluation summary. 100% of the people who participated said that they felt they were well informed. Nine out of the 13 regular members completed the evaluation. The member's feedback affirmed that the Anti-Racism series and information sharing were helpful.

Discussion ensued regarding the definition of membership and regular membership. We must have a process for people to become members so that one understands the purpose of the HSJCC, noting that we are not an exclusive group.

Toronto Regional Co-chair position: Susan reported that Sarah James is replacing Mark Linton on the HSJCC committees. Per our model, one of the Co-chairs needs to be from the justice sector and the other from the community mental health. Sarah has expressed interest in the Toronto Regional Co-chair position. She recently joined the HSJCC and has a strong understanding of our purpose. She is the Co-chair of the TSDC Reintegration Table and overlooks various programs at JHS Toronto. Tazio Clarke is the past Co-chair of the Scarborough HSJCC and is currently working as the Policy Development Officer at the City of Toronto to prevent Gun

Violence. Having three Co-chairs can be beneficial to the work of the HSJCC. The committee agreed to have three Toronto Regional HSJCC Co-chairs. Sarah and Tazio were nominated by Dana and seconded by Melissa. The committee unanimously voted to support the motion.

Updates from the Toronto Local HSJCCs

Susan noted that preparation is going on for the Hybrid Toronto Local HSJCC mega meeting on November 2, 2023, at the OCJT. Flora Matheson and the St. Michael research team will help facilitate and lead the discussion. A light breakfast will be provided.

S-HSJCC Dana provided the report:

The committee met on September 13, 2023, and discussed how transitioning to the Regional Bail Centre and the Ontario Court of Justice – Toronto (OCJT) affects service delivery in your organization, sector, and/or community.

Issues identified were:

- Travel challenges for individuals or family members to go to OCJT. When they get there, they are unable to find where to go. Clients and family members' main complaint is that they can't contact anyone at the courthouse.
- The increase in travel cost and time to go to OCJT affects clients, resulting in more bench warrants being issued.
- Often, documents are not at the OCJT, and probation does not have the documents, which leads to more bench warrants.
- Family members trying to file a FORM 2 don't know who to speak to at the TRBC or OCJT- nobody to help them when they are there.
- The three-agency merger highlights that MH diversion looks different with each agency.
- There is much confusion for clients and staff.
- Two new members joined the committee.

WT-HSJCC Debbie provided the report:

At the September 12th meeting, there was a presentation from the Fred Victor mental health court diversion program at the OCJT.

- The committee discussed how transitioning to the Regional Bail Centre and the Ontario Court of Justice – Toronto (OCJT) affects service delivery in your organization, sector, and/or community.

Issues identified were:

- Travel difficulties for clients to get to OCJT from the TRBC when released can occur late in the day or evening (just before midnight).
- Evening transportation is slow.
- When released from the TRBC, the Fred Victor MH worker does a comprehensive intake, if possible, at OCJT.
- The police division where one is charged will determine which agency to refer to: Fred Victor, Cota of CMHA.
- The Crown Attorney has the final say if an offender is referred to the mental health diversion program. There is no designated Crown Attorney for the MH Court. There is a gap in Crown's knowledge of MH, TBI, ABI and dual diagnosis. Thus, MH staff are doing more education with the legal staff.
- The Crown Attorney's Office is changing its Divisions, impacting the referral process.
- MH court was dealing with low-risk offences, not high-risk. Having the MH Court Diversion program in one space has highlighted that each agency has interpreted and practices the MH policy differently.

NY-H SJCC Tammy provided the report:

On September 14, the committee discussed how transitioning to the Regional Bail Centre and the Ontario Court of Justice – Toronto (OCJT) affects service delivery in your organization, sector, and/or community.

Issues identified were:

- Prisoners belonging and transportation challenges when released at the TSDC, TRBC and Police Divisions.
- A red bag program protocol was established 2017; is there one in Toronto? Who needs to be at the table to address the prisoners' belonging issues? Durham police do release the prisoner's belongings?
- Care packages at the Bail Centre are going quickly.
- Lack of shelter and housing.
- Women released from the TRBC have transportation struggles to get back to Vanier. How can we support people to get to point A to B when the Go Trains do not go there? We need a unified voice. Bring concerns to the P-HSJCC.
- Lack of transportation resources
- The John Howard Reintegration trailer is not open until late pm when folks can be released from the TSDC.
- TSDC releases folks up until midnight. They lack resources when released late at night, have no shelter, etc.
- When one is released at night, their original court paper has to come to the TSDC in person.
- If the system requires respect, should the system not respond with respect?
- Somebody who had a wheelchair in jail was released without a wheelchair or walking devices.
- Tammy noted that the NY-HSJCC is also working on recruitment for the second co-chair position.

DT-HSJCC Susan provided the report:

On September 14, the committee discussed how transitioning to the Regional Bail Centre and the Ontario Court of Justice – Toronto (OCJT) affects service delivery in your organization, sector, and/or community.

Issues identified were:

- Transfer prisoners' belongings when released at various points, such as bail, police station, or TSDC. Often, they do not have their house keys, wallets, medication or phone to get back home.
- No consistency of crowns – room changes impact the connection with clients. Susan noted that bringing this to the table is crucial: how do we use our collective voice to speak to this problem?
- Red Bag Program? Who should be at the table to solve the problem? Late release from Bail and individuals do not have their belongings with them. Duty Counsel notes where their belongings are, and then they have to return to TSDC or where they come from to pick them up. Often, clients don't know how to go to the TSDC late at night.
- There needs to be more Lunch and Learn addressing MH issues to address stigmatization.
- Challenges with paperwork are not always at the place that is needed.
- Prisoners' belongings are a significant challenge for prisoners with cognitive impairment.
- Members suggested that the OCJT Accessibility Coordinator be invited to our meeting regarding accommodation.
- Members noted that accessibility is a human rights issue.
- No consistent or trauma-informed approaches are used by the legal staff who make decisions on individuals, impacting their continuity of treatment at the Drug Treatment Court. Need a collective voice; bring concerns to the P-HSJCC and MAG?
- Is there a Mental Health Program at the TRBC?
- It is essential to use a psychoeducational approach for the legal sector and emphasize the benefits of trauma-informed practices and consistent staff who understand MH and substance use.
- Many cases are not being heard because there is not enough staff.

- The committee would like to do some advocacy from the Toronto Regional table, such as letter writing outlining these problems and what we would like to see done about them.
- Release structure concerns: no one is present to help when one is released in the late evening.

Patricia and Natasha noted that a meeting has taken place to address the lack of consistency between the bench and the Crown, and they are working on it.

A letter can be helpful to write to ensure the issues identified above are addressed. Natasha, Susan and Robin Cuff are interested in writing a letter. If anyone else is interested, please let us know. We can feed the letter to the P-HSJCC.

Update from the Toronto Regional Anti-Racism Ad Hoc Group

Patricia reported that the Anti-Racism Ad Hoc Group agreed to have a follow-up series starting in October. Dr. Reece recommended a session on white supremacy and anti-Indigenous racism. The series will have five parts. Each Local HSJCC will lead one session.

The order is:

1. Foundational 101 - October 26 (Lead by T-HSJCC)
2. Whiteness and White Supremacy - November 23 (Lead by NY-HSJCC)
3. Anti-Indigenous Racism - TBD (January 2024) (Lead by S-HSJCC)
4. W2B - February 2024 (Lead by DT-HSJCC)
5. Organizational/Operational Change - March 2024 (Lead by WT-HSJCC)

Current Issues:

TRBC and OCJT see above

Justice Centres – no updates

Bozena notes that there was a meeting with Sound Times; they provide alternative space for virtual court on site. The main concern is the noise level; the limited space makes it challenging to hear what is said.

Toronto Community Crisis Services: Susan reported that the TCCS will be city-wide in 2024—over 8000 responses in one year among the four teams. The pilots are working well, and there has been maturity, cultivating relationships and collaboration, creating pathways across the region. To access TCCS, call 211 and ask for it, or one can be diverted through 911. We are moving away from a police response to a mental health crisis to a health response rooted in the community and connected to the resources that people need. Susan noted that Two Spirit has launched a telephone crisis line for Indigenous people, 12 hours a day. Bozena reported that Surrey Place has added a staff position to the Streets to Homes program.

Update from the P-HSJCC:

The annual conference will take place **on November 15-16, 2023.**

Discussion regarding intentional values

The committee agreed that our intentional equity perspective was practiced at this meeting. Are we rooting this from the lens of our anti-racism commitments regarding Indigenous, Black and Racialized populations? It is important to note people's struggles and reflect on our intentions.

Action Items Follow-up:

- Domenica will send the invitation to the committee members for the next meeting.
- Local HSJCCs will discuss having an annual mega-meeting with the four locals.
- Letter writing ad hoc group, contact Domenica if you are interested to join.

The next meeting will occur virtually on Thursday, November 30, 2023, from 9:30 am to 11:00 am.