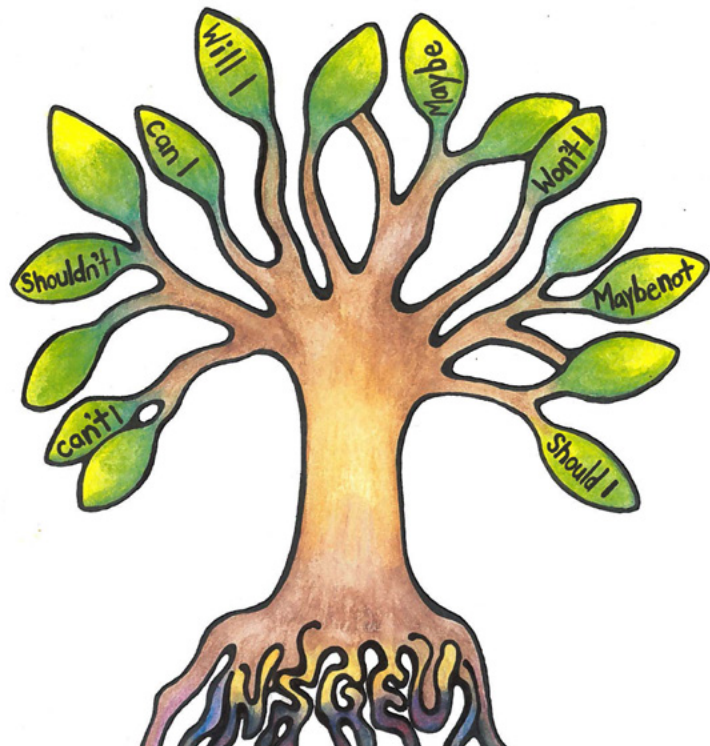


NSGEU

Resource Guide to Mental Health & Addiction Services in Nova Scotia



Message from NSGEU President

The health of the people of Nova Scotia – not only workers, but youth and seniors – is critical to the overall wellbeing of this province. But health isn't just about our physical condition: it's also about our mental health.

Mental illness can be debilitating without access to the appropriate supports and resources. While there are actually many mental health resources available in Nova Scotia, Schools Plus, Employee & Family Assistance Program—our healthcare system is very complex and, quite frankly, it can be challenging to navigate it and find the appropriate supports when you need them.

The NSGEU tries to ensure all members and their families are supported, both within the workplace and in the community. A big part of this means helping people access resources they need to improve their lives. The first step to access is ensuring people have accurate, up-to-date information.

During the NSGEU's 2013-2016 term, the NSGEU's Ad-Hoc Health Care Committee was formed. This committee realized there was often a disconnect between these critical resources and the people who need them. So, they

decided to try and bridge this gap, and to try and assist Nova Scotians who need to access all mental health and addiction services in our province, by creating this guide, Mental Health for All of Us.

Inside you will find a wealth of information for adults, children, youth, families, and seniors, as well as valuable references and resources to help everyone better understand mental health issues and our healthcare system.

We are very proud of the hard work undertaken by the NSGEU's Ad-Hoc Health Care Committee in the creation of this resource. I'd like to sincerely thank the committee members for the effort and energy they put into creating this guide. We hope it is of help to you and your loved ones, and that it gives you the information you need to begin your journey to improved mental health.

In Solidarity,

Jason MacLean
President, NSGEU

Why this guide is needed

All of us know someone who is dealing with a mental health issue, substance abuse, and/or gambling problem, be it a loved one, co-worker, friend, relative or oneself. Have you ever thought: "If I could only do something to help?"

This booklet is designed to guide members of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU) and their families, friends, and co-workers as they attempt to navigate the healthcare system and community resources in order to find the help they need to deal with difficult times and circumstances, life changes, and transitions. Whether dealing with a crisis or a non-crisis situation, this color-coded guide will help you and the people you care about.

Important note

In case of an EMERGENCY or CRISIS, please go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911. You can also refer to the Crisis section in this booklet for information and numbers to assist you.

The information provided in this booklet is intended to be a guide to resources to be mentally well, get mentally well and stay mentally well. It is not intended in any way to provide any type of diagnosis or treatment for mental health and/or addiction issues. If you have concerns about your mental health and/or substance use/gambling, please seek the help of a health care professional.

As members of the Ad-Hoc Health Care Committee, we did our best to ensure that the information provided in this booklet is valid, accurate, and up-to-date. We regret any errors and that, for reasons of space, we may have omitted or missed information about many topics and valuable resources in our communities.

In Solidarity,

NSGEU Ad-Hoc Health Care Committee

A guide to the handbook

Definitions

Crisis

Adults

Children, Youth and Families

Seniors

Important numbers and definitions

Definitions

Speaking About Mental Health in General

Over the course of a lifetime, every individual will likely experience mental health problems. Usually, they are normal, short-term reactions that occur in response to difficult situations (e.g., school pressures, work-related stress, marital conflict, grief, changes in living arrangements), which people cope with in a variety of ways: employing internal resilience, family and community support, etc. Mental health problems that resolve quickly, do not recur, and do not result in significant disability, do not meet the criteria required for the diagnosis of a mental illness.

Please note: In this booklet the terms mental health concerns, mental health issues and mental health problems are used interchangeably.

Mental Health

Mental health is defined as the capacity to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance one's ability to enjoy life and deal with challenges. Expressed differently mental health refers to various capacities including the ability to: understand oneself and one's life; relate to other people and respond to one's environment; experience pleasure

and enjoyment; handle stress and withstand discomfort; evaluate challenges and problems; pursue goals and interests; and, explore choices and make decisions.

Good Mental Health

Good mental health is associated with positive self-esteem, happiness, interest in life, work satisfaction, mastery, and sense of coherence. It is well recognized that good mental health enables individuals to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

Mental Health Issues

Mental health problems by contrast refer to diminished capacities whether cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, motivational or behavioral that interfere with a person's enjoyment of life or adversely affect interactions with society and environment. Feelings of low self-esteem, frequent frustration or irritability, burn-out, feelings of stress, and excessive worrying, are all examples of common mental health problems.

Mental Disorder or Illness

Mental disorders or illnesses generally refer to clinically significant patterns of behavioral or emotional function

Definitions

that are associated with some level of distress, suffering (even to the point of pain and death), or impairment in one or more functional areas (e.g., school, work, social, and family interactions).

There are many different forms of mental disorders. They vary widely in terms of the course and pattern of illness, the type and severity of symptoms produced, and the degree of disability experienced. An individual may have only one or may have repeated episodes of illness separated by long periods of wellness. While some mental disorders are episodic or cyclical in nature, others are more persistent with lengthy or frequently recurring episodes. Individuals with persistent illnesses usually require long-term treatment and support.

Addiction

Addiction implies uncontrollable use of one or more substances, associated with discomfort or distress, when that use is discontinued or severely reduced. Addiction may also describe certain other behavioral problems, such as compulsive or pathological gambling, which can be considered a process rather than a substance addiction. Current research suggests that pathological gambling may

progress in stages similar to those in alcoholism.

It can be difficult for someone to admit that he or she has a substance use or gambling concern. They may avoid facing up to it, or could be in denial about the situation. For those reasons it is often difficult to talk to someone about their substance use or gambling. It can be ever more difficult to give them support.

There are ways you can support them. The most important step is to educate yourself. If you are not sure what to do or where to turn you can contact your local Addiction Services office. It is not just the well-being of the person using or gambling that is at risk. It can affect the lives of parents, children, family members, friends and co-workers.

Whether your loved one decides to get help or not, help is available for you. you can talk to someone at your local Addiction Services office. (Addiction-services-offices.asp)

Some effects of substance:

User becomes withdrawn and isolated from family, friends and society. Can develop mental health issues, mood swings, anger and resentment. Effects on friends and

Definitions

family can include depression, mental health issues, mood swings, anger and resentment. Effects on co-workers can include increased workload, decreased productivity, increases stress and sick time.

For more information on addiction go to novascotia.ca

Stigma and Discrimination Associated with Mental Illnesses

The serious stigma and discrimination attached to mental illnesses are among the most tragic realities facing people with mental illness in Canada. Arising from superstition, lack of knowledge and empathy, old belief systems, and a tendency to fear and exclude people who are perceived as different, stigma and discrimination have existed throughout history. They result in stereotyping, fear, embarrassment, anger, and avoidance behaviours. They force people to remain quiet about their mental illnesses, often causing them to delay seeking health care, avoid following through with recommended treatment, and avoid sharing their concerns with family, friends, co-workers, employers, health service providers, and others in the community.

The Canadian Alliance for Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) has identified combating the stigma of mental illnesses and preventing discrimination against people with mental illnesses as one of the most pressing priorities for improving the mental health of Canadians. Educating the public and media about mental illness is a first step toward reducing the stigma and encouraging greater acceptance and understanding of mental illness. Developing and enforcing policies that address discrimination and human rights violations provides incentive for change.

Stigma brings experiences and feelings of:

- Shame
 - Blame
 - Hopelessness
 - Distress
 - Misrepresentation in the media
 - Reluctance to seek and/or accept necessary help
- Source of definitions: phac-aspc.gc.ca

FACTS

- Mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures.
- A complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors causes mental illness.

Crisis

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians through illness in a family member, friend or colleague.
- 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness during their lifetime.
- Mental illnesses can be treated effectively.
- Approximately 8% of adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives. The onset of most mental illnesses occurs during adolescence and young adulthood.
- Source of facts: phac-aspc.gc.ca

Definition of Crisis

A crisis is an emergency that is an immediate threat to your physical, emotional and mental health. Extreme stress (for example: the loss of housing, acute relationship distress, or violence and trauma) can lead to crisis. A crisis can happen when a person's usual coping strategies are overwhelmed and they need urgent support. The goal of Crisis Response is to provide support to enable the person to handle the crisis while remaining in the community.

Some examples of crisis:

- Someone could be extremely worried about the possibility of violence in the house next door, or to a

friend or family member.

- Noticing a sudden loss of interest or a sudden mood change in your child, partner, friend or family member.
- Someone could be talking about dying a lot and emailing or posting these thoughts to Facebook or Twitter, etc.
- Someone's thoughts of suicide are becoming more troublesome and frightening.
- Someone is very anxious and retreating from friends and family.
- Someone's drinking has increased to the point that it causes a lot of negative thinking or negative events in their life.
- Needing to use drugs or alcohol before a person is able to go out.

You may be in crisis if you are:

- Not sleeping well (less than four hours per night) and feeling mentally exhausted;
- Feeling very depressed and not able to keep up with your life demands;
- Thinking about dying or being dead, and being afraid of these thoughts;
- Wishing you were dead and/or wanting the courage

Crisis

to kill yourself;

- Hurting yourself more by cutting, taking too many drugs or alcohol, or becoming reckless;
- Spending more time drinking, smoking pot or using other types of drugs;
- Missing a lot of time from work and hiding away from friends and family;
- Feeling alone, lost or unloved;
- Having strange and frightening thoughts;
- Having nowhere or no one to turn to.

If you are in an emergency situation, you can contact:

- Helpline - [902-421-1188](tel:902-421-1188); [1-877-521-1188](tel:1-877-521-1188) (toll-free); TTY [1-855-443-2660](tel:1-855-443-2660). The Helpline provides service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Mental Health Crisis Line - [1-888-429-8167](tel:1-888-429-8167) (toll-free). This province-wide line provides telephone crisis intervention to all Nova Scotians, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can also visit this link to find mental health help in your local area: <http://bit.ly/1r6P8Rm>

In the Halifax Regional Municipality:

The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre provides the sexual assault nurse examiner program (SANE), with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage, to four healthcare facilities in the HRM, including the IWK.⁵ [902-425-0122](tel:902-425-0122)

Avalon lists the options available to you if you have been sexually assaulted. If you have just experienced a sexual assault, you have several options to address any immediate physical or medical needs.

Sexual Assault

Outside the HRM call 911 if you are in an emergency situation and need medical care and/or police assistance. If you live in the Antigonish-Guysborough Strait Area, you can call the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's Program (SANE) for help [1-877-880-7263](tel:1-877-880-7263) (toll-free), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.¹ Coverage of this program includes the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow if you are able to make your way there. SANE nurses provide immediate care for victims and can conduct forensic examinations of victims of sexual violence.

SANE provides services to both females and males, 13

Crisis

years of age and older. As well as calling [1-877-880-7263](tel:1-877-880-7263) (toll-free), you can access this service in the Antigonish-Guysborough Strait Area through contacting the RCMP, your hospital Emergency Department, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, or the St. Francis Xavier Health and Counselling Centre.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, [902-863-6221](tel:902-863-6221), provides short and long-term counselling for female sexual assault victims over the age of 16 (assault or abuse that occurred in the past or has happened recently).

If a child under the age of 16 reports sexual assault or sexual abuse, you must report it to your nearest Child Protection office, Department of Community Services.² The age of consent is 16 years in Nova Scotia. In an emergency, you may decide to call the police before getting in touch with Child Protection.

The SANE program is only available in the Antigonish-Guysborough Strait Area and the Halifax Regional Municipality. Therefore, if you do not have access to SANE, you will need to call [911](tel:911) in an emergency and go to your nearest emergency department.

The Colchester Sexual Assault Centre, located in Truro, provides services to adults, aged 16 and over, who have been victims of sexual assault and/or child sexual abuse. Services and programs are available to all genders and are available, but not limited to, individuals in the counties of Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants and Pictou.³ Please telephone [902-897-4366](tel:902-897-4366) during the office hours of 9:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday.

Women's Centres in Nova Scotia often provide supportive counselling for victims of sexual assault and sexual abuse (historic and current).⁴

During crisis, you can:

- Call 911 if you are in an emergency situation and would like medical care and/or police assistance. You also have the option to contact the police either immediately after the assault or later on.
- Call the 24 hour, seven days a week, Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Response Line [902-425-0122](tel:902-425-0122) to speak to a nurse examiner. You may also arrange for a medical examination and/or forensic evidence collection by a nurse examiner if the assault occurred within the past 72 hours.

5. Taken from <http://bit.ly/1C2fjeE>

1. <http://bit.ly/1qgR8Ts>

2. <http://bit.ly/1tbWeUN>

3. colchestersac.ca

4. womenconnect.ca

Crisis

- Proceed to the Emergency Departments of the QEII Health Sciences Centre, Dartmouth General Hospital, IWK Health Centre, or the Cobequid Community Health Centre. SANE responds seven days a week, 24 hours a day, to male, female, and trans-identified people who have experienced sexual assault/abuse in the past three days.
- If you are in crisis or in an emergency, you can contact:
- Helpline [902-421-1188](tel:902-421-1188)
- Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team [902-429-8167](tel:902-429-8167)

For further information or counselling and legal support you may decide to:

- Contact Avalon Sexual Assault Centre [902-422-4240](tel:902-422-4240) (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.)
- Contact Halifax Regional Police Victim Services [902-490-5300](tel:902-490-5300) for emotional support and assistance with the police.
- Contact Nova Scotia Victim Services for court and legal assistance and referrals to programs for victims of crime.
- Access Mental Health and Addiction Services in your

community.
In addition to crisis service for sexual assault victims, the Avalon Sexual Assault Centre offers counselling for women who are 16 years of age and older and have been sexually assaulted. Counselling is provided free of charge.

Adults

Introduction

One in five Canadians will experience some problem with their mental health in the course of a year.⁶ However, not all mental health problems or concerns that people experience meet the criteria for diagnosis of a mental health illness.

The term “mental health problem” is a broad one that encompasses a wide range of mental health issues that do not warrant a diagnosis: for example, a person who is experiencing a high level of stress in the workplace or going through a period of acute grief. Most professionals in Canada use the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual V* to determine whether or not an individual’s symptoms meet the criteria for diagnosis of a mental illness or disorder. Therefore, it is important to realize that mental health exists on a continuum. One person’s mental health problem may be manageable in the short-term with some support from concerned others, while another’s may be more persistent and require longer-term treatment from mental health professionals. Each person’s mental health problem is as unique as she or he is. Not all mental health problems require professional help, but if they do, it is important to be informed about the kinds of treatments

that are available for your specific problem or condition and the effectiveness of such treatments.

Sometimes people experience mental health problems and substance use or addiction issues at the same time or at different times. For example, a person may have anxiety and a drinking problem. Mental health and substance use problems affect each other in a variety of ways. When seeking help, it is important to find a professional who can help you consider both problems.

Both mental health problems and mental illnesses can give rise to changes in a person’s thinking, emotional state, and behaviours. They may affect the person’s ability to work and maintain their relationships. Next you will find information about the symptoms of mental illness.

Adults

What are the symptoms of mental illness?⁷

Everyone experiences symptoms of mental illness differently. Here are some general symptoms that may affect you or a loved one:

Behaviour: A person experiencing symptoms of mental illness may behave in ways that seem bizarre or confusing to other people. These can include excessive hand washing after touching something, extreme low energy, or feelings of severe anxiety or sadness.

Mood: Our moods can change throughout the day. We can feel excited, sad, or anxious as we react to daily events. With mental illness, however, severe moods, and mood changes often cause significant distress over time. They can reduce a person's ability to function on a day-to-day basis.

Perception: A person may begin to experience the world through their senses, vision, taste, smell, touch and hearing in unusual ways. One person might hear voices while someone else develops an exaggerated sensitivity to sound.

Social interaction/withdrawal: With some mental

illnesses people begin to withdraw from family and friends. Social activities are dropped and they increase the amount of time they spend alone.

Thinking: Thinking may become confused, disorganized, illogical, or irrational. A person may have difficulty following along with conversations, may say things that do not make sense, or have difficulty remembering things.

Mental Health and Addictions Emergency and Crisis Support

For emergency mental health and addictions (alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs) assistance, please call 911 or go to the Emergency Department nearest you. For example, an emergency may be a situation in which you are in immediate danger to yourself and/or others or have taken an overdose of alcohol and/or drugs.

For people who live outside the HRM, the province-wide Mental Health Crisis Line provides telephone crisis intervention to all Nova Scotians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, [1-888-429-8167](tel:1-888-429-8167) (toll-free.)

In the HRM, you can call the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team in times of a mental health and/or substance abuse

Adults

crisis at 902-429-8167 or 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free). The Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team includes mental health professionals and police officers who provide confidential crisis support for children, youth and adults experiencing a mental health crisis.⁸ For example, a mental health crisis could include thoughts of **suicide, intense anxiety, psychotic thinking, or feeling out of control**. The crisis line is staffed by licensed clinicians with a background in social work, nursing or occupational therapy. The clinicians will triage and assess each call for safety and attend to the needs of each caller.

In most communities of the HRM, this crisis service is provided through a mobile response unit as well as telephone crisis support. Mobile response is available for work, home and community agencies, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, [902-429-8167](tel:902-429-8167) or [1-888-429-8167](tel:1-888-429-8167) (toll-free.)

Accessing Support:

Note: If you are under 19 or over 65 you may find additional information in the Child, Youth and Families, or Seniors sections.

When in a crisis, you can call 911 or the Mental Health Crisis Line 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free). You can also go to your nearest emergency department. Some of our emergency departments in Nova Scotia have social workers or discharge planning nurses located within. You can ask to speak with the social worker or discharge planning nurse directly prior to seeing the doctor in the emergency department.

For non-emergency health information and advice, you can call [811](tel:811).⁹ Hearing impaired citizens can call the Teletypewriter at [711](tel:711).

If you have a family doctor or can access a walk-in medical clinic, you can request a referral to your local Mental Health and Addiction Services. Mental Health and Addiction Services, part of the services offered by your local Health Authority, provide individuals, children, and families with help such as individual therapy and support, couples counselling, and psychiatric treatment, including psychiatric medications. Mental Health and Addiction Services appointments are covered by Medical Services Insurance. You may want to check with your family doctor to see if s/he can provide initial support and guidance until

7. Taken from <http://bit.ly/1tbXY08>

8. <http://bit.ly/1mSGVIB>

9. 811.novascotia.ca

Adults

your Mental Health and Addiction Services appointment. Remember that you do not have to be referred by a family doctor to Mental Health and Addiction Services; you can self-refer.

If you have a private health care plan, you can call the number on the back of your member card and ask if you have supplemental coverage for counselling services with a credentialed mental health professional. Fees charged for this service will differ based on the coverage you have in your plan.

For help finding an appropriate mental health professional, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1r6P8Rm>

Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)

Many NSGEU members have access to Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAP). In Nova Scotia there are two major EFAP programs: Homewood Human Health/Solutions and Shepell•fgi. You can call your Human Resources office of your employer to find out about what benefits you are entitled to or you can look on your employer's website and search for details on your EFAP.

When you call your respective program for service (either Homewood Human Health/Solutions 1-800-663-1142 (toll-free), homewoodhumansolutions.com or Shepell•fgi 1-800-461-9722 (toll-free) or shepellfgi.com. You will need to give the person the name of your employer. They will direct you to a counsellor in your area for face-to-face counselling, and if available, offer telephone or e-counselling counselling. Several of the EFAPs also provide short-term financial and legal counselling. EFAP counselling tends to be short-term or brief counselling. However, it is a good place to start for getting help and the counsellor should be able to connect you with long-term counselling in your community should you need it. You may be able to negotiate with your counsellor for additional sessions depending on your needs.

There is a smart phone app available at shepellfgi.com to help you make appointments. This website also offers a range of very helpful educational materials on a variety of mental health related topics such as tools for stress reduction and coping with the after-effects of trauma.

Adults

Mental Health and Addictions Services, NSHA

Mental Health and Addictions Services is funded by the Government of Nova Scotia and delivered through NSHA.

Each Mental Health and Addiction service has a multidisciplinary team dedicated to serving adults and seniors. The team generally consists of social workers (often called clinical therapists or clinicians), psychiatrists, occupational therapists, nurses, and community support workers.¹⁰ Mental Health and Addiction Services provides a range of services focusing on treatment, recovery, and support for individuals and families as well as health promotion and prevention. You can ask to be referred by your family doctor or nurse practitioner or you can self-refer.

Services may include outpatient therapy (often called counselling), psychiatric diagnosis and treatment, emergency/crisis response, emergency psychiatric consultation, group programs on a range of topics, and rehabilitation and clubhouse programs. Acute inpatient psychiatric care can help stabilize a person's symptoms of mental illness while inpatient withdrawal management,

(often called Detox) offers medical assistance to people who are in the physical and psychological withdrawal stages of dependency and addiction on alcohol and other drugs. For more information on mental health services in Nova Scotia, visit: <http://bit.ly/YWvRWi>

Mental Health and Addiction Services helps people cope and deal with mental health issues as well as substance use issues (alcohol and other drugs) and gambling. Clearly, not everyone who uses substances or gambles has problems with them. Substance use and gambling problems do develop, however, when use continues despite a variety of physical, mental, social, legal, work-related, and financial consequences.

Mental Health and Addiction Services offer Intensive Treatment Services that involve an approximate 21 day inpatient program which includes a period of withdrawal management and once completed it is recommended to continue on with 2 weeks of group work.

Once intensive treatment is completed, clients will be referred to a community based service to continue with relapse prevention and support.

Adults

Each Addiction Services department may have a therapist who specializes in women's substance use and/or gambling (called clinical therapists specializing in women or women's services coordinators). These helpers have knowledge and understanding of the specific issues and circumstances that women face. For example, research suggests that substance abuse and mental health issues in women are often connected to the violence, abuse, and trauma that women have experienced or experienced.¹¹

If you or someone you know could benefit from help from Addiction Services, offices are located throughout Nova Scotia to help individuals, families, and communities with the range of problems created by the harmful use of alcohol, drugs, and gambling.¹² To find the office nearest you, please go to: <http://bit.ly/1tGsXPz>

Therapists in Mental Health and Addiction Services can also help you if you are affected by someone else's use of alcohol, drugs and/or gambling, whether this person be your spouse, partner, son, daughter, parent, friend, or co-worker. Remember that you need not consider yourself or someone else to have an addiction to seek help. For example, you may be concerned about the amount you are drinking or how your use or gambling is affecting your

life. Getting information and support and talking with a therapist about it may help.

Non-governmental resources for substance use

There are community resources to help people with substance use. These include Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon Family Groups, Narcotics Anonymous, and residential facilities such as the Marguerite Centre, an 11-bed long term residential facility for women in recovery, located in Halifax. Mental Health and Addiction Services should be able to give you information about these resources.

Community Resources

Family Resource Centres

Many communities in Nova Scotia have Family Resource Centres which offer programs and support to parents and families. You can contact the Nova Scotia Council for the Family, 902-422-1316, for information on a Family Resource Centre near you or check their website nscouncilfamily.org for a location.

Family SOS

In HRM, Family SOS offers a variety of programs and

Adults

support for parents, children and youth.¹³ You can call them at 902-455-5515. Visit familysos.ca to find out more about their programs. As well as programs for children and youth, Family SOS helps parents with parenting through parenting groups and in-home parenting support.

Family Services Association

Family Services Association is a non-profit, community based agency located in Halifax serving families, including children and adolescents.¹⁴ The Association offers counselling and education services to families, couples, and individuals on a wide range of issues such as relationships, parenting, grief and loss, gambling, violence, and anger. Their services are accessible through many Employee Family Assistance Programs. For more information, please call 902-420-1980.

Family Service of Eastern and Western Nova Scotia

The Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia has been providing support to families for over thirty years.¹⁵ The service has offices in Antigonish, New Glasgow, Port Hawkesbury, Sydney, Glace Bay, and Inverness. Call toll-free 1-866-330-5952.

Family Service of Western Nova Scotia provides services for families in Bridgewater and other communities in the region. For more information, please call 902-543-7444, toll free 1-877-882-7722.

11. Report on Violence against Women, Mental Health and Substance Use. (2011). Canadian Women's Foundation and BC Society of Transition Houses.

12. <http://bit.ly/1tGsXPz>

13. <http://bit.ly/1zEbMiq>

14. fshalifax.com

15. fsens.ns.ca

Introduction

Children and youth can express their feelings, troubles and needs in a variety of ways and in different parts of their lives. For example, a child or adolescent with a learning disability who does well at home may have problems in the classroom. One young person may show signs of depression and/or anxiety while another child may behave aggressively toward others or use alcohol or drugs.

Children and youth today may experience a wide range of issues and concerns. These may include:

- Depression and anxiety
- Mental illness
- Weight and body image preoccupation
- Eating disorders
- Physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse
- Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs and gambling)
- Behaviour problems
- Issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression
- Trauma
- Suicidal thoughts and intent
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

- Parental – child conflict
- Grief and loss

Research suggests that most mental health concerns, (approximately 70%) begin in childhood and adolescence, before the age of 25.¹⁶ If these issues are identified early in a child's life, appropriate intervention may lead to better school and occupational performance, better relationships, and an overall better quality of life.

Sometimes it is difficult for a parent or parents to get a handle on what their children are struggling with or grasp the causes of their troubles. As a parent or guardian, you may be unsure of whether or not to seek professional help for your child. You may not know where to turn or how to begin to look for help. You may feel confused, overwhelmed, or anxious about reaching out for information and guidance.

In the course of getting help for your children you may come into contact with a range of helpers such as social workers (sometimes called clinical therapists or clinicians), psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, occupational therapists, child and youth workers, and others. Sometimes it is hard

Child, Youth & Families

to distinguish the differences between them and you may want to ask what it is that each helper does.

As parents and guardians you may also hear terminology that may be unfamiliar to you. Generally, when you access a service, there is a process in place that guides how that service is delivered. As you and your child or children go through the process of seeking and getting help you may hear words like intake, assessment, individual and family therapy, group therapy, residential treatment, outpatient treatment, consultation, treatment team, and so forth. If you are unclear about any information given to you, ask for clarification to help you.

Parents need to be aware that in order for a child to benefit from counselling or therapy the child must be willing to attend and engage in the process. In the case of younger children therapists may be able to work with the parents separate from the child or children.

How to Look For Help For Your Family

As a first step in seeking help many parents speak with their family doctor about their concerns about their child. Others may ask for guidance from a religious leader such

as a minister, rabbi, or pastor. Still other parents may begin with the Important Numbers Page of the telephone book or do a search of ns.211.ca to find what services are available in their community. There is no right way to begin; what is important is that you begin.

Sometimes finding the right resource for your family involves starting with calling one local community organization or agency and asking questions. For example, Women's Centres exist in eight Nova Scotia communities and workers in these Centres are very knowledgeable about services for children, youth, and families.¹⁷ Other local resources in your community where you can find out what services might be available to you and your child include your local hospital, shelters for women who are abused, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Family Resource Centres.¹⁸ Family Resource Centres across Nova Scotia offer a range of programs for parents, children (pre-natal up to age of 6) and the family such as child development and parenting programs.¹⁹

Child, Youth & Families

Family Service Organizations

Resources in your community can include family services organizations that offer counselling and education to families in Nova Scotia. For example, the Family Services Association is a non-profit, community based agency located in Halifax serving families, including children and adolescents.²⁰ The Association offers counselling and education services to families, couples, and individuals on a wide range of issues such as relationships, parenting, grief and loss, gambling, violence and anger. Their services are accessible through many EFAPs. For more information, please call [902-420-1980](tel:902-420-1980).

Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia has been providing support to families for over thirty years.²¹ The service has offices in Antigonish, New Glasgow, Port Hawkesbury, Sydney, Glace Bay and Inverness. The toll free number for this organization is [1-866-330-5952](tel:1-866-330-5952).

The Family Service of Western Nova Scotia provides services for families in Bridgewater and other communities in the region. For more information, please call [902-543-7444](tel:902-543-7444). In HRM, Family SOS offers a variety of programs and support for parents, children, and youth.²² You can call

them at [902-455-5515](tel:902-455-5515). Visit familysos.ca to find out more about their programs. As well as programs for children and youth, Family SOS helps parents with parenting through parenting groups and in-home parenting support.

Schools Plus

Schools Plus, an initiative of the Government of Nova Scotia, is part of the province's child and youth strategy "Our Kids Are Worth It."²³ Schools Plus aims to provide mental health, health, social work and justice services at local schools so that families can be served in a welcoming, accessible place in their own community. Schools Plus helps struggling children and their families to better connect to the resources and services they need. Students and families can refer themselves to the services available at the school, for example, to a mental health therapist. Toll free [1-877-882-7722](tel:1-877-882-7722)

17. womenconnect.ca

18. nscouncilfamily.org/parenting

19. <http://bit.ly/1tc6ufN>

20. fshalifax.com

21. fsens.ns.ca

22. familysos.ca/programs/parents

23. schoolsplus.ednet.ns.ca

Child, Youth & Families

Internet Resources for Children, Youth, and Parents

The Government of Nova Scotia webpage, Mental Health Services – Services for Children and Youth, lists a number of resources for children and youth such as the Mental Health Crisis Line, 1-888-429-8167 and The Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868. Other resources listed on this webpage include the Kids Help Phone, Teen Mental Health, Psychosis Sucks, and the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia.

The Government of Nova Scotia also has a webpage called Depression Strategy, which provides helpful information for teens and young adults on recognizing depression.²⁵ Please refer to these websites for more information: <http://bit.ly/1vMfJkI> and <http://bit.ly/1mO8XWt>

Employee and Family Assistance Program

Employees may have access to an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) sponsored by their employer. Through EFAP you can receive counselling and support in person, over the telephone or online, and through self-guided resources, depending on the company providing the benefit. EFAP is confidential within the limits of the law and is available to you at no cost.

In EFAP you and your family members can attend a number of sessions with a professional. You can access counselling for a range of concerns: work, personal, relationships, family, legal, financial, and well-being issues, including health and mental health, and substance use and/or gambling. If you feel you need more sessions than the maximum allotted it may be possible to negotiate more sessions.

If your employer has not informed you about your EFAP the Human Resources office at your workplace should be able to provide you with the information you need, accompanied by a brochure that describes what EFAP is and how it works.

Mental Health Professionals

You can usually find Mental Health Professionals such as therapists, counsellors, family therapists, and psychologists who are trained to work with children, youth, and families in private practice listed in the Yellow Pages and Canada411. Fees per session are set by the individual private practitioner.

Sometimes a word-of-mouth recommendation from a

Child, Youth & Families

relative, friend, or neighbor can be helpful in finding the right private practitioner for your needs. Be sure to ask what their qualifications are and if they have experience in the kind of issue for which you are seeking help.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services provides services to children, youth, and families such as foster care and adoption; income assistance and employment support; and services for persons with disabilities.²⁶ The Department also looks after child protection services in the province that seek to protect children under 16 from abuse and/or neglect.²⁷

Child Protection Services in the province are responsible for investigating reports of alleged child abuse and/or neglect. Child abuse can include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse as well as neglect. Every citizen has the obligation to immediately report suspected child abuse to a child welfare agency.

If you are concerned about a child who may be in need of protective services contact the district office of the Department of Community Services nearest you for the appropriate telephone number. If you believe that a

child is in immediate danger you can call the provincial emergency child welfare line at 1-866-922-2434 (toll-free) after business hours.

In the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM):

The Avalon Sexual Assault Centre provides the sexual assault nurse examiner program (SANE), with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage, to four healthcare facilities in the HRM, including the IWK. In addition, the Centre offers counselling for women who are 16 years of age and older and have been sexually assaulted. Counselling is provided free of charge.

Avalon lists the options available to you and your child if sexual assault has occurred.³⁰

If you have just experienced a sexual assault you have several options to address any immediate physical or medical needs.

Help for Sexual Assault Victims

Outside the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM): If you and your child live outside HRM you can call 911 if your child is in an emergency situation and needs medical

24. <http://bit.ly/1vMfJkI>

25. <http://bit.ly/1mO8XWt>

26. novascotia.ca/coms

27. <http://bit.ly/1qKLHJM>

30. Taken from <http://bit.ly/1C2fjeE>

Child, Youth & Families

care and/or police assistance. *Note: Please see the next section regarding help for sexual assault victims in HRM.*

If you live in the Antigonish-Guysborough Strait Area you can call Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner's Program (SANE) for help [1-877-880-7263](tel:1-877-880-7263) (toll-free) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.²⁸ Coverage of this program includes the Aberdeen Hospital if you are able to make your way there. SANE nurses provide immediate care for victims and can conduct forensic examinations of victims of sexual violence.

SANE provides services to both females and males 13 years of age and older. As well as calling [1-877-880-7263](tel:1-877-880-7263) (toll-free) you can access this service in the Antigonish-Guysborough Strait Area through contacting the RCMP, your hospital Emergency Department, the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, or the St. Francis Xavier Health and Counselling Centre.

The Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, 902-863-6221, provides short and long-term counselling for female sexual assault victims over the age of 16 (assault or abuse that occurred in the past or has happened recently).

If a child under the age of 16 reports a sexual assault or sexual abuse you must report it to Child Protection, Department of Community Services. The age of consent is 16 years in Nova Scotia. In an emergency you may decide to call the police before getting in touch with Child Protection.

The SANE program is only available in the Antigonish-Guysborough Strait Area and the Halifax Regional Municipality. Therefore, you will need to call 911 in an emergency and go to your nearest emergency department and report the assault or abuse to Child Protection.

The Colchester Sexual Assault Centre, located in Truro, provides services to adults, aged 16 and over, who have been victims of sexual assault and/or child sexual abuse. Services and programs are available to all genders and are available, but not limited to, individuals in the counties of Colchester, Cumberland, East Hants and Pictou.²⁹ Please telephone 902-897-4366 during the office hours of 9:30 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday.

Women's Centres in Nova Scotia often provide supportive counselling for victims of sexual assault and sexual abuse

Child, Youth & Families

(historic and current). Check with your local Women's Centre to see what counselling they provide for young people. To find a Women's Centre near you, please visit: womenconnect.ca or call 902-449-9820.

Your options include:

- Call 911 if you are in an emergency situation and would like medical care and/or police assistance. You also have the option to contact the police either immediately after the assault or later on.
- Call the 24 hour, seven days a week, Avalon Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Response Line ([902-425-0122](tel:902-425-0122)) to speak to a nurse examiner. You may also arrange for a medical examination and/or forensic evidence collection by a nurse examiner if the assault occurred within the past 72 hours.
- Proceed to the Emergency Departments of the QEII Health Sciences Centre, Dartmouth General Hospital, IWK Health Centre, or the Cobequid Community Health Centre. SANE responds seven days a week, 24 hours a day, to male, female, and trans-identified people who have experienced sexual assault/abuse in the past three days.

If you are in crisis or in an emergency you can contact:

- Helpline [902-421-1188](tel:902-421-1188)
- Mental Health Mobile Crisis Unit [902-429-8167](tel:902-429-8167)

For further information or counselling and legal support you may decide to:

- Contact Avalon Sexual Assault Centre (Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 pm). [902-425-0122](tel:902-425-0122) After hours [1-866-431-6472](tel:1-866-431-6472) (toll-free).
- Contact Halifax Regional Police's Victim Services 902-490-5300 for emotional support and assistance with the police.
- Contact Nova Scotia Victim Services for court and legal assistance and referrals to programs for victims of crime.
- Access Mental Health and Addiction Services in your community.

Mental Health and Addictions Emergency and Crisis Support

For emergency mental health and addictions assistance, please call 911 or go to the Emergency Department nearest you. If you live in the HRM you can go to the IWK Health

²⁸. <http://bit.ly/1qgR8Ts>

²⁹. colchestersac.ca

Child, Youth & Families

Care emergency department. For example, an emergency may be a situation where your child is in immediate danger to her/himself or others, or where your child has taken an overdose of alcohol or drugs.

In times of a mental health and/or substance abuse crisis (alcohol, legal or illegal drugs), parents and/or youth can call the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team. The Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team includes mental health professionals and police officers who provide confidential crisis support for children, youth, and adults experiencing a mental health crisis.³¹ For example, a mental health crisis could include thoughts of suicide, intense anxiety, psychotic thinking, or feeling out of control. The crisis line is staffed by licensed clinicians with a background in social work, nursing or occupational therapy. The clinicians will triage and assess each call for safety and attend to the needs of each caller. In most communities of the Halifax Regional Municipality, the service is provided through a mobile response unit as well as telephone crisis support. Mobile response is available for work, home and community agencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please call 902-429-8167 or 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free).

For people who live outside the Halifax Regional Municipality the Mental Health Crisis Line provides telephone crisis intervention to all Nova Scotians 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Mental Health and Addictions Services, NSHA

Mental Health and Addictions Services for children and youth are provided by NSHA and by the IWK Health Centre (The IWK in Halifax, NS, provides care for women, children, and youth from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island).

The Government of Nova Scotia is in the process of making changes to the administration of District Health Authorities in Nova Scotia. However, at this point in time, health services in Nova Scotia are delivered by the IWK and nine District Health Authorities:

Each Mental Health and Addiction Service area has a Child and Adolescent Team responsible for providing general and specialized services to children, youth (up until their 19th birthday), and their families or guardians. Children and families receive services on an outpatient basis.

Child, Youth & Families

The frequency of appointments and length of treatment will depend on factors such as the nature of the issue, treatment goals, and the availability of parents to attend.

Parents and older youth can self-refer to Mental Health and Addiction Services. Referrals for children and youth can also be made by family doctors, teachers, community agencies, and others. As part of what is called the intake process, you will need to (as a parent or guardian) give some basic information about yourself and your child. When you meet with the therapist, s/he may also connect you with other agencies if appropriate. Services in the Health Authority may include individual assessment and treatment, family therapy, groups for parents and/or children and youth, and parent education. Community-based in-home support may be provided for children with mental health and emotional concerns and for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families.

Each Mental Health and Addiction Services provides adolescent services in the schools for youth and/or parents to talk about drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and gambling. Adolescents and families may be referred to one of the clinical therapists at Addiction Services for therapy. For

information on the locations of Addiction Services please visit: <http://bit.ly/1tGsXPz>

The Initiative for Sexually Aggressive Youth (ISAY) is a provincial program for youth, 12-18 years, who exhibit sexually inappropriate behavior. ISAY is a partnership between the IWK and NSHA. Following an assessment by IWK clinicians, therapists at the NSHA provide treatment for youth and their families in their local area.³² Please contact your NSHA or IWK Health Centre for further information to find out what services and programs are available for children and youth in your area.

IWK MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

There are a range of services available for children and youth at Mental Health and Addictions at the IWK. Mental Health and Addictions Services at the IWK serves children and teens, up to their 19th birthday, who are experiencing mental health and substance use issues. For more information about Mental Health and Addictions Services at the IWK, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1qfbAnK>

Depending on a family's particular situation parents can first receive services through Mental Health and

31. <http://bit.ly/1mSGVIB>

Child, Youth & Families

Addictions Services in their NSHA and then be referred to Mental Health and Addictions Services at the IWK for more specialized services. In other situations for example; parents, guardians or older youth can directly call the IWK Central Referral at [902-464-4110](tel:902-464-4110) to self-refer.

There are three Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinics — located in Halifax, Sackville, and Dartmouth— to help children and youth and their families in the HRM. Staff will help you figure out whether the Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinics can provide the right service for you or your family member. You can also call toll-free at [1-888-470-5888](tel:1-888-470-5888) and ask to be connected to Central Referral.

If a Central Referral worker has helped you determine that an appointment with a CMHA Clinic is right for you and your family you will be given an appointment at the Clinic of your choice. At the first appointment the clinician will talk with you about what brought you to the Clinic, how the Clinic may be able to help you, and options for care.³³

Adolescent Intensive Services

The Adolescent Integrated Services (AIS) formally CHOICES, is part of the IWK Mental Health and Addictions Services. It

offers treatment for adolescents, aged 13 and up to their 19th birthday, who are harmfully involved with substances (alcohol and drugs), gambling, and/or have both mental health and substance use difficulties. Youth attend AIS voluntarily; they cannot be mandated to engage in treatment.

AIS services include outpatient treatment, a day program, a residential 24/7 eight-week structured inpatient treatment.³⁴ The residential inpatient treatment program is available to youth outside the Metro area. Other AIS services include community outreach, health promotion, and prevention initiatives.

AIS treatment approach is harm reduction. This means that workers help youth reduce the various forms of harm associated with their use. In addition to focusing on substance use and/or gambling, professional staff help youth deal with other issues in their lives that are often interconnected with substance use. They also work with each young person to develop their own specific treatment goals.

Families are essential in the treatment of youth and AIS

Child, Youth & Families

actively involves families in the program. The treatment team works with the young person and their family to support them in achieving their goals and in making the transition back to school and community. More information on the AIS program, both the day and residential programs, is available from the AIS website.³⁵ The AIS number is [902-491-2401](tel:902-491-2401)/ [902-491-2330](tel:902-491-2330)

Youth, parents, family physicians, mental health clinicians, school personnel, or individuals from any agency that works with youth may make a referral for AIS outclient services. Referrals to the day program or the residential 24/7 program may be made through any Mental Health and Addictions worker in the province. Once a referral is received the AIS intake worker will contact the youth and/or family to complete the referral.

Other IWK Mental Health and Addictions Services

The IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program also offers other services to children and youth:

- The School Mental Health and Addictions service offers mental health and addictions treatment in some schools in the Halifax Regional Municipality so that students can receive the help they need in their

home school.^{18 36}

- Another service at the IWK is the acute inpatient unit (4 South) for those children and youth who are acutely ill and require hospitalization.
- The Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, SeaStar, which operates under the umbrella of the Child Protection Team at the IWK, provides coordinated services and support for children and youth who have experienced violence and abuse, including sexual assault.³⁷ It is designed to be a comfortable, warm, private, friendly environment where children, youth, and their families can access the services they need all in one place. The Centre's goal is to ensure that children and youth disclosing violence and abuse are not further traumatized by the services intended to help them. An advocate assists the family in understanding and navigating the helping systems.
- The Child and Family Day Treatment service helps children aged 5-12 and their families who need support from a professional mental health team on a daily basis.³⁸ Diagnosis, behaviour management, and/or medication review form part of this program, which runs for three and one half months.
- In a program structure similar to that of the Child

32. <http://bit.ly/1leMO8e>

33. <http://bit.ly/1opd3DX>

34. <http://bit.ly/VQDgnD>

35. <http://bit.ly/1q52ifk>

36. <http://bit.ly/1qh94x9>

Child, Youth & Families

and Family Day Treatment service the Adolescent Day Treatment service helps youth 13-19 years of age who need professional mental health support on a daily basis to manage their mental health difficulties.³⁹ In this three month program the treatment team works with youth to manage better at home, return to school, and participate in their community.

- The Adolescent Integrated Services (formerly ACT) helps youth with anxiety, depression, attention deficit disorder, or oppositional defiance disorder.⁴⁰ It teaches youth between 13 and 19 a range of skills to help them do better in their family, classroom, and community, for example: social skills and anger management. Youth can attend this program on an outpatient day or residential 24/5 basis.
- Compass is a service for boys and girls under the age of 13 designed to help children who have behaviour problems and their families.⁴¹ Children live at Compass during the week and at home on the weekends with children gradually spending more time at home and their community school. This four-month long program helps children learn new skills for better living such as anger management and problem-solving.

- IWK Eating Disorders Team is a multidisciplinary team that provides professional help to youth who are struggling with anorexia or bulimia nervosa. The team works, offers support, therapy, education, and training to youth and their families.⁴²

To learn more about all of the above services, please call the IWK Central Referral at [902-464-4110](tel:902-464-4110) or call toll-free at [1-888-470-5888](tel:1-888-470-5888) and ask to be connected to Central Referral. Youth Forensic Services provides assessment and treatment services to youth who are involved with the criminal justice system.⁴³ These services are generally accessed through court orders, conditions of a youth's probation order, or other divisions of the Department of Justice. For more information on Youth Forensic Services, please call [902-491-2444](tel:902-491-2444).

Child, Youth & Families

Seniors

Introduction

Mental health issues for senior citizens are no less prevalent than among younger persons and they carry their own stigma in society. Sometimes these problems are of a temporary nature and can be addressed with a little help. Other times these issues can require more care and attention for a longer period of time, sometimes by health professionals. This section of the booklet will offer some directions and resources for the mental health needs of senior citizens.

Some Facts and Statistics from the NS Department of Seniors Statistical Profile, 2009:

- Mental illness affects at least 20% of Nova Scotia's senior citizens.
- By 2015, for the first time, seniors will outnumber children and adolescents (combined) in Canada.
- Having the oldest population in Canada (15.4% as of 2009), Nova Scotia is already beginning to notice the effects of an aging population. Halifax county is the youngest in NS, while Cumberland is the oldest.
- Fewer seniors are admitted to a hospital for mental health care than among the younger population, but a senior tends to stay in care longer.

- 60% of Nova Scotian seniors rate their own mental health as very Good, meaning 40% feel some level of concern.⁴⁴

Unique challenges

Senior citizens face challenges with mental health that are unique to them and their life stage. Many have known friends who have passed on or find adjusting to retirement to be a challenge. In an increasingly high-tech world, it can be difficult to relate to wider trends or changes in society. Sometimes the mental health of seniors doesn't seem to be taken seriously. Mobility issues can also make it difficult to seek help. All of this can make the search for help more difficult or intimidating. However, there is help available for you and care providers who will listen and provide support. These providers understand the challenges faced by seniors and are prepared to help you with your specific needs.

Accessing Help

In an emergency call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department. Staff including doctors, nurses, and social workers are able to help you, including making appropriate referrals to government and community resources.

Seniors

For non-emergency health information and advice, you can call 811, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Registered nurses can help with information and reassurance about health issues and questions. Hearing impaired citizens can call the TTY at 711.

Through the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors

The Department of Seniors acts as an entry point to senior services in the province. It provides information on a variety of programs and services that may be helpful to you and your family such as Mental Health and Addiction Services and Continuing Care Programs and Services. It also offers useful information on topics such as HST and personal income tax and credits.

The Department of Seniors provides a toll-free information line to help seniors, family members and friends find out about and access government programs and services. The number is 1-844-277-0770 (toll-free) in Halifax/Dartmouth 902-424-0770, or novascotia.ca/seniors The Department of Seniors can also help you recognize and take action in situations where you suspect that an adult is being abused and in need of protection. For more information on Adult Protection Services you can call the toll-free Senior Abuse

information and referral line at 1-877-833-3377. If you know of an adult in need of protection you must report it immediately by calling the Continuing Care toll-free line at 1-800-225-7225 (to be directed to adult protection.)

Through your family doctor Your doctor may be able to refer you to health professionals and services including therapists or counsellors, psychiatrists, hospital-based programs, and seniors' programs in your community.

Through a clinic If you do not have a family doctor or if you need an immediate medical appointment you can access a walk-in clinic in your area. A physician may be able to refer you to the resources you need. Walk-in clinics are covered under MSI.

Through EFAP programs Many NSGEU members have access to Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAP). In Nova Scotia, there are two major EFAP programs: Homewood Human Health/Solutions and Shepell•fygi. You can call your Human Resources office of your employer to find out about what benefits you are entitled to or you can look on your employer's website and search for details on your EFAP. When you call your respective program for service (either

44. <http://bit.ly/1qwFB3x>

Seniors

Homewood Human Health/Solutions 1-800-663-1142, homewoodhumansolutions.com or Shepell•fgi 1-800-461-9722; www.shepellfgi.com), you will need to give the person the name of your employer. They will direct you to a counsellor in your area for face-to-face counselling, and if available, offer telephone or e-counselling services. Several of the EFAPs also provide short-term financial and legal counselling. EFAP counselling tends to be short-term or brief counselling. However, it is a good place to start for getting help and the counsellor should be able to connect you with long-term counselling in your community should you need it. You may be able to negotiate with your counsellor for additional sessions depending on your needs.

There is a smart phone app available at shepellfgi.com to help you make appointments. This website also offers a range of very helpful educational materials on a variety of mental health related topics such as tools for stress reduction and coping with the after-effects of trauma.

If you are reading this booklet as a spouse or family member of a NSGEU member, you can call the EFAP to see what services you may be eligible as a spouse or family

member. EFAP can help you find the right resources for you in your community.

NSHA

Mental Health and Addiction Services is funded by the Government of Nova Scotia and delivered through your Health Authority. Mental Health and Addiction Services has a multidisciplinary team dedicated to serving adults and seniors and provides a range of services focusing on treatment, recovery, and support for individuals and families. If you have mental health issues that need attention such as depression or anxiety you can ask to be referred by your family doctor or nurse practitioner to Mental Health and Addiction Services. You can also self-refer by calling or visiting.

Services may include outpatient therapy (often called counselling), psychiatric diagnosis and treatment, emergency/crisis response, emergency psychiatric consultation, group programs on a range of topics, and rehabilitation and clubhouse programs. Acute inpatient psychiatric care can help stabilize a person's symptoms of mental illness while inpatient withdrawal management (often called Detox) offers medical assistance to people

Seniors

who are in the physical and psychological withdrawal stages of dependency and addiction on alcohol and/or drugs (legal and illegal). For more information on mental health services for seniors, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1lumzem>

Mental Health and Addictions Services helps people cope and deal with substance use issues (alcohol and drugs) and gambling as well as mental health issues. Not everyone who uses substances or gambles has problems with them. Substance use and gambling problems do develop however, when use continues despite a variety of physical, mental, social, legal, financial, and work-related consequences.

Mental Health and Addiction Services offer Intensive Treatment Services that involve an approximate 21 day inpatient program which includes a period of withdrawal management and once completed it is recommended to continue on with 2 weeks of group work.

Once intensive treatment is completed, clients will be referred to a community based service to continue with relapse prevention and support.

Each Addiction Services may have a therapist who specializes in women's substance use and/or gambling (called clinical therapists specializing in women or women's services coordinators). These helpers have knowledge and understanding of the specific issues and circumstances that women face. For example, research suggests that substance abuse and mental health issues in women are often connected to the violence, abuse, and trauma that women have experienced or experience.

Addiction Services offices are located throughout Nova Scotia to help individuals, families and communities with the range of problems created by the harmful use of alcohol, drugs, and gambling.⁴⁵ To find the office nearest you, please go to: <http://bit.ly/1tGsXPz>

Therapists in Mental Health and Addictions Services can also help you if you are affected by someone else's use of alcohol, drugs, and/or gambling, whether this person be your spouse, partner, son, daughter, parent, friend, or co-worker.

Remember that you need not consider yourself or someone else to have an addiction to seek help. For example, you

⁴⁵. <http://bit.ly/1tGsXPz>

Seniors

may be concerned about the amount you are drinking or how your use or gambling is affecting your life. Getting information and support and talking with a counsellor about it may help.

Seniors' Services, Mental Health, NSHA

Seniors Mental Health, Capital District Health Authority provides assessment, consultation, and time-limited treatment by a multi-disciplinary team specializing in seniors' mental health.⁴⁶ Clinicians work with you and your family and communicate with your family doctor to ensure that you receive continuity of care after Seniors Mental Health is no longer required. Seniors Mental Health strives, as much as possible, to provide care for seniors in their community or home setting. Examples of programs and services available through Seniors Mental Health include: Outreach Services (services to seniors in their home and education for family members) and Outpatient Services (services at outpatient clinics in several locations including the Veterans Memorial Hospital (Geriatric Medicine Clinic area); 6th floor Abbie Lane Building; and the Mount Hope and Purdy buildings at the Nova Scotia Hospital). Seniors Mental Health also has regular clinics in several long term care facilities. Additional services include the Healthy Living Program

focusing on primary prevention and caregiver support materials; educational and treatment groups for seniors with depression and/or anxiety and inpatient care specializing in the mental health care of seniors.

Referrals to Seniors Mental Health can be made by family doctors (preferred option) however, health care professionals, family members, and others may contact the service for information on how to access it. Seniors Mental Health can be reached at 902-464-6054 or 902-473-7799.

If you are in mental health or substance use crisis, you can contact:

- Mental Health Crisis Line - 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free). This province-wide line provides telephone crisis intervention to all Nova Scotians, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Helpline - 902-421-1188; 1-877-521-1188 (toll-free); TTY 1-855-443-2660. The Helpline provides service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Access a Bus : HRM Only

Seniors

If you have mobility issues, Metro Transit Access-A-Bus service may be able to help you. This transit service is for persons who are unable to use the conventional transit system due to physical or cognitive abilities.⁴⁷ You have to register for this service and be declared eligible for it. The cost of this service is covered by the province. The Access-A-Bus Registration number is 901-490-6681.

A service that can transport people with mobility issues may exist. Speak to your family doctor or call your municipal or town office to see if such a service exists.

Through Veterans Affairs Canada

If you are a veteran or otherwise qualify to receive veterans' services, help may be available to you through the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs. They can be reached at 1-866-522-2122 or veterans.gc.ca

Care Givers Nova Scotia

Is a support agency assisting care givers who need support. The agency supports care givers through programs, support groups, advocacy, and services to those giving care, including telephone and email support. They have locations in HRM, Cape Breton, Northern and Eastern

Mainland, and the Western Region, and can be reached at 1-877-488-7390 toll free; caregiversns.org or 902-421-7390

Through the Provincial Seniors' Mental Health Network

This network was established to help government, community groups, and individuals advance the mental health of seniors. It supports education, exchange of knowledge, and mutual learning on seniors' physical and mental health. For more information on the Provincial Seniors' Mental Health Network please go to: <http://bit.ly/1lumzem>

⁴⁶. <http://bit.ly/1zEN2H5>

⁴⁷. <http://bit.ly/1tcgKV3>

Important phone numbers

All Emergencies	9-1-1
CRISIS LINE (mental health mobile crisis)	8-1-1
Telehealth	7-1-1
Community & Social Services	2-1-1
Government of NS TTY Hearing Impaired	1-888-429-8167
QEII Emergency Room	902-473-3383
Dartmouth General Emergency Room	902-465-8333
IWK Emergency Room	902-428-8050
Cobequid Community Health Center Emergency	902-869-6101
Avalon Sexual Assault Center	902-425-0122
After Hours Crisis Line, Avalon Sexual Assault Centre	902-425-0122 ext. 911
Antigonish- Guysborough Strait area (sexual assault nurse)	1-877-880-7263
Antigonish Womens Resource Center	902-863-6221
Care givers Nova Scotia Metro	902-421-7390
Toll free (Care Givers Nova Scotia)	1-877-488-7390
QEII Hospital Main number	902-473-2700
Cobequid Community Health	902-869-6100
Dartmouth General	902-465-8300
East Coast Forensic Hospital	902-460-7300
Eastern Shore Memorial Hospital	902-885-2554
Hants Community Hospital	902-792-2000
Musquodoboit Valley Memorial	902-384-2220
Nova Scotia Hospital	902-464-3111
Twin Oaks Memorial	902-889-4110
CyberSCAN (cyber bullying)	1-855-702-8324
Department of Justice Victim Services	902-424-3309
Homewood Human/Health Solutions	1-800-663-1143
Womens Connect Centers	902-449-9820
Nova Scotia Council for the Family	902-422-1316

Important phone numbers

Family Services Association	902-420-1980
Eastern NS	1-866-330-5952
Western NS	902-543-7445
Family SOS (HRM)	902-455-5515
Halifax Regional Police (general inquiries)	902-490-4000
Halifax Regional Police (non-emergency)	902-490-5020
Halifax Regional Police Victim Services	902-490-5300
Halifax Sexual Health Centre	902-455-9656
Immigrant Settlement and Integration Service	902-423-3607
IWK Child and Adolescent Central Referral	902-464-4110
IWK AIS Referral	1-888-470-5888
IWK AIS	902-491-2220
Family and Parent Advocate	902-483-9591
Cole Harbour/Eastern Passage	902-434-3263
Bedford/Sackville	902-865-3663
IWK Mental Health Care Nurse Advocate	902-470-6755
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
NS Department of Seniors	1-800-670-0065
	902-424-0065
Public Prosecution Services (Crown Attorneys)	902-424-2652
RCMP	1-800-803-7267
RCMP Victims' Services	902-865-3663
Veterans Affairs Canada	1-866-522-2122
Child Welfare Line	1-866-922-2434
TDD crisis line	1-800-567-5803
Youth Forensic Services	902-491-2444
Senior Abuse Referral Line	1-877-833-3377
Senior Mental Health	902-464-6054

Important phone numbers

Victoria County Memorial Hospital	902-295-2112
Dartmouth General Hospital	902-465-8300
IWK Health Centre	902-470-8888
Lillian Fraser Memorial Hospital	902-657-2382
All Saints Springhill Hospital	902-597-3773
North Cumberland Memorial Hospital	902-243-2521
Eastern Memorial Hospital	902-366-2794
Guysborough Memorial Hospital	902-533-3702
St. Martha's Regional Hospital	902-863-2830
St. Mary's Memorial Hospital	902-522-2882
Strait Richmond Hospital	902-625-3100
Aberdeen Hospital	902-752-7600
Sutherland Harris Memorial	902-485-4324
Soldiers Memorial Hospital	902-825-3411
Valley Regional Hospital	902-678-7381
Cape Breton Regional Hospital	902-567-8000
Harbourview Hospital	902-736-2831
Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital	902-258-2100
New Waterford Consolidated Hospital	902-862-6411
Northside General Hospital	902-794-8521
Fisherman's Memorial Hospital	902-634-8801
Queen's General Hospital	902-354-3436
South Shore Reginal Hospital	902-543-4603
Digby General Hospital	902-245-2501
Roseway Hospital	902-875-3011
Yarmouth Reginal Hospital	902-742-3541

Important phone numbers

Important information

Discontinuation of Medication Alert: FYI

Symptoms such as mood swings, anxiety, and depression can make it difficult to distinguish between discontinuation reaction and depression.

Symptoms of anxiety during discontinuation of treatment may represent depression, especially if they arise several weeks after the stopping of the medication. If this occurs, check with your pharmacist or mental health provider.

Helpful links

The following links may provide you with tools to help you manage your own mental health and wellness and increase your knowledge so you can provide guidance to family or friends. You may visit anxietybc.ca or cmha.ca

Definitions

AIS- Adolescent Intensive Systems

SANE- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

HRM- Halifax Regional Municipality

EFAP- Employee Family Assistance Program

ISAY- Initiative for Sexually Aggressive Youth

Thank You

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to my committee members Peter Perry, Madge Murphy, James Berry, Tracy Fraser-Maclsaac, Lana MacLean, Norma Jean Profit, Raymond Theriault and Executive Liason Jason MacLean. Your hard work and dedication to bring this booklet to life is inspiring. Also a special thank you to Robin Berry for the beautiful artwork on our cover.

To Shannon MacIntyre and Holly Fraughton, I can't believe the amazing job you have done on this booklet. It far exceeds what I ever imagined. NSGEU is very lucky to have you two on staff.

It has been my honour and privilege to be chair of the Ad Hoc Health Care Committee. To be able to work with such a wonderful group of people is something I will never forget.

In Solidarity,

Tracey Fisk
Committee chair

Produced with the support of

NSGEU

© 2016