
Forward

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An Introduction to the Mental Health Needs of Persons with Developmental Disabilities represents a breakthrough!

For some years now, it has been acknowledged that one of the most serious barriers to the provision of effective support to persons with a dual diagnosis has been the lack of readily available education related to dual diagnosis. Many useful books exist that deal with various aspects of dual diagnosis. Several types of training and education related to dual diagnosis have been offered on a short-term basis. But there has never been a systematic, thorough campaign to provide dual diagnosis education across an entire province or state until now!

The Habilitative Mental Health Resource Network is the Ontario Chapter of the National Association on Dual Diagnosis. In that capacity, we have a provincial perspective on dual diagnosis and a responsibility that pertains to persons with dual diagnosis living throughout Ontario.

Four years ago, our Chapter decided that one of its priorities was to pursue avenues by which dual diagnosis education could be provided consistently and equitably across our province. We recognized that we had many strengths in Ontario: pockets of specific expertise, a great many excellent staff, concerned parents, post secondary educational institutions with an

interest in dual diagnosis, and a structure of local dual diagnosis committees. It was agreed that whatever process we developed would build on these strengths.

From our perspective, the missing element was a comprehensive training curriculum that could meet the needs of a variety of participants. Therefore, the Habilitative Mental Health Resource Network developed a plan to obtain funding for a curriculum which would be utilized in a carefully planned way across Ontario. Our goals were twofold. First, we wanted to provide the information itself. Second, and in some ways more importantly, we wanted to establish a system of dual diagnosis training that would exist permanently.

In 1998, we submitted a proposal to the provincial government to fund the development and dissemination of an introductory dual diagnosis training curriculum. This proposal was approved in 1999. Significantly, this funding was cross sectoral since it came from both the Ministry of Community and Social Services, which is responsible for Developmental Services, and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, responsible for Mental Health Programmes. An editorial committee was struck by our Chapter and the process was under way!

After two years of hard work, all as volunteers, the members of the Editorial Committee brought to completion the production of the book you are now reading. Our debt to them is enormous, and we thank them all most sincerely.

Several factors make *An Introduction to the Mental Health Needs of Persons with Developmental Disabilities* unique:

- ☆ it has been produced with the specific purpose of being disseminated at cost to thousands of readers across the vast province of Ontario
- ☆ its purpose is to ensure that there is a basic introductory level of dual diagnosis education throughout the province
- ☆ it has been written in a user friendly format so that it will be of benefit to a diverse audience including parents, staff who work in direct contact daily with the individuals who are labelled as dually diagnosed, and staff who work in more clinical and/or consultative roles
- ☆ it will be accompanied by trainer's materials, including overheads and exercises, so that the materials can be taught at local levels by existing educators in a variety of settings
- ☆ each local area will decide how the curriculum can most effectively be utilized in its own area to complement other work occurring in its region
- ☆ it is appropriate for use as a course text in college or university
- ☆ the authors, with two exceptions, are from Ontario, which means that they are accessible to readers who might wish further information
- ☆ the information is applicable to a broader readership beyond Ontario
- ☆ it represents the most up-to-date research and practice

In conclusion, I can only try to convey how proud our Chapter is of this book and those who have been part of its creation. As it is utilized for training across Ontario, we are confident that it will make a significant contribution to the lives of our citizens with a dual diagnosis and to their families.