

# The Notepad



Supporting families dealing with serious mental illness

January 2014, No. 132

## Public Education Lecture Series Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)



### Assertive Community Treatment: A Proactive Alternative

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) is best described by psychiatrist Joan Bishop as “a hospital without walls.” Long promoted by NSSS, ACT teams are comprised of 11-12 service providers, including a psychiatrist, who go out into the community to provide intensive care for those with severe mental illness, including psychotic disorders, addictions, and complex physical health problems.

ACT teams regularly visit patients, sometimes daily, to administer or ensure a patient is taking medication and to generally care for patients in much the same way they would have received care in a psychiatric hospital such as Riverview.

To provide an overview of assertive community treatment in Vancouver, NSSS welcomes Otto Lim, ACT program coordinator; Andrew Ryan, clinician; and Beverly Nolan, social worker, at the next NSSS public education lecture, Wednesday, January 29, in the Lions Gate Hospital auditorium.

Otto and Andrew will discuss the many successes and challenges ACT has had in its first years in Vancouver. As part of the RainCity Housing First ACT team, Beverly will focus on supportive housing and its relation to ACT services.

Lecture series attendees will not only have an opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of experiences working as part of an ACT team, but will also have an opportunity to ask questions about the ACT model of care and the difficult issues faced every day by ACT teams.

More on ACT in B.C. can also be found in this month's issue of the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin*.

### Featuring a panel presentation:

**Otto Lim,**  
Vancouver ACT Program Coordinator

**Andrew Ryan,**  
Vancouver ACT Clinical Supervisor

**Beverly Nolan,**  
Social Worker, RainCity Housing First  
ACT Team

**Wednesday, January 29, 2014**  
**Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium**  
**7:30 p.m.**

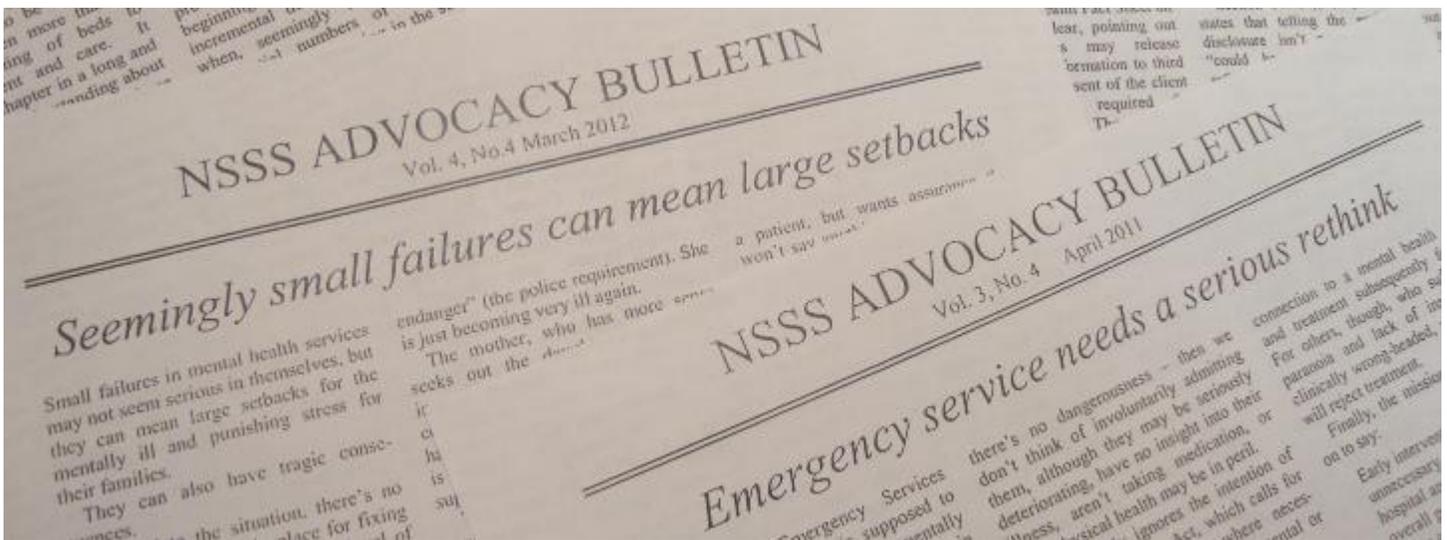
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### Save the Date: NSSS Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, March 26

The NSSS annual general meeting will be held Wednesday March 26, 2014, at Lions Gate Hospital. Watch for the March issue of *The Notepad* for further details.

## Letter from the President, Cheryl Zipper



As many of you may know, support for family members is the foundation of much our work at the Society. NSSS provides one-on-one support and crisis counselling, group support sessions, and an intensive Family-to-Family education course. This work is always intended to benefit the family members, and indirectly, their loved one who is ill. But we also provide another important function geared more toward the greater good and society-at-large - our system advocacy work.

When I first became NSSS president, I set out to inform myself further on all aspects of our work, and found myself fully engrossed in reading the past editions of the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin*. We are fortunate to have a professional writer on board who is also passionately interested in issues related to serious mental illness. Herschel Hardin is our advocacy coordinator, and has taken on advocacy with considerable commitment.

To get a glimpse of this commitment, you can read issues of the *NSSS Advocacy Bulletin* at [www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/bulletin.htm](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/bulletin.htm). Each one tackles a complex subject, and all are aimed at improving the system.

Some issues refer to tragic cases where something has gone amiss in our healthcare system, or involving the police and the justice system, highlighting the preventable deaths of Michael Wild and Ben Williams, or Ashley Smith and Sammy Yatim. Other issues, in fairness, credit cases where service providers have responded well, as seen in *Anatomy of a Successful Response to a Crisis* (March 2013).

How society deals with legal issues such as NCRMD (Not Criminally Responsible on Account of a Mental Disorder), involuntary admission, or privacy concerns which often hamper information sharing with family members (FIPPA) – is serious stuff. Those of us who know Her-

schel knows he doesn't hold back when it comes to tackling such questions. This sometimes means calling on major mental health agencies, such as Vancouver Coastal Health, to be accountable. This isn't an easy situation. We are able to do this because we are financially independent – we do not receive any funding from the health authorities. More important, however, is the fact that we speak out. It would be easier to shy away, not to rock the boat.

Many family members progress to a place of understanding and acceptance, and pursue personal advocacy on behalf of their loved one. Not so many go beyond that toward a wider advocacy of addressing the system as a whole and trying to effect governmental, legislative, or societal change.

Those who venture into this vast area of need come to realize how complex the issues are, and how much work there is to be done. NSSS staff member Melanie Scott describes advocacy aptly as a "lonely slog." She also reminded me of the most salient point of all: that in our advocacy work we are speaking on behalf of people who often cannot do so themselves.

I realize the analysis NSSS does takes often has an "edge." What I also realized, however, is that this approach, where appropriate, is necessary. It is profoundly important that we do this. And when I came away from reading the *Bulletin*, what I was left with was a feeling of compassion, for all those people who need a voice.

## Call for Nominations: 2014 Responsiveness to Families Award

Have you had an exceptional experience dealing with a psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, case worker, social worker, or other service provider—someone who listened to you and your family's concerns about your ill relative and included you in treatment and rehabilitation plans?

If so, you might consider nominating this person for the second-annual NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award. This award is presented to a healthcare or service provider who has demonstrated outstanding responsiveness to families. **Nominations close February 17, 2014.**

Last year's recipient was Dr. Rosalynd (Cindy) Holdsworth. Dr. Holdsworth was nominated by several families. One family member wrote, "If not for her diagnoses, treatment, care and caring, our family would have completely fallen apart."

NSSS has long advocated for the inclusion of families as an integral part of the treatment team and advocates as well for responsiveness to families to help change the culture of mental health services where the key role of families are not always recognized.



NSSS President Cheryl Zipper (left) presents the 2013 Responsiveness to Families Award to Dr. Cindy Holdsworth.

**For nomination criteria and rules, please see [www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/nominations.htm](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org/nominations.htm), or call 604-926-0856 to have a copy mailed to you.**



### Wanted: Storage Space

Do you have extra storage space in your home or garage? NSSS is looking to store several boxes of holiday decorations and supplies, used annually at our Christmas banquet. If you have free space available, please contact Susanna at [susanna@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:susanna@northshoreschizophrenia.org), or 604-926-0856.

### Family Support Centre

Personal support and information on major mental illnesses – schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders

205 - 1865 Marine Drive  
West Vancouver BC V7V 1J7

Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
or by appointment

North Shore/Lower Mainland: 604-926-0856  
Sea to Sky: 604-849-2252

[www.northshoreschizophrenia.org](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org)  
[info@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:info@northshoreschizophrenia.org)  
Facebook: [northshore.schizophrenia](https://www.facebook.com/northshore.schizophrenia)  
Twitter: @NSSSoc

### Monthly Support Meetings

Come share your questions, concerns, and experiences with family members.

Support group meetings are held each month in West Vancouver and Squamish for family members and close friends of people who have serious mental illnesses.

For information on the West Vancouver group, call 604-926-0856. For Squamish, email [seatosky@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:seatosky@northshoreschizophrenia.org).

### Families Helping Families

Thank you to our many friends and supporters. Your donations are appreciated.

Tax receipts will be issued for all contributions.

## Individual Placement and Support: Hope Through Employment

Last year, Rob Lockhart was looking to re-enter the workforce. He was motivated to work and wanted a steady job, but as someone with schizoaffective disorder, he knew a big part of his illness meant struggling with apathy.

“I used to dread getting out of bed,” says Rob.

To take the next steps, he contacted Gill Walker, an occupational therapist with North Shore Adult Community Mental Health. Gill uses an evidence-based model of supported employment called Individual Placement and Support (IPS), designed specifically to help those with a serious mental illness join the competitive labour market, no matter what the person’s age, diagnosis, or employment history.

Rob and Gill shared their experiences with IPS at the last NSSS public education lecture, Wednesday, November 27, at Lions Gate Hospital.

The success of IPS, Gill explains, is providing clients with individualized assistance. In some cases, Gill will ride the bus with a client to an interview or to work for their first few days on the job. She helps with paperwork, and will email prospective employers on behalf of a client if they’re not able to do so themselves.

One client had an early-morning phone interview, but was having difficulty getting out of bed before noon. Gill phoned the client to arrange a morning meeting before the call. She wondered whether her client would show up or not, but the person did – and later had a successful interview.

“Employment itself can be motivating,” says Gill.

Gill talked with Rob about his interests and helped him prepare his resume. She approached Park Royal Mall about possible openings in maintenance. She continued to encourage Rob, and went with him to his second interview at the mall, where he chose to disclose his mental illness.

The decision to disclose an illness is always the client’s. Some clients don’t want it mentioned at all. Rob was glad to have a chance to discuss it fully with his prospective employer, and had Gill to help him get through it.

He got the job.

To access IPS on the North Shore, the person must already be a client of North Shore Adult Community Mental Health, requiring a referral by a GP or hospital. In Vancouver, an IPS worker is assigned to each community mental health team. Burnaby also has two IPS workers.

Gill works only with those clients who really want to work



Rob Lockhart received motivational support and encouragement from occupational therapist Gill Walker when re-entering the work force.

and are able to do so. She doesn’t do assessments or worry about diagnosis or a history of substance abuse. All that matters is the person’s desire and motivation. For those with acute anxiety or other barriers, Gill will work with them as long as they remain committed to getting a job.

Another part of Gill’s role is reaching out to employers to see if jobs are available. She’s motivated by one question: “How do you give people hope again?”

She begins by finding opportunities for work that anyone can learn to do, that will give an employee a sense of purpose. Most jobs are in coffee shops, warehouses, grocery stores, small offices, or retail stores. Gill approaches employers by cold calling, through generic letters on Craigslist, or by attending early-morning business networking meetings.

Since January 2013, she’s found jobs for 35 people, with a success rate of 32 per cent of those referred to her. An IPS program in Montreal, over a 10-year period, has a 47 per cent success rate.

Rob is one of Gill’s success stories. “I just have to keep pushing myself to try and overcome apathy,” Rob says. “For me, it’s about having persistence, friends, and family.”

If you are an employer who would like more information on hiring, please contact Gill Walker at [gill.walker@vch.ca](mailto:gill.walker@vch.ca) or 604-983-6020.

More information and a video on IPS can be found at <http://sites.dartmouth.edu/ips/>. For a copy of Gill’s PowerPoint presentation, please contact Melanie at the Family Support Centre, 604-926-0856.

## Nancy Ford, the New NSSS Executive Director, Shares Her Story



Welcome to 2014. As I begin the New Year, I find myself reflecting on the past, what I've learned, and what I would like to bring forward. These days my son is my teacher, and we are both looking at how to take care of ourselves. He was diagnosed with a serious mental illness a few years ago, and together we've been on a roller coaster ride.

When he was first diagnosed neither of us had any insight. He thought he was just fine, that it was the world that was confused. I was a complete mess and didn't think I would ever make it through this trauma. As resilient as I've been in my life, my son's illness was getting the better of both of us. Over time we've learned to adapt, to respond to what's present and be with what is, and most importantly, to care for ourselves.

We also learned how critical it is to reach out to others for help, support, and understanding. Relationships, networking, and building capacity in families are buzzwords these days in the philanthropic and non-profit world.

### Winter Sessions of Family-to-Family on the North Shore and Sea to Sky

If you or a family member you know is struggling to understand how to deal with any aspect of serious mental illness, the Family-to-Family education course can help make a world of difference. This structured, 12-part education course covers the biological, psychological, and social aspects of mental illness, including symptomology, diagnosis, crisis management, and advocacy.

Classes begin on the North Shore on Tuesday, January 21, and on the Sea to Sky on Tuesday, February 18. For more information or to register, please call the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856.

As many of you already know, the course offers families both a supportive environment and a knowledge base to interact more productively with healthcare professionals, which can help generate better outcomes.

"It's immensely beneficial to speak to and get to know others in similar situations," writes one participant. "The teachers are so open, caring, and supportive."

NSSS is already leading the way, with family leadership; a board comprised entirely of family members; and family-based support, advocacy, and education. NSSS is considered an innovator in today's non-profit world.

It was quite by accident that I spotted the ad for this position, and quite by chance that I was free to explore a new opportunity. I've dedicated the past 17 years to families and individuals with a disability, first at PLAN and then at PLAN Institute, where my focus had been training, consultation, and research related to leadership development, personal network facilitation, social enterprise, and social innovation.

I still can't believe my good fortune, that I would find another gem in the non-profit world and have the opportunity to learn from incredible advocates and leaders. This is a family-driven organization rich in experience and wisdom. From the few families I've met up to this point, I can only imagine how much capacity for leadership and advocacy is in the membership.

It is an honour and a privilege to be serving alongside the families at the North Shore Schizophrenia Society, with a wonderful welcoming and supportive staff. And as we head into 2014, a reminder for each of us is to take time to care for ourselves.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Ford".



### Providing for the Future: Estate Planning and Strategic Legacies

When it comes to wills, trusts, and estate planning, it's important to understand and make the most of your options, to help secure the financial future of your loved one.

Join Bill Murdock, financial security advisor, and Herschel Hardin, NSSS vice president, for a special workshop designed for families of individuals living with an illness or a disability.

The workshop will be held Saturday, February 22, at the Capilano Branch (Edgemont) of the North Vancouver District Library, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It's free of charge, but registration is required. To register or for more information, please email [info@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:info@northshoreschizophrenia.org) or call 604-926-0856.

Topics covered will include the provision and administration of funds, fund management, RDSPs, types of trusts, strategic legacies, tax charge reductions, and life insurance.

## NSSS Wins Unity in Diversity Award



Pictured above with the award, from left to right, are Susanna Junnikkala, NSSS administrative assistant; Nadia Vargha-Majzub, nominator; Nancy Ford, NSSS executive director; and Michael Greenall, West Vancouver Baha'i.

NSSS is honoured to be this year's recipient of the Baha'i Community of West Vancouver's Unity in Diversity Award, after being nominated by a member of the community, Nadia Vargha-Majzub.

The award is presented annually to individuals or organizations that contribute significantly to "promoting understanding and mutual respect between diverse groups," according to Baha'i community spokesperson Minoo Greenall.

Herschel Hardin, NSSS vice president, and board member Byron Giraud accepted the award at a reception at the West Vancouver Library, November 13.

## North Shore Unitarian Church Donates \$1,500 to NSSS



NSSS board member Byron Giraud (left) and president Cheryl Zipper (second from left) were delighted to receive a cheque for \$1,500 from the North Shore Unitarian Church. Representing the church was Peggy Sloan (second from right), a member of the church's Social Responsibility Committee, and Rev. Stephen Atkinson (right).

The donation represents collections from the congregation at its services for the month of October.

NSSS would like to warmly thank the church and its members for their generosity.

Photo courtesy of North Shore Unitarian Church

*The North Shore Schizophrenia Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Province of British Columbia; City of North Vancouver; District of North Vancouver; District of West Vancouver; Resort Municipality of Whistler; Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; North Shore Rotary Clubs; Canada Post Foundation for Mental Illness and Mental Health; West Vancouver, Squamish, and Whistler Community Foundations; Lynn Valley Legion; Seymour Golf & Country Club; Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; and our many other generous donors.*

## Notes from the Family Support Centre

**Family-to-Family interview in *North Shore News*:** *North Shore News* health reporter Erin McPhee visited the Family Support Centre on January 13 to learn more about the Family-to-Family education program. Her interview with NSSS president and Family-to-Family teacher-trainer Cheryl Zipper and ED Nancy Ford will appear in the *North Shore News*, Sunday, January 19.

**NSSS Advocacy Bulletin mentioned in *National Post*:** The NSSS *Advocacy Bulletin*'s analysis of the Paul Boyd case ("Prosecutor's decision in Paul Boyd case fails test," November 2013) was discussed by Toronto newspaper columnist Christie Blatchford, on January 3, in the *National Post* and several other Postmedia newspapers, such as *Vancouver Sun*.

**NSSS to speak to LGH social workers:** Executive Director Nancy Ford will be meeting with social workers at Lions Gate Hospital on Tuesday, February 18, to exchange information on programs and services.

**Support Team training concludes initial training cycle:** The third training session of the new Support Team was held in late November, covering subjects such as urgent situations requiring hospitalization, involuntary admission, and the importance of persistence and creativity. This completes the core training, to be followed by

by experience in the field working with support coordinator Marguerite Hardin. It's envisioned the team will meet every three months in the future, for advanced training and feedback.

**Fundraising Team seeks new members:** The Fundraising Team is currently focusing on NSSS's annual fundraiser, Circle of Strength, held May 3, while also working on other areas that sustain our revenue. Personal donations continue to be a major source of support. The team is always looking for new members. No experience is necessary, and participating on the team is a lot of fun. If you would like to join the team, please call the office, 604-926-0856.

**NSSS Board continues strategic planning:** On January 14, as part of its regular meeting, the board conducted a follow-through planning segment with facilitator Karen Harrison. The original planning session took place in early November. The Board holds a strategic planning session every two years.

**A special thank-you:** Volunteers and staff would like to thank Ken Pert for donating a microwave to the Family Support Centre. We're already enjoying plenty of hot lunches!

## Notes from the Sea to Sky

**NSSS continues partnership building in the Sea to Sky:** Since expanding to the Sea to Sky in 2008, NSSS continues to collaborate and build partnerships. Sea-to-Sky Outreach Coordinator Christine Buttkus attended the 2013 Whistler Senior's Fair, and Parent Advisory Committee. An attendee of the latter wrote to Christine, "*Thanks for your presentation...very powerful and full of hope while grounded in reality and science.*"

**Stand Up for Mental Health a success in Whistler:** Thank you to the Resort Municipality of Whistler for their sponsorship of *Stand Up for Mental Health*, November 20. The performance was attended by over 90 people.

This is the second performance NSSS has been involved in, and the audience, made up of long-time residents and seasonal workers, deemed it the best performance yet. A thank-you also goes out to Whistler Community Services Society who partnered with NSSS, and to *The Pique*, for assisting with promotion.

**NSSS participates in the Jill Ackhurst Community Welcome Dinner:** This annual dinner, held November 21, always provides an opportunity for Whistler locals and seasonal workers to gain information on mental health resources. A young person who lost a friend to suicide this year shared how grateful she was to see the

work of the Sea to Sky Suicide Awareness and Prevention Working Group, which NSSS has taken a lead role in launching. Many thanks to Louise Buchholz for helping with the display.

**NSSS partners in *Issues in Adolescence*:** Close to 100 people attended a panel presentation and dialogue on youth mental health at Don Ross Secondary School, with excellent feedback. Many thanks to those who volunteered.

**Sharing successes at the Community Foundation of Whistler's Annual Showcase:** Outreach Coordinator Christine Buttkus attended the Community Foundation of Whistler's Annual Showcase to share successes from our projects that receive their support. These include outreach to schools/community, Partnership presentations, *Filling in the blanks between mental health and mental illness* community dialogue sessions in Whistler and Pemberton, the NSSS display, and resource materials for public libraries.

**Update on Mental Health Partnership Table:** NSSS continues to host the monthly table meetings and was pleased to have new NSSS Executive Director Nancy Ford join us in Squamish for the January meeting.

## NSSS Celebrates the Holiday Season



The weather outside was frightful, but that didn't stop over 100 guests from gathering at St. David's United Church on Saturday, December 7, for the annual NSSS Christmas banquet. Guests enjoyed a roast beef dinner, a moving performance by mezzo-soprano Christina Kent, and of course, a visit from Jolly Old St. Nick.

A heartfelt thank-you to all the volunteers who helped make the evening such a success!

*Top: Guests chat before dinner.*

*Left: Steve Watt adds the finishing touch to a good meal.*

*Bottom left: Mrs. Claus and Santa, all smiles.*

*Bottom right: Donna Sylvester, Kathi Collins, Sherry Steel, and Lisa Stringle prepare dessert behind the scenes.*

