

NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, December 9, 2009



For immediate release.

Mental Health Support Program for Families and Friends

Sunrise Health Region is inviting the participation of friends and families in a mental health education program called “Strengthening Families Together”. During the nine-session program, which starts January 19, 2010, participants will learn more about serious mental illness and will learn ways to cope.

“Family members and friends of persons who have been diagnosed with a mental illness often feel overwhelmed, hearing for the first time, the words “mental illness”, “treatment plan” “recovery process” and “relapse prevention,” says registered psychiatric nurse Brenda Bohun. Bohun works in the mental health day program and rehabilitation services in Yorkton.

“This program helps family and friends to adjust their expectations and take an active role in recovery” adds Bohun. “We also help to unravel the challenges of communicating and navigating the health system which, at times, can be difficult for people to understand and access.

“Strengthening Families Together” is a nationally established education program for families and friends of individuals with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorders or other diagnosed mental illness.

“Mental illness is as challenging as other serious medical conditions but is not as openly acknowledged,” says Bohun. “Caregivers, families and friends of persons with a mental illness often neglect the importance of their own health, and their own need for support.”

Yorkton Mental Health Services will host the next “Strengthening Families Together” sessions starting on January 19, 2010. Persons can register by calling 786-0869 before January 12, 2010 and can find out how to access other resources if the “Strengthening Families Together” program will not meet their needs.

Topics covered in the program include: facts about mental illness, treatment and the process of recovery, coping as a family, self care, effective communication, problem-solving skills, and understanding the mental health system.

-30-

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Sharon Tropin, Director of Communications 306.786.0144

www.SunriseHealthRegion.sk.ca