

NEWS RELEASE  
Tuesday, April 13, 2010



**For immediate release**

## **Strengthening Families Together – New Sessions Starting**

Sunrise Health Region Mental Health Services is again offering the "Strengthening Families Together" support program starting on April 20, 2010. The program is a weekly series of nine educational sessions that provide information and support for families and friends living with an individual with a diagnosed mental illness.

Mental illness is not isolated to a small number of people; it affects one in five Canadians. Many people are affected by a mental illness including those diagnosed with the illness as well as their family and friends. The good news is that there is a support program available in this region.

“Strengthening Families Together” is about breaking down the barriers of stigma surrounding mental illness and exploring problems and solutions in a supportive environment with people who can really empathize with each other’s situation.

It is normal for family members to feel overwhelmed and to have difficulty balancing the role of caregiver with the need to take care of their own needs and the needs of other family members. The “Strengthening Families Together” program gives families a chance to meet with others who understand and share their experiences, and to work with mental health professionals to learn coping strategies and ways to shape their own self-care skills.

Diagnostic labels such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression can be devastating for family members hearing these words for the first time. Information is provided at the sessions so that families can better understand symptoms of mental illness, treatment, how to provide support and how to navigate the mental health system.

“Strengthening Families Together” is a nationally recognized education program developed by the Schizophrenia Society of Canada and the program is applicable to all forms of mental illness. Yorkton Mental Health Services will host the next sessions starting on April 20, 2010. People interested in registering or learning more can call 786-0869.

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