

NEWS RELEASE
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For immediate release

Dual Opportunities Group Program

Yorkton Mental Health & Addiction Services is pleased to announce a group program for individuals recovering from concurrent disorders. A concurrent disorder is a combination of a mental illness and a substance use disorder. Recovery is more successful when one disorder is not treated in isolation from the other.

Each Wednesday, starting April 14, 2010, weekly group sessions will be led for ten weeks by professionals from Yorkton Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Dual Opportunities Group offers education, information and support to individuals recovering from concurrent disorders. The group facilitators provide a coordinated and integrated treatment approach that helps participants to establish personal goals that strengthen their recovery plan and prevent relapse.

Nearly 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. Mental illnesses include depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, and schizophrenia.

About thirty percent of people diagnosed with a mental illness will also have a co-occurring substance use disorder. Substance use disorders are characterized by preoccupation with obtaining alcohol or other substances such as marijuana, or painkillers.

Substance use disorders are also characterized by excessive consumption and loss of control over consumption of the substance, increased tolerance, and physical and psychological withdrawal if the substance is not available.

Concurrent disorders can include combinations such as: schizophrenia and marijuana dependence; an anxiety disorder and a drinking problem; or depression and cocaine dependence.

There is no simple cause of concurrent disorders. A person suffering from depression may try to hide from their problem and use alcohol or other substances to mask symptoms such as low mood, feelings of hopelessness, sleep problems, and low energy. Alcohol or other substances are often turned to

by persons with the uncontrollable worry, intense panic and fear symptoms of an anxiety disorder.

Substance use may provide short-term relief such as helping a person forget their problems and make them feel better, but it actually can worsen or mimic the symptoms of mental illness, causing depressed mood, anxiety, or hallucinations.

Fear of being judged, blamed or criticized by others often keeps people from seeking help. Being supported by family, friends, and community who understand and encourage treatment is important for success. For those living with the challenges of a concurrent disorder, stigma often creates a barrier to treatment.

The good news is that with the appropriate treatment and professional help recovery is possible. The journey of recovery involves development of a support system, learning to manage symptoms of a mental illness, strategies such as harm reduction to reduce the negative physical and psychological impact of substances, and development of a relapse prevention plan.

For more information about The Dual Opportunities Group, or to register please contact Cres 786-0574 or Karen 786-0573.

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For information about this news release, please contact Sharon Tropin, Director of Communications 306.786.0144.