



ACTION

NEWS – NOUVELLES

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Building capacity within the substance abuse field

This September, CCSA will be releasing Version 1.0 of the *Behavioural Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Field*. CCSA has been working with consultants and experts in the field to determine a set of core behavioural competencies for the substance abuse workforce for a range of job clusters. Part of CCSA's broader Core Competencies initiative that began in 2006, the behavioural competencies define the "soft" skills required to work in counselling, health promotion, outreach, withdrawal management, clinical supervision, administration and senior management. The "hard" skills or specific technical knowledge required for these types of positions are defined by the core technical competencies released in November 2007.

The goals of the broader Core Competencies initiative are to: enhance professionalism within the field by supporting the use of research-based practice; support the hiring and retention of skilled people; and develop strategies for learning and development that will equip the field for excellence, now and in the future.

After conducting extensive research, a draft of 19 core behavioural competencies was taken to 11 focus groups—comprised of substance abuse professionals from across Canada—for consultation. Through

these consultations, 18 of the 19 proposed competencies were adopted. Professionals chosen for the focus groups represented seven broad job clusters—counselling, health promotion, outreach, withdrawal management, clinical supervision, administration and senior management. These groups deliberated on the topic of 'which behavioural competencies define excellence in performance'.

Focus group participants:

- identified core behavioural competencies for each job cluster;
- rated each competency's importance relative to other competencies;
- identified the level of proficiency necessary for each of the truly core behavioural competencies;
- suggested language and terminology that would "speak to" the substance abuse workforce; and
- provided insightful comments about the proposed performance management tools.

In addition to the core behavioural competencies developed, CCSA also plans to provide organizations in the field with tools to assist them in hiring and managing their staff more effectively. Senior managers from across Canada gathered in April to develop interview questions and

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IOS 2009 program firms up

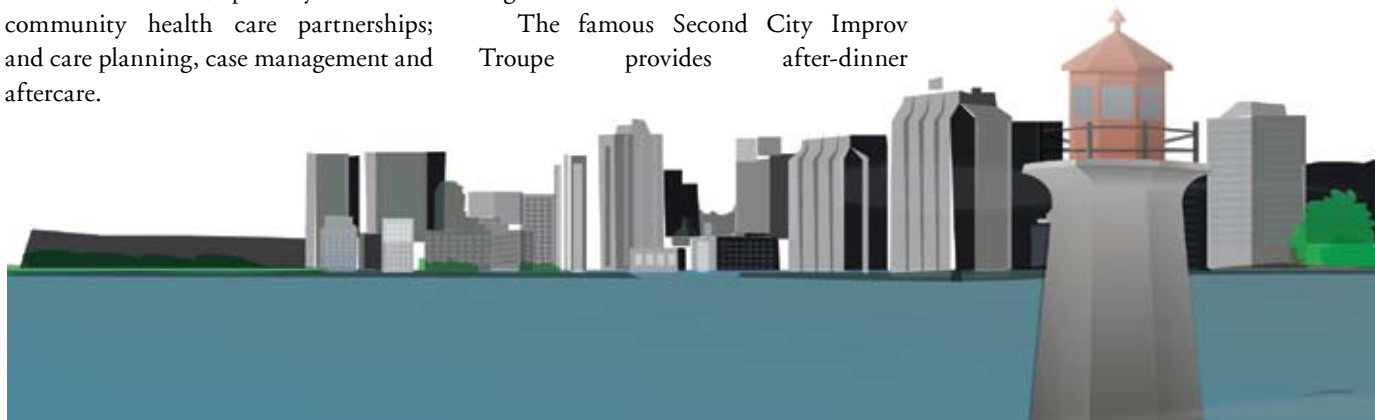
The countdown to IOS 2009 in Halifax from November 15–18 has begun. With over 130 abstracts submitted, the Program Committee meets in mid-June to select presentations that best reflect the conference theme: Pathways and Bridges to Change. The theme draws from the National Treatment Strategy, exploring individual ‘pathways to change’ through a tiered model of treatment and ‘system bridges’ across the range of services to ensure coordinated care experiences. Presentations will be organized according to the six conference threads: collaboration and coordination; specialized addiction treatment; prevention and health promotion; early identification and brief interventions; primary care and community health care partnerships; and care planning, case management and aftercare.

Three exciting keynote speakers are confirmed including Annette Dale-Perera, Director of Quality at UK’s National Treatment Agency, who will open the conference with a discussion on implementation of the tiered model in that country. Tuesday’s keynote speaker, Dr. Franco Vaccarino, chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto, will speak on the neuroscience of addiction and its application to treatment. The conference will close with Christopher Kennedy Lawford, an author, lecturer, public policy advisor and advocate in the field of addiction and Hepatitis C, who will speak about his personal experience with addiction and efforts to reduce stigmatization.

The famous Second City Improv Troupe provides after-dinner

entertainment on the Monday night with skits and improv custom-designed for our conference. Audience participation is expected!

The conference is hosted by CCSA with support from the Atlantic Canada Council on Addictions, the Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection and the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions. A range of partnership opportunities are available offering several strategic benefits, including the opportunity to network with the 600 participants expected to attend IOS 2009. The number of exhibit spaces has also been expanded this year. For more information about the conference and to register, visit www.issuesofsubstance.ca. >



CCSA’s drug prevention strategy for youth update

The *Drug Prevention Strategy for Canada’s Youth* (see Action News, Vol. 17, No. 4)—a five-year, \$10-million national drug prevention initiative—is making strides to accomplish its aim of reducing illicit drug use among Canadian youth aged 10–24. The Strategy is based on the principles of shared accountability and responsibility, leveraging investment, and ongoing sustainability.

Partnership engagement underpins this Strategy and one of the key mechanisms for achieving this is the National Advisory Group on Youth Substance Abuse Prevention (YSAP). YSAP has provided input on the Strategy

and its three key approaches and has recently adopted its own action plan identifying several priority areas that it collectively wishes to address.

In May, CCSA released *Building on Our Strengths: Canadian Standards for School-based Youth Substance Abuse Prevention—A Guide for Education and Health Personnel*. To introduce this key resource to the field, CCSA hosted a pan-Canadian webinar in May, held focus groups in Atlantic Canada in June, and will hold a general consultation on the School-based Standards this fall. Based on this feedback and a scan of new research, a second edition of the Standards will be produced next year. A new Canadian

Standards Task Force is currently being formed to develop standards for family- and community-based youth substance abuse prevention initiatives, to be released in 2010.

This past year, the Media/Youth Consortium—a national cooperative comprised of media, marketing, communications and youth services and drug prevention experts—launched Xperiment.ca, an innovative drug prevention website for youth.

For more information on the Strategy visit: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/Priorities/YouthPrevention/Pages/default.aspx>. >

National Alcohol Strategy in action

The National Alcohol Strategy Advisory Committee (NASAC) held its inaugural meeting in December 2008. The mandate of the 20-member multi-sectoral NASAC is to lead the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NAS recommendations, with the aim of increasing Canadians' awareness of the issue of alcohol abuse and their participation in reducing its associated harms.

Several of the NAS recommendations are currently being implemented, including the development of drinking guidelines and the development of SBIR—screening, brief intervention

and referral—tools and strategies. A Drinking Guidelines Expert Advisory Panel, chaired by Dr. Peter Butt of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, is expected to finalize the guidelines in the fall of 2009. Their broad goal will be “to encourage a culture of moderation and aim for consistency and clarity of alcohol-related health and safety messages” (NAS, pg. 7).

The drinking guidelines are the foundation for many of the NAS recommendations, including the development of SBIR. The primary objective of developing SBIR tools and strategies is to reduce alcohol-related

harm in adults through a culture of moderation and to encourage responsible drinking. The tools will provide health professionals with information to screen and treat those who may be at risk for or have already developed alcohol-related problems. CCSA signed a contract with the BC Mental Health and Addictions Services to provide the services of Dr. David Brown to work with an SBIR Expert Advisory Panel of 10 leading scientific and clinical experts across Canada to develop the final version of the SBIR in the winter of 2010. >

Maternal cannabis use during pregnancy

CCSA has just released *Clearing the Smoke on Cannabis: Maternal Cannabis Use during Pregnancy*, the second in a series of four reports that review the effects of cannabis use on various aspects of human functioning and development. A growing body of evidence suggests that the use of cannabis—the most widely used illicit drug in Canada—may negatively impact several aspects of people's lives, including pre- and postnatal development among children of maternal users. Cannabis is the most frequently consumed illicit drug during pregnancy, with 2.8% of pregnant

women in the United States reporting past-month use, according to recent data.

The report indicates there is growing evidence to suggest that maternal cannabis use during pregnancy (particularly heavy use) has subtle harmful effects on offspring, beginning at approximately three years of age. Children as young as three and as old as 22 have shown affected cognitive functioning, behaviour and mental health, which has been attributed in part to prenatal exposure to cannabis. As well, accumulating evidence suggests that prenatal exposure to cannabis may contribute to early and frequent substance

use during adolescence by these offspring, putting them at greater risk of associated harms.

This report emphasizes that cannabis use is a preventable prenatal risk factor and that it is prudent to advise pregnant women, and women thinking of becoming pregnant, of the risks associated with cannabis use during pregnancy. For more information on this report, visit: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Eng/KnowledgeCentre/OurPublications/Pages/default.aspx>. >

NTS leadership team promotes collaboration

CCSA is working with partners across jurisdictions, sectors and organizations to move ahead on the recommendations made in the November 2008 report, *A Systems Approach to Substance Use in Canada: Recommendations for a National Treatment Strategy*. An important first step has been the development of the National Treatment Strategy Leadership Team, which is co-chaired by representatives from the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Liaison Committee on Problematic Substance Use—Anne Bowlby (Ontario) and Carolyn Davison (Nova Scotia)—and by Jim Cincotta from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. The Team also has representatives from the provinces and territories, the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions, CCSA, Health Canada, First Nations & Inuit groups, primary

care, community/lived experience, mental health, public health, and regional health authorities. Project management and operational support is provided by CCSA, with funding from Health Canada's Drug Treatment Funding Program for the four-year period ending April 2013. Moving forward, the Leadership Team will focus on promoting the importance of integration and partnerships between and across jurisdictions, sectors and organizations. Key messages to be disseminated emphasize that: treatment works; change is needed; a model of dual competency that is informed by and responsive to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Western approaches is required; and the voice of lived experience must be included. >

... substance abuse field

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performance management tools to ensure that these resources are relevant to the substance abuse workforce. These tools will be accompanied by both an interview

and performance management guide.

To learn more about this initiative, visit: www.ccsa.ca/Eng/Priorities/Workforce/CoreCompetencies/Pages/default.aspx. >

CCSA Signs MOA with CSAM

CCSA has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Canadian Society of Addictions Medicine (CSAM)—a national organization of medical professionals and other scientists interested in the field of substance use disorders. Similar to CCSA, CSAM aims to prevent problems arising from substance abuse and improve or stabilize the lives of those who experience substance use harms.

This partnership aligns the clinical practice of addiction medicine more

closely with CCSA's policy work on substance abuse—and shares the collective aim of further promoting the development of leading-edge research, policies and programs in the field. In support of this MOA, CCSA will host a session on the Core Competencies initiative and the *Substance Abuse in Canada Report: Concurrent Disorders*, both currently being developed, at the ISAM-CSAM joint meeting in Calgary this September. For more information on this event please visit <http://www.csam.org/default.aspx>. >

CCSA launches new terminology databases

On June 1, CCSA launched two new terminology databases—*Acronyms and Abbreviations* and *CCSA Lexicon*. The first is a bilingual addictions-related inventory of acronyms and abbreviations presented alongside the full term or phrase that they represent. It has international as well as Canadian content. The *Lexicon* is an addictions-

specific inventory of terms and phrases used in CCSA documentation and the CCSA preferred translations (but not definitions). This tool will be very useful for translators and for researchers who write in both official languages. CCSA will continue to maintain and update these databases on a regular basis. >

New Sex/Gender/Diversity Worksheet

The *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada (2005)* was a groundbreaking report built from cross-country consultation and discussions with government, NGOs and other key stakeholders. Fast-forward to May 2008 when at a national forum meeting for the National Framework, participants expressed considerable interest in addressing issues of sex, gender and diversity in the implementation of the Framework's priorities.

In response, Dr. Colleen Dell of the University of Saskatchewan and Nancy

Poole of BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, under the auspices of memorandums of Agreement with CCSA, have created a worksheet entitled *Applying a Sex/Gender/Diversity-based Analysis within the National Framework*. Its goal is to support those working on Framework priorities to incorporate a population-informed approach that considers gender and other ways in which social conditions and inequities shape overall health.

For more information on the Worksheet, visit <http://www.nationalframework-cadrenational.ca/images/uploads/file/sex-diversity-paper-bil.pdf>. >

EVENTS

September 3–4, 2009

International Symposium Gambling and Addictions

Montreal, Quebec

E: jeux-gambling2009@opus3.com

September 7–8, 2009

1st National Cannabis Conference

Ultimo, NSW

E: g.mathieu@unsw.edu.au

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

10th Annual Fetal Alcohol Canadian Expertise (FACE) Research Roundtable

Toronto, Ontario

http://www.motherisk.org/FAR/econtent_conferences.jsp#3

September 23–26, 2009

ISAM-CSAM Annual Conference 2009

Calgary, Alberta

E: marilyn.dorozio@albertahealthservices.ca

October 25–28, 2009

XXXVII colloque - Les dimensions humaines de l'intervention en dépendance

Trois-Rivières, Québec

E: ctrottier@aitq.com

November 2–4, 2009

Making Gains in Mental Health and Addictions

Toronto, Ontario

E: linda@mmsonline.ca

November 15–18, 2009

Issues of Substance 2009

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

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