



Hamilton Brant Behaviour Services & The Family Counselling Centre of Brant

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June is Deaf-blind Awareness Month

Deafblindness is a unique disability that incorporates the sensory loss of both sight and hearing. Take a moment and think about all the information that we inadvertently receive through our eyes and ears on a daily basis. Whether it is news on the radio, conversations of friends, headlines in the news paper, or reports of stormy weather, these seemingly incidental bits of information, which most of us take for granted, are out of reach for a person living with deafblindness.

June is celebrated around the world as Deafblind Awareness Month, marking the birth month of Helen Keller, unquestionably the most famous person who was deafblind. Helen Keller's journey is an inspiring story which took her from silence and darkness to a life of vision and advocacy. Against overwhelming odds, she waged a seemingly impossible battle to re-enter the world she had lost, and through her actions and achievements, she is recognized as one of the most powerful symbols of triumph over adversity.

Many people are familiar with the story of Helen Keller but are unaware that her disability is still all too real for an estimated 15,500 Canadians who are deafblind. It is appropriate during the month of June to celebrate the achievements of deafblind persons, and to recognize that increased public awareness of this disability is crucial to increase opportunities for those who live with it.

Submitted by: Christine Nowlan, Deafblind Consultant with FCCOB & HBBS

June is Seniors Month

Canadians are experiencing longer life spans and better health than before. As we become senior citizens, the tasks in life that were so easy to do become much more of a challenge. We can assist seniors in their day to day lives by; creating large print signs, or assist individuals at the store (by reaching an item, carrying out bags or offering to let them go ahead of us in line.) Before assisting a senior, ALWAYS remember to ask if they would like help. Many seniors live independent lives and prefer to do tasks on their own.

There are lots of others way you can help in your community. For more information visit www.seniorsinfo.ca/en/welcome

Don't Forget!

June 15th, 2011 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day . Seniors deserve to live safely, with dignity and as independently as possible with supports they may need. Abuse comes in many forms including; Financial, Physical, Sexual, Psychological (Emotional) and Neglect. Knowing the signs of Elder Abuse is one of the first steps in preventing it. For more information on signs, what you can do and more please visit The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (ONPEA) at

www.onpea.org



Recognizing the Signs of Thyroid Disease

June is thyroid awareness month. According to the **Primary Care of Adults with Disabilities, Canadian Consensus Guidelines, May 2011**, endocrine disorders (thyroid, diabetes, low testosterone) are difficult to diagnose in adults with developmental disabilities and this population has a higher incidence of thyroidism compared with the typical population. Hypothyroidism and Hyperthyroidism are both more common in adults with Down Syndrome. Hypothyroidism is when the thyroid gland is not producing enough thyroid hormone. Hyperthyroidism is when the thyroid gland produces too much thyroid hormone

Problems with the thyroid are often not one of the first areas investigated when someone experiences health concerns and can often go undetected for some time. Some individuals with developmental disabilities may not be able to communicate symptoms they are experiencing and rely upon reports given by their caregivers.

Symptoms of an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) are: constipation, dry skin, coarse/brittle hair, weakness, sensitive to cold, lethargy, depression, loss of cognitive skills, appetite change.

Symptoms of an overactive thyroid are: weight loss, hyperactivity, sweating, fast heart beat, trembling hands, trouble sleeping, anxiety, fatigue, and loss of cognitive skills, and other personality changes.

The Canadian Consensus Guidelines states that adults with developmental disabilities should be monitored for thyroid function regularly. Individuals with a high risk for thyroid disorders should be tested at regular intervals every 1-5 years. Physicians seeing individuals presenting with changes in adaptive skills, unusual or challenging behaviours, and changes in emotion/mood should also consider testing for thyroid disease. Concerned caregivers of individuals with developmental disabilities can help by keeping accurate records of several health related behaviours, such as sleep, energy level, appetite, and mood change.

For more information and resources, see the following websites and publications:

Sullivan, W.F., Berg, J.M, Bradley, E., Cheetham, T., Denton, R., Heng, J....McMillan, S (2011) Primary Care of Adults with Developmental Disabilities: Canadian Consensus Guidelines. Canadian Family Physician: May 2011, Vol 57, pg. 546.

<http://www.ngdf.org/cms/modules/files/uploads/17710.PDF>

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen nor even touched, but just felt in the heart."

- Helen Keller, 1891



Caregiver Burnout

Caregiver burnout happens when a caregiver is physically and emotionally drained due to caregiving. If burnout continues, it can have a major effect on the lives of our loved ones and on the caregiver.

If we know what to look for and have ideas on how we can make burnout a bit less stressful, we can take the steps needed for healthier lives for ourselves and our loved ones.

Caregiver burnout doesn't just happen within the family, it can happen at work also. Depression, being overly tired and sleeping difficulties are just a few of the signs of caregiver burnout.

Here are some ways to prevent caregiver burnout;

-Ask for help. Ask family members, friends and co-workers for help.

-Know your limits and don't overdo yourself

-Don't plan too far ahead, instead, go day by day

-Make time for yourself

- Look online. The internet is a great place to research caregiver burnout.

Another great way to prevent burnout is to confide in others.

Remember: You should always look after yourself when looking after others!

BECOME A PUBLISHED AUTHOR!!

If you would like to see your art work or any other creative piece in the HBBS newsletter, please submit it to the following email address

jnichols@fccb.ca, pass it on to someone you know from HBBS or mail it to:

Newsletter Submissions
Hamilton Brant Behaviour Services
1024 Upper Wentworth St., Unit 4
Hamilton, Ontario
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This could be a success story, a poem, a letter, a creative piece, etc.
(Try to keep it between 175 and 225 words.)

RESOURCE: IS YOUR AGENCY TRAUMA INFORMED?

BY: Lisa Whittingham

Trauma is an event that is unexpected and exceeds a persons usual coping strategies. In recent years there has been an increased awareness of the abuse of people with an intellectual disability. As service providers, it is imperative to recognize the impact that trauma may play in the lives of people we support. One of the frameworks for understanding and supporting people who have been abused is a trauma-informed system (Klinic Community Health, 2008). In a trauma-informed system, abuse is understood as a factor that impacts all aspects of an individual's life instead of a unique event. In other words, the impact of trauma can be observed in all areas of an individual's life. There is an increased risk of becoming re-victimized if we are not aware of the role that trauma may play in an individual's life (Klinic Community Health, 2008).

Klinic Community Health (2008) is a Manitoba-based agency that has developed an online toolkit for agencies to increase awareness and to ensure services are more trauma informed.

They outline trauma-informed care as:

- Integration of understanding of trauma throughout their program
- Development of policies and procedures to ensure prevention of re-traumatization
- Involvement of trauma-survivors in designing and evaluating services
- Placement of priority on trauma-survivor's choice, safety, and control.

This toolkit also includes evaluation tools for agencies and staff in addition to information about what is trauma, recovery, and guidelines for working with trauma survivors. The toolkit can be found at

www.trauma-informed.ca.

This Issues Question

We often hear people say things like "think positive," "don't focus on the negative," or "it could always be worse." Do you think the Power of Positive Thinking really works?

Please submit your answer to the following email address jnichols@fccb.ca, or pass it on to someone you know from HBBS



July 1st, 2011

We're on the
web!

www.fccb.ca

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WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Southern Ontario has some great events. Some of which are highlighted here. For a full listing please go to

www.soto.on.ca

- * Royal Botanical Gardens hosts a Red-Hot Jazz and Cool Blues every Wednesday during the summer 6pm-8:30pm
- * 2nd annual Brantford Hockeyfest June 3-5 2011, Lions Park Brantford
- * Springtime in Paris June 4-5 Lions Park Paris
- * July 1, 2011-Canada Day Celebrations! Various communities throughout Ontario.
- * 38th Annual Brantford International Villages Festival July 6-9
- * Movies in the Square-free family movies at Harmony Square in Brantford every Thursday during the summer.
- * Brott Music Festival June 11 to August 18-Hamilton
- * Hamilton Music and Film Festival June 25
- * The 2nd Annual OH Canada Rotary Ribfest June 30 to July 03-Hamilton
- * Festival of Friends August 5-7-Hamilton
- * Beach Festival August 12-14- Hamilton
- * Brantford's Own Annual Ribfest August 12-14
- * FestCaribbean August 20-21

For more information on events visit

[Hamilton and area Events](http://www.tourismhamilton.com/events.php)

<http://www.tourismhamilton.com/events.php>

[Brantford and area Events](http://www3.brantford.ca/brantfordevents.nsf)

<http://www3.brantford.ca/brantfordevents.nsf>

What topics would you like to see in our upcoming newsletters?

Please send suggestions to jnichols@fccb.ca