

ASPERGER COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP

Summer 2010
Issue 2



ADDRESSING THE NEEDS IN THE COMMUNITY FOR TEENS AND ADULTS WITH ASPERGERS SYNDROME

What's been happening?

Moving On Up in Ottawa!

In Feb. 2010, Ottawa held its first-ever conference for teens and adults with high functioning autism. Almost 100 teens, adults and their families took part over the 3 days of "Moving On Up: Success in Adulthood." The best part for the conference organizers was getting to know these amazing young people and their dedicated families.

The event kicked off Friday night with a session on post-secondary studies. The disability centres of the local college and universities presented valuable information on how students should prepare, what accommodations to expect, and available assistive technology. They "wowed" the tech savvy audience on technology such as the Smartpen, a digital pen that both digitizes hand-written notes and records audio from lectures, linking the two—allowing you to tap on your notes with your Smartpen to hear what was said while you were writing!

Saturday morning included the sessions "Finding You a Job" and "Motivating Yourself and Setting Goals for Success" presented by Y's Owl Maclure Cooperative Centre, a local day program and employment agency, that has many clients with Asperger Syndrome. Saturday afternoon parents attended a session by psychologist Dr. Yolanda Korneluk on "Helping Your Son and Daughter Cope with Life Changes." Meanwhile, teens/adults were experiencing gentle fitness and relaxation with Mary Bette Ridell, owner of a local fitness studio. The idea for "Time to Get Fit and Relax," came from one of Y's Owl's employees, a man with Asperger Syndrome, who saw both the educational and "downtime" benefits this session would offer.

Undoubtedly the most spirited session of the conference was the last session of the day— "Healthy Relationships"—where participants actively explored aspects of relationships. According to the presenters, Y's Owl Maclure, the participants showed great enthusiasm and insight on the subject. During that time slot, parents attended a session by the local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association on little-known "Form 2—Order for Examination under Section 16 of the Mental Health Act of Ontario"—a document that could help parents get an adult child (who refuses care) to be examined at the hospital if they are in danger to themselves or others.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Moving on Up in Ottawa	1
Asperger Lunch and Learn	1
What is a Form 2?	2
Book of the Month	2
Possible Changes to the DSM-V Diagnostic Criteria	3
Launch of the Autism Registry	4
Spotlight on a ASCPG Member	5
Upcoming Training Opportunities	6
Support Groups for Adults and their Families	7

Y's Owl Maclure started us off again on Sunday morning with "Getting Along With the People You Work With" and "Time Management and Problem Solving Skills." In the afternoon, those with Asperger Syndrome attended a workshop by the Rotary Club called "How to Keep Safe-Online and in General." Parents attended a Coffee Talk on Resources led by Nancy Gibson, RCP of Autism Ontario Ottawa Chapter and Heather Fawcett, a parent volunteer with the Chapter.

The conference wrapped up with a panel of 5 people with AS talking about their experiences, including a married couple—one with AS, the other without, who also talked about marital relationships. The panel was organized by Reinhard Buehling, a person with AS, with the help of Aspirations, the local support group for adults with Asperger Syndrome. Reinhard also videotaped the conference to be shared with those who couldn't attend.

Heather Fawcett
Chair - Asperger Syndrome Community Planning Group

Asperger Lunch and Learn

On January 26th ASCPG held a Lunch and Learn on "Asperger Syndrome in Adulthood" (sponsored by CMHA.) The presenters were Heather Fawcett, volunteer with Autism Ontario Ottawa Chapter and Rosalinde Grein who has Asperger Syndrome. The speakers discussed the features of AS in adulthood, their life prospects, interventions and local resources. The audience was made up of staff from local agencies, education institutions, professionals and family members. Participants were particularly interested in support around transition to post-secondary, treatments and therapy, and available services. To this end, ASCPG hopes to provide more training on these topics in the future.

What is a Form 2?

Many people who support individuals with Asperger Syndrome have expressed the need to know more about mental illnesses because of the higher incidence of co-occurring mental health issues among this population. To help address this need, the Asperger Syndrome Community Planning Group organized a Lunch and Learn opportunity in June.

Brenda Moore, a Registered Nurse with the Canadian Mental Health Association, gave an overview of mental health issues to an audience of approximately thirty-five members of the community. Feedback suggested that participants especially appreciated a section on the "Form 2," and so this article provides a brief overview of what this is for those who missed the Lunch and Learn.

A Form 2 is an "Order for Examination under Section 16 of the Mental Health Act of Ontario." It is issued by a Justice of the Peace and it guarantees that a person brought to a hospital will be examined by a physician to determine if he or she will be admitted under psychiatric care. It does not guarantee that this person will be admitted.

This form is generally requested by family members, friends, or workers when the person would not otherwise voluntarily go to the hospital. Criteria to have the form issued are strong concerns that the person is a danger to self, to others, or is unable to manage self-care. Persons filling out the form need to be specific about why they have these concerns. It differs from a Form 1 in that it is a physician who fills out a Form 1.

For those readers who live in Ottawa, Form 2's can be picked up at the courthouse on Elgin and Laurier. You fill it out, bring it to the JP's office and explain why you feel there is enough concern to warrant a Form 2. It's helpful to include supporting documentation with the form (ex. letters from other concerned people in the person's support network, etc.) The JP then decides if she or he will issue the form. If it is issued, you should hand-deliver it to the police station on Elgin, at which point police have seven days to find the person and bring him or her to a hospital emergency room for an examination. Make sure you're available by phone for hospital staff who may want to discuss your request with you.

Sara Luck
Coordinator, Brokerage Service
Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch

BOOK OF THE MONTH



House Rules

By Jodi Piccoult

"They tell me I'm lucky to have a son who's so verbal, who is blisteringly intelligent, who can take apart the broken microwave and have it working again an hour later. They think there is no greater hell than having a son who is locked in his own world, unaware that there's a wider one to explore. But try having a son who is locked in his own world, and still wants to make a connection. A son who tries to be like everyone else, but truly doesn't know how."

This book is about a teenage boy with Asperger Syndrome who has a special interest in forensic analysis but this special interest ends up getting him into trouble when there is a terrible murder in his town. The cops come to him with questions but the characteristics of Aspergers such as not making eye contact, stimulatory tics and twitches and flat affect begin to make him look guilty to those investigating the case.

This is a fantastic read and through all of her research and contact with many people who have personal experience with Asperger Syndrome Jodi Piccoult has managed to make her character seem so real. You won't be able to put it down.

Possible Changes to the DSM–V Diagnostic Criteria.

The Neurodevelopmental Disorders Workgroup met in Arlington VA on April 21-22, 2009 and discussed the following recommendations for potential changes to DSM-V diagnostic criteria. No final decisions have been made about the changes and feedback will be sought from professional and lay communities before the Workgroup finalizes their recommendations.

PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS (PDD)

1) The Workgroup is considering a change in DSM-V that would replace the Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) category with the title "Autism Spectrum Disorders" (ASD). The change would utilize a single diagnosis for the disorders currently entitled: Autism, PDD-NOS and Asperger disorder. Several factors support making this change:

1) A single spectrum better reflects the pathology and symptoms. Separation of ASD from typical development is reliable and valid, while separation of disorders within the spectrum is variable and inconsistent. Individuals with autism, PDD-NOS or Asperger disorder often are diagnosed by severity, rather than unique, separate criteria defining the three diagnoses.

2) To better reflect the symptomatology and clinical presentation of ASD, changing the three current symptom domains (social deficits, communication deficits and fixated interests/repetitive behaviors) to two (social communication deficits and fixated interests and repetitive behaviors) is also being considered.

Streamlining the current PDD (ASD) criteria to better clarify diagnostic requirements is being examined. The criteria might be presented as relatively brief "bullets" with more extensive examples provided in the accompanying text to better describe symptom presentations at various ages, developmental stages and levels of cognitive functioning. Gender and cultural factors will also be considered to ensure that the ASD diagnosis is made appropriately in diverse patient populations.

3) Symptom severity for ASD could be defined along a continuum that includes normal traits, subclinical symptoms and three different severity levels for the disorder. One possible model:

Most severe ASD

- Minimal or no social communication
- Nearly constant, complete preoccupation, strongly resists interference with ritual

Moderately severe ASD

- Some social communication but interactions noticeably disturbed
- Frequent and interfering rituals, repetitive behaviors and fixated interests

Less severe ASD

- Clear impairments in social communication. Meets all diagnostic criteria including symptom severity greater than threshold
- Occasional rituals, repetitive behaviors and fixated interests; some interference

Subclinical AS Symptoms

- Has some symptoms from one or both domains but no significant interference or impairment.
- Odd mannerisms, some excessive preoccupations but distractible, may have ritualized behaviors but they don't interfere with daily activities

Normal Variation

- Socially isolated or "awkward"
- Some ritualized behaviors and preoccupations but these are normal for developmental stage and cause no interference

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

DSM-IV uses the term, "Mental retardation" (MR) to describe cognitive deficits. This term is outdated and considered pejorative by many, so the work group is considering a change to the term "Intellectual Disabilities".

The usefulness of the four current categories (Mild MR, Moderate MR, Severe MR and Profound MR) is being examined, in comparison with a single category of Intellectual Disabilities, with diagnostic specifiers for 1) IQ and 2) Adaptive functioning.

The Workgroup will seek feedback (through RFIs and meetings with stakeholder groups) on these changes in definition, as well as on the specific criteria to be proposed for the intellectual disabilities in DSM-V.

The Launch of the Autism Registry

What is the Autism Registry?

The Registry for People with Autism is an Ottawa Police Service 2010 pilot project in partnership with the Ottawa Chapter of Autism Ontario. The online registry promotes communication and gives police quick access to critical information about a registered person with autism. The Registry can provide police with emergency contact information, detailed physical descriptions, known routines, favourite attractions or special needs of the individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This information can assist officers in communicating with, attending a residence of or dealing with an emergency involving an individual with ASD.

Goal of the Program:

The goal of the program is to give police quick access to critical information about a registered individual with ASD in the community in an emergency situation.

How it Works:

Ottawapolice.ca/autism gives you access to:

- General information about the program;
- A list of Frequently Asked Questions about the program;
- The online registry form;
- Contact information/email link; and
- An Internet link to Autism Ontario-Ottawa Chapter for information and resources;

Complete the on-line registry form. Once submitted, you will receive a thank you notice which:

- Confirms the registration form is being processed;
- Provides a confirmation "Flag Number";
- Provides the option to attach a picture (face only picture similar to a passport or school picture) to the form by replying to the confirmation flag record number.

- Advises you of the option to place a static cling "Emergency Alert" window decal at your residence, which will alert police that there is an occupant with autism who may not respond to verbal commands and who participates in the registry. These decals will be provided by Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter, and it will be the option of the individual who registers to contact Autism Ontario for these resources.

Register annually. Annual registration is required to keep your form active. It is the responsibility of the person with autism or the guardian to resubmit the form. It is recommended that you resubmit on the registrant's birthday to make it easier to remember.

Contacts:

Autism Ontario - Ottawa Chapter

211 Bronson Avenue, Suite 210
Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5
Tel: 613.230.6305
Fax: 613.288.1423
ottawa@autismontario.com

Zoye Coburn, Ottawa Police Service

Trainer and Outreach Worker
Diversity and Race Relations
613-236-1222, Ext. 5011
coburnz@ottawapolice.ca

<http://www.ottawapolice.ca/en/Community/Autism/AutismRegistry.aspx>
21/05/2010

Spotlight on Canadian Mental Health Association



The Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting good mental health, developing and implementing support systems and services, and encouraging public action to strengthen community mental health services and related policies and legislation. Its mission statement is to offer opportunity and support for individuals with mental health issues so that they may achieve meaning and success and improve their level of functioning in the environment of their choice.

There are several programs offered through the CMHA. The Ottawa Branch provides centralized **Intake and Assessment** services to link individuals with case management services either through CMHA or one of its partner agencies. **Community Mental Health Support Services** is for individuals with a serious mental health problem who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals can obtain direct services either through the Community Support Program (e.g., a Case Manager) or the Outreach program (e.g., an Outreach Worker). In order to access an Outreach Worker the person should be referred through a homeless shelter, the justice system, or inpatient psychiatric services. The **Dual Diagnosis/Brokerage Service** assists people who have a developmental disability, a mental health issue, and complex needs. Coordinators work with individuals and families to provide planning, short-term direct services as needed, and to link individuals to appropriate community supports. The **Public Education Program** develops and provides education and programming in mental illness awareness and mental health promotion. The **Vocational Program** links clients with employment, volunteer, and recreational opportunities. CMHA employs nurses and psychiatrists who provide **clinical supports and consultation** to clients. CMHA also runs therapeutic groups, for example in **Concurrent Disorders and Dialectic Behaviour Therapy**.

The Ottawa Branch began in 1953 when a small group of Ottawa citizens came together for the purpose of determining mental health needs and planning and developing services for this area. It has expanded significantly since then and last year the Ottawa Branch served over 900 individuals. For more information, please contact CMHA's **Information and Referral** line at 613-737-7791.

Sara Luck
Coordinator, Dual Diagnosis/Brokerage Service

Asperger Community Planning Group Members

- AS Parent Support Group
- Aspirations
- Autism Ontario Ottawa Chapter
- Canadian Mental Health Association-Ottawa
- Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre
- Service Coordination
- Solution-S
- Y's Owl Maclure Co-op Centre
- Family Members
- Individuals with Asperger Syndrome

If you are with an organization or are a professional who provides services/supports to those with AS and would like to join us around the table, contact Heather Fawcett at hfawcett@sympatico.ca.

Upcoming Training/Course Opportunitites

Autism 2010 - Geneva Centre for Autism International Symposium



November 3, 4, 5, 2010, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre

For more information or to register visit - <http://www.autism.net/welcome-symposium-2010.html>

Summer Video Gaming Night

Y's Owl Maclure Co-operative Centre will be holding a Summer Gaming Night for individuals 16-24 years old with Asperger Syndrome/High Functioning Autism.

Cost: \$100 for 8 sessions

Time: 6-8:30pm

Dates: Wednesday in July: 7, 14, 21, 28

Wednesday in August: 4, 11, 18, 25

Location: Y's Owl Maclure Co-operative Centre, Suite 100, 1140 Morrison Drive, Ottawa.

Transportation to and from the group is the responsibility of the individual/family

Call Suzanne Ford at (613) 721-1500 ext. 19 for registration

Autism Spectrum Disorder Employment Training

Y's Owl Maclure Co-operative Centre and Autism Ontario will be holding a series of five workshops for individuals on the Autism Spectrum around various Employment skills. These workshops will be held in late August into October 2010. Stay posted for more details OR for more information contact Paul Arney at chaptermgr.ottawa@autismontario.com or 613-230-6305, ext 21.

Training Opportunities through Community Networks of Specialized Care

Community Networks of Specialized Care offer workshops on developmental disabilities on-site and through videoconferencing. Although workshops are geared to those with intellectual disabilities, not those with AS, some workshops may still be of relevance.

For more information and to access their Training Calendar please see <http://www.community-networks.ca>

Support Groups for Adults and their Families or Other Supports

Autism Ontario Ottawa Chapter offers two support groups focusing on adults:

Aspirations—support group for older teens and adults with Asperger Syndrome. Meets the third Monday of the month at the Bronson Centre, 7 pm to enjoy presentations, discussions, companionship, and mutual support. Family members, friends, and professionals are welcome too. The group has a website at: <http://aspirations.topcities.com/> For more information contact Gord Montgomery at king.atlas@gmail.com or call the Chapter office at 613-230-6305.

Families of Adults with AS—support group for parents and other family members of an adult with high functioning autism/AS. Presently meets three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) at the Bronson Centre, 7 pm for a mix of speaker presentations and informal discussion. For more information, contact Paul Arney at chaptermgr.ottawa@autismontario.com or 613-230-6305, ext 21.