

March 24, 2005

Dear service provider:

We are writing to introduce you to the Concurrent Disorders Screening and Assessment Tools Project. This provincial project is the result of a number of initiatives, both federal and provincial, that relate to best practices in working with people living with concurrent disorders.

In 2002, Health Canada released the Best Practices in Concurrent Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders document. One of its recommendations was for screening for mental health disorders to take place in substance abuse programs and for substance abuse screening to take place in mental health settings in order to increase identification. Each province was called to formulate a response to the recommendations in the document. This project is one component of our provincial response.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) conducted a survey of all Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) funded mental health and substance abuse agencies in Ontario in 2003. You may remember receiving the survey concerning current screening practices. We learned that treatment providers in both addictions and mental health organizations had many questions concerning the best tools to use and practices to follow. In response, stakeholders from both the mental health and addictions sectors came together to discuss these findings and, as a result, they initiated this project. The goal of the project is to review research in order to provide advice about appropriate screening tools for both sectors and to develop a menu of tools that might be used in varied treatment settings. We recognize that different settings will have different needs, therefore these diverse needs will be reflected in the advice and recommendations.

We are now in the process of reviewing research and in the next few months will be recommending screening tools for use in both addictions and mental health settings. Most of the tools have only been developed and researched with English speaking populations in North America unfortunately. Although, some of the screening advice consists of questions to ask and are not standardized tools so providers can use these questions in French.

Please refer to the list of our [committee members](#) and we encourage you to get in touch with us if you have any questions. We will be keeping you posted on our progress and will also use other means of communication such as the [Concurrent Disorders section of the CAMH website](#), Addictions Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs and in the Ontario Peer Development Initiative newsletter. Look for us at the Making Gains Conference in London in October 2005; we hope to present our work there!

Sincerely,

Leona Murphy

Committee Chair and CAMH System Planner

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