

Health Canada's Drug Treatment Funding Program (DTFP)

Persons with Lived Experience and Family Member Advisory Panel

About the Project: The Persons with Lived Experience and Family Member Advisory Panel is comprised of people with direct, personal lived experience of addictions/problematic substance use and family members. The main function of the Panel is to ensure the perspectives of persons with lived experience and family members inform the individual Ontario Systems Projects, and the DTFP initiative as a whole, for greater system impact. The Panel was convened and is supported by Evidence Exchange Network at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

KEY MESSAGES:

- There are three primary forms of evidence that may inform system and program planning:
 - Research evidence;
 - Expertise and tacit knowledge based on professional experience; and
 - Lived experience of people and families
- Lived experience is a valid and important form of evidence. The meaningful integration of lived experience in decision-making at all levels results in policies, programs and services that are more relevant and effective for clients and families
- The Persons with Lived Experience and Family Member Advisory Panel may serve as a model for the effective integration of lived experience as a form of evidence in system-level initiatives
- Creating knowledge exchange opportunities for persons with lived experience, families, decision-makers, and other substance use system stakeholders:
 - Enhances the capacity of decision-makers and other stakeholders to effectively engage persons with lived experience and families in change efforts
 - Builds skills and confidence of persons with lived experience, including youth, and families to use their personal stories to galvanize change
- The endorsement by government of lived experience as a critical input in decision-making at all levels, adds credibility and reduces the stigma attached to the lived experience voice
- The commitment of resources by government to support ongoing efforts to engage persons with lived experience and integrate lived experience in system-level initiatives is an important step toward improving the substance use treatment system

For further information about the project, please visit www.ontariodtftp.ca or contact Keri West, EENet Knowledge Broker at keri.west@camh.ca