

Building the Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter



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Generating knowledge that drives community action.

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BUILDING THE NIAGARA MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS CHARTER

The Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter built by 65 diverse organizations working in the mental health and addictions continuum in Niagara is a collective statement based on evidence and community expert opinion, gathered through a systematic process facilitated by Niagara Connects and Healthy Living Niagara.

The people and organizations committed to building this Charter are doing so to promote, support and plan for its implementation.

The intent of building the Charter is that its signatories would agree that the following Principles will form the foundation of Niagara's mental health and addictions continuum, and agree to promote these Principles among their members, colleagues, stakeholders and networks.

Go to www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com to download the full Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter, May 2014 document.

CHARTER GOAL AND PRINCIPLES

Overall Goal for the Charter

Create a common agenda in Niagara where:

- optimal mental health and wellbeing for all people is an essential element to be included in the planning as we build a stronger future; and
- we take an inclusive, holistic, preventive, individual and family-centered approach across the whole lifespan (prenatal - older adult), so that each community member can achieve their optimal level of wellbeing.

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Promotion and Prevention

All Niagara residents live in a community that promotes mental wellness, absence of discrimination and the prevention and early detection of mental illness and addictions.

Wellness has many biological, psychological and social determinants. The Niagara-wide community has a responsibility to adopt planning methods that incorporate a population health and preventive supports approach to mental health, addictions, recovery and wellness.
- 2

Holistic Approach

All Niagara residents have equitable access and opportunities that promote a healthy mind, body and spirit.

Wellness is more than the absence of disease. We all live on a continuum of physical and mental well-being, affected by the social determinants of health.
- 3

Working Together for Individual and Family-Centered Services and Care

All Niagara residents have equitable access to individual and family-centered effective mental health and addictions services and care.

An integrated system focuses on shared ownership of an individual's needs, that is respectful of their ongoing and changing requirements as they transition between their home and various informal and formal services. Transition points can be particularly traumatic for individuals and consequently require sensitivity and cooperation between service providers, families and the individual.
- 4

Direction of Resources

To create an environment where individuals in Niagara can achieve and maintain their optimal mental health and wellbeing, strong relevant policy and dedicated financial resources are essential.

Building a strengthened integrated, individual and family-centered mental health system for Niagara will take time and resources. Clear policy direction and an 'upstream investment' approach are required, including intentional focus on professional development and strengthened inter-agency relationships across the mental health and addictions continuum.
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Partnerships

To create the environment where individuals in Niagara can achieve and maintain their optimal mental health and wellbeing, residents of Niagara, along with their social supports**, are full partners in their wellness journey. Individual and family-centered care assumes the individual's participation and that of the family when feasible, in all aspects of self-care including assessment, intervention, decision-making and management.

** 'Social supports' include people that play a significant support role, such as family members, caregivers, friends, clergy or community agencies as identified by the consumer.

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Information

An individual and family-centred approach to mental health and addictions services assumes individuals and their social supports** have full access to reliable, information about the range of support options available in the community.

This assumes that people working in mental health and addictions in Niagara are fully informed and able to assist individuals in navigating the Niagara-wide care and service delivery continuum. Treatment alternatives include access to services beyond those that are publicly-funded.
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Inclusivity and Respect

To create the environment where individuals in Niagara can achieve and maintain their optimal mental health and wellbeing:

 - inclusive services and care are provided with sensitivity to, and respect for, individuals' diverse needs and choices; and
 - strong, respectful inter-agency relationships are essential.

Diverse needs may pertain to age, gender, culture, language, creed, race, economic standing, accommodation status, education, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs. Marginalized people may have difficulty accessing services appropriate to their needs. Individual and family-centered services and care assume a flexible, individualized approach to mental health, addictions and recovery that is responsive to changes over time.
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Knowledge Exchange

Consistent, open communication and exchange of best practice knowledge among the diverse groups and organizations working in Niagara's mental health and addictions continuum builds trust, assures mutual objectives and creates common motivation for an individual-centered approach to providing services and care.

A key condition for successful implementation of this Charter is open, timely and responsive communication among all signatories, facilitated by (a) nimble backbone support organization(s).*

*Collective Impact, Kania & Kramer, 2011
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Continuous Evaluation

Setting common goals and regularly measuring outcomes will help signatories to champion implementation of this Charter and collectively communicate progress to the Niagara-wide community.

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all Charter signatories ensures alignment of everyone's efforts and reinforces accountability.