

September 14th, 2009

Community Connections for Offenders who have Mental Health Disorders

St. Leonard's Society of Canada (SLSC) is pleased to announce the launch of our second phase of research on mental health disorders. This project is funded by Public Safety of Canada with additional support from Correctional Service of Canada. It will also benefit from the participation of SLSC Affiliates. Building on an earlier project, "Towards an Integrated Network", this project will create momentum for substantial change through its focus on research and the dissemination of appropriate local strategies. Positive programs made available to those in need by representatives of all sectors of mental health are essential to helping ensure community safety and rehabilitative impact.

Goals:

- To assess the challenges and opportunities in providing community reintegration services to offenders who have mental health disorders
- To bridge the gap between community residential facility personnel and mental health service personnel
- To educate mental health service providers and CRF staff in the human rights and legal entitlements of offenders with mental health disorders to access appropriate services
- To create research tools and resources for mental health and corrections
- To enhance capacity for staff in residential programs (halfway houses) to meet the needs of people with mental health problems
- To ensure safer communities by promoting effective and humane reintegration measures for offenders with mental health issues – being mindful of their human rights and particular needs

Methods:

- Survey of Community-based Residential Facilities (CRFs) intended to research and disseminate local strategies at CRFs that support access to appropriate community-based mental health services for residents
- Case studies centered on CRFs that demonstrate promising practices
- Engaging Pro Bono Students Canada to research legal obligations as they pertain to offenders with mental health disorders in a community corrections setting
- Facilitate structured discussions with a National Advisory Committee to provide insight and direction for investigative research
- Encourage network building through a forum at an urban centre

Outcome:

- To enhance the capacity of CRFs to connect effectively with local mental health service providers, and to develop increased awareness for mental health service providers about CRFs and their capacity to work with mental health disorders
- Develop a multidisciplinary community mental health strategy

Target Audience:

- Academics and Researchers in the fields of mental health and law
- Mental health service providers
- CRF managers, front-line staff, and executives
- Consumers and/or survivors
- Members of the correctional system

For more information about the **Community Connections for Offenders who have Mental Health Disorders** project, please contact the SLSC Ottawa head office at (613) 233-5170 or at research@on.aibn.com.