

Strengthening Families Together is a 10-week education and support program. Each weekly session is two hours in length and is facilitated by two family members having experience with a loved one who lives with schizophrenia or a psychotic disorder. A guest speaker with topical expertise also presents and answers questions each week. The program is **FREE** and open to all family members and friends of those living with a serious mental illness.

Session 1 > What is Mental Illness

- Introduction to the program, facilitators, and other participants
- Brief introduction to psychosis and recovery
- Stigma: Misunderstanding mental illness

Session 2 > Facts About Psychosis

- The basics of psychosis
- Facts about mood & anxiety disorders
- Psychosis & caregiving
- Early intervention
- Five steps to help a family member
- Voices activity

Session 3 > Psychosis: Causes & Treatment

- Facts about the causes and treatment
- Psychosocial interventions
- Preventing relapse

Session 4 > Coping as a Family

- Exploring the issues families face
- Loss and grief (with discussion)
- Managing symptoms at home: What can families and friends do?
- Supporting a medication plan
- Helpful hints for family members for working with service providers

Session 5 > Self Care

- Understanding self care
- Building support systems

- Tense-o-meter activity
- Self care plan

Session 6 > Communication

- Effective communication skills
- Talking to others about mental illness
- IDEAL method of problem solving

Session 7 > Living with Psychosis

- Living with psychotic illness
- Preventing and dealing with relapse
- Daily living tips
- Handling crisis situations
- Facts about concurrent disorders

Session 8 > Recovery

- What does recovery from mental illness mean?
- Recovery journey
- Recovery activity

Session 9 > Understanding the Mental Health System

- The basics of the Canadian mental health “systems”
- Role of family and friends in the system
- Advocacy: What can family and friends do?
- The Advocacy Toolkit

Session 10 > About Psychiatric Medications / Closing Celebration

- Medications and their side effects
- Program evaluation and awarding of Certificates

Strengthening Families Together is offered at:

- Bayers Road Community Mental Health;
- Bedford/Sackville Community Mental Health;
- Cole Harbour/Eastern HRM Community Mental Health;
- Dartmouth Community Mental Health; and
- West Hants Community Mental Health.

For session dates phone 462-8658 or send an email to hrmchapterssns@accesswave.ca.



SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA
A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.

HRM Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia

Education and Support for Families and Friends

&

delivery of



Mission Statement

The mission statement of the HRM Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia (SSNS) is to improve the quality of life for those affected by schizophrenia and related illnesses through family education and support.

Brief History

The HRM Chapter of the SSNS was formed in December 2007 by a number of family members coming together to fill a gap in the mental health system. Family members wanted a greater understanding of mental health issues through regular educational sessions. Families also recognized the benefits of sharing experiences, concerns and coping strategies. It was determined that the best way to meet the needs of family members, improve the lives of their loved ones, and bring about change, was to form a Chapter of the Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia.

For further information on the HRM Chapter of the SSNS and the **Strengthening Families Together** program, visit www.ssns.ca, or:

Phone: 462-8658

Email: hrmchapterssns@accesswave.ca

Address: HRM Chapter of the SSNS
Suite 205, Unit 10, 118 Wyse Road
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3A 1N7

Family Support Meeting Information

Who

Family and friends of those living with a serious mental illness.

What

Education & Support

7:00 pm to 8:00 pm Guest Speaker

8:00 pm to 9:00 pm Group Discussions

Where

Room 6016
Halifax Infirmary, QEII Health Sciences Centre
1796 Summer Street,
Halifax, Nova Scotia
(Summer Street South Elevators)

When

Meetings are held the second Monday of each month from September to June, except for holidays, when the meeting will be held the third Monday of the month.

Time: 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

(Transportation may be arranged if necessary)

Topical Issues

Understanding Mental Illness

Treating Mental Illness

Schizophrenia

Psychosis

Mood & Anxiety Disorders

Medications & their Side Effects

Navigating the Health Care System /
Community Supports

Relapse Prevention / Follow-up Care

Communication with Ill person & Health Care
Professionals

Coping as a Family

Impact of Substance Abuse

Stigma

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team

Advocacy / Raising Awareness

Mental Health & the Criminal Justice System

Living Wills & Estate Planning