



Committee Minutes

Mental Health and Addictions Task Force June 21, 2022 – 9:30 AM

The Mental Health and Addictions Task Force met on the above date through electronic means with the following members participating:

Present: Councillors Carleton, O’Leary, Burley, Mackey, Keaveney and Clumpus; Phil Dodd, Clark MacFarlane, Naomi Vodden, Dr. Arra and Sandra McLay-Winters and Warden Hicks

Regrets: Councillor Hutchinson

Staff

Present: Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer; Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO; Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Community Services; Rob Hatten, Communications Manager and Tara Warder, Clerk.

Alison Govier and Dr. Zayed were also in attendance.

Call to Order

Chair O’Leary called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations.

Delegations

Supportive Outreach Services – SOS – Grey County Paramedic Services, Robyn Nocilla and Dr. Cox

Kevin McNab introduced Dr. Cox and Robyn Nocilla. Discussion occurred on the evidence based treatment to help an individual stay sober, as well as harm reduction. She spoke to the medications used to assist with reducing use and maintaining abstinence.

It was noted that recovery includes less use. Sobriety can release many emotions that not everyone is ready to deal with.

Kevin McNab then provided an overview of the Supportive Outreach Service (SOS). The service formed after a COVID-19 outbreak at a rooming house. The goal was to keep people safe for the time period they were in isolation. Throughout that month, significant health improvements were seen with many people's health. The partners continue to stay connected in that area on a bi-weekly basis. Community partners continue to work as a part of SOS as well. Work has been done to start developing those same services in the City of Owen Sound and Hanover.

Project assessment has been built in from the beginning. The Health Unit is responsible for this task. Assessment includes evaluating the program.

Francesca Dobbyn then spoke to the social navigation that is a part of the SOS program. The purpose is to bridge and connect people to the system and to other services.

The concept of street medicine was discussed. People who have been wronged by the health care system in the past may be hesitant to use traditional medical services.

Scott McKay then spoke to the mental health aspect. Connecting individuals to case management to assist with their mental health goals. He noted that there are roadblocks, including waitlists and ineligibility as not everyone meets the criteria that has been laid out. There is a need for SOS to be connected to the Canadian Mental Health Association New Directions program and look for services that meet the needs of the individuals.

Concern was expressed regarding sustainability. People step up in a crisis situation and collaborate well together during these times, however this isn't always sustainable. Discussion needs to occur on what can be done to bring more resources in so the system continues to function.

Discussion occurred on the role of the Ontario Health Team (OHT) with respect to funding. It was noted that OHT doesn't have command over the funds but has staffing resources to provide support to programs. At maturity, the vision is that the OHT will have command over local funding dollars but this isn't the case currently. The OHT will have all partners at the table and have a stronger voice with funders. Inquiry was made as to what can be done immediately while the OHT matures.

Phil Dodd left the meeting at this time.

The difficulty in finding housing and staffing was further discussed, as well as the need to have a permanent funding source. A commitment is needed to continue SOS

because the OHTs won't be ready in a timely manner to move it forward the way that is needed.

It was noted that there is a deficit of peer support workers in Grey and Bruce Counties who can connect and establish trust and support people along their journey.

Discussion occurred on supportive housing which is in short supply. Supports need to be available to meet people's needs at all times. The Ministry of Health typically funds supportive housing.

Human trafficking exists in our community. There is a fear of reporting to police and limited resources to handle this. It is a difficult and complicated situation.

Sandra McLay – Winters – Peer Advisory Group

Sandra McLay – Winters spoke to the Task Force on behalf of the Peer Advisory Group. She provided an overview of the Peer Advisory Group members. All members have experienced the impacts of substance use. She introduced a video where the group spoke of times they felt empowered and disempowered and how that experience could have been different for them. The video was played and the members courageously spoke of their experiences, challenges and successes while navigating services in the community.

She noted that it is invaluable to involve those with lived experience when developing, implementing and evaluating programs. Those with lived experience are in the best position to talk about their reality and find answers and offer local solutions. It was noted that traditionally the voice of this group has been missed. The Peer Advisory Group welcomes and extends the invitation to government bodies to consult with them with the goal of improvements to the challenges faced by the service user. Best practices and guidance tools are found on the Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy website.

It was noted that money needs to be dedicated to compensate people's participation and input and time. The Peer Advisory Committee is fortunate enough to be able to compensate people for their expertise and time with annualized funding, however this is a pilot project that will cease at the end of 2022. There is more to be done, including budgeting and resourcing to get fully engaged people to provide their expertise.

There are links to the Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy on the website. It is critical to ensure the people who use drugs routinely have a voice in the creation of policies that affect them and further information on this can be found at drugstrategy.org.

Other Business

The remaining delegations will be rescheduled to July 7th.

Next Meeting Dates

July 7th, 2022.

On motion by Councillors Carleton and Mackey, the meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.

Brian O'Leary, Chair