Donna Bowyer (NPF Health Committee member) comments on the mental health aspect of the Federal/Newfoundland/Labrador agreement related to the latest health care agreement.

“In going through the document it appears that they have similar issues to what we all have.  There is a lot of 'apple pie' stuff but there is a recognition that there is more work to be done in supporting what they are already doing.  They talk about a patient centred system which in Sask we have what is called a Patient First system which is really just words.  They are trying to move towards that but it is really a hit and miss mostly because of financial shortfalls.  There does seem to be the wish but it's falling short.  With MH we were definitely in better shape years ago.  Newfoundland identifies that they currently have 5.7% of the health budget going to MH.  Sask it is now under 5%.  They don't identify how much this influx of Fed funding will increase this.

The areas they are focusing on is more support for families which children and especially what they refer to as emerging adults.  This is an area of young people that have very little resources now and fit in neither the adult or children's programs.

There is also more emphasis on e-health.  The concern I have with e-health is that technology is not always available in rural and northern area and are not all comfortable with having mental health delivered through technology.  I think it is very different taking training through e-health if you are learning  strategies to live with a physical health issue than with a mental health issue.  In the far north, people don't acknowledge you unless you come over to shake their hand and make that human contact.  I don't see e-health doing what's needed when it comes to mental health issues.  I do see some avenues for it working provided there is someone in the room that can support what is happening in the training but then that person could do the training without the e-health input.  Many Seniors are also not comfortable with receiving MH support through technology or apps.

Peer Support is recognized for it's value and they are treated like a valuable partner which I totally agree with.  It has been a struggle to get that acknowledgement.

Seniors are not mentioned at all in this document.  They are lumped in with adults and there is no recognition that they  may have some needs that may be different such as loneliness and isolation.  I want to go through the Home Care section and take a look at that through MH eyes but haven't had time to do that yet.  I'll let you know when I have.

There is still that stigma in mental Health around seniors in that many still mental illness, depression,.... in seniors as just a part of aging and so are often treated as if they are just taking up space and there is nothing that can be done anyway.  They are overlooked and ignored as in this document.”

Donna

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