


Health Care

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 ROBERT H. CRANFIELD D.C.
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Local health network offers help directory on cutting health

Choices 4 Health, Halton's Heart Health and Cancer Risk Reduction Network, has created a directory which provides information about services and resources that focus on the reduction of heart disease and cancer.

Heart disease and cancer account for over 70 per cent of deaths in Halton. Choices 4 Health wants to help people reduce their risk factors.

The directory is free of charge and focuses on the four choices that people can make to reduce their risk of heart disease and cancer. You can reduce your risk by choosing to include healthy foods, regular physical activity, smoke free living and well-managed stress, in your daily routine.

It is easy to include the four choices in your life. You can enjoy a variety of healthy foods by following suggestions in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. A regular mall walking program or attendance at a local fitness club will help you keep fit and programs exist in the community to help you with smoke free living and the management of stress.

The Choices 4 Health directory provides you with a list of programs and resources that will get you on the track to healthy living.

The directory includes a listing of programs, resources, contact names and telephone numbers of members of Halton's Heart Health and Cancer Risk Reduction Network, call the Halton Regional Health Department ext. 7489 at 853-0501 (Acton) or 878-8113 (Georgetown).

High school shootings:

Care workers start programs to avoid tragedies here

Are youth in Halton at risk for experiencing tragedies similar to those recently seen in Colorado and Alberta?

Professionals who work with youth have suggested that the way to prevent recurrence of these incidences is multi-faceted.

Three staff reports were presented to the Halton Region's Health and Social Services Committee on May 4 outlining initiatives that will begin to address two strategies: ensuring there's treatment available for identified youth and to ensure youth have a forum to talk about things troubling them.

The initiatives are:

- Youth Net—a mental health promotion program run by youth for youth.
- A proposal for integrated services for youth with concurrent disorders.
- Body image perceptions in Halton youth.

Youth Net is a program designed to create youth awareness around mental health and mental illness. The program is run by youth, for youth, and the goals are: to increase awareness and decrease the stigma regarding mental health and illness issues; to help youth develop connections amongst themselves as well as with a safety net of professionals; and to provide alternate mental health services for youth.

Through focus group sessions, facilitated by trained young people, teens will be given the opportunity to talk about a wide range of issues like relationships, fitting in, etc.

A pilot program will be conducted in

a Burlington high school in May and June with a full program implementation expected in the fall.

Integrated treatment for youth with concurrent disorders.

One of the issues related to substance abuse by Halton youth identified by the Community Action for Drug Free Youth (CADY) was "the need for an integrated, broad system of services that will work with families and youth who have mental illness, addictions and behavioral problems."

Individuals who have both a mental illness (including a behavior problem) and who abuse drugs and alcohol are said to have a concurrent disorder. In Halton, there's services for individuals suffering from mental illness and for those with addictions. What is lacking in Halton is a comprehensive system of services for youth, in particular for those young people with concurrent disorders.

A proposal has been developed to support youth with concurrent disorders. It has two components.

The first is a day treatment that includes an assessment process, treatment that includes individual and group therapy, and discharge planning that includes referral to community resources.

The uniqueness of this proposal is the second component—the continuity team. Staff on this team will work closely with the intake and discharge planning staff from the day treatment program to ensure that the appropriate planning occurs before and after discharge. By ensuring that the many individuals and

service providers involved with the client understand the role they may help play in recovery, the chance of recidivism is greatly reduced.

In addition, the continuity team will act as a service co-ordinator for youth referred to the program by who do not require the high level of support in the day treatment setting.

Body image

Body image dissatisfaction, a desire for thinness and attempts to lose weight, begin around the third grade and increase with age. Research indicates that by age 18, 80 per cent of young females have dieted. Children who do not feel good about themselves are more likely to engage in negative behaviors such as risky sexual activity, substance abuse, tobacco abuse, and risk taking behaviors leading to injury and suicide.

In recent focus groups, youth were asked to reflect on their past experiences and make suggestions on how to promote healthy body image development among children and youth. They identified peers, family and other adults along with the societal value of physical appearance as being factors that influence their own feelings about their bodies and themselves.

The recommendations made through the focus groups have been incorporated into a comprehensive school-based project which has been piloted in a Halton Hills elementary school.

If you have any questions about how you can participate in youth issues, call the Halton Regional Health Department at 853-0501 or 878-8113.

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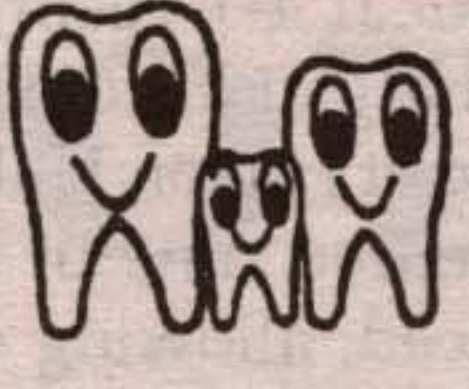
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