



Manitoba Schizophrenia Society Family Engagement Survey Results 2017-2018

Meaningful family engagement is critical in supporting recovery of a loved one with a mental illness.

This is a summary of the Family Engagement Survey, which was live from May-July 2017 (69 total responses). It was initiated by family caregivers and was created in consultation with mental health service providers. It is sponsored by Manitoba Schizophrenia Society and the data analysis and reports are written in collaboration with Inspire Community Outreach (www.Inspirecommunityoutreach.ca). Appreciation is expressed to Joshua McNeil and Felicia Owadara who were valuable in creating and analyzing the survey data. Acknowledgement also is extended to Margaret Elliott and Dianne Booth who initiated and facilitated this project.

The survey's purpose was to receive feedback from caregivers of adult children who experience any type of mental distress. The survey data reflects the caregiver's personal experience of family involvement with Winnipeg mental health services within the last three years. All information was related to mental health service providers in Winnipeg within the last 3 years.

The survey questions and standards are reflective of family engagement, recommended by both the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Practice Guidelines for Involving Families (2013) and the National Guideline for a Comprehensive System to Support Caregivers of Adults with Mental Health Problems and Illnesses. (2013).

What did we hear from families?

- 1) 68% of family members felt the information that they shared was valued and they felt heard.
- 2) 25% shared that confidentiality was discussed and revisited during care, however 42% said it was initially discussed but not revisited, and 33% said that it was not discussed.
- 3) 53% of family members did not receive information on the roles of service providers or how they would support recovery.

- 4) 65% were not given information on how they could support their loved one's recovery.
- 5) 64% did not receive personal support or information on community programs to meet their own needs as a caregiver.
- 6) 70% responded that no personal support was given, and 67% responded that no contact or community supports were provided.

Recommendations for service providers:

- 1) Require each mental health service/program to provide caregivers with written family orientation information (program details, what to expect, confidentiality -what can and can't be shared, family engagement practices for that service/program, contact names and numbers, etc.) noting the provision of this information in the client notes/chart.
- 2) Provide caregivers with help for their **own** needs and with written information on programs and services appropriate for their needs.
- 3) Training support for service providers, guided by community need and experience.
- 4) Ensure that families know they can share with service providers even if the loved one has not given permission for service providers to share with family. Family members should continue to be encouraged to share collateral information that may help with diagnosis and/ or treatment plans.
- 5) Streamlined communication between staff and within teams/systems.
- 6) Confidentiality issues addressed, including clarification and system changes

Recommendations for family members:

- 1) Become informed about your rights as a caregiver and what services are available.
- 2) Advocate for improved family engagement practices in adult mental health services.
- 3) Contact Health Minister, Kelvin Goertzen or your local MLA to request the necessary policy changes and implementation to improve meaningful family engagement.

Email: minhsal@leg.gov.mb.ca

Phone: 1-204-945-3731

Address: Minister of Health, Seniors, and Active Living
Room 302 Legislative Building

450 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C0V8

Sample Letter:

Dear Hon. Kelvin Goertzen,

I am writing to ask that your government ensures that mental health policies regarding meaningful family engagement and the implementation of these policies receive the highest priority by the regional health authorities in Manitoba. Furthermore, a percentage of the protected mental health funds received from the federal government to Manitoba be used towards providing caregivers of those living with mental illness more information, resources, and support in their valuable role. This will help make our communities stronger as caregivers will be able to more effectively fulfill their important role in their loved one's recovery. Implementing and improving family engagement practices is both evidence based, cost effective, and improves the wellbeing of Canadians.

Sincerely,

For more information about this survey contact:

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