

Report from the

Ontario Halfway House Association Membership Visioning and Planning Day

January 15-16, 2008

Ontario Halfway House Association

224 Cornwallis Court
Oshawa, ON L1H 8E8

Telephone: (905) 571-1999

Fax: (905) 571-6401

Toll Free Services: 1 (800) 698-7489

E-mail: info@ohhaonline.ca

Website: www.ohhaonline.ca

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Ontario Halfway House Association Membership Visioning and Planning Day

Working With Women Offenders

Ms. Trish Crawford – Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston

Trish Crawford welcomed the group and thanked them for their participation. Round table discussions occurred allowing each participant the opportunity to share current realities and challenges that the agencies providing services for women experience.

Recommendations:

- Development of a process to review specific funding issue for Women's Service

Welcome to Participants

Mr. Larry Cook - Association Coordinator

Larry Cook welcomed the group and indicated how good it is to have this many people here together in order to discuss issues and strategies that affect us all. Thanks were expressed to the OHHA Executive Committee for their assistance in pulling together this Visioning and Planning Day as well as the Community Strategic Planning Committee 'Building Bridges' Workshop to follow.

Opening Comments – Outline for Vision and Planning Day

Ms. Sonya Spencer – OHHA President

Sonya Spencer also welcomed the group and indicated the following:

- This is a very important and worthwhile process
- This is an opportunity to establish the road map for future OHHA direction
- CSPC has been very active over the past couple of years and appears to be moving issues/agendas forward
- Thanks were expressed to the Executive Committee
- Hopes that OHHA can follow up on the recommendations from the last Vision and Planning Day
- Suggestion that OHHA has played a vital role in other Regional Associations by pulling the first meeting together and sharing our experiences
- OHHA has received an improved contract to provide professional services to CSC
- Recent opportunities have been OHHA's role at the Parole Office Training and a recent proposal submitted in order to address the concerns of offenders coming up for release without the necessary identification

Appendix 'D' Statement – Statement of Work A Review for Comments

Mr. Paul Fernane - St. Leonard's Community Services London and Region
Mr. Louis Berube – OHHA Executive Member

Larry Cook reported on the historical overview going back to the last contract year. It was also noted that Don Cunningham CSC again ensured that OHHA was able to review the document. Concerns were raised regarding the timeline and OHHA met with the CSPC to allow an opportunity to review the document

Paul Fernane started the presentation by asking for a few common statements:

- Are we a CCC or a CRF and what does that mean in terms of funding?
- With the current language of Appendix 'D' many CRF's are not prepared to sign the contracts
- Many fundamental issues
- Could OHHA look for a long-term consultation?
- Concerns from all regions being identified
- Offender Privacy and CRF liability in question
- Group to make a recommendation through CSPC and have OHHA circulate Appendix 'D' to the CRF's allowing the time for a proper review and feedback

Recommendation:

In order to ensure the CRF contracts are received in a timely manner, it was suggested to use 2007-2008 Appendix 'D' to allow a year for the proper review.

This is a definite process issue and again has happened a second year in a row. It was also noted that some of the items are taken from the Audits.

Items receiving notable concern:

Item 16:

- Responsible for CSC documentation

Item 13:

- Clinical vs. Security reporting; concerns of computer availability
- 'Meet CSC standards?' – We would meet our own standards
- Assurance that the staff entered information is locked

Item 36:

- To wake the person; adds risk as they could become startled, violation of Human Rights - liability
- Policies will be different from house to house
- Concerns with language and process; need for a process to address individual CRF to address the documents individually

Item 3:

- Lack of empowerment
- Philosophical issues – life skills

Comments:

- Process must allow for the CRF individual uniqueness!

Paul posed the question of how many CRF's participated in a CSC audit and how many did well? Many expressed that they did do well and that included their individual uniqueness.

It was noted that a few years ago, CSC required that the CRF have a policy to address the standards and that this no longer is in place. INCLUSION of policy provision could address many issues. The inclusion of the Area Director's ability to "Waive" requirements also to be considered.

There also seems to be some confusion as the Area Directors are still recommending that CRF's contact OHHA to work this issue though. It was suggested that OHHA has moved to a place where some movement can be made – How do we make change?

CRF's have differences and that is a good thing!

The process should be that CSPC is tasked with vetting the new information and to provide feedback to all the CRF's in a timely manner.

Item 42:

- Impossible to meet this but could be covered locally if the agency has a policy to address this issue

Item 38-39:

- CRF's do not grant passes and agency staff are not paid to be Parole Officer's – this is a supervision contract – Clearly the role of a parole officer
- CRF do random calls as a measure of managing risk – 3rd party risk assumption
- Feels like downloading of responsibility from CSC
- Different ways with clients from CRF to CRF
- Passes are granted based on offender
- Appears to be many contradictions in policy

Item 44:

- Concerns that 'unknown' offenders show up to be taken into custody
- Language is very unclear
- Single staffing – when alarm is turned on the door is not going to be opened
- Situational – and noted 'where possible'

Item 59b:

- Strong sense that this was not CSC's business

Item 26:

- 'Each offender'?

Item 32:

- CSC offices indicated that they did not want them – but not in writing
- Privacy and confidentiality issues

Item 64-66:

- CRF should determine the need – after a review what if CSC doesn't think of the need for additional resources is needed – What happens to the offender - suspension?

- Times that cases are not reviewed by the CRF as the CSC office assumes the risk is not manageable – language – all referrals should be forwarded to the CRF
- Additional staffing and resources to manage the Statutory Release with Residency offender; want the CRF to have more discretion with the staffing
- No CCC's for women
- This is parole supervision?

It feels like CRF staff are asked to do more work that falls under the job description of the Parole Officer.

Recommendation:

CRF's need/want more time to study the Appendix 'D' to review and offer comments with the recommendation that CSC use the current year contract Appendix 'D'. Any agencies that have concerns with the 2007-08 Appendix 'D' should be reviewed and a letter on the file with District Director.

Next steps:

1. Check with other Regions for their comments
2. Put it to the CSPC for follow up – creation of a sub-committee to be actions quickly
3. Language and tone is getting more problematic – More wanted without the resources or partnership
4. Everyone is unique and everyone does good work – cookie cutter process is unacceptable

Offender Barriers to Release

Mr. Art Rasmusson – OHHA Past President
 Ms. Heather Kerr – OHHA Executive Member

Heather Kerr and Art Rasmusson opened the discussion by offering everyone an opportunity for all to share their experiences.

Many different and unique process examples include Community Assessment Teams were shared. Getting to know the key people that make decisions was critical. Increased institutional involvement assisting with offenders gaining acceptance was very important as well as appropriately accessing OMS and the concerns that are associated

Examples of Success:

- OHHA participated in the recent Parole Officer training in a capacity to engage the Parole Officers as well as provide an information CD – Stonehenge Therapeutic Community also provided a CD
- 4 OHHA members sponsored to host a reception
- Encouraged dialog highlighting OHHA's assistance to this group
- Want to be involved in this process on a regular basis
- Looking at unpacking the 'myths'
- Unique CAT process from location to location – All cases including CCC referrals are brought to the CAT – Plan put into place even if the case goes to the CCC for possible future transfer
- Additional funding for CRF's to go the CCC's in order to look at the cases – 16 hours per week to meet with PO's and to look at any updates as well as track the offender progress, ability to market the CRF

- Increased PO referral
- Seeing an increase in CRF accepting and managing SRR cases
- Watch for the CCC ‘cherry-picking’ issue
- List of cases in the CCC being available to the CRF in order to review the cases that are in the CCC and releases anticipated – Cases should be flagged 6 months in advance in order to begin visiting and relationship building
- Opportunity to look at OMS for additional information
- Focus that CAT referrals – 1st step is to look at ‘home’ community and would like to look at a way to properly documented and accessed
- Meet with a case in Joyceville Institution and advised that his Parole Officer is not recommending a release – need to enhance the relationship in order to assist with the communication. At this time the CRF never had a full picture of the case. Met with Psychologist and got valuable information. This is an example of keeping pushing to get the information that assisted with reducing the barriers.
- OMS access to offender files prior to meeting with the client in the institution could provide more informed linkages
- Some CRF’s are beginning to get increased access to OMS for applying offenders
- 1st access was 14 days prior to CAT is now at 35 days and not consistent
- This allows an opportunity to review past comments made by the CRF
- Preparing for institutional visits and accessing better information for all parties concerned
- General Recommendation:
- Request for additional access to OMS – Referral; application; then request access for OMS access, currently questions of timeline to access – anywhere from 30 days to unlimited
- Assess allowed for a series of UTA’s
- Makes more of an equal footing due to increased information access
- Issue is to be able to access the critical information in a timely manner
- Asking the offender to give more information at the time of application
- Time saving and better work will be done
- Need to find a constant approach for access to OMS and timeliness
- Fenbrook Institution has been very open accessing with a Mertek card... office space with a phone and a directory is very helpful. It gives you an opportunity to access the units in order to talk to offenders
- Experiences in V&C can be terrible
- Bath Institution is moving toward offering the same access
- Grand Valley Institution access can be dependent on who is on staff – need to have better access to the Institutional Parole Officer and offender
- Why are we dealing with security instead of the IPOs
- Want the Wardens to be aware of our access issues
- Need to find a collective approach using OHHA to share some of the ‘Better-Practices’ – looking for Warden endorsement
- Access to the institution when a lock down – courtesy phone call
- Increase interest in the detail – Building Relationships

- Orientation Sessions involving OHHA
- Grand Valley Institution was recently included in the Parole Officer meetings
- Pre-Release Fairs are an excellent opportunity for meeting – suggestion to split the day with the offenders and the case management
- Fenbrook Institution is increasing capacity by 18 beds and some staff are stressed
- OHHA should have a standing/administrative agreement with all Wardens identifying the process of access – all CRF staff are already Enhanced Reliability clearance
- Suggestion that OHHA members get involved in orientation training for the Parole Officers and be in communication with the Staff Training College
- Having Parole Officers participate in OHHA training conference and conduct CRF visits
- ‘Building Bridges’
- Telephone directory is on the info-net of CSC and accessed through OMS and outlook
- Building relationships take an incredible amount of time
- Processes vary from institution to institution
- Barriers also include were the community does an incredible amount of work and is shut down at the local level parole
- New in- reach workers are in place in Central District to identify higher risk offenders and longer time sentences CSC should advise the CRF’s of detention review cases through email or fax

Communication from the Treatment Centres to be circulated to the Membership and CCC’s for awareness

CRF Contract Funding Review

Mr. Art Rasmusson - OHHA Past President

Mr. Larry Cook - Association Coordinator

Art Rasmusson reviewed the history of the Contractual process since the implementation of the National Funding Arrangement in 2002.

A review occurred with the St. Leonard’s of Hamilton in order to address the true costs of operation. Comments from John Clinton:

‘On Thursday of this week I met with Mark Malette to review the CRF Funding presentation planned for the CSPC conference. This is the second time Mark has driven to Hamilton to meet with me during this review. We have also had several telephone calls and exchanges of information and Mark is to be commended for working this into his busy schedule.

As you are all aware, St. Leonard’s Hamilton’s Robert Street residence was selected as the “male” sight for this review. The reason for this selection was the 20-bed size of Robert Street Residence, our ability to provide the requested information in a timely way and our historical relationship (Mark and I were on the Ontario Funding Model CSPC committee).

Having now seen the draft presentation for next week's CSPC conference, I am satisfied that Mark has put together a fair and reasonable funding request. Some people in the room may feel that the 5+% proposal is insufficient due to the nil or very small increases following the "National Funding Approach" in fiscal 2003. Those people need to be mindful of the reality of this request. What we have put into place is first and foremost something that can be implemented. To strategically go after a more substantial amount would only lead to 3 years of "study" and no increase for the coming year. Secondly, this is not a "one time" review and we have put in place a better mechanism to capture major increases like insurance, utilities and wages in future years. In other words we have put together a funding review approach that will be a much better "way forward".

I regret that I cannot be with you at this conference, but am available to discuss this matter with you (or anyone else) to help clarify any of the above. Best regards and have a good CSPC Conference.'

- The group agreed that 5% is lower than the true costs of agencies and suggested that this mechanism have the ability for annual reviews
- The Prairie Region Halfway House Association has no mechanism and many CRF's have been doing local negotiations
- OHHA continues to work with the CSPC to move this issue forward – concerns are is this a one-time deal and would prefer an annual review - How does this work with future years within the model?

A review of the Contractual Process occurred:

- Problems scheduling meetings with the Area Director
- Problem with process is the wording is empowering the Area Director to negotiate and it appears that they do not have the ability
- Need to nail down the process and commitment to ensure that the negotiations can be occurring
- Need a process to offer respect
- Opportunity for OHHA and CSC in order to have a transparent review annually, also need to have an ability to negotiate
- Look at fixing the Contractual process to ensure that the document usable
- Agencies need the ability to know what to expect
- Change December 1 time line to November 1 in order to allow 2 months
- Ad do have the ability to request

Relationships

1. Process is in writing
2. Identifying within the current model to identify that CRF's are under funded
3. OHHA has a contract with permits us to come together and raise the collective response
4. Nationally this process is in place

Comments from the group to wrap up day 1:

- Positive steps in the right direction
- Process should be expected in a timely manner
- Currently it is a contradictory – we can offer a better process

- OHHA should review the blanket funding – Area Director should be empowered to negotiate local changes
- Need for a collective voice
- Who is doing what?
- Request to look at what OHHA can do on behalf of its Membership
- Very informative
- Need to be sure the Women’s Network is being recognised
- Funding formula when agreed to there was a commitment that the women’s network would have a different model i.e. Special Needs, funding formula does not work for women’s and small houses and a need for OHHA to take on this issue
- We are in a funny place as some CSC contracts do pay quite well
- Need for more CSC champions of the cause – Need for fresh life to be breathed into the process
- Other Elizabeth Fry organizations in the country are receiving much higher per diems
- Need better terms of reference that more represent the situation
- Need for hearing other peoples experiences – teaching tool
- Interesting variances of instructional access
- Stage of great opportunity – OHHA has moved on its credibility – use the momentum to move forward
- Need for more women specific women’s issues
- Special consideration for women’s funding
- Nice to have the chance to see and hear what the rest of the region is doing
- Nice to see other peoples realities
- 2 years ago many things were discussed and not followed up with
- Always good to hear other peoples experience – and there is an opportunity for both OHHA and CSPC – let the local levels deal with
- Women’s program is small – today was a group sharing excise which was very helpful
- Feel more comfortable sharing the experiences of the people
- Appreciation of a collective approach in a pro-active way moving forward

Managing High Risk/Need Offenders

Mr. Darrell Rowe – OHHA Vice President

Major James Hagglund – OHHA Executive Member

The discussion began with agreement that High Risk offenders were not only those designated as Statutory Release with Residency, sexual offenders or those serving long time sentences. CRF’s are looking at ways to manage the risk and to assist the offender on focusing on ways to make a better life for themselves.

The funding does not meet the needs of servicing these offenders and a need to look at a structure to manage the offender through appropriate staffing.

Areas for discussion:

- Needs: Programming requirements to be address as quickly as possible – delays can elevate the risk for this offender and for high risk offenders it is even more

- Reporting: Series of check-in that would be based on the case – initial release it is 2 hours and it cascades
- Call In Check Ins
- Face to Face Check Ins - This allows for a more watchful supervision
- CSC is looking at CRF's become a base for Reporting Centres for offenders in the community
- Past residents are welcome to drop in at any time
- Concerns with some of the CSC Reporting Centre proposals that are beginning to occur – Ottawa is looking at \$81,000 – This has privacy issues for residents of the CRF and there are many different opinions in the community with the desire for access to programs and assessment
- Integrity Funding is the envelopes for resources to the reporting center – Not to be a drop in center, if it's just a check in go to the local parole officer – our model is for increased assessment.
- CSC and the CRF have very different views of what would work. There is also an issue of offender incompatibles
- At WED funding stops from CSC and there needs to be a model in place to address the post-WED. More partnerships are required
- A couple years ago we discussed the challenges that were occurring
- Differential supervision strategies at the Community Assessment Team

Ideas included

- First 48 hours the offender is in the CRF
- Two hour check Ins
- 21:00 hrs curfews
- No granting of weekend pass privileges
- Offender is advised upon arrival
- Graduated restrictions
- Not every SRR is High Risk Offender
- Hamilton has Enhanced Supervision for SRR cases and sexual offenders
- Restrictions/Conditions are not just for SRR but could be applied to APR cases if the Risk or need is appropriate
- Needs to be a consistent approach from all parties including NPB
- NPB only imposes conditions if CSC submits the recommendation
- Local issues should be addressed though the local office – CSC can put a 60 local order available
- Additional conditions should be included in the community assessment and shows that a risk management is in place
- CRF's are now requesting hard copy of assessment
- Differential Supervision strategies are communicated to the NPB and indication that the important information is not making its way there
- Suggestion the information be sent from the CRF to the NPB and include CSC in the information that is being shared

Conditions:

- Need to be on top of monitoring and quick assess to programs
- Awareness of immediate risk areas
- Many changes in CSC Program – challenge of numbers to facilitate a group and moving towards the ability to work 1 on 1

Attitude:

- Impact on the attitude of the CRF
- Concept of role modeling and some of these offenders can poison the environment – staffs need to be prepared to challenge the offender to ensure the negative ideas are not continued
- Staff ability and skill sets are a challenge due to the consistent staff turn over
- CAT training
- This is challenging to maintain staff stability due to the lack of funding

Cell Phones:

- Cell phones can be used to contact the offender but fear exists that the cell phone could be used inappropriately

Offenders are having difficulty and in some cases not making it to the CRF – travel challenges Institution is bringing the offender to the CRF through an escort – Needs to be clarified but should be initiated by the local parole officer

Requests for accompaniment for offenders being released, particularly with substance abuse issues and heading for treatment-based CRF operations - Request to be made at CAT to CSC and the local parole office to arrange with institution.

Building capacity through training an good policies and procedures

Concerns of funding – there are other provisions within the contracts that could be used to manage the offender on a case by case bases

Tom Lamothe Residence is a program that specializes with this population and offers:

- Individual rooms
- Population separation
- Diversified funding

OHHA Vision and Planning and Preparing OHHA Outcomes for Community Strategic Planning Workshop

Mr. Art Rasmusson – OHHA Past President

Key Recommendations – Strategic Planning

- Development of a process to review specific funding issue for Women's Service
- Suggestion that OHHA has played a vital role in other Regional Associations by pulling the first meeting together and sharing our experiences
- In order to ensure the CRF contracts are received in a timely manner, it was suggested to use 2007-2008 Appendix 'D' to allow a year for the proper review.
- CRF's need/want more time to study the Appendix 'D' to review and offer comments with the recommendation that CSC use the current year contract Appendix 'D'. Any agencies that have concerns with the 2007-08 Appendix 'D' should be reviewed and a letter on the file with District Director.
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- Communication from the Treatment Centres to be circulated to the Membership and CCC's for awareness
- Change December 1 time line to November 1 in order to allow 2 months
- Reporting Centre proposals
- Integrity Funding
- Differential supervision strategies at the Community Assessment Team
- Enhanced Supervision
- Differential Supervision strategies are communicated to the NPB and indication that the important information is not making its way there

- Suggestion the information be sent from the CRF to the NPB and include CSC in the information that is being shared
- Requests for Accompaniment for offenders being released, particularly with substance abuse issues and heading for treatment-based CRF operations. Request to be made at CAT to CSC. Local parole office to arrange with institution.
- Concerns of funding – there are other provisions within the contracts that could be used to manage the offender on a case by case bases

Closing Remarks

Ms. Sonya Spencer – OHHA President

Sonya Spencer thanked the group for their attendance and participation in this years Membership Planning Day. The group remained very positive and discussed many issues that impact on our service delivery.

The membership has provided very clear direction for the upcoming Community Strategic Planning Committee Workshop.

Attendance List

Louis	Berube	Maison Decision House	613-728-5013	613-728-4965	decision@trytel.com
Marguerite	Brenton	Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton	905-451-7282	905-451-8508	mbrenton@efrypeelhalton.ca
Lindsay	Brown	St. Leonard's House (Peel)	905-457-3611	905-457-2314	lindsayb@stleonardshouse.com
Pam	Cassista	Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton	905-451-7282	905-451-8508	pamc@efrypeelhalton.ca
Larry	Cook	Ontario Halfway House Association	905-571-1999	905-571-6401	info@ohhaonline.ca
Tracey	Cortes	House of Hope	613-230-7676	613-238-5952	tracey.cortes@houseofhope.ca
Trish	Crawford	Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston	613-544-1744	613-544-0676	elizabethfry@cogeco.net
Kelly	Falconer	Salvation Army St. Catharines	905-684-7813	905-684-4513	falconerkl@csc-scc.qc.ca
Paul	Fernane	St. Leonard's Society of London	519-668-2701	519-668-7549	codycentre@execulink.com
James	Hagglund	New Directions (Kitchener) Salvation Army	519-744-4666	519-744-2081	jameskhagglund@rogers.com
Scott	Hole	Kirkpatrick House - Ottawa	(613) 236-3077	(613) 594-8874	scotth@ottawa.johnhoward.ca
Heather	Kerr	Stonehenge Therapeutic Community	519-837-1470	519-837-3232	hkerr@stonehengetc.com
Art	Rasmusson	Past President - OHHA	416-964-6316	416-969-0717	artr@on.aibn.com
Rob	Remus	John Howard Society of Ottawa	(613) 789-7418		remus@ottawa.johnhoward.ca
Deborah	Riddle	Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel-Halton	905-459-1315	905-459-1322	driddle@efrypeelhalton.ca
Darrell	Rowe	St. Leonard's Society of Peterborough	705-743-9351	705-743-9975	edmisonhouse@on.aibn.com
Nic	Southall	St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton	(905) 572-1150	(905) 572-9152	nsouthall@slsh.ca
Sonya	Spencer	St. Leonard's Society of Toronto	416-462-3684	416-461-0700	sspencer.slst@rogers.com
Rea	Theijsmeijer	Salvation Army Ellen Osler Home	(905) 627-1632	(905) 627-9609	director@ellenoslerhome.org
Judi	Burrill	Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston	(613) 544-1744	(613) 544-0676	elizabethfry@cogeco.net

Mission

The OHHA is a member organization dedicated to promoting information, education and leadership for its membership and the community in order to contribute to a more effective justice system.