



# SOUTHERN NETWORK OF SPECIALIZED CARE

## NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

Fall & Winter 2012 Edition

### A Message from Coordinator Liz Froese

## Networking Benefits Those We Serve

Working, planning and striving together in our collective efforts to enhance services for people with a Dual Diagnosis and developmental disabilities has been the objective of the Southern Network of Specialized Care since we were established by the Ontario government in 2006.

As our Network enters our third Strategic Planning phase for the years 2012 to 2015, we wish to express our gratitude to our many partners and community stakeholders for their tireless efforts to network within their communities for better outcomes for the people we collectively serve. The work our Network does around encouraging and providing opportunities for collaboration, and for leading-edge training and research continue to be successful because of the combined efforts of many dedicated people across our region.

This passing fall and as we move into winter, I will be meeting with all of the Local Service Delivery Networks and Dual Diagnosis Committees to discuss our plans for the future and how best we can work together to achieve them for those we serve, and I continue to be thankful for the time and commitment they have invested in meeting our collective goals.

From our Network's participation in reviewing an Emergency Binder produced by the Windsor Essex Dual Diagnosis Committee to the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder research in Grey Bruce and the training of nurses working in the mental health area for the Niagara Health System, we are proud to play a role in producing a stronger, more responsive service system for individuals with a Dual Diagnosis

To assist all of us in this pursuit of excellence and best practices in the field, our Network, along with our partner Networks, has revamped our website. This new website, which you can visit at [www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca), is now up and running, and is more friendly to navigate for information aimed at advancing our knowledge and skills in improving the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities.

We are also working with our partner Networks in the province and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services to review training packages and resources for working with people with developmental disabilities. To learn more, read: A Summary of Findings from the Community Networks of Specialized Care, posted on the Quality Assurance Measures Training website, [www.gamtraining.net](http://www.gamtraining.net).



*Liz Froese, SNSC Coordinator*

Finally, our Southern Network wishes to thank all of our partners across the region for your growing support for working and planning together in the best interest of those in our communities with a Dual Diagnosis.

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### Upcoming Events

**Community Networking Day**  
December 6th, 2012  
9:00 am - Noon via Videoconference  
"Health Concerns with Aging for People with Developmental Disabilities"

# Profiling Network Advisors Connie Smits and Lea Pollard

The SNSC is once again pleased to pay tribute to those who have contributed their time and expertise to our Advisory Committee – a group of 17 professional leaders who, along with our Co-Leads Brian Davies and Jason Young, provide invaluable assistance to us in networking with the many partner agencies we serve across Ontario's southern region.

This time we are pleased to profile Connie Smits, Supervisor of Adult Respite Services at Community Living Sarnia-Lambton, and Lea Pollard, Executive Director of Contact Hamilton for Children's and Developmental Services and Administrator of Developmental Services Ontario for the Hamilton-Niagara Region.

Connie Smits began her work for Community Living Sarnia-Lambton in 1990 as a part-time support worker. She went on to assume numerous positions in that organization, from Primary Support Counsellor to Assistant Supervisor of Residential Services to her current position. A mother of three children and four step-children, and a grandmother nine times over, Connie attended the Lambton College Business Management Development Program and is currently enrolled in an International Certificate Program in Dual Diagnosis at Brock University in St. Catharines.

In 2011, Connie made a presentation on innovative ways of supporting people with complex behaviours at a conference on respite service in Phoenix, Arizona and this October she was invited to outline innovative ways for developing respite plans for people with complex behaviours at another international conference in Toronto.

"Working within the developmental services sector for many years has been very rewarding," says Connie. "I feel my role within this sector is to help strengthen community relationships, and to ensure educational information reaches community partners that might benefit from such information."



*Connie Smits, Supervisor of Adult Respite Services at Community Living Sarnia-Lambton*

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Lea Pollard is a Hamilton native who went on to earn a Bachelor of Social Work at McMaster University. A mother of two, Lea has had two decades of experience working in the development services sector for both adults and children. Her experience includes Geriatric Social Work in the early to mid 1990s, and finally working as the Manager of Client Services for Contact Hamilton, before taking her place as that agencies' Executive Director.

Lea has the following words to share about the value of the work the Southern Network does in collaboration with our many partners;

"In collaboration with others, our Southern Network has created and published resources like the Youth In Transition Toolkit that help demystify Dual Diagnosis and make knowledge of it more accessible," she says. "Dual Diagnosis is coming out of the shadows. It is being talked about more and it is increasingly better understood, and the Network is striving to unite all of us who work and interface with people with a Dual Diagnosis to work together...."Network staff are highly involved in their communities," Lea concludes.

"They are, in essence, sector connectors, linking mental health, developmental services, health, justice, education and other human service sectors in an effort to better the lives of people with a Dual Diagnosis."





# Joining our Tri-County Partners for a Day of Sharing

This past June, our Network was pleased to accept an invitation from the Tri-County Staff Training & Development Group to present the SNSC's Dual Diagnosis Manual for Direct Support Professionals.

The invitation was an opportunity for our Coordinator Liz Froese and team of Facilitators to engage in a day-long discussion with managers, supervisors and other professionals working for a host of community-based agencies in the counties of Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor-Essex to highlight the information on how to support people with a dual diagnosis from a bio-pyscho-social perspective. It was also an opportunity to highlight our efforts to encourage research and provide our partners with the most up-to-date information and strategies for ensuring accessible, high-quality assistance for people with developmental disabilities.



***SNSC Coordinator Liz Froese (at left) with Joanne Brackett, Chair of the Chatham Kent DDC LSDN, Leslie McLean, former chair of the Windsor Essex DDC, Connie Smits, Chair of the Sarnia Lambton DDC and SNSC Facilitator Sue Benko***

"It was a day where the entire Southern Network team presented to the Tri-County Area," says Sue Benko, the Network's Facilitator in the communities of Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent and Sarnia Lambton. "and it turned out to be a great opportunity for those communities to become more familiar with the SNSC and the work we do."

Benko says this June 7th 'Day of Sharing', attended by more than 30 agency representatives in the Tri-County communities, was also an opportunity to showcase our Network's Dual Diagnosis Resource Manual for Direct Support Professionals – one of the most recent of a growing library of detailed information tools we have produced in concert with numerous professionals in the fields of developmental services, mental health, health, education and justice. All of our partners can obtain a copy of this Manual by visiting our website at [www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca), then clicking on Resources.

At the Tri-County event, our Facilitators provided leading-edge information on such topics as crisis care planning, relationship management and best practices for dealing with mental health and behavioural challenges. We also discussed the review of Ontario's Joint Policy Guideline for the Provision of Community Mental Health and Developmental Services for Adults with a Dual Diagnosis, and our Network's continued efforts to encourage research and to build health care capacity for people with a Dual Diagnosis.



***Some of our professional partners participating in last June's Tri-County area Day of Sharing***

The day also featured a presentation by Leslie McLean, a Manager at Community Living Essex County who discussed an Emergency Binder that the Windsor Essex Dual Diagnosis Committee produced on best practices for hospital staff responding to emergencies. You can get a copy of this binder at [www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca) under Resources.

Our Network welcomes invitations from all of our partners to discuss the work we do together to ensure the best possible services for people with a Dual Diagnosis.





# SNSC Celebrates Fifth Annual Research Forum

Our Southern Network celebrated another milestone in our almost 7 years of providing a wide range of knowledge- and skill-building opportunities to you, our many partners across the region of southern Ontario that we serve. That milestone was our 5th Annual Research Forum, held in Ingersoll, Ontario this past September.



*Dr. Yona Lunsky*

This Research Forum, like the four previous ones we have hosted for our multi-sectorial partners working to fulfill the lives of individuals with a Dual Diagnosis, offers a special opportunity to participate in a discussion with speakers engaged in leading-edge research in the field. These forums also inform our partners about the support our Network can provide to our partners to conduct research of their own.

One of the Southern Network's core objectives is to encourage research that helps frontline workers across the region provide the best services possible to individuals with a Dual Diagnosis," said our Network's Research Facilitator Beth Anne Currie shortly after she joined our team more than two years ago.

Beth Anne played a lead role in organizing our latest Research Forum, which featured two keynote speakers engaged in research on individuals with developmental disabilities. Those speakers included Dr. Yona Lunsky, an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto and Research Head of the Dual Diagnosis Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and Megan Harris, CEO and co-founder of the Gestalt Collective, a full-service knowledge brokering company based in Toronto who has a Masters of Public Health degree from the University of Waterloo.

There is an increasing amount of credible and relevant Ontario-based research that improves our understanding of the care and assessment of people who have a Dual Diagnosis," said Beth Anne as she joined our Network's Coordinator Liz Froese in welcoming Dr. Lunsky, our first keynote speaker of the day, to the podium. "We are so lucky to have the leadership and commitment of Dr. Yona Lunsky and her team to help us know and understand their findings, but more so to help us translate these findings into everyday practice and training across the Network."

Dr. Lunsky, who has authored and co-authored more than 100 publications in the field of developmental disabilities, and whose research has focused on psycho-social risk and other health factors as they relate to individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers, spoke to our forum on the subject of turning research into practice. Following her talk to the room of more than 75 participants, she divided them into groups to brainstorm on such issues as the effects of medication on adults with developmental disabilities, physical health challenges like diet and obesity, and barriers to attaining health services.



*Making research presentations at the forum were, from left, Beth Anne Currie, Jane Hoy, Phillip McKeen and Lynda Legge*





# Fifth Annual Research Forum....continued

The second keynote speaker, Megan Harris helped guide participants through some activities and planning processes for helping to “promote evidence-informed decision making in our everyday lives.” She discussed strategies for turning new and important findings coming out of research into practice, and on how we put what knowledge we have available to us to best use.

Our Research Forum also showcased some of the research underway in this region with the support of the Southern Network. The projects highlighted this year include:

- Lynda Legge, SNSC Facilitator, shared preliminary findings from a regional project entitled: “Huron Perth School Adult Life; A Review of Planning for Transitional Age Youth”, which examined the transition planning experiences of youth (and their families) who have developmental disabilities and attended secondary schools in Huron and Perth Counties.

- Jane Hoy, a Community Support Supervisor at Community Living Kincardine & District, outlined research on practices for assisting adults with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder living in the community and dealing with the justice system.

- Beth Anne Currie, SNSC's Research Facilitator, focused on research that explores coping experiences of parents with adult children with a Dual Diagnosis.

- Phillip McKeen, a Masters student at the University of Windsor's School of Human Kinetics, made a presentation on the impact of motor skill training on eye-hand coordination involving individuals with intellectual disabilities and a Dual Diagnosis.

Our Southern Network encourages all of our partners to explore opportunities to consider doing some research of their own that advances all of our efforts to enhance the lives of people with a Dual Diagnosis. You can find out more about how our Network may support your research efforts by visiting our website at [www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca), and by contacting our Research Facilitator Beth Anne Currie at [bethannecurrie@sympatico.ca](mailto:bethannecurrie@sympatico.ca).



*From left, our Network's Research Facilitator Beth Anne Currie, with our second keynote speaker Megan Harris, and our Network's Coordinator, Liz Froese*



*SNSC Health Care Facilitator Tom Archer, joins other forum participants in question-and-answer sessions with our speakers*

For all of our partners who may be interested in doing research in the field of developmental disabilities, Beth Anne would like to leave you with this quotation she chose for this past September's Research Forum from a toolkit for researchers edited by Gavin Bennett and Nasreen Jessani. That quotation goes like this:

“Knowledge is like fine wine. The researcher brews it, the scientific paper bottles it, the peer reviewer tastes it, and the journal article sticks a label on it. The archive systems store it carefully in a cellar. Splendid! Just one small problem! Wine is only useful when somebody drinks it. Wine in a bottle does not quench thirst. Knowledge Translation opens the bottle, pours the wine into a glass, and serves it.”



# Southern Network Presents Certificate Course to Partners

In keeping with one of our Network's core goals – to provide educational and training opportunities for our many partner agencies across the southern region – we have been working with our three sister Networks in Ontario, and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and George Brown College in Toronto to present a course called 'Training in Partnerships'. Training In Partnership (TIP) is a four-day Certificate Course on Dual Diagnosis, originally developed by the Dual Diagnosis Implementation Committee in Toronto for managers and supervisors in agencies that support individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health issues.

"The curriculum covers topics specific to Dual Diagnosis," says Linda Smith, our Network's Facilitator for our partners in the Hamilton and Brant areas who is playing a lead role in presenting this training opportunity across the region we serve. "The goal is to increase the capacity of providers and to facilitate better connections between mental health and developmental services."

Early sessions were held in the Hamilton and Brant areas last year and this past September the TIP course was provided in the Woodstock and surrounding areas where 20 of our partners took part in it. Another session is being planned for the Hamilton/Niagara area in January 2013.

For more information on this training opportunity, please contact Linda Smith at 1-800-789-1773 ext. 444 or email her at [lsmith@bethesdaservices.com](mailto:lsmith@bethesdaservices.com).



*The trainers for these sessions, from left, are Pam Roe, Manager of the Dual Diagnosis Program, St. Joseph Healthcare London, S.NSC Facilitator Sue Benko, Tanja Colnerus, of the Dual Diagnosis Program, St. Joseph Healthcare Hamilton, and S.NSC Facilitator Lynda Legge*

*The group of nurses from the Niagara Health System participating in our September training day*



## Network Holds Training Day for Hospital Nurses

This past September, the Southern Network was pleased to play a lead role in developing and delivering a training day for registered nurses working for the Niagara Health System.

The agenda for the training day was prepared by our Network's Niagara Facilitator Nancy Hall and by Derek Christensen, Regional Educator in the Mental Health Services section of the Niagara Health System (NHS) for nurses who will be working in the Mental Health Unit at the new hospital complex the NHS is opening in St. Catharines in 2013.

Dr. Kerry Boyd, Psychiatrist and Chief Clinical Officer for Bethesda Services delivered a presentation on people with a Dual Diagnosis, and Nancy Hall offered a training session on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Leanne Mione, a Manager with Developmental Services Ontario, discussed access to services for people with developmental disabilities in the province, and Tom Archer, one of our Network's Health Care Facilitators reviewed the Primary Health Care Guidelines. The day also included a tour of three models of group homes highlighting the variety and complexity of services available for people with developmental disabilities.

At the end of what all considered a successful day, Derek stated; "We have our first group of 'experts' on Developmental Disability at the hospital." The nurses participating in the day received valuable training through the session, he said, and there are already plans to have more sessions of this kind.





# Clinician's Day Draws High Marks From Participants

In the close to seven years the Southern Network of Specialized Care has been in existence, one of the recurring skill-building opportunities our team has been most proud to offer our many partner agencies across the southern region is our Clinician's Networking Days.

Our Network has been providing these opportunities for Clinicians, including behaviour consultants, psychologists, social workers, nurses and specialized case managers in our region for five years now. In keeping with our goal to promote best practices by offering Dual Diagnosis education for developmental service professionals, we have always made it our business to invite keynote speakers to these day long sessions who are doing leading-edge work in the developmental disabilities field.

The Clinician's Networking Day our Network hosted last June 8th at the Elmhurst Inn in Ingersoll for more than 120 of our professional partners in the region was no exception. This time, our keynote speaker was Dr. Lauren Charlott, an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the prestigious University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Dr. Charlott also serves as Director on the University of Massachusetts' Multi-Disciplinary Intellectual Disabilities/Mental Health Consultation Team and on the Advisory Board for the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed. She has given numerous talks on a host of topics, including the behavioural health needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and has published a number of original research papers on the topic of mood disorders in individuals with intellectual disabilities.

The presentation Dr. Charlott shared with our clinical partners was titled: Neurodevelopmental Effects on Multi-Model Assessment and Treatment, and focused on a range of strategies for identifying and addressing the root causes of psychiatric and behavioural challenges faced by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. You can review the series of power-point slides Dr. Charlott featured during her presentation. It is available on our Network's website at [www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca) and using the search engine to key in: Clinician's Networking Day, Dr. Lauren Charlott in the search engine.



*Dr. Lauren Charlott, third from left, with members of our Network's Clinician's and Networking Committee. From left are: Tim Frauley and Marilyn Bell, two representatives from Woodstock-based Regional Support Associates, Dr. Charlott, Tom Francey from Niagara-based Bethesda Services, SNSC Facilitator Lynda Legge, and Amanda Hendry from Hamilton Brant Behaviour Services.*



*Keynote speaker Dr. Lauren Charlott, left, with SNSC Facilitator Lynda Legge*

Lynda Legge, one of our Network's Facilitators who helped organize the June 8th Clinician's Day says one of members of the Networking Day Committee praised the Neuro-Developmental approach Dr. Charlott outlined this way: "It is an approach that is empirically grounded and makes good common sense. We don't often see both of those together." Other feedback received by those who participated in the day included: "Excellent information!"; "Great resources shared!"; and "Thanks for introducing her to us!"

Our Network encourages our partners to visit [www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca) for information on upcoming events of interest to you.



## Profiling: Ashley Rail

The Southern Network of Specialized Care extends a warm welcome to Ashley Rail who has joined our Network as a post-secondary student in psychology at Brock University to fulfill a nine-month co-op placement.

"I am very excited for this wonderful opportunity to work with and learn from all of the members of this talented team," says Ashley of her placement with our Network, and we are equally excited to work with her as she furthers her knowledge of the services provided by our many partners in the Southern Region for ensuring that people with developmental disabilities have every opportunity to participate in every aspect of community life.

As well as learning more about people with developmental disabilities and a Dual Diagnosis, Ashley is also hoping to use some of her time with us to gain more knowledge in doing psychological assessments and in conducting research.

Ashley was born and raised in St. Catharines and says she was attracted to psychology "because of a fascination with how the brain functions, as well as how it can influence a person's behaviour." While working toward a career in a psychology-related field, she also devotes her time to one of her other passions, dancing, where she is an assistant teacher for a Niagara dance school.

Please join us in welcoming Ashley as she looks forward to a bright and promising future in our field of work.



## We wish to hear from you!

We thank you for reading the latest edition of the Southern Network of Specialized Care newsletter and hope it is providing information the Network's many partners across the Southern Region need to better serve their clients.

To ensure that this newsletter continues serving the needs of our partners, we invite you to share your thoughts and ideas for articles for upcoming editions.

Is there a topic or program you feel should be shared with fellow professionals across the Southern Region? If so, please contact:

Liz Froese, SNSC Coordinator  
[froese.network@sympatico.ca](mailto:froese.network@sympatico.ca)

1.866.486.1651

## SNSC Advisory Committee

**Dr. Jay Rao** - Regional Mental Health Care London

**Leo Massi** - Haldimand-Norfolk R.E.A.C.H

**Lynda Nicholson** - Community Living Six Nations

**Mary Westerhof** - St. Joseph's Health Care Hamilton

**Maurice Voisin** - South-East Grey Support Services

**Nancy Wallace-Gero** - Community Living Essex

**Shelley McCarthy** - Family Counselling Centre of Brant

**Mark Benner** - Fanshawe College

**Connie Smits** - Community Living Sarnia

**Heather Callender** - St. Leonard's Community Services, London

**Jenny Barretto** - HNBHN LHIN

**Dawn Maziak** - Erie St. Clair LHIN

**Patty Chapman** - South West LHIN

**Lea Pollard** - DSO Hamilton Niagara

**Kevin West** - Probation and Parole Services, Niagara Falls

**Bob Fehir** - CMHA Oxford

**Mary Gregg** - Alexandra Marine and General Hospital, Goderich

### Co-Leads

**Brian Davies**

Bethesda - Network Co-lead

**Jason Young**

RSA, Woodstock Office - Network Co-lead

### Ex-officio

**Liz Froese** - SNSC Coordinator

**Rosanne Perron** - MCSS Southwest Region

**Wilma Van Staalduinen** - MCSS Hamilton



[www.community-networks.ca](http://www.community-networks.ca)