

MAY 2021

FSC NATIONAL NEWS

Newsletter for members of Family Service Canada



Message from the Board

We hope everyone is taking good care of themselves as we move into another, hopefully the last, leg of the pandemic. In speaking with many of you, we know it is taking its toll, however the work continues and families continue to receive support and treatment.

The Community of Learning (COL) received very positive feedback, thank you to those that filled out the survey. We are in the process of planning our COL for the fall, October 27th, stay tuned. Saskatchewan will be hosting this year.

I have sent out our membership application and calculation forms. Please take the time to fill them out and submit them before the end of July. If you have any questions about how the calculations work or require some short-term support, connect with me at pauline.smale@familycentre.org

Pauline Smale
Board Chair

Read and Comment on the New Blog

Visit the blog post at <https://familyservicecanada.org/2021/05/become-antiracist-organization/>

May 25, 2021, marked one year since Minneapolis Police killed George Floyd, sparking global protests. The events and discussions that followed brought a greater awareness of structural racism and increasing social pressure for organizations to acknowledge and fix their practices and policies that perpetuate racial inequality. In Canada, as elsewhere, it's becoming increasingly risky for organizations not to invest in racial equity and diversity.

Every agency is at a different point in responding to racism. Our most recent blog post explores structural racism in Canada and offers suggestions for your organization's steps. If your agency is actively making changes, we hope you'll share some of that work in the comments. By sharing our knowledge, experiences, and expertise, we can collectively support families' wellbeing, health, and resiliency.

Men's Helpline

What it is:

The Men's Helpline is a 24-7 new service in Nova Scotia for adult men or anyone who identifies as male, 18 years and older, who have concerns about their emotional well-being. We built this service collaboratively with the Department of Community Services, Status of Women, 211, and Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia with the input of many community and government partners along the way. The Men's Helpline formally launched in September 2020.

By contacting 211, men receive a soft live transfer to one of the MHL clinical on-call team at Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia. This team of social workers and therapists offers brief clinical supports within a 30 minute call. During the call, the worker and caller can determine if ongoing counselling is needed and if so, the caller is referred to the ongoing team to receive up to 6 sessions. Callers are able to access the line as many times as they need and can choose to remain anonymous.

What it is not:

It is not a crisis line. If at any point in the conversation – starting with the 211 navigators through to the counsellors at FSENS – it appears that someone is at risk of immediate harm to themselves or others or in mental health distress, they will be connected directly to emergency services such as 911 or the mental health crisis line.

As part of this prototype, we are focused on building and strengthening relationships, servicing shared outcomes, and exploring joint team learnings with our Provincial Mental Health Crisis Line.

How it came about:

Various aspects of COVID-19 have raised pressures on all citizens, including men – from loss of social networks and employment to family issues in the home. The number of men accessing 211 looking for support has increased by 30% in the past year. This line represents a provincial response to this need.

The well-being and safety of families and communities are dependent on the availability of resources and supports for all Nova Scotians, including men.

Enhancing support for men, normalizing reaching out for help for men, and understanding men's help seeking pathways form the foundation of this new service.

Since the launch, the line has received over 1000 calls.



CEO Spotlight: Sharon Amirault

Sharon Amirault is the CEO of Family Plus/Life Solutions in Saint John New Brunswick, as of March 1, 2021. She has over 25 years of executive experience in the not-for-profit sector and loves to lead change. She is well versed in the areas of strategic planning, financial management, and project management related to mental health, addictions, poverty, domestic violence, homelessness, education, and employment.

Previously, Sharon was employed with various not for profits in Nova Scotia, and most recently in the role of Executive Director of the Saint John Women's Empowerment Network. For 18 years prior, she directed First Steps Housing Project Inc., a multi-service centre for young women and their children who have no safe place to live.

Sharon has served on boards with Boys and Girls Clubs, the Elizabeth Fry Society, and Sophia Recovery Centre. Sharon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Masters of Arts degree from Dalhousie University. She is skilled in leadership, non profit management, public speaking, fundraising, and team building. Though she was born in Goose Bay Labrador and grew up in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Sharon proudly calls New Brunswick home. She loves to read, write, and walk the beach in search of sea glass.



We want to know what is happening in your agency. Let us know about your successes, new initiatives, important changes in staffing, anniversaries, etc. We will include them in future issues of our newsletter.

