

What types of supports are available?

The ministry-funded services that families may be linked to are:

Residential Services

Community Participation

Case Management

Specialized Support

Adult Protective Service Worker Program

Specialized Clinical Services

Passport Funding

Respite

Person Directed Planning

Support for Families

Waiting is part of the reality for accessing supports and services. It can be frustrating and stressful. At the DSO, individuals, who have completed eligibility, will wait for the application package to be completed, and then afterwards, wait for funded services, and Passport funding.

CAMH (the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health), CLT (Community Living Toronto), and the DSO received some funding to do some research on how to best support families who are waiting. Some of you may have participated.

- Most research and most interventions are child focused
- What is there for parents? What can the DSO do to help?
- Parents were randomly sorted into 2 groups: mindfulness and information

The information group discussed the following:

Getting to know Adult Developmental Services and how to access resources; Passport & Person Directed Planning; Taking care of us: Caregiver issues and Respite services; Specialized clinical services; *ConnectAbility.ca* overview; fee for service, advocacy and parent support groups; Residential alternatives; Crisis supports; and Family support workers and Adult Protective Service Workers Roles

In the mindfulness group there were 6 sessions. Some examples of topics were:

Getting off Automatic Pilot; Observing & Non-Judgmental Acceptance; Thoughts are

Not Facts and Taking Care of Myself.

Everyone who attended a group said they found the experience helpful. After 3 months, the mindfulness group felt slightly less stressed than the information group.

What participants said:

- “A chance to meet with professionals and able to share my own insights as to what may be more effective in planning for future services”
- “It simply makes sense to learn from other families.”
- “Made me aware of the significant challenges that were being faced by others and less alone”
- “It was like visiting a world where people had the same life problems as me”
- “We don’t know what we don’t know. These sessions were a starting point for getting more information about the sector”

What did we learn?

Even though it is hard to get families out to group sessions, those who attended found it very helpful. Both groups are useful and help deal with the stress of waiting. Stay tuned, more groups coming to the Toronto community!

Family Support Groups in Toronto

In the meantime, check out this link for more family support groups in Toronto. <http://goo.gl/5Jr4W1> A few examples of groups you will find are listed below.

Adult Sibling Support Group

In association with: Extend-A-Family

Description: An opportunity for adult siblings (ages 18 and up) to get together, share, connect, and support one another through sharing stories, information, and conversations in an informal setting.

Location: Various locations around the city

Meetings: One Thursday a month from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Contact: Jessica Van Wyk, jvw@extendafamily.ca, 416-239-7161

Safe & Secure Futures Network

Description: Aims to empower families to develop and nurture a support circle with their family member who has a disability. Offer opportunities to share and learn from each other. A variety of topics of mutual interest are explored through guided discussions with a facilitator.

East

Location: St. Simon the Apostle Anglican Church. 525 Bloor St. E. (between Sherbourne and Parliament)

Meetings: Third Tuesday of the month from September – June from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Contact: Lee Steel, ssfne@extendafamily.ca, 647-220-9412

West

Location: Royal York Road United Church, 851 Royal York Road (2 blocks s. of Bloor). Parking on side streets only

Meetings: Second Tuesday of each month from September - June from 7:00-9:00 p.m but subject to change depending on availability.

Contact: Selena Blake, ssfnw@extendafamily.ca, 647-292-5144

Coming Up!



A new research project is being conducted by Community Living Toronto and the Developmental Services Ontario Toronto Region (DSO-TR). The research aims to better understand the experiences of immigrant families who are contacting the DSO-TR for services. The goal is to help develop recommendations in order to increase the cultural awareness and competence of staff doing intake, assessment and service navigation.

This study will be interviewing 12-30 participants. The eligibility criteria will include the following:

- You are over 18 years old
- You are a parent or caregiver to a person with a developmental disability
- You identify as an immigrant or newcomer (born outside of Canada)

We will share more details about the recruitment of participants in the coming weeks, please stay tuned! For more information on this study please contact Melissa Turner melissa.turner@cltoronto.ca.

Call the DSO at 416 925 4930 for information, or if something changes in your life, i.e., moving, health needs.

Jargon Corner:

ODSP INCOME SUPPORT Ontario Disability Support Program. Apply when you are 17 ½ years of age. The Ontario Disability Support Program helps people with disabilities who are in financial need pay for living expenses, like food and housing. It is separate from the DSO

ODSP EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT Some people with disabilities can work and want to work. That's why there are Ontario Disability Support Program Employment Supports to help get ready to work and help find a job. It is separate from the DSO and part of the MCSS (Ministry of Community and Social Services)

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