



# EMPOWERMENT REPORT

*(The Newsletter of the Empowerment Council)*

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## The Empowerment Council's Work Plan for 2010-2011

By Jennifer Chambers - EC Coordinator

### **Mission Statement:**

*The Empowerment Council is a voice for clients/survivors and ex-clients of mental health and addiction services.*

### **Statement of Purpose:**

*The Empowerment Council will conduct system wide advocacy on behalf of clients and ex-clients.*

### **The Empowerment Council's work falls into six major categories: Advocacy, Education, Representation, Outreach, Research and Organizational.**

#### **Advocacy:**

The EC has three substantial projects aimed at making the world safer for our people:

- Opposing Bill S-10, which will require mandatory jail time for numerous drug, related offences. The EC will submit its own paper to the government and support other organizations (including CAMH) that oppose the bill.
- Evaluating the implementation of the CAMH Bill of Client Rights to judge its effect at CAMH.
- Participating in promoting the CAMH goal of a Restraints Free Facility.

The EC has legal cases it will continue to pursue that have been in the works for years – seeking a ruling on whether Community Treatment Orders violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the right of people with addictions to get disability support.

The EC also brings the voice of clients to the Local Health Integration Network and various governmental and quasi-judicial bodies.

The EC will be seeking opportunities to advocate for a greater range of support alternatives (including trauma informed care) to be available for clients when needed.

#### **Education:**

Educational materials planned by the EC will cover the topics of drug information, how to have an effect on a committee, analyzing “the science” and myth-busting.

The EC gives ongoing feedback to both CAMH and the Toronto Police Services about their educational materials.

Education about the CAMH Bill of Client Rights will continue, now with a DVD and learning package available to accompany it.

The EC will continue to respond to speaking requests that allow us to educate different groups of people on the client and rights perspective.



## EC Workplan 2010-2011

### Representation:

A significant task of the EC involves the representation of clients on many committees. This year the EC will be applying a tool it has developed for evaluating our effectiveness on committees. We also advocate for every CAMH program to involve its clients in evaluations and decisions about the program.

The EC will be seeking to form an Intersectionality subcommittee, with representatives of clients who use various community specific programs.

### Outreach:

We will continue to send out our Empowerment Report at least three times a year, and update and maintain our website.

We will reach out to our membership through various focus groups, visits and surveys to inform them of our advocacy efforts.

### Research:

In this new category, the EC is partnering on two research projects: one looking at how women's sexuality is depicted in inpatient charts and the other at how clients are treated in health care when it is known they have a mental health or addiction issue or history.

### Organizational

This is the unsung category without which the rest would not be possible. We will be tracking our finances, holding our AGM, and so forth. This year we are also meeting with CAMH for the periodic review of our funding agreement.

This list may at times be exhausting but is by no means exhaustive. It highlights the EC's focused activities and goals for the coming year.

*The EC consists of its membership, board of directors, two full-time and two part-time staff.*

## Introduction to the New Addictions Advocate: Tucker Gordon

The EC position of Addictions Advocate focuses on addressing systemic barriers faced by addiction clients, both internally at CAMH, and externally in areas such as government policy. In addition to policy and outreach work, it includes an educational component addressing the prejudice and discrimination that affect addiction clients.

My professional background is in human rights, working on systemic cases focusing predominantly on disability and gender issues. My policy experience includes assisting in redrafting an organization's human rights complaint system, as well as working on equity and outreach policies. Additionally, in the anti-poverty field, I've helped people navigate the complex legal aid, social assistance and tenant systems. I have also had to navigate a few of these systems myself.

My personal history includes having a concurrent disorder, as well as being queer and trans. I continue to turn this into an asset, using my experience as a way to engage others through public speaking and educational opportunities. The knowledge gained from engaging openly with my peers, the health system, and every other arena in my life have shown me the many facets of discrimination. Conversely, I have learned that many people are willing to examine their own biases when given a space to ask questions and the chance to connect with an actual person.

*(Continued on page 4)*

# OPSEU Delivers on Promise to Release New Ad For the Psychiatric Survivor and Consumer Community

By Lucy Costa

One in 5 people in Canada will experience a mental health issue. We are more likely to be victims of violence than the cause of it.

We are you — your family, friends, co-workers, neighbours.

End discrimination. Challenge stereotypes.

OPSEU SEFPO

EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL

This message is brought to you by the Empowerment Council, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, and A Coalition of Clients, Employees and other Citizens.

In November of 2008, during an attempt to communicate with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) management, OPSEU initiated a contentious ad campaign that resulted in the perpetuation of the commonly held stereotype that people who use mental health services are violent.

The posters, mounted in bus shelters in front of the Queen Street site of CAMH, depicted a woman with a bruised eye and the accompanying incriminating text, “No more excuses - CAMH must protect its staff from violence” upset a number of clients, workers and family members. As a result, numerous psychiatric survivor and consumer agencies, community allies, and some OPSEU members mobilized together, writing and expressing their outrage at the implications behind this discriminatory ad campaign.

Although there was never a formal apology from OPSEU, we accept the reissuing of this counter ad as a demonstration of apology.

The ad ran during the month of May in the bus shelter on the southwest corner of Queen at Shaw Street.

We look forward to collaborating further with OPSEU and other community members in addressing complex issues as they arise in the future. The Empowerment Council commends OPSEU for taking responsibility and stepping up as a positive example of how we can address the issues and move beyond ambiguous discussions of stigma towards zero tolerance for any discrimination.

## Introducing New Addictions Advocate: Tucker Gordon (continued)

My advocacy style is to empower people to advocate for themselves by first determining what actions they would like to see occur and then providing the support they need to achieve their goals. I prefer to negotiate wherever possible. However, if there is a lack of movement on an issue, I believe in using other venues, such as the legal or complaint systems to achieve results, even if its purpose is simply to bring the other party to the table to continue the discussion.

I am currently focusing on the issues of gambling and voluntary exclusion, access to social supports for clients and Bill S-10 which is currently before the Senate of Canada and proposes mandatory minimums for drug offences. If you have questions, feedback, or would like to get involved, please contact me. I can be reached at:

**tucker\_gordon@camh.net or (416) 535-8501 x7007.**

### EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

**EC Statement of Purpose:** *To conduct system wide advocacy on behalf of clients.*

#### CONTACT INFORMATION: (Please Print Clearly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I have used mental health and/or addiction services (*check those that apply*):

*College Street site* \_\_\_\_\_ *Queen Street site* \_\_\_\_\_ *Other: Mental Health* \_\_\_\_\_

*Russell Street site* \_\_\_\_\_ *White Squirrel Way* \_\_\_\_\_ *Other: Addiction* \_\_\_\_\_

**I support the purpose of the Empowerment Council:**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: **Empowerment Council, 33 Russell Street, Room 2008, Toronto, ON M5S 2S1**  
You can also fill out a membership form online at our website: [www.empowermentcouncil.ca](http://www.empowermentcouncil.ca)