



# THE EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL

## Systemic Advocates in Addictions and Mental Health

### *Empowerment Council Activities: May 2019 – March 2021*

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“Voice” differs from participation in being more overtly autonomous. “Voice” contains the meaning of being heard but does not prescribe how or where. It presupposes organization, and contains the idea of collectivity and identity. <sup>1</sup>

## Advocacy

### Feedback and/or Influencing

- Medical Assistance in Dying – ongoing
- Drivers Licence Suspensions
- Aging and Mental Health Policy Framework
- CAMH Advocating for Patient privileges, passes, programming, access to exercise and means of communication during COVID
- CAMH Advocating on restraint issues: maximizing de-escalation, controls on use, least restriction, prevention, etc.
- Addressing Anti Black Racism in use.
- Advocating for community-based alternative to police response that is noncoercive, has significant service user presence in governance and values expertise of lived experience in hiring crisis workers
- Advocating for community delivery and oversight of police training, transparency and accountability in public reporting by police, etc.



## Advocating for Clients on Committees at CAMH

- Clinical Care Committee CAMH (and Working Groups on Restraints, Passes, Searches, Pornography, Code White, Code Yellow, Covert Medication, South Pod, Protective Devices, etc.)
- CAMH Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committee
- Acute Care Committee CAMH
- Complex Care Quality Council CAMH
- External Reviewers CAMH Forensic Program
- Advocacy (EC/Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office/Client Relations Office) Meetings CAMH
- Fair and Just CAMH Steering Committee - CAMH Anti-Black Racism Training Work Groups (Curriculum, Evaluation)
- CAMH Education Integration
- Interview Committee for CAMH Ethicist
- Initiated the *Service User Research & Ethics Subcommittee CAMH*  
This sub-committee will oversee and offer feedback on activities of the Recovery College by specifically focusing and drawing from service user experiential knowledge and scholarly writings and research
- The Human Services and Justice Coordinating Committee - People with Lived Experience Committee

## Advocating for Clients Outside of CAMH

- Mental Health and Addiction Advisory Panel to the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) Community Co-Chair
- Anti Racism Advisory Panel to the TPSB
- City of Toronto Police Reform - Alternative Community Safety Response Table
- Global Law Enforcement and Public Health - and forming Service User Group
- GTA Disability Coalition
- Equity and Inclusion Council University of Toronto Psychiatry
- Social Justice Education Advisory University of Toronto Psychiatry
- Anti-Oppression Education Group
- LAO Mental Health Law Advisory Committee

## Education

- Supervision: Service User Equity & Labour & Inclusion Project  
One staff; one volunteer.
- Supervision: Pro Bono Students Canada  
One student
- Teaching: Dalla Lana School of Public Health : Mental Disorder, Mental Health and Public Health (July 2020 and March 2021)
- Teaching and Training Lisbon, Portugal: Leadership in mental health “Patient Voice Advocacy and Human Rights”
- Chapter contribution in forthcoming book on: Psychiatric Documentation and Medical Records
- Matters of Engagement Podcast on Patient Engagement (follow up in the works)
- Conference abstract submission (multiple presenters) : Educating for equity: Development and implementation of a social justice curriculum in a large psychiatry residency program
- Correctional Reform Coalition
- Mental Health Commission of Canada : Champions of Change Report Features the work of *Centering Madness: Building Community Competencies* Curriculum (Due May 2021)
- Speaker at Conference: Police-Hospital Transitions
- Speech to Graduating class of Recruits Toronto Police College
- Deputations to get Toronto Police Services Board
- Know Your Rights Committee Toronto Police Service (PACER) - public education on website and in videos explaining rights in encounters with police. Ongoing.
- Deputation Toronto City Council Executive Committee and Budget Committee
- Educational Video for Dawson College (Quebec) on the Forensic Mental Health System
- Speaker Law and Mental Disorder Association
- Conference CMHA Ontario "Best Evidence versus Vested/Best Interest"

## Research

- SSHRC Grant Knowledge User/Subject Expert Discussion on Human Rights and Equity Informed Mental Health Services and Supports. Funded.
- CIHR SPOR grant - National Training Entity Grant (If funded this project will serve as a central body for systematic training of patient-oriented research leaders and serve as a community-building enterprise in the domain of capacity development.)
- CIHR Planning Grant: Navigating Canada's changing health policies and legislation on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and Mental Illness: Advancing a Research Agenda
- Chambers J. Meaningful Engagement to Save Lives - Working relationship of a service user organisation with police and mental health services. J Psychiatr Ment Health Nurs. 2021 Feb;28(1):83-89. doi: 10.1111/jpm.12724. PMID: 33320390.

## Judicial

- Empowerment Council success in the Supreme Court of Canada in "G" . The SCC ruled in favour of the EC position that it violated the equality section of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that people found guilty of a sexual offence could apply to be removed from the sex offender registry, but that people found Not Criminally Responsible by Reason of a Mental Disorder never could (no matter how minor the event). The Court referenced the EC in its decision.
- Expert Witness in a Human Rights Tribunal case

## Organizational

- Packed, moved and relocated Russell and Queen St. spaces to the new combined EC office in McCain Building.
- Renewed Funding Agreement between EC and CAMH.
- Developed EC Strategic Plan.
- Launched new EC website.
- Responded to administrative office calls, complaints, queries to EC.
- Communications with members.
- Maintained organizational requirements - financial management and records, corporate record-keeping and insurance.

## WHO WE ARE:

### EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL STAFF

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Co-Chairs: Chloe Pearson and Sheldon LaPorte*

*Treasurer: Francine Geraci*

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