



**Ontario Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Education and Health Standing Committee**



Care for our Common Home

Directive #13

Pages: 1
Attachments 3

January 8, 2019

To: Diocesan Education and Health Committee Chairpersons
From: Wilma Vanderzwaag, Ontario Provincial Council, Sub Committee Chairs: Mary Lou Watson and Heather Sisk
cc: Diocesan Presidents, Archbishop O'Brien, Ontario Provincial Council Executive, National Health and Education Standing Committee Chairperson

"It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the action that we do."
Mother Theresa

Blessed New Year to you all! During this time of the year we are all thinking and reviewing the activities of the past year by preparing annual reports. This is a great time to reflect on what you have reported on and what you would like to report on moving forward. This standing chair has so much information available in both health and education. See what has resonated with your members or has stirred in them the need for change—perhaps even a resolution to bring forth. If you have anything in your reports or newsletter that you feel everyone in the province would benefit from, please forward to me. I love reading your newsletters and reports, they are all filled with great information—keep up the great work.

With this directive are three attachments. One is the report on the conference, Putting Care into Mental Health Care that I attended in November. The other two come from Sue Lubowitz, Toronto Education and Health Chair who attended the 3rd Moira Ste. Marie Memorial Lecture in October. The theme was "Holistic Health: The Spiritual Dimension". Thank you to Sue for sharing her report.

On December 9, 2017, CBC Radio program, White Coat Black Art reported on how the North Bay Regional Health Centre has peer support workers helping patients in crisis. Many patients in the midst of a mental health crisis find little comfort in the average emergency room. Peer support workers are there to bring relief to those at their lowest moments. Peer support workers have lived experience with mental health issues. People for Equal Partnership in Mental Health Nipissing (PEP) offers services to those suffering from mental health and addiction issues for more than 26 years. Triage nurses in North Bay state that peer support workers especially help during the downtime, the period between assessment and admission. They keep the patient calm, and no one is left alone. The patient feels they have a supportive person at their side. Support workers based on their education and own personal experience, provide strategies for coping with day-to-day struggles dealing with the symptoms of mental health issues. Emergency departments can be intimidating and overwhelming environments. Doctors are often in a hurry, and the wait times are long. Letting the

patient in crisis know they are not alone is the entire point of peer support. According to Deborah Sherman, executive directive of the Ontario Peer Development Initiative, "the basic tenant of peer support is saying 'I've been where you are, I've been through it. I'm doing okay. What can I help you with? How can I encourage you? How can I support you?'" Peer support workers are not interested in making a diagnosis. They aren't there to cure or treat any ailments but rather to provide hope and to exemplify that people do and can recover. That you're not alone and that there are far more people with issues that you might know about. Triage nurses think the peer support workers are invaluable in the North Bay Regional Health Centre. In this emergency department, when a patient is identified as needing mental-health support, they are brought to a more comfortable private room. A little while later, a peer support worker arrives to ask them how they are feeling and allows them to express their concerns. Peer support workers are dressed in street clothes and that can also be a help as they are less intimidating. An emergency room physician with regards to peer support navigators, stated that when someone has been wounded you have something more to share. These support workers because of their shared experiences can relate to a patient and make a patient feel at ease. Human connection is deeply healing.

Emergency departments are good at fixing broken bones, not broken minds. To learn more about peer support workers or view the entire episode of White Coat Black Art go to cbc.ca/whitecoat with Dr. Brian Goldman.

BELL LET'S TALK DAY IS JANUARY 30, 2019. It's all about having the right tools to combat the stigma around mental illness. The Bell Let's Talk toolkit consists of simple everyday tactics that can be used to break the silence, including a conversation guide, workplace tips and social media images. Bell will donate towards mental health initiatives in Canada by contributing 5 cents for every applicable text, call, tweet, social media video view and use of our Facebook frame or Snapchat filter. To learn more about this event or the tool kit, just search Bell Let's Talk 2019.

Lisa Henry posted on her Facebook page the following quote:
"Never give up on someone with a mental illness. When "I" is replaced with "We", illness becomes wellness." Shannon L. Alder

Inspiring words to live by.

Blessings and hugs,

Wilma



a big
HUG