

## In this issue:

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- Working on major challenges facing caregivers related to education, employment and caregiver well-being
- Community Engagement

## Future issues:

- Lifetime Networks
- Employment
- Estate Planning
- Housing

*“Good mental health is about living well and feeling capable despite challenges.”*

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## Caregivers Come Together to Support Each Other and Their Loved Ones Living with Mental Illnesses

Caregivers of those living with mental illnesses have come together to develop strategies and resources to help their loved ones along the road to recovery and to plan for the future.

The [Mental Illness Caregivers Association](#) (MICA) of Canada provides information and resources to caregivers. It brings caregivers' perspectives to communities and to governments that are planning services and programs for those living

with a mental illness. The goal is to identify gaps in services, and to work with partners to find solutions to improve quality of life for caregivers and their loved ones.

Caregivers may feel overwhelmed by the emotional, physical and financial demands of managing daily challenges and finding answers to the crucial questions of: *“What will happen to my loved one when I’m gone?”*; *“How do I keep myself strong and*

*healthy?”*; *“Where can I go for support?”*; *“What financial help is available?”*.

Share your thoughts and concerns with us regarding some of the challenges you and your loved one face from providing for the necessary supports to seeking employment and finding appropriate housing. Become a MICA member by visiting [www.micaontario.com](http://www.micaontario.com) or by [click here](#).

## Caring for Caregivers – New Guide from Ottawa Public Health

The City of Ottawa’s [Mental Health Caregiver Guide](#) provides practical tools, tips and information on taking care of you - the caregiver - and caring for your loved one.

The information in this Guide is based on things you can control, and things that you can do to complement a treatment plan, promote recovery, or while waiting for services.

The information was gathered from trusted mental health providers including nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, caregivers,

and individuals with lived experience.

There are no easy answers – we all know – but we believe the Guide will provide a framework for developing healthy coping mechanisms and resiliency. Taking care of ourselves lays the foundation to care for and support our loved ones to improve their quality of life.

Good mental health is about living well and feeling capable *despite* the challenges we face.

Your feedback on the Guide is important to us.

[Click here](#) or go to [ottawa.ca/mentalhealthcaregiver](http://ottawa.ca/mentalhealthcaregiver) to find the Mental Health Caregiver Guide. Let us know what you think at the following address: [mica\\_ottawa@rogers.com](mailto:mica_ottawa@rogers.com).



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***Build your own toolbox: find out what's available, be supported by people who have similar experiences, add your voice to our efforts and work with us as we create, in consultation with potential partners, new "tools".***

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## **Working with Community and Government on Caregivers' Challenges**

MICA is working with a variety of partners and families across Eastern Ontario on some major challenges caregivers face:

- **Education:** access to information for caregivers, including workshops on key issues such as housing alternatives.
- **Employment:** access to work for persons living with a mental illness and developing a better

understanding of their needs and accommodation requirements in the workplace.

- **Planning for when caregivers are gone:** providing personal care and well-being, building family networks, exploring estate planning including housing trusts.
- **Well-being of caregivers:** developing and implementing practical

resources that improve quality of life for caregivers and their loved ones.

Some of our valued partners in this work have included: Ottawa Public Health, Canadian Mental Health Association, Canadian Public Health Association, and Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa.

## **Giving a Voice to Caregivers - MICA in Eastern Ontario Communities, Spring 2017**

MICA will be meeting with caregivers in the Spring of 2017 to report on progress being made in addressing some of the topics in this newsletter.

So, if you are a caregiver caring for someone living with a mental illness, this will be your opportunity to connect with others who face the same challenges and who are searching to

find solutions that will have a lasting and positive impact on the quality of life for themselves and their mentally ill loved ones.

Work with us to:

- Provide appropriate, innovative and responsive support for your loved one living with a mental illness.
- Give a voice to caregivers on this

challenging life-long journey.

- Personally stay strong and healthy.

Watch for locations and dates for these meetings in upcoming MICA newsletters!

## **Coming Up: Planning for When You are Gone, Employment, Listening to Caregivers - in Winter & Spring Newsletters**

Watch for the following:

**“What Happens When I’m Gone”:** Pilot Program: Lifetime Networks for caregivers of people living with a mental illness.

**Employment:** our work with partners on employment for our loved ones.

**Other:** listening to caregivers – reporting on our efforts to date and doing what we can to ensure “we got it right”.