

CAREGIVERS PLANNING FOR WHEN THEY ARE GONE – A CAREGIVER FOCUSED APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

The Mental Illness Caregivers Association (MICA) would like to present the Caregiver Resource Hub, a pilot project led by MICA, in partnership with organizations that share our goals related to supporting caregivers seeking housing solutions for their loved ones living with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities.

The challenge: all caregivers are concerned with how their loved ones with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities will manage if the caregiver is no longer able to care for them or after they are gone. Individual situations differ and there is no one size fits all.

Caregivers' concerns – what we heard: caregivers want to be confident that they have not only put in place a housing plan, for after they are gone, and that there are financial and legal arrangements to support the housing plan, but also ensure the continued well-being of our family members.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS NOTE – A PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Taking the first steps in creating a plan that ensures your family member(s) living with mental illness and/or substance use disorders have continued access to a safe and secure place to live. A housing plan that:

1. Has clearly identified the required personal supports by:

- Identifying the type of supports required including supports required to ensure continued access to: mental health professionals; on-going health and dental care; a network of community supports – all in the interest of ensuring stability and the continued well-being of their family member.

2. Has considered financial and legal arrangements by:

- Focusing on ensuring arrangements are in place to fund both current and long-term expenses while ensuring the appropriate controls are in place to protect the family members.

3. Addresses concerns related to ensuring family members continue to have access to a safe place to live by:

- Identifying, in consultation with selected caregivers the supports required to ensure their family members have continued access to a well maintained and safe place to live and, if required, arrangements are in place to manage any changes in the housing needs of the family member living with mental illness from the sale of property to accessing supported housing.
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LET'S GET STARTED

Let us discuss the needs of your family member as we explore some of the possibilities below and share one family's plan using the planning framework – see Annex 'A'

A NEEDS ANALYSIS – A PLANNING FRAMEWORK

A housing plan that ensures the continued well-being of my family member by supporting my family member in:

- Managing symptoms of illness from being a good listener to providing words of encouragement and, if required, someone ready to advocate for access to treatment*
- Helping in organizing visits to mental health professionals including arranging appointments and ensuring compliance with any follow-up actions*
- Arranging for and tracking compliance with taking medications and assisting the patient in understanding and managing side effects*
- Being there to celebrate special occasions from birthdays to holidays and whatever else can be done to address the loneliness and isolation faced by persons living with mental illness*
- Monitoring self-care from good hygiene practices to regular visits to health care professionals – medical doctors, dentists, optometrists and so on*
- Being there during illness to address concerns and offer support including visits to health care professionals and sometimes, visits to the hospital*
- Other*

A housing plan that has considered financial and legal arrangements by supporting my family member in:

- Maintaining banking arrangements in place that provide for payments for monthly expenses from food to utilities and rent*
- Sorting out any concerns related to continued access to disability benefits and other arrangements such as the disability tax credit and access to registered disability support fund*
- Accessing legal and financial advice related to matters from implementation of wills and estate plans to accessing and managing funds including insurance plans in place for funding a range of needs from property management to continued access to a safe place to live*
- Other*

A housing plan that ensures continued access to a safe place to live by supporting my family member in:

- If property is owned:*
- Accessing funds in place for on-going maintenance, necessary improvements, big-ticket items such as roofing and issues related to mortgage, property taxes and insurance*
- Accessing trusted sources to arrange for appraisal and sale of property and if required the purchase of a new property*

- If property is rented:*
- Accessing on-going maintenance provisions set out in leasing arrangements and sorting out any concerns related to lease arrangements*
- Accessing trusted sources to arrange for a lease and to confirm fair and reasonable terms*

- Sorting out any concerns related to services such as telephones, cable TV, hydro, gas and so on*
- Accessing trusted sources for repairs and maintenance from plumbers to electricians when required*
- Other*

ANNEX "A" - ONE FAMILY'S PLAN USING THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

PERSONAL SUPPORTS	LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORTS	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS
<p>Case management – On-going supports and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide for wellness checks, social and community connections, leisure and recreation programs, psychoeducation, system navigation <p>Case management – Crisis stabilization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Making the 911 call – assist my family member in preparation of emergency response plan ✓ Emergency Room, Hospitalization – assist my family member in understanding need for a mental health assessment, the diagnosis, and the treatment plan ✓ Hospitalization - being there during illness to address concerns and offer support including visits to health care professionals and sometimes, visits to the hospital ✓ Hospitalization and discharge planning - support to my family member on discharge from psychiatric hospitalization and help him/her integrate back into the community by developing goals and accessing the proper supports and services ✓ Contact with the Law - support to divert my family member from the justice system toward mental health court and services in the community 	<p>Annual legal and financial review:</p> <p><i>Legal Services – contact information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist my family member in accessing and understanding provisions of caregiver estate instructions <p><i>Financial Services – contact information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist my family member in accessing financial arrangements in place to fund both current and long-term expenses while ensuring the appropriate controls are in place 	<p>Annual property management review</p> <p><i>Property management services – contact information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Assist my family member in accessing property management services – both routine and emergency services <p><i>Real estate services – contact information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Periodic appraisal of home and if necessary, managing the sale of the home and arranging for alternative living arrangements