



SCHIZOPHRENIA
SOCIETY OF ONTARIO


A REASON TO HOPE

CONNECT

Schizophrenia Society of Ontario
2017-2018 Annual Report

#SSOCares



A young woman with long, light-colored dreadlocks is hugging an older woman from behind. The young woman is wearing a dark, ribbed sweater. The older woman has short, light-colored hair and is wearing a light-colored top. They are both smiling and looking towards the right. The background is a solid, warm yellow color.

For 39 years, SSO has been Ontario's largest not-for-profit charitable health organization supporting individuals, families, caregivers and communities impacted by schizophrenia and psychosis.

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Message from Chair & CEO

This was a year of connecting our health system and communities to better fulfill our mission of making a positive difference in the lives of people, families and communities affected by schizophrenia and psychotic illnesses.

Collaborating with government, community organizations, including police, clinical and health care leaders across the province, we have worked tirelessly to connect people with the support needed in their communities and worked on connecting the health system to better support them.

We put thoughtful, focused work into looking at optimally structuring our new Institute for Advancements in Mental Health to connect innovators, design experts and entrepreneurs from around the province — and eventually country — to bring transformative solutions to people living with serious mental illness. To advance this work, we started key conversations with industry, health care and government partners.

Ahead of cannabis legalization, we reviewed the *Cannabis Act* and responded with our position paper on cannabis, making us one of the first organizations flagging the risks associated with cannabis and psychosis, especially in youth, and advocating for system and social improvements necessary to manage the impacts of legalization on vulnerable youth.

Building greater awareness through the Know The Signs campaign, we garnered more than 62,000 visits to our website and established almost 6,000 followers on social media, adding almost 1,000 followers via our new Instagram channel.

Through focused efforts to be part of key discussions and collaboration with government partners, we were able to provide feedback on ways to improve the mental health system to decision makers, including a pre-budget submission to the 2018 Ontario budget. Through community forums and events, we reached more than 6,400 people province-wide, building greater awareness and compassion for those living with schizophrenia and psychotic illness, and their families.

In today's changing health care landscape, bringing the needs of those living with serious mental illness to the forefront is not always easy. Through our continued efforts to advocate for a more responsive health care system for families and individuals affected by serious mental illness, we continue to move the needle forward every year.

We would like to thank our Board of Directors, the committed, compassionate and dedicated staff at SSO, our volunteers, partners and stakeholders. It is your ongoing passion and support that allows people affected by schizophrenia and psychotic illness to live healthier, fuller lives.



A stylized, handwritten signature of Aamir Mian in black ink.

Aamir Mian
Board Chair



A stylized, handwritten signature of Mary Alberti in black ink.

Mary Alberti
CEO

Mission, Vision & Mandate

Mission

We make a positive difference in the lives of people, families and communities affected by schizophrenia and psychotic illnesses.

Vision

We envision a world without schizophrenia.

For this to happen:

- Society must recognize schizophrenia as a serious brain disease
- Excellence in service and treatment must become the norm
- Stigma must be eliminated
- A cure must be found

Mandate

EDUCATE

SUPPORT

ADVOCATE

Schizophrenia Society of Ontario By the Numbers

More than 140,000 people in Ontario live with schizophrenia

6,414 individuals & their families

supported through SSO programs, services and events



206 professionals trained across Ontario to better support clients

1,993 calls to our **Ask the Expert** counselling line

65 Dedicated Volunteers and 20+ staff

15 PEOPLE whom SSO helped fund education pursuits via our scholarship program
totalling \$21,500



Our Values



We bring kindness and understanding to the work we do.



INNOVATION

We lead with hope and creativity.



INTEGRITY

We are honest, accountable, professional and responsive.



INCLUSIVENESS

We engage others and respect the diverse experiences and backgrounds they bring.

Strategic Themes

Our Commitment

Our strategic themes represent our commitment to building a mental health care system that is more responsive and look at how we can redesign society for better mental health.



INNOVATION



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



PARTNERSHIPS



SOCIAL CHANGE



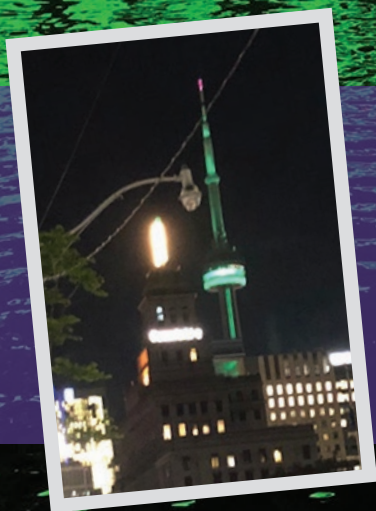
IMPACTFUL & NEEDED SERVICES

A large, illuminated green 'TORONTO' sign is visible at night, with the letters 'TORO' clearly shown. The sign is set against a dark background, and its reflection is visible in the water in the foreground. In the background, a modern building with a grid-like facade is lit up.

TORO

Lighting Up the City for Schizophrenia

On May 24, 2017, we celebrated National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day (NSPAD). We partnered with the City of Toronto to celebrate NSPAD by lighting both the CN Tower and the iconic Toronto sign in Nathan Phillips Square green to mark the occasion and bring awareness to schizophrenia and psychosis.






Connecting People with Education Opportunities

SSO's Scholarship Program helps people of all ages achieve educational goals

A first episode of psychosis most often occurs between the ages of 16 and 25, and thus has the potential to significantly impact a young person's plans for future education. Many people who apply for SSO scholarships have had their education disrupted by their illness. SSO's scholarship program is one of Canada's only bursary programs dedicated to funding educational opportunities for people of all ages who are affected by schizophrenia or psychotic illness, offering them incentive to pursue educational goals confidently whenever they choose. SSO's scholarship program is unique in that it not only funds higher education but also funds practical education opportunities such as obtaining a GED or vocational schooling.

Tom was awarded an SSO scholarship helping him to pursue an education in audio production and engineering.



"The scholarship has supported my studies in audio production and engineering at Metalworks Institute of Sound & Music Production. My professional goal is to be a successful recording artist one day. Music has saved me from my mind while battling with mental health. I hope to bring mental health awareness further into mainstream conversation — this is a major social goal of mine."

Adam is currently completing a Master's degree in sociology at McMaster University with a focus on mental health.



"My goal is to help change the way we think about mental health. My education has helped me move closer to this goal. For me, everything changed when I took a community-based education course where I conducted my first mental health study and realized that I loved and excelled in research. More importantly, this gave me a passion to improve the mental health experiences of all people. I am excited to move so much closer to my goal of achieving significant social change in the area of mental health, and some day, hope to realize my dream of becoming a Canada Research Chair."

SSO is one of very few organizations in Ontario that provide schizophrenia and psychosis specific supports, filling a critical service gap when individuals and families often have nowhere else to turn.

Connecting the System for a Better Tomorrow

Second Annual Lobby Day at Queen's Park

SSO's Lobby Day is an annual advocacy event to encourage policy changes that could help persons impacted by severe, persistent mental illness to get the help they need when and where they need it.

On May 17, 2017, SSO staff, members of our Board of Directors and mental health advocates from SSO's Speakers Bureau spent the day at Queen's Park to share their experiences and encourage change, raising awareness and calling attention to critical issues affecting people living with schizophrenia and psychosis. The day consisted of 13 meetings with key members of provincial parliament from all parties and/or their staff, including Deputy Opposition Leader Sylvia Jones, all in the spirit of improving our mental health system.

Advocacy Highlights



In response to the *Cannabis Act*, launched thought-leading discussion paper on the effects of cannabis use on people with schizophrenia and other vulnerable groups, and deputed it at Queen's Park Standing Committee on Justice Policy.



Supported the implementation of the 2017 *Quality Standards for Schizophrenia Care for Adults in Hospitals* — a guide for patients, families and caregivers so they know what to discuss with health care professionals.



Attended the annual Drug Pricing Policy Summit focused on improving access and price points for key therapies indicated for schizophrenia.



Launched petition calling for greater mental health supports for individuals and families impacted by schizophrenia and psychosis.



Presented to the Toronto Police Services Board about the dangers of increased use of Conducted Energy Weapons (Tazers) on those affected by serious mental health issues, advocating for de-escalation measures.



Lieutenant Governor of Ontario Honours SSO

Recognizes SSO's courage and dedication to bring hope to others

On November 14, 2017, The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, held a reception in recognition of SSO in the Lieutenant Governor's Suite at Queen's Park. Attended by SSO staff, Board members, volunteers and supporters, the reception recognized our organization for our more than three decades of support to people living with schizophrenia and their families. Also in attendance was SSO's Founder Dorothy Jefferies, who together with her husband Bill started the organization in 1979 in an effort to change the world's awareness of the illness.

From small beginnings in an Oakville church basement gathering to the provincial organization SSO is today, our founders are truly an example of what can be accomplished when you have the courage to reach out to connect with others. This act of reaching out at a time when fear and stigma was so great took courage and led us to be the organization we are today, proud to be recognized for connecting thousands of people with the support they need to live healthier, fuller lives.



Connecting with our Community



Hosted one of the first forums focusing on cannabis and mental health in St. Catharines, with Dr. Suzanne Archie, SSO Scientific Advisor and Erin Boudreau, Manager, Government Relations, Policy and Community Engagement, SSO.



Joined efforts with Lead Psychiatrist for the Region of Halton's Early Intervention in Psychosis Program, Dr. Thomas Hastings, to host a community education session focusing on antipsychotic medications for treating psychosis and related psychiatric illness (part of the Ontario Health Quality Standard for Schizophrenia)



Participated on an Early Psychosis Intervention System Leadership table to improve access to early intervention services in the Region of Peel.

500

Reached 500 youth during the Stephen Lewis Secondary School Mental Health Fair, Mississauga.



Research and Innovation

As the main agent in Ontario for schizophrenia and psychotic illness, SSO continues to collaborate with and engage key members of the scientific community. Guided by our expert Scientific Advisory Council, we are able to keep up with developments in schizophrenia and schizophrenia research. As we move forward, we continue to support research and innovation initiatives that work to improve the lives of the people we serve. To that end, the Thomas Gabriel McGowan Biomedical Research Fund was established in 2017 to be used for biomedical research related to schizophrenia. Supported by the Bill Jefferies Research Fund for psychosocial research, our current research work also includes important policy initiatives and the Institute for Advancements in Mental Health (IAM).

Highlights of our work for 2017-2018 include:



Collaborated with Dr. Turkington and Insight UK in the development of a caregiver model in cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) for psychosis, *Psychosis Recovery by Enabling Adult Carers at Home* that focused on researching the effectiveness of CBT-p as a supportive tool for caregivers. This work resulted in a recent submission to the Journal of Cogent Psychology, entitled *A training model for relatives and friends in cognitive behaviour therapy informed care for psychosis (CBT-p)*. The work suggests that CBT-p informed care for psychosis can improve anxiety, depression and mental health of caregivers and can improve the function of the loved ones they care for, suggesting need for further study to explore the applicability of this therapy on a larger scale.



Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation Local Poverty Reduction Fund, SSO is evaluating the use of CBT-p to help individuals with schizophrenia and psychosis who are living at or below the poverty line, hoping to establish its validity as an intervention to the poverty cycle. This initiative is helping people who are isolated have better connections in their communities. Concluding in 2020, the project aims to equip front line community workers to better support individuals in the community living with mental illness.



In collaboration with Dr. Suzanne Archie, Clinical Director, Cleghorn Early Intervention in Psychosis Program, St. Joseph's Healthcare, Hamilton, and one of SSO's scientific advisors, SSO is exploring a research project entitled *Exploring marijuana use among young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis*, aiming to better understand the links between cannabis use and psychosis.



SSO has continued its leadership in bringing together influencers and entrepreneurs to support innovative solutions within the mental health landscape through its social change initiative, the Institute for Advancements in Mental Health (IAM). This past year, IAM focused on evolving the structure and key relationships and partnerships necessary to advance this work.



SSO often plays an important facilitation role to ensure people living with schizophrenia have a voice in influencing important current issues and research initiatives, including decisions about what medications or treatments should be publicly funded. Our recent submission to the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee helped lead Health Quality Ontario to recommend public funding for CBT-p for people with schizophrenia. In February of 2017, we led a patient submission to the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) Common Drug Review Committee, helping determine the feasibility of reimbursement of Brexpiprazole.

connectingMINDS

Innovation for social change in mental health

In conversations with caregivers across communities province-wide, SSO heard **access to adequate peer supports** is consistently identified as a service gap for people with mental health and addictions. At the same time, increasing access to peer supports emerged as a solution to some of the issues that people and families experience. Spearheaded by **Clayo L.***, member of SSO's Youth Advisory Council, an idea for the **connectingMINDS** project came to fruition. SSO's Youth Advisory Council includes young people who work together to improve the physical and psychological health of those impacted by serious mental illnesses. In partnership with the University of Toronto, the Ontario College of Art and Design as well as SSO, and supported by University of Toronto's Healthy Generation Fund, **connectingMINDS** is a social change initiative that creates a space for young caregivers to connect with other young caregivers, learn to navigate the system, and share useful information. Leveraging the latest technology to share resources, networking and self-management support, **connectingMINDS** is an online, 'all in one' navigation hub for families affected by psychosis, helping them navigate around not just the entire system but also helping them with the illness itself. Through **connectingMINDS**, we hope to change the narrative of psychosis from an isolating and stigmatizing experience to a connected and hopeful experience, so that families can get the help they need as quickly as possible.

Features of connectingMINDS

- Education/support to understand psychosis
- Connecting with other caregivers to learn from their journey
- Care guides explaining what you need to know and do in each stage of psychosis
- Interactive map with real-life review of supportive services in the GTA
- Help preventing or preparing for a crisis
- Experts' thoughts on specific topics




*"The stories of families affected by psychosis are unfortunately often too similar. A loved one shows early signs of psychosis but family members don't know what to make of it. Eventually, symptoms worsen and families experience exhaustion as they scramble to figure out what to do and where to go. That's exactly what happened to me — and that's what inspired me to create **connectingMINDS** — because it addresses these service gaps. Families supporting a loved one with psychosis often find psychosis can include hostility, and they need support navigating a relationship with their loved one in order to find proper care. **connectingMINDS** ties all these pieces together."*

— **Clayo L.**

* Clayo's full name is not provided to best support privacy.


Where our money comes from:

Donations	\$ 1,380,037	
Events	\$ 169,454	
Gaming	\$ 183,023	
Investment Income	\$ 16,114	
Government	\$ 557,712	
Corporate Grants, Foundations & Other Agencies	\$ 356,392	
Fee for Service	\$ 48,934	
Sundry	\$ 2,113	
TOTAL	\$ 2,713,779	








Where our money goes:

Programs	\$ 1,061,387	
Research & Innovation	\$ 225,463	
Fundraising	\$ 464,616	
Gaming	\$ 120,900	
Administration	\$ 391,121	
TOTAL	\$ 2,263,487	



Community Fundraising

	REVENUE
 GOLF	\$84,142
 WALK	\$63,512
 YOGATHON	\$19,262
 BINGO	\$10,523
 TOTAL	\$177,439

Thank you to all community partners, sponsors and participants, including the Hole out for Hope Committee — Craig Sindrey, Fred Howe, Lesley and David Skelly.

A Big Thank You to Our Donors

\$1,000 - \$1,999

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Ontario Trillium Foundation - Local
Poverty Reduction Fund

\$200,000 and over

Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
The Harry and Shirley Young Foundation



A heartfelt thank you to the Harry and Shirley Young Foundation for their most generous **\$998,264** donation.



Sudbury Volunteers Celebrate 20 Years!

SSO's volunteer group in Sudbury has been with the organization since the very beginning and this April, they celebrated the 20th anniversary of their annual fundraising dinner. Organized by long-time volunteers Evelyn Fillier and Brenda Pajunen, the dinner took place at the Lexington Hotel in Sudbury with over 90 people in attendance.

"It was a delightful evening. I heard from many people that they had a great time, they enjoyed the food and the venue," Evelyn said. "There was a great sense of community the entire evening."

Thank You!

Thank You! Without the support of our valued members, donors and volunteers, we would not be able to make a difference in the lives of thousands of people and families affected by schizophrenia and psychosis.

Your support allows us to deliver vital programming and pursue the research and innovation needed to change the face of schizophrenia.

Thank you for all you do to support us and the people we serve.





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Serving Ontarians for **39 years**

2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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