



Simcoe County Special Needs Strategy Communication

“An Ontario where children and youth with special needs get the timely and effective services they need to participate fully at home, at school, in the community, and as they prepare to achieve their goals for adulthood”.

With spring on our doorstep, the Special Needs Strategy planning table has been deep in conversation with our community, focused on the experiences and insights of families, youth and front line providers within the current system. A big thank you to all for supporting these conversations and helping the planning table to ensure lots of warm invitations to participate in the discussion. The input and sharing that occurred in January and February has formed the foundation for planning and decision making moving forward.

The planning table has been on the road and online, through the initial engagement strategy for both Coordinated Service Planning and Integrated Rehab we have:

- Completed 10 focus groups across the county for families and front-line providers with 196 people participating
 - 3 focus groups were offered with Francophone capacity and 2 focus groups occurred with FNMI planning tables
- Attended 4 established youth groups, discussions occurred with 50 youth
- Distributed a survey electronically to families, youth and front line providers, with 166 completed in English and 3 in French
- Offered a one on one interview tool to the system to engage in discussions, 5 have been submitted so far
- Offered a webinar for youth

Overall we have had more than 366 discussions to get us started in the planning! A summary of this remarkable initial engagement was submitted to the Ministries in March.

The community took some concentrated time to build the foundation for the plans:

- On February 27th and March 6th the core and consulting planning tables including families and front line providers gathered for two full days of planning. A good portion of the retreat days were dedicated to making meaning of the information gathered in community discussions and surveys. The participants received all 106 pages of feedback to read and digested the information together, relating it to the plan over the course of the two days. There is a wealth of information for the planning table to consider and many key themes emerged.
- Significant strengths were identified including the amazing providers across the system who work hard to provide quality services and the existing collaborative structures in Simcoe County around planning for services. Concerns were not surprising but it was important to understand how gaps in service mandates and areas of limited service integration are impacting families and youth in Simcoe County. One of the most important messages was how important relationships are within our service delivery system; connections matter!
- The work of the retreat days will form the basis of a work plan to address the key plans and decisions that now need to be made to work towards a specific plan for Simcoe County.

The planning table made a big decision:

- The Simcoe County Special Needs Strategy (SNS) Core Table is pleased to confirm Children’s Treatment Network of Simcoe York (CTN) as the Lead Agency for Coordinated Service Planning. A process was completed with representatives from the four agencies that expressed interest:
 - Catulpa Community Services
 - Central CCAC
 - Children’s Treatment Network
 - North Simcoe Muskoka CCAC
- The process was based on the establishment of the following principles: emphasis on a collaborative rather than competitive approach; continued building on existing services through a contracted partner approach and the establishment of a management model that would reflect best practice and the interests of all involved with Coordinated Service Planning.
- CTN, in keeping with its Network model, is committed to building on its existing partnership model to further develop Coordinated Service Planning in Simcoe County by working collaboratively with families and all partner agencies involved in the delivery of Coordinated Service Planning.
- Through the Simcoe Special Needs Strategy’s ongoing planning process, further details of the Coordinated Service Planning model will be shared as they are developed.

In the works....

- A work plan is being established to sequence necessary discussions and decisions within the remaining planning time
- Key task group work is being identified and there is lots of interest across the system in participation
- Ongoing family, youth and front line engagement strategies are being identified to continue the conversation and to ensure that family/youth experience continues to drive the plan

Don’t forget...you can still contribute to the discussion, please feel welcome to complete a one on one interview with someone you know who hasn’t had a voice!

Please feel free to contact your planning table co-chairs for more information.

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“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success”

Henry Ford