



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Hamilton
Mental health for all

TAMI (Talking About Mental Illness)

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TAMI Origins

- Group project through the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and Mood Menders Ontario
- Piloted in Hamilton in the early 1990's
- Very clinical in nature
- Pre and post tested
- Created as an anti-stigma program

TAMI Evolution

- After pre and post test evaluations a guide for teachers and the community was created to help implement the program
- Organizations shared the presentation duties, providing support to the program
- Overtime the program became a mainstay of the Canadian Mental Health Association in Hamilton
- Moved away from the clinical model to focus more on the personal journey

TAMI Now

- Currently Hamilton is the only location in South Western Ontario providing “TAMI”
- But there are other organizations/services offering similar programs: e.g., K-W: Beautiful Minds, Speaker Bureaus at CMHAs around the province, Start With Me (a grass roots organization), The Jack Project
- All feature speakers with lived experience

TAMI Guidelines and Policies

- TAMI guidelines and policies have been expanded upon and in some cases changed from years ago
- We no longer have a clinician do the presentation but rather a staff member who is skilled in facilitation and has extensive knowledge about mental health and addictions
- We follow guidelines around public speaking and training set out by the Mental Health Commission of Canada
- All speakers go through an interview process before becoming a volunteer speaker

TAMI Guidelines and Policies

- Following the initial interview the TAMI speaker works on the development of their own personal story on paper
- The speaker must also attend 3 presentations to get a feel for the different types of presentations we provide based on audience e.g., secondary school, senior elementary and community
- The new speaker has a chance to practice their skills by presenting to a small group of staff who provide positive feedback
- The speaker then begins presenting in situations that they are most comfortable

The TAMI Speaker and Facilitator

- One of the key parts of the TAMI program is that the speaker does not go out and speak on their own, they are a part (the most significant piece) of a larger presentation
- The facilitator not only provides more of the facts and statistics of the presentation but is also the support person for the speaker
- The facilitator coordinates the presentations, provides public speaking training and support and is a support person before, during and after the presentation

The TAMI Speaker and Facilitator

- The TAMI program is approved by the Mental Health Leads in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, the Hamilton Catholic District School Board, the Grande Erie District School Board and the Niagara District School Board and the Niagara Catholic District School Board
- The program received its first ongoing funding in 2015 for the Haldimand Norfolk Hamilton Burlington LHIN.
- The TAMI program has been included in the School ASSIST manual created by Dr. Kathy Shortt as a best practice program on stigma reduction

Outcomes and Successes

- Since the TAMI program received formalized funding almost four years ago the reach of the program has increased greatly
- In the past year (January to November 2018) there have been 38 presentations engaging 1034 people.
- This has included students at the senior elementary level (Grades 6-8), Secondary, post Secondary at institutions such as McMaster University and Mohawk College as well as community
- Presentations to the community have included: staff at a local accounting firm, staff at a local asphalt company, staff of our local public health department, family support groups, youth groups and International Schools

Outcomes and Successes

- Currently there are 15 speakers who are actively speaking and 3 more who have just started the process to become a speaker
- Age ranges from someone in their early 20s to someone in their mid 70s; also reflecting a wide range of diagnosis and stages of recovery
- Topics include: Schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, psychosis, bipolar disorder, anxiety and depressive disorders, suicide, and substance use
- Each story comes from a platform of Hope and Recovery and that recovery is different for everyone, but absolutely possible

What does the TAMI program do?

- The TAMI program is unique because it focuses on mental health rather than illness
- It provides hope and healing for both the speakers and those who experience the presentation
- It reduces stigma
- It breeds understanding and empathy

Testimonials

- What I liked best “was that each situation was related back to how we can cope with ourselves. That it all starts with us.”
- “Very informative, and it feels good knowing there’s people out there who are willing to help.”
- “Very well done. I encourage every school to invite you for a presentation. Makes a lot of students and teachers aware on something which is not discussed enough”
- “ Thank you for coming in and talking to us and for sharing your stories. People like you make me feel not so different and “crazy” and gives me hope and shows me there is hope to educate the next generation and change the negative stigma surrounding mental health”