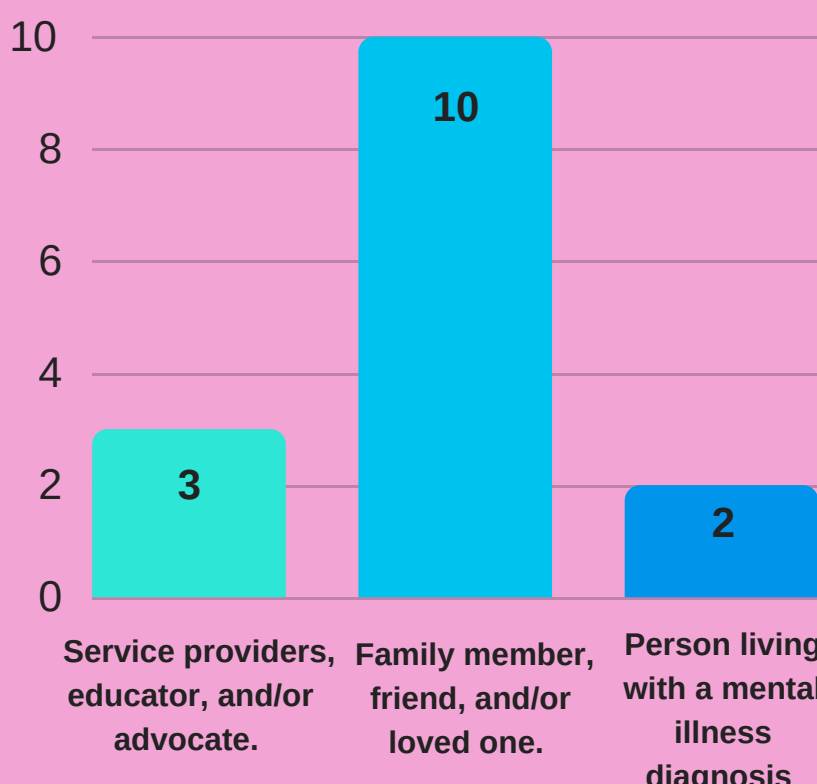


# TORONTO FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH CAFÉ 2018 PROJECT SUMMARY

On June 16, 2018, the Family Mental Health Research Project began the Ontario tour in Toronto. This study is led by Prof. Charmaine Williams. Thank you for joining the conversation!

## WHO WAS IN THE ROOM?



## FEEDBACK FROM YOU!

91%

- Café was well organized
- Topics discussed were relevant
- The overall pace of the Café worked well
- Facilitators were engaging and kept the Café interesting.
- Would recommend this Café to others
- Met people at this Café that they would like to connect with in the future

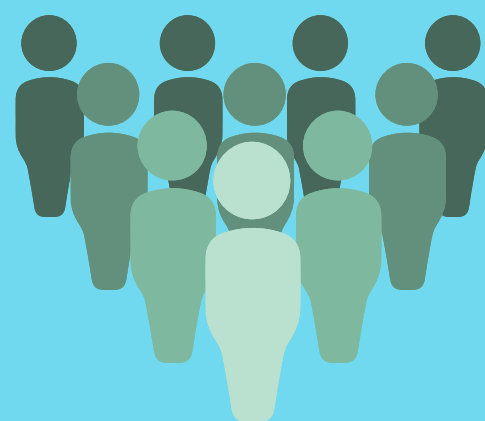
## ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- More people living with a mental illness should be present in this study.
- More youth engagement
- Spread the importance of family councils and other community resources

## KEY AREAS OF CONVERSATION

### 'CAREGIVING FAMILIES'

- 'Caregiver' and 'care receiver' roles are not binary
- The whole family needs to be educated
- Can't do it alone
- Navigating services
- Outside resources and systems are crucial
- Isolating



### 'CAREGIVER' ROLE

- Caring is work
- A lot of responsibility
- Often question your abilities
- Feeling isolated
- We have no idea how to deal with it...

### 'CARE RECEIVER' ROLE

- Concerns with not reaching milestones and meeting expectations
- Feeling isolated
- Redefining relationships in the family

## CHALLENGES

- Trying to protect family members while dealing with other issues.
- Harmful assumptions made by healthcare professionals and law enforcement
- Medical system (i.e. harmful discharge planning, lack of access to services and mental health programs)
- Feeling a sense of loss and grief
- Stigma
- Strain on family and friend relationships
- Hours of operation (mental illness is not only between 9:00am and 5:00pm)

## HELPFUL STRATEGIES

- Developing boundaries
- Being validated – hear that “I am doing a good job”
- Outside support (i.e. access to a therapist)
- Open discussions – lines of communication
- More ongoing education and willingness to learn
- Self-care (e.g. reading, walking, therapy)
- Peer support
- Connecting with community (i.e. volunteering)

## WHAT DO FAMILIES NEED?

- Honest conversations in a safe environment
  - Centralized place to access resources (too many siloes of care)
  - More funding and resources (i.e. ODSP)
  - Not just crisis focused help/resources, need prevention-based support
  - Empathetic listening of the system
  - Holistic healing (i.e. integrating healing circles and/or other cultural traditions)
  - Supportive housing and employment
  - Diversion from the criminal/justice system
  - Respite
  - Patient-centered care from the systems and institutions
- Police and healthcare professionals need to be more kind, compassionate, and have more knowledge about mental health