

NEWS RELEASE

Facebook Site aims to help families dealing with child and youth mental health challenges

Kootenay Boundary, BC – 24 September 2015 – The start of the school year always marks a spike in the number of enquiries to Child and Youth Mental Health agencies across the Kootenay Boundary. With 1 in 5 children and youth affected by mental health challenges, it's a problem that is more widespread than many people realize.

To help bring a public face to the issue and provide a place for families, caregivers, children and youth to interact with each other, the volunteer led Kootenay Boundary Child and Youth Mental Health & Substance Use local action team has launched a new Facebook page.

“We know that when people who have dealt with mental health issues share their stories and personal experiences, it helps kids know that they are not alone,” said Dr. Cindy Loukras, one of the Physician Leads on the local action team which brings together families, doctors, representatives from 3 school districts, mental health clinicians, drug and alcohol counsellors and community agencies to improve mental health wellness in the region. “And the team recognized that to really engage kids and their families, we needed to get onto social media. This Facebook page is a first step.”

While many children and youth are affected by the issue, only 1 in 6 children and youth get the help they need - many have a hard time asking others for help. For this reason, it's important for parents, teachers and friends watch out for signs that a child or teen needs help, including:

- Getting significantly lower marks in school
- Avoiding friends and family
- Having frequent outbursts of anger and rage
- Loss of appetite
- Rebelling against authority
- Drinking a lot and/or using drugs
- Constant worrying
- Attempting self injury

Monique Lalonde, a parent in residence for the FORCE as well as part of the local action team said, "Be part of the change, share your story, and join us through our new facebook page as we work towards solutions."

Children, Youth, their Families and Caregivers are invited to visit the new Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/KBCYMHSU> - for more information and to share their experiences.

About the Child and Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Collaborative (CYMHSU) The

CYMHSU Collaborative involves multiple individuals, organizations and ministries all working together to increase the number of children, youth, and their families receiving timely access to mental health services and support in the Interior Health region.

The Collaborative is funded by the Shared Care Committee, with additional support from the Specialist Services Committee. Both committees are partnerships between and funded by the Ministry of Health and the Doctors of BC. <http://sharedcarebc.ca/initiatives/cymhsu-collaborative>

About the Divisions of Family Practice

The Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice represents doctors in 14 communities across the region including Castlegar, Christina Lake, Fruitvale, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Kaslo, Midway, Nakusp, Nelson, New Denver, Rock Creek, Rossland, Salmo, and Trail.

The Kootenay Boundary Division works to improve patient access to local primary care, increase local physicians' influence on health care delivery and policy, and provide professional support for physicians. www.kbdivision.org

The Division of Family Practice initiative is funded by a joint committee of the BC Ministry of Health and Doctors of BC.

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