

The Advocate

March 2020



About Us

Established in 1985, McCormick Dementia Services is Ontario's largest adult day program specializing in dementia care. We are committed to delivering the highest quality programs and support services to families and caregivers, as well as to clients in our adult day and overnight respite care programs. Formerly known as Alzheimer Outreach Services, McCormick Dementia Services is located at the corner of Oxford Street and Commissioners Road in London, Ontario. The team is a dedicated group of professionals and volunteers who are focused on client needs and personalized care.

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A Note from the Director

With the upcoming changing of the season to spring, so, too, are things changing in the day program. Technology, a new partnership, Coronavirus screening, and staffing changes abound!



On March 1st we went live with a new electronic medical record and billing system, which will help streamline the tracking of client information and documentation, and reduce the risk of human error. On your end, we will be more consistent with our mail-out timing and our invoices will be easier to read. So far, the staff in the program have enjoyed using the new software.

You will find in this issue a new section entitled "Medication Education," which will feature information and advice from McCormick Dementia Service's new consulting pharmacist, Andy Donald. We've included an introduction to Andy as well as his first article, which talks about sleep and the use of medications. We are excited to have Andy as a part of our team, as he is passionate about health and the proper use of medications, particularly for the older adult population.

Speaking of health, McCormick Care Group has implemented a broad Coronavirus self-screening process for visitors to the organization. At this point, we ask that if visitors to the day program or support groups are feeling unwell (cough, fever, difficulty breathing), they delay their visit and contact their health care provider. We are closely following the updates regarding the Coronavirus global spread, and are also aware that influenza is in the local community affecting many people. Consider getting a flu vaccination if you have not already done so. Flu symptoms include fever, cough, body aches, and in some cases vomiting and/or diarrhea. So again, I ask that if you or your loved one are unwell, please stay home and get the appropriate health care you need.

Lastly, I want to share a significant staffing change in our family support area. After nine years with us, social worker Dawn Smale has accepted a position at Parkwood Hospital. We are very proud of the hard work and dedication she has provided to our team, clients and caregivers. She was instrumental in implementing our successful Lewy Body Caregiver Support Group, and displayed strong case-management skills in helping clients with some challenging situations. She has been a tremendous source of support for many caregivers. We wish Dawn all the best in her future pursuits, and will miss her here at McCormick.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Karen Johnson, MSW, RSW

Social Work

Help....I Need Somebody!

By Dawn Smale MSW, RSW

I was listening to a 60's station on the radio on my way home from work recently. The song "Help" by the Beatles began to play. It's a pretty popular song, and I have heard it many times before. This time the lyrics really spoke to me as I often talk about asking for help or looking at more support when chatting with caregivers and family members. I am sure many of you can identify with these lyrics as well...

*And now my life has changed in oh so many ways
My independence seems to vanish in the haze
But every now and then I feel so insecure
I know that I just need you like I've never done before
Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate you being 'round
Help me get my feet back on the ground
Won't you please, please help me?"*

So... how exactly do we ask for HELP?

The people we surround ourselves with — friends and family — can be the biggest supports during the times that we struggle or feel overwhelmed. The hardest part is asking for help from those closest to us. I often hear from people I meet in my role that family and/or friends don't always know what to do or how to help. I encourage you to make a list of tasks that need to be done, send it to family and friends, and ask them to sign up for a time/activity they could help with.

Your list could include taking your loved one out to give you a break. You could provide a list of activities that they could do or places to

go with your loved one, such as going for a drive, to the movies, or out for a coffee. Help can also come from assisting with tasks instead of taking care of the person with dementia: How great would it be if someone would cut the lawn or deliver groceries to the door? Or perhaps provide financial support by paying for a person to help with bathing, time in the day program or an overnight respite stay? Friends and family may not know these things might help — the first step is to ask. You might be pleasantly surprised.

If family and friends aren't able to give that extra help, perhaps it is time to consider paying privately for that extra set of hands to assist. There are a number of companies in London and surrounding area that offer care services in the home, such as PSW support. Start out gradually, so your loved one can build rapport with their care provider and settle into the new routine more easily.

Chatting with a social worker or in a group can also be beneficial because you can talk candidly about how you are doing. Support groups provide an opportunity to talk with others who are on a similar journey and hear ways that have worked for them when times are hard. If you are considering joining a support group, you can bring your loved one with you. They can spend time the day program (for a small fee) so you can attend the support group without worry.

There are many ways to get the assistance you need. Explore the options that work best to help you "*get your feet back on the ground.*"

We need your help!

The safety of our clients is our number-one priority. As our day program is a secure environment, entry codes are required at each entrance to ensure the safety of our clients while they are with us. When family or friends arrive during non-busing times to pick up a client from the day program, we ask that they please alert staff by pressing the buzzer button in the front entrance. A number of times now, individuals picking up clients have coded themselves into the day program space (atrium) and in some cases accidentally allowed clients into our locked coatroom. It is a serious safety issue—as it can not only be frightening for the client, it also increases the risk of their getting out of our safe environment.



Thank you for your help in following our processes and keeping everyone safe!

Nursing

The flu virus is dangerous to the elderly and can lead to life-threatening complications. Know the symptoms so that you can get the care you need. People with the flu can have fever, chills, dry cough, general aches and pains, and a headache. The flu can leave a person feeling very tired; they could complain of having a sore throat, and experience sneezing and a stuffy nose. If you or your loved one are sick, we kindly ask you to stay home. Try to rest in bed and drink plenty of fluids. Make sure to cover your cough or wear a mask if you must be in a public area. If you or your loved one do not have a tissue, try to cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Disinfect and clean high touchpoints frequently, including door knobs, light switches and faucets to stop the spread. These tasks plus regular handwashing particularly before and after meals are some of the best ways to avoid getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others. In addition, talk to your doctor about getting a flu vaccination. For more information please visit www.healthunit.com.

When to Check with Your Doctor

- A recurring fever
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- You feel sick and don't seem to be getting better



Medication Education

Everyone needs six to eight hours of uninterrupted sleep every night to awaken refreshed (physically and mentally), rested, and clear-headed with no day-time sleepiness. Up to 57% of seniors living at home have problems with chronic insomnia. We have prepared a short list below of lifestyle habits and medication recommendations to help you

get a good sleep. Please speak to a pharmacist for more details to find a medication therapy that is right for you.

Andy Donald, B.Sc.Pharm., R.Ph., is a Certified Geriatric Pharmacist, Owner of Daily Dose Pharmacy, and our new consulting pharmacist. Learn more about Andy on page 5.



Daytime

- Set a consistent routine time to wake-up (and sleep).
- Avoid napping - limit to under 30 min if unable to eliminate, should be before 2pm. With longer naps you go into deep sleep and disrupt your sleep routine.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, spicy foods 4-6 hrs before bed.
- Exercise 30 minutes every 1-2 days as it will help increase deep sleep and help you get a longer nights sleep. However, avoid within 3 hrs of bedtime.

Sleep meds to avoid (long term use):

- **Benzodiazepines** (e.g. lorazepam, clonazepam): inhibit your regenerative REM sleep, increase amnesia and falls.
- **Antihistamines** (e.g. Benadryl, Gravol): can cause memory impairment, dry eyes, urinary retention, constipation, sedation, and a hangover effect.
- **Tricyclic antidepressants** (e.g. amitriptyline): similar adverse effects as antihistamines. Only suitable if nerve pain is disrupting sleep.
- **Antipsychotics** (e.g. quetiapine): should never be used for sleep, can cause fatal heart arrhythmia on top of many other side effects.

Sleep Guide

Nighttime



- Avoid bright lights & screens (e.g. TV, phone) 1 hr before bed, it delays your sleep onset by stopping you releasing melatonin.
- Have room dark and noise free (e.g. below 35 dB), noise can be above a whisper but below levels heard in a library or a normal conversation.
- Eat a snack high in tryptophan (e.g. poultry, soy, nuts)
- Drink warm beverages (e.g. warm milk)
- Set a pre-bed routine (e.g. warm bath or shower), as your body cools down it triggers you to start getting sleepy.

Best sleep medication options:

- **Mirtazapine**: only low 3.75-7.5mg doses are effective, higher doses could make you more alert. Taken 1 hr before bedtime.
- **Trazodone**: low 25mg-100mg doses should be taken 3-4 hrs before bedtime. Best taken regularly.
- **Melatonin**: your body naturally makes this hormone, it triggers your body that its time to sleep.
- **Tryptophan**: amino acid that causes a drowsy sensation in the brain and also is used to make melatonin.

2020: The Year of Change in Recreational Programming

By: Becky Clark

Over the next few months, clients of the McCormick Day Program will start to see changes in the recreational programs that are offered, particularly what are referred to as “theme” afternoons.

The need for change became apparent through feedback from Dream Workshops, client focus groups, discharge surveys, caregiver comments, and our Relationship-Centred Care Action Team communications. The start of 2020 felt like a natural time for management and the recreation team to initiate the change, and it was identified that there was a need to evaluate programs as a first step.



The timing was coincidental in that the day program welcomed a Gerontology Interprofessional Practice (GIP) field placement student in January. Luana, our GIP student, worked with the day program to create a research project entitled “The efficacy of a new self-reflective evaluation tool to recreation specialists’ program planning practice: A pilot study.” During the month of February — which also happened to be Therapeutic Recreation Month — the recreation specialists started utilizing a new self-reflection tool and holding weekly team meetings to plan, evaluate, create or re-create special events and themes.

The changes in programs offered have already been noticed. In February, the recreation team hosted Valentine’s Week, a Hawaiian-themed program, Mardi Gras and a Travel Around the World program complete with client-made decorations, food and specialty drinks. An exciting month of March is already underway.

The next steps involve the research component, which will also be facilitated by Luana, where recreation specialists complete a questionnaire to determine the staff’s response to the new self-reflection evaluation tool. The team also welcomes feedback from clients and caregivers, so feel free to contact us.

All of us at McCormick Dementia Services extend our gratitude to the Recreation Team who have embraced our program evaluation and developed dynamic programming to continue to provide exceptional experiences for our clients. It is not an easy task to balance the many roles and responsibilities that these recreational professionals do while continuing to develop meaningful relationships with the clients they serve. But the team makes it look effortless! We look forward to sharing the results of the research project and how it could help influence other members of our interdisciplinary team and even our colleagues within the adult day program network throughout our region. Stay tuned!

Meet Our New Consulting Pharmacist

By: Karen Johnson

McCormick Care Group has the aim of being recognized as one of Canada's leaders in dementia care by 2022. As such, we at McCormick Dementia Services see the strength and value in broadening our team and increasing collaboration with various health care professionals. This past January we brought a consulting pharmacist, Andy Donald, on board for the McCormick Day Program. He is a certified geriatric pharmacist and CEO of Daily Dose Pharmacy. His voluntary role will be to support staff with complex medication questions and provide education. As well, he will be supporting caregivers with education events and providing articles in future issues of our Advocate newsletter. We thought you might be interested in learning more about Andy.



What is a geriatric pharmacist? How is it different from a "regular" pharmacist?

A certified geriatric pharmacist (CGP) has specialized knowledge and skills about the effects that medications can have on us as our body ages. These skills are particularly important as medications tend to accumulate over time. Kidney function decreases continually throughout our lives and can lead to unwanted drug side effects and toxicity. With his focus on pharmacy care as we age, Andy and his team are better able to help optimize medication therapy for the older individual.

Why is Andy so passionate about his work?

Andy has always been an advocate for pharmacy and patient care. In 2010, during his time at the University of Toronto Pharmacy School, he founded a committee called SOAPE (Students for Optimizing and Advocating Pharmacy Endeavours) in an effort to unify the profession and advocate for enhancing the role that pharmacists play in patient care. As a pharmacist, he became an owner of a Shoppers Drug Mart in London, where he continued advocacy as a member of the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) membership committee in 2017 and 2018. He left Shoppers Drug Mart in September of 2019 to open Daily Dose Pharmacy in an effort to revolutionize the profession using new and innovative technology, with an emphasis on improving patient care.

Why did Andy become a geriatric pharmacist and what is his dream for people who have to take medications?

Andy became a CGP to help improve patient safety and health, particularly people in vulnerable populations. What's exciting is that his team now has all the tools they need to make a difference. With Clinical Connect, they have access to hospital records, diagnoses, medication history and past lab work for their patients. This access allows them to help usher in a new era where medications can be assessed for safety and efficacy on an ongoing basis. Since our body's ability to process medications continually changes, the ideal doses and even medications that are used to treat health conditions should also be continually changing. Medication optimization and de-prescribing will be a new focus seen in health care, helping us to age more gracefully and comfortably.

The 34th annual Ritz Gala was a great success and raised more than **\$55,000 net** — thanks to your support!

On January 16, the Ritz Gala presented by SilverFox Pharmacy, rolled out the red carpet and provided guests a fun filled evening with many ways to win extraordinary prizes while supporting McCormick Care Foundation!

Karen Johnson, Director of McCormick Dementia Services along with Dr. Elizabeth Finger provided novel insights about dementia and the international impact of McCormick Care Group's work. Their presentation inspired attendees to generously support our fundraising focus — renovating and refreshing the spa for McCormick Dementia Services clients.

Canadian comedian Erica Sigurdson, closed the evening with a 'laugh-out-loud' performance for guests. Special thanks to Siskinds for sponsoring our entertainment and ensuring everyone went home with a smile, feeling happy and inspired.

Save the date for next year's Ritz Gala — January 21, 2021



THANK YOU!
We are very grateful for the generosity and support of our Partners



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McCormick Dementia Research

An Update on Our Research Activity

By Catherine Blake

Therapeutic Gardening

Our garden research project, in partnership the School of Social Work at King's University College, involved observing McCormick Day Program participants working in the garden and individual interviews with participants and their caregivers. They were asked for their experience in the garden and whether it contributed to improvements in mood.



A poster on caregivers' perspectives was presented at the annual Canadian Association on Gerontology in October in Moncton, New Brunswick, and a poster on the use of a spiritual lens in the data analysis was presented at the Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Graduate Research Conference at Western University in February 2020.

Be EPIC – PSW Communication Training

We are partners with Dr. Marie Savundranayagam, from Western University's School of Health Studies, to enhance the communication skills of home care personal support workers (PSWs) who care for clients with dementia. The training focuses on assessing the environment, using person-centered communication, focusing on client relationships, and incorporating the client's abilities, life history and preferences into routine care.

A new version of the Be EPIC course designed for workers in long-term care settings began in January at both Chelsey Park and at McCormick Home. Eight PSWs from McCormick Home participated and feedback has been very positive.

Fanshawe College – Gerontology Interprofessional Practice Graduate Certificate Program

We welcome student placements from the Gerontology Certificate Program at Fanshawe College. This winter, a student will be surveying recreation staff to evaluate the new tool they are using to assess and enhance the recreation programs.



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We will be closed on the following dates:
April 10, 11, 12 and 13, 2020 - Easter Weekend
May 18, 2020 - Victoria Day