

Focus Newsletter Winter 2000

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OASIS 3rd Annual General Meeting

Wednesday May 3rd to Friday May 5th, 2000 - Conquering the New Millenium - Thriving on new challenges.

Featuring Frank Collom

You will enjoy Frank's unique style of presentation as he empowers us with his knowledge for managing the changes that we and our agencies are facing. You will soon learn why Frank was chosen by the students of Queen's University as the "most popular professor".

Co-featuring Professor Sandy Cotton

Sandy, a much sought after consultant, facilitator and retreat leader to orgainzations and leadership teams, will lead us through the strategies for effective team building.

OASIS Admin Cost Study Released

OASIS has completed a two-year study on how agencies distribute and use funds for central administration program support and direct service purposes. This study breaks new ground in setting clear ground-rules around how the data was collected. These collection protocols resulted in an "apples to apples" comparison of data from fourteen ACLs in Ontario, representing small and large, urban and rural, union and non-union.

The Study was done with the assistance of Tom Little, from the [Centre of Management of Community Services](#), under the auspices of an OASIS Taks Force, Chaired by [Gordon Anton](#), E.D., Collingwood.

The data sheds new light in several directions and most assuredly, raises questions around assumptions built into MCSS policy directions, which have driven their agenda in the past two to three years.

What follows are highlights of some of the important findings:

- 1) Central Admin Costs are averaging 8.7%. This is made up of 6% in salaries and benefits and 2.7% in other central admin costs.
- 2) There was little variation among participating agencies, even taking into account geography, size and the employee bargaining status.
- 3) On average, 95% of staff were involved with program delivery.
- 4) Of this 95%, 88% of staff worked directly with individuals with developmetnal disabilities and 7% were required for program support.
- 5) The remaining 5% of agency staff worked in central administration.
- 6) The average salary for all staff within agencies was \$31,000.
- 7) The average salary for direct service staff was \$29,200, for program support staff \$38,600 and for central administration staff, \$40,500.

The data shows clearly that a recent MCSS directive for agencies to move central admin expenses from 12% to 10% over three years, had no basis in fact, given that most agencies were already below these percentages. Further, lowering central admin costs was central to the "Making Services Work" exercise. The facts show that CA is already comparatively low and that further diminishing returns in this area will erode agency infrastructures to the point where services are seriously jeopardized.

While not the subject of this study, anecdotal evidence in many agencies in this service sector, paints a clear picture of an eroding administrative base for most agencies. Service managers, supervisors and secretarial support are positions which have been decimated in the past eight or so years, under continuing fiscal restraint. The facts now support arguments that even front line support and service quality are being affected. Due to comparatively low salaries, agencies are losing good people to both health and education sectors and this exacerbates the tremendous strain placed upon

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the developmental sector. There is no question, the developmental sector has undergone profound change.

Recently, there have been quiet MCSS acknowledgements that perhaps the government restraint over eight-plus years has gone too far. However, there are no concrete initiatives to address pay equity issues, inter-sectoral salary inequities, or even reintroducing cost of living adjustments.

All in all, it is a sector which continues to be under siege, despite the facts showing ominous warning signs. It is a sector which does not get the attention of Health and Education and because of it, languishes in relative obscurity from the public point of view.

OASIS agencies will have received a full copy of the OASIS Admin Cost Study. [Copies can be printed by clicking here.](#)

Featured Best Practice: Simcoe County Dual Diagnosis Task Force

Creating Partnerships

A Dual Diagnosis Committee was established in Simcoe County after a meeting held in December 1991 which brought a number of interested parties together as a focus group to discuss the needs of individuals with a dual diagnosis.

The Committee was initially formed in preparation for the provincial interministerial initiative for those with a dual diagnosis. The members of the Committee include Associations for Community Living, community mental health service providers, developmental service providers and consumers.

A proposal was developed under the "Initiatives for Persons with Developmental Disorders and Mental Illness- Dual Diagnosis." Unfortunately, provincial funding was no longer available.

The Committee members then implemented parts of the proposal with existing dollars from a Simcoe County community agency. This was called the "Creating Partnerships Project" (now known as Dual Diagnosis Service Coordination).

One of the major accomplishments of the Project and the Committee, is an annual educational event. The Project also facilitates service development, encourages the flexibility of service mandates across the county and develops education training to meet identified needs. Some of the services available through the project include psychiatric consultation, community partnerships forum, resource information, library referral system, parent support group, Speaker's Bureau and training video library.

The target population is defined as a person 12 years or older, with a developmental disability and an emotional, behavioural or psychiatric illness.

OASIS Agency Membership - Sixty-Seven

The success of OASIS in just three short years, is phenomenal. The growth in membership numbers reflect the fact that OASIS has indeed filled a need among agencies to seek solutions through inter-agency collaboration. The collaboration has been driven by a task-oriented Board, without the assistance of paid staff. In large part, the volunteer aspect of this method of operation has been a primary reason for its success. OASIS is truly an organization for members, of members and by members.

All members of the organization are [welcome at any meetings](#), including those of the [Board](#). Member agencies are regularly polled on policy positions and initiatives.

In its relatively short history, OASIS has made significant contributions on: developing ISA tools; setting up an inter-agency communications infrastructure; setting up a labour relations network; researching service sector administrative and direct service costs; providing agency cost effective group insurance alternatives; establishing important links with MCSS decision makers; initiating partnerships with other provincial networks on current and vital issues; sharing best practices among agencies; and a host of other activities.

The Board of OASIS will meet shortly to review its mission and mandate, with a view to keeping it focused and relevant. As the organization grows in size, much thought needs to be given to keeping the organization responsive to member agencies.

Member Agency Highlights

Many agencies find it beneficial to offer specific types of "therapies" to people that they provide service and supports to.

For example, the [Guelph Wellington Association for Community Living](#) is now offering Music Therapy. This is defined as the clinical use of music as a therapeutic intervention for persons with special needs. It attempts to develop the potential of the individual and to improve the quality of human life. This association reports that children, youth, adults and seniors with a developmental challenge, are

currently enjoying music therapy sessions. Individual plans for each participant are developed and a determination is made of each person's musical preferences, type of music, favourite instrument, etc. Sessions are offered on an individual and small group basis.

[The Barrie and District Association for People with Special Needs](#) has been offering monthly Pet Therapy visits at the Consumer Resource Centre, since March 1999. Jester is the official Consumer Resource Centre Pet Therapy dog. Jester also visits other sites. Jester and his owner are also participants in the "Bite Free" program offered through the Saint John Ambulance Pet Therapy Program, which teaches and encourages safe interacting between people and dogs.

[The Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities](#) also offers a Dog Therapy program through Therapy Dogs International, working with the staff from the Community Transition Centre. Volunteers and their dogs have developed a program that is already showing positive results for their clients.

Does your agency have a unique story for the Agency Highlights? [Please let us know.](#)

OASIS Welcomes New Members

Welcome:

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