

LDAO Response to Minds that Matter

November 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the report on the consultation on human rights, mental health and addictions, **Minds that Matter**. There are many important issues raised in the document, and a few of the ideas we presented in our April 2011 submission to the consultation were referenced (although our name was listed incorrectly).

I would like to reiterate an important point that we made in our submission which was not specifically referenced in the report. I have recently talked to a professional who works with adults who have mental health disabilities, and he concurred that the funding model for ODSP Employment Supports is a problem for his clients because of their complex needs.

“With the new system of funding for ODSP Employment Supports, implemented in 2006, agencies are only paid for service once a client has obtained employment, and there is no differentiation for what is required to get them ready for employment. Therefore there is no incentive for agencies to provide psychological assessments in order to plan for appropriate employment, even though such assessments can give valuable information. There is also a disincentive for agencies to take on clients with complex needs and barriers to employment. Very often such clients have a combination of mental health and learning disabilities. The new funding model has resulted in less access and less success for clients with mental health and learning disabilities.”

Another issue has come to our attention since our submission in 2011. It has to do with the way health and safety issues are used to question suitability for licensing in medically related professions. This is a general concern, but specific issues have come up with the College of Nurses. In order to access accommodations on the written registration exam for the College of Nurses, candidates with learning disabilities have to submit a copy of a psychoeducational report. There have been situations where statements in such reports that reference any type of mental health concerns in the past, e.g. depression or anxiety, have led to the candidate being referred to the Registration Committee because “you may suffer from a physical or mental condition or disorder”. We have also heard from our contacts in the offices for students with disabilities at colleges that students who self-identify as having received any treatment for anxiety or depression are having their suitability for registration questioned.

We look forward to the development and release of an OHRC policy on mental health and addictions disabilities.