

The Home Based Services Network

For the past 2 years I have had the privilege of co-chairing the Home Based Service Network. It is a great network for professionals working with children and youth within the home and community settings. In home based work, service is delivered in a variety of ways to children and youth in a more cost effective and less intrusive manner than residential/residential treatment. The network provides an opportunity for professionals to get together and share experiences, share and learn new strategies, share and learn about new treatment philosophies, stay up to date on what is new in agencies around the province, brainstorm, explore case examples, discuss and debate issues specific to home based services, and share resources.

Meetings are held quarterly in a location provided by a member agency/service provider. The meetings are open to any/all individuals who are working within home based services in Ontario. Meetings run from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with an opportunity to network during and after the agenda has been addressed.

The meetings have so far been held in South-western Ontario. The time and expense of travel for our Northern friends limits their attendance although we welcome their input and they participate in our conference that is held every second year. At this point, we are working at coordinating teleconferencing to have our northern friends more included in our network meetings.

In an effort to make the most of our time together, a meal is provided to facilitate a working luncheon. The hosting agency/service provider provides the refreshments and lunch for which they are reimbursed. There is a reasonable cost for the meetings which includes the cost of lunch, speaker honorariums, use of the rooms, audio visual aids, any written materials made available by the presenters and administrative costs.

For each meeting, the hosting representative and the executive members coordinate a speaker(s) of interest to the membership, using feedback from the membership. The host agency/service provider arranges for meeting space, lunch, and any equipment that the speaker may need for their presentation, such as an overhead, flipchart, screen, DVD and TV, etc.

An agenda is distributed to the membership prior to each meeting. The agenda may include: introductions and agency presentations, agency updates, book/audio material reviews, an opportunity to discuss issues of importance to home based programs, speakers on a variety of topics related to home based services, case histories and discussion, educational programs, debate on hot topics related to home based services, clinical resource sharing, setting the date and location of the next meeting, and evaluations.

We value feedback from the membership of the network in order to arrange speakers on a variety of topics that are interesting and most relevant to home based services.

Holding the meetings in various locations allows the membership to visit a variety of facilities. It helps us to see agencies that we may have heard of and dealt with but never visited. It also encourages attendance from different members that may find it too far to travel to some agencies but not others.

If you would like to or know someone who would like to receive invitations to our network meetings, please send me an e-mail at sgunton@lutherwood.ca or call me at 519-743-2460, extension 254.

Susan Gunton, CYC, cert.