



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

National Addictions Awareness Week: “Addiction Matters” Portage Atlantic helps young men and women take back control of their lives

Fredericton, November 16, 2015 – During National Addictions Awareness Week, which runs from November 15 to 21, Portage Atlantic is joining the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and other drug addiction organisations across the country in stating that “Addiction Matters.”

According to Statistics Canada, 60% of illicit drug users in Canada are between the ages of 15 and 24, and the reported harm due to their drug use is four times higher than it is for drug users over the age of 25. Portage Atlantic welcomes this vulnerable group of young people to its residential rehabilitation centre at Cassidy Lake in New Brunswick, where they can work to overcome their drug addiction issues and take back control of their lives.

Many youth at the Portage Atlantic rehabilitation centre have had a complicated background of trauma, family dysfunction, and chaos – all factors that contribute to drug addiction and mental health problems. Many have begun using drugs as early as 10 or 12 years old. They have lost interest in school and are not attending regularly, are often alienated from family members and no longer live at home.

For young women, there are even more complicating factors. Prostitution, violence, stigma, and, in some cases, the fear of losing custody of their children are among the obstacles discouraging women from seeking help with drug abuse. A 2015 UN Drug Report states the unfortunate reality that although one in three drug users are women, they represent only one in five people in drug treatment.

“We may not see them or hear them, but these women need our help,” states Peter A. Howlett, President of Portage. “As a society, we must reach out to these silent victims and help them into treatment.”

Gender-specific program

For many of the youth in treatment at Portage Atlantic, unhealthy relationships, physical or emotional abuse, and poor self-image are often intertwined with drug use. The rehabilitation program at Cassidy Lake is gender-specific for this very reason, with two distinct communities – one for young men and the other young women.

“Without the pressure of being around members of the opposite sex, the young women are better able to identify the root causes of their drug problems and work through them,” says Portage Atlantic Chairman, Dr. Russell H. T. King. “They feel more comfortable and can make better progress in their therapy.”

Since Portage Atlantic was established in 1996, more than 2,500 youth from Atlantic Canada have benefitted from the rehabilitation program.

ABOUT PORTAGE ATLANTIC

Portage Atlantic is a residential addiction rehabilitation treatment centre for youth between the ages of 14 and 21 with serious substance abuse problems. The bilingual program, located at Cassidy Lake, NB, is offered to youth from throughout Atlantic Canada. The approach to treatment is based on the therapeutic community model which, through positive peer pressure and role modelling, helps youth increase self-esteem by developing coping mechanisms and transferable skills.

For more information, visit www.Portage.ca.

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For more information

Carol Tracey

(506) 459-1284

ctracey@portage.ca

www.portage.ca