



The Centre for Child Development and Mental Health, Jewish General Hospital

support parents, and advocate for children's mental health," says Dr. Jaswant Guzder, head of Child Psychiatry.

The JGH provides intensive treatment for children with serious emotional and behavioral difficulties that interfere with their adjustment in school, at home, and with peers.

These children present with a range of diagnoses and they experience a broad range of issues, including psychological, cognitive, behavioural, and family problems. The children and their families are offered a comprehensive treatment program incorporating psychological assessment, individual and family therapy, social skills training, educational services, art therapy, and occupational therapy. The hospital works in partnership with families, as they are an integral part of treatment planning and implementation. As a result of this approach, therapeutic outcomes are highly successful, enabling children to return to their regular school or daycare settings with optimal functioning in over 95 percent of cases, within an average six to 12-month treatment period.

The staff maintains a close working liaison with community schools, during and following the admission, in order to ensure a successful reintegration. The JGH and the English Montreal School Board (formerly the PSBGM) have had a longstanding partnership for decades. In addition, both the principal and teaching staff, at the Day treatment program, are EMSB employees. As a Behaviour Management Specialist for the EMSB, I have seen firsthand how students can struggle when faced with unresolved mental health issues. The Montreal anglophone community is quite fortunate to have access to such a comprehensive service and a dedicated team.

Catherine Korah, M.Ed., c.o. is a Behaviour Management Specialist, English Montreal School Board.

By Catherine Korah

Many people recognize the importance of mental health, but few recognize mental illness until adulthood. Studies show that one in five Canadians will have a mental health problem or illness this year. Research tells us that mental and emotional troubles in childhood should be taken very seriously, that psychiatric disorders can arise and persist from the earliest years, and that they can continue to develop further into adulthood.

According to 2006 data from the government of Canada, at least 70 percent of mental health problems and illnesses have their onset during childhood and adolescence.

Many studies have demonstrated the importance of interactions in early childhood with significant family members, which has a strong potential to determine a person's future mental health status. Childhood trauma has a profound effect on the emotional, behavioural, cognitive, social and functional

status of the adult brain. This new information illustrates the importance of supporting vulnerable families and investing in their children's well-being as a collective, societal responsibility. As few as one in four children with a mental health problem or illness will receive treatment; the rest (75 percent) will not, says one study.

The Division of Child Psychiatry of the Jewish General Hospital (JGH), established in 1966, provides second line and tertiary care specialized treatment services to an ethnically diverse population of high risk children and their families. The Centre includes an Outpatient Service for children up to 15 years old and Day/Evening Hospital programs for children, in the anglophone sector, ranging in age from five to 12. The hospital receives 350 to 400 referrals per year and 250 to 300 of these are for children aged five to 12 who are assessed and accepted for treatment in the Day/Evening Hospital Programs. "The Jewish General Hospital has pioneered a family-based, child-focused treatment approach. This aim has become increasingly relevant in order to reduce stigma,

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5250 FERRIER SUITE 801
514-591-2020
abbykb@videotron.ca
www.abbysoffice.com