



SALEM Digest

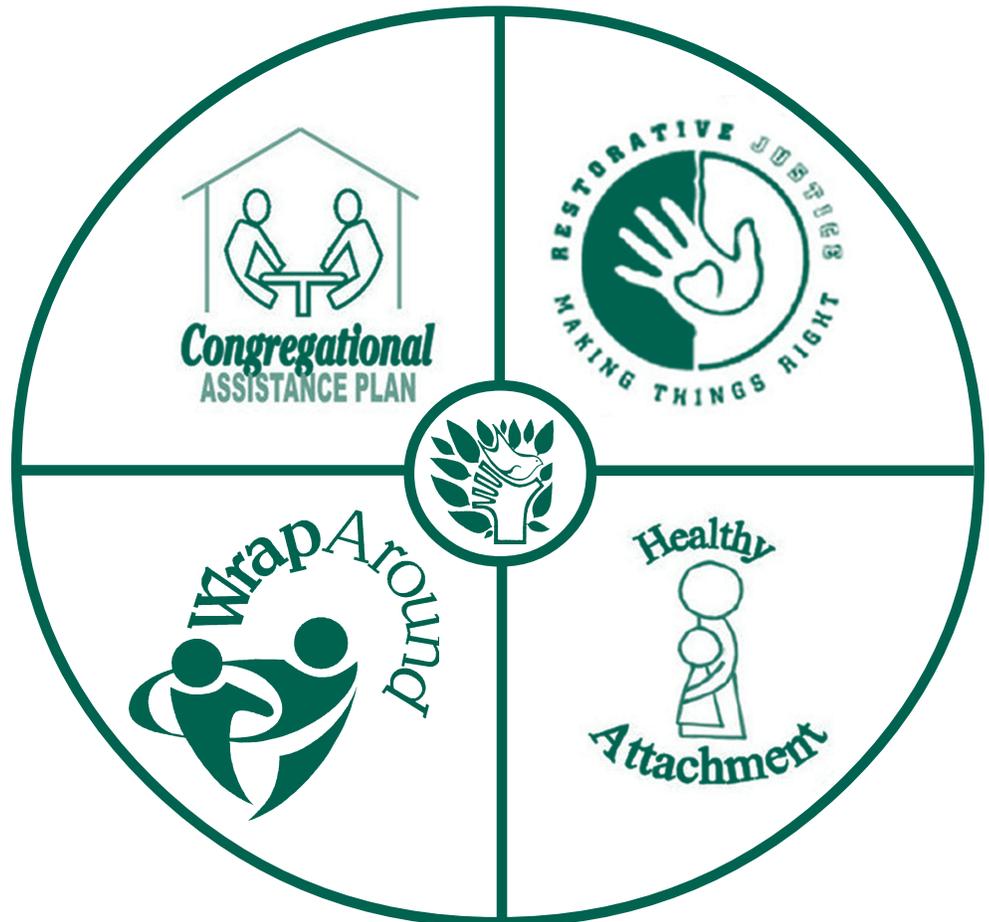
Summer 2006 • Topics of interest to friends of Salem Christian Mental Health Association

Dear Friends,

Many years ago a number of visionary Christian people formed Salem Christian Mental Health Association. Their vision was to provide service in Christ's name to people who struggle with serious mental illness and psychiatric issues. Their original plan—to build a Christian psychiatric hospital—did not materialize, but the dream of serving those in serious emotional and psychiatric distress did not fade. Today Salem is piloting new ways of reaching out to that very group of people.

Exciting things are happening at Salem. The Board has adopted several pilot projects to test whether they might serve as viable areas for Salem's future ministry—in addition to the counseling services that Salem already provides. All of them are in areas where the relationship between faith communities and the field of mental health has enormous potential. Perhaps they will serve as building blocks towards a larger vision—one in which Salem plays a fruitful role by serving as a Christian Mental Health Association of Ontario.

Salem presents these pilot projects here to whet your appetite. As you read, I hope you will become intrigued, even excited, about the possibility of you or your church community becoming involved in them—as a way of living out Jesus' call to seek out and walk alongside people in our communities who are vulnerable. If the pilot projects prove to be successful, Salem hopes to offer them to any community interested—as resources permit.



Most of all, thank you for what you already do, in the name of Christ, in support of those among us who struggle with emotional distress or psychiatric issues.

Mark Vander Vennen, MA, M.Ed, R.S.W.
Executive Director

Congregational Assistance Plan

From time to time all of us are faced with difficulties—some more serious than others. Usually, we are able to resolve them. But there may be times when our usual ways of coping no longer seem to work. This may be a situation related to family, marriage, grief or other issues. The Congregational Assistance Plan (CAP) helps to enable a church community to respond where this is the case for any member of the church.

With CAP, a congregation “purchases” up to eight counseling sessions per year for any member of the church. Salem develops contracts with qualified, professional Christian counselors in the church’s area to do the counseling. Individual, couple or family sessions are offered. A parishioner simply calls Salem’s toll-free number to get the sessions going. All services are offered in complete confidentiality and at no charge to the client.

Salem is piloting CAP with two churches, one in Hamilton and one in Bowmanville. The initial response has been positive! The program is inexpensive and has significant potential for expanding the diaconal service of a church to its members.



“Wow, it helped so much. I feel like I am not alone with no where to turn. I haven’t got out of the ‘black hole’ yet but I know it is possible.”

CAP Client

“When CAP was introduced to the congregation we were both surprised and pleased by the immediate response to the program. It is a wonderful tool for healing in the beginning stages of a developing family issue.”

*Margaret Pypker and Gary Stoter,
Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, Bowmanville*

“I was initially hopeful, but uncertain whether or not people would take advantage of this ministry. But people are responding, how exciting!”

*Pastor Andrew Zantingh,
First Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton*

WrapAround

WrapAround is a way of organizing and sustaining the God-given impulses within a church congregation to care for those who struggle with complex needs—especially needs made complicated by psychiatric difficulties. It is a strength-based planning process that doesn’t burn people out but does make a long-term difference. WrapAround is also at the leading edge of developments in the field of mental health.

Salem is now actively contributing to new community-based WrapAround developments in the greater Hamilton area and in the Durham region, in partnership with several Christian Reformed, Anglican, United and other churches, as

well as professional mental health services. Church members, once they have received WrapAround facilitator training, can do WrapAround in their own communities. Salem’s staff provide training, coaching, community planning and



actual WrapAround facilitation with individuals and families.

One WrapAround participant, working with Salem’s June Zwier, notes:

“WrapAround helped our family feel embraced by the

church community. People cared and we were able to share our emotions, joys and concerns with people we knew would understand. It seems that when there is a serious diagnosis or disability within a family that people often don't know how to approach or help. The family is left then to initiate or seek out what help might be available. So for us before WrapAround we felt isolated and very lonely. Having a group of people that we chose to turn to is like having an extended family. The group idea

also helps because no one person gets burned out. The structure of WrapAround, having specific goals, time limited meetings and working from a strengths base, ensures that there are not huge expectations placed on people. Having people come alongside us has been so helpful and we are thankful to feel more a part of our church family. Every church should have this as part of their ministry and we hope that WrapAround will help many more people feel part of the Body of Christ."

"Every church should have this as part of their ministry and we hope that Wraparound will help many more people feel part of the Body of Christ."

WrapAround participant

For more information on WrapAround, Google: "national WrapAround initiative" or see <http://www.salem.on.ca/html/pdf/spring05.pdf>.

Restorative Justice

Wouldn't it be something if churches acted as the hosts of the reconciliation processes that happen in their communities? That's the motivation behind Salem's "hosting" pilot project, done in partnership with the Ontario Multifaith Council (OMC), of which the Christian Reformed Church has been an active member since its inception.

At a restorative justice conference, someone who has hurt another person is able to repair the harm, to the degree possible, to the satisfaction of the person harmed and the others involved.

Under this unique project, numerous faith communities in four areas—Kitchener/Waterloo, Orillia, Halton Region and Durham Region—will act as the "hosts" for these events. The project is blessed by the input and support of some of the best practitioners and minds on restorative justice in Ontario.

The hosting project resonates deeply with such biblical concepts as hospitality, sanctuary, justice, mercy and reconciliation.

Recently the synod of the Christian Reformed Church recommended that its churches become involved in restorative practices. And the linkage between restorative justice and mental health is now a leading growth edge in the field of mental health itself.



"I see the hosting by faith communities as a way to respond supportively to crime that occurs by supporting the efforts of persons causing harm, and those harmed, to work towards a constructive solution."

*Mark Yantzi,
Community Justice Initiatives, Kitchener*

"The city of Orillia has a vision of being a caring community that focuses on building positive relations between troubled youth and their victims. Justice for Orillia Youth with Community Engagement (JOYCE) is part of that vision. We are delighted to have the support of Salem and OMC—local faith communities are now being approached to ascertain interest and commitment."

*Irena Lawrenson,
Coordinator, JOYCE; OPP Inspector (retired)*

For more information on restorative practices, see www.restorativepractices.org or http://www.crcna.org/pages/osjha_restorative.cfm.

Attachment Treatment

More and more research is finding that some psychiatric issues that surface in adulthood originate in attachment difficulties early in life. Attachment can be understood as our ability to connect, relate and enter into relationships.

Healthy or unhealthy attachment is a process that begins at birth, and a secure attachment by a child with his/her primary caregiver serves to protect the person against the difficulties encountered in life.

Through Betty J. Broersma Brouwer, Salem's child and family therapist and registered art therapist, Salem is developing an attachment treatment project, working directly with several esteemed experts in the field, including U.S. psychologists Dan Hughes and Arthur Becker-Weidman, and Ontario-based art therapist Edward Hagedorn.

The therapist works with the child and his/her primary caregiver to develop a more secure attachment. Salem's hope is to work with children whose long-term foster

care, adoption or kinship care placement is in danger of breakdown.

The Christian community has a strong, widely appreciated practice of foster parenting and adoption. Salem's attachment treatment project is designed to support that practice—at a time when the number of children in the care of Children's Aid Societies has jumped dramatically in a short period. Betty is able to work with you and your child on attachment issues—and watch for more news on this project as it unfolds.



“What excites me is that this project adds the latest cutting edge treatment for deeply hurt children to Salem's long history of building health into families.”

*Edward Hagedorn,
who integrates expressive arts and dyadic developmental therapy in his clinical practice, based in Cobourg, Ontario*

*For more information on attachment disorder and treatment, see Dan Hughes' book **Building the Bonds of Attachment** (Jason Aronson, 2006).*

We hope you catch the enthusiasm and opportunities behind these ventures. For more information about how you can become involved, please contact us. We are deeply grateful for your prayers for Salem's staff and Board and the people we work with—and for your financial support. Please continue to donate generously—without your support, Salem's work could not continue.

1 Young St. Suite 512 Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8
Telephone: (905)528-0353 Fax:(905)528-3562 Web: www.salem.on.ca