

Expert Panel to Discuss Pressing Needs to Manage Child and Youth Mental Illness Last Saturday

Toronto, May 28, 2018... One in five teens in Canada has seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months¹ and in Ontario one in five children and youth is affected by mental illness, of whom five out of six do not receive the treatment they need². With the alarming increased number of child and youth suffering depression and mental illness, ParentConnect™ sees the pressing need to raise parents' and public awareness on youth mental illness and the need to attend to the issue in the early stage to help save our future generation.

One of the ParentConnect's action items is hosting an expert panel session on Saturday May 26 between 12:30 pm and 2 pm at the Gibson Centre in Markham to share latest situation, insights on youth mental illness, advice on how to manage the situation and seek support and resources, as well as to answer questions from parents. Admission is free. More information can be found on www.ParentConnect.ca.

The panel is moderated by ParentConnect's founder Loretta Lam, and joined by Dr. Anna Wong, Doctor of Speech-Language Pathology and Executive Director of Chinese Family Services of Ontario, Mandy Fang, registered psychotherapist, Tammy Wong, PhD (Candidate) Clinical Psychology, and Allan Tam, York Region District School Board Trustee.

“Over 70 percent of mental health problems start in childhood or early adolescence. Many parents don't recognize their children's early stage depression and anxiety, or do not know where to seek help or how to manage. There is also a stigma attached to mental illness that parents are reluctant to speak up and seek help,” says Loretta Lam, founder of ParentConnect Inc., a Canadian-registered non-profit organization founded in 2017 to promote positive parenting. “We hope this kind of expert speaker panel discussion would encourage parents to learn from experts about early symptoms and how to manage mental illness with their children in a positive manner.”

Co-hosting the panel is Chinese Family Services of Ontario (CFSO). According to CFSO's Executive Director Dr. Anna Wong, early detection of depression symptoms among children and youth and getting expert counselling can help manage mental health issues and better communication with these children and youth.

“Mental illness is an invisible disability that gets little attention and support. Youth mental illness has become a major issue in our community, especially among immigrants. The increasing numbers of mental youth not only increase the economic burden on the health system, but also lead to lost income and productivity on parents and caregivers to close to \$51 billion per year.³ With provincial election just two weeks away, we would like to appeal for government's attention and support on this poorly funded area,” adds Dr. Wong.

Another report indicated that 19 percent of Asian youth surveyed, majority first generation immigrants said that they felt at times over the past year they would better off dead and 12 percent had seriously considered suicide.⁴

More...

Parents, media and community representatives are encouraged to participate with questions and opinions at the event.

ParentConnect aims to encourage parents build a better and stronger parent community for ongoing learning, sharing and communication.

Some alarming numbers:

- According to Statistics Canada 2010, suicide has become the second leading cause of death among people from 15 to 34 years old in Canada.
- Chinese patients had higher severity upon ER admission than other populations (67% vs 46%), according to the study of Identifying Promising Practice for Chinese Youth in Conflict with the law in Canada.
- Children’s Mental Health Ontario pointed out that more than 60% of youth in Ontario reported having had concern about their level of anxiety; however, only 3 in 10 have expressed their feeling with a mental health care professional.
- According to the Children and Youth Mental Health Survey: Getting Help in Ontario conducted by Ipsos Public Affair in 2017, 50% of parents in Ontario report having ever had concerns about their children’s level of anxiety.

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About ParentConnect™

ParentConnect is a registered not-for-profit initiative and one-stop online parenting platform founded by a passionate immigrant parent to promote positive parenting and a better future society. Results from a focus group study by ParentConnect shows that there is a huge information gap for new and immigrant parents to access the knowledge and resources they need to raise a family in an unfamiliar and time-stressed environment. www.ParentConnect.ca

About Chinese Family Services of Ontario

Chinese Family Services of Ontario (CFSO) is a non-profit, accredited professional counselling, family services and settlement agency that offers both linguistically and culturally sensitive services to individuals and families in need of counselling and settlement services.

Sources:

1 Teens Talk 2016 by Kids Help Phone

2 Children’s Mental Health Ontario

3 A New Population-based Measure of the Burden of Mental Illness in Canada on Chronic Diseases in Canada

4 Hong Fook Mental Health Association



Photo caption: ParentConnect, a not-for-profit initiative and one-stop online parenting platform, hosted an expert panel to raise public awareness on mental health issues. From left, Bill Chan, former police constable, Allan Tam, York Region District School Board Trustee, Albert Chan, parent representative, Loretta Lam, founder of ParentConnect, Dr. Anna Wong, Executive Director of Chinese Family Services of Ontario, Mandy Fang, registered psychotherapist, and Tammy Wong, PhD (Candidate) Clinical Psychology.