



A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.
SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE.

July 19, 2010

To whom it may concern:

Over the last number of weeks, I have received numerous communications expressing concerns about a perceived shift in the mission and objectives of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada. The volume of these communications prevents me from responding directly to each individually so this note will have to be a collective response to all.

It's obvious that many of the correspondents have contributed a lot of time and energy to the schizophrenia movement over many years, locally, provincially and nationally. Thank you for that investment of time, energy and good work.

The concerns expressed have been the subject of much discussion among the board members of SSC in advance of upcoming Annual General Meeting and Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The SSC continues to work to improve the quality of life for all those affected by schizophrenia - the persons who live with it, and their families and friends. Research into the causes and a cure, early psychosis intervention, access to treatment and ensuring people get the support they need are areas that SSC has and will continue to advocate for. Yet if we are to make meaningful strides in Canada toward reducing the stigma that continues to be associated with mental illness, it is must also be about helping people to achieve a good quality of life -- recovery -- to the point where they are included as full members of Canadian society. As such, I believe the theme and presentations at this year's conference are both valid and relevant.

The SSC board, like any board, has members with a range of views and opinions, and we recognize and respect that diversity. Our thinking is informed by the experiences of people who live with schizophrenia, family members, the medical community, social scientists, and the approaches being taken by other organizations in Canada and elsewhere across the globe. We consider this information and evidence as we debate the best approaches for dealing with various issues related to schizophrenia, and we work hard to reach consensus on what we believe to be the best path forward.

SSC's "Key Messages Survey", which is being disseminated through our Provincial Society partners, is intended to be part of that effort. We look forward to presenting the results of that Survey in St John's.

The Board of SSC is grateful for the work and leadership of our CEO, Chris Summerville and of Board member Neasa Martin. We fully and unanimously support their continued involvement in the work of the Society.

Just as the SSC will continue to be a voice for families and friends of loved ones who live with schizophrenia, it also can and will be a voice for those who live with the illness. This year's meeting and conference in St. John's will be an important forum for advancing discussion of issues that are fundamentally important to improving the quality of life for persons who live with schizophrenia. That was part of this movement when it was founded, and will continue to be so.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns.

Jim Adamson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Adamson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

President,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, Schizophrenia Society of Canada