

*“We do remember that even when we had given up, there were those who loved us and did not give up... they did not overwhelm us with their optimistic plans for our futures but they remained hopeful despite the odds. Their love for us was like a constant invitation, calling us for the... the miracle was that gradually... I began to hear and respond to this loving invitation.”*

– PAT DEEGAN

## About this Project:

Families are an important part of a person’s recovery and well-being. The Schizophrenia & Community Integration Service (SCIS) are committed to strengthening the role of families at each step of a person’s recovery. This brochure was developed by family members and health care professionals and is one in a series of nine including:

1. Caregivers – How Are You?
2. Managing Relapse
3. Communicating with Health Care Professionals
4. Encouraging Medication Adherence
5. Fostering Independence
6. Goal Setting – How to Help?
7. Mental Health System Navigation – What You Need to Know in Urgent Situations
8. Treatment and Consent to Share Information
9. Overcoming Resistance – How To Encourage Positive Change

St. Joseph’s | Schizophrenia & Community  
Healthcare Hamilton | Integration Service

**St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton  
Schizophrenia & Community  
Integration Service**  
West 5th Campus  
100 West 5th Street  
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3K7  
Telephone: 905-522-1155 ext. 35599

PD 10147 (2020-01)

[www.stjoes.ca](http://www.stjoes.ca)

## Overcoming Resistance – How To Encourage Positive Change

Schizophrenia & Community  
Integration Service



## Supporting the Supporter

St. Joseph’s  
Healthcare Hamilton

[www.stjoes.ca](http://www.stjoes.ca)

## Overcoming Resistance – How to Encourage Positive Change

We can all get stuck in our old (and sometimes unhealthy) habits and can struggle to build momentum to make positive changes. If you would like to encourage your loved one to start a new habit or break an unhealthy one, the following tips can help you guide those difficult conversations.

### 1. Express Empathy

- Ask them about their concerns or worries
- Try not to judge what they are saying
- Listen attentively – don't interrupt.
- Use reflective listening: "What I hear you saying is..."
- Let them know that you understand their concerns and the barriers they are facing
- Avoid arguing with them as it will stop the conversation
- If you notice you are arguing you can say: "We seem to be arguing..." or "I've gotten off track..."

### 2. Help Them See Inconsistencies

- Help them to see that some of their actions and behaviors don't mesh with their ultimate goals
- Help them to choose and set their most important goals
- The reason for change needs to come from them
- Remind them of their goals and how their actions aren't supporting

their goals (i.e. "On one hand you are saying that meeting people is important to you but on the other hand you are saying you want to stay home by yourself again.")

### 3. Support Strengths and Abilities:

- People need to believe they have the ability to succeed
- Help them believe in their ability to do the skill that is needed
- Promote self-esteem and build confidence
- Focus on past success, their current positive behavior and skills/strengths they have or can easily learn (i.e. "Tell me about some of your personal strengths that will help you succeed.")
- Example: "So even though you have not been abstinent everyday this past week, you managed to cut down the number of cigarettes significantly. How were you able to do that?"

### 4. Help Support Change

- The person needs to have their own reasons and need for change. You can help them move from thinking about change to taking action
- Help them see the disadvantages of their current behavior or situation (i.e. "What worries you about your current situation?")
- Help them see the advantages of changing (i.e. "What would you like your life to be like in five years?")

## Other Helpful Resources:

Books:

**Motivational Interviewing: A Workbook for Change Agents**  
By Barbara Orr and Marilyn Stein

**Finding Your Way to Change: How the Power of Motivational Interviewing Can Reveal What You Want and Help You Get There**  
By Allen Zuckoff

**A Toolkit of Motivational Skills: Encouraging and Supporting Change in Individuals**  
By Catherine Fuller and Phil Taylor

**I'm Not Sick, I Don't Need Help**  
By Dr. Xavier Amador

---

**The Family Resource Center**  
Located at West 5th Campus on Level 1, by main entrance. For more information and hours of operation visit: [stjoes.ca/FamilyResourceCentre](http://stjoes.ca/FamilyResourceCentre) or call (905)522-1155 extension 39075

**Mental Health & Addiction Program Family Information Handbook.**  
You can obtain a copy of the handbook at: [stjoes.ca/FamilyHandbook](http://stjoes.ca/FamilyHandbook).

**Family Liaison Worker**  
To find out more, call (905)522-1155 extension 35599.