

**Intake to Mental Health and Developmental Services  
Pilot Program Evaluation June 2016**

In November 2015, CKCS introduced a "Pilot Program" to test a new design for Intake Services to Mental Health & Developmental Services. The greatest difference for families and the community would be a more direct path to service, including significantly shorter wait-time to be connected with a Caseworker. Six months later, after what agency staff observed to be a successful implementation, Barnes Management Group was selected to lead a formal evaluation of the pilot program. This Summary shares some notable findings from the final evaluation report.

The Pilot Program Evaluation project, led by Barnes Management Group and supported by CKCS staff, collected the following stakeholder feedback:

- semi-structured phone interviews with 25 parents/caregivers & 6 youth (aged 12 years and older) from 26 families;
- community focus groups including ten persons from three external partner agencies and two multi-agency committees ;
- a series of face-to-face interviews and focus groups with 12 CKCS staff members, most working in MH & Development;
- online survey completed by 35 CKCS staff, most MH & Developmental Services staff.



**Pilot Program strengths**

- wait-time to Intake: *"either immediate, same day, or next day at the latest;"*
- quality of Intake staff: *"knowledgeable and professional", "positive, engaged;"*
- continuity of service: *"families are able to have the same contact person until they are assigned to a clinician;" families are saved "the burden of having to tell her story multiple times;"*
- direct access to MH: *"Especially for those living in poverty... [Children's Aid] is so stigmatized..."*

*"Caring, concerned, wanted to help, showed great empathy in asking all the questions..."*  
-parent, on her initial impression of Intake Worker

*The wait-time was "fast--compared to last year..."*  
-parent

*"My needs were met."*  
-parent

*"I really got to explain myself."*  
-parent

**Recommendations**

- Communication & Promotion of Improvements to Intake: *"...word of mouth among families that mental health is separate [from Protection] or 'I was able to meet outside the building'... this will have more of an impact coming from another family than from a service provider;"*
- Education for community partners on Best practice for making referrals to CKCS Mental Health Intake (ie. obtaining proper client consent).



*"This is a pilot so it's still early days, so the perception is that you're going in the right direction but more promotion needs to be done if you want to see results."*  
- community partner



Based on overwhelmingly positive feedback from a whole range of community stakeholders, formal evaluation of CKCS' Intake to Mental Health and Developmental Services Pilot Program supports recommendations that, going forward, the recent (November 2015) improvements to CKCS Mental Health Intake program become standard agency protocol.