

COMMUNITY NETWORKS OF SPECIALIZED CARE

As part of the Ministry of Community and Social Services' strategy to enhance community-based specialized services and supports for people who have a developmental disability and mental health issues and/or challenging behaviour (dual diagnosis), MCSS introduced the Community Networks of Specialized Care as a new initiative in March 2006 to improve the way specialized services and supports are delivered.

Four Community Networks of Specialized Care that partner specialized service providers, professionals and resources have been established in the north, west, east and central regions of the province.

As a new way of coordinating the delivery of specialized services and professionals such as doctors, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and behaviour therapists to pool their expertise and support adults who have a dual diagnosis, the Networks are collaborative systems rather than a physical place where people go to receive services and supports.

The agencies leading the Networks are recognized for their expertise in this area of developmental services and were selected by service providers in the sector through a community-based process.

The mandate of the Networks is to better coordinate the specialized service system, increase the range and availability of specialized services and supports and build expertise and community capacity through joint research and training initiatives.

The creation of 90 new specialized residential spaces for people who have a developmental disability and mental health issues and/or challenging behaviour are also a part of the Ministry's strategy to enhance community based specialized resources in Ontario. The 90 specialized spaces include:

- Permanent spaces for adults with persistent, high-risk behaviour who need ongoing specialized support. The objective is to create a long-term safe, secure and therapeutic environment for individuals.
- Temporary, transitional spaces to provide crisis and specialized respite support for adults whose needs exceed their caregivers' ability to keep them safe from self-harm and/or harm to others.

The goal is to build caregiver capacity so that the individual can be permanently supported at home or to find a more appropriate residential placement.

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