

November 16, 2006

## **Learning computer skills aids recovery of Mental Health Services clients**

**Kingston** - A unique computer course is promoting recovery for a group of clients at Providence Continuing Care Centre Mental Health Services. The pilot project is a 10-week interactive training program that teaches computer use and functioning for an hour a week to clients from Community Connections, a program for mental health clients living in the community. Training takes place in the Mental Health Services computer lab, which is normally used by PCCC staff.

“We have wonderful resources and this project allows us to use our facilities to help clients regain their roles in the community and move forward with recovery,” explains Carol Mieras, Coordinator of the Community Connections Rehabilitation Program. “Computers are everywhere and if you don’t know how to use one, you may feel disconnected from society, which only increases the stigma associated with mental illness.”

PCCC’s Technical Learning Coordinator Scott Warren has designed the course to meet the individual needs of clients. “I’m helping with the basics like becoming familiar with using a mouse and searching the Internet for local websites and information related to Kingston.” Often people recovering from a mental illness lack computer access or supportive technical training. Clients with a cognitive impairment may not be able to work at the pace of regular courses.

Student Phil Brodie, who recently bought his first computer, says he’s learning more from this course than a previous one he took. “Right from the beginning we got one on one attention. Plus he repeats things so we learn it well.” Student Rick Wall sees the course is a stepping-stone to further education. “I’m having a great time and in a few weeks I’d like to get a computer too. I want to get my grade 12 and think this will help me a lot.”

PCCC’s Community Connections is a community-based, individualized rehabilitation program that offers a supportive environment where clients can learn skills and coping strategies necessary for successful community living. The program helps clients to regain valued roles and to continue along the path to their own recovery.

**Editor’s Note:** The news media is invited to attend a computer training session from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. on Monday, November 20 to speak to participants and take photos. Please contact Corinne Deshaw at [deshawc@pccchealth.org](mailto:deshawc@pccchealth.org) to make arrangements. Photos are also available.

*For more information visit our website at [www.pccchealth.org](http://www.pccchealth.org)*

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