

ESTABLISHING STAFF PARTICIPATION

This month the project has been focusing on creating a concrete plan for staff participation throughout the project. This included holding an all-staff meeting (the first in 7 years!) to discuss the findings from staff interviews conducted in December, and to plan staff roles in the project in the upcoming months. This participation will include doing outreach with community partners to keep them informed of progress, and establishing multiple staff Working Groups to examine specific topics.

FINDINGS FROM INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH STAFF

Throughout December 2015 and January 2016, each full-time staff member was interviewed by the research team to discuss their current roles and responsibilities, the staff they work most closely with, how the upcoming transformation will affect their work and opportunities and concerns for the upcoming transformation. Some of the themes that arose from those interviews are discussed below.

Communication

Staff emphasized that open and frequent communication will be crucial to make the transformation process a successful one. It was highlighted that communication directly from the Steering Committee and the Project Lead is very important to ensure the project remains transparent. Finally, staff discussed how it will be important to share information in a variety of ways, since people prefer differing modes of communication such as email updates, in-person updates, staff meeting discussions, and all-staff meetings.

Staff Participation

It was frequently mentioned that staff should be central to discussions and recommendations on topics that will be affecting their work in the transformed model. Staff have experience and insight into key topics that will be invaluable to the transformation, like working collaboratively with other offices, developing a new intake system and aligning internal policies.

Staff also suggested that they can help communicate information to legal clinic community partners by contributing to monthly newsletters and reaching out to partners they are in contact with most frequently. Staff emphasized the importance of keeping community partners informed on the progress of the project.

Concerns about the transition

Staff were keen to develop a system in which they will be very engaged throughout the project. There was also concern that some actions might be decided upon without staff knowledge or input, and that a concrete communication and engagement plan should be established to avoid this from happening.

Opportunities of Transformation

Staff were excited about a number of new opportunities that would be made possible through this transformation. These included both internal opportunities for staff like training opportunities and updated technology, and also opportunities to provide better services to clients, such as implementing the 'no wrong door' policy and providing more holistic services by working collaboratively with staff that have differing skill sets.

The results of these one-on-one interviews are available to read on the project website www.ottawaclinics.ca.

To see the full power point presentation on the findings from the staff interviews, [click here!](#)

ALL-STAFF MEETING

In late January, 20 staff from the three participating community legal clinics got together for an all-staff meeting. In this meeting, the staff decided that Working Groups should be developed to work through specific issues that will be changing throughout the amalgamation. There was open discussion about how many internal systems will need to be integrated between the current three clinics, and greater systems of collaboration will need to be put in place.

The staff agreed that four of the main areas that need development are:

- Developing a joint intake process and managing workloads between offices;
- Task allocation between support staff and the office manager;
- Harmonizing legal clinic policies;
- Developing legal practice teams.

Therefore, over the coming months staff will establish these Working Groups and will provide input and recommendations to the Steering Committee from discussions held in the groups.



NEXT STEPS

Now that we have met with all staff from the three participating legal clinics and discussed some initial Working Groups, the next step is to establish the first meetings of each Working Group. These initial meetings will be happening in February and March.

To learn more about this process, please visit www.ottawaclinics.ca.

To contact us, please email info@ottawaclinics.ca.