



"When word gets out in the community, people want access to these programs. They hear from others that they work. But resources are limited. This is one area where we can always use support." -Kaye Robinson

Meet Kaye Robinson, a social worker at the Rapid Access Addiction Clinic



Part 5 in a 5-part series on this innovative clinic and a group of its staff members.

Kaye Robinson is a social worker at the Rapid Access Addiction Clinic at St. Paul's. From helping a person obtain short term medication coverage when they are not on a medical plan, to counseling, to full-blown crisis intervention, Kaye supports people in their treatment goals for their substance use.

A key area of Kaye's work involves the social determinants of health, which are the circumstances around us that shape our lives. Elements such as employment status and financial standing, food security, housing, education. Kaye helps people with substance use disorder improve these circumstances, or connects them with other community resources, such as residential treatment or recovery houses, that support such goals.

Kaye and her social work and nursing peers also operate different groups, including one to help people set goals to reduce stimulant use. (Stimulants are drugs such as amphetamine, methamphetamine, cocaine/crack.) A highly effective approach has been contingency management groups, where people get rewards for achieving goals, with a goal being anything from a negative urine screen to simply attending group sessions regularly.

"With such a program," says Kaye, "we are working on the same reward pathways in your brain that a stimulant would act on; and because there is no medication for stimulant use, these programs are currently the best evidence-based treatment."

Kaye's insights also point to the fact that the drug crisis in BC is about more than opioids, and that stimulants and depressants are also part of the problem.

Kaye speaks to a very high demand for contingency management group programs but they are not offered widely, with lack of resources the main reason. In addition to the RAAC, there are only a few other places that offer them in greater Vancouver.

"When word gets out in the community," says Kaye, "people want access to these programs, they hear from others that they work. But resources are limited. This is one area where we can always use support—helping to maintain these programs and, hopefully, expand the groups we offer. They help a lot of people and families."

With much room (and need) to grow this vital and already impactful program, friends of St. Paul's Foundation are encouraged to help by making a donation to support the work of the Rapid Access Addiction Clinic.

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