



VHA Voice

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Are you or a loved one living with diabetes or stroke?

We've launched a Peer Mentor Program for clients living with diabetes or stroke.

Peer mentors offer hope and reassurance by being a role model and providing support.

Research shows that people living with a chronic disease can better relate to a person who has the same chronic disease.

For more information, please contact Christina Darling at cDarlington@vha.ca or Nadia Hladin at nHladin@vha.ca

You can also visit:

[bit.ly/](http://bit.ly/DiabetesStrokePeerMentor)

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Clients Helping Clients: Finding the Best PSWs for the Job

VHA is committed to bringing the voices of clients and their families into everything we do. What better way than to involve clients in the hiring process of our point-of-care staff? That's what VHA's circuit recruitment process is all about.

"If we have a program that helps prepare a PSW for their job and makes sure they are educated about what we need as clients, then absolutely I want to help with it," says Michelle Amerie, a VHA client and a member of our Client and Carer Advisory Council who volunteered to participate in VHA's circuit recruitment interviews.

VHA's Human Resources team recently collaborated with clients, supervisors and service co-ordinators to pilot a circuit interview process that takes PSW candidates through real-life scenarios. This approach gives candidates a more realistic idea of the nature of the work they are applying for. It also allows the circuit recruitment team, which includes clients, to see candidates in action—demonstrating their skills in interacting with clients in some challenging, but realistic, situations.

Once all candidates completed the circuit, the team discussed the strengths of each candidate to differentiate between good and great applicants. As a client receiving VHA services, Michelle was enthusiastic about being part of the role-playing activities. "Being involved in this as a client ensures that the PSW gets a more realistic experience. My vision and your vision [as an HR recruiter] are different when it comes to planning scenarios. And for me to come in and be a part of this whole program creates a more realistic way to find out how these situations would be for a client," she says.

It's a great way to reinforce VHA's core belief that our job is to provide spectacular care. "Clients and families tell us that they appreciate a flexible PSW who is responsive to their needs. Circuit Recruitment goes beyond interview questions and lets us see an honest display about who the candidate really is, how they'd react in a sudden situation and how well they think on their feet," says Beth Posen, VHA's Human Resources Manager.

"The program is still a work in progress," says Beth. "Our pilot results were really positive and helped us hire PSWs we are confident will have the skills and personality to provide the best possible experience to our clients and their families."

If you're a client or family member and interested in becoming involved in VHA quality improvement initiatives like circuit recruitment, please contact our Client Voice Liaison, Stacey Ryan at sryan@vha.ca or 416-489-2500 x4342.



VHA client, Michelle Amerie, volunteered to participate in VHA's circuit recruitment interviews.

VHA Home HealthCare
Creating More Independence

www.vha.ca

Newsletter available in alternate formats on request.

Loved our newsletter? Thought we missed something?

Want to be profiled or contribute?

We're interested in hearing your ideas, stories and suggestions!

Email communications@vha.ca or call 416-489-2500 ext. 4344, toll free at

1-888-314-6622 ext. 4344

We're All Ears!



VHA Earns Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada

After some intense scrutiny — including client visits, countless interviews and a review of many of VHA's processes and quality improvements — VHA once again earned health care's "gold seal" of approval with Exemplary Standing. While we're delighted with the results, this is an ongoing journey and we're now starting to lay the groundwork for our next accreditation survey in 2020!



VHA Playdate: A Rare Chance for Kids with Medical Complexities to Socialize and for Their Parents to Take a Break

VHA Playdate is a unique pilot that ran this fall to give kids with complex medical needs a rare chance to hang out and play together, and their parents — who have few chances for respite as caregivers — a much needed weekend break. The brainchild of VHA Home HealthCare, the VHA Playdate program took place at Scarborough Village Public School and emerged out of a focus group of family caregivers who said there weren't many programs around where their kids could safely play.

"Many of these kids go to school during the week thanks to onsite medical support. But opportunities for play outside of the classroom are few and need lots of co-ordination," says Caroline Hunter, Regional Manager at VHA Home HealthCare and current chair of VHA's Client and Carer Advisory Council.

VHA Playdate doesn't just give kids a chance for fun, it allows their parents some precious free time. "It is always hard for me to leave my daughter behind and do things with my other two children, but this is amazing," said one of the moms whose daughter participated. "The socializing is good for her. It is all so well-planned and organized."

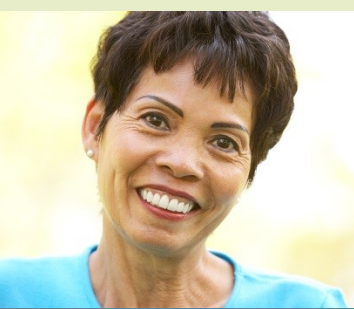
Another mom really appreciated the warm and open atmosphere of the program. "On the weekends my kids like to get out. At Playdate we feel comfortable because it is professional and safe. They are familiar and accepting and they fit in. You aren't worried about people's reactions — you can relax and feel comfortable."

"It's really an incredible experience to watch," says Alexandra Dunlop, Occupational Therapist and VHA Playdate program lead. "The activities, from music to arts and crafts to sports in the gym, create an atmosphere that is nothing short of magical." Parents are able to comfortably leave their children for three and a half hours as each child is paired with his or her own Personal Support Worker and is also supported by an onsite Registered Nurse to address any immediate medical issues.

VHA Playdate was funded by a VHA Ideas to Action/Innovation grant but is looking to secure long-term funding through community or government grants. In the meantime, VHA has launched a funding page to try to deliver another session in the early spring. For more details, and to check out the CTV news story on the program, visit www.vha.ca/playdate.



Kids having a blast at a VHA Playdate session.



Become a partner! Share your voice!

VHA is always looking to improve. Join the conversation. If you would like to share your thoughts and become a Client Voice partner at VHA, please contact **Stacey Ryan** at sryan@vha.ca or **416-489-2500 x4342** for more information.

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