



Changing the  
Mental Health  
Landscape for  
Young Adults

## **LOL: Back to school is no laughing matter**

TORONTO, Sept 1, 2014 – Stella's Place, a new young adult mental health organization opening in 2015, is warning Toronto educators that thousands of student-aged young adults may not make it to class this week.

Back to school is not a time for fresh starts and optimism for many young adults with emerging mental health issues. Stella's Place has compiled a three point mental health checklist for parents, peers, supporters and educators that changes up the meaning of L-O-L = Listen, Observe & Learn; a preventative tool for parents and educators.

### **L-O-L Mental Health Check List**

1. **Listen** to young adults to find out what they are concerned about. You have to be open to hearing that going back to school may not be an easy time.
2. **Observe** changes in behaviour like increased isolation, loss of appetite, change in sleep patterns or increased agitation.
3. **Learn** about the signs of mental health and addictions issues and the resources available. Connect with guidance counsellors in the school system, and make sure your young person knows about student services and peer supports at their college or university.

"100,000 people aged 16-29 in Toronto have mental disorders, and many of them are suffering in silence with anxiety and depression, with 5 in 6 not getting to needed service", warns Jenny Carver, social worker and Executive Director of Stella's Place.

"Back to school is a vulnerable period and the risk for anxiety and depression sometimes leading to self-injury and suicide increases for young people", says Carver. "Many of them may have been taken off the education track because of mental health symptoms, so it's an extremely loaded time for them as they see their peers moving on".

Stella's Place is also calling on government & health stakeholders to work collaboratively to continue to improve the services for young adults who suffer from severe mood and anxiety disorders and other complex mental health issues that disengage them from school and employment. With leaders like the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Ontario has made progress in youth mental health and addictions service, research and training. Stella's Place believes that more engaging community-based services are required for youth who are in transition to adulthood, These young adults often don't make the connection with existing adult mental health services.

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### **Facts:**

In Canada, at least 70% of mental health problems appear before the age of 25

Young adults with serious mental health conditions have high rates of homelessness (30%), arrests (60%) and dropping out of school (42%).

Youth who disengage from service during their transition to adulthood are at significantly



higher risk of developing more enduring mental health problems. And, this age group has the highest drop out rate from treatment.



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**About Stella's Place:**

Stella's Place [www.stellasplace.ca](http://www.stellasplace.ca), is being developed by social workers and Toronto parents of young adults suffering from mental disorders. Young adults with mental health and addictions issues are acting as advisors to program development. They agree that new ways are needed to engage young adults who are isolated and not accessing the connection, assessment and treatment they need. They suggest that on-line and other technologies will be an important part of this engagement, as well as a safe community where they can connect with peers in addition to the clinical and complementary health services they need.

Slated to open in 2015, Stella's Place will be Canada's first community based assessment and treatment centre for young adults with mental health issues.

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