

What are some interventions you could take to optimize Teresa's health in this situation?

One of our experienced nursing leaders, Kathy Hardill, Nurse Practitioner, has some suggestions:

- Assess her mental status, screening for depression, anxiety and PTSD – intervene accordingly e.g. medication, expert mental health supports, etc.
- Explore her history of mental health care: any medication trials? Counselling? Psych hospitalisations? ER visits? Suicidality?
- Explore her substance use – when did it begin, what was going on at that time, what are the factors that contribute to her ongoing use? Have a high index of suspicion for self medication of serious mental health issues and suicidality.
- Explore her history of intervention re substance use – has she ever tried to quit? What happened? Has she ever gone to detox or treatment? What was the outcome? Is she interested in this currently? If using opioids, has she ever been assessed for methadone or other opioid dependence treatments? Explain the nearest resources available to her should she wish to do so.
- Explore issues of violence in her life – screen for violence from her current partner, offer to assist her to leave if she wants to do this; otherwise ensure she has information/phone numbers for local shelters or women's centres; if her risk of violence is high, ensure nothing you provide to her will further endanger her (i.e. no pamphlets or pieces of paper – suggest she write down emergency numbers discretely in her clothing or disguise numbers in some way).
- Explore income support – consider assisting her to apply for social assistance; if receiving Ontario Works, support her to apply for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits which nearly double her income (from \$626 per month to \$1,086 per month as of November 2013) providing greatly enhanced stability; explain that it will assist her to get more stable financially and therefore mentally/physically, and if she is able to become healthier she may well be able to pursue her dreams e.g. education/training etc. Has she filed her income tax return to access benefits she might be entitled to?
- Explore her housing situation – has she ever had her own place? Is she dependant on her partner for housing? Can you assist her to get her own place e.g. once she gets a more stable income or independent income?

What else can you think of?

Check out these resources that might be particularly useful to help improve Teresa’s conditions of daily life as well as assist with clinical care:

RNAO Best Practice Guideline Clinical Resources:

Client-Centred Care

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/client-centred-care>

Crisis Intervention

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/crisis-intervention>

Establishing Therapeutic Relationships

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/establishing-therapeutic-relationships>

Supporting Clients with Substance Use and Related Issues

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/supporting-clients-substance-use-and-related-issues>

Supporting and Strengthening Families Through Expected and Unexpected Life Events

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/supporting-and-strengthening-families-through-expected-and-unexpected-life-events>

Supporting Clients on Methadone Maintenance Treatment

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/supporting-clients-methadone-maintenance-treatment>

Woman Abuse: Screening, Identification, and Initial Response

<http://rnao.ca/bpg/guidelines/woman-abuse-screening-identification-and-initial-response>

External Resources:

Community Legal Education Ontario

ODSP Applications: Information for Health Professionals

http://www.cleo.on.ca/sites/default/files/book_pdfs/ods-prof.pdf

Your Legal Rights

ODSP Applications: A Presentation for Health Professionals

<http://yourlegalrights.on.ca/resource/76665>

Health Providers Against Poverty:

Poverty: A Clinical Tool for Poverty in Ontario

Patient Brochure on Income Supports

<http://www.healthprovidersagainstpoverty.ca/Primary%20Care%20Toolkits>

Income Security Advocacy Centre:

Current social assistance rates

Updates on changes to Special Diet program

<http://www.incomesecurity.org/resources.html>

Jean Tweed Centre

Trauma Matters: Guidelines for Trauma-Informed Practices in Women's Substance Use Services

<http://www.jeantweed.com>

Tenant Hot Line: (416) 921-9494 is based in Toronto but often assist people across Ontario.

Tenant Survival Manual is available in 20 languages from the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association:

<http://torontotenants.org/resources/tenant-survival-manual>

Working for Change based in Toronto in an example of an organization of people with lived experience of poverty who can be tremendous resources and partners in improving health care services and with political advocacy.

<http://workingforchange.ca/>

What are some interventions you could take to tackle the structural drivers of the conditions of daily life, such as the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources that impact Teresa's health?

Public Policy and Political Advocacy Resources from RNAO:

RNAO Why Your Health Matters (2013)

<http://rnao.ca/policy/reports/why-your-health-matters>

RNAO Creating Vibrant Communities (2010)

http://rnao.ca/sites/rnao-ca/files/CVC_Technical_Backgrounder.pdf

RNAO Political Action Toolkit

<http://rnao.ca/policy/political-action/political-action-information-kit>

Check out these information and advocacy resources from our community partners and allies:

25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction

<http://25in5.ca/>

Campaign 2000 Ontario

<http://www.campaign2000.ca/Ontario/>

Colour of Poverty, Colour of Change Campaign

<http://accessalliance.ca/community/advocacy/colourofpoverty>

Community Legal Education Ontario

<http://www.cleo.on.ca/>

Dignity for All: Campaign for a Poverty Free Canada

<http://www.dignityforall.ca/>

Health Providers Against Poverty

<http://www.healthprovidersagainstpoverty.ca/>

Homeless Hub Canada

Homelessness information from across Canada

<http://www.homelesshub.ca/>

Housing Opens Doors Campaign

<http://www.housingopensdoors.ca/>

Increase the Minimum Wage Campaign, Workers' Action Centre

<http://www.workersactioncentre.org/issues/minimum-wage/>

Income Security Advocacy Centre:

<http://www.incomesecurity.org/>

Information and Resources on Social Assistance Reform

<http://sareview.ca/>

<http://sareview.ca/resources/>

Migrant Worker Health Project

<http://www.migrantworkerhealth.ca/AboutUsGeneral.html>

ODSP Action Coalition

<http://www.odspaction.ca/>

Ontario Campaign 2000

<http://www.campaign2000.ca/Ontario/index.html>

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty

<http://www.ocap.ca/>

People's Health Movement

<http://www.phmovement.org/>

Poverty-Free Ontario

<http://www.povertyfreeontario.ca/>

Put Food in the Budget Campaign

<http://putfoodinthebudget.ca/>

Working Towards Health Equity-Related Policymaking in Ontario

<http://tinyurl.com/k9bx5wb>

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If you have other suggestions for inclusion, please email Lynn Anne Mulrooney at lmulrooney@RNAO.org or contact us at <http://rnao.ca/contact>