

The Canadian Association of Social Workers created the theme of “**Bringing Change to Life**” to celebrate Social Work Week, March 18 – 24, 2018. The social workers from the Connecting to Care program, Brette Crockett and Lane Sentes, are bringing change to the lives of the people they work with on a daily basis.

The Connecting to Care program includes social workers, Nurse Practitioner and Cultural Advisor. This is a 7-day a week program with social work available in the evenings and on weekends.

The program started in 2015 to fill the gap in care for people that frequently attended the Emergency Departments attempting to have their needs met. Initially, the target population was predominantly indigenous men, with lived experience of poverty, homelessness, discrimination, racism, social exclusion, and familial, intergenerational and historical trauma. In the last while the team has added clients who have mobility problems and chronic illnesses to their caseloads. The admission criteria remains the same – repeat admission to hospital, chronic health condition plus a mental health diagnosis or addiction and a need for long-term community case management beyond the capacity of similar programs.

Lane and Brette provide intensive case management including assessment, planning, and facilitation of care coordination, evaluation and advocacy on behalf of their clients. They provide clients with information and connections to other support services that may benefit clients’ long-term mental, emotional, spiritual and social health status.

Brette and Lane say that their work is finding resources for their clients, making connections for them in the community. They provide one-to-one counselling, attend appointments and court dates, assist with transportation and housing needs and provide general support. They also co-facilitate a Community Support Group with the Transition Team. The group runs once a week and is well attended.

Lane and Brette speak fondly of clients that have been successful in becoming sober and independent in their living conditions. There have been relapses, which are to be expected after years of unhealthy coping skills, but Brette and Lane reconnect and provide the support needed to get their clients back on track.