



Peers Perspective Newsletter

Break the stigma, peers helping peers

Jan – March
2018

Public Education

Library and pamphlets available for all at the Canadian Mental Health Association, 1152 3rd Avenue, Prince George.

Peer Support – Offers support to individuals impacted by mental illness who require help in resolving issues or concerns they may have in dealing with areas of their daily lives such as: income assistance applications and appeals, government and agency forms and requirements, tenancy issues, making appointments, finding information, financial matters, or connecting to services. This is by no means an exhaustive list, as we attempt to assist individuals with all their needs as best we can, either directly or through referral. This is an open referral service, with anyone welcome to make appointments and inquires to (250) 564-8644 Ext 205 Email edlui@cmhapg.ca

Community Education & Workshops – Providing workshops on mental illness and informational material. 250-564-8644 Ext. 209

Life Skills Support Program – Designed to help those with mental illness develop and learn skills for independent living. 250-564-8644 Ext. 212

Housing Resource Program – To assist in accessing affordable housing. 250-564-8644 Ext. 204

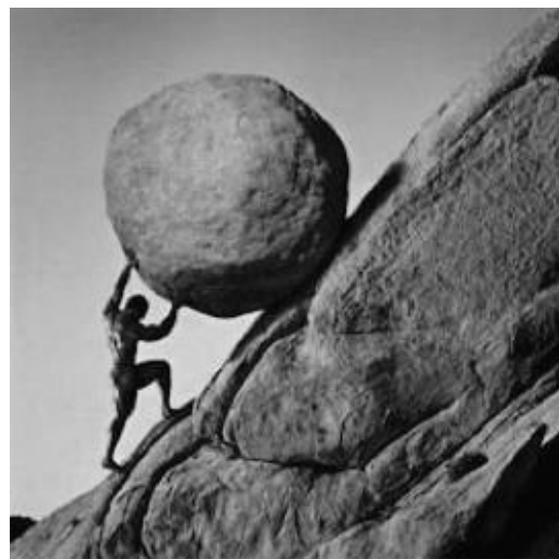
Bounce Back Self Help – For people living with a chronic physical illness that contributes to mild to moderate depression with or without anxiety. 250-564-8644 Ext. 211

Want to Help Out? Volunteer or Donate!

Studies show regular volunteering can have a positive effect on mental and physical health. And who doesn't feel good giving? Visit www.princegeorge.cmha.bc.ca to learn more on how to help Canadian Mental Health Association and your mental Health!

How I beat Depression

When I was twenty I started not feeling good. I didn't know why, but I got the blues and as time went on I got worse and worse. I lost most of my friends and the few that stayed wondered what was wrong with me. I became depressed...not just under the weather, but clinically down. As time went on I got worse and worse. All my family backed me up and decided to go for help. My friends and family got me to talk to a doctor and he figured it was severe depression. Because of my deteriorating condition they all decided to put me on the Psych Ward. I couldn't snap out of it and was thinking only of dying and suicide. |So what was I to do... I was seen by a psychiatrist who put me on some anti-depressants and for 3 torturous weeks I held out and finally started to feel good. The medication brought me out of the depression. It felt so liberating after the meds kicked in... Just amazing. You don't realize what you have until you lose it...and I had lost my hope, but regained it back stronger. I was healed and everyone who loved me was relieved



By Devin Sluchinski



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of British Columbia**

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Nature and Me

There is something special about Mother Earth... that I can merely keep my eyes on. She is wondrous with her mountains and forests. I have experienced her many times throughout my life and every time I was awed by Her great beauty. Now that I have a mental illness...She is more important than ever. Every time I go for a walk outside, or around a lake I feel replenished and all my problems slip away like water in a mountain stream. I try to get out in nature when I can, and when I do I am never disappointed. One of my favorite things is going fishing. Summer or winter I love trying to catch fish and it's a good reason to go outdoors. When I go for a trail walk, sometimes I stop, sit down and meditate by a river and then feel connected to the Earth. Feeling good and having a mind clear are the only side effects. Where ever I go I am never displeased or wronged. I am only healed and loved by her compassionate arms.

By Devin Sluchinski

The Power of Mindfulness

According to Wikipedia, "mindfulness" is defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique. As someone who struggles with anxiety and depression I believe the practice of mindfulness to be absolutely crucial in my recovery. I believe our thoughts are either in the past or future when we are experiencing uncomfortable mind-states such as anxiety or depression. But if we are living truly in the present moment, we can experience life for what it really is without a negative perception. I learnt about mindfulness some years ago but I didn't have a steady practice. I began to meditate and started feeling a lot better but my practice slipped up when my schedule got busier. I noticed my anxiety and depression got worse again. I would be off in a ruminating tangent in my head and it would take me several minutes to actually realize and be conscious of my thoughts. When I got better at observing, I started to notice almost every second thought was of either the past or the future. Just this first step of noticing which time frame you're in (past present or future) can already start to make a huge difference. If you can stay in the present moment for even just one second, praise yourself. With time and patience those seconds will become minutes and eventually even hours if you continue to practice and put in the effort.

By Alissa Gunton

A Mom's Letter

I was asked to write some things I went through, being a parent, of a child with mental illness. At first it's hard to believe that your honor roll, smart, outgoing child has a mental illness. At first I just thought that he turned 19, and was getting a little wild. Then other people in the family and close friends were telling me things he was doing, that didn't make sense. So we had a family meeting, and for his own safety we had to put him into the hospital. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do. Thank God I have the best family support behind me and my son. I think family support is one of the biggest things a person needs. And another thing I found that helped me is talking to other people about it. It seems like the more you talk about it to other people the more other people confided in me about their family and what was happening to them. My son has taught me a lot; how to be patient, and sincere and Earth loving. He loves helping others and making other people happy. He is a free spirit and I love him.

By Devin's Mom, Debra

A Long Struggle

I remember being 12 or 13 years old and being so tired, and wondering how people got through their lives feeling that way. What I didn't know, was that I had depression. My family didn't know the symptoms, and I never got help. Over the next 20 years, I struggled hard. I tried everything to feel better. I tried natural medicine, healthy eating, yoga, everything I could try except for admitting that I needed medical help. At age 30, a family member approached me and suggested I seek help. I saw my doctor, and at first I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder. Over the next year, through many visits and trial and error with different medications, it was discovered that I in fact struggle with type 2 bipolar disorder, which is mainly characterized as depression, with periods of feeling normal. Now that I have the right medication, I have never felt so good in my life. I wish that either a family member had known what to look for, or that I would have been less afraid of the stigma of mental illness sooner.

By Jess

Quote of the Month

Do your little bit of good where you are: it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.

Desmond Tutu

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Important numbers

Canadian Mental Health Association Prince
George Branch: (250) 564-8644

Crisis Line: (250) 563-1214

Salvation Army Community: (250) 564-4000

Primary Care: (250) 565-2612

BC Suicide Crisis Centre: 1-800-Suicide
(784-2433)

Rainbows: (Grief & Loss) (250) 563-5584

Greetings,

At Canadian Mental Health Association Prince George (CMHAPG) we want to share with you, mental health education from those with lived experience in the form of a newsletter.

In this newsletter we hope people may connect with the individuals behind the stories on a personal level and recognize in having similar feelings and thoughts that they are not alone, but more importantly that they can reach out for support to find hope.

Mental health affects everyone - it does not discriminate and affects individuals of all ages, races, and sex. As awareness of mental health becomes more prevalent, so does the need to educate and bring awareness to the public. Statistics have shown that 1 in 5 adults experience a mental health issue in their lives and 1 in 3 working Canadians report having had a mental health condition. Depression, anxiety, bipolar, whatever name it goes by. Mental illness costs Canadian employers billions of dollars every year. The reality is mental illness is a complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors. Stigma or discrimination attached to mental illness presents a serious barrier not only for diagnosis and treatment but in bringing forth acceptance in the community.

We're hoping to receive support by advertising your business in our newsletter. Any donation to help with the cost of printing will be appreciated. Please support mental health in the workplace.

Our main goal is to shed light on the darkness of mental illness by educating the public, education provided from those who have a mental illness. In conclusion, we hope you will be a part of our project that aims to help others and bring awareness around mental health to the community.

Thank You!

Questions & Feedback?

Do You Have a Story? We would like to hear it!

We strongly believe sharing real success stories from individuals (you can remain anonymous) can help spark needed conversations about mental wellness.

Contact Ed Lui at Canadian Mental Health Association
Telephone: 250-564-8644 Ext 205
Email: edlui@cmhapg.ca

Find-A-Feeling

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HAPPY
ANGRY
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BORED
JEALOUS
WORRIED

PROUD
CONFIDENT
LONELY
SHOCKED
HOPELESS
SAD

Interesting facts:

In 2012, Canada spent 6 billion on uninsured mental health and time off work for depression and distress that was not treated by the health care system.

3.8 % of all admissions to general hospitals were due to mental illness.

By age 40, about 50 % of the population will have or have had a mental illness.

1 in 25 people live with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar, or major depression.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for men and women from adolescence to middle age. Of the 4000 Canadians who die every year as a result of suicide, most were confronting a mental illness.

CMHA National Facts