



**April- May -  
June 2018**



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Prince George  
Mental health for all

# Peers Perspective Newsletter

Vol. **2**

**Break the stigma, peers helping peers**

## Public Education

Library and pamphlets available for all at the Canadian Mental Health Association, 1152 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

**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

## 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](mailto:edlui@cmhapg.ca)

## Meditation and Mental Illness

Meditation has been around for thousands of years and it has helped many people with mental problems including me. There is a correlation between meditation and reduced anxiety or stress. I find meditation very soothing and peaceful. It has helped me reduce anxiety and stress. I get into a state of mind where I am at peace and bliss. I feel afterwards refreshed and renewed.

Meditation helps me cope with stress and illness. My illness actually starts to diminish and I feel healed. For such a simple exercise it has such great results. I feel as though I am cured when I am finished a meditation for a little while. It helps keep my thoughts positive and that's a powerful thing. The more positive I am the better I feel and the better I feel the less my illness bothers me. It quiets my mind so that I can listen to my heart and my heart says to myself... I love you. Self-love is awesome because you learn you're worth it!

Now, I'd like to make an honorable mention to those people who have importance in not only my life but the lives of others. They are our Pharmacists. They make our lives better because they fulfill an important role in dispensing our medication. But that's not all they do.... They give counsel to you when needed and good advice about other products like health supplements. They also know the ins and outs of the medication you take, so you know any dangerous side effects or what to expect from the medication. They're personal-impactful-professional and courteous. The relationship with your pharmacist is important because of the medication and how it works. To me, they are a most important service for us to help with numerous roles. I like the Shoppers Pharmacy in Spruceland...They are always helpful, informative and caring. I enjoy talking to the pharmacists because they're always smiling and friendly. Most of them know my name, so I feel personable. They take the time to get to know you and they treat me with dignity and respect, even when they know I have a mental illness. I think they must like to help others and are compassionate. They go out of their way to make sure I receive my medication promptly and always with counsel....Thank You!

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## A Journey of Hope

Hello, it's me the mentally ill  
Would you care to listen, if you do I sure will  
Be a wonderful host, take you on a journey you won't forget  
All I ask you are two things, then I'll be in debt  
To be genuinely open and to see in our eyes  
Our story needs to be told and there won't be any lies  
There's much more to us than this story tells  
But it's a start and I truly hope it rings a bell  
To a life filled with so much clouds and rain  
Are we meant to suffer? To live with this pain?  
We try to do this, we try to do that  
But knocked down we are knocked down flat  
Our thoughts are scrambled, our moods are week  
You may offer to help, but we'll turn our cheeks  
We're like the raven isolated and alone  
we yearn for acceptance and serenity we loathe  
Imagine for a moment, not having control of your brain  
You'd have everything to lose and nothing to gain  
Of humiliation we're so afraid  
From the hackling hyenas, they all laugh the same  
they talk about us behind closed doors  
Of us being crazy, trash and poor  
So their ignorance wins, their prejudice prevails  
But in their hearts they've known they failed  
Because they know a real person inside  
They see it in our actions and deep in our eyes  
We may feel hollow, a bit on the edge  
Or so depressed we feel like jumping off a ledge  
But we're so human with heart and soul  
Our blood is red, to this you know  
We are not useless, lifeless or dead  
The opinions you have are all in your head  
So speak with your heart not with your mind  
Be gentle receptive compassionate and kind  
Is it so hard to accept us, and not be afraid  
Be true to yourself, then the way is paved  
For we all have visions, we all have dreams  
We all want belonging, do you know what I mean  
Happiness and freedom are everyone's right  
We are all beautiful in the eyes of the Light  
So I hope this little story has given you some thought  
Perhaps a bit of insight into us and I thank you a lot  
Because we all have a purpose, and I'll tell you mine  
To speak out for mentally ill, and it's about time  
And if you didn't know it, I'll tell you right now  
I, Devin have a mental illness  
Does that raise your brow?

## Joke of the month

What's the difference between a hippo and a zippo?  
One is really heavy, and the other is a little lighter.

## Fear of Lightning

One of the first phobias I experienced was the fear of lightning. One day I remember my dad asking me, "Alissa, do you want to come play soccer at the school with Adrianna and I?" My stomach lurched. I love soccer, I wanted to go so bad but, *What if there's a thunderstorm? What if lightening starts shooting down from the sky, hits me, and kills me instantly? I can't chance that.*" I took a peak at the weather conditions; overcast. It wasn't raining yet but it very well could start and then lead to a thunderstorm in which I would be running around an open field just asking to be hit (in my perspective). I started getting anxious just thinking about it; my heart racing. Even if I mustered up the courage to go, I wouldn't be enjoying myself because I'd be scared a thunderstorm could break out at any moment. Another time while playing a soccer game it started to storm. My dad was coaching our team. I didn't want to let him down but I couldn't handle it, I was scared I was going to die. I kept running over to the sideline telling him I couldn't play because I was terrified. But I didn't know what was worse, being in the open field, or sitting on the sidelines on top of roots, which could be dangerous if the tree was hit by lightning. Eventually the game was called off, and I was flooded with relief. With time and exposure this phobia died out on its own without therapy but there were more phobias/obsessions to come. Having obsessive-compulsive disorder isn't just limited to those that continuously wash their hands until they're raw to get the germs off. It can manifest in so many different ways. I am extremely untidy but I have OCD. Anything can become a phobia or obsession. Something that has helped me, along with cognitive-behavioral therapy is having a healthy obsession. Something that stimulates my mind so much that it's hard to not be in the present moment. I started writing and taught myself guitar when I was about sixteen. Music has been by far what has kept me going; it can bring me out of the darkest depths of the human psyche.



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## Important numbers

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

Crisis Line: 1-888-562-1214

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

Primary Care: (250) 565-2612

BC Schizophrenia Society: 250-561-8033

Ace Centre: 250-564-3396

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 gender. 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.

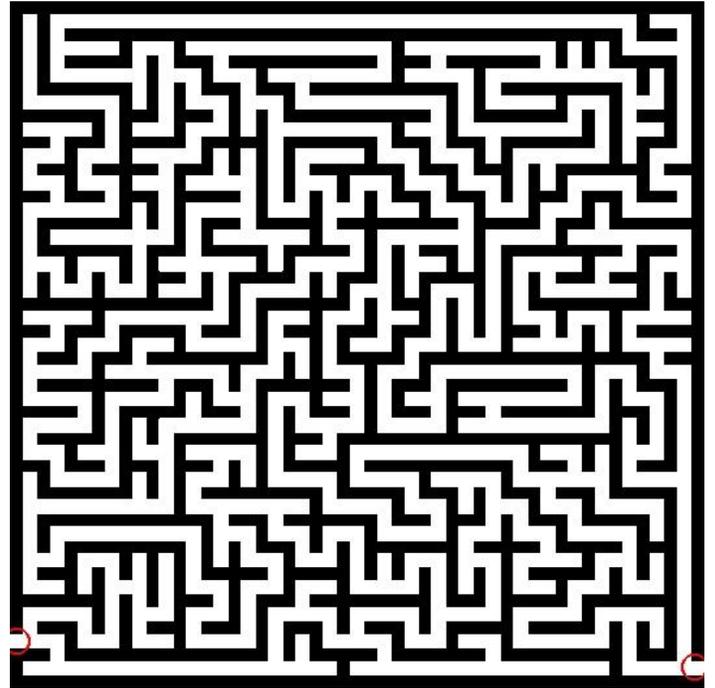
Our main goal is to shed light on the darkness of mental illness by educating the public, education provided from those who have a mental illness. In conclusion, we hope you will be a part of our project that aims to help others and bring awareness around mental health to the community.

Thank You!

### **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](http://www.princegeorge.cmha.bc.ca) to learn more on how to help Canadian Mental Health Association and your own mental Health!

### **Fun Maze**



### **Quote of the Month**

Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again

Nelson Mandela

### **Interesting facts:**

The economic cost of mental illnesses in Canada for the health care system was estimated to be at least \$7.9 billion in 1998 – \$4.7 billion in care, and \$3.2 billion in disability and early death.

Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague.

In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.

Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels, and cultures.

Schizophrenia affects 1% of the Canadian population.

Anxiety disorders affect 5% of the household population, causing mild to severe impairment.

CMHA National Facts