



MENTAL HEALTH *Matters*

Canadian Mental Health Association — Victoria County

Volume 8, No 1

May 2007

*The CMHA
envisions a society
which values
human dignity and
enhances mental
and emotional well-
being for all.*

Mental Health Week, May 7-13, 2007

WorkLife Balance: It's a matter of time

I feel like half my life I have been living according to the White Rabbit from *Alice in Wonderland*, "Oh, my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" Our slavery to time threatens to take away much of the joy in our lives.

Maybe it would help to look at it from a fresh point of view. Think about it: time is not a natural law, like gravity. It is in fact nothing but a tool, a human invention, conceived to give us a standard by which to structure our days and our lives. A notion, a fabrication, just as we have established inches and centimeters as standards to help us structure distance, and pounds and kilograms to structure weight. We might just as easily be living with hours divided into one hundred minutes...

So isn't it just as silly to let minutes and seconds rule our lives as it would be to let centimeters or milligrams control what we do and how we plan our activities?

Time need not be in control, **we** can be, once we realize that our time belongs to us, and we don't belong to our time.

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Strange, isn't it, how we surrender power over what we do and when we do it to something we have invented to make our lives easier?

Taking control of our time can help us balance our livelihood with our leisure and family life. One way we can do that is to become more aware of how we use our time, and set our own personal priorities.

To that end, it can be helpful to understand the difference between what is urgent, pressing (that is, what must be done to avert immediate disaster of one sort or another, for example, taking the time to buy gas when your gas tank is near empty) and what is important, crucial (that is, what will make things around us better in the long run, what will bring us closer to our life's goals, for example, taking the time to really *listen* to someone you love).

Once that difference is clear, once we can separate tasks and activities into degrees of urgency and degrees of importance, it is much easier to decide what to do with our hours, our days, our lives. And also, it is easier to get ourselves to accomplish things we would otherwise put off and ignore, painfully unbalancing our lives. 

Kaca Henley, Volunteer Editor

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Coming Events

Two Inspiring Speakers:

Tom Regehr is a university-educated former business owner who found himself on the streets dealing with issues of addiction, mental health and emotional trauma. He founded CAST Canada, a mutual aid empowerment group offering support, education and advocacy. Tom brings the wisdom and insight of the consumer to the helping professional and the general public.

In his teens, **John L'Allier** progressed from cannabis to cocaine and altercations with the law, while taking on a biker lifestyle. He speaks on how he was inspired to reverse his downward spiral, and today he provides support to youth at risk of following a similar road. Phone 328-2704 for further details and to register.

Minden: Wednesday, May 7, 1-3:30 pm

Lindsay: Thursday, May 10, 1-3:30 pm *or* 7-9:30 pm

Hoarding Workshop:

Jennifer Nelson helps us understand some of the complex processes that lead to hoarding situations. Learn motivational interviewing techniques for helping someone reclaim their life by clearing their clutter. Call 328-2704 for further details and to register.

Tuesday, May 1, 9 am to 3 pm.
\$25 includes lunch

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (A.S.I.S.T.)

A two-day interactive training program regarding suicide first aid designed for everyone, the professional and the non-professional. Both days must be completed for certification. Call 328-2704 for further details and to register.

May 9 and 10, 9 am -4 pm.
\$75 fee includes manual and certification

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training (CPI)

This behaviour management program will show participants how to control an "out-of-control" situation. It consists of two days of physically intensive training in non-harmful verbal and physical intervention, for those who might need to deal with agitated, angry or potentially dangerous individuals. Call 328-2704 for further details and to register.

June 7-8, \$75 fee includes all materials.

Annual General Meeting

Guest speaker, Kier Barker: born with spina bifida and not expected to live past his infancy, Kier shares his philosophy of life with us, believing that it is his outlook on life that has enabled him to face his challenges and contribute to his community while growing older with dignity. For further details and to register, phone 328-2704.

June 21, 5 pm Royal Canadian Legion hall
12 York St. North, Lindsay.

Stephanie Ratz, HKPR District Health Unit

Beating the Blahs with Physical Activity

Are you feeling down in the dumps? Low energy? Not sleeping well? Notice that your mood isn't all that positive? Everyone has times when they feel low mentally and emotionally. While the benefits of regular physical activity for physical health are becoming more widely known, fewer people may be aware that regular physical activity is equally beneficial to your mental health.

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease." The good news is that it is possible to improve your mental health with physical activity. Even though it's called **physical** activity, it is good for your body **and** your mind.

Regular physical activity can:

- √ Reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression and panic disorder
- √ Ease tension and stress
- √ Improve mood and give a sense of positive well-being
- √ Enhance self-esteem by providing a sense of control over health and body image
- √ Act as a distraction from the climate (e.g. in the winter)
- √ Provide opportunities for pleasant social interaction

These are changes that can happen right after a session, not just through exercising regularly over a long period of time, particularly if the activity is moderately intensive.

The benefits touch every aspect of our lives, including:

- √ **Communication:** expressing ourselves through movement and action; using a socially acceptable outlet for anger and aggression
- √ **Enhanced self-confidence and motivation:** through setting and reaching goals
- √ **Better sense of control:** taking action to improve our mood and health
- √ **Body image:** feeling stronger, more agile
- √ **Socializing:** developing support and friendships with fellow exercisers, in our own community

You may have heard of the "runner's high". Thankfully, you don't have to run a marathon to feel that rush of euphoria and the melting away of tension. Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommends that adults get 30 – 60 minutes of moderate effort physical activity each day. Moderate effort means that you are exerting yourself enough to break a sweat, but you can still carry on a conversation.

The natural "high" is produced by endorphins, a chemical produced in the body. They relieve pain and are also believed to enhance the immune system, reduce stress and delay the aging process.



Think of endorphins as a warm, protective cloak for your overall well-being. Although it might seem counterintuitive, by getting up and getting active, you'll have more energy. The key is to make physical activity a habit. Whether it's running on a treadmill or walking around the block, it's the regularity of activity that makes the difference. We tend to separate the mind from the body, but each affects the other. So, whether your mind gets your body moving or the other way around, remember that both are getting the benefits of physical activity!

Often the hardest part is just getting started, but if you create a plan, set a realistic goal and steps towards achieving it, you'll be on the right path to getting and staying active.

Here are a few tips:


- √ If you're already active, try to maintain or increase your level of physical activity
- √ Choose activities that you enjoy and try to do them more often
- √ Start slowly, in 10 minute blocks, and build from there
- √ Keep a log or diary to record your achievements and reward your accomplishments
- √ Build activity into your lifestyle: e.g. take the stairs or park the car a little further from your destination

When you make physical activity part of your day, you will have more energy,

sleep better, feel calmer and therefore cope better with the stresses and demands of your life. Taking control of your physical health can also give you a feeling of accomplishment and a sense of confidence. Physical activity... good for the body, good for the mind!

For more information on physical activity, call the Health Unit, 1-866-888-4577.

Sources:

1. "Be Active for your Mind and Body", Canadian Health Network, on the web at: www.canadian-health-network.ca/servlet/ContentServer?cid=1133700860100&pagename=CHN-RCS/CHNResource/CHNResourcePageTemplate&c=CHNResource
- 2., "Get Physical", Canadian Mental Health Association, on the web at: www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=2-267-1320-1321 



Emerging Into the Light

A Man and His Cat

Some months ago Tim* had to find a new apartment for himself and his only companion, his cat Bell. He was successful in finding a place where the landlord, who occupied another unit in the building, told him it was fine for him to have a cat.

Within a few short weeks of his moving in, the woman living with the landlord as his girlfriend appeared on Tim's doorstep and announced "Get your coat, we're going now to get rid of your cat."

Totally taken by surprise by this unexpected turn of events and terrified that if he did not comply he also would be thrown out, Tim collected his cat and was driven to a farm where it was dropped off. For the following weeks Tim suffered agonies of concern about what had happened to Bell, the only creature in the world who loved him unconditionally. Clearly, these unfeeling, unethical folks were so concerned about renting their units that they were prepared to say anything to entice tenants in, believing they could do anything they wished through

pressure tactics once the new tenant was in residence.

Recently, Tim moved again, this time to a place where he was encouraged to try to find his cat and bring it back to live with him. After a number of calls, and with a lot of support, Bell was found and returned to Tim; the man and his cat were happily reunited!

For many individuals who live alone, an animal companion provides contact and comfort.

Tenants cannot be prohibited from responsibly keeping pets in rented property, unless the landlord also resides on the premises and makes that a condition of the agreement.

Tenants cannot be prohibited from responsibly keeping pets in rented property, unless the landlord also resides on the premises and makes that a condition of the agreement.

Tim's situation would indicate that it would be wise to put any agreement concerning the keeping of pets in writing before signing a rental agreement. (Condominium complexes that have no pet rules in their common agreements can be an exception to this general rule.)




* Names are changed to protect privacy

Following are three simple ways for animal owners to maintain good relationships with their neighbors and landlords.

Three Tenets of Responsible Pet Ownership

Be a good neighbor: limit your animals to your own space, and keep them close to you when in public areas. Be mindful of excessive or continuous amounts of noise your animals may be making.

Keep your space clean and safe: you deserve to live in such an environment as much as your pet does. Excessive dirt and odor will annoy neighbors and could cause difficulty with the landlord, on or off site.

Be kind to your animals: always provide fresh water, wholesome food, plenty of attention, and seek medical care for them when necessary. Provincial laws protect animals from neglect and cruelty and owners not providing adequate care can be subject fines and even prosecution. 



Meditation:

**a great stress reliever and
a powerful morale booster**

There are many books written on the topic of meditation and they can be quite complex and detailed. But if you feel you already have enough details to remember and life is already complex enough, you don't need another book to make it even more so.

The strict rules that surround the idea of meditation need to be thrown out of the window, for meditation can be made a whole lot more simple.

If you decide you want to take up meditation in order to relax, you simply need to find a quiet place to sit down and relax. Simply close your eyes with the idea of meditating in mind and that's it. **YOU'RE MEDITATING.**

Simply set aside a few minutes a day that you plan to devote to the idea of meditation.

You can put on an easy listening CD or tape if you have one and that's it. Kick back and relax.

You do not have to force your mind to relax. Plan your next day if you want or what you are going to have for supper.

Eventually your mind will start to slow down and relax on its own, without you having to force it to do so. And don't worry if you happen to fall asleep, you probably needed the rest. There are many benefits to be found in meditation and they are well worth your time.

*Lynda Flagler, BA, PSW
Meditation teacher
Intuitive medium*

Consumers' Corner

Mental Illness

Mental illness is not an easy thing to be diagnosed with, it is also not an easy thing to admit to having. Unless you can admit to having a mental problem to yourself, you can get all sorts of counseling and it is not going to do you a bit of good.

I'm not a perfect angel, I've been there and done most of what other people have, drug, alcoholism and mental and physical abuse. The mental abuse part I took for quite some time before I realized that there was help out there for me or that I didn't have to put up with it, afterwards I still didn't go for counseling, unfortunate for me as I then turned to a lot of other things not so healthy, I was Miss Know-it-all and didn't need this help. Wrong. After five marriages and a huge amount of lows in my life and a very good friend, I finally got the help I needed so badly.

If anyone out in this world today thinks that they have a mental disorder, I'd advise you to seek the help you need, it will do you a world of good, it has changed my life around completely and you would be surprised at what you find out about yourself.

Frances G.A.

Forensics Team offers support services

CMHA-VCB now offers a range of support services for people involved with the criminal justice system. The Forensics Team works with three separate programs.

1. Court Diversion Services are available to people who are dealing with mental health concerns and have been charged with a minor offence, such as public mischief or theft under \$5000.00. This program assists people with developing a supportive community-based program to prevent future re-offence. The charges are withdrawn from the courts upon successful completion of a community support plan.

2. Court Support Services are available to anyone with a mental health concern involved with the criminal justice system. On-site supports at the courthouse are offered, including assistance with obtaining Legal Aid, facilitating access to Duty Counsel, and being a supportive presence in front of a judge or justice of the peace. Team staff also assist with applications for alteration of bail conditions and/or probation orders.

3. The Release from Custody Program is a province-wide program assisting people dealing with mental health concerns and who have been sentenced to serve time for their offence(s), to suc-

cessfully re-integrate into their home community. The person is connected with a Short Term Case Manager, who can help with obtaining housing, medical support, accessing community mental health programs, referral to residential treatment for addictions, and general advocacy. Staff work in partnership with employees at the Centre East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, and network with other Release from Custody Programs across Ontario.

Members of the Forensic Team

Cinnamon Tousignant leads the team, and has been with CMHA-VCB since the spring of 2005. She has worked with other CMHA Branches in the past and enjoys working with her team.

Todd Meredith and Sherry Richard staff The Court Diversion and Court Support Programs

Todd is a five-year veteran staff member at CMHA-VCB and has an educational background in Addiction Counseling. He has worked with these programs since their inception with the agency in the spring of 2005, and has watched them grow. "It's great to be part of a program that is developing, and to have input into how that happens." Asked what he likes about his job, as compared to work he was doing with the agency in the past, Todd replies, "I like having more interactions with other



agencies. Another difference is that my relationships with clients are shorter, in this work there is faster turnover." He stops to consider, and adds, "In the Court Diversion Program, we don't help divert the people, we help divert the charges."

Sherry also has a background in Addiction Counseling and started with this agency in the fall of 2006. She brings to the team her experiences overseas while working with the armed forces. To the question of what she likes about her work, she replies succinctly, "I love my co-workers, the CMHA, and the opportunity to work with people in the courts."

Laurie Green and **Brandon Riopka** staff the Release from Custody Program.

Brandon has an educational background in social work and is currently working towards his Bachelor of Social Work degree. He has been with the agency since the fall of 2005. His experience with youth complements the team's skills knowledge base nicely. His role is that of a Short Term Case Manager. "The neat thing about this job," explains Brandon, "is that the Program is filling a long-standing gap in services to a neglected group of people. We work with the sentenced population, and help to ease their transition back to the community. It is a new program, in its first year, and growing."

Laurie is the newest member of the Forensic Team. She has her Masters in Psychology and a history of working with people who are dealing with mental health concerns who are involved with the criminal justice system. In this position for only a few days, she is reluctant to make any sweeping judgments about the job. But one thing she knows already: she says, "I have a lot to learn, but really look forward to working with an experienced team of people who also have a sense of humour."

Indeed – there can be no doubt that, as a group, these four enjoy one another and their work, and clearly know how to laugh. All four chime in on the question of what they enjoy about working within this team. As they describe it, the team is cohesive in part because its members are well chosen to mesh with one another, and in part because of the leadership they work with. They agree that Cinnamon is an excellent team leader, the agency is a fine place to work, and they have high praise for other senior staff, Jennifer Cox and Naresh James.

The team's solidarity was evident when its members responded to the author's effort to take a picture of the team for this article. They felt that without its leader (who was unable to attend the interview), a team photo to accompany this article would not be right.





Cheryl-Ann Webster, artist/sculptor and inspired speaker, addresses an audience of mothers and daughters. Co-sponsored by CMHA, she spoke on self esteem and beauty as perceived by girls and women today.


Community partners for true beauty

Talk about multi-tasking: four separate community organizations, dedicated to four separate social issues, joined forces in March to sponsor an amazing art exhibit and a whole series of public talks. The Beautiful Women Project, the creation of artist Cheryl-Ann Webster, proved to be an eye opener in more ways than one.

When the Lindsay Gallery decided to bring this uncommon exhibit to town, the Canadian Mental Health Association, along with Women's Resources and the Health Unit's Body Image Task Force, offered to lend their names and support to the exhibition, and to sponsor various events.

The Project came into existence as a response to the startling wish of a 13-year-old girl for breast implant surgery. The artist created clay sculptures from casts of the torsos of real women between 19 and 91. On the surface of each sculpture, she depicted her vision of the woman's spirit, in bright colours and unique designs. The accompanying small texts give verbal insights into the individual women as well.

Many visitors, in particular males, remarked that on walking through the door, they had been a bit taken aback at the aspect of so many nude female torsos, but the naturalness, the openness and intimacy of the exhibit soon created a comfort level that allowed them to grasp and be moved by the core message. The exhibit and the lectures were aimed at dispelling the distorted body images entertained by women and girls in our society, images rooted at least in part the media's unreal notion of beauty.

In addition to a talk by the artist detailing process and background of the project, her other well-attended lectures spoke to Art as Social Commentary, Body Image & Self-Esteem, and Media Influences & Body Image. 

This Lindsay Gallery exhibition is called the Beautiful Women Project. Shown are just a few of the colourful torsos representing the natural beauty of 120 real women between the ages of 19 and 91, along with brief poetic narratives. The show is open to the public from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays, and will be up until March 31.



Body Image is not black and white

With this as her overall motto, Cheryl-Ann's sessions were interactive, each one different, each accompanied by a visual presentation, each geared to the specific audience. She approached issues of self-esteem and self-worth in a personal and entertaining manner, breaking down stereotypes - for example, showing visually how media "improve upon" the natural face and body of a young model.

Those of us who attended the show and her talks came away with a greater sense of comfort in our own physical appearance, along with the surprising realization of how similar we all are, and yet how unique.

What a genuine boost to our mental health!



Kaca Henley, Volunteer Editor

Some Surprising Life Lessons


Below, you will find a text that can teach us a double lesson. It has done the rounds of the Internet for years under the title “The Dalai Lama’s Instructions for Life”, and it has made a lot of people think long and hard about their lives and their behaviours.

Instructions for Life

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three Rs
Respect for self
Respect for others
Responsibility for all your actions
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly
6. Don't let a little dispute injure a great relationship
7. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it
8. Spend some time alone every day
9. Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer
11. Live a good honourable life; then when you get older and think back, you'll be able to enjoy it a second time
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation; don't bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge; it is a way to achieve immortality
15. Be gentle with the earth
16. Once a year, go someplace you've never been before
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for one another
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon

Only this list has nothing to do with the Dalai Lama. As an editor, I try to check things out that I am asked to include in this newsletter. I discovered that it is, in fact, from a book published back in 1991 titled *Life's Little Suggestion Book*, by Brown & Brown.

There are several (additional) life lessons to be learned here, both of them telling us to **think**: One is that its being in print or on the Internet doesn't necessarily make it 100% true. But the second is that its not being by the Dalai Lama doesn't make it any less valuable.

Isn't it amazing where we can find lessons to be learned? 


Melanie Jackson,
Public Education/FCN Coordinator

Consumer Focus Group

On February 26, consumer survivors of the CMHA Victoria County Branch and their family members, as well as interested community members, met with branch staff for the annual Focus group.

Held at the Knights of Columbus hall, this event is an opportunity for all to share thoughts and ideas about the services the branch currently offers, and about how changes could be made to help the branch better meet community needs in the future.

This event is looked forward to with great anticipation by staff, as it is not often we see so many of the folks we work with on a daily basis together in the same place. The pizza we share afterwards is also greatly appreciated by everyone in attendance!

As always, we got top marks for what we currently do, and some excellent ideas for things to come. Thanks to one and all for participating towards keeping our branch “on its toes” as one of the leaders in community mental health service delivery. See you again next year! 


Affordable housing

Since April 2005, federal, provincial and municipal governments have been working with a plan to potentially invest a minimum of \$734 million across Ontario to create affordable housing under the Affordale Housing Program (AHP). The City, as the Service Manager for the COKL and Haliburton County, has received an allocation for the construction of 25 units (\$1.75 million) under the AHP, two of them for victims of domestic violence and three for persons living with mental illness.

The federal funding is equal to 38% of the total funding and is provided as a forgivable capital loan available during the development and construction phase of the project. The provincial funding is equal to 62% of AHP project funding. The average combined federal and provincial contribution is \$70,000.00 per unit.

The City will provide financial contributions/incentives in the form of waivers, to a maximum of \$10,000 per unit, of fees like those for planning applications, building permits, developmental charges and rezonings.

Statistics show that this is a wise investment. According to the Access to Permanent Housing Committee, it costs at least \$10,900 to keep a homeless person in a hospital bed for a month, \$4333 to keep that same person in a jail cell, and \$1,932 for bed in a homeless shelter. The average cost of providing a rent supplement to that same person for a private rental unit is approximately \$701.

In our experience, people with mental illness need a wide variety of supports, in addition to affordable housing, to prevent homelessness and to ensure their tenure in the community. Many are available from the local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, including crisis prevention and intervention; education and training in the areas of life and social skills; stress / symptom / anger / mood and behaviour management; emotional support; support groups; voluntary trusteeship, etc.. 

Naresh James, Executive Director

Federal budget responds to mental health needs

The creation of a Mental Health Commission to lead the development of a national mental health strategy was announced in the federal budget of March 19, 2007. Retired senator Michael Kirby will chair the Commission, with a budget of \$10 million for each of the first two years and \$15 million for following years.

It is reported that as it moves forward, the Commission will focus on five priority areas: stigma reduction, workplace mental health, aboriginal and children's mental health, and the creation of a Knowledge Exchange Centre.

The key principles are that the Commission be an independent not-for-profit organization at arm's length both from government and existing mental health stakeholder organizations, and that the central focus of its

activities be individuals living with mental illness, and their families.

Key elements in its mission are:

1. To act as a facilitator, enabler and supporter of a national approach to mental health issues
2. To be a catalyst for reform of mental health policies and improvements in service delivery
3. To educate all Canadians about mental health and increase mental health literacy among them, particularly among those who are in leadership roles such as employers, members of the health professions, teachers etc
4. To diminish the stigma and discrimination faced by Canadians living with a mental illness and their families.

Reactions from the mental health community:

"This budget continues a sustained commitment to community mental health that has been an important achievement of this government," said Michelle Gold, Senior Director of Policy and Programs for the Canadian Mental Health Association-Ontario.

"We would like to congratulate Michael Kirby on being named Chair of the new Canadian Mental Health Commission. His passion and commitment--as well as that of his Senate Committee colleagues--have resulted in the creation of this new commission today, and his leadership will ensure that it makes a real difference tomorrow. We are thrilled," said Dr. Paul Garfinkel, President and CEO of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

"I would like to commend the Government of Canada for announcing the creation of a Mental Health Commission, commencing with the 2007 budget. ... A Mental Health Commission provides the venue and concerted effort required to develop a coordinated and strategic approach to mental health issues across this country. A mental health strategy for Canada is urgently needed that promotes mental health and provides a continuum of services and supports for persons with mental illness. ... CMHA, Ontario is keen to support and work with the Commission, as its work proceeds." From a letter to Minister of Health Tony Clement, from Judith Watson, President, Board of Directors, CMHA Ontario.

