



October-November  
December 2018

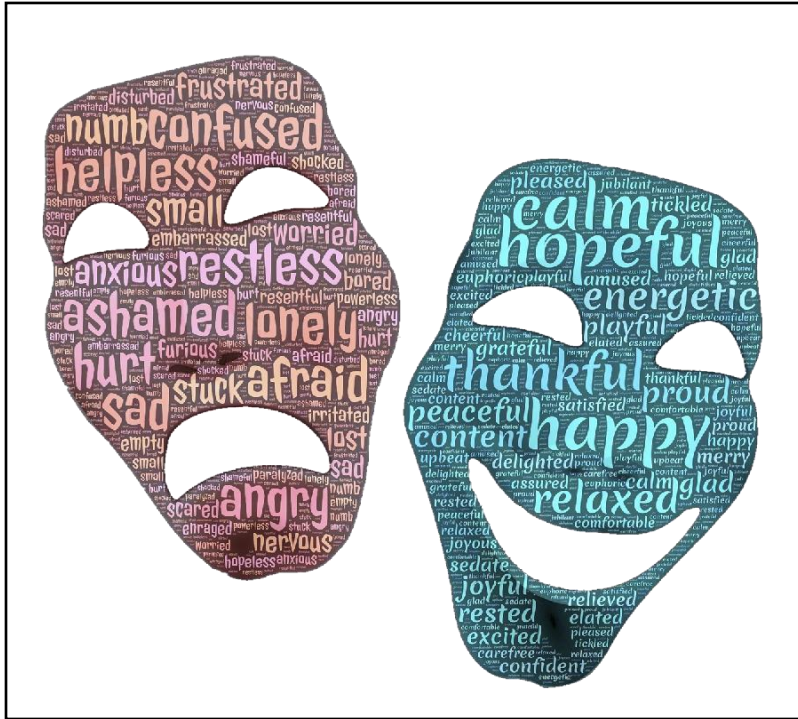


Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Prince George  
Mental health for all

# Peers Perspective Newsletter

Vol. **4**

**Break the stigma, peers helping peers**



## Here is my article. What do you think?

Hello, my name is Angie. I am a mother, an entrepreneur, and a volunteer. I became a mother at 39, late in life because I thought I didn't want children. I thought that because I was terrified of genetically passing down Mental Disorders. I decided I wouldn't let fear get in the way of creating a family! I don't personally suffer from psychiatric disorders however my father who died by suicide did. Also, my brother deals with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia every day. Over the years I have watched the suffering it has caused him. There is nothing easy about it, but he does live a rich and full life and has not been hospitalized for over 5 years now!

I think my brother found balance by really focusing on his well-being every day, and it is hard work! He does hear voices, but now he knows his dark voice tries to control him and feed him negativity. He has learned how to cope with it. He doesn't miss his medications, he doesn't drink or do drugs. He supplements vitamins and minerals, he meditates, does physical activities. He works and volunteers. He takes time to do the things he loves like fishing, going on long walks

## 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 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  
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Email: [edlui@cmhappg.ca](mailto:edlui@cmhappg.ca)

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and spends a lot of time with family and friends.

For the 20 years he did not have balance, all we (his family) could do was be there for him. We all felt helpless. It is so hard to watch someone you love suffer when there is nothing you can really do to help. Since I don't live in the same city as my brother I thought the least I can do is help my local Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Northwest Region. So, I joined the board of directors. I have been a board member for years, the last two years I have served as president of the board. Volunteering is good for my mental health. It feels good knowing our board has had a big impact on steering CMHA ANWR in the direction that helps the most people in our community.

My advice to anyone who wants to impact the mental health of others. **Smile often** and **Listen**. And if you have time, I promise volunteering with help with your mental health too.

**Angie Saltman**

**Quade's story...**

When I was 12 my best friend I spoke with and hung around with, one day disappeared without a trace. When I asked his parents they said he is no longer here. I felt that life was over, I blamed myself for the last 10 years for him disappearing. I got so depressed I went to the high school counsellor every day. The guilt and sadness was so deep... I could not see reality. Because of my symptoms I got depressed severely. I really tried to battle back, it was 16 when I tried to hurt myself. I was in the process of going thorough with it then a phone call came in and it was a high school friend who was concerned about me... coincidence? Or was it a higher power. As I reflect back I believe it was the creator that saved me back then. That was the first time I was able to be open with someone and tell her that things were very bad. As the years passed and I tried to survive. I decided to seek supports and talked to a peer support worker about this at CMHA. It took him to change the fact that it was not my fault... As I kept meeting with peer support it slowly did change, and I was able to accept that yes it was out of my control and I had not driven him away. It was not my fault. A miracle happened and I was able to find my friend again, 10 years later... I found out the real story of where he went. I was able to challenge all the lies my head has been telling me all these years... It was like a weight was lifted off my shoulders... I now can say that I was real with depression and overcame the fears with supports and with my faith... I am new person today and can close the case.

**Quote of the Month**

This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.

Dalai Lama



## My Breakdown

About 11 years ago I had a breakdown. For about 50 Years everything was going along fine, then all of a sudden, I found myself on the other side of the tracks and didn't care anymore. I was making mistakes at work and lost stuff off the truck I was driving. It wasn't like me to do that. When I got to the jobsite in Quesnel, people there thought I might be having a heart attack, so they took me to the Hospital. It turned out to be an attack of anxiety. My wife had to come pick me up. The Doctor said to take some time off work and take it easy for a while. I went on short term medical leave. As a result of my mental health issues, I ended up on the Psychiatric Ward in the hospital here in PG. My diagnosis is Bipolar-Anxiety-Depression. As a result of my anxiety, my Psychiatrist prescribed some medication to help me cope better. I felt like I did not care about anything, I was having trouble reading, and trouble comprehending... ("Listen to what I say not what I do"). I lost my "jokiness" for about 8 years, and lost some friends... one or two true friends stuck by me. I have had episodes of asking, "Why am I here?" and some Depression with suicidal thoughts. I was a gambler, and a shopper, but now with the meds, I'm just a shopper. The meds helped me to see what I was doing and helped to clarify what was going on. I was gambling using my credit card and shopping impulsively. My own judgement gets off-kilter when I am in a "Manic" state of mind. Now, I don't over indulge in things. For example, I saw a drone (flying machine) at the Salvation Army thrift store, and I was tempted to buy it, but I made a conscious decision not to. I also found that I was obsessed with collecting things such as old washing machines to repair. When I take a look at my family, I can see there is a history of mental health issues. My yard is a mess, my Dad's yard was a mess, and my Grandad's yard was a mess, same yard, three generations have lived there. Back in the "Old Days" you just didn't talk about mental health issues. It was more like, "Suck it up and carry on". My neighbors complained to the Regional District about our messy yard and the RD told us to clean it up. During the last year and a half, I realized the cycle needed to stop. That is when I reached out to CMHA and BCSS(ACE) to get involved in peer support to start the change in me. I've gotten back to doing things, I work for my daughter's business. I hired a driver to make the delivery runs for me so that I can have the time I need to get things done at home, such as cleaning up the yard. Volunteering with ACE and Peer Support has helped me to make a lot of new friends, although I did lose a few old friends along my journey. I also spend some of my time on the computer. ACE really helped me and so has CMHA Peer Support. I have a mental illness, "Been there, done that". Now I just take it a day at a time.

**Joke of the month** --- I was acting like a flamingo yesterday, and my wife told me to stop acting like that, so I had to put my foot down

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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.

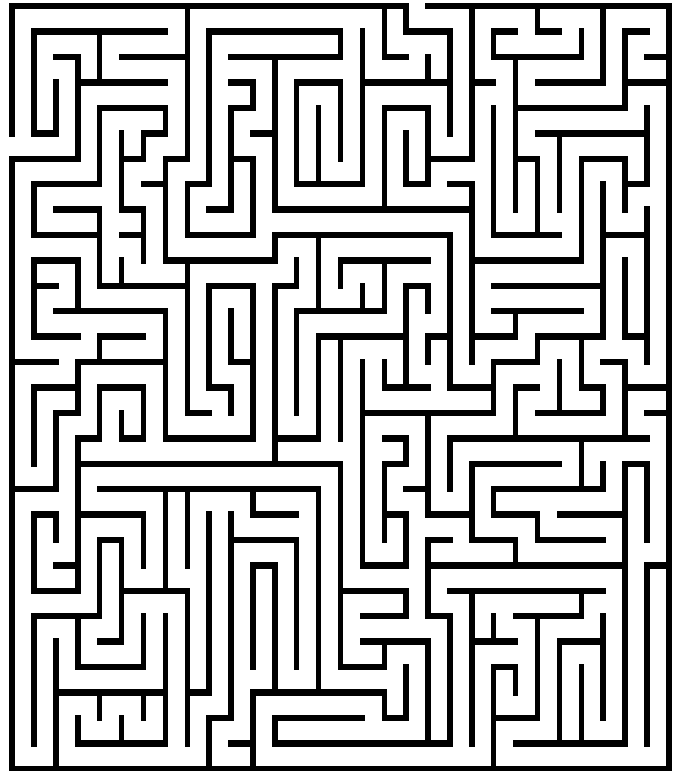
We're hoping to receive support by advertising your business in our newsletter. Any donation to help with the cost of printing will be appreciated. Please support mental health in the workplace.

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!

## Feedback

We would love for you to offer your ideas and feedback on the newsletter. If you would like to see a particular story or something we could add to the newsletter please feel free to tell us. The newsletter is about hearing how you are able to find hope in your life. It's about reaching to others who may feel alone in their own lives, and with their own struggles. You're the voice that gives hope to others



## 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!

## Schizophrenia

I have lived over half my life with this illness. I'm 43 now so you do the math... It's been a hard battle, but now I think I have it under control. I have a voice in my head, it's not a sound but more like a thought. This is hard enough to deal with on its own... The main problem with the voice is that it is always negative and hurting. It will say things like, "you're no good, or you'll never make it in life." The scary thing is that it's aware of itself, it's not some random thoughts. Having schizophrenia means having delusions or hallucinations or both. I've had both. I used to believe I could speak telepathy to people and live TV. It took a long time to realize it wasn't true. The psychiatrist put me on medication for the symptoms and they helped. I have yet found a medication that gets rid of my voice and I live with it day by day. My Dad had a mental illness, so I probably got it from him. Genetically, Schizophrenia affects 1% of the population but for me it's over 10%. I think I would wish this illness to no one and am very compassionate to others dealing with the illness. All I can do is keep trying and not give up.