



Peers Perspective Newsletter

Vol. 8

Break the stigma, peers helping peers

In the movies....

Recently I seen a 6 minute movie at a volunteer appreciation dinner, and I was in it... Earlier in the summer I was filmed about how has Connections Clubhouse helped me through the years. They filmed me at Fort George Park at a picnic table and at the Fraser River fishing and at Canadian Mental Health Association(CMHA) washing their windows. I told them at one point I was working for the Clubhouse, as a student one summer...then later I became ill with a mental illness and visited Connections Clubhouse as a consumer! It was weird at first but the people there were so warm and Kind that I felt a belonging. Later in life CMHA had a project to look after Vivian Lake Resort and I helped by being the Caretaker! What a beautiful job that was! Every morning I went to the dock and sipped on coffee while I watched and listen to the waves! CMHA has always been there for me.... They always had something for me to do... One time a staff member at CMHA received a donation and then she hired me to visit people on the Psych Ward. Every day I would go to the Ward and visit someone who the staff at the Ward would choose and I found it very fulfilling. CMHA is a great organization! They are all very compassionate and caring. I find that they are always willing to help and find stuff to do. Over all, the staff at CMHA are excellent and understanding, they have really made a difference!

Devin S

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. Depression, anxiety, bipolar, whatever name it goes by, 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!

Quote

Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.

Buddha




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I have “Schizophrenia”

I have “schizophrenia” you say! You say I feel, hear, see and sense things that are not real and not there. You say I am paranoid and read too much into things that “I believe” are way too bizarre and simply not normal.

I am told that if I want to say something truly happened, and or is happening that no one would believe, I must state first “I believe” this or that to be true. You do not say you believe, you say it is fact! I am not allowed to state something is fact unless I can prove to you with hard evidence.

If you cannot feel, hear, see and sense something, does that mean that it does not exist? Does evil exist, does God exist, do ghosts even exist?

Is there anything in the English dictionary that does not exist? You can find the words “dinosaur” and “ghost” in the dictionary but maybe you say they no longer exist!

“Schizophrenia” is a word also and I believe/know you know it to be a fact!

What you probably don’t know about schizophrenia is the What and the Why.

You think you know but I know you don’t! What you don’t know won’t really hurt you! If you do know – then what? Who can you really talk to about it all?

I have uncovered the power of the human mind. It’s true power exists in the powerful sub-conscious! During mindful calm or intense mania, there exists so far a raging battle that is ongoing between good and evil!

I have learned not to punish my mind for the gift of awareness that apparently most others do not have. I have learned that if you don’t believe me I am now really good with that. I have learned to not worry about what you think!

I have learned to not tell you three things... Everything! Nothing! and Anything! I want you to remember the What and the Why.

I have schizophrenia, to whom can I talk to?

Anonymous

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.

How my story begins...

When I decided to sit down and write my story, my first thought was no big deal, it happened almost 20 years ago... As I started to go into my memories, I started to tear up inside, like my inner child was reliving the trauma again. I know I had to take a big deep breath and just start writing. I had worked my way up in the financial institutions and thought things were in control when I started to notice odd changes in me. I was having a hard time getting to sleep, constant headaches, fatigue, patience was not there, and was emotional when dealing with the clients and staff at the bank. At the time I dismissed it as just normal and fought through everything. People around me noticed me not being the same. One day I realized that I was not doing well and went to the doctor. He said that you need to take time off as you're tired. The doctor did not mention anything about mental illness being present. Back then I knew nothing of it, just normal life stuff. I took off a couple weeks.... thinking it would help. It did not change anything. So I went back to work dismissing it. I lasted another month and the symptoms got worse to the point of effecting me at work and home. I was the one at the bank as the one who did everything, always positive, worked well with people and took the most difficult client cases. One day I hit the wall.... I had thought about ending my life, had a plan, a place and didn't care anymore. Just so tired. The doctor now told me I needed medication, a counsellor and to go on short term disability.

That lasted 6 months and I felt and dismissed everything again.(denial) I remember crying all out of the blue in front of my boss... she asked what's wrong....remember saying I don't know. So I left again, but this time I had to admit to myself that something was wrong. I have been off for the last ten years, on long term disability, medicated and going to weekly counselling appointments. I remember going to groups within Northern Health...group after group, my psychiatrist kept rolling the dice when it came to trying new medications. I ended up in the psych ward after seeing bugs and hearing things that I thought were real. There were so many days that I have forgotten as my mind and body was not well. All sorts of emotions, anger with my family, always yelling, isolation. All those things I can only admit to myself reflecting back. It's like a cloud that never lifts. A dream. I believe after all the years off work and not being present allowed the medication to find a balance chemically and the counsellor who has been very patient with me. My turning point was one day I was in group and I said in my head "I have analyzed it to death... I cannot find an answer to fix me" I made the choice to go back to school and try to use my disadvantage as an advantage. Using my life experiences to be successful in school. I went to school and I did have an advantage over other students it seemed. I was able to feel what the text books were saying ... instant understanding. I pushed through my fears and came up with coping skills to make sure I was successful in school. I look back and

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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 Activity Centre: 250-564-3396

I think my recovery was due to allowing my mind and body to heal over the 10 years, good counselling that allowed me to vent and reflect and medication balance to take off the edge. But the biggest thing was my quest to learn about my "new" self.... Understand why I feel the way I do. Along my journey I have found opportunities to learn and reflect on the person I have become. Learn, accept, endure... -- Me

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

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 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

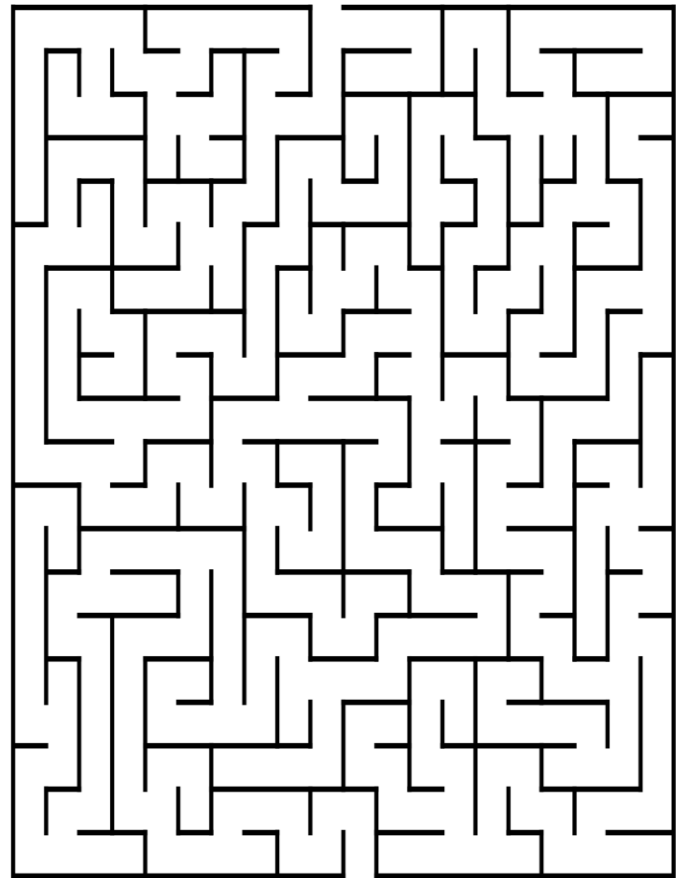
Questions & Feedback?

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
Telephone: 250-564-8644 Ext 205
Email: edlui@cmhapg.ca

Maze



How would you like to volunteer!

We at Canadian Mental Health Association are always welcoming new peoples who would like to volunteer and give their time and effort to a good cause. We hope to help people with mental illness with all their troubles or problems. Just go on our website

www.princegeorge.cmha.bc.ca for more information

Just a Fact

Schizophrenia affects 1% of the Canadian population.

Humour

I waited and stayed up all night and tried to figure out where the Sun was...Then it "Dawned" on me...What "Dew I Dew" today?

Opinions expressed are solely the individual author's and do not necessarily express the views or opinions of the Canadian Mental Health Association.