

September 2011



MENTAL ILLNESS FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE (B.C. Schizophrenia Society)
SALMON ARM BRANCH

FAMILY & FRIENDS

Let's Spring into Fall

Well, it has definitely been a wet summer. The spring was cool and rainy and by mid-August we were still having a mixture of rain and sunny days. So now it is September and everyone is gearing up for the fall and winter months. The leaves are starting to turn colours and the kids are heading back to school.



This fall will be busy again, we are gearing up for the Strengthening Families Together Workshop which will start on September 21st. We have Mental Illness Awareness Week which is October 2nd to 8th. And I have scheduled another lunch hour Mental Health Video Event starting October 6. We also have the World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 to consider as well. More information on these events can be found inside this newsletter along with some upcoming events happening in Vernon.

As you can see, the above is just a hint of what we have coming up and we always have things on the planning board. Do stop in at the office here in Salmon Arm, for any information or unscheduled events of interest that may develop from time to time. It will be great to meet with you.

So, if you have a bit of time and would like to learn more about mental illness or to volunteer, come on in, many hands make light work.

Hope you enjoy the Salmon Arm Fall Fair this weekend.

Donna Miller
Family Support Coordinator

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The International Association for Suicide Prevention invites you to light a candle at 8 PM



World Suicide Prevention Day

On September 10th

World Suicide
Prevention Day

Light a candle near
a window at 8 PM

to show your support
for suicide prevention

to remember a lost loved one

and for the survivors
of suicide

iasp.info/wspd



Antidepressant ABC's

Excerpts from Chatelaine - Health
by: Lesley Young

Antidepressants can be lifesavers, washing away the chronic despair and anxiety that threaten countless Canadian women. But if you or someone you love is taking them, you may be concerned about side effects, especially given a recent Health Canada advisory flagging suicide as a possible reaction to certain antidepressants such as Prozac and Paxil. The United Kingdom is also advising against antidepressants for people under 18, as studies show that risks may outweigh benefits for this group.

Don't panic. And if you think you're depressed, but alarming reports keep you from getting help, don't let them. Antidepressants save thousands of lives every year, says Dr. Shaila Misri, a professor of psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. And potential side effects are manageable in all but 15 per cent of people who respond to antidepressants. The real problem, says psychiatric pharmacist Wende Wood at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, is the lack of understanding about depression and how antidepressants work. So, what do you need to know? You may be depressed and not know it

About 25 per cent of women will experience a bout of depression, anxiety or both in their lifetime; however, fewer than half will seek treatment, and many will be incorrectly diagnosed. "People think of depression as being sad and crying all the time," says Wood, "but the illness can involve aches and pains and being tired all the time, too."

A recent survey presented by the Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments found that fatigue is the most common and debilitating symptom of depression, before and after treatment. Other symptoms include changes in sleep, headaches, a feeling of hopelessness and thoughts of suicide, says Dr. Misri. Talk to your doctor about physical symptoms such as these, or if you've experienced a depressed mood for at least two weeks. Finding the right treatment takes time

Once correctly diagnosed, half of all depressed patients will need to try two or more different antidepressants before finding one that works and has tolerable side effects, says Dr. Anthony Levitt, psychiatrist-in-chief at Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre in Toronto. Doctors have little way of knowing

which drugs work best for whom, and it can take four to six weeks to tell if an antidepressant is doing the job. In the meantime, you may have to cope with side effects, such as nausea and anxiety, which are typically more severe at the outset (Commonly prescribed antidepressants see Commonly prescribed antidepressants). Lately, Wood adds, physicians have begun prescribing lower doses of two antidepressants at the same time. While it increases the number of side effects you might experience, the severity of those side effects may be reduced.

For the uninformed, the drug trial period can be a crushing letdown, as well as physically exhausting. Karen Liberman, executive director of The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario in Toronto, is an extreme example. She had to try 26 different antidepressants, starting with Prozac when it hit the market in 1986, before finding the right match for her, Remeron. But Liberman never gave up, despite, as she says, "the vicious nature of the illness, which tells you it's your fault when a drug doesn't work." Quitting or changing your dosage on your own could make you sick

Once you find an antidepressant that works for you, your physician may still need to fine-tune the dosage to tone down side effects, says Wood. Recommended dosage varies for each antidepressant and for each patient. "Some people can get up to a full dose within a few days," says Wood. "For others, it can take a few weeks." "It is really quite shocking how many people who get side effects won't go back to their doctor," Wood says. "They just stop taking the antidepressant." A study in the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry shows that as many as 44 per cent of patients stop taking their medication by the third month of therapy. Common reasons: fear caused by side effects or the erroneous belief that the depression was cured.

While Health Canada contends antidepressants are not addictive, your physician will need to wean you off them by lowering the dosage. Quitting the drugs suddenly can result in withdrawal symptoms, including extreme anxiety, flu-like feelings, electrical sensations and thoughts of suicide. Health Canada also cautions pregnant women against quitting their drugs without consulting their physician, despite its recent warning that antidepressants may have adverse effects on newborns such as jitters, seizures and feeding and breathing problems. Still, according to Wood, the benefits of staying on antidepressants during pregnancy may still outweigh the risks of quitting them. Experts say the most important thing you can do when



Antidepressant ABC's - cont'd

on antidepressants is continually consult with your physician. "Try to see your doctor once a week for at least the first three or four weeks of treatment," says Dr. Misri. How do you know when you've found your fit? Ideally, the drug makes you feel as you did before you were depressed with no, or few, side effects. You can play a part in beating depression, too

Medication alone won't be enough to cope with depression. While not every patient needs therapy, according to Dr. Misri, people should seek out some support—even if it's just talking to a doctor and supportive friends. "Some people expect antidepressants to cure everything. They don't," says Wood.

Research is demonstrating that combining depression treatment with a healthy lifestyle—including regular exercise—can help recovery, adds Dr. Misri. So, try to address unfulfilling jobs or relationships, maintain good sleeping patterns and learn stress management skills. You may need treatment indefinitely—but that may not be a bad thing Wood says you can expect to be on an antidepressant for one year to treat your first episode of

clinical depression. Fifty per cent of people treated successfully for one bout of depression will never experience the illness again. But if you have a second episode, antidepressants for two to five years can help. You and your doctor may decide that you take the drug indefinitely.

Liberman will never quit her medication because if she gets ill again, the same drug may not work a second time. Taking medication for mental illness is no different from taking medication for diabetes or thyroid disease, she says. "After seven years on my medication," she adds, "in my heart of hearts, I believe I've beaten this." Knowledge is power.

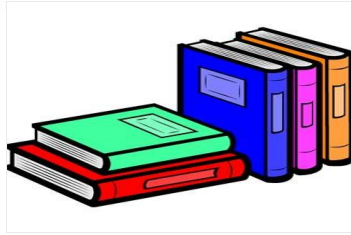
Use the chart below to find out about side effects of the most commonly prescribed antidepressants and what not to mix with them, according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. Note: side effects vary for each individual.

Commonly prescribed antidepressants

DRUGS	SIDE EFFECTS	AVOID
citalopram (Celexa); fluoxetine (Prozac); fluvoxamine (Luvox); paroxetine (Paxil); sertraline (Zoloft)	nausea, insomnia, headaches, sexual dysfunction, jitters/restlessness, dry mouth, drowsiness	St. John's wort; monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs); antidepressants such as phenelzine (Nardil) and tranylcypromine (Parnate); alcohol, which can increase side effects; and caffeine, which may trigger anxiety and insomnia
venlafaxine (Effexor, Effexor XR)	sedation, insomnia, headaches, dry mouth, constipation, sweating, dizziness, nausea, sexual dysfunction, increased blood pressure	MAOIs; alcohol, which can increase side effects; caffeine, which may heighten anxiety and insomnia. Use with caution if you have hypertension
mirtazapine (Remeron)	sedation, fatigue, dry mouth, constipation, increased appetite, weight gain	MAOIs; alcohol, which can increase side effects. Dosage adjustment may be required if taken with carbamazepine (Tegretol, Tegretol-XR)
bupropion (Wellbutrin SR, Zyban)	jitters, insomnia, headaches, dry mouth, nausea	MAOIs; stimulants. Epileptics may suffer increased seizure risk



In Our Library



In our library, we also have the following toolkits:

1. **How You Can Help** - a toolkit for families
2. **Family Self-Care and Recovery from Mental Illness.**

We also have the book “**Safe and Secure**” - Six steps to creating a good life for people with disabilities, which is information on the Registered Disability Savings Plan. If you have someone that has a disability, whether it is a physical or mental disability, and they are being left an inheritance, it would be a good idea to read this book. It is well worth your time.

Our book lending library is full of books on different mental illnesses as well as information on addictions. Several new books are added each year to our library, so if there is a particular book on a mental illness and/or addiction that you think would be of benefit to have in the library, please call and suggest it. I am always looking for new titles.

MENTAL HEALTH VIDEO EVENT

Come to the **FREE** lunch hour (12 to 1pm) video event at the Family Centre on the corner of Trans Canada Hwy. and Alexander Ave. Bring a bag lunch and sit back and relax.

October 6—Living with Schizophrenia—A video for people with schizophrenia and those who care about them.

October 20—Cry for Help—A critical look at the issues surrounding teen depression and suicide.

October 27—Fight or Flight - Overcoming panic and agoraphobia.

Bring a friend.

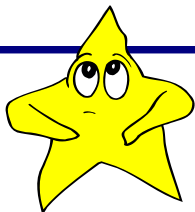
ATTITUDE



Don't EVER give up!

I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes.”

Charles Swindoll



DID YOU KNOW??

The amount spent for anti-depressants in Canada in **2007** was;

- \$35.00 per capita equaling \$1.16 billion overall.
- Amount spent for ages 45 - 64: \$57.00 per capita
- Amount spent for ages 20 - 44: \$30.00 per capita

The growth rate of anti-depressant use in Canada from 1998 to 2007: 4.6% year over year.



Family Support Group

Future Family Support Group dates are:
September 29, October 27,
November 24, and December 29

Do you have a family member or close friend who has been diagnosed with a mental illness? Do you feel you would like to talk about what you are going through with others that are going through similar feelings or issues with their mentally ill relative? Then come and join us. The Family Support Group provides a confidential and caring environment to share experiences and knowledge with others who have first hand experience in supporting a loved one with a mental illness. We meet on the last Thursday of every month from 7-9 p.m. We are located at 181 Trans Canada Hwy. N.E. Salmon Arm, which is on the corner of the Trans Canada Hwy and Alexander Street. There is parking on Alexander Street and at the back of the building. Please come to the front door. For more information call Donna at (250) 832-2170 ext. 206.



PASS IT ON

Strengthening Families Together Workshop -

Salmon Arm - starts Sept. 21 - pre-register by calling Donna at (250) 832-2170 ext 206 .

Vernon - starts Sept. 29 - pre-register by calling Diane at (250) 260-3233

Family Support Group - Salmon Arm - Last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Family Centre. Call Donna at (250) 832-2170 ext 206 for more information.

The Mental Health Video Event has been scheduled, so check out the information on [Page 4](#) of this newsletter for dates, times and titles.

A Ceremony of Remembrance - (World Suicide Prevention Day) Saturday, Sept. 10 at 4:30 p.m. in Polson Park, Vernon. Call Diane at (250)260-3233 for more information.



Strengthening Families

Together

Helping Canadians Live with Mental Illness

Our next workshop in Salmon Arm starts

SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

This **FREE** 6 session, confidential, Wednesday evening workshop is an educational program for family members and close friends of individuals living with a mental illness, to help you understand and support your loved one while maintaining your own well-being. This program provides information, skill building, support, awareness and self-care. This class fills early so call Donna at (250) 832-2170 ext. 206 before September 20th to **pre-register**.



INFORMATIVE WEBSITE

This site is based out of Victoria and is support for teens who have a parent that has a mental illness. This site is affiliated with BCSS Victoria Branch. Look around the site, it is very good.

<http://thinkinsideout.ca>

INSPIRATION

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

By George Bernard Shaw

CONTACT US

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181 Trans Canada Hwy N.E., Box 914,
Salmon Arm, B.C.V1E 4P1

Ph: (250) 832-2170 ext. 206 Fax: (250) 833-0137
Office Hours: Walk-in: Tues. to Thurs.: 1:00 - 4 pm .

By appointment: Tues. to Thurs. 9 am - 12 pm

Email: salmonarm@bcss.org

Website: www.mifsc.ca

Vernon Branch:

Dianne Hustler—Family Support Coordinator
#301 - 2 3402 – 27thAve., Vernon, B.C. V1T 1S1

Ph:(250) 260-3233 Fax: (250) 260-3212

Email: bcssvernon@shaw.ca

Website: www.mifsc.ca

BCSS PROVINCIAL WEBSITE: www.bcss.org

BE A BCSS MEMBER

A five dollar membership to BCSS Vernon/Salmon Arm entitles you to a vote at our Annual General Meeting and you will also receive our newsletter, (via email), Family & Friends.

If you would like to become a member of the BC Schizophrenia Society Vernon/Salmon Arm, please fill out this form and drop it off at our Salmon Arm or Vernon office or you can send it to:

MENTAL ILLNESS FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRES

BCSS - Salmon Arm
(PO Box 914)

181 Trans Canada Hwy NE
Salmon Arm, BC V1E 4P1

or BCSS – Vernon
#301 – 2 3402 27 Ave.
Vernon, BC V1T 1S1



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: (h) _____

(w) _____

Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

*Expiry Date: **March 31, 2012***

Membership dues

- \$5.00 Cheque (to BC Schizophrenia Society– Vernon)
 \$5.00 Cash

In addition to dues, I wish to make a donation to BCSS.

_____ Donation Amount

- Cheque (to BC Schizophrenia Society– Vernon)
 Cash

The BC Schizophrenia Society, Vernon Branch is an Incorporated Branch Society and Registered Charity
867 308 389 RR0001

Your generosity is appreciated.

Receipts will be issued upon request, for income tax purposes.