



Mental Illness Family Support Centre BC Schizophrenia Society - Vernon

Winter 2011

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VERNON OFFICE HOURS

Walk-in:

Mon. to Thurs.: 9:00 to 12:30

By appointment:

Mon. to Thurs. 12:30 – 4:00 pm

Fridays 9:00 to 12:30

*Other times available by request

Email: bcssvernon@shaw.ca

Website: www.mifsc.ca

SALMON ARM BRANCH

Donna Miller - Family Support Coordinator
181 Trans Canada Hwy N.E.
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Salmon Arm, B.C.
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BCSS PROVINCIAL WEBSITE

www.bcscs.org



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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The holiday season can be a time of great joy and excitement, but with all of the hustle and bustle, it can also be a time of stress and anxiety and a time of loneliness. Here are some self-care and coping ideas:

Traditions

Traditions can be very important and very comforting, but sometimes they can also be stressful or bring up painful feelings. Perhaps creating a new tradition may relieve some stress or bring new hope into your celebrations.

Too Busy?

Ask yourself if a particular activity or event is really important to you. If it isn't, it's okay to say, "no thanks" sometimes. Get others involved in gift wrapping, meal preparation, household chores, decorating. Have pot luck gatherings instead of cooking for large groups. Make a to do list and do the most important things on the list first. As you move down the list, the tasks get easier and you may even choose to not sweat the small stuff.

Overspending

Prepare a budget and stick to it. Get creative - give a "gift certificate" that's redeemable for snow shoveling, baby-sitting, house-sitting etc. Make a plan to give presents only to children, limit the cost of presents or have a secret draw where each person gets a present for only one other person.

Family concerns

Be realistic in your expectations. People and relationships don't change just because it is the holiday season. Encourage family to keep conversations light and avoid dealing with large issues at gatherings. Consider having separate gatherings if certain groups of people don't get along.

Take care of yourself

Eat healthy food, drink water, exercise, take some time to enjoy a hobby, seek support from others or just relax and put your feet up. If you are feeling lonely, reach out to help others.

Wishing you and yours a safe and happy holiday season!

*Holiday Hours: Our office will be closed from
Dec. 24, 2011 - Jan. 2, 2012*

We look forward to seeing you again Jan. 3, 2012

Six family members completed our fall session of Strengthening Families Together on November 3rd. Thanks you to all of you for participating so openly and thanks to Gloria for co-facilitating our fall session.

This FREE 6 week workshop is a national educational support program for family members and close friends of individuals living with mental illnesses such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and anxiety. You will learn about:

- Mental illnesses
- How to support your loved one
- Medications and treatments
- Tools for coping



If you would like to register for our spring session, please contact Dianne at : 250-260-3233 or bcssernon@shaw.ca

KIDS IN CONTROL

A wonderful group of four children completed our fall session of Kids In Control and with perfect attendance no less! This program offers education and support to children between the ages of 8 and 13 years of age who have a parent living with a mental illness. The children meet for one and a half hours, once a week for eight consecutive weeks. Using crafts,



games and fun activities, children learn about mental illness and work together to develop healthy attitudes and coping skills to deal with the difficulties they may face. The course is taught by a mental health professional and an adult who has experienced the special circumstance of

growing up in a home with a parent with a mental illness. Thanks to Lindi and Cecilia for your caring leadership of the group.

If you know of any children who may benefit from this program, please contact Dianne at 250-260-3233 or bcssvernon@shaw.ca so we can add them to the list for our spring session .

Awakening the Spirit art show & sale

Celebrating the creative talents of people living with mental illness

The eighth annual Awakening the Spirit Art Show was another success! This year's show ran from July 13th to September 11th and featured sixty four works by twenty two artists. Thanks to all of the artists for the beautiful work you shared with us. We are pleased to say that eleven pieces sold over the course of the show. Thanks also to the Art Show Committee and the staff and volunteers from Mental Illness Family Support Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association and Interior Health who supported this event and to the Vernon and District Performing Arts Centre for providing such a lovely venue. We look forward to seeing everyone's work at next year's show!

Community Farm Update

The community farm refers to an inclusive, productive farm where community members participate in meaningful activities that foster positive social, educational, health, and environmental outcomes.

Representatives from community organizations and individuals on **Community Farm Action Team (C-FAT)** continue to work on this valuable project. We



held a productive meeting in September with community members and organizations to discuss options and seek input. We continue to look at existing community farm models and we are beginning the process of developing a business plan.

Check out these websites:

The Smiling mask - Post Partum Depression
www.thesmilingmask.com

Mental and Emotional Health Information:
<http://helpguide.org>

Artbeat Studio - a mental health consumer initiated, peer directed, and recovery oriented art program in Winnipeg.

<http://artbeatstudio.ca>

Registered Disability Plan Resource Centre
<http://rdspresource.ca/index.php/rdsp-review>

Our Library



Thanks to those of you who have returned your overdue library items so that others may benefit from them.

NEW BOOKS:

- **When Someone You Love Suffers from Posttraumatic Stress: What to Expect and What You Can Do** by *Claudia Zafert, PhD and Jason C. Deviva PhD*
- **Feeling Unreal: Depersonalization Disorder and the Loss of the Self** by *Daphne Simeon*
- **The Sum of My Parts: A Survivor's Story of Dissociative Identity Disorder** by *Olga R. Trujillo*
- **Preventing Boundary Violations in Clinical Practice** by *Thomas G. Gutheil*

NEW DVDS:

IF ONLY WE HAD KNOWN - A Family Guide to Borderline Personality Disorder DVD SERIES: *produced by Dawkins Productions*

- **Understanding Borderline Personality Disorder**
- **Causes of Borderline Personality Disorder**
- **Diagnosing Borderline Personality Disorder**
- **Treating Borderline Personality Disorder**
- **Coping with Borderline Personality Disorder**

NEUROCOGNITIVE TESTING OF PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA - WHY?

After nearly a century of research it has been firmly established that neurocognitive deficits are a core feature of schizophrenia. Patients with schizophrenia show deficits in areas such as memory, attention and executive functions (Green, 1998). Waldo and colleges (1994) claim that 94% of patients with schizophrenia have neurocognitive deficits compared to non psychiatric controls. However, if you ask professionals who treat schizophrenia what the disorder is, the answer often takes the form of a list of psychotic symptoms.

Sometimes a professional description of the illness is more comprehensive and includes a brief account of “negative” symptoms. But rarely will neurocognitive deficits be mentioned. Compared to psychotic symptoms, neurocognitive deficits are not as noticeable, not as odd. They are not as yet part of any formal diagnostic system. But, the deficits are still there and they have a great impact on the patient’s life.

Schizophrenia is commonly associated with bizarre thoughts and invisible voices. But it is now clear that problems in cognition – reduced attention span, problems with memory and difficulties in reasoning and problem solving – are also key features of schizophrenia. Cognitive deficits are probably the most important factor for poor outcome in people with the illness. Memory is particularly impaired, and executive function – the ability to plan, prioritise and implement strategies – is also disrupted.

In actively psychotic phases, patients with schizophrenia are often hospitalized. When positive symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions are under control, the patient is usually sent home. However, a majority of patients experience relapses. There could be many reasons for this, but one important issue is that although antipsychotic medications have an impact on symptoms, they do not appear to help neurocognition.

Functional outcome appears to be more closely related to neurocognitive abilities than symptoms. The research of Michael Green (1998) and others has shown that verbal memory, executive functioning and visual vigilance predicts functional outcome in schizophrenia.

Even though it is clear that adults with chronic schizophrenia have cognitive deficits, little effort is made to examine cognitive functioning in people with the illness. There has been an increasing interest in cognitive training programs for this population in recent years, and some programs exist for people with schizophrenia. But much of this training is being done without proper testing to determine who might benefit from what. Before training, it should first be determined in which areas and to what degree individuals experience deficits.

For more information on this topic, see the last 20 minutes of the video, *Changing Your Mind*, online at:

www.cbc.ca/documentariesnatureofthings/2010/changingyourmind/

If cognitive testing were performed more regularly, it would be of great benefit to people with schizophrenia. Furthermore, an evaluation of collected data could be used to support more appropriate community service planning for all people who suffer from the disease.- *Adapted from Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Dr. Merete , University of Oslo2001 and 01/10/ Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London, 06/01/2003*

Family Support Group

Do you have a family member or friend who has a mental illness such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or anxiety? Our support group for family members is a caring place where you can share your hopes, fears, experiences and knowledge with others who also support a loved one living with a mental illness. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

******NOTE: The group will meet on the THIRD TUESDAY OF DECEMBER and then will return to our regular meeting time of the 4th Tuesday of every month starting in January, 2012**

Future Dates: Dec. 20 , Jan. 24, Feb. 28

Time: 7 – 9 pm

Place: Room 301 of the People Place.

3402 27th Ave, Vernon

Press 3012 at the main door to be let in.

For more information, contact Dianne at 250-260-3233 or bcssvernon@shaw.ca

Pan-Canadian Survey Raises Warning About Mental Health Services

The Canadian health care system continues to critically underperform for individuals with mental illnesses according to the findings of the September 2011 pan-Canadian survey of the mental health community by Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC).

Background

The survey was circulated to approximately 10,000 people within the MDSC network and was subsequently circulated to their respective networks. The survey received a remarkable 3,125 responses. Over 500 individuals provided additional written comments to questions in the survey.

The results of the survey tell us that while there has been some improvement in the various federal and provincial mental health care systems, there are many areas where improvements are desperately needed. What was made abundantly clear by the respondents is that significant gaps and shortages continue to be ignored by mental health policy makers throughout Canada.

Of particular concern to MDSC;

- 35% of the respondents indicate having to wait more than 12 months for a diagnosis. Comments cited the shortage of professionals available to diagnose and treat individuals with mental health issues.
- 52% of respondents reported visiting a hospital emergency room because of their mental illness and 50% of those respondents indicated that they were “moderately” to “extremely dissatisfied” with the care they received at the emergency room of which 24% indicated they were “extremely dissatisfied”.
- 59% of respondents reported that uninsured services prevented them from seeking the type of support they needed such as health care services from a therapist, psychologist, alternative health care provider, or other.
- 82% of respondents indicated they were able to access the medications they needed to treat their mental illness. However, some of the respondents indicated that this meant going into debt, rationing drugs, and staying in stressful situations to take advantage of benefits programs.
- 65% of respondents indicated that their local hospital did not provide adequate care for patients with mental illness. The number one reason cited was that the hospital “does not seem to prioritize mental illness”. Clinics and hospital emergency rooms are not well equipped to deal with individuals presenting with a serious mental illness. In hospitals, individuals reported they were left to wait unacceptably long periods of time, often in a state of psychosis with potential suicidal tendencies.

- On a positive note, 91% of respondents with a mental illness had a family doctor, 52% saw their family doctor for their mental illness and 46% were “very” to “extremely satisfied” with their family doctor for treating their mental illness.



Moving Forward

The survey clearly indicates that the status quo is no longer acceptable to Canadians immersed and treated in our country's mental health system. Canadians are undoubtedly calling for proactive action and change on these major, systemic issues identified in this national survey. The highest percentage of respondents, 41%, indicated that “increased funding for mental health services” was the issue that government must act upon immediately. When asked directly, the majority of respondents, 56%, reported that their number one funding priority was to shorten wait times to get mental health services (from patient request to time of receipt of services).

Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) is a national, not-for-profit, consumer-driven, voluntary health charity committed to ensuring that the voices of consumers, family members and caregivers are heard on issues relating to mental health and mental illness; and in particular with regard to depression, bipolar illness and other associated mood disorders.

For further information:

Read the full report at: www.mooddisorderscanada.ca

Provide us with your email address and you can receive the newsletter by email preserving mother nature and reducing mailing costs at the same time. Email Dianne at bcssvernon@shaw.ca so we can add you to our newsletter email list.

Our Mission: To provide hope to families affected by mental illness and empower them through support, education and advocacy.

Our Vision: A world where families affected by mental illness have knowledge about mental illness and the mental health system; have timely access to appropriate services and support; are partners in care; and are accepted in society.

INSPIRATION



As human beings we all want to be happy and free from misery. We have learned that the key to happiness is inner peace. The greatest obstacles to inner peace are disturbing emotions such as anger, attachment, fear and suspicion, while love and compassion and a sense of universal responsibility are the sources of peace and happiness. *Dalai Lama*

When you forgive, you in no way change the past - but you sure do change the future. *Bernard Meltzer*

Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.
William James

BECOME A BCSS MEMBER

A five dollar membership to BCSS Vernon entitles you to a vote at our Annual General Meeting and you will also receive our newsletter Family and Friends.

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

Mental Illness Family Support Centre

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

MEMBERSHIP FORM



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: (h) _____

(w) _____

Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

Expiry Date March 31, 2013

Membership dues

◇ **\$5.00 Cheque**

Please make cheques payable to:
BC Schizophrenia Society – Vernon.

◇ **\$5.00 Cash**

In addition to dues, I wish to make a donation to BCSS
_____ Donation Amount

◇ **Cheque** - Please make cheques payable to:
BC Schizophrenia Society – Vernon.

◇ **Cash**

The BC Schizophrenia Society Vernon Branch is an Incorporated Branch Society and Registered Charity 867 308 389 RR001
Your generosity is appreciated.

Receipts will be issued for income tax purposes.