



February 2009



**Drop In and
Peer Support**

Hours:

11a.m- 4p.m,

Mon - Fri

The Rights Stuff

Mental Health Rights Coalition

Our Mission: To encourage, enable and empower the voice and participation of consumers in the mental health system in Hamilton.

Peer Supporters Ready to Work



Finishing their training in December this group of Peer Support Trainees are now doing their practical training and will soon be ready to get to work helping others with mental illness. From left to right they are Matthew, Justin, David, Chrissy, Kerri-Lynne, Bonita and Dylan

Often the staff are called on to do "one on one" support for a variety of issues which may confront those who visit or phone the Coalition. The issues often include housing concerns, relationship and family difficulties. Many times people are looking for support in crisis situations including suicide or illness related issues.

Workers also do some support around life skills,

helping members find appropriate support for their needs and even help members find the necessities of life like clothing, housing and food.

In the Drop In the peer support workers and volunteers also run the scheduled program activities and offer some help with computer use. A big part of their role is "friendship" and encouraging members to take an interest in activities and developing supportive relationships with other members.

MHRC works to match people who need to have a mentor and "friend" who can offer some emotional support, problem solving, or goal setting on a regular basis.

The Program Coordinator takes refer-

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If you prefer to receive an email copy of this newsletter please notify the editor. mhrcprograms@bellnet.ca

Peer Support Defined

Peer Support is a structured relationship where a trained worker or volunteer, who has gone through a process of recovery, assists other people with mental health issues to identify and achieve life goals as part of their own recovery process.

Peer Supporters provide mentorship, emotional support, problem solving, goal setting, crisis risk assessment, and referrals to other community supports. Peer Supporters promote empowerment and self-determination through non-judgmental listening and person-centred goal setting.

MHRC Peer Support Training Manual

One on One Peer Support Available

Trained peer support workers are waiting to be matched up with individuals who need some individual support to gain or regain confidence in the community.



Executive Director: Frances Jewell mhrced@bellnet.ca

Love. Wanting it. Waiting for it. Wishing for it. True love is what many of us long for. Some of us find it. Some of us don't. When we do find it, there is nothing else that matters.

This is the month for Valentine's and love and I have found a few things I wish to lovingly share with you.

Valentine Traditions

Hundreds of years ago in England, many children dressed up as adults on Valentine's Day. They went singing from home to home. One verse they sang was:

*Good morning to you, valentine;
Curl your locks as I do mine —
Two before and three behind.
Good morning to you, valentine.*

In the Middle Ages, young men and

women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. To wear your heart on your sleeve now means that it is easy for other people to know how you are feeling.

In some countries, a young woman may receive a gift of clothing from a young man. If she keeps the gift, it means she will marry him.

Some people used to believe that if a woman saw a robin flying overhead on Valentine's Day, it meant she would marry a sailor. If she saw a sparrow, she would marry a poor man and be very happy. If she saw a goldfinch, she would marry a millionaire.

One tale says you should think of five or six names of boys or girls you might marry, As you twist the stem of an

apple, recite the names until the stem comes off. You will marry the person whose name you were saying when the stem fell off.

Pick a dandelion that has gone to seed. Take a deep breath and blow the seeds into the wind. Count the seeds that remain on the stem. That is the number of children you will have.

(Courtesy of Jim Cornish, Gander Academy)

Program Coordinator Peggy Guiler-Delahunt



The peer support trainees pictured on the front page of this newsletter are the first I have had the privilege of training at MHRC. We had a great time together over the 10 weeks of training and we are now in the process of finishing up their practicum hours and final interviews before they receive their certificates as Peer Support Workers.

Of the crew we have trained this time, two are already lined up for work in Peer Support. The others are actively engaged in volunteering either at MHRC or other agencies.

Peer Support Training has been my passion for ten years and I am excited about the progress we have made in the field.

It thrills me to see that many mental health and other social service agencies are also beginning to recognize the value of peer support and are creating positions for peer supporters in their organizations.

The Ontario Peer Development Initiative

has a task force group who are hard at work creating a common set of expectations and training standards for the consumer/survivor agencies in the province.

It is fun to have been part of this great movement almost from the beginning and I am proud of the agencies and individuals I've worked with over the years who have remained so committed to the vision and goals of peer support.

While it is fun and exciting it is also a little frightening. I believe the "Peer Support" movement is on the edge of a very crucial moment. It is imperative for us to find a common ground as we move forward. It is also imperative that consumers and the organizations which represent them continue to "own" peer support training.

The "consumer movement" has grown up and moved beyond its radical roots but we cannot forget there is still cause for a vigilance in our collective vision.

The Rights Stuff

**A monthly publication of the
Mental Health Rights Coalition.**

Editorial Policy

The Rights Stuff is published every month by the Mental Health Rights Coalition. Our purpose is to inform our membership and other interested partners in mental health and the community about issues and events which may be of interest. Included is a calendar of events for the upcoming month at MHRC.

The Rights Stuff is published two or three working days before the end of each month. It is available to our members via mail and to others as requested via email and our web site at: www.mentalhealthrights.ca

The Rights Stuff welcomes submissions & letters of 250 words or less. Be advised that MHRC reserves the right to edit and/ or decline publication of any submissions.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month (or the closest weekday).

Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter represent those of individual contributors, and not necessarily of The Mental Health Rights Coalition.

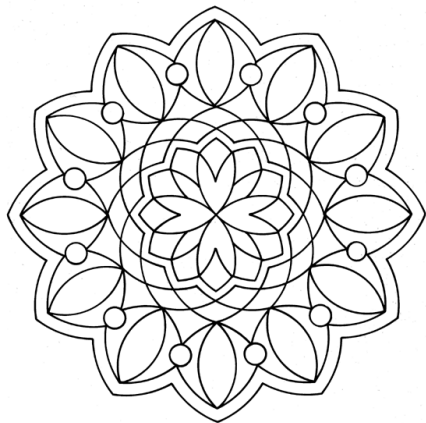
***If you or your group think
peer support training is
something which might benefit
your programs please contact
MHRC for more information.***



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***Our Mission is to
encourage, enable, and
empower the voice and
participation of
consumer/survivors in the
mental health system***

Mandala



At a recent staff meeting the MHRC staff discovered something new and fun.

Using the mandala as a theme for our two day event we wove the theme into team building exercises and some relaxation.

The Mandala is a concentric diagram with spiritual and ritualistic significance in both Buddhism and Hinduism. In one Tibetan

branch of Buddhism the mandala has been developed into sand painting. It is a key part of many meditation practices.

It is also used for focusing attention, as a teaching tool and for establishing a sacred space.

Those familiar with the use of mazes for relaxation will note the similarities.

Wikipedia quotes one expert as saying, the symbolic nature can help one "access progressively deeper levels of the unconscious, ...assisting...to experience a mystical sense of oneness ...with the cosmos."

I'm not sure if we experienced oneness with the cosmos but the exercises certainly helped us in growing together as a team.

We also really enjoyed colouring some mandalas we found on the internet.

"In common use, mandala has become a generic term for any plan, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically," says Wikipedia.

In our training and team building each person brought a special personal item which was "small enough to hold in the hand, had person significance. " It needed to be something we didn't mind others touching.

In our opening exercise we gathered the items and then gently tossed them onto a square piece of felt in the middle of the group. Each person took their turn placing their item where they would rather have it and explaining why they made the change. We repeated this at the end of the two days and asked each person to share the significance of their item.

The exercise showed us a great deal about ourselves in relation to the group and exposed to the group much about our personal qualities and values.

We also had some fun throughout the two days colouring the mandala pictured here. Our different styles are mounted for all to see.

We have a good supply of mandalas available for members to colour as well as

One to One Peer Support

(Continued from page 1)

rals from individuals who self refer or who are recommended through another agency for a variety of supports.

Some people just want to have someone to talk each week, maybe someone who could go out for coffee or on a simple shopping expedition with them. Others would like to have some support while they attend a meeting with housing or other service supports. One of our new matches needs someone to attend swimming with her.

People seeking a Peer Partner are matched at the discretion of the Program Manager. Partners are always of the same sex and MHRC works to match people who may have similar experience and interests.

On the first meeting both participants are asked to meet with the Program Manager so some of the rules can be reviewed and any questions can be addressed. The first few meetings take place at MHRC where

the two can spend time getting to know each other. When it is appropriate and both partners feel comfortable they may begin to meet in the community and go for coffee or other planned activities.

Appointments and cancellations are always made through the program manager because participants are not allowed to share personal information including addresses and phone numbers. They are also not allowed to travel together alone in a vehicle, though arrangements could be made for travel together on public transit or in special cases in cabs.

Peer Support Matches Available

Consumers needing on-going peer support by a trained volunteer are encouraged to call the

Peer Support Coordinator

at

905-545-2525.

Peer Support Training

Intake: An interview prior to the program to determine suitability and allows trainees to become more familiar with the expectations and with the trainer.

10 Group Training Sessions of 3 hours each (usually over a 10 week period) include: History and Purpose of Peer Support, Confidentiality, Values and Beliefs, Hope and Recovery, Problem Solving, Communication and listening Skills, Community Resources, Crisis Intervention, Suicide Intervention, Abuse, Addictions, Self Care.

Post Course Activities Include: A take home exam, 12 hours of practicum and a final interview

Ongoing Training

MHRC strives to offer ongoing training and support to graduates of the program on a quarterly basis. Topics vary and are reflective of the expressed and observed needs of those working as peer supporters.

MHRC offers this course without charge to mental health consumers in the Hamilton area free . We ask those who take the course to "give back" with their gift of volunteer service to MHRC or some other local mental health or social service agency

Peer to Peer Mentoring Program to Assist the Poor



The Campaign for Adequate Welfare and disability Benefits, in partnership with First-Pilgrim United Church will begin its first peer support training program on March 23 at Mental Health Rights Coalition.

Volunteers will learn skills to help them assist their peers in navigating what can sometimes be a complicated and daunting system of income and social supports including Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program and Employment Insurance.

This course is open to anyone who is interested. There is a screening process which organizers will explain to applicants.

This training will include basic computer skills, resource and access information about housing, OW, ODSP, EI, legal assistance, and community services, along with training in communication and listening skills, values and beliefs, problem solving, conflict resolution, boundaries, confidentiality, self care and empowerment. Graduates of the program will receive a certificate.

At their work, volunteers will be asked to spend time with clients to determine needs and assist in working through those needs. Work may also include accompanying clients to appointments. There will also be some office work including research and other office duties. Peer volunteers will receive a small honorarium and bus tickets.

The training will be offered four times a year. For information contact the manager at 905-524-0326 or email peertopeer-hamilton@gmail.com.

This project is funded by Tackling Poverty Together II, building Strong Communities Hamilton Community Foundation

Training Beyond our Door

MHRC is offering the training program in whole or in part to other agencies in need of similar training.

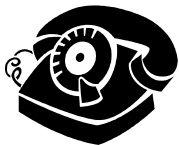
With some adaptation to the training, the program is now being offered to other CSI's (Consumer Survivor initiatives) and to special groups.

The Peer to Peer Mentoring program, will be using the services of MHRC to do an 18 hour portion of their training, beginning in March. MHRC is also entertaining requests from other CSI's to offer the training in their area.

Cost for the training is to be negotiated with the Executive Director. MHRC is willing to tailor the training to be delivered in weekly training at MHRC facilities for those within the city of Hamilton. Outside groups may be asked to consider blocks of training depending on the amount of travel and time required.

The Peer Support Program at MHRC, as with many other CSI's, is not funded with core funding from the Ministry of Health. Many groups keep the program running with a variety of grants. Others have chosen to make Peer Support Training and implementation a priority and offer it in addition to their other programs without the benefit of additional funding.

FOR SUPPORT....



**Give Us A Call! A Peer
Support Worker is
available Monday to
Friday, 11a.m.-4p.m.
905-545-2525**

Come Dance Away the February Blahs



Free Dance
Tuesday, February 24, 2009

1 to 4 p.m.

Emmaus Place

35 Aikman Ave.—Hamilton

Music by "Johnny Angel"

Refreshments available

This event is a joint venture of Good Shepherd
HOMES and Mental Health Rights Coalition

Call for information 905-545-2525

Don't Miss It

Watch for other up-
coming events on
our web site:

<http://www.mentalhealthrights.ca/index.html>

Consumer Conference

for consumers and
providers of the
LHIN 4

**Thursday,
March 26th**

**Liuna Station
Hamilton**

THAT'S CRAZY

That's Crazy is a column which appears periodically in The Rights Stuff and which will bring ideas and "stuff" which affects mental health consumer/survivors and citizens in general. We hope this will be informative and will provoke some thought and even discussion about the topic. If you have ideas about the subject or other subjects we might use for this column please send to the editor.

The Story of Stuff

Examining our Carbon Foot Print

In our recent travels around the World Wide Web, MHRC discovered a fascinating and helpful 20 minute on line video about "the stuff in our lives" and how it affects our environment. This fast-paced instructional video talks about "the use and disposal of all the stuff in our lives" and how it affects us personally and globally.

The host of this simply presented program is Annie Leonard, an expert in international sustainability and environmental health issues. It is produced by the Tide Foundation and Funders Workshop for Sustainable Production and Consumption.

In it's own words the production "exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world. It'll teach you something, it'll make you laugh, and it just may change the way you look at all the stuff in your life forever."

On the web site you will find a host of interesting links to "green topics" including ideas about action plans for individuals and groups. There are activities for affecting change which might work for

groups of any age. There are even invitations to send to people if you would like to host a screening of the program. You can sign up for updates.

Provided on the web site was a list of things we can all do to make a difference.

10 Little and Big Things You Can Do

1. Power down!
 2. Waste less.
 3. Talk to everyone about these issues.
 4. Make Your Voice Heard.
 5. DeTox your body, DeTox your home, and DeTox the Economy.
 6. Unplug (the TV and internet) and Plug In (the community).
 7. Park your car and walk...and when necessary MARCH!
 8. Change your lightbulbs...and then, change your paradigm.
 9. Recycle your trash...and, recycle your elected officials.
 10. Buy Green, Buy Fair, Buy Local, Buy Used, and most importantly, Buy Less.
- For more information on these steps and other "stuff" on the web site visit: <http://www.storyofstuff.com>

Membership Renewal

Memberships must be renewed annually before the end of April.

If you are an existing member you may renew your membership by calling the MHRC at 905-545-2525 weekdays between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

New members may complete a form available at MHRC

Membership entitlements:

- Access to peer support
- Voting privileges at all General Meetings
- Receipt of the "The Rights Stuff" - the monthly newsletter via mail or email.
- Participation in the drop in
- Access to the Resource Library
- Access to special trips and events
- May join internal committees
- May apply for membership on the Board of Directors

Non consumers members are considered associate members and will be non voting members. They will not be eligible for all the rights of membership.

Any personal information collected by Mental Health Rights Coalition is kept in strict confidence and is not shared with any other agency or corporation.

Members must be residents, working or receiving service within LHIN 4 (Hamilton, Niagara, Brant, Haldimand, East Norfolk)

Members must be mental health consumer/survivors.

Seeking Donations

- Fresh fruit for our members when they arrive each weekday.
- Gift certificates for the purchase of groceries or for outings to the local coffee shop.

For more information contact us at
MHRC

678 Main St E, Ste. 102- Hamilton, ON
L8M 1K2

Phone: 905-545-2525











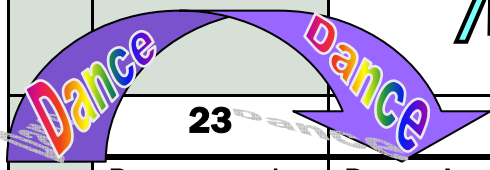
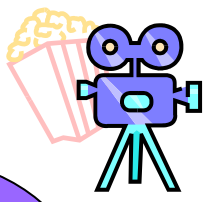



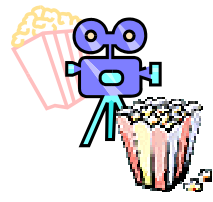




Facsimile: 905-545-0211

Email: mentalhealthrights@bellnet.ca

Did You Miss It?

**There is a free dance in February and in March a very special event for consumers
- go back to page 4 for more.**

February 2009

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| | Cards  | Crafts  | Karaoke  | Cards  | Coffee Walk  | |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| | Members Meeting 1:30 Karaoke  | Bingo  | Current Events  | Air Hockey  | Valentine Party And Craft – decorate cookies  | |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| | Family Day Closed  | Movie  | Karaoke  | Board Games  | Card Games  | |
| | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| | Popcorn and Movie  | Dance Away the February Blahs 1-4 Emmaus Place 35 Aikman MHRC will be closed at 12:30  | Birthday Party Much Music  | Walk  | Karaoke  | |

Calendar Activities begin at 1 p.m. unless otherwise stated.



Calendar Notes

Computer training with Matthew on Thursdays—Please sign up for one of two one hour sessions.

Help!

Members Meeting

This is an opportunity for members to give input into what goes on the calendar and to discuss any other issues of concern

Music on Wednesday—if

you show up on a Wednesday you should be prepared to sing.

We have a special guest volunteer to help you get in the mood.

Other additions

Valentine Party and cookie decorating on the 13th

Current Events—we have many periodicals available—a chance to share the news and your take on it.