



A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.
THE SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF ONTARIO
SOCIÉTÉ ONTARIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE.

**Hamilton/Niagara
Region**

September 2006

The Beacon

Hamilton/ Niagara Regional Office

193 James
Street South
Hamilton, ON
L8P 3A8

Phone:
(905) 523-7413

Fax:
(905) 523-8345

Website:
www.schizophrenia.on.ca

The Richard Russell Memorial Mental Health Information Fair

The SSO Hamilton Chapter is proud to present the Richard Russell Memorial Mental Health Information Fair on Thursday, October 26, 2006. Richard Russell was the Executive Director of the SSO Hamilton Chapter for sixteen years and passed away in April of 2005. A memorial fund was set up in his name, and this fund will be used to host this event. Richard worked hard to hold a mental health information fair in Hamilton every other year, and the Chapter is proud to carry on his legacy with this event.

The fair will take place at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, Royal Pavilions A and B, 150 King Street East in Hamilton. Displays will be set up by local mental health organizations and programs from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Following the fair, Toronto's Gordon Singer and Linda Chamberlain will discuss their personal experiences with schizophrenia in a presentation called, "Living With Schizophrenia: The Recovery Process." This presentation will be held in Royal Pavilion C at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, and everyone is welcome.

Join us at the fair, the forum, or both to learn more about mental health programs in Hamilton and to hear two stories of hope.

We could use volunteers to help displayers and attendees at the fair. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Melanie at (905) 523-7413.



Richard Russell

Mental Illness Awareness Week 2006: October 2 to 8

One in five people will be diagnosed with a mental illness at some point in their lives. Yet, too few people know about the prevalence of mental illness and too few receive help when they need it. Mental Illness Awareness Week seeks to raise awareness of mental illness, to reduce the stigma surrounding it, and to promote the positive effects of best practice in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. Because we know people can recover from mental illness, building awareness helps to create a community in which people with mental illness are accepted, respected, and supported.

The Hamilton Mental Illness Awareness Week planning committee is a partnership between St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, SSO, and the Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office. We invite you to attend the following Mental Illness Awareness Week events:

- “Little Pieces of Light”: 3rd annual Candlelight Vigil dedicated to Mental Illness Awareness. Join us as we acknowledge and remember our past, reflect on our present, and renew our commitment to advocate for a better future. You are invited to light a candle in memory of lost loved ones. **Monday, October 2, 7:00 p.m., at the Centre for Mountain Health Services, 100 West 5th Street, Hamilton.**
- “Recovery: Getting Beyond the Talk”: Workshop featuring Dr. Patricia Deegan. Dr. Deegan was diagnosed with schizophrenia as a teenager and holds a doctorate in clinical psychiatry. She will discuss the importance of relationships in recovery from major mental disorders and a recovery-based approach to using psychiatric medications. The workshop will also feature two panel discussions and will appeal to those in recovery, family members, clinicians, allied healthcare providers, and administrators. **Wednesday, October 11, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Scottish Rite, 4 Queen Street South, Hamilton.** Registration fee: \$50.00 before September 11, \$65.00 after September 11, Students/family members \$32.50, consumers free. To receive a registration form for this workshop, please call Melanie at (905) 523-7413. The registration deadline is Wednesday, October 4.



St. Catharines Forum: “Who Will Care When I’m Not There?”

As part of Mental Illness Awareness Week, the SSO Hamilton/Niagara Region and the Canadian Mental Health Association Niagara Branch present a free public forum, “Who Will Care When I’m Not There?”, on Tuesday, October 3 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Hamilton lawyer Herman Faber will discuss wills, Henson trust funds, bequests, power of attorney, and other issues relevant to caregivers of ODSP recipients. The forum will take place at the Quality Hotel Convention Centre, 327 Ontario Street in St. Catharines. This event is funded through an unconditional educational grant from Janssen-Ortho, and no registration is required.

For more information, please call Melanie at (905) 523-7413 or Karen at (905) 641-5222.





Hamilton/Niagara Region Represented at the Schizophrenia Society of Canada National Conference

On July 13, 14, and 15, 2005, the Schizophrenia Society of Canada held its National Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Hosted by the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, the event featured speakers on a wide range of topics, including recovery, advocacy, and family education. Along with SSO Executive Director Mary Alberti and four other SSO representatives, Hamilton/Niagara Regional Coordinator Melanie McGregor attended this conference. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about schizophrenia and related issues as well as meet other people involved with mental health services across the country. For more information on the conference and workshop material, please call Melanie at (905) 523-7413.

SSO Annual General Meeting

Saturday, September 23, 2006
at the Delta Chelsea Hotel, 33 Gerard Street West, Toronto
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please RSVP to Jan Huggins
1-800-449-6367
or jhuggins@schizophrenia.on.ca

We hope to see you there!

On hope...

“Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come.”

-Anne Lamott

Family Support Groups

Hamilton

The third Tuesday of every month
at 7:00 p.m.

at the Hamilton/Niagara Regional
Office

193 James Street South, Hamilton

St. Catharines

The first Wednesday of every month
except July, August, and December at 7:30 p.m.

at St. Barnabas Church (entrance off the
parking lot)

31 Queenston Street, St. Catharines



St. Catharines Walk of Hope

The Walk of Hope for Schizophrenia was held in St. Catharines on Saturday, June 3. Amid a steady drizzle, approximately 50 people turned out to walk, contribute pledges, and enjoy a free barbecue lunch courtesy of Harvey's on YMCA Drive (Home Depot). Over \$4000.00 was raised for SSO and schizophrenia research!

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the walk a success, the walkers who turned out to participate, and all the donors who supported this great event!

St. Catharines Chapter Annual Picnic

On Wednesday, August 2, the St. Catharines Chapter held its annual picnic at Burgoyne Woods in St. Catharines. On this very warm evening, approximately 60 people came out to enjoy fried chicken, salads, and desserts as well as play the water balloon toss, shoe kick, and other fun games.

Thanks to all the hard-working volunteers who were such great organizers and also to everyone who donated food to the event.

We'll see you next year
for another fun picnic!



Buddies By Phone



The phone buddy support program is back up and running! We have several volunteers who will speak one on one by phone with family members in need of support and a listening ear. Those who have used the buddy program have greatly appreciated the individual support and compassion provided by our volunteers.

If you are a family member of someone with schizophrenia and wish to be a phone buddy volunteer or to speak with a phone buddy, please call Melanie at (905) 523-7413.



Learn the AAABC's of Stress Management

Feeling stressed lately? Overwhelmed? Overloaded? Fed up?

With so many tips for managing stress, it can be difficult to keep them all straight. Stressors are any demands placed on your mind and/or body and range from laundry to grocery shopping to money to a loved one's illness. For an easy reminder of good stress management tips, remember the AAABC's. Courtesy of the Canadian Mental Health Association Chatham-Kent Branch, here is an easy formula to keep in mind for how to reduce frustration and frazzle:

A void the stressor: When possible, say no to taking on extra demands; delegate tasks or share them with others; know your own limits and recognize signs of stress.

A lter the stressor: Communicate about what you need to manage your stress; ask for help; manage your time and plan when you will do what; reduce extra demands during busy times for you; get organized—reducing clutter can help you feel calmer.

A ccept the stressor: If you can't do anything about it, then accept it and...

B uild coping strategies: Get enough sleep and eat well; make time to relax and do things for yourself; seek out support from loved ones; nurture your spirituality.

C hange your thinking: Look on the positive side of the situation; avoid overdramatizing and making everything into a crisis; be flexible and willing to try new ways of doing things or change your original plans; have reasonable, attainable expectations for yourself and others; use humour and laughter; choose your battles and let go of insignificant hassles; avoid negative coping strategies like drinking, aggression, and denial; use your own strengths to help you cope.

Stress management is about trial and error and finding strategies that work for you. It is also about being realistic and accepting that there will be times when you are stressed, irritable, and exhausted. Take your stress as a signal that it is time to care for yourself, and use the above tips to cope in healthy ways. For more information, please call Melanie at (905) 523-7413.

Want to learn more?



Check out the following suggested readings about stress management:

- The *Simplify Your Life* series by Elaine St. James: Books in this series include *Simplify Your Life*, *Simplify Your Work Life*, and *Simplify Your Life With Kids*. They are packed with easy, practical suggestions for how to reduce your stress by simplifying what you do and how you do it.
- *Stress Management for Dummies* by Allen Elkin: Try to resist being insulted by the title and focus on the easy, concise tips this book has to offer on a range of topics including worrying, communication, positive thinking, and relaxation.
- *Life is Short—Wear Your Party Pants* by Loretta LaRoche: Hilarious stress management guru Loretta LaRoche offers ten simple truths that lead to an amazing life. Have a good laugh and learn to focus on what matters most to you.

Lack of Sunlight in Mothers Linked with Schizophrenia

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—Women thinking of becoming pregnant have been urged to ensure they are getting enough vitamin D as findings suggest a deficiency during pregnancy may increase the chances of their offspring developing schizophrenia in later life. Vitamin D is made in the skin when exposed to sunlight.

Lead researcher Darryl Eyles, PhD, of the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research said that because the latest results were based on a study using rats, a link between vitamin D deficiency and schizophrenia in humans remains to be proved. “However, there are compelling indicators that women considering becoming pregnant should ensure they have moderate exposure to sunlight, or supplement their diets with vitamin D-fortified dairy products before they conceive,” he said.

But the findings have already prompted cancer experts to warn women not to interpret the results as *carte blanche* to ignore existing healthy sun exposure limits.

Substance Abuse Rates High Among First-Episode Psychosis

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—A significant proportion of young people treated for first-episode psychosis are at risk of mental and physical health problems associated with substance abuse and regular smoking of cigarettes, say Australian researchers.

The researchers, from the University of Melbourne Department of Psychiatry and Department of Medicine, the University of Queensland, the Australia School of Population Health, and the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research, conducted a 15-month follow-up study of 103 people treated for first-episode psychosis. Almost three quarters of them had a history of substance abuse, mostly marijuana. During the follow-up study, the rate of any substance abuse dropped from 70.9 percent to 53.4 percent, but smoking rates remained virtually unchanged (76.7 percent versus 75.7 percent). Those who continued their substance abuse tended to do so with less frequency than before treatment for their psychosis. The participants who continued substance abuse were more likely to be younger, male, and single, less likely to have completed high school, and were more likely to have had more severe marijuana use prior to entry into treatment.

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