

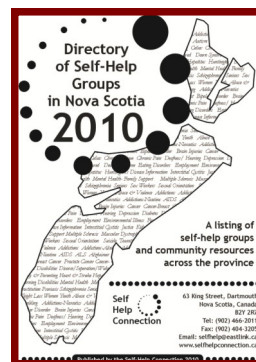
# Self Help Connection

Helping People Help Themselves

**FALL/WINTER 2010**



**2010 Directories are available for purchase!**



Available in hard copy or PDF format!

Visit [www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca) or call 404-7800 for more information.

## Partners in Recovery by Roy Muise

October 7, 2009 was a momentous day for the Self Help Connection and Consumer Initiative Centre. On that day, we received a cheque from the Canada Post Mental Health Foundation and officially launched Partners in Recovery. The Foundation was formed in 2008 by Canada Post and is supported by them, their employees, and the public. One of its most visible fundraisers is the Mental Health Stamp.

The aim of Partners in Recovery was to visit all of the health districts in Nova Scotia and meet with persons living with depression or bipolar disorder, family members, friends and healthcare providers. Our expectation was that within each district, depression, bipolar and family self-help groups would be started. Training took place over two days in each district. Day 1 was for persons with the lived experience of mental illness and consisted of Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) which is a self-management plan for mental illness. Day 2 was for everyone and

consisted of self-help group development and facilitation training. Participants were recruited by community organizations and individuals. The Foundation grant enabled us to cover meals, transportation and child care for participants as well as all materials and honoraria for our community partners.

We held Partners in Recovery workshops in Yarmouth, Cornwallis, Bridgewater, Halifax, Truro, New Glasgow, Sydney, Antigonish and Amherst and at time of writing, have a second workshop planned for Halifax. Approximately 100 people attended these workshops, including 6 people from Prince Edward Island who had heard of the project and joined us in Amherst. They hope to raise funds to bring Partners in Recovery to the island. The interest in Partners in Recovery has also led to us being invited to Windsor at a



(Continued on page 4)

### Inside this issue:

Partners in Recovery	Page 1	Showcase Your Talent	Page 5
Roles for Group Members: The 4Rs	Page 2	Director's Corner	Page 6
Building Confidence: A Guide to Developing Healthy Self-Esteem	Page 3	How's Work?	Page 8
Recipe Corner- Apple Crisp	Page 3	Understanding The Stages Groups Go Through	Page 9
WRAP® and the Wellness Toolbox	Page 4	Tips For Saving Money At Christmas	Page 10

## Roles for Group Members: The 4Rs

The following provides an overview of what can be expected of self-help group members while participating in group activities. This can also be useful for anyone who has not been involved in a group, or for existing group members looking for guidance.

### Respect

- Consider the right of all to use the group experience to have their needs met in their own way.
- Respect the feelings and opinions of other group members, even if they differ from your own.
- Share the time with everyone, each has a valid need.
- Permit various opinions including your own.
- Cooperate with boundaries such as time, leader role, rules.
- View other members as helpful.
- Consider how the group as a whole is a healing force.
- Accept full membership in the group process.
- Promote safety at all times.

### Reflect

- Listen carefully and think about what you are hearing.
- Try to put yourself in the place of the person who is sharing. Reflect upon your own thoughts and feelings.
- Compare your reaction to others' reactions.
- Consider different ways you would react.
- Evaluate how this experience may fit with your family of origin. Understand how you are important to the group experience.



### Respond

- Let the person sharing know you are trying to understand.
- Offer your thoughts, ideas, relevant experiences, empathy, praise as fits the topic. If you are not sure how to respond in a helpful way, simply ask.
- Tell others what they have shared has meant to you.
- Offer your thoughts, ideas, and relevant experiences.
- Share your own issues - even vulnerable ones.
- Reveal how you are changing your views of yourself.

### Receive

- Express your thoughts, feelings, and needs; this is the first step to receiving help and support.
- Try to accept the responses you get from others with an open mind - consider suggestions carefully before accepting or discarding them.
- Remember you have a right to receive from others. Group works through give-and-take.
- Experience the caring from others.
- Let others know how you are receiving their support.
- Allow yourself to feel close to others.

## Building Confidence: A Guide to Developing Healthy Self-Esteem

By Ashley Cooley

The Self-Help Connection successfully launched its first Building Confidence program this spring. The program was delivered to eight participants over six weeks and received a lot of great feedback.

*Building Confidence: A Guide to Developing Healthy Self-Esteem* was developed to address a need within the community to provide hands-on tools, resources, and education on how to attain personal confidence and increase self-esteem. While the program draws upon various resources, it has been tailored to meet the needs of both men and women from all walks of life. The program focuses on the relationship between our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, assertiveness, positive body image, practicing positive self-talk, and finding a balance in our lives.

If you would like more information or would like to register for the next session, please contact Ashley Cooley, Education Coordinator, at (902) 466-2011 ext. 16.



*"What kept me coming back week after week was that I learned more about myself and how to stand up for myself."*

-Participant Quote

## Recipe Corner

**A big thank you to Karen from Maggie's Place Resource Centre in Amherst for this recipe!**

### Apple Crisp

(Serves 6 - 8)

4 cups sliced apples  
 1/3 cup sifted all purpose flour 1 cup rolled oats  
 1 cup brown sugar  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 1 tsp cinnamon  
 1/3 cup melted margarine



Arrange sliced apples in greased 9 x 9 inch pan. Combine dry ingredients and add melted margarine. Mix until crumbly. Sprinkle crumb mixture over top of apples. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes.

You can substitute other fruit for apples - Use whatever is in season or on sale!

## WRAP® and the Wellness Toolbox



### Wellness Tool:

#### Quilting!

In a recent workshop, a participant shared with us that quilting was one of her wellness tools.

She brought it in to show us and it was a work of art. Each piece sewn reflected a story of recovery and was created with passion. We were left inspired.

**Thanks for sharing  
Pam!**



Copyright Mary Ellen Copeland-  
All Rights Reserved-  
www.wraparoundtheworld.com

WRAP® (Wellness Recovery Action Plan™) is a self-designed plan for staying well and for helping you to feel better when you are not feeling well. It allows you to increase personal responsibility and control over your own life and help you make your life the way you want it to be.

A **wellness toolbox** is the first step in developing a WRAP®. It is also the cornerstone of a WRAP Plan. It is a comprehensive list of all the things a person does to stay well and to feel better when they are not feeling well. It can include things the person is doing now and things they have learned and might want to try. New tools can be added to the Wellness Toolbox as the person discovers new options. Tools that are not working well can be removed.

People who are developing their own Wellness Recovery Action Plan refer back to their Wellness Toolbox to complete each section. For many people, developing the Wellness Toolbox is their first introduction to personal responsibility and empowerment.

In creating a wellness toolbox, you discover new things you can do for yourself and acknowledge the many gifts you use on a daily basis. The smallest things we do can make the biggest difference.

### There are endless possibilities!

Here are just few of some wellness tools people have shared:

- Singing, dancing, drumming
- Meditation, prayer
- Looking for sea glass
- Learning to play a new instrument
- Quilting, drawing, painting, crafting
- Reading
- Walking in the forest
- Brushing horses, loving animals
- Watching the sunrise and sunset

### What's in your wellness toolbox?

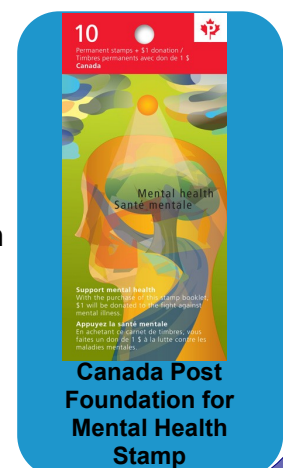
If you have a wellness tool that you would like to share, we would love to hear from you. To share with us or for more information on WRAP® call Mickie at the Self-Help Connection, or email: [mickibowe@eastlink.ca](mailto:mickibowe@eastlink.ca).

## Partners in Recovery (continued from front page)

later date to present the workshops there. Although it is still early, indications are that there will be groups started in these areas or that existing groups will be strengthened because of the training.

The PIR team from the Self-Help Connection and Consumer Initiative Centre would like to thank the Canada

Post Mental Health Foundation and our community partners for their assistance in bringing Partners in Recovery to reality and making it such a success.





## Opportunity to Showcase Your Talent!

**Deadline for Submissions:  
January 31, 2011**

### We're Looking for Your Submissions

**Department of Health, Mental Health, Children's Services and Addiction Treatment Branch is requesting submissions from mental health consumers for a "Creative Works" booklet to be published and distributed throughout Nova Scotia.**

If you are interested in submitting poetry, pictures, short story, personal story or other original creative work to be published in our booklet, please contact:

Tony Prime  
Coordinator, Adult Services  
Department of Health  
Mental Health, Children's Services  
and Addiction Treatment Branch  
PO Box 488, 1690 Hollis St  
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8

Email: [primets@gov.ns.ca](mailto:primets@gov.ns.ca)  
Tel: 424-7235  
Fax: 424-0647

Poetry • Short Story • Picture • Personal Story

## Director's Corner by Linda Bayers

### New resources for Family Physicians: Online Self-Help Directory and Quick Contact Cards

The Self-Help Connection is launching two resources which may be of special interest to Family Physicians (FPs): 1) an online "Directory of Self-Help Groups In Nova Scotia: A listing of self-help groups and community resources across the province" for sale through our website ([www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca)) and 2) Quick Contact Cards (see an example shown below).

While our hard copy version of the directory remains popular with health professionals and FPs, the online feature may be more convenient and faster for some users. Most FPs now have laptops in their offices to document their clients' needs, treatments, and test results. If FPs believe their patients might benefit from attending a self-help group, contact information is now a few clicks away if they have our online directory. For instance, if an FP wanted to refer a patient to a depression group, they simply run the directory, type in the word "depression" in the search box, and the contact information for depression groups and resources will pop up. They can simply print the page for the client. We are working on a version of the directory which FPs can download to their Blackberry or smart phone.

Our second resource is a **Quick-Contact Card**. Presently we offer free cards to FPs who contact us through email: [selfhelp@eastlink.ca](mailto:selfhelp@eastlink.ca) or by calling us at 466-2011. Those interested will soon be able to order directly from our website.

**Self  
Help  
Connection**  Looking for a Self-Help Group  
or Community Resource?  
Want to start a group?

Call  
902-466-2011  
1-866-765-6639  
[selfhelp@eastlink.ca](mailto:selfhelp@eastlink.ca)  
[www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca)

*Image of Quick-Contact Card*

Our motivation for providing these resources is two-fold: 1) self-help groups are an important but under-utilized resource for emotional support and practical help in dealing with illness, and 2) research indicates that FPs would refer more patients if they could quickly and easily access information on existing self-help groups. Streach (2009), in her pilot research study conducted in the Capital District Health Authority, ***Assessing Family Physicians Awareness of, Attitudes about, and Informal Referral Practices to Self-Help Groups***, found that FPs informal referral to SHGs was primarily influenced by their awareness. FPs who were more aware of SHGs also referred more frequently. Unfamiliarity with SHGs was cited as the main reason for infrequent informal referral by the 21 FPs (52.5%) who never or rarely mentioned SHGs. Overall, the FPs' extent of awareness about SHGs was limited. Notably, the FPs considered SHGs to be helpful for patients and they indicated FPs should identify SHGs as a resource for their patients. 85% indicated they were either interested or extremely interested in learning more about SHGs. One FP summed the interest up this way:

*"I would be interested to know what's available and how people might access it. Maybe we are missing out on some valuable services."*

Self-help groups (SHGs) have been recognized worldwide as a cost-effective complement to the formal health care system (Femia, 1982; Laudet, 2000; McGovern, 2001; Nottinghamshire Family Health Services Authority and the Self-Help Team, 1993; Ontario Medical Association as cited by Peterkin, 1993). In Canada as early as 1986, SHGs were identified as an important health promotion mechanism in the *Framework for Health Promotion* (Epp, 1986) and were included as important health care components in the *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* (World Health Organization, 1986). More recently, SHGs have also been considered a community health promotion strategy directly addressing two of the determinants of health: 1) social support

(Continued from page 6)

networks and 2) personal health practices/coping skills (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2003). SHGs have been shown to have numerous health benefits that lead to improved quality of life and a decreased consumption of formal health care services (Borkman, 1999; Gray & Fitch, 2001; Kirby & Keon, 2006; Kurtz, 1997; Kyrouz, Humphreys, & Loomis, 2002; Madara, 2008; McGovern; Riessman & Carroll, 1995). Despite the research acknowledgement of their value, SHGs remain underutilized in Canada (Bayers, 2004; Gray et al., 1998). By providing these two new resources for FPs, we are encouraging them to more actively tap into self-help groups as resources for recovery, healing, emotional support, social support and practical help.

## References

- Bayers, L. S. (2004). *Surviving breast cancer: A discourse analysis of breast cancer self-help groups*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of South Australia.
- Borkman, T. (1999). *Understanding self-help/mutual aid: Experiential learning in the commons*.
- Epp, J. (1986). *Achieving health for all: A framework for health promotion*. Ottawa: Health & Welfare Canada. Assessing Family Physicians" 97
- Femia, A. (1982, December 9). Physician prescribes doses of "self-help:" Movement seen reducing health care costs. *News Tribute*, Woodbridge, N.J., section 2 p. 1.
- Gray, R. E., & Fitch, M. (2001). Cancer self-help groups are here to stay: Issues and challenges for health professionals. *Journal of Palliative Care*, 17(1), 53-58.
- Gray, R. E., Orr, V. J., Carroll, J. C., Chart, P., Fitch, M., & Greenberg, M. (1998). Self-help groups: Family physicians' attitudes, awareness, and practices. *Canadian Family Physician*, 44, 2137-2142.
- Kirby, M. J. L., & Keon, W. J. (2006). Self-help and peer support. In *Out of the shadow at last: Transforming mental health, mental illness and addiction services in Canada* (pp. 227-247). Ottawa, ON: Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.
- Kurtz, L. F. (1997). *Self-help and support groups: A handbook for practitioners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Kyrouz, E. M., Humphreys, K., & Loomis, C. (2002). A review of research on the effectiveness of self-help mutual aid groups. In B. J. White & E. J. Madara (Eds.), *Self-help group sourcebook: Your guide to community and online support groups* (7th ed.) (pp. 71-86). Denville, NJ: American Self-Help Group Clearinghouse.
- Laudet, A. B. (2000). Substance abuse treatment providers' referral to self help: Review and future empirical directions. *International Journal of Self Help & Self Care*, 1 (3), 213-225.
- Madara, E. J. (2008). Self-help groups: Options for support, education, and advocacy. In P. G. O'Brien, W. Z. Kennedy, & K. A. Ballard, (Eds.), *Psychiatric mental health nursing: An introduction to theory and practice* (pp. 151-168). Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett.
- McGovern, M. (2001). *The use of mutual support/self-help in the prevention, management and care of chronic physical disease in older Canadians*. Retrieved May 1, 2007, from [www.selfhelp.on.ca/resource/chronic\\_support.pdf](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca/resource/chronic_support.pdf)
- Nottinghamshire Family Health Services Authority and the Self Help Team. (1993). "A self help group for your patient?" *Guidelines for G.P. practices* [Brochure]. Nottingham, UK: Author.
- Peterkin, A. (1993). Self-help movement experiencing rapid growth in Canada. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 148(5), 817-818.
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2003). *What determines health?* Retrieved October 23, 2007, from [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/determinants/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/determinants/index.html)
- Riessman, F., & Carroll, D. (1995). *Redefining self-help: Policy and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Streach, S.D. (2009). Assessing Family Physicians' Awareness of, Attitudes about, and Informal Referral Practices to Self-Help Groups: A Pilot Study in the Capital District Health Authority, Nova Scotia. School of Health and Human Performance. Dalhousie University Bachelor of Science (Health Promotion) Honours.
- World Health Organization. (1986). *Ottawa charter for health promotion*. Retrieved October 23, 2007, from [www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa\\_charter\\_hp.pdf](http://www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/ottawa_charter_hp.pdf)
- Streach, S. (2009). School of Health and Human Performance.

## How's Work? by Marc Porter

Whether we like it or not, much of our life is shaped by our occupation. In fact, we often define ourselves by what we do instead of who we are. Consequently, our moods can be dictated by what happened at work yesterday, what's happening today, and what we expect to take place tomorrow.

The Psychology Foundation of Canada suggests you can equip yourself to deal with the physical, mental, and emotional challenges stemming from your job, whether you work for yourself, or someone else.

Ideally, we should start with the knowledge and skills specific to the position. What we lack, we commit to acquire.

The importance of how we communicate and deal with others in the work environment is often underestimated as a determinant of job satisfaction.

Sometimes lost amid the demand for technical skills is an attitude component. This is where otherwise average performers can distinguish themselves. The combination of a solid work ethic and a positive attitude virtually ensures premium performance and nothing sustains a positive attitude more than optimism. Here I don't mean a "glass half-full vs. half-empty" outlook, but authentic optimism.

Martin Seligman, of the University of Pennsylvania, describes it as healthy and "based on knowledge, experience, a realistic understanding of our own capabilities, and the ability to assess situations". His research suggests optimistic people are less likely to see themselves as having no ability to control a situation. They are better able to combat depression by always challenging any negative thinking patterns. We should always make a concerted effort to think positively and share the rewards!

### **Five ways to build your optimism assets**

1. Coach yourself to see bad situations as temporary setbacks rather than permanent disasters. Most are.
2. Don't catastrophize or exaggerate the negative impacts of bad situations. When something goes wrong, don't waste time on self-blame. Instead, look for even one small step you can take to improve the situation.
3. Enjoy and take credit for your accomplishments without being egotistical. Celebrating success helps to feed optimism.
4. Learn to challenge your negative thoughts and beliefs. Negative ideas, which are often inaccurate, help to keep bad feelings in place.
5. Look for the positive in negative situations. Many failures and disappointments offer a chance for growth i.e. a lesson that can be learned, an opportunity to improve.

*Source The Psychology Foundation Of Canada*



## Understanding The Stages Groups Go Through

Like all groups, self-help groups start, grow, and change. Knowing what stage your group is at can help you understand what's happening in the group.

*(Excerpt from A Self-Help Toolkit for New and Seasoned Facilitators)*

**Forming** — In this first stage of group development, members are meeting for the first time and some may be feeling anxious or uncertain of what is to be expected. They may wonder: What can I expect? What is the group for? What will I get out of it? The group is very much dependent on its leader at this stage.

### Key tasks for this stage are:

- Use icebreakers so that members develop relationships based on mutual respect and shared goals.
- Define the purpose of the group.
- Establish guidelines for the operation of the group.

**Storming** — A key issue for teams is to effectively manage conflict while avoiding group think (i.e. where everyone blindly follows along and no one asks any questions). Too much conflict can delay the groups' progress but too little conflict (group think) can stagnate creativity. Groups may also lack unity and cliques may form.

### Key tasks for this stage are:

- Develop ways of identifying problems with the group.
- Develop processes to overcome group think.
- Learn to control disruptive behaviour.
- Learn how to resolve conflict in the group.



**Norming** — The group is now becoming more harmonious. Members are more trusting and more accepting of one another's ideas and opinions, less dependent on the leader, more focused on each other, and take more responsibility for controlling the group.

### Key tasks for this stage are:

- Look for signs that the group is bonding, becoming an entity.
- Continue to delegate tasks so the members are more independent.
- Develop a plan for the sharing/succession of the leadership.
- Evaluate the group's activities and guidelines to see how you are doing.
- Take pride in your accomplishments and congratulate yourselves on a job well done.
- Allow the group to change structure and guidelines for participation to better meet members' needs.

**Performing** — Commitment and loyalty are strong in this stage. The group takes responsibility for programs and process. People try out new strengths because they know they have been accepted. Everyone participates, creativity is high, and any remaining dependency on the leader is replaced by trust in one another.

*(Continued on page 11)*

**Tips for Saving Money at Christmas** By Michelle Jones**Saving Money on Christmas Cards:**

- Send postcards or letters, instead of Christmas cards.
- Cut your old Christmas cards from last year in half, and send the pretty side as a postcard.

**Saving Money on Christmas Wrapping Paper:**

- Use magazine pages to wrap small gifts.
- Use the comic section of your newspaper.
- Use your children's artwork, or create your own on plain paper. The large reams of packing paper are great for this.
- Save used wrapping paper all through the year, just roll them back onto the paper tube and place a small piece of scotch tape on the edge to hold in place. If the paper is the wrong theme, you could just turn it over and decorate the plain side yourself!
- Make your own gift tags by cutting a small piece of matching paper and folding it in half. You can also cut up old Christmas cards.

**Saving Money on Christmas Decorations:**

- Have a warm and cozy Christmas the old-fashioned way. Pop some popcorn and string it up all over the house!
- Add some cranberries to your popcorn string for a touch of color.
- Decorate your house by bringing the outside in, using pinecones and acorns!
- Invest in an artificial tree after Christmas - when they go on clearance!

**Saving Money on Christmas Entertainment:**

- Get out the board games. If you don't have many to choose from, maybe you can borrow a new game from a friend or neighbor. You never know, they might have a closet full they never even use!
- Sing, sing, and sing!
- Take a drive or a walk around your town to see the Christmas lights!

Source: [www.betterbudgeting.com](http://www.betterbudgeting.com)

**Remember:**

**Clocks go back one hour on the first Sunday in November!**

## Understanding The Stages Groups Go Through

(Continued from page 9)

### Key tasks for this stage are:

- Develop activities to help both individual members and the group grow.
- Evaluate what is, and is not, working and set new goals.
- Encourage and allow members to take on more roles/tasks and responsibilities for running the group.

**Adjourning** — This occurs when either the leader or a group member leaves, or the group ends or disbands. If the group has been a good one, this is probably a time of strong feelings. The group can disband on a positive note.

### Key tasks for this stage are:

- Be prepared to discuss how members feel when a member drops out.
- Be prepared to discuss the strong feelings of dependency the group may have on the leader.
- Be prepared for feelings of abandonment or animosity if you do not have a plan for leaving.
- Put your succession/leaving plan in place.
- Put into place your plan for the group to continue under new leadership.
- Have a closure plan for your last day (e.g., special refreshments, good-bye exercise, and so on).

**Thank you to our funders who support the work we do in our community!**



### How to Contact Us:

**Self  
Help  
Connection**

Tel: (902) 466-2011  
 Fax: (902) 404-3205  
 Toll Free: 1-866-765-6639  
 Email: [selfhelp@eastlink.ca](mailto:selfhelp@eastlink.ca)



**Consumer  
Initiative  
Centre** *moving forward*

Tel: (902) 404-7800  
 Fax: (902) 404-3205  
 Toll Free: 1-866-765-6639  
 Email: [selfhelp@eastlink.ca](mailto:selfhelp@eastlink.ca)

Building the capacity of Nova Scotians to take control of their health through individual and collective action since 1987

Increasing the capacity of persons living with, through, and beyond mental illness to help themselves and each other move forward since