

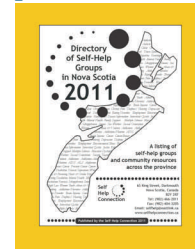
# Self Help Connection

Helping People Help Themselves

**FALL 2011**



**2011 Directories are available for purchase!**



Available in hard copy

Visit [www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca) or call 466-2011 for more information.

## Change and Recovery– By Roy Muise

As I was sitting in the park enjoying one of those all too rare beautiful summer days, I was thinking of what I would like to write for this edition of our newsletter. For some reason, I thought of one of my favourite quotes and realized how suitable it was for the theme of this edition; “Change is Good”. I have seen this quote attributed to both Albert Einstein and Henry Ford. Regardless of who said it first, to me, it describes the recovery journey so well. The quote is; “If you always do what you always did, you’ll always get what you always got”.

Recovery is all about change, changing what we do and/or the way we do it in order to realize our goals and dreams. Having a mental health problem or illness can turn our lives upside down. After a while, though, we reach that point where we can begin to think about recovery and how that looks to us. One of my favourite definitions of recovery comes from

Appalachian Consulting Group Inc., which has trained peer support workers all over the United States and recently here in Nova Scotia. “Recovery is the process of gaining control over one’s life – and the direction one wants that life to go on the other side of a psychiatric diagnosis and all of the losses associated with that diagnosis”.

How do we gain control of our lives? My experience has been that it involves a lot of change and learning to do things differently. Change can involve many things in our lives. It may include changes in diet, beginning or expanding an exercise program, changes in relationships – both family and friends, changes in how we view ourselves, and the list goes on.

My personal recovery journey has included changes in my diet, I eat a much healthier diet than in the past and although I still have a way

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to go I know that I am on the right track. I have begun walking again, something I enjoyed in the past and that enjoyment has come back.

Without a doubt, the most difficult change I have made is in how I view myself. I am not my illness; I am, instead, a person dealing with a health issue. I am not weak, but instead I now know that I am strong and able to deal with life's ups and downs. I am not lazy, but instead am someone who has worked hard to get where I am. Most importantly, I now like the person I see in the mirror every morning.

My relationship with family and friends has also changed. I have educated them about mental health issues and I have been more honest about how I am feeling. I have also given them permission to let me know if they feel I may be starting to become depressed. During this period I have also had to break off some relationships that were toxic to my

recovery - not an easy task but so necessary.

The message I hope you receive from this is that change can be good, not always easy, but often necessary. The recovery journey is a wonderful journey to be on and I urge you all to look at your journey and discover those things that you need to change in your life and start making those changes. Remember to take your time and work at making changes at a pace that suits you. As always, all of us at the Self-Help Connection are here to assist you with the changes you may wish to make as you continue your recovery journey.

Always remember – “Change is Good”.



**Roy Muise CPS**  
**Peer Support Worker**

### **“The unexamined life is not worth living.” -Socrates**

I am interested in starting a group for childhood sexual abuse survivors, for the purpose of healing and growing as a person. My healing journey began a couple of years ago, after a stressful period triggered PTSD, which was a result of a childhood trauma. During this period, I had the opportunity to learn various methods and ways to cope and even overcome related anxieties and health issues.

Sexual abuse, whether multiple or a one time trauma, is similar to mold growing in a damp dark place, when suppressed. It can affect a person's mental, physical or emotional health. When a person opens himself or herself to change, it sheds light in dark places, eliminating the spreading of mold, while providing healing and personal growth.

We are not meant to suffer, only to learn. Let us learn from each other, welcome change, rid mold, and of course welcome each other.

**For more information, please email Cathy at [crmr@eastlink.ca](mailto:crmr@eastlink.ca) or call Linda at The Self-Help Connection at 466-2011.**

## Smoking Cessation Sessions

Capital Health's Stop Smoking Services are continuing. The next *Getting Started*\* sessions will be on October 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in Twin Oaks Boardroom. There is a maximum limit of 12 participants. For more information, please call 424-2025 or call 889-4107 and ask for Susan, Heather or Elicia.

\*A *Getting Started* session supports you in making choices about the use of tobacco products and provides you with more information about Capital Health's Stop Smoking Services.

**All Capital Health Stop Smoking Services are free of charge.**

## Cooley's Cooking Corner

### BBQ Beef Soft Tacos

 kraft foods  
kraftcanada.com

#### what you need:

- 1 onion, sliced, separated into rings
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips
- 1 lb. (450 g) extra lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup *Kraft* Original BarBQ Sauce
- 8 whole wheat tortillas (6 inch)
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1/4 cup *Kraft* Tex Mex Shredded Cheese



#### make it:

**COOK** and stir onions and peppers in nonstick skillet sprayed with cooking spray on medium-high heat 3 min. Add meat; cook 10 min. or until done, stirring occasionally. Stir in sauce; cook 2 min. or until heated through, stirring occasionally. **SPOON** onto tortillas; fold in half. **TOP** with tomatoes and cheese.

#### kraft kitchens tips:

Serving Suggestion: Serve this tasty meal with bowls of 1/2 cup each salsa, sour cream and chopped cilantro. Then everyone can top their taco the way they like it.

Source: kraftcanada.com

## CHOOSE TO BE A DRAGONFLY THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE– By Holly Poole

How many of us are fully entranced by the beauty of the dragonfly? The subtlety of the wings brings forth many “ohhhs” and “awwws” as we watch it fly around.

Yet, did you know that as a ‘baby’, it is a remarkably unattractive insect whose gills force it to live in water for one to five years? Twelve or more times it sheds its skin; each time it remains water bound.

Eventually it crawls from the muddy water to the top of a reed or up on a rock. At last after the final shedding, emerging with a long slender body and gauze-like, iridescent wings, it is the beautiful dragonfly. Because of this transformation, a whole new life style is now possible. It breathes air, feels the sun’s warmth and it flies! But....was it any ‘less’ of this beauty as it struggled to come to the surface of life and be free?



*Dragonfly Nymph Shell*  
Photo Credit: Amy Blagden

This graceful flyer comes from the ugliest of bugs. Repeatedly it shuffles off the outer that is no longer appropriate. It then needs to pull *‘itself’* out of the mud and water to new life. Unless it does, it cannot use the power within. Had it tried to cling to the old limitations, if it refused growth and change, if it had waited for someone else to free it, it would never have emerged to fulfill the promise of its birth.

Unless we remove ourselves from inappropriate past programming that keep us mud bound and waterlogged - unless we lay claim to the creative Life Force within - we cannot fly free.

So many of us live with ‘guilt’ about various things. We live with guilt and we constantly ‘should’ on ourselves. “I SHOULD do this....” And “I SHOULD do that.....” Every time we use that wording, we are only pushing ourselves further and further into that mud.

Sometimes humans can be their own worst enemy - the wording that we use about ourselves, the way we treat ourselves, and also the choices that we make can often be very self-defeating. And then we wonder ‘why’ refuse to treat us with respect? Do WE treat ourselves with respect?

When we are in a “funk” - is how I usually call it, we often need other people to ‘help’

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us out. But first and foremost we have to WANT to get out. Sometimes it is just too easy to live in that mud. Unfortunately, being in the mud, doesn't allow for anything more than simple "existence" - Are you willing to just "exist"? There is not one person in the world that can help, unless you yourself make that first step and want to become that beautiful dragonfly.

This sometimes will mean choosing to let go of past hurts. It means choosing to let go of past wording. It means choosing to see the positive versus the negative. It's all in the training of the mind. The mind has to understand the need to change first - and the body will follow behind with that understanding.

How often do you hear yourself say or think?

*I forgot to pick up the laundry; what a klutz!*

*I really put my foot in that one. How could I be so stupid?*

*I left the car lights on - Dunce! Will you never learn?*

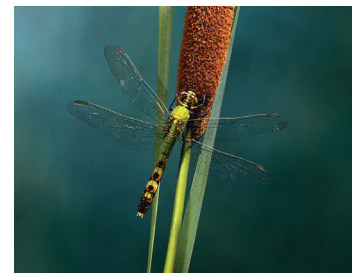
*How terrible of me to have thought about not going?*

*My body and mind are breaking down on me - I will never be well!*

Our thoughts are just so very powerful as often it controls our actions AND our health. Those words above denotes a 'helplessness' - that you are headed into the world of misery without any power or any control.

You HAVE control. You perhaps need someone to help you realize just how much control you really do have over life. Don't GIVE UP! There is a solution to EVERY problem.

You CAN become that dragonfly. Should you choose to remain the bug - remember that is YOUR choice - but you have JUST as much of a chance to become that dragonfly. Choose to have the beautiful iridescent wings and fly. Choose to make that journey from the waterlogged stream, to the air to be free.



Become that beautiful dragonfly that you have come to be!

**Holly Poole**

**Professional Astrologer, M.Sc. Healthology**

[www.healinginmotion.com](http://www.healinginmotion.com)

## Atlantic Minds Wide Open Festival



Tickets are available through:

- TicketPro: [www.ticketpro.ca](http://www.ticketpro.ca)
- or 1-888-311-9090
- or at the door

Tickets are available to those on fixed/limited incomes. Please consult our website [www.atlanticmindwideopen.ca](http://www.atlanticmindwideopen.ca) for more information on accessing those tickets.

All proceeds will go to current and future events and educational initiatives of Atlantic Minds Wide Open.

Seed funding provided by:



### the what & the who

The Atlantic Minds Wide Open film festival has been created by a partnership of people who want to promote positive change in our world: Artists (filmmakers Nance Ackerman & Ariella Pahlke), individuals involved with mental health (psychologists Brad Kelln & Andrew Starzomski) and community development leaders (United Way's Linda Rowe), and others. For more on the people working to bring this to life, visit our website.

Nova Scotia is rich in talent and resiliency. The talents and vision of our community will be showcased in an afternoon and evening devoted to discussion and film. In addition, world-renowned filmmakers will share their vision and passion on these issues with you.

The festival will provide a forum for a more in-depth exploration of filmmaking with a focus on:

- breaking down stigma around mental health and addictions issues,
- exploring pathways of recovery and growth and personal development
- promoting healthy, vibrant communities where everyone has a valued place.

By coming together to explore film as a medium for promoting mental wellness and community development, new partnerships will emerge to channel more creativity and energy on film here in our region.

### The Who: Everyone is welcome.

The festival will be of particular interest to individuals living with mental illness and/or addictions issues, their families, filmmakers, those working in mental health, and people involved in promoting neighbourhood and community issues. We are excited to bring together youth as well as adults. The event will also be of interest to students in film, other fine arts and health fields.

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# Atlantic MINDS WIDE OPEN

Celebrating Films About  
Mental Wellness and Vibrant Communities

**November 25,  
2011**

Alderney Landing Theatre  
Dartmouth,  
Nova Scotia



[www.atlanticmindswideopen.ca](http://www.atlanticmindswideopen.ca)

## Naked Art Show - by Julie Sadler

Mid-March saw a rather odd scene on the University of King's college campus. The Wardroom, the King's campus bar, was plastered in drawings of naked people; bar patrons milled about with their drinks, examining the art. Every available wall, column and alcove was covered in drawings; as soon as one was purchased, it was taken down and replaced with another from the pile of donated art. The event, entitled the Naked Art Show, has become something of a fixture on the King's campus in its four years of operation. The show seeks to foster the visual arts on King's campus and raises money for charity through the production and sale of art.

The Naked Art show began in 2008 as an effort to bring more opportunities for visual artists to the King's community. Drawing sessions were fifteen minutes long and went on for about two weeks. The title was deliberately frank—and deliberately provocative. The show took as its subject not the soft-focus, artistically-sanctioned word *nudity*, but the matter-of-fact realities of nakedness. The show was accompanied by a series of roundtable talks on nakedness, feminism, body image and art. Rather than drawing models through the comforting veil of anonymity, students draw each other naked. Though the show's format has expanded to include nearly eight weeks of drawing, painting sessions and a silent auction, its commitment to its original principles is unwavering. The project's expansion has been accompanied by a clarification and refinement of its message and ideals. Creating safe space for dialogue, artistic exploration and naked bodies of all types continues to be a priority and a commitment for the Naked Art Show.

This year, the project had fifteen drawing sessions with two models each. The models, all volunteer King's students, posed for one hour each. There are only two rules for artists attending the sessions: if you're in the room, you have to draw, and all drawings must be surrendered to the show before leaving the room. All life drawing sessions are free and materials are provided; the only price is the art produced, which is the property of the Naked Art Show and which is sold at the final show in March. This year, as in the year previous, the proceeds went to the Eating Disorders Action Group. Since EDAG's unfortunate closure, the Self-Help Connection is currently holding the funds, pending EDAG's re-establishment. The money, which totalled over 600 dollars, will be used for eating disorders programming and support.

The strength of the show is the sense of community that imbues it. The models and artists are friends, acquaintances and classmates; the body at the front of the room is both an object of the artist's gaze, and, unavoidably, a person with whom the artist has a pre-existing relationship. This sense of community also fosters the safe space necessary to such an undertaking. The challenge facing the show in future years is to balance growth and expansion with the sense of community that has informed the project.

Planning has already begun for next year's Naked Art Show. Possible additions include body image and eating disorder awareness roundtables, closer partnership with the Eating Disorders Action Group/Self -Help Connection and formal drawing lessons to encourage new artists to explore life drawing. The directors welcome input, criticism, suggestions and volunteers and can be reached at [nakedartshow@gmail.com](mailto:nakedartshow@gmail.com)



## A Concrete Approach to Changing Beliefs- by Anna Planedin , Business Coach

We all agree that beliefs, especially those that are negative or unrealistic, can prevent us from taking beneficial action in our lives. Beliefs exert a powerful force and, indeed, we can all agree that positive thinking has great value.

Unfortunately, however, even though most people recognize the 'power of positive thinking,' few are properly equipped with the knowledge or willingness to get rid of destructive beliefs. In my work as a business coach, for example, some of the people I work with would like to cultivate positive beliefs, yet they fall victim to habitual thought patterns that have established a stronghold after years and years of repetition.

It is no surprise, then, that changing our beliefs requires an incredible amount of work. It is much easier to *think* about cultivating positive beliefs rather than actually *working on* one's beliefs. The unfortunate fact is that some people who value having constructive beliefs have formed negative thought patterns and lack a concrete method for changing.

In order to change or transform harmful beliefs, we must dig deeply into the fabric of our perspective, which is an intricate array of 'common-sense' thoughts and ideas that have been with us for as long as we can remember. Part of the difficulty is that we may have to question ideas about ourselves and the world that we have come to know as 'truths.' Changing deep-seated ideas takes work.

**So, what does the process of changing one's beliefs look like? Well, the process begins with noticing the beliefs you'd like to change.** Although there may be many, start with just one. If you find it difficult to find a belief to work with, think about a situation or conflict that you've had or a time when you've felt uncomfortable. The conflict can be with someone else or with yourself. For example, many entrepreneurs low-ball the price of their services or products because they undervalue their skills and

expertise. This usually stems from a belief that others are more experienced or skilled than us and we aren't worth it. Usually thinking about such experiences can help highlight a belief you hold about yourself, the world, or a particular topic that is blocking you.

*"Many entrepreneurs low-ball the price of their services or products because they undervalue their skills and expertise."*

**Once you have found a belief to work on, you can begin to tackle it by critiquing, or doubting, it.** Think of ways you generally tend to doubt beliefs. Most people tend to challenge beliefs with a number of questions. You can ask yourself, "How useful is this belief? How does it influence my life? And has it become embedded in my psyche?" Say, for example, that you are working with the belief that you aren't as skilled as other artisans, so your work isn't worth as much. In asking how useful this belief is, you would find that it isn't useful, since it is preventing you from making money. In asking how the belief influences your life, you'd find that it restricts you from finding out whether people would be willing to pay more for your product. The belief might also affect the way you speak about your product and the extent to which you market it (as well as the kinds of marketing tools you use).

**One thing to keep in mind while you doubt your belief is that by doubting, you don't have to believe the opposite.** Doubting merely entails 'entertaining the fact that something isn't necessarily so.' In other words, you're telling yourself, "I don't have to believe this way. It's just something I've grown accustomed to." As you begin to notice how a belief can negatively influence your life, you will begin to say 'no' to that belief.

**The next step is disbelief.** This involves thinking of something you definitely do not believe. Say, for example, that you don't believe that

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unicorns exist. In working with this disbelief, you would write down and describe the way you subjectively represent disbelief. You might write that you have never seen a unicorn and that you only came to know about them in fictional tales when you were a child. By brainstorming in this manner, you will find some ways that you represent disbelief. You can use the same manner of representing disbelief to challenge the belief in question.

**Next, think about your experience of openness and write down instances when you feel open to entertaining new ideas.**

Again, describe, in writing, the experiences your mind conjures up. What encourages openness and curiosity? Something that provokes curiosity in me is my desire to find out whether a different standpoint or belief makes an experience more enjoyable.

*“Something that provokes curiosity in me is my desire to find out whether a different standpoint or belief makes an experience more enjoyable.”*

Now that you have doubted your belief and have put some thought into experiencing disbelief and openness, you are ready for the nitty-gritty work. **Now it's time to get in touch with your desire to change your belief.**

What would changing your belief do for you? What positive outcomes could develop when you replace your old belief? The stronger your desire, the more likely you will eliminate the belief and find a replacement.

**Here is the key: somewhere within your desire to change lies a ‘positive intention’ for yourself—something beneficial that you would like to see occur in the future.** It could be something like, “I want to feel more at peace with myself in my everyday life,” or “I would like to feel more confident in public speaking.”

*“Somewhere within your desire to change lies a ‘positive intention’ for yourself.”*

**Next, think of and describe a new belief that would help in fulfilling your positive intention.**

The new belief must be realistic (i.e., possible) and credible (i.e., seems believable).

**Finally, imagine using this new belief in the situation you used originally to brainstorm a belief to work with.** Does the belief seem realistic and credible in this situation? If not, how could it be modified to fit?

**Here is an example to illustrate the entire belief change process.**

Say you are angry because your clients take a lot of time (and prompting) to get back to you about work you're doing for them. Your underlying belief is that they are disrespectful because they aren't prompt with their communication.

However, once you challenge this belief, you realize that your characterization of them isn't fair. Perhaps they don't realize how much you value (and expect) prompt communication. You realize that your belief isn't useful, since it creates a division between you and your clients and doesn't fulfill your positive intention of having a harmonious working relationship with them.

After going through the ways you are open to new beliefs, you decide on a new belief that will better fulfill your positive intention. You come up with the belief that people need to know about your preferences in order to be able to respect them. Hence, if you want people to behave in a way that you think is respectful, you need to communicate clearly that you prefer prompt communication (responding to e-mails within two days of receiving them). Taking on this new belief puts you in the driver's seat and gives you the opportunity to resolve your anger, which has the

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added bonus of putting you at peace with yourself.

### Strengthening New Beliefs

At this stage in the belief change cycle, you may be wondering how you can make your new belief stick.

There are three tried and true ways to strengthen beliefs:



1. Repetition
2. Validation from an accredited source
3. Validation when a belief leads to good experiences

**Here is how repetition works:** the more the belief circulates through your mind, the more you will strengthen the neural pathways in your brain and increase the likelihood that you will choose that belief in the future. Pretty cool, hey? While you can seek out material to strengthen your new belief's validity, it is more difficult to ensure that your belief leads to good experiences. For this, you need to 'go with the belief' and be sure to notice what happens.

I hope you can now see how beneficial this process can be. It takes courage and determination to tackle your negative thoughts, but I assure you the results are well worth it.

*Source: Canadian Society for Social Development, CSSD E-news, Summer 2011*

# ONE in FIVE.ca

**One in five people experience a mental illness every year. That means roughly 200,000 Nova Scotians are affected annually.**

OneinFive.ca was created by the Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry. It seeks to create awareness of the prevalence of mental illness and provide information and resources for individuals and their families.

OneinFive.ca also highlights the people and groups in your community working hard to deliver the research, treatment and support Nova Scotians deserve.

Psychiatrists are an integral and positive member of our community and mental health system in Nova Scotia. **Please help spread mental health awareness by forwarding [www.OneinFive.ca](http://www.OneinFive.ca) to your contacts, or share with your network using the Facebook and Twitter icons located on the homepage. For monthly updates, sign up online for the OneinFive.ca e-Newsletter.**



**DALHOUSIE  
UNIVERSITY**

*Inspiring Minds*

*Department of Psychiatry*

# SAVE THE DATE: Thursday October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Hope will be held:

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Olympic Hall

2304 Hunter Street

(corner of Cunard & Windsor)

3:00-8:00 p.m.

*Join the Mental Health Community for a celebration of hope, healing & recovery.*

Fun, Food & Entertainment! Free...  
Everyone Welcome

Organized (to date) by:

The Canadian Mental Health Association Nova Scotia Division and Halifax-Dartmouth Branch, Capital District Health Authority Mental Health Program, Dartmouth Community Health Board, Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia, Halifax Community Health Board, Healthy Minds Cooperative, IWK Mental Health & Addictions, Laing House, Lake City Employment Services, Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, Metro Community Housing Association, Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia & HRM Chapter, Self Help Connection, The Empowerment Connection and community volunteers.

Sponsored (to date) by:



## Upcoming Workshops at The Self-Help Connection

The Self-Help Connection is pleased to offer **FREE** Healthy Living workshops beginning this Fall. To register, please **Call** 466-2011 or **Toll-Free** at 1-866-765-6639 or **Email** [selfhelp@eastlink.ca](mailto:selfhelp@eastlink.ca).



Workshop	Dates	Time	Location
<b>Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®)</b>	October 5 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , and 26 <sup>th</sup>	1:30pm - 4:00pm	East Dartmouth Community Centre 50 Caledonia Road
<b>Anger Control Training</b>	November 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , and 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1:30pm - 4:00pm	East Dartmouth Community Centre 50 Caledonia Road
<b>Managing Stress</b>	December 6 <sup>th</sup>	10:00am - 12:00pm	Alderney Public Library Dartmouth

Stay tuned for upcoming workshops on **Financial Literacy, Craving Change and Vision Boards**. Please visit [www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca) for updates!

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



### How to Contact Us:



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