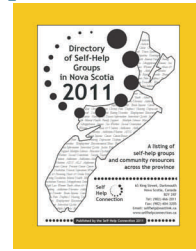


# Self Help Connection

Helping People Help Themselves



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## SPRING/SUMMER 2011

### Mind your P's & Q's\* – Marc Porter

Hey guys, do we need another reason to improve our diet and monitor our cholesterol levels?

Well, it doesn't matter because we're getting one anyway.

Recent research suggests that men with lower cholesterol are less likely than those with higher levels to develop high-grade prostate cancer – an aggressive form of the disease which has a poorer prognosis.

From the University of Michigan Medical Center, Dr. Mark Moyad recently discussed this possible link in the Prostate Bulletin. He notes that death due to prostate cancer has dropped over the past decade and attributes this partly to early detection with PSA testing and improved surgical and radiation techniques. He also suggests this may be an unintended benefit stemming from the increased attention paid to cardiac health. Apparently, our aggressive approach toward heart disease is paying dividends in other areas as well.

But before we overload the bandwagon, it should be noted that this hypothesis raises a host of other issues. Specifically, statin medication is being credited with controlling cholesterol, yet no discussion of the well-

documented risks of statin use is offered.

Dr. Elizabeth Platz, co-director of the cancer prevention and control program at the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, in a study of more than 5,000 U.S. men, reported that having lower levels of cholesterol may cut a man's risk of aggressive cancer by nearly 60%. As published in the Cancer Epidemiology & Prevention Journal, Dr. Platz is careful to point out that cholesterol levels had no significant effect on the **entire** spectrum of prostate cancer incidence - only on those with high-grade (more lethal) forms which tend to grow and spread more rapidly.

In summary, I believe the latest information out of Johns Hopkins epitomizes the challenges we face when developing a personal health strategy. We must constantly strive to become better-educated about health risks in order that we can make more-informed choices regarding the risks we are prepared to accept. At the very least, we want to be wary of a course of action wherein the "cure" (statins) may cause more harm than the disease.

Stay tuned.

**\*Prostate & Questions**

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## Peer Support– by Debi Noye

Less than two years ago I knew absolutely nothing about mental health. I had never heard the term “mental health consumer” and I certainly didn’t know that term applied to *me*. When I found out about peer support I wasn’t even remotely excited or even curious. My sister had discovered the information on the internet and I made plans to meet with a peer specialist mostly to satisfy her (thanks Sis!!).

At this point in my recovery I was in denial as to the seriousness of my illness. I was very confused and afraid but reluctant to even think about my mental health. The confusion and fear was born of ignorance... my complete lack of knowledge regarding mental health, especially mine.

Meeting my peer specialist for the first time was an eye opening experience. He immediately told me that he was not a therapist and that he too lived with a mental illness. My ears perked up! He didn’t sit behind his desk, asking me invasive questions. He sat at a table beside me and we had an easy, relaxing conversation. We even laughed. I felt comfortable. He shared his life experiences as someone living with depression. It had been a long road for him. He had a wealth of experience to draw on, both his own and that of those he had helped over the years.

He didn’t pressure me to talk but when I did, he listened, really listened. He didn’t judge. He accepted me... just the way I was... broken. He didn’t send me home with a long list of things to do to “fix” myself. He didn’t ask anything of me. The message he had for me that first day was one that was to be a continuing message... that he was there for me... that he understood and that he would do what he could to help me.

I left that day with a spark of hope.

I continue to see my peer specialist on a regular basis. He allows me to express my pain, my anger, frustration and fears. He answers the questions I’m too embarrassed to ask anyone else. He directs to me other resources in the mental health community. He helps me understand the process of therapy and treatment. We’ve worked together to complete a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and a Crisis Plan for me (important and useful tools).

Most importantly, when that spark of hope disappears he helps me find it and encourages me to hang on to it. He has shown me it is possible to survive.



Check out this e-learning link for computer related training courses through Victoria County CAP Sites:

[www.vccaps.com/easy-step-guides](http://www.vccaps.com/easy-step-guides)

Victoria County CAP Sites Association was formed in the Fall of 1998 as the umbrella organization for all CAP Sites in Victoria County. VCCAPS helps manage projects and support funds available to the CAP Sites through an Industry Canada Initiative. Currently, 9 CAP Sites throughout the county assist communities and visitors with Internet access, access to information and IT training needs.

By clicking on the above link you will find step-by-step instructional manuals on:

Nova Scotia



Community Access Program

1. **Computer Courses**
2. **Web Optimization Courses**
3. **Multimedia Courses**
4. **CAP Tech Tutorials– Tech help**

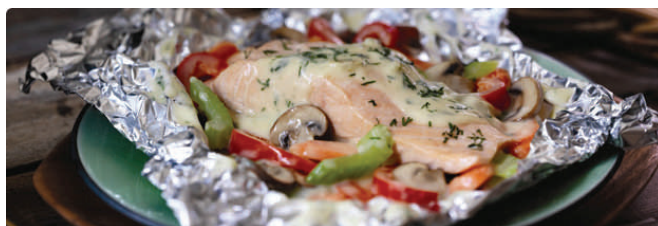
## Cooley's Cooking Corner

### Dinner for 6 for under \$15

**Foiled Grilled Salmon** By: Campbell's  
**Prep Time: 10min Cook Time: 15min Serves: 6**

#### Ingredients:

- 1 can (284 ml) CAMPBELL'S® Condensed Low Fat Cream of Celery Soup**
- 1 lemon, juiced**
- 2 cups (500 ml) sliced mushrooms**
- 2 cups (500 ml) mixed fresh carrots, celery and peppers, thinly sliced**
- 6 fresh salmon fillets (5 oz/140 g each)**
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 ml) coarsely ground black pepper**
- 1/4 bunch fresh dill**



#### Directions

1. Mix soup with lemon juice. Set aside.
2. Combine mushrooms with sliced vegetables. Place even amounts of vegetable mixture onto centre of each of 6 (12" / 30 cm) aluminum foil squares.
3. Top each with a salmon fillet and season with a generous dash of pepper. Top salmon with even amounts of dill and sauce. Seal foil tightly around edges to form pouches and place with seam up to cook.
4. Grill on barbecue at 500°F (260°C) for about 15 minutes. Open foil pouches carefully to avoid steam.

*For more great recipes with Campbell's go to [www.cookwithcampbells.ca](http://www.cookwithcampbells.ca)*

## FIGHTING OBESITY? CONSIDERING SURGERY? ...GUESS WHO GIVES A “HOOT”!!

### **OBESITY: A GROWING EPIDEMIC**

The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that by 2015 approximately 2.3 billion adults will be overweight and 700 million will be obese globally. WHO's strategy is Diet & Physical activity as part of the overall chronic disease prevention.

### **A SOLUTION FOR THE OBESITY EPIDEMIC?**

People who are unable to achieve or maintain a healthy weight through diet and exercise, who are severely overweight, and those who have health problems as a result, may need to consider having WLS - Weight Loss Surgery (also called Bariatric Surgery). Weight loss surgery is a serious surgical procedure that decreases the size of the stomach, reduces food intake and can enable you to lose a significant amount of weight. It is a permanent procedure that requires a lifetime commitment to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Weight loss surgery will help reduce your risk of life-threatening conditions and improve your overall health and appearance. Diabetes, high-blood pressure, sleep apnea and joint problems are among the most common conditions related to obesity and are better managed after weight loss.

### **LIFE AFTER OWLS: Sometimes A Bumpy Road**

After weight loss surgery, resuming your normal life can be a challenge. The most significant change is the amount or types of food you are able to eat. Your new life after surgery also involves other important changes, such as creating a new lifestyle of physical activity and preparing yourself for some of the psychological hurdles that may arise as you begin to adjust to your new body. Most bariatric surgeons will tell you that ongoing post-surgical support helps produce the greatest levels of success. Myself, I couldn't agree more with this statement.

### **NOT A MAGIC BULLET**

I had a bariatric surgery procedure called Gastroplasty (commonly known as Stomach Stapling) in 1991. At this time there was very little available support for new patients and we were left to wander through our journeys without the proper education and often felt alone with many questions unanswered. That was, until I decided to take the necessary steps and form my own group. I engaged in research and reached out personally to people who have had WLS to see if there was a need for peer-led support in our community. The results were alarming! Practically everyone felt they would benefit from such a group and they were eager to join.

### **COMING TOGETHER: People Just Like You!**

Our non-profit support group called OWLSS (Obesity Weight Loss Surgery Support) began meeting monthly in the Fall of 2010 and as word got out through advertisement and by word of mouth, our group has grown to 38 members. Most of our meetings are held in Lower Sackville at the Sobeys' Community Room and we now have another chapter in Truro which is growing in numbers. We also have an active group on Facebook which is private and only for our members to participate on. Our group meetings are open for persons who have had, or are waiting to have, weight loss surgery and are strictly confidential. Our topics range from sharing our success stories, dealing with complications that arise from surgery and working together to learn how to cope with the life changing effects we all experience after losing weight. Weight loss surgery is meant to be used as a tool to help us achieve our health goals. Working together helps keep these goals fresh in our minds to each reach success and happiness.

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Without our community we were forced to lead this path alone but as most members claim, having the support through this network, they feel comfortable to discuss private issues with peers who understand. The greatest part of having a peer-led support group of this type is the creativity and education we discover. Surround yourself with people who share your situation. Ask questions and receive answers in a supportive environment. There is always new information and ideas popping up that we can gather from a meeting and take home to work with for making new plans.

A typical night at our meetings involves a round-table discussion along with a simple introduction to get to know one another. If anyone has a specific issue they need to deal with we allow for open floor discussion and work together to see how the person can resolve the problem. We also cover the importance of nutrition and adding regular exercise into our lives. Occasionally we will have a guest speaker visit and give a presentation on these topics. We all agree that an overall healthy lifestyle is the key element to maintain many years of success.

### **MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL...**

Having WLS is more than just battling the bulge. As we begin to transform into our new bodies, we may have new issues surface. More than our share of members have proven success and lost extreme amounts of inches off their bodies. With this comes another obstacle, excess skin. Losing a substantial amount of weight in a short period of time does not allow for our skin to bounce back and shrink. This usually leads to some patients wanting to take their journey to another step and have plastic surgery for body reconstruction. Myself, I had a complete Abdoninoplasty (Fleur-De-Lys Tummy Tuck). The results are amazing and not only gave my body a slimmer look, but boosted my self-esteem. Some patients need to undergo other procedures to improve their appearance such as Arm & Body Lifts. This of course is another area of discussion we sometimes direct at our meetings as self-image plays an important role in our recovery.

### **IT AIN'T "EASY" BEING ME!**

Because of our new family of Owlss, many new friendships have been formed, and we happily share our milestones along this journey with people who understand, or are looking forward to have happen soon as well. Together we motivate, and inspire one another through laughter and tears. Having a positive outlook on Bariatric surgery and partake in a local support group can be one of the most self-aware rewarding gifts we can give ourselves. It's not easy taking on this journey, no, it's NEVER the "Easy Way Out", but with friends and support by our sides, we have a lifetime ahead of us to look forward to and never take these steps alone again!

### **Contact us!**

For anyone who is looking to have WLS or are already onto the journey and would like to attend our meetings, please contact us by email: [owlssupport@hotmail.com](mailto:owlssupport@hotmail.com) or find us in the Self-Help Connection's directory.

Coreena Hale, Founder & group facilitator for Owlss  
[owlssupport@hotmail.com](mailto:owlssupport@hotmail.com)

## Conference on Acupuncture and Natural Healing



### Canadian College of Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine



ACTMANS and the Canadian College of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (CCATCM), with the support of the national association is proud to announce the first annual Canadian Conference on Acupuncture and Natural Healing July 8 and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 to be held at the CCATCM, 1306 Bedford Highway, in Bedford, Nova Scotia.

The Conference is looking for your support.

The Conference presents a number of important firsts:

- It plans to be the first gathering of all 3 acupuncture associations in the Maritimes.
  - It is the very first opportunity for all complementary medical practitioners to come together to learn from each other.
  - The 15 seminars (participants get to choose to take 5 of the 15), and 3 keynote speakers all offer exceptional learning
  - The keynote speakers will include medical doctors and doctors of TCM
  - It is the first event to bring together the natural healing abilities and synergies of complementary therapies and conventional medicine to explore choices in cancer care and wellness
  - It will also present the first round table forum on the future of cancer care and the future of medicine from a holistic, client-centred perspective.
- The round table forum will be open to the public and especially people with cancer, their families, and care givers.
  - The round table will strive to include educators, researchers, health-care practitioners, care workers, politicians and cancer survivors. The round table discussion will be open to questions from the public.
  - The long-term conference goal will be to envision the medicine of tomorrow, and gain input into it.
  - All profits will go into a special scholarship fund to promote the use of natural therapies and to advance the integration of complementary and conventional medicine.

If trends continue, medicine will be driven by the public's need for diversity, choice, and sustainability. It will integrate heroic, conventional medicine and caring, informative, natural medicine. It will combine the best of all worlds and focus on wellness and prevention as well as disease. It will work on the parts and the whole person. It will be both science and art.

The focus of the conference is cancer care. Cancer is Atlantic Canada's number one health concern given its prevalence and its spiralling costs - financial, social and emotional. Until a cure is found there is a need for a medicine that builds immunity while nourishing body and soul, and reducing the physical and emotional pain. Acupuncture

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and complementary medicine help meet these needs.

The Conference is timely. Complementary medicine needs to come together or risk being frozen out of the much-needed and overdue health-care system reform. Hopefully, this will be the first of many annual Conferences designed to strengthen the profile of acupuncture and natural healing and to answer a grass roots need for greater choice.

The Conference is still in its planning stages. Foremost, ATCMANS is inviting the co-sponsorship of its sister acupuncture associations, MARA and NSAA, and the participation of their members. A number of seminars are being planned that will appeal to all acupuncturists, complementary and conventional medicine practitioners. The-key note speakers are sure to inspire and recharge our professional sense of identity and purpose.

The Conference invites all medical associations both complementary and conventional, and their members to inquire as to how they can play a vital role in the Conference. Naturopathic, massage therapy and chiropractic associations are invited to present seminars on cancer care.

The Conference is currently soliciting applicants to sit at the round table. Would-be applicants must belong to a provincial health-care association and have a long-standing clinical practice that involves cancer care. These applicants may be medical doctors, chiropractors, counsellors, psychologists, massage therapists, osteopaths, reiki practitioners, therapeutic touch practitioners, acupuncturists etc. The

conference also needs a cancer survivor on the round table.

The Conference will endeavour to have government representation as well. The media will be invited to bear witness. This round table will be a great opportunity to follow up on health-care reform and add more voices and ideas towards the creation of a sustainable, fully integrated medical model.

Please consider contributing in any way possible to this effort and help bring all medical stakeholders and the public together in this synergistic event:

- If you are an association, institute or business, a letter of support would be greatly appreciated.
- If you are a health-care practitioner, come join the conference- it offers excellent value.
- If you are curious about complementary medicine and how it can help you and help drive the future of medicine, attend the Sunday Forum.
- If you want to be a sponsor/ donor, please enquire about the win-win benefits.
- If you want to set up a booth to promote your business and support the aims of the Conference, please enquire.
- If you want to volunteer your services, please enquire.
- All inquiries may be directed to Joseph at [joestarr@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:joestarr@ns.sympatico.ca) or phone (902) 832-6628. News of the Conference will be released as details are finalized at [www.acupuncturecollege.ca](http://www.acupuncturecollege.ca).

## Q&A WITH CAPITAL HEALTH'S FIRST WELLNESS NAVIGATOR

In September of 2010, occupational therapist **Heather Beaton** became Capital Health's first wellness navigator, working with the Dartmouth Community Health Team (CHT) as part of the Primary Health Care portfolio. *Capital Calling* spoke to her about her exciting new role.

### **What are your main responsibilities as a wellness navigator?**

I support people who live or work in Dartmouth, or whose family physician is based there, by helping them access various health-and-wellness resources. My focus is seniors, youth, people with chronic health conditions and those classified as "complex cases," meaning they have multiple health conditions such as arthritis, diabetes or a mental illness. For example, a family physician might need to link an individual to a church, so the physician will refer that person to me to help find a church with the appropriate resources. Maybe there's a seniors' group or a food bank the individual needs to access there, or he or she is grieving for a loved one and requires spiritual guidance. I'm available as a resource for family physicians, along with other health care providers and community groups.

### **Does a family physician have to refer people to you?**

That does happen, yes, but people can also self-refer. They can come see me at the Dartmouth CHT's office at 58 Tacoma Dr. to set up an appointment, or they can call or email to book a meeting.

### **Do you see people on a one-on-one basis?**

I work with individuals, families, couples and groups of all ages. I teach group programs on such topics as emotional wellness and stress management. I help seniors learn about how to access resources that are available to them that they might not be aware of, such as social programs, exercise classes and medication-delivery services.



Heather Beaton, Wellness Navigator

### **Are you also working with youth?**

The CHT is currently offering The Incredible Years Program for parents of youth aged 6 to 12 who may be struggling with behavioural or emotional problems, but who haven't necessarily been diagnosed with a particular condition like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. So parents who are dealing with a child who is having difficulty at school or home can come see me, and I can recommend this program. The CHT works closely with the IWK Health Centre, which explores other areas that support youth.

### **What's in store for the future?**

I'm very excited about this role and how it's expanding. In January two more wellness navigators were hired, one part-time for the Dartmouth CHT and one full-time for the Chebucto CHT, which provides programs and supports for the communities from Armdale to the Pennants. We're being accepted and welcomed by the people who are coming to see us. It's great for residents to be able to access health resources right in their own community, rather than having to go to a hospital. My colleagues and I talk about how we envision CHTs becoming the "hub" of each community. Community members also voiced this during citizen-engagement events, when the CHTs were being developed. We're a link to all of the other roles in Capital Health, and the idea is to move more services from hospitals to communities. Our hope is that one day, there will be CHTs right across the district.

**Source:** *Capital Calling, Issue 13, Winter 2011 Issue by Capital Health.*

## Director's Corner

## Wellness: What Does It Mean, and How Does a Person Achieve Wellness?

By Linda Bayers

On January 11, 2011, the former departments of Health (DoH) and Health Promotion and Protection (HPP) merged to form the new Department of **Health and Wellness** (DHW) to ensure better integration between the prevention and treatment sides of health care. The new department hopes that if these two departments work more closely together, will have a positive impact on, and provide overall better health care to, Nova Scotians.

But what is the relationship between health and wellness? The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” WHO defines wellness as “an active process of becoming aware of, and making choices toward, a more successful existence.” Process means that we never arrive at a point where there is no possibility of improving. Aware means that we are, by our nature, continuously seeking more information about how we can improve. Choices mean that we have considered a variety of options and select those that seem to be in our best interest. Success is determined by each individual to be their personal collection of accomplishments for their life.

Wellness is multidimensional. A popular model adopted by many university, corporate, and public health programs, encompasses six dimensions, or areas: Social, occupational, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and emotional. Other models mention additional aspects: environmental wellness, financial wellness, mental wellness, and medical wellness.



While there are different wellness models, there is agreement that wellness is a holistic approach, incorporating all aspects of our body, mind, and spirit. Holistic medicine became more recognized in the 1970's by both biomedicine and alternative medicine, and has since become one of the accepted methods of medical practice, and popular thinking on what makes and keeps us healthy. It is based on the general principle that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts.” For the parts to work as a whole there has to be balance and harmony in our lives.

While many programs provide wellness through the old standbys of responsible action — physical activity, good nutrition, adequate rest and sleep, stress reduction, an optimistic attitude that includes humour, positive thinking, creativity, and hope, they are short on the “How-Tos” of finding the time, money, motivation, and resources to take action. Some countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are using “wellness incentives” to promote healthy behaviours, such as providing tax credits for children’s and adult sports and recreation fees.

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**At the Self-Help Connection, we offer six important hands-on resources for taking individual and collective action on your health:**

- 1.** Join or start a self-help group. Self-help groups are recognized as sites that are beneficial in imparting information, communicating experiential knowledge, teaching coping methods, giving support, assisting with health system navigation, helping patients guard their interests in medical encounters, conveying a sense of belonging, and reducing hospitalization. We can put you in touch with a self-help group in your community, or help you start a group. Call 466-2011 or send an inquiry through our website ([www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca)) and **any staff person will help you.**
- 2.** Use the assistance of our certified peer support specialist. He can help you start or maintain your road to wellness. The peer support worker can help you with a one-on-one plan, a Wellness Recovery Action plan, or provide group programs to help you set goals, solve problems, build confidence, and work your way through the five stages of recovery. **Call Roy Muise at 404-7800 for more information on how to set up your program.**
- 3.** Learn how to create a WRAP®(Wellness Recovery Action Plan). This plan is an important resource for anyone who is living with a mental health problem or illness. Provided in a workshop group of 6-8, you can learn the key elements of WRAP®. **Call our Certified Recovery Educator, Mickie Bowe, at 404-7800 to register for a workshop.**
- 4.** Register for our Anger Control Training (ACT). This is a 12-week (2 hours per week) program to help individuals, develop positive coping strategies that will work for them. We also offer a “Train the Trainer” program for health professionals interested in setting up a program in their place of practice. **Call 404-7800 or 466-2011 and a staff member will tell you how to register for the ACT program, or “Train the Trainer.”**
- 5.** Acquire the skills and support to start your own business or re-enter the labour market. The self-employment option has two components: technical, or formal instruction on how to develop a business plan, and practical, where participants actually write their own business plan. **Call our Employment Educator, Marc Porter at 404-7800 to learn more.**
- 6.** Register for our new “Healthy Living Series.” **Call our Education Coordinator, Ashley Cooley, at 466-2011 for more information.**

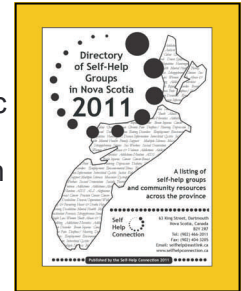
## 2011 Directory

The **2011 edition of the Self-Help Connection's Directory of Self-Help Groups in Nova Scotia** is now available for purchase. The directory contains a listing of self-help groups, support groups, and community resources throughout Nova Scotia. Topics range from Abuse, Violence, Bereavement, Cancer, Family and Parenting, to Youth organizations.

Whether you are someone looking for a particular group to meet your specific needs, a professional seeking an appropriate referral point for a client, or a researcher looking for self-help group contacts for information about a certain topic, we hope you will find this directory to be an informative and practical resource.

This publication is updated yearly.

The cost is \$30.00 for each directory + \$5.00 shipping and handling per item. Please visit our website at [www.selfhelpconnection.ca](http://www.selfhelpconnection.ca) for more information on how to order your copy online.



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



### How to Contact Us:

**Self  
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Connection**

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



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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 2002