



THE SHARING TREE

Consumer Newsletter

For any Man or Woman Living with Mental Illness

Issue 29, January February 2016

Editor: Jo-Ann Paley

My Life with a Diagnosis of a Mental Illness

by Elizabeth Britney Vagi



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Elizabeth Vagi, pictured above, is one of FACES valuable volunteers.

Our feature story for this newsletter is written by Elizabeth Vagi. The following is what she has to say.

“I was born in England and I came to Canada with my family when I was four years old. I was diagnosed

with a mental illness when I was 30 years old. I saw a psychiatrist and then I was told I had schizophrenia. I was surprised and I could not believe what was happening. I asked questions and tried to get answers. I grew and lived with the diagnosis. When I met with a psychiatrist I was put on an antipsychotic medication. I have taken a number of medications including: Clozapine, Haldol, and Risperidol. After some time I was put in the Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT). I have learned that most medications have side effects and some medications work for some people and not others. I am currently taking Abilify. It makes me very tired and it affects my legs and joints.”

“It has been a journey for me, meeting people and talking to people about my life. The first time I came to the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society (MSS) they were still

“My Life....” continued on p. 2

If you would like to send something in for this newsletter please email your submission to:

Karen@mss.mb.ca

or send it to

**The Manitoba Schizophrenia Society,
 100 — 4 Fort Street,
 Winnipeg, Manitoba
 R3C 1C4**

“My Life..... cont.” from p.2

located at 1000 Notre Dame Avenue. I spoke to Sherri Matsumoto. I found that MSS is a nice and friendly place to be.”

“When MSS moved to 4 Fort Street I came to FACES and spoke to people from the various organizations located there at the time, including people from the Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba Division (CMHA MB); Mood Disorders Association Manitoba, (MDAM); the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba, (ADAM) and MSS. They all have helped me in my life. The people at 4 Fort Street are very dear to me. They have been good people to talk to. I have been to groups at 4 Fort Street. I have learned so much from talking to other people. Music has also helped me in my life, especially Britney Spears, and listening to her story has helped me to cope. I have enjoyed her music throughout my life. I learned I had to change my lifestyle and live a healthy life. I began to keep a daily journal of my life and I found this very helpful because it gave me a better picture of what I was going through at the time. I started eating better and keeping a regular routine. Writing things down helped me to express my feelings better when I spoke to my psychiatrist and social worker. In the years since my first diagnosis I have learned to advocate for myself. I even started to volunteer. I have been a volunteer at FACES for eight years. In 2013 the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba (MDAM) presented me with a plaque for volunteering as a receptionist at the desk at the front entrance of FACES. Last year I received a pin from MDAM for volunteering. Other things I enjoy doing are watching the news channel, CNN, and learning about

what is happening in different parts of the world and listening to the radio station Hot 103 FM.”

“I really enjoy FACES. I feel comfortable here and thankful for the years I have worked here. The people in the Mental Health Resource Centre (MHERC) library have been nice and helpful. I have been in psychiatric wards several times throughout my life. I feel stronger now with all that I have learned and continue to learn. It has been a journey. An inspirational message for people is: ‘Don’t give up. There is still HOPE’ ”!

By Elizabeth Britney Vagi

Mrs. Universe 2015—2016

This year’s First Nation’s Beauty Queen is Ashley Burham (nee -Callingbull).

This 25 year-old woman from Alberta’s Enoch Cree Nation became the first First Nations Contestant and the first Canadian to win the Mrs. Universe contest at the end of August! She doesn’t just sit there and look pretty—or act like a little lamb!

Ashley says that First Nation’s issues are always relegated to the back burner! Speaking at events across the country she wanted Indian youth to go to the polls on October the nineteenth. Ashley refuses to be silent—and never does a day go by that’s dull!

Ashley earned a standing ovation at the pageant, and she is a survivor of sexual and physical abuse. This started at age five by her mother’s boyfriend. She has had rocks thrown at her by white class mates. She grew up really fast.

Ashley moved in with her grandparents so the abuse did not last.

Ashley says: “Missing and murdered Indian women are a priority, but why aren’t they treated like that? We are human beings!”

By Carolyn Gibson

Thought for the Day

Be who you are. Say what you think.
Those that matter...don’t mind.
Those that do mind, don’t matter.

Have a great day.

Anonymous

Partners in Awareness

**A peer support group made up of
interesting dynamic professionals
with schizophrenia.**

**Receive support from those who
understand!**

You Don’t Have to Do It Alone!

4 Fort Street, Winnipeg

NEXT MEETING:

March 3rd

7:00 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

Contact: **204-786-1616**

Sponsored by:



Message from the Editor

We reserve the right to change the formatting of work received but we will not change the meaning of any work submitted.

Coping With Mental Illness In The Workplace

On January 20th we discussed coping with mental illness in the workplace. We did some brainstorming on the subject. Here is what people had to say:

Problems in the Workplace

Lack of knowledge of the job requirements; feelings of isolation; lack of respect from co-workers; feelings of not belonging and not being appreciated; feeling overwhelmed; lack of good communication skills; not being a team player.

Some Solutions and positive outcomes:

Having an up-to-date resume before applying for a job; knowing what kind of job you are best suited for; having the skills for the job; having good communication skills; feeling that you belong where you work; being respected and valued; need to be happy with the job you are doing and with your fellow workers; being a team player; being able to make friends with people who have similar interests; learning about other people's cultures and interests.

Duty to Disclose

The question arose about whether or not to reveal that a person is living with a mental illness when that person applies for a job. Some people felt that it was necessary to disclose living with a mental illness. Others felt that it was not necessary to disclose because they feared that they would not be considered for the job if they revealed they were living with a mental illness.

Duty to Accommodate

In Canada, there is a duty to accommodate people who live with a mental illness as long as certain safety-sensitive issues are complied with. Employees are responsible to make employers aware of any conditions that might affect their judgment or ability to perform their job.

Positive Relationships —What are they like?

- * Kind
- * Mutually respectful
- * Helpful, not hurtful
- * Patient
- * Trustful
- * Mindful — being mindful of your words and actions, so negative emotions don't impact those around you.
- * Open, honest communication whereby each person benefits.

We have **H.O.P.E.S.** *for young people living with psychosis and schizophrenia*



If you are a person between 15 and 30 and are living with psychosis and schizophrenia, or schizo-affective disorder, **H.O.P.E.S.** or **Hope and Opportunity through Peers, Empowerment and Support** might be a place for you!

4 Fort Street, Winnipeg

First Thursday of the Month 4:00 pm—5:00 pm

Contact: the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society
at 204-786-1616

10 Week MSS Structured Voice Hearers Program

The ten week structured support program is designed to help voice hearers gain a better relationship with their voices. During the ten weeks, education and exercises are shared with the group members to empower people with their voices.

Registration is required before attending this program.

What are Hearing Voices?

Hearing voices is experienced as either coming from inside your head, outside your head or in the body. Hearing voices can be male, female, without gender, child, adult, human or non-human.

A voice hearer can hear one voice or many voices.

The Hearing Voices Approach Objectives

- Accepting that hearing voices are a normal human experience
- Hearing voices is meaningful for the person and related to life experiences
- Believing in each person's strength through resiliency and ability to recover
- Respecting each person's process of recovery
- While hearing voices is a challenge, the difficulty is in coping with the experience
- Owning their voices enables people to cope with their experience

MSS Voice Hearers Support Group

The support group is open to anyone who hears voices and a registration is not required to attend. This self-help group offers a safe place for voice hearers to share their voices without fear of being judged. The group offers mutual support and different coping tools to help members live well with voices.

**Runs every 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday of each month
6:30PM – 8:00PM**

Suite 100-4 Fort Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1C4
Phone: 204- 786-1616 Email: matthew@mss.mb.ca

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

For families and friends of those experiencing schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, and psychosis.

**The Last Tuesday of every month
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

2016 Schedule

| | |
|---------|---------|
| Jan 26 | July 26 |
| Feb 23 | Aug 30 |
| Mar 29 | Sept 27 |
| Apr 26 | Oct 25 |
| May 31 | Nov 29 |
| June 28 | Dec 27 |

Multipurpose Room

**For more information contact 204-786-1616
or info@mss.mb.ca**

Manitoba Schizophrenia Society
4 Fort Street
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: 204-786-1616

“Need to talk to someone about your life with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder?”

Then consider attending the

MANITOBA PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR MEN AND WOMEN
On Wednesday afternoons

SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2016

Meeting Time: 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM (Unless otherwise indicated)

DATE

ACTIVITY

JANUARY

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 6 | The Healing Power of Humour |
| 13 | Movie Day at MSS |
| 20 | Coping with Mental Illness in the Workplace |
| 27 | Living with Fear and Anxiety |

FEBRUARY

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|-----------|--|
| 3 | Co-occurring Disorders and Mental Illness |
| 10 | Valentine’s Day Party |
| 17 | Guest Speaker—Dr. Colleen Murphy, a Psychologist with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Early Psychosis Prevention Intervention Service (E.P.P.I.S.) speaking about Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and treating Mental Illness |
| 24 | Check-in followed by an Outing to be Confirmed |

Women's Program Schedule

January & February 2016

Meetings are held on Thursday afternoon from 1:15 PM to 2:45 PM at 4 Fort Street (FACES) although sometimes we go on outings. Any women living with a mental illness are welcome to attend. Occasionally we are out of the office for an activity so please call to confirm your attendance at 204-786-1616.

JANUARY

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| 7 | Writers' Group- Goal Setting – New Year's Resolutions |
| 14 | Topic – Anger Management |
| 21 | Movie Day |
| 28 | Bowling at Dakota Lanes – 1085 St. Mary's Road – Please be there by 1:20 p.m. – Bus 14 |

FEBRUARY

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|-----------|---|
| 4 | Writers' Group—Topic "What is Love?" |
| 11 | Valentine's Day Party |
| 18 | Schizophrenia & Menopause |
| 25 | Walk to The Forks |

WEATHER PLAN—WALK IN THE MALL AT FACES



Funded by:
A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.
MANITOBA SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ MANITOBAINE DE LA SCHIZOPHÉNIE
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE