We hope you find “A Journey with Friends” an informative and enjoyable read. Please direct any comments to Susan Roach, Manager, Wellness & Recovery Centre. We welcome and invite your feedback.

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Kevin’s will to live and stay mentally well has inspired people worldwide. His compelling story has touched diverse, global audiences within colleges and universities, high schools, corporations, clergy, military, clinicians, health and medical communities, law enforcement organizations, and various industries. Thousands have communicated to Hines that his story helped save their lives. Kevin believes in the power of the human spirit and in the fact that you can find the ability to live mentally well. His mantra: “Life is a gift, that is why they call it the present. Cherish it always.”

Out of the Shadows
In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada experiences a mental health problem or illness. But, unlike other health conditions, only one in three people who experience a mental health problem or illness—and as few as one in four children or youth—report that they have sought and received services and treatment. Stigma, discrimination and fear of mental illness and misunderstanding of mental health remains one of the primary roadblocks to individuals addressing and seeking help.

During mental health week please join us on the journey to bring mental health “out of the shadows” and to recognize, in both words and deeds, the truth of the saying “that there can be no health without mental health.”

To register or for more information please contact:
CAMHS - Achieve Mental Health Wellness & Recovery Centre
519-428-0580 x 5

April is National Humour Month

National Humour Month serves to raise public awareness of the therapeutic value of humour. Laughter and joy, the benchmarks of humour lead to improved well-being, boosted morale, increased communication skills, and an enriched quality of life. Humour as a tool to lift ailing spirits is an established notion supported by scientific research. The curative power of laughter and its ability to relieve stress and burnout may indeed be one of the great medical discoveries of our times. Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the chemical endorphins that are released by your brain. It activates and relieves your stress response.

Health benefits that positive thinking may provide include:

- Increased life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress
- Improved social and recreational activities
- Better homeostasis
- Soothes tension
- Increases life span
- Lower rates of depression
- Lower levels of distress
- Greater resistance to the common cold
- Better psychological and physiological well-being
- Better cardiovascular health and reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease
- Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress
- Improved social and recreational activities
- Better homeostasis
- Soothes tension

When your state of mind is generally optimistic, you're better able to handle stress in a more constructive way. That ability may contribute to the widely observed health benefits of positive thinking. Indeed, some studies show that personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of your health and well-being. The positive thinking that usually stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the chemical endorphins that are released by your brain. It activates and relieves your stress response. Soothes tension.

Optimist or Pessimist?

Is your glass half-empty or half-full? How you answer this age-old question about positive thinking may reflect your outlook on life, your attitude toward yourself, and whether you're optimistic or pessimistic. It may even affect your health. In fact, research shows that positive thinking can affect many areas of your health and well-being. The positive thinking that usually stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the chemical endorphins that are released by your brain. It activates and relieves your stress response. Soothes tension.
Depression: Let’s Talk

Depression is the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide. According to the latest estimates from the World Health Organization, more than 300 million people are now living with depression, an increase of more than 18% between 2005 and 2015. The new estimates were released in the lead-up to World Health Day on April 7th, the high point in WHO’s year-long campaign “Depression: let’s talk”. The overall goal of the campaign is to engage more people living with depression, everywhere in the world, both seek and get help.

WHO Director-General, Dr. Margaret Chan reflects: “These new figures are a wake-up call for all countries to re-think their approaches to mental health and to treat it with the urgency that it deserves.”

One of the first steps in the “Depression: let’s talk” campaign is to address issues around perception and discrimination. Lack of support for people with mental disorders, coupled with a fear of stigma, prevent many from seeking the treatment they need to live healthy, productive lives.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” – Nelson Mandela

Enhancing knowledge and understanding of mental illnesses, including depression, empowers individuals to recognize and respond to personal mental health challenges and contributes to the development of community networks which are supportive of individuals and free from barriers of stigma and discrimination.

To enhance your knowledge of depression check out: https://youtu.be/XXcnnLQ0YO

The efforts of the Centre’s Mental Health Literacy Program are to outreach to both Haldimand and Norfolk residents with a diversity of education and engagement initiatives. These can enhance personal mental health strategies, and help seeking behaviour, reduce stigma and increase acceptance of those living with mental illness or addictions.

The Centre was the recipient of a beautiful gift of stained glass hand-crafted by Donna Williamson, a CAMHS staff member. Our ‘Wellness Tree’ hangs proudly at the Centre for all to enjoy. Thank you Donna!

Why Do We Worry?

As human beings, we naturally fear the unknown. Worry is mental agitation or concern about impending or anticipated problems. Thereby, worry is thinking about the future. We fear that we might make mistakes; we fear that others will judge us negatively; we fear losing the things we have that are important to us. What is the difference between that worry came true. When not managed properly, worry can cause stress, lack of sleep, increased aging, lack of focus and even physical problems such as digestive issues. Below are some tips for how to manage worry:

Tip 1: Determine if some of your worries are simply noise.
Ask yourself questions like: What am I worried about? Is this a real problem or an imaginary one? Is the worry real or a memory? Is this my brain’s threat detection system going into overdrive? Are these thoughts helping me? What are the benefits of having these thoughts? Worrying can be helpful if it motivates you to make a positive change in your situation. Worrying about things you have no control over is not useful. Try to notice these thoughts without judgment and let them go.

Tip 2: Postpone and manage your worries.
Instead of worrying constantly, set aside a “worry-time” each day. Take 15-30 minutes to worry about whatever is troubling you and problem solve. Try to make it the same time every day. If worrying is keeping you up at night, try placing a pen and paper beside your bed and writing down the worries that are bothering you. Tell yourself that you will look at the list during your worry-time the next day and try come up with a solution. When you notice worries come into your mind, tell yourself that you’ll think about them again during your worry time and let them go for the time being.

Tip 3: Have a problem solving session.
If you determine that your worry is legitimate (not just noise), you can start problem solving during your worry-time about how to deal with the issue. First, identify what you are worried about. Clearly define the problem and write down the details about the worry and write them down. Next, think about how you can solve the problem. If you can’t think of a direct way to solve it, write down ideas for a step you can take in the direction of solving the problem. Consider whom you can ask for help and information you need to acquire, and things you can do to lessen the negative impacts of the problem. Finally, take action. What ever you decided to do in the previous step, now is the time to do it. You may feel much better about the problem once you have taken action to solve it.

Tip 4: Manage stress
When you worry, your body releases the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol. When there is too much of these hormones present they can negatively affect your mental, physical, and emotional health. Self-care strategies can help manage stress related to worrying. Some forms of self-care might include listening to music, taking a bath, exercising, meditating, going for a walk, or spending time with pets. When managed, worrying can be a positive motivation in your life rather than a cause for agitation and stress!

Researched and prepared by Emily Vandehei, concurrent disorders placement student from Mohawk College

Meet the WRC Staff

Deborah Strachan - Program Assistant
Field placement at the Centre, joined staff in 2009
Education: Fanshawe College
Social Service diploma, Crisis Intervention certificate
Awards/Accolades: Women of Excellence Award - Soroptimist International
President’s Honour Roll – Fanshawe College
Ontario Honour Roll – Fanshawe College
CSS Lightbearers – Unsung Hero 2012
Mantra or guiding belief: “Be the best I can be – do my best to support others.”

My Road Travelled:
My mood disorder and social service education empowers me to make genuine and meaningful connections with those I support. I also find it helps and makes it very easy to make connections with others in various presentations and discussions, as I talk about personal experiences with ease and passion. As I was helped and supported along my journey of recovery – so do I wish to support those in need.

Interests, hobbies:
Family, animals (rescue dogs, horses), antiques, travel

Marijo Watt - Program Assistant
Field Placement at the Centre, joined staff in 2016
Education: Fanshawe College
Early Childhood Education & Social Service Worker Diploma
Mantra or guiding belief: “We fall down so we can figure out how to pick ourselves up over the past few years I’ve realized that talking about our journey with depression and anxiety has given me the courage to share my experiences and knowledge to help others on their own personal journeys. For far too long I was shrouded by stigma, stuck in my own self-imposed silence. I hope to be a step forward on the road to recovery for those who identify with living with a mental illness. I realized that I don’t have to suffer, I can choose to live and now I spend my days encouraging others to do the same.

“You cannot have a rainbow without a little rain.”

Interests, hobbies:
Education, family, travel, reading, fishing, nature walks

Ariza Delyekser - Program Assistant
Joined staff in 2017
Education: Pre health at Georgian College
Fanshawe College Social Service diploma
Mantra or guiding belief: “I choose to try my best to have a positive outlook, to strive for a successful day rather than a frustrating one. I choose to believe in the power of life matters and my choices are important. “We fall down so we can figure out how to pick ourselves up again.” We are what we believe.”

My Road Travelled:
Over the past few years I’ve realized that talking about what I’m feeling does help. My strong support team is made up of friends, family and professional members who help me to accomplish anything I set my mind to. With my combined lived experience and education, I can provide a positive and motivating environment for members.

Interests, hobbies:
I love the outdoors and anything to do with it, I really like cats and sharks. An odd combination but both interesting in their own way!

Charlotte Potticary - Program Assistant
Field Placement at the Centre, joined staff in 2016
Education: Concurrent Disorders Certificate (Mohawk College) - Dean’s Honours List
Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree (University of Guelph) - Dean’s Honours List
Mantra or guiding belief: “I believe that everyone is worthy of being truly happy, and I hope that I can in some way help them to achieve that. It has been incredible to learn what many people have overcome in their lives, and inspires me every day to try to stay positive.

My Road Travelled: I have an amazing support system – my husband, my family, my friends, my co-workers, my dog – and this has helped me to stay happy and healthy. My personal experience with anxiety has allowed me to relate well to others who feel like they’re alone or different. I love to learn, and the huge step I (finally!) took of going back to school really helped to raise my self-esteem. I wasn’t sure if I could do it – and I didn’t!!!

Interests, hobbies: I love to go for walks with my dog, and take in the scenery, the sunshine, and the sounds and smells of nature. I love playing cards (especially euchre), board games, and lawn games.

Trisha Schotsch - Program Assistant
Field placement at the Centre, joined staff in 2014
Education: Fanshawe College Social Service diploma, Child and Youth Worker Diploma
Awards/Accolades: Dean’s Honor Roll - Fanshawe College
President’s Honor Roll - Fanshawe College
Academic Achievement Award - Fanshawe College
Mantra or guiding belief: “You don’t need to take the whole staircase to take the first step”. “What lies before us and what lies behind us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us!” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

My Road Travelled:
My personal experience with Bipolar Disorder combined with my education give me the courage and strength to share my story and inspire others to speak about mental health challenges. By speaking about it, we can lessen the stigma attached to mental illness.

Interests, hobbies:
Family, reading true crime book, my dogs, camping
Mind * Body * Spirit Wellness Fair

Representatives from over 110 health providers, programs and services were all available, under one roof, to provide information to the residents of Haldimand and Norfolk on Saturday March 25. The Mind * Body * Spirit Wellness Fair is hosted annually by Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk and attracts growing interest every year.

The Wellness & Recovery, a program of CAMHS initiated the wellness fair eight years ago and have grown the event from a handful of services, representatives and visitors to this year’s successful event which hosted over 800 people during the five-hour event.

The Mind * Body * Spirit Wellness Fair broadly represents the diversity of services which can contribute to overall wellbeing. Travelling along just one row of the event, visitors can speak to and learn from providers about sleep apnea, policing services, funeral planning, diabetes, poverty, volunteering, mental health and addiction, pet therapy, and dental care. The event approaches health and wellbeing in a very holistic manner recognizing the significant impact that social determinants of health can have on an individual’s day to day wellbeing.

Deborah Strachan, program assistant from the Wellness Centre, leads and coordinates the event to ensure that every year visitors leave feeling satisfied and informed. Visitor evaluations overwhelmingly reflect that they found beneficial resources and information and would both return to the event in the future and recommend it to others. Presenters acknowledged “another great year, keep up the good work!”

The annual event is available free to the public thanks to the sponsorships and funding support of businesses and services in the community.

Caring Communities Make Things Happen - Thanks to Our Sponsors and Supporters

VOICE Awards 2017

The VOICE award recognizes the outstanding efforts of individuals or services which support mental health and wellness in our community. Contributions in three areas are recognized:

- Support the personal wellness, health and recovery of an individual person living with mental illness
- Strive to improve or enhance the quality of supports available for individuals living with mental illness
- Increase understanding and reduce stigma about mental health/mental illness in the community

Absolute Respiratory
Andrews, Connie
Antozewski, Linda
Beemer, Gary
Benneff Concrete
Berkel Greenhouses
Bishop, Cheryl
Bishop, Sarah
Blad, Meghan
Boerkamp, Tracey & Shelley
Boston Common
Bowen Therapy
Bowyer, Bruce
Candy-Harding, Nancy
Clark’s Pharmasave
Clarsse, Alexandrea
Community Legal Clinic
Compeli, David
Compeli, Gianna
Corrigan, Bill
Delutis, Don
Druettie, Michele
Duffett, Robert
Dunn, Alison

Fleury, Cam
Fournier, Magga
Good Redden Klosler
Green, Sheila
Kerry’s St. James Street Eatery
Lomas, Karen
Lomas, Tom
Lomas, Chad
Lomas, Christopher

Palliquin, Paulette
Peckford, Alla
Perry, Triss
Porter, Leanna
Porter, Spencer
Procurier, John
Schoolley, Brenda
Schweertman, Eugene
Second Ave. Printing

Shepherd, Allen
Simmons, Irene
Slaght, Roselle
Sone, Trevor
Springview Farms Golf
Stirling, Erin
Sugoja, Harmony
Torti, Joanne
United Way of Haldimand & Norfolk

Warrell, Janice
Weber, Dr. Gary
Williamson, Donna
Woodward, Amber

Wellness & Recovery Centre Active on Poverty

Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk (CAMHS) are committed to the “enhancement of our community through the provision of services that promote and support wellness.” CAMHS provides clinical addiction and mental health services and peer support, while also recognizing and responding to the significant impact that social determinants of health can have for everyone.

Social determinants, such as disability, unemployment, housing and food insecurity, are some of the most important factors that impact both mental and physical health. In fact, access to economic resources is one of the most significant factors that impacts on an individual’s ability to achieve and maintain positive mental health. Poverty and the deprivation associated with it compromise one’s quality of life and negatively impacts mental health. Addressing social determinants of health such as poverty is critical to the overall resiliency, health and wellness of ALL citizens.

Mental health is the state of well-being that allows us to “feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.” Mental health impacts each and every one of us. We all have mental health, good or poor, just as we all have varying degrees of physical health. But mental health is not fixed or stagnant as it can be enhanced or undermined by the many social factors which impact on one’s life.

For individuals living with a mental illness or addiction; poverty, housing and unemployment undermine their ability to recover and achieve overall wellness. Managing illness is difficult while also trying to manage the daily life challenges which arise with poverty, a lack of safe, secure housing and lack of employment. Positive mental health supports an individuals’ recovery as it provides a foundation for dealing with life’s challenges including living with a mental illness.

CAMHS is an active member of the Poverty Action Partnership of Haldimand-Norfolk (PAPHN) to develop and enhance awareness of the negative impacts of poverty on the overall mental health of our community and our clients. As committee participants we support and advocate for changes to benefit and strengthen the resiliency, health and wellness of all citizens. CAMHS is represented on the committee by Deborah Strachan from the Wellness & Recovery Centre.