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Check It Out

The Mood Disorders Association of Ontario works every day to open hearts and minds, inspire hope and effect change for those of us living with mood disorders.

This year, the focus of MDAO’s Mental Illness Awareness Week campaign, October 4th to 10th, will be to encourage Ontarians to be proactive about their mental health by going to the Check Up from the Neck Up website to “check it out”.

We are encouraging early intervention and would like everyone to know that early intervention helps to ensure good mental health and saves lives.

Our initiative will take place throughout Ontario at events organized by our various support groups across the province, as well as in three Yonge Line subway stations in Toronto (Eglinton, Bloor and King) on Wednesday October 7th during the morning rush hour.

Our large and fabulous network of volunteers across the province will be handing out 20,000 promotional packages, including the fridge magnet you see here:



We will be seeking media attention for our campaign and for these messages:

- “check it out”
- help is here if you want it
- let’s reduce the stigma – mental illness is an illness like any other, there’s no shame in it.

Together, let’s raise awareness of mental illness in Ontario and promote early intervention and regular check-ups. It’s just as important as your regular physical check up.

Get your check up today at: www.checkupfromtheneckup.ca

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Laughing Like Crazy
 Don't miss an amazing night of comedy starring award winning comic Mike MacDonald and hosted by television star Pat McKenna!!
 October 24th, 2009—Panasonic Theatre Toronto





“Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, it’s about learning to dance in the rain.”

Learning to Dance in the Rain...

Recently, I attended the Mental Health Summit hosted by the Minister of Health and Long Term Care, the Hon. David Caplan. We heard a number of speakers who shared their lived experiences and one of them, Dr. Robert Lester shared this quote: *“Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, it’s about learning how to dance in the rain.”*

I was very touched by this quote because it so accurately captures the day-to-day lives of so many individuals and families that we serve. To be sure, many of us are blessed with full and complete recoveries—regaining our purpose, our joy, our laughter, our love. But for many of us, the road to recovery is still incredibly long and contains violent storms and days on end of drizzle and rain.

Part of our role here at MDAO is to help thousands of individuals and families to learn to “dance in the rain”; to cope, to manage their illness, to continue to put one foot in front of the other.

At times, it can get quite discouraging waiting to see truly bright days again... days of cool breezes, brilliant sunshine, and peaceful pleasures. In fact, for many of us, those days seem like a distant memory or just a fantasy.

But just think about this past “summer that never was....” : days of cool, dreary, drizzly, bipolar weather. But think back carefully! Do you recall those precious few days when it was truly beautiful... sunny, not too hot, and so perfect that you almost didn’t know there was weather. Those days were few and far between to be sure... but there **were** a few of them.

And that, my friends, is the story of our collective journeys. How do we make the best of the erratic weather patterns of our lives? How do we keep moving towards the light? For make no mistake, there is definitely light. Even in the darkest days of our emotional winters... there is light. I know—I found it! But in the meantime, keep moving! Don’t stop! Learn to dance in the rain. Eventually the storm WILL pass! I promise.

All the best,
Karen

Letter from the Editor

As the new Manager of Marketing and Communications at MDAO, I am also happy to take on the role of editor of Equilink.

I am excited to be able to tell you, the reader, all about the great things that are going on. Please feel free to pass along any comments and suggestions to me.

Thanks for reading, and for being a part of MDAO!

Donna

THE EDITOR
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416.486.8046 ext.232

Focus on Regional Programs



Spotlight on MAMDA

In 1994, four patients in the psychiatric unit at Markham-Stouffville Hospital found they shared similar problems, perspectives on mental health, and concerns about their post-hospitalization functioning. They started to meet and the Markham Area Mood Disorders Association, or MAMDA, started.

Now, the group meets every two weeks on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 pm in Richmond Hill and attendance is usually around 12 people.

An unusual feature of this group is that consumers and families do meet together. (However, most consumers attend without family, and many family members come without their related consumers.) Both consumers and families benefit: family

members learn to distinguish between symptoms and other factors, to listen, and to learn about medications and therapy options. Consumers learn to appreciate the difficulties their behaviour can bring to loved ones, notably early in an illness before family members have developed much understanding of it. Members potentially benefit in many ways: including learning that others share similar problems, acceptance of each other, they get treated as people first, have the opportunity to socialize, and frequent laughter.

If you are interested in joining MAMDA please call Paul at 905.889.4057 (Richmond Hill) or Teresa at 905.898.3116 (Newmarket).

Spotlight on Equilibrium

Founded in 1991, Equilibrium is a peer support group in Oakville for individuals and their families who are affected by a mood disorder.

No registration or membership is required—all those with mood disorders are welcomed to just show up.

Meetings:

2nd Tuesday of every month from September to June at 7:30pm

Evangel Pentecostal Church, Oakville

New website:

www.equilibrium-oakville.com



Equilibrium's focus, wellness through education and sharing, is accomplished through monthly meetings with guest speakers or informational videos.

Guest speakers include individuals who live with a mood disorder, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, social workers and specialists in nutrition and relaxation.

Equilibrium provides a safe environment to talk to someone who's been there.

Family and Youth Programs



416.486.0411

Tuesdays

12-8pm

"I hope the word spreads quickly and widely about a mental health 416 number for families, the way the Telehealth number came on the scene. Anyone who wonders about unusual behaviour can comfortably call for information, direction, or support. As parents, when we faced dealing with bipolar disorder with our daughter, we knew nothing about mental health problems. We had no idea who to talk to or where to turn - a telephone contact would have been so helpful."
Parent

To volunteer for a family program or to join a group, contact:
Catherine Bancroft
416.486.8046 ext.300

New Family Number

Thanks to the generous support of CIBC, MDAO has launched a new 416 number for families. During Tuesdays With Families, family members will be able to call 416-486-0411 to access information and referrals.

During one of our family gatherings, a group of family members identified that the one thing they wanted was a number

to call when they were first trying to understand what was happening with their loved one. Family members expressed that if they had a number to call they may have avoided weeks, months and sometimes years of not knowing what was happening with their loved one and would have known where to turn. Out of that meeting came the idea for the family number.

We are pleased it is now a reality— Tuesdays from 12pm to 8pm.

Groups

Strengthening Families Together

Tuesday evenings starting October 6th

"Being part of the Strengthening Families Together Group gave us much-needed information and support, resources, increased patience and understanding, renewed strength, clearer direction, relief of sometimes-unbearable guilt, and, probably biggest of all -- HOPE. ."

Linda Novick-Laker

Siblings Only group

Thursday evenings starting January 14th, 2010

"It takes courage to join a Siblings Support Group. Although the idea of a group like this in theory could initially make one feel exposed and vulnerable, in practice, my reality was that this group offered nothing but much needed support and education in a time when I needed it most." Sibling Group member

Police Diversity and Education Group

The goal is to open up communication lines, engage in friendly and professional dialogue, and create links between the Toronto Police Department and mental health services in the Toronto area.

Anyone with experience or interest in joining the group, please contact Catherine.

Upcoming Event

Join Us to Meditate @ 8 in Toronto — October 8th at 6:30

A fun evening and a fundraiser for Step Stone House

Please rsvp to: meditateateight@mooddisorders.on.ca

For more information: www.mooddisorders.on.ca/family.html

MAD About You

6th Annual MAD About You Gala February 6th, 2010 The Carlu, Toronto

Planning is well under way for the 6th Annual MAD About You Gala. Never ones to disappoint, we are planning all kinds of excitement and surprises for everyone who attends.

We rely upon the strength of commitment and enduring loyalty of our community partners and sponsors and we continue to build our programs, services, and resources upon that lasting foundation.

We are truly grateful to our sponsors and guests whose faith in and commitment to our work allows MDAO to reach for ever-higher goals.

Last year's "MAD About You and Inspiration Awards Gala Celebration" raised \$225,000 that will go directly to our programs and services such as:

- peer support and education
- early intervention
- workplace awareness
- anti-stigma initiatives and so much more.

Thank you to everyone who supported the 5th Annual MAD About You Gala Celebration.



To reserve your tickets or to sponsor MAD About You contact Carlin at: carlinb@mooddisorders.on.ca



TOUCHED BY FIRE

THE ART SHOW YOU HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO ENTER

MDAO is happy to be presenting the third annual Touched By Fire art show and sale, sponsored by financial services company Raymond James.

Artists who experience mood disorders have once again entered in droves to be a part of this exciting event.

Touched By Fire's live show and sale will take place November 26th, 2009 at the Royal Ontario Museum. Everyone is invited to join us in celebrating the works of great artists.

To RSVP for this event, email carlinb@mooddisorders.on.ca

For more information, or to visit the ongoing online show, visit www.touchedbyfire.ca.





Working Through It

Stories of **reclaiming well-being** at work,
off work and returning to work

“Working Through It”

is an innovative resource designed for those who may be struggling with life and work issues – feeling frustrated, hopeless, anxious or overwhelmed. The Canadian Mental Health Association and the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario developed Working Through It to provide practical insights and suggestions to help individuals feel better and to cope more effectively, whether they are at work, off work or in the process of returning to work.

Working Through It blends video clips of individuals sharing their experiences and insights, clips of professionals offering suggestions, and on-line content to supplement the questions being asked and answered.

Viewers will meet 10 individuals who reflect on their own journeys: what worked and what could have worked.

They address questions like:

- What can I do at work to feel better? Who can help me at work? What should I say?
- If I continue to struggle should I stay at work?
- How can I manage financially?
- What happens when I go back to work?
- What if I lose my job?

Viewers will also meet medical and human resources professionals, who talk about ways to navigate workplace, health care and insurance issues.

Individuals can go through the video at their own pace and according to their own priorities.

Thank you to Great West Life for its generous financial support for this resource, enabling us to bring it to life.

Working Through It can be accessed, for free, on the Great West Life Centre for Mental Health website at:

www.gwlcentreformentalhealth.com/wti

Mood Lighting

On May 28, MDAO proudly acknowledged the Mood Lighting Video Contest winners:

1st Place winning video – Speak Up by Chelsea Maloney, Mike Williams, Megan Stewart

2nd place winning video – The Brain is Part of The Body by Patrick Fishman, Sylvia Nagy & Chelsea Stevenson

3rd place winning video – Head Cases by Matt Greyson

Honourable Mention video – Created by Peter Mulcair

We congratulate all the filmmakers who participated in Mood Lighting.

Thank you for your contribution to building awareness of mood disorders and MDAO.

To view Speak Up, and other winning entries, please visit www.mooddisorders.on.ca



Focus on Toronto Programs



Drumming to Our Own Beat

Learn to cope with your mood disorder in a musical way—no experience necessary.

New group starts October 1st for 8 weeks

Thursday evenings from 6 pm to 8pm

Participants must RSVP to Kim Umbach

Stand Up for Mental Health

New program starting September 30th

Stay posted for info on the “Comedy Showcase” in January 2010

Mindfulness in Everyday Life

Five week program introduces methods to support mindfulness in daily life

New program starting September 29th

Tuesdays from 4pm to 5 pm

Applicants must apply to be part of program

Coffee with Karen

Have an informal chat with

Executive Director Karen Liberman

October 20th

November 18th

December 9th

2pm to 4pm



Managing Your Depression & Anxiety

An educational group for those on their way to recovery. Participants will learn general coping strategies.

New program starting October 14th

Wednesdays from 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Participants must register

For a full list of groups and programs, please visit the calendar on our website at:

<http://www.mooddisorders.on.ca/pdf/calendar.pdf>

For more information or to register for groups or programs, please contact:

Kim Umbach

kimu@mooddisorders.on.ca

416.486.8046 ext. 223

After receiving many requests, we are introducing a new women’s group, meeting the first Monday evening of every month, starting October 5th

Laughing Like CRAZY

**Saturday, October 24, 2009
8:00 p.m.
Panasonic Theatre
65 I Yonge Street**

Mike MacDonald is fast, funny and *probably the best veteran of the North American funnyman circuit!* An award-winning Canadian comic, Mike will have you laughing like crazy in this one man, stand up comedy event in support of the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario.

In addition to his live performances all over North America, Mike MacDonald has *also starred in three well received and critically acclaimed specials for the CBC in Canada and for Showtime in the U.S. and appeared on numerous TV shows including "Late Night With David Letterman", "Just For Laughs", A&E's "An Evening At The Improv" . Mike MacDonald's popularity continues to skyrocket both in the United States and Canada. He has hosted both the Gemini Awards and the "Just For Laughs 10th Anniversary Special" for the CBC. In fact, MacDonald also holds the distinction of being the only comedian to perform at each and every Just For Laughs gala show.*



The evening will be hosted by Patrick McKenna, another of Canada's favourite funny men and a television personality. From his roles on "The Red Green Show" and "Traders" to the "Trudeau" miniseries, Patrick McKenna is well known and well-loved.

Don't miss this opportunity to see Patrick McKenna and Mike MacDonald perform live and get to know him in a studio-style Q & A after the show.

**Visit www.ticketking.com or 1.800.461.3333 to get your tickets today!!
Or fill out the form below and fax it to Carlin at 416.486.8127**



YES I would like to support MDAO by attending Laughing Like Crazy

All tickets \$70*

I would like 2 4 6 8 other _____ tickets

I prefer to pay by ___ Visa or ___ Mastercard **to purchase tickets by cheque, email carlinb@mooddisorders.on.ca*

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

Card Number _____ Expiry Date _____

Address _____ Apt # _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

E-mail Address _____ Telephone _____

**applicable taxes and services charges will be added to your final bill*

www.mooddisorders.on.ca