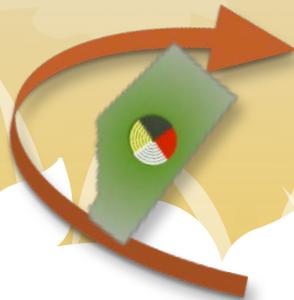


ALBERTA NNADAP

Treatment News

Sue Howard, Clinical Addictions Consultant



Welcome to this month's edition of the newsletter!

Forward this newsletter to your team members or anyone else you would like to share it with.

If you have information you would like to share for future newsletters, email by the 3rd Monday of the month to:

sue@suehowardconsulting.ca



2017 Kapown Wilderness Camp

Kapown Rehabilitation Centre is accepting applications for summer camp.

The 2017 Kapown Wilderness Camp runs the full month of July. There is no cost to attend. The only criteria is that at least one adult in the family has completed residential treatment and is maintaining their sobriety.

Camp fills quickly so please apply early. Applications can be obtained by emailing intake@kapown.ca or by calling 1-888-751-3921.



Upcoming Conferences, Training & Events

25th International Harm Reduction Conference

May 14-17, 2017
Montreal, Quebec

The theme of this year's conference is 'At the Heart of the Response', and the program will include presentations, panels, workshops and dialogue space sessions on innovative harm reduction services, new or groundbreaking research, effective or successful advocacy campaigns and key policy discussions or debates.

With delegates from more than 70 countries set to take part in this four-day conference, the program will not only reflect the truly global nature of the movement but also address key international issues.

Registration & Information:

<https://www.hri.global/hr17/register-landing>

Webinar: Two Spirit! Let's Hear it! – An Introduction to Two-Spirit Health

April 12, 2017 10:00 am

In this webinar, Dr. Sarah Hunt, Assistant Professor, First Nations and Indigenous Studies and Department of Geography, University of British Columbia will provide an introduction to the health of Two-Spirit people, discussing the diversity of meanings ascribed to Two-Spirit as a term used to describe an array of Indigenous identities and expressions of gender and sexuality. Within a social determinants framework, an overview of the impacts of colonization will be provided as a key component of understanding the health of Two-Spirit people.

Registration & Information:

<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/8543008916447256066>

Seasonal Affective Disorder



What is Seasonal Affective Disorder?

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that is directly related to the changing of the seasons. Generally speaking, SAD symptoms tend to begin around fall or early winter, and continue throughout the winter months until spring. There is also an unusual form of SAD that causes depressive symptoms in the spring and summer months.

Causes

Some of the possible causes or factors contributing to the onset of SAD may include:

- Serotonin levels: Serotonin is a brain chemical that affects our mood. A reduction in sunlight can cause a drop in serotonin.
- Melatonin levels: The change in seasons may cause a disruption in melatonin levels, affecting sleep patterns and mood.
- Biological clock (circadian rhythm): A reduction in sunlight can affect our body's internal clock.

Symptoms

Because SAD is a form of depression, symptoms are virtually the same of major depressive disorder, however they are only present for certain parts of the year. General symptoms of SAD may include:

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness, and worthlessness
- Feelings of guilt or shame
- Feeling irritated, agitated or on edge
- Fatigued or low energy
- Loss of interest in activities that once brought pleasure
- Changes in sleep patterns (difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, or oversleeping)
- Changes in appetite (increase or decrease in appetite)
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Difficulty concentrating and focusing
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Treatment

Treatment of SAD may vary from person to person, however it typically involves a combination of light therapy, psychotherapy, and medications.

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/basics/treatment/con-20021047>

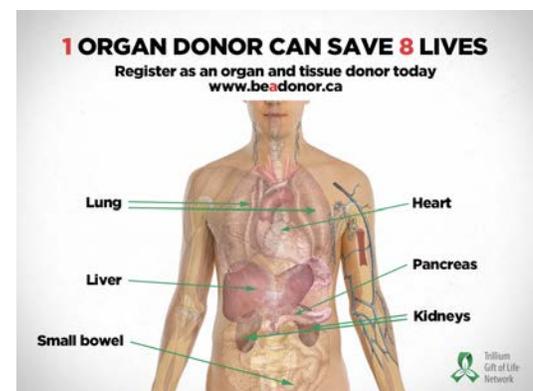
Be a Donor Month

April is 'Be a Donor Month'

Be a Donor Month is an event that occurs across Canada to help promote organ donation and transplantation.

Organ donation saves lives.

If you are eligible to be an organ donor, register as an organ donor and you could save multiple lives.



Source: <http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/community.htm>

Starting the Conversation about Mental Health

Why is it important to talk about mental health?

Mental health is a term used to describe a person's mental state in regards to their emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. Everyone must nurture and take care of their mental health, but for some that is more difficult than for others. When our mental health is not in balance, we may be suffering from mental health issues, such as a mental illness. A mental illness is a condition that affects our mental wellbeing, such as how we feel, how we think, how we behave, and how we interact with others. Mental illnesses vary in severity, and not every mental illness can be treated equally. Some people can manage the symptoms of their illness on their own, whereas others may need extra support. This is why we have to be able to talk about mental health. Whether you personally are struggling with mental health issues, or a loved one has come to you in need of support, the following facts may be beneficial for starting a conversation about mental health.

How to start the conversation

Whether you are trying to tell a loved one about your struggles with mental health, or whether a loved one has turned to you for support in their time of need, it is important to be ready for the conversation. The following are some suggestions for how to talk about some of these difficult issues.

1. **Give them a heads up:** No one likes to be bombarded with an intense conversation without any warning. Sometimes letting the person know ahead of time that you have something important you would like to discuss with them will allow them to mentally prepare themselves for a serious conversation.
2. **Pick the right time:** Be sure to choose a time when neither of you have commitments immediately after the conversation. This is a conversation that should not be rushed, so be sure to have plenty of time to have a good discussion.
3. **Educate yourself:** If you are the one initiating the conversation, educate yourself further on the subject. It is natural that the other person may have some questions about what you are discussing, and for their benefit and yours, it might be helpful to have some of the questions answered. It also might help you clarify what it is you are saying and how it is you are feeling.
4. **Explain yourself:** Let the person know why it is you chose to tell them about this topic. Maybe explain how you are feeling, why it is important for you to talk about this, why you chose to talk to them about this, and what you are hoping to get out of this conversation.
5. **Brace yourself:** When having difficult conversations like this, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and vulnerable. Remember that the other person might also be feeling overwhelmed at hearing this information, so try and be patient with their reaction. It is important to brace yourself that their reaction might not be exactly what you had anticipated or hoped for, and to try not to let their reaction discourage or influence how you choose to proceed with treatment.
6. **Remember:** Remember, even if this conversation feels challenging and difficult, you will likely feel a sense of relief once it is over with. Carrying around secrets can put a toll on your wellbeing. By opening up the conversation about your mental health, you are releasing some of the stress you have been carrying alone, and that is a step in the right direction.
7. **Be prepared for action:** Now that you have opened up about the realities of your mental health, expect that your loved one may want to help you. This might mean setting up an appointment with a therapist, or talking to a mental health professional about how to handle the situation. Do not be afraid of the idea of taking action. You told your loved one because you are ready for help; so let them try and help you.



Source: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/time-talk-tips-talking-about-your-mental-health>

Warning Signs of Mental Illness



When someone starts displaying unusual behaviours that indicate mental illness, it can be overwhelming and sometimes even frightening, however the sooner a mental illness is diagnosed, the sooner treatment can begin. Learning to live with mental illness is not always easy, but living with an untreated mental illness is even harder. Being able to recognize some general signs associated with mental illness could help someone get the treatment they need to live a fulfilling and safe life.

Withdrawal or isolation

If someone begins to pull away from friends and loved ones, or increasingly spends time alone in solitude, it may be a sign that something is bothering them, but they are not sure how to talk about it or handle the situation. Sometimes when people begin to isolate themselves, they need support more than ever.

Cognitive problems

Problems with cognitive function may indicate that the individual is struggling psychologically. This may include problems with memory, difficulty making decisions, troubles focusing or concentrating, or difficulty communicating, such as disorganized speech or unusual conversational patterns.

Decline in functioning

If someone is struggling with their mental health, they will likely begin to struggle in other areas of life, such as work, school, or even their hobbies.

Hypersensitivity

A common characteristic of mental illness is a heightened sensitivity to stimuli, such as sounds, sights, smells, and touch. This could cause the individual to avoid stimulating situations or environments, sometimes leading to withdrawal or isolation.

Changes in appetite and sleep patterns

A common side effect of mental illness is a change in appetite. This could mean an increase or decrease in appetite, leading to corresponding weight gain or weight loss. Sleep disturbances are also common with mental illness. Whether that means the individual is struggling to fall asleep, stay asleep, or is oversleeping, it may indicate psychological issues.

Mood swings

Drastic or unusual mood swings may indicate mental illness, such as overreacting to situations. People with mental illness may be struggling with managing their emotions, which could cause unusual moods. Seeming irritated, annoyed, upset, or unusually happy and elated may indicate that they are struggling with their mental health.

Lack of motivation

Being apathetic or having a lack of motivation is a very common side effect of mental illness, specifically mood disorders. The individual may suddenly seem uninterested in activities they once enjoyed, or become increasingly lazy and unmotivated.

Bizarre or illogical thinking and behaviour

If someone begins to act very unusually, or talks about things that make little sense, it may be an indication of mental illness. Behaviours can often change as a result of psychological distress, and people may act out of character, such as being suspicious or anxious. Also, any talk or behaviour that indicates a loss of touch with reality can be a very serious sign of mental illness, such as psychosis.

Source: <http://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/warning-signs-of-mental-illness>

Alternatives for Self-Harming

What is self-harming?

Self-harming is the deliberate act of injuring one's own body, such as by cutting or burning the skin. Self-harming is not a suicide attempt. In fact, self-harming is a coping technique for managing difficult emotions. People self-harm because they do not know how to cope with their feelings in a healthy and constructive way, and self-harming helps them release the tension associated with difficult emotions.



Alternatives to self-harming

Recovery from self-harming behaviour can be a long process, however one of the most difficult steps is learning new coping behaviours. The following is a list of alternative coping methods to try instead of self-harming.

- Hold an ice cube on the area where you once self-harmed
- Tear up cardboard, paper, or a magazine
- Scream or yell into a pillow
- Draw on your skin with a felt marker
- Write a letter explaining why you are frustrated or upset, but instead of sending it, burn it
- Call a friend or loved one you trust
- Call a helpline
- Exercise (run, hike, go to the gym, do an exercise video)
- Try relaxation methods (deep breathing exercises, yoga, meditation, mindful walking, etc.)
- Go into nature
- Listen to music loudly
- Play an instrument
- Write poetry, music, or a short story
- Take up a new hobby (cooking, juggling, knitting, pottery, painting, etc.)
- Have a nap
- Watch your favorite TV show or movie
- Go to a coffee shop and treat yourself to your favorite drink
- Write down a list of all the things you would like to accomplish by next year
- Organize or tidy your room/house

Source: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/PDF/Self-Harm%20Distractions%20and%20Alternatives%20FINAL.pdf>

Diabetes and Eating Disorders

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a very serious condition that affects how a person produces insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps our body turn sugar into energy. Insulin helps to regulate blood sugar levels. People with diabetes must take insulin from an outside source to avoid high blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia) and low blood sugar levels (hypoglycemia), both of which can be very dangerous. Diabetics must stick to a very strict diet to avoid serious complications.

What is an Eating Disorder?

An eating disorder is a mental health condition that is characterized by disturbed and unusual eating habits. Eating disorders typically stem from body dissatisfaction, poor body image, and low self-esteem. People with eating disorders may attempt to control their weight and body shape by manipulating their eating habits, such as severely limiting their calorie intake, or purging calories they have ingested, such as by self-induced vomiting, laxative use, or excessive exercise. Eating disorders can be very dangerous and may lead to severe malnutrition, sometimes resulting in organ failure.

What is Diabulimia?

Diabulimia is a form of an eating disorder that is specific to diabetics. People with diabetes may adjust their insulin doses in order to force sugar to leave their body through urination. This leads to quick weight loss. This can be very dangerous. Diabetics already struggle with their health, and messing with insulin doses cannot only be dangerous, it can even be fatal. Diabulimia may lead to severe nerve pain, kidney failure or total vision loss, resulting in permanent blindness.

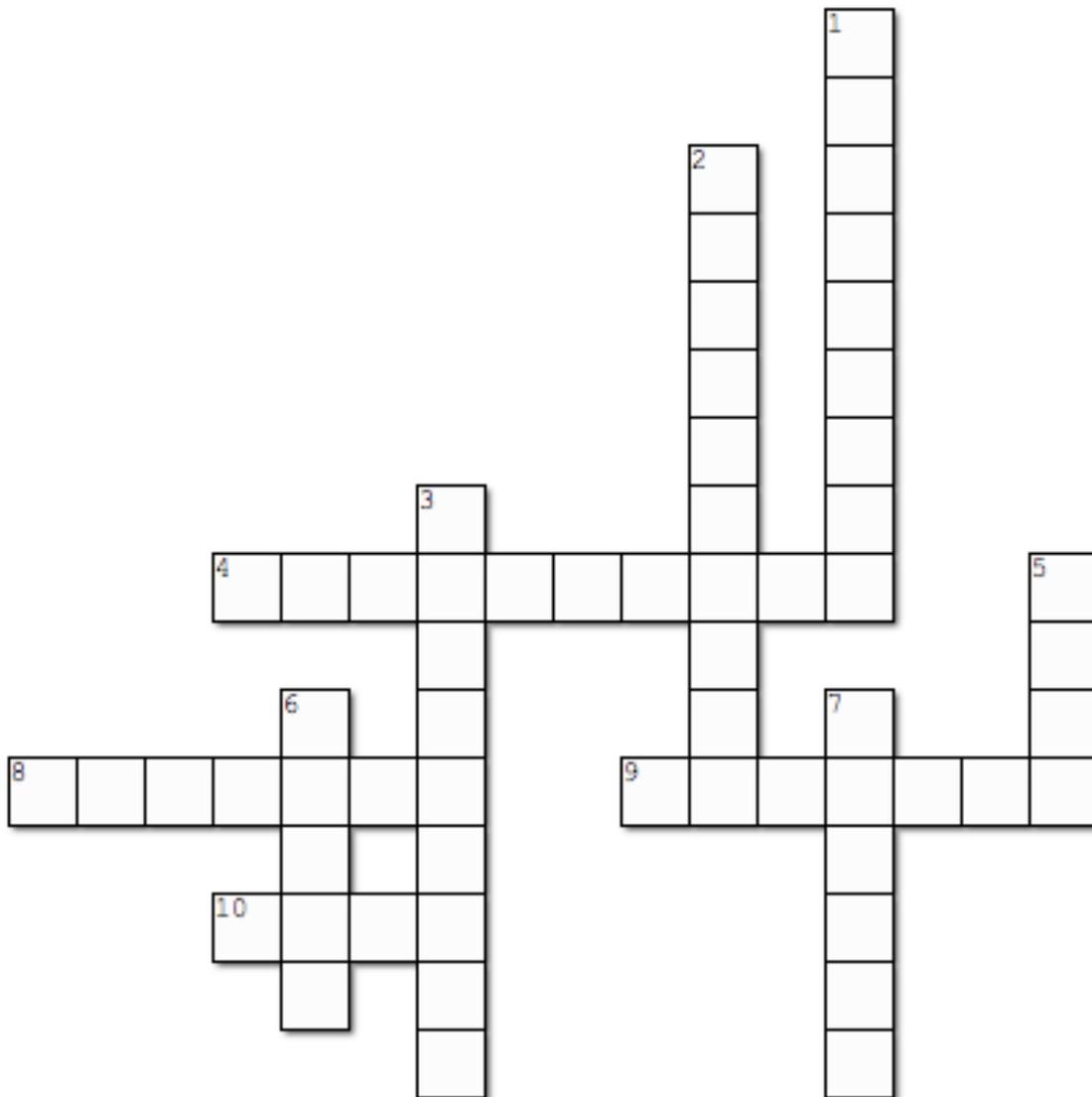
Stay Safe

If you or someone you know suffers from diabetes, be sure to stay safe. Educate yourself on proper nutrition, and learn the importance of taking insulin as directed. Diabetes is a serious condition, but it does not have to be so dangerous. Take care of yourself and your body, and diabetes does not have to rule your life.



Source: <https://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/treatment-for-eating-disorders/special-issues/diabetes>

And Now for Some Fun!



Across

- 4. Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is a form of _____ that is directly related to the changing of the seasons.
- 8. Sometimes when people begin to isolate themselves, they need _____ more than ever.
- 9. When our mental health is not in _____, we may be suffering from mental health issues, such as a mental illness.
- 10. People self-harm because they do not know how to _____ with their feelings in a healthy and constructive way.

Down

- 1. The change in seasons may cause a disruption in _____ levels, affecting sleep patterns and mood.
- 2. _____ is a form of an eating disorder that is specific to diabetics.
- 3. Being able to recognize some general signs associated with mental illness could help someone get the _____ they need.
- 5. One organ donor can _____ up to eight lives.
- 6. Be a _____ Month is an event that occurs across Canada to help promote organ donation and transplantation.
- 7. An _____ disorder is a mental health condition that is characterized by disturbed and unusual eating habits.

Answers: ACROSS: 4) Depression; 8) Support; 9) Support; 10) Cope; DOWN: 1) Melatonin; 2) Diabulimia; 3) Treatment; 5) Save; 6) Donor; 7) Eating