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## Recovery - Fishing for a Lifetime

By: Deborah Deforest

Have you ever heard that those who are given fish will eat for a day, those who are taught to fish will eat for a lifetime? Education is the fundamental right of all human beings. Without it there would be no personal growth. Education in Self Help and Recovery is also a part of growth, not just for those with mental health issues, but for all.

I have had the opportunity to be touched by the stories and struggles (all too familiar), of people who experience mental health issues. Ever ready to "tell their stories", like a badge of honour, glinting in the midday sun, they are articulate, directed and visionary. Some however, are lost in a sea of guilt and recovery surrender. Not being taught to catch fish, they wander aimlessly searching for someone to take their hand and show them

their journey, rather than creating their own. Their fate, seemingly etched in glass, being destined to wander in a state of bemusement, without any sense of direction. It is for those that I feel the most. If education is the fundamental right of all, then how and where did our mental health system fail in empowerment and purpose? It has been the experience of many consumer/survivors (survivors in the sense that they have not enabled the system to make them a statistic and be

governed by echelon, but rather by internal guidance), to struggle endlessly with those who feel that empowerment and esteem were dangerous for them to embrace, thus not having the rudimentary right of choice. Recovery, hope, and choice are not gifts given by others, but entitlements.

Recovery which enables choice, is the wave of the future. From the beginning of mankind's existence, faith and hope have

been irrevocably woven into the fibers of the human psyche and without hope, there can be no growth, change or progression. Without the innate human need to feel inherently civic, we would be no better than automatons. Thrive we must, and so

it is through research and policies that the mental health system is evolving. More importantly,

it is through peer support and self help philosophy that courageous men and women are leading the change for a better tomorrow, having been able to bring about once again that sense of hope for ourselves and for each other. We are all in a very large ocean moving toward the same goal - our continued survival and growth. May our children learn rousing things from our experiences, all the while making sure we teach them to fish, not to live for the day, but to learn to live for a lifetime.



# Waterloo Region Self Help - Self Help Recovery Centre

By: Kathy Briggs

Waterloo Region Self Help (WRSH) is one of the four partner organizations who joined to create the Self Help Alliance. WRSH's foundation has always been based on the values of social justice, advocacy, and peer support (self help). The most recent addition to WRSH has been the birth of a unique Self Help Recovery Centre.

The Self Help Recovery Centre is an initiative that provides individuals with the opportunity and tools to explore their mental health issues as only one piece of their lives, and no longer as a definition of self. It is a place where stigma can be challenged and where we can begin to re-think who we are, while recognizing that recovery is possible. There is hope and encouragement to see that everyday is one on the journey of recovery - one created by the individual for the individual.

Each month, a calendar is released to the community at large which has the dates, times, and descriptions of the different activities and groups that are being held. A sample of what is offered includes: Pathways to Recovery, Personal Development, People Acquiring Intimate Relationships (PAIR), Advocacy Topics, Attitudes, Dealing with Anger, Introduction to Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), Dream it and Make it Happen, and Life Stories.

At the Self Help Recovery Centre there is always a facilitator available to discuss the number of different resources and groups available that are held at the site on a regular, monthly basis. The items at the site and all of the groups are available in any frequency that the individual prefers.

In addition to all of the groups that meet, there is a great balance of flexibility and structure provided. The Self Help Recovery Centre houses a wide collection of videos, books, magazines, workbooks, and activities. Many of the items available are consumer-authored resources and materials completed in the subject of recovery. Among these items are *Wellness Recovery Action Plan* by Mary Ellen Copeland and *Pathways to Recovery* by Priscilla Ridgeway et al. There is no set amount of time any individual must spend in the Self Help Recovery Centre, and it is self-guided.

***“There is hope and encouragement to see that everyday is one on the journey of recovery - one created by the individual for the individual.”***

The Self Help Recovery Centre provides the environment and tools that can assist an individual on their journey - one that is designed, guided, and pursued by them.



Waterloo Region Self Help as an organization focuses on providing the opportunities for positive change for individuals who have experienced the mental health system, and changes in the community around the view and understanding of mental health issues.

It is about working together to change lives for the better by providing individuals with the information and tools that are needed related to any and all areas of life - it is about removing limitations and creating opportunities.

If you would like more information on Waterloo Region Self Help, the development of the Self Help Recovery Centre, the tools and resources available, and details about the groups, please contact staff at the site at 519.570.4595 or email:

- Amanda Elliott, WRSH Facilitator  
elliotta@wrsh.ca
- Jasmina Zlatanovic, Recovery Centre Facilitator  
zlatanovicj@wrsh.ca
- Lisa Cousineau, Community Liaison  
cousineaul@wrsh.ca

## Recovery in Service - Have You Asked Why?

By: Allan Strong

My role as Recovery Education Coordinator, has provided me with the opportunity to observe the implementation of a set of recovery values and principles, within broader case management services in our area. Throughout the course of providing training, I have had many opportunities to exchange different ideas and view points with several individuals. I struggle however, with what on the surface seems like a relatively simple process, one which in reality has actually proven itself to be quite complex.

The piece that has struck me the most, as we planned, re-searched, and began to implement recovery values and principles, is that as a system we have to date been caught up with the how's, what's, who's and where's of recovery. We have become quick to jump on recovery as a best practice and are focusing our energies on the "nuts and bolts" of what happens when somebody is in recovery. What seems to be missing in this discussion is the fundamental question of why. Focusing so much attention on the actual "doing" of recovery we have not yet explored the principle concept of the soul of recovery - why do people recover?

In my experience the reason why people recover is because they have to. People recover and move on with their lives because

they are at a point where they feel it is necessary to begin their journey. Notwithstanding the intervention of the mental health system and all else, recovery is about the person wanting to move on with their life. We are spending a great deal of time and energy exploring the how's and what's - primarily the system role - as opposed to focusing on the why. We now have the opportunity and the means to begin to explore the why. Why is it so important to create an environment that supports and enables people to do what they need to do? In our attempts to quantify and qualify best practices, we have yet to entirely delve into the reason we are doing this. The challenge that faces us, the shifting/moving to a recovery based service delivery, is not about understanding the logistics, but becoming comfortable with the why.

Until such time that we are comfortable dealing with the "why", we will never achieve our true goal of becoming completely recovery focused. Now is the time to be prepared to entertain discussion and accept the unpredictable nature of what needs to happen to secure a system driven by recovery. One where we start to leave the security of dealing only with the tangible behind, and touch on the somewhat elusive why. I am confident that we as a system can remove our security blanket and begin to actively absorb the warmth and security of the why.

## Wilma Townsend - Evaluation Study Results

By: Kathy Briggs

This year we were fortunate to have Wilma Townsend, a nationally recognized expert on consumer based and focused recovery, working with our community. In May of 2006, she visited the Waterloo Region and Wellington County to give the results of an extensive evaluation study ("Comprehensive Assessment of Recovery Readiness for Systems") she had completed which focused on different community mental health case management services in our area. Her focus was to evaluate where they are in terms of their level of recovery focused and consumer involved readiness in case management services. Overall, Ms. Townsend's opinion was that the community had the basis of what is needed in order to be recovery focused, and she was optimistic of the direction in which the organizations were heading. However, she was clear to state that much work remains in order to have fully recovery focused case management/support coordination services. In efforts to make the services truly reflective of recovery, a lot of hard work and time is needed to make the necessary adjustments – but this is achievable and the case management/support coordination services are off to a good start!

The areas evaluated included Clinical Outcomes, Collaboration, Training, Consumer/Family Involvement, Organizational Approach, Funding, Public Relations, and Cultural Competence. Results for one of the areas is as follows:

- Organizational Approach: Average score of 2.65 out of 4.00. Organizations are in-line by having great Mission and Values statements. However, not all agencies had policies and procedures in-line with the statements, and did not have any consistently recognized consumer involvement. The agencies

have yet to have formal agreements with consumer operated services established, but two agencies did have informal inter-agency collaboration.

Overall the organizations averaged a 2.8 out of 4. However, Ms. Townsend was clear to state that being over the halfway point is not enough, that communities need to work step by step to be beyond the 3+ level, and to achieve a change from 2.8 to 3.0 could take a number of years. The reality is that in order to put all the necessary pieces into place, there needs to be guidance provided to help make the system completely recovery focused. *There needs to be a cultural shift to recovery.* It is vital that the philosophical foundations about each individual person remain in place. For example, what any individual defines as their own recovery and recovery process needs to be recognized, respected and every effort needs to be made to put it into practice. Perhaps the strongest point Ms. Townsend reiterated was the necessary involvement of individuals who have experienced the mental health system in making such community changes. Involvement not just for feedback, but at the decision-making tables, part of the evaluation teams, generating new ideas, and exploring recovery as a whole network.

Two equally important steps that the self help organizations are partaking in to make the changes to a recovery focused community include: helping the system to involve individuals who have experienced the mental health system in the decision-making process; and helping individuals who are receiving support from the mental health system, to understand their rights and responsibilities associated with their own recovery.

## The Kirby Report and Recommendations are In

By: Bessie Schenk

After over two years of deliberation and preparation, the Kirby Report and Recommendations were released in May of 2006. Senator Michael Kirby chaired the Senate Committee examining the Mental Health Care System in Canada, which was responsible for the release of the 300-page report and 118 recommendations titled “*Out of the Shadows at Last – Transforming Mental Health and Addiction Services in Canada*”.

The recommendations state what the Committee deemed necessary to have occur in efforts to make the mental health and addiction system responsive to the needs of individuals who have experienced the mental health system, their families and their communities. Many of the recommendations are in-line with the philosophy of self help and are on target related to issues that we have been facing for many years. Some of the recommendations include issues related to housing, availability of a basket of community services, employment, Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), funding, development of knowledge exchange centres, and even recommendation #48 which states that:

“Research be undertaken to: quantify the benefits of self help and peer support to participants, identify savings to the health care system that result from these initiatives, and a portion of these

savings be redirected to support further self help and peer support initiatives.” (Michael Kirby et al. *Out of the Shadows at Last - Highlights and Recommendations*, 38, 2006).

As with any report released, there are questions as to whether it will make a difference. The recommendations come from a broader Federal level, and while the report is not perfect, it is another good start to get people thinking about mental health and addictions in Canada. Such political discussion can help to bring to light these issues and help to reduce the stigma connected with mental health and addictions. The report and recommendations do not sugar coat what is going on in the mental health system in Canada, and this can help to bring mental health and addictions to the forefront. Through awareness, education, and system change we can break down the barrier of stigma.

It is our hope that the Kirby Recommendations will be heard and explored in Canada resulting in systemic change, and as a country we will be able to develop an effective and inclusive National Mental Health Strategy. An important thing to remember is that every voice helps. Write to your government officials and let them know you are in support of the Kirby report. By telling our stories we can help an effort like this turn into a reality.

## Coping with Life’s Everyday Stressors

By: Bessie Schenk

Everyday we are faced with different areas in life that challenge us. Depending on the time of year, family life, work, finances, the list goes on, we must learn to cope and challenge life’s everyday stressors. Below you will find a list of ideas to help you cope with the stress which presents itself in daily life, and depending on the varying degrees to which it is evident, different methods we can use to make life just a little bit easier.

- **Make lists.** Often we become overwhelmed at the amount of things we need to get done. Lists are not just for groceries, but can be great for work items, gift ideas, and even important dates and events that are coming up.
- **Give yourself “me” time.** Life is busy and as a result we may find ourselves looking for some relaxation time. Build the “me” time in. It doesn’t have to be a lot, even a walk around the block, watching a movie, taking a bath or reading the paper for 10 minutes can often be rejuvenating.
- **Take time to eat and drink lots of water.** It is important to make sure we are regularly hydrated and getting enough nourishment. It is good to keep healthy snacks handy (like vegetables, fruits, crackers, etc.) and it is a good idea to carry a water bottle with you.



- **Exercise your body and mind.** Even a short walk, jog or swim can do the trick. Only a few minutes is needed to give the body a little kick. Don’t forget about the importance of exercising the mind, this can be done through such things as a short meditation, or even reading something that is different from the usual. Newspaper funnies can be a great way to keep our mind thinking, but about something we don’t need to focus on too intensely.
- **Spend time with a friend.** A quick phone call, email or short visit can remind us of good memories and make coping with life’s everyday challenges that much easier. A friend or family member’s listening ear can be a great way to release stress.
- **Get enough sleep.** Our minds and bodies need to rest without interruption to help us cope with challenges. If you find that you are tired throughout the day, check with yourself that you are going to bed at a regular time and getting a good amount of sleep (everyone varies on this topic, but often 6 to 8 hours is good for an adult) to suit your needs.
- **Have fun.** If your daily tasks are presenting themselves with difficulty, build in some fun. Think of things that make you laugh, and do them. Enjoying ourselves makes coping with everyday stressors much easier!

# Self Help Picnic 2006 - Reflections

By: *Kathy Briggs*

When I am fortunate enough to have an experience where I enjoy good food, good music, and great company, I like to take the time to reflect on the day and that which has led up to it. The Self Help Networking Barbecue held on August 23<sup>rd</sup> was just this type of experience.

As the Executive Director of the self help partnering organizations (Cambridge Active Self Help, Mood Disorders Association Waterloo Region, Waterloo Region Self Help and Wellington-Dufferin Self Help), I was thrilled to see the large turnout of members.

Beyond just attendance, it was wonderful to watch so many new social connections being made, and many old friendships revisited. For me, I often struggle with the challenge of being able to connect with everyone on a regular basis, and as a result such events are a wonderful benefit to me. It is a time to learn about each other and explore the thoughts and ideas that are proving to be the foundation of self help – a foundation that is strong and evolving. It is apparent that we are moving forward in our journeys as individuals, in peer support settings, and as organizations.

It is when we are brought together that we exhibit a united voice that gives us the strength to bring to the forefront the value and importance of each of us as individuals, and also as part of a team. It takes all of us to help build this solid foundation. As we grow, our links develop between different individuals, then



Allan, Lisa and Tom pose for the camera.

groups and naturally, communities. It is only when the people and the community join forces that the chain begins to strengthen and lengthen. I recognize that days such as this help us to grow, make links, and build these forces. We are a part of this team, this partnership and within we know we belong.

I see all of us - members, volunteers and staff - and I know that it is because each and every one of us has a vision that is unique and valid, that we are able to walk alongside one another. It is not about a distinct destination, but a journey, and days like this one affirm for me that I like sharing

in this journey. In addition, there is nothing better than all of the above mixed in with a whole lot of fun! While we started our day with announcements and updates, we moved quickly to networking events, presentations from Waterloo Initiative for Supportive Housing speakers, a barbecue lunch and a nice wrap up of dancing under the trees.

So with the completion of another successful networking event, I say thank you to everyone who attended and made this day enjoyable and bursting with energy. I would also like to extend a warm thank you to those who participated in the organizational end of things. Lastly, I leave you with the thought that this year's event resulted in a day filled with many memories for all of us, and for me it was also a wonderful time for reflection.

See you all again soon,  
Kathy



Daniel is ready for a day of fun and sun!



Smiles from Kathy and Trish.

## Inspiration

By: *Gregory Quinton*

Flying without wings, here amongst the clouds.  
Pursuing my true destination, somewhere near the stars.  
I am one and at peace, with the person I truly am.  
My soul reaches out in fulfillment, toward a universe yet unexplored.

One vision that will become many dreams, a grasp of unconquered realities.  
Nearest my matrix of my inner being, my heart cries out.  
And it is consoled with a passion, and a desire.  
To finally become the person I knew I could always be.



# Ask Reeves

By: Paul Reeves

What is "Ask Reeves"? This is a Q&A column related to advocacy questions that individuals facing particular issues or barriers would like addressed. This will be a regular piece in each newsletter to follow. It was suggested by readers that it would be good to have a column dedicated to responding to a different topic each issue. The column will remain completely anonymous and the issue addressed will only be responded to by Paul. Please keep in mind, that due to the large amount of questions Paul receives, he will select only one per issue to have printed, but we encourage everyone to please connect with Paul for any advocacy questions you may have.

Before we get to the question and answer, here is a little bit of information about the man behind the words of "Ask Reeves". Paul shares a wealth of knowledge and skills that he has gained through his personal and professional experience in self help over the past 17 years. During this time he has been presented with a wide array of different issues and topics that he has addressed in writing, on an individual basis, and in public forum. Paul has been the Advocacy Coordinator on behalf of the partnering organizations of the Self Help Alliance (Cambridge Active Self Help, Mood Disorders Association Waterloo Region, Waterloo Region Self Help, Wellington-Dufferin Self Help) for over 3 years.

## Question:

With the proposed changes to the Human Rights Code in the province of Ontario, will our rights as citizens be protected?  
Thank you,  
A.

## Answer:

Thank you for your question A. My opinion is that with the proposed changes to the Human Rights Code in the province of Ontario, it may make it difficult for many citizens to address injustices.

Presently, if you are discriminated against you can apply to the Ontario Human Rights Commission for support. If they deem your case worthy, you can then proceed with an action that can involve the commission and their appointing of a lawyer



free of charge, who is available to assist you with your case.

The new Bill 107 changes the present resolution process, and also it eliminates a lawyer being provided free of charge. The question is, how will individuals on fixed incomes be able to afford adequate representation at any hearings? The struggle becomes, are we then facing a province that only has legal defense available to people who can afford it?

Also, Bill 107 needs to look further at the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which makes provision for representations at tribunals through the Human Rights Commission. Will this representation also be eliminated? If so, then who will take action on behalf of disability groups? Or are we then going to be dealing with a Bill that is filled with so many exceptions that we as a public will not be able to get clear and concise answers on whether or not we can receive support?

It is my thought that the situation is immediate and we need to all take action. It is a good time to voice your opinion and insist that the procedure be simple and **that the free access to lawyers be provided**. Every citizen of Canada deserves and is entitled to equal and fair treatment, and in the legal system this should not be a result of your level of income.

If you share my concerns and want more information, I suggest that you contact your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP), make your statement and get your voice heard. You can find the name and contact information for your MPP in the blue pages of the phone book or on the internet at [www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca). For additional information on Bill 107, you may contact me directly or visit [www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/38\\_Parliament/session2/b107\\_e.htm](http://www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/38_Parliament/session2/b107_e.htm).

If you have questions you would like to submit to "Ask Reeves" please contact Paul Reeve directly via phone at 519.766.4315 ext. 232 or email [reevep@self-help.ca](mailto:reevep@self-help.ca). For those who do not see your questions in print, please note that Paul responds regularly to all questions he receives on an individual basis.

## Letter to the Editor

The "Letter to the Editor" column is an opportunity for you to voice your opinion on different subjects related to the current mental health system. This column will feature a response in each newsletter on the items you highlight as vital and important to you. Do you have comments related to Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and how it works for you? Do you have an opinion about recovery and its presence in the community? What about community inclusion? Have you read about the Kirby report and have thoughts on how it will or will not have an affect on the current mental health system in Canada?

All subjects are welcome, and each will be reviewed equally. This column will remain completely anonymous.

Send along comments that you have been waiting for the opportunity to voice. Please note we will only print a selected number of comments in each newsletter due to space limitations. Please send your letters to:

**c/o Self Help Alliance, Newsletter Editor  
5420 Hwy 6 N, RR#5  
Guelph, ON N1H 6J2**

# How to Overcome Boredom

By: *Fatima Musa*

Since the presentation of our first newsletter in March of 2006, we have received a number of topics that readers are interested in learning more about. These range from different health related issues, to advocacy questions, to everyday happenings. We thank everyone for your contributions and we hope that you find this and all newsletters to follow touch on some of these topics. Enjoy!

The following are a selection of the tips presented by Fatima Musa. Fatima has written numerous online articles which focus on positive thinking and making individual change. The complete article can be found at [www.wikihow.com/Overcome-Boredom](http://www.wikihow.com/Overcome-Boredom)

- **Change your thoughts.** By changing your mind about the meaning of your emotions and experiences you will generate a different attitude. Get inspired with powerful long-range goals.
- **Fire up your imagination.** Visualize where you want to be and what you want to become.

- **Journal your feelings and thoughts.** Observe and write down your feelings and thoughts for a week, and at the end of it reflect on them.
- **Create curiosity.** Create your curiosity around what is happening inside and around you. Life can be boring because of the repetition or pattern of some habits or activities.
- **Go through some motions.** Change your physiology. Go for a walk or do something active. Write down 10 things you can do to get moving and pick one and start it.
- **Find something exciting and entertaining.** Read, listen to music, watch a film or go out and do something that stimulates your interest. Go out and experience and do new and interesting things.
- **Keep your mind active.** Solve puzzles, organize, clean and don't be afraid to learn new hobbies.

## Call for Submissions!

Are you an artist of any type? Do you love to write essays, poetry, short stories, political commentary, sketch or take photographs? Then your submissions are what we are after!

There is no set limitation on the number of submissions that can be contributed by any one person, however please note that due to space limitations and the number of items received, not all items will be put into print. In addition, please do not send originals of any of your work, as we are unable to guarantee return of items and may keep them for future newsletters.

So send them in, one, two or ten! Feel free to drop them off in a sealed envelope to any of the sites (addresses and contact information on the first page of the newsletter) or mail them to the following:

**c/o Self Help Alliance, Newsletter Editor  
5420 Hwy 6 N, RR #5  
Guelph, ON N1H 6J2**

Submissions that are deemed not suitable for the newsletter will not be published.



## Our Evolving Identity

Over the past 2 years much has changed with the "look" of the Self Help Alliance - including many changes at the partner sites, a development of a new Self Help Alliance logo, creation of a newsletter and other promotional materials.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has taken the time to provide feedback on these changes, and we continue to welcome more suggestions. It is a result, in large part, to these recommendations, that we have begun to evolve and enhance the identity of the Self Help Alliance partnership.

Please note that over the next year you will see a continuance of this process, including ongoing structural changes to our newsletter and support materials. Please watch for our next newsletter in the Spring of 2007 to be a further representation of what you, our readers, are after.

If you have any questions about our evolving identity, comments or suggestions, please feel free to send them along via mail to the following:

**c/o Kathy Briggs, Executive Director  
Self Help Alliance  
5420 Hwy 6 N, RR#5  
Guelph, ON N1H 6J2**

## Contact Us

Since our last issue of the Self Help Alliance Newsletter, the partner organizations have gone through a number of exciting staffing changes. See below for the shared staffing updates:

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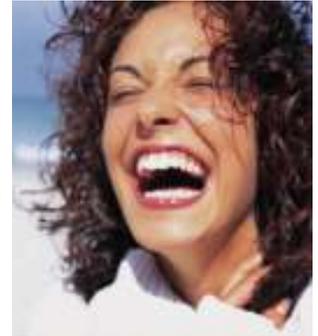
The views expressed are those of the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Self Help Alliance and the partner organizations.

## Stuff To Make You Laugh!

### A Spring in his Step!

With all the sadness and trauma going on in the world, it is worth reflecting on the death of a very important person, which almost went unnoticed. Larry LaPrise, the man who wrote "The Hokey Pokey" died peacefully at the age of 93. The most traumatic part for his family was getting him into the coffin. They put his left leg in, and then the trouble started.

*Reprinted from "The Funny Bone", Submitted by: Sylvia Cornell*



### Fight Competition

A shopkeeper was dismayed when a brand new business much like his own opened up next door and erected a huge sign which read BEST DEALS.

He was horrified when another competitor opened up on his right, and announced its arrival with an even larger sign, reading LOWEST PRICES.

The shopkeeper was panicked, until he got an idea. He put the biggest sign of all over his own shop and it read... MAIN ENTRANCE.

*Reprinted from "Ahajokes.com"*

### The Shoplifter

A shoplifter was caught red-handed trying to steal a watch from an exclusive jewelry store.

"Listen," said the shoplifter, "I know you don't want any trouble either. What do you say I just buy the watch and we forget about this?"

The manager agreed and wrote up the sales slip. The crook looked at the slip and said, "This is a little more than I intended to spend. Can you show me something less expensive?"

*Reprinted from "JokesGalore.com"*

## Upcoming Events/Friendly Reminders

- Are you interested in learning more about peer support and self help? Do you have an idea for a support group? If so, contact Deborah Deforest at 519.766.4315 ext. 287 for more information.
- The Annual General Meetings for all of the partner organizations is just around the corner. Feel free to contact any of the sites for information after November 1st, 2006.
- If you are involved in case management or support coordination and are interested in learning more about the recovery management tool, be sure to connect with the Recovery Education Coordinator, Allan Strong at 519.766.4315 ext. 244.
- New Parent Support Group for caregivers of children aged 12-18 with mood disorders. If you are interested in obtaining more information, please call Laura at 519.743.1422.