

Breakthrough

News About the
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
for Clients, Patients and Families

Winter 2007/2008

CAMH Client Shares Her Story of Recovery

Skills for the Job of Living

Celebrating National Occupational Therapy Month

By Laura Ferridge

I began working with an Occupational Therapist (OT) about two months after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder. It was December; I was fresh out of the hospital, and working two jobs. There were many people that I missed, people who were far away, and people who had somehow changed. I was incredibly depressed by my circumstances. I was very isolated.

I began going to LEARN, which was a social resource centre operated by CAMH. They didn't offer a drop in, but they had structured groups and learning sessions, as well as one-on-one support for education and employment. LEARN provided relevant content for anyone whose life seemed to be a mess. Tara Laing was the OT

there. She started off helping by being someone to listen to me. She coached me on the situation with my job, and the issues I was having with various relationships in my life.

I joined the LEAN (Learning Essentials about Active living and Nutrition) Cooking Group, which Tara ran with the help of the occasional guest speaker. The LEAN Groups I attended were vital to my recovery because they involved cooking, staying healthy, and shopping smart. After that was The Recovery



Occupational Therapist Tara Laing (left) with her client Laura Ferridge, who is also a Peer Support Worker at LEARN

Group, which Tara was also a part of. This group gave me insight into my own illness and encouraged me to write my recovery story.

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Metabolic Health Monitor

CAMH the First Hospital to House Software Key to Improving Client Health

The new catchphrase around CAMH these days is 'metabolic monitoring'. What is metabolic monitoring, and why are we hearing so much about it?

The Schizophrenia Program has started to monitor all in-patients using the Metabolic Health Monitor. The tool will first be used on Units 2-2 and the Integrated Rehabilitation Unit (IRU), before full implementation on all in-patient units of the Schizophrenia Program. All other in-patient units at CAMH will be brought on board by Spring 2008.

"It's fitting that we ended October, Schizophrenia Awareness Month, with the introduction of the Metabolic Health Monitor, which has been in development for a number of years," said IRU Psychiatrist Dr. Tony Cohn, adding that CAMH is the first hospital to house the groundbreaking software.

The purpose of metabolic monitoring is to identify clients who have established metabolic problems such as diabetes, hyperlipidemia and hypertension and also to identify those at risk for developing these problems characterized as the Metabolic Syndrome, a syndrome that is diagnosed when risk factors such as abdominal obesity, high blood pressure

and high glucose are present in the patient, among other symptoms.

Although lifestyle factors like diet and physical activity are important, clients most at risk appear to be those treated on second-generation antipsychotic agents, including Clozapine, Olanzapine, Risperidone or Quetiapine. "It is well established through research conducted at CAMH and at other institutions, that treatment with the above medications can result in various degrees of weight gain and possibly contribute to negative health consequences such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, and dyslipidemia," notes Dr. Cohn.

There are a number of ways to modify risk factors and manage metabolic problems in clients with mental illness. Interventions that encourage healthy eating and increase physical activity are extremely helpful (see related stories on pages 2 and 4), as are paying attention to those influences, opportunities, or conditions



Recreation Therapist Natasha Bakiewicz, Dr. Tony Cohn, and Registered Nurse Elizabeth Budd of the Mental Health and Metabolism Clinic

that promote obesity in individuals, and screening for metabolic disturbances through regular metabolic monitoring.

Overseeing the clinical implementation of the Metabolic Health Monitor is the responsibility of the Mental Health and Metabolism Clinic, which was established in 2001 as a result of various research projects conducted at CAMH by Dr. Cohn.

For more information on the Metabolic Health Monitor, or how to make a referral to the Mental Health and Metabolism Clinic e-mail metabolic@camh.net, Tony_Cohn@camh.net, ext. 2573 or Elizabeth_Budd@camh.net ext. 2562. ☎

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Mission & Vision

CAMH Mission

Improving the lives of those affected by addiction and mental health problems and promoting the health of people in Ontario and beyond.

CAMH Vision

Strong and healthy communities, in which people with addiction and mental health problems can access appropriate and effective services and live as full participants.

How to Reach Us...

CAMH's Main Number
416 535-8501

Toll-free: 1 800 463-6273

Emergency (College St. site):
416 535-8501 ext. 6885

The R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre and the CAMH telephone support line:
416 595-6111 or 1 800 463-6273

For General Assessment Appointments, Call:

Addiction: 416 535-8501 ext. 6128

Mental Health: 416 535-8501 ext. 6878



Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale

A Pan American Health Organization /
World Health Organization Collaborating Centre
Affiliated with the University of Toronto

Credit Union Coming to CAMH

Beginning in 2008, CAMH clients will have new and improved on-site banking services from the Provincial Alliance Credit Union, which will replace the CAMH Cash Office.



David Reville

This new service arises from the recommendations of the CAMH Cash Office Review Committee, guided by the findings of David Reville, external consultant and consumer/survivor. The Committee advised CAMH to transition clients' current accounts to low-cost bank accounts in a financial institution, while continuing to provide no-fee onsite banking for clients who are unable to leave the ward or manage their own money.

The Provincial Alliance Credit Union (PACU) will set up an on-site bank in the current CAMH Cash Office locations in the Community Centre at the Queen Street site and in the tower of the Russell Street site. The hours of operation will be the same as the Cash Office. This will allow clients who are ready to establish an independent banking relationship to do so with PACU on site.

Once the transition is complete, independent clients will no longer need a case worker's signature to access their own money. PACU will also offer telephone banking and ATM machines. Clients and families can expect to hear more about the transition to PACU in the weeks to come.

Those clients whose money is managed by the Ontario Public Guardian and Trustee or who cannot leave the unit or site will be able to have PACU accounts that CAMH will help manage or facilitate.

"With PACU, clients get access to a wider range of banking services, clinician time is freed up for clinical practice and CAMH is allowed to concentrate on its core competencies as a teaching hospital—it is a win-win-win arrangement," said Dean Martin, VP of Finance and Support Services. "With the help of our clinical leadership, we expect implementation to be completed in three months time. We will be keeping clients and families informed." [↗](#)

Healthy Snacks at a Vending Machine near You! Nutritious Foods and Beverages Now Available at CAMH

As the movement towards healthy food choices continues to gain momentum, vending machines have become the latest frontier to receive a makeover.

On November 1, all CAMH vending machines changed their stock from sugary, high-caloric foods and beverages to lower-fat and more nutritional snacks like baked chips, granola bars and 100% fruit juices.

"Placing healthy options in our vending machines is the first step as we prepare to set the stage for ongoing nutrition improvements to menus across CAMH," says Jane Paterson,

Deputy Chief of Professional Services. "We all play an important role in promoting healthy eating in our population. There is a growing awareness of nutrition's vital role in preventing, delaying and managing costly and debilitating diseases."

The impetus for this initiative was concerns voiced by families and clients about the nutritional content of vending machine snacks. Coupled with increased rates of diabetes among CAMH's patient population, it was clear that a healthy change was in order. "We're actually following a trend from other provinces' initiatives, such as British Columbia's school boards that started stocking healthy options in their machines due to the increasing incidents of obesity in children. The response has been positive," says CAMH Dietitian-in-Chief Trish Dekker.

An expert on all things nutrition, Trish authored the *Report on Recommendations for Healthy Foods and Beverages in CAMH Vending Machines and Snack Carts* earlier this year at the same time the new Canada's Food Guide was released. In it, the message is clear: traditional snacks such as chips, chocolate bars and pop are high in

fat, empty in calories and not healthy for public consumption.

At CAMH especially, it is crucial to improve the food and beverage options since studies show nutrition is particularly important to the well-being of individuals with mental illness and addictions and that poor eating habits among our population can adversely influence cognitive functioning, contribute to mood changes as well as to metabolic changes such as obesity.

As prevention continues to take centre stage, nutrition has received increased emphasis in all recent major health promotion and risk-reduction initiatives. Small changes can make huge differences. For instance the Integrated Rehabilitation Unit recently switched from 'buffet' style portions to tray service. The result is well-fed clients minus the extra portions they may have taken because the option was there with the buffet.

"It's important for people to note that they can still enjoy some salty and sweet snacks, but in a more healthy format," says Trish. This initiative has garnered support from CAMH clinicians, dietitians and both the Empowerment and Family Councils. "We're working with food vendors to be consistent in the healthier foods we offer," adds Jane.

To find out more about the healthy choices coming your way please contact Trish_Dekker@camh.net [↗](#)



Deputy Chief of Professional Services Jane Paterson (left) and Dietitian Carol Ayer stand next to a vending machine with healthy snacks.

.....
...[Skills for the Job of Living] continued from page 1

As time went by, the clouds started to part a bit, and the sun warmed my face. Working closely with an OT was working for me. Tara was really helping me find a new job. She reminded me of things I already knew. She would also inform me of things that I knew nothing about. It was a well-rounded relationship. Tara provided me with one-on-one résumé writing and job searching. OT's become like good friends who want to see you succeed.

Even though I made a full recovery, I still benefited from working with Tara. I participated in the Recreational Group. It helped me fill leisure time by getting me out of the house more, and find things to do while at home. I loved the writing aspect of the Creative Writing group that Tara ran. It really got me thinking.

Tara really encouraged me to take on a leadership role, with other participants and with my recovery story. Early on I began engaging with other members. I was always a cheerleader for others, and helped get some members to LEARN's front doors. I would use the information gained from the groups to be a more useful peer. I gained crucial experience from this and from Tara that was sorely needed for the next chapter in my life. I have told many people my recovery story at mental health functions because Tara told me it was insightful, uplifting, and hopeful.

I saw something in myself because someone else saw it in me. With the job searching skills I learned from Tara, I found a job posting for a peer support worker. I applied everything I knew and was able to secure the position. I know that had so much to do with the work I had done with Tara. It doesn't matter if your world is falling apart, or if you are fine but just want to improve things, OT's can help you with anything.

My case manager is an OT. She told me she spent a four-hour flight telling a friend about the work she does. That after the end of the flight her friend still didn't know what she did. I laughed and said, why didn't you just tell her you do it all? I said you help with relationships, work, school, self-esteem, basic needs, recreation, managing symptoms, and every other aspect of life. She smiled and said she had never looked at it that way. [↗](#)

Creative on Queen

Clients of CAMH's Resource Room contributed many items, including knitted wear and dream catchers, at September's Creative on Queen.



Ken, Beverly Clarke, CAMH client [redacted] and Irene Hatos at their display on CAMH's front lawn for Creative on Queen, CAMH's signature community event that is part of the Queen West Art Crawl

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Voices from the Wall Photo Exhibit

CAMH Patients from the Past Speak to Us Today

The remains of the historic wall that surrounds CAMH's Queen Street site tell many stories through the inscriptions found on the bricks. Photographer Tom Lackey's lens captured the words and images inscribed by former clients and patients who once lived within the brick walls of the more than 150-year-old site.



Dr. Paul Garfinkel addressing the crowd at the Voices from the Wall exhibit opening

Over a three-year period Tom painstakingly documented the bricks on film, photographing every single one in the wall. Selections of his photos, titled Voices from the Wall, were exhibited at the Lennox Gallery from October 25th through 28th.

"It began with just 'Why don't you take a picture of our wall?' But as I began to look and see, I opened up a book. It was just like a tapestry of inscriptions, some completely enigmatic," Tom told the National Post.

Built by patients at what was then known as the Provincial Lunatic

Asylum beginning in 1860, the wall was originally 1500 metres long and enclosed the 20-hectare campus. At that time, patient labour was referred to as 'work therapy' or 'moral therapy'. However, over time, work as therapy became unpaid labour intended to save money for the provincial government of the day.

Psychiatric Survivors organized to preserve the remaining walls, which today are monuments to all of the psychiatric patients who lived, worked and died on the grounds since 1850. The historic walls are being restored as the Queen Street site redevelopment moves forward and transforms CAMH into a hospital for the 21st century.

At the exhibition opening, CAMH President and CEO Dr. Paul Garfinkel noted that, "to the casual observer, the walls surrounding the site have negative associations. Walls, to most, symbolize barriers, and the need for protection. Most would be surprised to learn that these walls have come to symbolize hope and the vast

potential and ingenuity of people who were written off by society."

The more than 260 different inscriptions illustrate the lives of the patients with dates, symbols, figures, names, and phrases etched into the bricks over the decades. Taken together, the images and phrases like, "Mind Fatigue," "Old Summers" and "it's a casual madness" create a different type of concrete poetry. "They killed me," is etched into one brick, while others are covered in Xs or zodiac symbols.

"Looking closely at the surviving segments of the wall, you'll find not only an aesthetically beautiful structure, but an emotionally-charged manuscript," said Dr. Garfinkel. [↗](#)



"Mind Fatigue" etched into a brick in CAMH's heritage wall. Photographed in detail by Tom Lackey.

The New Client Information Package

The new Client Information Package was developed in response to clients' need for greater understanding of their rights and how to access advocacy and other services while at CAMH, as well as information about what to expect regarding care and program delivery.



Each package includes a copy of:

- The CAMH Bill of Client Rights* & Client Relations Service bookmark
- Empowerment Council brochure
- Welcome to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): Information about CAMH for clients and families booklet (also available in French)
- Privacy brochure

Client Relations Coordinator Joan Lewis says, "The Client Information Package was developed with input of staff from across CAMH. Each group worked hard to ensure that the documents included were easy to understand and reflect clients' right to information."

The message is clear:

- Every client is welcome at CAMH.
- Every client has rights, including asking question, and to complain.
- Every client is important.
- Every client is respected.

"Becoming familiar with the Client Information Package and distributing and explaining it to clients during admission is part of orientation best practices as well as client safety standards," says Judith Tompkins, Chief of Nursing Practice and Professional Services and Executive Vice President Programs.

Law and Mental Health Program clients were paid to assemble the packages as part of the unit's occupational therapy programming.

Lucy Costa of the Empowerment Council says, "When clients receive the information package and know that they can freely discuss the Client Bill of Rights with staff and other clients, it will go a long way to them feeling welcome here."

The Knitting Group

Developing Client Skills, Building Relationships

Since 2002, CAMH has been helping its clients develop skills and build social networks through the Knitting Group. Established by Therapist Kirsten Binseil, the Knitting Group takes place in the Russell Street Resource room and was formed when a request for donations for knitting supplies went out throughout CAMH. Soon enough supplies and donations came rolling in. On October 3, it celebrated its fifth anniversary.

The knitting group has gone through many changes from the start. "The first project was the Imperfect

Square, a blanket that was raffled off to make funds for more yarn and knitting needles," says Beverley Clark, Addictions Program Worker.

At first, the group consisted mainly of clients from the Opiate Clinic. "We helped them learn how to relax and not knit so tightly," remembers Beverley. However, in later months, the group expanded to include all clients.

Years later many of the knitting group clients have moved on to prosperous projects, though two of the original members are still with the

group. "One client started her own business through the internet. Another finished a home project she had put away for a long time, and other clients have left to join groups in the community," says Beverley.

She also notes that some clients knit for other agencies. For example,

they knit baby blankets for The Hospital for Sick Kids, kitty blankets for the Toronto Humane Society, and blankets for the victims of the storm in Jamaica. One unifying theme is that all of the clients involved experience better health and improved self-esteem.

"One day when a client mentioned that she didn't have anything to call her own we decided to knit ponchos for ourselves. Now clients knit one item for the Resource Room and a second item for themselves," says Beverley.

For all the good times the group has shared they've also experienced sorrows together. "The first Memorial Service was held in the Resource Room in 2006 after one of our clients passed away," recounts Beverley.

As the group continues to expand, some clients are now teaching each other the skill of knitting and teachers donate their time from time to time to demonstrate advanced knitting skills.

The knitting group couldn't be as successful if it weren't for the dedication and support shown by the clients and the Addictions Medicine Clinic staff and their Manager Shirley Smith.

For more information on the Knitting Group please e-mail Beverley_Clarke@camh.net or phone 416 535-8501 ext. 6615. [↗](#)



The Knitting Group celebrated five years on October 3. Members and supporters of the Knitting Group shown left to right: Client Irene Hatos; Carolyn Shim, Resource Room Support Worker; volunteer Margaret Jackson; Norma McDowall, Volunteer Resources QIS; client Kari Tari; Beverley Clarke, Program Worker Resource Room; Addiction Medicine Clinic Therapist, Cindy De Souza; and Attendant Mila Huaracaya.

* The CAMH Bill of Client Rights is available in English, French, Punjabi, Tamil, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Simplified Chinese. [↗](#)

Putting Fitness at the Heart of Mental Health and Addiction Recovery

Hundreds gathered at CAMH's leafy Brentcliffe Site on Sunday August 26 to stroll, wheel, jog and in some cases, sprint in the name of physical fitness as part of recovery from mental health and addictions challenges.

That's the whole point of the Don River Run for Recovery, according to event director **Kari Ala-leppilampi**, a research analyst at CAMH. Now in its 13th year, the 5k and 10k walk event raises funds for FITRAP, CAMH's Fitness in Treatment Research and Advisory Panel, which helps clients use physical fitness to aid in their recovery from mental health and addictions challenges.

"Today we're here pursuing better physical fitness and at the same time we're doing something that has a direct, positive impact on our mental health and well-being," Kari said. "It's a win-win!"

Each year, the Don River Run draws CAMH staff, volunteers, clients, families and community members. This year was no exception. People of all ages came to show their support, including participants as young as 10 years old.

Ontario Health Minister George Smitherman greeted runners and paid tribute to their commitment to pursuing better overall health.

"As one of those who has been public about his battle with addiction, and one of those who has used running to recover, I'm pleased to support this event. By participating you are making an important contribution to your health and your community," Minister Smitherman said.

Physical fitness has a long-established link to better recovery from mental health and addictions challenges, Kari adds, but it's important to remember that not everyone needs to 'run a marathon' to see the benefits.

"When I first started coming to CAMH over a year ago, exercise wasn't in my vocabulary," says CAMH client Anna Prezament. Physical fitness is an aspect of recovery that Anna is beginning to get acquainted with. Just 13 months ago, Anna had her last cigarette after 43 years of smoking. That is until she discovered the CAMH gym facilities and was encouraged by **Beverley Clarke**, Addiction Program worker, to join the fitness group that meets twice weekly.

The "Facilities for Fitness" at CAMH is the first fully equipped client-only



For many of the runners and walkers "exercise is one of the best medicines."

camh events

Diabetes Self-Management Program for Mental Health Consumer/Survivors

Diabetes Education Community Network of East Toronto (DECNET)

DECNET is pleased to offer a diabetes education program especially tailored to meet the needs of individuals experiencing mental illness and diabetes. The classes are free and TTC tokens are provided.

Anyone with diabetes and mental illness (consumer/survivors), his or her families, caregivers and case managers can come to these classes. In small groups led by a nurse and a dietician you can learn about: what causes Type 2 diabetes; how managing your blood sugar can make you feel better; healthy eating, especially how to shop and cook on a tight budget; and how you can be more physically active.

Meet for two hours, once a week for four weeks, on weekday afternoons at South Riverdale Community Health Centre, 955 Queen Street East (at Carlaw).

For more information about starting dates and times phone Denise at 416 469-6580 ext. 3157.



CAMH Client Anna Prezament stretching at the Russell Street courtyard.

fitness room at the Russell Street site that serves both inpatients, outpatients and two special school programs that are run out of CAMH. The program is delivered through Fitness in Treatment Research and Advisory Panel (FITRAP).

FITRAP has also recruited a certified personal trainer who now works closely with clients on an ongoing basis in order to assist them in safely meeting their fitness goals. This fitness room and personal trainer has made a major difference to the lives of a great number of clients who may have felt intimidated at the prospect of taking on physical activity given years of inactivity.

"We start with some warm-up exercises and use bikes and weights to build strength," says CAMH client Irene Hatos. "I learned to inhale at 13 and I smoked for 33 years. Now it's been three years since I've quit."

Like Irene, Anna realized the benefits of being a non-smoker immediately. "As more days went by that I was smoke free, I would wake up and... breathe. You take it for granted, but it's the most amazing sensation."

Soon after, Anna was avoiding the escalator in favour of running up the stairs and walking around town faster. "Exercise is one of the best medicines. It became such an important part of my recovery. My lungs needed to clean out. Going to the gym and sweating is a great way to get the toxins out of my body," says Anna.

For more information on joining CAMH's Facilities for Fitness program contact Beverley Clarke at 416 535-8501 ext. 6615. [↗](#)

Finding the Cause of Major Depression in Young Adults

Blue Sky Project the First to Focus on First-Episode Occurrence

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a time of great stress as young people take on the added pressure of independent living, professional employment, and adult relationships. While most young people make this transition successfully, many do not. Young adulthood is the period of greatest risk for the onset of serious mental illness, including major depression.

According to recent reports, 1 in 7 young people aged 18 to 25 have experienced a first onset of depression, and an alarming 50 to 60 percent of these will go on to suffer multiple recurrent episodes throughout their adult lives. The onset of major depression in young adulthood is connected with poor educational achievement, poor occupational functioning, poor physical health, and

disrupted interpersonal relationships. These individuals fail to reach their potential as adults because of the devastation wrought by their illness.

A five-year study being led by CAMH scientists Dr. Michael Bagby, Dr. James Kennedy, Dr. John Strauss, Dr. Arun Ravindran, and Queen's University scientist Dr. Kate Harkness seeks to reverse this pattern by examining the factors that cause the very first onset of depression in young adulthood. This study is called Blue Sky Project.

It is the first study to focus specifically on the very first episode of the illness to uncover its initial causes. This study is vital because if scientists can understand what causes the disorder in the first place, then they can provide early detection and treatment to young people at risk. Unfortunately,

the vast majority of young people on their first onset of depression do not receive treatment of any kind.

Depression runs in families, largely because particular genes are passed down from parent to child. However, the impact of genes on depression is not direct, but instead acts through the environment. In particular, people with a specific genetic marker in the serotonin system are much more likely to get depressed in the face of stress in their environment than are people without this genetic marker. That is, this particular genetic variant heightens individuals' sensitivity to stress such that they break down in the face of relatively more minor stressors.

Dr. Bagby and his colleagues believe that this model can help explain why young people get depressed the very first time. Specifically, they are testing

the idea that young adults with a particular variant of the serotonin transporter gene will require less severe levels of stress in both childhood and adulthood to cause their first episode of depression, compared to people who do not possess this at-risk genetic variant.

In Blue Sky Project, Dr. Bagby and his colleagues look at 18 to 29 year-olds currently suffering from depression for the first time, within the GTA. These young adults are thoroughly assessed, receive anti-depressant medication and are closely monitored. For further information about how to participate in the Blue Sky Project please call 416 979-4294 or e-mail blueskyproject@camh.net. [↗](#)

