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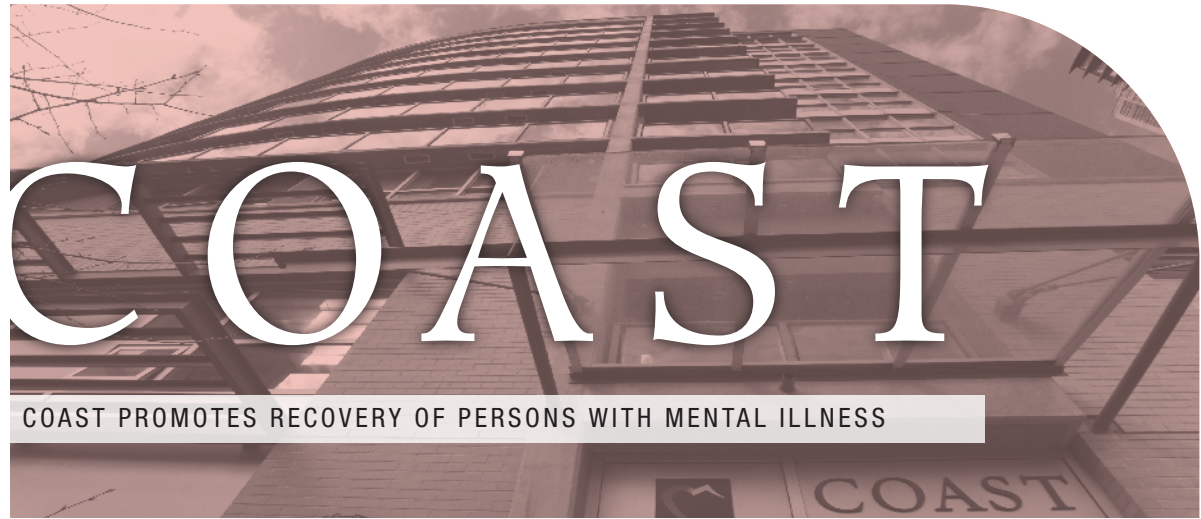


Photo: Dave Foels

National Mental Health Policy Initiative

“Out of the Shadows at Last”

Andrea Keen

Coast was enthusiastic to receive the final report, *“Out of The Shadows At Last”* from the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in May this year. The release of the final report concludes the Committee’s three year study on mental health and addiction. The final report includes 118 recommendations, and a proposal to fund them.

The Committee, led by Senators Kirby and Keon, has provided a strong foundation for improving a system characterized by fragmented policies and programs. Coast congratulates the Committee’s call for a system that will address the needs of clients, families, caregivers, service-providers and government. We are very pleased to note that a Canadian Mental Health Commission is being assembled to foster implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee, and will enable greater collaboration among governments and stakeholders to address the issues facing people with a serious mental illness in Canada. We also note and support the Commission’s recommendation to promote best practices in mental health through a knowledge exchange centre.

The Commission also recommends the development of a mental health transition fund, to be released every year for 10 years to develop community capacity through initiatives that otherwise would not be funded in two areas:

1. Mental Health Housing Initiative

\$2.24 billion over 10 years to provide 57,000 people with mental illness with housing.

- New units of affordable housing
- More rental assistance
- More supportive services



2. Basket of Community Services

\$215 million per year or \$2.15 billion

- Assertive case management teams, crisis intervention units, respite care
- Collaborative care initiatives with physicians
- \$50 million per year for support for persons with concurrent disorders
- \$2.5 million per year for peer support initiatives

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Building & Reinforcing Our Foundation | 

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COAST



Dual Diagnosis Support for Concurrent Disorders

Ross Taylor

A concurrent disorder, also known as a dual diagnosis, combines both a mental health problem and a substance abuse problem. For example, someone with major depression who also abuses alcohol has a concurrent disorder. It is known that people with mental illness have higher rates of addiction than people in the general population. The challenge faced by many people in addiction recovery support groups is the belief that taking psychotropic medications such as anti-depressants or anti-psychotics means that a person is not clean and sober.

Dual Diagnosis Anonymous (DDA) is a program that allows a person to decide if they take medications and leaves that decision to trained medical professionals and the person in recovery. Part of Coast's effort to promote recovery in addictions has been to support the establishment of Dual Diagnosis Anonymous groups. To attend these groups you need no referral, and do not need to be a Coast member.

For the last four years, Coast has provided a meeting room for two weekly DDA meetings. Through these groups people meet others in recovery, and many provide mutual support throughout the week. The Saturday group,

"Afternoon Delight" has seen increasing attendance since its establishment four years ago. In January 2005 another meeting was established at Coast's Clubhouse on Fridays at 5:00 p.m. "The Dinner Group" (Coast provides a meal) had 200 people in its first year and as of August, 2006 has had 125 people attend.



Coast's Clean Start manager, Beata Zaleska says, "Coast is always supportive of networks which provide peer support for recovery from drug and alcohol abuse and serious mental illness." While these meetings are not "Coast" programs, it is supported through Clean Start, and Coast plays a pivotal role in providing administrative support to these member-run meetings. For more information on meetings you can call Dual Diagnosis Anonymous voice mail service at 604-682-3269 ext 7846. 📞

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"Out of the Shadows at Last" cont. from page 1

"We are optimistic by the Senate Committee's vision for a system that includes individual approaches to meet the unique needs of people with mental illness, a holistic, client-centred service model that considers the front-line service providers as part of a collaborative team," says Executive Director, Darrell Burnham. "For example, even with

the right medication, a supportive doctor, and peer support, without a home, recovery can remain elusive for people with serious mental illness."

Coast encourages you to read the report online and call or write your MP to ask that they support Senate Committee's Report for a national mental health policy. 📞

WAR and PEACE *Managing My Bipolar Disorder*

Simon Wu

This story is the second of four segments, presented by Coast member and volunteer, Simon Wu. His UBC psychiatrist, Dr. Lancelot Patrick, has written an introduction.

This story is about a man with a serious mental illness. He has done well, and this is how he has done it. I, his psychiatrist, am pleased to be asked by this exceptional man to make some commentary about his methods to reach success. The fundamental thing that has distinguished Simon is his personal unshakable determination to face mental illness with courage and never give up. He recognizes the truth that he has a serious problem. He did not minimize nor ignore the illness, or make excuses that it was somebody else's fault, or take refuge in the concept of "bad luck", or any of the mental rationalizations that could have diverted him from fighting the illness and realizing a good quality of life. I encourage you to look at the strategies he is sharing freely with you, and those strategies that you think would be useful, use.



Pablo Picasso's Face of Peace

Self Awareness

The first and most difficult step for me was realizing that I was sick. With this realization, I began to ask myself many puzzling questions: What is happening in my brain? Why am I told I have a problem in my manic state when I feel so good? Are these medications effective or are they causing more problems? I had to find answers, learn more about the causes, symptoms and lines of treatments for bipolar disorder. My determination to fight started with such self-awareness.

This awareness was by no means easy to

come by. It was a complex and drawn-out process. To complicate matters, the manic stage in my bipolar disorder is quite often an enjoyable experience (unlike the people close

“RECOVERY IS LIVING WITH MY ILLNESS”

to me!). It is not easy to describe such feelings: I feel good at such an intensity, becoming more confident, joyful, friendly and energetic. People often compliment me on my charisma! How can I accept that I am sick?

This realization actually came in two stages. First, in one of my manic episodes several years ago, I felt so good that I wasted \$80,000 of my hard-earned RRSP money on silly activities. At that time I felt so euphoric that I could hardly imagine I was at the brink of tearing my family to pieces. I was completely unable to admit that I was sick while in such a manic state; self-reflection was not easy and self-criticism nearly impossible! During the subsequent and inevitable depression – through remorse, self-reflection, and unending talks with my family and doctor – I realized that I have a serious mental illness called bipolar disorder.

And so I started to equip myself with knowledge of this disease. I understand that my bipolar disorder might not ever go away completely. My best strategy then is to manage the symptoms rather than focus on a full return to what life was like before I got sick. I realize that this is a life-long process, not something that I or my doctor or medications alone can fix. Recovery is living with my illness. It is an ongoing process.

My psychiatrist congratulated me on this key understanding – that sometimes feeling good is not good. We agree that I must be aware that sometimes my mental illness can be very subtle. 🗣️

Engaging the Public



Donor Feature *Stocks & Securities*

Ross Taylor

Recent tax changes have made it even more attractive to donate publicly traded securities. Under new rules in the 2006 federal budget, you may give stocks, bonds, futures and options, as well as shares in mutual funds – and you will **pay no tax on the capital gain**. This greatly reduces the out-of-pocket expense of making such a donation. A gift of this type provides you with both a charitable tax credit reducing annual income taxes, plus a reduction in capital gains taxes.

When you donate stocks, bonds or mutual funds an official charitable tax receipt from Coast will be issued to you for the value of the securities at the end of the day they are transferred into the Foundation's account. This can be applied to your income tax this year or over the next five years,

as any charitable contribution would. In addition though, any capital gains taxes you would have paid on the shares are eliminated. When you donate publicly listed stocks or securities the government considers that you have “sold” the stocks or securities and normally capital gains taxes would be triggered but because you have donated them to a registered charity such as Coast, you pay no capital gains tax.

To make a gift of securities to the Foundation, you only need to contact your financial institution and fill in a one page form. They will then arrange to forward the shares to the Coast Mental Health Foundation's brokerage account. Please contact Sharlene Hertz, at 604.675.2316 for more information.

Invitation to the Annual General Meeting

Coast Foundation Society (1974)

You are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Coast Foundation Society (1974) which will take place

Tuesday September 26, 2006 at 4:30 pm

Location

Vancouver Public Library
Conference Centre
350 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC

Registration begins at 3:30 p.m.

Business Meeting starts at 4:30 p.m.



The Coast Community Tour Changing Lives

Date

3rd Tuesday of the month

Time

Noon 'till 1:00 pm

Lunch

will be provided

Location

Coast Mental Health
Resource Centre
1225 Seymour St
(at Davie)

Purpose

To inform the community about Coast Mental Health's services

RSVP

Sharlene Hertz

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NEED A CUSTOM TOUR?

No problem! If you would like a tour on a different date, or if you would like to visit Coast licensed care homes or learn more about our employment or housing programs – please contact us. We can also conduct a “virtual tour” at your workplace or service club.

For more information about Coast visit www.coastfoundation.com

Engaging the public

