

# Self-Help Ontario

The Newsletter of the Ontario Self-Help Network

Fall 2006

## “Building Connections”

### Self-Help Awareness Week, Sept. 24 to 30, 2006

The Ontario Self-Help Network and our 19 affiliates across Ontario are pleased to sponsor Self-Help Awareness Week (SHAW), September 24-30, 2006. This year's theme is “Building Connections”. There are a number of events across the province. In the Greater Toronto Area our free events include:

#### Self-Help Workshop in the Peel Region

Tuesday, September 26, 1 to 3:30 pm. In this workshop, facilitated by Gillian Kranias of the Ontario Self-Help Network, self-helpers can discuss challenges, learn new strategies and share successes.

#### Self-Help Success Stories

Tuesday, September 26, 6 to 8 pm. Come hear some amazing success stories from people who have overcome great challenges through participation in self-help and support groups.

#### Francophone Community Event

Thursday, September 28, 1:30 to 4:30 pm. Learn how the Francophone community is using self-help in and around the GTA with a panel discussion and networking activities.

#### Building Connections: the Quest for Interdependence

Thursday, September 28, 6 to 8 pm. Attend our annual general meeting for food, fun, and networking with other self-helpers and agencies. Guest speaker Jim Milligan.

#### Facilitation Workshop

Saturday, September 30, 10 am to 4 pm. Learn the basics of facilitation skills in this free workshop: what is facilitation, group guidelines, process, conflict resolution and co-facilitation. (Limited to 14 people.)

#### Free events - Registration is Required

Call 416-487-4355 Toll Free 1-888-283-8806

Email: [shrc@selfhelp.on.ca](mailto:shrc@selfhelp.on.ca) [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca)

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**The Empowering Stroke Prevention Project** combines the models of self-help and health promotion in training lay health promoters to assist their communities in the prevention of stroke.

**Resources** online at [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca)

- Healthy Ways to Prevent Stroke Guide
- A Facilitator's Guide
- Partnership Building Toolkit

## Rural Self-Help

A peer support group of 11 breast cancer survivors were able to share comfort and mutual experience despite membership that crossed different areas of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1998, with the support of The Canadian Cancer Society, the women were linked together by an audio conferencing network. Through this positive experience, they were able to overcome one of the unique obstacles that challenge rural self-help groups.

Along with concerns regarding accessibility and low turn outs, rural peer support groups have higher confidentiality concerns than their city counterparts.

The preconception that rural communities naturally foster stronger social support networks is not always so and the need for peer support is equal to that of urban areas.

With patience and mutual effort, self-help group members can overcome the obstacles of remote community living. Rural Canadians, like the 11 women of Newfoundland and Labrador, will be able to draw strength from the positive experience of peer support.

## Resources for Rural Self-Help

The Self-Help Resource Centre has prepared a research paper called “Self-Help Groups in Rural Canada”.

Materials are also available for those interested in organizing a peer support group in their community.

Visit our website [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca) to search our resources by type or subject.

## **Working with Muslim Women and Their Families: A skills-building forum for Healthcare and Social Service Providers**

In May of this year, a number of Muslim organizations came together in Toronto to present Working with Muslim Women & Their Families: A Skills-Building Forum for Healthcare and Social Service Providers. The day-long conference at Ryerson University attracted about 300 service providers and provided a rich opportunity for us to hear a number of Muslim women address issues of concern to the community at large.

Through a series of lectures participants were given a brief overview of Islam, with a review of concepts and definitions, a summary of the history, cultures and faith of Muslims in Canada, and an examination of some of the challenges faced by Muslim women, parents, and children in Canadian society. This was followed by a wide variety of different vegetarian dishes before the conference broke into three streams: caring for Muslim patients; marriage, divorce & domestic violence in a Muslim context; and the documentary "*A new life in a new land: The Muslim experience in Canada.*"

During the presentations and the question and answer session offered by a panel of the presenters, several clear themes emerged. Since Islam is a religion, not a culture, there is still much confusion when mis-attributing to Islam a particular culture's norm – the two should be seen and understood as separate and different.

The panellists felt that despite cultural practices, the Qur'an is very clear about the rights of a Muslim woman. The opinion was expressed that both partners in marriage have rights and if these rights are abrogated, either partner can sue for divorce.

In working with Muslim women and their families, the conference organizers offered several suggestions for service providers to keep in mind. Since many Muslims wish to maintain their religious traditions, interactions are more likely to be productive if the assistance offered demonstrates sensitivity to the values and principles of Islam.

Such efforts should also include an explanation of exactly what you can do to be of help, since some Muslims are more likely to approach their imams for assistance rather than an unknown mainstream agency. Finally, because the Qur'an emphasizes reconciliation as a possibility in any conflict, offering to teach effective coping and conflict resolution skills may be a good bridge-building strategy.

**Visit [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca) for resources for Muslim families.**

## **Health promotion for Newcomer Communities**

**Diversify the Source, Enhance the Force** was a project in partnership with community agencies to provide New Canadians with opportunities to volunteer and increase their confidence and employment prospects.

**Resource:** Call toll free 1-888-283-8806

- DSEF: Using Peer Support to Create Volunteer Opportunities for New Canadians (hardcopy version only)

## **Fall 2006 Workshops**

This is the first of a series of workshops offered in 2006-2007 by the Self-Help Resource Centre.

### **Building Partnerships: a Self-Help Model for Community Involvement**

**Thursday, September 28, 1 to 4 pm**

The purpose of this workshop is to assist you in building partnerships between various groups by focusing on your common interests. In this workshop the participants will learn how to partner with other organizations, local agencies and community members. Topics covered include community-based partnerships, benefits of partnerships, parameters of a successful partnership and the barriers to build one. Practical group work will walk you through a "Partnership Map" which can be used as a blue print for future partnership building.

**To learn more about this and other workshops or to register**

**Tel: 416-487-4355 or**

**Email [shrc@selfhelp.on.ca](mailto:shrc@selfhelp.on.ca)**

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The Self-Help Resource Centre of Toronto invites you to attend our Annual General Meeting

### **Building Connections: The Quest for Interdependence with Jim Milligan**

Jim Milligan has many years of connection with mutual aid groups through his work as an educator in the areas of substance use, youth-at-risk, diversity and social inclusion, harm reduction, compassionate leadership and personal and organizational change.

**Thursday, September 28, 6 to 8 pm**

**To reserve your space**

**Tel: 416-487-4355 or**

**Email [shrc@selfhelp.on.ca](mailto:shrc@selfhelp.on.ca)**

## **Report on the Guelph Regional Conference By Spencer Brennan, Co-coordinator, OSHNET**

At the Guelph Regional Conference in May, 2006, the keynote speaker was Professor Geoff Nelson, Chair of the Psychology Department and faculty member in the graduate program in Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University. His topic was The Value of Peer Support and Self-Help. Professor Nelson has served as the Senior Editor of the Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, and together with the Canadian Mental Health Association/Waterloo Region Branch, received the Harry V. McNeill Award for Innovation in Community Mental Health from the American Psychological Foundation. He is the author of five books and over 100 journal articles and book chapters. His research has focused on issues related to psychiatric consumer/survivors (i.e. housing, self-help/mutual aid) and primary prevention programs for children.

In his presentation, Geoff looked at why peer support and self-help are important, examined how and why they work, and how best to promote their usage. He referenced some of his research which evaluated the importance of peer support and self-help in four mental health consumer/survivor initiatives (CSI), with a follow up three years later. Also included in the presentation were examples and comments from members involved with these initiatives, highlighting an increase in their self-confidence and self-efficacy after being active in a supportive peer environment.

Visit [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca) to view Prof. Nelson's presentation "The Value of Peer Support"

### **BOOK THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR!**

The next Regional Conference, hosted by the Ontario Self-Help Network (OSHNET), will be held in Toronto on Friday, November 24, 2006, 9 am and 4 pm. This year's theme is BUILDING CONNECTIONS, and while all the details have not been finalized, the six workshops offered will be of interest to both professionals and self-helpers. For more details, check the website [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca) in early October, when registration forms will be available online. See you there!

## **French Language Services at OSHNET**

On Thursday September 28, OSHNET will co-host a French language breakfast event in Toronto to launch our new French language resources. After networking with other francophone community members and professionals interested in self-help/peer support, participants are invited to stay for a free training workshop in French. To register for this event call 416-487-4355 or email [shrc@selfhelp.on.ca](mailto:shrc@selfhelp.on.ca)

OSHNET's new French language resources include translations of our most popular two-page factsheets: Self-Help 101; Confidentiality in Self-Help Support Groups; Families and Self-Help/Mutual Aid; Self-Help and Health Promotion; Tips for the Helping Professional; and Integrating Self-Help Strategies in Your Health Promotion Work. We also translated the article "Support Groups: Transitioning from professional towards member leadership". Last year OSHNET offered a French workshop on this same topic to 13 staff at the Centre Francophone in Toronto.

For information on the September 28 event, or to discuss how OSHNET can provide French Language Services in your Ontario community, contact Gillian Kranias 416-487-4355 or email [oshnet@selfhelp.on.ca](mailto:oshnet@selfhelp.on.ca)

To find OSHNET's French language resources online, go to "online resources" at [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca), then search our database under "type of resource" by selecting "French language resources".

## **Health Promotion for Seniors**

**The Family Councils Program**, provides assistance to families who have a loved one in an Ontario long-term care home. In conjunction with residents and staff, individual family councils work together to provide support, share experience and seek solutions to enhance the lives of their loved ones in care.

**Resource:** [www.familycouncils.net](http://www.familycouncils.net)

# The Ontario Self-Help Network

The Ontario Self-Help Network (OSHNET) is a program of the Self-Help Resource Centre of Greater Toronto. Working with 19 affiliates in seven regions of the province, OSHNET provides support and training to self-help groups, as well as educating the public and related professions on the value of self-help and peer support. OSHNET would like to publicly thank our affiliates for their on-going support and participation.

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**KINGSTON**, Michael Borges, CMHA, Tel: (613) 549-7027, Email: mborges@porchlight.ca [www.kingston.org/cmha](http://www.kingston.org/cmha)

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**WATERLOO-WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN REGIONS**, Allan Strong, The Self-Help Alliance, Tel: (519) 766-4315 Ext. 244, Email: stronga@self-help.ca

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**YORK REGION**, Tanya Shute, Self-Help Network of York Region, Tel: (905) 780-0491 ext. 14, Email: tanyas@idirect.ca  
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**NORTH WEST REGION**, Marie Klassen, Community Information Resource Centre, Thunder Bay, Tel: (807) 626-9626, Email: circ@tbaytel.net

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The Self-Help Resource Centre is a United Way agency, also funded by  
The Ministry of Health Promotion, the City of Toronto and the Trillium Foundation  
Tel: 416-487-4355 Toll Free 1-888-283-8806 [www.selfhelp.on.ca](http://www.selfhelp.on.ca)

