

The Ontario Self-Help Network (OSHNET) was established in 1992 to support the development of new and existing self-help/mutual aid initiatives across Ontario. There are 19 affiliates across the province working together to promote and support self-help. For self-help information in your region please contact these affiliates.

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Self-Help Ontario

The Newsletter of the Ontario Self-Help Network

Fall 2007

This is the first part of a three part article on Facilitation for Self-Help and Support Groups.

The 1st P in Facilitation: Purpose By Spencer Brennan, co-coordinator of OSHNET

The purpose of facilitation is "to make easy." The facilitator's role is to offer the group a safe and supportive environment to achieve a stated goal while assisting its members to remain on course toward success. This means nurturing the fledgling group, providing resources and information, and introducing the necessary basic group skills until such time as the membership can facilitate its own process with little input from the facilitator. However, when I think of the reason for a group's existence, I see two intertwined purposes; organizational and personal.

If I am doing a support group as part of my job description, the organization for whom I work will give me some direction as to what, how, why, and the expected outcomes. Those parameters can also apply to a 1-on-1 session, either as coach or mentor. In addition, I will also have my own slant on what those parameters mean for me. If, however, I am organizing a support group and plan to be a member of it, then my thinking would reflect my own need for support as well as that of the other members, which in turn, presents its own set of difficulties.

Having a purpose -- knowing what it is I hope the support group will accomplish -- provides the beginning of a structured goal or set of goals. One of the initial goals needs to be establishing what "support" means -- for me and the other members of the group -- since support does look different for different people. If, for example, there is a support group for people dealing with their Hepatitis status and the purpose of the group is to provide ongoing information, but not emotional support, that needs to be clarified at the very beginning of the group. If the group is a men's support group, what do those words mean? If it is a psycho-educational group, then members will understand that while we will attempt to address their emotional concerns, we will also provide ideas, tools, and thinking that may be helpful in dealing with those concerns. Thus, determining the nature of the group helps both facilitators and members balance their expectations between what they hope for and what can realistically be provided.

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Free E-Newsletter

You can get advance notice of OSHNET conferences, workshops and events, by subscribing to our free monthly e-newsletter.

You can subscribe by visiting
<http://www.selfhelp.on.ca/newsletter.html>

Les Voilà!

Launch of French language directory and web pages.

Thursday September 27, 2007
Time: 12:30 pm to 2 pm

Location: Tam Tam Cyber Café,
86 Nassau Street 416-603-0007

For more information :
oshnet@selfhelp.on.ca or call
Gillian 416-487-4355

You can now locate French language support groups all across the province, or learn about starting a new group online - *en français*.

Join OSHNET for the launch of our new French groups directory *Répertoire des groupes d'entraide francophones de l'Ontario* and French webpages.

Mingle with Francophone community members and professionals who are involved/interested in self-help groups.

French Language Resources

Our website has many resources about different aspects of self-help/support groups, for self-helpers and professionals working in related fields.

Visit www.selfhelp.on.ca From the pull down-menu, select Resources, then On-line Resources. You can search for French language resources in each topic area.

Resources for Dealing with Conflict

Centre for Nonviolent Communication

<http://www.cnvc.org>

This site states that as long as one communicates clearly how they feel and what they need, it will contribute to internal, interpersonal, and organizational peace. Its focus is reflecting on what one says and how they say it. For example, "When asking someone to do something, check first to see if we are making a request or a demand." The main concepts in this model are: observing; feeling, needing and requesting.

Conflict Resolution Network of Canada

<http://www.crnnetwork.ca>

CR Network Canada develops, promotes and extends the use of conflict resolution and restorative justice processes such as negotiation, mediation, consensus-building and peacemaking circles. This site strives to educate and empower Canadians to better manage conflict by producing reader friendly publications, searchable on-line directories. It also publishes Conflict Resolution Today, Canada's highly-respected conflict resolution magazine; hosts national conferences and workshops, and; sponsors research and on-line discussions about effective ways to deal with conflict.

Conflict Resolution Information

www.crinfor.org

This site is a gateway to conflict resolution resources, including such topics as "conflict news", "recent publications", and "education and training".

International Centre for Conflict Resolution and Mediation (now known as the Pacific Path Institute)

<http://www.circm.com>

Areas of interest:

Education - This division promotes pacific behavior in schools through the implementation of the Pacific Path program.

Research - This division evaluates the impact of the Pacific Path Institute programs and services to measure their effectiveness and ensure their quality.

Social mediation - This division offers individuals, organizations and communities alternatives to prevent or resolve conflicts.

Peacemakers Trust

<http://www.peacemakers.ca>

This is an organization's website which is dedicated to research and education on conflict resolution and peace building. It also has direct links to 'Conflict News Sources', a bulletin board, as well as five other useful links.

Anderson, Kare. (1999). *Resolving Conflict Sooner: The powerfully simple 4-step method for reaching better agreements more easily in your everyday life*. California: Crossing Press, Inc.

This is a great book! It includes step-by-step conflict resolution techniques, as well as the consequences for various actions. It is simple to understand, and the quotes in the margins raise good points and promote further thinking about each scenario. The author helps you to understand conflict from both sides, and provides great advice to assist you in making your side of a disagreement. This book also contains a "mini checklist", as well as a list of suggested reading to further improve your conflict resolution skills.

Fall Workshop Series

Here are three workshops offered by the Self-Help Resource Centre.

Building Community Groups That Work. Tuesday, September 25, 1 to 4 pm

Self-help methods have been used as a community-based and volunteer-run development strategy in many parts of the world. It can be used to build partnership between communities and helping professionals and agencies. In this workshop these strategies will be shared and the participants are given a chance to apply it to their own examples.

The ABC s of Volunteer Management for the Non-Professional Volunteer Coordinator. Thursday, October 11, 1 to 4 pm

If you don't have "Volunteer Coordinator" in your job title but you work with volunteers, this primer is for you. Learn about the important 4Rs of volunteer management: Recruitment, Retention, Recognition and Relationship-building and how to integrate them into your formal or informal volunteer program.

Transitioning – From Professionally led to Member Run Support groups. Monday, November 12, 1 to 4 pm

This participatory workshop will assist professionals to learn more about self-help/peer support models, to identify key steps in building a successful transition team and plan, and to consider their new role as a professional "on tap, not on top"

You can download the registration form from www.selfhelp.on.ca

**Tel: 416-487-4355
Toll Free: 1-888-283-8806**

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The First P of Facilitation by Spencer Brennan

For me, success is more of an individual thing than an outcome report, because success is also defined by each individual member. If members have attained or achieved their personal goal -- of getting support, of finding their voice, of clarifying their thinking or choices -- then they have succeeded. Sometimes, what appears to be a failure can actually turn out to be a success depending on how the individual interprets its meaning. I like to keep a brief outline of the general tenor of each group meeting, with a descriptive line for each member. Thereafter, when thinking about and preparing for group, I have some sense of where each person is in the group's process and can be ready with appropriate feedback at a moment that is helpful in moving both group and individual along.

I also like to keep track of those behaviours or situations that trigger or hook me during group sessions. Taking those to supervision and sharing them with a co-facilitator can only be helpful in staying present to the process; there is a Quaker saying that "way will open when I get out of my own way." Knowing where my limitations are and moving quickly to neutralize them can only be beneficial in keeping both me and the group, on track.

Ultimately, I believe that facilitation is an act of love designed to create a circle of power in which individual members can wrestle with their demons in a safe space without judgment, where they can be "listened into existence" until their burden is lifted, and they can learn to fly. It is there that we are reminded to celebrate the fierceness of the collective human spirit and realize, no matter how exhausting the journey, the effort was worth it.

Self-Help Forum 2007

On March 26, 2007 the Self-Help Resource Centre hosted a self-help forum called "Grouping for Change". This was done to bring together self-helpers and professionals who work with self-help, in an effort to build a larger community.

Over 70 people attended this meeting where they learned about self-help models from Germany and Australia.

Participants also divided into four groups to discuss the issues that many self-help and support groups share in common: promotion, insurance, space rental and funding.

Many issues and ideas were raised and shared. Some participants expressed interest in forming a working group to continue to explore these issues. The SHRC will continue to support the efforts of the working group in the fall of this year.

To read an overview of the German self-help model visit www.selfhelp.on.ca and check under the Resources link, and then search our On-line Resources for German Self-Help.

Self-Help Awareness Week Sept. 23-29 2007

For complete details of our awareness week events visit www.selfhelp.on.ca

Distance Education Workshop: "Getting Started with Self-Help Groups"

Monday, September 24, 2007, 7-9 pm. A FREE 2-hour Distance Education Workshop across Ontario.

"Resiliency Workshop" for Members of Self-Help Groups

Monday, September 24, 2007, 7-9 pm. A FREE 2-hour workshop at the Krasman Centre, 10121 Yonge St. Richmond Hill. To register contact Alex Cheng at (905) 780-0491

Annual General Meeting of the Self-Help Resource Centre

Tuesday, September 25, 2007, 6-8 pm. A FREE event

"Building Community Groups That Work" workshop will focus on how self-help strategies can be used to build partnerships between communities, helping professionals and agencies.

Tuesday, September 25, 2007, 1-4 pm. \$15 Registration fee, limited to 20 people

Launch of resource "3 elements for New Facilitators"

Wednesday, September 26, 2007, 8 page package on centering, listening, & assertiveness, downloadable from our website at www.selfhelp.on.ca

"So you want to be a facilitator" Workshop for new and recent facilitators of self-help groups.

Saturday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Limited to 12 people -- \$15 Registration is required.