



The Surviving Spirit Newsletter – Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts -

Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars. - Kahlil Gibran

Hi Folks,

May 2010

I hope all is well for everyone, no complaints here, busy, but that's okay. We here at the Surviving Spirit have lots of great news and resources to share for this month's newsletter. May is Mental Health Awareness Month and with that in mind, here are some inspirational resources to help you and your loved ones on your healing journey.

A startling and sobering statistic that always bothers me - 1 in 5 people have to deal with some mental health concern at some point in their life, yet 2/3 of those folks don't seek treatment or help due to the stigma and discrimination surrounding "mental illness"... how sad and how tragic that is.

1] Chato B. Stewart of Mental Health Humor [www.mentalhealthhumor.com] has put together an incredible resource and outlet for some humor in which he honors 31 Mental Health Hero's for the Month of May at <http://mentalhealthcartoons.com/> Please check out the 'character' for May 14th...some guy with a guitar. Thanks Chato for this very special honor. Many of the folks receiving this newsletter also qualify as Mental Health Hero's – keep doing what you're doing!!!

2] The folks at Unveiling the Stigma have put together an incredible website to help those who suffer with depression and mental illness. www.unveilingthestigma.com

Also posted at their site is a Suicide Prevention Video – having lost two brothers and two friends to suicide, this is a subject matter very close to the heart for me. May is the birth month of my brother David who took his life...so Mental Health Awareness Month has a truly poignant significance for my self on so many levels. Perhaps if the stigma and discrimination weren't so prevalent around mental illness and trauma, he might be with us today.

3] With that in mind, here's two more websites for Suicide Prevention:

[SPAN USA \(Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network\)](#)

[Center For Suicide Prevention](#)

4] Not only is my friend Deb Damone involved with the PIPER [People Improving Peer Empowering Recovery] organization, she has also written a book on her life's struggles

with trauma, abuse & mental health concerns. She is one more shining example of a Surviving Spirit, you can learn more about PIPER and her book at www.piperli.org

5] Carol Coussons de Reyes with the Office of Consumer Affairs in Lincoln, NE has put together a workbook involving the creative arts called **Picture Recovery**

“Struggle is necessary for growth, and from struggle we build wings to fly. This workbook invites the person to draw or cut out pictures of activities and actions that will support them in their own recovery.”

It can be downloaded and copied at –
www.dhhs.ne.gov/beh/mh/MHConsumer/RecoveryWorkbookEditedFinal3.pdf

I was fortunate to meet and work with Carol at the 2009 Alternative Conference that involved the creative arts.

6] My friend Judith Haire over in England and author of “Don’t Mind Me” has this helpful news to share:

“I’m letting you know that Chipmunkpublishing have 5 new free e-books available for you until the end of July 2010.

Mad Pride, Poems of Survival, Let’s Hang onto Mental Health and Sweet and Bitter Fool and Self Harm.

To download your very own free e-book(s), please visit www.chipmunkpublishing.co.uk and click on E- Books then Specials”

Surviving Spirit is very excited and honored to be promoting and selling Judith’s book; the info will be posted soon at www.survivingspirit.com [please keep in mind that the website is still under construction, but you can get a sneak peak]

7] Jim Hopper who is an instructor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, researcher, therapist, and consultant has helped create an incredible website called 1 In 6, @ www.1in6.org/

It is designed to help men with unwanted or abusive sexual experiences in childhood and for the people who care for them.

And his website www.jimhopper.com has a wealth of information and resources pertaining to trauma and abuse. It is a site I have visited frequently; please check them both out to learn more.

8] Sarah Peterson with AAPD [American Association of People with Disabilities], a great advocacy organization, moderates the advocate and activist network with the mental health community via the website blog @ www.jfactivist.com And you can sign up for

the newsletter at www.aapd.com/jfa I've been a member of this organization for a long time - they do some incredible work

9] Speaking of peer support and recovery, a few folks who have achieved incredible success [and deservedly so] with that are Mary Ellen Copeland and Shery Mead. I have many friends and know many others who speak highly of what their advocacy work has done for them in their healing journey. Please visit Mary Ellen's website @ www.mentalhealthrecovery.com/

10] Shery Mead's work regarding peer support and peer run crisis alternatives in mental health can be found at <http://www.mentalhealthpeers.com> I had the good fortune to work with Shery many years ago on some advocacy efforts here in NH concerning trauma informed care and concerns for parents dealing with mental health issues. And as mentioned many newsletter ago, she was one of my original inspirations for becoming an advocate.

11] Speaking of parents struggling with mental health issues, this is a great book and one I highly recommend – it should be required reading for all treatment providers and for those involved in the court systems when dealing with a parent or parents struggling with mental health concerns. Too many times that darn label of “mental illness” can strip away the rights of a parent needlessly. This book is a shining example that it doesn't need to be that way. “When a Parent is Depressed – How to Protect Your Children from the Effects of Depression in the Family” by William R. Beardslee, M.D., Boston Children's Hospital

He offers wonderful stories of hope and healing and the book is full of helpful resources.

12] And finally for this month's resources, a website that addresses the issues of parental alienation. It is important to be shared in a newsletter raising awareness about Mental Health Month, because for many parents who struggle with mental health concerns, it has been used against them to keep them from their children. Not only is it destructive to the parent on the receiving end of parental alienation, it can also cause severe emotional and psychological harm to the child. I've known too many parents who have shared this pain & suffering with me through the years. To learn more, please visit: [Parental Alienation Awareness Organization](http://ParentalAlienationAwarenessOrganization)

Take care, Mike

ps. Please share this with your friends & if you have received this in error, please let me know.

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

A diagnosis is not a destiny.

www.mskinnermusic.com - Hope, Healing, & Help for Trauma, Abuse, & Mental Health through music, resources, & advocacy

www.myspace.com/michaelskinnermusic - musical endeavors, friends & advocacy

www.new.facebook.com/profile.php?id=635415804%20 Facebook - for friends, music, & advocacy!!

www.youtube.com/mcstrain - live performance of "Brush Away Your Tears" from TV show interview

mikeskinner@comcast.net 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

www.michaelskinner.net - new site for public speaking & music presentation on healing for trauma, abuse, & mental health.

"BE the change you want to see in the world." Mohandas Gandhi