



Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy

Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

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

May is Mental Health Awareness Month - Mental Health Month began in 1949 to raise awareness of mental health conditions and mental wellness for all.

“A man's concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an existential distress but by no means a mental disease.”

“... a man's suffering is similar to the behavior of a gas. If a certain quantity of gas is pumped into an empty chamber, it will fill the chamber completely and evenly, no matter how big the chamber. Thus suffering completely fills the human soul and conscious mind, no matter whether the suffering is great or little. Therefore the "size" of human suffering is absolutely relative.” Viktor E. Frankl

Hi Folks,

I thought I would open up the newsletter with a few thoughts from Viktor E. Frankl to help us in promoting the fact that May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month. Viktor Frankl was one of my ‘childhood heroes’ ...not the ordinary kind of inspiration a young boy would look up to. But I did, his book and the books of other survivors of the Holocaust helped give me strength, inspiration and hope that I too could survive the ‘concentration camp’ of horrors I grew up in.

Many years later as an adult in the mid-nineties I would find myself being drawn to read the words of a whole new group of ‘heroes’ – those who spoke out and advocated for awareness concerning the long term impact of trauma, abuse and mental health concerns. These new ‘heroes’ in my life helped to encourage me, to set about becoming an advocate and address the issues of stigma and discrimination for those diagnosed and labeled “mentally ill”. Oh how those words could hurt and damage someone’s life; and for those of us who had already known earlier horrors and trauma in life, well, it made a bad situation even worse.

Fortunately, there are so many wonderful people, organizations and peer support groups who are doing great things to address the needs and concerns for those struggling with their mental health, for whatever the reason. We have come a long way in addressing the issues and concerns of mental health, trauma and abuse, but we still have a long way to go.

That said, here are some great examples of the good works being done out there to help others.

"An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior." Viktor E. Frankl

I have the great honor to be a guest on this show that will be touching upon Mental Health Awareness next Wednesday May 30th @ 9pm EST – it is a ‘live’ show, so you can also call in and I hope you do. [Dreamcatchers Blog Talk Radio – Upcoming Shows](#)

1] [Removing Mental Health Stigma Bigger Priority Than Funding: Health Minister](#)
-Heather Scoffield, The Canadian Press

Canada needs to deal with the stigma surrounding mental health issues before it can go on to tackle funding questions, says federal Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq.

“The first step is to get past the stigma and get people talking about mental health to determine better what kinds of services we can provide,” she said in an interview from Geneva, where she led a round table on mental health during a global discussion on improving health care.

*She wants my love, but she pushes away
She wants my love, but she gives it away*

*Tried so hard to get her to stay
She says it's not me, but she won't explain
Tells me there's things inside causing her pain
So she wants my love but she pushes away
So much love inside but she runs away
No matter what I say I can't get her to stay - The 9:30 Train © Michael Skinner Music*

2] [Medical News Today](#) - Troubled Romantic Relationships May Stem From Childhood Emotional Maltreatment

People who experience Childhood Emotional Maltreatment (CEM) are more likely to have troubled romantic relationships in adult years, according to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) researchers.

Childhood Maltreatment (CM) includes sexual and physical abuse, emotional maltreatment and neglect, and is a significant contributor to the dramatic increase in referrals to university counseling centers. CM also foments self-criticism causing a deleterious effect on romantic relationships.

"Over time, this tendency might be consolidated, becoming a defining part of a person's personality, and ultimately derailing relationships in general and romantic relationships in particular," explains Ms. Lassri, whose doctoral dissertation, supervised by Prof. Shahar, served as the basis for the study.

"I now choose to rise above my personality problems to recognize the magnificence of my being. I am totally willing to learn to love myself." Louise L. Hay

"Love is not consolation, it is light." Simon Weil

3] [Jerome Kagan: Psychology Is In Crisis | Radio Boston](#)

Jerome Kagan is known as one of the fathers of developmental psychology. Now in retirement from Harvard, his new book, "[Psychology's Ghosts](#)," is an indictment of the field he helped shape, calling into question research psychology's most basic methods and assumptions.

"Psychiatry is the only sub-discipline in medicine where the diagnoses are only based on the symptoms," Kagan told host Meghna Chakrabarti. "You're treated for depression on the basis of your symptoms when your depression could come on for a half a dozen different reasons and the reasons are important in how you treat the patient."

"Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'." Viktor E. Frankl

"Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside you that is greater than any obstacle." - Christian D. Larson

4] The CHOICES IN RECOVERY® newsletter is a trusted resource designed to inform and inspire the mental health community by supporting serious mental health conditions.

In publication for more than 5 years, the CHOICES IN RECOVERY® newsletter offers essential and helpful information

[The Power of Love and Art](#) – an article that features one of our fellow Surviving Spirits, Mary Ann Goughler. This is a great article that shares some of her great art and the support she has received from her loving husband through her ordeals and struggles with mental health concerns. Well worth reading folks...truly an inspirational story showing hope and healing.

Download PDF: [CIR_NEWSLETTER_2012_ISSUE_ONE_FINAL.pdf](#)

Please do take a look at several of Mary Ann's art work posted in the [Surviving Spirit Web Store](#).

"All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware." Martin Buber

"Healing comes with the gift of life...but we must seek it in each other to unleash its full potential." R L Pete Housman

5] ["Undoing Depression"](#) - Richard O'Connor, PhD

Our brain does not merely store our experiences. Each experience changes the brain - structurally, electrically, chemically. The brain becomes the experience. In order to break free from the stress cycle, we need to feed our brains and bodies with experiences of mastery, creativity, and joy. Our minds - the way we think about things - have tremendous power to help us rebuild and rewire our brains, power that we too often ignore or use self-destructively. But we can use that power constructively, to build autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and help ourselves step off the stress cycle forever.

Six Simple Steps to Help Fight Depression

- **Get help.** Don't be ashamed of needing medication, and don't give up until you find something that helps. And see a therapist.
- **Identify your feelings and moods.** Depression is a self-destructive effort to avoid feeling. Accept that emotions are natural and helpful. Learn that mood changes don't come "out of the blue" - they are always started by an event, a memory, a dream.
- **Challenge depressed thinking.** People with depression remember and blame themselves for bad events, while they forget about and give others credit for good events. Their low expectations mean they often don't prepare adequately and give up too easily. Worst, they think they are essentially different - damaged somehow - from other people. These are all learned habits of thought that can be unlearned. Pay attention to your assumptions and beliefs.
- **Let others know.** Depressives fear intimacy more than most people. We put on masks for the world, because we believe our true selves to be shameful, unworthy. But this belief is wrong. When we're with someone we can trust, sharing our thoughts and feelings - even if they seem unimportant - is good for us.
- **Take care of your self.** Learn to pay attention to messages from your body. Depressives abuse themselves by not eating right, not exercising, then expecting to work 12 hours straight. They will deny a minor ache or pain until they have an ulcer or a chronic back condition. Take time for moderate exercise, eat healthy but delicious meals, and allow yourself some pleasure in life.
- **Practice detachment.** We spend far too much time and effort trying to control things that aren't worth the struggle. Many things that worry us are really unimportant; we've just gotten over involved and lost our bearings. We may find that we're trying to change things that we realistically cannot change. Instead of battering your head against a brick wall, learn to walk away.

"PTSD is not about what is wrong with you. It is about what happened to you." Author unknown

6] [Engaging Women in Trauma-Informed Peer Support: A Guidebook](#). - By Andrea Blanch, Beth Filson & Darby Penney, with contributions by Cathy Cave.

The guide can be downloaded as a single file (8MB) or chapter by chapter. [*FYI – very honored to have played a small part in this helpful booklet – Chapter 8 scroll down to “Male Peer Supporters Working with Women”*]

This guide was created by the National Center on Trauma-Informed Care as a technical assistance document to help make trauma-informed peer support available to women who receive or have received services in behavioral health or other human service systems. It is designed as a resource for peer supporters in these or other settings who want to learn how to integrate trauma-informed principles into their relationships with the women they support or into the peer support groups of which they are members. The goal is to provide peer supporters - both male and female - with the understanding, tools, and resources needed to engage in culturally responsive, trauma-informed peer support relationships with women.

“We meet as equals and help one another, not because some are experts and others are learning, but because we all have needs and strengths.” The Twelve Steps and Traditions

7] Film Series: Family/Community Response to Mental Illnesses More Important than the 'Ailment'

[“Afflictions: Culture & Mental Illness in Indonesia”](#) is an award-winning compilation of six films about the lives of men, women and children living with schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, anti-social personality disorder and Tourette’s syndrome in Bali and Java. Directed by anthropologist and documentary filmmaker Dr. Robert Lemelson and released by Elemental Productions is screening as an official selection at conferences and festivals worldwide.

8] [The Adversity 2 Advocacy Alliance](#) To inspire, to educate, and to facilitate the process of turning personal challenges into service to others facing similar challenges.

Adversity comes in many shapes and sizes - from life-threatening illnesses, to mental health challenges, to countless other forms and degrees of personal hardship. It can center on one’s own struggles or those of another. And its duration can range from days to years.

While the means of addressing adversity are every bit as varied as its many forms, there is one approach that’s been shown, again and again, to amplify the benefits of all the rest.

It taps the wisdom of the age-old adage that we help ourselves by helping others, and it is supported by a growing body of empirical evidence. This approach is simply that of turning one’s personal challenges into service to others with similar challenges, and it’s available to anyone battling any form of adversity.

[Please note they are asking folks to **“Send us Your Stories”** – info posted at their site]

9] [Helping Others Helped Him Overcome OCD](#) | *Here & Now* - National Public Radio

For most of his life, San Francisco newscaster Jeff Bell has battled O.C.D. or obsessive compulsive disorder. At its worst, he told *Here & Now*'s Robin Young, we would literally replay hours of his program to make sure he got it all right.

[A really good interview with the founder of Adversity 2 Advocacy]

10] [Supporting the Name Change of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to Post Traumatic Stress Injury](#)

Joyce Boaz, the director and Dr. Frank Ochberg, the founder of the non profit organization, Gift From Within (GFW) are part of a campaign to gain support for a change in the name of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, dropping the "D" for "disorder" and substituting "I" for injury. Their goal is to end the stigma, promote honor, improve public understanding and save lives.

The rationale is clear on the site. GFW would appreciate endorsements if you agree with what the campaign is hoping to achieve.

The GFW website is also a treasure trove of educational resources for survivors of trauma and victimization and mental health practitioners.

*So open up your eyes, clean out your ears
Learn to listen, listen to learn, and then you'll hear
And then you can get past your stigma and fears
Of what has caused you to treat me so callously*

*I'm not a child to be patronized
With all of your fake smiles
I too have hopes, hopes and dreams
To be more than what you've labeled me - "Walk With Me" © Michael Skinner Music*

11] [Psychiatry Giant Sorry for Backing Gay 'Cure'](#) - Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, Apologizes for Study on Gay 'Cure' NY Times

The simple fact was that he had done something wrong, and at the end of a long and revolutionary career it didn't matter how often he'd been right, how powerful he once was, or what it would mean for his legacy.

Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, considered by some to be the father of modern psychiatry, lay awake at 4 o'clock on a recent morning knowing he had to do the one thing that comes least naturally to him.

Now here he was at his computer, ready to recant a study he had done himself, a poorly conceived 2003 investigation that supported the use of so-called reparative therapy to "cure" homosexuality for people strongly motivated to change.

“All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual.” - Albert Einstein

12] Peerlink National Technical Assistance Center Webinar

"Expanding the Hearing Voices Network" with Oryx Cohen and Daniel Hazen

Thursday, May 31, 2012 11:00am-12:00pm PST 2:00pm-3:00pm EST

Join Oryx Cohen and Daniel Hazen to learn about the history of the international Hearing Voices movement, what Hearing Voices groups have to offer and the increasing numbers of Hearing Voices groups in the United States. Hearing Voices groups incorporate a fundamental belief that there are many ways to understand the experience of hearing voices and other unusual or extreme experiences. The network is part of an international collaboration between professionals, people with lived experience, and their families to develop an alternative approach to coping with emotional distress that is empowering and useful to people, and does not start from the assumption that they have a chronic illness.

To register for this webinar, visit: <http://www.peerlinktac.org/events/>

13] What is Neurofeedback? [Boston Neurofeedback Center](#)

Increasing numbers of families and individuals are seeking non-invasive services which will help their loved ones. In the 1970's, EEG biofeedback, as it was called, was known to precious few government agencies such as NASA and universities such as UCLA School of Medicine where it was developed. Now, literally thousands of individuals worldwide are seeking this treatment. For many patients, treatment goals consist of maximizing their potential talents and abilities while minimizing troublesome side effects.

14] [PTSD - What is Neurofeedback - EEG Info Videos](#) – You Tube video 10 minutes

Two war veterans share how neurofeedback has helped them

15] [What is Neurofeedback? Dr. Claire Albright](#) You Tube video 3 minutes

Neurofeedback is being used for ADD, ADHD, Migraines and Anxiety. It also may be helpful in therapy for depression, chronic fatigue, and fibromyalgia.

Thanks & take care, Mike, Rachel, Lynn, Mary, Zsuzsi, Cynthia, & John

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

[The Surviving Spirit](#) - Healing the Heart Through the Creative Arts, Education & Advocacy - Hope, Healing & Help for Trauma, Abuse & Mental Health

[The Surviving Spirit Speakers' Bureau](#)

[The Surviving Spirit Facebook Page](#)

mike.skinner@survivingspirit.com 603-625-2136 38 River Ledge Drive, Goffstown, NH 03045

| [@MichaelSkinne11](#) Twitter

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