

# Men of all Moods

## Local advocates promote mental health beyond gender stereotypes

He's tough. He's strong. He is in control. Despite definitions of masculinity broadening over the past thirty years, some ideas about what men are "supposed to be like" – tough and in control – remain.

Gender stereotypes explain why even though men are as susceptible as women to mental health challenges, they are less likely to talk about it or to seek support. That's why this year, CMHA's Mental Health Week focuses on reaching out to men and boys.

Several years ago, David Zyla was experiencing some mental health-related challenges. At first, he resisted seeking help. Fortunately, Zyla overcame his initial reluctance and accessed counselling services through his workplace Employee Assistance Program.

*"... there is no shame in asking for help ..."*

"When I sat down with the counselor and they explained what they do, it felt like such a relief," says Zyla.

Now a workplace mental health advocate, Zyla explains that, for many men, "showing emotion is seen as a weakness, and there isn't a lot of openness and discussion around mental health or feelings."

Michael Jordan, who lives with bi-polar disorder, explains that although it can be difficult for men to talk about emotional struggles, "putting on a strong face, bottling it up, and ignoring it is not going to solve anything."

In fact, he says, not seeking help can make problems worse. Without treatment or strategies to deal with mental health problems, they can intensify. Reflecting on his own experience, Jordan says, "when problems do come back, they can be scarier than they were before."

Jordan grew up in a small, insular community where no one talked about mental health. When he moved to Winnipeg and accessed supports, he was amazed by the impact.

"My life is better than what it used to be. Having support helped more than I ever fathomed it could," he says.

"I felt for the longest time that my life was a tragedy and I don't think there is any reason that should have happened,"



David Zyla takes a workday break in the park

says Jordan. "So now I educate people."

Jordan is currently a student in psychiatric nursing, a member of CMHA-Winnipeg / Manitoba's board, and a speaker in youth mental health promotion.

The idea that asking for help is "unmanly" is a gender stereotype that needs to be thrown out, says Zyla.

"Everyone's mental health is important, including your own. To be the best person you can be, there is no shame in asking for help, reaching out, and talking about mental health."

*Learn more about men, boys, and mental health by downloading CMHA's Men's Mental Health Week factsheet, available at [mentalhealthweek.ca](http://mentalhealthweek.ca)*



Message from the

## Executive Director

During the week of May 4 to 10, CMHA is leading its 64<sup>th</sup> National Health Campaign known as Mental Health Week. This year we focus on the mental health and well-being of men and boys, and as always, we encourage people from all walks of life to learn, talk, reflect and engage others on issues related to mental health and mental illness.

This year's campaign is an especially important one as we are inviting Canadians to "Get loud for mental health." Why is it important to "get loud?"

There seems to be a greater awareness about mental health and mental illness. The conversation is started and getting stronger. And these conversations are slowly lifting the stigma associated with mental health issues.

However, we still have a long way to go. Every day at CMHA, citizens tell us of their experiences of discrimination and the challenges with getting the right help in a timely fashion. Mental health services continue to be underfunded.

We can all do our part to address these challenges. Let your voice be heard by making mental health an election issue with both provincial and federal elections on the horizon. Consider making a donation to CMHA-Winnipeg / Manitoba. Or host a fund-raising event to assist us in influencing policy, deliver services, and advance public education on mental health and mental illness.

— Marion Cooper

### Recovery is a process possible for everyone

Explore the Journey of Recovery Introductory workshop

June 9, 2015, 1 pm - 4 pm

Register at [winnipeg.cmha.ca](http://winnipeg.cmha.ca) or by calling 204-982-6100

### Man-Up Against Suicide Studio Central Gallery

Photo Exhibit, May 1 to 29

2nd Floor, 444 Kennedy Street

Tuesday - Friday 10 am - 6 pm, Saturday 11 am - 3 pm

### STAFF NEWS

CMHA-Winnipeg / Manitoba wishes volunteer Michelle Drad "best of luck" on her future endeavors. Michelle logged almost 70 volunteer hours since May 2013.

CMHA-Winnipeg welcomes Bhupinder Sidhu, Rehabilitation Worker.

Thanks and appreciation to students who completed their practicums at CMHA-Winnipeg:

- Breanne Borowski (Red River College, Disability and Community Support)
- Charlotte Ofori Adjei (University of Manitoba, Social Work)

## CMHA'S 64TH ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH WEEK MAY 4 - 10, 2015

### Mental Health Tips

What you can do for your mental health:

1. Be kind to yourself. Take time to relax.
2. Practice positive self-talk.
3. Talk about it.
4. Eat well and keep active.
5. Ask for help when you need it.

For more information on how to maintain your mental health or to donate to CMHA, visit [mentalhealthweek.ca](http://mentalhealthweek.ca)



#GETLOUD

### Are you phine or fine?

"Phine" is saying you're fine when you really are not.

GET LOUD because being phine is not fine.

### CMHA - Winnipeg / Manitoba Events

- |                  |                                                                                                      |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday, May 4    | MHW "GET LOUD" KICK OFF<br>Manitoba Hydro Place, Main Floor Gallery<br>360 Portage Ave, 12 pm - 2 pm |
| Monday to Friday | FINE OR PHINE? INFO BOOTH<br>Portage Place Mall<br>9 am - 4 pm                                       |
| Thursday, May 7  | GET LOUD NOON ROCK OUT<br>Portage Place Mall, Edmonton Court<br>12 pm - 1 pm                         |



# Opening Doors

## Making the case for working together

It took two-and-a-half years. (That's approximately 100 hours of meetings!) Plus a town hall with locals to explain (and pitch) the idea. It required the development of terms of reference, policy, and protocols. That may sound like a lot of time and effort for paperwork, but one year in, Project Northern Doorway's quarterly reports are showing upwards of a 30% drop in the use of emergency services.

"We all shared the same clients," explains CMHA-Thompson's Executive Director, Paulette Simkins, "but none of us could share information."

Project Northern Doorway provides housing for homeless clients who were frequent users of Thompson's shelter and emergency services. Facilitated by CMHA-Thompson, who also provides the case management for clients, stakeholders in the project include the RCMP, the Addictions Foundation and the area Emergency department. With client support to share information, Project stakeholders could see which people were using the most of their services. These clients were given priority for housing.

The success of the Project will not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the Housing First Model, an approach to addressing homelessness that, true to its name, prioritizes housing before other issues a homeless individual might face, such as mental health issues and addictions. Evidence stemming from the Mental Health Commission of Canada's cross-country Housing First project, *At-Home / Chez Soi*, have largely confirmed what some housing advocates had long argued: housing itself is a determinant of health.

A feature of the effort, says Simkins, is keeping stakeholder's communicating and identifying problems. "If clients are going to Emergency instead of the walk-in because of a barrier at the clinic, we can find out what that barrier is and fix it,"

Simkins says. The result is better use of available services.

The impact has been significant, too. Five homeless people died due to exposure and lack of shelter during the development of Project Northern Doorway. Since the Project has been in operation, the shelter hasn't had to turn anyone away and they have had less need to open their cold-weather facility.

"It means less people are homeless, we are not duplicating services, and all of our resources aren't stretched as much," says Simkins.

Christina Moody, Coordinator at Thompson's homeless shelter, says she has seen big changes in clients who moved from the shelter to an apartment in the community or to the apartment block that CMHA manages, including just how clients look. "The changes in everyone's appearance is very big. They can clean themselves, but they are also proud – to have somewhere to call home and to have a bed to sleep in."

In the Winnipeg region, CMHA's Community Housing with Supports program is working with nine other agencies to launch a similar project that coordinates information sharing access to services. Stephanie Skakun, Director of CMHA's program, says Doorways Community Collaboration is aimed at "reducing the daunting task homeless people experience trying to navigate the system". The project is expected to launch in the fall 2015.



CMHA-Thompson's Executive Director, Paulette Simkins, stands in front of the apartments they manage as partners in Project Northern Doorway

**Congratulations to CMHA–Central for the Grand Opening of House of Hope, a transitional housing complex, in Portage la Prairie in February.**

# In Case of Emergency ...

## Open self-care kit

What does chocolate, a crystal rabbit, and a scented candle have in common? For CMHA-Winnipeg Rehabilitation Worker, Arlene Mayes, they're what makes her emergency self-care kit.

"If you are having a down day and you've tried the other tools you have but they aren't working, an emergency self-care kit can offer a quick pick-me-up," says Arlene, "and everything is there in one box."

Arlene encourages all her participants to build a self-care kit. It's a way for people to take control over part of their lives and it can provide a sense of accomplishment. Plus, it encourages self-care, which is something everyone needs.

Barb, a participant in CMHA-Winnipeg's Rehabilitation and Recovery Service, says making an emergency self-care kit was both inspiring and helpful.

"If I'm having an anxiety attack, I know that I have an out," says Barb.

Her kit has candles too. But it also has gel pens, notebooks,

affirmative messages and Pop Rock candy – a favorite from Barb's childhood.

"Not everyone's care kit is going to be the same," explains Barb.

Making your own emergency self-care kit is easy, says Arlene, who suggests starting with a list of favorite things or favorite memories. "What would make you smile?" says Arlene, "Or, if you were in an actual emergency, what would you take with you?"

Photos, tea, and candles are common items, says Arlene. She's also seen kits with swatches of silk, sports articles, and toy cars. One participant made a kit filled with sand, rocks and driftwood.

Expect that your care kit will evolve over time. "If you put something in that works today, but doesn't later, take it out," advises Barb.

The most important thing about an emergency self-care kit is knowing it's ready when you need it. "When I open my box and utilize the things that are in it, it really does make me feel better," says Barb.



Arlene Mayes shows off her emergency self-care kit

## Champion

### mental health

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Canadian Mental Health Association  
Winnipeg / Manitoba

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**Felicitations** to Santé en français, who offered the first Mental Health First Aid class *en français* on February 23 and 24 to twenty students in Social Services of University of St. Boniface.

The course was taught by CMHA-Winnipeg staff, Tessa Blaikie, and part of a larger project promoting mental health in French communities funded by Health Canada, Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Société Santé en français (SSF).

For upcoming offerings of Mental Health First Aid in French, contact G. Nathalie Sombié at [nsombie@santeenfrancais.com](mailto:nsombie@santeenfrancais.com), 204-235-3524 or [santeenfrancais.com](http://santeenfrancais.com).

CMHA - Winnipeg / Manitoba

# AGM

Wednesday, June 17  
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm  
Norwood Hotel  
With guest speaker Nellie Kennedy

All are welcome  
RSVP by June 3 to [office@cmhawpg.mb.ca](mailto:office@cmhawpg.mb.ca) or by calling 204-982-6100

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