



Training Police in Crisis Intervention

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is working with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police in order to put in place national standards for training police officers to deal with the mentally ill. Police are often the first responders to someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The long waiting lists at mental health services mean the police have difficulties getting help for those in crisis. As a result of the lack of services, police need training on how to de-escalate the confrontation with those in crisis to make the situation safe for everyone involved. Too often, these confrontations have ended in tragedy.

While some police forces are not able to provide extra training for this problem, Ontario's York Regional Police Service and the Edmonton Police Service have made this issue a number one priority. Halifax and Hamilton Police are delivering forty hours of extra training to their officers.



They have also developed special teams, which include mental health workers, to respond to calls involving a mental health crisis.

By Tony Legere

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A Nature-Centered Approach to Mental Health

“I'd be willing to place a bet that among people who get out into the outdoors early and really love it, there are fewer depressed people.”

– E. O. Wilson, Naturist

Naturist Edward O. Wilson coined the term *biophilia* to describe our innate tendency to focus on nature. Our favourite living space, he suggests, shows our preference for natural settings: the beach, campgrounds, abundant acreage with trees, bushes, and flowers, and our enjoyment of animal companionship. Although more research needs to be conducted, there is some evidence to suggest that spending time outdoors has tremendous mental health benefits.

Studies have shown that surrounding oneself with nature can decrease anxiety and depression; and for children with ADHD, dyslexia, or other learning disabilities, the outdoor learning environment is especially well-suited to their educational needs. Author Richard Louv states in *Last Child in the Woods* that a lack of natural stimulation can cause what he calls nature-deficit disorder which could actually stunt healthy brain development. People who spend a lot of time indoors have narrow concerns and a limited perception of the world, while those who enjoy outdoor activities have a broader perspective because of their connection to nature.

Nature is a provider, not a taker, and is a much needed respite from the worries of life. It has everything we need to thrive spiritually and psychologically.

By Dena Walker



Source

Wilson, E. O. NOVA. Ed. Peter Tyson. April 3, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/conversation-ee-wilson.html>

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Clara's Big Ride

Clara Hughes is a six-time Canadian Olympic speed-skating and cycling medalist. Clara's Big Ride for Bell Let's Talk is a 110-day national bicycle tour through every province and territory, beginning in Toronto on March 14, 2014 and concluding in Ottawa on July 1, 2014. As part of Clara's Big Ride, Clara Hughes will cover 12,000 km and visit 95 communities along the way. Clara's Big Ride will help grow awareness, acceptance, and action to create a stigma-free Canada.

Update

Clara Hughes began her big ride in Toronto on March 14th and continued through Quebec and the Maritimes visiting Halifax and Truro. She travelled to Newfoundland in late April.

She has received support wherever she has travelled, especially in the many communities she has stopped at along her way.



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Allergies and Mental Health

The connection between allergies and mental illness has been evident since the 1950s when Dr. Lauretta Bender noted that children with schizophrenia frequently had celiac disease (severe gluten allergy).

By 1966, she had recorded twenty such cases from among two thousand children with schizophrenia. This means that one in a hundred people with schizophrenia may have a severe wheat allergy and that 1 in 100 people with schizophrenia may have celiac disease. According to www.Celiac.ca, 1 in 133 Canadians have celiac disease, showing those with schizophrenia having a higher risk of having celiac disease.

When someone has Celiac disease, their body attacks gluten, a protein found in certain grains such as wheat, barley and rye, by releasing antibodies. In response, gluten causes damage to the small intestine making it less likely to absorb nutrients from food. A growing number of people are gluten-sensitive, which means that while their digestive system isn't attacked, they are affected negatively in other ways. A blood test can determine celiac disease but only an elimination diet can reveal gluten sensitivity. In both cases, following a gluten-free diet is the only option.

While it's not known why those with schizophrenia may be more prone to celiac disease, it indicates that gluten allergy may affect brain chemistry. The role of food allergies in mental health is controversial and not all accept it. Since everyone is different, there are no hard rules regarding food sensitivities but it is recommended to find an understanding psychiatrist and dietitian who can work together toward a treatment plan that's good for your physical and mental health.

By Melinda Cadarette

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phine

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Saying you're fine
when you are not.

fine

~ definition (adjective)
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Alone in a Crowd: The Consequences of Chronic Loneliness

“Lonely, I’m Mr. Lonely
I have nobody for my own
I am so lonely, I’m Mr. Lonely
Wish I had someone to call on the phone”
- Bobby Vinton, 1962

When crooner Bobby Vinton cried “I have nobody for my own,” he revealed the reason why people can be lonely in a crowd. If they don’t have anyone special in that crowd, they may feel isolated. However, it is not short-term loneliness that affects our emotional well-being but rather “long-term, chronic loneliness that wears us down rather than loneliness that is ‘situational’ or passing” (The Lonely Society).

Social relationships are crucial for our well-being. If we don’t have enough of a social life, the consequences can be life threatening. We are affected mentally and physically. Author of *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*, John Cacioppo at the University of Chicago has discovered something that has long been suspected: loneliness can be detrimental to our health. Chronic loneliness affects stress hormones, immune function and cardiovascular function with “a cumulative effect that means being lonely or not is equivalent in impact to being a smoker or non-smoker.”

Cacioppo found that chronic loneliness leads to changes our behaviour, “increasing our chances of indulging in risky habits such as drug-taking.”

Being chronically lonely can also play a role in developing mental disorders such as anxiety and paranoia. Loneliness is also a known factor in suicide.

By Heather Frenette



What Is Loneliness?

Loneliness isn’t the same as being alone.

It’s a state that can include feelings of isolation, a lack of connectedness and a sense of not belonging.

Loneliness can be temporary or more persistent and can change the course of a person’s life.



Who’s Lonely?



One in five Canadians said they were lonely or dissatisfied with life



Older people are more likely to feel lonely than younger people



Women are more likely to feel lonely than men

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How loneliness can make you sick.

<http://www.cbc.ca/thesundayedition/features/2014/03/23/john-cacioppo-on-loneliness>.

Why loneliness is bad for your health.

<http://www.igsb.org/news/psychologist-john-cacioppo-explains-why-loneliness-is-bad-for-your-health>

The Lonely Society.

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/the-lonely-society/>

A Mental Health Perspective Mission Statement:

The purpose of this newsletter is to bring faith, hope and courage to members of the local mental health community of Kings County, Nova Scotia, as well as others who are involved with a mental, emotional or psychological condition.

Donations (cheque or money order) to support this newsletter and other important programs and services can be made to CMHA-Kings, 11 Opportunity Lane Suite 3 Box 10 Coldbrook NS B4R 0A5

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