



# Addiction Changed My Life

*The first part of a series about addiction, this article combines my personal experiences and some facts about addiction.*



I am recovering from schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, addiction, and alcoholism. Looking back, I believe my schizophrenia started when I was 14 years old in grade 9 in the early 70's. At the same time, I started abusing drugs and alcohol. The first time, I was out walking with a couple of friends. They pulled out a joint and asked me if I would like to try it. Without even asking what it was, I said sure. I smoked it. The only effect I experienced was dizziness. A few days later my friend asked if I would like to try it again. When I said, "Not much happened the last time," he told me it always works better the second time. So, I tried it again. This time it worked and I was right out of it, even hallucinating. *(Continued on page 2)*

**CMHA-Kings County Branch Annual General Meeting.  
Please see page 2 for details!**

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From that moment on I fell in love with drugs. A few days later the same friend introduced me to alcohol. I drank a few beers with him and another fellow he knew. I only had three or four but I got quite drunk. I fell in love with alcohol. I just loved the physical and mental feeling it gave me. I also believe my addiction to both drugs and alcohol started from the very moment I tried them. This was the first I ever heard of drugs. I was never educated about them. Sometimes I wonder: if I had known about drugs and the consequences of using them, would I have said no to my friend?

What developed first: my schizophrenia or my addiction? If I had never smoked marijuana would I have developed schizophrenia? Did smoking marijuana cause an early onset of schizophrenia?

Eighty-three studies have shown that limiting the use of marijuana can “delay or even prevent some forms of psychosis.” Scientists have discovered that using marijuana speeds up the development of schizophrenia making it occur three years sooner than in those who don’t use it. The Archives of General Psychiatry states that an earlier onset of schizophrenia of 2.7 years will have a negative impact on the person’s prognosis for life.

I believe that if I had never used drugs or alcohol that would have prevented some of the severe suffering I went through for many years. Drugs kill dreams *(to be continued)*.

By Tony Legere

References:

Melinda Burns. “Marijuana Use Hastens Onset of Schizophrenia.” *Pacific Standard*, 26 March 2011, 25 May 2013

<<http://www.psmag.com/health/marijuana-use-hastens-onset-of-schizophrenia-29515/>>

## USED COMPUTERS WANTED



CMHA-Kings will gratefully receive donations of computers and computer hardware (towers, keyboards, mouse, laptops, and flat monitors) to be refurbished and given to people in the community who are in need of them. Please contact our volunteer (and CMHA-Kings Board of Directors member) Morley Robinson at (902) 678-7563.



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**Canadian Mental Health Association**  
Kings County

The **Board of Directors** of the  
CMHA-Kings County Branch  
Cordially invites you to attend our  
**Annual General Meeting**

Guest speaker:  
**Trevor Moores, Supervisor,**  
CMHA-Kings “Shelter Me” program

**June 6, 2013**  
**7:00 p.m.**

Lower Hall of St. James’ Anglican Church,  
18 Prospect Avenue, Kentville  
Refreshments to follow  
RSVP to (902) 679-7464

## Review of the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act: Questions Raised

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, about twenty people gathered at the Annapolis Valley Health Auditorium in Coldbrook to discuss the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (July 2007). This review, mandated by the act itself, was led by retired Supreme Court Justice Gerard La Forest and Law Professor William Lahey. Laurel Taylor, a staff member with CMHA Kings County Branch, attended the meeting.

Taylor noted the tone of the meeting was positive and that many of the people who came were parents of individuals with severe mental health issues and who were in favour of the Act. She said these young people often lacked the self-awareness to recognize their illness. One of the mothers present commented on the dilemma inherent in the Act. When confronted by a situation where her daughter needed treatment but would not get it, the woman helped her get help through the Involuntary Treatment Act. She was aware that in doing so, she was not respecting her daughter's human rights but said it was the only way to save her life.

According to Taylor, questions were raised about Section 10.1.B of the Act which specifies "the person (must) be detained, restrained and observed in a psychiatric facility for not more than seventy-two hours." At the review, the general consensus was three days was not long enough for doctors to evaluate a patient's health. Many felt seven to twenty-one days would be more appropriate.

Family members are now part of the treatment. Concerns were expressed for people who don't have a family to help them. It was felt some mechanism should be put in place in the Act to ensure they get medical attention when they need it.

The Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia supports the Act. As Taylor pointed out, the Society does not advocate the use of involuntary commitment lightly but it has noticed some positive effects for the family life of those with schizophrenia.

The lack of rural support for people under a Community Treatment Order was identified. Taylor used the example of transportation to treatment, a problem in rural areas where distances are greater.

Rhonda Fraser, director of Chrysalis House, Laurel Taylor, CMHA Kings County Branch and Daisy Dwyer, Kingston-Greenwood Mental Health Association, all expressed the opinion that the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act made the difference between life and death to the people in Nova Scotia who are living with mental illness.

By Heather Frenette

**Hope**  
CHANGES EVERYTHING

## New Office for Annapolis Valley Chapter of Autism Nova Scotia

The Annapolis Valley Chapter of Autism Nova Scotia opened their new office at the Western Kings Memorial Health Centre in Berwick on April 25. Formerly known as the Valley Autism Support Team, this volunteer-run group helps local families with autism by providing resources and services including those for teens and adults.

As a non-profit group, the Chapter depends on fundraising and voluntary donations to keep it going. To date, their biggest fundraising event is the Walk the Walk for Autism, which will be held at Middleton on June 15. This walk is happening all over Nova Scotia to help support local autism groups. To register or make a donation, go to [www.walkthewalkforautism.ca](http://www.walkthewalkforautism.ca).

For more information on the Annapolis Valley Chapter of Autism Nova Scotia, e-mail Lori Smith at [vautism@gmail.com](mailto:vautism@gmail.com) or join their Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/103147019735512>.

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## Smart Organizing: De-Clutter your Way to Health

Public speaking, workplace deadlines, and tight schedules can induce anxiety in anyone. Sometimes anxiety affects every aspect of life: “. . . behavior, thoughts, emotions and physical health” (Understanding Anxiety Disorders). There are many types of anxiety disorders, but one thing is true across the board:

Learning to cope is key to managing the responsibilities of everyday life. A clean, organized home not only de-clutters the living space, but also frees the mind, allowing for a clear and better focused psyche and a feeling of being in control, thereby reducing anxiety and leading to greater productivity. Organization can be especially challenging for those with anxiety disorders, let alone staying on top of housecleaning.

The goal of smart organizing is to set up your home to make it easy to clean. According to Sandra Felton’s *Smart Organizing: Simple Strategies for Bringing Order to Your Home*, there are two essentials of housekeeping: keep surfaces bare and everything off the floor as much as possible.

Felton gives a list of easy to implement tips:

- De-clutter – dispose of everything you don’t use (throw unneeded papers away immediately and file what you need)
- Keep surfaces bare or put a cloth under items; it’s easier to dust when you don’t have to remove anything
- Use containers to store many small items for cleaning convenience (for instance, put all your cleaning products in one basket). It will only take a minute to pull it down and wipe the shelf
- Keep everything off the floor; it’s far easier to sweep and mop when there are no major preparations involved
  - Use shelves or shoe bags for shoes and keep out of season and dress shoes in storage, again off the floor
  - Attach brooms and mops to the wall

Don’t get discouraged if you can’t implement all of these ideas at once; perhaps address the issue that causes you the most anxiety first, or begin with one room and go from there. An excellent online resource for decluttering and changing patterns of thought is [www.flylady.net](http://www.flylady.net). The smallest change can have enormous benefits.

By Dena Walker

### References

Felton, Sandra. 2005. *Smart Organizing: Simple Strategies for Bringing Order to Your Home*. pp. 34-51,101-156. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell.  
Understanding Anxiety Disorders. (1993). *Canadian Mental Health Association*. [Brochure].



### 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 to support this newsletter and other important programs and services can be made to CMHA, 11 Opportunity Lane Suite 3 Box 10 Coldbrook NS B4R 0A5 (Cheque or money order will be accepted).

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