



Haelen House: A Chance to Heal

Haelen House is a new initiative for CMHA-Kings. “Haelen” is an old Saxon word meaning “healing; holy”, and its derivative is still in use today when we describe someone as being “hale and hearty” when they are strong and well.



This project came about as a result of our very successful *Shelter Me* housing program, and was funded by The Government of Canada’s *Homelessness Partnering Strategy for Rural Communities*, as administered by the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS). CMHA Kings was one of six agencies invited to apply for capital funding during the summer of 2013, we put together a strong proposal in partnership with the *Mental Health and Addictions Services* (MHAS) of *Annapolis Valley District Health Authority* (AVH). We were notified that we were successful in September 2013, and the funding came through on March 10, 2014, to be spent by March 31, 2014.

We purchased a duplex in Kentville, with a three bedroom upper apartment and a two bedroom lower apartment. The federal funding covered the purchase and closing costs, the installation of new windows and doors throughout, two heat pumps, electrical panel upgrades, and the removal and replacement of asbestos tile flooring. The *Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia* has contributed money to the purchase of appliances and some furnishings.

When we purchased the home, Brenda Main, Executive Director of CMHA-Kings, thought “This is a house where I would be happy to live”, and one tenant cried tears of relief when she moved from a cramped upper apartment in the midst of asphalt behind a pizza parlour, and started paying almost \$400 less per month for rent for a larger, warmer space that “felt like home” from the moment that she saw it.

Haelen House tenants are families where a parent or child lives with a severe and persistent mental illness. The affordable rent is set to the DCS housing allowance for income support, and includes power and water. The house is on a bus route, and is within walking distance of NSCC Kingstec, the elementary school, all the services of downtown Kentville, grocery stores, and the hospital. All tenants receive support from AVH MHAS Community Support Workers in order to progress toward their goals, as well as support from CMHA-Kings staff.

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Safe to Dance: Music, Kids and Mental Health Observations from a parent and teacher

A Kindermusik class gives permission to explore movement and sound, and a safe place to learn about self and others, where distractions are minimal.

Focusing on a few simple sounds and other sensory experiences at one time can reduce the stress of modern life, and becomes its own coping skill.

Classes offer parent and child a dedicated time for one-on-one attention. The "bonding hormone," oxytocin, helps learning by calming the central nervous system. Singing to and with a child offers many benefits - for both adult and child.

Singing to your child in a class builds community.

The children laugh as they bounce on grown-up knees, and any remnants of tension in the room evaporate.

The parents and grandparents begin to remember how to play. Some have never forgotten, but need time to lower their guard in a group. Many new parents anticipate the need to set boundaries.

Kindermusik strives to remove some of the usual boundaries around sitting quietly. There are moments for stillness, but free movement reduces the urge to manage stillness.

"Follow the child," you'll hear Kindermusik educators say, and they mean this literally and figuratively.

Although we use the word *play* to talk about making music, and suggest an open-ended process, we often focus more on imitation than exploration, and avoiding mistakes becomes a preoccupation. This has parallels for the rest of life.

Following a child's inspiration opens frontiers of communication and interaction beyond the classroom. When confident they are heard, children have the space for vibrant, resilient development without the pressure to imitate other children.

"I'm watching you because you have good ideas," I say to the children: expecting positive results instills them.

The thrill a bucket of shaker eggs offered to a small hand is a reminder that leadership and good mental health begin with little accomplishments.

By Anna-Maria Galante



Thanks to Anna-Maria Galante, guest writer this month on the benefits of Kindermusik.



Kindermusik is ...

movement
creativity
energy
FUN
bondless
stories
bonding
freedom
pretend play
self-determination
growth

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Coldbrook and Greenwood

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Controlled Exposure to Fears: Treatment for OCD

Being diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is jarring and confusing. No pill exists to make it go away but effective treatments are available to return you to a normal existence.



Two methods typically used to treat OCD are exposure therapy and cognitive therapy. I had exposure therapy (usually called "Exposure and Response Therapy" or "ERP" for short), which is essentially what it sounds like: in a controlled environment, you're exposed to your compulsions. Along with medication to help ease the anxiety, these are the tools at your disposal.

My OCD was mostly to do with germs. My therapist would have me touch something that was not "mine" in my home, like a fridge, or kitchen table. At first I definitely felt a mixture of skepticism and apprehension, but after a few times I was able to center myself and think more critically about what was actually "germ-y" and what I was blowing out of proportion.

OCD is definitely something you need to be vigilant about, and while I didn't find exposure therapy 'perfect' by any stretch of the imagination, it definitely got me back to a functioning state. Before the treatment, I was incredibly jittery; always aware of how close someone was to me and if they were even slightly close to touching me. I would also wash my hands multiple times, to the point of them becoming red and sore. Now I only wash if my hands are truly dirty. I'm still more wary than most about my personal space, but I'm not always thinking about it and can let things go most of the time.

Living with OCD is a constant learning process for you and those around you. Challenging your mind can be terrifying, but also very rewarding. Though far from easy, it can definitely be done.

By Udell Graves



**Welcome to Udell Graves, the newest
member of our writing team**

Reference:
http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/health_information/a_z_mental_health_and_addiction_information/obsessive_compulsive_disorder/obsessive_compulsive_disorder_information_guide/Pages/ocd_treatments.aspx

Update: "Shelter Me" Program



The funding for the successful CMHA Kings "Shelter Me" housing program has been renewed starting August 4, 2014. We would like to welcome "Shelter Me" staff members Val Billard and Candy O'Brien. Information about upcoming programs will follow.

To reach "Shelter Me" staff, call 902-679-7573 or email

sheltermesupervisor@cmhakings.ns.ca

Did You Know?



**CMHA-Kings has submitted
twenty-six applications
through the Skills
Development program for
clients to attend high school
and post-secondary
education**

**This program assists with
tuition, living expenses
books and travel**

**The deadline for applications to
the program was August 15, 2014**

**For more information call
Mark Eastman at (902) 679-7464
Or email admin@cmhakings.ns.ca**

Social Phobia

"I've spent most of my life and most of my friendships holding my breath and hoping that when people get close enough they won't leave, and fearing that it's a matter of time before they figure me out and go."

— *Shauna Niequist, [Bittersweet: Thoughts on Change, Grace, and Learning the Hard Way](#)*

Social phobia, or social anxiety disorder, involves feeling afraid of being embarrassed in front of others, either by speaking publicly or with an authority figure, or more general fears of public situations. The anxious person is very afraid of ridicule, and although s/he knows the fear is unreasonable, s/he does not know how to conquer it, the result being complete avoidance of the situation. Symptoms may become exacerbated by stressful situations and seem to disappear for a time for whatever reason; however, they usually return. Having a social phobia can interfere with every aspect of life such as work, school, and relationships.



Social anxiety is a fairly common experience among Canadians, with a lifetime prevalence rate of between 8% and 13%, and with a once-only occurrence rate of 6.7%. Typically, social anxiety shows up in childhood or the early teen years, when social skills are starting to develop. There is no known cause of social phobia but there does seem to be a connection to genetics as this tends to run in families. There is speculation that parenting styles may have an impact on whether or not children grow up feeling anxious, such as over-protecting them and not allowing them to take reasonable risks. This style prevents children from learning to cope with stress. Sometimes people have become anxious due to a trauma they have experienced. Women are more likely than men to have the disorder.

It is important for those with a social phobia to seek treatment as soon as possible to improve the chances of a less stressful life and preventing other disorders from developing. Medication is sometimes prescribed, along with Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT), the gradual exposure to anxiety-laden situations, and relaxation techniques. There are also groups available that can provide support.

By Dena Walker



Sources

Goodreads. "Quotes About Anxiety." 2014. Web. Retrieved from <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/anxiety>

Government of Canada. *Statistics Canada*. "Section B – Anxiety Disorders." "Part 3 – Soc Phobia." 2013. Web. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-619-m/2012004/sections/sectionb-eng.htm#>

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



Staff & Volunteers

Editor: Heather Frenette Writers: Udell Graves, Tony Legere, and Dena Walker

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