



Ask your Candidates

**Is mental health & addictions a priority with your
candidates in the upcoming provincial election?**

Now is the time to ask.

How will they:

- Support and enhance the Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions Strategy?
- Address the issue of underfunding of Mental Health & Addictions services?
- Ensure that government departments continue to work collaboratively to address the needs of those affected by mental illness and/or addictions?
- Address the housing and poverty crisis for those living with mental illness and/or addictions?

Mental health and addictions are important to us. How about you?

Don't forget to get out and vote!



Reprinted With thanks from the Mental Health Coalition of Nova Scotia

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Invisible Woman: Women, Aging and Self Image

Women are often defined and judged more harshly by their appearance and attractiveness, a feeling reinforced by a society in which magazine covers celebrate youthful feminine good looks and taut bodies often photoshopped to an unnatural degree.

-Tira Harpaz, Women Over Fifty are Invisible

I recall the girls being separated from the boys in my grade seven class at school to meet with health teachers. We were to learn about puberty and the changes our bodies would undergo as we approached adolescence. They gave us pink booklets with flowers on the cover produced by Kotex. It was all hush, hush and I can remember how all this personal information made my cheeks burn with embarrassment- or was it anticipation? It was a secret, something we girls were to keep to ourselves. It was something wonderful: I was becoming a woman.

Now after being married for forty-three years and after giving birth to two children, I am fighting a battle to maintain my femininity. Sometimes I wish there were a companion booklet on aging. It would have pages describing menopause, wrinkles and moisture loss in your skin and it would be produced by Poise instead of Kotex. It would explain the grooves which have suddenly appeared in my face in the shape of a permanent pout. My mother warned me of the hazards of pouting when I was just three. I should have listened to her.

No one warned me my looks would change dramatically as I got older. Current photographs reveal few traces of my former self and disclose instead a stranger. My younger self emerges in the mirror in the half-light of my bathroom. Articles about the aging process speak of an elderly woman becoming invisible. There is evidence that some natural body changes associated with aging may increase a person's risk of experiencing depression (American Psychological Association). A woman who has lived her life as someone attractive to men finds it shocking to learn men no longer look at her. 'Somehow, you just vanish. It's a cliché, but men grow in gravitas (dignity) as they get older, while women just disappear' (Kristen Scott Thomas, actor).

These negative stereotypes need to be combatted. They are hurtful and can lead to an early death. There is a concept called "positive aging" which may improve life for women who face old age. Positive aging is a term used to describe the process of maintaining a positive attitude, feeling good about yourself, keeping fit and healthy, and engaging fully in life as you age (American Psychology Society). People should be valued for who they are and what they have accomplished in their lifetime not for their appearance. Hopefully this healthy approach to aging will begin to turn things around and then we will see the cult of the invisible woman disappear.

By Heather Frenette



Aging and Depression. American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/heapcenter/aging-depression.aspx>

Australian Psychological Society. .Ageing positively. http://www.psychology.org.au/publications/tip_sheets/ageing/

I am becoming invisible like so many middle aged women. Laura Cox.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-2380539/Kristin-Scott-Thomas-I-invisible-like-middle-aged-women.html#ixzz2fSmbS2LP>

What it feels like to stop getting noticed. Valerie Monroe. <http://www.oprah.com/spirit/How-to-Deal-with-Aging-Valerie-Monroe-on-Getting-Older>

Women over fifty are invisible. Tira Harpaz.

http://www.salon.com/2013/04/05/wanna_know_what_its_like_to_disappear_try_being_a_woman_over_50_partner/

In The News

World Suicide Prevention Day, September 10, 2013, was declared to raise awareness of suicide and to cut down on the number of lives lost to suicide. Three thousand five hundred lives were taken by suicide in Canada in 2012. The Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, and the Taririt Kanani (an Inuit organization) are hoping to build a suicide prevention movement to help reduce suicide rates in Canada. Dammy Damstron-Albach, President of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention has stated, "Suicide prevention is everyone's business. Every Canadian should know what to notice and what to do." Canadians should learn to recognize the signs and how to practice suicide prevention to help reduce suicides.



In 2009, her husband committed suicide as a result of anxiety and depression. Conservative Senator Denise Batters now uses her position in Senate to talk publicly about mental health issues at a national level. Sen. Batters has stated, "Now that I'm a senator, it offers me a much wider scope to reach Canadians and speak about these important topics." She hopes that by speaking out it will encourage those suffering from anxiety, depression, and other problems to talk about their problems and seek help.



Oftentimes in Canada people battling a severe mental illness live on the street and spend a lot of time in the emergency room. The mentally ill make up a large percentage of those living on the street. Many mentally ill people cannot work and have relationship problems. As a result, they end up on the street. When a homeless person is in crisis, the police respond. They attempt to help the person by talking with them and bringing them to an emergency room where they are kept a few hours, then released back onto the street. This pattern is repeated over and over again. This is not right. We live in Canada where people have human rights. The Canadian government and all Canadians should do something to get the mentally ill off the streets and into a warm place to live.

By Tony Legere

References:

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Andrea Hill, Postmedia News. "Senate Snapshots: Saskatchewan Sen. Denise Batters Talks Mental Health on a National Stage." *canada.com*. 4 September 2013. 14 September 2013. <<http://www.canada.com/health/Senate+snapshots+Saskatchewan+Denise+Batters+talks+mental+health+national+stage/8870295/story.html>>
Mariah Griffin-Angus, Human Rights Activist. "The Streets are no Place for the Mentally Ill." *Huffpost Living Canada The Blog*. 4 September 2013. 14 September 2013. <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/mariah-griffinangus/mentally-ill-homeless_b_3869618.html>

Mental Health Community Festival of Hope

A Celebration of Health, Healing and
Happiness

8pm, October 6, 2013

LOCATION: OLYMPIC HALL, 2304
HUNTER STREET, HALIFAX
(Cunard & Hunter, near Windsor
Street)

Free Everyone is welcome



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A Long Way Home: Kate MacEachern's Walk for Mental Health

Kate MacEachern is on a mission. The Antigonish County native is trying to walk all the way to Ottawa, an estimated forty-five day trek, to raise awareness of mental illness in soldiers and first responders. Her walk is expected to take an average of forty kilometres a day with a total of 1,864 kilometres.

The former military tank driver was inspired to do the walk last year when she raised twenty thousand dollars for the **Soldier On Fund** which supports retired military personnel with a chronic illness or injury.



“I’ve seen too many friends and families of friends just hang on by their fingernails dealing with this stuff,” said MacEachern. “Post-traumatic stress disorder is never going to go away but we can change how we deal with it by bringing the issue out into the open.”

One of her drivers for the walk, Kevin Berry, says: “We're moving away from the 'suck it up' attitude. It's that attitude that we need to break down so that people can come forward and talk about their problems.” Both MacEachern and Berry are taking part in the walk to raise money for Military Minds, a charity organization that supports veterans with mental health issues. Berry was a former soldier who was treated in 2010 for post-traumatic stress disorder and alcoholism.

By Melinda Cadarette

Source: Beswick, A. 5 September 2013. The Chronicle Herald. “Walking For Mental Health.” Retrieved from <http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1152364-walking-for-mental-health>



8th Annual Tools for Life Conference

October 25, 2013

Horton High School, Greenwich, Nova Scotia
For more information go to www.tools4life.ca

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

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