

# The Notepad



Supporting families dealing with serious mental illness

January 2015, No. 137

## Public Education Lecture Series *Dialectical Behavioral Therapy*



### Featuring:

**Dr. John Wagner, PhD**  
Clinical Psychologist and Director,  
DBT Centre, Vancouver

**Wednesday, January 28, 2014**  
**Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**Free of charge; no registration required.**

### What is Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, and How Does It Work?

**F**or adults and adolescents having difficulty coping with intense emotions and other complex problems, including suicidality, self-harm, and addiction, dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) can provide helpful self-management skills. This evidence-based approach to handling borderline personality disorder, depression, anxiety, and other disorders, focuses on mindfulness, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness and distress tolerance skills.

Dr. John Wagner, a registered psychologist in B.C. and director of the DBT Centre of Vancouver, is well-equipped to answer audience questions at the NSSS Public Education Lecture Series, January 28, at the Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium. Not only does Dr. Wagner use DBT and other behavioral approaches with clients, but he did post-doctoral work with the original developer of DBT, Dr. Marsha Linehan, at the University of Washington.

Dr. Wagner will explain more about DBT, a modified form of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and how it can help people change harmful patterns of behavior. DBT teaches people the triggers that lead to their reactions and helps assess which coping skills to apply to stop the undesired behavior.

In his own practice, Dr. Wagner assists people through weekly individual and group therapy sessions and by telephone consultation. For further information, please visit Dr. Wagner's website ([councellingbc.com/website/383](http://councellingbc.com/website/383)). □

**Save the date: The NSSS Annual General Meeting will be held Wednesday, March 25, 2015. Please see more details inside.**



## Welcome

party, organize lectures, sit on the board, or fundraise to keep the Society going.

A core of 13 teachers is delivering the Family-to-Family course this year, in five different locations. Ten “new” teachers, who were trained in early January, will join them. Thank you to Eileen Callanan, a champion volunteer from Terrace and Nanaimo, for helping us build our team. A team of family members, along with persons with an illness, will give Partnership presentations to over 800 students in high schools in the Sea-to-Sky and on the North Shore this year. These talks raise awareness and sow the seeds for empathy and earlier treatment in the future. Family members facilitate support groups and provide critical one-on-one support. We advocate in small ways on a daily basis, but also in much

It is a great tribute to the initiative, perseverance, courage and dedication of many people, most notably, of course, Marguerite and Herschel Hardin, that the Family Support Centre of the North Shore Schizophrenia Society is approaching its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These “many people” over all those years have all been volunteers – family members who walk in parades, work at events, help at the Christmas

larger ways, such as the Hardins’ role in getting important, fundamental changes made in the BC Mental Health Act.

We are keenly looking forward to new initiatives, such as working with first responders in dealing with the mentally ill and delivering information to families, or participating in the development of an education program for parents of school age youth. We could not possibly contemplate doing these projects without volunteers to carry them through.

The many years of delivering our core programs and our efforts at collaborating with other agencies are gaining recognition and praise. Other agencies are increasingly recognizing the value of what families have to offer in the treatment of the mentally ill. Other agencies are directing people our way.

This is very exciting for us, because there are so many families that need our help and there is so much good work that we could do. It also means that we depend on the capacity in our membership to carry this momentum forward. We cannot do this without you.

Please join us at the AGM in March so that we can acknowledge your valuable contribution, and celebrate our twenty years of helping families. Because of you, this society is thriving. □

**Cheryl Zipper**  
**NSSS President**



### **Eileen Callanan, of Nanaimo, Shares Her Story, as She Retires as a Family-to-Family Teacher-Trainer**

In 1989, my beautiful son developed a mental illness and eventually received a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder. Although I have a Bachelor of Nursing degree, I had no idea what to do. The trauma of the illness affected my whole family.

I began attending a support group held by the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society and later became a board member for the organization. Along the way, I

learned of an education program designed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Family-to-Family. I brought in trainers to teach families to provide the program in Terrace, B.C., where I lived. It is clear to me that the only way to make change and help people is through education, education, education.

In 2007, my son died by suicide. I continued to volunteer and reach out to families, and in 2009, received the Schizophrenia Society of Canada’s Bill Jefferies Award.

The Family-to-Family teacher-training workshop held by NSSS in early January was my last session. It has been my privilege to have journeyed with many people through their traumatic experiences of mental illness in their families, to a place of knowledge, self-care, and advocacy. Thank you to all I have met. □

## Psychiatrist Receives 2014 NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award



NSSS President Cheryl Zipper presents the 2014 award to Dr. Steve Mathias

**N**SSS held a reception on Tuesday, December 16, in honour of Dr. Steve Mathias, the winner of the second-annual *NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award*. The award is presented annually to a healthcare or service provider who demonstrates exceptional responsiveness to families and includes family members as part of their ill relative's treatment team.

Dr. Mathias was nominated by several families, all of whom agreed their lives would not have been the same without his care and treatment of their ill relative. As one family member wrote:

*These past several years of my son's illness Dr. Mathias has been a rock for our family. From the beginning we were fully included in the treatment process. He has helped us to better understand my son's illness and how to deal with it. And he has always encouraged us to work together as a family to support my son with love and understanding.*

Dr. Mathias co-founded the Inner City Youth Mental Health Program, in Vancouver, a collaborative initiative targeting that city's estimated 700 street youth. Because of the challenges in reaching ill, addicted, and homeless youth, the team has established partnerships with shelters and housing sites in the downtown core. Dr. Mathias hopes to expand this program in the future to reach even more at-risk youth, and develop a model that will then function province wide.

Nominations for the NSSS Responsiveness to Families Award are accepted year-round from family members. More information on the award is available on our website, [northshoreschizophrenia.org/nominations.htm](http://northshoreschizophrenia.org/nominations.htm). To learn more about the importance of family involvement, please visit [northshoreschizophrenia.org/involvement.htm](http://northshoreschizophrenia.org/involvement.htm). □

### Family Support Centre

Personal support and information on major mental illnesses – schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders

205 - 1865 Marine Drive  
West Vancouver BC V7V 1J7

Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
or by appointment

North Shore/Lower Mainland: 604-926-0856  
Sea to Sky: 604-849-2252

[www.northshoreschizophrenia.org](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org)

[info@northshoreschizophrenia.org](mailto:info@northshoreschizophrenia.org)

Facebook: [northshore.schizophrenia](https://www.facebook.com/northshore.schizophrenia)

Twitter: @NSSSoc

### Monthly Support Meetings

Come share your questions, concerns, and experiences with family members. Support group meetings for family members and close friends of those with mental illness are held each month in:

- West Vancouver (third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m.)
- Tri-Cities (second Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.)
- Squamish (second Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.)
- Whistler (third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m.)

To register for any of the groups, call 604-926-0856, or for Whistler and Squamish, call toll-free 1-888-681-1999.

## Peer-Support Worker Shares Her Story of Living with Mental Illness



**D**ebbie Sesula knows from personal experience how traumatic serious mental illness can be, and how discrimination can arise from having a diagnosis. Now a tireless peer-support worker and advocate, Debbie shared her story as part of the NSSS Public Education

Lecture Series, Wednesday, November 26, at Lions Gate Hospital.

Debbie was 27, in her last year studying psychology at university, when she was hit by a debilitating depression. After suffering her first panic attack, she was placed on medication, but it didn't help. Though she was able to finish her degree, the depression deepened, leading to multiple suicide attempts. She was hospitalized, received shock treatment, and then was released, too soon. Her depression turned into psychosis. She disconnected from reality, hearing voices instructing her to destroy herself. Another round of hospitalization led to a stay in a residential facility with 24-hour care. She credits this stay as allowing her proper time to heal. As

she recovered, she participated in peer-run programs and education courses, and was soon determined not to let mental illness control her life. The drive to get well eventually evolved into a passion to help others in similar situations, to reach out and encourage those with an illness—and by extension, their families - not to give up.

“Being able to connect with my peers at that time was invaluable,” Debbie says. She began sharing her story in local high schools in partnership programs. Students listened and asked meaningful questions, and this gave her the confidence to take peer-support training and start working with others in need.

Debbie has received a number of diagnoses over the years, the last being bipolar disorder. With treatment, medication, and determination, she completed a Masters degree and now wears many hats in the peer-support community—program coordinator for North Shore Adult Community Mental Health Services Peer Support Group, education coordinator for the Pacific Bipolar Foundation and Canadian Mental Health Association, and a member of Peer Support Accreditation and Certification Canada's Certification Committee. She has also received numerous awards along the way, including CMHA's Consumer Involvement Award, Coast Mental Health's Courage to Come Back Award, and the Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Resiliency Award.

“There is always hope,” she says. □

## ShareDDB Auction Raises Money in Support of NSSS



**D**DB Canada (Vancouver), a leading advertising and marketing agency, held its annual fundraising auction, *ShareDDB*, on November 19, 2014, in support of two charities selected by employees. NSSS and the James Lee Foundation split the total proceeds raised that evening, with each organization receiving \$6,400.

DDB staff members contribute items to the silent auction, including photography, paintings, handmade jewelry, rock-climbing lessons, sailing adventures, catered gourmet dinners, and more.

Presenting the cheque to NSSS President Cheryl Zipper is Larry Saunders, executive VP and managing director, DDB Canada (Vancouver). □

Happy 20th Birthday  
Family Support Centre!



#### NSSS Family Support Centre is 20 Years Old



*Marguerite Hardin,,  
founder of the  
Family Support  
Centre*

If you go to the NSSS website, [www.northshoreschizophrenia.org](http://www.northshoreschizophrenia.org), and click on the Family Support Centre link, you'll be invited to "Drop by the Family Support Centre and meet with one of our volunteers, and suddenly you are no longer alone as you try to come to grips with having a family member or friend suffering from a serious mental illness. The Centre is the hub of our support activities, with one-on-one peer support; a wide range of pamphlets, books, magazines, videos, and other

materials in our library; practical information of particular interest to families of those with serious mental illness; and, above all, a friendly space where you can sit down and share your feelings with others who can empathize because they have been through similar experiences."

April 2015 marks the 20th year the Family Support Centre has been supporting families on the North Shore, the Sea to Sky corridor, and into Vancouver and beyond.

Please help us celebrate the many members and volunteers who help keep the Centre running year after year. Join us at our AGM, Wednesday, March 25, at 7:00 p.m., in the Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium.

We look forward to seeing you. □

**PLEASE JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE 20 YEARS SERVING FAMILIES  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 7- 9:00 P.M., LIONS GATE HOSPITAL**

- 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. **Savory snacks and social**
- 7:30 - 8:00 p.m. **Presentations and cake**
- 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. **Annual General Meeting**

## Notes from the Family Support Centre

### Estate Planning Workshop to Be Held February 28



Mark your calendar for the upcoming ***Estate Planning, Discretionary Trusts, and Strategic Giving Workshop***, Saturday, February 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The location is to be announced.

Led by Bill Murdock, a financial security advisor who himself has an ill relative, the workshop is designed for families of those with a mental illness. Bill will explain

how to make the most of your options to help secure the financial future of your loved one, and also ensure future caregivers have the support they need.

#### Topics covered include:

- Making a will
- Fund provision and management
- RDSPs
- Discretionary trusts
- Reducing tax burden

The workshop is offered **free of charge**. To register, please call the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856.

### NSSS Presents at NS Inter-Agency Network Meeting

NSSS board member Steve Watt gave a well-received lunchtime presentation to 30 attendees at the North Shore Inter-Agency Network meeting, January 8. NSSS was praised for its work in the community, with many of the agencies in attendance, including the West Vancouver Police Victim Services, already directing families to NSSS for support. Steve provided a family's perspective on navigating the system and supporting an ill relative.



### Family-to-Family Teacher Training Session

Ten family-member volunteers from four regions—North Shore, Sunshine Coast, Vancouver, and Tri-Cities—took part in a weekend Family-to-Family teacher-training workshop, January 9-11, at the Family Support Centre, West Vancouver. Eileen Callanan and Cheryl Zipper led the workshop, as certified NAMI teacher-trainers. A special thanks to the new Family-to-Family teachers: Mark Thomas, Kim Thomas, Donna Motzer, Shirley Chan, Edina Irwin, Arlene Kennedy, Stephanie Briggs, Cindy Beatch, Christine Holmquist, and Janet Mowatt.

Family-to-Family will begin on the North Shore on Tuesday, January 27, and in Vancouver, Tri-Cities, and Squamish on Tuesday, February 10. A class will start in Sechelt in April. To register, please call the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856.



### Families Helping Families

Thank you to our many friends and supporters. Your donations and membership are appreciated.

Pictured is our volunteer team of Christmas party gift wrappers - Patti Lintick, Mandy O'Brien, Sheilah Best, and Philip Wright. For more on this year's party, please see the back page.

The North Shore Schizophrenia Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Province of British Columbia; City of North Vancouver; District of North Vancouver; District of West Vancouver; Resort Municipality of Whistler; Seymour Golf and Country Club; Lynn Valley, Ambleside Tiddlycove, Mt. Seymour, and Capilano Lions Clubs; Vancouver Foundation; West Vancouver Community Foundation, Squamish Community Foundation, Community Foundation of Whistler; North Shore Rotary Clubs; Lynn Valley Legion; Jill Ackhurst Foundation; Fulmer Capital Partners; Margitta's Flowers; Terra International Food; and our many other generous donors.

## Notes from Sea to Sky



Marguerite Hardin, support coordinator (right); Sue Puchmayr, Squamish support group co-facilitator (centre); and Nancy Ford, NSSS executive director (left),

### Innovations in Mental Health

On December 8, executive director Nancy Ford, was a guest panelist at the *Innovations in Mental Health* workshop. Marguerite Hardin, Support Coordinator for NSSS and Sue Puchmayr, Squamish Support Group co-facilitator joined Nancy for *Bringing it all together: Planning for mentally healthier communities in Sea to Sky*, a project designed to build capacity in individuals, agencies, and communities to advance the mental health and well-being of adults and families. The project's focus is to shape next steps in a multi-year, corridor-wise plan to strengthen mental health. Other attendees were senior executives, elected officials, and philanthropic partners and content experts from outside of Sea to Sky. Gerrit Clements, JD, practicing health lawyer and professor, spoke on the topic of confidentiality, disclosure of information, and ethical considerations in the context of the B.C. Mental Health Act. MLA Jordan Sturdy and Squamish Councillor Susan Chapelle also attended.

### Jill Ackhurst Dinner and Volunteer Expo

Whistler's NSSS outreach coordinator, Chris Dickinson, set up a booth at the Jill Ackhurst Dinner and Volunteer Expo Fair, November 21, and connected with several new residents and young adults. Since diseases such as schizophrenia are typically diagnosed between the ages

of 16-25, the event provided an opportunity to engage with the community. A special thank-you to the Jill Ackhurst Foundation as a financial supporter in the Sea to Sky corridor.

### Innovations for Mental Health

In late November, *Innovations for Mental Health* hosted a workshop for human resources professionals. Chris attended as one of the panelists and provided insight on current barriers to accessing service in Whistler.

### General Practices Service Committee

On December 3, NSSS families were represented at the General Practices Service Committee 'GP for Me' conference in Whistler. The seminar's aim was to address current shortages and 'gaps in service' in the community in regard to the provision of doctors, hospitals, and related medical amenities. According to the data presented at the conference, the demand for services related to mental illness is increasing and requires further expansion to help meet the needs of current and future generations.

### Peer-Educators Class Presentation

On December 10, Chris made a presentation at Whistler Community Services Society to the 2015 Peer-Educator Class. The Peer-Educators are a group of young adults that presently live and work in Whistler. These individuals are provided with training in the social services that exist in the community and corridor. The presentation helped generate awareness on the topic of mental illness as well as highlight what is currently being done by the NSSS in Whistler and Squamish.

### Sea to Sky Support Groups

If you are a family member coping with an ill relative's mental illness and would like to attend either the Squamish or Whistler support group, please contact Chris Dickenson at 1-888-681-1999 or the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856.

The Whistler support group has outgrown its current location, with many thanks to Lynn Spark for hosting this group in her home. New location to be announced.



## NSSS Celebrates Christmas 2014!

A jolly time was had by all at the 2014 NSSS Christmas Banquet, Saturday, December 6, at St. David's United Church, West Vancouver. Over 120 guests enjoyed a roast beef dinner by Cheers catering, a wonderful performance by Dominique Hogan and her choir, including special guest Marcus Mosely, and a visit from Santa and his beloved Mrs. Claus.

This event could not have been such a success without the help of our dedicated members, friends, and volunteers. NSSS thanks everyone who shopped and wrapped gifts, drove guests, decorated the hall, did kitchen prep, served food, took photos, distributed gifts, and helped with clean-up.

Thank you to John Nixon for the top photo, and also thank you to Terra International Food for the donation of coffee and tea.

We look forward to seeing everyone in 2015.

