

The Notepad



Supporting families dealing with serious mental illness

May 2015, No. 139

Public Education Lecture Series

Brain Plasticity and Everyday Life



Featuring:

Dr. Bill Honer

**Head, UBC Department of Psychiatry
Director, UBC Institute of Mental Health
Jack Bell Chair in Schizophrenia**

Wednesday, May 27, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium

Free to attend; no registration required

What is Brain Plasticity?

In the past two decades, overwhelming research has revealed that the brain never stops changing and adjusting. This capacity is called plasticity. In the case of brain illness or injury, plasticity plays a fundamental role in a person's recovery.

To explain more about brain plasticity, Dr. William Honer, head of UBC's Department of Psychiatry, will speak on Wednesday, May 27, at 7:30 p.m., in the Lions Gate Hospital Auditorium.

Recently Dr. Honer and his team of researchers have been studying the effects that aerobic exercise and yoga have on the cognitive functioning and clinical symptoms of female schizophrenia patients with early psychosis. Brain scans before and after exercise shows an enlargement of the hippocampus, suggesting brain tissues could regenerate as a result of this intervention, rather than be lost to the illness.

Dr. Honer's research interests include mechanisms of illness in schizophrenia, brain aging, and complex co-occurring illnesses such as psychosis, addiction, and infectious disease. He is the author of more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and has authored the assessment section of the *Canadian Clinical Practice Guidelines for Schizophrenia*.

He received his medical degree from Queen's University and completed specialty training in psychiatry at Vancouver General Hospital and the New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University. This was followed by research training in neuropathology and genetics at Columbia University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.

We hope you'll join us for this informative evening.

Supported by





Greetings

I step into the role of president of North Shore Schizophrenia Society with some trepidation. After all, I am following in the footsteps of Cheryl Zipper, who led with strength, grace, and eloquence. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cheryl for the sound leadership and guidance she has provided the Society during the past two years as president, and I am pleased to say that Cheryl remains on the

Board as vice-president. Her sound counsel is most welcome.

Additionally, we have four new board members: Janice Lilley, Sue Puchmayr, Hedy Theed, and Joanna Watt. I commend them for their volunteer commitment and look forward to working with each of them in the coming year (more on page 4).

We held our AGM on March 25, and I would like to thank those who came out to listen, participate, and support the Society (see following page). In addition to approving the terms for existing and new board members, the number of board members was raised from nine to ten.

In conjunction with the AGM, we held a celebration for the 20th anniversary of the Family Support Centre. During the festivities several members voiced their sincere thanks and appreciation for the work and dedication of Marguerite Hardin, the Family Support Centre's founder. Over the years, Marguerite has helped hundreds of individuals and families as they have struggled to both understand and to help their loved one suffering from serious mental illness.

The Society is in a period of transition. You may ask: What does that mean, *transition*? Will everything change? Well, the short answer to that is, *no*. However, change is inevitable, to some degree, and many will say that change is the only constant. We have a new Board, with seven of the ten members in their first or second

year of service, including myself. With new faces come new thoughts, questions, and ideas. The Board's role includes oversight and defining the future direction of the Society. That includes reviewing *what we do* and *how we do it*; and asking, *can we do better?*

Ultimately, it is about maintaining and improving the services and programs we provide to our members and to others in need.

We are entering our parade season, and the topic generated a healthy discussion among Board members. In past years we have participated in the *West Vancouver Community Day* parade and the North Shore's *Canada Day* parade, as well as our own *Walk The World* event. As an example of change, the Board has decided to participate in the *Canada Day* and the *West Vancouver Community Day* parades, and to forego this year's *Walk The World*. Additionally, the Board has requested our Events Committee review *Walk The World* for its effectiveness in raising the Society's awareness with the public, with a view to reshaping it, as well as identifying other initiatives.

For those of you available to represent the Society at one or both of the parades noted above, welcome! Please advise the staff at the Family Support Centre by email or phone.

Our volunteers are our strength and it is through them we deliver the vast majority of our programs and services. My personal thanks to each and every volunteer, past and present, for their involvement. Also, my sincere thanks to our caring and committed executive director, Nancy Ford, and Family Support Centre staff, Melanie Scott and Susanna Junnikkala; to Halina Haboosheh for her accounting skills; and to our Whistler outreach coordinator, Chris Dickinson.

I look forward to the year ahead and specifically to explore how we can enhance our programs and services to better serve those individuals and families who seek our help, and to raise our profile with the general public. If people know *who we are* and what *we do*, they will be able to reach out to us in a time of need.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Watt', written in a cursive style.

**Steve Watt,
NSSS President**

Annual General Meeting Celebrates 20 Years of the Family Support Centre



Cheryl Zipper, NSSF Vice-President honours Herschel Hardin, advocacy coordinator; photo credit: John Nixon

This year's Annual General Meeting, held Wednesday, March 25, was a special event. In honour of the Family Support Centre's 20 years of operation on the North Shore, NSSF volunteers, members, and staff gathered to celebrate the Centre's founder and Support Coordinator, Marguerite Hardin, and Advocacy Coordinator Herschel Hardin.

Out-going NSSF President Cheryl Zipper highlighted many of the past year's achievements—the

expanded Family-to-Family education program, now offered in four locations; the growing Partnership Program in schools, where NSSF spoke to over 900 students; new support groups in Tri-Cities and Whistler; and increased community engagement with other agencies and partners. Cheryl also thanked staff for their dedication and hard work.

NSSF welcomed four new board members (please see page 4). Those whose board terms ended are Byron Giraud and Herschel Hardin.

Once the main business concluded, NSSF members Rosemary Wagner and Margitta Schultz shared their stories, having received support, guidance, and understanding from Marguerite, through her dedicated support work. Margitta gave Marguerite a colourful floral bouquet, and Rosemary presented the Hardins with a gift certificate to Bravo Cucina Restaurant, as a nod to their trip to Italy in 2012.

The evening concluded with refreshments and a slideshow documenting two decades of awareness and outreach events organized by NSSF. The Centre is not only a focal point for all NSSF activities, but an inviting physical space for families to meet and receive personal support and information whenever needed.

Thank you to all members and volunteers, and to all who joined in the celebration.



Margitta Schulz thanks Family Support Centre founder and support coordinator Marguerite Hardin; photo credit: John Nixon

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
info@northshoreschizophrenia.org
Facebook: northshore.schizophrenia
Twitter: @NSSSoc

Monthly Support Meetings

Come share your questions, concerns, and experiences with family members.

Support group meetings are held each month in West Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler, and Tri-Cities for family members and close friends of people who have serious mental illnesses.

For information, please call 604-926-0856. For Whistler, please contact Chris at 604-966-7334.

Your Contribution

Thank you to our many friends and supporters. We appreciate your donations and membership. Tax receipts will be issued for all contributions.

Notes from the Family Support Centre

Meet the New NSSS Board Members:



Hedy Theed first connected with NSSS in 2004 when she took the Family-to-Family course. Educating herself was key to caring for her son, initially diagnosed with schizophrenia and a concurrent disorder, and later schizoaffective disorder. Hedy appeared in two NSSS videos produced for the Circle of Strength fundraiser and shared her story in person at the 2010 event. She has also given talks to psychiatric staff at St. Paul's Hospital in 2006 and 2013. For almost a decade, Hedy advocated for stable, permanent housing for her son, which he has finally obtained.



Joanna Watt first learned of NSSS after her brother-in-law was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2011. She has seen first-hand how NSSS supports families confronting serious mental illness. Joanna is a Chartered Accountant with lululemon athletica inc. Previously, she held a volunteer position on the Board of the organizing committee for the 2014 Special Olympics Canada Summer Games, held in Vancouver. She lives in North Vancouver with her husband, Morgan, and baby son, Logan, and is looking forward to supporting the Society as treasurer.



Sue Puchmayr has been an active NSSS member since 2006, when her daughter was diagnosed with and treated for schizophrenia. She and her husband drove from Squamish to the North Shore every week to attend Family-to-Family. She has since been a Family-to-

Family teacher and has done one-on-one training and support. She currently facilitates the Squamish support group. "Taking the course and receiving support from Marguerite was by far the best thing my family could have done to help ourselves," says Sue. "It's been a long journey, and NSSS has greatly benefitted us."



Janice Lilley was first introduced to the NSSS eight years ago when looking for help for her ill sister. "Through the Family to Family course I gained the knowledge, understanding, and strength to change the downward trajectory of events," Janice says. "The darkest days are behind us now. Our lives have improved and my sister's life was saved." Janice has taught Family-to-Family many times since then and is looking forward to serving a second term on the board. An architect by profession, she enjoys the creativity, complexities, and teamwork, and delivering successful results.

Notes from the Sea to Sky

- NSSS received a Community Enrichment Grant from the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW). This funding will help build capacity in the Corridor and aid in offering more services to families looking for support.
- The Whistler Family Support Group has a new, permanent location for monthly meetings, in the Whistler Public Library's Fireside Room. To register, please call 604-926-0856 or 604-966-7334.
- Dr. Kristin Buhr, from the North Shore Stress and Anxiety Clinic, made a presentation, April 21, to Sea to Sky residents and service providers on anxiety in youth. The event was made possible through facilitator Chris-

tine Buttкус of Innovations in Mental Health. Chris Dickinson promoted awareness of the NSSS and its services, including the Whistler and Squamish Family Support Groups.

- contributed by *Chris Dickinson, Whistler Outreach Coordinator*

NSSS would like to congratulate Chris Dickinson, a recipient of the 2015 Social Movement Building Award from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). Chris was recognized for his work with Whistler's local homeless population. Chris's short documentary, *Homeless in Whistler*, is available on YouTube.

Dialectical Behavior Therapy— Helping People with Borderline Personality Disorder

“Borderline personality disorder [BPD] is not a life sentence,” says John Wagner, Ph.D., psychologist, director of the Vancouver DBT Centre, and guest speaker at the NSSS Public Education Lecture Series, Wednesday, January 28, at Lions Gate Hospital auditorium.

“There’s always a capacity for change, that people can recover and achieve a better quality of life,” he says. “BPD is only a label used by clinicians. The focus is on a client’s specific problems, rather than the diagnosis.”

BPD affects 1- 2% of the population, showing more frequently in women than men. A person must meet five of nine criteria to have BPD, including persistent patterns of unstable behavior, emotions, relationships, and sense of identity, as well as awareness problems in highly stressful situations (delusions or hallucinations and feeling disassociated from the body). This range of criteria means no two cases will look the same.

The most widely researched, well-established treatment for BPD is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), developed by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D, at the University of Washington, Seattle. Combining behavioral science with concepts such as mindfulness and acceptance, DBT teaches people how thoughts and behaviors affect emotions, and how to focus on the present moment.

DBT consists of outpatient individual consultation, psychotherapy, group skills training, and pharmacotherapy. Group work is a large component of DBT, with 12 people meeting in groups with a leader and co-leader, two hours a week, for six months. While some people are

initially resistant to group work, most eventually relax into the routine.

Clients with significant trauma are not asked to

address that trauma when first starting treatment. As trauma work can be intensive, a person should be self-harm-free for two months before looking at the root causes of their intense emotions.

Private vs. Public DBT Treatment: The Vancouver DBT Centre is a private practice. An initial two-hour meeting with a therapist, including an assessment, is \$375. Hourly rates range from \$120-\$175, plus \$95 for each group session. More info can be found at dbtvancouver.com.

For non-private forms of DBT, Dr. Wagner suggests checking with local-area Community Mental Health Teams, and with Vancouver General Hospital, which offers a DBT program on a smaller scale. A DBT program should always include a strong group work component.

Further reading on BPD:

- *The Borderline Personality Survival Guide*, by Alexander L. Chapman, Ph.D and Kim L. Gratz, Ph.D.
- *Loving Someone with BPD*, by Shari Y. Manning, Ph.D.
- *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*, by Marsha M. Linehan, Ph.D.



John Wagner, left, with Steve Watt, NSSS president



Photo credit: North Shore News

Local Artist Donates Proceeds from Art Work

Artist Carolina de la Cajiga graciously donated the proceeds of her painting, *Infinitum*, to NSSS as part of the North Shore Art Crawl, a free community arts festival held March 7 - 8. In the photo, Carolina, in red, displays the painting for Nancy Ford, NSSS executive director. Many thanks to Carolina for her contribution.

To view more of Carolina’s artwork, please visit her website: www.delacajiga.com.

CBC Radio's *Early Edition* Looks at Family-to-Family Education

Not long ago, Christine Holmquist was numb, weary, and extremely frustrated trying to cope with her brother's mental illness. He was in a psychotic state, sometimes exhibiting threatening behavior, and hadn't taken medication in several years. Her family's world was, as she describes, "defined and almost consumed by his needs."

Christine wanted support, guidance, and understanding. In September 2014, she joined the first Family-to-Family education course offered by NSSS in the Tri-Cities area, where she lives. What she found in the course – information, a safe and welcoming space, and a connection with other families going through similar situations – gave her the tools to help her brother, and also care for herself.

Joined by NSSS Vice-President and Family-to-Family Coordinator Cheryl Zipper, Christine was interviewed Tuesday, April 28, on CBC radio's *Early Edition*, hosted by Rick Cluff.

Cheryl spoke to the 12-week course's enormous value in educating families on all aspects of mental illness, including symptomology, brain function, and medications and side-effects. The workshops, focussing on coping skills such as problem solving, communications, and empathy, helps families to see mental illness from the ill person's perspective. Overall, the course enables families to deal more effectively with the emotional trauma of watching someone they love struggle with an illness.

"The empathy I now have for my brother, for the challenges he faces just to be in this day - I have tremendous admiration for him," says Christine.

For Cheryl, teaching the course is both humbling and rewarding, particularly when participants begins to bond. Out of the first Tri-Cities class emerged a new monthly family support group, co-facilitated by Christine and three other family members.

"It's an incredible privilege," Christine says. "A great takeaway from the course is that you become part of a cohesive group of admirable, capable people."

If you would like to listen to the full CBC radio interview, please go to www.cbc.ca/earlyedition/pastepisodes/.

The episode is dated April 28, 2015. You must scroll to the 2:10:50 point in the episode to find the start of the interview.

A Good News Story

The Family Support Centre received a note in March from Christine Holmquist. With her permission, we wanted to share it with our readers:

Dear NSSS,

One Sunday night I received a phone call from my brother, who has a mental illness, wishing me a Happy Birthday for that coming Monday and inviting me to meet him at a local pub he likes for dinner. The last time my brother remembered or acknowledged my birthday was well over a decade ago.

This past month, as he continues to make incredible progress with the support of an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team, we have had some very decent phone calls. I met my brother for dinner that night, and we enjoyed a pleasurable two hours discussing our family's history of going to logging shows.

We still have a long journey ahead, but we must stop and applaud these moments and give them a prime spot in our memory banks.

- Christine

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; Bouygues Building Canada; Margitta's Flowers; and our many other generous donors.



SOLD OUT!

Thank you to all our families and volunteers.

A Word from the 2015 Circle of Strength Sponsor



In the March 2015 issue of *The Notepad*, NSSS announced Bouygues Building Canada as the official sponsor for 2015 Circle of Strength fundraiser luncheon, Saturday, May 30, at

takes special care to support the communities where they work. This commitment is realized through the creation of jobs, but also through community aid actions such as donations of equipment and food, immunization campaigns, work experience programs to introduce young people to trades in the construction industry, and promoting access to housing for the most underprivileged.

Since 2008, Bouygues has helped to set up 150 projects sponsored by 185 employees around the world.

Some of Bouygues Building Canada's projects include Kitsilano Secondary School, Gibsons Elementary School, Jim Pattison Outpatient Hospital, Queen Charlotte/Haida Gwaii Hospital and RCMP Headquarters in British Columbia, Pan Am Games Hamilton Stadium, York University Stadium and Milton Velodrome in Ontario, and the Iqaluit International Airport in Nunavut.

Hollyburn Country Club. Here is a little more about Bouygues Building Canada:

As Bouygues Building Canada understands and appreciates the challenges faced by families of persons with serious mental illness, they feel privileged to support the important work of North Shore Schizophrenia Society through their sponsorship of the 2015 Circle of Strength luncheon.

A Canadian General Contractor with the support of a worldwide organization, Bouygues Building Canada

Circle of Strength's Master of Ceremonies:

Jon McComb, host of CKNW radio's *The Jon McComb Show*, joins NSSS for a second year as Master of Ceremonies. Jon will share his own story of living with depression and anxiety, as part of his ongoing work raising awareness of mental illness in local communities.

Mothers and Daughters Video Debut

Elton Hubner, an award-winning videographer and founder of Eyes Multimedia, worked with NSSS volunteers to create a new video for the fundraiser, entitled *Mothers and Daughters*. The video will be available for viewing on the NSSS YouTube channel in early June.



The Registered Disability Savings Plan: A Valuable Tool for Families

The Registered Disabilities Savings Plan (RDSP) plays an important role in helping families ensure the financial wellbeing of a relative with a mental illness.

This Canada-wide, registered matched savings plan is designed for those with a mental illness or physical disability. Anyone can contribute to the account—friends, family, neighbours—and the money can be invested to grow over time, creating reliable, long-term support.

Two upcoming workshops can help families learn more about the RDSP—how it works, how to make contributions, and how to invest over time. These workshops will be held:

- Thursday, May 28, from 7 - 9 p.m. (attend in person)
- Thursday, June 11, from 10 a.m.- 12 p.m. (tele-seminar)

For more information and to register, please contact Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network at inquiries@plan.ca or 604-439-9566.

Mark Your Calendars!

Two Walks, Two Ways

to Help Raise Awareness of Serious Mental Illness



To register for these fun summer awareness events, please contact the Family Support Centre at 604-926-0856, or email info@northshoreschizophrenia.org.

We look forward to seeing you!

West Vancouver Community Day Parade

Saturday, June 6, 2015

Start time: 10 a.m.

Assembly time: 9:30-45 a.m. at starting line, the foot of 13th St., Ambleside

Parade route: 13th St., along Marine Dr. to 17th St., then back along Bellevue Ave. to 13th St.



North Vancouver Canada Day Parade

Wednesday, July 1

Start time: 10 a.m.

Assembly time: 9:30-45 a.m. at the starting line, Grand Blvd. and 13th St.

Parade route: Grand Blvd. and 13th St. to Lonsdale, then north and down 17th St. to Mahon Park

Coming Up in September: Family-to-Family



Family-to-Family, a comprehensive, 12-week course designed for families dealing with mental illness, and taught by trained peer volunteers, begins in late September in three locations: North Shore, Vancouver, and Tri-Cities. For more information, please contact the Family Support Centre.