



Mood
Disorders
Association
of
Ontario

Insights:

MDAO Newsletter
Summer 2018

Hi there,

This June, we're celebrating Pride Month and all of the wonderful LGBTQ staff and volunteers that give so much to our organization. We couldn't do the great work we do without all of their knowledge, experience and support. Check out the latest issue of Insights to learn more about LGBTQ Mental Health, LGBTQ drop-in groups, and find out what's happening this summer at MDAO.

*"The greatest gift that you can give to others
is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance"
– Brian Tracy*

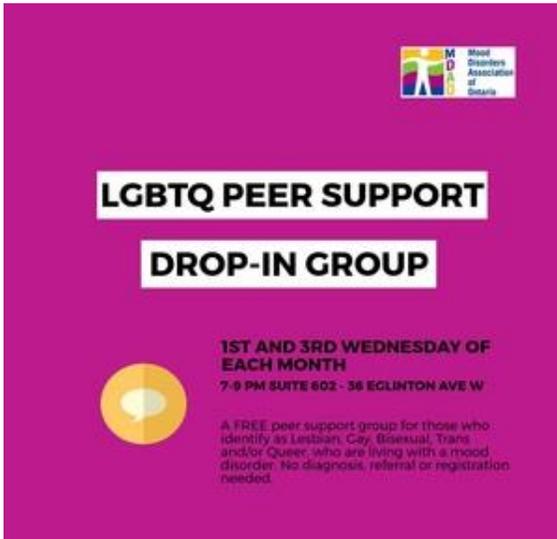
LGBTQ Mental Health

While members of the LGBTQ community face higher rates of mental health issues due to the discrimination and stigma they experience, studies have shown that supportive environments can contribute to their improved mental health.

Here are some facts about LGBTQ mental health:

- LGBTQ people face higher rates of depression, anxiety, suicidality, self-harm, and substance use
- LGBTQ youth face approximately 14 times the risk of suicide and substance abuse than their peers
- Support from family and friends reduces stress and contributes to positive mental and physical health in LGBTQ adolescents
- Youth who identify with their LGBTQ community have reduced internalized homophobia





Peer Support Drop-In Group

We offer a [free peer support drop-in group](#) for those in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer community who are experiencing challenges with their mental health. Join us and learn that you are not alone.

The **LGBTQ Peer Support Group** meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, from 7-8:50 p.m. No diagnosis, referral, or registration is required.

Call for Applicants

We are looking for creative, enthusiastic and highly organized individuals who are interested in executing exciting community events. Volunteers on our **Community Engagement Committee** take on a multitude of tasks including:



- Developing new and engaging display materials, activities and creative ways of representing MDAO within the community
- Helping with the planning and executing of community and fundraising events
- Researching upcoming events

Training and orientation are provided, as is ongoing support for volunteers. If interested, apply [here](#).



Tell Us: What's Important to You?

As one of our most important stakeholders, we are looking for **your expertise** to help prioritize the [CAN-BIND](#) education and outreach programs that we provide for the community.

This [quick survey](#) will take less than 5 minutes to complete and all questions are optional. Thank you for your help!

Could You Be Living With a Hoarding Disorder?

You've likely seen extreme cases of hoarding on different television shows in recent years, but hoarding behaviour is more common than many people realize.

According to the Toronto Hoarding Support Services Network (THSSN), hoarding is characterized by:

1. Excessive acquiring
2. Inability and difficulty with letting go of items (i.e. papers, books, furniture, containers, plastic bags, screws, etc.)
3. Space in the residence is unable to be used for its intended purpose
4. Mental distress caused by the hoarding behaviour
5. Comorbidity may be present

At MDAO, we offer a drop-in support group for individuals who may be dealing with hoarding tendencies. If you believe you or a loved one are exhibiting hoarding behaviour, you can learn more about our **Clearing The Clutter** peer support group [here](#).



CLEARING THE CLUTTER

DROP-IN GROUP

MEETING EVERY 1st, 3rd, AND 4th THURSDAY EACH MONTH

36 Eglinton Ave. West, Toronto || 7:00-9:00 p.m.

A non-judgmental peer support group for those struggling with hoarding tendencies



Early Psychosis Intervention Family Group

2nd and 4th Thursday of month
from 7:00-8:50 p.m.
36 Eglinton Ave. West, Suite 602, Toronto

June 28, 2018 - Causes of Psychosis
July 26, 2018 - Promoting Recovery from Psychosis
August 23, 2018 - Treatment and Medications

Early Intervention Family Group

This is a peer support/psychoeducational group for family members and supporters with a loved one experiencing psychosis or who has been newly diagnosed. This group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday each month from 7:00-8:50 p.m. at 36 Eglinton Ave. West, Suite 602.

You will receive support, psychoeducational tools and resources to cope with your loved one's psychosis.

For more information, visit our website [here](#). **RSVP to Stacey at staceyb@mdao.ca or 416-486-8046 ext. 237.**

Treatment and Medication with Special Guest Dr. Karen Wang



Join us on Thursday June 28, 2018 to hear from special guest speaker **Dr. Karen Wang, Child Adolescent Psychiatry Resident at Sunnybrook Hospital**, about treatments and use of medication for psychosis. All are welcome.



This special edition of the **Early Intervention Family Group** will meet on June 28, 2018 from 7:00 - 8:50 p.m. in our office at 36 Eglinton Ave. West, Toronto.

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Stacey at staceyb@mdao.ca or 416-486-8046 ext. 237.



Peer Support Program at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre



The partnership between **Mood Disorders Association of Ontario** and **Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre** has allowed for a **Peer Support Volunteer Program** to be implemented within the inpatient mental health unit at Sunnybrook. This program offers patients in the unit access to both group and one-on-one peer support services from

MDAO-trained volunteers on a weekly basis. This program is jointly supervised by **Lesley Breen**, Sunnybrook Psychiatry Recreation Therapist, and **Allison Dunning**, MDAO Peer Support Coordinator. This program has been well-received by patients and staff of the hospital and we are looking to expand the program.

If you have lived experience with a mental health challenge, have been in an active process of recovery for at least a year, and would like to offer a compassionate, empathetic and supportive perspective while working with Sunnybrook Psychiatry patients, then please apply with a cover letter and resume to Lesley Breen and Allison Dunning via email; lesley.breen@sunnybrook.ca and allisondunning@mdao.ca. Please feel free to reach out to either contact in order to learn more about the program.

Upcoming Distinguished Speakers Series

Join us on **Monday July 16, 2018** for a free public talk on suicide awareness from a lens of hope & recovery. Learn about new research in suicide biomarkers & hear about a family's journey of hope and recovery. This Distinguished Speakers Series will feature **Dr. Sakina Rizvi** talking about her work in the suicide biomarker and treatment resistant depression research program, as well as [David and Deborah Cooper](#), suicide loss survivors, sharing their poignant story of their family's journey of hope and recovery.



**DISTINGUISHED
SPEAKER SERIES**

This event is scheduled to take place at the [Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute](#), 209 Victoria St., Toronto, [Auditorium 209](#) from **6:30-8:30 p.m.** More details to come. Follow our [Facebook page](#) for the latest updates.



ripple
AFFECT

Ripple Affect - Share Your Story

The **Ripple Affect** is a place where anyone can submit and share their story, poem, or video clip to shed light on something they did that has had a **Ripple Affect** on others. People often say they feel powerless to help or make a difference. The **Ripple Affect** aims to debunk that myth: each of us *can* do something. Many people *are* doing something. Many people are doing a lot of things. A lot of little things can make a huge difference.

Hear how an encounter with a young woman on a subway makes a profound impact on Darlene and creates a *ripple affect* [here](#).

To share your story of how you are starting a **Ripple Affect**, visit our website [here](#).

Superstar Students

We'd like to send a big THANK YOU to the grade 11 students at **Northern Lights Secondary School** in Moosonee, Ontario for organizing their **Munchies for Mental Health** fundraiser. In a school of 120 students, they were able to raise \$300 for programs and services at MDAO! We are so grateful for these young entrepreneurs who are making a difference in



their community and across Ontario. On behalf of everyone at MDAO, THANK YOU!



We also recently received a donation from Alia, Emma and Ella, students at **St. Denis School** in Toronto. They recently did a project to raise awareness about the transgender community. They were able to raise \$340, which they have generously donated to our LGBTQ support groups.

Thank you, Alia, Emma and Ella!

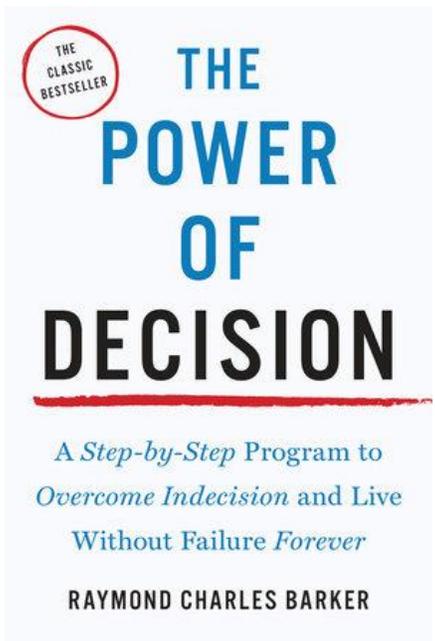
Staff Picks: The Power of Decision by Raymond Charles Barker

Our decisions impact every area of our lives. Making better decisions means living a better life. But how can we develop the habit of making great decisions?

This step-by-step guide to overcoming indecision explains the principles of success and illustrates the process of choice that all of us must take - and that all of us are capable of taking - to change our lives and make our dreams come true.

"This book was such an inspiration because it made me realize that with hard work and self awareness I can shape my anxiety and depression to make it more manageable and live a happier life. I am no longer ruled by my mental health issues; although they are still with me, I feel much more in control."

- Ruston B., Family Matters Peer Support Worker



Coming Up: MDAO Speakers' Bureau Program

We will be launching the **MDAO Volunteer Speakers' Bureau Program** in August called **Peer Talk**. Participants in the program will speak from their personal, lived experiences with mental illness, or their experience of supporting someone with a mental illness.

Sharing stories about mental illness helps to inspire others and highlight our vision that people with mood disorders and their families receive the help they need to recover and

heal. MDAO is committed to raising awareness and conveying hope in schools, workplaces, and communities through **Peer Talk**. We will be looking for dynamic and authentic speakers who will promote empathy, hope and resilience through their speeches and presentations. Speakers will be fully trained and we will be opening up the application process in the middle of July. We encourage youth, family members, members of the LGBTQ+ community, seniors, and those from all walks of life to apply to join the Speakers' Bureau.

Omar Ansari, MDAO's Peer Support Workplace Coordinator, will be organizing the program. Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks.

Remembering Karen Liberman

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the death of our beloved Karen Liberman, former Executive Director at MDAO, who passed away last month. She will be deeply missed, leaving behind a phenomenal legacy. She was an integral part of MDAO and it is indeed a significant loss to MDAO and the mental health community as a whole.



It is her amazing legacy that we cherish, celebrate and carry forward in everything that we do. Karen showed extraordinary love, compassion and caring to everyone she met on their journey. She is such an inspiration and the depth of her compassion is remarkable. She will be profoundly missed by everyone whose lives she touched.

Collaborative Care Rotation at MDAO



Dr. Rosalie Steinberg

Next month, we'll have three **Psychiatry Residents** from the **University of Toronto** join us for one day a week where they will be providing direct care and consultation under the supervision of **Dr. Rosalie Steinberg**, our **Resident Psychiatrist**. This is part of their Collaborative Care Rotation requirement for senior psychiatry residents across Canada, which requires them to complete a rotation in either a primary care or community setting.

We would like to welcome **Dr. Justine Giddens**, who will be at MDAO on Mondays from July to November. She will be joining **Dr. Mara Silver**, who is returning to MDAO in August after a maternity leave. We would also like to welcome **Dr. Chelsea Kaplansky**, who will be with us for one day a week on Thursdays. Both Mara and Chelsea will be at MDAO for the remainder of the academic year until June 2019.



Dr. Mara Silver



Welcome, QV, to the MDAO Team!

Quang Vu (QV) joined us in May as our new **Manager of Ontario Peer Support Program & MDAO Program Development**. He's been focusing on the coordination and implementation of MDAO's volunteers and will soon begin managing MDAO's programming across Ontario and establishing a Project Charter for each program to ensure the highest quality of programming.

QV holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from the University of New Brunswick and brings expertise in project management, problem-solving, critical thinking and strategic planning with an extensive background in quality assurance, client services and peer support.

Welcome to the team, QV! We look forward to working with you.

Joke Of The Month

**"I told a counsellor about my tragic life story.
It upset her so much, now she takes my anti-depressants."**

- Dave N., Laughing Like Crazy Participant

Get social with
us!

