

Kanaweyimik's Counselling Corner



The Kanaweyimik Communicator

Happy 2012 all community members. As we move through this wonderful winter season I would like to remind everyone to contact me, Kellie Balicki, if you are interested in any training opportunities.

The Counselling Program has now been open for one year. Happy one year Kanaweyimik Counselling Program! We are looking forward to the years to come.

Current Scheduled Events:

I will be in Sweetgrass on January 11, 2012 and Saulteaux on January 30, 2012 showing a film called *Tears for April: Beyond the Blue Lens* then facilitating discussion from 1:00PM to 3:30PM. This video dismantles the myth that drug abuse affects just the user as life and death unfolds in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. *Tears for April: Beyond the Blue Lens* follows the short, tragic life of April Reoch who was first cautioned by one of Vancouver's city police officers at age 17 to leave the streets. Within six months, April is addicted to drugs and prostituting herself. This video follows April's life-and-death struggle: from her first days living on the streets, through her fight to get clean, to finding her dead body on Christmas Day. To view this video please contact Kellie Balicki at 1-306- 445-3500.

Feeling Under the Weather

Have you not been feeling yourself lately? Do you struggling with falling asleep or staying asleep? Have you noticed that you have no interest or very little interest in previous activities? Do you carry a level of guilt? Has your energy started to plummet? Do you find that your mind wanders and that you are unable to concentrate? Has your appetite changed? Do you notice that you are more clumsy than before? Or cannot complete physical tasks which you once could? Have you recently contemplated suicide or are you currently thinking of killing yourself?

If you have noticed any or a combination of the points listed above I would encourage you to contact Kellie Balicki at 1-306- 445-3500.

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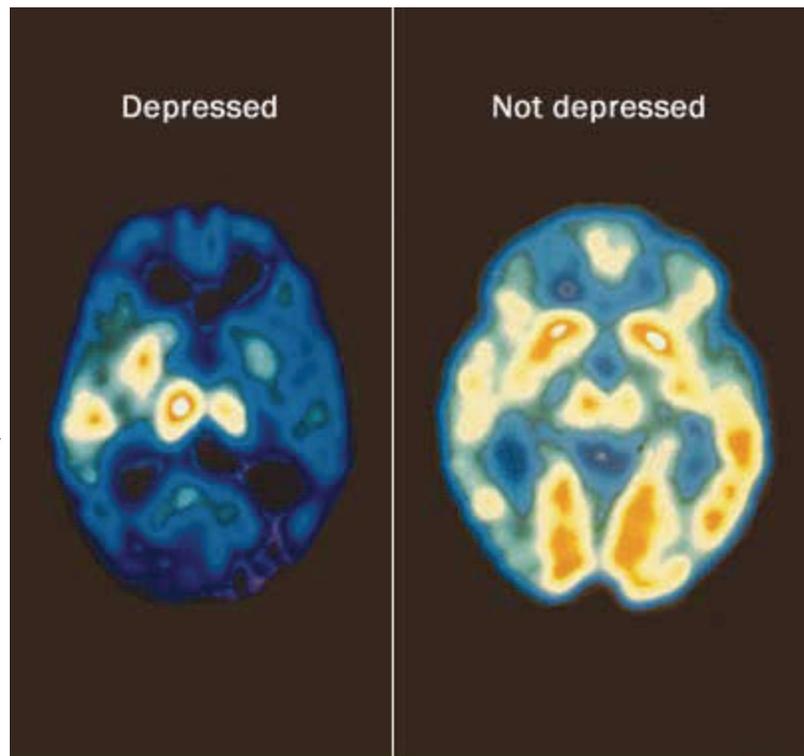
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"If we took what we all know about suicide we could prevent and predict suicide"

Tony Martens

Do You Wonder if there is something wrong

Clinical depression, sometimes referred to as major depression, is a "mood disorder" which causes many people a lot of pain and despair. The common symptoms of depression include a gloomy despairing mood. Generally speaking, this mood manifests itself most days, remains present for the majority of the day, lasts for over two weeks and impairs the person's day to day life and relationships. For example, a person who is depressed may have trouble going to work or school. Other depression symptoms may include, but are not limited to, problems sleeping, change in weight or appetite, loss of interest in daily activities, withdrawing from friends and family, feeling hopeless, agitated or slowed down, having no energy and thoughts of suicide. At times people who are depressed lose touch with reality.



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Above a positron emission tomography, also called PET imaging compares brain activity during depression (left) with non-depressed brain activity (right). An increase of blue and green colors, along with decreased white and yellow areas, shows less brain activity as a result of depression.

Depression is not uncommon and in therapy/counselling programs depression is seen fairly regularly. It is estimated that depression and worry will affect 60–70% of adults at some point in their lives to the extent that it will have an adverse effect on their day-to-day functioning. There are many factors in a person's life which can contribute to depression. One factor that can affect a person's mood is struggling financially or living in poverty. Living in poverty causes the family to be under constant stress. There are many reasons that a person lives in poverty or for a person to need to utilize social assistance, and it is important to recognize that each person's situation is unique. If you are sick of having someone else control your financial situation I encourage you to make a change in your life and phone Kanawayimik to enter into the counselling program.

If you are contemplating and wondering if something is wrong there is probably something that you could improve in your life. Making changes is not easy and having the support and direction of a trained professional makes these changes more effective and less of a struggle.

What are my options if I am depressed

If you feel like you struggle with depression you have options. If you do nothing you will probably stay the same or get worse over time. Someone who struggles with clinical depression is not likely to get well on their own. If the type of depression is very mild there are things that you can do. When a person is depressed a chemical in their brain known as serotonin is low. There are ways that you can increase the levels of serotonin in your brain without taking an anti-depressant medication. Even if you are not depressed doing the things that will be mentioned will help you to feel better mind, body, emotions, and spirit. The second thing you can do which will make you feel better is to exercise.

Exercise improves mood in all people. This is a fact that has been well documented. There are several lines of research which show that exercise increases brain serotonin function in the human brain. Motor activity or exercise increases the firing rates of serotonin neurons, and this results in increased release and synthesis of serotonin. This means exercise equals more serotonin which means you will feel better. Serotonin is one of the “feel good” chemicals in the brain. You may think to yourself “but I don’t like exercising” or “I have no energy to get off the couch” or “I have such a busy life I

just have no time.” It is important to remember these are all excuses not to

work out and as human beings we are all very good at making excuses. If you truly want to feel better then exercise. Make sure you are exercising hard enough that your heart rate is increased and you are sweating (Always check with your Doctor before you start to exercise). The World Health Organization agrees with the benefits of exercise and states that “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”



Lastly, you can enter into therapy to improve your situation.

When you enter into therapy at Kanawayimik the first thing that will happen is you will meet the counsellor and any questions you have will be answered. The counselling program will be explained and you will be given the option to choose if this is the right program for you. If you decided to enter into the counselling program information will be gathered about you and your life. From the information gathered an assessment and case plan will be completed. During the information gathering phases if it is determined that you are clinically depressed you will be given options to improve your situation. These can range from making life changes, being referred to a physician for medication, or choosing to talk through your situation to improve your life. One approach which may be used is based on the idea that negative attitudes lead to the development of depression. By challenging these attitudes and teaching you to think differently depression can be treated and relapses can be minimized.

Season Changes and How You Feel



There is a form of depression which is affected by seasons. This is known as Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and episodes of this depression occur at a certain time of the year, usually during winter. Symptoms usually build up slowly in the late autumn and winter months and are commonly the same as with depression. For people who do not suffer from SAD, the weather can also affect them. People are naturally sensitive to their environment. When our eyes identify darkness, a small gland in the brain called the pineal gland releases melatonin. Melatonin is the chemical which regulates sleep cycles. When you detect light, melatonin production slows down. When melatonin slows down serotonin production begins to

speed up to help you feel awake and happy.

Certain people are affected more by weather changes but it is important to remember that you can do something to help yourself feel better. The weather is one thing you can not control but you control you. You can do something for yourself and how you feel.



A New Years Note from the Counsellor

How many New Years resolutions have you made and not kept? Well it is now 2012 so why not make this the year that you are going to give your life and yourself the time and attention to be happier and healthier. Don't wait until next year, make the changes now. You may need assistance to reach your goals and the Kanawayimik counselling program is the place to go to help you to reach your goals. We operate a holistic interdisciplinary counselling program. So if your New Years resolution is to lose weight, to stop cheating on your partner, to be nicer to the people around you, to get a better job etc. The counselling program at Kanawayimik is the place to help you start these changes. Only you can make the changes in your life to improve your situation.

Moosomin

Thunderchild

Red Pheasant

Its 2012 and this is the year for you!

Saulteaux

Kanawayimik's 5 member communities!

Sweetgrass



**Please consider the environment
before printing this Newsletter. It
can be accessed at
www.kanawayimik.com**

