

On Track



Education & Support
Cognitive Behavioural Groups

Spring/Summer 2006

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On Track

A publication of

ADAM

Anxiety Disorders
Association of Manitoba

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Welcome to our new location! This year is a turning point, not only for ADAM, but for other organizations as well. In February, ADAM along with MSS, MDAM, CMHA-MB and a few more groups moved to a new location. This new venture puts all these self-help groups together – providing a one stop shop environment. You are now able to access all these services in one new and beautiful building. The new location is 100 - 4 Fort Street. We still have the same phone numbers and email addresses, so please feel free to give us a call and come visit our new facility. We are very excited to be able to offer you a new and comfortable environment.

ADAM Ongoing Support Groups

Location: 100-4 Fort Street
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Every Monday Night

*Enter at 4 Fort Street
(corner of Fort and Assiniboine).

This is a drop-in support group for anyone who has completed a cognitive behavior program either through ADAM, St. Boniface Hospital Anxiety Disorders Clinic or other facilities. There will be a topic each evening followed by an opportunity for sharing information and experiences. There is no charge.

For more information, please call 925-0600

ADAM *On Track* ...

ADAM is *On Track* providing effective help for sufferers of anxiety disorders ...

ADAM is *On Track* raising public awareness ...

ADAM is *On Track* providing support and intervention groups with a cognitive behavioural focus ...

ADAM is *On Track* with caring and competent peer group facilitators ...

ADAM is *On Track* supporting research in the field of anxiety disorders.

Invitation for Letters to the Editor What has ADAM done for you? We want to hear your stories. Let's spread the good news! Please email submissions to wendy@adam.mb.ca.

By the Parkland Outreach Worker

It was in the spring of 1996 that I was entering the Keystone Center in Brandon to attend a curling event. With every stair I climbed, I began to notice a sensation of heaviness in my chest. Almost like something external was applying pressure to my chest. Breathing became quite difficult. Numbness and tingling through my left arm convinced me, a nurse, that a heart attack was most definitely imminent. I had never experienced anything like this before, but I struggled to remain calm.

The ambulance transported me to the hospital, where the standard treatment for a heart attack was initiated. You can imagine my confusion when my test results were not showing any indication that I was experiencing a heart attack. My blood pressure was normal, heart rate was normal, as was the EKG. The attending doctor ultimately advised that I most likely had a diaphragmatic spasm. (Whatever that was). In the meantime I had begun to share some of the recent past events in my life, the most upsetting of

which was the death of my husband, four months previous. Because the doctor advised me to “just go home and be quiet about all of it”, I learned exactly how not to react to someone who is experiencing a panic attack. I made it my mission to become well-informed on the subject of panic and anxiety.

Over the next months I learned about my distorted automatic thoughts and ways in which to challenge them. I learned that I could feel better almost instantly by diaphragmatic breathing and thinking a positive thought which was more realistic than the negative thought that was making me feel so anxious. My episodes of anxiety gradually subsided as I became more adept at facing them head on and accepting my anxiety rather than struggling against it. Even today, as certain situations tend to raise my level of anxiety, I call upon those same valuable breathing techniques and positive internal dialogue.

Self Help Groups Work because they:

1

Alleviate Feelings of Isolation and Loneliness

Self-help groups provide an opportunity to relate to others who struggle with similar issues, therefore thoughts and feelings can be expressed without fear of rejection, misunderstanding, or judgement.

2

Recognize the Benefits of Mutual Support

Self-help groups embrace the idea that helping others stimulates our own growth. Taking action to support others motivates us in our own journey.

3

Provide Educational Opportunities

Self-help groups often assign a portion of every meeting to activities that are aimed at informing or aiding members in acquiring specific coping skills.

“Paris, Here I Come!” –LR

My husband and I recently flew to Halifax. From there, we rented a car and drove around the majestic winding roads of Cape Breton’s Cabot Trail. The scenery was breathtaking. I felt like I was in God’s country, not only because this is a place where lush forests blanket rolling hills and mountains that overlook the ocean, but because I felt divinely unbound from the panic and anxiety that formerly kept me from enjoying anything outside the confines of my home.

I’ve suffered with a debilitating panic disorder since I was in grade three. It started as chronic stomach aches and soon developed into episodes of terror I came to know as panic years later. While the condition would subside at times, panic became a constant companion that could reduce me to a quivering mass of fear and self-doubt. My symptoms have been wide and various, from nausea, hot and cold flashes, heart palpitations, numbness, dizziness – well, you name it. At times, I was even unable to eat solid food and my weight plummeted.

In high school, a friend of mine and I went to see a fortune-teller on a whim, just for a laugh. The self-proclaimed mystic told me that, like most girls my age, I soon would move out of the house and enjoy a successful independent life, with a responsible office job and a sports car to boot. Although I’ve never put any stock into such things, I knew instantly this woman was a fraud. How could I ever amount to anything? I could hardly set foot outside my parents’ house without being seized by physical and emotional sensations that surely meant oncoming doom. I wasn’t going anywhere. Except maybe crazy.

My confidence gradually vanished. I had little self-esteem because my constant anxiety and worry rendered me incapable of putting in a full day of work, or of sitting through an entire university class. I feared being away from things that felt safe, like my car or my home, or people who could rescue me. I felt I need-

ed a quick escape from everything, which took a toll on my friendships and my future. I no longer felt I could take care of myself. I was losing myself.

Thankfully, many hands reached out to help me, including the friendly ones here at **ADAM**. Though panic and depression have unhappily clouded much of my life, I now recognize they’ve also been a gift. Without their hard lessons, I wouldn’t have become the strong, determined, independent person I am today. With the help of wonderful therapists, groups and friends, I’ve gained the courage to face my fear and stand my ground. Certainly, it’s been hard. Very hard. In fact, I can think of no braver people than the ones I’ve met through **ADAM’S** programs, who taught me that there was no shame in being nervous; rather, that there was much strength, compassion, humour, and mettle within those that suffered with it.

Now, I no longer make decisions based on fear. That’s not to say I don’t still feel afraid from time to time. Certainly not. But I live my life with the fear now instead of fighting it. This has allowed me to fulfill my dream of finishing university (with honours I might add!), and to hold down a demanding management position in a large corporation. It’s also allowed me to travel, something I never thought I could do when trapped inside my home all those years ago.

Facing my fear and simply living through my panic symptoms has lessened their hold on me. My attacks now are very rare and, rather than wishing the day away until I could sleep off my emotional exhaustion, I am thankful for my time on this earth.

The next trip I hope to take is to Paris. While I am not entirely free of worry or panic, I remind myself that it’s okay to have these feelings, wherever I am.

ANNIVERSARY event

Planning begins for Anniversary event

2006 is **ADAM’S** 20th anniversary. A planning committee has been created with representatives from **ADAM** staff, board of directors and stakeholders. The group will soon be meeting to start planning the celebration activities. As details become available, they will be published in our newsletter and on our website. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting event!

WHO IS ADAM?

ADAM is our Board of Directors



L-R: Dr. Steve Feldgaier, Ian McKay, Elsa Sydorko, Dr. John Walker, Margaret Milton, Lois Callander (chair), & Linda Ladyman

ADAM is our Staff

HELP WANTED

Norman (Flin Flon)

Burntwood (Thompson)

North Eastman (Lac Du Bonnet)

Interlake (Wpg. Beach)

Winnipeg

Parkland (Swan River)

Westman (Brandon)

South Eastman (Steinbach)

Central (Winkler)

Barbara Brass
Outreach Worker

Elsa Sydorko
Outreach Worker

Bruce Sielski
Executive Director

Lorraine Johnson
Program Coordinator

Peggy Tollefson
Accountant

Helene Dufour
Office Support

Wendy Fergusson
Public Education Coordinator

Ron Dyck
Outreach Worker

Constance Eagle
Outreach Worker

Shirley Miles
Outreach Worker

Debbie Fisch
Outreach Worker

Sherri MacVicar
Outreach Worker

ADAM is YOU

who join us as we work together to reduce the impact of anxiety problems on the lives of Manitobans.