

Learning About Mindfulness

What will we do?

Mindfulness is a tool that you can put in your tool belt to help you manage difficult situations and bring you back to the present moment. In this group, we will engage in both discussions with our peers and with the curriculum to learn about the 9 attitudes of mindfulness to help us set the stage for positive emotional experiences.

What will we learn?

- The 9 attitudes of mindfulness from Jon Kabat-Zinn
- To stay in the present in order to foster a positive and comfortable emotional state

Exploring Employment as Part of Your Recovery

What will we do?

Self-exploration activities

- Exploring readiness and your own personal needs
- Transition planning
- Learning about ways in which Vocational Services can help to support with your employment goals

What will we learn?

Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation Services at Ontario Shores and how to get referred

- The benefits of work as part of your recovery
- Exploring your own personal readiness to engage in job preparation
- Beginning the process of skills identification

Let's Butt Out Together

What will we do?

This 2-session workshop will focus on the addictive nature of tobacco and explore different strategies to thwart cravings through presentation, 'did you know' questions, helpful tools and group discussions to assist those who smoke with a better understanding of why they smoke and provide techniques and external support services to better equip them with reducing or quitting.

What will we learn?

You will learn how to recognize triggers to smoking and how best to manage them with strategies, behavioural change and with the help of resources, participant support, and free Apps.

CMHA Collaboration – Connecting to Your Community

What will we do?

If you are interested in developing a new Recovery College program to assist others who are looking to enhance their connection to their communities, then this is the group for you!

You are an expert on your own mental health journey, and we greatly value this expertise! As like-minded peers, we will come together brainstorming ideas and developing content for this course to be presented in future Recovery College semesters!

We will collectively decide on a course name, content and topics, and how to engage participants who join. We would love to hear your experiences regarding the ways in which you connect to your community and how we can share those connections/resources with others.

We can't wait to learn and create alongside you!

What will we learn?

- Co-design skills and the Recovery College philosophy.
- How to leverage personal experiences as a source of strength and value.
- How to apply the principles of co-design, lesson planning, and how to work effectively in a group while producing and/or sourcing course content.
- How to help meet the mental health needs of your peers by creating a new, innovative and interactive course.

WRAP

What will we do?

Take action! In this course we will develop action plans that we can use to prevent crisis, when we are in crisis, or post-crisis by identifying areas of support. We will find a sense of empowerment through having the opportunity to connect with our peers and share our lived experiences and insight.

What will we learn?

To identify healthy coping strategies, triggers, signs, and symptoms to inform our crisis related responses

Yoga Hybrid

What will we do?

This delivery of this hybrid Recovery College program is new as it allows people to attend either in-person or virtually.

We know that yoga can be a great workout but it is more than that. It connects us with our body by practicing breathing techniques, working on our posture as well as strength,

flexibility, balance and stamina. Yoga may also assist us with focusing, concentration and quieting our minds. The type of yoga that this is based on is Hatha yoga. It focuses on strengthening the body and involves physical postures (asanas) and breathing techniques (pranayama).

What will we learn?

- Become more aware of the mind and body connection in relation to stress and ways to release it
- Maintain or increase personal balance, flexibility and strength through continuous participation in this session
- Build confidence to continue to practice after the session has ended for continued benefits

Building Resiliency

What will we do?

Resilience is when we are able bounce back from difficulties. Throughout this group, we will engage in discussions related to managing and coping with life's stressors and highlight our strengths to better equip us to cope and adapt to challenging situations.

What will we learn?

- What personal resiliency is
- To identify and learn how to apply resiliency skills to current and future stressors

Sit & Get Fit!

What will we do?

As requested by you – a chair exercise program that can be done by most. We will use the chair to sit in but also as a support while standing, so no wheeled chairs please.

This program will combine discussion, demonstration and instruction to ensure that everyone gets more physically active while challenging their level of fitness. Each week we will complete a 50 to 60-minute chair exercise program. This program will combine yoga, muscle strengthening using light weights, balance work as well as core and cardio exercises.

What will you learn?

- New ways to exercise that do not involve going to the gym and that are safe to do.
- Develop a new exercise routine that can be done almost anywhere you have a chair.
- How to confidently become more physically active.
- Evaluation:
- A Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire (Par-Q) will be required if you have not completed one in the last year
- On-going evaluation will take place by the facilitator to ensure the program is meeting the needs of the participants.

- At the end of the program, the Recovery College evaluation will be given to each participant to complete.

Escaping Vices

What will we do?

This group is intended to bring together people with dependency issues in conjunction with concurrent mental health issues. Individuals who have been struggling with the current Covid-19 crisis and coping in less healthy ways can share their experience and receive practical tips to deal with their addictions.

What will you learn?

- To support each other in our addiction recovery in a safe, supportive and confidential environment
- Learn tools gleaned from other recovery programs to support ourselves in our own recovery journeys

Self-Esteem

What will we do?

Do you find it difficult to share your opinions and to speak up for yourself? This peer led course will explore what self-esteem is, why we struggle with it, the importance of positive self-esteem, and what causes low self-esteem. We will also take a look at strategies to challenge negative or inaccurate thinking.

What will you learn?

- What is Self-esteem and ways to build it
- Factors that shape and influence self-esteem
- How to communicate assertively
- Ways to set healthy boundaries

Self-Compassion

What will we do?

Self-compassion is the ability to turn understanding, acceptance, and love inward. The practice of having compassion and nurturing oneself can be often difficult for us to make time for. We tend to find it easier to have compassion for those we care about and not give ourselves the love and compassion we require to nurture ourselves. Through the use of creative expressive arts interventions and journaling, you will learn the foundations of how practicing self-compassion can have a positive impact upon your mental health.

What will you learn?

- Participants will enhance creativity through self-expression
- Learn to foster resilience and boost self-esteem
- Learn to identify ways to practice self-compassion and self-love

PeaceLove Expressive Arts

What will we do?

Welcome to the PeaceLove! This is an expressive arts experience that is now known as “scribl”. We know that when we make stuff, we feel better! Each week we will create a piece that is based on a different theme and discover the connection to the person who made it. We will take a journey that invites us to consider each person’s unique story. Scribl is about sharing stories, finding your voice, making meaningful connections and discovering new tools for personal awareness and recovery. You do not need to be creative...just willing to participate! This group is spontaneously creative, judgment free and open to all!

What will you learn?

Each weekly session will have goals specific to the activity. However, the overall goals of this 6-week program include: actively engaging in the process of creating art without fear or self-criticism, demonstrating a personal connection between the artistic experience and emotions, utilizing creative expression to connect as a cohesive group and utilizing art to tell a personal story about self and/or recovery.

*Note: The CREATOR will send you a list of supplies that you need as well as other options that you might want before each group

Purposeful Living**What will we do?**

Challenges are something that we are bound to face in life but we can equip ourselves with strategies so they do not de-rail us from achieving our goals. In this group, we will engage in discussions and educational activities with our peers to develop coping strategies that we can use when experiencing mental distress and/or stressful situations.

What will we learn?

- To develop and apply personalized strategies for managing and coping with stressful situations

Let’s Talk About Art!**What will we do?**

If you are a creative mind that likes to use art as an outlet for sharing your mental health journey, or perhaps you enjoy looking at Art that depicts others mental health journeys then this course is for you! Within this six-week course we will come together to talk about art. We will share with each other how we tell our stories through art, learn about artists throughout history that create work about the human condition, and learn new ways to communicate through art.

What will you Learn?

- To share your story through art
- Learn how others share their stories

- Learn about different artistic techniques/outlets
- Learn to write an artist statement about your work

Group Facilitation Skills Training

What will we do?

This course will teach participants the skills they need to successfully develop and implement workshops in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. We will explore a variety of topics including adult learning principles, lesson planning, classroom management and group dynamics, as well as public speaking and presentation skills. Completion of this course is a prerequisite for facilitating a course within the Recovery College.

What will you learn?

Class participants will have an opportunity to:

- Gain presentation skills
- Increase social confidence
- Learn how to engage a group of individuals so that everyone participates
- Learn how to prepare lesson plans and deliver them with success
- Practice active listening skills
- Develop leadership skills

Exploring Employment As Part Of Your Recovery

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Coping with Depression

What will we do?

We've all been sad or had moments of a low mood at times in our lives, but what happens when we can't pull ourselves out of these prolonged funks?

In this group we will increase our understanding and knowledge about depression and gain skills to help recognize and manage symptoms that can frequently occur. Collectively we'll identify and implement healthy coping mechanisms and explore a variety of treatments that help manage day-to-day symptoms.

What will we learn?

- Identify signs and symptoms of depression
- The importance of a support system and developing a crisis plan
- Exploring a variety of different treatment options and coping strategies
- Examining personal triggers and enforcing boundaries
- Discuss our experiences with stigma and how to normalize depression through effective conversations

Wellness Wednesday

What will we do?

Creating holistic wellness involves developing a self-care routine. Part of self-care is taking time to explore our interests to develop a well-rounded leisure lifestyle. In this six-week group we will explore activities that tap into our physical, social, spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and creative domains of well-being. When we create balance within these domains we see the positive effects that it has on our day to day lives. Each week we will participate in fun activities that support our overall wellness.

What will you learn?

- Identify activities within each domain that are enjoyable
- Learn new ways to improve their overall wellness through leisure
- To promote relaxation and healthy leisure experiences

Exploring Core Beliefs

What will we do?

Core beliefs are a person's most central ideas about themselves, others, and the world. These beliefs act like a lens through which every situation and life experience is seen. Because of this, people with different core beliefs might be in the same situation, but think, feel, and behave very differently. Through structured curriculum, activities and discussion we will explore our core beliefs and find ways to leverage them while maintaining our recovery wellness.

What will we learn?

- To explore our Core beliefs
- To understand where our core beliefs come from
- How our core beliefs impact us on a day to day basis
- How to leverage our core beliefs in perusing, maintaining our recovering wellness

Understanding Anger

What will we do?

This peer-led course will explore the roots of anger and its many faces. The course is filled with practical wisdom and helpful tips and techniques that will assist individuals with their emotions.

What will you learn?

Participants will learn the tools to support the common struggles with anger issues and end the anger cycle, living up to their true potential.

My Story. My Voice DMHS Collaboration

What will we do?

Sharing your experiences can be a meaningful way to change your story from one of illness to one of strength and wellness. In this course, you will learn how to use your own personal and unique lived experience to craft your own story. You will work towards feeling comfortable and confident with sharing your work in progress in front of a group of peers while accepting gentle feedback in order to make your story the best it can be.

What will you learn?

- Participate in a series of activities that will help you to get comfortable with the process
- Mine your memory for experiences you would like to use in the story you choose to tell
- Have one on one feedback sessions with an instructor
- Have the opportunity to share your story in progress with your group of peers
- Tell your story during the final session of the course

Cultivating Joy & Happiness

What will we do?

When you think about happiness and joy, does it make you wonder about what those words really mean? Does it make you think about how you would like to feel this way more often? In this 6-week group we will explore ways to cultivate happiness & joy in our lives. We will learn about factors that create these emotions but also obstacles that can make it difficult. We will consider how our awareness of these emotions influence our mental and physical health. And finally, we will look at how happiness & joy impacts our recovery and well-being.

What you will learn?

- Why are happiness & joy and so important?
- Is there a relationship between mental health, happiness and joy?

Cannabis and Mental Health

What will we do?

Cannabis is now legal for recreational use for adults in Canada, but it does have its health risks, especially for those living with a mental illness. This 1-day workshop will help provide general information and give a better understanding of the relationship between the two to guide our decisions about cannabis use.

What will we learn?

- To learn about the diversity of experiences that people have using cannabis
- Health and safety considerations for cannabis use
- Learning the differences between recreational and medical cannabis
- Understanding the various types of cannabis and the dangers of unregulated and synthetic products
- Exploring the links between cannabis use and psychosis
- How to set boundaries around cannabis use

Understanding Burnout

What will we do?

Are you feeling overwhelmed and burnt out? The prolonged stress of burnout can leave us feeling physically and mentally exhausted and drained. In this course we will look at identifying the signs and symptoms of burnout and how to utilize different coping strategies to get your wellness to a place where you want it to be. In this space we will have the opportunity to learn from each other and share strategies and experiences.

What will you learn?

In this course we hope to learn to recognize when we are experiencing burnout and learn strategies to help us get through it.

Building Better Boundaries

What will we do?

Do you know how to identify your boundaries? Are you comfortable saying “No,” if someone crosses your boundaries? Would you like to learn how to set personal boundaries and feel confident executing them? If so, then this is the course for you!

What will you learn?

- Discover what a boundary is and how you can establish ones that work for you.
- Learn how your boundaries can both protect and promote yourself.
- Understand how to use boundaries to help you achieve your goals and dreams.
- Recognize how respectful boundaries can bring value to your mental, emotional and physical health.

Guided Painting

What will we do?

Within this four-week course you will learn to paint something new each week. In This guided painting experience you will be able to create your one of a kind pieces that teaches the following painting techniques: Stenciling, sponge painting, and using a tooth brush as a painting tool. You do not need prior painting experience to join in the fun, this program is for all levels!

What you will learn?

- Within this workshop you will have the opportunity to self-express through painting.
- Learn a variety of painting techniques with brushes, stencils, and everyday household objects
- Build self-esteem and creativity
- Participate with others in a judgement free social environment

*Please note that registration for all virtual guided paint sessions must be completed with a minimum of two weeks' notice to arrange for canvases to be mailed out.

Participants will be required to provide their own paint and brushes, a list of paint colours that will be required for the session will be sent out upon registration.

Building a Skills Toolbox

What will we do?

When we are faced with a challenge, it is important to be equipped with the right tools. In this group we will engage with educational materials and in discussions with each other to fill our tool boxes. When life presents a challenge, we will be able to draw on these tools to rise to the challenge.

What will we learn?

- To develop and use mental and physical tools to address stressors or challenges
- To leverage our experiences of the five senses to enhance resiliency
- To remove and replace tools that do not serve us

Reducing Stigma, Empowering People

What will we do?

Stigma is when someone sees or treats another person in a negative way because of a particular characteristic or attribute. This is often rooted in ignorance or misunderstanding. In this group, we will develop a sense of self beyond our experiences with mental distress by engaging in conversations and activities with our peers about what stigma associated with mental health is, why it is harmful, and develop strategies for combatting this stigma. You will have the opportunity to self-reflect, highlight your strengths, instill hope, and create change through the collective sharing of lived experiences and knowledge.

What will we learn?

About various forms of stigma and associated strategies for combating them

Women's Group

What will we do?

Be part of a group of women empowering each other in our recovery journeys! In Women's Group, we will engage with educational materials about the personal recovery philosophy and discuss how it applies uniquely to our experiences as women. Through these discussions, we will collectively decide on learning objectives related to the factors that influence personal recovery: connection, hope, identity, meaning, and empowerment. Through our discussions, we will foster a sense of community and make meaningful connections. We will facilitate a safe space for women to feel validated and empowered.

What will we learn?

- About the personal recovery philosophy and how we can apply it to our lives as women
- To share and promote positive coping tools with one another
- To build positive self-image
- About societal pressures and expectations put on women and how to manage them
- About healthy boundaries to foster healthy, positive relationships

Conquering Loneliness**What will we do?**

This program will explore the difference between being alone and feeling lonely. It will encourage peer discussion about the challenges of feeling disconnected from others and brainstorm ways to decrease feelings of loneliness and increase meaningful connections in our lives.

What will you learn?

The group will provide a supportive environment in which to practice new communication skills and foster the confidence needed to reach out to others.

A Good Night's Sleep**What will we do?**

Sleep is so important as it relates to so many areas of our wellness, but sometimes certain factors interfere and will prevent us from securing the required amount we need on a daily basis. This workshop is designed to help build healthy habits and to provide helpful tips to improve the quality of our sleep, even in challenging times.

What will you learn?

- The importance of getting enough sleep and the science behind it
- Exploring common sleep problems and obstacles that prevent a good night's sleep
- Acquiring strategies for having good sleep hygiene and bedtime routine
- The effects sleep can have on both our physical and mental health

Pursuing Dreams and Aspirations**What will we do?**

Students will take part in a 3-4 week workshop series. Facilitators will teach students the skills needed to achieve goals, dreams, and aspirations using audio/visual aids, group activities, and group discussions.

What will you learn?

In a supportive environment, students will learn how to take next steps towards reaching their goals while utilizing specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely approaches.