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The Consumer/Survivor Information Resource Centre
Distributed through generous support from CSRU Program (Community Support and Research
Unit) of
CAMH (Centre for Addiction & Mental Health)

BULLETIN

*Information for consumer/survivors of the mental health system,
those who serve us, and those who care about us.*

Mad Pride Issue July 14, 2008
Bulletin 374

C/S INFO CENTRE DROP-IN HOURS: 1-4 Monday-Friday PHONE HOURS: 9-5 Monday-Friday
LOCATION: 252 College Street, 3rd Floor, Toronto, ON
MAILING ADDRESS: c/o CAMH, 250 College Street, Toronto, ON M5T 1R8
TEL: 416 595-2882 FAX: 416 595-0291 E-MAIL: csinfo@camh.net

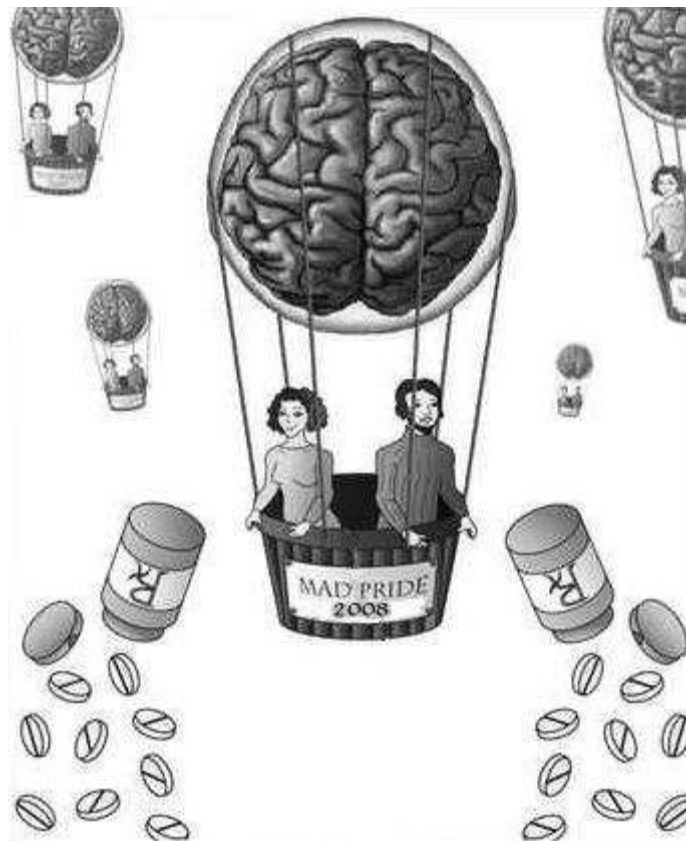


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A HISTORY OF PSYCHIATRIC SURVIVOR PRIDE DAY DURING THE 1990s

by Geoffrey Reaume

“Crazy Day.” That was the first suggested name for the (nearly) annual event that has taken place since 1993 in and around Parkdale where the largest number of psychiatric survivors, consumers and ex-patients live in Toronto. After much debate, the original organizers decided to call this event “Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day.” From the beginning this name has sparked a great deal of debate. People inside and outside the community asked: “What do you (or we) have to be proud about?” After all, isn’t this group of people supposed to be “dangerous” or a “burden” on society? Who wants “crazy people” in their neighbourhood anyway? It was to fight stereotypes like these, including the prejudice of local rate-payer groups in Parkdale who opposed housing for discharged psychiatric patients, that Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day was first organized in 1993. The organizers’ main message was: “Psychiatric survivors are part of the community and belong here just like anyone else.” Parkdale boarding home resident Ron Wilson made this point when he spoke publicly at a rally at Parkdale Library that first Pride Day.

The original Pride Day organizers drew up a list of six objectives including: to combat stigma; to celebrate psychiatric survivors “as active members of Canadian society”; to “present the history and culture of psychiatric survivors from the perspective of those who lived...this experience”; to “link up with other marginalized groups [including] persons with disabilities, people of colour, first nations,” in “rejecting oppressive cultural stereotypes”; to connect with “other community based groups in Parkdale to ensure visibility and acceptance of persons with psychiatric histories”; to “empower those of us previously excluded, to participate in the creation and preservation of our contribution to Canadian culture.”

There was opposition in 1993 to using the term “Pride Day” among some people in the organizing group who did not want to be associated with the annual gay and lesbian celebration, even though many of the organizers belonged to both communities and wanted to make this link with other groups who face bigotry. Dealing with prejudice, including racism and homophobia, from within our own community has also been part of the history of this event. There was also opposition to the politics of the event from some people who disliked the poster for the first Pride Day which had two raised clenched fists, one black, one white, both in chains, a poster which was approved by the organizing committee. This image had already been used on a pamphlet issued in spring 1993, entitled “Proud to be Crazy” which spread the word about Pride Day organizing (remember, the 1993 event was organized in pre-email days). Yet, there was also much more working together than anything else among the 20 or so active committee members, including two rummage sales that summer which brought in donated goods and over \$600.

The word “survivor” was chosen to show that there was much pride in our history of surviving discrimination and abuse inside and outside the psychiatric system, in advocating for our rights and in our personal and collective accomplishments – that psychiatric survivors are much more than a diagnostic label. Organizers also wanted to remember the many people who did not survive. At the conclusion of the first Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day on Saturday, September 18, 1993, a march of over 100 people left the Parkdale Library, where the event had started with a rally in the auditorium, went up Queen Street and ended at the west boundary wall of what was then the Queen Street Mental Health Centre. This wall was chosen as a fitting

place to end the first Pride Day since it witnessed so much history of exclusion of asylum inmates from society which the organizers were protesting. (We did not know in 1993 that this wall had been built by patients in 1888-89; that important fact was found in the archives three years later). In single file, marchers in 1993 laid flowers at the foot of the wall and then attached to this old barrier the names of people who died in mental institutions. Songs were sung, speeches were made and a moment of silence was held for those who were remembered at the end of that first Pride Day.

After the initial enthusiasm of the first Pride Day, events held in 1994 and 1995 were more modest occasions held in local community centres with entertainment, food and refreshments, while also delivering a political message about the need for societal inclusion of psychiatric survivors. Though on a smaller scale than the first event in 1993, Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day in 1994 and 1995 were essential to maintaining a sense of continuity. However, there was not enough community support to sustain organizing in 1996, the one year since 1993 when this event did not take place. By 1997, organizing picked up again and has continued ever since then. After a five year absence, marches returned in 1998 as a regular part of Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day.

During these years, Pride Day was organized by committees ranging from 20 to a much smaller group of people, though with more logistical support on the actual day itself, all of which contributed to a sense of community and shared history. Parkdale Community Legal Services was essential to these organizing efforts for most of the 1990s, with Community Legal Worker Lilith Finkler coordinating the events for 1993, 1997 and 1998 which Peggy Gail-Dehal continued to do after she was hired at PCLS in 1999. Festivities were also organized in both 1993 and 1994 by activists in West End Psychiatric Survivors who met in Parkdale until this group folded in early 1995. The Queen Street Patients Council also supported the event over the years with staff member Erick Fabris coordinating the 1995 event. Pride Day was always held in September or October from 1993-99. However, in 2000 the celebration was moved to July and expanded beyond one day to a week-long series of events. This change was made to align Toronto with the international "Mad Pride Day" events elsewhere. Reflecting ongoing debates over how people choose to self-identify, "Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day" was changed to "Instance of Resistance" in 2000 to "Psyche Survivor Pride Week" in 2001 and, since 2002, "Mad Pride".

In addition to the above mentioned organizers, Ruth Stackhouse of Friendly Spike Theatre Band, along with many fellow activists, have been among the primary organizers of Toronto Mad Pride events during the 2000s, a period which has seen a significant expansion of activities and support for this annual celebration, building on years of community engagement by Pride Day participants dating back to its early history.

As Mad Pride celebrations are held in 2008 it is important to remember those people who contributed to the first Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day in 1993 who are no longer with us in body but who are with us in spirit, this year and every year: Ron Wilson, who spoke out about life in Parkdale boarding homes during that first Pride Day and who was a member of the original organizing committee; Shirani George, who attended the first event and who was also a key organizer of the second Psychiatric Survivor Pride Day in 1994; Keith Welch, a long-time member of the Queen Street Patients Council who helped at the first wall memorial; Stuart Mair, psychiatric survivor activist at Queen Street and beyond who shared his musical talents as part of the celebrations in 1993; and Bobbi Nahwegahbow who had a longer history of active involvement in Pride Day organizing than anyone else in Toronto at the time of her death on November 4, 2007. Thanks to all of you, and many more people over the past 15 years, Psychiatric Survivor and Mad Pride Day continue to make history and to make a difference....

Mad Pride in our Mad Culture

Mad Culture . . . say what?

Is there such a thing as a Mad Culture? The famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz said that “culture must be seen as the webs of meaning within which people live, and encode meaning in symbolic forms (language, artifacts, etiquette, rituals). The Latin word “cultura” means to “to cultivate” so societies or groups of people “cultivate” the way they create meaning through rituals, rules, and a way of being.

“Madness” is an umbrella term for those of us that identify as “crazy, mentally ill, insane, psychiatric survivors, users, consumers or inmates”. Madness used to be a word used as a way to belittle people who had psychiatric experiences but these days “madness” is a word that has been reclaimed and re-possessed by the people it originally hurt.

Historically there has been a dependance on identifying Mad people only with psychiatric diagnosis, which assumes that all Mad experiences are about biology as if there wasn't a whole wide world out there of mad people with a wide range of experiences, stories, history, meanings, codes and way of being with each other.

Consider some of these basics when thinking about Madness and Mad experiences:

- We have all kinds of organized groups (political or peer) both provincially and nationally
- We have produced tons and tons of stories and first person accounts of our experiences (see www.psychiatricurvivorarchives.com/MadTitles.doc)
- We have courses about our Mad History. (see <http://www.atkinson.yorku.ca/cdis/courses.htm> and <http://www.ryerson.ca/calendar/2007-2008/pg1911.html>)
- We have groups of students who meet and talk about madness (see www.madstudentsociety.com)
- We have all kinds of art which expresses meaning – sometimes about our madness (see <http://www.bonkersfest.com/>)
- We do music such the CD “ Nutters with Attitude”
- We have an archives which houses a collection of documents with our history (see <http://www.psychiatricurvivorarchives.com/index>)
- We have our own special brand of jokes and humour (see <http://www.standupformentalhealth.com/>) or <http://www.mindfreedom.org/kb/mental-health-arts/humor>)
- We have films produced about our experiences and interests
- We are organized in many countries and internationally
- We have rights under law both Nationally and internationally
- The experience of Madness produces unique behaviour and language that many Normals don't understand but which make complete sense to many of us (see <http://www.hearing-voices.org/index.htm>)
- We have a special day dedicated to Mad Pride from Toronto's mayor (which makes us special)
- We have had many many parades and Mad Pride celebrations for decades now.
- If you are new to the Mad community you can learn lots from the many “Glossary of Terms” that explain some of the vocabulary used specifically for our range of experiences. (see <http://www.harborside.com/~equinox/glossary.htm> or http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatric_survivor)

So next time someone tries to simply pigeon hole you into a medical label and tells you that Madness is solely a biological experience, tell them about the many ways we as Mad people celebrate our unique, mysterious, wondrous identities and culture.

Happy Mad Pride,

Lucy Costa

My Experience With Friendly Spike Theatre and the Play “Tied Together” By Myrna Schacherl

I had heard about the “Mad People’s History” class that David Reville teaches at the Ryerson School of Disability Studies and a co-worker encouraged me to sit in on it. In January I began to attend. The first day I walked into the class, Ruth Ruth Stackhouse was sitting at the front of the class. Ruth Ruth is the director and founder of the Friendly Spike Theatre Company, a community theatre company comprised of psychiatric survivors. I had known her briefly about 10 years ago and had not spoken to her since then. She turned, looked at me, and immediately said “Myrna you look just like May F. You must be in the play I’m going to write for my class project!”

The next thing I knew, myself, Ruth Ruth and Mel Starkman started to rehearse the play after David’s class. The play is a historical play to do with patient labour at the Toronto Hospital for the Insane in the early 1900’s, and is based on Geoffrey Résumé’s book on the subject Remembrance of Patients Past (Patient Life at the Toronto Hospital for the Insane, 1870-1940). Geoffrey has been very excited about the play and has acted as a resource person. The play is set in a classroom and during the play, there are three women whose lives are described in Geoffrey’s book that appear in front of a class of university students and tell their stories. The students ask the women questions, and there is a great deal of sociological commentary and education about the historical treatment of the “insane”.

Slowly other actors started to join us, although Mel eventually dropped out due to personal reasons. Most of the actors have a strong background and experience in the dramatic arts. I was the new kid on the block. I had studied acting in university but hadn’t acted in 20 years. Ruth Ruth was a kind and excellent director and I began to gain confidence in the part of May F. We continued to rehearse and also had a few public rehearsals. The actors also visited the Royal Ontario Museum, where they viewed an installation Ruth had done on the topic. In June, due to Ruth Ruth’s ingenuity, 5 of us went to Vancouver and performed the play at the Madness, Citizenship and Social Justice Conference and had a blast!

The next performance of the play will be July 17th at the May Robinson Auditorium as part of a free program of entertainment that evening entitled “Mad Pride Arts and Education on Stage.” May Robinson Auditorium is located at 20 West Lodge Avenue, one block east of Lansdowne and one block north of Queen. Come early if you want to see the other plays. The entertainment starts at 5:30. The exact start time for Tied Together is unknown, but is expected to be about 8:00 pm and run for one hour. To be sure, get there at 7:00 or 7:30.

Mad Pride Events

[Sunday, July 13th 2008](#) Two services in celebration of Mad Pride Week at Emmanuel Howard Park United Church, 214 Wright Avenue. (Roncesvalles & Wright) at **10:30 am and 5:15 pm**.

E-HP is a church dedicated to “radical hospitality: and principles of social justice and anti-oppression. There will be a community supper after the 5:15 service, to which **everyone is invited and welcome**.

The services will be conducted by **Cindy Bourgeois**, a transwoman and psychiatric survivor who is a candidate for ministry in the United Church and called to working with people experiencing social exclusion.

Monday July 14th 2008

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm Presented by **The Empowerment Council**
1001 Queen Street West, Training Room A and B

Hugging Our History: Why Psychiatric Survivors Need to ‘Own’ Our Mad Past”

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm (meet up at front patio, 1001 Queen Street West, Ossington entrance)

The Patient Built Wall Tour and Memorial

The purpose of this tour is to remember the contributions of the men and women who lived, worked, and died in the Toronto Hospital for the Insane. This is represented by the boundary walls they built which stand as enduring testament to their abilities and a monument to their endurance. We hold up this past symbol to challenge discrimination that is experienced today by people who have a psychiatric history.

Tour Guide: Geoffrey Reaume

Attendees are invited to a post tour memorial which will pay tribute to those who went before us. Organizers ask guests to bring a few lines of words to lend meaning to the moment.

Members of Psychiatric Survivors Archives Toronto (PSAT) will make a special presentation.

Tuesday July 15th 2008

3:00 pm – 9:30 pm

May Robinson Auditorium, 20 West Lodge Avenue (one block east of Lansdowne, north of Queen)

Vendors (*table space is provided for three day run*): Sound Times, Friendly Spike, A-Way Courier, Mad Students Society, TK Workman, Creative Works Studio (Marlena Zuber), Art by AnnaMarie, Social Phobias Support Group (Earla Dunbar), Greenspiration (Angela Bischoff) Naomi Laufer, Bonnie Briggs, Rob Cusson, Women Won't Forget, CAPA –Coalition Against Psychiatric Assault, MHPGCC – Mental Health Police Records Check Coalition, Women's Health in Women's Hands and more.

Mad Pride Arts and Education in Literature

-3:00 pm – 9:30 pm - Vendors

-3:30 pm – 5:00 pm – Pat Capponi – reading from her new novel, The Corpse Will Keep

-5:00 pm – 5:30 pm – Reception – Catered by The Raging Spoon

-5:30 pm – 6:30 pm – Poetry Workshop with Honey Novick

Mad Pride Arts and Education in Film

-6:30 pm – 7:30 pm -- Angela Bischoff introduces; Big Bucks Big Pharma – A film that pulls back the curtain on the multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical industry to expose the insidious ways that illness is used, manipulated and in some instances created for capital gain (46 min)

-7:30 pm – 7:45 pm -- Tk Workman introduces; The Cat Talks Back, a film about noise pollution (4 min)

-7:45 pm – 8:15 pm – Michael and Erick introduce The Mad Pride Bed Push Parade from a Kid's Perspective (30 min)

-8:15 pm – 8:30 pm – Michele Thomson Rosano introduces; Anti Stigmatization Series (6 min)

-Terri Calder introduces; Canned Meat/ immobilized (3min.30sec.) is a story told through the eyes of a disenchanted woman who is disconnected from society and explores the aspects of mobility and immobility, physically and mentally.

-8:30 pm– 9:30 pm – Angela Bischoff Introduces; Prescription Suicide The story of 6 kids and their encounters with antidepressant drugs – their lives changed forever. www.prescriptionsuicide.com



Wednesday July 16th 2008

3:00 pm to 6:30 pm

May Robinson Auditorium

20 West Lodge Avenue (one block east of Lansdowne, north of Queen)

Mad Pride Arts and Education in Human Rights

-3:00 pm – 9:30 pm -Vendors

-3:30 pm – 5:00 pm – Rights Forum: Mental Health, Employment Accommodation and the Law in Ontario. Facilitator; Ayshia Musleh, PCLS

-5:00 pm – Brown Bag Snack from Houselink Community Kitchen

-5:00 pm – 6:30 pm –Focused discussion lead by D. Marchand; The Supreme Court of Canada Presents: Welcome to Aldous Huxley's Brave New World" – adoptees; sperm bank babies; human created by new reproductive technologies and other deliberately created genetic orphans; some emotional, mental and physical repercussions; the SSCC's decision that human beings do not have a right to true biological information; the creation of the right to procreate anonymously and offer your child to the adoption industry; and, the death of section 15 Charter equality rights.

Mad Pride and Disability

7:00 pm – 9:30 pm - Art With Attitude – Crip Cabaret - presented by Ryerson University's School of Disability Studies. Jorgenson Hall, Pod 250, Ryerson Campus. We'll leave as a group from May Robinson Auditorium at 6:30 pm.

Thursday July 17th 2008

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Samuel Malcolmson Lecture Theatre, 1001 Queen Street West

The Empowerment Council hosts: Zoned Out

-1:00 pm – 1:30 pm – Zoned Out: How city zoning rules discriminate against psychiatric survivors – by Lilith Finkler

- 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm – Relief and Resistance; A poor peoples history of East downtown – Toronto, - by Gaetan Heroux

3:30 pm – 9:30 pm

May Robinson Auditorium, 20 West Lodge Avenue

Mad Pride Arts and Education on Stage

-3:30 pm – 5:00 pm – Vendors

-5:00 pm – 5:30 pm – Sketch Animation with Francesca and Lila Rose

-5:10 pm – 6 pm - Mind Storm written and directed Matthew Christie, a one-act play

-6:30 pm – 7 pm - Therapy written by Michael and Jiji Voronka, performed by Julie Devaney and Jiji Voronka

-7:00 pm – 8:00 pm – Mad and Proud with David-Jan Juresek and Playback Theatre

Playback Theatre is a kind of theatre where you the audience are invited to tell stories from your life and a trained group of emphatic actors and musicians play them back. It is a community ritual and a spontaneous event – come and share or simply relax and watch!

-8:00 pm - 9:00 pm – Tied Together, a Mad People's History Play by The Friendly Spike Theatre Band

Friday July 18th 2008

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Training Room A&B, 1001 Queen Street West

Peer-driven Research – Psych Survivors Take Charge

Lana Frado: Executive Director, Sound Times Support Services

Lucy Costa: Outreach Worker, Empowerment Council

Tina Shapiro: Community Service Worker, Sound Times Support Services

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre, 1499 Queen Street West

Mad Pride Poetry Night and Bobbi Nahwegahbow Memorial Award Presentation

Poets interested in reading their work should sign up at PARC at 6:00 pm.

Saturday July 19th 2008

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), 1001 Queen Street West, Front Patio (Ossington Entrance)

Gather on CAMH Patio at 1:00 pm. We will hold a short presentation to present awards, and then Parade west on the south sidewalk to Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre.

Second Annual Mad Pride Bed Push Parade

3:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre, 1499 Queen Street West Toronto Ontario

Refreshments, entertainment and fun – hosted by PARC

Mad Pride Toronto Bed Push Party

Sunday July 20th 2008

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Sally Horsfall Eaton (SHE) Building, 99 Gerrard Street East, Room 560, Toronto, Ontario

Workshop Discussion about Mad Pride

For info on events:

416 516-4740 or

Friendly Spike Theatre Band, Suite 210, 2466 Dundas Street West, Toronto ON M6P 1W9 or

friendlyspike@primus.ca.

If you wish to help out at the events, best just show up and pitch in.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PSYCHIATRIC SURVIVOR ARCHIVES, TORONTO, ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2008 from 1 - 4 PM

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION, 215 SPADINA AVENUE, SUITE 120
(south of Dundas, east side of Spadina)

psychiatric survivors/consumers/ex-patients and allies are welcome to attend PSAT's AGM to hear a report on past activities, discuss future directions and elect board members for the year ahead.

This meeting is wheelchair accessible.

For more information please call: 416 661-9975.

For more information on PSAT please see:

<http://www.psychiatricsurvivorarchives.com/>

Join Pat Capponi and friends for the launch of her new Dana Leoni mystery,

The Corpse Will Keep

Thursday, July 17, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm at
PARC, 1499 Queen West.

Free and open to all.

To subscribe to The Bulletin or The Wellness and Recovery Newsletter, call the Consumer/Survivor Information Resource Centre of Toronto at 416 595-2882 or email us at csinfo@camh.net. The Bulletin is published twice a month on the 1st and 15th. The Wellness and Recovery Newsletter is a joint production of Community Resource Connections of Toronto (CRCT) and the C/S Info Centre. It is published 4 times a year. The next issue will be sent out at the end of July. Both are posted on the CRCT website at www.crct.org, and both publications are free to receive. We encourage people to subscribe by email if they can so we have the resources available to mail to those who do not have access to a computer or the Internet.

Helen
C/S Info

Consumer/Survivor Information Resource Centre Assistant Coordinator 0.8 FTE (28 hours per week)

The Consumer/Survivor Information Resource Centre was established with the philosophy that access to information provided by and for Consumer/Survivors in an informal setting can result in better usage of the resources in the community and within oneself and will therefore, result in a better quality of life.

Responsibilities:

- Provide information and assistance in finding resources to consumer/survivors, mental health professionals and the general public, both on the phone and in person,
- Collect information relevant to the readers of the Bulletin,
- Publish, and distribute the semi-monthly newsletter, The Bulletin, by mail and email, including photocopying, envelope stuffing, etc.
- Expand and diversify the organization's resource material,
- Distribute the quarterly Wellness and Recovery newsletter,
- Make additions, changes and deletions to our mailing lists,
- Complete a workload measurement tool and a client contact log for statistical and funding purposes,
- Network with funders, general members and community partners in a professional manner in accordance with our mission and goals,
- Plan and/or participate with consumer/survivor stakeholders in community events,
- Maintain confidentiality of C/S Info clients to outside parties,
- Other duties as required.
- Hours are flexible but are generally until 5 pm or later and between Monday and Friday.

Qualifications:

- **Must be a psychiatric Consumer/Survivor**
- Thorough knowledge of the services and resources available to consumer/survivors,
- Ability to be gracious to a wide variety of people who come to call,
- Strong attention to detail for proof reading and editing The Bulletin,
- Cooperative spirit,
- Self motivated, able to assess priorities and move to the next task with minimum supervision,
- Excellent oral and written communication skills,
- Ability to work with both Consumer/Survivors and mental health professionals,
- Familiar with Internet research, office equipment and WORD,
- Website knowledge would be an asset.

\$18 – 21 /hour commensurate with experience.

Apply in writing by 5:00 July 18, 2008 to: Consumer/Survivor Information Resource Centre of Toronto.

By Mail: c/o CAMH 250 College Street Toronto ON M5T 1R8.

By email: csinfo@camh.net By Fax: 416 595-0291

Or Drop-Off Your Resume In Person During Drop-In Hours : 252 College Street.