

Mood for Thought MDO Newsletter Summer 2023



MDO's Peer Newsletter

Enhancing the quality of life of people with mood disorders and their loved ones since 1986.

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Also on Facebook and Instagram

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Letter from the editors

Here we are again!

Once again, we are testing new ideas and methods in an attempt to redefine and modernize MDO's newsletter. Through **Mood for Thought**, we hope to strengthen our sense of belonging to our MDO community and give our voices meaning and value within a mutually supportive and accepting environment.

In this edition of our Newsletter, in addition to providing informative updates on the functioning and activities of MDO, the various voices of our peers are featured to illustrate our diversity and share MDO's impact on our recovery. In fact, it is by telling our stories, through language and words that we define and shape our culture. For instance, a decade ago, words and terms like BIPOC, POC, she/her, he/him, they/them, non-binary, LGBTQIA+, white privilege, colonialism, and micro-aggression might have been unfamiliar to some people. Today, these words are more commonly used to create a world where social justice, equity, and diversity prevail.

We use language and words to express who we are to others, as well as to strengthen our inner self-perceptions. Our beliefs, values, and sense of self are revealed as we speak.

With **Mood for Thought**, we can reclaim the power of our words and those of our peers. Sharing our own stories can help us build the accepting and compassionate society we long for, which is vital to our recovery. Together, we can affirm our needs and strengthen our bond. The world can be a better place if we are not afraid to say, at least among our peers, "I live with mental illness. Take me as I am."



MDO Programming

Please consult MDO’s website www.moordisordersottawa.ca or call the Info Line: at **613-526-5406** for more information about MDO’s programs, support groups, and events.

| MDO SUMMER 2023 | | WEEKLY SCHEDULE | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------|
| | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
| 9:30 AM | | Mugs Up ☕ | | Mugs Up ☕ | | Yakn Yarn 🧶 | |
| 10:00 AM | | Virtual | | Virtual | | Virtual | |
| 10:30 AM | | Open and on-going | | Open and on-going | | Open and on-going | |
| 11:00 AM | | registration | | registration | | registration | |
| 11:30 AM | | | | | | | |
| 12:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 5:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 6:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 6:30 PM | | WRAP | | Pathways to Recovery 🧘 | MDO Peer Support 🗣️ | | |
| 7:00 PM | Virtual Games Night 🎮 | | | Virtual | Open and on-going | | |
| 7:30 PM | | In person for 10 weeks | | Virtual for 12 weeks | Open and on-going | | |
| 8:00 PM | Open and on-going | Started April 17th, 2023. | | Started April 12th, 2023 | registration | | |
| 8:30 PM | registration | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| <p>MORE TO LOOK FORWARD TO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual End of Spring Virtual Party. • Annual Summer Picnic on July 18th, 2023. • Annual Art Auction. • More Summer programs will be announced shortly. | | | | | | | |
| <p>MEETING: Round Table for Peer Facilitator Friday May 26th 2023 from noon to 1:30 pm</p> | | | | | | | |

Peers Around Town

IMPORTANT

If you, or a loved one, are in immediate danger of hurting themselves or others please call 911.

General Health and Information Helplines



Community Information Center of Ottawa (CICO)

Provides information about a wide range of services in the Ottawa area (e.g. community services, health, social services, government services, employment, and housing).

613-241-4636 x211

1-877-761-9076 (Toll-Free)

TTY: 1-866-540-0565

<http://www.cominfo-ottawa.org/>

Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario

"Community Information Bulletin"

A primary source of information to access social and community services in Eastern Ontario.

Call toll-free: 1-877-761-9076

www.cneo-nceo.ca

eMentalHealth

Online navigation system, including information and referral services.

Find mental health help in your area. <https://www.ementalhealth.ca>

Mental Health Support

Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region

www.dcottawa.on.ca

Distress 613-238-3311

Crisis 613-722-6914

Toll-free 1-866-996-0991

TEXT 343-306-5550

7 days per week, 10 am to 11 pm.

Drugs and Alcohol Helpline

www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca

Provides information about drug and alcohol addiction services in English, French, and over 170 other languages.

1-800-565-8603



Mental Health Crisis Line Ottawa

<https://crisisline.ca>

MH Health Crisis Line is geared to answer calls from people aged 16 or older.

City of Ottawa 613-722-6914

Outside of Ottawa 1-866-996-0991

Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre

www.orcc.net

Provides English service to survivors of sexual violence, supporters, and family and friends of survivors. The crisis line volunteer counselors provide crisis intervention on issues such as childhood sexual abuse, recent sexual assault, flashbacks, and suicide intervention.

Dial: 613-562-2333

Canada Suicide Prevention Service

<https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/>

Free crisis line services are offered to everyone throughout Canada at 1-833-456-4566

Connect via **TEXT** at 45645, 4 pm - 12 am Eastern Time Zone (Ottawa).

Monthly Movie Ticket Draw

WHO? For Members Only.

WHAT? 10 Cineplex Gift E-Cards worth 15\$ each are drawn every month. Enjoy a new release at home or in the theater!

WHEN? On the 21st of EVERY month.

HOW? It's simple to win. Register on the MDO website before 8 p.m. on the 21st of each month. E-movie cards will be emailed to winners.



There is one exception: If you win a card one month, you will not be eligible to win another until the following month. In this way, we can increase the number of winners every month.

MDO Members Cheer on the Ottawa Senators



The Ottawa Senators were challenged by the Philadelphia Flyers during a game at the Canadian Tire Center on March 30th, where Bell Let's Talk donated 24 tickets to MDO members.

Despite the Flyers striving to demolish the Sens victory with brilliant plays, notably with 3 consecutive goals late in the match, DesBrincat began overtime off a fumbled puck at 1:36 scoring into an empty goal recovering the Sens threat.

Inebriated and emotional from their triumph, MDO fans did indeed rejoice as their beloved Sens took the lead 5 to 4 over the Philadelphia Flyers.

Call for Volunteers

MDO needs your help!



Whether it is to share your ideas, suggestions, and feedback, we need YOUR help to make the Peer Newsletter a success!

MDO Newsletter needs:

- Writers to share their inspirational recovery journeys;
- Participants in MDO's activities, programs, and support groups to share their experiences with MDO;
- Artists share their artwork;
- Poets to share their creations;
- Editors to review the document before its publication;
- Anything else that you can think of ... We need your help!

Recovery is possible with mutual peer support!

MDO Memberships

Become a Member or Renew your MDO Membership

The membership fees you pay support MDO's programs, events, peer support groups, and other activities.



It is a low-cost annual membership. The membership fee is 100% directed to **benefit you and your peers.**

The choice of membership include:

- \$5 - Individual, Low Income Membership
- \$10 - Family, Low Income Membership
- \$15 - Individual, Regular Membership
- \$20 - Family, Regular Membership
- Other: any amount that you can and want to contribute.

As a member, you will have **free access** to certain events only available to MDO members, such as the

- Holiday dinner,
- monthly movie draw,
- Summer picnic and
- Other special events, such as tickets to see a Senators game thanks to a generous donation from Bell Lets Talk.

Featured Peer Facilitator

Peer facilitators are crucial to MDO's success. They are the ones on the front line, interacting daily with the people who turn to MDO for support. They listen to people's concerns, compassionately offer their support, and most of all, infectiously share their hope through inspirational recovery stories.

It is in recognizing the invaluable support peer facilitators provide to our community that this newsletter chose to feature one of its peer facilitators, Kathleen.

Hello, my name is Kathleen and I am a Peer Facilitator with MDO.



I would like to share with you, the reader, a little bit about who I am and why I enjoy peer facilitation.

My strengths are: I am patient and compassionate. I am kindly curious about people. I have a gentle sense of humor and can laugh at myself. I am humbly insightful.

My milestones for this year are: To facilitate WRAP. To get training in facilitating Pathways to Recovery. To get more courses in herbalism. To

celebrate our 30th anniversary with my wife by going on a whale watching tour at Tadoussac on the St. Lawrence River.

The insights (A-HA moments) I have gained this year are: I took a week-long training course and went daily from 9-4 which disrupted my regular "wellness" activities and routine. It made the course very stressful. I realized afterward how far I had come in developing a set of tools that allowed me to have extended periods of stability. I also noted that I had taken those skills for granted so I renewed my commitment to maintaining them. Moreover, I'm excited to seek out and explore new ways to support my wellness.

My favorite role: My all-time favorite role is Facilitating. I never knew what it was when I was employable and didn't get a chance to do it. I love it, it brings together so many of my skills and passions into one neat package. These are the best years of my life.

Why I chose to become a facilitator: I wanted to help people heal from tremendously difficult, often horrific circumstances. I want to help people see they are more than the hateful things said and done to them. I want to help people develop a hope-filled vision for their lives.

What I like the most about facilitating: It's emotionally rewarding to me. I feel I make a difference in people's lives. It's very meaningful. It allows me to be a healer despite my ineptitude at science.

My vision for my life includes: Becoming an herbalist, a certified peer worker, and who knows what else. I want to be skilled in a variety of therapeutic techniques to support people in their mental health recovery.

Peer's Perspective

Gender Pronouns and What It Means To Me

Author: Fred



One of the disabling things about gender pronouns is that they tend to foreclose creative ways of being in relation. As somebody who used to write "(No pronoun.)" next to my name on CVs and other pieces of writing, I have come to accept that changing the broader status quo about gender will take time. In the meantime, I say that I am transgender (for me, this means messing with gender norms, such

as presenting as a boy or a girl), yet, I find that pronouns are too limiting and stop me from being me: Fred.

Becoming pronoun fluid has meant that I had to stop worrying about how others perceive me. Fred, in general, is seen as a name for boys. In fact, having a male identity comes with many privileges.

But it is easier for me to identify with "he/him", "she/her", "they/them", etc. because I don't like being unintelligible on medical forms or other social situations. In a way, pronouns are blessings in disguise, so to speak, because they are making me count and not be cast out.

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Ideally, pronouns should not be forced on people if they/we wish to be themselves. However, they go some way in making social environments accepting and convivial.

Regarding the grammar argument - that "they/them", amongst others, won't work because these pronouns are "grammatically incorrect".

What are our options, then? We must remember that English today is born out of various dialects and that it has greatly evolved over time to reflect its cultural and linguistic needs. Just as racial, patriarchal, capitalist societies are being challenged to promote equality, respect, and acceptance, it also makes sense that the English language, as an evolving institution, will also need to follow suit to reflect a world we can all be part of, no matter how we identify ourselves.

Living with anxiety and depression, I'm so grateful to have found MDO. It was a gift to sit on the Board of Directors and to help with the direction of the organization. But difficult life circumstances came my way and I had to step away from my roles as a board member, peer, and facilitator. And that is OK too. In a society that values productivity, which is not always non-judgmental and conducive to a sense of safety, I've had to recharge from feeling overwhelmed. Often I miss MDO and all the friends I made here, and I've been rewarded with the new interpersonal skills I



learnt, such as saying "No". Recovering from depression means making choices that will foster my well being, like moving to Toronto. Recovering from anxiety means being functional enough to go on dates, follow my line of employment, and celebrate the moment.

As such, I hope this article impacts you in a positive way, since coming to MDO has nourished my mind and body to keep navigating recovery. Whatever that means to the reader, hold on to now and be present.

Featured Board of Directors Member

Author: Danielle



Joining the MDO Board of Directors (BofD) was one of the best decisions that I made to advance my recovery.

After a Pathways to Recovery group one cold and somber December evening, Sharon, one of the facilitators, approached me to be on the MDO BofD. I am not sure what she saw in me, but the fact that she believed in me, at a time when I was at the lowest point in my depression, felt good. I had been off work for a few months and had just started treatment for Major Severe Depression. I felt useless and worthless. Nevertheless, here was Sharon, asking me to be part of the BofD with MDO. Seriously? I had no purpose in life, no energy, and no will to continue at that point.

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What the heck? I had been president of my kid's school parent's council for a few years and loved it! My volunteer work made me feel valuable and competent in addition to allowing me to make many new friends with similar interests and passions. I felt like I was able to make a real difference in the school's culture and improve the parents' involvement in their kids' school community. I ended up joining MDO's BofD, initially for 2 months, with Sharon's guidance and mentoring. If I did not like it or if I could not do the work, at least I had an exit strategy.

Remembering that I once had been a valuable member of my community was the beginning of a positive shift in my thought process. If I had been a valuable person in the past, maybe joining the MDO Board could help me feel good about myself again.

At first, I did not understand anything. It took me a long time to understand the Board's role, to learn how the organization functioned, and to familiarize myself with the group's interpersonal dynamic. At times, I was so discouraged that I wanted to quit.

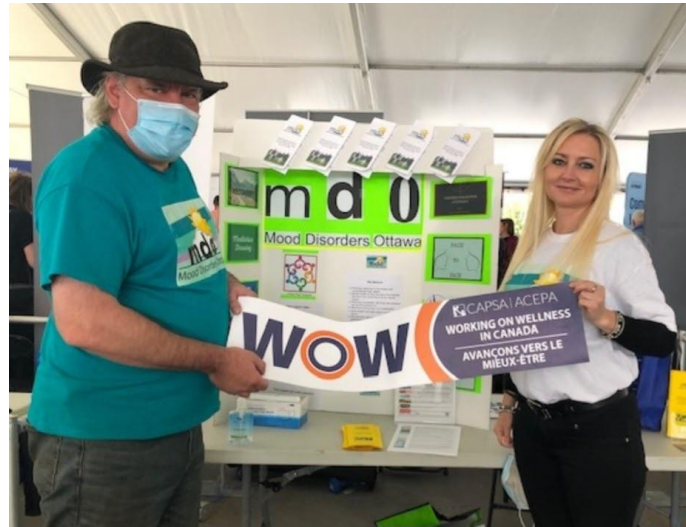
In the end, I did not give up. Two years later, I am still happily on the Board.

Today, I feel much better about myself. The volunteer work with MDO's BofD has helped me regain confidence, develop cognitive skills that I had lost with depression, break my social isolation, and allowed me to test my limits in a safe and understanding environment. Most of all, being a member of the BofD gave me a sense of purpose, enabled me to meet people with similar interests, passion, and drive, and most of all, it dug me out of the emotional gutter of my depression that low self-esteem had entrenched in me. Without a doubt, joining the MDO BofD helped save my life.



MDO's Board of Directors

Who, What, Where, When, and How?



Unlike most organizations, MDO does not have paid employees. To function, it relies solely on volunteers to perform its various tasks. The MDO volunteers perform tasks such as listening to messages left on the organization's answering machine, facilitating peer support groups and peer-recovery programs as well as organizing social events.

Members of the Board of Directors are also volunteers, but unlike non-board volunteers, they are legally responsible for the organization's actions. All decisions related to MDO's affairs and governance are made by the collective BofD. The Board of Directors is bound to act in the best interests of the people and organization they represent by their fiduciary duties. No matter what our experiences, needs, and interests are as individual board members, our decisions must serve MDO's membership's best interests.

Board Members:

A total of nine (09) members from the MDO membership comprise this year's Board of Directors. Each board member has a one-year term that will expire at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM). At the next AGM, the membership votes to approve the next Board of Directors.

Currently, in alphabetical order, the nine (09) Board members are:

- Carrie (Chair and Treasurer)
- Catina
- Christina
- Christopher (Co Vice-Chair)
- Danielle
- Jonathon
- Lucie
- Nancy (Co Vice-Chair)
- Neil (Secretary)



Please feel free to write to info@mooddisordersottawa.ca with suggestions and comments that can help our organization grow and strengthen.