

Jan, 2014 - What is Daybreak Anyway? & Making Realistic Resolutions.

At Daybreak we have realized that a lot of people don't really know what Daybreak is:

Some people think Daybreak is daycare for adults. It isn't. Daybreak involves organized events for adults who live with mental illness. The adults who participate in Daybreak activities are independent. Members choose which activities to attend. Members can come and go as they like. There are no rules about when to arrive or when anyone can leave.

Daybreak is known as an "activity centre." We are one of 23 such centres in the province. Every activity centre is different. Daybreak is probably unique because, as is appropriate in a town full of artists, members take a lot of interest in culture and the cultural activities available in Sackville, New Brunswick. There are many theatre companies, galleries, libraries and creative people here – including very creative Daybreak members! But the point is that Daybreak is not really about the activities we do. It is about the people. It is about people supporting other people who have similar illnesses, disabilities or issues. We call our centre a "peer support" centre. We support one another. That is why we always say, "We are so much better when we are together." Daybreak reduces the social isolation that is so common for people living with mental illness or with other disabilities.

Daybreak members are full participants in planning the monthly Daybreak calendar of activities. There is a budget and everyone figures out how much we can afford to do based on the budget. At Daybreak we have developed a bit of a routine. Most weeks we do crafts and related activities on Mondays and Wednesdays at our Centre on Queen's Road. There is an extensive collection of art and craft supplies available. Sometimes there is a structured craft or activity, but there are always other options available. Every effort is made to accommodate individual interests. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we go to a gym to do aerobic activities, build strength and develop fitness. We know that there is a link between physical fitness and mental health. Sometimes we do other things like bowling. Once a month we visit the Owen's Art Gallery for art education. On Tuesdays we sketch after we go to the gym. On Thursdays after gym we go to Uncle Larry's to play billiards and other games.

At Daybreak we like to be fully a part of our community. We like to do volunteer work. Once a month we help with sorting and distributing food for the Fresh for Less program administered by the Tantramar Family Resource Center. Sometimes we help at volunteer days at Open Sky or the Sackville Community Garden. We are always interested in finding ways to give back to the community.

In the summertime we spend a lot of time learning about and growing food at the Sackville Community Garden.

In addition to these activities there are small groups who meet to pursue specific interests. We have small groups that: learn about stress management; learn to crochet; go to lectures and discuss the information; do creative writing; and more.

At Daybreak we try to have something for everyone. We are so much better when we're together!

Making Realistic Resolutions

At Daybreak we begin every new calendar year with a special lunch. At our lunch we share how our holidays went. We talk about things we liked about the last year. We imagine what we would like to do in the New Year. Some of us make resolutions. Some don't.

Some people do not like to make resolutions. There is a good reason for that. We heard a joke that New Year Resolutions are basically a "to do" list for the first week of January.

The problem with this thing we call a resolution is that we usually resolve – or decide – that we will make big changes in our lives. According to a website called Statistic Brain (<http://www.statisticbrain.com/new-years-resolution-statistics/>) the top 10 New Year Resolutions are:

1. Lose Weight
2. Get Organized
3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Stay Fit and Healthy
6. Learn Something Exciting
7. Quit Smoking
8. Help Others Realize their Dreams
9. Fall in Love
10. Spend More Time with Family(and/or Friends)

At Daybreak, some of the members had resolutions that are not on this list:

- Think positive
- Be honest
- Live on one's own
- Reduce or eliminate medication
- Stay out of trouble
- redecorate;
- work more intently on various hobbies;
- get a job;
- Face reality and/or be realistic
- Learn not to feel jealous of other people (we agree that we can feel what we feel, but balance these feelings by trying to express appreciation for the other person's happiness, success, possession or whatever it is we feel jealous about).

Less than half of resolutions are still in place after six months.

Daybreak members are pretty wise. A lot of members have set goals in the past so they know what works and what does not. We agreed that goals that work involve:

- – Being realistic
- – Breaking a big goal down into small steps
- – Using to do lists and checking off different accomplishments as you go. Checking off items on a to do list is good for mental health too. It makes a person feel relieved and happy; and
- – Not being afraid to look at our goals, decide whether they are working; and reset them without feeling guilty or mad at ourselves.

We talked about the things that actually help our mental health. Some of them are not easy to accomplish: get enough sleep; get enough exercise; and find activities that take our minds off our problems.

We talked about what we would like to do as a group this year. Now we are working on arranging some fun activities for 2014 like a Valentine's Day Group Date so none of us feel lonely if we lack a romantic partner; going bowling for a different fun way to get activity; and visiting the Sugar Woods in the Spring. We always welcome new ideas and contributions from present or future members and volunteers. Give us a call at 536-7475 or email daybreak.centre@yahoo.ca