



Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada
Association Canadienne des Troubles Anxieux

ADAC / ACTA NEWS

Winter 2011

Number 10

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Our Website:

www.anxietycanada.ca

Provincial Associations

British Columbia: www.anxietybc.com

Manitoba: www.adam.mb.ca

Ontario:

www.anxietydisordersontario.ca

Quebec: www.ataq.org

Contact Us

contactus@anxietycanada.ca

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Canada

We are very pleased to announce that ADAC/ACTA is now 10 years old. This issue will highlight our accomplishments over the years and will also focus on Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD).

From the President

Happy 10th Birthday Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada (ADAC/ACTA)!

The Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada became a reality in 2001 due to a small group of hard working, tenacious individuals from several provinces across our nation. Dr. John Walker (Manitoba), Dr. Peter McLean (British Columbia), Ms. Cheryl Driskell (Ontario), Mr. Jean-Claude Cusson (Quebec), Ms. Pauline Pratt (Ontario), Ms. Nicole Keebler (Ontario), Ms. Linda Stinson (Ontario) and myself (BC) formed the Anxiety Association of Canada/L'Association Canadienne de L'Anxiété, as it was then called.

At that time, people with anxiety and their family members were experiencing difficulty accessing accurate, evidence-based information as well as treatment resources. We proposed that the needs of people troubled by anxiety symptoms would be better served if awareness of anxiety increased in the larger population. People who were working in the field, or conducting research, or suffering from anxiety disorders had had a lot of interaction at professional conferences, over email, via phone, and from letter writing for many years. These same people decided to band together and recruit several people with broad expertise and an interest in anxiety to form the Anxiety Disorders Association of Canada (L'Association Canadienne des Troubles Anxieux).

ADAC/ACTA, in its initial year as a nascent organization, was consumed with operating procedures: establishing a board of directors, filing paperwork to be registered under the Society Act, setting up a membership database, drafting by-laws for the association, setting up a mailing procedure for an official address, designing letterhead, designing a brochure, designing a website, creating and sending a newsletter, opening a bank account, applying for a non-profit status with the appropriate government authorities, formalizing a telephone service and

Who we are:

ADAC/ACTA Board of Directors:

Lynn Miller, Ph.D - President

Sherry Holt, M.Ed. – Past- president

Kamilla Molnar, CGA - Treasurer

Martin Katzman, M.D. Chair Scientific Advisory Committee

Lisa Palmer- Chair Consumer Advisory Committee

Madalyn Marcus, M.A- Student Representative

Directors:

Stéphane Bouchard, PhD

Nicole Keefler, B.FA

Andrea McEwan, B.Sc., M.A., LLB.

Jamey Piedaleu, M.A.

John Walker, Ph.D

Executive Director: Genevieve Charette, B.A.

responding to calls from the public, and a myriad of other tasks that help support the foundation of any organization.

In 2003, we held our First Conference, for both professionals and for consumers to increase their understanding of latest research findings, in Toronto. Every other year since then, we have hosted a professional conference ('05 Montreal, '07 Toronto, '09 Vancouver).

Over the course of our ten years, we have had one general manager, Mr. Louis Blanchette, and two Executive Directors, Nicole Keefler and our current ED Geneviève Charette. They have all worked tirelessly to ensure that the day to day and global operations of the organization are met and sustained year after year.

The Board of Directors has changed over the years, but continues to meet each month throughout the year via conference calls, driven by our mandate: to promote the prevention, treatment and management of anxiety disorders, and to improve the lives of people who suffer from them.

For the last ten years this volunteer group has written many grants to support our operating budget. We lobby government, and meet with policy makers, Foundation Directors, politicians, leaders of companies, Rotary groups, community groups etc., all in an effort to raise the profile of anxiety disorders. With a bit of money, we were able to develop an extraordinary website <anxietycanada.ca> and we are recognized across Canada for our service to our community.

During the past ten years, many volunteers from different backgrounds and varying experience have given significant time and effort to this very worthy organization. It is due to this small group of hard working people that ADAC/ACTA is as successful as it is. We are now looking to expand services to the Canadian community, always with an eye to evidence-supported science.

We invite anyone to contact us with their ideas for future priorities or areas of growth. Please find elsewhere in this Newsletter our committee structure. If you or anyone you know may be interested in volunteering your time, and you have a particular expertise, we would be delighted to talk to you!

Lynn Miller, Ph.D

In the News....

Bell Canada has a new mental health initiative

In September 2010, Bell announced that it was to launch a 5 year, \$50 billion dollar initiative which will enhance awareness and the 'understanding and treatment of mental illness and promote access to care and research across the country.

As part of this initiative, February 9th will launch 'Let's Talk Day' and will contribute .5 cents for every LD call and text made by customers in support of mental health.

<http://letstalk.bell.ca/video/?home>

Mental health on CBC radio...

The CBC's radio show 'The Current' with Anna Maria Tremonti recently ran a full program on Mental Health.

"As part of a CBC national project called *Live Right Now* focused on getting out nation healthier, The Current devoted an entire program to take an in depth look at our mental health. It is often a taboo topic but it's an important discussion to have.

And our guest host, Steven Page, feels the same way. He has had his own struggles with mental illness battling depression and manic episodes."

Included in show is a segment on teen mental health.

From the Executive Director

I was hired as the ADAC/ACTA Executive Director just over three years ago and I am thrilled to be here to celebrate the Association's 10th anniversary. Since my arrival, I have enjoyed working closely with the Board of Directors to continue to meet our mission to promote the prevention, treatment and management of Anxiety Disorders. Hopefully over the years I have also helped improve the lives of the people who suffer from them and been a support to their family and friends who contact me by phone and email to ask for suggestions on how to help their loved one.

I have over the years at times felt limited and frustrated because I am unable to answer certain questions given that I am not a mental health specialist. I think that is why contacting us by email is the best means of communication. It allows me to research and find the appropriate answer, whether it is to locate a specialized and respected clinic or service in your area or to refer you to one of our four provincial affiliates. The Ontario, Manitoba and BC Associations offer incredible programs for those suffering with anxiety disorders.

Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions I have received:

1) I think I have an anxiety disorder what do I do?

First I always recommend you see your family doctor to discuss your symptoms. I also suggest you print out and fill in the "self-evaluation tests" found in our Student Zone section on our website. Doing the test beforehand, helps you arrive prepared to your doctor's appointment and avoids forgetting details about what you are feeling.

I encourage students to go see their school guidance counselor for help.

If you have health insurance at work, I recommend you call the insurance company hotline, in many cases they will find a mental health specialist for you.

2) My doctor just prescribed XXX and I am scared to take it because I don't know what the side effects are, what do I do?

Most pharmacists are only too happy to explain potential

"As many as 20 per cent of Canadian Children, Teens and Young Adults suffer from mental illness. And a lot of them aren't getting the help they need. We talk to a young teen diagnosed with major depression and anxiety and a doctor who is working on a national mental health strategy for children and youth."

To listen to Steven Page (of The Barenaked Ladies) discuss mental health issues with Anne Maria Tremonti:

Click here:

<http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/2011/01/07/youth-mental-health/index.html>

GAD:

Books of interest on Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Overcoming Generalized Anxiety Disorder-Client Manual: A Relaxation, Cognitive Restructuring, and Exposure Based Protocol for the Treatment of GAD by John R. White

Master of Your Anxiety and Worry: Workbook by Michelle G. Craske and David H. Barlow

side effects, some of them can even recommend alternative meds to discuss with your doctor should you develop a side effect.

I also like to quote what a doctor once told a friend of mine: "If you needed glasses, you'd wear them; anti-anxiety meds will help you see clearly and calmly so they are worth a try". (please understand that I am in no way suggesting you take meds, I am just saying to not rule them out if your doctor recommends them)

3) How do I find a psychologist or therapist?

I either recommend that you contact our provincial anxiety disorder association, your provincial psychological association (most of them have an online referral service), ask your family doctor for a referral or call your local hospital mental health department and ask them for a referral.

When you have questions you can also have a look at our RESOURCES section on our website. There are free downloadable brochures available on all the anxiety disorders.

I invite those of you who have not yet done so, to become a member of our association. The small one-time fee helps cover the costs of our programs and of course of publishing this newsletter. The membership form can be downloaded from our website.

Hoping you find ways to keep warm during these frigid months.

Genevieve Charette

ARTICLE: What is Generalized Anxiety Disorder? by Dr. John Walker

Maria had been a worrier as long as she could remember. Close family members had told her that she always seemed to be worried about something and when one worry settled another one would come along. She was especially concerned about her children who were now young adults. Would they be successful in their school and their work? Would they be happy with their partners? When one of them was having difficulty in some area of life, she had trouble with the worry until the problem resolved. She was concerned about her husband's health because he did not

Generalized Anxiety Disorder:
Diagnosis, Treatment and its
Relationship to
Other Anxiety Disorders
by David J. Nutt, Spilios
Agyropoulos and Sam Forshall

Chronic Anxiety: Generalized
Anxiety Disorder and
Mixed Anxiety- Depression by
Ronald M. Rapee and
David H. Barlow

A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach to
Generalized
Anxiety Disorder by Elisabeth
Breitholtz

About the ADAC/ACTA Consumer Advisory Committee

The Consumer Advisory Committee is
an active body which serves as a voice
for Canadians living with Anxiety
Disorders.

All members of this committee have
been in some way touched by an
anxiety disorder and know its
experience well.

This dedicated group of people advises
the National Board of Directors on the
issues related to the experience
of living with Anxiety Disorders and
provide input in areas such as
topics for ADAC/ ACTA public
presentations, consumer activities,
advertising for public events
and the ADAC/ ACTA website.

take as good care of his health as she would have liked.

Maria was also tense much of the time and had difficulty
letting go of her worry and relaxing. Her concentration was
not as good as she would like because she was often
distracted by worry. She found herself bothered by
headaches almost every evening. Even though she felt very
tired in the evening she had difficulty falling off to sleep
because of preoccupation with her worries.

Maria struggles with generalized anxiety disorder. This
anxiety problem affects about 3% of Canadians, with twice
as many women than men affected. This problem is
characterized by chronic problems with worry that is hard to
control. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is not diagnosed
unless the person has problem with worry for at least six
months. The problem tends to wax and wane with life
stresses but without treatment it typically continues over
many years. The problem with worry is generally
accompanied by physical symptoms such as muscle tension,
headaches, and difficulty sleeping.

Fortunately medication and psychological treatments are
equally effective for generalized anxiety disorder. Medication
treatments typically emphasize anti-depressants medications
which are also used in treating anxiety problems. A group of
researchers led by psychologist Dr. Michel Dugas at
Concordia University in Montreal has been especially
influential in developing effective psychological treatments
focused on learning to manage worries effectively. This
treatment focuses on strengthening problem solving skills,
thinking more realistically about risks, and learning to accept
the uncertainties in life.

If you think you may be suffering from Generalized
Anxiety Disorder (GAD) please contact your local health
practitioner, psychologist or social worker.

CONSUMERS SPEAK UP!

Patricia's Story...

My life ten months ago had become one that I found
unbearable to live. The anxiety that had infiltrated my every
waking moment kept me suspicious and fearful of making
ordinary decisions. I knew that something was seriously wrong
with me but I didn't know what was causing me to feel so

Individuals living with anxiety disorders or consumer family members are invited to apply for a position on this National body.

Currently we have representatives in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Our goal is to have each province of this country represented on our committee and we are actively seeking candidates.

If you or someone you know would be interested in applying for a position on the ADAC/ACTA Consumer Advisory Committee, please forward a resume and any enquiries to:

ADAC/ ACTA, P.O. Box 117 ,
Station Cote St-Luc
Montreal , Quebec , H4V 2Y3
or email us at
lpalmer@anxietycanada.ca.

Your Stories of Success...

As always, your success stories are welcome. We also understand and respect the fact that some people may want to remain anonymous. We are happy to help you tell your story and keep your privacy.

If you or someone you know has a story to share, please email it to :
contactus@anxietycanada.ca and write "Success story" in the subject.

worried all the time.

When I had a problem that needed a solution I would become agitated and fearful. Everyday problems became too much to cope with. Many times family, friends and co-workers would tell me to "relax and take it easy". It felt as though my head was going to burst. The levels of my anxiety became so unbearable that I went on a medical leave from my employment. I had hit the wall and slid down. I was depressed, angry, sad and scared. Most people around me didn't understand why I had become depressed. Little did they know that my days had been an exercise on acting "normal". Thankfully, one of the qualities that sustained me through all of this was my quick sense of humor. I used this to distract myself from the painful rushes of fear and anger that pulsed through my body. Sure I had functioned in the daytime at my job but at night I would go home, turn the phone off, close the curtains, drink wine and watch TV. Next day it would start all over again.

In my home I didn't use my alarm system or the self-cleaning on my oven. My mind hung on threads of fear that the alarm would go off and never stop and my over would go up into flames. During this period I also stopped driving outside the city because I believed that my car would explode on the highway.

At work I needed to know what was going to be the outcome of every situation that came up. I could not stand uncertainty. In my mind I would be working through every possible negative scenario so that in the end I would be so fearful that I didn't make a move. I could not see the solutions for the problems.

While I was doing some voluntary work I met a woman who shared with me that she had gone to the anxiety Disorders Unit at a local hospital for treatment of her anxiety. She thought that maybe I needed some help so she gave me the contact information. Months later I got a call to come for an interview. This was the beginning of a journey that would change the course of my life forever afterwards.

It was quite liberating to now be able to attach a name to what had plagued me and to know that I could learn how to have control over it. First I needed to understand how my mind spiralled into an obsessive attachment to a negative process and then learn how to interfere with this. Something which seemed so out of control was now going to be manageable to me. I was to become my own therapist and I found this to be an exciting prospect. I met with two therapists once a week for approximately eight months. They

Donations...

To **DONATE to ADAC/ACTA**, please go to our website at: www.anxietycanada.ca and either make a donation online via the secure site CanadaHelps.org or download a donation sheet and mail us a cheque.

Please do not send cash by mail. We will gladly issue a tax receipt for all

donations of \$20 or more.

If you have been forwarded a copy of this email and would like to receive it directly to your email address, please send an email to: contactus@anxietycanada.ca and simply write "subscribe" in the subject.

To be taken off our emailing list, please send an email and write "unsubscribe" in the subject heading.

guided me through the principles of cognitive-behavior therapy. Every week I learned a new way to look at and deal with my problems. My homework gave me the opportunity to challenge my belief system.

Some weeks I felt sad and fearful as I sat in their office. It's not easy to let go of old habits. The therapists were very kind to me and I always felt reassured by them that all this hard work was going to have real value for me. I became very motivated to change these negative patterns. It was empowering to have the skills to make concrete changes to what had been a painful existence. Every time I left their office I came away with an added sense of self esteem, that I was worth all the effort that the three of us were contributing to my well being.

We said our good-byes last week. My therapy sessions with them are over. I must now be my own therapist. It is going to be very important that I spend time each day on worry management so that those feelings of helplessness don't get a chance to return. The more practiced I become the better chance I will have of incorporating healthy responses into my daily life.

Thank you to Patricia for sharing her story and giving hope to people who are suffering and feeling alone in their struggles.