



Scarborough Women's Centre

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Women at the Centre FALL 2004 Newsletter

One of the women who has used our case management services and educational programs wanted to share her story with you.

VARSHA'S STORY

I lived in a verbally abusive situation for almost thirty-eight years. My marriage was hell. I was depressed, scared and isolated. While living this kind of life, I found that my relatives and people around me lost respect for me.

My situation felt so desperate, and I needed help. I didn't have the energy to ask for help. I was completely down and too scared. While recovering from a car accident, I was going to physiotherapy. One day during my exercises, I overheard a woman talking to her friend about Scarborough Women's Centre. I asked her about the Centre, and she gave me their phone number.

It took me a couple more years to get the courage to contact Scarborough Women's Centre. It felt good to talk to the staff person, although it wasn't easy. I saw the Case Manager, Tahereh, every two or three weeks, and very slowly I came to light. My fear and sadness faded away. She genuinely helped me by talking, listening and comforting me. Today



I am so much better, and have become more and more confident in every area of my life. I feel like a new person! I feel like I am sitting in the driver's seat, and the ball is in my court. What a feeling!

Thanks to Scarborough Women's Centre for their true help! The Centre offers so many courses and workshops, such as Assertiveness, Self Esteem, and so many more. I took almost all of them and they were excellent. My message to every woman who is suffering from any kind of unhappiness: Please go and seek help from Scarborough Women's Centre. Don't waste time in depression and crying. Life is for us to enjoy and feel peaceful. When you feel stronger, you can help others, and feel even more happiness. You can do this by contacting the Centre. They are eager to help you.

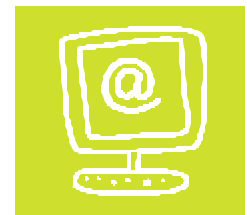
Whoever started the Centre, did the best thing for women. Thank you so much!

**22nd Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2004
6:30-8:30p.m.**

**Scarborough Civic Centre
Rotunda
150 Borough Drive
(McCowan and Ellesmere)**

Everyone is welcome! Light refreshments will be served. Members are especially requested to attend. A member of "Stand Up Scarborough" will be speaking at the event. Childcare is available if you pre-register.

R.S.V.P. by September 16th



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR WEBSITE?

It's full of information regarding programs, volunteering and special events.

Visit us at:

www.scarboroughwomenscentre.ca

THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTS OUR CENTRE

The Scarborough Mirror generously featured Scarborough Women's Centre in a front-page article this January. A new volunteer with the Centre had written to let the editor know about her enthusiasm for our work and they decided to follow up by sharing her story with the Scarborough community.

We heard from many people who were keen to get involved – as participants, volunteers and donors. One group, which especially stands out is the all female bluegrass band, **Roses in the Snow**. These wonderful women shared their amazing talents and held a benefit concert in March at the Black Swan, which raised over \$1000 for the Centre.

A group of high school students at the **Cardinal Newman High School** held a jeans day for the Centre and raised \$1000. **Woburn Collegiate** students were also generous towards us. THANK YOU!

We are also grateful to "Chief Glamazon" **Nathalie-Roze** for her donation of a portion of the May sales from her lively accessories line to the Centre!

As a non-profit, the Centre depends on the support of our whole community. Fully 1/3 of our costs are paid for by private and corporate donations, events and fundraising activities.

If your group would like to hold an event for the Centre, we would love to hear from you! Please contact Lynda Kosowan our Executive Director.

Thank you so much to everyone who keeps the doors open for Women.

Together, we can make a difference!

SPEAKING OF WOMEN

Mark your calendar! Our annual fundraising event will be held Saturday, **November 6th 2004 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. at Ellas Restaurant.**

Fascinating speakers will discuss what they've learned along their life journey. A great opportunity for networking. Stay tuned for further details.



STRENGTHENING THE CENTRE

Last year, we told you about a unique opportunity for the Centre. We are one of 5 Toronto based agencies chosen to participate in a 3-year pilot project called Building Agency Capacity funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation, Maytree Foundation and the United Way of Greater Toronto. They want to help small to mid size agencies get stronger so that they can meet the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

Over the past year, we have involved Board, staff, committees, volunteers and participants in identifying areas of growth for the Centre and addressing them. In year one, we focused on strengthening some of our policies. The Board participated in learning sessions to build their governance skills, and the Fundraising committee and staff developed their skills to build sustainability of the Centre. As well, a consolidated Strategic Plan was

developed to guide us through the next 3 years.

Next up – we will be working on a review of our organizational structure to ensure that we are working effectively as possible to serve the needs of our community. In the years to come, our focus will shift to how we can serve more women well, to build a brighter tomorrow for women and their children in Scarborough. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in making this project a success!

Are you interested in sharing your ideas and giving back to the Centre at the same time?
Have you used our services?

Consider joining the **Consumer Advisory Group**. We meet twice a year to exchange ideas and get your advice about the Centre's programs.

Our next meeting is on **29th of September at 6pm**. Please call the Centre to register by 22nd of September.



WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

is a publication of
Scarborough Women's
Centre.

Letters and suggestions are
very welcome.

Please forward to
Lynda Kosowan,
MSW, RSW
Executive Director.

EMail:
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centre.ca**



LET'S BE GUIDED BY COMMUNICATION, NOT BY ASSUMPTIONS.

"The thing that upsets people is not (so much) what happens (to them) but what they think it means." Philosopher Epictetus.

As human beings, we are born, live, and die in relationships. We learn many things from them. We get hurt and we heal in relationships. It is important to update our knowledge. We get formal education about everything but relationships. I am going to provide you a few hints about enhancing relationships and warn you about a habit that sometimes traps us.

Ideally we want to be able to express ourselves fully to one another and be accepted without any fear in any relationship. What happens is we enter a relationship with our own baggage, from our past experiences. Sometimes our past personal experiences may color our view of relationship and prevent us from effective communication with one another. Although we logically know that communication is an effective tool to connect to others and resolve possible problems, we don't practice it when problems arise. We forget to share our thoughts and feelings with each other and we tend to keep them inside. We personalize the problems and feel threatened by conflicts. In order to protect ourselves we tend to either get angry and act aggressively or get depressed and become passive.

When we get angry, we don't communicate with each other or we may say things that we don't mean; we lose our control over self. By

yelling, shouting and possibly assaulting we try to make problems go away. Problems don't get resolved that way; as a matter of fact we get into more trouble. We get angrier and develop more personal problems for self and others. When we become depressed and passive, we lose control over self too. We develop a sense of unworthiness and experience more difficulties.

These two solutions, getting angry or becoming depressed, don't do us good. They escalate our problems. I suggest you allow yourself to practice another alternative, which is communication with a person that you are in conflict with. Problems happen in relationship and need to be dealt with in relationship.

One of the most threatening habits in communication is making assumptions. We make assumptions when we don't have enough knowledge around someone's behaviors, thoughts or feelings. We make assumptions based on what we have learned from others e.g. our family, peer groups, co-workers and so on. We take our assumptions as absolute truths and don't bother to examine them. Do you think you could find two people exactly alike? Why then, do we apply our generalized assumptions to our relationships? Is it because it is easier and simpler? Is it because we don't like disagreements? Could there be other reasons? When there is a problem in relationship, making assumptions colors our minds and disables us to resolve it. Before going ahead with your assumptions, be sure you examine them by sharing them with the person you are in conflict with. Communication allows us to examine our assumptions. It allows us to be positive and empowered; it prevents us from having a black and white

mentality; it expands our horizons and allows us to explore other alternatives to resolve our problems. It allows us to build or shape our relationship; it takes us to the highest level of satisfaction where we can express ourselves freely and feel connected to one another.

Practice telling the other person what you think about discussed issues. Allow a person to share her/his thoughts with you. Try to ask questions respectfully in order to clarify the other party's behaviors or thoughts. Avoid repeating yourself and try to rephrase your points in order to send your message smoothly. Repeating has negative effects and it can be interpreted as nagging. Make your points clear and brief and express them in a calm manner.

Look at conflicts from a different angle. Conflicts in a relationship could be signs of need for improvement. Don't be afraid of conflicts. It is normal to have conflicts in a relationship. It is normal to have arguments with others. Like anything else, the relationship goes through its own ups and downs until it gets its own unique shape. The relationship becomes one of your sources of growth when you practice more communication.

Communication can help you to resolve conflicts easier. It opens space for discussion and eliminates negativity. It allows you to develop your own voice, and helps you to listen to the other person's voice non-judgmentally. It provides you an opportunity to learn to respect differences.

In the end, relationship survives in the light of communication, not assumptions. Don't assume! With a little awareness and patience, you can avoid this common problem in your relationships and make time for the good things. Enjoy! - **TAHEREH BARATI**
CASE MANAGER/COUNSELLOR

Acknowledgements & Appreciation

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SWC appreciates the contributions of these **groups:** Mowat White Ribbon Campaign; St Marks United Church; Students of Cardinal Newman High School; Lee Tak Wai Foundation; Caring Together, TD Employees Fund; OPG Employees & Pensioners Charity Trust; Royal Canadian Legion.

Special Thanks for In-Kind Donations to: Art Gallery of Ontario; Bulova Watch Co. Ltd.; Paramount Pictures (Canada); Steelite International Canada; Shoppers Drug Mart; Vidal Sassoon Salon; Famous Players; Hilton Toronto; Hockley Valley Resort; Keg Restaurants Ltd.; Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People; Ontario Science Centre; Paramount Canada's Wonderland; Pizza Pizza; Radisson Hotel Toronto East; Soulpepper Theatre Co.; Tim Hortons; The Big Stretch Yoga Centre; The Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre; The Fairmont Royal York; The Keg Restaurants Ltd.; Timex Canada Inc.; Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Team; Toronto Argonauts; U.of T. Bookstore; Winners; Wild Water Kingdom; The Bradford Exchange; Santos Place; Merveille Health and Beauty Spa; Joey Bravo's Ristorante; New Image Health and Skin Care; Sony of Canada Ltd; Paramount Home Video; Aldgate Group; Wal-Mart Canada Corp; Optical 20/20; Curves; Natural Solutions Spa; Laura Secord; Timex Canada Inc; Revlon Canada; Sisters Pace Fitness; Umbra Ltd; Town Florist.

SUPPORT THE CENTRE!!

Make a donation, become a member, or volunteer

Name: _____ Address _____

Apt. # _____ City/Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

I would like to be a member of the Centre. _____ Please send an information package. _____

My donation of: \$500. _____ \$200. _____ \$50. _____ \$20. _____ Other _____

Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____ payable to Scarborough Women's Centre.

Visa Card _____ Expiry Date: _____ Signature: _____

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Yes, you may acknowledge my donation in your newsletter and website.