



CoDA CANADA NEWSLETTER



January, 2011 • Volume 2 Issue 1

Announcements

- CoDA Canada Service Positions Available: newsletter article writers, Canadian CoDA literature editors, CoDA Canada Forum moderator, outreach email responder,
- New Canadian Hospital and Institutions Representative: Veronica H has recently volunteered
- General Service Representatives and Hospital and Institutions Area Representatives needed across Canada
- Check out Service Opportunities information on www.cdrs.ca. If you would like more information on a position, please email service@cdrs.ca.
- Do you have a story or a poem you would like to share about your recovery? We want to hear from you. Contributions should be no more than 250 - 500 words long and should reflect the Steps and Traditions as well as the principles of CoDA. Please submit contributions to lists@cdrs.ca. We reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary for the length, editorial content and style of this newsletter.

Wishing you a continued healthful recovery in the New Year!

From the Co-Dependents Society Recovery Board of Directors and Members: Deborah, Ernie, Gerry, Geordie, Sharon, Susan, & Tonja

Calendar of Events

Seabeck Retreat • Seabeck, WA • March 11, 12, 13, 2011

Contact Cynthia Mullen @ cindy@newmedcareers.com

CoDA World Fellowship Conference & Convention
Denver, CO • July 5-10, 2011 (See page 2 for more details)

Vancouver Island Retreat • September 9-11, 2011

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Co-Dependents Recovery Society

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Please pass this newsletter to those who may be interested. If you would like to receive this newsletter, please email: lists@cdrs.ca to add your email address to our database.

Highlights from the Annual CoDA World Fellowship Conference

CoDA World Fellowship 2010 International Conference was a most dynamic one. First time delegates, Tonja T., Toronto, ON, and Michèle L., for Dépendant affectif anonyme (CoDA Quebec) brought a true commitment of outstanding service. Also in attendance, Deborah R., Calgary, Alberta, delegate for Co-Dependent Recovery Society (CDRS) was privileged to be associated with her new "Canadian Comrades." The Canadian delegates delightfully and gratefully engaged with other members in sharing experience, strength and hope at the international level. The opportunity to have a meeting directly to engage with the other international delegates was a pure pleasure. Much was gained that will be shared with fellow Canadian Co-Dependents during the next year.

The major highlights of the conference included:

- Highest increase in attendance from international countries including: Canada, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Japan, and the United Kingdom. This increased participation has now allowed "**more Trustees on the [new] Board from outside the United States than inside.** We have crossed an **important threshold in our development as a world fellowship.**" CoDA Second Quarter Service Report for 2010, p. 1
- Voting Entities – outside the USA continue to increase
- The numbers of meetings are changing whereby the US meetings are slightly decreasing, while the Canadian meetings are on the up rise.
- 8 new meetings have sprouted up in British Columbia and 3 in Ontario.
- 51 English speaking and 52 French speaking meetings for all of Canada. Michèle L. reports that Quebec has 51 voting entities which result in at least 25 General Service Representatives on the average meet monthly for the province of Quebec.
- **Revised and updated Patterns of Co-dependency literature**-look for the **NEW avoidance patterns.** (**Please note these changes for your meeting format. See revised copy in this newsletter.**)
- Co-Dependents Recovery Society (Canada) renewed the contract for copyrighting CoDA literature. In continued good faith, CDRS provided a \$1,000 donation.
- Board stated concern for a lack of rotation of service people for some positions at all levels.
- All motions for next year's conference are asked to be presented 60 days in advance in order that information can be shared and discussed at the group levels before discussing at conference.
- **Next year's conference and convention will be in Colorado Springs, CO from July 5-10, 2011—CoDA's 25th Anniversary! Will you be there representing your Canadian voting entity? For more information, contact Deborah R. @ deborah_outreach@cdrs.ca**

2011 International CoDA Convention

workshops on working a personal program, speakers fun

Know a new sense of belonging

Location in Denver, Colorado

July 8-10th, 2011 (Friday, Saturday & Sunday)

International CoDA Convention Registration Prices

- Early-bird Registration -- \$45.00(**until 1 Feb 2011**)
- Regular Registration -- \$65.00(after 1 Feb 2011)
- Walk-in registration -- \$75.00 (Last year Registration sold out early & Walk-in Registrations were not available)
- Friday Luncheon -- \$25.00 Friday Dance -- \$10.00
- Saturday Banquet -- \$45.00
- Sunday Brunch -- \$25.00

Full Payment due at time of registration

Registration includes all workshops, speaker meetings, hospitality room and great fellowship with members from around the globe!

Co-Dependent Anonymous, Inc. (CoDA)

2011 CoDA Service Conference (CSC)

International Business - Motions discussed & voted on

Location in Denver, Colorado

July 5-8th, 2011 (Tue, Wed, Thurs & Fri)

REGISTRATION Prices

Trustees/Delegates/Committees' Chair Registration - \$75.00
You need to be voted in by your Canadian CoDA community(ies) to represent your province or area and vote on motions for the conference. - FREE Observers only – No voting privileges.

Full Payment due at time of registration

For More Info See <http://www.coda.org/events/index.php>

Or contact Deborah R. – deborah_outreach@cdrs.ca
or Gerry B. – unionwith1@gmail.com.

Denial Patterns:

- I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling.
- I minimize, alter or deny how I truly feel.
- I perceive myself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.
- I lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others.
- I label others with my negative traits.
- I can take care of myself without help from others.
- I mask my pain in various ways such as anger, humour, or isolation.
- I express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways.
- I do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom I am attracted.

Low Self Esteem Patterns:

- I have difficulty making decisions.
- I judge everything I think, say or do harshly, as never “good enough.”
- I am embarrassed to receive recognition and praise or gifts.
- I value others’ approval of my thinking, feelings, and behaviour over my own.
- I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.
- I constantly seek recognition that I think I deserve.
- I have difficulty admitting that I made a mistake.
- I need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and will even lie to look good.
- I am unable to ask others to meet my needs or desires.
- I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.
- I perceive myself as superior to others.
- I look to others to provide my sense of safety.
- I have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.
- I have trouble setting healthy priorities.

Compliance Patterns:

- I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others' anger.
- I put aside my own interests and hobbies in order to do what others want.
- I am hyper vigilant regarding the feelings of others and take on those feelings.
- I am afraid to express my beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differ from those of others.
- I value others' opinions and feelings more than my own and am afraid to express differing opinions and feelings of my own.

Compliance Patterns (cont.):

- I accept sexual attention when I want love.
- I make decisions without regard to the consequences.
- I give up my truth to gain the approval of others or to avoid change.

Control Patterns:

- I believe most other people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
- I attempt to convince others of what to think, do or feel.
- I freely offer others advice and directions without being asked.
- I become resentful when others will not let me help them.
- I lavish gifts and favours on those I want to influence.
- I use sexual attention to gain approval and acceptance.
- I have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others.
- I demand that my needs be met by others.
- I lavish gifts and favours on those I care about.
- I use my charm and charisma to convince others of my capacity to be caring and compassionate.
- I use blame and shame to emotionally exploit others.
- I refuse to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate.

Avoidance Patterns:

- I act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward me.
- I judge harshly what others think, say, or do.
- I avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a means of maintaining distance.
- I allow my addictions to people, places or things to distract me from achieving intimacy in relationships.
- I use indirect and evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.
- I diminish my capacity to have healthy relationships by declining the use the tools of recovery.
- I suppress my feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable.
- I pull people toward me, but when they get close, I push them away.
- I refuse to give up my self-will to avoid surrendering to a power that is greater than myself.
- I believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness.
- I withhold expressions of appreciation.

Co-Dependents Recovery Society 2009 – 2010 Annual General Meeting

Presidents Report

Despite a slow first half, (we were down for 2 month to relocate) we have managed to have a strong second half. There was an increase in CoDA events this year and some new groups were formed. We added a CoDA Forum to our website (go to www.cdrs/forums) and we have in the past year begun working on a contract from CoDA Inc. to print and distribute CoDA approved literature.

We thought getting the license a difficult task. It was, but implementing the contract is shaping up to be just as difficult. The first question you might ask is “why print?” The reason is simple we have been given an opportunity to supply literature that is printed in Canadian English. We have been able to stabilize the price by being the manufacturer and distributor (no middle man) and we have been able to reduce the cost to the membership.

Phase one has been completed; our pamphlets are now made in house. As you can tell on our current order form they have been reduced in price by 30%. They might not be as eye pleasing as the originals but they are of high quality and get the message out just the same. Our next phase will be to print the folded booklets. We are currently working on finding the best solution to get this to you with a substantial savings. We feel strongly that co-dependents need access to the literature and the most effective way to accomplish this is by making it affordable. This implementation is a process that takes planning, patience and money. Equipment and printing incur start up costs. How quickly we get this together depends on our funding. Further changes to the order form will come with shipping costs being shown up front. This will not increase the cost of literature but will reflect more accurately what our costs are and will simplify our bookkeeping practice.

All in all, we have been busy upgrading, growing and moving forward in loving service. We hope that in the coming year we will be able to expand our volunteer services, so you too can experience the growth that comes with service in a healthy way.

Gerry B
CDRS Chairperson

CDRS Chairperson Changes

At the Co-Dependents Recovery Society (CDRS) Annual General Meeting, board director positions for the CDRS were reviewed. After a lengthy and energetic service as Chairperson, Gerry B. of New Westminister, BC, made the decision to resign this year. He has been active on the board for past 9 years and has been the Chairperson for 5 years. He performed not only these duties, but also many more, some of which included and still include: web master, literature distributor and printer. Gerry desires to have more time to pursue other avenues within CDRS such as increasing Canadian CoDA printed material and helping to decrease literature costs to the CoDA members. He has volunteered to be the Vice Chairperson for the next term and the Board of Directors accepted his new position.

Gerry stated, “It has been a true blessing to be of service to the program that has given me back my life. I am excited at the growth of CoDA throughout the World and in Canada and the hope of recovery that it brings. Because new people are stepping up, I am able to give service in an area that I am passionate about, publishing in Canada.”

Deborah R., Calgary, AB, was asked to consider taking on the chairperson role and has agreed. Although Deborah joined the CDRS Board over a year ago, she is not new to service. She started in CoDA 20 years ago in California where she was active at the local and community levels. She was the Fellowship Coordinator of Orange County where she helped organize county fellowship activities for over twenty five meetings. Six years ago, she moved back to Canada and took up residence in Calgary. She helped start a new meeting there and began attending the CoDA World Fellowship Business Conferences as a Canadian/CDRS delegate. Deborah reflected, “I am so ever grateful for all the earnest efforts Gerry has done in so many ways to help bring CDRS services to where they are. I have much respect for his deep wisdom and vast experience. It is an honour to be able to be of service in representing CDRS and recovering Canadian codependents. As I work a “we program” to pursue my personal recovery, I strongly believe in working a “we service” philosophy, too. Given the help of God, the other Board members as well as, the many talented recovering codependents across Canada and abroad, “we” can be of great service

to “carry the message for those who still suffer.” Deborah is very interested in hearing from you and can be reached at deborah_outreach@cds.ca.

As for the other board directors, Geordie F. will remain as Secretary while Susan F. will continue as Treasurer. Ernie F., Prince Albert, SK will continue his role as a director. Sharon B., New Westminster, BC is acting as the Outreach contact person. Tonja T., Toronto, ON has recently joined the Board as an observer.

As a whole, the Board has much on their agenda to accomplish in the next year. Some of the priorities will be the continued development of Canadian literature, the CoDA Canada newsletter, the Canadian CoDA Forum, and contacting all Canadian secretaries through outreach surveys. Additional goals are an increase of awareness and nominations of General Service Representatives, as well as provincial delegates at the CoDA World Fellowship Business Conference.

Deborah R.
CDRS Chairperson
Calgary, AB

PROVINCIAL EVENTS

Vancouver Island CoDA Retreat- The Journey Continues---balancing work with play laughter and fun

My name is Malcolm S. and I am a codependent. My wife, Barb G. and I have organized the Vancouver Island Retreat on September 10-12, 2010 and this is our second year.

It was a primarily a CoDA Retreat on with an inner child focus. We were so blessed to have attendees with such diverse talent that we have drawn on. This year's retreat was themed on page 79 of the CoDA big book “The Journey Continues---balancing work with play laughter and fun.” We had 5 workshops based on the new patterns and characteristics, we had a dance with a live band and a therapeutic dance session, we had a recreation break with yoga and kayaking and swimming and nature walks. CoDA members led all sessions.

Personally, I get so much out of retreats that I think it as essential in my recovery to be able to get to a place in such a short period of time. [!] feel free to share at a very deep level to get in-touch with the losses of my childhood feel and heal them and return to a place of gratitude. After the retreat, I felt so peaceful and warm inside and at the same time, invigorated and recharged to go on and be able to share my experience strength and hope.

Malcolm S.
Vancouver Island

Vancouver Island Dances

I'm writing to you in regards to the Vancouver Island retreat that I attended two weeks ago. It was an incredible experience! This is the second year that I have attended the retreat. This year I organized a dance called “Healing and Releasing Through Movement: Dancing It all Off”. The response was remarkable and I will volunteer to do another one next year. On that note, I am willing to offer this service as a volunteer at other CoDA retreats if anyone is interested in why including this event in their program. The dance was very playful and the inner child really came out for several people. The music that I play is world beat and was well received by all participants. I am open to having this presented in the newsletter if you like, and have the space to do so.

Thanks so much,
Francine, K.
Vancouver Island

Edmonton Retreat

The Edmonton retreat took place for three beautiful days in September at the Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert, just north of Edmonton. People from all over Alberta came. The focus of the conference was on the first three steps of the CoDA program. We had a guest speaker, Cindy H., from Vernon, BC, who shared the inspiring story of her own journey of healing. We had several workshops every day and there was absolutely something for everyone, at all stages of recovery. We tried guided meditation and built “God boxes.” We held several group forums to discuss the steps and the problems we all have. We were able to look at the steps in much more detail than is possible in a regular meeting. It was a tremendous learning experience, and best of all was the sharing and fellowship.

Mississauga ON Retreat

“No Service, No CoDA” – Carrying the Message: Living the Twelfth Step

On August 23, 2010, the Mississauga Step N’ Go Group in Ontario held its very first BBQ/Speaker meeting event. This was a very exciting event for the group. The event was generated to help spread the word, not only of our message to the codependent who still suffers, but also awareness about CDRS’s efforts in initiating intergroups to help facilitate unity within CoDA. The members in service did a fantastic job in spreading the word. CoDA literature was well stocked, the barbeque was flaming, and members came from all over Ontario. The group had barbeque and potluck an hour before the Speaker meeting, providing opportunities for some really good fellowship to take place. It was wonderful seeing so many CoDA members in attendance, including many newcomers who came specifically to attend the event!

The Mississauga Step N’ Go Group has adopted a system that recognizes milestones in recovery. These chips are neither a prize nor a reward, but merely represent a reason to be grateful for working The Steps and living by The Traditions. Milestone chips are: the Welcome chip, 1 month, 2 months, 3 months, 6 months and 9 months. Members celebrated as the many newcomers and members in early recovery stepped up to receive chips. It was such an inspiring scene reminding many of us when we first came into CoDA so early in our own recoveries ourselves, and the gifts we have today. We strengthen in our own recovery because of members before us carrying the message and being there for us as we all work the Steps. Through this service of Tradition Twelve, we also have an equal opportunity as a sponsee to give back to our sponsor through identification by sharing our experiences as we learn and work the program. This event exhibited the unity and fellowship our Traditions are based on and gave new members an opportunity to connect with old members, and likewise for members within various different home groups across Ontario.

Our speaker shared his experience, strength, and hope. It is through identification many of us are able to work the Steps and live the Traditions of recovery, so a big thank you to Jamie C. for having the courage and strength to be our very first CoDA guest speaker. His courage and strength in sharing his story, and the gifts in recovery he has

experienced continued to inspire us to work the program the best we can, because it works if we work it, and we’re certainly worth it!

The event was a huge success because of everyone’s contribution, and we thank everyone in attendance and everyone in service making it as successful as it was. The unity and fellowship at this event has also inspired the group to continue expanding in service. The Mississauga Step N’ Go Group in Ontario is planning to offer more speaker meetings and even workshops in the future; stay tuned for more information on that if you’re interested! The group is excited about offering different opportunities for members to work the program of recovery in CoDA, and these events will be posted on the CDRS website when they are finalized.

May you be joyous and free,
Step N’ Go Group
Mississauga ON

Section 7 Intergroup or Community Service

The Intergroup (Community Service Group)

A strong CoDA Intergroup (community service group) (CSG) is the key to the success of CoDA in general. This CoDA community group may also be called an Intergroup (community service committee) a sense of community at the local level leads to success in attracting and sustaining the involvement of members of the fellowship in service work and in community building activities.

The Intergroup (CSG) is made up of Group Service Representatives (GSRs) from area meetings and CoDA members from the local Fellowship. The *Twelve Service Concepts of CoDA* offer guidance in establishing service boards.

Service Participation at the Intergroup (Community Service Group)

All members of the Fellowship are welcome to attend and participate in their Intergroup (CSG). All CoDA groups are encouraged to send a Group Service Representative to Intergroup (CSG) meetings. Commonly, input is welcome from all in attendance, but Group Service Representatives are usually the only participants who vote.

Intergroup Members (GSRs)

An Intergroup (CSG) service member belongs to a CoDA group and has an interest in doing local service work. There are no "job requirements" for service to CoDA, although 6 months of

meeting attendance is helpful before beginning service work. Some consider it a way of practicing and demonstrating responsibility and accountability to self and to others, while working a program of recovery and remaining open to Higher Power's will.

Group Service Representative (GSR)

A GSR is a person the Intergroup (community Service Group) selects/ elects to act as a trusted servant and attend Voting Entity meetings. An alternate GSR can be selected/ elected as well.

The GSR is a link between group representatives and the Delegates. The GSR is very valuable to the meeting because they carry the "grassroots" group conscience to the Voting Entity. GSRs may help select/ elect Delegates who represent the Group Conscience of that Voting Entity at the CoDA Service Conference.

Searching and Fearless Moral Inventory

Something I learned early on in recovery was how important uncovering and challenging my negative core beliefs really is! Everything shared in this piece is knowledge acquired in this area by working the Program through personal experience.

Sometimes we seem less aware of our negative core beliefs than of our negative thinking because we convince ourselves that those beliefs are 'truths'. If we constantly remind ourselves that negative beliefs are no more than a point of view or a story we tell ourselves and that they may not be true at all – no matter how strongly we believe them, it can help us take our first fighting step to changing them. To fight these negative core beliefs, we must first know what they are. Our negative self talk is an indication when there is a negative core belief underlying our feelings, thoughts and behaviours. If we don't have many people coming up to us to speak with us at a party, calling us up socially, or are rarely being consulted with at work, we might conclude that we're dull, not very interesting, a loser, have nothing of value to offer, or we're simply not that likeable. Whether

Alternate Group Service Representative

The Alternate Group Service Representative acts on behalf of the community if the GSR cannot serve. The selection/election process is the same as that for the GSR. The alternate GSR normally accompanies the Group Service Representative to meetings as a member in training, asks questions, and learns procedures.

Co-Dependents Recovery Society

Board of Directors:

Chairperson – Deborah R. (AB)
Vice Chairperson – Gerry B. (BC)
Secretary – Geordie L. (BC)
Treasurer – Sue. F. (BC)
Observing Member – Tonja T

Directors at Large:

Ernie F. (DK)
Deborah R. (AB)
Outreach – Sharon B. (BC)
CoDA World Fellowship
Vice Chairperson and Board Member
Liason to Canada:
Dianne B. (BC)

consciously or subconsciously, our minds instantly search through our memories for past experiences that might support this negative thought pattern. There are many different ways to try exploring this further but I'll share with you what I found most helpful for myself.

For me, digging into my past has helped TREMENDOUSLY. I created a chart for myself documenting separate columns for the following: (a) age, (b) the experience I remembered, (c) the message received, (d) thoughts/feelings, (e) core belief that developed from it, (f) cognitive distortions as a result and lastly, the (g) values fostered from the beliefs. For example: (a) Age 11. (b) Received an A on a test and parents said I could do better. (c) I didn't work hard enough. The result wasn't good enough. (d) I need to work harder, try harder, and do better. From feeling happy and proud to feeling sad, disappointed and shamed. (e) I'm not good enough. I should do better; work harder, get a perfect A+. (f) All or nothing, Rome building, should statements. (g) Perfectionism, hard work, competency. Why this was important for me was because if I had the sense any one of those categories was being violated or disrespected, I became irrational and quickly fell right into my wealth of codependent

patterns and behaviours and the cognitive distortions prevented me from seeing the truth of my actions and beliefs. As an example: as soon as I felt the value 'competency' was infringed by a co-worker not following through with tasks my job depended on, I became angry. I would jump into the 'should statements' (he should know better, he shouldn't be working here if he can't get the job done, he's preventing me from getting my job done). The actions I perceived as incompetent would strike my core belief "not good enough." I owned this feeling as a representation of my actions, when in fact it was not my behavior to be responsible for. I also jumped in with my 'should' statements, or 'Rome' building distortion by expecting it to be done fast and well, and spiraled into other codependent beliefs, like thinking I had to 'assume responsibility' and do everything myself or that maybe the co-worker was experiencing some difficulty and I needed to be the one to take care of him and help him out. Thinking I was helping, I would tell him what he 'should do' or 'should feel' and freely offer direction even though I'm his co-worker, not his boss. In these different categories I worked on, I found different characteristics and patterns of codependency in each belief. For a long time, I could not figure out why some things triggered such a strong reaction, but in this type of inventory, I truly began to understand the true issues behind the struggles I was experiencing. I acquired a new understanding of 'powerlessness' and believed Step One: I was powerless over others and my life had become unmanageable trying. It was like trying to stick a square peg in a round hole: it just becomes more frustrating and agonizing the more I tried. The only other alternative to cope was through manipulation and lying, not only to others, but to myself as well. It is sometimes a strange feeling when others can see something completely different in our behaviour than what we see. In this kind of situation, I thought was helping and doing well by this other person, and even if others told me it was not my issue and it was not really help, it was only through this introspective work in recovery that I realized it was the opposite!!!

It is amazing the clarity and spiritual growth gained by being completely and utterly willing.

"Bottom is when you stop digging." I realized then I simply was not completely and utterly willing

I was able to use the "wise mind" to see my experiences and behaviours in an objective way discerning where, when and why the behaviour surfaced, and what it is actually accomplishing instead of what I thought it would or wanted it to accomplish. It is amazing the clarity and spiritual growth gained by being completely and utterly willing. I struggled with a lot of my codependency issues before and kept telling myself I wanted a better and more serene life. So I kept asking myself, 'why isn't it working out that way?' Instead, each time things seemed unmanageable, I sank lower. Until I read in a women's recovery book, "Bottom is when you stop digging." I realized then I simply was not completely and utterly willing; I had not let go at all, I was still resisting and fighting inside holding onto just that bit that (said) maybe I can handle things and this would blow over. This was the codependency in me fighting for survival by sabotaging my attempts in working a solid recovery program.

I hear a lot of talk in meetings about working the Steps, and I believe in the ability of the Steps to change our lives forever. But, I also know from a lengthy personal experience that there's more work and focus necessary to arrest any codependent behaviours and patterns. The CoDA Booklets have a lot of information in them covering all sorts of topics to help facilitate working the Steps. Topics like shame, boundaries, and self-love all have different places in the Step work we do. I incorporated my work on my core beliefs into my Fourth Step. Sometimes answering yes or no questions is just simply not enough. In my case, doing a very thorough Fourth Step gave me such peace because I began to use my 'wise mind' and understand where my issues are were coming from, and this helped me to effect change in a healthy manner. I think I find so much joy in spreading the message because the CoDA Program works so well. I found remembering the principle the Step is based on shows there is more than just repeating the words needed to actually work it and reap the benefits – such as now having the Promises in my life.

**All the best in your recovery!
Anonymous in Ontario**