

The Mercy Moment

Mercy Canada Quarterly Newsletter



IT MATTERS TO HER...

We Need Your Help!

This year has already been a huge success here at Mercy Canada! Let's fill you in on what's been happening...

In January **we launched 5 online support groups** - Anxiety; Boundaries; Grief; Emotional Regulation; and our Keys to Freedom discipleship training study. Our heart's desire is for these groups to be easily accessible to women all across Canada, ages 13 up to any age, **at no cost to them**. Each group has 8-10 participants, and is led by one of our trained facilitators or Registered Clinical Counsellors. Our Spring groups have already begun and will continue until mid June. Consider joining us for the Keys to Freedom or Boundaries groups starting in July! Register by clicking this link: <https://form-can.keela.co/support-group-registration>

In April, we were thrilled to attend the **Propel Conference at Cariboo Road Christian Fellowship**. Our Executive Director, Nicola Bartel, along with Union Gospel Mission's Direct of Women & Families Programs, Tara MacDonald, spoke straight from their hearts on Ministry and Mental Health.

You may have also found us at **City Dream Centre's Impact Conference** in May - connecting, and getting inspired by many other likeminded people. Thank you City Dream Centre, and Cariboo Road Christian Fellowship, for allowing us to share in these powerful events!

BIG NEWS - we are in the midst of a **50K MATCH CAMPAIGN!** Thank you to those who have already contributed - we appreciate your kindness. A huge thank you to a generous friend of Mercy who is partnering with us to see lives transformed by the power of Christ. Because of their generosity, **every dollar that YOU give until the end of May will be DOUBLED - up to 50K!** Help us fund our vital Christ centred programs & support services, outreach training, resources, and our Wellness Centre for women struggling with life controlling issues. Click this link to **DONATE TODAY:** <https://donate-can.keela.co/website-donation-form7>

June is fast approaching, and we will be flying to Edmonton to educate, train, and equip pastors, ministry leaders, and more, at our MPower Training Day on June 2nd. Our friends at Beulah Alliance Church are generously hosting us and providing lunch. MPower Training manuals have been graciously provided by a generous donor, and will be no cost to participants. You can find more details on this event or register by clicking here: <https://MercyMPower.eventbrite.com>

By choosing Mercy, you've impacted countless lives - THANK YOU!

Newsletter Highlights

It Matters To Her...
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A Message From Our
Executive Director

Join the Conversation:
Education Nights

Counsellor's Core -
Insight's from Mercy
Counsellor's

Parent's Perspective





A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mental Health Matters!

Lately, I have been reflecting on the growing statistics regarding all things mental health. If I didn't know beautiful Jesus, or hadn't experienced his ongoing love, healing, and transformational power in my own life, I'd be downcast and discouraged. Thankfully, I have also had the privilege of walking with hundreds of women who have experienced the same. **I truly believe, more than ever, Jesus really is what the world needs today.**

Did you know, in Canada...

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. The remaining 4 will have a friend, family member, or colleague who will. (Sources: Statistics Canada. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.)

Mental Health matters, it really does! We all have our own mental health to value and care for. But sometimes, even if we practice all the things we know to do getting enough sleep; daily physical activity; good nutrition; good boundaries around work and home life; leisure; fun; connecting with healthy friends; belonging to a great church community; daily quiet time with Jesus; reading/meditating on scripture - all good practices and necessary to optimize our well being, but sometimes we may need more help. Sometimes you may need professional help in addition to all those practices, and that is OK!

I'd like to give us all permission to reach out and ask for the help we need. I often say, **"its ok to struggle but it is not ok to struggle alone"**. Talk to someone who is safe in your world and seek services that are available. There is help. Mercy Canada is one, if you are a woman 13 or older. We are here and we want to help. You know, I have the privilege of hearing stories of hope and transformation daily at Mercy Canada and I never take this privilege for granted. These brave women, treasured daughters of God, remind me of the truth of Jesus words found in Matthew 19:28.

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible"

Here is just one of those stories, I hope you too are reminded of this truth!

"I have been in chains for eleven years. I built up a system of lies that held me in bondage and stripped everything from my life.... including the God who created me and only wanted me to live to the fullest. I [was in bondage to] sex, men, drinking, drugs, and severe bulimia. All the lies and secrets, especially to my family and loved ones, hurt me deeply but I couldn't help it. I was so ashamed. I lost everything - my life, health, stability, balance, and relationships.

A year ago, I applied [to Mercy] with the attitude that I had nothing else to lose because all was lost. I was so sick and trapped that it took me almost a year to finish my application. I have now been set free! Through the Mercy program and the Word of God, I can now fight my spiritual battles. I truly believe I am free and have forgiven myself for the first time! God is daily romancing me to my TRUE self and building a new foundation. He is stirring up my gifts, purpose, and plans.... not just for me, but to bless others and especially generations to come. It's no longer a choice. Jesus is the ONLY WAY! I would go through the valleys all over to truly KNOW Him as I do today.

So, I speak blessings to you. The seeds of faith you planted have saved my life! I may not know where or what I am doing after the program yet, but I do know I have an extraordinary life...purposeful and complete in Christ! Thank you!" (client story)

There is hope. If you, or a loved one, are hurting and need help please reach out. You matter and are worthy of getting the help you need. Mercy Canada just might be right for you.

Blessings,

Nicola

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Education & Awareness Nights

We invite you to "Join the Conversation" on various topics covering mental health challenges and their associated life-controlling issues. **Free of charge** and offered **online** via Zoom for everyone across Canada.

The Spring 2023 topics will be as follows:

- May 25th from 7-8:30PM (PDT) - **Fitness For Your Mental Health**
- June 22nd 7-8:30PM (PST) - **Understanding Emotional Regulation**

Visit our website for more information <https://mercycanada.ca/events/>



Counsellor's Core

Learn more about the importance of Breath Prayer and how we can integrate it into our faith practice.

Parent's Perspective

Joy Bailey, the parent of a young woman who suffered from life-controlling issues has a unique and heartfelt position.

As a mom who has walked that road and come out the other side, she hopes to encourage other parents on their own difficult journeys.

by Katy Kwon

We counsellors are a predictable bunch. How does that make you feel, and empathetic nodding while maintaining gentle eye contact. It's not that we aren't gloriously unique individuals, it's just that we are mostly cut from the same oversized cardigan cloth. We strive to see you succeed and there are a handful of things that apply in almost every situation – and one of those is deep breathing. Our breathing pace is deeply tied to how safe we feel in a certain moment. If I am hypervigilant (anxious, wound up, defensive, overwhelmed, dysregulated) then my body will hold that physically by being ready to run or fight. This means increasing my heart rate and yep, you guessed it my breathing.



All of us face everyday hypervigilance and some of us clinical levels of it. Taking my breathing on as way to recenter and ground myself in the here and now is an incredibly helpful tool. But did you know that this can be integrated with my faith practice too? Breath Prayer has its roots all the way back to the 6th century where our Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters practiced prayer that was interconnected with the pace of their breathing.

Here's how we do it – find a phrase in Scripture that has meaning for you or a cry in your heart to God. This might be 'Be still and know that I am God,' or 'You see my suffering, rescue me.' As you inhale for 4 seconds think the first part of the phrase. Hold for 4 seconds and then as you slowly exhale for 4 seconds, think the second part of the phrase. Start small, maybe 5 rounds and build up to more as you are able. Hold a posture of curiosity and grace for yourself.

[Further reading: Breath as Prayer by Jennifer Tucker]

PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Living Through the Day to Day - by Joy Bailey



Living through the day-to-day with someone who suffers from a life-controlling issue is excruciating.

I will tell you that some days I didn't think I'd make it, mentally or physically. More days than I can count I said, "I can't do this anymore." And then I did it anyway. Jenna's anorexia commandeered my life and my mind. It stole the energy and commitment I should have put into my other children. It bruised and battered my marriage.

I found that once I accepted the fact that this was a mental disorder and I was never going to understand it, I could let go of the pursuit to figure it out. It didn't make the day-to-day easier, but it unburdened me from that responsibility.

Then, because I no longer had words to pray, I relied on a group of trusted friends to pray. The words of their prayers became the words of my prayers. I called them my Jenna Warriors. Not only were they holding her up before God, they held me up as well.

The other constant during that time was never losing sight of the fact that God was still in control. I pictured myself slugging through the muck in the valley, step by faltering step, while God could see the whole landscape—past, present, future—from His vantage point. For me, it wasn't about resentment. It was about trust.

Accepting that I'd never understand, relying on praying friends, and remembering the inherent goodness of God—these three factors helped me to make it through the day-to-day.

The Lord is good, a Strength and Stronghold in the day of trouble; He knows (recognizes, has knowledge of, and understands) those who take refuge and trust in Him. [Nahum 1:7 AMP]



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