

The 22nd Annual IAPSRs Conference
Beyond Boundaries
Broadening Horizons



VANCOUVER:
Spectacular by nature.
The picture says it all!

Workshop Proposed For IAPSRs Conf. Vancouver June/97
BEING OUT ABOUT IT

Two presenters with experience of major mental illnesses and previous hospitalizations talk about "being out", making the choice to go public about their experience - the benefits and risks.

Presenters: Bruce Saunders, organizer of MOVIE MONDAY, a consumer-driven project that presents weekly movies in a psychiatric hospital theatre; and Ingrid Olson Mercer, a consumer/provider employed in a psychiatric day program at CAPITAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION; both of Victoria, BC, Canada.

How does a person heal from a traumatic experience of psychiatric illness without admitting that it ever happened? What is the emotional cost of hiding such an important secret? How can someone overcome stigma when we carry the seeds of self-hatred within ourselves? How does anyone receive support when no one knows he or she is hurting? Because mental illness is an invisible disability, we can "pass for normal", at least on our good days.

In the gay community there is a saying, "Being out saves lives." Psychiatric survivors can also save lives by being role models of productive human beings and giving hope to others.

"Being out" is a major step in our wellness campaign. We have both suffered the shame, trauma, and hopelessness of major illness (manic-depression and four episodes of brief psychotic disorder), and have struggled to get back on track with family and our community. We have made ever bolder revelations of our stories and have found strength, healing and liberation in the process.

Other consumers have given us their stories as well. There is great power in this sharing and testifying to our experience. Bonding with each other makes each of us stronger. Our talk is illustrated with brief video clips and slides.

(Dec /96 Accepted for 1 1/2 hr workshop at IAPSRs conf. /97)

The International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services (IAPSRs), in conjunction with the British Columbia Chapter of IAPSRs, is proud to invite you to Canada for the second time in the organization's history and to Vancouver - one of the most beautiful cities in the world. You'll feel right at home in a clean, safe, and friendly city that is also very affordable, especially for our neighbors from the United States!

The theme of *Beyond Boundaries: Broadening Horizons* has been chosen as we have much to learn from one another. Consumers, families and funders are challenging us to be more responsive and creative. The world is rapidly changing around us as cultural, geographic and technological boundaries disappear. We have the opportunity to cross borders and broaden our horizons.

The International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services' Annual Conference expands our minds and enriches our lives by bringing together consumers, families, practitioners, advocates, administrators, researchers, and policy makers. The goal of psychosocial rehabilitation is to help individuals who've been challenged by mental illness to become more self reliant and become reintegrated in their community. Ensuring that psychosocial rehabilitation is available to people, is even more important as health care is changing throughout the world. The conference offers opportunities to learn, network with people from all over the world and have fun.

Don't miss out on all of the exciting possibilities the 1997 IAPSRs Conference and Vancouver have to offer!

Next June, Ingrid and I will be giving our workshop at this prestigious conference. Turns out Movie Monday is on the cutting edge of psychosocial rehab! Well, it's working for me. Four years ago I couldn't have imagined myself in this situation.

The conference runs June 9 - 13. We'd like to attend 3 days. We're still finding out how much it will cost - even presenters pay the full registration - no perks. Scholarships possible. The host hotel's 'special' rate is \$183/day, so we'll be looking for a more reasonable spot but determined not to sleep on someone's floor. Conferences can be stimulating and exhausting events and we're determined not to risk our mental health over this effort. We do this for love but we're not going to be silly about it.

I'll be taking time off in my busiest gardening season. Volunteering gets you 3 days for the price of 1 1/2 but I'm not keen on spending my valuable time directing people traveling on expense accounts to their next workshop. I might use MM funds to cover some expenses, it's a legitimate cause, but I'd rather not. SO, if you want to contribute directly to MM's presence at IAPSRs 97 let me know - 595-FLIC I'll try to represent Victoria and the cause well!

Bruce Feb 24/97