

Mental Health a balance of mind and body

By Hadley Koltun

Mental Health and You is provided as a service of the North of Superior Community Mental Health Program. The purpose of these articles is to inform the community about mental health issues.

These articles will appear once every two weeks and will cover a variety of mental health issues.

We invite feedback by the community at large by writing the News office. Any opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the management of the North of Superior Community Mental Health Program.

What is Mental Health?

Mental Health may have a variety of meanings. It implies a general soundness of the mind which includes thinking, feeling and behaviour.

If an individual adopts and adjusts to changes and problems within himself, others and the community, he is said to be mentally healthy.

Everyone faces problems and crisis; it is how we deal with these problems that determines mental health.

Mental health professionals (eg. psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, etc.) have discovered two principles that are important in understanding mental health.

The first is the major question of psychology itself; the body and mind principle.

In centuries past, it was believed that

the body or our physical functions (eg. breathing, circulation, digestion, etc.) were independent from our mind (thinking, feeling and behaviour).

With many of the discoveries of modern science, many mental health professionals have come to recognize an interaction between the body and the mind.

For instance, when we feel anxious and worried for long periods of time (stress), our stomach secretes hydrochloric acid, which eats away at the wall of the stomach.

This may cause an ulcer. Conversely, when we are sick with the flu, we cannot help but feel miserable. Therefore, of our bodies or physical functions are well, then our mind or mental functions are well and vice versa.

The second principle that mental health professionals have come to realize is the inter-relationship between thinking and feeling.

For instance, when one is angry, it is not a good idea to drive a car or operate a complex machine because the anger may interfere with one's ability to clearly think on the road.

This may cause an accident. Thus, thinking and feeling are inter-related.

These two principles seem to be the cornerstone of sound mental health. Just like physical fitness can be improved, mental health can be improved by good habits, environment and relationships.

To feel 'good', it is important to be in good physical and mental health.

Second, our attitudes about ourselves, others and the environment influence the way that we feel as well.

We have all heard the statement, "You've got a bad attitude" when we are angry with our friends, co-workers or family.

What causes mental illness

Earlier, we explored the body-mind relationship and thinking-feeling relationship as the force behind mental health.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint a cause for mental illness, these two relationships are pivotal.

Let's look at them closer. We can find three major factors; physical causes, heredity and environment.

1. Physical causes:

Physical causes are related to some kinds of mental illness. Body chemistry may play a part.

Some physical illness (sleeping sickness, syphilis, injury to brain tissue) can cause changes in behaviour like symptoms of mental illness.

2. Heredity:

Heredity can be a factor. If we can inherit our eye color, build, etc., then it is likely that we can inherit some patterns or traits of behaviour.

However, the relationships between heredity and environment in causing mental illness is not yet clear.

3. Environment:

Our environment is the world around

us. Experiences with people in the family, at school or on the job create situations which cause tension.

Our behaviour is changed or modified when we come in contact with others; we learn how to get along with others.

We also need a positive self-esteem; a feeling of self-importance and self-worth.

The way people think of themselves is the way that others will think of them.

By understanding these relationships between body-mind and thinking-feeling and the various factors that influence mental health, we can understand mental illness and provide support for those who suffer from mental illness.

Remember, a caring community is a powerful and effective medicine.

You can contact the Community Mental Health Worker in Terrace Bay at 825-3238 or in Schreiber at 824-2597.

INVITATION

You are invited to attend the LAKE NIPIGON N.D.P. ANNUAL MEETING & NOMINATION CONVENTION, to be held on

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15, 1987

AT 1:30 p.m.

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Membership forms will be available at the door.

SEE YOU ON THE 15th of FEBRUARY 1987.

Bits and Bites

By Helene Ballard

Hi. I do hope all is well with our readers. Seems the new year is going by, somehow the days go by.

I think we have been blessed with mild weather for the holidays- as a rule it gets pretty cold at this time of the year. I only hope we don't pay for it in April.

Things have been rather quiet here at Birchwood since the holidays. I guess it's just as well, it gives us time to 'recharge our batteries' before Easter.

We all agree here that it was a very

nice Christmas and we thank all those who worked hard to make us happy.

Just now the craft room is busy making flowers for weddings. We can almost make them in our sleep, but it keeps us busy.

We welcomed three new residents over the holidays. Miss Rita Gaffney from Longlac, Mr. James Singleton from Hurkett, and Mr. Andrew Desmoulin from Heron Bay.

We hope they will be happy living here at Birchwood.

Our bridge-playing friends from

Schreiber have started up their regular Tuesday card games, so if some of you nice people out there would like to spend a winter afternoon just come over from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Our residents look forward to these weekly games.

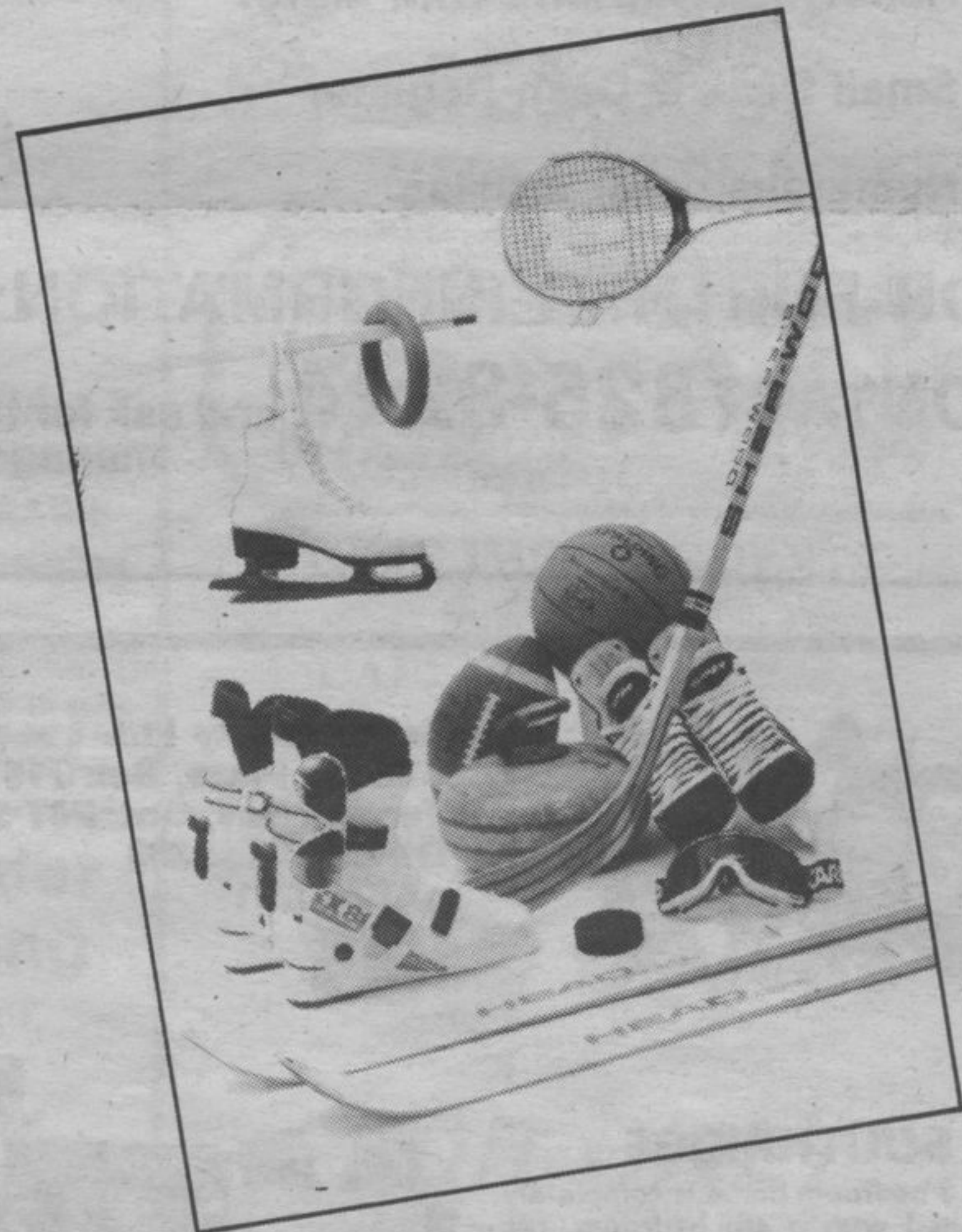
For now, news is scarce so I'll end this chatter with this wee bit of 'fun'.

"Do you know you can't play the National Anthem on the violin? It's against the law because they don't want any fiddling around with O Canada."

Until next week, Cheerio.

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