

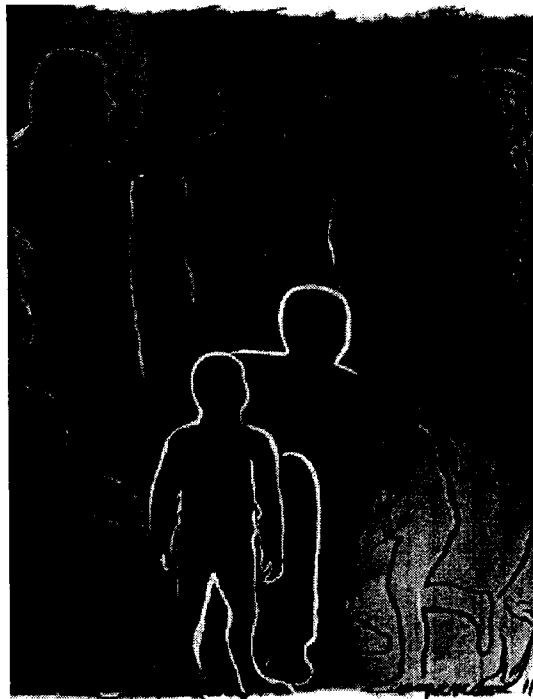
D.E.W. DROP IN

Downtown Eastside Women Do Drop In

The Newsletter for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre

March 2003

Free



Open Eye Photo And Illustration, From www.rvv.net/aar/get-involved.html

INSIDE:

- DEWC 25th Anniversary— 21st
- International Women's Day— 8th
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination— 21st
- Hepatitis C FAQs
- Resume, Newsletter, and French Speaking Workshops!
- Poetry & Prose

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre's 25th Anniversary

Who we are and how we came to be...

As you all may know, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre was established on March 21 of 1978. This month we will have provided a safe place for women and children living in the Downtown Eastside for twenty-five years!

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide for basic needs and to work toward positive change for women and children in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.

Our Purpose

The constitution of the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre was written in 1978 upon incorporation and is still relevant today.

- To provide a comfortable, safe drop-in centre.
- To provide recreation and self-help programs.
- To act as a source of information by assisting women with referrals concerning their needs.
- To provide a social space and facilitate the opportunity for women of diverse backgrounds to interact and build community.
- To educate the public and all levels of government about issues concerning women in the area.

A Cause for Celebration...

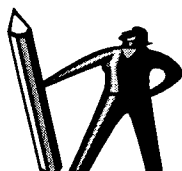
Indeed, our 25th Anniversary is cause for celebration. We are planning for a celebration in the Spring, please share your ideas as it comes time to organize!



Newsletter Group is about to begin.. JOIN IN!

Andrea will be meeting with all women who would like to take part in the production of the DE WC Newsletter every Thursday at 2:30 pm here at the Centre. Bring your thoughts, poems, stories, literature and other bright ideas to this meeting of women and share in the process.

All women are welcome.



Resume Writing Workshop Series has begun... JOIN IN!

Eemina and Hisako will be meeting with women on Tuesday afternoons at 2:30pm to work on Resume Writing. Come out to explore some of your talents, create a resume, or update an older one. Whether you are currently looking for work, or would like to explore some of your best qualities, all women have something to gain from checking out this workshop!

All women are welcome.



French Speaking Women's Group is about to begin.. JOIN IN!

La Boussole, French Community Centre, will facilitate a French speaking women's group on Wednesday afternoons between 1:30 and 4:00pm here at the Centre. The goal is to provide a social gathering for French speaking women and to focus on the diverse needs of the French speaking community. Arts and crafts will also be available.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day (8 March) is an occasion marked by women's groups around the world. This date is also commemorated at the United Nations and is designated in many countries as a national holiday. International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history; it is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women for equality, justice and peace.



The Role of the United Nations

Few causes promoted by the United Nations have generated more intense and widespread support than the campaign to promote and protect the equal rights of women. The Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco in 1945, was the first international agreement to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental human right. Since then, the Organization has helped create a historic legacy of internationally agreed strategies, standards, programs and goals to advance the status of women worldwide.

Over the years, United Nations action for the advancement of women has taken four clear directions: promotion of legal measures; mobilization of public opinion and international action; training and research, including the compilation of gender desegregated statistics; and direct assistance to disadvantaged groups. Today a central organizing principle of the work of the United Nations is that no enduring solution to society's most threatening social, economic and political problems can be found without the full participation, and the full empowerment, of the world's women.

More information can be found at: <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/womday97.htm>

International Women's Day and Status of Women Canada

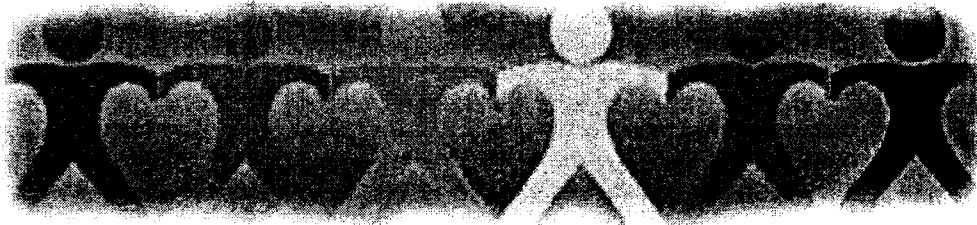
This year, Canadians will celebrate *International Women's Week (IWW)* from Sunday, March 2 to Saturday, March 8, 2003, with the highlight being *International Women's Day* on March 8. The Canadian theme for *IWD/IWW 2003* is *World-Wide Women (WWW): Surfing the Digital Revolution!* The advent of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as the Internet, has revolutionized the way people communicate, access information, create networks, develop business opportunities, etc. While bringing important economic and social benefits, this revolution also poses challenges and risks. This theme allows Canadians to take a closer look at the impact of ICTs on women and their use as a tool for the empowerment of women and the promotion of women's equality.

More information can be found at: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/iwd/index_e.html

Take part in the celebrations happening locally for International Women's Day. Look out for posters in the Centre that will highlight some of the activities going on!

HOW

HCV
Inve
B an
SEX
The
be m
shou
trans
the v
shou
sexu
sexu
open
Also
herp
HOW
It is
hepa
lupus
losin
the l
spec
an ex



Racism. Stop It!

Since 1966, the 21st of March has been recognized by the United Nations as the **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**. Canada was one of the first countries to support the UN declaration and in 1989, the Department of Canadian Heritage launched its annual March 21 Campaign.

What is Racism?

Racism means attitudes, practices and other factors that disadvantage people because of their race, color or ethnicity. Racism can be directed against any race, color or ethnicity.

Some examples of racism are obvious, such as graffiti, intimidation or physical violence. Racial and ethnic slurs and "jokes" are other examples. Unfortunately, they are often ignored because people do not know how to deal with them.

Other forms of racism are not obvious, such as discrimination in hiring and apartment rentals, or policies that disadvantage members of certain races.

Racism exists at three main levels: individual, institutional and cultural.

Individual racism takes the form of individual attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviours. Racial prejudice, bigotry, belittling and jealousy are examples of racist attitudes. Examples of racist beliefs are racial stereotypes, the belief that some races are better than others and even the belief that people can be classified according to race in the first place. Violence, name-calling and discrimination in hiring are examples of racist behaviour.

Institutional or systemic racism takes the form of the practices, customs, rules and standards of organizations, including governments, that unnecessarily disadvantage people because of their race, color or ethnicity. They do not always involve differences in treatment. Educational requirements that are not related to actual job duties are an example.

Cultural racism are the cultural values and standards that disadvantage people because of their race, color or ethnicity. Examples are cultural expectations as to the race of a company president and the cultural standard for what a beautiful, trustworthy or competent person looks like.

What is meant by prejudice? Stereotype? and discrimination?

Prejudice literally means "prejudgement." A prejudice is a preconceived negative opinion or attitude about a group of people.

Stereotype means "set image". The word comes from the process of making metal plates for printing. When applied to people, stereotyping refers to forming an instant or fixed picture of a group of people, usually based on false or incomplete information. Stereotypes ignore the fact that no two human beings are identical. Stereotypes are often negative.

Discrimination is anything that has the effect, intentional or not, of limiting the opportunities of certain individuals or groups because of personal characteristics such as race or colour. Unlike prejudice, discrimination is an effect or result, not an attitude. Discrimination sometimes results from prejudice or stereotypes. However, it also comes from the failure, intentional or not, to avoid practices that disadvantage certain groups more than others, when the disadvantage could be eliminated without causing undue hardship.

What can I do to stop racism?

First of all, speak out against racism. Otherwise, your silence may be interpreted as tacit approval of discrimination. You have the right, as well as the responsibility, to speak out.

In the community:

- Take part in activities marking the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination every March 21.
- Join organizations dealing with issues of racism and human rights.
- Suggest that your local newspaper publish a special section on the racial and cultural diversity of your community.
- Create a speakers bureau of persons willing to speak about racism and human rights.
- Explore ways in which community organizations can work together to promote positive race relations.
- Suggest that your community develop a policy statement against all forms of racial discrimination.
- Object to racist jokes and insults.
- Invite guests to speak on racism and human rights.
- Show films on prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination and racism.
- Examine the contents of television, film, radio and newspapers for stereotypes. Identify and discuss the stereotypes.
- Encourage dialogue on racism and human rights.
- Develop clear policy statements in organizations you work with against all forms of racial discrimination and define ways to make them work through cooperation and consensus.



Libra
This i
and n
quite
and c
perso
judgm
care c

Scor
At thi
yours
Dom
you a
infect
very b

Sagit
You u
on ot
Serio
heart
seems
are g
now.
or rea
moral

Capri
There
penet
probl
find i
behav
cost.
sense
be a t

Aqua
At thi
have
conne
favou
misur
image

Pisce
You l
partic
love a
that e
judgm
an exp

Defining Concepts and Terms

FAQs from www.antiracist.com

Anti-Racism

The acknowledgment that racism exists in our society, and recognition that racism is perpetuated through uneven distribution of power. It promotes the elimination of all types of racism and the unlearning of racism. Anti-racism seeks to identify and change policies and practices that promote racism, as well as provides skills and strategies for changing attitudes and behavior.

Racism in Canada

There is a strongly held belief in Canada that overt racism and organized hate groups are simply relics of the distant past. The notion of Canada as a unique haven in a world of intolerance is what is believed to separate Canadians from other countries. The belief in Canada as a tolerant country is such a central part of national identity that it is difficult, despite a body of evidence to the contrary, to draw attention to racism in this country. Canadians believe that if racism still exists in the country, it is anomalous and of a more gentle and subtle form that will eventually dissipate with more modernization.

Racism and International Peace Movements

THE WORLD RISES UP AGAINST WAR:

**- February 15: Millions march around the world today to say "No War Against Iraq"
International A.N.S.W.E.R.--Act Now to Stop War & End Racism**

Large anti-war demonstrations took place in most of the major cities of the world. All told, more than 600 cities and towns were the scene of simultaneous protests. In the United States, most of the major anti-war coalitions fully mobilized for the February 15 actions. Internationally, the demonstrations included some of the biggest ever. The original call for the February 15 demonstrations came from the European anti-war movement. In London, the demonstration was nearly two million according to march organizers. Millions more marched throughout Europe -- in Madrid, Paris, Berlin, Rome and throughout the continent. In Damascus, 200,000 marched. Tens of thousands marched in Buenos Aires. In Toronto, 80,000 took to the streets.

It is one of the great ironies of recent history that the ultra-militarist policies of the Bush administration, threatening a catastrophic war of aggression against Iraq, have been the catalyst to a global anti-war movement unlike anything that has existed for three decades -- that is, since the close of the Vietnam War.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.InternationalANSWER.org>

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
 302 Columbia Street, Vancouver
 604.681.8480

LUNCH SERVED
DAILY AT 12:30-1:45

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
2 2:00 Video	3 10:00 CWS 10-2 Computers 1:30 Beading 2:00 Literacy 5-8 Organizer's Training	4 10-2 Computers 2:30 Resumes 5-8:30 Women's Health Clinic 5:00 BWSS	5 1-4 Street Nurse 1:30 French Group 2:00 Crochet & Raffle 2:00 Food & Health 2:00 Writing Group 5:00 Harm Reduction	6 10-2 Computers 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Storytelling 2:30 Newsletter	7 10:00 Sewing etc. 10-2 Computers	8 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
9 1:30 Library Literacy 2:00 Video	10 10:00 CWS 10-2 Computers 1:30 Beading 2:00 Literacy 5-8 Organizer's Training	11 10-2 Computers 2:30 Resumes 5-8:30 Women's Health Clinic 5:00 BWSS	12 1-4 Street Nurse 1:30 French Group 2:00 Crochet & Raffle 2:00 Food & Health 2:00 Writing Group	13 10-2 Computers 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Storytelling 2:30 Newsletter	14 10:00 Sewing etc. 10-2 Computers	15 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
16 1:30 Library Literacy 2:00 Video	17 10:00 CWS 10-2 Computers 1:30 Beading 2:00 Literacy 5-8 Organizer's Training	18 10-2 Computers 2:30 Resumes 5-8:30 Women's Health Clinic 5:00 BWSS	19 1-4 Street Nurse 1:30 French Group 2:00 Crochet & Raffle 2:00 Food & Health 2:00 Writing Group 5:00 Harm Reduction	20 10-2 Computers 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Storytelling 2:30 Newsletter	21 10:00 Sewing etc. 10-2 Computers 5:00 Music Jam with Marg	22 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video
23 1:30 Library 2:00 Video 30 1:30 Library 2:00 Video	24 10:00 CWS 10-2 Computers 1:30 Beading 2:00 Literacy 5-8 Organizer's Training 31 (See above)	25 10-2 Computers 2:30 Resumes 5-8:30 Women's Health Clinic 5:00 BWSS	26 1-4 Street Nurse 1:30 French Group 2:00 Crochet & Raffle 2:00 Food & Health 2:00 Writing Group CHEQUE DAY	27 CENTRE CLOSED	28 10:00 Sewing etc. 10-2 Computers	29 1:30 Dreamcatchers 2:00 Video

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

Chinese Women's Group (CWS) -Open to women whose first language is Chinese. The group will focus on cultural awareness, advocacy, and social events.
Computers – Enhance your computer skills with assistance from Gwen.
Creative Writing Group-Read and write poems and prose.
Library Literacy – Readings, crafts, literacy activities, and preparing the new library.
Literacy Workshop – Working with books, themes and word puzzles. Learn while having fun!
Health & Nutrition (Food & Health)– Eileen, Community Nutritionist, will be here to answer any and all questions regarding your health and nutrition. Come out and ask about your concerns or curiosities.
French Speaking Group – Social Gathering for French speaking women!
Newsletter Group –Contribute to the creation of the DEWC Newsletter! Andrea will be here with helpful tips!
Resume Workshop – Create your own Resume with the help of Eemina & Hisako!
Storytelling with Erin – Learn more about theatre and storytelling. Listen to other women's stories and if you'd like tell one of your own!
The Street Nurse comes by every Wednesday sometime between 1-4pm to give you information on all kinds of health issues.
Women's Voice – Meets to give feedback about the Centre. Your opinions and ideas are needed!
ARTS & CRAFTS WORKSHOPS with materials supplied
Beading with Denny or Louise- Every Monday, 1:30 pm.
Crochet with Anna-Every Wednesday, 2:00pm.
Fabric Arts with Freeda- Every Friday morning, 10:00am.
Dreamcatchers -Every Saturday at 1:30pm.
 Expand your skills and share stories with other women.
EVENING PROGRAMMING
Organizer's Training (ELP) –Monday from 5-8pm. Learn to facilitate and organize anti-poverty rallies and develop political strategies around various poverty issues.
Battered Women Support Services- Support for women experiencing violence. Usually Tuesdays from 5-8:30pm.
Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Group –Takes place every second Wednesday from 5-8pm. Everyone welcome.
Music Jam- Sing and play instruments with special guests.

MARCH/2003

ARIES:

Emotionally (and possibly physically as well) you are apt to feel out of sorts, congested, or stuffy. Unbidden emotions or childish behavior surface now also, perhaps as just a passing mood or in response to others. You are affected more than usual by subjective influences, the emotional tone of your surroundings, the feeling of the place you are in. It is a good time to make adjustments or refinements in your home. Inner harmony and a sense of flowing along comfortably with events and people are accented now. You're likely to take the path of least resistance and to stay with whatever has proven trustworthy and safe, rather than making significant changes. Relationships with females are helpful now.

Taurus:

This is a time of considerable frustration and your desires or efforts appear to be thwarted or at least delayed. Relationships with men and people in authority may be particularly uncomfortable. Also, you have more self-doubt than usual; your mood is somber and rather self-critical. This is a good time to take stock of your life, to see how you are limiting and holding yourself back, and to determine your next steps. But do not attempt to press forward now, and don't take whatever setbacks you experience too much to heart. You act very impulsively and may do something spontaneously that really upsets the status quo in your life. Daring and reckless, you act with fierce independence. All manner of accidents could result from this rash foolishness. You are apt to feel tense, "wired", cross, or out of control. You might wish to avoid traveling at this time.

Gemini:

This is an excellent time to be out and about. There are significant opportunities to make connections, exchange information, and to learn something through a meeting or chance encounter. Letters, phone calls, and conversations that you initiate are productive at this time. Be gentle and don't expect too much of yourself right now. Intoxicants of any sort are best avoided at this time. You experience sudden insights, make discoveries, come up with fresh solutions to old problems, and seek alternatives to the usual routine way of doing things. Your mental processes are speeded up and you move more quickly now. Try to make room for a lot of spontaneity and flexibility in your schedule at this time.

Cancer:

An intense emotional or sexual attraction, a very revealing, intimate encounter, or a powerful desire to be close to and share your deepest feelings with someone is very likely now. Emotions and issues in a close relationship that have been brewing beneath the surface for quite awhile come to the surface at this time, possibly in a very disruptive way. All of your relationships intensify and you need to be aware of your tendency to act in a rather compulsive, demanding way towards others. It is easy for you to talk about your feelings now and also to listen sensitively to not only what others are saying but also what they are feeling. This is an excellent time to discuss your feelings and clear the air of any grievances you may be holding on to from the past. Your communication with women is especially good at this time.

Leo:

Although this is a wonderful time for fun and frolic, it tends to be a bad time for making decisions on important, serious personal matters. You tend to be overly optimistic, inclined to exaggerated hopes, impulsive and impatient, and inclined to overlook practical details. You fail to thoroughly assess a situation and will jump into something on blind faith. You are also inclined to spend money rather wildly too. Interestingly, you actually do have a little bit of extra good luck now and unusually good opportunities may come your way, but you must be careful not to exaggerate the potential of a new idea or venture. Be careful not to throw your security (savings, home, insurance, etc.) to the wind in an impulsive act of blind faith.

Virgo:

A need for excitement, adventure, and fun pervades this time period. Exciting outdoor activities appeal to you now. Ski trips, canoe rides, softball, tennis, swimming, or camping appeal to you now, depending on your tastes and the season. Parties and get-togethers of all sorts appeal to you too. This is the time to loosen up and be informal and adventurous. If your work is exciting and full of surprises, you may not feel a need to get away from your usual routine now. But if your work is tedious and dull, you will find your attention drifting away from the matters at hand and into exciting fantasies. If this happens, then break out of your rut and start a little adventure!

De
FA
Anti
The
unev
Anti
and
R
The
dist
Can
iden
Can
that
R
TH
- Fe
Inte
Lar
and
full
eve
Lor
thre
mar
It is
thre
unli
FO
http

Libra:

This is a time for being with people and especially giving something of yourself and your talents to others. You want to be seen and noticed. You receive appreciation and a positive response and possibly an opportunity or personal contact which will be quite beneficial. You are feeling sober and realistic about love at this time, and are interested in being with people you respect and can depend upon - your oldest, true-blue friends. Also, reaching out to an older relative or another mature, experienced person can mean a lot to you and be mutually beneficial now. Making decisions or long-range plans is favored now. Your judgment is sound. Making worthwhile professional contacts, reaching out to others who can help you in your work, and taking care of business in an orderly, clear way are also likely.

Scorpio:

At this time you are more sensitive to beauty and also to the feelings and needs of others. It is easy for you to give generously of yourself, for you sympathize strongly with other people and spiritual values are more important than material ones at this time. Domestic disputes caused by interference from outside agents are indicated. For example, you may be bringing work home with you and then unconsciously venting your hidden resentments and frustrations on innocent people. You are subject to fevers or infections now, fueled in part by emotional irritability. Letting off steam in whatever nondestructive ways you know would be very beneficial.

Sagittarius:

You use charm, humor, and a light touch to get your point across now, and your friendly attitude makes a favourable impression on others. Your artistic and aesthetic sense is heightened now also, and interest in literature, poetry, and culture is strong. Serious and demanding mental work should probably be put off for another time, as either your mind is more on matters of the heart or you simply want to relax and think of lighter topics. You are a peacemaker now since harmony in your environment seems more important than ever. Loving relationships, giving and receiving affection, and attracting people into your life who are good for you are very likely at this time. Your choices and decisions may lack prudence, realism, or sound judgment right now. Be wary of overly optimistic plans which are presented to you, signing contracts without doing thorough background work or reading the fine print, or promising something which will be difficult for you to fulfill. Questions of honor, ethics, law, or morality arise in your mind at this time.

Capricorn:

There is great depth to your conversations. You find yourself revealing secrets or very private matters, and also asking very penetrating questions of others. Superficial answers don't satisfy you now. This is an excellent time to investigate a complex problem or mystery, look for something that has been lost or hidden, and also to learn more about your own inner depths. You find it stressful to balance needs for freedom and independence with needs for love and intimate companionship. You really behave quite oddly or aloof right now which will put others off considerably thus affording you the space you need, but at a cost. You are also attracted to the exotic, offbeat, unusual, or bizarre at this time. People or things which might offend your senses at other times now arouse your appreciation and interest. This will not be a boring time if you can help it! But it is apt to be a tense time if you are in a close, bonded relationship.

Aquarius:

At this time you enjoy emotional satisfaction and harmony in your home life. Relationships with women run smoothly. If you have a solid emotional base in your life, you will receive the benefits of that. If not, this is a good time to begin making connections with people and also to discover what gives real emotional nourishment and fulfillment. This is one of the least favourable times to make a decision or sign a contract, as your communication with others is likely to be fraught with misunderstanding or even outright deception. Your thinking is rather fuzzy now and you are more gullible or swayed by feelings, images, and ideals rather than seeing situations and people as they are. Your imagination is very active at this time.

Pisces:

You have a special magnetism and attractive power now, and you are feeling intensely loving also. Your relationships, particularly sexual or romantic ones, intensify and have a deep, compelling, urgent quality. Your inner feelings and needs for love and closeness emerge very strongly. You may also channel some of these feelings into creative or artistic work, something that evokes and expresses your deepest self. This is an excellent time to make decisions about your financial affairs, as your judgment is sound and reliable, though a bit conservative.. Spending "quality time" with an old and trusted friend or enjoying the company of an experienced, mature person who has much of substance to give you will make you happy.

Peppermint Patti's Junk Drawer

Hepatitis C FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

WHAT IS HEPATITIS?

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. "Hepato" is Greek for "liver," and "itis" means "inflammation." The different types of hepatitis are caused by different things, but they all produce inflammation of the liver. Viral hepatitis refers to several common contagious diseases caused by viruses that attack the liver. The most important types of viral hepatitis are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Newly discovered forms of viral hepatitis also include hepatitis D, E, and G. Non-viral forms of hepatitis can be caused by toxic agents (drugs or chemicals), alcohol, or autoimmune processes. Another form of hepatitis is toxic hepatitis. Toxic hepatitis can be caused by viruses or by liver damage due to toxic substances. Toxic hepatitis is a deterioration of the liver cells caused by chemicals, alcohol, drugs, and industrial compounds. Alcohol abuse is a common cause of toxic liver damage.

HOW DOES HEPATITIS C USUALLY BEGIN?

For a slight majority of patients, the illness begins suddenly as though one had come down with the flu. Except that this "flu" doesn't seem to completely go away. For many other patients, the onset appears gradually over a long period of time. Infants and young children often have no symptoms at all.

Many other symptoms may also be present, however they will typically be different among different patients. These include: fatigue, low-grade fever, headaches; slight sore throat, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, and stiff or aching joints. Many people develop a pain in the right side, over the liver area. The urine may become dark brown, and the feces may be pale. In severe acute infections, some people may develop jaundice in which the skin and whites of the eyes become yellowish. The degree of severity can differ widely among patients, and will also vary over time for the same patient.

HEPATITIS C VIRUS (HCV)

Hepatitis C is a form of hepatitis caused by an RNA virus of the Flaviviridae family that targets the liver. HCV accounts for the majority of the hepatitis cases previously referred to as non-A, non-B hepatitis. The virus, which typically has a six to nine-month incubation period, if left untreated can lead to liver failure, liver cancer and death. HCV is also a trigger for a host of autoimmune disorders and various other diseases, such as diabetes, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, retinal complications and thyroiditis.

HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

Most people with hepatitis C contracted it either through a blood transfusion or receiving a blood product (plasma, gammaglobulin, etc.) that was contaminated with hepatitis C, or by sharing needles with intravenous drug users that were infected with hepatitis C. Thanks to HCV testing with modern sensitive methods, the risk of acquiring hepatitis C from blood transfusion is now less than 1%. Others who acquire hepatitis C may get stuck with an infected needle or instrument, people receiving medical/dental procedures, people undergoing hemodialysis, body piercing, sharing razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers or people who have had tattoos or manicures that were performed with poorly sterilized equipment. Infected mothers can pass the virus to the fetus in utero; statistics for vertical transmission are between 5 and 10%. It may occur more readily if the mother is also infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS--30% transmission rate. Cases of hepatitis C with no evidence of exposure through blood transfusions, needle sticks or needle sharing are called "sporadic." How these individuals became infected is unknown. Forty percent of all cases of hepatitis C were contracted through unknown means by people who are in no current risk category. What this means is that we are all at risk for contracting hepatitis C.

HOW HCV IS NOT TRANSMITTED

1. The hepatitis C virus is NOT airborne.
2. It is NOT spread by:
 - a. sneezing and coughing
 - b. holding hands
 - c. kissing (unless there is deep-kissing and open sores present)
 - d. using the same toilet
 - e. eating food prepared by someone with HCV
 - f. holding a child in your arms
 - g. swimming in the same pool
3. The virus IS in the blood of an infected person.
4. Hepatitis C can be spread by using something with infected blood on it such as:
 - a. razors, nail clippers or scissors
 - b. tooth brushes and water pics
 - c. tattoo or body piercing needles
 - d. illicit IV drug needles and paraphernalia (cottons, spoons, etc.)
 - e. tampons or sanitary napkins
5. The virus must enter the body through the skin or mucous membrane.

HCV AND INTRAVENOUS DRUG USE

Investigators at Johns Hopkins report that injection drug users are at high risk for contracting hepatitis B and C, and that many contract hepatitis B or C within the first year of IV drug use.

SEXUAL TRANSMISSION

The risk of sexual transmission of hepatitis C virus has not been thoroughly investigated but appears to be minimal. However, people with acute illness and multiple sexual partners may be at greater risk and should use condoms to reduce the risk of acquiring or transmitting hepatitis C as well as other sexually transmitted infections. The risk is increased if the HCV positive partner is immunocompromised because the virus titer in the blood may be increased under those circumstances. Sex during the menstrual period should be avoided, due to the blood contact at that time. The reason that many studies say "multiple sexual partners" when referring to the risk of sexual transmission of HCV is that people who have multiple sexual partners have a greater risk of contracting other sexually transmitted diseases which can cause open sores and lesions. And with those open sores and lesions you are at greater risk for blood contact. Also, it is thought that the hepatitis C virus tends to "piggyback" on the herpes virus, and if you have herpes you are at much greater risk of contracting or transmitting the virus.

HOW DO I FIND GOOD MEDICAL CARE FOR HEPATITIS?

It is very important to find a health practitioner who is familiar with this illness. The symptoms of hepatitis can be mimicked by other illnesses (autoimmune illnesses, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, lupus, arthritis, etc.), and if you in fact have another illness that is not properly diagnosed, you may be losing out on getting treatments that might be effective for you. Hepatologists specialize in diseases of the liver, and would be your best choice in physicians, followed by a gastroenterologist (a digestive disease specialist) or an infectious disease specialist. If there is a hepatitis support group nearby, they would be an excellent source of advice in identifying local doctors who may be familiar with hepatitis.

One Day at a Time
By Carol Cardinal
November 9, 1979

I've learned to live day by day.
I don't care anymore what others say.
I've been through love, and lost it.
I've been through peace and still have it.
I've been through hatred and I don't miss it.
I've been through beautiful memories and still keep them.
I've been through long days and learned to enjoy them without someone,
And everyone special to me.
I've been through lonely nights, but I knew I still had you, cause you taught
Me to live one day at a time.
For if we don't take time, where would we be now?
Time is really all we have, so make the best of it, and take time to live
One day at a time.
Time gives us friends, a gift we can only give to ourselves after we have
Learned to love ourselves.

Why Is It?
By Marie Keyespapmatao

Why is it? When I have a nice smile upon my face'
That you want to twist it into an ugly disgrace.
Why is it? When my feelings were set for another glamorous day'
You've neglected to hear my wonderful words, and left with dismay.
Why is it? When I go out of my way to do something positive/
That I could see my reflection in your eyes, that it's negative.
Why is it? Every time I walk out, I suddenly forgot something'
Is it because I've seen the light, and time to turn to a new fling.
Why is it? Now that I have decided to let you go, and set you free'
That you leave little messages behind, that emotionally haunts me.
Why is it? As adults that each time we make a mistake'
That it takes time to correct it, and is like a piece of cake.
Why is it? So hard to make that right decision, and know it'
Yet, it's so damn hard to admit that you have left the bull-shit.
Why is it? Now that I am gone from your life and split'
That every time I see you now, you ask me; "Why is it?"

Angel's Kiss
By Peggy Bouse

We go through life so often,
Not stopping to enjoy the day.
And we take each one for granted,
As we travel on our way.

For in your pain and sorrow,
An Angel's Kiss will help you through,
This kiss is very private,
For it is meant for only you.

We never stop to measure,
Anything we just might miss.
But if the wind should blow by softly,
You'll feel an Angel's Kiss.

A kiss that is sent from heaven,
A kiss from up above
A kiss that is very special,
From someone that you love.

So when, your hearts are heavy,
And filled with tears and pain.
And no one can console you,
Remember once again.

About the ones you grieve for,
Because you sadly miss.
And the gentle breeze you took for granted,
Was just an Angel's Kiss.

Dedicated to All the Women of the Centre.
With love, honour, strength, hope and courage, Carol.

Our BC Rain
by Loama Smith

There are many different kinds of rain
Some is soft rain like kisses on the cheek
Some warm soft falling rain in the evening like a long hot day
Some raindrops are cold with gusty winds
And then the winter rain mixed with snow
Snowflakes are the most perfect thing of God's nature
But just think what they can do
When they stick together— that's what families should do.

YWCA IN FOCUS PRE-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM For Parenting Women (Up to 30 years of age)

YWCA IN FOCUS assists parenting women to prepare for, and access, further education and vocational training, or to obtain suitable employment.

This 15-week program provides:

- Literacy and educational upgrading
 - Personal development
 - Pre-employment skills
 - Work experience
 - Computer orientation
- Health and wellness activities
- Support – parenting information, help in finding child care, access to community services and peer support

**For more information call (604) 688-4666
or email focus@ywcavan.org**

Next sessions to start: March 3 and April 21.

This program is funded by the Ministry of Human Resources

The YWCA of Vancouver, a registered charity, is a resource for women, families and those seeking to improve the quality of their lives. From support for children & families to employment services, housing to health & wellness programs, leadership development to information & referral, the YWCA provides essential programs in more than 40 locations throughout Greater Vancouver. Visit www.ywcavan.org