

**THE
WHOLE
TRUTH**



PRISELLA **MAGAZINE**



SPECIAL DELIVERY



Credits

Writings: Margie Mendez, Suzie Morales, Rheas, Rachel Montour, Michèle Marie-Josée Tremblay, Anna Aude, Anita, Carrie and Marie-Paule

Translation: Chloé Surprenant, Julie Duzyk, Patrick Poulin and Aramis Alexandre Belval

Corrections: Marie-Paule Grimaldi, Gaétan Proulx, Tau S. Bui, Chloé Sondervost, Sara Dignard, Fannie Leonard, Anita Schoepp and Carrie Martin

Drawings: Margie Mendez, Rheas, Rachel Montour and Suzie Morales

Collages: Michèle Marie-Josée Tremblay, Chloé Surprenant and Anita, from an images selection by Margie Mendez, Suzie Morales, Rheas, Rachel Montour, Michèle Marie-Josée Tremblay, Anita, Carrie and Marie-Paule

Design: Chloé Surprenant

Impression: Le Groupe Quadriscan

Prisella was created during workshops at Tanguay Prison with Anita Schoepp, from Stella, Carrie Martin, from the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, and with Marie-Paule Grimaldi, guest artist.

Prisella received financial contributions from Stella, Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, QPIRG Concordia, QPIRG McGill and Alberta Street Nurses Association. We wish to thank them for their support.

Financial contributions from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Public Health Agency of Canada has contributed financially to the production of this magazine. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.



Editor's Note

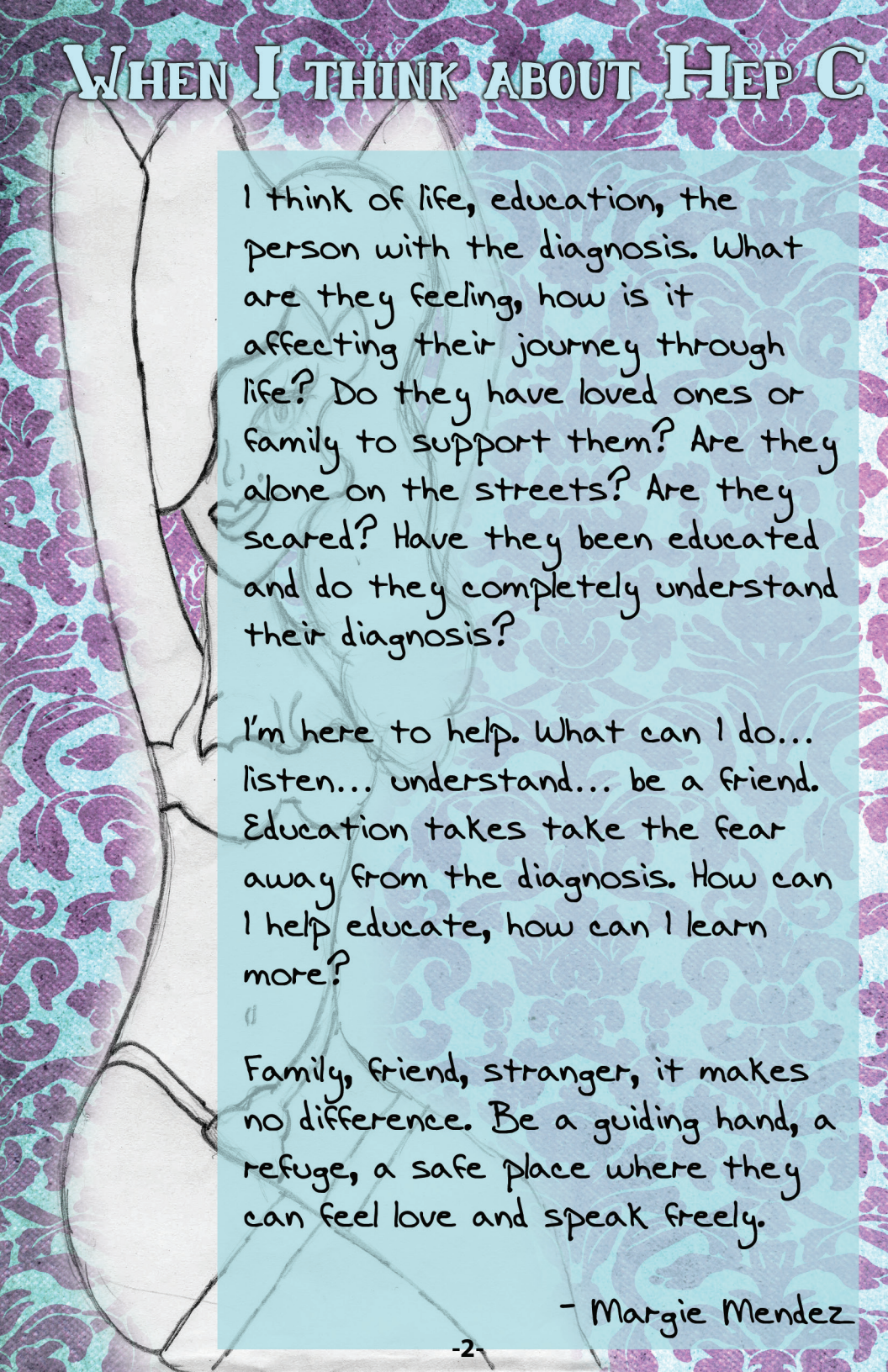
And so here it is, *Prisella*! This magazine was created in collaboration with women living in Tanguay prison, the organization Stella, the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, Marie-Paule Grimaldi, guest artist, and Chloé Surprenant. We hope that you use it as a tool for Hep C education, prevention and support. We had a great time making it and we all learned so much! We hope you enjoy...

- Anita, Marie-Paule and Carrie

Table of Contents

2. When I Think about Hep C – Margie Mendez & Suzie Morales
4. Water and Drug Habits – Rheas
5. 24 Things You Don't Know About Me!! – Margie Mendez & Suzie Morales
6. What's health? – Rachel Montour
8. # 1 Trick - Rheas
10. Inner Peace – Margie Mendez
11. Feel Good Activities for Health and Why – Rachel Montour
13. Journey Tanguay: Just Like Me – Margie Mendez
15. What's Hep C?
17. Fashion – Suzie Morales
18. Questions for a Mom with Hep C – Anna Aude
23. Cell Memory, D² - Rheas
24. Break the Silence – Margie Mendez
26. My Mistress - Rheas
28. Dear Abby - Collective
33. Movie Suggestions - Rheas
34. Quiz – Suzie Morales & Margie Mendez
36. Recipes
38. Thank You
40. Horoscope - Collective
44. Resources

WHEN I THINK ABOUT HEP C




I think of life, education, the person with the diagnosis. What are they feeling, how is it affecting their journey through life? Do they have loved ones or family to support them? Are they alone on the streets? Are they scared? Have they been educated and do they completely understand their diagnosis?

I'm here to help. What can I do... listen... understand... be a friend. Education takes take the fear away from the diagnosis. How can I help educate, how can I learn more?

Family, friend, stranger, it makes no difference. Be a guiding hand, a refuge, a safe place where they can feel love and speak freely.

- Margie Mendez



When I think about hepatitis C, it makes me very aware of my surroundings. I didn't know too much about the disease until I came to jail. Reading about it and hearing about how contagious it can be really opened my eyes to be more cautious in this environment. I'm happy I know now more about the disease and can share my knowledge with people. Also, it will hopefully lower the risk of catching it if everyone is being aware and cautious. I'm very happy I participated in the Stella group.

- Suzie Morales



WATER AND DRUG HABITS

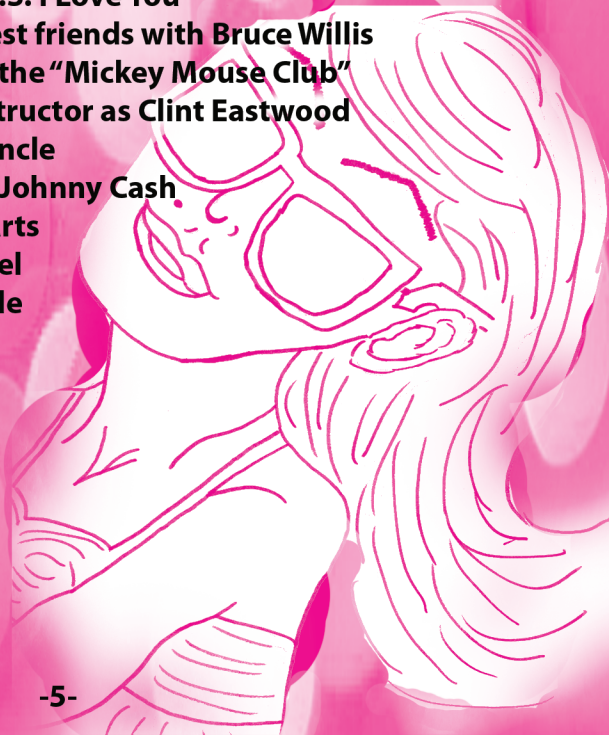
I want to tell you an anecdote! When I started taking ketamine and some of these new drugs made from prescription drugs (it was new back then), I really liked it and it allowed me to stop taking coke and heroin. Ketamine became my substance of choice. I took 10 grams daily along with speed, GHB and ecstasy. Now I have an interstitial cystitis (inflammation of the bladder). I must admit I don't drink much water, drinking without an effect really isn't my cup of tea. But I know that my dealer has been using these drugs for 7 years and doesn't seem to have any problems. And yes, he drinks a lot of water. He drank 2 to 4 litres daily and it saved his ass! So, drug habits or not, this proves that the water we are 90% made of, is vital to any human being.

Rheas

24 THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME!!

1. My older sister is a Sister...as in, a Nun
2. My mom is an undercover detective for drug and gang enforcement
3. My favorite color is flamingo pink
4. My favorite cocktail is a Mojito
5. I want to have 6 children
6. Women adore me, men desire me and yet my day job is being a janitor
7. I like my men and my food super hot and spicy
8. My favorite book is "Fifty Shades of Grey"
9. A guy once tried to impress me by dressing like Howard from "The Big Bang Theory"
10. My favorite dessert is cheesecake
11. My favorite vacation destination is the Fiji Islands
12. I would like to franchise my own cupcake company
13. I really want to receive a Tiffany & Co. box as a gift
14. I adore expensive shoes
15. My favorite movie is "P.S. I Love You"
16. My second cousin is best friends with Bruce Willis
17. When I was 7, I was on the "Mickey Mouse Club"
18. I have the same ski instructor as Clint Eastwood
19. Carlos Santana is my uncle
20. I once locked lips with Johnny Cash
21. I majored in Creative Arts
22. I have a Brittany Spaniel
23. I love to surf in the nude
24. I'm Hep C positive

*Margie Mendez &
Suzie Morales*



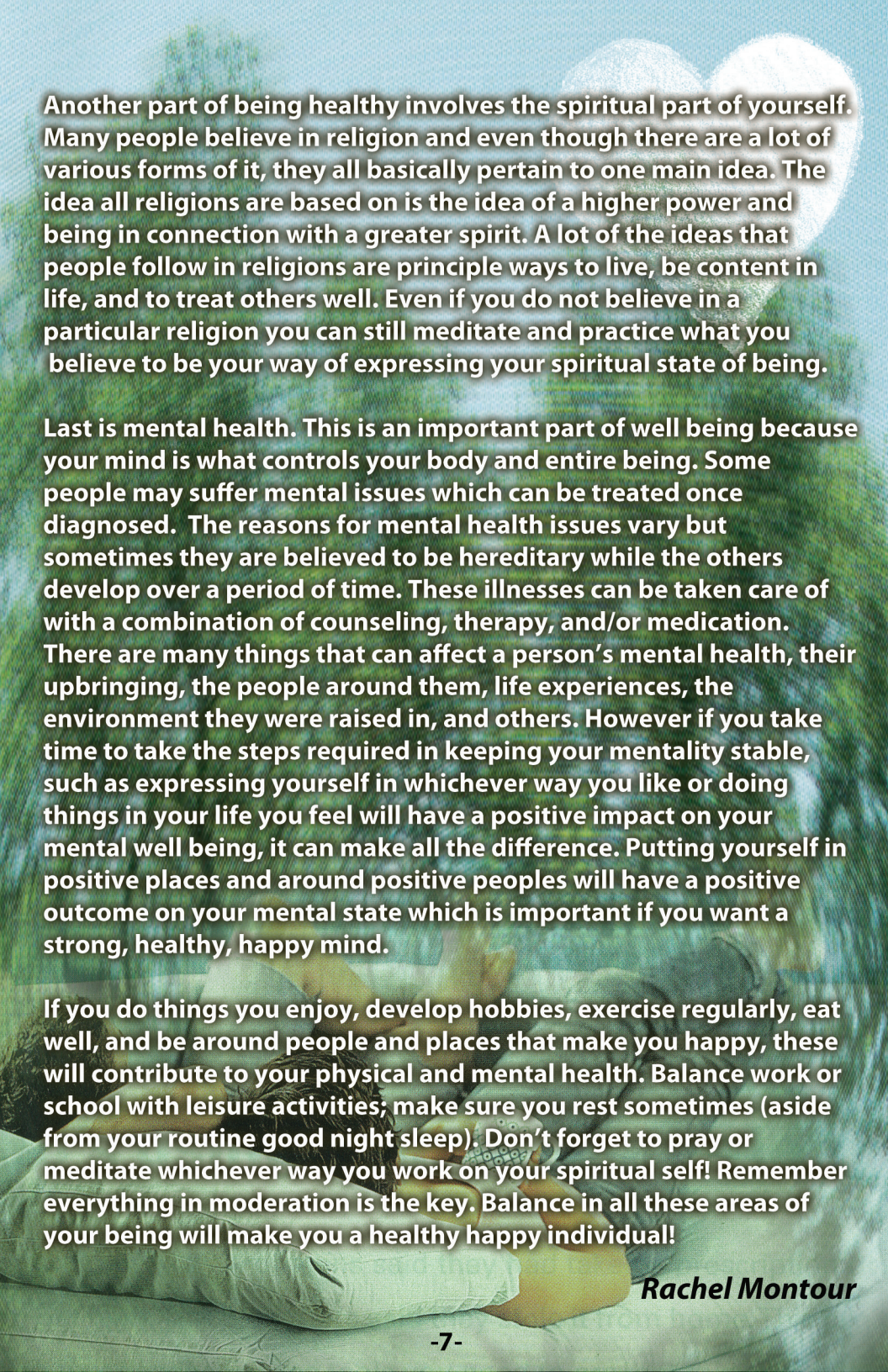


WHAT IS HEALTH?

Health means taking good care of yourself in all aspects. Physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. It is important to acknowledge that to be in good, over-all health your body needs to be healthy just as much as your mind since both depend on the other to function. There are many steps we should take as well as steps to avoid taking in order to stay healthy.

Physical health means eating a nutritional, healthy diet and exercising regularly. Eating well and exercising is good for keeping in shape and which consequently, keeps your heart healthy, your blood pressure low, your weight normal, and the list goes on and on. Visiting a dentist every six months and seeing a physician for routine checkups can also be a key factor in staying healthy. When you take care of yourself in these manners you are more likely to be in good physical health.

Next is emotional health. This involves being in tune with your feelings and acknowledging the need to be loved as well as treated well to be happy! Above all, the most important relationship in your life is the one you have with yourself. This means that you have to treat yourself well because when you are good to yourself others will see that and will be more likely to treat you the same. People need to be around other healthy people in order to be healthy themselves. Self love and self respect will draw others to want to be around you! Don't be afraid to set standards for yourself to show others what you deem to be acceptable and what is not. Remember spending alone time is healthy too.



Another part of being healthy involves the spiritual part of yourself. Many people believe in religion and even though there are a lot of various forms of it, they all basically pertain to one main idea. The idea all religions are based on is the idea of a higher power and being in connection with a greater spirit. A lot of the ideas that people follow in religions are principle ways to live, be content in life, and to treat others well. Even if you do not believe in a particular religion you can still meditate and practice what you believe to be your way of expressing your spiritual state of being.

Last is mental health. This is an important part of well being because your mind is what controls your body and entire being. Some people may suffer mental issues which can be treated once diagnosed. The reasons for mental health issues vary but sometimes they are believed to be hereditary while the others develop over a period of time. These illnesses can be taken care of with a combination of counseling, therapy, and/or medication. There are many things that can affect a person's mental health, their upbringing, the people around them, life experiences, the environment they were raised in, and others. However if you take time to take the steps required in keeping your mentality stable, such as expressing yourself in whichever way you like or doing things in your life you feel will have a positive impact on your mental well being, it can make all the difference. Putting yourself in positive places and around positive peoples will have a positive outcome on your mental state which is important if you want a strong, healthy, happy mind.

If you do things you enjoy, develop hobbies, exercise regularly, eat well, and be around people and places that make you happy, these will contribute to your physical and mental health. Balance work or school with leisure activities; make sure you rest sometimes (aside from your routine good night sleep). Don't forget to pray or meditate whichever way you work on your spiritual self! Remember everything in moderation is the key. Balance in all these areas of your being will make you a healthy happy individual!

Rachel Montour

#1 TRICKS

Like many addicts, I have been sexually molested, I was 4 years old. At 11, my virginity got stolen. Broken, hurt, life for me had become hell. My emotions crushed open, I no longer wanted life itself. Until the very day where I discovered drugs, wow, I could then sedate my emotions on demand. I could control my emotions but just like a viper, drugs invaded my veins. From then on, I was no longer my own master but my very own slave. 25 years of slavery, slavery that I don't wish on anyone. Not even on my worst enemy. This is why I wish to share with you today alternative ways of evading reality that I made part of my life. After many trials and errors, these are my #1 healthy ways of escaping:

1) Music has been a great, vital support. It helped me get out of my reality, to let off steam when my emotions were too intense. Emotions I could no longer freeze. Music has been a great, vital support through my multiple attempts of withdrawal. A song that moves you playing in loop may be your best ally, just like a lifeline.

2) Travelling for me is a way to be in a new world, to nourish myself with different cultures and see that I am not alone. To make my spirit colorful. When I took my last trip to Europe as a backpacker, to be treated with methadone, I was very determined to quit heroin. Last hit at the airport, it took me two weeks to get cold turkey. Survival is such a powerful instinct that may often surprise you!

Just Chill Out

3) I didn't believe at all in therapies what so ever, but in jail I have discovered individual zootherapy. It allowed me to admit undeniable truths about myself. Not only about the why's and how's of my story but also about the 'me' that I had ignored, that little girl that I had so well hidden from that foul disgusting world. I did not want to see nor recognize this inner splendor who was ME in the end. That fragile soiled ME that I have kept hidden very far away in fear of it getting broken.

4) In jail, I thought that the insanity that I witness everyday could be controlled by my way of life. Being in jail deprives me of my way of life, there is no way out. Finally, I found a mistress that I had never really encountered before. Believe it or not, television saves my life, tv allows me to get through my time. To escape a merciless, cruel, double faced world.

5) **NEVER FORGET:** the most important thing is to not care about what others think or believe. It is only YOU forever and ever that most be important.

ME, MYSELF AND I.

Rheas

peace

momentum

Inner Peace

My life has been full of many challenges. The journey I have walked has been full of lessons and life experiences. Now as I reflect upon these challenges, I understand that each step I have taken has led me to where I am today.

respect

Inside me for a very long time, I let fear and guilt make me feel unworthy of love. As such I accepted things, such as mental and physical abuse, because I felt that was all I was worthy of receiving. I've spent a life-time with the disease to please. By pleasing others, or in the attempt to please others this is how I would feel, loved, wanted and needed. I can honestly say I never said no and I never put myself first.

hope

Now my journey is focusing on self love and self acceptance. I am learning to truly love myself for who I am. Deep inside I've always known but I let myself be manipulated by others' actions and words. As well as not forgiving myself for my past failures. I realize now that these failures have taught me lessons along the way. By making these mistakes it has helped me to grow in self love and self acceptance.

I have also learned how to trust myself, to listen to my inner voice, and pray. I know that there is a higher power and that I want to grow more spirituality. Deep inside I know there is peace and happiness waiting for me. I just need patience and to continue walking the path.

Margie Mendez

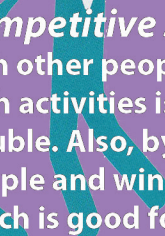

pride

satisfaction




FEEL GOOD ACTIVITIES FOR HEALTH AND WHY

Taking a walk, because you are doing mild exercise which is good for you and gives you time to think about things in your life that may be bothering you. Also, it's good to get out in the sun, breathe fresh air, and look at your surroundings.



Competitive sports which can be good to share an activity with other people who enjoy doing the same thing as you. Doing such activities is positive because it keeps you from getting into trouble. Also, by doing so, you open yourself up to meeting other people and winning games can give you a sense of achievement which is good for your self-esteem.



Riding bikes, roller blading and skateboarding are good forms of exercise as well. It is important to get your heart pumping and your blood flowing at least 30 minutes a day. People find these enjoyable because, unlike walking, you get to cover distances faster and the feeling of the wind in your face and hair can be very exhilarating.

Doing artwork such as drawing, painting, coloring, sculpting, beadwork, knitting, or any other kind of arts and crafts are good ways to express yourself creatively and can make you feel proud of your work when you have a finished piece to admire.

Reading books or magazines can be good for you because it gives you time to relax and it improves your reading and writing skills. It can also extend your vocabulary and have educational benefits. Reading takes your mind to different places and is enjoyable because you can pick any kind of book you want to read and you can do it entirely by yourself.

Finding different recipes in magazines, cookbooks, internet, or even from cooking shows can be a good way to switch up the variety of food you eat. Some people find cooking to be a rewarding experience because it takes up time and is a good way to stay healthy. When you're cooking for yourself, you usually take the time to make sure what you're going to be eating is good for you. It is a healthier alternative than eating fast food or going to restaurants where you don't know what is going into your food.

Playing with animals. Having an animal to play with, raise, love and train can be good for you because they love you unconditionally and teach you a sense of responsibility. Animals have a way of making people happy and have been known to restore people back to happiness and health.

Putting yourself in positive places and around positive people will have a positive outcome on your mental state which is important if you want a strong, healthy and happy mind, well being, it can make all the difference.

If you are experiencing abuse (abuse comes in many forms: mental, physical, verbal), this can have a negative impact on your mental state. Talk to someone you trust and do your best to get away from unhealthy situations. Do things you enjoy, develop hobbies, exercise regularly, balance work or school with leisure activities and rest properly. Remember everything in moderation is the key. Balance in all these areas of your life will make you a healthy, happy individual. Set standards for yourself. Do what works for you.

Rachel Montour



Journey Tanguay: Just Like Me

Maybe you're someone just like me, at first you may not know it. We don't come from the same social environment, we don't speak the same language. Normally our lives may never cross paths, but today we find ourselves in the same place, same space, living our daily lives together in Tanguay.

My initial feeling when I was arrested was relief, definitely not a normal or expected reaction to this type of situation. Then there was denial, denial that I was like other inmates and definitely denial that there was anything wrong with me; someone else was responsible or at fault and that is why I was in prison.

My journey began slowly at first, by fate, by luck, by a higher power, whatever you want to call it. There were definitely many different people who helped me along the way: inmates, guards, programs offered, and people who came in and out of my life. I eventually began to open my ears and listen, although sometimes I pretended not to hear, or pretended that it had nothing to do with my situation. When the cell door closed at night, there was nowhere to hide from myself. I knew deep inside it was me and I had to face myself.

Many times it would just be a comment, other times it would be conversation next to me. I could hear the excuses, the justifications, the denials (hello Margie! That's you!!). Of course that would have been way too easy and anyone who has had to overcome fear, guilt, denial, mental or physical abuse, drug or alcohol addictions, rape, molestation, sexual abuse, homelessness, an injury or accident that changed their lives, addiction to prescription medications, depression, OCD, ADHD or been diagnosed as Bi-polar, knows it is not easy at all to face the reality of the situation.

I think that when each one of us, like me, looks back through our lives it has been something significant or a profound event in our lives that shook our whole existence, our core values and beliefs which in turn set our world spinning out of control and that is how we eventually ended up here in Tanguay.

For me, it became my safe haven, my place to heal, recover, and learn all about me. It's funny, but before I was just a small reflection of the person I was with. I didn't know who I was, what I liked, how to feel emotions. I had kept things locked up, deep inside of me that I wasn't even aware of. At the beginning it was opening flood gates. I was completely overwhelmed, but what I found was that the people I was surrounded by had a significant part in my healing and personal growth.

So I would like to thank all of you who are just like me! I have become a better, stronger, and more confident person. Meeting all of you is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

Thank you!

Margie Mendez



On ne rigole pas avec

What is Hep C?

It is a disease that attacks the liver and can cause some serious damage. The disease is caused by the hepatitis C virus: HCV. This virus is transmitted with blood to blood contact. So that means that to catch it, the blood of an infected person has to get into the blood stream of someone else. The illness can also become chronic, meaning that it lasts a long time and slowly destroys the liver over the course of many years. People will eventually develop other illnesses due to liver damage such as cancer and cirrhosis.

How do you prevent Hep C?

Prevention means not sharing materials that could have traces of blood on them. Hep C can live outside the body for a very long time (over a year) and so you reduce the risks of getting it if you DON'T:

-Share your injection material like syringes, spoons, steri-cups, cotton and even your wash.

-Share the material you use for sniffing drugs like rolled bills or straws.

-Share material for smoking crack like your pipe. When you smoke a lot of crack you can get cuts on your lips which are open doors for transmitting hep c and receiving the virus.

-Share hygienic products like tooth brushes, nail clippers, razors, nail files, tweezers etc.

-Get a tattoo or piercing with material that hasn't been sterilized between uses.

-Have unprotected sex : the risk of contracting hep c with sex is low, but it exists if you have sex and blood is present like sex when you are menstruating or where there could be tearing like rough or anal sex.

-Share razors or anything else you use for cutting or self mutilation.

*Le jeu de
du corps*

On ne rigole pas ça!

Can you heal Hep C?

Sometimes, for under 20% of people who get Hep C, the body heals itself. If not, there are treatments that you can go through that can heal Hep C depending on your body, the type of Hep C virus you have and what condition your liver is in. The treatment can take up to 6 months to a year to do and can have serious side effects. Talk to your doctor or Hep C support groups like CAPAHC (514-521-0444)

Is Having Hep C the end of the world?

NO! There are many people that live with Hep C without treatment and live healthy lives. What is key if you have Hep C is to focus on your health and the health of your liver. This means that you need to take care of yourself by watching how much you consume (especially things that can hurt your liver like alcohol), eating healthy (see our recipe section), exercising (even walking does a body good!) and reduce your stress.




Hep C, STIs and prison

People in prisons are at a much higher risk of contracting things like Hep C and HIV because it is much harder to get unused gear inside. It is also harder to get things like new hygiene products because your environment is so controlled. The best form of prevention is education so don't be scared to pass on what you know about the illness. The only thing you should be sharing is knowledge, and knowledge is power so share away!

C'est la fin du
jeu de hasard.

LE CRI
du corps

Comment
SURVIVRE



THIS SEASON GET DRESSED UP. BE DARING REFINED AND ELEGANT FASHION IS FOR EVERYONE. BEAUTIFUL DRESSES, JEANS, SHIRTS AND SWEATS. BEING HEP'C POSITIVE IS NOT A CERTAIN LIFESTYLE, YOU COULD BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL RUNWAY MODEL WORKING FOR THE BIGGEST COMPANY IN NEWYORK, MAYBE YOU'RE THE GIRL WALKING DOWN THE STREET NEXT TO ME OR THE ONE SITTING ON THE COUCH IN HER SWEATS READING THIS. FASHION IS EVERYWHERE AND FOR EVERYONE. HEP'C' POSITIVE OR NOT. ARRIVE FASHIONABLY ... NEVER LATE!



SUZIE MORALES



Questions for a Mom with Hep C

Did you feel lonely or isolated when you got diagnosed?

When I discovered my positive status with Hep C, it was on the phone and I was in a therapy centre. I felt lonely and isolated.

Did you know about Hep C before you got it?

I knew about Hep C, because I was using drugs. A lot of my friends were infected by the virus and almost each time I went to get some prevention materials, people were talking about the risks of contracting Hep C.

What did you think of people with Hep C before you got it?

Nothing good or bad. It was just people.

How did you feel when you were diagnosed?

Not really surprised. I was using a lot of drugs by injection and inhalation. I shared the materials a lot of times. But I did feel alone and nobody to talk to, about it.

How did you find out about your diagnosis?

They tested me, during the pregnancy.

When you learnt you had Hep C, did the doctor or the nurses give you proper educational materials to learn about the illness?

As I said before, I was in a therapy centre and I received a phone call from the nurse. She told me about my positive result and that's it.

Were you diagnosed before or after you had kids?

After my first kid but during the pregnancy of my other kid.

Are you scared to give it to your kids?

I had a lot of questions about transmission during the pregnancy, about breast feeding and stuff. And I was also interested to know more about transmission to my kids. I was scared as well. I needed to be clear with my kids about not sharing our personal stuff like toothbrush and nail cutters. I am not scared anymore, to pass it to my kids.

Are you in pain?

I am not in pain. But I am tired all the time. And also I changed my lifestyle. I can't drink all the time and I don't take too much drugs... Try to eat well and sleep well. Now the challenge is to exercise more!!!

How has it changed your sex life?

At the beginning, I thought I could only fuck with Positive people like me. People were telling me that I have the obligation to tell my status to all my partners. I find this horrible and often not possible. I was not really sexually active in the first years after discovering my Hep C status. Now, I have a sexual life. And it is positive!!! My actual partner knows about it and I need to remind her a lot of time about our risks and especially her own risks. I think I am more responsible and mature about my sexlife since I am positive on Hep C.

How did your entourage react when they learnt you have Hep C?

They all reacted differently. Some showed great and strong support. Others were so nervous about it that they felt they needed to consult their own doctors to know more about the virus. My mother was really nervous. I remember cutting myself and my daughter wanted to help me with it. My mom was yelling at her not to touch me and stuff. Then, when it was over, I needed to take a little time with my mother to explain that my kids are educated about Hep C and that she doesn't help when she overreacts like that!

After your diagnosis, how did your daily routine change? Did your daily habits change?

I am just paying more attention, when I hurt myself. Like I am always checking if I am bleeding, and if so, I cover it to be sure I don't put anyone at risk. Also I double check that when I have my period. Like cleaning the toilet and the bath tub more than usually. Have to explain to my kids that I don't shower with them when I have my period and stuff like that. I also try to not drink too much. And I pay attention to what food I eat.

What outside support did you get? ie. from organizations like CAPAHC (Center and Association for People Living with Hepatitis C)

I did not look to have outside support. I have friends who are positive like me so we talk about it often in my personal life.

What was your first thought after being diagnosed?

That I could not have a 'normal' sexual life.

How do you decide it is the right time to reveal your status to your sexual partners?

Still today, I do not disclose my status to all my partners. In the moment I am dating a really sexy lady and it was clear that I wanted to tell her before we could have sex together. I wanted to be real with her. Not that am not real with others but you know, you need to feel really at ease and in a respectful space with somebody to disclose yourself. I choose my people to disclose or not.

Is there a typical response you get from people when you tell them you have Hep C?

Not really...Except 'How did you get this'?

How old were you when you were diagnosed?

Who gave you Hep C?

I have a couple of choices!... I was smoking crack for years and sometimes performed blowjobs without condoms. I thought it could be in that situation that I get Hep C. And I also injected drugs. And I had sex with Positive people...you know! I snorted drugs for years sharing materials too! There are a couple of possibilities, in my case!

Are you still in contact with that person?

As I said before, I shared materials with a lot of people. But I keep in my mind and heart one of my special street friend who was co-infected. One day, I was sick. I did not have clean gears for injection. I ask that person to share his own syringe. He did not want because of his status. I had to tell him that I was infected too (even I did not know my own status at that moment) to get the syringe. Maybe it's that moment. Last time I saw him, we had sex together with condom and it was great. I am not mad, at him, at all. I still love him.

How did they react when you told them you had Hep C?

Some people are ok, some are really supportive and others are acting like they are afraid.

Do you think that having Hep C affects your kids and how?

Yes, they are educated about Hep C but also about sexuality and limits. I think it's a positive thing that is happening for my family. We have to talk about the real things that sometimes happen in life and we need to take concrete actions for limiting the possibility of transmission. Also, they are now actors of social changes since they can talk about Hep C to people they trust. About confidence and trust, I have to tell my kids that they cannot tell everybody about mommy's status.

Are you considering treatment? Why or why not?

I am considering treatment since I know I am Hep C Positive. But I am waiting for the perfect moment!... I wanted to do it, for a long time now. When I had the results, I was in a therapy centre. And possibilities of relapse were high, during the treatment, especially if you just stopped using. I was not ready. Then after, I started university and it was important for me. But I have to say that I did a lot of exams to check if my liver was OK. To be sure that the virus was under control and see if I can still wait to treat it. I think I will be ready in another 2 years...but Yeah I will try it for sure! Life without Hep C...Awwww soon!

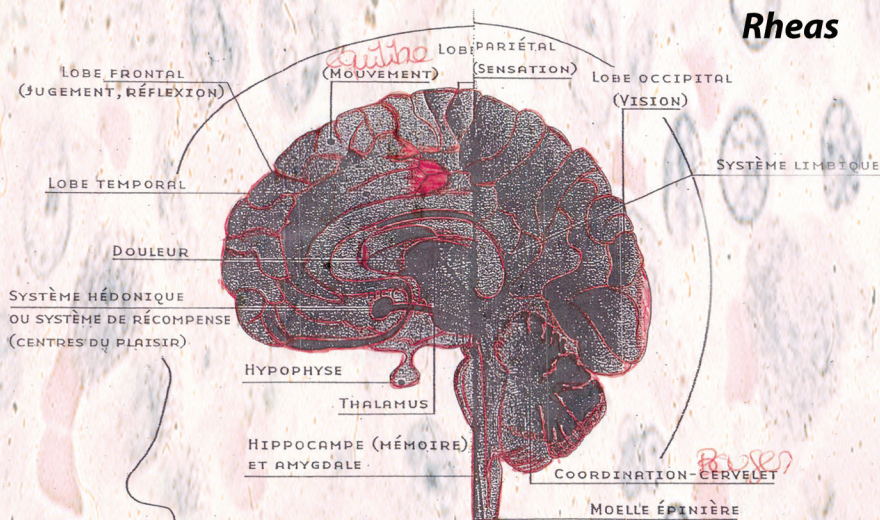
Anna Aude

Cell Memory, D²

Drug habits, despite society's efforts at keeping it under the radar, are present in every level of our society. Gambling, drugs, love and others are all addictions, but some benefit a kind of standing over the rest that are used by the elites. This so-called high society cannot be brought to use the term "junkie". As for me, I am a money-addict, a drug-addict and an adrenaline endorphin power addict. In this article, I will only refer to my main addiction: drugs. I was born with more D² adrenalin and endorphin receptors than normal, which means that when I take heroin or cocaine, the effects are that my metabolism absorbs an immediate higher dose which accelerates the dependence to the synthetic substances. That is when the diagnosis was revealed to me. My first contact with drugs was smoking mescaline, an initiative of my dad when I was 4. My drug addiction started right then and there, due to cell memory. We all possess a cell memory that detects any outside agent that infiltrates us by skin contact, mucous membranes, inhaling, etc. The second time I took drugs, my cells immediately identified the intruder! Automatically, addiction found its place, without any form of self-preserving mechanism. Pre-destined and condemned by a careless father, supported by a hard life, my path was all drawn out for me, but with a solid dose of optimism, willpower and perseverance, I could change this path with something creative of my own.

From an ex-drug user but still addicted, this is an everyday fight for a better life that I intend to win! You are the most important person in your life.

Rheas



Break the silence

Domestic violence is something that touches most women. Either by personal experience, a close friend or family member or a person in her social environment. "You know", the woman who has those inexplicable bruises and constant accidents.

This woman looks no different than me or you. As a matter of fact she usually is me or you. The battered woman, she can work, or stay at home with the children. Maybe even work the streets. She may be a socialite, a doctor, a lawyer; she may have a university degree or no education at all, because being battered has no discrimination. It may happen to any of us, at any time.

No matter where these women come from they all share the same feelings. They are scared and afraid. They feel guilty and think they deserve what is happening to them. They think it is all they do deserve, this is the only love they know, it's their security. She loves her abuser. She believes him when he says he's sorry, and that it won't happen again. She even thinks she can change him. After all it's her fault she shouldn't have said what she said, did what she did, or wore what she wore.

On the outside looking in, it is easy to give this woman advice. Just leave the bastard! Oh honey you deserve a hell of a lot better than that. Come on you're beautiful, intelligent and funny. Any man would be lucky to have you. In all honesty to someone who has never experienced violence it is cut and dry, simple. But those of you like me who know, it is much much more complicated than that.

It is not easy to admit that you are mentally or physically abused. You are afraid you will be judged. You feel stupid. Maybe like me you can't believe you're in this type of relationship again. There are hundreds of reasons why you don't admit it, but you are not alone. There is always someone out there to listen and help you work through it. It may be very difficult and it does take time to work things out but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

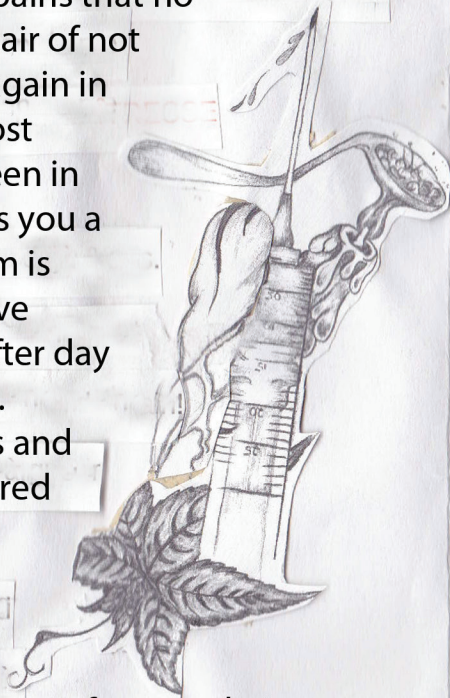
If you are mentally or physically abused don't be afraid to speak up or look for help. Even if you're a man. There is always a way to end the abuse. For me, I know I'm not alone and I am here to listen, help and learn.

Margie Mendez

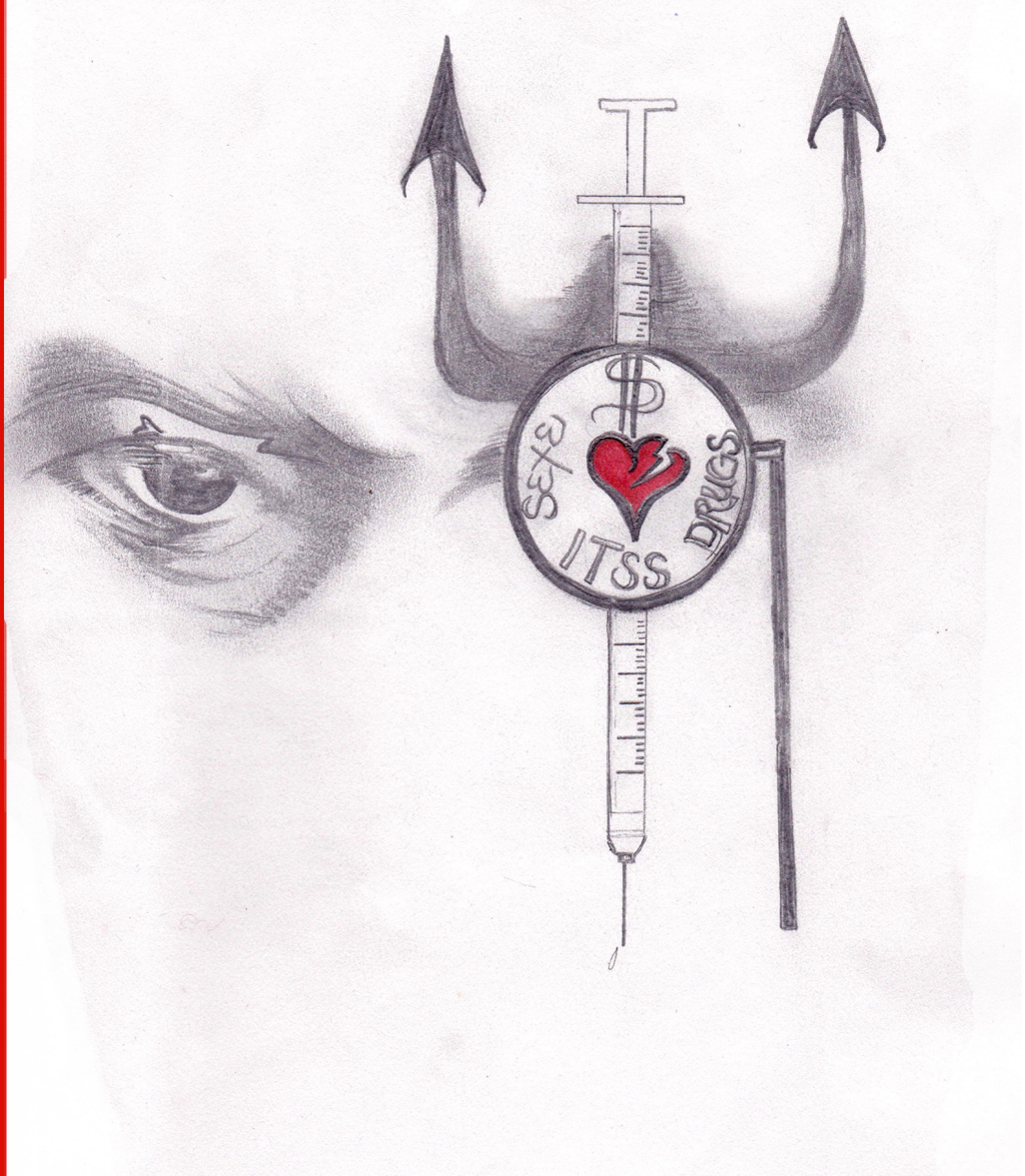


Dear Mistress

One day at a time, one step at a time, I will achieve my goal that desire that I've been cherishing for 5 years! From illegally at large to relapse just to get a chance to be functioning again! Those intense pains that no specialist could alleviate, the despair of not finding any release made me fall again in my mistress's arms that were almost gone from my mind since I had been in control for 8 years. Life never gives you a challenge you can't face. My dream is getting real! I have to accept to love myself and keep on healing day after day those wounds for so long ignored. I have to welcome my weaknesses and seek for the help and support offered to me! *Psycho*toxico*crimino, they all took control over my life, but I have to be proud and use my 35 years of being to help protect others myself from the gloom of manipulation. *Psycho*toxico*crimino, I want to become a professional with certifications to put in use those years of come-down and decay to guide people still in darkness into the light. Today, I accept that my inner light guides me too out of this tunnel in which I have been wandering for too long.



Rheas



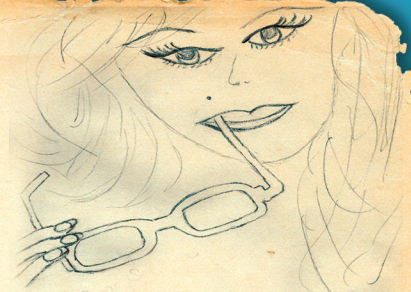
DÉSIR

Put Pônia ~~meu~~ meu péssimo
que

GUÉRIR

Rheas V

Dear Abby



My best friend has just found out she has Hepatitis C and she isn't sure how to break the news to her family and our other friends. She is scared that it is going to push them away or frighten them. Also, I understand the treatment requires the person to have a good support system for a full year. If the news pushes her family and friends away, how will she go about the treatment? Please give me advice Abby, I am scared for my friend. I work full time and don't think I could be there as much, as she needs me, if she were to go into treatment. Do I tell her to not tell anyone or to not do the treatment? I am worried about her health and not being a good friend to her. Any advice?

-Worried in Quebec



Dear Worried in Quebec,

I completely understand the empathy you feel for her! I have 2 options to propose, even though I don't know the people in her entourage. If she is afraid of these people's judgment, I would tell her this: she should seek the assistance of a competent organization like Stella, for example. This way, not only would she get help, but she would also have access to treatment if needed. This treatment is most effective if it is administered as soon as possible. This way, she could put all the chances on her side and keep the support of friends and family for other things. She can get the treatment and then choose to announce it to her loved ones. If they are still judging her, they can always get tested for hepatitis C. This way she can feel secure that she has done everything she could. The second option could be to use a documentary, something with the right information, this way other people's judgment might be less harsh and once they take some time to let that sink in, they can appreciate the effort. There is support available. Best of luck to the both of you! Visit Stella's website, you will find a wealth of advice.

Love



Dear Abby,

I was wondering, I am 21 and I've been dancing for two years now. I have not done extra sexual favors; I'm always trying to be extra clean. In the strip club the men are allowed to touch some parts of my body but as soon as I'm done, I do go and wipe my body with baby wipes. Am I at a very high risk on having Hep C?

- Concerned

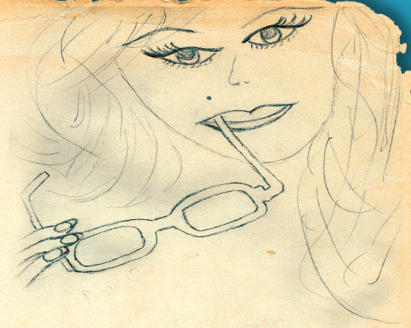
Dear Concerned,

Well let's keep it real. You are not actually working in a high risk environment to catch Hep C, so first be sure to get proper education regarding Hep C and all other sexually transmitted diseases. Hep C is transmitted from blood to blood contact, so unless you are working in a dance bar full of vampires you should be all right. One thing to remember though is that your toothbrush, nail clippers, razors, and all other personal items should not be left out where other girls can use them. Although you are cautious by not lending, doesn't mean if you leave them out in the open other girls will respect your things.

Dear Abby,

I am 21 years old and starting a methadone process. So the doctor made me take a bunch of tests and I found out that I got Hep C. I really don't know how I caught it. When using drugs I always used new syringes. What are the ways or possibilities that I could have been infected? I am currently taking care of my mother who has recently been diagnosed with stage 4 terminal cancer. What could I do to protect her from contracting my Hep C? Should I avoid treatment until she doesn't need my help anymore? I heard it takes a lot of energy and can last up to a year. I fear I won't be able to take care of my mother and go through treatment myself.

-Thank you for Helping Me



Dear Thank you for Helping Me,

First of all, I'm sorry about your mother and her illness. Cancer is hard on the person who acquires it as well as for the family and friends. Second, there are many ways a person can become infected with Hepatitis C. The risks are high with intravenous drug use. That is why it is important to always use a new syringe and to not share any other part of the gear such as steri-cup, cotton ball or even what you use to tie your arm to find your vein. Try to always have a supply of new syringes on hand to avoid this happening to you.

Hepatitis C is transmitted from blood to blood contact. For example, you have a cut on your hand and you shake hands with somebody else who has a cut on their hand (and is infected with Hep C), their blood gets into your blood stream and infects you. You may or may not know how you got it or who you got it from but the important thing is that you do not spread it to others and get treatment for it as (ASAP) well. For a complete list of all the different ways to contract Hep C turn to the resource page or consult your doctor. If you have other family members or anyone else who can take care of your mother, maybe they can take care of you at the same time. That way you can spend time with her and take care of yourself too. It is important to be there for your mother while she is still alive but you need to think of yourself as well. There are also people called Hospice Workers who can come daily or even live with and take care of terminally ill people at little or no cost. To avoid infecting your mother with Hep C, keep her from coming into contact with your blood at all costs. This would be a good time for friends or hospice workers to come help, on days when you're not feeling so hot. Good luck

**Dans
leurs
yeux
amoureux**

Le doute



Dear Abby,

I am lost, I need help! I met a wonderful man, tall, strong, sweet, funny... And we are in love. We started this relationship slowly but now we want to take it to a deeper level, move in together, live together and if all goes well get married! It's been only 6 months but I feel very close to him already. The problem is 2 weeks ago he told me he had hepatitis C and had it for a year and a half. He was afraid of telling me, afraid of losing me. I don't want to lose him either but hepatitis really scares me, I don't have any knowledge on the subject... Once or twice in the heat of the moment, we've had unprotected sex, is there a high risk? Am I risking my life with the man of my life?

Please help me !

Dear woman in love,

I will try to help you to the best of my knowledge and try to put your mind at ease. First of all, your partner's fear of telling you is normal, more often than not people afflicted with this kind of illness are afraid of other people's reactions. He must do his homework, learn to live with this and learn all there is to know on Hepatitis C, that is his responsibility. There are sources of information, help and follow-up at his disposition. As for the unprotected sex issue, unless there has been blood-to-blood contact, the risk of getting Hepatitis C is very low. But if you want to have a long-term relationship with this man, make sure you also get all the information that you need, either in a clinic or a help group.
Best of luck to you!

Resources :

- Stella 514 285-8889
- Clinique L'Actuel 514 524-1001
- CLSC (24/24hrs) 514 527-2361





Help!

My spouse has lied to me about a lot of things since we have been together. It's difficult for me to trust him. He told me he has been checked and tested, but I don't believe him, and I am scared. I have done all the checkups and I am OK, no disease. He is now in jail, I only want to have sexual encounters with him and quit prostitution, so it will be less risky on my side. I don't know what to do to reassure myself about how safe he will be when we will meet next... Please help me.

Dearest,

I totally understand your trust issues.

It is only through mutual trust that a relationship can blossom, in which each partner may grow and evolve. Try to discuss it openly with your spouse, without blaming him, talking about what is important to you, paying attention to his fears and respecting his own limitations. But open discussions and loyalty will not be enough to protect your health. You may be totally honest and trustworthy, but you can only speak for yourself. To be completely reassured, you should have safe protected sex with him and pay attention to details to avoid Hepatitis C infection: do not share toothbrushes, razor blades and clippers, for instance, since Hepatitis C is transmitted through blood contacts. You cannot control everything, but you can take care of yourself by respecting your needs.

love



**CINEMA
IS MADE
FOR THAT**

SHIVERS

MOVIE SUGGESTIONS

TRAINSPOTTING :

If you want to lose the motivation to pursue these self-destructive habits, this movie is a must. You will see all the different stages of drug-use, from the fun first times all the way to the grave. A British movie that shows you the facts of life! Seriously, a must!

LA RUN :

This one is about junkies, dealers and competition between runners. This Quebec production uses the misery of the underground world to hit the audience with the hard-core, merciless, harsh reality and questionable morals without asking us to completely change our point of view. An interesting way of depicting this milieu. Great movie!

Rheas

STUNTS FANTASTIC IMMERSIVE

Quiz

Name:

Nickname:

1. I feel sexy in...

- a) Jeans and t-shirt
- b) Stilettos
- c) A mini-skirt
- d) A sexy thong and a bra

2. My favorite celebrity is:

- a) Christina Aguilera
- b) Britney Spears
- c) Fergie
- d) Kim Kardashian

3. The strangest place I've ever been naked is

_____.

4. My favorite kind of cake is:

- A) Cheesecake
- B) Chocolate
- C) Vanilla
- D) Carrot

5. My celeb look-alike is:

- a) Ellen DeGeneres
- b) Queen Elizabeth
- c) Snoop Dog
- d) Donald Trump



QUIZ

6. My guilty pleasure is:

- a) Watching scary movie marathons
- b) Eating all the Ben & Jerry's I want
- c) Wearing sexy lingerie under my sweats
- d) Having sex on my mom's bed

7. With exes, I think it's best to:

- a) Turn them on and then walk away
- b) Smash their car's headlights
- c) Be friends with benefits
- d) Burn everything they ever gave you

8. The best way to beat stress is:

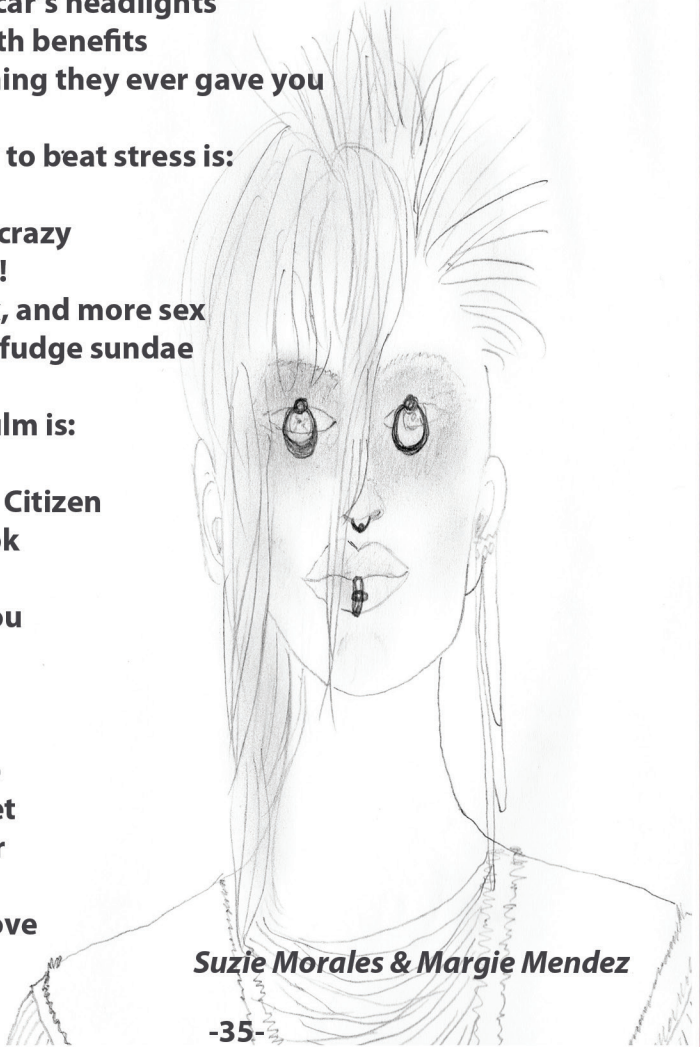
- a) Exercise like crazy
- b) Go shopping!
- c) Have sex, sex, and more sex
- d) A big fat hot fudge sundae

9. My favorite film is:

- A) Law Abiding Citizen
- B) The Notebook
- c) Scarface
- d) P.S. I Love You

10. I have:

- a) A great smile
- b) A healthy diet
- c) A secret lover
- d) Hep C
- e) All of the above



Suzie Morales & Margie Mendez



Recipes

These recipes are taken from *Raw Vegetable Flesh*, a cook book created for people with Hep C and their friends.

Spring Wraps

The Spread

- ¼ cup of crunchy peanut butter
- ¼ cup honey
- 3 tablespoons of miso
- 2 tablespoons of water
- 2 tablespoons of lime juice

The wrap

- 2 whole pita bread
- 6 slices of cheese
- ½ cucumber, sliced
- 1 carrot, grated
- 2 tablespoons of fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons of fresh coriander or parsley

Steps

1. In a bowl mix the peanut butter, honey, miso, water and lime juice.
2. Spread the spread on your pita.
3. Add your ingredients and any other veggies you like.



Homemade Muesli

Ingredients

- 250 g of puffed rice**
- 200g of oat flakes**
- 1 fistful of sunflower seeds**
- 1 fistful of almonds**
- 1 fistful of pumpkin seeds**
- 1 fistful of your favorite nut**
- 2 fistfuls of raisins**
- 2 fistfuls of dried apricots**
- a few pinches of flax seeds**

Steps

- 1. Mix everything together.**
- 2. Serve in a bowl with milk or soy milk.**

Chocolate Cake

Ingredients

- 2 cups of brown sugar**
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of whole wheat flour**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cocoa**
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of baking powder**
- 1 cup of soy milk**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable oil**
- 2 tablespoons of vanilla extract**
- 1 cup of boiling water**
- 1 tablespoon of salt**

Steps

- 1. Preheat oven at 350 degrees F.**
- 2. Mix together all the dry ingredients.**
- 3. Add the soy milk, oil and vanilla together and whip for 2 minutes.**
- 4. Add the boiling water while still mixing.**
- 5. Pour the mixture into a square cake pan and bake for 35 to 45 minutes.**



THANK YOU

I just want to say thank you to the ladies at Tanguay! It is because of your focus, your interest and your leadership that we have this tool to share with other people. You are all an inspiration to me in how courageous and strong you are. I will think of you often, hold you in my heart and send you love. I also want to thank Chloe for her work and Anna Aude for her participation and support. I hope this tool can not only educate and prevent, but support those who are living with Hep C. Love and respect,

-Anita

To you, my dearest, who have given so much into this creative workshop.

I believe in meetings, in the opportunity it gives us to grow, to transform ourselves, to discover other ways of understanding reality. Every work session was this sacred moment where just being together was the most important reason for being present. We met at Tanguay, yes and no. We met through our mutual desire of art making, writing, through images and drawings, and helping others. You gave a lot, with intelligence, sensitivity, humor, strength, compassion, hope, and generosity. This is who you are; this is what you have given. Even under the best conditions, artistic creation is hard to achieve. You have successfully surpassed all difficulties brilliantly and beautifully. This is what you are capable of. Remember, no one can take it away from you. Congratulations, and thank you. Through you, I have learned so much about life itself. Thank you for sharing, thank you for the team work. I will remember. You. Meeting you. Forever.

- Marie-Paule





THANK YOU

I would like to thank you for allowing us to come be a part of this group and for welcoming us into this space. I also want to thank you for sharing such personal and intimate stories that have demonstrated your true strength and courage. You are all such powerful, intelligent women and this experience has been both educational and inspirational for me. Thank you. I look forward to presenting your finished work in the coming weeks.

- Carrie



HOROSCOPE

Aquarius

January 20 - February 18

You're very stubborn and set in your ways. This can be good and bad. Although it is true of Aquarius to be high achievers in whichever field of work they do, at the end of the day you will still want to sit back and enjoy yourself a bit. Whichever person (or people!) you choose to be with that make you feel good, make sure to protect yourself and them by having condoms and clean equipment before you start your trip. A euphoric experience will feel much better when you know you are safe from Hep C and other diseases caused by long, rough sex or by sharing drug equipment.

Pisces

February 19 - March 20

You have been very helpful for others lately. You need to stand up and get a back bone so that you won't be taken advantage of. Think of yourself more, Pisces; especially if you're shacking up with someone! Don't let them persuade you into having sex without a condom or doing something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Unprotected sex makes you more susceptible of catching Hep C!

Aries

March 21 - April 19

You're usually very content being on your own; as an independent person, you're used to being by yourself. As a result, you can tend to be a bit selfish. It's not bad to think of you first and, in some instances, it's good! Such as keeping things like your straws, pipes and steri-cup to yourself which, when using drugs, can keep you safe from the risk of Hep C!

Taurus

April 20 - May 20



Your relationship is exactly where you want it to be. Don't be scared to push it one step forward. Your loyalty will never leave you, but just because your loyalty is strong sexually to one person doesn't mean you're immune to Hep C. Don't share your nail clippers or tooth brush and use clean needles and be cautious before getting any tattoos.

Gemini

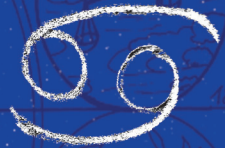
May 21 - June 20



This month is full of parties and fun. Although you keep many secrets, remember Hep C is no secret. So be prepared to have your own tools for your partying needs...

Cancer

June 21 - July 22



Most Cancer people are adaptable to any situation. They are sensitive to other people, which can draw people to them and they can tend to be a bit impulsive sometimes. When you meet some new people and decide to go out partying on a spontaneous note and there is a question of whether there is going to be clean needles or condoms, don't wait until it's too late; stop at a local pharmacy on the way and pick some up! It's better to be safe than sorry! Put your safety and health first: protect yourself from Hep C.

Leo

July 23 - August 22



You're usually the centre of attention or the one carrying the party. Even though you may want everyone's admiration, that doesn't mean you have to share needles with somebody to avoid making them feel offended. Make sure to always bring enough needles if you know you're going to be using drugs with other people. Never use a needle twice to avoid the risk of catching Hep C!

Virgo

August 23 - September 22



Beware of expecting too much from others. Although you like to control things, remember no one can control a free spirit. So be sure when things get hot and heavy in the bedroom, speak up and use protection; not everyone is as loyal as you.

Libra

September 23 - October 22



As a Libra person, you are a smart, determined, outgoing and a fun-loving individual. You may have a lot of friends around you and when you're not working or in school, you're most likely out having a good time. Remember that intelligence has nothing to do with good decision-making so to avoid having to be put in dangerous situations when partying, always have your condoms and clean drug equipment at hand. This will make it easier to be safe from Hep C.

Scorpio

October 23 - November 21



When you're ready to bring out your passionate sexual side, always remember as much as you love your moments of sex, be sure to always be packing your favorite condoms. Love is always in the air for you, but being safe is what really matters.

Sagittarius

November 22 - December 21



This month's social calendar is full of fun and parties. Although you want to be the life of the party and you want the world to be perfect, "wake up and smell the coffee"! When partying, don't share needles, straws, etc., because even socialites are not immune to Hep C or other sexually transmitted diseases.

Capricorn

December 22 - January 19



A new business is on the horizon. All your goals have been set, but be sure to pay attention to details in business and pleasure. You don't judge others, but when in a sexual relationship be sure to ask the difficult questions and protect yourself from Hep C and all other sexually transmitted diseases.



Resources

You are now better informed about Hep C and on your way to protect yourself. Our health is precious, it's important to take care of it. In conclusion, here are some useful resources that you can call to ask questions in total confidence:

Stella - By and for sex workers
2065 Parthenais, suite 404
Montreal, H2K 3T1
514-285-8889

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal
514-933-4688

Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
514-499-1854

CAPAHC – Center and Association for People Living with Hepatitis C
514-521-0444
1-866-522-0444
www.hepcinfo.ca

Info-santé –free 24-hour telephone services for medical information and references; there are many CLSCs in town and they all have drop-in clinics. Phone to get the CLSC in your neighborhood:
811 or 514-527-2361

Clinique actuel
HIV and STI screening; this clinic also offers specialized hepatitis services

CLSC Faubourgs (downtown) - Équipe ITSS
514-527-2361

CLSC Metro (west downtown) – Équipe ITSS
514-934-0354 poste 7413

CLSC Hochelaga
514-253-2181

Alcoholics Anonymous
514-376-9230

Narcotics Anonymous
1-800-879-0333
514-249-0555

PASAN
1-866-224-9978

organization of prisoners, ex-prisoners and activists providing support, education and advocacy for prisoners living with HIV.

CLSC

NAA
AA



