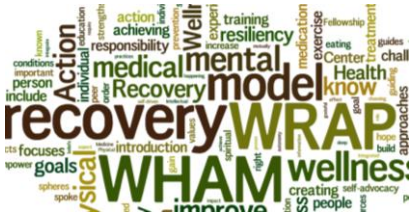


AccessLetter

***Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities***

An Intro to WRAP & WHAM, Self-Driven Recovery Approaches



In conjunction with the Disability Law Center (DLC) and the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC), CCPD

hosted a presentation by Bob Rousseau, Director of Peer Recovery Services, Fellowship Health Resources, Inc: *An Interactive Introduction to WRAP and WHAM*, two different mental health recovery approaches that are self-driven.

Before delving into WRAP and WHAM, Bob spoke about the difference between the medical model and the recovery model approaches to achieving wellness. While acknowledging that the medical model can and does play an important role in the recovery of many people with psychiatric disabilities, he noted that it focuses on what is wrong with a person; it is driven by symptomology, which results in a diagnosis (or several), followed by a course of treatment, which typically includes medications such as anti-depressants or anti-psychotics.

Many of these medications have side effects so severe, such as weight gain and impotence, that they affect the person's quality of life and may require taking additional medications to treat them. The course of treatment when prescribed from a strictly medical model point of view gives the individual being treated very little voice in how to proceed; it is not typically a partnership between provider and patient.

(More on WRAP & WHAM, page 2)

Disability Rights: A Global Perspective



Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in July 1990, similar disability human rights laws have proliferated in countries around the world. But all too often, people with disabilities across the

planet continue to endure significant, and in some cases, rampant unequal treatment and discrimination, simply on the basis of having a disability.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has drawn international attention to how this situation can be acknowledged and redressed through a country's laws. Subsequently, this increasing attention has led to the formulation of the Nine Principles of Disability Rights, authored by an organization called Global Disability Rights Now! (and excerpted below). These nine principles capture and illustrate common elements of effective disability rights laws around the world.

Principle 1: People with Disabilities Are Experts

People with disabilities themselves play a critical role in making the laws widely known, implemented and enforced. People with disabilities and their allies must be extremely knowledgeable about the law. A common problem in many countries is that people with disabilities themselves are not aware of the rights they have, and do not know how to file a complaint or to let the authorities know when their own laws are not being enforced.

(More on Disability Rights, page 3)

SAVE THE DATE!

SSDI/ Employment Training

Fri., September 30, 2016

10 AM to 3 PM

Cambridge Public Library

449 Broadway

**Info will be posted soon
at www.dlc-ma.org**

WRAP & WHAM (continued from page 1)

On the contrary, Bob explained, the recovery model focuses on the individual's strengths and how to build upon them; he quoted Mary Ellen Copeland, who created the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) as saying, "I'm not interested in what's wrong with you! I'm really interested in what's right with you."

The recovery model also recognizes the individual as an expert in her or his own wellness; Bob explained, "I know something about my life. I know something about my emotions. I know something about my physical health and wellbeing. And I certainly know about the history of my mental health challenges and my addiction recovery challenges! It is my life. I have a voice. I have a say."

The recovery model is person-centered, not illness-centered; it is strength-based, not deficit-based. Bob explained that these values are at the foundation of both WRAP and WHAM, and that the recovery model has five key concepts: hope, personal responsibility, education, self-advocacy, and supports.

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan, or WRAP® as it is more widely known, was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland, a psychologist who has lived experience of mental health disability, and is a wellness and recovery tool published by the Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery (CCWR), which states that it helps people:

1. decrease and prevent intrusive or troubling feelings and behaviors;
2. increase personal empowerment;
3. improve quality of life; and
4. achieve their own life goals and dreams

(Information from
<https://copelandcenter.com/wellness-recovery-action-plan-wrap>)

WRAP workshops are typically led by peer specialists and include a workbook that guides participants through creating a plan for achieving wellness. The plan is entirely voluntary and is broken into six parts:

- Wellness Toolbox
- Daily Maintenance Plan

- Triggers Action Plan
- Early Warning Signs Action Plan
- Breaking Down Action Plan
- Crisis Plan
- Post-Crisis Plan

WRAP lists eight spheres of wellness: Emotional, Social, Spiritual, Occupational, Physical, Financial, Intellectual, and Environmental. Bob guided participants in an exercise in which he asked them to select three of these spheres where "*you* could make, for *yourself*, an action plan that would improve the quality of your life as you are experiencing life right now." He then asked them to write down two things they could do to improve their quality of life in each of the three dimensions of wellness they selected.

For example, an action plan to improve the physical aspect of wellness could include walking the dog for 15 minutes every day after work and eating two vegetables a day; one for enhancing the intellectual sphere could be attending a lecture at a local university and joining a book club.

WRAP, Bob noted, is for everyone, not just for people with mental health and addiction recovery issues. Typically developed throughout 8-12 week peer-led group sessions, the plan emphasizes self-determination and responsibility. While one's WRAP may include aspects from the more traditional medical model, such as regular appointments with a psychopharmacologist or choosing to be hospitalized in a crisis, it is self-written, and that autonomy is the very foundation of the recovery model. Indeed, the medical and recovery models, while based on different values, do not have to be mutually exclusive.

After breaking for lunch provided by DLC, the group came back together for an introduction to WHAM, or Whole Health Action Management, a peer support training provided by the federally funded SAMHSA-HRSA's Center for Integrated Health Solutions. The goal of WHAM is to teach participants skills to improve self-management of chronic physical health conditions, mental illness and addiction problems in order to increase resiliency. Bob explained that, like WRAP, WHAM focuses on participants' strengths, guiding them to choose, develop and enhance healthy habits that are known to result in better health outcomes.

WHAM identifies 10 “whole health and resiliency factors,” which are stress management, healthy eating, physical activity, restful sleep, service to others, support network, optimism based on positive expectations, cognitive skills to avoid negative thinking, spiritual beliefs and practices, and a sense of meaning and purpose.

Each of these domains is explored in the WHAM training, which is typically held over two full days. In this introduction, Bob spoke a lot about stress reduction, stating that “prevention and treatment of the harmful effects of stress is a vital feature of health integration, [...and] the ability to reduce and/or counter the negative impact of stress is very important for relapse prevention [in physical, mental health and addiction conditions].”

He then led a short deep breathing exercise to demonstrate the Relaxation Response, developed by the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine at MGH, noting that research has proven that the regular practice of this mindfulness exercise improves physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

The WHAM training guides participants in setting realistic goals to improve their skills relating to each of the whole health and resiliency factors, and then in creating an action plan for achieving those goals by helping participants break them down into concrete steps that will lead to creating new habits. WHAM consists of two components, guiding participants in developing:

- Person-centered whole health goals; and
- Mind-body resiliency in order to build and strengthen self-management skills.

Both the WRAP and WHAM approaches strive to integrate the medical and recovery models, with a single common goal: the wellness of the individual person as defined by that person. CCPD is grateful to DLC and the MDDC for their partnership in bringing this engaging and interactive introduction of WRAP and WHAM by Bob Rousseau to Cambridge. For more information about:

- WRAP: <https://copelandcenter.com/wellness-recovery-action-plan-wrap>
- WHAM: www.integration.samhsa.gov/health-wellness/wham
- Fellowship Health Resources (FHR): www.fhr.net

Disability Rights

(continued from page 1)

Principle 2: Full Participation

People with disabilities have a right to participate in a full range of life activities, free of discrimination from any organization, business or entity that provides goods or services. People with disabilities must have access to all aspects of political, civil, economic, social, and cultural life. There are many circumstances where people with disabilities encounter discrimination. Disability rights laws should address all of these circumstances, from obtaining healthcare to seeing a movie, from employment to housing, from the issuance of a driver's license to airplane travel, because people with disabilities have the right to equal participation in every aspect of society.

Principle 3: Cross Disability Coalitions

Cross-disability coalitions are necessary to building the greater political, economic, and social influence needed for lasting change. People with disabilities and their families all over the world have historically fought for rights that apply to their own specific disability (e.g. people who are blind fought for the right to receive an education and the use of Braille materials, people in wheelchairs fought for ramp entrances into buildings, and so forth). But people with many different kinds of disabilities and chronic conditions all face common barriers of discrimination, prejudice, and stereotype. If they, their families and friends, and their advocates combine the influence they have as consumers, voters, individuals, and as groups who communicate through the press and social media, the disability community overall will gain a cohesive identity and force that is not obtainable any other way.

Principle 4: Champions for Your Cause

High-level law and policy makers and people of influence can act as critical champions for your cause. Whether a country is democratic or socialist, has a monarch, or is a federal republic, as long as there is some acknowledgement of the rule of law and a system of government representatives who create and administer those laws, it is important to have allies among those government representatives who understand disability rights.

Principle 5: Defining Disability

Disability discrimination laws should not be defined purely in terms of a medical diagnosis. Disability

discrimination laws start with the understanding that people with disabilities are full human beings with the same potentials, capacities and worth as other human beings. They can recognize that people with disabilities need benefits because of inequality, but also recognize that the root of inequality lies in a long history of unequal economic, social and political opportunities for people with disabilities (not just the natural consequence of an individual's medical diagnosis). Disability discrimination laws acknowledge the many factors, such as prejudice, stereotypes, misplaced pity and physical barriers that together have the consequence of stopping people with disabilities from achieving their highest potential. These laws should:

- Explicitly acknowledge the existence of discrimination against people with disabilities
- Recognize the disabling impact of longstanding physical, social, economic, political, and cultural barriers
- Should not define disability purely in terms of a medical diagnosis

Principle 6: Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are necessary to level the playing field so that people with disabilities can have the same rights and opportunities as their non-disabled peers. People with disabilities do not have an equal right to participate if they are individually left to overcome physical barriers and historical ways of doing things that exclude them. The wheelchair user's right to enter a building or use a bus that only has stairs is an empty right. The right of a person who is deaf to attend a good university is meaningless if she is not given access to the content of the classes through a sign language interpreter.

Principle 7: Checks and Balances

Reasonable accommodations cannot cause an undue financial burden to the entity making the accommodation. A strong and sustainable law should contain checks and balances to show that disability-related accommodations and modifications are reasonable and not unlimited. A proposed law will more quickly pass, achieve public support, and be

effectively implemented if it is perceived to be a fair law, not only for the minority group whose rights are recognized, but for all parts of society. People with disabilities have a right to reasonable accommodations (RA) and barrier removal, but those rights can be balanced in a number of ways.

Principle 8: Specific Regulations

Disability rights laws will not be effective without specific implementing regulations and time tables. At this point, many countries around the world have laws on the books that ban discrimination or protect the rights of people with disabilities. However, very few countries have laws that are being implemented, and one of the common reasons is the absence of practical and enforceable implementation details.

Principle 9: No Rights without Remedies

Very specific consequences for breaking laws provide strong and direct incentives for people to comply. Just like any other law, disability rights laws will not be effective without consequences that are enforced when the law is broken. A true remedy has two parts:

1. There must be a way for the enforcement agency to monitor whether people are actually complying with the law.
2. Once a violation of the law is found, the agency must have the recognized authority to enforce the law's consequence.

The Global Disability Rights Now! Organization is managed by Mobility International USA (MIUSA) through the RightsNow!: Strong Communities through Enforcing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities project and in collaboration with the RightsNow! U.S. Consortium. The RightsNow! Project provides technical assistance to civil society and governments in four project countries: Armenia, Kenya, Mexico and Vietnam. The project is funded by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the U.S. Department of State. For more info, visit www.GlobalDisabilityRightsNow.org

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (See end of Calendar for all weekly and recurring events)

Aug. 9 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – You are invited to learn about these programs at a session presented by the Housing Division of the Community Development Department. Presently, the Housing Division is accepting applications for the Homeownership Pool and Rental

Applicant Pool. Preference is given for Cambridge residents and families with Children. One-hour sessions will be offered at 6pm and 7pm at the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS), 1046 Cambridge Street. Sessions are free and open to the public, no need to RSVP. Contact Michelle Moran at mmoran@cambridgema.gov or 617.349.4622 for more information.

- Aug. 11 **Beginner Adaptive Kayaking on the Charles River** – Offered by Waypoint Adventure, this program will give you and your group access to some of New England's most beautiful lakes, rivers, and coastline. Enjoy the fun and serenity of the water all while being a part of a supportive community. Benefit from the wide array of adaptive kayaking equipment designed to meet your individual needs. Our highly trained staff will instruct, support, and encourage you as you learn new skills or further develop your existing ones. All kayaking programs will be custom designed to fit the needs of you and your group. This program costs \$10 per person and will meet at the Woerd Ave Boat Launch, 48 Woerd Ave in Waltham and will run from 1:00 to 3:00pm. For more information or to register, contact Julia Spruance at 617.244.5472 or visit waypointadventure.org
- Aug. 15 **Boston Children's Museum Morningstar Access** – Morningstar Access offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum from 8-10am, a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, there is a limit of 150 guests, so children and their families can explore the Museum with less concern about infections and large crowds. Fee is \$8 per person (half-priced admission; free for members) and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar or email Saki Iwamoto, Health and Wellness Educator at Iwamoto@BostonChildrensMuseum.org or call 617.986.3697.
- Aug. 18 **Adaptive Cycling at Artesani Park** – Join All Out Adventures from 11am-3pm at Artesani Park in Brighton, 1255 Soldiers Field Road and explore a wide variety of adaptive bikes for adults and kids, including hand cycles, trikes, tandems, and recumbent bikes. Enjoy the bike path on your own or join a caravan and take in views of the Charles River! Ride occasionally or weekly! Reserve your one-hour time slot now! Pre-registration required and costs \$3 per person to reserve a 1 hour time slot: call All Out Adventures at 413.584.2052. This event is sponsored by DCR's Universal Access Program. For more information, contact Rachael Lee at rachael.lee@state.ma.us or 413.545.5745 or visit www.mass.gov/dcr/universal-access.
- Aug. 24 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – Same as August 9 listing, except that these sessions will be offered at 12:00 and 1:00pm at the Central Square Branch Library, 45 Pearl Street.
- Aug. 30 **Go take a hike at Walden Pond State Reservation!** – Sponsored by DCR's UAP, this hike at Walden Pond, 915 Walden Street in Concord, will be led by Outdoor Access. Explore accessible trails and rugged paths with a focus on fun and meeting new people. Assistive equipment and team-work unite people of all abilities using Terra Trek mountain wheelchairs, other assistive devices and lots of stops to rest. Bring a lunch and enjoy activities such as scavenger hunts, nature talks, and letterboxing. Collect the Walden Pond State Reservation passport stamp! Sighted guides available. Cost is \$3 per person or \$5 per family. To register, call Outdoor Access at 413.259.0009
- Aug. 31 **DBSA-Boston's Mill Street Open Mic Session** – Hosted by the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) of Boston in the de Marneffe Building at McLean Hospital, 115 Mill Street in Belmont, this 6:30-8pm event provides a chance for musicians and poets to share their music and writing with the DBSA-Boston community at the new Mill Street Open Mic Session! The purpose of the open mic session is to appreciate and showcase creative individuals in our community. Each performer will have a 10-minute time slot for 2 songs or poetry pieces that are family friendly (i.e. no swearing, drug/sexual content). All music and poetry must be live; no karaoke tracks, loud amplifiers, or drum-kits allowed. If you are interested in performing, sign-up sheets will be found at the Welcome Table. For any questions, please see Christian or email him at christian@dbsaboston.org.

- Sept. 3 **Adaptive Sailing on the Charles** – Offered through the Spaulding Adaptive Sports Center, this session will be provided by Adaptive Sailing with Courageous and Piers Park Sailing from 12:30-3:30pm at the Harbor View Apartment Dock, 250 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard. Program is free, but pre-registration is required: call 877.976.7272.
- Sept. 5 **Boston Children's Museum Morningstar Access** – Same details as August 15 listing.
- Sept. 7 **Adaptive Cycling at Artesani Park** – Same details as August 18 listing.
- Sept. 8 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street from 5:30-7pm with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice), 617.492.0235 (TTY), or e-mail ccpd@cambridgema.gov for more information or to request accommodations.
- Sept. 13 **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Night at Historic Fenway Park** – Bring your family and friends to the game to support the Deaf community during Deaf Awareness Week and join the Red Sox as they host the Baltimore Orioles at 7:10 p.m. A portion of the proceeds from each ticket will benefit the DEAF Inc. and Our Deaf Survivors Center non-profits. ASL interpreting services will be provided on-field for during the pre-game ceremony. The National Anthem and the 7th Inning Stretch will also be performed in ASL by members of the local Deaf community. Purchase tickets online at <http://m.mlb.com/bos/tickets/info/deaf-hoh>
- Sept. 16-18 **Abilities Expo Boston** – Imagine everything you need, all under one roof at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center! For more than 30 years, Abilities Expo has been the go-to source for the Community of people with disabilities, their families, seniors, veterans and healthcare professionals. Every event opens your eyes to new technologies, new possibilities, new solutions and new opportunities to change your life. Where else can you discover ability-enhancing products and services, play a few adaptive sports, learn new dance moves, attend informative workshops and only scratch the surface of what Abilities Expo has to offer? For more information or to register for this FREE event, visit www.abilities.com/boston.
- Sept. 16 **MOD's Annual Summit at the Abilities Expo** – Free and open to the public, the Massachusetts Office on Disability's (MOD) Annual Summit is their largest public event of the year, and is an opportunity to hear over 300 opinion leaders and agenda setters from the disability community. "Employment" is this year's summit theme, and will feature speakers providing perspectives and data on the issue of under-employment and labor force participation of the disability population. Confirmed speakers include Dahlia Shaewitz and Dr. Michelle Yin of the American Institutes for Research, who will present their recent studies on disability and employment. There will also be a live performance, award presentation and continental breakfast. Guests who RSVP to the Summit in advance will be pre-registered for the Expo as well. Registration for the summit begins at 8:30am. For more information or to register or request accommodations contact 617.727.7440 or mod-events@state.ma.us.
- Sept. 24 **Adaptive Cycling at Artesani Park** – Same details as August 18 listing.
- Sept. 27 **Celebration of Caring with Patch Adams** – With his unique blend of wisdom, silliness, clowning, and caring, Patch will speak on "The Joy of Caring" and help all of us to tap into the "the magic and power of care." Sponsored by Advocates, Inc., this event will feature Patch Adams, who is a physician, clown, and activist who believes that treating his patients with love, humor, and creativity is equally important as traditional medical care. In 1998 his book, *Gesundheit!*, was made into the popular movie, *Patch Adams*, starring the late Robin Williams. Learn more about the work of Patch Adams at www.patchadams.org. This event will be held from 1-3pm at The Verve, Crowne Plaza Natick, 1360 Worcester Street in Natick, MA 01760. Tickets are \$10 each. Light refreshments will be served. Space is limited, pre-registration required. For more information or to pre-register, visit www.advocates.org/events/celebration-caring-patch-adams

Weekly & Recurring Events

Access to Art tours – the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of visitor centered, interactive tours designed for groups with disabilities or if persons with disabilities prefer an individual tour with a companion or care partner. There is no fee for these tours but most require pre-registration. Contact us for a sighted guide or other access accommodation: Hannah Goodwin at 617.369.3189 (voice), 617.369.3395 (TTY), or email access@mfa.org. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue and is accessible by the Green line “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line “Ruggles” stop. Please visit www.mfa.org for more information.

Injured Worker Support Meetings – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, but other times can be arranged. Appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4th Floor Conference Room. RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book, to people with RSIs (Repetitive Strain Injuries) or other workplace injuries. Discussion topics have included medical treatment, insurance/legal issues, and speech recognition software. To set up a meeting or more info, call 617.247.6827, or visit www.rsiaction.org.

Cambridge Women’s Center Groups – The Cambridge Women's Center at 46 Pleasant Street is open to all who identify as women. It has a variety of groups such as yoga, sewing, feminist book group, support group for survivors of child sexual abuse, trauma survivors' writing group, teen group, narcotics anonymous, mah jongg, and others. There is also a kitchen where women can prepare a simple meal, and computers with internet access are available during open hours (M-F 10am-8pm; Sat 10am-3pm). Everything is free. A wheelchair lift is available, and every effort will be made to make a group accessible upon request. For up-to-date schedule listings or other information call the Women's Center support Helpline at 617.354.8807 or the business line at 617.354.6394, or visit www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

Mondays

Learn to Cope Support Group –If you have a family member who is battling addiction or know someone who does, invite them to attend our Learn to Cope (LTC) Support Group every Monday night from 7-8:30pm at Spaulding Hospital Cambridge, 1575 Cambridge Street (free parking; use the main entrance). This group is sponsored by OPEN (Overdose Prevention and Education Network), a program of the Cambridge Prevention Coalition, and is for the parents, family members, spouses, and caregivers of people who have addictions to opiates, alcohol, or other drugs. Learn to Cope is free and offers a unique format that has experienced facilitators who have been there, resources, informational material, guest speakers (in long term recovery or professionals in the field), overdose education, and most of all, HOPE! For more information visit www.learn2cope.org or call 508.738.5148

NAMI Support Group for Caregivers – A free support meeting sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for family members of people with mental illness where they can talk frankly about their challenges and support each other in coping with all the problems that arise in dealing with their loved ones. This group meets on the 1st, 3rd and 4th Mondays of each month from 7:30pm to 9:30pm at the Cambridge Hospital Learning Center, Conference Room A, 3rd Floor, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, see www.namimass.org/programs, or contact Elizabeth at elizabeth@nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org or 781.646.0397.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group – Open to adults with OCD, this group meets biweekly on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month from 7-8:30pm at the Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge. Parking is limited, but it is close to the Harvard Square T stop. OCD can feel extremely isolating; it can feel like living on an island. Having people to share experience with, especially people who are going through the exact same thing, seems invaluable. This group is a casual, open discussion of the trials (and triumphs!) of living with OCD. \$5.00 suggested donation. For more information e-mail ocdgroupcambridge@gmail.com.

Tuesdays

Computer Lab Open to Public – Every Tuesday from 3-5:45 pm Cambridge Community Television at 438 Massachusetts Avenue offers free computer access, plus assistance from a friendly volunteer who can help with job searching, online job applications, basic computer skills, and much more. This drop-in time is open to the public and there is no need to sign up, just stop by! Call 617.661.6900 for more information.

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group – This is a support group run by and for people living with mental illness that provides a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope. Connection groups are free of charge, and open to anyone with a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. You do not need to be a member of NAMI to attend. This group is held every Tuesday from 1-2:30pm at The Hope Center, Lindemann Mental Health Center, Plaza Level, 25 Staniford St. in Boston. Email Jessica at folgore1120@hotmail.com for more information.

Movie Showings for Guests & Families Living with Autism or Other Special Needs – AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to bring you unique movie showings where you can feel free to be you! We turn the lights up, and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing! Our Sensory Friendly Film program screens to four showings per month, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7pm (and Saturdays at 10am). These screenings are held in 7 AMC theaters in Massachusetts, including AMC Loews Boston Common 19. See www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films for the schedule of films and more information.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) meets 1 – 3 pm at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 and 3 on the 4th Wednesday of each month to coordinate with MBTA officials to identify accessibility problems in both the Fixed Route and Paratransit system and to work on solutions. There are also presentations on timely topics and updates on ongoing MBTA and Paratransit-vendor activities. For more information or to request reasonable accommodations, contact Janie Guion, the AACT Coordinator, at 857.702.3658 or aact@ctps.org.

Amputee Support Group – Offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, all amputees, their family and friends are invited to socialize and discuss common areas of interest, including accessibility and resources, as well as to provide support and share coping strategies. Usually meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 1-2:30pm on the 5th floor, in the Lantern Room 5, at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). For more information, contact Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617.952.6254 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by email at sejohnson@partners.org.

Carroll Center for the Blind Information Day – Learn more about Carroll Center programs and our visual impairment services the 1st Wednesday of every month (except in January and July). See the campus, learn from rehabilitation instructors, and talk to graduates about their experience in adult and senior rehabilitation and technology programs. And lunch is provided free of charge! Sessions start promptly at 10am and end at 2pm. Staff loves the chance to help participants become informed, relaxed, and motivated! To make a reservation (required), email maureen.foley@carroll.org or call 1.800.852.3131 ext. 225 w. the name of each guest attending. Family and friends are welcome. The Carroll Center is located at 770 Centre Street in Newton.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group meets every Wednesday from 7-9pm in the cafeteria in de Marneffe Building at McLean Hospital in Belmont. On the 2nd and 4th Wednesday there is a lecture from 7-8pm, then group from 8-9pm. Call 617.855.2795 or visit www.dbsaboston.org for more information.

Free tour of MFA in American Sign Language (ASL) – for visitors and their family and friends who are fluent in ASL. Monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, the tour explores a different part of the Museum each month. These tours will start at 6:30pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. No pre-registration

is required; meet at the Sharf Visitor Center in the MFA. For more information about accessible programs call 617.369.3302 (voice), 617.369.3395 (TTY) or e-mail access@mfa.org.

Housing Search Workshop – Learn how to conduct a successful housing search and how to communicate with housing authorities, agencies and landlords from 10am-noon on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at the Boston Center for Independent Living, 60 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston. For more information, call 617.338.6665.

NAMI Connection – Support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), meets every Wednesday and Friday 10:30-12:00 at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 35 Medford Street, Suite 111 in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617.863.5388 or tanj@vinfen.org.

Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum – Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 pm at the offices of the Asperger's Association of New England (AANE), 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. A \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617.393.3824, x310 or Jamie.Freed@aane.org.

Senior Support Group for Caregivers over 60 – meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Family Resource Center, 20 Gould Street in Reading. Share and learn with other seniors who have adult family members with developmental disabilities. For meeting times or more information, contact Judy Santa Maria at 781.942.4888, x4022 or familysupport@theemarc.org.

Spaulding Stroke Support Group – This community-based support group offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH) provides socialization and education for stroke survivors, meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 3-4:30pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). Contact Karen Halfon at 617.952.6560 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or e-mail at khalfon@partners.org. Visit us at www.spauldingrehab.org.

Thursdays

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting – generally meets on the 2nd Thursday, at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30-7pm with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice), 617.492.0235 (TTY) or e-mail ccpd@cambridgema.gov for more information or to request accommodations. [Note that we are not meeting during the month of August]

Assistive Technology Resource Center (ARTC) Open House – The ARTC, which helps people with disabilities in Eastern Massachusetts make informed decisions about assistive technology they can use to increase their independence at home, on the job or in school, holds an open house on the 1st Thursday of each month from 8:30am-4:30pm. These FREE monthly open houses provide an opportunity to see what kinds of assistive technology products are available, and to try them out. The ARTC is located at the Boston Easter Seals office, 89 South Street (one block from MBTA South Station). Visit www.eastersealsma.org, call 617.226.2634, or email ATRC@eastersealsma.org for more information.

Brain Injury Survivor Support Group in Bedford – Sponsored by the Brain Injury Association of MA, this group is held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1-3pm in the Community Room at Village at Taylor Pond, 3000 Taylor Pond Ln. (59 Middlesex Tpk.) in Bedford. Please contact Joanne Stephen at joannejstp@aol.com or 781.698.6169 before attending.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group – meets at Mass. General Hospital every Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m. in the Schiff Conference Center Room, Suite 4A on the 4th floor in the Yawkey Building. Follow the signs. Meetings are free and open to public. For more information call 617.855.2795 or e-mail mghgroup@dbsaboston.org.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Support Group – Offered by the Greater Boston Chapter, National Spinal Cord Injury Association. Weekly support group meets every Thursday from 4-5pm, is for anyone affected by SCI, to help and inspire the newly injured through role models and peer mentors, and to support individuals and family members as they begin their post-injury journeys. This group is held at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, 6th floor, Lantern Room, 300 First Ave, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). E-mail sciboston@aol.com for more information.

Fridays

Free Fun Fridays is Back! – This is the 8th year that the Highland Street Foundation is offering Free Fun Fridays, funding free admission for all on Fridays through August 26 to museums and cultural attractions throughout Massachusetts, such as Boston Children's Museum, JFK Library, Franklin Park Zoo, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and many more – this year's schedule includes a record 80 different cultural venues! Visit www.highlandstreet.org for the Free Fun Fridays schedule or call 617.969.8900.

NAMI Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), meets every Wednesday and Friday 10:30am-12:00pm at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center. See Wednesday listing for details.

OCD Support Group Informal Gatherings – The Monday OCD Support Group (see information listed under Mondays) has informal get-togethers at the Cosi restaurant next to the Kendall/MIT stop on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month from 5-6:30pm. Please join us for a nice meal and/or friendly conversation! Email ocdgroupcambridge@gmail.com for more information or to confirm a gathering.

Saturdays

Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support Group (BABIS) – The mission of this free support group is to provide a positive forum for peer socialization, hope and education for people with acquired brain injury, their family and friends. This group is held on the 1st Saturday of the month, from 10am-12pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, Conference Rooms A and B, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). No registration required, just show up! For more information, call Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617.573.2539 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), e-mail babisgroup@hotmail.com, or visit www.babis.info.

Beyond the Spectrum: Adventures in Art for Children with Autism – Offered by the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Artful Adventures offers a specially designed program for children ages 8-12 on the Autism Spectrum, including Asperger's Syndrome, accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Upon arrival children will be divided into groups by age and/or needs. The program typically meets on the 1st OR 2nd Saturday of each month from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Each class lasts an hour and a half and combines gallery exploration with an art-making activity. Pre-registration is required by the prior Tuesday. The cost is \$9 per child (includes materials and museum admission), and one adult is admitted free with each child ticket, which also includes discounted parking. The program meets in the Education Center in Druker Family Pavilion, Room 159 at 10:20am before the start of each class. For more information, or to pre-register, go to www.mfa.org/programs/community-programs/beyond-the-spectrum, call 617.369.3303 or email artfuladventures@mfa.org.

Family-friendly Movie Showings for Guests & Families Living with Autism or Other Special Needs – AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to bring you unique movie showings where you can feel free to be you! We turn the lights up, and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing! Our Sensory Friendly Film program screens to four showings per month, on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays at 10am (other sensory friendly films are held on Tuesdays). These screenings are held in 7 AMC theaters in Massachusetts, including AMC Loews Boston Common 19. See www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films for the schedule of films and more information.

Sundays

Computer Lab Open to Public – Every Sunday from 4-5:30pm Cambridge Community Television at 438 Massachusetts Avenue offers free computer access, plus assistance from a friendly volunteer who can help with job searching, online job applications, basic computer skills, and much more. This drop-in time is open to the public and there is no need to sign up, just stop by! Call 617.661.6900 for more information.

Feeling for Form Tours of MFA for blind & low vision visitors -- The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of guided tours for visitors who are blind or have low vision who want to build a deeper relationship with the Museum. Each monthly session focuses on a different collection and includes wayfinding and verbal description of spaces. The Sunday tours are held on the 1st Sunday of the month at 1pm, with the exception of some holiday weekends, and require pre-registration at least one week in advance. Call 617.369.3302 to register. Family and friends are invited to come along. Guided tours can also be scheduled on request, please contact Hannah Goodwin at 617.369.3189 or access@mfa.org for more information.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) does not discriminate on the basis of disability. **AccessLetter** newsletter is available via email, in large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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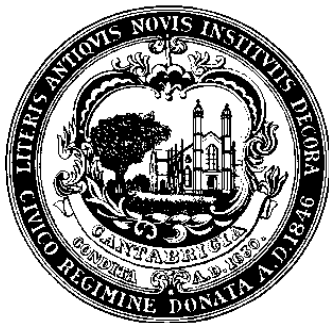
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51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor
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