
THE MENTAL PATIENTS



ASSOCIATION
information
leaflet

MPA

The Mental Patients Association (MPA) is a registered non-profit society composed primarily of ex-mental patients. Our structure and approach to mental health differs radically from that of hospitals and professionals in that we feel people who have gone through rough times themselves are qualified to help others going through similar experiences. The emphasis is on concern and empathy. We are also working for changes in the present Mental Health Act to give people in hospital more control over their own lives.

MPA is constantly growing, and continually changing, re-assessing and restructuring. The process of trial and error is sometimes tedious, but provides an excellent learning experience. We, as a group, are stronger because of it. Since every member has an equal say in how MPA is run, everybody has a chance to learn from our mistakes and celebrate our successes.

THE DROP-IN CENTRE

The drop-in centre is at 1982 W. 6th Ave. It is open seven days a week. The centre provides assistance and information in many areas, such as:

Housing

Crisis

Crafts

Activities

Welfare and Unemployment problems

Vancouver Opportunities Program (extra money for people on welfare for part-time work with MPA)

Sports

There is enough flexibility and

freedom at the drop-in centre so that any member may start up his or her own activities. This allows creative persons to contribute to the full extent of their abilities. Arts/Workshop facilities are in constant use and some members are able to sell their work. In the drop-in centre you will notice artwork and custom designed cabinets which have been made by members. People are welcome to drop in and:

chat

tackle a problem

have a coffee

make something in crafts

learn something

teach something

participate in activities

start new activities

or just sit around and do what

feels comfortable

Our phone numbers are 738-5177 and 738-1422.

Sometimes, due to a number of things happening at one time, a new face isn't recognized at once. It's hard to come to a new place alone and not have anyone recognize you but if you approach one of us we think you'll find we're a pretty open bunch--just give us a chance.

RESIDENCES

Since it is a fact that most of our members are on extremely low incomes and since it is also a fact that most people coming out of hospital or going through emotional difficulties suffer further by living in a dingy single room (the only kind of accommodation available to those on a low income), it was simply common sense to set up an alternative. The only way we could do this was to set up group houses -- so we did it.

MPA currently has four houses in

the city. Each residence has a co-ordinator as a resource person, but house decisions, problems and interaction are generally handled by people living there. Standing by, doing little at certain times, is one of the hardest parts of helping people solve their own problems. Offering encouragement and support only when needed usually results, in our experience, in people finding their own solutions. Of course, if the problem gets to be too much for persons to handle themselves, they have the other people in the house or a co-ordinator to help them through the worst.

The rules are few and basic:

No illegal drugs

No violence

No alcohol

No interfering with the quiet activities of others

Rent, food and utilities are paid by the residents

More volunteers are always needed. If you are interested in helping, phone or drop in and visit. We need people to answer phones, talk to people, help with activities -- there are many possibilities.

Drop-in Centre: 1982 W. 6th Ave.
Phone: 738-5177, 738-1422