



A belated Happy New Years to everyone. 2012 is the year of the Dragon in the Chinese Horoscope and I hope this year brings us lots of new and exciting things. I'm looking forward to starting groups in Winnipeg and in South Surrey/White Rock. If anyone else has a location in mind for a new support group, please let me know.

Jan

## How to ward off the Winter Blues

The following information is taken from [www.medbroadcast.com](http://www.medbroadcast.com)

It's that time of year again. The holidays are over and the next few months seem to offer nothing to look forward to but gloomy grey skies, bone-chilling weather, and piles of snow. It's no wonder why many people suffer symptoms similar to those of depression, such as sadness, fatigue, and irritability during these long winter months.

If you don't have the luxury of escaping to a warm tropical island until April, there are other more feasible ways to beat the winter blues.

### **Exercise**

With a lack of sunshine to keep you energized, it's tempting to want to spend your evenings hibernating under the covers instead of being active. But remember, exercise is known to increase your levels of serotonin and endorphins, leading to a happier mood. While it's understandable that many people are less than keen about participating in outdoor activities during these chilly months, keep in mind that there are many ways to keep active while staying indoors. Join a gym class, walk on the treadmill while watching TV, or try out a new lively game on Wii.

### **Socialize**

Building and maintaining social networks is an important way to keep a positive outlook. When you're feeling down, it's natural to want to isolate yourself from others. But spending time with family, friends, and other people is a sure way to lighten your mood. Try joining a weekly art class or volunteering for a local organization. If you can't bear the thought of leaving your cozy home, then organize and invite your friends over for regular game nights or TV nights.

### **Take vitamin D**

In the summer, we normally get the vitamin D we require from the sun. However, you may not be getting a sufficient amount of vitamin D during the winter because of decreased exposure to sunlight. Many studies have suggested a link between vitamin D deficiency and poor mood. Although more research is needed to confirm that this vitamin can lift your mood, supplementing with vitamin D during the winter months will give you many of the other benefits you may be missing. These include enhanced calcium absorption and proper bone health. Be sure to speak to your doctor before starting any supplements.

## **Keep a regular sleep schedule**

Research has shown that lack of sleep may actually lead to anxiety, mood disorders, and depression. To keep a regular sleep-wake cycle, make sure you go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. To help get you energized and ready for the day, try sleeping with the blinds open so you are exposed to sunlight as soon as you wake up. Otherwise, try to get out into the bright light as soon as possible.

## **Eat well**

When you're feeling down, it's natural to want to turn to comfort foods that are loaded with fats and sugars. But constant consumption of these carbs-containing comfort foods can cause weight gain. Stick to healthier foods that will keep your energy levels up, such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and foods packed with protein. This will keep you healthy while giving you the energy you need to stay active and social until a brighter season comes along.

If following these tips does not help lift your mood, make sure you speak with your doctor. You should also see your doctor if you experience feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, if you lose interest in things that you normally find enjoyable, if you have difficulty concentrating, have trouble sleeping, or if you experience any changes in weight.

## **Balance Your Brain.....Love Your Life**

**By: Brenda Sharp, TN Support Group Leader, Niagara Region and Brainwave Technologist at Brain Matters**

One thing that has always concerned me is that there doesn't seem to have been a lot of advances in the treatment of trigeminal neuralgia over the past 25 years.

The common path today, as it was back then, usually starts with a cocktail of medications, followed by one of the destructive procedures, and many times culminating with an MVD. Although these procedures are helpful to some, they are not successful for everyone, and sometimes we are left with more pain, or different pain, and we are left still looking for relief.

More and more of us are looking for alternative methods of dealing with pain....whether it be special diets, topical ointments, acupuncture, chiropractic etc. I know first hand that we are willing to try just about anything when it comes to dealing with effects of trigeminal neuralgia.

I'd like to introduce you to a technology called Brainwave Optimization. It is not a medical modality and does not diagnose, treat or cure specific diseases or symptoms.. It is a technology based on neuroplasticity and quantum physics which balances and harmonizes brainwaves that have become stuck in a non-optimized state. Traumas, whether they be physical or emotional can knock our brainwaves out of balance, and that can correlate with all types of issues such as sleeplessness, depression, anxiety, pain, headaches, etc.

I was intrigued after researching Brainwave Optimization and decided to try it out for myself by going for an assessment. My technologist suggested that my brainwaves were so imbalanced that they resembled the patterns commonly found in a drug addict. She suggested that I must have had a long period of time where I had suffered an incredible amount of pain. (My years of suffering with trigeminal neuralgia had left an imprint on my brain). My goals were to overcome the effects of stress that I was experiencing at the time, and depression. I went on to have 12 sessions over the period of one week to bring my brainwaves back into balance. Results were gradual, but there was

no mistaking the fact that over time, I was so much calmer and relaxed, I was sleeping better, and no longer over-reacting to events.

I read a testimonial from an occupational therapist in Michigan, who after having sessions, reported that her trigeminal neuralgia was no longer active. She wrote that she was reducing her meds, enjoyed eating, washing her face, brushing her teeth, and talking without nerve pain. Even though I knew enough about TN to know that this could have just been a remission she was experiencing, it just made me excited enough to want to explore it further.

After a lot of thoughtful consideration, I quit my job, went to school in Arizona, graduated as a licensed brainwave technologist, then brought this technology back, and opened my office “Brain Matters” in St. Catharines, Ontario. There are now over 140 offices worldwide that offer Brainwave Optimization.

If you’d like to learn more, please visit my website at [www.yourbrainmatters.ca](http://www.yourbrainmatters.ca)

## Calgary Group

The Calgary groups meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 1 pm in the Confederation Park senior’s Center. The next meeting will be Feb 21, 2012. Contact Bev or Gaye to confirm dates and location at [Calgary@catna.ca](mailto:Calgary@catna.ca).

Best wishes to Bev for a speedy recovery from her recent surgery.

## Regina Group

Mark your calendars for this year’s meetings: Feb 25, Mar 17, Apr 14, May 12 all at 10 a.m. All meetings will be at the Wascana Rehabilitation Center at 10 am. Contact Faye for more information at [regina@catna.ca](mailto:regina@catna.ca).

## Toronto Group

The Toronto Group meets the last Sunday of each month at 9:30 am in the Thornhill Community Center. Meeting will now be held in the Activity room – B6 which is in the basement. The next meeting will be Feb 26, 2012. Please contact either Kathy or Sandra to confirm meeting dates and times at [Toronto@catna.ca](mailto:Toronto@catna.ca)

## Niagara Group

Please contact Brenda for updates on meeting times and dates. [Niagara@catna.ca](mailto:Niagara@catna.ca)

## Winnipeg Group

A new group will be starting in Winnipeg in April of this year. The leader of this group will be Ted Wozney. We will share more information as it becomes available. Ted can be reached at [Winnipeg@catna.ca](mailto:Winnipeg@catna.ca)

## New Book.

There is a new book on TN available from Barnes and Noble. It is called "Facing Facial Pain". This book was written by a Dr. Lemole, a cardiac surgeon and son-in-law of Oprah's friend Dr. Oz. It promotes a healthy life style with diet and exercise. The premise is that Neuropathies like TN are the result of inflammation and that certain foods can reduce the inflammation and promote good health.

If anyone has read this book, I would be really pleased to hear from you and I could share your comments in the next newsletter.

## Letters

From Bill (Dec 1):

Just as a matter of interest I indicated quite some time ago on the web site that I decided to tackle this TN thing by seeing if the B Complex supplements plus liquid fish oil once per day in combination with the 1000mg of Tegretol had any effect. Since mid September I have not had a major attack and by mid October I have experienced a marked drop in the number of "minor" episodes. In addition to the above I have eliminated all alcohol, pop (including the diet stuff), and have dessert only once per day. I have also upped the number of servings of vegetables and fruit quite markedly. Since the start of this regimen Sept. 1st my weight has dropped from 196 to 181 at present. Every now and then I get a slight reminder that this TN thing still lurks but since the spring and summer the disease has lessened in severity a great deal.



*"It's Alice Kramden!"*

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