

## Laughter-----A Powerful Antidote to Stress, Pain and Conflict

Cheryl Oberg is a dynamic professional speaker, certified yoga leader who has been a therapeutic practitioner at the Childrens Hospital, where she spends three days each week lifting the spirits of children and families. She was one of the speakers at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual ORNAA Provincial Conference held in Edmonton, Alberta.

She spoke of the benefits of Laughter. Nothing functions faster or certainty to bring your mind and body into balance than a good laugh. Humor lightens your burdens, inspires hopes, connects you to others, and keeps you grounded, focused, and alert. With so much strength to heal and rejuvenate, the ability to laugh easily and frequently is a tremendous resource for overwhelming problems, enhancing your relationships, and supporting both physical and emotional health. Laughter is good for your health, relaxes your whole body; boosts the immune system, thereby decreases stress hormones, increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease; it triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which promotes an overall sense of well-being and even temporarily relieve pain. Laughter protects your heart by improving the functions of blood vessels and increase blood flow, which can protect you against heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.

Laughter makes you feel good. The good feeling that you get when you laugh remains with you even after the laughter subsides. Humor helps you keep a positive, optimistic outlook through difficult situations, disappointments, and loss. Even in the most difficult times, a laugh----or even simply a smile---- can go a long way toward making you feel better. And laughter really is contagious---- just hearing laughter, fills your brain and spontaneously prepares you to smile and join in on the fun. Laughing with others is more powerful than laughing alone. Shared laughter is one of the most effective tools for keeping relationships fresh and exciting. Although all emotional sharing builds strong and binds lasting relationship, sharing laughter and play adds joy, vitality, and resilience. It binds people