Barthel's presentation captures audience

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Globe Staff

LACOMBE— A strong turnout at the Kozy Korner Community Centre on Thursday night heard a personal and informative presentation on addiction, mental illness and parenting from Tom Barthel.

Owner of Street Smart Counselling in Red Deer, Barthel is taking his messages from one-on-one sessions to larger audiences. He said it seemed he was giving all his clients the same information so it made sense to capture a bigger audience in a public speaking forum.

His stories gripped the Lacombe audience as he told about his own battles with addiction and mental illness that almost led to jail time and death on a few occasions, as well as how he was able to move from a life of drugs and crime to the success he enjoys now.

Barthel talked about the myths around drugs, especially those held by parents, and what he saw as the problems that led to his addictions. Myths such as that drugs or outside influences are the big problems when the truth is it's often something closer to home that makes a young person vulnerable to addictions.

He then addressed how parents can prevent addiction in their children and how best to deal with child who has already been overcome with problems. He talked about making sure your child feels comfortable coming to you, as parents, with whatever problems they may be having. If they feel like they'll only hear criticism and judgment, they will take their problems elsewhere, said Barthel.

At one point near the end of his presentation, Barthel had three words written on easel: respect, accept and love. He emphasized that these are the components for a healthy relationship with one's child. A relationship, he stressed, that can help them not fall into a world of addiction and can also help them climb out of an addiction.

For more information on Barthel, Street Smart Counselling and his presentations, visit www.streetsmartcounselling.com.

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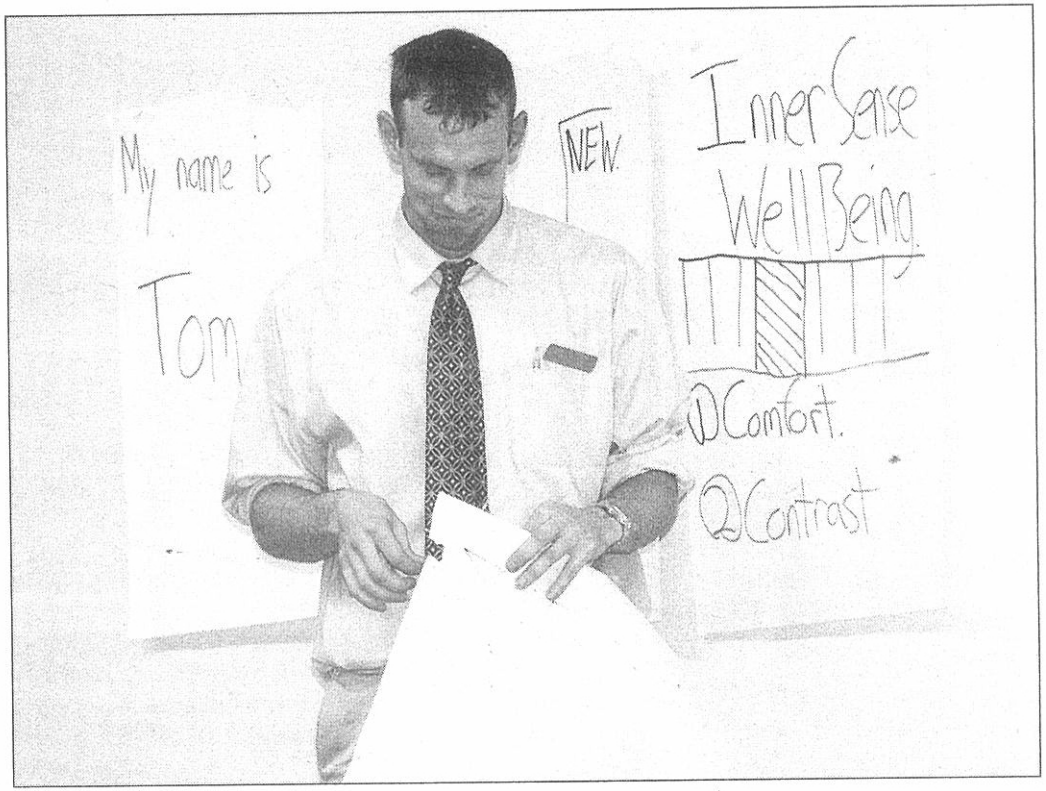

Tom Barthel of Street Smart Counselling in Red Deer gave a spirited presentation to a crowd gathered at the Kozy Korner Community Centre on Nov. 5.

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