Supporting your mental health with the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program

Taking care of your mental health and well-being has been at the forefront of the pandemic, and it is now more important than ever. For people who are experiencing depression, anxiety or anxiety-related conditions, the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) Program is here to help.

Coordinated by Waypoint and delivered in a wide range of community settings, the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program provides publicly-funded, evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and related approaches to individuals looking for help. CBT is a form of talk therapy that helps people reduce their psychological stress.

"The focus is on helping people develop alternative ways of thinking and behaving to be able to cope with various stressors."

Jessica Ariss, manager, Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program

OSP operates on a stepped care model, providing the level of care that best meets an individual’s needs. When someone is referred, a trained professional will complete an assessment and recommend support at the level of service to best address their needs and support their recovery.

Most people who access the program will begin with BounceBack®, a guided self-help program offered through the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Others may begin with individual or group based CBT provided in person or virtually. Through ongoing monitoring, clients may be transitioned between services within OSP, as needed. For example, if a person starts treatment through BounceBack® and they require more intensive support, they may be ‘stepped-up’ to CBT.
COVID-19 has changed our lives. Health care workers, care providers and first responders continue to be called to new levels of service. The reality of being at the front lines of the pandemic puts these workers at risk of developing increased symptoms of anxiety and depression, and anyone with pre-existing mental health conditions is at even higher risk of worsening symptoms.

If you are a health care or community care worker or first responder impacted by stress related to COVID-19, supports are available to help you cope through the COVID Frontline Wellness program.

“We need those who are caring for us to be both physically and mentally healthy,” says Allison Jones, a clinician with COVID Frontline Wellness. “As the pandemic drags on, we are all dealing with related stress and challenges. This virtual service allows health care workers to get the support they need safely.”

COVID Frontline Wellness connects individuals with supports and access to services to help them enhance resilience, and provide care and treatment for mental health and addiction challenges.

The program is available by self-referral and after an initial intake, individuals are scheduled for a one-hour session with a therapist to talk about concerns and discuss a variety of services including a flexible plan for brief therapy intervention and symptom management and support, as well as evidence-based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and free counselling.

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Allison Jones
COVID Frontline Wellness Program

The service is open to anyone in any role - from direct patient care and patient/client support services to environmental and food services, administrative or management - affected by the pandemic whether from a hospital, health care, residential setting, or first responder service.

Since launching in 2020, the program has assisted many from across the province with services ranging from brief therapy, psychiatric consultations, treatment planning with primary care, collaboration with other mental health services and system navigation.

“Feedback has been very positive with clients reporting high levels of satisfaction with ease of access as well as effectiveness of the interventions,” adds Jones. “This is care for our frontline workers and first responders when they need it most and we hope they will reach out for help if they need it.”

To access the self-referral form, please visit www.waypointcentre.ca/programs_and_services/c_o_v_i_d_frontline_wellness or call Waypoint’s Central Intake at 705-549-3181, ext. 2308 or 1-877-341-4729, ext. 2308.

This service is being offered at five hospitals in Ontario, including Waypoint, through a partnership with the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence at Ontario Health. For more information on these different resources, please visit COVID-19: Get support if you are a health care worker. www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-support-people#support-health-care-worker
“Publicly-funded psychotherapy programs available to anyone who needs them are creating equity and access to a part of the mental health service that really hasn’t been available through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan in the past,” said Heather Bullock, Waypoint vice-president partnerships and chief strategy officer. “Structured psychotherapy is one of the most evidence-based paths to recovery from mood and anxiety challenges, which are the most common mental health challenges we experience.”

“While psychotherapy can be hard work, it can also offer the opportunity to not just cope with symptoms, but reduce or eliminate them,” she added.

The program began as a pilot project in 2017 at four sites across the province. In 2020, Ontario announced funding for an additional six programs. Each network lead organization works with various delivery sites such as community health centres, family health teams, community mental health agencies, and colleges and universities to deliver the program. This expansion is an important milestone for building a connected, comprehensive mental health and addictions system that ensures Ontarians across the province can access high-quality supports in their community.

People can sign up for this program themselves, or get a referral from a psychiatrist, family doctor or health care provider. For more information and how to access the program, please visit www.waypointcentre.ca/programs_and_services/ontario_structured_psychotherapy.

I began feeling the weight of anxiety shortly after my first son was born. By the time I had my third son five years later, the waves of anxiety got larger and more frequent and the worries got so big and heavy that many days I felt like the waves had swept me out to sea and I was struggling to keep my head above water.

Within the first few minutes of meeting, my therapist created a space that felt safe for sharing, and her kindness, knowledge, and warm demeanor encouraged me to speak more honestly and openly about my anxiety than I ever had before.

Looking back now on the work I’ve done throughout the CBT process, it amazes me. I whole-heartedly recommend CBT to anyone struggling with mental illness.

OSP Client
In support of Hospice Huronia and Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care

2022

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Lottery Licence No.: RAF1212867

Waypoint Charitable Registration No. 838367027RR0001
The holidays can be a stressful time of year for many...cue the Waypoint Wellness Team for help! The Team wants this holiday season to be one for the books...full of laughter, love, togetherness and fun.

Self-care during the holidays will help you feel better and more relaxed through a more challenging time and perhaps inspire new habits and interest in putting yourself first in the New Year and onward. You have the power to change your life and be your best self simply by making a few brave choices on how you run your day. Think about your day-to-day actions – specifically your morning routine. What do you do when you first wake up? Are you spending the first hour, first half hour, even the first few minutes, taking care of you? Or are you immediately jumping right into your email, your day, or working on everyone else’s to-do lists?

Here are some easy tips for you to use during the holidays:

- **Physical Wellness** – Hectic as this time of year may be, staying active is still well worth the time and effort. In fact, a workout might be just the antidote you need before dinner with your in-laws or a long week of end of the year deadlines. Don’t forget, even just 10 minutes of intentionally moving does wonders for your wellbeing. If all else fails...crank those holiday tunes and jingle what you got.

- **Social Wellness** – Spend time with those who bring positivity into your life. Find the Cindy-Lou Who’s around you and don’t forget the power of boundaries to avoid those Grinch’s.

- **Emotional Wellness** – Make time to laugh. Humor is a fantastic stress reducer and an effective way of coping with challenging situations. Cue National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation. If cousin Eddie doesn’t make you laugh...we don’t know what will!

- **Intellectual Wellness** – Baby it’s cold outside. Now is the perfect time to curl up with a good book or podcast and get those brain cells fired up like the Elves In Santa’s workshop.

- **Environmental Wellness** – Decorate your space! Research shows that people who decorate their homes for the holidays are happier and friendlier. To help spread the happiness, check out this list of DIY Christmas Decorations to help make your home shine this holiday season. Have fun creating and feeling great.

- **Vocational Wellness** – Connect safely with coworkers. Learn about their favourite family traditions and consider swapping your favourite holiday recipes.

- **Financial Wellness** – Stick to your holiday budget and save money with some DIY gift ideas. DIY gifts can take a bit more effort, however with more effort, brings more reward. Studies have shown that people prefer homemade gifts – something that is sentimental and thoughtful rather than expensive.

- **Spiritual Wellness** – Practicing gratitude is a proven stress-buster. It changes your perspective and helps you see that there is always some good in life, even in tough times. To help you focus on the positive, jot down three people you are grateful for, send them a message wishing them well over the holidays.
The Patient/Client and Family Council (PCFC) is a peer-led, non-profit organization committed to using personal experiences to improve mental health & addiction services for individuals and their families through support, education and advocacy.

PCFC was established in 1994 at a time when all Schedule 1 psychiatric hospitals were mandated to create a structure or patient council where service recipients could be heard. Nine patient councils were created, but the PCFC is one of the last few survivors. This is due in part to the vision of both Waypoint and the PCFC to partner in an effort to highlight the patient and family voice and improve their experience of the services provided.

“To this partnership, we bring not only our own stories and lived experience, but a broad voice, of many voices, of those who have received services both within the hospital and in the community,” says Yvette Brook, PCFC Executive Director.

Check out some of the services offered by PCFC. For more information on any of these programs or to connect with the Patient/Client and Family Council, please visit www.pfcconnect.org

### INDIVIDUAL PEER SUPPORT

One-on-one support to individuals as they work towards their personal recovery. Peer support allows you to talk with someone who has travelled a similar journey and shares in your struggles and successes. Peer support is available in a hospital setting, transitional housing, and the community. Groups and activities are also offered to assist with building social connections and becoming active participants in the community of your choice.

### FAMILY PEER SERVICES

This includes a weekly group offering support, education and hope to families and friends who are affected by or caring for someone with mental health and/or addiction. In addition, one-to-one peer support can be provided and education/resources to help understand and navigate the mental health system and the various aspects of mental illness.

### FAMILY PEER SERVICES

Supporting clients as they transition amongst services including hospital to hospital and hospital to community.

### EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

Having a person with lived experience as members of committees and working groups can improve the effectiveness of the work by understanding the gaps/barriers from those who access the service. PCFC collaborates with a number of organizations across the region to bring that important perspective to focus and enhance the success of quality initiatives that affect patients/clients & families accessing services.
We are so proud to share that our very own Dr. Kevin Young was awarded a 2021 Jane Chamberlain Award this past November.

Jane Chamberlin is the former executive director of the Association of General Hospital Psychiatric Services (AGHPS). The award was created upon her death to recognize outstanding achievement in mental health relating to general hospitals / schedule 1’s in Ontario.

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed an unprecedented burden on professional and support staff, the AGHPS decided to recognize many people in 2021 who embody the spirit of the award – those who came through, persisted, inspired and innovated practice during an extended crisis. This criteria describes Dr. Young and his contributions perfectly.

Dr. Kevin Young awarded a 2021 JANE CHAMBERLIN AWARD

In considering her nomination of Dr. Young, Dr. Nadiya Sunderji looked at his leadership in developing:
- ways to mitigate response to the pandemic
- innovative strategies to maintain or enhance care and service
- efforts to support the lives and outcomes of those presenting to hospital with mental health issues
- awareness, education, information that has made a difference to colleagues and/or patients and families
- provincial, regional or organizational leadership in an area of practice.

Dr. Sunderji and Dr. Young attended a virtual celebration of the AGHPS 11th Leadership Summit event on November 5, 2021 where he was presented the award. Congratulations Dr. Kevin Young – we are so happy to have you as part of our Team!
A poster titled Evaluating the Implementation of Health Quality Ontario Standards for Care of People Living with Schizophrenia at Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care was awarded first place recently at the annual meeting of the Canadian Psychiatric Association. Matthew Tersigni, a summer research medical student who was with the hospital in summer 2020, led the poster design. Congratulations!

The work on implementing the standards for schizophrenia care from Health Quality Ontario (HQO) continues to be a priority at Waypoint. An additional twelve clinicians from seven programs across the hospital recently completed training in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for psychosis (CBTp); making this important therapy intervention available to countless more patients. In addition to CBTp, our work also continues on other HQO standards including long acting injectable antipsychotic medication, treatment with Clozapine, transitions in care and follow up after discharge.
The Mental Health Commission of Canada reports that one in every five Canadians experiences a mental health problem within any given year. While we often know a lot about physical illness, there tends to be less knowledge about mental health or substance use problems. This lack of understanding leads to fear and negative attitudes towards individuals living with these problems. It prevents people from seeking help for themselves and from providing appropriate support to people around them. Mental Health First Aid can help.

A program of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, mental health first aid is help for a person experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. Just like physical first aid, the goal is to offer a person immediate assistance until they can receive appropriate professional treatment, or the crisis is over.

The course offered at Waypoint has shifted to a blended online learning delivery to allow participants to take part from the safety and comfort of their own home. Participants will learn how to recognize signs that a person may be experiencing a decline in their mental well-being or a mental health crisis. They will also learn how to have conversations that encourage a person to talk about declines in mental well-being, discuss professional and other supports, reach out to these supports and assist in a mental health or substance use crisis.

Not only does the course help participants learn how to help others, but also to use the Mental Health First Aid actions to maintain one’s own mental well-being. As we continue to live with the challenges of the pandemic, these skills can be critically important.

“The course doesn’t train people to diagnose mental illness or be a therapist or counselor,” says Susan Lalonde-Rankin, Mental Health and Addictions Systems Coordinator and Mental Health First Aid Trainer. “It’s designed to help build confidence that one can be helpful when encountering someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis. We know the sooner a person with a mental health problem gets help, the better their chances of recovery.”

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Waypoint is proud to subsidize this program with fundraising dollars. The cost per participant is just $75 and includes access to virtual classroom modules and the online “MHFA Participant Reference Guide.” Thank you to all of our donors for believing in our efforts to advance understanding of mental illness and build supportive communities for people with mental health problems.

For more information and to register for an upcoming course, please visit: www.waypointcentre.ca/programs_and_services/mental_health_first_aid
People from communities across Canada are donating to the causes they care about most. Together, gifts large and small change lives. You can help us change the lives of people faced with mental health and addiction challenges.

Please consider joining our monthly giving program. Monthly giving is one of the easiest and most effective ways you can support Waypoint.

DONATE TODAY!
www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/waypoint-centre-for-mental-health-care