Winter 2020 Issue

13th Annual Spirit of Volunteerism Recognition

Don't forget to nominate at volunteer for this year’s Spirit of Volunteerism Recognition!

for more information contact info@dcontario.org

Combating Loneliness During the Cold and Lonely Months of Winter

After spending about 10 winters in Canada and four in Edmonton, I can say that wintertime can get pretty lonely since it is harder to engage in outdoor activities and I don't necessarily feel like going outside. I always catch myself looking for ways to fight loneliness during winter and for this article, I asked two of my close friends to help me by sharing their ways of combating loneliness.

Read more ...

Mental Health Stresses of Climate Change Begin to Show

Among the signs held by protesters at a climate strike in September was one that read, "I'm going to die from climate change!"

It was held by a serious-looking teenager listening to the speakers on the stage talk about the grim future that awaits them as the effects of climate change unfold.

Read more ...

Mental Health Stigma and Seasonal Depression Affects Students

As the semester draws to a close, students, faculty and staff are likely feeling the stress of final exams and projects. It is common to experience fatigue and anxiety while cramming work into the final weeks of the semester. But for many people, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) worsens their mental stress as the weather gets colder and the days get shorter,
Positive Effects of Love on Mental Health

Love has been defined in various ways. From a deep feeling of affection, to the embodiment of virtues that always protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres. And for centuries, humans have found ways to celebrate the existence of love.

Now, with a better understanding of the biology and chemistry of love, science has begun to recognize that there are health benefits as well. Helping our patients understand the value and importance of maintain loving relationships may help them to benefit from love's positive effects on mental health.

First Aid for Attempted Suicide

Suicide touches all ages and incomes; all racial, ethnic, and religious groups; and in all parts of the country. It is a leading cause of death in the US.

- For every suicide, there are about 25 attempts.
- In 2017 alone, there were about 1.4 million suicide attempts.
- Risk for suicide was 22 percent higher among Veterans when compared to US non-Veteran adults.
- The highest suicide rate was noted among adults between the ages of 45 and 54.

The Power of the People to Rewrite the Narrative (In Just One Lifetime)

Dec. 5, we celebrated International Volunteer Day, and this year's theme is "Volunteer for an Inclusive Future." On Dec. 1, millions of people recognized World AIDS Day. This year's theme was "Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community."

Both days offer a time to pause and reflect on the world as it is, and to envision what it can be.
DCO Updates

ONTX

258258 has been launched for about 6 months now. As with anything new the build up is slow, our January statistics demonstrated that we have lost about 2/3 of our client base in the transition. The trend is that we are increasing our numbers. We have prepared promotional items to share so that we can engage with the community - if you would like some please connect with Jackie or I to have some sent out to you. There are flyers, peel out business cards and a double size and sided bookmark. There has been significant interest from a variety of sources about ONTX. I am looking forward to these interests materialising into memberships. I have been working diligently to see if I can secure funding so that the program can be offered to the membership for free. Feedback from those using the service is that it is helpful and high quality.

Learning Forums

DCO has spent time reviewing and consulting with our membership about the Learning Forums. We in the process of implementing those recommendations beginning with hiring an Educator who will assist us in updating and creating new learning modules for us. We hope to create a schedule that we would send out ahead of time so that the members would know what the offerings are ahead of time and schedule their attendance based on interests. Also, we hope to create new modules based on demand and we are working on improving the assessment of learning so that it is more intuitive and accurate. We hope to be fully relaunched by spring 2020. Keep an eye out for updates!

Podcasts

Our podcasts were launched softly in the Fall 2019, we have created some new ones and replicated the Learning Forums into audio. So far, we have reached over 2000 downloads which by many measures are not a lot, knowing that we have not really promoted nor have we made it public it feels like an achievement. This is an exciting new mechanism in knowledge and information transfer. By the conference we hope to do a public and more formal launch of the podcast platform. Follow us to see our progress!

Neta Gear - A Year In Review!

Hello from wintry Waterloo! As I sit here with my cats and coffee, looking out at the tumbling snow I am pulled into a reverie of what a year it has been. It was certainly exciting, busy and fruitful.

In the winter of 2019, about a year ago, we were to have the annual conference; like today the weather called us out! We had to cancel and rebook for June. As it was it turned out to be a good call Mother Nature. We had a small but mighty conference. We gathered and networked creating new partnerships and renewing existing ones. Nina Spencer kicked us off as the dynamic keynote on how to maintain our passion for the work we do; we met Harriet from Big White Wall, Lynette Katsivo from AMHO who enabled us to understand the current and future state of Ontario Health Teams and Jane Hennig who informed us on the planning and engagement of
volunteers in the new era of volunteerism. We had lots of fun honoring our volunteers at the Spirit of Volunteerism Awards, ratifying our new Board and adopting the Strategic plan at the AGM. Reports and comments from the attendees were very positive. I would like to thank all the attendees and express my gratitude for their support.

The Summer was packed and productive. It saw me travelling the province visiting our member organisations. I learned a lot about the unique profiles of each member organisation and how DCO has and could add value to their membership. Members were warm and welcoming, and shared their perspectives freely; thank you for that. Then we shifted to a new ONTX number 258258, that undertaking was quite complex and time consuming, with a lot of perseverance it came to fruition.

Autumn came with a similar flurry; we launched our Social Media platforms and our Podcasts with a vengeance. We welcomed new Board Members and build new partnerships. The Fall saw us restructuring our internal staffing, acting on the analysis we made over the months regarding technology and programming, and planning for the next year. Poof there went a year!

During this time, I have met so many people who are familiar and becoming familiar with DCO and the work we do. The enthusiasm and interest in a time when fiscal restraints are causing so many of us to be stressed is heartening as it speaks to our resilience and trust in each other. One of my goals is to strengthen these relationships and build more.

I am grateful for the support, advice and goodwill of our member organisations and partners especially the new ones. A year ago, I felt really overwhelmed and could not see the forest for the trees however, today I feel focussed with a definite vison and clarity for the future of DCO and its membership. I look forward to keeping contributing in building the sector so that we could reinforce the network of emotional support for individuals experiencing distress and crisis.

Here is to 2020!
Going in peace
Neta Gear

---

**Things you may find interesting**

**Is There a Mental Health Crisis at Canadian University Campuses?**
Recent suicides on Canadian university campuses have sparked an outcry from students for better mental health services. Student mental health experts discuss some of the reasons behind the spike in the number of students seeking help, and why so many of them have a hard time getting it. - CBC News

[Click here for video clip.](#)

**Five Student Deaths in 10 Months: UOttawa Faces Mental Health Crisis**
On Monday the university informed students of the weekend death of an unidentified student. By Tuesday afternoonm days before reading week when student stress is at a high, university president and vice-chancellor Jacquest Frémont didn't mince words at a press conferene when he called the situatio a "crisis" and pleaded with struggling students to seek support.

Frémont, in a statement Tuesday, said he grieves "side-by-side" with the "student's family, friends, and loved ones, and to everyone who knew them."

[Click here for the complete article](#)

**In the Wake of Student Deaths, Western and Fanshawe See "Growing Demand" for Mental Health Service**
'The kids are under a pressure that they don't reveal,' says father who lost son to suicide

The sudden death of two Western University students within the space of a few weeks is highlighting the importance of on-campus services - including counselling - for students
News from our Member Centres

Distress Centre Ottawa and Region
Save the Date!
Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region will be holding their 2020 Chocolate Affair Gala on November 14th, 2020 at the Infinity Centre. For more information contact Judy Grunwald at jgrunwald@dcottawa.on.ca.

What resource information would like to see in your DCO newsletter?

Let us know at info@dcontario.org

Follow us on social media at

Donate to Distress and Crisis Ontario and thank you for your support! Please click here to donate.
ONTX Steering Committee
4th Monday of each month

DCO Conference
June 10th - 12th, 2020
Location: TBD

DCO Annual General Meeting
Friday, June 12th, 2020
Location: TBD

Spirit of Volunteerism Recognition Event
Friday, June 12th, 2020
Location: TBD