



December 2024 Newsletter

"The holiday season is a perfect time to reflect on our blessings and seek out ways to make life better for those around us." – Terri Marshall

December Holidays and Observances

December is often a busy time as many Ontarians celebrate the holiday season. This month also hosts [World AIDS Day](#), [International Day of Persons With Disabilities](#), [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#), [Human Rights Day](#), and [Anti-Bullying Day](#).

To see what other days of importance and celebration there are in December, [click here](#).



Beyond "She'll Be Right": Taking Action When Your Child Needs Help

"She'll be right."

That's Australian slang for "you'll be ok" or "everything is going to be fine."

We Aussies say this statement many times daily and apply it to almost all situations.

Break a nail; she'll be right. Burn the toast; she'll be right. Have a sick family member, she'll be right.

It's a statement that exudes optimism and a positive outlook, meaning nothing is really that bad.

However, sometimes she won't be right."

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Seasonal Affective Disorder

"As the crisp Ontario air turns frosty and the days grow shorter,



some individuals may find themselves battling more than just the winter chill. They may be impacted by Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, a mental health condition that affects people during specific seasons.

SAD is more than just the "winter blues." Join us as we explore what SAD is, uncover its impact on Ontario residents, look at the science behind light therapy as a treatment and consider practical strategies for coping with SAD in the upcoming winter season."

[Read more...](#)

The Dark Heart of Volun-tourism

"Voluntourism is a two-billion-dollar industry. One that sells wealthy people access to the impoverished; a way for the rich to buy a life-affirming experience, sometimes at the peril of those they well-intendedly want to help.

I've always had a, probably pathological, desire to help. Having traveled the world there have been many times where every fiber of my being wanted to help some of the people I came across. But I've always been a little skeptical too."

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The Additional Costs of Disability: Why Canada's Poverty Measure Falls Short

"Poverty is on the rise in Canada. The cost of living is soaring, and it's hitting everyone hard. But for people with disabilities, it's even tougher. 27% of people in Canada have a disability. Canada's official data suggests that of those with severe disabilities living alone, 28% live in poverty. However, we know from the families and people we work on behalf of, that the rate of poverty for people with an intellectual disability who live outside the family home is much higher and is estimated to be 73%.

People with disabilities often have additional expenses related to their disability. You would think that when the government measured poverty, they would include these costs – but they don't."

[Read more...](#)

Take care of your mental health this holiday season

"The holiday season is a time to be merry, but for many it can be stressful. The Jed Foundation has tips for those who are struggling with their mental health this December."





Is the content of this email relevant to you? Any feedback can be sent to info@dcontario.org.

Yes, absolutely

Yes, somewhat

Yes, a little bit

No, not at all

Updates from the Government of Ontario



Ontario Expanding the Role of Nurse Practitioners and Registered Nurses

"The Ontario government is making it easier and more convenient for people to connect to the care they need. Upcoming regulation changes will expand the scope of practice for nurse practitioners and registered nurses to order more tests and provide additional services in a variety of settings including hospitals, interprofessional primary care teams and long-term care homes.

"Ontario is proud to be home to world-class health care professionals and our government continues to make innovative changes to allow them to work to the full extent of their expertise and training," said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Expanding the roles of highly skilled nurse practitioners and registered nurses is another step our government is taking to provide more people with the right

care, in the right place.””

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Ontario Expanding Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel

“The Ontario government is investing more than \$32 million to ensure first responders and public safety personnel have access to mental health supports. The new Mental Health Supports for Public Safety Personnel program (MHS4PSP) will provide specialized services for police officers, firefighters, correctional workers, paramedics and others who support Ontario’s public safety system.

“First responders and public safety personnel have our backs every day and we will always have theirs,” said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. “This new program will ensure Ontario’s selfless heroes, who put their lives on the line daily for us, receive targeted mental health supports that match the unimaginable challenges they face.””

[Learn more...](#)

Ontario Building Safer and Stronger Communities

“[November 18], the Ontario government introduced legislation that, if passed, will help keep streets and communities safe and hold criminals accountable. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act includes targeted measures to help support public safety near supervised consumption sites, crack down on auto theft and careless driving, enhance the tools police can use to manage sex offenders, tackle illegal cannabis sales and support access to justice. The government is also exploring measures to improve the collection of bail statistics as part of its ongoing calls for Criminal Code reform.

“Our government is keeping our communities safe and holding criminals accountable,” said Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. “Today, we’re proposing impactful changes to strengthen tools for police officers, improve access to justice and eliminate dangerous activity that puts hard-working people at risk. In Ontario, crime doesn’t pay.””

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Ontario Boosting Efforts to Combat Bullying and Support Student Mental Health

“The Ontario government is marking Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week by investing \$4.6 million to help combat bullying in schools and expand initiatives to equip students with the social and emotional skills they need to thrive. This funding will help foster stronger connections among students, promote a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment, and help reduce incidents of violence in schools across the province.

“As a mother, I understand firsthand how heartbreaking it is to hear about your child facing bullying or having a difficult day at school,” said Jill Dunlop, Minister of Education. “Our investment in anti-bullying and mental health initiatives is a testament to our commitment to nurturing our students and making our schools places of respect and care. Through these efforts, we are fostering an environment where every child has the support they need to promote their mental health and reach their full potential without fear or hesitation.””

[Read more...](#)

News from and for our Member Centres

Save the date! This October, 2025, on the 23rd and 24th, we will be hosting our first **in-person event** since 2018! Keep an eye out for more information in this space and elsewhere as we finalize our plans and look forward to this exciting event.



The Clyde Mental Health and Addictions Awareness Project

In honour of Clyde and his family, and with the holiday season approaching, this month we have chosen to highlight Feed Ontario.



"Feed Ontario is the province's largest collective of hunger-relief organizations. Together with food banks, industry partners, and local communities, we are relieving hunger in communities now, while driving change through research and advocacy to ensure a future where everyone is food secure."

[Learn more...](#)

In other news...

The Data: Mental Health and Disability in 2024

"The Canadian Survey on Disability (2022) reveals that mental health related disability is the fastest growing disability in Canada. Over 3 million Canadians have a mental health related disability and the majority are women. Did you know the following statistics? 1 in 2 Canadians have unmet mental health care needs. 6 months is the average wait for psychiatric care in Canada. In some areas, the wait is closer to 2 years. 4 in 5 people with a mental health disability have at least one other disability."



[Learn more...](#)

12 Tips To Build A Holiday Budget That Won't Break The Bank

"The holiday season is a time for joy, connection and celebration, but it can also be expensive if not managed properly. A well-planned holiday budget ensures you can enjoy the festivities without financial stress. By proactively budgeting for Christmas or other holiday expenses, you can prioritize spending on what truly matters.



This article offers actionable strategies to help you stay financially secure during the most wonderful time of the year. Whether it's gifts, decorations or parties, learn to allocate funds wisely while keeping holiday cheer alive."

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DCO Updates

Learning Forum Updates

Important updates and refreshes continue on our Learning Forum platform, including new modules on the way that explore supporting survivors of brain injury, Seasonal Affective Disorder, and more. Updated Learning Forum walkthroughs have been provided to all Member centres to access the Learning Forum section of our new website.



Spirit of Volunteerism (SOV)

SOV webinars for Member staff and volunteers continue to be held each month online. Registration links are shared via email with Member leadership in the weeks leading up to each webinar and are now also being shared on our new Spirit of Volunteerism Community Page available to all Learning Forum users on Thinkific. We are continuously seeking feedback from our Member centres on how we can improve these monthly webinars.



Website

To learn more about Distress and Crisis Ontario, our member organizations, and current news and events, check out our website at www.dcontario.org. If you have any suggestions for or feedback on the content of our website, please email us at info@dcontario.org.



Blog

Our blogs, released once a month, cover timely topics related to current events or monthly themes, articles that didn't make it into our eNewsletter, updates from the Association and Members, and much more. Our latest blog explores Seasonal Affective Disorder and how to cope in these colder, darker winter months. Visit our website to learn more.



Podcast

Our podcast, "DCO Discourse..." continues to feature a variety of mental health topics with new episodes being released every Monday. In November the podcast explored topics like life in your 20s, lived experiences with mental health, and geriatric health and mental wellness.



You can click our logo to the right to listen now. If you have any feedback or requests for future content, please [click here](#).

Becoming a Member

If you are interested in becoming a Member of the Ontario Association of Distress Centre, currently operating as Distress and Crisis Ontario, please [click here](#) to visit our website and learn more. Becoming a member will allow your organization to increase networking in the sector, receive subject matter content specific to distress, crisis, and suicide prevention, and benefit from collective advocacy. Any questions can be sent to us by email at info@dcontario.org.





Thank you for supporting Distress and Crisis Ontario. [Click here](#) if you would like to donate through CanadaHelps.org, or [click here](#) to purchase a Blue Jay Poster, as shown to the left, through ONTogether and support us that way.



DCO Upcoming Events and Schedule of Meetings

Board of Directors Meetings

- January 28, 2025 at 5:00PM EST
- April 22, 2025 at 7:00PM EST

SOV Webinars

Information on upcoming Members-only Spirit of Volunteerism (SOV) webinars for staff and volunteer responders will be sent to Membership directly as we adjust our programming to better support our Members.



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