



January 2024 Newsletter

"One can follow the sun, of course, but I have always thought that it is best to know some winter, too, so that the summer, when it arrives, is the more gratefully received."
— Beatriz Williams, "Along the Infinite Sea"

Correction notice: Our sincere apologies, an earlier version of this newsletter included an incorrect title for the video shared below. This has now been updated and we apologize for any confusion.

January Holidays and Observances

We would like to wish a Happy New Year to all those who celebrate it this month. For many, this time of year provides an opportunity to reflect on the year past and look forward to new possibilities.

January is also [Alzheimer's Awareness Month](#) and includes important days like [Bell Let's Talk Day](#), [International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust](#), and [The National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia](#). There are also some silly days of celebration like [National Compliment Day](#) and [National Hot Chocolate Day](#).

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

Don't Make a "New" New Year's Resolution

"While we can make resolutions to start fresh any day of the year, December is the time when most people double down on their goal-setting in pursuit of New Year's resolutions that they hope will work (this time).

And while setting goals may be effective for some people, for others, it can undermine their efforts—and even cause harm. Research shows that the impact of goal-setting can result in people focusing too much attention on the wrong things, inhibiting their learning, engaging in unethical behaviors, or participating in extreme behaviors to achieve those goals."

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Seven ways to cope with the winter blues

"Winter blues are more common than you might think. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that people in northern climates usually experience during the fall and winter months, when there's less sunlight.



I'd like to share some ways to practice self-care when feeling the winter blues, which you can also use to help keep them at bay. Taking these steps doesn't mean you won't ever feel sad, but they will assist you in moving through the symptoms.

One point to keep in mind before I start: Feeling sad or blue when bad things happen isn't the same as having a depressive disorder. A major depressive disorder lasts for at least two weeks, affecting a person's ability to work, carry out their usual activities, and have satisfying personal relationships."

[Read more...](#)

Looking after yourself - Some information from the Alzheimer's Society of Canada

"Providing care for someone living with dementia takes a tremendous toll on the physical and emotional health of the primary caregiver, yet many caregivers often don't recognize the warning signs, or deny its effects on their health."



The Alzheimer's Society of Canada has dedicated an entire portion of their website providing information that, "can help you reduce the many stresses associated with caregiving, and help you find resources that support *your* quality of life."

You can explore their information and resources on [their webpage](#).

Ontario Mental Health And Addictions Organizations Sound The Alarm On Alcohol Announcement

"Community mental health and addictions organizations are questioning the value of the alcohol retail sales expansion, expressing concerns that the announcement is a step in the wrong direction in reducing public health harms.



The concerns come as the Ontario government has announced increased access to alcohol by allowing sales in corner stores, gas stations, and grocery stores, as well as ending the restrictions on 12 and 24 case sales at the Beer Store.

As part of the expansion plan, the government has committed \$10 million over five years to social responsibility and public health measures. The government has also pledged to continue consulting with public health organizations on this issue."

This is a joint statement from the Canadian Mental Health Association, Addictions Mental Health Ontario, and Children's Mental Health Ontario. You can read the full statement [here](#).

The Importance of Checking In



While this video was released for World Mental Health Day in October, the message is equally impactful around the holidays when many people struggle in silence. Reach out, check in, and remember the signs that someone needs support may not always be obvious.

Updates from the Government of Ontario



Ontario Helping More Students Kick-Start Careers in the Trades

"The Ontario government is investing over \$62.9 million in two of the province's foundational skilled trades programs to help more than 18,000 young people explore and prepare for life-long careers in a growing industry. The record increase in funding will help train the 100,000 skilled workers needed to build transit, hospitals and at least 1.5 million homes by 2031.

"We need more young people to know university isn't the only path to success in life," said David Piccini, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. "Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government will continue to invest in expanding opportunities for students and young people so everyone in Ontario has a fair shot at a life-changing career."

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Ontario Connecting Indigenous Peoples to Culturally Appropriate Care

"The Ontario government is investing up to \$2 million over the next two years to expand the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council's (IPHCC) Indigenous cultural safety training program. This expansion will allow the program to deliver more cultural training sessions to health care organizations so they can connect First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous people across the province to the culturally appropriate care they need.

"Our government is taking action to connect Ontarians to the care and support they need, close to home, no matter where they live," said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Expanding the Indigenous cultural safety training program will ensure our health care partners have the tools they need to deliver high-quality, responsive care to the Indigenous communities they serve."

[Learn more...](#)

Ontario Investing in Programs to Prevent and Address Gender-based Violence

"The Ontario government is investing an additional \$18.7 million this year to help prevent and address violence against women and girls. This funding builds on the province's existing investments of \$1.4 billion over the next four years to end gender-based violence and support victims.

"Today marks the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, which honours the 14 women killed and those injured 34 years ago at l'Ecole Polytechnique de Montréal," said Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. "This day is a solemn reminder of the importance of ensuring that we do all we can to prevent gender-based violence and address its root causes. Our investments will help ensure women and girls can live in safety – free from violence."

[Continue reading...](#)

News from and for our Member Centres

We regret to announce that the ONTX text and chat program will be ceasing operations on January 30th, 2024. Text and chat services will remain available until that date, however, they will no longer be accessible starting January 31st, 2024. If you are seeking support alternatives, we encourage you to visit our website at www.dcontario.org/locations to locate your nearest Member centre, some of which provide their own text and/or chat support services.



The Clyde Mental Health and Addictions Awareness Project

In honour of Clyde and his family, this month we have chosen to highlight Jack.org.



"Globally, It's estimated that a man dies by suicide every minute. This Jack Originals project is a multidisciplinary deep-dive into men's mental health, creating space for conversations. Our hope is that anyone who comes to this space will leave more prepared to support the men in their lives, or are more open to asking for help."

In other news...

Bell Let's Talk Day

Bell Let's Talk Day will be on January 24, 2024.

"Dedicated to moving mental health forward in Canada, Bell Let's Talk promotes awareness, acceptance and action with a strategy built on 4 key pillars:

- Anti-Stigma
- Care & Access

- Research
- Workplace Leadership"

You can learn more about Bell Let's Talk Day [here](#).



Best winter experiences in Ontario

Ontario is incredible to visit all year round, but it's especially enchanting to travel here during the winter. Whether you want to experience snow for the first time, try out some classic winter sports, or relax with hot drinks in a cozy café, there's something for everyone to love about spending your winter holidays in Ontario. Pack a ski jacket or winter coat, so you'll be protected from the cold and ready to enjoy all the wonders of Ontario's winter season.



[Here](#) are the top must-do winter experiences in Ontario.

DCO Updates

Learning Forum Updates

Important updates and refreshes continue with our Learning Forum content. We have many new and updated modules uploaded to our website with more on the way very soon.



Spirit of Volunteerism Committee

Monthly SOV webinars for Member staff and volunteers are held on the second or third Wednesday of each month from 12:00PM - 1:00PM EST. Upcoming webinars are as follows:

- January 17th, 2024 - Post-Holiday Letdown and "Winter Blues"



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 available to all Learning Forum users on Thinkific.

Website

To learn more about Distress and Crisis Ontario, our member organizations, and current news and events, check out our website at dcontario.org. We are currently undergoing an update to our website to ensure we continue to provide the best services possible which is set to launch this month.



Podcast

Our podcast, "DCO Discourse..." continues to feature a variety of mental health topics with new episodes being released every Monday. In December, the podcast focused on holiday-specific topics like holiday preparedness and facing grief over the holidays.

There was also a two part series on LGBTQ Mental Health and the Theatre.

Click our logo to the right to listen. 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 read our Member Benefits Package. 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 Meetings

Friday Jan 12, 2024 at 10:00am EST
Friday Apr 19, 2024 at 10:00am EST

SOV Webinars

Upcoming members-only lunch and learn webinars for staff and volunteer responders are as follows:

- January 17th, 2024 - Post-Holiday Letdown and "Winter Blues"

Annual Winter Conference - On Grief

Thursday, February 29th, 2024



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