



## March 2024 Newsletter

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"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." — Viktor E. Frankl

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### March Holidays and Observances

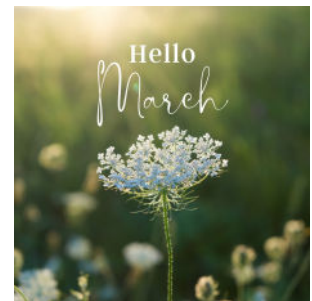
March hosts [International Women's Day](#), [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#), and [International Transgender Day of Visibility](#), as well as many physical health days of awareness like [Epilepsy Awareness Month](#).

To all those who celebrate Ramadan, we wish you a Ramadan Mubarak!

To all who celebrate Easter, we wish you a Happy Easter!

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

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### Existential Lessons of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Depression

"Historians have noted that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. attempted suicide twice as a child — when his best friend died and again when his grandmother died — and also struggled with depression as an adult. Many mental health advocates have leveraged King's personal history of depression to combat the stigma of mental illness, a humanizing gesture that makes a hero seem relatable. At the same time, however, I argue that this move oversimplifies the existential nature of King's despair.



Mental health advocates have pondered whether King had a psychiatric disability, whether stigma deterred him from seeking help, and to what extent fears of retaliation and defamation pressured him to mask his feelings of depression. They also have suggested that depression was the shadow side of his empathy.

These possibilities — while thoughtful — detract from the political trauma that must have upended Dr. King's philosophical development, leading to transformations that entailed depression, but weren't necessarily treatable by clinical means."

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## Radioactive Rotis: Britain's Secret Human Radiation Trials

"Over 50 years ago, a medical study targeted 21 British Indian women without their consent. The U.K. government has still not investigated or apologized.

In 1969, Punjabi homemaker Pritam Kaur was having a bad migraine, so she visited a doctor in Coventry, England. The doctor diagnosed her with anemia and prescribed a regimen of one specially prepared, hand-delivered chapati for Kaur to eat every day. He told Kaur he would schedule follow-up tests to assess whether the treatment had worked and her health had improved.



Unbeknownst to her, Kaur was ingesting much more than the South Asian flatbread known as chapati, roti, or phulka. Her "medicine" was laced with radioactive iron salt. This would be the start of a secretive study that experimented on 21 Indian women in Coventry — without their consent — a truth that would come out only decades later. To this day, the 'chapati study' offers little resolution. Kaur's experience reveals a sordid pattern of exploitative research that has long marred Western medicine."

This article was shared in The Juggernaut and can be read by [clicking here](#). You will be asked to provide an email address to access the article.

## How the media might inadvertently promote suicide

In February, Dr. Benni Zaiser, Vice Chair of Distress and Crisis Ontario's Board of Directors, authored an article for the Ottawa Citizen discussing how media coverage of prominent suicide-related stories may heighten the risk of suicide in vulnerable populations instead of mitigating it. Dr. Zaiser specifically highlighted the coverage of Kenneth Law and his "suicide kits," along with the impact of the 1774 novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther," which influenced some young men to take their own lives. Such stories can lead to copycat suicides, commonly known as the "Werther Effect," and the manner in which the media reports these incidents can inadvertently encourage suicide.



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## Why thinking about death helps you live a better life

At our winter workshop, "Let's Talk More About Grief", our speakers Dr. Susan Cadell and Dr. David K. Wright shared the following video to help attendees explore how we think about death and grieving. The video is 20 minutes long, but it does not feel like it when you are watching it, and does contain talk of death and dying.

"As a death doula, or someone who supports dying people and their loved ones, Alua Arthur spends a lot of time thinking about the end of life. In a profound talk that examines our brief, perfectly human time on this planet, she asks us to look at our lives through the lens of our deaths in seeking to answer the question: "What must I do to be at peace with myself so that I may live presently and die gracefully?""



## Updates from the Government of Ontario



### Ontario Helping Non-Profits Deliver Important Community Services

"The Ontario government announced more than \$26 million in grant funding this year to support 251 local projects at non-profit organizations across the province through the seventh and final round of the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF) Resilient Communities Fund.

The Resilient Communities Fund was created in August 2020 to help Ontario's non-profit organizations address pandemic-related challenges so they could continue to provide local services. To date, this fund has supported 3,299 projects with \$294 million in support.

"Non-profit organizations are critical to the success of communities across the province, delivering programming that helps people find jobs and live healthier, happier lives," said Neil Lumsden, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. "That's why our government is proud to continue to support Ontarians through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Communities across the province have overcome significant challenges in the past couple of years and supports like the Resilient Communities Fund have enabled non-profit organizations to continue to deliver valuable programming and services to those who need it the most."

[Continue reading...](#)

### Ontario Empowering More Black Youth and Young Professionals

"The Ontario government is investing an additional \$16.5 million in the Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP) to continue supporting more than 20 community-based and culturally focused organizations with a proven track record of empowering Black children and families. The funding, through the BYAP's Economic Empowerment stream, will help Black youth and young professionals develop skills to help launch their careers in high-demand sectors such as the skilled trades, information technology, automotive, health, film and the arts.

"We have seen the difference community organizations make in helping Black youth and young professionals find meaningful employment, develop critical skills and unlock a brighter future for themselves and their communities," said Michael Ford, Minister of

Citizenship and Multiculturalism. "Today's investment is part of our government's ongoing work to empower communities, and build a stronger, more inclusive workforce where everyone can succeed."

[Learn more...](#)

## Ontario Banning Road Tolls, Freezing Driver's Licence Fees to Keep Costs Down

"The Ontario government is keeping costs down for drivers by introducing legislation that would, if passed, ban tolls on provincial highways. This ban would apply to the Don Valley Parkway and Gardiner Expressway once uploaded to the province, as well as the province's 400-series highways.

"Our government under the leadership of Premier Ford is on a mission to keep costs down for families and businesses," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation. "First, we scrapped the tolls on Highways 412 and 418, now we're protecting drivers from the costs of new tolls. Together with our cut in the gas tax and eliminating the license plate sticker fee, we're saving drivers hundreds of dollars every year."

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## Ontario Releases 2023–24 Third Quarter Finances

"The government released the 2023–24 Third Quarter Finances, to provide an update on Ontario's economic and fiscal outlook since the release of the 2023 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review (also referred to as the Fall Economic Statement, or FES).

While inflation-related pressure has eased slightly across the province, high interest rates and unpredictable consumer price inflation continue to pose risks to the province's economic outlook. In spite of this, Ontario's economy is expected to see continued growth in 2024.

"Ontario's economy is continuing to grow, largely driven by the hardworking people in every corner of this province," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. "As this year unfolds, our government will continue to take a prudent, responsible approach to managing Ontario's finances, ensuring there is capacity to respond to economic headwinds while continuing to invest in building Ontario's future."

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## News from and for our Member Centres

Thank you to Dr. Susan Cadell, Dr. David K. Wright, and all who attended our winter workshop, Let's Talk More About Grief. We are grateful to our two speakers for sharing their time, personal experiences, and professional expertise with us and to our attendees for their time, active participation, and courage. We hope that all who attended found the morning as inspiring and useful as we did.



We would also like to thank Nicole Graham Shank from [VS Marketing](#) for her presentation to our member leadership on HR best practices for recruitment, retention, and building a positive organization culture.

Watch this space for information on more to come!

# The Clyde Mental Health and Addictions Awareness Project

In honour of Clyde and his family, this month we have chosen to highlight [Families for Addiction Recovery](#).



"Families for Addiction Recovery is a national charity founded by parents of children who have struggled with addiction from their teens. Our goal is long term recovery for those with addiction and their families.

- We offer parent-to-parent support for families struggling with addiction.
- We are a voice for families to influence government policy.
- We educate community groups, health care providers and law enforcement about addiction, health laws and drug policies."

## In other news...

### The Biggest Hour for Earth is back

"Join us for Earth Hour 2024! Switch off and Give an hour for Earth on Saturday, March 23rd at 8:30 pm your local time. Together, let's create the Biggest Hour for Earth!"



[Learn more...](#)

### Fun March Break activities in Ontario 2024

"March Break in Ontario is March 11–15, 2024. It is a break from school and a chance for families to spend time together. Plan a week-long getaway or an overnight stay at a family-friendly resort in Ontario. Discover plenty of family bonding activities and fun things to do with your toddlers, tweens or teens."



[Here](#) is a list of activities from *Destination Ontario* for March Break this year.

## 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 being developed now.



### 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 and 7:00PM - 8:00PM EST. Registration links are shared via email with Member leadership in the weeks leading up to each webinar, and are now also being



## Website

To learn more about Distress and Crisis Ontario, our member organizations, and current news and events, check out our website at [dcontario.org](http://dcontario.org). The updates to our website have been completed and we would appreciate any feedback you have on the new and improved site. Please email any feedback to [info@dcontario.org](mailto:info@dcontario.org).



## Blog

In case you missed it, one of the new features of our website is that we have started a blog! We are thrilled to introduce this new platform for connecting with our community and sharing valuable information each month. Our blog will be released mid-month and cover timely topics related to current events or monthly themes, articles that didn't make it into our e-newsletter, updates from the Association and Members, and much more. You can read our first blog post, "Let's Talk more About Grief" [here](#).



## Podcast

Our podcast, "DCO Discourse..." continues to feature a variety of mental health topics with new episodes being released every Monday. In February topics included eating disorders within the black community, sexual and reproductive health week, acting intimacy coordination, and more.



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. 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](mailto:info@dcontario.org).



Thank you for supporting Distress and Crisis Ontario. [Click here](#) if you would like to donate through [CanadaHelps.org](http://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 Apr 19, 2024 at 10:00am EST

### SOV Webinars

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

- March 20, 2024



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