

## QFHT NEWS

FALL/WINTER  
2019

NEWS &amp; INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS OF THE QUEEN'S FAMILY HEALTH TEAM

## MENTAL HEALTH

NURTURING YOUR OWN  
PERSONAL NEEDS

*"Be kind, for everyone you meet  
is fighting a battle you know  
nothing about."*

(Quote by author Wendy Mass,  
"The Candymakers")

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) estimates that in any given year, one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness.

Everyone has different lived experiences and medical diagnoses that influence their ability to cope. It takes practice to recognize and address unhelpful thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Sometimes, we turn to unhealthy coping strategies such as avoidance, isolation, or alcohol or drug use, etc.

Experiencing mental illness is as justified and normal as experiencing physical illness. There are many strategies you can practise to reinforce mental wellness and resilience. Here are a few to consider:

**The mind-body connection** — Regular exercise has been shown to reduce symptoms of depression. Start by taking a walk, for example. Take baby steps; a small step is actually a big step.

**Healthy thinking** — Look at all factors in a situation objectively, in a balanced way, and then decide how you feel about

it. Are you thinking from your emotional, rational, or wise mind? Using balanced thinking can improve your responses to stressful life events and maintain mental wellness.

**Positive support network** — Healthy relationships are crucial to mental wellness, and may involve going outside of your comfort zone and taking risks. This may mean reconnecting with friends and activities or trying something new.

**Find balance** — Take inventory of what is important to you, and strive to find your own boundaries. This may mean putting your needs above those around you.

**Be mindful** — Practise thoughtfully directing your attention to the present. Take a moment to notice the taste of your coffee, the feel of a breeze on your skin or the scent of a fall rain.

**Get help and stay patient** — Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Don't hesitate to reach out, and stay patient with yourself. Recovery is an evolution, not a miracle.

For more information, read the CMHA's [Fast Facts about Mental Illness](#).

**Key community resources in Kingston for mental health support:**

[Addictions and Mental Health Services](#)  
KFL&A: 613-544-1536

[\\*Crisis Line](#) (24-hour phone support):  
613-544-4229

[Bereaved Families of Ontario](#):  
613-634-1230

[BounceBack Ontario](#) (skills-building telephone support): 1-866-345-0224

[Centre for Abuse and Trauma Therapy](#):  
613-507-2288

[Maltby Centre](#) (for children and youth):  
613-546-8535

[QFHT](#) (anxiety and depression program): 613-533-9300, Ext. 73976

[Resolve Counselling Services Kingston](#):  
613-549-7850

[Sexual Assault Centre Kingston](#):  
613-545-0762

[Street Health Centre](#) (harm reduction centre): 613-549-1440

Employee assistance programs/benefits may also be available to you; check with your employer.

**Self Help**

[Big White Wall](#) (online support)

Mind Shift (phone app)

[Centre for Clinical Interventions](#)  
(downloadable workbooks)

# FAST FACTS

## GET YOUR FLU SHOT!

Our annual flu shot clinic is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 13** from 1–4 pm and 5–7 pm, and **Friday, November 22** from 9 am–noon and 1–4 pm at 115 Clarence St. (Haynes Hall).

Call our flu line at 613-533-9303, Ext. 71947, to make an appointment, or drop by during those hours. Otherwise, call to book an appointment on another day, or simply ask your nurse for your flu shot during your next appointment. For more information about the flu shot, visit [qfht.ca](http://qfht.ca) (Immunization/Vaccination).

## PRESCRIPTION RENEWAL

Will you need a prescription renewal soon? Limited clinic appointments will be available over Christmas/New Year's, and our hours will be reduced. Please help us ensure you have enough of your prescription to get you through the holidays. Get your refills today!

## AFTER HOURS CLINIC

The QFHT After Hours Clinic, on the second floor at 115 Clarence St., offers booked and drop-in appointments. To book an appointment, please call 613-533-9303. On a rotating schedule, QFHT physicians also offer booked appointments on Monday and Tuesday evenings. If you wish to see your physician on one of these nights, ask your receptionist when he or she is scheduled on the rotation and we'll book you in.

Our After Hours Clinic is open exclusively to QFHT patients, Monday to Thursday from 5–8 pm and Saturday from 1–4 pm. When the clinic is closed, please call 613-533-9303 and our answering service will contact the physician on call.

During Christmas/New Year's, our hours will vary. Please visit [qfht.ca](http://qfht.ca) for a list of our holiday hours.



Photo by Laura McDiarmid

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT QUEEN'S FAMILY MEDICINE

An important aspect of residency training is learning strong communication and leadership. In September, our resident physicians gathered in Temagami for a wilderness medicine retreat that provided an opportunity to develop such skills.

The Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario has recognized the **Queen's Family Health Team** (QFHT) for its outstanding patient programs with a nomination for its annual Bright Lights Awards. The QFHT was nominated under the category *Access to Care: Improving Access to Team-Based Care*, recognizing the value of QFHT's wide variety of programs open to the community, including its Breastfeeding Drop In; Introducing Solids Foods to your Baby; Understanding & Coping with Anxiety & Depression; and Best Health, Best Weight.

**Dr. Sarah Funnell**, the department's Indigenous health director, has been elected a board member for the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada. She will serve as the association's treasurer over the next three years.

**Dr. Michael Green** is a member of a working group of leading Indigenous medical educators who participated in drafting the [Joint Commitment to Action on Indigenous Health](#), a report that provides a roadmap for institutional change to enable Canadian medical schools to respond to the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action*. Dr. Green is also a member of the [Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario](#), a five-year program intended to support the next generation of Indigenous health scholars and advance Indigenous health equity in Ontario.

**Dr. Susan Phillips** has been appointed Walter Rosser Chair in Family Medicine Research. Among other responsibilities, Dr. Phillips will be responsible for conducting, supporting, and developing research within the department, and will oversee the education, supervision, and mentorship of research students and trainees at the undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and postdoctoral levels.



## Understanding and Coping with Anxiety and Depression

### A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

As a patient of Dr. Imaan Bayoumi, I first attended the Queen's Family Health Team's (QFHT) anxiety and depression program in fall 2016, after QFHT social worker Evelyn Bowering referred me. During the program, Evelyn asked if I would share my personal story with the group about my struggles with anxiety and depression. As well, I have experience and a background in mental health through my education and place of employment that morphed into me helping to facilitate.

Since that time, the QFHT's Erin Desmarais and Jessica Waller have done an amazing job at molding the program into what it is today. They have created new roles for peer mentors, added new material, and the new monthly booster groups have emerged as a result of the positive feedback we have received since the program's inception. I believe this is one of the best programs the QFHT offers its patients. The program's waitlist is strong evidence of the need for a program like this in Kingston, where mental health services are not as abundant, compared to cities like Ottawa and Toronto.

When I was first referred to a psychiatrist in town, I remember asking what else he could do for me. His response was "nothing." He had prescribed the medication, but he told me it was up to me to become mindful. Mindfulness, yeah, right, I thought.

Now, I owe him an apology; he was right! Being able to live in the moment, to relax, to actually pay attention to my thoughts is just as important as any pill, and groups like this program help us to re-activate our lives and remind us of the need for self-compassion.

I have seen firsthand the positive changes the QFHT's program has had on some of the patients who attend and take it to heart. For someone who may suffer from anxiety or depression, it can be overwhelming just to come to the group with a bunch of strangers. But participants quickly form bonds with one another, knowing it is a safe space and everyone is there for the same reason — to take back control over their mental health.

On the final afternoon of the program, we welcome the participants into its elite group of alumni. That's a great feeling, as it signals the end of the session but also the start of the healing journey for these patients.

When the program ends, we have provided some new skills and tools to this group, and hopefully have empowered some of them to take back control over their own mental health. I hope when patients leave, they know they are not alone in the ongoing battle that is anxiety and depression.

Chris S.

### PATIENT PROFILE

At the beginning of a harsh journey with my health, I asked myself: "How could I end up on this dark path?"



A mother of four boys, I suffered from post-partum depression following my last delivery. From there, I had very fragile health because of an iron deficiency, followed by more depression.

Finally, I realized I had another battle to overcome: domestic violence. After years went by, raising a young family, I left my husband.

I was grateful to have a very caring family doctor at the QFHT, Dr. Karen Hall Barber, as well as counsellors who taught me how to cope with panic attacks and PTSD. What a dark period it was. I did not know if I would ever be able to return to work full time.

Thanks to the QFHT, Sexual Assault Centre Kingston, and Addiction and Mental Health Services KFLA, my health was stabilized and I became emotionally stronger. I volunteered as much as possible, which helped keep me grateful and humble, understanding how fortunate I was as a survivor of many struggles.

Once my health improved, I started to make plans for my future — a future which, before then, I felt I may never have. I started to make small goals to return to the workforce. An immigrant to Canada, I started by enrolling in a class to improve my English skills, and went on to earn a diploma in business administration — human resources. While studying, I continued to volunteer and worked part-time. Now, I work as a full-time receptionist.

When I told Dr. Hall Barber how far I've come, she gave me a hug. I know I have become a success story not just for her, but for all who believed I could direct my energy towards positive actions in my life.

I am grateful to be surrounded by great mentors who encouraged me along the way, as well as my four sons, who have been my deepest inspiration.

Pilar R.

# RESIDENT PHYSICIANS AND YOU



Dr. Alistair MacDonald

Many perceive doctors to have it all together. However, did you know that resident physicians experience mental illness, in particular depression and anxiety, at a rate of three to four times that of the general population?

I experienced this first-hand in medical school when I had severe depression that forced me to put my studies on hold. I felt the sadness, numbness, and despair many patients with mental illness feel. Fortunately, with the help of doctors, counsellors, medication, community, and self-care, I was able to return to my normal self.

Many of my patients here at the QFHT have also had such undesirable emotions that accompany mental illness. I commend you all for reaching out for help, as I know how challenging this can be. You have been extremely brave in opening up to me and other residents when you feel so vulnerable.

I will continue to do my best to listen to you, to hear your story, and to let you know I've been there, too. Being able to help you has been highly gratifying for me. So, thank you, and do not be afraid to ask for help.

*Dr. Alistair MacDonald, a second-year resident physician at the QFHT, has written a compelling first-person account of his experience as a medical student and resident, and its effect on his mental health. [How Depression made this Doctor a Better Physician](#) is published in MedPage Today's KevinMD.com.*



Tim Forbes/Forbes Photographer

Dr. David Barber with a patient at the QFHT After Hours Clinic, 115 Clarence St.

## CLINIC CONVERSATION

In September this year, Health Canada released an information update alerting the public about a possible contamination in several medications containing ranitidine. These medications are being recalled due to an impurity, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), found in them. NDMA is a potential carcinogen, which means it could cause cancer with long-term exposure. Please [click here](#) for detailed information and the affected lots.

If you have been prescribed ranitidine within the last 12 months and you are still taking this medication, we suggest you contact your community pharmacy to discuss an alternative prescription. Our clinicians will work with your community pharmacist if necessary for other treatment options. If you have any other concerns, we encourage you to call for an appointment to review with your physician.

Consistent with the Department of Family Medicine's new strategic plan, and one of our key priorities of a supportive, communicative workplace culture, the QFHT clinic is committed to providing a healthy, safe, and respectful environment for its patients, residents, faculty, and staff. Aggressive, abusive, and violent behaviour — physical or verbal, actual or threatened — will not be tolerated in person or on the telephone. We reserve the right to take any measures — including asking you to leave the premises — against any inappropriate behaviour. We appreciate your adherence to this policy.

We welcome your input and suggestions about our clinic operations. At any time, please feel free to contact me or your care provider.

## We are Family Medicine.

For Learners. For Patients. For Communities.

To you in good health,

Diane Cross  
Clinic Manager

**Do we have your current email address?** If not, please send it to [info@dfm.queensu.ca](mailto:info@dfm.queensu.ca) so we can keep you and your family well informed.