



COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians'
October 2021 Newsletter

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Project Updates

[Racial Equity in Education -](#)

[Eman Zahid, Muslim Community Outreach Coordinator](#)

The Coalition for Racial Equity in Education is working on passing motions regarding racial equity issues at Ontario school boards. Volunteers and community members interested in the project can access the training materials from our last training weekend using these links:

Parent Meeting Folder, click [here](#).

Students Meeting Folder, click [here](#).

RECRUITING: We are recruiting the 2nd volunteer cohort, so if you are interested in participating in the project, please fill out this form: <https://form.jotform.com/210544427161246>

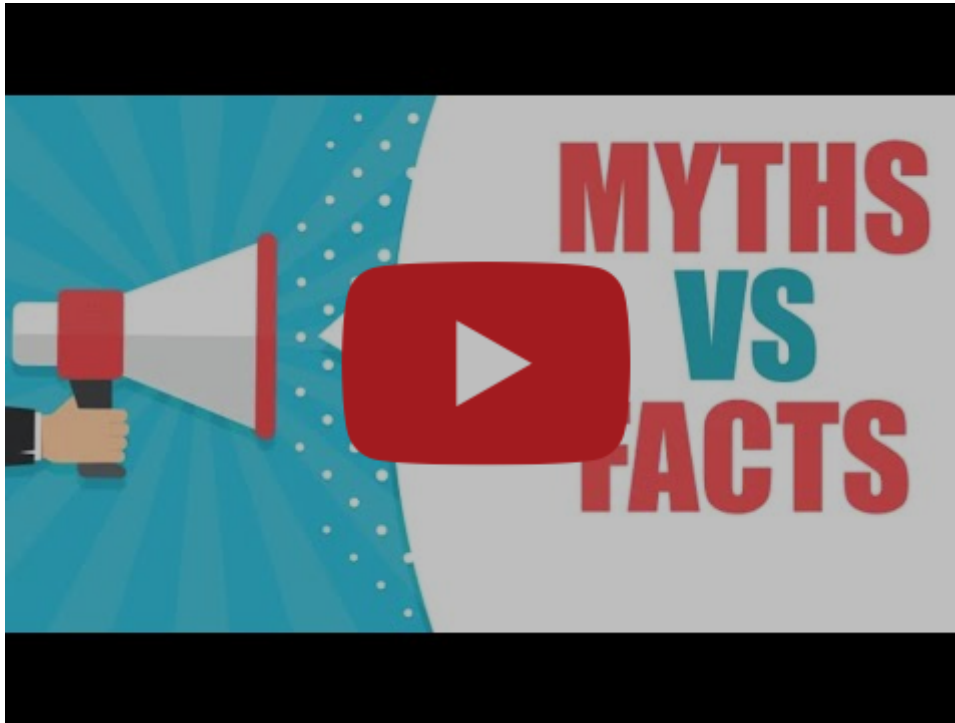
[South Asian Vaccine Engagement Collaborative -](#)

[Wardah Malik, Vaccine Engagement Coordinator](#)

With the change of season, vaccine engagement is more centered on online spaces. CASSA's team, including the new addition of Nimra Aftab (nimra@cassa.on.ca), remains focused on creating content that address the concerns of the South Asian community. New releases will begin

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platforms which explain the raising number of cases and what we can do to protect ourselves and our families. Lastly, the Hub is undergoing changes and site maintenance and will be re-launched with a new campaign that explores the different experience of the pandemic through storytelling. Please keep a look out for these releases and reach out to wardah@cassa.on.ca if you have story to share about the pandemic and its affect on your community.



Click here to view the full playlist of vaccine education videos available in 4 different languages: English, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu.

[Vaccine Myths vs Facts](#)
[Vaccine Education Series](#)

Hate Crime Reporting -

Lakhdeep Dhaliwal, Hate Crime Reporting Project Coordinator

The hate crime reporting project reached another milestone this month with community focus groups underway in Peel region. **Community members are invited to contribute experiences of hate incident reporting in these focus groups** while CASSA facilitators educate and demystify that process by clarifying legal definitions of hate, community responses to hate, and police service protocols of reporting hate. October will see a continued community input via focus groups in Peel region before shifting the focus to York region, Toronto region, and Ottawa regions. In concert with the community focus groups, the CASSA community survey on hate incident reporting will remain live until December. This survey is for residents of Peel, York, Toronto, and

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This project is made possible by the Ministry of the Solicitor General in the form of direct support from The Safer and Vital Communities Grant.

We are excited to launch our [hate crime reporting survey](#), where we hope to anonymously capture the voice of community members in Toronto, Peel region, York region and Ottawa on hate incident reporting. What is a hate incident? Where do hate incidents occur? Why do some in the community report hate incidents while others do not? How can hate incident reporting be improved upon? This survey only takes 5-10 minutes to complete, and those who complete the survey will receive a **\$10 gift card** as an honorarium.

CASSA is also seeking community organizations and agencies from the four regions who are interested in doing 30-minute focus groups with staff, members and/or program participants on hate crime reporting. All focus groups participants will receive a **\$20 gift card as an honorarium**. If you are interested in doing a focus group with us, please email lakhdeep@cassa.on.ca.



Gender-based Violence Project - Dinoba Kirupa, Gender-based Violence Project Coordinator

The gender-based violence research project is well on its way. September consisted of all partner organizations coordinating efforts for upcoming focus groups with their clients. Flyers and a pre-screening survey were made and translated to five languages, including Urdu, Bangla, Tamil, Punjabi, and English. Data collection will now take place throughout October. This will consist of both focus groups, which will be conducted by all partner agencies to obtain anecdotal evidence, and interviews with their executive directors, which will be done by CASSA. A long survey, which has also been translated

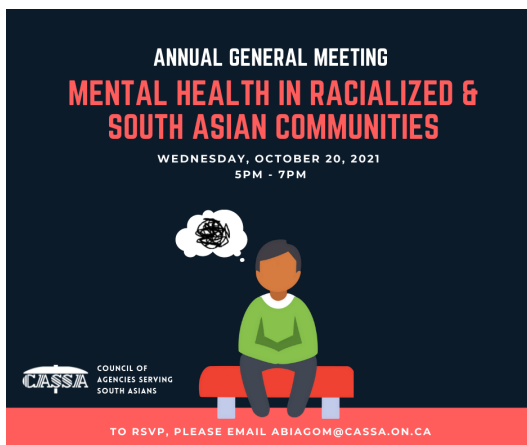
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Anti-Hate Initiatives -

Maryam Faisal, Project Manager

Today marks the beginning of CASSA's #EradicateHate campaign - geared towards bringing awareness to online hate issues and how we as individuals and communities can act in response. Over the next few months, we will share infographics, illustrations, as well as a reflection game to share with friends, family, and colleagues, and most importantly, our well awaited and extensive Anti-Hate toolkit, compiled with the help of community organizations, community activists, and experts. Share these graphics on your stories, retweet onto your timeline, and repost on your news feeds. Stay tuned! Art by Sharon Liang. maryam@cassa.on.ca

Save the Date: Annual General Meeting



CASSA's Annual General Meeting is taking place virtually this year on **October 20, 2021** from 5-7 pm.

To RSVP, please email

abiagom@cassa.on.ca



Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
5200 Finch Avenue East, Suite 301A
Scarborough ON, M1S 4Z5
Phone: 416-932-1359
E-mail: cassa@cassa.on.ca Website: www.cassa.on.ca

October 1st, 2021

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) congratulates the Peel District School Board (PDSB) for passing the motion championed by CASSA, Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR), and the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM); put forward by Trustee Nokha Dakroub to develop and adopt an anti-Islamophobia strategy and mandate anti-Islamophobia training for all staff.

This motion is in line with what has been working towards since 2017: to bring attention to hate-motivated crimes and create policies and programs to combat all forms of hate crimes and hate speeches. We firmly believe that this work needs to be done across sectors and industries to effectively eradicate hate.

One of the most effective ways to combat hate in all its forms is through education and education begins with ensuring our School Boards are held accountable in conducting the appropriate training necessary to address the rise in Islamophobia.

Less than four months ago, the Afzal family—a Muslim family—in London, Ontario was murdered, orphaning a nine-year-old boy. In the same vein, the Quebec Mosque Shooting remains in our collective conscience. These incidents do not take place in a vacuum, thus a comprehensive effort needs to be made to combat Islamophobia wherever it rears its ugly head; whether it is interpersonal or systemic. This motion is long overdue and CASSA hopes to see this strategy implemented across all school boards.

The Peel District School Board has a significant population of Muslim students, teachers, and staff. Schools must be places of safety and should not perpetuate any hate or harm in any form. A positive learning and safe working environment needs to be cultivated and mandated to mitigate the harm—both mental and physical—caused by discrimination, xenophobia, and Islamophobia. The PDSB is the first school board to pass such a motion and we urge other school boards in the country to follow their lead.

In solidarity,

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) congratulates the Peel District School Board (PDSB) for passing the motion championed by CASSA, Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR), and the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM); and put forward by Trustee Nokha Dakroub to develop and adopt an anti-Islamophobia strategy and mandate anti-Islamophobia training for all staff.

[Read the full statement here.](#)

Messages from Members

Wednesday
Oct. 20th, 2021
6:00 to 8:00 pm
EST

Wednesday
Oct. 27th, 2021
6:00 to 8:00 pm
EST



Digital Anti-Racism Education Workshops!

Join our free, virtual Anti-Islamophobia 101 & Countering Cyberate 101 Workshops.
Workshop Topics Include:

- October 20
 - What is Islamophobia?
 - Gendered Islamophobia
- October 27
 - What is Cyberhate?
 - CounterSpeech & Counter Narratives

Participants attending both sessions to receive a certification in Digital Anti-Racism Education!

Registration required

<https://bit.ly/DARE2OCASI>

For more information visit www.daretobeaware.ca



Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)
Le conseil canadien des femmes musulmanes (CCFM)

OCASI
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

Digital Anti-Racism 2 (DARE2) Education Workshops - CCMW, OCASI

CCMW will be hosting its first PHASE 2 Community workshop, which is a part of the Digital Anti-Racism Education 2 (DARE 2) Project funded by the Government of Canada. The 2-series virtual workshop is being held in partnership with OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants) and is open to the larger community. The **October 20 workshop** will focus on Anti-Islamophobia 101 and the **October 27 workshop** will focus on Countering Cyberhate 101.

Participants can register for the workshop at:

<https://bit.ly/DARE2OCASI>

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WoodGreen's Afghan Settlement Hotline (ASH)

Helping Afghan Refugees access community and related supports in English and Dari/Farsi/Pashto.

Effective September 27, 2021, Afghan refugees or service providers serving Afghan refugees can call our hotline to speak with our expert Settlement Counsellor and a Community Ambassador who will provide needed interpretation.

We are here to help!

Please call our **HOTLINE** at:
416-405-5300
Monday to Friday
1:30pm-4:30pm



We are excited to have started the Afghan Settlement Hotline (ASH) helping **Afghan Refugees** access **community and related supports in English and Dari/Farsi/Pashto from September 27**. Starting Sept 27, 2021, Afghan refugees can call our hotline to speak with expert Settlement Counsellors who are available to provide settlement help and support.



Live and virtual visits available



South Asian Risk Assessment Clinic - SANSAR

The South Asian Cardiovascular Risk Assessment Clinic went on hiatus at the beginning of the pandemic. SANSAR is pleased to announce that the clinic has been completely overhauled to be offered as a virtual or live clinic, based on patient preference. The new clinic will open to patients as of September this year, and patients from across Ontario are now eligible for virtual consultations upon referral by a physician.

Learn more [here](#).

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life changed.
He attacked me
with nothing to
defend myself
but my bare
hands and my
red coat."

#Hate2Healing <http://www.daretobeaware.ca/>

the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) launches a unique initiative to raise awareness on and take action against hate, racism, and Islamophobia.

We invite you to join us on our #Hate2Healing journey by sharing, retweeting, and promoting campaign posts a from your individual and/or organizational social media platforms.

Young Women aged 18–24 are most likely to experience the most severe forms of online abuse including stalking, sexual harassment, and physical threats (Pew Research Center, October 2014) — this needs to end. The #Hate2Healing campaign includes a powerful video that captures this trauma of online hate in the story of Noor, a young woman in Canada whose experience with online hate should cause us all to feel the need to act. Watch the video at: www.daretobeaware.ca

Dress
for the
Cause **PIN
YOUR
PINK**



Pin your Pink this October - Breast Cancer Society of Canada

October is International Breast Cancer Awareness month and the [Breast Cancer Society of Canada](http://www.breastcancer.ca) is asking businesses to lend a hand and support life-saving breast cancer research by displaying a Pin Your Pink donation box with pink ribbons. The free Pin Your Pink kit comes with this adorable box, 250 ribbons and a 4" X 6" window cling. Ribbons can be purchased with cash or by simply scanning the QR code.

[Order your Pin Your Pink kit before August 31 at DressForTheCause.ca](http://www.breastcancer.ca) The Breast Cancer Society of Canada | bcsc.ca | 1-800-567-8767

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Therapy for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC)

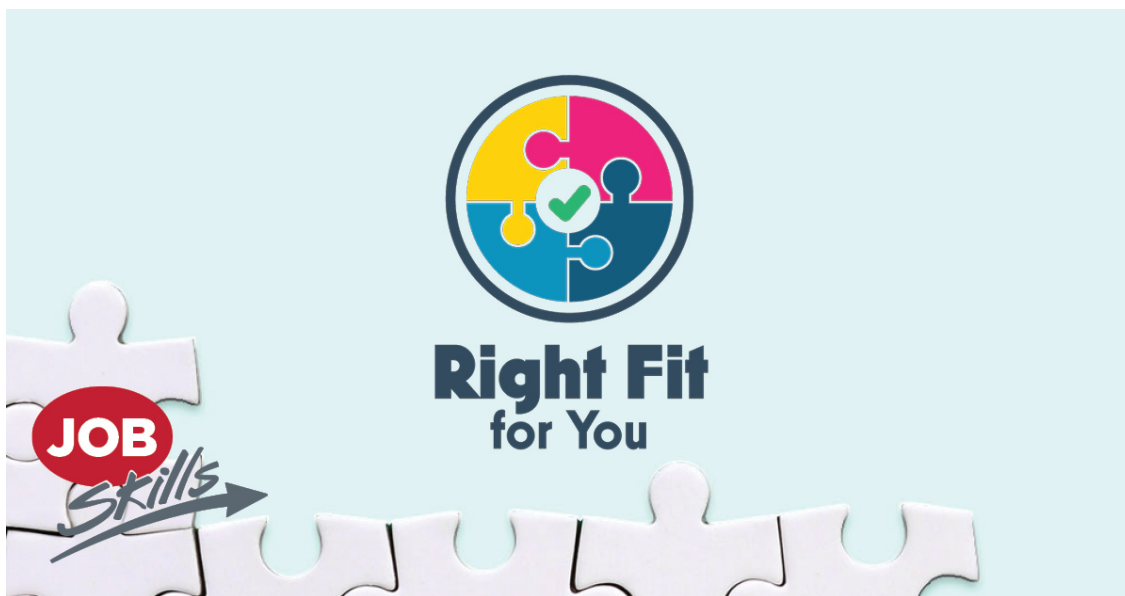
A digital platform to find culturally responsive mental health & wellness professionals in Canada

- June 2021 -

A little more about Althea Therapy

Althea Therapy was created by Hamilton-raised mental-health advocate, Micheline Khan, to close the gap for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in accessing therapists who share the same cultural background. The app launched in April of this year (2021) and provides BIPOC individuals with a space to search for and connect with BIPOC mental health and wellness professionals in their area. Additionally, the app is a resource hub with information, education, and engagement on mental health and wellness topics, shared through the app, on the Althea Therapy website, and through the Althea Therapy weekly newsletter. Learn more [here](#).

Opportunities



[Right Fit for You - Job Skills](#)

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The Right Fit for You program is available at no cost and offers the following:

- A customized 20-week learning environment using online and small group sessions.
- A dedicated social worker/facilitator team to improve your ability to meet life and employment goals.
- Skills training, mentoring, work experience placements, referrals and follow-up support.

Find out more or register at:

[Click here to learn more or register now.](#)

Recruiting Women for a Research Study:

Co-developing a Culturally Appropriate Question Prompt Tool About Cardiovascular Risk After Hypertensive Pregnancy

Overview: Many women experience Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy (HDP), referring to several conditions featuring high blood pressure during pregnancy. A pre-formed list of questions, or Question-Prompt Tool, may help women talk to their clinicians about the potential impact of HDP on their health, such heart disease risk and prevention. The purpose of this study is to co-develop and test a Question Prompt Tool for HDP among diverse women.

Eligibility: Ethno-culturally diverse women who are conversant in English, Canadian residents, aged 18+, and have experienced high blood pressure during pregnancy, recently or many years ago.

Procedure: This study involves a one-time, 20-minute interview scheduled at your convenience, using a toll-free telephone number.

Results: The information you provide will help us develop and test a Question Prompt Tool. In the future, this tool could help other women discuss the impact of HDP on their health, with their clinicians.

To participate or for more information contact Jessica Ramlakhan
jessica.ramlakhan@uhnresearch.ca

You will receive a \$50.00 gift card for your participation

Participants Needed: Women With High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy - University Health Network

Researchers at University Health Network and University of Calgary are recruiting ethno-culturally diverse **women who had high blood pressure during pregnancy, recently or many years ago**. The study involves a one-time **20-minute phone call** to discuss how a pre-formed list of questions might help women talk to their doctor about high blood pressure in pregnancy and heart health. Women will receive a **\$50 e-gift card**. Please contact jessica.ramlakhan@uhnresearch.ca to ask questions or express interest.

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MLSC is currently looking for two volunteer law students to assist the MLSC 6 hours a week with client intakes and help develop a database of outreach and referral resources. Both students require an advanced understanding of the challenges faced by Muslim clients.

Duties/responsibilities for the intake student:

- Assist clients to complete intake forms
- Update case status using MLSC tools
- Attend weekly check-in team meetings
- Schedule meetings with clients and pro bono lawyers as needed
- Collect and submit data by end of the day using MLSC tools
- Document areas of improvement and growth through MLSC client-lawyer-partner feedback loops

Duties/responsibilities for the outreach/research student:

- Research and document Muslim organizations including mosques, educational institutions, and places of interest for MLSC services
- Create regional map of outreach locations
- Identify mission/vision of groups that aligns with that of MLSC
- Facilitate outreach work to access legal resources
- Create a database of resources that serves the information need of the Centre

Time commitment:

- 6 hours a week from September 2021-March 2022

Qualifications:

- Law student, interested to gain legal service experience in areas of intakes and Public Legal Education Seminars
- A commitment to social justice, intersectional-feminist framework
- Demonstrated capacity to use online video conferencing software
- Ability to gather information through multiple sources using the internet, phone and virtual tools
- Good time management and organizational skills

What can the student expect to gain from this experience at MLSC:

- Volunteer experience serving Muslims in a culturally competent manner
- Increased understanding of intersectional needs of growing Muslim population
- Increased knowledge of legal needs of Ontario Muslims
- Improved research and data presentation skills
- Acknowledgement of volunteer contribution
- A coordinated and seamless team experience

Job posting for a Communications Coordinator at MLSC

The Muslim Legal Support Centre (MLSC) was initiated by the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association (CMLA) in 2018 in recognition of the lack of culturally competent legal services accessible to the Muslim community.

MLSC is currently looking for a part-time Communications Coordinator to assist the Centre with its communication functions. The ideal Coordinator would have advanced communication skills and a good understanding of Muslim communities and the challenges and needs of Muslim clients.

The Communications Coordinator should have strong written and verbal communication skills and be proficient in using social media and online platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Canva, and Wix.

Terms of employment

This is a 6-month contract for a part-time position of 15 hours per week at \$20.00 per hour. The Communications Coordinator is expected to work from home within a remote/virtual setting until further notice. MLSC promotes flexible working hours as part of the organizational growth, by encouraging work-life balance, and higher job satisfaction. However, the scheduling of staff hours will be subject to negotiation with the Director and any extension of employment beyond 6 months is subject to funding.

Duties/responsibilities for the Communications Coordinator:

Communication

- Create promotional materials, and web-content and respond to social media/other inquiries in a timely manner
- Support clinic communication functions by contributing to communication needs and solutions
- Copy edit communication materials and respond to stakeholder concerns in conjunction with the Clinic Director
- Tweak or improve communication tools to support the MLSC
- Create templates to facilitate clinic communication
- Participate in MLSC team activities and perform duties as assigned

Public Legal Education (PLE)

- Support the organizing and promotion of clinic and PLE events for MLSC in a culturally competent fashion
- Develop relationship with PLE resources, help create information resource/educational tools and promote events through strategic outlets
- Coordinate with strategic MLSC stakeholders to coordinate PLE/information sessions

Other

Perform duties as assigned.

Qualifications/Experience:

- Experience in creating communication materials and experienced in social media and other online platforms
- Experience in legal service setting or non-profit environment
- Knowledge of the needs and legal issues faced by Muslims in Ontario
- A commitment to social justice

MLSC is currently looking for **two volunteer law students** to assist the MLSC **6 hours a week** with client intakes and help develop a database of outreach and referral resources. Both students require an advanced understanding of the challenges faced by Muslim clients.

All interested candidates are requested to contact the MLSC with an **expression of interest and resume** in one document- not more than 3 pages to mlsc.coordination@gmail.com

Job Posting: Communications Coordinator - MLSC

This is a **6-month contract** for a **part-time position of 15 hours per week at \$20.00 per hour**. The Communications Coordinator is expected to work from home within a remote/virtual setting until further notice. MLSC promotes flexible working hours as part of the organizational growth, by encouraging work- life balance, and higher job satisfaction. However, the scheduling of staff hours will be subject to negotiation with the Director and any extension of employment beyond 6 months is subject to funding.

If interested, contact the MLSC with an expression of interest, **three professional references and resume** in one document - not more than 4 pages (word or pdf) to mlsc.coordination@gmail.com by **Friday, October 15, 2021**.

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The **Ontario Cervical Screening Program** is doing interviews to find out how to make new cervical cancer messages better.

You may be able to do an interview if you

- Are 25 to 75 years old
- Are a woman, trans man or non-binary person
- Speak English

About the interview

The interview will take 1 hour and 15 minutes. You can choose to be interviewed by phone or by videoconference. Do an interview and get a \$30 President's Choice gift card as a thank you.

If you are interested

- Call us at **1-866-662-9233** toll free
- Email us at **cancerinfo@ontariohealth.ca**
Do not send us any information about your health or your health card (OHIP) number



Visit [cancercareontario.ca/cervicalinterviews](https://www.cancercareontario.ca/cervicalinterviews) to learn more



Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) is looking for volunteers to help improve their new cervical cancer messages. **Do an interview and get a \$30 gift card as a thank you.** Find out more here:

<https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/get-checked-cancer/volunteers-needed-cervical-messages>.

University of Toronto in partnership with **WOMEN'S HEALTH IN WOMEN'S HANDS CHC** IDRC | CRDI

'SAFE HANDS SAFE HEARTS' COVID-19 COUNSELLING SESSIONS

This research project is offering a free online 3-session counselling series to support and address LGBTQIA+ experiences during the pandemic.

THIS PROJECT IS FOR YOU IF:	WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT:
You identify as a LGBTQIA+ person.	Support using COVID-19 preventative practices with a trained peer counsellor.
You are 18 or older.	Exploring wellness and mental health during the pandemic.
You would like support in navigating your experiences during the pandemic.	Compensation of \$30 per session.

Register here: www.safehandssafehearts.com/ca
If you have questions, please contact: shshstudy@whiwh.com

Participants Needed:

SafeHandsSafeHearts - University of Toronto

#SafeHandsSafeHearts is a partnership between Women's Health In Women's Hands and The University of Toronto Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) aiming to support sexual and gender minority communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The project involves **3 online counselling sessions** to increase COVID-19 knowledge and protective behaviours, and reduce pandemic stress (anxiety, depression, loneliness).

We encourage any adults **over the age of 18** who identify as **LGBTQIA+** to apply. In addition to receiving the counselling service, participants will be compensated **\$30 per session (3 sessions + 2 survey = \$150)**. To apply, please fill out the screening survey here:

<http://www.safehandssafehearts.com/ca>. Please reach out to shshstudy@whiwh.com should you have questions about the project.

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interactive online workshops that dispel myths and misconceptions about epilepsy.

Public Education Online Workshops

Covering topics such as:

- Epilepsy 101
- Seizure First Aid
- Epilepsy Toronto Services

Hear client stories of their lived experience with epilepsy.

For further information, please e-mail leah@epilepsytoronto.org

[Combatting Epilepsy Misconceptions - Epilepsy Toronto](#)

Here is a new COVID-19 Vaccine Bulletin, developed by doctors in partnership with settlement organizations, in 8 languages. It's the first in a series, addressing questions about the vaccine.

Epilepsy Toronto is offering interactive online workshops that dispel myths and misconceptions about epilepsy.

Topics include: Epilepsy 101, Seizure First Aid and Epilepsy Toronto Services. Hear client stories of their lived experience with epilepsy. For further information, please email leah@epilepsytoronto.org

Important News

South Asians least likely to recognise cancer symptoms, research finds

NHS analysis showed the awareness of a range of potential cancer symptoms was in each case lower among South Asians than for the general public. For instance, only 58 per cent of South Asians knew that tummy troubles for three weeks or more could be signs of cancer, compared to 71 per cent for the general public. Only 59 per cent were aware diarrhoea for three weeks or more could also be a sign, in comparison to 73 per cent of the general public.

“If you see any unusual changes like lumps, bleeding, weight loss, tiredness or loss of appetite,

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MIS can develop in adults after acute COVID-19 infection, study finds

A new study has found that multi-system inflammatory syndrome, a rare but serious immune response that has predominantly been reported in children, can also occur in adults after acute COVID-19 infection. The study, conducted by researchers with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), found that multi-system inflammatory syndrome in adults (MIS-A) can present approximately four weeks after contracting COVID-19 with "heterogeneous clinical symptoms." [Read more here.](#)

Study of COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness on South Asian community

"Our study is a prospective cohort study, meaning we enroll participants at the community vaccination clinics being held in South Asian 'hot spots' such as Brampton, and the rest of the GTA, and follow them forward in time to collect contextual information including their living and work conditions, clinical and health care access information," said Anand. "This study will allow us to understand where there is hesitancy, use the science to demonstrate the safety and efficacy of Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccines, and lead to more people within the South Asian community making the choice to accept this life-saving vaccine"

To read more, click [here](#).

South Asian Canadian creators making mark off-screen — as crucial as being in front of the camera

South Asian creators, like other people of colour in the film and television industries, need to have the same opportunities to succeed and fail that are afforded to white people, Niazi said. She pointed to the "glass cliff" theory, which states that during a high-stakes crisis, people of colour and women are favoured for promotions, setting them up for failure from the beginning. [Click here to read more.](#)

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