Mental illness and addictions are 24-hour-a-day problems.

Now there’s 24-hour-a-day help.

If you need someone to talk to about mental health or addiction problems, or just have a question, we can help. Simply pick up the phone, your mouse or drop by our location in Toronto.

Real people with reliable answers. Totally confidential.

Sometimes knowing who to ask for help is hard. Now finding where to ask isn’t.

The R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre provides:

Up-to-date information on mental health and addiction problems, trends, facts, programs, treatments, and prevention strategies through a toll-free Information and Support Line, a Web site, recorded messages and storefront.

Confidential and anonymous telephone support.

Our recorded messages span a wide range of topics, including:

- facts on mental health, alcohol and drugs
- information guides
- help for families.

Information about prevention, support and treatment resources in Ontario.

Information is available in English and French. Some services are available in a variety of other languages.
Dear Readers,

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is pleased and proud to present this series of five stories in photographs. Published in English and French, these stories illustrate the most common problems associated with drinking, problem gambling, depression, drugs, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

To identify the needs of our ethnic communities, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health conducted consultations with various community groups. The message that emerged clearly from these consultations was that there is lack of knowledge about substance use and mental health problems and about the services that are available to address them. The consultations also revealed that access to services was difficult or lacking.

We hope that these stories will help to inform, and raise awareness in, the ethnic communities and promote a better understanding of, and more caring response to, people dealing with mental health or substance use problems. We also hope that these stories will provide support to the families and loved ones of people who are dealing with these problems.

We are grateful to our community partners and to members of these communities who gave so generously of themselves during the consultations.

We also thank the Ontario Region Settlement Branch of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which generously funded for this project.

Lastly, we hope that in reading these stories, members of our ethnic communities will use the services that are offered, make informed choices, and dispel the prejudices and taboos surrounding mental health and substance use.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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DEVELOPMENT
The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) managed the OASIS contract. The project manager was Antoine Dérose, Project Consultant for Central East Region, and Saroj Bains was the photo-novellas’ Project Co-ordinator/Consultant.

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CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT TEAM
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CAST
Juliette – Karen Currie
Juliette’s Husband – Peter Cunningham
Juliette’s Daughter – Shireen Biggart
Rosie/Marie-Jo – Diane Gardish
Doctor – Sophia Tieu
Young Employee – Kirsten Sibert
They are interrupted by a young employee.

**Coming!**

Juliette, come with us after work. Ravida, Tania, Marie and I are all going to get a coffee down on the corner. That will give us the chance to chat a little.

No thanks, Rosie. I have more work waiting for me at home. I have to help my daughter get ready for her term exam. Maybe another time. Have fun.
Hey mom, are you all right? You look sad!

I’m OK... you’d better get going; you are going to be late for school.

When I’m your age, I hope to be as beautiful as you are!
Dinnertime at Juliette’s Apartment

And you honey, you’re not saying anything. How did your day go?

Oh! As usual... you know. Nothing really exciting.

You used to always have something funny to tell us about the students, Ms. Alvarez or your colleagues.

Come on mom, who wrote something dirty on Mr. La Pase’s desk again? No! Tell us again what Rosie did when she got a book back late from a teacher.

Are you not feeling well, honey?

I think I’m a bit tired, that’s all.

Do you think you’re coming down with the flu?

Don’t worry. I’m going to go to bed early, and then I’ll feel better. I’ll give you some help on the weekend for your exam. Good night.
GOOD AFTERNOON, JULIETTE. HOW ARE YOU TODAY?

FINE.

HOW ARE YOU? HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

AS ALWAYS, WE'RE SWAMPED AND UNDER PRESSURE WITH A NEW ASSIGNMENT FOR MS. ALVAREZ'S STUDENTS THAT REQUIRES MORE DOCUMENTS THAN WE HAVE IN AT THE MOMENT.

TELL ME, IS IT TRUE THAT YOU ASKED TO WORK IN THE ARCHIVES AND ON THE INVENTORY OF NEW ARRIVALS?

BUT DON'T YOU FEEL LONELY, CLOSED IN HERE ALL DAY? YOU'RE SO ALIVE AND WARM. YOU MUST MISS IT, THE CONTACT WITH THE STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES, DON'T YOU?

YOU KNOW, THIS JOB GIVES ME A BIT OF TIME TO THINK AND DREAM. IT'S QUITE PLEASANT NOW AND THEN. AND YOU'RE RIGHT THERE, I CAN SEE YOU THROUGH THE WINDOW.

MMM, MMM.

WELL...
IN THE BEDROOM

JULIETTE, I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU. YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF, YOU'RE TIRED ALL THE TIME AND YOU AVOID PEOPLE'S QUESTIONS. YOU DON'T INVITE PEOPLE OVER ANY MORE AND YOU NEVER WANT TO COME OUT WITH US. YOU DON'T EVEN TALK TO ME ANY MORE ABOUT YOUR GYM!

YOU'RE BOTHERING ME WITH ALL OF YOUR CHATTER. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH ME. I'M JUST A BIT TIRED RIGHT NOW. LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. IT'S BEEN A LONG WINTER, AND I'M NOT SLEEPING WELL. TURN OFF THE LIGHTS AND LET ME GET TO SLEEP. WE'LL TALK TOMORROW.
Signs of Depression

These symptoms seem very familiar to what I'm experiencing.
FAMILY CLINIC - 2 MONTHS LATER

WELL, FOR A FEW MONTHS I'VE BEEN FEELING AS IF I HAVE NO ENERGY. I'VE BEEN HAVING A LOT OF TROUBLE CONCENTRATING.

MY COLLEAGUES AND MY FAMILY ARE AFTER ME FOR SHUTTING MYSELF AWAY AND, FOR MY PART, I'M NOT GOING OUT OR EATING WITH THEM ANYMORE. I JUST DON'T FEEL WELL....

WELL, I OFTEN FEEL LIKE CRYING FOR NO REASON. WHEN I HEAR MY DAUGHTER AND HUSBAND TALKING ABOUT WHAT THEY DO DURING THE DAY, I FEEL THAT MY LIFE IS UNINTERESTING AND THAT I'M NOT CONTRIBUTING A LOT TO SOCIETY.

THIS HAPPENS FOR NO PARTICULAR REASON. I FEEL VERY ISOLATED. I TRY TO MAKE MYSELF BUSY, BUT I JUST END UP EATING ALL THE TIME. SUDDENLY I CAN BARELY FIT IN MY SKIRTS, I FEEL FAT AND UGLY AND UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT....
You may be suffering from depression. It's a problem that a lot of us have in common, but it can be dealt with.

That's right, I read an article in a magazine. It talked about it. Can you tell me exactly what it is?

It's really good you took this first step. I hope you feel better soon. I'm available to you if you have any further questions.

What should I do in the meantime?

Don't be too hard on yourself about anything. You could also talk about it with your family. Inform them about the change in your behaviour.

It's important that they understand what is going on with you, so they can help and support you. You are going to need it. It's not easy. Here's info about support groups for those dealing with depression in the family.

I'm going to assign you a counsellor. She will be able to answer all your questions and she will be able to see, together with you, what options are best for you.

Some patients use medication. Others need treatment with a therapist. You might also want to participate in group sessions. Pastor Toussaint runs a group each week from the church basement. I'll give you some pamphlets to read for background information. But first we need to find out if you are suffering from depression.

Thank you.
SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

HOW DID IT GO?

VERY WELL. SINCE STARTING MY VISITS WITH THE COUNSELLOR, IT SEEMS THAT THE PROBLEMS ARE BEING RESOLVED. MAINLY I DON’T FEEL SO SAD. THE COUNSELLOR IS VERY GOOD, LISTENS WELL AND IS VERY INTERESTING. SHE COMES FROM A FAMILY OF NINE AS WELL.

I’M GLAD TO HEAR YOU TALKING LIKE THAT. YOU LOOK BETTER.

I BUMPED INTO AN OLD STUDENT FROM SCHOOL. IT’S INCREDIBLE HOW MUCH HE’S GROWN, HE IS SO TALL.

HE TOLD ME THAT PASTOR TOUSAIN RUNS A GRIEF MANAGEMENT GROUP HERE. APPARENTLY AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER HE WASN’T WELL, SO HE JOINED THE GROUP.

I AM GLAD I FEEL BETTER. I FEEL THAT I HAVE SO MUCH MORE ENERGY TO SPEND WITH OUR FAMILY.
WHAT IS DEPRESSION?
Everyone feels sadness at times. This is a normal feeling following a disappointment, the loss of a loved one or any other unhappy event. Usually the sadness lessens with time. Sometimes, the sadness turns into a depression that persists and becomes a health problem.

There are two types of depression, major and minor. The type of depression depends on the number of the symptoms and how long they last.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION
A person who is depressed has some of these symptoms:
- changes in appetite and weight
- sleep problems
- loss of interest in work, hobbies, people; loss of feeling for family members and friends
- feeling useless, hopeless, or overly guilty
- dwelling on failures or inadequacies; loss of self-esteem
- obsessive thoughts (putting too much importance on something, or not being able to stop thinking about it)
- feeling restless or too tired and weak to do anything
- slowed thinking, forgetfulness, trouble concentrating and making decisions
- decreased sex drive
- crying easily, or needing to cry but not being able to
- thoughts about suicide or killing someone.

People who have fewer than five of these symptoms for at least two weeks may be diagnosed with minor depression.

If someone has five or more of these symptoms for at least two weeks, it is called a major depressive episode.

DEPRESSION IN WOMEN
Major depression occurs in 10 per cent to 25 per cent of women – almost twice as many as men. Hormonal factors may contribute to the increased rate of depression in women, particularly:
- during changes in the menstrual cycle
- during pregnancy
- after giving birth or miscarrying
- in the years leading to menopause and menopause itself, when periods stop.

DEPRESSION IN MEN
Men with depression are more likely than women to feel irritable, angry and discouraged. This can make it harder to recognize depression in men.

Men are more likely to die of depression. Although more depressed women attempt suicide than men, four times as many men actually kill themselves.
IS THERE HELP FOR MY DEPRESSION?

Many people have depression for a long time before they visit a doctor or mental health professional. An untreated episode of depression can last 18 months or longer. However, once treatment is begun, significant improvement may be seen in two to six weeks.

People with depression are often seen first by their family doctor or general practitioner. In milder cases, family doctors can assess and treat you as an outpatient with medication and counselling. The doctor may refer you to other community resources.

If your depressive symptoms are more severe, you may be referred to a psychiatrist. You may be treated as an outpatient or, if necessary, admitted to a hospital.

The most commonly used treatments for depression are psychotherapy and antidepressant medication. In deciding on the best treatment, the doctor will think about:

• how severe your symptoms are
• possible “triggers” that bring on the depression
• any treatments for depression you have had in the past.

Some people also seek out alternative forms of treatment, such as herbs or light therapy.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Here are some places you can contact if you or someone you know needs help for depression:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre
Toronto: 416 595-6111
Toll-free number: 1 800 463-6273
Web site: www.camh.net

Telehealth Ontario
Toll-free: 1 866 797-0000
TTY: 1 800 387-5559
Web site: www.gov.on.ca/health/english/program/telehealth/telehealth_mn.html

Ontario Women’s Health Network
Toronto: 416 408-4840
Web site: www.owhn.on.ca

Mood Disorders Association of Ontario
Toronto: 416 486-8046 in Toronto
Toll-free: 1 888 486-8236
Web site: www.mooddisorders.on.ca

Internet Mental Health
Web site: www.mentalhealth.com
For information on addiction and mental health issues or other resources, please contact CAMH’s R. Samuel McLaughlin Addiction and Mental Health Information Centre:

Ontario toll-free: 1 800 463-6273 • Toronto: 416 595-6111

To make a donation, please contact:
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation
Tel.: 416 979-6909 • E-mail: foundation@camh.net

If you have questions, compliments or concerns about services at CAMH, please call our Client Relations Co-ordinator at:
Tel.: 416 535-8501 ext. 2028.

Web site: www.camh.net

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