

YMHC YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CANADA

March Volume: An Overview

MARCH

Welcome to March. This volume features information on YMHC events & activities, a March activity calendar, a healthy recipe, mental health resources + more!

Special days in March include:

- International Women's Day: March 8
- March 12 - Daylight Savings: time to 'spring forwards'
- March 17 - St. Patrick's Day
- March 20 - the first day of Spring in the northern hemisphere

Health Promotion Days include:

- Brain Health Awareness Week & Month
- Music Therapy Awareness Month
- National Social Work Month
- Nutrition Month
- Creative Arts Therapy Week
- World Purple Day: Epilepsy
- World Water Day
- World Down Syndrome Day

YMHC Resource

YMHC photocopyable resources are available for educational and mental health professionals to print multiple copies for students and clients.

Go to: bit.ly/3IB2HDR



Upcoming YMHC Activities:

YMHC is holding our first in-person Hamilton event on Saturday, March 25, at The Westdale, 1014 King Street West.

The night focused on "Hope Rising for Youth Mental Health Action" will provide a mental wellness community fair, film screening, and panel discussion with leading mental health and suicide prevention professionals and advocates from the Hamilton and surrounding area.

Tickets are available on Eventbrite at ymhc.ngo/2023fair.

There are many ways to support YMHC! We are looking for sponsors and donors. Support youth. Support YMHC.

Self-Care Tip

Get a houseplant: Besides keeping air cleaner, exposure to plants can also boost your mood. Active interaction with indoor plants has been shown to possibly suppress nervous system activity and reduce blood pressure, leading to an overall sense of calm. Don't exactly have a green thumb? Try a succulent or an air plant. You (basically) can't kill them.

The YMHC newsletter was produced by Chelsea, Sheryl, Kyra, Jim, and Abenaya.



Event Website

YMHC

Youth Mental Health Canada



Get Tickets

presents a

MENTAL WELLNESS FUNDRAISING EVENT

SATURDAY MARCH 25

THE WESTDALE COMMUNITY MAGIC

1014 KING STREET WEST, HAMILTON, ON
DOORS OPEN AT 5 PM / FILM BEGINS AT 7 PM

Join us for a community fair, film, light bites, networking opportunities, and panel discussion with leading mental health and suicide prevention advocates, professionals, and community organizations!

TICKETS AT:
EVENTBRITE

www.ymhc.ngo/thesword

- Swag Bag #1: \$50 (valued at \$100)
- Swag Bag #2: \$25 (valued at \$50)
- Fair: \$15

SPONSORSHIPS
AVAILABLE!

Vendors/Information Tables:
\$50 to cover Wellness Fair
expenses

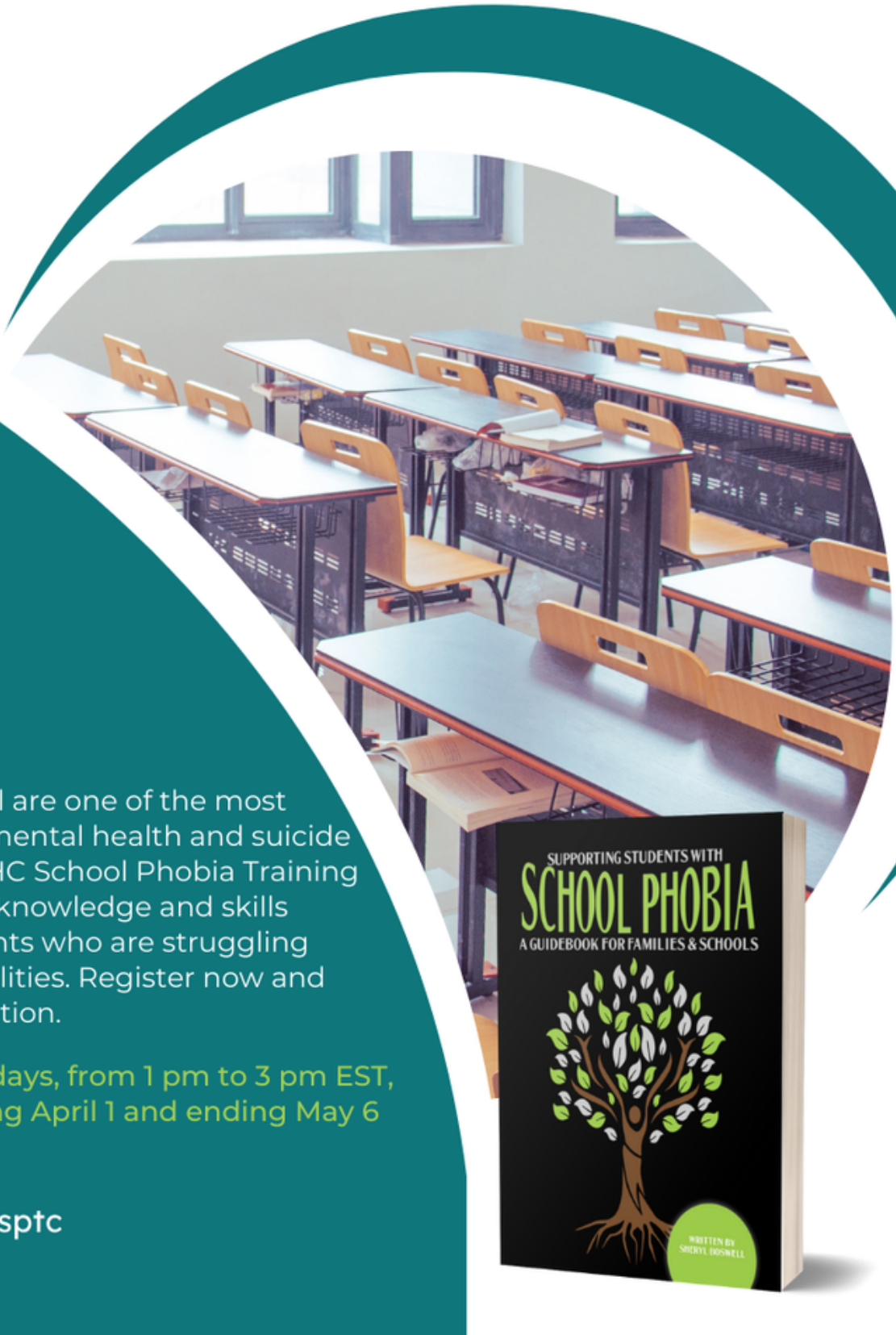
FOR MORE
INFORMATION:

Please contact:
admin@youthmentalhealth.ca

www.ymhc.ngo

This event is co-sponsored with the generous support of:





SCHOOL PHOBIA TRAINING COURSE

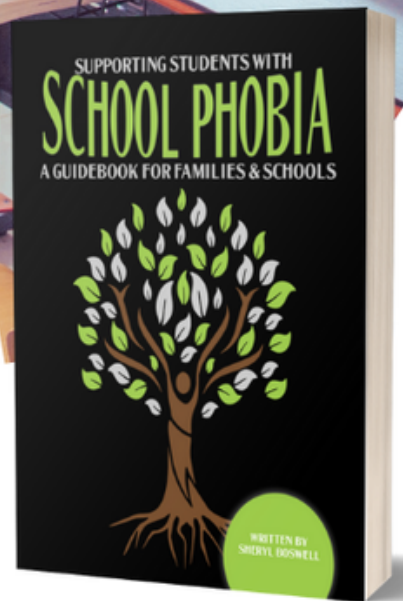
School phobia and refusal are one of the most pressing issues in youth mental health and suicide prevention. With the YMHC School Phobia Training Course, you can gain the knowledge and skills needed to support students who are struggling with mental health disabilities. Register now and become a part of the solution.

ENROLL NOW

Saturdays, from 1 pm to 3 pm EST, starting April 1 and ending May 6



Apply Online
www.ymhc.ngo/sptc



YMHC Workshops

YMHC provides workshops & presentations to students, school staff, parents and caregivers, community workers, newcomers to Canada, and professionals on a wide range of mental health and wellness topics. Workshops can be tailor designed to meet your needs. The length of most workshops is from 1 to 3 hours. The platform used is Zoom.

We can also provide in-person workshops.

For more information, check out the information on our website and contact us at <https://edu.ymhc.ngo/workshops>



School Phobia Training Course :

- 12 hours instructional time
- meaningful assignments
- photocopiable guidebook on school phobia
- certificate

Register at courses.ymhc.ngo



YMHC in the News

'School avoidance' tied to mental health

Study of GTA finds 600 per cent rise in extreme absenteeism

KAREN BLACK
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

For Jessi and Brian White of Sarnia, the beginning of the school year looked promising. Their 15-year-old son, Seamus, started Grade 10 and he appeared to be doing well.

"He got through the first three weeks fairly flawlessly and seemed excited," said Brian, a Sarnia city councillor.

"And then almost like hitting a brick wall, it came to a crashing halt, about week four. Then it was outright refusal to get out of bed, refusal to go to school."

The Whites are not alone. Their son is just one of a spiralling number of kids who are chronically missing from school, suffering from what psychologists call "school refusal behaviour" or "school avoidance."

"It's really important to understand that this is not an issue of truancy," said Sheryl Boswell, executive director of the advocacy group, Youth Mental Health Canada.

"Kids who don't want to go to school are actually suffering with a mental-health disability."

There is no national public data on the number of kids suffering



everyday last semester, trying to get Seamus back to school. He was averaging about two days a week. "But it ebbs and flows," Brian said. They gave up trying to get him on the school bus. Instead, Jessi, a kindergarten teacher, drove him to school, stopping at the local Tim Hortons for his favourite coffee on the way. That was after getting up extra early to allow for the time she needs to get Seamus out of bed, pack his lunch and make sure everything he needs is at the door.

"We are desperately trying to figure out how to help our son learn in

Anxiety Canada estimates about 25 per cent of youth will engage in school refusal behaviour during their schooling years. And the pandemic has made it worse. One expert said Canada is behind other countries when

school every day. "I'm trying my best to tough it out," he said. "But it's a struggle."

Last semester, "I was going to school two, maybe three times a week. Sometimes I wouldn't go for whole weeks because I just really didn't feel like they were going to put any effort into helping a struggling student," he said.

The Whites say they are beyond frustrated with the school system.

"We've asked for meetings but I get maybe three or four minutes on the phone with a vice-principal who said he checks in with my son

not a student refusing to go to school — they want to be in school," Boswell said the school system needs to figure out, "How do we support the individual brain needs of students and the learning differences? We're not one-size fits all but that's unfortunately how the education system is designed."

Boswell has produced what she said is the first comprehensive guidebook on the topic. Called "Supporting Students with School Phobia: A Guidebook for Families and School," it outlines how to create a schoolwide approach with a student's family treated as a key member of the education support team.

Liana Lowenstein, a Toronto child and family therapist, said she has definitely seen an uptick in school avoidance issues since the pandemic. Lowenstein, who presents webinars on school avoidance to mental health professionals, said there are a variety of reasons why kids might avoid going to school. "They may be fearful about tests or performing in a school play," she said. "Or it could be related to social issues such as bullying or fears about something going on at home."

"At the most mild end of the spectrum are kids who are chronically late for school, complaining in the morning they don't want to go," Lowenstein said. "And then there are kids who haven't been to school in months. At the far end of the spectrum are kids that rarely leave their bedrooms."

Getting kids back to school can be a delicate balance of doing things that are comfortable but mean

Carolene Taube with a private tutor in Toronto. Some parents are coaching kids

they approach say something

just getting up can you walk up to me? Can we be together?"

school attention with the Thunder

Board, said one option is to go and knock on

help is needed. "We will bring a gift

local Walmart so that families can buy whatever they need

"I might even offer them a lift because transportation can be an issue," Carleton said. "It's not just about addressing students' academic needs but also their emotional needs."

Boswell said Canada is behind other countries when it comes to understanding the issue of school absenteeism. "It is too often misunderstood as an issue created by the parents or by the young person," she said. "So there's a lot of language

to help them and support

the village is struggling that impacts the well-being of the school

Scan to read & share



"We are seeing our gifted child risk his entire future because he can't get through sitting in a regular classroom."

A study of Greater Toronto schools published in 2021 revealed an alarming 600 per cent increase in extreme absenteeism — when students miss more than 50 per cent of classes. "That translates into almost 9000 students," said study co-ordinator Kelly Gallagher-MacKay of Wilfrid Laurier University.

The effect of this level of absenteeism extends well beyond loss of education, Boswell said. "There is loss of peer network, loss of school support, loss of hope and sometimes loss of life. For me it's one of the most pressing issues in youth mental health and youth suicide prevention."

Seamus graduated from Grade 9 with an average of 88 per cent and said it was a little scary when he found it difficult to do his school work. "I started to get almost angry with myself because I felt I should be able to do everything they were telling me to do," he said. "But there was something blocking me from even starting a lot of the projects. I would sit there on a screen trying to do my work and my mind would go blank. And I asked for help numerous times but to almost no avail. Which was very frustrating." He said he was offered a space in the school's learning centre but that didn't help.

Seamus said that since the new semester started, he has been

Page 3 Rural the

far too

Happy IWD!

MARCH

8



HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY

**Here's to strong women!
May we know them!
May we be them!
May we raise them!**



ART in YMHC



Mural by Kyle Joedicke, First Nation artist in Hamilton, Ontario for YMHC

My name is Kyle Joedicke, and I am an Indigenous artist from "what is now known as" Hamilton, Ontario, which is situated on the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississauga First Nations.

I have pursued art in different forms and with varying levels of dedication for my entire life. My true education in art didn't start until my adolescence, when I dove headfirst into graffiti culture. This art education was trial by fire, aggressive, and for the most part self-taught. Graffiti is not a form of art that is or can be taught in school, it is entirely taught in the moment. That style of impulsive, and explosive artistic expression is something that has guided my creation ever since.

I have been a graffiti artist for the last 15 years, and that passion has organically transitioned into producing large scale murals in and around Hamilton. Now, however, these murals are imbued with the Indigenous stories, and teachings, that I am in the process of learning.

Over the last five years, I have begun the long journey of re-discovering my indigenous heritage. I am Cayuga, Turtle Clan, from the Six Nations of The Grand River reserve. As a child, I was very close to the indigenous community that my father was a part of, but as I grew older, that connection waned and is now almost non-existent.

Through the woodland style of art, I have been able to marry my impulsive, and often chaotic background of graffiti culture with the narrative of my struggle to understand my indigenous identity. These two pieces of myself often clash, but I think together have allowed me to create and maintain cohesive, and attention-grabbing works of art that at their core express my search for answers about myself.

HEALTHY CARROT CAKE COOKIES

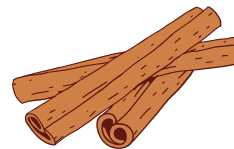
Tasting just like a combo of carrot cake and a granola bar, these cookies are a hit in my family! Bonus: these are gluten friendly!

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup oat flour, almond flour, or flour of your choice
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/3 cup chia seeds
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 2 large eggs whisked
- 1/6 cup coconut oil melted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup honey, optional
- 1/3 cup shredded carrots



 @freshandflavourful



Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 350F. Line a baking pan with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix together flour, oats, chia seeds, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon. Add raisins and coconut. Set aside.
3. In a medium sized bowl, mix together melted coconut oil, vanilla extract, and honey. Add eggs and whisk to combine.
4. Slowly fold wet ingredients into dry. Continue to mix with a large spoon, until dry ingredients are completely mixed with wet (no dry ingredient clumps). Dough will be thick.
5. Using an 1-inch diameter ice cream scoop or large spoon (about 1-2 tbsp of dough), scoop dough onto a cookie sheet about an inch apart. Gently press to slightly flatten each cookie.
6. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until cookies are golden brown, firm to the touch, and soft on the inside. Remove from oven and let sit on baking sheet for another 5 minutes. Remove from the pan and let cookies cool completely.
7. Cookies can be stored in an air tight container at room temperature for up to 4 days, or place in the freezer for up to 1 month

Makes 18-20

Self Care Calendar

MARCH 2023

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Feb 26

27

28

Mar 1

2

3

4

YMHC
Youth Mental Health Canada

Go on a 10 minute walk or explore a new nature path

List things that make you smile

Practice/research about mindfulness

Compliment yourself every time you see your reflection

5
Write down 10 things you love about yourself!

6
Visit your local library/read a new book

7
Write down anything positive that happened today

8
International Women's Day: take time to appreciate the women in your life!

9
Compliment a stranger

10
Listen to an inspirational podcast

11
Try a deep breathing exercise

12
Go to sleep an hour earlier! (daylight savings)

13
Call a friend to catch up!

14
Try baking a pie for pi day!

15
Share a funny joke or story

16
Attend a YMHC event/check out some of YMHC's resources!

17
Make a list of inspiring quotes

18
Write a poem about your current feelings

19
Surround yourself with positive people

20
Do some spring cleaning

21
Take some time for yourself

22
Spread some joy: make someone laugh

23
Put together a video for a loved one

24
Art challenge: create an abstract doodle art piece

25
Put together a gratitude list

26
DIY/craft something spring inspired

27
Watch a funny movie

28
Listen to a different genre of music

29
Start your day off with a healthy breakfast

30
Plant some tulips/get yourself a plant

31
Set some personal goals for next month

Apr 1





YMHC

Youth Mental Health Canada

Supporting Youth Mental Health Change in Canada

YMHC is a community-based, youth-led charitable non-profit organization focused on youth, family, and community engagement for mental health education, support, advocacy, hope, and change.

We advocate for needs-based, culturally sensitive, trauma-informed mental health support, services and educational accommodations for students and direct funding to families to support young people with chronic mental health disabilities.



Scan or visit ymhc.ngo/links to follow us on social media, donate, and subscribe to newsletters!



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Make Hope Happen!

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