

PCHS

HEALTH

MAGAZINE

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Amandeep Kaur CEO, PCHS
Message from CEO

Culturally Responsive Innovation and Growth in 2024

As we embrace the New Year, I am filled with optimism and enthusiasm for the opportunities that await us. I am excited to share my thoughts and aspirations for the months ahead.

To commence, I am eager to share the invaluable insights that emerged from our recent ‘Friends of PCHS’ event held last month. During this gathering, our community members emphasized the critical importance of ongoing education and communication in addressing the challenges faced by our seniors, those affected by addiction, individuals struggling with mental health, and our marginalized populations.

Their recommendations included adopting holistic, community-driven, and technology-infused service delivery approaches, such as “meet me where I am,” mobile support, community hubs, and online services. Additionally, our community urged systemic advocacy to support international students, improving accessibility to subsidized housing, and addressing stigmas related to addictions, mental health, and intergenerational trauma. The community also suggested enhancing financial and digital literacy, promoting positive parenting, and fostering intergenerational and intercultural understanding.

In alignment with the key recommendations by our community members and in accordance with our strategic priorities for 2023–2027, I am pleased to announce that PCHS’s leadership

retreat is scheduled to formulate a detailed work plan to address the issues identified during the Friends of PCHS event. Our aim is to seamlessly integrate this work plan into our organization’s framework. The results and progress of this plan will be communicated to the broader community during PCHS’ Annual Meeting and Friends of PCHS events in 2024.

For a comprehensive overview, please refer to the Friends of PCHS 2023 report available on the PCHS website – www.pchs4u.com

Furthermore, I humbly extend an invitation to you, your loved ones and friends, to join us at the International Women’s Day Gala 2024. This event will take place on Friday, March 22, 2024, at the Speranza Banquet Hall in Brampton. Your presence at this gala will not only honour the spirit of International Women’s Day but also contribute to the empowerment and support of women within our community.

Moreover, as we embark on this exciting journey, let us remember that our success is a collective effort. Each member of PCHS plays a vital role in shaping our future. I am grateful for your dedication, tireless efforts, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Together, we will continue to reach new heights, making 2024 an extraordinary milestone for PCHS.

“HAND IN HAND - THE JOURNEY OF VIGOR AND HOPE” RAPID RESPONSE SAVING LIVES

Sowmya Shinde Case Manager – RRSL Addictions



The Rapid Response Saving Lives team at PCHS strives to cater to the varied needs of the international student community and provide holistic support throughout their educational pursuits here in Canada.

Early adulthood is often seen as the most challenging and stressful phase of our life. We carry big dreams and aspirations of embarking on a successful career path, exploring the world, settling down, and supporting our families. Every year, lakhs of such students come to Canada for their academic pursuits and to achieve their dreams. However, this goal comes with its own unique set of challenges. Reports suggest that about 1,028,800 students enroll in higher education and struggle to meet their basic needs, such as housing, food, and transportation. An added challenge is the difficulty they face in securing a job as the inflow of students is higher every year and the existence of dull periods in recruiting. These challenges eventually dispense the students towards poor mental health and unfortunately, many tend

to cope with their problems through alcohol and substance abuse. This vicious cycle of financial and environmental challenges leads to stress, anxiety, and depression, which drains their coping skills and affects both their career and life.

The Rapid Response Saving Lives team of PCHS considers this phenomenon faced by international students and provides handholding throughout their journey. The RRSL team, on the one hand, provides wrap-around services such as supporting the students with rental assistance, groceries, transportation, and expenses related to their course, and any other specific miscellaneous needs. On the other hand, we provide psychoeducation on relevant topics such as coping with anxiety, mindfulness-based practices, stress management techniques, etc. to equip the students with tools and tips to overcome challenges and lead a healthy quality of life. The RRSL team further ensures that there is consistent and individualized support for the students by engaging a large team of case managers

and peer support workers to provide one-on-one supportive counseling and care management.

To name a few, the RRSL team, since its inception, has collaborated with other significant partners in the social sector, such as Khalsa Aid and Laadliyan, in conducting workshops and open house events.

1. Session on Anxiety at Glidden Gurudwara

PCHS and Khalsa Aid came together to cater to the basic needs of newcomer international students residing in the region of Brampton. An awareness session was conducted on anxiety and the effects of anxiety on health. Students were equipped with coping skills to manage anxiety. Around 100 students benefited from the program and were linked to community resources available to them.



2. Workshop on Mindfulness, National Banquet Hall

On January 20, 2024, PCHS conducted an exclusive workshop on mindfulness for international students. It was an informative and practical session where students were engaged in mindfulness exercises such as breathing, progressive muscle relaxation meditation, and reflection time to work on their emotions and thoughts. The session concluded with lunch and a conducive opportunity to socialize and network with their fellow student community. Around

75 students had attended the session and were enrolled in the RRSL services at PCHS.

3. Open House Event with Laadliyan

The RRSL team joined hands with Laadliyan in the open house event held at Susan Fennel Sportsplex on January 21, 2024. The event witnessed a good response where around 40 students were given individual time to learn about our services and resources available, as well as an opportunity to connect with other community resources such as Peel Police and the Seva Food Bank. It was yet another informative and resourceful event for the international students to learn from and reach out.



4. “Bell Let’s Talk”: A talk on Mental Health and Stigma

PCHS partnered with The Niagara College, Toronto, to conduct a session on mental health and the stigma associated with it. On January 24, a resolute team of RRSL staff set up an information booth and activity corner for the students at Niagara College to explore, engage with, and learn about the various aspects of mental health. To add on, the staff delivered a special talk on how to overcome the challenges of mental health issues and the correct ways to seek out help, highlighting the Look, Speak, and Seek approach to tackle mental health and addictions. Around 40–50 students benefitted from

the session and were educated on the community services rendered by the PCHS RRSL program for student wellbeing.



5. Workshop on Stress Management

In continuation of the persistent efforts to reach out and serve students who face real-life challenges, the RRSL team conducted a workshop on stress management techniques on January 27, 2024, in Village Taste, Mississauga. The workshop covered topics like understanding different stressors in a student's life, positive and negative coping strategies, and a practical session on guided meditation where everyone got an opportunity to relax, reflect, and rejuvenate. This event witnessed a huge response, with the students actively engaging in the workshop and sharing their personal stories of resilience and growth. More than 100 students participated in the workshop and gained valuable takeaways such as personal coping skills, a community to rely on, and the motivation to nourish their dreams.

The goodwill and dedication of PCHS to the welfare of the international student community is an ongoing work that plays a significant role in the lives of these vibrant and talented student communities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENT TEAM

By Rabia Bhatti - Youth Worker



The Settlement Team at PCHS is committed to enhancing their professional skills to ensure quality of services are provided to the clients. The team had the opportunity to build capacity and attend “Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)” conducted by Canadian Mental Health Association - Peel Dufferin.

By attending this training, the team was able to learn about how to intervene when an individual is thinking about committing suicide. Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) was an interactive workshop that taught the staff members to be able to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and has enabled PCHS staff to be able to create a plan that will help support that individual in their immediate safety. Staff were also able to recognize that the client's loved ones are also severely impacted in this situation. Furthermore, staff were able to learn on how to provide life-assistance guidance to a person thinking about committing suicide and provide suicide first aid. This training is going to further help PCHS staff improve

community resources and recognize that suicide prevention is boarder than suicide intervention. Suicide intervention is a complex process that goes beyond merely preventing immediate harm and a comprehensive approach is required to address the underlying factors contributing to suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

UNRAVELING THE THREADS: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN ADDICTION

Rahul Kumar Gahlot - Addictions Case Manager

Health, illness, disease, and disability are outcomes of several social, cultural, and economic factors that operate and interact at both the individual and population levels. These include income, housing, food security, early childhood development, education, health care, employment, the social and physical environment, culture, health behaviors, genetics, and gender.

Addiction is a complex problem that extends beyond individual choices. Substance addiction is influenced by various social factors. Social and economic factors shape risk behavior and the health of drug users. They affect health indirectly by shaping individual drug-use behavior; they affect health directly by affecting the availability of resources, access to social welfare systems, marginalization, and compliance with medication. To truly understand and address the root cause of addiction, it is important to delve deep into the social determinants of health that often play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's vulnerability to addiction.

The connection between perceived stigma and its outcomes in treating substance use disorders shows how societal views create obstacles to managing and recovering from addiction. Stigma and perceived stigma are significant factors in addiction, affecting how individuals see themselves and their willingness to seek help, impacting the social aspects of addiction. Substance abuse is a serious public health concern, with family and social environments influencing the development and maintenance of substance use disorders. This highlights the need to understand and address social factors in preventing and treating addiction. Following social determinants

are crucial for a better understanding of their relationship with addiction.

Economic Factors

One of the key social determinants influencing addiction is economic status. Poverty and a lack of economic opportunities can create an environment where substance abuse becomes a coping mechanism or a means of escape. Unemployment, financial instability, and limited access to education contribute to a cycle of addiction that is deeply linked to economic hardships.

Social Environment

The social fabric in which individuals reside often significantly impacts their susceptibility to addiction. Peer pressure, social norms, and the influence of family dynamics contribute heavily to shaping an individual's attitude towards substance use. Exploring the role of family support, or lack thereof, community support, and societal attitudes helps unearth the layers of social determinants impacting addiction.

Education and Awareness

Access to education and awareness programs serves as a powerful tool for preventing and addressing addiction. Individuals with limited education may face challenges in understanding the risks associated with substance abuse or accessing resources for treatment. Highlighting the role of education as a social determinant is imminent and crucial for developing comprehensive strategies to combat addiction.

Healthcare Disparities

Disparities in availability and access to healthcare services, along with their quality, also contribute to the prevalence and maintenance of addiction. Limited access to mental health services, stigma around addiction treatment, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure can create barriers for individuals seeking help. Addressing these disparities is essential to creating a society that prioritizes mental health and addiction recovery. Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences Trauma and adverse childhood experiences have the potential to significantly increase the likelihood of developing substance use disorder. It is imperative to understand the impact of early life experiences on mental health and addiction risk in order to create and implement effective prevention and intervention strategies. Trauma-informed care and support systems can play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of addiction.

Intersectionality

Understanding of the complexity of addiction can be achieved by understanding and recognizing the intersectionality of social determinants. Individuals may face multiple layers of disadvantage, such as being marginalized due to race, gender, or sexual orientation, which can compound the risk of substance abuse. Integrating an intersectional approach into addiction intervention strategies ensures a more inclusive understanding of the challenges individuals may face in their journey to recovery.

Employment and Working Conditions

Employment has bearings on physical, emotional, mental, and social health. A conducive workplace and meaningful work provide not only money but also a sense of pride, identity, purpose in life, and avenues for personal growth. During adverse circumstances, when a person loses work, it affects the person heavily and may also affect the family

as well. Unemployment or underemployment are the leading causes of health problems such as depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, and suicide.

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Developing comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies requires a multi-faceted approach. Incorporating evidence-based practices, community-based programs, and strategies tailored as per the needs of the community into prevention initiatives can enhance their effectiveness. Alongside developing collaboration among policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators, community leaders, and grassroots workers is essential for creating and implementing cohesive and targeted strategies that address the diverse social determinants contributing to addiction.

Substance addiction is closely linked to social factors such as stigma, social interactions, early experiences, financial condition, level of education, social environment, and family influences. Recognizing and addressing these social factors is paramount to creating effective, holistic, and efficient strategies, interventions, and inclusive support systems for individuals dealing with substance use disorder.

By addressing economic disparities, fostering supportive social environments, promoting education and awareness, tackling healthcare disparities, and addressing trauma, we can work together to disarm and dismantle the intricate web that enables and perpetuates addiction. A comprehensive approach is the need of the hour that considers social determinants will not only help individuals overcome addiction but also contribute to building a healthier and more equitable society.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AT GLIDDEN GURDWARA

Navdeep Kaur, Community Health Ambassador, HPCS

The Glidden Gurdwara outreach served as a supportive Social Insurance Number (SIN) clinic, where new students were able to obtain their SIN. Beyond this aspect, the outreach program by HPCS and the settlement department played a vital role in introducing newcomers to the various services available to them. These departments collaborated to extend a warm welcome to newcomers, offering a comprehensive introduction to available services.

The HPCS department, recognizing the diverse needs of individuals, provided hygiene kits to those in need, reinforcing a commitment to holistic support. Moreover, we took a proactive approach by informing students about avenues for financial and grocery support. This thoughtful integration of services ensures that new students not only fulfill immediate requirements but are also equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate any potential challenges on their journey ahead. We look forward to attending such events soon!



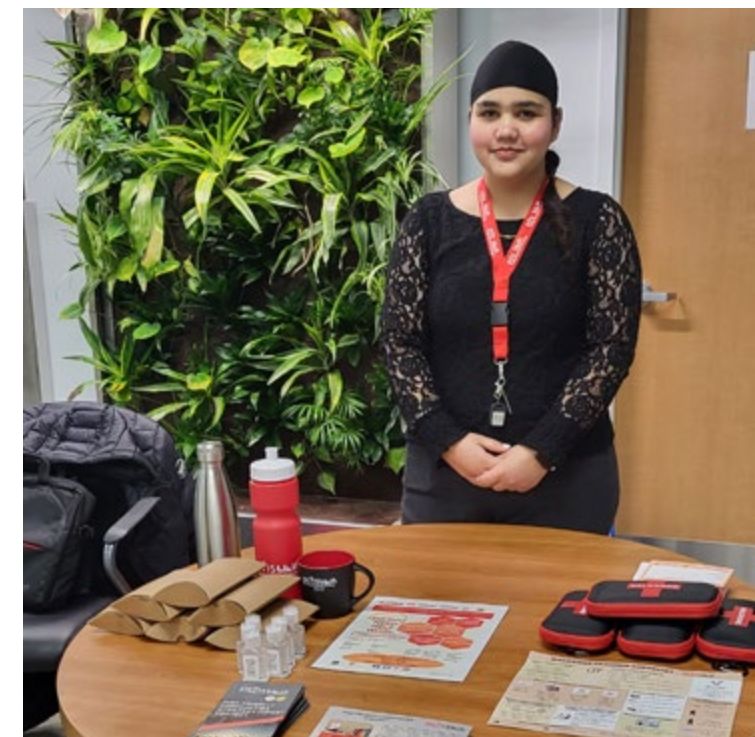
HPCS TEAM'S POSITIVE IMPACT AT SAULT COLLEGE

Fariha Muqueet, Community Health Ambassador, HPCS

At the start of the New Year, Sault College's Brampton Campus welcomed the HPCS team to participate in the new student orientation, a crucial event for international students experiencing their first taste of Canada. Alongside other community organizations, the HPCS team took the opportunity to address students, shedding light on the diverse services they offer.

The atmosphere at the orientation was one of anticipation and excitement as all the enrolled students were new to Canada. This provided the Community Health Ambassadors (CHA) from the HPCS team to interact with a great volume of students. In this dynamic setting, the CHAs shared valuable resources with around 200 students about the settlement program, HPCS initiatives, and the comprehensive wrap-around services available to support the students in their academic and personal journeys. Additionally, the CHAs took a proactive approach by providing naloxone training to students. This critical intervention ensures that students are equipped to respond effectively to any potential drug-related emergencies, enhancing the overall safety net within the college environment.

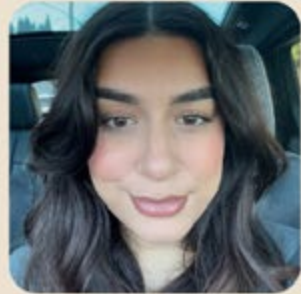
The HPCS team received an overwhelming response to PCHS settlement and HPCS services. A remarkable 45 students eagerly signed up, highlighting the meaningful connection fostered by the services provided. This ongoing collaboration promises future opportunities for knowledge-sharing and mutual benefit thus empowering and supporting international students.



ARAO Committee

The Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression (ARAO) Committee consists of PCHS staff members representing diverse programs and levels. Together, we are united in our mission to cultivate, disseminate, and embody a discourse centered on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion at PCHS. From our programs to our policies –both internally and externally.

Our primary goal is to foster a community that continually evolves, demonstrating unwavering dedication to dismantling any existing harms entrenched within the systems that shape our lives, work, and existence. This commitment is integral to our mission.



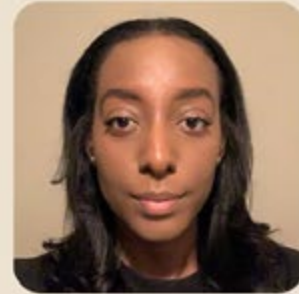
Harkiranpreet Sidhu
Co-Chair



Amandeep Kaur
CEO



Amanjit Kahlon
Director of Community
Development



Tashona Tyndale
Co-Chair



Akanksha Sharma



Simran Ghumman



Arashdeep Chahal



Gursharan Kaur



Samandeep Mann



Savita Saini



Kanwalpreet Kaur



**Harpreet (Rena)
Dhaliwal**

ARAO

THE UNSEEN BURDEN: CLIMATE INJUSTICE AND COMMUNITIES OF COLOUR

By Savita Saini, HPCS Case Manager

In our world today, the impacts of climate change aren't the same for everyone. Some communities are facing a bigger challenge, and this is especially true for communities of colour.

Environmental racism is when certain communities, mostly those with less money and people of colour, experience more exposure to environmental problems like pollution. This unfair treatment keeps these communities stuck in social and economic problems, making them suffer the most when natural disasters happen. On the brighter side, there's something called environmental justice—a movement that aims to fix the harm caused by bad environmental policies. It focuses on helping low-income communities and communities of colour, making sure things are fair and sustainable for everyone.

Communities of colour have a tougher time dealing with climate issues. Things like air pollution, ocean problems, and the aftermath of natural disasters affect them more than others. For example, African American and low-income communities face more health issues because of bad air quality. And when natural disasters happen, it makes life even harder for these communities.

The challenges get even bigger when we look at history. Unfair practices, lack of access to education, and not-so-great health make it harder for people of color to handle the impacts of climate change. Knowing this helps us figure out better ways to deal with these challenges and become stronger in the face of climate issues.

In the end, we need to talk more about climate justice. We must make sure that people of all races and backgrounds are safe from the bad effects of climate change. It's time for all of us to work together, break down barriers, and create a future where fairness and environmental justice are for everyone.

References available.



22ND ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024, DOORS OPEN AT 6 PM
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- Support clients to achieve their recovery goals.
- Short-term Person Centered Support.
- Help connect with community support services and other resources.
- Healthy Mentoring & More

CONTACT INFO



437-243-8479



sowmya.shinde@pchs4u.com



This program is based on the principles of HOPE, RECOVERY, EMPATHY, SELF-DETERMINATION, & RESPECT.

Services are offered in ENGLISH, PUNJABI, HINDI AND URDU.

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Sahara Overnight Respite Program (SORP)

This program is developed to prevent caregiver burnout, avoidable hospital emergency department visits, and unnecessary hospital admissions amongst older adults. Our Overnight Respite Workers (OSW) provide support by staying with the client at their home from 9:00 pm to 5:00 am to provide short-term relief to the caregiver.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Age 55 +
- Reside in Brampton and Malton region
- Maple score of clients: 3 and above
- Recent discharge from hospital (within 1 week to two months)
- Older Adults diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or mental illness requiring emotional support
- Older Adults with caregivers who are experiencing caregiver burnout

Note: This program is not equipped to support bedridden and clients on palliative care

**If you are eligible for this program,
please contact below.**



Funded by Ontario Health Central



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Kick Start (Ontario Autism Program) in association with PCHS

PCHS and Kick Start Therapy Inc. have collaborated to provide culturally appropriate services to children in need of Ontario Autism Program Core Clinical Services.

About this program: Parents and caregivers learn therapeutic strategies and specific techniques from professionals based on the child's needs. In 2022, we successfully piloted a culturally adapted model of OAP clinical services to support clients from the South Asian community. Kick Start Therapy Inc. provides OAP core clinical services which support children and youth. This collaboration was created to address the additional support needed by caregivers supplied to them in their language with an understanding of their culture. We want to address the core question of: "How can caregivers support their children if they can't get help for themselves?" This program aims to help prevent burnout for caregivers.

Caregiver Support and Wellness Sessions


This program provides:

- One on one supportive counselling
- Support group – parents coming together
- Connection to additional resources and support
- Stress management techniques for caregivers
- Coping strategies
- Referral to clinical services provided by Kick Start Therapy Inc.
- Referral to additional wrap around supports for children, youth and caregivers




For more information:

Hansraj

 **(416) 725-2103**

Prabhdeep

 **(416) 580-6901**

Teen Book Review

The Lost Causes

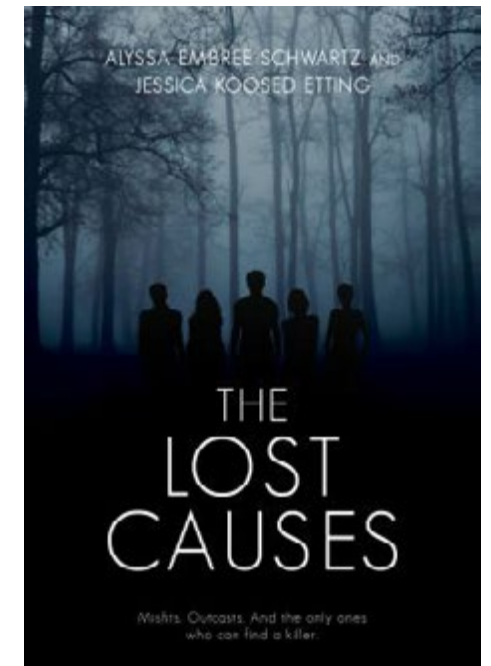
Author: Jessica Koosed Etting, Alyssa Embree Schwartz

Reviewed by: Harsh Patel, Brampton Library Youth Volunteer

Pages: 341 pages

Gabby, Z, Andrew, Justin and Sabrina have dealt with mental illnesses as long as they can remember. Everyone, along with their parents appeared to have given up on them since there was no progress with their separate issues. One day, the five of them get invited to a group therapy session which they found abnormal. At the session, there are two therapists named Nash and Patricia who we later discover are agents that work with the FBI. They dose the group with a serum that not only grants them extraordinary abilities like telekinesis and mind reading, but also cures each of their symptoms. The 5 teenagers are asked to solve the murder of Lily Carpenter who was involved with the creation of the serum.

This book was recommended to me by one of my friends. After reading the synopsis I was immediately hooked as I love mystery! My favorite part was how the authors wrote and depicted the characters. The story was told in third person, switching from each main character's point of view. The writing made you get attached to the characters who were all really interesting as they all had their own flaws and quirks. As the book went on, all the lost causes gained confidence and discovered the purpose of friendship that they had previously lacked which I loved. The story did get a little stale for a couple chapters in the middle, but brought me right back quickly with even more build up and suspense. In all, the authors did a great job in writing this mystery sci-fi story! Its unique, well paced plot along with its character development and its subtle thriller makes it a must read for mystery lovers like me.



The book is also available at Brampton Library

[Click here to read](#)

WELCOME NEW PCHS STAFF!



Ravshir Gill
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



Sumanjeet Kaur
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



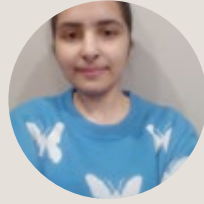
Gursimran Khaira
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



Jaslene Singh
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



Arshdeep Kaur
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



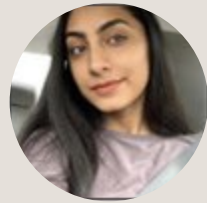
Harsimran Kaur
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



Sukhwinder Singh
Peer Support- RRSL-
Addictions



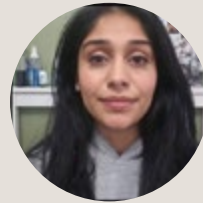
Disha Mehta
Case Manager –
Addictions- RRSL



Neelam Bal
Peer Support- RRSL-
Mental Health



Mehtab Singh
Peer Support- RRSL-
Mental Health



Rashamdeep Sandhu
Peer Support- RRSL-
Mental Health



Manpreet Kaur
Peer Support- RRSL-
Mental Health



Henry Lam
Case Manager –
Addictions- Withdrawal
Management



Sharon Uy
Settlement Counsellor-
Filipino speaking

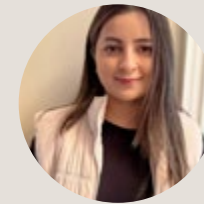


Rachel Tacsuan
Short term Counsellor



Sunil Sharma
Case Manager- RRSL-
Mental Health

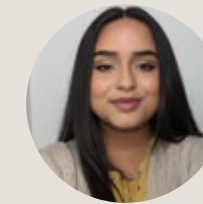
WELCOME NEW PCHS STAFF!



Lekha Chopra
Case Manager WRAP



Kanvardeep Hayer
Case Manager -
IN-STED



Sidak Nagi
Case Manager-
Concurrent Disorders



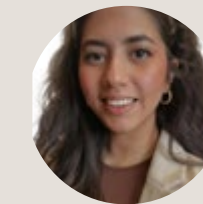
Harmanpreet Kaur
Peer Support RRSL –
Mental Health



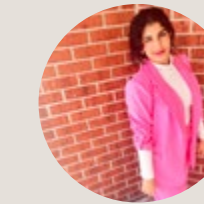
**Sowmya Sajan
Rao Shinde**
Case Manager-
RRSL-Addictions



Suraya Binti Ismail
Peer Support Worker
(Short term)- Addictions



Iqra Jalal
Case Manager-
Addictions Withdrawal
program (short term)



Aqsa Javaid
Intake Specialist



Rose Attalla
Program Coordinator-
Sahara Support
Services



Rajleen Atwal
Program Coordinator-
Sahara Support Services

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"I wanted to take a moment to thank PCHS for all the help you have been giving me and the progress we have made. I have tried many different paths on my journey to sobriety. My sobriety has never lasted longer than it has working with PCHS. I am finding it very beneficial with the 1:1 sessions and the group sessions. The group meetings that PCHS has host are great as I can relate to others who are in the same situation as myself and can use the real life experience to strengthen my "Toolbox" on ways to stay sober. PCHS teams dedication to help me stay in this program by holding me accountable, creating a safe environment to open up and helping me realise that this has to start with me and that I am doing it for myself above anything else has been a key for me. I look forward to continuing this psycho-education program and building my days of sobriety. Once again, I thank PCHS for making a big difference in my and my family's lives."

-BHA



21ST ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY GALA

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