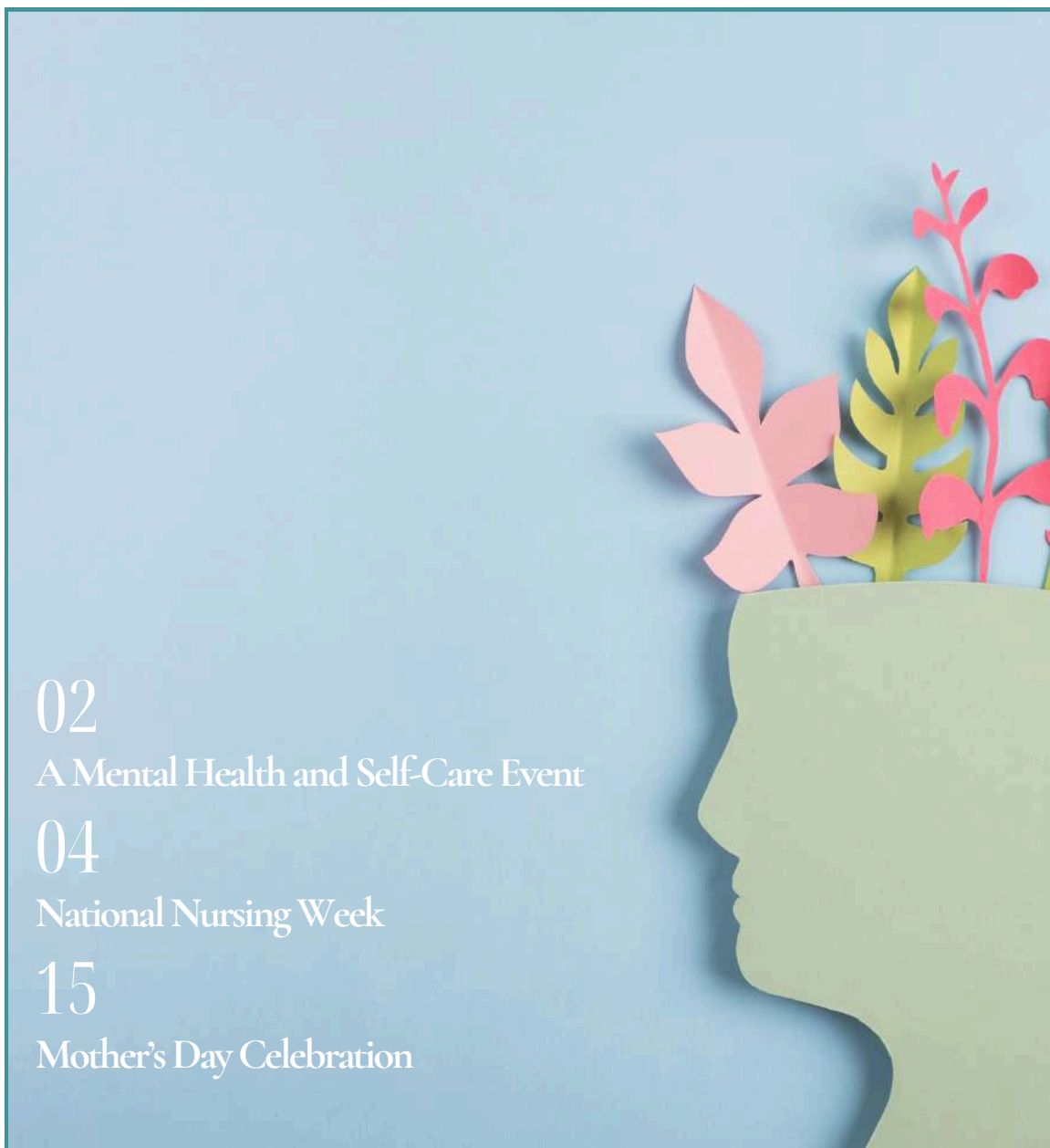


PCHS

HEALTH MAGAZINE



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Amandeep Kaur CEO, PCHS



Grounded in Our Roots, Evolving with Purpose

At our recent Board retreat, we revisited a foundational question: Is Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) truly grounded in its values and service to the South Asian Punjabi-speaking and other equity-deserving communities? The answer was clear and affirming—yes. For over three decades, PCHS has remained deeply connected to the needs, cultures, and lived realities of the communities we serve. Our work has always been informed by an intimate understanding of the Punjabi-speaking population, and our commitment to equity has guided our approach to outreach, health promotion & prevention, service delivery, programming, and advocacy.

Today, that commitment is stronger than ever. We continue to serve with the same heart—but with increased intentionality, clarity, and purpose. In recognition of this, we have updated our logo's tagline from 'Leading with Courage and Conviction' to 'Punjabi Community Health Services' to reflect our whole identity. This change is not about narrowing our focus or excluding others. It is about telling the truth of who we are and who we serve. It's about alignment—ensuring that our name, messaging, and services reflect our mission.

While we proudly use the term “equity-deserving populations,” we also acknowledge the lived reality: the majority of those who walk through our doors, call our phone lines, and attend our programs are Punjabi-speaking clients. They represent diverse faiths, including Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and others, and span generations, migration stories, and social identities. The thread that connects them is their shared cultural and linguistic heritage.

Being “Punjabi” is not a religious label. It is a rich cultural, linguistic, and regional identity that informs our work and strengthens our ability to provide responsive, relevant, and respectful care. Our strength lies in that inclusive cultural lens. It enables us to remain open, welcoming, and rooted in community while addressing structural inequities in health and social systems.

As part of our ongoing growth and strategic reflection, the Board has posed another critical question: Should PCHS review its mission, vision, and values to articulate this commitment more effectively? We believe now is the right time to engage in that process, not to redefine our identity, but to reaffirm and sharpen it.

We are beginning to explore language that might guide this evolution: Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) is committed to delivering culturally and linguistically responsive health, social, and settlement services to South Asian Punjabi-speaking and other equity-deserving communities. We strive to meet the evolving needs of our communities with compassion, dignity, and cultural understanding. While our focus is on the Punjabi-speaking community, our programs remain inclusive and accessible to all equity-deserving populations.”

This is not a change in direction. It is a deepening of our identity. A recommitment to our community. A more unmistakable voice in an increasingly complex health landscape.

As we look ahead, with new partnerships, innovation, and expanded services, we do so grounded in who we are and guided by a shared purpose. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Empower and Refresh:

A Mental Health and Self-Care Event for Women

By: Sukhpreet Tiwana, Peer Support Program Coordinator



In honor of Mental Health Month, the mental health team and community members gathered on Sunday, May 25 at Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) for the Empower and Refresh: A Mental Health and Self-Care Event. This event was dedicated to promoting mental well-being, especially among women. The event created a safe, welcoming space where attendees could explore stress relief strategies, share personal stories, and walk away feeling more supported and empowered.

Understanding Mental Health: Breaking Stigma and Building Awareness

The facilitators led a powerful session on mental health awareness, focusing on common struggles like stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout especially within the Punjabi and broader South Asian communities. While also mentioning the many supports and services available for everyone within PCHS.

The facilitators encouraged silent reflection and anonymous sharing of personal mental health experiences and coping strategies. These reflections, read aloud, helped normalize the conversation and foster a deeper sense of connection and solidarity.

Embracing Self-Care: Tools for Everyday Wellness

The next part of the session focused on self-care. Mainly discussing the key four key areas of self care:

- **Physical Self-Care:** Importance of movement, sleep, and nutrition.
- **Emotional Self-Care:** Benefits of journaling, mindfulness, and gratitude.
- **Mental Self-Care:** Hobbies, stress management, and mindfulness techniques.
- **Social Self-Care:** The role of relationships and community support.



This was followed by a high-energy Bollywood Zumba dance session that added joy and movement to the learning experience, reinforcing how physical activity can serve as a powerful tool for mental health.

Refueling and Raising Awareness

Following a light lunch break, participants engaged in a breast cancer awareness session through the SHPP program. The segment underscored how holistic self-care includes proactive health screening and education, further empowering participants with knowledge.

Self-Care Kit Giveaway: A Gift for Continued Wellness

A standout moment came when self-care kits were distributed to attendees. These thoughtfully assembled kits, including items such as moisturizers, stress balls, body, journals, and feminine hygiene products, were introduced as tools to extend self-care practices beyond the event. Participants explored the kits together, discussing how each item could bring comfort, relaxation, and joy into their daily routines.

Closing Reflections and Community Building

Celebrated during Mental Health Month, Empower and Refresh served as a meaningful reminder that mental wellness is not a destination but a journey, and one that no one has to walk alone. Through open conversation, shared learning, joyful movement, and community care, the event left each participant feeling more seen, more equipped, and more connected.



National Nursing Week 2025: Empowering Health Through Compassion

By: Harkiran Sidhu, SHPP Program Coordinator, RN

National Nursing Week was celebrated this year from May 12 to 18, with the inspiring theme: **“The Power of Nurses to Transform Health.”** This theme highlights the vital impact that nurses have in shaping and strengthening the healthcare system. As frontline professionals and trusted caregivers, nurses consistently advocate for patient-centered care and play a crucial role in improving health outcomes within all communities.

Nurses are often referred to as the superheroes of healthcare — and rightfully so. Their dedication, compassion, and advocacy extend far beyond clinical responsibilities. From hospitals and long-term care facilities to schools and community programs, nurses provide essential support that touches every stage of life. National Nursing Week serves as an important opportunity to recognize their tireless efforts, strong commitment, and the meaningful difference they make every single day, not only in Canada but around the world.



At PCHS, we recognize and value the many important roles that nurses fulfill within our organization and in the broader community. We are proud to have three dedicated nurses in our organization, each contributing unique skills and perspectives to support our mission. Whether through leadership, outreach, or health education, their work is essential in promoting community wellness. This week — and every week — we express our sincere gratitude to our nurses for their exceptional service, compassion, and leadership in transforming health for all.



World Ovarian Cancer Day

**By: Savita Saini, SHPP
Preventative Care Specialist**

Every year on May 8, the world comes together to observe World Ovarian Cancer Day—a day dedicated to raising awareness about one of the most deadly and under-recognized cancers affecting women globally. Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer among women and is often called a “silent killer” due to its vague and easily overlooked symptoms. Bloating, pelvic or abdominal pain, feeling full quickly, and frequent urination are some of the early signs, but because they mimic less serious conditions, many women are diagnosed in the later stages of the disease. This late detection contributes to a lower survival rate, making awareness and education crucial.

According to the World Ovarian Cancer Coalition, when ovarian cancer is detected early, the five-year survival rate can be as high as 90%. However, over 70% of cases are diagnosed at an advanced stage when treatment is more difficult and outcomes are poorer. One of the biggest challenges is that there is no reliable screening test for ovarian cancer, so it’s important for women to recognize symptoms and understand their personal risk.



Certain factors can increase the risk of developing ovarian cancer. These include having a family history of ovarian or breast cancer, carrying the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations, being over the age of 50, having endometriosis, and never having been pregnant. Women with a strong family history should consider discussing genetic testing with their healthcare provider to assess risk and consider preventative strategies. Increased awareness can lead to earlier detection, which in turn can save lives.



This year's theme, "No Woman Left Behind," highlights the global commitment to addressing disparities in care. Women from marginalized communities often experience delayed diagnoses, limited access to care, and poorer health outcomes. World Ovarian Cancer Day aims to bridge this gap by advocating for equitable healthcare access, education, and support across all populations.



There are several ways individuals can participate in raising awareness. Wearing teal, the official color of ovarian cancer awareness, is a simple gesture of solidarity. Sharing information on social media, encouraging loved ones to learn about symptoms, and supporting local or national organizations through donations are all meaningful ways to make a difference. Most importantly, having open conversations about women's health can empower others to seek help sooner.

World Ovarian Cancer Day is a powerful reminder that awareness is the first step toward action. It is not just about recognizing a disease—it's about standing together to support women, share knowledge, and strive for a future where ovarian cancer is no longer silent or deadly.



Critical Issues of Health Equity Concerning the South Asian Community: Recent Trends and Challenges

By Brahmjot Dhillon, Diversity Equity & Inclusion Coordinator

Health equity, the principle that everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health has gained increased attention globally, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the populations disproportionately affected by health disparities are South Asian communities, including individuals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In recent years, researchers and policymakers have begun to highlight several pressing health equity issues specific to this diverse group.

One of the most prominent concerns is the rising prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and type 2 diabetes in South Asian populations. Despite often having lower body mass indexes (BMI), South Asians are more likely to develop insulin resistance, abdominal obesity, and high triglyceride levels (Chadha et al., 2011; Misra & Sharma, 2009). Recent studies have identified a genetic predisposition combined with lifestyle factors, such as diets high in refined carbohydrates and low physical activity as major contributors (Mohan & Shanthirani, 2005). Efforts to promote culturally tailored prevention and intervention strategies are gaining momentum, including community-based programs focused on diet education, culturally competent healthcare, and early screening initiatives.

Mental health is another emerging area of concern. Historically, mental health issues have been underreported and undertreated in South Asian communities due to stigma, lack of awareness, and inadequate access to mental health services (South Asian Public Health Association [SAPHA], 2023). A 2023 report from SAPHA emphasized the impact of intergenerational trauma, immigration stress, and racism on mental well-being (Perkins, 2023). The rise of community-driven mental health initiatives, such as culturally informed therapy groups and mental health awareness campaigns in South Asian languages, is beginning to address these long-standing gaps.





Women's health equity is also at the forefront. South Asian women often face unique challenges related to gender roles, domestic violence, reproductive health, and access to care. Recent work has highlighted the need for intersectional approaches that consider the interplay of culture, gender, and migration status. For example, research in the UK and Canada has shown that South Asian women are less likely to attend cervical and breast cancer screenings due to cultural taboos and mistrust of the healthcare system (Gupta & Sharma, 2002; Hasnain & Lee, 2014). Community health advocates are now working with religious and cultural organizations to promote preventive care and health literacy (Adegboyega & Adegboyega, 2023).

Another recent and interesting development involves digital health equity. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of telehealth, but disparities in digital access and literacy have left many older South Asians and non-English speakers behind. There are growing efforts to develop linguistically appropriate digital health tools and train community health workers to bridge this digital divide (Lee & Chang, 2022).

Environmental health and climate change have also started to gain attention in the South Asian diaspora, particularly in urban areas with high pollution levels. Asthma and other respiratory conditions are disproportionately high in South Asian children living in high-density neighborhoods, underscoring the need for environmental justice and sustainable urban planning (Times of India, 2023a, 2023b).

Overall, addressing health equity in South Asian communities requires a refined, culturally informed approach. While recent initiatives have made important strides, sustained investment in community engagement, data disaggregation, and culturally competent care is essential for long-term progress.



Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month

By: Ramanpreet Kaur, Community Health Ambassador, SHPP



May is observed as Melanoma and Skin Cancer Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about prevention, early detection, and treatment. Skin cancer is the most diagnosed cancer worldwide, with over 1.5 million new cases in 2022, including 330,000 cases of melanoma, the most dangerous type (International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2022).

What is Skin Cancer?

Skin cancer happens when abnormal skin cells grow uncontrollably, often due to long-term **ultraviolet (UV) radiation** exposure from the sun or tanning beds (World Health Organization, 2023).

There are three main types:

- **Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC)**
- **Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC)**
- **Melanoma** (the most aggressive form)



Risk Factors

Risk factors include:

- Fair skin and light-colored eyes
- Frequent sunburns or tanning bed use
- A family history of skin cancer
- A weakened immune system (Canadian Dermatology Association, 2024)

Signs and Symptoms

Use the ABCDE rule to recognize early signs of melanoma:

- **A**symmetry
- **B**order irregularity
- **C**olor variation
- **D**iameter larger than 6 mm
- **E**volving shape or size (Canadian Dermatology Association, 2024)

Prevention Tips

- Use sunscreen with SPF 30+
- Wear hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing
- Avoid direct sun from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Do monthly skin self-checks
- (Canadian Dermatology Association, 2024)

Treatment

If detected early, skin cancer can be treated successfully. Treatments may include surgery, immunotherapy, or targeted therapies (World Health Organization, 2023).

Conclusion

Raising awareness and practicing sun safety can help save lives. Encourage regular skin checks and spread the message in your community.



SUNSCREEN
SAVES LIVES

What Is Trauma?

Reflections from Gabor Maté's Work and My Practice

**By: Manpreet Panag,
Registered Social Worker, MSW**

While reading Dr. Gabor Maté's book *The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness, and Healing in a Toxic Culture*, I came across a powerful explanation of trauma that deeply changed how I understand emotional pain and healing. In this article, I want to share some of the insights I learned from his work, along with what I have observed in my own practice as a social worker supporting women through challenging life experiences.



What Is Trauma?

Many people think trauma only refers to extreme events like abuse, violence, or disasters. But what I've learned is that trauma is not just about the event itself—it's about what happens inside a person as a result. When someone goes through a painful or overwhelming experience and doesn't feel safe, supported, or understood, it can cause a deep emotional wound. That internal response is what we recognize as trauma.

How Trauma Appears in Practice

In my work with clients, I often notice a common pattern—many of the challenges they face are connected to trauma. Sometimes it stems from early childhood experiences, such as emotional neglect, lack of safety, or instability at home. Other times, the trauma is more recent, and clients are still trying to understand or process what has happened. Whether the trauma is old or new, it often shows up in the present through emotional distress, relationship struggles, or difficulty coping with daily life. In almost every case, I find that trauma plays a role in shaping a person's current life—how they think, feel, relate to others and see themselves. It can influence their behavior, emotional response, and even their sense of identity.



Different Types of Trauma

Some trauma is clear and visible, like an accident or a crisis. But there are also more subtle forms—being ignored, judged, or not feeling emotionally safe growing up. These experiences may not seem like trauma on the surface, but they can deeply shape how a person sees themselves and the world. When those emotional wounds go unrecognized, they can show up later in life as anxiety, difficulty trusting others, or a sense of not feeling “good enough.”

The Link Between Trauma and Health

One of the most important insights I took from Dr. Maté’s work is the strong connection between trauma and health. Emotional pain that is left unaddressed can eventually affect the body. Many people struggling with chronic stress, anxiety, or illness are carrying unresolved emotional wounds. Recognizing this link helps us understand that healing emotional trauma is not just about mental well-being—it’s also an important part of physical health.

Healing from Trauma

Healing doesn’t mean going back in time or erasing the past. It means becoming aware of how those past experiences are still affecting us today—and gently working through them. It means reconnecting with the parts of ourselves we had to shut down. Healing can happen through therapy, community, creativity, mindfulness, or simply having safe, supportive conversations. Every person’s path to healing is unique, but it often begins with feeling seen, heard, and understood.

Trauma is something many people carry, often without realizing it. But understanding it is the first step toward healing. What I learned through this book—and what I continue to see in my work—is that people are not broken. They are often carrying pain that was never acknowledged. With the right support, healing is not only possible—it’s powerful.



Unemployment, Stress, and the Rise of Substance Use in Newcomers

**By: Sandeep Sekhon,
Case Manager- Addictions**

Canada is known as a country full of opportunity, which is why thousands of immigrants and international students come here every year, hoping for a better future. While many do succeed, others face serious struggles, especially when it comes to finding a good job and dealing with stress. One growing problem is the increase in substance use, including opioids, among newcomers to Canada. This issue is affecting many immigrant groups, especially people from South Asian countries.

Many South Asian immigrants come to Canada with high hopes. They are often well-educated and have professional experience in fields like medicine, engineering, or teaching. However, once they arrive, many face challenges. Employers may not accept their degrees or work experience from back home. Some immigrants face language barriers or even discrimination when looking for work. Because of this, many skilled newcomers end up working in low-paying, unstable jobs like factory work, delivery driving, or cleaning. These jobs offer little chance to grow or build a better life, and this mismatch between dreams and reality causes frustration, sadness, and stress.

Being unemployed or working in a job far below your skill level doesn't just affect your wallet, it can also hurt your mental health. Many immigrants feel pressure to succeed, especially when their families back home depend on them for financial support. When things don't go as planned, it can cause guilt, shame, and emotional pain. Living in expensive cities like GTA makes the situation worse, as it becomes hard to pay for rent, food, or other basic needs. Over time, the constant stress can lead some people to use alcohol, cannabis, or even opioids to escape their problems.



The problem is even worse for international students. Many young people from South Asia come to Canada for education, hoping it will lead to permanent residency and a good job. But these students pay much higher tuition fees than Canadian students and are often only allowed to work 20 hours a week. This is not enough to cover their living and school costs. If they run into problems paying tuition or keeping up with school, they can lose their immigration status. When this happens, they are no longer allowed to work legally and cannot access many support services. This creates huge stress and feelings of being stuck. Some students turn to drugs to cope with their anxiety, fear, and loneliness.

Opioids are strong drugs that are often used to treat pain. They are also used illegally and can be very dangerous and addictive. In recent years, Canada has seen a big increase in opioid use and overdose deaths. Immigrant communities, including South Asians, are becoming more affected by this crisis. Some newcomers use opioids to numb the stress, sadness, or trauma they experience. But over time, these drugs can lead to addiction, poor health, job loss, and even death. In South Asian culture, there is often a lot of shame around drug use, so many people don't ask for help or talk about their struggles. This makes it harder for them to recover or get support early on.

Community Initiatives and Support Systems

Organizations like the Punjabi Community Health Services offer tailored support for South Asians dealing with opioid use disorders. These services provide counseling in multiple languages and are sensitive to the cultural nuances of the community.

Additionally, community outreach programs aim to raise awareness about the risks of opioid use and the importance of mental health care. These initiatives are crucial in breaking down the stigma and encouraging individuals to seek help.



Mother's Day Celebration with our Seniors



By: Riddhi Mehta, IST Geriatrics

We celebrate Mother's Day to honor and appreciate mothers and mother figures for their love, sacrifices, and contributions to families and society. It's a day to recognize the vital role that mothers play—not just in raising children, but also in nurturing communities and shaping future generations. People express their gratitude through gestures like cards, gifts, spending time together, or simply saying “thank you.”

The modern celebration of Mother's Day originated in the early 20th century, largely thanks to the efforts of Anna Jarvis in the United States, who wanted to honor her own mother's work and the broader role of all mothers.

At PCHS, we had a heartwarming and joyful Mother's Day celebration with our senior's group, honoring the incredible women who have nurtured families, shaped communities, and shared a lifetime of love and wisdom. The event brought together seniors from diverse backgrounds to enjoy a special time filled with laughter, music, and togetherness.



The celebration included fun activities, games, and beautiful moments of sharing stories about motherhood and cherished memories. Every senior enjoyed the food, and the atmosphere was filled with warmth, appreciation, and heartfelt connection. It was truly touching to see the smiles and hear the kind words shared among the group.

Mother's Day gave us a meaningful opportunity to recognize and celebrate the strength, love, and resilience of the mothers in our senior community. We look forward to many more such moments of connection and celebration together.

Many seniors shared stories from their motherhood journeys, while others read quotes or presented their own written reflections in both Punjabi and English. As a culturally sensitive organization, we were delighted to see our seniors dressed in their traditional cultural attire, making the celebration even more vibrant and meaningful.

One famous quote shared by seniors during the celebration was: "God could not be everywhere, and therefore He made mothers."

This quote deeply resonated with everyone, as it beautifully reflects the vital role a mother plays in our lives. Even for those who may no longer have their mother with them, there is often someone who steps in as a mother figure—someone who cares, nurtures, and supports us just like a mother would.



Youth Engagement for Mental Health Month Across the GTA

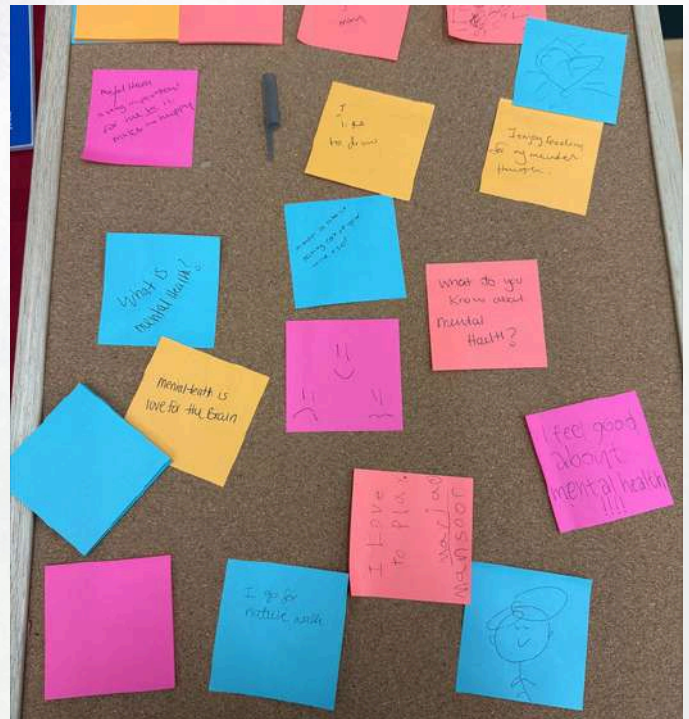


**By: Simran Ghumman,
Mental Health Case Manager**

As part of Mental Health Month, the Mental Health Team had the privilege of connecting with students at several schools across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). These youth-focused outreach events were a powerful opportunity to engage young people in meaningful conversations around mental health, well-being, and stigma.

At each school, our outreach table served as a welcoming and safe space for students to explore mental health at their own pace. One of the most engaging elements was our interactive "What is Mental Health?" board. Students were invited to share their own definitions of mental health many of which were thoughtful, honest, and reflective of their lived experiences. In addition to writing, many students also expressed themselves creatively by drawing pictures that represented how they view or experience mental health. This visual expression added a deeply personal and relatable layer to the dialogue, helping to break down barriers and make mental health more approachable.

Our team provided culturally relevant information, answered questions, and offered resources about the services available through PCHS. The students' enthusiasm and curiosity demonstrated how eager they were to learn about mental wellness not just for themselves, but also to better support their peers.



For many youth, especially those from South Asian and other racialized communities, mental health remains a stigmatized topic. Seeing a team that looked like them and understood their cultural context helped normalize these conversations and made it easier to ask questions that might otherwise go unspoken.



The feedback from both students and school staff was overwhelmingly positive. Many shared how our presence made mental health feel more accessible and less intimidating. It was a reminder that sometimes, the most impactful thing we can do is simply show up and be available to listen.

While Mental Health Month may only last 31 days, the connections and conversations sparked through these outreach efforts will carry forward. At PCHS, we remain deeply committed to supporting youth, reducing stigma, and ensuring that mental health resources are visible, culturally sensitive, and within reach every month of the year.



National Youth Week 2025 Celebrating Newcomer Youth

By: Simarjot Kaur, Youth Worker



From May 1 to 7, newcomer youth from across the Peel Region came together for a week of creativity, engagement, and self-discovery as part of National Youth Week 2025. Organized by Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), the event welcomed 58 youth and offered them meaningful opportunities to explore their passions, express themselves, and strengthen their sense of community. From science experiments and talent showcases to museum visits and collaborative art projects, each day was thoughtfully designed to inspire and empower.

1 **Day 1: Discovery Day – May 1**

The week commenced with an engaging day of science experiments featuring baking soda, vinegar, food coloring, and more. Enthusiastic reactions and erupting volcanoes brought learning to life, encouraging critical thinking, curiosity, and collaboration. This STEM-focused day set a dynamic tone for the rest of the week.

2 **Day 2: Take the Stage – May 2**

The Malton Youth Hub transformed into a lively stage where participants displayed their talents through singing, dancing, poetry, and visual art. The youth captivated the audience with heartfelt performances, showcasing both skill and cultural expression. Medals and gift cards were awarded to outstanding participants, reinforcing confidence and pride.

3 **Day 3: Day at the Museum – May 3**

A full-day field trip to the Royal Ontario Museum provided an immersive exploration of history, science, and global cultures. For many, it marked their first museum visit—an experience filled with wonder, learning, and laughter. Guided tours and reflective group discussions deepened their understanding and appreciation of the world around them.

4 **Day 4: Skills for Success (Virtual) – May 4**

This virtual workshop centered on career readiness, equipping youth with practical tools for future success. Participants developed resumes, practiced interview techniques, and identified their strengths through interactive breakout sessions. Facilitated by employment experts, the session fostered confidence and career awareness.

5 **Day 5: The Great Search – May 5**

An energetic scavenger hunt challenged youth to solve riddles and complete tasks across the Malton Youth Hub. This exciting event emphasized teamwork, problem-solving, and creativity. Small prizes were awarded for collaboration, speed, and innovation.

Day 6: Minute to Win It – May 6

6 Participants took part in a series of one-minute physical challenges, from cup stacking to ping-pong ball tossing. These fast-paced activities promoted perseverance, lighthearted competition, and mutual encouragement. Youth learned the value of trying, supporting one another, and celebrating collective effort.

Day 7: Wall of Wonder – May 7

7 The week concluded with a vibrant display of artistic expression. Youth collaborated on a large community mural symbolizing unity, resilience, and cultural identity. Guided by local artists, each contribution added depth and meaning. Individual canvases and sketchbooks provided additional space for reflection, allowing each participant to share their personal journey. The completed mural now proudly adorns the Malton Youth Hub as a lasting symbol of connection and belonging.

Throughout the week, participants were supported with meals, materials, and a welcoming environment. The program fostered a strong sense of inclusion, empowerment, and community engagement.

A heartfelt thank you to all the youth, facilitators, staff, volunteers, and community partners who brought this initiative to life. National Youth Week 2025 was more than a series of events—it was a celebration of voices, dreams, and the vibrant spirit of newcomer youth.



Brewing Connections

SHPP's Connect Over Cups

By: Fariha Abdul Muqueet- Preventative Care Specialist-SHPP

On May 7th, the Sahara Health Promotion and Prevention (SHPP) team hosted their Connect Over Cups event in the main lobby of the Honorable William G. Davis building, located at 60 West Drive in Brampton. The event was a warm and welcoming opportunity for community organizations housed in the building to come together, connect informally, and learn more about SHPP's impactful work.



SHPP, a program funded by Ontario Health and run by Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), focuses on three key pillars: Diabetes Education, Mental Health and Addictions, and Breast Cancer Awareness. The event provided a space for local agencies to meet the SHPP team, ask questions, and explore opportunities for future collaboration.

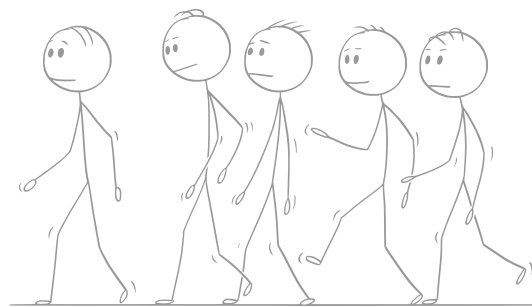
The event encouraged open conversations around shared goals in community health and well-being. Attendees learned how SHPP supports individuals through culturally appropriate education sessions, workshops, case management, and referrals to primary care services. Team members also highlighted their outreach efforts, which target underserved populations in the Region of Peel.

The SHPP team aimed to create a space that felt approachable, allowing people to learn about their services and explore ways to work together to better serve the community. The event was well-received, with several organizations expressing interest in future partnerships and joint initiatives. Connect Over Cups not only strengthened professional ties but also fostered a stronger sense of community within the building.

SHPP hopes keep the conversation going and build a united front in the pursuit of better health for all. Stay tuned for more opportunities to connect, collaborate, and create change—one cup at a time.

Power Walkers Club at PCHS

By: Harkiran Sidhu, SHPP Program Coordinator, RN



Power Walkers Club is a new wellness initiative at PCHS that invites individuals to take a midday break for a walk during lunch. It is a simple way to get some fresh air, move your body, and connect with colleagues in a relaxed setting. Whether you are walking quietly or having a light conversation, it is a refreshing break from the usual work routine.

Staying active during the day is important for both physical and mental health. A short walk can help clear the mind, reduce stress, and improve focus for the rest of the day. It also supports our daily fitness goals and reminds us to make movement a regular part of our lives.






Your Wellness Space Workshop

By: Navdeep Kaur, SHPP Case Manager

On May 29th, the SHPP Department hosted an engaging workshop titled Your Wellness Space, designed to raise awareness about mental health and encourage self-care in a fun, supportive setting. The workshop offered interactive activities to help clients explore and identify coping strategies that work best for them.



One highlight was the creation of affirmation jars, where participants filled jars with positive, uplifting messages they could turn to whenever they're feeling low or overwhelmed. Another thoughtful activity was writing a letter to their future self, offering a moment of self-reflection and hope. These letters will be opened one year from now, providing insight into their personal growth over time.

The event concluded with a calming guided breathing exercise, allowing participants to leave feeling refreshed and centered. Your Wellness Space was a valuable opportunity for clients to learn, connect, and take-home simple tools to support their mental well-being.

Mindful May Series

Mehar Roop Kaur, SHPP
Community Health Ambassador

This month, the Sahara Health Promotion and Prevention team launched “Mindful May,” a month-long social media series devoted to slowing down, tuning in, and being present. Each week focused on a unique wellness theme, inviting followers to reflect, reset, and take small, meaningful steps towards balance:

1 Week 1: Set Your Intention

We encouraged our audience to reflect on personal goals and practice mindfulness through exercises like box breathing and grounding.

2 Week 2: Mental Health Week – Your Story Matters

We shared strategies for emotional wellness, emphasizing the importance of treating mental health with the same care and urgency as physical health.

3 Week 3: National Nursing Week – Honouring Care

This week focused on celebrating nurses and caregivers. We spotlighted health tips, shared gratitude, and highlighted the importance of rest and support for care providers.

4 Week 4: Workplace Wellness & Safety – Balance at Work

This week focused on hydration, movement breaks, and setting boundaries to support a healthy work-life balance.

5 Week 5: Tobacco Awareness – Breathe Free

To wrap up the month, we finished with tools, resources, and motivational content to support those considering a tobacco-free journey.

Together, these weekly themes offered simple, yet powerful ways to prioritize wellbeing and make mindfulness a sustainable part of everyday life.



Mindful May Series

MINDFUL MAY

WHAT ARE YOU LETTING GO OF?

This May, let's practice mindfulness by releasing what's been weighing us down.

"Letting go gives us freedom, and freedom is the only condition for happiness" – Thich Nhat Hanh



MINDFUL MAY

PAUSE & REFLECT

Take a deep breath and ask yourself:
What's one thing I'm ready to let go of this month?

Share your answers in the comment section below



MINDFUL MAY

SHARE & SUPPORT

Let's build a mindful community. We invite you to share in the comments:
What are you letting go of this May?

Examples

Guilt around rest

Constant screen time



MINDFUL MAY

PRACTICE LETTING GO

Here are 3 gentle ways to let go this week:

Journaling

Mindful Movement

Digital detox

Remember: Letting go is a process. Be patient and kind to yourself.



PCHS In The Community



Connect Over Cups event



*Novo Nordisk
Diabetes + Obesity
presentation*

WELCOME

NEW STAFF



Navneet Kaur
Caregiver Support
Worker



Sheetal Nair
Caregiver Support
Worker



Ravneet Kaur
RPN, Concurrent
Disorders




Taranjit Singh
Peer Support Worker,
Rapid Response Saves
Life (RRSL)

Power Walkers Club

Join the SHPP Team for a refreshing walk during lunch! We'll chat, destress, and enjoy some time outside to clear our minds and get moving. It's the perfect way to step away from work and refocus. See you there!



 **12:30 to 1:00 pm**

 May 14 & 28
June 18 & 25
July 9 & 23
August 13 & 27




 *Weather
Permitting

Meeting Point

60 West Drive - Front
Parking Lot

TO LEARN MORE:

 supportline@pchs4u.com
 437-243-3735

Step Up. Power Up - Walk Your Way to Wellness!



HOW TO APPLY FOR A PARDON

Join us for an informative session on the pardon application process for individuals with legal charges.



10:30 AM – 12:30 PM



Thursday, June 26, 2025

You Will Learn:

- Steps to apply for a pardon
- Required documentation
- Timelines and legal considerations
- How a pardon can support your recovery and reintegration

PRESENTATION BY:
ANDREW TANENBAUM
(PARDON CANADA)

For more information
contact Daljit Basra at
daljit@pchs4u.com
647-969-2061

REGISTER NOW

Venue: 2980 Drew road, Mississauga (Unit 245)

Client Testimonial



"I've undergone brain surgery twice and was bedridden, having lost all hope—until I found Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS). They supported me in countless ways. I'm still connected with them, and they continue to help me. In fact, they've even arranged transportation for me to the airport, as I'm not able to manage on my own. PCHS treats me like family—actually, even beyond that. Their support has made a significant difference in my life, and I've never faced any difficulties since being connected with them.

Organizations like PCHS are vital for people like me. I pray for their continued success and hope they can keep doing the amazing work they do for those in need.

Client: Newcomer Settlement Program



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In memory of RCMP Constable Harvey Dhani



60 West Drive, Unit 202,
Brampton ON L6T 3T6

2980 Drew Road, Unit 241,
Mississauga, ON L4T 0A7

Southfields Community Centre 225
Dougall Avenue,
Caledon ON L7C 3M7

2 Dewside Dr, Unit 202, Brampton,
ON L6R 3Y5

Community Door,
7700 Hurontario St, Unit 300,
Brampton ON L6Y 4M3

Different Spokes
8 Nelson Street West,
Brampton ON, L6X 1B7

705 Progress Ave, Unit 101,
Toronto ON M1H 2X1



905-677-0889



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