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Celebrate mental health

October 6-12 is National Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) across Canada, and October 10 (today) is World Mental Health Day. One in five Canadians will directly experience mental health concerns at some time during their lives. Setting aside a designated time for Canadians to become more aware of mental health opens up real possibilities. The first step is to build awareness; the second and more critical step is how we then respond.

A client of a local psychiatrist once felt so isolated and hopeless that he walked to the tallest building and got into the elevator, intending to ride to the roof and jump. But during that brief ride, someone nodded and smiled at him. Based on that simple gesture, on that acknowledgement, he stopped his ride, got off the elevator, and said 'yes' to life for another day.

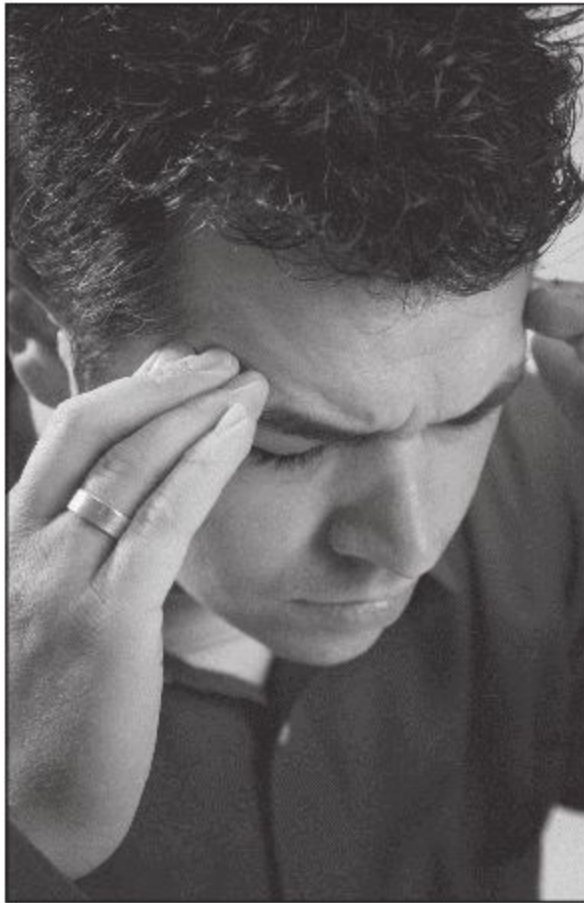
Mental health concerns are complex and wide-ranging in form and duration. They are not 'fixed' by such simple one-off gestures as a friendly smile or a listening ear. On a day-to-day basis, however, community awareness and support can make a real difference, together with professional counselling and other interventions.

National Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) is about the impact of mental illness and mental health. But more than that, it is about how we respond to the challenge.

There are volunteer opportunities, educational

programs, and mental-health supports at many agencies throughout North Halton, including community-based volunteer registered charity: the Dr. John Dougan Centre for Mental Health Promotion, where the focus is on providing regional social support for those with mental-health concerns, including an annual Christmas Party and summer picnic. Public education is also one of its mandates.

At its root, National Mental Illness Awareness Week is about recognizing common humanity and working together to fulfill common potential. All Canadians have a stake in this. Consider becoming an active supporter of a non-profit mental health group or agency in the community. Whether you donate, volunteer, drop by a fund-raising event, or bring your curiosity and ideas to a general meeting, there's always room and a welcome for you on our bench.



Dr. John Dougan Centre for Mental Health Promotion:

http://www.johndougancentre.ca
Telephone: 519 853-9229
Email: info@johndougancentre.ca
National Mental Illness Awareness Week
http://camimh.ca/mental-illness-awareness-week-english/about-miaw/
World Mental Health Day (October 10, 2013)
http://www.who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/en/index.html

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