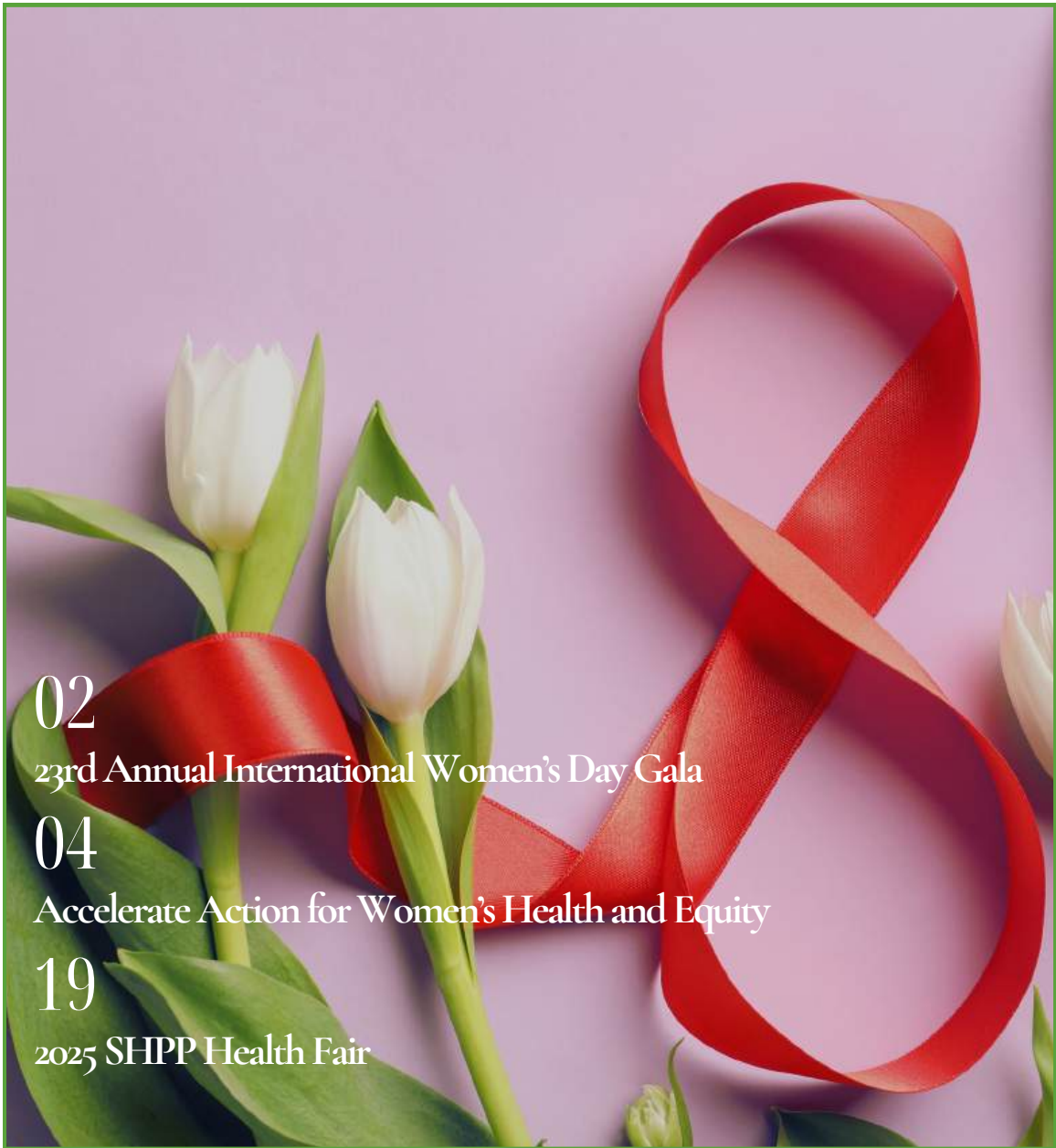


PCHS

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# HEALTH MAGAZINE

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# LETTER FROM THE CEO

Amandeep Kaur CEO, PCHS

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## Marching Forward: Renewal, Resilience, and Community Impact

As we conclude the month of March and approach the end of our fiscal year, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the continued growth, innovation, and community connection that define our work at Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS). This season of renewal has brought opportunities to deepen our impact and reaffirm our commitment to culturally responsive, family-centered care.

March is recognized globally as World Social Work Day, which was observed this year on March 18, 2025. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all social workers at PCHS and beyond. Your compassion and unwavering commitment to action allow us to serve the community members who need us the most. Thank you for being the heart of this work.

This month, we continued our investment in youth leadership through the Youth Peer Support Program at Louise Arbour Secondary School. Senior students are preparing to guide their younger peers through academic and personal challenges—both in and outside the classroom. Now implemented in three high schools—Louise Arbour, Castlebrooke, and Harold M. Brathwaite—this initiative has become a cornerstone in fostering leadership, inclusion, and resilience among youth.

Another milestone this March was the expansion of the Sahara Mental Health and Addiction Wellbeing Program into the Halton Region.

Through new partnerships with Joseph Brant Hospital's Halton ADAPT program and engagement efforts with the Halton Hills Public Library, we are advancing mental health conversations using culturally informed approaches. This initiative is broadening access and support for South Asian individuals across the region.

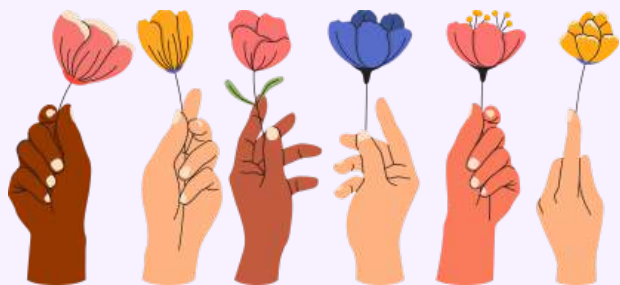
As part of our Sahara Health Prevention and Promotion Program, we hosted our second Wellness Workshop and a vibrant Health Fair. These events offered critical health services and resources, made possible by our dedicated community partners—Roots Community Services and Wellfort CHC—who share our commitment to holistic well-being.

We also marked two major celebrations: 35 years of the PCHS journey and our 23rd Annual International Women's Day Gala. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make this event so memorable and impactful. Stay tuned to our social media channels and the April edition of the Health Magazine for highlights and stories from the event.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more inclusive community.



# 23rd Annual INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



PCHS celebrated its **23rd Annual International Women's Day Gala** on March 28th, with a great turnout of community members, sponsors, and staff. The evening was filled with inspiring moments and a shared commitment to gender equality. A heartfelt thanks to all who contributed, from sponsors to attendees. This year's theme, **#AccelerateAction**, reminded us to not only recognize women's achievements but actively work toward meaningful change. Together, we're driving progress and making an impact.



Stay tuned for more in next month's April Magazine!



# PCHS' 35th Anniversary

Let's take a moment to celebrate the beautiful memories that PCHS has created over the last 35 years, shaping lives and building a legacy of excellence.



# International Women's Day 2025 – Accelerate Action for Women's Health and Equity



**By Mehar Roop Kaur, SHPP Community Health Ambassador**

The theme of International Women's Day 2025, "Accelerate Action," calls for meaningful progress toward gender equity (International Women's Day, 2025). For too long, we have acknowledged gender disparities but failed to dismantle the systemic barriers that sustain them. We must hold ourselves accountable for the ways we may, intentionally or unintentionally, uphold systems of oppression that prevent women from fully participating in society—including in decisions about their health.

For generations, South Asian women have been treated as temporary members of their birth families, expected to marry and fulfill roles that prioritize family honour over personal autonomy. Son preference, rooted in the belief that male children ensure financial security and lineage continuity, reinforces gender inequality—often at the expense of women's health.

Raised to conform to rigid gender roles, many women internalize the idea that their wellbeing is secondary. Their primary duty is to serve—first their father and brothers, then their husband and in-laws (Sohal, 2009). This extends to their healthcare, where seeking care for themselves is often seen as indulgent unless it directly benefits their family (Bottorff et al., 2001). As such, preventative care is often neglected.

Particularly in sexual and reproductive health, stigma, shame, and misinformation compound barriers to access to essential screenings. Cultural attitudes discourage open discussions, reinforcing the expectation that women should endure discomfort in silence. This is reflected in lower breast and cervical cancer screening rates in South Asian women as compared to host country women worldwide (Anderson de Cuevas et al., 2018). While systemic factors such as limited access and language barriers contribute to these disparities, attitudes and beliefs play a crucial role. Studies have shown that concerns about maintaining modesty and chastity in pursuit of preventative services such as Pap tests and mammograms are a major hindrance to women seeking timely and essential healthcare (Anderson de Cuevas et al., 2018). Additionally, they fear the social repercussions of being known to have sought out such care, as reproductive health services are often wrongly conflated with sexual activity (Meherali et al., 2021). This fear of judgement and loss of reputation heavily dictates health-seeking behaviours and can have harmful consequences.

*Empowered Women  
Empower Women*

When cultural influences prevent women from prioritizing their health, they face higher rates of late-stage breast and cervical cancer diagnoses, poorer prognoses, and reduced agency in making informed decisions (Anderson de Cuevas et al., 2018). The psychological burden of stigma and secrecy further limits health literacy and engagement with healthcare professionals, perpetuating cycles of neglect.

To “**Accelerate Action**” and address these disparities, it is critical to:

- Ensure confidential, stigma-free healthcare services that allow women to seek preventative care without fear
- Continue to develop culturally sensitive health education initiatives that normalize routine screenings and challenge misconceptions
- Empower women with greater healthcare autonomy, ensuring their decisions are not contingent on external approval
- Encourage discussions within families to dismantle biases that reinforce patriarchal beliefs

This International Women’s Day, we must move beyond acknowledgement and commit to action. Too many women have been forced to choose between their health and dignity, between seeking care and avoiding shame. Let us work towards a world where women’s health is prioritized, protected, and free from judgement.

If you would like to take charge of your health, please reach out to the SHPP team for a free breast cancer risk assessment. Early detection saves lives, and prioritizing your well-being is the first step towards advocating for your health.

**Contact us at: (437) 243-3735 or [supportline@pchs4u.com](mailto:supportline@pchs4u.com).**



# Breaking Barriers: Women's Mental Health in Canada



**By: Lakhvir Sandhar, Mental Health Wellness Case Manager**

This International Women's Month, we celebrate the strength, resilience, and achievements of women across Canada. However, it's essential to acknowledge the mental health challenges that many women continue to face.

Women in Canada experience mental health issues at higher rates than men, with anxiety and depression being particularly prevalent. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, one in four women will experience clinical depression in their lifetime. Factors such as gender-based violence, caregiving responsibilities, workplace inequality, and societal pressures contribute to these challenges.

For South Asian women in Canada, cultural expectations and stigma can create additional challenges when seeking mental health support. Many face pressure to uphold traditional family roles, leading to stress, isolation, and difficulty prioritizing their own well-being. Stigma around mental health remains strong in many South Asian communities, preventing women from speaking openly about their struggles or seeking professional help. Language barriers, lack of culturally sensitive services, and fear of judgment from family and community members further complicate access to care. Addressing these issues requires community-driven awareness, increased representation in mental health services, and safe spaces where South Asian women can seek support without fear of shame.

Focusing on Punjabi-speaking women, studies have shown they are at a higher risk for perinatal depressive symptoms. Research conducted in British Columbia found that 20.6% of Punjabi-speaking women who required an interpreter reported depressive symptoms during pregnancy, compared to 10.8% of English-speaking women. Furthermore, a study found that South Asian Canadian-born populations had a higher estimated prevalence rate of poor-fair self-perceived mental health status (4.4%) compared to their immigrant counterparts (3.4%). These findings highlight the urgent need for culturally tailored mental health services that address the unique challenges faced by South Asian women in Canada.





The demands of balancing work, family, and personal well-being can also take a toll. Women are more likely to take on caregiving roles, which can increase stress and decrease time for self-care. Workplace inequality, including the gender pay gap and underrepresentation in leadership, further affects women's mental well-being, leading to higher stress levels and burnout.

But there is hope. Across Canada, organizations are advocating for better mental health policies, more accessible services, and workplace wellness initiatives that support women's unique needs. Community-based programs, peer support networks, and digital mental health resources are also playing a key role in breaking down barriers.

This International Women's Month, let's do more than just celebrate women—let's support them. Whether by advocating for mental health funding, checking in on the women in our lives, or challenging workplace stigma, we all have a role in fostering a society where women's mental well-being is prioritized.



# Safe Sleep Week: Raising Awareness for Infant Sleep Safety

March 10th to 14th 2025



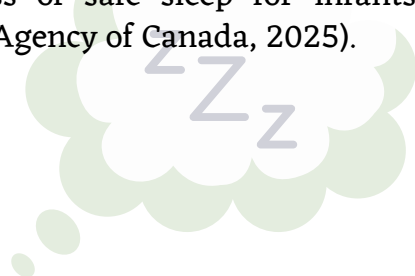
**By Gia Oberoi, Nursing Placement Student - SHPP**

**Safe Sleep Week** is a yearly campaign designed to spread awareness and educate caregivers on safe sleep practices for infants. This year, it runs from March 10 to March 14, 2025. The campaign aims to ultimately reduce sleep-related injuries and death in infants by reaching as many people as possible (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2025).

Many infant sleeping products are available in-store or online; thus, knowing what to buy or avoid can be difficult (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2025). The best way to keep an infant safe when sleeping is to keep the sleep environment simple.

Before buying numerous products that may be unsafe, it is important to know that the only products an infant needs are: a crib, cradle or bassinet which meets Canada's safety standards and regulations; a firm, flat mattress with fitted sheets to prevent the infant from moving into a position that impedes their ability to breathe; and simple, fitted sleepwear. Products to avoid include anything that has soft padding, as that can pose a suffocation risk to the infant, as well as anything that can cause the infant to overheat. Some popular unsafe infant products include pillows, bedding sets, baby hammocks, bedside sleepers, and crib tents. Always keep this information in mind when shopping for infant products, and remember to ask yourself if the product is safe for your baby and if you know how to use it safely (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2025).

Several organizations partner together to spread awareness of safe sleep during the week. To support the cause and learn more about ensuring infants are safe when sleeping, visit Health Canada's social media to view and share posts regarding Safe Sleep Week. You can also share this information with parents and caregivers to raise awareness of safe sleep for infants (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2025).



# March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month: Know the Risks, Get Screened, Stay Healthy

**By: Fariha Abdul Muqueet, SHPP Preventative Care Specialist**

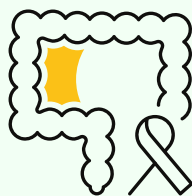
Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancers worldwide, but the good news is that it is also one of the most preventable. Each March, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of early detection, healthy lifestyle choices, and proactive healthcare.

## A Growing Concern

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is projected to be the 4th most commonly diagnosed cancer in Canada in 2024. It is also a leading cause of cancer-related deaths, ranking as the 2nd deadliest cancer among men and the 3rd among women. These figures emphasize the critical need for greater awareness, early screening, and preventive actions to help reduce the disease's impact.

## Screening for Colon Cancer

**COLORECTAL CANCER IS 90% CURABLE IF DETECTED IN ITS EARLY STAGES.**



Colorectal cancer often begins as precancerous polyps, which can develop into cancer over time. Early detection through screening is key to preventing cancer by identifying and removing these polyps or catching the disease at an early, more treatable stage before it spreads—significantly improving treatment outcomes.

In Canada, the FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test) is a vital screening tool for detecting colon and rectal cancer in its earliest stages, often before symptoms appear. The Canadian Cancer Society recommends that adults aged 50 to 74 at average risk undergo a FIT stool test every two years. If the test result is positive, further testing, such as a colonoscopy, will be required.

For individuals over 75, screening decisions should be discussed with a healthcare provider to determine the best approach. If you're unsure about when to start screening, speak with your doctor to assess your risk and develop a screening plan that's right for you.

## Preventing Colon Cancer

Preventing colorectal cancer focuses on reducing risk factors and adopting lifestyle choices that can help to lower the chance of developing colorectal cancer.

## Key Risk Factors That Increase the Likelihood of Colorectal Cancer

Several factors can increase the likelihood of developing colorectal cancer, including:

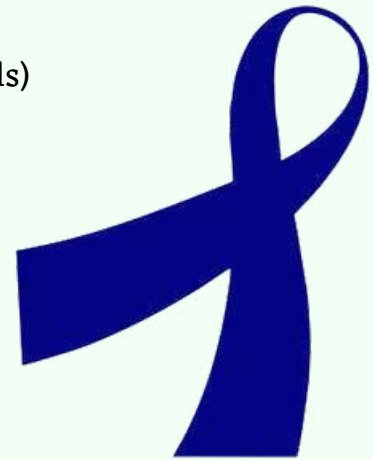
- Inflammatory bowel disease, such as ulcerative colitis
- Having benign (noncancerous) polyps
- A personal or family history of colorectal cancer
- Inherited syndromes, such as Lynch syndrome



## Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer may not show symptoms in its early stages, but it's important to stay aware of potential warning signs, such as:

- Changes in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea, or narrow stools)
- Persistent urge to have a bowel movement with no relief
- Rectal bleeding or blood in stool (bright red to dark black)
- Abdominal discomfort (bloating, cramps, gas pain)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue and weakness, possibly due to iron- deficiency anemia



## Healthy Habits for Colon Health

A few simple lifestyle changes can lower your risk:

- Eating foods rich in dietary fiber lowers the risk of colorectal cancer. This includes legumes such as beans and lentils, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains.
- Eating whole grains like whole wheat, oats, quinoa, brown rice, and popcorn lowers the risk of colorectal cancer
- Limiting consumption of processed meat and red meat which may increase your risk
- Limiting consumption of alcoholic drinks.
- Aiming to reduce your weight especially if you are overweight (BMI: 25.0 – 29,9) or obese (BMI: 30.0 and above)
- Be physically active lowers the risk of colorectal cancer. 30 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity is recommended.

**Make Number #2 your #1 priority.**



# Celebration of IWD at PCHS Senior Groups

**By: Prabhjit Kaur, Geriatrics Department**

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated globally to honor the incredible contributions women make to society. On this day, we recognize the dedication, resilience, and love women show in their roles as caregivers, leaders, and nurturers within their families and communities. Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) organizes a special observance of IWD, complementing the traditional appreciation practices for women. This occasion provides an opportunity for people to come together through cultural recognition and strengthen bonds to express gratitude towards women, who are the cornerstone of their community. Punjabi Community Health Services is a vital health care and social services organization focused on meeting the needs of Canadian Punjabis and South Asian communities. The organization is committed to promoting wellness and improving the quality of family life by offering culturally appropriate and inclusive care.



## **A Cultural Celebration of Love and Gratitude**

The International Women's Day event at PCHS is marked by a variety of activities that highlight the significant role women play in Punjabi and South Asian cultures. In Punjabi culture, women, especially mothers, are revered as the foundation of the family, nurturing not only the physical well-being of children but also their emotional and spiritual health. The celebration fosters a sense of unity, cultural pride, and appreciation for the women who shape the fabric of the community. Food plays an important role in Punjabi culture, and no celebration would be complete without a feast of traditional dishes. Women are treated to a special meal featuring cherished Punjabi delicacies such as carrot pudding or gulab jamun. The event is often accompanied by refreshments and snacks, providing an opportunity for everyone to come together, share meals, converse, and create cherished memories.

## Focus on Health and Well-Being

PCHS takes a holistic approach to the International Women’s Day celebration by recognizing that women are not only caregivers but also individuals with their own health and wellness needs. This occasion is used to raise awareness about the importance of women’s health, self-care, and overall well-being. During the event, there are often presentations or information sessions on topics such as managing stress, navigating the healthcare system, and achieving a balanced life. These sessions are led by health professionals, counselors, and community leaders who offer valuable resources to empower women. PCHS aims to ensure that women have access to the tools they need to care for themselves, as they often serve as primary caregivers within their families.

## Recognition and Community Support

A key element of the International Women’s Day event at PCHS is the recognition of the diverse experiences and contributions of women in the community. PCHS acknowledges that womanhood is experienced differently across various cultures and backgrounds, and this is reflected in the celebration.



# “Circle of Care” – A Workshop for Building a Community of Healthy Families

**By: Sowmya Shinde Case Manager, Addictions**

Since time immemorial, the role of families and human relationships has always been a building block for civilizations and eventually led to the growth of humanity. Human connections realized through care, nurturance, empathy and support have benefited humanity in all probable ways. Appreciating this value of healthy human relationships, the addiction team at PCHS conducted a series of workshops themed “Fostering healthy relationships for recovery” specifically for the family members of clients dealing with addiction and mental health issues.

The first in the series was conducted on March 06, 2025, at the 60 West Drive location of PCHS, with around 25 members from the community actively participating in it. The one-day workshop was divided into 3 phases starting with refreshments, mindfulness-based meditation like Progressive muscle relaxation and transitioning into understanding addiction and mental health through myths and facts, discussions and psychoeducation. Further to it, creative activities like Relationship Web were conducted to provide a safe space for the clients and the family members to share and learn from each other’s personal experiences and perspectives which eventually witnessed a beautiful unfolding of emotional catharsis and building interpersonal bonds with each other.

After a good lunch break a session on the topic Communication was conducted which highlighted the role of effective communication in strengthening family connections and fostering a healthy relationships and supportive environment for the client’s recovery journey. The workshop was concluded with yet another expressive arts session on making greetings cards for the loved ones and highlighting the role of gratitude for personal well-being and collective healing. The participants were also provided with a self-care kit as a takeaway goodie to practice the skills learnt.

Overall, the workshop was filled with rich mutual learning experience and a great opportunity for people to connect with their inner self and strengthen their intentions towards supporting their loved ones in all aspects of life.





# National Social Work Month



**By Ramanpreet Kaur, SHPP  
Community Health Ambassador**

**March** marks **National Social Work Month**, a time to honor the dedicated professionals who provide essential support and services to individuals, families, and communities. The 2025 theme, “Social Work: Compassion+ Action,” highlights the core values of social worker, emphasizing both the compassionate nature of the profession and the actions social workers take to improve lives. (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2025).

## **The Role of Social Work**

As a Community Health Ambassador at PCHS, my work involves outreach initiatives aimed at promoting health, wellness, and accessibility. From delivering educational presentations on mental health, breast cancer, and diabetes to distributing Naloxone kits to combat the opioid crisis, the focus remains on bridging gaps and ensuring essential services reach those in need.

Social work plays a vital role in advocating for underserved communities by building trust, providing resources, and promoting cultural competence. It is about understanding community needs and tailoring services to effectively meet those needs.

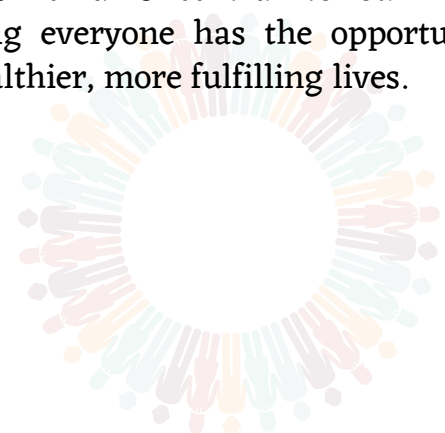


## **Creating Inclusive Spaces**

Through my work with PCHS, I strive to create safe, welcoming environments where individuals feel empowered to seek support. Whether organizing health fairs or conducting Laughter Yoga workshops, the goal is to promote mental and physical well-being. This aligns with the principles outlined by the NASW Code of Ethics, emphasizing cultural responsiveness and the importance of human relationships (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2021).

## **Continuing the Mission**

Social work is about advocacy, education, and accessibility. Initiatives like Affordable Therapy Ontario, which provides low-cost mental health services, showcase how social work continues to address community needs effectively. The commitment to breaking barriers remains central to our mission, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live healthier, more fulfilling lives.





# The Science Behind Addiction

**By: Zahra Masood, Addictions Case Manager**



## **Breaking the Cycle: The Science of Addiction and Recovery**

Addiction is a complex and chronic condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Understanding the science behind addiction and recovery is essential for both individuals struggling with substance use, and those supporting them in their journey toward healing. This article explores the science of addiction, how it alters the brain, and the recovery process that helps break the cycle.

### **The Brain's Role in Addiction**

At the core of addiction lies the brain's reward system, a complex network of structures responsible for feelings of pleasure, motivation, and reinforcement. The key player here is dopamine, a neurotransmitter often referred to as the brain's "feel-good" chemical. When a person consumes substances like drugs, alcohol, or even engages in certain behaviors (such as gambling), it triggers the release of dopamine, creating an intense feeling of excitement.

Over time, the brain's reward system becomes dependent on the substance or behavior. As the brain adapts to the presence of these external stimulus, it begins to produce less dopamine naturally and relies on the substance for stimulation. This creates a vicious cycle where the individual needs more of the substance to achieve the same high, leading to tolerance and ultimately, dependence.

## The Cycle of Addiction

The cycle of addiction is often self-perpetuating. As tolerance builds, individuals feel the need to increase their consumption to achieve the desired effects. The brain's reward system becomes less responsive over time, making it harder for people to experience joy from non-addictive activities, thus reinforcing the behavior.

As addiction progresses, it leads to a range of physical, emotional, and social consequences. These can include brain changes that impact decision-making, impulse control, memory, and emotional regulation. This explains why addiction often leads to continued use despite negative consequences, as the brain's ability to recognize long-term harm diminishes.

## The Role of Genetics and Environment

Addiction is not solely a result of individual choice or willpower. Genetic factors play a significant role in determining a person's susceptibility to addiction. Research suggests that certain genetic variations can increase the likelihood of developing an addiction, particularly in individuals with a family history of substance use disorders.

However, genetics alone do not determine addiction. Environmental factors, such as childhood trauma, stress, peer pressure, or exposure to substance use at an early age, can also increase the risk. These factors, combined with genetic predisposition, can create a perfect storm for addiction to take root.

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## Recovery: Rewiring the Brain

While addiction can cause lasting changes to the brain, the good news is that recovery is possible. The process of recovery involves not just abstinence from the substance but also rewiring the brain's reward system. This is achieved through therapy, lifestyle changes, and sometimes medication, all of which work together to support lasting recovery.

- 1 Therapy and Counseling:** Psychological treatments, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Interviewing, are effective in helping individuals identify the root causes of their addiction, change unhealthy thought patterns, and develop healthier coping strategies. Individual therapy can assist individuals address underlying psychological issues contributing to their addiction.
- 2 Medication:** Certain medications can help reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms, making it easier for individuals to maintain sobriety. These medications target the brain's reward system, helping to normalize dopamine levels.
- 3 Support Networks:** Building a supportive community is crucial in recovery. Group therapy, 12-step programs, Community Resources (local support organizations, volunteer opportunities).

# March Break at PCHS: A Celebration of Creativity, Teamwork, and Self-Care

**By: Oksana Bobrova – Youth Worker**

This March Break, Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) hosted a dynamic and enriching week-long program designed to empower newcomer youth in the Peel Region. With a focus on creativity, teamwork, cultural appreciation, and self-care, the program provided a safe and supportive space for young participants to explore their talents, build meaningful connections, and engage in fun-filled activities.



## **Painting Outside the Lines – Monday**

The week kicked off with an inspiring Youth Painting Event, where participants unlocked their artistic potential. Through hands-on painting exercises, they explored color theory, composition, and self-expression. This creative session not only encouraged imagination but also nurtured patience, confidence, and emotional well-being, setting a positive tone for the transformative week ahead.



## **Together We Thrive – Tuesday**

Tuesday was all about teamwork and collaboration, as youth engaged in interactive challenges and group activities. From problem-solving games to friendly competitions, participants developed essential skills such as leadership, communication, and decision-making. The activities highlighted the power of teamwork and resilience, helping youth forge strong connections with their peers.



## **Cook & Connect – Wednesday**

Midweek, the program took a delicious turn with a hands-on cultural cooking experience. Participants prepared traditional dishes from diverse backgrounds, learning about the history and significance behind each recipe. This engaging session not only enhanced their culinary skills but also encouraged them to embrace cultural diversity and global traditions, all while enjoying a shared meal in a warm, communal setting.



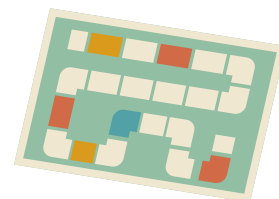
### **Sculpt & Unwind – Thursday**

Thursday was dedicated to self-care and mindfulness, offering a calming and introspective experience. Participants immersed themselves in clay sculpture creation and tote bag designing, using art as a therapeutic tool for relaxation and self-expression. As they molded unique creations, they also discovered the importance of mental well-being, self-reflection, and emotional balance—key elements of personal growth.



### **Game Face On – Friday**

The program wrapped up with an exciting Games Day, where participants tested their knowledge with trivia challenges and enjoyed a variety of classic board games. The atmosphere was filled with laughter, strategy, and friendly competition, reinforcing the significance of teamwork, critical thinking, and social connection in a fun and engaging environment.



Through a week of creative exploration, cultural appreciation, and self-care, PCHS provided newcomer youth with an enriching and empowering experience, equipping them with valuable skills, friendships, and memories to carry forward.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us for this special program! We look forward to making next event even bigger and better. Until then, keep spreading love, positivity, and creativity in all that you do!





# 2025 SHPP HEALTH FAIR

**By: Navdeep Kaur, SHPP  
Community Health Ambassador**

*Healthier Lives: Empowering Wellness for a Brighter Tomorrow*

The SHPP department held a successful Health Fair on Saturday, March 15th, at the Susan Fennell Community Centre. The event was a hit, with over 80 people attending to learn about many helpful health resources. A variety of organizations, such as SOCH Mental Health, Roots Community Services, GAM Diagnostic Imaging, Wellfort Community Services, and several PCHS departments collaborated to share essential health information with the community. Wellfort was on-site, offering free HbA1C testing, so attendees could learn about their sugar levels.

These events are crucial in helping individuals understand and take control of their health. In addition to the information shared, we provided training on Naloxone use, equipping community members with the knowledge to respond in emergencies. Attendees also had the opportunity to undergo diabetes risk assessments and breast cancer risk assessments, further empowering them to take proactive steps in managing their health.

The event had a fun atmosphere with a lively Zumba dance session, which got people moving and energized. It concluded with an exciting raffle, awarding lucky winners with great prizes. Overall, the Health Fair was a great success, not only helping people learn more about staying healthy but also bringing the community together in a positive and enjoyable way.

We look forward to hosting similar events in the future to continue providing valuable health resources, education, and support to the community.



**By: Kamalpreet Kaur, SHPP Case Manager**

On February 7, 2025, the Sahara Health Prevention Promotion (SHPP) team brought the energy, leading an unforgettable Wellness Workshop 2.0—packed with movement and motivation to empower a healthier lifestyle from the comfort of home.

With 16 spirited participants, the event wasn't just about learning — it was about doing. The workshop featured an exciting lineup of physical exercises and lively health trivia all designed to inspire long-lasting habits. Attendees stretched, strengthened, and smiled their way through accessible, at-home routines — proving that fitness doesn't require a gym membership, just a little motivation and know-how.

## The Wellness Workshop 2.0

The health trivia challenge added a playful twist, sparking curiosity and conversation about physical well-being. Each activity blended fun with fitness, leaving participants feeling energized, empowered, and ready to embrace a healthier, more active lifestyle.

The feedback was glowing — attendees loved the dynamic mix of movement, learning, and community spirit. This wasn't just a workshop; it was a wellness wake-up call — a reminder that taking care of your body can be empowering, exciting, and achievable every day.

# March is Nutrition Month 2025: Fuel Your Health, Nourish to Flourish

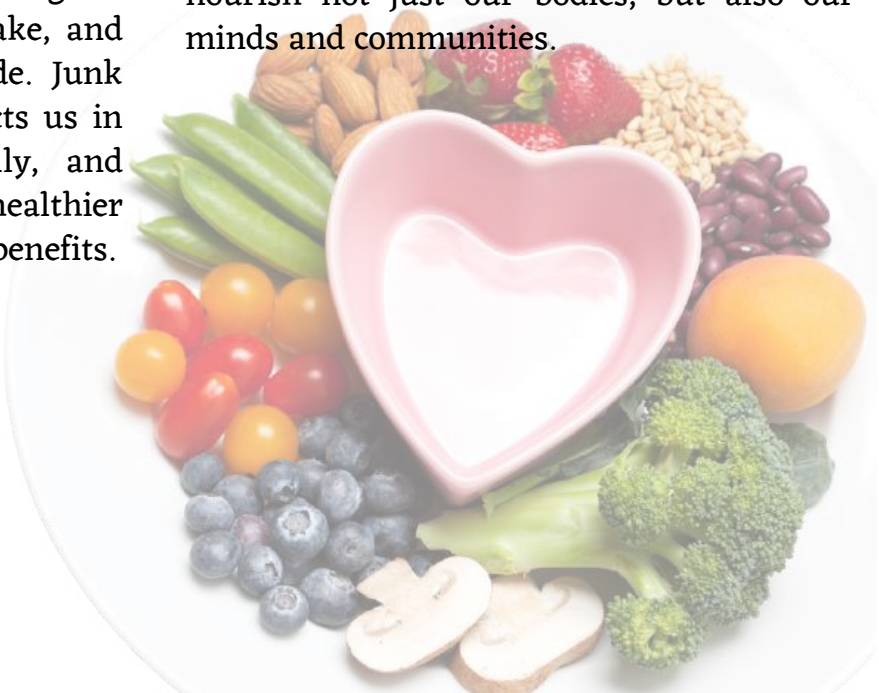
**By: Mahakdeep Sidhu, SHPP Nursing Student**

Nutrition is more than just food—it’s a lifestyle. It has a holistic impact on our health, influencing not only our physical well-being but also our mental, emotional, and social health. This year, Dietitians of Canada have announced “Nourish to Flourish” as the theme for Nutrition Month 2025, to emphasize the link between nutrition and holistic well-being. The focus is on how food does more than nourish our bodies as it brings people together, fosters cultural connections, and supports mental well-being.

Nutrition Month is celebrated to encourage informed food choices and highlight the intricate role of food in our overall well-being. The goal is to promote healthy and mindful eating habits, emphasizing the benefits of cooking at home, reducing processed food intake, and following the Canadian Food Guide. Junk food consumption negatively impacts us in multiple ways physically, mentally, and financially, whereas adopting healthier eating habits can lead to long-term benefits.

A balanced diet should include an appropriate mix of proteins, carbohydrates, healthy fats, fiber, hydration, micronutrients, and antioxidants which are all essential for growth, disease prevention, immune support, and overall vitality. Nutrition is not just about sustenance; it is deeply linked with our emotions, identity, and culture. Food is often a reflection of our heritage and traditions, forming a vital part of our social lives.

Eating well is a rewarding journey that enhances both physical and mental health. Enjoying meals with others, cooking more often, and consuming foods that align with our cultural values can contribute to a healthier, more fulfilling lifestyle. By making conscious food choices, we can nourish not just our bodies, but also our minds and communities.

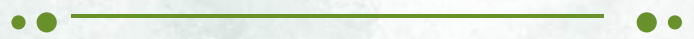
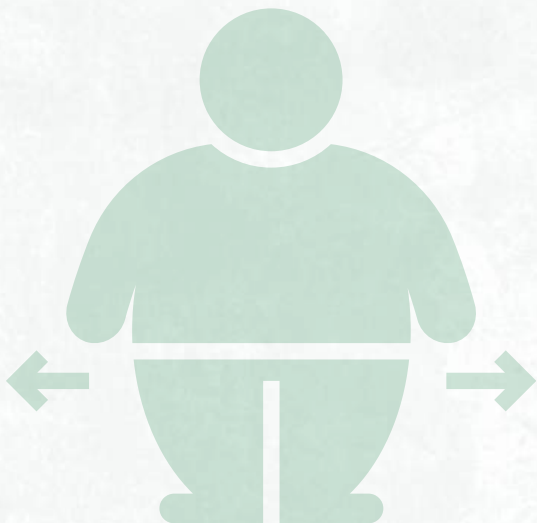


# World Obesity Day - March 4

**By: Arpan Gill, SHPP Nursing Student**

On **World Obesity Day**, we take the opportunity to recognize the complex factors contributing to obesity and the importance of health promotion through physical activity, nutrition, and supportive environments. This year's theme, "Let's talk about obesity and...", encourages open discussions on obesity from multiple perspectives, acknowledging that it is not just about individual choices but also includes broader societal and environmental factors (Government of Canada, 2024).

Obesity is a significant public health concern in Canada, with nearly two in three adults and one in three children and youth classified as overweight or living with obesity (Government of Canada, 2024). This condition increases the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Addressing obesity requires an integrated approach to promote healthy living, increase physical activity, and encourage healthy eating habits.



Nutrition plays a vital role in preventing obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. However, multiple factors influence our ability to make healthy food choices, including the availability of nutritious foods in our homes, schools, grocery stores, and restaurants, as well as social influences and food marketing (Government of Canada, 2024). Creating supportive food environments can encourage healthier choices. The Food Guide Kitchen is a great resource that offers easy recipes, cooking tips, and instructional videos to help Canadians make informed food choices (Government of Canada, 2024).



## OBESITY IN CANADA

### A growing concern!

**Over 5 million adults in Canada have obesity (2014 Canadian Community Health Survey).**

**30% (1 in 3 adults) in Canada has obesity and may require medical support (2015 Canadian Health Measures Survey).**

**The prevalence of obesity in Canadian adults is projected to continue increasing over the next two decades.**



Physical activity is another crucial component of maintaining a healthy weight and overall well-being. Small changes, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator, joining a community sports league, or walking outdoors, can significantly improve daily activity levels (Government of Canada, 2024).

At Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), we recognize the importance of addressing obesity within our community. Our programs focus on culturally appropriate health education, diabetes prevention, and lifestyle modification support. Through workshops, community outreach, and tailored health promotion initiatives, we aim to increase awareness about the risks of obesity and provide accessible resources for healthier living. Our dedicated team works with individuals and families to promote balanced nutrition, encourage active lifestyles, and address health disparities within the Punjabi population. By integrating culturally relevant approaches, we strive to create a supportive environment where healthier choices become more accessible and sustainable.

On this World Obesity Day, let us continue to raise awareness and build supportive communities to foster healthier lifestyles. By taking proactive steps toward better health, we can collectively work towards reducing obesity rates and improving overall well-being across Canada.



**CHANGING SYSTEMS  
HEALTHIER  
LIVES**



# PCHS In The Community



*PCHS Staff completed ASIST Training in March 2025*



*The SHPP Team conducting diabetes risk assessments with the community*



*The SHPP Team providing information about diabetes & obesity*



*PCHS Settlement & Addictions' team participating at the Health Fair*



*Geriatrics department celebrating International Women's Day (IWD)*



*SHPP Team at a community outreach*

# March Into Wellness Series

PCHS kicked off March Into Wellness, a campaign dedicated to promoting health and well-being throughout the month. We covered a variety of topics to enhance self-care and overall wellness, including building healthy routines, prioritizing health, preventive screenings, healthy eating, staying active, managing stress, and the importance of sleep and hydration. We also celebrated reflection, progress, and the power of self-love.

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HEALTH PROMOTION & PREVENTION

## March INTO wellness

Thriving Thursdays



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### Tips on Setting and Achieving Personal Wellness Goals

- 1 Create a Vision Board
- 2 Track Your Progress
- 3 Celebrate Small Victories

>>>

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### Track Your Progress

Take the time to track each step to see how far you have come!

>>>

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### Create a Vision Board

- Think About Your Goals**  
What do you want to achieve?
- Visualize Your Goals**  
What does achieving those goals look like?
- Put Your Goals Together**  
You can draw, write, or use online programs to put all your goals in one place.
- Take Action**  
Take the Steps to Achieve these Goals

>>>

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### Celebrate Small Victories

- Share with someone**
- Keep a jar of your victories**
- Acknowledge the victories**
- Treat yourself**

TREAT YOURSELF TODAY

# March Into Wellness Series

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## March **INTO** wellness

Tasty Tuesdays



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## Nutrition & Healthy Eating

### Benefits of Greek Yogurt

- Rich in protein
- Vitamin B12
- B2
- Calcium
- Phosphorus
- Zinc
- Potassium
- Supports gut health



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## Different ways to consume Greek yogurt



Yogurt parfait with  
granola, oats & fruits



Make lassi (Buttermilk  
drink)



Marination of chicken or  
paneer

# WELCOME

NEW STAFF



**Umar**

Marketing and Social  
Media Specialist



## Empowering Caregivers: Supporting Children with Autism

**16+ years**

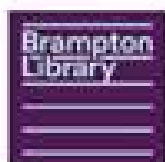
Join us for a program designed to provide caregivers with personalized tools and strategies to support children with autism. This session includes:

- **1:1 Supportive Counselling:** Receive individualized guidance tailored to your unique caregiving journey.
- **Coping Strategies:** Learn practical techniques to manage stress and foster resilience for both you and your child.
- **Additional Resources and Services:** Discover a wealth of local and national programs, tools, and services to enhance your support network.

This session aims to empower caregivers with the knowledge and confidence needed to navigate challenges and celebrate successes in their child's development.

**Gore Meadows    April 1, 2025    10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

This program is held in partnership with Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS). Registration required. For more information, please contact [harpreet.dhaliwal@pchs4u.com](mailto:harpreet.dhaliwal@pchs4u.com).



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## ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ: ਔਟਿਜ਼ਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਭਾਗ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਉਮਰ: 16 ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ

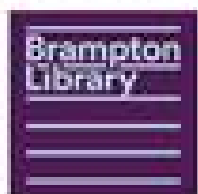
ਔਟਿਜ਼ਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਸਾਧਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਣਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਲਈ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਵੋ। ਇਸ ਸੈਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ:

- 1:1 ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਕਾਊਂਸਲਿੰਗ: ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਗਤ ਮਾਰਗਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰੋ।
- ਨਜਿੱਠਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ: ਤਣਾਅ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਤਕਨੀਕਾਂ ਸਿੱਖੋ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਲਈ ਲਚਕੀਲੇਪਨ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਓ।
- ਅਤਿਰਿਕਤ ਸਰੋਤ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ: ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਨੈੱਟਵਰਕ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮਾਂ, ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਲਓ।

ਇਸ ਸੈਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇਖਭਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨੈਵੀਗੇਟ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਫਲਤਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਸ਼ਨ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ।

**Gore Meadows    April 1, 2025    10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਹੈਲਥ ਸਰਵਿਸਿਜ਼ (PCHS) ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝੇਦਾਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਯੋਜਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਰਜਿਸਟ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ [harpreet.dhalliwal@pchs4u.com](mailto:harpreet.dhalliwal@pchs4u.com) or 905-872-3582 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।



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# Client Testimonial

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*The caregiver resides in England, while her parents live in Brampton, Ontario. She is very grateful for the services provided by the PCHS staff.*

*“As a caregiver residing in England, it has been a challenge to ensure the well-being of my elderly parents, who live in Canada. My parents, aged 91 and 93, require extensive support for medical appointments, counseling, and overnight respite services. Recently, my father suffered a stroke and was urgently hospitalized. During this critical moment, my mother contacted the IST case manager, who promptly called 911 and managed the situation effectively, ultimately saving my father's life.*

*My father is still in the hospital, but the case manager has continuously provided support to both my parents, maintaining regular contact with me as well. The case manager even took my mother to visit my father, as there was no one else who could do so. This consistent communication and assistance have been invaluable, offering much-needed reassurance and support during this difficult time.*

*I am profoundly grateful for the efforts and dedication of the case manager. Their timely intervention and ongoing support have made a significant difference in the lives of my parents and have provided me with peace of mind despite the distance.”*





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



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