

THE WELLNESS POST

SPRING 2022

HOME FIRST COMMUNITY SUPPORT SPRING FORWARD

Hello March, Hello Spring!

When the snow begins to melt and little bits of green grass start to appear, it is a good indication that spring is near!

The first day of Spring is March 20th. This is often a time of rebirth and new beginnings in both nature and as a human experience. During this time, flowers begin to bloom and tree branches start to fill up with leaves. Similarly, spring is when people tend to focus on tasks that align with a fresh start.

Tips on how to "Spring Forward"

Practice Gratitude – What is currently working in your life? What are you grateful for? This can be done in your head or as a journal activity each day.

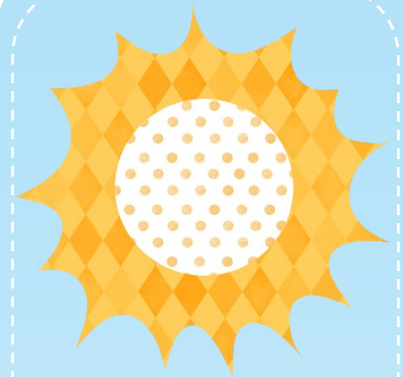
Try something New - Take a cue from Mother Nature- seeds need sun and water and thrive, people do too! For example, you can go for a hike in nature (check out the York Regional Forests- free of charge and open all year long)

<https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/3829d763-1bf1-4ff8-8b10-7fe345213e0d/Everyday+Guide+to+the+York+Region+Forest.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=nHEGz2O>

Declutter and Start Fresh- For example, donate items you no longer use, put away that laundry pile in the corner of your room, clean those windows so the beautiful sun can shine in, take up a new hobby, or spend more time in nature.

The Peer Support Specialists, Natalie, Maggie, Domenic & Bill would like you to know we are here to assist you in your journey. Sometimes we need help to see things in a different way. Contact your Case Manager if you would like added support!

Every day is an opportunity to start again



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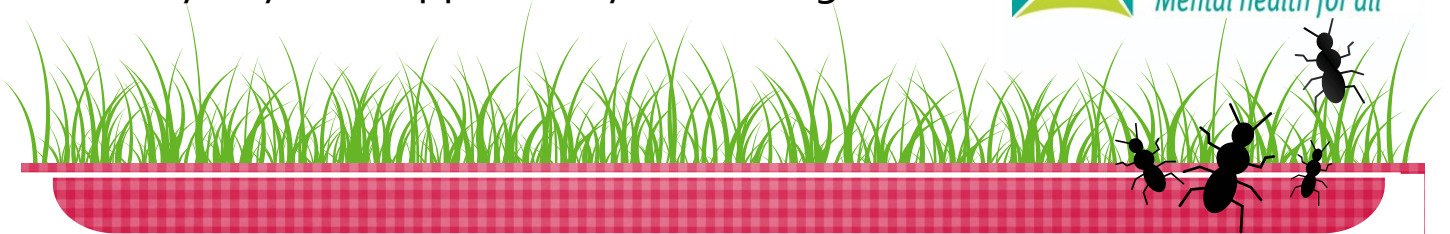
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Important Dates

03/20 First Day of Spring
03/22 International Earth Day



Canadian Mental
Health Association
York and South Simcoe
Mental health for all



A Personal Journey

Someone's story can be so empowering to others. It can be a thread of HOPE to anyone that reads their success story.

Everyone that would like to share their stories of their journey are more than welcome to.

If you need assistance in writing or editing your story or have something to submit please reach out to :

mfullerton@cmha-yr.on.ca

nrogers@cmha-yr.on.ca

dpolito@cmha-yr.on.ca

bayotte@cmha-yr.on.ca

Your Peer Support Specialists

Home First Community Support Team:

Maggie, Natalie, Domenic & Bill.

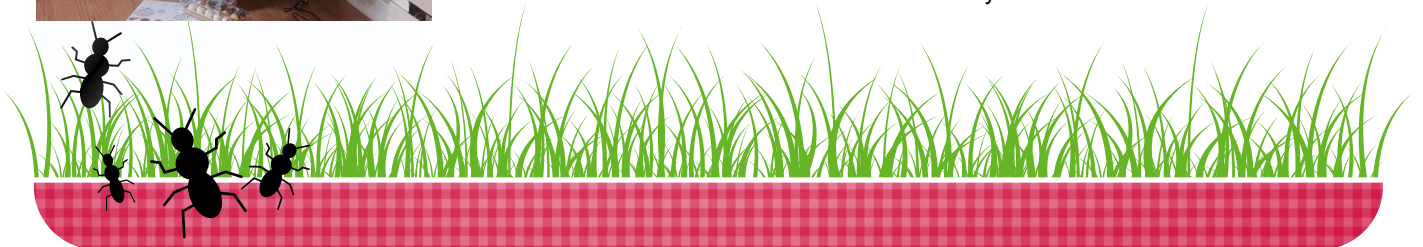
SPRING FORWARD WITH YOUR JOURNEY



From Homeless To Our Own Home

Growing up, I was always an artistic and curious child that never fit in. I was bullied and tormented relentlessly, none of my friends liked any of my interests. Finding pretty rocks or learning languages, did not fit in with the popular crowd. The solace I found was in books, painting and fencing. I practiced fencing daily with a determination burning inside, to try to prove to someone, anyone, that I was good enough. Just as I found myself grasping on the step before the summit, the competition before my U.S.A. scholarship, and a permanent gold title in Canada - I got sick. It's called Fibromyalgia. It started with my hands and spread like wildfire. Fibromyalgia is brutal, sharp and ever-burning. The pain was unbearable, it was indescribable, it was not fair and it never got better. My family pushed me away as did my friends, and no matter what I did, I could never be enough - regardless of how much it hurt me to do so. I met the love of my life Yuriy in the summer before my first year of university. My studying paid off, and my average was high enough to earn an entry scholarship to go to and be able to afford the university. Now thankfully my husband, who continuously supports me, I finally felt understood and cared for, and perhaps hopeful for a brief second that life was on the mend. Unfortunately that was not the chapter that has been written for my fate. We fell in love, got married and prepared to spend our lives saving up and building towards our future, yet that too was shattered. As we came home one night, the locks were changed on us with no warning. Nowhere to go and in a state of such utter shock and despair, we were paralyzed. I was paralyzed. I was in -apt to help or to fix anything for my family. We slept in the car, under the bridge and in the fields with our adorable and sweetheart of a cat and bird. We struggled for food and shelter. When one of our friends suggested we apply to CMHA, I researched the program upon my first opportunity with Wi-Fi - and it seemed too incredible to be true, to be as real and honest in the services they claimed to provide. However a shot in the dark is better than no shot at all, so I sent in an application. Life as I previously described was a whirlwind of terror and anxiety and I didn't know where we would sleep or eat or bathe the next day. Until one day. The day Caroline A. A. Santos called, and told me my file is up for consideration. The next day this lovely woman called me; and I was given the news of our acceptance. She immediately connected me to my support worker Mila Vega Perez who personally, I believe, is an angel walking among us. With these two incredible women present in my life, I was able to get not only a rental supplement with my qualifications, I was also able to be privy to the emotional and personal support on such a high level, I still tear up thinking about it. Jacky Tam as the clinical lead has been such an incredible and supportive individual. He was able to advocate for me, and help me gain confidence in my potential, more than I have ever before. Mila has been with me from the beginning and I truly feel the warmth and generosity, each and every time I am lucky enough to speak to her. This program has been the Christmas present I could never dream of becoming possible. To spend a whole summer homeless in the rain and in the wind - to having a home to call our own, as well as having such caring and genuine people that truly do their best to help and support me, has been a profound and transformative experience. CMHA has given me the light at the end of the tunnel. The support of sturdy walls as I felt them crumble around me, and a path so strong that when I believed the world was falling under my feet, it held me up. I owe this program a debt of gratitude for it's immeasurable impact in mine and my family's life. It was a miracle I was scared I did not deserve. Through their counseling, I was able to realize that despite my familial relations, I do deserve support and I do deserve love, however I would have never found it without CMHA. I could not express in any language how grateful I am for all the support, and cannot express just how much this program has helped us flourish. I am ever so lucky to continue to be working with CMHA.

~Alice Danylenk





Kind Hearts are the Gardens
 Kind Thoughts are the Roots
 Kind Words are the Blossoms
 Kind Deeds are the Fruit

~Anonymous

"Self care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you"

~Katie Reed

HARM REDUCTION IS SELF CARE

ALL SERVICES ARE FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL

If you are a person who uses drugs\substances or is seeking support for a friend or family member in York Region, here is what you can access :

Harm reduction supplies such as:

- Sterile needles and syringes
- Sterile water
- Cookers
- Vitamin C
- Filters
- Straight (crack) pipes
- Brass screens
- Push sticks
- Bowl (meth) pipes
- Mouthpieces
- Used needle disposal containers
- Condoms, lube, dental dams

Sites to obtain Harm Reduction supplies & resources in York Region:

*CAYR Community Connections

17665 Leslie Street, Unit 12, Newmarket

Tel: 905-884-0613 & Toll free: 1-800-243-7717

*The Krasman Centre

10121 Yonge St Richmond Hill

Tel: 905-780-0491

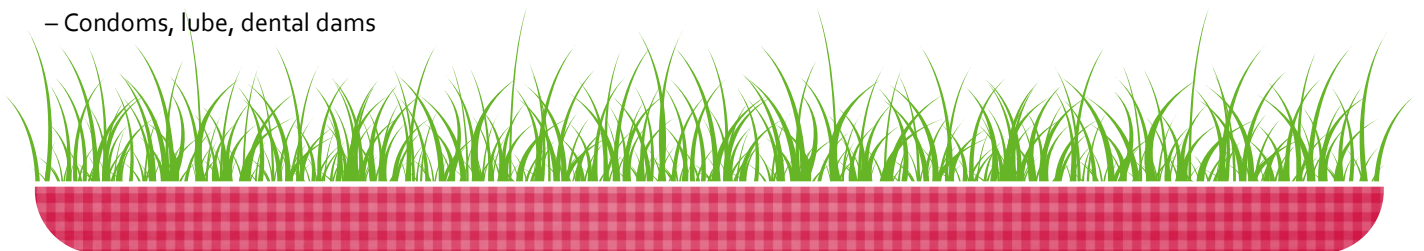
*Loft Crosslinks Street Outreach Van

Call 1-866-553-4053 to schedule a meeting

After hours text # for van: 416-274-4972

*York Region Public Health

Tel: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 766





Domenic Polito playing Awaken

Awaken

Awaken was written as a feel good song. The song starts off slow, it graduates to a slightly faster tempo and then picks up full speed ahead.

Like our mental health, things are slow moving in the beginning, then they start to pick up, and then begin to feel so much better. The song goes back to the slow part because in real life that's what happens sometimes. Our mental health declines when we don't take care of it or tragic life events happen. So we pick up again, bring it back to medium speed and then start to speed up to where we are finally where we want to be.

Enjoy,

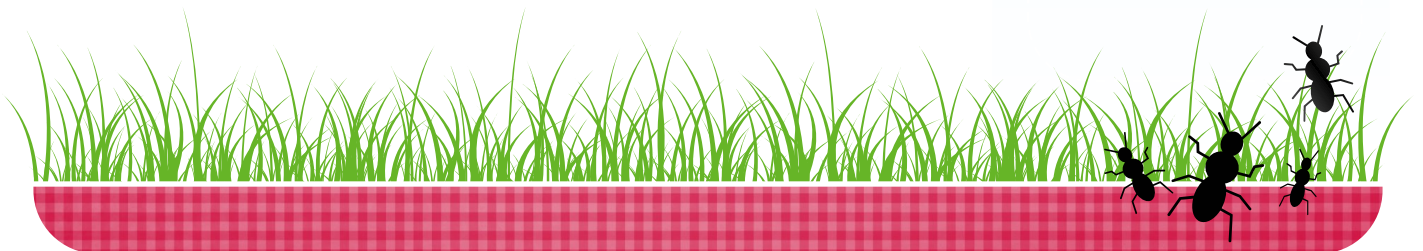
Domenic Polito

<https://ln5.sync.com/d1/9bba4a8c0/8ttp2rv6-ddpd7ga5-negdmk45-u2izthr9/view/default/10660631950005>

Especially Made For You!

Domenic, one of four Peer Support Specialists on the Home First Community Support Team, composed this song especially for you! It was inspired by the weather of winter moving into spring and also our moods. Everybody gets moody. Moods are a natural part of your emotional rhythm. But, if your low moods are lasting for more than two weeks and you have felt sad, down or miserable most of the time or have lost interest in most of your usual activities, you could have depression. Make an appointment to talk to your family Doctor about how you are feeling. Please enjoy the music created by Dom. If you need added support, contact your Case Manager and ask for Peer Support.

Really is a beautiful song and worth going to the link!



Spring Forward

The gray clouds of winter are now behind us now
 As the sunlight brightens our days and flowers begin to grow
 Darkness is now in the past as we can now bring spring forward
 We have a new purpose as we feel the warmth of the suns glow

Everything is new again as the colors of spring start to show
 The sun is our source of illumination for new awakening
 Let spring be your distraction to cope with the dark days of winter
 May this give you new energy and hope as the you continue to grow



*"Being a good tenant and being a good landlord are not innate skills and can be taught. RentSmart is a proven educational approach that builds successful tenancies for both tenants and landlords. **This is key to housing stability, prevention of homelessness and strong communities.**" Kristi Rivait, Co-Executive Director, Ready to Rent BC.*



RentSmart is designed to build a combination of life skills, knowledge and confidence in tenants and landlords through Community Educators. In CMHA-YRSS we have Certified RentSmart Educators who are delivering the education to our clients and participants **free**.

About RentSmart

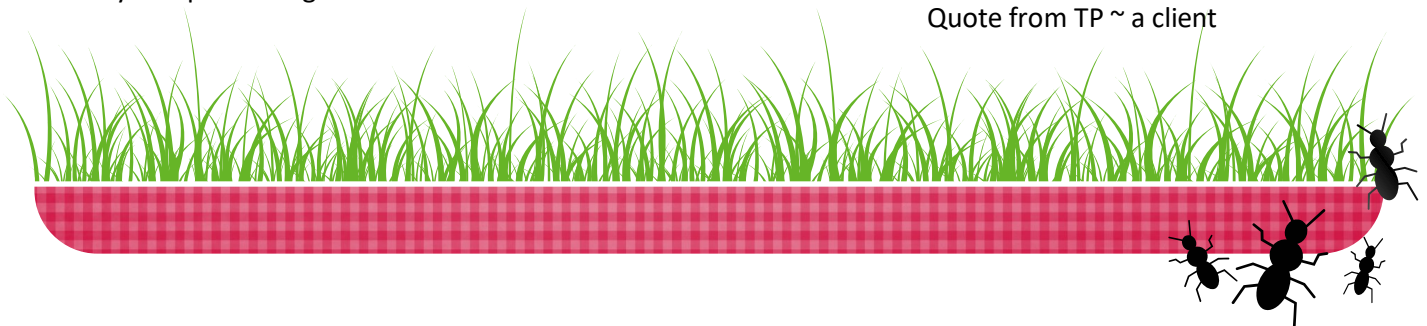
Millions of Canadian households like our clients and participants, want a safe, suitable, affordable home to rent; landlords want tenants to pay rent on time, respect neighbours and take care of their property. Being a good tenant or a good landlord is a learnable skill. RentSmart provides education and support to tenants, landlords, and community champions with one goal: Successful Tenancies for all. Successful tenancies are key to building strong communities, increasing housing stability and preventing homelessness.

For Tenants/clients: Certificate curriculum is interactive education focused on developing reliable tenants, preventing damages and evictions and ending the homelessness cycle. RentSmart education is for anyone who wants to understand their role as tenants, may face barriers to housing, and want to reduce those barriers. RentSmart builds knowledge, confidence and life skills. Upon completion of the RentSmart Certificate course or RentSmart Basic course participants earn the RentSmart Certificate or letter of Completion. Landlords are able to verify the Certificate and know that graduates have taken the time to learn how to be a good tenant.

Please connect with your Case Manager or Housing Specialist to register. <https://cmha-yr.on.ca/get-support/community-connections-16/>

"I know my rights I attended RentSmart Training"

Quote from TP ~ a client



Mental Health Toolkit

As the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic moves into its third year of altering our new normal, many of us face additional challenges and hardships. But no matter how hopeless or confined you feel at the moment, there are steps you can take to ease the burden on your mental health. Using the short tips contained in this toolkit, you can improve your mood, feel less isolated, and ease the stress of social restrictions.

Create Your Own Mental Health Toolkit

Looking after your mental health can be challenging. What tools do you have to help manage what daily life stressors to least impact you? A Mental Health Toolkit is not a fixed thing, but rather an ongoing process of figuring out what works best for you and when to use them. As the name suggests, it is a tool to use to help maintaining a happier and healthier you. It's much easier to run towards something you want than away from something you don't.

When Do You Use the Mental Health Toolkit?

The more times you reach into your toolkit, the more likely it will become second nature and more quickly you would reach for your mental health tool kit when you are experiencing difficult times. The Toolkit is not a quick fix but rather something you build upon to become aware when you start to feel anxious or depressed, to have the tools to motivate yourself to spend less time in darker moments.

Does the Mental Health Toolkit Work Every Time?

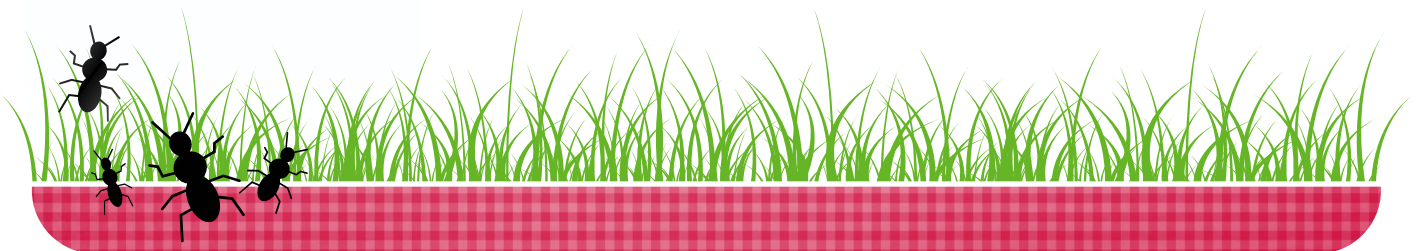
As previously mentioned this is a toolkit that needs to be practiced. Having a multitude of different methods in your toolbox makes it easier to apply in everyday life. For example, sometimes you won't feel like ...journaling and may enjoy putting on your favorite song may make you break out in singing or dancing that can alter your mood. Creating your own lists of practical items to put in your toolbox makes you having a plan before things over burden you.

The most important thing to keep in mind is this is your Mental Health Toolkit.

The more items you can put into it, the more choices you have when you need to reach into that tool box to assist you. Finding something that works for you and using it, is most important. Check out the last page of the newsletter for an example of a Mental Health Toolkit.

Remember: your Toolkit is not a must do list, rather it is a list of resources for you to add to or remove as your needs change.

Refer to the last page of the newsletter for an example of a Mental health Toolkit



Recovery

Recovery is based on respect: Community, systems, and acceptance and appreciation for people affected by mental health and substance use problems, including protecting their rights and eliminating discrimination are crucial in achieving recovery. There is a need to acknowledge that taking steps towards recovery may require great courage. Self-acceptance, developing a positive and meaningful sense of identity, and regaining belief in one's self are particularly important.

Within the Home First Community Support Team there are four Peer Support Specialists, Natalie, Maggie, Domenic & Bill. We are here to walk beside you in your journey should you feel you could use that support. The support is grounded in hope, empowerment, and recovery. The supporter has also lived through a similar experience and has found their way to a path of recovery. Ask your Case Manager if you are interested in having a Peer Support Specialist to assist you in your journey of recovery.

"A peer supporter who has traveled a path of recovery can relate and offer empathy and validation, which offers the peer hope, a key determinant to recovery."

UNDER THE RAINBOW DISCUSSION GROUP



Under the Rainbow Group

Come and connect at our safe, social and supportive virtual discussion group for those who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and their allies.

When: The 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 P.M.

Where: Virtually over Zoom- Meeting link will be provided prior to the group

For more details and to register, contact Natalie Rogers at

Nrogers@cmha-yr.on.ca



Photography
by Maggie

This is from Ontario Public Health Changes to public health and workplace safety measures

The following changes to public health and workplace safety measures are in effect as of March 1, 2022. For the full list of measures in effect, see O. Reg. 364/20.

- capacity limits have been lifted in all indoor public settings
- proof of vaccination requirements have been lifted
 - businesses and organizations may choose to require proof of vaccination upon entry
 - other protective measures, such as mask/face covering requirements and passive screening of patrons remain in place
 - businesses and organizations that are open must continue to have safety plans in place

To keep up to date :

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/public-health-measures>

Key Times to Wash Hands

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

Before, during
and after preparing food.

Before and after eating food

Before and after caring for
someone at home who is sick
with vomiting or diarrhea

Before and after treating a
cut or wound

After using the toilet

After changing diapers or
cleaning up a child who has
used the toilet

After blowing your nose,
coughing, or sneezing

After touching an animal,
animal feed, or animal waste

After handling pet food or
pet treats

After touching garbage



Days Observed in Spring ~ Just to name a few... Let us know if you have one to add!

March 3 Hina matsuri Girl's Day or Doll's Day (Japan)

March 8 International Women's Day

March 9-10 Holi Festival - India

March 13 Daylight Savings, Pi Day

(Remember to turn your clocks 1 hour forward)

March 15 Ides of March

March 17 St. Patrick's Day

March 20 Spring (Vernal) Equinox

March 22 International Earth Day

March 25 Annunciation

March 27 Passover

March 28 Palm Sunday

April 2 Good Friday, National Walk to Work Day

April 4 Easter Sunday

April 8-16 Passover

April 12 Ramadan begins

April 21 Administrative Professionals Day

April 22 Earth Day (U.S.)

April 22 Take Your Teenager to Work Day

May 1 May Day

May 4 National Teacher's Day, Star Wars Day

May 5 Cinco De Mayo

May 9 Mother's Day, Lilac Sunday

May 24 Victoria Day (Canada)

April 1 April Fool's Day, International Tatting Day

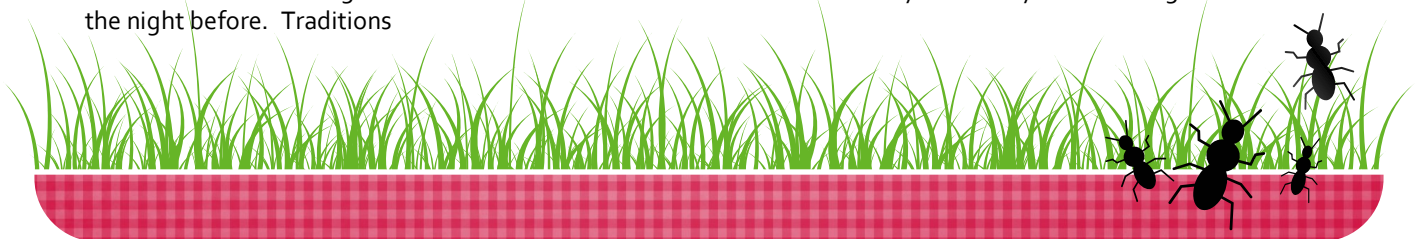
Do you have a cultural holiday you wish to share?

Lunar New Year submitted Victoria Huang (Case Manager)

Lunar New Year is one of the biggest celebrations in East Asia - celebrated everywhere from Korea to Singapore, and many of their diasporic communities. One of the more well-known celebrations in York Region is the Chinese New Year. This is celebrated by the descendants of Greater China (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and Mainland China). In the Chinese community, this involves the entire family - including extended relatives and communities. During this time, people will deep clean their homes (similar to "spring cleaning") before the New Year and have a big dinner the night before. Traditions



differ depending on which region a family is from but include special dishes, each prepared with a special meaning. For example, some people from Northern China will make dumplings with the whole family to symbolize wealth. Those from the Coastal and Riverside regions cook fish to wish for a plentiful year. In the South, glutinous rice cakes are prepared in hopes for a prosperous new year. During this time, the younger generation receives red pockets filled with money and candy - if they can impress the older generation with verbal blessings! The New Year celebration begins February 1st, 2022 and lasts for over two weeks, filled with fun, food and family. This year is the year of the Tiger.



| Tools List | Contacts and Notes |
|--|--------------------|
| Talk to a friend | |
| Talk to a health care professional, doctor, pharmacist, etc. | |
| Peer Support | |
| Listen to music, make music or sing | |
| Relaxation & Stress Reduction Exercises | |
| Journaling (writing in a notebook) | |
| Exercises/ go for a walk | |
| Diet considerations | |
| Sleep /extra rest | |
| See a counsellor / therapist | |
| Pamper yourself / Spa Day | |
| Community supports, including Community centers, drop-in centers | |
| Look through old photos, scrapbooks & photo albums | |
| Make a list of your accomplishments/ practice gratitude | |
| Do something special for someone else/ volunteer | |

Refer to Page 6 of Newsletter for more information regarding Mental Health Toolkit

Need assistance creating a Toolkit tailored to you?

Talk to your Case Manager, if added support needed, ask for a Peer Support Specialist.

For submissions to Newsletter talk to your Case Manager, Housing Specialist and/or

Peer Support Specialists