

NEWSLETTER - FALL 2024

Inspiring Journeys



Greetings,

As I reflect on my first two years as President and CEO at Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, I am struck by the transformative power of possibility — and hope.

Waypoint provides care for some of the most vulnerable individuals in the province who face complex mental health and substance use challenges. Offering unwavering support, we guide all patients through their darkest moments with compassion and expertise. We challenge the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction and foster an environment where every person is embraced with understanding and acceptance.

Waypoint's vision — to change lives by leading the advancement and delivery of compassionate care — drives everything we do. From best-practice treatments and innovative service delivery models to cutting-edge research informed by patient perspectives, we are pushing boundaries and setting new standards.

Keeping pace with increased demand for mental health, addiction and geriatric care in Ontario requires the leadership, innovation and expertise of many team members and community partners, along with the incredible support of donors like you.

I'm delighted to share this issue of *Inspiring Journeys* with you. Inside you'll read about just some of Waypoint's dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters, and hear from two patients who have been brave enough to share their personal journeys.

As I celebrate my anniversary at Waypoint, I remain humbled to work alongside all of Waypoint's amazing staff, physicians and volunteers, and am grateful to you for supporting all that we do.

With sincerest thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nadiya'.

Dr. Nadiya Sunderji
President & CEO



Therapy dogs bring comfort and connection

Beau and Brenda are volunteers at Waypoint. Together they generously donate their time, brightening the days of patients (and staff). Connection is so important for our mental health and this volunteer team is certainly connecting and making a difference.

"My dad was cared for in the Alzheimer's program at Waypoint, and I visited the unit every week for over two years."

Brenda continues, "Once I took my granddaughter in for a visit and there were big smiles all around from the patients. This gave me the idea of finding out more about the possibility of a pet therapy dog visiting the hospital."

She says, "It took me a few years until the perfect dog came into my life – Beau is a border collie mix and has always adored people. My goal with Beau was to give back to the place that gave my father so much kindness and care. He is so full of love and so intuitive with people that I knew he would be perfect to help at Waypoint."

"The positive impact of a therapy dog is much greater than I would ever have believed."

"Therapy dogs can change lives. Beau is seven years old and very intuitive. He sits and listens to every word said to him. Some patients hug him and start to cry. Beau brings so much unconditional love into the wards. One gentleman sat unmoving in his wheelchair for many months and the day he saw Beau, he extended his hand out to the dog in greeting. They became friends."

Brenda points out that, "Beau's work is much bigger than just receiving pats from patients. He truly knows when someone especially needs to see him. And if they are not able to reach out, he just stands close beside them to let them know he is there. Therapy dogs are a relaxing presence that can interrupt anxiety. Many Alzheimer patients have no family visits at all. They desperately need visits and some attention in their day – and Beau is there to provide loads of care and happiness!"

"Beau has a strong desire to work – he is always excited when he knows we are getting ready to visit Waypoint. He has many friends on staff, and he always looks for certain patients that he has formed a social bond with after months of weekly visits. There is such a wide variety of people to meet, and Beau accepts everyone for where they are – no matter the circumstance. Together, we have had so many mind-boggling experiences, I've seen so many miracles happen in this program."

"I want friends and donors to Waypoint to know that this work is rewarding for everyone involved. We need more pet therapy volunteers to come into the hospital. I was raised to give back and volunteer – so, if you have seen good care at Waypoint, get involved and help make it even better."

Brenda concludes by saying "Every day at Waypoint is an adventure for Beau and me, and we get far more back in return!"



OSP program provides the best individualized care possible

Anneliese is part of the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) program team. Improving access to mental health care and offering exceptional support in the community, Anneliese and the OSP team are there when and where people need them most.

The broader community might know that Waypoint provides a range of acute and longer-term mental health and addiction inpatient and outpatient services. But not many are aware that Waypoint also provides very successful outpatient care for people who are experiencing depression, anxiety, or anxiety-related conditions through the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) program.

OSP is free and has a self-referral option to increase access for people in need of support. The program is grounded in evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and is tailored for individuals looking for help. CBT is a form of talk therapy that helps people learn to identify, question and change how their thoughts, attitudes and beliefs relate to their health and wellbeing.

Anneliese Surmann is a therapist in the program and says that "OSP works so well because it teaches clients very practical skills that they can use every day, alongside a compassionate perspective. CBT is a proven method that provides a lot of value for many people."

Impressed with the commitment to patient care, Anneliese has chosen to build a strong professional connection with Waypoint, "I first started at Waypoint in 2018 as a social work student in training. Waypoint is unique in the sense that it offers very specialized, individual care – it does not use a 'one size fits all' approach. This commitment to personal care made a big impression on me. I want to be part of a team with a philosophy of finding out what works best for the individual patient, rather than what just works, overall."

Anneliese continues, "after my graduate work, I've been at Waypoint since the start of the OSP program and it's been extremely rewarding to be part of something that has grown to be a great success today. We work from the ground up to understand the client's individual experience. With OSP I've seen how working on basic, practical skills can lead to massive changes. The program is delivered online in meetings with a therapist, as well as with self-guided work by the client. The sessions are more than virtual. We also use the telephone or meet in person, depending on the needs of the client."

"Waypoint has designed the program to be open to people across the region, including clients in remote areas or in situations where transportation might be a barrier. We want to deliver help in the best way possible for each person. In addition, we have Indigenous-specific supports as well. I'm very happy to say that OSP is always evolving and offering more training to respond to the needs of unique populations."

As well, she notes that "clients can serve on an advisory council, and they play a vital role to inform our program design and decisions. OSP programs and policies are always transparent and are run through the council for feedback. We are always asking if the program is the very best it can be? Is it helpful? Can we shift to meet new needs? We try everything to provide the best care possible."



The Success of the Youth Hub

Current research suggests that more than half of Ontario youth in grades 7 to 12 say they experience a significant level of psychological distress.

This alarming reality has doubled over the last decade.

Waypoint is the lead organization for the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub, one of twenty seven Youth Wellness Hubs in Ontario. It helps to reduce this hardship with a variety of benefits targeted to the unique needs of youth. Led by a respected inter-professional team - including the youth-led Youth Advisory Committee, youth from ages 12 to 25 can explore group and individual plans designed to achieve the best standard of well-being and life success.

The dynamic North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub supports over 4,500 young client visits a year in the local community with non-clinical services, and approximately 800 additional vulnerable youth visits for those who require clinical services.

This leading program accomplishes everything from one modestly sized meeting room at Waypoint's Community Health Hub in Midland, offering support at the right time and in the right place, both in-person and online. Resources and tools to cope with anything that life can bring include:

- Mental health counselling
- Substance use and addictions counselling
- Peer support
- Employment and education supports
- Primary care and physical health services
- 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous services
- Youth Street Outreach
- Food pantry
- Youth drop-in and a variety of recreation activities
- a wide variety of workshops and cultural teachings.



North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub

Monday - Friday: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Location: 287 Bayshore Drive, Midland, ON L4R 0H1

Phone: 705-427-5639

Email: nsywh@waypointcentre.ca

Youth Intake & Navigation: search.caredove.com/service/25242

Nurse Practitioner: search.caredove.com/service/29809



Belle is a youth leader at the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub, who has dedicated much of her passion and talent to the Hub and youth in our region. Through her commitment to the Hub, Belle is helping to create a community of support for youth.

Belle says that at the Youth Hub, "youth get everything they need to support their social and mental health. Including all the extra good stuff that is so important – for example I can access employment and education counsellors to help me achieve my goals."

In addition, Belle is appreciative of her Hub peers and excited to say that "I was even able to compete in the National Special Olympics and everyone from the Youth Hub tuned in to support me. And I won a medal!"

She continues, "I've been coming regularly for six years and am a member of the Youth Advisory Group. We help to create and run special events, make decisions about the Hub, help everyone to achieve their goals, and supply a youth voice throughout the program."

In addition, local youth can meet and learn positive skills from others who may be facing similar situations.

Program staff point out that if not for the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub looking out for the mental health and wellbeing of young people in the region, there would be nothing else like this to support the needs of 12- to 25-year-old people.

With the help of donors, the Youth Hub can grow to better reach even more young clients with expanded facilities and increased programming.



Your gift goes a very long way

Mark is a strong community leader, a thoughtful donor, and has a close connection to Waypoint through a loved one. Through his own giving and encouragement of others, he is helping to build a brighter future.



Mark starts the discussion by reminding us that, "We can't underestimate the degree to which COVID impacted everyone, especially people dealing with mental health issues."

On top of that, there is increasing inflation pressures and uncertainty hitting people's finances, and so many people are faced with doing more with less. So is Waypoint."

He continues, "I am very thankful to the staff at Waypoint. I know they are under resourced at a time when they must meet some of the biggest increases in community demand in over a hundred years. The fact is that today, they must provide better care to greater numbers of people than ever before. As well, beyond the sheer numbers, staff must be creative in how they reach highly diverse client populations of young people, inpatients, outpatients, and seniors."

"I am very confident that Waypoint is up to meeting this challenge, but they need our support now more than ever. I believe a big positive factor in favour of being successful in the future is that increasingly, Waypoint is basing its care programs on better technology and more data to tackle mental health. This means that rather than waiting for people to come to them, Waypoint can be much more proactive."

"With good data, you can take the initiative and get out and help people. Technology means that - for instance - outpatient care can spot growing areas of need in the community and identify how resources from Waypoint can make the strongest impact. Investments in technology and data can let Waypoint sort out the impact of age and demographic characteristics, among many other variables, and discover how to design and implement the best interventions before a crisis point is reached."

He continues, "Many of us know a young person with a growing mental health issue, or a parent or friend or relative, going through some kind of issue. There are not enough resources to help. We can't only rely on the government to fix things. That's why I am so glad that Waypoint Centre is here to tackle the problem."

As a successful entrepreneur, Mark points out that "It is possible to do more with less, especially using technology. As well, when donors support academic work and research, it doesn't necessarily cost a great deal of money - yet yields a surprisingly great return in terms of helping Waypoint deal with the gravity of complex mental health risks, and the quality of patient care."

"Donors play such an important role in making all of this happen. I've seen first-hand that Waypoint is a capable, compassionate, and very efficiently run charity. When you make a gift, it helps them get to more people, and earlier. This can also mean much less need for long-term care down the road. Your gift goes a very long way."

Light at the end of the tunnel

Samantha is a vibrant, caring member of our community, who is making a profound impact by sharing her story and experience with the OSP program. Her openness is a gift.



Samantha Hollingshead starts by saying that, "For me, trauma started it all! Trauma has impacted my life every day. 365 days of the year. I was suffering in every moment. But I wouldn't be where I am today without Waypoint. They gave me my life back. This is a fact!"

With strength, she shares more of her story. "I'm from a small town and we do not have trauma-based programs. I had done many different programs before, but only found success with Waypoint and the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) program. At first, I was very hesitant that the program was all virtual. I'm a little old school and didn't see how an online program could work for me. But let me tell you, I know now that virtual care can be just as effective. Maybe even more so. I'm living proof that it works – and works well."

Samantha continues, "I came to realize just how trauma distorts our perceptions. When a person reaches out for help – even the act of asking for help can cause more distortions. My experience with Waypoint and OSP helped me to work through so many barriers and get to a place of healing and recovery. Survivors of trauma don't need new barriers to make recovery harder. For me, OSP was the light at the end of the tunnel. Before, I didn't have this kind of chance to receive good care."

"In addition, Waypoint teaches you how to take good care of yourself going forward. My therapist was phenomenal and helped me work through my trauma. The work was all tailored to me. OSP is truly about the client as a unique individual. And I am so grateful to Waypoint and OSP for all the help. It works! The therapy works! For example, some clients do 'symptom records', and you can track results as the process goes along. This alone was a big deal for my recovery – to see that the process was really working and that I was getting results that I could see, and measure. This gave me a lot of hope to continue."

Samantha emphasizes that "I can't speak highly enough of Waypoint and what they have done for me – together we have turned something around that I thought would never happen. I want to give back to Waypoint and the OSP program for their help, so I serve on the OSP advisory committee of clients. Waypoint really wants input from clients to make the program even better. Waypoint heals you. They listen. They care. They want the best for all clients."

"If I were able to invest funds towards mental health, I would proudly choose to invest in Waypoint's OSP program because I know they invest time in helping their clients to achieve healing and recovery. I am confident that any financial investment towards this program is exactly what is needed to make a real difference in people's mental health. Waypoint's OSP program helps us move towards healing and away from stigma."

She concludes that, "I've learned that OSP is a team approach, not at all like other kinds of therapy. It is very different. Waypoint has the experience, the genuine compassion, and they bring it to another level of care."

Information & Resources

Need Immediate Help?

Call 9-1-1 or visit your closest emergency department

Suicide Crisis Helpline, call 9-8-8

Mental Health Crisis and Information Line - 705-728-5044 or 1-888-893-8333 (toll-free)

For Your Mental Health

Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (therapyontario.ca)

Idoor.ca

Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinics (rvh.on.ca/areas-of-care/mental-health-and-addictions/adult-addiction-services/)

Quick Access Counselling Clinic for children, youth and their families (newpath.ca/book-now/)

In the News

\$750,000 Grant for Dementia Care (rogerstv.com/show?lid=12&rid=23&sid=7661&gid=659831)

At-Home Mental Health Support (cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-112-ontario-morning/clip/16081561-waypoint-centre-mental-health-care-launches-program-support)

Waypoint's new 20-bed inpatient unit (barrietoday.com/local-news/beacon-of-hope-20-bed-inpatient-unit-to-be-built-at-waypoint-9170389)

Past Waypoint Talks - Improving Approaches to End Intimate Partner Violence
(givewaypoint.com/waypointtalks)

Events

Waypoint Talks - Rising Above: Enhancing Youth Resilience Through Community and Support
(givewaypoint.com/waypointtalks)

Shine the Light - Friday, November 22, 2024 at the Midland Cultural Centre

An evening of exceptional music and fine dining, in support of mental health and addiction research
(givewaypoint.com/aneveningtoshinethelight)

Contact Us

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Ways to Support

You can make a donation - givewaypoint.com/waystogive

You can become a volunteer - Contact Diane Desroches, Talent and Volunteer Services Coordinator
ddesroches@waypointcentre.ca | 705-549-3181 ext. 2219

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