

Joint Message from the President and the Executive Director

Mental Health Matters.

As being promoted in the CMHA Mental Health Week from May 3 to May 9, we all need to **#GetReal about how you feel.** When we try to help or heal to avoid doing harm, we often overestimate our own capacity and end up burning out or having crisis. Recognizing our own vulnerability and capacity are critically important despite that we are being a dedicated and committed formal or informal caregivers, service providers or healthcare leaders. Many people have reported having declining mental health. Clients of Hong Fook Mental Health Association are facing different challenges, such as uncertainty about what is going on in response to COVID-19 pandemic; not able to access usual supports that keep people on track; increased demand for services, and having barriers to access which can also exacerbate ongoing mental health needs.

To support each other to stay healthy and well, we encourage you to join our wellness together journey. You can learn to build resilience, and to expand your social network. For example: browsing our website to sign up for workshops, groups, webinars, volunteer opportunities, events, etc.; booking appointments to see your service providers and health care professionals for your mental health and physical health needs; and sharing your skills and talents as well as experiences how you manage or cope with stress, and challenges. More importantly, we encourage you to support our COVID-19 screening and vaccine campaign and actions to help yourself, your family, friends and community to stay safe and healthy.

We are working on the readiness plan to prepare for the reopening of all the Hong Fook branches. We are also very pleased to share the good news with you that our new Downtown office renovation was complete and we are ready for the opening. Please stay tuned with our official announcement.

We are also celebrating the National Nursing Week from May 10 to May 16 this month, with the theme of #WeAnswerTheCall. Please check our NPLC sharing on page 3 and visit the website to see the vital role of our Nurse Practitioners and Registered Nurse contributing to the well-being of our clients and community.



New Downtown Branch, 407 Huron Street.
From left to right: Reception Area, Asian Clinic
Doctor and Nurse Offices, three Activity Rooms
on 2nd and 3rd floors

Managing Mental Health amid Ongoing Anti-Asian Racism

The recent reports of spikes in hate crimes and discrimination against Asians in North America have reignited an ongoing movement to end anti-Asian racism. Hong Fook has shared our collective concern on anti-Asian racism and the emotional turmoil in our communities, to several umbrella organizations such as Addictions and Mental Health Ontario (AMHO), Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), and participated in the Mayor Roundtable initiated by the City of Toronto Mayor John Tory with service providers and community groups in East Asian communities.

In this Asian Heritage Month, we would like to share one of the interviews by our ED Bonnie Wong with the Global News in late March.

"The pandemic has resulted in an increasing demand for mental health services especially for issues related to isolation, loss of income and fear. Our clients and community members are experiencing a high level of negative emotions like anxiety, fear, and ... they also experience discrimination or hatred or racism. While anti-Asian racism is not a new topic, the recent reports of brutal attacks, violence and scapegoating against Asian communities locally and worldwide, has caused many people to feel unsafe.

As a mental health organization for Asian communities, Bonnie shares Hong Fook is able to deliver culturally competent care, but because many other guidelines from governments and other organizations are almost entirely in English and French, it adds



an extra burden on Hong Fook staff to disseminate translated information. Additionally, resources continue to be limited, and it is critical to have equitable funding to support agencies that deliver culturally or language-specific services.

Support is needed from all levels of government and key decision-makers to educate, invest in culturally competent services, anti-violence and anti-oppression training and provide support to create safer spaces for people to discuss mental health."

To read the full article, please visit <https://globalnews.ca/news/7721478/asian-communities-mental-health/>

Our newsletter invites Hong Fook staff, volunteers, clients and family members to write a short article in their mother tongue. In this issue, we have quoted part of the sharing written by one of our Mandarin Health Ambassadors after the group watched "The World is Bright". The full sharing article can be found here: <https://www.jianshu.com/p/b6bfa67e882>

世明：你好！

作为一个相同处境的人，在这个月又一次情绪崩溃时，我突然觉得和你之间有了某种连接，我决定给你写一封信，写给一个素未谋面，却曾在时空里生活过的“老朋友”。

可能我们来了十年二十年，随着找到了工作，买了房，很多伤痛我们都不想再提起。我们从来没有想过，作为一个移民，特别是北美移民，要经历多少压力：包括经济压力，生存危机；人际圈子萎缩和重建；文化冲击；新的教育就业报税体系本身的复杂性；单身寻找配偶成倍增加的难度；婚姻中两个人在新国家更易暴露出的核心价值观不同，步调不一致，离婚后更加贫穷更加孤独的压力；对司法警察体系完全陌生的压力；无法孝敬父母的遗憾内疚，想念家乡却回不去的无奈，不被家乡亲友理解痛苦；不被社会认可的屈辱；社会环境活力不够带来的压抑感；公共交通系统的极度不发达带给新移民的养车的经济压力和社会的集体抑郁感；重新开始职业生涯的困惑和极高的时间成本；在回国和待下来之间的纠结战争；失去个人身份认同的极度不适和自我否定……

就好像细菌腐蚀的牙，最终长了洞，不得不拔掉，所有这一切长期的压力，对我们的精神健康都潜移默化地摧残着。以我个人的经历，在多次尝试失败后，有一天我终于理解，我们受到良好教育的谦谦君子，在经过长期压力后，又不被理解，内心的愤怒委屈，足以让我们和一个纵火犯、杀人犯之间，几乎只有“思维是否钻牛角尖”的一线之隔，任何人在极端情况下，完全有可能成为我们认为不可能成为的人。

如果这个世界，特别是作为吸收移民的国家，能多些友好和对其他文化的宽容，就好像在一个铁房子上开了一道通风口。这种宽容，不光是宣传和意识领域的，更应该做在实处，比如特别鼓励和资助不同语言文化的心理健康服务，拓宽来自母语文化的心理支持人员的资历认可，加强养老、医疗、职业资历的国与国之间的认可和对接。

康福是我在独自寻求了很久之后，找到的精神家园。我在2015年开始在这里接受心理健康大使的培训。虽然我觉得还没有太多机会为我们华人社区做太多贡献，但是这里认识到的朋友，对我个人的心理健康起到很大缓解作用。

世明，如果你还活着，真希望在这里能见到你。在这里，你的优势和能力会得到认可和用武之地，你的故事我们会不带评判地倾听。虽然我们可能帮不了太多，但是你能感到有这样一群人和你在一起。圣诞和春节的时候，我们会吃到百家的家乡美食，春暖花开、红叶尽染的季节，我们会一起出去走走，说说笑笑中会缓解你的孤独。

我和你最大的不同，就是我不会在不好的时候

说“我挺好的”，这让我这些年，一步一步爬了过来，人生这么长，我要看一看会不会永远这样。我惟愿下辈子你来的时候，能够打开你的心！这世界上有很多像你一样曾生活在黑暗里的人，谁的人生不黑暗呢？喊出“我很黑暗”也是一种勇气，那些爱你的家人，给他们机会去好好爱你、帮助你吧，在这世界上，你未曾谋面的朋友，现在这些仍然关注你的人，向他们敞开你的心吧！祝安好！

葳子

The Quality Journey

Accreditation Canada Primer Survey – Part B is still pending due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The latest schedule will be May 26 and 27. The focus of the onsite survey will be on client chart review, personnel file review, medication management, IPAC policy and procedural practice review, episodic care review, etc. Further updates will be sent out once the Part B is complete.



Hong Fook Virtual Town Halls

Building vaccine confidence for our clients

In April, our Integrated Recovery Program hosted a series of virtual town halls to provide the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination, prevention and testing. We have invited Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Pharmacist, Family Doctor and Toronto Public

Health Outreach staff to deliver the sessions in corresponding East Asian languages. 185 clients from five communities attended the sessions. Most participants shared they feel more confident of getting the COVID-19 vaccine and become clearer about where to get the vaccine shot after the session.

The recorded sessions can be found at Hong Fook YouTube Channel. You can also visit the [City of Toronto's website](#) for COVID-19 vaccine information in different languages.

Asian Clinic Annual Dinner

With social distancing, the Asian Clinic annual dinner meeting was successfully held via virtual platform on April 21, with 32 people attended, including collaborating psychiatrists and general practitioners from Asian Clinic and HF Connecting Health NPLC and related staff. In the midst of the pandemic, the event provided opportunity for participants to



share their work adjustment during the pandemic and have a glance at the future clinic site at 407 Huron Street via a virtual tour.

Sharing from NPLC



Have you been drinking enough water?

I always think that if there is only one drink that I can choose to have for the rest of my life, I would for sure choose water over anything else. When I am thirsty, nothing would help, but water! Are you the same?

It is important for us to know the vital role water plays in our body. This includes: moving nutrient and waste through our body, keeping your blood pressure normal, controlling our body temperature, lowering your risk of dehydration and heat stroke, aiding in digestion, preventing constipation, cushioning joints and protecting organs and tissues.

Here are some warning signs that you need more water: weakness, low blood pressure, dizziness, confusion or urine that is dark in colour.

The amount of fluid you need depends on your age, gender and level of physical activity. It will be different for everyone. The daily 4 to 6 cups rule is for generally healthy people. But if you're on certain medications that cause you to retain water or you have a certain health condition, your daily intake will vary. It is important to talk to your health care provider to find out what is suitable for you.

All beverages containing water contributes to your daily needs. However, the healthiest choice is water since sugary beverages will impact your weight and health. Fresh fruits and vegetables are also rich in water so make sure you include them with each meal.

Other tips to help you meet your water needs:

- Keep a water bottle nearby when you're at home, at work, at school or running errands
- Take sips of water while eating and snacking
- Make soups more often
- Have a jug full of water, with lemon, lime, cucumber slices or other fresh fruit in the fridge
- Remember to drink more when the weather is hot and when you're exercising
- Limit caffeinated drinks to 3 cups a day

Have you drunk water today?

Upcoming Programs & Activities



Hong Fook currently operates with reduced office hours, **from Tuesday to Thursday, from 10:00am to 3:00pm.**

Client's appointments may continue to be virtual (by phone or video) or in person, depending on staff's and client's circumstance. All on-site programming has been cancelled until further notice.

- Check our **monthly calendars** to respective communities at www.hongfook.ca/association
- Subscribe to **Hong Fook YouTube Channel** www.youtube.com/c/hongfookmha/playlists to watch recorded mental wellness seminars and exercise sessions in different languages.

"Uncomfy Convos" IG Live Series

Anti-Asian racism has been on the rise since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is not a new issue. It has been around for decades, and it continues to be a part of our day-to-day lives and how we see the world. It can be challenging to understand all aspects of anti-Asian racism, but we aim to continue the conversation with an initiative put together by our Youth and Family Service "Uncomfy Convos" where each Instagram live will feature a guest speaker to share honest and candid thoughts about anti-Asian racism, solidarity, recent events, protection and safety, and much more.

Follow our Youth and Family Service on Instagram @hfyouthfam

Membership Renewal

It's time to renew Association membership. As an official member of Hong Fook, you will be able to:

- Enjoy the privileges of a member and participate in Committees and activities of the Board of Directors;
- Participate in the planning of Hong Fook's programs and services;
- Stand for nomination to the Board of Directors;
- Vote at the Annual General Meeting; and many more to explore.

The regular membership annual fee is \$10. For renewal application and payment, please contact jle@hongfook.ca

Since early March, Hong Fook, in partnership with Story Money Impact, hosted a virtual **Hong Fook Film Screening** featuring “The World is Bright,” exploring a wide range of hidden risk factors impacting immigrant mental health, especially youth and younger adult immigrants at transitional age. In the past two months, the campaign reached out to 28,464 contacts and generated 280 views of the film.

On April 7, almost 100 people attended the wrap-up virtual panel discussion joined by the film director and four mental health professionals from different cultural background. 60.1% of attendees were immigrants themselves. 35.9% have experienced mental health challenges

themselves, while 81% knew of someone who did. Through the panel discussion, 98.1% will take steps to become more competent in starting, and dealing with, mental health conversations. Thanks to all the supporters, this campaign has also helped raise almost \$10,000 in the past two months, for more resources to develop the youth corner at our new Downtown site, which is the area highly populated by post-secondary students.

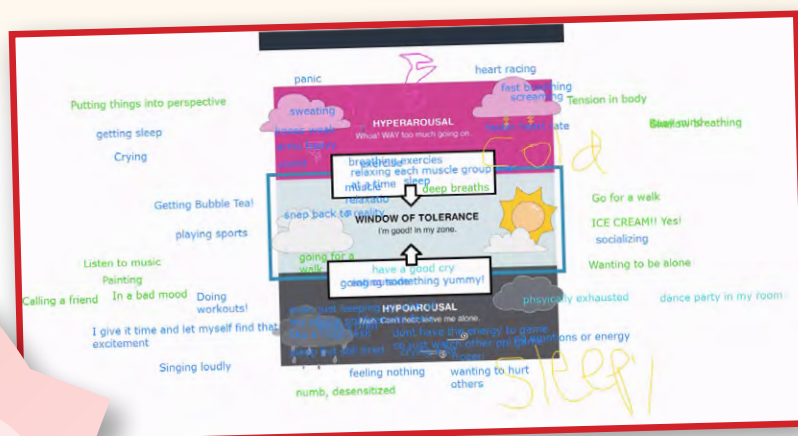
Coming up, Hong Fook will be kicking off our **Hong Fook Radiothon Fundraising Week**, in partnership with Sing Tao A1 Radio,

from July 16-22. The timely access to culturally competent mental health care is the top 1 priority Hong Fook has been addressing in the sector. This need becomes extremely urgent in our communities facing a looming mental health crisis during the pandemic and amid the ongoing anti-Asian racism. This is the moment, more than ever, we count on your generosity. We are looking for sponsors (Champion, Elite, Community levels) to support this campaign together. If you are interested in the sponsorship opportunity, please contact Sunny Wang at swang@hongfook.ca or 416-493-4242 X 2258.

From D, a youth participant

Since the COVID-19 outbreak last year, I have a feeling of being alienated by other Asian kids, who I used to go to school and hang out with. After the Atlantic shooting and the recent wave of anti-Asian racist attacks, that unsafe feeling has made me more anxious and just want to stay home. I thought we are the so called “model minority” as we all do the “right” things — study hard, get good grades, keep our heads down... and never expected one day the racial violence could happen to us. I don't know how to

share that with my parents, who just care about my grades. I don't feel it's safe to share with my peers at school any more. Finally, I found out Hong Fook's Youth and Family Service facilitated a “Space to Process” group session. A group of other young people like me came together and openly processed our feelings about anti-Asian racism during this never-ending pandemic, with the team of Youth Workers. I am feeling a little bit assured now and know there is a group of peers at Hong Fook I could connect to.



Youth Doodles at the Space to Process session

Kennes Lin, our Youth and Family Service Lead, shared, “according to a report by the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter, during the pandemic-induced anti-Asian racist attacks, the younger cohort was found to be the most emotionally and mentally impacted with those under the age of 18 at 83% and those ages 19 to 35 at 79%.” Our newly developed Youth Discovery College, adapted from Hong Fook's Recovery College peer positive model, creates a space for youth to actually share their experiences and feeling about confusion, loss, hurt and grief openly and safely. And by building strength and confidence, it has also led to parents recognizing what they're experiencing. **With the Downtown new site opening very soon, the team is looking forward to launching the Discovery College at the new site and count on more resources to put together a youth friendly, digital driven corner!**

Head Office

3320 Midland Avenue, Suite 201
Scarborough, ON M1V 5E6

Downtown Branch

New location will be
opening soon.

North York Branch

1751 Sheppard Avenue East, G/F
North York, ON M2J 0A4

Youth And Family Hub

2667 Bur Oak Avenue
Markham, ON L6B 1H8

Please visit our website www.hongfook.ca and subscribe for e-Momentum.

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