

# Navigating the Mental Health System

Accessing mental health care in Ontario for you and your loved ones

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# Goals



- To better understand the options available for mental health care in Ontario
- To learn about different mental health care providers
- To learn how to support family members if they are experiencing mental health issues



# Meet Sahar and family

- ▶ Sahar started university program 2 months ago. Family and friends were very proud of her, and she was very excited for this new chapter in her life.
- ▶ Starting early October her mother started to notice that Sahar is easily irritable, and tends to head straight to her room after coming home with limited interaction with family.
- ▶ In Mid-November, Sahar's mother noticed that she was sleeping for 14-15 hours/day and missing all of her morning lectures, mentioning that they're mostly online and she can catch up easily.
- ▶ Sahar seems to have lost 20 lbs. over the past 2 months since starting university and often chooses to skip on meals with family.

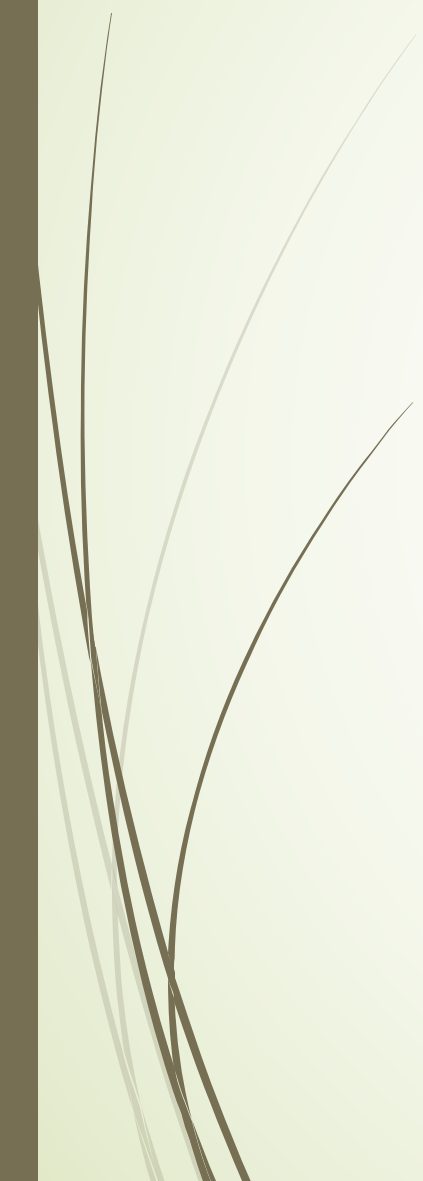


# Meet Sahar and family

- ▶ Sahar hasn't attended Arabic calligraphy which was one of Sahar's greatest passions, and hasn't produced or worked on an art piece in over 3 months
- ▶ She hasn't had any friends over in 2 months either, and hasn't shared with family any plans of going to the movies, dinner or coffee with friends.
- ▶ She looks tired and sad often. When asked about the changes, she mostly shares that school is very demanding and she doesn't have time for anything else in her life.



# Meet Omar and family

- 27 year old man who lives with his parents and younger sister
  - Last worked as a waiter at a restaurant
  - Completed high school and 2 years of university education
  - For the past 3 years, he has been much quieter. Sometimes, family hears him talking to himself
  - Over the past 6 months, worried that “someone is watching us”, pacing back and forth, not leaving the house, family hears him shouting from his room
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# Meet Omar and his family

- ▶ Family has tried to convince him to see their family doctor or get other help for 3 years but he refuses
- ▶ One evening, they hear crashes in his room- rush upstairs, he has broken furniture and window. Stating “I can’t do this anymore, I can’t do this anymore, I have to end it”
- ▶ Father able to calm him down and eventually falls asleep.
- ▶ Parents and sister sit down to discuss. “What are we supposed to do?”





# Introduction to the mental health system in Ontario

- Different settings of care
- OHIP and non-OHIP covered services
- Various caregivers





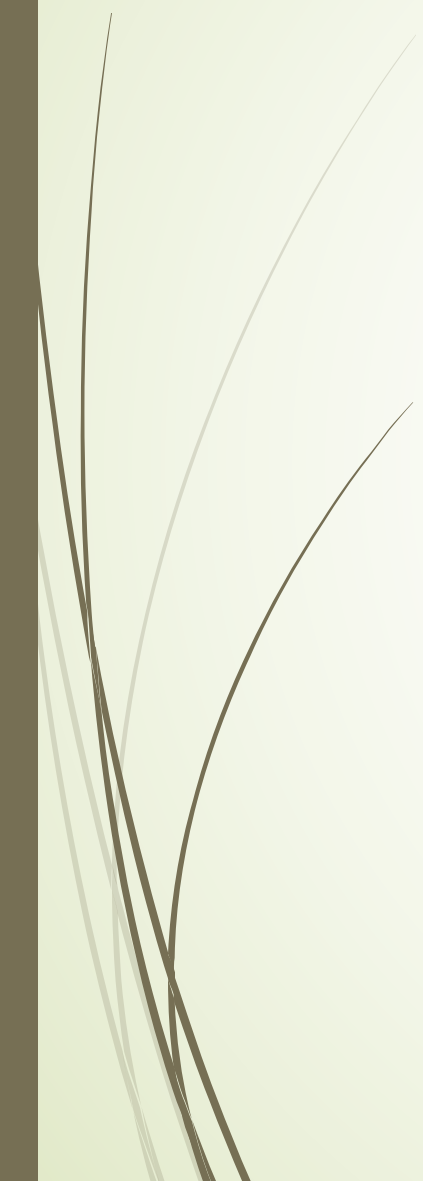
# Meet a psychotherapist

- ▶ A clinician who provides psychotherapy/talk therapy for treatment and support of mental health concerns- **Non-OHIP**
  - ▶ Clinical psychologist (Master's level), Master of Social work, Master's of Occupational therapy, Master's of Education with training, Nursing with psychotherapy training
  - ▶ **Private:** self, work & university insurance coverage, OSAP disability bursary
- ▶ **GP** psychotherapist- **OHIP covered**
  - ▶ Family **physician** who is trained in providing psychotherapy
  - ▶ Need a family doctor referral
  - ❖ <https://www.mdpcac.ca/>





# Meet a psychologist

- Holds a master's and/or doctoral degree in psychology
  - Can provide diagnosis
  - Can provide psychotherapy
  - Conduct research
  - **Non-OHIP** (OHIP covered if working in a hospital, or community service)
- 



# Meet a family doctor

- Graduated medical school and completed their residency in family medicine
- They are the **entry point** to the medical system
- Can either treat mental health concerns or refer to other specialists
- Can prescribe medications or recommend non-medication strategies
- **OHIP covered**

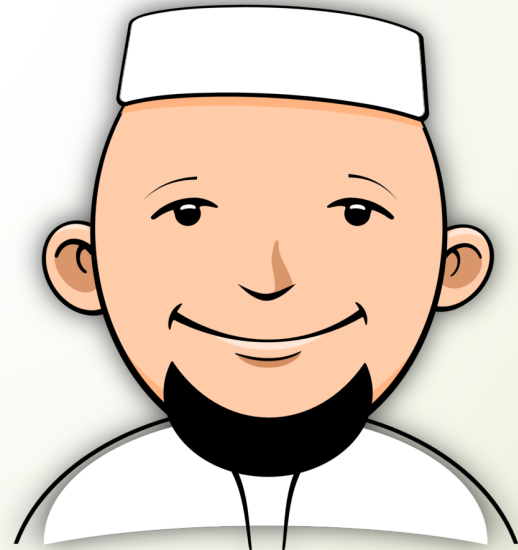


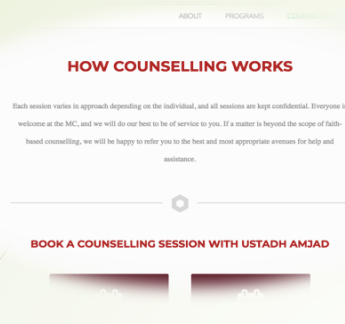
# Meet a psychiatrist

- Graduated medical school and completed a 5 year residency in psychiatry
- Can deal with a wide variety of mental illnesses including depression, anxiety, addictions, psychosis and others
- Can prescribe medications, some provide psychotherapy
- Recommendations about community resources
- **OHIP covered**

# Meet an Imam/Sheikh

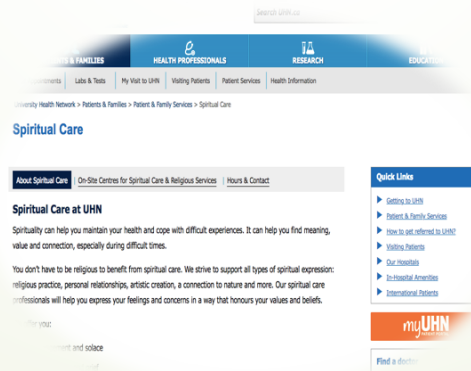
- An Imam title refers to a worship leader of a mosque and Muslim community. Imams/sheikh may lead Islamic worship services, serve as community leaders, and **provide religious guidance**.





# Meet a chaplain

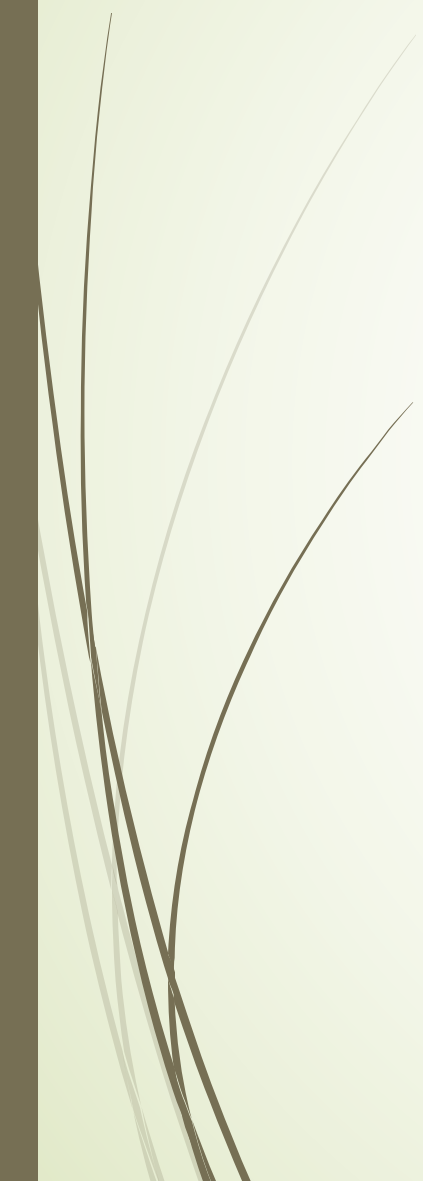
- A chaplain is, traditionally, a cleric or a lay representative of a religious tradition, **attached to a secular institution** such as a hospital, prison, military unit, school, labor union, business, police department, fire department & university.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asWroD3HkAs>



# Entry Points: What steps do I first need to take?

- ▶ Talk to family doctor/nurse practitioner
  - ▶ Crisis counseling and get referred by social worker
  - ▶ Imam/Chaplain
  - ▶ Community resources
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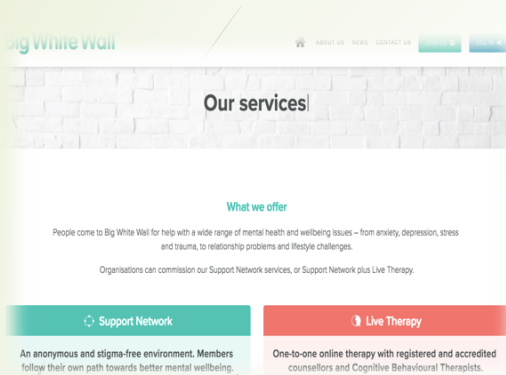




# Community Resources: In-person

- ▶ Student health resources/Student health and Wellness Centers
- ▶ Walk-in counseling (through family doctor or not)
- ▶ Community Organizations
  - ▶ For adults: Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), YMCA, Catholic Family Services. Alcoholics Anonymous
  - ▶ For youth: School social workers, University wellness centre/mental health support, walk-in mental health youth clinic, Hincks-Dell-crest, Blue Hill
- ▶ Start a support group

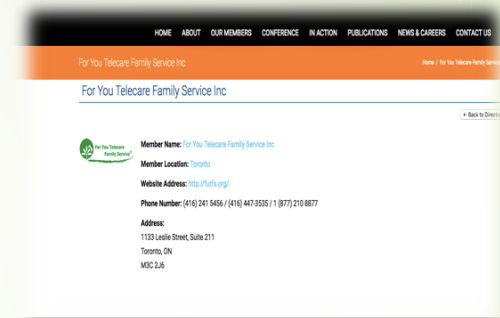
# Online/Phone Resources & Support



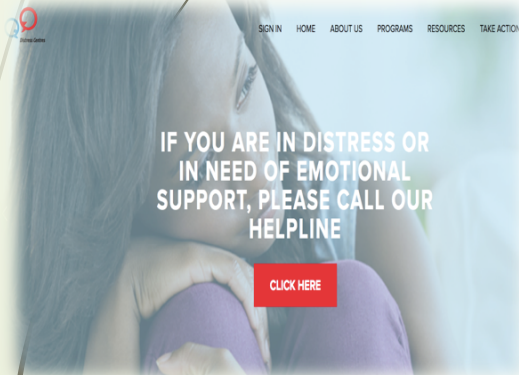
Big White Wall



Naseeha Youth Helpline



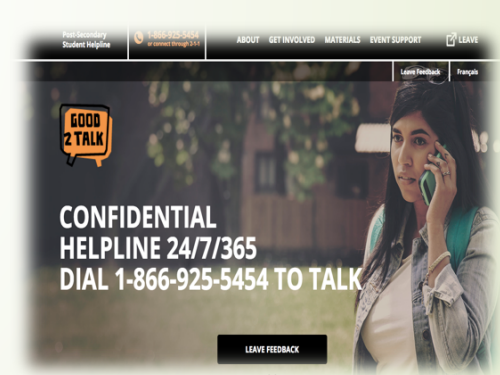
For You Telecare Family



Toronto Distress Centre



Mental Health Helpline



Good2Talk



# Back to Sahar and family

- ▶ Family can speak to Sahar and explain their concern (i.e. have noticed many changes she is not as present, or engaged/isolating, sleeping a lot, stopped calligraphy)
- ▶ Encourage her to seek support from Family physician or University Health and Wellness Centre
- ▶ Let her know that they're here to support her through this, and listen to some of her challenges
- ▶ Normalized the difficulty
- ▶ Encourage her to access University Chaplaincy for spiritual support alongside medical support and psychotherapy
- ▶ Offer to accompany her to appointment, if needed



# Back to Sahar and family

- Went to family doctor with her sister
- Referred for psychotherapy through student health centre
- Sought support from chaplaincy, joined MSA for additional social support
- In 3 months, has scheduled an appointment with family doctor to assess need for medication in addition to these the other supports



# Second line: What to do next?

- ▶ Psychiatrists

- ▶ The best way to access is through your family doctor
- ▶ Wait-times can be long depending on where you live
- ▶ Emergency departments (ONLY IN EMERGENCIES)
- ▶ Hospital wards

- ▶ Psychologists

- ▶ Can access privately, so wait-times can be shorter
- ▶ <https://prstoronto.com/>
- ▶ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/>



# What about someone who does not want help?

- **MOST IMPORTANT GOAL: Engage the person in their care. Treatment works best if someone wants it.**
  - Talk to them about what you are noticing
  - Listen openly to why they are reserved about getting care and show empathy
  - Use “I” statements instead of “You” statements
  - Let them know that you are available when they are ready to receive care





# The Mental Health Act

- ▶ Legislation about mental health in Ontario
- ▶ Forcible assessment and treatment only in EXTREME cases
- ▶ Form 1:
  - ▶ If a physician has seen your family member or loved one in the past 7 days and are concerned about their safety, can fill “Form 1” → allows a person to be taken to the emergency department and receive a psychiatric **assessment** only
- ▶ Form 2:
  - ▶ As a family member of a loved one, you can go to the Justice of the Peace and request Form 2. They will be brought to the emergency department and will receive a psychiatric **assessment**



# Back to Omar and his family

- The next day, parents went to the nearest Justice of the Peace
- Explained situation, and that they were concerned that their son would harm himself any day
- Provided evidence about their concerns
- Form 2 filled out, Omar brought to the emergency department by EMS
- Seen by a psychiatrist, admitted to hospital
- Over two weeks, slow improvement with medications and support from professionals



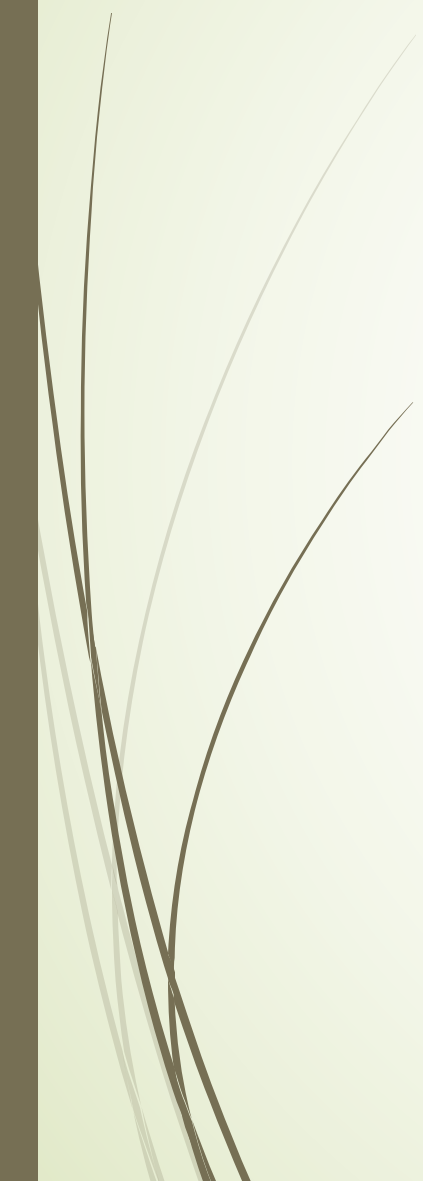
# Other ways to support family members

- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies
- Locate helpful organizations
- Encourage participation in spiritual practice
- Make plans together

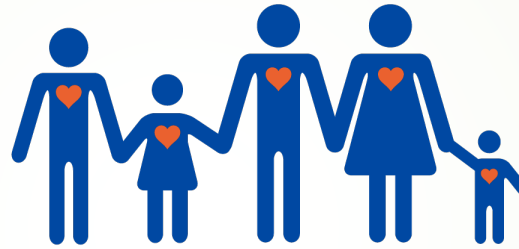
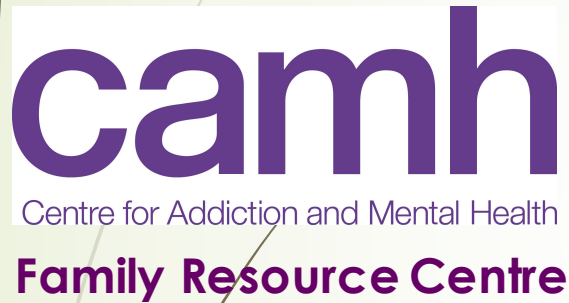
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw>



# Caring for caregivers

- Caring for loved ones with mental illness can be exhausting and overwhelming
  - Make time for yourself
  - Seek out family/friend support
  - Seek out spiritual support for yourself
  - Consider attending peer support groups with other family members who have experienced similar issues
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# Family Support Organizations



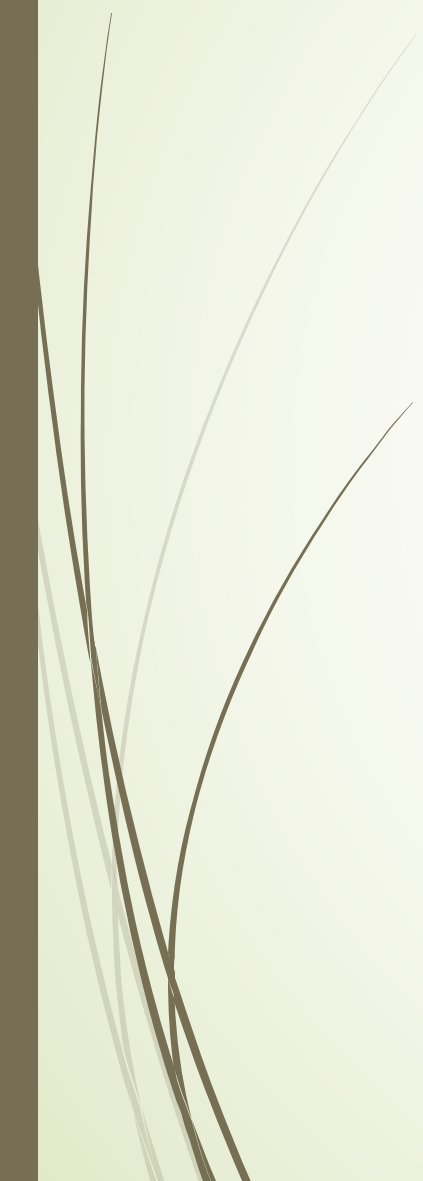
**Mood  
Disorders  
Association  
of  
Ontario**

**FAME**

**Family Association for  
Mental Health Everywhere**



# Wrapping up...

- The mental health care system can seem confusing and overwhelming
  - Important step is to reach out and use those entry points
  - Make sure that as a caregiver, you are well enough to support your loved ones
- 





# Questions

