

Message from the Executive Director

By Andrew Chung

With a mere blink of an eye, we already find ourselves just weeks away from the end of 2023! I want to thank you for staying in community with us and being our source of joy and purpose over these last few months and for making 2023 such a meaningful, impactful year so far.

In September and October, many of us in the Hong Fook community re-connected with family and friends for the Mid-Autumn Festival and Canadian Thanksgiving. We were reminded of the importance of being together and gratitude for the unique cultural bonds we experience during times of celebration and togetherness. For me, these holidays mark the gradual preparation for the winter months and how I'd like to spend the remaining weeks in the current year.

With the winter season just weeks away, we are now experiencing the shorter and colder days, seasonal changes that can sometimes make it a bit harder to wake up in the morning and get the day started. But there is also much to take joy in as we approach the end of the year. I, for one, am reflecting on the first six months of my journey as Executive Director and all the things I've learned from the team, our volunteers, and our community members. Taking a minute to pause and think about the ways we are helping to strengthen individuals, families and communities has let me look forward to the next year with hope and optimism.

As we approach the holiday season and prepare to welcome 2024, I hope you will also take time to reflect on this past year, and with kindness. It's important to recognize that while we may

not have achieved all our goals or may have made some decisions we're not proud of, we should hold on to the goodness, the lessons learned, and the growth we've both shared and experienced. These are the milestones we can carry forward into the new year with pride and gratitude.

I look forward to welcoming the new year together, united in our dedication to

advancing mental well-being and offering the support and resources people in our community will need.

Wishing you cozy days ahead with people who lift you up and love you.

With gratitude,

Andrew



All staff retreat at Sunnybrook Park



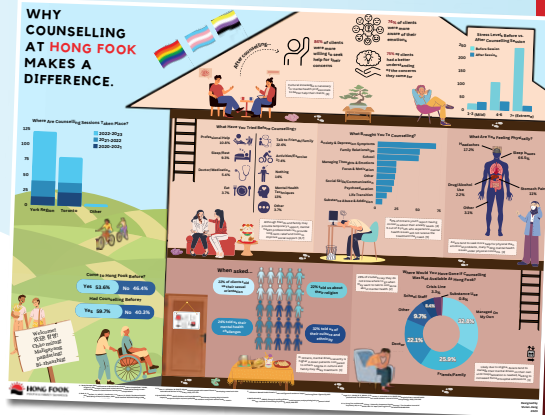
Tri-Board Forum hosted on September 9, please visit www.hongfook.ca for the three Hong Fook organization boards for the new term

Brief Counselling Services for Asian Youth

Early intervention in youth mental health

Since 2020, Hong Fook has been supporting Asian identifying youth aged 12 to 25 with individual counselling by our Registered Social Workers and Registered Psychotherapists. The Brief Counselling Services provide free, immediate, single-session therapy using a Walk-In model, for not only newcomer youth but also Canadian-born, second and third generation Asian youth. The service makes a difference supporting youth isolated during the pandemic, and navigating all of life's challenges in a post-pandemic world. Here's a glimpse of the impact the service has made over the past three years:

- **Help-Seeking Behavioural Change:** Our counselling services have had a profound post-intervention impact, with 84% of our clients feeling more comfortable seeking help for their concerns. Breaking the stigma surrounding mental health is at the core of what we do.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** 74% of youth have indicated greater awareness of their emotions after the session.
- **Clarity and Insight:** A staggering 75% of youth indicated after the session a clearer understanding of the concerns that brought them to us, fostering personal growth and resilience.
- **Addressing Immediate Needs:** the top three reasons for seeking our services are anxiety and depression symptoms, family relationships, and school-related stress.



Hong Fook's Brief Counselling Results 2022-2023

Scan here to check the full image



- **Holistic Well-being:** We understand that mental health is interconnected with physical well-being. Notably, 67% of our clients reported sleep issues, and 17% mentioned headaches, as a key physical concern along with the presenting problems.

Early intervention in youth mental health helps identify and address issues before they escalate, changing the trajectories of a young person's life. Besides this immediate therapy support, our Youth and Family Services also facilitate collective group-based care like peer support groups. Please check our Youth and Family Service Catalogue for the group schedule.

Knitting and Sewing Groups

Practice mindfulness in a peer support setting

Hong Fook's Knitting and Sewing Groups are Leisure Clubs in our Recovery College. They both serve as a powerful tool to practice mindfulness in the process of recovery. The rhythmic and repetitive motion of knitting and sewing fosters a sense of calm and focus. Moreover, the peer-led group provides a safe space for sharing, bonding, and learning from one another's experiences, making it an invaluable tool for peers on recovery journey. As the holiday season is around the corner, the peers have designed the holiday special and will be launched for sale on our Charity Sale page soon.



Hong Fook Snowman, holiday greetings from Hong Fook peers

Upcoming Programs & Activities



Recovery College – New Courses

For individuals in recovery

Compassion Practice via Music

Wed, Nov 8 to Dec 13
10:30am-12:00pm
North York Office

Let's Walk the English Talk

Wed, Nov 22 to Dec 13
2:00pm-3:30pm
North York Office

Tech Booster on Android

(Cantonese only)
Fri, Nov 10, 17, 24
2:00pm-3:00pm
North York Office, and
Downtown Toronto Office

Youth and Family Services

Walk-In Counselling

For Asian-Identifying Youth
Ages 12-25 and their families
1st Wed of every month
4:00pm-8:00pm
Markham Office

1st Sat of every month
11:00am-3:00pm
Downtown Toronto Office

Check Holistic Drop-ins for individuals in recovery, monthly wellness seminar and other upcoming programs in our program calendars and our Youth and Family Service Catalogue at www.hongfook.ca/association. Watch all recorded seminars at our YouTube Channel @HongFookMHA.

Request for Trainings

Our team delivers trainings on mental health related topics, cultural competency, crisis intervention to professionals, community service providers, educators and parent groups. To request: info@hongfook.ca

Celebrating 10 Years of Empowering Communities

On September 22, our NPLC proudly marked its 10th anniversary, commemorating a decade of transformative healthcare service in the North Scarborough community. To celebrate this remarkable milestone, 80 community partners, stakeholders and service users joined our celebration, for a day filled with appreciation, reflection, and a renewed commitment to improving the health and well-being of North Scarborough residents.

Established in April 2012, this pioneering clinic, situated in an area with a substantial population of racialized immigrants, primarily from Asia, has been a beacon of hope and health for the community.

The HF Connecting Health Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic was born out of a shared vision between the Association and the Ontario Ministry of Health. In response to the Ministry's call for proposals over a decade ago, the Association sought government funding to create a Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (NPLC). This vision was part of our commitment to providing integrated mental health and primary care, recognizing the vital intersection between mental and physical well-being.

The need for such integrated care has been substantiated by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's 2016 paper, "Mental Health and Primary Care Policy Framework," which underscores the critical importance of addressing mental health challenges within primary care. The paper revealed that individuals with mental health challenges and illnesses often receive inadequate preventative physical health care, resulting in disparities such as reduced access to cancer screening and treatment for chronic conditions like diabetes. Stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings were identified as significant barriers to receiving appropriate treatment and care. Astonishingly, mental illness can shorten a person's life by seven to 20 years, primarily due to preventable diseases that appropriate primary care could have addressed.

Today, as a fully rostered clinic with nearly 3,300 patients, the NPLC aspires to expand its services in the near future, aiming to alleviate its waitlist and further enhance its capacity to deliver quality care. Their goal is to promote longer, healthier lives and reduce emergency department visits through proactive healthcare.



NPLC board and key stakeholders



MPP Aris Babikian with the NPLC team



A service user receiving game prizes from Cheuk Law, NP Lead, at the Open House

Save the Date

The **2024 Hong Fook Gala** will be hosted on **Saturday, June 1, 2024**, at Hilton Toronto/Markham Suites Conference Centre & Spa in Markham. While COVID-19 is no longer deemed a global health emergency, the significance and urgency of taking care of our mental health persists. In particular, our youth have been at higher risk of experiencing poor mental health (compared to other age groups) during and post the pandemic. 1/2 of Ontario parents report having ever had concerns about their child's level of anxiety.

Hong Fook has been responding by providing evidence-based, culturally competent care. And it's more than just about language – it's about the deeper cultural connection that allows a person to be fully seen and understood. Your contribution to our annual Gala enhances our capacity to provide essential supports to our community and foster hope for future generations. We look forward to your presence at our gala and welcome all supports through sponsorship, donation, silent auction gift donation and many more. Please visit our website www.hongfook.ca/foundation for more information.

Appreciation

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Toronto Hong Kong Lions Club for selecting Hong Fook as the beneficiary charity for their annual fundraising gala this year. Through a fully engaged gala evening, \$50,000 has been raised to support the Asian mental health cause.



Chico Hui, THKLC President (left) and Gary Chan, Gala Chair (right) presenting the cheque to Michael Ma, Hong Fook Mental Health Foundation Chair (middle)

Congratulations

Each year, Hong Fook's Health Ambassador Training reaches out and empowers community members with essential knowledge of mental health and mental illness, along with vital skills in stress management and relationship building. It is our privilege to have numerous trained health ambassadors who share our vision and mission, and take on leadership roles in disseminating stigma reduction messages and raising resources to create a supportive environment. We are proud to share that two of our health ambassadors, Sue Tang and Jenny Pu, received the 2023 Chinese Canadian Legend Awards. Thank you for joining us on this mental health journey.



Sue Tang, second from the left and Jenny Pu, third from the right, presenting together with other award recipients of the 2023 CCLA

Sharing from a trained Health Ambassador

“Through the training, I've not only gained valuable knowledge but also developed a deeper passion for active listening and better communication skills. The Health Ambassador Training has left an indelible mark in my life, and I am truly thankful for all that Hong Fook and the instructor have done with us, with me. As I move forward in my journey and beyond, I will carry the knowledge, not just during the classes but in life.”

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