

# LIVING WELL WITH AIMGA

*Compiled by AIMGA's Health and Wellness Team*

## HEALTHHUB FOR NEWCOMERS



**Health Matters! Wellness Matters! Diversity Matters!**

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## January: Let's Talk Mental Health!

The Alberta International Medical Graduates Association (AIMGA) welcomes you to our new wellbeing newsletter, "Living Well With AIMGA", written by international medical graduates (IMGs) themselves.

Newcomers face a number of new challenges when moving to Canada, which can take a toll on one's health and wellbeing. The goal of this initiative is to support and improve the wellness of the community, including newcomers, by working together to share appropriate tools, tips, and health-related resources compiled by our medical experts. We hope that these newsletters will showcase who we are at AIMGA and what we stand for, while also fueling community partnerships and outreach.

If you have any content ideas that you would like to see included in a future newsletter, submit this in the "Reflect and Share" section. We deeply value your opinions so that we can better serve IMGs and the community.

With Bell Let's Talk Day around the corner, this month's newsletter theme is Mental Health! Please explore the various tips and resources to better support your wellbeing and the wellbeing of others! Join AIMGA in our efforts to remove the negative stigma around mental health through education and conversation.

# Hot Topic: Focus on Your Mental Health For Your New Year's Resolution!



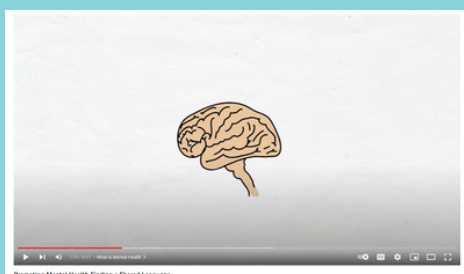
Do you have a New Year's resolution? How does improving your mental health sound?

Your mind and body cooperate powerfully. The way you think affects how you feel, and vice versa. When you feel stressed, your muscles get tense and you might experience headaches and stomach problems; a physical reaction called "fight or flight". Feeling stressed all the time could result in high blood pressure and affect your heart. Likewise, when you're in pain you may become distressed or anxious. However, when you relax your mind and body, you no longer produce the hormones that create stress which allows you to return to a state of calm, physically and mentally.

Mental illness or mental health? What is the relationship to one another? They are separate yet interconnected concepts. They need to be looked at, measured and responded to differently. According to Statistics Canada, 1 in 3 Canadians will experience a mental illness or substance use disorder in their lifetime. What about the mental health of the rest of the population?

Mental illnesses are disorders that can be caused by factors like genetics or brain chemistry. They complicate our thinking, mood and behaviours hence severely negatively impacting the way we function in our lives. Different mental illnesses present differently and some of them take effort to work through and diagnose. Although mental illnesses can affect people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and social classes, many go undiagnosed. Depression, anxiety, and OCD are just a few examples of the many mental illnesses that people may suffer from. These conditions need to be treated for one to function optimally in their community.

On the other hand, mental health is a positive concept, it is all about mental well-being. It relates to our ability to live a satisfying and fulfilling life, achieve our goals while coping with stressors and dealing with everyday challenges. Mental health affects all people. It's important to realize that one might have a mental illness such as depression, but with the help of medications and support from various resources, they could have good mental health. Furthermore, poor mental health is not always due to mental illness, life events or stressors can affect anyone's mental health, whether or not a mental illness is present.



## What is Mental Health?

Check out this video by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) on promoting mental health and finding a shared language. Click here: [FR](#) / [EN](#)



## Red Flags

If you or someone you know is at imminent risk for self-harm or suicide, seek help immediately. Click [HERE](#) for community resources and contacts.

# Tips and Resources

Everyone has mental health, and good mental health is important for all of us. It's what we want for ourselves, our family, and our friends. There are steps we can take to help create positive change in our lives. Listen to your mind and body. Ask for help and take some time if you are struggling or feeling overwhelmed. You might take a walk, reach out to a friend, or listen to your favourite music. Remember, it's okay to not always feel okay.

Here are some valuable resources to better your understanding of mental health and how to support yourself and others.

- [5 Simple Ways to End Stigma](#)
- [Recognizing Signs of Stress and Connecting to Help](#)
- [Taking Care of Yourself and Others](#)
- [TED Talk – There's no Shame in Taking Care of Your Mental Health](#)
- [Additional Mental Health Resources and Strategies](#)
- [Addressing overwhelm: How to set boundaries and prioritize self over practice](#)
- [How to Beat the Winter Blues](#)



## Myth or Fact?

Click on each myth bubble to find out true, evidence-based information.

"Panic attacks cause extreme harm and are lethal."

"PTSD only affects war veterans."

"Children do not experience mental health-related problems".

"People with mental health conditions cannot hold down a job."

## Bell Let's Talk

This year, Bell Let's Talk Day falls on January 25th, 2023. On this day, people around the world come together to help create positive change for people struggling with their mental health. However, just because we use this day to raise awareness doesn't mean it's the only time we should focus on our mental health – in fact, the whole message of the campaign is that we should be more open, every day. So, whether it's April, the beginning of September, or anywhere in between, you don't have to feel stressed or scared about discussing your mental health.

Gearing up for Bell Let's Talk Day at the end of the month, we encourage everyone to take action and share with AIMGA what you do to take care of your mental health. You can post a note or photo on the jamboard [HERE](#).



## Health Reminders

- Have you got your flu shot this season? If not, call your local pharmacy, or your family doctor, or dial 811 to make an appointment.
- COVID-19 vaccines and boosters play a key role in keeping your children safe at school and in the community. Contact your physician to see when you and your children are due for another dose.



# IMG Spotlight

Oseahume (Ose) Olusile is a member of AIMGA who firmly believed in the significant contribution of mental wellness to overall well-being, which has led her along the path of mental health service delivery. She has worked in clinical mental health service delivery, mental health research, and has been committed to the facilitation of health promotion and education of mental health and its effects on communities. Ose obtained her medical degree at the University of Benin in Nigeria and worked in a rural community before pursuing training in Psychiatry. When we met Ose, we knew her passion was mental health and we were so pleased when she matched to Psychiatry last year at UofA!



**Ose Olusile**

## Skills Gained From AIMGA



Networking



Flexibility



Communication



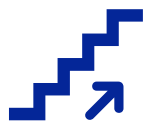
Teamwork



Interviews & Presentations

## Biggest Lesson Learned & Advice for Other IMGs

"I've learned that all life experiences are beneficial in some form; even the experiences I initially considered to be negative turned out to be learning experiences that I drew upon later in my life. Everyone's journey is different: straight for some, circuitous for others. Remember to never lose sight of your values, purpose, and goals, and enjoy every moment along the way!"



## Reflect and Share



- [Mental Health Reflection](#) (slide 1);
- [Share the Good](#) (slide 2); and
- Rate this newsletter & share your content ideas for future volumes [HERE](#).



A special thanks to Niveen Bishai, Rubab Shamsi, Pallavi Kainth, and Ose Olusile for their additional contributions.