



Ontario Association of Young Parent Agencies

servir infants, children and young parents - together

l'Association Ontarienne des Agences pour Jeunes Parents

servir nourrissons, enfants et jeunes parents - ensemble

May 2024

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OAYPA Survey Update and Action!

Thank you to everyone who completed the OAYPA Survey this past month. Winner of the draw for Dr. Wittenberg's *Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting: Reducing Stigma and Improving Outcomes* is **Columbus House**. Congratulations!

To date, there have been over **200 client surveys** (after sifting through 5K bot responses - thanks social media!) and **80 staff responses**. **Thank you for your support!**

ACTION: Our priority at this point, is to have all member agencies submit an “Agency Lead” response by complete the survey after selecting “agency lead”. Choosing this will result in additional branching questions asking for more info about your organization and work supporting young parents. Only one response per agency is needed. **At the time of writing this 8/20 members have completed this response and hope to have a 100% response rate.**

This policy paper is a critical tool that OAYPA will use to advocate to government and other provincial partners for increased investments and other supports to our sector to achieve a comprehensive system of services for young parents and their children across the province. We feel that it is essential that all our member agencies participate, to send a strong united message to the government and other provincial partners.

Please access the staff survey [here](#). You will be directed to these agency lead questions by selecting “agency lead” in the “Role” section. If you have any questions, please contact Bev or Tamar.

Mental Health Week Message

Message from Ekua Asabea Blair, President, OAYPA

As we observe Mental Health Week from May 6 – 12th, it offers us as leaders a crucial moment to pause and reflect on our roles in promoting positive mental health among our staff and within our leadership teams. The cornerstone of my leadership philosophy is the profound impact of mindfulness, which I view not as a transient trend but as a fundamental principle that instills clarity, compassion, and resilience in both individuals and our collective teams.

My personal journey with mindfulness began during my public sector executive leadership training in 2023. It was there I discovered that mindfulness is instrumental in fostering intentional leadership and insightful decision-making.

This practice guides us to be more present and aware before making decisions, enhancing our recognition of the limits of our knowledge, ethical deliberation, creative problem-solving capabilities, early identification of necessary decisions, improved discernment of trade-offs and unintended consequences.

Three Pillars of Mindful Decision-Making:

Intention: Recognizing the motivation behind decisions.

Attention: Actively directing focus to where it is most needed.

Attitude: Maintaining a constructive and open perspective throughout the decision-making process.

Life's stresses can sometimes cause us to lose sight of these pillars. To combat this, I have integrated tools such as the [Healthy Minds](#) app into my routine, which offers recordings focused on the foundations of mindfulness—awareness, connections, insights, and purpose. This resource has been so transformative that I now share mindfulness insights daily with our leadership team, helping us all to cultivate a robust foundation for managing both personal and professional challenges.

Mindfulness has also been seamlessly integrated into our All-Staff meetings, reinforcing its role as a key element of our organizational culture. By adopting a mindful approach, we empower a culture of presence, ensuring decisions are made with acute awareness of their immediate relevance and future impact. In our demanding sector, such steadfast mindfulness has been essential in navigating challenges with composure and profound insight.

Furthermore, mindfulness acts as a catalyst for meaningful connections and empathetic leadership. By being fully present in our interactions, we forge deeper relationships with our teams, our peers, and the young families we support, thereby building trust and mutual understanding. As we cultivate a workplace culture steeped in mindfulness, we create an environment where every voice is heard, and collective goals are pursued with unity and determination.

Mindfulness transcends personal practice—it is a transformative force that molds organizational cultures, drives innovation, and sets the stage for enduring success.

Thank you for your commitment to this journey. Together, let's continue to harness the power of mindfulness to lead with intention, attention, and attitude.

What's New



Annual Membership Dues

Your membership dues have come due. We deeply appreciate your role as a contributing member of our association. Your support is invaluable to our mission, and we eagerly anticipate an active year of advocacy with government bodies and funders on behalf of our members. Additionally, we are excited about finalizing our new three-year strategic plan and achieving the associated action goals. Thank you for your continued commitment. The membership form can be found [here](#) or attached to the email.

Ujima Project Update

Impact Report Webinar

Thank you to everyone who attended the Ujima Project Impact Webinar. It was a resounding success with over 125 people attending including folks from children's mental health and rehabilitation, public health and government.

Here is a link to the webinar recording: <https://www.oaypa.ca/ujimaprojectimpactwebinar/>

Please take a moment to review our [Impact Report](#) and [Infographic](#), to celebrate our accomplishments from the past year.

Thank you to all our frontline staff who continue to work tirelessly to serve our young families and their infants/children. We've achieved significant milestones this year, with all indications pointing towards another successful Ujima year!

Funders Luncheon

In May, Ujima Project funder is hosting a Funders luncheon with leading foundations to discuss the work of our sector. Presenters will include Dr. Jean Wittenberg and Gillian Thompson from SickKids. They will:

- Provide an overview of the impact of social stigma on adolescents/youth who are at high risk of teen pregnancy and how that stress predicates adverse health outcomes
- Discuss factors contributing to health disparities affecting young families such as socioeconomic status, stigma, access to healthcare, and systemic biases and their short and long-term consequences
- Highlight how the Ontario Association of Young Parent Agencies is working to improve the outcomes of young families across the province through the Ujima Project

Meeting with Minister Parsa's Office and Directors from the Child Welfare Division

Ujima Project leadership met with two Directors in Minister Parsa's office and will be meeting with colleagues from MCCSS Child Welfare Division to discuss OAYPA and the outcomes and successes of the Ujima Project. During this high-level discussion, we hit all the key notes, and they will be reviewing the impact report, sharing an upcoming RFP and will be scheduling a follow up meeting.

Resources



On April 16, 2024, the George Hull Institute of Childhood Trauma and Attachment hosted a webinar on [Universal Trauma Screening in Preschool Speech and Language Services](#). The link to the recording (which will be available for the next month, until May 15th) is [here](#).

Western University Inclusive Language Guide

Language is not just words. It portrays a vision of the world, and the words, whether spoken or written, can touch people's lives in positive ways, but they can also be harmful. The purpose of this guide is to:

- Provide some key principles and recommendations to encourage the use of inclusive language in our personal and professional lives;
- Explain how and why certain language related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization has changed over time; and
- Provide examples of language that is presently derogatory and substitute them for examples of language that conveys respect and validation for diversity.

This [Guide for Inclusive Language](#) does not provide an exhaustive list of the language that has historically harmed equity-deserving group members, nor a prescriptive manual of words that should or should not be used. It provides recommendations about the use of words and phrases that do not deliberately exclude or harm equity-deserving group members. The Inclusive Language Guide is a living document that will be updated whenever necessary to reflect and honour the language changes surrounding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Decolonization, and Indigenization.

Significant Dates



May 6 – 10 [CMHA Mental Health Week](#)

May 7 [National Child & Youth Mental Health Day](#)

May 12 Mother's Day

May 14 [Ontario Child and Youth in Care Day](#)

Professional Development

SickKids Education Sessions

May 7, 2024 1:00 pm – 2:30pm [Register here](#)

Borderline Personality Disorder presented by Dr. Susan Dundas and Janine Lawford. By the end of this session, participants will be provided with some of the latest thinking regarding treatment and assessment of Borderline Personality Disorder in relation to adolescents. Both pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatment will be reviewed:

- Learners will understand the DSM V definition of BPD in adolescents
- Learners will gain a better understanding of the etiology of BPD in adolescents
- Learners will be provided information on the non-pharmacological treatments of BPD including concepts/skills overview of DBT
- Learners will better understand the approach to pharmacological treatment of BPD in adolescents

May 21, 2024 1:00pm – 2:30pm [Register here](#)

Crisis and Coping Plans Don't Work? How Self-Regulation Mapping Can Help Stressed Nervous Systems Find a Way Back to Calm presented by Dr. Michael Cheng. By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Explain self-regulation to a family using an integrative, polyvagal model;
- Explain the zones or states of regulation
- Create a self-regulation map for a youth/adult, which includes 1) what they look like in each zone, 2) what triggers or leads them into each zone, and 3) what they and others can do to support them to find their way back to green.