



NEWS RELEASE

New Innovative Online Mental Health Resources Unveiled

BounceBack® and Big White Wall® support achievement of mental health wellness

Durham Region, May 7, 2018 – National Mental Health Week (May 7 – 13) was the backdrop as provincial and local partners today unveiled the availability of new innovative online mental health services for individuals in the Central East Local Health Integration Network (Central East LHIN) region and across the province.

Supported by funding from the Government of Ontario and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) announced the availability of Big White Wall® (otn.ca/bigwhitewall). A 24/7 online mental health platform available free and without referral for youth 16+ and adults, Big White Wall® provides a support community, education and guided self-help programs with the aim of reducing social isolation for people struggling with anxiety and depression.

Additionally, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario Division unveiled BounceBack®, (<https://bouncebackontario.ca/>) a free skill-building program designed to help adults and youth 15+ manage mild to moderate depression and anxiety. The program offers two types of support: one-on-one telephone coaching using workbooks, and a series of online videos that offer practical tips.

“We’re pleased that people are starting to view their mental health in the same way as physical health, But there’s still a lot more work to be done,” notes Camille Quenneville, CEO of CMHA Ontario. “We’re excited that the Ontario Government is investing in new psychotherapy services, such as the BounceBack telephone coaching program. This means that thousands of Ontarians with mild to moderate depression and anxiety will now have access to timely support for their mental health issues.”

Both BounceBack® and Big White Wall® are being made available to support people to achieve an optimal level of mental health wellness. In the Central East LHIN, the availability of these resources supports the development and implementation of the Central East LHIN Regional Mental Health and Addictions Plan, being led by Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences and Lakeridge Health, and the Plan’s Innovative Service Delivery Model, which promotes seamless service transitions to improve care for people living with mental illness.

“Ensuring that people are supported to achieve an optimal level of mental health wellness is one of the top priorities for the Central East LHIN,” says Louis O’Brien, Board Chair for the Central East LHIN. “With the support of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and other partners, the new, innovative and evidence-based service models unveiled today will increase access to care, improve the delivery of mental health and addictions services, and support health care providers and partners, including primary care, to better serve patients and support them to achieve excellence in mental health and live healthier at home.”

“We’re thrilled to make Big White Wall available in Ontario starting in the Central East LHIN,” says Dr. Ed Brown, CEO, OTN. “Big White Wall can be a tremendously useful option for people struggling with anxiety and depression while waiting for in-person support or as a stand-alone tool for those seeking a supportive community. This is an exciting first for Ontarians to have direct access to this type of impactful tool at no cost.”

These new resources are welcomed by individuals struggling with mental health issues who may face challenges receiving immediate support.

“Sometimes I don’t have access to immediate services other than a distress line,” says John. “But because of their hours, there may or may not have been someone there to receive my call. With Big White Wall there is an immediacy of contact, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I can connect with someone who has or is going through a similar situation or a moderator who can step in and give me guidance to get me through crisis moments safely.”

“Our government’s historic \$2.1 billion investment in mental health and addictions takes a comprehensive approach, ensuring Ontarians are supported across their lifespan, no matter what their needs may be,” says Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “Low-barrier mental health supports, such as Bounce Back and Big White Wall, that people can access at home, online or over the phone free-of-charge, are a tremendous resource that is available when people need support. Our government is committed to the mental wellness of Ontarians, recognizing that physical and mental wellness must go hand-in-hand for Ontarians to live their best lives.”

About OTN

OTN brings virtual care innovation to the healthcare system so that the people of Ontario can get the care they need when and where they need it most: at home, in their community or in hospital. For more than a decade, OTN has increased access to health care and education across the province with one of the world’s most extensive telemedicine networks. Working with its many partners and leveraging its unique knowledge of health care and digital technology, OTN addresses challenges by introducing and spreading new ways of delivering care that benefit patients, care providers and the healthcare system. An independent, not-for-profit organization, OTN is funded by the Government of Ontario. For more information please visit www.otn.ca.

To arrange an interview with Dr. Ed Brown or Laurie Poole, Vice-President of Clinical Innovation, OTN, please contact Gillian Wansbrough, 416-446-4110 ext. 4004, or gwansbrough@otn.ca.

About OTF

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario and one of Canada’s largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. www.otf.ca

About the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario

Incorporated in 1952, CMHA Ontario provides community-based programs and services across the province to meet the needs of individuals seeking support with their mental health and addictions. Our 30 local CMHA branches are part of a community-based mental health sector which services approximately 500,000 Ontarians annually.

To arrange an interview, please contact, Joe Kim (jkim@ontario.cmha.ca), Director, Communications at 416.977.5580 ext. 4141.