

# OARC In Action

## For Residents By Residents



June 2020

### Live Webinar - July 16, 2020 | 2 to 3 PM EDT - Therapeutic Professionals Supporting the Psychosocial Health of Residents in LTC Homes

**Invited Guest Speaker:** Katherine Plested, President, Therapeutic Recreation Ontario

**Moderator:** Josie-Lee Gibson, Director of Education and Community Engagement, OARC



*Katherine Plested  
President, TRO*

Meaningful connection is so important to our well-being. Under current circumstances, heightened infection control measures and strict adherence to a risk management approach in long-term care (LTC) homes places emphasis on prevention and physical health, often at the expense of resident emotional health and social connections. Therapeutic recreation professionals play an essential role in the planning and execution of resident engagement opportunities that nurtures resident minds, bodies and spirits. OARC invites you to join our dynamic guest speaker, Katherine Plested, who wears many hats including Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at Mount Hope Long-Term Care Home in London, ON and President of Therapeutic Recreation Ontario. Together, we will explore ways in which Therapeutic Professionals can support the psychosocial health of residents living in long-term care homes during the pandemic and beyond.

Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6283166201786730511>



Therapeutic Recreation Ontario (TRO) is the professional association that represents Therapeutic Recreation practitioners in Ontario

<https://www.trontario.org/>

### Did you miss a recent OARC webinar? Visit [www.ontarc.com](http://www.ontarc.com) to view archived education

Webinar	Guest Speaker(s)	Date
<a href="#">Supporting Residents with Cognitive Changes During COVID-19</a>	Dr. Allen Power, Schlegel Chair in Aging and Dementia Innovation at the Schlegel—University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging	June 25, 2020
<a href="#">Caring for Long-Term Care Residents, a Message of Hope from our Government</a>	Christine Elliot, Minister of Health; Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Long-Term Care; Janet Hope, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long Term Care Policy Division; Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long Term Care Operations Division	June 18, 2020
<a href="#">Ontario Long-Term Care Inspection Program During COVID-19</a>	Brian Pollard, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations Division, Ministry of Long-Term Care and Stacey Colameco, Director, Long-Term Care Inspections Branch, Ministry of Long-Term Care	June 10, 2020
<a href="#">Exploring the Impact of Mealtimes in LTC During an Outbreak</a>	Heather Keller, RD PhD	June 9, 2020

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## LONG-TERM CARE HOMES SHARE INSPIRATION AND BRIGHT IDEAS

### Featured Artist of the Week from Tilbury Manor Long Term Care Home

Residents at Tilbury Manor love their creative colouring! During the recent period of physical distancing and in-room isolation, creative colouring has emerged as a purposeful and enjoyable activity for many residents. Determined to showcase and share the talent of the residents, the Recreation Department created a 'Featured Artist of the Week' initiative displaying the many beautiful coloured creations Tilbury residents have worked on throughout the week. The art is displayed on a giant bulletin board in the main hallway, along with their picture and a brief bio.



*Left to right: Tilbury Manor's Resident Artists, Rosie, Edna and Christie*

Resident artists are encouraged to choose their own artistic theme, reflective of some of their favourite things. They are so proud of what they have done. Resident stories and artwork are also included in Tilbury's monthly newsletter. Thank you to the residents and Janith Menard, Programs Manager at Tilbury Manor LTC Home, for sharing this idea.

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### Now Accepting Seasons Magazine Submissions

OARC understands that this is a very busy time for long-term care home teams and roles and priorities have shifted. Over the last 4+ months while Residents' Council meetings have been on hold, homes across the province have taken innovative approaches to adapting recreation programs and supporting resident engagement. Many homes have started to reconvene Council meetings in new and different ways, in some cases, utilizing technology and virtual modes of communication.

OARC is accepting submissions for our fall/winter edition of Seasons magazine. With Ontario's FIRST Residents' Councils week just around the corner (September 14-20), we'd love to hear what makes your Council special and how you've maintained connection during the pandemic. To share your story email Melissa McVie at [mmcvie@ontarc.com](mailto:mmcvie@ontarc.com) with the following information:

- Article submissions to be 250-300 words
- 1-2 photos to accompany your story
- Submission title and authors

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### Podcast Interview with OARC Board Members

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 OARC Board Members, Sharron Cooke, Devora Greenspon, Barry Hickling and Dee Lender, Executive Director, were interviewed by Andrew Neary, Podcaster of the "Grilled" podcast series. Sharron, Barry and Devora describe living in their long-term care homes during the pandemic. Grateful to the staff in their homes, Sharron, Barry and Devora share their struggles with depression, loneliness, isolation and advocate to introduce supportive psychosocial care and mental health measures and improve communication gaps for residents. They discuss a new normal and how society and long-term care will be forever changed by this experience. "...just because we are in long-term care don't forget about us..."

Listen to these amazing people on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbEkFmc6alM>

## Embracing Diversity: A Toolkit for Supporting Inclusion in Long-Term Care Homes



Created by the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research and Innovation in Long-Term Care (CLRI), the toolkit was informed by the Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in Long-Term Care Advisory Committee and other experts, including persons with lived experience.

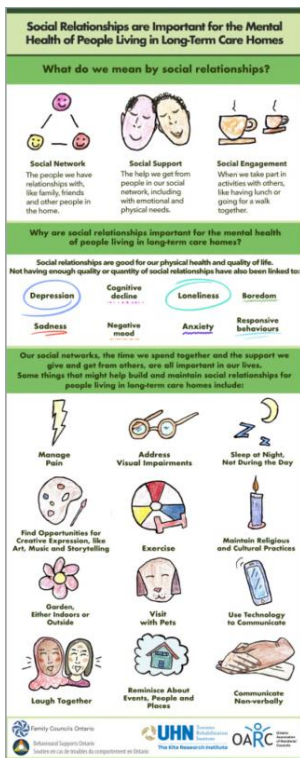
OARC's Board members David Kent and Devora Greenspon and OARC's Team Members Melissa McVie and Josie-Lee Gibson, joined with other stakeholders to support this work.

The toolkit is designed to provide ideas for reviewing and/or modifying existing policies, practices, and programs; planning training initiatives; and developing a diversity committee for long-term care homes. The toolkit and accompanying online resource library includes:

- Information and resources for providing affirming care, services and an environment that brings attention to diversity and promotes inclusion
- Tools and assessments to help develop and implement organizational commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Stories that highlight the successes of Ontario LTC homes on their journeys towards cultural sensitivity
- A list of key articles, websites and toolkits that may be useful

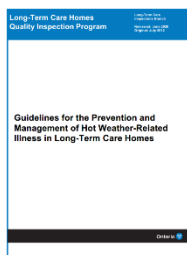
The toolkit and other diversity resources are available here: <https://clri-ltc.ca/resource/embracingdiversity/>

## Social connectedness for residents of long-term care homes: A scoping review of research on the mental health impacts and strategies to address social connectedness



**Social relationships are important for the mental health of people living in long-term care (LTC) homes.** In Canada, coronavirus (COVID-19) has taken a particularly heavy toll among people living in long-term care homes. The measures put in place to protect residents' physical health (such as prohibiting visitors and reducing contact with other residents and staff) has also impacted residents' social connectedness. We know good social connectedness is associated with better physical and mental health and wellbeing. However, the concepts of social connectedness and strategies to address it have distinct considerations for people living in long-term care homes. Researchers at [The Kite Research Institute \(Toronto Rehabilitation Institute\)](#) and members of [Behavioural Supports Ontario \(BSO\)](#), [Family Councils Ontario \(FCO\)](#) and the [Ontario Association of Residents' Councils \(OARC\)](#) are working together to summarize research evidence on the mental health impacts of social connectedness for residents of long-term care homes as well as some strategies that might help to address it. An infographic poster summarizing preliminary results is available in [English](#) and [French](#) online at <http://www.encoatteam.com/index.html> and long-term care homes can request free printed copies by mail by completing this [form](#) or by contacting Ellen Snowball at [ellen.snowball@uhn.ca](mailto:ellen.snowball@uhn.ca)

## Guidelines for Hot Weather – Related Illness in LTCH - Ministry of Long-Term Care



As temperatures continue to rise across communities in Ontario, it is important to take steps to stay safe and cool this summer. Your home's management/leadership teams recently received guidance from the Ministry of Long-Term Care on how to prepare for hot weather conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. See [full memo](#), dated June 22, from Stacey Colameco, Director, Long-Term Care (LTC) Inspections Branch and the [full guidelines here](#).

### When does hot weather become a risk to residents?

When heat and humidity are combined, it is known as the humidex which is displayed as a number on a chart. For at risk groups such as residents living in LTC, the acceptable upper temperature limit is 26°C and a humidity level of approximately 50% for comfort. When these numbers are plotted on the humidex chart, the value is 30. Therefore, LTC homes must monitor conditions inside and outside of the home to know when to initiate actions and control measures to manage possible heat-related illness. To help prepare for extreme heat events, homes should consult Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) weather website regularly or the local weather station.

### What are your home's top 10 priorities if the building doesn't have central air-conditioning?

1. There are dedicated common areas that can be cooled in all home areas or on each floor and there are enough of these areas to accommodate all residents in the building, considering physical distancing as required.
2. There is a team member assigned to monitor the indoor air temperature and humidity levels in these dedicated cooling areas three times per day (when outdoor conditions exceed a humidex of 30) so that cooling areas remain below a humidex of 30.
3. There is a back up supply of portable air conditioners in the building in case any of the others fail or if any are needed in high risk resident rooms (if electrical capacity is available).
4. In case of a power outage, the home's generator will power the air conditioning equipment in the designated cooling areas. In the absence of a generator, home management can call a company to deliver one if necessary and it is capable of being hooked-up on the same day.
5. There is an evacuation or relocation plan for residents if the building can't be kept cool enough during extreme heat episodes to manage resident heat-related symptoms.
6. Any fans, that are in the building, are kept clean and used in accordance with Public Health Ontario guidelines.
7. Any air-conditioning systems have been inspected, cleaned and are working. Portable air conditioners have been cleaned and disinfected before use.
8. There are enough staff to assess each resident for heat risk, to monitor them for symptoms of dehydration and other heat-related symptoms, to offer them adequate fluids and to know when to report concerns to a Registered Nurse
9. The menu plan includes foods that can be eaten cold and have a high-water content for hydration.
10. Care staff are familiar with resident cooling strategies, location of cooling equipment and supplies, how to forward heat complaints and report malfunctioning equipment to maintenance staff.

During extreme weather alerts, the Ministry monitors incoming temperature complaints and critical incidents. These are prioritized and triaged with urgency. **If you have any questions or concerns about your health, comfort or temperature-related matters, please speak to a nurse or team member at your home.**

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## LTC Resident Forums: Keeping Residents Connected



After nearly 2.5 months of running weekly Resident Forums, it has become increasingly clear to the OARC team that residents across Ontario are craving meaningful connection. While plans for outdoor visits with family and friends continue to be ironed out and executed, virtual peer-to-peer interactions are another way that residents can access a private and confidential outlet for sharing, learning and connecting.

Facilitated by Barry Hickling, OARC Board member and resident leader from the Village of Aspen Lake in Windsor, Resident Forums continue to be offered on a weekly basis. Forums are not a replacement for formal counselling or therapy, but they can help residents to work through feelings of loneliness and isolation by providing reassurance and validation from resident peers.

Beth, a resident leader from True Davidson Acres in Toronto has joined the Forums on a few different occasions since they started. She shared, "Every time I have participated in the Forum, I have enjoyed the meeting greatly! It's so informative and I always have a warm feeling when I hear of the situations of such a variety of people from different locations, all of us in similar or the same daily living."

Residents can participate in the Forums by phone by dialing a toll-free number, through a meeting platform on a computer or through an app on either a smart phone\* or tablet device\* (\*download of GoToTraining required). We understand from previous Forums that some residents may require additional support during the sessions to participate in a meaningful way (unmuting lines, speaking into phone receiver, moving closer to computer screen or microphone, encouragement to speak up and share etc.). Our hope/intention with the Resident Forums is to hear directly from residents as much as possible.

We have added new July dates – get registered today!

<https://attendee.gototraining.com/rt/4948757107395787522>

**Note:** Ongoing participation in the Forums is encouraged, however, we ask that residents come back to join us on a monthly basis, rather than weekly, to allow other residents the chance to participate.

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## “Is Social Isolation Elder Abuse?” OARC Participates in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is marked each year on June 15. It is an official United Nations International Day acknowledging the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. This past June 15th was the 15th anniversary of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. OARC participated in an interactive online expert panel hosted by Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario, CanAge and the Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. The panelists discussed the issue of isolation and neglect of older Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic in light of the restrictions to visitors in LTC, and COVID-19 infection prevention precautions.

### Expert panelists included:

- Brian Dybwad, Hereditary Chief of the Gitksan Nation (gave Indigenous Welcome)
- The Honourable Deb Schulte, Minister of Seniors
- Dr. Elizabeth Podnieks, Founder of WEAAD & Professor Emeritus at Ryerson University's School of Nursing
- Gregor Sneddon, Executive Director HelpAge Canada
- Laura Tamblyn Watts, LLB, President and CEO of CanAge
- Samir Sinha, MD, DPhil, FRCPC, AGSF, Director of Geriatrics, Sinai Health System and the University Health Network and Director of Health Policy Research, National Institute on Ageing
- Kahir Lalji, MA, Provincial Director, United Way Lower Mainland and Executive Director, United Way Southern Interior BC
- Devora Greenspon, Treasurer, OARC, Resident Leader at Bayview Extencicare, Willowdale
- Dee Lender, Executive Director, OARC

Dee and Devora expressed organizational commitment to working with government and stakeholders to ensure that LTC living and working never returns to pre-COVID-19 status.

While there is no simple answer, the consensus view was that social isolation causes profound negative outcomes, some surmising to be worse than the effect of contracting physical illness. OARC's contributions were led by Devora Greenspon, Treasurer for OARC who spoke candidly from her personal experience living through social isolation, co-horting, lack of human contact and associated outcomes including depression, sadness, despair, loss of appetite, loss of motivation, and loss of physical mobility. Dee Lender, Executive Director spoke to longstanding systemic issues that were not created by COVID-19, but exacerbated, resulting in the tragedy of disproportionate infection and loss of life for residents and team members in LTC homes. The webinar and slide presentation can be accessed here:

<http://www.eapon.ca/training-education/training/webinars/>

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### **OARC in the Media**

Devora Greenspon, OARC Board Member, describes her journey in isolation – “Woman recounts being isolated in long-term care during the pandemic” (June 17, 2020) CityNews, Toronto

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2020/06/17/woman-recounts-being-isolated-in-long-term-care-during-the-pandemic/>

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### **Resources and Research**

- **ABCs of Combating Isolation**, webpage <https://www.pioneernetwork.net/resource-library/> Pioneer Network
- **Resources for People Living in Long-Term Care Homes from Dementiability:**
  - What is COVID-19 – Dementiability  
<https://www.dementiability.com/resources/1-COVID-19-Book-for-Dementia-in-LTC-in-Canada.pdf>
  - Hand Hygiene Tips, Tools and References  
<https://www.dementiability.com/hand-hygiene>
- **"Why, in almost all countries, was residential care for older people so badly affected by COVID-19?"** (July 2020), opinion paper  
[http://www.ose.be/files/publication/OSEPaperSeries/Declercq\\_Et\\_Al\\_2020\\_OpinionPaper23.pdf](http://www.ose.be/files/publication/OSEPaperSeries/Declercq_Et_Al_2020_OpinionPaper23.pdf)  
Declercq, A., de Stampa, M., Geffen, L., Heckman, G., Hirdes, J., Finne-Soveri, H., Lum, T., Millar, N., Morris, J. N., Onder, G., Szczerbińska, K., Topinkova, E. and van Hout, H. (2020), Why, in almost all countries, was residential care for older people so badly affected by COVID-19?, OSE Working Paper Series, Opinion Paper No. 23, Brussels: European Social Observatory, 13 p.
- **"Restoring Trust: COVID-19 and The Future of Long-Term Care"** (June 2020), policy briefing report  
<https://rsc-src.ca/en/restoring-trust-covid-19-and-future-long-term-care> Estabrooks CA, Straus S,

## OARC Annual Education Bursary Delayed

Due to COVID-19 demands, the OARC's Annual Education Bursary for Residents' Council Assistants will be delayed. Please watch for updates in future newsletters and website <http://www.ontarc.com/>

## Special Dates

### OARC Launching Ontario's FIRST Residents' Councils Week September 14th-19th, 2020

Residents Councils' play an important role in shaping the place residents call home. They bring residents together as peers, to discuss issues of importance and to stay connected and engaged in home operations and decision-making. Ontario's first official Residents' Councils week will allow Councils the opportunity to creatively showcase who they are and what they do. Stay tuned in the coming months for customizable tools and templates to help promote this special week in YOUR home! Check our website for updates <http://www.ontarc.com/residents-council-week.html>

## OARC Representing Residents' Councils

Working with our Ministry of Long-Term Care (MOLTC) and Stakeholder Groups as members of various committees, residents attend and provide their lived experience to government and sector leaders through:

- Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ministry of Colleges and Universities
- Ontario Seniors Care and Assistance Roundtable (OSCAR)
- Behaviour Supports Ontario: Advisory Group, Integrated Teams Collaborative, Lived Experience Advisory Group, Non-Stigmatizing Language Expert Panel
- CLRI Provincial Advisory Committee; CLRI Supporting Diversity and Inclusion in LTC Advisory Group; CLRI Ontario Caring Advisory Circle (OCAC), Implementation Advisor
- Health Quality Ontario: Resource Development Advisory Group; Long- Term Care Practice Report Advisory Committee; Transitions from Hospital to Home Advisory Group



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Thank you to Java Group Programs and the Ontario Centres for Learning, Research & Innovation in Long-Term Care for supporting OARC's Culture Change products and education programs. To find out more about how you can support OARC, please contact Dee Lender, Executive Director [dlender@ontarc.com](mailto:dlender@ontarc.com) 1-800-532-0201 x 240.

We encourage you to share this information with residents in your home. We love to hear from you - call, write or email us with your questions, suggestions and stories.



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