

THE TADDLER

Annual Review from the Chair of the Board of Directors

By: Dr. Sarah Shaw, Board Chair

Every year in health care brings challenges and this past year is no different. We have moved into a new phase of COVID where it no longer takes centre stage. That said, COVID has lingering effects on all of us which have contributed to our work loads and exposed weaknesses in our health care system. We have seen higher rates of attrition on our team. In a recent survey, almost 80% of Taddle Creek Family Health Team staff reported moderate or high levels of occupational exhaustion. None of this is surprising given that primary care has continually done more work with less resources over many years running.

Despite limited capacity, as a team and a board, we have met a number of major milestones in the past year:

- We developed a 3 year strategic plan which involved stakeholder engagement, staff surveys, focus groups, one on one interviews and board of directors' retreats;



- Our incredibly hardworking and now phased out COVID Task Force provided multiple briefings and kept our team informed, prepared and agile to respond;
- Our registered nurses, nurse practitioners, dietitians, pharmacists, physician assistant and diabetes team contribute invaluable advice and care on a daily basis. Critically, they also provide the team with updates and guidance on changes in medications and guidelines, whether it be through hosting clinical meetings, lunch and learns or developing new informational documents. The groups we offer to patients continue to be on the cutting edge, addressing pressing concerns including trauma, insomnia, mindful nutrition and intuitive eating for diabetes. Our social workers continue to offer quick access to mental health care via Single Session appointments;

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- In addition to our regular hours of business Monday to Friday, our 17 physicians provided 260 evening clinics and 104 weekend clinics;
- We brought our by-laws and articles of amendment into compliance with ONCA (Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act);
- Our Executive Director continued to provide meticulous attention to detail, keeping us updated on Ministry of Health (MOH) requirements and submitting multiple reports to the MOH including our Annual Operational Plan, letters to request additional funding and committee reports; and
- We updated our policies to help staff effectively manage potential acts of violence.

There is a lot of media coverage about limited access to primary care and this is clearly a dire problem for Canadians. However, I can proudly say that the Taddle Creek team works tirelessly to provide an incredibly high caliber of care and accessibility. I am grateful to work alongside the Taddle Creek team.



Sherry Kennedy, our Executive Director, will be leaving Taddle Creek after 17 successful years. I want to acknowledge how much she has done for Taddle Creek and how much we appreciate her.

In the strategic plan, we articulated our commitment to foster a strong and resilient organization that creates conditions for Taddle Creek's staff team to thrive. Our staff Wellness Circles have been a welcome addition in this regard. Another key piece of our wellness as individuals and as a team is advocating for primary care. I personally have written many letters to government over the last few months. I also had a wonderful opportunity to meet with our Patient and Family Advisory Committee in April 2023 where I spoke my mind regarding the need for increased support for primary care. Our patients on this committee are cheering us on and are looking for ways to advocate for us as well.

Yours truly,

Dr. Sarah Shaw, Board Chair



Mental Health Corner

Self-Compassion

By: Sarah Wash, Social Worker



From a young age, we learn about the importance of other people's feelings, needs and time; however, we rarely learn about the importance of our own feelings, needs and time. With this, some of us find it important and second-nature to be kind and compassionate to others, but may find it less important and more challenging to extend these traits to ourselves. This begs the question – what is self-compassion, why is it important and how can we practice it?

Defining Compassion vs. Self-compassion

Compassion is about acknowledging and understanding another person's distress and supporting them through it. *Self-compassion* is about turning this understanding and acceptance inwards. Dr. Kristin Neff, a pioneer in the study of self-compassion, has defined three pillars of self-compassion: (1) self-kindness, (2) mindfulness and (3) common humanity. Rather than judging ourselves on our successes and failures, self-compassion is about acknowledging that we as human beings deserve kindness regardless of the circumstances. Mindfulness is about observing and accepting our thoughts, emotions and experiences as they are without getting swept up in them or ignoring them. Lastly, self-compassion is not self-pity where we become immersed in our own issues and ignore the suffering of others. Instead, it is about recognizing that we are not alone in our challenges.

Barriers to self-compassion

Being compassionate with ourselves is not always easy. Trauma and stressful life events – both in the past and present – can impact our ability to see ourselves as worthy of self-compassion. Additionally, social expectations and past teachings

can lead us to believe that self-compassion is selfish or self-indulgent. Research shows that self-compassion is important for our physical and mental health, much more so than self-criticism. Not only can self-compassion help us to adequately manage difficult situations and build our resilience, but it can increase compassion for others.

How can we practice self-compassion?

Just like any new skill, growing self-compassion takes time and practice. There are a variety of strategies we can use to increase our self-compassion. One way is by trying to notice when we are saying something to ourselves that we wouldn't say to someone we care about and talking to ourselves as if we were talking to a close friend. We can also try externalizing our harsh inner voice, such as by giving it a name (eg. the critic) and calling it out when we notice the negative self-talk happening. For example, saying "there is ___, at it again!" or simply stating "STOP" when unhelpful thoughts come up.



Final Remarks

Many people are reluctant to be self-compassionate out of fear that they will let themselves get away with anything. People are often hard on themselves, thinking that this will be helpful to them achieving their goals, but the opposite is often true. According to Dr. Kristin Neff, "the care intrinsic to compassion provides a powerful motivating force for growth and change, while also providing the safety needed to see the self clearly without fear of self-condemnation." In other words, having compassion for ourselves allows us to navigate life with ourselves as a friend, rather than a critic.

References:

1. Boykin, D. M., Himmerich, S. J., Pinciotti, C. M., Miller, L. M., Miron, L. R., & Orcutt, H. K. (2018). Barriers to self-compassion for female survivors of childhood maltreatment: The roles of fear of self-compassion and psychological inflexibility. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 76, 216-224.
2. Neff, K. (2003). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and identity*, 2(2), 85-101.
3. Neff, K. (2011). *Self-compassion: Stop beating yourself up and leave insecurity behind*. New York, NY: William Morrow.
4. Neff, K. & Germer, C. (2018). *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook*. The Guilford Press.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TADDLE CREEK

By: Sherry Kennedy, *Executive Director*

This column lets you know about Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TC FHT) events, program updates and announcements.

Hello Taddler Readers,

As I write my last Taddler column, I am overflowing with pride, optimism and gratitude. It has been my honour and privilege to be part of Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TC FHT) for 17 years.

I am proud of the FHT we have built and the exceptional interprofessional primary care we provide to you, our 22,000+ patient population. Our primary care providers deliver services to hundreds of patients every day. Our Mental Health Program offers numerous counselling cycles, single sessions and groups annually. Our accredited Diabetes Education Program delivers a remarkable array of diabetes services for both TC FHT and community patients. Our Respiratory Program uses an electronic asthma management system to modernize asthma and COPD care, including spirometry and respiratory education, and our Cardiovascular Program provides hypertension and lifestyle change counselling in conjunction with one-to-one nutrition counselling. Our programs and services have improved the health and well-being of countless patients.

TC FHT is well respected by our colleagues, patients and our funder. Our work has had many challenges: changes in provincial government direction, a health human resource crisis and a 3-year global pandemic, just to name a recent few. Challenges will continue but having witnessed this team's resilience, persistence and compassion, I am optimistic they will face new challenges as a patient centered team and will continue to be a beacon of light on the primary care landscape.

Lastly, I am sincerely grateful to TC FHT's Board, its committees, along with every team member ever associated with TC FHT for supporting me in my leadership role. Each one of you has made my time at Taddle Creek special and all of you have contributed to our success.

Thank you and best wishes.

Sherry Kennedy, Executive Director

Taddle Creek Family Health Team 2006-2023

Mental Health Webinar – October 17th, 2023

Our Mental Health Program and our Patient & Family Advisory Committee worked together to offer a “Creating & Setting Personal Boundaries” webinar that explores the importance of boundaries and the valuable skills that can be implemented in our daily lives. Over 90+ patients attended to discuss healthy relationships, types and categories of boundaries and signs we may need to set them. The webinar recording and resources are available on our [website](https://taddlecreekfht.ca/mental-health-webinar-2023/) (<https://taddlecreekfht.ca/mental-health-webinar-2023/>).

Note: You can also find our past mental health webinars on our [website](https://taddlecreekfht.ca/classes/mental-health-webinars/) (<https://taddlecreekfht.ca/classes/mental-health-webinars/>). Topics include: Balancing Your Emotions, Improving Your Sleep, Practicing Mindfulness and Self-compassion and How To Ask For Help.

Cont'd from page 4 (What's Happening at TC)

Patient Care Survey

The 2023-24 TC FHT Patient Care Survey will be emailed during the month of November to patients with an email address recorded in our electronic health record. Please keep an eye out for it and watch that it does not go to your trash folder. Your comments provide insight into how TC FHT can better serve you and how we can improve your patient experience. Please take time to complete this survey.

Fall Vaccine Information

COVID-19 XBB vaccines are available in pharmacies and public health clinics - TC FHT is not offering these - to everyone aged six months and older, with or without OHIP cards. Influenza vaccines are available at pharmacies as well as our offices to all eligible individuals over 6 months of age, regardless of their insurance status. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine is available in pharmacies. People 60+ can request a prescription from their Primary Care Provider. Please see "Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV): The not-so-new kid on the block" on page 7 for more information.

Personnel Announcements

Cheryl Dobinson, the new Executive Director, started on Oct 23, 2023. Cheryl comes to TC FHT with a decade of leadership positions at Planned Parenthood including Director of Community Programming/Research and Interim Executive Director. She has worked as a manager of health promotion with the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, as a project coordinator with Sherbourne Health and a researcher with CAMH. She brings 2 decades of experience in community building and leadership, championing equity and diversity and working passionately toward social justice in multiple communities including 2SLGBTQ+, newcomers, young parents and Black youth mental health communities. Cheryl has a Master of Arts in Sociology from York University and a wealth of research experience.

Stephen Fenn, Social Worker, was hired Aug 21, 2023. Stephen comes to us with a Master of Social Work from University of Toronto (2016) and 4.5 years of social work experience at South Riverdale Community Health Centre. This role involved providing short-term counselling/case management for their chronic disease management program. Stephen was also a social worker at CBT Associates for 2 years and a LGBT Mental Health Counsellor at Sherbourne Health for 1 year.

Nazneen Patel, Registered Nurse (RN), was hired Aug 21, 2023 as a full time, contract RN to cover Victoria Charko's maternity leave. Nazneen comes to us with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing earned from Toronto Metropolitan University in 2022. She also has a practical nursing diploma from Mohawk College in Hamilton earned in 2017. Nazneen has primary care nursing experience having worked at Magenta Health since 2019. She also worked at Toronto Public Health from primarily related to the pandemic and also worked 3 years at Sunrise of Richmond Hill for seniors living.

Sarah Wash, Social Worker, was hired May 1, 2023. Sarah comes to us with a Master of Social Work from University of Toronto completed in 2021 and 2 years of social work experience at Kingston Community Health Centre. This role involved her providing short and long-term, individual mental health counselling and case management to adults with a variety of needs. Sarah was also a social work student with TC FHT in 2021.

Taddle Creek

DIABETES
DIGEST

Diabetes and Mental Health

By: Karen Finch, Registered Nurse & Diabetes Nurse Educator

Taking care of your mental health is equally as important as taking care of your physical health. This is especially true for those living with chronic conditions like diabetes.



Diabetes and Mental Illness

There is a link between diabetes and mental illness. For example, people with diabetes are 2-3 times more likely to have depression, yet only 25-50% get diagnosed and are treated for it.¹ Symptoms of depression include prolonged sadness, feelings of emptiness or hopelessness and a loss of interest or pleasure in the activities of day-to-day life.

Anxiety is also more common in people with diabetes with evidence showing a 20% increased risk.¹ Symptoms of anxiety include persistent worrying about a number of areas that are out of proportion to the impact of the events, overthinking plans and solutions to all possible worst-case outcomes and difficulty handling uncertainty.

Other psychiatric disorders such as bipolar disorder, sleep disorders, eating disorders and stress-related disorders are more prevalent in people with diabetes compared to the general population. To complicate things further, the symptoms of mental illnesses and/or the side effects of some psychiatric medications can make managing diabetes more challenging. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes and also suspect or have been diagnosed with a mental illness, please see the list of resources at the end of this article and reach out to your primary care provider.

Stress and Diabetes Distress

Stress is a normal part of life, however ongoing and/or severe stress can impact our ability to take care of ourselves. Additionally, the stress hormones (cortisol, adrenaline and noradrenaline) can directly impact blood sugar, cause cravings for less healthy food and lead to weight gain. For the same reasons, chronic unmanaged stress can contribute to high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other health concerns.

Living with a primarily self-managed illness like diabetes can be burdensome. Frequent medical appointments, blood tests, lifestyle and medication management as well as the stress associated with

social relationships and/or with the patient-provider relationship can lead to a type of burnout which has been labelled “diabetes distress.” It is very common and, in fact, it



has been found that approximately 33-50% of people living with diabetes experience diabetes distress in any 18-month period.¹ People who have low-income, limited social supports, mental illness and/or who are experiencing complications related to their diabetes are even more susceptible. The symptoms of diabetes distress can resemble depression or anxiety but it is not usually treated effectively with medications.¹ Rather, diabetes distress can be treated with cognitive behavioural therapy and support with managing diabetes care.

Living with diabetes and wondering if you are experiencing diabetes distress? Consider completing the “[Diabetes Distress Scale](#)”. If you are not already connected to a diabetes education program you can ask your primary care provider to refer you to the Taddle Creek Diabetes Education Program or give us a call at 416-204-1256 x0 to self-refer.

Resources

Mental Illness:

<https://www.camh.ca/depressionhurts.ca>

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/>

Managing stress (CDC):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQwGKEa_MkM

Diabetes Distress (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-distress/ten-tips-coping-diabetes-distress.html>

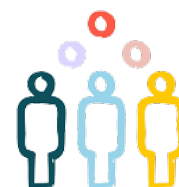
Diabetes Management Support (Diabetes Canada):

<https://guidelines.diabetes.ca/patient-resources>

References

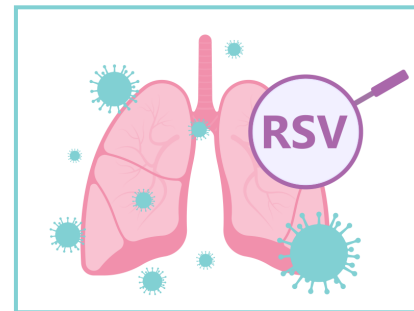
1) <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/mental-health.html>

2) https://www.diabetes.ca/health-care-providers/clinical-practice-guidelines/chapter-18#panel-tab_FullText



Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV): The not-so-new kid on the block

By: Jessica Lam and Shawn Goodman, Pharmacists

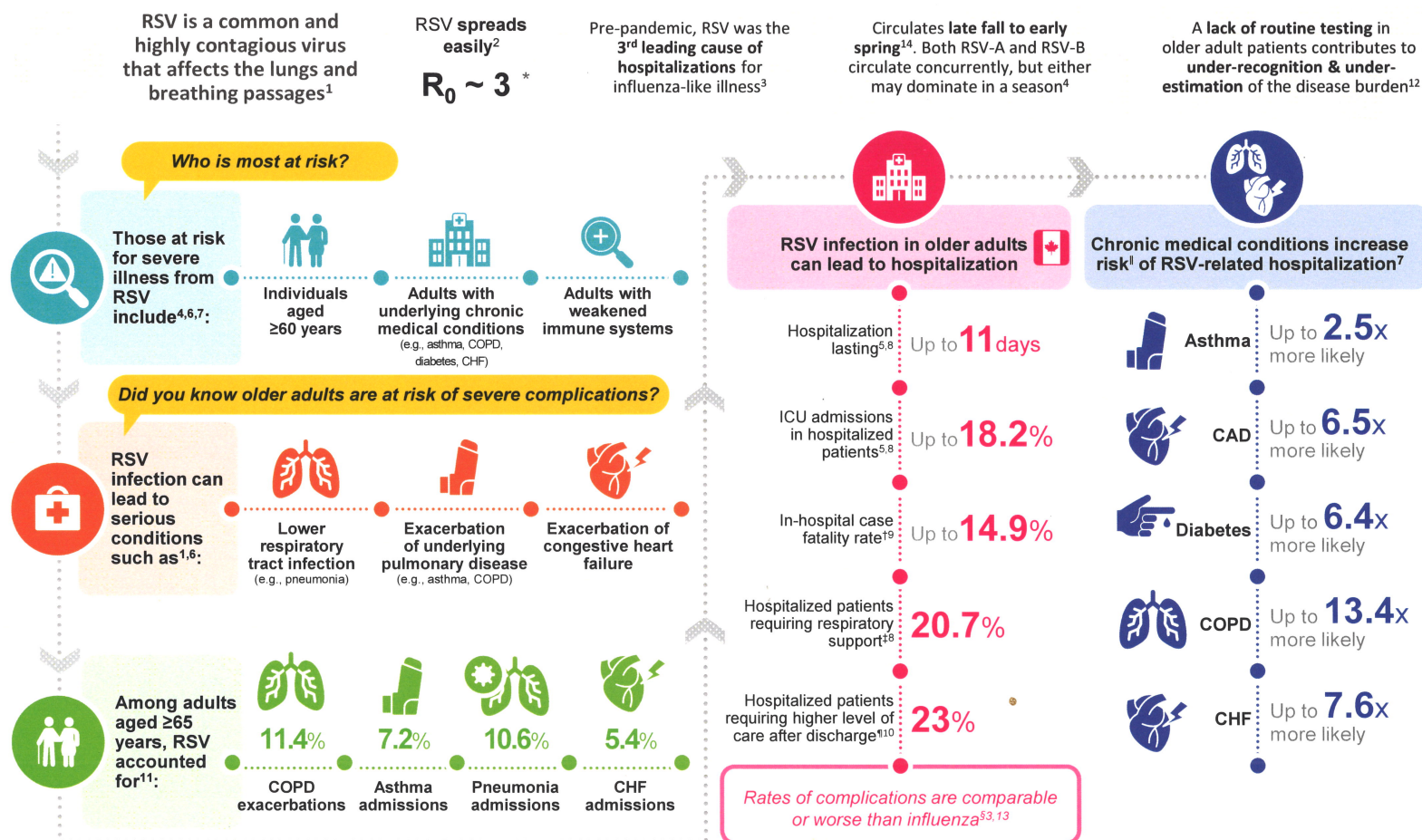


What is RSV?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common, contagious respiratory virus that affects the lungs and respiratory airways. RSV follows an annual seasonal pattern. In Canada, a wave of increased activity (an epidemic) usually occurs from the fall to the early spring. RSV usually causes a mild illness with cold-like symptoms. People who are infected with RSV can have repeat infections. Individuals of any age can be infected; however, infants, older adults (60 years of age and older) and immunocompromised individuals are at a higher risk for developing more severe illness from RSV.

Symptoms of RSV

Symptoms of RSV infections in adults are typically mild, including cold-like symptoms. However, RSV can sometimes present as pneumonia and some affected individuals may require supplemental oxygen or hospitalization for treatment.



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Cont'd from page 7 (RSV Vaccine)

How can I protect myself against RSV infection?

Arexvy is the first RSV vaccine recommended for older adults. The Arexvy vaccine is not yet publicly funded; the approximate cost is \$300 per dose. It was recently approved in Canada and is now available by prescription. It is a one-time dose for people 60 years of age and older and about 94% in protecting those with underlying medical conditions. The most commonly reported ($\geq 10\%$) adverse reactions in study participants were injection site pain (60.9%), fatigue (33.6%), muscle aches and pains (28.9%), headache (27.2%) and joint pain (18.1%). Talk to your primary care provider to discuss whether you would be a good candidate to receive the RSV vaccine.

References

1. Papi A, et al. Respiratory Syncytial Virus Prefusion F Protein Vaccine in Older Adults. *N Engl J Med* 2023; 388:595-608.
2. Arexvy Product Monograph. GlaxoSmithKline, Inc. Date of Initial Approval: Aug 4, 2023. Accessed Aug 28, 2023. https://pdf.hres.ca/dpd_pm/00071904.PDF
3. GlaxoSmithKline, Inc. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV): a serious but under-recognized disease in older adults. April 2023.

Taddler Tips

NEW:

Toronto Health and Social Services Directory

Your guide to finding care close to home



The [Toronto Health and Social Service Directory](https://torontoservicedirectory.ca/) (<https://torontoservicedirectory.ca/>) can be used to find health, social and community services in Toronto. This allows people seeking support to search the directory of over 8,000 services by location and topic or keyword. There are easy-to-find service topics, including Older Adults, Caregivers, Mental Health, 2SLGBTQI+, Newcomers, Income Support, Housing, etc. all in one place.

THE TADDLER

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DISCLAIMER

The information presented in The Taddler is for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the professional advice, treatment or diagnosis from your health care provider. Contact your physician, nurse practitioner or other qualified health care professional if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

The purpose of the TC FHT Newsletter, "The Taddler" is to provide:

Education on varied health-related topics
Regular communication about what is happening at TC FHT
Information on issues that impact TC FHT and its patients
A means for patients to get acquainted with TC FHT team members
We hope you enjoy reading it!

**The Taddler is not for private marketing purposes*

Taddle Creek Family Health Team

November 2023 - March 2024 Groups/Workshops/Drop-In Offerings

Groups/Clinics are open to Taddle Creek Family Health Team patients
 Additional information is available on the Programs and Services drop down menu,
 see website: <https://taddlecreekfht.ca/>
 Dates are subject to change

Event	Date(s)	Time	Learn About/Assistance With
CBT for Insomnia Group Virtual Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral required	Jan 9 - Feb 6, 2024	Tuesdays 5:00 - 7:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is used when treating insomnia • Techniques to help you get quality sleep that will promote good physical and mental health • How our minds and thoughts contribute to insomnia • Practicing mindfulness to reduce stress and help you get to sleep
Trauma Group Virtual Call 416-260-1315 Note: MD referral required	TBD (Spring 2024 or Fall 2024)	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of one's stress and trauma responses • Increase body awareness and practice body-oriented skills • Learn how to respond to painful emotions and trauma responses • Enhance self-compassion • Enhance overall well-being
Blood Sugar Management Workshop Virtual Call 416-204-1256	Dec 6, 2023 (Part 1) Dec 13, 2023 (Part 2) Dec 14, 2023 (Part 1) Dec 21, 2023 (Part 2) Jan 3, 2024 (Part 1) Jan 10, 2024 (Part 2) Jan 18, 2024 (Part 1) Jan 25, 2024 (Part 2) Feb 7, 2024 (Part 1) Feb 14, 2024 (Part 2) Feb 22, 2024 (Part 1) Feb 29, 2024 (Part 2) Mar 6, 2024 (Part 1) Mar 13, 2024 (Part 2) Mar 21, 2024 (Part 1) Mar 28, 2024 (Part 2)	Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm Wednesdays 9:00 - 11:00 am 9:00 - 11:00 am Thursdays 5:00 - 7:00 pm 5:00 - 7:00 pm	An introductory two-part series designed to help individuals living with prediabetes or diabetes. Workshops will be held over Zoom. Part 1: Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is diabetes? • What causes diabetes? • How is prediabetes/diabetes diagnosed? • How do I prevent long term complications related to diabetes? • Is diabetes reversible? Part 2: Taking Charge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I manage my blood sugars? • What can I eat when I have prediabetes/diabetes? • Can exercise help with prediabetes/diabetes? • How does stress impact my prediabetes/diabetes?