

FORGING A PATH FOR
**BETTER MENTAL
HEALTH CARE**
TOGETHER

IMPACT REPORT

MOVE FASTER. REACH FURTHER. DO MORE.

2025



THANK YOU

To Our CAMH Community,

Thank you for your generous support. You help CAMH forge a better path for mental health. One that reflects people's real experiences, adapts when things change and brings better care to life.

Because of you, we move faster to meet urgent needs, reach further to support people who need it and do more to improve care across the system. Your generosity powers progress—not just in one program or project, but in mental health care, research, education and advocacy throughout CAMH and beyond.

This impact report shows the difference your support makes every day. Each story is a glimpse at what better looks like: care that meets people where they are, sees people for who they are and helps them move ahead on their recovery journey.

People turn to CAMH at moments when they feel lost, overwhelmed or unsure where to turn. Your generosity helps make sure they're not alone—and that their path forward leads somewhere full of support and hope.

Thank you for believing in a future where no one is left behind. We're proud to build something better, together with you.

With gratitude,



Anne-Marie Newton
President & CEO, CAMH Foundation



CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE CARE IS BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Jessica Muamba knows that the right care can change everything—especially when it reflects your lived experience. She saw the importance of representation and understanding up close with her younger sister, Joyce, who was born severely premature and lives with lasting motor and cognitive challenges.

In 2018, Joyce was in crisis. She stopped sleeping. She ran away from home. Police found her wandering downtown Toronto and brought her to a hospital, where she was transferred to CAMH's Early Psychosis Unit. CAMH staff worked persistently until they found the right treatment, and it made all the difference. For Jessica's family, seeking care was a turning point.

"In a lot of African communities, there's a huge spiritual aspect to mental health," she says. "They try to pray it away."

After many family conversations—and after seeing the positive impact that care had on Joyce's stability and recovery—her mother came to embrace it as part of the solution. "Maybe the professional help was the answered prayer."

Even with high-quality clinical care, Jessica saw the gaps. At one point, staff were unfamiliar with how to support Joyce's braids and didn't recognize the meticulous care and maintenance they require. "It showed me how important culturally informed care really is," she says. "It could make a big difference."

CAMH is committed to health equity and strives toward better, more culturally appropriate care. And we know there's more to do. Your support helps CAMH take steps forward on this journey.

"How else would we have the clinical education and trial and error to back these groundbreaking treatments without funding?" Jessica says. "This support means everything."

In 2020, after her mother passed away, Jessica became Joyce's full-time caregiver. Today, Joyce is thriving with the right medication and daily routine. She's since moved in with her dad, who helps with her care and takes her to a community hub program that gives her structure and a sense of belonging with peers who share similar experiences.



MOVE FASTER

Early intervention saves lives. Your support helps CAMH deliver care for complex illness sooner—at our hospital and across Ontario.



REACH FURTHER

CAMH programs like AMANI, which provides culturally responsive mental health and substance use support for Black youth and families, and Shkaabe Makwa, the first Indigenous-led hospital-based centre in Canada, reflect people's lived experience and expand access to care for communities long underserved.



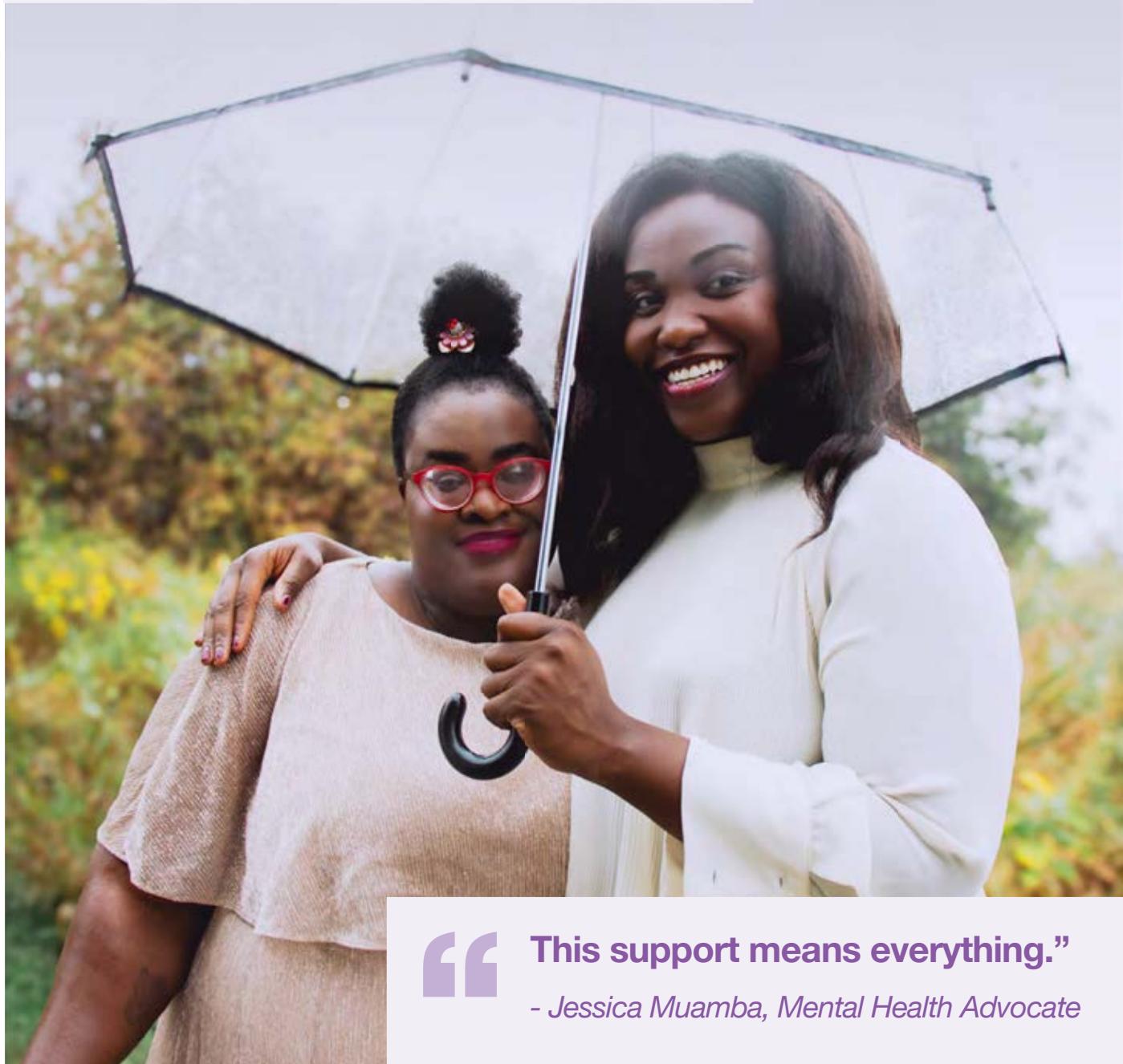
DO MORE

CAMH-led solutions like urgent virtual care clinics and youth hubs across Ontario break down barriers and make it easier for people to get help, faster.

Meanwhile, Jessica is raising three daughters of her own and has become a mental health advocate who uses her social platform—featuring Mama Africa, a character inspired by her mom—to speak with honesty, humour and heart. Through storytelling, she shares the unspoken challenges in immigrant households while celebrating her culture. She speaks openly about mental health and uses her voice to lift others—because when people feel seen, it gives them the strength to keep going.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to explore Jessica's Instagram and advocacy for better mental health for everyone.



This support means everything.”

- Jessica Muamba, Mental Health Advocate

EARLY INTERVENTION IS BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Amit Rotem sees the early signs of mental illness every day. At CAMH's Youth Urgent Care Clinic, he works with young people navigating anxiety, depression, trauma and addiction—often all at once. Nicotine use is one of the most common clues.

"When I ask if they use substances, most say no," he explains. "Then I'll point to the vape in their hand. Until that moment, they don't think of it as a problem."

For many youth, nicotine use is the first visible signal that something deeper is going on. Without early intervention, those signs can be missed—or dismissed.

"Addiction can form in just a few weeks," says Dr. Rotem. "We need to respond early."

CAMH's approach is rooted in evidence. The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)—the longest-running study of its kind in Canada—tracks youth mental health trends across the province.

And it's working. With earlier access to care, CAMH is seeing a reduction in emergency readmissions among youth.

Looking ahead, Dr. Rotem envisions a new fellowship in youth mental health and addiction: a training program for the next generation of clinicians to intervene sooner, respond more effectively and help young people in crisis with the dignity and urgency they deserve.

Work like this reflects what's possible when care starts early and every sign is taken seriously.



MOVE FASTER

Recognizing early signs matters. Your support helps CAMH act quickly when young people show symptoms of mental illness or addiction.



REACH FURTHER

Our research shapes care across the system. Large-scale studies like OSDUHS guide evidence-based treatment and policies, which improves outcomes for people living with mental illness and their families.



DO MORE

CAMH is home to the brightest minds in mental health and trains the leaders of tomorrow. You enable us to build a future-ready workforce that cares for people of all ages with empathy, expertise and urgency.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to watch CAMH's back-to-school webinar for youth and families, featuring Dr. Rotem.



Addiction can form in just a few weeks. We need to respond early.”

- Dr. Amit Rotem, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, CAMH

SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS IS BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

For Dr. Yona Lunsky, caregiving has always been a part of her story. As the youngest in a big family, she helped care for her sister, who is three years older and has a developmental disability. “It’s just how things were,” she says. “You don’t call it caregiving. You’re just a sister.”

Today, Yona is a senior scientist and Director of the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre at CAMH. She leads research focused on the mental health of adults with developmental disabilities and the families who support them.

But it took time to integrate her personal experience into her professional life. “I was trained not to bring myself into the room,” she says. “But that changed over time. I realized my experience helps me understand what some of the families I work with are facing.”

Her team now offers and studies a range of supports for caregivers, including mindfulness, peer support and psychoeducation. One study shifted her thinking: while working with older caregivers whose adult children also had developmental disabilities, she saw how both parent and child were aging.

“Both need, and give, care—so who’s the caregiver here?”



MOVE FASTER

We’re advancing research and care for people often left out of the system. That includes Canadians with developmental disabilities and complex mental health needs whose unique experiences and outcomes matter.



I realized my experience helps me understand what some of the families I work with are facing.”

- Dr. Yona Lunsky, Director, Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre, CAMH



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to explore the CAMH Mental Health Toolkit.



The study also revealed unexpected barriers to access. Some participants preferred phone calls over online forms; others couldn't join video appointments because of outdated devices. "Initially we were very focused on meeting the access needs of people with developmental disabilities, but not necessarily these older caregivers."

Access, she says, is about trust, timing and dignity.

"We talk a lot about finding the right door. But sometimes the problem is there are too many doors and no map. Or the person doesn't even know they're allowed to ask for help."

Yona believes the mental health system must do more to recognize caregiving as a shared experience and make it easier for families to find their way through it. That includes creating better tools, reducing stigma, developing resources and building opportunities for connection.

Recently, Yona took part in CAMH's first-ever Family Summit, which brought caregivers, clinicians and researchers together to talk, listen and share lived experience.

"You could see people thinking, 'I've never been in this space before where it's okay to talk about my caregiving experience.' That's what we need more of."



REACH FURTHER

CAMH develops evidence-based tools, virtual programs and resources that meet families where they are. The impact of these innovations extend far beyond our walls to provide support for people everywhere.



DO MORE

Lived experience shapes better mental health care. Through caregiver-led research, collaborative design and engaging events, we're building a system that listens, learns and responds.

NOURISHMENT IS BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

At CAMH, recovery is about more than just treatment. It's about ensuring people feel safe, cared for and seen on their path to recovery.

That's the idea behind Gifts of Light—a 100 per cent donor-funded program that provides essential items and meaningful experiences to support patients during their time at CAMH. From warm clothing to art kits to access to food, it helps restore dignity and make healing possible.

The Gifts of Light food pantry initiative began with one gift card and a few snacks on a shelf. Counsellor Mike Lamore-Robins, who works in CAMH's Youth Addiction and Concurrent Disorder Service in the Youth Day Hospital day treatment program—quickly saw its value. His students often arrived tired, distracted or dysregulated.

"Last year, many youth in the program had ADHD," he says. "Encouraging students to sit down, take a minute and have a snack before giving in made a huge difference."

Today, that simple idea has grown. There are now 19 Gifts of Light-supported food pantries across CAMH's outpatient programs. Stocked with nourishing options and the occasional treat, they're open to anyone who needs them—no questions asked. For many patients, it's the first sign they're in a place that cares.

Your support helps CAMH deliver care that goes beyond treatment—meeting basic needs, restoring dignity and supporting people through every step of recovery.

"At CAMH, we're teaching people to live well. Small changes in how we deliver care can have a big impact."



MOVE FASTER

Programs like Gifts of Light, the Therapeutic Neighbourhood and the Collaborative Learning College help people recover sooner by supporting real-time needs, easing transitions and building skills for life beyond the hospital.



REACH FURTHER

You fuel our ability to pilot and expand what works. Programs that start small—like Gifts of Light's food pantry—can grow to reach more patients across CAMH and inspire new models of care.



DO MORE

CAMH brings humanity to every healing journey. Donor-funded programs provide basic items and meaningful experiences that treat the whole person and change the care experience.



At CAMH, we're teaching people to live well. Small changes in the way we deliver care can have a big impact."

- Mike Lamore-Robbins, Counsellor, Youth Addiction and Concurrent Disorder Service, CAMH

THANK YOU

You help forge a better path
for mental health.

camh
FOUNDATION

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