

March 29, 2023

H.O.P.E. -Health Opportunities Promoting Empowerment-Destigmatizing Mental Health

The commonly referred to 'Hope Committee' was formed in 2010 by local service providers and community members with lived experience of Mental Health in Mount Forest. The Committee's aim was to network, educate and advocate for resources around Mental Health and Wellness. The committee is not-for-profit, under the umbrella of the Mount Forest Family Health team.

Over the years the committee has become very active and expanded to all areas of Wellington North and at times, into Minto. The committee meets in Mount Forest monthly for networking, planning and providing updates on community needs. Examples of what the committee has achieved over our 10+ year history include:

1. An annual digital and printed Mental Health Resource guide.
2. Annual Hope BBQ Fundraiser to assist in funding our educational events.
3. Monthly Movie Nights held in the community, showing movies with mental health/wellness themes, followed by facilitator lead discussions.
4. Mayor's Lunch Events as part of Showcase Wellington North; hosting 80+ community members at no cost for a light lunch and guest speakers discussing areas such as Mental Health in the Workplace, and Mental Health in Agriculture with guest panelist from the farming community and University of Guelph
5. Hosting no-cost Suicide Awareness Workshops-Safe Talk

In 2020, the committee intended to host a large Wellness Festival, named The Lighthouse Festival, to acknowledge the 10-year mark for the work of this community group and expand the message about the importance of mental wellness. The concept for the festival was inspired by a Scottish event, called the Bear's Den Festival. Covid-19 forced the committee to regroup and is now on track to host the festival in September 2023.

The committee is currently seeking financial support for our efforts to assist with the festival's organizational expenses and ongoing work of the committee through the year.

Those seeking more information on the Hope Committee, activities of the committee or the proposed wellness festival can reach out to the current chair person.

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Hope Committee Participating in Showcase Wellington North



Discussion panelists and MC for the Mayor's Lunch-Farming and Mental Health
(Tim May-Farmer Tim, Andrea Jones-Bitton-OVC-University of Guelph, Elsa Mann-Hope Committee, Katie Normet-Rivers Edge Goat Dairy)



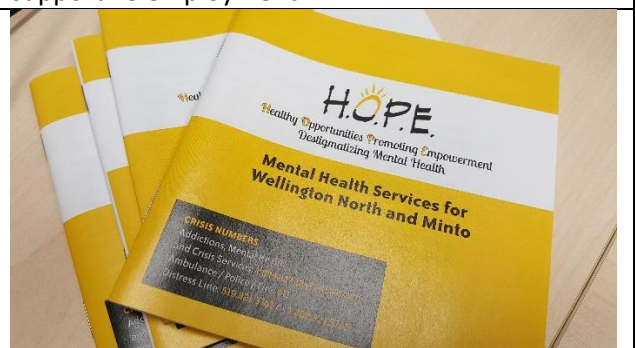
Mayor's Lunch 2016-Mike Harloff-Hope Committee provides an overview of supporting mental health in the workplace, with attendees from Wellington North's business community.



Hope Committee 2018-Serving Lunch for the Mayor's lunch, Arthur, as part of Showcase Wellington North. The Raw Carrot Soup Enterprise spoke on the topic of their Social Franchise and how they provide opportunities to residents with disabilities to contribute by providing jobs and supportive employment.



2021-Mount Forest Lions donated \$2150 to the work of the HOPE Committee



Hope Committees produces a printed resource with contacts and descriptions for local Mental Health services and other community supports. This tool is beneficial for everyone, in particular, those that cannot or do not have access to online tools.