



# December 2022

## AFTERWORDS

Newsletter of Active Retired  
Members  
Chapter 11



Keep your eyes on your inbox! Our ARM Prez will be announcing a NEW Photo Challenge - with prizes! And you will be featured in future newsletters.

And in this issue ...

- Check out what's being donated from Chapter 11 to those who need a little extra warmth
- Have you had it already with Hallmark holiday movies? Create your own!
- At our age, the holidays carry new stressors. Here is a Healthline article on how to prepare for Christmas if you're a caregiver again ...
- Got a great entrepreneurial idea after years of teaching? THIS man did, but look what happened when he tried to test his learning game.
- How many ways can pollution hurt us, Let me count the ways...
- All I want for Christmas is a medical appointment ...word from our friend Dr. Anne Marie Zajdlik and The Toronto Star about where we are- and how we got there!
- As always, helpful advice from our friends at OTIP.

*AfterWords* is the official publication of the Active Retired Members of OSSTF, Chapter 11 Thames Valley (ARM C11). Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of ARM C11 or OSSTF.



### And to your left ...

**Our past president and her fellow knitters have worked through summer heat and fall garden duties to create this collection of handcrafted warmth and compassion. The items will be donated to shelters in our area to provide something new and beautiful for people facing tough times!**

Oh, admit it—we all make fun of them, but what would December be without those Hallmark movies?

## Hallmark Christmas Movie Plot Generator

choose one from each column

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big city	lawyer	returns to her small town at Christmas time	to inherit something	and magically falls in love	with a sensitive guy in plaid
career- oriented	writer		to enter a folksy contest		with an old flame
recently single	baker		to stop some corporate closure		with some guy and his dog
world weary	interior designer		to save the family business		with a single dad and his precocious child
with the wrong guy	early 2000s actor you forgot about		to appease their sassy friend or widowed parent		with Christmas, the town and some guy

...and also the only old man in town might actually be the real Santa Claus.

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## ARM Chapter 11      Executive 2022-23

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## Holiday Hints for Alzheimer's Caregivers

Holidays can be meaningful, enriching times for both the person with Alzheimer's disease and his or her family. Maintaining or adapting family rituals and traditions helps all family members feel a sense of belonging and family identity. For a person with Alzheimer's, this link with a familiar past is reassuring.

However, celebrations, special events, or holidays, which may include other people, can cause confusion and anxiety for a person with Alzheimer's. He or she may find some situations easier and more pleasurable than others. The tips below can help you balance busy holiday activities with everyday care for a person with Alzheimer's disease.

### Finding the Right Balance

Many caregivers have mixed feelings about holidays. They may have happy memories of the past, but they also may worry about the extra demands that holidays make on their time and energy. Here are some ways to balance doing many holiday-related activities while taking care of your own needs and those of the person with Alzheimer's disease:

- Celebrate holidays that are important to you. Include the person with Alzheimer's as much as possible.
- Set your own limits, and be clear about them with others. You do not have to live up to the expectations of friends or relatives. Your situation is different now. Involve the person with Alzheimer's in simple holiday preparations, or have him or her observe your preparations. Observing you will familiarize him or her with the upcoming festivities. Participating with you may give the person the pleasure of helping and the fun of anticipating and reminiscing.
- Consider simplifying your holidays around the home. For example, rather than cooking an elaborate dinner, consider a smaller dinner with close family. Instead of elaborate decorations, consider choosing a few select items.
- When health and safety provisions allow, encourage friends and family to visit even if it's difficult. Limit the number of visitors at any one time. Plan visits when the person usually is at his or her best. Virtual visits through video or phone calls are also a great way to connect over the holiday season.
- Prepare quiet distractions to use, such as looking at pictures or going for a walk, if the person with Alzheimer's becomes upset or overstimulated.
- Make sure there is a quiet space where the person can rest and have time to recharge.
- Try to avoid situations that may confuse or frustrate the person with Alzheimer's, such as changes in routine and strange places.
- Try to stay away from noise, loud conversations, loud music, lighting that is too bright or too dark, and having too much rich food or drink (especially alcohol).
- Find time for holiday activities you like to do. For example, go for a walk in the neighborhood and look at holiday decorations, or bake holiday cookies.

If you receive invitations to events that the person with Alzheimer's cannot attend, consider going yourself. Ask a friend or family member to spend time with the person while you're out.



## Holiday Home Safety Tips

Holiday decorations, such as Christmas trees, lights, or menorahs, should be secured so that they do not fall or catch on fire. Anything flammable should be monitored at all times, and extra precautions should be taken so that lights or anything breakable are fixed firmly, correctly, and out of the way of those with Alzheimer's disease. Candles should never be lit without supervision. When not in use, they should be put away. Also, try to avoid clutter, especially in walkways, during the holidays. For more home safety tips, visit Home Safety and Alzheimer's Disease.

## Preparing Guests

Explain to guests that the person with Alzheimer's disease does not always remember what is expected and acceptable. Give examples of unusual behaviors that may take place such as incontinence, eating food with fingers, wandering, or hallucinations.

If this is the first visit since the person with Alzheimer's became severely impaired, inform people ahead of time what they can expect. The memory-impaired person may not remember guests' names or relationships but can still enjoy their company.

- Explain that memory loss is the result of the disease and is not intentional.

Stress that the meaningfulness of the moment together matters more than what the person remembers.

## Preparing the Person with Alzheimer's

Here are some tips to help the person with Alzheimer's disease get ready for visitors:

- Begin showing a photo of the guest to the person a week before arrival. Each day, explain who the visitor is while showing the photo.
- Arrange a phone call for the person with Alzheimer's and the visitor. The call gives the visitor an idea of what to expect and gives the person with Alzheimer's an opportunity to become familiar with the visitor.
- Keep the memory-impaired person's routine as close to normal as possible.

During the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, guard against fatigue and find time for adequate rest.

*Perhaps their  
best  
Christmas  
memories look  
more like  
this ...*







## Wiikwemkoong band member creates board game to reinforce TRC studies

By  
[Michael Erskine](#)

### Former teacher designs game for use in schools

KAMLOOPS—Anishinaabe artist James Darin Corbiere has worn a lot of hats since he set out into the world from his home community of Wiikwemkoong, including as a police officer and secondary school teacher, and now, artist, working on white birch wood panels. It was while working as a secondary school teacher in Sault Ste. Marie that Mr. Corbiere came up with the idea of creating a board game as a teaching tool about Truth and Reconciliation.

“I was a former police officer and a secondary school teacher in Ontario when the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Truth and Reconciliation Report came out in 2015,” he recalled. “The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) was looking to put together a group of Indigenous educators to design a tool kit to teach Federation members.”

Mr. Corbiere applied to be one of those educators and he was chosen as one of eight Indigenous educators tasked with coming up with an activity to engage people.

“I created a trivia board game called the Truth in Truth and Reconciliation Game,” he said. “It is a trivia game that teaches about the true relationship between Canada and the Indigenous people who live here.”

In the end the OSSTF went with a puzzle design for broader distribution, but Mr. Corbiere went on to introduce the game to his students in May of 2017 as they were getting ready for their exams. “The kids loved it,” he said. In fact, many people seemed to think it was a great idea.

A couple of years earlier, Mr. Corbiere had embarked on becoming an artist and his artwork was incorporated into the game, adding an even more personal connection to the project. “In October of 2017 I attended an educational conference in London,” recalled Mr. Corbiere. While he was in Southern Ontario a representative of an educational book publisher saw the prototype. “It was pretty rough,” he admits of that prototype. “I literally had cut and pasted it together.”

The game is a “trivia-style” game.

Meanwhile, the publisher of educational books was excited enough by the product that they took development a lot further.

They had never published a game before, according to Mr. Corbiere, but the company’s research indicated there was nothing else like Mr. Corbiere’s game out there that focussed on Truth and Reconciliation.

The company polished things up to professional game standard from the prototype mock-up and sent the game to its focus group. That is when the speed bumps started popping up.

“The test was with the separate school boards in Ontario,” he said. “But they wouldn’t buy the game.” The truth part of the Truth and Reconciliation game, it seems, was a bit too hot to handle. “In the game there are church and Crown shame cards for the hurts that they caused,” he said. “The school board didn’t want children questioning why the church would get shame cards.” The publishing company lost interest in the project.

Undaunted, Mr. Corbiere was encouraged enough by the initial interest to consider going a different route, but self-publishing something on that scale was beyond his personal means. It would cost \$20,000 just to set up for printing. The full tally to take the game to production and distribution would head north of a million dollars.

“So, I am looking for funders,” said Mr. Corbiere. He has set up a GoFundMe campaign with an ambitious goal of \$1.5 million. “If there is a First Nation out there that is looking for a project with a lot of potential, this is not only for Canada. There are a lot of countries out there that were impacted by colonialism, there is Australia, New Zealand, all kinds of places where colonial powers impacted the Indigenous peoples. It could go international, and it is not just for schools—it is intended as a resource.”

Mr. Corbiere is hoping to get back to Wiikwemkoong sometime in the next six months to visit with family and old friends. “I haven’t been home since 2017,” he said.

A demonstration of the game and its original and current format can be found in a YouTube video featured on Mr. Corbiere’s website at [easternwoodlandart.ca](http://easternwoodlandart.ca).

The GoFundMe campaign itself can be accessed through a link there or at [gofund.me/ea8d4c9b](https://gofund.me/ea8d4c9b).



## *The Six Types of Courage*

**Physical Courage:** To keep going with resiliency, balance & awareness.

**Social Courage:** To be yourself unapologetically.

**Moral Courage:** Doing the right thing even when it's uncomfortable or unpopular

**Emotional Courage:** Feeling all your emotions (positive & negative) without guilt or attachment.

**Intellectual Courage:** to learn, unlearn and relearn with an open & flexible mind.

**Spiritual Courage:** Living with purpose & meaning through a heart centered approach towards all life and oneself.

# Air pollution harms the brain and mental health, too – a large-scale analysis documents effects on brain regions associated with emotions



Published: November 21, 2022 8.14am EST

**Author** Clara G. Zundel

Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences, Wayne State University ·

## The big idea

People who breathe polluted air experience changes within the brain regions that control emotions, and as a result, they may be more likely to develop anxiety and depression than those who breathe cleaner air. These are the key findings of a systematic review that my colleagues and I recently published in the journal *NeuroToxicology*.

Our interdisciplinary team reviewed more than 100 research articles from both animal and human studies that focused on the effects of outdoor air pollution on mental health and regions of the brain that regulate emotions. The three main brain regions we focused on were the hippocampus, amygdala and the prefrontal cortex.

In our analysis, 73% of the studies reported higher mental health symptoms and behaviors in humans and animals, such as rats, that were exposed to higher than average levels of air pollution. Some exposures that led to negative effects occurred in air pollution ranges that are currently considered “safe” by the Environmental Protection Agency’s standards. In addition, we discovered that 95% of studies examining brain effects found significant physical and functional changes within the emotion-regulation brain regions in those exposed to increased levels of air pollution. Most of these studies found that exposure to elevated levels of air pollution is associated with increased inflammation and changes to the regulation of neurotransmitters, which act as the brain’s chemical messengers.

## Why it matters

Research into the physical health effects associated with air pollution exposure, such as asthma and respiratory issues, have been well documented for decades.

But only over the last 10 years or so have researchers begun to understand how air pollution can affect the brain. Studies have shown that small air pollutants, such as ultrafine particles from vehicle exhaust, can affect the brain either directly, by traveling through the nose and into the brain, or indirectly, by causing inflammation and altered immune responses in the body that can then cross into the brain.

At the same time, researchers are increasingly documenting the association between air pollution and its negative effects on mental health.

Unfortunately, research suggests that air pollution will only worsen as climate change intensifies and carbon emissions remain unregulated.

For this reason, more research into the health effects of air pollution exposure that goes beyond respiratory health outcomes into the realm of biological psychiatry is badly needed. For instance, the neurobiological mechanisms through which air pollution increases risk for mental health symptoms are still poorly understood.

## What still isn’t known

In addition to our primary findings, our team also identified some notable gaps within the research that need to be addressed in order to paint a fuller picture of the relationship between air pollution and brain health.



We also found that within the studies investigating air pollution effects on the brain, only 10 were conducted in humans. While research on animals has extensively shown that air pollution can cause a host of changes within the animal brain, the research on how air pollution affects the human brain is much more limited. What's more, most of the existing brain studies in humans have focused on physical changes, such as differences in overall brain size. More research is needed that relies on a technique called functional brain imaging, which could enable researchers like us to detect subtle or smaller changes that may occur before physical changes.

# HOW DOES POLLUTION AFFECT YOU?

Prolonged exposure may impact...

The infographic features a central white silhouette of a human figure against a dark background. Surrounding the figure are various internal organs and body parts, each represented by a red circular icon with a white symbol inside. The icons are arranged in a circular pattern around the central figure. The organs shown are: Eye, Heart, Kidney, Nose, Skin, Lungs, Blood, Throat, Alertness, and Liver. Each icon is connected to the central figure by a thin white line.

- Eye
- Heart
- Kidney
- Nose
- Skin
- Lungs
- Blood
- Throat
- Alertness
- Liver

new creative





Seriously. Let's just wear a mask. Despite our Minister of Health's suggestion that the crisis in healthcare would be solved if family doctors and nurses worked harder, we are seeing 35 plus kids a night at our after hours clinic. I am seeing well over one hundred patients a week. Our Minister of Health could have helped save lives instead of throwing the caretakers of your health care system under the bus. Instead of shirking her responsibility, she could have suggested we wear masks to avoid the perfect, deadly storm that is making so many people sick: RSV, the flu and COVID. She could have recommended getting a flu shot and your next COVID booster. Instead she played a deadly political game that will result in hundreds if not thousands of needless deaths. This government has no concern for your well-being. Lord only

knows what their priorities are but it is not our health and safety. We will continue to stand and care for our patients despite what you say or do and in spite of what you don't say and neglect to do.

- Dr. Anne-Marie Zajdlik (Guelph, Ontario)

## AND ...

Thanks to the research of The Toronto Star reporters, Kenyon Wallace and Megan Ogilvie, I cut and pasted a portion of the article, "Pediatric Care in Ontario is in Crisis. How Did We Get Here?" on my own Facebook page this week. Bless Natalie Mehra for being seen and heard on recent media-. If someone at your home is awaiting cataract surgery, a hernia operation, a hip replacement ... we retired teachers KNOW 'how we got there'.

### **A crisis decades in the making**

To answer the question of how Ontario got to this point, you have to travel back in time.

Beginning in the 1980s, successive provincial governments shrank the number of hospital beds.

"The idea was that we had overbuilt hospital beds and people should be allowed to age in place and we should start moving more care to the community," says Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition, a public advocacy group working to protect health care. "It was a well-intended idea.

“But by the latter half of the 1990s, every part of hospital care that was cut was privatized. The vision of a system of care in the community was replaced with a relentless drive to expand privatization and reduce costs by offloading ever more complex patients regardless of their actual care needs.”

In 1996, the Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris enacted the Savings and Restructuring Act, an omnibus bill more than 200 pages long known as the “Bully Bill,” which modified more than three dozen laws, including the Health Insurance Act, Health Care Accessibility Act, Ministry of Health Act and Public Hospitals Act.

The bill gave sweeping powers to the province to close or amalgamate hospitals, regulate where doctors could practise and open the door to private, for-profit medical facilities.

The Health Services Restructuring Commission, created under the bill, ordered the closure of 39 hospitals in the 1990s.

The cuts also resulted in about 6,000 nurses being laid off. The human resources crisis then forced a Harris government about-face in 1999, and more than 3,000 nurses were hired in the ensuing year.

In total, 64 hospitals were either merged or closed from 1989 to 1998, according to data collected by the Coalition, resulting in a 24 per cent decrease in the number of hospitals. The number of acute-care beds dropped by 33 per cent, while chronic-care beds decreased by 28 per cent during those 10 years, according to the Coalition.

This, despite the fact that Ontario’s population grew by more than a million people over that time.





## News and Updates

### Shop safely online this holiday season

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Online shopping has become a big part of many Canadians' lives. As an online shopper, you get to avoid checkout lines, scout for the best prices and shop whenever you want – all from the comfort of your home.

But the convenience of online shopping comes with the growing risk of scams that impact consumers well after their credit card bill is due. More than 35 percent of all scams reported by Canadians in 2021 were online purchase scams<sup>1</sup>.

Here are 9 online shopping safety tips to help prevent scams and protect yourself and your family this holiday season:

#### **Don't shop on public Wi-Fi.**

Using public Wi-Fi is just one of the ways that your personal information can be compromised. While it's best to connect to a trusted Wi-Fi network, like your home network, if you need to shop while you're out and about, turn off your Wi-Fi and use your 5G or LTE network.

#### **Restrict access to your Wi-Fi.**

The easiest thing you can do to secure your home network is to change the default name and password. Ensure you use a longer phrase unique to that device, and don't use any obvious or personal information. Most routers also offer an optional encryption feature that you can enable to prevent others from eavesdropping on your network without logging into it.

#### **Buy from reputable retailers.**

Avoid fraud and online scams by buying from sellers you know by reputation or experience. If you're unfamiliar with the seller, do your research by reading customer reviews and finding them through the [Better Business Bureau](#). Trust your instinct – if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.

#### **Check that the website is secure.**

Before you check out your online purchase, make sure that the website you're on is secure. You should see a padlock icon in the address bar and the URL should begin with "https" rather than "http" – the "s" in "https" stands for secure and this means that all data is encrypted as it passes from your browser to the website's server.



### Use unique passwords.

If signing up for an account is necessary to check out, do not use the same password as other accounts. Once an online scammer figures out one password, it's easy for them to try it on all your accounts to access your information. A good password is ten (10) or more characters and will have an uppercase letter, a lowercase letter, a number and a symbol. Implementing two(2)-step verification is also one of the best ways to help protect you against fraud and scams.

### Use a credit card.

Many credit cards will fully reimburse you for any direct financial losses from unauthorized activity on your accounts. It's faster and easier to receive reimbursement for fraudulent charges on a credit card rather than a debit card because they have less personal information attached to them.

### Monitor your credit card statements.

It's good practice to check your credit card statements for unauthorized activity frequently. Contact your credit card issuer immediately if you notice any unusual transactions.

### Review your insurance coverage.

Among other things, restoring your identity can cost a lot of time and money. While an insurance policy can't prevent fraud and identity theft from occurring, it can help you restore your identity to its pre-theft status and cover some of the financial loss incurred. Take some time this holiday season to review your insurance policies to know what you're covered for.

If you'd like to inquire about fraud and identity theft coverage, contact your OTIP broker today at [1-888-494-0090](tel:1-888-494-0090) to discuss your insurance options.

