



SUMMER 2022

AFTERWORDS

Newsletter of Active Retired
Members



In this issue...

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.

- Welcome “I don’t have to go back to school” with a new photo contest!
- The Ontario Health Coalition is swinging hard at the Ford government's increasing privatization of our public health system
- A handy fact sheet if people STILL ask you, “But won’t private clinics and hospitals solve our long waiting lists?”
- The indefatigable Joe Wilson has added another feather to his cap—a published novel!!
- A “report card” for Stephen Lecce
- Pandemic isolation brought out the worst in your mate? Nick Wignall gives practical advice
- Our insurers weigh in with excellent advice.

What Will You be **DOING** on September 6th???

It’s another photo contest for ARM Chapter 11 members– with lots of prizes just for participating!

WHAT: capture a photo of you **DOING** something on September 6th. The teaching profession deserves respect. Let your photo demonstrate the respect that teachers GIVE—to the environment, people, history, hopes for the future...

Choose a photo that evokes an emotional and/or intellectual response

WHEN: Submit just one entry per ARM member to djanitis@gmail.com and armpresident@execulink.com by **Friday, September the 9th**

WHY: gift cards for participation!

AND: Please include your full name in the email you send. Your photo may be used in a future collage– but we won’t publish that name!



Despite Ontario's election results, the fight against diluting and privatizing our public health care system is NOT over!

2022 Health Action Assembly & Annual Conference

Convention at Central YMCA
20 Grosvenor St Toronto

Saturday October 1 10:30 – 4:30 PM
Sunday October 2 9:00 – 1:30 PM

Everyone who believes in Public Medicare and wants to work to defend and improve it are invited to join together in a major strategy session.

This year's assembly is critically important. Join us for briefings, speakers, report-ins and strategizing.



[Click HERE for more information](#)

Now, more than ever, we need fearless, strong, ambitious action and strategy to stop privatization, force Ford to address the health care staffing crisis and make good on his promises to improve long-term care. Each year, we invite everyone from our networks and further who believes in Public Medicare and wants to work to defend and improve it to join together in a major strategy session. This year's assembly is critically important. Join us for briefings, speakers, report-ins and strategizing.

Hotel Rooms: We have reserved a block of hotel rooms at a reduced rate at the Courtyard by Marriott Downtown Toronto at 475 Yonge Street. The rate is at \$259 per night plus tax. To book your room, please click the [link](#) to book online at the discounted rate or call 1 (800) 847-5075 and cite Ontario Health Coalition as the group name to receive the reduced rate. Please book as soon as possible, as space is limited and the deadline to book your hotel room at the discounted rate is **Friday September 2.**

Local Coalitions: are asked to please seek local funding first to subsidize your travel costs. If you need a subsidy from the Ontario Health Coalition, we will fund up to two representatives from each active local health coalition including hotel and travel costs. All subsidies must be pre-approved by Natalie Mehra, executive director. Each local coalition seeking to have representatives subsidized by the Ontario Health Coalition must fill out a subsidy request form and submit it to Natalie Mehra at ohc@sympatico.ca for approval. Note: we will subsidize amounts up to the block rate for a hotel room and gas (not mileage) or train/plane.



FACT SHEET

The Privatization of Ontario's Public Hospital Services

Posted: March 8, 2022

The Ford government's privatization plans

The Ford government has continued [plans](#) to privatize health care by *contracting private facilities* to perform surgeries and other procedures such as diagnostic imaging.

Taking it further, on Tuesday, February 1, the Ford government [announced its plans](#) to allow private clinics (called "Independent Health Facilities") to operate private hospitals. Private hospitals are currently banned in Ontario. Under the Private Hospitals Act, which was amended in 1971, the then-existing private hospitals were grandfathered in and no new private hospitals have been allowed since. There are only three private hospitals left in Ontario, two of which do limited amounts of surgeries. Our hospital system is public and all other hospitals in Ontario operate on a non-profit basis.

Additionally, instead of resourcing public hospitals and public health units to increase efficiency in labs and testing procedures, the government [has given contracts](#) to private lab companies and for-profit pharmacy chains.

Constrained hospital budgets and reduced public funding have diverted more and [more laboratory work to private laboratories](#).

Quality Issues

The evidence on poorer quality in for-profit clinics and hospitals is clear:

- Less qualified staff are used to replace more qualified staff
[For-profit clinics](#) and hospitals cut corners, [resulting in higher death rates](#)
- There is less effective [regulatory oversight](#) & serious quality breaches
- Revenues are directed into the profits away from care and for-profit hospitals have [higher costs](#)
- Private facilities are less [accountable to the public](#)

Private facilities charge user fees and [extra bill patients](#) for medically necessary services violating the Canada Health Act



Why Not Privatize?

1. Expanding the private sector **increases** staffing shortages by driving highly skilled professionals in public hospitals to private clinics.
2. Private facilities take the easier and less complex cases, leaving patients with more complex and urgent medical needs waiting longer in underfunded and **understaffed** public hospitals
3. Private facilities charge user fees and extra bill patients for medically necessary services **violating** the Canada Health Act

Violation of the Canada Health Act

Our research shows that a majority of for-profit hospitals/clinics are charging patients user fees in violation of the Canada Health Act which states that patients have the right to services without user fees and extra billing.

- 88 out of 136 private clinics surveyed by Ontario Health Coalition in 2017 were found to be charging patients extra user-fees and selling medically necessary services
- 250 out of 400 patients surveyed detailed facing extra charges when trying to access needed medical care in private clinics

The Canada Health Act requires healthcare services to be provided based on need, whereas private/for-profit centres provide services based on an individual's ability to pay. This is a violation of the foundational principles of our public health care system which is based on compassion and equity – health care is to be provided based on medical need, and patients are to be protected from financial ruin when they get sick, disabled, or elderly.

Gaps in Health Equity

Procedure Cost in private for-profit clinics

Knee Surgery \$13,000-\$20,000

Cataract Surgery \$1,200-\$2,000

MRI \$700-\$1,200

Providing services based on ability to pay is especially concerning as populations with lower incomes are the same populations that are most in need of healthcare services and have more illness or disease due to associated factors such as poorer living and working conditions.



And what has our intrepid Joe Wilson been doing this summer?

Joe has welcomed the first printing of his NOVEL (and the birth of twin granddaughters). Many of you have read snippets already (thanks to Joe's generosity in sharing them with "AfterWords" readers)

The official launch of "Deadly Intersections" is rumored to be at the King Edward in Ilderton on Sunday, September the 18th from 1:00 to 4:00



ARM Chapter 11 Executive 2021-22

President: Mary Lou Cunningham

Vice President and Newsletter Editor: Daina Janitis

Secretary/Treasurer: Kae Ackland

PAC Representative: Bryan Smith

Facebook Administrator: Wendy Anes Hirschegger

Member-at-Large: Joe Wilson

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT STEPHEN

HE DIDN'T ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOL, NOR DOES HE HAVE A BACKGROUND IN EDUCATION.

HE'S BEEN EDUCATION MINISTER FOR 3 YEARS AND HASN'T DEIGNED TO LEARN ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT HIS PORTFOLIO.

HE HASN'T SET FOOT IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN YEARS, AND HE REFUSES TO MEET WITH PARENTS, STUDENTS, OR TEACHERS.

UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, ONTARIO SCHOOLS WERE CLOSED FOR LONGER THAN IN ANY OTHER PART OF CANADA.

HE USES THE MEDIA TO VILIFY UNIONS AND EDUCATION WORKERS INSTEAD OF NEGOTIATING WITH THEM IN GOOD FAITH.

HIS MANDATE IS TO STARVE, DISMANTLE, AND PRIVATIZE PUBLIC EDUCATION.

#MINISTEROFMISEDUCATION



@JENNYLEESHEE



Nick Wignall began his career as a middle school English teacher! After studying Social Science for his Master's degree at the University of Chicago, he specialized in clinical psychology for his PhD at Dallas.

How to Handle Other People's Bad Moods Like a Pro

Here's a question I get asked a lot as a therapist:

How do you sit there and listen to people's problems all day... Don't you get depressed?
The short answer is: Not at all.

While you might imagine all that sadness, frustration, anxiety, and shame my clients tell me about would start to rub off on a guy after a while, it really doesn't. In fact, if anything, I feel like I'm better at managing both my own emotions and other people's because I'm forced to practice all day long as a result of my job.

In this article, I want to share five specific skills that help me to effectively and respectfully handle other people's difficult emotions.

If you can learn to cultivate them, these skills will be invaluable for every relationship in your life, from spouses and bosses to parents, children, and friends.

1. Treat strong emotion as a puzzle, not a problem

When someone close to us is racked by anxiety, overwhelmed with sadness, or incredibly frustrated, it's natural to see their emotion as a problem—something to be taken care of right now, both for their sake and ours. Which is why we so often turn to advice-giving when people we care about are upset.

But as I'm sure you've learned, giving advice to someone who's emotionally overwhelmed is unhelpful at best, and usually counterproductive.

So instead of seeing their emotion as a problem, what if we shifted our perspective slightly and tried to see it as a puzzle?

Viewing someone's emotion as a problem puts us in a moral frame of mind—we think of the emotion as something bad to be gotten rid of quickly. On the other hand, thinking of it as a puzzle puts us in a mindset of curiosity. And when we're curious about another person's emotion, it's far easier to be validating, understanding, and empathetic, which is what most people experiencing strong emotion really want.

So, pay attention to your own self-talk when someone you care about is very emotional. How are you thinking about their emotions to yourself? Try to catch and hold back on thoughts like:

- *Don't they see this isn't doing them any good!*

If only they knew how much they impacted other people, they'd never be like this.

And instead, substitute more curiosity-driven questions like this:

- *What could be going on in their mind to lead to so much painful emotion?*
- *What kinds of external situations or circumstances might have set them up for feeling this way?*

Even though they don't like feeling sad, is there some kind of benefit they might be getting from it?

When you shift from problem-thinking to puzzle-thinking, your mindset becomes driven by curiosity rather than morality, which is far more helpful in an emotionally-intense situation, both for you and the person across from you.



2. Try some reverse empathy

Empathy is the act of putting yourself in another person's shoes and trying to imagine what it must be like to live in their skin—with their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and circumstances. And while empathy is obviously a hugely important skill to cultivate for all sorts of reasons, there's a version of it that's especially helpful for managing other people's bad moods. I call it *reverse empathy*.

Instead of putting yourself in someone else's shoes, reverse empathy means trying to remember a time when you wore the same shoes.

In other words, try to recall a time when you struggled in a similar way and with a similar set of difficult emotions and mood.

For example, if they're really frustrated and angry, think back on a time when you were so frustrated you couldn't seem to think straight...

- What happened to get you that angry?
- What kinds of thoughts and emotions were racing around your mind?
- What did the people around you do?

And maybe most importantly, What do you remember wanting, needing, or wishing for when you felt that way?

Often, reverse empathy can be a more powerful way to appreciate someone else's struggle because it's based on your own experiences rather than hypothetical ones.

And the more you can relate yourself to what they're going through, the better your odds of being genuinely helpful and supportive to the person next to you, not to mention being less reactive and emotional yourself.

3. Be a mirror, not a mechanic

Without a doubt, the number one mistake I see people (especially couples) make in their communication with each other is that they get stuck in *fix-it mode*.

For example: Bob feels bad and starts describing how he feels and why he thinks he feels that way to Shelly. Because she sees that Bob is in pain and struggling, Shelly's natural reaction is to try and alleviate or eliminate Bob's suffering.

But here's the thing:

Often people struggling emotionally don't want someone to fix their pain, they want to feel understood.

Bake that into your brain because it's one of the most counterintuitive but universally true laws of human psychology I can think of. And once you really believe it and start acting accordingly, everybody starts feeling better.

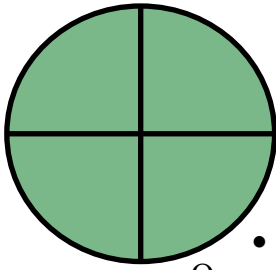
So, how do you get out of a fix-it mindset and start helping people feel understood? The best way is to practice a technique called reflective listening.

Reflective listening means that when someone tells you something, you simply reflect back to them what they said, either literally or with your own slight spin on it.

For example:

• Person A: *I can't believe Teddy embarrassed me like that in front of the whole staff!* You: *Sounds like you were really embarrassed.*

Person A: *You never listen, you're always just giving me advice.* You: *It seems like you feel like I tend to just give advice without really listening to what you're saying.*



4. Validate your own emotions

One of the hardest things about other people's bad moods is the emotions they tend to stir up in us:

- Our spouse is sad and melancholic and we get frustrated.
- Our boss is anxious and overbearing and we get anxious too.

Our parent is angry and irritable, and we respond with annoyance and sarcasm.

The trouble is, once we're deep into a spiral of our own difficult emotion, it's hard to have enough mental and emotional bandwidth to navigate both our own mood and that of someone else. Which is why we often end up reacting to other people's bad moods in a way that ultimately isn't helpful to them, us, or the relationship.

The solution is to get better at noticing and managing our own emotional responses early so that they don't balloon out of control. And the best way I know of to do that is through a process called emotional validation.

Emotional validation simply means acknowledging our own emotions and reminding ourselves that they're okay and reasonable even if uncomfortable.

For example: suppose your spouse or partner has been worked up all evening about some incident at work. They're frustrated, angry, a little bit anxious, and there's no sign of it letting up. While you've been able to tolerate it for the past couple hours, you feel yourself starting to get annoyed with them.

Rather than A) acting on this annoyance and saying something unhelpful to your spouse, or B) becoming judgmental of yourself for feeling annoyed with them, you could validate your own annoyance. You could pause for a few seconds, acknowledge that you're feeling annoyed and frustrated with your spouse, remind yourself that it's okay and natural to feel that way, and then ask yourself what the most helpful way to move forward might be.

5. Clarify your responsibility

Now it might sound silly or condescending, but I promise you it works. And the reason is, it's not about the content of what they're saying, it's about how they feel.

Yes, they know and you know that they were really embarrassed at work. The real value of your reflecting back what they just said is that it helps them feel like you are with them, that you're connected and understanding and on their side.

By mirroring another person's experience you're giving them something far more valuable than advice—you're giving them genuine connection.



A common pitfall I see people make when trying to deal effectively with other people's bad moods is to overextend their responsibility to that person to include how they feel.

Let me unpack that a bit:

- We can only be responsible for things that we can control.
- Emotions, by their very nature, are not directly under our control.
- Because we can't control emotions directly, we're not responsible for them—either our own or those of other people.
- However, we are responsible for our actions—for how we choose to behave and think.

When we assume responsibility for things beyond our control, we set ourselves up for unnecessary frustration, disappointment, and resentment.

On the other hand, when we are clear about what we actually have control over and therefore responsibility for, we're able to deploy our efforts and resources as effectively as possible.

So much unnecessary struggle, conflict and wasted energy comes from a fundamental misunderstanding about what's really under our control. On the other hand, it's amazing how much genuinely helpful energy gets freed up when you remove the burden of excess responsibility from yourself.

When you stop expecting to be able to make someone feel better, you can start taking real steps to connect with them in a heartfelt way and be genuinely supportive.

Wrapping up

Bad moods and painful emotions are hard to handle, both in ourselves and the people around us. While it's not possible to fix another person's emotional struggles, there are a handful of practical skills you can learn to help you be more genuinely supportive and helpful in the face of other people's bad moods.

And even if you fail completely to help the other person—or have no interest in doing so—skills like emotional validation and reflective listening will help you stay calm and effective instead of reactive and impulsive in the face of other people's bad moods.

Me: I am perhaps already the
undead, hauling my body around this
mortal realm, haunted by the souls
of the damned and the hungry who
feast on my muscles and bones until
I shall be dragged to hell once
more

Doctor: ...once again I don't know
where that is on a 1-10 pain scale



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5 reasons to never skip a home inspection before buying a new house

Prospective home buyers across the country are feeling the pressure to skip home inspections in the hopes of having the winning offer in a bidding war. But deciding to waive a home inspection can be risky — especially if there are hidden issues looming in your new house. Here are some reasons why you shouldn't skip a home inspection before you purchase a property:

1. You may unknowingly be purchasing a "money pit." It can be hard to spot serious water damage, cracks in the foundation, or crumbling brick without the keen eye of a licensed professional. These issues should be identified prior to a home purchase, as they can be incredibly expensive to fix down the road.
2. Your new home may contain a safety hazard. Things like critical electrical issues, fire hazards, or the presence of radon, carbon monoxide, or mold can be dangerous, but you likely won't be able to detect them yourself on a regular property walkthrough. These hazards can lead to injuries, illnesses, or even death, and should be resolved as soon as possible — not after you have moved in.
3. You'll have limited insight into the future maintenance needs of your home. A home inspection can prepare you for major maintenance items that will soon be necessary, like a furnace replacement, plumbing repairs, or the need for a new water heater.

1. You lose out on a key bargaining tactic. If you have a home inspection and determine there is something that needs to be fixed, you may be able to negotiate a lower sale price if costly repairs are required. If you skip out on the inspection, you may miss out on this opportunity.
2. You may not know about illegal additions or modifications made without permits. These may require repairs or hinder your ability to resell your home in the future.

Do I need a home inspection to obtain home insurance?

Although it is not required for your home to be inspected in order to purchase a home insurance policy, the insurer may order an inspection on the property at their own expense. Typically an insurer may order an inspection to examine things like; age of home, oil tanks, woodstoves, high-value contents/homes, homes with large acreage and more.

Your insurer has the right to order an inspection at any time.

When you're considering purchasing a home, there are several factors that could affect your insurance. For more information on how a home inspection could affect your home insurance, reach out to an OTIP broker at [1-833-494-0089](tel:1-833-494-0089). If you want to receive a quote for home insurance, please call an OTIP broker at [1-833-615-9326](tel:1-833-615-9326).

And ... if all other stress-relievers fail ...

directions for the perfect martini!

