

Reach out if You Need Mental Health and Addiction services in Espanola and Manitoulin Island: Help is Just a Phone Call or Click away
Health Care Column by Dr. Stephen Cooper, North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Primary Care Lead for Manitoulin Island/Espanola

If you find yourself dealing with a mental health or addiction concern, it can sometimes be difficult to know where to turn to for help. Fortunately, the Espanola and Manitoulin Island area is well-equipped with resources that can be accessed to assist with mental health and addictions issues and many are available free-of-charge. There are also a number of online and phone-based services that can be accessed.

A good place to start when addressing a mental health or addiction issue can be an appointment with your family doctor or nurse practitioner. It's important to note that all three Family Health Teams in the area have social workers who will work with clients who self-refer for mental health or addictions issues and self-referrals can also be made through area First Nations' communities. As well, both Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre and the Manitoulin Health Centre now have an e-referral service to help make effective mental health referrals.

Here are five ways that you can get timely access to help on your own:

1. **Feeling low, depressed or anxious and want to learn new skills to manage?** The North East LHIN is supporting two new, free self-help psychotherapy services: [BounceBack](#), a telephone-coaching program with workbooks and videos, and [Big White Wall](#), an online peer support and self-management tool. Both programs, funded by the Government of Ontario for its residents of Ontario, are designed to help adults and youth with depression, and anxiety. These two services provide skill-building and cognitive behaviour therapy. For more information go to bouncebackontario.ca/ or call 1-866-345-0224, or bigwhitewall.ca/
2. **Are you struggling with opioid or alcohol addiction? The Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic can help.** The Espanola and Area Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinic is now open and providing timely, barrier-free treatment for patients who are dealing with alcohol or opioid addictions. The clinic is hosted by the Espanola and Area Family Health Team, in partnership with Health Sciences North and Espanola Hospital and Regional Health Centre. Walk-ins are welcome to the clinic, located at 801 McKinnon Drive, though referrals are appreciated. You can phone (705)869-1420 ext. 4245 to make an appointment or to request more information. You can also leave a message after hours and your call will be returned the next day.
3. **Do you have a situation in your life that you need to talk over with a counsellor?** Several counselling services are available in the area:

Health Sciences North offers a mental health and counselling service that available in both Espanola and Little Current. Services are available to people aged 16 years and older who have mental health concerns. Referrals go through a central intake process, though it is possible for clients to self-refer either over the phone or in person. The Health Sciences North Espanola office can be reached by at (705)869-1564. The Little Current site is located at the Manitoulin Health Centre and can be reached by phoning (705)368-0756.

Noojmowin Teg Health Centre provides counselling and psychology services to both on-reserve and off-reserve Indigenous populations in the Manitoulin Island area. These mental health services work closely with traditional healing programs. Services are available at multiple Noojmowin Teg sites around Manitoulin Island. Referrals are required. Call (705)368-2182 ext. 222 for more information.

4. **Interested in exploring what mental health or addiction services in Manitoulin and Espanola might fit your needs?** A section of the **NortheastHealthline** is devoted to Mental Health and Addiction services. Go to connect.northeasthealthline.ca to find services here in Manitoulin and Espanola that are tailored to your needs and how you can access them. The website also has referral forms.
5. **Feeling isolated and want someone to talk with, or connect with peers for support?** The **North East Regional WARM Line** offers peer support, self-help groups, social, educational and recreational activities to individuals with mental health and addiction issues. Peer counsellors are ready to take your call between 6 p.m. and midnight daily at 1-866-856-9276.

Local organizations are working together to better connect providers and enhance the system of care. If you need help or support in any way, please reach out to any of the mental health and addiction services available in the Espanola and Manitoulin area.