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February 2026 Newsletter

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Introducing our Interim ED: Jessica Singh

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Jessica brings over 17 years of experience at the intersection of strategy, culture, and social justice, supporting nonprofit and community-based organizations to strengthen impact and advance meaningful change. She holds a Master's in Social Work and an MSc in Evidence-Based Social Intervention from the University of Oxford, with expertise in research design, impact evaluation, and evidence-informed decision-making.

Most recently, she served as Director of Fundraising & Development at the Mississauga Symphony Orchestra, and over the past five years has helped raise more than \$3 million through consulting projects, strengthening systems and navigating complex funding challenges.

CASSA's Membership!

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COUNCIL OF
AGENCIES SERVING
SOUTH ASIANS

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

For more information contact qurat@cassa.ca or visit
www.cassa.ca/membership



CASSA Project Updates

South Asian Social Justice Network Project - Alberta

We were honoured to bring together passionate individuals and organizations from grassroots advocates to mainstream leaders who are working tirelessly to uplift and strengthen our South

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The discussion highlighted important barriers that South Asians continue to face in advancing social justice, including access to resources, meaningful representation, and ongoing systemic challenges. These conversations are essential to advancing equity, amplifying community voices, and fostering collaborative solutions.

At CASSA (Council of Agencies Serving South Asians), we remain committed to creating spaces where dialogue leads to action and partnerships drive meaningful change.

Thank you to all participants for your leadership, dedication, and continued commitment to building a stronger and more inclusive Alberta.

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South Asian Social Justice Network Project - Quebec

Seeking South Asian Voices in Québec!

The South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN) Québec is officially mobilizing! We are a

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We are looking for activists, service providers, researchers, and legal professionals to join our monthly working group.

Email zahra@cassa.ca to join the movement. Based in Tiohtiá:ke/Montréal.

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Advocating for Equity in Québec

The South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN)



Empowering South Asians through
collective advocacy and policy change

Join the movement at zahra@cassa.ca

cassa.ca | [@cassaonline](https://twitter.com/cassaonline)

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Advancing Justice for South Asian Communities in B.C

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asian's continues to expand its engagement in British Columbia through the South Asian Justice Network, with regular network meetings beginning this February. These sessions will convene community leaders, service providers, and key stakeholders to identify and address pressing justice issues affecting South Asian communities across the province.

Insights gathered from these discussions will inform a comprehensive report highlighting key challenges and providing clear, actionable recommendations at both the provincial and national levels. Stay tuned for further updates as this important work unfolds and as we continue building a coordinated, community-driven approach to advancing equity and access to justice in B.C

Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence' Project

CASSA, United Way Greater Toronto's South Asian Community Advisory Council, and the Women's Mosque of Canada invite service providers and frontline workers to a virtual training on 'honour-based violence' (HBV).

Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence' is a research and capacity-building initiative that helps professionals recognize, understand, and respond to HBV within South Asian communities. The initiative addresses knowledge gaps, improves service accessibility, and promotes culturally responsive, survivor-centered approaches to care. To learn more about our research, the final will soon be available on our website: <https://www.cassa.ca/taking-the-honour-out-of-honour-based-violence/>

This expert-led session covers the definition and context of HBV, how it differs from other forms of gender-based violence, key indicators and risk factors, and practical guidance on trauma-informed support and safety planning.

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Register for the February 26 session: <https://forms.gle/LDcJHEXHyxeT7AcM6>

Sexual & Reproductive Health for South Asian Newcomer Women

CASSA is leading a three-year community-based research project titled Breaking Barriers: Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for South Asian Newcomer Women. This project is funded by United Way Greater Toronto and supported by partner organizations including Punjabi Community Health Services, South Asian Women's Collective, and Laadliyan.

This research focuses on the experiences of South Asian newcomer women—particularly immigrants and refugees who have arrived in Canada within the past five years—and the challenges they face when accessing sexual and reproductive health services. The project will generate evidence to inform the development and advocacy of more culturally safe, trauma-informed, and equitable healthcare services. Specifically, this will include producing a public-facing report, launching a social media campaign, and delivering training sessions for service providers on anti-oppressive and culturally safe care practices.

Coming soon: We will be recruiting participants for community focus groups, consulting subject matter experts, and launching a survey to gather broader community input.

Digital Story-Telling Campaign

CASSA is looking to connect with Black-led and Indigenous-led organizations to partner on a "Digital Storytelling Campaign" project funded by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to uplift stories from Black and Indigenous communities through short videos, podcasts, and digital

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Honorarium included

If your organization is interested, please email ridah@cassa.ca and/or samaha@cassa.ca

**CASSA IS LOOKING
TO CONNECT WITH**

BLACK & INDIGENOUS-LED ORGANIZATIONS

to partner on a "Digital Storytelling Campaign" project funded by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to uplift stories from Black and Indigenous communities through short videos, podcasts, and digital graphics.

**IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS
INTERESTED PLEASE EMAIL**

Ridah@cassa.ca
or
Samaha@cassa.ca



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Epilepsy & Seizure First Aid Public Education Workshops

Offered in-person, over Zoom,
teleconference and hybrid.

Please email leah@epilepsytoronto.org
for further information.

Presented By



Session will cover:

- ✓ Myths and Misconceptions about Epilepsy
- ✓ Difference Types of Seizures
- ✓ Epilepsy Toronto's Services
- ✓ Treatment
- ✓ Seizure first aid
- ✓ Client stories

www.epilepsytoronto.org

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Anemia is common in South Asians — *but it should never be normal.*

South Asian women and adolescents are at higher risk due to diet, menstrual blood loss, and low iron absorption — often without obvious symptoms.

What is anemia?

Anemia means your body doesn't have enough healthy red blood cells or **hemoglobin** to carry oxygen.

Common signs:



Fatigue & Weakness



Dizziness / Headaches



Pale Skin / Dark Circles



Shortness of Breath



Poor Concentration

Why South Asians are at higher risk

- Predominantly vegetarian diets
- Low iron absorption from **plant-based foods**
- Heavy menstrual bleeding
- Pregnancies with short gaps
- *Anemia often dismissed as "normal tiredness"*

Why this matters:

Untreated anemia can impact:

- Daily energy & productivity
- School & work performance
- Pregnancy outcomes & recovery
- Long-term health
- **In infants it can affect brain development and learning**



World Anemia Awareness Day — Feb 13, 2026

Invest in Your Iron Initiative investinyouriron.ca

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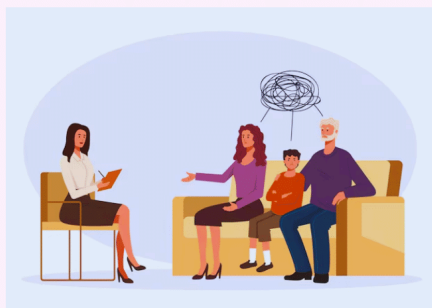
Developed by Sridevi Veluganti (RM), MBBS, DNB (Ob/Gyn)

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VASANTHAM - TAMIL HEALTH & WELLNESS CENTRE

Vasantham is Starting a New Program

"Trauma informed Family inclusive Counselling and Case Management"



Family Counseling & Case Management

- One Member of the Family must have Addiction
- Domestic Violence in the Family
- Family with Children/ Family with no Children

**Ongoing Intake
Referrals are Accepted**

CALL: 416-847-4172

EMAIL: INFO@VASANTHAM.CA

**VISIT: 2660 EGLINTON AVENUE EAST,
SCARBOROUGH, ON, M1K 2S3**



camh
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Funded by - SASP Program



WWW.VASANTHAM.CA



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NEPALESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES (NCCS)
Together We Serve, Together We Grow

**NAVIGATING THE
CANADIAN TAX SYSTEM**

EXPERT GUIDANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS & BUSINESSES

 **7:00 PM TO 8:30 PM**
FEBRUARY 22, SUNDAY

PANELISTS:



BIDHYA BHUSAN KARKI
(CPA, CGA, FCCA, MBA, MA ECO)
Chartered Professional Accountant



CHANDRA PANTHEE
CPA, CGA
Chartered Professional Accountant

FREE & OPEN TO ALL

Join us for an informative live session on Canada's tax system, including filing requirements, credits, benefits and common mistakes to avoid.

 **PANEL ON ZOOM**
Meeting ID: 848 4047 7286
Passcode: 925608

LIVE ON FACEBOOK
 **@NCCS**



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ARE YOU A SOUTH ASIAN CANADIAN WOMAN WITH A LITTLE ONE UNDER 2 YEARS OLD?

Research Title: Exploring South Asian Canadian Women's Postpartum Experiences in Daily Life

What?

We are inviting participants for a research study that explores how South Asian Canadian women experience the transition into motherhood during the first 24 months postpartum.

We are recruiting participants from January 2026 to May 2026. Your participation is voluntary, and there will be no compensation for your participation. What you share with the research team will be kept confidential and be used for research purposes only.

The student researchers, N. Bolastig and A. Gaiser, are completing this study as partial fulfillment of their Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy degrees at the University of Toronto. They are working under the research supervision of J. Davis (Primary Investigator), R. Sangrar, S. Marwaha, and K. Sandhu.

Why?

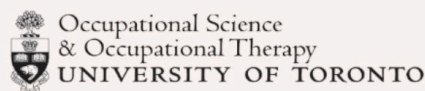
Your voice will help inform how best to support South Asian Canadian women through postpartum transitions.

How?

Share your experiences with two student researchers in one Zoom interview (approximately 60 minutes).

Who?

- 18+ years of age
- Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Currently reside in Canada
- Self-identify as South Asian
- Be up to 24 months postpartum
- Comfortable communicating in English (interviews will be in English)
- Have access to Zoom and reliable internet



Interested in participating? Email ot.sacpostpartum@utoronto.ca or scan the QR code above!

The ethics protocol for this study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board [REB #00049855].

October 23rd, 2025 (v1)

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CALL FOR RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS

Migrant Stories through Fashion: An Ethnographic Study of the Fashion Practices of Diasporic Sri Lankan Tamil Women in Toronto



01 OVERVIEW

The study will uncover the ways in which Sri Lankan Tamil women in Toronto utilize dress and self-fashioning to navigate and communicate their experiences of migration. To participate, you must be a Sri Lankan Tamil woman between the ages of 18-25. You must be a current resident of Toronto and have resided in Toronto for the past 12 months. Multiple participants from one household are not permitted to participate.

02 WHAT TO EXPECT

Participants will take part in a 2 hour focus group and a 1.5 hour wardrobe interview. The focus group will allow you to engage in dialogues with other participants about your dress and self-fashioning practices. The wardrobe interview will allow for tangible materials to be viewed, discussed, and analyzed. Prior to the wardrobe interview, participants will be asked to send photographs of certain garments, both styled and laid flat, along with a brief written description of your choices, guided by prompts provided by the researcher. This process should take approximately 1.5 hours. The focus group will involve all chosen participants, while the wardrobe interview will only be for select participants, determined after the focus group. Consenting to audio-recording is a requirement for this study. You can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the study.

In appreciation of your time, you will receive a \$20 gift card via email to either Tim Hortons or Amazon following the focus group session.

03 NEXT STEPS

If you are interested in participating, please fill out the interest form: <https://forms.gle/dC1TJoCUDaU1Z9Dv5>

**Toronto
Metropolitan
University**

This research is being done as part of my Master's Major Research Paper under the supervision of Dr. Nigel Lezama. For more information, please contact: Anusha Kuhanathan, MA Fashion Graduate Student, TMU anusha.kuhanathan@torontomu.ca

The ethics protocol for this study has been reviewed and approved by the Toronto Metropolitan

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In the News

[‘Canada is not Minnesota,’ minister says in reaction to U.S. immigration raids](#)

Public Safety Minister Gary Anandasangaree says he won't pass judgment on the U.S. crackdown by federal forces in Minnesota that resulted in the deaths of two residents.

[Immigration minister wants department to track exits of temporary residents](#)

Immigration Minister Lena Diab says she wants her department to acquire the ability to track the number of people with temporary visas who are exiting the country.

[This Toronto doctor has over 2,000 patients, but still no permanent residency](#)

Dr. Michael Antil moved from North Carolina to Toronto in July 2023, seeking a more diverse and broad-minded environment for his family and a universal health-care system in which to practice. But three years later, despite Canada's well-documented doctor shortage and so many theoretical routes to citizenship for skilled workers like himself, he still doesn't have permanent residency.

[Bill C-9 Faces Calls to Confront Anti-Black Hate](#)

As Parliament debates Bill C-9, the federal government's proposed Combatting Hate Act, Black community leaders are urging Canadians to look closely at what the legislation includes, and, just as importantly, what it leaves out.

[B.C. First Nation issues travel advisory to U.S. due to immigration crackdown](#)

A First Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island is warning its citizens to avoid non-essential travel to the United States. Huu-ay-aht First Nations issued a travel advisory on Friday, citing concerns about escalated U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "We have never issued a

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Continuing with the recent theme of the CASSA's 2026 Newsletter.



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