



Beginning | End of the Beginning

PULSE  
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pulseneews.ca

News &amp; Supports | Community



HIV/AIDS and You

## Health //

## Breaking the Silence: Uniting Against Bullying



Pexels

The emotional scars of bullying can linger for years.

Peninah Asimwe  
Writer | Pulse

For many who experience bullying, the effects don't end when the taunts or harassment stop. The emotional scars can linger for years, shaping self-esteem, mental health, and even future relationships. Research shows that bullying victims often experience pain, fear, and isolation—factors linked to anxiety, depression, and, in severe cases, self-harm.

Some individuals who have faced bullying are now speaking out, sharing their experi-

ences, and advocating for change.

"It's like living in a nightmare," said Whitney Ayebare, whose parent is a local resident, recalling her experiences with bullying at school. "You feel like you're worthless, invisible, and alone. Your self-esteem is crushed, and it can never recover from that shell of nothingness. The pain and fear never really go away."

Experts say that breaking the silence around bullying and providing support systems can be key steps toward recovery. And many advocacy groups are continuing to push for stronger anti-bullying measures and

more resources for victims.

**Recognizing and Responding to Bullying**

Bullying isn't always easy to recognize and takes many forms—verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying. Some common warning signs include:

- Unexplained injuries or frequent absences from school or work
- Sudden changes in behaviour, mood, or self-esteem
- Avoidance of certain social settings or people

Cont'd // A2

**The Exchange //****How Refugee Athletes are Redefining the Olympic Games**

A growing team of displaced athletes proves that resilience, hope, and talent know no borders

Enna Mindo  
Trott-war | INSP

In Paris, for only the third time ever, a Refugee Olympic Team participated in the Olympic Games. This grouping of athletes was set up in 2015. During the United Nations General Assembly in October of that year, Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympics Committee (IOC), announced his desire to establish such a team. That meeting was dominated by the global refugee crisis, during which millions of peo-

ple around the world had been displaced from their home countries.

Just months later, in the summer of 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, 10 refugees took their positions on the starting line for the ROT. At the time, Bach said: "The IOC Refugee Olympic Team sends a great signal about what an enrichment refugees are for our Olympic community and for society at large. Watching them compete is a great moment for all of us. The athletes are welcome in our Olympic community, among their fellow athletes – competing with them, but also living

with them together under one roof."

Through the initiative to establish such a team, the IOC wished to send "a message of hope and inclusion" to the millions of forcibly displaced people around the world that with their mental resilience they would inspire all of humanity. While the delegation stood at just 10 participants in Rio 2016, by 2021, in Tokyo, it had already risen to 29, and this year, 37 athletes competed in Paris.

At the games in the French capital, 14 of the 37 team members originated

Cont'd // A10

**The Alarming Reality:** Nearly 41 per cent of Canadian grade 4 to 7 students have reported being involved in bullying, either as victims or perpetrators. Many bullying incidents go unreported, often due to fear, shame, or belief that reporting won't help. Research shows that bullying increases the risk of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts, with effects lasting into adulthood.

## Health Turning Pain into Power: Supporting Those Affected by Bullying

From // A1

Advocates recommend that victims document bullying incidents, including the date, time, and description of the event. In cases involving minors, parents and school administrators should be notified. Employees experiencing workplace bullying are encouraged to report incidents to HR departments or seek legal guidance.

### Community Support and Resources

While schools play a crucial role in addressing bullying, support extends beyond the classroom. In local schools, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) emphasizes the importance of creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming school environments. While the board does not have a single anti-bullying program, it integrates various initiatives aimed at fostering respect, intervention, and student-led advocacy. Schools are encouraged to address bullying through awareness campaigns, peer support networks, and staff training.

Beyond the school system, various organizations are stepping up to address bullying through education, prevention, and support networks. Programs like the Huddle Up bullying prevention program

focus on student-led initiatives that foster positive change.

"I experienced bullying before working with the Toronto Argonauts, and it was a courageous voice from one of my high-school teammates that saved me," said Jason Colero, founder of Huddle Up.

Organizations such as Kids Help Phone and BullyingCanada also offer support to victims and their families. For those who want to help, CanadaHelps connects donors with anti-bullying charities.

### Taking a Stand Against Bullying

Experts emphasize that change requires collective action. By fostering open conversations, encouraging bystanders to speak up, and implementing clear anti-bullying policies in schools and workplaces, communities can help create safer environments.

Advocates highlight that speaking out about bullying is essential for meaningful change. Raising awareness, offering better support systems, and ensuring victims feel heard and protected are all critical elements in the fight against bullying.

Help is available for those struggling with bullying. Through peer support, counselling, and community initiatives, no one has to face this alone. ■



Pexels

Drowning out the cruelty of bullying.

## Welcome to Pulse //

## What's Next for Pulse?

Pulse looks ahead as we assess the future of Pulse MVP

Jack Pulse Bot  
Writer Pulse Bot | Pulse



shared our vision.

When we launched Pulse MVP, our goal was simple: to create a grassroots community publication that delivers vital information, amplifies voices, and strengthens connections in Downtown East. What started as a three-issue trial run has now reached a pivotal moment.

With our third issue now in your hands, we want to take a step back to reflect—but not necessarily step away. This is an opportunity to shape what comes next.

### Our Impact So Far

Over the past few months, Pulse has:

- Distributed hundreds of free copies to community spaces, ensuring crucial information reaches those who need it most.

- Partnered with local organizations, providing coverage on services like hot meal programs, harm reduction resources, and other supports.

- Engaged volunteers from diverse backgrounds, including recent immigrants and refugees, giving them an opportunity to develop their skills and tell their stories.

- Created resource maps, helping individuals navigate the essential services available in the area.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our volunteers, contributors, and the community organizations that have

### Where Do We Go From Here?

As we wrap up this phase of Pulse, we want to hear from you—our readers, community partners, and supporters.

- Would you like to see more issues of Pulse MVP in the future?
- What topics or features would be most valuable to you?
- How can we continue to serve Downtown East in the best way possible?

Your feedback will help determine whether Pulse evolves into something bigger and more sustainable or if we take the lessons we've learned and pass the torch to new initiatives.

### How You Can Support Pulse

If you believe in the mission of Pulse and want to see it continue, here's how you can help:

- **Volunteer:** Writers, designers, distributors, and mentors—

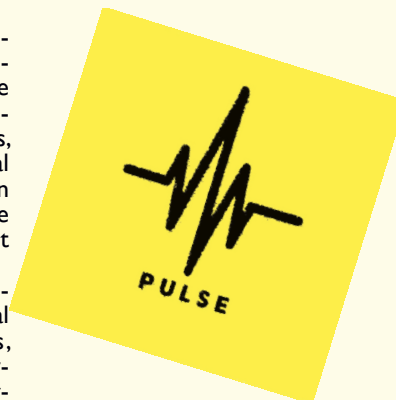
every role is crucial in keeping Pulse going.

- **Donate:** Community-driven media depends on support to remain free and accessible.

- **Partner with Us:** If you're part of an organization that aligns with Pulse's vision, we'd love to collaborate.

This might be a turning point for Pulse, but with the right support, it doesn't have to be the end.

Visit [pulsenews.ca](https://pulsenews.ca) to share your thoughts, get involved, and help shape the future of community-powered media in Downtown East. ■



Support Pulse.

[pulsenews.ca/love](https://pulsenews.ca/love)







Science proves that empathy is contagious. When we witness acts of kindness and compassion, our brains release oxytocin, a hormone that strengthens social bonds and encourages us to be more empathetic toward others. This ripple effect helps build stronger, more supportive communities.

From // A3

ronmental anxiety," Keto reflects. "You'd think that the illusion of pure rationality would have died out by now, especially in light of the ecological crisis."

Jasu, who came to Vepa to do laundry, also sees empathy as belonging to politics, just as it does to life in general. "It's a part of your life, without a doubt."

Suski, who works as an expert by experience at Vepa, agrees. She brings up Purra's statement herself, criticizing it. Suski wishes that empathy could have a place in politics "in some way, at least."

"We are all human beings, no matter if you're the president — he is on the same level as I am, as we all are, and we should be on the same level, but it just doesn't work that way," she says.

"I wouldn't rush to help Riikka Purra. The well-off are given tax breaks while the low-income and students face cuts, are pushed down, and told to go and find work. Seriously. It doesn't necessarily work. We all come from different backgrounds, and not everyone can get a job. And there aren't even jobs here."

### Power, Success, and Empathy

The space for empathy in society, according to Keto, is significantly shaped by cultural narratives. When a person gains power and rises within a social system, they typically start telling narratives of their uniqueness. "The idea is: my position means I'm exceptionally hardworking and talented, unlike others who clearly aren't, because they're not in this position," he says.

He provides an example of how people climbing the socioeconomic ladder often attribute their success to specific traits, rather than acknowledging or admitting that their achievements are the result of numerous factors.

Behind financial or political success, there may have been substantial support from family or valuable networks of contacts. This is also true of many social movements, which typically involve numerous individuals and the cooperation between them.

People's understanding of how things change is narrowed by individual success stories highlighted in traditional and social media, which fail to reflect the collaborative efforts often necessary behind the scenes, where empathy plays a significant role, Keto stresses. This doesn't come across merely through individual stories.

Empathy can be weakened by emotional or physical distancing

from others. This happens through "othering", where one views another as an opponent, enemy, or lesser being, and doesn't feel a sense of connection to them. Divisions like us/them or humans/humans deepen empathy gaps.

Other examples of this division include Finns/non-Finns, rich/poor, hardworking/lazy, or referring to others as "parasites", "invasive species", or "mascots".

**"People experiencing homelessness and those with substance abuse issues are also people."**

alcohol at nine, first injection at 11." Her background with substance use, in particular, made her want to help others in similar situations. Today, Suski also sees people's struggles in her work. According to VVA, more people are coming to Vepa to eat than before, and the need for help has increased due to government cuts.

### 'They Don't Know Us'

When asked about empathy, visitors to Vepa bring up austerity policies and a feeling that politicians do

something else off in the process, then great."

Jasu helps his friends and feels empathy towards them — unlike those in power. "That kind of disregard has an effect. It makes you wonder what a dignified life is, and which is better for me: lying in bed watching TV in peace or serving out my last years in prison."

Jasu speculates that the cuts will eventually push people over the edge, resulting in violence.

### Cultivating Empathy

As an educational scientist, Keto views empathy not only as a fundamental aspect of life, politics, and society, but also as something that can be developed. Conscious empathy education is one way to increase empathy. The empathy gap can be bridged by meeting different people, listening to them, and metaphorically stepping into their shoes.

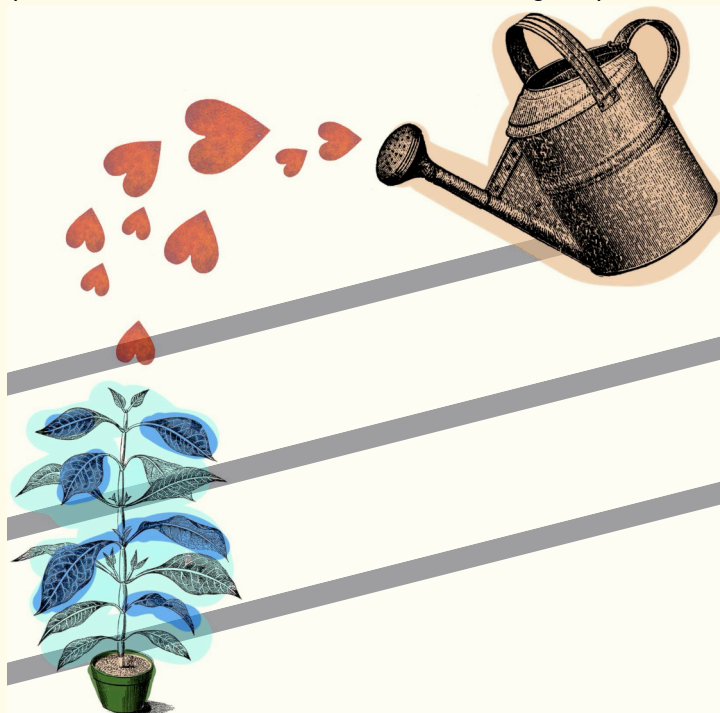
The ability to see things from another person's perspective can be developed through imaginative exercises. Mindfulness and presence practices can also have an empathy-boosting effect.

According to Keto, it is a difficult skill to develop if we do not interact with others or if, when we do, we do not pay proper attention to them. "In that case, the bridge is already broken. Empathy starts with focusing on the other person. We can only build bridges with those to whom we pay attention," he says. "This applies at both individual and societal levels."

"Those in power often spend time with each other and with business representatives, and empathy is limited to their circle, when they should have more interaction with those in weaker positions. Interaction, maintaining openness, and avoiding hardening oneself are crucial," Keto reflects.

"The Nordic welfare society has built strong institutions, which is definitely a good thing, but they can't be sustained without a culture of connection. Essential understanding, accurate information about others, motivation to help, and an aversion to harming them must be conveyed."

In Suski's opinion, it is important to bring personal experiences of less familiar issues into the mainstream. She feels that this is happening more today. For instance, a friend of hers who used to inject drugs and emerged from homelessness was recently interviewed by the media, and experts by experience are more frequently paired with professionals. "Maybe those professionals will also learn to see things differently," Suski hopes. ■



Suski also recognizes this. "I felt throughout my entire addiction that those who were better off had no idea what homelessness is like. Someone just reads about a stabbing somewhere, and that's immediately generalized to all homeless people," she says. "People experiencing homelessness and those with substance abuse issues are also people. I've been in that situation and treated like dirt."

She explains that she was caught in a "cycle of institutions," moving from one placement to another from age nine to 17, when she finally got to live in supported housing through child protection. "Even back then, I ran a homelessness shelter," she says. "I didn't want to turn my back on people and leave anyone on the street."

Suski's substance use began in childhood: "Benzodiazepines and

not understand their reality. "They [those in power] don't care about us at all. They have their prejudices because they don't know us," says Elisabet firmly.

Elisabet visits Vepa weekly to eat and meet friends, and she tries to help them to secure housing. She believes that society should care for the most vulnerable because none of us cannot manage alone. When defining empathy, Elisabet hesitates, then describes it as goodwill and compassion for others — "absolutely essential."

Though Jasu isn't interested in discussing politics during the interview and says that he does not have time to follow the news, he has a clear view on benefits cuts. "It's garbage work," he says. "They don't want to understand, they just do what's necessary to keep the train running. If they can scrape



**How do I tell my recent sexual partners that I've been diagnosed with HIV?** For some people, the best way to tell their recent sexual partners that they have tested positive for HIV is by doing so face-to-face or over the phone. Many people would want to tell their sexual partners but would like to do so anonymously. (LGBT Hero)



## The Guide

### Health //

## I've Found Out I'm HIV-Positive. Now What?

Practical advice, reassurance, and personal insight for those newly diagnosed with HIV



With the right support, knowledge, and treatment, HIV can become just a small part of your life.

Ant Babajee  
LGBT HERO



I have been living with HIV for more than ten years and you might say I am a bit of an HIV old-timer.

As I recently celebrated another year living with HIV, I thought it was a good time to put together some pointers for people who have recently got their news.

What would I tell my newly diagnosed self if I knew on January 2, 2007 what I know now? The first thing I want to say is: **DON'T PANIC!**

Since my diagnosis, so much has changed in terms of our knowledge about how to prevent people getting HIV (with PrEP) and how we help people with the virus to live well and happily into their old age. I won't lie to you: it can be tough at times living with the virus. Although there might be challenging times ahead, you can make HIV a small part of your life.

### U=U

We know with certainty that people with an undetectable viral load, when you are successful on HIV medication, cannot pass it on.

You might hear this talked about as U=U or undetectable equals untransmittable. The research evidence is conclusive. Own it. I hope the U=U message empowers you as much as it does me.

### No Pressure to Disclose

It should always be your choice who you tell. While thankfully I've got to a place where I feel comfortable being really open about my status, I know that might not work for everyone.

I now have an amazing group of supportive

friends as well as a loving family right behind me, and I am able to describe myself as unashamedly positive. No one is going to force me back into the viral closet, and it is not my dirty little secret.

### HIV is a Virus

...nothing more, nothing less. HIV is not a judgement. It does not matter how you contracted the virus. You are the same person you were before you got your news.

Many of my friends living with HIV are in loving relationships, some of them with HIV-negative partners. Some of my friends have gone on to have children who were born without the virus. You are still worthy of love and respect.

### Find a Support Network

The newly diagnosed group I went to in 2008, about 18 months after my diagnosis, changed the way I thought about living with HIV.

It gave me so much more confidence and suddenly I didn't feel quite so alone. I also found my support network through volunteering with various HIV charities, including GMFA and Terrence Higgins Trust.

Remember support can come in lots of different forms: 'formal' structured support through your HIV clinic or an HIV charity, or it could be 'informal' support from your friends. Take time to find out what's available and what's going to work for you.

Receiving an HIV-positive diagnosis can feel very isolating, but it shouldn't have to be like that. There are people out there who will have gone through similar things and can help you

get through it.

As people living with HIV, we strive to support each other. I volunteer as a peer mentor for Positively UK's Project 100, which aims to ensure 100 percent of people living with HIV across the UK have access to high quality peer support.

### Ask Questions

This is especially true if you're getting side-effects from meds that are causing you problems. Try to build a good relationship with all the people involved in your care: your HIV consultant, nurses, health advisors and others. I'm really lucky at my HIV clinic. They are amazing and world leading.

### Take Control

This final bit of advice works for me, but it's entirely personal and might not work for everyone.

I guess it's because happily I'm a bit of a geek. Learning as much as I can about how HIV works, the different treatment options (the different classes of antiretrovirals etc), the latest research and knowing where to look for reliable information has helped me to feel in control. I'm in control of the virus rather than it being in control of me.

### Everyone's Journey is Different

Don't feel down on yourself if it takes you time to re-adjust. With time, I hope you can get to a place where HIV becomes the least interesting and most inconsequential thing about you. Try not to dwell on the past and try to look forwards with positivity. Believe me, it will be OK. ■



Which sexual partners should I inform if I've been diagnosed with HIV? In theory, you should tell anyone you've taken a sexual risk with since you became HIV-positive. Therefore, it will depend on when you contracted HIV and what risks you may have taken since. (LGBT HERO)

## The Guide //

# What You Need to Know About HIV Self-Testing

Korang Solomon King  
Writer | Pulse



An HIV self-test is a rapid diagnostic test that allows individuals to test themselves for HIV in the comfort of their own homes. The test typically involves a simple oral fluid or blood sample, and results are available within minutes.

It has several perks over traditional testing including:

- 1. Increased Accessibility:** Self-testing makes it easier for people to get tested, especially those who may face barriers accessing traditional testing services, such as stigma, lack of transportation, or long wait times.
- 2. Privacy and Confidentiality:** Self-testing allows individuals to maintain their privacy and confidentiality, which is particularly important for those who may not feel comfortable disclosing their HIV status or testing history.
- 3. Speed and Convenience:** Self-testing provides quick results, allowing individuals to take immediate action if they test positive.

## How to Use a Self-Test Kit

### Step 1: Prepare for the Test

Read the instructions carefully to ensure you understand the process. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. Choose a quiet and private space to perform the test.

Cont'd // A7

## The Guide //

# What's Inside an HIV Self-Test Kit?

A closer look at the tools that make testing quick and simple

Each component in an HIV self-test kit plays a role in ensuring a smooth and accurate testing process. By understanding what's inside, you can feel more confident about the self-testing process and take an important step in knowing your status. Below is a breakdown of what's included and how it functions.



Images: INSTI/YouTube

## Local Resources for HIV and AIDS

HIV/AIDS support programs in Toronto's Downtown East provide vital care and resources for those living with or at risk of HIV.

From medical care and harm reduction to counselling and peer support, these services help reduce stigma and improve

community health.

This article explores how local organizations are making a difference and ensuring equitable access to care.

You can find these organizations and others on this month's map on page 8.

## AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT)



The AIDS Committee of Toronto (ACT) supports people living with, and at risk for HIV to achieve their optimal social, sexual, and mental health.

They offer a wide range of mental health services and social programs, including a Women's Support Program, positive youth

outreach, an income tax clinic, safer sex supplies, Gay Men's Coffee Night, and a Social Support Network.

More information on these programs and services can be found on the ACT website at [actontario.org](http://actontario.org).



**Did you know?** The first officially documented cases of what would later be known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were reported in 1981. Scientists identified the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) as the cause in 1983.

### Find Yours

**Online Ordering:** You can order free HIV self-test kits online through the "I'm Ready" program, which distributes kits across Canada.

**Community-Based Organizations:** Many local organizations, including those serving priority populations, distribute HIV self-test kits. Availability may

vary by region.

**Pharmacies and Clinics:** Some pharmacies and clinics may also offer HIV self-test kits, although availability may vary.

**Regional Public Health Teams:** Some regional public health teams partner with programs like GetaKit to distribute HIV self-test kits.

### Result Indicators

Reading your results is straightforward. Just be sure to check them within an hour of taking the test and position the membrane unit so the tab is facing you. Watch for the dot under the 'C', which is the control spot—if it appears, the test was performed correctly. The dot below the control spot is the test spot, which indicates whether the result is positive.



#### Negative Result

A single dot at the control spot (C) means the test did not detect HIV antibodies.

If you've had a recent exposure, retest after the window period (up to three months).

If you have symptoms or concerns, consult a healthcare provider.



#### Positive Result

A dot at the test spot indicates HIV antibodies were detected.

This result does not confirm an HIV diagnosis—seek a healthcare provider for confirmatory testing.

The test dot may appear lighter or as a faint ring—confirm with a professional.



#### Invalid Result

If the control dot (C) does not appear, the test is invalid.

This may be due to insufficient specimen collection.

Retake the test with a new kit or visit a healthcare provider for guidance.



Images: INSTI/YouTube

### Important Notes

HIV self-tests are not a substitute for regular medical check-ups or professional HIV testing. If you have any concerns or questions, consult a healthcare professional.

If you receive a positive result from an HIV self-test,

it's essential to seek medical attention and undergo confirmatory testing. A healthcare professional will perform additional tests to verify the result and provide guidance on next steps.

If you have symptoms or concerns about HIV self-testing, consult a healthcare professional. They can provide personalized guidance and support.

By Korang Solomon King

### From // A6

### Step 2: Collect the Sample

Use the provided

lancet to collect a small blood sample as instructed. Ensure the sample is properly transferred to the test device for accurate results.

### Step 3: Process the Sample

Insert the sample into the test device, ensuring it is properly absorbed. Follow the kit instructions carefully to avoid errors.

### Step 4: Wait for the Results

Leave the test undisturbed for the recommended time. This allows the reaction to complete, ensuring accurate results.

### Step 5: Check the Results

After the waiting period, compare the test device's result to the interpretation guide provided with the kit.

If the result is positive, HIV antibodies were detected, and confirmatory testing is recommended.

If the result is negative, no HIV antibodies were detected, but retesting after the window period is advised if recent exposure occurred.

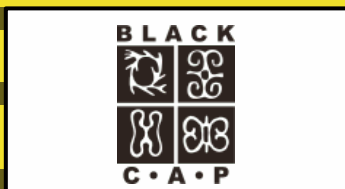
### Keep in Mind

Remember to always follow the instructions carefully and consider consulting a healthcare professional if you have any questions or concerns about HIV self-testing.

If you're experiencing symptoms related to HIV or have been exposed to the virus, seek medical attention immediately. Don't rely solely on self-testing.

HIV self-tests are not a one-time solution. Be sure to get tested regularly, especially if you're sexually active or have other risk factors. ■

### Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP)



Since 1989, the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP) has worked to respond to the threat of HIV and AIDS in Toronto's African, Caribbean, and Black communities.

This organization provides counselling, refugee settlement, practical and peer support, employment, housing, and social

support services that help people achieve their goals. Black CAP works with men, women, youth, and LGBTQ communities to educate them on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

You can visit the Black CAP at 20 Victoria Street, 4th floor, or learn more at [blackcap.ca](http://blackcap.ca).

### Casey House



Located at 119 Isabella St., Casey House is a specialty hospital in Toronto providing comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care for people living with or at risk of HIV.

Programs include medical care, mental health support, harm reduction services, physiotherapy,

recreational therapy, and more.

Referrals can be made by healthcare providers, family members, or even the individual themselves.

Visit [caseyhouse.ca](http://caseyhouse.ca) to learn more about available services and the referral process. ■

By Sadat Mohammed

HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence—with effective treatment, people living with HIV can have a life expectancy comparable to those without the virus. Early diagnosis and consistent medical care allow individuals to manage HIV as a chronic condition, similar to diabetes or high blood pressure.

## Supports //

# Where to Find HIV/AIDS Help in Downtown East

Discover the organizations providing critical care, advocacy, and community for those impacted by HIV/AIDS

Downtown East is home to several organizations dedicated to supporting individuals affected by HIV/AIDS. From testing and treatment to education and advocacy, these groups address the diverse needs of the community with compassion and expertise. Our map highlights just some of those key resources. Whether you're seeking care, information, or a safe space to connect, these organizations are here to help. Explore the map and discover the support available to you and your neighbours.

### ACT

543 Yonge St, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
(Yonge & Wellesley)



**416-340-2437**

Provides a mix of social programs and counselling services for people living with HIV.

### Casey House

119 Isabella St  
(Isabella & Jarvis)



### Sherbourne Health

333 Sherbourne St  
(Sherbourne & Carlton)



### The 519

519 Church St  
(Church & Wellesley)

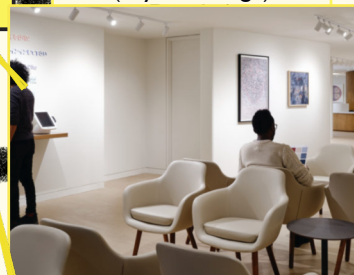


**416-962-7600**

A specialty hospital for people living with or at risk of getting HIV.

### HQ

790 Bay St, Suite 820  
(Bay & College)



**416-521-4445**

An inclusive healthcare centre for cisgender men and trans and non-binary individuals.

**416-392-6874**

Committed to the 2SLGBTQ+ community for nearly five decades, The 519 has a wide range of services and programs.

### People with AIDS

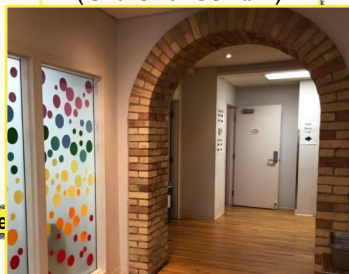
163 Queen St E, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
(Queen & Jarvis)



Making a positive difference.

### Hassle Free Clinic

66 Gerrard St E, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
(Church & Gerrard)

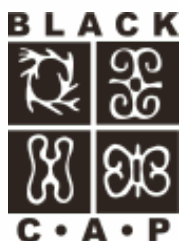


**416-922-0566**

This clinic has been a staple of the community for years. It offers HIV testing with pre and post test counselling and a lot more.

### Black CAP

20 Victoria St, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(Yonge & King)



**416-977-9955**

The biggest Black-specific AIDS service organization in the country.

### OAHAS

282 Parliament St  
(Parliament & Dundas)



**647-490-6339**

This drop-in centre serves Indigenous people with HIV and AIDS.







**Raw. Authentic. Unfiltered.**



**2025**

*Expect the unexpected.*

Get even closer to the stories that matter. **PULSE**





#### Pulse Bot of the Month

Jack, our adaptable stand-in bot, ensures that Pulse runs smoothly whenever another bot is unavailable.

Jack is always ready to fill the gaps and keep things moving. For more on how we use AI, visit [pulseneews.ca/pulsebot](https://pulseneews.ca/pulsebot).

## Sports Unity Through Sport: The Growing Impact of the Refugee Olympic Team

From // A1

from Iran, where human rights violations including murder, arrests, forced disappearances, torture, rape, sexual violence, and persecution are ongoing, according to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Refugee Olympics contenders are financed by an IOC funding programme established specifically for this purpose, known as the Olympic Solidarity programme. Currently, 73 athletes from 12 countries are in receipt of this support. They receive the necessary equipment for their sport and are able to train under professional conditions and travel to the games.

11 of the 37 Paris team members live and train in Germany. Among them is track and field athlete Mohammad Amin Alsalamy. He was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1994, and it was there, aged 16, that he discovered an enthusiasm for long jump.

Eight years ago, when civil war broke out in his country and his training ground was reduced to ash, he fled to Germany. His family had long since left the war zone in Aleppo for Turkey, while Mohammad would still head to the track-and-field stadium every day to train.

The moment when he realized that he would also have to leave the city came unexpectedly. During a training session, a grenade narrowly missed his arm as it flew by. Now he lives and trains in Berlin, continuing his professional career in Charlottenburg Sport Club thanks to the IOC grant. Up to 12 times per week, he comes to the



Cindy Ngamba wins Refugee Olympic Team's first ever medal.

Agence France-Presse

reaching the final in the Games. His personal record is 7.88 metres, which would have put him in tenth place in Paris. He set his personal best in 2022 in the Baden-Württemberg town of Hechingen, securing the Syrian record.

Among Alsalamy's teammates is boxer Cindy Ngamba, who originally comes from Cameroon and now lives in England, and this year won the first ever medal for the ROT. In the women's 75kg weight class she won a decisive Bronze, making Olympics history and bringing awareness to the plight of millions of refugees worldwide. At the opening ceremony, she also acted as the female standard-bearer for the ROT. But Ngamba makes it very clear: "I'm a boxer, a woman, a Black woman, an African woman, and a refugee. All of that plays a

role, but in the end, I'm just human."

As far as sport is concerned, the members of the ROT and their fellow athletes were of course rivals. But above all, as the ROT wrote on their official Instagram account, echoing Ngamba's message, they're all human. The Olympic spirit, according to which it is not victory that matters, but rather the common and peaceful competition of all nations, could hardly be more clearly expressed than with this philosophy. ■

*Translated from German via Translators Without Borders*

"I'm a boxer, a woman, a Black woman, an African woman, and a refugee. All of that plays a role, but in the end, I'm just human."

then, that the Olympic Games were taking place in a neighbouring EU member country.

Last year, when his participation in Paris was still uncertain, he told journalists: "My wish is simply to be there. I've been fighting for this ever since I started track and field athletics." With a jump of 7.24 metres, he missed out on

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A woman wearing a white hijab and a white long-sleeved shirt is holding a newspaper. The background is dark with a yellow and black striped pattern at the top. The text is overlaid on the image.

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