



# ONTARIO NURSES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Official Newsletter of ONEIG  
An RNAO Interest Group

## When Disaster Strikes

JOSALYN RADCLIFFE - ONEIG CO-CHAIR

This past month has circled one predominant theme for me: disaster.

It hasn't been long since the first images of record floods tearing apart Pakistan and Nigeria were released with millions displaced and after COP27, the UN announced the development of a loss and damage fund for vulnerable countries facing crises like these. And it was only a few weeks ago our executive CANE liaison, Hilda Swirsky, pulled together an excellent webinar with Beth Emeth synagogue, ONEIG, and CANE that included practical advice about disaster readiness from expert Alain Normand. And when Rob Samulack, Dominique Baillargeon, and I came together and listened to a COP27 session, we heard about the human health costs of climate emergencies from health leaders. And still ringing in my ears was the statement by UN Secretary General Antonia Guterres that we are on 'the road to climate hell' just as our own province announced Bill 23 to remove Greenbelt and environmental protections while planning new highways through wetlands, farm land, and habitat.

We cannot avoid the reality, the on-the-ground truth, that we are going to face more disasters as we walk into the future. And we shouldn't avoid this truth even as we need to take time to distract ourselves and enjoy this beautiful world that is so worth protecting. We need to keep working for conservation and climate mitigation, but what I am getting at is this: we need to be prepared.

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## When Disaster Strikes

JOSALYN RADCLIFFE - ONEIG CO-CHAIR

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This past month of witnessing, predicting, preventing, and examining disasters made me recognize we need to make changes to protect our communities, our patients, and our families.

Alain Normand's presentation provided some really practical advice about go bags and emergency kits and key considerations to keep your family safe (listen to the presentation for more detail!), while you have likely heard about 72-hour kits in public messaging. This is critical information, yet we know there are many who do not have these resources or may need additional support.

Graveline and Germain (2022) discuss this disaster risk resilience and point out the need "to pay particular attention to the power in communities so that the resilience of one group does not come at the expense of another group and that efforts to strengthen it do not contribute to perpetuating vulnerabilities." "If we praise and focus only on those with the current capacity to be prepared, we stigmatize and ignore the social and environmental inequities that shape our day-to-day life.

"COVID-19 is an example of that sort of a biophysical phenomenon and social phenomenon that's filtered through systems in which some of our lives are deemed more essential or more valuable than others."

-participant reflection Sume Ndumbe-Eyoh et al., 2022

Both COVID-19 and climate research have addressed the reality that the most vulnerable will be more greatly impacted and are the least equipped to respond. Disaster planning and preparedness must include actions on the intertwined social and ecological determinants of health that continue to inscribe this vulnerability. Strategies do exist! For example: universal design now can remove barriers to accessing shelter, basic incomes and increasing social assistance rates can enable people to have stores when storms hit, and sufficient and secure housing provides protection from the elements.

“Autumn is a  
second Spring  
where every  
leaf is a  
flower”

~ALBERT CAMUS

## On the Horizon

ONEIG  
Quarterly  
General  
Meeting

## Monday, December 5th

keep your eye on your email for registration details

# SOCIAL MEDIA EXECUTIVE: WELCOME CLEO DANFORTH!

Hello All!

I am pleased to introduce myself as ONEIG's newest social media executive taking over for 2022-2024. My name is Cleo Danforth and I have been a registered nurse for 5 years since my graduation from the Queen's School of Nursing in 2017. As a new graduate I worked for several years as a floor nurse on the General Surgery ward at Kingston General Hospital, also taking on a nursing clinical instructor role for a few semesters at Queen's and working for a time casually with the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault unit at KGH.

After moving from Kingston to Ottawa in Spring 2021 and starting a position as an infusion clinic nurse, I started looking into ways I could redirect my mounting eco-anxiety into productive directions. I started with volunteering at local environmental organizations in Ottawa, particularly helping with the Breathe Easy campaign by Ecology Ottawa to study air quality near schools and long-term care facilities, as well as the Tree Campaign giving away thousands of tree seedlings to Ottawa residents to help improve the city's tree canopy. Previously an ONEIG member, I decided to get involved with the executive team in spring of 2022 to add my efforts to advocacy around the intersection of the climate crisis and human health.

My hopes for this role are that I can learn from the amazing and passionate ONEIG executive team, and that I can be of service in raising awareness via social media of the importance of addressing the climate crisis and of ONEIG's efforts to affect positive change within the broader environmentalist movement. Though the job of combatting climate change is massive and truly overwhelming, it helps me to know that between ONEIG and its many collaborators, I am working in solidarity with a large network of deeply committed people with a common goal. I am thrilled to be involved in the ONEIG executive and looking forward to pushing for change together.

“Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up.”

-David Orr

## When Disaster Strikes

JOSALYN RADCLIFFE - ONEIG CO-CHAIR  
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The funding promised by nations at COP27 (for adaptation and disaster and loss) and the integration of equity and social-ecological determinants of health into disaster planning are acts that can save lives. At the community and personal level, we must also support one another and play active roles in better disaster planning and response. We can do our best to 'bounce forward' by anticipating and transforming our systems using the knowledge we have today (Graveline & Germain, 2022). Once we face the difficult truths about the challenges to come, we are better able to unpack the ways we can minimize the risk, and organize and advocate for what we will need to face them.

### Academic References

Graveline, M.H., Germain, D. Disaster Risk Resilience: Conceptual Evolution, Key Issues, and Opportunities. *Int J Disaster Risk Sci* 13, 330-341 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13753-022-00419-0>

Ndumbe-Eyoh, S., Muzumdar, P., Betker, C., & Oickle, D. (2021). Back to better: amplifying health equity, and determinants of health perspectives during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Global health promotion*, 28(2), 7-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17579759211000975>

### Links:

On a Road to Climate Hell:  
<https://www.cbc.com/2022/11/07/were-on-a-highway-to-climate-hell-un-chief-guterres-says.html>

“COP27 Reaches Breakthrough Agreement on New ‘Loss and Damage’ Fund for Vulnerable Countries”  
<https://unfccc.int/news/cop27-reaches-breakthrough-agreement-on-new-loss-and-damage-fund-for-vulnerable-countries>

RNAO Bill 23 Submission:  
<https://rnao.ca/sites/default/files/2022-11/RNAO%20Bill%2023%20Submission%20Nov%2017%202022.pdf>

Are you Emergency Prepared? [YouTube]:  
<https://youtu.be/dhpchzYPLrU>



# COP27 VIEWING PARTY

By Rob Samulack RN ONEIG Co-chair

On November 17th, we hosted a COP27 viewing party where we met on Zoom together while we watched the livefeed from the WHO pavilion on "Responding to Climate Disasters - Perspectives from Emergency Medicine". November has been a very busy month for ONEIG and the promotion bit for this event was less than ideal as we only got it posted to social media the day before. Sorry to those who missed it because of this!

Regardless, the presentation was a discussion between nurses, doctors and emergency managers from around the world, but with a large focus on lesser developed countries from regions in Africa, the south Pacific and southern Asia. It put a focus on not only that these regions are experiencing climate change, but how these professionals are responding to the various emergencies. Of note, it was the most vulnerable populations within these regions that were the hardest hit.

Dr. Wayne Smith from Cape Town discussed their handling of the water crisis and how they had to ration water to stave off Day Zero when the water would run out. Surgeons switched to alcohol to scrub in. They even had to collect and recycle steam from their autoclaves.

Nurse Moya works for an NGO in conflict zones in Africa where severe rationing of resources needs to take place. They need fuel for generators as electricity infrastructure has often been destroyed or is unreliable. They cannot stockpile large quantities of fuel as they would become a target, but clean energy infrastructure is hard to set-up in these situations.. Despite this and other resource austerity conditions, they are still able to function. They need community support to maintain services.

One of the points discussed by a US emergency doctor doing a fellowship in sustainability is a back-to-basics approach. It reminded me of the musical lyric, "It's as easy as A, B, C." While the newest innovative equipment can help save lives, it has diminishing returns. All of this new equipment can be very resource intensive and therefore wasteful. 'When do the harms outweigh the benefits?' is a question that needs to be asked continually in procurement.

There was a lot of discussion on the need for an upstream approach. We need to avoid the worst outcomes of climate change by changing policies and putting in proactive steps to strengthen our healthcare systems to be able to absorb the blows in anticipation of future climate change related natural disasters and health emergencies. Mitigation and adaptation.

It left me thinking that ONEIG is on the right track. We are doing the education piece, both the other nurses, but also to government. We are speaking out on bad government policies, such as Bill 23. We are trying to use a climate justice lens and give voice to the more vulnerable people wherever possible. We are trying to partner with like-minded organizations to get the message out and advocate for change in our healthcare system and institutions.



# SPEAKER SERIES

By: Hilda Swirsky

A frequently, sought-after speaker, author, lecturer, teacher and expert in Emergency Management, award-winner Alain Normand was our guest speaker on Sunday November 13th in the partnership between the Canadian Association of Nurses for the Environment, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda synagogue and the Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group.

In 2019, Alain had won the T. Joseph Scanlon Lifetime Achievement Award. It is the highest honour presented annually to recognize the lifetime contributions and achievements of individuals who enhance Canadian disaster planning. Alain has directed relief efforts in disasters world-wide including Ukraine and across Canada including the Ford McMurray Fires in 2016 and the Maritimes after the aftermath of the recent Hurricane Fiona which he spoke about.

Alain has also been a Canadian Red Cross volunteer for almost 20 years and an ADRA Canada volunteer for 25 years. He now works part-time for ADRA Canada, developing and implementing the national program for In-Kind Donations Management based on the humanitarian role of ADRA International.

In his presentation, Alain described commonalities of disaster relief in war-torn Ukraine and the Maritimes after Hurricane Fiona. His recorded webinar can be found on Beth Emeth's website [beby.org](http://beby.org) under Programming and then Greening Committee or on the Y-Tube.

Here is the bio for our guest speaker Dr. Gili Nevo for Sunday January 22nd, 2023 at 5:00 P.M.

Dr. Gili Adler Nevo trained as a child psychiatrist in Israel before immigrating to Canada and completing a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Anxiety at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. She is an assistant professor at the University of Toronto and leads the MGH (Michael Garron Hospital) Child and Adolescent Anxiety Clinic.

Dr. Adler believes in prevention (being proactive as opposed to reactive), this conviction led her not only to specialize in treating anxious youth in order to help them divert their life trajectory, but also to her volunteer work as co-chair of the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) Green IS Health MIG (Medical Interest Group).

Wearing these two hats she is happy to speak to you about the intersection of the climate crisis and anxiety.

# LET'S TALK ONEIG!!

Interested in joining ONEIG or simply want to learn more about what we do?

Check out our video by Dominique (one of our Policy and Political Action Executives) who will discuss her role on ONEIG, our latest and most exciting events, and what to expect when you join our team!  
- If you have any questions, please email us at [oneigrnao@gmail.com](mailto:oneigrnao@gmail.com)

Join ONEIG here: <https://join.rnao.ca>

Check out our socials listed here

Check out our RAO Bill 23 submission here:

<https://rnao.ca/.../RAO%20Bill%2023%20Submission%20Nov...>

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<https://chapters-igs.rnao.ca/interestgroup/36/about>



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