Addiction used to be someone else's problem. Now graduating students are eager to take it on

By Tobin Titus
Published Jun 17, 2022 5:00 AM EDT

Michael Chaves, 24, a graduate of Addiction and Mental Health Services, at the organization's facility on Queen Street West in Toronto, on June 15.

Mr. Chaves grew up in the heart of Toronto's Kensington Market neighbourhood, where he watched, as a child, his parents and their teenaged foster youngers who suffered from substance use disorders.

During the two years there, he came to refer to the house as "the drug house," a place where addiction, poverty, gang violence and incarceration – and the struggle to escape them – were all too familiar.

Now, 24 years old, Mr. Chaves is set to graduate from Addiction and Mental Health Services, a program at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) that trains students to recognize and treat substance use disorders, among other mental health issues.

He's among a growing number of students and graduates who are choosing to enter the addictions field, and the profession is undergoing a transformation as a result.

I never knew my baby would get ill

Newborns and other medicine from all-but-outlawed schools ground control to their children, and the pill of medicine, and loneliness, she's

Get More Headlines in your Inbox
The 10 top must-reads stories from Globe and Mail delivered to your inbox every morning.
Sign Up

Medical schools historically emphasized treatment of the acute symptoms, and the job of medicine, and loneliness, she's [illegible] Now, students are learning that addiction is a chronic disease, that relapse is not a sign of the prevention of disorders, or that a good doctor-patient relationship can be the key to recovery.

Among those who joined the curriculum:

Mr. Chaves, who is now in his fourth year of studies, is a recipient of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, which is awarded to students who "have an interest and also among those in the hospital," he said. "I've been able to work with a lot of people who have been through a lot. I feel like I learned medicine through the lens of addiction, because addiction can be misdiagnosed, very frightening, and it makes for a lot of stressful determination of treatment."

Subscribe to unlock this article
Try unlimited access to The Globe and Mail for $1 per week for the first 4 weeks.
Subscribe now
Already a subscriber? Log in

Advertisement

Report an error

Michael Chaves, 24, a graduate of Addiction and Mental Health Services, at the organization's facility on Queen Street West in Toronto, on June 15.

Mr. Chaves grew up in the heart of Toronto's Kensington Market neighbourhood, where he watched, as a child, his parents and their teenaged foster youngers who suffered from substance use disorders.

During the two years there, he came to refer to the house as "the drug house," a place where addiction, poverty, gang violence and incarceration – and the struggle to escape them – were all too familiar.

Now, 24 years old, Mr. Chaves is set to graduate from Addiction and Mental Health Services, a program at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) that trains students to recognize and treat substance use disorders, among other mental health issues.

He's among a growing number of students and graduates who are choosing to enter the addictions field, and the profession is undergoing a transformation as a result.

Medical schools historically emphasized treatment of the acute symptoms, and the job of medicine, and loneliness, she's [illegible] Now, students are learning that addiction is a chronic disease, that relapse is not a sign of the prevention of disorders, or that a good doctor-patient relationship can be the key to recovery.

Among those who joined the curriculum:

Mr. Chaves, who is now in his fourth year of studies, is a recipient of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, which is awarded to students who "have an interest and also among those in the hospital," he said. "I've been able to work with a lot of people who have been through a lot. I feel like I learned medicine through the lens of addiction, because addiction can be misdiagnosed, very frightening, and it makes for a lot of stressful determination of treatment."

Subscribe to unlock this article
Try unlimited access to The Globe and Mail for $1 per week for the first 4 weeks.
Subscribe now
Already a subscriber? Log in

Advertisement

Report an error

Get More Headlines in your Inbox
The 10 top must-reads stories from Globe and Mail delivered to your inbox every morning.
Sign Up

Medical schools historically emphasized treatment of the acute symptoms, and the job of medicine, and loneliness, she's [illegible] Now, students are learning that addiction is a chronic disease, that relapse is not a sign of the prevention of disorders, or that a good doctor-patient relationship can be the key to recovery.

Among those who joined the curriculum:

Mr. Chaves, who is now in his fourth year of studies, is a recipient of the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, which is awarded to students who "have an interest and also among those in the hospital," he said. "I've been able to work with a lot of people who have been through a lot. I feel like I learned medicine through the lens of addiction, because addiction can be misdiagnosed, very frightening, and it makes for a lot of stressful determination of treatment."