

# Running uphill against anxiety and depression

By Chris Marchand

Wayne Cho has come a long way in many regards since he began running across Canada to raise awareness about anxiety and depression.

With my microphone shoved in his face, he explains that being able to talk to a stranger, let alone a reporter, has been one of the small victories of his journey. This journey has revealed for him since he took his first step last May in Newfoundland.

"I had a huge fear of traveling before I took this trip," says Cho. "On this journey I find myself in a new place every day. It's been a way for me to face and overcome my fear. I had a social phobia where I would hesitate, or be afraid of talking to others. Getting the message out has given me a chance to get over another fear."

Cho spoke to a roomful of staffers at Dryden Regional Health Centre last week, telling of his own battles with a mental illness that affects one-in-five people.

While Cho would like to see anxiety and depression recognized as a common illness, he says sufferers fall victim to the



Cross-Canada runner Wayne Cho addresses a group of Dryden Regional Health Centre staff during a visit to Dryden, March 13.

stigma associated with it.

"Face the truth," he says. "If you have it, accept it, get the proper treatment and move on."

Cho also credits running, or physical activity as playing a key role in the treatment of his own anxiety and depression and he's here to champion exercise as an important treatment for anxiety and depression.

"When I first started running, I felt relief from the physical symptoms - it relaxed and calmed me," he says. "Exercise produces good chemicals, like serotonin that helps a person regulate their mood. The longer I run the more beneficial it is."

Check out Wayne's website at [www.crosscanadarun.com](http://www.crosscanadarun.com).