



OUR

STORY



IMPACT

REPORT



2023



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
*Mental health for all*



# STORIES ARE POWERFUL.

They're how we share our lived and living experiences and are an essential part of what makes us human.

At CMHA National, we hear stories every day. Stories about family members seeking help for loved ones. From parents who lost their child to suicide or the drug poisoning crisis. Of doctors, nurses and frontline workers overwhelmed and burnt out by our healthcare system. Stories of young adults, racialized individuals, Indigenous people and millions more unable to access care – care that they have a right to.

These stories are all too common and the harsh reality of our current system. But they have the power to create change.

We also hear stories of resilience and strength. From people brave enough to share their lived/ living experience and inspire others to do the same. Stories from those who give what they can, donate monthly, or dedicate time to raise money to support mental health. It's these stories of kindness that create empathy and understanding.

The sense of community that storytelling creates is more vital today than ever before. When we share stories and experiences with one another, especially of difficult times and challenges, it gives others hope, courage and strength to overcome their own struggles. Sharing our stories gives voice to rights – holders, and space to expose rights violations. Whether it's at home, at work or at school, storytelling is a simple way to strengthen communities, build connections, and foster care.

By creating room for more storytellers and stories, we can influence and inspire change in other people, including our leaders. Together, we can strive for the same goal: a Canada where mental health is a universal human right.

**This is Our Story.**



# OUR COMMITMENT TO TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

At CMHA National, we remain committed to Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation and being inclusive and anti-racist in order to better meet the needs of diverse cultures and communities across Canada.



Our National Truth & Reconciliation Working Group, made up of CMHA staff from across the country, has a powerful long-term goal to decolonize and indigenize the CMHA Federation—our programs, policies and practices. As a first step, we will be acknowledging CMHAs' role in colonization and then we will be developing a strategy with the federation to do the important work of true reconciliation.

CMHA National is also committed to working as allies with Indigenous mental health organizations to advocate for increased funding for Indigenous-led mental health services to advance reconciliation and to better support Indigenous communities.



# OUR COLLECTIVE POWER

At CMHA National, we work on behalf of branches, regions and divisions (our Federation) to maximize our impact locally, provincially/territorially, and nationally. Our work includes amplifying local programs and services, advocating for mental health system change, and educating people in Canada to shift attitudes and beliefs and create a climate of empathy and understanding.

We proudly represent a federation that includes:



**1**  
national  
office



**11**  
provincial/territorial  
divisions



**67**  
local branches/regions



**7,000**  
staff



**11,000**  
volunteers and members



Presence in over  
**330**  
communities

## A leader in mental health

CMHA has been a leader in community mental health for decades. By looking inwards at how we work together across the country to promote mental health for all, we will ensure our impact can continue for decades to come.

Each CMHA branch, region and division operates as its own charitable organization offering a range of community mental health and substance use health programs and services, including:

- ✓ Crisis Services
- ✓ Respite Services
- ✓ Outreach Services
- ✓ Justice Programs & Services
- ✓ Peer Support Services
- ✓ Mental Health Counselling
- ✓ Supportive Housing
- ✓ Income & Employment Supports
- ✓ Social Connectedness & Other Supports
- ✓ Health Promotion & Early Intervention Programs
- ✓ Substance Use Health & Addictions Services
- ✓ Case Management Services

# Building the Capacity of the Federation

At CMHA National, we understand the power of collective strength. That's why we're working to scale our impact and build the capacity of our Federation to best serve Canadians.

## ► Project Activate

Through the launch of our initiative Project Activate, we traveled coast-to-coast-to-coast to meet with CMHA divisions, branches and regions in person to deepen our relationships, learn about local priorities, and discuss ways to collectively work together and understand our united potential.



CMHA Colleagues from the Winnipeg Branch and Manitoba Division.



CMHA Quebec Division Board of Directors with Margaret Eaton, CMHA National CEO & Norah Whitfield, Director Federation Relations.

## ► A Core Service Framework

Together with our branches, regions, and divisions, we created a Core Services Framework to align on who we are *collectively* aiming to serve, how we are *collectively* aiming to serve them, and the impact we are *collectively* aiming to have.

## ► Creation of Communication and Engagement Strategy

To foster two-way communication and to create shared learning opportunities, we will be creating a communication and engagement strategy. We will be launching a federation-wide newsletter as a key communication strategy.

## ► Updated National-Division Agreements

At CMHA National, we are committed to quality and accountability. This year, we finalized our National-Division Agreements that demonstrate our shared interest in effectively working together as a federation towards a common vision.



# OUR GUIDING VOICE

The National Council of Persons with Lived Experience (NCPLE) is an advisory committee to CMHA National and the CMHA National Board of Directors. The NCPLE is composed of volunteers across Canada with lived/living experience of mental illness and substance use disorders. Working in partnership with CMHA National and the National Board of Directors, the NCPLE helps ensure that the voices and needs of persons with lived/living experience help guide the focus and work of the National office by sharing their wisdom, knowledge, and insights.

Over the years, the NCPLE has been instrumental in infusing the voice of lived experience within CMHA National.

## THIS YEAR:



CMHA National expanded staff mandate to better incorporate lived/living experience into our work.



The NCPLE increased its capacity by welcoming 4 new members with diverse lived/living experience.



The NCPLE continued to develop a new engagement strategy after participating in an in-depth strategic planning and renewal process.



The NCPLE participated in a National Press Conference to launch the [Act for Mental Health](#) campaign in November 2022



The NCPLE participated in media interviews for CMHA's Mental Health Week highlighting this year's theme [#MyStory](#)



Leora Simon, Chair of the National Council for Persons with Lived Experience (NCPLE), speaking at Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) event.



# OUR RALLYING CRY

## Our Systems Change Work

Millions of Canadians are struggling and can't get the mental health care they need. That's because it's not available, or it isn't covered by public health insurance. We need mental health care that is publicly funded and free. We need universal mental health care. To make this happen, CMHA National is spearheading nationwide advocacy to make sure everyone has access to the supports they need, wherever they are, whoever they are. This important work is influencing policymakers to fund mental health.

### THIS YEAR:



**112**  
engagements with  
decision-makers



**6**  
national advisory  
committees invited to join



Posted  
**12**  
policy statements, letters and  
testimonies to our website  
and shared through social  
media channels



Appeared before parliamentary  
committees to address  
structural inequities in our  
mental health care system



**39**  
new policy and advocacy  
partnerships developed



Margaret Eaton, CMHA National CEO, on the launch of the Act for Mental Health campaign.

# Act for Mental Health

When it comes to mental health, it would simply be untrue to call our health system universal. It's true that there is mental health care. But only some of us will get it. As part of our systems change advocacy, we launched [Act for Mental Health](#), a campaign that rallies Canadians to press our leaders for universal mental health care. To date, we have:



Distributed a [national press release](#)



Generated over  
**554 million**  
media impressions



Secured  
**229**  
news stories including The Globe and Mail, CBC Radio Syndication, and The Canadian Press syndication



Received endorsement from  
**39**  
organizations



Released our [white paper](#) calling for universal mental health and substance use health



Reached  
**\$1.1 million**  
in ad value



Over  
**35,000**  
page views to the  
[Act for Mental Health website](#)

## CMHA's lobby day & parliamentary reception

Joined by our Nationwide Leadership Team and National Council of Persons with Lived Experience members in Ottawa, we met with over 20 Parliamentarians and their staff. Following the Hill Day, 39 Parliamentarians and their staff joined CMHA and the Mental Health Commission of Canada that evening in a co-hosted evening reception to mark the occasion of the campaign launch.



Sarah Kennell, CMHA National Director Public Policy, and Tony Van Bynen, Member of Parliament, Newmarket-Aurora.



Margaret Eaton, CMHA National CEO, speaking at a Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) event.

## Partners in practice

We are proud to collaborate with like-minded organizations to amplify our shared vision of universal mental health care. We joined several advisory committees including:

- The Standards Council of Canada mental health and substance use health standards advisory committee;
- Mental Health Commission of Canada Public/Private insurers steering committee;
- Mental Health Research Canada Polling Advisory Committee;
- Public Health Agency of Canada Steering Committee for Inequalities in Mental Health Report; and
- Bell's accessibility advisory committee.



CMHA National is grateful to have received a two-year \$500,000 grant from the Shoppers Drug Mart/Pharmaprix Foundation to support our systems change work. This funding allows us to implement public engagement strategies in support of the [Act for Mental Health Campaign](#) and undertake research to better understand the state of mental health care in Canada, particularly as it affects women.

# Our Advocacy Impact

## ► Funding the future

CMHA has long called on the federal government to make substantial, permanent investments in community-based mental health and substance use health care. This year, we made significant strides in advocating for adequate funding for community mental health care and substance use health by:

- ✓ Joining a handful of organizations invited to an embargoed stakeholder lock-up for the First Ministers' Health Summit on February 6–7th, 2023.
- ✓ Pressing the government to fulfill its pledge to permanent funding for universal mental healthcare in meetings with the Prime Minister's Office and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.
- ✓ Influencing Budget 2023 by submitting a brief to House of Commons Finance Committee's pre-budget consultation
- ✓ Facilitating roundtable discussions with parliamentarians to address the urgent need for mental health and substance use health care funding.
- ✓ Working with all CMHA Divisions to send letters to their respective governments calling for the creation of a Canada Mental Health Transfer.

## ► A credible voice

CMHA continues to be a credible voice to push policymakers and inform them on critical research regarding mental health and substance use health in Canada. We released several reports, statements and policy positions to influence our leaders and spark change. A few of which include:

- ✓ A statement on the announcement by the Government of Canada to implement a 3-digit suicide prevention and mental health crisis line
- ✓ A reaction statement to the funding announcement from the First Ministers Health Summit followed by a statement regarding the lack of funding from Budget 2023
- ✓ Spotlighted mental health stories across Canada to amplify the voice of persons with lived experience
- ✓ Polled Canadians during Mental Health Week to determine the type of care they want from the mental health care system





# OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

As a leader in the mental health space, we continue to spark conversations around mental health in Canada to drive social change. We are breaking down silos and changing beliefs and attitudes about mental health to build community, connection and care.

CMHA is a go-to source for information in the mental health space. This year, our website saw:



**248,662**  
new visitors



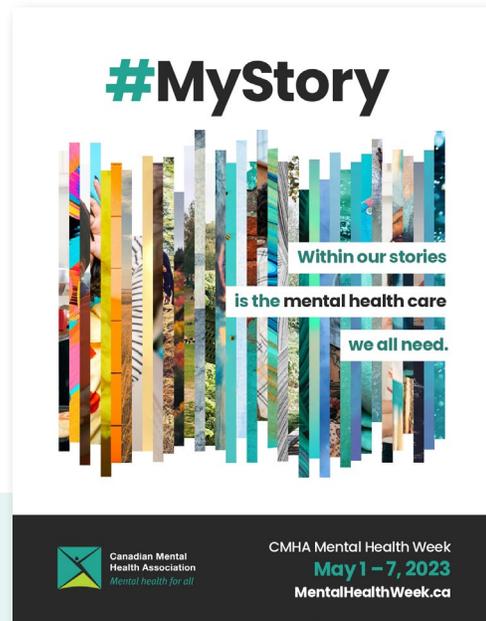
**584,768**  
returning visitors



**1.7 million**  
page views

## Mental Health Week

This year's theme, MY STORY, harnessed the power of storytelling to share diverse stories across Canada. By shining a spotlight on community-based mental health care champions, programs and communities we showcased the importance of securing universal mental health care, what it can look like and how mental health care can be expressed and nurtured at home, at school, at work and in communities.



### This Mental Health Week, we:

- ✓ Secured **3.7B+ media impressions**
- ✓ Earned **3,093 news stories**
- ✓ Coordinated **36 media interviews** with top-tier national outlets
- ✓ Generated **\$5.8M+ in ad value**
- ✓ Reached **4.9 million people on social media**
- ✓ Published **138 posts, shared 590 times** across all platforms
- ✓ Garnered **2,461 Mental Health Week posts** across the country
- ✓ Gained **150 new fans and followers**
- ✓ **Trended in top spots in Canada** with the hashtags #MyStory & #MentalHealthWeek
- ✓ Received **163,129 campaign site visits**
- ✓ Saw **20,043 toolkit downloads**
- ✓ Prepared **two bilingual campaign videos** shared with **28 hours of total viewing time**
- ✓ **Shared nine articles, stories and resources** across our site



# OUR CALL TO SERVE

CMHA National supports our federation to offer a variety of programs, services and support designed to meet the needs of people in their own communities.

## BounceBack



BounceBack® is a free mental health coaching program for youth aged 15+ and adults experiencing low mood, worry and stress. Using a series of self-selected workbooks and supported by a trained coach, participants learn skills to manage low mood, worry and stress, and improve overall mental health.



Over  
**2,200**

individuals have been referred to the program



Evaluation results demonstrate significant improvement on mood, physical health, and quality of life

## Talk Suicide



**Every day in Canada, 11 people die by suicide.**

Talk Suicide provides nationwide, bilingual support to anyone who is thinking about suicide or is worried about someone they know.

**By phone:** 1-833-456-4566 anytime

**By text to 45645:** 4pm to 12 midnight ET

The service is delivered in partnership by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Crisis Services Canada and CMHA National, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.



# Workplace Mental Health

In any given year, 1 in 5 of us will experience mental illness. All of us benefit from environments that support our mental well-being.



## Workplace Mental Health Training & Certification

CMHA National offers employee educational opportunities, including professional certification and essentials training and customized workshops based on the needs and interests of your employees. From building resilience and managing stress, to returning to work and coping with change, our facilitators work with you to deliver the right workplace mental health training for your team.



**183**

professional certificates



**93**

participants in Psychological Health and Safety essential trainings



**120**

customized corporate training sessions

## Not Myself Today



Not Myself Today®, is a turnkey employee wellness program that provides helpful tips, learning modules and other resources for employees to help improve their mental health at work. The platform helps to build an open and supportive workplace by cultivating meaningful conversations and deeper understanding about mental health and wellness in the workplace.



**347**

participating organizations



Serving

**330,000**

employees



**98%**

of organizations are satisfied with the Not Myself Today® program

**“The program has given our staff permission to say, ‘I’m not myself today.’ It’s helped to reduce the stigma around talking about mental health.”**

To learn more about the Not Myself Today® program, please visit [www.notmyselftoday.ca](http://www.notmyselftoday.ca).

# Peer Support

## > Campus Peer Support



CMHA's Campus Peer Support program is a pilot program offering specialized peer support training and certification on five Canadian campuses, in partnership with local CMHA offices. The program provides post-secondary students with the tools they need to support each other's well-being.



Over

**1,900**

students across all pilot sites have been served by the CPS program.

**"Everyone is lovely. It's nice to have a dedicated space one can go to where the psychological safety is high. It's nice to meet others on the same journey."**

- Campus Peer Support student

We are grateful to Health Canada and Sleep Country Canada/Dormez Vous for their generous funding to the Campus Peer Support pilot project. The funding will enhance peer support across post-secondary institutes and play an essential role in promoting personal growth, supporting mental health recovery and improving quality of life.

## > Peer Support Canada



Peer Support Canada

Peer support is emotional and practical support between two people who share a common experience, such as a mental health challenge or illness. Peer Support Canada offers certification for Peer Supporters, Family Peer Supporters, and for Peer Support Mentors. Special shout out to the employees of Loblaws for backing Peer Support Canada this year.

**41**

Certified Peer Supporters (CPS)

**5**

Certified Family Peer Supporters (CFPS)

**1**

Certified Peer Supporter Mentor (CPSM)

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**TOTAL: 47 certifications**



# Peer Support



## ➤ Resilient Minds

Resilient Minds™ is an evidence-informed, peer-to-peer training program designed to enhance the personal resilience of public safety personnel (PSP) and the collective resilience of PSP organizations/departments.



Resilient Minds™ has supported thousands of PSPs across Canada.



Resilient Minds™ is the only training program designed to train both career and volunteer fire fighters and takes into consideration the differences in experience and resources available to the two groups.

## ➤ Recovery Colleges

Recovery Colleges are progressive, low-barrier, peer-driven and strength-based learning spaces aimed at helping students thrive. They offer nonclinical-based education and training to people with lived/living experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges.

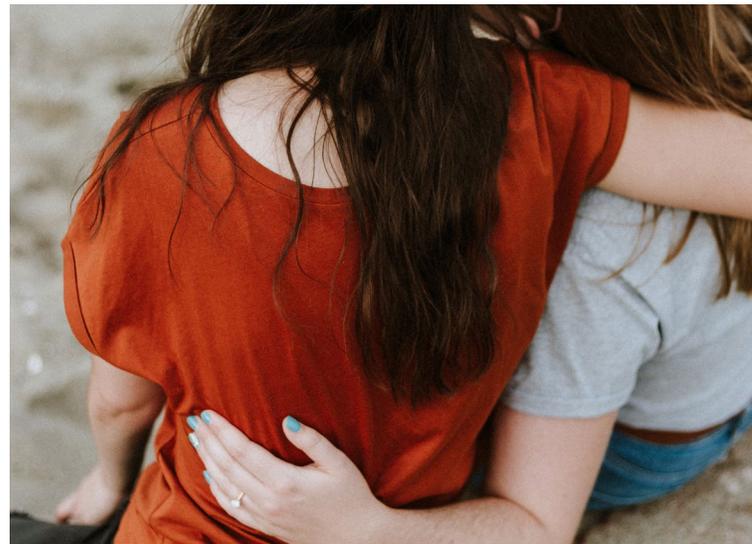


# 28

Recovery Colleges now operating across Canada

**“Recovery College provides me with a sense of connection and social opportunities I otherwise wouldn’t have had.”**

- Participating Student, CMHA Recovery College





# OUR GENEROUS ALLIES

## Flexibility for the Future

Everyone has something to give, and every act can be transformative. The founders and team at Guusto believe that success means more when it's tied to a broader social impact. So, they teamed up with the Upside Foundation to pledge 1% of their founders' shares to CMHA. Pledging this future gift allows the Guusto team to focus on the needs of their business today, to make an even larger impact tomorrow.

## Sustaining Support

Each year, our loyal donors commit to a monthly donation that supports and sustains our core work – the fight for mental health as a human right. Thanks to their steadfast commitment, this regular funding allows us to directly connect people to the CMHA services and support they need. These donors are the quiet heroes of the mental health movement, reaching out an unseen hand to help one more person.



# OUR GENEROUS ALLIES

## Cooperation & Community

It takes a commitment to run five kilometers each day for five days. Even more, to do it in five different cities across five provinces. In September 2022, Andy Trewick, President & CEO of Graham Construction, and his colleagues did exactly that. The Graham 5/5/5 fundraiser brought together Graham staff to raise funds for CMHA locations in each of the five provinces where they work. These champions rallied their friends, family, colleagues and collaborators to raise more than \$150,000 for youth mental health programs.



Members of the Graham Construction team warming up prior to a 5 km run in Toronto.



CBRE colleagues and partners gathering for their annual charity golf tournament.

## Corporate Champions

At the height of the pandemic and committed to making a difference, CBRE Canada surveyed their employees about causes they cared about. The desire to support mental health was resounding. CBRE named CMHA their national charity of choice and have already contributed more than \$125,000 to improve mental health across Canada. CBRE lives their values with a series of mental health and wellness initiatives for their staff. CMHA is proud to partner with CBRE to help foster well-being within their walls and right across the country.

## Interested in leaving a legacy?

When you remember CMHA National with a gift in your will, you are helping build a new Canada. A mental healthcare system where no one falls through the gaps. A society where all of us are supported to thrive.

Learn more about other ways to help here: [cmha.ca/how-you-can-help/donate](https://cmha.ca/how-you-can-help/donate)



# SPONSORS & DONORS



Weston Family  
Foundation



## LEGACY DONORS

Estate of Eric A. Wade -  
Denis Wade Trust

Estate of  
Patricia Foster

Estate of  
Marcel Decock



**Canadian Mental  
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