

Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous

Strengthening Our Collective Impact: A Strategic Plan for CMHA

2012 – 2017

Message from Peter Coleridge, National CEO



Founded almost a century ago, today's Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) has a remarkable team of more than 10,000 volunteers and staff and provides vital services and support to well over half a million Canadians every year. CMHA is Canada's first and only truly national mental health organization with a presence in hundreds of communities across the country. At the local level,

we provide a wide range of specialized mental health programs and services tailored to the needs of each community. Our ability to have an impact on the lives of so many Canadians can be witnessed at every one of our community locations.

The foundation of a healthy society begins with a mentally healthy population. There is no health without mental health. CMHA is the

... this new plan is a road map for advancing our vision: mentally healthy people in a healthy society.

only association in Canada that addresses all aspects of mental health and mental illness. It could be a high school student experiencing unbearable stress, a bereaved woman overwhelmed by her feelings, or a father with mental illness who can't find work. Mental health begins where we live, work, and play. CMHA promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness.

And the needs are pressing. Approximately one in five Canadians will experience a mental health issue or addiction every year. And mental illness indirectly affects us all at some time through a family member, friend or colleague. The fact is, we are all touched in some way by mental illness.

There is also the staggering economic impact of mental illness. The costs associated with health care and lost productivity related to mental health exceed \$51 billion each year in Canada. But CMHA is working to address these issues: for example, for over 10 years CMHA has run programs that promote mentally healthy workplaces.

This strategic plan is the beginning of a new era for CMHA.

The mental health movement is gaining momentum! The majority of Canadians now believe that mental health is a health issue and deserves attention. There is just too much at stake for action not to be taken on maintaining and improving the mental health of Canadians.

This strategic plan is the beginning of a new era for CMHA. It outlines a new direction for our organization that will help us leverage our nation-wide expertise, capacity and dedication to address the mental health and mental illness needs and challenges of all Canadians. It will strengthen the collective impact of the organization, increase our profile and influence on health policy decisions, improve services for CMHA clients, and help shift public perceptions about mental health and mental illness.

Developed with extensive input from CMHA's Divisions, Branches and Regions across the country and from our mental health sector partners, this new plan is a road map for advancing our vision: mentally healthy people in a healthy society. It sets out CMHA's goals for the next five years and outlines concrete strategies for achieving them.

In this publication, you will also hear what the general public's thoughts are on mental health issues and learn how the work of CMHA staff, Board members and volunteers is promoting mental health for all.

We are actively moving forward with our exciting plans, which will transform CMHA into a more coordinated and effective organization as we approach our 100th anniversary in 2018.

CMHA has helped shape the changing attitudes towards mental health and mental illness for nearly 100 years. There is no question that CMHA's contributions to an emerging mental health movement have been vital and unequalled and is reflected proudly in our legacy as Canada's oldest mental health organization.
Tom Shand, Executive Director, CMHA Alberta

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision: defines the overall outcome that we are working towards.

Our mission: describes our purpose and unique contributions.

Our core functions: outlines how we will fulfill our mission.

Our key values and principles: the key beliefs and principles that underlie our thinking and actions.

OUR VISION	Mentally healthy people in a healthy society.
OUR MISSION	As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.
OUR CORE FUNCTIONS	We fulfill our mission by:
Building capacity	Strengthening the capacity of individuals, families, professionals, organizations, and communities to address mental health needs.
Influencing policy	Influencing the design and implementation of policies and services related to mental health.
Providing services	Providing services and supports that maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience and support recovery from mental illness.
Developing resources	Building the financial and human resources and partnerships required to address mental health needs.
OUR KEY VALUES AND PRINCIPLES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing the voice of people with mental health issues Promoting inclusion Working collaboratively Influencing the social determinants of health (e.g. housing, justice) Focusing on the mental health needs of all age groups Using evidence to inform our work Being transparent and accountable

CAMIMH (Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health) is pleased to support CMHA's new strategic plan and its shared vision of good mental health for all Canadians.
We are also very pleased that CMHA is a longstanding, valuable member of CAMIMH.
John Higenbottam & Dave Gallson, Co Chairs, CAMIMH

A Changing Landscape

Significant trends and realities in our strategic environment have shaped the development of this plan. All kinds of shifts are taking place, with major implications for mental health and mental illness. For instance, our rapidly aging population presents a challenge. Older age can mean social isolation that, in turn, can lead to increased anxiety, depression and substance abuse. Across all age groups, the realities of poverty, unemployment and economic uncertainty are placing huge pressures on individuals and families.

Against this backdrop, governments are facing fiscal challenges, including escalating health care costs. And there are serious gaps in the mental health system that need urgent attention. The current mental health system is fragmented, and access to mental health services is an issue that significantly impacts all Canadians, whether living with a mental illness or not. Psychological services, for example, are not publicly funded, despite their proven effectiveness. Nor is cognitive behavioural therapy part of the formal health care system in most provinces.

Meanwhile, essential community services, such as those for the homeless and for Canada's aboriginal populations, continue to be underfunded and limited. As a result, people are waiting an unreasonable amount of time to get the services they need.

The current mental health system is fragmented, and access to mental health services is an issue that significantly impacts all Canadians, whether living with a mental illness or not.

Perhaps because of enhanced media exposure, the profile of mental health has increased in a phenomenal way. There's a greater societal recognition of, and attention to, mental health and mental illness. A growing number of partners are involved in mental health and this presents an opportunity for new synergies. After unprecedented nation-wide consultations, Canada now has its first-ever mental health strategy, spearheaded by the Mental Health

Commission of Canada. With our network of people in communities across Canada, CMHA will be central to implementing this landmark mental health strategy. We have the expertise, skills and tools needed to strengthen Canadian's mental health system today.

And our new strategic plan will help us to thrive in a changing environment and to seize new opportunities for impact.

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CMHA's strategic plan is an important contribution to the efforts to improve the mental health landscape in Canada. I commend the CMHA's renewed vision for promoting mental health for all.

Louise Bradley, President and CEO of the Mental Health Commission of Canada



“ To eliminate or reduce the stigma associated with mental illness we have to peel back the layers of taboo and get people talking. It's perfectly acceptable and normal to talk about mental illness. ”



“ The first thing we need to do is make people aware. We need to keep people informed. We need more mental health education. ”

CMHA's new strategic plan creates a set of expectations for the organization over the next five years. To deliver our programs and services more effectively and to raise awareness and appreciation of the value of CMHA, we must first recognize our organizational challenges.

In the next five years, CMHA will work to:

- Define and strengthen our brand.
- Strengthen our collective voice.
- Work collaboratively and establish a common agenda across the organization.
- Share knowledge and information within CMHA.
- Strengthen our organization and governance framework.

■ Goal 1: Strengthening Our Voice

Over the next five years, CMHA will focus its collective energy on three specific goals. Each goal will be achieved by pursuing a series of strategic directions.

Some specifics about Year 1 and 2:

We want to ensure that everyone knows what CMHA is – and this means strengthening our voice. A lot of people know us for the services and support we provide to those experiencing mental illness. But some may not realize that we assist families too, and help people to stay mentally healthy. And there’s much more: from shaping mental health policy initiatives and fostering research partnerships to providing access to evidence-based mental health tools, programs and resources, and education.

In the first year of this plan, we are focused on raising awareness and appreciation of the value of CMHA. Work is already underway to develop a clear brand promise and strategy for all of CMHA. In May 2012, we launched a refreshed logo. Registered as the ‘Fanciful Person Design,’ some view the abstract human figure as symbolizing the role of physical and mental health in the development of the whole person. Others interpret the four solid triangles as being the organization’s four areas of activity: building capacity, influencing policy, providing services, and developing resources. Also this year, CMHA

unveiled a redesigned national website with enhanced social media capabilities. Designed in partnership with Bell Business Markets, the new website will widen our reach and help Canadians find mental health information and services faster.

CMHA has long been an advocate for strengthening mental health services. A priority in the early years of this plan is to have an even greater influence over national, provincial and local policies affecting those services. We will build on successful work being done by CMHA. In British Columbia, for instance, our team works directly with physicians and has made significant progress in the area of primary care and mental health. CMHA will now actively identify key policy initiatives that will be our focus moving forward.

Despite increased awareness about mental health and mental illness, we have a long way to go in improving people’s understanding of mental illness and dispelling misperceptions. Strengthening our voice will help us reduce stigma and discrimination, and improve the way Canada deals with the many issues surrounding mental health.

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The new website will educate and engage visitors by bringing them into a dialogue about mental health and empower them to contribute to the cause of mental health.

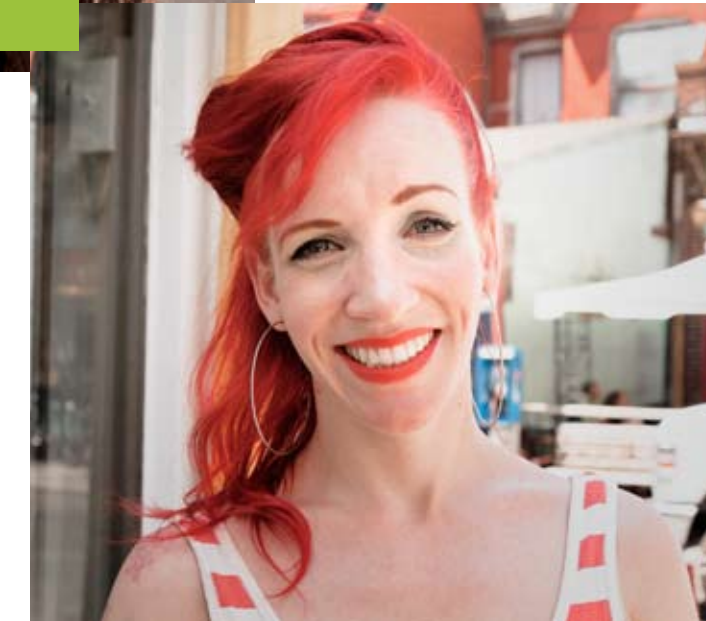
Scott Mitchell, Director, Knowledge Transfer, CMHA Ontario and Project Lead on the redesigned website



“ A great way to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness is to keep mental illness out in the open and keep the conversations going. ”

By sharing my story and by volunteering, I’m trying to lead by example and let people know that recovery is possible. I intend for my life to be an open book. I want to help people and give them hope.

David Albert Newman, CMHA Winnipeg Board Member



OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Over the next five years, we will:

- Develop a new brand promise and strategy that enhances the image and identity of all of CMHA.
- Participate in key mental health and public health policy initiatives and promote key policy positions across the country so CMHA can have an even greater influence over national, provincial and local policies affecting the services it provides.
- Develop enhanced web site and social media capabilities and increase technological capacity across the organization to widen our reach and provide more Canadians with the mental health information and services they need.
- Enhance CMHA’s capability as a national organization to operate and communicate in both official languages.

OUR IMPACT

Over the next five years, we will demonstrate the following outcomes:

- A heightened awareness and value of the CMHA brand.
- Increased influence over national, provincial and local policies.
- Broaden contact with and impact on the lives of people in Canada.

■ Goal 2: Ensuring Quality Services

At CMHA, we provide a remarkable range of innovative services and support to people experiencing mental illness and to their families. From early intervention for youth to peer support, stress reduction workshops, and housing and employment assistance for those with mental illness, our organization is making a difference in communities across the country. In Atlantic Canada, a CMHA program called *Changing Minds* is training front-line responders, such as paramedics, who regularly encounter people experiencing mental illness, to better understand what it is like to live with these conditions. At the other end of Canada, CMHA B.C. offers *Living Life to the Full*, a program that helps people improve their moods, feelings and behaviours by providing practical skills and advice they need to tackle life's problems. And in Quebec, the bilingual program, *Ma vie, c'est cool d'en parler! / My life: It's Cool to Talk About it!*, encourages youth to better manage their mental health by talking about their problems and seeking help for any mental health issues they may be experiencing.

■ Created by CMHA more than 60 years ago to raise awareness of mental illness in Canada, Mental Health Week has always been a central event in our calendar.

■ We will take our best programs and roll them out in other parts of the country. The result will be widely recognized flagship programs.

With our new strategic plan, we will take our best programs and roll them out in other parts of the country. The result will be widely recognized flagship programs. Work has already begun in Year 1 to identify criteria for selecting these best-practice initiatives. It is important to note that, while we seek to replicate successes across the country, we also recognize the need for autonomy and flexibility to tailor programs to the communities in which they are based.

In Year 1 and 2 of this plan, another focus is to enhance the profile and impact of Mental Health Week as our nation-wide flagship program. Created by CMHA more than 60 years ago to raise awareness of mental illness in Canada, Mental Health Week has always been a central event in our calendar. To exploit its full potential, we will develop a five-year plan to take this important week to the next level so that it has a greater and more sustained impact in helping to shift people's perceptions about mental health and mental illness.

The work I do with the *Living Life to the Full* program ensures that CMHA's message of mental health for all truly touches people from all walks of life. The program empowers people with practical skills to help them maximize their ability to deal with life's challenges.

Lindsay Nielsen, Resource Development & Communications Coordinator, CMHA BC



As a volunteer, I feel that contributing to an important organization such as CMHA, with its rich tradition of leadership and service across Canada, affords me the opportunity to give something of value to those touched by mental illness or addiction.

William Bone, CMHA Alberta Board Chair



“ We need to remove the taboo of mental illness with education and awareness, especially in schools. We definitely need more education in schools. Maybe students should be required to take a mental health course. ”

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Over the next five years, we will:

- Identify and invest in the development and roll-out of best-practice, widely recognized flagship programs across the country.
- Enhance the profile and impact of CMHA's Mental Health Week as a nation-wide flagship program so it has a greater and more sustained impact in helping to shift people's perceptions about mental health and mental illness.
- Establish and support CMHA nation-wide communities of practice and centres of excellence in program and service delivery.
- Develop an electronic inventory of CMHA programs and services.
- Develop and support a common quality management system.
- Explore the possibility of including substance use as a core focus of CMHA because so many people with mental illness are vulnerable to alcohol and drug abuse.

OUR IMPACT

Over the next five years, we will demonstrate the following outcomes:

- High quality, evidence-based CMHA services that improve people's lives.
- Widely recognized, flagship programs delivered across the country.
- Innovation in programs and services.

■ Goal 3: Enhancing Organizational Health

Organizational health is key to maximizing the impact of everything we do. To deliver our programs and services more effectively, we must change how we function. This plan sets us on a course that will strengthen our organization and governance framework. In Years 1 and 2, we will review our organizational and governance structure nation-wide. We will look at other organizations to learn about the changes they have made to their own structures, governance, and processes.

For CMHA, change will mean streamlining structures to be more efficient, and capitalizing on economies of scale so that more energy and resources go into achieving our mission. By doing so, CMHA will be in a stronger position than ever before to maintain, improve and promote mental health and help those experiencing mental illness.

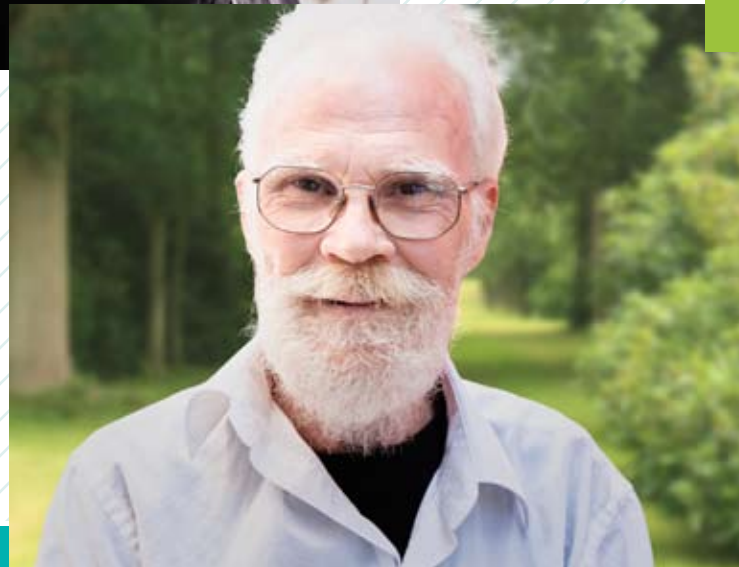
■ Organizational health is key to maximizing the impact of everything we do.

I recognize that working collaboratively strengthens CMHA whether it's working together on joint fundraising events or sharing successful program and service models with my colleagues across the country. Collaboration is essential to ensure CMHA as a whole is responsive to and can have a significant impact on the communities we serve.

Katie Hughes, Executive Director, CMHA North and West Vancouver



“ Everyone is affected by mental illness. Everyone knows someone affected by mental illness. ”



“ A lot of people think that mentally ill people are dangerous. A step in the right direction would be to change the perception that people with mental illness are a threat. ”



OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Over the next five years, we will:

- Review our organization and governance framework nation-wide.
- Develop and implement an internal communication strategy to more effectively communicate CMHA's mission, vision, values and goals to staff, volunteers and Board members.
- Develop nation-wide communities of practice to develop and share tools to support staff and volunteer recruitment, training and retention.
- Develop a nationally coordinated fundraising strategy.
- Develop a major, nation-wide signature fundraising event that engages people in all communities across Canada.

OUR IMPACT

Over the next five years, we will demonstrate the following outcomes:

- Strengthen CMHA organization and governance framework.
- Improved internal communication.
- Improved recruitment, training and retention of volunteers.
- Increased fundraising capacity.

A Look Ahead

There is a lot to be done. We are working hard to achieve all the collective goals laid out in this strategic plan. As this plan moves forward, we will increasingly be involved in key mental health policy areas and will develop a nationally coordinated fundraising strategy. As well, we will create nation-wide centres of excellence in program and service delivery.

In 2018, CMHA will celebrate its centennial. With the implementation of this bold plan, and involvement of dedicated staff and volunteers, CMHA will be a more unified organization. We will be better equipped to influence mental health policies, better able to fundraise the crucial dollars needed to provide existing services and extend our services to more Canadians, better known for our unique role within the mental health system, and better positioned to pursue our all-important goal of mental health for all.

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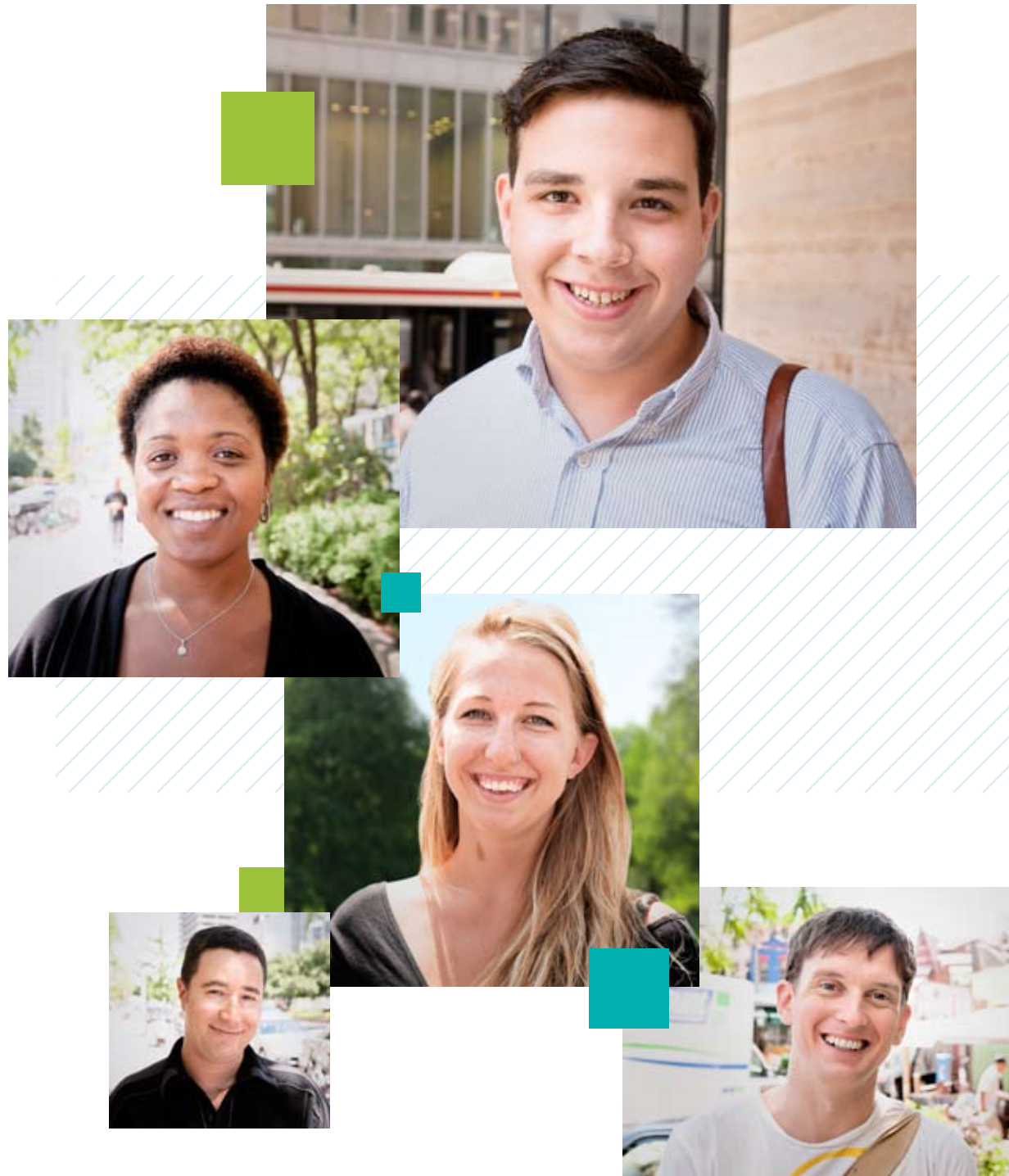


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Canadian Mental Health Association, National
303-595 Montreal Road, Ottawa, ON. K1K 4L2
Tel: 613-745-7750 Fax: 613-745-5522

CMHA.CA



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