The light at the end of the tunnel may very well be system transformation.

Over the past year, COVID-19 has devastated livelihoods, strained relationships, disconnected families and weighed us down with grief and longing. But slowly, as people took off their brave faces and shared what they were going through, they found new voices. Slowly, as people struggled to fend off the anxiety and stress, they started to see for themselves how essential it is to feel seen, to have help, to feel supported.

With our eyes wide open, our society has never been so ready to reinvent our mental health system. To push for a new normal in which mental health is valued and our system actually meets people’s needs.

As we spell out in our new Nationwide Strategic Plan launched this past year, we envision a Canada where mental health is a universal human right.

And not only where people have the right to timely mental health treatment or access, but also to the secure jobs, safe places to live and good relationships that make good mental health possible for every person in Canada. To the conditions that allow us to feel well wherever we live, work, learn and play.

We work for everyone so that, one day, the system will work for everyone.
These have been times of extreme isolation and trauma—especially for those who were already experiencing stigma, exclusion, racism and discrimination. To help keep track of how people in Canada were really doing, we worked with researchers at UBC to monitor COVID-19’s effects on mental health. Over the past year, we found Canadians:

- Felt worried, bored, stressed, lonely or sad 8/10 adults
- Had recent thoughts or feelings of suicide
  - 10% of adults
  - 28% who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+
  - 27% with existing mental health issues
  - 24% with a disability
- Reported a decline in their mental health since the onset of COVID-19
  - 41% of adults
  - 61% of those who are unemployed due to COVID
  - 54% with existing mental health issues
  - 50% aged 18-24

The good news is that most Canadians say they are coping at least fairly well with the pandemic, using approaches such as:

- Walking or exercising outside 51%
- Connecting with family and friends virtually 43%
- Keeping up-to-date with relevant info 38%
- Doing a hobby 37%
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle 40%

Small things like making healthier daily choices, connecting with loved ones and learning more about ourselves can protect our mental health. But factors that promote well-being also include big-picture things like social and economic security, freedom from violence, harm and trauma, and access to mental health resources.

We cannot just will ourselves to feel well. We have to work together.
At the national level, CMHA works on behalf of its branches, regions and divisions to strengthen and scale on-the-ground programs and services, advocate for mental health system change, educate, and influence societal beliefs and behaviours to create a climate of understanding and acceptance. We proudly represent:

**Our Leadership Position**

1 national office  
11 provincial/territorial divisions  
75 local branches/regions  

5,000 staff  
11,000 volunteers and members in over 330 communities

CMHAs in 330 communities offer a range of programs, services, supports and expertise, and work in mental health priority areas:

- **100%** Mental Health Promotion  
- **84%** Suicide Prevention  
- **84%** Youth  
- **80%** Peer Support  
- **56%** Addictions & Eating Disorders  
- **43%** Campus Mental Health  
- **43%** Community Research  
- **31%** First Responders and Veterans

**Guided by lived experience**

For more than two decades, the National Council of People with Lived Experience (NCPLE) has worked with CMHA and its National Board of Directors to ensure that lived experience guides our work.

- The NCPLE is comprised of volunteers from across Canada who have direct lived experience of mental health and/or addictions issues.
- The NCPLE provides valuable input into policy papers, campaigns, definitions, messaging and programming of all kinds. The council is updating CMHA’s official definition of PWLE (person with lived experience) and undertaking a strategic planning process to increase leadership and engagement with the national office and the federation,
With its nationwide scope and community roots, CMHA’s public policy and advocacy work is all geared towards creating a stronger community mental health system in which people have access to the help they need, when they need it.

We worked with the federal government to ensure that there were mental health supports available during a time when people’s mental health was suffering during COVID-19. Over $1 billion in federal funding has been allocated for mental health supports for people in Canada.

Collaborated with UBC on a multi-round cross-sectional study to monitor the ongoing effects of the pandemic on mental health across Canada.

Our commitment to reconciliation: CMHA released a policy statement acknowledging our colonial history as an organization and calling on our health care system and decision-makers to heed the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). To sustain this work within our own organization, we are developing a Community of Practice that will explore our own colonial history, how we can support the Calls to Action of the TRC and decolonize the ways we plan and deliver mental health programs and services.

CMHA appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs to present its published position on medical assistance in dying (MAID) as it relates to mental health.

Partnered with The Wellesley Institute, Children First, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), United Way, YMCA and Kids Help Phone to propose a Social Contract for a Mentally Healthy Canada formalized through a Mental Health Renewal Plan to make mental health supports in Canada accessible to all.
If mental health is a universal human right in Canada, we have to make sure that everyone has equitable access to the information they need to understand and take care of their mental health.

In our efforts to push for a society that understands and fosters good mental health, we work to influence people’s behaviour in key settings, such as schools, workplaces and communities, to create a climate of acceptance and to foster social change. And working with partners, we lead important public discussions on mental illness, mental health and how to improve it.

We recognize the need to reflect on how we, as an organization, have contributed over the past century to mental health harms and damage caused by poverty, colonialism, racism and ignorance. Good mental health requires freedom from harm, trauma, racism and discrimination. Rather than just tackling stigma, CMHA is committed to tackling the misunderstandings that underlie stigma to push for social justice and real change.

Stay Connected

@CMHA.ACSM.National
@CMHA_NTL
@cmhanational
Canadian Mental Health Association
www.cmha.ca
info@cmha.ca

We are a go-to source for accessible, reliable mental health information and resources:

Over 10.9 million
website users in the past year (+137%)

Over 177,000
social media followers (+34%)

Over 29,000
news stories across Canada (+17%)

Over 10.4 billion
earned media impressions (+37%)

Over 140,000
to our COVID-19 and Mental Health web pages

Over 236,000
brochures printed or downloaded (+203%)
In 2021, we celebrated CMHA's 70th annual Mental Health Week. This year, we focused on how naming, expressing and dealing with our emotions—even when they're uncomfortable—can make us feel better. When we understand and work with our emotions, this helps protect our mental health, during tough times like the pandemic and throughout all stages of life. Heavy, painful feelings lighten when we put them into words, so we said: Name it, don’t numb it!

#GetReal and #MentalHealthWeek trended in the top spots in Canada

256 million hashtag impressions

100+ posts and videos from Parliamentarians

Over 395,000 visits to mentalhealthweek.ca (up from 348,000)

Over 65,000 toolkit downloads (up from 27,000)

2,593 news stories and over 2.9 billion media impressions (up from 536 million)

It’s the start of a new week, but this isn’t just any week – it’s MentalHealthWeek. It’s a time to #GetReal with each other about our mental health. And it’s a time to reach out, check in, and talk about how we’re doing – it’s okay to not be okay.

– Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
CMHA drives discussion on key issues in mental health, with digital campaigns launched simultaneously by CMHAs across the federation.

We bring our whole selves to work
Workplace-based interventions for mental health and well-being are effective in improving productivity and reducing absenteeism and presenteeism. They are also cost-effective for employers and help reduce health care costs—in the past year, workplace mental health has been called “the coming revolution.” CMHA leads certification, custom training and programming in workplaces across the country:

- **900+** Psychological Health and Safety Advisors certified since 2015
- **78%** of trained advisors felt confident in workplace psychological health and safety knowledge
- **38** custom webinars and training sessions
- **77** new Psychological Health and Safety Advisors trained
- **77%** would recommend the Psychological Health and Safety Advisor training to a colleague
- **3** custom workplace mental health panels

Indigenous peoples continue to experience trauma caused by colonial violence. At CMHA, we are committed to advocating for and reconciling with Indigenous communities across Canada.

Everyone deserves mental health care whenever and wherever they need it.

Having supportive spaces to live, work, play and learn is key to the wellbeing of those who identify as LGBTQ2S+.
Not Myself Today is a proven workplace mental health initiative that is needed now, more than ever. Through attention-getting materials like mood buttons, learning activities, tools and resources, the program educates about mental health, reduces stigma and fosters safe and supportive cultures in public, private and not-for-profit organizations, big and small.

372 participating organizations with 279,404 employees across Canada and beyond.

97% of organizations are satisfied with the Not Myself Today program.

89% would recommend the program to other organizations.

80% reported that the program was good value for the money.

The program solidifies who we are as an organization and has become a foundational piece. With our employees spread across Canada, with many not in a traditional office environment, we know we can reach them where they are, every day. We highly recommend Not Myself Today to everyone.

– Karen Hunt, Director – Office Services, Freybe Gourmet Foods
The 5th annual Mental Health For All (MH4A) conference was held virtually for the first time in 2020. Exploring the theme, *Hope in an Age of Uncertainty*, over 800 service providers, front-line workers, researchers, funders, policy makers and people with lived experience of mental health problems and mental illnesses examined how disruption and unease can be catalysts for optimism and change. Hope filled our digital space:

- **98%** found the conference theme relevant
- **95%** were pleased with the conference experience
- **82%** said their personal learning objectives were met

Now in its 6th year, CMHA’s MH4A Conference has become a must-go mental health event in Canada. In October 2021, we will be **Deconstructing Normal**. The pandemic has caused significant social and economic upheaval, resulting in higher rates of mental distress. There is so much yearning for when things will “get back to normal.” But what if normal was what got us here? We yearn for a new normal that is inclusive and anti-racist, that advances Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation and includes the voices of those with lived experience of mental illnesses and mental health issues.
Nationwide, CMHA offers a variety of programs, services and supports designed to meet the needs of people in their own communities. At the national office, we mobilize and marshal resources, partners and people to scale and strengthen the important work CMHAs are doing online and on the ground across Canada.

BounceBack is a free, guided self-help program that helps people aged 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress and worry. Already proven and funded by governments and partners in British Columbia, Ontario and parts of Manitoba, the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)-based program expanded to the rest of Canada in 2020 thanks to a transformative gift of $1 million from Bell Let’s Talk and support from the RBC Foundation and Economical Insurance. In 2021, the Weston Family Foundation committed $3 million to extend the program for three more years and expand its reach to youth and underserved populations who need extra support through the pandemic.

50% reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety at program completion

88% said it helped them make positive life changes

93% would recommend it to a friend

I wanted to thank you for having this program. It was amazing and helped me so much. It opened my eyes so much that I made a career change and am going back to school.

– A letter from a BounceBack participant
CMHA recovery colleges and well-being learning centres quickly brought their innovative learning environments online in 2020 and they continue to serve people virtually and in person. Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Ontario Shores) partnered with CMHA to enhance and evaluate the centres. We thank Shoppers Drug Mart for its investment, which will allow CMHA branches to create new centres in more communities. These unique, safe spaces bring together people with lived experience of mental health issues, peers, family members and mental health professionals to co-produce and co-deliver courses that support well-being and recovery.

23 recovery colleges and well-being learning centres now operating across Canada

296 courses developed and offered through Recovery Colleges in Canada

151 members engaged in Community of Practice across 11 provinces and territories

95% of students report that recovery colleges offer an opportunity to gain self-awareness and self-management skills by choosing courses that suit their interests and aspirations

96% of students report that recovery colleges and well-being learning centres value equality

86% of students report that there is a commitment to recovery through the programming offered at recovery colleges and well-being learning centres

Each session is thoughtful, helpful, inspiring, motivating, and informative…All the staff and peer supporters are wonderful and I really appreciate the multiple perspectives shared in the sessions. Thank you!
– Student (Discovery College)
Peer support is emotional and practical support between two people who share common life experiences, such as living with a mental illness or mental health issue. A Peer Supporter has lived through that similar experience and is trained to support others. As the national certifying body for peer support, Peer Support Canada offers certification for Peer Supporters, Family Peer Supporters and Peer Support Mentors. Peer Support Canada and CMHA have agreed to re-establish Peer Support Canada as an independent peer-driven organization in two years. Until that time, CMHA will continue to provide organizational support as a strategic partner.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) provided $21 million over five years to CAMH, Crisis Services Canada and CMHA to operate and expand the country’s suicide prevention helpline, called the Canada Suicide Prevention Service. The service provides people across Canada with access to crisis support from trained responders via voice and text. If you are thinking about suicide, or are worried about a friend or loved one, you don’t need to face your problems alone. You deserve to have someone to listen.

**Peer Support Canada**

- **43** peer supporters certified in the past year
- **76** candidates in the process of certification

**Thinking of suicide?**
Worried about someone at risk? We are here for you.

In Canada, call toll-free 24/7
1-833-456-4566

or text 45645
(available 4PM-12AM ET)

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**CMHA - Impact Report**
The past year brought unprecedented challenges to our mental health, but also an unprecedented outpouring of support for our cause. While demand for CMHA services was up 170% in some regions, support has also increased. CMHA National received more than 4,300 donations in 2020, a 65% increase over previous years. It’s been a tough year, but we are grateful that people are showing up. For us, for themselves and for each other.

CMHA’s national flagship fundraising event is Ride Don’t Hide, a mental health bike ride that has raised millions of dollars for mental health in local communities over ten years. When the pandemic hit, we changed course: riding outside, inside and in spirit. Participants rode, walked, danced and meditated their way to taking care of their mental health and corporate partners jumped aboard in support. This year, we featured weekly challenges throughout June, including a Gratitude Week with Westland Insurance, Meditate with Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy and Nourish your Mental Health with PC Health.

30 communities and 3343 participants
Over 10,000 donations
$1,067,000 and counting raised for community programs

corporate challenge teams: Westland Insurance, Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy, Siemens Canada, Siemens Healthineers, Green Shield Canada, Rotary International, Mainstreet Credit Union, iQmetrix Global, Matheson Constructors, Enbridge
OUR SUPPORTERS

Funders + Donors

Estate of Marcel Decock

Tim O’Heron Charitable Trust

Capital Power

Rogers tv.

The #SpeakUpforLee Fund

Modern Beauty

Quadra

Torlys

Daily Hive

Westland Insurance

Silver Icing

QBE

Hazelview Properties

Volunteers

National Board of Directors
National Council of Persons with Lived Experience

Financial statements are available at www.cmha.ca.

Strategic partner

Mental Health Commission of Canada
Commission de la santé mentale du Canada