

# TRANSFORMATION

Impact Report 2021



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
*Mental health for all*



years of  
community

# OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE

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

**O**ver 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.

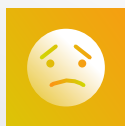
**We work for everyone so that, one day, the system will work for everyone.**



# OUR MOMENT IN TIME

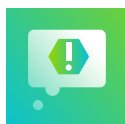


These have been times of extreme isolation and trauma—especially for those who were already experiencing stigma, exclusion, racism and discrimination. To help keep track of how people in Canada were really doing, we worked with researchers at UBC to monitor COVID-19’s effects on mental health. Over the 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
- 21%** aged 25-34
- 28%** who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+
- 19%** aged 18-24
- 27%** with existing mental health issues
- 20%** who are Indigenous
- 24%** with a disability



Reported a decline in their mental health since the onset of COVID-19

- 41%** of adults
- 48%** of students
- 61%** of those who are unemployed due to COVID
- 47%** with a disability
- 54%** with existing mental health issues
- 46%** who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+
- 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:

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

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.**

# OUR LEADERSHIP POSITION



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:



**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

**56%** Addictions & Eating Disorders

**84%** Suicide Prevention

**43%** Campus Mental Health

**84%** Youth

**43%** Community Research

**80%** Peer Support

**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,

# OUR SYSTEMS CHANGE WORK

Develop public policy | Advocate to make change

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.



Working with federal allies and partners, we introduce and push for new systems, policies and practices that foster better mental health and well-being. And we advocate to improve the spaces, places and conditions that shape mental health.



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.

# OUR SOCIAL CHANGE WORK

Influence in key places and spaces | Inform the public about mental health

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](http://www.cmha.ca)
-  [info@cmha.ca](mailto: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%)



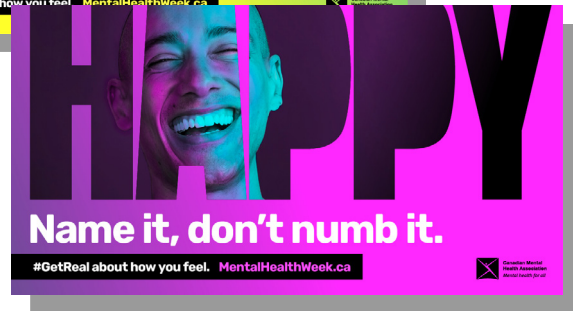
Over  
**140,000**  
to our COVID-19 and Mental Health web pages



Over  
**236,000**  
brochures printed or downloaded (+203%)

# OUR SOCIAL CHANGE WORK

In 2021, we celebrated CMHA's 70<sup>th</sup> 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](https://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)

**CMHA** Mental Health Week  
**#GetReal** May 3-9  
**2021**

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

# OUR SOCIAL CHANGE WORK

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

**Having supportive spaces to live, work, play and learn is key to the wellbeing of those who identify as LGBTQ2S+.**



**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.**



## 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



# OUR SOCIAL CHANGE WORK

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



**99%**

of participating organizations reported increased awareness and compassion about mental health

→ Launched a new module on Medical Cannabis



**94%**

saw decreased stigma

→ Launched the new 'Manager's Resource Centre' which houses all resources targeted to managers - permission is restricted to appropriate access level



**99%**

said the program helped create a better workplace

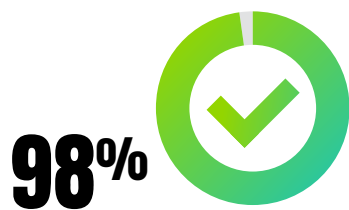


**The program solidifies who we are as an organization and has become a foundational piece. With our employees spread across Canada, with many not in a traditional office environment, we know we can reach them where they are, every day. We highly recommend Not Myself Today to everyone.**

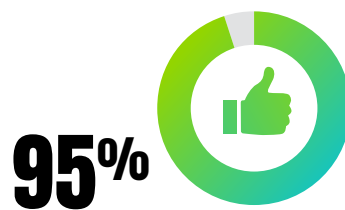
- Karen Hunt, Director - Office Services, Freybe Gourmet Foods

# OUR SOCIAL CHANGE WORK

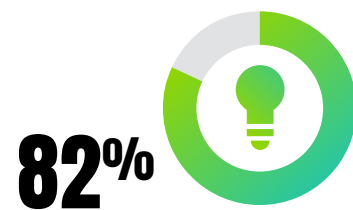
The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Mental Health For All (MH4A) conference was held virtually for the first time in 2020. Exploring the theme, **Hope in an Age of Uncertainty**, over 800 service providers, front-line workers, researchers, funders, policy makers and people with lived experience of mental health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



found the conference theme relevant



were pleased with the conference experience



said their personal learning objectives were met



Now in its 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

# OUR WORK IN COMMUNITIES



**Nurture a healthy culture | Modernize our structure | Connect and support CMHAs**

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

# OUR WORK IN COMMUNITIES

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



**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)

→ **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

# OUR WORK IN COMMUNITIES

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.

## Peer Support Canada



**43**

peer supporters certified in the past year



**76**

candidates in the process of certification

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.



**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)

 Canada  
Suicide  
Prevention  
Service



Available

**24/7**

every day of the year



Offered

**NATIONALLY**

delivered locally by  
community-based distress  
centres



Offered in

**ENGLISH + FRENCH**

# OUR SUPPORTERS



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

 **10**  
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



The Ben and Hilda Katz  
Charitable Foundation



Quiet Money®

Estate of Patricia Foster



Estate of David  
Keenleyside

# OUR SUPPORTERS

## Funders + Donors

Estate of Marcel Decock



Tim O'Heron Charitable Trust



**ROGERS** tv.

The #SpeakUpforLee Fund

**MODERN**  
BEAUTY



**TORLYS**

**DailyHive**

 Westland Insurance

SILVER  ICING



## Volunteers

National Board of Directors  
National Council of Persons with Lived Experience

## Strategic partner



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

Financial statements are available  
at [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca).



# TRANS FORM ATION

[cmha.ca](https://cmha.ca)



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