living working belonging
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CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION (CMHA)

CMHA is a nation-wide, voluntary organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness.

CMHA Toronto accomplishes this mission through service, education, advocacy and research.

**CMHA VISION**

Mentally healthy people in a healthy society

**CMHA TORONTO BRANCH MISSION STATEMENT**

At CMHA Toronto Branch we work with people who have experienced mental illness or psychiatric disabilities, their families and other members of our diverse community to

- Develop and provide community based support services that help people who have psychiatric disabilities improve the quality of their lives in accordance with their defined needs.

- Provide information and education to increase knowledge and understanding of mental health and mental illness and services that promote mental health.

- Advocate for public policies that lead to improved quality of life for people with psychiatric disabilities, their families and our community.
President and Executive Director’s Report

While the world has experienced a turbulent year, we are pleased to report that despite the challenges of our environment, CMHA continues to thrive. Our Consumer Participation Initiative continues to gain steam while improving the CMHA experience for people living with mental illness. Peer support has been expanded across all our programs and the implementation of wellness recovery action planning, led by staff who themselves live with mental illness, helps people manage their illness and use natural support systems.

Our Equity & Diversity committee, which includes staff, board and consumers, has developed a plan that will help us improve on our mission to provide services to Toronto’s diverse communities. Our accreditation activities demonstrate our commitment to embed quality in everything that we do.

We still face enormous challenges. Only 3 in 10 people get the mental health services and supports that they need and more than half do not get the right level of support to match their needs. This poses a major challenge to mental health systems as well as individual organizations. We hope that the Minister of Health’s mental health and addictions strategy to be unveiled next year will provide a 10 year framework and funding to increase capacity. We are in dire need of more housing. People who use our crisis residential beds often find themselves with no permanent housing available to them. A recent study we funded for the Toronto Supportive Housing Network shows that people have a one in three chance of accessing supportive housing, because the 4300 units developed over the past 30 years are full.

Our program review process has demonstrated that while consumers are generally satisfied with our services, most want to work and increase their social opportunities. We have to find ways to do more in these areas.

CMHA continues to practice prudent fiscal management. CMHA remains in good fiscal shape and our investment portfolio has started to recover from the losses that occurred during last year’s financial market turbulence.

We have worked collaboratively with Central LHIN on the development of their new integrated health service plan and have continued to provide assistance to the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

As CMHA develops its new strategic plan we will use LHIN, MHC and provincial planning to inform our work in the years ahead. We build on a strong base of committed board members, staff and volunteers. To borrow the tag line from United Way… without you there would be no CMHA!

Respectfully submitted

Mary Jo Smith
President

Steve Lurie,
Executive Director
Over the past two years our Board of Directors have identified three priority areas that we as an organization needed to focus on, that were essential to moving CMHA Toronto to be the kind of agency we had committed to be.

ACCREDITATION

This year CMHA Toronto began the process of accreditation, under the leadership of Garfield Bembridge. The purpose of accreditation is to help us define, measure, report and improve the quality of care and services we provide to our clients. It involves continuous learning and improvement in the quality of services provided, identifying both our strengths and our opportunities for improvement. Guided by Accreditation Canada, every area of our service delivery and operations is being examined, including medication management, staff health and wellness, client records and privacy, disaster preparedness, board accountability, infection prevention and control, ethics, and environmentally friendly practices.

Through accreditation, we will be able to ensure that CMHA Toronto provides a safe environment for clients, staff, and the public. Our staff are highly invested in the accreditation process -- to date 18 committees have been formed, with 97 staff participating on those committees.

Accreditation means that CMHA Toronto staff will continuously strive for best practices, and that our service delivery is client-centred. Garfield Bembridge summarized the process by saying, “The essence of accreditation is to improve the quality of care and services that we provide to our clients”.

EQUITY & DIVERSITY

At CMHA Toronto we have always had a strong commitment to diversity, which has been reflected in our policies and our work. This year our Board established an Equity and Diversity Initiative, led by Carolina Berinstein, who, along with our Equity & Diversity Committee, is working to make certain that all across our organization we are equipped to provide excellent services to our diverse community and that we are an excellent employer to all of our staff, regardless of race, disability, gender identity, age or religion.

The Committee (made up of staff, board members, clients, family members and community representatives with a broad range of life and work experiences) is developing a vision for CMHA Toronto’s equity and diversity work, and individual programs and teams are identifying areas where there may be barriers to access, where change is required, and identifying what training is needed to make that change happen. Our HR Department is actively engaged to see that our staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of the community we serve. We are making our communication materials available in the languages of the populations we serve, reflecting in appearance Toronto’s diverse community.

In every way, we are developing specific goals, objectives and timelines to ensure that all we do at CMHA Toronto reflects a spirit of inclusivity and belonging.

Garfield Bembridge, Accreditation
CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

One year ago, CMHA Toronto embarked on an initiative to ensure that we have strong roots in consumer participation and a recovery philosophy. Led by Greg Kim, the Consumer Participation Initiative (CPI) has made great strides to see that we at CMHA Toronto ‘walk the talk’, focusing on four areas:

- Hiring and human resources
- Peer Support
- Program Planning and Evaluation
- Advocacy

We are working to engage more consumers in our work here at CMHA Toronto, through consumer participation in our hiring panels, increasing consumer volunteer work and creating paid positions within teams.

For those CMHA staff who have lived experience with mental illness, we now offer a confidential Peer to Peer Support Group where they can share their struggles and their successes. We are also fostering more consumer run support groups, and have planned Recovery Sessions for consumers at CMHA Toronto where they are developing personal Wellness Recovery Action Plans.

Over 60 training sessions have been delivered to CMHA Toronto staff addressing how the recovery philosophy should inform the services we provide to our clients. Although the CPI is a three year program, the real goals and objectives extend beyond that timeframe, as we endeavour to ensure that the consumer voice is heard at every level at CMHA Toronto.

"We endeavour to ensure that the consumer voice is heard at every level at CMHA Toronto"

Carolina Berinstein, Equity & Diversity

Greg Kim, Consumer Participation Initiative
Key to the work we do is building a trusting and supportive relationship with our clients, to provide the support and resources that clients need in their recovery process.”

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Living, Working, Belonging

This is our goal at CMHA Toronto for all our clients. On any given day, working from our ten sites throughout Toronto, our teams provide the supports and services that our clients need so that they can:

- Live in the community, in clean, safe affordable accommodation
- Find and keep meaningful paid or volunteer work
- Live and be engaged in their community activities

Here is a listing of the CMHA Toronto services that help our clients to live, to work, and to belong.

ACCESS AND INFORMATION

Information, Intake and Referral Services are the frontline services of CMHA Toronto. Our IIR Team responds to individuals requesting help, providing them with information about mental health issues and services, whether the request comes from the individual needing help, their family or friends, or from other agencies and health care providers. Our Team does this by:

- Responding to telephone, email and in-person enquiries about mental health services in Toronto
- Assessing whether someone might be eligible for CMHA Toronto services
- Making referrals to CMHA Toronto programs and/or providing information about other agencies
- Developing and maintaining relationships with other community agencies to enhance access to resources for consumers of mental health services.

Information, Intake and Referral Services assisted 3,581 people this year.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Case Management Services support individuals with serious mental illness, helping them to live, work, and belong in their communities. Our case managers work with their clients to develop the skills they need to live independently, such as helping them with their banking and shopping, or linking them with social opportunities. Our case managers also work to coordinate other services their clients may require, such as housing support, vocational and employment opportunities, and income support. Key to the work they do is building a trusting and supportive relationship with their clients, and, where appropriate, with the family, to provide the support and resources that their clients need in their recovery process.

Case Management Services has two teams:

- West Toronto (English, French and Italian-speaking case managers),
- East Toronto

Case Management programs served 316 clients this year.
CROSS-CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Cross-Cultural Initiatives are programs which recognize and value the diversity of the community we serve, while at the same time acknowledging the barriers to employment and education experienced by racial, cultural and religious minorities. We are committed to working towards the elimination of these barriers through case management services, wellness programs, and educational services.

Rehabilitation Action Program (RAP) provides case management services for individuals with serious mental illness in the Tamil, Somali, and Afghan communities in Scarborough, for whom language or culture is a barrier to participation in mental health services.

Women’s Wellness Groups are designed for immigrant and refugee women, and are offered in partnership with settlement and community agencies. These groups promote the mental health of women who are:

- Socially isolated
- Experiencing cultural and linguistic barriers, and/or
- At risk of mental health problems due to difficult life circumstances.

Most of the groups are language-specific, and provide the opportunity for women to discuss topics such as stress management and nutrition. The groups learn what community resources are available to them, and the participants support each other in the development of leadership skills.

Working Together: Across Cultures is a partnership program between CMHA Toronto and agencies that work with newcomer communities. This program helps settlement agency staff to recognize the signs of mental health issues and learn how the mental health system works.

Healthy Living Groups are mental health promotion groups for residents of Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings in Scarborough. These are individuals who are often socially isolated and experiencing mental health and coping difficulties, including resettlement stress.

Education Workshops on Cross-Cultural Mental Health promote awareness as to how individuals from different cultures view mental illness, and how this perception can impact the way in which they seek help. These “Joining Hands” workshops, delivered in partnership with Public Education, encourage service providers to develop a helping relationship that is culturally sensitive.

Cross-Cultural Initiatives had 5,923 individuals participate in 434 sessions this year.

HOUSING

Housing Services provide safe and affordable housing to individuals with mental health difficulties, and those with concurrent disorders, who are living in a wide range of supportive housing options throughout Toronto. Our housing outreach workers act as a liaison between the landlords and our clients (the tenants) and they are available 24 hours a day to respond to any crisis situations that may arise. They provide information to both the landlords and tenants on their respective rights and responsibilities, and work to educate landlords and property managers about mental health issues. Working closely with our case managers, our housing workers help to ensure that our clients are able to live independently and maintain their housing.

Housing Services provided accommodation to 593 clients this year.

“I go on with my life, like you do. I do not let the illness take me away. Neither should anybody - client or family member. I accept it as an obstacle that I am overcoming with support of loved ones and friends helping and guiding me along the way.”

ASMITA PAL, CMHA CLIENT
EMPLOYMENT

Employment Services assist people with mental illness to find work by providing them with competitive job opportunities and assisting them in finding and maintaining employment, as work (volunteer or paid employment) is key to our clients’ recovery. Our Employment Support Workers provide:

- Pre-employment Services – assistance in resume writing, developing interview skills, and doing a job search
- Job Development Services -- direct links to employers who are willing to make accommodations for individuals with mental health issues
- Job Retention Services -- job coaching and on-the-job training support for individuals starting in new positions.

Employment Services oversees a consumer-operated Cafeteria/Catering business, run out of Yamaha Motor Canada, as well as a Cleaning business, both of which provide clients with meaningful job opportunities, while providing valuable services to the community.

Employment Services assisted 520 clients this year.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social Support Programs offer accepting and supportive environments that promote a sense of belonging where group members can build relationships, share their experiences and learn new skills to live healthier lifestyles. These programs also provide opportunities for skills development and consumer leadership.

Social Resource Centres (SRCs) are programs based in the community that facilitate the recovery of individuals who have serious and persistent mental illness. They offer activities such as walking clubs, cooking classes, games night, support groups, yoga classes, book clubs, and arts and crafts.

Keele Street Women’s Group facilitates the recovery of women who have serious and persistent mental illness. The group engages in social activities such as bowling or movies, and recreational activities, such as arts and crafts or fitness classes. There is also a lunch program where the women prepare simple, but hearty meals. All the activities have the goal of enhanced physical and mental health, and socialization.

What Next! Peer Support Drop-in is a meeting place where people recovering from mental health issues can share their experiences with others and gain social and emotional support. This program is run by the members themselves, and serves to:

- Promote wellness and recovery through social support
- Offer members personal growth through recreational and educational activities
- Empower members as they develop and lead the program

Social Support Programs had 898 participants this year.
Our teams go out into the community to support their clients, meeting with them in their homes, a coffee shop, or anyplace the clients chooses.
**ASSERTIVE OUTREACH**

Assertive Community Treatment Teams (ACT) provide intensive support to individuals with severe mental illness, who have had multiple hospitalizations. The ACT Teams are multi-disciplinary, with each team having a social worker, nurses, a vocational specialist, an occupational therapist, a psychiatrist, a peer support worker and an addictions specialist, which ensures that every need a client may have can be met with ‘one stop shopping’. Our ACT Teams go out into the community to support their clients, meeting with them in their homes, a coffee shop, or anyplace the client chooses. Our Team meets with their clients as frequently as they require, whether that be once a week, or twice a day. A 24 hour on-call system is available to our clients, and services are provided seven days a week, 365 days a year. CMHA Toronto has three ACT Teams:  
• West Metro ACT Team,  
• New Dimensions ACT Team, and  
• East Metro ACT Team.

**Community Treatment Order (CTO)** Case Management Services provides services to individuals with serious mental illness who are on Community Treatment Orders. CTOs are legal orders issued by a doctor and consented to by the individual, who is known to benefit from treatment and support, but who often does not engage voluntarily in services, which, in many cases, leads to hospitalization. The CTO lays out the terms under which that person may receive treatment, support and supervision in the community, as opposed to being hospitalized, and is developed in partnership with CAMH. There is no wait list for our CTO services, and our case managers often connect with their clients while they are still in hospital. As with all our programs at CMHA Toronto, our CTO case managers focus on recovery. They not only support their clients in their treatment plan, but also support them in improving their quality of life and achieving their self-defined goals, such as returning to work or school, finding housing, and improving significant relationships.

Assertive Outreach Programs served 537 clients this year.

**EARLY INTERVENTION**

Mood & Psychosis Early Intervention Program (MOD) works to enhance the recovery of young people, ages 16 – 34, who are showing the signs of early psychosis. The MOD program provides psychiatric supports, clinical services, medical treatment, and psychosocial supports to their clients. Integral to the program is engaging with the families of the clients, providing them with supportive counseling and education to help them deal with the impact of psychosis. Over 90% of the families of our Early Intervention clients are actively involved in the MOD program. Believing that recovery is possible, the MOD Team focuses on helping young people re-capture their dreams. They work with their clients for three years, always with the goal of transitioning them back into their community, whether that is school or work, or social networks.

Transitional Youth Program (TYP) assists youth 16 to 24 who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia or a mood disorder. The goal of the TYP is to assist young people regain/maintain age appropriate activities such as school, work, and relationships, and minimize the impact of mental illness on their lives. It is an intensive clinical support service, offering therapeutic and case management interventions. TYP works closely with the clients, and their families and social supports to assist them in understanding and coping with the illness. The key focuses are education, employment and socialization with peers.

Early Intervention Programs served 156 clients this year.

“CMHA has a very good program - they care very much, and the staff is very understanding”

DEREK TROCHANOWSKI, CMHA CLIENT
MENTAL HEALTH AND JUSTICE

Mental Health and Justice Prevention Program provides community support and consultation to individuals who have a mental health issue and:

• Are at significant risk of incurring criminal charges, or
• Have current criminal charges, or
• Have recently had charges before the criminal courts.

This program supports individuals who are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system by assisting them to access and use mental health and other services and, where needed, by providing short-term case management. Consultation by phone is available for police, probation officers, other criminal justice personnel, as well as family members and other service providers.

Mental Health Court Support Program assists people with serious mental illness who become involved in the criminal justice system. Court Support workers link individuals to community mental health services to assist in their release from custody, facilitate the process of mental health diversion, mitigate the outcome of their case, and to prevent future involvement with the criminal justice system. Our workers provide intensive case management and offer information to lawyers, members of the judiciary, bail and probation supervisors, service providers and families about mental health services and the criminal justice system.

Mental Health and Justice Case Management Services provides intensive case management to individuals who are residing in Mental Health and Justice Housing Initiatives apartments. Individuals with serious mental illness and criminal justice involvement may be eligible for permanent housing in a rent supplement program that includes 395 supportive housing units in the Toronto Region. Case managers provide individualized support and assistance to these clients, designed to help them maintain their housing and prevent future involvement with the criminal justice system.

Short-term Residential Bed Program (Safe Bed) provides short-term housing for individuals with serious mental illness who are in crisis and who have come in contact with the law as the result of their illness. Safe Bed provides an alternative to custody, emergency room assessments, and/or hospital admissions, by providing a non-medical approach to crisis intervention in a short-stay residential setting. Support is provided for immediate crisis issues and referrals are made to other community resources for on-going, non-crisis issues. Safe Bed also operates a 24/7 Police Access Line, providing information and support to Toronto Police Services when an individual is apprehended who requires community-based mental health services. This year our Safe Bed program moved to a new facility that is used exclusively for the program, providing a safer, more secure environment for clients, with more opportunities for socialization.

Transitional Rehabilitation Housing Program (TRHP) provides supportive housing in a CMHA operated building to individuals who have serious mental health issues, who have been found NCR (Not Criminally Responsible) and are under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Review Board (ORB). TRHP provides intensive case management services with a focus on recovery, skill building and risk management. Clients remain in the program until they are able to live successfully in the community, where they are connected to community supports and permanent housing.

Transitional Case Management (TCM) provides case management services to individuals who have serious mental health issues, who have been found NCR (Not Criminally Responsible), and who are under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Review Board (ORB). The TCM Team works to facilitate their clients’ safe transition from a secure forensic unit in the hospital back into the community by linking them to services in the community, with the goal of breaking the cycle of readmission to hospital and correctional facilities, and promoting recovery. The Team is very careful to balance community safety with quality of life and autonomy for the individual. This program is delivered in partnership with CAMH and Reconnect Mental Health Services.

Mental Health and Justice Programs served 992 clients this year.
Integral to the program is engaging with the families of the clients, providing them with supportive counselling and education.”
MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Mental Health Promotion seeks to promote good mental health and improve the lives of people living with mental illness. This is done by:
- raising awareness about mental health issues, promoting recovery and reducing stigma
- coordinating special events and participating in health information fairs,
- developing educational resources and communication materials
- developing and funding Consumer Financial Assistance Programs

Public Education provides education and training on mental health, mental illness, mental health in the workplace, and suicide prevention.
- Face to Face: Understanding Mental Illness teaches the signs and symptoms of the major mental illnesses, treatment options, and features a speaker who shares their experience living with a mental illness
- Mental Health Works is a series of workshops on mental health in the workplace, teaching managers how to recognize and address mental health issues in the workplace
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is designed to equip people with the skills and knowledge to prevent the immediate risk of suicide
- Stress Sense teach strategies to help today's working person manage the stress in their lives, and find a healthy work/life balance.
- The Family Education Program is a course for family members and friends of people living with mental illnesses, providing information about mental health issues, treatment and recovery, communication skills and self-care.

Public Education delivered 62 workshops to a total of 1,488 participants this year.

Communication
CMHA Toronto provided information on mental health issues to the general public and to other service providers at health fairs, on the CMHA Toronto website, through our newsletter “Mental Health Matters”, as well as through our resource materials and through media relations.

Consumer Financial Assistance Programs
Thanks to the generosity of CMHA Toronto’s donors, we are able to fund the following three Consumer Financial Assistance Programs, which help our clients with financial needs that are not covered by other income support programs:
- The Green-Fischer Personal Assistance Fund pays for expenses such as medications or dental costs
- The Cameron-Lurie Educational Bursary provides financial support to help clients who are pursuing educational opportunities
- The Reaching for the Stars, a new fund that was established this year, assists CMHA Toronto clients with the costs involved in starting up their own business, such as the printing of flyers or business cards

The Green-Fischer Fund assisted 26 clients this year.
The Cameron-Lurie Bursary Fund assisted 11 clients this year.
The Reaching for the Stars Fund assisted one client this year.

Holiday Gift Program
The Holiday Gift Program, CMHA Toronto’s oldest program, has provided gifts to people with mental illness every December since 1956. These are distributed to men and women living in boarding homes, mental health care facilities and in the community. The gifts include hats, gloves, scarves, backpacks and personal care items. The HGP is supported by financial donations from CMHA Toronto supporters, the Rotary Club of Scarborough Bluffs Golf Tournament, and by our supplier, The Bargains Group, who allow our volunteers to sort and wrap the gifts in their warehouse.

The Holiday Gift Program provided gifts to 6,501 people this year.

“ I am very grateful for receiving the Cameron-Lurie Bursary. I am appreciative of the award because it acknowledges people with mental illnesses, and opens windows of opportunities for us to pursue our careers”

2008 CAMERON-LURIE BURSARY RECIPIENT
We wish to thank all our funders and donors who contribute to the work of CMHA Toronto. Without the generous support of many individuals and organizations, we couldn’t do the important work of helping individuals with serious mental illness to live, work, and belong in our community.