

CMHA CALGARY'S FAQs

Who is Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region (CMHA Calgary)?

It is Canadian Mental Health Association – Calgary Region's (CMHA Calgary) mission to be a leader in reducing the impact of mental illness and addiction in community. For more than 65 years, we have provided a person and family-centred integrated service model that delivers a measurable increase in community resiliency. CMHA Calgary builds awareness and provides education and support for individuals and families living with a mental health or substance use concern, and a loss by suicide.

Our long-standing belief is that recovery is possible. Our recovery model focuses on wellness by shifting the emphasis from a narrow, limiting view of a diagnosis, towards empowering individuals, building their strengths, resiliency and hope for a meaningful life. This recovery is demonstrated in the advancement of mental health literacy and peer support programs, where individuals with personal experience of a mental health or substance use concern are trained to support others through shared understanding and hope.

We believe that we have an obligation and duty to provide a platform for advocacy and leadership in the community. We have a proven ability to engage, help organize, empower and support the community in building the capacity to understand and support those living with mental health and substance use challenges.

As an organization CMHA Calgary aims to:

- Provide a person and family-centred integrated service model
- Focus on education, early intervention, and prevention of mental health or substance use concerns
- Strengthen individual or community capacity, to take charge of circumstances that impact mental health
- Enhance protective factors to optimize healthy coping and decision-making skills
- Decrease risk factors
- Focus on what is strong rather than what is wrong
- Integrate mental health programming across sectors

You can find all of our Programs and Services here: <https://cmha.calgary.ab.ca/>

What is CMHA Calgary's vision?

Mental Health For All.

What is CMHA Calgary's mission?

Promoting resilient and mentally healthy communities through wellness and recovery-oriented supports and services.

What are CMHA Calgary's values?

R.E.S.P.E.C.T

Recovery: We will use recovery-oriented practices in our work with clients.

Empowerment: We will empower our clients to be healthy and independent.

Self-Awareness: We will take the time to assess how we individually contribute to quality client care and a psychologically safe workplace.

Partnership: We will look to grow our programs and services using a partnership model.

Excellence: We will look at new work practices and models of care that support creating a culture of excellence in client services.

Client Focused: In every decision or action, we will ask how this effort will serve our clients.

Teamwork: We will further develop and support healthy teams that contribute to a healthy organizational culture.

What is the history of CMHA across Canada?

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is one of Canada's oldest national voluntary organizations. Founded in 1918 by Dr. Clarence Hincks, the organization's goals at the time included supporting those with mental illness while promoting mental health. CMHA is the only national voluntary organization that addresses the needs of those with a mental illness, the prevention of mental illness, and the promotion of mental health. Over 25,000 members and volunteers support the activities and programs of the Association throughout Canada. These activities range from direct services to individuals with a mental illness and their families, to public education, community action, and advocacy.

How is CMHA Calgary affiliated with CMHA National?

CMHA Calgary shares a common vision to deliver community mental health services and promote awareness and advocacy about mental health issues; however, independent regions and branches such as Calgary's are largely autonomous. The independence of each local office allows us to provide programs and services that best suit the needs of our communities. CMHA Calgary was established in 1955 and is dedicated to promoting mental health and wellness through a comprehensive range of community-based services for individuals, families, groups, and organizations.

Are there CMHA offices in other Canadian cities?

There is currently one national office, 11 divisions in all provinces and one territory, and 75 community-based branches/regions. Support is provided to over 1.3 million Canadians through the combined efforts of more than 5,000 staff and 11,000 volunteers.

Is CMHA Calgary a government organization?

No. CMHA is a national non-profit with national, provincial, and local offices.

What services does CMHA Calgary provide?

CMHA Calgary provides a number of services across the mental health continuum. Some of our programs for Community Mental Health and Wellness include Suicide Bereavement, Family Support, and Grief and Loss Counselling, Peer Support, The School of Peer Support, Recovery College, and Adult and Youth Community Education.

We also work closely with Alberta Health Services to provide Outreach and Housing Supports through our Post-Discharge Transition, Supportive Living, Apartment, Independent Living Supports, and Continuing Connections programs.

Is there a cost to your programs?

Most services are free-of-cost, while some operate on a sliding scale.

How is CMHA Calgary funded?

CMHA Calgary relies on contributions from individual and corporate donors, sponsorships, grants, and funders. These donations help achieve mental health for everyone.

Why is mental health important in our society?

Everyone has mental health and everyone deserves access to mental health supports if required to be able to live a rich and fulfilling life.

What impact does CMHA Calgary make in the community?

CMHA Calgary builds awareness and provides education and support for individuals and families living with a mental health or substance use concern, and a loss by suicide.



What models of practice are being utilized by CMHA Calgary?

CMHA Calgary provides a person and family-centred integrated service model that is focused on early intervention and prevention of a mental health or substance use concern that delivers a measurable increase in community resiliency.

Does CMHA Calgary accept volunteers and practicum students?

Yes. Volunteering with CMHA Calgary is an experience available for anyone who wants to give back to their community and make a difference. We also encourage people who have lived experience with a mental health or substance use concern to volunteer as a way to engage with the community and provide inspiration to others. Your support helps us improve the lives of people living with a mental health or substance use concern and we truly appreciate the dedication and initiative of those who unselfishly contribute their time and energy. CMHA Calgary's volunteering experiences are posted on CMHA Calgary's website throughout the year as needed.

CMHA Calgary does accept practicum students! This process would typically be coordinated through postsecondary institutions.

What credentials do your staff have?

CMHA Calgary is made up of many different positions, that all require different credentials, professional certifications, and years of experience.

What is Peer Support?

Peer Support is emotional and practical support between two people who share a common experience, such as a mental health challenge or illness. A Peer Support Worker has lived through a similar experience and is trained to support others. CMHA Calgary's Peer Support builds hope, connection, and belonging through shared experiences.

How can I become a Peer Support Worker?

CMHA Calgary's School of Peer Support provides a unique opportunity for people who have a lived history with a mental health or substance use challenge to use their experience to support their community and make a difference. We provide 83 hours of training, 50 hours of unpaid practicum experience, and opportunities to connect with the Peer Supporter Community of Practice. Training is free of cost, but individuals must apply and undergo an interview process before being accepted into the program. More information can be found on our website: <https://cmha.calgary.ab.ca/education-training/become-a-peer/>

What types of mental illnesses does CMHA Calgary support? Must someone have a formal diagnosis to receive help from CMHA Calgary?

CMHA Calgary works with clients with a variety of mental health concerns and diagnoses, and with many of our programs, you do not need to disclose or have a mental health concern or illness. The typical client at CMHA Calgary varies as we offer a spectrum of supports and programs for our community.

Does CMHA Calgary help people in crisis?

CMHA Calgary does not provide crisis support or interventions for individuals contemplating suicide. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, please call the Distress Centre's 24-hour Crisis Line at (403) 266-HELP or visit their website. If you or a person you know is at immediate risk of harming yourself or others, please call 9-1-1.

What are the community partners that work with CMHA Calgary?

There are many incredible community partners that CMHA Calgary works with who share our vision and help drive our work forward. These include, but are not limited to, Alberta Health Services, United Way Calgary and Area, The Calgary Foundation, Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), Community Connect YYC, and Gateway.

How does mental illness affect people and how do they function in their community?

Mental health is not a fixed state; everyone will experience changes in their mental health at some point in their lifetime. When the demands placed on any individual exceed their resources or coping abilities, their mental health may be negatively affected. Mental health issues and mental illness can impact how we think, our ability to handle situations, and how we function in our day-to-day life. It's important that when we do find ourselves feeling mentally unwell, we seek help from trusted sources. The sooner we reach out for help, the sooner we can start to recover.

How many people do you support each year?

CMHA Calgary typically provides direct services to over 5,000 individuals, and mental health education opportunities to over 25,000 each year. There are more specific stats found in the annual report on the CMHA Calgary website: <https://cmha.calgary.ab.ca/about/annual-reports/>

What age groups do you work with?

CMHA Calgary works with various ages in each of our programs. Across our spectrum of services, we offer supports for youth, young adults, and adult clients.

What is Recovery College?

Recovery College is an educational-based approach that focuses on helping people recognize and develop their own resourcefulness and awareness in order to support themselves or their loved one's recovery journey. All of our courses are developed and delivered in partnership with our peer supporters who are experts by experience: they have their own story of a mental health or substance use concern or are supporting a loved one. Everyone is welcome to attend our free courses and drop-in classes. No previous experience is required and with more than 45 courses to choose from, there is a course for everyone.

What is YouthSMART?

CMHA Calgary's YouthSMART (**Youth Supporting Mental Health and Resiliency Together**) integrates collaborative, youth-initiated mental health learning opportunities in local junior and senior high schools. YouthSMART offers a popular menu of mental health learning sessions and engagement opportunities for all Calgary and area schools, youth groups, and sports leagues serving youth aged 12 - 24. All sessions are age-appropriate, interactive, and flexible between virtual delivery and in-person facilitation.

How does CMHA Calgary use its funds, volunteers, community partnerships, expertise, etc.?

This information can be found in our annual reports, audited financial statements, and strategic plans found on CMHA Calgary's website.

What can people in our community do for their mental health?

It is important for everyone in Calgary to further their own mental health awareness, learn how mental health may impact them, practice self-care, seek supports when needed, and challenge stigma in their day-to-day lives.

What can people in our community do to help CMHA Calgary?

There are different ways the community can help CMHA Calgary, including donating as an individual, hosting a community fundraiser, volunteering, or even applying for one of our posted job opportunities.

We also love when people share our program information with a friend, family member, colleague, or anyone who might be struggling and need mental health support. We have brochures available and encourage our followers on social media to share our resources.

What is CMHA Calgary's registered charity number? _____

122013139RR0001

How can I connect with CMHA Calgary? Where can I learn more about CMHA Calgary? —

The best way to connect with CMHA Calgary is by phone (403-297-1700), email (info@cmha.calgary.ab.ca), or visit our website (www.cmha.calgary.ab.ca).

