



**MDSC/Canadian Community Mental Health Network (CCMHN)
Monthly Meeting Minutes**

Date: March 18, 2024

Location: Teams

Link to next meeting: [here](#)

Attendees:

- Dave Gallson
- Martin Boucher
- Gary Thandi
- Sharla Robertson
- Alison O'Handley
- Kristina Hennessey Braun
- Dylan (Impact Public Affairs)

Meeting Minutes: CCMHN Monthly Meeting

Welcome and Member Updates

The meeting began with a warm welcome from Alison, followed by roundtable updates from members on various initiatives:

- **Defeat Depression Campaign:** The campaign's momentum was highlighted, noting increased social media engagement. Discussion emphasized the critical phase of securing sponsorships for continued visibility and impact.
- **Veterans Programs at MDSC:** Successes in veterans' peer support programs were shared, with a focus on the recent completion of the Ontario Veterans Peer Support program and the ongoing Veterans Wellness Program. A new initiative for veteran volunteer companionship calls was introduced, aiming to reduce isolation among veterans through social interaction.
- **Organizational Changes:** Recent staffing changes were discussed, aiming to refocus efforts on advocacy, marketing, and recruitment. The meeting noted the strategic shift towards leveraging the MIRA project, a mental health resource that has secured three-year funding, though details were pending a public announcement.
- Martin shared insights into the comprehensive restructuring process within NISA, aiming to address capacity challenges and enhance program delivery. The



restructuring, approved in December and initiated in January, has led to a significant organizational shift, including the onboarding of new management positions to better support program and operational demands. This change aims to free up strategic and planning resources, thereby enabling a stronger focus on key projects and advocacy efforts.

- Alison presented an update on HMC and its innovative peer support programs, emphasizing their focus on 2SLGBTQIA+ suicide prevention and intervention. The update highlighted training initiatives for community members in safe talk techniques, aiming to equip individuals with the skills to discuss suicide more openly and supportively. Additionally, Halifax is pioneering a "Circle of Support" networking group for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals interested in suicide prevention, sharing resources, and professional development

Letter Submissions to MPs (Kristina)

- Kristina provided an update on the advocacy campaign involving letter submissions to Members of Parliament. The campaign has generated significant engagement, with 464 letters sent, primarily targeting Liberal and Conservative MPs. Highlighted were MPs receiving the highest number of letters, emphasizing the campaign's reach and the visibility it brings to CCMHN's advocacy efforts.

MP Meetings

- The group discussed recent and upcoming meetings with MPs, focusing on leveraging these opportunities to advocate for increased funding and support for community mental health initiatives. Specific strategies and key messages were shared, aiming to align CCMHN's objectives with current political priorities and to ensure the network's efforts are well-represented in governmental circles.

Political Update (Impact)

- An update was provided on the current political landscape, particularly focusing on government priorities such as affordability and housing. The conversation touched on the potential implications of recent scandals and the importance of mental health advocacy in this context. The update emphasized the need for strategic engagement with political figures to secure support and funding for mental health services.



CCMHN Resource/Program Sharing/Capacity Building

- Members explored opportunities for resource and program sharing within the network, aiming to enhance organizational capacities and support each other's initiatives. The discussion included the potential for grant writing workshops and sharing successful programs and resources, such as peer support training materials. Members were encouraged to contribute to a centralized resource hub to facilitate access to shared tools and knowledge.

Closing/Open Discussion

- The floor was opened for members to discuss any additional topics of interest or concern. Topics included challenges related to funding sustainability, the importance of peer support in mental health care, and exploring innovative approaches to service delivery and advocacy. Members shared insights and strategies from their respective organizations, fostering a collaborative environment for problem-solving and support.
- The meeting concluded with thanks to all participants for their contributions and a reminder of the importance of continued collaboration and advocacy to advance the mental health agenda. The next meeting date was set, and the chair for the next meeting was nominated.

Action Items

1. **Contribute to CCMHN Resource Hub:** Members agreed to share resources, training materials, and program details for inclusion in the CCMHN platform for collaborative benefit.
2. **Engage Politically for Mental Health Funding:** Continued efforts to engage with MPs and political figures to advocate for increased mental health funding and support.