



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Prince Edward Island

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CMHA PEI Launches PEI's First Specialized Peer Support Worker Training**

*Training equips individuals with lived experience of mental illness to support others*

**Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island** - The Canadian Mental Health Association – PEI Division (CMHA PEI), in partnership with the Quebec Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and in collaboration with the University of Prince Edward Island's Office of Continued Education and Professional Development (UPEI OCEPD), is introducing PEI's first ever Specialized Peer Support Worker Training to begin this fall.

CMHA PEI strives to be the key partner in mobilizing and supporting the full continuum of peer support in PEI. Peer Support is the process of disclosing personal experience with mental illness/addictions and a personal recovery journey to inspire hope and recovery for others. The organization has been offering the Peer Support program on PEI since 2018. Since then, the program has seen significant growth and staff have seen an increase in clients accessing this type of support. It's become evident of the need for formal training and support for peer workers to effectively do this meaningful work.

The Specialized Peer Support Worker Training is a 119-hour program that includes two weeks of in-person training, a practicum, and a written and oral exam. The training will equip individuals to use their personal experience to support others by providing specific education, tools, skills, and exposure.

Tayte Willows, CMHA's Director of Programs and Policies says, "CMHA PEI believes this training is a valuable recognition of the power and possibility for formal, paid, peer support workers to strengthen mental health supports and services across PEI. We hope that by offering this training more organizations and services across the Island will consider hiring paid peer support workers into their programs."

The UPEI Office of Continuing Education and Professional Development offers a diverse collection of professional development courses and certificate programs designed to meet the needs of today's workforce. Programs are carefully created and consistently updated to provide excellent new skills for professionals in all stages of their careers. Dr. Katherine Gottschall-Pass, Interim Vice-President Academic and Research says, "We are thrilled to partner with CMHA PEI on this unique initiative and are committed to supporting mental health and wellness when and where we can. We look forward to the success of this training program."

Individuals who are interested in participating in the training can apply through the CMHA PEI website: [www.pei.cmha.ca](http://www.pei.cmha.ca) A multi-disciplinary committee will select eight successful candidates for the first training, which will start in September 2021. The location of the training will be determined based on COVID restrictions in the fall. The training will cost \$1000 for each participant which includes, lunch and snacks throughout the training, and the certification fee through UPEI. Individuals who successfully complete the training will be added to the PEI Peer Support Community of Practice where they can continue to develop their skills. For more information, please call 902-628-1648.

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