



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Prince Edward Island

December 2, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CMHA PEI Completes PEI's First Specialized Peer Support Worker Training

Nine individuals now trained 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), has successfully completed PEI's first ever Specialized Peer Support Worker Training, with nine people set to graduate this Monday, December 6th.

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

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."

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 and/or 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.

Ashley Belanger-Birt, CMHA's Provincial Peer Support Coordinator, says, "Since we started Peer Support in 2018, we have been able to provide our Prince Edward Island peers with a program that inspires hope in their mental health recovery journey. Our Peer Support workers are able to share their own lived experience with mental health and/or addictions to show our peers that recovery is possible. We help our peers to see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel."

Julia Ramsay, CMHA's Manager of Community Outreach and Education, stated, "The impact that the Peer Support Program at CMHA PEI has had on Islanders, province-wide, has been monumental. Islanders have expressed sincere gratitude for the support they have received from our Peer Support Specialists since the implementation of the program in 2018. CMHA PEI's hope with obtaining this certification is to have trained Certified Peer Support Specialists who can continue in aiding in an individual's well-being and their journey to recovery."

For more information on this program please call: 902-628-3666 and for information on CMHA PEI go to their web-site: www.pei.cmha.ca.

For those interested in being notified for the next upcoming training, please go to UPEI's website: <https://www.upei.ca/professional-development/cmha-peer-support-worker>

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