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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CMHA PEI and UPEI, bringing Specialized Peer Support Worker Training to Prince County

The Canadian Mental Health Association – PEI Division (CMHA PEI) in partnership with the University of Prince Edward Island’s Office of Continued Education and Professional Development (UPEI OCEPD) will be providing Specialized Peer Support Worker Training to begin this spring in Prince County.

The Specialized Peer Support Worker Training is a 119-hour program that includes Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), two weeks of in-person training, a practicum, a written and an 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.

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. In the fall of 2021, CMHA Peer Support completed their first ever Specialized Peer Support Training with nine successful graduates and five new CMHA Peer Support Workers.

Julia Ramsay, CMHA’s Manager of Community Outreach and Education, says, “The impact that the Peer Support Program 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 this program in 2018. CMHA PEI’s hope with offering this certification is to continue to have trained Certified Peer Support Specialists who can continue aiding in an individual’s well-being and their journey to recovery. Targeting rural areas with this spring training will ensure that our services are meeting the needs of individuals province wide.”

A multi-disciplinary committee will select up to 15 successful candidates to partake in training which will start in the spring of 2022. The location of the training will be determined based on COVID-19 restrictions in the spring. The training will cost \$1000.00 for each participant, which includes lunch and nutritional breaks throughout the in person-training portion as well as 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.

Individuals who are interested in participating in the training can apply through the CMHA PEI website: www.pei.cmha.ca For more information on this program please contact: Provincial Peer Support Coordinator, Ashley Belanger-Birt: a.belanger-birt@cmha.pe.ca For information on CMHA PEI go to their web-site: www.pei.cmha.ca

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