



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Nova Scotia  
*Mental health for all*



# COMMUNITIES ADDRESSING SUICIDE TOGETHER (CAST) PROGRAM

2020-21

Submitted by:

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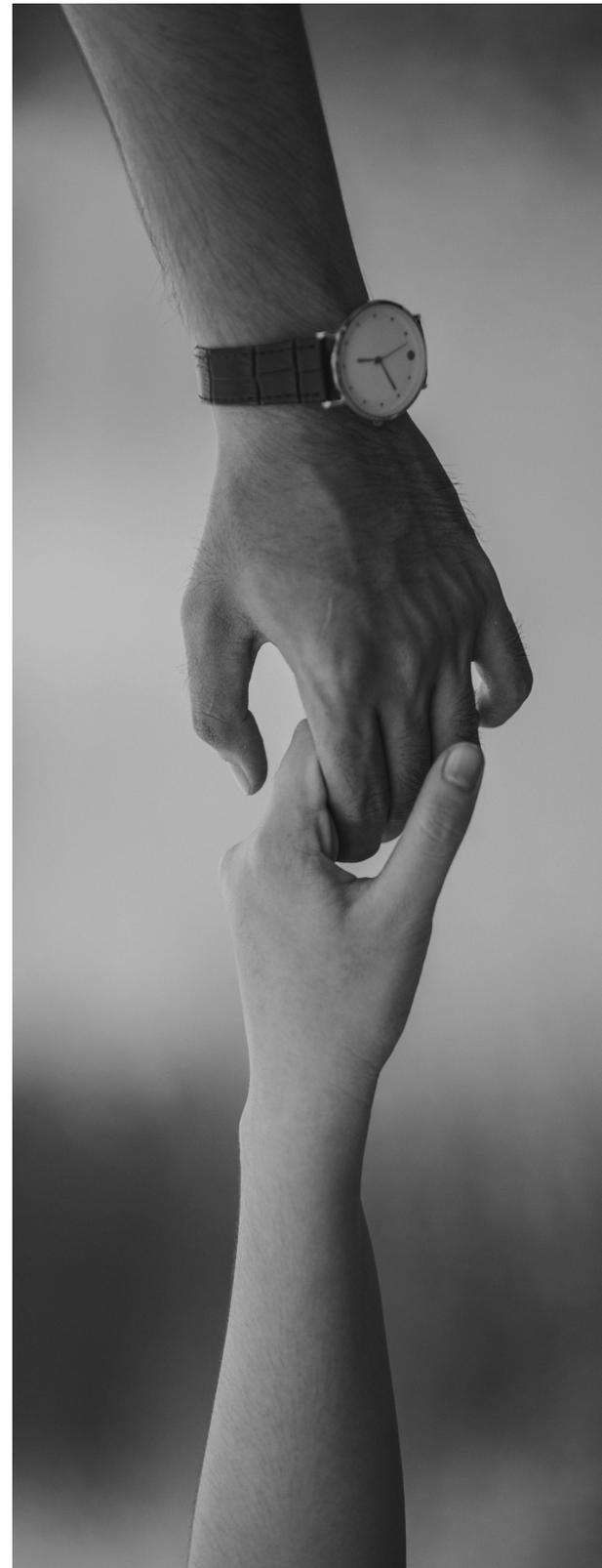
To: Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

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# YEAR IN REVIEW

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Suicide attempts are the third leading cause of injury hospitalization in Nova Scotia. There are many complex factors associated with suicide and attempted suicide.

**Preventing suicide is about more than prevention – it also includes intervention and postvention.** This means a focus on the things that happen before, during and after a period of suicidal crisis – to help both the person, as well as their family and/or friends, as well as the community at large.

The Canadian Mental Health Association – Nova Scotia Division (CMHA NS) through its Communities Addressing Suicide Together Program (CAST), along with the Department of Health and Wellness, has been a provincial leader in suicide prevention for many years.

One overarching challenge for fiscal 2020-21 was COVID 19. Like many organizations, CMHA-NS had to adjust its delivery method for services. Our offices were closed. All staff had to work from home. No in person meetings could be held. The arrival of COVID 19 impacted all aspects of the work of CMHA NS.

CMHA NS created a Suicide Prevention Hub on its website which provides resources online to people throughout the province. This work continued in 2019-20.

CMHA NS chose Peer Support programs as a means of addressing suicide prevention. These programs are evidence-based and as such serve as resources and provide people with the opportunity to come together and share their personal journeys while experiencing a sense of belonging. They also provide participants with access to needed resources. These groups are suicide prevention at their core.

The idea of holding a Worth Living Conference in partnership with Worth Living Mental Health Consulting came from the Worth Living Conference held in Halifax, May 31, 2019. The Executive Director of CMHA NS, at the time, attended and it was decided that two conferences would be held in partnership, in Sydney and Halifax. There would be a pronounced focus on suicide prevention.

The CAST goals for fiscal 2019-20 were to engage more people in the conversation on mental health and suicide prevention.

# PROPOSED WORK

- Continue to populate and promote the CMHA NS CAST Program Community-based Suicide Prevention Resource HUB as well as the Maternal Mental Health Resource Hub.
- Art of Friendship was the chosen Peer Support structure to follow.
- Host community-based Peer Support groups for high-risk populations were identified- **young males, older males, Indigenous Communities, those who lost someone to suicide, and 2SLGBTQ+ Communities**. It was decided the first group that CAST would work was adult males.
- Worth Living Conferences in Sydney and Halifax were planned.



# OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the 2020-21 plan were as follows:

- **OBJECTIVE 1- CAST HUB** – CMHA NS to provide communities and individuals with prevention and postvention tools and resources.
- **OBJECTIVE 2** - Art of Friendship– CMHA NS to provide Art of Friendship, an evidence-based peer support model, to targeted populations noted in this report, for prevention and postvention peer support groups used for suicide prevention peer support groups for prevention and postvention peer support groups for prevention and postvention.
- **OBJECTIVE 3** -Tranquility Online– In partnership with CMHA NS, CMHA-NS was to be trained on use of Tranquility Online in order to provide Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) mental health supports.
- **OBJECTIVE 4** - Worth Living Conference– CMHA NS to partner with Worth Living to host two conferences in Halifax, and Sydney.
- **OBJECTIVE 5** – Community Resource - CMHA NS to provide supports and resources to government, communities, and individuals throughout Nova Scotia.

# WORK COMPLETED

## OBJECTIVE 1 - CAST HUB



(Screenshot)

### **Convert CAST Suicide Awareness in person workshop to online resource.**

Using the original CAST Suicide Awareness as a guide, a PowerPoint was created with updated pictures from the CAST HUB. Much of the original content was kept. The content that was removed was content that was better delivered in person.

These were sections such as the dual model continuum and some of the activities. As well, currently there is an increased reference to the CAST HUB to encourage community members to access the resources on the HUB.

The PowerPoint included a voice over using the audio function which allowed community members to download and view the presentation without having to use a large quantity of data or require a large amount of bandwidth. This is important for those living in more remote communities where internet is unreliable.

### **Create more awareness of CAST HUB through email and social media.**

A letter was drafted to introduce the CAST HUB to municipalities and groups across Nova Scotia.

This letter outlined the purpose of the CAST HUB and encouraged leaders in the communities to share several resources: brochures, tent cards, posters and an overview video.

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# WORK COMPLETED

(Continued from Page 5)

Several organizations were identified to distribute this information including RCMP detachments, libraries, SchoolsPlus and post-secondary institutions. The CAST Facebook page continues to post information about new resources to help create more awareness.

## Expand resources on CAST HUB to include COVID -19 information.

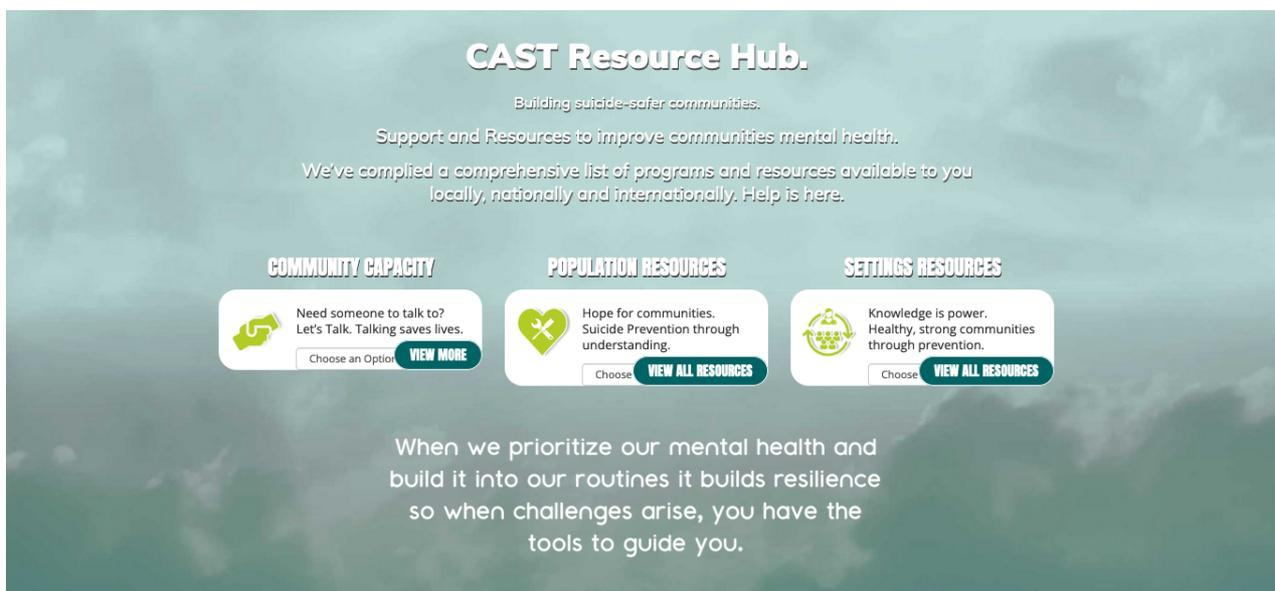
With Nova Scotia declaring a state of emergency and requesting residents to practice social distancing and social isolation, there was increased concern about people’s mental health.

Another section of the CAST HUB was developed to house important resources and information to help people access reliable information.

Under the Community Capacity section, viewers will find a COVID 19 link and along with resources on:

- on how mental health is impacted during Covid 19
- how to improve mental health while social distancing
- managing anxiety
- talking with children and youth during Covid 19
- workplace considerations, and information for professionals

New resources are added regularly to ensure information is up to date and reliable.



(Screenshot)

# WORK COMPLETED

## OBJECTIVE 2 - ART OF FRIENDSHIP PEER SUPPORT GROUP

In Nova Scotia, five high-risk populations have been identified – **Adult Males, Young Males, Indigenous Communities, someone who lost someone to suicide, and 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities.**

An Advisory Committee was created with province wide representation. The committee met four times to ensure diverse perspectives were engaged and included in the content development.

### The Committee members were:

- Brian Comer, current Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
- Ryan Gould, President of Membertou Men's Society
- Chelsea Rose, 1st responder, paramedic, and the representative of the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community
- Dorothy Halliday, ED, Community CARES Youth Outreach
- Robert Chisholm, adult male representative
- Brian Gilbert, adult male representative
- Robin Campbell, 1st responder, firefighter, PhD candidate at the time



The Terms of Reference were drafted. As a result, we developed a PowerPoint Curriculum to address core themes for three of the populations:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ Community
- Adult Males
- Someone who lost someone to suicide

*(Continued on Page 8)*

# WORK COMPLETED

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Once the content was designed, CMHA NS met with specific representatives from each population to work through content and discuss appropriate adaptations from their lived experience to ensure that programming was informed from a first-person lens.

From this, CMHA NS developed and prepared facilitation notes for each population to ensure facilitators were comfortable leading the content and activities with comprehensive speaker notes. Adult Males Peer Support chosen as the first group to proceed.

Two facilitators, one CMHA staff and one former CMHA NS Board member, assisted with the power point drafted by CMHA NS Education staff. Clinicians were contacted to be available during the sessions to ensure that we hosted safe peer support sessions.

CMHA NS contacted DoctorsNS, Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists, and the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia to seek assistance in having adult males attend.

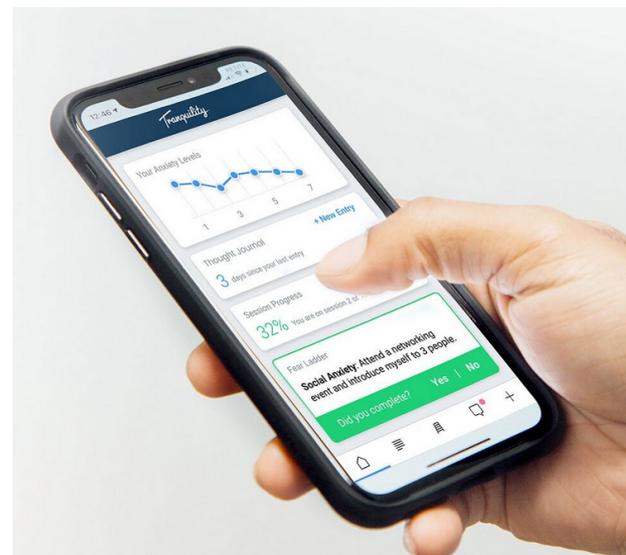
They each supported the program and thought it would be of benefit to clients / patients. Each association contacted their members with the program particulars. CMHA NS did not receive any responses from any adult males or inquiries of any nature. We saw this as a challenge, a true learning experience that would be addressed in the following year.

## OBJECTIVE 3 - TRANQUILITY ONLINE

The CMHA NS staff had a training session online with Tranquility Online, a website and mobile app that uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help people with mild to moderate anxiety and depression support their own wellness and mental health.

Staff members were not comfortable with the training, nor comfortable with becoming “coaches”. No further steps were taken at that time.

We have since been in discussion with Tranquility to explore a partnership that is more efficient and effective in order to provide more services.



# WORK COMPLETED

## OBJECTIVE 4 - WORTH LIVING CONFERENCES HALIFAX AND SYDNEY

Advisory Committees for each location were created in the fall and meetings held with planning started in the fall, 2019.

### **The Halifax Advisory Committee members were:**

- Pamela Magee, ED, CMHA NS
- Keith O'Neil, businessman, top sponsor of Worth Living Conference, 2019
- Chelsea Rose, 1st responder, paramedic



### **The Sydney Advisory Committee members were:**

- Amiee Wilson, Counselor Therapist
- Nigel Westbury, 1st responder, paramedic
- Dorothy Halliday, ED, Community CARES Youth Outreach
- Nora Macintosh, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Social Justice
- Shauntelle Usher, youth worker, Community CARES

Appropriate venues were reviewed with one being chosen in Sydney; no decision was made on a Halifax venue. Consideration was given to universities hosting the event, as well as the usual venues such as hotels.

Unfortunately, in the Spring of 2020, Covid surfaced, and it was not possible nor permitted to hold conferences.

## OBJECTIVE 5 - PROVINCIAL SUPPORT BY CMHA NS

CMHA NS continued to provide support and resources province wide through the CAST Hub. With Covid 19, in person meetings were not available. The delivery of all services went online.

# APPENDIX A - 2020-21 BUDGET

	Organization's Annual Budget (\$)	% of Total Organizational Budget	DHW Contribution (\$)	% of Line Budget Contributed by DHW	Actual Expenses
<b>Personnel Costs</b>					
Salaries	311,690.00	43.60%	50,152.45	16.09%	69,442.75
Benefits (CPP, EI, Employee Benefits)	29,447.91	4.12%	9,000.00	30.56%	9,963.55
Accountant - Contract	48,489.12	6.78%	7,273.00	15.00%	7,200.00
Research/evaluation	43,400.00	6.07%	6,510.00	15.00%	2,150.00
<i>Personnel Costs Sub-Total</i>	433,027.03	60.57%	72,935.45	16.84%	88,756.30
<b>Memberships/Associations</b>					
Membership Fees and Annual Dues	8,687.00	1.22%	1,303.00	15.00%	1,200.00
Other (please specify)		0.00%		#DIV/0!	
<i>Memberships Sub-Total</i>	8,687.00	1.22%	1,303.00	15.00%	1,200.00
<b>Governance</b>					
Board Meetings (supplies, materials)	664.00	0.09%	-	0.00%	
Professional Development for Board/Volunteers		0.00%		#DIV/0!	
Board Travel (Transportation, Accomodation, Per Diems)		0.00%		#DIV/0!	
Other (please specify)		0.00%		#DIV/0!	
<i>Governance Sub-Total</i>	664.00	0.09%	-	0.00%	
<b>Programming/Service Delivery</b>					
Staff Travel (Transportation, Accommodation, Per Diems)	24,000.00	3.36%	4,000.00	16.67%	3,997.00
Materials/Supplies (program/service specific)	15,000.00	2.10%	2,000.00	13.33%	2,488.13
Volunteer recognition/honoraria	6,300.00	0.88%	-	0.00%	-
Other (please specify) - Promotions Contract support	35,000.00	4.90%	6,900.00	19.71%	-
<i>Programming/Service Delivery Sub-Total</i>	80,300.00	11.23%	12,900.00	16.06%	6,485.13
<b>Building Costs</b>					
Rent	41,712.00	5.83%	6,256.80	15.00%	5,208.00
Insurance	3,485.00	0.49%	522.75	15.00%	401.50
Other (please specify)		0.00%		#DIV/0!	
<i>Building Costs Sub-Total</i>	45,197.00	6.32%	6,779.55	15.00%	5,609.50
<b>Operating Costs</b>					
Office Supplies (consumables)	14,000.00	1.96%	500.00	3.57%	600.00
Office Equipment (including computers)	35,400.00	4.95%	2,400.00	6.78%	-
Printing	28,000.00	3.92%	746.00	2.66%	
Communications (Phone/Fax/Cell Phones)	35,000.00	4.90%	5,250.00	15.00%	463.64
Website (Hosting, Design and Maintenance)	18,000.00	2.52%	5,000.00	27.78%	5,003.00
Board Insurance	2,000.00	0.28%	300.00	15.00%	401.50
Auditor Fees	8,000.00	1.12%	1,200.00	15.00%	1,200.00
Bookkeeping - see above	-	0.00%	-	#DIV/0!	
Bank Fees	1,850.00	0.26%		0.00%	-
Payroll Administration	4,800.00	0.67%	686.00	14.29%	263.10
Other (please specify)		0.00%		#DIV/0!	
<i>Operating Cost Sub-Total</i>	147,050.00	20.57%	16,082.00	10.94%	7,931.24
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>714,925.03</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>110,000.00</b>	<b>15.39%</b>	<b>109,982.17</b>

# QUESTIONS? CONTACT US.

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