



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Nova Scotia
Mental health for all



2022 – 2023

Communities Addressing Suicide Together (CAST)

Submitted by:

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To: Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

Table of Contents

- 01 Introduction
- 02 Objectives
- 03 Suicide Prevention Hub
- 04 Peer Support | Success Story
- 05 Community Engagement
- 06 Holly Carr Story Trails Project
- 07 Talk Today | Team Up
- 08 Appendix A.2022-23 CAST Budget
- 09 Contact CMHA NS

Introduction

The Communities Addressing Suicide Together Program (CAST) was developed in recognition of those lost by suicide and the many Nova Scotians who continue to struggle with thoughts of suicide.

With support from the Department of Health and Wellness, our work throughout 2022 and early 2023 has continued to be informed by those who are affected by suicide, those who have survived suicide loss and those who have survived a suicide attempt and who are healing.

CMHA NS, along with our partner, Injury Free NS, led the Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Working Group, which met monthly throughout the year.

As a leader in peer support, CMHA NS facilitates peer support groups for high-risk populations including men and Indigenous youth.

Through the CAST program, CMHA NS also launched an advisory committee with people who lost someone to suicide to support the work on the Community Conversation.

This committee was comprised of six individuals who met bi-weekly and were critical in reviewing our framework to ensure it was in line with community needs, provided meaningful feedback on our work, which helped shape the direction of the one pan-provincial community conversation meeting.

This meeting will be held June 23–24, 2023, and will focus on youth.

The CAST goals for fiscal 2022–23 were to engage more people in conversation on mental health and suicide prevention.

Objectives

Aligned with the Nova Scotia Suicide Prevention Risk Reduction Framework's strategic objectives, CAST work focused on activities that aimed to:

Reduce stigma and raise awareness, including activities such as workshops and events campaigns that focused on targeting specific population groups.

Support research and innovation in suicide prevention to identify gaps and opportunities in research, knowledge, and translation.

Connect people, information and resources, including tailored initiatives for different population groups.

The five projects we focused on this year were:

CAST
Suicide Prevention
Hub

Peer Support

Community
Engagement

Talk Today |
Team Up

Holly Carr
Story Trails

Projects



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Suicide Prevention HUB

Nova Scotians affected by suicide, including those who have survived suicide loss, survived a suicide attempt or are contemplating need access to timely, relevant information and resources.

The HUB is a resource available to CMHA NS clients, other non-profits, the public and government departments and agencies.

It can be found on the CMHS NS website, www.novascotia.cmha.ca

Staff reviewed the information on the hub in 2022 and updated it to ensure all resources were up to date and accurate. Staff also identified several new resources to include as well.

Analytics

Pageviews

28,173

Top Pages

- Nova Scotia Supports
- Canadian Supports
- Preventing Suicide in Youth

Projects

Peer Support

Peer support brings together people who've had similar experiences to support each other – which we believe is a key component of suicide prevention work

CMHA NS staff has been discussing with groups in the Yarmouth area the idea of peer support groups for newcomers. There are challenges such as language and culture but the local contacts there are keen to proceed.

We have just started discussions with We'koqma'q Mental Health and Addiction Services to launch peer support groups. This work will continue next year.

We also have been in discussions with Louann Link, of Let Your Light Shine – Jevon Link Society. We have provided some training in peer support. This work will continue.

Louann Link is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Community Conversation.

We have started to draft a Peer Support Strategic Plan.

Success Story

Getting the opportunity to meet with We'koqma'q Mental Health and Addiction Services to discuss peer support in the community, scheduled for May 30, 2023.

The steady, unrelenting effort by all on the Community Conversations to engage community on a provincial level.

Connecting with a number of communities throughout the province to discuss suicide prevention and to actually see real steps being taken, such as the Community Conversations, to address concerns and to provide support and guidance.

Projects



Community Engagement

On September 8, 2022, CMHA NS hosted our second annual Voices of Hope event in recognition of World Suicide Prevention Day, which is held annually on September 10.

For this edition, CMHA NS partnered with Roots of Hope, the Membertou Men's Society and the Healthy Minds Cooperative and explored men's mental health and suicide prevention.

Panelists included Warren Kelsey, Community Navigator, Office of Workplace Mental Health Province of Nova Scotia, Brad Rowe, Peer Navigator, Healthy Minds Cooperative and Ryan Gould, President, Membertou First National Men's Society.

The panel was moderated by Keith Anderson, Provincial Lead, CMHA NS Peer Support and Community Suicide Prevention.

Forty Nova Scotians attended this virtual event.

Projects

Holly Carr Story Trails Project

The Holly Carr Story Trail project continues to forward. A small but committed Story Trails Committee continues to meet monthly.

Members include representatives from the Portapique Community Build Up (an organization committed to upgrading the existing Portapique Community Hall and the surrounding park land), Along the Shores Community Health Board, the artist, Holly Carr as well as the ED's from CMHA Nova Scotia Division and Colchester East Hants.

Holly Carr has kindly offered to write and illustrate a book dedicated to the residents of Portapique. It is an iteration of 'Light in the Forest' that focuses on the themes of hope and resilience.



Photo courtesy of Holly Carr

The book is expected to be completed by Fall 2023 with the launch of the story board trail to follow in Spring 2024.

The trail is expected to be part of a larger program that will involve going into schools as well as the development of educational content that will be available at the Portapique Community Hall once completed.

Focus of the work in the coming year is to secure additional funding for the capital required to build the trail.

This will also be part of the broader community capital campaign.



Photo Contributed

Projects

Talk Today | Team Up

CMHA NS has an understanding with CMHA Ontario to meet with Nova Scotia-based hockey teams from the Quebec Major Junior League and the Maritime Junior Hockey League to provide SafeTALK.

CMHA NS provided a lead for the project and two staff members who had received Talk Today training, and thus, they were then qualified to provide the training to the teams.

Four teams of the Maritime Junior League received training by zoom.

These teams were Truro Bearcats, Yarmouth Mariners, Amherst Ramblers, and South Shore Lumberjacks.

The Project Lead assisted with the training for one Q League team, the Cape Breton Eagles. We look forward to continuing the work this year with a better understanding of the challenges, especially scheduling.

Total number of players, coaches, trainers was 103.



Photo Courtesy of CMHA Ontario

Appendix A

Canadian Mental Health Association Departmental Income Statement 04/01/2022 to 03/31/2023

	CAST - funded	CAST - donations	CAST - Total
REVENUE			
Operating Income			
Government grant funding	99,566.59	0.00	99,566.59
Donation revenue	0.00	4,388.33	4,388.33
Total operating income	99,566.59	4,388.33	103,954.92
TOTAL REVENUE	99,566.59	4,388.33	103,954.92
EXPENSE			
Personnel expenses			
Wages & salaries	70,138.90	0.00	70,138.90
Benefits	7,083.69	0.00	7,083.69
Total Personnel expenses	77,222.59	0.00	77,222.59
General & Administrative Expenses			
Accounting support services	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
Audit	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00
Interest & Bank Charges	600.00	165.82	765.82
Office supplies	2,600.00	0.00	2,600.00
Materials	4,886.00	0.00	4,886.00
Meetings	840.00	0.00	840.00
Staff Training	3,500.00	0.00	3,500.00
Telephone	1,300.00	0.00	1,300.00
Travel	2,750.00	0.00	2,750.00
Website Development & Maintenance	1,668.00	0.00	1,668.00
Total General & Admin. Expenses	22,344.00	165.82	22,509.82
TOTAL EXPENSE	99,566.59	165.82	99,732.41
SURPLUS	0.00	4,222.51	4,222.51
Funding provided	127,450.00		
Expenditures - fiscal 2023 (above)	(99,566.59)		
Unspent Funds, March 31, 2023	27,883.41		

We thank you for your ongoing support of C.A.S.T.



Connect with CMHA NS

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