

# ANNUAL REPORT

2021–2022



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
North and West Vancouver  
*Mental health for all*

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Annual Report 2021-22

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

**M**any business books have been written about innovation. It's pretty much a given nowadays that for-profit businesses need to be committed to continuous improvement while also disrupting the status quo with unique new ideas.

In the social services and non-profit sectors, we also strive for continuous improvement and new ideas. Like those in the for-profit sector, we want change. But our context is unique. First, our desire for change is usually rooted in social innovation. Second, our funding model is different. The investment needed to support a new idea from ideation to actuality is often hard to find. Non-profits rely on grants and contracts. Our traditional funders ask for evidence to provide an idea has worked before they fund us. They are apprehensive about funding something that has potential.

But we are not deterred.

Over the last few years at the Canadian Mental Health Association North and West Vancouver Branch (CMHA NWV), we have begun to build our muscles in the areas of social innovation. A few years ago, we launched pet therapy at our Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Resource Centre. It was an inexpensive idea that required a committed and enthusiastic leader who loved dogs. Luckily, we had MJ, our volunteer coordinator, who also happens to train therapy dogs. Since then, people come from across the North Shore to be with the dogs, and the dogs are invited and welcomed upstairs in the psychiatric wards.

In subsequent years, we looked at the gaps in the systems of care and considered our own knowledge and opportunities to learn. We were supported by Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and First Nations Health Authority to help develop a new Indigenous peer support program. Today, this program is the

Community Wellness program. It has grown roots in the communities of the subregion, which include Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), shíshálh (shishalt) and ʔəms gųje (Tla'amin) Nations. Community Wellness includes a training curriculum, which continues to be used and adapted by our partners and local communities. It's in its first few years, but we have already helped to launch new peer programs in three of the five nations in our region.

Growing our capacity for innovation continues to be a priority for our organization. Throughout 2021-22, CMHA NWV pushed ahead with two new programs with minimal seed funding. Both initiatives, discussed in more detail on pages 6–8, were the products of important partnerships within and outside the CMHA federation.

The first, our Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT), was launched in November 2021. This program partners a mental health professional and a peer support worker to respond to mental health and substance use crises across the North Shore. From November to March, the team responded to over 270 calls. It's the first of its kind in BC, and was created with knowledge gathered from the community and from our CMHA team at the local and provincial levels. It's a simple idea that fills a giant hole in our system of care. In 2022, this simple idea was acknowledged by the provincial government with funding that will take us into 2024.

The other innovation, a project that is slated to launch in fall 2022, is Recovery College YVR. This program, modeled upon similar Recovery Colleges in Canada and the UK, brings together peers and professionals in an innovative learning space where participants can access free courses, webinars, and workshops to learn, gain new skills, and connect with others in their community.

Like PACT, it's an idea based in collaboration and community knowledge. It's a partnership between local CMHAs in Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health. Recovery College YVR has the potential to transform recovery from mental illness in an inclusive way because it centers community connection and the sharing of personal wisdom. Like PACT, Recovery College has received funding from the provincial government.

So much of our capacity for innovation and growth has its roots in a strong, integrated organization. We have been fortunate to establish a healthy and reciprocal relationship between operations and governance. Many of our board members are into their second term with us, and their commitment and deep expertise has contributed to both stable and strategic organization. Over the last three years, we have doubled our operating revenue; we have brought

In summer 2022, we approved the new 3-year strategic plan. The board's focus was on establishing key priorities for the organization. Supporting operational plans for management and the board will help chart a path forward with specific actions and measurable outcomes.

The CMHA staff deserves much of the credit for the organization's growth. Their commitment to our clients and mission of CMHA inspires all of us.

Looking ahead, it feels very much like the organization is starting to shift to a place of abundance and opportunity. Many of our programs have stable funding into the next fiscal year. We feel hopeful that as we move out of this pandemic, we will have more time for rest and reflection as we evaluate our innovative programs to ensure they are meeting the needs of our community.



***So much of our capacity for innovation and growth has its roots in a strong, integrated organization.***

in new funders and have grown our staff team. As is the case with many organizations going through profound growth, we recorded a deficit for 2022, but we performed notably better than budget.

Over the last year, the board and management team worked on a new set of organizational values to support the new CMHA statement. The values of kindness, integrity, social innovation, agency, and connection are central to everything we do, and we will continue to translate these into specific behaviors and competencies.

To everyone that has supported us and has reached out to support others in our community, thank you!



**Jas Dhillon Gupta**  
*CMHA NWV Board Chair*



**Julia Kaisla**  
*Executive Director, CMHA NWV*

# ONE-ON-ONE: INTERVIEWS WITH ELAINA MOSS AND TEJAL BARDE

Over the past year, the tell-tale markers of social innovation were encapsulated by our two new programs: the Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) and the upcoming launch of Recovery College YVR. Social justice leadership can take many forms, but PACT and Recovery College YVR exemplify our commitment to giving voice to systemic gaps and responding through innovative actions. Both programs share the qualities of reflecting the communities it aims to serve.

What does it look like to launch a brand-new program at CMHA NWV? To capture their unique experiences, we interviewed Program Managers Elaina Moss and Tejal Barde to better understand their roles in leading the delivery of Recovery College YVR and PACT.

## Elaina Moss (They, Them, Theirs), Program Manager, Mental Health First Aid Instructor

### What is a Recovery College?

Recovery Colleges, based on a successful community mental health model from the UK, are focused on personal recovery in mental health and well-being.

Recovery Colleges provide an innovative learning space where anyone can access free courses, webinars, workshops, and events to learn, gain new skills, and connect with others in their community.

### Who oversees Recovery College YVR?

Recovery College YVR is a partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health's Consumer Involvement and Initiatives program and CMHA Vancouver-Fraser Branch.

### Where is Recovery College YVR taking place?

Recovery College YVR will feature both in-person and online services.

### How is Recovery College YVR different from other wellness programs?

One of the program's unique features is the focus on creating course content in collaboration between mental health professionals and people with lived experiences. This process of co-production helps to hinder rigid hierarchies. It centres on connecting

the pursuit of mental wellness through connection and community.

Recovery College YVR not only provides a space for learners to discover new skills, but takes a non-judgmental approach in its delivery and meets people where they're at on their personal wellness journey.

### What are three words that capture the spirit of Recovery College YVR?

Community, empowerment, and enhanced quality of life.



With the upcoming launch of Recovery College YVR, we're inspired by the fantastic work CMHA Calgary Recovery College has done and continues to do!



## What excites you about the upcoming launch of Recovery College YVR?

So many things! I'm excited about the opportunity it gives us to hire more peers, to offer more volunteer options, and to increase the amount of free social support programming that community members can access.

I'm also really excited to increase awareness of the co-production model of mental health service delivery and about any opportunities that might come up to partner with other organizations to make the Recovery College inclusive and accessible to everyone.

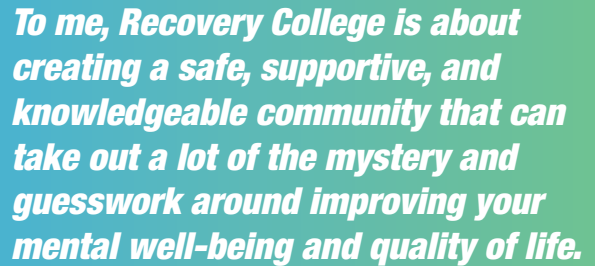
## On a personal and professional level, what does Recovery College YVR mean to you?

It means a lot to me on a personal level because of my own experience with a mood disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and growing up with a single parent with severe untreated mental illness.

As a teenager, I had to seek and advocate for my own healthcare and didn't have many people in my life who could model healthy coping. When you have low mental health literacy and you feel alone and without community, it is extremely difficult to muster up the motivation to work on your own recovery. It is also difficult because you don't have a barometer for whether a treatment or something you are doing for self-care is really working and to feel confident in saying no to a treatment that isn't working or is causing harm.

To me, Recovery College is about creating a safe, supportive, and knowledgeable community that can take out a lot of the mystery and guesswork around improving your mental well-being and quality of life. People will benefit from collective knowledge being shared and feel empowered to make decisions that are right for them and/or their families.

Professionally, it's a (good) challenge. I've never worked on a project of this scale or where there is this level of collaboration across sectors. I've also never had experience with patient-oriented research and building a program where research is embedded into practice. It's going to enable us to respond quickly to feedback and changing needs. And if we've learned anything from the pandemic, it's that needs can change quite suddenly.



*To me, Recovery College is about creating a safe, supportive, and knowledgeable community that can take out a lot of the mystery and guesswork around improving your mental well-being and quality of life.*

It's also nice for me because I used to be a counsellor but had to leave practice due to chronic illness. I'm still able to help people in our community, just in an indirect way.

## What had it been like for you to launch Recovery College YVR?

I've really enjoyed working with the team we have. It's a mishmash of peers, mental health advocates, health professionals, academics, researchers, and business professionals. Everyone is so excited and passionate about this project and its potential. Knowing that we're aligned in our values and that everyone wants this to succeed makes the really hard work a bit easier.

It's been a lot of learning—learning how to effectively collaborate across multiple organizations and disciplines; learning about patient-oriented research; learning what the community needs are; learning different ways of doing things; and learning about myself and where my strengths are, but also where I need to grow and change. I've also learned there is a huge need and appetite in the community and among peers and healthcare professionals to do this work and transform the way people view mental well-being, recovery, and the value of living and lived experience.

## What is your hope for people to get out of participating in Recovery College YVR?

My hope is that participants will experience belonging, safety and support, perhaps reignite an old passion or discover a new one, gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their challenges, develop new skills to support their mental and physical well-being, and gain an enhanced sense of self-worth and recognition of their inherent value if they don't have this already.

## Tejal Barde (She, Her, Hers), Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) Manager

### What is the PACT program?

Launched on November 4, 2021, PACT is a mobile civilian-led team that responds to crisis calls related to mental health and/or substance use on the North Shore. The program pairs a mental health professional with a trained peer crisis responder to provide trauma-informed support to youth aged 13+ or adults in the North Shore.

PACT is not exclusive to crisis-related calls; our program can also offer in-person support to people in varying stages of distress. For example, people who may not feel like themselves can access our services. PACT acknowledges people need care before a crisis, and our services can offer a preventative approach for clients.

### Who oversees the PACT program?

CMHA NWW, in partnership with CMHA BC, began the work of launching PACT on the North Shore (i.e. West Vancouver and City and District of North Vancouver) to provide an alternative service to police response to crisis calls related to mental health and substance use.

### How is PACT different from other crisis programs?

PACT not only offers in-person services, but it's also BC's first civilian-led mobile crisis team that assists in responding to mental health calls. Many of the program's features, such as later operating hours, texting options, and services in English and Farsi, reflect community-specific needs.



### What are three phrases that capture the spirit of PACT?

Agency, holding space, and safety through community.

### What are you most proud of?

The fact that we are BC's first civilian-led crisis team offering in-person services is a monumental achievement! We have crossed many hurdles to get here today, and I believe we're starting to create trust within our community members to rely on us when they need our services. Since we are a small team, many North Shore residents have come to trust the staff members and have built a strong rapport. This also builds long-term trust with CMHA NWW as we aim to connect them with other services within the organization.

I'm also proud of how peer support workers and mental health professionals have participated in various community events to raise awareness. We offered many information sessions about PACT in English and Farsi since we also offer services in Farsi.

During CMHA's National Mental Health Week, CMHA NWW highlighted PACT in a #TogetherNorthShore campaign to highlight the diversity of the North Shore. The campaign encouraged people to acknowledge their support systems and #makeaPACT to reach out to PACT if they are struggling.

It has been incredible to see the community using PACT as an option. Slowly but surely, we're seeing their trust in a community program created by a non-profit organization—especially among individuals from racialized communities, where the stigma of accessing such services can be high. Our work has just started and there is a lot more to do, but this is definitely a start I am proud of as well as a team I am even more proud to work alongside.

◀ PACT team members (left to right): Nooshin Gallehdari, Skyler Oxley, Tejal Barde, and Mojgan Veisi attending the 2022 Chaharshanbe Suri (Fire Festival) at Ambleside Park.



## B.C.'s first civilian-led mobile mental health crisis team expanding to 2 more municipalities



In the 6 months since the program's launch on the North Shore, the team has responded to over 270 calls.

Isabelle Raghun - CBC News - Posted: May 04, 2022 5:00 AM PT | Last Updated: May 4



Sean Daoust, a peer support worker with PACT speaks to North Shore residents at Lynn Valley Library to raise awareness of the presence of B.C.'s first civilian-led crisis team in the region (featured in CBC News).

### What have been the challenges in launching PACT?

There were many challenges we faced during the launch of PACT, but one that comes to the forefront was demonstrating to community stakeholders that this program was not only credible but that it was well equipped with the necessary tools and resources to support people in crisis.

Put differently, a key challenge in launching PACT was the uphill process of building community trust in the North Shore and West Vancouver communities. Creating a solid foundation to build trust in communities is an ongoing, dynamic process and not something that's going to happen overnight.

### On a personal and professional level, what does PACT mean to you?

Personally, as a person of colour in the community I'm in, I'm glad PACT offers services in another language.

Professionally, I was an outreach coordinator when I was first told about PACT. The program encompassed

The PACT team, Sean Daoust (left), Tejal Barde (second to left), and Nooshin Gallehdari (far right) and CMHA Executive Director Julia Kaisla (second from right) featured in the North Shore News.



everything I wanted to do. During crisis situations in communities, countless individuals are apprehended under the Mental Health Act. I think it's important that a different option exists during crises, so the default route isn't police and emergency services. Also, PACT's services are an option for individuals or families that recognize their symptoms before they reach a point of crisis. PACT can provide that option, and that caught my eye.

### What is your aim or intention for people who have accessed PACT or want to access PACT?

My aim is to increase accessibility, reduce the stigma around mental health and substance use, and create space to have difficult conversations in racialized communities. Accessibility for PACT can take different forms—from offering services in more languages to operating from a harm reduction lens. Both literally and figuratively, the program meets you where you're at. We respect a client's choice and offer a space for people to be themselves without feeling like they need to change their story.

Whatever support PACT can provide to the individual or a family at that moment, I would consider a win for the program. Creating immediate security and support is the foundation of PACT, which is what our peers and mental health professionals strive to achieve every time they're out in the community. This security can look different for the people we serve. We might not always receive the closure that PACT staff hopes for at the end of the shift, but what's essential to acknowledge is we were present, put our best foot forward, and served with integrity.

## First civilian North Shore mental health crisis team launched

Service helps people uncomfortable with police and ER setting



North Shore News  
Nov 22, 2021 3:58 PM



# HOUSING

**3**

licensed mental health group homes

**6**

women 50+ years of age reside in **Harold House**, getting 24-hour care

**6**

men 25+ years of age reside in **Arborlynn House**, dealing with serious mental illness and substance use issues and get 24-hour care

**7**

men 50+ years of age reside in **Lillian House**, getting 24-hour care

**3**

Circle of Care supportive housing sites

**16**

clients supported by Circle of Care

**2**

Circle of Care homes for men 25+ years of age

**1**

Circle of Care home for four single women 25+ years of age and one woman-led family

**W**e are focused on creating sustainable programs to enhance quality of life. Often, this means advocating for additional support for clients that are aging in place or supporting clients with life skills.

Some of our clients have gone back to school, found stable employment, joined support groups, and reconnected with their families. Success means something different to each person, as it does with all of us, and our committed housing team helps them identify health and life goals.

Our approach is client-centered, which means we respect that each individual has agency to choose their own life path.

Circle of Care homes are operated by CMHA NWV in partnership with faith communities and Vancouver Coastal Health's Health Connections Clinic. All Circle of Care clients have a diagnosis of mental illness (i.e., PTSD, anxiety, depression, etc.) and have a history of or are at significant risk of homelessness.



Capilano Church volunteers working hard on our Circle of Care home, Molina House.



CMHA leadership with volunteers from Capilano Church. Over 70 volunteers from the church donated their time and care to make this a safe and beautiful space for 4 women and a family.

# OUTREACH SERVICES

**700**  
clients supported

**180**  
new clients served

**C**MHA offers more than an outreach program—we have transformed outreach services into a case management-focused approach with a client-centered delivery model. Outreach workers assess the client's needs and identify any psycho-social limitations, economic challenges and barriers. The outreach workers and the clients set a care plan based on the services available and the client's short and long-term goals.

This approach may limit the ability to serve more individuals, but it increases the possibility of keeping clients housed and supported. After addressing immediate physical and safety needs, we continue to support clients after finding housing, including assisting with life skills like budgeting, groceries, and home maintenance.

Increases in the cost of living and the housing limitations on the North Shore and the Sunshine Coast are significant challenges for our outreach services. The pandemic continues to reveal unseen challenges concerning mental health, substance use disorders, racial discrimination, limited support for abused victims still with an abuser, and little support for the LGBTQ+ community. This made our outreach services, which remained opened to the public by appointment throughout the year, both a challenging and a needed service.

Importantly, despite a doubling of staff capacity over the last year, we continued to turn away more than 10 clients on the North Shore per month and up to 10 clients per month on the Sunshine Coast. We continue to advocate with our funder, BC Housing, to increase supports in our communities.



***After addressing immediate physical and safety needs, we continue to support clients after finding housing, including assisting with life skills like budgeting, groceries, and home maintenance.***

# COUNSELLING

**1,439**

**counselling sessions provided to people  
from North Shore, Greater Vancouver, and  
Sunshine Coast residents**

**T**he counselling program at CMHA NWV is committed to providing low-barrier, individual sessions to adults (18+ years old). Integrating low-barrier strategies by having a low-cost model, being self-referral, and having no exclusion criteria reflect our values of acting with integrity and choosing to be guided by honesty, fairness, and decency.

system offers more security and efficiency and can be accessed anywhere. All paper records have been stored, transferred, or destroyed, accordingly. Prioritizing security in our counselling practices is one of the many ways we create conditions that make our clients feel safe.



***Integrating low-barrier strategies by having a low-cost model, being self-referral, and having no exclusion criteria reflect our values of acting with integrity and choosing to be guided by honesty, fairness, and decency.***

Over the past year, we increased our counselling fees. Clients can access Registered Clinical Counsellors (RCCs) for \$60/hour and Master's Level Practicum Student Counsellors for \$35/hour. Despite the increase in fees, clients such as those who experience homelessness, receive disability income, and Indigenous clients can still receive free counselling.

We continue to offer a hybrid service model, including in-person and virtual counselling. To that end, we transitioned counselling services to a digital client management system. The new client management

When offering short-term counselling, we aim to create wrap-around support by connecting clients with our other services, both before counselling—while they are on our waitlist—and after they finish counselling. These include individual peer support and online social support groups, as well as free counselling at WorkBC for clients ready to return to work. We also link clients to emergency mental health services like the Peer Assisted Care Team and on-site outreach services, including assistance with tax and disability forms, rent supplements, and free food and transit passes.



◀ Counselors attending a virtual meeting.

First row: Caroline Wedderspoon (Registered Clinical Counsellor), Maria Watson (Counselling Manager, CMHA NWV), Paul Griggs (Registered Clinical Counsellor).

Second row: Magdalena Mocarski (Registered Clinical Counsellor) Lara Fitzgerald (Registered Clinical Counsellor), Lily Shalev (Registered Clinical Counsellor).

Third row: Arezu Moshrefzadeh (Registered Clinical Counsellor), Catherine Moore (Registered Clinical Counsellor).

Over the past year, we again worked with seven excellent students from partner universities— UBC, Adler University, Yorkville University, and City University. These students come from various training backgrounds and can offer clients different counselling styles, such as Art Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, and sometimes service in other languages like Farsi.

We continue to be supported by provincial funding from the Community Action Initiative, now in its third year.

After a pilot study of walking therapy last year, we officially launched this counselling option in March 2022. Walking counselling is popular with clients for several reasons: many clients enjoy exercise, benefit from being in nature, feel safer outside due to

COVID-19 concerns, prefer not to face the therapist directly, or feel less “trapped” outside an office setting. They also have the added benefit of giving counsellors a break from their desks and Zoom! Our walking routes start at the office and include options like walking city streets, walking to a park and sitting at a picnic table, walking around a running track, and walking on trails along a creek.

Additionally, we received a grant to do training in nature therapy with an organization that specializes in this, called Human Nature Counselling. Our counsellors and clients are excited about walking therapy, which aligns with our organizational value of centering client agency. It feels wonderful to be creating something new after years of treading water as a result of the pandemic!



***Walking counselling is popular with clients for several reasons: many clients enjoy exercise, benefit from being in nature, feel safer outside due to COVID-19 concerns, prefer not to face the therapist directly, or feel less “trapped” outside an office setting.***



# SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS

**3,085**

people participated in our social support groups virtually and in-person

Over the past year, we continued to offer a large variety of peer facilitated social support groups, both in person and online. These groups include:

- Circle of Hope Farsi-Speaking Women's Group
- Knitting
- Chronic Pain Support Group
- Mindfulness and Meditation and Movement
- SMART (Self-Management And Recovery Training) Recovery
- Art Therapy for Wellness
- Watercolour Painting
- Pet Therapy
- Men's Lets Talk

This was CMHA's second year supporting the community on the Sunshine Coast, and we continue to learn about the community, and the gaps in services. Over the last year, we continued to serve clients through our Drop-In Mental Health Navigation and Outreach services located at the Salvation Army in Gibsons. We also worked with the Sunshine Coast Seniors Centre to offer our services and maintained our SMART Recovery groups in the community.



A couple of paintings created by participants of the Watercolour Painting Social Support Group



# COMMUNITY WELLNESS: INDIGENOUS PEER SUPPORT

**W**e continued to learn from our First Nations partners and supported them as they launched or re-launched peer support programming in their communities.

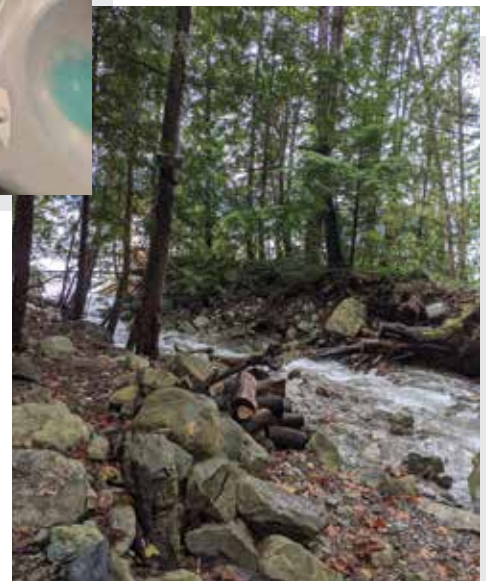
This program is overseen by a Sub-Regional Indigenous Peer Support Steering Committee made up of First Nations Health Authority, Səlílwətał (Tsilil-Waututh) Nation (contract holder), CMHA (subcontractor), Reciprocal Consulting (evaluator) and representatives from the Nations invited into the project—ʔəms ɡʻjε (Tla'amin) Nation, shíshálh (shishalt)

Nation, xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Indian Band, and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation. Together, we are growing the program and reflecting on the learnings.

CMHA launched the Re-energizing Wellness curriculum and we are continuously attending to it to ensure it's meeting the needs of our partners and peers. Over the past year, the peer program expanded across shíshálh (shishalt) Nation and ʔəms ɡʻjε (Tla'amin) Nation and multiple trainings and communities of practice meetings were hosted to ensure the peers felt capable and supported.



Images from the Reenergizing Wellness curriculum, a resource for peer-led programs in Indigenous communities.



# PEER NAVIGATION

**270+**  
Peer Navigation  
sessions

**O**ur Peer Navigator is someone you can talk to about the challenges you're facing, big or small. They can offer a listening ear as well as information and resources. Peer Navigators also have lived experience with mental health challenges and can connect with you about your experiences and offer guidance on your journey. Connecting with our Peer Navigators is free and there is no formal intake process or eligibility criteria. Our Peer Navigators can connect with you within a week of reaching out to us over the phone, email, or Zoom. People can connect with a Peer Navigator once or on an ongoing basis.

During the pandemic, people lost many opportunities for connection. Peer Navigation is all about connection, as is mental health and wellness. Our team of staff and volunteer Peer Navigators have been there virtually and via phone to offer a sense of connection.

We are proud to have expanded our Peer Navigation team to include a group of five skilled, compassionate, and experienced volunteers and Peer Support practicum students. This allowed us to reach more people in need of connection and increase the diversity of experience, skills, and knowledge across the team.



***Our Peer Navigator is someone you can talk to about the challenges you're facing, big or small.***



Over the past year, Peer Navigators have supported people struggling with a variety of challenges related to their mental health and the hardships of the pandemic. Some of the most common challenges included social isolation, anxiety, work or school concerns, grief, transitions, chronic pain, relationships, and self-care.

◀ The Kelty team (left to right): Karen Hoshino (Peer Navigator), MJ Moore (Volunteer Coordinator), Tessa Veikle (former Program Manager), Talayah Jamshidi (Senior Operations Manager), Barry Rich (Peer Support Group Volunteer), Monique Ledoyen (Peer Support Volunteer), Carsten Crolow (Peer Navigator Volunteer).

# FAMILY NAVIGATION

**400+**

families supported by  
our Family Navigator

**O**ur Family Navigator works with parents and families of youth to help them navigate the mental health system, make referrals to programs and services, and advocate for families in times of need.

During the pandemic, our family navigator continued to work in a full-time capacity, working with families via Zoom, by phone, and in-person. Initially, there was a sharp shift to digital communication, but over the last several months, in-person appointments resumed to pre-pandemic levels, including drop-in scheduling, outreach, and appointments at the Foundry North Shore campus.

The Family Navigator continues to independently manage referrals from community, school, parents, hospitals, and a range of service providers on the North Shore. Referral numbers continue to rise and the pandemic exponentially contributed to growth.

Public health restrictions resulted in parents and youth spending more time together and in each other's space more frequently and for longer periods of time. Combined with an abrupt decrease in distractions, social activities, and commitments outside the home, there were more opportunity for familial conflict. Parents often expressed concerns with their relationship quality and connection, and were looking

for ways to support their youth's mental health. Family navigation contacts reflected this influx.

Our Family Navigator also introduced Emotional Focused Family Therapy (EFFT) as another support by completing course work, facilitating workshops/support groups, and maintaining monthly clinical supervision. Skills coaching with parents has been foundational to addressing the above concerns using an accessible, solution-focused model. Feedback from parents has been encouraging, with parents finding that it provides both alternative methods of approaching conflict and easy-to-access dialogue in times of crisis or stress.

Over the past year, we have seen a return of in-person community support events for parents such as Let's Talk Shop and Mental Health Education Series.



Entrance of the Foundry North Shore where Family Navigation and Peer Support services are offered.

# YOUTH PROGRAMS

53

youth served one-on-one

22

Steps participants registered

## Youth Peer Support

**C** MHA NWV provides Peer Navigation for North Shore youth out of Foundry North Shore. Our Youth Peer Navigators assist youth aged 12–24 experiencing mental health and addictions by:

- Fostering a positive peer-to-peer connection
- Assisting with non-clinical goals like recreation, life skills, meeting new people, and finding employment
- Connecting clients with resources in the community
- Sharing their own lived experience

The past year was especially challenging for youth who were managing many transitions, missing their friends and schoolmates, as well as activities in the community and at school. Youth Peer Navigators at the Foundry were able to offer guidance, support, and hope through these challenges.

We had huge success with Tea Spill, a social group for women and people ages 17–24 who resonate with the feminine experience. Tea Spill's success inspired the same group for the younger, 12–16 age category, Teen Spill, which ran for the duration of spring 2021 and was also very popular. These tea groups will be resuming in fall 2022.

A Steps program participant trying to land a strike during bowling. >



*We saw an uptick in the number of referrals and client responsiveness in late 2021 and early 2022. I'm happy to report that many clients who I've met with have become repeat peer support clients, attended groups, or were referred to other programs from peer support and had successes in those realms.*

—Kelly Cameron, Peer Supporter





## Steps Youth Recreation Program

**S**teps is a nature-based recreation group for North Shore youth experiencing challenges with their mental health. Program goals focus on reducing participants' experiences of anxiety and depression, reducing isolation, and supporting recovery from mental illness through weekly physical activity and experiences in nature.

CMHA NWV facilitates two Steps cohorts, 13–18 year olds and 19–29 year olds. Participants are also offered one-on-one support from the Steps Peer Support Worker as needed. Steps has been offered for the past six years and is free to all participants. It's supported entirely through fundraising and grants.

The majority of Steps participants identify as girls or non-binary between the ages of 15 and 18. Most participants are from North Vancouver, though some are from West Vancouver and Bowen Island. All experience anxiety, which leads to self-isolation, and most also struggle with depression and their mood. The program meets every Thursday.

The majority of Steps + participants identify as women and are between the ages of 22 and 28, coming from

North Vancouver. All experience anxiety and struggle with their mood. The program meets every Monday.

Groups are run weekly for one to two hours and feature a mix of recreational, artistic, and social activities, all discussed by the group.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we were unable to work with some of our past community partners. We were able to restart our collaboration with Foundry North Shore early in the program this year, which allowed us to not only use one of their indoor spaces for various cooking, art, and board game groups, but also to have one of their staff co-facilitate the Steps+ group.

We recently started back up with programming through North Vancouver recreation centres, starting lightly with yoga once a month from April to June. Other public spaces we use and hold groups at have been JJ Bean, Park and Tilford, the Shipyards undercover area and surrounding businesses—Café Artigiano, Welcome Parlour Ice Cream—Polygon Gallery, King Pins Bowling, and Bella Ceramica.



***When thinking of “success” stories, I immediately think of two young women in the Steps group. One had been in the group for the past two years and the other joined us halfway through this session. Both struggle with social anxiety as well as depression, and usually keep to themselves out of school. Though they both go to the same high school, they are in different grades and had never met before. They now are extremely close friends that hang out often and offer wonderful mental health support to each other.***

—Elysia Dalgarno, STEPS Program Coordinator

# EMPLOYMENT

**W**hen supporting clients facing barriers, the concept of agency plays a vital role. Agency can simply be described as creating opportunities centering on personal choice. CMHA NWV regards agency as acknowledging that each person is an expert on themselves and the life they want to lead.

Anar Virani, our Customized Employment Specialist from WorkBC shares their experience with a client that showcases the power of agency and meeting someone where they are at.

“I had a client diagnosed with bipolar disorder—a condition that causes extreme mood swings ranging from highs and lows. Despite the client also facing alcohol and drug addiction, he made the courageous choice to seek therapy. After years of treatment and medication, he overcame his addiction and chose to take steps to seek employment. At that point, he reached out to WorkBC. The client emphasized that he wanted a role where he could work directly with people, make a difference in someone else’s life, and give back to the very community that supported him over the years.

In his own words, he said repeatedly, “I want to give back.”

During my time with the client, I witnessed firsthand the eloquence in which he speaks, his genuine empathy for others, and his calmness. Agency in action is about intentionally creating environments where people can learn to trust their inner wisdom, so they can make their own decisions.

Throughout the process, the client’s perspective guided me. I connected with the North Shore Disability Resource Centre to enquire if there would be a community attachment possibility for the client to work with people with developmental disabilities. By marketing the client’s strengths and abilities, he was offered an interview and successfully obtained an assistant peer support worker position. In this role, the client works in a team to support participants in outreach activities. After checking in with the client and Program Manager, the consensus is that it’s a successful fit for both parties.

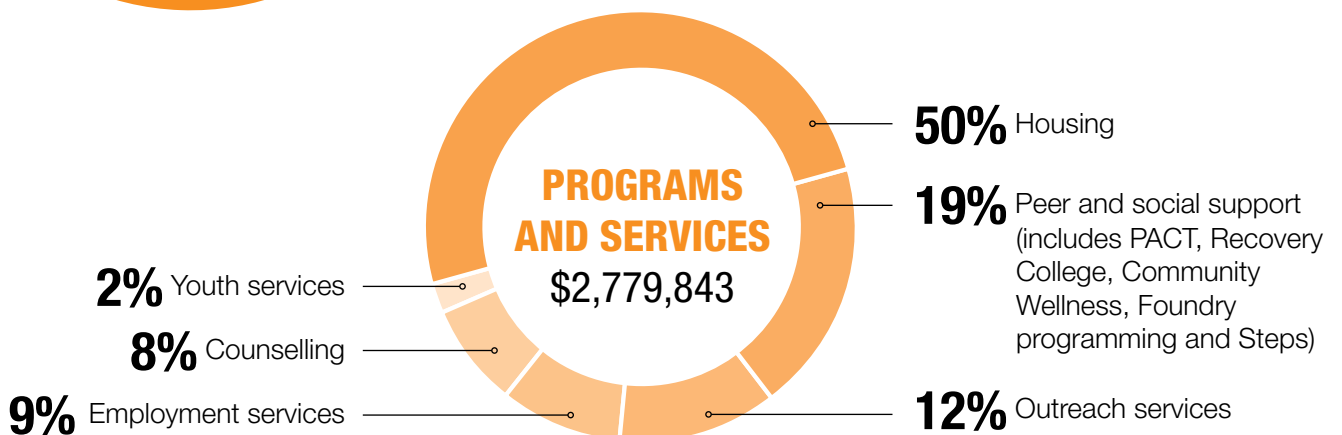
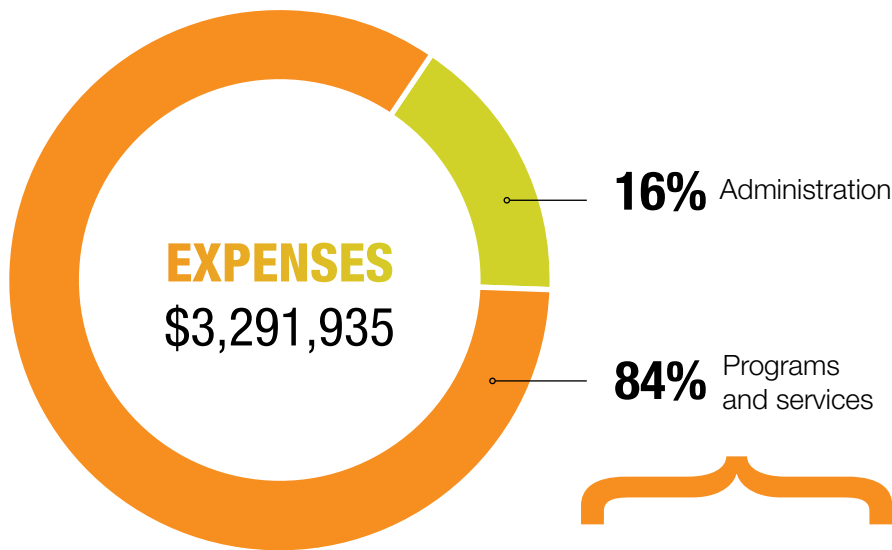
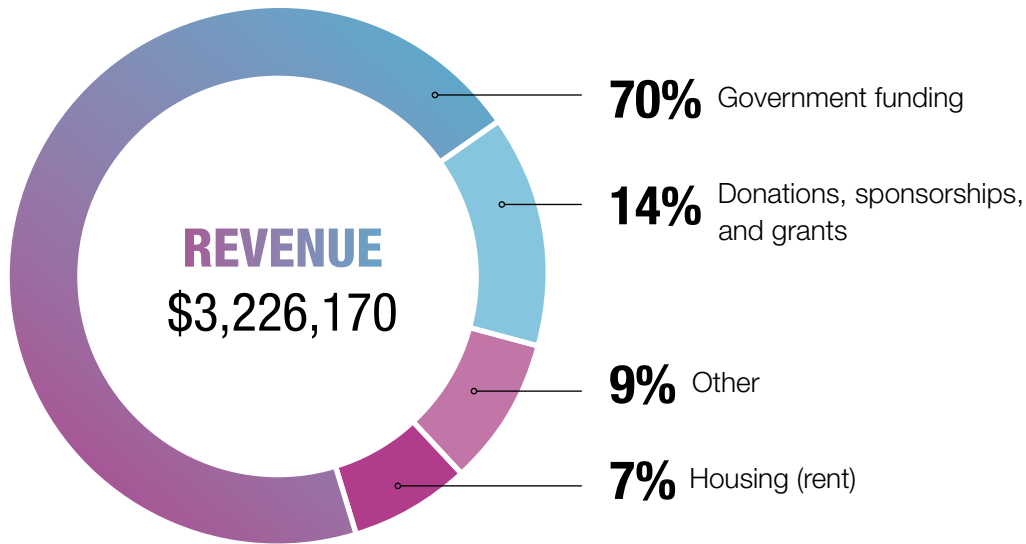
The client expressed sincere gratitude for the service he received. He states that from now on, things are “only moving forward.”



***Agency can simply be described as creating opportunities centring on personal choice. CMHA NWV regards agency as acknowledging that each person is an expert on themselves and the life they want to lead.***



# 2021-22 FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN



# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” —Coretta Scott King

Our community is comprised of a vast mosaic of people and organizations that help to support what we do every day. We appreciate all our funders and sponsor supports—governments, businesses, foundations, community friends, and individual donors. Your financial support and in-kind contributions help make our work viable. With the utmost sincerity, thank you to our funders and sponsor supporters for strengthening our community wellness. We recognize that your values of kindness and generosity continue to support CMHA NWV's growth!



Thank you to the North Shore Community Foundation and the Mayor's Golf Tournament for their tremendous support of our Circle of Care program. From left to right: Josh Radcliffe (CMHA Board Member), Julia Kaisla (Executive Director, CMHA NWV), Mike Boehm (North Shore Community Foundation) at the Mayor's Golf Tournament.

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