



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Champlain East
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Champlain Est
La santé mentale pour tous

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Submitted by: Canadian Mental Health Association Champlain East

Changing the Conversation Around Mental Health

If there is one thing we are learning as a community, it is this: mental health is not something we should only talk about when things go wrong.

More and more, the conversation is shifting—away from silence and stigma, and toward openness, understanding, and prevention. And that shift matters.

Because when people feel safe talking about mental health, they are more likely to reach out earlier, support one another, and take steps to stay well.

Moving Beyond Stigma

For a long time, mental health was something people kept to themselves. Many worried about being judged or misunderstood. Even today, stigma remains one of the biggest barriers preventing people from asking for help.

But change is happening.

We are seeing more real conversations—in workplaces, in schools, and around kitchen tables. People are beginning to understand that mental health is something we all have, and that struggling does not make you weak—it makes you human.

Reducing stigma does not require perfect words. It starts with listening, being open, and creating space for honest conversations.

Focusing on Mental Health Promotion

While support and treatment are essential, there is another piece that often does not get as much attention: **mental health promotion**.

This is about helping people stay well. It means building resilience, learning coping skills, staying connected, and having the confidence to reach out—or check in on someone else—before things reach a crisis point.

It is simple in theory, but powerful in practice.



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A Community Effort

One thing many people do not realize is that mental health promotion is not government-funded at CMHA Champlain East. These programs rely on the support of our community—through donations, sponsors, and fundraising efforts.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of partners such as United Way SDG, United Way East Ontario, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, whose contributions help make this work possible. Local businesses also play an important role. For example, Au Vieux Duluth generously hosts an annual dinner fundraiser, bringing people together each year in support of mental health in our region.

It is a true community effort—and every contribution helps us reach more people with tools and support.

Learning Together

Another way to reduce stigma and build a healthier community is through education.

As a non-profit, we are proud to offer **low-cost training sessions** that are open to everyone. These include:

- **safeTALK** – learning how to recognize when someone may be struggling and connect them to support
- **ASIST** – building skills to help someone at risk of suicide
- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** – understanding how to respond to mental health and substance use challenges
- **The Working Mind** – supporting mental health in the workplace

You do not need to be a professional to take these trainings—just someone who wants to better understand and support the people around them.

The Role We All Play

Promoting mental health does not have to be complicated. It can start with small, everyday actions:

- checking in on a friend
- taking time to listen without judgment
- being open about our own experiences
- encouraging others to reach out for help



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These moments help build a culture where people feel supported—and where stigma continues to fade.

Looking Ahead

Mental health is something we all share, and promoting it is something we all can be part of.

If you are interested in **hosting a fundraiser**, learning more about our **education sessions**, or getting involved, we would love to connect with you.

You can reach **Chantal Tessier at 613-551-7493** or visit **cmha-east.on.ca** for more information.

Because when we work together, we do not just talk about mental health—we strengthen it.

DO YOU NEED HELP?

Dial or text 2-1-1 for free and confidential service that easily connects people to the critical social and community support they need.

If you are thinking of suicide, please call 9-8-8 which is a mental health crisis and suicide prevention line.

The information provided is not a substitute for professional advice. If you need advice, please consult a qualified health care professional. For further information or if you want to access our services at CMHA, please call 1-800-493-8271 or visit our web site at

www.cmha-east.on.ca