

Member Guidebook

*See Spring Mental Wellness
Coalition*

Guidebook for Members

April 15, 2022.



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Who we are: See Spring is a Coalition of Victoria area mental health Advocates with Lived Experience navigating mental wellness challenges and resources. We are guided every step of the way by our local First Nations partners on whose land we live, work and heal.

Mission Statement

“See Spring Mental Wellness Coalition’s mission is to create healthy and supportive safe spaces for all. We do this through peer support and advocacy for our community today and for future generations.”

1) Core Values:

Lived Experience:

All human beings deserve to be seen and heard. There is inherent value in everyone's personal struggles and sharing that Lived Experience is a gift. This is why all of our employees and volunteers have been impacted by a journey with mental health.

Please read all of our Core Values available on our Website.

<https://www.seespringcoalition.org/core-values>



Inclusion & Representation:

See Spring actively informs all of its work to be inclusive through not only the involvement of, but through the holding of positions of leadership within the organization by multi marginalized Members.



2) Pilot Project

Pathways to Hope, Together

See [Spring Mental Wellness Coalition](#)



“Connection and empathy offered by someone who has been through a similar experience is essential for mental health, harm reduction, and recovery. I am grateful to BCcampus for leading the work in developing this curriculum in a way that includes peer-support workers and recognizes lived experience as valuable expertise. Until now, nothing like this has existed. It is bold, and I believe that it will open doors for lived and living experience to reach its potential as one of the most powerful interventions in our system of care.”

— Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions



A Pathway to Hope and See Spring Mental Wellness Coalition:
Aligned Opportunities
April 2022

Background

See Spring Mental Wellness Coalition is a grassroots coalition of Victoria-area residents and mental health advocates with lived/living experience, working together to catch people in acute states of distress, midstream. We offer peer support to help prevent, navigate through, and recover from, an acute or ongoing mental health crisis.

Overview of the See Spring Pilot Project:

1. 24/7 Drop-In Community Safe Space
2. Warmline
3. Respite House
4. Peer Support Worker Training Certificate
5. Continued Mental Health Advocacy in the Community



Creating Safe Spaces in the Community

See Spring Mental Wellness Coalition is a grassroots coalition of Victoria-area residents and mental health advocates with lived/living experience, working together to catch people in acute states of distress, midstream. We offer peer support to help prevent, navigate through, and recover from, an acute or ongoing mental health crisis.

See Spring Aligns with MMHA Goals

The MMHA has made a call to action and See Spring wants to be at the forefront of paradigm shift in the way we, as a society, provide support for those struggling with mental illness and mental health crises.

We are community advocates, dedicated to creating alternatives to a strained healthcare system and fragmented mental health services. We are not a replacement for life-saving interventions and will work in tandem with those systems as needed. The support we can offer as peers with lived and living experience is complementary, but distinct from the traditional healthcare system.

Our aim is to support wellness, beyond simply mitigating crises. We intend to do this through the creation of midstream support options such as 24/7 Drop-In, Warm Line, and Respite House. We are also dedicated to continued



advocacy and leadership in our community through various committees that will address other aspects of the MMHA's call to action.

For example, our youth committee is focused on responding to the rapidly rising rates of anxiety, depression and suicide among youth in B.C.

From the ground up, we are built to not only be inclusive to those who have experienced additional barriers and discrimination in community care, but to also ensure they are positioned to lead our efforts. Representation of marginalized groups in our work is a top priority.

See Spring Will Increase Overall Ability to Provide Community Mental Health Care Services

We are uniquely positioned in the community to provide support before a person experiencing mental health or concurrent substance use challenges reaches the limit of their coping capacity.

We are not a replacement for professional treatment options, but we will provide support to those struggling with a variety of mental health challenges, where limited public services are struggling to.

- We provide comfort and assistance for parents experiencing postpartum challenges.
- Those who struggle with psychosis, substance use, depression, anxiety, experience bipolar disorder, trauma, and so on are welcome in our spaces.
- We provide psychosocial support for discomfort from substance withdrawal where appropriate.

People get the care they need by asking once. They will not be turned away.



We can help people now and reduce the demands on healthcare down the road.

More needs to be done on sharing knowledge and promoting mental wellness.

We will assist members of our community to go through peer support training and provide their skills to support others.

We are developing effective care when and where people need it. Every door through See Spring is the right one and it will always be open to those who need it.

No appointment, referral, or diagnosis is needed to access See Spring services. Anonymous help can also be provided.

Our Core Values have embedded within them: inclusion, non discrimination, cultural safety, and are trauma informed. We have a paid Indigenous Advisor from our local First Nations who guides our development every step of the way.

We support people finding their way through struggle and as they find wellness after an acute mental health crisis. We provide opportunities to develop further resiliency, belonging, and a sense of purpose in the community. We are here to empower people and support their strengths while recognizing the challenges they are facing.

Peer-run services are a fraction of the cost of hospitalization or repeated acute care crises where the underlying struggle is inadequately addressed by existing services.

“I spent about 15 days overall in hospital after my three suicide attempts. I was either in a freezing waiting room where I was supposed to sleep in a chair or in a bed recovering from ‘an overdose that would have killed a horse’. I was no better after all of this. I had people in my life but they were frightened to talk about suicide. I had peer support but if I talked about suicide they had to report it. I had people but I was still alone.” –J

Following Proven Examples

Around the world, successful models demonstrate the cost savings of peer-led, non-medical alternatives to support those struggling with mental illness or mental health challenges. The whole community benefits from reduced wait times at the emergency room when we have civilian-led mobile crisis response teams and warmlines, as midstream options.

Let’s catch people midstream. We can provide effective support for people to help prevent a crisis and maintain mental wellness after a crisis.

Pilot Project

1. The **24/7 Drop-in Centre** as an alternative to the ER, walk-in clinics, or police interaction.
2. The **Warm Line** staffed by people with lived and living experience is most often sufficient and preferable to a crisis line.

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3. The **Respite House** as a non-medical alternative to hospitalization, which releases the pressure on an already stressed healthcare system.

Potential location: If a location is identified that is accessible to those arriving at the hospital in distress, Emergency room staff could suggest people try the 24/7 drop-in centre and other peer respite supports.

Conclusion

MMHA's bold vision in creating the **Peer Support Worker Training** has brought us this unique opportunity to take concrete action and position Victoria Peer Support Workers at the service of the community.



Links to a sampling of existing government funded approaches

Wisconsin peer respite grants

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/assets/program/peer-respites-fact-sheet.pdf>

<https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/peer-respites-us>

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/behavioral-health-recovery/peer-respites>

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?BillNumber=1394&Year=2019>

<http://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/2912457172628484097>

[Georgia mental health consumer network](#)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iTEclXrPrixCF_wUQffJoIE34Km0C5y9/view?usp=drivesdk

https://docs.google.com/file/d/1VeVxmnoXR4WmmQQNaxXNU7J6y-GTeDav/edit?usp=docslist_api&filetype=msword

<https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/pdf/10.1176/appi.ps.201700451>

[Afiya Peer Respite Annual Report FY '15](#)

[Pathways Vermont | Department of Mental Health](#)

[Maytree | We're open to suicidal feelings](#)

[Afiya Peer Respite - Wildflower Alliance](#)

<https://wildfloweralliance.org/spaces/>

[California - Peer Respite](#)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5630e573e4b0efc185471156/t/5abd7a9b70a6ad798f81aa55/1522367180975/Peer+Respite+Final+2017.pdf>

[Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service](#)

[Harbour crisi](#)

[Emerging trends mental health crisis cafe](#)

3) Committees

1. Policy and Advocacy Development Committee (PAD).
2. Disability Rights Committee.
3. Reforms Committee.
4. Youth Issues Committee.
5. Convention Planning Committee.



4) Policy Statements: One of the most important responsibilities for the new Board of Directors is to finalize and publish official Policy Statements that represent the Coalition Voice.

All Members involved with the Policy and Advocacy Development (PAD) Committee will have ongoing worksheets with topics to discuss for this purpose.

5) Training opportunities

1. Peer Support Worker Training certificate.
2. Online Workshops as recommended.
3. Additional See Spring Peer Training as it develops.

6) Peer Support Groups:

As they are developed more will be available. At this time we have an online “Conversations about Suicide Group” on Wednesday’s from 6-8 pm.

This group provides a safe space for people in crisis to discuss their experiences around the topic of suicide. Please contact Jenifer Wilson for more detailed information.

Conversations About Suicide: What is it and what it provides.

- 1) *This is a safe location, either virtual or in person, for people in crisis who are thinking about suicide or have attempted.*
- 2) *Talking about suicide is not often encouraged or understood in greater society. There is a general fear that if it is talked about it will happen. The opposite of this is true. Stuffing feelings, becoming isolated because ones feelings are ‘scary’ push people toward suicide, not away.*



3) *This is not a place for people to learn about what suicidal thoughts are. That is a completely valid need but must take place elsewhere.*

4) *This is not a place for loved ones of people who have attempted or committed suicide. We can have a different group for that.*

5) *This is simply a conversation. There is no should or shouldn't. It is moderated by a person with lived expertise not a doctor or nurse of any kind.*

6) *What is said in the group stays in the group. Complete confidentiality is of utmost importance.*

7) Questionnaire

The Questionnaire is not a requirement for Membership in See Spring: It's simply a tool for people to record their experiences and for us to pinpoint the areas that need improvements in Victoria area mental health services.

The first Questionnaire: What it is for.

The questionnaire is a completely voluntary option for people with lived experience to do.

It serves two purposes:

1) *It is an avenue for people to describe what has happened to them in our healthcare system. What has been helpful, what has not, and how they feel about all of it.*

2) *It is a way for See Spring to get an idea of what is really happening to people and collect relevant statistics.*

It is only the first Questionnaire we have made, it does not need to be the last. The more people who choose to fill it out (as much as they want to) the better.

<https://www.seespringcoalition.org/questionnaire>




8) Members, Supporters, Staff & Board

There are different roles for people with Lived Experience who want to be involved in the See Spring Coalition.

- Members
- Volunteers
- Staff
- Board of Directors
- Supporters

9) Budget:

Please contact the Treasurer for budget information and financial documents.

10) Fundraising:

<https://gofund.me/abd50c49>



11) Advisors

See Spring is fortunate to have a wealth of experienced and knowledgeable mental wellness Advisors we rely on to help us develop our policies.

12) Advertising & Social Media

Our advertising and social media are under development

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/327085462684976>

13) Convention Planning Convention Committee

See Spring's first annual convention will be held in August 2022, in beautiful Victoria.

Do you enjoy organizing large scale events? Do you have experience managing the logistics of multiple speakers? Interested in hosting discussion panels? Let us know if you'd enjoy this dynamic environment!



Convention topics:

1. What constraints exist that stunt positive approaches to reform?
2. How do we support and make concrete changes to mental healthcare transition points?
3. Where are people falling through the cracks and how do we work together immediately to prevent that?
4. What were you taught that needs to be reframed?
5. Where is government funding going now, and how do we gauge its effectiveness in supporting the mental health advocates doing the work that's needed to expand cooperation across mental healthcare systems?

Thanks to Francesca Simpson, author and advocate, for leading this committee.

14) Communications with elected officials

We have multiple ongoing conversations happening with all levels of Government. Please contact the Chair of the Board for the most recent information.



15) Press Releases

Hope and help for Victoria residents in mental health crisis

See Spring Mental Health Coalition

A new mental health organization is working to provide much-needed peer support services in Victoria. [See Spring Mental Wellness Coalition](#) was founded this year by a group of Victoria residents with lived experience navigating the city's mental health services.

See Spring will offer non-medical crisis spaces to people in Victoria living with suicidal thoughts and other mental health challenges. These will include a warmline, a 24/7 drop-in crisis centre, and a respite house for longer stays--all run by peers with lived and living experience of mental illness, and based on models that have been successful elsewhere.

“Peer support is the key to creating excellent, safe, and meaningful support for people in crisis,” says Jenifer Wilson, See Spring’s policy director. “And it also takes the pressure off other supports.”

The goal is that with See Spring’s services, the community will benefit from reduced hospital waitlists, and the city will benefit from significant



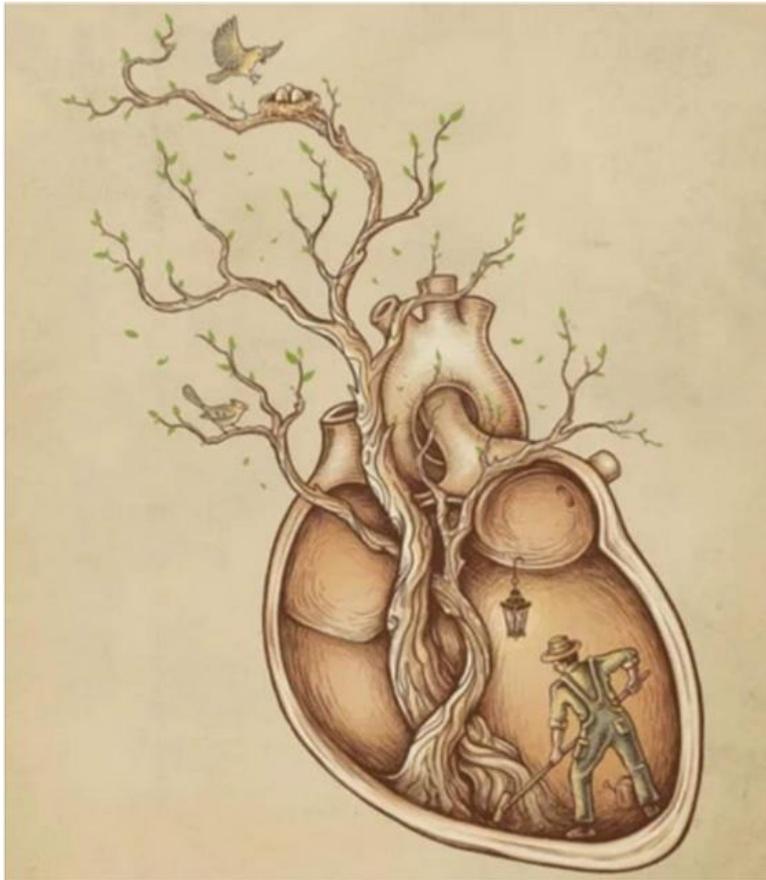
financial savings. And most importantly, people in crisis will get the support they need.

See Spring's plans have been enthusiastically endorsed by the CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association's BC arm, and by the Executive Director of Island Community Mental Health.

[See Spring is currently raising funds](#) to get resources in place as quickly as possible.

Contact:

info@seespringcoalition.org



Our growth chart

March

Enriching the soil that is feeding this grassroots movement.

April

Establishing the structure needed for firm roots to take hold, such as Nonprofit paperwork and electing a Board of Directors.

May

Planting the seeds to grow by putting down on paper a Pilot Project to operate our three non-medical crisis spaces;

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1. 24/7 Drop In as an alternative to PES.
 2. A Warmline as an alternative to 911.
 3. A Respite House as an alternative to hospitalization during a life interrupting crisis.

16) Contact Information

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Thank you to all the Members who entrusted me with their stories and allowed co-founders Jenifer Wilson, Anne Turner, Amy Frank, Cesca Simpson and myself to hold your hopes and hurts in our hands as we planted the seeds for us all to seek healing through See Spring.

This effort is dedicated to Boyd Gevers, my steadfast friend and inspiration when times were tough.

Amy Allard/Iris , Co-founder

To those who wanted something like See Spring to exist but were too afraid to dream. Welcome aboard: it has been created. Come be co-creators in what we all need: comfort and shelter from our internal rain.

Jenifer Wilson, Co-founder