

# Pathways to Hope, Together

## See Spring Mental Wellness Coalition

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*“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

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## Creating Safe Spaces in the Community

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## 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.

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- 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*

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## 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.
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/billsummary?BillNumber=1394&Year=2019>

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

[Georgia mental health consumer network](#)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iTEclXrPrixCF\\_wUQffJolE34Km0C5y9/view?usp=drivesdk](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iTEclXrPrixCF_wUQffJolE34Km0C5y9/view?usp=drivesdk)

[https://docs.google.com/file/d/1VeVxmnoXR4WmmQQNaxXNU7J6y-GTeDav/edit?usp=docslist\\_api&filetype=msword](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](#)