



#MyStory

The reality of mental health is found in our stories.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

CMHA Mental Health Week **May 1–7, 2023** MentalHealthWeek.ca

Each May, people across Canada rally around CMHA's Mental Health Week. Inaugurated by CMHA in 1951, May 1-7, 2023 marks the 72nd annual Mental Health Week in Canada.

Mental Health Week is a social change campaign to educate the public and shift beliefs and perceptions about mental health. It helps promote behaviours and attitudes that foster well-being, support good mental health and create a culture of understanding and acceptance. **The 2023 theme is MY STORY.**

We all have different, yet equally valuable stories which can be used to share one key message: universal mental health care is important and needed now! We can harness the power of storytelling to help build connections and understanding between each other while strengthening our communities.

Storytelling is a fundamental part of being human. Our stories make us human. They're how we pass down information, culture, language and ways of life. They connect us with our families and ancestors. Sharing personal experiences and stories is not only valuable for promoting understanding — it can help us see the world from different perspectives.

Stories help build connection and stronger communities. Stories let us share information in a way that creates empathy which in turn promotes a feeling of emotional connection between individuals, groups, families and communities. While we don't all share the same experiences, we do all share a similar array of emotions, fears and hopes.

Storytelling supports mental health and reduces stigma. Sharing stories and experiences with each other, especially of difficult times and challenges, can benefit a person's mental health and help others feel like they are not alone. For those struggling with mental health challenges, hearing others' brave stories can offer a sense of comfort and solidarity that helps to reduce feelings of isolation.

Canadians can join the fight for universal mental health care by supporting community organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association. We all need care to thrive but as things are, only some of us will get it. Mounting mental health needs are straining our systems and for two out of three of us, care isn't available due to cost, wait times, location, or lack of equitable access.

Call on your local government representatives to ensure mental health supports are available and funded outside of a hospital or doctor's office. Or donate to the Canadian Mental Health Association to fund their work for a better future – one where everyone can access free and universal mental health care.

Visit www.mentalhealthweek.ca for more information and to download resources. Connect with us on social media using the hashtags #MyStory and #MentalHealthWeek.

If you or someone you know needs mental health support, there are free community programs and services available to help.

To access free mental health and addictions programs, services and supports tailored to the needs of your local community, visit www.cmhatv.ca.