

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS PROGRAM

monthly newsletter



MHAhelpNS.ca celebrates one year online!

The COVID-19 pandemic brought much uncertainty to Nova Scotians, but the Mental Health and Addictions Program was here to help with their new website and online tools.

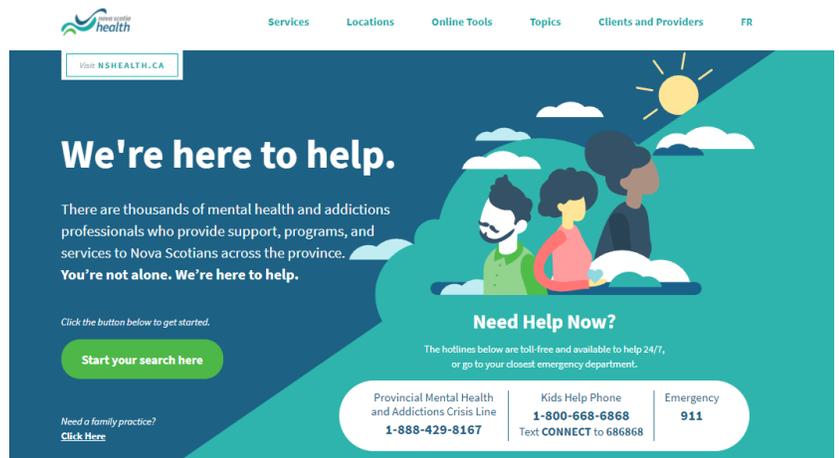
Launched in June of 2020, [MHAhelpNS.ca](https://www.mhahelpns.ca) aims to provide Nova Scotians with information, resources, and supports in an easily accessible way. Community partners, Nova Scotia Health staff and physicians, and clients, are saying that the website is user friendly and makes finding pertinent information quick and easy.

Since last June, [MHAhelpNS.ca](https://www.mhahelpns.ca) has more than 540,000 page views and more than 122,000 people (or around 1 in 8 Nova Scotians) have visited the website. It is a place where Nova Scotians can:

- Learn about mental health and addiction topics.
- Search for mental health and addictions programs, and community supports in their local area.
- Access and sign-up for a range of online self-help and peer-supported programs and services.

The website supports the Mental Health and Addictions Program’s Plan Direction 2025, that aims to help Nova Scotians access the right service, from the right provider, at the right time and place.

Clinicians and community partners often encourage clients to visit the website as a trusted source of information and tools.



This new website can provide the basics of recovery and allow individuals to take charge of their mental wellbeing in a non-intrusive, self-directed manner.

*- Susan Henderson, executive director,
Canadian Mental Health Association Colchester East Hants Branch*



What's in this issue:

- MHAhelpNS.ca celebrates one year!
- MHAP Patient Experience Indicators
- Meet Dr. Dave Martell
- Did You Know? MHAP Intake Service
- MHA Tools and Resources
- Training and Webinar Opportunities

Mental Wellness Tip of the Month

*Go outside for a walk and fresh air.
Enjoy the changing colours of the leaves!*



MHAhelpNS.ca celebrates one year online! *continued*

The website also links people to a variety of free online tools, which cover topics like mindfulness, coping strategies and skills, depression, substance use, building healthy relationships, peer support, and more.

To help community partners learn more about these online tools, the Mental Health and Addictions Program launched interactive information sessions. To date, 20 sessions have been offered to community partners and organizations throughout the province. The sessions cover eMental Health and Addictions service basics (what it is and why we are offering it), an overview of the eMental Health tools now available, and tips and strategies on how to integrate eMental Health into recovery planning.



The website will continue to evolve and improve with input from public and community partners. This fall, the Mental Health and Addictions Program is excited to be launching a new Provincial Centre for Training Education and Learning portal where their staff, partners, and physicians across the province can access mental health and addictions education sessions and resources.

Working with people who have lived experience and other stakeholders has helped them quickly evolve their online presence. Bringing resources and information to Nova Scotians when, and where they need them, includes connecting with them online. The new site is a great start.

For more information on the eMental Health tools, to arrange an information session, or to request free promotional materials (e.g. posters, pamphlets, key resource contact cards) contact Amanda.Hudson@nshealth.ca

Visit our website: MHAhelpNS.ca

Watch and share our videos: [Website promo video](#) and [eMental Health video](#)

Tier 2 Feedback Survey

We would like to remind you of the initiative MHAP is embarking on, supported by the Government of Nova Scotia's Office of Mental Health and Addictions.

We launched a **survey that will help provide insight into community-based supports that could assist Nova Scotians at risk of or experiencing mild emotional distress and substance use concerns.**

We invite you to participate in and share broadly with colleagues and friends in your network. The knowledge and insights shared by you, your colleagues and the Nova Scotia public will enrich this initiative.

The English version of the survey is found [here](#) and the French version of the survey is found [here](#).

Please stay tuned. As this work progresses, we will share our learnings.



Having an online tool to access on your own time, and in your own way, provides an important resource for Nova Scotians,

*- Dr. Theresa Vienneau, psychiatrist
Mental Health and Addictions Program, Nova Scotia Health*



Mental Health and Addictions Program Patient Experience Indicators

The Mental Health and Addictions Program client experience survey is available for both inpatients and outpatients year-round. Every client who has an appointment or is a current inpatient, is able to complete a survey answering questions relating to their experience with MHAP. Once a year, all services participate in a survey blitz to increase response rates. The next one will take place in February of 2022. Below are some of the highlights and results of the patient experience survey for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. The results are needed to determine what we are doing well, and where improvements are indicated. Action plans are currently being evaluated and updated with the most recent results. An additional survey was introduced this year as part of a comprehensive service evaluation plan on the MHAP Intake Service and highlights from this survey are also included below.



Inpatient

88%

Reported they were given enough privacy when discussing issues or treatment with staff.

90%

Reported feeling safe while staying in the unit.

85%

Reported that they felt staff supported their improvement and/or recovery.

92%

Would return for service if they needed treatment in the future.



80%

Reported an overall positive experience with the service they received.

Outpatient



86% reported not waiting a long time after being referred.



95% recommend this service to a family member or a friend.



92% would return for service if they needed treatment in the future.



93% reported that they felt staff supported their improvement and/or recovery.



89% reported an overall positive experience with the service they received.



Intake Service



96% indicated that the purpose of the intake was clearly explained to them.



93% reported being able to do an intake at a time that was convenient for them.



97% reported that they felt listened to and heard by the person completing the intake.



90% reported that they felt that the person completing the intake worked together to decide how to get help for their concerns.



92% understood what the next steps would be after completing an intake.

Meet Dr. Dave Martell: Mental Health and Addictions Program welcomes new Physician Lead in Addiction Medicine

By Cass Hanson, Health Communication Specialist, Health Promotion

Early in his career, Dr. Dave Martell developed an interest in addiction medicine soon after moving to Lunenburg, where he had been practicing as a family physician since 2004.

At the beginning of 2019, he decided to pursue a career in addiction medicine, following fellowship training in Ontario. Before that, Dr. Martell was involved in leadership within the addiction medicine community through the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine where he has been an active board member since 2015.

Seeing how practice has evolved in other parts of the country, he realized that Nova Scotia has unique advantages to developing an effective program of treatment for people with substance use disorders.

In July 2021, Dr. Martell became the Physician Lead for Addiction Medicine (PLAM) at Nova Scotia Health.

The PLAM role involves leadership for the addiction medicine community in Nova Scotia, and for the wider health care system.

Dr. Martell focuses on communication with other health care providers involved in the work, offering guidance, and formulating policy changes to improve the way we help people who experience addiction.

“When we talk about supports, we should take care to guide those supports to people and systems who need them,” said Dr. Martell.



I see this position as a key way to achieving what other provinces have struggled to develop with this program,” said Dr. Martell



People with substance use disorders need support, but so do their families, so do health care providers and the community agencies who are tasked to be the helpers.

Upon seeing a rise in rates of substance use throughout the pandemic, Martell said shifting our focus less on the substances themselves and more on social problems will be crucial to effecting changes. “I see substance use partly as a surrogate marker for other health determinants” explained Dr. Martell “When people struggle more with poverty, homelessness and trauma, they use more substances.”

Dr. Martell would like to see awareness broaden, as addiction affects many groups in society. He described the impact of a society recognizing people with substance use disorders first as people versus their substance use behavior. “I think we lose some of our connection to them as people and some of our own humanity in the process.”

To read Dr. Martell's complete profile ... [click here](#).

Did You Know? Mental Health and Addictions Intake Service

Nova Scotia Health Mental Health and Addictions Program's Intake Service is available to all Nova Scotians across the province, no matter where you live in Nova Scotia.

Mental Health and Addictions Program's Intake Service can be reached by calling 1-855-922-1122, and is available Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The service has voicemail evenings, weekends, and holidays, and is most often the first point of contact people have with Nova Scotia Health's Mental Health and Addictions Program. The Intake Service provides triage, screening, and navigation for Mental Health and Addiction Programs offered through Nova Scotia Health (and IWK).

The Intake Service is available for anyone in Nova Scotia to call if they feel they might need a little extra support, and don't know where to turn, concerns about their own mental health or substance use, or the wellbeing of someone they care about. People can self-refer by calling the Intake toll-free telephone line, or a referral can be made on behalf of the person by their doctor, other health care professionals, a community agency or families.

During the process of Intake, a mental health and addictions Intake clinician will ask questions that help determine what services and supports best meet the needs of the individual seeking help. This service can link the individual seeking help with Community Mental Health and Addictions clinics, Withdrawal Management Services, or Opioid Replacement and Treatment Programs as well as refer them to other appropriate resources in their community.

When a person calls the toll-free intake line, at the beginning of the call they will be asked to help identify their geographic area that will route the call the most appropriate Intake team. Callers spend on average 30 minutes speaking with a mental health and addictions intake clinician who will provide support, and ask questions that will help match them with the services(s) most appropriate to their needs.

For more information on our Intake Service, visit [our website](#) and watch our [Intake Service video](#).

If you are experiencing a crisis our Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line is available 24/7 by calling 1-888-429-8167.



Check out some MHA tools and resources:

- [Adult Mental Health Treatment Algorithm](#) is a flow sheet containing all content covered in the Adult Mental Health Practice Support Program.
- [Cognitive Behavioural Interpersonal Skills \(CBIS\) Manual](#) provides an organized, guideline-based approach for primary care providers to assess patients and provide a variety of self-management treatment strategies.
- [Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health & Addictions \(CARMHA\)](#) includes tools and resources to support mental health care, including a manual of strategies effective in the self-management of depression: The Antidepressant Skills Workbook.
- [MindShift™ CBT app](#), developed by Anxiety Canada and free for download, is a consortium of CBT-based strategies useful for individuals experiencing anxiety.
- [Learning About the Current State of Digital Mental Health Interventions for Canadian Youth to Inform Future Decision-Making: Mixed Methods Study](#)



Training & Webinar Opportunities



MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is offering **Accredited Online Modules based on the MHCC Toolkit for e-Mental Health Implementation**. They are designed to give mental health providers, managers, and leaders the knowledge and skills to integrate e-mental health into daily practice. MHCC suggest allowing 10 to 12 weeks to complete with 4 to 6 hours dedicated per module. A certificate will be granted upon completion. For more information [click here](#).

MHCC has released **a guide to Suicide Prevention in the Workplace**. The guide helps to navigate difficult conversations for employers, managers, and co-workers, and includes tips for those who work with the public. In addition, it offers information for your own mental health, and ways to help facilitate meaningful conversations in the workplace about suicide, that will provide support and resources, and bring hope to someone who may be struggling with the thought of suicide. For more information and to access the guide [click here](#).

COVID-19 and People Living With Serious Mental Illness Policy Brief provides an overview of issues faced by people living with serious mental illnesses (and their circles of care) during COVID-19, along with considerations for policy development as we move into the post-pandemic period.

COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH CENTRE

Dr. Lori Wozney, Health Outcomes Scientist, Tara MacDonald, Clinical Manager of Addictions Services, Dr. Julie MacDonald, Advanced Practice Lead, Child and Adolescent Services and Jill Chorney, Mental Health and Addictions with the IWK have published an original paper in the Journal of Medical Internet Research. The paper is titled: Learning about the Current State of Digital Mental Health Interventions for Canadian Youth to Inform Future Decision-Making: Mixed Methods Study. The study looks at how the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand for youth mental health services in Canada as disruptions to clinical care continue to persist due to the risk of transmission and exposure to the virus. It discusses digital mental health interventions, including web-based resources and mobile apps, and how they have provided opportunities to support youth mental health remotely across Canada. Their study speaks to the need to better understand how these digital interventions are being selected, recommended, and used in various regions across Canada. To read the paper [click here](#).

David Devine, Clinical Therapist, MHAP and Liane Khoury, Health Promotion, MHAP will be taking part in a panel presentation on October 28, on *Rebuilding queer space in rural/semi-rural Nova Scotia*. The presentation is part of Summit 2021 a free conference hosted by Community-Based Research Centre (CBRC). Their presentation will be promoting the research and invention development of health for gay, bi, trans, Two-Spirit, and queer men (GBT2Q). The Summit provides the opportunity to listen and hear from people with lived experience and think about how to build more inclusive policies and programming. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

THE FRESH OUTLOOK FOUNDATION

The Fresh Outlook Foundation just hosted a **virtual HEADS UP! Community Mental Health Summit called VITAL LINKS: Rallying from Isolation, Loneliness & Depression to Connection, Contribution & Joy**. Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Head of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry, participated and shared practical mental health solutions for loneliness in a post COVID world. He also talked about related research, the role of genetics in people's propensity for isolation/loneliness, societal contributors such as stigma, and the importance of collaboration and integrated care among mental health professionals. For more information and to watch the session [click here](#).



Want to be featured or have an update to share?
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