WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
Mental Health

WE’RE IN IT TOGETHER

Understanding Conditions
Emerging Therapies
Who’s at Risk?
How to Get Help

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

island health
United Way Greater Victoria
Camosun College
Black Press Media

Bateman Foundation
Gallery of Nature
A little boost can make a big difference.

BoosterBuddy is a free app to help young people improve their mental health.

islandhealth.ca/boosterbuddy
**BY THE NUMBERS:**

Statistics from Canadian Mental Health Association, Victoria Foundation, and other government agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>84,000</td>
<td>Children and youth in BC have a diagnosed mental disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>Canadians, in any given week, are unable to work due to mental illness</td>
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<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Of BC residents are experiencing a mental illness or substance issue today</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>Of Vancouver Island residents have mental health challenges</td>
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<td>20%</td>
<td>In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness</td>
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**SUICIDE TOP 3**

Victoria was one of three BC cities with the highest number of suicides in 2016

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<th>Statistic</th>
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<td>Mental disorders account for more of the global burden of disease than ALL CANCERS COMBINED</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>44.5% Of first responders have PTSD</td>
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<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Of hospital stays are due to mental disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Of study respondents who feel they've suffered from depression or anxiety haven't seen a doctor about it</td>
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**Vancouver Island Crisis Line**

1-888-494-3888

7 days/week 24 hours/day

Crisis Chat

www.vicrisis.ca

Crisis Text

250-800-3806

Both from 6pm to 10pm 7 days/week

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**Life doesn’t end with a prostate cancer diagnosis.**

Lean on us.

Rest assured – you’ve come to the right place. We’re ready to support you in living to the fullest with health guidance and emotional support to navigate a prostate cancer diagnosis, right from the start.

Our services are always free. No referral required. Visit us today: islandprostatecentre.com

100-1121 Yates Street | Tel: 250.388.0214 | Mon–Thurs 9–6:30
Mental health is not just in our heads. 1 in 4 people on Vancouver Island will encounter mental health challenges during their lifetimes, whether it be depression or anxiety disorders that compromise their lifestyles and their well-being.

We know that good mental health is fundamental to our quality of life. But many of us struggle in silence. United Way takes a collaborative approach in tackling complex #UNIGNORABLE social issues like mental health. We fund a network of agencies that provide community-based programs and services focused on mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.

We’ve been a cornerstone in Greater Victoria for 82 years, working to build a strong, healthy community, one where everyone gets the help they need. Last year, thanks to the generous support of individuals and corporate donors, United Way positively changed the lives of more than 80,000 people.

Too often stigma gets in the way of asking for help. That’s why we are proud to work once again with Black Press in sponsoring this important resource guide. Together, let’s bring mental health issues into our everyday conversations, listen when people need help and be more aware of the myriad services available to help.

Mike Macdonell, Chair, Board of Directors, United Way Greater Victoria

In the words of legendary wildlife artist Robert Bateman, “Nature is magic.”

The Bateman Foundation was established in 2012 and is a national public charity that uses art to connect Canadians to nature, combating the increased levels of depression and anxiety caused by nature deprivation and the ever-increasing prevalence of screens in our lives.

Through educational programming, like our signature Nature Sketch program, and exhibits at the Bateman Gallery of Nature in Victoria’s Inner Harbour, we work to highlight the remarkable healing powers of the natural world.

We are proud to be working with Black Press on this important guide: mental health affects us all, and while we are not medical professionals, we know that the beauty of nature is invaluable when practising mindfulness.

The many stresses of modern life can be overwhelming, and we easily forget about the tools we can access by simply going outside.

Our goal is to shift this focus. We hope this guide will be a valuable resource that promotes awareness, empathy, and understanding of the modern condition.

John Bateman, The Bateman Foundation

At Camosun College, our vision is inspiring life-changing learning and our mission it to build a better future for our community with relevant, innovative and applied education.

Our values are: life-long learning, positive and supportive student experiences, an inclusive community, an environment of respect and safety for all, our relationships with one another, and indigenization.

By living our values, we foster a campus environment that supports the mental health and well-being of our students, faculty, staff and community.

Our new Advanced Mental Health and Addictions and Criminal Justice certificate program provides students with the knowledge and skills to work with individuals and groups in a variety of settings. Graduates of the program use the principles of psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery to support people living with mental health and addiction challenges to live the life they envision for themselves. Camosun is pleased to support the publication of the Mental Health Resource Guide, because when it comes to mental health and the well-being of our community, we’re all in it together.

Wendy Taylor, Incoming Chair, Criminal Justice Program
Inside this special report

Black Press Media’s Victoria News and Monday Magazine are proud to share with the community this special report exploring mental health in the Capital Region.

Few issues reach quite as far as this one, affecting all of us in one way or another.

Consider that one in four people will experience mental health challenges in their lifetimes. That in 2016, Victoria, was one of three BC cities with the highest number of suicides. That 84,000 children and youth in BC have a diagnosed mental disorder.

We also know that mental health challenges aren’t limited to age or gender or socio-economic group. We are all susceptible, as are our family members, our friends, our co-workers and neighbours.

The implications of that – personally, economically and societally – are significant, and it’s with that in mind that we share this guide.

In it we explore common mental health concerns, symptoms to watch for, and suggestions for improving and supporting our mental health.

Throughout this guide, you’ll find local resources you can turn to for additional information and vital resources.

With information comes awareness and understanding, with the goal of reducing the stigma that prevents people from seeking the help they need.

Black Press Media extends its thanks to our community sponsors – United Way Greater Victoria, the Bateman Foundation, Camosun College and Island Health. When our team proposed the Mental Health Guide, they completely supported the project and were involved every step of the way.

We are grateful for their support and participation, and for the many people working to make a difference in the mental health of our community.

Thank you.
Getting young people the mental health supports they need

Today, young people face significant pressures and challenges that can contribute to added stress, anxiety and depression. That’s why our government is working hard to build a wraparound system of mental health and addiction care where young people, students and their families can access support wherever they are: at home, in the community or at school.

As part of that plan, we created A Pathway to Hope, our government’s 10-year vision for improving mental health and addictions care so that we can help young people address their challenges before they turn into roadblocks.

We’ve announced almost $12 million in grant funding to support school-based mental health programs focused on identifying issues early, preventing issues from snowballing into bigger challenges, and on promoting overall mental health and wellness across the province.

In the community, we’re so proud to be opening even more Foundry centres – ‘one-stop-shops’ for youth to access care and early interventions. There are currently nine Foundry centres across the province, with plans to expand that model to include a total of 19 in the next two years!

We are also launching new integrated child and youth mental health teams in the Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows and the Comox Valley school districts. These teams will connect children and youth to the right care early on and streamline services so young people and families don’t have to tell their stories over and over again. In the coming year we will be announcing three more school districts with integrated teams. As well, to improve substance use services for youth in Chilliwack, a new regional 20-bed Youth Substance Use Treatment facility is scheduled to open in spring 2020.

We are also working with the Ministry of Health to expanding our primary care networks to incorporate mental health and substance use services for families, to make access to these vital services even easier.

We, along with the Ministry of Advanced Education, are also developing a 24/7 mental health line for post-secondary students at all public and private post-secondary institutions in B.C. This service is scheduled to launch in spring 2020, after engaging with youth and post-secondary institutions on the service’s design.

This is just the beginning when it comes to helping our young people and teaching them to prioritize their mental health.

We’re working with school districts to make mental health a priority so that youth at an early age can learn that it’s okay to say, “I’m not okay” and get the help they need. Because we know that resolving small issues before they become big ones avoids needless suffering and costlier solutions down the road. And because we know that giving every child their best possible start yields tremendous gains for all of us.

Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions

When the news of the day isn’t good

Global warming, political turmoil, Coronovirus...sometimes the news isn’t just bad, it’s downright scary. “Bad news” isn’t anything new, of course, but today’s constant stream of information can make it seem overwhelming.

The Foundry shares a few ways you can take care of yourself when negative thoughts are hard to turn off:

• Set firm time limits. If you want to see the news, set a time to stop regardless of what you’re seeing.
• Try to not consume news before bedtime. Headlines can cause worry and lost sleep. During breaking news, it may be difficult to avoid updates, but it’s important you give yourself space to digest the headlines and wait to digest the story until the next day. If you’ve heard upsetting news before bed, find another activity for the evening such as reading a book or connecting with family.
• Make an effort to find good news.
• Set boundaries. Let others know you may be uncomfortable discussing current events. If someone insists, you can say, “I choose not to look into the news that would make me upset right now. I know it’s good to stay updated, but I want to take care of myself first.”
• Change up your social media feed. Don’t be afraid to unfollow sources or mute notifications to help limit what you’re seeing. Try to like or follow positive posts like inspirational quotes or cute animals you’re interested in, to help change the algorithm preferences of your social media. You can also step away from social media, even for a day.
• Take action – volunteer, donate or support causes you’re concerned about. Connect with others with similar views.
• Thank those in the community. Sending messages of gratitude to service people like firefighters, police officers, or charity organizations can help convey positive feelings.

To learn more about a wealth of mental health topics, visit foundrybc.ca
In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness; here in Victoria, 1 in 4 will experience challenges in their lifetime.

Affecting people of all ages, education, income levels and cultures, it’s safe to say that directly or indirectly, through a family member, friend or colleague, mental illness affects all Canadians at some time, says the Canadian Mental Health Association.

In fact, by age 40, half the population will have or have had a mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

What causes mental illness?

The causes include a complex combination of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors, CMHA notes.

The implications remain significant – on a personal level for affected individuals and their friends and loved ones, and for the community.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health notes that the economic impact of mental illness in Canada is estimated at $51 billion per year, including health care costs, lost productivity and reductions in health-related quality of life.

In any given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental health challenges.

Consider too that people with a mental illness are twice as likely to have a substance use problem compared to the general population, the centre notes. At least 20 per cent of people with a mental illness also have a substance use problem. For those with schizophrenia, the number may be as high as 50 per cent.

Promotion, prevention & early intervention

However, a growing body of international evidence shows that promotion, prevention and early intervention initiatives show positive returns on investment.

Of key importance is combatting the stigma surrounding mental illness, as this remains a serious barrier to individuals seeking treatment and community acceptance.

While mental illnesses can be effectively treated, almost half of those who feel they’ve suffered from depression or anxiety have never seen a doctor about it, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health says.

On a positive note, respondents to a 2015 survey said they believe attitudes about mental health issues have changed for the better compared to five years previously and 81 per cent were more aware of mental health issues.

[To learn more about combatting stigma, see page 18]

“Mental health is key to our well-being,” notes CMHA. “We can’t be truly healthy without it. It involves how we feel, think, act and interact with the world around us.”

Building resiliency

How can you support your mental health? Many of the same steps that support your mental health also support your physical wellness, including good nutrition, physical activity and social connections.

CMHA also suggests considering your emotional well-being – recognizing your emotions and what influences them – and taking care of your spiritual well-being, in whatever way resonates with you.

Work to build healthy self-esteem, build positive support networks, get involved in your community and build resiliency.

“Resiliency means coping well with problems, stress and other difficult situations. Problems and stress are a normal part of life. Situations like accidents or illness, unexpected life changes and conflict happen to everyone. Resiliency is what helps you look at the situation realistically, take action when you can make changes, let go of things you can’t change, and recognize the helpful supports in your life.”

For more information

Learn more at victoria.cmha.bc.ca and camh.ca.
How do you feel?
The Canadian Mental Health Association offers 3 tests to help evaluate your wellness:
• cmha.ca/mental-health-meter
• cmha.ca/whats-your-stress-index
• cmha.ca/work-life-balance-quiz

Wellness in the Workplace
Given that we spend much of our lives at work, it’s important that employees feel supported in their mental health.
The Victoria branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association – BC offers a variety of programs and workshops designed to help.
• Awareness of Mental Health at Work – a workshop designed to help build comfort in talking about mental health and mental illness, and learn how to respond in a supportive way to co-workers who may be experiencing a mental illness.
• For My Health! Workplace Screening – a fun and interactive health promotion event integrating physical and mental health screening and education.
• Mental Health Works – Talking about mental health at work can be challenging, but becoming more aware of signs of mental illnesses, and learning how to have those difficult discussions are part of being an effective leader.
• Safe and Sound – Creating a safe workplace goes beyond hard hats and ergonomics. It also means protecting the psychological health and safety of your employees.
• Suicide Prevention Training – Community Gatekeeper training is designed to help make BC communities safer, and help save lives, by preparing key members of every community with skills to help people who are at risk of suicide.
• Understanding Addiction – a unique online training program for those who work directly or indirectly with people who face challenges with addiction.
• Workplace Mental Health webinars – free one-hour webinars covering a range of workplace mental health strategies, and including valuable insights and lessons. Each provides practical advice, skills and tools to be used to support positive change in the workplaces.
For details, visit victoria.cmha.bc.ca.

Understanding Mental Illnesses
Health professionals divide mental illnesses into several different groups based on signs or symptoms.
The Canadian Mental Health Association describes some common groups of mental illnesses:

Anxiety disorders
Anxiety disorders are all related to anxiety. They may include excessive and uncontrollable worry, strong fears around everyday things or situations, unwanted thoughts, panic attacks, or fears around a past scary situation.
Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses, and can create barriers in people’s lives. Panic disorder and phobias are examples of anxiety disorders.

Mood disorders
Mood disorders all affect a person’s mood – the way they feel. This can affect every part of a person’s life.
When someone experiences a mood disorder, they may feel sad, hopeless, tired, or numb for long periods of time.
At times, some people experience an unusually ‘high’ mood and feel powerful and energetic, but this can also create problems.
Depression and bipolar disorder are examples of mood disorders.

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ANXIETY? You’re not alone

If you’ve experienced the heart-racing, stomach-churning signs of a panic attack, or a mind flooded with worry that something bad will happen, you’re not alone.

According to the organization Here To Help, anxiety is the most common type of mental disorder, affecting 12 per cent of BC’s population, or one in eight people, in a given year.

Anxiety disorders describe a group of related mental illnesses. While anxiety and stress problems can have much in common, in an anxiety disorder, symptoms are extreme and don’t go away once the stress is over.

Different types of anxiety disorders include phobias, post-traumatic stress, panic disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

Women are twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, for various reasons, including hormonal changes, caregiving stress, and greater comfort level than men in seeking help.

Anxiety disorders most often appear in youth, with phobias and OCD showing up in early childhood and panic disorders and social phobias in teen years. In fact, an estimated 6.5 per cent of BC youth have an anxiety disorder.

Other risk factors include family history, personality and social factors, occupational factors in the case of PTSD, and chronic illness.

However, anxiety disorders are among the most treatable mental illnesses. Treatment can include:
• Counselling – Many people with anxiety disorders benefit from cognitive-behavioural therapy. A mental health professional trained in CBT can help you work through the thoughts, emotions, behaviours and triggers contributing to your anxiety, and teach you coping skills.
• Medication – Anti-anxiety medications can be used in combination with counseling to reduce your body’s response to anxiety.
• Support groups – Share your experiences and learn from the experiences of others.
• Self-help – Regular exercise, eating well, managing stress, spending time with friends and family, spirituality and monitoring your use of alcohol and other drugs can help.

For more information:
AnxietyBC – anxietybc.com or 604-525-7566.
Heretohelp.bc.ca – info, tips and self-tests.
HealthLink BC – call 811 or visit healthlinkbc.ca to access free, non-emergency health information.

Recognizing depression

Like anxiety, depression can affect anybody – regardless of age or gender. A mood disorder, depression will affect 1 in 8 Canadians at some point in their lives, often arising during times of change, whether physical, like hormonal changes, or life changes, like leaving for university or retirement.

Youth and older adults are both at higher risk of depression, in addition to those with chronic illness, and with substance use problems. Those from different cultures may also hold beliefs about depression that can affect how they deal with it.

While depression is diagnosed twice as much in women as men, reasons include life-cycle changes, hormonal changes, higher rates of childhood abuse or relationship violence, and social pressures.

And because men may be less comfortable seeking help, depression in men may be high-under-reported. Men often feel emotionally numb or angry when depressed whereas women usually feel more emotional.

Like anxiety, treatment for depression can be very effective. Options include counselling, medication, light therapy, electroconvulsive therapy for those with severe depression or who can’t take medications or haven’t responded to other treatments, and self-help – exercise, nutrition and building connections.

For more information:
Mood Disorders Association of BC – mdabc.net; 1-855-282-7979
CMHA-BC Division – cmha.bc.ca or call 1-800-555-8222

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESSES

Eating disorders

Eating disorders really aren’t about food. They’re complicated illnesses that are often a way to cope with difficult problems or regain a sense of control.

Eating disorders may include seriously restricting how much food a person eats, bingeing, or purging food. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa are examples of eating disorders.

Psychotic disorders

Psychosis is a health problem that affects how people understand what is real and what isn’t real. People may sense things that aren’t real or strongly believe things that can’t be real.

Schizophrenia is one example of a psychotic disorder.

Personality disorders

Personality disorders are patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that may last for a long time and create challenges in a person’s life.

People who experience personality disorders may have difficulties developing healthy and satisfying relationships with others, managing their emotions well, avoiding harmful behaviour, and working toward important life goals.

Personality disorders can affect the way people understand and view themselves and others, and how they cope with problems.

Borderline personality disorder is one example of a personality disorder.

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When it comes to our mental health, so much can start from talking about what we’re feeling, and what’s going on for us. No matter what you’re experiencing, sharing can help you feel less alone, especially when you’ve been struggling to handle everything yourself.

How to get started, though? Sometimes that’s not so easy. The Foundry offers some suggestions to get the conversation going.

Who do I want to talk to?
It can be helpful to look for someone who you’re comfortable with, someone you trust, who won’t judge you or downplay what you’re going through, will respect your privacy, will take you seriously, and will be understanding and accepting.

If you just want to talk, a friend may be a great choice.
If you want to find professional help, an adult, such as a parent, doctor or teacher, might be a better choice.
And if you’re not sure where to start, or prefer to talk to someone anonymously, phone, text and online chat options are available. Here are some options:
• Parent, or other family member
• Partner/boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse
• Friend or co-worker
• Teacher/school counsellor/coach
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• Peer support worker
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What kind of help do I want from them?
You might find it helpful to think ahead about what kind of support you’re looking for – do you just want to talk, are you looking for more information or to find services such as counselling? Writing down a few notes might also be helpful.

How do I want to communicate?
There’s no right way to reach out to start the conversation, so do what feels most comfortable for you – face-to-face, phone or text, online chat or email.

Starting the conversation
Start by explaining that you need help with a problem – you might think of a few examples of what’s going on to help them better understand.
If you’re unsure how the person will react, you could test the waters, perhaps talking about a story you read in the news that’s similar to your challenge, and see how the person reacts. This will offer an idea of their views and whether they’re likely to be supportive.
You could also start a conversation more generally – talk about how you’ve not been feeling great, rather than saying you’re feeling depressed/anxious/stressed/etc.
Be prepared for a range of different reactions, and remember that someone’s initial reaction isn’t always their longer term reaction. The person may be surprised at the information you share and it may take a little while for them to process it. Life is full of ups and downs, and sharing our experiences with the people who care about us can help make things better.
For more information, visit foundrybc.ca

A note on suicide
Suicide, when someone ends their life on purpose, is not a mental illness in itself. Not all people who die by suicide experience a mental illness.
However, suicide may be linked to many different mental illnesses. It’s important to take any talk or thoughts of suicide seriously and seek help.
To learn more, visit cmha.ca.

Childhood disorders
This is a large group of mental illnesses that start to affect people when they’re young, though some people are not diagnosed until they’re older.
One example of a disorder in this group is attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (or ADHD), which affects a person’s ability to focus, complete tasks, plan or organize, sit still, or think through actions.

Dementia
Dementia refers to a group of symptoms. It can be caused by a disease that mainly affects nerve cells in the brain or can be associated with many other medical conditions.
Dementia impacts a person’s memory, language abilities, concentration, organization skills, mood and behaviours. Alzheimer’s disease is one type of dementia.

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#UNIGNORABLE: Connecting for mental health

It seems obvious: good mental health and well-being help us enjoy our life and the people in it. Individuals struggling with mental health issues can experience fear, rejection and stigma that severely impacts their quality of life including social connections, housing and employment.

Did you know that 1 in 4 people on Vancouver Island experience mental health challenges?

For AJ, there was a time when mental health challenges controlled his life. When he was a little boy, he was diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) that led to other diagnoses, including anxiety and depression.

AJ’s illness made it difficult to get along with his family; his depression got to the point where it was so bad, it manifested as suicidal thoughts. By the time he was 18, he was homeless, with no money and no education. “I felt like no one was listening to me,” he says.

AJ got help through a United Way-funded program that reconnected him to programs and services including counselling, housing, peer support and skill development. Now AJ volunteers with youth as a peer support worker. “It really helps me to be able to help others. I no longer feel like a burden on society,” he says.

Mental health is one of our critical community needs. While Island Health and first responders provide urgent medical responses to mental health issues, United Way works with funded community partners on initiatives focused on mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention.

When you give to United Way Greater Victoria you’re helping ensure that those people impacted by mental health issues, like AJ, can easily access the services they need. When we care for and about each other, we’re creating a strong, inclusive community that can tackle #UNIGNORABLE issues like mental health.

Learn more at uwgv.ca/unignorable/
Camosun launches multi-disciplinary certificate program

Those working with people living with mental illness or substance use disorders know their needs are rarely served in isolation.

A new program starting this September from Camosun College recognizes this, bringing together multidisciplinary knowledge and expertise for the Mental Health, Addictions and Criminal Justice Advanced certificate.

“Working in partnership with our mental health program at Camosun, we saw a need,” explains Wendy Taylor, incoming chair of Camosun’s Criminal Justice department.

“The criminal justice system today is over-represented with individuals having mental health and addiction challenges and the program focuses on ways to better meet their needs in the community with an integrated, collaborative approach.”

The certificate will focus on skills and strategies, taking an applied learning approach that embraces the expertise from mental health, social services and the criminal justice system.

“I’m excited by how much all of us as instructors and students will learn from each other,” says Taylor. “I have both experience working in the field and supporting a family member who has been involved in the mental health system for a few years so I’m very passionate about this.”

The eight-month program features four courses delivered online, allowing students working in the field to accommodate their work and program schedules.

Operating from a social justice perspective, the Mental Health, Addictions, and Criminal Justice program emphasizes the values related to and importance of: social responsibility, advocacy, community-capacity building, and interprofessional practice.

Upon completion, students will have an enhanced understanding and ability to provide integrated services and supports, as well as to advocate for change in the health and justice systems that individuals with mental health or substance use challenges experience.

Graduates will gain systemic level awareness and skills to navigate and support individuals with mental health and/or addiction challenges in residential settings and the community. Students may be currently working in or looking to pursue a career with mental health, addictions, community and criminal justice agencies. A bachelor degree, diploma or combination of education and experience is required. For more information, please email MHCJ@camosun.bc.ca or visit camosun.ca/mhacj

Mental Health, Addictions, and Criminal Justice program launches in September at Camosun College.

MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTIONS, AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
ADVANCED CERTIFICATE • 8 MONTHS • ONLINE • ARTS & SCIENCE - HEALTH & HUMAN RESOURCES

Apply an interprofessional approach to the provision of services and supports for individuals with mental health and substance use challenges in contact with the mental health, social services, and the criminal justice system.

WE WILL HELP YOU
• Enhance your ability to provide integrated services and supports.
• Advocate for systemic change.
• Build skills and strategies.

ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE?
The Mental Health, Addictions, and Criminal Justice program values
• social responsibility
• advocacy
• community-capacity building
• interprofessional practice

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
As a graduate, you will have systemic level awareness and skills to navigate and support individuals with mental health and/or addiction challenges in residential and community. You will enhance your existing skills to better advocate, support, and serve clients.

For more information: MHCJ@camosun.bc.ca
camosun.ca/learn/programs/mental-health-addictions-criminal-justice
camosun.ca/mhacj
Smart solutions for student well-being

The transition from high school and life with family and old friends to the new post-secondary environment can be challenging for many students; for others, it can be overwhelming.

The good news? There are strategies that can help. Here are a few suggestions from Camosun College.

Well-being strategies
- Create and follow a study schedule within your weekly routine.
- Practice anxiety/stress management strategies before tests.
- Clarify assignment expectations; seek feedback from instructors.
- Use learning support services available at your school.
- Clarify program requirements and course selection; clarify academic and career goals.
- Join study groups.
- Seek volunteer opportunities for experiential learning.
- Use campus counselling and other services as needed.

Cognitive well-being
- Challenge perfectionism; monitor negative self-talk; avoid self-judgment and "shoulds."
- Focus more on positive accomplishments and less on shortcomings.
- Take breaks from your studying routine to refresh and recharge.
- Monitor and limit illogical or irrational thinking.
- Reward your mental efforts and shift perspective with healthy, enjoyable activities.

Emotional well-being
- Pay attention to your emotional experience; share your feelings.
- Notice when you experience emotional distress and how it impacts you.
- Find time to validate your emotions with significant friends/partner.
- Regularly practice meditation or relaxation techniques.
- Spend time with non-judgmental, supportive friends and family.
- Try to have a positive outlook; ask for help when needed; make time for fun, laughter and creative expression.

Physical well-being
- Even small amounts of physical activity can improve and maintain well-being.
- Maintain a regular sleep schedule.
- Prepare healthy meals with leftovers and nutritious snacks.
- Join in fitness, yoga or other active programs on campus.
- Limit alcohol, substance and tobacco use.
- Practice safe sex – look for resources on campus.
- Follow your healthcare provider’s suggestions.

Financial well-being
- Create a realistic estimate of the financial costs of your student lifestyle and track your spending.
- Rely on debit or cash rather than credit cards for purchases; avoid purchasing items you don’t need.
- Locate budget food outlets and food banks, on and off campus.
- Seek help understanding, applying for and managing student loans/grants.

Social well-being
- Practice open, clear communication in your social interactions.
- Be respectful of your own and others’ needs; ask for what you need.
- Share feelings and be receptive to the emotional expression of others.
- Set clear boundaries; practice assertive communication when required.
- Problem-solve minor conflicts to resolve differences.
- Spend time with friends and family who practice healthy communication.

Environmental well-being
- Use sustainable practices when possible.
- Connect with the environment – walk, hike, camp, ski or practice mindfulness in nature.
- Practice personal safety in the use of alcohol, substances and sex.
- Seek support from counselling, campus security, ombudsperson, the sexual health centre or a community service if your personal safety is at risk or has been violated.

Spiritual well-being
- Develop a spiritual/meditative practice for deeper personal reflection.
- Practice self-compassion and compassion for others who may hold different beliefs; be open to others’ spiritual beliefs and cultural practices.
- Participate in activities that encourage mind-body-spirit connection.
- Develop a reflective practice such as journaling or the creative arts.
- Find ways to connect with a community that feels spiritually fulfilling.

Find more tips at camosun.ca

Get the app!
Mindshift is a free mobile app for managing anxiety
BoosterBuddy is a free mobile app to help young people improve their mental health

We’re In It Together / On Campus
TALKING
with your teens about mental health

Teen years can be challenging times when it comes to mental health. Not only do youth face changing bodies, hormones and school and family pressures, but today’s 24/7 society and pervasive social media add pressures unseen by previous generations.

So, if a teen comes to you with mental health concerns or questions, how should you react?

Here are some suggestions from the Canadian Mental Health Association:
• Take their concerns seriously. It might be easy to dismiss a teenager’s concerns as ‘just hormones’ or ‘just another part of growing up,’ but that isn’t helpful. Even if you can’t relate to the problem, you can still express concerns about your teen’s worry or distress.
• Take time to listen – without judgment. If you’re in the middle of something else, find a time later in the day when you can talk and give them your full attention.
• Don’t judge what you hear. Just listen and be there.
• Ask your teen what they need. They might already have a good idea of the next steps they’d like to take.
• Don’t worry about having all the answers right away. This can be an opportunity to learn together.
• Offer alternatives. It can be difficult for some teens to talk with their parents about some subjects. Give additional places to seek support, such as a school counsellor, another family member, a local mental health or youth organization, a website, or a phone line.
• Talk about safe situations to share personal details. It’s very hard to take information back once it’s posted on social media or shared with others, so encourage your teen to think about safe places to talk and seek support.
• Seek outside help if you need to. Your family doctor is a great place to start. They may be able to assess problems and provide treatment. They’ll also refer your teen to specialized mental health services, if needed. School counsellors

Resources:
Living Life to the Full for Youth – A fun, interactive course providing 13- to 18-year-olds with the inspiration and tools to get the most out of life. This eight-week community-based course provides simple, practical skills for coping with stress, problem solving, boosting mood, and busting bad thoughts, and has been shown to improve mood and well-being and reduce stress and anxiety.
Info: bluewavebc.ca

Janice Lee Blue Wave Bursary – A post-secondary bursary program open to BC youth under age 20 who have experienced a significant mental health or substance use problem.
Info: bluewavebc.ca

Talk Today – A mental health education program from Canadian Mental Health Association – BC, developed for the BC Hockey League, to help athletes and their supporters learn about mental health and to help support players who may be struggling or at risk of suicide.
Info: cmha.bc.ca

Did you know? 1 in 7 youth will experience a mental illness at some point. – cmha.bc.ca
can also help, offering supports at school, and referring your teen to resources in the community.

**Just listen and be there**

Many mental illnesses start during the teen years, yet many teens don’t receive the help they need right away. Working towards good mental health and seeking help early means teens can get back on their feet quicker when problems arise.

**When should I talk to my teen?**

Make mental health an ongoing topic of conversation.

Be there and be interested whenever your teen wants to talk, and don’t be afraid to ask questions to get the conversation started.

You can also bring up mental health when you notice your teen is going through a stressful period or is expressing a lot of negative thoughts about themselves or the situation.

Everyone will have a bad day, or even a bad week, at times. It’s normal to feel low, stressed or anxious when experiencing conflict, disappointment, loss or other upsetting situations.

The key is that the feelings should match the situation and you should start to feel better as things improve. For example, if they feel anxious about a school project, the feelings should go away when the project is finished.

**What do I say?**

The more you model these key messages yourself, the more effective they’ll be.

Mental health is an important part of everyone’s health. When you have good mental health, you can cope better with stress.

When you have poor mental health, you might have a harder time feeling good about yourself.

Mental health changes just like physical health can, so don’t ignore problems. Even if you’re diagnosed with a mental illness, mental illnesses are treatable.

You don’t need to have all the answers. You just need to be open, curious and compassionate.

**Do you need more help?**

Contact a community organization like the Victoria branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, or the other organizations listed in the Resources section of this guide to learn more about support and resources in the local community.

Learn more at cmha.ca.

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**Signs a young person may need support**

Because mental health challenges often start as vague, subtle changes, it can be difficult to tell if something is going on.

Further complicating matters, a young person may wrestle with their difficulties for some time and not tell anyone. To others, they appear to be doing well, but inside, they may be distressed, confused and scared.

The Foundry shares the following signs that a young person may be struggling and need support:

- Reduced interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Persistent low mood
- Worries much of the time
- Very anxious when around other people
- Irritable and easily frustrated
- Expresses feelings of worthlessness and uselessness
- Has trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Withdrawn from family and friends; spends considerable amount of time alone
- School performance has dropped or they’re not attending school
- Change in eating habits or preoccupation with weight
- Feels tired all the time and has no energy
- Decreased need for sleep
- Complains of headaches, nausea or other physical symptoms not linked to a physical health problem
- Engaging in self-injuring behaviours
- Beginning or increasing substance use
- Expresses odd beliefs that don’t seem to have any basis in reality*
- Appears at times to be talking to someone but there is no one there*
* Seek professional advice if you observe these last two signs. They may be indications of emerging psychosis.

The signs listed above do not always mean that a person is struggling with a mental health challenge. Mental health challenges are typically characterized by: A pattern of changes; changes that persist or increase in severity over time; distress; and decline in functioning, such as school or work, relationships with family and friends, or recreational activities.

For more information, including numerous resources, visit foundrybc.ca, visit in Victoria at 818 Douglas St. or call 250-383-3552.
Eco-anxiety

Eco-anxiety is a type of stress caused by seeing the negative effects of climate change and worrying about the future for yourself and later generations, explains The Foundry.

Feelings of helplessness, loss and frustration can also arise when we feel unable to make a difference in stopping climate change.

The Foundry offers a few tips that may help:
• Connect with family, friends, neighbours and community groups about your feelings toward climate change. Check out youth-led events led by Climate Strike Canada and Fridays for Future Canada. You can volunteer with organizations such as BC Parks, Wildlife Rescue Association of BC or Environmental Youth Alliance.
• Start a climate change initiative in your own community.
• Spend time in green spaces. Time in nature, such as parks, beaches and trails can reduce stress. See the places you want to protect.
• Learn what you can do. You’re not powerless in the fight against climate change: use reusable bags, use energy wisely and eat less red meat.
• Talk to a counsellor or therapist. They may not be climate experts, but they understand overwhelming feelings and how to approach them. Consider reaching out if you notice stress and worry affecting your daily life. Learn more at foundrybc.ca

Nature Sketch is the Bateman Foundation’s flagship art education program.

Now in its third year, it aims to inspire appreciation of the natural world, offering a cultural lens for exploring the outdoors and developing mental wellness tools.

Guided by an artist and naturalist, participants learn about the wildlife and different ecosystems in their community using established eco-literacy principles and sketching inspiration from world-renowned artist and naturalist, Robert Bateman.

Technology is an inherent part of modern life. We look at screens all day. We are online more than ever before: more informed, more aware, more overwhelmed. We see everything and yet feel helpless.

The younger generations are struggling in ways we can barely comprehend: many spend more than six hours a day on screens, but less than 30 minutes a week in nature, and the constant pressures of technology and social media have spiked alarming rates of anxiety and depression. Nature Sketch was created as an antidote to this, taking the philosophies of Robert Bateman and using them to combat the effects of nature deprivation, reconnecting Canadians with the beauty of the natural world. Your local environment has many wellness tools to offer, and this program teaches how to access them using a pencil and sketchbook.

Nature Sketch: Mindfulness in nature

The very act of sketching is a mindful one, and as participants learn to slow down and observe their surroundings, they develop a deeper appreciation for nature’s gifts.

The ultimate goal is to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between humans and mother nature: as Robert Bateman says, “the more people know and fall in love with nature, the more they will protect her.”

Now more than ever, we need that bond.

The Bateman Foundation’s mission is aided by a number of key partners, such as Anxiety Canada, who help us deliver Nature Sketch workshops to children with mental health difficulties at the Vancouver School District and at BC Children’s Hospital.

In 2019 we reached more than 3,000 children through these partnerships, a coast-to-coast-to-coast event across the Trans Canada Trail, and school programs at the Bateman Gallery of Nature in Victoria.

In 2020, we want to reach more!

With a goal of helping 10,000 children across Canada, we are gratefully accepting donations towards sending classrooms to Nature Sketch programs in their local areas, and hosting Nature Sketch family programs for low-income families and children with medical challenges.

Plus, in honour of Robert Bateman's...
90th birthday in May, we’ll distribute 33,000 Nature Sketch journals across the country, asking people to step outside and sketch what they see. Join the Foundation in taking the time to be mindful. And don’t forget to share your work with the hashtag #mynaturesketch!

To get involved with the Bateman Foundation, you can...

- Sign up for a Nature Sketch class in your area (there are Junior and Adult versions available): batemanfoundation.org/naturesketch/
- Visit the Bateman Gallery of Nature at the Steamship Terminal, 370 Belleville Street: batemanfoundation.org/visit/
- Volunteer or donate: batemanfoundation.org/support-us/

Podcast: Where You Are
Promote your family’s mental health and wellness from Where You Are to where you want to be.

Hosted by Char Black and Bryn Askwith, from Mental Health Literacy, and Michelle Horn, from Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre, this podcast shares real stories, expertise and practical tips, to help families promote their mental health and wellness.

Each episode, the hosts join in conversation with parents and caregivers, youth and health professionals, and challenge some of the myths, stereotypes, and stigma that surround mental health. The episodes empower children, youth and families by providing reliable mental health and substance use information in a way that is understandable and relatable.

Learn more at keltymentalhealth.ca/podcast

The Bateman Foundation’s Nature Sketch Program shares established eco-literacy principles and sketching inspiration from renowned artist and naturalist, Robert Bateman.

Listen to John Bateman’s #OurAnxietyStories – the Anxiety Canada Podcast to hear people from all walks of life share their experiences with anxiety: anxietycanada.com/articles/ouranxietystories-podcast/
A ccording to Canada’s Mental Health Commission, 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health problem or illness every year. That’s about 7 million of us. Despite how common it is, mental illness continues to be met with widespread stigma, often from our own friends and family.

Mental Illness: Feeling the pain of stigma

“How does stigma feel? It’s like wearing a letter of shame; a body-blow when people shun you. It can crush you down and add to the pain of what you’re already dealing with,” says Lisa Ridgway, a member of the Patient Voices Network.

By Susan Evans, Editor, Island Health magazine

According to researchers, the more stigma can be reduced, the better the outcomes for people and programs promoting mental health.

Lisa Ridgway was diagnosed with treatment-resistant depression in late 2016; she found successful treatment with her psychiatrist, Dr. Song and through Island Health’s Mental Wellness Day Program at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. Her illness and recovery inspired her to give back through the Patient Voices Network.

“I didn’t open up about my illness with colleagues; I was a lawyer for 15 years – although I had started to back away from my practice and was no longer in court. I knew that, for the most part, lawyers are afraid of mental illness,” says Ridgway. “I felt that if I shared what was going on with me, I would be judged negatively. I really felt like I couldn’t reach out to colleagues for help.”

Those with mental health problems may feel shame or guilt – you might not want your employer or even your friends to know. This is called “self-stigma” and it can keep...
Continued from page 18

you from getting treatment or finding work. "The stigma I felt most was probably self-imposed. I put a lot of expectations on myself and being unable to meet those expectations, both personally and professionally, felt like I failed myself," says Ridgway.

"To compound my feelings of self-stigma, I also found that some family members and friends were uncomfortable around me – they were concerned that I would be unpredictable or simply didn’t know how to talk to me, so they avoided or even dropped me from their lives,” adds Ridgway.

LEVELS OF STIGMA

Stigma can be experienced on three levels: self-stigma, public stigma and structural stigma.

SELF-STIGMA occurs when people feel ashamed and blameworthy, and try to conceal their illness from others. This may include avoiding situations where they think they might feel stigmatized. Avoiding stigma is thought to be one of the key reasons why the majority of people with a mental illness don’t seek care.

PUBLIC STIGMA encompasses all the prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours expressed toward people with a mental illness by members of the public – attitudes that are often resistant to change. These include the ideas that people with a mental illness can never recover; they are violent and unpredictable; and they are blameworthy and could control their illness.

STRUCTURAL STIGMA occurs at the level of institutions, policies and laws. It creates situations in which people with a mental illness are treated inequitably and unfairly – for example, when they’re denied their basic human rights, or when policy agendas do not give mental health issues high priority.

How can we change attitudes? How can we stop stigmatizing those with mental illness?

"Mental health is as critical to your well-being as physical health,” says Ridgway. “If you ask someone ‘how are you?’, actually mean it, and if they tell you they are experiencing some mental health issues, then really listen. It’s the normalization of mental health – the acceptance of the everyday nature of mental health for everyone.”

The annual Bell Let’s Talk Day and awareness campaign is well recognized for its effort to help reduce stigma and promote awareness and understanding.

This campaign is designed to drive the national conversation to help reduce this stigma and promote awareness and understanding. Bell believes that “talking is an important first step towards lasting change.”

“Let’s not make mental illness a secret anymore,” says Ridgway. “It’s not a family secret or secret between spouses or a secret from the people you work with. The more we talk about it, the better for everyone.”

Reprinted with permission from the winter issue, Island Health magazine.

Get Connected
Make A Difference
Be Involved

Volunteer Access Program provides support to people on a mental health and/or substance use journey. We connect people with opportunities to volunteer. Email Debbie@volunteervictoria.bc.ca

Mental Health Visiting and Activity Program recruits volunteers to assist residents living in mental health group homes with recreation, fitness, arts and crafts, or to go on outings. One-on-one or group activities. Email Maryann@volunteervictoria.bc.ca

Volunteer Victoria: We Inspire New Generations of Volunteers volunteervictoria.bc.ca
Many people will experience some symptoms from time to time but they become a problem when they keep returning or don’t go away.

- Get confused when people say you look too thin, because you don’t see yourself that way?

Feelings – Do you:
- Feel guilt or shame after eating large amounts of food?
- Feel you’re worthless or don’t deserve food?
- Feel out of control when you go on an eating binge?

Behaviours – Do you:
- Not eat even when hungry
- Go on diets often
- Have strict rules about what you can and can’t eat
- Eat less and less over time
- Count calories for everything you eat
- Spend a lot of time exercising to burn off calories or punish yourself for eating
- Prefer to eat alone and are secretive about eating habits
- Use steroids and protein drinks to build muscle
- Try to avoid social situations where people will be eating
- Argue with others when they say you should eat more or exercise less
- Stop doing activities that were fun or important to you
- Visit the bathroom immediately after eating
- Weigh yourself often

Concerned about someone else?
For more information, including how to support a friend or family member, visit foundrybc.ca.

Note: The Vancouver-based Looking Glass Foundation offers regular, free and anonymous online peer support services for people of all ages experiencing disordered eating, weight, or body image challenges. Learn more at lookingglassbc.com
According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, people with a mental illness are twice as likely to have a substance use problem compared to the general population. At least 20 per cent of people with a mental illness have a co-occurring substance use problem. For people with schizophrenia, the number may be as high as 50 per cent.

Similarly, people with substance use problems are up to three times more likely to have a mental illness. More than 15 per cent of people with a substance use problem have a co-occurring mental illness.

Additionally, the study found that 37 per cent of people diagnosed with an alcohol disorder will have a mental health disorder at some point in their lives and 53 per cent of those diagnosed with a substance use disorder other than alcohol will also have a mental health disorder at some point in their lives.

While there’s no simple cause of concurrent disorders, the Centre shares several reasons a person might develop both a mental health problem and a substance use problem:

- A person may turn to alcohol or drugs to cope with symptoms of a mental disorder, such as anxiety.
- Substance use may lead to situations that make mental disorders more likely to occur. For example, alcohol abuse may lead to a marriage break-up, which in turn can lead to major depression.
- For some, a common factor may lead to both mental health and substance use problems, such as a biological factor or an event such as emotional trauma.
- Some severe and chronic mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, make people more sensitive to substances; they may develop substance use problems with lower amounts of drug or alcohol use than people without a mental disorder.

The effects of concurrent disorders vary from person to person and may depend on substances used and mental health problems a person has and how severe the problems are. Some effects that tend to arise with concurrent disorders include more severe psychiatric symptoms, such as a worsening of depression; more severe effects from substance use; and increased suicidal feelings or behaviour.

To learn more, visit camh.ca
You can also learn more at island-health.ca/learn-about-health/substance-use-addiction
According to the World Health Organization, depression is among the most significant mental health concerns affecting older adults, and one that will pose greater concerns as the senior population here in Canada and around the world grows.

Different from normal feelings of sadness, grief or low energy, depression is an illness that causes you to feel sad or hopeless much of the time, explains HealthLinkBC.

Further, depression is not a normal byproduct of age.

Older adults may experience major life changes or challenges that trigger depression, such as losing a spouse, living with a long-term health problem, or leaving their family home.

Like others who experience a life change, older adults may feel sad and may grieve and recover, or they may develop depression. However, depression is often missed in older adults. Among those more likely to be depressed include:

- Older women.
- Those who have lost their partners.
- Those without friends or family who can support them.
- Those who’ve had a medical problem such as a heart attack, stroke or broken hip or with chronic pain or illness.
- Those who’ve had depression before or have a family history of depression.

In older adults, untreated depression can last for years and can lead to or worsen other physical and mental health problems. It also makes suicide more likely, HealthLinkBC notes.

Common symptoms of depression, such as sadness and loss of interest, occur in older adults just as they do in younger adults. But older adults also may:

- Feel confused or forgetful.
- Stop seeing friends and doing things.
- Have a hard time sleeping.
- Not feel like eating.
- Because these symptoms are sometimes like symptoms of other diseases, depression may not be recognized. Forgetting things might be seen as a sign of dementia rather than depression. But people can have both.
- Certain medicines may also cause depression.

Older adults may avoid seeking help for depression, perhaps because of related stigma; sometimes the cost of medicines and treatment can prevent older adults from seeking help.

If your doctor thinks you are depressed, they’ll ask you questions about your health and feelings. This is called a mental health assessment.

From staying active to staying connected, seniors have many strategies for addressing and preventing depression. Learn more at healthlinkbc.ca or victoria.cmha.bc.ca

Grief is the road you travel

Let us walk with you

No prior connection to Victoria Hospice is required.

Find out more about our services:
VictoriaHospice.org • 250-519-3040

LANA POPHAM
MLA Saanich South
Saanich South Community Office
260 – 4243 Glenford Ave. | 250.479.4154
lana.popham.mla@leg.bc.ca | www.saanichsouth.ca
Today, more Canadians take care of friends, family members and loved ones of all ages living with a mental health concern, whether they live together at home or not.

While caring for a loved one can be rewarding, it can also be tiring, overwhelming and stressful.

And though many caregivers feel obligated to put others’ needs before their own, taking care of yourself will help you avoid burnout, isolation, depression, anxiety and other problems that may arise, explains the Canadian Mental Health Association – BC.

Ongoing education can help you understand what’s going on and build realistic and hopeful expectations. This includes learning about available mental health and social services in the community. With your loved one’s permission, you can also ask their mental health care team for information and advice.

Be mindful of extra barriers to good communication. If your loved one finds it difficult to filter distractions, for example, they may need more time to think about what they’d like to say. Or they may have focus or energy for a respectful conversation only at certain times of day.

Mental illnesses can cause a lot of upsetting or difficult thoughts or experiences.

People who experience depression may talk about feeling worthless or hopeless. People who experience an anxiety disorder may bring up unrealistic fears. People who experience episodes of psychosis may experience hallucinations or delusions.

All of these situations can be very upsetting for caregivers. A helpful approach can be to simply acknowledge your loved one’s feelings around the thoughts.

You could say, “I can see how upset you’re feeling right now. I can only imagine how scary those thoughts must feel.” It’s unrealistic to expect that you can solve or even fully understand what your loved one is experiencing, but acknowledging and empathizing shows that you’re listening and you care. That can be enough to reduce some distress.

SET HEALTHY LIMITS

You may feel you must be available all the time or find yourself spending more time caregiving than you’d like.

Think about your own needs, then work with everyone to find a solution, such as setting limits around behaviours, time spent caregiving, expectations around the house.

Part of setting limits is releasing the idea that you can control someone else’s symptoms or behaviours. You may have influence, but your own actions are the only ones you have control over.

ASK YOUR LOVED ONE WHAT THEY NEED MOST

It’s natural to want to help, but you can’t do everything, and building independence is an important part of recovery.

Taking more time to listen and understand the reasons behind your loved one’s priorities can help you use your energy better. For example, if they’re focused on finding employment, putting effort into finding new treatment providers might not be the best use of your caregiving resources.

PRACTICE CLEAR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Clear communication allows everyone to discuss their thoughts or concerns respectfully.

This includes active listening without distractions, being specific, focusing on one topic at a time, and bring respectful and empathetic.

Learnmoreatcmha.bc.ca. You’ll also find information and resources from the Family Caregivers of BC, familycaregiversbc.ca.
According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, the most at-risk group for suicide is men in their 40s and 50s; men over the age of 80 have the highest rate of suicide.

While women are three to four times more likely to attempt suicide than men, men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women.

Men tend to use more immediately lethal means and are much less likely to reach out for help.

However, any suicidal behaviour, whether lethal or not, originates in suffering and results in trauma.

Suicide is the second-most common cause of death among young people.

First Nations, Inuit and LGBTQ people have higher rates of suicide-related behaviours.

Up to 90 per cent of people who take their own lives are believed to have substance use problems or a mental illness such as depression or anxiety – whether diagnosed or not – at the time of their suicide.

For more information, visit cmha.bc.ca

Did you KNOW?

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For more information, visit cmha.bc.ca

Reducing the risk of suicide

Suicide isn’t easy to talk about, but it’s important to listen. When someone talks about suicide or raises concern for a loved one, it’s important to take action and seek help quickly, explains the Canadian Mental Health Association.

A suicidal person is feeling so much pain that they see no other option – they may feel they’re a burden, and in desperation see death as a way to escape.

While not all suicides can be prevented, some well-being strategies can help reduce the risk:

• Seeking treatment, care and support for mental health concerns, and building a good relationship with a doctor or other health professionals;
• Building social support networks, such as family, friends, a peer support or support group, or connections with a cultural or faith community;
• Learning good coping skills to deal with problems, and trusting in coping abilities. If you’re concerned about a loved one, the two most important things you can do are listen and help them connect with mental health services, CMHA notes.

Ask them directly if they’re thinking about suicide; they may be relieved they can talk about it.

If they’re actively suicidal, get help immediately – call 911 or take them to the emergency room.

Who’s at risk?

Known suicide risk factors include having attempted suicide before, family history of suicidal behaviour, serious physical or mental illness, and problems with drugs or alcohol. A major loss, such as the death of a loved one, unemployment or divorce, and major life changes, are also risk factors, as is family violence, social isolation or lack of a support network, and access to the means of suicide.

However, most suicides are preventable, and few happen without warning. Major warning signs for suicide spell IS PATH WARM:

I- Ideation: thinking about suicide
S- Substance use: problems with drugs or alcohol
P- Purposelessness: feeling like there is no purpose in life or reason for living
A- Anxiety: feeling intense anxiety or feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope
T- Trapped: feeling trapped or feeling like there is no way out of a situation
H- Hopelessness or Helplessness: feeling no hope for the future, feeling like things will never get better
W- Withdrawal: avoiding family, friends, or activities
A- Anger: feeling unreasonable anger
R- Recklessness: engaging in risky or harmful activities normally avoided
M- Mood change: a significant change in mood

Learn more about suicide at the Centre for Suicide Prevention, suicideinfo.ca, or the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, suicideprevention.ca

Need help now?

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, call 911 or your local crisis line, listed on page 26.
Bereavement services

The death of someone very close may feel overwhelming and impact many aspects of our lives. Victoria Hospice Bereavement Services can help you understand grief and adjust to loss. Services include telephone support; in-person counselling; bereavement support groups; information and education; and referrals where appropriate.

Support Before Death: Registered patients and their families can receive support in their homes or on Victoria Hospice’s palliative care unit to assist with emotional, psychological, or spiritual issues, as well as practical matters such as financial, funeral and care planning. Contact Counselling Services by calling 250-370-8715 or by email.

Support Following a Death: After a death, bereavement services are available to non-hospice registered families in their Community Support Centre. For more details, call 250-519-3040.

While contact from Victoria Hospice Bereavement Services may continue for up to a year, bereaved people are welcome to initiate contact during or after that time. Professional counselling services include face-to-face sessions, telephone support and groups, and are available on a limited basis to individuals, families, youth, children and groups.

To learn more, visit victoriahospice.org

Finding support through grief and loss

When we lose someone important to us – a partner, child, parent or friend – the idea that you’ll “get over it” doesn’t resonate.

Following a significant loss, the relationship with the person who died doesn’t end, but it does transform, explains the team at Victoria Hospice, which in addition to palliative care, provides bereavement counselling and support for both adults and children.

What does that mean? The love and connection we have with an individual when they were alive can still inform and strengthen our life after their passing.

Thinking about it another way, you have people in your life right now who you may not see or speak with for a time, but your relationship with them continues.

Following a loved one’s death we still think of them often, about what they’d say or enjoy in certain situations, or how they might advise us in a particular situation.

The experiences we shared with them when they were alive remain with us after their passing and the insights and guidance they provided continue to influence. For some, continuing that relationship may come through small gestures – perhaps wearing bracelet that belonged to their loved one or lighting a candle in their memory on special days. It can be as simple as listening to their loved one’s favourite song or preparing their favourite meal or donating to their loved one’s favourite cause at the holidays.

To learn more or seek bereavement support

Victoria Hospice offers professional bereavement counselling and support groups that are open to everyone; no prior connection to Victoria Hospice is required and most are free thanks to generous donors. Bereavement services are located at the Community Support Centre, 102-4450 Chatterton Way.

To learn more about Victoria Hospice Bereavement Services, call 250-519-3040 or visit victoriahospice.org.

Support for grieving children

Find a three-episode series covering Child and Youth Grief, from Victoria Hospice offers at victoriahospice.org/podcasts/
CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINES
24-HOUR VANCOUVER ISLAND CRISIS LINE – The Vancouver Island Crisis Line provides a supportive listening ear for people in emotional distress and connection to emergency mental health services when needed. The phone number is the same for all areas of Vancouver Island.

• Call from anywhere on Vancouver Island: 1-888-494-3888
• Crisis Chat services (6 to 10pm nightly) at vicrisis.ca
• Crisis Text number (6 to 10pm nightly) 1-250-800-3806

BC211 – Providing free information and referral regarding community, government and social services in BC. Info: bc211.ca

• Dial 2-1-1 on Vancouver Island/Gulf Islands to talk with an Information & Referral Specialist. This service is free, confidential, multilingual and available 24/7.
• TTY – Access for the deaf/hard of hearing community in BC is available by dialing 604-875-0885.
• Text the name of your city to 2-1-1 to chat with an Information & Referral Specialist. This service is free, confidential, and available daily between of 8am & 11pm.

KUU-US CRISIS LINE – The KUU-US Crisis Line is a resource for suicide prevention for Aboriginal people on Vancouver Island and in the province of BC. Help is available 24 hours a day. If you’re facing a crisis, call any time.

• Adult Crisis Line: 250-723-4050
• Youth Crisis Line: 250-723-2040
• Vancouver Island and through the Province of BC: 1-800-588-8717

BC ALCOHOL AND DRUG REFERRAL SERVICE – 1-800-663-1441

BC MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION INFO LINE – 1-800-661-2121, 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Sponsored by Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division.

BC DRUG & POISON INFORMATION CENTRE HOTLINE – 1-800-567-8911.

AA 24-HOUR SUPPORT LINE – Victoria, 250-383-7744.

NA 24-HOUR SUPPORT LINE – Victoria, 250-383-3553

PROBLEM GAMBLING HELP LINE – 1-888-795-6111

8-1-1 – A free-of-charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in B.C., operated by HealthLink BC, part of the Ministry of Health.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

COOL AID SUPPORT SERVICES
REES Program, 465 Swift St., 250-595-8619 or email rees@CoolAid.org.

Downtown Community Centre, 755 Pandora Ave., 250-383-0076 or email dcc@CoolAid.org.

Low-barrier and individualized supports and services, including system navigation, outreach and peer support, work opportunities and employment-related supports, and volunteer opportunities, as well as free health, recreation, arts and life skills programming to meet the diverse needs of people facing mental health and substance use challenges.

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, BC DIVISION – VICTORIA OFFICE – As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. Info: #101- 612 View St., victoria.cmha.bc.ca or 250-216-4228.

AT WORK VICTORIA – CMHA BC - Victoria program offering individualized assistance to find and maintain meaningful paid employment to those who are recovering from mental illness or addiction. Info: victoria.cmha.bc.ca or 250-216-4228.

ISLAND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION – Helping individuals experiencing mental health challenges by promoting individual recovery through evidence-based programs, housing, community partnerships, client and family involvement. 125 Skinner St., icmha.ca or 250-389-1211.

MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY PARTNERS – Providing services for people with mental illness, with or without substance use issues, regardless of their diagnosis, and the people who care about them. 941 Kings Rd. mhrp.ca or 250-384-4225.

CONNECTIONS PLACE – Offering employment, education and recreation initiatives to help people diagnosed with any mental illness including psychosis, PTSD, bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression, OCD and schizophrenia. 3375 Oak St., connectionsplace.org or 250-483-3748

ANXIETYBC – For information and community resources. Info: anxietybc.com, 604-620-0744

CENTRE FOR ADHD AWARENESS, CANADA (CADDAC) – Information and resources, tips for working with your doctor and child’s school, information for educators, parenting strategies, support groups and more. Info: caddac.ca

FAMILY CAREGIVERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA – a registered non-profit dedicated to helping family caregivers. Info: familycaregiversbc.ca, 250-384-0408

HEALTHLINK BC – Free, non-emergency health information, including mental health information. Info: Call 811 or visithealthlinkbc.ca.

MENTAL WELLNESS DAY PROGRAM – Island Health’s group-based, recovery-oriented psychosocial rehabilitation day program for individuals ages 17 to 75 living with a severe and persistent mental illness. Info: 250-370-8126.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

FOUNDRY VICTORIA – Offering young people ages 12 to 24 health and wellness resources, services and supports – online and through integrated service centres in communities across BC, including Victoria. Info: 250-383-3552 or foundrybc.ca/victoria/

FORCE SOCIETY FOR KIDS’ MENTAL HEALTH – Information and resources that support parents of a young person with mental illness. Info: forcesociety.com or 1-855-887-8004 (toll-free in BC)

LEDGER HOUSE – Provides acute, inpatient, hospital-based psychiatric services for Vancouver Island children and youth ages six to 16 with complex psychiatric problems. Info: islandhealth.ca/our-locations/children-youth-locations/ledger-house-children-youth-families

KELTY MENTAL HEALTH – Information, referrals and support for children, youth and their families in all areas of mental health and addictions. Info: keltymentalhealth.ca or 1-800-665-1822 (toll-free in BC)

FROM GRIEF TO ACTION – A not-for-profit society working to improve the lives of addicted youth and their families and friends, and a voice and a support network for families and friends affected by drug use. fromgrieftoaction.com

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF VICTORIA: VYPER – Victoria Youth Program for Enhanced Recovery supportive recovery program and parenting programs, 301 - 1195 Esquimalt Rd. Info: 250-384-9133 (ext. 216), bgcvic.org

ANXIETY CONNECTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH – From Saanich Neighbourhood Place, providing information and skill building to help children and youth cope with anxiety.
Canada’s NDP believes complete health includes Mental Health Care and Universal, Public Pharmacare
We care. Because you’re worth it.

Edgewood, located in Nanaimo, BC is a fully credentialed and licensed medical and psychiatric facility designed to treat complex, concurrent Mental Health Disorders.

Our expert medical, psychiatric, and clinical team will work closely with individuals and their families to establish a treatment plan that’s right for you.

Because the right treatment can change everything.

PSYCHIATRISTS ■ PHYSICIANS ■ 24/7 NURSING ■ TRAUMA INFORMED CARE ■ CBT/DBT ■ GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL THERAPY ■ ANXIETY & DEPRESSION SKILLS-BASED GROUP

FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE CALL: 1.800.683.0111
info@edgewood.ca ■ www.edgewood.ca
Info: saanichneighbourhoodplace.com

YOUTHSPACE.CA – Provided by NEED2 Suicide Prevention, Education and Support, this free and confidential online support network offers Canadian youth up to 30 years of age access to emotional support, resources and crisis response services. Info: Youthspace.ca

VICTORIA YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SOCIETY (YES) – Youth Detox and Shelter, life skills program, mental health liaison, counselling for sexually exploited youth and support for transitional housing. Info: 533 Yates St., 250-383-3514 or yyes.ca

VICTORIA YOUTH CLINIC – Youth counselling, outreach support, vaccines and medical testing; Foundry Centre. Info: 818 Douglas St., 250-383-3552, victoriayouthclinic.ca

PACIFIC CENTRE FAMILY SERVICES ASSOCIATION – Promoting dignity and quality of life for families and individuals across Greater Victoria, especially on the West Shore, through education, counselling and creative programming. Find a wide range of vital services for people dealing with substance use, mental health issues, and day-to-day life challenges. Info: 250-478-8357, pacificcentrefamilyservices.org

ISLAND HEALTH, DISCOVERY YOUTH & FAMILY SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES – Youth and family counselling, youth outreach services, prevention and early intervention, Esquimalt Health Unit, 530 Fraser St., 2nd floor. Info: 250-519-5313, Discovery.SouthIsland@viha.ca

VICTORIA NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE – Dedicated to improving the quality of life for Aboriginal people in the Greater Victoria area, the Friendship Centre offers a variety of programs, including career, education and employment resources, family service, a wellness clinic, community support, addictions counsellors and more. 231 Regina Ave. Info: 250-384-3211, vnfc.ca


ESQUIMALT MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE – Community-based organization addressing the needs of the military family and medically released members and their families. Prevention, support and intervention staff offer support with deployment relationship issues, relocation, military lifestyle, and short-term crisis situations, in addition to referrals to outside counselling resources and specialized counsellors. Info: 250-363-2640 , esquimaltmfrc.com

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

BOUNCEBACK – a free skill-building program from Canadian Mental Health Association – BC designed to help adults and youth age 15+ manage low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry. Delivered online or over the phone with a coach, access to tools to support you on your path to mental wellness. Info: bouncebackbc.ca

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL – Provided by CMHA – Victoria, these interactive, facilitated eight-week courses for youth, adults and seniors are based on the principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), that improves resilience, mood, well-being, anxiety and social support. Info: victoria.cmha.bc.ca/programs-services/living-life-to-the-full

L,K,I,L CHILD AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM – Provided by the Hulitan Family and Community Services Society, the program provides support to Indigenous children and youth up to age 19 and their families presenting a variety of mental health challenges, including complex trauma. Info: 250-384-9466 or hulitan.ca/child-and-youth-mental-health-program/

MINDFULNESS GROUPS – provided by YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island, this is a free seven-week support group for young adults ages 18 to 30 who experience anxiety. Info: 250-386-7511 Local 413 or vancouverislandy.com/program-services/community-health

GRIEF & LOSS

HEALING HEARTS – VICTORIA – peer facilitated bereavement support group for people who have experienced a loss due to substance use disorder. Info: momsstopharm.com/healing-hearts

VICTORIA HOSPICE – providing end-of-life care focused on palliative treatment and comfort for patients and support for families, including bereavement care. Info: victoriahospice.org

OVERDOSE PREVENTION & SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION SITES

THE HARBOUR – Formerly known as Pandora Supervised Consumption Centre, includes 10 consumption booths, post-use areas, rooms for counselling, medical help, naloxone kits, education and support, 941 Pandora Ave. Info: 250-519-5303

AVI HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES SOCIETY – Harm reduction services, including an overdose prevention room for safer drug use and rapid overdose response; mobile van (deliveries and used syringe pick-up from Sidney to Sooke), harm reduction supplies and support, overdose prevention and response training, including take-home naloxone education for safer drug use and safer sex, street nurse clinics, referral

In today’s complicated world, teachers are there to help kids find their way.

Because kids matter, and teachers care.

A message from the Greater Victoria Teachers’ Association
and assistance navigating social and health care systems, outreach education for youth and prison populations and educational and leadership development programming. 713 Johnson St. Info: 250-889-0268, avi.org.

JOHNSON STREET COMMUNITY – Health services, education for safer drug use, referrals to mental health counselling, links to an on-site nursing clinic, linkages to addiction treatment programs. Please note: This site is open to building residents only. Info: 250-812-1764, phs.ca/project/johnson-street-community

VICTORIA COOL AID SOCIETY – Providing prevention, education and counselling, harm-reduction, naloxone kits, substance use treatment, supports and access to mental health services, 535 Ellice St., 250-383-1951 ext. 2247, coolaid.org.

ISLAND HEALTH – Providing health care services through a network of hospitals, clinics, centres, health units and residential care locations for more than 794,000 people on Vancouver Island, the islands in the Salish Sea and the Johnstone Strait, and the mainland communities north of Powell River and south of Rivers Inlet, including mental health, substance use, addiction and overdose-prevention services. islandhealth.ca

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY – FNHA – Province-wide health authority whose vision is to transform the health and well-being of BC’s First Nations and Aboriginal people by dramatically changing healthcare for the better through services largely focused on health promotion and disease prevention. fnha.ca, 1-866-913-0033

HERE TO HELP – A project of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information, a group of mental health and addictions non-profit agencies that have been working together to help people live well and better prevent and manage mental health and substance use problems. Info: heretohelp.bc.ca

AVI WEST SHORE HEALTH CENTRE – The AVI Health Centre (AVIHC) offers low-barrier, free treatment and support to people struggling with opiate addiction, #111-2787 Jacklin Rd., 250-940-3605 (toll-free 1-800-665-2437), avi.org/westshore.

PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY SERVICES (PES) – Specialized mental health and addiction services, including intensive assessment and crisis intervention for patients arriving with acute and critical psychiatric disorders. Available via Royal Jubilee Hospital emergency rooms or the 24-hr crisis line: 1-888-494-3888.

ADDICTIONS OUTPATIENT TREATMENT – Providing services to adults age 19+ experiencing drug and alcohol problems. In Victoria, self-referral for substance use services is by attending in person at Substance Use Intake at 1119 or 1125 Pembroke St., daily 9am to 8pm.

VICTORIA UMBRELLA SOCIETY – Providing support to individuals, and their loved ones, struggling with substance use issues. The society operates three recovery houses and offers counselling for families, outreach services and group sessions. # 8 – 415 Dunedin St, umbrellasociety.ca or 250-380-0595.

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADDICTIONS TREATMENT PROGRAM – Assessment and treatment for Canadian Armed Forces members struggling with alcohol, drugs and gambling, as well as other addictions. Additional mental health and stress programs also available. Info: canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/programs/caf-mental-health-services.html#atp

COMMUNITY-BASED RECOVERY SERVICES & SUPPORTS

ANAWIM COMPANIONS SOCIETY – Support for people living in physical, emotional, spiritual and social poverty, this private men’s residential alcohol and drug treatment program provides for basic needs while encouraging personal development. Also offers a free drop-in day program for men and women in need. 973 Caledonia Ave., anawimhouse.com, 250-382-0283.

OASIS SOCIETY – Works with homeless and newly housed people to create a shared and inclusive spiritual community. Integrated Recovery and Holistic Wellness Program provides supports to Indigenous people dealing with chronic homelessness, substance abuse and mental health challenges. Also holds nature-based retreats where people can connect to one another, themselves, nature and elders, and in First Nations ceremonies. Room 12, 710 Cormorant St., 250-361-0036, oasisvic.org.

MEN’S THERAPY CENTRE – Supporting anyone who identifies as a man who has experienced emotional, sexual or physical trauma as a child or an adult, with victim services, counselling and group programs. Info: 250-381-6367 or menstherapycentre.ca.

GREATER VICTORIA CITIZEN’S COUNSELLING CENTRE – Affordable, accessible counselling to adults. All counselling is offered by volunteer counsellors trained and supervised by the Centre. Sliding fee scale based on family income. 941 Kings Rd., 250-384-9934, citizenscounselling.com

SOUTH ISLAND CENTRE FOR COUNSELLING & TRAINING – Providing affordable, income-based counselling services to individuals, couples, children, youth and families around a variety of issues, including anxiety, depression, grief and loss, end-of-life, self-esteem, abuse, and family conflict. 3821A Cedar Hill Cross Rd., 250-472-2851, southislandcentre.ca.

PEERS VICTORIA RESOURCE SOCIETY – Multi-service, grassroots agency established for sex workers, by sex workers, providing an array of outreach and drop-in, harm reduction and support services along with education and employment training for current and former sex workers. Main office hours 11am to 3pm Monday to Thursday. 1-744 Fairview Rd., 250-388-5325, safersexwork.ca

COUNSELLING & ADDICTION TREATMENT

EDGEWOOD – A premier, private residential alcohol and drug rehab addiction treatment centre specializing in the treatment of addiction and mental health from its Nanaimo campus, with full-time, ASAM/ABAM-certified medical doctors who are experts in the field of addiction medicine and psychiatry, including drug and alcohol withdrawal treatment. 2121 Boxwood Rd. Nanaimo, 1-800-683-0111, edgewoodhealthnetwork.com

RESOURCES

Recognizing Resilience: A Workbook for Parents and Caregivers of Teens Involved with Substances, keltymentalhealth.ca

Toward the Heart offers information on fentanyl and naloxone: towardtheheart.com

Island Health’s Discovery Youth and Family Substance Use Services: viha.ca/youth-substance-use/discovery

HealthLink BC has overdose information and nurses available by calling 811 or visiting healthlinkbc.ca

Mindcheck is an online resource for youth and families offering mental health resources and support: mindcheck.ca

Here to Help BC offers a Resiliency Guide for Parents and Youth: heretohelp.bc.ca

Keeping Youth Connected, Healthy & Learning (for school administrators): viha.ca/ NR/donlyres/D37BC183-1B0E-4F0B-B949-5A8870A6049F/0/keepingyouthconnected.pdf
Team up against ANXIETY

Confident Parents: Thriving Kids – Anxiety is a free program helping BC families overcome anxiety challenges in children ages 3–12.

This web- and phone-based coaching service helps parents and caregivers learn effective skills and strategies for managing anxiety.

Learn more at confidentparents.ca
THE HELP YOU NEED. NOW.

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- Abuse
- Addictions
- Anxiety
- Counselling
- Gender & Sexual Identity
- Grief & Loss
- Financial Assistance
- Health
- Legal Aid
- Shelter & Homelessness

bc211.ca