



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION REPORT

January 2020

Prepared by



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## Introduction & Agenda

Shelburne County Mental Health and Wellness Association decided to engage the community to talk about issues, gaps, barriers, opportunities and solutions to work toward their mission of *“Mentally healthy people in a healthy Shelburne County.”*

Without understanding the issues and opportunities it is difficult to make meaningful action happen, so these sessions were set up to help gain a deeper understanding and talk to those in our community that are living with mental health concerns and those that support them.

The goals of the session included:

- ▶ To engage people in the community to:
  - Reduce stigma and talk about it
  - To increase community mental health services and supports
  - To raise awareness about SCMHWA
  - To begin community-wide action planning on mental health

The Agenda of the sessions was set up to accomplish the goals and included:

- ▶ Setting the stage – a chance to talk, to be heard and to listen!
- ▶ Guidelines to follow
- ▶ Check in and getting to know each other
- ▶ Brief presentation about Shelburne County Mental Health & Wellness Association, Shelburne County Warm Line, and other community resources and supports
- ▶ Small group discussion on a mentally healthy Shelburne County
- ▶ Actions and priorities, anonymous survey
- ▶ Check out and next steps

## Setting the Stage and the Group Guidelines

The stage was set, with an introduction of mental health, the goals of the session, and the importance of hearing our voices, listening and creating a safe space. The participants formed group guidelines to follow in the sessions which included:

- ▶ Confidentiality
- ▶ Allow people to have their turn
- ▶ Safe
- ▶ Trusting
- ▶ Respectful
- ▶ Non judgemental

## Why we are Here and Who Participated

Participants were asked to join in with a short check in and introductions to answer the questions of:

▶ *Who are you and where are you from?*

Many different community members attended this included: people living with mental health illnesses and issues, people supporting loved ones, community members that care about mental health in our communities, people living with grief, depression, anxiety, and social isolation.

Many stakeholders, organizations, and partners were represented including: Juniper House, SASI, Senior Safety, Integrative Health Coach, Life Coach, NSHA – Mental Health and Addictions, Public Health, Animal Rescue, Warm Line, Retired Clinical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Shelburne Fire Department, Municipality of Shelburne – Warden, Shelburne Group Home, Yoga & Dance, Massage Therapist, SCMHWA.

▶ *What brought you here today? And What's your story?*

- A lot of stigma, need to reduce it! Talk about it!
- Increase in anxiety in Shelburne County
- To be informed, supportive, know about resources
- Worked in the field
- Passion
- Interest
- Be a helper
- What are the issues, what are the supports?
- Learn and listen
- Interesting, and innovative ideas to address the gaps
- Need to access supports, before crisis
- The need for trust
- Feeling mentally resilient
- Worried about our youth
- Seeing people in crisis and needing to help
- To be a strong advocate

## Presentation on Shelburne County Mental Health and Wellness Association and Shelburne County Warm Line and Resources in Shelburne County

A brief presentation was given by members of the SCMHWA and the Warm Line Coordinator. The information presented can be found in Appendix B (Session Presentation).

## Resources in Shelburne County

Participants had an opportunity for a quick brainstorm of resources available in Shelburne County and the updated (January 2020) SCMHWA resource list was circulated.

Other resources discussed included: Critical Incident Response Team – Fire, RCMP, EHS, Schools Plus, Provincial Cyber Scan Unit, Teachers, Rally Point Retreat – PTSD for 1<sup>st</sup> responders and veterans, Mental health at Roseway hospital, Sou West Nova Transit, CMHA, New Attitudes group in Yarmouth (people with lived experiences that give presentations), Mental Health Expo, Because We Care Fundraising, Juniper House – 24 hour crisis line and shelter in Yarmouth. 1-800-266-4087, Our outdoor natural resources (Rails to Trails), Special Olympics, Recreation Departments, 2 Peer Support groups with Tri County Women’s Centre meeting at McKay library.

## Small group discussions

Participants were asked to engage in small group discussions to discuss the gaps, barriers, issues, opportunities, solutions and actions around mental health in their community. The questions and answers are below.

- ▶ *What does your mentally healthy Shelburne County look like? How are people being supported? By Who? What's happening?*

## Health care

- Stressors around mental health care are gone
- Timely availability of mental health services
- Feeling able to safely speak up
- Sufficient access to doctors, nurses
- Flexible systems
- Local mental health care and other options (a psychiatrist in Shelburne)
- Families are part of the MH process
- Stronger ER
- More MH professional positions and accessible MH services
- More Nurse Practitioners and doctors
- Better communication and awareness of services between departments and service providers

## Education and awareness

- Educated public on services available
- Educating people on their own ability to help themselves
- Giving people self awareness
- Children learn about mental health at an early age

- Teaching life skills and coping skills in schools
- More awareness and education for caregivers and family members (Mental Health 1<sup>st</sup> Aid?)

### **Community engagement and kindness**

- Community engagement effort, checking in with others, being nice, power of kindness
- Positive attitudes
- No stigma!
- Accepted, valued, loved and cared for people
- More events like tonight!

### **Services and supports**

- Services are expanded
- A Volunteer Hub
- Intergenerational opportunities
- Early interventions
- Circle of Care
- Free recreation opportunities
- Adequate, available, affordable housing of all kinds
- Basic needs are met
- Jobs!
- Education
- Free transportation
- More community outreach workers in homes (Social Services)
- More drop-in groups and peer support groups
- Service Navigators
- Mental Health Clubhouse/hub
- Safe community places
- Communication and coordination of services and supports
- Alternative practises
- Children learn about mental health
- People being active in nature
- Yoga
- Community response team

## Action planning and prioritization

Participants were then asked to independently think about how these ideas, potential opportunities and solutions can be moved forward to action by answering the below questions. The answers are a themed summary and represent many of the major themes discussed. Individual names are listed when people committed to independent actions forward.

### ► *What we can do together?*

## Education and awareness

- Educating people with tools for empowerment
- Education and awareness to supporters and loved ones
- Continue to refer and education
- Awareness of who needs what support
- Get the information out there and better sharing of information
- More education and awareness for families and care givers

## Services and supports

- Mental health clubhouse
- Fundraising events
- Early intervention and prevention – before the crisis hits
- Life Skills training
- Warm Line, 7 days/week, 24 hours/day
- Offer Mental Health First Aid at no cost
- Support for others from away and from different cultures (i.e.: Welcome Wagon)
- More peer groups in smaller, more isolated communities throughout the County
- Community Emergency Response Team
- Mental Health and Wellness Expo

## Advocacy

- Advocate for more money, more services, etc.
- Talk to our MLAS
- Advocate politically
- Advocate for more psychiatric services in Shelburne

## Community Engagement and Kindness

- Be inclusive and be kind, talk to people!
- Outreach and invitation to neighbours, etc.
- Destigmatize across the spectrum
- Regular community dinners
- Spend more time together

## Collaboration

- Share resources, partnerships, work with each other
- Commit to meeting again
- Help make sure people's basic needs are met
- Reach out to other stakeholders
- Spend more time together
- Create a forum to share information
- Continue the vision of SCMHWA
- Look out for each other
- Better sharing of information
- More partnerships among organizations

### ► *What we hope others can do?*

- More outreach workers on the ground
- Fundraising efforts
- Mandatory volunteering instead of paying taxes
- More trained professionals
- Implement a Housing First model
- Free transportation for all for everything
- A Volunteer hub for those that want to volunteer
- More outreach in homes for mental health
- A psychiatrist in Shelburne County
- More communication between departments in the health system
- Better, more flexible systems
- Once a week Mental Health professionals give a talk
- Increase services
- Provide funding
- Because We Care fund.com
- Bring the facts to the higher ups
- More funding

### ► *What I can commit to do?*

- Begin researching, looking at the idea of the Club House – Cindy and Kelly
- Continue to support the Warm Line – Sue
- Reinvigorate the Shelburne County Housing Coalition – Lucinda
- Continue to coordinate and navigate resources – Shawna
- Expand Warm Line (train new volunteers, more hours, etc.) – Cindy
- Advocate to Municipal Government – Penny
- Stay healthy and be a role model

- Continue to support SCMHWA, seek financial assistance (Free mental health first aid, club house, more peer support groups, Warm Line, etc.) – Marilyn
- Participate
- Be Kind
- Advocate
- Volunteer
- Support family members with mental health issues
- Keep trying to help others
- Take care of myself and visit neighbour
- Continue education on how to best support my clients
- Self care
- Refer and educate

### **Next Steps & Conclusion**

Participants were asked to fill out a short anonymous survey (Appendix C) and were asked to bring forward any personal actions or commitments moving forward. All participants were encouraged to join the SCMHWA in their collective action, with the next meeting being held on February 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 at the Shelburne McKay Library.

This report also serves as not only a record of the two sessions, but a document to engage everyone in planning and action forward. Many tangible solutions and innovative ideas came out of the sessions and there was a lot of engagement that can be leveraged for real, collective action. The SCMHWA is the platform where these actions can take hold, and with more committed, dedicated volunteers, stakeholders and community members taking part, more can happen around creating a mentally healthy Shelburne County!

APPENDIX A

Session Invite and Poster

HOSTED BY SHELBURNE  
COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH &  
WELLNESS ASSOCIATION

*Do you or someone you support live with a  
mental health illness?*

# LET'S TALK! MENTAL HEALTH

JOIN US TO GET TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER ABOUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT  
TO US AND TO OUR COMMUNITY.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 28TH | 1:30 TO 3:30 PM  
BARRINGTON LIBRARY**

**WED, JANUARY 29TH | 6:30 TO 8:30 PM  
SHELBURNE LIBRARY**

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS  
PROVIDED  
RSVP TO CINDY AT  
SCWARMLINECOORDINATOR  
@GMAIL.COM

  
**Shelburne County**  
Mental Health & Wellness Association



## LET'S TALK about MENTAL HEALTH IN OUR COMMUNITY!

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>

1:30-3:30

BARRINGTON LIBRARY

&

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>

6:30-8:30

SHELBURNE LIBRARY

*DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU SUPPORT LIVE WITH A MENTAL  
HEALTH ILLNESS?*

JOIN US TO GET TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER ABOUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO  
US AND TO OUR COMMUNITY.

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED – RSVP TO CINDY AT [scwarmlinecoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:scwarmlinecoordinator@gmail.com)



APPENDIX B

Session Presentation

**Welcome! – The Agenda**

- ▶ The Agenda
  - ▶ Setting the stage – a chance to talk, to be heard and to listen!
  - ▶ Guidelines to follow
  - ▶ Check In and getting to know each other
  - ▶ Brief presentation about Shelburne County Mental Health & Wellness Association, Shelburne County Warm Line, and other community resources and supports
  - ▶ Small group discussion on a mentally healthy Shelburne County
  - ▶ Actions and priorities, anonymous survey
  - ▶ Check out and next steps

**Welcome!**

- ▶ Setting the stage – a chance to talk, to be heard and to listen!
- ▶ The Stories, the voices
- ▶ Priorities and actions – together!
- ▶ Our goals:
  - To engage people in the community to:
  - Reduce stigma and talk about it
  - To increase community mental health services and supports
  - To raise awareness about SCMHWA
  - To begin community-wide action planning on mental health
- ▶ Group guidelines – how we want to ensure our voices get heard, and we bring respect and empathy

**YOUR ILLNESS DOES NOT DEFINE YOU. YOUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE DOES.**

HEALTHYPLACE.COM

## Check in and Introductions

- ▶ A chance to get to know each other
- ▶ Talking stick
- ▶ Voluntary
  
- ▶ Who are you and where are you from?
- ▶ What brought you here today?
- ▶ What's your story?

### Mental Health:

a state of well-being in which an individual realizes one's own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.



## About Shelburne County Mental Health & Wellness Association

- ▶ Vision – Mentally healthy people in a healthy Shelburne County.
- ▶ Mission – We are a community-based, not-for-profit group that seeks to advocate for and improve mental health in Shelburne County by reducing stigma, promoting recovery and building resiliency.
- ▶ Some Goals – raising awareness; reducing barriers and isolation; changing attitudes; peer support
- ▶ Some Key Values – embracing the voice of people who live with mental health issues; recognizing the value of lived experience



## About The Shelburne County Warmline 1-833-927-6547

- ▶ The Warm Line is a grass roots initiative started by the SCMHWA, in partnership with SASI.
- ▶ The Warm Line is a non crisis line for anyone dealing with mental health challenges of any kind run by volunteers.
- ▶ You can call the Warm Line if:
  - ▶ You need to chat with someone.
  - ▶ You are feeling lonely or depressed.
  - ▶ You are experiencing loss, grief or sadness.
  - ▶ You need to talk about a difficult situation.
  - ▶ You are feeling anxious.
- ▶ We can help!



## About The Shelburne County Warmline 1-833-927-6547

- ▶ Our volunteer operators are highly trained.
- ▶ All calls are anonymous and confidential.
- ▶ We have open hours 3 days a week:
  - ▶ Wed 4:30-8:30
  - ▶ Fri 4:30-8:30
  - ▶ Sat 1-5
- ▶ These hours will expand as more volunteers are trained.
- ▶ 1-833-927-6547



## Other resources and supports in Shelburne County

Question to the group: What others do you know about?  
Resource table!



## Small Group discussion

Review group guidelines  
10 minutes then switch to next table – with one host staying

1<sup>st</sup> question: What does your mentally healthy Shelburne County look like?

2<sup>nd</sup> question: How are people being supported? By who?  
What's happening?



## Small Group report back

What did you hear?

1<sup>st</sup> question: What does your mentally healthy Shelburne County look like?

2<sup>nd</sup> question: How are people being supported? By who?  
What's happening?



## Actions and priorities

On action wall – with post its

- 1: What can we do as a group?
- 2: What can others do?
- 3: What can you do?

Anonymous survey to fill out



## Next steps and check out

What's one thing you are taking away from our conversations?

Anonymous survey – fill out before you leave!



## Thank you!

Shelburne County Mental Health & Wellness Association

On facebook – Shelburne County Mental Health & Wellness Association  
– like us and share!!!

Our website: [www.shelburnecountymentalhealth.com](http://www.shelburnecountymentalhealth.com)

Email: [shelburnecountymentalhealth@outlook.com](mailto:shelburnecountymentalhealth@outlook.com)

Yes! SCMHWA needs volunteers!

- ▶ Warm Line: 1-833-927-6546
  - ▶ Wed 4:30-8:30
  - ▶ Fri 4:30-8:30
  - ▶ Sat 1-5



**APPENDIX C**

**SURVEY**



**COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY – JANUARY 2020**

1. What could the community do to ensure you thrive and flourish? What could be in place to support you and your loved ones? What supports do you need to flourish?
  
2. What coping skills do you use?
  
3. What other groups, services, or programs could be a support?
  
4. What could be done to raise awareness about mental health and reduce the stigma in our communities?
  
5. How can we support each other to promote mental health in our communities?
  
6. Other comments or feedback?