**The Canadian Mental Health Association in Alberta
Recognizes Recovery Month**

*Recovery Colleges in Alberta Provide Hope, Belonging and Connection*

**(Alberta), September 1, 2022 –** Across Canada, Recovery Month is recognized in September as an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the successes and unique journeys of individuals in recovery from addiction or a mental health concern. It is a time to continue the work of reducing the stigma around recovery, as we support education and meaningful conversations in our communities.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Recovery Colleges offer a variety of recovery-focused courses designed for individuals, families, the workplace, and cultural and spiritual groups. All Recovery College courses are co-developed and co-facilitated with the communities they serve as well as peers with lived experience who are role models to others in their recovery journey. The courses provide early access to mental health support through a range of topics that develop resiliency, wellness, connection, belonging, and hope.

“Recovery Month is an opportunity to have important conversations about what recovery means and how we can support ourselves, as well as family, friends, and co-workers who are facing substance use or mental health challenges. The goal of Recovery College courses is to support people to manage their mental health or substance use by exploring skills, knowledge, and tools that will help build resiliency, confidence, understanding, and overall wellbeing,” says Jenn Yurkiw, the Provincial Recovery Lead for the CMHA Alberta Recovery College Project.

Recovery College courses are free andopen to anyone aged 16+ who are affected by mental health or substance use issues. Recovery College allows individuals to explore their recovery journey and their own wellness, with an emphasis on individual talents and strengths.

* In a recent survey of Recovery College Alberta participants 87 per cent of survey respondents felt an **increased sense of belonging** after attending a Recovery College course.
* In a recent survey of Recovery College Alberta participants 90 per cent of survey respondents reported **increased hope for the future**.
* In Canada, approximately 21 per cent of the population (about six million people) will experience a substance use disorder or addiction at some point in their lifetime.
* With one in five Albertans experiencing mental health needs and/or addiction each year almost half (48.7 per cent) have reported unmet needs for mental health services, with a common reason being an inability to afford services.
* Alberta recorded its deadliest year on record for drug overdoses with more than 1,700 deaths in 2021.
* Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group.
* Mental illness and substance use disorders are leading causes of disability in Canada.

To learn more about Recovery Colleges, please visit [https://alberta.cmha.ca/recoverycollege.](https://alberta.cmha.ca/alberta-recovery-colleges/)

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**About the Canadian Mental Health Association in Alberta**
*For more than 60 years in Alberta, CMHA has focused on recovery and support for Albertans impacted by mental illness. We stand with people living in their communities as they achieve their wellness goals. Hundreds of CMHA staff and volunteers engage clients in activities and navigation within the complex matrix of mental health services. We believe in enabling individuals, groups and communities to increase control over and enhance their mental health.*