



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate distribution

**Mental Health Commission of Canada launches
Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada
in Nova Scotia**

Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 13, 2012 – Building on last month’s successful release of Canada’s first-ever mental health strategy, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) was invited to Laing House in Halifax to launch *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada* in Nova Scotia. Laing House is an organization that empowers youth living with mental illness through innovative youth engagement and peer support.

The Commission is holding regional events across the country to extend the conversation about how the *Strategy* can improve mental health and about what can be done to bring the *Strategy* to life in our communities.

“The *Strategy* was shaped and informed by the experiences and input from thousands of Canadians, including considerable engagement in Nova Scotia,” says MHCC President and CEO, Louise Bradley. “The release of this *Strategy* marks a historic milestone for our country, the millions of Canadians living with mental health problems and illnesses, their families and, all those who are working to ensure that every Canadian can enjoy the best mental health. “

“We welcome the Mental Health Commission of Canada’s national mental health strategy. Improving mental health care is a priority of mine, and the government of Nova Scotia, “said Health and Wellness Minister David Wilson. Nova Scotia also released a plan to improve mental health and addictions care for Nova Scotians, *Together We Can*. “It’s a sign of changing attitudes and times when we agree at every government level that we must do more to intervene early so problems are identified and addressed earlier.”

The release of *Changing Directions, Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada* marks the first time that Canada has created a shared vision and set of priorities that will guide the efforts of the public and private sector, the service delivery sector and all Canadians to improve mental health outcomes.

“At Laing House we are always looking to see opportunities where we can support the advancement of the mental health strategy that shows the hard work of so many people. It is so positive to see attention being focused on mental health,” says Maureen Fraser-McLaughlin, Executive Director, Laing House Association.



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The *Strategy* sets out recommendations for change that promise to improve the quality of life for Canadians in every province and territory, grouping these changes into six key strategic directions:

- Promote mental health across the lifespan in homes, schools and workplaces, and prevent mental illness and suicide wherever possible;
- Foster recovery and well-being for people of all ages living with mental health problems and illnesses, and uphold their rights;
- Provide access to the right combination of services, treatments and supports, when and where people need them;
- Reduce disparities in risk factors and access to mental health services, and strengthen the response to the needs of diverse communities and Northerners;
- Work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to address their mental health needs, acknowledging their distinct circumstances, rights and cultures; and,
- Mobilize leadership, improve knowledge and foster collaboration at all levels.

ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is a catalyst for change. We are collaborating with hundreds of partners to change the attitudes of Canadians toward mental health problems and to improve services and support. Our goal is to help people who live with mental health problems and illnesses lead meaningful and productive lives. Together we spark change.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is funded by Health Canada.

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca
strategy.mentalhealthcommission.ca

ABOUT LAING HOUSE

Laing House is a peer support organization that empowers youth ages 16-29, who have a diagnosis of psychosis, mood and/or anxiety disorder. It is a youth-driven, community-based centre where members can meet peers and embrace their unique gifts in a caring and supportive environment. Laing House is the first of its kind in Canada.

www.lainghouse.org



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