



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Halifax-Dartmouth
Mental health for all

OUR PATH OF HOPE

**A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CMHA HALIFAX –
DARTMOUTH 2015- 2020**

CMHA Halifax-Dartmouth Branch

The Canadian Mental Health Association Halifax-Dartmouth (CMHA Hal-Dart) is an associated branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). CMHA is Canada's first and most widespread national mental health organization, with divisions and branches serving hundreds of communities across the country. CMHA Hal-Dart began in the 1950's as two separate Halifax and Dartmouth branches serving their respective communities. In 2007, the branches merged into one to better provide support and services throughout urban Halifax Regional Municipality.

The need to support mental health is significant and continually growing. With one in five Canadians experiencing a mental health problem every year, most of us are touched by the effects of mental illness in some way. There is an increasing awareness within our country that mental health care is a pressing issue that can no longer be ignored. This is also true within our own city.

The CMHA developed a national strategic plan for 2012-2017 to set a new direction for the organization. This national plan ensures a coherent vision of mental health for all Canadians and how each member association can contribute to its achievement. The CMHA promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. The decentralized nature of the CMHA means that each individual branch is responsible for their own fundraising and strategic planning to reach these shared objectives.

As a local charitable organization, CMHA Hal-Dart provides specialized mental health initiatives that are tailored to the needs of our community through both direct and indirect delivery models. We have impacted the lives of members of our community through the following programs and services:

Sharing and Caring (Halifax) and Among Friends (Dartmouth) Social Clubs

The *Sharing and Caring* and *Among Friends* social clubs provide adults living with mental illness an opportunity to engage in recreation and leisure activities in the club and community. Actively involved members cope with a number of barriers in society including poverty, homelessness, stigmatization and isolation. The unique and inclusive atmosphere creates a welcoming place for individuals of diverse culture, age, and sexual orientation. The activities are designed from member input to ensure their needs and interests are being explored. This helps to build social capital by developing trusting relationships and networks. These welcoming spaces provide an opportunity for positive social connections with peers and foster a sense of belonging with the wider community. Partnerships have evolved over the years with other not-for-profit agencies, government departments, corporate establishments, local churches, and post-secondary institutions. These partnerships have allowed members, staff, and volunteers to become active in their community, bringing their unique perspectives afforded by their experiences with mental illness. The social clubs are influential in creating interactions in the

community that have resulted in meaningful opportunities. The social clubs have had the chance to participate in the Halifax North End Community Parade and in the Clean Your Neighbourhood Program in Dartmouth which are opportunities for community connection. We continue to expand our community involvement and seek opportunities for club members to share their talents and develop new ones. Members are able to demonstrate empowerment by becoming active in community engagements and influence change in areas that create barriers and perpetuate stigma. The social clubs operate during the afternoon and evening hours Monday through Thursday (hours set per location) and Friday afternoons.

Building Bridges Program

The Building Bridges Program connects socially isolated adults, living with mental illness, with volunteers and small groups to share time and common leisure interests. Program members are supported by a Coordinator, the branch office hub staff and community volunteers. Building Bridges facilitates bonding and fosters a sense of belonging, resilience, hope, and well-being. Social isolation and loneliness are reduced through thousands of hours of outings, visits, and contacts.

Collaboration and Partnership Services

Our partnerships are important components of our ability to provide needed support and services to our members and to others in need within our community. We have developed some key partnerships to offer programs including Creative Collaborative Partnerships, The Coffee House for All, and Our Voices Matter. Continuing to build on existing and establishing new strong relationships will help to create opportunities to expand the services and supports provided.

Plan Summary

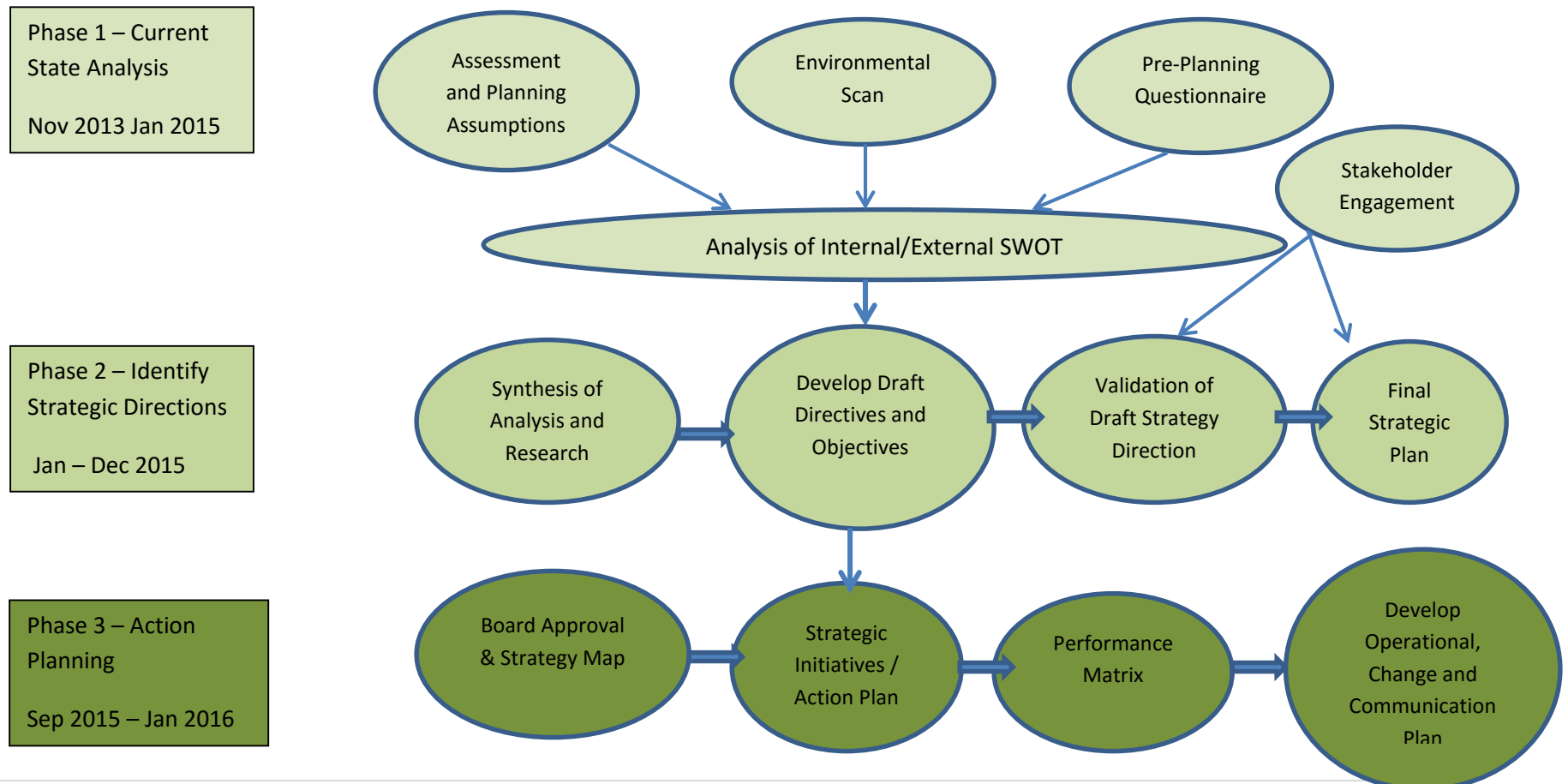
This Strategic Plan is the first step toward a stronger organization. It is a direction setting document that will guide and inform planning from 2015 to 2020. The plan outlines broad strategies and actions over this five-year period and will ensure that efforts are aligned with the goals that have been set. It will also ensure that the programs and services provided are responsive to the mental health needs of our members and the changing needs of our community.

Through a strategic planning process in 2014 and 2015, the Board of Directors for CMHA Hal-Dart developed a draft with input from staff and members through written submissions, focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and reviews. In addition, an environmental scan was completed which included a review of key documents from CMHA National and Division as well as from other community mental health agencies. The

planning process provided an opportunity for reflection on the current context of the organization, identified barriers to overcome and exciting new opportunities for the future. It is an evolving, collaborative effort presented in draft form at the Annual General Meeting on June 23, 2015, which started a stakeholder consultation process.

The strategic plan is intended to be a flexible framework that commits the Board and the organization to delivering community-centred mental health programs and achieving long-term sustainability.

Planning Process



Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

The following was assembled through the environmental scan and reaffirmed from stakeholder feedback.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation for supportive, compassionate, welcoming environment • Support to individuals in a safe, confidential manner • Well-established programs • Funding goes to programs in our community • Dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers and staff • Mosaic event • Person-centred and inclusive community of support • Grassroots delivery of services • Timely response to significant situations that impact the ability of CMHA Hal-Dart to deliver quality services such as the need to move locations, issues within the building like flooding, etc. • Strong partnerships and collaborative advocacy • Resilient/resourceful • Volunteer/training opportunities for students and work experience through job creation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising - no direct appeal • Challenges with geographic size of the area served (i.e., Halifax Regional Municipality vs. Halifax/Dartmouth communities) • Board structure, direction, and impact • Profile and community visibility • Workload balance to vision and mission • Succession and staff development • Lack of an identified Communicator/Spokesperson for CMHA Hal-Dart - Communications strategy/policies/roles need to be revisited at the National, Division, and Branch levels • Organizational structure - roles/responsibilities clarification • Staff inadequately remunerated - needs to be reviewed/improved to demonstrate that current staff are valued and to prepare for succession • Not always able to demonstrate the values that we promote such as overworked staff, lack of clear direction, changing needs, etc. • Accountability and transparency • Removal of committees that were previously in place to help the operation of the organization
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased focus on mental health in our larger community - awareness and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government funding cutbacks • Donor fatigue • Housing difficulties for our clubs • Amalgamation of health districts

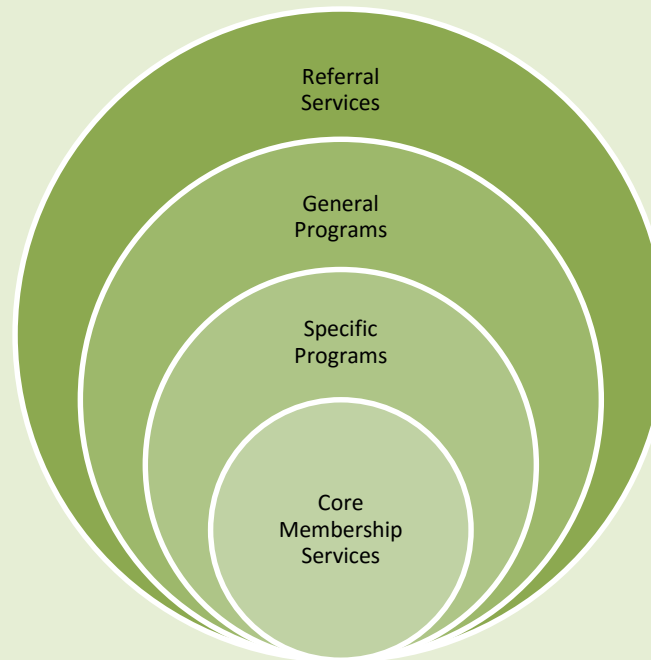
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured expansion of programs to meet the changing needs of our members and the community, based on funding opportunities • Re-establishing committees to assist in matching CMHA Hal-Dart needs to our capabilities • Collaboration with other agencies to advance mental health in the community • Work with other Nova Scotia CMHA branches • Kiosk/displays at community events such as volunteer conferences, the Festival of Hope, and Mental Health Week • Media engagement (both social and traditional) for donor relations and increasing awareness • Untapped donor/sponsor models for enhanced financial sustainability • Enhancement of annual report (continuous improvement) • Reputation building for expanding social capital (i.e., social action, social inclusion, and community advocacy) • Demonstration of improved accountability and transparency by developing a strategic plan and strengthening governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and links with/between division and national • Mental Health Foundation, NSHA Community Mental Health Services, and other mental health programs/organization cause confusion of role, support, and services • Period of reduction in government budgets and charitable donations impacting sustainable funding • Lack of clarity between branch and division and the services provided including education and public awareness |
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Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision	Mentally healthy people in a healthy society.
Our Mission	As a local leader and champion for mental health, we support the resilience and recovery/well-being of people living with mental illness through our social programs, our support services, and through the provision of information, resources, referrals and advocacy in a space that is inclusive, safe, and respectful. We strive to create an environment of hope, to reduce stigma, and to promote mental health for all.

What we do	<p>We fulfill our mission by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating environments that foster trust and a sense of belonging • Delivering social support programs for adults living with mental illness and mental health problems • Collaborating with other organizations on mental health initiatives • Providing information about mental health resources within the community • Building capacity for individuals to be active and fulfilled citizens in the community – to feel acceptance, recognition, and a sense of contribution • Reducing stigma by raising awareness
What guides our actions	<p>Integrity: We value honesty, sincerity, truth and honouring our promises.</p> <p>Empathy: We believe in listening in a caring, open and non-judgemental manner.</p> <p>Equality: We believe in a mental health continuum where there is no “us” and “they”. We believe everyone is deserving of respect and should be empowered as a citizen within our community.</p> <p>Diversity: We value diversity and individuality. We believe that the differing perspectives offered by race, religious belief, sexual orientation, age, and ability, all contribute to a richer society.</p> <p>Transparency: We are committed to being focused, accountable, and transparent in the effective and efficient use of our resources.</p> <p>Collaboration: We promote working together, cooperation, and reaching out to partners in order to provide a continuity of support and advocacy for mental health.</p>
Who we serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults who have experienced or are experiencing mental illness or mental health problems and who want to improve their own well-being through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positive social interactions ○ Avenues for creative expression ○ A comfortable and safe social environment ○ A social network with others who have similar experiences ○ Opportunities tailored to the geographic location in which they reside

- An open-door to other social connection resources in the community
- A place that is inclusive and provides a sense of belonging
- Activities that our members might not otherwise be able to access due to financial or other barriers
- Members of the public who are curious about mental health or are looking to become involved in the mental health community.



Strategic Goals

Establishing strategic continuity will help guide our organization through this time of fiscal restraint. We recognize that to be successful we must not only maintain existing relationships, but also cultivate additional partnerships to meet our goals. We are committed to the provision of the high-quality programs and services currently offered and to the development of new initiatives to meet the changing needs of our members and

the community at large. Goals are broad and general expressions of an organization's future aspirations. They are written to state the expected or desired outcome over the longer term.

Over the next five years, CMHA Hal-Dart will focus its collective energy on five goals broken down into actionable steps. Each year, these objectives will be pursued through activities that can be measured. Our commitment to concrete improvement is reflected in the specificity of the agenda that will follow. The intention of these items is not to shackle our organization to a list, but rather to provide a tangible framework to use in prioritizing actions. As objectives are met, some items will become less critical, while changes in the environment might dictate completely new priorities. Ultimately, we aim to strike a balance between measurable outcomes and flexibility in order to ensure there are steps constantly being taken to improve CMHA Hal-Dart.

Supported by the pillars of good governance, organization profile, sustainability, and quality services, CMHA Halifax-Dartmouth Branch's goals over the next five years are:

1.0 Demonstrate that CMHA Hal-Dart is an accountable and effective organization

We want to strengthen the Branch through strong leadership and good governance. In the first year of this plan, we will focus on creating board and organizational structures that are built on best practices for charitable organizations which will help lead us into the future.

Our strategic directions over the five years include:

1. Develop an improved board governance structure and succession plan for board members to create success
2. Review the organizational structure and develop an implementation framework based on mental health initiatives that CMHA Halifax-Dartmouth Branch actively advocates for and supports
3. Develop a plan to recognize the contribution of staff and volunteers
4. Develop a system to keep all stakeholders informed of new initiatives, programs, and services, and plan for improved accountability and transparency
5. Identify key risk areas and develop strategies to mitigate risk

The impact of these strategic directions will be demonstrated through the following outcomes:

- Strengthened board governance framework and organizational structure

- Improved recognition of staff and volunteers
- Improved recruitment, training, and orientation of staff and volunteers
- Increased funding and fundraising opportunities

2.0 Improve our communications

As a local charity that operates under the umbrella of CMHA National and CMHA Nova Scotia, there is a connection between all three levels that needs to be fully understood both internally and by the public. All who are involved – board members, staff, members, program participants, and volunteers – need to understand the common purpose towards which we are all working.

Our strategic directions over the five years include:

1. Develop an annual communications plan, identifying measurable goals for success
2. Strengthen communications and strategic relationships with Division and National
3. Develop and implement an internal and external communication strategy to more effectively communicate the vision, mission, values, and goals of the organization to key audiences.
4. Develop and implement a volunteer engagement strategy

The impact of these strategic directions will be demonstrated through the following outcomes:

- Strengthened relationship with other CMHA organizations
- Increased influence over targeted local policies impacting mental health
- Broadened contact with stakeholders and impact on community
- Increased volunteer participation and lowered turnover of staff and volunteers

3.0 Enhance our financial sustainability

Like many non-profits, we have to keep pace with changing community needs and increasing expectations while being impacted by continuous funding reductions and grant cuts. By fostering a consistent operational funding source the organization will have greater agility and responsiveness to better support mental health in the community.

Our strategic directions over the five years include:

1. Develop an enhanced multi-year funding strategy to effectively increase and diversify revenue streams (i.e. endowment, partnerships, strategic sponsors, etc.)
2. Expand our signature event, the Mosaic for Mental Health, to be a widely recognized annual community fundraiser
3. Develop and implement a funding and sponsorship strategy to engage new and existing funders and sponsors
4. Identify cost savings initiatives as part of the annual budget and planning cycle, including opportunities to share resources/infrastructure
5. Develop a strategy to effectively increase revenue while offering skill development to members (i.e., storefront opportunity)

The impact of these strategic directions will be demonstrated through the following outcomes:

- Innovation in service delivery
- Increased staff and volunteer morale
- Increased revenue

4.0 Provide quality programs and services to support adults within our community experiencing mental illness or mental health problems

CMHA Hal-Dart can generate the biggest positive outcomes by aligning our programs with the vision and mission of our organization and by collaborating with other groups interested in advancing mental health in our community.

Our strategic directions over the five years include:

1. Conduct a needs assessment and identify program opportunities that are aligned with the vision, mission, and values of the organization and with our funding strategy
2. Create strategic partnerships for new program initiatives and collaborate on the delivery of programs and services
3. Establish an objective process to measure client satisfaction and outcomes across all programs

The impact of these strategic directions will be demonstrated through the following outcomes:

- High quality programs that improve our members' quality of life in the community
- Innovation in programs
- Community recognized programs delivered

- Increased partnerships and influence on mental health services

5.0 Develop a reliable infrastructure that supports the mission of CMHA Hal-Dart

The Branch has been impacted by significant changes in municipal and provincial government funding and infrastructure support models. The Dartmouth Club has been forced to move on three separate occasions over the past 10 years, while the Halifax Club was recently relocated as a result of the closure of the Bloomfield Centre. All of this disruption has an impact on the delivery of quality programs and services and is not conducive to the consistency needed by the membership. Since the final presentation of this document to the Board, notice of lease termination for our Dartmouth Branch was provided by the landlord expediting the development of a relocation plan much earlier than anticipated.

Our strategic directions over the five years include:

1. Develop a service plan that recognizes the potential relocation in Dartmouth
2. Develop and implement a travel plan to expand outing options in the absence of a dedicated vehicle
3. Plan for transition from 2020 Gottingen back to Bloomfield Centre (when building is complete)
4. Conduct a facility and infrastructure needs assessment and develop an associated plan
5. Maintain required assets in good condition and develop an appropriate replacement/upgrade plan

The impact of these strategic directions will be demonstrated through the following outcomes:

- Improved quality of services
- Strengthened community connection

Conclusion

Aligning efforts and resources of CMHA Hal-Dart toward the achievement of the goals identified is essential. Our success in reaching our goals is contingent not only on this alignment but it is dependent on the contributions of staff, volunteers, and the ongoing engagement of stakeholders.

Annually the Board of Directors will review the performance success of the previous year and establish new targets and detailed initiatives to ensure consistency with the Strategic Plan, current trends, and anticipated events.