



Goodbye Capital Mental Health Association, Hello Island Community Mental Health

Capital Mental Health Association has been serving individuals experiencing mental illness in Greater Victoria since 1956. Initially the Victoria White Cross Society, we became the Victoria branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association in 1956.

In 1979 we incorporated as Capital Mental Health Association so that we could work in partnership with BC Housing to provide much needed housing for individuals with mental illness. We continued to share an executive director and programming space with Canadian Mental Health Association until March 31, 2010, when we parted ways.

In order to distinguish ourselves as a local organization providing community-based, client-driven service, we began looking for a new name.

After our separation from Canadian Mental Health Association, sharing an acronym became confusing, especially as the Victoria branch of Canadian Mental Health Association worked to establish itself, so the search for a new name gained momentum. With input from clients, community partners, our funders, and our staff, we settled on a name that reflects who we are, where we came from, and where we are headed: Capital Mental Health Association officially became Island Community Mental Health on February 26, 2015.

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A new look for a familiar face

Since 1992, most of the day programs and the head offices of Island Community Mental Health have had their home at 125 Skinner Street, in a nondescript, pale blue and grey stucco building reminiscent of a community church.

Originally purpose-built to house Laurel Enterprises, our transitional employment program, the Harold Moist Centre for Mental Health Recovery opened its doors in June of 1992. The building was named after long-time supporter and board member Harold Moist. It was also, sadly, rather prophetic, as twenty years later the building began experiencing problems due to water intrusion.

As a result, 125 Skinner Street spent a good part of 2014-15 behind scaffolding and under tarps as the stucco and flashing were removed, windows replaced, and a new rain screen installed. The new building, though substantially the same, is much more welcoming and vibrant, and we have received compliments from community members, neighbours, and visitors.



New Website

To go along with our new name, ICMH has launched a new website.

www.IslandCommunityMentalHealth.ca is the best source for current information on programs, schedules, and the latest news on what is happening around Victoria in the realm of Mental Health.

For clients and participants, the website provides program information, current schedules, and news about changes to programs and activities. There are also helpful links to mental health resources and other community service providers.

Retirement Announcement

After 23 years of dedicated service to the organization, Pat Valks has announced her retirement as of July 17, 2015. Pat has worked in several programs within Island Community Mental Health, much of that in our employment programs, both as a front-line support for clients, and, since 2008, as coordinator of NetWorks Employment Solutions.

Throughout her 23 years with us, Pat has touched the lives of those she has worked with as a colleague, and as a support to her hundreds of clients (113 since 2010 alone).

Pat plans to spend her newly-minted free time traveling, and already has a trip to Italy booked.



Please join us on Friday July 17, at 2:30 to say farewell and good luck. We hope all of you who have known and worked with Pat will come to this open house tea, to wish her good fortune in her new found freedom.

ICMH a Partner in Major Non-Profit Development

We are proud to be a part of a large project called Nigel Valley, which is looking to redevelop seven acres of property owned and managed by local non-profits and BC Housing to create a better way of providing housing and support to those in need. It is still in the planning process but it will involve two of our apartment buildings in one of the largest improvements to the non-profit community that Victoria has seen in quite some time.

Networks Hosting Communication Workshops

NetWorks provides supported employment services to individuals recovering from mental illness who are seeking work. One of the community resources they refer clients to is Communica Dialogue and Resolution Services, who teach communication and conflict management skills. These skills are often essential in maintaining employment and positive relationships.

NetWorks has just partnered with Communica to offer a seven-workshop series called Communicating Through Conflict at our Skinner Street location. The workshop covers conflict basics, conflict styles, active listening, assertiveness, managing emotions, and culture and power. If you are interested, please contact Dawn twin at dawn.twin@icmha.ca

Supported Employment Pilot Project

NetWorks Employment Solutions in partnership with Camosun College and Island Health are participating in a Supported Employment pilot project. The project is to offer supported employment services to post-secondary students during the last term of their education, and to see what effect this has on students gaining and keeping employment in their chosen field.

Supported Employment, and specifically the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, has been thoroughly researched, and has been found to be the most effective means of finding and keeping employment for individuals recovering from mental illness. ICMH's NetWorks program is successful in helping job-seekers find employment (66% within one year of starting the program), but individuals usually do not access the program until after graduation.

Go to College at ICMH

Starting this fall, ICMH will be a program location for Camosun College's School of Access. As a community partner, we will be offering college preparatory courses at our Skinner Street location.

Also, ICMH has partnered with Camosun College on a proposal to provide a first-of-its-kind program incorporating BEST, CBT, and WRAP. What are those?

BEST is the only provincial, face-to-face comprehensive career and training program in BC.

CBT is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, an evidence-supported way to learn skills for managing depression and anxiety, and other symptoms of mental illness or distress.

WRAP stands for Wellness Recovery Action Plan – an evidence-based practice self-management and health recovery system.

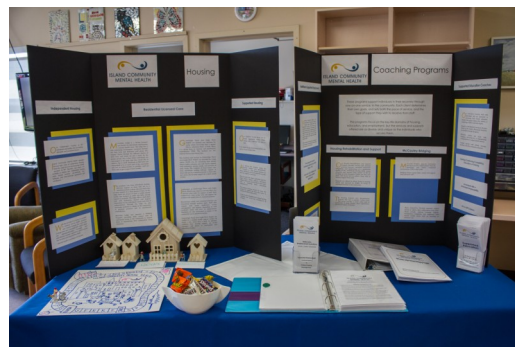
Individuals completing the program will have the skills and self-confidence to set and follow through with realistic personal, educational, and career goals.



Alzheimer's Support Program Receives Victoria Foundation Grant

With the focus on “aging in place” we, as part of the community take our role of supporting the caregivers very seriously. Primary caregivers need to carefully manage their own self-care. Island Community Mental Health recognizes this challenge and, through a grant from the Victoria Foundation, we have implemented a monthly Lunch and Learn program wholly focusing on the Caregiver. These are facilitated sessions, providing an opportunity for peer support, guest speakers, and topical information sharing.

Island Community Mental Health Open House May 4, 2015 to Kick Off Mental Health Week



Motivational Interview Training

This spring, staff across all of our programs completed training in Motivational Interviewing. This four-day intensive program teaches skills for engaging and supporting clients in their own desire to change. From the Motivational Interviewing website:

Motivational interviewing is a form of collaborative conversation for strengthening a person's own motivation and commitment to change. It is a person-centered counseling style for addressing the common problem of ambivalence about change by paying particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen an individual's motivation for and movement toward a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.

PSR/RPS Canada Conference – 2015

This June, PSR Canada held their annual conference in Vancouver, and Island Community Mental Health we well represented. We sent a number of participants for the two-day conference and Supported Employment symposium, and we also had a poster presentation which focused on our GROW (Gateway to Resources and Options for Wellness) Program. The presentation illustrated GROW as part of an integrated suite of services offered by ICMH, which included Supported Education, Supported Housing, and Supported Employment.



United Way funding Young Adult Engagement Project through GROW

Currently about 27% of GROW clients are aged nineteen to thirty. While this is representative of the adult population of Victoria (21% 19-30) this group is typically under-served and over-represented in mental health care. Most individuals experience their first bout of mental illness from age sixteen to twenty-five, and there is increasing evidence of the importance of early intervention and treatment in long-term recovery.

In order to increase the number of young adults accessing services, and to increase their level of engagement in recovery from the United Way of Greater Victoria through GROW. The Young Adult current clients of ICMH, community
als in the community to develop
tract young adults, bringing them
services, and providing opportunities to engage in recreational and wellness activities.



The project started in April 2015, and has already planned or offered workshops including Fashion on a Budget, Stone Sculpting, Writing and Poetry, Photography and the Art of Seeing, Theatre and Improv Skills, Hip Hop Dance, and Spoken Word, all facilitated by artists and professionals in the community. The workshops are marketed under Island Community Mental Health, and open to all, though they have been designed with young adults in mind.

By October, we plan to have two groups each week drawing in young adults who are either not engaged with community recovery services, or marginally engaged. It is hoped that through their interaction with staff and other clients, they will feel comfortable enough to engage in other recovery-based programming offered through ICMH and other community service providers.

ICMH's Housing Support Rehabilitation Program Offers Ready to Rent

Ready to Rent is a six-week program for individuals to learn how to find good, affordable housing, how to exercise their rights and responsibilities as tenants, improve their credit rating, manage money, complete rental applications, and many more skills to improve one's chances of finding and keeping good housing. ICMH recently trained two of our staff to facilitate this program, and we will be offering it to clients starting this fall.