

Background

During its strategic planning process, the Capital District Mental Health Program (CDMHP) and the Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry (DaLU-DP) identified the requirement for citizens (particularly end-users of mental health services and their families) to have meaningful participation in system policy development, planning, service delivery, and evaluation, as well as in system navigation and peer support roles. Although meaningful citizen participation in these functions is government policy in Nova Scotia, the current reality is that it is only happening in small pockets and in a limited way throughout the province. To this end, the CDMHP/DaLU-DP partnership has supported and fully endorsed the development of an independent cooperative entity – *The Healthy Minds Cooperative*

The Blue Horse

Inspired by a real horse that pulled the linen wagon in the Trieste's mental asylum (1970's) in Italy, the blue horse adopted by the Healthy Minds Cooperative pays tribute to Marco Cavallo, a large blue horse made of wood and papier maché that was constructed within Trieste's asylum walls. To demonstrate the liberation of the asylum's inmates, four hundred people paraded Marco Cavallo through the streets of Trieste in Late March 1973. In addition to the opening of the asylum, patients began to organize themselves and, in 1973 a cooperative of 60 people was formed and contracted to clean wards, kitchens, and hospital grounds. These tasks, previously performed without payment, were now carried out by an autonomous organization which offered union contracts and a regular salary.

HEALTHY MINDS COOPERATIVE



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Healthy Minds Cooperative

Information Brochure

*Healthy Minds
Healthy People
Healthy Communities*

A Blue Horse Initiative

Overview

The Healthy Minds

Cooperative is a grassroots not-for-profit organization whose mandate is to address vital matters identified by those who are living the experience of mental health issues/concerns, and/or brain disorders. It is now well documented that peer support/ peer provided services grant benefits to the peer providers, the individuals receiving services, and the mental health delivery system.

Grounded in the Canadian Mental Health Association's **Framework for Support**, the program outputs of the Healthy Minds Cooperative will ultimately be that people with serious mental health problems are living meaningful lives in the community.

Identified Priorities

Better access to mental health services



Public education regarding mental illness and brain disorders



More extensive participation of those with living experience in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of mental health services



Providing peer support and advocacy services for end-users of mental health services and families



Developing better connections to existing community services

Mail or fax for more information

Check all that apply (optional):

- Mental Health Consumer
- Family Member
- Youth
- Senior
- Service Provider
- Other

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____



Cut and Mail To:

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