

BC Partners for Mental Health & Substance Use Information

IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024



At a glance

Welcome to the 2023 Impact Report of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information. Our reach is broad and our impact strong. Together we are helping people across BC make informed decisions and take control of their mental health and substance use.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

We had **1,808,069 website visits**, **2,591,325 video views**, **17,944 podcast listens** and **2,286 information-referral requests**. Our **promotional audience** via e-newsletter or social media **was 157,582.***

PRINT RESOURCES

We distributed **58,682 resources** including magazines and self-help publications.

EDUCATION EVENTS

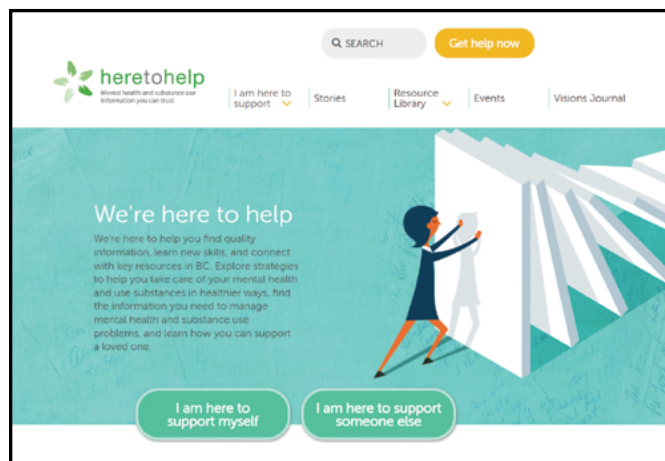
We welcomed **11,637 people** who registered to attend **121 live events**.

* Our followers and subscribers include those from the agencies' main channels, which also profile BC Partners resources.

Digital Resources

HeretoHelp.bc.ca

Twenty years after its launch, HeretoHelp.bc.ca remains an important repository of knowledge on mental health and substance use education for British Columbians—and beyond. Visitors accessed the website almost two million times last year. HeretoHelp respondents to a survey generally found the site easy to navigate and valued the credibility and usefulness of the information provided. Visitors said they primarily used the information to help themselves, followed by help for family members or patients/clients. The practical *Wellness Modules*, screening self-tests and general mental health information were the most accessed resources on the site. The most popular substance use resources were the *Safer Use* brochures and *You and Substance Use* workbook. We are currently making changes to improve the user experience on the site. The website also continues to individually support people navigating the mental health and substance use systems in BC: staff and volunteers responded to over 2,000 individual requests for help or referrals in 2023–2024.



"I had a very good experience when I emailed HeretoHelp for help with a family crisis. I received a very helpful and thorough response from a caring professional."

~ information–referral requester

"[Visiting the site] made me realize that I'm not alone in my curiosity and reduces the stigma surrounding my issues. It's a safe and reliable site when looking for answers to the hard-to-ask questions."

~ website visitor

JessiesLegacy.com is now EmbodyBC.com

After more than 20 years, it was time for a new chapter in the story of Jessie's Legacy eating disorder prevention and awareness program. We shifted the name and visual identity to serve a specific audience. Our work has a renewed focus on preventing eating disorders among children of all ages and genders. The updated name, Embody, evolves the brand for new generations. Together, we are equipping parents, caregivers and professionals to develop protective environments and start conversations that promote self-compassion. The EmbodyBC.com website has been fully updated with new navigation, visuals and content. Embody will spark thousands to start the conversation about body image and disordered eating. Last year JessiesLegacy.com had over 55,000 visits. With the launch of EmbodyBC.com we expect to increase that number next year. In addition, Embody staff helped over 200 people with support, information and referrals to services across the province.

"Our 16-year-old daughter has been dealing with an eating disorder for almost a year now and she has been actively engaging in therapy and has found a good connection with her current team. We have found your referral to the peer support group very helpful. Thank you so much!"

~ information-referral requester

"Thank YOU for making my life so much easier. The website has amazing content and resources for teachers and hopefully it will prevent body image issues for my students."

~ website visitor

Podcasts

The BC Partners support the development and promotion of two podcast series, one on anxiety and one on mental illnesses like psychotic disorders.

"Just hearing stories reminds me that I am not alone in this struggle and there is hope for healing."

~ podcast listener

#OurAnxietyStories

#OurAnxietyStories is a podcast series that features people from all walks of life sharing their experiences with anxiety. This year, Anxiety Canada pressed pause on releasing new episodes, but the existing episodes continued to provide value, amassing a total of 6,858 listens this past fiscal year.

Look again: Mental illness re-examined

Look again: Mental illness re-examined takes a close look at the reality of serious mental illnesses like psychotic disorders and the role we can all play in helping those who live with them lead the most productive lives possible. This podcast dispels myths, featuring interviews with medical experts, families and people with lived experience of mental illness. Some of this season's topics were the pursuit of a cure for mental illness, virtual reality to treat psychosis and two episodes on suicide. For Season Four we had 1,128 followers and 11,086 downloads. This year we were ranked 44th by Goodpods in its Top 100 Medicine Podcasts ranking and 6th by Feedspot for their 10 Best Schizophrenia Podcasts.

"Look Again provides great information about serious mental illness. It's informative without being cold and clinical. I've shared the podcast with many of my friends and family!"

~ listener

Videos

The BC Partners also make videos for diverse digital platforms. These offer information and support in a dynamic, accessible medium.

About anxiety

Looking to meet young people where they are and combat misinformation on social media, the series of 21 short videos, primarily distributed on TikTok, has reached over 2.5 million views since its launch in 2023. Survey feedback indicates the practical demonstrations and relatable content have helped viewers understand and manage anxiety. Particularly valued were video skits like "A Day in the Life with OCD," which viewers highlighted as effective in fostering a deeper connection and understanding of daily challenges faced by those with anxiety and OCD.

"Very informative [videos] all around. Great tips and suggestions about coping and working through anxious thoughts and feelings."

~ viewer



For families and caregivers

FamilySmart added five new videos to the In the Know Video Library for families, viewed 16,622 times this year. Topics include trans and gender diverse children and youth, preparing for the transition to post-secondary, families and schools, emotion regulation and supporting a mental health crisis at home. These videos were co-created with families, young people with lived experience, health care providers, clinicians, university campus wellness leads and the Crisis Centre of BC.

“I’m so glad I came to know about this video. It was so informative and listening to someone talk about their experience was really good and gave me hope that things will get better”

– viewer



Visions

The past year continued a rhythm of bringing new perspectives and energy to *Visions: BC's Mental Health and Substance Use Journal*, the BC Partners' flagship publication. Known for featuring stories from diverse people impacted by mental health and substance use concerns, *Visions* focused on timely issues like moving and nourishing our bodies; family, friends and substance use; and planning work on an issue exploring inclusive and accessible workplaces. The journal continued a new practice of selecting a guest managing editor from one of the BC Partners agencies other than the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Collaborating in this new way, CMHA, Anxiety Canada and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) have built capacity and brought diverse perspectives and skills when coordinating each issue. *Visions* welcomed other new perspectives through recruitment of new external Editorial

Board members and by hosting reader focus groups to more deeply evaluate the journal.

Focus-group feedback indicated readers were excited to receive each new issue, often reading the entire magazine looking for stories and strategies that could help

them better understand and help themselves or others. *Visions'* articles helped readers feel less alone and create a safer, open space to discuss difficult topics. Many said they were especially impacted by the experiential stories, something that can't often be found elsewhere. Professionals shared that they often use *Visions* as a teaching tool. The benefits of *Visions* also extended beyond its readership. Contributors experienced a sense of empowerment and pride, greater respect, empathy for others and better writing skills, along with greater self-acceptance and confidence. Readers were generally happy with the design, found most articles easy to read and really appreciated that the magazine was free. Focus-group comments included ideas for BC Partners to consider in making *Visions* even better and many positive reviews of the journal:



“Visions is such a helpful resource and I’ve learned so much. The information and data is always sound and hearing people’s personal stories has reduced a lot of shame in my own life. So after I read it, I brought it to work to put in our community room and I have received such positive feedback. Thank you again for this great publication.”

– *Visions* reader

“I am so looking forward to these magazines. I know I will receive hours of support and understanding from each issue. I’m super grateful for that”

– *Visions* reader

“I can’t say enough about it, so I read every single thing and underneath my desk here [I have] the stack. I go through them all the time because I have so many things just marked... circled [to read]”

– *Visions* reader

Education Events

We know people need and deserve access to mental health and substance use information. They also need more: opportunities to learn from and connect with each other through peer-to-peer interactions in real time about how this information applies at home, work, school and in the community. That's why BC Partners facilitate in-person and online education events for audiences across BC. Events build safe communities to learn, find empathy and understanding, and destigmatize mental health and substance use challenges. Through events, communities also gain capacity to provide better mental health and substance use support.

In 2023–2024 the BC Partners directly hosted or supported trusted local agencies to host 121 events, connecting with almost 12,000 people. Popular events enabled by BC Partners included In the Know; Beyond the Blues Education and Screening Days; PROUD2BE; Provincial Eating Disorders Awareness Week (PEDAW) events; and Child and Youth Mental Health Day events.

A few event highlights:

- Embody (formerly Jessie's Legacy) engaged 47 organizations to host their own Provincial Eating Disorder Awareness Week (PEDAW)

events across the province. PEDAW events also drove Embody website traffic up by 51% in the 4th quarter to over 19,000 visits.

- National Child and Youth Mental Health Day 2023 featured Dr. Ross Greene facilitating an online event on the topic of collaborative and proactive solutions, attracting 3,616 parents and caring-adult registrants.
- Beyond the Blues, which has had a presence in BC since 1995, saw a nearly 80% increase in attendance over the previous year across 44 different events.



This year, project partners collaborated to incorporate two shared survey questions across all project events. This approach provided continuity when reviewing evaluation results. We also improved our cross-promotion. Evaluation participants described events as positive, inspiring and affirming. Through participation, people experienced a sense of community and belonging, and felt less alone. Participants said the strategies and tools presented were helpful and informative, and prepared them to better help others. Attendees left feeling supported, hopeful and better equipped to take next steps:

“Beyond the Blues is extremely valuable to our campus community as it provides a space where open dialogue surrounding mental health and wellness is highlighted. Students were also able to check in with their personal well-being through the screening process. This event was part of the campus’s overall wellness campaign—and by far the biggest success of the week!”

– Beyond the Blues attendee

“The PROUD2BE event gave us so much needed information about what we can do next to gain support for our (trans) teen. We feel more informed and not alone, and therefore more confident than we did before”

– Proud2Be attendee

“This [FamilySmart In the Know event] was incredibly informative and supportive. It validated feelings I had about the challenges of raising my daughter with ADHD and reminded me of ways to help her and reframe my thinking in those challenging times. It was great to be “in a room” with like-minded people who are going through the same thing as I am—I no longer felt alone in my struggles and my worries. I wish this was available for every educator and just the general public to educate others”

– In the Know attendee

Healthy Minds | Healthy Campuses

Healthy Minds | Healthy Campuses (HM|HC) is a province-wide, locally active community of practice. HM|HC exists so everyone can work together and learn to promote mental well-being and healthier relationships with substances within BC post-secondary institutions. Communities of practice are voluntary groups of people who improve their pursuit of a shared cause through collaborative learning. HM|HC's partnering initiatives engage students, service staff, faculty and administrators to build capacity and shape campus cultures that help all campus community members to thrive.

HM|HC was quite active in 2023–2024. Various efforts followed up on the 2023 Biennial Summit to continue encouraging campuses to activate the *Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting University and Colleges*. Students participated in the Leadership Committee, served on the Support Team and contributed as panel members to an HM|HC Talks (a virtual dialogue event). Among this year's five talks were one focused on embedding mental well-being into course and class contexts, and another on supporting international students. Ten e-newsletter issues facilitated learning and referenced helpful resources. HM|HC continued as a consulting resource for campuses and

external agencies. HM|HC provided welcome guidance to one BC campus conducting a regional forum to advance health and supports. HM|HC also strengthened its relationships with the BC Partners through regular profiles on partner agencies in the newsletter and by featuring one agency's initiative at an HM|HC Talk.

Assessment activities for HM|HC were rooted in a responsive evaluation approach that asked open-ended questions about participants' experience. Those involved have continued to regard their engagement as a welcome opportunity to learn alongside others and be further inspired to help bring about positive change in their campus context.

"I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be involved on the Leadership Committee and connect with the wonderful humans and hearts who are contributing to something so powerful and needed in support of campus mental health and well-being."

– Student committee member

"This was a great session. It was good to listen, gain resources, dialogue, and share ideas with one another"

– HM|HC Talk participant



Who We Are

The **BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information**, created in 2003, is a group of seven leading provincial mental health and substance use organizations. Mental health and substance use issues are complex. By coming together to share knowledge, resources and support, we can better help all British Columbians live healthy, meaningful lives.



heretohelp

Mental health and substance use
information you can trust

BC Partners member agencies include:



MOOD DISORDERS ASSOCIATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A BRANCH OF  Lookout
Housing Health Society



Canadian Mental
Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all



FamilySmart
Together-Centred



**University
of Victoria**

Canadian Institute for
Substance Use Research

Embody
Kindness for every body

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BC MENTAL HEALTH
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES



**Provincial Health
Services Authority**
Province-wide solutions.
Better health.