



# Mental Health Week 2023

## Mental Health Week May 1-7, 2023

Each year Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) branches across the country celebrate Mental Health Week to build awareness, encourage conversation about mental health, reduce stigma and encourage people who may need it to seek help. 1 in 3 Canadians will experience a mental health concern in their lifetime, and we all need to care for our mental health.

### Theme

CMHA National announces the Mental Health Week theme each year. The theme this year was #MyStory, in recognition that everyone has a story to tell about mental health. Your Story may be about your own personal experience, or how mental illness has touched your life through the experience of a loved one, someone you care for, or a work experience. Story telling is powerful, it's healing, and it opens the door to being vulnerable and to being validated. It allows us to learn from each others' experiences and build human connection. Mental Health Week (May 1-7) recognized that collectively and individually we all have multiple layers and stories that make us who we are.

This year's Mental Health Week theme, #MyStory, spotlighted community mental health champions, programs, and activities, and highlighted the importance of universal mental health care. The theme was used to showcase the sharing of one's story and effecting change with that story in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities in general. Storytelling is a fundamental part of being human. Stories help build strong, connected communities. Storytelling, in all its forms, supports mental health and reduces stigma.



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# Mental Health Week Theme Continued..

The Canadian Mental Health Association, Hamilton Branch (CMHA Hamilton) encouraged and supported the creation of these conversations and the development of these stories in a variety of ways throughout our community during Mental Health Week.

## Toolkit

To support, educate and encourage these conversations in multiple arenas, CMHA Hamilton created toolkits for both elementary and secondary schools, and workplaces.

## Workplace:

The Employer Toolkit was designed to offer practical tools, tips, and resources to cultivate a mentally healthy workplace. To create a workplace that aims to improve employee well-being, enhance engagement, reduce employee turnover, and strengthen overall workplace performance.

The Employee Toolkit was created to support the employee in prioritizing their mental health while juggling the priorities of both their personal and professional lives.

The guides offers several actionable items that employees and employers can do while also offering valuable knowledge and resources to both. These toolkits support the employer in helping create a more mentally healthy work environment and the employee on how to access support and maintain that mentally healthy balance.

## Mental Health Week Cookies



## Schools:

The School Toolkits were created to support the theme of #MyStory and build on the skills needed to share and continue communicating about mental health in the school setting.

Each toolkit focused on activities designed to inspire a different module every day that supports the #MyStory theme:

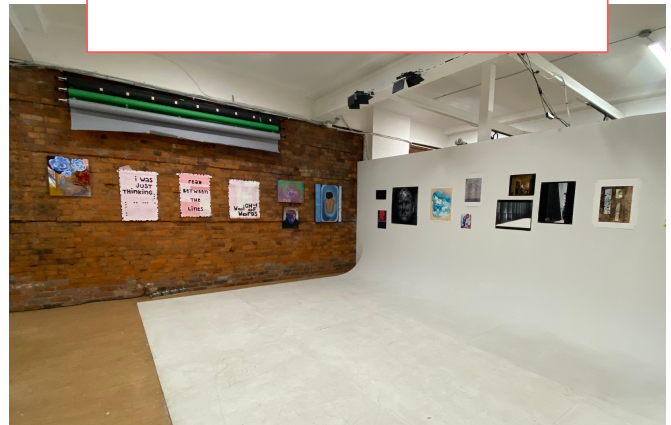
Monday: Mindfulness  
Tuesday: Creative Expression  
Wednesday: Joy/Gratitude  
Thursday: Connections  
Friday: Affirmations

Each toolkit focused on games and activities geared towards both elementary and secondary students. Accompanying each toolkit was a resource guide featuring tools, local resources, and information.



# Community Connections

CMHA Hamilton Office



The community was invited to come to the CMHA Hamilton office to create their own Letters of Hope and attend an Open House to learn about our services. The Letters of Hope will be given out to individuals in the local community who could benefit from support and a sense of community such as seniors living in retirement communities or military personnel.

An outdoor Mental Health Marketplace featured an opportunity for members of the community to meet, greet and access information and resources from a multitude of service providers. The Marketplace is a long-standing tradition during Mental Health Week that showcases the power of organizations working together towards the common goal of supporting the community in which they live and work.

CMHA Hamilton also facilitated a fun-filled day at Gage Park for the general public that focused on learning and participating in a variety of wellness activities that involved nature, creativity, mindfulness, and movement.

Mental Health Week ended with two creative community partnership events; the Resilience and Connection Community Art Exhibit co-hosted by Centre 3, McMaster University's Centre for Advanced Research on Mental Health and Society (ARMS) and CMHA Hamilton, and Every Brilliant Thing, a moving one-character stage show at the Hamilton Conservatory for the Arts. The month of May highlights the significance of looking after and supporting one's mental health and that of those around us. CMHA sees the month of May as a way to encourage and highlight the importance of this topic all year round.



**The reality of our mental health is found in our stories.**

***Building  
community  
health together.***

Visit CMHA Hamilton's website [here](#), and be sure to follow CMHA Hamilton on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).



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