IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CANADIANS AFFECTED BY MOOD DISORDERS

MDSC ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

MDSC.CA
At MDSC, we are very proud that our work includes allyship and direct leadership involvement of persons with lived experience (PWLE) in all that we do.

MDSC strives to improve access to treatment, inform research, shape program development and government policies, to improve the quality of life for people affected by mood disorders.

MDSC’s public educational resources, workplace programs, anti-stigma campaign and activities, peer and trauma supports and services, health care and professional educational development, and our extensive military, first responders and veterans programs have a direct positive impact on the lives of Canadians, their families, caregivers and our communities.

THE LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY IN CANADA: MENTAL ILLNESS.
MDSC developed the Defeat Depression campaign to offer Canadians a way to support their local mental health organizations. The Defeat Depression campaign sees 20,000+ supporters at event locations across Canada raising funds for local mental health services. Since the inception of the campaign, the dedicated participants and donors have enabled more than $2.0 million to be donated to local mental health services nationally.

This campaign provides direct financial aid to a wide variety of mental health organizations' initiatives. This funding ensures programs and resources are available for the increased number of Canadians impacted by mental illness.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN’S IMPACT AT DEFEATDEPRESSION.CA

Elephant in the Room (EITR) is a national anti-stigma campaign designed to address the stigma associated with mental illness.

When you display your blue elephant, you show that you care about the wellness of others and demonstrate a safe place to talk about mental illness, without anyone having fear of being stigmatized.

EITR is now being used by tens of thousands of Canadians in many hundreds of organizations, government departments, police forces, school boards, Universities, Colleges, first responders, hospitals, and businesses. Use EITR to change the culture of your office and make mental health a priority.

When you see the little blue elephant, you know it’s a safe place to speak about any mental health issues you or your family may be going through.

LEARN MORE AT ELEPHANTINtheroom.ca

AN EASY-TO-IMPLEMENT ANTI-STIGMA CAMPAIGN THAT IS CHANGING PERCEPTIONS, INCREASING COMPASSION AND ALTERING ACTIONS.
As part of our public education resource series, we are proud to offer a variety of resource guide booklets and websites that have a combined distribution of well over 2.5 million copies.

Our newest educational resource addition is the Medications and You resource guide. When you or a family member/friend experience mental health issues, often medications are part of the recovery process. Through this book, it is our hope we can assist by providing you with easy to understand information on medications.

Our Workplace Mental Health Guide continues to be an incredibly valuable resource for Canadians and is becoming a staple for business, organizations and government departments across the country.

We also provide What is Bipolar Disorder?, Workplace Guides, What Better Feels Like guides, and many more.

The MDSC depressionhurts.ca website is a significant resource for persons impacted by depression including their families, caregivers and health care providers. It contains in-depth information, tools and supports and is available in four languages - English, French, Chinese and Punjabi. With 500 visitors each day we will soon be seeing 3 million visitors.

Now in its fourth edition, this comprehensive, evidence-based document contains important statistics relating to mental illnesses and addictions.

Through this book, we provide easy-to-understand information on the different types of depression, its symptoms/causes and treatment options. Depression is a serious illness and affects millions of Canadians.

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MDSC and our stakeholder partners have developed a wide array of professional continuing education programs for Physicians, Nurses, Health Care providers, Lawyers, Judges, and Law Students as well as Research Training for Persons with Lived Experience of Mental Illness.

85% of Canadians dealing with mental health problems approach their family physician first.
Mood Disorders Society of Canada recognizes the vital importance of caring for and supporting persons experiencing mental illness. We recognize that these illnesses have a significant effect on the individual directly living with it, and that it also directly impacts family members, caregivers and friends as well.

**PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR CANADIAN EDUCATORS**

MDSC’s Canadian Educators Conference on Mental Health (CECMH) brings educators together to address mental health issues and learn the many ways in which they impact students and staff. Educators from across Canada gather to hear leading experts discuss and present on a variety of Mental Health topics that impact schools each and every day.

This conference is about learning the most current effective practices and research. Delegates attend sessions that include keynotes, panels and workshops that provide them with concrete information and tools that they can use immediately upon their return to the workplace.

Visit the conference website to learn more: www.CECMH.ca

**PROJECT TRAUMA SUPPORT**

Project Trauma Support (PTS) is an MDSC partnership program that addresses Post Traumatic Stress and Operational Stress Injury in military personnel, veterans, first responders and correctional officers. Recognizing the great contribution made by those who protect us, the mission of PTS is to empower them to continue to serve and to live fulfilled lives. PTS is led by a team of mental health professionals and persons who have extensive lived experience.

This innovative, community-based, 6-day residential program that employs a sanctuary model to create a safe and restorative environment in which those who have had their lives ravaged by PTSD find healing from PTSD and Moral Injury. The program runs out of Perth, ON. MDSC is very proud of the significant accomplishments the PTS program is achieving and we are very pleased to have them as part of the MDSC family of programs.

**MDSC PEER AND TRAUMA SUPPORT SYSTEMS (PATSS)**

MDSC has an exceptional team of Special Advisors with years of lived experience, peer support and mental health professionals experienced in addressing trauma. The PATSS team provides professional Peer Support presentations, training and guidance in the development of Peer Support programs, Peer selection, and ongoing support for peer teams for Canadians. With guidance and advice from the Peer and Trauma Support Systems Team, organizations can meet their needs for Trauma Support, Peer Selection, Training and Development within their organizations and workplaces.

**WORKSHOPS AND PEER TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ2S COMMUNITIES**

Peer and Trauma Support Services expanded to provide peer support training for the LGBTQ2S community based on the successful MDSC Peer and Trauma Support Services model. There is no substitute for being among people who are going through the same things as you are. Peer support is intended to complement clinical care that may already be provided to community members. It is well documented that peer support group members can offer greater feelings of empathy and connectedness than what occurs in a typical patient-therapist relationship.

**WHAT BETTER FEELS LIKE**

Just as recognizing the signs and symptoms of depression is important to enable people to seek out treatment, it is equally key to recognize the signs of recovery or ‘what better feels like.’ MDSC embarked on a project to learn from others who have “been there,” to understand what better feels like to them. Here, ten people who had experienced depression were interviewed to answer questions like: What is depression like? What are the signs of getting better? What helped and what didn’t? And what does better feel like? The results... two documents and several videos in the words of those who have lived experience.

**FORUM**

MDSC provides an online discussion forum for people who are experiencing mental health issues and their families to obtain support and information. This provides a safe place for people to share their experiences and concerns. With over 2,600 discussion threads and 33,000 posts, our forum is one of the most widely accessed in Canada.
ADVOCATE

MDSC advocates for policy improvements to address mental illness and, in its national advocacy role, presents formal briefs and positions before Parliamentary Committees, and other bodies and initiatives.

We work collaboratively with all health care organizations and stakeholders in our mutual quest to improve the lives of people who experience mental health issues. We support initiatives which address gaps in services and resources.

RESEARCH

Our partnerships bring together the extensive experiences and knowledge working collaboratively on effective research to improve the lives of persons with lived experience, their families, caregivers and communities.

NATIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The MDSC National Youth Advisory Council is a network of students from colleges and universities across the country, aimed at engaging young adults in mental health issues facing their demographic. As the future leaders of society, MDSC seeks to hear from young adults, to identify where there are potential gaps in supports and to assist them in acquiring the resources they need. The mission is to engage about mental health issues & consult on current MDSC initiatives, to formulate resources. Member activities will include policy discussion, promoting peer-based mental health resources and programs and to promote and share peer-based mental health resources and programs within their networks.

CANADIANS FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DEPRESSION MEDICATIONS (CEADM)

MDSC is a national founding partner in CEADM, and works collaboratively to seek improvements for all Canadians to have access to the depression medications that work for them. MDSC believes all Canadians should have access to the depression medications that support their recovery and well-being. Members of the coalition from across Canada include mental health organizations, professionals, academics and people with lived experience.

ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

MDSC has a partnership with Mental Health Research Canada (MHRC) to work together to address mental illness and promote mental wellness in Canada.

This collaboration will focus on advancing evidence-based mental health research that is problem-solving, cost-effective and usable in the real world. It will also focus on advocacy, allyship and innovative opportunities for joint projects which support the development of programs which benefit persons with lived experience, their families, caregivers, and health care workers in Canada.

PAN-CANADIAN HEALTHCARE SURVEYS

The Canadian healthcare system continues to critically underperform for individuals with mental illness, according to Mood Disorders Society of Canada’s (MDSC) pan-Canadian surveys of the country’s mental health community.

Results of the national surveys clearly illustrate that Canadians are calling for increased focused actions and change on systemic issues identified in Canada’s mental healthcare system. The issues highlighted in these report are considered critical areas for government focus, with particular emphasis on increasing access to mental healthcare professionals across Canada.

TREATMENT RESISTANT DEPRESSION SURVEY

Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD) is a significant mental health issue with wide ranging impact on Canadians, families, communities and the health care system according to the findings of the national survey on TRD, by Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC).

The results of the survey reinforce TRD as a very serious, often debilitating illness that desperately requires new innovation in treatments and collaborative approaches in the various federal and provincial mental health care systems.

RESEARCH
Work With Us
MDSC collaborated with the Arthritis Society on a groundbreaking three-year project that addressed depression and arthritis in the workplace. The project provides information to both employers and employees on how they can support workplace inclusion.

The initiative tackled the co-morbidity of mood disorders and chronic diseases nationally. This initiative supports Canadians living with depression and/or arthritis by giving them the tools they need to actively self-manage, lead healthier lives and fully engage in work.

The Arthritis Society and Mood Disorders Society of Canada acknowledge that the majority of these individuals are of working age, who want to remain productive in the workforce.

Canadian Depression Research and Intervention Network (CDRIN)
MDSC partnered with the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and The Royal’s Research Institute, the University of Ottawa Institute Of Mental Health Research (IMHR), and other partners to develop the network.

The network supported more than 80 research institute clinicians who specialize in depression. In collaboration with other research agencies and governments, these professionals work towards developing a comprehensive research plan with a special focus on suicide prevention and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) early detection and intervention.

Transitions to Communities National Skills Development Program
MDSC is very proud to have developed and provided a three-year project to address veterans struggling with mental health issues. Through providing skills training and the support needed to obtain and retain employment, this project had a direct impact on the lives of our citizens.

Participants developed their personal and professional skills gradually through seven week-long workshops on topics including: Professional Development, Community Supports, Computer Skills Development, Mental Health & Wellbeing, Social Development, Peer & Community Supports, Success to Obtain Employment, and job search skills. As a result of this program, participants obtained employment or returned to school.

MDSC worked with mental health organizations, stakeholder groups, homeless shelters and local employers to deliver 48 programs, over a three-year period, in Calgary, Montréal and Toronto.

MDSC Working Internationally with APEC
The APEC Digital Hub for Mental Health is the coordinating centre for APEC’s work in mental health, bringing together government, public, and private sectors to share, develop, scale up and evaluate innovative evidence- and practice-based programs for mental health.

The Digital Hub is hosted in Canada at the University of British Columbia (UBC), in collaboration with the University of Alberta (UA) and MDSC was a founding partner in this endeavour. Core partners across the Asia-Pacific region support and contribute to the activities of the Digital Hub.

While the Hub will serve as a digital centre for information and learning about mental health, its transformative and unique value will be as a place where key stakeholders will go regularly to work and collaborate.

Partners
MDSC is a proud member of the Canadian Military and Veteran Families Leadership Circle, Mental Health Research Canada, and is also a member of Research Canada: An Alliance for Health Discovery. MDSC is the only Canadian Associate Member of GAMIAN (Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks).
MDSC STRIVES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO TREATMENT, INFORM RESEARCH, SHAPE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES, TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MOOD DISORDERS.

At the Mood Disorders Society of Canada, we strive to support the needs of Canadians impacted by mental illness. Without ongoing core funding, we rely on generous donations from sponsors, private industry and the general public to assist us in this work.

If you would like to support our efforts, you can make a donation on our website or by mailing your donation to the address shown below.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

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