



Mood Disorders Society of Canada  
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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## A Message from the MDSC Board President and National Executive Director

MDSC has experienced another very impactful year. Our successes have been achieved through our people, partners, Stakeholders, and using a collaborative approach.

This year we launched exciting new initiatives while continuing to provide and expand vital core programs. Ensuring all our work is grounded with the leadership of, and in collaboration with, Persons with Lived/ Living Experience (PWLE), we continue to offer programs and services that individuals and organizations can access from every Province and Territory in Canada.

Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, partners and staff, we've made meaningful and measurable strides forward in our mission to improve the quality of life of Canadians impacted by mental illness. We are privileged to work closely with and support vital grass-roots community mental health partners, researchers, businesses, foundations, academia, and Government partners across the country.

Most importantly, we support and work with persons impacted by mental illness, along with their families and caregivers. All our efforts are centred on championing policies, programs, funding and research that are in the best interests of those we serve. We always advance solutions-based approaches which foster inclusivity and resilience in our communities.

Amidst the challenges of continual economic, political and priority shifts that we navigate, our unwavering efforts advocating for improving government policies that advance mental illness treatment and services across Canada has never been stronger. MDSC will continue to move through these times with resilience, gain strength through our trusted partnerships, and leverage innovation and shared knowledge, emerging stronger and more united.

As we look to 2025 and beyond, we will continue to strengthen our existing networks and establish new partnerships and collaborations to pursue meaningful pathways to better mental health care across Canada.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.



**Dave Gallson**  
National Executive Director



**Cynthia Black**  
Board President





## Program Highlight: Advocacy



# Building Capacity for Community Mental Health

In 2024, Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) continued its mission to strengthen Canada's mental health system. Through engagement with policymakers, advocacy campaigns, and amplifying the voices of People with Lived/Living Experience (PWLE), we called for sustainable investments in community based mental health care.

### Why It Matters

Community mental health organizations are vital to Canada's health care system. They provide services like crisis counseling, peer support, housing assistance, and substance health care—essential programs that meet people where they are.

However, chronic underfunding limits these organizations' ability to meet growing demand, leaving millions of Canadians without the care they need. Investing in these services isn't just compassionate—it's cost-effective, reducing strain on hospitals, emergency services, and primary care providers. Through advocacy and collaboration, MDSC is working to secure the funding needed to sustain and expand these critical services.



**More than 1 in 3 Canadians** with mood, anxiety, or substance use disorders report unmet or only partially met health and mental health care needs. Without adequate funding, millions are left without the care they desperately require, further burdening an already strained healthcare system.



## About MDSC

Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) was formally launched and incorporated in 2001 with the overall objective of providing people with mood disorders with a strong, cohesive voice at the national level. MDSC's commitment to mental wellness is grounded in our mission driven mandates:

- **Advocacy**
- **Education & Literacy**
- **Reducing Stigma**
- **Research**
- **Support**

In collaboration with our community partners and grass-roots service providers – and always with the inclusion of Persons With Lived/Living Experience (PWLE) - MDSC identifies gaps in mental health services across Canada, and takes the lead in establishing new, innovative programs to help Canadians achieve mental wellness.

Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) has evolved to become one of Canada's best-connected mental health NGOs with a demonstrated track record for forging and maintaining meaningful, trusted and sustained partnerships with the public, private and non-profit sectors throughout Canada.

## MISSION

*To improve the quality of life of Canadians impacted by mental illness so they can live the most fulfilling life possible.*

### Highlights

- Met with 20+ parliamentarians to advocate for community mental health funding.
- Highlighted the critical need for increased support to alleviate pressure on overburdened healthcare systems.
- Shared compelling real-life stories to emphasize the gaps in mental health care.
- Submitted a prebudget submission for budget 2025 recommending a \$50M investment in a Community Mental Health Fund to better support capacity of these organizations to provide mental health programs and services.
- Proposed two funding streams to address national and regional needs, ensuring flexibility and tailored impact



## Program Highlight: Support, Education & Literacy, Reducing Stigma Veteran and Family Member Programs



*"I know I'm not the only other Veteran who has benefited from these calls. When you feel alone it makes things much harder to deal with and these weekly check-ins always seemed to arrive when I most needed them, allowing me to face another week."*

At Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC), we hold a deep respect and gratitude for those who have served our country and their families. We understand that Veterans and their Family Members face unique challenges, particularly regarding mental health. Our Veteran and Family Member Programs are specifically designed to address these needs, providing comprehensive support for mood disorders and related conditions.

### MDSC is proud to offer four support programs for Veterans and their Family Members:

- Peer Support Training** provides education and resources to participants as they develop their skills to offer informed Peer Support within their own communities. Peer Support Training is facilitated by MDSC's Peer and Trauma Support Services Team the facilitators are Veterans, Veteran Family Members and Trauma Informed Mental Health Professionals;
- Companionship Calls** - which are an opportunity to have a social call with a caring volunteer/Veteran or Veteran Family Member;
- Mental Health Resources** - These materials are available in a variety of different formats and cover many areas, including: anxiety, bipolar disorder, cannabis, depression, OSIs, PTSD, sleep, and many other topics.
- Veterans Volunteerism with MDSC**, providing opportunities to Veterans to use their skills while giving back to other Veterans.

**MDSC Veteran Support**

**100% No cost for Veterans & Veteran Family Members**

**LEARN MORE**  
VeteransPeerSupport.ca

Mood Disorders Society of Canada  
Société pour les troubles de l'humeur du Canada

## Milestones Reached in 2024

**Peer Support Training:**  
60 workshops conducted.

**Volunteer Recruitment:**  
23 active Veteran volunteers onboarded.

**National Support:**  
Over 1,130 service points provided to 662 Veterans and Veteran Family Members across Canada.

Collaborating with like-minded organizations, we go above and beyond to support Veterans and their Family Members, addressing their unique mental health needs and promoting overall well-being.

## Program Highlight: Support, Education & Literacy Defeat Depression | A National Mental Health Fundraising Campaign

### Together, We Are Making a Difference

The Defeat Depression Campaign brings together friends, families, and organizations across Canada to raise funds for mental health programs, support regional services, and advance research, advocacy, and program development for those affected by mental illness.



### Community Impact Highlights

**Educational Resources:** Over 10,500 downloads of mental health materials.

**Volunteer Support:** 100+ dedicated volunteers across the country.

**13 Years and Running:** Over \$3,500,000 Raised for Mental Health, 130+ Community organizations helped

### Illuminating Hope

Landmarks lit up to support mental health awareness:

- Calgary Tower
- CN Tower
- Niagara Falls

### Amplifying Awareness

Our campaign's message reached far and wide this year:

**Total Social Media Reach: 170,000+**

**Impressions: 350,000+**

**Follower Growth: +21.7% from 2024**

**Newsletter Subscribers: 16,500+**

**OVER \$350,000 Raised in 2024**

### 10th Annual Canal Pursuit for Mental Health

700 km over 7 days along the Trent Severn and Rideau Canals

Over \$18,500 raised in 2024, honoring emergency service personnel and military members



# Donor Spotlight: Vale - A Mine for Minds



If you were to think about the hard, rugged landscape of the Canadian North, words like caring and friendly may not be the first words that come to your mind - but that is precisely what kind of space Vale Base Metals has carved out for their employees who work with their Canadian operations.

'We exist to improve life and transform the future. Together.' - displayed in large font, on the front page of the company's website, this statement is not just lip-service – it is a mindset that the company lives by every day. "Our communities mean a lot to us", says Don Langlois, Health and Disability Management for Ontario, "We are integrated into, and our employees reside in the communities we operate in. At Vale, we want to provide meaningful employment and leave the communities we work in better shape than what they were when we arrived."

Concerned about the unique mental health challenges of people living and working in remote areas, such as those in the Canadian mining industry, in 2015, Vale spearheaded a large, multi-year study on the mental health of its workers. The study yielded some surprising results with many workers responding that they felt their physical safety, on the job, was better than their psychological safety.

Recognizing the need to provide their employees with not just physical health support – but also mental health support, Vale created a new mental health strategy called MINES for Minds.

A memorable acronym, MINES stands for Monitor, Intervene, Normalize, Encourage, Support. MINES for Minds promotes mental health and awareness and is facilitated by Vale employees. People leaders at Vale take part in specialized mental wellness training and receive a Mental Health First Aid Certificate. Every employee is encouraged to be mindful of the mental wellness of themselves, and their co-workers – the company's Home Safe program provides personal, daily reminders of the reasons that each employee has to return home safe.

Taking it a step further, Vale also has regional workgroups made up from a cross section of employees at all levels, whose purpose is to identify region specific issues and promote solutions. Some of the regional mental health initiatives that have come from the work groups include "Green Rooms" – mental health spaces accessible by employees that promote mental wellness; an employee health app, which connects employees to medical and mental health supports; and for remote locations with no local counselling services available, Vale flies counselors into the operation to work with employees one-on-one.

In addition to hands on mental health services that Vale provides its workers – the company also promotes awareness and engagement by participating in initiatives such as MDSC's Defeat Depression and Elephant in the Room Campaigns. Since 2017, Vale has been the Title Sponsor of the National Defeat Depression Campaign and has had hundreds of employees and community members participate in community campaign events. Through sponsorship and participation, Vale has contributed over \$600,000 to MDSC in support of mental health care across Canada.

When asked what message Vale employees might have for other Canadians who are struggling with mental health challenges, Don's reply was heartfelt, **"You are not alone, and you are enough. Mental health is health, and people care about you – don't feel afraid to reach out for help."**



From L-R - Nadeem Khan, Dave Gallson, Gord Gilpin

During the 2024 Defeat Depression Vale event in Port Colborne, Gord Gilpin, Director of Ontario Operations and Nadeen Khan, Manager of Port Colborne Refinery presented MDSC's National Executive Director, Dave Gallson with a "cheque" for \$225,000 as a symbol of their most recent three year pledge to the Defeat Depression Campaign. During the presentation, Mr. Gilpin spoke about Vale's ongoing commitments to the mental wellness of Vale's Employees and the communities Vale operates in.



**MDSC programs that support employee wellness...**

**Create a healthier work environment.**

Rally your team to participate in activities, fundraising, and mental health awareness initiatives, transforming your workplace into a hub of support.

**Find more information at:**  
[www.defeatdepression.ca](http://www.defeatdepression.ca)

**MIRA was born from a vision that mental health services should be accessible to Canadians when and where they need it.**

MIRA belongs to Canadians.

MDSC invites organizations from small community centres, through to large health authorities, to use MIRA for free.

To learn more about how to partner with MIRA and/or to embed the MIRA chatbot on your organization's website, visit:  
[www.mymira.ca](http://www.mymira.ca)

**Let's work together to reduce the stigma around mental health!**

MDSC is proud to offer Anti-Stigma Posters that provide simple yet effective ways to promote healthier environments. Display them in your workplace, school, or community center to encourage positive attitudes toward mental health.

**For more information, visit:**  
[www.mdsc.ca/stigma](http://www.mdsc.ca/stigma)



# Program Highlight: Research, Advocacy

## Access to Medications

### System Broken

Access to appropriate medications is a cornerstone of effective mental health treatment. However, systemic barriers within Canada's public drug coverage often impede timely and equitable access for individuals living with mental illnesses. Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) has been at the forefront of identifying these challenges and advocating for comprehensive reforms. To view the full report please visit [acesstomedication.mdsc.ca](https://acesstomedication.mdsc.ca)

In 2023, MDSC launched the "System Broken" report, which revealed substantial delays, a significantly higher rate of negative reimbursement recommendations for mental illness medications compared to medications for other medical disorders, and an inequality of publicly funded medications across Canada.

To address these gaps, MDSC led a roundtable with 32 health system experts, which resulted in three MDSC Health System Roundtable Recommendations, listed below, for the path forward. Improvement in the front-line voice within the reimbursement review process is at the core of the recommendations.

### MDSC Health System Roundtable Recommendations

#### Include Voices:

Increase and enhance representation of front-line voice (People with Lived/Living Experience (PWLE) and Psychiatrists) in the reimbursement review process

#### Education:

Create guidance and education for reimbursement review expert committees on "clinically meaningful endpoints" for mental illness

#### Improve Transparency:

Improve transparency around the reimbursement review process and final decisions

### Key 2024 Outreach & Outcomes

- **Awareness building:** 5M media impressions from national & regional opinion-editorials and advertorials in the National Post & The Hill Times
- Presented scientific posters and spoke on 2 panels at international and national reimbursement conferences attended by 5,000 delegates
- Held one-on-one educational meetings with government across the country

### MDSC Health System Working Group

To advance the above recommendation areas, MDSC is establishing a pan-Canadian, multi-party working group (WG). MDSC will collaborate with Canada's Drug Agency (CDA-AMC), the nation's largest reimbursement agency, in taking part in and achieving the goals of the WG.

MDSC continued to collaborate with CDA-AMC and other stakeholders to address these systemic issues. As a direct result of MDSC's advocacy and outreach to CDA-AMC, the agency enabled front-line voice to be added to its deliberative committee and Board of Directors, and launched a Mental Health Listening Tour.

# Program Highlight: Education & Literacy, Support

## MIRA

In 2024, the MIRA project continued to redefine how Canadians access mental health resources. MIRA, a conversational chatbot designed to simplify mental health system navigation, delivers expertly vetted resources tailored to individual needs. By focusing on accessibility, anonymity, and inclusivity, MIRA has made significant strides in addressing systemic barriers

### Community Engagement

**Focus Groups & Interviews:** After conducting user focus groups, MIRA 4.0 incorporated many recommendations including enhanced accessibility and resource retrieval. In addition, insights from Micmac and Indigenous Student Achievement Pathways (ISAP) helped inform UI/UX improvements and cultural adaptations. Through this feedback, we enhanced user experience while ensuring user safety and acceptability.

**Presentations & Outreach:** The MIRA team meets regularly with potential partners to discover opportunities for collaboration. This leads to enhanced MIRA user experience and increasing availability for partners to offer assistance to their users by accessing mental health resources on their websites. Engagements with organizations like STR8 UP Saskatoon and events like the Canadian Alopecia Areata Foundation Conference expanded MIRA's reach.

**Global Presence:** Represented at eMHIC Congress and International Society on Bipolar Disorders, fostering global interest in MIRA's innovation.

### Developed by MDSC in Collaboration with:



# 4.0

### Resource Library Expansion

MIRA's library now offers over 1,500 vetted resources and 3,000 reviews. Including resources for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, and expanded French language offerings.

### Enhanced Accessibility and Functionality

Accessibility tools: text-to-speech, high-contrast modes.

Improved resource retrieval algorithms for relevance.

Enhanced stability for a seamless experience.

French language support.

New pathways for youth, veterans, and public safety workers.

Faster processing and modular customization for specific audiences.



# Volunteers

## 2024 Volunteer Highlights

MDSC currently has  
**183 Active Volunteers**

Volunteers provide valuable support to MDSC by engaging in tasks such as:

- Organizing community led Defeat Depression events
- Providing peer support and companionship calls to Veterans and their Family Members
- Vetting mental health resources for the MIRA library
- Participating in research studies and roundtables to benefit mental health initiatives across Canada



1,130+ hours  
researching  
resources  
for MIRA  
completed by  
passionate  
volunteers



23+ NEW  
Veteran  
Volunteers



## National Youth Advisory Council

NYAC is a network of students from high schools, colleges and universities across the country, aimed at engaging young adults in discussions about mental health in their own age demographic. NYAC Researches, identifies, and addresses gaps in youth and student mental health support to advise MDSC on youth-centric programs and services. NYAC volunteer teams are currently led by a Core Council of 18 students from across Canada.

## 2024 NYAC Highlights:

NYAC Presentation to the Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health titled *Advancing Adolescents: AI Applications in Youth Mental Health*.

NYAC released the report on their *Canadian Students Mental Survey*

# Planning For The Future

**The full impact of MDSC's efforts is sometimes difficult to measure.** While we may know that 9375 mental health resources were downloaded from the MDSC website, or that 80 Students participated in a recent research study about Youth Mental Health, we cannot put into numbers the 12 year old who decided to confide in her school social worker instead of self-harming because she saw an elephant on her teachers desk, or the Veteran who made a decision to go to the grocery store today for the first time in weeks because of a Companionship Call they received. **We know from speaking with PWLE and their families that the work we are doing is valuable and meaningful, and we know from our roundtables and research that more must be done.**

In December 2023, MDSC Board of Directors approved a 4-Year Strategic Plan following a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process involving 423 staff, funders and donors, community partners and volunteers. The plan has provided us with **clear focus and direction**. It provided a strong framework for developing annual operational plans with **measurable goals and realistic objectives** for the organization to monitor our progress effectively and will enable us to **respond and adapt as circumstances (and technology) evolve**.

In alignment with our Strategic Plan, MDSC developed a detailed Sustainability Plan during Summer 2024, which includes Stewardship and Impact Reporting guidelines for our donors. Our Sustainability Plan ensures that all donors to MDSC receive regular updates and communications on their impact, with the goal of establishing long-term relationships beneficial to the donor, MDSC, and our partners.

**MDSC will use these plans as our roadmap to improve mental healthcare systems in Canada with a goal of ensuring that people can access the supports and programs that they need, when they need it, in the communities where they live and work.**



# Financials

Mood Disorders Society Of Canada  
Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets  
For the Year Ended March 31, 2024

## Revenue

Grants and contributions  
Grants - Hope Rising  
Donations  
Grants - Improving Veterans Wellness  
Other income  
Conference registration fees

	2024	2023 (note 6)
	\$ 1,041,815	\$ 628,528
	331,568	30,143
	263,118	239,874
	85,085	118,454
	38,431	34,376
	1,951	2,360
	<b>\$ 1,761,968</b>	<b>\$ 1,053,735</b>

## Expenses

Project management and consulting costs  
Salaries  
Program delivery - Hope Rising  
Program delivery - Improving Veterans Wellness  
Gifts to qualified donees  
Travel and meeting expenses  
Advocacy  
Phone, facsimile and website  
National campaigns  
Office and meeting expenses  
Fundraising  
Legal and accounting fees  
Interest and bank charges  
Rent

	2024	2023
	563,670	121,410
	406,599	434,845
	194,920	9,504
	121,925	162,377
	87,411	116,532
	45,458	28,682
	44,694	58,009
	25,383	30,917
	22,643	11,106
	21,863	26,075
	18,622	55,127
	17,467	17,867
	8,383	5,154
	6,000	6,000
	<b>\$ 1,585,038</b>	<b>\$ 1,083,605</b>

<b>SURPLUS (DEFICIT) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES, for the year</b>	176,930	(29,870)
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, beginning of year</b>	314,326	314,326
<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 491,256</b>	<b>\$ 314,326</b>

# Thank You to Our Partners.

Donors/Sponsors contributing \$10,000+ to MDSC initiatives in 2024

AbbVie Corporation  
Alberta Innovates  
Biogen Canada Inc.  
Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd.  
CN  
Eisai Inc.  
Idorsia Pharmaceuticals Canada Ltd  
Innovative Medicines Canada  
Johnson & Johnson Innovative Medicine  
Lundbeck Canada Inc.  
Otsuka-Lundbeck Alliance  
Pfizer Canada Inc.  
Place2Give  
Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command  
Takeda Canada Inc.  
TD Bank Group  
Teva Canada Innovation  
The Printing House  
True Patriot Love Foundation  
Vale Canada

With Support from the Government of Canada

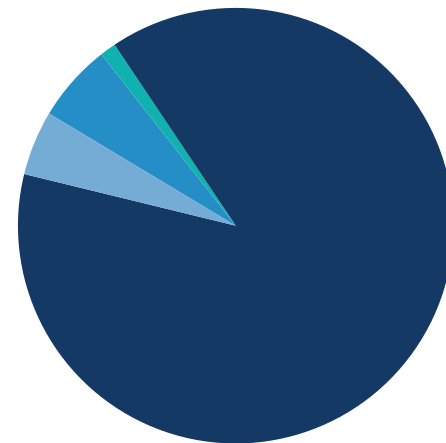
Canada

## A Brighter Future Together

We extend a heartfelt thank you to each of our donors, sponsors and partners who share our vision and dedication. Your unwavering support has been a beacon of hope for many. Together, we are not only addressing the immediate needs of those impacted by mood disorders but also building a foundation for a brighter, more supportive future.

# Expenses

Program Delivery	88.2%
Administration	5.8%
Gifts to Other Qualified Donees	4.8%
Fundraising	1.2%



For our full audited financial statements, please visit our website [mdsc.ca](https://mdsc.ca)

## How You Can Help

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.

[mdsc.ca/donate](https://mdsc.ca/donate)



# Territorial Acknowledgement

Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) is a national, non-profit health charity committed to ensuring that the voices of persons impacted by mental illness are heard on issues relating to mental health and mental illness. Doing so requires ongoing understanding and action related to persistent health inequities and injustices.

MDSC is headquartered on the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee, covered by the Williams and Upper Canada Treaties. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work in the community and on this important traditional territory. We acknowledge our shared obligation to respect, honour, and sustain these lands and the natural resources contained within. MDSC staff, volunteers, and partners live and work from many territories across Turtle Island.

Through ongoing learning and education we can help challenge and dismantle systemic barriers that persist in our society and which are intimately linked to the central mission of our organization in mental health and wellbeing. We commit ourselves to the path of justice, healing, and reconciliation to create a brighter future and mental health landscape for all Indigenous individuals and communities.

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