



## **Welcome to Island Health's MHSU Update!**

This communication is intended to connect Island Health staff and share developments and achievements across the MHSU portfolio.

With each New Year comes new possibilities! We are excited to be entering 2021 with the wonderful MHSU teams and look forward to continuing to flourish and share our successes!

## *Good News Stories . . .*

### **Highlights:**

- Innovative Mental Health Act Engagement Efforts
- Wellness Supports, Self-Care and Team Resilience
- Stabilization Unit moved to McClure Street
- Successful Sub-Acute Webinar

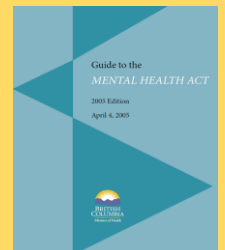
### **Victoria Stabilization Unit Moved to McClure Street**

The Stabilization Unit, formerly located at Eric Martin Pavilion, has moved to a temporary space at 924 McClure Street, Victoria. Stabilization offers 13 beds in two adjacent houses, providing a more home-like environment and less of an institutional setting than at Eric Martin. The same programming and support services will continue to be provided to support clients on their recovery journey with programs that include psychoeducational groups and a safe sober place to stay for up to 30 days. This move aligns with Island Health's larger vision to establish a treatment and recovery centre. Further, it increased in-patient bed capacity for MHSU patients at Royal Jubilee Hospital through the creation of a Sub-Acute unit (next page). *Thank you to everyone who helped make this happen!*



### **Mental Health Act – Virtual Training**

The Mental Health Act (MHA) Education Subcommittee is responsible for ensuring compliance with the MHA education plan. The subcommittee created a virtual training module for its Island Health colleagues.



Nick Cherwinski, Consultant for Professional Practice, articulated his support and praise for the innovative, interactive and engaging learning experience:

*"This offering has clearly been designed by experienced clinical educators; and the experience for learners is such that they are able to listen, watch, learn, and interact with the educators – live Zoom chat support is even provided by a variety of experts trained in this work. This learning product delivered via the virtual learning modality is an example of an exceptionally well designed training, and the team should be applauded for this work."*

Since the MHA Information Sessions launched in June 2020, over 200 participants across Island Health have taken the training! Visit this link to register for the offering: [Mental Health Act - Information Session](#).

## Wellness Supports & Self-Care

As colleagues we can support and encourage each other to make self-care a priority. Deidre Knudson shares some ways which she and other team members have been practicing self-care:

*In April, Jessie, Tara, Katie and I met for a socially distant visit and made a pact to stay in regular contact and support each other. As Mental Health workers at Comox Valley Hospital, we know practicing self-care benefits not only ourselves, but also our families and patients. Scheduling weekly plans reduced feelings of isolation and the fear of the unknown. Once allowed our “Safe Six”, we became each others’ bubble and would go to the beach, sit and talk for hours, floating in a tube—disconnecting from work, social media, and the news.*



*We made sure to talk about how we were feeling, and challenged each other to be honest—breaking down barriers and responding with transparency enabled us to best support each other when any of us were struggling. Come fall, as COVID cases rose, we met at the beach and became emotional knowing this would be our last visit. We practiced a meditation and shared experiences with resources available to us, such as EFAP. Now, the texts, video calls and random messages keep us smiling and feeling connected and help us manage all the burdens around us. The women in this friendship are outstanding—having a strong social network is key!*

In acknowledging the impacts the past several months had on our lives, remembering to make time for self-care can be challenging. MHSU Operations would like to extend our appreciation to all our staff and take a moment to highlight the support resources available:

- ❖ Homewood Health (Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP))
  - Counselling Services
  - Wellness Webinars
  - Trauma Care Program
  - Depression and Anxiety Care Program
- ❖ Island Health’s Spiritual Health Practitioners (SHP)
- ❖ The Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Skills Group Program
- ❖ Digital Wellness Resources (e.g., LifeSpeak, Starling Minds, Care for Care Givers)
- ❖ The Stress First Aid (SFA) and Peer Support Training
- ❖ Mobile Response Team (via Provincial Health Service Agency)
- ❖ BounceBack (via the Canadian Mental Health Association)
- ❖ PTSD Coach Canada App (via Veteran Affairs Canada)
- ❖ For additional information, please visit: <https://intranet.viha.ca/covid-19/>

## Victoria Sub-Acute Unit Information Webinar

A Webinar delivered by the MHSU Sub-Acute Unit planning team on January 8<sup>th</sup> was attended by 106 participants! The event provided an overview of the new unit as a Step-Up/Step-Down service with emphasis on its role in the MHSU care continuum in the South Island.

The Unit, targeted to open this Spring on 5B EMP, will respond to overcapacity/surge pressures and/or decant needs due to a potential COVID+ outbreak on one of the acute care units. During the event, Dr. Chris Blashko, Susan Rich and Jocelyn Barr answered participant questions which will be summarized in a forthcoming FAQ.

The Webinar PowerPoint presentation can be found [here](#).



## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The MHSU Leadership continues to encourage physician and staff engagement in generating transformational practices in our workplace. Please send questions or comments to Monica Flexhaug, Director, Special Projects ([Monica.Flexhaug@viha.ca](mailto:Monica.Flexhaug@viha.ca)).

