



## **Supporting People Who Live With a Mental illness**

There are clear values represented throughout the Canadian Mental Health Association's National policy statements and documents. This document will summarize CMHA values regarding people living with mental illnesses.

The fact that people who live with mental illness have the same rights and needs as everyone else is sometimes forgotten in the mental health service delivery system. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Manitoba believes in the following:

### **People**

- Have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and valued as human beings.
- Have the right to make their own informed decisions on all matters affecting their lives.<sup>1</sup>
- Have the responsibility to change, contribute, recover and self direct their lives in every aspect: body, mind and spirit. Contrary to common assumptions about people with mental illness, they are capable of directing their own recovery process and indeed, feeling "in control" is a key element of the recovery process.
- Have the right to be accepted regardless of sex, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or political affiliation. Any form of discrimination is unacceptable.
- Have the right to be given access to information, pros and cons as it concerns all aspects of their lives.
- Have the right to choose who their own supports will be, including choosing and appointing a decision-maker for cases of emergency.
- At times rely on the advice and assistance of support networks, which may include family members, friends or service providers.

### **Conclusion**

CMHA recognizes that people who live with mental illness have the same rights as everyone else and are the experts on their own experience of their mental illness.

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*The Canadian Mental Health Association is a nation-wide, voluntary organization that promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. CMHA accomplishes this mission through advocacy, education, research and service. CMHA's mission is framed by a vision of mentally healthy people in a healthy society.*

Approved by CMHA Manitoba Division Board of Directors May 27, 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> The only exception is during cases of "emergency;" in this context, an emergency is *limited period of time* that a psychiatrist may declare the person as being incompetent to make treatment decisions and immediate treatment is needed to avert death, or serious harm to self or others. Criteria for measuring competency should be explained to the individual during non-emergency times.

## Key Resources

- Canadian Mental Health Association (1995). *Consumer involvement: Beyond tokenism*. Retrieved March 5, 2007, from [http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=5-33-181](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=5-33-181).
- Canadian Mental Health Association (1996). *Informed consent to treatment*. Retrieved March 5, 2007, from [http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=5-33-174](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=5-33-174).
- Canadian Mental Health Association (1999). *Supporting consumer involvement*. Retrieved March 5, 2007, from [http://www.cmha.ca/bins/print\\_page.asp?cid=5-33-180&lang=1](http://www.cmha.ca/bins/print_page.asp?cid=5-33-180&lang=1).
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2006). *SAMHSA Issues Consensus Statement on Mental Health Recovery*. Retrieved March 5, 2007, from [http://www.samhsa.gov/news/newsreleases/060215\\_consumer.htm](http://www.samhsa.gov/news/newsreleases/060215_consumer.htm).
- Trainor, J., Pomeroy, E., & Pape, B. (2004). *A framework for support* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Toronto: Canadian Mental Health Association. Available: [http://www.cmha.ca/data/1/rec\\_docs/120\\_Framework3rdEd\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.cmha.ca/data/1/rec_docs/120_Framework3rdEd_Eng.pdf).