

We Are More



A Strategic Plan for
the Canadian Mental
Health Association
Waterloo Wellington

2014–2018

Vision

Imagine a community where:

When you need support,
wherever you are,
there's someone.



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Waterloo Wellington

Mission

We are more.

We work to build a community in which everyone has what they need to live meaningful lives.

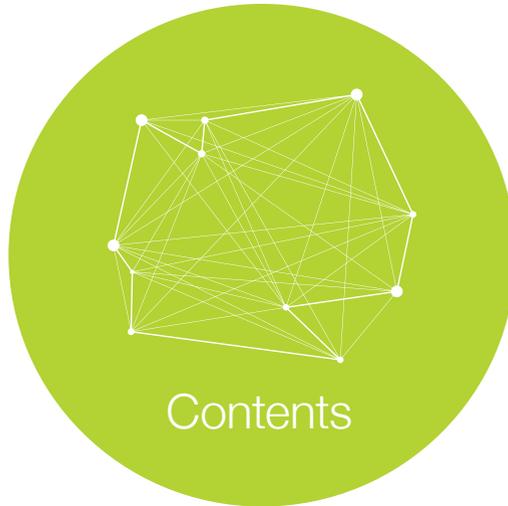
We build human connections that make it possible for people to achieve their greatest potential.

We inspire and support people in achieving the quality of life that they desire.

We are there when you need someone.

We are CMHA WW.

We are more.



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It's been an inspiring journey.

At CMHA WW we've spent six months going through an incredible process of dreaming, investigation, reflection, and problem solving that's led to a powerful strategic plan for the next three years of this organization.

We were guided by a human-centred approach and anchored by a huge engagement process geared to understand the experiences, needs and challenges of our clients and staff. Through interviews and focus groups we engaged a significant number of WWD staff and clients, which gave us a deep foundation on which to base our strategic plan. What we learned was organized thematically as needs, obstacles or opportunities for change. We uncovered one fundamental truth:

The people we support come to us because they need more.

Through a process of shared understanding, respect and consensus, we've created an action plan that puts our clients first, reframes our challenges as opportunities, values creativity and builds exciting momentum for the future. This is a plan with a direct connection to better meeting the needs of those we support.

All of this was possible because of the passion and hard work of CMHA WW staff—we're an incredible group of people, all doing our best to help the communities we serve. We've faced a huge amount of change and challenges, but we're ready to move forward as a strong, unified organization.



What does this mean for you?

We ask that you read through this plan and get familiar with it—this is where we've outlined our goals and future direction as an organization. We want this document to live and breathe, and that means keeping it off the shelf and integrating it into our everyday behaviour.

You will be asked to take the action strategies outlined in this strategic plan and help create specific, realizable action plans.

This is where we embed our goals in reality by outlining actionable steps, timelines, key players, tasks, and evaluable outcomes. No one knows your corner of our organization better than you and we need you to share that expertise.

The strategic plan will be the foundation of our work for the next three years. We ask that you engage with and revisit your action plans frequently, that you are active in participating in All Staff Days and follow-up meetings, and that you contribute to a goal-focused, positive culture.

Why does CMHA WW exist?

Determining what is important to CMHA WW and where we want to put our focus and energies over the next three years requires that we have a clear understanding about why we exist, why we do what we do every day, and why we or anyone else should care. Once we are clear on the why we can describe our how – how do we fulfill the why? How do we behave? How do we work?

Being clear on CMHA WW's “why” and “how” allows for a flexible “what”. This maintains alignment and strength as an organization because the core is clear and unchanging.



Our “why”

When people come to CMHA WW, it's because they need more—

more support, expertise, community, or hope— more than what they and the people around them can provide. Whatever more is for each person, we're here to provide it and if we cannot provide it, we help them find it. Our vision and mission reflect that we are striving to be more for our communities.



Vision

Imagine a community where:

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Mission

We are more.

We work to build a community in which everyone has what they need to live meaningful lives.

We build human connections that make it possible for people to achieve their greatest potential.

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Our “how”

This isn't about the mechanisms of how we actually do the work—it's not about what we provide to people, the emails or the meetings or the paperwork.

The how is what guides and directs our work and tells us how we wish to behave.

This is where our values and philosophy come in, and this is the first layer of constraints we intentionally place on our why. We can do anything that helps us fulfill our purpose as long as we live up to our values and philosophy.



Our Philosophy

We are dedicated to supporting resilience and recovery.

Resilience is the strength to maintain hope.
Recovery is a journey towards enriched quality of life.

Our Values

Mutual Respect

We embrace diverse beliefs and values.
We treat each other with openness, empathy and kindness.
We listen to learn and improve.
We believe everyone is important.

Accountability

We effectively balance different needs and interests.
We acknowledge and correct our mistakes.
We are committed to a healthy and fiscally accountable organization.
We take pride in what we do.

Integrity

We are sincere in our words and actions.
We work for the good of the community, the organization, and our funders.
We discuss issues directly and honestly.

Excellence and Innovation

We foster a culture of creativity, which encourages participation from those we support.
We work to enhance our skills, increase community capacity and use best practices.
We evaluate outcomes to ensure we are constantly improving.
We strive to inspire our community.

Over the next three years, our focus, energy and resources will be dedicated towards one strategic priority:

Creating the best possible service experience.

CMHA WW is more and this will be exemplified in providing the people who access our help with the best possible service experience. This means doing all we can to provide care that makes the biggest difference possible in their lives, while continually striving to make their experience of CMHA WW as satisfying and welcoming as possible. With this as our common objective over the next three years, we will be able to achieve our practical vision, and it also moves us closer to our long term vision of a community in which people have support wherever and whenever they need it.

We can create the best possible service experience by starting from four launch points.

Each of the four action strategies becomes the foundation for specific action plans that lay out actionable steps, timelines, key players, tasks, and evaluable outcomes. This section is likely the most useful as you consider practical ways to move forward.





LAUNCH POINT ONE

We Will Strive to Build a Person-Driven System

We're part of a hugely complex system of influences, expectations, needs, and constraints, and this system can be extremely difficult to navigate. We want to take a system-level view, placing the client at the core and helping their needs propagate through and shape the system. There are innumerable challenges that are largely out of our control, but if we identify the challenges we're able to affect and accept those we can't, we can reframe these constraints as opportunities for creative problem solving and new ways of working and thinking. Productively acknowledging the constraints and identifying opportunities within the many layers of the system will help us to design programs and services that proactively support our clients at each and every level.

Ideas generated during the mapping process:

- Identify and evaluate systemic challenges
- Connect the dots between community, individual, and organization
- Use a community to make a community healthy
- Accept the challenges of large geography
- Address inconsistencies and limitations of workspace
- Be proactive (with programs, services, and teams) and less reactive
- Give time, patience, and flexibility to the merger process



LAUNCH POINT TWO

We Will Create A Thriving Work Environment

We are overloaded and exhausted and our culture, clients, and personal wellness suffer for it. We need to create a healthy, positive work culture that empowers and enables staff to take the time they need for self-care, personal growth, and wellness. This means implementing policies that support a healthy work/life balance, continuing to listen to staff needs, and actively supporting and promoting wellness. This might mean adjusting caseloads, offering training in self-care, and allowing for more flexible workdays. Mental health and wellness is so important to all of us—it's what we work to support every day—now we've got to walk the walk and prioritize our own wellness. We'll all be happier, more engaged, empowered, and capable, and our clients will benefit.

Ideas generated during the mapping process:

- Policies that support work/life balance and flexibility as well as self-care
- Play well and play together
- Foster emotional intelligence
- Personal and professional growth and development
- Create a caring culture
- Assess staff needs
- Provide opportunities for fun team-building and to foster staff wellness
- Include front-line staff in planning



LAUNCH POINT THREE

We Will Create A Communicative Culture That Promotes Autonomy

In a large organization with many services, programs and locations, clear, honest, and timely communication is critical. It's important as we settle from the merger that priorities, policies and standards are clearly set and communicated—not only does this help everyone align and unify, but it also empowers staff and builds trust. When everyone's on the same page, it's easy to allow for more autonomy and flexibility—features that will allow staff to adapt as needed to the needs of their clients and their own. Everyone will benefit from an informed, aligned, and empowered CMHA WW where staff are able to do what they need to serve their clients and care for themselves by tailoring their workday and adapting to the ever-changing challenges they face.

Ideas generated during the mapping process:

- Set, communicate and evaluate priorities
- Develop better internal and external communication
- Communicate clearly, concisely, and authentically
- Create a culture of integrity and autonomy
- Encourage deep listening, questioning, and reflection
- Develop capacity in change management and improve methods, skills, and tools



LAUNCH POINT FOUR

We Will Invest In Building Creative Capacity

We're constantly solving problems and leveraging our creativity to do so, and it's important that we dedicate time and resources to developing these skills. At CMHA WW we value human-centred design, which places the needs of our clients at the foundation of our work—therefore training in design thinking methodology will help us reinforce these beliefs with skills, tools, and strategies. Creative problem solving also helps to reframe challenges as opportunities, providing a positive and empowering frame to the many obstacles we face each day. Working in teams of people skilled in this way of thinking will provide a common baseline and way of thinking that will help us reconsider our assumptions and work differently to serve our clients better.

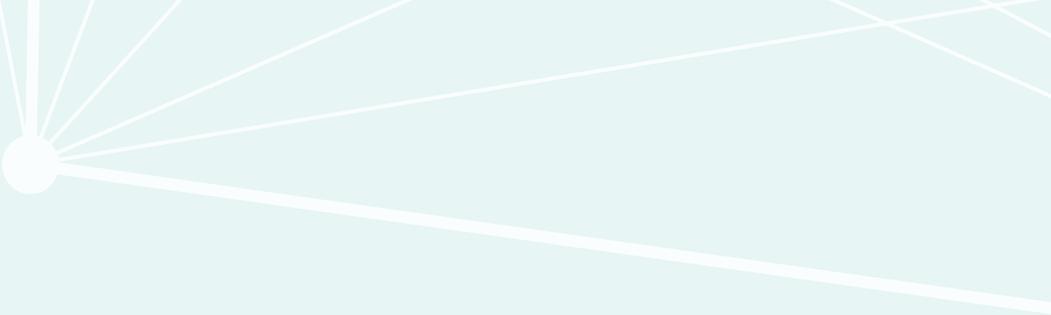
Ideas generated during the mapping process:

- Provide technology based on need
- Learn to triage
- Engage positively in the process
- Use our assets to better ourselves and to build a creative team equipped with design thinking capacity

An ideal picture of CMHA WW in 2017

If we achieve our goals and, over the next three years, implement the practical action strategies we've identified, our organization will be one that:





CREATES A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

It's extremely important to us that we design our work around the needs of our clients—this is why client engagement was such an important part of this project. When we put the needs of clients first, we can design our services in a way that meets clients where they are and gets them to where they need to be. In order to create a positive, welcoming, and meaningful experience for our clients, staff also need to feel supported, educated, and empowered to do whatever they need to do. Creating a powerful and effective client experience means building a culture of wellness, engagement, and happiness that will shine through our staff and ultimately serve our clients better.

OFFERS ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE, AND RELEVANT SERVICES TAILORED TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

No matter how meaningful or effective our services are, they're useless if they're not accessible, inclusive, or relevant to the range of people who need them. We've got to make it possible for any and everyone to access our services if and when they need to, and that means overcoming geographical challenges across our territory, as well as logistical challenges, such as transportation. This also means being more available to our clients by reducing wait times and making it easier for people to identify and access the services they need. To do this, we need to continue to prioritize client needs and adapt our services to them as much as possible.

IS A LEADER AND A PARTNER IN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN THE COMMUNITY

Our role in the community is important to us—we want the community to know who we are and what we can do for them. We want to spearhead new and creative approaches to wellness, prevention, and education and be recognized as a leader in these areas. This will mean building powerful and fruitful partnerships within the community and leveraging these to serve Waterloo Wellington as best we can.

ENGAGES IN COMMUNICATION THAT BUILDS UNDERSTANDING, AWARENESS, AND ENGAGEMENT

Clear, timely, and effective communication has always been important, but never more so than during this period of rapid change. Not only does communication between services, programs, clients, and staff continue to be critical to our work, but it's crucial to building a unified and engaged CMHA WW. Managing this rapid change requires continuous, open, two-way communication about the changes taking place and a clear understanding of policies and procedures.

OFFERS A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

During this project we learned that staff love a lot of things about their jobs, but there are lots of ways we can make CMHA WW an even better place to work. We thoroughly understand the value of a positive culture in the workplace—we know that people need to feel appreciated, rewarded and secure, that they need to have time to process and decompress, and that they need to feel supported and energized by their work. We also know that staff who are engaged, empowered, and happy work better together and help their clients get to better outcomes. So it's extremely important to us that CMHA WW becomes an employer of choice for those working in the sector by building a strong and united culture that supports us all in our work.

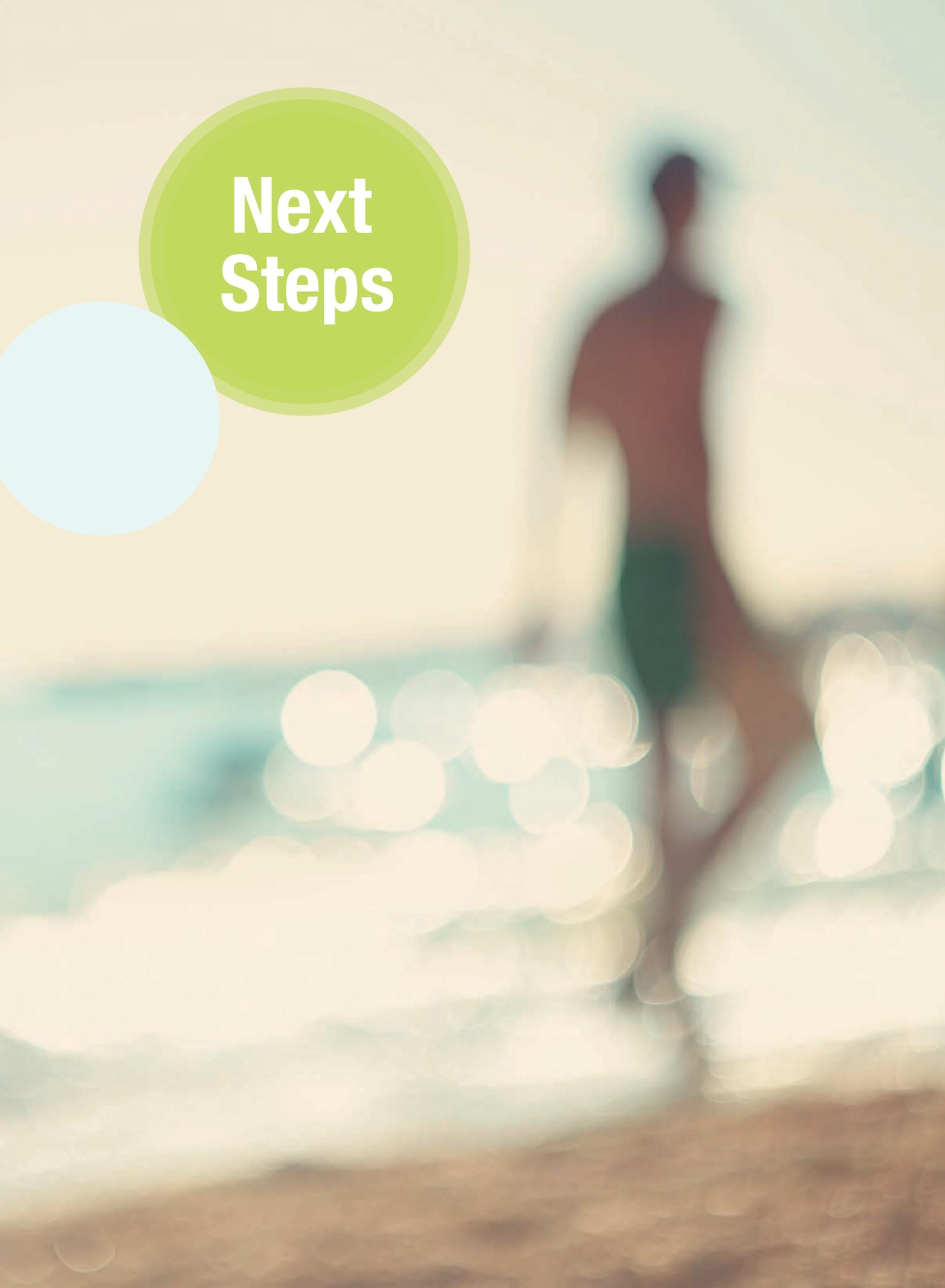
MAXIMIZES & EXPLOITS I.T. FOR BEST CLIENT OUTCOMES

Access to Information Technology is a huge ongoing challenge for staff at CMHA WW, when in fact, it should be a powerful tool that helps us serve our clients. Technology offers us nearly endless possibilities—it can support new ways of interacting with clients, engaging with the community, and collaborating with community partners. Digitizing records and reducing paperwork will help us deliver better care, and communicate effectively and efficiently internally, across services, and with outside partners. Through simple digital tools and applications, improved mobility, and personalized IT options, technology can help us get the best outcomes for our clients.

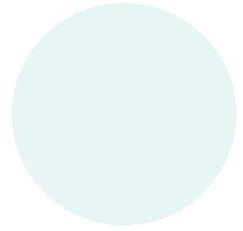
SUPPORTS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

We believe that inviting a diverse range of voices and experiences to contribute to CMHA WW will only strengthen the organization and improve client experience. Although we already value and invite the participation of the community in our organization, we could offer new and different ways for a wider range of voices to contribute. This could mean inviting people with lived experience to participate in an advisory council, expanding our language offerings, or inviting families and caregivers to participate in new ways.





Next Steps



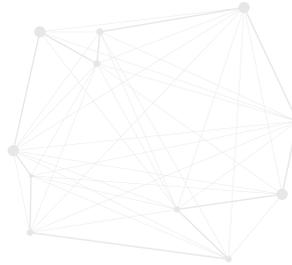
Take some time to reflect

Reflect on what we've learned throughout this project—skim through this report and the preceding Insights Report—what resonates with you most? What can you do the most about? What expertise do you have that can contribute to this being realized or improved? Which ideas are the most inspiring? Which are you most excited about? Which do you think would make the biggest difference? Pick out some ideas or discoveries from this project that are meaningful to you—write them down on a sticky note by your computer, turn them into a screensaver, or find time to reflect on them regularly. Use this reflection to create personal goals that you will work toward individually. If possible, designate a specific amount of time every day or week toward these goals—spend it generating tasks you can do to move them forward; reflect on why these things are important to you, your clients, coworkers, and community; discuss with a colleague or friend; and take action.

Day-To-Day

It's all too easy to shelve a strategic plan—there's a lot going on in the day-to-day and it can easily get pushed to the backburner. So each one of us needs to be very intentional about carving out the space for this work to happen and building accountability for progress. The strategies we've identified in this report have to be at the foundation of our programming, meetings, and performance reviews. If you have suggestions for creative ways to do that, we'd love to hear them.

ACTION GROUP



We will be setting up an action group with representation from staff from across the organization and from management to identify at least one concrete action plan for each of the four strategies described above. The Working Group will oversee and coordinate achievement of those action plans and create new ones as specific action plans are achieved.

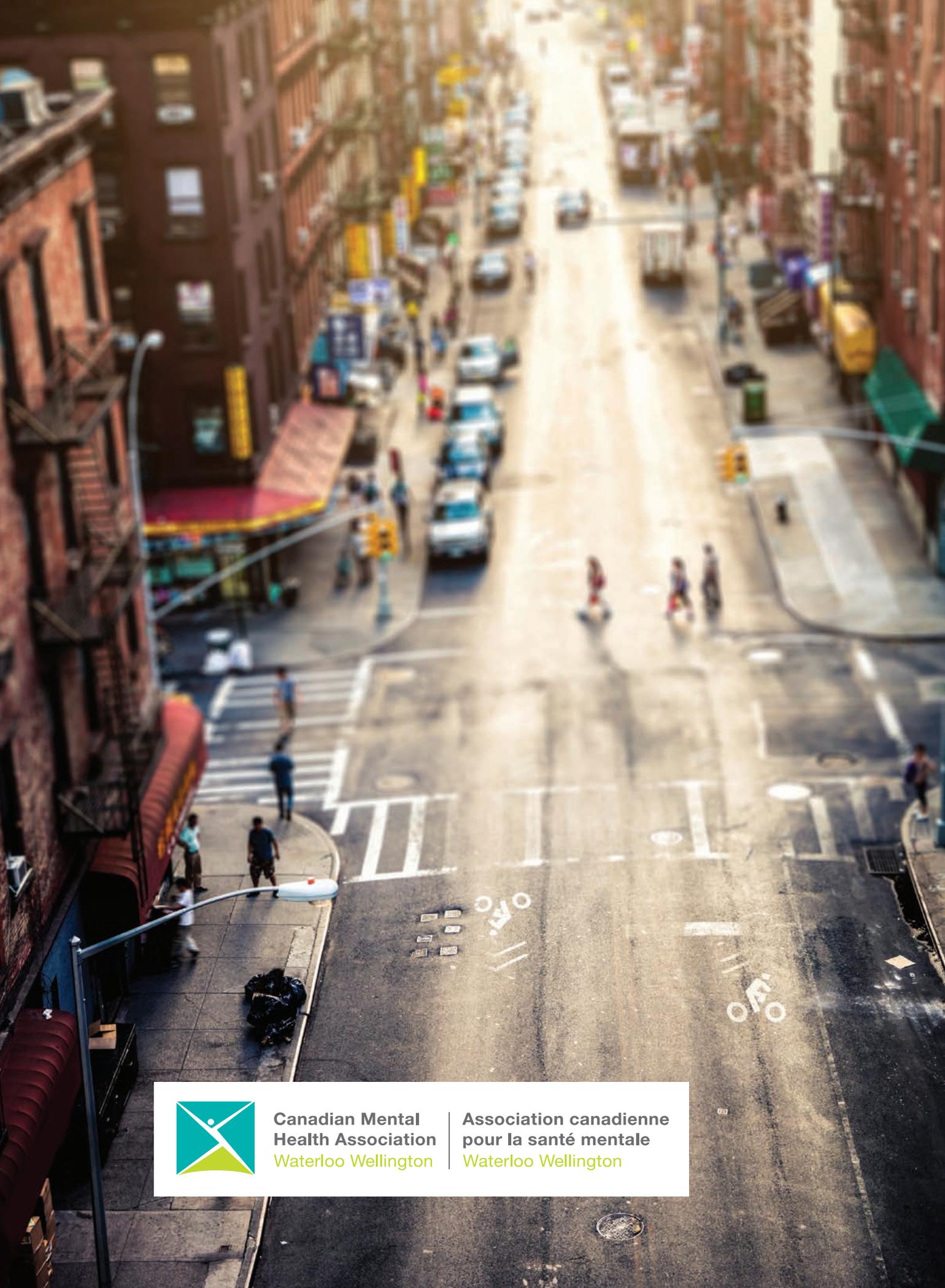
LET'S TALK

If you have questions about anything you have read in our “We Are More” plan, please get in touch with Meredith Gardiner, our Manager of Organizational Performance, at ext. 2054 or at mgardiner@cmhaward.ca.



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