



NNMH - STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

OCT. 5TH & 6TH 2010

FINAL REPORT - DRAFT

*“The NNMH is at a crossroads: either it leads and becomes the Captain of the Ship,
or remains as sailors on someone else’s boat!”*

Eugène LeBlanc



FINDING OUR WAY BACK TO OUR MEMBERS

PREPARED BY: NEASA MARTIN

NEASA MARTIN & ASSOCIATES

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2010

The National Network for Mental Health

(NNMH) is the only non-diagnostic consumer/survivor-driven mental health organization in Canada that is national in scope. Its stated purpose is to advocate, educate, and provide expertise and resources that benefit the Canadian consumer-survivor community. Core to its mandate is a commitment to fostering networks, inclusion, partnerships, and mutually respectful alliances. Using a 'grassroots' approach to community development the NNMH is intended to help bring individuals and organizations together to share information and find common ground. It delivers direct service through its pre-employment readiness program - BUILT, has strengthened consumer leadership through the development of the Canadian Coalition of Alternative Mental Health Resources, and has created empowerment resources such as 'Consumers in Action' Toolkits.

The Network aspires, by working collectively, to empower consumers to remove the barriers to full citizenship and achieve a healthy, connected and good quality of life.

Planning Background Context:

Canada is at a critical 'tipping point' on mental health issues with increased visibility and interest being paid by government, policy planners, and the media. This focus is strengthened by the emergence of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC). The development by the MHCC of ['Towards Recovery and Well-being: A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada'](#) is creating a potentially influential road map for mental health supports / services development and the implementation plan for its delivery is currently in the process of being written. MHCC is also funded to deliver: a national anti-stigma and discrimination reduction strategy; build an knowledge exchange centre; undertake research to address the homelessness faced by people living with mental health challenges and most recently has launched a [Peer Project](#) to enhance the utilization of peer support. The Commission has also targeted the creation of a 'social movement' through its 'Partners Project' as a strategy for keeping mental health issues at the forefront of government decision-making. These are each critical priority areas of concern for the NNMH. Its membership will be significantly impacted by this work and has within its network essential 'experiential expertise' necessary to inform these diverse planning processes.

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However, a consequence of the emerging presence, and growing influence of the MHCC, is the unanticipated and destabilizing effect it is having on national stakeholder groups who are trying to find their place in a vastly different post-Commission environment.

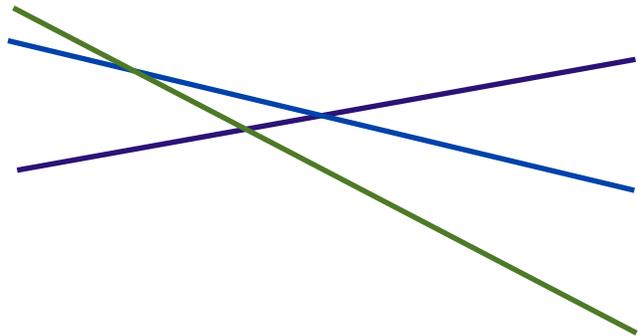
Like other national groups, the NNMH is frustrated by the minimal inclusion and influence it has had on the work of the MHCC. Focusing on the MHCC, and trying to find ways to influence its work, has contributed to the NNMH being distracted from, and losing its footing with, its membership. There has been a growing fear that the 'consumer voice' is being marginalized, and that the value of consumer inclusion is looked upon with derision and suspicion by the Commission's leadership. The clarion call of the disability community "*Nothing about us – without us*" has not yet resonated in the work of the Commission.

Consumer involvement is a 'best practice'

To build a case for inclusion, the NNMH recently undertook a review of the research evidence on consumer leadership (written by the Consultant). This report documents what consumers have long known: consumer engagement is critical in shaping policy, service delivery, advocacy, building accountability and in framing issues that support transformative change.

Research also confirms that consumer leadership is invaluable in reducing stigma and discrimination through peer-based contact, education, and protest activities. Those who participate in empowerment activities also experience a positive impact on their recovery and lessened self-stigma.

Unlike the USA, Scotland, UK, Australia and New Zealand, the consumer leadership role in Canada is currently undertaken almost exclusively on a volunteer basis, with limited coordination and in an environment of unequal power and influence. A lack of financial resources has meant that this important voice is muted and it is a challenge to participate as equal and active partners in critical change processes. Yet it must find ways to participate.



NNMH - STRATEGIC RENEWAL PROCESS:

The NNMH has recently undergone serious organizational challenges including changes within its senior management team. As a consequence, it is facing a loss of confidence from its membership, and a financial shortfall. These challenges pose both an organizational



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threat as well as an opportunity for renewal.

The newly elected Board, and recently engaged executive director, recognize that the NNMH needs to go 'back to basics' and serve a critical role of networking to capturing and amplifying the voice of consumers to inform the decisions which affect their lives.

To be seen as credible and achieve sustained and meaningful influence, NNMH members must be engaged to play a more active and guiding role in the organization's work. The NNMH leadership needs to carefully consider how it can marshal its limited resources, revitalize its mission and narrow its priorities to address those issues of greatest concern and importance to its membership. At the same time it must reflect on how it can capitalizing on emerging opportunities and forge strategic alliances to increase its visibility, influence and policy reach without risking the loss of its unique voice.

To achieve this end, the NNMH undertook a strategic planning process and formulated a plan that reaffirms its commitment to 'grass roots' input, responsiveness to its membership and which provides clear direction to its Board of Directors and the new executive director. This plan includes taking the time to address organizational and governance challenges to ensure its ongoing sustainability.

The Consultant was engaged to facilitate this

planning process and to help NNMH define immediate priorities, in the context of financial constraints, as well as articulating a long-term strategic plan reflecting the emerging opportunities, trends, and the priorities of its membership, stakeholders, and strategic partners. This planning process included undertaking pre-planning surveys which informed a two-day strategic planning event held in Ottawa in October with the Board of Directors and staff.

APPROACH TAKEN:

- Undertake a survey of NNMH members, organizational partners and stakeholder groups.
- Conduct a self-evaluation survey of the Board's strengths and priorities for action.
- Summarize the findings and deliver in PowerPoint format (Appendices A & B).
- Facilitate a strategic planning process and initiated Board governance training in response to the survey findings.

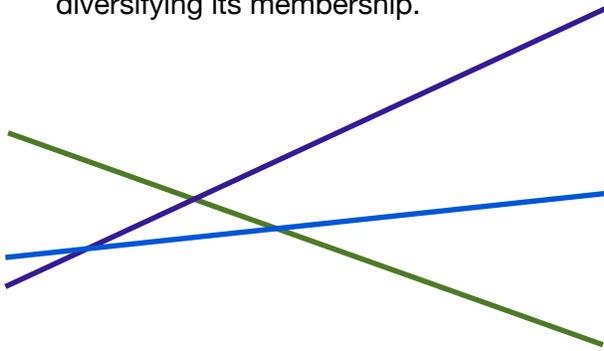
The following is a summary report outlining recommendations for short-term and long-range strategic direction.

STRENGTHENING BOARD GOVERNANCE:

A summary presentation of the findings of the NNMH Board/Staff Survey was delivered, and formed the basis of planning discussions. Through this self-assessment process, the Board evaluated its current performance and

identified its top priorities for action: These include:

- 1) A need to strengthen Board governance and accountability;
- 2) Addressing financial challenges and improve fiscal management;
- 3) Actively engage its membership to understand their priorities, inform planning, broadening its base and diversifying its membership.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS - BOARD/STAFF:

We are all involved with the NNMH because we've been touched by the impact of mental illness. As this does not define us in our daily lives, nor should it define us as a working group. People need to remember that our role as Directors and Staff are to effectively carry out the mandate and values of the organization. We need to come together as a group of professionals prepared to work hard to evoke change.

What is clear through this survey is that there is a high level of passion and commitment

amongst Board members and staff to do the best job possible for the members of the NNMH. It is equally clear that passion is not enough and that the challenges of the past year have brought into relief areas of vulnerability in the operation of the NNMH.

The Board rated poorly the NNMH's performance over the last year in delivering its mission, with particular emphasis on losing touch. failing to communicate with its membership and a perceived lack of networking with, and engagement of, the membership in its work. Consequently, the NNMH has not fully understood the issues of concern of its membership.

The Board gave itself a failing grade on promoting the value of peer support, 'experiential expertise', and the importance of the NNMH with governments, the public and its stakeholders. There was also a high level of dissatisfaction expressed with the resources provided by the NNMH (website, newsletter...). A notable exception was the work of the BUILT Network, which received a 72% satisfaction rating.

BOARD GOVERNANCE:

Board members were asked to reflect on their level of satisfaction serving as a Director with the NNMH. Although 5/8th of the Board members say they would encourage others to join the Board, there was a fairly high level of dissatisfaction with their recent experience.



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The Board was equally divided on whether they have a good understanding of the organization's mission or whether they have served effectively as Ambassadors for the NNMH within the community. The Board also gave itself a failing grade on their knowledge of the programs of the NNMH, their provision of oversight and their ability to follow through on their commitments.

Although there was a strong sense of shared purpose and passion amongst Board members for the work of the NNMH, concerns were raised on the need to improve the management of the meetings, reduce the 'expressed emotions', increase the professionalism and decorum of Board members and ensure the focus remains of the needs of the membership and not on promoting 'personal agendas'.

Most Board members did not feel they had within their ranks the knowledge, skills or ability to fully deliver on their role. Only half feel that they are providing staff with the policies and practice guidelines needed to effectively manage the organization. Improving the recruitment process for Board leaders and using a selection process based on needed skills, knowledge and community connections were stressed. This requires reviewing and amending the by-laws to improve recruitment processes. Strengthen the knowledge of risk management and legal issues and enhancing fund-raising skills were ranked as the top priority areas of

improvement.

Particular concern centred on their lack of oversight in monitoring and evaluating both the staff and their own performance. These concerns are compounded by the absence of a structured strategic planning process or the provision of direction to staff through the creation of an operational manual or through the motions of the Board.

(It is critical to note that the Board did take the steps needed to restore order and did not waiver in its commitment to the NNMH).

FISCAL PLANNING:

One area of identified excellence is the Board's confidence that it meets its contractual obligations to funders and complies with all government regulation. However, concern was raised that it is currently running a short-term deficit due to the impact of recent staff severance packages. Its limited fiscal resources and lack of diversification in its funding base leaves the NNMH vulnerable should government funding priorities change.

There is a recognized need to develop a fund-raising strategy, as well as formulating a cost containment plan, to address funding short-falls. Focusing on proposal development aligned with member needs, and building the confidence of core funders in the stability of the NNMH are ranked as high priorities for the Board and staff.

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IMPORTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP:

Expanding the individual membership was rated by 88% as extremely important with 63% feeling group membership (particularly group membership with consumer/survivor initiatives) is extremely important. Only 25% see engaging stakeholder groups as members is extremely important. However, there is recognition that the NNMH must first clearly define its value, improve its service and more aggressively engage and communicate with its membership to meet the challenge of growing membership.

The Board acknowledges that it must create a two-way dialogue with its membership to:

- Listen carefully and learn the members priorities and concerns;
- Provide the membership with the support and services they value;
- Connect people together to strengthen the consumer voice; and
- Actively advocate on their behalf with powerful others and the media.

The Board set the highest priority on providing direct service delivery (BUILT) to consumers (this was not rated as highly in the members survey), as well as participating in alliances and building partnerships (88%). This was followed closely by strengthening the linkages between consumer groups and

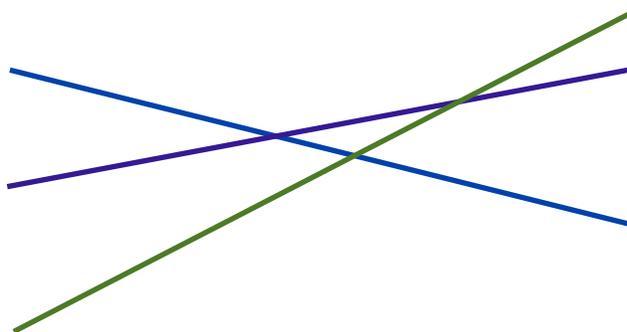
advocating on consumer-focused issues - including advising the work of the MHCC (75%).

BEST ADVICE FROM THE BOARD:

Get back to our roots and develop a large and involved membership base.

Through the survey, the Board identified the need to:

- Strengthen Board governance through careful selection, education and training.
- Undertake a member-driven strategic planning process.
- Actively engage membership as valued partners and building accountability.



MEMBERS / STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY

The purpose of this on-line survey was to assess the current level of satisfaction with the services of the NNMH, identify priorities and concerns, provide direction to the Board and staff in planning, and to establish benchmarks and success indicators from which the NNMH can measure its ongoing performance.



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The survey was promoted electronically through the Bulletin and on the NNMH website. Seventy-two people participated (54% individuals, 12% consumer-groups, and 34% stakeholders) representing a relatively low response rate. Confirming the veracity of the findings of the survey with the broader membership is recommended.

A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY:

Members recognize this is a critical time in Canada with more attention being paid to mental health and mental illness, and greater financial resources becoming available. The increased visibility created by the presence of the MHCC and a greater focus on recovery at the provincial level, is helping to advance and demonstrate the success of peer support, and its value to both consumers and funders.

People see this as an opportune time for the NNMH to create a 'bigger tent', to engage 'new voices', to forge new partners and to re-engage with the 'disaffected' by reaching out to the grass roots of the consumer movement. It is being challenged to network with "*authentic consumer/survivor organizations across Canada*" which "*gives fuel to solidarity and mission*".

The availability of the Internet is acknowledged as a powerful tool - but this is not considered adequate in engaging at the grass roots level. The NNMH is encouraged to increase personal contact with its membership through telephone, mail and

face-to-face contact.

Emerging research is also recognized to be documenting the value of peer support and empowerment and consumer-focused practices are increasingly being recognized as 'best practices' in service delivery.

PERIOD OF INCREASED RISK:

Members recognize the vulnerability of the NNMH in terms of its limited core funding, difficulty in attracting strong leaders and preventing burnout. Unless it takes steps to be more responsive, transparent and to engage its members, it runs the risk of being seen as 'dysfunctional' and 'directionless'.

The prominence of the biomedical framing of illness and the indifference of governments and mental health professionals towards consumer engagement as partners elevates the risk that the NNMH will be seen as irrelevant. New consumer-led initiatives are creating potential competition to the NNMH. Engaging with allies and potential partners is seen as critical as long as the 'consumer voice' remains strong and unified.

MEMBERSHIP IS VALUED:

Despite frustrations expressed, the work of the NNMH is highly valued and people are committed to seeing it succeed. The most common reasons given for joining the NNMH include:

- Feeling part of a larger, consumer-driven,

advocacy focused grass roots movement.

- Having a sense of belonging.
- Having a strong, influential, voice involved in decision-making, shaping services and systems.
- Access to information, education and consumer-focused resources, keep up on consumer trends.

CONSUMER LEADERSHIP IS SEEN AS CRITICAL - BUT IT IS NOT YET A REALIZED GOAL:

Survey participants were asked to rate how important it is to include consumers in leadership and decision-making from the individual decisions regarding treatment, to policy planning, service and program delivery, evaluation, accreditation, research, partnerships and informing the work of the MHCC. Consistently across the board, consumer leadership is rated as extremely important. However, when asked how successful people feel we currently are in Canada in including consumers at all levels of decision-making (within mental health supports and services, research and policy planning decisions) there was dismal evaluation of success. The challenges and barriers to consumer involvement identified include:

- Self-stigma and a lack of confidence (fear of disclosure, being labelled or a lack of

personal empowerment).

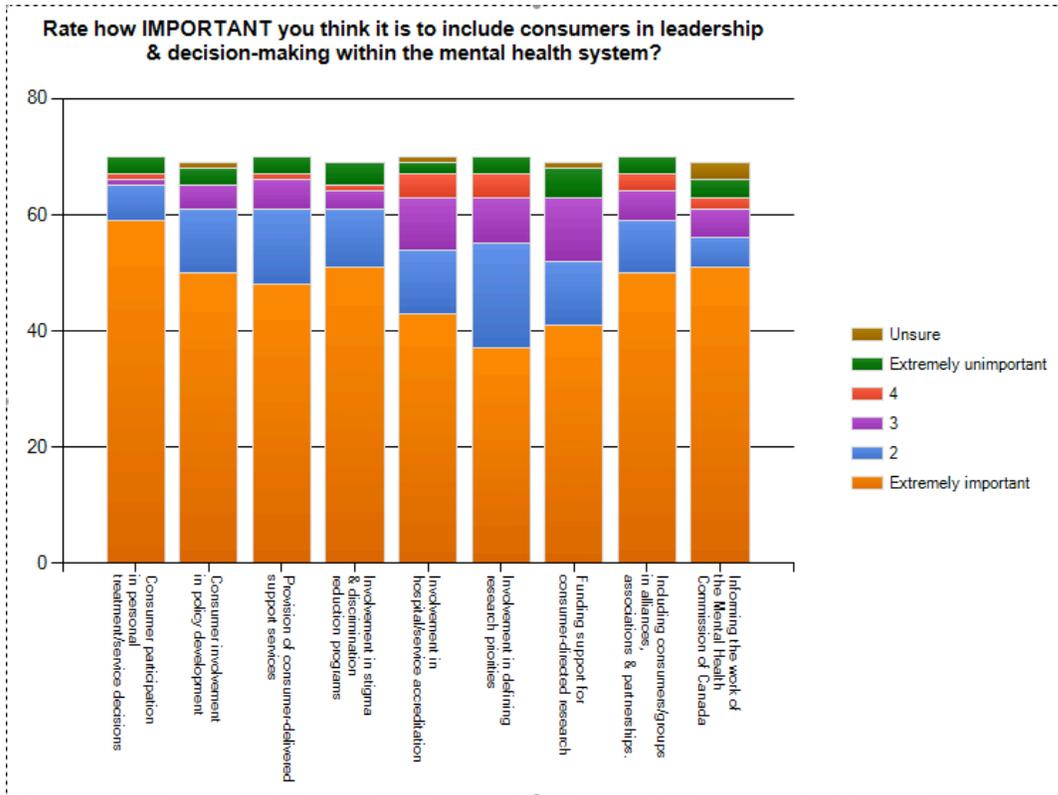
- A devaluation of the role consumers can play (not included, tokenism, power imbalance, dismissed, invalidated and a lack of accountability within the system).
- Discrimination within the mental health system (seen as illnesses - not people, differing framing of mental health issues creates conflict, people are punished / excluded).
- A lack of knowledge, skills and abilities (lack of training, know-how on how to participate with impact or availability of opportunity).
- Limited opportunities to meaningfully participate (employed under represented, resource barrier, fluctuating illness and burnout).
- Limited leadership with few strong leaders (need to include youth who want to play a role, divergent opinions fragment single voice, divisiveness and pettiness within the consumer movement).

The need to focus on leadership development and capacity building was emphasized as an important but unmet need.

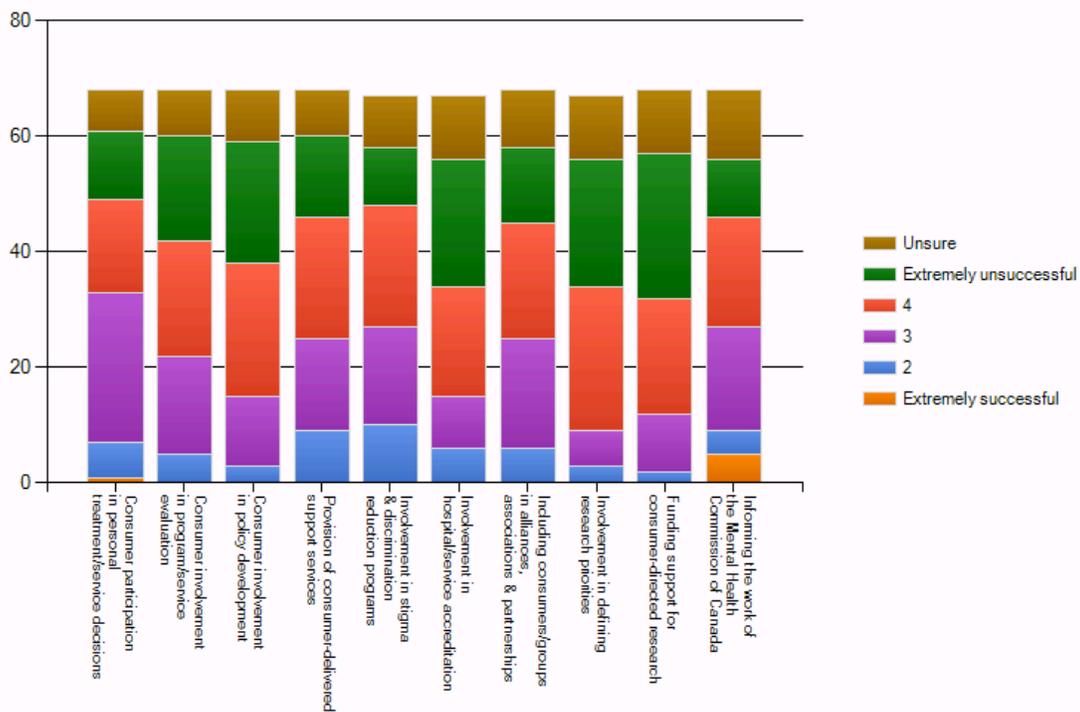
The following charts captures the gap between the perceived importance of involving consumers and our success in Canada in achieving that goal.



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Overall, how SUCCESSFUL do you think mental health supports, services and policy planners are in including consumers in leadership & decision-making roles in Canada?



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

It is clear that the membership has been deeply dissatisfied with the work of the NNMH and it has received failing grades for the delivery of its mission. Only 16% feel it is effectively networking with consumers, family and friends, only 20% feel the NNMH is doing a good job promoting itself to stakeholders and the public, is communicating effectively with its members or responding well to emerging trends.

Less than a third see the NNMH as an effective advocate on consumer issues, or see it as being effective in promoting empowerment, the value of peer support or the the importance of 'experiential expertise' of the consumer experience. Just over 1/3 think the values of the NNMH are being reflected in its work, or that it understands consumer concerns, or provides valued educational / consumer-focused resources. Only 42% of people feel consumer leadership is being effectively reflected in the work of the NNMH. Nor is there widespread satisfaction with the resources that the NNMH is providing (website, consumer-focused information, Bulletin, updates or toolkits). Concerns were raised regarding the sporadic, infrequent and content-less newsletter.

Even amongst its own membership, there is a low level of awareness about the NNMH's activities including their delivery of BUILT

Network and the development of the Canadian Coalition of Alternative Mental Health Resources. Those few participants who know of BUILT were divided on whether this should be divested as a project of the NNMH or expanded to serve more communities and deliver a broader range of services. What appears clear, is there is confusion regarding what NNMH does, what it should do and what programs it delivers. The presence of three separate and distinct websites (NNMH, CCAMHR & BUILT) further diffuses its brand identity.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT:

Despite broad-based dissatisfaction with the NNMH, and its service delivery, over 60% would recommend that others join the NNMH. Less than 2% saying they would not. People do value highly what the NNMH has the *potential* to deliver – if it were to adopt a stronger member-driven service approach, by demonstrating value to its membership, focus its resources on amplifying the consumer voice and aggressively connecting and engaging with its membership.

The NNMH is encouraged to 'broaden the tent', nurture the involvement of youth, build cultural, linguistic, age and social diversity within its ranks. It is also encouraged to build linkages with compatible stakeholder groups to extend its reach and influence. It is felt that the NNMH needs to define itself clearly,



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develop marketing tools to promote itself aggressively, and sign up more members in order to increase its credibility, profile and influence.

Best Advice from the Members:

I'll Take A Stab At It.....DO THE BEST POSSIBLE WORK FOR THE NNMH MEMBERS RESULTING IN THE MEMBERS' GAINED TRUST IN THE NETWORK, AND PERHAPS THEIR FURTHER SHARED ASSISTANCE AND OPENNESS IN FUTURE.

Although the expression of dissatisfaction with the current operations of the NNMH is clear and forceful, there is also a well-spring of hope and optimism that if the NNMH can set a new course, strengthen the organization's governance, build stronger mechanisms of accountability, stay strong and focus its efforts, it can be a vital resource for the consumer community.

Members want to play a meaningful role in setting the course of the NNMH and participate actively in its work. Stakeholders want to support its work and see it as a critical player in influencing needed change. In addition they suggest that the NNMH's current challenges can be overcome by partnering with others stakeholder groups and forging strong alliances with its allies – without giving up the strength of the consumer voice or weakening its priorities (housing, employment, education, child &

youth, military, tax allowances, harm reduction, suicide etc).

Members want the NNMH to take a strong social justice and human rights approach and work with the Human Rights Commission and Legal Advocacy Groups to address privacy, consent and systemic discrimination. There is a desire for the NNMH to find resources to support consumer-focused education, peer support, empowerment, leadership development and capacity building.

The members are looking to the NNMH to promote the value of 'experiential expertise', and to advocate for funding for self-help and peer support with the MHCC, governments and stakeholder groups. They would also like to see the NNMH link consumer groups together, identify alternative treatments, emerging 'best practices' in recovery and peer support, and to keep them informed on changing trends both in Canada and internationally.

MEMBERS WANT FORCEFUL ADVOCACY:

- Promoting recovery-oriented treatment and support systems (91%).
- Consumer involvement in planning and policy decisions (85%).
- Addressing stigma, discrimination and social inclusion (83% - 81%).
- Promoting the importance of consumer-

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driven supports (81%).

- Address the increasing criminalization of mental illness (81%).
- Promoting human rights, housing security, employment & training (74%).
- Reduce the use of force (Tazers) in emergency response situations (71%).

There is also an important message to the NNMH leadership to shift its focus from identifying problems and move towards offering solutions to challenges which reflect consumer values, insights and priorities.

" MARTIN LUTHER KING DID NOT BECOME FAMOUS FOR SAYING " I HAVE A COMPLAINT"

VAN JONES, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

TOP PRIORITIES FROM THE MEMBER SURVEY

There is a high level of diversity of opinions expressed in the survey with differing ideas of how to proceed. This will create a challenge meeting the diverse expectations of its membership. However, when asked to identify top priorities for the NNMH there was clear direction provided:

- Re-invent and revitalize the NNMH to become a respected, visible, vocal and bold advocate for consumers. Do this by diversifying and engaging the

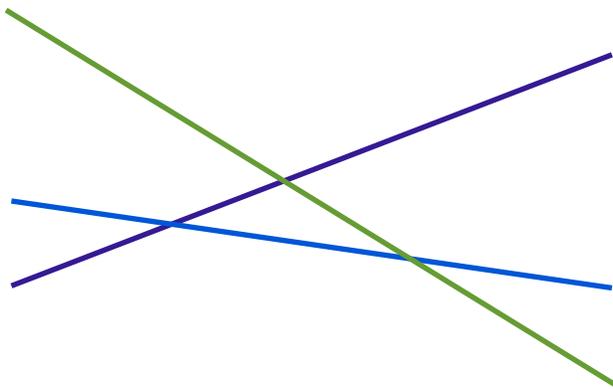
membership in planning and action and by focusing on those issues of importance to its membership.

- Become a strong, national, unifying voice for consumers. Grow a diverse and inclusive membership.
- Address internal weaknesses re: resources, capacities, and governance issues.
- Reach out to the consumer community and create a platform for linking individuals and groups together to build solidarity and unity of purpose.
- Build capacity for peer support, create provincial networks and strengthen leadership through training, education and strengthening accountability.
- Fearlessly advocate on issues of importance to the membership with 'powerful others' including: support for education, training and employment, developing a peer support workforce and empowerment programs, promote recovery, privacy, criminalization, housing, quality of life and social inclusion.
- Advocate for funding to support a consumer workforce, empowerment activities, and the inclusion of peer-support as a 'best practice' in health and social services.



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- Promote the importance of peer support and consumer inclusion in delivering services and leading anti-stigma, discrimination reduction programs.
- Educate the public, stakeholders and governments about recovery, and the value of consumer leadership.
- Emphasize our person-hood (not illness), our strengths (not limitations), that mental health difficulties are a fully human experience and not something to be eradicate.
- Develop partnerships and alliances with other stakeholder groups who share our goals.



STRATEGIC PLANNING - STEPS TAKEN:

As the chess master says, (we must) play our own game, rather than to become drawn into playing the game of our opponent.

Over two days the Board and staff met in Ottawa to undertake a strategic planning process. Through the survey, the need for

Board training was identified as an urgent priority. Consequently, steps were taken to build knowledge of basic governance as an imbedded element of the planning process.

Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of Board, Executive, Committees and Executive Director, strengthening accountability mechanisms, Board recruitment/selection - based on a defined skill matrix, understanding and meeting fiduciary obligations, providing a strategic vision and plan were areas discussed. Print materials on 'best practices' in Board governance were also provided to participants. The need to revise the current By-laws, review and refine the Board Orientation and Governance Manual, as well as the Organizational Operating Manual to guide staff were identified as top priorities for the organization.

The linked cycle between engaging the membership in strategic planning, member-driven priority setting, program development, setting benchmarking, evaluating member satisfaction, providing organizational oversight and evaluation tied together through the evaluation of the Executive Director's performance was reviewed.

The Board and staff of the NNMH undertook a consensus-based planning process to revitalize the mission, vision and values. Drawing on the feedback from its members it set priorities to strengthen the organization to better respond to the desires of the

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membership and become a strong, unified and credible national consumer voice. This is but the beginning of a planning process and further engagement of the membership will be required to confirm the new mission and the

priorities set.

The results of these deliberations is reflected in the following document.

DRAFT - VISION & STRATEGY



OUR VISION

We live in a nation that nurtures the mental health and well being of all its citizens, where diversity is celebrated, and where those who experience mental health challenges live free from discrimination, and are respected, and supported in their recovery journey to be fully included, productive and valued members of society.

OUR MISSION

The NNMH is committed to promoting hope and recovery for everyone. By working closely with our membership, and by forging partnerships and alliances, we will promote social justice, human rights, and will help capture and amplify a strong, unified voice of consumers in influencing decisions which effect them and that enhance their quality of life.

OUR BELIEFS...

- We hold hope, optimism, and a belief in the capacity for recovery - for everyone. This includes recovering from the personal and social impact of mental health challenges.
- We believe that participating in peer support, self help and consumer leadership is both healing and empowering and must be included as a funded 'best practice' in a recovery-oriented health system.
- We believe that by linking people and groups together, sharing our support, information, and resources we will strengthen the collective consumer voice to help individuals, systems, and society as a whole to become more equitable and socially inclusive.
- We believe we have essential 'experiential expertise' important in providing support to our peers and in delivering peer-based services. We believe our voice needs to be included in the development of policies, and the delivery and evaluation of services intended to meet our needs.
- We believe that the solution to social exclusion includes having equal access to the basic determinants



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of health, supporting the mental health and well-being of all individuals, families and communities, and by removing discrimination and the barriers to inclusion.

MEMBERSHIP

The NNMH is a nationally-focused, not-for-profit, member-driven consumer organization. Our membership includes individual affected by mental health challenges and consumer-led groups and organizations. As a consumer-driven network, it is our members who lead, make decisions, and set the strategic direction for the organization.

The NNMH also recognizes that there is strength in partnership. We welcome individuals, organizations, and associations who share our vision, promote our common goals, and provide friendship, support and care to our members to join the NNMH and encourage us in our recovery journey.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- ✓ Being an active part in building a strong, engaged, consumer movement focused on advocating for consumer priorities and influencing public policy decisions;
- ✓ An opportunity to participate in NNMH networking activities;
- ✓ Receipt of the 'Bulletin Newsletter' which includes information on alternative treatments, consumer-recovery, peer support and consumer-driven initiatives, notification on policy, resources, legislative updates, and information on emerging trends in mental health.
- ✓ Having access to 'member-only' resources of the website.
- ✓ Playing an influential role in defining the priorities, policies and programs of the NNMH.
- ✓ Having a role in setting the NNMH's strategic direction.
- ✓ The eligibility of Individual consumer members to become a Board member.
- ✓ Individual consumer members hold voting privileges in electing the NNMH Board of Directors.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

1) **Develop a strong, sustainable organization**

Strengthen NNMH governance structures:

- Develop Board orientation manual & training strategy.
- Create Operational Manual to guide staff.
- Strengthen Board recruitment processes. Tie to strategic plan using skills matrix.

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- Review By-laws to strengthen membership participation. Create Board work-plan & meeting calendar tied to decision-making.
- Build fiscal accountability & financial sustainability. Tie budget to strategic priorities.
- Develop fund-raising strategy to diversify funding base. Develop proposals for funding tied to member priorities (i.e. opportunities for face-to-face meetings).
- Monitor program effectiveness using annual member satisfaction survey.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ High marks on annual Board self-evaluations.
- ✓ Successful alignment of staff efforts to strategic priorities.
- ✓ Diversified funding stream. New funding sources up 10%.

2) Build a responsive & accountable member-driven organization

Seek endorsement to revitalize the mission & purpose from members.

- Work with members to create key messages, update print & web materials aligned with new mission.
- Use personal stories, quotes, and images, consider literacy levels, languages.
- Integrate NNMH, BUILT & CCAMHR websites.
- Build NNMH's visibility & market resources to community.

Assess membership needs & priorities

- Clarify NNMH's value to members regarding desired supports & services.
- Adopt a 'customer service' approach - train staff to respond.
- Build evaluation tools into all programs for quality improvement.

Performance Indicators

- ✓ Increase in membership by 15%.
- ✓ High marks on member-satisfaction survey (use existing benchmarks).
- ✓ Increased diversity in membership.
- ✓ Increased involvement of grass-roots volunteers.

Develop with membership strategies for engagement in planning & decision making.

Build membership within the NNMH

- Build recruitment tools, make a 'shared responsibility', train staff, Board & volunteers.
- Set annual targets & monitor.
- Develop strategy to diversify membership to include new consumer voices (youth, racialized groups, Aboriginal, First Nations & Inuit communities, Quebec, poverty groups etc.)

3) Deliver a strong, unified & credible national consumer voice

Increase the visibility & strengthen the voice of consumer movement



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- Articulate priorities of members with government, policy planners & the MHCC.
- Review & use CCAMHR policies in advocacy efforts.
- Simplify policies & create a marketing strategy to increase influence.
- Share policy positions with key targeted stakeholder groups.
- Build knowledge of alternative treatments & peer based practice.
- Share resources with members & stakeholders.

Strengthen relationships between consumers/consumer groups by:

- Build on existing CCAMHR leadership through quarterly info sharing/gathering teleconferences
- Sharing resources, linking consumers, & building leadership skills.
- Develop webinars, teleconferences, newsletter & conferences focused on member priorities.
- Seek funding for face-to-face meetings with grass roots.

Performance Indicators

✓ NNMH is seen as a credible & recognized leader within the consumer community – measured through an annual survey.

✓ Funding for peer support, consumer directed services increases and is recognized as a 'best practice in mental health strategies.

4) Strengthen its influence by working with key organizations

Build strategic alliance & partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups.

- NNMH will partner with those which groups share a common purpose, respect the importance of consumer participation in decision-making, & support the vision & values of the NNMH.
- Staff & Board, with input from members, will identify prospective partners, & undertake a national partnership-building process focussed on removing barriers and strengthen social inclusion.
- NNMH works with provincial consumers & stakeholders to strengthen horizontal & vertical influences in planning, reduce discrimination and increase social inclusion.

Performance Indicators

✓ NNMH is seen as a credible, respected leader by consumers as measured through annual survey.

✓ Consumers have resources they need to act.

✓ NNMH is a sought after resource in national planning & decision-making processes.

✓ Consumer priorities reflected in policy, practice &

CONCLUSION:

The NNMH is at an important cross-road. It has recently received critical reviews on its failure to deliver its mandate both internally, and from its members and stakeholders. Mental health issues are taking prominence at the federal and provincial levels and decisions are being made that will directly impact consumers. It is an important time in Canada to ensure that both the concerns, and the vision, of consumers are brought forward in framing issues, shaping systems, and in developing policies, supports and services intended to meet their needs.

People living with mental health challenges highly value the opportunity to meet with their peers who share their unique experience, find support and solidarity, and make meaning from this challenge. Meaning is derived from supporting their peers, improving the 'system', educating the public and fight for social justice. Access to peer support is highly valued, poorly understood and woefully underfunded. The NNMH has an important role to play in promoting this precious resource. However, if the NNMH is to reclaim

a credible leadership role, it must address its organizational and governance challenges, earn the respect and loyalty of its membership, ignite the interest of consumers in joining with the NNMH, and increase its profile, visibility and influence so that it can play an important and influential role in shaping transformational reforms.

The strength of the NNMH rests with its ability to reach out to the 'grass roots' and forge linkages between and across consumers/groups. But it must also work with its allies to help leverage its influence. The NNMH is being challenged to go back to the basics - by connecting with and linking the consumer community to create a strong, influential and unified National voice.

A few final words from the members...

Let's talk.

Good luck and good work. I look forward to seeing the movement forward from here - because it has been a wonderful opportunity to watch the growth of this organization over the past 18 years.

Keep your mind open to new & fresh ideas and you will be on the verge of excellence!

