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MEDIA RELEASE

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JOINING FORCES TO BUILD PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE AND HEALTHY MUNICIPALITIES

The Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division (CMHA BC) and the British Columbia Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA) have partnered to offer a suite of workplace mental health awareness and training courses to BCMSA members across the province.

CMHA has adapted three courses to meet the needs of local governments.

Safe and Sound: Building and Sustaining a Psychologically Safe and Healthy Workplace will provide guidance to supervisors, leaders, and occupational health and safety committee members and help them understand how they can contribute to, and advocate for, a psychologically safe workplace.

Responding with Respect – On the Front Line is aimed at front line workers and will teach them how to navigate challenging behaviour from clients or customers who may be experiencing a mental illness.

Awareness of Mental Health is a customized training workshop designed to increase resiliency of workers, and help them become more comfortable talking about mental health.

“We at CMHA are proud to partner with BCMSA to offer these valuable workshops to municipalities throughout British Columbia” says Julia Kaisla, Director of Community Engagement at CMHA BC. “Providing training to workers at all levels, whether to help them manage their own mental health, to help them support colleagues or direct reports, or to better respond to the public, is key to creating a safe and healthy workplace.”

“In the last few years, we have become more and more aware of the issue of psychological health and safety in the workplace and it is an issue that has moved up the agenda for businesses and local government organizations alike” says Cathy Cook, Executive Director, BCMSA. “BCMSA is dedicated to offering a wide variety of health and safety courses and we believe these three cost-effective and accessible workshops, specifically tailored to our members’ needs, will help create a stronger, more resilient, more educated workforce that is better equipped to support healthier municipal workplaces”.

The issue of workplace mental health in Canada has increasingly come in to focus over the last decade with a growing recognition within business and industry that providing a psychologically healthy and safe working environment is beneficial to both organizations and their employees. Mental illness takes a personal toll on individuals and also leads to losses in productivity through injuries, absenteeism, presenteeism and disability costs.

These positive attitudinal changes to workplace mental health in British Columbia have significantly gained momentum since July 2012 when WorkSafeBC took steps to expand compensation to include diagnosed mental disorders.

The following January the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace was launched, the first standard on psychological health and safety of its kind in the world.

Developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) and the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ), the Standard is a voluntary set of guidelines, tools and resources focused on promoting employees' psychological health and preventing psychological harm due to workplace factors.

Today, workplaces across the country are getting serious about improving psychological health and safety in the workplace. They are contributing resources and are seeking external expertise to ensure their workplace is robust and resilient, and ready for the future's many challenges.

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About CMHA

CMHA is Canada's most established mental health charity and the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health. CMHA helps people access the resources they need to maintain and improve mental health, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness. Each year in BC alone, CMHA serves more than 100,000 people all across the province.

About BC Municipal Safety Association

The central purpose of the BCMSA is to improve worker health and safety through the sharing of knowledge and resources within local government. The BCMSA delivers many training and education programs throughout the province and strives to be the health and safety resource of choice.

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