



Canadian Mental
Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Colombie-Britannique
La santé mentale pour tous

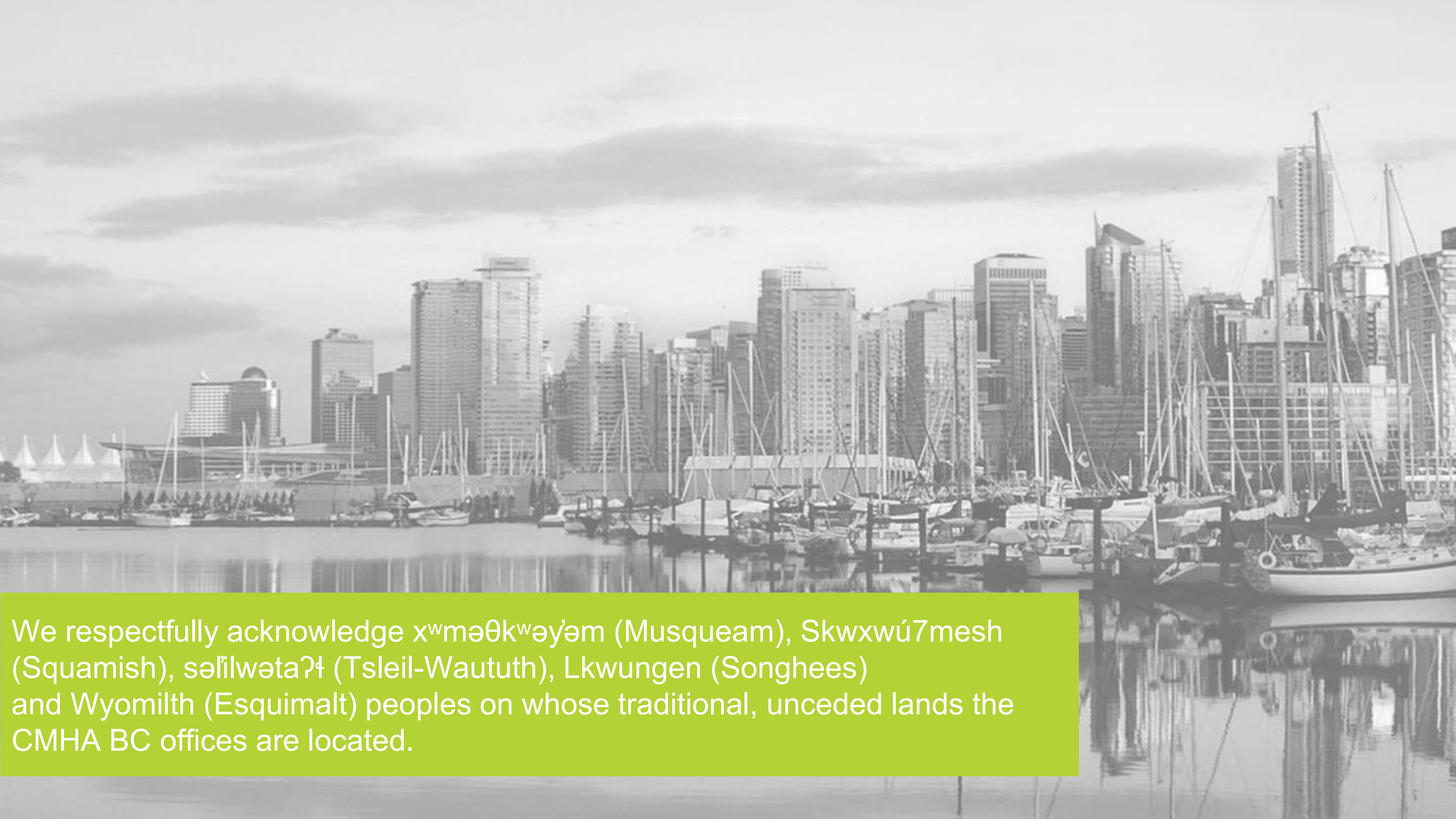
Funded by: van[∞]ver
foundation

Peer Employment Project Information Session

Presented by the CMHA BC Policy Department



November 2, 2023



We respectfully acknowledge x^wməθk^wəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh), Lkwungen (Songhees) and Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples on whose traditional, unceded lands the CMHA BC offices are located.

Indigenous Peer Voices

“There is a lot of value using the word “traditional” to describe these programs in different Indigenous communities—that’s what we’re ultimately trying to get back to, right? [A place] where every person had their place, everyone was connected to the land, the water, each other, animals, [and] the Creator. That’s how our people maintained basic wellness and that’s essentially what peer work is in our communities.”

“We come together in times of need; we come together in times of grief. At the heart of every community is peer work, that relationship to one another. First Nations people have endured a lot of trials and tribulations; colonialism was meant break us, so we’re finding our way back to the heart of that work as a people.”



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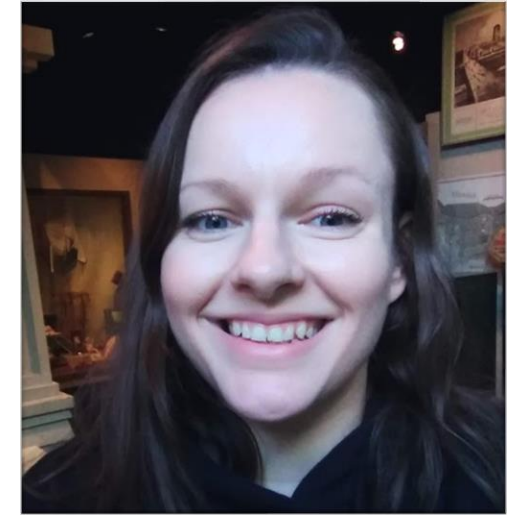
Introductions



KIM MACKENZIE
Director of Policy



ALEXIS ERLICHMAN
Senior Policy Advisor



KAT GOLIK
Peer Researcher



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About CMHA BC

CMHA Branches in BC

CARIBOO CHILCOTIN (WILLIAMS LAKE)

250-398-8220 | www.cariboo.cmha.bc.ca

COWICHAN VALLEY (DUNCAN)

250-746-5521 | www.cowichanvalley.cmha.bc.ca

KAMLOOPS

250-374-0440 | www.kamloops.cmha.bc.ca

KELOWNA

250-861-3644 | www.cmhakeLOWNA.com

KOOTENAYS (CRANBROOK)

250-426-5222 | www.kootenays.cmha.bc.ca

MID-ISLAND (NANAIMO)

250-244-4042 | www.mid-island.cmha.bc.ca

NORTH AND WEST VANCOUVER

604-987-6959 | www.northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca

NORTHERN BC

250-564-8644 | www.northernbc.cmha.ca

PORT ALBERNI

250-724-7199 | www.cmhaportalberni.ca

SHUSWAP-REVELSTOKE (SALMON ARM)

250-832-8477 | www.shuswap-revelstoke.cmha.bc.ca

SOUTH CARIBOO (100 MILE HOUSE)

250-395-4883 | www.southcariboo.cmha.bc.ca

SOUTH OKANAGAN SIMILKAMEEN (PENTICTON)

250-493-8999 | www.sos.cmha.bc.ca

VANCOUVER-FRASER (VANCOUVER)

604-872-4902 | www.vf.cmha.bc.ca

VERNON

250-542-3114 | www.cmhavernon.ca

VICTORIA OFFICE (CMHA BC)

250-216-4228 | www.victoria.cmha.bc.ca



Our Support

- Education & Training
- Service Delivery
- Policy & Advocacy

Our Reach

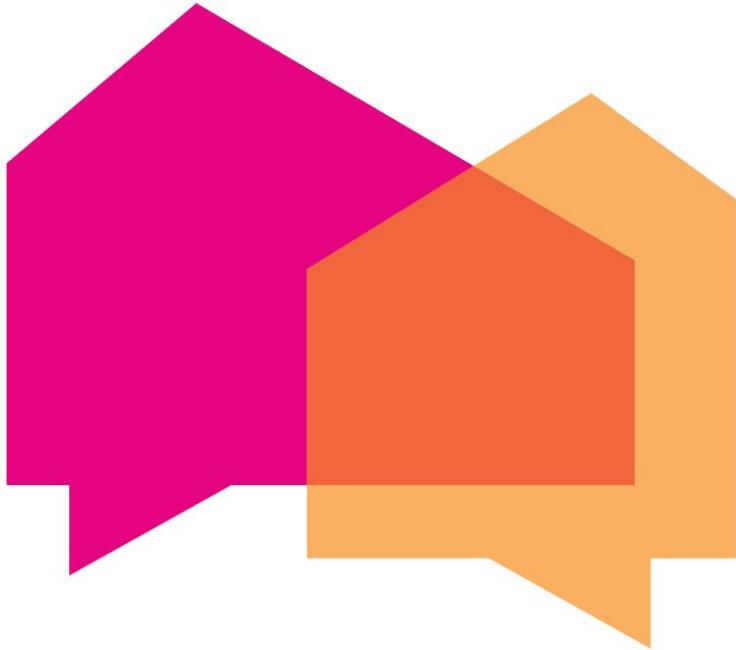
- CMHA operates in BC through the BC division and 14 branches that service over 100 communities to meet local needs.

Co-production is...

An equitable relationship where peer and non-peer colleagues (including employers) share power and partner on the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of mental health and substance use policies, services, and systems.



Peer Researcher Voice on Co-Production



“There is a massive shift that needs to happen within our MHSU systems. At the root, I believe is the learning and action we are undertaking to make these spaces accessible and support the participation of peers in a meaningful way. Genuine co-production between peers and professionals will benefit everyone and create the shift we need.”

– *Jessy Knight, Peer Researcher with CMHA BC*



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Research Methods

Literature
review

Peer
map

Employer
survey

Peer
interviews

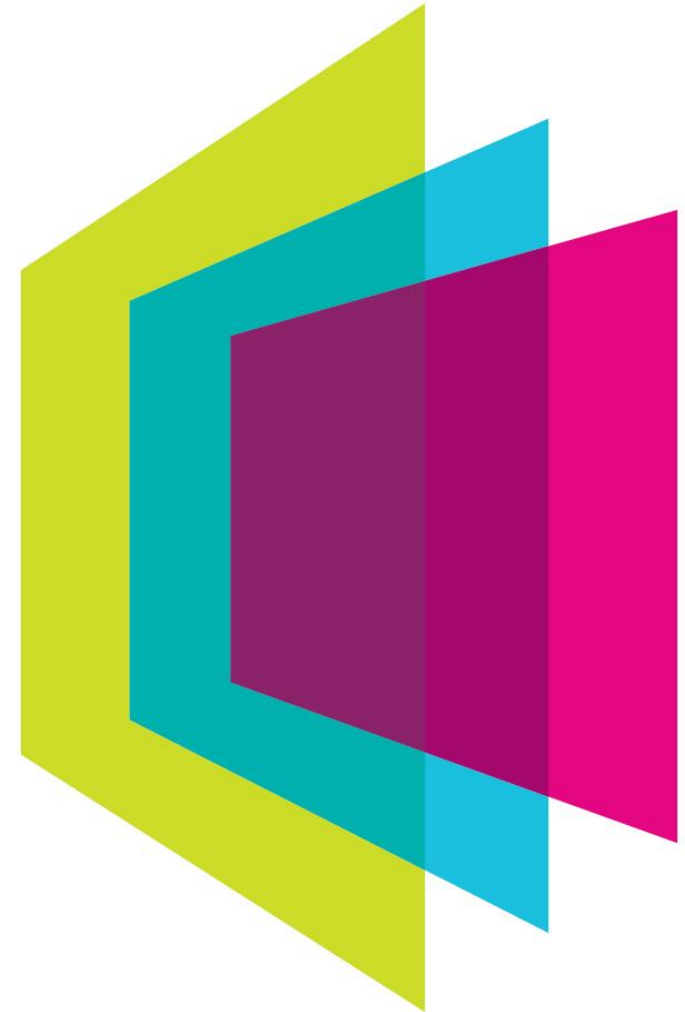


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Project Products – Literature Review

Peer Employment in the Mental Health and Substance Use Sector A Literature Review



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Project Product – Research Report

**Experience is
Expertise:**
Improving Peer
Employment in BC's
Mental Health and
Substance Use Sector



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Where Peers Work and What Jobs They Do



- Most peers work on the lower mainland or the island
- Most peers work in service delivery positions as support and outreach workers, facilitators, and frontline harm reduction workers at overdose prevention sites, mental health and substance use centres, hospitals, and within interdisciplinary outreach teams.
- Positions at other levels of the system, such as advisor and research positions, are less common.

Peer Voices

“I would love for peers to do [more]; there’s a lot of us that want to do so much work, but we don’t have the education. And so, because without the education we can’t move further, we can’t move ahead.”

“Some peers only want to work five hours a week. They like being contractors because it allows for that, and they have other sources of income. But others want it to be a career with a living wage and want to be unionized and employed. We need to offer a range of options to meet everybody wherever they’re at. Someone might start as a contractor doing a few hours and then want to move up in the system, but we don’t have many opportunities for that.”



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Peer Employment Conditions

Peers are often **inadequately paid**, **barred from participation at their work sites**, **forced to tolerate prejudicial beliefs about their lives and abilities**, and **stuck in service provision roles that marginalize their voices and viewpoints**. Social inequity, exploitation, stigma, and discrimination are significant barriers to the realization of meaningful participation and partnership.

Wages

Peer workers' payment types:



hourly (60%)



honorarium (57%)



salary (30%)

Wages range from **\$15.50** to **\$35** per hour.

Honorariums range from **\$10** to **\$50** per hour.

Peer workers' payment schedules:



biweekly (63%)



inconsistent (42%)

Peer Voices

“I was just a regular support worker and I feel that the problem with that is that the people who are identified as peer workers were making way less money despite doing the same amount of work as everyone else...”

“I would like to see an end to stipends and contracts and... I would like to see [peers] be employees and have benefits and be able to have dignity in their own lives because if you're living on a disability pension and you're getting paid erratically as a contractor or with honorariums it's pretty difficult to maintain yourself to eat well enough, to be healthy enough to show up and be expected to perform in a professional capacity when you're living in poverty”



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Peer Voices

“I felt like I didn't receive the same level of access to training, information, and communication that somebody who wasn't a peer worker would have.”

“They've rationalized it that we are 'receiving a service,' but we aren't receiving anything. We're just doing a job and getting paid, we're not being trained, mentored, led or taught – we're just being put out there. What service are we receiving in lieu of better pay? We're not receiving anything. They've just got this group of vulnerable people [who] they're paying nothing out there keeping tabs on people [who] are doing worse.”

Where to go next

1. Remove barriers to employment
2. Create equitable workplaces
3. Build toward co-production in BC



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Project Product – Power Assessment Framework

Sample Assessment Scale

Opportunity

1	2	3	4	5
Peers' job duties are narrowly defined and enforced. They are barred from entering workplace facilities or accessing resources that are accorded to other staff.	Peers' job duties are narrowly defined, but they are granted access to the same workplace facilities and resources as other staff. Stigma remains a barrier to greater participation.	Peers' job duties reflect their lived or living expertise. They include access to workplace facilities, resources and capacity-bridging (knowledge-sharing) that supports the co-delivery of services.	Peers' job duties include contributions to the design, delivery and evaluation of services. They are provided with resources and support to complete their duties.	Peers' job duties reflect the principles of co-production and they are supported to participate at decision-making tables. Employers support peers to progress and take on increased responsibilities.

SECTION II: WORKPLACE POWER ASSESSMENT

Please refer to the assessment scale and rate the selected peer position on each of the following indicators:

1 Financial Security (circle a number from 1 – 5):

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

2 Self-determination (circle a number from 1 – 5):

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

3 Values Alignment (circle a number from 1 – 5):

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4 Opportunity (circle a number from 1 – 5):

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5 Influence (circle a number from 1 – 5):

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Final score:

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Project Product – Employer Checklist



Strategies for Empowerment

Wages, compensation and benefits

Policies and processes

Job descriptions and duties

Workplace culture

Recommendations for the MHSU Sector

1	2	3	4	5
SDPR & HLTH	HLTH & MMHA	MMHA	OHRC	Gov't of BC
Enhance access to the peer support work income exemption for all peer workers in BC	Increase opportunities for peers and improve work conditions within the MHSU sector	Fund a peer-based or peer-employing organization to develop and deliver training for MHSU organizations on the role and value of peers in the workplace	Expand current guidelines on employment equity to increase inclusion of persons who have mental health and/or substance use related disabilities	Establish a new Independent Office of the Legislature called the BC Office of the Mental Health Advocate



Questions?



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**What is one thing you can
commit to actioning from
what you learned today?**



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Thank you for attending this information session!

If you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to the CMHA BC Policy Department. We would be happy to hear from you.

Contact us at public.policy@cmha.bc.ca