



Annual Report 2021-2022

Establishing our Roots

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About the Alliance

The PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being is an independent and incorporated non-profit organization. It was established in 2021 in response to community-informed recommendations to have a focused and community-championed approach to address the spectrum of mental health needs people experience across the lifespan.

Day-to-day, the Alliance serves as a backbone support in this effort, providing leadership, coordination, and communication.

Our Vision

All people living on PEI have an equal opportunity to achieve and maintain the best possible mental well-being throughout their lifetime.

Our Mandate

The Government of PEI has mandated the Alliance to provide leadership, coordination, and communications related to mental well-being on PEI by:

- Developing, catalysing, and disseminating with its partners, a dynamic and pragmatic 'whole of PEI' collaboration around a common vision of mental well-being;
- Building relationships, consulting, and co-operating with and among governments, not-for-profit, academic, business, professional and voluntary organizations in matters related to mental well-being;
- Contributing to the effective understanding and knowledge mobilization around a common knowledge base to inform mental well-being actions;
- Facilitating and contributing to the development and application of professional development and capacity building on mental well-being;
- Promoting and assisting in the development of realistic and effective policies and programs aimed at improving mental well-being; and
- Championing a comprehensive, ongoing communications approach to inform partners and all Islanders of collective efforts focused on mental well-being.

Our Work

2021-2022

Convening the Community

In its backbone support role, the Alliance works to facilitate new connections, and be a catalyst for coordinating action across the province.

Knowledge Mobilization

The Alliance fosters widespread understanding around the science of resilience to build a common knowledge base within the mental well-being landscape.

Grant Program

The Alliance facilitates the Focusing Action for Positive Change Grant Program, which helps non-profit organizations deliver projects and initiatives focused on building and strengthening the resilience of individuals, families, and communities.



Message from the Board Chair

I am pleased to present the PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being's 2021-2022 Annual Report. This report contains a summary of the Alliance's activities and actions from November 2021 to March 2022.

This first operational year, while short, was a time of change and growth. I officially joined the Alliance as Board Chair in November 2021. My motivation for taking on the position stems from my experience volunteering within PEI's mental well-being landscape.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand the prevention-focused support available in different areas across the province. Connecting these supports through a "whole of PEI" approach will help us better address the complexity of mental well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

The Alliance was created to serve in a backbone role and convene others. To accomplish this, we need to be guided by members of the community who bring diverse perspectives to our table. Recruiting Board members and staff for these positions was a huge focus in the early months of 2022, and by March we were able to officially announce our inaugural Board of Directors. I am proud to work with a group of committed people with different backgrounds and lived experiences related to mental well-being and addiction.

The year ahead will be the Alliance's first as a fully functioning non-profit organization. There is a lot of work to be done, and lessons to be learned. We look forward to continuing our journey supporting those on PEI who are committed to enhancing resilience and mental well-being.



John Horrelt
Board Chair

Message from the Executive Director

In November 2021, after months of planning and preparation, the PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being launched full steam ahead hosting a series of community information sessions across the province. It was motivating in those early days to connect with and hear from people who had ideas about how the Alliance could take its first steps of action to improve mental well-being outcomes on Prince Edward Island.

These initial community connections helped solidify our path forward as we developed and delivered the Focusing Action for Positive Change Grant Program. The first round of grants saw over 25 non-profit organizations receive support for projects and initiatives focused on building and strengthening resilience and mental well-being. We look forward to working with them in the years to come.

We quickly pivoted in the wake of the potato exports ban, working to bring "In the Know", a mental health literacy training program for the agriculture community, to PEI. This initiative built on the conversation opened by the Farmers Talk program. In the Know participants gained mental health knowledge and the ability to recognize signs of struggles related to mental health. The program encouraged them to speak openly about these struggles and foster responsive relationships between community members.

The learnings from our first year have laid a strong foundation for growth and advancement in the months ahead. In acknowledging these learnings, I must also recognize the hard work of Alliance team members in the early days of our operations. They continually went above and beyond while we grew and adapted to our new role, and many of our successes are directly attributable to their efforts. We now approach this next chapter with excitement, ambition, and a deep dedication to a province where opportunities to strengthen mental well-being are more equitable.



Karen Cumberland
Executive Director

Our Work: Convening the Community

On November 19, a public launch at the Farm Centre in Charlottetown was held to announce the PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being as a new organization. Attendees heard from Executive Director Karen Cumberland and Board Chair John Horreht, along with government and legislative officials and community leaders. The event was built around the theme of “connecting at the table”, working together, and opening conversations.

In early December, there was a quick transition into a full week of community information sessions. Starting in Kensington, the Alliance team then continued to Stratford and St. Peters. With public health concerns around the Omicron variant of COVID-19, the team finished up the week with a session in Elmsdale and a virtual session. Despite a cancelled session due to a snowstorm and the circumstances of COVID-19, over 40 individuals showed up to learn more and express interest, experiences, and ideas.

There were also early meetings with individuals, groups, and organizations within PEI’s mental well-being landscape whose work focuses on frontline services, policy change, and a wide range of community-based support. These meetings helped Alliance leadership to gain a better understanding of what work is happening, where alignment exists, and what connections might be made.



In March, we partnered with the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land, the PEI Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Mental Health Association of PEI, and the University of Guelph Ontario Agriculture College to bring “In the Know” to PEI. “In the Know” is a research-based mental health literacy training program developed by the Ontario Veterinary College (University of Guelph). The program was created specifically for agricultural community members. We opened a free training session to the public on March 7, during which participants learned to both recognize struggles related to mental health and speak about the topic in a safe and open way.



ONTARIO
AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL BIOSCIENCES



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Prince Edward Island



As a newly incorporated organization, a priority of the Alliance in its early months was the development of our Board of Directors. These individuals sit as members for at least three years. We placed a public call for applications and spent several months meeting with interested individuals. The first seven we welcomed came from different backgrounds and brought with them a wealth of qualifications and knowledge that shaped their input into governance.

Our inaugural Board of Directors is comprised of: John Horreлт (Board Chair), Ryan Maxwell, Mary Pendergast (Vice-Chair and Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee), Carolyn Francis, Chelsey Rogerson, Lucas MacArthur, and Sophie MacDonald.

Our Work: Knowledge Mobilization



The Alliance relies on the science of resilience and uses evidence-based research to guide its work across the province. We consider knowledge mobilization to be an “umbrella term” that includes a wide range of activities relating to research and bringing the results of research into the community. The focus of our knowledge mobilization efforts in 2021-2022 was fostering an understanding of the science of resilience. We believe that a common understanding of this science will create the foundation for positive change.

During 2021-2022, our knowledge mobilization efforts reached a wide variety of audiences across the province. We made early efforts to connect with policymakers and provincial politicians to discuss our work, the science of resilience, and how it could be applied on PEI. We also hosted a virtual Grant Program technical workshop. This hour-and-a-half session invited the public to learn more about the science of resilience and its relationship to our Grant Program. The session also covered specific details about the Grant Program and its criteria, processes, and coaching opportunities for applicants.

This engagement set us up for a highly successful run of coaching opportunities within the Grant Program. Understanding the time and effort involved in seeking grants, our priority was ensuring applicants felt they were receiving appropriate support throughout the application process. We launched our free coaching program to address that gap. Knowledge base experts met one-on-one with applicants to have tailored conversations about aligning programs and initiatives with the science of resilience. In total, 60 coaching sessions took place. Many participants expressed their appreciation of this service and highlighted how helpful they found it to be.

“It was super refreshing for us to be able to have that interaction and get feedback.”

-Coaching participant

“One of my concerns was we’re such a small organization... how are we going to measure up against some of these other organizations when it comes to writing a proposal? In speaking with the person who worked with me, they really put my mind at ease and gave me some good ideas about how I might bring across the point I was trying to make.”

-Coaching participant

Our Work: Focusing Action for Positive Change Grant Program

The Alliance's Grant Program supports projects and initiatives focused on building and strengthening the resilience of individuals, families, and communities across the province.

Four main objectives shape the Grant Program:

- 🌀 To strengthen and enhance the factors that build individual, family, or community resilience.
- 🌀 To generate and amplify cross-sector and cross-PEI initiatives to align and integrate preventative approaches.
- 🌀 To support capacity-building and raise awareness of the connection between resilience and mental well-being, based on science.
- 🌀 To support efforts to assess, learn, evaluate, and share resilience-building best practices and their impact on PEI.

The first round of the Grant Program offered four streams and officially opened in December 2021. More than 60 applications were received and adjudicated by a Peer Review Committee. Peer Reviewers represented the PEI community of applicants. With an open call for reviewers, they were selected, in part, with an eye to their experience in working with or representing diverse populations. We also recruited a portion of Peer Reviewers from outside the province to fill gaps in expertise and avoid possible conflicts of interest. The Peer Review Committee plays an important role in evaluating applications against specific Grant Program criteria and making recommendations to the Board of Directors for funding approval.




As a catalyst for enhancing existing initiatives and creating innovative solutions, the Grant Program funded 27 grantees in 2021-2022!

A Look Ahead to 2022-2023

During its first full fiscal year of operations in 2022-2023, the Alliance is prioritizing the growth of its Board of Directors and staff team.

This growth will help us facilitate the cross-province activities we intend to do, while developing solid operations within our pillars of work.

Other priorities include:

-  The creation of a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the work of the Alliance in future years.
-  The development of more opportunities for those within the mental well-being landscape to convene.
-  Further mobilization of the science of resilience through virtual, in-person, and experiential learning opportunities.

Connect with Us

Interested in the Alliance's work? Connect with us!

Email: info@allianceformentalwellbeing.com

Facebook: [PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being](#)

LinkedIn: [PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being](#)

Twitter: [@wellbeingpei](#)

Phone: 902-370-2472

Website: www.allianceformentalwellbeing.com



