



January Newsletter

Happy New Year from the Stigma-Free Mental Health Society!

Dear Stigma-Free Community,

As we enter 2025, we want to reflect on the impact we made together in 2024. It's been a remarkable year of growth, and your commitment to mental health awareness and education helped make all our accomplishments possible!



highlights

2024

Our [Rural Mental Wellness](#) and [Stigma-Free School Programs](#) touched the lives of youth and rural residents across Canada.

We brought mental health and anti-stigma education to thousands of students and school staff through our [Virtual Stigma-Free Presentations](#) and [Student Mental Health Toolkit](#).

Virtual Stigma-Free Presentations

We reached 3,518 students through our virtual presentations, breaking down stigma at their schools and improving mental health awareness and understanding.

"I did not know what stigma was but when they explained it, I know the exact feeling and related to it a lot."

Feedback From Students and School Staff



"The overall style was very personable. It was easy to listen to Andrea speak about the topic. Though it is a serious issue, it wasn't heavy presentation."

The personal story part made it very real way to remove stigma and show how it can happen to anyone and that that there is hope and help for those who give life a chance."

"Personal stories being shared helps youth see they are not the only ones with challenges."

Student Mental Health Toolkit

Our Toolkit was accessed by approximately 28,000 users, delivering valuable resources and support to students, school staff, and caregivers.

Words of Appreciation



“Amazing work you are doing, thank you!”

“Thank you for making a mental health curriculum that addresses diverse abilities explicitly.”

“Thanks so much for putting these together free of charge.”

We refreshed our brand and honed our focus on mental health stigma.

We refined our [vision, mission, and values](#) to reflect our goal of reducing stigma – specifically around mental health – in rural and school communities.

We also **updated our logo** and **changed the name of our charity** from Stigma-Free Society to Stigma-Free Mental Health Society to accurately reflect our dedicated focus on eliminating mental health stigma.

We made exciting developments to the Student Mental Health Toolkit.

We [translated our toolkit into French](#) and **expanded the [Resources for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers](#)** section. We are thrilled that our resources are now accessible to Francophone students and school staff, and that we can provide further support to caregivers of youth facing mental health challenges.

We empowered rural communities with mental health resources and training through our [Rural Mental Wellness Toolkit](#), [Rural Peer Support](#)

Rural Peer Support Fundamentals Training

We trained **41** participants in rural peer support, empowering them to lead their own support groups and make a positive impact in their communities.

A special thank you to [Sara Riel Inc.](#) for partnering with us to provide this training!



Rural Minds Matter Awareness Campaign



We initiated the Rural Minds Matter Awareness Campaign in 2024 to support individuals and families in Northern BC. Following an incredibly productive trip to Fort St. John and Prince George in November, the campaign engagement is exciting and the feedback is clear. **There is an overwhelming need for Rural Minds Matter** – for raising mental health stigma awareness across the entire Northern BC region and creating lasting community impact through peer leadership training and support. By addressing this need, we can empower neighbours to support neighbours and assist communities with the fight against isolation by rebuilding important personal connections that enrich the lives of everyone.

Stigma-Free Mental Health Society looks forward to sharing more about Rural Minds Matter in 2025 and launching an official awareness campaign throughout the entire region in the Spring. We will have much to share in the New Year, so stay tuned!

This work would not be possible without the support of local government, businesses, organizations and individuals from the largest cities to the smallest villages. A successful campaign relies on funding, partnership, advocacy, and volunteers. We are grateful for the early support from the City of Fort St. John, the

Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce, MooseFM and Energetic City, the NCLGA, Prince George Airport Authority, Stantec, Smith Fuels Services Inc., and Dave Richardson and Family.

If you wish to support Rural Minds Matter in Northern BC, please consider [donating today](#). Your donation, no matter how small, will help the awareness campaign reach far and wide and fund our peer leadership training, so neighbours can be equipped to support and raise each other up.

THANK YOU

We couldn't have made such a significant impact without the support of our incredible community, partners, and donors. Thank you for believing in our mission and for being part of our journey.

We are excited to continue working together in 2025 to break the stigma around mental health and support mental wellness in rural and school communities!

With gratitude,

**Andrea Paquette, President, SFMHS
and the Stigma-Free Team**



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