

Leading the Change: Innovating for Better Mental Health in Canada

Insights and actions from the 2023 CAMH Business Leaders for Mental Health Action Symposium, presented by Sun Life

On October 13, 2023, CAMH Foundation and Sun Life hosted 103 business leaders for the coalition's third annual symposium.

Through panel discussions and networking sessions, participants engaged in open conversations discussing innovations in mental health and how we can commit to work toward the same goal: better mental health for Canadians, and a future where no one is left behind. Guests heard from keynote speaker Clara Hughes—a six-time Olympic medalist and mental health advocate—as she openly and passionately shared her struggle with mental illness and addiction. Among many takeaways from Clara's powerful keynote, we learned about the importance of rest and its game-changing impact on her life and career. "Rest is as important as work. Because rest feeds the fire. It's a right, not a privilege," said Clara.

“

To the business leaders in this room: you lead the way. You have the power to go back to your place of work and make it a better place for whole health and whole being for every employee, no matter where they come from or who they identify as. You can make it an inclusive, accepting and safe space for everyone, and have a chance to become the gold standard yourself. To show what is possible when full health is supported in the workplace.

- **Clara Hughes**, six-time Olympic medalist and mental health advocate

”



Key Insights from the Panels and Symposium Attendees



Panel 1

Unlocking Potential of Innovation in Workplace Mental Health

Moderated by Alison Chick, Sun Life with panelists Carolyn Byer, Microsoft Canada; Dave Jones, Sun Life; and Iliana Oris Valiente, Accenture.

Our business leaders panel focused on discussing how to build a positive workplace culture that destigmatizes mental health, prioritizes employees, and centers on leaders to set the tone to prioritize mental health.



Panel 2

Innovations in Mental Health Care

Moderated by Deborah Gillis, CAMH Foundation with panelists Dr. Allison Crawford, CAMH; Stephanie Sliemers, CAMH; and Dr. Shreejoy Tripathy, CAMH.

Through studies in [sleep quality](#), leading the rollout of the [9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) (which will be available November 30th), [North America's first Mental Health Simulation Centre](#), and the [province-wide youth wellness hubs](#) piloted at CAMH, scientists at CAMH are leading life-saving work that will change mental health and addictions care across Canada.

How can leading organizations better prioritize and address employee mental health?



Business-wide priority | Make mental health a business imperative and strategic objective versus an HR responsibility. Leaders should take initiative in sharing their own stories and ensuring that their workplace is a safe space for employees.



Help navigate care | Shift from employee resiliency to taking stress out of the workplace, and provide benefits and care aligned with organizational values. Through changes like an intranet home page button linking directly to mental health resources and more robust and accessible benefits, we can ensure systems better support employees and their families.



Communication matters | Making time to communicate effectively about prioritizing mental health can be as easy as sharing a mental health benefit as an agenda point at the beginning of meetings (keeping it top of mind), or adjusting everyday language like 'Sick Day' to 'Holistic Day Off' to allow employees to have some agency with how they approach work-life balance and mental health.



Set the standard | As business leaders, we need to stay visible and set the tone. Avoid sending emails after work hours and on weekends, and utilize AI to give team members time to pursue work they're interested in. Remember to take an experiential and agile approach and adjust as you go.



[Hear some key takeaways from business leaders](#)



[Read the Workplace Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders](#)

Thank you to all attendees and to our coalition partners

Accenture
AGF Group
CAA Insurance Company
Choice Properties
Connor, Clark & Lunn Financial Group Inc.

George Weston Limited
Hudson's Bay Foundation
Loblaw Companies Limited
MiQ
RBC Foundation

Richardson Wealth
Scotiabank
Sun Life
Whitehorse Liquidity Partners Inc.
Vancity

CAMH Business Leaders for Mental Health Action

For more information, please contact:

Denise Lo

Chief Partnerships Officer, CAMH Foundation
Denise.Lo@camh.ca | 647-220-9606

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Foundation

100 Stokes Street, Bell Gateway Building, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M6J 1H4
camh.ca

Charitable Registration Number: 106932320RR0001