



# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **for the period of**

**[2024 - 2027]**

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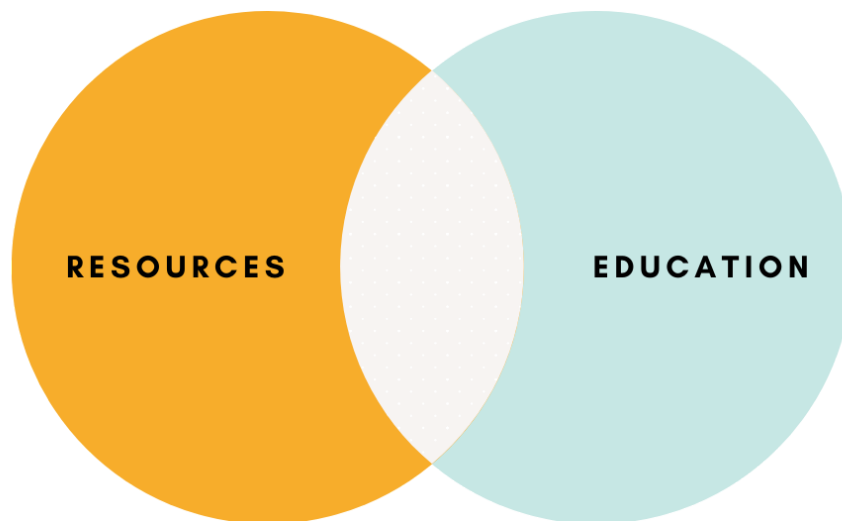
## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- + Organizational Description
- + Mission, Vision and Values
- + Executive Summary
- + Goals and Strategies for 2024-2027
- + Appendices
  - I - Action Plans by Team
  - II - SWOT Analysis
  - III - Impact Evaluation
  - IV - Acknowledgements

# Organizational Description

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The Mental Health Society of Greater Victoria (MHS Victoria) is a grassroots non-profit organization incorporated under the BC Societies Act. The MHS Victoria serves as a community hub for all mental health and substance use concerns, linking people to the resources and services best suited to their needs. Our team is a diverse collective of people with lived experience and unique skills, sharing a passion for changing our community's approach to mental health care. Based out of Victoria, BC, we are primarily operating remotely as we search for a dedicated centre to be able to provide more accessible in-person services.



# Mission, Vision and Values

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Our Strategic Directions are intrinsically linked to our Mission, Vision and Values. These statements act as guiding principles during the strategic planning process. They will also be reviewed regularly to ensure continued alignment as we execute our new strategy.

## Our Mission

To improve mental health in Victoria, British Columbia by facilitating access to services, delivering mental health resources and education, and providing compassionate peer support to all members of the community.

## Our Vision

Replacing stigma and barriers with access and compassion.

# Our Values

**Community** - we support our neighbours and are committed to serving the diverse community in Victoria, BC.

**Individuality** - we believe that everybody is unique and that includes what will help them maintain good mental health.

**Holism** - we believe that mental health is a multifaceted phenomenon. All of our efforts are informed by environmental, genetic, chemical, spiritual and social factors. Using our holistic approach, we adapt our services to meet each individual's unique needs and preferences.

**Compassion** - we use compassion to create safe spaces in which community members can express themselves and ask for help without facing prejudice or judgment.

**Inclusivity** - we approach every interaction with an open mind and welcoming presence. We never discriminate based on race, age, religion, gender, physical ability, or sexual orientation.

**Transparency** - we believe in the importance of being honest and open when we interact with community members, service providers, volunteers, and stakeholders.

**Reliability** - we are committed to assisting community members as they seek mental health support. Unfortunately, we know what it's like to "slip through the cracks" during this process. At the MHS, we refuse to leave anyone behind.

**Humour** - we are mindful of the fact that this is a difficult field to work in, and incorporate the humour and the positive powers of laughter wherever appropriate.

**Accountability** - we uphold these values and follow through on our duty to each other and to the community, only committing to that which we can achieve.

# Executive Summary

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“When I first founded the Mental Health Society, I had recently graduated from the University of Victoria with a BSc in Biological Psychology and Mathematics. While at university, I finally started opening up about my struggles with mental health and was shocked to find so many others experiencing similar things in silence. I ended up starting the UVic Mental Health Awareness Club with another student, which was my first introduction to working in mental health; It also ended up being the catalyst for me seeking better care, and led to a late ADHD diagnosis at the UVic Health Clinic. After graduating, I felt a void from not being involved in improving the system that I could see was inadequate for many. I ended up deciding to hold off on my plan for medical school to work in advocacy. Although I didn’t have much time (or experience for that matter), I couldn’t find a good reason why people with lived experience couldn’t be the ones to find a solution, and I already had a lot of ideas.

However, even after receiving a degree, a diagnosis, and ample knowledge of the system, my healthcare experiences haven’t improved. The fact that even as the person writing this Executive Statement, I still face the same problems as many of our clients is indicative of the lack of accessible, quality help. Everyone living in Victoria deserves to know about the services that meet their needs, have access to tools to improve their well-being and to feel equipped in the event of a crisis. Most of the people who reach out to us for support are those who fell through the cracks of the system and don’t know where to go next. This is the origin of the MHS: a grassroots organization led by people who face similar struggles, providing widespread resources, education, and support to those dealing with mental health issues in the community.

In the 5 years since the MHS Victoria first started, we have seen tremendous growth and received support in many forms from so many community members who believe in what we do. What started as a small group in my living room has now grown into a 35+ volunteer organization with several teams and initiatives. You may notice that this strategic plan is much more thorough and ambitious. However, we’re still a long way away from having the stability of other mental health organizations, due to our grassroots origin and lack of funding. We are still 100% volunteer-run and funded by community donations. Both of these facts highlight the amazing souls who have helped move us forward these last few years, and exemplify why our primary stakeholders are, and always will be, the community served by our initiatives. This includes the dedicated members of our team who have been my source of strength throughout this whole process; without them, none of this would be possible.”

- Ilia Fernandez  
Founder/CEO

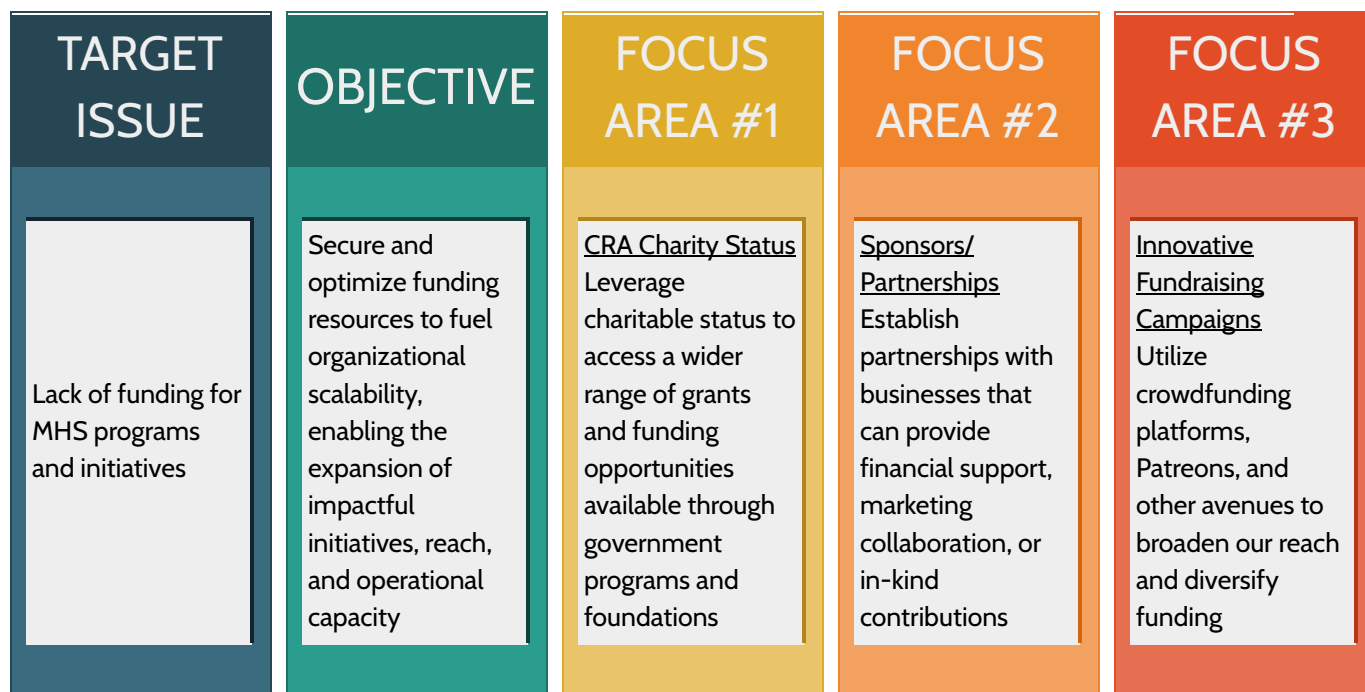
# Strategies for 2024-2027

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Our three objectives were identified and refined through the combined efforts of the founder, Board of Directors, and Team Managers.

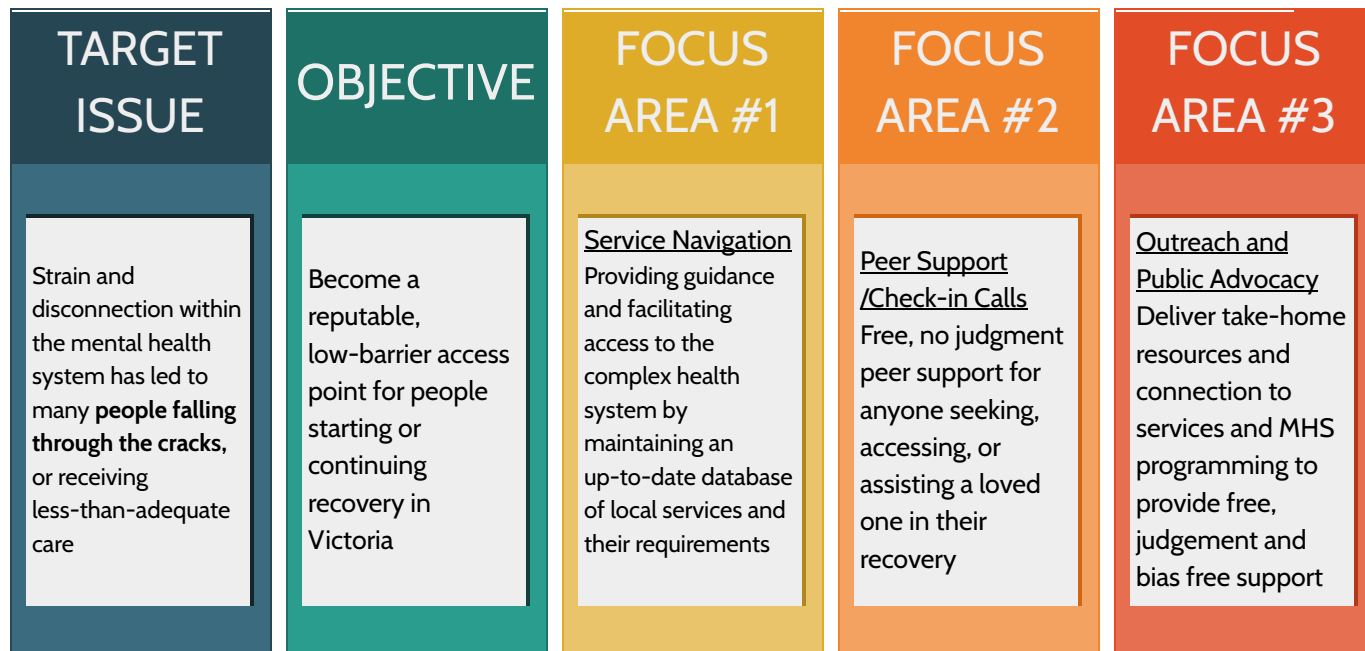
Since starting our organization, we have continually collected input through our programs and community events. With everything we do, we take it as an opportunity to hear the people we're helping to modify and improve our services. This is also where we have been fortunate enough to hear from the public about their experiences with mental health challenges and the obstacles they faced. So far, we've spoken to countless people, of all socioeconomic and educational backgrounds facing similar issues. We have begun to track this data more rigorously in order to approach the problem systematically and show the value of peer-driven initiatives for wellbeing. The following objectives are based on our initiatives with the highest engagement and the most need in the community: peer support, mental health training, and innovation through multidisciplinary collaboration.

# Objective #1: Obtain sustainable scalability of our programs and initiatives through strategic funding



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Apply for CRA Charity Status	Secure New Grants	Maintain Charitable Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirmation of charity status</li> <li>- # of applicable grants increase</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Forge relationships with other organizations - in order to secure financial support, and/or facilitate resource sharing.	Increase operational capacity - through automation, further development and process efficiency	Utilize possible funds and/or relationships to enhance and maintain Mind Map, by providing honorariums for continued support from developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of collaborative efforts increase</li> <li>- More automated processes</li> <li>- Increase in funding</li> <li>- Increase in resources available to us</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Provide a space for volunteers to sell their art - whether it be bookmarks, paintings, etc.	Expanding our reach via the free library - in turn having people in the community donate	Setting up a Patreon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of donations</li> <li>- # of Patreon subscribers</li> <li>- # of art/merch sold</li> <li>- Increase in revenue</li> </ul>

Objective #2: Reduce healthcare gaps and increase connections in the community by providing free, low-barrier peer support in the form of system navigation, check-in calls, and public advocacy



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Working collaboratively with Pathways BC and other service databases	User-friendly database that is searchable by the community	Encouraging the development of compatible databases across different regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of service navigation support requests</li> <li>- # of searches through the database</li> <li>- # of updates and additions to the database</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Increase active clients and available resources	Increase the team of callers and researchers to support maintaining a no-waitlist program	Recognized peer support service in local networks with opportunities for clients to access team training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # new intakes</li> <li>- # active clients</li> <li>- Referral source</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Displaying more widespread array of resources at event booths with on-site peer support	Attending community events to provide peer support and resources	Hosting our own resource-centered events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of take-home resources</li> <li>- # of peer support conversations at events</li> </ul>

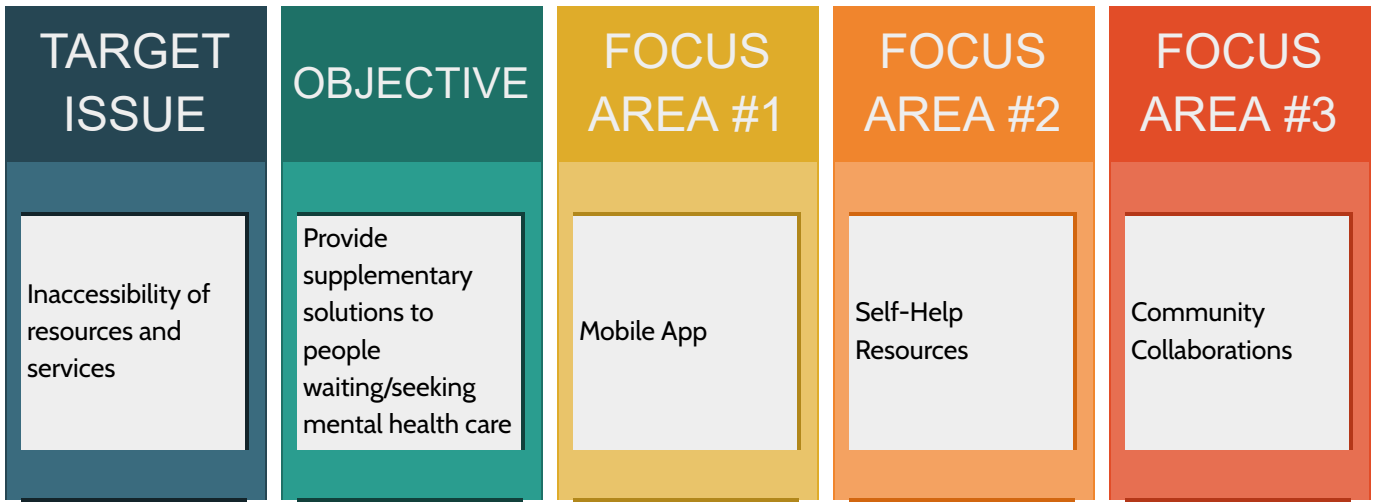


Objective #3: Increase access and availability of community-wide training and education around mental health and substance use



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Delivering curated workshops to businesses who request one	Workshops to partner organizations and school groups	Independent workshop series open to all members of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of workshop requests</li> <li>- # of workshop attendees</li> <li>- Client and attendee feedback</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Display a wide array of educational content on our social media platforms	Develop a streamlined method to share content across all platforms and through our new mobile app	Utilize our social media platforms to promote team initiatives and further our reach through targeted content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social media post engagement</li> <li>- # followers</li> <li>- Diversity of content</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Providing ample training opportunities for the professional development of our team	Subsidizing the delivery of pre-existing trainings to equip the wider community	Independently run mental health training to the general population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # team members completing courses</li> <li>- # of courses subsidized</li> <li>- # of community members trained</li> </ul>

Objective #4: Cultivate opportunities that empower leaders of the community to develop innovative solutions to ongoing issues through collaboration and resource development.



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Launch our mobile mental health app	Collaborate with local government agencies to promote the app city-wide	Expand the app to surrounding regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # App users</li> <li>- App user feedback</li> <li>- Feedback from services</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Compile collections of MHS educational posts and helpful information	Make content into easily digestible information for the app and social media platforms	Large compilation of education and self-help resources on our website and the app	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- App user feedback</li> <li>- Website feedback</li> <li>- Support client feedback</li> <li>- # of support clients using the resources</li> <li>- Website traffic to resource pages</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Involving the wider community by offering inclusive programs, educational workshops, and volunteer opportunities that foster collaboration, awareness and active participation in our shared initiatives.	Set up Mental Health themed Little Free Libraries across Greater Victoria	Expanding the free library initiative whether that be numerous libraries, more resources, or both.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of collaborative initiatives</li> <li>- Broadened reach</li> </ul>

## Appendix I - Strategic Objectives by Team

- [Executive Team](#)
- [Operations Team](#)
- [Finance/Fundraising Team](#)
- [App Development Team](#)
- [Events Team](#)
- [Peer Support Team](#)
- [Resource Team](#)
- [Research Team](#)
- [Workshops Team](#)
- [Web/Newsletter Team](#)
- [Social Media Team](#)

## Executive Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Go through Thriving Non-Profits program	Obtain stable funding through various channels such as grants, merch sales, and donations	Obtain CRA Charitable Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Volunteer satisfaction</li> <li>- Volunteer retention</li> <li>- \$ received in grants</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Focus on showing appreciation to our current sponsors and partners and pursuing further collaborations	Reach out to local government agencies and healthcare authorities to collaborate on initiatives	Establish an office space near to partner organizations to continually collaborate on future initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # community partners</li> <li>- # grants applied to alongside other organizations</li> <li>- # events attended with other organizations</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Port phone number to have a fully functional phone line linked to our tracking software	Find a physical address to use along with our PO box for mail	An MHS Office - a collaborative work space where volunteers can drop in to do work, that can also be utilized for workshops, events, and storage of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of calls via phone</li> <li>- A physical space for members to utilize</li> <li>- # of volunteers working from a shared coworking space</li> </ul>

# Operations Team



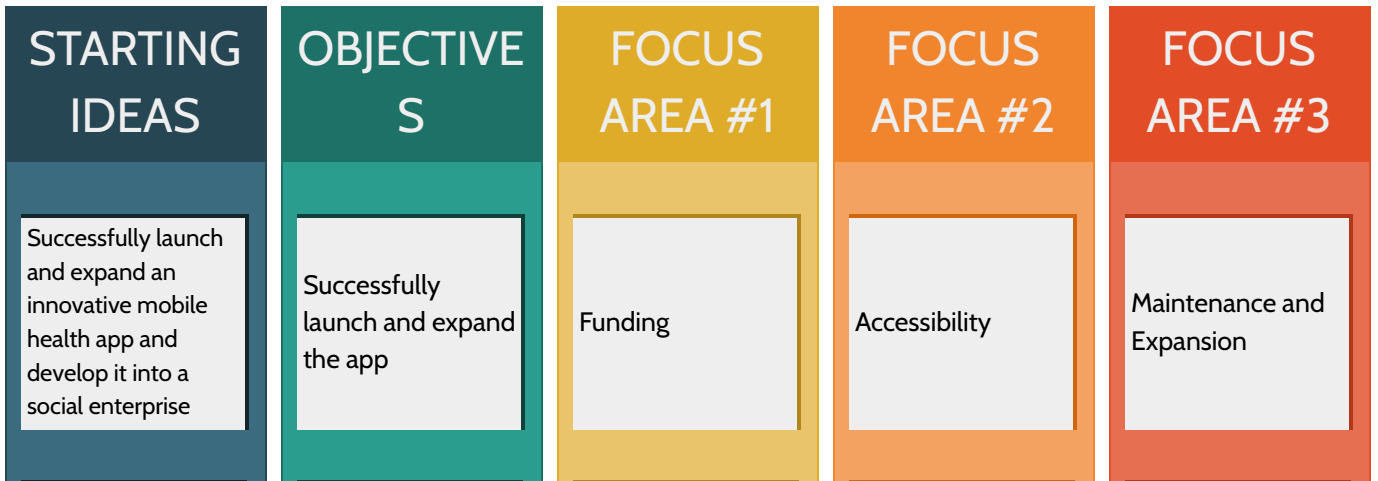
	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Provide clear and detailed recruitment information	Maintain straight-forward and comprehensive new volunteer orientation	Understand reason behind volunteer leaving and use the information to adjust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of new volunteers</li> <li>- # of leaving volunteers</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Develop hour tracking procedure across all teams	Ensure procedure is sustainable and update as needed	Monitor hour logs and maintain consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # hours logged</li> <li>- # of volunteers actively tracking hours</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Post office	Google Drive/passwords	Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timely updates</li> <li>- Clear structure</li> </ul>

## Finance/Fundraising Team



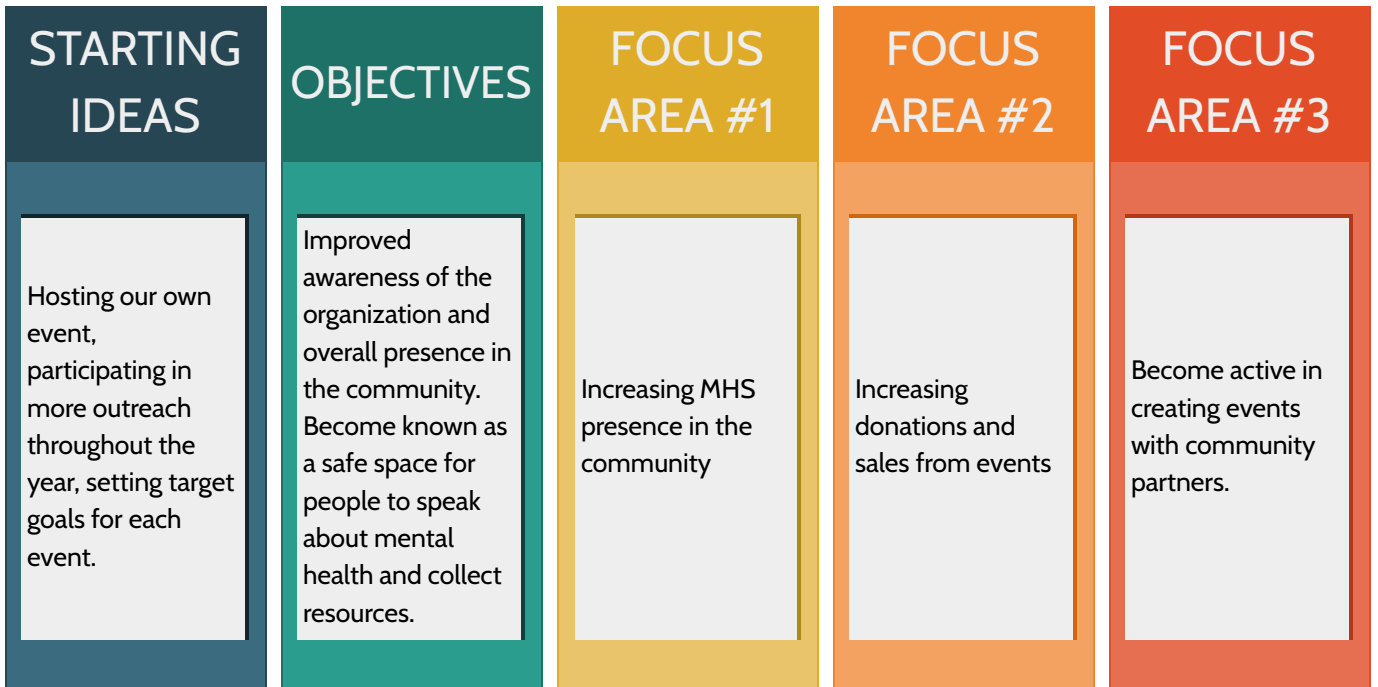
	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
<b>Focus Area #1</b>	Increase awareness of organization's mission and services among potential donors	Diversify funding sources  Attain CRA Charity Status	Establish consistent and sustainable funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistent growth in overall funding</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #2</b>	Identify & establish initial partnerships with local businesses/organizations	Strengthen existing partnerships & explore new collaborations	Build a network of sustainable, long-term financial partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in overall budget &amp; collaborative projects</li> <li>- # of sponsors/partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #3</b>	Implement a comprehensive tracking system to monitor grant deadlines, requirements and outcomes	Establish grant management process to ensure reporting & compliance	Foster relationships with grant-making organizations, cultivating partnerships for sustained support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of grant applications submitted</li> <li>- Success rate in obtaining grants</li> <li>- Successful implementation of grant-funded projects</li> </ul>

## App Development Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Research options for Mind Map and obtaining copyright	Apply for government funding to link Mind Map with local municipalities	Secure long-term funding to hire the Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donations to Mind Map</li> <li>- # of Financial partnerships</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Launch an app with accessibility features and option to submit feedback for future improvements	Improve upon the app based on user feedback	Have the team complete App media accessibility training and compete updates to meet accessibility standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- App downloads</li> <li>- User feedback</li> <li>- # of app crashes</li> <li>- Reported bugs</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Monitor performance and troubleshoot errors through iterative improvements (i.e. upgrades)	Maintain security measures - through regular security audits to identify and address potential vulnerabilities and ensure compliance with data protection regulations.	Expansion to other local communities with full functionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of active users</li> <li>- Compliance with relevant standards</li> <li>- Frequency of update addressing bug fixes</li> </ul>

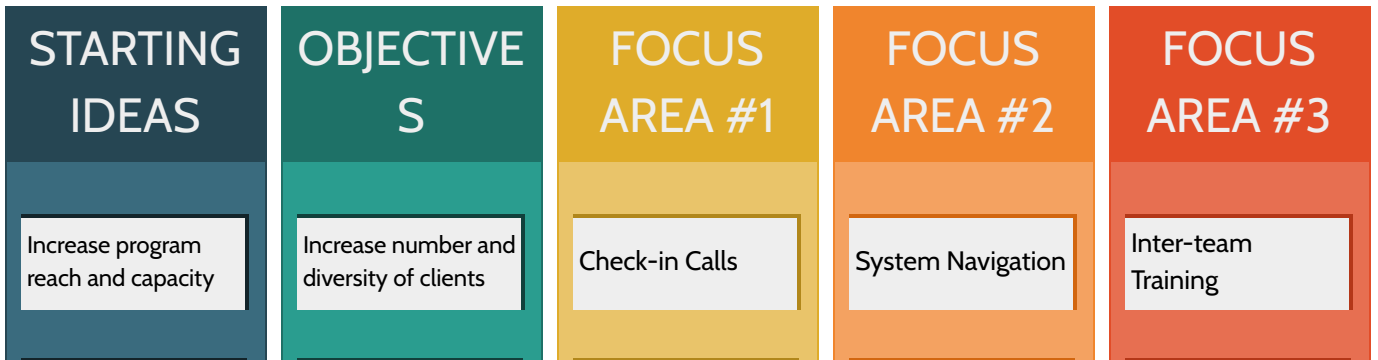
## Events Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Expand attendance of events	Improve visual advertising around the city (ie. poster, stickers, mini library)	Attend more collaborative community meetings with local organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of community events attended</li> <li>- Variety in the type of events</li> <li>- Increased website activity and email.</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Improve explanation and advertising of our services and volunteer needs	Expand group of contributors for sellable products	Create more MHS merchandise and products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase of donations at events and online</li> <li>- Inventory restock needs</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Further develop our relationship with current event partners.	Understand what the community is in need of and would enjoy.	Work with a local partner to create our own event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of invitations for collaboration</li> <li>- Interest and engagement from the community</li> </ul>

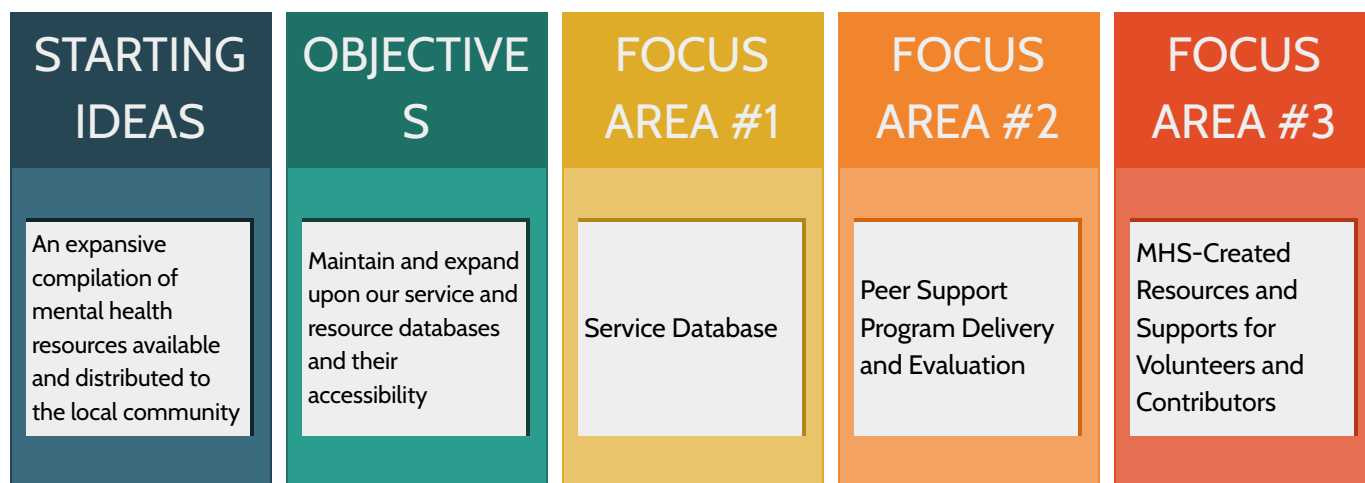


## Peer Support Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
<b>Focus Area #1</b>	Increase frequency of check-in calls and expand the peer-support program via promotional campaigns	Establish Check-in Call Best Practices in order to ensure effectiveness and impact	Develop a systematic framework for continuous improvement of the check-in call program, incorporating feedback loops, data analytics and innovative strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of intake requests</li> <li>- # of check-in calls</li> <li>- # of minutes spent on calls</li> <li>- Length of time using service</li> <li>- Client feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #2</b>	Provide system navigation assistance through our Peer Support Program	Offer system navigation support at drop-in locations throughout the city	Staff drop-in and appointment hours for the community at our future office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of referrals</li> <li>- # of appointments</li> <li>- # of email inquiries</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #3</b>	Conduct Skills Assessment - on current peer-support volunteers as well as prior clients that are interested in taking on peer-support duties	Implement Targeted Training Sessions - (based off skills assessment)	Establish Ongoing Training Program in order to foster continuous learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- clients to volunteer turnover</li> <li>- # training sessions</li> <li>- Self-reported increase in volunteer confidence</li> </ul>

## Resource Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
<b>Focus Area #1</b>	Develop, disseminate a user-friendly database for our Support Team and clients	Connect the database to the app and develop further partnerships with similar databases	Have a continually updating database of resources accessible by the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of services on database</li> <li>- Successful search results</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #2</b>	Develop indicative metrics for tracking program evaluation	Track and analyze satisfaction and succession metrics using a scorecard and implement changes	Create a process for ongoing reviews and corrective actions based on preset scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantitative: Scorecard based on client satisfaction surveys</li> <li>- Qualitative: Client reviews</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #3</b>	Analyze required resources, which are lacking in the community.	Create a process for implementing new resources in various media formats.	Have a central hub of required resources which need creation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantitative: # of “checked out” resources by volunteers</li> <li>- Qualitative: # of internally created resources</li> </ul>

## Research Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
Focus Area #1	Develop a list of topics that require more research/knowledge.	Connect with local schools/orgs to gain insight on the gaps in knowledge.	Connect with community organizations and develop partnerships. - Interviewing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of collaborations</li> <li>- # of gaps (topics) resolved</li> </ul>
Focus Area #2	Connecting with MHS teams to gain a better understanding of their needs.	Youtube series in collab with social media team	Interviewing guest speakers and mental health professionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Member feedback</li> <li>- # of interviews</li> <li>- Engagement rate (traffic, likes, views)</li> </ul>
Focus Area #3	Collab with the Workshops team to build workshops.	Develop a curriculum for training programs.	Implement, track and improve training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- # of successful trainings</li> <li>- # of workshops</li> <li>- Client feedback</li> <li>- Member feedback</li> </ul>

## Workshops Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
<b>Focus Area #1</b>	Reach out to local businesses about hosting workshops.	Create a “workshop package” to enhance marketability.	Develop alternative workshops to fit unique requests and increase opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased interest through email.</li> <li>- Increased recommendation through previous workshop partners</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #2</b>	Reach out to local community partners about hosting workshops.	Create a “workshop package” to enhance marketability.	Develop alternative workshops to fit unique requests and increase opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased interest through email.</li> <li>- Increased recommendation through previous workshop partners</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #3</b>	Reach out to schools and educational facilities about hosting workshops.	Create a “workshop package” to enhance marketability.	Develop alternative workshops to fit unique requests and increase opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased interest through email.</li> <li>- Increased recommendation through previous workshop partners</li> </ul>

## Web/Newsletter Team



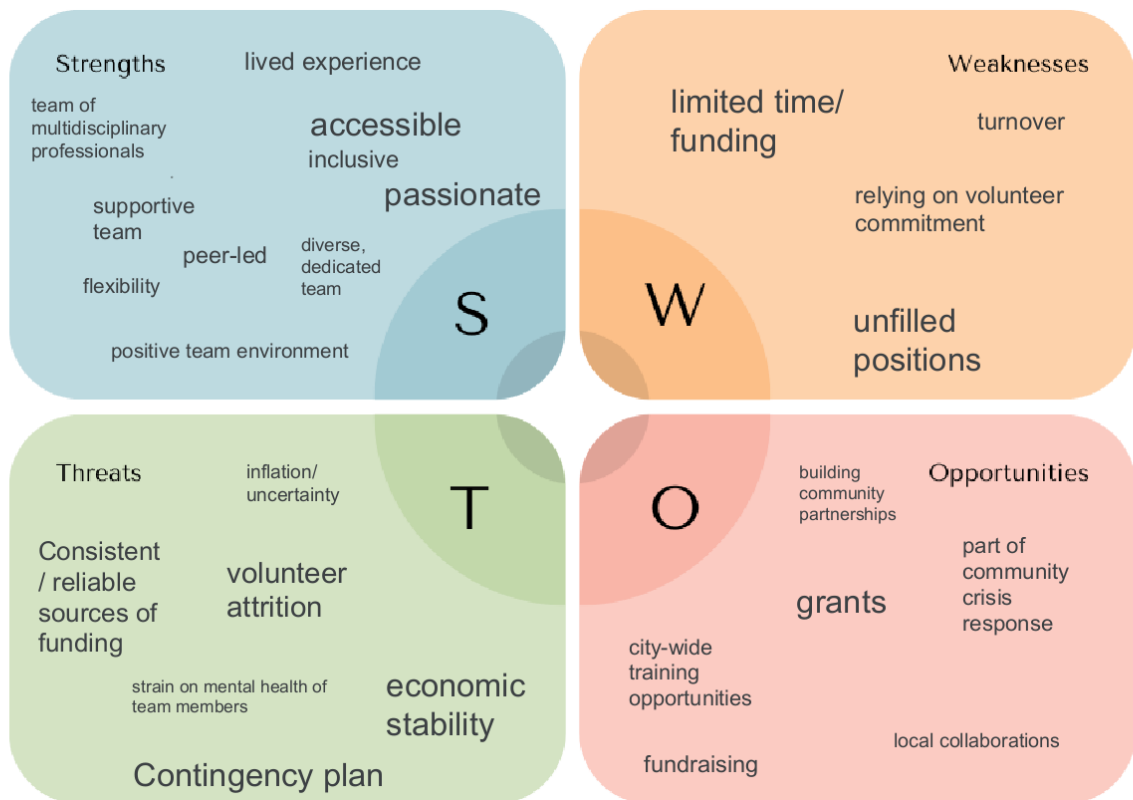
	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
<b>Focus Area #1</b>	Promote newsletter subscription through social media posts and website pop-up windows	Diversify content on newsletter to reach people of varying interests	Reaching out to related local organizations to help promote newsletter	- # Newsletter subscribers
<b>Focus Area #2</b>	Inserting links to website in social media posts and newsletters	Ensuring SEO best practices are in place, and making sure desired content can always be easily found	Ensuring accessibility practices (such as for people who are hearing- or vision-impaired)	- Increase in website traffic - # of links clicked
<b>Focus Area #3</b>	Researching focus groups that we can provide resources for	Creating / curating information and resources for each target group	Organize and present information and resources to be easily accessed by those in need	- Representation of all demographics in content - Accessible content with easy links to additional info

## Social Media Team



	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Key Indicators
<b>Focus Area #1</b>	Understand current assets and propose improvements	Develop highlights/account pages with funnel in mind	Improve and change account page as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile viewed</li> <li>- Profile clicks</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #2</b>	Basic research into what funnels can be created	Develop avenues to direct people to funnels	Improve and change funnels as necessary for optimal use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic in</li> <li>- Traffic out</li> <li>- Pages viewed</li> </ul>
<b>Focus Area #3</b>	Work with current team to determine a sustainable posting schedule	Explore different posting mediums for engagement and reach effectiveness	Move forward with the kinds of content that drive engagement and conversions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly reach of accounts</li> <li>- Number of posts per month</li> <li>- Kinds of posts posted</li> </ul>

## Appendix II: Internal Analysis - S.W.O.T.



## Appendix III: Impact Evaluation

At the MHS, we are constantly monitoring and evaluating all of our initiatives. Our four objectives are outlined in our action plan. It is important that we monitor and evaluate each process so that we can measure the impact we have made in our community and adjust our efforts accordingly to have the maximum output for the efforts of our volunteers.

## Appendix IV: Plan Communication

All members of the MHS must be familiar with this plan and must clearly understand its contents. The strategic plan will be directly communicated to all team members and will be available to access this document online through the Shared Google Drive. It is also important to us to be open and transparent with all aspects of our organization, including communicating this plan to the public. For this reason, the MHS will post highlights of our strategy on our website and the entire plan will be available to community members upon request.

## Appendix V: Acknowledgements

Thank you to our Board of Directors and Team Managers for their contributions to our strategy. A special shout-out to **Jess** for her help reviewing and finalizing this plan.

Ilia Fernandez - CEO

Emma Waldock - President

Tereza Belanger - Vice-President

Nancy Huo - Secretary

Kal Zubair - Director of Finance/CFO

Jess Kengatharan - Director of Fundraising

Jas Bhela - Director of Education

Brooke MacLeod - Director of Resources

Lindsay Tannahill - Director of Development

Carina Chan - Manager of Web/Newsletter

Shawn Chand - Manager of Resources

Frederick DeNisco - Manager of Social Media

Chris Bell - Lead App Developer



