



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Niagara  
*Mental health for all*

## **CMHA NIAGARA BRANCH**



**LEADING THE WAY TO QUALITY CLIENT SERVICE**

**CMHA NIAGARA STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2017**

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## Message from Board Chair and Executive Director

We are very pleased to present our 6<sup>th</sup> strategic plan. Our commitment to Quality Client Service began with listening to the right people, both informing the strategic plan and continuing that process through to implementation. This year our Board has added two critical initiatives to inform the plan. The first initiative was to assure ourselves that we had sufficient input from the people we serve so that we were truly focused on our core business. The Board set a goal of 100 clients and we are pleased to say that goal was superseded. The Board's second initiative was to invest personal time in speaking to other Board members; a critical initiative in a time of increased collaboration. As a result Board members personally interviewed 11 agency Board members.

This year we improved our operational planning process with a deeper involvement of staff members .Our next phase will be to involve clients at the operations planning level. It is an **iterative** process and we are committed to continuous quality improvement. As we move forward within the four key areas of focus for 2014-2017, the Board acknowledges that we are in a turbulent environment requiring dramatic decisions. Financial pressures and health systems changes will continue to demand our continuous re-assessment and adjustment.

As an organization we work within a strategic planning process, not merely to predict the future or stay ahead of trends and practices. Ultimately, we plan, to create a better future for those we serve.

Sincerely,

Rashmi Biswas, President of the Board

George Kurzawa, Executive Director

Thank You

Our thanks to all who contributed to our future: our Board of Directors for their personal commitment to an evolving and meaningful plan, our Human Resources Manager who developed the investigative process and authored this document, Board members from allied Niagara service agencies who provided their reflections and opinions, our managers for their ability to listen and accept constructive criticism, our staff for their ideas and practical suggestions, and of course our clients who volunteered their personal experiences to inform this process.

## **1.0 Introduction**

CMHA Niagara Branch is a non-profit, charitable organization committed to promoting mental wellness and to improve the lives of people in its service area who have mental illness themselves or have experienced it within their families. CMHA Niagara Branch achieves its mission through a number of programs and services which are more fully identified in the Services section of this document.

CMHA Niagara Branch is committed to a recovery philosophy and practice which focuses on the potential for people with mental illness to lead full, productive and engaged lives in their communities. The Branch works in partnership with many other organizations in the service area who share in the commitment to supporting the broad determinants of health.

CMHA Niagara Branch has and continues to earn a reputation as a key provider of community-based mental health services in the Niagara Region for over four decades, culminating with an amalgamation of two earlier agencies in 2001 to form the current entity which is now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year of service.

Throughout this period the health care sector in Ontario has continued to undergo significant change and challenge. The Niagara Branch has been diligent and timely with its strategic planning and continues to explore opportunities and synergies to align the organization both externally and internally with emerging needs and service imperatives. This attention to planning will reinforce its 2012 Accreditation Canada award to CMHA Niagara: Accredited With Exemplary Standing.

The 2014 Strategic Business Plan represents a summary of the Branch's proposed responses to the ongoing changes in the Ontario health care sector as well as the economic challenges being faced by all levels of government and society as a whole.

## **2.0 Strategic Planning Defined**

### **What is Strategic Planning?**

Strategic planning is essentially the process of proactively addressing where the organization is going and how it intends to get there. One hallmark of a well-managed organization is its ability to anticipate the future. Its purpose is to increase the likelihood that the organization will accomplish its purpose and make effective use of its resources. There is a sequential process, which typically includes creating a vision for where the organization should be in the future, analyzing internal and external conditions, determining where we are today, and then developing operational plans for closing the gap over time.

The intended outcome is to make the dream a reality and the process of planning forces the Branch to realistically figure out how it can do so.

### **What is a Strategic Plan?**

The strategic plan defines, in broad terms, how the organization will achieve the vision.

This vision is held against the current reality of where we sit today based upon strategic planning considerations. Operational goals and priorities are established, implemented, and shared with others. The plan is reviewed annually, measured and updated. In other words, all of the strategic planning activities are about operations and are dependent upon, and directed by, the vision.

## **3.0 Background / Executive Summary**

All residents of the Niagara Region desire a good life shared with family and friends. Good mental health is the cornerstone to build and maintain a good life. Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. Yet we know that one in five residents experiences mental health problems at least once in their lifetime (World Health Organization). This means that every Niagara resident will be affected by poor mental health at a personal level or as a family member, friend, neighbour or colleague. It is ironic that at a time when we are experiencing the highest ever standard of living, including advances in health care, that we are also reporting increasing levels of unhappiness and psychological distress. The mental health of a community is reflected in the strength of its community spirit, its families, economic development, access to work and recreation, housing and education. Ultimately, the mental health of our Niagara citizens is everyone's concern. Both national and international studies have predicted that depression will become the second largest cause of global burden of disease within the next twenty years.

CMHA Niagara Branch is under increasing pressure as demand for services continues to grow as a result of increasing prevalence of mental health problems and mental health illness, and increasing awareness and willingness to seek treatment. The following represents a sampling of statistics:

- It has been estimated that approximately 8% of the working population in Ontario has a diagnosable mental disorder (Dewa & Lin)
- It is projected that by 2030, major depressive disorder will be the number one leading cause of disease burden in the World (World Health Organization, 2008)
- It is also projected that by 2020 major depressive disorder will be the number two condition just behind ischemic heart disease (Mather & Loncar)
- Depression is the third most disabling condition below hearing loss and conditions requiring corrective lenses (World Health Organization, 2008)
- Considering work-related disability claims, it has been estimated that short term and long term mental disorder claims account for about one third of all claims. Each episode of mental disorder claim averaged about 65 days compared to 11 days for a respiratory related disability episode. Mental disorder disability claims were also

the most expensive type of claim, costing approximately \$18,000 per claim compared to an average disability claim of about \$9,000 (Dewa et al., 2010)

- Mental illness related disability claims are the fastest growing category of disability in Canada. In 2008/09, 26.8% of persons enrolled in the Canada Pension Plan Disability program had a mental illness (Mental Health Commission of Canada)
- Mental health problems and illnesses are the leading cause of productivity loss in Canada. It is estimated that 35 million work days are lost each year due to mental health problems and illnesses, and 20% of all sick leaves are due to mental health problems and illnesses.

Additionally, the *Open Minds, Healthy Minds Strategy* put forward by the Ontario Government in 2011 identifies four guiding goals:

1. Improve mental health and well-being for all Ontarians
2. Create healthy, resilient, inclusive communities
3. Identify mental health and addictions problems early and intervene
4. Provide timely, high quality, integrated, person-centered health and other human services

Within the context of an evolving health system, CMHA Niagara undertook a comprehensive strategic planning exercise. Planning was guided by a review of the Mission/Vision/Values, a review of quantitative data, and a current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats assessment. The process was led by conducting a transparent and inclusive process with meaningful engagement and effective communication. The confirmation of the Vision Statement sets the direction moving forward. The environment in which we propose to achieve the vision is framed by our values. Two overarching strategic directions further guide the Branch. These themes summarize at the highest level the directions/initiatives to which the Branch will devote time, energy and resources. Having stated that, the strategic plan is simply a plan. The successful execution of the Plan will require the leadership of the Board Committees, Management and the staff. The Board committees and the Executive Director will provide the overall oversight and direction with respect to the development and completion of the strategic plan document.

#### **4.0 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Since amalgamation in 2001, CMHA Niagara Branch has commissioned five separate strategic plans. Three of these projects were developed using external consultants, the fourth and current plan through internal resources.

To facilitate the planning process as a Board mandate, a strategic planning steering committee was struck to provide oversight and guidance with this project as per the following terms of reference:

- Review the strategic process to provide guidance, commentary and to assist in developing a Board Planning Day that was conducted on December 2, 2013
- Reviewing final draft proposals in terms of editing and content for the final report document
- Developing a communication strategy to provide recommendations on communicating the report with staff, community and funders

The key areas of focus for the 2014-2017 plan were identified by the steering committee as:

1. The plan must demonstrate client centric processes, motivators and behaviours
2. Values and ethics are to be intrinsic to all decisions and actions
3. Ongoing leadership development and accountability for managers to have consistency in execution of goals with staff
4. Continue to explore, invite and signal willingness to offer service integrations within the sector

In terms of actual activities that were undertaken to develop input for the off site workshop in December, a comprehensive environmental scan (i.e. an analysis and evaluation of internal conditions and external data and factors that affect the Branch) spanning the period from September 2013 to November 2013 which included the following:

- At an all Branch meeting, all staff attending were presented with an overview of the strategic planning process (as presented earlier to the Board of Directors)
- Team leaders for each program and support team were requested to distribute the SWOT template and key issues to each team member to complete for their team as well as for the Branch
- Regularly scheduled team meetings with each team in September and October included a facilitated session with either the HR

- Manager or the HR Coordinator to gather input to inform the plan as per the SWOT format
- Focus groups meetings were conducted separately with Volunteers and CMHA Niagara clients which gathered structured input from over 100 individuals
  - Structured questioning to inform the plan was also gathered using a web based survey program accessed from a link on CMHA Niagara's homepage as well as hard copy questionnaires at each CMHA Niagara site for deposit into a polling box.
  - CMHA Board members conducted telephone interviews with Board members of other Mental Health agencies in the Region using a set of scripted questions to ascertain level of awareness of CMHA Niagara and its services which in turn was collated and summarize to further inform the plan

The information gathered from these varied sources was summarized on a SWOT template and categorized by staff input and by client input.

As noted earlier, a strategic planning workshop was conducted on the morning of December 2, 2013 attended by Management, Board members and selected staff in order to debrief the SWOT data and to arrive at up to five strategic objectives to drive the plan.

## **5.0 CMHA NIAGARA BRANCH VISION, MISSION AND VALUES**

VISION: CMHA, Niagara is a catalyst for an innovative, inclusive and recovery-based community.

MISSION: CMHA, Niagara furthers its vision by serving individuals holistically to develop and strengthen their place in the community.

**HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS = STRONG COMMUNITIES**

**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES = STRONG INDIVIDUALS**

## BACKGROUND

Vision Statement: Through the input of staff and volunteers, it was expressed that the Vision statement that existed from the previous planning process still stood strong in encompassing recovery (our main goal), inclusion, community (capturing individuals, their families and their communities), and the message that we wish to be known for leadership, innovation and being a driving force for best practices in our community (the catalyst).

Mission Statement: The Mission statement was also felt to serve its purpose from the earlier planning process. The intent was and continues to be to capture the concept of serving the entire spectrum of an individual's needs: recovery, shelter, advocacy, education, job placement and community support, thus the term holistic. The second goal was and is to emphasize that the individual and his/her community are inseparable, and need to be seen as completely interrelated. We also mindfully chose to avoid the word *services* as being too inflexible and program oriented. We chose instead *serving* as a preferable description of how we want to relate to our clients and our community.

## CMHA NIAGARA CORE VALUES

## BACKGROUND

The Branch's Core Values formed a key part of the strategic review as they form the connective tissue to drive the actions and behaviour that support the vision and mission. Accordingly, just as with the Vision and Mission statements, it was critical to gather staff feedback to determine their re-affirmation or need to change. The consensus of expression was they remain unchanged.

### Respect

We show respect for those who seek our service, co-workers, community partners and ourselves by being open to different opinions, beliefs and values.

### Integrity

We have congruence between what we do and what we say, such that our actions and decisions are sincere, transparent, consistent and reflective of our values and policies.

### Teamwork

We are accountable for our common goal of enhanced well being and contribution to the mission, vision and strategic goals of the Branch.

### Service

We work in a "culture of service" with the ten fundamental components of recovery: self-directed, individualized/person centered, empowered, holistic, non-linear, strengths based, peer supported, respected, responsible and hopeful.

### Competency

We demonstrate service at the highest professional level, through our attitude and ongoing skills attainment.

## **6.0 SERVICES**

CMHA Niagara is a multi-funded, multi-service adult mental health agency serving the Niagara Region. CMHA Niagara offers a broad range of therapeutically oriented services to adults with mental illness within a coordinated system of mental health and addiction providers.

## **INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

### **Referral**

Individuals can call a central number (905-641-5222) for information about our CMHA Niagara programs and referral into case management and counselling programs.

### **Public Education**

Seminars and displays are provided with information to increase understanding and acceptance of people with mental health issues.

### **Mental Health First Aid**

This two day course provides the knowledge and skills needed for a lay person to provide “mental health first aid” until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis is resolved. (Fee based)

### **Mental Health Works**

Award-winning training that provides clear solutions for employers regarding accommodation in the workplace. (Fee based)

### **Concurrent Disorders**

Mental Health and Addictions are closely related. Our training lays a foundation of understanding regarding the integrated support and treatment of these issues. (Fee based)

## **IMMEDIATE and CRISIS SERVICES**

## **Mental Health Urgent Support Services**

Mental Health Counsellors assist with problem solving, goal setting, linking to community supports and bridging to longer term resources. Self referrals are accepted. No appointments are necessary. Hours of operation are Monday – Friday 11:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

### **Walk-In Counselling**

This is a therapeutic service that enables individuals to see CMHA counsellors at their moment of need.

The intention is to create opportunities for immediate problem solving and therapeutic conversation, as well as connectedness to other CMHA services if required.

Hours are between 12:30 and 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays.

### **Crisis Support Beds**

Short term accommodation of 5 to 7 days for non-medical crisis resolution is provided. The service is always open.

### **Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST)**

Provides services to people in the Niagara Region who are in crisis and have a mental health concern. Mental Health Professionals work as a team in a unique partnership with police officers who are specially trained in mental health. Information is collected over the phone by a qualified health professional. Ongoing telephone support and/or referral to appropriate follow up services may be recommended to prevent further crisis. COAST is not a rapid-response service. Life threatening emergencies should be managed through calling 911.

### **Mental Health and Addiction Access Line**

This is a 24 hour 7 day a week service that provides access for Niagara adult citizens who wish to access mental health and/or addictions services. Sixteen Niagara agencies serving this population are connected through the access line. Service connections are immediate during office hours or within 24 to 48 hours at other times.

Both of the above programs are operated by the Distress Centre as community initiatives, funded through CMHA Niagara.

## **Community Support Services**

### **Therapeutic Support in the Community**

Individuals are provided with information and therapeutic support to enhance their recovery and their community participation and integration. The IMR (Illness Management and Recovery) curriculum is used extensively as a step by step goal setting process for individuals to acquire mastery over their psychiatric illness and/or concurrent disorder (mental illness and substance abuse). Dialectical Behaviour Therapy is utilized to support individuals with challenging behaviours through individual and group work. Other therapies are utilized as needed.

Counsellors provide individual support in office and at persons homes. Housing supports are included for many, including the homeless. Subsidized and non-subsidized apartments and two group living homes are provided. Services are offered in various communities throughout Niagara.

## **JUSTICE SERVICES**

### **Court Support**

Individuals charged with minor offences are supported throughout the court system and including their transition back into the community.  
Location: St. Catharines Court House

### **Detention Centre**

Case workers provide counselling and support during incarceration and upon their release.

## **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

## **Renewed Employment Access Link (R.E.A.L. Work)**

Individuals in recovery from mental health issues are offered a full range of employment supports beginning with pre-employment life skill instruction and counselling, through work aptitude and skill assessment, to employment search and maintenance.

Strong partnering with community resource sites and collaboration with their skilled staff bring enhanced resources to this program. Locations: St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Port Colborne, Fort Erie, Beamsville.

## **VOLUNTEER SERVICES**

### **Partnering Up**

Volunteers support a selected partner to integrate into the community through leisure, social and recreational activities.

### **Warm Line**

Trained volunteers offer social interaction and friendship by telephone to those who are socially isolated, have limited support or have difficulty reaching out.

### **Speakers Bureau**

Trained volunteers share their personal stories to advocate for and provide awareness of mental health issues.

### **Other**

Volunteers also participate on our Board of Directors, committees, bingo fundraising, health displays and other events. All volunteers receive training and support.

## **COUNSELLING SERVICES**

## **Short term Counselling /Groups**

Individuals with emotional difficulties receive individual counselling. Depression, Separation/Divorce and Anxiety Support groups are offered at various times throughout the year. (Fee based)

## **Resource Centres**

Three centres in Niagara provide mental health counselling, information and access to the various programs of CMHA, Niagara. Locations: Niagara Falls and Fort Erie.

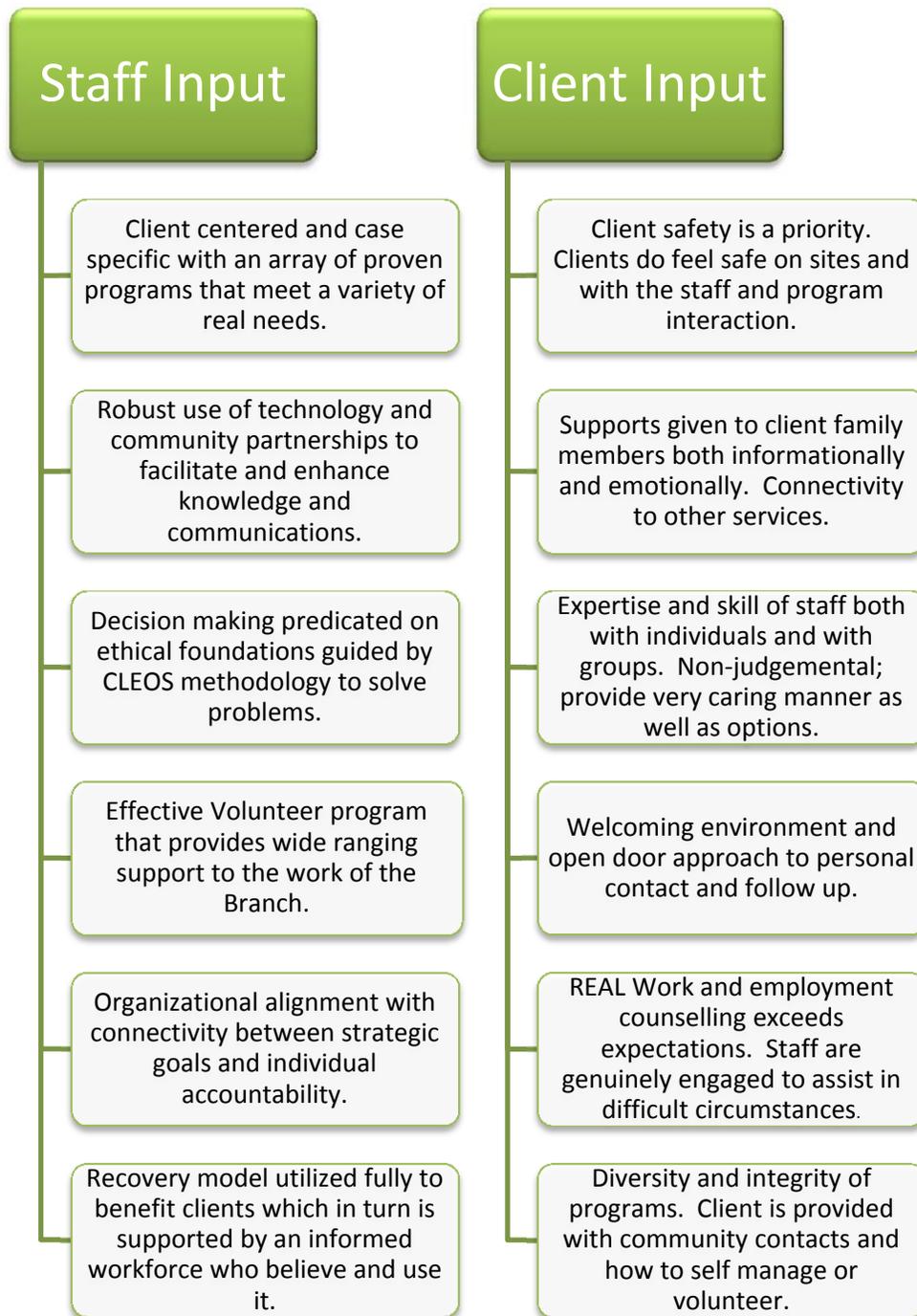
## **OUR FUNDERS**

- Ontario Ministry of Colleges, Universities and Training
- Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- HNHB (Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Health Integration Network)
- The United Way of St. Catharines and District
- The United Way of Niagara Falls and Greater Fort Erie
- Bingo – Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and St. Catharines
- Employment Ontario
- Private and Corporate Donations

## 6.0 SUMMARY OF SWOT DATA

The following represents a summary of Strength themes as shown derived from staff input and also from client feedback.

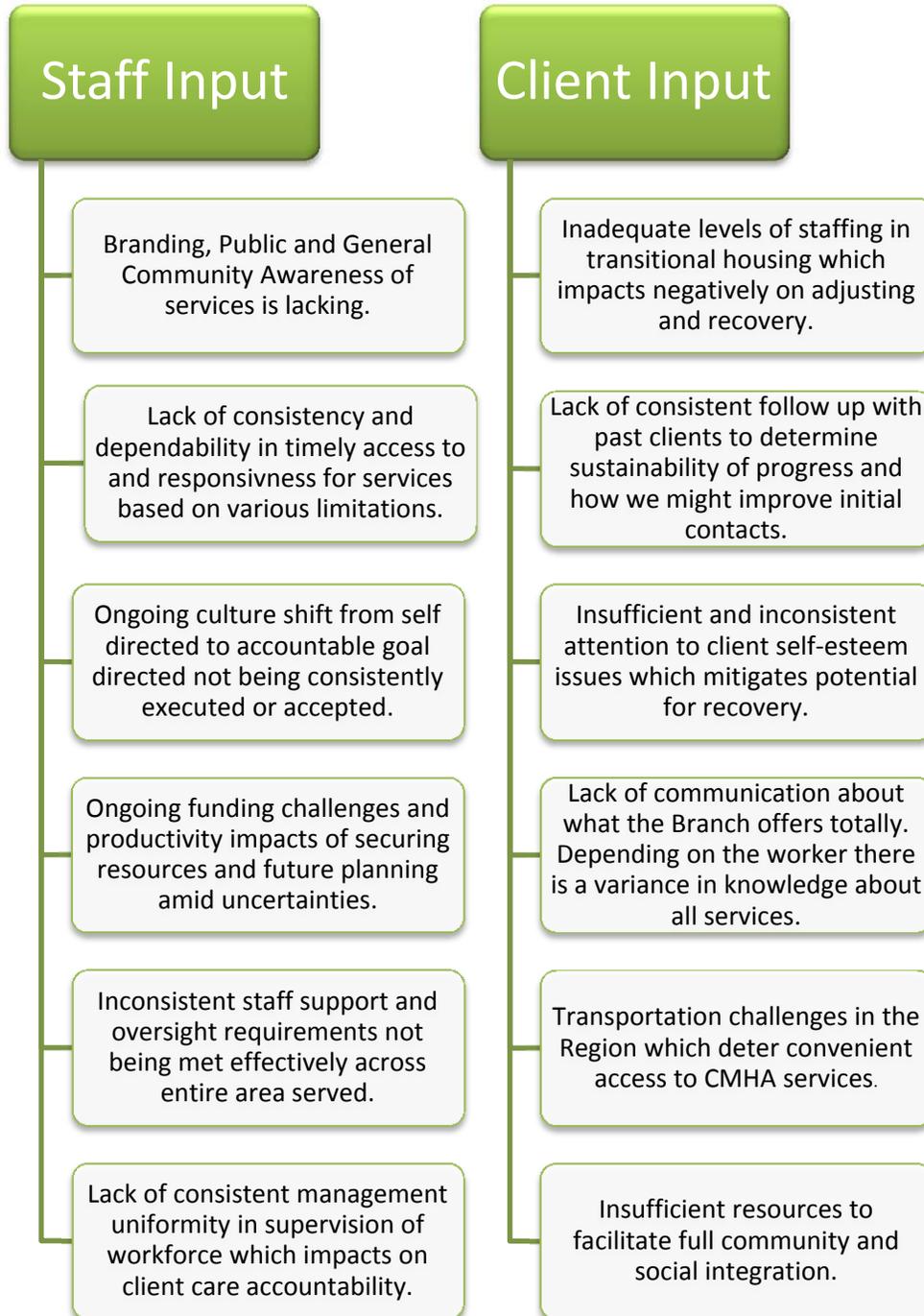
### STRENGTHS



## SUMMARY OF SWOT DATA (cont'd)

The following represents a summary of weakness themes as derived from staff input and also from client feedback.

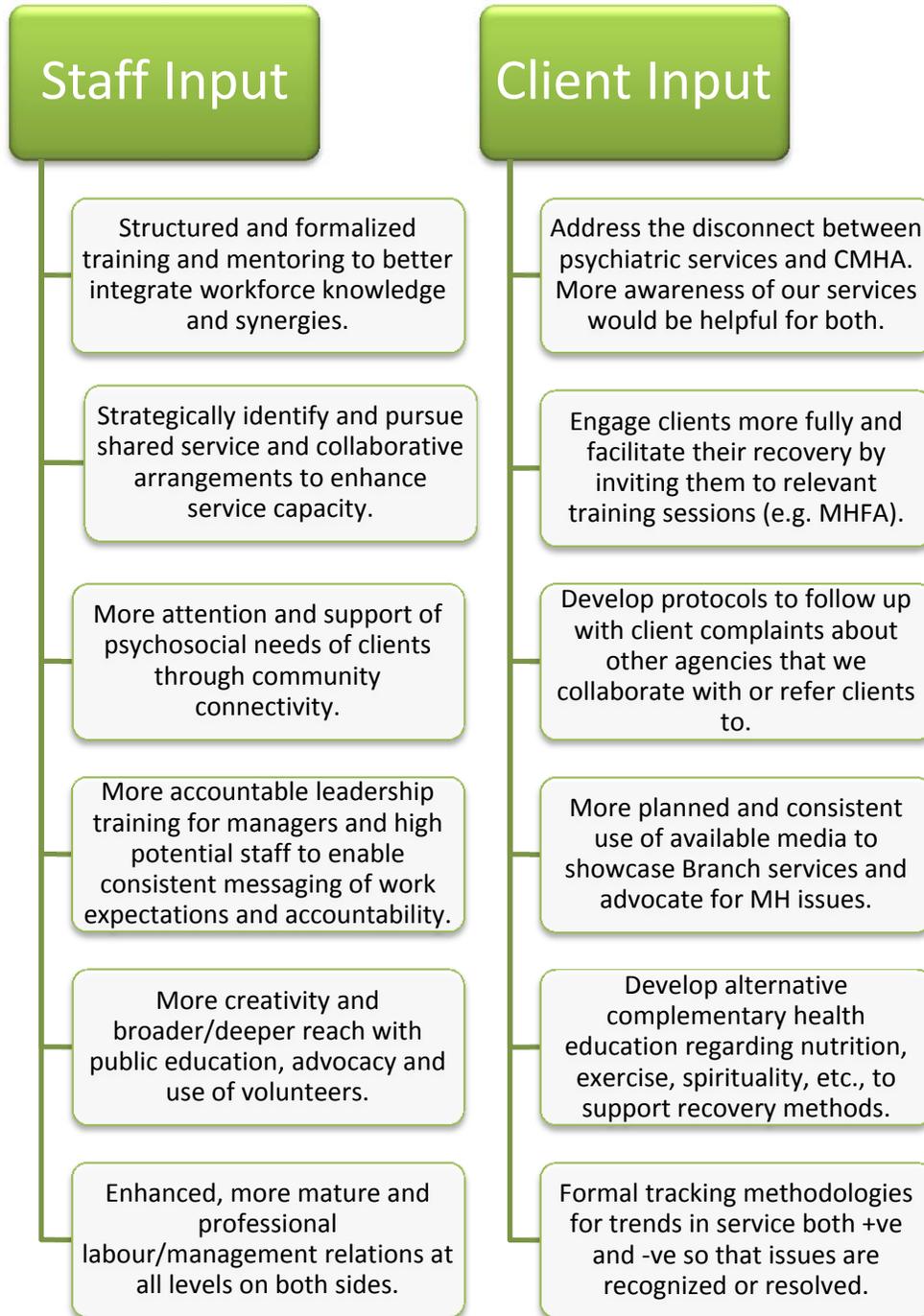
### WEAKNESSES



## SUMMARY OF SWOT DATA (cont'd)

The following represents a summary of the Opportunities themes as derived from staff input and also client feedback.

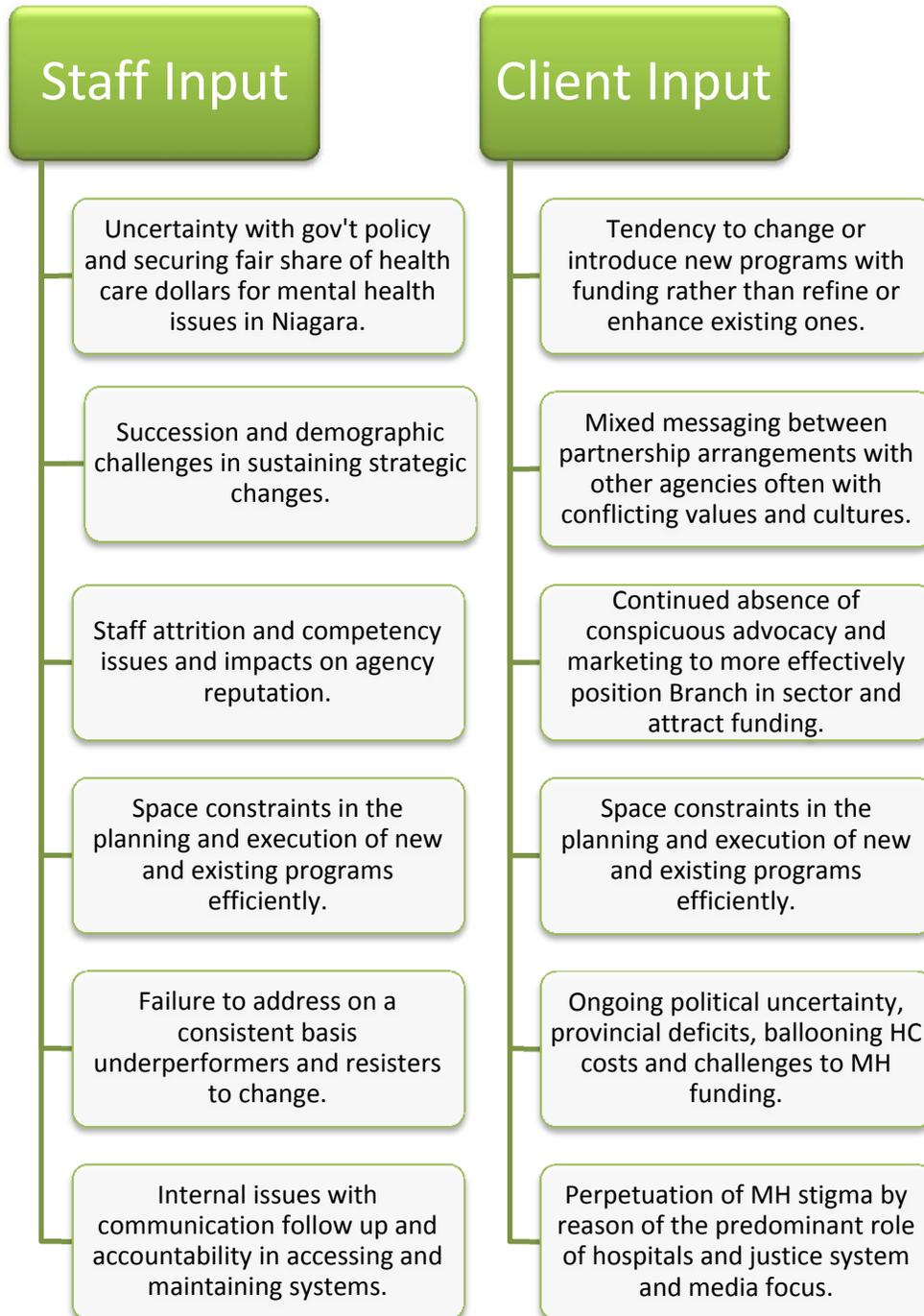
### OPPORTUNITIES



## SUMMARY OF SWOT DATA (cont'd)

The following represents a summary of Threats themes as derived from staff input and also client feedback.

### THREATS



# Board to Board Strategic Feedback

## STRENGTH

Consensus from those polled affirmed that CMHA Niagara is a credible leader in the sector.

## WEAKNESS

External feedback suggests that more needs to be done in creating a fuller understanding of CMHA Niagara services in our region.

## OPPORTUNITY

Opportunities include exploring ways and means of bringing leaders together to maximize capacity through creative rationalization and amalgamation of services and expertise.

## THREAT

Primary threats are those associated with funding challenges and lack of more familiarity between agencies which impedes respect and operating knowledge of each other.

## **9.0 Organizational Strategic Goals 2014-2017**

### **CMHA NIAGARA STRATEGIC STATEMENT**

CMHA NIAGARA will demonstrate its commitment to continuous quality improvement and risk management in client service and management practice.

#### 1. Client Service

1. Evaluate and identify best practice in our programs and delivery system
2. Increase the participation of clients throughout the Branch
3. Improve transitions for clients between internal/external services and community
4. Increase public information and advocacy
5. Enhance the use of volunteers for client service

#### 2. Management Practice

1. Align key issues and concerns with standard expectations in performance
2. Identify and develop future requirements regarding sustainability and continued best practice
3. Align service delivery and explore synergies that enhance client service