



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
British Columbia
Mental health for all

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NEWS RELEASE

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Conquering the January Blues: Stories from Bounce Back

Today is Blue Monday (the third Monday of January) which many see as the most depressing day of the year. Fortunately CMHA delivers hope over the phone to British Columbians who want to feel better and conquer depression.

Vancouver, BC – It had been a difficult few months for Melissa. She was laid off from her job and shortly after, her beloved dog passed away. The combination of disappointment and grief left her depressed and very anxious. She tried counselling, she was prescribed medication, and she tried different forms of alternative therapies to feel better. None of these seemed to be what she was looking for.

For those of us already struggling to cope with life's many challenges, January brings us further stress. With its cold weather and short days, the post-holiday blues are also characterized by debt and failed resolutions. It is no question that this can be a depressing time of year. (In fact, today, Blue Monday, is considered by many to be the most depressing day of the year.) Many of us don't know where to turn for help and have few resources to pay for counselling.

For Melissa and others feeling down in the dumps, help can be just a phone call away. The Bounce Back program is a free, physician-referred program aimed at helping BC adults feel better, whether they have depression or anxiety, or are simply feeling low. It combines self-help workbooks based on principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) with telephone-based coaching delivered by trained CMHA staff. As the participants learn practical skills to cope with everyday situations, coaches are available to support and motivate them.

Janet, a coach from Vancouver Island said, "There are so many tips, tools, and reminders that can be put to use in daily life whether you're struggling or not."

Melissa signed up for the Bounce Back program offered by the CMHA at her doctor's recommendation. Fond of reading and writing, Melissa found it very helpful to be able to put her thoughts on paper and hear the supportive, kind voice of her coach over the phone. She worked through several modules and felt much better by the end of the program.

One man even saved his marriage. Bill was in his late 40s when his wife asked him leave. Living all alone, Bill was depressed and angry. His doctor referred him to Bounce Back. After completing the program, he showed such dramatic changes that his wife wanted to give their marriage another try.

"It's amazing to hear their relief over the phone," said Erica, a program staff in Vancouver. "People find it refreshing that they are in charge of their health and can make changes right away." Another coach echoed that at the end of the program, "You can hear the light in the participant's voice." The program works so well that one of the referring physicians sent his own child to the program.

"Before, I was floundering. Now I know what to do. I was able to shift my mind," said Margaret, an 83-year-old who enrolled in Bounce Back to get back her optimistic self.

It's now been months since Melissa completed Bounce Back. Unfortunately she was laid off from yet another job, but this time, instead of feeling lost, she stayed calm and marched on. She has a few interviews lined up and is focusing on boosting her own confidence.

“Change is possible. Effort, time, and a little coaching support can make a world of difference in a person’s quality of life,” said Coach Janet.

Margaret agrees: “I was lost there for a bit, but now I have definite help. I understand now that it’s quite common to feel low. We have to find the good things which are left in life.”

To learn more about Bounce Back™: Reclaim Your Health, talk to your doctor or visit our website at www.bouncebackbc.ca.

About the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division

Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division (CMHA) is part of one of Canada's most established national mental health charities. Our vision is mentally healthy people in a healthy society. As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA helps people access the community resources they need to build resilience and support recovery from mental illness or addiction. We do this by building capacity, influencing policy, providing services and developing resources. Each year, CMHA BC together with a network of 17 BC branches provides services and supports to over 120,000 British Columbians. Together we promote mental health for all and support the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness or addiction. To learn more visit www.cmha.bc.ca.

To schedule interviews with Bounce Back referring doctors, participants and coaches, contact:

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