

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CANADIAN ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH HONOURS 2025
CHAMPIONS OF MENTAL HEALTH DURING MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK**

October 6, 2025 (Ottawa, ON) – Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) will honour seven outstanding Canadians at the annual Champions of Mental Health Awards, taking place at the Sir John A. Macdonald Building in Ottawa. The ceremony coincides with Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 5 – 11, 2025), and its theme: *“Mental Health and Substance Use Health: A Right, Not a Privilege.”*

The 2025 Champions of Mental Health are:

- **The Sharon Johnston Champion of Mental Health Award for Youth** – [Back2Basickz Youth Support Services \(Amanda Coombs, CEO\)](#)
- **Media** – [Joanna Lavoie, Bilingual Multimedia Journalist](#)
- **Workplace Mental Health** – [Michael Perry, RPN, President, UNA Local 183, Founder, UNA Mental Health Workers Caucus](#)
- **Community Organization** – [The Do More Agriculture Foundation \(Merle Massie, Executive Director\)](#)
- **Community Individual** – [Susan Hyde, Executive Director, Schizophrenia Society of Newfoundland and Labrador](#)
- **Parliamentarian** – [Senator Patrick Brazeau, Canadian Senator from Repentigny, Quebec](#)
- **Innovation (Researcher or Clinician)** – [Dr. Shu-Ping Chen, Associate Professor, University of Alberta](#)

“Honouring this year’s Champions during Mental Illness Awareness Week reminds us that access to mental health and substance use health care is a right. Their leadership shows the progress that’s possible when advocacy and action come together,” said Anthony Esposti, CAMIMH Co-Chair. “These champions remind us that Canada’s mental health system must continue to evolve to meet the needs of all Canadians.”

“The Champions are changing the conversation across Canada. Their efforts demonstrate that mental health and substance use health must be treated with the same urgency and importance as physical health. Each of their stories reflects the collective responsibility we all share in building a system that truly support Canadians.

By celebrating these Champions, CAMIMH shines a light on the progress being made and the urgent work still required to ensure mental health and substance use health are prioritized as fundamental rights in Canada.

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About CAMIMH:

Founded in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of national organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing people living with mental illness and substance use health, their families, and caregivers. CAMIMH’s mandate is to

CAMIMH Members

**Canadian Association of
Occupational Therapists**

**Canadian Association of
Social Workers**

**Canadian Counselling and
Psychotherapy Association**

**Canadian Federation of
Mental Health Nurses**

**Canadian Medical
Association, Office of Public
Health**

**Canadian Mental Health
Association**

**Canadian Psychiatric
Association**

**Canadian Psychological
Association**

**Community Addictions Peer
Support Association**

**Medical Psychotherapy
Associations of Canada**

**National Initiative for Eating
Disorders**

**National Network for Mental
Health**

**Psychosocial Rehabilitation
Canada**

**Schizophrenia Society of
Canada**

ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so all Canadians can access appropriate care and support.

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