

# Nova Scotia

## organizations and programs

The **Nova Scotia Health Authority** provides health services to Nova Scotians and some specialized services to other Maritimers and Atlantic Canadians. Personnel from the province's forensic system note that individuals transitioning from correctional settings to the community are referred to their local mental health and addiction services.

**Community Mental Health and Addictions**, provided by Nova Scotia Health, works with primary and community partners to offer mental health and substance use services that are time-limited and evidence-based. These services are delivered by a team of workers and clinicians, including registered nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, recreation therapists, and psychiatrists. Services are matched to individual needs and may include

- mental health and addiction screening and assessment
- group and individual therapeutic interventions
- medication prescribing or consultation
- recovery treatment or care planning
- rehabilitation and monitoring services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

For more community mental health and substance use resources, see [mha.nshealth.ca/en](https://mha.nshealth.ca/en).



### Service navigation and crisis lines

Nova Scotia's **Mental Health Crisis Line** is available 24/7.

Call: [1-888-429-8167](tel:1-888-429-8167) (toll-free)

**Mental Health and Addictions Intake** can be reached Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Call: [1-855-922-1122](tel:1-855-922-1122)

### Other services

**Correctional Services** provides programs to people who are still under community supervision in the province.

For examples, see [novascotia.ca/just/Corrections/offender\\_programs.asp](https://novascotia.ca/just/Corrections/offender_programs.asp) and [halfwayhouses.ca/en/region/ahha/facility/lavers\\_house/](https://halfwayhouses.ca/en/region/ahha/facility/lavers_house/)

# Stepping Stone

<b>Agency/organization/provider name:</b> Stepping Stone		<b>Province/territory where located:</b> Nova Scotia	
<b>Geographic reach or focus of program:</b> Local/municipal		<b>Language of services:</b> English	
<b>Contact information:</b> Phone: 902-420-0103 Email: N/A (can send queries via website)		<b>Specific services available for:*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Women</li> <li><input checked="" type="radio"/> Other (current and former sex workers, people likely to enter the sex trade, and trafficked persons)</li> </ul>	
<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://steppingstonens.ca">steppingstonens.ca</a>			
<b>Main address:</b> 2350 Hunter Street, Halifax, NS B3K 4V6			
<b>Single or multi-site:</b> Single			
<b>Specific focus on criminal justice-involved populations:</b> No		<b>Referral required:</b> No	
<b>Costs associated:</b> No		<b>Supporting evidence/evaluation available online:</b> None found	
<b>Program description and objectives:</b> Stepping Stone advocates for equal access to services such as health care, as well as for human rights and dignity. The program uses a harm reduction model, aiming to make sex work as safe and as positive as possible for individuals involved in the trade.		<b>Span of services and supports:</b> The Personal and Professional Development with Sex Workers in Prison Program offers workshops to sex workers in prison, meeting the need for services geared toward the unique needs of sex workers. Through the same program, staff also work with sex workers to develop release plans. Recognizing that housing is one of the largest barriers facing sex workers, these plans include a specific focus on securing housing so individuals know where they are going upon release.  Among other services and supports, Stepping Stones also offers community drop-in services (e.g., peer support and crisis intervention, addiction referrals, court support, housing support) and street outreach.	

\*

This information is based on program information available online. Not all organizations indicate specific populations, but may still offer programs or services tailored to particular population groups.

## Additional notes:

Stepping Stone's Tipping the Scales Program supports former and current sex workers who are currently in contact with the criminal justice system. A court support and corrections worker can meet with service users at the correctional centre, attend court and probation meetings, and more, advocating for service users throughout their contact with the justice system.

## Propose a new resource to be included in this inventory

This inventory represents mental health and substance use services and supports identified during a relatively short period of time (September 2020 to February 2021). One notable gap is a lack of programs and services specific to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. As such, this inventory is by no means an exhaustive list of services and supports. The MHCC may update this inventory as other resources are identified that address gaps.

Please submit a program, service or resource that is not included in this first edition of the inventory. All submissions will be reviewed for inclusion in the next edition of the inventory.

[Click here to propose a program to be included in the inventory.](#)

The inventory includes:

- community-based mental health and substance use services and supports specific to people who are transitioning away from the criminal justice system.

The inventory does not include:

- mental health and substance use programs embedded in correctional institutions or therapeutic residences run by the Correctional Service of Canada (but some programs are included that are available only to people who are or have been recently incarcerated)
- mental health and wellness courts
- drug treatment courts
- forensic mental health hospital settings (those designed primarily for people found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder or unfit to stand trial).



## Appendix: Glossary of terms

**Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)** is an international self-support network for individuals seeking a sobriety approach to alcohol-related problems.

**Assertive community treatment (ACT)** is a model of care designed to improve community-based care for people living with a serious mental illness or associated complexities such as difficulty with following treatment.

**Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)** is a highly structured and time-limited form of psychotherapy focused on addressing challenging thoughts and behaviours.

**Concurrent disorders** refers to co-occurring problems or illnesses, particularly co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns.

**Continuity of care** refers to the quality of health and social service care that individuals receive over time.

**Critical time intervention (CTI)** is an intervention model designed to help individuals through critical transitional periods such as the transition to the community from correctional settings, shelters, and hospitals.

**Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT)** is a form of psychotherapy focused on building healthier ways to manage stress, mood, and relationships.

**Discharge or release planning** refers to the process of preparing individuals for their release from incarceration and community re-entry.

**Diversion** refers to processes and opportunities for redirecting people away from the criminal justice system.

The **federal correctional system** in Canada oversees people who have been convicted of criminal offences and sentenced to two years or more. The Correctional Service of Canada manages federal correctional institutions and supervises persons under conditional release in the community.

**Forensic assertive community treatment (FACT)** is a type of specialty mental health program for individuals living with one or more serious mental illnesses who are involved in the forensic care system.

The **forensic care system** provides service to individuals who have been involved in the criminal justice system while experiencing one or more serious mental illnesses. Typically in Canada, this system provides mental health care for persons who have been found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder and those deemed unfit to stand trial.

A **halfway house** is a type of setting designed for people who have been involved in the criminal justice system to assist with their community re-entry.

**Harm reduction** comprises an array of policies, services, and practices that aim to reduce the negative health and social impacts associated with substance use, drug policy, and drug laws.

**Health equity** is the principle that all people should have equal access to opportunities to achieve their highest health potential, independent of differences in social, economic, and demographic status.

**Mental health court** is a type of criminal law court for people with lived and living experience of mental illness or mental health concerns.

**Naloxone** is a medication used to counter the effects of opioid overdose.

**Narcotics Anonymous (NA)** is an international support network for people seeking recovery from use of drugs other than alcohol.

The **provincial/territorial correctional systems** in Canada are responsible for managing people who are on remand, are convicted and sentenced to less than two years, or are in immigration detention.

**Rapid-access addiction medicine (RAAM)** clinics offer quick access to care for people living with substance use concerns.

**Recidivism** refers to the tendency for people who have been previously involved with the criminal justice system to be re-exposed to the criminal justice system.

**Reintegration** refers to the transition away from criminal justice settings such as correctional facilities and back to the community.

**Transitional and supportive housing** includes temporary types of accommodation designed to help people move away from homelessness or precarious housing to permanent housing. Supportive housing includes affordable community housing combined with dedicated support from mental health and/or substance use program staff.

**Trauma-informed practice and policies** recognize the complexities of personal, family, and community experiences of trauma. They incorporate what is needed to prevent re-traumatization including acknowledgement of the contributing cultural and systemic forces and power dynamics such as colonialization, social exclusion of diverse people, and systemic racism. These policies facilitate journeys of mental health recovery through compassionate care, consumer choice, flexibility, and opportunities for self-mastery and resilience-building.