

Headstrong Summit coming to Pictou County this week

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Students in Pictou County are coming together to attend the Headstrong Summit to learn how to reduce stigma toward mental illness.

The summit takes place Thursday at the Pictou County Wellness Centre, with 120 students and staff from local schools participating in the day.

Bringing this summit to Pictou County has been a work in progress for the past year. Headstrong is the Mental Health Commission of Canada's youth anti-stigma initiative. With the support of the MHCC, bringing Headstrong to Pictou County has been a strong collaborative effort between many community partners, including

the Chignecto Central Regional School Board Celtic Family of Schools and SchoolsPlus Program, Nova Scotia Health Authority Mental Health and Addictions and Public Health Services, along with other supportive organizations in the community.

The Pictou County Headstrong Summit is one of the first in Nova Scotia. Headstrong Summits are starting to pop up across the country as a way to engage and inspire young people to take action to reduce stigma. At the summit, students will hear personal stories of hope and recovery from people who have lived experiences with mental health problems or mental illnesses, as well as learn about the damaging effects of stigma. Participants will also engage in activities and action planning to assist them in taking these messages back to their schools.

Speakers for the Pictou County Summit include Keely Wadden, Cape Breton, Dexter Nyuurnibe, Halifax and Sarah MacCullum of Pictou. Each brings a unique and inspirational story of what is it is like to live with a mental illness.

The summit was made possible by the generous financial contributions from the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia and the Aberdeen Health Foundation.

“We are so thankful to be recipients of a Mental Health Foundation Community Grant, which enabled us to bring this opportunity to Pictou County. This is a perfect illustration of work that can help change the way Nova Scotians think about mental illness,” said Ashlie Cormier of Mental Health and Addictions.

She offered special thanks to the Aberdeen Health Foundation, which she said generously assisted us on short notice to allow us to bring an additional speaker to the summit.

“It is through the generosity of donors, and hard work of these foundations, that our young people are being provided this opportunity,” she said. “We are forever grateful to be bringing this work to Pictou County.”

For more information on Headstrong, please visit:

<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/initiatives/11876/headstrong>

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