



hereto help

Mental health and substance use  
information you can trust

# beyond the blues

report 2024/25



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



University  
of Victoria

Canadian Institute for  
Substance Use Research



# beyond the blues

education & screening days

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funding provided by



**Provincial Health  
Services Authority**  
Province-wide solutions.  
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with additional support from the Ministry  
of Children and Family Development

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Ministry of Children & Family Development  
College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of BC  
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Vancouver Coastal Health Authority  
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**heretohelp**

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Beyond the Blues is a project of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information and part of its HeretoHelp brand. The BC Partners are six non-profit agencies that have come together to provide quality information to help people prevent and manage mental health and substance use problems.

For more about BC Partners and HeretoHelp, see [www.heretohelp.bc.ca/about-us](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/about-us)

## overview

Beyond the Blues is a campaign of free events led by community agencies across British Columbia which provide friendly and engaging education and resources on mental health and substance use each fall and winter. Many events also provide a chance for people to take a brief screening self-test and have a conversation with someone to talk about next steps. Screenings help participants to better understand their health and to connect to the right supports and resources in their community.



*"Wellness and mental health are among the most powerful learning strategies for students in post-secondary environments."*

*"Beyond the Blues gives me a focused time and amazing resources to bring awareness and help to my community."*

*"The resources allow us to engage with diverse communities (great way to generate dialogue/engage)!"*

## events

**30 Beyond the Blues** events were held this season across **20 communities** in British Columbia. Attendance at these events is estimated at roughly **1900 participants**.

Event locations include:

- New Westminster
- Coquitlam
- Trail
- Castlegar
- Nelson
- Cowichan Valley
- North Cowichan
- Princeton
- South Okanagan
- Osoyoos
- Keremeos
- Vancouver
- Williams Lake
- Nanaimo
- Hazelton
- Prince Rupert
- Smithers
- Quesnel
- Abbotsford
- Terrace



## screenings

Beyond the Blues screenings are a good way for participants to gauge how they are feeling. It opens the door to begin conversations with a clinician to debrief their scores and discuss next steps. Of the 30 BTB events held, 22 of them offered screening:

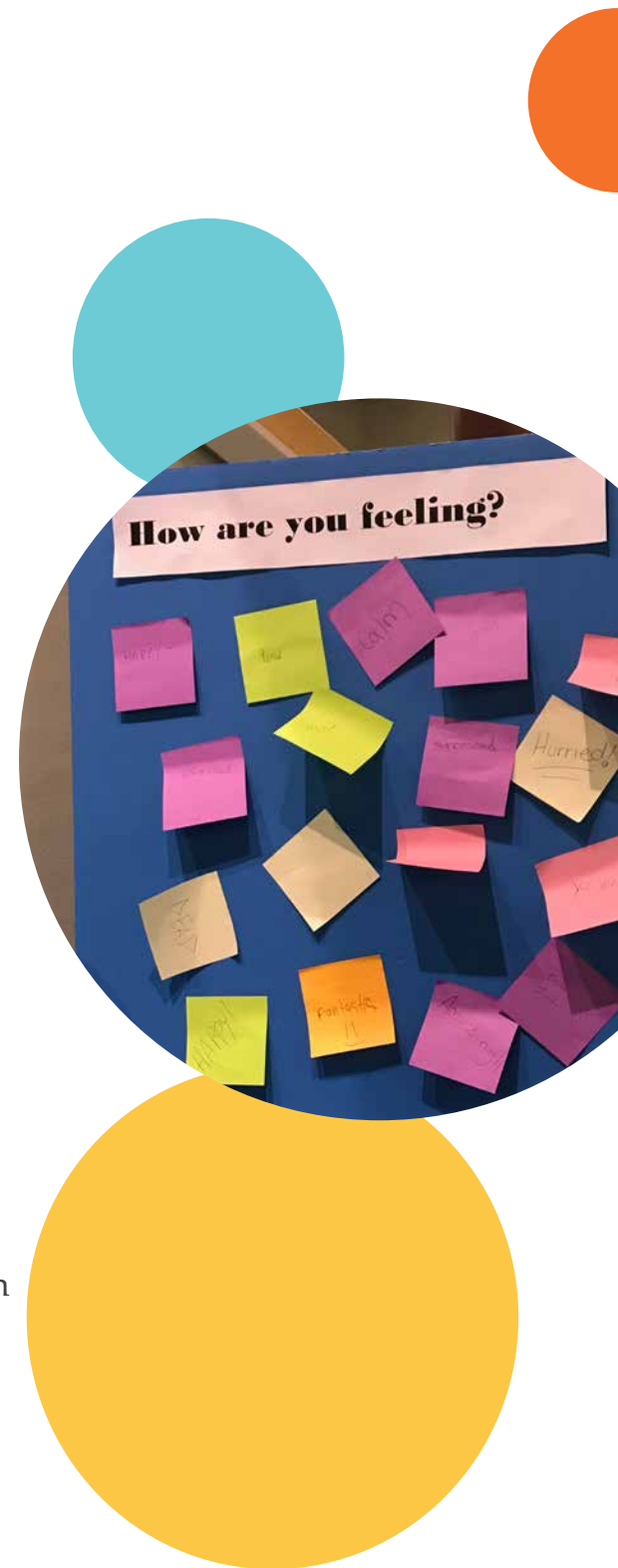
- During the events **100+ people were screened**
- Screenings available: mental health and well-being (including depression and anxiety), cannabis, substance use, disordered eating, risky drinking and body image

## key success

- We saw an **uptake on sites opting to do screenings** along with education

## key challenge

- This year we saw a trend of sites opting to have more open sites with no targeted audiences. This meant we were unable to capture the number of youth, young adults on campuses or parents who attended the open sites vs. targeted events.



# feedback about events

## From event planners about the value of participating

- *“It brings awareness to mental health and wellness, which is vital for students at college. The free info and swag from BtB helps us promote this with a limited budget on our end.”*
- *“It is an important part of our campus wellness strategy, allowing students a space to discuss and share information about mental health and provide reflection through the screening process for those who are interested.”*
- *“This is one way to promote to the public how important mental health is and de-stigmatize mental illness. I am all for mental health promotion and passionate about getting people out to raise awareness to mental health issues.”*

## Anecdotes about the value of attending

- It was important to the person to understand what this process looked like. She was uneasy about reaching out and this gave a way to gain this perspective.
- Participants were able to gain practical knowledge on the issues discussed (i.e., anger management, stress management etc.)
- Students said the event was great for information on their mental health resources, therapy dogs gave them a stress relief just before exams start.
- A student who was hesitant to take the screener eventually chose to do so, and through this, discovered they may be suffering from anxiety. As a result of taking their test, we were able to help them get connected to a free therapist through the school and eventually visit a family doctor to discuss a potential diagnosis.