BC's Mental Health and Addictions Journal

visions

writer's guidelines

Visions is a quarterly magazine focusing on mental health and substance use issues. It is written by and for people with mental illness and/or addictions, their friends and family, people who work in the mental heath or addictions fields, and other community agencies. Each issue of Visions focuses on a specific theme and includes perspectives from a wide range of people. Visions is read throughout BC by more than 15,000 people in print, and thousands more online and through our email version called e-Visions.

summary of key points

- please don't send submissions unless we're expecting one from you. Visions is theme based; we invite contributors based on theme.
- anyone can contribute
- word limit is 750 words
- please include a maximum 50-word bio with your submission
- please include a phone number and mailing address that we can reach you at (these are not for publication)
- write in plain language, no higher than a Grade 9 reading level
- submissions must be original
- a $75 honorarium is provided for personal experience stories

- submissions should be sent to visions@heretohelp.bc.ca as a Word document
- all articles are worked with by a structural editor, who will keep your voice, but will ask questions to help with clarity, structure and flow
- you must acknowledge any sources appropriately; use endnotes in APA style
- all articles go online and will be indexed in search engines; some articles may only appear online
- stock photography may appear with your article
- you keep the copyright for your article, but in submitting your article, you grant us the right to allow other agencies to republish your article for educational purposes if they ask to

who can contribute to visions?

- Anyone can contribute to Visions. You don't have to have any special academic background to be considered. We particularly value submissions by people who have been personally affected by mental health or substance use problems, and their family and friends. We also value perspectives of those who provide direct services.
- Preference is given to writers from BC and those who haven't been published before in Visions.
- To encourage new writers and voices to be heard in the Experiences and Perspectives section, articles by the same individual on different facets of their recovery journey will only be considered in every other issue.
- You may write your story under a pseudonym (false name), but you must tell us if you are

what's the word count?

- Articles should not be more than 750 words
  » 750 words does not include the article title, your name, your bio or references
- You may include text that is best suited to a sidebar for an additional 150 words, but the article should still make sense without the sidebar
- If our editors need more details than you could provide in 750 words, they will be in touch during editing
- Material that disregards these limits may not be considered at all or cut—at our discretion

who will you be working with on the visions team?

- Sarah Hamid-Balma is Visions Editor-in-Chief and is involved in article and theme selection and in policy issues. She can be reached at sarah.hamidbalma@cmha.bc.ca
- Stephanie Wilson is Visions Editorial Assistant. She is the contact for articles, ensures articles are delivered on time and in the correct format, and on the topic we ask for. She can be reached at visions@heretohelp.bc.ca or at 604-688-3234 (toll-free in BC at 1-800-555-8222) ext. 231.

- Vicki McCullough is Visions Structural Editor. She is a professional editor and does more detailed editing for all articles and contacts authors directly with questions.
- Visions is a theme-based magazine. If you have a new article (or article idea) you'd like to submit for consideration on an upcoming theme, please contact Stephanie with a summary. If you have been specifically asked to contribute a story, please email your submission to Stephanie.
- As editors, we are very mindful of the author's style when editing. We are also conscious of the theme that Visions' is exploring and the reading level we are trying for all articles. If you would like to see what your article will look like before we send it to print, let us know. Any suggested changes you have for our consideration at that point are welcome and we will compromise wherever possible. However, do note that final editorial decisions belong to Canadian Mental Health Association staff, who produce Visions journal on behalf of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. Before it goes to press, you have to right to ask your article not be published.

submissions must be new

- We assume all submissions provided to us are original pieces—that is, that they are new and not published anywhere else before. For legal reasons, you must let us know if you are submitting a reprint to Visions Journal. If you are making changes to a previous article of yours that has been previously published—what we call an adapted article—you must submit the full text of the original reprint at the same time as your adaptation. Also remember that plagiarism rules apply for your own previous works. You must credit sources appropriately.
- Unless you have been asked otherwise, do not submit more than one article at a time
- Personal experiences are assumed to be true, not fiction; Visions does not publish creative fictional work or poetry

[1] for writers who submit their personal stories under false names, real first and last names will have to be provided to the BC Partners for the honorarium cheque

- If you are submitting a personal experience, take care to identify any consequences of naming another person (such as a family member or service provider) without their express permission. If there is doubt by the editors, we reserve the right to use pseudonyms as appropriate.

plagiarism

- We expect that absolutely no part of your submission takes credit for ideas that are not your own (i.e., plagiarism).
- If you must footnote sources, do so only when necessary and adhere to APA format for sources. For a free guide, see http://owl.english. purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

visions online

- Due to space constraints, there is a chance your article may be accepted for publication but not appear in the print version of the journal; instead it will be online at www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/visions and in our e-mail version of Visions called e-Visions. Editors retain discretion of which articles appear in print and which online.
- Please note that Visions is available in its entirety as a PDF and in HTML on the Heretohelp.bc.ca website. This means it will have a broader readership than just BC and can appear in search engine listings along with your name. There may also be stock photography accompanying the article. We make notes to readers telling them stock photos are for illustration only and do not identify the writer.

copies and honoraria

- Each contributor will receive three copies, free of charge, of the issue in which his or her article appears. Guest editors may receive more, at our discretion.
- Individuals who contribute articles about their personal experience with mental illness and/or addiction (including family members), and whose story is selected for Visions, are entitled to receive a $75 honorarium for their contribution. The $75 honorarium applies for print and online-only articles. Payment is sent after Visions is printed.

- Visions Journal does not otherwise pay for articles; however, agencies who wish to profile a program or project in Visions are welcome to contract with freelance writers for a Visions submission. In those cases, payment comes from the agency, not Visions Journal.

audience considerations: writing to help the reader

Now that you have an idea of what Visions is trying to do and who it writes for, with, and about, we need to stress that all submissions to the journal must practice plain language writing principles so that it is accessible to all readers.

Plain language tips would include some of the following:
- Don't make your sentences too complex or string too many long ones together.
- Choose commonly-used words over ones that are more foreign.
- Break up long paragraphs into smaller ones.
- Use person-centred language: "you will" as opposed to "one will"
- Use active sentences "We found that" as opposed to "It was found that"
- Choose words with fewer syllables over ones with several.
- If you have to use special terms, define them within the text or as a footnote.
- Include concrete examples to keep readers following you.
- Don't be afraid to use subheads, bulleted or numbered lists, charts or tables to help make your point and organize your discussion.
- Above all, be clear, concise, and easy to read. Give your article to someone else to read; a high school student with minimal understanding of mental health or addiction issues should be able to understand what your article is trying to say.

TIP for clinicians, researchers or program coordinators writing articles
Visions is a different kind of journal than a peer-reviewed academic one. Include the first-person ("I") in your article and use examples (or anecdotes/case studies) wherever you can to make the subject come alive. Think about ways to make it accessible to any reader.

copyright and reprints

- Contributors retain copyright over their final submissions; however, once published, the articles cannot be sold to another publication.
- In submitting your article, you grant BC Partners the right to allow other agencies to republish your article for nonprofit, educational use. As a courtesy, where we have a valid email on file, we would let you know when such permission has been granted. This is a condition of accepting your article unless you specifically tell Visions staff that you don't want us to have this authority.
- Articles that have originally appeared in Visions are allowed to be published, without reprint fee, in another non-profit publication or newsletter provided permission is sought. Please visit Heretohelp.bc.ca for our copyright and terms of use policies and request forms.
- In cases of reprints that are submitted for consideration to Visions, we will need to contact the publication's editor to see if we can reprint. We do not generally reprint articles, and in the rare cases that we do, not from sources that would charge a fee to do so. During the selection process, we always opt for previously unpublished articles.

check if your article is at a grade 9 reading level

- We strive to keep Visions accessible by urging writers to aim for a Grade 9 reading level
- A good readability checker is the website www.wordscount.info. This free resource is recommended by the Canadian Public Health Association's (CPHA) Plain Language Service.
- Choose Readability>Calculator from the left-hand menu
- Cut and paste your text (without footnotes or bio) into the box provided
- Look for the line called the Flesch-Kincaid Grade.

WordsCount Readability Results

Index	Metric	Data
1	Words	774
2	Sentences	49
3	Syllables	1119
4	Big Words [> 3 syllables]	74
5	Smog Grade	10.15
6	Gunning-Fog Index	10.14
7	Automated Readability Index	5.79
8	Coleman Liau Index	6.47
9	FleschÂ–Kincaid Grade	7.63
10	Flesch Reading Ease	68.49
11	Spache Index	4.62
12	Dale-Chall Index	10.21
13	Dale-Chall Grade	16+

Do your best to get this number to be less than or close to 9!

If the Words Count server is down, another similar site is at http://www.addedbytes.com/tools/readability-score/

What if I can't avoid using some key words with many syllables, which skew my grade level ranking?
CPHA's advice is that the topic of the text only needs to be counted once when calculating readability. So, if your article is, for example, on the topic of schizophrenia, you can remove the word schizophrenia after it appears once before inputting text to a readability calculator. But if the word isn't the topic of the article, each instance should left in. If there are places where a more familiar word can be used, it may be better to use the familiar word instead and put the more technical term in brackets.

formatting considerations

step 1

Include an interesting, appropriate headline for your article. Leave a space.

step 2

Type your full name as you would like it to appear printed in the journal. If you say Dr. before your name, please include your degrees after your name. Leave a space.

step 3

Come up with a short "bio" (one to two sentences) describing who you are: that is, your title and place of work, plus any other details that would be important for our readers to know Leave a space.

step 4

Type your article. Single-space and set the font as Times New Roman.

step 5

Edit, proofread, and spell-check your article.

step 6

Send your article to Stephanie Wilson, Editorial Assistant [visions@heretohelp.bc.ca] as an email attachment in MS Word. Not possible? you can fax it to (604) 688-3236 or mail it.

step 7

If you have an obvious and interesting photograph that could accompany your article—for example, a photo of a housing project or a conference that is the subject of the article—let us know. It needs to be an action shot, not just people posing. Indicate if there are any photo credits that must accompany the photo, and a caption. Photos should be submitted at 300dpi and be at least 3 inches square. (please do not send photos of the writer)

step 8

Include your phone number and mailing address in the email where you send your submission. These will not be published. They are for us to contact you if we need to, and to send you copies of Visions if your article is published.

other reminders

✓ **do**

- use Canadian spelling standards throughout your document
- feel free to include bolded subheads in your article (if appropriate)
- break your headline into a main headline and a subtitle if your main headline is getting too long
- set special facts or other material in a sidebar. Simply put a clear "[for SIDEBAR]" sign to indicate sidebar text.
- use Endnotes for all your references. If a source is used twice, repeat the relevant endnote number, don't repeat the source reference
- use the APA (American Psychological Association) documentation style when documenting sources

☒ **please do not**

- use text boxes or columns
- add headers/footers or page numbers