

# Recovery in reading:

Horizon client-founded mental health project creates collection of self-help books



A new mental health initiative will help New Brunswickers by providing them access to therapeutic and self-help books in hopes they find healing in what can be a long and painful journey through mental health, addiction or life's challenges.

The **Healing Books Project** was founded by a Horizon client with lived experience and supported by professionals with a variety of backgrounds from Horizon's Addictions and Mental Health team. She was inspired to create the project because of the support and hope she found in reading self-help and therapeutic books while in treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"This initiative is the result of perseverance and much work from the founder of the project who says books literally saved her life," said Jill LeBlanc-Farquharson, director of Addictions and Mental Health, Moncton area.

The program stems from the Hope Library, a volunteer-run library at Horizon's Moncton Addictions and Mental Health office. The program offered free self-help and therapeutic books on mental health and addictions for clients to borrow, and was awarded a 2017 Community Health Recognition Award from Horizon.

"Working with our patients, clients, families and communities to create and sustain quality and safe care is Horizon's top priority, and this project illustrates how working with clients who use the health care system can improve the health care system," said Jean Daigle, VP Community, Horizon.

The collection includes more than 1,300 books on addiction, anxiety, depression, mindfulness, stress, trauma and many more topics. The collection also has books for supporters, caregivers, and family members to help them deal with the many challenges they also face.

Some of the titles featured include *The Resilience Workbook: Essential Skills to Recover from Stress, Trauma, and Adversity*, *Tending Dandelions: Honest Meditations for Mothers with Addicted Children*, and *I Have a Question about Death: A Book for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Special Needs*.

The creator of the program, together with Horizon's Addictions and Mental Health team members, approached New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) to partner to grow the program, bringing a collection of books to store in the provincial library's expansive and accessible catalogue.

NBPLS agreed to partner with Horizon Health Network and work collaboratively to improve services to New Brunswickers by expanding their existing collection and resources to better meet the needs of all New Brunswickers needing and/or seeking resources for addictions and mental health challenges.

The project was then awarded \$25,000 grant from MindCare New Brunswick, a committee of the Board of Directors within the Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation that funds programs across the province that promote mental wellness and provide services to those living with mental illness.

As a result of this collaboration, all New Brunswick residents with an N.B. Public Libraries card now have access, at no cost, to English and French books, eBooks, and audiobooks, as well as resources for those with print disabilities.

The grant was used for the purchase of print books in the collection. Ebooks and audiobooks in the project were purchased through other means.

Books in the Healing Books Project are identifiable by a butterfly icon, which appears on the item's online catalogue record, as well as on a bookplate inside books.

“The purple butterfly is the symbol of hope, transformation and healing, and my wish is for that logo to become recognizable to those seeking help,” said Jill.

Books are also part of a space within the NBPLS online catalogue called the Mental Health “room.”

Books will be available to borrow through all 63 public libraries in the province and through the New Brunswick Public Libraries provincial online catalogue. Books will also be available through Library Services by Mail.

To learn more about the project, visit  
[horizonnb.ca/healingbooks](http://horizonnb.ca/healingbooks).