



Promoting resilience, strength, and emotional well-being for people in the Grand Forks community through education and collaboration to increase awareness and access to mental health resources.

The Grand Forks Community's *Mental Health Matters* is a program working toward the vision: "The Grand Forks community will be an emotionally healthy place to live where people receive the support they need to thrive and succeed."

The inaugural meeting of the *Mental Health Matters* coalition occurred in January 2019. This foundational meeting developed as a community call to action in response to several deaths by suicide that occurred in the Grand Forks community in 2018. The initial community call to action for mental health was organized by the Grand Forks Public School system with assistance from the Grand Forks Mayor's office.

During late Spring 2019, the community call to action group engaged in strategic planning to develop a mission, vision, and goal-oriented work groups. During the strategic planning process, the community call to action group acknowledged that supporting the mental health needs of the area will be an ongoing collaborative effort that must be driven by the entire Grand Forks community. This group was reimagined as the *Mental Health Matters* coalition, with the sharable hashtag, #GFCARES.

A kickoff event was held in March 2020, before the collaboration came to an unfortunate halt due to COVID-19. Many of the professionals dedicating their time to the coalition needed to focus on their own agencies in their pandemic response. The steering committee were dedicated to continuing the good work of achieving collective mental wellness and proposed a full time Community Mental Health Coordinator position, which was filled in February 2021, to manage the Mental Health Matters program full time.

The program is overseen by an advisory committee of members from Grand Forks Public Schools, City of Grand Forks, Altru Health System TEARS program, Grand Forks Opioid Response Program, Grand Forks Police Department, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks Air Force Base, Mountain Plains Mental Health and Addiction Technology Transfer Centers, and mental health providers.

The ongoing work of Mental Health Matters focuses on developing clear deliverables from four focus areas:

Education: Promote emotional wellness through education and empower our community to become advocates for one another.

Data and Policy: Understand and apply data to achieve community policies, awareness, and education.

Community Awareness: Promote mental health awareness and stigma reduction through media platforms and community events that encourage healthy socializing.

Community Collaborations and Resources: Promote excellence in mental well-being through strengthening agency partnerships and community collaboration.

100% of donations and sponsorships are used to support local mental health needs by:

- Address barriers such as transportation and cost of services and/or necessary prescriptions.
- Organizing community events to educate, promote awareness, and provide resources,

•**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS•**
TOGETHER WE CREATE HOPE AND WELLNESS!