

# New Harm Reduction & Mental Health College Founded in Canada

*Private Vocational Institute Aims to Build Workforce in Social Services*

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA, May 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new private vocational institute has been founded in Canada, specializing in mental health and harm reduction. LINKS Institute is based in Brandon, Manitoba, but offers its courses in an online format, so there are no geographical restrictions on student recruitment. LINKS Institute is the first career college in Manitoba to be approved with a solely online learning format. "Our intention is to offer prospective students education options which are flexible yet robust for their career needs without having to leave their community and supports", says John Jackson, founder and CEO of the organization. LINKS Institute is an approved private vocational institute with the Manitoba Registration and Accountability Office.



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In another first for Manitoba, LINKS Institute is announcing a Community Support Worker (CSW) certificate focused on Harm Reduction. "We were inspired to create this certificate by the needs we see in non-profit services who support people living with substance use disorders, housing insecurity and mental health concerns.", says Jackson, whose previous role as executive director of a non-profit shaped his interests for LINKS Institute. "We anticipate an increasing focus on services for people who choose to use substances, and or/engage in higher risk sexual behaviour in Manitoba, and we're offering education to contribute to a workforce which has appropriate skills for those services".

Additionally, LINKS Institute offers a CSW: Mental health certificate, focused on training students who are interested in working in community based mental health settings. "Manitoba is

experiencing a mental health and substance use epidemic, and there is a demand for skills training for people who are passionate about these needs.", says Jackson.

Jackson says the inspiration for LINKS Institute was based on the changing face of further education as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. As existing schools adjusted to determine how to provide education for students in a way that is safe, LINKS planned solely online offerings so that students will have consistency for the duration of their studies. The two certificates consist of 9 courses each and a 6-week practicum, the nature of which will be dependent on ongoing covid-19 restrictions.

LINKS Institute is seeking community engagement by way of practicum sites for students, instructors for their programs, and interested students. Both the CSW: Mental Health and Harm Reduction certificates will be offered starting July 5th, 2021.



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