

LINKS Institute Unveils New Program to Meet Workforce Development Needs in Manitoba

Mental Wellness & Harm Reduction Worker Diploma Intended to Equip Students for the Complexity of Provincial Needs

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA, September 17, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The needs of people accessing health and social services in Manitoba is becoming increasingly complex, and [LINKS Institute](#), a private career college, is stepping up to help build a workforce with appropriate skills. "One of the challenges with the mental health and addictions system in Manitoba is that until recently it has been very siloed", says Jackson, President and CEO of LINKS Institute. "This was one of the findings of the [Virgo](#) systematic review in 2017-2018. Siloed service delivery can mean a workforce that doesn't always have a rounded skillset". LINKS is unveiling a [Mental Wellness and Harm Reduction Worker](#) Diploma (MWHR), which is intended to prepare students to support people with issues of mental health, substance use, and high-risk scenarios. "Previously we were offering separate mental health and harm reduction programs, which integrated elements of the other into the curriculum. Based on student and community demand we decided to offer a program that incorporated elements of all approaches".

The intended outcome of the MWHR Worker Diploma is to equip support workers in health and social settings with the right skills for the right time. Often people living with addiction problems will have a co-occurring mental health problem and staff may not necessarily be equipped to respond to this. Jackson highlights rural and remote areas of Manitoba, including First Nation communities, as potential partners for uptake of LINKS' new program. "Many communities are recognizing the innovative nature of our programs which allow students to learn from home, do practicum in their communities, and then apply their skills to help people in local services".

The MWHR Worker Diploma consists of 12 courses and a practicum experience. The language that LINKS Institute chooses to use around the titles of their programs is indicative of their philosophy towards mental health care. "We chose the term 'mental wellness' because it reflects our belief that recovery from problems in living needs a holistic approach, and takes time," says Jackson. "LINKS Institute is focused on creating an environment in which our students see these values and take them up for themselves".

LINKS Institute's Mental Wellness and Harm Reduction Worker Diploma begins on October 4th, 2021. Interested students, instructors or potential practicum sites can email info@links-institute.ca for further information.

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