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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **New support line for 2SLGBTQIA+ launches in Edmonton**

**EDMONTON, AB (June 8, 2021)** – A new telephone support service for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community launches today in Edmonton. Beginning June 8, Brite Line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to community members in need of support. The service is the first telephone line created specifically for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

The Edmonton-based telephone line aims to create a safe space where the 2SLGBTQIA+ community can connect with supports free of judgement or stigma. The line is operated by trained staff and volunteers from the Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton Region (CMHA Edmonton) who help callers connect with community organizations that address their specific needs.

Founder of Brite Line Neil Salsbury says, “Over the past few years, I’ve noticed the levels of suicide, self harm, and unhealthy behaviour rise in our community. I wanted to ensure every person had an opportunity to reach out for help without judgement, fear, or bias. I want the phone line to be able to give the caller hope when they are in their darkest moments.”

“There is a notable gap in mental health supports and services for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and addressing this gap is long overdue. We know community members face several unique obstacles when it comes to accessing services in our region. Brite Line is the first step toward more inclusive and community-centred service delivery,” says CMHA Edmonton Executive Director Giri Puligandla.

Brite Line is free to access and is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. To connect with trained staff and volunteers, call 1-844-702-7483. For crisis support, call the 24-hour Distress Line at 780-482-HELP (4357).

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### **About Brite Line**

Brite Line is the first support line of its kind in Edmonton. It was created in response to alarming statistics that indicate the 2SLGBTQIA+ community experiences higher rates of suicide, suicide attempts, substance use issues, and overdose. Members of the community also report higher levels of harassment, discrimination, and violence.

The telephone line is operated by staff and volunteers trained in crisis intervention who can connect callers to additional resources that address their specific needs. Brite Line is operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton Region. Visit [briteline.ca](http://briteline.ca) for more information.

### **About Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton Region**

The Canadian Mental Health Association – Edmonton Region (CMHA Edmonton) works within the community to support people experiencing mental illness and their families through advocacy, education, research, services, and programming. CMHA Edmonton works alongside community partners to service vulnerable and targeted populations who are living with or are at risk of developing mental health challenges. To learn more about CMHA Edmonton, visit [edmonton.cmha.ca](http://edmonton.cmha.ca).

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