

annual 2021/2022 report

Whoomp!



Welcome to the 2021/22 Training Graduates – Whoomp! There it is.
TOP: Laura, Katalin, Lara, Mandy, Jorge (TA), Stephen, Ryan, Hayley, Jude (Trainer)
MIDDLE: Pegan, Mary (TA), Barb FRONT: Jen, Emily, Julie, Marilyn, Emmalee, Josh, Sarah MISSING: Makeda

We started our 2021/22 training year with 18 new trainees selected from over 70 applicants. Though we lost one member due to unforeseen circumstances, the remaining 17 have demonstrated themselves as highly committed. Each person has worked hard with deep compassion to develop strong foundational counselling skills.

Our training assistants this year were Jorge Frias Arias, who returned for a second year and Mary Lucas, a former practicum student. Jorge and Mary were exceptional training assistants helping to deliver and develop training material, mentoring triad groups and sharing their experiences as counsellors.

We were able to start our training in person and only had to train remotely for five sessions – four sessions during the height of Omicron and one session to accommodate a guest speaker.

Masks were mandatory until the spring, but this did not affect our ability to dig into personal work or deliver the training material. We all just learned how to adapt and adjust, perhaps good qualities for budding counsellors!

Due to Covid restrictions, our weekend training sessions were held at the Centre, rather than a residential weekend or booking offsite. I do not think this took away from our quality of bonding or the level of personal work. We had lots of tears, laughter, learning and full bellies!

On our first weekend, the group named themselves, “Whoomp! There it is” based on experiences of personal work, humour, the song and group bonding.

Though we kept the strong foundation laid out in previous years of training curriculum, we spent more time this

year practicing reflective listening skills and learning about trauma-informed practice. We had some wonderful Guest Speakers including our in-house Supervisors. This year one of our volunteers joined a Supervisor to deepen the discussion about gender.

I am very proud of this group of people and as we near graduation, I am excited for them to join our community of Counsellors as they will provide solid service to our clients.

~Jude Marleau, Trainer

We will build capacity through state of the heart counselling.

Citizens
COUNSELLING
CENTRE



Report from the ED

by Brenda Wilson

Blink and another year goes by. A year which, as usual, was full of change and growth for the Centre. Even enduring another year of pandemic... adjustments. I am constantly amazed at how smoothly the Centre runs given the number of people and the details of the day-to-day operations! I learn and re-learn lessons in gratitude and appreciation. Here are three things I have re-learned this year:

Number ONE: I am surrounded by well over a hundred energetic, curious, heart-full and endlessly creative citizens who volunteer here and who work here. Each year, although we lose some, we attract more. Just this past year our training program included a landscape gardener, a lawyer, a translator, an international development worker, two educational assistants, an emergency manager,



Brenda Wilson, Director

a massage therapist, a soon to be new mom, a yoga instructor, a hospitality worker and several students who will go on to become professional therapists in the community. Where do they keep coming from? I am daily full of gratitude.

Number TWO: Things at the Centre will never 'quiet down'. It has taken me a long, long time to accept this. We will always have more work to do than time to do it. And this is a good thing, not a bad thing. It means, to me, that we are continuing to serve the populations we are mandated to serve and that we continue to be a much needed service; it means we are constantly changing, examining our ways of doing things, refining our internal systems, adjusting to meet the ever evolving field of counselling. Science definitively says change keeps our brains working better too.

Number THREE: There is no substitute for kindness. As Henry James said: Three things in life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.

Every day amazing things are happening inside our counselling rooms, on the phones and video screens across Greater Victoria and beyond. People are altering their lives and their perceptions of themselves all over the place.

The Board, full of wisdom and, thankfully, good humour, is working on our value statements around inclusivity and diversity. Revenue development is also, as always, front and centre as well.

A cycle completes and a new cycle begins. I am in awe of what we have all helped to build; what all of the many counsellors and Board members and staff have helped to build since the Centre began in 1969. **We do good work here.**

Report from the Board Chair

by Sara Comish

Although the sun is finally peeping out, our wet spring has not been enough to lift everyone's mood, I fear. Which is why the service provided by the Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre is so needed these days. Things are looking better than they have for several years now, but they are not the same, and having a compassionate ear can make all the difference.

Our Volunteer Counsellors are the ones providing this compassionate listening, and I am so grateful for all they do. Volunteers are at the core of the Centre, contributing to our community, and being there for our clients. Volunteers help the Centre in other ways too, working on tech solutions, creating our website and computer portal, fundraising, and being on the Board. They are supported by our staff, our administrative team, the supervisors, and the trainers who all do a wonderful, heart-filled job. Our funders and donors have provided the resources to fuel our



Sara Comish, Board Chair

Centre. Thank you. Our Executive Director, Brenda Wilson is the guiding light, navigating the Centre through our changing times, keeping the organization operating smoothly. The Centre has developed in unanticipated ways; we

now offer video and telephone services which works better for some clients and counsellors, allowing us to work with clients who may not otherwise have been reached, due to mobility issues, family commitments etc., and our traditional in-person counselling is still available for those who prefer to be in the room together. We adapt and change, but always stay true to our mission - providing accessible volunteer counselling services to assist adult members of the community in achieving socially and psychologically satisfying lives.

The Board has continued to focus on keeping the Centre on track with our strategic plan, and looking ahead to ensure

sustainability. We have also continued with the process of addressing inclusiveness and diversity, viewing it as an on-going journey to keep our actions in line with our values, and working to embed this process in our operations. This year, we are saying goodbye to Chantelle Jones, who has been a bright contributor to the Board over her time with us. We are lucky that Chantelle is going to continue to serve Citizens' on the Revenue Development Committee. One of our Counsellor Representatives, Vicki Küng, is also leaving the Board. Vicki has been our leader in devising our portal, and guiding us in Portal tech, as well as being an ideas person in her contributions to the Board. We will miss both, and are very grateful for their time.

The Centre really does seem greater than the sum of its parts, and it is by each part working together that it is able to make a difference in the lives of so many. It is because of each person who contributes to the Centre that it is able to be there, to be the listening and supportive ear that is so needed these days. Thank you to all who help.



"My counsellor is very intelligent and managed to get to know me in a short period of time, and was able to offer helpful suggestions."

~ Centre Client

"I appreciated my counsellor's unique insights and angles he took in helping me examine things. Angles that I often hadn't considered."

~ Centre Client

"The training allowed me to take a closer look at different biases I may hold that I was unaware of. I thought I had a great deal of self-awareness but this has given me a deeper look."

~ Volunteer
Counsellor Trainee

"Thank you for the amazing opportunity. I'm truly grateful to be a part of this organization."

~ Volunteer
Counsellor Trainee

"Training has changed me for the better and I feel ready to help others."

~ Volunteer
Counsellor Trainee

"It was good for me to have someone to talk through my processes/inner-work with on a weekly basis. Someone who was there and present only for me every week for a couple of months."

~ Centre Client

The Citizens' Team ...

Board of Directors 21/22

Chair: Sara Comish

Vice Chair: David Hume

Treasurer: Lisa Underdown

Secretary: Chantelle Jones

Special Advisors:

Tim Wedge & Margot Liechti

Members at Large:

Andre Serzisko

Arla Sinclair

Michael Boyle

Neil Webb

Counsellor Reps

Chris Belliveau

Natalia Richardson

Vicki Küng

Professional Team

Elizabeth Bradley

Joanna Morrison

Jude Marleau

Michael Timney

Administration Team

Brenda Wilson

Laura Hutcheson

Meegan Simpson-Cooke

Meg Wiles



Our funders this year include:



We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia Gaming Commission.

We acknowledge the financial support of the Barnes Family Foundation

Here's what we've been up to this year

IN THIS PAST YEAR:

- 8,700 hours of counselling
- 960 clients served
- 107 volunteer counsellors
- 63% of our clients paid < \$20 per session
- 8.4 sessions per client (on average)

TOP PRESENTING ISSUES:

- Stress/Anxiety/Panic Attacks
- Depression
- Relationship/Communication
- Self Esteem / Identity Issues
- Addictions (past/present)
- Family Issues (past/present)
- Suicide attempts (past/present)

DID YOU KNOW?

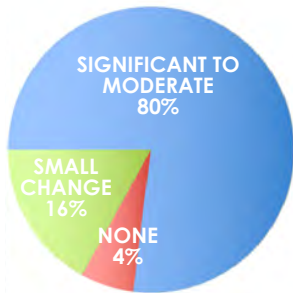
100% of direct service to clients is provided by our trained volunteer counsellors

\$1,000,000 is the market value of the counselling services provided annually

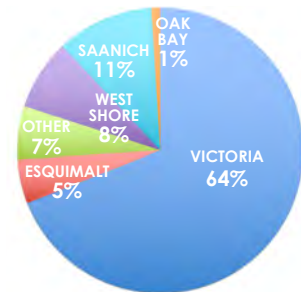
34% of our clients are between the ages of 18 and 29

34% of our clients are employed F/T

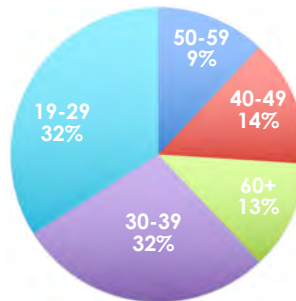
CLIENT REPORTED CHANGES AS A RESULT OF COUNSELLING



AREA OF RESIDENCE



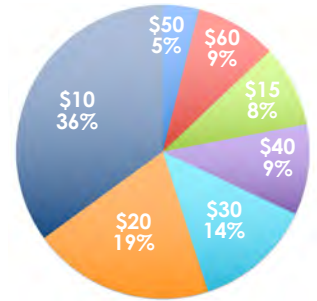
CLIENTS BY AGE



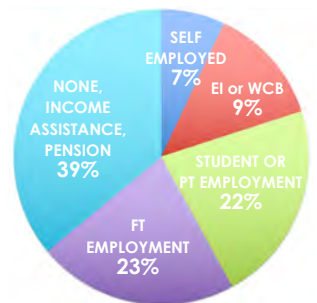
REFERRAL SOURCES



FEES



CLIENT INCOME SOURCE



And hopefully YOU!

CLIENT FEEDBACK FROM THE QUESTION "HOW WAS THIS COUNSELLING PROCESS VALUABLE TO YOU?"

"The education, tools and resources provided and developed together with my counsellor have impacted my life in more ways than I can count."

"Counselling helped reveal some of the sources of my depression that I wasn't dealing with, and gave me tools to deal with depression and anxiety."

"I find her to be a positive inspiration in my life and I think of her and what she's taught me every day."

"The counselling allowed me to rearrange the parts of my mind that were not working well together."

"The service you offer impacts so many in a positive way and I cannot express how grateful I am for the assistance you have provided."



Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre

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Look for Citizens' Counselling Centre on

