

Our funders  
this year  
include:



VICTORIA  
FOUNDATION



PayPal  
Giving Fund



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

We acknowledge  
the financial  
support of the  
Barnes  
Family  
Foundation

And hopefully  
**YOU!**



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

## IN THIS PAST YEAR:

- 11,118 hours of counselling
- 756 clients served
- 132 volunteer counsellors
- 44% of our clients paid < \$20 per session
- 9.3 sessions per client (on average)

## TOP PRESENTING ISSUES:

- Stress/Anxiety/Overwhelm
- Depression
- Self Esteem/Self Compassion
- Emotional Regulation
- Loneliness
- Stage of Life Issues
- Grief / Bereavement / Loss
- Career / Job

## DID YOU KNOW?

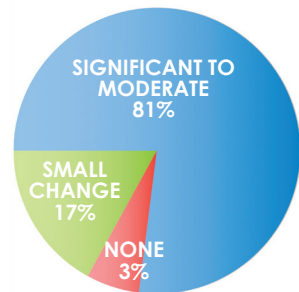
100% of direct service to clients is provided by our trained volunteer counsellors

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

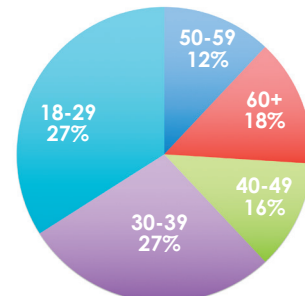
28% of our clients are between the ages of 18 and 29

26% of our clients are employed F/T

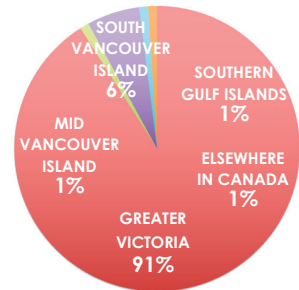
## CLIENT REPORTED CHANGES AS A RESULT OF COUNSELLING



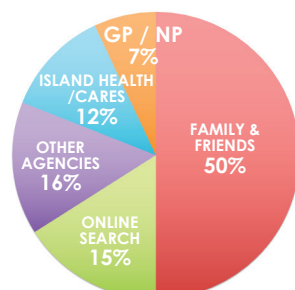
## CLIENTS BY AGE



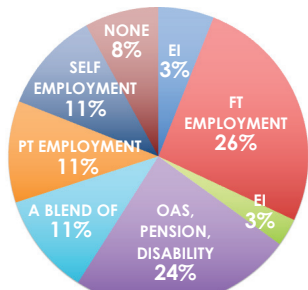
## AREA OF RESIDENCE



## REFERRAL SOURCES



## CLIENT INCOME SOURCE



## CLIENT FEEDBACK FROM THE QUESTION

### "HOW WAS THIS COUNSELLING PROCESS VALUABLE TO YOU?"

"It gave me access to a highly trained counsellor during a difficult time, when I would have absolutely not been able to afford one otherwise"

"Kind, compassionate, knowledgeable, and down-to-earth"

*"I truly believe it's with the help of my counsellor that I am here today."*

"Counselling helped me understand my past and showed me a new path ONWARD!."

"Thank you for offering such an innovative model of service and care"

Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre

941 Kings Road, Victoria, BC, V8T 1W7 • 250.384.9934  
info@citizenscounselling.com • www.citizenscounselling.com

Look for Citizens'  
Counselling Centre on



# annual report 2024/2025

## A Year of Learning

by Holt Sivak, ED

When I wrote last year's report, I had only just arrived at Citizens'. I was still in the delightful stage of discovering who we are — meeting people, hearing stories, and beginning to sense the depth of the organization's roots in this community.

A year later, that sense of admiration has only deepened.

If last year was about seeing Citizens' for the first time, this year has been about understanding it — its rhythms, its challenges, and its remarkable capacity to adapt while holding fast to its purpose.

It has been, as our Chair so aptly put it, "a year of learning." Like so many non-profits, Citizens' has faced pressures that test both imagination and endurance: rising costs, shifting funding landscapes, and the ongoing aftershocks of a changed world. Yet at every turn, I have witnessed creativity, cooperation, and a kind of quiet courage that defines this place.

Our volunteers and practicum students continue to be the heart of that



Holt Sivak, ED

courage. Whether greeting clients at the front desk or offering support in one of our counselling rooms, they embody the spirit of service that has carried Citizens' for more than fifty years. Their commitment — the months of training, the hundreds of hours of counselling, the care they show for each client — continues to astonish me.

Our staff, supervisors, and trainers deserve equal recognition. They hold the line on quality and ethics, mentor new counsellors with patience and wisdom, and ensure that our clients receive the thoughtful, compassionate support for which Citizens' is known. This interdependence — between learners and teachers, counsellors and clients, community and organization — is our strength.

Financially, this year has required careful navigation. We have looked closely at how to do more with less, how to sustain our training program for the long term, and how to balance accessibility with the real costs of maintaining

quality. Through all of this, what has guided our decisions is the same principle that has guided Citizens' since its inception: no one should be turned away for lack of ability to pay. That commitment remains unwavering.

Looking forward, I am excited by what lies ahead. We are beginning to rebuild connections across the broader community — with partners, funders, and the public who may not yet know what Citizens' offers. There is fresh energy on the Board, innovative service and fundraising ideas bubbling in the ether, and a shared sense that renewal is already underway.

To everyone who has contributed — volunteers, staff, supervisors, donors, and our resilient community of clients — thank you. Your belief in what we do makes the work not just possible, but profoundly worthwhile.

The best of Citizens' remains constant: compassion, commitment, and community. The future that we are building together feels bright — not because it will be easy, but because it will be ours.



Welcome to the  
2024/25 Training  
Graduates -  
The Renovators



We will build capacity through state of the heart counselling.

October 2025

# About the Training Group

by Jude Marleau

Our 2024-25 training cohort and training year began and ended with a bang – this group of people was highly committed to changing things up! I mean this in the absolute literal way, as this cohort, who named themselves “The Renovators: Paws and Reflect”, took on the vision of renovating the training room. Members contributed ideas, finances, the labour of cleaning, painting, hauling away old stuff, supplying food for the work crews, building, repairing, decorating, and donating items. And they did this with such joy, camaraderie and many hours outside of training. During training, many folks brought their four-legged companions (or their love of them) and, of course, training is all about “reflecting”. Their name is truly fitting!

This year's training assistants were Meg Wiles and Rewa Grewal. Meg and Rewa were exceptional training assistants who helped deliver training material, mentored triad groups and shared their experiences as counsellors.

A huge thank you to both of them—they worked very hard, volunteering many hours, to mentor and guide this training group.

Unlike our training room, our training content and format only underwent a few changes this year. We met for 37 weekly sessions and two full weekends. Training began with group development, then moved on to personal exploration, followed by foundational skill development. In the spring, we started exploring topics relevant to our clients. The weekends were rich with individual counselling demonstrations, clinical presentations and topic discussions. Based on past years' training feedback, we reduced guest speakers' attendance (instead, we watched interviews that I conducted with key people). This allowed us to increase in-session training practice time.

Over half of our graduates started counselling right away, after training



Jude Marleau, Trainer and Supervisor

wrapped up in June, and most people had started by September. Each member of this group has demonstrated their solid skills as Counsellors, ready to meet with our clients to provide quality service.

This group has left an incredible legacy of their heartfelt commitment to the Centre. I am proud to have them become part of our esteemed community of volunteer counsellors.

Jude Marleau, M.Ed., CCC, RCC-ACS

## Root to Grow: A Volunteer Profile

By Laura Pereira,  
Volunteer Counsellor/  
Volunteer Intake  
Coordinator



Laura Pereira

When I was first considering applying to the training program with Citizens' (CCC), I had much hesitation. I had spent most of my life actively avoiding long-term commitments. I lived semi-nomadically, only took temporary work contracts, and lived in short-term rentals; I mostly enjoyed the freedom to roam and explore. I was likely one of the final applicants to the training program that year, as I struggled to picture myself grounding down into a lengthy opportunity. But there was an unexpected and mysterious desire growing in me, and with therapeutic support I was able to identify my longing to contribute to something meaningful.

It was during the initial group interview that I knew I had landed somewhere I belonged. Care, presence, thoughtfulness and professionalism shone through the training team. I was new to Citizens' when I applied and had many questions about the processes in place. Throughout the training, the trainers (Meg, Rewa and Jude) were thorough, engaged and compassionate, ultimately setting a strong precedent for the quality of care provided at CCC, which I have come to understand as quality counselling infused with large doses of compassion.

Here I will have to restrain myself from a thorough discussion of how incredible the training experience was. Holt did give me a word count.

Having struggled through the mental health care maze myself, I am so proud to be part of an organization that

offers hope to those dizzied by difficult attempts to seek support. My recent experiences volunteering as an intake counsellor has deepened my respect for the much needed work that we do. Who knew that the tag Phase 3 (what Admin uses to indicate a “matched” client) could bring me so much joy?

I hold deep reverence for all the humans that make up CCC, and that includes the courage of our clients to show up and do difficult work, the steadfast dedication of the admin team, the anchoring support of our supervisors, and of course all the background efforts of the board. The community at CCC was a gift to me by filling a gap in my life. Today I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to carry that gift forward by working with a team that is filling gaps in such a fractured mental health system. Checking voice mails, returning calls and sitting with clients surprisingly satiates my ongoing pursuit for meaning, exploration and growth.

## Report from the Board Chair

by Nadine Vockeroth

Last year's Board Chair, David Hume, ended his report with the words: “Here's to a year of winning and learning as we move through 2024 and 2025. To all our members, thanks for being there with us!”



Nadine Vockeroth

I'd like to begin this year's report right where David left off, with heartfelt thanks. To all our members who have stayed the course with us through an unexpectedly complex and challenging financial year, thank you. To our steadfast office volunteers who offered their time and care as we worked to find ways to reduce operational costs, thank you. To our remarkable staff and supervision team who ensure the continuity of our culture, our expertise, and our care for both clients and volunteer counsellors, thank you. To our volunteer counsellors who embody the mission and values of CCC in every client interaction, thank you. And finally, to the Board, whose unwavering commitment to Citizens' provide the steady foundation of governance on which we continue to grow, thank you.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank by name our dedicated office volunteers, our staff, supervisors, and our trainers each of whom contributes to the heart and strength of this organization. Our office volunteers over the past 10 months were: Brenda Wilson, Lindy Duschene, Anna Lundeen, Andrea Gagnon, Shiela O'Shea, Michele Martin, Emily Perkins, Kusuma Mitchell, Laura Pereira, Cindy Barton, and Shennan Li. Each of them spent several hours a week doing the critical

tasks of answering the phones, conducting intake interviews, relaying messages to counsellors, rationalizing payments and a myriad of other essential tasks that allowed us to continue to function as a counselling centre.

Our staff, with whom most of you are familiar, but they still need to be named: Laura Hutcheson, Meg Wiles and, until April 2025, Sheila Gauthier. Supervisors are Michael Timney, Patricia Nasmyth and Sue Farr, with Jude Marleau doing double duty as both supervisor and volunteer counsellor trainer. Marita Poll hosts our monthly 'All Welcome Group Sup' and Lisa Kratz joined our Supervisor Team in September 2025.

This past year was truly one of learning. Like so many not-for-profits in a post-COVID world, we faced significant challenges, but we also found new ways forward. We celebrated every win, large or small, and in doing so rediscovered the resilience and creativity that have always defined Citizens'. Over the past 50+ years, Citizens' has served more than 30,000 clients, trained over 900 volunteer counsellors, and supported nearly 400 practicum students. The ripple effect of that work, the communication skills, empathy, and mental health awareness shared throughout our community, is immeasurable. Our legacy is one of connection and compassion, and that is something we can all be proud of.

Citizens' remains largely self-sustaining, with 75% of our revenue generated

through our own efforts. Apart from a small gaming grant, we receive no government funding. In today's evolving fundraising landscape, the traditional galas of the past are no longer viable, but our determination to adapt remains strong. We are deeply grateful to Sue Dakers, former Board Member and Chair of the Revenue Development Committee, for her tireless efforts to bridge the gap, and to Holt Sivak, our Executive Director, for his steady leadership and commitment to financial stewardship. And we are doubly appreciative of those organizations that see fit to invest as funders in our vision. Please take special note of them on the back page.

As we look to the future, there is much to be hopeful for: new board members bringing fresh ideas, new staff joining our talented team, renewed capacity to train volunteer counsellors, and growing financial stability. Most excitingly, we look forward to Holt reconnecting and rebuilding our presence and partnerships within the broader community, ensuring that Citizens' continues to play a vital role in supporting mental health for years to come.

We could not do any of this without each and every one of you, our members, volunteers, donors and community. Together, we have built something remarkable, and together, we will continue to grow. So this year, I'll end on a slightly different note: here's to a year of exploring new possibilities, creating our future, and embracing renewal. The best of Citizens', its people, its purpose, and its promise, remains strong.

### The Citizens' 2024/25 Team ...

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair: David Hume /  
Nadine Vockeroth  
Vice Chair: Sue Dakers  
Treasurer: Sonterra Ross  
Secretary: Cheryl Turner /  
Natalie Day  
Past Chair: Sara Comish  
Natalie Day (Special Advisor)  
Margot Liechti  
Vicki Kung

#### COUNSELLOR REPS

Nathalia Richardson  
Daniel Good  
Ashlynn Whalley

#### PROFESSIONAL TEAM

Jude Marleau - Trainer & Supervisor  
Sue Farr - Supervisor  
Patricia Nasmyth - Supervisor  
Marita Poll - Supervisor  
Michael Timney - Supervisor

#### ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Holt Sivak, ED  
Laura Hutcheson  
Sheila Gauthier  
Meg Wiles

#### CONTRACTORS

Libbi Smith - Bookkeeper  
Michele Murphy - Communications

