



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2021 / 2022**

# ABOUT THE CRISIS CENTRE

The Crisis Centre of BC is dedicated to providing help and hope to individuals, organizations, and communities.

Our offices are located on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. We have been in operation since 1969.

Spanning the spectrum of crisis support, suicide prevention, and postvention, we engage staff and volunteers in a variety of services and programs that educate, train, and support the strength and capacity of individuals and communities.

## WE OFFER:

- Immediate access to barrier-free, non-judgemental, and confidential support through 24/7 phone lines and online services as well as follow-up support
- Education and training programs that promote mental wellness and equip schools, organizations, and communities to assist people at risk of suicide

Our programs work to ensure timely access to support, destigmatize suicide and mental health concerns, and increase awareness and skills for mental health. We engage a community of passionate volunteers while fostering and creating compassionate, connected, and suicide-safer communities.

### Content Warning

Our Annual Report contains stories and information that might be difficult for some readers. Support is available. If you or someone you know is struggling and needs someone to talk to, we are here for you:

- Anywhere in BC 1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433
- Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789
- Online Chat Service for Youth: [www.YouthInBC.com](http://www.YouthInBC.com) (Noon to 1am)
- Online Chat Service for Adults: [www.CrisisCentreChat.ca](http://www.CrisisCentreChat.ca) (Noon to 1am)

## ANNUAL REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

With deep appreciation, this Annual Report contains stories and files written by: Fergus Allen, Oliver Lum, Lindsay Anderson, Stacy Ashton, Jeffrey Preiss, Gabe Mutch, Lu Ripley, Mark Sheehan, Akhila Blaise, Liz Robbins.

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

We have been making our voice heard over the past fiscal year as we continue providing 24/7 crisis response and suicide prevention services.

Our year is bookended by our participation in the BC government's Special Parliamentary Committee on Reforming the *Police Act*.

On April 30, 2021, the Crisis Centre submitted a written response to the Committee as part of our leadership in mental health and crisis response systems change. On June 29, 2021, we presented in-person to the Committee on a panel of community-based groups seeking alternatives to police-led crisis mental health interventions.

We are grateful to our supporters and others who shared their experiences with the services they received when in crisis; we have woven their stories and recommendations into our work, which resulted in two key recommendations in the April, 2022 final report, *Transforming Policing and Community Safety in BC*:

- Adding a fourth option to 9-1-1 dispatch: fire, police, ambulance and mental health
- Creating a continuum of response to calls related to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues.

The recommended continuum of response has three components: community or civilian-led responses involving peer support workers, health, and social service professionals; co-response programs that pair police with these professionals; and increased prevention and follow up support.

We have already begun working with E-Comm 9-1-1, BC Ambulance, and the Canadian Mental Health Association BC to reach across our silos and achieve the goal of a seamless continuum of crisis mental health care based on a "least restrictive, least costly" model.

At the same time, we worked with crisis lines across BC to secure our future: sharing calls within a single call centre managed by the Provincial Health Services Authority. Locally, we are building a deeper partnership with the Chimo Crisis Line in Richmond to better serve the Vancouver Coastal Health region.

We continued to see a record number of requests for training in wellness, supporting people in distress, and skills to respond to suicidality with care and compassion. Furthermore, we expanded our Suicide Bereavement Advisory Group to build more services for those experiencing suicide loss.

The upcoming year will bring more challenges and opportunities, and we look forward to making progress on both together.



Stacy Ashton, MA - Executive Director



Mark Price - Board Chair



# CRISIS LINES KEY SUPPORT DURING DISASTERS

We experienced many natural disasters in 2021, and predictions about the future seem to indicate more will come our way.

Whether you are struggling with issues concerning your mental health or have been affected by flooding and wildfires, crisis lines across BC are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

During recent floods, heatwaves, forest fires, and exceptional cold, our volunteers aided British Columbians with information about emergency shelters and services and ensured that the people they connected with felt heard and supported.


“During any kind of natural disaster involving displacement, folks separated from one another, loss of property and livelihood, a whole raft of emergency services come into play. That’s excellent, and it’s also confusing if your whole life has turned upside down. What we’re specifically able to do is help people pinpoint and address their most current need while scanning for emotional distress and suicide risk factors,” says Stacy Ashton, Executive Director of the Crisis Centre of BC. “We’re keenly aware it’s often easier to test the waters with a practical request, but with some empathy, you can quickly build the trust needed for someone to tell you the level of pain or fear or despair they might actually be experiencing.”

**There is an increase in first-time callers and an increase in callers who we’ve been supporting long-term.**

Crisis lines in BC work directly with the Health Emergency Management team at the Provincial Health Services Authority to make sure anyone working with people impacted by natural disasters are trained to recognize signs of mental distress and suicide. “We’re trying to up-skill call takers on other lines so that they know what looks like apathy or rage could be a sign of suicide, and that they can ask us to make outreach calls to folks they are worried about. This gives them practical skills that increase their confidence and compassion on the lines, and a concrete way to connect people to immediate help,” said Ashton.

It’s impossible to ignore the correlation between the recent disasters and the increase in call volume; 2021 broke all previous records for the number of calls, peaking in October with over 9,000 inbound calls, almost double that of the previous October.

“When a natural disaster happens, such as a pandemic, the general anxiety level of the population increases, and that makes people with anxiety disorders even more vulnerable,” says Ashton. “Calls with folks we talk to regularly become more complex, more crisis-oriented, and more frequent because they have more anxiety to begin with. There is an increase in first-time callers and an increase in callers who we’ve been supporting long-term.”

A photograph of a flooded landscape. In the foreground, a white road sign is partially submerged in dark water. The background shows a flooded field with trees and a utility pole under a cloudy, overcast sky. A semi-transparent blue box with a yellow border is overlaid on the image, containing white text.

**During any kind of natural disaster involving displacement, folks separated from one another, loss of property and livelihood, a whole raft of emergency services come into play.**

# DISTRESS SERVICES

Our Distress Services program provides crisis support to vulnerable individuals across British Columbia. We offer services through our distress phone lines (24/7) and online chat services (noon and 1am).

Highly-trained volunteers and paid responders provide non-judgemental emotional support through risk assessment, collaborative safety planning, and short-term follow-up by phone. We also engage in emergency rescue services as needed.

## SERVICES INCLUDE

**310 Mental Health (604-310-6789) and 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)**

Serves British Columbia in collaboration with other crisis centres through the BC Crisis Lines Network.

**Vancouver Coastal Regional Crisis Line 604-872-3311**

- Available to youth, adults, and seniors across Metro Vancouver, 24/7.
- Services the communities of Vancouver, Richmond, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Sea-to-Sky (Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton), and the Sunshine Coast (Gibsons, Roberts Creek, Sechelt, Powell River).

**YouthInBC.com (ages 12-24)**

Provides youth, and those concerned about them, an opportunity to chat confidentially online with a highly-trained crisis responder (noon - 1am) in BC and the Yukon.

**CrisisCentreChat.ca (ages 25+)**

Allows adults who may not connect with traditional crisis services by phone or in-person to chat online with a highly-trained crisis responder (noon - 1am) in BC and the Yukon.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Launched the Vancouver Public Library Suicide Line in April 2021

Designed online training modules to expand hybrid training models

Focused on staff and volunteer wellness by expanding mental health support, participating in research on burnout amongst crisis responders, and planning for a refreshed distress services room

Expanded Distress Services team by hiring quality assurance and training staff and 15 staff Crisis Services Responders

Implemented 4-weeks advanced scheduling of volunteers to improve shift coverage and overall capacity

Developed Crisis Intervention Competency benchmarks

Presented a workshop on Competency Benchmarks for Training at the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention conference

Planned technology needs for the crisis line enhancement project together with provincial partners

Welcomed two new babies to staff team families



## FOLLOW-UPS:

## WE SOMETIMES CALL YOU

In the early days, crisis lines were a one-way affair: you're in crisis, you call us. Every crisis call was seen as its own unique event.

Sometimes that's how a crisis works, but there are also crises that unfold over days, weeks, or even months. Often a crisis is a gridlock of problems that have to be solved one by one in order to achieve stability. Your health is failing and your relationship is too, and you lost your job because you snapped at your boss, and also you've been drinking a lot, and maybe rent is going to be a problem this month.


When this is what's happening, it's best to address the crisis step by step. You know who's good at doing that? A crisis line responder on the other end of a crisis line.

If we can't resolve all the issues in one conversation, we can and will give you a follow-up call.

You don't have to be all better at the end of a call. We just want you to be safe. After you've had some sleep, another crisis line responder on another shift will call to see how you're doing, review whatever ideas and referrals were discussed the night before, and remind you that you've got this. Because you do.

We'll keep calling and reminding you of that until you're back in control of your life.

Being there for someone isn't a one-time thing. It's an ongoing commitment to ensuring you're okay. Crises come and go, but our care for people does not. We know you will make it through, and we'll be there with you until you do.



**YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO BE ALL  
BETTER AT THE  
END OF A CALL.  
WE JUST WANT  
YOU TO BE SAFE.**

# ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS



**6,494** youth reached through our self-care and wellness programs

↑ increased by 2,676



**123** new volunteers trained in the Distress Services program

↓ decreased by 3



**11** adults trained in safeTALK Training for Trainers, bringing safeTALK workshops to organizations and communities across North America

● no change



**946** Service providers and community members trained in suicide response including through ASIST, online suicide response training and safeTALK

↑ increased by 195 because we added online suicide response training



**556** youth reached out for support through our YouthInBC.com online service

↓ decreased by 434



**4,794** adults trained to support emotional well-being and respond to distress and suicide

↑ increased by 713



**8,307** outgoing call for scheduled follow-ups, third party or staff requested outreach, or staff follow-up with service providers

↑ increased by 230



**238** organizations hosted offsite or participated in CLE training programs including various school districts, Vancouver Coastal Health, Langara College, and BC Marine Employees Association

↑ increased by 58



**1,273** attended free webinars focusing on tools for managing stress, burnout, and well-being

↑ increased by 370



**75** participants in our suicide bereavement and suicide loss support programs

↑ increased by 10



Having received over 93,955 incoming calls and only being able to answer 40,238 is hard on callers and crisis service responders alike. Hearing a call go unanswered is heartbreaking. People need our services now more than ever. We are looking forward to a near-future where all BC crisis lines can share and answer more calls together, and we can gain the resources and placement in the emergency services response system to make the difference we know we can.



**93,955**

Incoming calls

↑ increased by 21,795



**40,238**

Answered calls

↓ decreased by 626



**8,307**

Outreach/Follow Up (Calls & Chats)

↑ increased by 1,476



**597,029**

Minutes of Talk Time

Calls & Chats, Incoming & Outgoing

↓ decreased by 20,123



**1,709**

Answered Chats

↓ decreased by 1,788

## CALL AND CHAT DEMOGRAPHICS

Ages 0-12	0.03%	Male (disclosed)	55.91%
Ages 13-18	3.53%	Female (disclosed)	38.57%
Ages 19-24	8.71%	Diverse Gender (disclosed)	1.26%
Ages 25-39	26.10%	Undisclosed Gender	4.27%
Ages 40-64	31.84%	Indicated a Disability	17.13%
Ages 65+	9.94%	First Time Callers	26.37%
Unknown Age	19.84%	Previous Callers	34.80%

Number of calls or chats that included a suicide risk assessment 18.97%

## GEOGRAPHY BY HEALTH REGION



The Crisis Centre of BC's primary operating region is Vancouver Coastal Health. We support Fraser Health by answering 1-800-SUICIDE and 310-6789 calls.

# COMMUNITY LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

Our evidence-based, trauma-informed programs increase awareness about suicide, strengthen intervention skills, facilitate growth and recovery after a suicide experience, and provide empowering tools to support well-being, stress management, and ongoing resiliency. We work with individuals across the lifespan to support well-being in schools, communities, and organizations.

## SUPPORTING OTHERS CRISIS AND SUICIDE RESPONSE

- Skillfully Responding to Distress
- safeTALK
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- ASIST Tune-Up
- safeTALK Training for Trainers

## SUPPORTING OURSELVES RESILIENCY AND WELL-BEING

- Self Care for Mental Health Workshop (youth)
- Mindful Tools for Everyday Living Program (youth)
- Real Talks (youth)
- Indigenous Mindfulness Project
- Wellness and Resiliency - courses, workshops and webinars
- Suicide Loss Support

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Completed the Indigenous Mindfulness Project with youth from Squamish Nation

Partnered with two North Vancouver Schools to collaborate on delivering a youth-led mental health program

Developed a new online suicide awareness and response workshop tailored to the needs of partner agencies

Acquired seed funding to develop online modules for the Mindful Tools for Everyday Living workshop to increase youth engagement, as well as content accessibility and relevance

Adapted our wellness programming to meet the needs of the community for more relevant content and greater accessibility with stand-alone sessions

Secured a contract with the Vancouver School District to provide employee wellness programming as well as increase staff training in suicide response



# KEEPING IT 'REAL TALKS': YOUTH PROGRAMMING IN NORTH VANCOUVER

The Crisis Centre of BC has been offering youth programming in schools across the province for over 20 years. In 2020, we were approached by three students to partner on a peer-led model for mental health promotion. Their proposal was so impressive, we just couldn't turn them down. As a result, we've been partnering on this project with two schools – one in North Vancouver and one in West Vancouver – for two years.

The Real Talks model, as envisioned by youth leaders Assal Rezaei and Sierra Lee, was to create a youth-led space for students to openly discuss mental health and be empowered with tools and resources. As a partner, the Crisis Centre supports this initiative by offering free training and providing a facilitator to support peer leaders at the Real Talk groups.

This project has been supported by funding from the City and District of North Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health.

In many cases, societal norms encourage people to hide their emotions, especially the unpleasant ones. There is an unfortunate expectation to default to stoicism above all else, when in fact everyone struggles with their mental health at some point in their lives; as emotional beings, it's in our nature.

"Mental health is something that's kind of taboo," says Assal Rezaei, a student at Sutherland Secondary. "It's sort of scary for students to talk about."

"At my school, I found that there weren't many conversations about mental health," echoes Sierra Lee, a senior at Sentinel Secondary.

"I would have loved something like this in my teenage years," says Karen Brady, the Crisis Centre's co-facilitator for the programme. "To have peers openly talking about their own experience with mental health...it normalizes it, so that it just becomes a part of our everyday conversation."

Real Talks consists of 3-4 sessions, each about 1.5 hours long. During each session, small groups of students get together to discuss various issues surrounding mental health, as well as learn self-care and mindfulness strategies to support their wellbeing.

"For most of the sessions," explains Sierra, "There was a co-facilitation piece between Karen and a peer with lived experience." These peer leaders co-lead the group through various activities and bravely support the interactive parts with examples from their own lives of dealing with mental health challenges, from test anxiety to depression and more. This, in turn, encourages openness on the part of the other participants to engage actively in discussions.

Sierra continues: "At our most recent session, we did an activity where we had all of the attendees write some of their negative thoughts down on paper." The attendees

**"Mental health is something that's kind of taboo, it's sort of scary for students to talk about."**



would then crumple up their pieces of paper and the peer with lived experience would read them out, the notes themselves remaining completely anonymous. “The purpose of that activity was to show everyone how we actually have a lot of the same struggles and doubts.”

With Karen’s guidance, these activities would springboard into discussions incorporating mindfulness practices that the students could then apply to their own lives beyond the sessions. “We all have such common negative self-thoughts...talking allows us to open up a little space for self-compassion,” says Karen. “To sit and share stories and to witness each other. And to say ‘Yeah, you know, me too.’”

So, what’s next for Real Talks? The aim is to get the programme into more schools, says Assal. “Sierra and I have made this kind of blueprint, and we’d like to spread it to other schools in the district, to see if they’d want to run something similar.”

“I’m graduating this year,” says Sierra, “so I would love it if we could get Real Talks to some more people because I think the impact has been really meaningful... conversations about mental health need to be had.”

“I feel like with mental health...” says Assal, “Everyone is afraid that talking about it is going to lead to mental illness or the idea of contagion. Like if we start talking about it, Pandora’s box will open and now everyone’s gonna get it. But it’s really not like that. I feel like people need to put their guard down when it comes to mental health.

Nothing good ever came from trying to hide a problem.”



# VOLUNTEER POWERED

Greater Vancouver has a rich and diverse community of committed and talented individuals who are passionate about helping others.

The Crisis Centre trains and supports these regular yet extraordinary individuals who share their skills as volunteers in administration, on the phone lines and in chat rooms, in classroom and community events, and in training rooms at the Centre.

## NUMBER OF HOURS CONTRIBUTED BY OUR VOLUNTEERS IN 2021/2022\*:

Distress  
Services

34,539  
hours

222 volunteers

Community Learning  
& Engagement

1648  
hours

39 volunteers

Administration &  
Office Support

51  
hours

8 volunteers

Development &  
Communications

565  
hours

12 volunteers

*\*these numbers reflect the total number at the end of the fiscal year*





# THANK YOU!

We rely on the generosity of our community to ensure we can deliver our lifesaving services and programs. We would like to thank all our donors and supporters including those who wish to remain anonymous. Your financial support helps us help others when they need it the most.

[www.crisiscentre.bc.ca/donate](http://www.crisiscentre.bc.ca/donate)

## **VISIONARIES OF HOPE \$75,000+**

Provincial Health Services Association  
The Walsh Foundation

## **STEWARDS OF HOPE \$10,000 - \$74,999**

Al Roadburg Foundation  
City of Vancouver  
CKNW Kids' Fund  
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Estate of Ernest Bone  
ETRO Construction Limited

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TELUS Friendly Future Foundation  
The 1988 Foundation  
Vancouver Airport Authority  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
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## **PARTNERS OF HOPE \$5000 - \$9999**

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The Phyliss and Irving Snider Foundation  
The VanTel/Safeway Credit Union  
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## **BUILDERS OF HOPE \$1000 - \$4999**

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The Raven Foundation Yeates Family  
The Wolrige Foundation  
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Vancouver Fraser Port Authority  
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Zymeworks Biopharmaceuticals Inc.

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TREK Outdoor Education Program  
United Way British Columbia  
William Zander and  
Frances Bickerstaff

We strive to ensure our donor information is as accurate as possible. If you see an error, if you were missed, please contact us:  
[development@crisiscentre.bc.ca](mailto:development@crisiscentre.bc.ca)



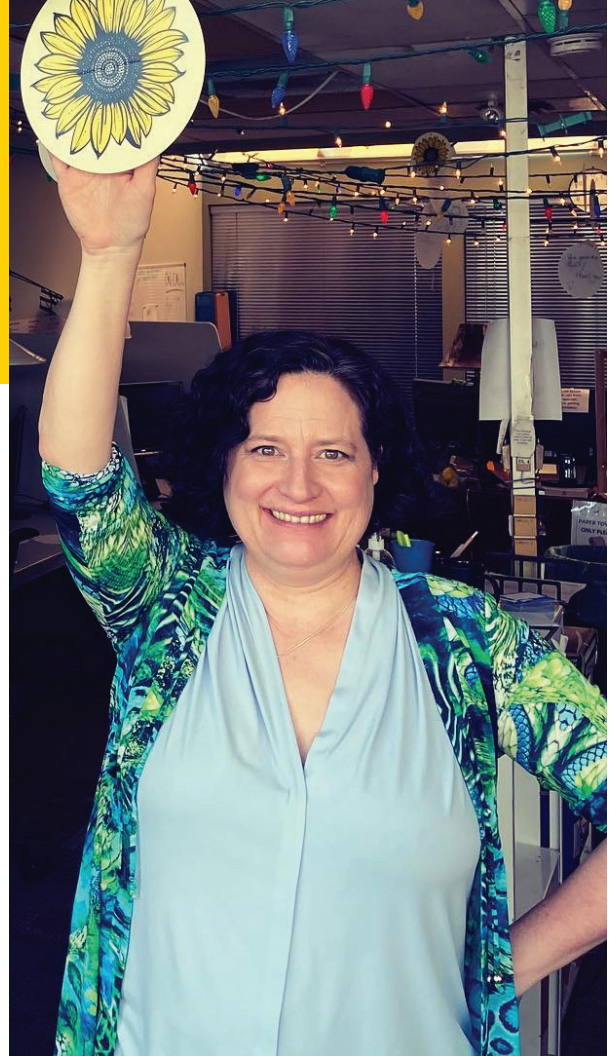
# LEADERSHIP

## 2021/22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Pam Bilusack – Director  
Dan Cox – Director  
Brandon Ma – Treasurer  
Alexis Martis – Director  
Mark Price – President  
Doug Querns – Director  
Rob Wallis – Director

## STAFF LEADERSHIP TEAM

Stacy Ashton, MA - *Executive Director*  
Jeffrey Preiss, MATS, MA - *Director, Development & Communications*  
Shannon McCluskie - *Director of Finance*  
Tamara Guyon - *Office Manager*  
Lu Ripley, MA - *Director, Community Learning & Engagement*  
Mark Sheehan, MSc - *Manager of Client Services and Operations*  
Liz Robbins, MS, RCC - *Director, Distress Services, Crisis Response & Operations*  
Akhila Blaise, MA - *Director, Distress Services, Training & Quality Assurance*  
Johanna Polkki - *Manager of Crisis Response & Operations (on leave)*  
Nicole Roussos - *Manager of Crisis Response & Operations*  
Alain Bedard-Gibson - *Distress Services Training Manager*



The Crisis Centre of BC has worked hard to meet the demands for its services and programs. The Centre has successfully pivoted to seek out funding for projects in new areas of significant interest in the past year, and we secured a total revenue of \$2,142,836 to support our frontline work.

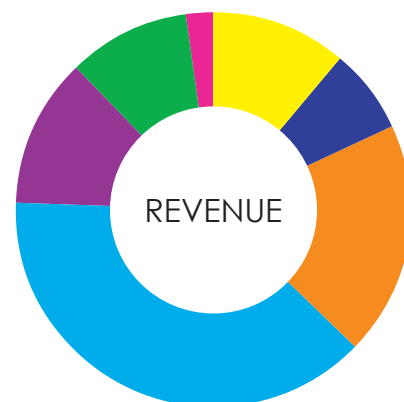
The Centre is grateful for its main sources of revenue provided by various organizations, service contracts and fee-for-service programming, foundations, businesses, and individuals. A list of donors is provided in this report.

The Centre also operates with a generous and dedicated volunteer team and would like to acknowledge this value, which is not necessarily present in the financial statements. The Crisis Centre's incredible volunteers, supporting frontline services, community learning, and administrative support are estimated to be a value of \$775,000 per year.

## THE CENTRE IS A BEACON OF HOPE BECAUSE OF DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS.

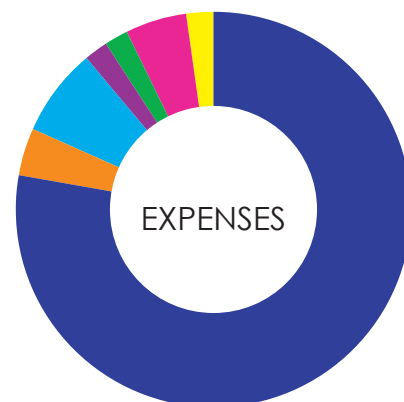
### REVENUE

Individual Donations	\$ 245,361	11%
Corporate Donations	\$ 140,956	7%
Grants & Foundations	\$ 413,783	19%
Provincial Health Services Authority /		
Vancouver Coastal Health Contract	\$ 817,918	38%
Province of BC — Community Gaming Grant	\$ 258,686	12%
Fees for Service and Training	\$ 217,384	10%
Interest & Miscellaneous	\$ 48,749	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,142,836</b>	<b>100 %</b>



### EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 1,648,078	77%
Administrative & Fundraising	\$ 86,851	4%
Telecommunications & Technology	\$ 156,019	7%
Building Occupancy	\$ 51,588	2%
Amortization	\$ 44,902	2%
Community Training	\$ 107,801	5%
Volunteer Support & Staff Development	\$ 32,542	2%
Publicity & Marketing	\$ 3,761	< 1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,131,542</b>	<b>100%</b>



\* Audited financial statements are available upon request.

## IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS STRUGGLING AND NEEDS SOMEONE TO TALK TO, WE ARE HERE FOR YOU:

- Anywhere in BC: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
- Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789
- Online Chat Services for Youth: [www.YouthInBC.com](http://www.YouthInBC.com) (noon to 1am)
- Online Chat Services for Adults: [www.CrisisCentreChat.ca](http://www.CrisisCentreChat.ca) (noon to 1am)



Crisis Intervention & Suicide Prevention Centre of BC  
763 East Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V5T 1X8

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