

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

45th
YEAR
ANNIVERSARY



LISTINGS

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Akhila Blaise, MA – Co-Director, Distress Services – Volunteer Management/Training
Liz Robbins, MS – Co-Director, Distress Services – Clinical/Operations
Michael Lam – Director, Human Resources and IT

Crisis Centre

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E: info@crisiscentre.bc.ca
W: www.crisiscentre.bc.ca
Charitable Registration N^o: 10699 3322 RR0001

Accredited by American Association of Suicidology

Distress Services

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:
Regional Support: (604) 872-3311
1-800-SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433
Seniors' Distress Line: (604) 872-1234
Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789

Available noon-1 A.M., 7 days a week:
www.YouthInBC.com (ages 12-25)
www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (ages 25+)

Community Education

Training and Workshop Opportunities:
www.crisiscentre.bc.ca

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Jodi Moss
PRESIDENT



Ian Ross
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As has been true for many of the past 45 years, 2014 was productive, filled with successes, challenges, and accomplishments. The Crisis Centre continues to evolve as a volunteer driven organization, striving to build a strong continuum of support, focusing on 'Hope, Help and Healing' for individuals in crisis.

At the heart of the Crisis Centre, are our 450+ front line volunteers, with 160 new volunteers joining us in 2014. These dedicated individuals provided more than 64,000 hours of service in 2014, conservatively estimated to \$1,200,000 in donated time.

In 2014, the Crisis Centre connected with over 127,000 individuals through our Community Education and Distress Services programs. Some highlights include:

- Major improvements in our technology infrastructure including new firewalls, offsite data storage and battery backups to ensure uninterrupted 24/7 service;
- Better ways to utilize our resources to meet the growth of requests from our community while managing mobile compliance and limiting our calls and chats to individuals from BC & Yukon;
- Launching a new Multi-Session Mindfulness Program for high school students; and
- Increasing the capacity of over 1,000 service providers and community members to recognize and respond to crisis and suicide in their community through training programs such as ASIST and safeTALK.

As we look back over the past 45 years of Crisis Centre service, it is inspiring to see the number of individuals who have supported the Crisis Centre to make it what it is today. In 1969, six individuals recognized an important need for crisis support in our community. This small group of volunteers adopted the 'Good Samaritans model of non-judgmental support' which has been adapted into the model the Centre uses today.

This year's Annual Report showcases the historic moments in the Crisis Centre's history. It is because of you, our supporter family, that we can continue to provide relevant crisis intervention and suicide prevention programs to enhance the emotional wellness of our community. We look forward to your continuing support as we embark on our next 45 years.

*Due to the nature of our organization's services, all names have been changed to reflect the privacy of our volunteers and clients.

TIMELINE OF PROGRAM LAUNCH DATES

1969

Crisis Centre founded;
Regional Distress Phone Lines

1983

Youth Education
videos

1986

Youth Education
Program

1995

Community
Training

2004

Youth In BC
chat

2004

Provincial
Phone Lines

2009

Bridge Suicide
Prevention Initiative

2009

Building Seniors'
Wellness

2012

Crisis Centre
Chat

2014

Mobile
Technology

2059

Our vision
moving forward



1969 REGIONAL DISTRESS PHONE LINES

It all began in 1969 when six like-minded community members saw a need in our community for a service which would provide confidential, empathetic listening to those in need. Collectively, they founded the Crisis Centre, indiscriminately offering non-judgemental phone line support to distressed individuals, and those who care about them. Today, the Crisis Centre's Distress Service phone lines have maintained the same foundation of empathetic listening, but our program has dramatically transformed into a crucial community resource, providing crisis intervention, assessment, safety planning and phone follow up for people of all ages. With a large volunteer base, the program offers an opportunity for training, personal and career growth potential, and creates future ambassadors in the community.



A total of 22,248 individuals contacted our regional Distress Service Phone Lines in 2014 to seek connection to our service as a first response resource as well as linkages to other community service providers.

Yuan, a 17 year old male, called the Crisis Centre seeking support after a good friend had attempted suicide. Yuan expressed profound regret about the situation to Crisis Centre volunteer, Brian. "I should've done more to help him" Yuan said, deeply shaken, overwhelmed by the process of trying to find help for his friend. Yuan also expressed shame at seeking support, even going as far as apologizing for calling the Regional Distress Line in the first place. Brian provided Yuan an opportunity to share his story and in addition to this "in the moment" support, Brian helped Yuan to locate some regional resources. Yuan ended the call with thanks: "It really does help. Keep up the good work."

1969

1983 YOUTH EDUCATION VIDEOS

Since 1983, the Crisis Centre has been creating critically acclaimed suicide prevention videos geared towards teens that have been distributed throughout North America. These have been a key component of our school suicide prevention workshops. In 1983 we produced *Urgent Messages*, and in 1994 *Choices*. In 2008, based on evaluation and support from leading researchers in suicide prevention, *Choices 2: Reaching Out* DVD and education package was produced.

This hopeful and inspirational video and educational curriculum continue to be a mainstay of our youth education programming and helps break the silence and shame that surrounds suicide and mental health issues.

Choices 2: Reaching Out is one of the select few videos recommended by the Video Review Committee of the American Association of Suicidology.

Every year, more than 5,000 students continue to watch *Choices 2: Reaching Out* through our *Reaching Out* Youth Education Workshop.

“I most liked the video about suicide where you get to see the real impacts of suicide and how important getting help is.”

“I liked watching [*Choices 2: Reaching Out*]. The way to prevent suicide was useful. I will use it on people who seem to be depressed.”

“I liked the video because it had a variety of people talking and sent a powerful message: suicide can happen very quickly and it’s important to act.”

— Workshop attendees

1969

1983

1986 YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Three years after the launch of the first Youth Education Video, *Urgent Messages*, a group of young students pioneered the road for our Youth Education Program. Shocked and beside themselves when their close friend suddenly died by suicide, they turned to the Crisis Centre for help in the wake of the devastating news. From discussions with program staff about the urgent need for suicide prevention education for teenagers, our Youth Education Program was launched.

This life-changing program has been critical in breaking down stigma and raising awareness about suicide and mental health among young people, and providing youth with practical and accessible coping skills and vital links to support. Based on research demonstrating the promising practice of mindfulness in building resiliency, in 2009, the Crisis Centre implemented mindfulness programming for secondary school students. Still today, the Crisis Centre remains to be one of very few in North America to offer mindfulness programming in its mission.

In 2014

Over 7,800 students participated in Youth Education Workshops.

406 youth in need were connected with their school counsellor for support as a result of our workshops.

A new multi-session mindfulness program was implemented in 5 schools focusing on marginalized youth.

“I thought the [Mindfulness] workshop and facilitators were excellent. This was a very thoughtful and important workshop, and students were highly engaged throughout.”

— Sir Charles Tupper Secondary Teacher

“Engagement of facilitators with students: OUTSTANDING. Best workshop in the years I’ve been teaching. Open and engaging workshop that allows suicide to be talked about without feeling awkward.”

— Sutherland Secondary Teacher

1995 COMMUNITY TRAINING

Due to stigma, fears, and lack of training, many people in our communities do not feel equipped to play a role in suicide prevention. Since 1995 the Crisis Centre has been working at the community level to enhance capacity by providing impactful and relevant training for a variety of service providers and community members. In 2011 we began offering Living Works' Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and in 2013 safeTALK, both internationally recognized and evidence-based training programs. These empowering and accessible trainings significantly break down the stigma surrounding suicide and increase our community's ability to provide suicide life-assisting first aid intervention.

In 2014

1,000+ community members were trained to increase their capacity to respond to suicide and crisis in their home, work, and community.

We trained 20 service providers to deliver safeTALK trainings within their own organizations and the community.

"Previously there had been a tendency to negate our role in suicide prevention, and to rely on outside experts. As a result of the safeTALK and ASIST training we received with the Crisis Centre, we have initiated a new plan for working with youth at risk of suicide that acknowledges *our* role in a young person's care. While a community response is critical, accessing evidence-based training at the Crisis Centre has been valuable for us, providing an opportunity to work and learn from others in the community and helping to see ourselves as an important part of the solution."

— **Sue Dorey**, *Manager of Youth Programs, Burnaby School District*

2004 YOUTHINBC.COM

After an overwhelming 70% drop in calls to our distress line from 12-25 year old youth in early 2000, followed by a number of focus groups where young people indicated that they prefer using computers as a means of communication, the Crisis Centre was presented with a unique opportunity to leverage its services to include online chats. As a result, YouthInBC.com, a web-based crisis chat for 12 to 25-year-olds, was implemented in 2004. Launched in collaboration with our current board member, UBC professor Dr. Shelley Hymel, and Dr. Jennifer White of SAFER Counselling Service, this project was well researched from youth crisis experts to ensure the needs of young people were being met. Since we pioneered YouthInBC.com 10 years ago, we continue to experience an increasing demand for its service, indicating clearly that it provides a vital safety net for thousands of young people in our community.

Lisa was only 18 years old and told us she was completely out of options when she logged on to YouthInBC.com one night. She explained abuse was a long-term problem at her home from her parents and sibling and she had just been denied funding to live on her own and seek employment. In her opinion, escaping her situation was her only way to stop the abuse. She told us she was living in fear, was suicidal, and completely alone. Cody, a Crisis Centre volunteer, utilized his crisis counselling training to help de-escalate Lisa's emotional state and together they worked to explore next steps, including local shelters and opportunities to live in Vancouver. By the end of the chat, Lisa recognized the options available to her, whereas previously she felt like she had nothing to live for. "Lisa was very responsive. After our chat, which she was so grateful for, she started thinking that she would like to get into a helping role one day," Cody described in his chat report.

In 2014 YouthInBC.com became the only mobile-friendly crisis chat service in BC.

An overwhelming 31,902 young people accessed YouthInBC.com through their mobile device.



Illustration by Carmen Bright

1995

2004

2004 PROVINCIAL PHONE LINES

With dozens of phone numbers to local Crisis Centres throughout BC, there was a need for one simple number that was easy for all British Columbians to memorize. 1-800-SUICIDE was born in September 2004 in partnership with the Crisis Centre of BC, Kelowna Community Resources, Mission Community Services, the Crisis Prevention, Intervention & Information Centre for Northern BC and the NEED Crisis & Information Line (Victoria). All five member organizations are accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, and participate in a collective effort to answer calls on the line. The provincial mental health number, 310-6789, also works in partnership with 1-800-SUICIDE, channelling calls that are not focused on immediate suicide support. Together, these provincial services ensure all BC residents are connected to a caring, highly trained responder 24 hours a day, anywhere throughout BC.

Through our provincial phone lines in 2014, Crisis Centre volunteers initiated 159 interventions for suicidal high-risk individuals, many with permission of the client.

“I have a suicide plan...” her voice was distant as the caller explained that she had called that evening to alleviate some of her stress and loneliness after deciding that she was going to end her life by suicide. Mandeep tried her best to make the caller feel comfortable revealing any details about herself, even just her name. She explained to Mandeep that she had struggled with depression for years, intensified by her recent job loss. Utilizing her training and experience, Mandeep was able to engage with this distressed woman to better understand what had brought her to consider suicide and examine the level of risk she presented. After consultation with staff, police were dispatched to the caller’s home, and thanks to the collaborative efforts of 1-800-SUICIDE, we were able to keep her safe.

The Crisis Centre has answered over 21,039 calls on the 1-800-SUICIDE line and the 310-6789 Mental Health Line since 2004.



2004

2004

2009 BRIDGE SUICIDE PREVENTION INITIATIVES

The innovative Suicide Prevention Bridge Initiative project was the first of its kind in Canada.

In 2009, the Crisis Centre led a team to pilot The Suicide Prevention Bridge Initiative. The Crisis Centre developed community partnerships to install and activate six crisis hotline phones with signage on the Lion’s Gate Bridge, one of the more frequented locations for individuals to die by suicide. An additional partnership was created with the North Shore RCMP leading to the subsequent installation of 6 more phones on the Second Narrows Bridge. As of early 2015, physical barriers are being installed on the Second Narrows Bridge, a suicide prevention measure which is considered most effective. Unlike most bridges in the Lower Mainland, the Lion’s Gate Bridge is unable to structurally support physical suicide barriers at this time. Therefore, other options are being considered.

The Bridge Suicide Prevention Initiatives were made possible through vital community partnerships with the Crisis Centre, the Ministry of Transportation, the Crisis Line Association of BC, TELUS and local police agencies.

First silence, until a sobbing voice choked “I love my Mom...” Ben stood on the bridge, flooded with emotions. A history of sexual abuse, and his father’s cancer left him feeling isolated, desperate, and truly out of options. Ben picked up a yellow phone on the Lion’s Gate Bridge and was directly connected to a Crisis Centre volunteer, Kelly. Working to establish his trust, Kelly created a connection and a safe space for him to talk and share details of his life. Kelly kept Ben safely on the phone until she heard the police arrive and they confirmed they would take Ben to a local hospital for further help.

2004

2009

2009 BUILDING SENIORS' WELLNESS

Canadian seniors are vulnerable. They have among the highest suicide rates in the country and are less likely than other age groups to reach out for support during times of need. In response, the Crisis Centre launched an initiative that included a range of activities to reach older adults and those working with them. Over the past five years, we have enhanced training for Crisis Centre volunteers to respond to calls and chats from seniors, promoted distress services, including the newly created Seniors' Distress Line, developed a community education wellness workshop for older adults led by older adults and continued to provide training for service providers and volunteers working with older adults.

"One of the things I've worked hardest on in the last few years is developing my emotional maturity and wellness. To have this recognized as something that is important for everyone, and to have it celebrated is awesome. It was great to be heard and to be able to share what I have learned."

— *Seniors' Wellness Toolkit volunteer*

"It is a great help to hear stories from other seniors who have gone through similar life challenges. I envision many people reading it and relating to a story as a source of encouragement. I will be keeping copies of this new innovative resource with me at all times and sharing with all of the seniors who I work with."

— *Senior Service Provider*



In 2014

300 seniors attended our Lightening the Load workshop, providing older adults with awareness about mental and emotional wellbeing.

We developed a unique Seniors Wellness Toolkit that shares the stories and wellness tips from nine local seniors.

2009

2009

2012 CRISISCENTRECHAT.CA

Due to a growing number of people using web-based tools as a primary means of communication, the Crisis Centre launched CrisisCentreChat.ca in 2012, providing a new web-based platform for adults in distress (25+) where they can access free, confidential, non-judgmental support noon-1AM daily. CrisisCentreChat.ca, now with mobile-friendly technology, is for people who are in need of specific resources in their community that relate to their demographic, as well as for anyone who may not otherwise connect with traditional crisis intervention counselling services by phone, or in person.

In 2014

There are strong indications that for each adult who died by suicide, there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide (2014 World Health Organization).

In 2012, 2,436 people accessed CrisisCentreChat.ca, compared to 14,951 in 2014, a significant increase in chat visitors in only a few years.

Every day, we connect to people experiencing emotional distress on CrisisCentreChat.ca, many who explain they feel like our volunteers are the only people they are comfortable talking to. Whether they are communicating to us solely to speak to another human being, or they're dealing with a crisis, our volunteers provide a space where they can talk about any issue on their mind. One of our chatters is Dave, who states he's dealing with acute anxiety on a daily basis. Our volunteer empathizes with Dave's struggles and together they brainstorm some coping strategies. Dave states that he often practices breathing exercises. The volunteer refers Dave to a section of the Crisis Centre website that discusses mindfulness and walks through some simple mindfulness activities. Before the end of the chat, Dave explains he is feeling calmer and has some resources to come back to. He'll most likely log on to CrisisCentreChat.ca again, but he gets through these daily struggles thanks to the incredible work of our volunteers.



2014 MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

A few years ago, the Crisis Centre began experiencing a significant increase of people seeking resources on our website and logging onto YouthInBC.com through their mobile device. From only 1,186 of the people we support accessing our services through their smartphone, handheld, or tablet in 2010, to an outstanding 58,643 unique mobile visitors as of 2014, the statistics are staggering. Due to the overwhelming trends, we began working on a long-term project to integrate mobile friendly technology into all of our websites and chat services. As of 2014, anyone visiting our online resources has the ability to view our webpages, and receive one-on-one real-time support through their mobile device.

The Crisis Centre offers the only mobile friendly crisis chat service (operating YouthInBC.com and CrisisCentreChat.ca) that is available from noon-1AM daily across our province.

Over 60% of the people we serve through our website's resources and online chats are using their smartphone or a handheld device.

Ava reached out to us on YouthInBC.com from her iPad in the middle of her school day, desperate for help. She told us she was hearing voices. "I want to kill myself" spilled out of her. The voices were getting louder and were telling her to hurt herself. With a history of suicide attempts, Ava explained to our volunteer, Kang, she did not have a good experience with reaching out for help and was very concerned about bringing shame upon her family. Despite all this, Kang was able to get Ava's consent to send emergency intervention. Ava was struggling to find a physical safe space away from school and the attention of her schoolmates, where she would feel more comfortable meeting emergency mental health services. *If it wasn't for our mobile technology, Ava would not have been able to easily reach out for support outside of school grounds through her iPad that day. New mobile friendly services allow people the ability to receive real-time one-on-one support and important resources anywhere.*



2014 OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers provide more than 64,000 hours of service to our community – that equates to over \$1,200,000 in time donated to the Crisis Centre.

Our Distress Services volunteers undergo a thorough screening and rigorous, time-intensive training program of over 100 hours focused on basic counselling techniques, suicide risk assessment, crisis intervention and collaborative problem solving. They then provide a minimum of 200 hours of direct support on the frontline. The volunteers go through regular supervision to hone and refine their skills during their commitment.

Community Education workshops are delivered by highly trained volunteers, skillful and inspirational facilitators who share concrete tools for wellness and a positive message of hope.

"It was one of my first volunteer shifts on a chat that day, with my mentor there to support me. Amy was alone, had just swallowed a bunch of pills and I was unaware of her location. I soon learned about Amy's husband, how he would travel for long periods of time for work, and how she felt completely alone. She told me a bottle of anti-anxiety medication was her only option out of the pain; she was planning on killing herself that night. During our conversation, she kept taking more pills. We started talking about her past and she confided in me that she had been raped, one of the reasons why she was taking the medication. I finally persuaded her, after some time, to put the drugs away. Amy kept insisting she wanted to go to bed, but I managed to keep her on the chat. After trust was built between us, we called the police together and they found Amy that day, before it was too late."



2059 THE NEXT 45 YEARS

As the Crisis Centre embarks on the next 45 years of operations, we rely on the strong support from our donors, volunteers, service providers and community members. Together, we will continue focusing our efforts aiming to:

Deliver relevant crisis support and education programs with measurable impact to build resiliency, enhance wellness and prevent suicide among our community members.

Be a respected and credible leader in the community and trusted source of information on suicide prevention and awareness.

Partner with network providers and community stakeholders to work collaboratively to build a full continuum of mental healthcare for our communities.

Position Crisis Centre as a leader in capacity building through training programs on crisis intervention, suicide prevention and wellness; successfully engaging and training volunteers and staff as well as other community service providers and educational institutions.

2014 FINANCIALS

2014 Financial Summary

REVENUES

Vancouver Coastal Health Contract	\$280,476	21%
Fundraising Efforts	\$926,606	68%
Fees for Service and Training Fees	\$102,380	8%
Interest/Other Income	\$43,642	3%
Total	\$1,353,104	100%

EXPENSES

Distress Services Programming	\$836,783	62%
Community Education Programming	\$378,732	28%
Administration/Fundraising	\$137,105	10%
Total	\$1,352,620	100%

Audited financial statements are available at www.crisiscentre.bc.ca

2014 OUR DONORS

\$75,000+

Estate Of Kwong Hwei (Kathy) Lam
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