

Distress Centre HALTON

Annual Report 2019/20

Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 2020



United Way
Halton & Hamilton

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You Can Make A Difference

Volunteer with Distress Centre Halton

- Our training will prepare you to take calls on our Distress Line, and make calls with TeleCheck (no prior experience required)
- Our training is currently being done online via Zoom
- Volunteer from home or from our Oakville or Halton Hills office
- Visit www.dchalon.ca for more information and to complete an application

Message from Regional Chair Gary Carr



Message from Regional Chair Gary Carr

On behalf of Regional Council, I would like to welcome and thank those attending the Distress Centre Halton Annual General Meeting.

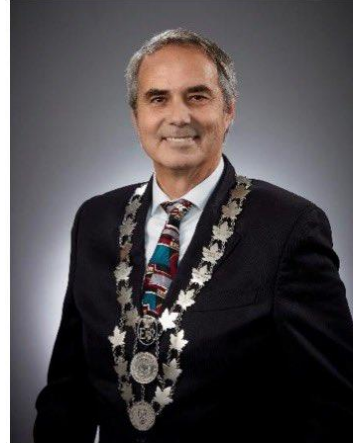
Today's meeting recognizes all the important work your team and volunteers do in the community. The Distress Centre provides critical supports for individuals experiencing crisis, loneliness and emotional stress. The work your team and all your volunteers do through the telephone and online services you provide, make a significant difference in the lives of those experiencing a mental health crisis.

COVID-19 has created challenges for all of us in many aspects of our lives. We have all learned during this difficult year how important it is to take care of our mental health and your service provides a connection for people when they need it the most. Thank you for always being available and ready to help people in Halton.

On behalf of Regional Council, I would like to thank Distress Centre Halton for the contributions you make each day to improve the quality of life in our community. By working together to improve mental health and well-being, we keep Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Sincerely,

Gary Carr
Regional Chair



Executive Summary

Message from the Executive Director



As I write this, five months into our global pandemic, reflecting back on our whirlwind year from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, we had planned for a re-invention of the Centre but did not plan for just how unprecedented that change would soon become.

On April 1, 2019 we legally became Distress Centre Halton, amalgamating Distress Centre Oakville and North Halton into one dynamic service. On December 1, 2019, Gail Cartwright, former Executive Director of Distress Centre North Halton, organized the move of our Halton Hills location into its new home at 14015 Danby Road, Halton Hills. Our Oakville location also took on a new look – fresh paint and new carpeting generously donated by Carpet Warehouse. These changes to our two locations set the tone for our new approach and reset.

All of our volunteers stepped up to our new vision this year with unmatched support and commitment!

Our Distress Line Volunteers responded to 18,741 calls between our Distress Line and TeleCheck! Our Volunteer Trainers provided outstanding support and facilitation to our new volunteers, ensuring they were ready to be on the phone lines with confidence, empathy, and understanding. Our Mentor Volunteers expertly guided new volunteers through their onboarding and first calls.

Our Bingo Volunteers brought in a record \$34,000 by staffing shifts at Delta Bingo. We actually staffed one of the last bingo shifts before the state of emergency was called in March 2020. Our Outreach Volunteers staffed display tables at many community and school events providing information about our Centre to potential clients, volunteers, and funders.

We expanded partnership both in the community and in the business sector. We piloted an Active Listening workshop to Sheridan College and we presented a streamlined version of this workshop to 311 Halton employees.

A thank you to our Board of Directors who realigned to the new vision by embracing greater agility and identifying areas of change needed to adjust to the new normal, both structurally and operationally.

A huge thank you to our supporters, including the United Way of Halton & Hamilton, Bell Let's Talk, May Court Club of Oakville, CCL Industries, The Lions Club, Knight of Columbus, The Kinsmen Club of Georgetown, and all of the many service clubs, churches, business and individual donors for their generous support of our Centre. A full list of supporters is included on page 12 of this report and also on our website.

We worked with the United Way of Halton & Hamilton contributing to their national video production. Our final fundraiser was partnered with the Autistic Job Finders Club at Milton's Magna employees "Live Rock and Roll Dance Party" held on February 15, followed by a corporate match by Milton's Magna International. The cheque presentation on March 14, 2020 was the last group shot taken before the state of emergency was called.

As an essential service, Distress Centre Halton stayed open during the state of emergency. To comply with physical distancing measures, we set-up our Oakville and Halton Hills locations to ensure only one Distress Line shift was covered at a time, and we quickly transitioned our TeleCheck service so volunteers could work remotely from home as of March 23, 2020. Our Distress Line also went remote in early April 2020.

When the world stopped, we did not. We moved quickly to ensure continuous support of our callers with our new Virtual Call Centre. We were proud to reach out to other Halton services at this historic time to provide support with their clientele as more and more people became isolated through the dramatic shock of change.

And finally – a heartfelt and proud thank you to our small but mighty staff that worked tirelessly and enabled the Centre to tackle all challenges, opportunities, and the substantial growth that we faced this year, always with humour, determination and heart.

Dara Eisner Clancy
Executive Director

Message from the Chair



Last year, in my Message from the Chair, I said that “that year” had the most changes packed into one year in the history of the Centre.

What I didn’t take into account was that Dara Eisner Clancy was our Executive Director for only the last three months of 2018-2019. In 2019-2020 Dara was our Executive Director for the full year, and what a year it was!

It was a year of many great accomplishments. We increased our revenue from our volunteers helping at Bingo and negotiated with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation to use that money more productively. Dara, Gail Cartwright, and Jyoti Sahu ran in October 2019 to raise more than \$18,300 for the Centre. In early 2020 Dara negotiated with Crisis Services Canada to sign up the Centre to provide training to our volunteers to serve clients of their nation-wide suicide prevention telephone lines. We approved a budget for 2019-2020 with an expected deficit of \$47,000 and Dara and her team turned that into a \$16,000 surplus.

Dara recommended two new excellent board members, Kimberly Calderbank and Brandie Stevenson, who joined us in August of 2019. And our own Gail Cartwright, formerly the Executive Director of North Halton Distress Centre, retired in December 2019 and promptly agreed to join the board in January 2020. We also had board members whose circumstances changed and who chose to retire from the board during the 2019-2020 period. We appreciate all they did for the Distress Centre in the time they served with us: Jeffrey Campbell, Florence Fiorino, Michelle Lee and Tyler Harper.

I write this in September of 2020 which is five months after the end of the period covered in our fiscal year 2019-2020. I have to say that these five months have been the true test of our organization, and I am so proud of our volunteers, our staff and our board as Distress Centre Halton has stepped up and met the challenge of the pandemic that has swept the world. Thank you all.

Richard Darjes
Board Chair

About Us

Distress Centre Halton is a non-profit charitable organization that provides telephone and online support to people 365 days of the year. We are a unique service in that we train volunteers for front-line work providing emotional support, befriending, and suicide risk assessment to people in distress or crisis.

Our service improves the health and wellness of people in our community and the quality of life of those who are feeling alone, isolated, and vulnerable.

Our Mission

Distress Centre Halton supports people in our community to better cope with crisis, loneliness, and emotional stress.

History

Distress Centre Halton is an amalgamation of 3 small Centres that originated in the 1970s – Distress Centre Oakville, Distress Centre North Halton, and Telecare Burlington. In April 2019 the Centres legally amalgamated and officially became Distress Centre Halton.

Originally volunteers answered the phone lines on Friday and Saturday nights only. As the demand for the service grew, the hours were extended to 24/7, 365 days of the year. In 2019/20 we responded to 18,741 conversations.

Board of Directors: April 2019-March 2020

Richard Darjes, Chair
Allison Boyd, Secretary
Florence Fiorino, Treasurer
Kimberly Calderbank
Jeff Campbell
Gail Cartwright (start date January 1, 2020)
Jodi Dwyer
Tyler Harper
Eric Hotson
Michelle Lee
Kristin Madarasz
Brandie Stevenson

Staff: April 2019-March 2020

Dara Eisner Clancy, Executive Director
Gail Cartwright, Operations Director (retired December 31, 2019)
Brenda Buchanan, Manager, Volunteer & Client Services
Kathleen Bontigao-Legaspi, Coordinator, TeleCheck & Community Outreach
Denise Sinclair, Administrative Assistant (end date September 21, 2020)
Rose Ford, Coordinator, Office Operations & Administration (start date Feb 24, 2020)

Volunteer Trainers: April 2019-March 2020

Marlene Beitz
Janis Bellman
Brenda Buchanan
Tim Dixon
Jodi Dwyer
Linda Jaklich
Michael Miu
Feeroza Suchak
Michael Thornton
Kathie Tourangeau
Susan Vandenberg

Our Services

DISTRESS LINE – available 365 days of the year

Oakville: 905-849-4541

Burlington: 905-681-1488

Halton Hills: 905-877-1211

People call for lots of reasons,
including:

- Feelings of loneliness
- Relationship issues
- Thoughts of suicide
- Bullying
- Bereavement
- Addictions
- School or work issues
- And many more ... no issue is too big or too small

Call us. We Listen. We care.

TeleCheck – Mon to Fri 9am-5pm

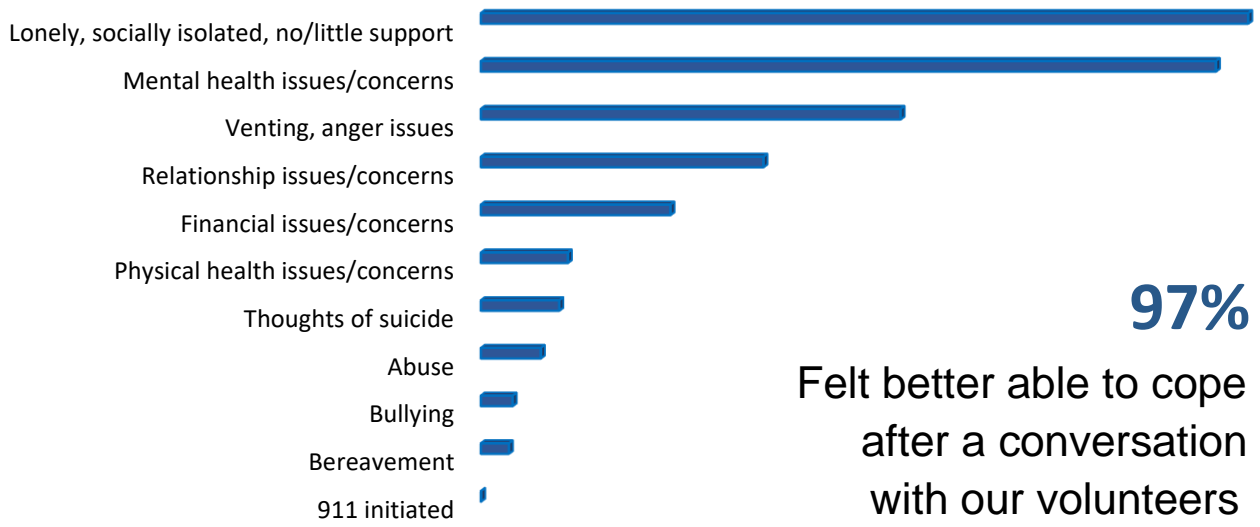
Distress Line Volunteers will call you
at a scheduled time to:

- Check on your safety & well-being
- Provide medication or appointment reminders
- Provide respite to caregivers

Calls can be once a week, several
times a week, or daily. You can
cancel anytime, or stop and restart
as needed.

**For more information contact us at
905-849-4559**

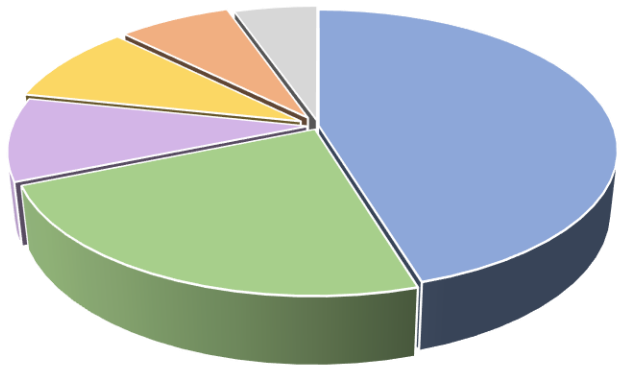
Impact



97%

Felt better able to cope after a conversation with our volunteers

Supports Offered



- Listened, befriended, provided emotional support
- Let client vent, get things off their chest
- Discussed self-care, coping strategies
- Explored options, next steps
- De-escalated the situation/client
- Ensured client safety, well-being

210

Total Volunteers

9,487

Volunteer Hours

1,562

Average Conversations Per Month

Client Feedback

"The Distress Centre is my only meaningful support and I feel better as a result of our conversation. Thank you so much."

"I really want to thank you and everyone at the Distress Centre. You're all such wonderful people for volunteering your time to talk to others and provide them with help."

"I'm so grateful for the Distress Centre especially on the weekends. I believe that having access to you has saved my life."

Caller was feeling suicidal and thinking of jumping from their balcony. Our volunteer de-escalated the situation and ensured the caller's safety.

"Thank you for taking my call, I really appreciate it. I'm feeling so much better, thank you. Thank you."

Caller was crying and thinking of suicide. Our volunteer provided support and ensured the caller's safety.

"Thank you for being so kind, I wasn't expecting that after I was rejected by the other places I called."

"Whoever's paying you better put a raise in your mailbox."

He was shocked to find out we're not paid for this and that we volunteer to do it.

"You actually saved my life today. You stopped me from jumping off that bridge."

"I really appreciate all the volunteers who took time out of their Christmas Day to help vulnerable people. I'm happy I can connect, especially today."

Caller extended Christmas Greetings and thanks to the entire Distress Centre team.

"If I can't call you, nobody else will listen to me. Thank you very much for listening to me"

"It's really wonderful having a service where people call out to check-up on others because sometimes people don't have anyone and I'm really lonely. Thank you."

"I am very lonely and it always feels good when I am able to talk with someone."

Financials – Fiscal 2019/20

Fiscal 2019/2020

Revenue

Donation and Funding Income	\$ 177,751	63%
Fundraising Revenue	105,883	37%
Interest Income	35	0%
	\$283,669	

Expense

Administrative Expenses	\$ 196,236	73%
Communication Expenses	15,837	6%
Contract Services	12,064	5%
Fundraising Expenses	689	0%
Program Expenses	10,126	4%
Occupancy Costs	31,050	12%
HST Rebate and Adjustments	1,619	1%
	\$ 267,621	

Excess of revenue over expense **\$ 16,048**

Complete audited financial statements are available through our office.

Our Supporters

Distress Centre Halton is a United Way Funded Agency. We also receive donations from service clubs, churches, local businesses, and individuals.

Your donations allow us to support the people of Halton to better cope with crisis, loneliness, and emotional stress.

Thank you!

Funders:

United Way Halton & Hamilton
Bell Let's Talk Community Fund
Altruists of Oakville
Backman Family Foundation
Burlington Foundation
Halton Region Community Investment Fund
Knights of Columbus Oakville, Marian Council
Lion's Club of Oakville
The Graeme Moffat Memorial Fund (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation)
The MacDonald Family Foundation (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation)
The May Court Club of Oakville

Partners:

Distress & Crisis Ontario
Delta Bingo Oakville
Canadian Mental Health Association
St. John's United Church
Norval United Church
Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition
Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce
Sherwood Digital Copy & Print
Cars4Cures
"VintageBeef" aka Daniel M

Donors:

Carpet Warehouse
Magna International Inc. - Magna Karmax
Alex Irish Management Company
P.V. & V. Insurance Centre Ltd.
CCL Industries Inc.
Norval United Church Women
The Georgetown Bridge Club
Oakville Shrine Club
The John Dax Charlton Foundation
Individual Donors

Call to Action

Donate: Donations make it possible for Distress Centre Halton to support people in our community to better cope with crisis, loneliness, and emotional stress. Donations over \$25 are tax deductible, a charitable receipt will be issued. Donations can be made online here: www.dchalton.ca/donate.

Volunteer: Volunteers are the lifeline of our service! No prior experience is needed, we provide the training. For more information about volunteer requirements and upcoming training dates, visit our website: www.dchalton.ca.

Walk2Talk from home 2020: This is an online virtual event the week of October 4-10, 2020. You can walk, run, ride, or even swagger in your favorite location; at the park, along the lakeshore, at the mall, or in your own home. Visit our Walk2Talk website to register or make a donation!

Distress Centre Halton

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