

# Distress Centre HALTON

## Annual Report 2021/22

Annual General Meeting  
Wednesday, October 5, 2022



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.dchaltont.ca](http://www.dchaltont.ca) for more information and to complete an application



**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.

This meeting recognizes the significant, positive impact your team and volunteers have on the residents of Halton. For nearly 50 years, Distress Centre Halton has provided critical supports for individuals experiencing crisis, loneliness and emotional stress. Through the 24/7 telephone and online services you provide, you make an important difference in the lives of those experiencing a mental health crisis.

Many individuals have faced new challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly impacting mental health and wellbeing. In the height of COVID-19 response, Distress Centre Halton generously led complimentary de-escalation workshops to over 700 Halton Region Healthcare workers to ensure the public were well supported.

On behalf of Regional Council, I would like to thank you 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Carr".

Gary Carr  
Regional Chair



## Executive Summary - Message from the Executive Director and Chair



*In the picture from left to right: Rev. Walter Ridley – Founder of North Halton Distress Centre in 1973; Dara Eisner Clancy, Executive Director; Gail Cartwright, Board Chair.*

We are so very proud of Distress Centre Halton again this year.

From April 1, 2021 – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, our achievements can only be described as tremendous and transformational! Tremendous support from our amazing and resilient volunteers who give so compassionately and generously of their time, unstoppable effort from our small but growing staff who work from their heart each and every day, and transformational wisdom from our dedicated Board who provided vision and direction this year.

We were not expecting a second year of Covid rule; like the rest of the world, we had hoped we could return to our old normal instead of a creating a new normal, but Omicron changed our trajectory.

Knowing that the extended Covid restrictions would be creating even more mental stress on our community, we strove to bring more awareness of DCH to the public. We were recognized as Reader's Choice by Milton, Oakville, Burlington, and Halton Hills. Our incredible volunteer trainers were awarded the Community Spirit Award by the Town of Oakville for their tireless efforts at training new volunteers onto the lines.

We would also like to thank the United Way Halton & Hamilton for the recognition of The United Apart Award, which recognized an organization that successfully connected and engaged employees – whether virtually, or at a safe distance. DCH has kept both offices open for both volunteers and staff – demonstrating a shared commitment and shared love for our community, despite the relentless uncertainty and challenges.

We are especially proud of our support to Halton Region's amazing Covid Teams. We provided de-escalation and self-care workshops to nearly 700 Halton Health Covid Caseworkers and mass immunization staff, to help them in their complicated commitment to the public with techniques gleaned from DCH's decades of experience.

Our staff nearly doubled in size this year, and we provided over 15,217 hours of volunteer service, and provided 27,935 connections in our community to people struggling with isolation, loneliness, and emotional stress.

This year, the long-term effects of isolation were starting to show more on the lines and DCH volunteers helped the people of Halton region cope with overwhelming uncertainty in so many areas as the world continue to change rapidly, repeatedly, and drastically.

We also want to acknowledge the tremendous support of our funders that kept us growing. The UWHH, The Oakville Community Foundation, The John Dax Foundation, Cotiviti Cares, Fidelity, Altruist's Society, Rattlesnake Point, Halton Region, the Public Health Agency of Canada and too many others to list here. We are so grateful for the support that you provided during this extended year of uncertainty.

Distress Centre Halton was also awarded by the Halton Hill Chamber of Commerce Association of the Year, which was proudly accepted in March 2022! A tremendous end to a transformational year!

We are tired, but we are wired and inspired to step up and provide even more emotional support to the growing need in the continuum of mental health support in our community as we face our next 'new normal'.

Dara Eisner Clancy, Executive Director

Gail Cartwright, 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 2021/22 we responded to 27,935 conversations.

### **Board of Directors: April 2021-March 2022**

Gail Cartwright, Current Chair  
Richard Darjes  
Jodi Dwyer  
Izabela Kvesic  
Sue Munro  
Craig Redick  
Feroza Suchak

### **Staff: April 2021-March 2022**

#### **Full Time**

Dara Eisner Clancy - Executive Director  
Brenda Buchanan - Manager, Distress & Crisis Program  
Kathleen Bontigao-Legaspi - Manager, TeleCheck Program  
Mark Howarth – Manager, Administrations & Operations  
Victoria Bello – Coordinator, Volunteer Services

#### **Part Time**

Kristin Leveille – Volunteer Coordinator, CSPS  
Linda Jaklich - Supervisor, Calendar & Shift Management  
Rose Ford - Donations Management & Communications

### **Volunteer Trainers: April 2021-March 2022**

Brenda Buchanan  
Dan Kaloutsky  
Diane Woodall  
Dionne Downer  
Feroza Suchak  
Linda Jaklich  
Michael Miu  
Michael Thornton  
Nicole Frost  
Sue Munro

## Our Services

**DISTRESS LINE – available 365 days of the year**

**Oakville: 905-849-4541**

**Burlington: 905-681-1488**

**Halton Hills: 905-877-1211**

**Hamilton: 905-561-5800**

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**

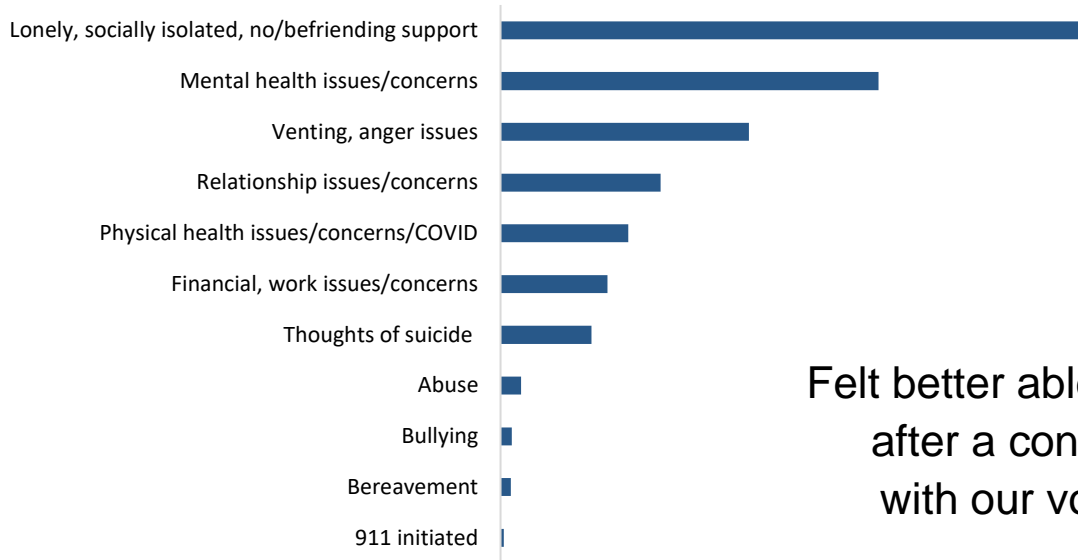
Distress Line Volunteers will call you at a scheduled time to:

- 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**

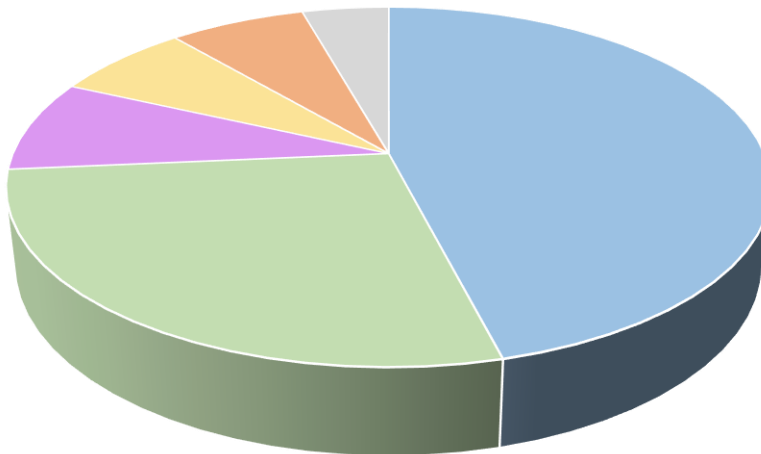
## Impact



**97%**

Felt better able to cope after a conversation with our volunteers

## Supports Offered



- Listened, befriended, emotional support
- Let caller vent, get things off their chest
- Discussed self care, coping strategies
- Explored options, next steps, pro/con list
- De-escalated the situation/caller
- Ensured client (and/or others) safe for now

**286**

Total Volunteers

**15,217**

Volunteer Hours

**2,328**

Average Conversations Per Month

## Financials – Fiscal 2021/22

### Fiscal 2021/2022

#### Revenue

Donation and Funding Income	\$ 513,850	87%
Fundraising Revenue	74,244	13%
Interest Income	169	0%
	<b>\$588,263</b>	

#### Expense

Administrative Expenses	\$ 372,879	77%
Communication Expenses	47,769	10%
Contract Services	9,085	2%
Fundraising Expenses	569	0%
Program Expenses	18,508	4%
Occupancy Costs	31,500	7%
HST Rebate and Adjustments	3,041	1%
	<b>\$ 483,351</b>	

#### Excess of revenue over expense

**\$ 104,912**

Complete audited financial statements are available through our office.



## Client Feedback

"Very grateful someone is there to take my call on Christmas day, especially this year, I've been feeling lonelier. Thank you."

"Really nice talking to you. My head was spinning like a vortex before this call. I appreciate you talking with me. Thank you for what you do."

"I'm very thankful for the Distress Line, it's an important coping strategy for me and for many others during these hard times."

"Thank you. I feel much better after talking. I don't know what I would do without the Distress Line, especially now during the lockdown. I feel like I can talk about anything, say anything, and I'm so thankful for it."

"Thank you to you and your staff you're all amazing, you've helped me so much, never underestimate what you mean to someone like me, everyone there has really helped me so much, anytime I need to talk they're always there for me."

"I can't thank you enough. I like the coping strategies we talked about and I'll call again if my thoughts go dark. Really, I mean it, thank you."

*Caller had thoughts of suicide, volunteer listened and worked with caller to create a safety plan.*

"I'm calling to express my appreciation for the empathy and compassion shown by the volunteer I spoke with last night."

*They called the night before in crisis, it was their first time calling us. The volunteer helped them to de-escalate and feel safe.*

"Thanks for calling. Good to have someone to talk to, to listen and not contradict how I am feeling."

"Thank you for calling. I need to talk. I want a positive way to vent and keep my sanity. I am glad to have connected with you guys. You listen and care about people."

"I'm a senior and these calls help me a lot, I don't feel as isolated, especially during COVID."

## 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:

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

### Donors:

100 Women Who Care Burlington  
100 Women Who Care Oakville  
Abbey Park High School  
Alex Irish Management Company  
Bell Let's Talk Community Fund  
Boehringer Ingelheim Canada  
CCL Industries Inc.  
CIBC Children's Foundation  
Community Foundation of Halton North  
Cotiviti Cares  
Crystal Homes Corp.  
The Georgetown Bridge Club  
Fidelity Investments Canada  
The John Dax Charlton Foundation  
Magna International Inc. - Magna Karmax  
Meridian Credit Union Ltd.  
Norval United Church Women  
Oakville Blueprinting  
Oakville Shrine Club  
P.V. & V. Insurance Centre Ltd.  
Rattlesnake Golf Club  
St. John's United Church Women  
Unilock Ltd.  
Individual Donors

### Partners:

Burlington Chamber of Commerce  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Carpet Warehouse  
Cars4Cures  
Compu-master  
Crisis Services Canada – Now Talk Suicide  
Distress & Crisis Ontario  
Delta Bingo Oakville  
Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce  
Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition  
HeyRay  
Milton Meals on Wheels  
Oakville Meals on Wheels  
Norval United Church  
Ramrock Electric  
Sherwood Digital Copy & Print  
St. John's United Church  
"VintageBeef" aka Daniel M

**THANK  
YOU!**

## 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](http://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](http://www.dchalton.ca).

**Connect with us:** Follow us on our Social Media channels to keep up with the latest news and events. Like and share posts to help us spread the word about our services.



## Distress Centre Halton

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