



Citizens' Counselling Centre is big into reality. Much of what goes on in our cozy counselling rooms is gentle support as clients move from a state of protective denial and magical-thinking into a place of mindful reality. A place that they can begin the hard work of acceptance, reassessing, and rebuilding – with the support of a grounded, skillful counsellor. We don't deal in magical thinking.

Except, it seems, in how we fund the work we do. It is here that much of our revenue projections are based on hopes and yes, believing in magic.

Six years ago the first of what would be a series of just such magicians arrived.

Tip a Fool – the Centre's major fundraiser – had seen its last ticket sold – unless by some miraculous happening someone answered our final call for a new Event Chair. Enter Kyara Kahakauwila, LA Limousine VP and Metchosin Councillor (note spelling of councillor). Kyara seemed to come from out of nowhere saying – yes, I can help.

When asked why she put her hand up for such a huge all-consuming job, that paid only gratitude and appreciation, Kyara shares a very personal experience of how mental health – and the availability of quality support – has affected her life.

"The concerns of mental health are very close to me. Not many people know (though I guess they will now), but I suffered from severe postpartum depression following the births of both my sons. I didn't know where to turn and I thought I could manage on my own; it took four years of my life away. Had

I known about Citizens' Counselling Centre, things may have been different for me. I don't want others to suffer in silence.

"What the Centre does for their clients is invaluable to the well-being of our community. Being a part of the fundraising efforts for the Centre is my way of ensuring help is there for those that need it, when they need it," says Kyara.

While not the same story, it was that same desire, willingness and abundance of ability and heart that brought magic-makers Michelle Le Sage, Oak Bay Beach Hotel's GM, and Stephen Roughley, Victoria Marriott Hotel's GM, to the Centre as rock star Tip a Fool celebrity waiters. Michelle would go on to co-chair the event with Kyara. Within a year the fabulous three had taken Tip a Fool to new heights of success – not only money-raised – but fun, joy and value.

After a crazy – and very successful – Tip a Fool 2017 it was decided that a year-off was needed to re-assess the whys and hows of the production-intense event. So as not to leave the Centre with a gap in revenue, the three got together to create what was to be a "fill-in event" for 2018 – just a simple dinner with a guest chef, or two. With the support of the Hotel Association of Greater Victoria, the Oak Bay Beach Hotel, Ed Bain, and six of Victoria's top executive chefs – this "fill-in event" became an instant smash-hit – delighting more than 100 guests and raising almost \$40,000 in its first year – The Culinary Phantom Dinner was born.

"Working with Michelle and Stephen was a lot of fun and a great experience. The Phantom Dinner was a

thrill to put on; I was so pleased with the success and cannot wait to do it again!" says Kyara.

This summer saw more magicians arrive at our door. Citizens' is a long time Community Partner with the United Way and our friends there connected the Centre with Katie McGowan, ED of Business for Better Society (BBS). Katie and BBS chose the Centre to be the beneficiary of their inaugural Kitchens4Missions fundraising event, also in September. That well-attended and enjoyed event raised over \$14,000 for the Centre.

The reality of it all seems to be that if you're doing good work – and are very lucky – good people magically appear out of nowhere to make sure that you can keep doing the work.

And we're very grateful for the magic of it all.



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Citizens
COUNSELLING
CENTRE



WE WILL BUILD CAPACITY THROUGH STATE OF THE HEART COUNSELLING.

Friends of the Centre is published annually and is distributed throughout the Citizens' Counselling Centre Community.

What Makes Us Happy?

According to Yale University professor of psychology Laurie Santos the things that we commonly think are going to make us happy, don't. The research suggests that things like a high salary, material objects, or high academic or professional achievement are just not cutting it like we thought they would. Our minds seem to be steering us in the wrong direction – if happiness is the desired destination.

But what is it then that does create a sense of happiness?

Well, that's exactly what the course that Santos is teaching at Yale is about: "Psychology and the Good Life" – and it seems to have struck a chord. Incredibly, about 1,200 Yale students took the course proving it to be Yale's most popular in its 317-year history. In fact, a full 25% of Yale's undergraduate population took the course.

Based on the course's resounding success, Yale created and offered a free online course that's open to the public: "The Science of Well-Being" through online learning platform Coursera.

The purpose of the course is to not only learn what psychological



research says about what makes us happy but also to put those strategies into practice. The course reveals misconceptions we have about happiness, and it goes on to provide activities that have been proven to increase happiness and strategies to build better habits.

The last part of the online course asks learners to apply one wellness activity, which the course refers to as a "Rewirement", into their lives for four weeks.

We were intrigued by the topic, as well as its popularity, and as a result two of our staff members, Laura Hutcheson and Sheila Gauthier, have successfully completed the on-line course.

Using The Science of Well-Being course as a template, they are in the process of developing a curriculum specific to Citizens' clientele.

"Making Sense of Happiness" will be offered as an eight-week group starting in the Spring of 2019.

"While the Yale course shares a variety of research on what brings the feeling of happiness to people, we felt the examples were largely geared to a privileged demographic," says course co-developer Sheila Gauthier. "In addition, we are working towards making the offering less academic and more practical along with inserting material from our own life experiences on the topic of happiness."

So, what has science proven to actually improve happiness? When asked her three top-tips Santos offers: taking time for yourself; a regular mindfulness and/or gratitude practice; and giving to others. She said in a CBC interview, "People who give money away, give things away, donate to charity, and volunteer their time, those are the folks that tend to be happier."



Board of Directors 2018/19

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Do you or does someone you know work for the BC Government?

If you do - have you considered naming the Centre as your Donor Choice for your PECSF charitable donations? You can designate that your donations go directly to the Centre. We'll receive those donations twice annually in August and March. See the PECSF Charities page on the PECSF website for more info!



Provincial Employees Community Services Fund



CitizensCounselling



friends of the centre



On Healing & Curing & Us

by Brenda Wilson, ED

than science. Life is filled with mystery, courage, heroism and love – all these things that we can witness but not measure or even understand, but they make our lives valuable anyway.

selves, to every counselling session with our clients is the most important part of any counselling we do. And we tried very hard to do this for over 9,000 hours this past year! I think that is amazing.

for our services as well as offering the same to several other non-profits, most notably BC Schizophrenia Society who has been our valued tenant since the beginning. That's pretty impressive too.

"We thought we could cure everything, but it turns out that we can only cure a small amount of human suffering. The rest of it needs to be healed, and that's different. Healing and curing are inherently different. Curing means 'eliminating all evidence of disease,' while healing means 'becoming whole.'"

These words from Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen resonated for me as a staff member of our healing community at Citizens'.

She goes on to say, "I think science defines life in its own way, but life is larger

Healing is a potential in all relationships and at all times. Our power to heal is far less limited than our power to cure. Healing is not a relationship between an expert and a problem ... it is a relationship between human beings. In the presence of another whole person, no one needs to feel ashamed of their present pain or weakness and be separated from others by it. No one needs to feel alone and small."

What this says loud and clear to me is that bringing ourselves, our whole but of course less than perfect

And do you know what else is amazing?

The new almost here year, 2019, is the Centre's 50th birthday. From kitchen table beginnings to 2018 we have served over 25,000 clients. We have trained over 800 volunteer counsellors and helped support the careers of over 300 Master's level practicum students. Over 200 Board members have helped shape and govern the Centre. That's pretty impressive.

We bought our building 28 years ago and have enjoyed secure offices

We have weathered many funding storms during that time; we have witnessed many wonderful community non-profits rise and fall. But just as we believe in our clients' resilience and offer them hope and support, those working at and governing the Centre have always believed passionately in the services we offer.

As of now we have not yet planned our 50th celebrations but there will be some serious celebrating to do. We'll keep you posted.



Helping the Helpers

Another initiative the Centre is developing comes from our understanding that people's lives are more and more complicated and that our workplaces are very often incredibly stressful – especially if we encounter people that are distressed, frustrated and angry.

Many people encounter situations where they feel ill equipped to help and unable to communicate effectively if the person they are trying to speak with is upset. This can be particularly true in our region's many social service agencies.

We also recognize that the Centre has a great deal of experience – and expertise in working with peo-

ple that are distressed. We're also pretty amazing teachers.

In the Centre's feedback surveys one of the many questions that we ask both clients and volunteers is how they were treated by our front-line staff. "Did you find our office staff welcoming and accessible when you first called and in any other contact with them after that?" What we consistently hear back is yes - they made me feel welcome, comfortable and at ease.

So it makes sense that we develop and deliver a program for the many staff and volunteers of front-line agencies in the Capital Region on how best to communicate with

people that are under pressure or duress.

The working title of the planned eight-week program: "Receiving and Responding Effectively: How to Communicate under Pressure". Or maybe we'll call it Radical Empathy. We don't know yet.

What we are quite sure of at this point is that pretty much everyone could use the skills we will be offering – and could use a place to decompress, debrief and unpack their work day situations – but we'll start with local social service providers as we believe this will benefit our community colleagues – and the people they so lovingly serve.



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

Our funders this year include:



United Way
Greater Victoria



VICTORIA
FOUNDATION



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



Kitchens 4 Missions
A Business for Better Society Initiative



And hopefully
YOU!

PAST FISCAL YEAR:

- 8,800 hours of counselling
- 1131 clients served
- 115 volunteer counsellors
- 8.2 sessions per client (on average)

TOP PRESENTING ISSUES:

- Stress/Anxiety/Panic Attacks
- Depression
- Relationship/Communication
- Self Esteem / Identity Issues
- Addictions (past/present)
- Physical/Emotional Abuse (past/present)
- Suicide attempts (past/present)

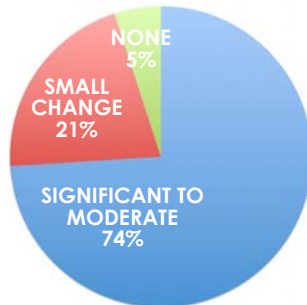
DID YOU KNOW?

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

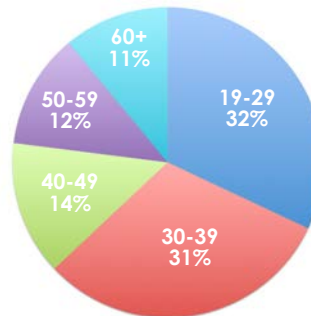
\$1,000,000 is the market value of counselling services provided by trained volunteers

32% of our clients are between the ages of 19 and 29

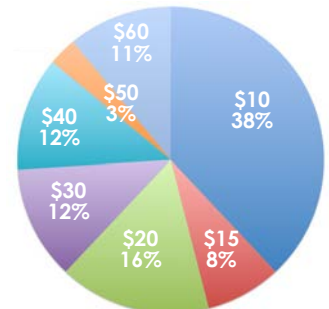
CLIENT REPORTED CHANGES AS A RESULT OF COUNSELLING



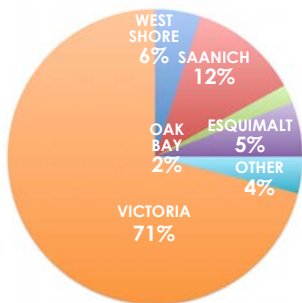
CLIENTS BY AGE



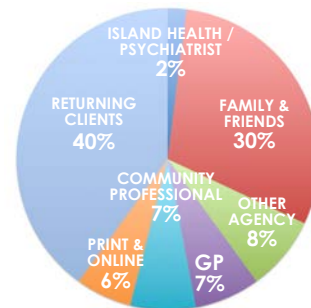
FEES



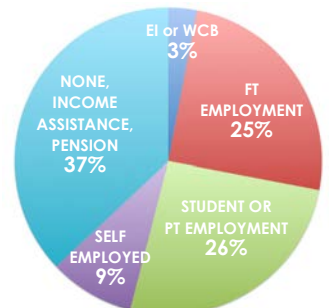
AREA OF RESIDENCE



REFERRAL SOURCES



CLIENT INCOME SOURCE



CLIENT FEEDBACK FROM THE QUESTION

"HOW WAS THIS COUNSELLING PROCESS VALUABLE TO YOU?"

"She helped me be more aware of my emotions and feelings, encouraged me to check in with myself and I found this helped me to better rationalize my feelings of anxiety."

"I went through a noticeable transformation while seeing my counsellor."

"It was a life-changing few months."

"He helped me be more honest with myself, gain confidence, build stronger relationships and cope with social anxiety."

"Having regular appointments pushed me to stay engaged in improving my mood and anxiety rather than ignoring it."

"I finally feel good about myself and my parenting for the first time in a long time."

"Just having someone who listened to me and didn't judge me felt amazing."

Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre

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