

Introducing the Tender s



Please Welcome The Tender Hearts to the Centre Community of Volunteer Counsellors

In no particular order: Alyson Kowalewsky, Amber Freer, Christopher Simons, Claudia Fabbri, Deirdre Syme, Elspeth Horn, Mia Yule, Jack MacDonald, Jenny Goubault, Kahla Lichti, Kevin Bagshaw, Lael Whitehead, Megan Stanley, Samira Fraser, Rose Sylvester, Shiela O'Shea, Wesley Stolth, Andrea Kober, Anja Hess, Anne Vaasjo, Danielle Mondor-Arslan, Eric Ganassin, Eric Verbeek, Heather Murphy, Jordy Freeman, Katie Schmid, Levi Chase-Levesque, Lindy Duchesne, Macayla Yan, Marissa Boyce, Marnie Caron, Mike Wilson, Nicola Oldham, Sarah Hermesen.

Graduating Group of 17/18

Last year Citizens' Counselling made the decision to invest in a major undertaking... addressing our growing wait list. An eight to 12 week wait that, for some can be the difference between beginning their change process, or remaining stuck. The solution we arrived at was to double-up on the training groups. The Tender Hearts, 34 dedicated graduate counsellors, are those two groups.

Let me tell you a little bit about this year's training process.

With 36 spots to fill the amount of interviews needed was looking overwhelming – so we made the decision to do things a little differently.

Group interviews were scheduled where applicants experienced some individual, small group, and large group exercises. This allowed us, with the support of our Citizens' staff and four training assistants (Gayle Floyd, Danelle Kabush, Jody Rambold, and Shannon Husk) to narrow the field to 36 accepted trainees.

Groups began on Wednesday and Thursday evenings by mid-September. Our online training resources were expanded to include a training schedule for participants and revised training agendas for the training team. With some revisions to our training process we introduced the counselling and self-awareness aspects simultaneously to allow trainees more time to acclimate to the idea of being a counsellor and spent more time on the foundational skills that make up the majority of work that happens at Citizens',

especially for counsellors early on in their counselling experience.

The first weekend in December saw our two groups become one for the Shawnigan Lake School residential retreat, and during an intense session of family of origin work and skill development around core issues, the Tender Hearts named themselves and took one more step forward in the footsteps of many that have walked this path before them.

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**Citizens
COUNSELLING
CENTRE**



We will build capacity through state of the heart counselling.

Report from the ED

by Brenda Wilson

Several times this year someone has remarked to me about the upbeat, full of smiles, chuckles and laughter nature of the Centre, expressing surprise that a counselling agency can be so lively.

While we deal constantly with people's pain it obviously does not seem to mean that we must be sombre to be serious. I believe this is one of the Centre's core strengths. This positive, hopeful attitude works well and should be nurtured carefully. I remember seeing a family therapy video long ago called "I'd Hear Laughter". This was the response from a family member when asked "How would you know something positive had happened in your family?" I can't help but think that if laughter is an important benchmark for health, then we are one of the healthiest places in town.

We continue to be a healthy, vibrant, flexible agency that strives to walk the walk and talk the talk. We just graduated 34 new counsellors (having embarked on a one time plan of conducting two training

groups this year) and over 70 applications to this fall's training program are now being reviewed. We are holding steady with our client numbers the past couple of years and with our increased number of counsellors soon to be active, clients phoning from now on will hopefully be told of a wait list of one month or less, a far cry from the three months that many have waited in the last year or so.

Our fine Board of Directors is committed to updating, reviewing and making decisions which involve both the head and the heart. Staff and consultants do the same. The amount of change that takes place here – our clients' and our own is vast and never ending.

What doesn't change is the values that all here at the Centre hold close: quality, accessible, respectful, non-judgemental training and counselling. And those values light our way all day, every day.

I am constantly amazed at how smoothly the Centre runs given the number of people and the details of the day to day



Brenda Wilson, Director

operations. It remains truly a privilege to work in a place where staff like, respect and support each other, Board members are present and ready to help and volunteers are committed and care-full.

And for the next year? We'll start another training full of great people, we'll offer our services to about 1200 clients, our building will continue to echo with tears and laughter and the stuff of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Wilson'.

Report from the Board Chair

by Chris Hoyer

This year the Board has been staying the course as we have worked towards the goals in our strategic plan, capably steered by Board member David Hume.

Our double cohort of new counsellor volunteers is about to launch, after training under Andre Serzisko's skilled and supportive guidance. We're all eager to see the waiting list finally shrink. The Board has done a lot of patient, detailed work on updating and amending our by-laws, ably spearheaded by Board member Andy Wachtel, who has also guided us through decisions around our depreciation and savings plans, to ensure our continued financial stability. And Board member Sara Comish has done a fantastic job of enlarging our Board for the coming year with people who will bring a wide range of new skills and knowledge:



Chris Hoyer, Board Chair

New members at large John Fraser, Sandy Lundmark, Neil Webb, Chantelle Jones and Tim Wedge and new Counsellor Representative Lindy Duchesne will all stand for election at this year's AGM. We're excited to welcome them 'on Board' (pun intended!).

We say goodbye to two Board members this year. Eliza Bates-Smith who has been on the Board as our legal advisor for several years is now a new

Mother, and Carla Macdonald, a Counsellor Representative for the last two years is also moving on, though she remains a counsellor at the Centre. Thank you to both for your dedication and service. I am stepping down as Chair this year, as it's time to pass on the reins, but I will remain on the Board as Past Chair. I am very grateful and honoured to have served in this capacity for the past three years, and I'm also happy to hand over to Sara Comish, who I know will do a fabulous job.

Our Board work is made easy because of the knowledge and support supplied to us by the indomitable Brenda Wilson, backed up by an extraordinarily dedicated and helpful staff. So heartfelt thanks to my fellow Board members, to all the staff, and most especially thanks to all our volunteers who give so much and so generously. I am honoured and grateful to be part of such a great team – thank you!



GVCCC



CitizensCounselling



Introducing The Tender Hearts *cont'd*

Cont'd from page 1...

As all group process moves forward, the difficulty of unlearning how to listen, and the newness of listening with new ears can become overwhelming for some and we lost two people along the way, as the intensity of the training experience and the volume of new information began to take its toll.

For those that continued, it wasn't always easy, we worked our way through doubts and struggles, judgement and questions, mistrust and missteps, but we still took one step after another, and in truth I never doubted that what I began to see early in the new year would develop. The new counsellors-in-training were beginning to feel some confidence in what they had been practicing, the core skills began to assert themselves in practice sessions.

We introduced a five-month triad process that gave each trainee exposure to full-length practice counselling sessions, and we utilized both groups to simulate the experience of counselling an individual that they did not know. We also introduced them to clients so they could hear directly from people about what made the difference for them in the counselling process.

The spring saw us taking on heavy topics ranging from depression to suicide, and addiction to sexualized

assault and trauma. Some new attention this year concentrated our time on experiences of culture within a counselling context, our relationship to food, and navigating through the difficult and changing language in the area of gender. I was thinking that we may lose some more trainees during this time, but everyone rode out the heaviness of the training content and refocused on doing what we were quite used to doing: grounding, sharing, supporting each other, teaching and practicing, and that inner confidence began to rise again and our almost-counsellors started to talk about their excited nervousness in taking on Intake Interviews and launching themselves in a counselling role with Citizens'.

The beginning of May saw our second full weekend gathering with both groups, and our trainees put in a lot of practice time that was observed by the training team.

And finally, June arrived. We graduated the Tender Hearts cohort of 34 new counsellors on June 6 and 7, and while their work is only beginning, I owe them a debt of gratitude as they enter their service as counsellors in our community of helpers. I couldn't have asked for two better groups of individuals as my first training year at this incredible organization.

Some thank you's need to be said on behalf of the Tender Hearts, and my training team...

To our Citizens' support staff, Sheila, Meegan and Laura, thank you for always getting what we needed, to organizing our residential weekend, to making sure evaluations were available, and to providing the necessary information when we needed it. To Pip and Brenda, thank you for working with me to make this happen, without your support we never could have pulled it off. To our Supervisors, Doug, Lilli and Marilyn thank you so much for your time and effort in introducing new and sometimes difficult ideas to our training group, and finally to my TAs, you made it possible for me to teach while you made sure you were there, in your quiet and accepting silence, holding our space, watching over our groups, and allowing the training process to happen the way it needed to happen. Then you took on even more by demonstrating with me, and helping keep our groups on task by facilitating through discussions and content, and making it easy for me to ignore the details of what needs to happen to make these groups run.

Welcome... to the Tender Hearts.

Andre Serzisko - Trainer

Board of Directors 2017/18

Chair - Chris Hoyer

Vice Chair - Andy Wachtel

Treasurer - Lisa Underdown

Secretary - Sara Cornish

Special Advisor - Eliza Bates-Smith

Members at Large -

Arla Sinclair

David Hume

Bev Regan

Counsellor Representatives -

Carla Macdonald

John Manthorpe

Terri Layman

Administration Team

Brenda Wilson

Laura Hutcheson

Meegan Simpson-Cooke

Pip Crocker

Sheila Gauthier

Professional Team

Andre Serzisko

Lilli Rosenberg

Doug Carter

Marilyn Murdock

"I had the answers,
she just guided
me in a positive
direction."

~Centre Client



Our funders
this year
include:



United Way
OF GREATER VICTORIA
COMMUNITY PARTNER



Provincial Employees Community Services Fund



**VICTORIA
FOUNDATION**

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

**THRIFTY
FOODS™**



*And hopefully
YOU!*



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

IN THIS PAST 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)

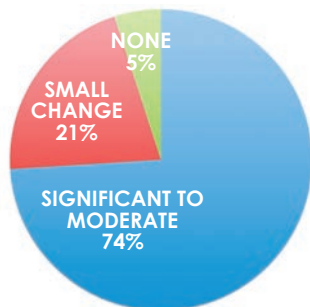
DID YOU KNOW?

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

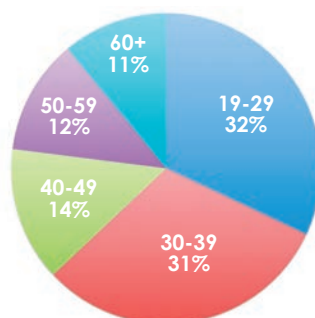
\$1,000,000 is the market value of counselling services provided by trained volunteers

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

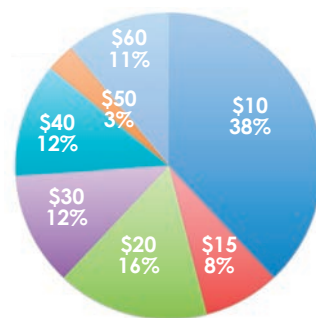
CLIENT REPORTED CHANGES AS A RESULT OF COUNSELLING



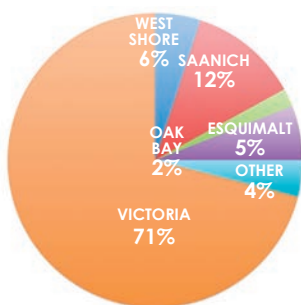
CLIENTS BY AGE



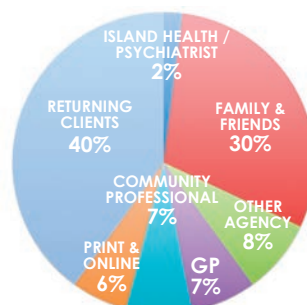
FEES



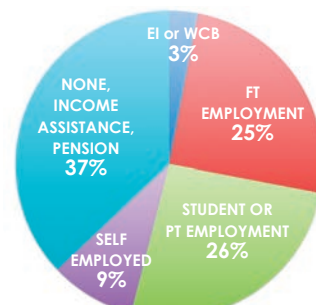
AREA OF RESIDENCE



REFERRAL SOURCES



CLIENT INCOME SOURCE



CLIENT FEEDBACK FROM THE QUESTION

"HOW WAS THIS COUNSELLING PROCESS VALUABLE TO YOU?"

"He was a great listener and knew what to say to help me work through things. He was encouraging and respectful. He often showed me a way of seeing things in a way I might not have myself, especially in regards to my relationship."

"Even though I waited 3 months to finally see a counsellor, I had that little life line of knowing it was going to happen after the initial interview."

*"Thank you for
providing such
amazing services."*

*You are all changing
lives for the better."*

"Counselling enabled me to appreciate how fortunate I am by talking to my counsellor and listening to myself. Thank you for being there and being affordable."

"She helped me in a compassionate and non-judgmental way to figure out my process when I feel depressed and/or have anxiety. Learning this process and exploring various methods to deal with it throughout our time together is really changing my experience with life."

"I found it refreshing to be able to convey genuine thoughts and feelings."

Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre

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