
Counselling Services of Belleville and District

ANNUAL REPORT

September 15, 2021

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. PRESIDENT
Ronuk Thackray
2. VICE-PRESIDENT
Ray Dassylva
3. TREASURER
David Rutherford
4. Chris Barry
5. Ruth Chisholm
6. Barbara Deacon
8. Ken Lewis
9. Ken Dostaler

STAFF LIST

2020/21

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Susan Seaman	- Executive Director
Nicole Chevalier	- Clinical Services Manager
Trish McKinnon	- Program Manager

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Alice Haveman	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Madoc
Tammy Kavanagh	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Bancroft
Cathy Orr	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Belleville
Spencer Parsons	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Trenton
Virginia Pearsall	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Picton
Jill Thurston	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Belleville
Jessica Wood	- Adult Protective Services Worker, Trenton

ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION/FGC

Marilyn Brooks	- ADR Coordinator (contract)
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AUTISM PROGRAM

Anne Brennan	- Clinical Supervisor – Autism
Nicole Storms	- Clinical Supervisor – Autism
Ellen Anderson	- Family Support and Transition Coordinator
Ann-Marie Wilson	- Family Support and Transition Coordinator
Paige Bertelink	- Instructor Therapist
Katie Bishop	- Instructor Therapist
Brigitte Cote	- Instructor Therapist
Meagan Desforge-Petrie	- Instructor Therapist (contract)
Angela French	- Instructor Therapist
Corrin Harris	- Instructor Therapist
Lauren Kirkpatrick	- Instructor Therapist
Nik Pankow	- Instructor Therapist
Monica Richardson	- Instructor Therapist
Kelly Truscott	- Instructor Therapist

BEHAVIOURAL CONSULTING SERVICES

Cindy Adamson	- Behavioural Consultant
Lonnie Farrell	- Behavioural Consultant
Janet Stapley	- Behavioural Consultant

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (formerly Home Personnel Resource Program)

Patti Dionne - Special Needs Supervisor
Kelly McMillan - Community Support Services (contract)

FAMILY COURT CLINIC

Patricia Gray - Assessment Worker

FAMILY RESOURCE AND SUPPORT

Andrea Brennan Doucette - Family Resource Worker
Tammy Kavanagh - Family Resource Worker
Renee O'Hara - Family Resource Worker
Judy Robertson - Family Resource Worker

INDIVIDUAL, MARITAL AND FAMILY COUNSELLING

Mary Ann Brooymans - Therapist – (Fee for Service)
Nicole Chevalier - Therapist – (Fee for Service)

INFANT CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Miranda Johnston - Infant Development Worker
Cheryl Marlin - Infant Development Worker
Hope Robson Harper - Infant Development Worker
Hillary Snow - Infant Development Worker

INTAKE PROGRAM

Tracey Corrigan - Intake and Waitlist Support Worker

INTENSIVE SERVICE PLAN COORDINATION

Anne Clark - Intensive Service Plan Coordinator

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

John Paul Chusroskie - Finance Manager
Tammy Shiers - Executive & Financial Assistant
Virginia Barker - Office Administration
Alison Spry - Office Administration

SUPERVISED ACCESS SERVICES

Cheryl Clarke	- Supervisor
Susan Morley	- Supervised Access Service Worker
Samantha Williams	- Visit Monitor
Samantha Williams	- Supervised Access Service Worker
Julie Staley	- Visit Monitor
Shelby St. Hilaire-Skinner	- Visit Monitor

Executive Director's Report

I am pleased to have this opportunity to reflect upon the activity of the agency and its accomplishments for the fiscal year of 2020/21.

This fiscal year has proven to be a challenge for many. Initially, the thought was this would be a short term measure and the pandemic would diminish and regular routines would return. Unfortunately, this was not the way things unfolded. The pandemic and the office closure, along with all the new and ever changing Covid-19 regulations had a significant impact. Staff were required to adjust to new ways of service delivery. Virtually working with families and seeing clients in more restrictive settings was certainly a different way of doing business. Still, we are trying to manage with health and safety protocols in place while the Province continues to lessen restrictions and open up businesses, services and activities to a level that still remains reduced from our past experiences.

Staff were also challenged during this time. Many with young children at home were charged with working and attending to their children's personal and educational needs. I am happy we were in a position to provide some flexibility to staff, while continuing to meet the needs of clients and their families.

There were many changes required during this time. New policies were created. Safety barriers, wipeable furniture, and separate entry points were installed. This was all done to create a work environment that was safe for both staff and clients.

The Government also provided some flexibility to reporting requirements for utilization of budgets and funding for certain programs. Families were also afforded flexibility on what they could use their Special Services at Home and/or Passport funding. Feedback regarding this flexibility was typically positive as this also allowed us to try new things in terms of service delivery.

The agency invested in improved computer equipment to allow for transportability and systems were put in place to allow for video conferencing. The use of Zoom as a platform for meetings and/or conduction of business proved to be very successful. It also allowed, or challenged us to work differently.

A new electronic database was introduced as well over the past year. We invested in "Nucleus" which provides a secure system of all client data and staff service activity. The training and utilization of the new system was undertaken using virtual training sessions. Typically, this would have been done on site with hands-on instruction, however this was not to be the case. It has presented some challenges but overall has been very successfully integrated.

During this time work continued on all fronts. The Ministry introduced the new direction for Developmental Services through its document "Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion". This is a long-term vision to encourage and increase inclusive options for individuals who have a developmental disability.

The Ontario Autism Program continues to unfold new elements of the service models, however it has been delayed due to the current circumstances as well. Families have continued to receive varying levels of service during the closure and reopening.

The distancing of staff and colleagues has been personally a great challenge for me. I find it very difficult to interact and meet new staff and develop the types of relationships we have come to expect and are more familiar with. However, I did learn the need to spend time travelling to meetings close by, or at a distance, is not necessary and much can be achieved by meeting virtually.

I have asked teams to highlight some of their “lessons learned”, family experiences and successes as part of today’s meeting to demonstrate not how the pandemic may have impacted our ability to deliver services, but how we have, and are able to, overcome this.

I look forward to the coming year as we hopefully move toward a resolve and management of Covid-19, as we return to in-office and increase our face-to-face service delivery.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their ongoing support and understanding, the Management Staff and the entire staff group for their perseverance and dedication to the clients they are involved with.

Administration

Administration Team consists of two full time Administrative Assistants overseen by the Office and Information Technology Manager.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Admin team relied heavily on technology and were able to continue to offer supports to all agency staff while in lockdown. Reception staff returned to the office full-time at the end of August 2020, and worked diligently to ensure both clients and staff had access to the required supports. The team continues to field many calls a day and have been very helpful in the redirection of phone calls, when required.

The Administration team continues to provide administration support to families with funding and who are purchasing Autism Services. They also assist with the formatting of parent and client programming flyers for Autism Services.

The team provides all administration support to the Individual, Marital and Family Counselling program, which includes managing waitlists, booking clients, compiling statistical data, and preparing the billing.

The Administration team staff provided a great deal of support with the implementation of our new client database management system, Nucleus. Not only did they provide troubleshooting and administrative support for staff using this new system, they spent many hours combing through the agency's case list, identifying and compiling a list of duplicate case files, which was forwarded to the NucleusLabs Support team.

Adult Protective Services

The team provided services to 155 people during the year. Despite the barriers presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, staff continued to provide supports creatively and successfully. Practises included virtual meetings, increased phone connections, driveway and porch visits, and face-to-face meetings, as required or appropriate. All health regulations and recommendations were followed throughout the year.

A number of staff changes occurred during the year. CSBD was approached by the Ministry in 2020 to assume the Adult Protective Services role in Lennox and Addington County. An existing APSW was assigned to this position and began her duties in March 2021. A new APSW was hired to cover the caseload in Hastings County bringing the staff complement to seven. In addition, a new APSW was hired in July 2021, after a long time employee retired from her position.

Alternate Dispute Resolution

The ADR program has now been operating for 14 years. We are fortunate to have a roster of experienced, independent mediators, coordinators and facilitators who offer Child Protection Mediation, Family Group Conferencing and customized Indigenous approaches.

ADR services have historically focused on personal face-to-face contact with families who are wanting to resolve issues with a child welfare organization in a collaborative manner. ADR provides a support to families who can then navigate a means to meet, discuss and develop a plan that meets the criteria to resolve the issues. The investment of time in building a relationship with clients is critical to the success of the service.

The pandemic has significantly impacted the manner in which those services can be provided. Service providers have needed to establish contact and build a rapport through virtual means. There have been many challenges to this approach, including the technical ability to ensure clients have the necessary equipment, the development of a knowledge base to provide the service (both clients and service providers), the logistical need to involve multiple parties and family members in the meeting, and last but not least, the need to provide assurance regarding privacy and safety of information being disclosed via virtual means.

Despite the above concerns, after an initial hesitancy to refer to ADR, our referrals increased dramatically in the past fiscal year. We had a record 154 referrals to the ADR program. We receive referrals from the Highland Shores CAS, Family and Children's Services of Frontenac and Lennox and Addington, Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Child and Family Services and Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services. We are very pleased to provide services to all Children's Aid Societies and Child Wellbeing Agencies in our 6 county jurisdiction. ADR is a service that can provide a means to resolve issues relating to families with indigenous affiliations in a manner that is culturally sensitive. We anticipate the request for such services to increase, and we are looking at ways in which we can promote our services for families interested in this approach.

A new data collection was established in coordination with the Ministry and as of last year we are now reporting not only on how many families were able to resolve their issues, but the type of issues that were resolved. That data will be analyzed as the data is reviewed.

We were pleased to produce and distribute 3 brochures relating to ADR in general, Child Protection Mediation (CPM) and Family Group Conferencing (FGC). We are working on completing our brochure for Indigenous Services.

This has been a very positive year for ADR and we could not have achieved our results without the support and the efforts of our roster of service providers, our community partners, the agencies making the referrals and our Ministry partners who fund these services. We are looking forward to another successful and exciting year.

Autism Services

Many new components of the new Ontario Autism Program have been introduced. The program continues to provide Behaviour Intervention to children who were in service as they are entitled to continuous services. A fee-for-service option was introduced and a number of families have purchased behavioural intervention with their childhood budget or one time interim funding allocation. Foundational Family Services (FSS) were offered virtually and there was a positive response from parents.

The Autism Program continues to operate with a reduction in staff. There are three individuals currently on leave who plan to return in 2022. Recruitment for replacement staff has been difficult due to the lack of stability of the program. Over the past year services were offered in a variety of ways due to the pandemic. Children were brought in for face-to-face intervention once restrictions due to Covid were lessened. All appropriate protocols were followed to keep both clients and staff safe.

A number of changes continue to occur with the Ontario Autism Program. There has been calls for proposals for a number of the program components of the new program. The introduction of “Foundational Family Supports” was introduced and a number of families participated in this service. The service is able to offer Parent Support Groups, Educational Workshops, as well as brief consultations.

We were successful in our proposal to deliver “Project Impact”, which is a caregiver mediated service for children between the ages of 2 and 4. This is to be delivered in the fall of 2021.

A proposal to deliver School Readiness Program was also submitted but to date have not been advised of the status of this application.

The Ministry continues to provide families with funds so they can purchase core clinical services which include: Behavioural Intervention, Speech & Language Services, Occupational Therapy and Mental Health Services. We continue to assess and develop our capacity to deliver fee-for-service options for children and their families.

The role of the Independent Intake Organization is currently being filled by the Child and Parent Resource Institute while a permanent organization has been established. This entity is to provide Care Coordinators who will assess individual child and family needs in order to establish a level of funding required for the purchase of core services.

The team is to be congratulated for their dedication and willingness to support children and families during these times of significant uncertainty and change.

Behavioural Consulting Services

Behavioural Consultants provided support to 50 children and adults during the year. There was a significant decrease in the number of referrals received to the program. Much of this can be attributed to the effects of Covid-19, including restricted contacts with schools, families and community agencies. The Behavioural Consultants provided support and intervention in creative ways such as virtual meetings and observations, driveway and porch visits and telephone contacts.

All staff were trained virtually in October 2020, and the new Nucleus database went live in November. It has been a learning experience for all and complicated by the barriers created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Community Support Services

The program continues to offer support to families and individuals who qualify for Ministry funds or other individualized funding. Sixty children and adults were supported during the year. The Community Support Worker resigned from her position in August 2020. Coverage for the program was provided by Family Resource Workers and Adult Protective Services Workers for the remainder of the year. One APSW provided the coverage for respiteservices.com tasks. Maintaining contact with families and respite providers has been a significant challenge due to the Covid Pandemic. Many barriers continue to bring challenges in accessing providers and maintaining safe practises for the provision of successful and safe respite options. Many families and individuals were left without adequate respite during this past year. It is hoped that once more services and supports open, additional safe options will be available to all.

Many tasks were completed remotely for applications and contacts with families or respite providers. These methods created barriers for some families as their access to remote options was limited. Staff were able to hand deliver some materials while following all Public Health Safety measures.

Connections with Community Living Prince Edward regarding the provision of respiteservices.com supports were maintained throughout the year. Ideas were shared to encourage appropriate use of this tool to assist families to access and maintain respite providers. Quarterly meetings were held remotely to review practises and refine website efficiencies.

A full time staff person for Community Support Services was hired in July 2021.

Family Court Clinic

The Family Court Clinic completed assessments involving 43 individuals during the year. The program remained staffed with one Assessment Worker. There was an increase in the number of voluntary assessments due to the closure of the Court early in the Pandemic and the simplification of the processes due to imposed limitations.

Family Court Clinic staff worked closely with Society staff to streamline the referral process during the year and meet the new expectations for file disclosure. Staff worked creatively to complete the assessment process within Covid restrictions.

Family Resource and Support

Program staff provided support to 236 children, youth and young adults throughout the year. Wait times for families continued to be reduced with the change in case assignment practises. Team members have been very successful in providing support and resources to families during the Covid-19 pandemic. Connections have been achieved through virtual connections, increased telephone contacts, driveway and porch visits and occasional face-to-face meetings. Public Health guidelines are met at all times.

All staff were trained virtually in October 2020, and the new Nucleus database went live in November. It has been a learning experience for all and complicated by the barriers created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Individual, Marital and Family Counselling Program

The Individual, Marital and Family Counselling Program continues to provide individual, family and marital counselling services on a fee-for-service basis to members of the community, as well as services through the Employee Assistance Program contract brokered through Family Services EAP. During the pandemic, sessions have been offered primarily through phone or Zoom.

We continue to offer counselling subsidies, supported by fees generated through our fee-paying clients and EAP contracts. During this fiscal year, we have adjusted our fees in order to be able to continue offering the subsidy. Additionally, we have eliminated our waitlist for fee-paying clients. Now all of our clients are offered a session once the referral processes are complete, and clients are no longer waiting for service

Community Capacity Building funding has continued, which has allowed us to continue to provide services to individuals referred by Highland Shores Children's Aid. Our initiative to reduce wait times within this service continues.

Additionally, we continue to provide counselling services to students of Loyalist College, through a grant process with the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH).

We are also in partnership with The Quinte West Youth Centre. A staff person is on-site at the Centre one afternoon per week and offers in-person counselling. Sessions were provided virtually during periods of lockdown.

The Individual, Marital and Family Counselling Program provided a total of 304 sessions during the fiscal year.

Infant and Child Development Program

Program staff provided support to 204 children in 2020-2021. The total number of children supported was greater than previous years as referrals were high and cases were not closed as quickly. Although Covid-19 created many barriers to interventions, the team was able to develop effective and creative ways to connect with families. Virtual meetings, increased telephone contacts, and porch or driveway visits assisted in maintaining connections with families. When it was safe to do so, some face-to-face visits occurred, while following all Public Health guidelines.

The team continued to participate in the Infant Mental Health Promotion webinars towards the acquisition of a certificate in Infant Mental Health. All team members and management were successful in completing the online training during the year. Staff also participated in the Hastings\Prince Edward Infant and Early Mental Health Pathways training. This collaborative effort provides specific training in the administration of the Ages and Stages questionnaires for our community.

Congratulations to all in the completion of this training. The team will continue to collaborate with other community partners in developing effective pathways for early intervention and mental health of infants and young children.

Intake and Waitlist

Intake procedures continued throughout the year with modifications due to Covid 19 limitations. Staff worked remotely to process program referrals using the new Nucleus platform. Staff worked collaboratively with management and front-line staff to become familiar with these new practises. Families, individuals and community referral sources were given information about CSBD's available services and supports and of other appropriate community resources.

Staff also continued to provide administrative support to the Pressures and Priorities Committee, CSBD staff and community colleagues regarding this committee.

Intensive Service Plan Coordination

The coordinator in the program continues to provide consultation to collaterals regarding the processes involved in conducting Coordinated Services Plans, as well as applications for Children with Complex Special Needs (CWCSN) funding. The coordinator continues to carry a caseload of children and youth who are in receipt of CWCSN funding.

The coordinator and management continue to meet with community partners to refine referral and consultation processes.

Supervised Access Services

With the news of the Covid 19 Pandemic and the shutdown, in March 2020, all face-to-face contacts stopped for clients to see their children through Supervised Access Services.

With the shutdown, new policies and procedures were developed to implement new cleaning procedures and ways to conduct our services. During the shutdown, staff continued to be in contact with clients over the telephone, with some telephone access scheduled. New furniture was purchased to ensure all cloth surfaces were removed and replaced with surfaces that could easily be sanitized. The group supervision schedules that were previously in place, were replaced with families coming to the visit location one at a time. Time was allotted to allow for cleaning between all families using the service, with all surfaces wiped down and all toys cleaned between usages. Plexiglas barriers were put in place to help protect the staff and families while supervising the parents with their children. Mask policies were strictly enforced and with that came the closure of the kitchen area as no food or drinks could be allowed, as masks would need to be removed. The schedules were reduced to only allow parenting time for one hour, as opposed to three hour visit time slots that were previously in place. The service also limited clients coming to the service to within the same colour zones as was provincially developed. With all this, the management of the over seventy open files was a challenge.

The service reopened for face-to-face visits and exchanges on August 14, 2020, after the playroom was rearranged and all clients were contacted to complete new Covid Agreements for Service.

As of August 17, 2020, the Supervised Access Program transferred to a regional structure of operating within Ontario Victim Services. Since its inception, the Supervised Access Program was managed centrally under the Centralized Programs Delivery Unit under the Ministry of the Attorney General. The program was realigned to operate within the same structure as other OVS transfer payment programs and meant new provincial contacts with the support of regional managers and staff instead of a provincially operated program. With this realignment came many changes and the Coordinators within the province decided to form a group to ensure the connection was not lost, as the new regional format with six regions meant having different contact managers. The Coordinators started to meet weekly through Zoom to discuss policies and procedures, operating issues, scheduling, cleaning supplies, masks and other related topics. This group has continued to meet weekly and has become a huge resource for all Coordinators.

On September 25, 2020, Supervised Access Services and CSBD said farewell to Sue Morley, as she decided to retire after 23 years of service. We welcomed Sam Williams into the position of Supervised Access Services Worker and her position of Visit Monitor was filled by Julie Staley, and then Shelby St. Hilaire-Skinner.

In October of 2020, staff attended the annual Supervised Visitation Network conference virtually. The three day conference had many presentations which were available for viewing for two weeks. This allowed all the staff to receive all the information. The staff will participate in the conference virtually again this year later this month. This will be the 30th Anniversary of the SVN annual conference and it has been labelled “Pearls of Wisdom”, representing a unique and rare accomplishment of longevity and success.

On April 19, 2021, the service made the difficult decision to close for face-to-face visits, due to the rising Covid cases in our regional area, but continued to provide service to those families using the service for exchanges. The service reopened again on June 1, 2021, for all families, when the Covid numbers decreased. As the province changed the colour zones, the service lifted the restrictions for travelling within the zones and again allowed parents from other areas of the province to come for their face-to-face parenting time. To date, the service continues to provide face-to-face services for visits and exchanges, with some families also being supervised over Zoom.

In March 2021, changes to Canada’s Divorce Act came into effect. A shift in language, particularly with the shift away from terms like “custody and access” to “parenting-time and decision-making”, were just some of the changes that effects the operation of Supervised Access Services.

On February 23, 2021, Rachel Birnbaum presented a Zoom meeting on the Divorce Act and Ontario Children’s Law Reform Act: What could it mean for Supervised Access in Ontario. The presentation addressed some of the changes and how it could affect the services within the province.

The Supervisor continues to be a member of the Supervised Visitation Network and serves as the secretary of the Ontario Chapter. She also serves as the treasurer and a member of the Quinte Coordinating Committee against Violence. She sits on the Social Service Worker Advisory Committee which meets twice a year. The Supervisor continues to attend the monthly Community Liaison committee and the Bench and Bar meetings, all of which has continued over Zoom.