

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

BREAKAWAY COMMUNITY SERVICES

REDUCING HARM &
ENHANCING HEALTH



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Breakaway would like to acknowledge that our services are delivered on the traditional territories of the Mississauga's of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat peoples. This territory is part of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, an agreement between the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still home to many indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work in this community, on this territory. We are also mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of the ongoing drug poisoning crisis on Indigenous people. These losses and the grief experienced are immeasurable. We acknowledge that the drug crisis is rooted in systemic discrimination and that people who use drugs often experience multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination, including colonialism and racism. We commit to collective action to address the drug poisoning crisis.

ABOUT BREAKAWAY COMMUNITY SERVICES

For over 30 years, Breakaway Community Services has been a community hub, demystifying what substance use looks like with an aim to eradicate the criminalization and stigma around substance use. Providing support across Toronto, Breakaway Community Services provides confidential and free services that address our clients as humans and not just their relationship with substances.

Our mission is to provide seamless, comprehensive, and effective harm reduction services and a full range of addictions treatment services that are amenable to an individual's needs and goals. Our services are offered through community-based facilities with a focus on street and community outreach.

At Breakaway Community Services we are dedicated to providing treatment that includes all aspects of our clients' lives and situations. We have always operated from a trauma-informed and harm-reduction approach, which forms the philosophical basis for all our work, in reducing harm and enhancing the health of our clients.



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To start this letter with "wow, 2020/21 was quite the year!" is a laughable understatement. It will be one that will remain in my memory as deeply challenging AND full of beautiful and hopeful moments. I am exceptionally proud of how we have addressed the adversity and challenges placed before us, due to COVID-19 and in the context of the drug poisoning crisis. In spite of it all: Breakaway has been there.

These are the things that I am particularly proud of: we started a Grief, Loss and Wellness Initiative through the creation of the HRWWN (Harm Reduction Worker Wellness Network) focused on caring for the people who do this work; we kept services going virtual and in-person; we ramped up our food distribution program; and we created new connections and links in community.

We witnessed the negative impact of social isolation and fear on our clients and staff; we lost many loved ones due to the increase in substance use related deaths and mental health challenges. It's been a very painful year.

We are looking at the path ahead and anticipating and preparing for a tsunami of mental health issues and needs. Breakaway will continue to be agile and flexible: filling the gaps and meeting people's unique needs.

Most importantly I want to say thank you. Thank you to the loving and present staff. Thank you to the Board of Directors for keeping the ship on course. And most importantly to the clients and service users for your determination and perseverance; and for letting us be there for you.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thomas Sullivan,
Chair

Nakema Rae
McManamna,
Vice-Chair

Nicole Hunter,
Secretary

Dan Lamothe,
Treasurer

Members

Bryanna Petrie

Brian O'Connor

Janet Hicks

Kelly West

Loren White

Neha Trivedi

Tina

Karamchandani

Tracey Methvan

A HEARTFELT FAREWELL AND THANK YOU TO OUR LEADERS

It is with deep gratitude and appreciation that Breakaway says farewell to three of our wonderful and dedicated Board Members. Thank you for your service and governance that has shaped the trajectory of Breakaways' mission and vision.



Bryanna Petrie
Board Member
2020-21



Nakema Rae McManamna
Vice Chair
2017-21



Loren White
Board Member
2018-21

From all of us at Breakaway, we wish you all the very best!

KEEPING SERVICES GOING DURING COVID



Brian O'Connor, our very dedicated (and thankfully handy!) Board Member installing a safe and covered place for clients and staff to meet outside.

OUR TEAM

Adam Fraser

Adanna Anucha

Aidyn Low

Amanda Ross

Amit Robson

Ammarah Syed

Amy Druker

Anne Marie DiCenso

Carmel Hutchison

Christopher Sankey

Claud Tran

David Dibben

Ellen Chang

Faith

Finn MacLeod

Fortune Ibare-Jones

Gordon Seaman

Juno Zavitz

Kathy Hughes

Kai Somerville

Kimber Vradenburg

Lesley Stoddard

Lindsay Williams

Liz Beeforth

Liz Herlich

Madison Tooley

Marina Douglas

Marissa Martins

Mella Brown

Milyon Woldemichael

Mohak Ramnani

Nicola Bangham

Odessa Hewlitt-Bernhard

Omar Al-Samadi

Pam Castel-Mezzano

Renee Sandler

Rhekia Fahssi

RT

Sheryl Lindsay

Stefania Sgambelluri

Steph Venneri

Stephen Chatterton

Subor Momad

Sev Arslan

Teju Oladoyin

Tim McConnell

COVID-19: OUR RESPONSE

Vaccine Pop-Up Clinic

Breakaway's vaccine clinics took place on May 13th and July 8th, in collaboration with St. Joe's Health Centre. In addition to providing over 128 clients with their 1st and 2nd vaccine, we were also able to provide vaccines to some of our supportive neighbors.

Knowing that both the staff and venue would be familiar helped alleviate the reticence of the many among the community who have been let down by the medical system or who have traumatic associations with injections.

Food Program

Between July 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 Breakaway provided 15,618lbs of fresh and canned food to our clients. The monetary value of foods distributed was \$22,626.21.

In collaboration with United Way and Daily Bread Food Bank, Breakaway Community Services also distributed over 4,100 \$25 gift cards between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

We are grateful to our donors: Daily Bread and United Way for their generous contributions to our food program this year.

2020-2021

BREAKAWAY STATS

Snorting Kits: 1800

Rimming: 480

Fisting: 480

IM Hormone Injection: 360

Needles: 1120

Sharps returned: 18,000

Naloxone: 180 kits: 60 refills

Condoms: 1944

Zines: 150

Safer Self Harm Kits: 650

IV Injection: 1440

Crack Kits: 960

Crystal Meth Kits: 1080

Crystal Meth Bulbs: 210



Family & Youth Initiative: 133

Toronto Opiate Support Team: 138

Supportive Housing: 60

Pieces to Pathways: 367

Satellite Opioid Treatment: 152

Harm Reduction Outreach: 95

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Grief, Loss and Wellness Initiative

Founded in January 2021, the Grief, Loss, and Wellness Initiative offer support to frontline workers, community-facing management and coordinators, and community supporters who have been impacted by the trauma and overwhelming loss of the overdose crisis. 1-1 and group support is delivered by community members and practitioners and is free of charge.

Year 1 (2021-2022) of the Initiative focuses on providing direct grief, loss, and wellness support to those on the frontlines (including peers and community members who are not formally employed in frontline positions). Year 2 (2022-2023) will expand the program to include capacity-building supports, such as skill-building training and resources to support teams and communities to respond to grief and loss.

On choosing to engage with the Grief, Loss, Wellness Program:

“I have had an unreal experience. It has helped me in so many different ways. It is one of the best things I have been able to do for myself.”

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Grief, Loss and Wellness Initiative



Who is a "harm reduction worker" ?

Breakaway defines "harm reduction worker" as individuals who are presently or formerly engaged in supporting people who use drugs. This may include those in paid positions as workers, and may also include those in community support roles but not formally employed by an agency or organization. This also includes community-facing coordination/management roles who support frontline workers.

Is there a catchment area? What languages are offered?

1-1 services are currently available for those living on the land originally called Tkaronto (so-called Toronto or GTA). Group supports are open to individuals from anywhere in the world. Group programming and 1-1 supports are currently offered in English. If you're looking for support in other languages, please contact us.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

CCENDU Project: The impact of COVID-19 on women, pregnant and parenting people who use drugs

The COVID-19 pandemic has, and continues to, affect people all over the world. Nondiscriminatory and proven to having adverse effects on people from all walks of life, the onset of the pandemic complicated life more for many.

Having worsened, the opioid overdose crisis in Toronto became exacerbated by the pandemic, having devastating impacts on people who use drugs and service providers. Those who use drugs are more isolated from each other, their supports, and health services. Pregnant and parenting people, in particular, face judgment, stigma, and discrimination, worsening the effects of the pandemic. These factors can mean separation from their children, loss of access to visits and fears around using harm reduction services.

In collaboration with the Toronto Drug Strategy and the Women and Drug Policy Working Group, we launched a project in hopes of uncovering the lived experiences of community members, hearing their stories in their own words. The goal of the consultations was to discuss shared experiences of the pandemic and to validate and document the skills and knowledge used by parenting people to navigate these challenging times.

Consultations were conducted between November 2020 and June 2021. Twenty-four participants, ranging from ages 30-69 were engaged by a therapist from Breakaway Community Services to participate in unstructured qualitative interviews by phone as a result of COVID-19 measures.

Key Findings:

Three themes were identified from the thematic analysis of parenting peoples' narratives:

1. Challenges and difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Knowledge, skills, and acts of resistance; and
3. Hopes for the future.

Resource: [Know Your Rights: Drug Use and the Child Protection System in Toronto](#)

“How can you leave when you feel like you have nowhere to go? Because access to drop in’s, chill spaces, shelter beds are closed or full people feel at a loss. For people with kids, abusive partners were using COVID as a way to make them stay in for fear the child (ren) will get sick if they go to a shelter. Also restricting people from watching the news and getting accurate recent news.”

- Anonymous Project Participant

RENOVATION: OUR NEW KITCHEN

Completion date: December 2021

THANK YOU DAILY BREAD!

Our kitchen is more than a place where food is prepared and cooked. At Breakaway, it's a community hub, a meeting place, and a space to share in mutual wellness. Utilized every day by multiple programs, our clients have come to rely on our kitchen for more than just a meal.

Thanks to the \$35,000 kitchen infrastructure grant from the Daily Bread Food Bank, we have been able to undergo a full kitchen renovation. Our new kitchen will now physically reflect what it has always symbolized - the centerpiece of our community space.



THE DANIEL GOULD SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Photo: Daniel Gould

“Because of Daniel’s insatiable hunger for knowledge and desire to go above and beyond in understanding, we, as his family, [felt that] establishing a scholarship in his name seemed like the most fitting way to honor his life and his memory”

-The Gould Family

In the loving memory of

Daniel Gould

JULY 14, 1994 - MAY 3, 2020

On May 3rd, 2020 the Breakaway community lost a valuable member and client, Daniel Gould.

The Daniel Gould Memorial Scholarship Fund was started after Daniel Gould, a member and client of the Breakaway community lost his battle with severe mental health and addiction issues in May 2020.

To honor Daniel’s insatiable and great love of learning, his parents and sister decided to partner with Breakaway Community Services to establish the Daniel Gould Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Fund was created to help support eligible young adults serviced by Breakaway Community Services who wish to pursue educational opportunities that may otherwise be inaccessible to them due to financial challenges.

The Gould Family has been working with Fortune Ibare-Jones and Teju Oladoyin to create a marketing campaign that includes an informative video introducing and explaining the Fund. This video has been added to the Breakaway Website and has been sent to all of Breakaway’s corporate donors. Under Fortune’s guidance, direction and encouragement the family is looking at other opportunities to widen the audience and increase interest in supporting the Fund.

Details regarding the amount of the scholarship(s) awarded have not been finalized at this point in time as it is not clear the amount that will be received in donations.

The family is interested in being involved in the selection process along with BCS staff and the distribution of the funds (although in which capacity, remains to be determined)

The family’s goal is to create a legacy project in Daniel’s memory that will benefit others who have similar lived experiences.

Partnerships, Supporters & Sponsorships

Breakaway thanks our 2020-2021 community partners and the contributions they have made to our work and the clients we provide services to. Thank You!

Brands for Canada
CAMH - STOP Program
Canada Summer Jobs
CHUM City Christmas Wish
Covenant House
Daily Bread Food Bank
FOCUS Toronto
George Brown College
Jean Tweed Centre
Kensington Health
Mark Egit & Susan Caldwell
Midwest Ontario Health Team
Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
Regeneration Community Services
Royal Ontario Museum
X University
Second Harvest
Sick Kids Hospital
Stella's Place
St. Michael's Hospital FHT
SUAP
Strides Toronto
South Riverdale CHC
Moss Park OPS
The Stop Community Food Centre
Through Ruff Times
Toronto District School Board
Toronto Catholic District School Board

Toronto Public Health
Toronto Foundation
TELUS Mobility for Good Program
VIRCAN
West Toronto Network of Community Care
Youthlink What's Up Walk-In
Yonge Street Mission
Evergreen Drop-In
York University

The ongoing commitment of our funders: the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care via the Toronto Central LHIN (Ontario Health); and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services via MOH; make it possible for us to deliver accessible and effective substance-use services and achieve our mandate to reduce harm and enhance health in our community.



Ministry of
Children, Community &
Social Services

**SUBSTANCE USE
AND ADDICTIONS
PROGRAM (SUAP)**



THANK YOU!



Through your generous donations and support, Breakaway Community Services can continue to offer harm-reduction focused addiction support services.

visit www.breakawaycs.ca to donate and help continue our effective programs to make our community breakaway from harm.

To read our 2020-2021 annual report click the link below:

[Click here to read Breakaway Community Services 2020-2021 Financial Report](#)

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