



Q1 Executive Director's Report

GENERAL COMMENTS

Family Service Toronto struck an external advisory committee to provide comment and advice to management in the review of the suite of counselling services provided by FST. The advisory committee includes: CAMH, West Neighbourhood House, the 519, YWCA, York U, a private practitioner, and the United Way. This group will be invaluable as we build on our pandemic learnings and move the program forward. The review of the counselling programs is an important component of implementing the Boards strategic direction to increase access to mental health supports over the next 5 years.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Changing Lives Family Violence

Internally, the first quarter of FY2122 was a busy one with many year end activities, including final reports to all funders for CLFV programs, and working with finance to prepare for the audit.

Externally, a webinar on non-legal interventions when working with people who have experienced abuse was developed in conjunction with a case manager from Ottawa. It was delivered through Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario's webinar series, at their request. The webinar was conducted with ASL interpreters present and is now posted on EAPO's website.

The Toronto Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee re-elected the director to the position of co-chair of this committee and the Service System Planning Table for Toronto Region confirmed the extension of the co-chair role that the director has previously held. This committee continues to define how it will operate at the system level and has identified key areas for moving forward.

The director also remains active in providing leadership to the Toronto Region PAR programs and liaising, on their behalf, with MAG.

Violence Against Women (VAW)

The Violence Against Women (VAW) team continued to provide virtual service. Groups offered include a weekly mindfulness webinar, an Expressive Arts counselling group and a trauma-informed yoga webinar. The project with the Assaulted Women's Helpline (AWHL) and the Red Door Shelter to provide immediate, short-term counselling support women in high-risk situations continues. VAW counsellors receive referrals from AWHL on a weekly basis. Additionally, two VAW staff members led a training for the Violence Against Women Counselling Network on facilitating VAW groups virtually. Staff also presented information related to gender-based violence on radio programs in Tamil.

Next Steps

The Next Steps Partner Assault Response (PAR) program continues to offer all groups virtually. Anecdotally, staff are reporting that clients are experiencing fewer technical difficulties connecting to groups as the pandemic has taught all of us more about technology. Clients must also attend virtually so this is likely helping them get used to the technology. Referral volumes to the program are growing as the courts have found a way to implement virtual court. Group sizes continue to be smaller than in-

person due to the nature of virtual work and the work that must be done in each session. Fees collected for the program also continue to be lower than projected due to the smaller number of attendees and the fact their financial situation has often been impacted by the pandemic. To date, there has been no indication of any COVID relief funds to assist with this situation, though the ministry has recently announced an internal audit will be conducted and agencies will be randomly selected to be engaged in this process. No further details about what this means are available at this time.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement team submitted two projects to IRCC during this quarter.

1. to organize a conference to provide a mutual sharing and learning for leaders from the seven communities that we engage through Healthy Family Healthy Community (HFHC) about Canada's history with Indigenous Peoples. This project recognizes that many of our HFHC participants may have been in Canada for many years and are eager to learn more about Canada's history with First Nations. This project is in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. The learning event will provide an opportunity for our HFHC community leaders to share their own settlement journeys and to re-connect after the pandemic, build their own diverse professional and personal networks and obtain educational resources made available by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for distribution within their own communities.
2. A pilot to test an established HFHC evaluation framework within the new Toronto-based Nigerian community and start exploring how this evaluation framework can potentially be enriched by applying an anti-Black racism lens.

Seniors and Caregivers Support Services

The Seniors and Caregivers Support Service (SCSS) team continued the Friendly Phone Chat program. Volunteers made over 80 hours of friendly calls. The Seniors Chat group, Caring for the Caregiver group and two other support groups continued. Team members participated on the FST run Elder Abuse Consultation Team and provided consultation to other senior supporting organizations. In collaboration with the Tamil Centre for Canadian Civic Action, an SCSS counsellor led an educational session for Tamil speaking seniors on long-term care. One team member contributed to a chapter on elder abuse in a book titled 'Responding to Older Adults with Mental Health and Addiction Problems'.

David Kelley Services

The team continues to offer individual and group support virtually. Due to unanticipated staff turnover, the team is in a period of transition. A counsellor has been hired to provide six to eight sessions to clients from both the HIV and LGBT waitlist. We have reduced the number of groups being offered to manage resources and support clients individually, however, the emotional skills group continues to run. The team is committed to learning and development of new clinicians from within the queer/trans/non-binary community and excited at the opportunity to work with a former student and support them through coaching and mentorship.

Counselling Services

The team continues to work with a large number of families, a trend that began with the onset of the pandemic.

The Walk-In-team developed and has started training clinicians in single session counselling and has also embarked on a program development initiative in creating a twenty-four-week trauma treatment group for male survivors of sexual abuse. This group is slated to begin in late September. The group will be co-facilitated and provide ongoing supports and referrals as needed, along with treatment-oriented protocols.

The team was approached by an external agency to offer critical incident debriefing. This led to an MOU for ongoing support. The team is exploring this as a possible community enterprise.

Families in Transition

The FIT team continues to work virtually with both parents and children and to work through the barriers of working with children on Zoom, coordinating with parents, offering shorter sessions, and using more engaging clinical modalities to help children receive the full benefit of the program.

The team has begun working with the Violence Against Women team, collaborating to better serve families impacted by violence. The teams often work with the same client population but with different clinical models.

The team is also working on several groups. These include psychoeducational eight-week groups with specific topic focus such as parenting after divorce/separation; co-parenting; and a mindfulness-based group for children. These groups will begin in September.

Service Access Unit (SAU)

Providing enhanced information and referral services through the System Navigator who has identified a gap in our services and demonstrated the need for this specific type of support. Most of the referrals require more than connecting them with a single identifiable resource and require short term collaboration with the service user to meet their needs and provide accessible service. This service has also fed information to FST's Directory of Community Resources soon to be available to the rest of the organization. Along with COVID vaccine information, the 2 other areas of support and referral provided included mental health and housing.

SAU is now the contact centre for the Passport and Options programs. SAU has been handling calls, connecting the callers with their coordinators, providing them with information and if needed, connecting them with the Duty Day worker.

Social Action

This quarter, Social Action launched two House of Commons E-petitions with national partners: one for broadening access to the Canada Child Benefit for families with irregular citizenship status, and one for a CERB Repayment Amnesty for low-income people. Both surpassed minimum signatures required and were presented in the House.

National Campaign 2000 Steering Committee members met with the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families Children and Social Development on report card findings and our response to the federal budget. We congratulated the government on their investments into childcare and housing but emphasized the lack of investment in income supports system. We noted that services are key but cannot replace income.

Work has started on the new project on the Sustainable Development Goals. A diverse national advisory committee has been put together and recruitment was started for the hire of two project staff.

Social Action has also supported the Board in its recruitment process this year, as well as playing a lead role in the new joint staff-board Equity Diversity Inclusion Working Group, developing the workplan and consultant RFP.

Knowledge Building

During Q1 we submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to conduct an Anti-Black racism analysis for Healthy Families/Healthy Communities program; we proposed working with the City of Toronto and within the Nigerian newcomer community.

The presentation on our research on 'The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Social Isolation on VAW Clients' Experiences in Counselling and their Access to Services' received the 'Best Presentation Award' by the International Conference on Social Work Research. We also worked with UWGT to re-establish the Sector Research Leadership table and held a first meeting in June.

The work on a full renewal of our Accreditation in 2022 has begun with an agreement on the standards on which we will be reviewed.

Building Inclusive Communities

Options

Carry On (line), Stay Calm and Connected: UW Project - The project has formally come to an end, but the groups continue. The caregiver and individuals with lived experience groups were going so well that the groups have opted to continue past the end of the project. Facilitation has moved to Options adult team staff and continue to be a great resource. A thorough report of the program and experience has been created and will be shared with those interested.

Our Community Network Facilitators have been working on launching an exciting Summer Series of programs including a Chit Chat group, Values group and some drop in surprises for the whole agency. Stay tuned!

National Accessibility Week – In collaboration with Volunteer Resources, Option's clients provided a fabulous Lunch and Learn to the agency. It was powerful to hear people with lived experience share their views and insights into accessibility with the group. We look forward to continuing work around Accessibility as an agency through the Accessibility Committee.

The short-term case management pilot project has entered into the fourth year and making a great success in reducing the waitlist for case management service.

Passport

The following is a breakdown of voice mail messages left for the team from April to June:

- April 2021: 1995
- May 2021: 1708
- June 2021: 1005

MCCSS announced the extension of the PSW wage enhancement with a submission deadline of August 23. The team has been working with clients to ensure invoices are submitted accordingly. In addition, the team presented (virtually) to the Toronto District School board and other secondary schools about the Passport program.

PassportONE

PassportONE experienced a very busy Q1. Twenty-one new Client Payment Administrators were hired to address the year end claim submissions. During that time, the team processed 107,537 claims for a total for \$101.5M. By the end of the quarter, the processing times were back to within 3 business days. With the back log cleared, extensive training began with the team to ensure that new initiatives

implemented by the Ministry were understood. This included advance payment reconciliation, Personal Support Worker wage enhancement, and the temporary changes to the guidelines. The team also supported FST's annual audit conducted by Deloitte, as well as the internal system audit performed by KPMG.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Technology, Communications, Facilities

Technology efforts continued to focus on supporting staff working remotely as office closures and pandemic-related restrictions continued through the spring. Our IT project manager led contract negotiations with Vital Hub for implementation and deployment a new Electronic Client Records System. A contract was signed in mid-June, followed by planning meetings and a project kick-off session with key stakeholders at the end of the month.

Facilities continued to lead the conversion of the second floor at Church Street to rental space for five non-profit organizations. By late June, four of the five organizations had signed five-year licensing agreements with two organizations preparing for move-in the last week of June in time for their July 1 occupancy. Negotiations with the fifth organization were expected to conclude in July with a signed agreement for occupancy Sept. 1.

Communications led the creation of content and layout for the 2020-21 Annual Report which was released online in time for Annual General Meeting on June 23. The report, which highlighted a full 12 months of pandemic operations, was scheduled to go to print in early July with release over the summer.

Finance

No report

Human Resources and Volunteers

Highlights in Q1 included:

- Joint Union- Management harassment, discrimination and workplace processes training provided by a lawyer in May and June
- Successful recruitment and onboarding of 23 temporary employees
- Conducted general interviews with Directors and Managers to inform improvements and efficiencies to orientation, recruitment and performance evaluation processes and gather information on COVID return to office readiness
- Completed payroll related year-end activities for (2020/21) Fiscal Year, implemented 2021 salary grid, 1% rate increases, updated PTO (Paid Time Off) balances and joined FST Audit team
- Volunteer Resources collaborated with Options team to onboard Options Peer Facilitators and Options clients to assist with the development of National AccessAbility Week (May 30 – June 5), activities to increase awareness of and discuss accessibility issues across FST