

## Q3 Executive Director's Report

### GENERAL COMMENTS

FST made the switch from our old electronic client record system (AIM) to the new (TREAT) on December 1, 2021. The impact of changing systems is of the same magnitude as adjusting to virtual operations in terms of business process. Strategy Team anticipated significant challenges and a good thing we did! A no fault semantics mistake resulted a data migration error...par for the course in such projects. Staff are continuing to adjust to the new system and beginning to see the promise of improved work processes. It will be some months before the system is fully implemented, but we are well on the way.

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

#### Changing Lives Family Violence

The Director, Changing Lives and Family Violence programs continued working with the Downtown East Toronto Ontario Health Team sub-committee focused on increasing access to counselling and psychotherapy services. A stepped care model, designed to match people's level of need, as determined by both qualitative and quantitative measures, to a specific modality of service was further refined during this period and tools to support this process were identified. Internally, significant time was spent on attending training for the new database, TREAT, developing a training program with managers and implementing it. A number of staff took on the role of super users and trained and supported their peers, along with the management group.

#### Counselling Services

Along with the rest of FST, counselling staff participated in TREAT training and have been working hard to adjust to the new electronic database. Teams have participated in operational planning and gave input to the Counselling model review. The Walk-in clinic has been seeing an increase in acute mental health issues and isolation.

The Queer and Connected project continued to reach 2SLGBTQ+ youth through peer groups, workshops and social media posts; the David Kelly Services (DKS) team has noticed an impact on attendance with pandemic closures causing a decrease in privacy for participants and/or a lessening of access to technology The Queer and Connected team continues to work hard to reach youth who may benefit from their programs.

Families in Transition (FIT) offered a range of virtual workshops for parents, including topics such as "Pandemic Effects on Families", Co-parenting, and dealing with difficult emotions. A Mindfulness for Children series was offered in a webinar format. The FIT team has been exploring their scope of practice and has engaged in planning to get winter groups off the ground. Strategies to decreasing barriers to accessing FIT services are being explored on the team.

The Violence Against Women (VAW) team continued individual and group counselling, including 3 webinars and a counselling group focused on self-compassion. The findings from an FST study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on VAW was presented at an International Conference; presentations also made to University Health Network social workers on safety planning best practices. Team members facilitated presentations in Arabic, Farsi and Tamil on issues related to gender-based violence to community organizations.

The Seniors and Caregivers Support Service (SCSS) team continued individual counselling, groups for seniors and caregivers and the friendly chat program. To provide support to clients waiting for SCSS counselling services, team members provided a single counselling session to all waitlist clients. The FST lead Elder Abuse Consultation Team provided consultation to other senior supporting organizations. Pat's Place continues to house older adults seeking refuge from abusive situations and has housed 2 clients from October to December.

The Next Steps Partner Assault Response program held a full day on-line retreat day that featured more in-depth training with the City's anti-black racism unit aimed at supporting the team to begin thinking about how to apply the anti-black racism tool to the program. The team focused on the tensions inherent in offering a one size fits all court-mandated program, as defined by the funder. The systemic and impacts of the program were explored and areas that could be adapted to better support Black and racialized clients were identified.

The Service Access Unit (SAU) prepared for the transition to new software this quarter. We hit some rough patches along the way and continued to adjust and adapt. As part of the transition, SAU recreated the 500+ referrals for all clients on the wait list as of Nov 23, 2021. Call volume increased as the pandemic continued. Callers were registered in FST services or referred to other organizations in the community. We have also learned to expect call surges each time public health restrictions are modified, including gathering resources that provide details of the updates.

### **Community Engagement**

Through the outreach work of our Nigerian team members, the Community Engagement program provided refurbished laptops to three Nigerian families who arrived in Toronto during the pandemic. All families have children in elementary and high school. The pandemic has already made their settlement quite challenging, and they shared that their top challenges include finding jobs, signing up for OHIP, getting culturally appropriate food, and finding permanent housing. On top of that, the children must adapt and adjust quickly to virtual school. These laptops became tools of settlement for these families. Our Nigerian team continues to assist these families through referrals to various services, and three Nigerian moms are now part of the Nigerian peer support group.

### **Social Action**

The report card was launched on Nov 24, 2021, and was very well received. A press conference for the release was organized as well as national radio syndication. There was significant take up over social media and with traditional media outlets. A webinar to share findings with issue area experts followed the release. Prior to release, a national focus group was convened for low-income parents to hear about their experiences related to policy and programs to inform report card narrative and recommendations.

The SDGs project was launched this quarter. The framework for an intersectional rights-based community-based research project within a policy context was completed. Literature review and policy mapping are underway.

Campaign 2000 coordinated a CERB Amnesty campaign, which sought to reverse clawbacks that took place to income benefit programs for people living on low and moderate incomes who accessed pandemic benefits. Several reversals were won for low-income seniors who had their GIS payments reduced or stopped, and a commitment that pandemic benefits would not interact with GIS payments going forward. Advocacy for the payment to be made immediately continues, while also asking for a full CERB Amnesty.

### **Knowledge Building**

**Quality Work:** Work on the team logic models for the service delivery teams is ongoing. The accompanying conversations on measurable outcomes are critical and will help us to articulate more clearly the impact of our work.

**Research:** Preparations for the SSHRC funded symposium “Peer mentorship for women labelled with a developmental disability who also experienced sexual abuse” is well under way. We expect to hold the national meeting virtually in late April 2022.

**Evaluation:** We worked with the Community Engagement team to understand the impact of the Healthy Families Healthy Communities program for the Afghan, Somali and Iranian community through focus groups.

**Accreditation:** Work on preparing the evidence for the Self Study is underway. The FST-wide policy review neared completion. Stakeholder surveys will go out before the end of February 2022.

**Electronic Client Record System:** Training was provided to all program staff on implementation of Health Equity Demographics Data collection. Focus continues on report writing for the new system.

### **Building Inclusive Communities**

PassportONE has paid 104,179 claims for a total for \$78.6M with average processing time of 4 business days. The Data team continued to provide monthly investment, quarterly and ad-hoc reporting to MCCSS and Passport Agencies as well as detailed Passport Agency wide analysis of trends in submissions, processing times, utilisation etc. The Ministry approved the implementation of Power BI which will lead to enhanced data reporting and enable user dashboards to monitor live data reports. Web submission sources saw an increase in registrations and submissions with 9,250 clients for eClaim registered. Webinars were provided to resolve queries and train prospective clients to use of eClaim.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **Technology, Communications, Facilities**

Technology efforts continued to focus on supporting staff working remotely as office closures and pandemic-related restrictions continued through the fall. FST marked a major milestone Dec 1 with the soft launch of TREAT – our new Electronic Client Record System for use by about 125 cross-departmental staff providing direct service.

Facilities supervised final repairs to our 2nd floor Sterling Road office space which received significant water damage as the result of a roof fire in late August and the department continued to work with our new Community Services Hub tenants at 355 Church Street.

Communications continued key messaging for external communications relating to FST’s virtual services resulting from pandemic operations. The department assisted Campaign 2000 staff with production of the national poverty report card. The department also played a key role in co-ordinating our virtual United Way staff campaign which raised \$28,000.

### **Human Resources and Volunteers**

The Staff Recognition event held on December 9, 2021. We thanked our staff celebrating milestone years of service, honoured our retirees, and welcomed our new staff members. The Event took us back through the decades, reflecting on the global and local life changing events of each era and the impact FST has had on our city.

HR commenced recruitment of 30+ Client Payment Administrator positions to perform year-end duties in Q4 and hired 9 other staff.

Volunteer Resources continued to raise the profile of the volunteer program through enhanced communication and the annual recognition of volunteers as well as outreach to staff to support their work with volunteers.