Vancouver Island Crisis Society

1970 – 2021

Helping People Find Their Way

51st
Annual Report
2021
2020-2021: A Year of Adaptation and Resilience

As all of us braved a number of adjustments in our daily lives in the first year of the pandemic, so too did the dedicated team of the Vancouver Island Crisis Society.

We rose to the challenges, often varied and numerous on a day-to-day basis, and changed the way we worked in a number of settings, without ever deviating from our goal of Helping People Find Their Way.

Milestones were set: We set a record for total interactions taken by our Crisis Workers. We also set a new fundraising record, as we received additional support from government funders and private donations from foundations, enterprises, and appreciative donors who included folks who fundraised for us in memory of lost loved ones or in appreciation of the support they received from our Crisis Workers.

Interactions related to COVID-19 made up 10 per cent of our record-setting interaction volume. Awareness of and access to empathic, non-judgemental, and confidential support notably increased during the pandemic, especially as a number of community-based services became temporarily inaccessible.

As the Vancouver Island Crisis Society very quietly celebrated 50 years of service in 2020, our Crisis Line Workers, comprising our dedicated crisis staff and volunteers, our board members, our facilitators, and our administrative personnel have already begun the Society’s next 50 years of serving and supporting our Vancouver Island communities.

Anita Rosewall Peters, President

Elizabeth Newcombe, Executive Director
The Crisis Society completed its 11th year as the regional Vancouver Island Crisis Line. Fundraising efforts to support Crisis Chat and Crisis Text resulted in its annual goal being reached again this year.

Our greatest asset continues to be our dedicated team:

- 27 volunteer crisis line workers and trainees;
- 17 staff crisis line workers;
- 9 members on our board of directors;
- a professional staff of 10 (an Executive Director of 29 years and Trainers with over 22 years’ experience with the Crisis Society); and
- our generous donors.

Here are highlights from the various program areas:

**Crisis Line Operations**

We continue to be an important provincial network partner in British Columbia, answering calls on 1800SUICIDE and 310Mental Health Support. We answered a total of 11% of the call volume for these two provincial networks.

We answered 14% of the total calls and 5% of the text interactions that were taken on the national Canada Suicide Prevention Service.

Our crisis lines were covered:

- 8% of the time by volunteers;
- 85% by staff Crisis Line workers; and
- 7% by Supervisory and Administrative staff.

A total of 1,775 volunteer hours were donated, a reduction of 50% from the previous year. This was due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These services equaled $26,625 in value. As a result, we relied heavily on staff crisis line workers to support our communities.

The levels of coverage in our Crisis Centre consisted of:

- double coverage, 74% of the time;
- triple coverage at 50%;
- quadruple coverage at 20.5%; and
- 31 hours where five Crisis Line workers were on shift.

**Crisis Chat and Crisis Text:**

**Online Emotional Support Services**

The number of chat and text visitors remained steady as per the previous year. We shut down these specific services on eight evenings due to limited staffing. This is a dramatic improvement from last year. Remote workers helped improve our capacity to answer interactions.

These services support people of all ages, with 44% being under 24 years of age. These two crisis services continued to be supported in part by individual and corporate donations.

We experienced an overall increase of 9% in the total number of call, chat and text interactions taken by the Crisis Society over the last fiscal year.

**Crisis Line Training**

Two Crisis Line volunteer training courses were delivered, with 13 trainees out of 14 candidates completing the training. We began to slowly and steadily increase our volunteer numbers, following the initial impact of the pandemic, with training occurring both online and in the Crisis Centre.

Staff Crisis Line workers attended five monthly training sessions.

We experienced a challenging year in terms of staffing and volunteering requirements.

**Vancouver Island Crisis Line Promotion**

We are grateful once again to Pattison Media for donating another year-long, Island-wide radio campaign promoting Crisis Line, Crisis Chat, and Crisis Text services, as well as volunteering opportunities, via eight radio stations.

Although in-person meetings were very limited this year, we participated in many online meetings to stay connected with community partners.

One e-newsletter was once again published online and promoted Island-wide. It reviewed the first year of the pandemic and provided an in-depth study of the complicated grief of suicide loss.

We continued updating our Community Resource Database, with 468 resources being revised this fiscal year.

Media releases were published for Crisis Line Awareness Week and World Suicide Prevention Day.
Fundraising

Our Crisis Line, Crisis Chat and Crisis Text services, as well as our youth suicide prevention programs, were supported financially by various community fundraising events such as the Odd Fellows Columbia Lodge No. 2’s Disc Golf Jamboree, VanIsle 460 Souls in Motion, and other fundraising events, in addition to many generous donors who helped us surpass our annual fundraising goal for this fiscal year.

While our Crisis Line operation is primarily funded by an Island Health contract, we rely on BC Gaming and donors who support our Community Education programs.

We were especially thankful this year for funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic from Nanaimo Foundation/Canada Emergency Support Fund, the Provincial Health Services Authority, and Pacific Blue Cross Health Foundation.

Thank You To All Our Donors!

This list represents all those who supported the Crisis Society financially or with in-kind donations for the fiscal year 2020-2021.

Visionaries ($5000+)

Island Health
Crisis Services Canada
British Columbia Gaming Community Grant
Nanaimo Foundation & Canada Emergency Community Support Fund
Odd Fellows Columbia Lodge No. 2 & CIBC Children’s Foundation
Provincial Health Services Authority
VanIsle 460 Souls in Motion
Intraworks I.T. Management
Clinically Creative Productions — Matt Wells

North Stars ($2500 – $4999)

A Day for Sam Fundraiser — Michael Kynalainen

Lighthouse Keepers ($1000 – $2499)

Knights of Columbus Ascension 7991
Ladysmith Lions Club
Nanaimo Beacon Fundraiser
Nanaimo Mitsubishi
PayPal Giving Fund Canada
Riley Evad
TD Small Business Banking

Life Preservers ($500 – $999)

Chameleon Hair Inc. Fundraiser
Fraternal Order of Eagles – Chemainus – Crofton Aerie No. 4400
Ladysmith Lions Club
Lynn Wood
M Graham & Associates Inc.
NanOOSE Bay Lions Club
Peter Hudson Comedy Fundraisers
Royal Canadian Legion – Br #191 Chemainus
Royal Canadian Legion – Br #134 Shawnigan Lake/Mill Bay
Vault Café Fundraiser
Westwood Metals Ltd.
Women of the Moose

ANCHORS (under $499)

Anne Tomyn
Anthem Postnikoff
Brian James
Carol Tromans
Cassi Starc
Christina Drake
Coast Capital Savings Federal Credit Union Employees
Coco Café
Cynthia Solyho-Kennedy
David Currey
Deb Hamilton
Dennett Woodland
Desirea Black
Diane Hogan
Elizabeth Newcombe
Ellis Richer
Elyse Cleave
Emma Johnston
Faith Scanlan
Glenn Davies
Island Colourscapes Painting
Janette Gerow
Jesse Cammack
Joanne Hogan
Joshua Nobleman
Kaitlin McDonald
Kathy Landry
Knights Mid-Island Charitable Society
Knights of Columbus Mid-Island 3842
Krista Stubbs
Leila Danielsen
Lori Schade
Lynmakepeace
Maggie Schulz
Marcia Bell
Oliver Sandberg
Omkar Chandorkar
Orbus Business Networks Inc.
Patricia Cleave
Patricia Wilson
Peeranut Visetsuth
Peter Hudson
Prox Employees Community Service Fund
Raymond Shred
Robin Toscak
Royal Canadian Legion Br #134 Shawnigan Lake
Royal Canadian Legion Br #211
Samantha Bevan
Sara Parbery
Sean and Vicki Finucane
Sean McCulloch
Sharyn Ball
Shirley Sterlinger
Steve Leavitt
Steve Marshall Ford Lincoln Ltd.
T. Lampard
The Condo Group Real Estate Ltd.
Community Education

With our facilitators consisting of three ASIST Trainers and one safeTALK Trainer, and two trainers experienced in presenting customized workshops, we facilitated a total of:

- nine ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) courses to 82 people;
- four safeTALK workshops to 60 people;*
  *These workshops continued to be offered in person, with an average 50% reduction in the number of participants per workshop for social distancing.
- two CIST (Crisis Intervention Skills Training) courses to 27 people online;
- five customized workshops, delivered to 141 people online.

School Suicide Prevention Programs

Two of our three youth programs were adapted for online facilitation and were presented Island-wide to elementary, middle, and senior schools.

- Two GRASP (Growth, Resilience, Acknowledgement, Suicide Awareness, and Personal Safe Planning) 12-hour gatekeeper training workshops were provided to 36 students.
- A total of 31 presentations of COPE (Communication, Options, Perspective, Enjoy life) were delivered to over 1,350 elementary school students.

Participating students represented 13 schools from Victoria, seven schools from Nanaimo, two schools from the North Island, and one school from Duncan.

Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out in-person presentations were not delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suicide Bereavement Support services return to VICS

To commemorate World Suicide Prevention Day, held on September 10, we re-launched our Suicide Bereavement Support services.

Eight monthly group support meetings were held online, with an average group size of six participants. One-on-one contacts were made either online or via telephone to support 75 participants.

Provincial and National initiatives

Our Executive Director continued to serve as Treasurer of the Crisis Line Association of BC (CLABC). The two provincial networks, 1800SUICIDE and 310Mental Health Support, continued operations with financial support from the Provincial Health Services Authority.

We continued to answer calls on the Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS) as a member site with financial support from the Public Health Agency of Canada. Our Executive Director stepped down as a Crisis Services Canada board member and continued to serve on the Canadian Distress Line Network and the CSPS Leadership Committee.

Staff Development

We did not attend any of the annual conferences normally presented by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS), the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP), and the Crisis Line Association of BC (CLABC) during the pandemic.

There was occasion to attend informative virtual training sessions during this pandemic year, including:

- Mental Health Academy Suicide Prevention Summit
- Institute of Child Psychology Trauma Summit
- HaaHuuPa Nuu-chah-nulth Cultural Connections
- Institute of Child Psychology, Emotional Regulation and Children’s Education
- Department of Justice Canada, Love Bombing 101, addressing youth sexual exploitation

As well, three staff successfully completed their Crisis Worker recertification with AAS.

2020-2021 Financials

Revenue: $1,203,124

Expenses: $1,114,718

*Note: $76,025 of Gaming funding deferred to next fiscal year
Vancouver Island Crisis Line, Chat, Text Statistics including 1800SUICIDE and 310Mental Health Support from April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021

Interactions and Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calls/Service</th>
<th>Mental Health Crisis</th>
<th>Interventions (911, MCFD, Other)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage of Calls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1800SUICIDE Calls</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1,596</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310Mental Health Support Calls</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4,371</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island Crisis Line Calls</td>
<td>2,173</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>28,260</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS) Calls</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>7,131</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Calls</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>41,358</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island Chats &amp; Texts</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPS Text</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Call, Chat, Text</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>43,028</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender of Callers

- Male: 10,035
- Female: 21,135
- Gender Diverse: 130
- Unknown: 2,927

- Average call, chat, and text interactions per day: 100
- Busiest day: March 20, 2021, with 151 interactions
- Follow-up calls made to high-risk callers and third-party call-outs: 355
- 3,606 voice messages left for a call back due to Crisis Workers supporting other callers
- 3,066 calls related to COVID-19 pandemic
- 17,371 callers asked about suicidal thoughts (51% of total calls)
- 6,022 (18% of call volume) suicide risk assessments/safety plans completed for callers
- Language Line accessed on one occasion for a caller who did not speak English

Why People Call the Crisis Line

- Mental Health and Substance Use: 45%
- Suicide: 12%
- Information & Resources: 9%
- Individual/Family Life: 18%
- Physical Health Issues: 5%
- Basic Needs & Homelessness: 5%
- Abuse & Family Violence: 1%

Estimated Age of Callers

- (Note: 10,040 were unknown)

- Average age of callers: 35 years
Mission Statement

The Vancouver Island Crisis Society is committed to providing an accessible voice, text and chat crisis intervention and suicide prevention services, including postvention programs. We endeavour to provide emotional support during times of crisis, information about community resources, education intended to promote community wellness, and reduce the incidence of suicide. We value the principles of confidentiality, non-judgmental acceptance, respect for diversity, personal empowerment and cooperation.

Board of Directors 2020-2021

Anita Rosewall-Peters, President
Maggie Schulz, Vice-President
Lacey Redding, Secretary
Elaine Layman, Treasurer

Directors:
Ryan Butler
Sharon Erickson
David Reid
Dr. Raymond Shred
Sam Stevens

Vancouver Island Crisis Society
P.O. Box 1118, Nanaimo, BC, V9R 6E7
Business Line: 250-753-2495
Toll-Free (BC only): 1-877-753-2495
Fax: 250-753-2475
Email: info@vicrisis.ca
Website: www.vicrisis.ca
Registered Charity Number 107758831RR0001

Crisis Line Services

Vancouver Island Crisis Line 1-888-494-3888
Crisis Chat via www.vicrisis.ca (Chat Now)
Crisis Text from your mobile 250-800-3806
1800SUICIDE (Provincial) 1-800-784-2433
310Mental Health Support (Provincial) 310-6789
Canada Suicide Prevention Service (National)
1-833-456-4566
CSPS Text 45645

Community Education

250-753-2495 or 1-877-753-2495

Affiliations

Accredited Crisis Centre by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS)
Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP)
Crisis Line Association of BC (CLABC)
Crisis Services Canada (CSC)
Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
Volunteer Nanaimo

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