



Vancouver Island
Crisis Society

1970 – 2023



The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings.

Kakuzo Okahura

53rd
Annual Report
2023

The board, volunteers, and staff of Vancouver Island Crisis Society gratefully acknowledge that we provide our services on the unceded and traditional territories of the Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth, and Kwakiutl Peoples.



A positive mindset evidences resilience, which inspires adaptation to change.

2022-2023: The winds of change are coming for Crisis Lines

Crisis Line services in the province of British Columbia and other parts of Canada are undergoing many changes. To begin with, for the first time in the 31 years our Executive Director has served Vancouver Island Crisis Society (VICS), **Island Health** is no longer the funder of our crisis line services. A “call for offers” was announced by the **Provincial Health Services Authority** (PHSA) in September 2022, resulting in PHSA becoming the primary funder for crisis line service delivery in BC, with five separate contracts having been awarded to distress centres. On October 1, 2022, VICS signed a contract with PHSA to continue to provide Vancouver Island Crisis Line services.

This important shift in funding has resulted in the continuation of the provincial Crisis Line Enhancement Project (CLEP). This also facilitates collaboration between the ten distress centres that are part of the **BC Crisis Line Network** and PHSA. Resulting from numerous strategic planning meetings, the robust Genesys Cloud technology is expected to be implemented for BC crisis line centres in mid-2023. Thus, increased funding and cutting-edge technology are hoped to improve access for BC residents to crisis line services for emotional support and suicide assessment and prevention services.

The **Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission** (CRTC) announced in 2022 that Canada will facilitate access for callers to suicide and mental health distress centres throughout Canada by entering **988**, beginning on November 30, 2023. Vancouver Island Crisis Society is preparing for this access number’s launch, building on its participation as an inaugural pilot site with the **Talk Suicide Canada** network since 2017, when it launched and quickly gained national recognition. We are working collaboratively with national and provincial partners toward implementing a routing system which will enable local calls being answered as much as possible by local centres that are part of the 988 system. These partners include the **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health** (CAMH), **Crisis Services Canada** (CSC), **Canadian Mental Health Association** (CMHA), **Public Agency of Canada** (PHAC), PHSA, members of the BC Crisis Line Network, and others.

We continue to serve our local Vancouver Island communities with dedication and empathy while engaging fully in the development of these significant changes to come.

This is community and we are proud to share our expertise and to learn from others.

Anita Rosewall Peters, President

Elizabeth Newcombe, Executive Director

The Crisis Society completed its 13th year as the regional **Vancouver Island Crisis Line**. Efforts by members of communities throughout Vancouver Island, to support **Crisis Chat, Crisis Text**, and other suicide prevention programs, resulted in over \$49,000 raised by private donations.

Our greatest asset continues to be our dedicated team:

- 13 volunteer Crisis Line Responders and trainees;
- 15 staff Crisis Line Responders;
- 9 members on our Board of Directors;
- a professional staff of 11 (an Executive Director of 31 years and Trainers with over 24 years' experience with the Crisis Society); and
- our generous donors.

Here are highlights from the various program areas:

Crisis Line Operations

We continue to serve our communities as part of essential provincial and national crisis line support networks.



We responded to a total of 5930 calls for the provincial **1800SUICIDE** and **310Mental Health Support**, support lines.

We answered 3264 call and 100 text interactions that were taken on the national **Talk Suicide Canada** network.

Our Crisis Lines were covered:

- 2.5% of the time by volunteers;
- 89.5% by staff Crisis Line Responders; and
- 8% by Supervisory and Administrative staff.

A total of 487 volunteer hours were donated. These services equalled \$7305 in value. We relied heavily once again this year on Staff Crisis Line Responders and Supervisory Staff to support our communities, resulting from an ongoing reduction in volunteers.

We continued to endeavour to support Service Users while short-staffing remained challenging in the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted unfortunately in our not being able to respond to as many incoming interactions as hoped.

Strategizing the paths to change with patience, skill, and experience



Crisis Chat and Crisis Text: Online Emotional Support Services

VICS responded to 818 Chat and Text interactions this year. These specific services were shut down on two evenings due to technology interruptions. Remote responders continued to help improve our capacity to answer interactions.

These services supported people of all ages, with 38% being under 24 years of age. These two crisis services continued to be supported in part by individual and corporate donations.

The Crisis Society remains abreast of emerging research and adapts processes to better support service users, and to facilitate suicide prevention and crisis de-escalation skills to Vancouver Islanders.

Crisis Line Training

Two Crisis Line Responder volunteer training courses were delivered, with five trainees out of 13 candidates completing the Fall program. Eight participants continued to train in the Spring.

Staff Crisis Line Responders attended eight monthly training sessions.

We piloted a new interactive online Crisis Line Responder training program in the Fall, with the goal of increasing volunteer training interest throughout Vancouver Island. Evaluation of this program is ongoing. We hope it will help increase our overall capacity.

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 and employment opportunities.

In-person meetings increased this past year, and we continued to participate in many online meetings to stay connected with community partners across the Island.

A total of 11 mass emails were circulated to promote programs Island-wide, including presentations affiliated with Crisis Line Awareness Week and World Suicide Prevention Day, as well as volunteering and employment opportunities.

We continued updating our Community Resource Database, with over 1500 resources being revised during this fiscal year.



[The Wolf 106.9 FM](#) [The WAVE 102.3 FM](#)
[The Lounge 99.9 FM](#) [The Beach 88.5 FM](#)
[The Peak 93.3 FM](#) [The Eagle 97.3 FM](#)



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** and others, in addition to many generous individual donors.

While our Crisis Line operation was primarily funded by **Island Health** for the first half of the fiscal year and by **Provincial Health Services Authority** for the ensuing half-year, we continued to rely on **BC Gaming and donors** to support our Community Education and School Programs.

Thank You To All Our Donors!

This list represents all those who supported the Crisis Society financially or with in-kind donations during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Visionaries (\$5000+)

Provincial Health Services Authority
Island Health
Public Health Agency of Canada
British Columbia Gaming Community Grant
Pattison Media
Crisis Services Canada
Odd Fellows Columbia Lodge No. 2
Intraworks I.T. Management
Leviathan

North Stars (\$2500 – \$4999)

Lighthouse Keepers (\$1000 – \$2499)

Clayton Kristiansen
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 76 Qualicum Beach
Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Canada



Our Crisis Line Responders empower others to create changes in their lives.

Life Preservers (\$500 – \$999)

Johnson Enterprises
Micaty Holdings Ltd.
Royal Canadian Legion Bowser Branch 211
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 134 Malahat
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 191 Chemainus
University of Victoria
Women of the Moose

ANCHORS (under \$499)

Anytime Fitness
Benevity Canadian Community Impact Fund
Brian Hayward
Christina Drake
Cora Hooper

Heather Crites
Karen Karsten
Kinsmen Club of Lake Cowichan
Linda Brandmeier
Lyn Makepeace
Marc-André Fillion
Michelle Steel
Mill Bay Lions Club
Neil Cutler
PayPal Giving Fund Canada
Provincial Employees Community Service Fund
Richard Kobayashi
Sean McCulloch
Tzu Lee
Wendy Wearne
Western Edge Theatre Society



Suicide Bereavement Support Services

Thirteen **group support** meetings were held online, with an average group size of five participants.

A total of 36 **one-on-one support** sessions were made either online or by telephone to support those grieving the loss of a loved one to suicide.

Community Education

Our Community Education workshop presentations continued to be in high demand.

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

- 12 **ASIST** (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) courses to 146 participants;
- 5 **safeTALK** workshops to 82 participants;
- 6 **CIST** (Crisis Intervention Skills Training) courses to 88 participants; and
- 15 customized workshops, delivered to 306 participants.

Workshops developed by VICS are delivered in person and online. *LivingWorks' ASIST and safeTALK are only delivered in person.*



School Suicide Prevention Programs

- Three **GRASP** (Growth, Resilience, Acknowledgement, Suicide Awareness, and Personal Safe Planning) 12-hour gatekeeper training workshops were provided to 58 students.
- A total of 15 schools on Vancouver Island continued to participate in the online version of **COPE** (Communication, Options, Perspective, Enjoy life), reaching 565 students. We resumed presenting COPE in schools as well, for a total of four programs to 93 elementary school students.

Speak Out, Reach Out, Help Out in-person presentations were not delivered during this past year, but are being booked for the upcoming year.



Staff Development

We attended a virtual annual conference presented by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) and attended the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) conference in person.

We participated in online training sessions offered by Talk Suicide Canada's *Community of Practice* and the AAS *Healing After Suicide Loss Summit*.

A staff retreat was held for 24 VICS personnel; it focussed on self-care, resilience, and positivity.



Provincial and National initiatives

The two provincial networks, **1800SUICIDE** and **310Mental Health Support**, continued operations with financial support from the Provincial Health Services Authority.

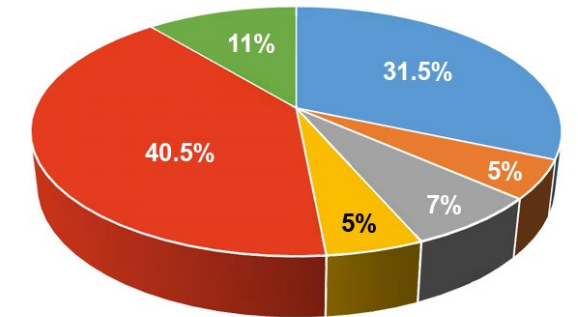
We continued to answer calls and texts on the **Talk Suicide Canada** network, as a member site with financial support from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Our Executive Director continued to serve on the **BC Crisis Line Network** and the **Talk Suicide Canada Leadership Committee**.



2022-2023 Financials

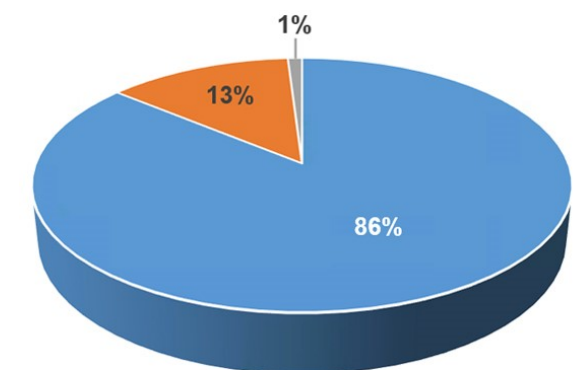
Revenue: \$1,268,021



- 31.5% Island Health
- 5% Donations, Membership, Fundraising, Other
- 7% BC Gaming Policy & Enforcement Branch*
- 5% Community Education
- 40.5% CLABC & PHSA Provincial Funding
- 11% Public Health Agency of Canada and Talk Suicide Canada

*Note: Deferred Revenue totalled \$143,610

Expenses: \$1,207,276



- 86% Crisis Services
- 13% Community Education
- 1% Administration & Fundraising

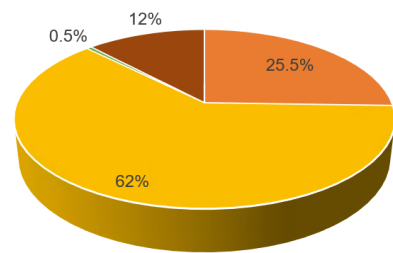
Vancouver Island Crisis Line, Chat, Text Statistics

including 1800SUICIDE and 310Mental Health Support

from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023

Data review facilitates a course of action for integrating new processes.

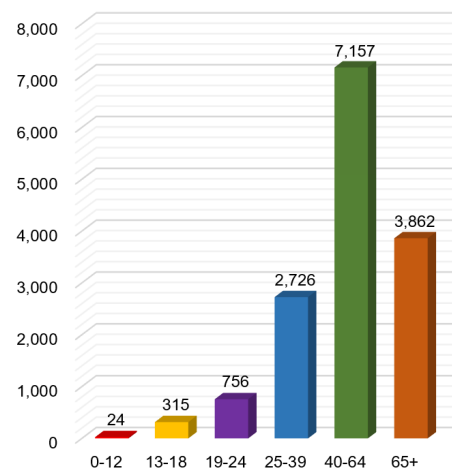
Gender of Callers



- Male: 7,223
- Female: 17,610
- Gender Diverse: 174
- Unknown: 3,374

Estimated Age of Callers

(Note: 13,541 were unknown)



	Crisis Line	%	Crisis Chat	Crisis Text
Total Interactions	28,381		393	425
Victoria and Area	10,990	39	156	192
Cowichan Valley and Area	2,166	8	18	30
Nanaimo/Ladysmith	5,562	20	79	90
Port Alberni/West Coast	376	1	7	13
Parksville/Qualicum	846	3	13	15
Comox Valley and Area	1,463	5	32	19
Campbell River and Area	608	2	14	14
Mount Waddington and Area	124	0.5	15	16
BC Off-Island	2,000	7	39	30
Remainder of Canada/USA	347	1	1	1
Unknown	3,899	13.5	19	5

(Regional listing does not include Talk Suicide Canada's call and text statistics)

- Average calls/chat/texts per day were 89
- 182 follow-up calls completed to high-risk callers and third-party call-outs
- 4,321 voice messages left for a call back due to Crisis Line Responder supporting another caller
- 316 calls related to COVID-19; that is 1% of our call volume
- 13,561 callers were asked about suicidal thoughts, which is 50% of total calls
- 1,841 (6% of call volume) suicide risk safe plans/assessments were completed for callers
- Language Line accessed on two occasions for a caller who did not speak English



Crisis Line Responders listen deeply and foster a sense of collaboration with those who reach out, which can result in new perspectives to help them in the here-and-now.



Interactions and Interventions

	Mental Health Crisis Response	Interventions (911, MCFD, Other)	Total	Percentage of Calls
1800SUICIDE Calls	21	22	1,518	5%
310Mental Health Support Calls	21	15	4,412	14%
Vancouver Island Crisis Line Calls	1,634	301	22,451	71%
Talk Suicide Canada Calls	—	62	3,264	10%
Total Calls	1,676	400	31,645	100%
Vancouver Island Chats & Texts	1	6	818	—
Talk Suicide Canada Text	—	1	100	—
Total Call, Chat, Text Interactions	—	—	32,563	—

Why People Call the Crisis Line

Mental Health & Substance Use	48%
Suicide	14%
Information/Resources	8%
Individual & Family Life	7%
Physical Health	4%
Basic Needs/ Homelessness	4%
Abuse/Family Violence	3%
Other	12%

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 2022-2023

Anita Rosewall-Peters, President

David Reid, Vice President

Lacey Redding, Secretary

Elaine Layman, Treasurer

Directors:

Ryan Butler

(resigned June 24, 2022)

Sharon Erickson

Raymond Shred

(resigned June 24, 2022)

Kim Bayliss

John Jordan

(rejoined June 24, 2022)

Karen Karsten

(joined October 27, 2022)

Karen Love

(joined October 27, 2022)

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

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 via mobile 250-800-3806

1800SUICIDE (Provincial) 1-800-784-2433

310Mental Health Support (Provincial) 310-6789

Talk Suicide Canada (National)

1-833-456-4566

Text 45645

Community Education

info@vicrisis.ca or 1-877-753-2495

Affiliations

Accredited Crisis Centre by the
American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

BC Crisis Line Network
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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