



NIAGARA
Sexual Assault Centre

Niagara Sexual Assault Centre Annual Report 2022-2023

niagarasexualassaultcentre.com

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St. Catharines, ON
L2R 7E1

Business # 905 682 7258
Crisis # 905 682 4584

Table Of Contents



We are committed to **advocacy** for social change and the **prevention** of sexual violence.

Niagara Sexual Assault Centre is a non-profit organization that responds to the needs of survivors of sexual violence and through public education increases understanding and awareness of sexual assault related issues. We provide a variety of counselling, support and emergency services to survivors and their families. Using a feminist, empowerment approach NSAC holds the universal truth that all clients are treated with respect and dignity. We are committed to advocacy for social change and the prevention of sexual violence.

Message from the Board	4
Staff and Board	6
Public Education	8
From The Clinical Team	10
Financial Highlights	14
Donor Recognition	16

Message From The Board



**2022-2023
has been
a year of
growth and
change.**

Quote by
— **Carrie Zeffiro & Carly Eckhardt**
Co-Chairs of NSAC

2022-2023 has been a year of growth and change.

In this past year our direct service reached new heights. With the addition of the new Anti- Human Trafficking program our **Public Education department offered programs to over 11,000** students and our counselling department provided **2081 hours of one to one counselling, advocacy and group therapy across the Niagara region.**

In 2022 – 2023 (186) new clients asked to be put on our waiting list for counselling services. Thanks to two community grants the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre was able to take an additional 85 individuals off of the waiting list; thereby **reducing the wait time, for individual counselling, from 8 months to 4 four months.** We are deeply grateful to the Niagara Community Foundation (David S. Howes Fund) and the Branscombe Family Foundation for their support and for making this dramatic increase in services possible.

Building capacity extends beyond direct service. To better support our board & staff and create efficiencies within the organization; we provided diversity and Inclusion training, completely revamped our statistical programs with new software (through a grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation) and launched our new website.

Lastly, we are thrilled to announce the revitalization of the **Volunteer program.** As leaders in the field of Sexual Violence Awareness, we feel a responsibility to provide learning and volunteer opportunities for our community.

As co-chairs for Niagara Sexual Assault Centre we take our role seriously. Sexual Violence is a difficult topic for many – it is frightening, it is controversial, it is heartbreaking and it is unacceptable! It is our job, as an agency, to bring the best possible service to our community and to do it with professionalism, kindness, empathy and as timely as resources allow. We thank the community for their support, the board for its endless dedication, volunteers for their hours of service and staff for their commitment to bringing forward their very best, each and every day.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie Zeffiro

Carrie Zeffiro, Co-Chair

Carly Eckhardt

Carly Eckhardt, Co-Chair

NSAC Staff and Board Members



STAFF MEMBERS
Isabel Beland
Lisa Berketo
Donna Christie
Tricia Cosgrove
Alyssa Howard
Mackenzie Klauck
Vera Krasovec
Sarah Mannaga
Suzanne Mason
Danielle Monsberger
Reema Shah
Jessica Wang

BOARD MEMBERS
Carrie Zeffiro – Co-Chair
Carly Eckhardt – Co-Chair
Sheri Durksen – Secretary
Anne Marie DiSanto – Treasurer
Melinda Cheevers – Director
Tracy Geoffroy – Director
Kelly Taylor-McNeil – Director

HOSPITAL RESPONSE TEAM
Mirna Batinic
Miranda Bos
Tricia Cosgrove
Andrianna Giardino
Niki Giardino
Kellie Glen
Tracey Murray
Amber Pressey
Candi Sider
Jessica Wang

Public Education



498

PRESENTATIONS

Over the past year, staff has provided 498 presentations.

11,123

STUDENTS REACHED

Over the past year, our presentations have reached out to 11,123 students across the Niagara Region.

11

PROGRAM TYPES

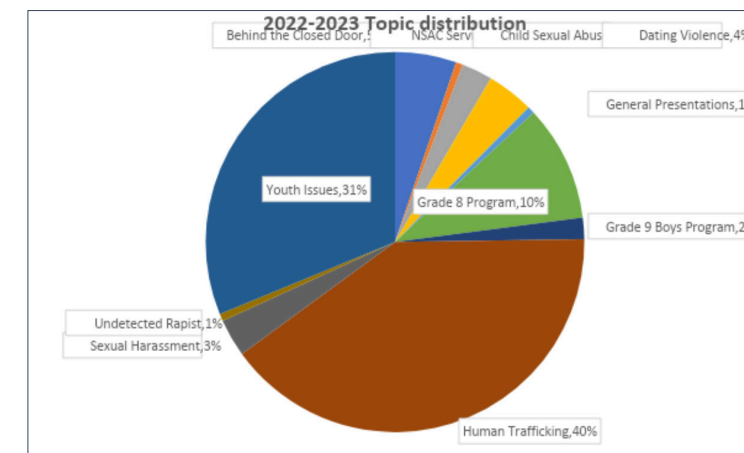
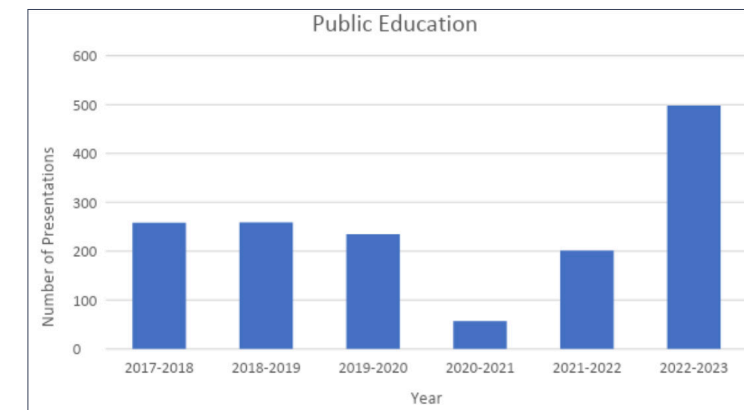
A total of 11 different programs were delivered across the Niagara Region.

This year the public education department received an influx of requests for both school boards with grades ranging from seven to twelve. A total of **11 different programs** were delivered across the Niagara Region and staff have received positive feedback and participation from both students and teachers.

Our **Human Trafficking** Program becomes one of our highly requested programs with **200 presentations** being delivered this past year. We notice as this topic becomes more relevant to the community, there is more engagement from the students.

Our second most popular program is the **Youth Issues** program with **155 presentations** being delivered in the past year. We are currently developing newer programs which will be piloted in the next year to provide relevant and informative information to the community.

Over the past year, staff has provided **498 presentations**, reaching out to **11,123 students** across the Niagara Region. This is the highest number of presentations we have seen in the past five years. We are excited to continue to meet the demand of our community and have a positive outlook for the next year.



Impact and Effects of Sexual Violence experienced in Childhood and Adulthood



Clients of The Niagara Sexual Assault Centre (NSAC) typically seek counselling to:

- Address the impact of childhood sexual abuse, incest and sexual assault (*recent or historical*)
- Manage trauma symptoms related to sexual violation (*i.e. depression, anxiety, and flashbacks*)
- Develop and increase confidence and self-trust

To reach these goals, clients are offered up to 30 individual sessions that take place on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The agency utilizes a tri-phasic approach. Each phase is comprised of 10 sessions. Phases are separated by an 8-week break that provides clients the opportunity to independently apply newly learned information and skills. Some clients benefit from participating in group therapy. These confidential groups speak to the feelings of isolation, despair and fear, and strengthen bonds of connection and hope. NSAC holds both a men's and women's 14-week survivor group.

One of the many goals of counselling is to support clients in making meaningful changes in their lives. Changes typically result in improvement of quality of life and ability to complete activities of daily living. At the commencement and end of each phase, counsellors measure progress using a 10-point Subjective Units of Distress (SUD) scale, which captures the distress clients experience associated with the effects of sexual violence trauma(s). This process provides a snapshot for both the client and counsellor to engage in collaborative goal setting to guide the work.

There are a number of symptoms which can disrupt the quality of life of a survivor of sexual violence trauma(s). Below is a categorization of symptoms experienced most often.

Re-Experiencing:

This is when a person involuntarily and vividly relives the traumatic event in the form of:

- flashbacks
- nightmares
- repetitive and distressing images or sensations
- physical sensations, such as pain, sweating, feeling sick or trembling

These symptoms, particularly flashbacks, can also have physical effects such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. Triggers such as words, objects, or situations that are reminders of the event may lead one to have re-experiencing symptoms.

Avoidance & Numbing:

It is not uncommon for trauma survivors to try to push memories of the event(s) out of their mind, often distracting themselves with work or hobbies. Avoidance behaviours are the survivor's effort to withdraw from situations and feelings that produce trauma-related symptoms.

Some people attempt to deal with their feelings by trying not to feel anything at all. This is known as emotional numbing. This can lead to the person becoming isolated and withdrawn, and they may also give up pursuing activities they used to enjoy.

Continued...



Avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings as well as external reminders such as conversations about the traumatic event(s) or people or places that bring the event to mind. Avoidance behaviors are effectively an effort to withdraw from situations and feelings that produce trauma-related symptoms.

Symptoms of avoidance and numbing include:

- Being on “automatic pilot”
- Loss of interest in life and/or people
- Feeling detached
- Feeling estranged from others
- Emotional anesthesia
- Self-harming
- Pre-occupation with avoidance

Additional Risk Factors

Some individuals may experience additional symptoms such as:

- Lack of support
- Lack of acknowledgement
- from people in their lives or even themselves
- Vulnerability from previous traumatic event(s)
- Interpersonal violation, such as domestic violence
- Coping by avoidance



I am forever thankful for this group.



Feedback from Women’s Survivor Group

“Sharing my story with others who understand me because they’ve “been there” was such an **impactful and freeing experience**. It helped me heal in more ways than I could have imagined.”

“I am forever thankful for this group. Telling my story and hearing others has been **life changing**. I feel validated for the first time and giving validation has been just as life changing.”

	Intake	End P1	% Change
Hyperarousal Avg.	8	6	27%
Re-Experiencing Avg.	8	5	37%
Numbing & Avoidance Avg.	7	5	25%
Additional Factors Avg.	9	4	49%
Average	8	5	31%

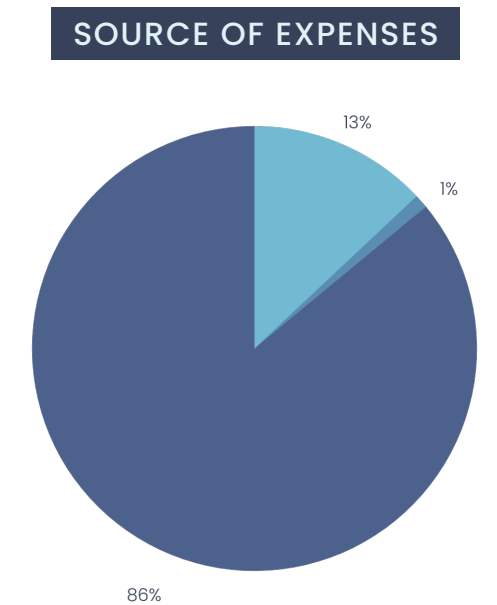
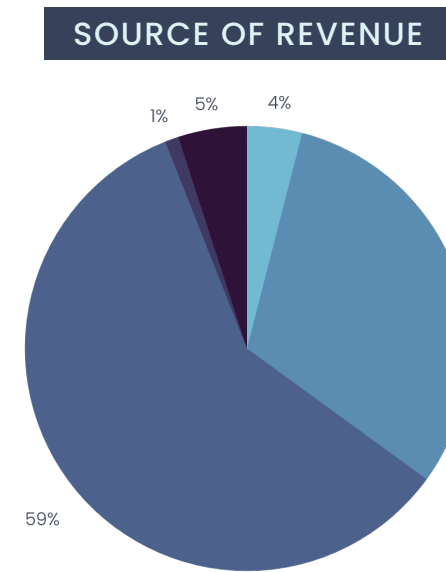
Financial Highlights



Source of Revenue	Total \$	%
Donations	26,926	4%
Grants	234,498	31%
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	441,537	59%
Interest	4,169	1%
Fundraising	40,532	5%
Total Revenue	747,662	100%



Source of Expenses	Total \$	%
Admin Expense	92,827	13%
Fundraising Expense	8,056	1%
Program Expense	615,611	86%
Total Expenses	747,662	100%



- Donations
- Grants
- Interest
- Fundraising
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Admin Expense
- Fundraising Expense
- Program Expense

Donor/Sponsorship Recognition, In Kind



We extend our sincere gratitude to all Donors – including those not listed and wish to remain anonymous. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of these very important lists. If you discover an omission or error, please accept our apologies and notify the Centre. We will ensure that this is rectified in the next Annual Report.

Andrea Addario
 Aynsley Cunliffe
 Branscombe Family Foundation
 Brock Ford Sales
 Canadian Federation of University Women
 Canadian Women's Foundation
 Carol Harding
 Carrie Zeffiro
 Clyde Head
 Carol Fursey
 Diocese of Niagara Falls
 Donna Ralph
 Duncan McNaughton
 Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
 First Ontario – Grantham Branch
 Fonthill Lions Club
 Geraldine Hawken
 Greater Fort Erie Secondary School
 Gregory Stone
 Haley Bateman
 Harriet Tubman Public School
 James van den Brink
 Jolene Boland
 Kinsmen Club of Niagara on the Lake
 Leela MadhavaRau
 Lions Club of Port Dalhousie
 Lori Littleton
 Lexi Winstanley
 May Court Club of St. Catharines
 Melinda Cheevers
 Menaka Evans

Niagara Community Foundation – Fred Marlow Fund
 Olivia Shaw
 Ontario Coalition to End Violence Against Women
 Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres
 Ottawa Coalition
 Pay Pal
 P. Smith
 Patricia Meek
 Pete Boychuck
 Port Dalhousie Lioness Club
 Quinn Arruda
 Raeanna Rees
 RaeAnn Thorsteinson
 Remax Niagara – Niagara Falls
 Ron & Donna Hogan
 Rotary Club of Niagara Falls
 Rotary Club of St. Catharines
 Royal Canadian Legion #479
 Royal Canadian Legion #612
 Royal Canadian Legion #613
 Fonthill
 Sarah Prindiville
 Sheri Durksen
 Susan Hroncek
 St David's & District Lioness Club
 Tammy Snow-Johnston
 Town of Fort Erie
 Tracy Geoffroy
 Tricia Cosgrove
 Veena Dwivedi
 United Way – Pledge Campaign
 Zachary Jones
 Zonta Club of Niagara Falls



Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.

- *Cesar Chavez*



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