



Annual Report: –2021-22

Wednesday September 28, 2022
aussi disponible en français

Chair's Report

Contact Niagara continues to meet the challenges of an ever-changing set of circumstances both locally, nationally and globally. The Covid Virus has forever changed us and the needs of our community. The need for our services continues to grow. Our dedicated staff led by Executive Director Nadine Wallace work tirelessly and continue to navigate the challenges and respond to the needs of our clients and partners.

We are grateful to work closely and collaboratively with our service partners. Only together can we make our services efficient and impactful to those we serve. We will continue to implement our recently updated Strategic Plan and build upon our work with members of the Indigenous Community.

Recent feedback gathered both internally and externally indicate we are well respected and trusted within our partner agencies. Also, of note is that Contact Niagara staff feel valued and respected and we are fortunate to have welcomed some new staff and to continue to benefit from the vast experience of others.

On a sad note, we say goodbye to 3 outstanding Board of Director Members, George Kurzawa, Marcel Jacques, and Kristy Andersen. These individuals have given countless hours of time and expertise to Contact Niagara. In return they have asked for nothing. Thank you for your time, commitment and passion. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff we wish you peace and happiness.

Finally, as Chair of the Board I continue to be inspired by the unprecedented level of

commitment to our values demonstrated by our staff and Board of Directors. I have no doubt we will continue to provide a high level of service and meet the challenges that lie ahead with integrity and passion.

Sincerely,
Todd Bright, Board Chair

Mission:

To make a positive difference for individuals, families and the communities we serve, by providing coordinated information and processes, participating in collaborative community planning, and facilitating access to services.

Vision:

A community where everyone feels respected, valued and supported and every child and youth is able to reach their full potential.

Values:

At Contact Niagara, to guide our decisions and actions, we have a belief in and a commitment to the following core values:
Client and Family Centred
Personal Development
Integrity,
Accountability,
Trust and Transparency,
Respect

Even with Covid, waitlists, etc., everyone responsive and incredibly kind and compassionate. It is incredibly comforting to know that experienced and empathetic people are helping the children in our community navigate life in 2021!

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

Executive Director's Report

I want to begin by saying to all those who contact us for information and services, we recognize and value the privilege we have of hearing your stories, and the courage it takes to share them. It is your strength, your determination, your courage, that motivates us every day. You inspire us and leave us in awe.

This past year, although we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, continued to require all of us to navigate impacts of the Pandemic. These impacts have been widely felt by children, youth and families, and as an agency, we worked to take further steps toward making our services more easily accessible, and ones that meet the needs of all of those who reach out for service. We understand that providing services and supports that are meaningful, must be grounded in health equity, in collaboration, and in broad partnership. In "seeing" each person's uniqueness and experiences. We recognize that members of the community who identify as Indigenous, Francophone, Black and Brown, part of the sexual and gender diverse community, and others who experience marginalization for a variety of reasons, continue to experience barriers to accessing services which meet their needs. We understand that how we support people must be done through this understanding of unique journeys (gender, culture, language, race, faith), and that one "size" truly does not "fit" all.

As I reflect on our work together in Niagara, I am constantly reminded of the importance of our relationships together. Over the past year, we have all continued to be creative in the ways we have tried to stay connected and continued to sustain and strengthen those relationships. This has been true despite challenges of need, resource pressures, and Pandemic restrictions. Out of crisis can come opportunities and we have witnessed innovative ideas, determination, and creativity and looked at the opportunities to do things differently.

I want to say thank you to the members of our Board of Directors, I am constantly reminded

of the power we have individually and collectively to make change. It is your commitment to all of us, that allows us to continue to strengthen and improve. To those of you who generously volunteer your time and expertise, to family members, the Youth Wellness Hub- Niagara Youth Advisory Committee, our direct service partners, and to the many partners we work with in our community, thank you for your never-ending dedication and energy to supporting members of the Niagara community.

In closing, every year for this report I search for words to do justice to the staff at Contact Niagara. Each day and passing year bring challenges. Challenges that are close to home, challenges that affect our community, ones that affect the world. With each challenge, I marvel at your skill, your kindness, your creativity, your humour, your strength and compassion... your humanity... and your never-ending support for each other. You are truly family. I said earlier in my message that with crisis can come opportunity; crisis can also lead to more crisis. Each of you has navigated every challenge, every obstacle with grace and determination, and because of you, there have been no roadblocks to finding ways forward. These past two plus years have seen us rely on each other more than ever before. Our collective ability to continue providing uninterrupted service, to fulfilling our responsibilities, is due to your commitment to our roles in the service system, and as importantly, to each other. Words can not do justice to how privileged I am to work with, laugh with, and learn from, each of you.

For 2022-2023, we continue to commit to implementing practices that are meaningfully co-developed with those who have lived experience and who represent a diversity of experiences. We re-commit to continuing our learning and to continuing to listen to understand.

"Do not fear making mistakes in life, fear only not correcting them". ~ Master Cheng Yen

Sincerely,

Nadine Wallace, Executive Director

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

2021-2022 Highlights:

At Contact Niagara, we have made a commitment to learn about the darker truths of Canadian history and its impacts on Indigenous Peoples. Our Staff and Board recognize that we still have much to learn regarding the individual and systemic effects (racism) of colonization and this knowledge must shape our programming and services. We recognize that this is a long journey that requires dedication and time. As we learn more about the truths, we are diligently implementing trauma informed and identity affirming approaches to address the unique needs of Indigenous families. With humility, we are committed to strengthening our relationship with Niagara's Indigenous community so that we can collectively identify the needs and challenges where we can offer support.

We consider ourselves fortunate to both provide direct service and partner on existing and new initiatives with our many partners across the Niagara region. As our systems of service as a whole look to how we can improve services and enhance programming, we understand engaging those with lived expertise is critical as we embrace opportunities and sometimes challenges of a constantly evolving system of services. We understand that change is often our constant and like our partners, we are always looking for opportunities to improve services and processes.

✚ 2021-22 saw us continue to partner as health and social service providers in Niagara to develop and implement a vision for connected and accessible culturally informed care through the Niagara Ontario Health Team-Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara (NOHT-ÉSON) (<https://noht-eson.ca/>). This work is ongoing and Contact Niagara is excited to be part of it.

✚ With Pathstone Mental Health, Niagara's child and youth mental health system Lead Agency, we continue to collaborate on enhancing the child and youth mental health system of services, working to enhance linkages across sectors (e.g. autism, developmental), and embedding family engagement in everything we do.

✚ We are continuing our participation on various

local, West Region, and Provincial committees, and in various research projects focused on co-development of services.

✚ Niagara organizations and people with lived experience continue to partner on Transitional Age Youth pathways and services for those youth transitioning into adulthood who may be eligible for adult developmental services.

✚ We are continuing to partner with the Niagara Regional police and other community-based resources on Niagara's Extrajudicial Measures Referral Program, for youth who intersect with the justice system.

✚ We completed our strategic planning process for 2020-2025 and launched a revised, more accessible, website.

Above are areas of growth. We also want to acknowledge the areas where we need to be better. The waits for service many times throughout the year have been unacceptable. These waits do not lie at the feet of our staff or their commitment. These waits (wherever in the journey) are related to many factors, and we commit to continuing to work to address these circumstances.

2021-2022: Statistics on Intakes:

# of Intakes Created		# Unique Children/ Youth	Case notes Completed
2021/22	5460	4173	29628
2020/21	4,691	4,208	24,222
2019/20	4,721	4,107	27,363
2018/19	4,949	3,944	28,729
2017/18	5,011	3,293	27,699
2016/17	4,054	3,450	19,021

Stats: Who Called to make a referral:

2021/22	Caller / Requestor	
Self/ Family/Friend	1,822	33%
Physicians	2,829	52%
Other professionals	325	6%
School	82	1.5%
Police	23	~.5%
FACS (CAS)	27	~.5%
Other/Anonymous	352	6.5%
Total	5460	100%

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

Other Programming Highlights:

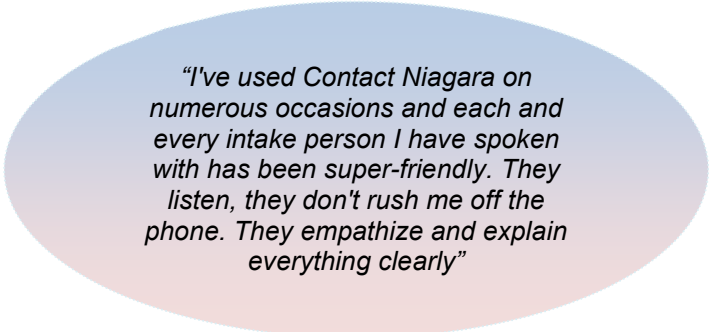
Co-ordinated Service Planning (CSP)

The 2021-22 fiscal year saw full implementation of Coordinated Service Planning (CSP) in Niagara. CSP is a collaborative Program with many partners, with Contact Niagara acting as the Coordinating Agency for the Niagara Region. CSP promotes the vision of a system in which children and youth with complex and/or multiple special needs get the timely and effective services they need to participate fully at home, school, and in the community. The objective of CSP, is to provide a seamless, family-centred service experience and to develop a single coordinated plan that outlines the needs and goals of the child or youth and family, and that facilitates the planning process, and liaises with all service providers involved with the family (“the Family Team”). CSP helps service providers take a holistic approach to supporting families and clients with complex and/or multiple needs (e.g. developmental, autism, mental health, medical) in collaboration with schoolboards and a network of Niagara’s children’s service partner organizations.

CSP Provider agencies in Niagara collectively support over 80 children/youth and their families and act as Service Planning Coordinators within their respective existing agency programs. There is a wide range of expertise that exists within Niagara CSP, including the diversity of skillsets among Service Planning Coordinators.. These front-line staff from CSP Partner organizations include Family Support Workers, Children’s Services Consultants, Case Managers, Care Coordinators, and/or Social Workers, among other job titles, and bring experience and backgrounds in social work, psychology, developmental services, nursing and allied health disciplines, behaviour management, and youth justice. Partner and community engagement activities throughout the implementation period have been a notable success for Niagara CSP, in spite of limited opportunities to engage in-person. Engagement

with existing Lived Experience and Family Advisor Networks in the region enabled Niagara CSP to benefit from having multiple Family Advisors who brought invaluable experience to their standing positions on the Niagara CSP Steering Committee and Implementation/Operations Committee.

Notable strengths of the Niagara CSP model include capacity to provide French Language Services in both the CSP and FASD programs, and also specific engagement with Indigenous community members. In Niagara, we have been very fortunate to work with the Indigenous Health Network and De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre, to support development of an Indigenous-specific service pathway within the CSP (and FASD (please see below) program. As part of this ongoing commitment, Coordinated Service Planning staff have completed several courses through the San’yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training curriculum and participated in several Reflection Circles facilitated by members of the Indigenous Community. Together, and through engagement, we hope to further build our system’s capacity to support access and choice to members of the Indigenous Community that includes both mainstream and Indigenous delivered services.



“I’ve used Contact Niagara on numerous occasions and each and every intake person I have spoken with has been super-friendly. They listen, they don’t rush me off the phone. They empathize and explain everything clearly”

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a complex, often invisible and misunderstood disorder. Contact Niagara, on behalf of Niagara, implemented the FASD Coordinator role in 2020-21 to support families of children and youth with/or suspected of having FASD; work that is closely aligned with Coordinated Service Planning

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

Program. Initiating a new program during a pandemic presents different types of challenges, and despite working virtually, Niagara has been supportive throughout the implementation of this new Program, and the FASD Co-ordinator role, in existing FASD services and supports, including Niagara's FASD Coalition.

The focus of the FASD program at Contact Niagara is to provide referrals, assist families to navigate services, answer questions about FASD, respond to programming needs, and provide training opportunities about FASD to families and professionals, in both English and French. In addition, Contact Niagara has been very fortunate to work with the Indigenous Health Network and De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre, to support development of an Indigenous-specific service pathway.

Goals of this program include supporting awareness, training activities, and increasing service capacity. Highlights of the past year include:

Caregiver/Family/Individual

- Direct information sharing with caregivers, related meetings about FASD, intake etc. - 70 distinct clients – probably higher for intake, support, consultation, region to region referrals with moves. One family moved out of province to another province and program assisted with connections and establishing supports. Family still reaches out as needed locally while awaiting services in their new area.
- Distribution of activity kits delivery/cooking classes with the Hub, 34 families, 65 children (unexpectedly, one kit became a neighbourhood activity, some were used by

children with other childhood friends, some did the programs while in respite or with family members in other locations).

- Kits could be used for the virtual activities or for family engagement. 29 families and 66 children/youth received kits.

Capacity Building

- Sponsoring learning and other professional development opportunities; participating in a number of workshops/ webinars/ presentations for those living and working in Niagara;
- Partnering on a calendar of events to raise awareness for FASD Awareness in the month of September;

Collaboration

Regionally and Provincially

- Working with and supporting Niagara's FASD Coalition;
- Participating in an Ontario Health Nexus Grant grant for 2021/2022, with partner organizations, including Family Counselling Centre and the Niagara FASD Coalition, made up of lived experience and many organizational partners.
- FASD Provincial Community of Practice

Youth Wellness Hub Niagara (YWHN)

The right services, at the right time, and in the right place. This is the goal of the Youth Wellness Hubs' Ontario (YWHO) model, which provides health and wellness services to all youth, ages 12-25. Services are provided free of charge and include mental health and substance use supports, primary care, intake and care coordination, housing, education, employment supports, and a variety of skill-

The YWHN has provided me access to mental health services that are extremely youth-friendly and has helped my recovery in a huge way. Being given the chance to participate in the youth advisory committee has given me a chance to give back and to implement my own ideas into the youth hubs and the programming that goes on there as well. All in all, the YWHN has changed my life in an extremely positive way and I can't express how truly thankful I am that it is here for youth like me. Alex (YAC Member)

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

building and wellness activities.

The YWHO Niagara Region began as a South Niagara initiative and has since grown to include support for all youth in the Niagara Region. Adopting technology to provide virtual services has allowed the Hub to provide virtual clinical supports to a growing number of youth, in a way that is flexible and accommodates the needs of youth throughout the Region. Niagara’s Hub continues to be a formal collaboration between the Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton-Niagara and the John Howard Society of Niagara, with Contact Niagara acting as the Network Lead. In addition to these partnerships, our local Hub has strong partnerships with other Niagara services and organizations.

In 2021-22, the YWHO- Niagara became a pilot site for the Lift/Futur en tête pilot project. As part of this project an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) worker was embedded in the YWHO Niagara Region team, providing individualized, intensive vocational and educational supports and services for youth clients. IPS supports are integrated with other Hub services and work to support youth in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment and/or education and training goals. Additionally, with the expansion of the Hub team and service offerings, we are also working to implement the PreVenture group program, an evidence-based program to promote mental health and delay substance use in youth ages 12-18.

At the core of YWHO Niagara Region is a very active Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) who are engaged in every facet of the Hub and who organized their first annual picnic in August of 2021. This past year also saw the YWHO Niagara Region welcome more youth to the drop-in space and continue to build on partnerships focused on supporting priority populations, such as Francophone, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, and newcomer youth. We want to recognize and extend our deep appreciation to the YWHO Niagara Region YAC. These members have volunteered countless hours to working to ensure

these spaces and services are youth friendly, safe(r), and inclusive.

YWHN YAC members:

- Olivia Cyr
- Giselle Rugigana
- Stephanie Groff
- Bedia Buhaga
- Tyler Smart
- Travis Lalondet
- Jack Taylor-Bajan
- Noah D’Abramo
- Rachel Anderson
- Devon Walpole

Peer Support: Alex Laughher, Dana Herriot, Ali Ahmed, Che Latchford

Financial Report

Financial Report: Fiscal Year End March 31		
	2022	2021
Revenue		
MCCSS / MOH	1,587,480	1,547,393
Rental and Other	23,549	37,152
TOTAL:	1,611,029	\$1,584,545
Expenses		
Salaries & Benefits	1,190,643	1,109,572
Other Expenses (including purchased client services)	420,386	474,973
TOTAL:	1,611,029	\$1,584,545
Youth Wellness Hub		
Revenue	650,0006	659,708
Expenses	50,000	659,708
TOTAL:	\$0	\$0
Other Revenues (Expenses)	\$0	\$10,000
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses	\$0	\$10,000

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

Board of Directors (2021- 2022)

Chair: Todd Bright
Vice-Chair: Marcel Jacques
Treasurer: Jordan Clark
Secretary: Kristy Andersen
Board Members:
Nick Baxter
Justin Creamer
George Kurzawa
Tanja Steinbach
Christine Sidhom

Contact Niagara Staff (2021 - 2022)

Organizational Supports:

Anita Engelage (Reception/Administration)
Jackie Frans (IT/Database Administrator)
Liliane Guertin (Bilingual Support
Translation/Interpretation)
Elaine Hand (Administration/Database Support)
Zibya MacLeod (Bookkeeper)
Nadine Wallace (Executive Director)

Resource Coordinators:

Jolene Bateman
Eva Berswick
Joanne Bovine (Bilingual RC)
Liana Danyliuk
Jenna Fiello
Heather Fowler
Margaret Griffiths
Kristen Hendry
Angela Lynch
Julie Nichols
Fred Steinhaus
*Ana Meager, Belinda Anderson,
and Rachel Roy

CSP/FAS:

Ashley Hardman (System Lead)
Katie McKay (SPC)
Julie Anderson (SPC)
Cathy Gales (FASD Lead)

YWHN:

Thomas Coyne (Program Manager/Clinical
Coordinator)
Ali Ahmed (Youth Navigator)
Dana Herriot (Youth Navigator)
Melissa Diogo (Mental Health and Addictions
Counsellor)
Che Latchford (Mental Health and Addictions
Counsellor)
Karlie Klink (Mental Health and Addictions
Counsellor)



**23 Hannover Drive Unit 8
St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A3**

**905-684-3407
1-800-933-3617**

www.contactniagara.org

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.

Contact NIAGARA

For Children's and Developmental Services
pour les services à l'enfance et à l'adaptation

Niagara is the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Atawanderon peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and the Dish with one spoon Wampum Agreement.