

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

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***Special Note**

In developing Contact Niagara's Strategic Plan, both family and youth engagement activities were developed, however, despite several attempts, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, these activities did not occur as planned. As an alternate measure, the Family Engagement Lead for Child and Youth Mental Health in Niagara and Lead for Niagara's Family Engagement Charter was consulted. Contact Niagara remains committed to meaningful Family and Youth Engagement and recognizes these activities as key elements of our Strategic Planning moving forward.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contact Niagara provides a central information and referral access point for local children and youth, ages 0-18, who are experiencing emotional, behavioural and/or developmental concerns.

This document provides details related to the strategic planning process that Contact Niagara undertook in 2019 to develop a road map to guide the organization for the next 3 years and beyond.

The key elements of the process, which occurred from June 2019 to March 2020, are summarized in this document. They include: an initial board engagement session to facilitate process planning, vision and mission review and environmental assessment/ SWOT analysis exercises with staff, the board of directors and external stakeholders.

This strategy document also contains an updated vision and mission statement for the organization, the key themes that emerged from both the internal and external assessments and the recommended priority areas and related strategic goals for 2020-2023 (Extended to 2025 due to COVID-19 Worldwide Pandemic and related delays in Plan finalization).

2. VISION, MISSION, VALUES

OUR VISION

A community where every individual and family feels respected, valued and is able to reach their full potential.

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VALUES

Everything we do is guided by a person and family first philosophy.

We believe in and are committed to the following core values:

INTEGRITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

TRUST

TRANSPARENCY

RESPECT

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

3. OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In 2019, the Board of Directors and staff of Contact Niagara embarked on a strategic planning process to set the direction.

The process took place from June 2019 to February 2022 as follows:

June 2019 - Initial meeting with the Board of Directors to create timeline including key dates for internal and external assessments.

July - August 2019 – Stakeholders identified. Interview questions developed and disseminated virtually to community stakeholders.

September 2019 - Planning session with Contact Niagara staff.

October - December 2019 – Telephone interviews conducted with key stakeholders. Survey translated to French and disseminated to external francophone partners.

January 2020 - Planning session with Contact Niagara Board of Directors to review data and set priorities.

February/March 2020 – Draft plan to date submitted to Board of Directors for review. (COVID-19 Pandemic declared)

April 2020/February 2022- Attempts made to complete individual/virtual group youth and family engagement sessions, however, due to challenges related to the Pandemic, these sessions were not completed as envisioned. (*Please see beginning note).

4. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A key component of setting the roadmap for the future of Contact Niagara included conducting an environmental and SWOT analysis with internal and external stakeholders.

This analysis provided the opportunity to learn about the organization's *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats* from the perspective of staff, board members, community partners, funders, and service users.

4.1 Internal Perspective

Two planning sessions were conducted with staff and board members to gather insights from an internal stakeholder perspective. Twenty staff members, including the Executive Director, and five board members participated.

What we learned:

The internal assessments revealed an organization with strong, capable staff and senior leadership.

Services are delivered by a cohesive and adaptable team who are quite diverse in the skills and competencies they possess. A collective commitment to a person centred philosophy of service delivery was clearly identified.

Additional strength insights included high levels of camaraderie and trust amongst the team, including senior leadership. This relational element was identified as highly beneficial for the agency as it experiences increasing competing priorities.

Areas for improvement included increased opportunities for skill development, debriefing and supervision, improved internal processes for increased effectiveness and efficiency and increasing the cultural diversity of staff and board.

4.2 External Perspective

Capturing the perspective of stakeholders external to Contact Niagara was also an essential component of the planning process.

To this end, 38 community partners were engaged to participate. *Fifteen community partners completed an online survey.* Seven community leaders participated in a telephone interview, for a total engagement rate of 61%. The external engagement process included representation from children's mental health, developmental services, Indigenous partners, school boards and program funders.

What we learned:

Data collected from the community revealed overwhelming support for Contact Niagara in their role as a leader in community collaboration and for CN's leadership role in ongoing coordinated system planning.

Contact Niagara's staff team and leadership were also acknowledged, from a strengths perspective, for their knowledge and understanding of the system and services, and for their awareness and responsiveness to community needs, respectively.

External stakeholder insight highlighted opportunities for the organization to expand their leadership role in community collaboration and service coordination.

Also revealed were perceived challenges for the agency related to capacity, both human and financial, and with regard to any potential changes in service delivery models.



5.1 FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES

Work to ensure:

- ***We approach all our work with a focus on health equity***
- ***Our policies and practices reflect an inclusive, culturally humble, appropriate and supportive environment***
- ***The minimum wait for services, including through regular internal monitoring of processes and timelines***

5.2 TAKING CARE OF OUR TEAM

Work to ensure:

- ***That Staff feel supported, respected, valued, and included in decision-making, within a healthy and safe work environment***
- ***That Staff have regular opportunities for clinical supervision***
- ***That Staff have regular opportunities for professional and skill development***

5.3 CULTIVATING GROWTH

Work to ensure:

- ***We have representation in all areas of our Organization that reflects the diversity of our community***
- ***Those seeking services know what we do and how to contact us***
- ***Innovation in aligning human and financial resources with community requests and needs***

Our Commitment:

Contact Niagara will continue to seek input and consult with community members and partners to ensure excellence in services. This will require actively reaching out to Indigenous, Francophone and other communities that often face unique barriers to accessing services. Contact Niagara will continue to invest in staffing. The Board recognizes that staff are essential to the successful operation to this organization. The organization will investigate new ways of implementing anti-oppression practices. The retention and recruitment of Board members is a priority for Contact Niagara to support the ongoing governance of the organization.