

Canada's Oldest Helpline Acknowledges 45 Years of Making a Difference

"With almost 120,000 calls placed annually to our phone rooms, every hour of every day, vulnerable individuals are supported by one of our hundreds of volunteers who staff the lines around the clock."

On November 1, 1967, the crisis centre movement was officially launched in Canada. At a time when making a suicide attempt was still illegal and punishable by imprisonment, a group of dedicated volunteers stood at the ready to respond to desperate callers. The third call that day was from someone threatening to take his life. Someone on the other end of the phone line at Distress Centres answered that call, offering life-sustaining support.

Almost five decades later, our trained volunteers continue to make a difference, providing an emotional safety net at the very moment of need for those who are at risk. With almost 120,000 calls placed annually to our phone

rooms, every hour of every day, vulnerable individuals are supported by one of our hundreds of volunteers who staff the lines around the clock.

At a recent meeting in Winnipeg of helplines from across Canada, the leadership of our Distress Centres was acknowledged by those present. Here's what we heard: not only were we the first, but as well we continue to be the largest in terms of sheer volume of calls. Our innovative partnership lines remain unique. We are also the only helpline in Canada with such significant service delivery demands that currently still employs only volunteers at the frontline.

Almost a half century later, Distress Centres

is still contributing to community capacity building: encouraging individual resiliency through the support of our most vulnerable citizens and graduating compassionate volunteers who can continue to make a difference in the community no matter what else they do. These legacies were addressed at our Annual General Meeting on April 23rd by the keynote speaker, the Honourable Bob Rae, then the Acting Leader of the Liberal Party. In his remarks, Mr. Rae congratulated Distress Centres on its important work and reminded those in attendance that this spirit of commitment and leadership would remain an essential building block in supporting emotional health needs of the future.

In this issue:

Canada's Oldest Helpline Acknowledges 45 Years of Making a Difference

Impacting the Future: Six Key Strategic Priorities for Distress Centres

Climate Shift: Longstanding Partnerships to Soon Yield Results

Proud Partners in an Award-Winning Initiative

Agency Snapshots

Events Calendar and Photos from Recent Events

Acknowledging our Sponsors and Donors

And More...

Upcoming Events

September 29, 2012

Diverse-City: Perspectives from the Frontlines, Third Annual Volunteer Conference
North York Civic Centre, Toronto

October 14, 2012

Crisis Centres Pre-Conference, Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference
Niagara Falls, ON

October 15-17, 2012

Annual Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Conference
Niagara Falls, ON

Ongoing

Helpline Volunteer Training
www.torontodistresscentre.com

Survivor Support Program Services and Training

Call: 416-595-1716

Distress Centres is a United Way Member Agency and receives support from the City of Toronto



United Way Toronto

A United Way member agency



Contact Us

Mailing Address
PO Box 243, Adelaide PO
Toronto, ON M5C 2J4

Office of the Executive Director
416-598-0168

Resource Development
416-598-0292

Administration
416-598-2454

Distress Centres Helpline
416-408-HELP (4357)

Survivor Support Program
416-595-1716

Website
www.TorontoDistressCentre.com

Our Services

408-HELP line

TTC Crisis Link

Caller Reassurance Program

Survivor Support Program

PAIRO Helpline for Interns and Residents of Ontario

The Emergency Medical Services Warm Transfer Line

Community Education and Outreach

Distress Centres' Six Key Strategic Priorities

1. Consolidate our position as the recognized leader in the area of suicide prevention, crisis management and postvention.
2. Strengthen our commitment to volunteerism as the model of choice.
3. Broaden our reach through technology and emerging communication channels.
4. Assume a leadership role in the delivery of coordinated distress centres services.
5. Secure our long-term financial resources.
6. Anchor our services in our commitment to community and our embrace of diversity.

Impacting the Future

Six Key Strategic Priorities for Distress Centres

The year-long process of engaging our stakeholders in our agency review was completed this spring and the conclusions presented to the Distress Centres membership at its Annual General Meeting in April. Ensuring that the programs and outreach provided by our organization continue to be relevant and measurably contribute to the emotional resiliency of our community motivated Distress Centres to undertake a comprehensive strategic planning process. This dynamic course of action successfully culminated with the identification of six key strategic priorities. These will guide the work of our agency as we move forward.

While we were gratified to hear from our service users, partners and funders that they feel Distress Centres' current services provide meaningful and accessible support in a cost-effective manner, we are

not content to just rest on our laurels. We need to be able to respond not only to the ever-evolving demographics of our diverse communities, but also to the future generations of "callers".

New technologies have created opportunities to reach vulnerable people for whom traditional access may have been a barrier. Our strategic directions have confirmed our commitment to both life-sustaining and life-enhancing services targeting those most emotionally vulnerable. They have also challenged us to continue to lead with innovation, taking full advantage of the energy that comes when working in tandem with others. We're excited to meet the future with a plan in place.

Become a Volunteer

Distress Centre volunteers receive numerous benefits and learn useful life and professional skills

Each of the hundreds of volunteers who form the corps of Distress Centres' service providers has a personal reason for why they have made their commitment to the vulnerable and at-risk.

Mary is one of our outstanding volunteers. She has been a phone line volunteer since 1991. In her personal life, she is a very involved sister, aunt, mother and grandmother. In addition, she juggles multiple part-time jobs as an ESL teacher, piano teacher and bookkeeper. And, Distress Centres is not her only volunteer commitment; Mary finds the time to help out with other causes as well.

Remarkably, Mary is one of our most active volunteers—even during times of considerable personal challenges. She is always able to respond to callers with empathy, thoughtful and non-judgemental listening and patient calmness during their times of crisis. Her skills in caller empowerment and years of experience

have made her a good candidate for our dedicated Crisis Link and PAIRO Helpline.

We have rewarded Mary for her commitment to our callers with—more responsibility! She, like all of our high-performing volunteers, has repeatedly told us that the best way we can say thank you is by engaging her in any opportunities we have available to make a difference. And, we have and we do.

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities available. For more information about these opportunities, please call 416-598-0166.

Learn

Attend intense and comprehensive training on empathetic listening, crisis management, counselling, among others.

Gain useful skills that can also be applied in your personal or professional life.

Lend an Ear

Be active in saving lives and offering life-altering support.

Take advantage of a wide range of volunteer opportunities that suit your interests while offering an invaluable service to your community.

Be Rewarded

Attend volunteer appreciation events and be recognized for your contributions.

Feel satisfaction in being a vital member of society, actively helping those who are most at-risk and vulnerable.

Proud Partner in an Award-Winning Initiative

Mid-June of this year, we marked the one year anniversary of the launch of Crisis Link, a one-of-kind suicide prevention program in the subway system. In partnership with the Toronto Transit Commission and Bell, Distress Centres responds to calls from transit users who are in crisis. With direct link buttons from every subway platform, help is truly just a phone call away.

In the first twelve months of operation, our trained volunteer specialists responded to 324 calls originating in the system. In 125 of those calls, emotional support and/or crisis management was provided. TTC's transit control was contacted 17 times during that same period of time. Although we are glad to

report that the number of incidents occurring in 2011 within the subway system was half that of the previous year, it is too early to predict that this positive trend will continue.

Crisis Link is just one component of TTC's comprehensive suicide response strategy, including their important gatekeeper training program. The accompanying awareness campaign for the hotline, however, has definitely supported Distress Centres' anti-stigma agenda. We do know that talking about suicide makes a difference in saving lives.

Congratulations to the Toronto Transit Commission which has won an urban transit award for Crisis Link—we are proud to be your partner.



This poster appears in TTC subway stations, raising awareness of the Crisis Link program, which connects vulnerable individuals directly to Distress Centre's 24/7 crisis helpline.

National Suicide Prevention Strategy on the Horizon

The climate has finally shifted. After many years of diligently working in the field and witnessing the heroic efforts of colleagues attempting to influence government policy, Canada is on the verge of adopting a National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

As the only remaining developed nation without a strategy, Distress Centres celebrates this achievement. A coordinated approach to suicide will help save lives by joining us all together to create an empowered safety net. This important step, against the backdrop of the past several years' work of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, has created unprecedented opportunities to share and compare, to learn and teach, and to innovate and lead.

These are exciting times for those of us anxious to fill the gaps in service that still exist. And, the

conversation is not just happening on a national level. Provincially and locally, we are also meeting with other organizations, hoping to work together in order to identify at-risk communities and to create accessible and programs with impact.

Through our membership in Distress Centres Ontario, we are in regular contact with other helplines in the province trying to develop standards of best practices and hoping to partner in the delivery of services to remote, under-resourced areas. Closer to home, we are working with neighbourhoods in an effort to support the work of all agencies charged with the responsibility of building capacity in vulnerable communities. It takes a network to effect and support change. Distress Centres is pleased to sit at the tables of its partners.

Distress Centres by the Numbers

SAVING LIVES

One conversation at a time

CALLER CONCERNS

Total percentage of concerns for each category

Interpersonal	81%
Mental health	68%
Physical health	27%
Occupational/financial	24%
Abuse/violence	17%
Substand abuse & addictions	8%
Sexuality	7%
Suicide	6%
General	6%
Interpreter service	1%
Other	5%

HELPLINE RESPONSE

Up to two responses per call

Emotional support	70%
Distress management	22%
Crisis intervention	10%
Contacted supervisor/on call	2%
911 intervention initiated	1%
Exploration of options or action	19%
Review of coping mechanisms	20%
Provide information	3%
Call not completed	5%
Other	7%



60%
of all our
callers call
after hours

Agency Snapshots

From the Phonedlines

8:00 p.m. on a Saturday evening. The call came into the phone room from a woman on a cell phone who was aimlessly wandering through a park in Toronto. She told the telephone counsellor that she was thinking about suicide because she felt trapped with nowhere to turn. She was planning on ending her life when she left the park, by throwing herself in front of a car on the busy main street nearby.

The volunteer calmly and slowly built a connection with the distraught woman. She expressed compassion for the difficulties she was experiencing, while assessing the risk for suicide and keeping the caller engaged.

As the call progressed, the woman shared with the volunteer that the intense emotional pain was overwhelming and that she didn't feel safe alone with her thoughts. She needed and wanted help. The volunteer reassured her that she would stay with her until transportation to the hospital could be arranged.

Emergency services were contacted and the volunteer stayed on the line for the duration of the process until help arrived on the scene. The caller expressed profound appreciation, before the call ended, for the caring support she received. "You heard my pain."

"As the call progressed, the woman shared with the volunteer that the intense emotional pain was overwhelming and that she didn't feel safe alone with her thoughts."

Person-to-Person

Volunteers in the Survivor Support Program bear witness to the most heart-wrenching stories of trauma and loss. They provide a safe haven for those bereaved by suicide and/or homicide where they can identify and explore feelings that often can't be expressed anywhere else—feelings like shame, guilt and anger.

Recently, Marian shared with us how she had been impacted by the loss of her partner of twenty years. He had shot himself at their cottage, a vacation home that they had bought, renovated and then shared during summer holidays for almost two decades. She spoke of experiencing such intense emotional pain that she felt

her body was going to explode, and her discovery of secrets about her partner were so personally disturbing that she was not able to reveal them to close family or friends.

Marian admitted to feeling uncertain and doubtful when she first initiated contact with the program. She immediately discovered, however, that the support team made her feel comfortable in opening up, especially when she realized that one of the counsellors had also lost a spouse through suicide. Not only was she able to share her dark and troubled feelings, but she was also able to put them into balance with her memories of happier times.

With the guidance of her team, Marian was also able to plan for some difficult decisions she would have to make with respect to revealing to relatives the new information about her partner.

After the individualized sessions were completed, Marian decided to join the support group that is offered as a second step in the support process. In stark contrast to her comments when she first contacted our office, she shared that "For the first time in a long time, I sense that finding happiness may yet be possible. I'm not there yet; but, it is possible."

B.A.D. Ride 15



The Bikers Against Despair (B.A.D.) Ride is Distress Centres' largest community outreach and a key fundraising event. 2012 marked the 15th anniversary of the B.A.D Ride, and since its inception in 1997, funds raised by the Ride have helped build organizational infrastructure that sustains critical support services for the vulnerable and at-risk in our community.

On May Sunday May 27th, 2012, almost 1,000 motorcyclists and their passengers from across Ontario gathered to honour the pioneering work of Distress Centres.

What a day it was! Kicking off the early morning festivities at Dave & Buster's were Darcy Tucker, Toronto Maple Leafs Alumnus, and legendary Q107 DJ Andy Frost. Their combined charisma and high energy, set the pace for the day's activities. The bright sunshine and cool breeze provided easy riding conditions and boosted spirits all around!

After a scenic, all new route, great food, more celebrations awaited riders at their end venue, Markham Fairgrounds. Participants then enjoyed a delicious BBQ provided by Hero Certified Burgers. They then relaxed into the afternoon with an indoor marketplace that featured a silent auction, outdoor exhibitions and a Mini Cooper "soc-car" game. The afternoon culminated with the draw for our Grand Prize – the 2012 Harley- Davidson Switchback. The lucky winner this year was René Gallipeau, who was too overwhelmed to believe that he had won and needed a few seconds of convincing

by his partner!

Thank you to everyone for making the B.A.D Ride event a continued success! Branded as: "Ride the Road for Life" for B.A.D Ride 15", the statement also became a rallying call, a declaration that mental health and suicide prevention are fundamental components of a healthy community.

In particular, we wish to showcase the outstanding work of this year's top 3 fundraisers: Mark Ludwig; Bob Redinger and Adam Fillier. Mark Ludwig has raised in total \$100,000 at the last 3 rides, making him a top Canadian motorcycling fundraiser!

A very special thank you also to all our sponsors, who through their generosity, ensure that 100% of funds generated by participants at the event is dedicated to the provision of Distress Centres services.

Distress Centres Signature Events

Concert by Twilight

Historically held at a heritage Toronto home, the Concert By Twilight is Distress Centres' other signature event. Over the last 18 years, Concert By Twilight committee members have always worked



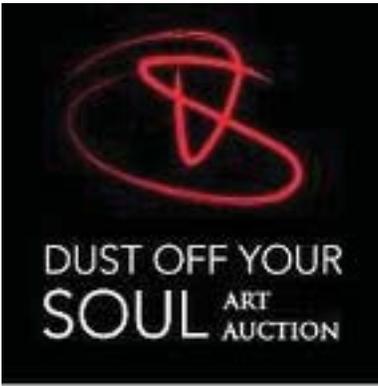
hard to make the event an exceptional one- continuously surpassing previous year's expectations - and this year was no different!

The marquee event was made possible by our generous hostess: Christine McCain- who provided a breathtaking venue and opened up the spectacular grounds of her home in support of Distress Centres. Set to soothing sounds of a string orchestra; fine food and great company - the evening was a resounding success.

Over 200 of Toronto's leading philanthropists and community leaders

attended this year's Concert By Twilight. Throughout the years, funds raised at the Concert By Twilight have helped us grow our organizational capacity; create life sustaining programs; expand our services and embark on exciting and innovative approaches for those in need and that create a meaningful difference in their lives.

Our warmest thank you to all Concert By Twilight Committee members, our gracious hostess and all who participated in support of the agency- You are our lifeline so that we can be one for others!



Now in its third year, Dust Off Your Soul 2011, was another successful evening in support of Distress Centres. Held in memory of Marc Fournier and Alex Hurst, this annual art auction honoured the work of Distress Centres by raising funds for the operations of the agency's programs and services.

Hosted by Annie Gaudreault and Esme Hurst, both Distress Centres Board

Members, the event showcased the work of more than 45 artists, and, included an exciting live and silent auction.

Thank you to Annie and Esme for their continued dedication and commitment to the agency. We appreciate the selection of Distress Centres in recognition of the legacies left by your loved ones

THIRD PARTY EVENTS

Distress Centres thanks the supporters who have helped to fundraise by hosting their own events.



On April 15th, 2012, a group of close-knit friends, once again organized an event in memory of their dear friend Melissa Krisman. "Melissa's Bowling Ball" celebrates Melissa's life and her love for bowling. It was also held to raise funds in support of Distress Centres.

We are deeply grateful to the organizing committee for dedicating these much needed funds to our agency- your gift will help towards strengthening the emotional safety net for those needing immediate life-sustaining support in our community!

In 2011, the Ferrone Family in recognition of the suicide prevention work of Distress Centres, donated the funds from their long standing annual tribute golf tournament for a third year in a row. They have our deepest appreciation

for their generous gift to the cause- your gift makes it possible for the agency to create and provide responsive programs that make a difference to the lives of those who are vulnerable and at-risk in our city.



On November 15th, 2011, a group of Toronto-based musicians held a fundraising concert at the Drake Underground to celebrate the life of Dan Siatkowski. Get Grounded is a labour of love for founder Mandi Siatkowski,

who began the fundraising concert in 2009, in tribute to her brother's life.

Since then, the event has grown to include "raising awareness, openness about mental health within our immediate and external communities".

We thank Mandi and her family for their support of our work- your generosity makes it possible for those experiencing distress to reach out to a trained crisis responder: 24/7, 365 days a year.



Awards and Recognition

The Distress Centres Team Accepted the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism from the Ontario Honours and Award Secretariat, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration



Agency staff declared 2011 to be the year of: "Making A Difference". It was a certainly a year of showcasing the best that the agency has to offer towards creating a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need. While serving our community drives the passion for our work, we feel honoured to be recognized by our peers and by leaders in the sector.

In 2011, Distress Centres won three major community awards: The June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism from the Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration;

PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada Foundation Team Leadership Awards and Top Pick of Charities in 2011-Charity Intelligence Canada.

Each award speaks to the differences made by our volunteers, staff and Executive Director. These awards are also a testament to the pivotal function that the agency has in delivering an emotional safety net for those who are marginalized and in need in our city.

Foundations

E.W. Bickle Foundation
 Isberg Charitable Trust
 Jackman Foundation
 Nathan and Lily Silver Family Foundation
 Pace Family Foundation
 PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada Foundation
 Schumacher Family Foundation
 The B&B Hamilton Foundation at the TFC
 The EJLB Foundation
 The Geoffrey H. Wood Foundation
 The GH Gales Family Charitable Foundation of Toronto
 The Harry E. Foster Charitable Foundation
 The Henry White Kinnear Foundation
 The John Dax Charlton Foundation
 The Marjorie and Joseph Wright Memorial Foundation
 The Murphy Foundation Incorporated
 The Paloma Foundation
 The Rogan Foundation
 The Sharp Foundation
 The Tippet Foundation

Corporations

Accel Construction Management
 Bell Canada
 Bicklette Ltd.
 Bombardier Transport Canada Inc.
 Brio Branding & Design
 Chair-man Mills Inc.
 CIBC Mellon Global Securities Services
 Den Bosch + Finchley
 East York Scarborough Reading Association Inc.
 First Choice Communications Inc.
 First Line Mortgages
 Gilbert's LLP
 Green Shield Canada
 Hydro One Inc.
 Interward Capital Corporation
 Key Concepts Consulting
 Mental Health Council for Scarborough
 Morningstar Air Express Inc.
 Network of Translators in Education
 Northstar Research Partners
 O.J. Muller Landscape Contractor
 Olympia Capital Corporation
 Ontario Power Generation
 Ready Honda Import Ltd.
 Skin Corporation
 TD Bank Financial Group
 The FSA Group
 Unicorn Technical

Churches

Humber Valley United Church Women
 Bedford Park United Church Women
 Rosedale United Church
 St. Dunstan of Canterbury
 Asbury and West United Church

B.A.D. Ride Sponsors

Artik
 Beard Winter LLP
 Bentall Retail Services
 Centro Restaurant
 Dave and Buster's
 Davies Harley-Davidson
 Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada
 Enbridge
 Hero Certified Burgers
 Jacox Harley-Davidson
 Lettieri
 Mackie Harley-Davidson
 Markham Fair

Thank You to our Donors and Sponsors

Mini Markham
 MotoLimo
 Motorcycle Mojo Magazine
 Neal Brothers Foods
 North American International Supershow
 Palmer Audio
 Petite Thuet
 Q107 Classic Rock
 Ready Imports Ltd.
 Riders Plus Insurance
 Stitchy Lizard
 SwiftTrade Inc.
 Terraplan Landscape Architects
 Toronto Motorcycle Show
 Yamaha

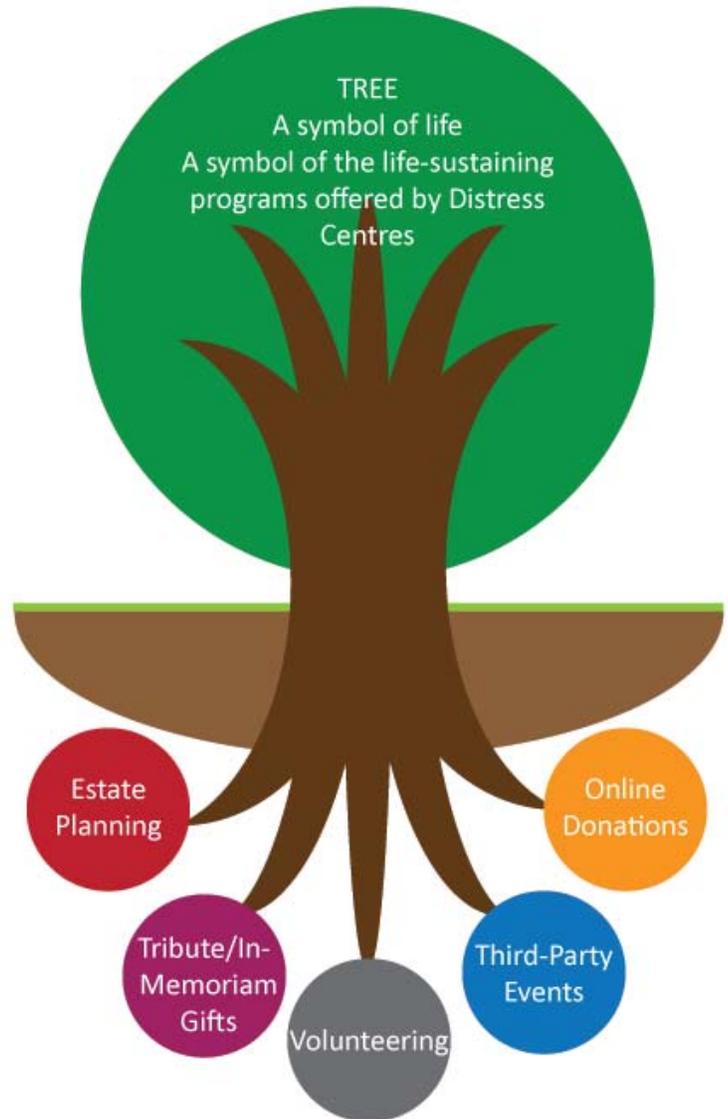
Why Support Distress Centres?

Distress Centres is a very lean organization with administrative costs at 2% of total charity value and fundraising costs at 10% of total donations.

But don't take our word for it; take it from Charity Intelligence Canada – who made the statement about the cost efficiencies of our agency.

So when you give to Distress Centres you can be assured that every dollar goes a long way.

Our bold promise to our supporters is that 91% of your gift will go directly towards activities that help to reduce the risk of suicide-like staffing our crisis lines with trained crisis responder volunteers to keep it operational 24/7 and 365 days a year. Donations also ensure that the agency continues on its path of innovative support with partner agencies and local community leaders.



You Can Make a Difference

- 

Bequests to Distress Centres in your will, endowments and trusts, securities, charitable gift annuities, and life insurance policies can create a meaningful difference
- 

Acknowledge the legacy of a loved one by making a donation in their honour. Their legacy will live on in the impact the gift creates for those in need.
- 

Our volunteers are an vital part of our operations. Donate your time and compassionate ear to those who need support.

- 

Host tournaments, auctions, parties, or other events, and donate the proceeds to Distress Centres. We can assist you with Distress Centres information and materials, and help to promote the event on our website.
- 

Donations can be made securely from your bank account or credit card. Make a one-time donation or set up a monthly giving plan.