

Message from the Chair

Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible - Helen Keller

In a year that has brought so much change -to the way we live, and how we operate as an organization- one thing that is ever present at WRSPC, is the commitment to changing the landscape around suicide in our community. Our community, staff, volunteers, and our many stakeholders have remained steadfast, and for that I am filled with awe and gratitude. Thank you.

During this time, we have realized our growth edges, and through this, opportunities and possibilities have emerged. As I reflect on our journey over the last year, I recognize the congruency with metamorphosis, the process which precedes the emergence of the butterfly. Each stage of the cycle is critical to realizing our vision, with the accompanying joys and discomforts that come with meaningful change. The butterfly is there to remind us that we are in transition, and that we are resilient. The butterfly is also a symbol of hope-that despite what we encounter in our journey, transformation is always possible.

In the next stage of our metamorphosis, we are committed to building more inclusive and diverse spaces within our organization, so the voices informing suicide prevention more accurately reflect our community. We will continue to expand our reach, building awareness, and providing education, in hopes of realizing our vision of a caring community that is fully engaged in suicide prevention.

A heartfelt thank you to our entire WRSPC family present and past-without you none of this would be possible.

With Gratitude, **Adrienne Luft**



Message from the Executive Director



As I reflect on this past year in preparation for the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council's (WRSPC) Annual Report it is impossible not to address the extraordinary times we are living in, and how the pandemic has impacted us all in one way or another. As we pause to recognize the significance of our work in hope, help and healing during a time of uncertainty and loss, we are hopeful that our continued work to fill our protective buckets of hope, belonging, meaning and purpose will help sustain us until we can be together in person again (i. from The First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum, a framework developed by Thunderbird Partnership Foundation).

Over the past year WRSPC has worked tirelessly to continue building on transformation and community engagement. What began as a transition of our internal governing structure a year ago has increased our organizational capacity and efficacy. We have increased our ability to serve the local, provincial, and national communities through continued and new collaborations, additional sector representation, and new community partnerships. Our strong digital presence has doubled our social media and website interactions with the community. The virtual shift of our "Why...?" Support After a Suicide Loss bereavement support groups has ensured that there is a continued safe space for individuals to grieve in a healthy way, surrounded by others who understand. Each of these elements has strengthened our work towards our vision of a community where everyone is engaged in suicide prevention, intervention and postvention (hope, help and healing).

As we look to the possibilities of the future, we are excited and grateful for continued leadership and support from the Board, for increased funding to support youth and men's mental health initiatives, for incredible donors, supporters and volunteers who give from their hearts the gifts of time, passion and funding, and for this amazing community, without all of whom we would not be able to do this work.

To my small, but incredible and dedicated staff team, the Board of Directors, and Advisory Committee, thank you for your perseverance over the past year, and for wholeheartedly giving of your time and expertise; I am humbled and inspired by you.

To all of those who have journeyed this road before us, thank you for the foundation you have laid, and for entrusting us to continue to build this work into the future. While there is still much work to be done, we are continuing to move forward and together, we are making a difference!

With the deepest gratitude, **Elisa Brewer-Singh**

Board

Adrienne Luft – Chair
Kim Hewitt-McVicker – Past-Chair
Bev Voisin – Secretary
Barb Ward – Director
Rob Martin – Director

Executive Director

Elisa Brewer-Singh

Program Coordinator

Amanda Demmer

Administrative Project Coordinator

Jenna Peacock

Along with our Board, the WRSPC is supported by an Advisory Committee of community stakeholders who inform, guide, and support our work, and a Previous Executive Advisory Council (PEAC) who we call upon for advice and guidance as needed.



By The Numbers

Education

6 presentations delivered to
670 individuals

52

Resource Thursday posts highlighting local, provincial and national suicide prevention resources

10

new resources, campaigns and information series created

134

total number of hours given by community members and organizations represented on the Advisory Committee

Training

66 Total number of learning hours in suicide prevention awareness and intervention training funded by WRSPC

500

total number of hours ... delivered in suicide awareness and intervention bereavement to **25** individuals



Online Engagement

Facebook
1,829 followers
15% increase

Instagram
851 followers
39% increase

LinkedIn
58 followers
Twitter
1,410 followers

Website

- visits to website
15,204
by
12,223 users

Total page views
23,859

In kind Donations

\$86,484

1,129 volunteer hours

493

Hope, Help and Healing glass butterflies sold



One of the butterflies from the annual World Suicide Prevention Day event and butterfly release ceremony, September 2020.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to reduce suicide and its impact on individuals, families, and communities.

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

Highlights and Accomplishments

April 2020 - March 2021

Pillar One Building Sense of Community



- Hosted a virtual World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) event on September 10, 2020, that included an information fair during the week leading up to WSPD. Over 2,742 unique viewers attended the virtual ceremony and butterfly release.

- As part of World Suicide Prevention Day 300 at-home activity kits were created and distributed for free to the community.

- WRSPC attended or hosted 8 virtual events throughout the year focused on increasing awareness of suicide prevention, resources and continuing the dialogue of hope, help and healing.

- Engaged with the community through 12 media engagements including 570 News, The Record, Kitchener Today, and Rogers TV focusing on resources that are available, events taking place within the community, and increasing visibility and awareness around suicide prevention.

Pillar Two Education and Training

- Developed 10 new resources, campaigns, and information series for social media and WRSPC website, including Resilience and Protective Factors series, Well-being Advent Calendar for the month of December and the launch of #365 Convos a year-long campaign designed to encourage dialogue around mental health and suicide prevention throughout our community 365 days of the year.

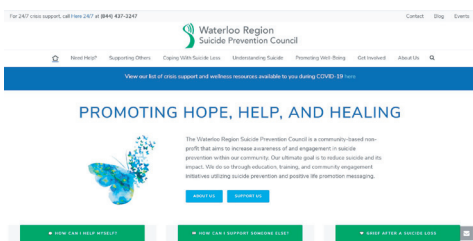
- Delivered 6 suicide and mental health awareness presentations to 670 individuals from various organizations and businesses in the community.

- Provided 4 virtual "Why...?" Support After a Suicide Loss groups facilitated by 8 professional facilitators in collaboration with 3 community organizations. Participants in the virtual groups were provided with care kits (pictured above) that included generously donated quilts, and mugs to provide some extra comfort in the digital setting. One participant shared "the package is so beautifully put together and thoughtful for the members. It shows that we are cared for and supported."



- In the "Why...? Support after Suicide Loss" groups, 80% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that the group has equipped them to "share their grief with friends and family", 80% of participants agreed/strongly agreed they "better understand the complexity of suicide" and 85% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that they have "are more comfortable accessing resources within my community" following the group. There were also many comments shared such as these two that reinforced the value of the group: "This was an absolutely fantastic group and experience. I highly recommend it." And "I'm so thankful for the opportunity to participate in the group... The fellowship has been as invaluable as the content."

Pillar Three Organizational Capacity and Excellence



- Made several important service enhancements including shifting our bereavement support groups virtually and made a significant investment to ensure online resources and digital spaces were accessible, informative, and met community needs.

- Partnered with Capacity Canada to further governance and leadership excellence throughout the organization.

- WRSPC Advisory Committee continued monthly virtual meetings and supported projects designed to increase the accessibility and navigation of suicide prevention and awareness resources on digital platforms.

- WRSPC is committed to ensuring suicide prevention efforts are inclusive. Staff have actively participated in an anti-racism training, and through consultation with the community, we are building an anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework to take an active stand against racism.

Pillar Four Growing Provincial and National Reach

- Supported the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Roots of Hope community led suicide awareness and prevention program in Waterloo Region that focuses on 5 pillars: specialized supports, training and networks, public awareness, means safety and research.

- Worked collaboratively with the Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention to provide leadership, consultation, and support to provincial suicide prevention efforts.

- Co-chaired the Canadian Suicide Prevention Coordinators Network which supports knowledge translation of best and promising practices, activities, and programming across Canada.

- Actively participated as a member of the National Collaborative for Suicide Prevention including their common messaging, and data and research working groups.

Our Supporters

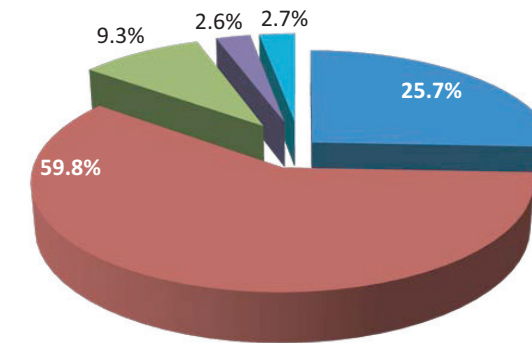
Without these supporters there would not be an active Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council



Henry Walser Funeral Home, Strummerfest, Edelweiss Tavern, Lana's Lounge, 100 Men of Wilmot Who Give a Damn, River Dali Foundation, Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, Busy Hands Quilters Guild, Kindred Foundation

Plus the numerous corporate and private sponsors.

Expenses



- Purchased Services
- Program Expenses
- Grants to Community Partners
- Professional Services
- Office Expenses

"I want to thank the conveners for running this group. It is a much-needed resource that can be helpful to so many more during such difficult times in our lives."

An individual bereaved by suicide sharing about the "Why...?" Suicide Bereavement Support Group

"The [Why...?] program is really first rate. Our facilitators made us all feel welcome and safe right from the beginning... That fact brought very meaningful discussions to each and every meeting... I pray that this program continues and is available to all that need it."

An individual bereaved by suicide sharing about the "Why...?" Suicide Bereavement Support Group

"[The presentation] was really very informative, gave me some real action pieces that I can start implementing right away and gave me the resources to connect people to the appropriate help."

A participant from the "Suicide Awareness and Prevention Presentation for Professionals"

"As a student intern for WRSPC I was given the opportunity to gain a new perspective on a subject that, in my experience, can be met with hesitation. This position allowed me to elevate my creative abilities, while being introduced to many great ways to start a conversation. This work also provided a unique pathway, to witness the interconnected nature of the work we all do, to create community and to preserve hope."

WRSPC Student Intern, Eve Astolfi



Debbie Emery 1970-2020

During this year we said goodbye to longtime WRSPC Council member and volunteer Debbie Emery. Debbie was an incredible supporter of suicide prevention work in our community for almost 2 decades, and her passion and advocacy was a strong voice in ensuring resources and access to services were available for everyone. This year's annual report is dedicated to her.

Financials

REVENUE

Government Grants	
- Region/LHIN/Ministry	91,500
Community Grant	10,000
Community Events Revenue	112,250
Donations	29,402
Resource Materials Sold	14,461
Fee for Service	20,943
Miscellaneous Income	724
Total Revenue	\$279,280

TOTAL REVENUE

\$ 279,280

EXPENDITURES

Purchased Services	159,751
Programs Costs	78,581
Professional Services	7,174
Advertising & Promotion	18
Office Expenses	7,384
Grants to Other Agencies	26,084
Total Expenditures	\$278,993

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

\$ 278,993

Surplus/(Deficit)

\$ 287



Waterloo Region
Suicide Prevention Council

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