

Strength in Community

Annual Report 2024

April 1st 2023 - March 31st 2024



WATERLOO REGION
**Suicide
Prevention
Council**



A Message from the Chair and the Executive Director

This past year we have been humbled by the support and commitment of our community. The efforts and willingness to build relationships and work alongside the WRSPC to provide hope, help and healing within our region has been inspiring. We know that we cannot do this work alone, and the strength of our community continues to propel us forward in our work of suicide prevention.

Over the past year we have committed to deepening our understanding and continue to take actions to become an organization that centres anti-racism, and anti-oppressive practices in its work. This includes building and expanding relationships with community partners to understand how we can continue to support equity deserving groups through our work.

As we move into this new fiscal year, we will strive to expand the reach of the WRSPC; to help more community members and organizations know who we are.

Thank you to the many incredibly passionate individuals who support us at all levels of the WRSPC. There is strength in community, as we work to reduce suicide and its impact through hope, help, and healing, and we are grateful to each of you!

With deepest gratitude,
Melissa Strachan-Baylis and Elisa Brewer-Singh



Who We Are

Staff

Elisa Brewer-Singh
Executive Director

Karyn Kipper-Day
Program Coordinator

Emma Chapelle
Program Coordinator

Chantalle Turgott
Program Coordinator

Marta Fukasawa
Development Assistant

Board Members

Melissa Strachan-Baylis, Chair

Megan Moore, Vice-Chair

Jessica Deming, Secretary

Ed Hofstede, Treasurer

Adrienne Luft, Director

Al Strong, Director

Kathy Payette, Director

Nancy Smith, Director

James Mills, Director

Hope

Youth Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Presentations

Our collaboration with the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Region Catholic School Board continued, with a new focus on engaging gr.7 students during the 2023-2024 school year. As a result, during Fiscal 2024, WRSPC staff delivered **302** presentations at **94** schools, to **6761** students and **407** school staff members, including administrators, teachers, and librarians. Through these facilitated discussions, youth learned about mental health and developing resiliency; how to recognize warning signs that they or a friend might be struggling; how to ask for help for themselves; and how they can use caring conversations to connect their friends to help and support.

In the Community

The WRSPC has been focusing on developing new opportunities to engage with the community, through hosting or participating in local events. Staff participated in or hosted **9** community events and engaged with a total of **3345** event attendees, often through collaboration with other community organizations. Event highlights of Fiscal 2024 include participation in the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Festival, a summer movie night hosted in collaboration with the Kitchener Public Library featuring Inside Out, and our continued free Community Skates, held in Elmira and Ayr during the winter and March breaks.



Youth creating Message Bracelets at the WRSPC booth during the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Festival.

Approximately **1000** community members stopped by our booth at the Multicultural Festival in 2023.

Did you know?
WRSPC has hosted free community skates since **December 2012!** These skates help to encourage physical activity and social connections, both of which are important to our wellbeing.

Help

Developing and Distributing Resources

The Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council continues to develop new suicide prevention and awareness resources and distributes these throughout the community. Through partnerships with the school boards, local hospitals, and community organizations, over **16,000 resources** were distributed, including over **5000 Youth Wallet Resource Cards** (also known as “Green Cards”). **13** new resources or webpages were created or redesigned, helping to ensure the community has access to up-to-date information.

Helping the Helpers through Professional Development

Our role is to support those providing frontline service access timely and relevant mental health, suicide prevention, intervention, and/or postvention information through professional development opportunities. During Fiscal 2024, the WRSPC hosted **3** Community Education sessions for professionals. A total of **122 individuals** participated in these free education sessions, which discussed topics such as traumatic grief, life promotion for Indigenous youth, and brief interventions for those at risk of suicide.

We continue to facilitate Community Suicide Prevention Roundtables, which bring together representatives from community agencies and partners. **4** Roundtables were hosted, resulting in **105** learning hours for attendees.



Some of the resources that have been distributed to the community, including crisis wallet cards and Feeling Wheels

“We were fortunate to have WRSPC give a presentation to our members. It was a meaningful time spent together even though talking about suicide can make some people uncomfortable. One thing really stood out: we all need to be more aware of those around us. Take the first step to comfort someone, to just listen or ask the really hard questions. Thank you WRSPC for being a voice for those who are often silent.”

a participant in a Suicide Awareness and Prevention presentation.

Healing

Creating Hope Through Action at World Suicide Prevention Day

On Sunday, September 10th, the community gathered alongside the WRSPC at the Victoria Park Pavilion to acknowledge and honour World Suicide Prevention Day. Hope and healing were promoted through an Information & Wellness Fair featuring local organizations, Yoga and Breathwork sessions, and messages from keynote speakers Adrienne Luft (Private Practice Psychotherapist) and Joanne Marchildon (Firefighter, Waterloo Fire Rescue).

“Why...?” Support After a Suicide Loss group

We continue to provide the funding and program material to ensure that individuals who are bereaved by suicide have access to free, trauma-informed support groups. Last year, the WRSPC worked with clinicians, both independent and from agencies (Shalom Counselling Services and Porchlight Counselling and Addiction Services) to facilitate 4 groups.

After attending a “Why...?” group:

88% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they “are more comfortable talking about their loss”.

88% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that they have “an increased level of hope”.

100% of participants agreed/strongly agreed that they would recommend this group to others.



Community Members engaged in a breathwork session at World Suicide Prevention Day

9 community organizations and **120** individuals attended World Suicide Prevention Day.

*"Thank you, for doing this important work. I felt very isolated and alone 9 weeks ago and I can honestly say that this has helped me more than other therapy or groups that I've done".
a participant from the "Why...?" Suicide Bereavement Support Group, speaking about the program.*

Provincial and National Reach

Ontario Suicide Prevention Roundtable (OSPR)

The WRSPC continues to lead the Ontario Suicide Prevention Roundtable with the goal of ensuring that small organizations and councils across the province are supported in their work at the local level. By supporting this provincial voice, the OSPR has been able to expand its membership to 14 organizations across 11 different communities.

“The Ontario Suicide Prevention Roundtable plays a critical role in helping all of us shape suicide prevention, intervention and postvention strategies in our communities. The strength of the forum is group collaboration and networking to foster an environment for knowledge transfer, sharing of innovative toolkits, resources and opportunities to brainstorm. While we all work independently within our own organizations, it is invaluable to come together collectively and take actionable steps towards suicide prevention capacity building in our communities.”
a member of the OSPR

Canadian Suicide Prevention Coordinators Network (CSPCN)

The WRSPC serves as a Co-Chair for the CSPCN, which is a network of representatives who work in suicide prevention at a national, provincial, territorial, or regional level. The Network was established with the aim of connecting members for knowledge exchange purposes through quarterly teleconferences and to build upon existing successes in suicide prevention and life promotion across Canada. The WRSPC has served in this role since 2018 and has supported the network’s membership growth by over 100 individuals during this time.

Conferences

WRSPC presented at the 2023 National Suicide Prevention Conference:

- “Lighting the Way Through Loss”
- “Lighting the Way Through Our Emotions”
- Co-presented “Community-based Suicide Intervention and Bereavement Initiatives” with Mara Grunau



Elisa Brewer-Singh (Center) with Mara Grunau, CEO of CMHA Alberta Division (left) and Sean Krausert, Executive Director of CASP (Right) at the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention’s National Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Financials

REVENUE

Government Grants	
Region/Ministry	\$155, 325
Community Events Revenue	179, 265
Donation Revenue	64, 764
Fees for Services	215
Program Revenue	10,500
Miscellaneous Income	<u>8, 103</u>
Total Revenue	\$418, 172

TOTAL REVENUE **\$418, 172**

EXPENDITURES

Purchased Services	\$108, 601
Program Expenses	279, 740
Professional Services	37, 123
Advertising and Promotion	1, 320
Office Expenses	<u>10, 755</u>
Total Expenditures	\$437, 539

TOTAL EXPENDITURES **\$437, 539**

Surplus/ (Deficit) **(\$19, 367)**

Our Supporters



CAPACITYCANADA



JACOB RANTON
Memorial Basketball Tournament

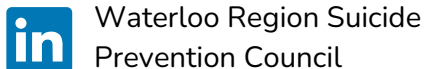


Brian and Pauline Fisher Fund, Busy Hands Quilters Guild, Mabel and Gordon McMillen Foundation, Motel Collective, Moxies Kitchener, Ross and Doris Dixon Charitable Foundation, Strummerfest, The Jay Hughes Memorial Foundation, Wilson Family Fund

Plus the numerous individual, private and corporate sponsors.

Stay connected with
WRSPC!

www.wrspc.ca



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WATERLOO REGION
**Suicide
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By the Numbers

