

DISTRESS CENTRE CALGARY

2022-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strengthening+ Adapting + Transforming= A world class crisis and navigation hub that connects and empowers people and communities

MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission

We provide compassionate, accessible crisis and navigations support that enhances the health, well-being and resiliency of individual in distress

Vision

Everyone is heard.

Values

Belonging: We create an environment of diversity, inclusion and equity and justice where voices are heard and individuals are supported

Collaboration: We will bring people, programs and sectors together to create partnerships and collaboration with intent

Volunteerism: We support volunteers by providing training, mentorship, recognition and community

Leadership: We are a recognized leader in supporting crisis and systems navigation, sharing of data and modelling technology applications for good

Integrity: We foster an open and positive work environment with ethical and transparent decision making

Innovation: We embrace innovation by providing a safe space for trial and error and both are celebrated

Service to others: We provide person centric services and process that are driven by community need

Excellence: We confidently pursue the highest quality in all of our operations

ORGANIZATIONAL POSITION

Distress Centre Calgary is a critical part of the vast and complex mental health and social services landscape in Calgary and surrounding area, which encompasses non-profit, public, and private service providers. While there are other organizations that are now offering referral (e.g., HelpSeeker) and crisis supports (Kids Help Phone, etc.), Distress Centre is the only organization locally that provides both seamlessly. Distress Centre stands out as an accessible organization. Distress Centre has led the introduction of a full range of accessibility options (telephone, mobile chat, virtual, in-person). Distress Centre is the only Calgary-based crisis organization that is accessible 24/7. As the 211 service provider, Distress Centre has a singular perspective on community need and available supports. Like other organizations in the mental health sector, Distress Centre Calgary has experienced a rise in demand for services over time, which may be attributed in part to increasing social acceptance of mental health issues and partly related to the twin crises of an economic recession and the pandemic.

Based on its unique features, Distress Centre's role in the Calgary mental health community is being the easy access, low barrier resource that is available for both crisis situations and ongoing support. It is an ideal entry point for community members seeking social service and mental health resources, both through its own programs and its ability to refer to resources, as part of the 211 service. It can reduce the fragmentation of resources, which often presents a barrier for individuals seeking support. There is also an opportunity for Distress Centre to help the sector shift toward needs-based planning and integration of the whole continuum of care (from prevention to early intervention, to acute care), because of the robust data it captures through its services and its excellent reputation as a partner of choice.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Distress Centre's last strategic plan ran through from 2019-22 and helped develop the physical and technological infrastructure to support the enhancement of programs & services. The plan ignited a dedicated commitment to its people, emphasizing self-care and community of care. Furthermore, it helped to create the strong infrastructure needed to pivot operations and meet community needs during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Engagement on a strategic refresh kicked off in summer 2021 with early engagement with funders and partners as part of the CEO search. Partners provided input on the role Distress Centre plays in the community and what they saw as future needs

In late summer 2021, Distress Centre retained *PolicyWise for Children & Families* to help develop a fact base on the starting point, a view on the external trends likely to face Distress Centre, and help facilitate a joint board-leadership virtual offsite in November 2021.

Offsite outcomes were synthesized and further feedback/ iteration with key stakeholders was undertaken between December-March 2022. This included engagements with: Distress Center board, Distress Centre leadership team, staff and volunteers, and select community partners and funders.

TRENDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

A scan of political, economic, social, and technological trends and conditions was completed with consideration of the long-term implications for Distress Centre. The following summarizes the most critical trends – those with highest certainty and potential consequence.

Social

- Social movements like feminism, anti-racism, and Indigenous Reconciliation are being invigorated by the mainstream through largescale campaigns like #MeToo, #BLM, and #EveryChildMatters
- Government organizations, for-profits, and non-profits alike are being held to higher standards of accountability around social issues
- Employees and volunteers are seeking more flexibility, work-from-home capabilities, and support for their mental health

Economic

- Demand for service will likely ease at the pace of economic recovery
- The greatest opportunities for growth in charitable giving is emerging in high net worth/transformational giving, corporate partnerships, and peer-to-peer fundraising
- Governments are more interested in giving where there are matched funds from philanthropists or corporate partnerships

Technological

- Substantial shift to online delivery of services and remote work in the social and health sectors; clients comfort levels with online services has increased with higher hesitancy levels to return in-person
- Non-profit sector is increasingly recognizing potential in advancing its data capabilities to drive insights around tailoring services and fundraising activities
- Cyber security

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Through the environmental scanning and engagements with stakeholders, three common themes emerged:

- 1.) Employees and volunteers need a supportive and inclusive workplace to remain resilient and to provide the best quality of care to clients.
- 2.) There is a need to focus on the unique value Distress Centre can offer the community in a complex and dynamic service ecosystem.
- 3.) The non-profit sector is lacking leadership in the development of digital capabilities needed to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

2022-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan has been developed on the underlying themes of strengthening, adapting and transforming our people, programs and the broader system in which we operate for a stronger crisis and navigation hub that connects empowers people and communities.

We are guided by a single **vision**, three pillars and 11 priority outcomes. Our operational enablers and values will underpin our progress over the next three years.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Our strategic plan focuses on three key pillars:

- First our **People**... we are a people-first organization and in order to effectively be there for clients in their moments of crisis we need to ensure our employees and volunteers are supported, engaged and resilient in the work we do... without that all else will fail.
- Second, we will evolve and strengthen our **Programming** to meet the unique and changing client needs... in doing so we must retain a trauma-informed approach to care while recognizing that customized offerings and collaborative partnerships will be required to improve client outcomes.
- Third, we will “level up” and take out a greater **System** leadership role... it is our privilege to be at the forefront of crisis support and system navigation support but with this we feel an obligation... an obligation to share the insights we have to contribute to research and actively advocate for practice and system change.

People

Our staff and volunteers continue to be impacted coming out of the pandemic. It is critical that we continue to have the care and wellbeing of our people be a cornerstone within all of the work we do. Through creating a psychologically safe workplace, we can ensure space for learning, innovation and growth. By prioritizing the wellness of our people, it creates strength and resiliency among the team to be mentally well in the work they do serving our clients and community.

Target Outcomes	Key Initiatives	Primary Accountable	KPI ¹	Timeline
A culture of community, health and wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement mental health and wellness strategy initiatives Continued strengthening of self-care and community of care initiatives 	People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee and volunteer self care Employee and volunteer wellness Employee benefit utilization 	'22 Q3-Q4 (development) '23 Q1- '24 Q4
Build, socialize, and implement an EDI strategy at all levels of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement and understanding work with all stakeholder groups Assemble and finalize EDI vision and strategy from the lens of comprehensive social location Socialize, communicate and train across the agency Implement strategy 	People and Culture, DEI Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee and volunteer DEI engagement through surveys, focused groups and individual engagements (exact metrics TBD through the process) 	'22 Q3 – '23 Q1 '22 Q4- '23 Q2 '23 Q3-'23 Q4 '24 Q1-Q4
Strong employee value proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Human Resources framework including 	People and Culture, Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee engagement, %shift coverage 	'22 Q2 - Q3 '22/ early '23 '23-'24

¹ Most KPIs gathered by surveys with employees and volunteers on an annual basis; through implementation of initiatives we will implement smaller, more focused quarterly surveys as well.

	compensation and benefits review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved employee management processes and systems Multi-level coaching, training and development program 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee satisfaction Employee retention rate Staff development utilization Employee skill and competency 	
Thriving volunteer Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize volunteer opportunities across programs Complete a formal review of shifting volunteer landscape and Distress Centre's volunteer program 	People and Culture, Volunteer Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer engagement, %shift coverage Volunteer satisfaction Volunteer retention 	'22 Q2 - '23 Q3
A flexible operation model that is responsive to the needs of clients, volunteers and employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of hybrid, flexible work and service delivery model where possible Lean process management across all procedures and processes 	Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee satisfaction Number of process efficiencies implemented and personnel time saved 	'22 Q3-Q4 '22 Q3-'24 Q4

Programs

We exist to service our clients and the community. We have enhanced our services in the past years, and have seen changes in the mode through which our clients contact us (chat and text having increased significantly). Similarly, our contact volumes through partnerships has grown at a faster pace than our traditional crisis services while the length/ complexity of calls has also increased. We must continue to ensure clients are the forefront of program and services design... through continued enhancement and partnerships we can bridge gaps in the sector and ensure better outcomes for clients.

Target Outcomes	Key Initiatives	Primary Accountable	KPI ²	Timeline
Person centered, trauma informed approach to client care across all programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline and socialize trauma informed principles and domains across the organization Review all agency processes, training and program- updating when and where required 	Programs ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client satisfaction Employee and volunteer satisfaction Number of improvements 	'22 Q3-Q4 '23 Q1-Q4
Customized programs and services to improve client experience and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake client profiles and journey mapping Review existing service delivery models and frameworks Implement changes at the program level to enhance service to identified client profiles Annual review of DC programming 	Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client satisfaction Client outcome ratings Number of service improvements #of clients served per DC program 	'22 Q3-Q4 '23 Q1-Q2 '23 Q2- '24 Q4
Encourage innovative and disruptive mindsets across programs, seek more collaborative service delivery models where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and foster a disruptive, agile, innovative mindset across the agency at all levels Strengthen and develop connections across the continuums of care for clients, leveraging existing and future service offerings and community partnerships 	Chief Executive Officer, Leadership, Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership evaluation and satisfaction scores Improved connection for clients served # of clients served through partnerships 	'22 Q2-Q3 '22 Q4- '24 Q4 '22 Q2- '24 Q4 '22 Q2- '24 Q4

² KPI's associated with this pillar will be measured through a combination of client surveys (live and post service) and partnership feedback forms (annually)

³ Programs refers to all programs including Crisis, ConnecTeen, 211, BNF, Counselling and Coordinated Access and Assessment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the implementation of the Community Information Exchange • Continue to advance crisis and navigation continuum through internal and external collaboration 			
--	--	--	--	--

System Leadership

In 2021 we served 150,000 contacts, across a spectrum of needs; putting us in a privileged position at the forefront of sector trends. We have a responsibility to illuminate these trends in an insightful way, sharing with local, provincial and national partners. We did so during the first year of the pandemic with our weekly reports helping drive decision making and pandemic response planning. We see other opportunities to share learnings to enhance the health, wellbeing and resiliency of individuals and reduce the stigma of those seeking help and supports.

Target Outcomes	Key Initiatives	Primary Accountable	KPI ⁴	Timeline
Enhanced knowledge and data sharing to inform policy, planning, research and systems change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize University of Calgary and other research partnerships • Build internal capacity for data analytics • Garner feedback on user stories and data needs • Design data infrastructure platform and implement 	Program and Performance; CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of dashboards created and viewed • Community reporting on utilization and usefulness of information provided 	'22 Q3- Q4 (set) '23 and '24 (implement) '22 Q3-'22 Q4 (set roadmap) 23' Q1-'24 Q4 (implement)

⁴ KPI's in this pillar are largely tracked through monthly system and financial reporting. Some KPI survey question will be develop for external feedback as work progresses

Driver of public awareness and discourse through bold education-focused marketing that leverages our insights into community needs and trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive, multi-dimensional, marketing and media strategy incl. rebranding (website, YouTube etc.) Strategy that focuses on paid, organized, earned and owned tactics Stand up internal working committee on content development 	Strategy and Engagement, Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly engagement report Number of campaigns Number of media engagements/mentions Number of subscribes 	'22 Q3- '22 Q4 Development '23 Q1-'24 Q4 Implement/ annual revision '23 Q1-Q2
Expands accessibility of our external capacity building and training offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of free community capacity building modules Social Enterprise fee-for-service training program 	Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people trained, presentations provided Increased knowledge and skill of crisis response in people trained Fee-for-service training revenue/expenses Recognized as approved training with ACSW (and other certification bodies) 	'22- Q2- '22 Q4 First phase '23 Q1-4 second iteration '24 Q1-4 third iteration

OPERATIONAL ENABLERS

Progress on our three strategic pillars and target outcomes is supported by four operational enablers. These enablers create a solid foundation from which we can grow in all areas of our work.

Strong Financial Position	Human Centered Storytelling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive 3 year budget and accompanying funding strategy • Compelling cases for support/packageable funding opportunities • Robust donor engagement and stewardship • Stability in sustainability fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of storytelling embodied across the organization • Robust content strategy • Connections with reliable professional media outlets • Media skill and presence honed across the organization
Data and Technology Empowered	Collaborative Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology literacy among staff and volunteers • Continued enhancement of technology systems and infrastructure • User-centric mindset in the design of data architecture • Leveraging of technology in all facets across the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership framework and evaluation • Culture of collaboration • Continued engagement of all leadership team and employees to maintain an outward presence/network with community partners

IMPLEMENTATION AND TRACKING

2022 and beyond brings a renewed focus as a strategy driven organization in all of our work. Coming out of two difficult but successful years for Distress Centre, the development and launch of a new strategic plan has provided an opportunity to slow down, reflect and celebrate all of our accomplishments, as well as our hopes and visions for the future.

This strategy will be shared broadly with all internal and external stakeholders and supporters who share in the implementation and success of the new plan. This will remain a living document through all work and planning with quarterly reviews conducted to measure success. As the landscape can shift from year-to-year we will conduct a comprehensive plan review and target measurements at the annual Board and Leadership Retreat.

All of us have a role to play in the success of this plan and in providing leadership to meet the needs of community.