



distress
centres

ontario



Annual Report

2010-2011

*Moving forward
through partnerships*

Chair of the Board's Report

My time as President of Distress Centres Ontario is now coming to an end. I feel very fortunate to have shared this experience with committed and dedicated colleagues on our Board of Directors – some are members of distress centres who bring passion and devotion to the table while others come to us from like-minded community organizations to share their expertise and knowledge – all working together towards a common goal.

Since I joined the Board of Directors in 2005, Distress Centres Ontario has gone through a remarkable renewal. I look back at the organizational review which was the catalyst for these changes. There was a reinvention of our provincial organization with a new direction for the future. We hired a new Executive Director to lead the membership through a revised strategic plan. We carried out new membership-driven initiatives which have contributed to the development of individual centres while making the network of distress centres in Ontario stronger and more resilient.

While some of our initiatives are in various stages of completion, each distress centre is working hard to either contribute to the overall provincial initiative or finalize its local plans. Several centres are on the verge of submitting their Intent to Survey to complete their accreditation process. Most centres have now submitted their information for the provincial Statistics, Information Outcome and Measures project. Telephone volunteers from all centres are taking advantage of the popular Learning Forums. New marketing materials will soon be available to those centres looking to advertise their services in their respective jurisdiction. Every year, we celebrate dozens of individuals for their impressive contribution to distress centres and clients in their communities through the Spirit of Volunteerism Awards.

Considered individually, initiatives undertaken by Distress Centres Ontario on behalf of its member centres since 2005 are quite significant. When considered as parts of a whole, our efforts are bringing distress centres ever closer to a more integrated, more efficient system of crisis management for all Ontarians. The 1-800 suicideOntario number will bring us together once again to discuss some fundamental principles that must be addressed so that we may move forward with such an important initiative. I encourage all of you to bring your constructive and creative ideas to the table so that we may continue to work at developing a fully integrated system to help the people of Ontario through their time of need.

As I step down from the President position, I will continue my involvement on the Board of Directors as Past President and will be involved at the committee level. I look forward to working with our incoming Directors as we consider the future of our movement.

Many thanks to my fellow Board members, the staff at DCO, to Liz Fisk, our Executive Director, and to all member distress centres during the last 6 years for making this such a pleasant journey.

See you at the meeting table!



Charles Laframboise
Chair, Board of Directors



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Report from the Executive Director

An organization is always on a journey – building on the stepping stones of its past to either shape or stumble into its future. It continues to be my pleasure to work with our entire member centre community to make sure we don't stumble into the future. Rather, that we develop a future where all distress centres that are part of our movement have the maps, the tools and the skills needed.

It's a lofty, but necessary goal. If we simply allow service systems or practices to develop around us, the empathic and compassionate supports that we value and provide, may not survive into the future.

The maps are our strategic priorities. Three years ago we developed a five point strategic plan with defined priorities that have guided every program and project that DCO has undertaken.

These priorities were developed on what you hoped would be the future of our movement. Every good set of maps needs to be updated. Over the past year we have undertaken a review and refreshment exercise that provides us with a vision, strategic priorities and critical success factors for the next three to five years.

The programs and services offered by DCO are the tools we need for our future journey. Whether they are the e-based Learning Forums, the Motivational Interviewing web-casts, the Lunch and Learn sessions or our SIOM (Statistics, Information and Outcome Measures) project and accreditation program. The skills are developed or enriched by the use of the programs and services offered by DCO. The statistical review in this report will highlight this skills development.

Having the right tools, maps and skills are just part of the necessary components of the future we shape. Let's contemplate our future.

What is becoming increasingly important is the need for our membership to be able to partner more significantly - to walk hand-in-hand with a common vision that integrates the unique priorities of each of its members. This is a hard task to accomplish and one that needs to be broken down into component pieces to make it more manageable. We have spent a significant part of this year focusing on two very critical projects. These will develop into the programs that will help every member centre increase their partnership potential.

The 1-800-suicideOntario project is a bold step to integrate a framework for providing complete and immediate access for all Ontarians to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention resources. The Crisis and Distress Worker Certification project looks to link the already well developed and renowned training programs offered by our member centres, into a widely recognized and respected Certification Program. This certification process along with the accreditation program already in place will help position our member centres on an equal footing with larger and better resourced service providers in the mental health and community support environments.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with each member centre as we develop a solid future for the distress centre movement. It won't be easy. Over the next year we will work through the tugs and pulls of self-interest, well placed confidence in our way of doing things, and the stark realities of under-resourced and under-funded organizations. However, during the past several years I have come to marvel at the resilience and determination of our member centres and their staff and volunteers. I am confident that during the following year we will make significant strides along our organizational journey.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Fisk".

Elizabeth (Liz) Fisk
Executive Director

Learning Forums | Strengthening our Skills

Thirteen excellent Learning Forums topics and much more to come! Staff and volunteers from our member centres have joined in learning at their own pace using this user friendly on-line tool. The Learning Forums website, intended as an in-service training tool, is host to 1013 users from 14 member centres at last count.

The format of this learning tool has been kept simple, while the content is top notch – informative and helpful. Once a learning topic has been reviewed, users may complete a quiz which generates a report emailed to them. In this past year several improvements to the Learning Forums have improved its usability at the centre level. Training and Education Coordinators can produce a Certificate of Completion that indicates successful completion of the quiz and completion of that learning topic. Also, Centres can now manage their own user lists in addition to posting their own private messages and information for their centre call takers.

What users are saying about strengthening their skills....

“Very useful video. I particularly appreciate and learned something new, that is the different levels of support: internal, external and peripheral. I usually focused on the caller’s external support but now I hope to help the caller explore all...” *Active Listening: The Power of Empathy*

“Wow, informative! Never hear about men being abused...”
Abuse in Intimate Relationships – Part 2: The Process of Leaving

“That was terrific! I really connected to the idea of our unrealistic expectations to which we all tend to subscribe when it comes to grief and the grieving process. It is part of our own discomfort coupled with the discomfort of those who...” *Understanding Loss*

“Thanks for the video, I really appreciate all the hard work.” “I found this very helpful.”
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

What’s Trending and Why?

Since its inaugural launch 16 months ago (May 1, 2010) an average of 280 users visit the Learning Forums web site monthly. Our statistics indicate that usage peaked during the inaugural month of May 2010 with 529 viewers, while March 2011 recorded 435 users. Interestingly, usage also increased when other DCO training initiatives were being offered such as the How to Work More Effectively with Challenging Callers offered in November 2010 and May 2011. It would seem that providing the webinars increased awareness of the Learning Forums as visits to the website increased substantially during those months.

Ranking the Topics by Length of time spent on the topic:

1. Trauma and Sudden Violent Loss
2. Mental Health & Impact on Suicide
3. Schizophrenia
4. Self Injurious Behaviour
5. Mood Disorders
6. Responding to Callers with Financial Concerns
7. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
8. Active Listening and the Power of Empathy
9. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
10. Understanding Loss
11. Abuse In intimate Relationships – Part 1
12. Limits and Boundaries
13. Abuse in Intimate Relationships – Part 2



“Thank you for your insights into this challenging topic! I took away a reminder to generate discussion about the cultural perspective on sudden violent death from the survivor...”

Trauma & Sudden Violent Loss

“Very good ideas. I also feel I have a better idea about the limits I have to set for myself and for the benefit of other volunteers that will be talking to a caller after me. I think I knew much of this before, but now I have a much clearer idea...”

Limits and Boundaries

Top five topics viewed to date:

Limits and Boundaries
Mood Disorders
Responding to Callers with Financial Concerns
Active Listening and the Power of Empathy
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder



Environmental scanning ... identified a need to represent the services of our member centres as professional in the eyes of potential and existing partners.

How we are moving forward

1-800-suicideOntario

The 1-800-suicideOntario project is a bold step to integrate a framework for providing complete and instant access for all Ontarians to suicide prevention, intervention and postvention resources. While several provinces in Canada and over 99% of continental USA offer the services of a 1-800 based suicide line to their populations, no such integrated province-wide line exists in Ontario.

It is the intention of the DCO membership to integrate the suicide prevention, intervention and crisis telephone support services of DCO's sixteen member centres so they can provide 24/7/365 suicide crisis telephone support to all areas of the province of Ontario with the next twelve months. The membership is also exploring the development of a text and web based response service to operate in tandem with the telephone-based service integration.

DCO member centres look at this initiative as a possible initial step to province-wide linking of existing distress centre telephone services to address currently under-served areas. An introduction of the project to intergovernmental working groups in northern Ontario has been met with a positive reception. This project will also solidify the distress centres' existing linkages with local mental health service providers, mobile crisis teams, various community based resources and mental health centres and develop similar linkages in under-served areas. We even see the ability to redirect emergency room attendees to more appropriate community based resources as a realizable outcome of this project.

However, as with all large projects, the issue of funding needs to be addressed. In tandem with committees working through the various issues that will present themselves in this initiative, DCO staff has met with representatives at the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to garner their support and also with leading political representatives.

Crisis and Distress Worker Certification

Environmental scanning and anecdotal experience in the help-line sector identified a need to represent the services of our member centres as professional in the eyes of potential and existing partners, especially those whose services are provided by paid and often certified staff. Certifying our call takers would increase the standing of our centres within these communities. In addition, certification of call-takers would support the 1-800-suicideOntario initiative.

The Crisis Worker Certification committee was formed in early 2011 to determine the applicability of the certification offered by the American Association of Suicidology to the DCO membership, and to identify other feasible alternatives. The committee members all successfully applied for certification, meeting the requirement for eligibility and passing an online exam. After identifying issues and assessing fit, they also investigated the option of developing a new DCO certification, either alone or with another partner.

This committee also reached agreement on the broad parameters of an appropriate certification: eligibility requirements, testing, implements and whether certification should be mandatory or optional. They suggested certification be tailored specifically to reflect the core competencies required of crisis/distress line call-takers, both staff and volunteer, and considered whether it might, in future, be made available to centres outside the DCO membership. This committee's hard work has set the stage for a very important project for 2011 and beyond.

Special appreciation is extended to committee members: Trish Freehan, Oakville Distress Centre; Victoria Freeman, Telephone Aid Line Kingston; Arianne Richeson, Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region; Erica Simpson, Distress Centre Durham; Tahlia Simpson, Community Torchlight o/a Wellington/Dufferin Distress Centre and Lynn Brewin, Distress Centres Ontario. Thank you to the members and also to their centres for donating the time for their committee participation.

Our volunteers are appreciated and recognized

Our dedicated volunteers make a significant contribution and the Spirit of Volunteerism Recognition event allows us the opportunity to extend our appreciation. By acknowledging the nominees and recipients of this award, we say thank you to all the volunteers throughout the province that they represent. Thank you for carrying on a self-less tradition that started over 30 years ago, and for listening empathically to our callers.

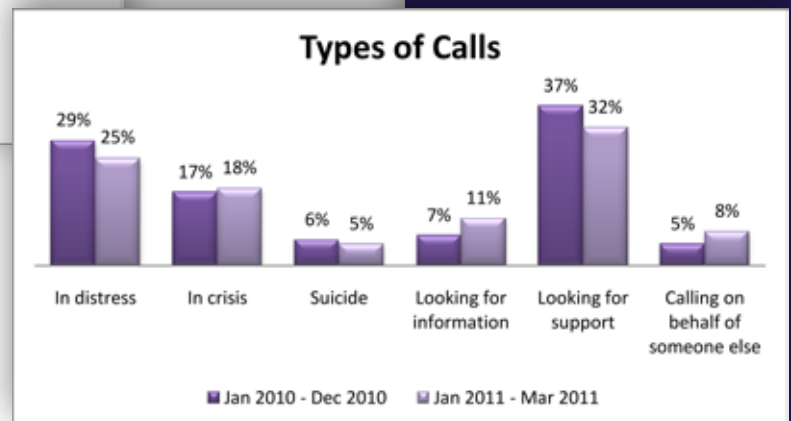
2010 Spirit of Volunteerism nominees include

Michael Bennett	Distress Centre of Windsor-Essex County	Recipient - Young Adult
Andrew Brennan	Community Torchlight Wellington-Dufferin	Nominee
Karen Cressman	Community Torchlight Wellington-Dufferin	Nominee
John Davis	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Anselm De Souza	Toronto Distress Centre	Nominee
Sue Duchesnay	Distress Centre Durham	Recipient
Stephanie Gordon	Toronto Distress Centre	Nominee
Wendy Guilemette	Community Torchlight Wellington-Dufferin	Nominee
Catharine MacLeod	Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region	Recipient
Dorothy McRae	Scarborough Distress Centre	Nominee
Tom Morris	Durham Distress Centre	Recipient
Christopher Pavia	Distress Centre Peel	Nominee
Elizabeth Penn	Telephone Aid Line Kingston	Nominee - Young Adult
Ron Pritchard	Scarborough Distress Centre	Nominee
Paula Robertson	Distress Centre Durham	Nominee - Young Adult
Mathura Thiagarajah	Scarborough Distress Centre	Nominee
Sue Turner	Distress Centre Lanark, Leeds & Grenville	Nominee
Dana Yates	Toronto Distress Centre	Nominee



**Charles Laframboise,
Board Chair,
acknowledges Michael
Bennett, Recipient -
Young Adult Volunteer
2010**

Here are some of the reasons why Ontarians call our lines and the type of calls we take:



*Listening with
empathy is the key*

Financial Report

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at March 31, 2011

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash	\$ 118,760
Sundry Receivables/Prepaid Expenses	12,218
	<u>\$ 130,978</u>

LIABILITIES

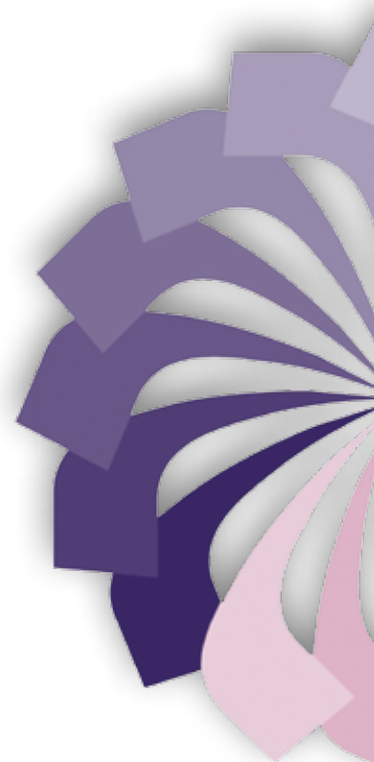
Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable, Accrued Liabilities	\$ 63,835
Accounts Payable MOHLTC	29,522
	<u>\$ 93,357</u>

NET ASSETS

Operations - unrestricted	\$ 22,621
Contingency reserve fund	15,000
	<u>\$ 37,621</u>
	<u>\$ 130,978</u>

Focusing our funding on developing programs and strengthening the capacity of our member centres.



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS for the year ended March 31, 2011

REVENUE

MOHLTC Operating Grant	\$ 213,902
Donations	192
Membership	5,635
Interest & Other	859
	<u>\$ 220,588</u>

EXPENSES

Programs	\$ 89,477
Educational Development	16,501
Program Development	35,244
Administration	67,218
Other	11,769
	<u>\$ 220,209</u>

EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES

\$ 379

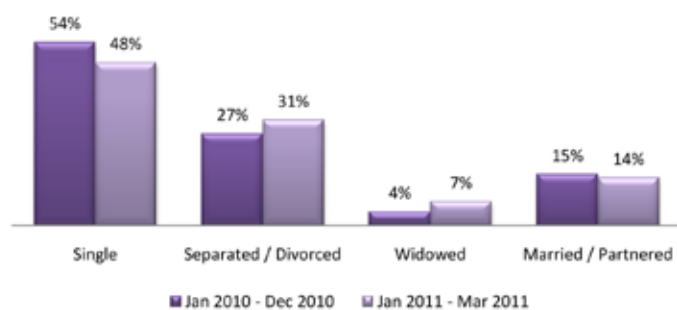
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

Beginning of the year	\$ 22,242
End of the year	<u>\$ 22,621</u>

Caller Status



Marital Status





distress
centres

ontario

MOVING FORWARD THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

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DCO Board of Directors 2010-2011

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Debbie Bonselaar

Gilles Brideau

Sheena Carpenter

Rahel Eynan

Victoria Kehoe

Charles Laframboise (Chair)

Donna Martin

DCO Staff

Executive Director

Elizabeth Fisk

Learning and Development Coordinator

Lynn Brewin

1-800-suicideOntario Coordinator

Asha Croggon

Administration and Program Facilitator

Jackie Grigsby

Learning Forums Webmaster

Dave Cooper

Member Agencies

*Contact information for member centres
can be found on our website at dcontario.org*

Telecare Cambridge Distress Centre

Distress Centre Durham

Telephone Aid Line Kingston (TALK)

Developmental Services of Leeds and Grenville

London and District Distress Centre

Distress Centre Niagara

Distress Centre North Halton

Distress Centre Oakville

Distress Centre Ottawa and Region

Distress Centre Peel

Family Counselling Centre (Sarnia & Lambton County)

Toronto Distress Centres

Distress Centre Waterloo Region

Community Torchlight Guelph/Wellington/Dufferin

Distress Centre Windsor-Essex County

We appreciate the generous financial
support of our long term funder:



Ontario

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
AND LONG-TERM CARE

We also wish to thank the individuals
who provide support to our programs via
CanadaHelps.org on our website.