

Executive Director 21/22 Annual Report



The global COVID-19 Pandemic continued to impact service delivery throughout the entire 2021/2022 fiscal year-protective measures did not start lifting the last month-April 2022. This year was impacted by several staffing changes and a huge influx of children, youth & families requesting services when COVID-19 isolation measures began to lift. During the 2021/2022 fiscal year, Intersect Youth and Family Services' focus for service delivery was to support our staff to manage complex and high caseloads, while supporting those waiting on our waitlist. During this time, we continued to navigate the safety of our staff and clients through the Covid-19 Global pandemic.

As a result of this planning and the commitment of the Intersect team, Intersect's services continued to operate throughout the pandemic and the families we serve experienced no disruption in their ability to access care- Intersects doors remained open. During the 2021/2022 fiscal year, Intersect Youth and Family services completed 427 intakes and provided full service to 564 children, youth, and their families. They performed 144 more intakes than last fiscal year resulting in the waitlist ballooning from 146 children/youth waiting in April 2021 to 222 waiting by March 2022. Staff noted that those attending intakes were more complex, higher risk and requiring a higher level of service than we usually see. All this happened during a staffing crisis as 3 clinicians went off on maternity/parental leave and six left the agency for various reasons out of Intersects control. Intersect would like to acknowledge their Clinical Supervisors, Jenny Plouffe and Melissa Finger, for the large amount of caseload management and training of new staff they completed this year.

Three Year Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Intersect Youth & Family Services created and approved a strategic plan for the years 2020-2023. The strategic goals and objectives are:

- Invest in our most valuable resource, our team, through the development of recruitment, retention, succession, and professional development strategies.
- Ensure our society has the technological systems, hardware and resources required to optimize service delivery and minimize wasted time spent on tasks that do not provide direct care to our clients.
- Make our client and staff's safety paramount through the identification of risks, development of policy and procedures to mitigate risks and the training and education to identify, respond to and get support for addressing risk.

The following goals have been identified to implement the strategic priorities:

1. The development and implementation of a professional development education and training strategy.
2. Develop recruitment, retention, and succession strategies.
3. Use technology to enhance client services, improve efficiency of personnel, improve productivity of personnel and systems to communicate with all stakeholders.
4. Ensure the physical and psychological safety of our team and clients.

Person's Served Snapshot

	21/22	20/21		21/22	20/21
Intake	427	283	Psychiatry	45	17
Infant Mental Health	59	33	Psychology	36	35
Active Service	564	585	New Directions	13	14
School Program	30	35			

COVID-19 Global Pandemic-Critical Incident

On March 17, 2020, BC's Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry declared a public health emergency under the BC Public Health Act in response to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. Intersect quickly developed a COVID-19 Safety Plan and implemented several measures to support the safety of our staff and clients. All planning was informed by and in accordance with the recommendations of the BC Provincial Health Officer, Worksafe BC and the Ministry of Child and Family Development. Intersect Youth & Family Services COVID-19 Safety Plan remained in place throughout the majority of the 2021/2022 fiscal year. On March 11, 2022 it was announced that people were no longer required to wear masks and on April 8th, 2022 businesses were no longer required to have a COVID-19 safety plan and to move to a communicable disease response.

CARF Accreditation

Intersect was reaccredited by CARF International in October 2019. The society has completed their annual requirements to maintain their CARF accreditation status and will be surveyed again in October 2022.

Human Resources

During the 2021/2022 fiscal year, in our CYMH programs four full time positions and two part time positions were vacated. Reasons for leaving included: one moved to be with family down south, one retired, one went into private practice, one went to the health authority for higher pay and lower caseloads, and two left due to long term medical leaves. Additionally, three clinicians went off on maternity/paternity leave and will return in Spring 2023. We had one person leave the new directions program as well as one admin go back to school.

This fiscal year, MCFD provided monies to support the recruitment and retention of front-line staff. This funding is intended for training initiatives and compensation of non-management positions. The monies must be used each fiscal year or unused balances may be clawed back. In March 2021 MCFD confirmed that this funding would be ongoing.

To support the recruitment and retention of their staff and in alignment with Intersect's strategic plan, Intersect's Leadership and Board of Directors chose to:

1. Add a 6th step to the current wage grids (completed 2020/2021 Fiscal Year)
2. Increase agency RRSP Contributions.
 - a. Increase employee required contribution amount from 2% of their gross income to 2.5% of their gross income.
 - b. Change timelines and allocation amounts to:
 - i. Three Months to 3 years: 5% (from six months to 5 years-4%)
 - ii. 4 years to 6 years: 6% (from 5 years to 10 years- 5%)
 - iii. 7 years to 10 years: 7% (10 years on- 5%)
 - iv. 10 years on: 8%

I started at Intersect in January 2022. From a professional perspective, I had decided to pursue employment at Intersect due to the agency's reputation of highly valuing staff wellness and providing great leadership. I was cautiously optimistic when starting my position after being very kindly welcomed by the team. Within the first few days, it was clear that the agency had cultivated a healthy and thriving workplace culture. I was given a thorough orientation and set up for success in my role. My supervisors also began arranging training and support that is tailored to my professional goals. The team supported me in my learning and were always there to answer my many questions. As I have settled into my role over the past few months, the clinical support, team and leadership continue to be exceptional. I am very grateful for the opportunity to provide mental health support to the community as part of the Intersect team.

Rebecca, Therapist

CYMH Clinical Services

Throughout this fiscal year, Intersect's Leadership team continued to focus on the evaluation and fine tuning of the numerous quality improvement made over the past 3 years while focusing on the mental health and safety of the Intersect team. In September of 2021, the entire Clinical Team participated in Brief Therapy training and Intersect implemented a brief therapy. This training was funded through a grant from The Federation of Community Social Services of BC.

Intake and Active Service Data: April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

21/22	INTAKES COMPLETED				ACTIVE SERVICE	
	Assigned	Closed at Intake	Infant	Total	Start Service	Continue Service
April	23	6	3	32	27	215
May	31	11	5	47	10	217
June	20	10	1	31	42	204
July	24	7	2	33	26	198
Aug	22	6	12	40	29	212
Sept	31	7	7	45	40	209
Oct	28	9	5	42	41	217
Nov	37	6	4	47	39	204
Dec	12	5	10	27	47	195
Jan	22	7	2	31	29	196
Feb	13	12	5	30	6	177
Mar	13	6	3	22	13	178
Total 21/22	276	92	59	427	349	564
Total 20/21	187	56	40	283	330	585
Difference	+89	+36	+19	+144	+19	-21

Waitlist

Last fiscal year, Intersect Leadership started tracking our waitlist data to identify trends and ensure we were in compliance with service delivery timelines. Last year we were excited to see the waitlist declining, however near the end of last fiscal year it started to climb again. We were very discouraged to see the waitlist continue to climb throughout the year despite our best efforts to meet the needs of our clients. Considering all the 2019/2020 improvements done to streamline service delivery and ensure full staffing levels, the leadership team was disappointed in the fact that although we were delivering services faster, this had no impact on the overall number of children and youth waiting for our services. At this time, they are confident there are no additional improvement they can explore and acquiring additional funding to hire more clinicians is the only way to minimize the number of children and youth waiting for Intersect's CYMH services.

September-October are typically Intersect's busiest time for intakes. This fiscal year, the high number of people requesting services continued throughout the year. Last fiscal we performed 283 intake interviews, this year we performed 427, that is 144 more than last year. Each intake takes roughly 3 hours, we spent an additional 492 hours providing intake services last year, this equates to an additional 0.8 FTE.

Waitlist Data: April 1, 2021 till March 31, 2022.

Month	Service Type		Wait Time				Total on Wait List	Intakes Completed 20-21	Intake Completed 21-22
	1 on 1	Group Only	Group < 35 wks	1 on 1 < 35 wks	< 35 wks	< 1 year			
April	128	18	1	5	10	5	146	12	32
May	131	17	2	3	7	2	148	11	47
June	126	18	4	6	10	1	151	27	31
July	122	20	7	5	12	0	142	9	33
August	136	14	7	8	15	0	169	8	40
Sept	89	19	7	3	10	0	132	33	45
Oct	135	20	16	13	29	9	174	22	42
Nov	129	18	2	16	18	6	165	33	47
Dec	144	18	4	9	20	6	195	21	27
Jan	174	20	9	33	42	6	234	44	31
Feb	170	25	11	35	50	7	240	32	30
March	176	16	8	24	37	5	222	31	22
							TOTAL	283	427

Infant Mental Health

Intersect's Infant and Early Childhood Intake team (IEC) consists of 4 clinicians/therapists and one clinical supervisor; all of which provide intake services. This is an increase of 1 Clinician with a degree in art/play therapy. IEC Clinical Supervisor is an active member of the CYMH Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice. The IEC team meets monthly to provide additional peer consultation and supervision, resources sharing and review procedures, etc.

As an overview of the involvement of our IEC team with intakes, please note inquiries are those who sought an intake but did not follow through, decided services were not needed or identified alternative services.

April 2021. – March 2022: 59 completed intakes, of which 53 were provided active services, 4 were closed after intake and 2 closed before completing the intake. This is 19 more referrals than we received in the last fiscal. During this year our IEC team have participated in the following professional development:

- 2 therapists - Infant Mental Health Basics 101 -Infant Mental Health Promotion
- 2 therapist – Play therapy, including Art Therapy.
- 3 therapist – DC:05

The training needed includes Circle of Security for 3 of the clinician and the Parent-Child Interaction Therapy for the IEC team. We continue to have many children who likely meet criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This year, I began including puppets in my practice. I was hesitant to do this at first, yet it always amazes me how kids develop what seems like separate, supportive relationships with puppets. A young child agreed to talk about his scary memories only if he could talk to the puppet. When he became dysregulated, he agreed to teach the puppet how to do calm breathing (and in the process, did some calm breathing himself!). In our family anxiety group, participants enthusiastically gave the "worry monster" puppet expert advice on how to face his fear. At the end of group sessions, participants say and goodbye to the puppet specifically, and one child confided in our group puppet about her own worries and coached him with advice to face them. Even teenagers gravitate to them. A teenaged

client who has developmentally relevant presenting concerns grabbed a puppet and nostalgically played with it while we chatted, visibly calming. Puppets are becoming my skilled co-therapists! *Andra, Therapist*

Brief Therapy Services

In September 2021 the CYMH clinical team was trained in Brief Therapy to support the implementation of a brief therapy service stream in October 2021. The intent of this service was to move lower risk level clients through services faster thus supporting waitlist management, to provide timely services and to lighten the risk level of clinician caseloads.

Purpose: Brief therapy is not the removal or fixing of the problem, but the creation and development of something new and valuable in the life of the client.

Deliverables:

- Skill development and psychoeducation
- Practicing skills, demonstrating skills and teaching other skills
- Short term goals with measurable outcomes
- Identification and building of support systems (formal and informal)

Service Parameters:

- Maximum of 12 sessions or 4 months (whichever comes first)
- Each Clinician will have 2 spots on their active caseload designated for clients assigned to their waitlist for brief therapy (ideally Clinician would have also performed intake).

Screening Criteria

- ✓ BCFPI – 70 or borderline
- ✓ Rated D, E, F
- ✓ Uni issue (maximum of 2)
- ✓ Requires psycho education and skill building
- ✓ May have minor, single, traumatic incident
- ✓ Engaged caregivers

Service Delivery Guidelines:

Phone call prior to first session:

- ✓ Validation of what's going well and why it makes them a good candidate for brief therapy.
- ✓ Client agreement to brief therapy prior to first session.

Sessions 1-3: Setting the Tone

- Validation, normalizing, identifying strengths
- Identify skills / education required
- Determine # sessions, timeline of care (ISP)
- Measurable outcomes (ISP)

Sessions 4-11: Therapeutic process

- look for opportunities for the client to “teach” caregiver or friends any skills they are meant to practice (ie. Last 15 min invite parents in)

Final Session: Closing/Termination

- Validation review, skills learned (child / caregiver)
- Review their internal and external resources and formal and informal support system
- Complete *How Have I Grown* document for client to take home
- Caregiver handover of care.

Specialized Services:

Psychological Services: In September 2021, Intersect realized they were unable to renew Dr. Chris Gingell's contract to delivery psychological service for the next fiscal year. Dr. Gingell was a valuable member of the Intersect team for 17 years, traveling to Prince George monthly from the mainland to provide service. Two things happened in 2020/2021 that forced Intersect to make this decision: 1. They were committed to being fully staffed and 2. MCFD changed their reporting requirements to hours delivered by each job classification. Intersect was not funded for the travel component of Dr. Gingell's work. Historically they funded this travel through staffing vacancies and donations—these funds were no longer available. Intersect's contract states they will provide 690 hours of psychological services every year which works out to about 2 days per week. Even if Dr. Gingell could provide that many hours of service, Intersect could not afford to pay the travel. Additionally, between COVID and forest fires the ability for Dr. Gingell to travel was compromised so even if we came to some kind of agreement there was no guarantee Intersect could meet its required contract hours.

Dr. Gingell and his contributions will be very missed. He did complete his contract till the end of March and was able to meet the new psychologist during his last trip to Prince George. In January 2022, Dr. Jonathan Thursfield joined the Intersect team to provide psychological services Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00-5:00. The team has really enjoyed the consistency of having a psychologist as a weekly member of the team for consult, learning and case management. Additionally, Jonathan's enthusiasm and demeanor have been a great fit to the team.

Psychological Service Deliverables:

	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	20/21
Assessment	0	7	0	6	1	11	0	0	0	5	4	2	36	32
FU/Consult	0	10	0	0	6	11	0	0	0	3	2	2	36	37

Psychiatric Services: Intersect did not have Psychiatry from September 2020 until August 2021. Thankfully Dr. Waller approached Intersect in July to enquire about providing psychiatric services. We were ecstatic to have her start in August 2021.

Psychiatric Service Deliverables:

	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	20/21
Assessment	0	0	0	0	6	9	4	6	6	9	4	1	45	17
FU/Consult	0	0	0	0	8	9	13	19	22	34	31	34	170	16

I worked with a family for 5 months this year, doing dyad sessions with mom and her 4-year-old who mom suspected was autistic. She followed her instinct and with Intersect's ability to give her a cognitive psychological assessment at short notice, worked collaboratively with a developmental pediatrician in Vancouver to get a private assessment done and then an ASD diagnosis. I was able to support mom through the whole process, and she did a tremendous amount of the legwork herself to get this done so quickly. We were able to close after only 5 months with the family being linked into the right specialist service (and funding!) for them moving forward.

Therapist, Senga

CYMH Therapeutic Groups

In compliance with Public Health orders to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, we were able to offer several groups in person this year. Due to staff change over and a huge increase in our waitlist in the fall, we choose to postpone the start of our Spring Groups until after the school district spring break to provide staff additional staff to prepare.

<u>Fall 2021:</u>	<u>Spring 2022:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting Through Strong Emotions – Wednesdays 6-7:30pm Weekly series Ages: Caregivers only Facilitators: Clinicians (rotating), Kathy (Family Smart) • Mood Management – Thurs 6-7:30pm Dates: October 7 – December 9 Ages: 13-15 Facilitators: Parul & Kara • Family Anxiety Group – Tuesdays 4-5:30pm Dates: October 6 – November 24 Ages: 7-9 Facilitators: Ashley & Jeanette • Family Anxiety Group – Thursdays 4-5:30pm Dates: October 5 – November 23 Ages: 11-13 Facilitators: Shannel & Caitlin • Spirited Child Group – Wed. 5:30-7:00 pm Dates: October 6 – November 24 Ages: under 12 years Facilitators: Senga & Andra • Circle of Security – Tuesdays 10:00-11:30 Dates: October 12 – November 23 Ages: Caregivers of children under 10 Facilitator: Lynn and Vanessa (Foundry) Location: FOUNDRY • Parenting Gender Diverse Youth – Last Monday of Month, 5:30-6:30 Any caregiver in the North Region Facilitator: Nicole, Peers Location: Zoom <p>EFFT Caregiver Workshop Dates/Time: October 23, 30, Nov 6, 13 Ages: Caregivers of Youth Facilitator: Cheryl and Kathy (Family Smart) Location: Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting Through Strong Emotions – Wednesdays 6-7:30pm Weekly series Ages: Caregivers only Facilitators: Clinicians (rotating) • Family Anxiety Group – Tuesdays 4-5:30pm Dates: March 29-May 17 Ages: 7-9 Facilitators: Andra & Rebecca C • Family Anxiety Group – Thursdays 4-5:30pm Dates: April 14-June 2 Ages: 11-13 Facilitators: Mohamed & Caitlin • DBT – Wednesday 6:00 – 7:30 Dates: March 30-June 1 Ages: 14-18 Facilitators: Rebecca and Lexi • Circle of Security – Thursdays 4:00-5:30 Dates: April 14-May 26th Ages: Caregivers of children under 10 yrs. Facilitator: Lynn and Tasha (AimHi) • Parenting Gender Diverse Youth – Last Monday of Month, 5:30-6:30 Any caregiver in the North Region Facilitator: Nicole, Peers Location: Zoom

New Directions Program-Youth Justice Contract

During the 2021/2022 fiscal year, New Directions workers continued to provide services and support throughout the COVID pandemic. For some clients, their New Direction Worker was the only support available during the isolation of lock downs and closures.

There were a couple staffing changeovers throughout the year. One staff moved out of the community in July 2021 but we were able to hire their replacement before they left. Their replacement was on extended leave from December 2021 until March 2022 when they resigned. Fortunately, we were able to quickly hire into the position although the extended leave did result in a shortage of service hours.

New Directions Service Delivery included:

- Updated the New Directions stat collection process to ensure more accuracy in reporting.
- Going beyond our contract requirements 3 times to transport youth outside of Prince George to treatment and their home community.
- Connection and referral to several other community agencies including Blade Runners (employment), the PGNFC (cultural), YMCA Gym, Youth around Prince George (drop in support), Reconnect (Housing/shelter), volunteering at the SPCA, and supporting transitions back to school.

New Direction Service Statistics 2021/2022

Month	1. Recipients Served	2. Indigenous Recipients Served	3. New Recipients Served	6. Total Service Hours
April	6	2	0	274.8
May	6	2	0	263.00
June	7	2	1	281.5
July	9	3	1	340.00
August	11	4	2	285.50
September	11	4	0	281.15
October	8	1	1	253.50
November	9	1	1	281.25
December	9	1	0	210.00
January	9	1	1	215.00
February	10	1	0	281.00
March	8	1	0	272.00

I was working with a young man who for the most part was homeless; to be exact was camping out at the local park. When he was not at the park, he was staying at a local drug house. He was adamant that he was not using. For a full year we played a cat and mouse game of me asking if he was using and him refusing to be honest until one day, I guess he had enough, because he blurted out that he was using hard drugs. After which we had a very positive conversation about his use and how it was affecting his life and all those around him. The grim reality finally had set in. Two months later he entered treatment and stuck through it through to completion. Upon returning to town he got a part time job and is attending a job readiness program. He is clean from hard drugs and motivated to better himself as a person. The takeaway for me is that although we can get frustrated with lack of progress, always lean on building a relationship at all costs because you never know when you may be a catalyst for change. A solid, respectful, caring relationship is always important and essential.

New Directions Worker, Daryl

Switch Program



This year's Switch program was made possible by a generous donation from Prince George Ford and Logan's Legacy. As the Whitmer family has been a support of SWITCH since its inception with their time, personal financial donations and fundraising efforts, Intersect recognized they needed to acknowledgement Logan's Legacy and its impact on the SWITCH program. The article below was provided by Logan's sister Marley and has been added to the Intersect Website in acknowledgement and appreciation of everything they have done over the years to ensure the program can continue to support the youth of Prince George.

This year we were also fortunate to have Logan's sister Marley coordinate and lead the Switch program both behind the scenes and out on the Hart Ski Hill. Due to COVID, we could only have 6 participants and because of a lack of snow, we were only able to run one group.

Switch's mission statement is simple: *To build life skills, self-worth and resiliency through the sport of snowboarding.*

The Program: *Switch* is a youth development project that provides opportunities for local young people to connect with healthy adults and to learn new personal and life skills. For eight Saturdays from 11:00-3:00, an adult volunteers and Snowboard Instructors accompany participants in snowboard lessons at the Hart Highlands Ski Hill. All transportation, lift passes, lessons, outerwear and equipment is provided. While there is no financial cost for participants, there is an expectation: to attend all session, to participate and to try and to try again.

Weekly Themes: Each week will have a theme – an integral part of our weekly snowboard lessons. At various times throughout the day, we will visit, reflect on and discuss the theme. All of the themes are seen as the anchor of our program. The sport of snowboarding serves as the vehicle that supports these impactful life moments or lessons. The weekly theme activity also provides an opportunity for kids to relate their on-snow experiences to different aspects or challenges they encounter in their everyday lives. The six weekly themes are:

Week One/Jan 22: Equipment fitting and meet your group Leaders

Week Two/Jan 29: Patience

Week Three/Feb 5: Persistence

Week Four/Feb 12: Courage

Week Five/Feb 19: Belonging

Week Six/March 5: Resilience

Week Seven/March 12: Mastery-Celebrate/return gear

Who can participate:

- Youth ages 13-18 years
- Youth that have never snowboarded before (or have only once or twice)
- Youth that are committed to attending all eight sessions
- Youth that will take care of the equipment lent to them.

Switch and the Logan Whitmer Legacy

Our son and brother, Logan Whitmer, developed mental health issues when he was about 16 years old. Logan had always been very active and loved to snowboard. As a part of his healing journey, Logan followed his passion, overcame challenges, and became a snowboard instructor at Tabor Mountain Ski Resort. Being on the mountain seemed to be a place of peace for Logan as he felt safe there. One of the programs Logan taught in was called 'Chill', which was run by Intersect. Chill was a 6-week snowboarding program in which 'at risk' youth were given the opportunity and equipment, along with their Youth Care worker or counselor, to learn to snowboard. Each week the youth were taught an inspirational 'word of the week' that were snowboarding terms, but also life lesson words. Logan thoroughly enjoyed teaching in this program and felt he could pass on his love of snowboarding and finding a place in the mountains to other youth.

In 2013, Logan tragically passed away in a car accident, and our family asked for donations to go to Chill. Unfortunately, the same year Burton Boards, who supplied the funding for Chill, pulled their funding from the two Canadian sites and the Chill program was eliminated.

Two amazing Youth Care workers from Intersect, J.P and Meredith, met with our family to propose a new program and in 2014 'Switch' evolved from the preexisting Chill program. Our family was so impressed with the program, the youth, and the support from Tabor, Diversified Transportation, and Intersect. Our family volunteers in program and The Logan Whitmer Legacy Fund has provided close to \$29,000 since 2013 to help support the program. Our program has endured some challenges, such as: a lack of snowboard instructors one year, Tabor burning and closing, funding issues and of course, COVID-19. The program now runs out of the Hart Ski Hill, and big thanks to Jess Koope for all her support. This year, again due to COVID-19, the program has been scaled down, but Marly Whitmer with support from Intersect will be running the program for 8 weeks on Saturdays. For more information or if you would like to volunteer or donate, please contact Intersect Prince George at 250-562-6639, and as always, enjoy the ride. SOURCE: <https://www.intersect.bc.ca/programs.php>

Today I was in an Intake appointment with a youth that is not attending school due to anxiety so I shared information with them about the School program. I was able to talk with Wendy (the teacher) who quickly facilitated a school tour and answered the questions they had. While we were in the classroom, students started to share their personal experiences of where they started and how they are now able to attend on a regular basis. The students were so selfless in sharing their own personal experiences. This all made for such an inclusive Intake appointment and the youth and their Mom shared how welcomed and informed they felt. Within 2 hours the Mom called me back and the youth is excited about the possibility to register for school here and shared feeling very supported by the students.

Intake Counsellor, Kelly

Intersect School Program

The Intersect School is a specialized educational program offered in partnership with School District #57 Centre for Learning Alternatives (CLA). All youth (grade 8-12) accessing this program are actively receiving therapy from an Intersect Clinician and have demonstrated barriers to success in mainstream

schooling. It is a time limited program with the goal of addressing these barriers then transitioning the youth back to another SD #57 program to continue their educational goals. In the 2021/2022 school year, 30 youth attended the school program.

Through the support and funding of the United Way of Northern BC and BC Community Gaming Grants, Intersect can employ a School Mental Health Support Worker that is the direct link between the students in the school program and their mental health clinician



The demand for youth mental health support has increased dramatically for Intersect in the last few years so the School Program has seen an increase in referrals. The School Program has also noticed that the complexity of the illnesses and mental health challenges the youth are facing are increasing as well.



The top three outcomes of the school program in 2021/2022 were:

- Youth developed a strong sense of self, felt empowered and made more positive decisions
- Youth's mental health and well being was enhanced.
- Youth learned skills to support their transitions to adulthood.

The Mental Health Support Worker has continuous contact with clinicians that are connected to the students in the school and charts important events in the electronic CYMH record-CARIS.

This school year was a huge success!! Of the 30 students that accessed the school program this year they had 10 graduates. This was the highest number of grads in a year since the program began over 30 years ago. This year they also had 4 students cross enrolled at Intersect School and at their catchment high school. Throughout the year, five of the students transferred back to mainstream high school full time.

School Program staff report that every day is a new challenge. The complexities of the youth and the systems that they are navigating can be frustrating. When things do start to fall into place, the growth is visible and felt throughout the classroom and they shared that "It's a beautiful process to be a part of".

As part of the reporting requirements to the United way, the school staff gathered stories from students on the impact the school program had on them. With their permission, here are just a few.

"To Intersect School Staff, Thank you for giving me the space to grow in a safe space and let me learn that there are things to live for. Without you guys and your program I would probably be dead, and a lot of other kids would be in a lot of bad situations. You saved my life. And remember that when you have a bad day or when there are tears in your eyes just trying to get through the day and not let us see, I see them. I want you to remember that without you we are just floating but you make a net to catch us. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

This note was received from a student at the end of the school year. This student missed almost all of grade 6,7 and 8 due to mental health challenges. After enrolling in the Intersect School Program two years ago they have had perfect attendance. In the beginning he was unable to enter the classroom due to debilitating social anxiety that made him physically ill. This student was one of the 10 graduates this year and performed a free style at the Intersect Grad in front of 100+ people. He was awarded \$500 in bursaries and scholarships and plans to continue his post-secondary education in music. We asked each graduate to write something that they would like to tell their future self, this is what he wrote. "Look how far you have come and grown. No matter what, use your strategies and try your best, whatever you are faced with. Try not to give up and keep pushing forward. Better days are coming, just keep your hope. I'm proud of you."

One of the 10 grads had been with the program for five years. The school team watched her from a highly anxious and suicidal 12-year-old to a successful, bright, and happy young woman with dreams of a future in medicine. The school staff and the Mental Health Support Worker received these beautiful letters from her family on graduation day.

“Dear Intersect School Staff,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the truly life changing and literally lifesaving work that you do. I am so proud of how my daughter has grown and developed and flourished as a student. The Intersect School is an amazing thing. I hope you will ask me in the future if you need parents to advocate for a program that should be expanded and used as a model for others. I wish you all the best.”

“Dear Stacey,

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have offered as you walked beside ‘Jane’ these last 5 years. She has done incredible work, thanks to your support, tough love, great humor and optimism. You are an amazing person and educator. A familiar refrain in our house – me: Who could you talk this out with? Who could you ask for support? Jane – Stacey Your sense of humor shifts the world to a better place. Thank you.”



Professional Development

The development and implementation of a professional development education and training strategy is part of the society’s 2020-2023 strategic plan. During the annual performance reviews, Intersect team members identified training they would like to pursue, and leadership reviewed their requests to identify themes. As part of the agency’s COVID-19 Safety Plan, all in person trainings were suspended limiting the training opportunities available to staff. As such, all training took place virtually.

During the 2020/2021 fiscal year, Intersect CYMH clinicians received the following professional development:

1. MCFD Sponsored Training
 - a. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy- 4 Clinicians
 - b. Foundations in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health- 4 Clinician
 - c. MCFD Virtual Service Delivery-8 Clinicians
 - d. Emotion Focused Family Therapy-3 Clinicians
 - e. Recognizing & Responding to Suicide Risk- 6 Clinicians
 - f. Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI)- 2 Clinicians
 - g. DC 0-5 Years Course- 3 Clinicians
2. Agency Funded-staff training dollars
 - a. EFFT-conflict Oriented Co-Parenting- 6 Clinicians
 - b. Brief Therapy-20 clinicians

Working at Intersect has shaped how I see mental health and healthcare in general. I joined Intersect after having a relatively small amount of experience in the field, and I had worked in roles in which mental health was explored through a single-person lens. Through my role at Intersect, I have begun to mentally shift from that model and to always make sure I look at mental health through the context of families and communities. I now see (and completely believe) that all mental health care should adopt a similar framework when developing treatment plans to increase the wellness of the clients served. Furthermore, I believe that adopting this framework also allows for the development of early interventions/preventative measures to help families cultivate mental wellness for everyone in the home rather than “allowing” family dynamics to continually deteriorate and result in the development of (or worsen existing) mental health struggles in the home.

Mohamed, Counsellor

Community Involvement

Our annual Community Stakeholder Survey was sent to other services providers in August 2021. This year the survey could be completed online from our website. We only had 7 responses this year compared to 17 we received last year.

What we are doing well at: overwhelmingly satisfied with the overall quality of services Intersect provides and the level of professionalism demonstrated by our staff. All but one agreed that Intersect's services help their clients.

What we need to improve: The long waitlist for services was noted by 6 out of 7 of the respondents. No recommendations were noted in the comments section.

Intersect continued to work in partnership with other service providers in the community including:

- Having two staff designated to provide services at Foundry Prince George
- Chairing the CYMHSU Service Provider meeting (includes Foundry PG, Northern Health, SD #57, PGNFC) and updating/distributing the Prince George CYMH Services handout. Carrier Sekani Family Services has joined this group.
- Co-facilitating the delivery of four groups with other local agencies including Foundry PG, Family Smart and the AimHi1500 and the Aboriginal Infant Development Program.

Intersect Leadership continued to participate in several committees within the community that included:

- a. Northern Attachment Network Advisory (NANA)
- b. Provincial Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Community of Practice
- c. CYMH Leadership Network: Local and Provincial
- d. Infant Mental Health Community Practice
- e. Foundry Core Partner Group
- f. CYMH Community Service Providers

This year has highlighted the importance of gradual transition and community partnerships. The reality is that we can't do this work alone, and there is not enough of any health professionals (particularly after a 2 year pandemic!) to meet the growing needs of youth and family mental health. This is even more true in the north. Yet, when we come together to do the best we can as professionals and have open, transparent conversations with our clients about transitions, closures, and service gaps, we can make amazing things happen. We can catch clients from falling through the gap of transitioning to adult services, we can support and challenge the fear of telling their story to another stranger, and we can even make sure that a family doesn't lose their housing on Christmas eve.

Lexi, Therapist

Annual Complaint Review

Any complaint received in person or over technology (phone, email, website, virtually) are recorded on the agency yearly complaint tracking form. This information is reviewed annually by the leadership team to identify any themes, opportunities for improvement and as a CARF accreditation standard. The complaint form can be given to any member of the leadership team and will be escalated to the Executive Director for final sign off before it is considered closed.

No formal complaints were received in the 2021

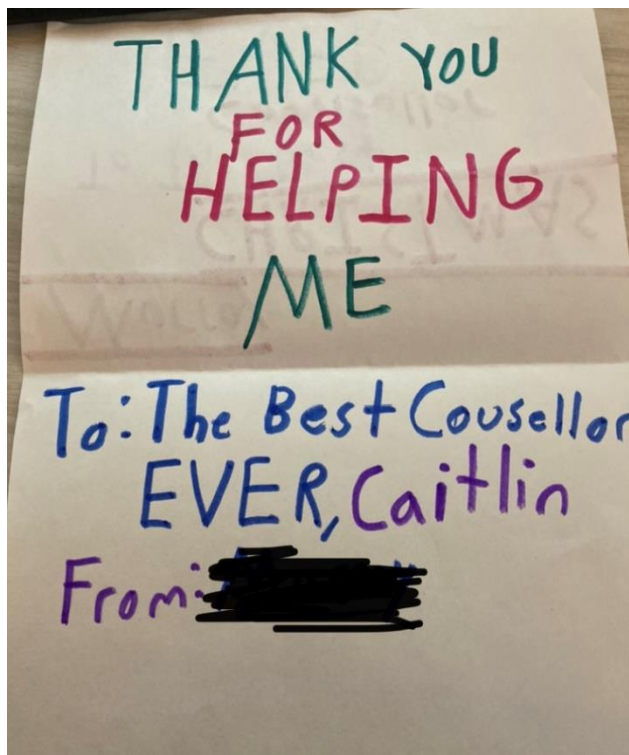
Summary of Informal Complaints:

Date	Nature of Complaints
March 17, 2021	Parent concerns therapy impacting their relationship with youth
April 22, 2021	Parent upset were not informed prior to MCFD report being made
Oct 26, 2021	Parent concerns about therapist approach with child and felt judged
November 17, 2021	Parent concerned about file being closed
November 25, 2021	Parent concerned therapist was not a fit and that file was being closed

Themes identified: No themes identified between these complaints

Opportunities for Improvement: No, the complaints were used as opportunities for mutual learning as they were about individual experiences and interpretations.

Changes Implement: No agency needs were identified for change.



I started working with a young male about 1 year ago. He struggled immensely with repetitive behaviors and compulsions, which his family and friends would notice and point out. He was diagnosed with OCD by his pediatrician when he came off the waitlist for services, which was approximately 2 years in length. He denied wanting to use medication to assist with his anxiety which he named "Steve". He was nervous to start ERP (exposure) but in just approximately a year of working together, Steve rarely bothers him anymore. He is able to go into big shopping centers, use public washrooms, and no longer fear catching COVID. Initially sessions started out over zoom, progressed to in-persons being masked, and now he is comfortable attending his sessions in person, without wearing his mask. His mom brought his grandma to a session to introduce her to me, as they are just overjoyed with this youth's progress in managing his OCD.

Therapist, Caitlin