

Executive Director

22/23 Annual Report



Although protective measures for the global COVID-19 Pandemic started to lift at the beginning of the fiscal year, Intersect Youth & Family Services continued to feel its impact on service delivery throughout. Additionally, this year was impacted by several staffing changes and a huge influx of children, youth & families requesting services as COVID-19 isolation measures began to lift. During the 2022/2023 fiscal year, Intersect Youth and Family Services' focus was to support our staff to manage complex and high caseloads, support clients waiting for services and ensure the mental wellness of the Intersect team.

Intersect's Leadership continued to monitor the waitlist for services and were discouraged that despite all the great work happening, around 200 children and youth continued to wait for the majority of the year. Coming out of COVID, there was a consciousness of the fatigue felt from the pandemic and leadership was concerned about the mental health of our team. It was a tough balance ensuring clients were having their needs met, while also meeting the needs of our staff. We continued to see a higher number of intakes than usual, with complex and high-risk children and youth needing immediate support.

For the 2022/2023 fiscal year, Intersect was awarded two additional contracts from the Ministry of Children and Family Development; the Family-Teen Mediation contract and an additional 1.75 positions to expand the Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP). The Family-Teen Mediation Program (FTM) is a low barrier service that provides in home and outreach support to caregivers and their youth (12- 18 yrs.) who are experiencing conflict and want to improve their communication, foster a healthier relationship, and learn how to resolve conflict while promoting a stronger relationship. The SAIP Program provides a range of appropriate, timely and accessible assessment, treatment and/or support services to children and youth who have been sexually abused, and to children under the age of 12 with concerning sexual behaviors. The creation, development and hiring of two additional programs required a lot of time from the leadership team. Additionally, Intersect had to renovate their boardroom to create two additional offices for the SAIP positions as there was no available space in the Intersect building.

Intersect Youth & Family Service is committed to doing our part to achieve transformative change as set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and by Indigenous communities across Canada. Intersect commits to supporting Indigenous children, youth, and families in the communities we serve and commit to creating equitable spaces for Indigenous peoples. Intersect recognizes that Indigenous peoples have suffered under colonial and postcolonial policies. We believe that to work respectfully with Indigenous nations, our staff needs to be aware of the collective impact that intergenerational trauma continues to have on Indigenous children, youth, and families. As part of our commitment, in June 2022, Intersect committed to having all of their current and future staff participate in Carrier Sekani Family Services, *Nowh Guna' Carrier Culture Training*. They successfully applied for a grant from the Federation of Social Services for \$10000 to pay for this training. All of Intersect's staff have completed the training and have reported they found the training extremely valuable and learned a lot about the history of the local Carrier peoples.

Person's Served Snapshot

	22/23	21/22	20/21		22/23	21/22	20/21
Intake	268	427	283	Psychiatry	42	45	17
Infant Mental Health	39	59	33	Psychology	57	36	35
Active Service	362	564	585	New Directions	17	13	14
School Program	30	30	35	Family-Teen Mediation	28	-	-

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.

CARF Accreditation

This year Intersect was surveyed for reaccreditation by CARF International on October 24-25, 2022. Intersect met 632 out of 635 CARF standards and received the maximum accreditation for three years. This accreditation will extend through to November 30, 2025.

The CARF accreditors spoke with Intersect staff, community stakeholders and clients. They also reviewed all policy, procedures, documentation etc. There were only three recommendations from the CARF surveyors and Intersect leadership has already implemented changes to meet the recommendations/standards. Due to the diligence of Clinical Supervisors Jenny Plouffe and Melissa Bloodoff, there were no CARF recommendations for our Child and Youth Mental Health Program, all CARF standards were met.

The CARF recommendations included:

- Add timeframes to Intersect's Systems and Technology Plan.
- Add the word Race to Intersect's Cultural Competency, Diversity and Inclusion plan. (The words ethnicity and culture were already included but Intersect did not implicitly have race listed).
- Add personal fundraising, personal property and witnessing of legal documents to HR 1-12 Ethical Code of Conduct Policy.

Some highlights from the CARF Accreditation Report are below. If you would like to see the CARF report in its entirety, please contact Shannon Croy, Executive Director.

“Accreditation Decision: On balance, The Intersect Youth and Family Services Society Demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. The Intersect Youth & Family Services Society employees have a diversity of expertise and experience and are dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life of the persons served. The staff members are recognized for being caring, compassionate, dedicated, and knowledgeable. Leadership has given them the power to make changes and to think outside the box, and this enable them to offer greater resources and opportunities to their clients.

Areas of Strength

CARF Found that the Intersect Youth and Family Services Society (Intersect) demonstrated the following strengths:

- The Intersect Youth and Family Services Society (Intersect) is known in the community as a safe place for children and youth to receive much needed services. According to a stakeholder, Intersect receives many referrals resulting in a long waitlist. The stakeholder reports the organization uses creative measures to help address this and offers the option to call info assigned case managers prior to starting services if needed while on the waitlist.
- Administrative staff members are highly organized; are detail orientated; and keep data readily accessible to refer back to for progress, completion and updated goal creation throughout the year.
- The staff members at Intersect are dedicated to the work they do, and this is evidenced by its longevity of staff members. Tenure is acknowledged...
- Leadership does an exceptional job of setting the culture of the organization's programs. Staff members report feeling valued, heard, respected and supported. They say their team feels like a family, and they openly spoke highly of their teammates, outlining their achievements. The working environments are designed in a manner that promotes relationship and connection.
- Intersect offers a wide variety of services and a diverse range of therapeutic styles so that many doors are available to open to help develop coping skills for youth, children and families. It has and continues to build upon its partnership in the community, all aimed at promoting growth, development and respect in a supportive environment.
- Supervisors provide guidance and support and a listening ear when the stories become overwhelming. They go beyond the typical duties of a supervisor whose primary goal is around organizing workflow and ensuring that staff members understand their duties or delegated tasks. The atmosphere and learning opportunities that surround the staff and leadership approval create a safe, fun and welcoming work home.
- Staff members are mission oriented and committed to the wellness of the clients. Staff members report they are afforded a safe environment that helps them to feel more empowered and capable of helping the client sustain their achievements.
- Clients and their family members commented that they are treated with respect and dignity from their initial contact and feel that staff member are engaged and always available."

CARF Accreditation Report for Intersect Youth and Family Services Society

This year I have so many success stories, it's hard to just pick one. I've been having some really good outcomes with our brief therapy stream. I had one youth, in particular, who participated actively with their mom. They took turns seeing me each week and worked from both sides to address the youth's anxiety. My sessions with mom focused on psychoeducation, EFFT, and other general parenting skills which were brought home each week and used to support the youth as they learned strategies to address anxiety. The youth and I also did psychoeducation and worked through CBT skills and exposure ladders to decrease phobias of escalators and needles. This youth and I would discuss homework for the week, and they would come back having done the entire thing! I got to see pictures of them conquering their fears and have awesome discussions about how this experience will help them face more fears in the future. This family also participated in our family anxiety group which provided awesome insight and opportunities for deeper discussions in therapy. I loved focusing on strengths, working with engaging parents, and explaining (then actually demonstrating!) all the positives of brief therapy. It's been awesome to acknowledge the importance of taking breaks in therapy and normalize coming back as needed.

Kayla, Counselor

Human Resources

The 2022/2023 fiscal year was plagued with staffing challenges in each of our programs and a large amount of time was spent on hiring and orientation. To fill our new contracts, we had to hire two Family-teen Mediators, one SAIP Counsellor and one SAIP Therapist. Additionally, we had two admins vacate their positions—one to return to school and the other due to retirement. In our CYMH program, we had two therapists on LTD for most of the year, three go off on maternity/parental leave, and three leave the agency to go into private practice.

The entire sector reported high vacancy rates for Counselors/Therapists making hiring extremely difficult. To respond to this, we updated our job postings to make them more appealing, posted the positions throughout the province with universities and professional bodies and two of our senior Therapists presented at UNBC's Masters level class to tell them about what Intersect has to offer. As a result of our robust hiring practices, we were able to hire 3 Counsellor/ Therapists but were unable to fill temporary, parental leave vacancies. This resulted in large caseloads for our team and longer wait times for our clients.

To support the recruitment and retention of our staff and in alignment with Intersect's strategic plan, In December 2022 Intersect's Leadership and Board of Directors chose to utilize the Recruitment and Retention dollars the agency receives annually from MCFD to increase the following staff benefits:

- Annual Wage Increases – Staff who have reached Step 6 on the wage will receive a 2% wage increase after another 5 years of service. This will occur at 5-year intervals to a maximum of three, 2% increases.
- Annual Sick Time Allowance – To increase the maximum days an employee can have in their sick bank from 24 days to 30 days (6 weeks).
- Annual Mental Health Benefit – Employee currently receive 2 Mental Health days per year at hire. Now they will receive an additional mental health day for every two years of service completed to a maximum of 6 days per year and can carry forward 2 mental health days annually.
- Annual Training/Education Benefit – Previously, after completing one year of service, full time permanent employees received \$400.00 per year (to a maximum bank of \$2,000) to use for personal training. The agency increased the annual amount to \$500 per year for the first 5 years of service and \$1000 per year for the following years (to a maximum bank of \$5,000).

I had the pleasure of accompanying a twelve-year-old youth as they explored concerns related to increased violence and school avoidance behaviour, such that their parents were physically carrying them to the car to attend school in the morning. Initially, emotional outbursts would last for hours and police had been called to the home several times to help deescalate violent situations in which this young person punched, kicked and threw things. This youth often became overwhelmed and easily overstimulated and had a hard time re-regulating themselves. Therapy included explorations with Internal Family Systems Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Skills, and Emotional Regulation Strategies. Their parents were offered support with Emotion Focused Family Therapy to assist with emotional validation and attended the Parenting Through Strong Emotions Group. Over time, my client was able to experience increased self-compassion toward the part of them that feels angry feelings and was often experienced as "causing trouble". As this young person's ability to tap into increased self-compassion for dysregulated aspects of Self increased, so did their ability to ride out the emotional waves in a more resourced and regulated state. In essence, they became their own "inner ally", allowing them to experience their own capacity and self-efficacy in navigating the storms of life without needing to act out. At closure, this youth expressed feeling that things were going good at home and at school. They were calm, cooperative, respectful, and expressed feeling proud that they were able to calm their anger and that they were 'graduating' from Intersect. This client and his family agreed that they had met their goals and was no longer in need of services at Intersect.

Jenn, Counselor

CYMH Clinical Services

Staffing challenges made this year extremely hard for the CYMH team. Due to the numerous clinicians leaving their positions, other clinicians had to absorb their caseloads. This meant that instead of opening clients on their caseloads, clinicians had to continue therapy with the clients of the clinician that left. The data shows that we started service with less clients this fiscal year and provided service to less clients overall. Clinicians also reported that clients they were seeing were more complex and time-consuming, making it an extremely challenging year. Leadership struggled to balance the mental health needs of our clinical team and the needs of our clients.

Leadership realized that the clinical team would need specialized training to support sexual abuse survivors and implement the SAIP programming. Finding training was extremely challenging and took the majority of the fiscal year to identify appropriate, relevant training and then schedule the training. In January 2023, the entire Clinical Team participated in Sexual Abuse Intervention Training. In March 2023, all clinicians working with children 12 years and younger took Treatment of Trauma Play Therapy Training.

Intake and Active Service Data: April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

2022/2023	INTAKES COMPLETED				ACTIVE SERVICE		2021/2022	
	Assigned	Closed at Intake	Infant	Total	Start Service	Continue Service	Start Service	Continue Service
April	9	4	3	14	22	244	27	215
May	23	5	4	28	11	279	10	217
June	15	2	5	18	9	275	42	204
July	16	0	4	17	11	256	26	198
Aug	3	1	2	6	8	272	29	212
Sept	12	4	0	18	4	285	40	209
Oct	18	9	5	28	11	294	41	217
Nov	20	1	1	22	12	293	39	204
Dec	13	3	0	18	4	300	47	195
Jan	13	9	6	23	10	322	29	196
Feb	23	12	6	35	8	316	6	177
Mar	28	11	2	41	8	285	13	178
Total	193	61	39	268	118	362	349	564

This past year for me highlighted the importance of using expressive techniques with clients. I started working with a young client one year ago - when they first began attending session, they were dealing with many different life stressors and as a result of this had significant anxiety; they were often unable to remain in a classroom and had trouble identifying their emotions. Through use of art in session this client was able to explore their emotions and worries in a way that felt safe for them. They were also able to learn new coping skills to help manage their worries. Recently, it was determined that they were ready to close – when this was discussed with the client, they shared “When I first started coming here, the world felt really scary but now it doesn’t feel as scary. I like sharing my feelings because then other people can understand me and help me if I need help”.

Katie, Therapist

Waitlist

Intersect Leadership continued to monitor the waitlist and were discouraged that despite a lot of great work happening, it stayed around the 200 children and youth waiting for service the majority of the year. Coming out of the COVID pandemic, they were conscious of the fatigue felt by everyone from the pandemic and wanted to ensure our teams caseloads were manageable. It was a challenging balance ensuring Clients were having their needs met, while also meeting the mental health needs of Intersect's staff. We continued to see a higher number of intakes than pre-pandemic, with more complex and high risk children and youth requiring immediate support.

Waitlist Data: April 1, 2022 till March 31, 2023.

Month 22-23	Service Type				Wait Time				Total on Wait List	Total on Waitlist 21/22
	1 on 1	Brief	Infant	Group Only	Group < 35 wks	1 on 1 < 35 wks	< 35 wks	< 1 year		
April	188	34	8	18	9	35	46	8	248	146
May	151	34	5	18	10	54	64	26	203	148
June	94	33	3	18	10	29	51	16	145	151
July	156	36	3	24	12	59	78	30	219	142
August	166	38	3	18	12	54	77	18	255	169
Sept	151	30	2	16	10	55	82	13	199	132
Oct	149	27	2	12	10	66	99	20	190	174
Nov	158	15	1	8	7	55	72	22	182	165
Dec	156	13	0	4	2	48	62	21	173	195
Jan	132	10	8	4	2	48	61	22	154	234
Feb	98	38	9	7	1	45	53	20	201	240
March	103	41	5	7	2	38	43	11	156	222

This is one of my success stories. Although I haven't been working with them for very long, they've made some leaps since we've started working together. They have tried counselling in the past with no luck. They didn't feel a strong connection with anyone. They are a fiery, young person that struggles to hone their passion. Since coming to Intersect, they are becoming self-aware of their reactions and emotions. Instead of exploding, they try to think before responding or sprints around the block to cool off. They want to do better for themselves instead of blaming their parents or falling into similar patterns as them. They started shifting their goals towards building a relationship with themselves first instead of putting people before them.

Kiran, Therapist

Infant Mental Health (IEC)

Intersect's IEC team consists of four clinicians/therapists and one clinical supervisor. Two of the team members are on parental leave as of August 2023; however, a new therapist skilled with IEC work is joining the team. The IEC Team Supervisor is an active member of the CYMH Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice and the IEC team meets monthly for peer consultation, supervision, and resource sharing. This fiscal year the IEC team focused on the use of video feedback interventions for caregivers and building relationships with other community services that support children under 6 years of age. This included a tour of the Native Friendship Infant Development Program (IDP) in the spring and tours booked with Aimhi's Infant Development Program and the Child Development Centre.

From April 2022 to March 2023 the IEC team completed 39 Intakes: of which 17 were provided active services,

11 were closed after providing our intake services which include interventions and bridging to other resources, and 11 were closed before Intake was completed for various reason (lost contact with guardian being the majority of reasons).

As part of my role, I conduct Intake assessment for the Infant and Early Childhood team. These are comprehensive assessments for children 5 and under, and their families. This year, I worked with a family of a young mother and her child that had experienced a significant amount of trauma and was struggling to find healing and support. The assessment was completed over 6 clinical hours due to the complexity of the case. While completing the feedback/recommendation session, the parent became emotional and expressed that Intersect was the first service she felt truly took the time to listen and understand the family's story. She expressed feeling relief to have found a service that she felt she could trust and was hopeful about the support we would be able to offer.
Rebecca, Therapist

Specialized Services:

Psychological Services:

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 consultation, learning and case management. Additionally, Jonathan's enthusiasm and demeanor have been a great fit. Updates to the psychological program this year included the creation of a priority matrix to triage referrals and updating the referral form to collect the information he needed to prioritize referrals and understand the client and clinician's goals for psychological assessment.

Psychological Service Deliverables:

2022-2023	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	21/22
Assessment	6	8	6	5	3	8	2	6	2	5	3	3	57	45
Service Hours	23	22	17	14	10	26	4	36	11	21	16	22	220.8	

Psychiatric Services:

Intersect has been thrilled to have Dr. Michelle Waller providing psychiatric services at intersect on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:00-5:00 pm since August 2021. We were also happy for her to expand her family and go on leave in Sept 2022. Dr. Waller worked hard to ensure that she completed all assessments referred to her before her leave, and left thorough, detailed treatment plans for all the youth on her caseload while she was away. Thankfully, MCFD was able to recruit Dr. Susan Baer from BC Childrens hospital to provide telepsychiatry for our clients from Oct 2022 until April 2023 to prevent a disruption of services until Dr. Waller started her transition back in February 2023.

Psychiatric Service Deliverables:

	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	21/22
Assessment	3	4	6	6	0	0	1	7	2	6	7	0	42	45
FU/Consult	30	35	31	39	45	3	0	1	1	1	1	5	192	170

I've been working for 4 years with a young person who was diagnosed with ASD as an older teenager, and who has been actively suicidal for years. Their suicidality has greatly reduced as they have taken responsibility for their health and medication needs, are working successfully after graduating, and have made great use of therapy and DBT group skills after many years of ups and downs. They initiated closure and are now ready to end therapy.
Senga, Therapist

CYMH Therapeutic Groups

COVID restrictions were removed at the start of the year so we were prepared to offer groups in person again; however, when we started contacting clients about group, several were not ready/willing to commit to group yet. Due to staffing turnover and to support the mental health of our staff, we cancelled one of the groups we planned to deliver in the Spring. One of our senior Therapists, Lexi, had a great idea to offer DBT group to the school program. It was highly successful and supported both the students and SD#57 staff so we will be offering it again next year.

<u>Fall 2022:</u>	<u>Spring 2023:</u>
<p><u>Parenting Through Strong Emotions</u> – Wednesdays 6-7:30pm Weekly series Ages: Caregivers only Facilitators: Clinicians (rotating), Kathy (Family Smart)</p> <p><u>Younger Anxiety: Jenny</u> – CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF PARTICIPANTS, Jennifer & Rebecca Carr School Room - Tuesdays at 5:30pm-6:45 – Oct 11 to Nov 29th. – 8 Weeks</p> <p><u>Older Anxiety: Melissa</u> Katy Brown & Caitlin 5 – 8 Weeks School Room – Mondays 5:30pm – 7pm Oct 17 to Dec</p> <p><u>Younger DBT (13 – 15 years old): Melissa</u> Rebecca & Katie & Kara School Room - Wednesday Sept 28th – Nov 30th 6-7:30pm – 10 weeks</p> <p><u>Spirited Child: Jenny</u> Senga & Kiran Group Room Thursday's October 6th to November 24th 6:00 – 7:30 – 8 weeks</p> <p><u>Circle of Security: Jenny</u> Lynne (Contractor) & community agency (Vanessa Foundry) Group Room Tuesdays Oct 11 – Nov 15th 5 – 6:30pm</p> <p><u>Parenting Gender Diverse Youth: Melissa</u> Nicole (Virtual) Last Wednesday of the Month, 7-8pm, monthly</p> <p><u>DBT School Group: Melissa</u> Lexi & Stacey (Marly) School Room – Wednesday afternoon</p>	<p><u>Parenting Through Strong Emotions</u> – Wednesdays 6-7:30pm Weekly series Ages: Caregivers only Facilitators: Clinicians (rotating) Kathy (Family Smart)</p> <p><u>Younger Anxiety Ages 7-9 yrs: Jenny</u> CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF PARTICIPANTS Jen Bain & Rebecca Carr School Room –Tuesdays 5:30-6:45 Feb 14- April 11</p> <p><u>Older Anxiety Ages 10-12 Yrs: Melissa</u> CANCELLED DUE TO STAFFING ISSUES Wiseley – School Room - Thursday</p> <p><u>Older DBT (16-18 years old): Melissa</u> Lexi, Rebecca Collins & Brittany Student (Jan -Aug practicum) Mondays</p> <p><u>Circle of Security: Jenny</u> Lynne Brown & Foundry Prince George</p> <p><u>Parenting Gender Diverse Youth: Melissa</u> Nicole (Virtual) Last Wednesday of the Month, 7-8pm, monthly</p> <p><u>DBT School Group: Melissa</u> Lexi & Stacey (Marly) School Room – Wednesday afternoon</p>

This year I had the privilege of piloting a year long Dialectical Behavioural Therapy Skills Group with our entire school program. Let me tell you, these youth are all so very cool! They are all struggling in their own ways, which is why they attend our school program, and to watch them grow into safety and add skills to their toolbox this year was amazing. You could see the resistance and fear at the start of the group. To celebrate our last group they planned a sit down meal of spaghetti. We don't always get to see the healing in motion and relation to others, so I cherish this.

Lexi, Therapist

Family -Teen Mediation

Family Teen Mediation Program (FTM) is a low barrier service that provides in home and outreach support to caregivers and their youth (12- 18 yrs.) who are experiencing conflict and want to improve their communication, foster a healthier relationship, and learn how to resolve conflict while promoting a stronger connection. FTM was initially developed back in 2011 as a program under a Northern Health contract with MCFD as Parent Teen Mediation and joined Intersect Youth and Family Services in April 2022. The program was re-named Family Teen Mediation and Intersect redeveloped the program including creating policies and procedures, job descriptions, communication tools, developing orientation manuals and coordinating training.

The FTM team is comprised of two mediators and one clinical supervisor. Clinical Supervisor Jenny Plouffe took on this team and two mediators were hired in June 2022, one of which left the agency in August and was replaced in October 2022.

The Family-Teen Mediators were trained by the Parent Teen Mediation mentor/trainer Kieron Simons who developed the training manual Building Bridges: Parent Teen Mediation. The whole CYMH clinical team participated in the first day of training to understand and learn the basis of family-teen mediation. The Family-Teen Mediators received additional training that Carrier Sekani's Nowh Guna Culture Training and Mental Health First Aid.

As part of the roll out of the program, the Team built relationships with other teen focused services in Prince George including: MCFD, School District 57, Prince George Native Friendship Centre (PGNFC) and Foundry. They provided formal presentations to MCFD Child Protection Teams, School District 57 Counselling Department, and PGNFC's Healing Centre.

The Family-Teen Mediation Team completed their training and started accepting in July 2022. We did a soft start accepting referrals from MCFD first, then opening referrals up to the entire community a couple months later. FTM received 31 referral/request for services from April 2022 to March 2023. Of these 31 referrals, FTM provided services to 28 families and 3 were closed at referral because we couldn't connect with the family or a member of the family did not want to participate.

New Directions Program-Youth Justice Contract

During the 2022/2023 fiscal year, New Directions workers provided services and support to 18 youth. Referrals started out slow, but increased in the summer when Custody ISSP service support was not available. A New Directions Worker that had been on an extended leave gave formal resignation notice in June 2022 and we were able to hire an internal employee immediately into the position so there was no disruption in service delivery.

New Directions Service Delivery included:

- Implemented a caseload tracking sheet to track referrals dates and expiry of orders.
- Going beyond our contract requirements 3 times to transport youth outside of Prince George to treatment and their home community including Vancouver, Smithers and Terrace.
- 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.

Switch Snowboarding Program



Switch's mission statement is simple: *To build life skills, self-worth and resiliency through the sport of snowboarding.* This year's Switch program was made possible by a generous donation from Kiwanis Club of Prince George and Logan's Legacy. Again, this year we were fortunate to have Logan's sister Marly coordinate and lead the Switch program both behind the scenes and out on the Hart Ski Hill. Additionally, we were approached by Levi Black-Amstutz to volunteer and be a part of the program. They were both perfect fits and great role models for the youth, exemplifying all the skills Switch strives to develop in its participants. Due to two youths not completing the program, there were additional funds to take the remaining youth on a final celebration skiing at Purden resort.

PARTICIPANTS: We started the 2022/23 program year with ten youth signed up for SWITCH and ended the year with eight youth completing the program. We have committed two seats in our next SWITCH program to the youth that could not finish, due to no fault of their own, so they don't lose the opportunity to learn and grow. The eight youth who were able to complete the program successfully learned:

- Courage, to try something new with individuals they did not know.
- Time management, to ensure they were ready for pickups and on time for their lesson.
- Patience, when waiting for other youth to learn a skill before moving onto the next.
- Teamwork, when helping other youth improve skills and encouraging their accomplishments.
- Communication, in respectfully communicating their needs when on the hill.
- Responsibility, in taking care of all their snowboarding gear.
- Confidence, in demonstrating their skills and trying new things on the hill.
- Most importantly, learning something new is hard and you need to work through it on your own and with help from others to try, try again.



The program was 10 weeks long. It included a weekly group, lesson, and lunch from January 4th until March 4th. As the youth had seasons passes from SWITCH, we allowed them to borrow their equipment until the Hart Ski Hill closed for the season in April. Many were seen out on the hill regularly after SWITCH ended using their passes, equipment and new skills. All the equipment was returned in its original condition, we were very proud of the youth for taking such good care of it.

HIGHLIGHTS: Youth testimonies:

- ❖ "I did something I didn't think I could do".
- ❖ "I liked the facilitators and the snowboard teacher. Plus, the food was good."
- ❖ "I made friends I wouldn't have met without the program."
- ❖ "It was cool I got to keep my gear because I would go during the week to practice my skills. I didn't have a jacket or anything so the program having all the stuff I needed made it easy."
- ❖ "I liked learning at the Hart it was less scary."
- ❖ "Ending at Purden was awesome to go on a real lift and longer runs."

I worked with a youth for a few years who struggled with anxiety and depression. They were struggling to attend school due to their mental health. They joined Intersect's School Program where they were able to graduate, and they are now completing post-secondary education. They recently came back to visit me after finishing counselling a couple of years prior and spoke about how well they are doing, how they are enjoying life and school, and how much they appreciate Intersect for all the support they received. They even spoke about encouraging others who are struggling to see a counsellor as they found it so helpful. They have hopes and dreams and envision a future for themselves which was something they did not think was possible when they first started at Intersect.
Shannel, Therapist

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. This year Intersect and SD #57 revised and updated the Memorandum of Understanding for the school program to reflect the maturing of the program as it had not been revised in several years. Intersect's Mental health Worker that supports the school program is funded through the United Way of BC and BC Community Gaming Grants.

During the 2022-2023 school year Intersect's School Program had 29 students access the program. They had 6 students graduate and 75 courses were completed overall. Five of their graduates applied for multiple scholarships, all were successful with a combined total of over \$10,000 in scholarships. One graduate enrolled in and was accepted to the University of Northern BC.

Every year the school program sees more complex behaviors and mental health challenges. All their students are rated as category H in the school system, at least half of the students are working through trauma, and all of them have some level of anxiety preventing them from attending school, being in public spaces or even leaving their home. The program focuses on the mental health needs of students first understanding that by supporting their mental health, they can increase their academic and personal success.

Each of Intersect's clinicians come to the classroom at least once a month and provide the students with strategies and self-care tools such as yoga, art, and skill building. Every week the School District's Aboriginal Educator worker spends time with the class doing activities and having discussions through an Indigenous lens. Once a week, an Intersect Therapist delivered a group for DBT skills. Intersect also offers a variety of therapeutic focused social skills groups, wherein students learn coping skills and self-regulation skills. We were pleased to see that some of our school kids have accessed these groups outside of regular school and counselling. The school team then supports the students to practice their new skills in the classroom.

The youth were able to participate in numerous community exploration opportunities that they would not otherwise be able to participate in if it were not for this program and funding. This year the students were able to enjoy swimming, archery, billiards, visits to community parks and a year-end trip to the Ancient Forest. The United Way CIIP Grant allows Intersect to provide the School Program with a Mental Health Worker, which in turn has allowed our youth to attend electives outside of our building. These electives consist of attending the Ventures Program, PE Electives, Music Electives and Art electives. Giving youth the opportunity to explore both community and elective options plays a significant role in helping them become active, productive members of our society and the community we live in.

"I started working with a youth in April 2021 over zoom. They were a grade 10 student attending Shas-Ti Kelly Rd, who had very limited attendance due to their mental health. After a few months of working together, this youth expressed to this writer that they were non-binary and shared their preferred name and pronouns. The youth requested this information to stay confidential, due to worries and fears around their family not being supportive

due to their faith background. Heading into their Grade 12 year, I suggested the option of transferring to the Intersect School Program to complete their grade 12 Dogwood, as they would likely not graduate that coming June. The summer heading into their Grade 12 year, this youth requested the support of this writer to assist them in expressing their preferred name, gender and pronouns to their mom. Initial worries of not being supported at home were immediately squashed, as mom embraced them with open and loving arms. This youth entered the Intersect School program as the individual they had viewed themselves as, getting a fresh start. They immediately made connections within the school program and had their very first friend-sleepover in Grade 12. By the end of the school year, this youth's preferred name and pronouns were being used by all immediate family members and grandparents.

The Intersect School program staff spoke highly of this youth, highlighting their art and writing capabilities, and shared with this writer that they purposely put this youth's assignments at the bottom of the marking pile, so that they could finish their day reading this youth's assignment. A youth who was essentially invisible at their previous school was now making connections with classmates and teachers, regularly attending school, completing assignments and classes at a quick pace, and joining in classroom conversations and debates. In May of 2023, just one month ahead of their graduation, this youth was asked to be the Intersect School Program Valedictorian of 2023. This youth is attending CNC in the Fall, after winning several bursaries during their graduation, and is excited for their future.

Caitlin, Therapist“

CYMH 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.

This year, Intersect created a document outlining its Professional Development Plan for its staff. This document outlines the core trainings Intersect will provide for each job classification, its supervision and performance management structure and how staff can use their personal training dollars. Additionally, Intersect used its new recruitment and retention funding to increase staff's personal training dollars. Previously, after completing one year of service, full time permanent employees received \$400.00 per year (to a maximum bank of \$2,000) to use for personal training. The agency increased the annual amount to \$500 per year for the first 5 years of service and \$1000 per year for the following years to a maximum bank of \$5,000.

During the 2022/2023 fiscal year, Intersect CYMH staff received the following professional development:

1. MCFD Sponsored Training
 - a. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy- 3 Clinicians
 - b. Foundations in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health- 3 Clinicians
 - c. CBT-Trauma: 4 Clinicians
 - d. CBT-Anxiety- 2 Clinicians
 - e. Emotion Focused Family Therapy-3 Clinicians
 - f. Team Leaders-3 Clinical Supervisors
 - g. Recognizing & Responding to Suicide Risk- 6 Clinicians
 - h. Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI)- 2 Clinicians
 - i. DC 0-5 Years Course- 3 Clinicians
2. Agency Funded
 - a. Carrier Sekani Family Service's Nowh Guna Training: all staff
 - b. Sexual Abuse Intervention Training: 17 Clinicians
 - c. Treatment of Trauma Using Play Therapy Skills and Techniques-SAIP: 10 Clinicians
 - d. Family-Teen Mediation Intro: 17 Clinicians
 - e. Family Tenn Mediation Full Program: 3 Mediators
 - f. Living Works Suicide Intervention: 3 Mediators
 - g. KIPS-3 clinicians

3. Personal Professional Development Dollars
 - a. EDMR: 3 therapists
 - b. Non-Suicidal Self harm Adolescents: 10 Clinicians
 - c. 2SLGBTQJA Therapeutic Support: 7 Clinicians
 - d. Play Therapy: 2 Clinicians
 - e. Neurodiversity: 4 Clinicians

Community Involvement

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

- Having one staff designated to provide services at Foundry Prince George
- Chairing the CYMHSU Service Provider meeting (includes Foundry PG, Northern Health, SD #57, PGNFC) Carrier Sekani Family Services has joined this group.
- Co-facilitating the delivery of four groups with other local agencies including Foundry PG, Family Smart

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

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

Quality Assurance:

Our annual Community Stakeholder Survey was sent to other services providers throughout the year of 2022. The survey could be completed online from our website, by fax, by mail or in-person. We had 8 responses to the survey. They included 4 from the school district, 2 from social services, 1 from the health authority and 1 other. One improvement from last year was to increase communication with the physicians. No physicians completed the survey last year to get feedback on this change.

What we are doing well at: Six respondents were very satisfied with the overall quality of services Intersect provides. Two surveys reported being satisfied with the quality of service. Intakes were thorough and clinicians are knowledgeable and friendly. All 8 respondents were very satisfied with the level of professionalism demonstrated by the staff. Also, one reported that being able to book intakes in advance was an asset.

What we need to improve: Some of those surveyed reported that the waitlist is too long. Some families are concerned about the unsafe location of Intersect. One of those surveyed wanted weekend appointments. Some were dissatisfied with the lack of communication from staff.

Again, this year most of those who responded to the stakeholder survey were overall satisfied with the services they received. Some recommendations were:

- Referrals to other services should the youth not want to participate in Intersects service.
- More counselling staff.
- Better collaboration with School District 57.
- A safer location

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 complaints were received in the 2022 year.

I got out October 13 2022 and have been building that life since. I know more than anyone that life can throw you to hell and back, then back again. Throughout the years I've given up on myself but if it wasn't for the people who are reading this right now, then this story wouldn't have the outcome that it does. I have so much appreciation for the people who have got me back on track and never doubted me. I just want you to know I survived.

Here is a paragraph from one of my client's capstone projects. She is talking about her experience with being hospitalized and how through therapy and attending our school program she has been on a healing journey and has been able to keep living. She gave me permission for you to use this paragraph in the report. Kara, Therapist

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Executive Director