



way to wellness fund



2021 COMMUNITY REPORT  
The Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton

## BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

The Way to Wellness Fund, formerly the Compassion Fund, was established in 1977 when The Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton first began providing professional counselling services to low-income Albertans in need.

Now, 44 years later, the Way to Wellness Fund still enables households with lower incomes to receive subsidies that support up to 90 per cent of the cost of each counselling hour. The Fund provided more than \$705,000 in subsidized in-person and online counselling in 2021 through Cornerstone Counselling in Edmonton.

Every penny contributed to the Way to Wellness Fund subsidizes no-to-low-income clients' counselling sessions. No donations support overhead costs.

Clients of Cornerstone Counselling are some of the greatest supporters of the Way to Wellness Fund. They pay the standard \$200 per counselling hour fee which is the rate recommended by the Psychologists' Association of Alberta that most psychologists charge. A portion of their fees are then contributed to the Way to Wellness Fund. The advantage of receiving professional counselling through Edmonton's most established counselling organization and Northern Alberta's largest non-profit provider is that our main purpose is to help low income families during their time of greatest need.

Other Way to Wellness Fund funding comes from people like you, our donors, or prospective donors. We also receive support from various foundations, granting agencies and businesses that care about helping disadvantaged Albertans and through our fundraising campaigns and events. Every single supporter is valuable to us, and every penny makes a difference in someone's life.

Research shows that the pandemic has impacted people who are financially disadvantaged most seriously. People with lower incomes often work in retail or service, and workers in these sectors have

lost significant income due to layoffs, shutdowns, and quarantines. Relationship problems, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and depression have always been common reasons that our clients seek us out, but we've seen that these issues have intensified profoundly during the pandemic. Moreover, we are now seeing more clients who are suffering from exhaustion, intense grief, feelings of isolation, and financial problems.

Please help us—support WTWF however you are able to—and help those who are in need of professional counselling but can't afford it. Demand for subsidized counselling services has never been greater than now. Mental health casualties continue to mount throughout this long and devastating pandemic.



**David Morley**  
*Board Chair*  
*The Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton*



# THE CORNERSTONE COUNSELLING SOCIETY OF EDMONTON

The Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton was registered as a charitable organization in 1977. We are Northern Alberta’s largest non-profit counselling agency and are committed to raising money in the community for subsidies so that underserved, low-income families can receive professional treatment. Also, a portion of fees from every full-fee paying client at Cornerstone Counselling is contributed to the Way to Wellness Fund which supports the counselling subsidies.

In addition to providing professional, accessible, and affordable counselling, Cornerstone offers workshops, psychotherapy training, and other mental health services. We value equity, diversity, inclusion, and serve everyone without discrimination from all backgrounds regardless of race, age, gender, sexuality, background, faith, or income-level.

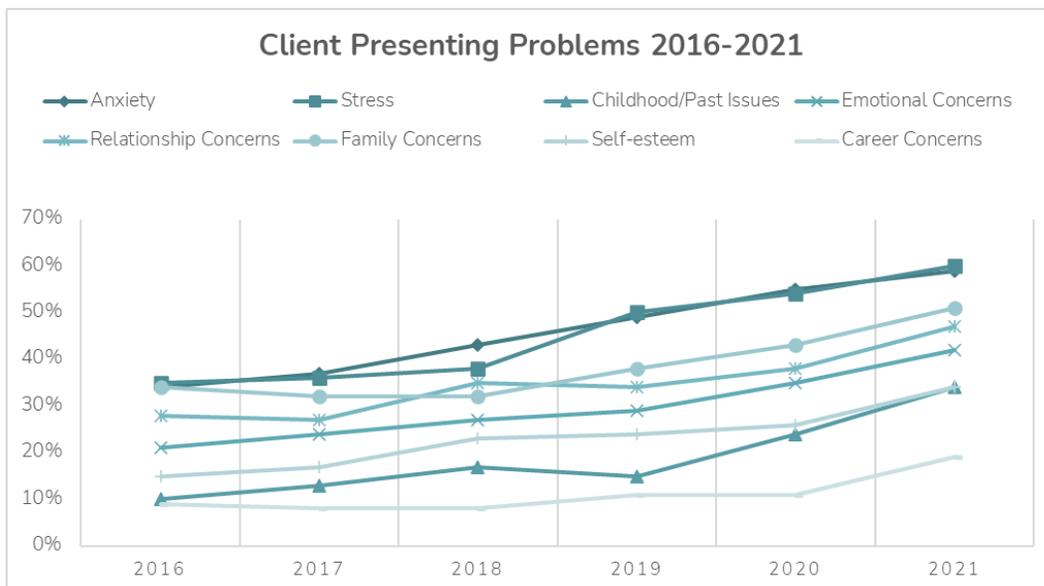
As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, much of our community’s mental health has been negatively impacted—especially those who were already struggling with mental health issues. Mental Health Research Canada surveyed 1,800 Canadian adults in April 2020 and another 3,005 in February of 2021 and the findings show:

- In April 2020, 7% of respondents self-reported that they were struggling with anxiety
- This number tripled to 25% by February, 2021
- Reports of depression also increased from 6% to 17%
- Along with this, Statistics Canada reports that the prevalence of mental disorders is more than four times higher among those who experienced feelings of loneliness or isolation as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

People are continuing to experience feelings of hopelessness, stress, and emotional pain due to financial hardships and the loss of loved ones. As a result, the demand for our Affordable Counselling Program has increased at an unprecedented rate.

Over the past six years, mental health concerns have been steadily on the rise:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Anxiety:</b> 25% increase               | <b>Stress:</b> 25% increase               |
| <b>Childhood/past issues:</b> 24% increase | <b>Emotional concerns:</b> 21% increase   |
| <b>Relationship concerns:</b> 19% increase | <b>Self-esteem concerns:</b> 19% increase |
| <b>Family concerns:</b> 17% increase       | <b>Career concerns:</b> 10% increase      |



## THE NEED FOR CORNERSTONE HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER

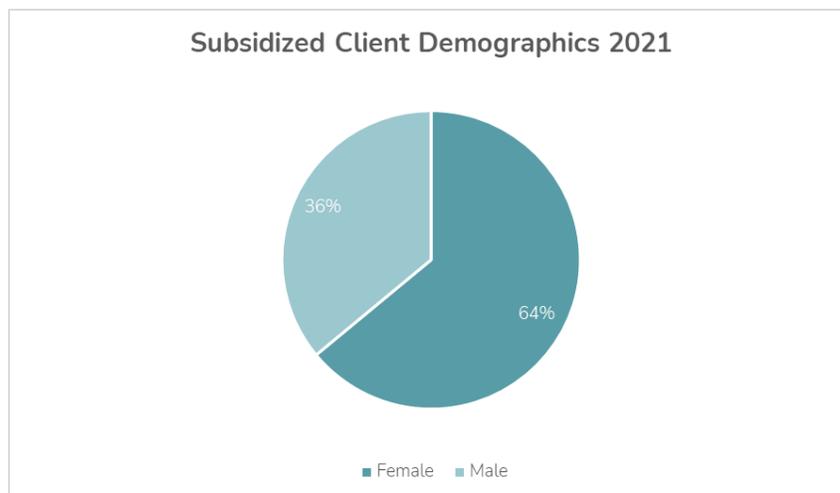
In 2020 and 2021, Cornerstone experienced record-breaking years in terms of number of client hours. We provided:

- 19,775 counselling hours to 4,585 clients in these years, despite an initial slow-down due to COVID-19;
- Counselling at reduced rates for 55% of our clients with an average of 105 subsidized counselling hours each week



In terms of Cornerstone's mix between full-fee and subsidized clients, there has been an 8% increase in subsidized clients vs. full-fee clients comparing 2016 and 2021. Of the subsidized clients, there has been an 11% increase in heavily subsidized clients and there has been a 4% increase in \$20 - \$40 clients in 2021 as compared to 2016.

There has been a 30% increase in subsidized clients overall over the past five years.



There has been a 38% increase in subsidized clients who have participated in individual counselling in comparing 2021 to 2016. The largest increase (45%) was with female subsidized clients—an increase of 367 female clients in comparing 2021 to 2016. There was an increase of 24% in males (an increase of 81 male clients) who participated in subsidized individual counselling in comparing 2021 to 2016.

## EATING DISORDER SUPPORT

As part of her youth group, Rose mentors young girls attending high school. A couple years ago, however, she sought help for herself. Rose had an eating disorder, and she was in the middle of her university degree. The stress of school compounded the stress in her personal life, and her eating disorder made it all worse. In a short amount of time, she lost a considerable amount of weight. Her friends and family noticed how different she looked, but their relationships had become strained, and they felt like they couldn't help her. Rose was more alone than ever and felt like life would only get worse.

"There was a feeling of emptiness from trying to incorporate all these different elements of my life," she says. "At that point, it was overwhelming. I needed perspective from outside my friends and family." She'd tried several counsellors, but none felt

right. She felt judged sometimes; with others, the experience was rushed and impersonal. When a friend from her youth group recommended Cornerstone Counselling, she gave it a try.

She was matched with a counsellor who, to Rose's surprise, asked if she'd prefer a faith-based approach. She did, and instantly she felt at home. It wasn't just the element of faith—it was the sense of trust, respect and acceptance. "It's a vulnerable state to be in," Rose says. "But my counsellor is very accommodating, and I really believe Cornerstone cares. I appreciate all the effort they've put in and all the support they've given me." She believes that if she hadn't found Cornerstone, she would have given up on therapy. "My eating disorder was causing my life to unravel," she adds. "All my relationships were suffering, and I was becoming a completely different person. Then I found Cornerstone."

Today, Rose says she still struggles with her eating disorder, but it's much more manageable. More than that, it's also made her a better mentor, and she's recommended Cornerstone to other girls looking for help. "It took me a lot of years to share that I had an eating disorder, but I feel like now I'm comfortable using it as a learning opportunity," she says. "It's equipped me with what I need to help others."



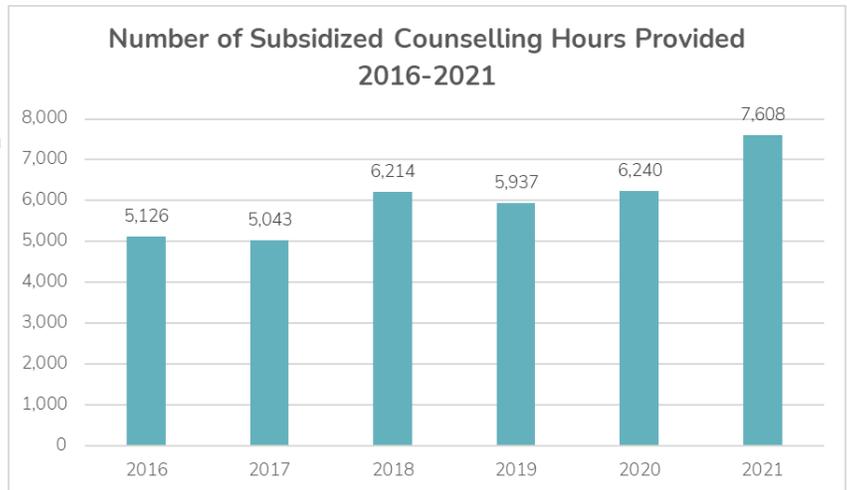
### Helping Youth In Need

Cody's family and friends created the Cody Sharun Memorial Youth Subsidy Fund within the Way to Wellness Fund to ensure that all youth in need of counselling can get it, no matter what their financial circumstances are.

To help youth thrive by getting much-needed counselling support, please contribute to the Cody Sharun Memorial Youth Subsidy Fund. For more information call us at 780-482-6215 ext. 235.

## WAY TO WELLNESS FUND SUBSIDIES

- There has been a 33% increase in the number of subsidies provided (2,397.25 more) since 2017.
- An average of 5,977 subsidies have been provided each year over the past five years 2017–2021.
- The number of subsidies provided increased by 16% between 2020 and 2021.
- The number of subsidies provided increased by 21% since 2019 (most of this time has been during the pandemic).



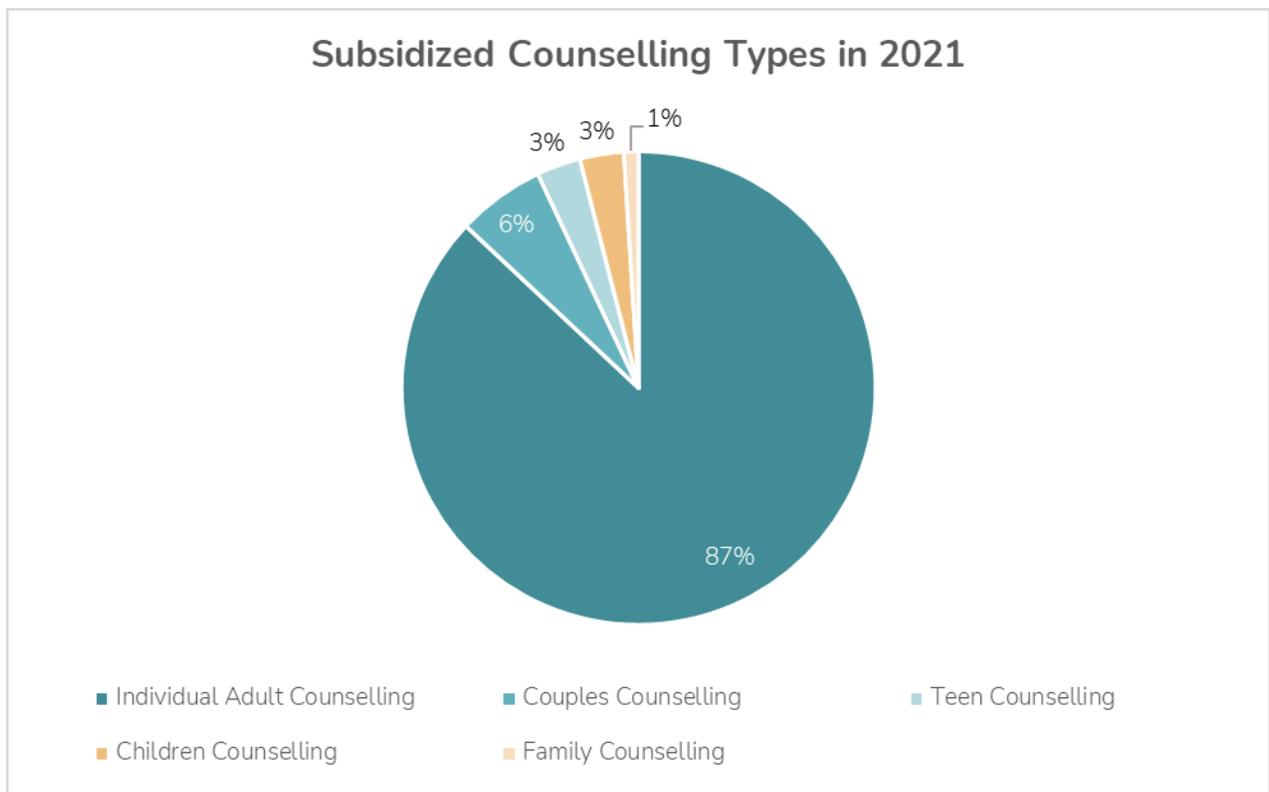
## COST OF SUBSIDIES PROVIDED

### 2020

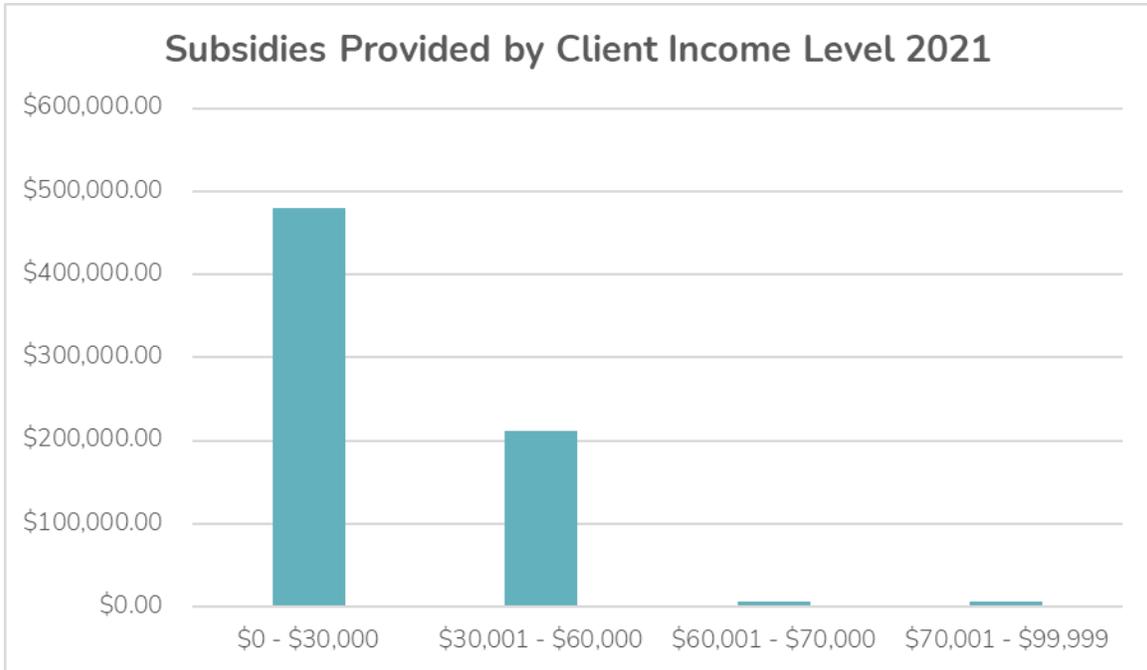
- 6,240 subsidies provided (up 303 or 5% from 2019)
- \$520,405 in subsidies provided

### 2021

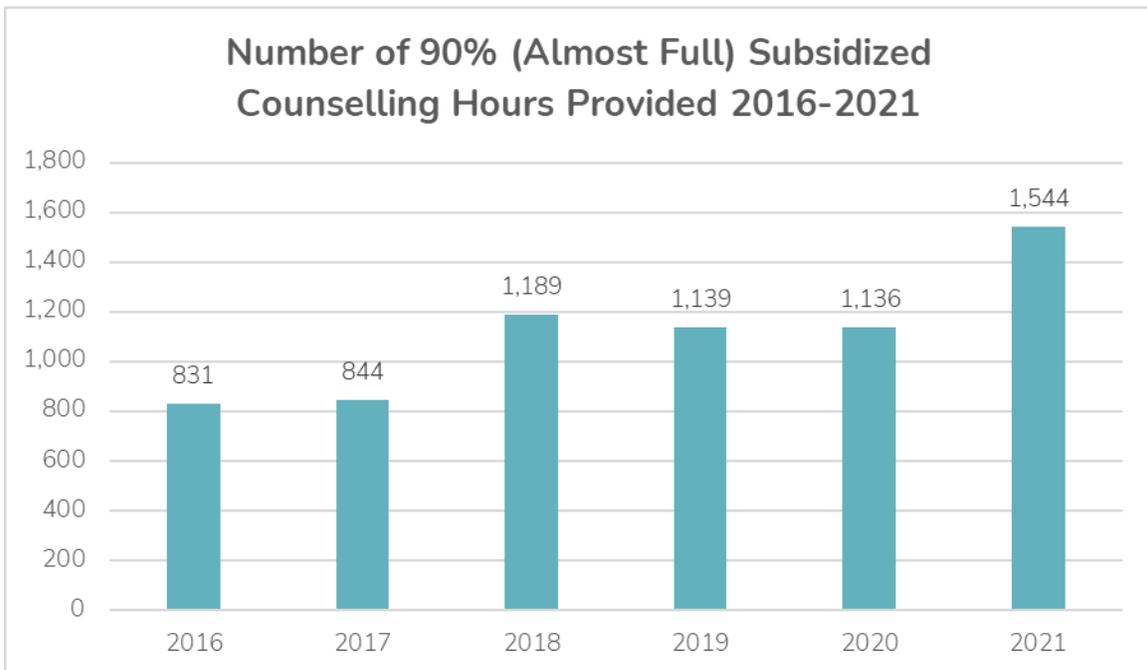
- 7,608 subsidies provided (up 1,368 or 18% from 2020)
- \$92.72 average subsidy provided in 2021 (an increase of \$9.32 or 10% as compared to 2020)
- \$705,412.50 in subsidies provided (an increase of \$187,007.50 or 26% as compared to 2020)



## WAY TO WELLNESS FUND SUBSIDIES



- In 2021, 11% of Cornerstone's subsidized clients live outside of Edmonton
- People living outside of Edmonton received 20% of available subsidy dollars in 2021



## SUICIDAL THOUGHTS TURNED TO REVITALIZATION AND HOPE

We're very grateful to our client, Bill, for sharing his battle with depression with us. Thankfully, he was referred to Cornerstone Counselling by his physician when he was in dire need of help. Bill was severely depressed during the pandemic. He almost ended his own life.

Bill was completely overwhelmed with life, and with good reason. He went on a medical stress leave from his job, and shortly thereafter, his employer terminated him. Weeks later, his wife of 35 years blindsided him with divorce papers after draining their bank account and retirement savings. Bill was gutted, broke, and alone.

"My first session at Cornerstone was a lifesaver," says Bill. "From the moment I met my counsellor, he immediately put me at ease. I felt like I was in a washing machine with all this stuff and didn't know where to turn. My counsellor got me to focus on each individual issue and analyze where I was with it, and this gave me a tremendous coping mechanism."

In their third session together, Bill completed a stress test to determine his personal resources. He had achieved some great things in his career, and his counsellor asked him to reflect on his natural traits of tenaciousness and resourcefulness.

"My counsellor told me, 'You've found ways to do things that no one else thought of and turned situations into something really positive. Remember you're too resourceful to let things get out of hand, so deal with them in the moment,'" remembers Bill. "So now, whenever I see things starting to slide, I come back to that one word: resourceful. That has stuck with me since the day he said that."

"My counsellor was able to get to my core, almost as though he was inside my head," explains Bill. He knew how I was thinking, enabled me to organize all my thoughts, and build the future I

deserve. Counselling at Cornerstone saved my life." Providing life-changing, and in the case of Bill, life-saving counselling experiences to people in need is our passion. Through the generous support of donors like you, The Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton has helped people like Bill since 1977.

Bill received professional counselling at Cornerstone for only \$20 per session thanks to subsidies provided by our generous donors and supporters. Bill paid \$80 for four sessions and the Way to Wellness Fund provided \$720 in subsidies. These small investments by Bill himself and by Cornerstone clients and supporters saved his life.



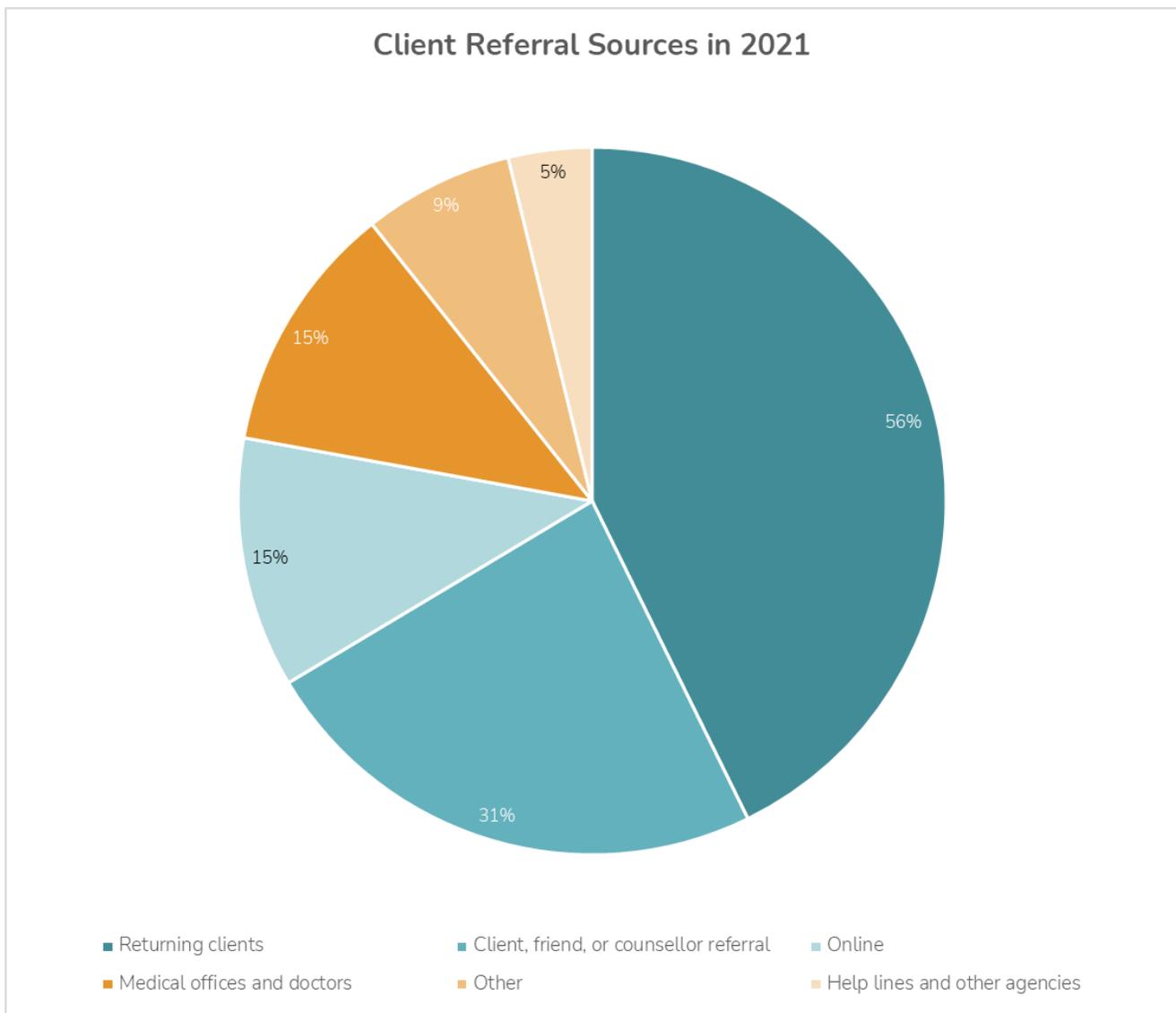
## CLIENT REFERRAL SOURCES 2021

Cornerstone works with hundreds of referral partners throughout Alberta to ensure that people in the greatest need are made aware of available subsidies through the Way to Wellness Fund.

Subsidies are provided from the Way to Wellness Fund and are awarded based on need and verification of household income.

“Cornerstone has been very easy to work with. We are pleased that Cornerstone has a wide variety of therapists available and are able to see patients quite quickly after they've been referred. The office manager, Sheila Wray, has been accessible and kind. Overall, our referral process has been well-structured and smooth running.”

**Lori Deverdenne**  
*Behavioural Health Consultant*  
*Edmonton West Primary Care Network*



## WAY TO WELLNESS FUND FINANCIALS

	2021 Actual	2020 Actual
<b>Revenue</b>		
Cornerstone Client Contributions	\$530,697.29	\$345,572.34
The Leder Charitable Foundation	\$50,000	\$35,000
Cody Sharun Youth Subsidy Fund	\$2,758	\$0
Grants	\$64,000	\$54,720
Church Contributions	\$7,184	\$10,167
Compassionate Christmas Donor Fund	\$26,107	\$1,004
Individual Donors	\$24,666.21	\$34,395.66
Business Donors	\$0	\$860
Invite the Light Fundraising Luncheon	\$0	\$38,686
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$705,412.50</b>	<b>\$520,405</b>

### Way to Wellness Reserve Fund

*This fund is supported by our monthly donors and online supporters*

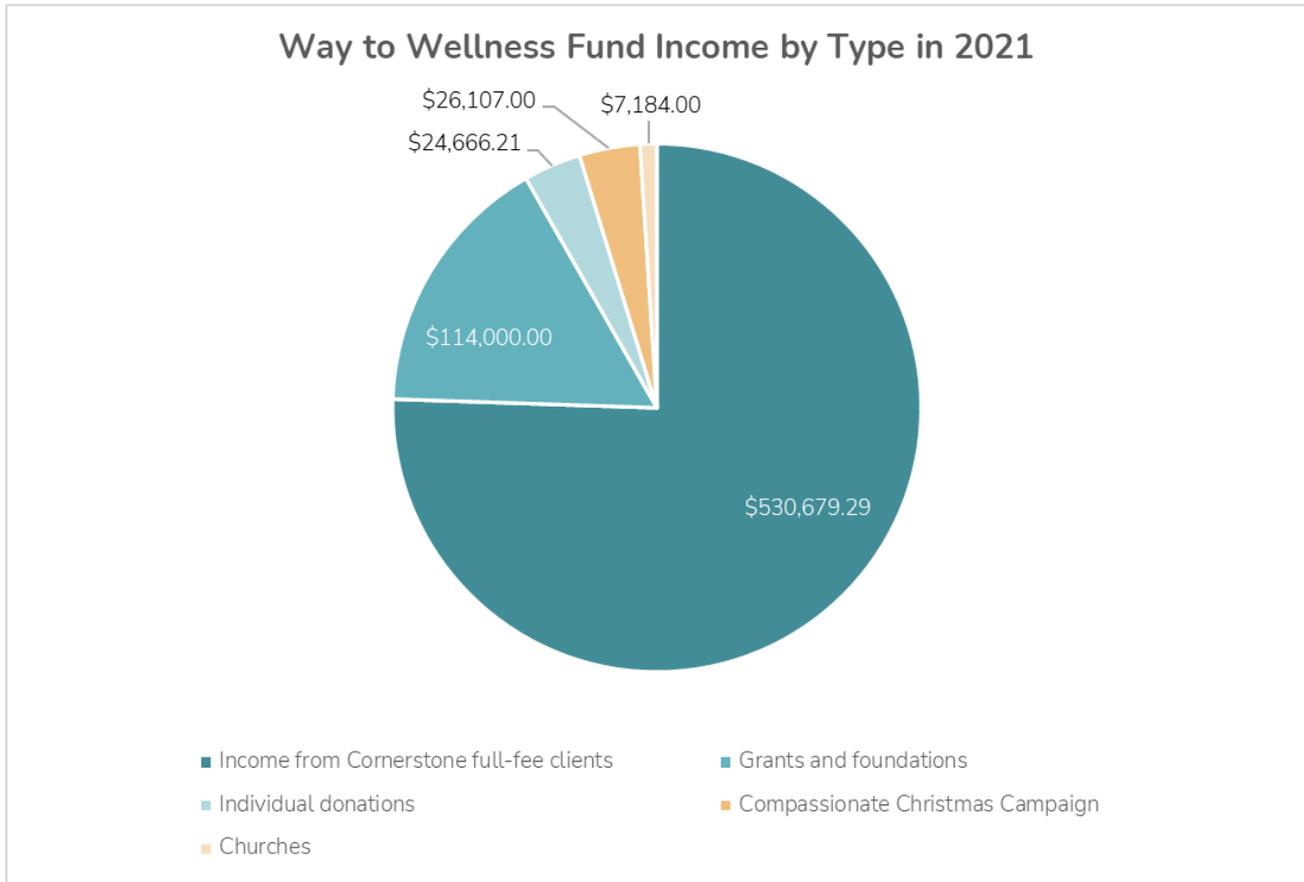
Balance	\$69,599.17	\$55,773.38
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### Expenses

Affordable Counselling Subsidies for Lower Income Households	\$705,412.50	\$520,405
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<b>Way to Wellness Fund as of December 31</b>	<b>\$69,599.17</b>	<b>\$55,773.38</b>
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## CORNESTONE IS GROWING



Cornerstone been hiring additional registered psychotherapists to meet the growing demand from our Affordable Counselling Program so that more Albertans will be able to access the mental health resources they need, when they need them, and at a rate they can afford.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has caused a decrease in revenue streams that we normally depend on from the community to support our client services. This puts current and future capacity of our Affordable Counselling Program at risk. We need to find additional funding from individuals, businesses, foundations, and grants for our Affordable Counselling Program or we will be left with no choice but to add to our growing waitlist of people hoping to access psychotherapy at an affordable cost.

Please contact us if you, your family, or workplace is interested in starting a trust fund within the Way to Wellness Fund to help low-income individuals or families to receive the professional counselling help that they need but can't afford.

### **The Cornerstone Counselling Society of Edmonton**

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**Cornerstone's CRA#: 106974702RR0001**



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