



2020 - 21

# Annual Report

We respectfully acknowledge the autonomy of Indigenous Peoples, and that SACE is located on Treaty 6 Territory and Métis Region 4 Territory, amiskwacîy ᐱᐢᐠᐠᐠᐠᐠ, a traditional home and gathering place for many Indigenous Peoples, including Blackfoot/Niitsítpii, Cree/Nehiyawak, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Saulteaux, Métis, and specifically the ancestral space of the Papaschase Cree.



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**Why land acknowledgements are important**

and why the work shouldn't stop there

#NIHM2021

Treaty 6 Territory Photo credit: Priscilla Preez



## No more stolen sisters.

#MMIWG2S



All of us want to live in a world free of sexual violence, and until we get there, we want those who experience such violence to be supported and respected. We cannot achieve this goal without first recognizing how the non-consensual and violent displacement of Indigenous people across this land directly connects to issues of sexual violence. Residential schools run by Anglican, Presbyterian, United, and Roman Catholic institutions, as well as the Canadian government, have been directly implicated in the ongoing cycle of sexual violence experienced by generations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We also cannot ignore that sexual violence continues to be used as a tool in the attempted genocide of Indigenous communities, and is closely tied to the devastating issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples (MMIWG2S).

SACE is committed to making every effort to becoming a safer and more welcoming space for Indigenous people to heal from sexual trauma. To do so, we must recognize and honour our collective responsibility towards Reconciliation and decolonization; a process that must centre Indigenous voices and self-advocacy work, and prioritize authentic relationships. We must also acknowledge the immense efforts being undertaken by these communities to heal, as well as the resiliency and strength that these efforts require.



We are grateful for Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls for providing us with a roadmap for our work. To view this important document, visit [www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/](http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/).


**6,500**

Unmarked graves recovered as of September 21, 2021

In the summer of 2021 as this report was being developed, discoveries were made of unmarked mass graves, first at the site of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, on the lands of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, and then over the following weeks and months at many more sites of former residential schools across the country. As an agency, we want to acknowledge this, and offer that if you or someone you know is looking for support, the options in the slider to the right are available:

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**National Indian Residential School Crisis Line**




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☎ 1.866.925.4419

Nation-wide emotional support and crisis referral services for former students and those who have been affected

# Who We Are



**Since the beginning of the pandemic, the demand for the services offered at SACE has been higher than we have ever seen in the 45 years of our existence.**

It is hard to imagine life before the year 2020, an existence when the word pandemic was very rarely mentioned, let alone creating unprecedented chaos for us all; or before the horrific murder of George Floyd ignited a groundswell of support for Black Lives Matter and other social justice movements. Like individuals, businesses, and organizations around the world, these unprecedented events we have all faced over the past year have been extraordinary and have pushed our team to think differently, to act differently, and to deliver our critical work and support in a way that we could have only imagined prior to 2020.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the demand for the services offered at SACE has been higher than we have ever seen in the 45 years of our existence. We are working collaboratively to meet this demand and, simultaneously, to reduce it through affecting social change. This means working strategically, strengthening our financial sustainability, and ensuring that SACE continues to be the centre of excellence that it has prided itself on being since 1975.

*This also means reflecting on who we are as an agency, and who we hope to be.*

Statistics demonstrate, over and over again, that sexual violence disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people. We know we can't address sexual violence without addressing racism and other injustices. We have been doing our own internal learning and growing in this area so that we can be a safer, more inclusive and accessible service provider for our community members.

To the SACE staff, who are truly the most brilliant, compassionate, and caring people imaginable, I say thank you. Thank you for always showing up. For standing out. For speaking up. And for fighting every single day for justice. You are the reason SACE is here. And, of course, to our Board, who, through their support, guidance, and vision, allow us to come to the office every day to do the work that we know continues to make a difference in the lives of many individuals – and contributes to making our community a safer space for all of us. No words could adequately express my appreciation and gratitude for all that you do, and all that you are.

The past year has truly tested us all, and at times, pushed us far past our comfort zones. And yet, as I enter this next year, I am filled with a renewed sense of hope that, together, we are moving closer to a world free of sexual violence.

**Mary Jane James**  
(she/her)  
CEO

## Board of Directors

### Executive

Devin Laforce, **Chair**  
Dr. Barbara van Ingen, **Vice Chair**  
Jennifer Forsyth, **Treasurer**  
Allison Downey-Damato, **Past Chair**

### Directors-at-Large

Michelle Fong  
Jodi Goebel  
Kellie Gower  
Kasey Machin  
Deb Manz  
Vivian Mills  
Greg Olson  
Margot Ross-Graham  
Jonathan Taves

### Advisors

Terrie Affolder  
Danielle Green



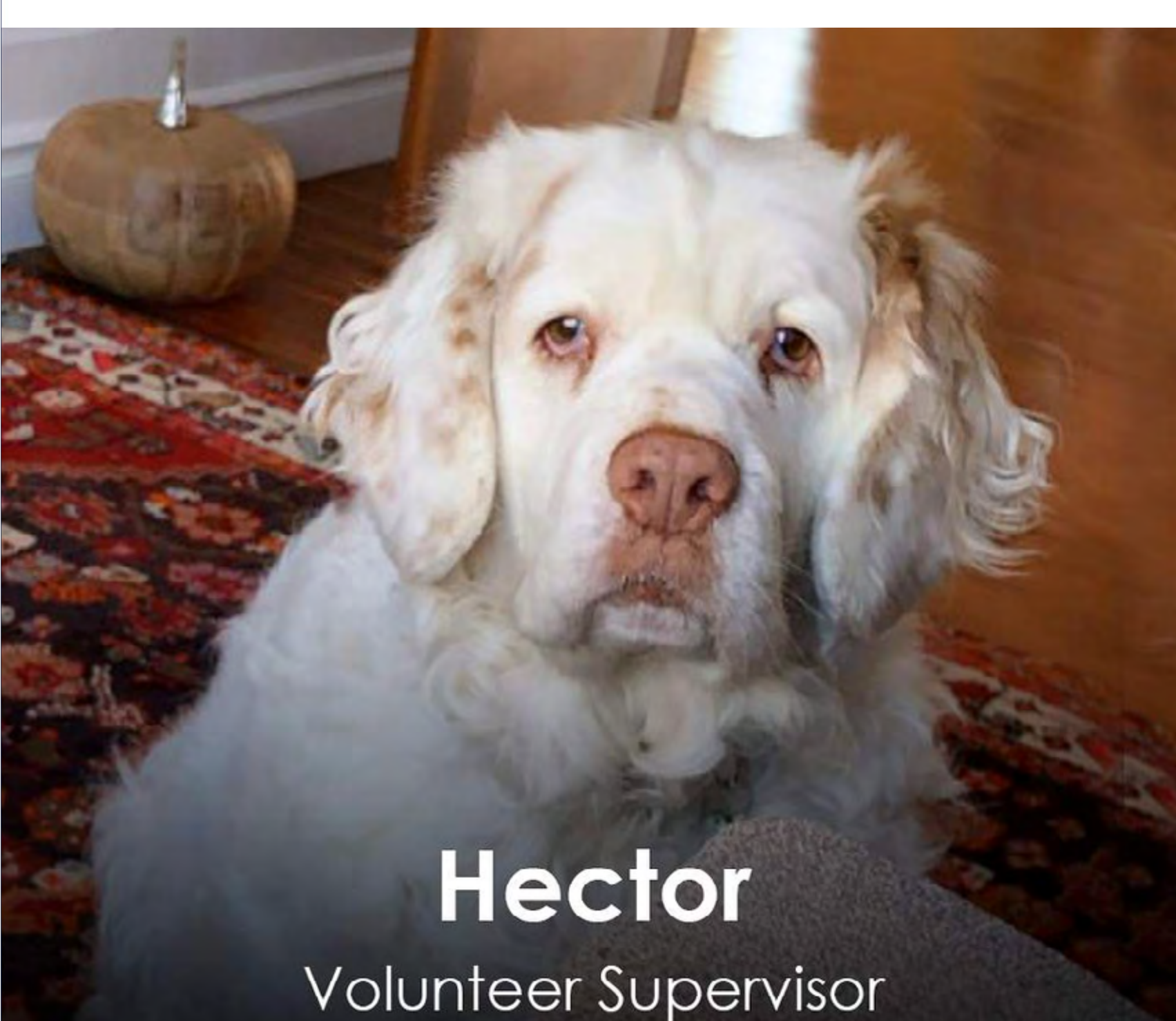
## Coworker Appreciation

Thinking back over the past year, it has been challenging, tough and heartbreaking to see COVID-19 hit closer to home. In addition to watching the impact of the pandemic on those we serve, we have also seen the effects on our coworkers, our colleagues, and ourselves.

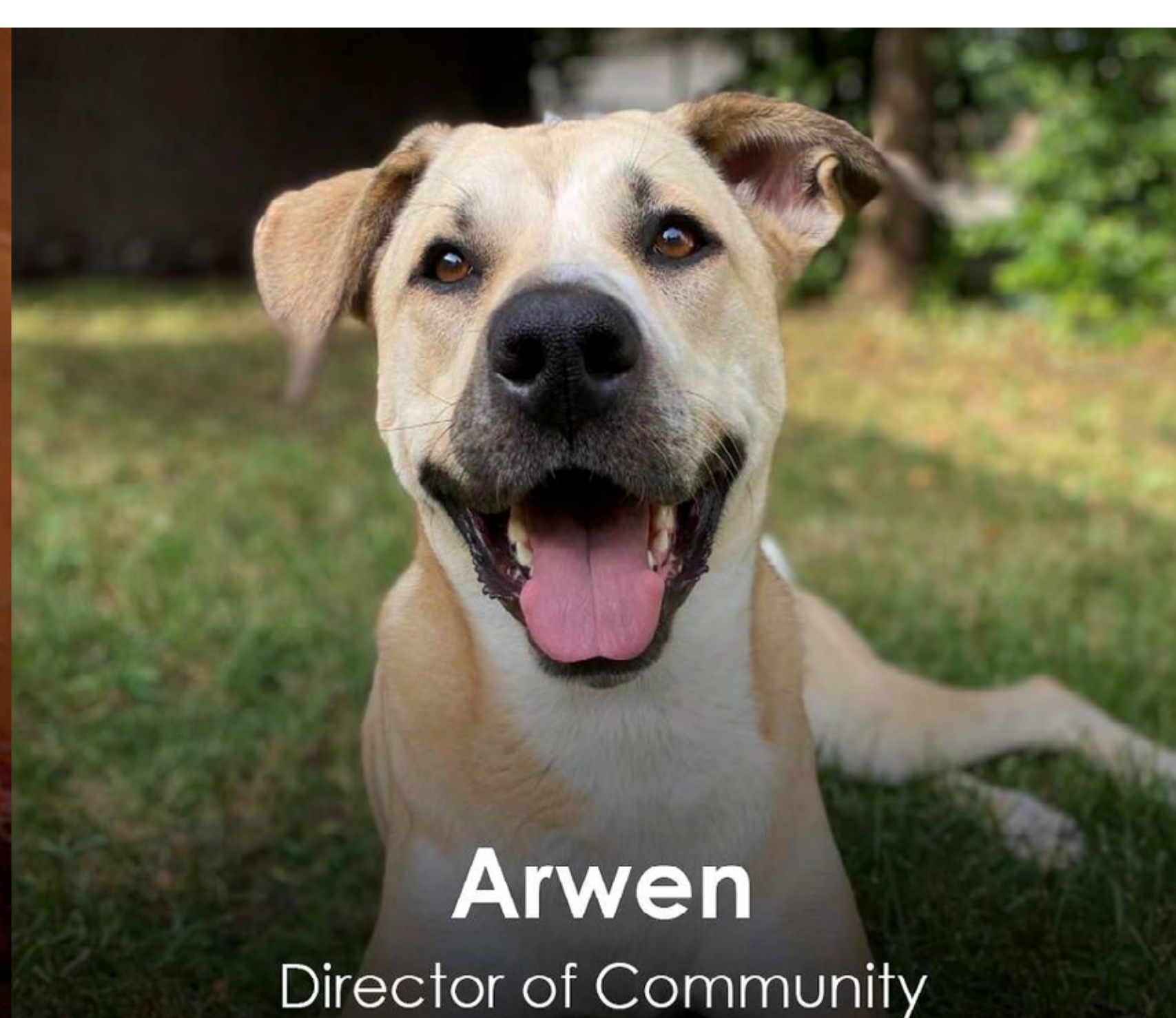
Amid the dark, tragic, and dreary news of cases rising, and places closing, the staff each found ways of connecting and remaining close despite being far away. Whether it was an unexpected pet visitor in a virtual meeting, a gardening group chat at lunch, or just taking two minutes to sing chaotic Zoom renditions of "Happy birthday!" to each other – we found ways of keeping us going.

Burnout and compassion fatigue are common things in the not-for-profit field, it takes some incredible resilience and bravery to do the kind of work we do. There are days we don't want to get out of bed – days where we feel the weight of the world is too much to take – but we do it anyway. Sometimes we just need a little help, whether that comes in the form of a puppy grin, a meow, a new flower on a houseplant, or a drawing from our little one.

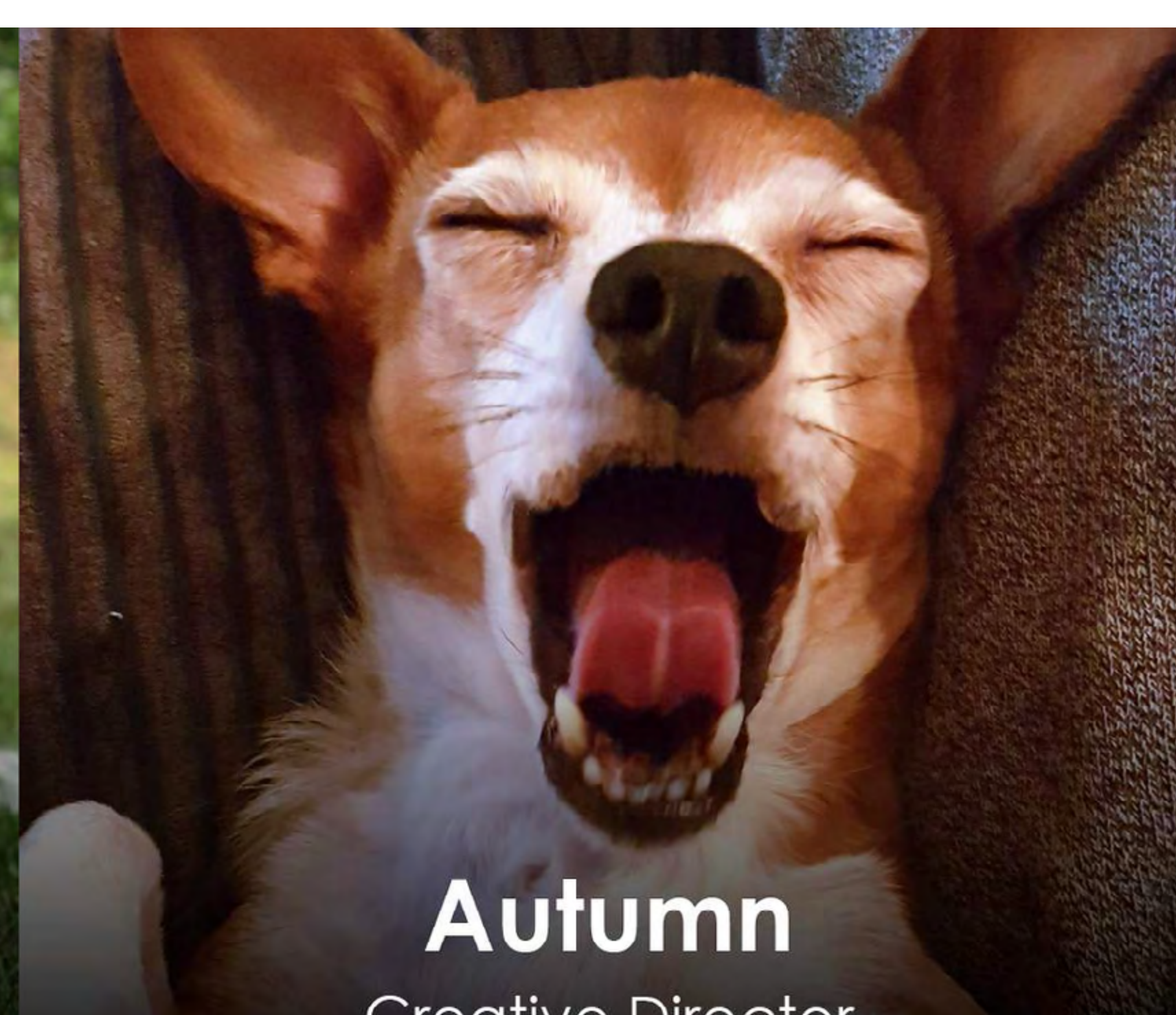
So, one thing that we wanted to share with you through this year's annual report was a small section honouring the various "coworkers" that helped keep the staff going during this hard year. Enjoy these photos and hold them in your heart as we hopefully see the light at the end of this tunnel together.



**Hector**  
Volunteer Supervisor



**Arwen**  
Director of Community Engagement

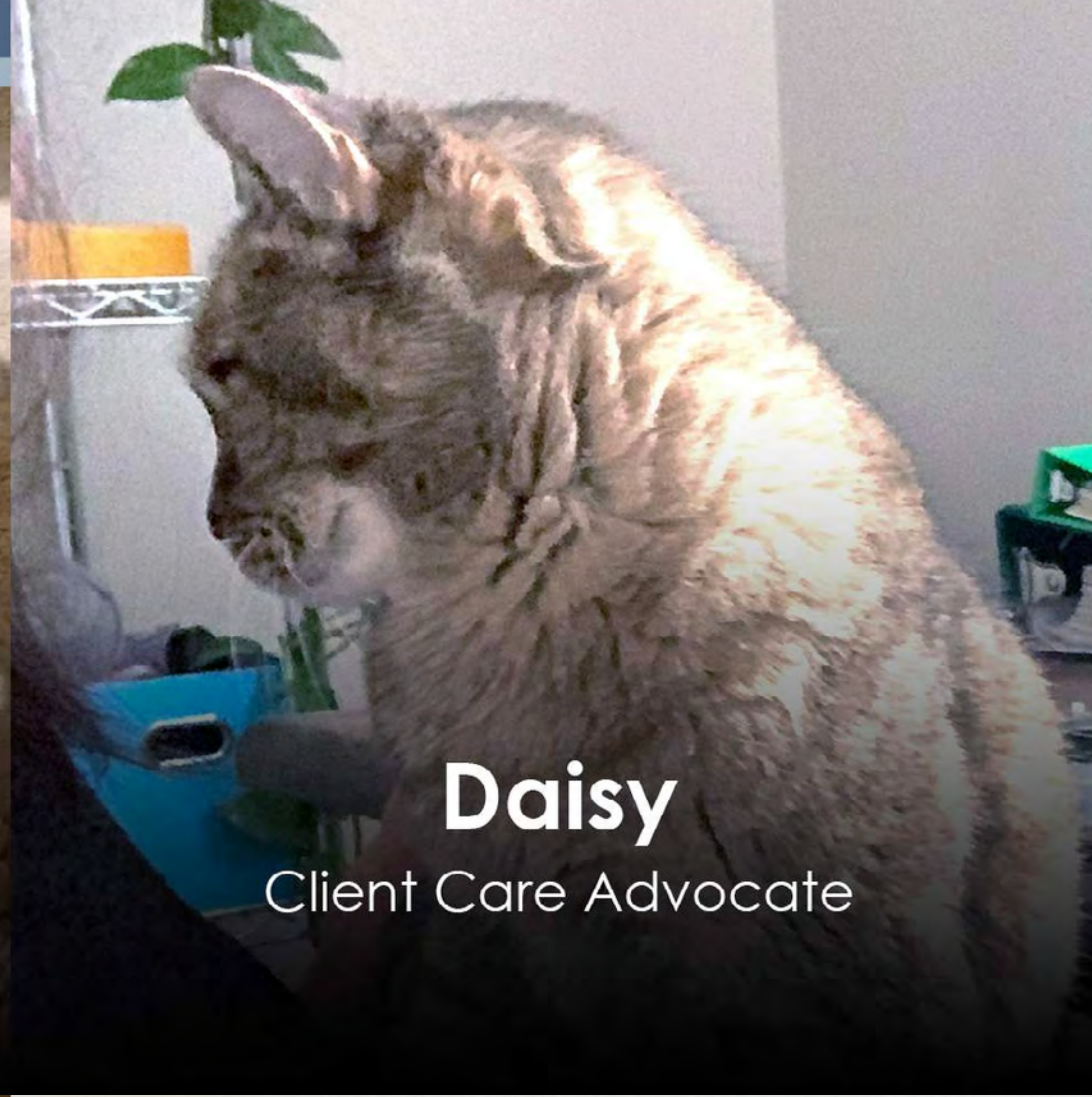


**Autumn**  
Creative Director



**Charlotte**

Police & Court Support  
Advocate



**Daisy**

Client Care Advocate



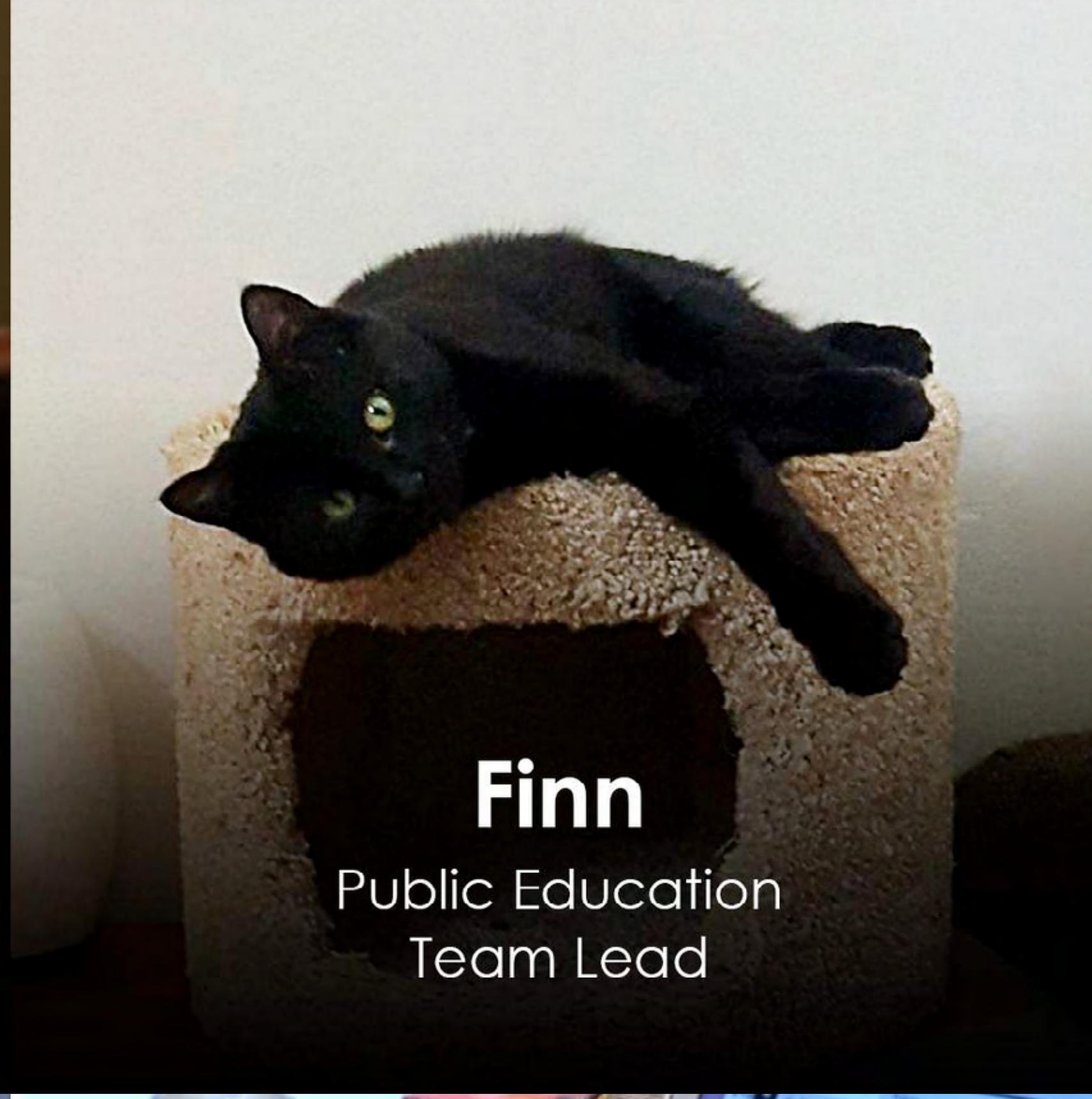
**Ellie**

Social & Fundraising  
Coordinator



**Finn**

Office Administrator



**Finn**

Public Education  
Team Lead



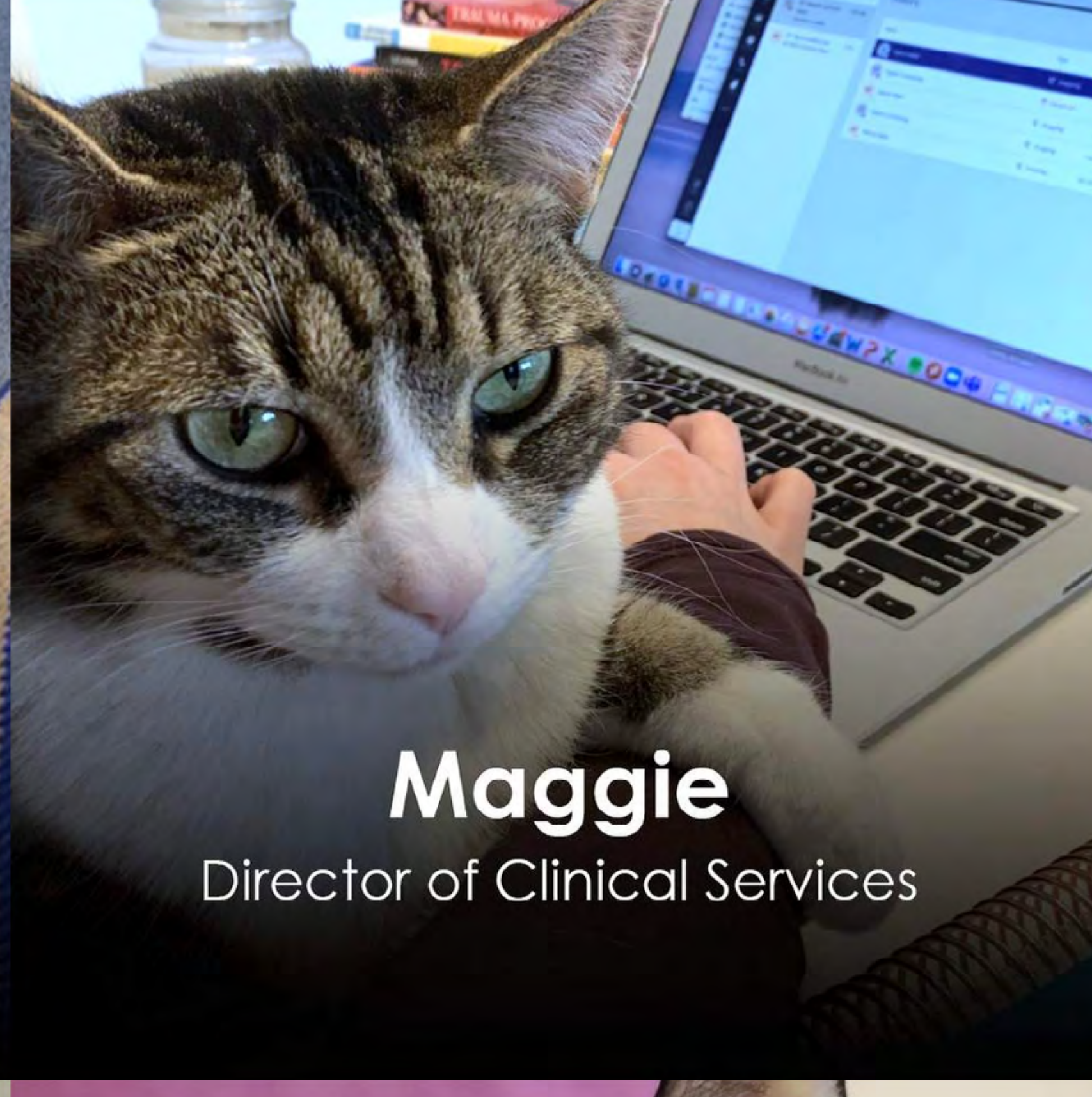
**Freya**

Court Support



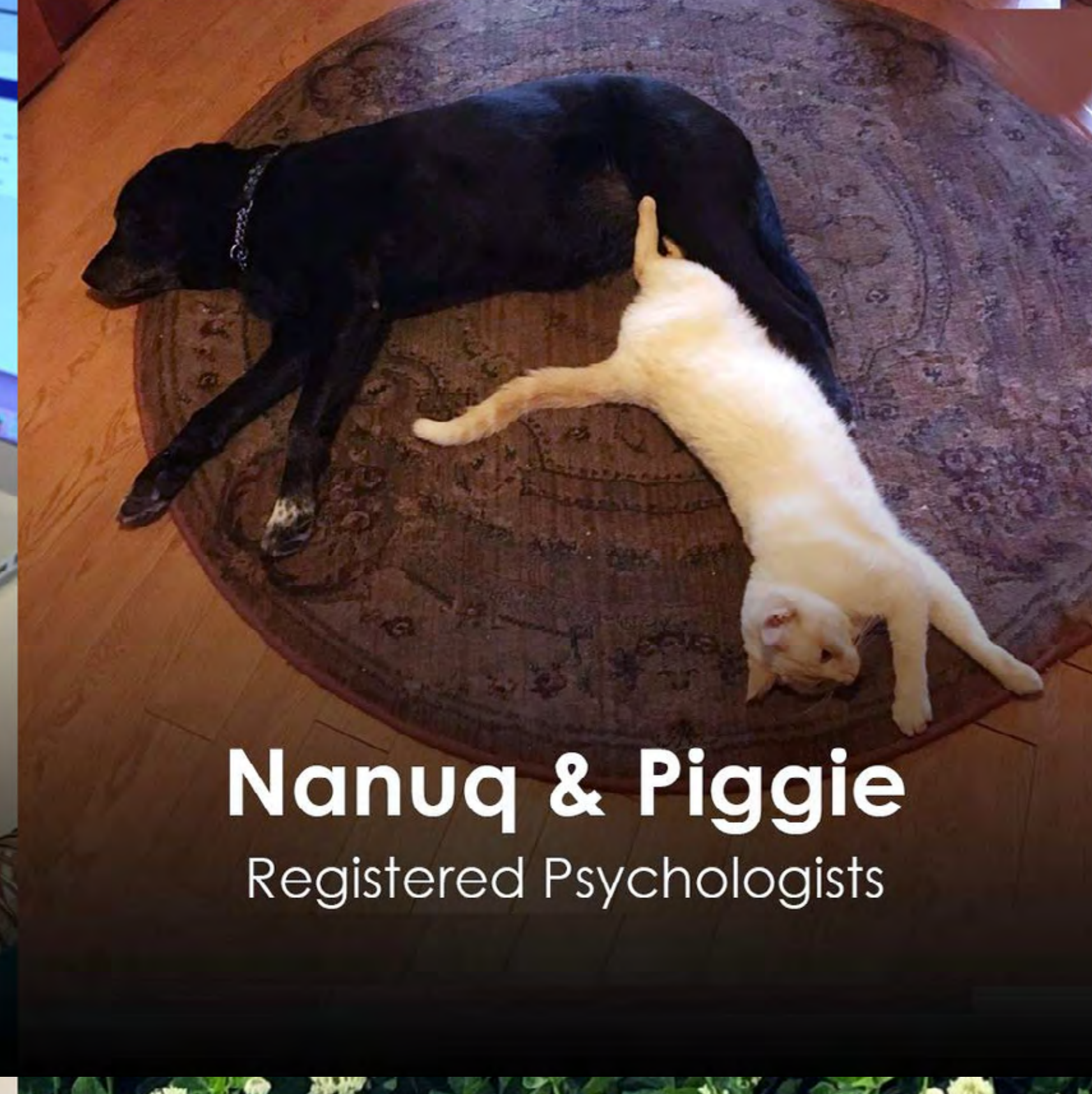
**Gus**

Sexual Violence Response &  
Prevention Consultant & Educator



**Maggie**

Director of Clinical Services



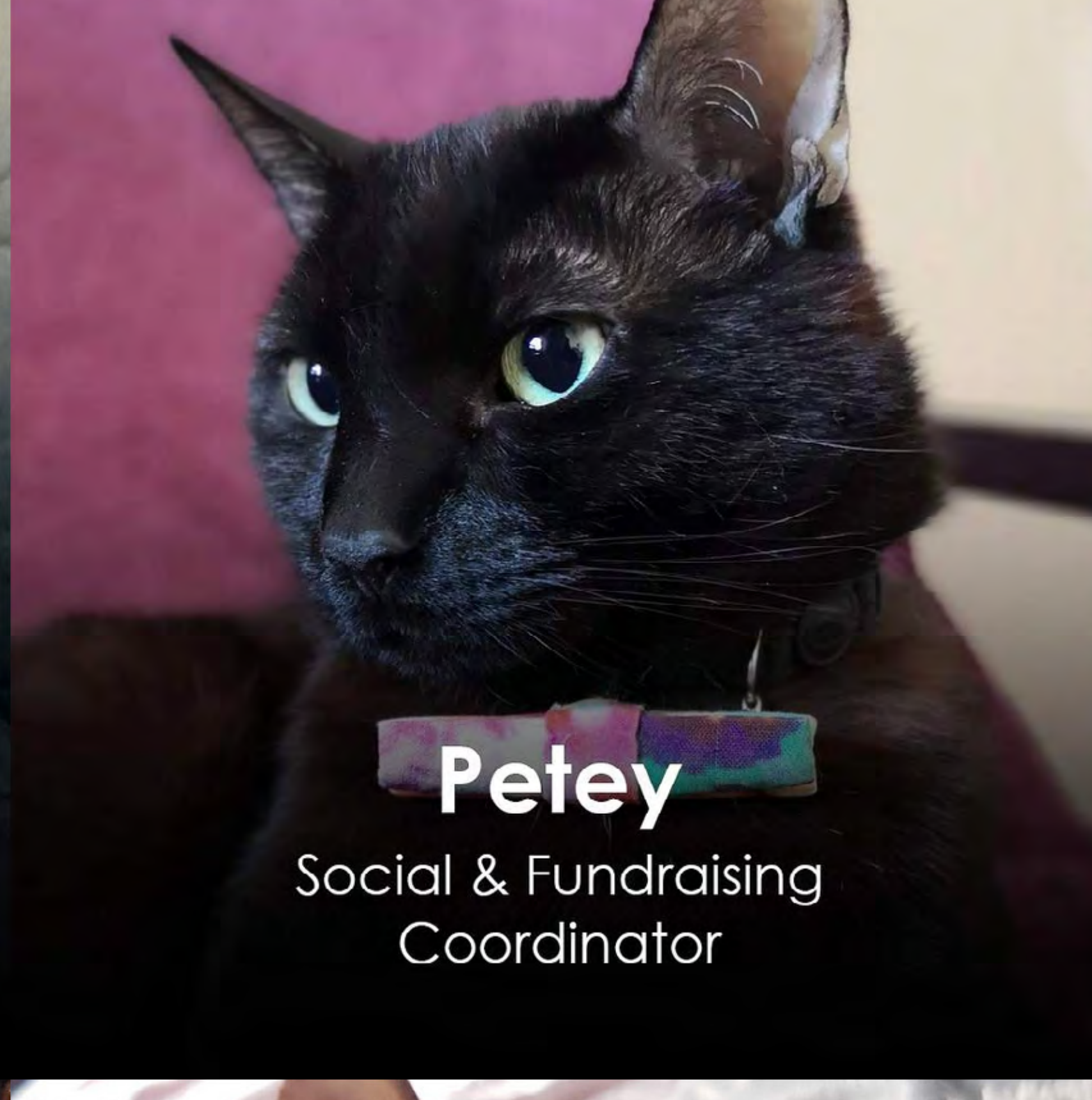
**Nanuq & Piggie**

Registered Psychologists



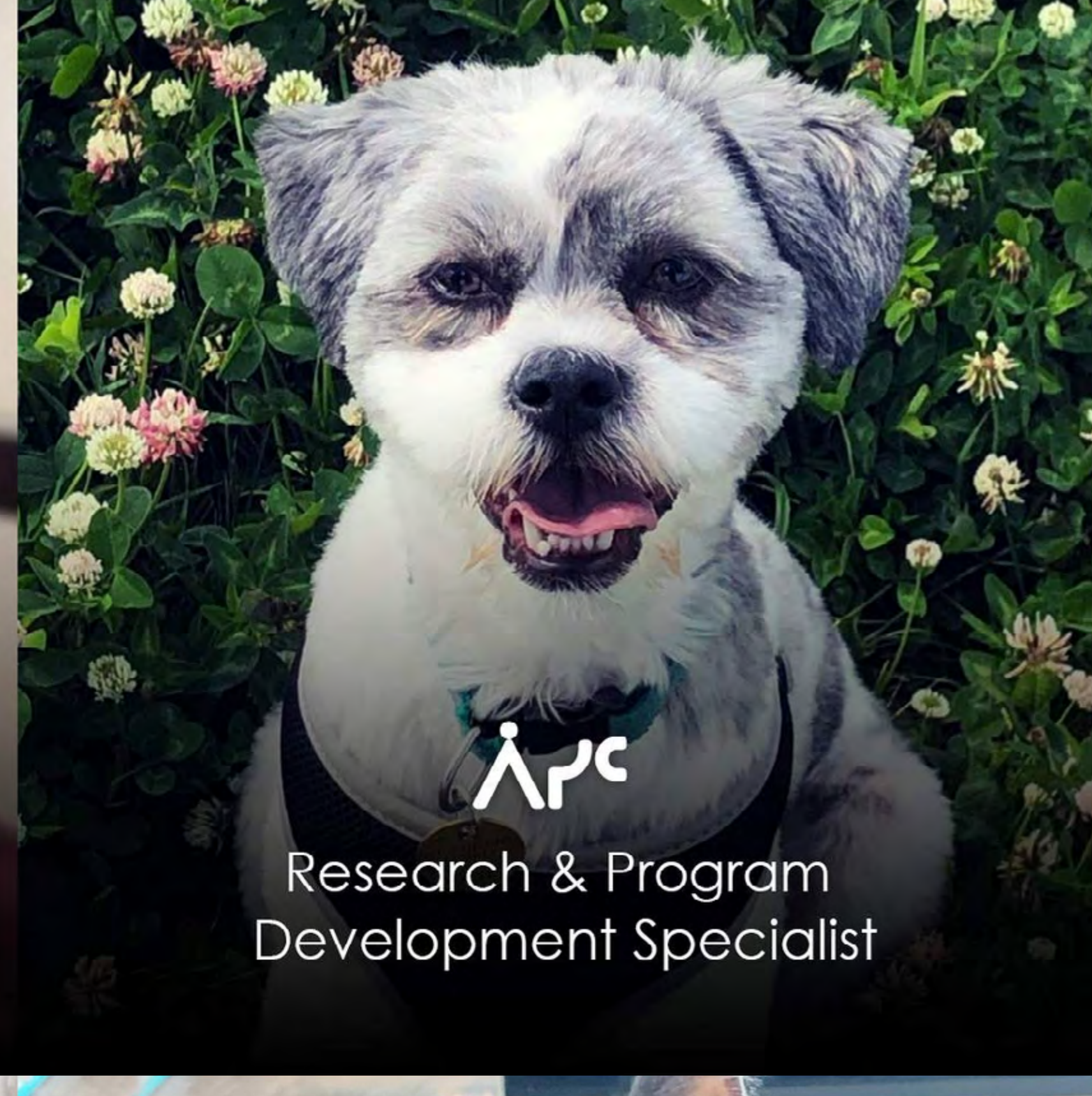
**Padfoot**

Clinical Team Lead



**Petey**

Social & Fundraising  
Coordinator



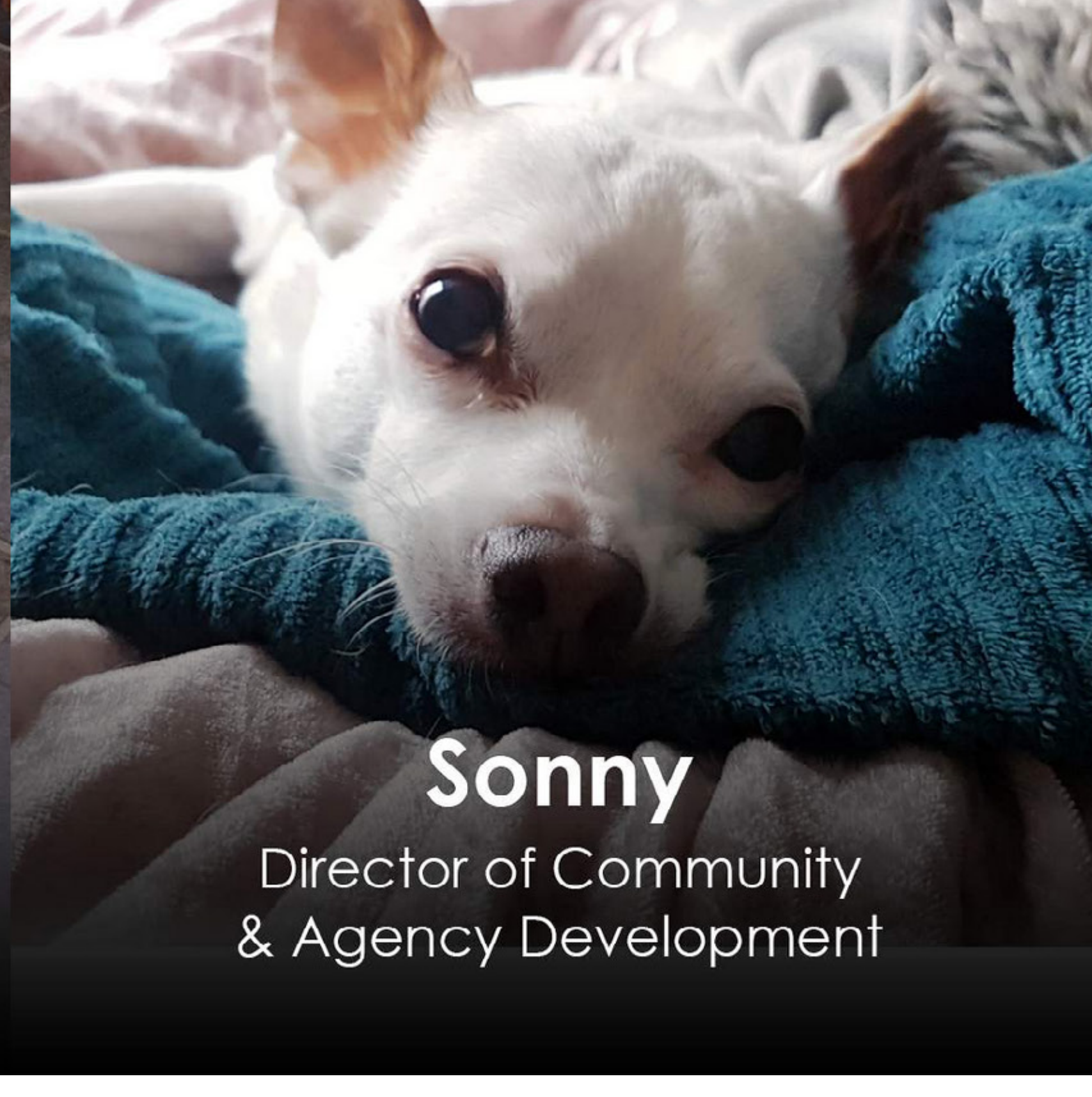
**Shanti**

Research & Program  
Development Specialist



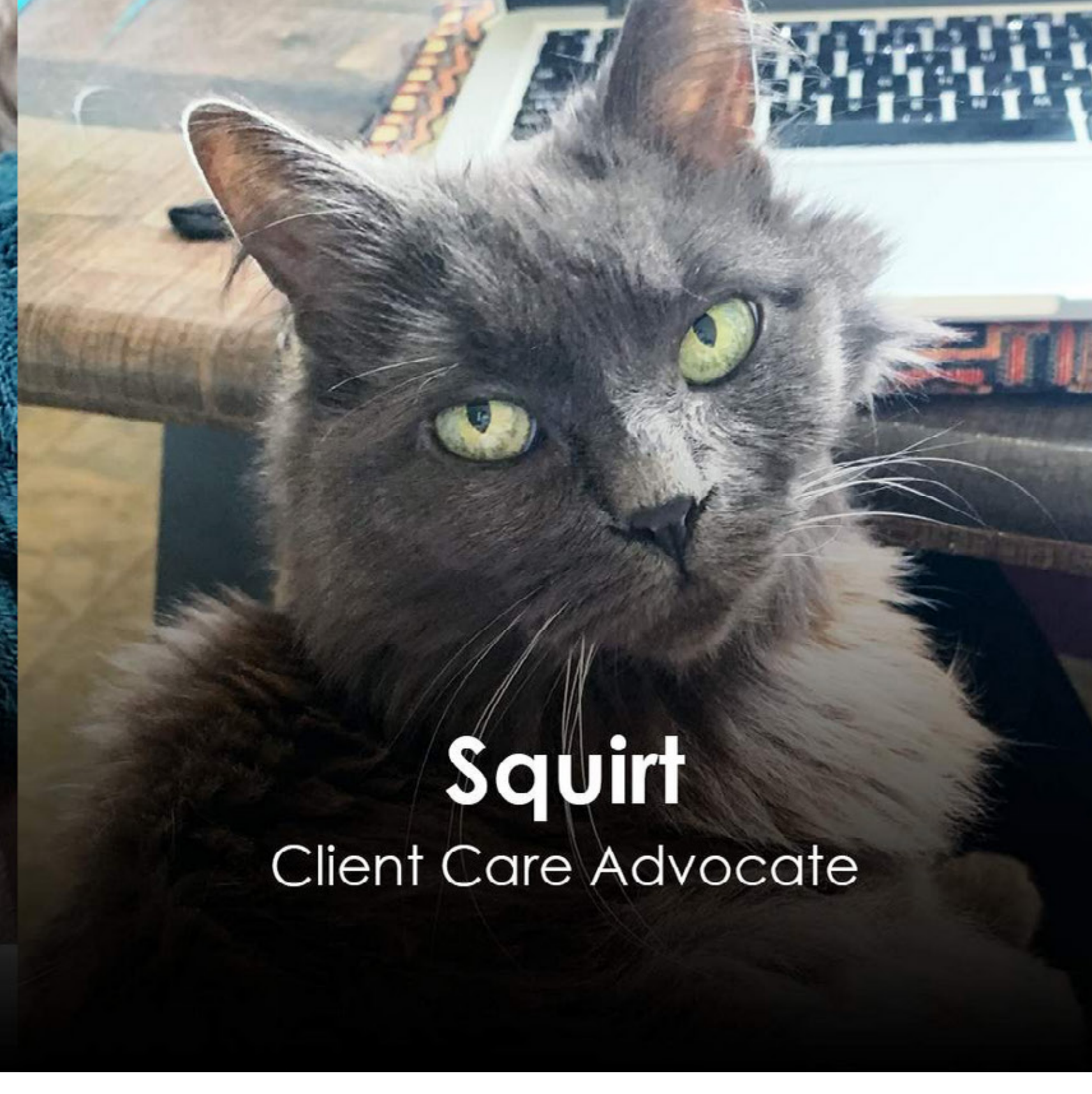
**Shanti**

Clinical Team Lead



**Sonny**

Director of Community  
& Agency Development



**Squirt**

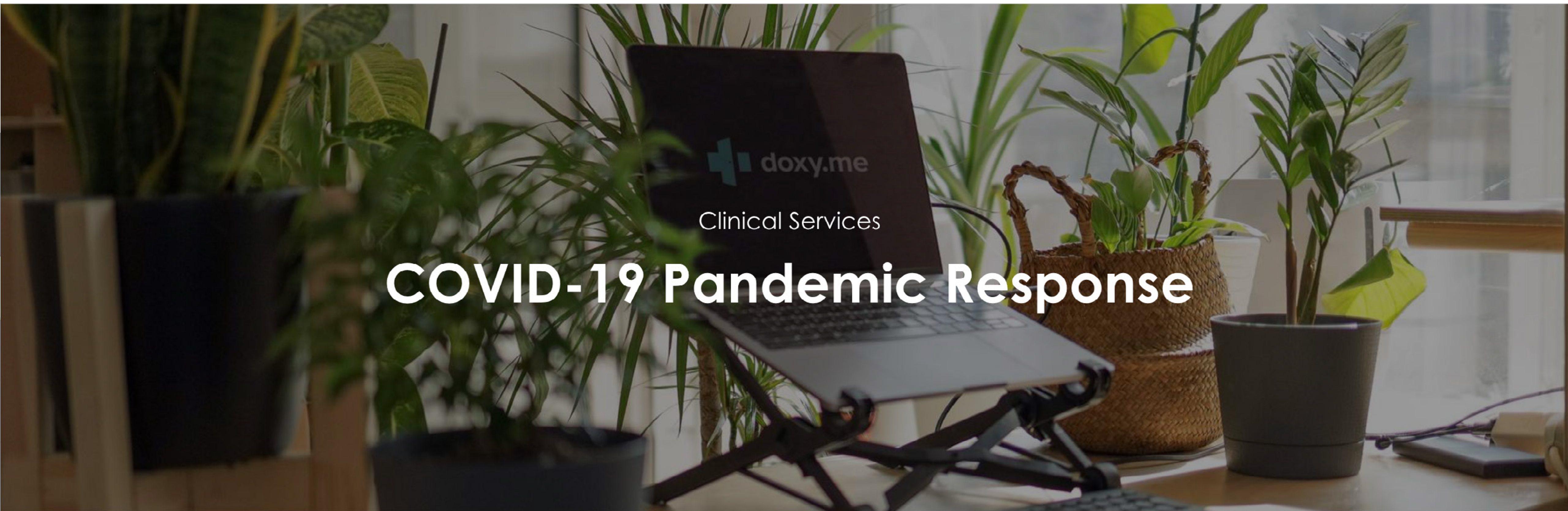
Client Care Advocate

Thank You to Our  
**Core Funders**

SACE could not do the work that we do if it were not for the generosity and commitment of our core funders: Alberta Community & Social Services, Alberta Health, Alberta Justice & Solicitor General, Alberta Health Services, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, and the City of Edmonton Family & Community Support Services. There are also many individuals, foundations, organizations, and corporations who, consistently but quietly, demonstrate their financial support and belief in what we do. For this, we are deeply and truly grateful.



# Clinical Services Department



## The adaptations needed to adjust to COVID-19 created the opportunity for us to explore a modality that reduces barriers for those in need of our services.

In reflecting upon the challenges and changes that the clinical team has undergone in the last year, I am struck by the adaptability, patience, and tenacity this team has demonstrated. When the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, those on the clinical team worked quickly to transition to offering telehealth services. This required the team to access training in order to competently and ethically provide these services, develop spaces in their homes to offer confidential sessions, and navigate how to remain connected as a team while working in isolation. There were bumps along the way, but one year later we have successfully transitioned all of our clinical programs to function virtually.

The impacts of COVID-19 did not only change how we worked, it also added to the complexity of the challenges our clients faced. In addition to processing the trauma of sexual violence, we also now need to address the impacts of grief – loss of family, friends, jobs, postponement of long-awaited court dates, and the increasing awareness of the prevalence of racialized violence have all added to the complexity of the clinical work our team does. I am beyond privileged to share that each of the clinical programs have come together to share learning, ideas, and support allowing us to continue to offer invaluable services to our community.

When our community went into the initial period of lockdown in March 2020, the clinical team had to act quickly in order to ensure continuity of care for those we were supporting. Those providing oversight to the clinical team developed policy and procedures to support the counselling team in working from home. During that time, the counsellors sought out training to ensure they understood the nuances of offering telehealth services. While we have all experienced technical glitches, surprise pet guests, and challenges we could not have predicted, our clients have expressed the importance of the stability our ongoing support provided. We entered into offering telehealth with trepidation – we were not sure that it could replace the connection that exists with in-person therapy. I am excited to share that it has created space for healing and growth in ways we could not have predicted a year ago. We have been able to offer consistent supports while keeping our staff and clients safe, and more easily support clients with disabilities, living rurally, and those whose mental health may have prevented them from consistently accessing services. The adaptations needed to adjust to COVID-19 created the opportunity for us to explore a modality that reduces barriers for those in need of our services.

### Client care

The journey of a SACE client from the moment they reach out for support to the time they complete their counselling is one that requires incredible vulnerability. From the very first point of contact our team strives to create an environment defined by compassion and support. This is exemplified in the work of the client care advocates. The staff in these roles are often one of the first points to contact for a person seeking counselling services at SACE. Each day they create space for people to acknowledge and share their experience of sexual violence. This is by no means an easy role. For many people asking for support can be an emotionally overwhelming experience. Our client care advocates work to create safety and containment while they hear the stories of members of our community seeking help. They work with clients to ensure that basic needs are attended while waiting for services. They support clients in accessing the food bank, housing programs, as well as a multitude of other community resources. They also work with counsellors when capacity to have basic needs shift for clients currently in therapy. The work of client care advocates in this regard is an integral part of many clients healing journey. In addition to the direct work of this team in supporting clients, they also provide invaluable support to the rest of the clinical team. In the last year this team has digitalized all existing paper files, moving thousands of client files to a database that can easily be searched and accessed. They navigate requests for information from professionals in the community with grace while prioritizing the privacy and confidentiality of SACE clients. They provide administrative support and technology troubleshooting, efficiently increasing the capacity of other team members to attend to other tasks. While this year presented numerous challenges, the client care advocates met it all in stride with the wellbeing of clients as their top priority – taking the time to call each client on the waitlist to update them regarding how SACE was handling the pandemic and assessing their willingness and capacity to access online services. Healing does not happen in isolation, nor does supporting trauma, each member of the clinical team shared a hand in contributing to the healing of clients.

### Office administration

The experience of reaching out for support and acknowledging that you or your child has been overwhelmed by the trauma associated with sexual violence is often a daunting experience. Working towards creating safety is an essential component of the work done by each person here at SACE. The first point of contact is the team at reception. Each person seeking to or accessing services at SACE are met with warmth and compassion. As we have navigated the challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic over the last 18 months, our reception team has been invaluable in developing return to office plans, supporting clients with technology, and ensuring that the cleanliness of the office space is maintained. To say that this team has gone above and beyond to support SACE and the clients is an understatement. They returned to work in July, 2020 to support therapists in resuming in-person services for children and youth. They sanitized toys and play spaces between sessions to maintain the health and well-being of clients, family, and staff. They cleaned and sanitized the waiting room, elevators, and bathrooms. Without this support re-opening the office would not have been possible. As we have navigated through the pandemic our Office Administrators have diligently screened clients, taken temperatures, and ensured clients understood the process of access in person services. They take on each new challenge with hopeful energy, curiosity and care. The environment that they create in the waiting room supports clients in feeling welcomed into and connected with SACE. The work that they do cannot always be measured and sometimes is not seen, but has allowed for SACE to continue to offer services and support through stay at home orders, return to office and everything in-between.

**Morgan Bissegger** (she/her)  
**Registered Psychologist #4722**  
Director of Clinical Services

**825**

new adult client intakes

**2,945**

adult counselling sessions  
provided via telehealth

**245**

new child and youth client  
intakes

**545**

child & youth counselling  
sessions provided via  
telehealth

## The last year has also seen a significant transition in counselling team members.

After many years of leadership, guidance, and teaching, Dr. Karen Dushinski stepped away from her role as Clinical Director. Additionally, longstanding counsellor Monika Penner resigned from her role. Fortunately, their combined 29 years of wisdom and experience continues to contribute to the development of a new team of counsellors.

Following Dr. Dushinski's departure, Morgan Bissegger stepped into the role of Clinical Director. Morgan has worked with SACE for the last 6 years as a child and youth counsellor and was previously the Clinical Team Lead. She looks forward to continuing to develop the Clinical Program at SACE, maintaining our commitment to providing the highest quality of care to our community.



Dr. Karen Dushinski

Monika Penner

Morgan Bissegger

## COVID-19 Response Timeline





# Adult Counselling

**75%**

of clients had a reduction in trauma symptoms

**84%**

of clients demonstrated progress on goals

**98%**

of clients felt their counsellor understood the impact sexual violence had on them

When our community went into the initial period of lockdown in March 2020 the counselling team had to act quickly in order to ensure continuity of care for those we were supporting. Within a week, the counselling team completed extensive training in online counselling service delivery, and our team was one of the first in the province to offer online counselling services. Over the year, counsellors engaged in ongoing learning to ensure the highest quality of care for clients, and to ensure interventions were being appropriately and effectively offered online.

This year program development was centred on adapting to COVID-19 and maintaining the well-being of clinical staff as they navigated working from home and the impacts of a pandemic and difficult social climate. We ensured that technology use was on par with or exceeding standards outlined for client privacy and confidentiality, developed processes for informed consent for online therapy, and ensured clients understood the risks and benefits of intervention.

Our counsellors supported clients who were navigating the pandemic in a multitude of ways, from those who experienced additional isolation and anxiety, to those who found it healing and restorative. Boundaries had to be re-explored in counselling relationships for clients accustomed to using coping behaviours in their home that wouldn't typically be a part of in-office counselling sessions. Clients navigated creating safety and privacy in their homes, and our counsellors sought to support them in creating that safety. Issues like zoom fatigue, isolation, work-life boundaries, and holding separation between the traumatic narratives within sessions that were now being offered from counsellors' homes from their personal lives and emotions were all heavy challenges for the counselling teams.

Our biggest priority for the 2020-2021 year was ensuring consistency in supports as we navigated the pandemic, and supporting clients as they navigated grief, fear, and/or trauma associated with the pandemic and social climate over the year in addition to processing the trauma of sexual violence. We were happy to find that online services can be delivered effectively. In future when the pandemic and related safety restrictions ease, we will continue with a hybrid model with priority for in-person services to those with contraindications to online interventions and those requesting in-person services.



## Resource Package

Early on we developed a counselling resource package outlining what to expect from counselling, the impacts of trauma, self care, and information about accessing counselling virtually. Overall, we are proud of the ways we developed ethical practice through the shifting terrain of the year.

[Download now](#)

## Client Testimonials

"Keep up the good work, please don't ever lose funding. I think the most healing and support I got was from SACE. I don't know if I would have come out of this the same way without you. "

"I wish I'd known about SACE sooner, SACE really catered their therapy to me and that SACE was patient with me when I needed time to leave and then come back when I felt ready."

"Counselling has positively affected my ability to cope with the sexual assault and understand that it is truly not my fault. It has provided a safe space for me to share my struggles and be heard. Although every day is different, I am able to manage my stress and recognize when I need to regroup myself when feeling triggered or less in control."

"I have really struggled to click with a therapist in the past, but I truly valued my time with my therapist and appreciate the gift of her time and wisdom she has given me. It was refreshing and relieving to connect with someone who I felt truly cared and had both the knowledge and the desire to help me."



Another important part of ensuring trauma-informed, safe-feeling counselling supports for the people we serve is prioritizing ongoing professional development and program delivery updates that centre the needs of communities that are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence, and who experience disproportionate barriers to accessing appropriate supports. To recognize the impacts of the harm perpetrated by institutions as part of Canadian culture requires people to see that the trauma does not stop with just those directly affected, but carries through generations. It also requires that we reflect on the ways we have perpetuated stereotypes and assumptions about what it means to be Indigenous in Canada.

In order to authentically provide support to Indigenous clients, our clinical team has needed to reflect on where they came from and how they have shown up in the world. As a team, we remain committed to continually challenging our own assumptions and beliefs about how healing may look for diverse clients.

This year our clinical team participated in a training called *Historical Trauma and What I Have Learned from Counselling Indigenous People*, facilitated by Registered Psychologist Gwendolyn Villebrun. We also started developing a relationship with Dr. Auger, the developer of Wiwip'son swing therapy. Our agency has acquired a therapeutic swing for use with clients, and staff will start training on this therapeutic modality next year. We are excited to continue building relationships, learning, and building on the culturally informed supports we can offer for Indigenous communities.

While we seek to create a place that feels safe for all members of the community, we are still growing in our knowledge of how safety can be created in a system, when so many have been harmed and oppressed within systems espousing help. Saying we are here to help simply doesn't prove much. At SACE, we have been and remain committed to working with our clients where they are in the moment, knowing that within them is the capacity to grow and heal. We continue to engage in conversations exploring our own biases and in training focused on developing our ability to offer comprehensive and culturally supportive services. We recognize that the path of healing is meandering and by no means easy. We are working to establish relationships and partnerships with Elders and Indigenous-focused agencies in order to work towards integrative supports and offer a number of paths clients can take as they navigate healing from complex and deeply rooted experiences of trauma.

## Child & Youth Counselling

**245**

new child & youth client intakes

**68%**

of children demonstrated a reduction in trauma symptoms

Counselling for children and youth, and in particular young children, has been very difficult to navigate virtually throughout the pandemic. Early on, a small team of child and youth counsellors developed strict protocols and processes for supporting young children safely in person at SACE. We moved furniture to set up simplified therapeutic play spaces that could be easily disinfected, spaced out staff to different areas of the office, and started supporting children and youth on-site in July of 2020.

Imagination was an important part of adapting to COVID-19, as counsellors needed to support creativity and explorations of themes like family and power and control through a more limited set of play items. Therapeutic tools that couldn't be easily disinfected had to be removed from use — so no sand trays, no puppets, no costumes or stuffed animals. A few exceptions were made for specially reserved stuffies for the kids who loved them best, and the reception team stepped up to assist with all the extra disinfection needed between sessions. Items like the dollhouse that could be easily disinfected came into play more frequently, but simple things like changing dolls' outfits or diapers weren't possible, and in general toys and items made of cloth won't be back in use for some time to come. Art was a bigger part of sessions, and at first, each child accessing counselling had their own box of supplies reserved for when they came in.

Moving into our 2021-2022 year, we are continuing with our hybrid model of in-person and virtual counselling, although we are prioritizing in-person sessions for children under 10.



## Key Learnings

- ✔ Kids are better at wearing masks than everyone
- ✔ When given the opportunity children and youth will express their perceptions/understandings of the world effectively
- ✔ Group therapy for teen girls can be offered online and completed effectively
- ✔ Reduction of therapeutic tools (items in playroom) does not hinder a child's healing process

Navigating conversations related to race was a large theme this year, with many children of all ages looking to answer questions about the things they were seeing and hearing about systemic racism in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd. Coming into the new reporting year, children were also processing the news of the bodies of children found at an increasing number of former residential schools, creating conversations with both kids and parents about how to navigate these additional sources of anxiety. One small symbol of this impact and how it affected therapeutic play was that the nun toy became a bad guy this year.

The pandemic compounded on anxieties young clients experience, and supporting children in developing feelings of safety in community through the shutdowns was a big priority. Children and youth also needed to be supported in navigating grief, loss, and fear beyond that stemming from their experiences of sexual abuse. Loss of grandparents and other family members due to COVID-19, worries about family working in healthcare professions, fear that parents/caregivers would become ill and die from COVID or that they would get people around them sick, and confronting the realities of historical trauma and racism in Canada all added to the emotional load young clients were navigating. As part of our shifting interventions to ensure ongoing safety during the pandemic, the team developed a strategy to replace deep breathing as means of emotional regulation, and instead focused on progressive muscle relaxation, guiding children in making their bodies tight like uncooked spaghetti and then letting it be loose and floppy like cooked spaghetti.

2020-2021 saw many conversations with parents about navigating behavioural issues related to their child's anxiety, and also where they could cut things to try to manage their own capacity and mental health. Supporting parents in maintaining relationship with their child while also navigating their own fears, worry or trauma associated with the impacts of the pandemic (employment, finances, reduced supports) and impacts of the social climate (such as parents impacted by residential school findings or confronted with realities in media daily) was also regularly needed.

## Group Counselling & Psychoeducation

**76**  
new group programming  
client intakes

**96%**  
of participants felt more in  
control of their life and  
emotions

**98%**  
felt supported by the group  
facilitator

**92%**  
felt less alone after starting  
group

"The emotional impact (of my experience of sexual assault) changed with realizing I am not to blame for any part of the assault and that the assault affected my adult romantic relationships. This has led to the start of forgiveness of myself."

Group offerings this year were disrupted initially by the pandemic. After redevelopment of the experiential activities and spaces created for emotional safety within group frameworks, some groups started being offered again in the fall, with additional capacity dedicated to supporting clients through technology challenges. Supporting people in being able to process the content and their own experiences when they weren't in the same room to read body language was a challenge, meaning more intentional check-ins and boundaries had to be incorporated. Some clients were disappointed to not get the full in-person experience, for example going to sweats, sharing a meal, or crafting together, however overall we found that group counselling via technology can be an adequate and in some cases preferred delivery format for group programming.

The group therapy offered by SACE has continued to expand and adapt to meet the needs of our community. Over the course of the 2020-2021 year we adapted all of our counselling groups to run virtually in order to do our part in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Curricula for our core groups SASS, ASHA, and the men's group were updated to create more consistency across programs as they were being redeveloped for digital spaces. We continue to offer groups for:

- ✔ Adult Survivors Healing After Abuse (ASHA; women who experienced sexual violence as children)
- ✔ Sexual Assault Survivors Support Group (SASS; adult women who experience sexual violence in adulthood)
- ✔ Hope for Healing (teen girls group)
- ✔ Men's Group
- ✔ refleQT group for 2SLGBTQ+ Folks
- ✔ Wiwip'son Healing from Sexual Trauma Circle for Indigenous Women

Looking forward to 2021-2022, we plan to develop a new post-court support group to create space for clients to process their experiences in the justice system. Post-COVID-19 measures we will also continue to offer virtual delivery of groups based on demand.



This group developed for 2SLGBTQ+ community members and first delivered in 2019 was initially created to offer space for 2SLGBTQ+ folks to come together and process the unique impacts sexual violence can have within this community. This "space" had to be reimagined in light of COVID-19, and the group was put on hold when in-person delivery became impossible in March. Our facilitators stayed in touch with participants about their needs, and the group was able to come together digitally in the fall to finish out the group. RefleQT has received wonderful feedback, and we are excited to continue to offer this group for the 2021-2022 year.

**"This group felt like old friends getting together and opening up and really talking and hashing things out. Like I really belonged, no judgements, just an honest sense of belonging."**

**"I found a lot of encouragement and emotional support through being a part of this group. The group came at a time when I needed it most."**

**"I received suggestions from facilitators or group members that I was able to implement to improve my internal narrative and relationship with my partner."**

**I learned:**

- **To stand up and take pride in my sexuality**
- **That no is reason enough**
- **How powerful it can be to share aspects of my story with people who have had similar experiences and can empathize**
- **That I am not alone**

## Wiwip'son Healing from Sexual Trauma Circle for Indigenous Women



This group was first developed in 2019-20 for Indigenous women (2-spirit and trans inclusive) who have experienced sexual abuse. It is co-facilitated by an Elder and Indigenous Psychologist, who weave traditional teachings with psychoeducation. This trauma-informed program recognizes the impacts of colonialism that have perpetuated the sexual violence of Indigenous women. For many of the women, this is one of their first introductions to culture and traditional teachings and so great care is given to providing an inclusive and non-judgmental space.

The first group ended abruptly due to COVID-19 restrictions but has been redeveloped for online delivery. We completed two online groups in Fall 2020 and Winter 2021, with plans to continue online delivery for Fall 2021/Winter 2022. The connection and traditional practices of the circle has been retained as much as is possible, and we intend to bring back in-person delivery and ceremony as soon as it is fully safe to do so. One new addition to the program this year has been the inclusion of an Auntie, who serves as a peer-mentor.



Facilitated by  
**Gwen Villebrun &  
Kookum Ruth Cardinal  
de Ubiera**



## Solidarity Group for Immigrant Women

In early 2020, SACE was in the pilot phase of a new community counselling program when COVID-19 rapidly and decidedly shifted what it could look like to do community work, or to address barriers to support. In the early days of the pandemic our new community counsellor pivoted to support our pandemic response, helping to create and distribute digital support packages with information about supports available via distancing, information about trauma impacts, and emotional regulation strategies. She also reached out to key agencies to offer support, and worked to help our clinical team with the transition to online services, and supported Client Care in calling out to everyone on our waitlist to ensure people were informed of the changes to service delivery and as resourced as possible. As the year continued, the pilot was able to meet many of its original goals. To read about this project, visit the Highlight: Responsive Program Development In a Pandemic section of this annual report.

As the year progressed, our community counsellor and diversity and inclusion program manager engaged in community consultation and sought feedback about the needs of immigrant communities. This learning led to the creation of Souldarity, a psychoeducational group for immigrant women developed and delivered in collaboration with Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA). The team worked hard to develop brand new tailored content, forms, and processes needed to run this group.

Souldarity is designed as a psychoeducation and support group for people who identify as immigrant women (trans inclusive) and who have experienced trauma or abuse. It is for people of any cultural or spiritual background who immigrated to Canada or come from an immigrant family (second generation). We designed it to not be a therapeutic group, as many community members may not feel ready for therapeutic interventions. It is a friendly, safe and kind space for group members to get introduced to learning about topics and having discussions. It is for group participants to learn about topics such as healthy relationships, consent, trauma, boundaries, self-care skills and community care through a culturally safe lens, and to create a safe network of support with other immigrant/racialized/BIPOC folks. The importance of having these supportive safety network spaces was also informed by the racial justice conversations that came to light in the media through 2020 and 2021, through events stemming from or responding to the murder of George Floyd. This group was designed to hold space in a way that is sensitive to the complexities of racial trauma. The first round of our group in early 2021 was a wonderful success, supporting eight immigrant women with empowering access to this education. We will be offering this group again in September 2021 and early 2022, and hope for it to become a permanent offering. While seeing the benefits and success of delivering this group online with adaptations, we also hope to be able to run it in person in a community space in the future.

Facilitated by

**Reena Samra, Meital Siva-Jain & Naheed Amjad-Minhas**



## Skills for Change

While it was not offered in the 2020-2021 year, we are re-piloting our Skills For Change psychoeducational group in May of 2021. The goal of this group is to support adult clients on the waitlist with tools to help them with emotional regulation and readiness for counselling.



## Police & Court Support

**94**

Self-referrals to the PACS Program

**157**

People supported

**48**

Ongoing client files managed

**158**

Hours of police, court & crown accompaniment

**A notable impact of COVID-19 is the shared experience of isolation that affected our communities.**

As such, this past year it was instrumental to strengthen connections with clients and community partners. Police and Court Support engaged in purposeful networking and collaboration to reduce the impacts of this ongoing challenge.

Police and Court Support adapted to the shift in client needs by providing ongoing support as clients responded to additional, unexpected stressors as a result of the pandemic, while simultaneously navigating the significant delays in the criminal justice process. PACS provided regular check-ins, resources, materials, referrals, and coping strategies to clients over the last year.

Police and Court Support has continued to network with a variety of community partners to ensure that clients are not being lost within existing service gaps amplified by the pandemic. We enhanced coordination of services with police-based and community-based victim services organizations, police, Crown, and community agencies.



PACS also collaborated with CPLEA (The Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta) to develop new resource materials for the community.



[Learn more](#)

## COVID-19 Impacts

Police and Court Support (PACS) service delivery was met with various challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. A temporary suspension of in-person services was extended, and PACS services transitioned to digital service delivery (phone, video, email).

Court matters experienced considerable delays as a result of COVID-19, which compounded onto pre-existing delays that the Courts had already been experiencing. Clients are subsequently waiting much longer than usual to have court matters addressed, extending their experience in the criminal justice process. This has resulted in PACS clients needing support for longer periods of time. The constant changes and updates from Alberta Courts have also created confusion for clients. Police and Court Support addressed these challenges by maintaining regular contact with clients, providing ongoing clear and simplified information about court updates and procedures, as well as liaising with clients and Crown Prosecutors about the status of their files and the implications of delays (for example concerns about Jordan's Principle applications). PACS provided ongoing emotional support for clients navigating their trauma symptoms, engaging in care and coping strategies to support clients through extended waiting periods and connecting clients with meaningful resources and referrals to various organizations to address specific needs outside of police/court matters.

## Client Testimonials

"It was so helpful to have you at court with me, thank you for the support"

"Felt less fear when reporting"

"Thank you for the support, PACS is a lifesaver"

"I appreciate the warmth and kindness"

"Thank you so much for letting me know you are still here for me for support, it means so much"



## Impact Stories

A prevalent theme in the overall impact of the Police and Court Support program is that it helps clients feel heard in their experience, while also supporting opportunities for clients to vocalize their experience in a meaningful way. This has been a common thread with clients who have experienced historical sexual assaults. One PACS client shared that they did not report their experience for several decades, as it did not feel safe to vocalize it: sexual violence was not openly discussed on a larger scale, and the weight of shame felt even heavier during that period of time. This client expressed that the existence of PACS services made it feel more manageable to speak about their experience openly, which felt healing for them, while also receiving assistance to get through the criminal justice process.

There are additional considerations for people who have experienced sexual violence and are going through the court process. The lack of control over the prosecution of their file and outcome can cause additional frustration and harm. PACS provides information and support to clients about the existing opportunities in the court process where a client can vocalize their experience and the impacts, including a Victim Impact Statement. One PACS client accessed this service and later provided feedback about their journey of writing and presenting a Victim Impact Statement at the time of sentencing, advising that it was both emotional and empowering to share the impacts of the harm out loud in a courtroom. This client expressed feeling moved, as they witnessed firsthand how the judge considered their words and the effect it had on the sentencing decision. They articulated that it was a powerful moment for their healing, thanked PACS for the ongoing support, and advised that they have continued to use their voice beyond the courtroom by sharing their own experience of participation in this process while encouraging others to consider completing Victim Impact Statements.

**Nicki Reid** (she/her)  
Police and Court Support Advocate

# EPS Case Advocacy Review Project



In 2020, SACE and the Edmonton Police Service's (EPS) Sexual Assault Section (SAS) entered into a formal agreement to participate in Sexual Violence Advocacy Case (SVAC) Reviews.

The SVAC review team, which is comprised of SACE representatives from different program areas, conducts quarterly reviews that take a second look at all EPS files that did not lead to charges, and provides feedback to help improve on future investigations to ensure the needs of sexual assault survivors are being met. In some circumstances, cases may be reopened and further investigated based on the feedback from the SACE team.

The goals of the program are to:

- ✔ Remove the burden from individual survivors to advocate for themselves if they have a negative experience in reporting to police;
- ✔ Act as a tool to ensure all people, regardless of privilege, resources, or access, have a third party review their reporting experiences, and advocate on their behalf;
- ✔ Ensure investigations are incorporating knowledge and best practices in addressing sexual violence, trauma, and power dynamics, and not replicating or responding to myths;
- ✔ Establish ongoing case-by-case, community-based oversight as a permanent mechanism in sexual assault policing;
- ✔ Identify potential problematic trends, and provide recommendations on how to address them, in order to shift not only individual behaviour, but create institutional change;
- ✔ Establish a culture where accountability can be relied on between police and SVAC advocates in the communities they police;
- ✔ Improve the overall quality of sexual assault investigations.



Community Engagement

# COVID-19 Pandemic Response

## Each program has shown incredible courage, creativity, and innovation in the ways that they have worked to adapt their services and service delivery.

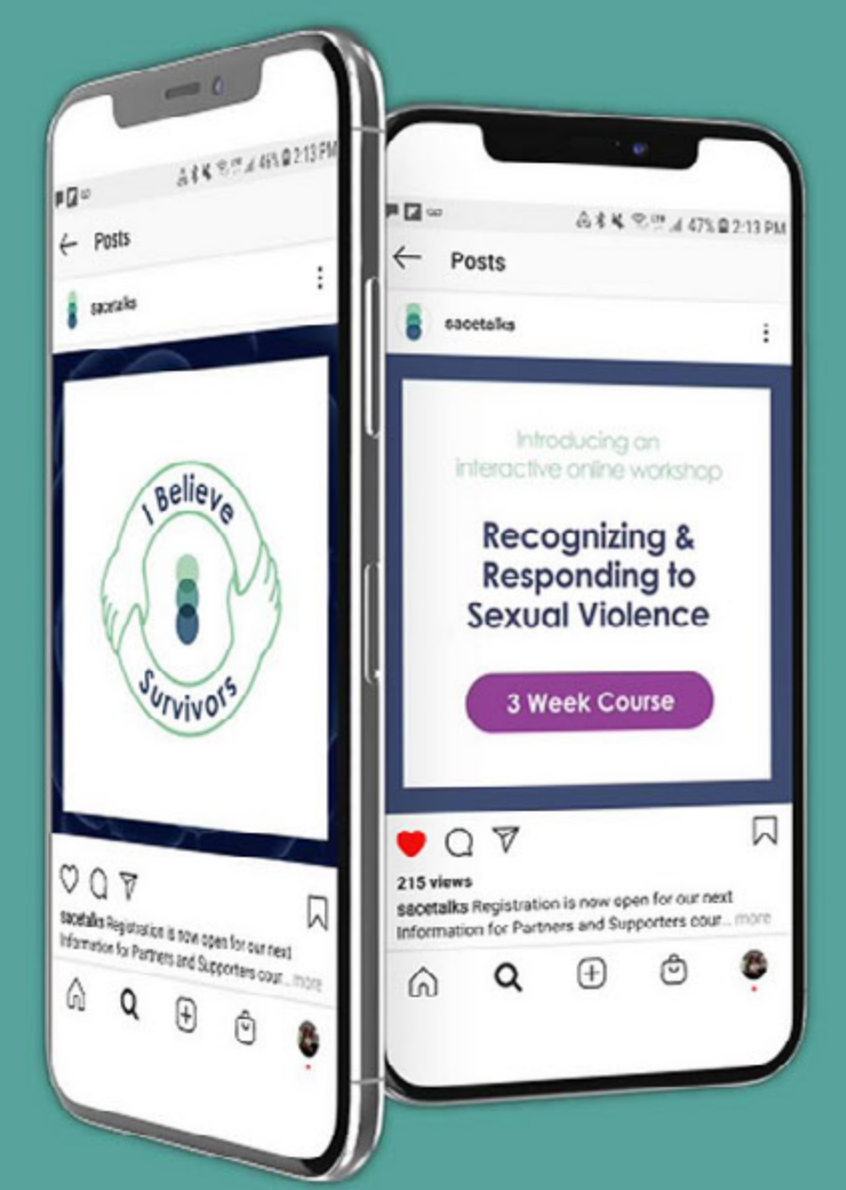
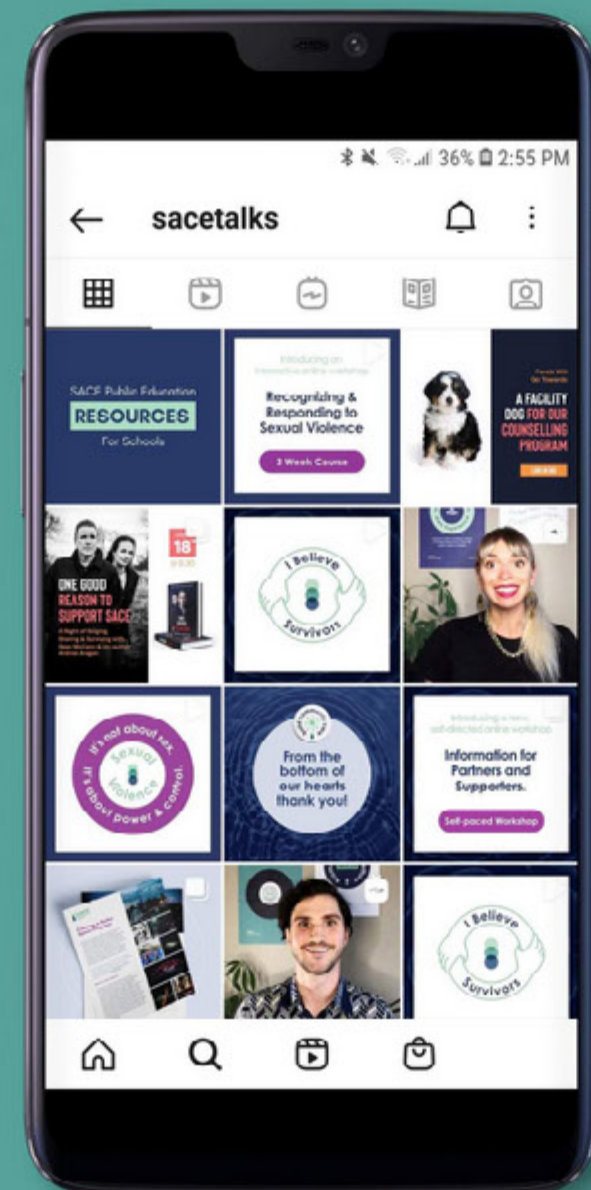
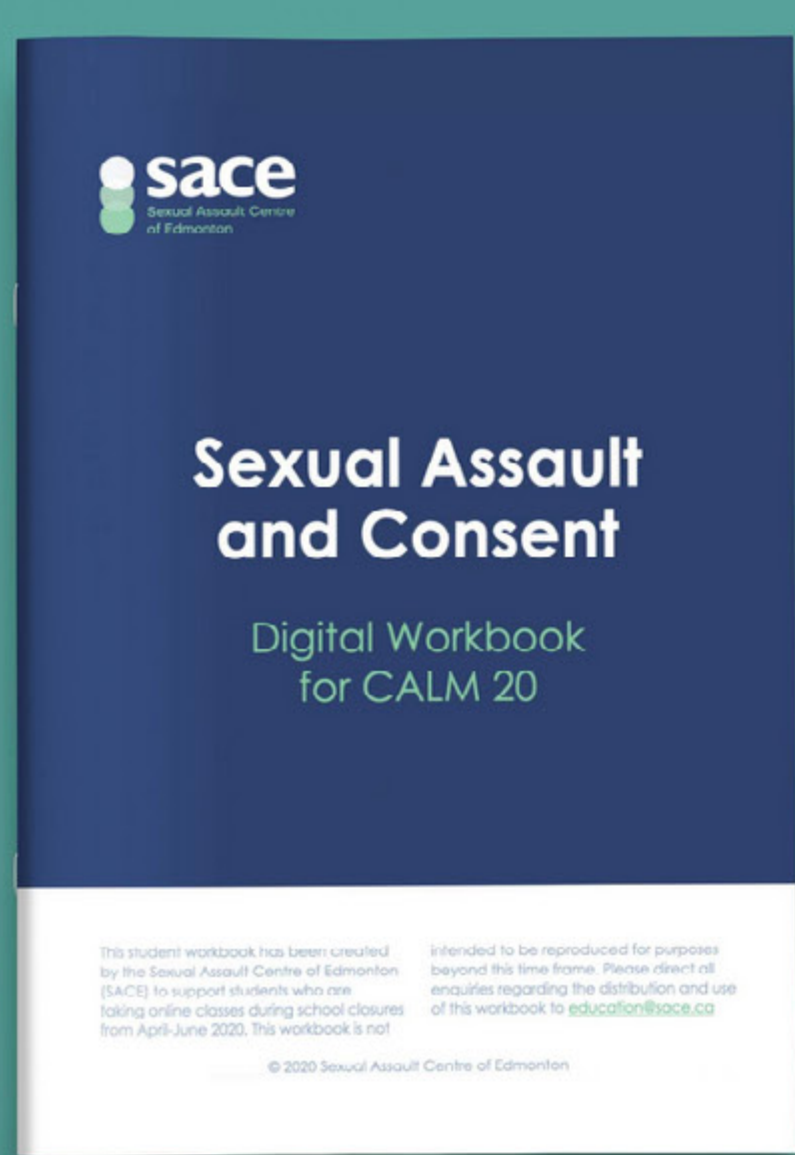
In the transition to initially working from home in early 2020, the CE team surveyed schools, organizations, and businesses to assess emerging community needs. A clear and comprehensive digital strategy was then created, and subsequently used to guide our work and coordinate our various community engagement efforts. Recognizing that our work would be impacted by circumstances beyond our control, our team created a new digital strategy every 3-4 months; this helped us to be prepared while it also allowed us to pivot and adapt as the pandemic evolved. This creative and flexible approach was one of the reasons our team was so successful in providing a range of services throughout the pandemic without compromising the quality of work that the community has come to expect from SACE.

While working from home it was, and continues to be, essential for our team to have access to computers and laptops with audio and video capabilities. These resources have made it possible for our team to safely and effectively connect with each other, with community members, and with our community partners via technology. Though we have worked primarily from home since March 2020, our team also accesses resources at the SACE office as they are needed.

It is likely no surprise that our team had to significantly adapt the content, format, and delivery of our various types of community engagement work in a short period of time. In our transition to online service delivery, we learned that different types of online offerings would be necessary in order to meet the diverse needs and circumstances created by the pandemic. We experienced challenges in the process, as there was no precedent for us to follow, but our team rose to the occasion. Each program has shown incredible courage, creativity, and innovation in the ways that they have worked to adapt their services and service delivery. They have met and overcome all of the limitations and restrictions created by the pandemic, and they have worked tirelessly to engage and connect with our community at this time.

Though there have been challenges, I am proud of our team's resilience, hard work, and creativity. We have been enormously successful in adapting to the situation and we have found many different ways to increase the accessibility of our services while meaningfully connecting with our community during this time of crisis. Though it is impossible to say what the future will look like, our team is prepared; we will continue to monitor the evolution of the pandemic, listen to the needs of our community, and adapt our services accordingly. Finally, when the pandemic has passed, we will not abandon the work that we have created throughout the past year. Our community engagement programs are stronger now that we have the ability to offer both virtual and in-person services. As such, our work throughout 2020 will have meaning and longevity past the pandemic, and these new ventures will continue to increase the range, accessibility, and impact of our work.

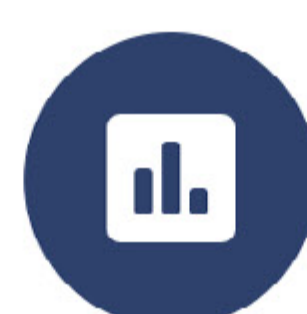
**Nikki Bernier-Singh**  
Director of Community Engagement



## COVID-19 Response Timeline

### Assess Community Needs

- The community engagement team was the first to make the shift to work from home. In the initial transition the CE team surveyed schools, organizations, and businesses to assess emerging community needs



March  
2020

April  
2020



### Move to Online

- The public education and community and agency development teams collaborated to quickly release a PDF booklet version of our Sexual Assault and Consent course, for use by teachers of high school CALM classes to facilitate students' self-paced learning from home
- A digital strategy team comprised of key staff across both agency departments was formed to triage and streamline projects and agency communications. A clear and comprehensive digital strategy was then created, and subsequently used to guide our work and coordinate our various community engagement efforts
- Prior to March 2020, the public education team did not offer any education services online, and by April 2020, we had successfully transitioned to offering our services online

### Social Support

- In May our team launched a 2.5-month social media initiative to share resources and informative videos about topics of interest, as well as highlight the programs we offer and the services available to people during the pandemic. By end of summer we were promoting newly-developed online courses



May  
2020

June  
2020



### Digital Strategy

- Recognizing that our work would be impacted by circumstances beyond our control, our team created a new digital strategy every 3-4 months; this helped us to be prepared while it also allowed us to pivot and adapt as the pandemic evolved

### New Online Course

- The public education team launched a new online self-paced course platform and the first of a series of education and psychoeducation courses available to the public



July  
2020

September  
2020



### Virtual Volunteer Training

- In fall 2020, SACE offered its first ever virtual volunteer training
- SACE also hosted its first ever virtual fundraiser, featuring the former lead singer of Great Big Sea

### New Psychoeducation Group

- Diversity and inclusion and pilot community counselling program staff collaborated to launch the new Soulidarity psychoeducation group for immigrant women, with an online delivery format and strategies to support connection despite the digital platform



February  
2020

2021



### Diversifying Our Services

- Our programs are stronger now that we have the ability to offer both virtual and in-person services. As such, our work throughout 2020 will have meaning and longevity past the pandemic, and these new ventures will continue to increase the range, accessibility, and impact of our work

## Support & Information Line

**13,760**

hours staff and volunteers provided support on the line

**483**

phone conversations on the AB One Line Northern Hub

**693**

chat conversations on the AB One Line Northern Hub

**2,092**

calls on the SACE SIL

2020 – 2021 was a year of pivoting for the [SACE Support & Information Line](#) and the northern hub of Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence. Less than one year after the launch of the One Line, SACE transitioned to remote working. Luckily, our volunteers were already used to working remotely, and their ability to remain committed to offering specialized support to Albertans is truly commendable. During this time, volunteers supported folks on the phone, by text, and by chat who were impacted not only by sexual violence, but by the global pandemic. The number of community members in Edmonton and across the province reaching out for support increased, but we adapted procedures and policies to ensure the lines were always staffed, and our dedicated team of volunteers and staff were always there to help support them.

Our support and information lines program always works closely with the volunteer program to ensure volunteers are equipped to meet the evolving needs of callers to the line. This year we revised our curriculum in the areas of domestic violence and risk assessment. As a major partner delivering services as part of Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence, this past year SACE also contributed to knowledge transfer about best practices in managing sexual assault support lines for other agencies in Canada undertaking this work.

**Rachel Grehan**(she/her)  
Volunteer & Support Lines Manager

"We've had a student here who has been trying to disclose to us what she has been going through but just couldn't do it. Yesterday, I had her chat with someone from your team using the chat function on your website. It was the final push of encouragement she needed. After chatting with SACE, she came into my office and told me everything. And now we are able to get her the support she needs. I know you understand this, but your work is making a difference."

-High school staff member

## Public Education

**299**

presentations

**8,887**

participants

**84%**

indicated that they felt better equipped to receive a disclosure

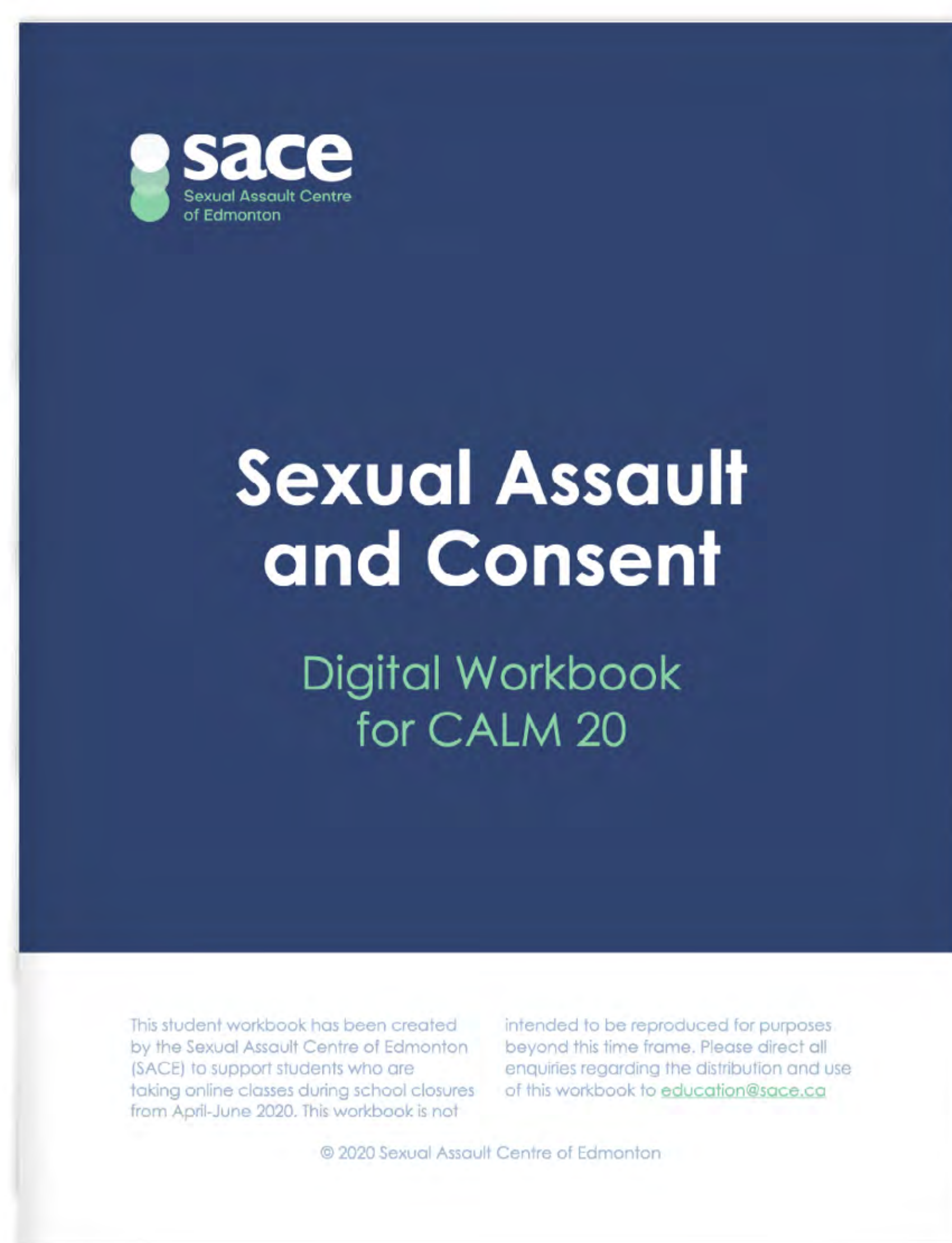
**85%**

of participants indicated they learned something new about sexual violence

In the 2020-2021 reporting year, the SACE public education program prioritized innovative approaches to meet the needs of a community adapting to unequalled challenges.

Public Education supported high school educators scrambling to fulfill mandatory CALM (Career and Life Management) curricular outcomes amidst the onset of the pandemic and shifting school policies with the creation of a digital workbook for students. The digital workbook is highly flexible and can be completed by students independently as they study asynchronously, whether from home or from school. Alternatively, it can also be completed and reviewed together as a class. As with all of our youth education, the workbook covers essential information related to sexual violence, including understanding consent, supporting a friend, and accessing community resources. It also features original videos developed by the SACE education team that have subsequently been of benefit in numerous education initiatives. The workbook was accessed by 3,092 students. The SACE public education program's ability to develop, market, and deliver the workbook within mere weeks of the pandemic's arrival in Alberta highlights our dedication to ensuring youth receive the information they need, even in the most unprecedented of circumstances.

As the pandemic progressed, the 2020/2021 school year commenced and junior high schools again began delivering health curricula. We responded to school requests by offering virtual delivery of our grade 7-9 presentations. As a team, we developed innovative delivery methods to accommodate the unique needs of each class, utilizing chat, microphone, video features, and interpersonal student collaboration. Many high school teachers also recognized the importance of having a live facilitator present the content in our CALM presentation to their students. As such, we provided live, virtual sessions to numerous grade 10-12 classes as an alternative to the workbook whenever requested. In all we facilitated virtual sessions for 9,210 youth ranging from small, intimate groups of about 10 students with unique behavioural and learning needs, to up to 5 combined classes at once. Facilitating virtual sessions to youth enabled us to walk students through an engaging, narrative approach to consent education, to respond to questions in real time, and to use our presence as facilitators to act as a safe bridge to SACE.



## Meeting the needs of adults and professionals

In addition to facilitating youth sessions, in 2020-2021 we continued to meet the needs of professionals and other adults seeking learning opportunities. Employing online learning tools such as Zoom polls, breakout rooms, Google jamboards, document sharing services, and various media, we adapted our professional development and adult sessions to engage audiences and provide the high level of quality education that participants have come to expect from SACE. When required, we also created pre-recorded educational videos tailored to the needs of specific audiences. In all, we reached 826 adult learners through these delivery methods.

**“I really feel like it gave me practical tools that I will be able to use if/when I come across sexual abuse in my personal or professional life.”**

**“I liked the video & how the presenter really went into detail about everything. I love how passionate the presenter was as well when presenting, it really made me want to listen & engage in the presentation.”**

## New in 2020: online courses

Perhaps the most innovative of all our online programming in 2020-2021 was the development of our first ever online courses. Hosted on the educational platform Ruzuku, these courses were developed to be accessible to individual community members seeking more information on sexual violence. The first of these courses, Recognizing & Responding to Sexual Violence, provides learners with information to identify various forms of sexual violence as well as the social contexts and norms that contribute to the perpetuation of this harm in communities. Discussion boards are included and actively monitored by educators to deepen participant conversations. While both courses cover providing support and accessing community resources, the second course Information for Partners and Supporters provides in-depth information regarding sexual violence trauma, and extended skillbuilding for supporting a loved one who has experienced sexual violence. 186 and 76 participants registered in each course respectively. These courses are especially accessible options for participants who prefer to work at their own pace, to participate in learning as an individual rather than as a member of a group or workplace, and for participants who may experience difficulty engaging in a largely auditory-based group setting.



## Decolonizing education work

As always, the education team remains committed to content creation that will meet the needs of unique groups, and particularly groups who experience disproportionate levels of sexual violence and may also be historically underrepresented in sexual violence programming initiatives. This year the public education team engaged in a multi-event process to learn about indigenous history in amiskwaciwāskahikan (colonially known as Edmonton), making use of available community created media. Incorporating this knowledge and building upon best practices, our educators engaged in personal and professional reflection to develop thoughtful and specific land acknowledgements to be used with different audiences and in a variety of educational contexts.

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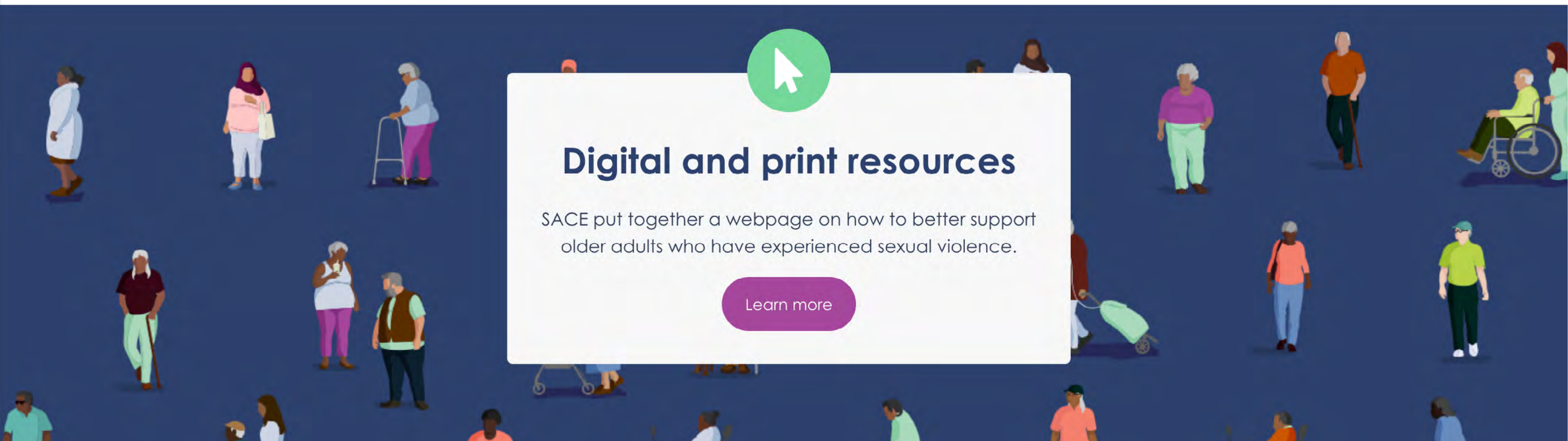


## Meeting the needs of underserved populations

Another population frequently underserved in sexual violence programming initiatives is older adults. To better meet the needs of this group, the public education team collaborated with members of the SACE diversity and inclusion and adult counselling programs to develop a training specifically for professionals and care providers working with older adult populations. This training provides those in the elder care sector with skills and knowledge to recognize sexual violence in their places of work, and to respond to older adults who have been recently or historically impacted by this issue. We are unequivocally enthused that this training will ensure that older adults in our community are met with the support that everyone deserves when disclosing experiences of sexual abuse.

Having successfully adapted our educational approach to meet the needs of our community members as they were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we look forward to the continued success of our online and virtual programming and always, always being there to provide essential anti-sexual violence education.

**Annette Klevgaard** (she/her)  
Public Education Team Lead



## Institutional Support

**150**  
Participants

**15**  
Establishments

**96%**  
of participants found the training effective in their ability to identify sexual violence

**96%**  
of participants found the training effective in their ability to enact bystander intervention strategies

## Responding to COVID-19

2020-2021 was a year that required a lot of adaptation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the institutional support program pivoted towards offering online training and consultation, and developing digital resources on safer spaces and responding to sexual violence as an organization.

Because of these adaptations, we are proud to report that we were still able to support 15 different organizations, ranging from non-profits, to arts organizations, to businesses, to improve their response to sexual violence. This support included customized training, policy development, provision of resources, and consultation.



## Some of the organizations we supported



ISLAMIC FAMILY & SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION



LATITUDE 53



### 5 Minute Friend

Despite most bars and nightlife establishments having to close over the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 5 Minute Friend program still provided 13 bystander interventions sessions to businesses and community groups looking to build their capacity for responding to sexual violence in their community.

**“In almost every situation it’s best to center the immediate needs of the person who is on the receiving end of the encounter.”**

– Member of arts organization after taking a bystander intervention training.



### Collaboration with the Edmonton Fringe Festival

In 2020, the SACE institutional support program started a new and innovative collaboration with Edmonton Fringe Festival to develop a digital training on Creating Consent Culture. This training will ensure that all 6000+ artists, producers, staff and volunteers formally associated with the Fringe Festival have the knowledge they need to respect consent, and to operationalize safer spaces principles. This digital Creating Consent Culture training will also be shared with Canadian Arts Festivals across Canada, and offered by SACE to other organizations as appropriate.

This digital consent training is unlike any other. It combines the anti-sexual violence knowledge of SACE with the storytelling and artistic expertise of the Fringe. The course features an audio play where participants follow 2 characters who are navigating consent in a relationship in which there is a power imbalance. Participants are given the chance to apply the concepts they learn in the course to the situation unfolding between these 2 characters.

This training is highly interactive and dynamic, and participants come away from the training with concrete skills for practicing consent in their own relationships and daily lives. We anticipate that this training will be completed by around 10,000 people each year.

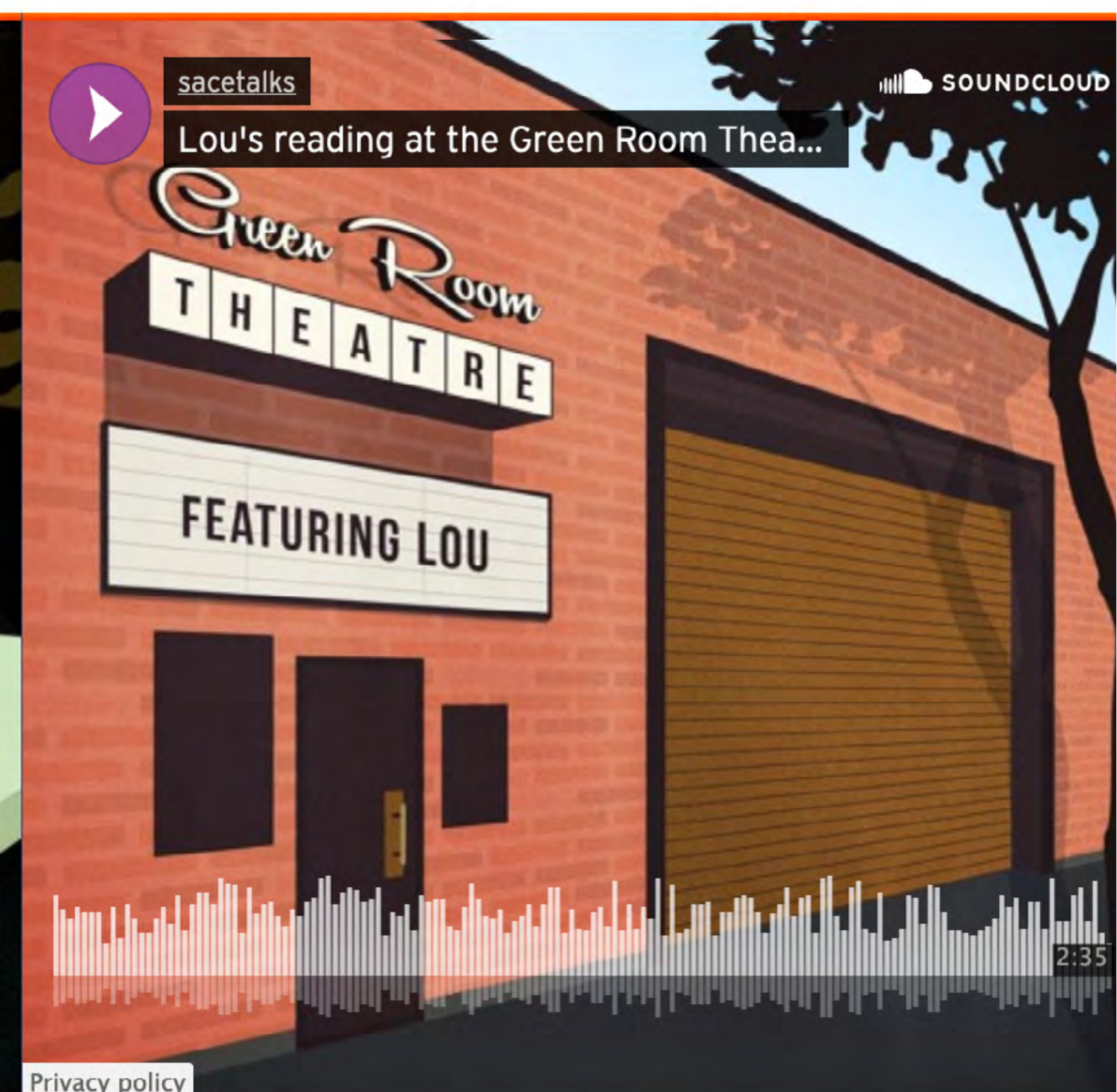
**Stephanie Olsen** (she/her)  
Sexual Violence Response and Prevention Consultant and Educator

#### Lou & Jamie Audio Play

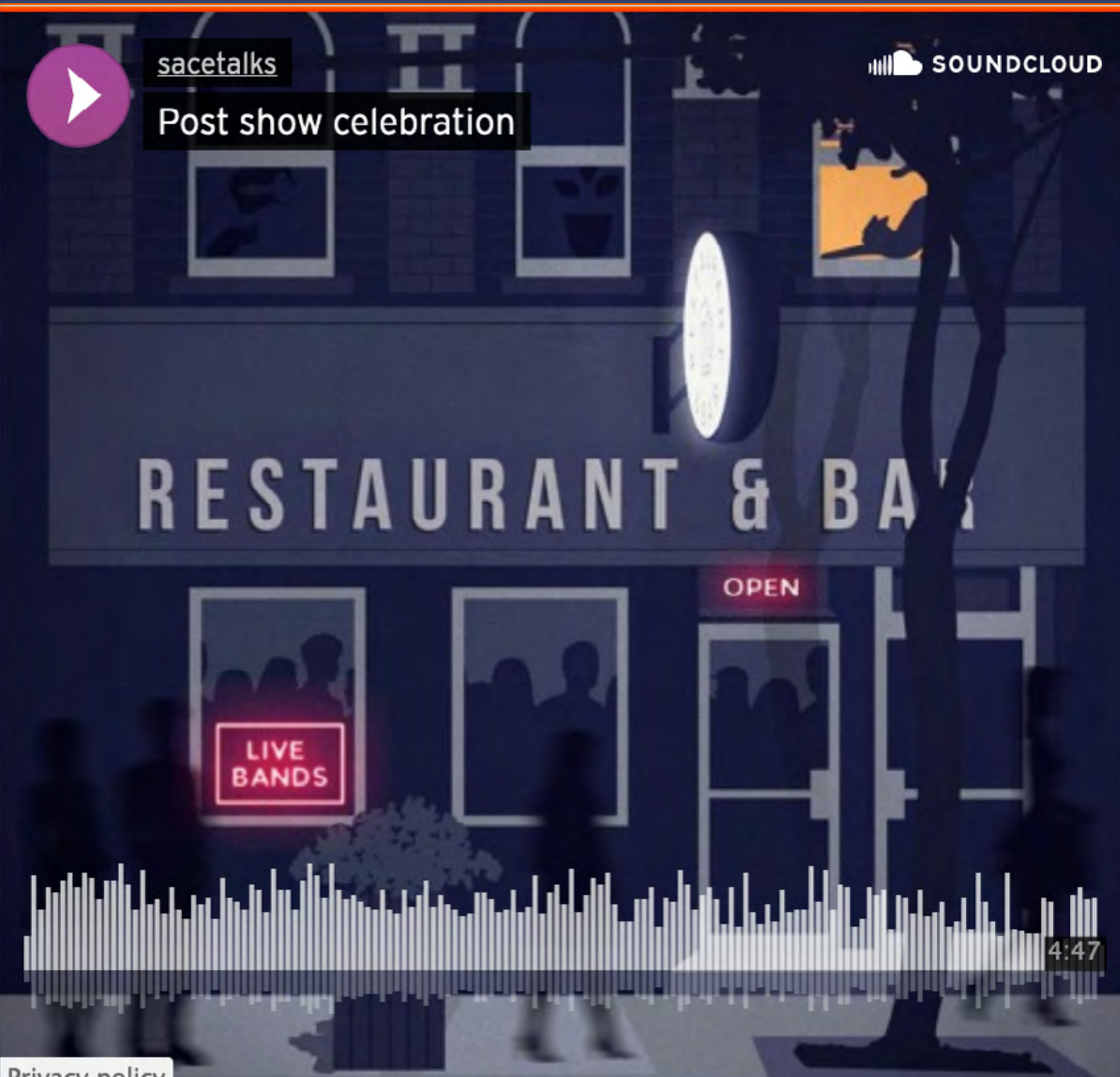
Follow Lou & Jamie in this five part audio play where they navigate consent in a relationship where there is a power imbalance.



sacetalks · Stage Left Cafe



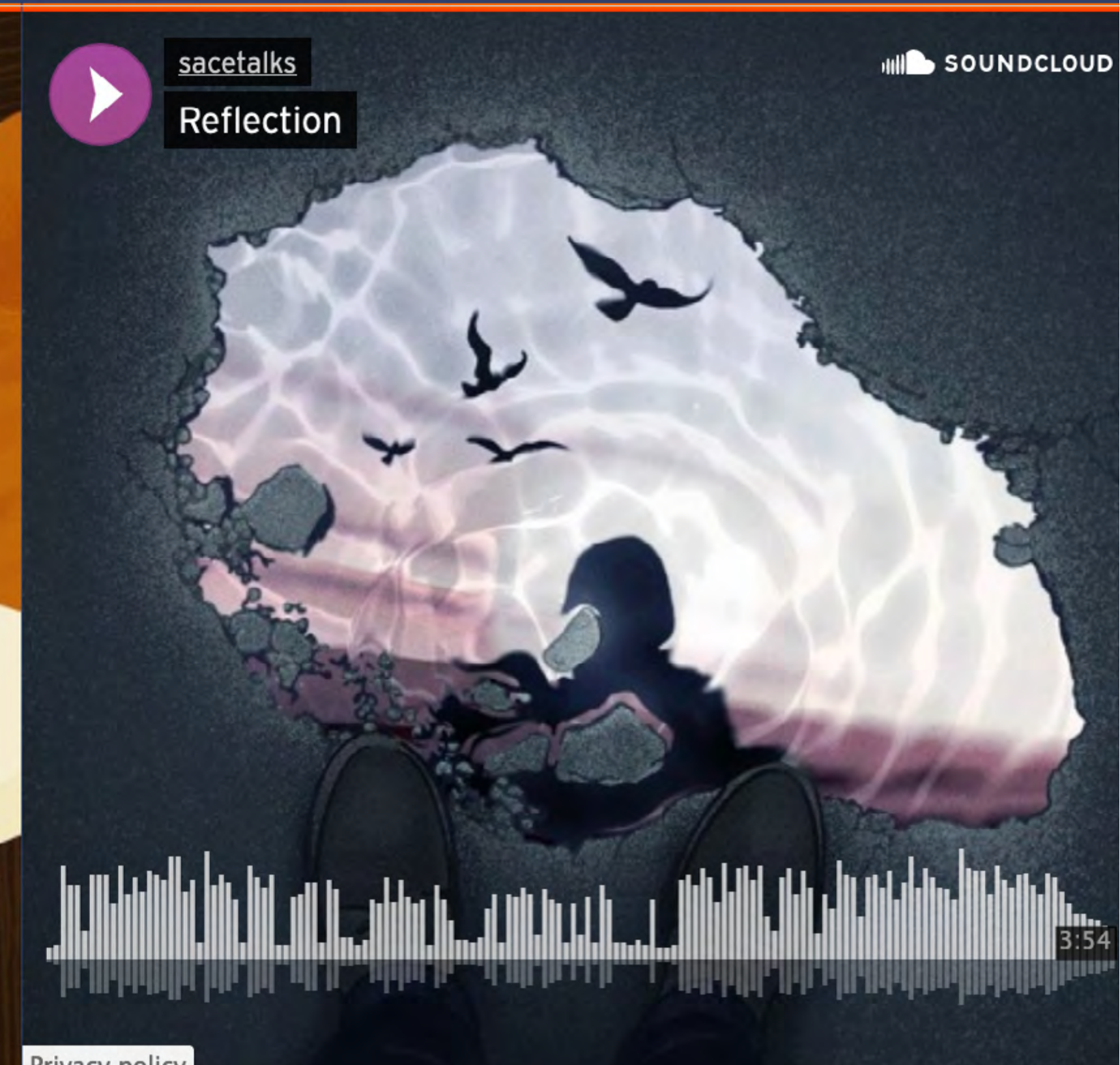
sacetalks · Green - Room - Theatre



Privacy policy



Privacy policy



Privacy policy

### Message from the Fringe

I have worked with SACE for the past two years as part of a Fringe Theatre / SACE partnership to develop and deliver sexual violence education to Fringe Theatre's large and diverse community, which comes together each year for the Edmonton International Fringe Theatre Festival. SACE's invaluable support includes:

- ✔ Providing evidence-based subject matter expertise;
- ✔ Demonstrating impeccable communication skills to teach sensitive subject matter in a way that is credible, accessible, and empathetic;
- ✔ Listening and responding to issues arising specifically within the performing arts industry; and most recently,
- ✔ Adventurously pioneering a new experiment with us: a digital learning platform to dramatically expand our capacity to offer sexual violence education beyond the Festival. Our first course, "Creating a Consent Culture" combines SACE's substantive knowledge with Fringe's storytelling prowess to make an interactive and impactful learning experience. We know that our 3000+ learners (including staff, artists, volunteers, producers, and technicians) will take their newfound skills with them into their places of business, recreation, and worship, their schools and homes, with the potential to create no less than an industry-wide culture shift toward sexual violence.



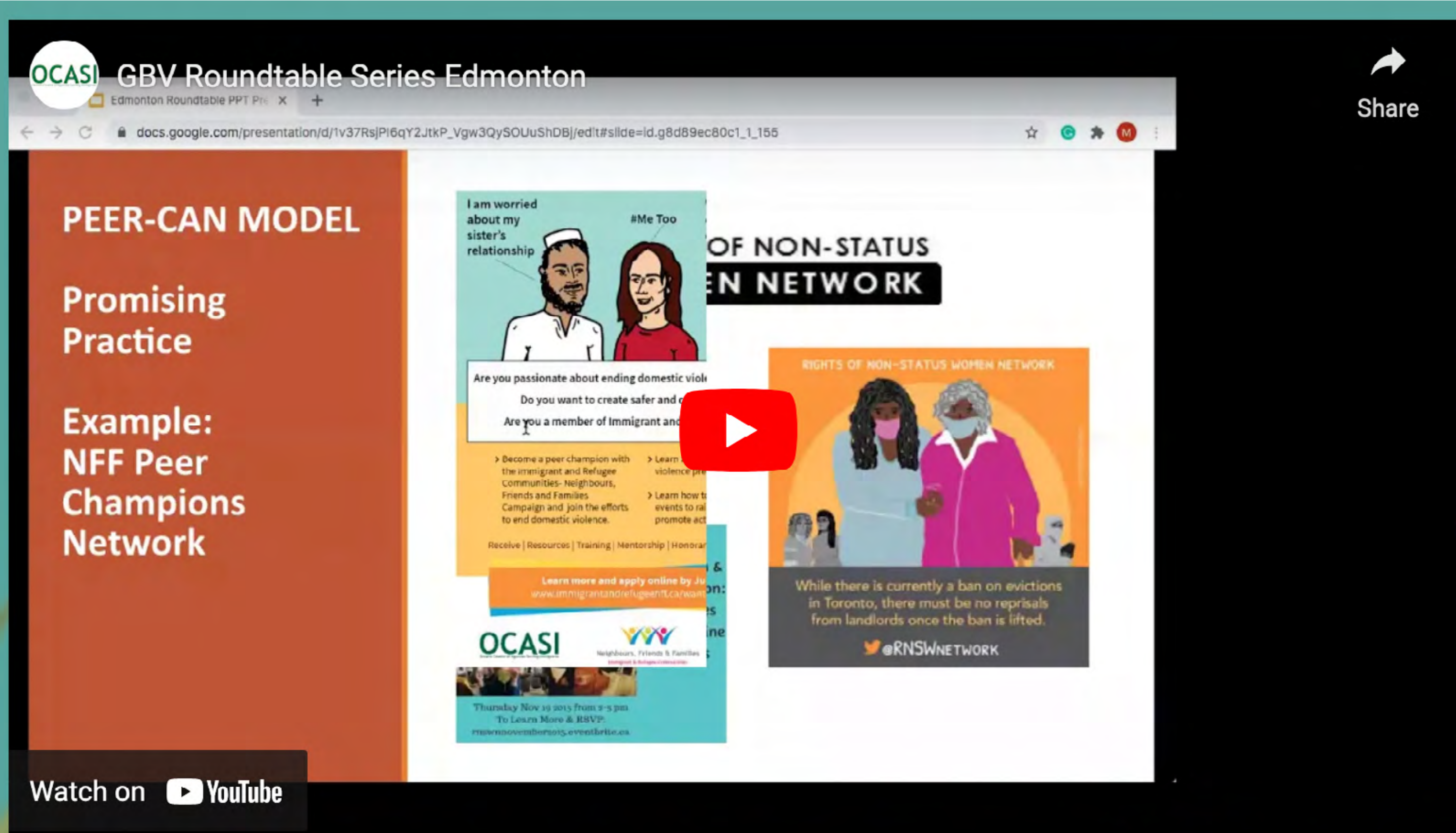
## Although this past year was challenging, it was great to witness the solidarity and support among colleagues, community members, and partner organizations.

At the start of the pandemic, our inability to physically visit communities was a barrier to service delivery. But within a few days the diversity & inclusion program transitioned to online delivery, and we were able to meet community members and partners who had safe access to technology. Since then, the SACE diversity program has continued its activities remotely, including content development, education sessions, consultations, and collaborations to support marginalized communities who experience sexual violence.

COVID-19 added an extra burden on people already struggling with the impacts of violence, poverty, and racism. Service providers found themselves overburdened by community needs. On top of that, some of us experienced personal loss because of the virus. We are thankful for the strong working relations that allowed us to receive and provide support throughout our work.

## Building leadership capacity to address gender-based violence against non-status, refugee and immigrant women across Canada

Since 2019, SACE has been representing Edmonton in a [national project](#) led by Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). The goal is to help build the leadership capacity of non-status, refugee and immigrant women (NSRI women) to shape and inform policies and services addressing gender-based violence. In September 2020, we hosted a roundtable event, called This Was Already a Crisis: Intersectional impact of COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against non-status, refugee and immigrant (NSRI) women in the context of COVID-19.



## Community collaborations to support newcomer communities

As part of the Immigrant Family Violence Prevention Committee leadership team, SACE participated in development work on an introductory online module about family violence in immigrant families, as well as holding regular meetings and hosting education sessions. This committee, supported by CIAFV, works to prevent family violence among immigrant families through advocacy and education.



Community Initiatives Against Family Violence



## Immigrant Family Violence Prevention Committee Article

Check out the article REACH Edmonton wrote about the Immigrant Family Violence Prevention Committee.

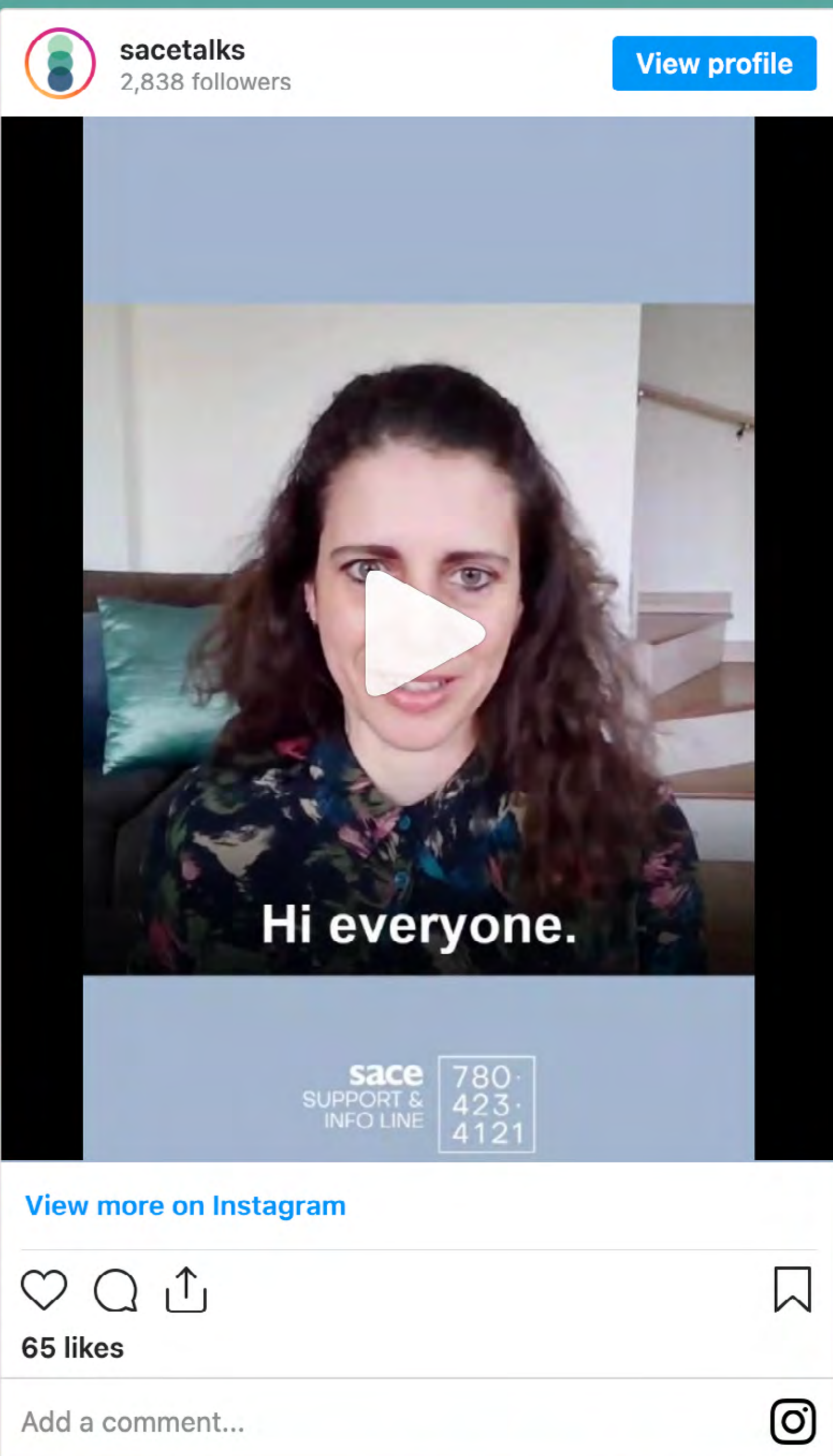
[Learn more](#)

## Landed: Relationships and consent in Canada

In 2020, SACE started development on a new standalone education and support resource for newcomers in Canada: a booklet we've called **Landed**. To ensure the resource would meet the needs of the community, the project included many consultations with partner organizations and community members. Landed was launched in February 2021, and received positive community feedback. The booklet helps newcomers learn concepts of sexual violence in Canada through exploring topics such as consent and healthy relationships, trauma, information about different forms of sexual violence, and relevant community supports in accessible language and design that is tailored specifically for the needs of newcomer communities. It is available in print and digital format at no charge. We look forward to offering *Landed* in other languages in the future.

**Meital Siva-Jain** (she/her)

Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Initiatives Team Lead



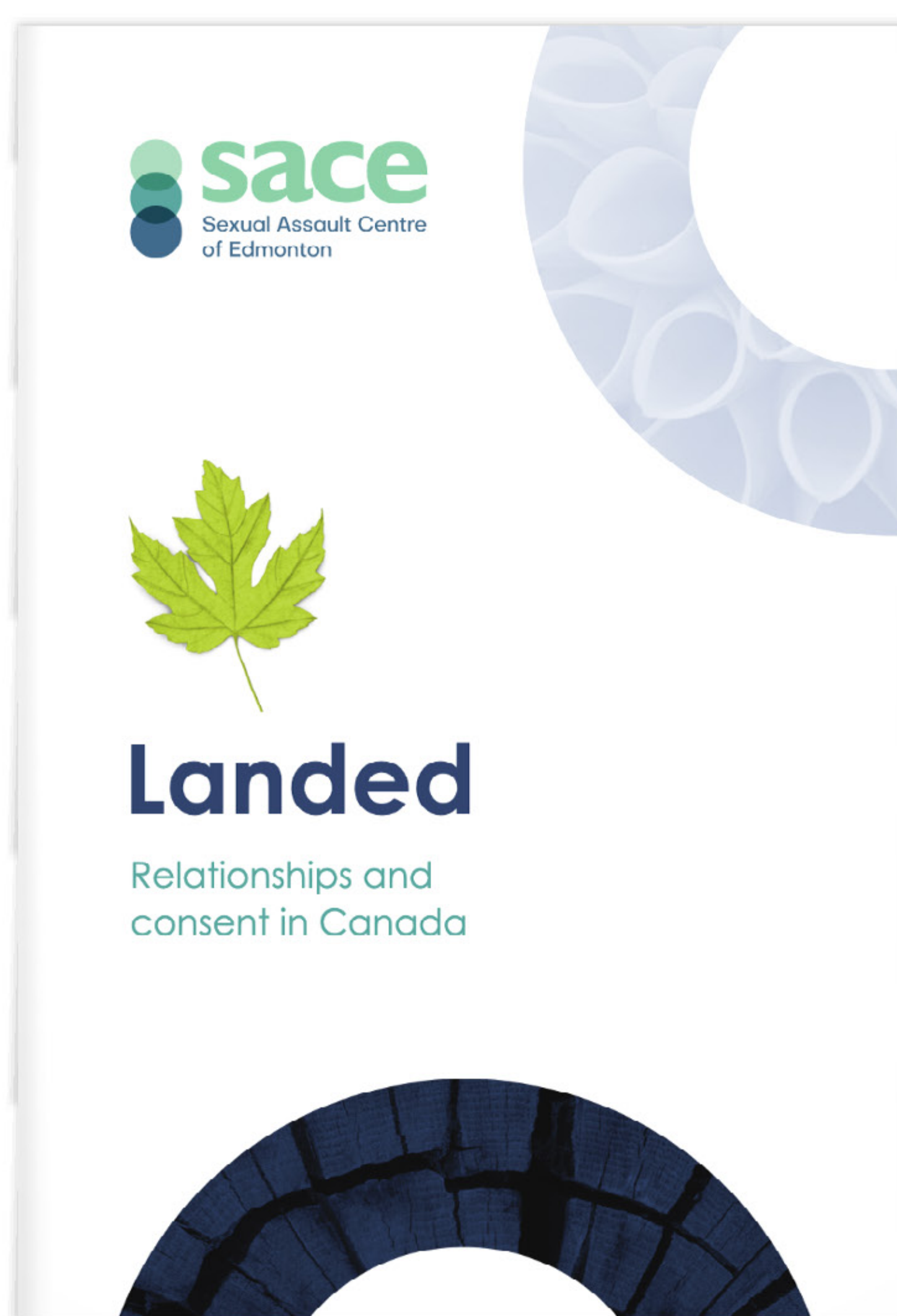
"I am very proud of offering the booklet *Landed, Relationships and consent in Canada* to the community. We received many positive feedbacks from community members who participated in consultations and filled up a survey, and from service providers who requested having the booklet available to their clients, including YESS – Youth Empowerment and Support Services and Edmonton public Library, Clareview branch."

-Meital Siva-Jain, SACE Diversity and Inclusion Program

"(The *Landed* booklet)... is already a gift. Hopefully we can participate of more workshops regarding this subject. It's really important to build a healthy generation"

- Community Member

1 / 52



## Highlight: Responsive Program Development In a Pandemic

Launched in January 2020 and significantly derailed by the pandemic when it hit in March 2020, the Community Counselling program offered by SACE has experienced significant challenges, learnings, and growth over the course of its pilot.

In early 2020, SACE was in the pilot phase of a new community counselling program when COVID-19 rapidly and decidedly shifted what it could look like to do community work, or to address barriers to support. In the early days of the pandemic, with support from the [Edmonton Community Foundation COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund](#), we pivoted to create and distribute digital adult counselling and child counselling support packages with information about supports available via distancing, information about trauma impacts, and emotional regulation strategies. Our community counsellor reached out to key agencies to offer support, and worked to help our clinical team with the transition to online services, as well as supporting the client care team in calling out to everyone on our waitlist to ensure people were supported through the transition to online service delivery and as resourced as possible.



### Adult counselling resource package

To prepare for counselling, SACE has created an adult counselling resource package that includes more information about what counselling is like, how trauma impacts the brain, and how to support your own healing.

[Download now](#)



### Child & youth counselling resource package

To support you before and during your child's time in counselling at SACE, this resource package includes information about what counselling is like, understanding how trauma impacts a child, and how to support your child during counselling.

[Download now](#)

## Supporting Evolving Program and Community Needs

While focusing on external relationship building in the community, the community counsellor also worked internally to assess how SACE as an organization can continue to expand on opportunities to provide inclusive and safe delivery of supports for communities that experience barriers and marginalization. This included sitting on our five Inclusion Committees – Newcomer, LGBTQ2S+, Older Adult, Accessibility, and Indigenous – to provide consultation, information gathering, and contribution to projects. As COVID-19 continued to impact access to the community, the community counsellor shifted to focusing on how to deliver services online. This started out with supporting the adaptation and tailoring of our Skills for Change group.

As the year continued, the pilot was able to meet many of its original goals through supports offered at key community agencies, offering support to their clients and staff in an online format. Partnerships included agencies such as iHuman Youth Society, Chew Project, Multicultural Health Brokers, Islamic Family and Social Services Association, and more. The community counsellor attended meetings with service providers, case consultations, provided individual virtual counselling sessions, offered resources and referrals, and facilitated many workshops, groups and programs specifically to newcomer communities.

One of the new and unique presentations that the community counsellor created was on the intersection of racism and sexual violence, and how to provide anti-racist, decolonized, culturally safe supports in newcomer and racialized communities. The community counsellor was able to offer this information to organizations such as MacEwan University to equip volunteers and service providers with knowledge and tools for how to address racial trauma and sexual trauma. She also worked together with the Diversity & Inclusion and Community and Agency Development on writing, designing, launching and marketing the booklet **Landed: Relationships and Consent in Canada**. The project was informed by numerous consultations with newcomer community members. To read more about this, please visit the Diversity & Inclusion section of this annual report.

Since 2019, SACE has been representing Edmonton in a [national project](#) led by Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). The goal is to help build the leadership capacity of non-status, refugee and immigrant women (NSRI women) to shape and inform policies and services addressing gender-based violence. In September 2020, we hosted a roundtable event, called This Was Already a Crisis: Intersectional impact of COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against non-status, refugee and immigrant (NSRI) women in the context of COVID-19.

## Some of the organizations we've worked with:



ISLAMIC FAMILY & SOCIAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION



iHuman  
Be a hero to your creativity.



Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants



MacEwan UNIVERSITY



Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative

## Community consultations and responsive program development

The community counsellor and Diversity and Inclusion Program manager facilitated community consultations and feedback gathering about what kind of support and counselling services were most needed in newcomer communities. We heard from stakeholders that individual counselling services may be a barrier, as it may not always be culturally fitting or safe, and there can be many other barriers to access such as transportation issues, childcare, and more. We were also told that speaking about sexual violence is a very taboo topic in many cultural communities, and therefore some folks may feel shame, fear, or anxiety about engaging in services to address sexual violence. We heard that utilizing a group format instead of individual counselling could be more flexible for people's needs, and offer opportunities to break down the stigma, engaging in important conversations and connection in order to address these areas. A consistent theme was that relationship building, community healing and community care through a cultural and spiritual lens would be important. Therefore, our community counsellor and diversity and inclusion program manager teamed up to create and launch a tailored psychoeducation and support group for newcomer communities. Through consulting with various service providers and community members, we were able to gather ideas about what would be important to include in a group and what the best ways to facilitate this would be. One of the key community agencies that we went to for feedback and guidance was the Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA). We decided to include a community partner in our delivery of this program in order to create a bridge for easier access in the community we were wishing to serve, since there can be stigma about accessing SACE in communities that are unfamiliar with our services. IFSSA decided to co-facilitate this group with us, and we worked hard to create this new group from the ground up. Solidarity, a group for immigrant women was born! For more about this group, please see the Group Counselling & Psychoeducation section of this annual report.



## Souildarity

A group for immigrant women

SACE and IFSSA have partnered to lead a new support group for immigrant women.



### Topics to be explored include:

- creating safety in your life;
- culture and spirituality;
- consent;
- trauma and the brain;
- triggers and emotions;
- resilience;
- emotional regulation;
- coping practice; and
- self-care and community care.

### Group Details

- For immigrant women who speak English
- Weekly sessions online every Tuesday morning from March 2 to April 20 (details will be provided during intake)
- For more information or referral for an intake appointment, you or your support worker or counsellor can email us at [communitycounselingsace.ca](mailto:communitycounselingsace.ca) or [naheeda@islamicfamily.ca](mailto:naheeda@islamicfamily.ca)
- If you have challenges that make attending this group difficult, let us know! Please mention in your email if you need support with childcare, technology, or anything else and we will do our best to help.

## Moving forward

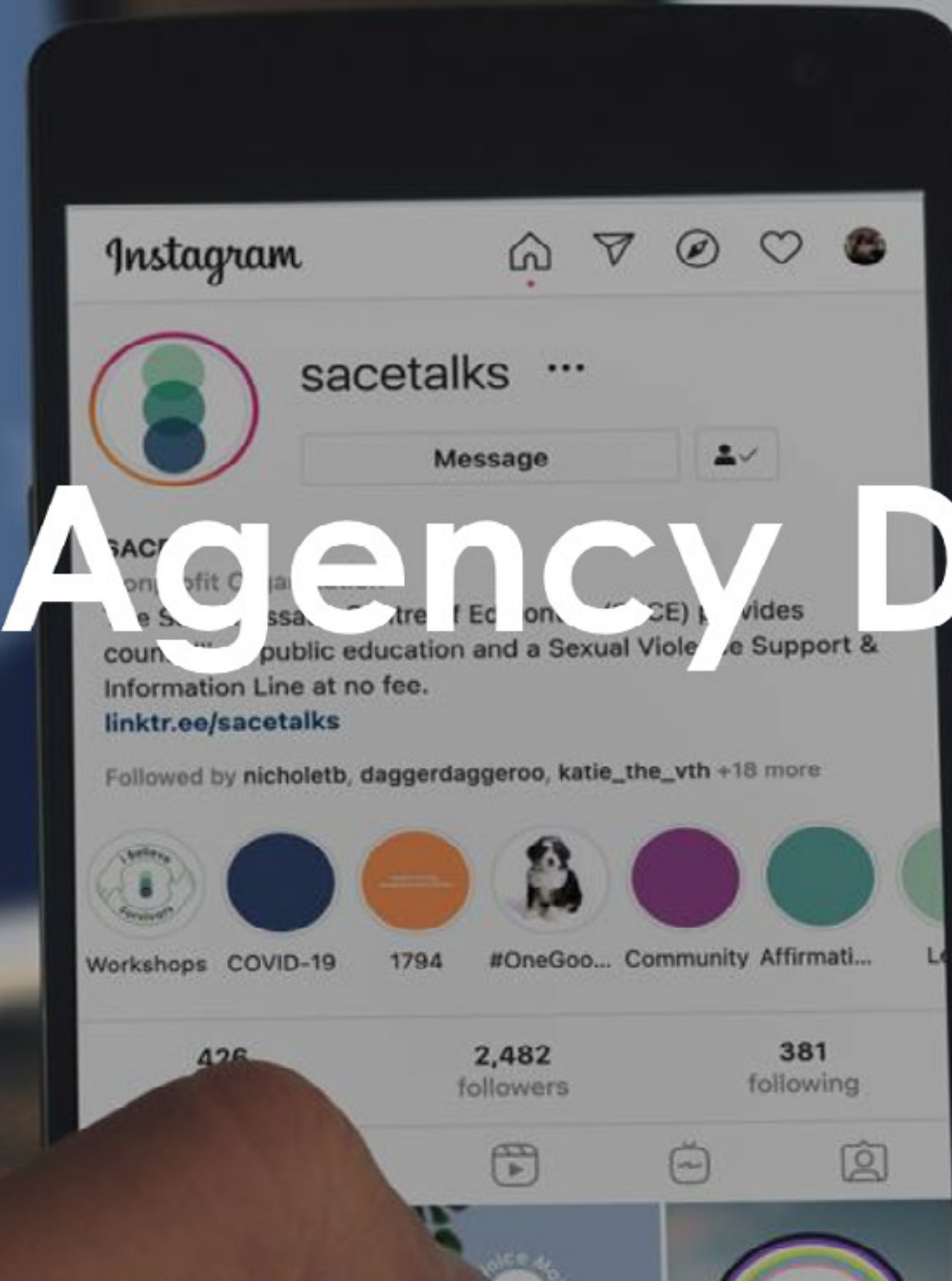
Overall, in spite of the challenges of engaging in community work during a pandemic, the Community Counselling project has successfully supported various diverse communities to have inclusive access to services in a way that addresses barriers, and represents their experiences in a culturally and spiritually safe manner. We anticipate for the 2021-2022 year that this pilot will be extended to further develop this responsive, supportive psychoeducation and community engagement work to better serve racialized and immigrant communities in Edmonton. We could not be more grateful to the Edmonton Community Foundation for their ongoing financial support of this important pilot project.

We are also grateful to the National Indian Brotherhood Trust Fund for their financial support of Indigenous-focused program development and decolonization work at SACE. We are excited and grateful for the learnings that have come from this community counselling pilot project and from our Indigenous inclusion committee and project staff, all of which have helped to inform our upcoming Indigenous Community Liaison role for 2021.

**Reena Samra** (she/her)  
Community and Client Care Support Counsellor



# Community & Agency Development



The 2020-2021 year was an incredibly busy one for our community and agency development team. In the early days of the pandemic, CAD staff coordinated with program areas agency-wide to form an interdepartmental digital strategy team to coordinate the communications needs of every program as they transitioned service delivery in response to social distancing measures. Supported by funding from the Edmonton Community Foundation and Canadian Women's Foundation, we worked with colleagues to create standalone digital resources such as guides for people on the waitlist to access counselling, self care and emotional regulation resources for community members grappling with trauma symptoms at home, and a new digital platform and templates for online public education course delivery. In all we collaborated to create 18 original digital resources on topics of interest to the people we serve, and shared these together with videos featuring SACE staff members outlining details of our programming and resources available as part of a social media strategy to maintain connection.

## Public & Media Relations

2020-2021 was a busy year for public and media relations at SACE. Our team prepared statements, speaking notes and briefs on topics ranging from support for important days of recognition, social movements, and new legislation, to positions on everything from the evolving pandemic and its connections to the spikes in sexual and domestic violence widely reported over the year, to important legal proceedings such as the Cindy Gladue murder trial, and its wider connections to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

17

op-eds or statements prepared

28

briefs or speaking notes prepared for media interviews

7

news articles

## Digital Communications

In a year of endlessly shifting terrain, the CAD communications team was able to advance the work of SACE, both internally and externally, and to present a strong, unified voice to the community on topics related to sexual violence and the supports available through the pandemic.

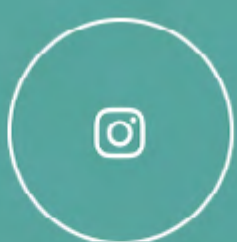
Launched for Sexual Violence Awareness Month in May 2020, we shared a series of 11 videos featuring SACE staff talking about their programs and new digital resources put together to support folks at home. The top performing video was viewed almost 2,000 times!

Posts with the most engagement resulted from new SACE programs and resources, like Souildarity and the Landed booklet for newcomers in Canada. Educational carousel posts on Instagram also performed well, with our "What is Play Therapy?" post reaching over 1,100 accounts, 35% of which did not already follow SACE. Our Instagram account saw the most growth this past year, with over 700 new followers.

In December 2020, we posted the SACE 45th anniversary video as part of our Giving Tuesday fundraising campaign. The video was viewed more than 2,800 times, with 203 likes and 1,421 impressions.

In March 2021, we ran several polls through our Instagram stories asking questions about the type of content our followers wanted to see. This has helped to us to align our content creation to what our followers were interested in, including posting more videos.

Social media and digital platforms are constantly changing. We hope to continue to include new trends and learn from our followers to increase our reach and diversify the content that our followers engage with.



# 16,768

engagements with SACE social media

# 8,173

social media fans and followers

# 37,775

unique users at sace.ca

# 113,534

pageviews at sace.ca

## Top Posts

358 likes

199 likes

107 likes

118 likes

## Top SACE Learn Page Resources

**Non-consensual photo sharing**

2,810 visitors

[Learn more](#)

**Victim Blaming**

1,290 visitors

[Learn more](#)

**Transformative and restorative justice**

1,034 visitors

[Learn more](#)

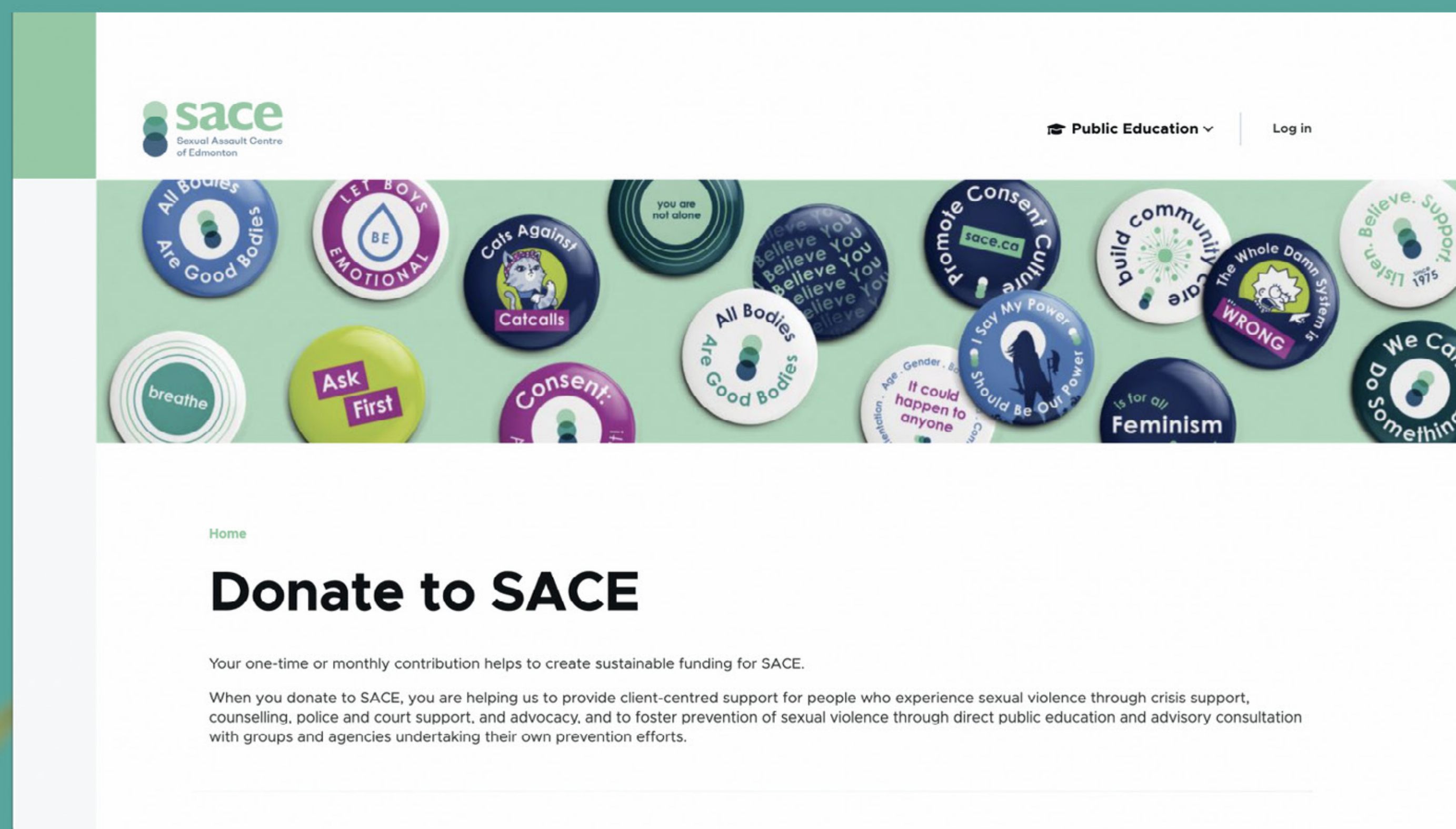
**What is child sexual abuse**

810 visitors

[Learn more](#)

## Agency Development

At the end of 2019, the CAD team began an ambitious project to review and rebuild, from the ground up, our agency's program theory and evaluations framework. The project began with deep in-person consultations with key staff from each of our agency's then 13 major areas of work. The timelines and format of this work shifted massively in March 2020 with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and for some time this project was effectively stalled, however we were still able to develop a preliminary SACE Program Theory and Context Guide to share with our funders, including updated logic models that reflect much of the invisible work that helps SACE to do our work as effectively as we do. This project will continue through 2022 as we refresh and add to program and agency evaluations tools, including a stronger evaluations framework to measure our progress on Strategic Plan goals, and work to develop a new client relationship, program management, and reporting tool tailored to our agency's work on the CiviCRM platform.



## Fund Development

This year our team worked harder than ever to meet the needs of our agency through fund development efforts. We submitted 17 funding proposals, completed funder reports and attended funder meetings and online events. We also built a secure new donations platform that minimizes fees on processing charitable donations, organized two digital fundraisers, and coordinated with 13 groups and individuals organizing their own fundraisers on behalf of SACE.

We are so grateful to the many individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies that supported our agency this year, without whom we could not have been as adaptive or responsive to the needs of our community.

We are grateful to have received grants in our 2020-2021 year from:

- Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF)- Community Foundations of Canada stream;
- Canada Summer Jobs;
- Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF)- United Way stream;
- Stollery Charitable Fund;
- ECF Community Grant Year Two Funding;
- Rotary Club of Edmonton;
- ECF COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant;
- Status of Women Canada Feminist Response and Recovery Fund;
- National Indian Brotherhood;
- Canadian Women's Foundation COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund (Received 2);
- CIP Project-Based Stream;
- Enabling Accessibility Fund;

**Sara Cameron** (she/they)  
Director of Community & Agency Development



# Volunteer Services

**101**  
volunteers

**65**  
support and information line  
volunteers

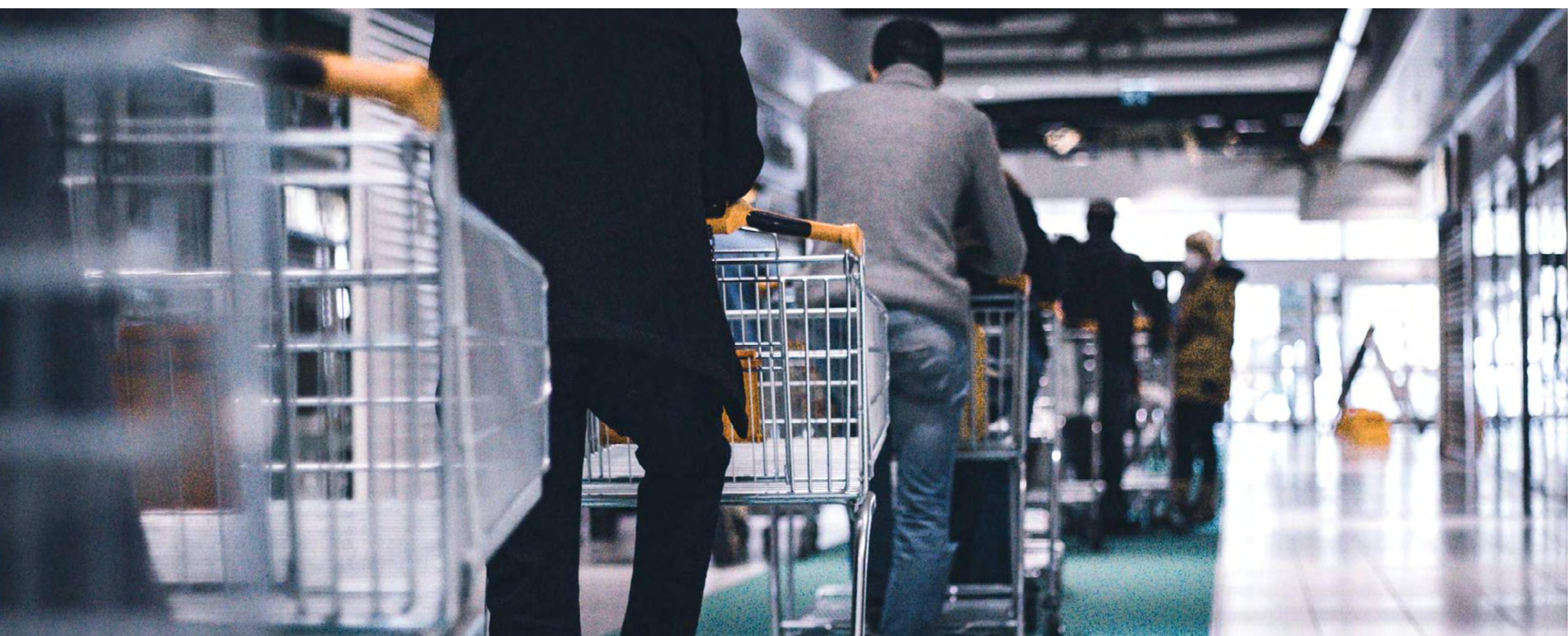
**5,000**  
volunteer hours on the  
support lines

**1,379**  
hours of volunteer training  
provided

**April 2020 to March 2021 marked a year full of resilience, dedication, and support from our vibrant team of volunteers.**

SACE began as a volunteer phone line in 1975, and volunteerism continues to be rooted firmly at the core of SACE values. Through the past year we continued our collaboration with Alberta's One-Line for Sexual Violence community partners, and poured many hours into the training, operation, and maintenance of the One Line. The One Line service is a collaboration between SACE, the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services (AASAS), Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA), and the University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre (UASAC).

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the Volunteer Services program at SACE. With the closure of bingo halls and casinos, we had to pause our fundraising program until we can safely resume in person. With our agency's work from home shift, the administrative volunteer program has also been paused until we are able to safely gather on-site. Community events have also been cancelled, which eliminated opportunities for booth volunteers. Finally, spring 2020 support line training was delayed and then eventually cancelled. As we quickly adapted to the changing times, we were able to digitize our entire training and offered our first Zoom training in the fall of 2020. A huge achievement for our department! Although several of our volunteer streams have been placed on pause, we are proud to say that the daily support lines never stopped and have continued to flourish. All of our volunteer meetings and appreciation events have been hosted over virtually, and despite COVID-19, we have seen the highest rate of attendance in the past five years.



## Volunteer Training & Ongoing Education

SACE prides itself on ensuring that our volunteers have the training and support they need to be able to comfortably and effectively fill their roles. We offer a free, 70-hour volunteer training program that helps prepare our Support and Information Line volunteers for their roles as supporters on the SACE Support and Information Line and Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence. This past year, as a result of COVID-19, we were able to run just one training in the fall of 2020, after retooling for online delivery.

Collaboration to deliver the One Line has forged deep connections between our agency other sexual assault centres in the province, allowing us to share our knowledge across agencies and elevating our volunteer programs. Each year the training curriculum is reviewed and evolves to meet the needs of the volunteers and community. This past year the focus was on reviewing risk assessments and domestic violence education.

Every month SACE hosts a volunteer meeting to provide our volunteers with an opportunity to connect with each other and the agency, refine their support skills, and to continue learning more about sexual violence and community resources. This year with the onset of COVID-19 we transitioned our meetings online, and were able to offer training on community resources, bystander intervention, historical trauma, counselling at SACE, grounding exercises, child abuse, and SACE services.

## Feedback from Our Volunteers

"Fulfilling, interesting, and satisfying. I feel like I am making a difference in my community on an issue that is important to me, while also learning a lot and growing as an individual."

"Constantly learning and such a valuable experience."

"Nice volunteers I really enjoyed the experience working with a good bunch of people."

"It's an empathetic and incredibly appreciative environment to volunteer in. There is lots of information and support for the role. The volunteering itself is incredibly accommodating as it's essentially on my schedule that I can do conveniently from home."

"Fantastic! Great training, supportive environment, feel like I'm doing something important for our community."

## Volunteer Appreciation

Spending time honouring our volunteers is one of the pillars of the Volunteer Services program at SACE. At the onset of COVID-19 we developed a Star of The Week program to help honour our volunteers and celebrate their triumphs. We were able to host our awards night over Zoom in December 2020, and celebrated our volunteers and their many accomplishments. We also ran raffles for gifts/treats to incentivize volunteers to take shifts during holiday weekends and promote full coverage.

A huge thank you from the bottom of our hearts to our dear volunteers. Without their tireless support and dedication, SACE would not be able to operate to the capacity and standard of excellence that it does. We are so grateful to have spent another year working with the most incredibly compassionate humans, who have shown us that in the most challenging times, community is still possible. They have been adaptive, innovative, and resilient in every sense of the word.

**Louise Owen** (she/her)  
Volunteer Supervisor



## Annual Rewards

Typically, there are three major awards SACE presents to stand-out volunteers each year: the Rick Chalifoux / Jean Gauthier memorial award for volunteer of the year; the Heather Huet memorial award for creativity, and; the Donna Leskie memorial award for community building.

As a result of the pandemic, there weren't sufficient opportunities for volunteers to engage in the types of activities centred by the second and third awards this year. This meant that only the first award was given at the awards function in December 2020, though we still shared the meaning behind all three awards and honoured Heather Huet and Donna Leskie at the event.

### Rick Chalifoux / Jean Gauthier Memorial Volunteer of the Year Award

This award is presented in memory of two SACE volunteers who worked on the support line, with training, and with fundraising. Rick and Jean were partners and died within a few months of each other of HIV/AIDS.



### 2020 SACE Roots Award for Longstanding Service recipients

This year a brand new award category was created, the SACE Roots Award for Longstanding Service. This award is presented to any volunteer who reaches 5 or more years over service with SACE on the support lines.



### Grace Suggett

2020 Recipient

Grace embodies so many wonderful qualities that make her a fabulous volunteer. She is dedicated, driven, kind, receptive, and curious. We were so impressed by her growth on the line as well as the quality of support she gives those who are in need. Grace is a vibrant member of our volunteer team and we are so lucky to have her as a part of the SACE community.

### Carolise Beliveau

2020 SACE Roots Award for Longstanding Service recipients

Volunteer cohort class of summer 2014.



### Jana Boehm

2020 SACE Roots Award for Longstanding Service recipients

Volunteer cohort class of fall 2015.

## Treasurer's Report



We started this year with the beginning of the pandemic that changed so much for everyone, including SACE and how the organization delivers services. The spread of COVID-19 and the measures taken to contain the spread of the virus, including quarantines and social distancing, resulted in the suspension of certain programs and the provision of SACE services in a remote manner. Amidst the extreme uncertainty, it was important to not only pivot the delivery of services but also take into careful consideration the financial health of the organization. SACE took steps to manage the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by closely monitoring cash flows and applying for additional funding available from various funders specifically related to pandemic support.

Management worked very hard to manage the finances in a difficult environment and I am happy to report a revenue of \$188,000 over expenditures for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Although the pandemic put an end to the original fundraising plans for the year, SACE held its first virtual fundraiser featuring Sean McCann and Andrea Aragon and raised \$17,000.

In 2021, the Board established an Operating Reserve Fund which is to be used for future operating contingencies and one-time non-recurring expenses that will build long-term capacity or investment in infrastructure. An initial transfer of \$750,000 was made from unrestricted net assets to the operating reserve. The Board remains committed to building a healthy reserve to protect the long-term sustainability of the organization.

The success of this year is due to the dedication and hard work of the management, staff and volunteers of SACE. The services SACE provides are essential to our community and we are grateful to our funders, supporters, and volunteers for their continued support, especially during these challenging times. You are the reason we can do what we do.

Jennifer Forsyth, CPA CA

Treasurer

**\$188,000**

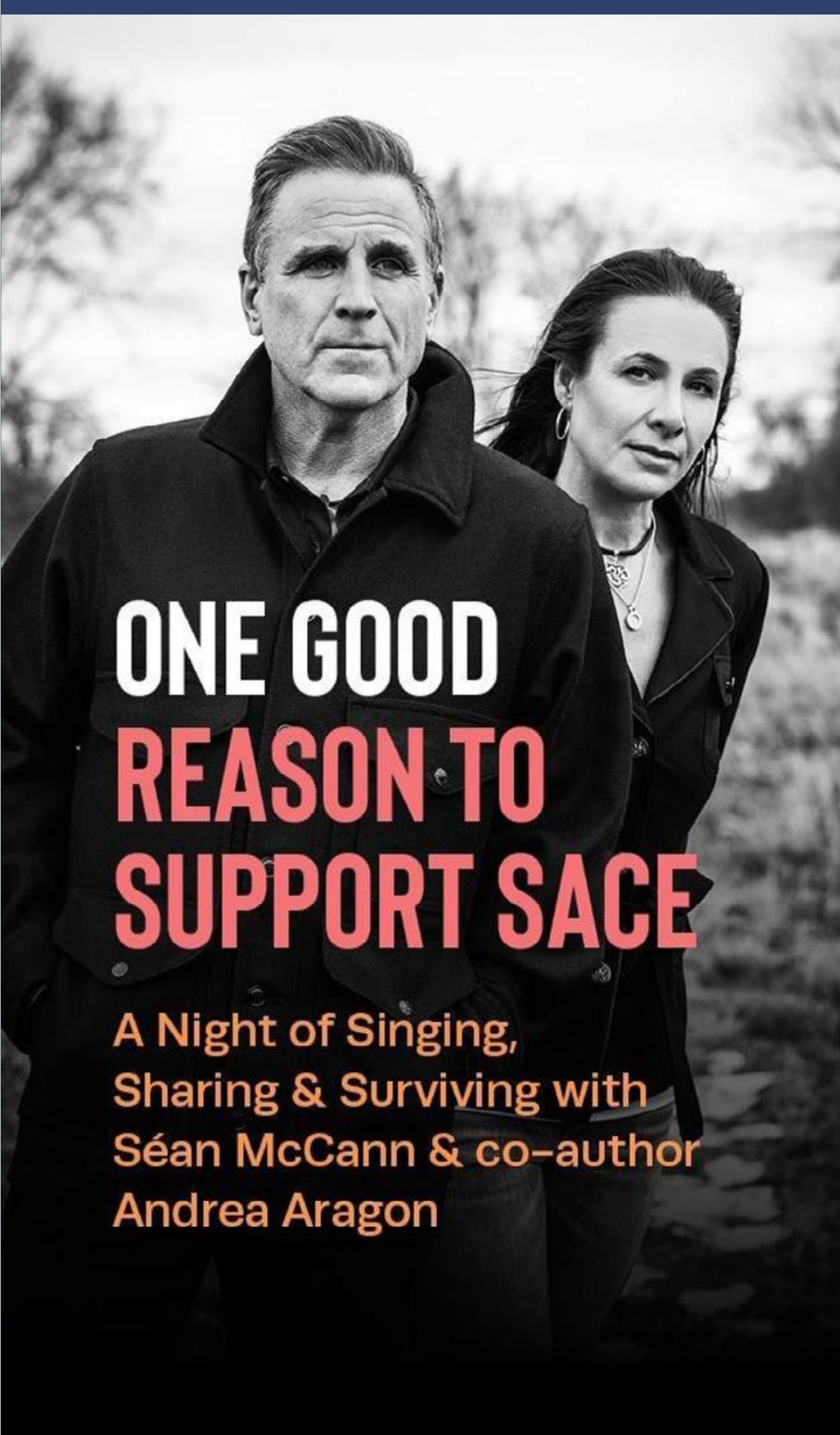
Revenue over expenditures

**\$17,000**

Raised in virtual fundraiser

**\$750,000**

Operating Reserve Fund



Funds Will Go Towards

**A FACILITY DOG FOR OUR COUNSELLING PROGRAM**

[LINK IN BIO](#)

### Financial Report

The above financial summary is prepared from financial statements audited by Grant Thornton LLP. Complete financial statements, including the auditor's report, may be obtained by contacting them directly at [780.423.8734](tel:780.423.8734).



Condensed Statement of Operations	Year Ended March 31	
Revenues	2021	2020
Alberta Community and Social Services	\$1,771,983	\$1,919,730
Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services	\$428,051	\$428,051
United Way of the Alberta Capital Region	\$291,551	\$250,000
City of Edmonton Family and Community Support Services	\$218,292	\$218,292
Alberta Justice and Solicitor General	\$150,000	\$150,000
Alberta Health Services	\$123,000	\$128,091
Other grants	\$122,849	\$58,229
Other revenues	\$298,013	\$509,514
	<b>\$3,403,739</b>	<b>\$3,661,907</b>
Expenditures		
Salaries, contract services, wages and benefits	\$2,658,615	\$2,713,602
Amortization	\$89,233	\$99,350
Other	\$467,760	\$573,564
	<b>\$3,215,608</b>	<b>\$3,386,516</b>
Excess of revenues over expenditures	\$188,131	\$275,391

Condensed Statement of Financial Position	Year Ended March 31	
Assets	2021	2020
Current	\$1,310,894	\$840,688
Capital assets	\$351,782	\$408,660
	<b>\$1,662,676</b>	<b>\$1,249,348</b>
Liabilities	2021	2020
Current	\$462,801	\$201,574
Long-term	\$146,681	\$182,711
	<b>\$609,482</b>	<b>\$384,285</b>
Net Assets	2021	2020
Unrestricted	\$98,093	\$639,115
Invested in capital assets	\$205,101	\$225,948
Operating reserve	\$750,000	-
	<b>\$1,053,194</b>	<b>\$865,063</b>
	<b>\$1,662,676</b>	<b>\$1,249,348</b>

## Credits & Contact



Web Design  
**Bear Belle Design Co.**

Line  
**49**

Web Development  
**Line 49**



Photography

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**Bruno Emmanuelle**  
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**Headway**  
**Olena Sergienko**  
**Priscilla Du Preez**  
**Sigmund**  
**Nick Morrison**



Healing starts with believing.

Visit Us

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Get in Touch

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 info@sace.ca



**Listen. Believe. Support.**

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