

**AT A GLANCE:
ANNUAL
REPORT
2023**



PATHWAYS FAMILIES
HELPING
FAMILIES
Serious Mental Illness Society

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WHO WE ARE



We are a volunteer-driven family support organization that provides education, support and advocacy to families and anyone who cares for a loved one with a serious mental illness (SMI) in British Columbia.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023

- Shirley Chan | [President](#)
- Joe Gormley | [Past President](#)
- Don Pavlovich | [Vice President](#)
- Alix Flynn | [Treasurer](#)
- Kim Thomas | [Secretary](#)
- Nancy Ford | [Advocacy Committee Chair](#)
- Adanma Ugoalah | [Board Member](#)
- Bob Sung | [Board Member](#)
- Jamie Andre de la Porte | [Board Member](#)

STAFF 2023

- Gabi Guerrero | [Executive Director](#)
- Pouneh Jula | [Office and Membership Manager](#)
- Treya Bishop | [Program Coordinator](#)
- Valeska Gauthier | [Support Coordinator](#)
- Farnaz Koosha | [Communications/IT](#)

Our Vision

is to be a vibrant, innovative center of support, education, awareness, and advocacy for families and others affected by Serious Mental Illnesses.

We have been working on the front lines for over four decades.

Our core programs and services are based on a peer support model. As such, all the programs and services we offer are delivered by trained Family Peer Support Volunteers with lived experience of caring for a family member, partner, friend, or relative with a Serious Mental Illness.



Pathways staff and volunteers are extraordinary human beings. I'm so glad our paths crossed (in the end!). I already shared your website and resources with another family member and am immensely relieved to have found a resource and a community that actually sticks. Thank you so much, from the bottom of my heart. This is where the inter-generational trauma ends.

Support Group Attendee



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has been an honour to give back to Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society since I joined after my family received help and guidance beginning in 2012. This past year I have served as President of the Board of Directors, a leadership role that ensures the Society remains true to the vision, mission and values that were established by you, our membership.

Additionally, I have maintained some of my other contributions to the Society which includes as a Family to Family teacher, Co-facilitator of a monthly Support Group and as a one-to-one Peer Supporter. The benefits of receiving education and support from Pathways for myself and my family has not been lost on me. Being a part of a network of families helping families supporting loved-ones with a serious mental illness has demonstrated to me how needed our services are in our community, and the importance of making them available for free.

Pathways continues to build strength through our staff and volunteers who are dedicated to delivering the Family-to-Family education program, one-to-one support, and weekly peer support groups. In 2023 we expanded our lecture and workshop offerings, reaching more than 400 people with relevant information that helps reduce the stigma of mental illness in our community. As the global pandemic receded, we continued to deliver programs online and added back in person services.

Our Advocacy Committee continues to be active in monitoring and making our membership aware of new developments in mental health and ways that we can all take action. We stand firm in protecting the rights our loved ones to have access to treatment when in need. We also chose to advocate for improved quality of life for our loved ones with a serious mental illness rather than MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying).

There are many people to thank for Pathways' success. It would be impossible to deliver all the services that we do without the tireless dedication of our peer support volunteers, Family to Family teachers, and event volunteers who ensure that family members with a loved one with a serious mental illness can access the help and the hope they need. We thank our staff for their commitment to our mission, and for the care and guidance they offer to volunteers and families. Immense gratitude goes out to our donors, sponsors, Federal and Municipal granters for their generous investment in the work of families helping families. We could not do it without you.

Thank you for your generous gift of time and money to help our families survive and thrive,

Shirley Chan

PRESIDENT, PATHWAYS SMIS

ACHIEVING OUR MISSION

Our Mission

is to alleviate the suffering caused by Serious Mental Illnesses, including anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, concurrent disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and schizophrenia.

We achieve this mission and help hundreds of families a year through the following peer-led programming:

Family-to-Family Course



One-on-One Peer Support



Workshops



Weekly Support Groups



Public Lectures and School Presentations



Advocacy





OUR IMPACT IN 2023

Making a real impact

It is known and regrettable that people who live or have a loved one suffering from a mental illness feel isolated and afraid to seek help because of the stigma that exists.

At Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society we work hard to reach out to the community undergoing this serious challenge and let them know that they are not alone, we are here to help.

Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society, brings families from a place of denial and fear of stigma to understanding, compassion, empathy, and acceptance. Through advocacy, we want the health care system/professionals to treat persons with mental illness with respect and their families to be engaged in their treatment, support, and recovery.

We have no restrictions and are inclusive. We welcome all ethnicities, cultures, beliefs and preferences in life without judging and by protecting our participants' confidentiality and provide support, education and advocacy, and share information and resources related to serious mental illness.

Learning about the causes, symptoms, prognosis, and treatments of different kinds of serious mental illnesses including anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, concurrent disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, schizo affective disorder and schizophrenia, as well as building skills around communication, boundary setting and problem solving are critical to helping families better care for their ill loved ones and themselves.

Higher levels of mental illness literacy in the wider community can help prevent the escalation of mental health problems.

Pathways Serious Mental Illnesses Society strives to achieve this purpose by holding various educational programs, providing support and advocacy, hosting informative public lectures, and developing new skills-building workshops. This constant dedication of our volunteers, staff, and board has substantially impacted the lives of families affected by Serious Mental Illnesses.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Learning about the causes, symptoms, prognosis and treatments of different kinds of Serious Mental Illnesses, and building skills around communication, boundary setting and problem-solving are critical to helping families better care for their ill loved ones and themselves. Higher levels of mental illness literacy in the wider community can help prevent the escalation of mental health problems. It can also ensure the safety of an ill loved one when unexpected crisis happens.

Family-to-Family education course

In 2023, 43 families graduated from our most popular educational program, the Family-to-Family course. This eight-week course is led by **trained volunteers** who have lived experience caring for a loved one with a Serious Mental Illness.

43

Families graduated from the Pathways Family-to-Family courses in 2023.

It covers topics including:

- Up-to-date information on mental illnesses and how they affect the brain
- Current treatments and therapies
- How to navigate the mental health system in B.C.
- Communication and problem-solving skills
- Compassion-centered approaches for supporting a loved one with a mental health condition
- Ways to handle a crisis
- Advocating for care for your ill loved one
- Managing the emotions and self-care



As a parent raising two young men on my own, I learned quickly that support from others would make our journey a little easier than if we acted alone. So, when one of my sons developed a serious mental illness, I knew I would need help in helping him, but it was beyond the scope of my friends and family.

As fate would have it, I heard about Pathways (SMIS) signature course called 'Family to Family'. During those classes when my son was in crisis and I felt I might lose him, the connections I made through Pathways enabled me to meet many other people who also had loved ones living with serious mental health issues. Wow!

The introduction to others who understood what we were going through, changed my life - and likely saved my son's.

Family-to-Family Course Attendee



Public lecture series

Our long-running Public Lecture Series are a space for the general public to learn more about specific aspects of mental illness and treatments available as well as issues that concern those with mental illness. They are typically delivered by experts in the field and service providers. Each lecture is followed by a question and answer session that is open to the audience.

This year, we held **nine public lectures** to help families care for their ill loved ones. We invited speakers who have **lived experiences** of Serious Mental Illness, people who work in the BC mental health system, and academics researching Serious Mental Illnesses.

Anyone who is interested in Serious Mental Illnesses is invited to attend our public lectures.

“

I would like to say thank you to all of the presenters and to tell them they are all very courageous to speak publicly as they did to help myself and others to better understand mental illness.

Lecture Attendee

”

402

Participants registered in Pathways informative interactive public lectures in 2023.

School presentations: **first hand stories**



10

School presentations

247

Students and staff reached



PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

Speaking and visiting with others who have a shared experience can be the gateway for families to get the support their family needs. Our peer support is non-judgemental and deeply caring. It is also a highly valuable source of unique expertise. Our Family Peer Support Volunteers are trauma-informed and trained to support families on a one-on-one basis in our weekly support groups. The demand for our support services continues to grow across BC and Pathways is striving to accommodate this need.

Weekly support groups



The Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society support groups have been a very valuable source of comfort, validation, information, inspiration and community. I am glad there are several at various times on various days each month.

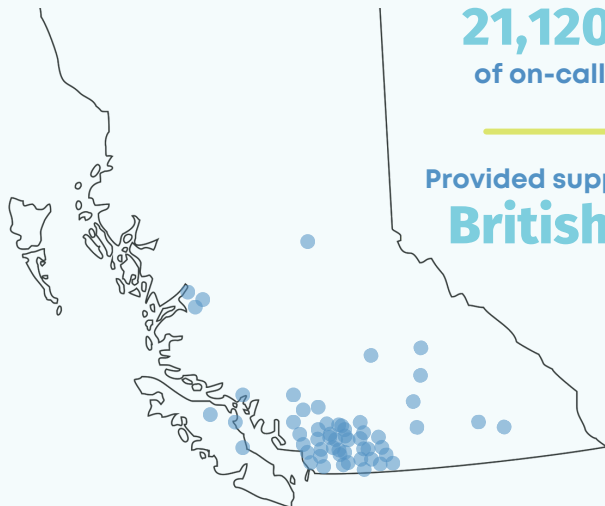
Weekly support group attendee



348

Families across BC attended our weekly support groups.

One-on-one support



21,120 minutes
of on-call support in 2023.

Provided support to individuals in
British Columbia.



I am so grateful for receiving the knowledge, the ear-listening to me and the support it has been a life saver for me.

Recipient of one-on-one support



Who are we supporting on a one-on-one basis?

Looking at the data of our one-on-one support calls, we found out that the largest number of our callers are supporting a loved one who has either **Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder**. Over half of all our support calls are from **parents** concerned about their child with a Serious Mental Illness.



I am forever grateful to the support I found through Pathways. I was seriously struggling with grief and confusion and guilt and filled with fear that I was losing my son. Now I have a place to go with those feelings, where I am understood and believed, and supported with suggestions and resources.

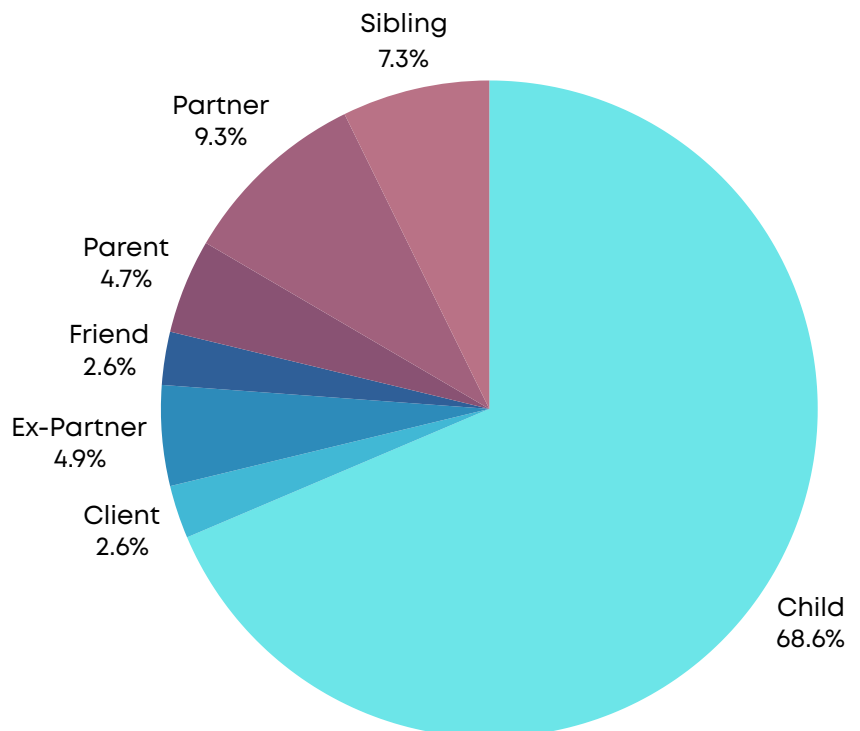
Recipient of one-on-one support



Frequently Reported Diagnoses and Symptoms as reported by callers

- *Bipolar Disorder*
- *Schizophrenia*
- *Schizoaffective Disorder*
- *Depression*
- *Anxiety*
- *Borderline Personality Disorder*
- *Narcissistic Personality Disorder*
- *Concurrent Disorders*
- *Obsessive Compulsive Disorder*
- *Self Harm*

Caller concerned about their:





In **2023-24**, the Advocacy Committee has continued to review and intervene on important developments in the province which impact the lives of families with loved ones living with a serious mental illness. We advocate to ensure our families have the tools they need to help their loved ones access services that treat their illness and lead to recovery.

On policy issues, the Advocacy Committee is monitoring and commenting on:

- Medical Assistance in Dying “MAID” as applied to persons with only mental illness and no foreseeable or imminent death: we are monitoring developments and want to ensure proper safeguards and access to other services that will alleviate issues associated with mental illness. We wrote to the Federal Minister of Justice to state our position and in February 2024 received a reply from the Honourable Arif Virani, P.C., M.P. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, which was shared with members. We will continue to keep abreast of Bill C-62.
- Challenge to the BC Mental Health Act: we support involuntary hospitalization and treatment for loved ones in crisis and are aligned with our partner BC Schizophrenia Society. We are learning more about the new Independent Rights Advice Service (IRAS) being implemented in BC and its potential impacts on involuntary treatment.
- Outreach and introduction of Pathways to the provincial cabinet under new Premier Eby. On March On January 29, 2024 Pathways President, Executive Director, and two members of the Advocacy Committee met with the Honorable Jennifer Whiteside, the new Minister of Mental Health and Addiction. Pathways clearly presented it’s mission and mandate to the Minister.
- The committee continues to reach out to experts in support of Pathways identified policy issues, education on serious mental illness and relevant topics/current media conversations.

On Public Lectures and Advocacy Bulletin:

- January 2024 – David Cox – ‘We have hope for some breakthroughs’: can we change the way we treat schizophrenia? Icelandic neuroscientist Kári Stefánsson is the chief executive of deCode genetics, based in Reykjavík, which has studied genetic information from more than two thirds of the Icelandic population.
- November 2023 – Eileen Finan and Alexandra Rockey Fleming – Schizophrenia Caused Eric Smith to Threaten His Mother’s Life, but He Refused to Get Help – Here’s Why
- October 2023 – A Letter to Minister: Pathways SMIS’s Position Regarding the Pending Federal Legislation on MAiD MI-SUMC September 2023 – Dr. Richard O’Reilly – Guest Blog: Why A Man From PEI (Andrew Bryenton) Is Homeless on the Streets of Toronto
- July 2023 – Susan Inman – Guest Blog: My Daughter with Schizophrenia Isn’t Living with Vancouver’s Homeless Mentally Ill...Yet
- August 2023 – David Gratzer – A crisis of neglect: How society can help those with mental illness



Just a big thank you to Shirley and Kim as well as the other Family to Family participants for sharing their experiences and providing such amazing, non-judgemental support. I looked forward to every class because it felt like one of the few places I could turn where people understood what I was feeling and genuinely cared. I don't know how they have the strength to do these courses and help so many people when they have their own daily struggles but I hope they know how much they are appreciated and how much they are helping and truly saving people.

Family to Family Attendee 2023



The Advocacy Committee anticipates a busy 2024-25. We welcome any input or ideas from our members on issues they would like our committee to research and act upon. We would also welcome any members who would like to join the committee.

THANK YOU



We are grateful to our incredible volunteers, donors, and organizations for the outpouring of support we have received from them during another challenging year.

We could not do what we do without you. 

Volunteers

All of our programming happens thanks to our incredible families who dedicate their time and energy to giving back to other families who care for a loved one with a Serious Mental Illness.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all of you who have given the gifts of empathy, compassion and hope this year through your hard work and dedication to alleviating the suffering that Serious Mental Illnesses can bring to families.

Volunteer Hours

Programs	Hours
Family-to-Family	536
Lectures and School Presentations	89
Support	404
Committee and Oversight	1404
Total volunteer hours	2,433

Donors

We are very grateful for the generosity of foundations, businesses, members and friends that ensure we can continue to provide services free of charge to families in need. We greatly appreciate all donations, no matter the size, and value the difference your support makes to our community.

\$77,955

was generously donated by individual donors to Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society in 2023.

Grants

We are very grateful for the generous grants that we received in 2023 from the following organizations:



Government grants

- City of North Vancouver
- District of North Vancouver
- District of West Vancouver
- Resort Municipality of Whistler



Community grants

- Kiwanis Club of West Van
- Lynn Valley Lions Club
- Rina M. Bidin Foundation
- Vancouver Foundation
- West Vancouver Community Foundation



Corporate Grants

- BC Gaming
- CDN Global
- Dilawri Group of Companies
- Global Giving
- Grant Thornton Foundation
- Vancity



Circle of Strength Sponsors

Blue Shore Financial - CDN Global - Dilawri Group of Companies
Everything Wine - Global BC - Indesign Financial Group Limited
Margitta's - Odium Brown - Pathfinder Asset Management Limited
RBC - Save On Foods - The Gull - Thomas Haas



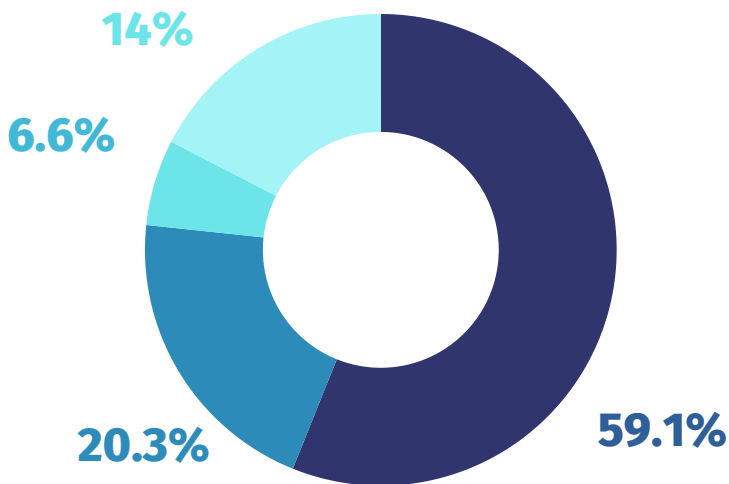


FINANCIALS

Year end: December 31, 2023

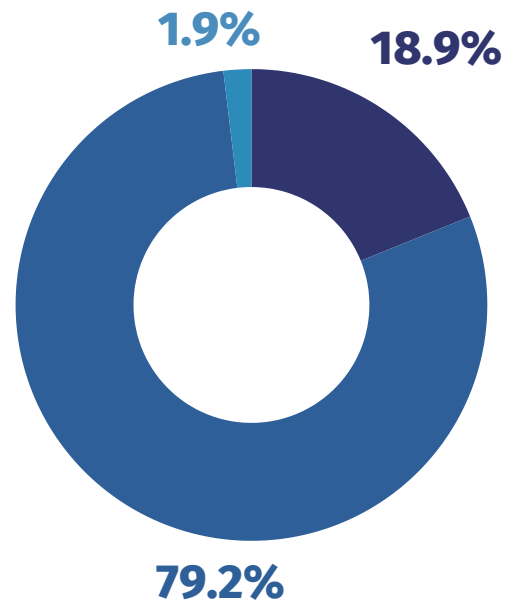
Revenue 2023

- Donations + Fundraising
- Endowment + Investments
- BC Gaming + Municipal Grants
- All other revenue



Expenses 2023

- Fundraising
- Charitable programs
- Management & administration



Revenue	2023
Donations + Fundraising	\$77,905
Endowment and Investments	\$26,377
BC Gaming + Municipal Grants	\$92,115
All other revenue	\$250,833
Total (\$)	\$436,988

Expenses	2023
Fundraising	\$7,773
Management & admin	\$77,112
Charitable programs	\$323,466
Total (\$)	\$408,351

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Join us on the front lines with parents, siblings, partners, adult children, friends and grandparents who care for a loved one with a Serious Mental Illness as we build the Pathways Serious Mental Illness community!

- Would you like to use your knowledge and experience of caring for a loved one with a serious mental illness to help others who are going through something similar?
- Do you want to give your gifts of hope and compassion to others in a similar position to you?
- Are you passionate about using your power to effect systems change?
- Volunteering with Pathways is a way to put your skills, knowledge and passion into action and become a part of our community of care.



@PathwaysSMIS



Our 14th Annual Circle of Strength Fundraising Luncheon saw amazing support from sponsors and donors alike. This is an inspiring event for the whole community.

Volunteer with us

Visit our website to learn about current volunteer opportunities and sign up:

<https://pathwayssmi.org/volunteer-with-us/>

Stay connected



Membership

For a small annual fee, you will be provided with a complimentary membership and a tax receipt. Visit our website to learn more:

pathwayssmi.org/membership



Be informed

Subscribe to our newsletter to hear about events, opportunities, and our families' work all in one place:

pathwayssmi.org/subscribe



Donate

Help us alleviate the suffering caused by Serious Mental Illnesses:

pathwayssmi.org/donate



Fundraising Ideas

Send us your ideas for third-party fundraising:

pathwayssmi.org/third-party-fundraising/

Have any questions?

Email us at info@pathwayssmi.org or Call us at **604-926-0856**.

