



# ConnexOntario

2021-2022 Annual Report



## Making the Connection



## Greetings from the Board

Each year, as ConnexOntario presents its annual report, we reflect upon the contributions we make to Ontario's healthcare system. Redeveloped vision, mission, and values statements provide the foundation for all that we do and ensure that our contributions to the people of Ontario remain focused.

Staff take tremendous pride in the quality of the data they collect, safeguard, and disseminate; accurate provision of information to the public, healthcare providers, and system planners aids efforts to integrate addictions and mental health services across this vast province.

Strong partnerships formed with sector organizations promote system efficiency, service integration, and improved data and service quality. Being data-rich and information-poor is a common problem in healthcare today and ConnexOntario, as a go-to provider of high quality, real-time information, helps inform system planning at all levels of government. Our ability to respond rapidly to data requests strengthens ConnexOntario's position as an information-rich agency.

The Board works diligently to ensure that we are providing effective governance. Much thought has been given to the skills and expertise needed both on the Board and within the organization.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Lorri Lowe, outgoing Executive Director, for her dedication to ConnexOntario during her tenure here. The efforts of the 'Connexion' team are always of the highest quality and this is very inspiring to all of us.

~ Dr. Sonja Grbevski, Board Chair

## ConnexOntario Board of Directors

Thank you to our board who dedicate their time, energy and expertise towards making ConnexOntario the best it can be.

Sonja Grbevski (Chair)

Harriet Ekperigin (Vice Chair)

Priya Paul (Secretary-Treasurer)

Sylvie Guenther

Marion Quigley

Leighton Schreyer

Marion Wright

Sue Hillis (Past Chair)

Aseefa Sarang (Vice Chair)

Karen Fleming

Helen Karpouzou

Marcia Scarrow

Danielle Wilson

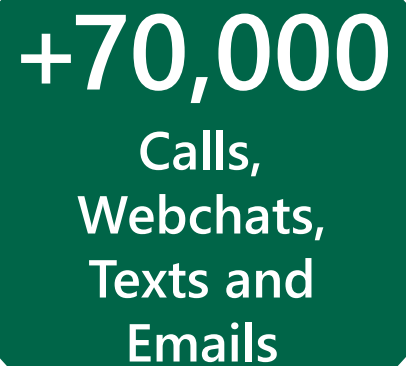
# System Navigation and Information Services

The 2021-2022 fiscal year was a challenge for us from many viewpoints – we have weathered COVID-19, dealt with short-staffing, said goodbye to several of our familiar faces, and said hello to many new faces with a pool of new relief staff being hired and trained on site.

Our system navigation and information team continued to be split with many staff returning to the office, but some still working from home. In the spring of 2022, remote staff transitioned back to working from the office – many never having seen it before – as we had moved into brand new premises in May of 2021. A thorough review of department scheduling was completed and, subsequently, several changes were made to the ongoing schedule. As ConnexOntario operates 24/7/365, review of this schedule is an ongoing process and minor adjustments will continue to be made as needed.

We also completed our first in-house Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) session. Most longer-term staff are already certified but we aim to have all of our newer staff certified as well.

Our staff have proven to be even more adaptable as ConnexOntario launched its texting service during this time – providing yet another method of contact for Ontarians seeking mental health and/or addictions services and supports. The SNIS continue to provide extra support and listening to callers – in large part due to callers' increased feelings of stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic.



**+70,000**  
Calls,  
Webchats,  
Texts and  
Emails

**Kudos to each and every System Navigation and Information Specialist for their genuine regard and resilience in responding sincerely and thoughtfully to those persons contacting ConnexOntario for help.**

In November of 2021, we extended access to supports and services through our new text line. Ontarians can now text 247247 to discover addiction, mental health, and problem gambling supports and services across the province.

Also, throughout the pandemic, ConnexOntario has been able to provide COVID-19 reporting, giving accurate information and data on which programs are open and which ones are closed.

The need for our services has become even clearer in these pandemic times. People are reaching out for information at all levels, and for all of the various types of information that we have available.

We see the increasing need for referrals to treatment services of various types, as well as increased requests for reports about service availability and need.



**172,133**  
Referrals


We are proud to continue to be Ontario's most comprehensive community mental health and addictions database. Our devoted staff, including those who maintain the database and the system navigation specialists who have been on the frontline during this time, played a key role in our successes this year.



**6,473**  
Programs



**+219**  
Child and Youth  
Programs  
Added



“I was on a call this morning with a gentleman and gave him a long list of resources to assist with his alcohol use disorder. He called back in the afternoon, in tears, stating that he is going into detox tomorrow, and then will be followed by the local services for both his substance use and mental health. He was very appreciative of the time I spent with him to provide guidance and information.”



~ System Navigation and Information Specialist

# People and Culture

In its second year as a new department of ConnexOntario, People and Culture has focused on workplace culture and on policies and procedures for new systems.

During 2021-2022, the Social Committee promoted several online activities for staff engagement including bingo and trivia contests. It has been challenging to engage staff with many working from home. It was also a big step for those coming back to the office. But, finally, we can enjoy being together again! Conversations and laughter can be heard in the hallways: camaraderie and teamwork are back in our workplace!

## Talent Management and Acquisition

Our turnover rate this fiscal year has been six percent, with seven employees leaving the organization and four new hires. Three of the seven vacancies were filled after March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022, giving us a full staff complement. Our average time to fill a position is 33.6 days (from resignation to hire) and average of years of service is 8.57.

## HR Information and Payroll System

We successfully completed the implementation of a new Human Resources Information and Payroll System (ADP), where, in a more automated way, employees are able to access pay stubs, tax forms, leave balances, and other information. In addition, we have designed a home page where we can post general information such as years of service, birthdays, social activities, new employees, etc., in order to keep employees up-to-date with all necessary internal information and changes.

## Communication Channels

We have continued hosting Townhalls and producing Newsletters. Both have had a great reception from our team members (more than 88% approval).

## Reviews

We continue having over 4 stars satisfaction rate on glassdoor, which is considered "Very Satisfied" and the highest classification on the scale.



# Data, Product, and Project Management and IT

ConnexOntario understands the value of ensuring that privacy and cybersecurity are given precedence in day-to-day operations. We have updated ConnexOntario's privacy protocols to reflect best practices and have provided privacy training for all ConnexOntario staff. The training covered various topics, including but not limited to safeguards, access and corrections, consent and capacity, disclosure, and confidentiality.

One of our visions is to have a comprehensive database that stores all Community, OHIP, Municipal, and Federally-funded mental health, addiction and problem gambling programs in Ontario. Our data management team is working towards expanding our database to include Children and Youth programs, OHIP-funded programs and more through community outreach

and stakeholder engagement. We hope to increase the number of programs we maintain and continue growing!

ConnexOntario has also taken measures to increase cybersecurity by completing the following:

- Applying the latest patches.
- Prompting staff to reset their passwords.
- Education about phishing.
- Re-evaluating current firewalls/frameworks.
- Formalizing an Incident Response plan to guide ConnexOntario through a security breach.

We will continue to ensure our systems are maintained to support business objectives.

## Text CONNEX to 247247

One of our most significant milestones this year is launching our new texting (SMS) service. Our team has worked hard to ensure that this service is rolled out to Ontarians seamlessly. This texting(SMS) service is available to all Ontarians by texting 247247 to connect to a System Navigation Specialist. We have received positive feedback from our clientele and hope to continuously improve our services!

The information you need  
when you need it.

Text CONNEX to 247247



ConnexOntario understands the value of collaborating with the Ontario Health Teams (OHT) as the sector changes. We seek to assist OHTs in their endeavours and incorporate their framework into our provincial model. We have presented at multiple committees to aid in developing a local framework.

Last year, we worked towards establishing a clear strategic direction for ConnexOntario. This year, we created several deliverables tied to those strategic priorities. Our team will be working on several medium to large-scale projects in the next 2-5 years to achieve the following:



Invest in state-of-the-art communications and technology



Amplify the reach of mindyourmind



Expand our system navigation and information services



Be the source of information for the mental health, addiction, and problem gambling sector in Ontario



Focus on children and youth mental health sector and diverse communities

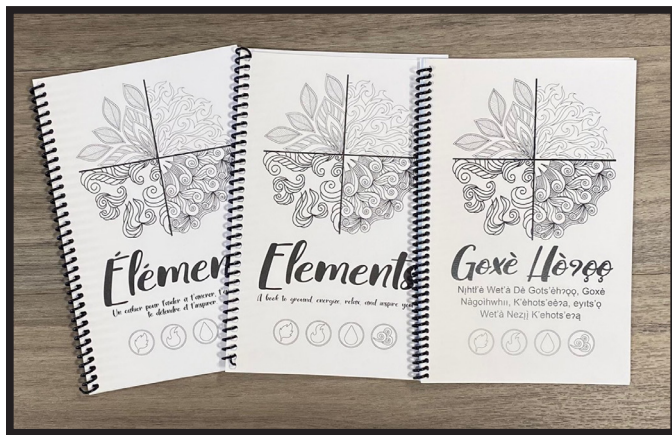


Improve the way our partners can access, provide, update, and receive data to inform current systems in real-time

# mindyourmind

Despite the obstacles that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have produced, **mindyourmind** has continued to thrive in its online spaces.

During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, we facilitated five online Design Lab Cohorts, four of which were part of the Canada Service Corps (CSC) initiative. Directly engaging with 75 youth across Canada in these programs, and interacting with countless others through our websites and social media, **mindyourmind** has remained persistent in our efforts to break down barriers when it comes to mental health.



**mindyourmind** created a variety of new mental health resources, in collaboration with young people across Canada. One of them was the Elements self care journal. This was created in partnership with TakingItGlobal, and is available in English, French and Tlicho (a language spoken by the Indigenous peoples in Northwest Territories).

## Social Media

**mindyourmind** shares content on multiple social media platforms each day to interact on both a local and global scale with youth, young adults and the professionals who support them.

These platforms allow us to reach our target audience in creative and engaging ways. Additionally, sharing relevant information and resources helps to destigmatize mental health and addiction and ultimately increases help-seeking behaviours. Our top three platforms include the following:

 +15,600     +5,500     +3,300

## Be Safe by mindyourmind

The Be Safe App continues to expand its reach and uptake, with over 2,000 downloads to date.

The App is an evidence based, safety planning and service navigation tool, developed in partnership with young people, improving access to mental health and addiction services.



## Zen Garden

**mindyourmind** collaborated with Psychology Canada in the Strong Minds, Strong Kids project to co-develop a tool that complements their Stress Lessons program for secondary students. Zen Garden is an interactive, web-based game to help students learn about and manage stress.





# Marketing and Communication

2021 saw another range of changes and updates to the ConnexOntario brand. The new logo continues to be incorporated into internal and external communication materials further developing the brand of ConnexOntario.

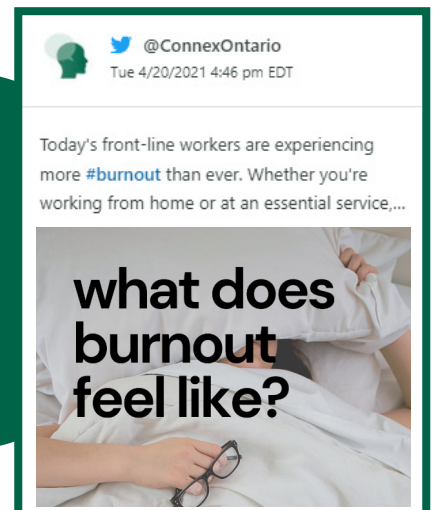
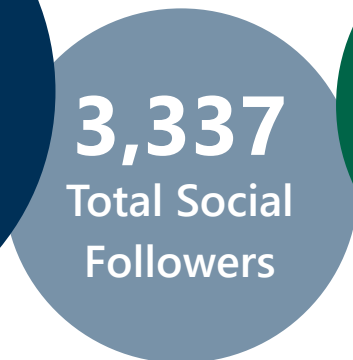
## iGaming

iGaming Ontario (iGO) was established in July 2021 as lottery subsidiary corporation of the AGCO. It is responsible for conducting and managing iGaming when provided through private operators. As iGO moves into the future of regulating operators within the province, ConnexOntario continues to support those with problem gambling issues as our toll-free number is included on all iGaming materials.



## 41,780 Items Shipped

ConnexOntario shipped 41,780 pieces of branded resource materials (posters, pamphlets, wallet cards, etc.) to 256 different recipients.



# Financial Review 2021-22

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Core Fund</b>	<b>mindyourmind</b>	<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>Total 2021</b>
Core Programs	3,751,711		3,751,711	3,751,709
Time-Limited Initiatives/Projects	104,875	745,356	850,231	818,795
Less: Capital Purchases				(31,360)
Add: Amortized Provincial Grants	50,457		50,457	63,322
<b>Adjusted Operating Grants</b>	<b>3,907,043</b>	<b>745,356</b>	<b>4,652,399</b>	<b>4,602,466</b>
Investment Income	1,859		1,859	1,752
Other	67,332		67,332	70,910
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>3,976,234</b>	<b>745,356</b>	<b>4,721,590</b>	<b>4,675,128</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Core-Funded Expenses	3,737,126		3,737,126	3,404,529
Time-Limited Initiatives/Project Expenses	16,126	630,955	647,081	657,737
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,753,252</b>	<b>630,955</b>	<b>4,384,207</b>	<b>4,062,266</b>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenses	222,982	114,401	337,383	612,862
Fund Balance (Deficit), Beginning	272,154	134,461	406,615	313,951
Surplus to be Recovered by MOHLTC	(120,902)	(70,020)	(190,922)	(517,750)
2018 DAH deficit allocation				(2,448)
<b>Fund Balances (Deficit), Ending</b>	<b>374,234</b>	<b>178,842</b>	<b>553,076</b>	<b>406,615</b>

## More...

As a partner in the Good2Talk project, ConnexOntario was a recipient of 'wellness' funding for our staff. Options were researched and staff benefited from an organizational Headspace™ account, a meditation session, individual counselling support sessions if desired, and a webinar focusing on return to work.

ConnexOntario has revised and updated its Business Continuity Plan.

The Skedda workstation booking system was adopted to use for 'hotelling' our hybrid staff and ensuring meeting space availability.

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee was developed with staff and board members participating in a demographic survey.



## Farewell...

It is with regret that I announce my retirement as Executive Director of ConnexOntario, effective March 31, 2022.

I am so very proud of our many accomplishments throughout the past two years. ConnexOntario has come through the COVID-19 pandemic relatively unscathed and still been able to maintain its full complement of services to Ontarians during this time. We were able to attain the goals and priorities for Connex – including the creation of a new strategic plan for the organization.

Our Organizational Leadership Council also set their own goals and priorities, many of which were attained with collective and individual contributions from others on the Connexion team.

Each person here recognizes the vital responsibility that they hold and each plays a valuable part in making genuine differences in the lives of people across the province who need our support. It has

been a privilege and a pleasure to have had the opportunity to work with this stellar team who have demonstrated great fortitude and perseverance over the past few years.

To the Board of Directors and all of the Connexions, I wish you all the best at ConnexOntario and beyond. Take care of each other and be well.

~ Lorri Lowe, Executive Director



# ConnexOntario

Discover Mental Health, Addiction and Problem Gambling Services

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