

# Social Return on Investment

## Catholic Family Service Counselling Program

### FAST FACTS

- Stress related illnesses such as anxiety and depression have been linked to heart disease and cancer
- 1 out of 10 individuals in the workplace suffer with intense feelings of depression and anxiety that lead to absenteeism
- Couples and family counselling therapies produce clinically significant results in 40-50% of those treated
- Isolated parents are at more risk of experiencing poverty, marital conflict, depression, and anger

### Service annually:

- Over 1,100 children, adolescents and adults access the counselling program every year
- Over 2,500 individual sessions, 450 sessions with couples and 650 family therapy sessions are completed annually

### SROI Overview:

For every dollar invested in the Counselling program at Catholic Family Service, there is a minimum of **\$1.62 in social value created**.

Only the 2-5% of clients who demonstrated the most meaningful changes were included in the SROI analysis

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“Counselling at Catholic Family Service has changed my life greatly. Along the process I reconnected with family, friends, my girlfriend and employment. I’ve become less anxious about things and more positive about life. I am not afraid to try new things, set short- and long-term goals and I look forward to getting out of bed in the morning”  
- Counselling Client

### About Catholic Family Service

Founded in 1957, Catholic Family Service (CFS) is a charitable organization dedicated to helping vulnerable Calgarians - from any faith or culture - to thrive. Accessible, respectful, and professional, CFS delivers high impact solutions that build healthy individuals, families and communities including counselling, community outreach, volunteerism, and education. Through its work, CFS strives to enhance the community for all. It is one of the only agencies in Canada that does not place clients on a waiting list but rather offers them a service of value until counselling is available.

### Program Background

CFS is a strong and vital organization, offering a wide range of services to support families in Calgary, including the Counselling program.

There is a common misperception that counselling services are only useful for those with acute psychological problems. In reality, counselling makes a significant difference in a variety of situations, including relationship conflict, abuse and mental health issues, recovery from trauma or the death of a loved one, or coping with difficulties as a couple, a family or an individual.

Counselling interventions have been proven to reduce or eliminate the need for medication in some cases, and

changes the direction of a person’s life by impacting their levels of resilience, ability to cope, relationship health, and social support. Counselling offers individuals, couples and families with a compassionate, open and client-centred approach to assessing and addressing

these challenges, preventing increasingly complex and painful outcomes from occurring, such as self-harm, violence towards others, problems with substance use, and depression or other mental health issues. Calgarians seeking out the Counselling program at CFS range from requiring

### Theory of Change

If people who find themselves in distress participate in counselling that helps to build deeper awareness, understanding and skills for managing the presenting difficulties, they will improve the stability and security of their family life, which in turn strengthens parenting and improves well-being for all members of the family

short-term interventions to long-term intensive therapy. CFS offers individual, couples and family counselling using a sliding fee scale, and no one is turned away due to inability to pay. CFS is the only affordable counselling service in Calgary that offers long-term counselling to those living with histories of complex trauma, mental health and personality issues.



## Social Return on Investment (SROI) Catholic Family Service Counselling Program

### Creating Social Value

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the Counselling program of Catholic Family Service involved mapping the outcomes of the program, giving them a value, discounting to avoid over-claiming, and calculating the ratio of investment to social value creation. While the total number of clientele is greater than 1,100 people in any recent year, CFS focused on the 2-5% within each profile that experienced substantial and meaningful changes as a result of the CFS services provided. The remaining 95-98% will have also experienced a significant degree of change as a result of the CFS Counselling program, yet will also have been influenced by other factors. For this reason, CFS chose to focus on the smallest proportion possible, in order to illustrate only the value of serving the most extreme cases and the most vulnerable clients.

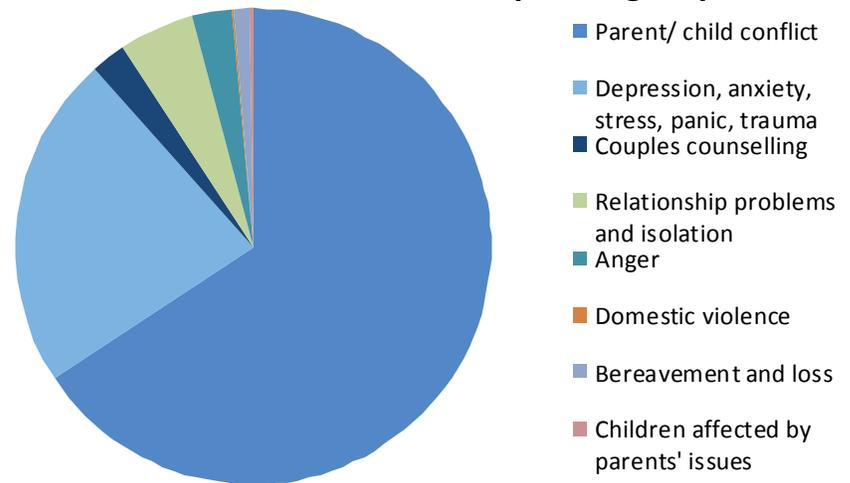
### SROI Ratio and Conclusions

The total present annual value of investing in the Catholic Family Service Counselling program was calculated to be **\$3,245,010**. With a total investment in the program of \$2,000,000, the final SROI ratio was calculated to be **1.62 : 1**. This indicates that for every dollar invested in the Catholic Family Service Counselling program there is a return of **\$1.62 in social value created by the program**.

### Client Profile

Clients accessing counselling represent a broad spectrum of ages, ethno-cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, sexual identities and life experiences. Many clients access counselling for a broad range of needs and challenges, including parent and child relationships, depression and anxiety, coping with experiences of trauma and their impacts, difficulties within couple relationships and divorce, the experience of isolation, anger, grief, and the perpetration and victimization of domestic violence.

### Value created for each client profile group



### Jessica's Experience

Jessica, a 24-year-old woman, was feeling paralyzed by anxiety and worries and as a result, the activities in her life were becoming increasingly limited. Most of her daily activities were experienced as burdens and she was isolating herself to cope with her growing fears around everyday activities and she had become somewhat hopeless about her life. Unable to identify what the 'problem' was, Jessica was reluctant to reach out and access support. Despite this, her desire to maintain her ability to care for her four-year-old son provided the motivation to make the courageous step to access counselling.

Through the Counselling program, Jessica grew to understand what her intense and immobilizing anxiety was connected to, and that it was based in patterns that had taken years to develop. With new strategies learned in counselling sessions, she progressively changed the way she was thinking and found the strength to face some of her fears and expand her life again. Her life slowly began to change, and with ongoing support she was able to attend work regularly, her parenting skills were improving as she was able to attend to her son's needs, and she even began to consider attending technical school to increase her ability to gain stable employment. She gradually recovered a sense of joy, confidence and inner peace as she was able to cope with life's challenges.