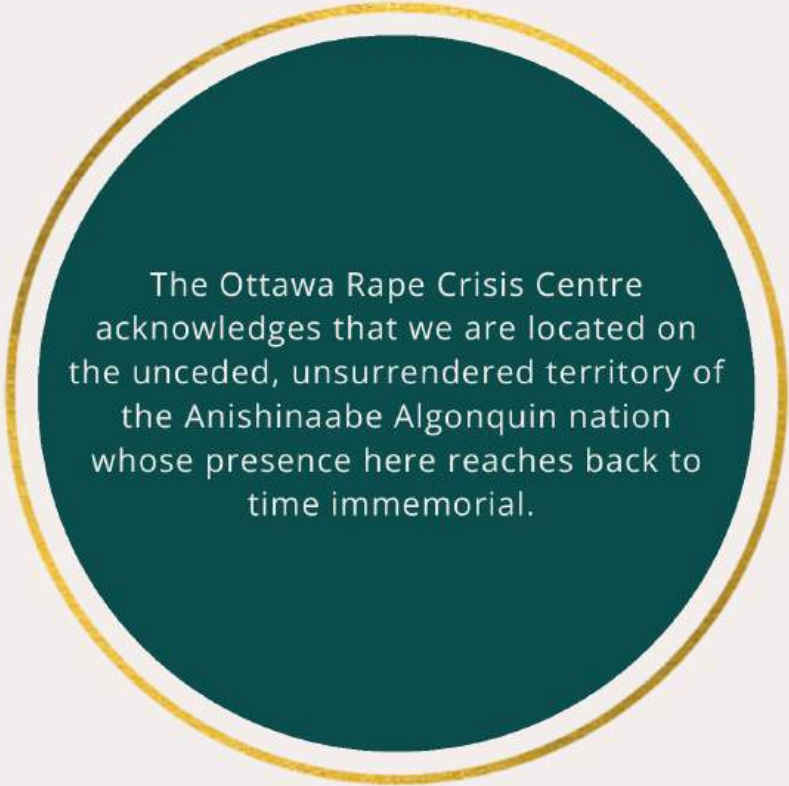




ORCC ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



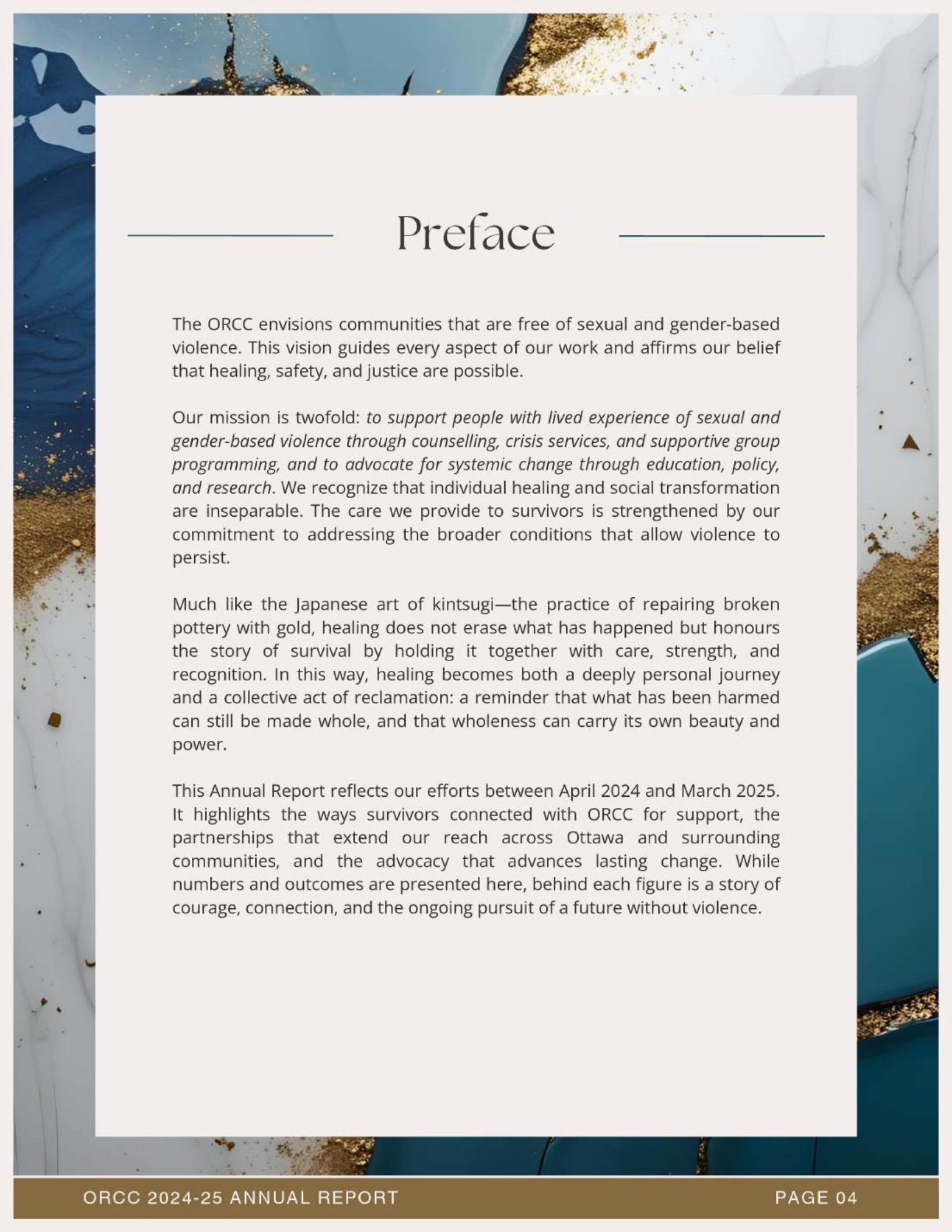


The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre
acknowledges that we are located on
the unceded, unsurrendered territory of
the Anishinaabe Algonquin nation
whose presence here reaches back to
time immemorial.



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Preface

The ORCC envisions communities that are free of sexual and gender-based violence. This vision guides every aspect of our work and affirms our belief that healing, safety, and justice are possible.

Our mission is twofold: *to support people with lived experience of sexual and gender-based violence through counselling, crisis services, and supportive group programming, and to advocate for systemic change through education, policy, and research.* We recognize that individual healing and social transformation are inseparable. The care we provide to survivors is strengthened by our commitment to addressing the broader conditions that allow violence to persist.

Much like the Japanese art of kintsugi—the practice of repairing broken pottery with gold, healing does not erase what has happened but honours the story of survival by holding it together with care, strength, and recognition. In this way, healing becomes both a deeply personal journey and a collective act of reclamation: a reminder that what has been harmed can still be made whole, and that wholeness can carry its own beauty and power.

This Annual Report reflects our efforts between April 2024 and March 2025. It highlights the ways survivors connected with ORCC for support, the partnerships that extend our reach across Ottawa and surrounding communities, and the advocacy that advances lasting change. While numbers and outcomes are presented here, behind each figure is a story of courage, connection, and the ongoing pursuit of a future without violence.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, *Christy Savage*

This past year has marked a powerful chapter of transition and progress at the ORCC — a time of reflection, renewal, and strategic growth in service of our mission to support survivors and build a future free from sexual and gender-based violence.

When I joined ORCC in January 2025, I stepped into an organization already grounded in bold and visionary work. I want to begin by acknowledging Candice Shaw, whose leadership helped re-vision ORCC and embed anti-oppressive practices across the organization. Her work laid a strong foundation for the future.

“We are ready to scale our impact, not only by expanding services, but by shaping the systems that survivors navigate every day.”

I also extend deep gratitude to Madeline McMahon and Jan Vesna, who co-led the organization through the leadership transition. Their steady guidance ensured continuity and care for both our team and our community during a pivotal time. Since stepping into this role, I've been listening and learning. Together with a dedicated team, we have been strengthening internal systems, expanding service delivery, and preparing ORCC for long-term sustainability and impact.

In the final quarter of the fiscal year, we:

- Finalized our year-end financials, reinforcing transparency and accountability;
- Developed a strategic, balanced budget for 2025–2026;
- Streamlined operations, to support sustainable, values aligned growth.

We also received critical funding in early 2025 to enhance survivor access through our expanded Service Navigation (Justice) program offering vital wraparound supports in housing, income security, connection to legal aid, and more. These services have reduced wait times and provided critical care while clients await counselling.

Recognizing that healing is not one-size-fits-all, we continue to offer our series of alternative healing programs generously funded over three years by the Ministry of Women & Gender Equality — including art, movement, and nature-based modalities. These culturally grounded, community-focused offerings have created vital spaces for survivors to explore healing on their own terms.

As we look ahead, ORCC is entering a new phase — one that balances stabilization with bold progression. In the words of my predecessor, we've not yet reached “cruising



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (continued)

altitude.” And like those who came before us, we continue to find joy in the journey — a joyful progression grounded in purpose, care, and courage. Our strategic priorities in the year ahead include:



We are ready to scale our impact; not only by expanding services, but by shaping the systems that survivors navigate every day. We remain deeply rooted in trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and anti-oppressive care, while growing toward a collective vision of communities free from sexual and gender-based violence.

To our staff, board, funders, and community partners: thank you for walking alongside us on this journey. Your steadfast commitment allows us to dream bigger, reach farther, and care deeper.

Together, we are building a future where healing is possible, dignity is upheld, and no one walks alone.

Christy Savage

Executive Director

Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

Claudia Newman

This past year ORCC faced its first significant transition since we began our modernization process in midsummer 2021. Candice Shaw, our Executive Director shifted her experience, expertise and strategic vision to a national organization. We thank her for her vision, commitment and compassion. She left us with a strong foundation from which we can continue to build.

In January 2025, we were delighted to welcome Christy Savage as our new Executive Director. Christy has significant experience and expertise in the not-for-profit sector combined with a well-honed strategic visioning lens. Her skillsets highly complement this next phase of ORCC's modernization while positioning us for the future.

This transition caused me to reflect on ORCC's past, present and to think of its future. At over 50 years old, ORCC's past is vibrantly woven into the fabric of Ottawa's support network. Our present, like our past remains laser focused on those who come to us in need. Within that laser focus, our present embraces our next phase, that of continued renewal, solidification of that renewal and keeping an eye trained on the future. As you continue to read this report

beginning with the Executive Director's message, you will see the exciting work that has been accomplished or set in motion.

While we turn our eye to the future. I know that it is filled with possibilities. Our vision is "Communities that are free of sexual and gender-based violence". Therefore, our possibilities lie in bold yet grounded strategic visioning that moves that needle incrementally closer to that vision. ORCC is excited to embrace and accept this challenge of imagining these infinite possibilities and most importantly, moving some to action.

To our interest-holders — Together we strive to make a difference both to individuals with lived experience of sexual and gender-based violence and collectively, to our community. We look forward to our on-going collaborations and partnerships and to those yet formed. It does indeed take a village!

Our vision is

*"Communities that are free of sexual and gender-based violence".
Therefore, our possibilities lie in bold yet grounded strategic visioning that moves that needle incrementally closer to that vision.*

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS *(continued)*

None of this would have been possible without the steadfast support of our funders. Thank you to our core funders - to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the City of Ottawa, and the United Way. And thank you to new funders whose financial support augmented our ability to enhance our programs and services even further.

Thank you to all staff for your commitment and your caring. While each of you bring your own specific skill sets that you apply with diligence, hard work and compassion, know that it is the sum of all that you do that creates the whole, making our organization what is today and what it will be in the future.

Organizations are rarely static, as we can attest! However, the one element that remains firmly fixed at the very core of our organizational being is our commitment to those in need. Know that you are and will remain our North Star.

Claudia Newman

Board Chair | Board of Directors
Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre



Meet the Team



Christy Savage
Executive Director



Jan Vesna
Director of Programs



Madeline McMahon
(Former) Director of
Finance & Operations



Meg Sinclair
(Former) Knowledge
Translation & Content
Development Lead



Roselin Dixon
Community Outreach &
Communications Lead



Elizabeth Williams
Finance & Operations
Coordinator



Odera Odenigbo
Registered Psychotherapist



Zahara Sheikh
Registered
Social Worker



Valerie Waters
Registered Psychotherapist



Caron Cuff
Service Navigator



Ivana Ljubic
Justice System Navigator

Our Philosophy of Healing

Healing is not linear - it's a journey walked at your own pace, in your own way. At ORCC, we meet survivors exactly where they are, creating spaces that are safe, authentic, and free of judgment. Our approach is rooted in compassion, flexibility, and deep respect for each person's story.

Healing here feels like being seen and supported by someone who is both deeply knowledgeable and profoundly human. Our service providers practice through an anti-oppressive, trauma-informed lens and reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. We are committed to creating inclusive, culturally responsive spaces where every survivor's voice, identity, and pace of healing are honoured.

This philosophy takes shape across three interconnected contexts. In one-on-one support, survivors are accompanied in reclaiming agency and defining their own paths to wellness. Through collective and community healing, creative expression, movement, and sharing circles foster belonging and solidarity. And in systems transformation, our advocacy challenges the structures that perpetuate violence and seeks to build communities where safety and justice are possible for all.

Healing is many things at ORCC: a quiet moment of reflection, a shared story, a reclaimed sense of agency, or a collective call for justice. Every step, every story, and every voice matters.

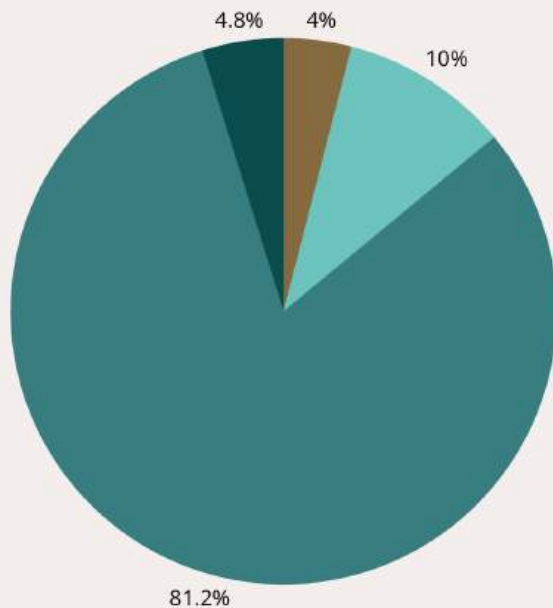




2024-2025 Year in Review

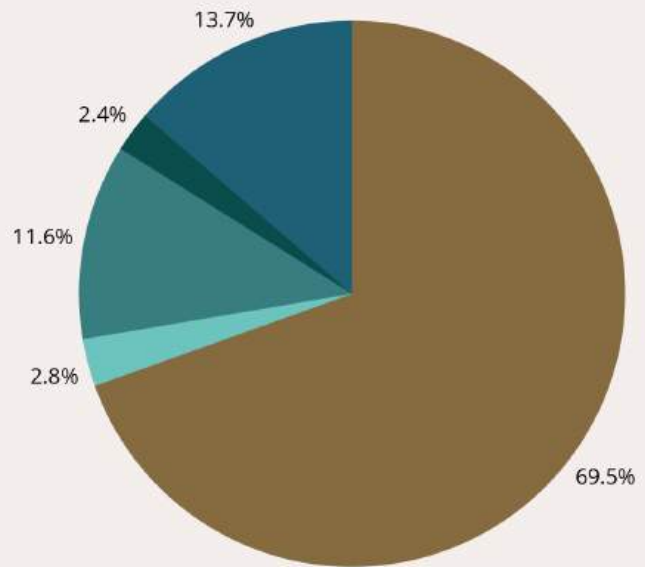
Empowering Our Purpose: A Look at Organizational Funding

Revenue



	Donations & Events	\$53,667
	Grants from Other Organizations	\$134,136
	Government Funding	\$1,088,902
	All Other Revenue	\$64,487
Total Revenue		\$1,341,192

Expense



	Salaries & Benefits	\$969,931
	Service Delivery Partnerships	\$39,180
	Professional Fees	\$161,335
	Travel, Professional Development & Program costs	\$33,658
	Administration Expenses	\$190,836
Total Expense		\$1,394,640

Impact by the Numbers

April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

At the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre, every number represents a survivor who reached out, a moment of connection, or a step toward healing.

Individual Healing

1,887

COUNSELLING SESSIONS

Survivors accessed almost 1,900 one-on-one sessions—an average of 5 every single day—creating space for grounding, storytelling, and healing on their own terms.

145

NEW CLIENTS

Each new client represents trust built and the beginning of a healing relationship with ORCC.

118

SERVICE NAVIGATION SUPPORTS

Almost evenly divided between in-person (62) and online (56), highlighting the importance of hybrid care in reducing barriers to support.



Collective Healing

137

INDIRECT SUPPORTS

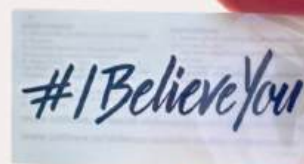
Behind the scenes, ORCC staff worked with partners to coordinate care, advocate for survivors, and ensure no one fell through the cracks.

464

GROUP ATTENDANCE

Survivors chose collective healing nearly 500 times—through creative renewal, peer circles, and community workshops.

“Every number tells a story of courage, connection, and the ongoing fight to create communities free from sexual and gender-based violence.”



Partnerships in Action

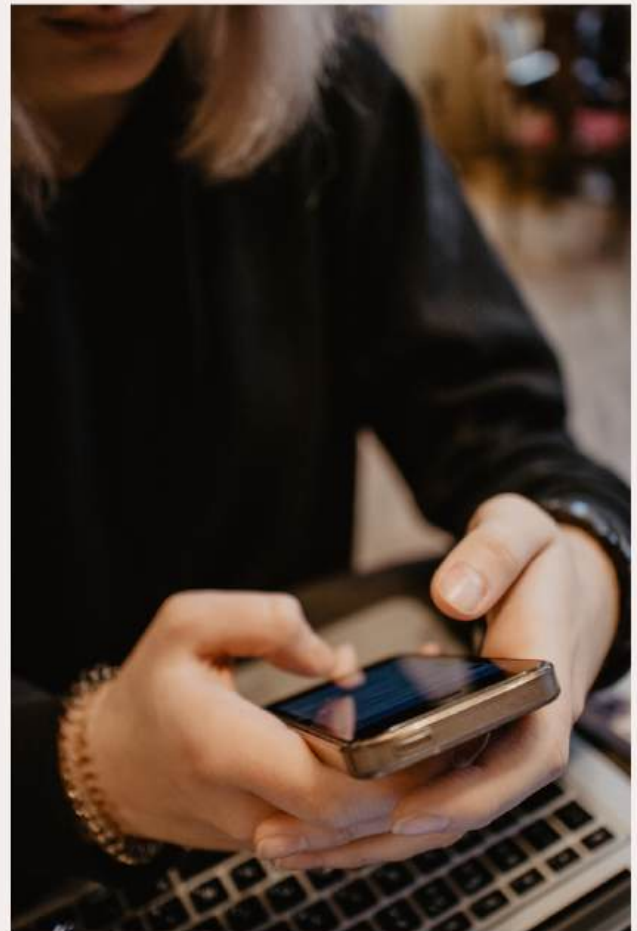
Through community partnerships, survivors accessed support in critical spaces:

- Cornerstone Housing for Women – an average of 5 survivors per week received support.
- Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC) – an average of 8 survivors per week found access to care while incarcerated.
- Ottawa Humane Society (OHS) – an average of 5 survivors per session spend an afternoon receiving pet-assisted psychoeducation and processing groups surrounded by adorable animals.

Who We Supported

**90% of clients were
between the ages of 19–34**

- This shows a striking trend: young survivors are reaching out for support in overwhelming numbers, underscoring both the urgency of early intervention and the long-term impact of sexual violence.



If you need immediate support:

 **24/7 Crisis Line:** 613-562-2333

 **Chat & Text Support:** 613-544-6424

(Available daily from 12 pm – 12 am. ORCC Chat & Text Support can also be accessed via www.orcc.net.)

For inquiries regarding counselling, please contact us:

 **Phone:** 613-562-2334 ext.105

 **Email:** counselling@orcc.net

Follow Us

Instagram & Facebook via [@orccsupports](https://www.instagram.com/orccsupports)

Rooted in Practice: Reimagining Healing through Anti-Oppression & Embodied Practice

Over the past three years, ORCC has been on a journey to explore what it truly means to practice anti-oppression in every layer of our work. Through our Rooted in Practice project, we have deepened our understanding of anti-oppression and created a foundation to share this knowledge across the gender-based violence (GBV) sector.

Community dialogue made it clear: we cannot focus only on managing individual crises. To break cycles of harm, we must also address the systemic forces that sustain oppression. The Rooted in Practice Guidebook is a first step in this direction—connecting individual experiences of sexual and gender-based violence with broader structures of colonialism, neoliberalism, White supremacy, patriarchy, cisheterosexism, and other intersecting systems of domination.

To bring these principles to life, ORCC is piloting alternative, embodied therapeutic programs that honour creativity, nature, and movement as pathways to healing:

- **Creative Renewal** – A 4-week art-based program that uses creativity as a tool for self-expression, emotional exploration, and reclaiming power.
- **Nurture in Nature** – A 4-week program blending online and in-person sessions that reconnects survivors with the natural world as a source of grounding, balance, and growth.
- **Revitalize & Reconnect** – A 4-week movement and mindfulness program fostering body awareness, collective support, and inner calm.

Together, these programs, and the critical discourse analysis that underpins them, are shaping promising practices for frontline services. By rooting our work in anti-oppression and embodied healing, we are building pathways not only for individual recovery, but also for systemic change.

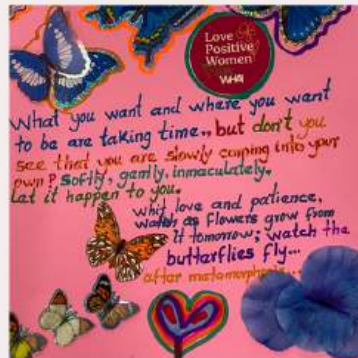
This project has been made possible with support from Women and Gender Equality Canada.

‘Rooted in Practice’ is more than programs and guidebooks; it’s a shift in how we understand healing and justice. By connecting individual experiences of sexual and gender-based violence to systemic oppression, we are:

- *Challenging power imbalances in our sector and society.*
- *Integrating art, nature, and movement into trauma-informed care.*
- *Supporting survivors to explore healing at their own pace, in their own way.*
- *Building practical tools and insights for frontline service providers through our Guidebook.*

This approach transforms healing from reactive crisis management into proactive, systemic change—empowering both survivors and the sector to envision a more equitable future.

“Community dialogue made it clear: we cannot focus only on managing individual crises. To break cycles of harm, we must also address the systemic forces that sustain oppression.”





Stories of Healing

Silenced

My voice was just a quiet song,
They told me that my words were wrong,
I wore my silence like a chain,
A heavy chain, a quiet pain.

They told me – “Bow to belong”,
I cried and cried, my days were long,
My thoughts became confused and lost,
I paid the price... my life the cost.

My silence grew, its heavy veil,
Each whisper gone, each hope frail,
Unspoken words were all in vain,
I could not utter or explain.

My voice was buried, deep within,
A spark, a shadow, lost and thin.
But even silence, cold and wide,
Cannot crush my light inside.

The world so cruel can't contain,
The truths that in my heart remain.
My blood that pulses through the vein,
My words will come. I'll speak again.

written by: A Creative Renewal partic[pant

Feedback from ORCC Service Users

"[My assigned ORCC counsellor] was a key part of my healing journey. She shaped my experience through a compassionate, caring, and insightful way. She provided me with so many resources to facilitate my well-being during our 1-1 counseling sessions. Her authenticity, compassion, and friendliness provided enough trust to welcome uncomfortable and difficult discussion. She let me lead the discussions at the start of the session and allowed me to progress to the depth that I felt was good for me that day. She met me where I was, provided so much insight, and made it feel like I was talking to a very well-informed and caring friend. I'd like to take a moment of gratitude for [my assigned ORCC counsellor], and the incredible team at ORCC that help so many survivors. Thank you so much!"

"I have done a lot groups provided through ORCC as well as other groups which have really helped me understand myself and how important self care really is so I am feeling more confident now."

"My priorities have changed. I have felt a mass[ive] improvement in being able to stand up for myself. I found my voice and found my sanity. I would still be unsafe if I didn't work with [my assigned ORCC counsellor]"

"[My ORCC Counsellor] was very comforting, she felt safe, she felt human. I learned how to build boundaries and appreciate myself more, I felt listened to and had a safe space to process my experience."

MY STUDENT PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE AT THE OTTAWA RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

BY: ISABELLA INGLIS

Completing my third-year Bachelor of Social Work practicum at the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre (ORCC) was a transformative experience that shaped my growth both professionally and personally. I began eager to gain real-world experience, and I am leaving with greater confidence, new skills, and a deeper sense of purpose as a future social worker.

From my first day, I felt welcomed as a valued member of the team. The staff's guidance and encouragement created a supportive environment where I could ask questions, overcome initial nerves, and fully embrace learning opportunities.

During my placement, I contributed to several meaningful programs. A highlight was participating in the Ottawa Humane Society Outreach, where working with animals during client interactions brought calm and helped build rapport in creative ways. I also assisted at the Women's Health Information Fair at Immigrant Women Services Ottawa, connecting with immigrant and racialized women and learning firsthand about the barriers they face. These experiences deepened my understanding of the importance of culturally sensitive and accessible care.



Adapting to online work was another key learning area. Developing presentations and program materials enhanced my technical skills, while supporting programs remotely highlighted the importance of digital collaboration and client safety in virtual spaces.

Over the past three months, I was entrusted with meaningful responsibilities that strengthened my knowledge of trauma-informed care, advocacy, and the complexities of supporting diverse communities. The inclusive and empowering atmosphere at ORCC gave me the confidence to stretch my abilities and find my voice.

I am deeply grateful for the mentorship and compassion I experienced throughout this placement. The lessons I've learned about empathy, inclusivity, and client safety will guide me as I continue my journey in social work, inspired to advocate for survivors and advance social justice wherever my career takes me.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS: REFLECTIONS ON MY ORCC PLACEMENT AT CORNERSTONE

BY: MEGHA JOBY

Visiting Cornerstone Housing for Women as a placement student with the ORCC was a meaningful and eye-opening experience. Although I already work at Cornerstone as a front-line support staff, stepping into the space in a different role, this time as part of the ORCC team, offered me a fresh perspective, new responsibilities, and an opportunity for growth, all while remaining rooted in our shared goal of supporting women.

Organizing and facilitating the event came with its challenges, but what stood out most was how our team came together to problem-solve and support one another. This reinforced the value of teamwork and reminded me of the importance of uplifting each other in community work.

The interactions we had with the women at Cornerstone were deeply enriching. Despite the hardships they faced, they welcomed us with openness and kindness. Hearing their stories and sharing space with them was powerful and left a lasting impact. We provided resources, information, and support within our capacity, and I'm truly grateful that we could make a difference – even in small ways.

As an ORCC team, our goal was to offer service navigation, counselling support, educational conversations, and creative engagement through games and painting. We also brought refreshments to create a warm and welcoming environment. Though the event wasn't without obstacles, I genuinely enjoyed being part of it and found it to be a valuable learning experience.

One key takeaway for me was learning how to navigate boundaries; shifting between my role as a Cornerstone staff member and my role as a placement student representing ORCC. It was a delicate but important balance, and I'm thankful for the chance to practice it.

I am especially grateful to the ORCC team and Cornerstone staff for their support and collaboration. A heartfelt thank you to my supervisor, Ivana, for guiding me with patience, understanding, and encouragement—you are the best mentor. To Odera, who provided counselling services while supporting our team, I deeply appreciated hearing your stories. And to Emma, who stood by us and helped ensure the event's success despite a challenging school schedule, thank you. I am incredibly grateful for each of you.

This experience reminded me why I chose this path: to serve, to listen, and to show up with empathy and intention.



Expanding Our Circle of Care



Building Community, Expanding Support: Why ORCC Needs You

With gender-based violence on the rise, survivors in Ottawa need the ORCC more than ever. But meeting this demand requires something we can't do alone: a stronger base of donors and community partners.

One inspiring example of what this looks like is our partnership with Happy Goat Coffee Company's Main Street location, where a TipTap donation machine raised more than expected in just two months. For Kristal, the café's co-founder, the decision to host the machine was simple:

"I know this community. People here are caring, generous, and want to make this place better. The TipTap made it easy, and the results blew us away."

For Kristal, the machine wasn't just about fundraising, it was about creating space for conversations that too often remain hidden:

"Healing looks like community. We're stronger when we lift each other up, open doors, or simply show up for each other, as human beings."

At ORCC, we believe the same. But to continue walking alongside survivors, we need your support.

This year, we are launching "This is What Healing Looks Like", a fundraising campaign to expand our circle of care. Your gift (whether a monthly donation, workplace partnership, or hosting a TipTap machine) will directly help survivors access the healing and advocacy they deserve. Follow us on social media and stay tuned for the upcoming campaign kick-off.

Join us. Show up for survivors. Help us grow the movement for healing and justice.



Looking Ahead: 2025–2026 and Beyond

ORCC is entering a new phase of renewal and growth. With stronger foundations in place, we are ready to deepen our impact — supporting survivors, influencing systems, building partnerships, and securing resources for long-term sustainability.

Our direction is guided by four pillars:

**Transparency, Accountability
& Trustworthiness**

**Caring, Responsive &
Equitable Service Delivery**

**Partnership & Collaboration
for Stronger Communities**

**Responsible & Sustainable
Financial Stewardship**

These pillars anchor our work as we expand healing opportunities and strengthen our voice across the gender-based violence sector.



Continuing the Healing Journey

In the year ahead, ORCC will:

- Expand culturally grounded and survivor-informed programming, including art, nature, and movement-based healing;
- Grow our Service Navigation model to bridge gaps in housing, legal aid, income security, and mental health;
- Embed survivor and community input into program design and evaluation;
- Invest in staff well-being and development, recognizing that a supported team is key to survivor care.

Priorities for Deepening Impact

- Organizational Excellence & Accountability – Strengthen systems, decision-making, and data to demonstrate impact.
- Program & Service Expansion – Scale services, pilot new initiatives, and sustain a balance between crisis response and prevention.
- Community Leadership & Advocacy – Build cross-sector partnerships, influence policy, and advance non-carceral, feminist, and decolonial approaches.
- Sustainable Growth – Diversify revenue, align budgets with goals, and lay the groundwork for ORCC's next Strategic Plan.

A Call to Action

Healing is not a service, it's a community practice.
ORCC cannot do this work alone.

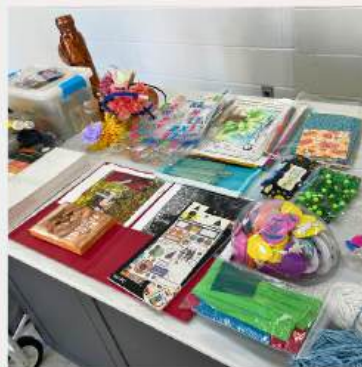
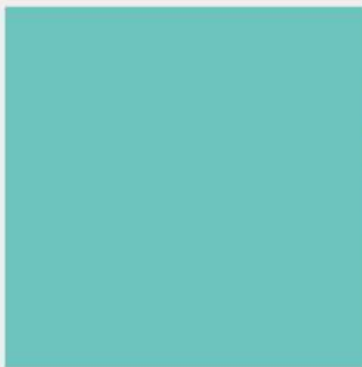
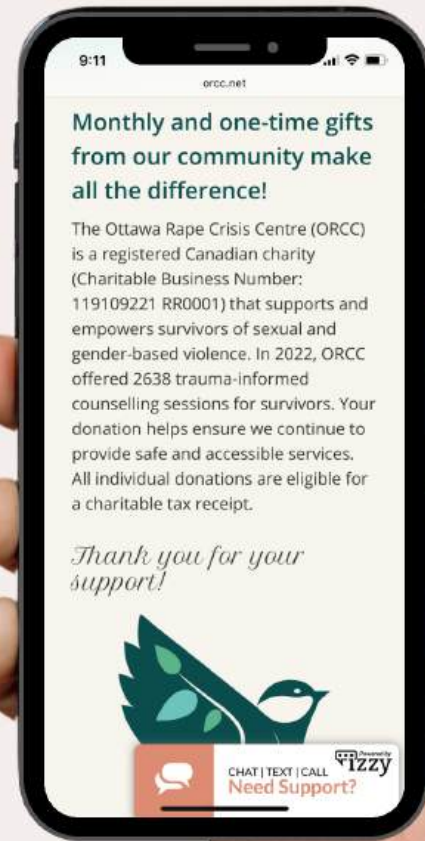
Your support makes healing possible by:

- Reducing counselling wait times;
- Connecting survivors to housing, legal aid, and income support;
- Bringing healing programs into communities facing the greatest barriers.

Every gift is a step toward healing. Every action brings us closer to a future free from sexual and gender-based violence.

Here's how you can help:

- **Donate:** \$150 funds one hour of trauma-informed counselling
- **Partner:** Ask us how to bring programs into shelters, schools, and community hubs
- **Advocate:** Push for survivor-centered care and systemic change
- **Amplify:** Share our mission to uplift survivor voices



Acknowledgements

The Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre extends our deepest gratitude to all who make our work possible.

To survivors: Thank you for trusting us with your stories, your healing, and your courage. Your voices guide every step we take and remind us daily why this work matters.

To our staff and volunteers: Your compassion, skill, and unwavering commitment sustain the Centre. You show up each day with care, creativity, and determination, holding space for healing while advancing change.

To our donors and funders: Your generosity ensures that survivors in Ottawa and surrounding communities have access to critical services. Every contribution—large or small—helps create pathways to support, safety, and justice.

To our community partners: Thank you for standing alongside us in this work. Collaboration is essential to building communities free of sexual and gender-based violence, and we are grateful for the solidarity, resources, and expertise you bring.

ORCC 2024-25 **Board of Directors**

- Claudia Newman, Chair
- Jeanette Doucet, Co-Chair
- Kayla Cavanagh, Treasurer
- Mary Masarella, Secretary
- Emma Pratt, Member-at-large
- Shannon Satov, Member-at-large
- Megan Simon, Member-at-large
- Sharon Rouleau, Member-at-large
- Mary Witherspoon, Member-at-large



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada

The Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre, Department of National Defense



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