



**Thrive Counselling
Strategic Plan
2016 - 2019**

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Thrive Counselling Strategic Plan 2016 - 2019

Who We Are

Thrive Counselling provides a range of counseling services to the residents of Halton Region. We have offices in Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Georgetown where we work with individuals and families to address challenges that they face. We provide counseling services designed to optimize health and wellness.



The Strategic Planning Process – Background

On October 1, 2015 two of Halton Region's well known counseling agencies merged their operations. The Boards of Access Counselling & Family Services and Halton Family Services spent more than 12 months planning the integration of their respective organizations, with a view to

- 1) Enhancing and expanding the range of services available to the residents of Halton;
- 2) Maximizing the capacity of the agencies to meet the changing needs of clients, funders and the community;
- 3) Increasing the Agency's financial capacity, viability and sustainability;

- 4) Providing stable employment and interesting opportunities for our dedicated staff;
- 5) Strengthening the profile of the Agency in the Region.

Following the successful merger of the two agencies, the new Board undertook a strategic planning exercise to establish new directions and specific goals for the new Agency.

The Environment

The environment in which we operate provides important context for future planning. As we look ahead, it is important that we are cognizant of trends and themes that will impact the family services sector generally and Thrive Counselling specifically.

In the **political environment**, there is

- Growing focus on integration and collaboration to improve effectiveness and efficiency;
- Ongoing fiscal constraint;
- Increasing demands for transparency and accountability;
- A growing focus on using partnerships and collaboration to improve service delivery.

Economic trends reflect continuing slow growth across the province. Studies have demonstrated a widening income gap, with ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) and OW (Ontario Works) levels not keeping pace with rising costs. Employment, particularly for young people, is commonly referred to as “precarious”, denoting an increase in part-time and contract employment and a decline in permanent, stable jobs.

Halton area residents have a higher than average median income. However, roughly 10% of the population is living at or below the poverty line.

In a challenging environment, not-for-profit agencies are not receiving budget increases, and are not able to increase employee salary levels. More not-for-profits are turning to social enterprise business models, or are otherwise looking for alternate sources of revenue to ensure sustainability.

The impact of the broad **social environment** is dominated by the demographic profile of the province and country. In Ontario, seniors will represent 23.6% of the population by 2036, up from a projected 16% in 2016 and an earlier (2013) figure of 13%. By 2031, 1 in 3 Canadians will be a visible minority, settling mostly in large urban centres. By 2031, between 4.0 and 5.3% of the population will be aboriginal. Aboriginal youth are Canada's fastest growing population, bringing unique cultural, social and educational needs.

In Halton, the Milton area is growing very quickly, with many young families.

In the **technological environment**, the rise of social media has had a significant impact on the way people provide and access information. There are growing demands for more immediate information, on a variety of technology platforms. This has implications for privacy, and the need to build systems that are robust and secure. Increasing technological sophistication is not reflected in all parts of the population, however; some seniors, or individuals with lower literacy levels or lower income levels, may not have access to new technology. Service providers will need to continue to provide information in a variety of formats to meet the needs of their clients.

In addition to reviewing the external environment, we also considered our own organizational strengths and challenges and emerging needs in the community.

Our Strengths include:

- Service excellence
 - Wide range of services
 - High quality of services
 - Little duplication of services
 - Flexibility and responsiveness of services
- Staff excellence
 - High quality staff
 - High staff satisfaction and low staff turnover
 - Cultural and other diversity
 - Enthusiasm for the future
- Community-based
- Reasonable cost
- Strong support for the organizational merger
- Strong Board
- Openness to change, adaptability

Challenges we face include:

- Marketing and public relations; visibility in the community
- Fund raising ability
- Hours of service in all parts of the region (ie. need more hours in some parts)
- Need for more partnerships and linkages
- Access to our Burlington & Oakville locations (lack of parking)
- Adequacy of services in the north of the region

Moving Forward ...

The Board took all of this information and feedback into consideration in developing its Strategic Plan for the upcoming 3 years.

This is both an opportune and a critical time for the Agency to build on the work to date and the momentum that currently exists to build an exciting, innovative organization for the future.

In establishing a new identify and new directions, the Board articulated the kinds of programs and messages that should define its future:

- Hope
- Change
- One-stop
- Wellness
- Proactive and positive
- Quality and excellence
- Holistic

Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019

Vision, Mission, Values

Our Vision:

Strong people

Strong families

Strong communities

Our Mission:

We partner with you to manage life's challenges.

Our Values:

Care and compassion

Respect and Dignity

Professionalism & Quality

Inclusion & Safety

Our Strategic Directions

Over the next 3 years we will

1. Expand and enhance our services
2. Increase community awareness and visibility
3. Nurture a positive, collaborative, innovative organizational culture
4. Continue efforts to ensure a sustainable organization for the future.

Strategic Direction #1: Expand and enhance our services to effectively meet the needs of individuals, families and the communities we serve.

Thrive Counselling is an important contributor to the health and wellness of the individuals and families in our communities. We will enhance and expand our services to respond to the growing and changing needs of the region.

Strategies:

- 1.1. Increase funding levels
 - 1.1.1. Secure new sources of funds (e.g., municipal and regional governments; health and other Ministries)
 - 1.1.2. Explore additional fee-for-service and private pay opportunities
 - 1.1.3. Develop new partnerships
- 1.2. Explore needs and opportunities for specialty counseling services
- 1.3. Expand outreach
- 1.4. Pursue opportunities for innovative programs and services

Strategic Direction #2: Increase awareness and visibility of Thrive Counselling in the community

Halton Family Services provides much needed high quality programs and services. Increased awareness will ensure that individuals and families who need our services will be able to find and access them easily, and we will be top of mind for these services in the broader community.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Develop a new name and branding; establish a new identity
- 2.2 Secure new partnerships with community providers and agencies
- 2.3 Pursue more community outreach
- 2.4 Develop a marketing and communications plan

Strategic Direction #3: Nurture a positive, collaborative, innovative organizational culture

The new Thrive has a strong base on which to build. Staff and Board members are highly qualified, positive and enthusiastic about the future. We will harness the energy and strength of the newly merged organization in efforts that are creative, proactive and innovative.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Pursue staff development and training to ensure the agency continues to provide best practice, evidence-based programs and services
- 3.2 Continue to offer competitive compensation to recruit and retain the best staff
- 3.3 Pursue a culture of innovation and creativity
- 3.4 Assume a leadership role in the community.

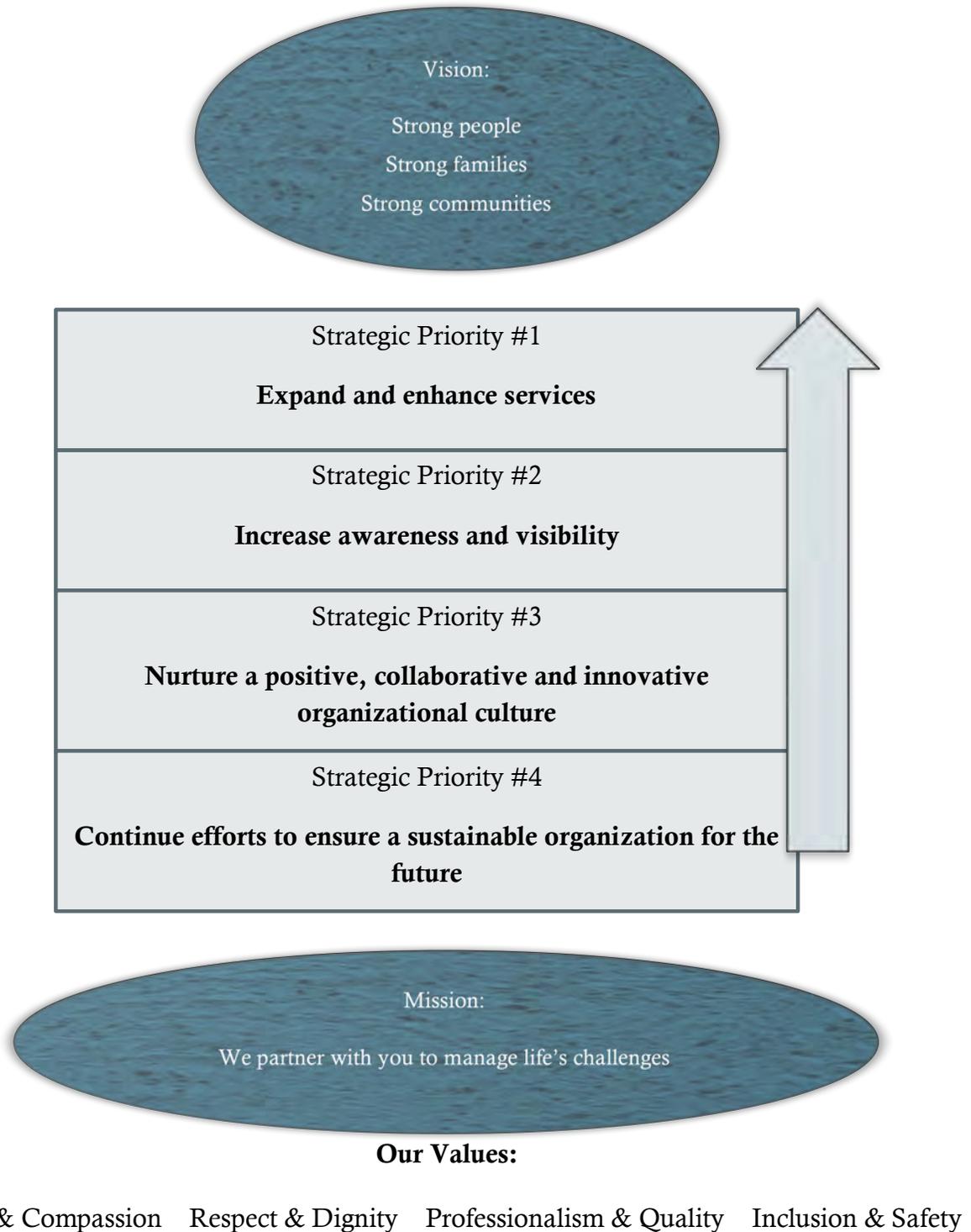
Strategic Direction #4: Continue efforts to ensure a sustainable organization for the future.

The current environment is characterized by rapid transformation and continuing cost pressures. To be sustainable, organizations must be nimble, adaptable and willing to embrace change. Thrive will continue to monitor trends and assess opportunities that will ensure its future.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Explore opportunities for further growth (e.g., partnerships, mergers, new business lines)
- 4.2 Analyze and optimize existing and new revenue streams.

Thrive Counselling Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019 - Summary





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