



# Strategic Plan

THRIVE COUNSELLING

2019 - 2024

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## Thrive Counselling – Our Mandate

Thrive Counselling is multi-faceted family service agency serving the Halton community for well over 50 years. Formed by the 2015 merger of Halton Family Services and Access Counselling & Family Services, we have maintained the best aspects of these organizations while redefining and positioning ourselves to take on the challenges of our current environment.

Thrive is committed to providing the residents of Halton services to address the challenges they face and optimize their health and wellness . Through the delivery of therapy, counselling, groups and services for families, Thrive commits to strengthening our community and its members.

### *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 & Safe

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

As our prior plan approached conclusion, the Board of Thrive Counselling reviewed the substantive progress during which occurred during 2016-2019. The primary goals of that plan arose from the merger and the need to develop, market and nurture a new agency identity and vision. Feedback across the organization and community provides strong support for the success of these objectives. The strength of this success provides Thrive with the ability to define bold new visions for the agency.

With this in mind, Thrive worked with a consultant with experience and expertise in strategic planning for the Family Service sector, as well as conducting discussions at the Board and Management level and a visioning day, to develop a new five year plan. Agency staff have provided their support for the agency objectives and are engaged in the operationalization of the goals.

### The Environment

An on-going environmental scan has provided essential context for agency planning and decision making.

**Political Environment** – Thrive and the family service sector face a changed political environment requiring the development of new relationships, a need to highlight our value to new bureaucratic and political players, and an increased focus on the value proposition associated with our work. We can expect the likelihood of significant changes as the provincial health sector re-aligns and re-organizes with an eye to cost-savings across the public sector. Thrive is aligning closely with our family service sector to maximize the benefits of Family Service Ontario's government relations expertise.

**Economic Environment**- While the economy continues to post modest growth, employment salaries have not kept pace with inflation and financial instability, risks and the income gap continue to rise.

While we are fortunate in Halton to have a high average provincial income, significant areas of poverty exist creating stressors for our community. In particular, the high cost of housing in Halton creates upward pressures on salaries. Flat funding revenues require non-profits to innovate to maintain service levels and be able to offer competitive salaries for a highly skilled workforce.

**Demographic Environment** – Challenges exist in providing service in four communities, particularly distinct in terms of age distribution,, cultural backgrounds and growth rates. The agency will need to continue to calibrate the changing needs for services and types of services across the region. Increasing the agency's capacity to serve a diverse population is considered in all decision-making. The Milton community continues to be one of the

fastest growing Ontario communities, attracting a young, diverse population. Burlington has a higher than average population of seniors. Oakville, one of the province's most affluent communities, has considerable pockets of poverty.

**Technological Environment** – This area continues to change rapidly. Increased technological skills are required across all staff groups. There is an increased need and opportunity to automate processes where possible, particularly across data collection and outcome measures. The ability to effectively utilize technology to engage Thrive's stakeholders, to optimize our efficiency and to demonstrate our effectiveness is essential to our ability to move forward. Thrive has enhanced our on-line presence and our technological platforms to capitalize on technological possibilities.

Thrive conducted a SWOT analysis to assist in better identifying the strengths of the agency that can be brought to address various challenges.

### **Strengths**

**Heightened Profile** – Website, social media, community outreach, new programming have increased local relevance and demand for service

**Excellent Staff** – Highly qualified staff who reflect population diversity. Dedicated, engaged and adaptive staff who welcome innovative programming.

**Region-wide Locations** - New, refreshed and accessible space provides opportunity and continuity across organization

**Organizational Excellence** Successful accreditation of merged agency, strong parent organization Family Service Ontario, committed and high- functioning Board

**Demand for Services** - High demand for services including new offerings including DBT Skills groups, Walk-In Clinics and language-specific groups.

## Challenges

Lean administrative structure presents risks for adequate role back-up and succession considerations

Unpredictable changes to political landscape. Potential impact on funding

Clinical and administrative time constraints

Lack of dedicated resources to manage technological issues and decision support

Capacity to respond to increased demand and higher need clients

## Looking Ahead

The Board reflected that a longer interval might be required to enact the next stage of planning in moving the agency forward as the intent to move forward and determined a five year strategic plan would best serve the current purpose.

Thrive Counselling has developed its culture and identity and has a vision to expand and grow in a manner which is sustainable, demonstrates quality and effectiveness and increases the capacity to meet the needs of the Halton community.



## Objective # 1 – Increase agency capacity for service (Individuals, Couples & Families)

Thrive currently sees approximately 1700 clients a year in our Individual, Couple and Family program. Demand for service is constantly increasing creating inappropriate waits for service. Providing timely service to a larger portion of our community is an essential goal. Evidence-based models of service such as Walk-In Counselling, new and enhanced funding as well as improved efficiency can advance this objective.

**Goal:** Serve 50% more clients in ICF by 5 year mark (850 additional ICF clients)

### Strategies

#### 1.1 Develop & Expand Single Session Walk-In service

Key tactics:

- Open and expand Oakville Walk-In Clinic
- Maximize utilization of Burlington & Oakville Clinic

#### 1.2 Increase staffing

Key tactics

- Access health funding for new Psychotherapy funding

### 1.3 Increase staff productivity

#### Key tactics

- Reduce volume of cancellations, re-scheduling and non-attendance for appointments
- Standardize and boost direct service time across agency

#### Measures

Total number of clients seen

Number of clients seen in Walk-in

Number of client sessions attended

### Objective #2 – Improve Client outcomes in therapy programs

Thrive is increasingly being asked by stakeholders and funders for information regarding outcomes and value for services. Thrive has some outcome measurements in place and has started using an on-line platform to improve this practice.

There is significant meta-analysis indicating that tracking outcomes and client feedback improves outcomes. Also, meta-analysis of research finds that the therapeutic alliance is more important than the specific intervention that is used on the client so best to focus on the factor which is the most influential for outcomes.

**Goal:** Have 80% of clients have a measurable positive outcome in functionality or symptomology

#### Strategies

**1.1** Utilize a robust outcome measurement system across the whole ICF and VAW program

**1.2** Track and measure therapeutic alliance

**1.3** Track Outcomes for Walk-in Counselling

#### Key tactics

- Introduce and build platform across all staff (Greenspace)
- Introduce progress measures .i.e. Miller
- Provide training, supervision and coaching for staff on implementation and therapeutic use of these measures
- Invest capital into training and measurement system(s)
- Develop and implement process to monitor outcome information for the agency, someone or someone's role to be responsible to the metrics. Decision support



## Measures

% clients using outcome measure of symptoms experiencing improvements

% clients using a functionality measure who show improvement

% of clients where alliance is being measured by a tool

% of clients participating in measures (at least 1 pre & post)

% of therapists utilizing outcome measures in counselling

% of clients whose outcomes are being tracked

% of clients showing Walk-In Clinic specific improvements

## Objective # 3 Stabilize agency funding through growth

Thrive currently has a budget of 2.2 million and would have more sustainability if costs could spread across a larger budget. This increase would allow for more clinical and administrative staff which would support our other objectives

**Goal :** Increase agency budget by \$400,000 in 5 years

## Strategies

### 3.1 Secure Increased funding through health

Key tactics

- Work with FSO Board
- Engage in Greenspace pilot project
- Outreach to political and bureaucratic decision-makers
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### 3.2 Increase client revenues

Key tactics

- Review fee structures
- Increase proportion of full or high fee clients
- Attract more high fee clients( i.e Victim Quick Response Program, employers, insurance clients)

**3.3** Add new funded programs through the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services, the Ministry of the Attorney General, or Regional providers

#### Key Tactics

- Position self for known potential program expansions – i.e. (Ensure credentialed staff with specialized training)
- Maintain vigilance about potential programs currently offered by other service providers
- Follow budget/announcements closely, for example changes to social assistance

#### Measures

Agency budget increase

% Increase in client fees

### Objective #4 Strengthen Organizational Infrastructure

Thrive currently has a lean administrative team with fairly centralized functions. This may pose risks in terms of flexibility to manage absences and turnover as well as variations in workload. Increased ability to stabilize workload pressures and navigate planned or unplanned absences would assist in maintaining focus on organizational goals.

**Goal :** Increase administrative capacity by 1.5 full time equivalent staff or equivalent capacity gain

#### Strategies

##### 4.1 Increase staffing levels for administrative functions

#### Key tactics

- Secure additional funding which includes administrative dollars

##### 4.2 Consider alternate back-end models

#### Key tactics

Research options available and costs

#### **4.4** Utilize students in administration

##### Key tactics

- Develop relationships with educational institutions which may assist with projects or special tasks

#### **4.5** Succession planning (short & long term)

##### Key tactics

- Increase cross-training
- Identify administrative risks and mitigations

#### **Measures**

Number of FTEs or equivalents

Number of student placements

Report and recommendations around alternate back-end models

Redevelopment and expansion of succession plans for key positions

## LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

## GOALS

1. Increase agency capacity for client service.

✓ Increase capacity in Individual, Couple and Family program by 50%

1.Strong Client Outcomes in Therapy Services

✓ 80% of clients have a measurable improvement in symptoms and/or functioning

✓ 100% of clinicians utilize outcome measures

3. Growing organization to increase financial stabilization

✓ Increase agency budget by 20%

4. Strengthen organizational infrastructure

✓ Increase administrative capacity by 20%

Effective  
Quality  
Services

Organizational  
Excellence

Skilled/  
Committed  
Staff

Sustained  
Funding

STRATEGIES