

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

HARD FEELINGS MENTAL HEALTH  
848 Bloor Street West  
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hardfeelings.org / @hardfeelings

## RIDING THE WAVES OF THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic caught us all by surprise, dropping us into a new realm of collective uncertainty. As we learned how to do our work in new ways, our focus became supporting the Hard Feelings community as a whole, including all of the counsellors, clients and folks who shopped with us. Through it all, we grew our online platforms to share mental health resources, created a podcast to build connection, and designed a free online group series to support people facing both new and ongoing mental health and financial challenges. The shift to online work in both the retail and counselling elements of our model is more familiar now, but continues to present challenges through rolling closures and ongoing uncertainty.

When Reader's Digest published an article (see photo) about our work over a year ago, the pandemic was not on our radar. Hard Feelings was thriving and our model was getting closer to financial stability. The pandemic shifted everything and yet, with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we were able to build our capacities and stay the course.

A second year into a pandemic we once thought might last two weeks, we are deeply proud of the flexibility and responsiveness that our dedicated team has shown to ensure that access to supports continued in people's greatest moments of need.

Kate Scowen  
Founder & Acting Executive Director



*How One Toronto Storefront Provides Accessible and Affordable Therapy /  
Reader's Digest March 2020*

Photo: Tanja Tiziana

## OUR MISSION AND VALUES

Our mission is to reduce barriers and increase access to mental health supports through an innovative community of practice. This work is rooted in our values of integrity, innovation, inclusion, and empathy.

## LOW-COST COUNSELLING

2020 was a year of ups and downs for us all; the impacts of the pandemic crashed against us and it often felt like we were swimming against the tide. We were always looking for the next way to support clients, but it became clear there were fewer people able to afford even low-cost counselling. In July 2020, we made the decision to remain fully online and our counsellors stayed with us as we waited to see how the pandemic evolved. We reduced counsellor membership fees to work online, rather than rent spaces, and trained counsellors in best practices of online therapy and other relevant topics.

With the support of a private donor, we supported clients in new ways by launching our free Spring Solace Group Series, with topics such as Mindfulness for Emotional Resilience Training, Mindful Muslims: Calming the Stressed Mind, Poetry & Writing Workshops, and CBT for Anxiety and Worry, among many others.

To support our counsellors from afar, we developed a pod-based peer supervision model and grew our shared practice resources. Our community grew closer and more connected throughout the enduring pandemic, resulting in the co-creation of a strong, innovative, and thoughtful group of counsellors.

HARD FEELINGS



Hard Feelings Podcast



## 2020/21 IN NUMBERS

**173** clients attended an intake session with a counsellor

**167** clients engaged in ongoing counselling

On average, **126** clients were engaged in counselling each month

**24** counsellors offered low-cost counselling through our model

On average, **18** clients were on the waitlist for counselling each month

Our Spring Solace Group Series saw **13** unique groups, run by **16** facilitators supporting **186** participant in **72** sessions.



## STOREFRONT

Our retail store also rode some waves of its own this year. We grew our store team and focused on encouraging customers to shop online. We launched "Care Kit" giveaways, as a way to stay connected with and support our community. We designed HF apparel that was very popular and these efforts led to increased online sales and engagement. We continued to work together to keep the store going despite rolling pandemic-related closures and a 44% decrease in sales from the previous year. Thankfully, we had an inspired team that brought renewed energy, and we ended up with a busy holiday shopping season.

We saw a steady swell in sales as we became more active on social media. We broadened our product offerings and looked for innovative strategies to market our products and advertise beyond the GTA. This upcoming year, we will continue to research new products, explore how to expand our reach, and connect to the needs of customers across Ontario.

# BOARD REPORT

**This was the first full year that Hard Feelings experienced the impact of the pandemic on our mission of reducing barriers and increasing access to stronger mental health.** We continued to adapt our model to meet this challenge. Our move, earlier in 2020, to a fully online version of Hard Feelings was supported through a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This enabled us to hire two Recovery Leaders to help us research and develop new ways of working that would build our organizational resilience through the pandemic. New programming, funded in partnership with a private donor, was designed specifically for individuals struggling to find mental health supports as a result of the pandemic, providing a series of free online groups. The counsellors in our Community of Practice continued to support our mission in a constantly changing environment, and we deepened our efforts to support them, as well. As a board of directors, we looked to the community and brought in new members with diverse experiences and backgrounds who are committed to supporting our mission going forward.

*The Hard Feelings Board of Directors*

### HFMH Board of Directors

Claire Angus, *Treasurer & Co-chair*

Maureen Carter-Whitney, *Secretary & Co-chair*

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