

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

HARD FEELINGS MENTAL HEALTH  
353 Church Street  
Toronto, ON, M5B 0B2

hardfeelings.org | @hardfeelings

## EXPLORING NEW WATERS

After taking our work and store online for 6 months, we were very excited to open a new storefront in February 2023. Our move into 353 Church Street has led to new partnerships and reinvigorated former ones. With our storefront situated close to several downtown post-secondary campuses, we are seeing an increase in demand from students and young adults, many of whom are struggling with the mental health impacts of the high cost of living, global conflicts, and climate change.

We have been collaborating with our new community to learn what people need, and how we might support them through new offerings. These consultations have resulted in:

- Updates to our counselling model
- Mental Health Library
- Hard Feelings Hangouts
- Volunteer opportunities
- Low-cost training and workshops
- Navigation supports
- Return to in-person counselling



Our new storefront space at 353 Church Street is a place for connection, mental health resources, and service navigation. Since we opened in February 2023, over **430 individuals** have come in and/or reached out to us for support.

## 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 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Access, Community, Integrity and Innovation.

*\*Our mission was updated in September 2022, as part of our Strategic Planning process.*

We are also a proud member of the Citywide Commons; a group of non-profit organizations located in our building, collaborating on city-wide service provision and navigation. As we learn how to support each other, we are committed to the belief that together we can make positive social change in the city.

Kate Scowen  
Executive Director

## LOW-COST COUNSELLING

This past year was one of growth and new adventures. It was a year when we worked to accept where we were at – in transition. We shifted to adapt to need and our capacity, both of which have been growing steadily.

In September 2022, we revised our counselling model and fees to ensure more access for clients and more support for our community of practice. We faced the ups and downs of demand and referrals and, in April 2023, five new counsellors who specialize in areas of identified gaps joined the practice.

At our new storefront location, we have built connections with other organizations in the Church-Gerrard area, and in the Citywide Commons, which has led to strengthening community partnerships and more in-person events in our beautiful, bright space. We opened an in-person counselling room and started having more conversations about mental health in our storefront.

We are working towards collaborating with these community connections to run more workshops for mental health professionals and public community members alike. Building up this community in our new neighbourhood, once again, is our primary goal.

*Elise Meertens.*

Manager, Community of Practice



**We worked with members of our community of practice to revise and update our practice model.** Pictured here at a counsellor focus group meeting are (clockwise from bottom left): Ary Maharaj, RP (Qualifying); Anand Jaggernauth, RP; Justin Goddard, RP Elise Meertens, RP. Not pictured are Corinne Smirle, RSW; Jean Hopkins, RSW; Kate Scowen, RSW.

### 2022/23 IN NUMBERS

**302** clients engaged in ongoing counselling

**1910+** hours of counselling were provided

On average, **104** clients were engaged in counselling each month

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

**430+** people accessed our new storefront for support navigating mental health resources, to learn about our work, and participate in community programs.



## STOREFRONT

Not surprisingly, sales in our retail store slowed during the 6 months we were fully online. Opening a new storefront and retail space has led to steadily growing interest in our work and an increase in sales. While we know that our retail revenue is an important part of our sustainability, the Hard Feelings storefront is about a lot more than selling mental health resources.

Over the past year, we have launched several new projects that happen online and in-person in our storefront:

- Our Hard Feelings Book Club, where we have read four books with 80 participants.
- Hard Feelings Hangouts, a weekly free drop-in featuring crafts that promote wellness.
- Our Mental Health Library, that has 54 patrons, with 95 books borrowed.

We've introduced many new products from local makers, to expand our offerings to customers. To help sustain the work we do, volunteers have returned to the space to help maintain daily store operations. And, as usual our annual Mental Health Pop-Up Market was a big success, celebrating our 5th birthday.

*Taima Humbert*  
Store Manager

## BOARD REPORT

**Hard Feelings has seen a lot of change over the last few years and 2022/23 was no exception.** We were very excited to move into our new storefront at 353 Church Street after leaving our former space last year. It is wonderful to have a physical location again and we look forward to continued and developing partnerships with Family Service Toronto, our Citywide Commons partner organizations, local post-secondary institutions, and other agencies in this dynamic downtown Toronto neighbourhood.

We recently received funding for a new staff position to focus on volunteer and community engagement, which will help connect us to our new neighbourhood. Our Community of Practice continues to thrive under the leadership of Elise Meertens, our Manager, Community of Practice. We remain committed to the goals in our strategic direction for 2021-24 and look forward to continuing to support our Hard Feelings staff and counsellors in the coming year.

*The Hard Feelings Board of Directors*

### HFMH Board of Directors

Rona Abromovitch

Annabelle Bernard

Maia Bessemer

Maureen Carter-Whitney

Trish Cislak

Saisha Guzder

Jean Hopkins

Neil Price

Jazba Singh