



HARD FEELINGS MENTAL HEALTH

CASE FOR SUPPORT

THE PROBLEM

One in four Ontarians will struggle with a mental health concern in their lifetime (CAMH, 2023), and many are not able to access the supports they need (MHRC, 2023). A recent report highlights the impact of increasing costs of living, housing shortages, and work burnout as detrimental to the mental wellness and psychological health of Torontonians (Thrive Toronto, 2025). The high cost of market-rate psychotherapy, long wait times for publicly funded care, and the stigma and shame many experience in reaching out for help, block many from accessing the care that they need, and are drivers of social isolation and loneliness. Traditional pathways to care have left gaps in service where people often get left behind.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Hard Feelings is to bring innovation to the mental health sector that reduces barriers and increases access to stronger mental health. We work with mental health professionals, community members and partners to facilitate the delivery of low-cost psychotherapy, curate mental health resources, and foster conversations that fight stigma.

OUR HISTORY

We opened our doors in 2017, as a non-profit, on Bloor Street West in Toronto. With in-person psychotherapy rooms, and a retail storefront that offered mental health and wellness resources, our innovative model served as a space to encourage conversations about mental health, and for people to connect with the supports they need to build stronger mental health.

Our storefront has moved to a new east-end location, allowing us to offer more in-person psychotherapy, and new community programming that increases access to mental health resources, reduces social isolation, and builds community. In this space, we have expanded programming that offers diverse pathways to care and connection.

Having received charitable status in July 2023, we are now engaging with every opportunity this provides us to grow our work and connect more people with programs and resources that support their mental health journeys.

ABOUT US

Hard Feelings exists to address the gap in service for accessible and more affordable mental health supports and resources. Our innovative storefront in downtown Toronto is a hub for conversations about mental health, and a place to get support navigating the complex mental health system. It is home to our retail store (also online) that offers a curated selection of for-purchase books and mental health resources, and our popular free Mental Health Library. It is a welcoming space where we gather for community-based programs, groups, and workshops - each of these allowing people to connect with mental health resources in low-barrier ways.

In its inception, Hard Feelings created and continues to lead a uniquely successful Community of Practice model that facilitates the delivery of low-cost psychotherapy to individuals facing financial barriers to access. Comprised of independent psychotherapists in private practice, members are selected for their clinical skill and expertise, and represent the diverse population of our city and province.

Hard Feelings is governed by a diverse Board of Directors, and led by Executive Director, Kate Scowen, MSW, RSW. We are a small staff team, supporting our Community of Practice and community-based programs, bolstered by a dedicated group of volunteers.

OUR IMPACT

Since we opened our doors in 2017:

- We have welcomed **20,350 visits in our storefront**, from people looking to find mental health resources, connect with a low-cost psychotherapist, participate in our community-based programs, or get help navigating the mental health system.
- **2,772 individuals** have accessed low-cost psychotherapy through our Community of Practice.

In the past year (2024/2025):

- We hosted **149 events and workshops**
- We welcomed **4036 visits to our storefront**
- Volunteers contributed **1152 hours of time**
- **805 individuals** accessed service consultation and **navigation supports**
- **432 individuals** accessed a total of **3131 hours** of low-cost psychotherapy

WHAT PEOPLE TELL US

Anonymous responses to our feedback surveys help us know we're on the right track.

- *"I have significant mental health needs that I have had to ignore for years. Without this low cost option I would never be able to afford therapy" (Psychotherapy client, 2025).*
- *"My experiences at Hard Feelings have been extremely positive. I have been attending regularly for over a year now, and the programming and events have been an essential part of my mental health routine" (Program participant, 2025).*

OUR PATHWAYS TO CARE

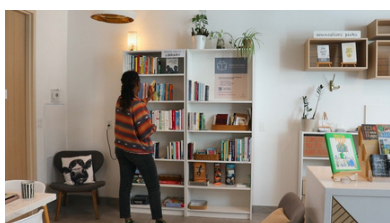
Research confirms that not knowing how or where to get help is a major barrier to accessing support (MHRC, 2023). Since one negative interaction can limit help-seeking behaviour, it's important that when people do reach out, they are provided with meaningful supports and interactions. Our programs are designed to address these issues, and to engage with our community to inform innovation and growth. Our model offers many different ways for people to enter and engage in their mental health journeys. By not funnelling access down to one touch point, we are able to meet needs of a wide group of people who inevitably have diverse needs, interests, and capacities.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & EVENTS



- **Weekly Drop-In Programs:** We offer free weekly volunteer-led drop-ins where individuals can participate in activities that support stronger mental health and wellbeing.
- **Groups and Workshops:** We collaborate with psychotherapists, and other community and mental health organizations to facilitate free and low-cost workshops and groups for our community.
- **Volunteer Programs:** We offer specialized training and opportunities for volunteer resource specialists, group facilitators, and storefront support.
- **Pop-Up Market:** We host an annual Pop-Up Market that brings together local vendors whose work intersects with mental health. This is a dynamic opportunity to celebrate our work and foster conversations that fight stigma around mental health with on average 400 annual attendees.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS & RESOURCES



- **Mental Health Library:** We operate a free Mental Health Library where everyone is welcome to borrow mental health books and other self-care items. We have 500 titles, regularly borrowed by over 490 patrons.
- **Service Navigation:** We provide mental health service navigation through hundreds of interactions in-person at our storefront; through our psychotherapy model; by phone and email; and online through our active social media presence. We take time to listen to what people need, and do our best to connect them with resources.
- **Low-cost Psychotherapy:** We facilitate the delivery of low-cost psychotherapy in-person (Toronto only) and online (across Ontario), supporting a community of independent psychotherapists through our Community of Practice model. Clients who face financial barriers can access up to 20 sessions of therapy, at price they can afford.

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

Everything we do at Hard Feelings is rooted in innovation. Our mission is to bring change to the way mental health is viewed and supported, and to significantly reduce barriers to access. We have learned a lot over eight years of operations, and have never wavered in our belief that we need to do things differently to meet the mental health needs of our community and society.

A unique component of the Hard Feelings model is that we are a charitable organization that generates 30 - 50% of our revenue internally through resource sales in our store, and through practice fees from psychotherapists in our Community of Practice. This diversifies our funding and increases our sustainability. Each element has the opportunity to grow and generate more revenue, further increasing our capacity to deliver on our mission.

“Hard Feelings is such a unique space within the city, and within the broader landscape of mental health organizations in Toronto. Beyond just being a place to access mental health services, it is a place to build community and break down stigma in small ways, like in conversations with community members every week at the hangouts” (Community member, 2025).

INVESTING IN OUR WORK

When you donate to Hard Feelings, you are investing in an organization that is working to achieve positive social impact and long-term change. Our priority is to build a sustainable and resilient organization that can deliver on our mission and grow as need expands or shifts. Your investment in our work will directly impact accessibility to mental health supports by:

- Developing and facilitating more free community programs and events.
- Conducting outreach and research to inform new program design that meets emerging needs of people in Toronto, and across Ontario.
- Maintaining and growing our Mental Health Library, and other free mental health resources.
- Expanding our service navigation supports as an accessible and positive experience that reduces stigma and ensures ongoing help-seeking behaviours.
- Growing and diversifying our Community of Practice, to offer more low-cost psychotherapy.
- Increasing available space for in-person psychotherapy, groups, and events.

**Invest in our vision: A world where everyone
has the mental health supports they need.**

CONTACT

Kate Scowen
Executive Director
kate@hardfeelings.org
647-740-3335



HARD FEELINGS
353 Church Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5B 0B2
hardfeelings.org