

CHANGING *lives*
TOGETHER



Family
Services
NORTH SHORE
Changing lives together

Who we are

For over 60 years, Family Services of the North Shore has provided counselling, support, education, and volunteer engagement. As the Agency has grown and evolved, so has our culture. When we developed our new Strategic Plan, we listened closely to our community, and we re-affirmed our core identity.

Today, we know precisely who we are and what we believe. We have clarified our intentions. We have mapped our shared ambitions. And our vibrant, inclusive culture shapes everything we do.

We share our identity not as a prescription, but as an invitation. Join us. Together, we can make a deep and lasting impact in our community. We can change the course of people's lives, for generations to come.

How we show up

We have an ethos and ethic we are determined to exhibit in everything we do. This is how we show up. These ideas are about our conscience, our convictions, and our commitments. In all things, we will be:



Mindful of our biases

We will first practice self-awareness and self-reflection as we seek to engage others.

Openhearted and daring

We will have sensitivity and openness to others, combined with courage and a willingness to challenge ourselves to be innovative.

Believing in the best future for everyone

We will envision the best possible trajectory for people's lives, no matter where they are and what they are facing.

Committed to excellence

We will set high standards and bring the best of ourselves to our work every day.

Honouring the value of all people

We will treat people with respect and honour, elevating the innate value of every human being.



What we believe in

We hold fast to a set of fundamental ideas that represent the underlying rationale for our work. These ideas are our foundation, our guideposts, and our points of orientation. These are the core ideas that guide *us*:

We believe everyone deserves a right to feel whole.

Human life is precious. Everyone deserves to experience wholeness in their lives, to recover and heal so that they might achieve their greatest potential and live their lives to the fullest.

We believe a connected life is a meaningful life.

Human connectivity is essential to a healthy and thriving human life. Every person needs the care and contribution of others. Every person needs to care and contribute to others. No one should lack meaningful and significant relationships.

We believe healthy families make communities thrive.

No community can be healthy and strong without first experiencing health and strength within the families of the community and the individuals who comprise these families.

We believe mental health is a community responsibility.

All members of the community are responsible for and contribute to the good mental health of all. A caring community embraces this truth and nurtures a sense of responsibility for the mental health of all members.

We believe equity and inclusion enrich our communities.

People within a community bring fresh and useful perspectives and contributions to enhance the development of all.



We believe there are reasons why people are having a hard time.

People do not struggle without reason. The human spirit is naturally buoyant and irrepressible. When a person experiences difficulty, there are reasons that require empathy and understanding.

We believe communities must take care of their most vulnerable.

To see the true substance and character of a community, look to how it cares for those who are most in need. This defines the virtue of a community.

The impact we intend

We intend for the communities and people we serve to be improved with the presence of Family Services of the North Shore. These communities are comprised of people of all ages, cultures, races, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and other factors. These are the changes we would like to make in our community. All of our work will be in service to achieving these results:



1

People experience deep and sustained health and well-being – a vibrant and healthy community

- All people are curious and excited about their inner worlds.
- All members of our community are empowered to face life's challenges.
- All people gain and increase their ability to make healthy life choices.
- All people experience the hope that they can lead healthy, productive, fulfilling lives.



2

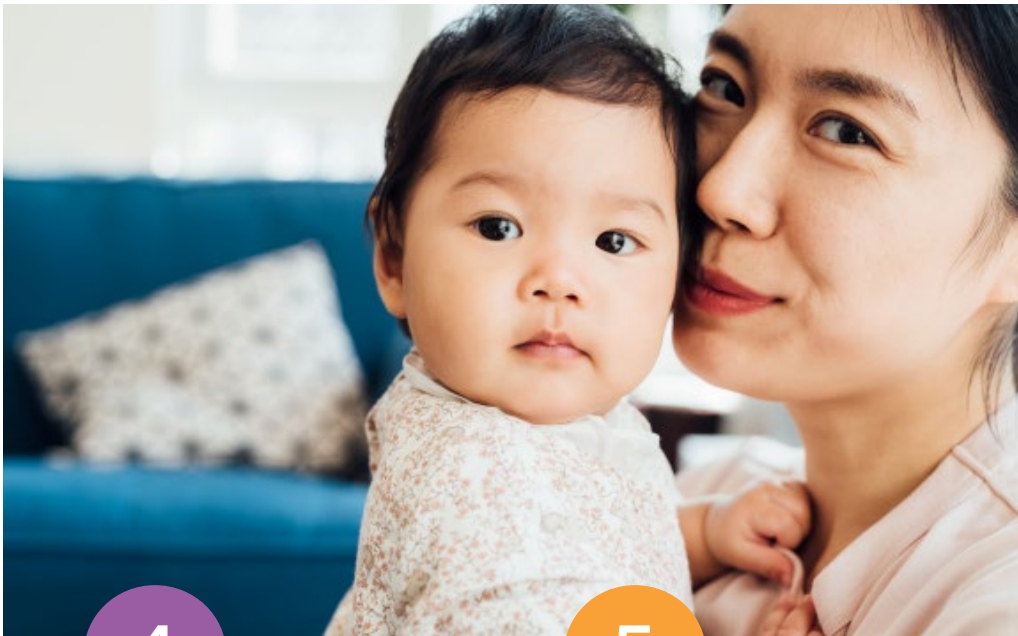
People experience safety and recovery from abuse and violence – a safe and recovered community

- Multi-generational impact of trauma and abuse is ended.
- Violence against women and children has ceased.
- All children are safe and secure in their lives and families.
- The cycle of violence and abuse is broken.

3

People are actively caring for one another throughout the community – a connected and caring community

- Families will feel interconnected and supported during changing needs.
- People own their story and share it to help heal others.
- The community is open, vulnerable, and connected.
- Our community takes responsibility for ensuring everyone is free from violence and abuse.



4

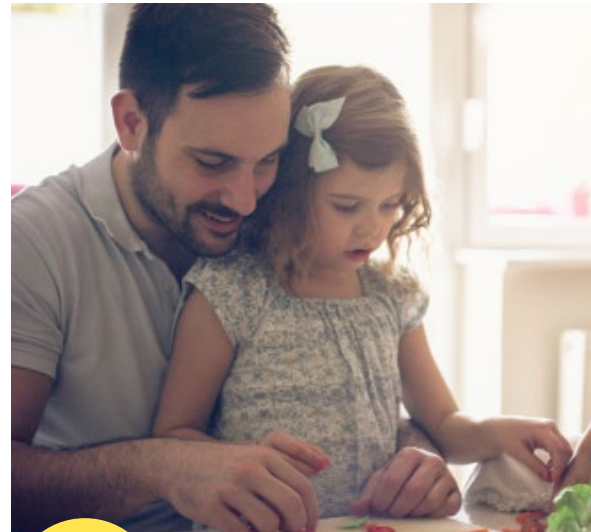
People experience a sense of belonging – an accepting and inclusive community

- All people feel connected and supported, even if values and cultures are different.
- Inclusivity and kindness are highly valued in the community.
- New immigrants to the North Shore feel supported emotionally and psychologically.
- Everyone feels 'at home' in the community.

5

People pursue personal growth and development – a growing and developing community

- Mental illness is destigmatized.
- No one feels shame in seeking help.
- Getting help is the norm, not the exception.
- People feel whole in their imperfections.



6

People are supported at all stages of life – an assisted and supported community

- Pathways to help are available and accessible to everyone.
- Everyone knows where to go for support when they need it.
- People are supported at all stages of life.
- Authentic and effective collaborations throughout the community support people's mental health needs.

The ways we engage others

We believe that every endeavour is guided by a set of commitments not just about the “why” and the “what,” but also the “how.” These are the ways we are committed to engaging those we serve. This is our approach. These principles characterize everything we do:

Engaging people in heartfelt ways

Engagement that matters is true, meaningful, and substantive. We must connect with people with true and authentic motivation from our hearts. We must also connect with people in ways that engage their hearts. The source of desire and motivation is a powerful agent of change. Impact happens when we engage the heart.

Partnering purposefully in the community

Our vision for a caring community cannot be accomplished if we work in isolation. Our best will be done as we see our work as a part of community work. We develop intentional and strategic partnerships with others, not to collaborate in superficial or perfunctory ways, but rather to build a strategic network within and to support a caring community. We will work with awareness of the systematic oppression our First Nations community members have experienced, and ensure we actively resist, respond to and aim to repair the damages through our participation in reconciliation.

Pushing at the edge of our comfort zone

The impact we intend will never happen if we become complacent and settle into unexamined habits of strategy. We must consistently keep ourselves, our partners, and our clients making progress on the edge of their comfort zones. Disequilibrium, Jean Piaget said, is the engine of growth. We need to press into our own development to maximize the potential within our community.

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Helping people to challenge their own limitations

Growing is hard work. We know that to be true of ourselves. We recognize that in others. We all need help to keep moving through our limitations to discover new possibilities. Courageous interaction with people at their growing edges characterizes all of our work.

Building relationships face-to-face

We recognize the unique power of human connection to promote human progress. We believe in the power of face-to-face interactions. Through these, we believe, people are prompted most significantly to take on their most challenging issues and most significant dreams.

Pressing into deep and meaningful conversations

The right kind of conversation can be tremendously influential. When people experience new perspectives, new options, and new support, they experience the encouragement needed to take the next steps in their lives. We believe in the power of conversation. We courageously use conversations about what matters most throughout our work.

Empowering and engaging the community as a whole

Since we believe the community is responsible for caring for the mental health of its members, we engage broadly and substantially throughout the whole community. We build capacity, mobilizing the community to act on behalf of its most vulnerable.

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