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# Daughters & Sisters Annual Program Report 2022-23

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## About us...

Daughters & Sisters is a unique six-month residential treatment program that serves young women aged 12 to 18 whose substance use is problematic. The young women accessing this program live with PLEA Family Caregivers in the community and participate in day, evening and weekend programming at our treatment centre in Surrey.

On average one to two youth live in each home. The Family Caregivers are members of our treatment team who support and reinforce what the youth learn while they are at the centre. They are also trained to support youth through non-medical detox, stabilization, and the treatment process. We have provided these services since 2000.

Programming is tailored to each youth's individual strengths, needs and circumstances. It includes individual and group counselling, parent-teen mediation, teacher-supervised education, addiction awareness learning and practical life skills. A range of social, arts, cultural and recreational activities are integral components of the program and take place in the community. A School District #36 teacher (Surrey) delivers the educational component.

We follow a strengths-based and culturally sensitive approach to treatment and emphasize social learning and solution focused interventions to help the youth build the skills and competencies they need to live safe, healthy lives. Our model is gender-specific, addressing the learning styles and developmental needs of young women.

The aims of Daughters & Sisters are to increase each youth's self-esteem, physical and mental health, educational and vocational functioning and family and social functioning, and decrease their substance use, criminal activities, and high-risk behaviours.

For probation referrals, young women must have a probation order that directs them to attend a full-time alcohol and drug treatment program. The order must be long enough to see them through the 6-month program. These 6 beds are funded by MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) and are an alternative to custody. Access is province wide. Additional beds are available through private referrals from parents, social workers, community-based addiction counsellors and other professionals. Access is nationwide.

## Who we served...

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of youth	6 FTAP 2 FFS	4 FTAP 5 FFS	4	15	17	24

[www.plea.ca](http://www.plea.ca)

Charitable Registration  
# 10781 0467 RR0001  
bcgeu

	2 Bail					
% self-identified as Indigenous	66.6%	44%	75%	39%	34%	38
Average age when cases were opened	FTAP – 16.5 FFS - 18	17.2	16.7	16.44	15.88	16
% of youth in MCFD care	66.6%	67%	75%	44%	59%	54%
% of youth who had spent time in custody	FTAP – 71.4% FFS – 100%	56%	100%	94.4%	76.5%	83%
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N = number of discharged cases)	FTAP – 100.5 (N=6) FFS - 46.7 (N=3)	85 (N=7)	102 (N=2)	109.07 (N=15)	119.57 (N=14)	90 (N=19)
# of youth who successfully completed the program	FTAP - 3 FFS – 0 Bail - 1	3	2	6	8	7

Low utilization rates were an issue again this year as is the state across the Youth Justice sector in British Columbia. In this reporting period, we provided Youth Justice placements to 7 youth with 2 being Bail placements. One of those Bail placements rolled into an FTAP placement in the beginning of the 2023 fiscal year following sentencing and remains in the program at the time of this report. The other was discharged to hospital within 24 hours of intake due to serious health related issues needing to be addressed.

Of the 5 FTAP youth served, one was discharged for an altercation that took place between participants, however, was welcomed back several months later and completed the program in March 2023. Of the 4 remaining FTAP youth we served, two more successfully completed the 6-month program and were transitioned back to their home communities. The two FTAP youth who did not complete the program were discharged involuntarily due to significant safety issues within the program. Of our two FFS participants, one remained in the program for almost 4 months before voluntarily leaving the program. The other participant left voluntarily after approximately 3 weeks.

Primary drugs of choice as reported by youth	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2108-19	2017-18
Amphetamines	11.1%	33.3%	0%	11%	17.65%	17%
Heroin and other opiates	55.5%	22.2%	50%	33%	35.26%	50%
Cannabis	0%	0%	0%	6%	17.65%	0%
Alcohol	22.2%	33.3%	50%	33%	17.65%	30%
Benzodiazepines	0%	11.1%	0%	11%	5%	-
Cocaine/Crack	11.1%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%
% of youth reporting a second drug of choice	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of youth reporting intravenous substance use	66.6%	33.3%	0%	22%	47.06%	41%

As has become a trend, all youth referred this reporting period noted a primary and secondary drug of choice with most youth noting that they will use almost any type of substance that is available should their drug of choice not be an option. Overdoses experienced by the youth prior to attending treatment continues to be reported as common place as well with referral packages noting near fatal overdoses for the majority of the participants. For our FFS placements this reporting period, youth reported DOC's of heroin and alcohol with heroin and amphetamines being listed as secondary drugs of choice. All youth openly discuss the use of cannabis regularly but do not list this substance as a DOC as they do not consider it to be a drug. 55.5% of FTAP referred youth stated that some form of opioids were their primary drug of choice. The other three youth listed alcohol, cocaine and amphetamines as their DOC's. Between those six youth, secondary drugs of choice were listed as opioids, alcohol or cannabis with two

reports of each. 66.6% of FTAP youth reported some level of IV use in relation to their opioid or amphetamine use. This type and level of substance use, at an average age of 16.5 years old, as well as the increased severity in withdrawal being experienced and the number of youth requiring OAT support in this reporting period speaks to the nature of the increased severity of substance use Daughters and Sisters is seeing.

## How we did...service delivery

	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
% bed utilization	28%	15.7%	18.6%	67%	63%	78%
# of youth who completed final assessments	3	2	2	6	8	0
# of youth reporting a decrease in substance abuse	2	1	1	2	6	0

As previously noted over the last three years, utilization rates continue to remain low as reflected across the Youth Justice sector in British Columbia. Our program continues to work with our contract manager to engage discussions on making our programs and services more accessible. Part of this works includes moving forward with offering short term and transition based Bail placements for youth in the Justice System who do not meet the FTAP requirements. The utilization rate of 28% is from the total 619 Youth Justice related bed nights of our contracted 2190 for the year. Moving forward, Daughters and Sisters will be contracted to provide only 1460 FTAP bed nights as we will now be considered a 4 bed resource. The FFS utilization came to a total of 86 bed nights during this reporting period with one of these youth spending the majority of her time in the program within last years reporting period. The utilization rate continues to be lower than the need for placements across the province as reflected in the number of requests and inquiries the program receives regularly for young women across the province. The placement requests are either unable to secure the funding to pay for services privately or do not meet the requirement of sentencing with an FTAP condition and therefore can not access our services.

## How we did...against the goals we set ourselves

- i. Despite declining referrals, our goal was to increase our utilization rate to 40%. With the continued increase in fee for service referrals, we were almost able to reach that goal. Discussions regarding altering the use of some of the allocated FTAP beds for short term Bail/Respite placements for Youth Justice participants will likely increase the utilization of our program. Although we are reporting low utilization rates over the past three years, Daughters and Sisters continues to be reported as being the 'FTAP program of choice' for Probation Officers across the province and our utilization rates surpass all other female only FTAP programs in BC.

We were unable to meet the goal of attaining 40% utilization this reporting period. With a utilization rate of 28% in reference to Youth Justice (FTAP and Bail) placements. When adding in the additional 86 beds provided to FFS clients however, our overall utilization rate went up to 32.2%. With the reduction in available beds for young women with FTAP conditions moving into the new fiscal, we will continue to reach towards a goal of 40% utilization in the coming year.

- ii. We were able to establish a small increase in respite options this past year by utilizing our own caregivers to provide respite to one another. This was a possibility due to low utilization across the Addictions programs. Cross agency communication and collaboration has also increased which has allowed for more flexibility in options for support for our Family Caregivers between youth programs at PLEA. We were unable to bring on new Respite Workers and continue to seek more consistent and stable Respite Caregiver options to ensure there is care and support when needed rather than when support is available.

Within this reporting period, Daughters and Sisters re-purposed one of our two bed homes to a Bail and

Transitions home. We were also able to onboard a new Family Caregiver home. Despite no new respite options being discovered, we continue to share the responsibility of care of the participants across existing respite workers and within our current caregivers. Lower utilization rates allows for more opportunity for caregivers to support one another however, with the increase in complexity of the participants we serve, burn out is still a risk as rest and respite are vital to caregiver longevity.

- iii. Throughout this reporting period we have been actively pursuing alternative funding options through RFP's and Letters of Interest for funding available for treatment and detox related services in order to expand on and supplement the existing Youth Justice contract we currently hold.

We did not secure any permanent contracts through health authorities over the last year however we did obtain one new Fee for Service opportunity with the second Fee for Service case carrying over from last year.

## Selected accomplishments...

- i. As reported above, the rate of participants who identify as Indigenous increased from 44% to 66.6% in this reporting period. As a commitment to engaging participants in culturally inclusive services, we facilitated for participants attendance and engagement in multiple cultural activities. Ceremonies such as Sweats, Pow Wow's, Cedar Brushings and story telling were supported by various Elders in the community as well as by our Addictions Support Workers. We facilitated opportunities for youth to engage in beading, cedar weaving, participation in a talking circle, as well as drum making. Providing opportunities for smudging as part of our daily check in process was also common practice this year. Our youth also volunteered to support an Elder from the Semiahmoo First Nations in repairing damages to his land from floods that occurred in the Fall which was reported as being an extremely positive experience for them.
- ii. With lower utilization rates, our program had the bed availability to support alternative placements than typical FTAP program participants. The introduction of the use of Bail beds and having the flexibility withing the Youth Justice system allowed for two youth without alternative options available to them to be provided with a safe residence on a short term basis. The original place for one of these placements was to provide support and housing until she could move into a treatment program closer to home. Following sentencing, this youth received an FTAP condition and was able to them move smoothly into a treatment program without the need for re-location or disruption to her housing situation.

## Selected story<sup>1</sup>...

Kate was a youth who had previously attended the Daughters and Sisters program as a young 15 year old who, at the time, was disconnected from family, experienced childhood traumas, spent most of her time with anti-social peers, and was engaging in problematic alcohol use along with other challenges. Her first attempt at Daughters and Sisters was cut short following an AWOL while back in her home community on an overnight visit. Kate was attending the program as a Fee for Service participant at that time and was not ready to address her substance use or be away from her home community and she refused to return to the program.

Upon returning to the program for the second time in 2022, Kate was referred through the Youth Probation system as an FTAP participant. Within the three years since first attending the program, Kate had completed time in two other treatment programs, and found success following the completion of one of those programs for a short while before experiencing a relapse upon returning to her home community. Kate had become further entrenched in criminal behaviour, exploitation, experienced significant amounts more trauma, and had moved from problematic alcohol use to full and intense opioid addiction. Upon being brought into custody prior to intake at Daughters and

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<sup>1</sup> Names have been changed to protect client privacy and confidentiality.

Sisters, it was reported that Kate's detox process was extreme and involved multiple visits to BC Women and Children's Hospital.

Despite all this, Kate arrived to the program and was eager to address her substance use. Adjustments to the structure of the program were not a significant challenge due to Kate's understanding of how the program worked and the guidelines she was expected to follow. Where Kate struggled the most, was with peer dynamics. Residing in a carehome with another participant, who also struggled with respectful and reasonable peer interactions, ended with a physical altercation taking place. At her one month mark, Kate was removed from the program for the role she played in that incident and was unfortunately, sent back to Custody.

Kate returned to the program upon the graduation of the youth with whom she had had conflict approximately three months later. Kate was given credit for her one month in the program and was able to successfully complete the remaining 5 months at Daughters and Sisters. Kate graduated the program, completed her high school education, successfully completed a nail tech program and was able to attain a 1 year sobriety milestone within her time in the program. Kate graduated Daughters and Sisters in March of 2023 and returned to her home community to be closer to her family members and was hopeful that she would find a nail salon in which she could be supported in further developing her skills and knowledge in the world of esthetics.

## Biggest challenges...

- i. One of the main challenges being faced at Daughters and Sisters is the complex needs of the participants being referred. With the threshold of criminality required to be eligible for the program through the FTAP stream now, youth attending our program have been involved, for years, in significant substance use, criminal behaviour and have experienced extreme trauma along with concurrent disorders for some time prior to intake. Much of our initial time with youth is being spent managing crisis, attending to significant health matters and stabilizing their withdrawal and mental health needs rather than being able to focus on rapport building and enhancing their willingness to participate. The level and risk in incidents is also increasing based on the behavioural and other challenges these youth bring with them. Complex family situations have also made discharge and transition planning extremely challenging.
- ii. Staffing has been another area of challenge over this reporting period with the current team, outside of the Management position, being entirely new. There has been a significant learning curve within the team in adapting to and forming a cohesive group. Stability has been found within the Addictions Support Worker team over the last half of this year and the hope is the team continues on an upward trajectory.
- iii. Lastly, we continue to face challenges with respect to the lack of Family Caregivers and Respite Workers available to support our participants. Burnout amongst Caregivers is a significant risk without the consistent and stable option to take respite. Some relief was available this year due to low utilization rates and Caregiver's ability to use each other as respite options when needed. While we did onboard a new caregiving family, out of home respite is their only option for relief as they have children in their home and can not appropriately take respite by hosting a respite worker within their home.

## Our team...staffing



## Our team...learning undertaken

Throughout this reporting period, the team at Daughters and Sisters collectively engaged in individual and group learning/trainings on the following topics:

- BCGEU Basic Occupational Health and Safety Training
- San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training
- MCFD Privacy Training
- Living Works – Suicide Prevention Training
- Naloxone Refresher Training
- CATIE's Harm Reduction Fundamentals
- MANDT Training refresher
- Plea Learning Modules on the topics of Gender Pronouns, Case Notes, Communicable Diseases, Cyber Security, Strength Based Service Delivery, Trauma Informed Practice
- Medication Assistance Training
- Basic Youth Justice Training
- Drug Identification Training with VPD
- Let's Talk Overdose Conference – UBC
- BC Substance Use Conference – The Challenge of Change

## Our team...new relationships

We hosted a tour of our facility to several Surrey Police members this year in hopes that if a move is made to City Policing in Surrey, we are able to develop a working relationship with officers to allow youth the opportunity to experience positive interactions with authorities. This is also to allow program staff to ensure we have officers who

understand our services and can support more effectively in the process of taking statements, executing warrants and attending calls related to our youth. We also continue to focus on building and maintaining relationships with Elders and knowledge keepers in our community to provide culturally specific services and ceremony to the youth who attend our program. Lastly, we continue to work along-side our Probation Officer Liaison who supports our referral and screening processes as well as the Youth Probation Officer associated with Surrey RCMP's Yankee 30 car who comes to visit and meet the youth in the program when possible. We have developed a strong working relationship with the staff and physicians at the White Rock OAT clinic which allows us to support participants who need this type of medication. Ensuring the clinic staff are aware of our medication processes and policies has allowed us to build the trust necessary to be supported with carry prescriptions. This enhances our support of high need participants without the barrier and challenges of attending a pharmacy for daily witnessing. We have also maintained close communication with the Addictions and Medical Teams at Burnaby Custody which allow for seamless support and transitions for youth coming from and returning to custody.

## Next year's goals...

- i. Secure and stabilize staffing – the team at D&S has continued to undergo significant change in the initial stages of this reporting period. In the coming fiscal year, our goal is to solidify the Service Coordinator position and to continue to support the Addiction Support Workers with developing a strong, collaborative team dynamic.
- ii. Changes to the contract have decreased the number of FTAP beds for the Daughters and Sisters program from 6 to 4. The remaining two beds have been re-allocated to support Bail and Transition placements. However, a focus needs to remain on Respite Worker and Respite Family Caregiver acquisition and retention in order to maintain the current placements. As an agency, PLEA has invested in recruitment for these much-needed positions and we will continue to focus on and work closely with our Caregiver Assessment Team to enhance this component of our program.
- iii. As the drug poisoning crisis continues and the government announces investments into this sector of care, we will continue to seek alternative sources of funding to supplement the existing Youth Justice contract we currently hold. Working in collaboration with health authorities and other government agencies, will allow us potential opportunities to increase our service mandate outside of the Youth Justice System.

## For more information...

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