

Executive Director 2023/2024 Annual Report



The 2023/2024 year was full of lots of highs and some very challenging lows. Intersect Youth & Family Services was excited to finally be fully staffed, to revamp our website and planning to host Clinicians from across Canada at our first conference, “Tending to Trauma, Supports & Interventions for Children and Youth”. At the same time, we were discouraged that we continued to see a large influx of families needing services, the children were younger and more complex and an average of 189 children and youth were waiting for their services each month. The most challenging though, was the decision to pause the Intersect School Program.

One of Intersect Youth & Family Services strategic priorities for 2024-2027 is to acquire the capital resources that allow the expansion of our services and provide a safe environment for our clients and our employees. The current building is out of space, so Intersect has been actively looking for a larger building, in a safer location. In December 2023, Intersect identified two potential buildings and successfully submitted offers on them. Unfortunately, we were only able to secure owner occupied financing so we could not proceed with either purchase. The excitement of potentially purchasing a new building also highlighted some challenges; purchasing a new building, selling their current building, the renovations that would be required, and discussion about who would pay to renovate the school space etc.. This created a lot of uncertainty for the Intersect School Program, its staff and especially its students. There was potential Intersect found a building at short notice causing a lot of disruption in the middle of the school year; it was also possible that Intersect’s search may produce a building not suitable for the school program in the end.

After successfully operating the Intersect School Program for over 30 years, in March 2024 the Executive Director and Board of Directors made the very difficult decision not to start the Intersect School Program for the 2024/2025 school year. The mental health and wellbeing of their current students was in the forefront of this decision; deciding not to start a school program until they relocated was the only way to ensure students had lots of notice of potential changes to provide thoughtful, supportive planning for their transitions. This was very difficult information for students and caregivers to hear and Intersect’s staff understood and shared their disappointment. Students were supported through this news and planning for their transitions with Intersect and SD #57 leadership, Intersect clinicians, and School District #57 teaching staff.

Intersect Youth & Family Service is committed to doing our part to achieve transformative change as set out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and by Indigenous communities across Canada. Intersect commits to supporting Indigenous children, youth, and families in the communities we serve and commit to creating equitable spaces for Indigenous peoples. Intersect recognizes that Indigenous peoples have suffered under colonial and postcolonial policies. We believe that to work respectfully with Indigenous nations, our staff needs to be aware of the collective impact that intergenerational trauma continues to have on Indigenous children, youth, and families. As part of Intersect’s commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, all their employees take the CSFS, *Nowh Guna’ Carrier Culture Training* and annually their staff will be of service to our Indigenous community and local First Nation by volunteering at Prince George’s National Indigenous Peoples Day event hosted by Lheidli T’enneh.

Person’s Served Snapshot

	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21		23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21
Intake	311	268	427	283	Psychiatry	54	42	45	17
Infant Mental Health	43	39	59	33	Psychology	32	57	36	35
Active Service	429	362	564	585	New Directions	28	17	13	14
SAIP	51	-	-	-	Family-Teen	22	28	-	-
School Program	28	30	30	35	Mediation				

Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Intersect Youth & Family Services met all the priorities identified in their 2020-2023 strategic plan. The strategic goals and objectives for 2020 through 2023 were:

- Invest in our most valuable resource, our team, through the development of recruitment, retention, succession, and professional development strategies.
- Ensure our society has the technological systems, hardware and resources required to optimize service delivery and minimize wasted time spent on tasks that do not provide direct care to our clients.
- Make our client and staff's safety paramount through the identification of risks, development of policy and procedures to mitigate risks and the training and education to identify, respond to and get support for addressing risk.

Although this work is ongoing, the following goals were met.

1. The development and implementation of a professional development education and training strategy.
2. Develop recruitment, retention, and succession strategies.
3. Use technology to enhance client services, improve efficiency of personnel, improve productivity of personnel and systems to communicate with all stakeholders.
4. Ensure the physical and psychological safety of our team and clients.

Strategic Plan 2024-2027

The full Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 is in development, however Intersect's strategic goals and objectives for 2024-2027 have been identified. They are:

- Acquire capital resources that allow for the expansion of our services and provide a safe environment for our clients and our employees.
- Create a vibrant, skilled and diverse workforce through innovative recruitment and retention initiatives and continuous professional development.
- Increase Intersect's profile in the North as a leader in Mental Health for children, youth and their families.

I ended therapy with one of my youths in January of this year. We had worked together for over 3 years, after they had been hospitalized for a suicide attempt. When I first started therapy with them, they were reluctant to access therapy, and guarded. Over the three years we worked together, this youth blossomed and truly built a life worth living. They attended groups, individual counselling and learned to truly love themselves. At our closing session they gave me a letter. This is a quote from the letter that I will forever hold dear to my heart "You were the person that believed in me and listened to me when no one else would... you made me see that there is hope for happiness....you helped me become that person again that I missed and heal my inner child. you made me, me again!" as a therapist that is the most rewarding thing to hear. Therapist Rebecca

CARF Accreditation

Intersect was surveyed for reaccreditation by CARF International on October 24-25, 2022. Intersect met 632 out of 635 CARF standards and received the maximum accreditation for three years. This accreditation will extend through to November 30, 2025.

The CARF accreditors spoke with Intersect staff, community stakeholders and clients. They also reviewed all policy, procedures, documentation etc. There were only three recommendations from the CARF surveyors and Intersect leadership has already implemented those changes to meet the recommendations/standards. Due to the diligence of Clinical Supervisors Jenny Plouffe and Melissa Bloodoff, there were no CARF recommendations for our Child and Youth Mental Health Program, all CARF standards were met.

The following CARF recommendations were completed during the 2023/2024 fiscal year:

- Add timeframes to Intersect's Systems and Technology Plan.
- Add the word Race to Intersect's Cultural Competency, Diversity and Inclusion plan. (The words ethnicity and culture were already included but Intersect did not implicitly have race listed).
- Add personal fundraising, personal property and witnessing of legal documents to HR 1-12 Ethical Code of Conduct Policy.

After returning from a leave in Spring 2023, I was transferred a client from a previous clinician and began working with them almost immediately. This youth was struggling with suicidal ideation, low mood, significant anxiety, and a trauma history. They had struggled to complete high school and struggled with plans for the future. They have now completed their first year of post-secondary schooling, following their artistic dreams. I was constantly amazed and humbled by their insight and willingness to talk about hard things and try new skills. They truly flourished because of the immense effort they put into their mental wellness. Although they have completed their therapeutic journey with Intersect, I have no doubts they will go do amazing things and continue to positively influence those around them.

Counsellor Shannel

Tending to Trauma Conference

To support Intersect 2024-2027 strategic goal of increasing Intersect's profile in the North as a leader in Mental Health for children, youth and their families, on May 2-3, 2024, Intersect was proud to host over 300 Mental Health Professionals from across Canada at UNBC for their conference, *Tending to Trauma: Therapeutic Supports & Interventions for Children and Youth*.

Intersect's leadership realized how difficult it was for their team to access relevant, evidence-based, professional development and wanted to provide an opportunity for their colleagues to gather and learn valuable knowledge and skills to enhance their individual practices and collective knowledge. They had an amazing line up of keynotes and workshop presenters including keynotes Lori Gill, Cindy Blackstock and Linda O'Neil. Day one's trainings focused on types of traumas: individual-general, intergenerational, family violence and sexual violence. Day two's trainings focused on populations types: children under 12, youth over 12 years, intergenerational and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. For more information, please check the event's section of Intersect's website at: [Tending to Trauma Conference - Prince George, BC | Intersect Youth & Family Services](#).



TENDING TO TRAUMA

AWARDED 14 CEC HOURS

THERAPEUTIC SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

DATES:
MAY 2 - 3, 2024
9:00am - 5:00pm PST

WHERE:
UNBC - Prince George, BC
www.intersect.bc.ca/conference

We are thankful to host you on the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh, on whose lands we live, work and play.

KEYNOTES

	Lori Gill Understanding the Neurobiology of Trauma & Attachment		Cindy Blackstock, PhD Spirit Bear's Guide to Reconciliation		Linda O'Neil Sustaining Hope in Practice: Understanding Secondary Trauma & What Helps
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When I started working here, I noticed a client that would come in, sit down, and hold their head down, this child could hardly walk and refused to talk. One year later this same child came into intersect RUNNING with JOY and a huge smile exclaiming that she's here to see her Clinician. The tremendous difference in this child in one year with one of our clinicians brought me to actual tears! I will never forget that!

Kara, Admin

Human Resources

During the 2023/2024 fiscal year, leadership focused on the retention of our current employees and strategies to support planned and unplanned vacancies. In April the Board of Directors approved the Executive Directors request to create a non-funded, CYMH overhire position to support these objectives. Due to the high vacancy rates in the sector for counselors/therapists, they weren't receiving qualified applicants for postings of temporary positions to cover parental leaves. Additionally, it takes several months to train a CYMH Clinician before they are able to assume a full caseload. This overhire position would support potential vacancies to ensure we meet contract obligations.

From May until July, the Executive Director met with each employee individually to get their feedback on what they felt Intersect was doing well at as an employer and what Intersect could improve on to ensure they stay with the agency. She asked if were getting enough support and development through supervision and training and if the benefit program was meeting their needs. Overall, she found that staff are happy with the support they receive, their benefits and really value their co-workers. Although there were some individual wishes, the only theme she identified was that paramedical costs have increased so the \$500 annual benefit was no longer sufficient.

As a result of this feedback and to support the retention of our staff, in October of 2023 Intersect utilized the MCFD Recruitment and Retention funding to increase eye care and paramedical services benefits.

- The eye exam amount was increased from \$250.00 every two years to \$350.00 every 2 years.
- Paramedical services were increased from \$500.00 every year, to \$750.00 every year.

Again, this year, there were numerous staffing changes in the 2023/2024 fiscal year that included:

- Family-Teen Mediation- One employee left their position in July 2023, but we were able to recruit someone from the community that was a great fit and started orientation before the previous employee's last day.
- New Directions: One employee left their position in Sept 2023. Again, we were able to recruit someone from the community that was a great fit and was able to start in October 2023. Unfortunately, at that same time our other long term New Directions worker took an extended personal leave and couldn't return until April 2024.
- Leadership/Admin and Finance- Due to Clinical Supervisor, Jenny Plouffe allocating 0.2 FTE of her position to support the FTM program, we were able to award a 0.2 FTE Supervision position to Rebecca Pozer to oversee the SAIP program:
- Child & Youth Mental Health:
 - We were able to hire a previous employee from May until September to support intake services.
 - We hired a Therapist in July but unfortunately, they weren't a good fit and left shortly after. Also, one of our Counsellors decided to transition to the School Program position in September.
 - In August we successfully hired one Therapist and one Counsellor in preparation of two CYMH clinicians going on mat leave in September.
 - In October we hired an additional Therapist into our last vacant position, and in December we were able to hire a fully trained therapist into the new overhire position.

As a new employee to Intersect, I have never met a team that I feel so supported by! This year has been full of challenges and changes. The opportunities to learn so much from my fellow coworkers has helped with weathering through the storms. I cannot express enough how fortunate I feel to be a part of this group. Having the chance to learn and grow in my own abilities just from being surrounded by so many intelligent, capable, and warm human beings! The imposter syndrome is felt less and less each day I am here, and I have all of you to thank for that! Counsellor, Tianna

Child & Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Clinical Services

Intake Services

This fiscal year 311 intakes were completed; this is an increase of 43 intakes compared to the previous fiscal year. Since each intake takes around 3 hours to complete, this is an increase in 129 service hours doing intakes. There were 38 IEC intakes completed and assigned, while an additional 45 IEC intakes were completed but closed due to alternative services being more appropriate for the family. Each intake is a service unto itself, and each family leaves with a detailed service plan that outlines things that can help with their child or youth's situation.

Historically, September and October have been Intersects' busiest times for intakes, but this fiscal year our highest intakes were in May, June, November and January. It's important to note our intake team remained exceptionally busy having over 20 intakes completed each month for 9 months of the 12 months of the year. This doubled to over 40 intakes in the month of November.

Though busy, our intake team continued to provide exceptional intervention and support to youth and their families. Within the Intake Satisfaction surveys received for the 2023 year, the majority of respondents reported that they felt safe, respected, and involved in their service planning. Most were also pleased with the process and resources offered. All but one of the caregiver survey's reported feeling satisfied with their visit, heard and more hopeful after the appointment. All youth surveys were satisfied with the intake process and felt included and heard in their service planning.

Intake and Active Service Data: April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

2023/2024	INTAKES COMPLETED				ACTIVE SERVICE		2022/2023	
	Assigned	Closed at Intake	Infant	Total	Start Service	Continue Service	Start Service	Continue Service
April	14	6	1	21	12	247	22	244
May	23	11	2	36	9	254	11	279
June	26	7	2	35	16	329	9	275
July	12	3	1	16	12	213	11	256
Aug	13	1	2	16	15	269	8	272
Sept	8	3	5	16	13	227	4	285
Oct	7	8	6	21	8	160	11	294
Nov	23	11	8	42	9	238	12	293
Dec	13	9	3	25	15	213	4	300
Jan	21	10	2	33	23	258	10	322
Feb	10	11	1	22	12	249	8	316
Mar	16	7	5	28	17	240	8	285
Total	186	87	38	311	161	2,897	118	3,421

My highlight of the year involved being able to create a safe enough emotional environment and therapeutic presence to allow at least three comprehensive clients to be vulnerable and take the risk of trusting me. Rapport can sometimes take a while to build, and I get a sense of accomplishment from being able to provide and model emotionally safe, caring, and respectful relationships with the many clients I interact with. I feel so honored not only to work with the children and youth themselves but also their caregivers. This last year there were also a few intakes that were valuable growth and learning opportunities and again I feel so lucky in my role getting to support children youth and caregivers in our community.

Therapist Ashley

Waitlist

Our Clinical Team has worked hard to seek a balance between caseload composition and providing quality services which has increased some capacity to create more movement on caseloads, therefore moving clients off the waitlist faster. We continue to find children and youth with more complex mental health challenges, often comorbidities with neurodiversity seeking our services. This complexity requires more comprehensive services and time in therapy. It should be noted we have had a 65% increase in Infant and Early Childhood children waiting for services since last year. There has also been a slight decrease in the total number of children and youth waiting for services with this year's average being 189 waiting each month; compared to last year where an average of 193 were waiting each month. Therefore, despite fluctuations between service types coming for services, our totals have not shifted significantly.

Month 2023/24	Service Type				Wait Time					Total on Waitlist 2023/24	Total on Waitlist 2022/23
	1 on 1	Brief	IEC	Group Only	Group >35 wks	1 on 1 >35 wks	Brief >35 wks	>35 wks	> 1 year		
April	139	47	5	7	2	44	47	53	16	158	248
May	119	52	3	9	3	40	52	52	17	183	203
June	117	54	4	12	4	31	54	42	14	187	145
July	106	58	5	9	4	32	58	46	17	179	219
August	124	62	6	10	7	39	62	60	20	202	255
Sept	101	62	8	13	7	22	62	53	18	194	199
Oct	113	66	8	12	6	35	66	59	24	199	190
Nov	120	62	8	12	7	43	62	72	23	202	182
Dec	117	71	7	10	4	36	71	67	16	204	173
Jan	110	65	6	10	5	33	65	62	13	191	154
Feb	112	62	10	10	4	30	62	60	12	194	201
March	108	57	11	9	5	35	57	72	16	185	156

"I had a youth that was referred to Intersect's brief stream of services. They were initially finding themselves struggling with recognizing social cues and wanted to work on their social anxiety. Through our time together we worked on identifying their strengths and applying them to the situations they would find themselves in. They were already someone who was open and transparent about their interests, which was the trait we used to push the youth to challenge themselves to engage in social situations. The youth eventually recognized their issues were within their control. They were able to acknowledge their own capacity and skills they always had within themselves. The youth felt so accomplished with what they had learned we ended up transitioning the youth out of services earlier than they expected! For the youth, all it took was a gentle push for them to recognize their own potential and flourish in the environments they originally thought were challenging! It's great to recognize that therapy does not always have to be a long-term commitment before seeing results in their lives!"

Counsellor Wisely

Infant Mental Health (IEC)

Intersect Infant and Early Childhood (IEC) team provides intake as well as brief and comprehensive services to children and their caregivers under 6 years of age. The IEC team consists of three clinicians/therapists and one clinical supervisor. Two of the team members are on parental leave as of August 2023 increasing the service numbers for the rest of the team. The IEC Team Supervisor is an active member of the CYMH Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice and SEED Northern Regional Table and the IEC team meets monthly for peer consultation, supervision, and resource sharing. This fiscal year the IEC team focused on the complexity of providing services to young children who have experienced trauma and/or are living with anxiety and neurodiversity.

From April 2023 to March 2024 the IEC team completed 59 Intakes: of which 41 were provided active services, 18 were closed after providing our intake services which include interventions and bridging to other resources, and 37 were closed before Intake was completed for various reason (lost contact with guardian being the majority of reasons). The increase in completed intakes for active services mimics that of our IEC's waiting for services. Therefore, putting a significant strain on the IEC team which is tolerable knowing the return of one of our team members on parental leave and the new therapist starting this Fall will help ensuring these young children are provided with early intervention.

This year, I can't help but rave about one client who has made remarkable progress. They had been labeled as 'angry' and 'out of control' by her loved ones. In the past, they would react aggressively, especially towards their caregiver. However, over time, they developed a deeper understanding of themselves and their emotions. Both them and their caregiver desire a strong connection with each other, but their messages often got lost in the turmoil. Recently, I had the privilege of holding a dyad session with them, and it was an incredible experience. Previously, I saw them separately on alternating weeks, with little progress. But when they came together, it was a completely different story. They finally heard and understood each other. I could literally feel the heaviness lift from the room. As my client said, "it was refreshing" to hear from her caregiver. I felt immense pride as my client bravely shared their experiences and their parent acknowledged their own role in their dynamic. It was a beautiful leap of faith, with both being open and vulnerable with each other. Therapist Kiran

Caregiver Coaching Pilot Project

The Clinical Supervisors identified that this year there was a huge influx of younger children going through intake and waiting a long time on the waitlist because their needs typically aren't urgent in terms of risk (suicidal). Many of these children are living with neurodivergence, trauma, anxiety, etc. and caregivers are confused by their behaviour and unsure how best to support them.

They came up with the idea to offer Caregiver Coaching to those families while they were on the waitlist. The Caregiver Coaching services were geared to support caregivers with children between the ages of 4 years (kindergarten) and 11 years. This age group was identified because these caregivers have fewer resources to access in the community unlike preschool children and youth. To ensure several families could access Caregiver Coaching, the services was short-term and included 5 sessions per caregiver.

The goal of the program was to support caregivers while they were waiting for CYMH services by strengthening their confidence through validating their current parenting skills, fostering the development of new skills and providing psychoeducation on their child's needs and abilities. The Clinical Supervisors recognized that during intake for Intersect's services, caregivers are often overwhelmed and need additional support implementing the recommendations in their Initial Services Plan. The Coach would also bridge the family to services recommended during intake and other community resources they identified.

Intersect found that Caregiver Coaching was extremely valued by caregivers and the Clinicians appreciated that families had already received the psychoeducation they needed when therapy started. This coaching service was invaluable because sometimes a shift in the caregiver perception of their child's challenges can improve the caregiver response to them and strengthen the relationship at the same time. From October until April, fifteen caregivers benefited from this program, and many would have benefited from more than 5 sessions. Intersect is actively looking for funding to continue this service for their clients.

I have been so honored and grateful to see immense growth in clients and caregivers over the year! One thing I'm particularly honored to be a part of is walking alongside caregivers who courageously work to shift their perspectives, challenge deeply held beliefs about themselves, their children and parenting, and ultimately create space for healing and connection with their children. It has been almost magical to see and experience the shift that takes place in those moments. I have been working with one caregiver whose kiddo was quite aggressive and sometimes violent towards the parent and animals in the home. Their parent has been working hard to recognize the underlying needs being expressed, to understand how their own dissociation or overwhelm in those moments leaves their child feeling alone in their big feelings and with unmet needs, and to validate their child's feelings even in scary or difficult situations. Not only has there not been an instance of aggression or violence in months, but their relationship is more secure and closer than ever! So for me, I think witnessing the power of healing in relationships, and supporting families to feel and believe in that power, has been my biggest highlight this year. Therapist, Brittany

Specialized Services:

Psychological Services:

Dr. Jonathan Thursfield was part of the Intersect team for the entire fiscal year providing psychological services on Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00-5:00. Consistently having a psychologist on site has provided support for the Intersect team as well as clients. Additionally, this year Intersect was able to meet their contract requirements for psychological services for the first time in several years.

Psychological Service Deliverables:

2023-2024	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
Assessment	2	3	1	4	4	2	3	4	1	4	1	3	32
FU/Consult	4	3	4	3	6	6	5	4	2	3	5	3	48

Psychiatric Services:

We were happy to have Dr. Michelle Waller return to Intersect in February 2023 to provide psychiatric services to our clients on Mondays and Tuesdays from 9:00-5:00 pm. Throughout the year, she worked with the Clinical Supervisors to update the referral process and prioritization levels for clients. In September 2023, Dr. Waller was randomly selected by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC's, Physician Practice Enhancement Program (PPEP) to undergo an office assessment at Intersect. The PPEP office assessment aims to support, educate and assess community-based clinical offices in alignment with College practice standards, professional guidelines and best practice recommendations. Although it was a lot of work for Dr. Waller to gather all the information, as expected, she met all standards. The only change Intersect needed to make was adding information about psychiatry to their office telephone greeting.

Psychiatric Service Deliverables:

	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL	22/23
Assessment	8	6	4	3	4	8	4	5	3	2	2	5	54	42
FU/Consult	29	41	32	35	41	35	48	45	43	45	16	46	456	192

In reflecting upon this past year with my clients, I see that it has been a year of futures. Many of the clients that I work with do not have hope, or a desire, for a future for themselves. Mining for hope is hard. Investing in themselves and their future seems so contradictory to the horrible stories that exist about themselves and the world. Watching them challenge these stories and breathe light and capacity into themselves is one of the greatest gifts of this work. Over the past year I have celebrated 8 client's graduations. 5 of them have started post-secondary journeys. 2 of them have moved out of town.

Therapist, Lexi

Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP)

The Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP) was revamped this year to provide a lower barrier, trauma informed program for the community of Prince George. SAIP consists of four clinicians and one clinical supervisor. All SAIP Clinicians were trained in various clinical modalities that are conducive to sexual abuse treatment (both intrusive sexual behaviors and being a survivor of sexual violence). The SAIP team meets monthly for peer-clinical supervision, case consultation, learning, and discussion of related resources. Program development and advancement were the primary focus of SAIP this fiscal year. New processes, policy, documentation, and dissemination throughout the community were key areas developed. The SAIP team has also worked towards improving our relationships with our community partners, which included meetings with the RCMP, Victim Services, MCFD and SD57.

During the fiscal year of April 2023 to March of 2024 SAIP served 26 children and youth within our community. Since the new process for SAIP has been launched in January of 2024, clinicians have completed 6 screenings, 4 of which have been provided with a service plan, and intervention. Prior to, and during the launch of the new clinical process for SAIP, SAIP clinicians have provided intervention to clients and families who were on their caseloads prior (child/youth and their families that are dealing with sexual abuse/violence). Including Intersects previous and new processes for SAIP, 32 children/youth and their families have received support through this program.

2023/2024 SAIP Data

Recipients Served	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	TOTAL
Existing	-	-	-	-	26	27	40	37	34	44	33	26	267
Indigenous	-	-	-	-	7	6	8	9	10	13	10	8	71
New	-	-	-	-	4	13	3	1	0	2	0	2	25

- Data collection process was not in place for April-July, those statistics were reported in CYMH.

This past year, I have had the pleasure of walking alongside a twelve-year-old youth who had previously experienced a sexual assault. Understandably, this was extremely distressing for this young person and brought up feelings of panic, shame, and self-blame when it was remembered, making it difficult to engage socially in the present. Through the course of our therapy, we capitalized on this young person's creative gifts and utilized a combination of Expressive Arts Therapy and EMDR to process the traumatic experience that was holding them back, which proved successful. This young person valiantly processed the traumatic memory to the point of being able to recount it with zero disturbance, and a feeling of self-compassion and pride in their own resiliency. It was truly an honor and a gift to witness. When I last checked in with them around the memory, they now took an empowered stance, expressing with confidence that thought they would never wish for something like this to happen again, they now felt certain they would be able to manage it.

SAIP Counsellor, Jennifer

CYMH Therapeutic Groups

In order to improve group attendance this fiscal, it was decided there would be only one offering of an anxiety group and one offering of a DBT group in the fall and then again in the spring. They were separated into a younger age pool and an older age pool. This year, group attendance improved, and we were able to run all the groups they planned to round.

<u>Fall 2023:</u>	<u>Spring 2024:</u>
<p><u>Parenting Through Strong Emotions</u> - Weekly series Wednesdays 6:00 -7:30pm Ages: Caregivers only Facilitators: Clinicians (rotating), Lynn Brown & Kathy (Family Smart)</p> <p><u>Younger Anxiety:</u> Jenny Shannel & Wiseley School Room – Mondays @ 3:45 – 5:15 pm Oct 16th to December 11th – 9 weeks</p> <p><u>Younger DBT (13 – 15 years old):</u> Melissa Brittany, Caitlin and Tianna School Room - Wednesdays 6-7:30pm Oct 11th - Dec 13th – 10 weeks</p> <p><u>Parenting Gender Diverse Youth:</u> Melissa Nicole (Virtual) Last Wednesday of the Month, 7-8pm, monthly</p> <p><u>DBT School Group: Melissa</u> Lexi & Stacey (Marly) School Room – Tuesday Mornings 10am – noon</p>	<p><u>Parenting Through Strong Emotions</u> - Weekly series Wednesdays 6:00 -7:30pm Ages: Caregivers only Facilitators: Clinicians (rotating) & Lynne Brown</p> <p><u>Older Anxiety Ages:</u> Jenny Shannel & Michael (Meg 3rd) School room – Wednesdays 4:00 – 5:30 om April 10th - May 29th – 8 weeks</p> <p><u>Older DBT (16-18 years old):</u> Melissa Lexi, Kayla & Kiran School room - Tuesdays 5 – 6:30 pm April 2rd – June 11th – 11 weeks</p> <p><u>Circle of Security:</u> Jenny Lynne & Jennifer Group room – Tuesday’s 5:00 – 6:30 pm March 12th - 6 sessions</p> <p><u>Parenting Gender Diverse Youth:</u> Melissa Nicole (Virtual) Last Wednesday of the Month, 7-8pm, monthly</p> <p><u>DBT School Group:</u> Melissa Lexi & Marly School Room – Tuesday Mornings 10am – noon</p>

“This year I got to co-facilitate one of our DBT groups, which was an amazing learning experience. I enjoyed getting to know the different kiddos and their families, especially as they became more comfortable and interacted more. It was interesting to see each youth connect to the material, but my favorite part was watching the relationship between the kiddos and their adult(s) grow. Even though a lot of the material in our groups can be introductory at times, I appreciate that it gives our youth the opportunity to share in their learning with the adults in their lives. Being on the same page with the language we use, understanding the reasons behind the skills we introduce, and strengthening the relationships in our kiddos lives is vital to the work that we do. I truly can’t wait for the next round.” Counsellor Kayla

Intersect School Program

The Intersect School was a specialized educational program offered in partnership with School District #57 Centre for Learning Alternatives (CLA). All youth (grade 8-12) accessing this program were actively receiving therapy from an Intersect Clinician and have demonstrated barriers to success in mainstream schooling. It was a time limited program with the goal of addressing these barriers then transitioning the youth back to another SD #57 program to continue their educational goals. The program focuses on the mental health needs of students first - understanding that by supporting their mental health, they can increase their academic and personal success. Intersect's Mental health Worker that supports the school program was funded through the United Way of BC and BC Community Gaming Grants.

During the 2023-2024 school year Intersect's School Program had 20 students access the program. Students completed over 75 courses, and we were excited to see 6 students graduate. Five of their graduates applied for multiple scholarships, all were successful with a combined total of over \$10,000 in scholarships. One graduate enrolled in and was accepted to the University of Northern BC. Every week the School District's Aboriginal Educator worker spent time with the class doing activities and having discussions through an Indigenous lens. Once a week, an Intersect Therapist delivered a group for DBT skills in which students learn coping skills, self-regulation skills, and interpersonal skills. The School District #57 staff attended the DBT group as well to help the students to practice their new skills in the classroom. This year there was a very successful integration of art and projects to the DBT group, and the students received school credits for participation and completion of projects/activities. Participation was at its highest for the DBT group and all youth reported back very positively about their DBT group experience.

Intersect has been actively looking for a larger building, in a safer location. In February 2024 Intersect's Leadership realized moving locations would create a lot of uncertainty for the Intersect School Program, its staff and especially its students. There was potential Intersect found a building at short notice causing a lot of disruption in the middle of the school year; it was also possible that Intersect's search may produce a building not suitable for the school program in the end. In February 2024 Intersect's Executive Director and Board of Directors made the very difficult decision not to start the Intersect School Program until Intersect relocated to another location. The mental health and wellbeing of their current students was in the forefront of this decision; deciding not to start a new school program until we relocated was the only way to ensure students had lots of notice of potential changes to provide thoughtful, supportive planning for their transitions. This was very difficult information for students and caregivers to hear and Intersect's staff understood their predicament and shared their disappointment.

Students were supported through this news by Intersect and SD 57 leadership, Intersect clinicians, and School District #57 teaching staff and given 7 months notice on the options available to them in September. All continuing students were given the opportunity to transition to a singular classroom with their classmates at the CLA, join a different CLA classroom, or facilitate a transition back to their mainstream catchment school. It remains Intersect's commitment to maintain a strong working relationship with School District 57 and to explore re-opening a school program in the new Intersect location, once secured.

*The highlight of my year was watching one of my long-term clients graduate high school. This client has struggled immensely over the past several years with anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts. There were many times where they weren't sure if they were going to make it to adulthood. Through their commitment to themselves and their healing journey, they have come so far and are now a confident, well-balanced, and skillful youth. In fact, this youth is the first to tell others about therapy and how much Intersect (staff and the school program) have positively impacted their life. After they walked across the stage, they came to thank me for "always listening to [them] and believing in [them]" even when they didn't believe in themselves. (Cue the tears**) They are an insightful, creative, kind, and resilient youth who will do amazing things in our world. I truly feel so lucky to be their therapist and a small part of their journey ♥ Therapist, Kara*

One of the first families I was had was a parent who'd survived domestic violence, but their life had drastically changed as they lost their home, struggled with mental health, and their children were separated and living at different locations. At the start of services, they really struggled and broke down in tears in every session, it was very inspiring to witness their resiliency as they returned each week and were so committed to improving their quality of life and reuniting with their family. They have since found a home, have greatly improved their relationship with their children, and have even enjoyed some family road trips. At our final session, the parent struggled to hold back tears as they expressed so much gratitude for all the services offered at Intersect and praised our agency for supporting youth, parents and bringing families together. Sara, Family Mediator

Family-Teen Mediation

The Family Teen Mediation Program (FTM) is a low barrier service that provides in home and outreach support to caregivers and their youth (12- 18 yrs.) who are experiencing conflict and want to improve their communication, foster a healthier relationship, and learn how to resolve conflict while promoting a stronger connection. The FTM team is comprised of two mediators and one clinical supervisor.

The goal of FTM this year was to have the mediators trained and facilitate Maple's Connect Group. Connect Group is for caregivers of teens with an attachment foundation, as a means to provide psychoeducation on the importance of attachment and to influence a stronger connection between the caregivers and their teens. FTM facilitated one Connect Group this spring/summer and plan to offer it again fall 2024. FTM received 38 referrals/requests for services from April 2023 to March 2024. Of these 38 referrals, FTM provided services to 20 families; unfortunately, 18 were closed at referral because FTM couldn't connect with the family, a member of the family did not want to participate, or the referral did not meet eligibility requirements. Reasons for not meeting eligibility included: referring families currently facing a crisis, youth who are needing immediate mental health services, children under 12 years and/or a court order restricting contact between the teen and their parent. A goal for next year is to re-educate community agencies on FTM's services to increase appropriate referrals.

I have had the opportunity to work with a family for 16 months. When I first started working with the family the youth had been living out of the home for over a year, was not attending school, had a history of trauma, and mental health was a large contributor to the issues experienced by youth and parent. Youth and parent also had a history of being physically violent with each other. After a year of space and not living together, the goal was reunification. This was a trying and difficult task. There were many times when I thought we had our last session, and mediation would end due to the family being emotionally dysregulated and angry with each other. I am surprised, but so thrilled and proud that week after week they came back to the mediation table willing to put the effort, sweat and tears into rebuilding their relationship and finding a path forward.

Over time the family learned how to communicate and negotiate in an effective way that led to less conflict among them. They were able to move forward and rebuild their relationship in a way that respected each other's pasts and experiences. They celebrated the little things, such as having a peaceful car ride to school in the morning or watching a movie together. Practicing having empathy for each other on the good and bad days has had substantial lifelong effects on the pair. Both Parent and Youth have the confidence and skills to navigate the ups and downs of their relationship.

I'm happy to report that youth and parent are doing extremely well. Youth is living back at home, works with a therapist regularly, is attending school, learning how to drive, and thriving. Allsion, Family-Teen Mediator

New Directions-Youth Justice

During the 2023/2024 fiscal year, New Directions (ND) Workers provided services and support to 28 youths, that was 10 more youth than last fiscal year. This increase in referrals was a result of local changes in Youth Justice and the local ISSP positions being vacant or their off on extended leaves. In November 2023, the province announced its plans to close the youth custody center in Prince George on March 31, 2024, due to the steady decrease in the number of young offenders being jailed as a result of changes to the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2019. New Direction was happy to take the additional referrals and provide consistent support to these youth.

When one ND Worker left their position in Sept 2023, the Executive Director was thrilled to recruit Levi Black-Amstutz to their position. He volunteered for the SWITCH program last year and she knew he would be a perfect fit for the program. Unfortunately, when he just started in October, the other long-term ND Worker needed to go off on an extended personal leave until April 2024. Even with the vacancy and extended leave, New Directions still accepted and provided service for every referral they received, and Levi was eager to build on the program and integrate support for “at risk” youth into his service. In March, Levi successfully applied for a grant from Canadian Tire Jump Start to fund a summer recreational program that included a variety of opportunities to try different sports at the Northern Sports Center and develop cultural connections with the Prince George Native Friendship Center, Central Interior Native Health Society, and CNC’s Aboriginal Resource Center

To meet contract requirements and incorporate a new approach to working with the referred youth, I have structured pro-social activities to include recreational programming that aligns with the [high-risk] youth’s interest and then have asked them to invite a friend [at-risk] to join. E.g. kickboxing, rock-climbing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, drum-making, jam-making etc.

To meet the contract’s “promote pro-social role modelling” requirement I have sought to expand potential role models beyond the New Directions staff. This has been successfully introduced through individual recreational programs which have included at least one or more coach/ experts that is(are) both knowledgeable and passionate in their sport/ area of expertise. E.g. Black-belt instructor, boxing coach, Rock-climbing safety trainer/ competitive athlete, snowboarding instructor, soccer and rugby coaches, Elders, and cultural knowledge holders, etc.

To meet contract requirements of community service, our youth have volunteered at the Saint Vincent de Paul’s Community Kitchen handing out hot meals and preparing food hampers to those in need; the Prince George Animal Humane Society looking after puppies and kittens; and at the Prince George Animal Rescue tending to horse, lamas, donkeys, and goats. As with the recreational programming, after a couple times volunteering, I’ve asked [high-risk] youth to invite a friend [at-risk] to join as a volunteer and provide them company along the journey. This opportunity has also allowed our youths to act in a leadership capacity as they can help their friend navigate the chores and volunteer duties that come along with the position. After the successful completion of their community service, several youths continued to volunteer at their respective establishment in to have the experience on their resume and a reference for prospective employers. In addition to on-going volunteer experiences listed above, several of these youths participated as volunteers on research panels that were presented to New Directions; these panels include UNBC’s youth and sports engagement, MCFD youth in care and missing person’s reporting, and the McLeary Center youth in custody experiences.

Levi Black-Amstutz, New Directions Counsellor

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Professional Development

The development and implementation of a professional development education and training strategy was part of the Society's 2020-2023 strategic plan. From 2020-2023, Intersect met all the strategic goals outlined in it. Focusing on Professional Development is also part of Intersect' 2024-2027 Strategic Priorities.

During the annual performance reviews, Intersect team members identify training they would like to pursue. Leadership reviewed these requests to identify themes and knowledge gaps to update the agency's Professional Development Plan. The Professional Development Plan is a document that outlines the core trainings Intersect will provide for each job classification, it's supervision and performance management structure and how staff can use their personal training dollars. Intersect uses their MCFD Recruitment and Retention funding to provide staff an annual personal training bank. Each employee has earmarked \$500 per year for the first 5 years of service and \$1000 per year for the following years, to a maximum bank of \$5,000.

In addition to the training listed below, all clinical staff participated in the Tending to Trauma Conference.

During the 2023/2024 fiscal year, Intersect CYMH staff received the following professional development:

1. MCFD Sponsored Training
 - a. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy - 1 Clinicians
 - b. Foundations in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health - 1 Clinician
 - c. CBT-Trauma - 1 Clinicians
 - d. CBT-Anxiety - 4 Clinicians
 - e. Emotion Focused Family Therapy - 8 Clinicians
 - f. Connect Facilitator - 2 Clinicians
 - g. Supervisors EFFT – 2 Clinicians
 - h. DC 0-5 Years Course - 3 Clinicians
2. Agency Funded-staff training dollars
 - a. Carrier Sekani Family Service's Nowh Guna Training - 5 employees
 - b. Treatment of Trauma Using Play Therapy Skills and Techniques-SAIP - 13 Clinicians
 - c. KIPS - 2 Clinicians
 - d. Behavioral Regulation Training – 2 Clinicians
 - e. Brief Therapy – 7 Clinicians
 - f. Ethics Training- 12 Clinicians
3. Personal Professional Development Dollars
 - a. EDMR - 7 Therapists
 - b. Non-Suicidal Self harm Adolescents - 4 Clinicians
 - c. 2SLGBTQJA - 1 Clinician
 - d. Play Therapy - 2 Clinicians

I was working for a couple of years (transfer from a therapist who left Intersect) with a family whose parents were estranged, with a very difficult relationship and ministry involvement. They were being offered a variety of external supports. I was recently able to close the case because the little one finally received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder this year, funding was accessed, other supports were successful with helping mom to address her own needs, and parents started to get along a lot better after the extended family worked hard to understand and help their son. Little one is now into sports, very well supported at a great school, and mom is much happier as well. The team around the child worked for this family 😊

Therapist, Senga

Community Involvement

Intersect continued to work in partnership with other service providers in the community including:

- Chairing the CYMHSU Service Provider meeting (includes Foundry PG, Northern Health, SD #57, PGNFC)
- Co-facilitating the delivery of four groups with other local agencies including Foundry PG, Family Smart
- The CYMHSU Service Provider group partnered the SD#57 DPAC to hosted resource fair on May 7th for National Child and Youth Mental Health Day (CYMH). They received a lot of feedback that it would be great to get this information out at the start of the school year, so they also organized on in October. The resource fair was an opportunity for caregivers to learn about programs available to them, children and youth in the Prince George area. We were thrilled that almost 20 service providers from around Prince George joined each one.
- In June of 2023 Intersect Leadership started monthly calls with Northern Health's APAU Leadership to build relationships, problem solve and case plan for shared clients.
- In November of 2023, Intersect's clinical team had a tour of the SCAN clinic to learn more about their services and how we can work together to support children and youth.
- In December of 2023, we distributed an updated CYMH services snapshot and combined referral form for PGNFC's Aboriginal Child & Youth Wellness Program and Intersect Youth & Family Services. This quick guide and the combined Intersect and PGNFC Referral form are available on Intersect's website and in MOIS.
- Intersect staff participated in the Pride Parade on June 3rd and served our Indigenous Community for National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21st.

Intersect Leadership continued to participate in several committees within the community that included:

- Provincial Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Community of Practice
- CYMH Leadership Network: Local and Provincial
- Infant Mental Health Community Practice
- CYMH Community Service Providers

After a youth I was working with experienced a tragedy they had to move to another community. Through collaboration with the CYMH team in their new community, their new caregivers were able to get supports immediately. The youth was prioritized and the CYMH team in her new community were great to connect and communicate with. We did a gradual transfer, so they still accessed services with me through zoom, while their new caregivers started receiving caregiver supports. After the final transfer, I wrote them a letter and they reached back out to thank me. I feel hopeful and positive that they will do well in their new home.

Therapist Caitlin

Quality Assurance Work

The Quality Assurance Committee is chaired by the Executive Director and made up of staff representatives of Intersect Youth & Family Services Society, working together for the ongoing development and maintenance of the quality assurance component of child and youth clinical services to strive to continually improve the organization and its service delivery.

They gather data from the sources listed below to compile into an annual Quality Assurance Report.

Data Feeding Planning Process	Frequency	Target Date	Delivery Method	Responsible Persons
Complaint Review	Ongoing Annually	December	Online In Person	Executive Director
Employee Satisfaction Survey	Annually	March	Online Survey	QAC*
Stakeholder Survey	Annually	May	Online Survey	QAC*

Persons Served-Guardian/Child Surveys			
Intake	Recurring	Paper and Online	All Staff
Active Service			
Post Service			
Group			
Blitz	Blitz	April/ October	QAC* All staff

Based on the data received last year, the Quality Assurance committee made the following recommendations for improvement work in 2024:

Clinical Recommendations:

- Remind Clinicians to keep their caseload tracking up to date, especially if the doctor's letter was sent as this is the only way to track it.

Agency Recommendations:

- Review childminding options for families with young children during intake.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendations:

- We have not had a physician provide stakeholder feedback for two years. Recommendations to develop survey specific to physician involvement and reach out to physicians personally for feedback.
- Evaluate pilot of group evaluation survey.
- Review all surveys to ensure we are collecting the information we need, specifically:
 - Youth Survey - review wording for treatment/closure plan, are we sure youth understand these questions.
 - Intake Survey - make sure that it specifies walk in or pre-booked, review if concerns about wait times for intake changes due to the staff meetings being moved to Wednesdays.
 - Employee Survey - add pre-amble explaining supervisor and management, add questions around satisfaction with recruitment and retention.
 - Stakeholder - ensure there is an easy way to identify MCFD feedback.

A client who struggles with emotion regulation and self-invalidation just said in session that she is learning how her feelings are valid even if they are there only for a little and then pass – she does not have to sit in them. She is learning to be more balanced and not be as controlled by situations, or feelings and thoughts. She shared she is learning to “tilt into her emotions” without being overwhelmed by them! She is experiencing more confidence in herself and is proud of how she has handled recent situations. *Clinical Supervisor & Therapist, Melissa*

Annual Complaint

Any complaint received in person or over technology (phone, email, website, virtually) are recorded on the agency yearly complaint tracking form. This information is reviewed annually by the leadership team to identify any themes, opportunities for improvement and as a CARF accreditation standard. The complaint form can be given to any member of the leadership team and will be escalated to the Executive Director for final sign off before it is considered closed.

In the 2023/2024 fiscal year, we received 4 complaints. Two were about therapist fit, one was about reporting risk, and one was about release of information.