



Reset: The Time is Now

# Annual Report

2020/2021

*Join us as we refresh, rebuild,  
and move forward together.*





Out of deep respect for Indigenous peoples of Canada, Youthdale Treatment Centres recognizes that its work, and the work of its community partners take place on traditional Indigenous territories across the province.

We acknowledge that there are 46 treaties and other agreements that cover the territory now called Ontario. In Toronto, we are situated on the land covered by Treaty 13 held by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Toronto is subject to the Dish with One Spoon covenant. We acknowledge that Youthdale's Re-Entry program in Magnetawan is situated on the land covered by the Robinson-Huron Treaty 61 and the Williams Treaty.

We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories. We are thankful to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who have cared for these territories since time immemorial and who continue to contribute to the strength of Ontario and to all communities across the province.

**In memory of the thousands of children who were sent to residential schools, for those who never returned and in honour of all the families whose lives were forever changed.**

*May we never forget. May we learn.  
May we do better. May we be better.*

*“It’s not just about the agency rebuilding and changing. Youth themselves are under construction when they come to us as well. They discover building blocks for coping and gaining control of their lives again, as well as repairing their confidence and trust.”*

– Youthdale staff member



## Introduction

This year was one marked by considerable uncertainty. The pandemic affected our ways of living and working so significantly that many of us have still yet to discover our “new normal.” Children’s Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) estimated that as many as 1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario would experience some form of mental health problem pre-COVID and new research from The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) shows a large majority of children and youth experienced mental health deterioration during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through all of this, system-wide challenges persist with staff shortages and extremely long wait lists for specialized services, intensive treatment services, and counselling across the province.

Youthdale is a leader in its field, integrating treatment with families in the community for over 50 years. As one of the founding members of the children’s mental health movement in Ontario, we pride ourselves on providing compassionate care for those who need it most. Despite the passion and hard work demonstrated by our employees over the years, the agency has not been immune to these challenges and we recognize where there is room for improvement.

We have not always mobilized evidence-informed practices and adopted the latest models in collaboration with other mental health organizations.

Youthdale seeks to realize a more interdisciplinary practice with respect to treatment of clients and we are decidedly in need of more active client engagement and community outreach. The evolving social landscape, calls to action from within the larger mental health system, and pandemic-related increases in complex mental health needs has made it clear that there has never been a better time for Youthdale to refresh, rebuild, and reset. **The time is now.**



# A message from the CEO

I am very excited to be welcomed into my new role as the CEO of Youthdale Treatment Centres. This is a very exciting time, as well as a time to reflect on the hard work and resilience of the staff that make up our organization.

The children and youth we support at Youthdale are the inspiration that drive our organization. The passion, adaptability and determination demonstrated by our staff in the past year ensured our success in providing consistent service and support to our clients during the pandemic. Despite the many challenges, our agency demonstrated incredible resilience, as we successfully maintained the service delivery models of many of our live-in treatment and secure treatment programs. In addition, we adapted and shifted our services to ensure we were meeting unfulfilled needs in our community by creating additional supports through our Virtual Services Program. I am very proud to be part of a team that was and continues to bring forward a dynamic approach to supporting our children, youth and families during a very challenging time for all.

As we reflect, it is important to note that despite the many successes, this time has also been marked by significant changes and challenges over and above the pandemic. These challenges provide unique opportunities to review, learn and reset. As the new CEO, along with my Youthdale colleagues we will engage, energize and revitalize our efforts in shaping our future in partnership with all of our stakeholders, including clients, funders, our board and our staff to ensure that we provide the highest quality of service to make a significant impact in the lives of those we serve.

Building on this foundation, our focus is to develop, expand and elevate our programs and services across the community ensuring that we continue to foster an environment of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. We strive to see ourselves in the clients we support recognizing that innovation, quality and continuous learning will allow us to thrive in the future.

I want to thank all of our staff, board members, and partners for their continued compassion, commitment and effort in supporting the most vulnerable children and youth across Toronto and Ontario. The time is now to reset and to continue to elevate our efforts to ensure children, youth and families experience health and wellness.

*Sincerely,*  
**Mamta Chail**



## A message from the Board Chair

2020–21 was another year for the books! As the global pandemic raged on, Youthdale yet again demonstrated its ability to adapt, adjust, and transform in the face of constant change, and continued to deliver dedicated, compassionate care to our clients and their families.

My message as Chair this year is ultimately about one thing: Recognizing the people that have made this organization a truly special place during a truly challenging time.

I'd like to start by thanking our outgoing interim CEO, John Flannery. John agreed to return to Youthdale to fill a one-year gap while we launched a comprehensive search for a long-term leader. John could not have known the challenge that awaited him, and yet, he led Youthdale through the uncertainties of the initial stages of the pandemic with grace, calm, and steady leadership. He was a true pleasure to work with.



Much of my appreciation goes to Youthdale's staff. I have often said that the staff at Youthdale are what makes me most proud to be a part of this organization. Even in the face of a global crisis, never did our staff's dedication to their clients waver. And as the mental health crisis in this province has continued to worsen, our staff rolled up their sleeves and demonstrated their dedication and commitment to quality care.

In January of 2021, Mamta Chail joined Youthdale as our new CEO. The Board is thrilled to have her on board. During her short tenure to date, she has proven to be an effective, inspirational, and strategic leader, choosing to view challenges as opportunities; studying Youthdale's strengths; and sowing the seeds for a wonderful future for the organization, alongside an outstanding senior leadership team.

I'd also like to thank my esteemed colleagues on the Board of Directors. Each director is an outstanding contributor and brings tremendous value to the stewardship of this organization.

Finally, the Board would like to thank the Government of Ontario for their continued support of our organization and of its commitment to improving mental health for all Ontarians.

*Best,*

Laura Jamer

## Program Spotlight

# Virtual Services

Despite the pandemic Youthdale continued to lead and innovate in providing services to children, youth and families across our communities. As an organization, Youthdale continued to listen to the feedback from children, youth and families regarding mental health services and needs within our communities especially during a time when many organizations had closed or limited their services due to the pandemic. We knew that COVID-19 was having an incredible impact on the mental health of our children, youth and families and as a result, The Virtual Outpatient Service was launched in April 2020 as an interim support during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The service was provided to children and youth between 6 years and 24 years of age, and their families who could benefit from phone or video-based support on a time-limited basis. The virtual service offered psychiatric assessments and consultation, psychological consultation, as well as brief individual and family goal oriented treatments.

A psychiatric assessment and/or consultation was most often the primary reason for referral followed by individual and/or family counselling. The structure of the program allowed for shared assessments and treatment services to be offered between various professions on the team.

Over the course of this year the overall profile of referrals to Youthdale changed significantly to reflect the increasing acute, complex and co-morbid emotional, psychiatric and physical health issues, as well as learning and behavioural issues that resulted during COVID.

As Youthdale's intensive services begin to return to pre-COVID occupancy levels in the summer of 2021, virtual individual and family treatment is winding down. Psychological Assessments and consultations continue at this time.

“ I am very pleased with the service. The doctor is a wonderful person, very professional and at the same time very caring. ”

— Virtual Outpatient

April 2020–  
March 2021

Referrals

**259**

Location

Outside  
Toronto:  
**25%**

Age

Under 16:  
**65%**

16–24:  
**34%**



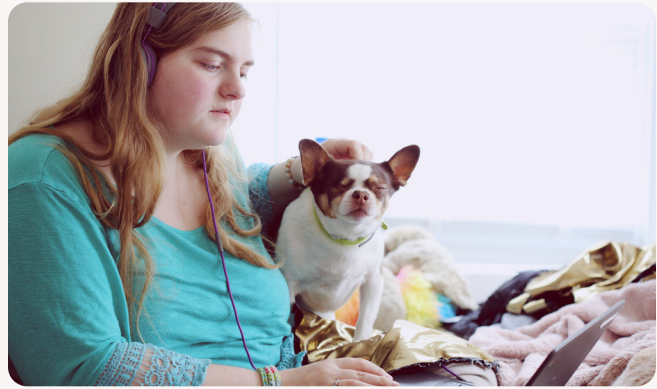
## Program Spotlight

# Transitional Age Unit

**For young people receiving mental health care, a gap in care opens when they turn 18;** this is often a time they must leave mental health services and search for adult services.

We know that unfortunately young people fall through the cracks in the health care system. It's estimated that up to 60 per cent of youth in child and adolescent mental health services lose access to treatment at the transition to adult services. This gap may also increase mental health risks for young people. A major challenge to closing that gap is providing accessible and effective services that a young person can easily transition to.

As a result, despite the many challenges of the pandemic, Youthdale understood the urgency to fill this gap as soon as possible and therefore, launched the Transitional Age Unit (TAU) in 2020.



Youthdale's TAU is a voluntary psychiatric program designed to serve transitional age youth, aged 18–24 years old, who have a primary mental health diagnosis with complex special needs that have not been met by services offered in less intensive settings.

The TAU first opened its doors in July 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has continued to operate as an essential service to date. While clients have exhibited a multitude of diagnoses, the pandemic has also directly contributed to their admission and decline in their mental health.

Our team of psychiatrists, child and youth workers, social workers, nurses, psychologists, and occupational therapist work closely with the client and their support network to understand their needs, set goals for their admission, and to plan for their discharge. Clients also have the opportunity during their stay to pursue their high school credits, for better employment opportunities and successful integration into the community, upon discharge.

# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging

Did you know that by 2036, racialized people will account for an estimated 48% of Ontario's population?

The senseless death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020, along with the growing Anti-Black racism protests across North America, served as a catalyst for Youthdale to prioritize its strategic and operational commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This was a distressing time for many of us, not only those in the U.S but here in Canada, in our own communities. The continued events that are going on all around us related to systemic injustice are heartbreaking. Through these events and many others, it has once again epitomized the devastating systemic injustice, prejudice and racism that still exists today. These events have heightened our awareness as an organization to look at and address the systemic in-justice embedded in our own agency.

Like so many of you, we are deeply saddened by stories that have been brought to light and we know they are not isolated instances. These stem from a deeply entrenched history embedded in our society and in our communities. Systemic racism exists in our culture, our institutions and impacts people of colour in all aspects of life.

*“ Youthdale saved my life and showed me that I am a special kid. I met some of the nicest people ever. They truly saved me and helped me not give up. I felt so welcomed. ”*

— Live-In Treatment and Inpatient Services Client

The impact of these injustices are further elevated through poverty, access to resources, health and mental health, all leading to vastly different treatment in society. This is depicted by incarceration rates and child welfare apprehension rates for marginalized populations, especially people of colour. We must be aware of the detrimental impact on mental health caused by the existence of racism, oppression, exclusion, inequality and systemic bias, especially for children and youth.

As a child and youth mental health agency located in downtown Toronto and serving the GTA and Ontario, we have to come together and want to make changes to ensure we shift the long-term impact of bringing change to the forefront. We know we have the opportunity to make things better and we owe it to our children, youth, families, employees and our communities to do so.

As a result, In consultation with Dr. Javeed Sukhera, internationally recognized health professions education researcher involved in advocacy and cross-sectoral work in education, policing, and community services, the Committee has begun work on the agency's Child and Youth Mental Wellness Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDI-B) Strategy. The Committee has also gathered feedback from clients and care-takers, front-line staff, management and the Board of Directors to ensure all voices are captured to create a comprehensive work plan. Youthdale remains committed to developing a long-term sustainable and scalable model of EDI-B commitment that will embed anti-racist, anti-oppression and inclusion practices for our staff, clients and families.





*“ There are many children’s mental health service providers in Toronto and they operate too independently of one another. This is confusing, frustrating, and scary for parents.”*

— Parent, Inpatient Services

# Growth Opportunities

According to CMHO, 36% of Ontario parents or caregivers have sought mental health help for their child. Of those who did, 4 in 10 didn’t receive the help they needed or are still waiting for treatment. Even pre-pandemic, wait times for critical services extended well beyond clinically appropriate numbers and this has been cited as the primary challenge families face. Unfortunately, mental healthcare staff shortages and high turnover further strain the system. Now, during the pandemic, children have been experiencing worsened mental health with respect to depression, anxiety, irritability, attention, and OCD. Eating disorder emergency department visits in particular have increased twofold, accounting for a large proportion of the overall increase in mental health hospitalization visits. Furthermore, poor transitions from youth to adult mental health services often lead to disengaging from care in a majority of known cases.

At a youth mental health system level, four critical priorities have been established to address some of these trends and create positive change. Ontario’s Child and Mental Health Youth Lead Agencies must strive to improve:

- **Clients’ service experience**
- **The quality and consistency of services**
- **Access to services**
- **Outcomes for those with the most complex needs**

Youthdale understands the importance of delivering high-quality of care for our children, youth and families because we know that quality initiatives will have a positive impact. As a result, Youthdale is focusing on a number of quality initiatives that will support children, youth and families to receive the right service, at the right time and right place with outcomes that promote wellness. Therefore, as an agency we are embedding client and family-centred care throughout all levels of our agency and within our policies and procedures, applying evidence-informed practices to guide treatment and agency decisions and improving transitions between services.

*“ Due to many waitlists, we do not know when we are going to receive additional support or for how long.”*

— Parent, Inpatient Services



#1

## Client and family-centred care

A collaborative and active partnership between clients, families and the agency that leads to meaningful engagement, effective treatment, improved services and client satisfaction that will result in more positive outcomes. We believe in the notion “no decision about me, without me”.

#2

## Evidence-informed practices

The use of standardized practices to assess the needs of clients in the delivery of mental health services will be expanded with the intent of enhancing the effectiveness, consistency and objectivity of processes and will include screening, assessment and outcome measurement tools.

Improved data collection and analysis will enable us to measure if treatment and services are working for clients and families and help us customize treatment plans and services to fit the community and clients’ unique needs.



#3

## Transitions

By supporting transitions effectively, we will maintain continuity of services and minimize disruption to already attained treatment gains. This will improve the overall client experience by making services more accessible while ensuring clients have the resources, support and tools required for success once discharged from Youthdale.



## Condensed Statement of Operations

	2020-2021	2019-2020
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Ministry of Health	12,649,428	11,493,113
Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network	4,601,426	3,324,746
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	632,556	636,229
Per Diem Services	318,978	784,846
Other	235,049	541,752
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>18,437,437</b>	<b>16,780,686</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries & Benefits	12,288,444	11,551,051
Building Occupancy	3,693,937	3,737,457
Service Delivery	1,021,590	892,552
Administration	1,620,161	914,792
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>18,624,132</b>	<b>17,095,852</b>
<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(186,695)</b>	<b>(315,166)</b>

These statements are excerpts from the Audited Financial Statements for Youthdale Treatment Centres. These statements should not be considered complete without the notes to the audited financial statements. The full audited financial statements are available on the Youthdale public website.

# Agency Highlights

## *A year in review*

No one knew for sure the magnitude of challenge the COVID-19 pandemic would bring upon families in our community, for how long, or how directly it would impact the mental health of children, youth, and everyone living through some version of lockdown through most of 2020. Counselling and therapy as well as live-in treatment client figures increased dramatically as a result, as did the complexity of needs clients presented with. Social isolation and loss of social interactions led to increased feelings of boredom, loneliness, stress, and anxiety. Youthdale staff worked tirelessly in order to respond nimbly and flexibly to the ever-changing demands in these unprecedented times.

**3000+**

Clients supported through client services

**772**

Admitted clients into services

**625%** 

Increase in Counselling & Therapy clients presenting with self-harm

**533%**

Increase in Live-in Treatment clients presenting with family needs

**75%**

Increase in Counselling & Therapy referrals

**20%**

Increase in secure treatment referrals

**15**

Average age  
Ranges from 6-24

*www.youthdale.ca*

**94%**

Of admitted clients coming in with complex needs assessed at intake

## Takeaways

The past year, along with much of the world, Youthdale faced many challenges due to the pandemic and emergent needs related to it, but also pre-existing trends in mental health service provision that were only worsened by the upset to our social order. We are very proud, however, to have been able to maintain all services when mental health needs were at their highest in our community and so many organizations had no choice but to close. Youthdale not only remained open but in fact launched a new program, the Transitional Age Unit (TAU), and Virtual Services to address a critical need in the most client-centric and safest manner possible.

The agency is moving forward with a definite focus on client experience by improving access to services, ensuring families can find the right services at the right time and at the right place. We are committed to providing the best services possible to young people arriving to Youthdale with complex needs. In response to constructive client feedback and very much in line with Child and Youth Mental Health Lead Agency system-wide goals, Youthdale is embedding client and family-centred care within all programs and policies; using evidence-informed practices to guide the delivery of treatment; and better supporting transitions between agency services.

Youthdale's refreshed brand identity, featured in this report, serves to reflect our reset, reimagined approach toward engaging and respecting young people and families of all backgrounds, as well as our commitment to open new channels of communication and awareness through quality initiatives, our website, and social media to name a few. We are proud of our successes, mindful of our challenges, and we certainly know our work is never done. The time for our agency—and all of us—to embrace change for the better is now.

*One thing that has always held true for us at Youthdale is that children, youth, and families matter. There's always hope. We invite you to find hope here.*

