



REPORT 2023-24

Submitted to: Johnny's Heart of Gold

Quarterly Report: October 1, 2023- December 31, 2023

1. PARENT PEER SUPPORT

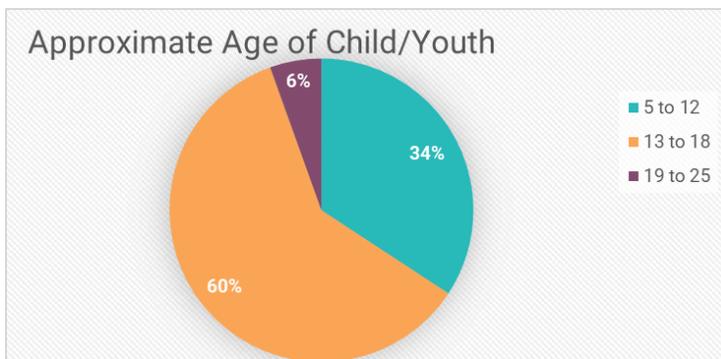
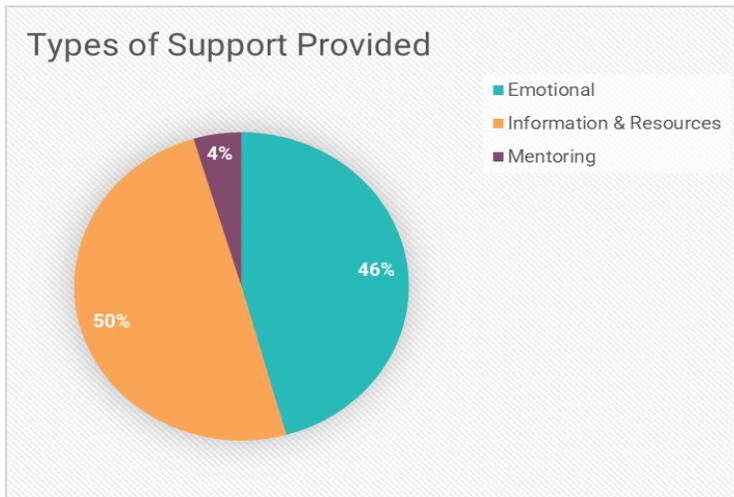
Parent Peer Support Workers use their own lived experience to offer support, resources and information, system navigation, education and mentoring to other families.

1.A Parent Peer Support at START North

Short Term Assessment Response Treatment (START) provides confidential mental health crisis intervention services for children and teens (6 to 18 yrs) who are experiencing the rapid onset (in the past 2-4 weeks) of extreme mental health symptoms resulting in the child/teen being unable to participate in their typical daily activities or relationships. Mental health crisis may include: self-harming, suicidal thoughts or attempts, intense anxiety or depression, distorted thinking, or high risk of significantly harming others.

Johnny's Heart of Gold Funds: Parent Peer Support 2 Days Per Week at START North. Between October 1st, 2023 to December 31, 2023, parents and caregivers with a youth in crisis were supported by a Parent Peer Support Worker at START North **73 times**.

Types of Support Provided to START families this quarter:



Reflections from the Parent Peer Support Worker serving families at START North:

Many conversations with a START family begin with the parent or caregiver expressing something like “I don’t know how you will be able to help”, followed by an outpouring of frustration, anger or despair. And yet I have never had a call that hasn’t ended with gratitude for what JHOG has generously funded FamilySmart to provide: a space without judgment from someone who understands how utterly disorienting it can be to have a child that is struggling. This gratitude sometimes finds its way into an email. One such email I received from a START parent this quarter said: “Thank you so much for your time, input and resources. There are no words to express how valuable my husband and I found our session with you, and we so appreciate you sharing the resources as we try to navigate this difficult time.”



2. Help for the Hard Times Workshop - A workshop for BC families whose child or youth is or has been a patient in a psychiatric unit and/or had an ER visit because of their mental health.

Parents' journey with mental health services often starts or in some way culminates in acute settings where the stay is short and then they are back home and in the community, often with nothing more than they had before except a safety plan for their child or youth. At this time, young people and families are at their most vulnerable, do not know what to do, and have little support.

The Help for the Hard Times workshop supports B.C. families after a mental health crisis. The workshop empowers families whose child/youth has had an inpatient experience in a psychiatric unit or emergency room to manage the transition from acute care to home. It includes 1-1 tailored support. The value of this workshop is that it offers parents/caregivers the opportunity to make practical plans for how to keep their child/youth and family safe, how to take care of their families' mental health and wellness and how to navigate the many resources available to help support their child or youth's mental health in the community. The workshop content, the opportunity to connect with other families, and the learning facilitated by the Parent Peer Support Worker is unique and of great value to families.

Johnny's Heart of Gold is funding 8 Help for the Hard Times Workshop series this year.

2 workshops were hosted in November and December, and **20** parents and caregivers participated.

When asked about their experience being part of the workshop this quarter, this is what some parents and caregivers said:

It has really helped in understanding what to do in a crisis and the resources to help. Helped make me feel like our family isn't so isolated and alone in the fight through this as well. I really took away how to create a safety plan as well.

It was a relief to have the views of parents with similar lived experiences. Like parenting itself, there are aspects to facing these unique challenges that only experience can teach. I learned many useful tips about daily communication, safety plans, accessing resources in my area, and navigating the often overwhelming maze that is BC's health system.

Helped me become aware of the resources available to us during this time. Also reminded me that it is important to take my own mental health seriously so that I can be a better support to my child.

I now have a bunch of tools that I can use. It was also extremely helpful to realize/be reminded that I am not alone.

3. OUTREACH IN THE TRI-CITIES

Throughout the quarter, FamilySmart connected with families, caregivers and professionals in the Tri-Cities by hosting resource tables and/or presenting at the following events:

- **Information Presentations were made to:**
 - Port Moody Police Department - Squad 1 & 2
 - SHARE Family and Community Services Parent & Caregiver's Circle
 - Access Youth Mentor

- **FamilySmart hosted a table at the following community events:**
 - Fraser Forum