



UNITED WAY WRC
CAUSE AREA



Advocating for Mental Health

Good mental health for all is a community responsibility, it is critical that supports are there when they are needed most.

Sudden job loss, grief, or other trauma can take a major toll on anyone. Ability to access crucial supports is that much harder for marginalized members of community such as for those experiencing poverty, racism or homophobia.

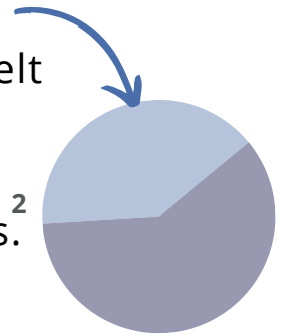
45-46%

of survey respondents had unhealthy general well-being scores in 2020 and 2021, compared to 22% in 2019.¹



40% of youth

in Waterloo Region felt they couldn't go to family to speak about their problems.²



Meet Maria

Finding opportunities that help families build the relationships and deepen connections that strengthen wellbeing is a hallmark of Carizon's approach to supporting mental wellness. Maria experienced this as a participant in Carizon's Food Distribution program. Staff noticed that she didn't seem herself – Maria was withdrawn and unable to make eye contact. Maria shared that, prior to the start of the pandemic, she had lost a child due to a medical condition. Conflict with her partner escalated as they struggled with their grief, coupled with not being able to spend time with extended family due to COVID, meant that Maria was not receiving the support she needed. With one phone call, Maria was immediately set up with an in-person walk-in counselling session. It was clear that she had been suffering: while coping with the loss of her child, the war in Ukraine had triggered past trauma for Maria from her life growing up in Bosnia. In addition, the pandemic caused Maria's husband to lose his job and she had not been able to return to work and they were living in poverty. Maria and her partner began counselling and received support to help grieve and develop conflict management skills. Maria also continued counselling on her own, identifying goals including becoming less isolated and re-engaging with her extended family and friends. Today, Maria credits counselling for helping to improve her relationships.



Local Solutions

Thanks to your support, here are a few of the frontline organizations that United Way WRC funded in 2021-2022 to advocate for mental health locally.



Programs Changing Lives



- Walk-in counselling
- Ongoing or crisis counselling supports
- One to one or group counselling that builds capacity
- Workshops for people experiencing mental health challenges, family members, friends, or professionals
- Public education efforts to address stigma & promote understanding



¹ <https://www.ymcaworkwell.com/special-report-2021>

² Child Witness Centre, Jul- Sept 2022 Grant Application

Without you,
there is no way.

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Waterloo Region
Communities