



# ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

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A YEAR OF GRATITUDE AND RESILIENCE

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# MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHERYL WHITEMAN

The year of 2020 has been heavy for so many due to COVID-19, and in addition, the year has highlighted the incredible resiliency and vulnerability that many of us had, that maybe we did not know we had or to the level to which we had, as we have moved through, and continue to work our way through a pandemic. The true act of vulnerability as defined by author, Brené Brown is "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. It's that unstable feeling we get when we step out of our comfort zone or do something that forces us to loosen control". This year has certainly been unstable in so many facets and yet, we as people, serving others in the human service sectors, continue to show up, moment-by-moment, day-by-day and brave the unknowns, selflessly providing support and ensuring as best as we truly can, that we continue to deliver high quality services. Thank you whole heartedly to everyone of you, for demonstrating your commitment to each other, to the people in the vulnerable sectors, for being kind and for allowing each of us to know what we all matter during this pandemic. We have a ways to go, but we sure have come far in a short time! Your dedication to our society matters, and I thank all of you for being people who care about one another!

Gratefully,

*Cheryl Whiteman*





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**"We commend you, and  
we are with you!"**

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On behalf of the Board and Staff from FOCUS, we want to acknowledge and thank all of the FOCUS registered organizations and their staff for enduring this most difficult and unprecedented time.

Please know your tireless work on behalf of service users and families in Ontario is just another example of your excellence as an organization.


# MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR, NANCY WALLACE-GERO

It has been an honour to serve on the 2019/20 Board of Directors once again for FOCUS Accreditation. As well it has been my pleasure to fulfill the role of Chair once again this past year. FOCUS is an organization with a very important and distinguished purpose...that of ensuring the quality of services and supports to people in Canada who benefit from programs operated by developmental service organizations, community support service organizations, deafblind service organizations and violence against women service organizations.

The Board of Directors has had a very unusual year, with many interruptions to our planned business. The highlights of the past year, including the major factors that affected the work of the Board, as follows:

- Continued as a top priority throughout the year to fulfill ongoing support for all organizations as they navigated the many challenges that came with COVID-19;
- With several new members of the Board in place, the establishment of Committees and major activities/workplans for the Board was a priority throughout the fall of 2019;
- Early in 2020, the arrival of COVID-19 required a pause and reconsideration of many activities and projects planned by the Board, including the development of a new Strategic Plan for the organization;
- Successfully completed the first ever fulsome virtual validation with DeafBlind Ontario Services, providing a framework for further virtual validations given the new challenges with COVID-19;
- Launched the 2020 Standards...a first time set of standards that are inclusive of all Sectors served by FOCUS;
- Successful ED Performance Review;
- Comprehensive revision of by-laws to reflect the impending changes in the Not for Profit Corporations Act (2010) and to modernize the language of the by-laws;

While it is somewhat disappointing that we were unable to complete some of the exciting plans we had for 2019/20, we remain very optimistic that our work during this past year has been extremely important and necessary to the continued success of FOCUS and the organizations we serve. The plans that were set aside in 2019/20 will be reset in 2020/21 and no doubt will have even greater depth and purpose as a result of our collective experiences over this very unusual and unprecedented time.





## CONTINUED MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR NANCY WALLACE-GERO

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I wish to thank outgoing Board Member Lisa Macdonald for her contributions throughout this past year and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our sincere thanks to our small but powerful staff team under the very capable leadership of Cheryl Whiteman, Executive Director.

My thanks to the committee chairs who provide extensive support to the work of FOCUS. As well, sincere appreciation to the current members of the Board of Directors for their ongoing support and commitment over the past quite difficult and different several months. I do look forward to facing the challenge of renewing our plans for 2020/21 and at the same time, continuing to offer our support to the courageous organizations in Ontario who are battling the impact of COVID-19 on the people and communities they serve

Most sincerely,



Nancy Wallace-Gero, Chair of FOCUS Accreditation



### What accreditation means to organizations...

At DeafBlind Ontario Services, our commitment to providing a high quality of life for people with deafblindness is ingrained in our values. We are proud to be re-accredited for the third time and to receive the elite Seal of Sustainability, and the first deafblind organization to do so. The accreditation process itself was clear, well structured and collaborative. Accreditation allows us to be measured by an unbiased, respected third party organization. This demonstrates to our families, funders, community partners, and the people we support, that we are dedicated to high quality service provision and accountability. It's also something that sets us apart in our field."

Roxanna Spruyt-Rocks, CEO DeafBlind Ontario Services

# FOCUS LAUNCHES THE 2020 STANDARDS!

This set of current standards is the result of the work of numerous people from within and external to FOCUS and is based on a foundation of standards from 2007–2014. All involved have a stake in the quality of human services, and we are grateful for their time, effort, and expertise. The 2020 standards apply to the following sectors serviced by FOCUS: Developmental Services, Community Support Services, Violence Against Women Services, and Deafblind Services.

The purpose of the standards is to improve the quality of services being provided to the people who use them. The standards reflect current stakeholder expectations, research, accepted international practice, and legislation related to human services.

The standards were developed and continue to be reviewed using a consensus approach. A review of current literature, legislation, and writings on quality in the human services sector, along with an extensive comparative analysis of similar standards was conducted. Throughout each version of the standards, informative and practical input was gathered, either individually or in focus groups, from service users, board members, executives, managers, staff, volunteers, funders, community stakeholders, and FOCUS peer validators.

As always, the standards were written in a manner that enables organizations to maintain and protect their unique culture, offerings, and approaches.

For more information, please contact:  
Cheryl Whiteman, Executive Director  
[cheryl@focusaccreditation.org](mailto:cheryl@focusaccreditation.org)





***The most valuable aspect of participating in the accreditation process with FOCUS Accreditation is the way that it motivates the organization to practice continual quality improvement in every aspect of service provision.***

The pre-onsite preparation and the on-site experience forces an organization to look inward and evaluate their performance in a very holistic way. It also supports organizations to find ways to address areas that require improvement.

I would recommend FOCUS Accreditation to any organization that wants to improve the quality of their services provided to people and all other stakeholders.

FOCUS Accreditation has created a community among the active agencies, the members of community offer collaboration, resources and expertise to each other. The support provided by the FOCUS staff was also invaluable in the process. With FOCUS you are never on your own.

After 10 years of involvement with FOCUS Accreditation there is no doubt that we provide better services, we are a stronger and more sustainable organization as a result of our involvement with FOCUS Accreditation.



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***Robert Bingham,  
Executive Director  
Community Living Dufferin***

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***Accreditation signals pride in excellence in all aspects of our work, every day! It is not just a moment in time, it challenges us every day to consider “did we do our best practice”?***

In their process, FOCUS Accreditation considers all areas of an organization. As part of the process to be re-accredited, FOCUS is very thorough in its collection of information and sets a high standard for “evidence” of excellence such as having practices, policies, procedures in place and examples of how we operationalize and achieve those standards. There is a tremendous amount of support as you prepare for accreditation; the FOCUS team is right beside you, offering guidance and support through the process which sets you up for success! The FOCUS Community of Practice group helps us all to connect with each other to learn and share information. We are very happy with the results of our accreditation process with FOCUS and most importantly, we are proud to achieve this standard of excellence in how we empower people to live, learn, work and participate in their community. Our efforts will continue to ensure we have quality improvement always at the forefront of who we are as an organization and to strive for excellence.

**Thank you FOCUS!**

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***Sandra Caravan,  
Executive Director  
Community Living York South***



## MANY THANKS AND WELCOME TO OUR 2020/2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nancy Wallace-Gero (Chair)

Ron Coristine (Vice Chair)

Marion Kirsh (Treasurer)

Angela Carter

Rhonda Hendel

Cindy Kinnon

Terry Richmond

Helen Zipes

## MANY THANKS TO OUR 2019/2020 COMMITTEE MEMEBERS

### Accreditation Committee:

Rhonda Hendel (Chair), Terry McCarthy,  
Brenda Ross, Mary Cosyns, Céline Parent,  
Nancy Wallace-Gero and Donna McKrow

### Nominating Committee:

Terry Richmond (Chair), Joe McReynolds,  
Cindy Kinnon, Lisa Macdonald

### Finance and HR Committee:

Marion Kirsh (Chair), Nancy Wallace-Gero  
Helen Zipes, Ron Coristine

## Thank you to those who support FOCUS!

FOCUS is fortunate to have wonderful sponsors who support our work in helping human services organizations in Ontario improve their quality of services.



ComVida Software

ONE SOURCE





# MANY THANKS TO OUR PEER VALIDATORS

FOCUS is fortunate to have the expertise of Peer Validators from across the province who dedicate their time and share their expertise during validations. Thank you to the many registered organizations who support their employees in fulfilling the role of Peer Validator for FOCUS Accreditation. FOCUS would not be able to provide the services we do without your support.

Thank you ... 

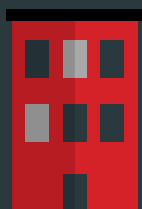
## PEER STATISTICS



18  
PEERS



880  
HOURS



6  
ONSITE  
VALIDATIONS



FOCUS Peer Validator Team at the Community Living Kincardine and District Onsite Validation

Our Peers Had This  
To Say...

"I really enjoy my time onsite. I always learn a lot and really enjoy the whole experience."

"Great experience! Love doing onsites!! Thanks for the experience!!"

# FOCUS looks forward to working with the following newly registered organizations. Welcome to the FOCUS family!



## REGIONAL SUPPORT ASSOCIATES

Regional Support Associates (RSA) provides leading edge clinical supports aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals with intellectual/ developmental disabilities in their community. Professional services are provided in a caring manner, tailored to the unique needs of individual, families and organizations served.



## ST. FRANCIS ADVOCATES

St. Francis Advocates is a social service agency that provides supports for adults with Autism and Developmental Disabilities. Their focus is on helping people realize their abilities to live an active and rewarding lifestyle in their own communities.



## SENSITY

Sensity delivers meaningful experiences for people who are deafblind, so they are empowered to make their own choices and to experience life to its fullest. Sensity provides Intervenor Services for children and adults across Ontario, delivered by their staff of professional intervenors.

## The FOCUS Team

September 2019- April 2020

Cheryl Whiteman  
Executive Director

Amy Watkins  
Manager of Accreditation

Kunj Parekh  
Accreditation Coordinator

Joan Richards  
Administrative and Executive  
Assistant





## BY THE NUMBERS

**91** ACCREDITATIONS COMPLETED

Organizations with 3 Accreditations

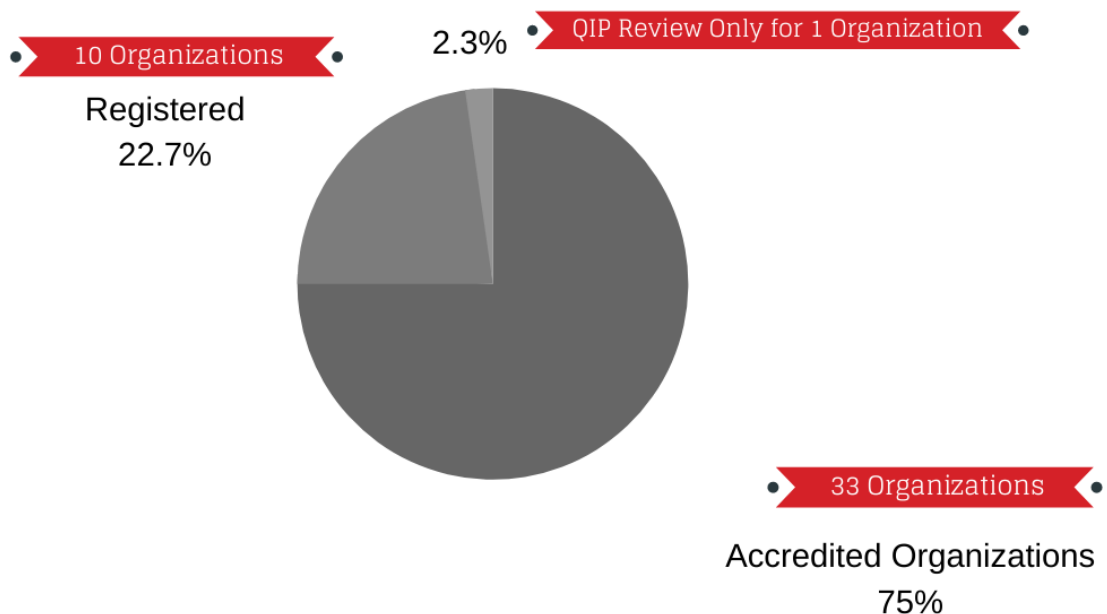
Organizations with 2 Accreditations

Organizations with 1 Accreditation



ORGANIZATIONS ACCREDITED **53**

## CURRENT FOCUS STATS



### Client organizations had this to say about FOCUS during COVID-19:

- FOCUS has been great to work with during the pandemic with all the additional work the pandemic has put on our plates! Thank you!
- Thank you for keeping in touch and remaining as supportive as you have all along!
- We appreciate the opportunity for discussion on needs and limitations as we look forward our next accreditation review.



# The following organizations have been Accredited between November 2019 and November 2020



## COMMUNITY LIVING DUFFERIN

FOCUS Accreditation is pleased to announce that Community Living Dufferin (CLD) has been successful in its bid to be re-accredited by FOCUS Accreditation for four years from December 2019 - December 2023 and receiving an elite level of an award, named Seal of Sustainability. This level of award is given to organizations, who achieve three levels of accreditation status.



## COMMUNITY LIVING KINCARDINE AND DISTRICT

FOCUS Accreditation is pleased to announce that Community Living Kincardine and District (CLKD) has been successful in its bid to be re-accredited by FOCUS Accreditation for four years from December 2019-December 2023.



## PARTICIPATION SUPPORT SERVICES

FOCUS Accreditation is pleased to announce that Participation Support Services (PSS) has been successful in its bid to be re-accredited by FOCUS Accreditation for four years from January 2020 - January 2024. This is organizations' second accreditation.



## **RYGIEL SUPPORTS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING**

FOCUS Accreditation is pleased to announce that Rygiel Supports for Community Living has been successful in its first bid to be accredited by FOCUS Accreditation for four years from April 2020 – April 2024



## **FAMILY TRANSITION PLACE**

FOCUS Accreditation is pleased to announce that Family Transition Place (FTP) has been successful in its bid to be re-accredited by FOCUS Accreditation for four years from April 2020 – April 2024.



## **DEAFBLIND ONTARIO SERVICES**

FOCUS Accreditation is pleased to announce that DeafBlind Ontario Services has been successful in its bid to be re-accredited by FOCUS Accreditation for four years from July 2020 – July 2024, and has received an elite level award, named Seal of Sustainability. This level of award is given to organizations, who achieve three levels of accreditation status.



*Congratulations on your achievements!*





# SERVICE USERS SHARED...

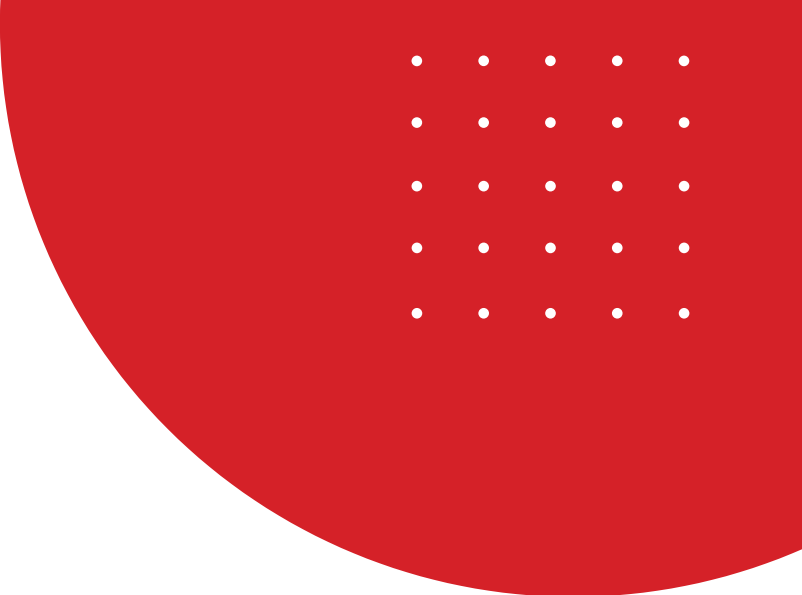

What the support and services  
they receive means to them!

*“This is a safe place to come  
home to.  
(Developmental Services Sector)*

*“I can not stress enough how they changed and  
saved my life. I am in awe of the work they do  
and what they did for me.  
(Violence Against Women Sector)*

*“DeafBlind Ontario Services is a leader in the  
industry, well managed, and its people are its  
strength.  
(Deafblind Sector)*


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***“I get to learn more about who I am and having a disability.***  
(Developmental Services Sector)

***“I’m grateful for the services offered and that they’re available at no cost, in my local town. It’s helpful not to have to drive an hour into a city.***  
(Violence Against Women Sector)


***“I have learned that I am who I am and not different from others so should be treated equally.***  
(Developmental Services Sector)



***“They are always advocating for different resources for the clients.***  
(Deafblind Sector)

***“We are blessed to have Community Care in our lives.”***  
(Community Support Services Sector)

***“They listen to me. They help me.***  
(Developmental Services Sector)



# Have You Thought About...

Have you ever thought about what differs between Accreditation and Ministry Compliance? Look at what our clients say about their accreditation versus compliance experience.

*“Accreditation is very thought provoking. It focuses on how supporting people enriches their lives. Compliance tends to focus on meeting requirements.”*

*“FOCUS spent more time with direct support staff and people receiving support.”*

*“With accreditation, interviews were more like a discussion, felt more like our opportunity to brag about the good things we do!! FOCUS does not prescribe how we meet the standards. We do it our way. Compliance is more prescriptive.”*

*“Accreditation is more welcoming and has a broad view. FOCUS speaks to stakeholders, not just focused on a file review.”*

*“Accreditation is a more thorough look at overall services offered. More qualitative than quantitative.”*

*“Accreditation provides an opportunity for a more relaxed atmosphere for the employees to participate in the interviews and share their experiences and opinions.”*

# The Benefits of Accreditation

## **Well-established Quality Assurance Mechanism**

Accreditation has been used internationally for 75+ years, and is widely accepted as one of the best quality assurance mechanisms known.

## **Current and Diverse Standards**

FOCUS Accreditation standards are developed with the input of key stakeholders, including people receiving services. Standards are responsive to and reflective of current expectations. Standards focus on the achievement of outcomes for people using services and the organization's performance.

## **Operationalizes Values and Principles into Practice**

FOCUS standards operationalize values, principles, legislation, funder quality assurance measures, and HR core competencies into daily practice. Standards provide an accepted blueprint for efficient and effective services, a quality improvement strategy, and a management tool to continually evaluate and improve services and programs.

## **A Proactive Approach to Assuring and Improving Service Quality**

Organizations have time to work toward meeting standards prior to the onsite validation. FOCUS provides agencies with a one-day orientation training session, tools (Standards, GAP Analysis and Evidence Guide) annual learning events, and membership to an on-line Community of Practice, shared listserv, and phone and email support.

## **A Framework for Ongoing Improvement**

A detailed analysis charts specific strengths and areas for improvement, and provides a framework for CQI.

## **Provides Recognition**

Accreditation identifies to funders, individuals, family members and other key stakeholders that the organization is one that is accountable and committed to providing high quality services, engaging in ongoing learning and improvement.

## **Facilitates Evidence-based Decision-making**

Accreditation produces information that informs decision-making at the individual, service, organizational and larger systems levels.

## **Excellent Publicity**

FOCUS provides accredited organizations with a Media Kit that includes a press release template, logos, etc.

# The Foundation of High-Quality Services

2020 Standards

## PERSON-CENTRED SERVICES

1. Ethical Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities (for service users)
2. Planning and Support
3. Communication with Stakeholders
4. Accessibility and Minimizing Barriers

## EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE and LEADERSHIP

5. Governance and Leadership
6. Financial Management
7. Risk Management

## SERVICE-SPECIFIC STANDARDS

Developmental Services (DS)  
Developmental Services—Services in a Person's Home (DS-SPH)  
Developmental Services—Clinical Services—Provider (DS-CS-P)  
Developmental Services—Clinical Services—Implementer (DS-CS-I)  
Services for Children (SC)  
Community Support Services (CSS)  
Violence Against Women Services (VAW)  
Emergency Shelter Services (ESS)  
Deafblind Services (DB)  
Clinical Treatment Plans—Provider (CTP-P)  
Clinical Treatment Plans—Implementer (CTP-I)

## A LEARNING CULTURE

8. Organizational Learning, Innovation, and Improvement
9. Human Resources
10. Community, Relationships, and Partnerships

## COMPREHENSIVE STRUCTURES and PROCESSES

11. Health, Wellness, and Safety



## Congratulations!

Congratulations to Vita Community Living Services and Mens Sana Families for Mental Health on their Accreditation Award.



## **OUR MANDATE**

To provide a robust Quality Improvement and Accreditation Program that assists organizations to deliver services that meet or exceed the expectations of all stakeholders – and most importantly, the people using community-based human services.

## **OUR VISION**

A Community Services Network where people are supported by human services organizations committed to continuous quality improvement.

## **OUR MISSION**

To provide leadership through connecting, empowering, supporting and accrediting community-based human services organizations.

## **OUR VALUES**

Accountability  
Collaborative service delivery  
Continuous improvement  
Knowledge transfer  
Leading systemic change



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