

LOOKING
BACK

THINKING
FORWARD

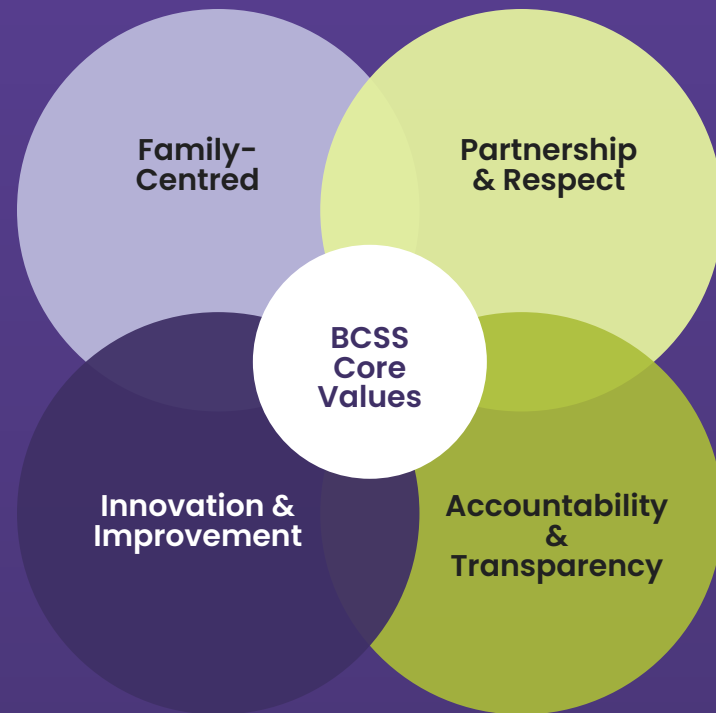


Our Mission

To support families affected by schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses in British Columbia through education, advocacy, and research.

Our Vision

A province where those affected by schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses receive effective treatment and support, and family members are essential partners within the mental health system.



A LETTER FROM THE BCSS Board President

It's remarkable to see the scale of change that can happen in a short period of time.

Last year, we were focused on the provincial election and securing support for our position (with Pathways and the BC Psychiatric Association):

- Treatment that includes medication and the judicious use of involuntary treatment
- Care that is available, accessible, and affordable everywhere in BC
- Collaborative engagement with patients and their families

Since the NDP formed government last October, we've had the privilege of discussing our objectives with Minister of Health Josie Osborne and other officials. Our group, including CEO Faydra Aldridge, has become a trusted resource of expertise for the government on severe mental illnesses, treatment, and family support.

Through our public policy positions, we have shown support for the existing *BC Mental*

Health Act, and have offered a framework for its review that maintains the most important aspects of it in regard to involuntary treatment.

Please let us know how you feel about these issues. We're working to bring the voice of our members to the discussion.

Today, the visibility of mental illness remains a crucial issue in the public life of many British Columbians. BCSS continues to advocate for clearer rules around clinician-family information sharing, improved treatment options, and increased support for families.

We remain determined to better support rural and underserved areas, working to enhance and expand partnerships with Indigenous communities.

BCSS is proud to announce that over the last year, we made meaningful strides to support Truth and Reconciliation, publishing our commitment statement, and making our land acknowledgement statement public on every page of our website. We are committed to providing our services in

an equitable way so that we can help improve mental health outcomes for Indigenous peoples and their families.

We are grateful for the ongoing funding from the provincial government and BCSS donors. Without this support, families and individuals living with mental illness would not have access to critical supports provided by our educators.

The work we do is a challenge. It's a relentless uphill battle to secure funding for a persistent illness that many don't want to talk/hear about.

But that's not going to stop us. We will innovate, we will find new resources, and we maintain our mission to shape a more accessible mental illness support system for the people of British Columbia.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us in our efforts.



Jack Middleton
BCSS Board President

BCSS's Impact

2024-2025 By The Numbers

1,206
New Families Supported

110,444
Website Page Views

49,696
Website Visitors



261

Family Support Group Sessions

1,588

Family Support Group Participants

5,512

Total Families Supported



1,433

Podcast Followers

145,707

Episode Downloads

78%

Average Podcast Consumption Rate

2,530

Total One-on-One Support

62

Strengthening Families Together Participants



MORE THAN 10,700

followers on BCSS and BCSS Youth Social Media accounts

108

Youth Program Participants

55

Partner Education Presentations

12,974

TOTAL PROGRAM ATTENDEES

*One-on-One Support, Strengthening Families Together, Family Support Groups, Education Presentations, and BCSS Youth Program Sessions.



A LETTER FROM THE BCSS CEO

Looking Back

For more than forty years, BCSS has served families affected by severe mental illnesses. We are incredibly proud of our history supporting caregivers and increasing awareness. At the heart of our mission, we strive to build a fulfilling future for those with lived experience and their families.

Each year, we try to build on the work before: Improving the delivery of our programs, reaching new audiences, educating more people, and affecting positive change at a system level.

The BCSS Board and staff devoted much time and effort to develop a strategic plan focused on several organizational priorities, which speak to our commitment to ongoing improvement and the delivery of our programs and services.

Our teams have since applied this guidance to advance these objectives. We are currently focused on: 1) strengthening our voice and key messages, 2) diversifying funding sources and increasing revenue, 3) organizational excellence, and 4) advocacy & public policy.

With regard to metrics, BCSS is pleased to share that we reached 1,214 new families (113 more than the year prior) and helped 692 more families than the year before, including 108 youth participants (5,142 total). More than 2,000 received one-on-one support, and 262 Family Support Groups were held with nearly 1,600 attendees.

Further, our Strengthening Families Together programs saw a 43% increase in sessions and 38% increase in the number of families attending. Large-scale awareness events engaged approximately 650 attendees in northern communities, while the Coastal Region delivered 39 PEP sessions to more than 1,600 participants.

More information about our programs, research projects, fundraising, and communications efforts are detailed in the following pages.

Thinking Forward

In the year ahead, we will continue our advocacy work through a variety of channels and outreach activities. Season six of our podcast *Look Again: Mental Illness Re-Examined* will evolve into a video-based program, and we are planning to host more webinars

with guest speakers from across the continent.

BCSS is also expanding its reach via the new *Youth in Mind* newsletter and more community engagement efforts. Additionally, in 2025-26 we will be launching pilot programs for the *Strengthening Families Together - Indigenous* program.

We understand the challenge we have going forth. We must be more efficient with our resources and do more with less. The good news is that our partnerships with the BC Government, Ministry of Health, sponsors, and other community groups remain strong.

We are grateful to have an incredible team of dedicated educators, administrators, committee and board members who not only believe in our mission, vision, and values, but care deeply about a better future for families affected by schizophrenia and other severe and persistent mental illnesses.

Faydra Aldridge
BCSS Chief Executive Officer



A LETTER FROM THE BCSS Foundation Chair

As a separate, but interconnected entity affiliated with the British Columbia Schizophrenia Society, the Foundation (BCSSF) supports scientific research to advance the understanding of schizophrenia – its cause, effects, treatments and a much-hoped-for eventual cure. The Foundation also supports related public policy research on the health care journey of affected individuals and families in BC.

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the BCSS Foundation administered donor-directed funds for these purposes, supporting three on-going science projects and one new study. The Foundation also worked on further clarifying its distinctive role and on increasing future capabilities. This activity was undertaken within the framework of the Foundation and Society working together with transparency, collaboration and joint communication.

Financials

The Foundation ended the fiscal year with fund balances of approximately \$446,000. Transfers to the Society amounted to \$45,000 – an annual \$20,000 contribution for administration and a one-time \$25,000

disbursement of estate funds for services and programs.

BCSSF's total income was approximately \$96,000, of which the majority came from donations and an annual gift from the Diana Hsu Endowment Fund. Expenses were carefully managed. While the year ended with a deficit, it was primarily the result of the \$25,000 transfer mentioned above. The financial picture was otherwise quite balanced. *More details are available in the audited statement.*

Governance

In a strategic meeting in February, the Foundation evaluated how to better define its role and more purposefully manage funds in alignment with donors' wishes and the BCSS mission. That work continues with the drafting of BCSSF-specific mission and vision statements, and the strengthening of relationships with other research-funding organizations.

This year, the Foundation welcomed Dr. Fidel Vila-Rodriguez to the board, after his previous tenure on the Society board. His research and teaching activity at UBC provides valuable insights to our organization

and we are very grateful for his participation.

Matthew Langlois – another former BCSS board member – has been nominated to the Foundation board; his name is on the slate for ratification at the 2024-25 AGM.

The Challenge

One of the challenges in the field of schizophrenia and psychosis research in British Columbia is the relatively low number of individuals who choose this area of study.

Feedback to the Foundation from a number of scientists, including Dr. Bill Honer (currently the holder of the Jack Bell Chair in Schizophrenia Research at UBC), Dr. Fidel Vila-Rodriguez, Dr. Todd Woodward and Dr. Mahesh Menon, indicates that one of the most impactful ways to stimulate research in neurobiology specific to schizophrenia is to motivate young scientists to explore this field of study. Once embarked on this path, researchers tend to continue, sometimes over a full career.

As a result of this feedback, the Foundation is considering ways in which donor funds can be

Research Update

The BCSS Foundation allocates donor-directed funds for research through peer-reviewed competitions and partnerships with respected provincial organizations like Michael Smith Health Research BC.

This agency offers matching funding, in effect doubling the impact of our donor-designated funds for schizophrenia research.

HRBC also provides key administrative support, including the management of the competitive process and peer analysis to ensure that applicants adhere to high scientific standards in order to qualify for funding.

BCSSF supported four different projects in the last fiscal period. The financial commitment to fund these projects was approximately \$68,000 in the twelve

months which ended in March. That commitment will rise in the current fiscal year to a projected disbursement of about \$90,000.

Over the past year, we provided financial support for initiatives conducted by the following scientists:

Dr. Rafal Skiba, a research trainee, who spent three years working with Dr. Todd Woodward's team at the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute. His focus is on ways to counteract the "Jumping to Conclusion" bias in schizophrenia with a combination of neuromodulation and metacognitive training.

Dr. Ben Azu at the University of Victoria, whose studies explore dietary intervention on the gut microbiome and its connection to brain cells.

Dr. Ivan Torres, a clinical professor at the University of British Columbia who is studying neuro-physiological functioning in patients with treatment-resistant schizophrenia at the BC Psychosis Program. He presented preliminary findings to groups of psychologists and other specialists who provide clinical services directly to patients. In addition, Dr. Torres also participates in the Cognitive Remediation Therapy (CRT) Provincial Advisory Board.

Our new project is in support of **Dr. Allie Slemmon** of the University of Victoria. Her focus is on improving the treatment of young people with serious mental illness, specifically improving seclusion protocols for the Young Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit within Island Health. It is only one of two such facilities in Canada.

effectively invested for this purpose in the very near future.

All of us at the Foundation are deeply grateful to all the individual donors who allocate money for research.

We are also extremely grateful to the Diana Hsu Endowment Fund, managed by the Vancouver Foundation, which supports BCSSF with a donation each year.

In appreciation

As always, I would like to thank all of my fellow volunteers who make up the Foundation board: Joanne Leung, Sylvia LeRoy, Guelda Redman, Fidel Vila-Rodriguez, and Matthew Langlois.

I'd also like to acknowledge the fantastic support we receive from the entire staff at the BCSS Provincial office under the leadership of CEO Faydra

Aldridge, and Director of Development Marsha McMurchy.

A special message to our donors: without you, very little would be accomplished. Thank you for your kind support!

Renato Zane
BCSS Foundation Chair

Event Highlights

Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning Seminar

On April 17, 2024, BCSS held a virtual Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning Seminar to help families—particularly those supporting a loved one with mental illness—better prepare for the future. The event brought together attendees from across B.C. seeking practical, compassionate guidance on navigating complex estate matters.

Led by Ben Buckingham of Solus Trust and joined by BCSS Director of Development Marsha MacMurchy and guest speaker Grant Monck, the seminar covered vital topics on wills, trusts, and legacy giving, empowering attendees to make informed, compassionate choices for their family’s future.

Members Education Event: Cognitive Remediation Therapy

On September 19, 2024, BCSS hosted a virtual Members Education Event featuring Dr. Mahesh Menon, Clinical Lead for the BC Cognitive Remediation Training Advanced Practice and Clinical Associate Professor at UBC.

The session focused on Cognitive Remediation Therapy (CRT)—a promising intervention designed to improve cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and problem-solving to support better daily functioning.

The event offered participants evidence-based insights into how CRT can empower individuals living with schizophrenia and related mental health conditions.

This educational opportunity reflects BCSS’s ongoing commitment to sharing research, enhancing care, and strengthening the community through informed support. This event was recorded and can be viewed on the BCSS YouTube channel.

Duncan: Education Presentation

Our Educator in Cowichan met with four different groups of local RCMP Members, starting with a story about a successful client as an example of what BCSS programs do in the community.

She talked about the challenges in the community when working with families, as well as what was available in the community.

The presentation also incorporated RCMP Crisis Intervention De-Escalation Course Videos, which are excellent because the volunteers discuss what is best for them in their interaction

with the police. The experience was encouraging because these officers revealed a sincere desire to understand how to handle mental health and illness challenges.

In summary, this feedback shows the impact:

“Thank you so much for coming to see each watch! The feedback I have received has been very positive. I know the members learned a lot and we all appreciate your time to come see us so early!”

Daajing Giids: Wellness Wednesday Lunch and Sharing Circle

This initiative was born out of the recognition that there was a gap in the community. We needed a place where people could feel supported, to connect, and to share a meal.

We committed to creating an open and inclusive space. With support from local NGOs, Northern Health mental health staff, and seed money from a BCSS client, we served our first lunch. And we haven’t missed a week since.

We’ve since secured small grants and informal support from Northern Health, and continue to

rely heavily on volunteers—those who cook, clean, and care. Everyone who walks through our doors is treated with dignity and kindness.

Our guiding principles are simple but strong: kindness, consistency, quality food, and meaningful connection. We like to say, “We learn from those who sit beside us.”

We’ve welcomed visiting clinicians, community partners, and even a few politicians—many of which leave our sessions deeply moved by the humanity that evolves from this soft support.

Nanaimo: LEAP Presentation

Vancouver Island Educators Michelle Gallant and Christine Riddell delivered our first ever LEAP (Listen-Emphasize-Agree-Partner) in-person session on September 15 to seven interested caregivers in Nanaimo. The presentation was developed by Dr. Xavier Amador, PhD., author of I am Not Sick, I Don’t Need Help!

The session was well-received, and people had the chance to learn in detail about anosognosia, as well as practice the seven LEAP tools. While all attendees agreed that more time to practice would be welcome, the training met their expectations, and all would recommend others to attend.

Don’t miss out on future BCSS events!



Scan here to sign up for our email newsletters or visit www.bcss.org/events

2023–2024 Annual General Meeting and Education Session

The BC Schizophrenia Society hosted its 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Education Session on Saturday, October 26th at the Sandman Signature Vancouver Airport Hotel & Resort in Richmond, BC, and virtually via Zoom.

The day was a great success, and our Education Session, led by keynote speaker Bethany Yeiser, was a thought-provoking and inspiring event that brought together our community from across the province.

The morning portion of the AGM consisted of two board meetings for the BCSS Board of Directors and the BCSS Foundation Board of Directors. Both meetings were short and effective and helped align the boards for the coming year.



The afternoon session opened with remarks from CEO Faydra Aldridge and President Jack Middleton. Faydra shared key updates, including expanded programs, the launch of a new



podcast season (Look Again), and refreshed websites for BCSS and BCSS Youth.

She also reaffirmed BCSS’s focus on advocacy, awareness, and organizational excellence as outlined in the 2024–2025 Strategic Plan. Jack echoed these priorities and expressed gratitude to families, staff, and advisory boards for their continued support and advocacy.

After the business portion of the AGM, motivational speaker and CURESZ Foundation co-founder Bethany Yeiser led a powerful education session, sharing her journey from homelessness and psychosis to more than a decade of recovery. She also spoke candidly about her diagnosis, treatment, and the importance of family education, highlighting how programs like

BCSS’s *Strengthening Families Together* could have helped her early on.



Bethany Yeiser from CURESZ

The session concluded with an engaging Q&A, where attendees asked thoughtful questions on medication, support systems, and recovery insights.

Board of Directors:

- David Halikowski
- Dr. John Gray
- Joanne Leung
- Donna Motzer
- Don Monsour
- Lena Bortnick
- Susan Inman
- Jack Middleton
- Dr. Fidel Vila-Rodriguez
- Paul Bhushan
- Colleen Crossley
- Brenda Sawatzky-Girling
- Jasdeep Dhaliwal*
- Noni Nabors*
- Gerrit van der Leer*
- Jane Gladman*

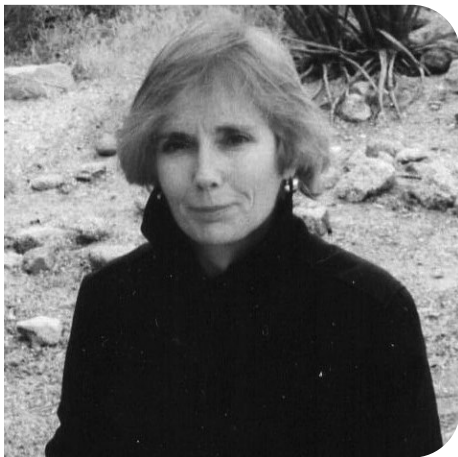
Foundation Board of Directors:

- Renato Zane
- Guelda Redman
- Joanne Leung
- Sylvia LeRoy
- Dr. Fidel Vila-Rodriguez*

*Joined part-way through the year.

Champion Award: Marilyn Donnelly

During the Annual General Meeting, Marilyn Donnelly was announced as the BCSS Champion Award recipient.



After two of her brothers were diagnosed with schizophrenia as young adults, Marilyn spent decades fighting for better services and resources for them and others with schizophrenia.

Marilyn later became a Registered Nurse and continued to advocate tirelessly for people with schizophrenia.

She passed away in 2022, and left a generous donation to the BC Schizophrenia Society in her will.

Her brother, Terry, accepted the award in her honour. He described his sister as a “force to be reckoned with” with “unshakeable determination and fearlessness” who advocated tirelessly on behalf of those with schizophrenia.



BCSS Board President Jack Middleton presented the BCSS Champion Award to the late Marilyn Donnelly’s Brother Terry Donnelly at the 2024–2025 AGM.

Beyond the Surface

National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Day

On Friday, May 24, 2024, BCSS hosted Beyond the Surface at the Rio Theatre in Vancouver as part of National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day.

This special event featured a moving screening of *Insanity: The Mental Health Crisis*, an autobiographical documentary by Wendy Hill-Tout that explores her family’s journey navigating her brother Bruce’s schizophrenia and his disappearance 25 years ago.

The film offered an intimate and powerful perspective on the far-reaching impact of serious mental illness, while highlighting the gaps in Canada’s mental health and justice systems that families continue to face today.

Following the screening, attendees engaged in a dynamic



and heartfelt panel discussion moderated by Kathryn Gretsinger (Associate Professor of Teaching at the UBC School of Journalism, Writing, and Media) and was joined by Shirley Chan (Board President, Pathways Serious Mental Illness Society), Dr. William Honer (Jack Bell Chair in Schizophrenia and Professor, UBC Department of Psychiatry), David Hill-Tout (brother of the filmmaker and family member

of a loved one with lived experience), and Jack Middleton (BCSS Board President).

This free, public event created space for honest dialogue, education, and reflection on the urgent need for change in Canada’s mental health and justice systems—amplifying the voices of families, professionals, and those with schizophrenia and serious mental illness.



Purple Power

As part of our National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day (NSPAD) campaign, prominent local landmarks across British Columbia were illuminated in purple—a powerful symbol of solidarity and hope. This initiative aimed to spark meaningful conversations, foster greater empathy, and raise awareness about serious mental health conditions. Through this collective act of visibility, the province reaffirmed its commitment to mental well-being and to building a more compassionate, inclusive society—one that embraces and supports individuals living with schizophrenia and related disorders.



Landmarks that lit up purple on May 24 included:

- Vancouver: City Hall, Convention Centre, Burrard St. Bridge, Science World, and Bloedel Conservatory
- New Westminster: City Hall
- Victoria: BC Legislature
- Surrey: Civic Plaza
- Trail: Victoria Street Bridge
- White Rock: Pier
- Kelowna: General Hospital
- Duncan: World’s Largest Hockey Stick



#StandAgainstStigma Campaign

To mark National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day, BCSS launched the #StandAgainstStigma campaign—an educational initiative aimed at dismantling harmful stereotypes and encouraging open, compassionate conversations about schizophrenia.

The campaign challenged the stigma that continues to impact people everywhere. Through media outreach and partnerships with leading mental

health influencers like Dr. Justin Puder (@amoderntherapist - pictured at left) and Michelle Hammer (@schizophrenic.nyc), the campaign achieved 75 media hits, 4.2 million media reach, and 1.5 million+ social media reach.

This helped ignite public dialogue, shift perceptions, and promote greater understanding of schizophrenia and serious mental illness in communities province-wide.

Youth Programs

With funding from the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, we offered three comprehensive programs this past fiscal year: *Kids in Control* (KIC), *Tweens in Control* (TwIC) and *Teens in Control* (TIC).

“My favourite part of the program was the interaction with other kids my age who are going through some of the same things that I am.”

All three programs foster resilience and increase knowledge and understanding of mental illness and addiction by providing support and education to youth who have a loved one with a mental illness and/or addiction.

Our team facilitated seven KIC, four TwIC and three TIC sessions, plus monthly online drop-ins for all three programs. We recorded 72 attendees for all

regular programming and 20 attendees for the monthly drop-ins.

We were also successful in partnering with other youth organizations this year to bring our programming to a wider and more diverse audience.

We co-facilitated two KIC programs with CYMH in Agassiz and two TIC programs at Foundry Richmond and

Foundry Langley.

Outside facilitation of two KIC programs were also hosted through MCFD at Stit’ó:s Lá:lém Totí:lt Elementary/Middle School and Ch’íyáqtel (Tzeachten) First Nation in Chilliwack with thirteen youth in total.

Our most successful youth program facilitator is a private counselor in Fort. St John. They ran a Kids in Control group this year with twelve children in attendance and a Teens in Control group with six participants.

In addition to running our online programming to reach more people, BCSSYouth aims to keep growing our in-person offerings by utilizing other youth-oriented agencies.

Primary areas of focus for BCSSYouth in the coming year will be to continue reconciliation efforts and expanding our BCSSYouth offerings to more Indigenous-serving organizations.



We aim to integrate family programming where parents attend similar adult/parent sessions at similar times as youth programming, so that mental health learnings and practices can be integrated and implemented on a family level.

The impact of BCSSYouth programming is evident when our participants report a better understanding of mental illness and mental health. Youth are able to recognize stress responses in themselves and use the mental health strategies we teach them even when they can’t control their outside environment.

One of our goals is to give youth the tools to help themselves and others in the early recognition and intervention of mental illness and/or addiction.

“Thank you so much for what you do. This group helped her hold on a little bit while she’s been waiting for individual counseling....

She was excited every Tuesday. It gave her something to look forward to, which was huge!

She’s been depressed and lonely and the group gave her an outlet. I seriously can’t thank you enough!”



bcssyouth

Partnerships & Collaborations:

- Foundry
- Hulitan Family & Community Services Society
- CMHA
- South Okanagan Similkameen Mental Wellness Society
- Healthy Minds | Healthy Campuses
- Langley Community Services Society
- MCFD/CYMH
- Chilliwack Youth Health Centre
- University of Victoria/Canadian Institute of Substance Use Research
- Cowichan Valley School District
- Greater Victoria School District
- Fraser Cascade School District
- Volunteer Victoria
- Island Health
- Youth Service Provider’s Network
- Intersect Youth & Family Services Society
- Sq’éwqel (Seabird Island Band)
- YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island
- Big Brothers Big Sisters BC
- FamilySmart
- Esquimalt Neighbourhood House

THE MANTRA

Our support groups also provide comradery among youth who find themselves in similar situations in their lives.

The most important learnings for our youth that are repeated and emphasized throughout our programming are **The Three C’s**:

I CAN’T CAUSE IT

I CAN’T CHANGE IT

I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF

New Communication Tools

In January 2025, BCSS *Youth In Mind* newsletter was launched to support young people who have a loved one living with a mental illness and/or substance use challenge.

This bimonthly newsletter aims to keep program graduates engaged in self-care, offer accessible resources, and serve as an early intervention tool. This also strengthens outreach efforts by inviting families, caregivers, and community members to share resources with youth in their lives.

In addition to launching our newsletter, BCSSYouth also edited and released new copies of our four *Understanding Mental Health* booklets for youth - Depression, Bipolar, Schizophrenia and Mental Illness - with consultation from the semester 2 psychology 12 class at Chilliwack Secondary School.



YOUTH IN MIND
Supporting Kids' Mental Wellness

Future Goals:

- Continue to offer programs to youth across the province virtually, continue to grow in-person options throughout the province with partners and offer hybrid programming.
- Continue to engage and educate similar organizations about BCSSYouth programs.
- Continue to engage with youth through social media and our enhanced youth website.
- Make more educational videos.
- Cultivate our relationships with Indigenous-serving youth organizations.
- Modify the curriculum for each program to incorporate more Indigenous content and cannabis consumption warnings (harm reduction).
- Continue to engage with schools and other community organizations to inform them about BCSSYouth programs and resources.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Ministry of Health, and working to increase programs and services for children, youth and emerging adults throughout BC.

“I can't thank you both enough for your support and encouragement. I honestly didn't believe it was possible to have this great an outcome. It will be a long road ahead and obviously there is no cure, but at last our daughter is receiving the treatment she needed. This would never have been possible without your help.”



Holiday Fundraising Appeal: Monica Tancon’s Story

In November 2024, BCSS launched its annual holiday appeal to raise funds for families and individuals affected by schizophrenia and other severe mental illnesses.

Michael Smith Health Research BC for investigations that lead to better care, better treatments, and discoveries that may one day lead to a cure.



This fundraising appeal enables us to continue our essential work on the frontlines by allowing us to:

- Provide crucial assistance to families in need.
- Deliver vital programs and services to support families and youth.
- Drive education initiatives to challenge stigma and ensure families receive the best care.
- Fund schizophrenia research awards through

At the heart of the 2024 Holiday Appeal was the moving story of Monica, a bright and compassionate nursing graduate who tragically lost her battle with schizophrenia.

Her parents, Bev and Rico Tancon, discovered BCSS in 2023 and have since courageously shared their journey of love, loss, and resilience—honouring Monica’s memory and raising awareness so that other families don’t have to face similar struggles alone.

For the ninth consecutive year, longtime supporter and former

BCSSF board director Chris Sandy generously matched donations up to \$10,000 — doubling the impact of every gift. His continued generosity reflects the spirit that drives BCSS’s mission forward.

Thanks to the generosity of our community and the strength of the Tancons’ story, the 2024 Holiday Appeal raised \$116,647—far exceeding expectations and setting a new record for BCSS fundraising efforts.

Get involved!

If you’d like to help BCSS make a greater impact, with a donation or fundraising idea, please email donorservices@bcss.org. There are many other ways that you can help: become a member, reshare our social posts, and/or volunteer your time. Email engagement@bcss.org to say how you can help, or scan the code to the right to complete the story sharing form.



Donor Appreciation Event

On November 26, 2024, BCSS hosted its annual Donor Appreciation Event at the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Richmond, celebrating the generosity of donors who help make our work possible. Held in a hybrid format, the event reflected on the year’s achievements and the profound impact of donor contributions.

BCSS CEO Faydra Aldridge and BCSS President Jack Middleton shared key updates, including how donor support enabled us to reach over 1,150 new families and further our Strategic Plan goals—especially in rural and underserved communities.



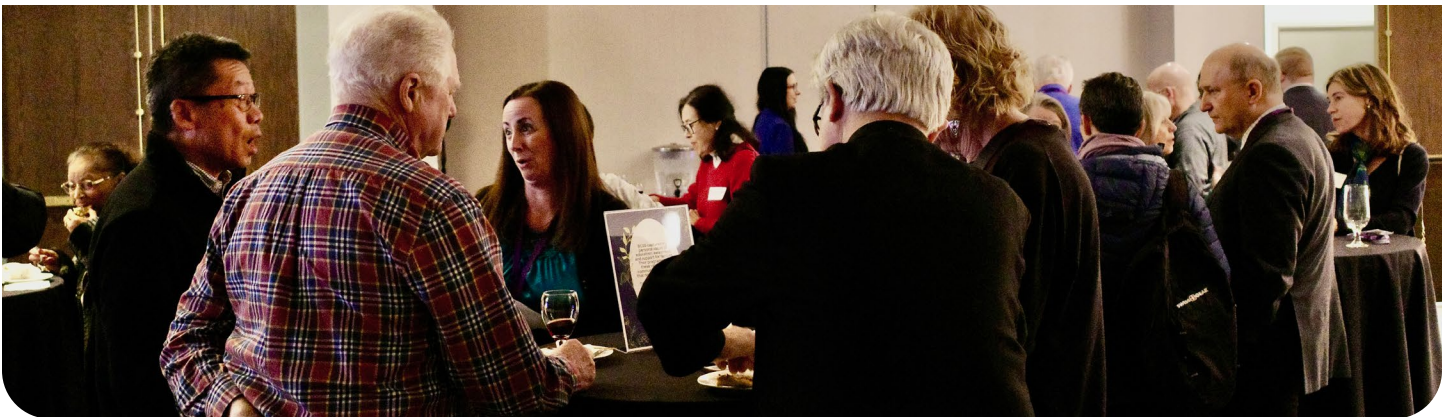
BCSSF Board Chair Renato Zane spotlighted the Foundation’s research initiatives, including a Reach Program grant awarded to Dr. Allie Slemon in partnership with Michael Smith Research BC.

He also highlighted projects by Drs. Skiba, Ben-Azu, and Torres, while encouraging attendees to consider volunteering or serving on the Foundation board.



The emotional heart of the evening came from the Tancon family, who bravely shared the story of their late daughter Monica. Introduced by Director of Development Marsha MacMurchy and supported by Regional Educator Michelle Gallant, their tribute moved the room and reinforced the importance of BCSS’s family support programs. Their powerful words brought the room to tears.

Regional Educator Hardeep Thind closed the event with an inspiring update, noting her team delivered nineteen community presentations in just six weeks, a powerful testament to our growing impact across the province.



Thank you for your support!

Without it, this wouldn't be possible.

We are deeply grateful to all the funders, donors, supporters, and partners who share our commitment to supporting families affected by schizophrenia and other serious mental illnesses in British Columbia.


Through your generosity, BCSS continues to provide vital education, advocacy, and research — offering thousands of families across the province a reason to hope and a means to cope.

A Special Thank You to Chris Sandy!

Chris Sandy has been a dedicated supporter of the BC Schizophrenia Society and Foundation for many years.

Moved by his personal journey alongside his beloved brother, Dave, who lived with schizophrenia, Chris has generously shared his story to help raise awareness and reduce stigma.

Inspired by this experience, Chris once again pledged to match donations—up to \$10,000—for our annual holiday fundraising appeal.



This marks the ninth consecutive year he has made this incredible commitment, and we are deeply grateful.

Chris, your unwavering generosity and advocacy make you a true ambassador for families across BC.

Thank you for standing with us!

BC Partners Member Agencies







Funders & Sponsors







Event Sponsors





Media Sponsor



Financial Snapshot

Approximately **83%** of all 2024/25 expenditures went directly towards programs and services.

Revenue	2025	2024
Program Funding	\$2,695,521	\$2,317,232
Donations	\$241,443	\$134,533
Sponsorship	\$60,788	\$61,290
Investment Income (Loss)	\$181,557	\$246,284
BCSS Foundation	\$45,000	\$20,000
Other	\$650	\$0
Total	\$3,224,959	\$2,779,339

Expenses	2025	2024
Wages, Contractors, and Benefits	\$2,325,711	\$1,960,924
Travel, Conferences, and Meetings	\$124,943	\$135,474
Office and Other	\$120,277	\$120,712
Program Expenses	\$171,358	\$127,646
Rent and Utilities	\$54,028	\$58,250
Telecommunications	\$55,784	\$60,677
Fundraising and Promotion	\$34,652	\$37,162
Professional Fees	\$93,589	\$67,279
Scholarships	\$22,200	\$24,000
Amortization of Capital Assets	\$11,627	\$15,212
Total	\$3,014,169	\$2,607,336
Excess of Revenue	\$210,790	\$172,003

Statement of Operations for the year ending March 31, 2025.

Communications

Like other departments at BCSS, the Communications and Marketing team is constantly looking for ways to iterate and evolve. Our department's top priority is in "Strengthening our Voice" (key messages).

Strategically, we're striving to better understand who our audience is and to meet them where they are, with relevant, high quality information. While there are endless forms that these efforts can take, we are increasingly concentrated on digital/online methods which are more cost effective and measureable. As a provincially focused organization it can be difficult to physically reach people in every corner of British Columbia, but

via the Internet we are equipped to spread our knowledge.

This work include creating and disseminating our key messages to increase understanding about the stigma and challenges that people experiencing severe mental illnesses face, as well as growing public awareness of BCSS's programs that support families and caregivers.

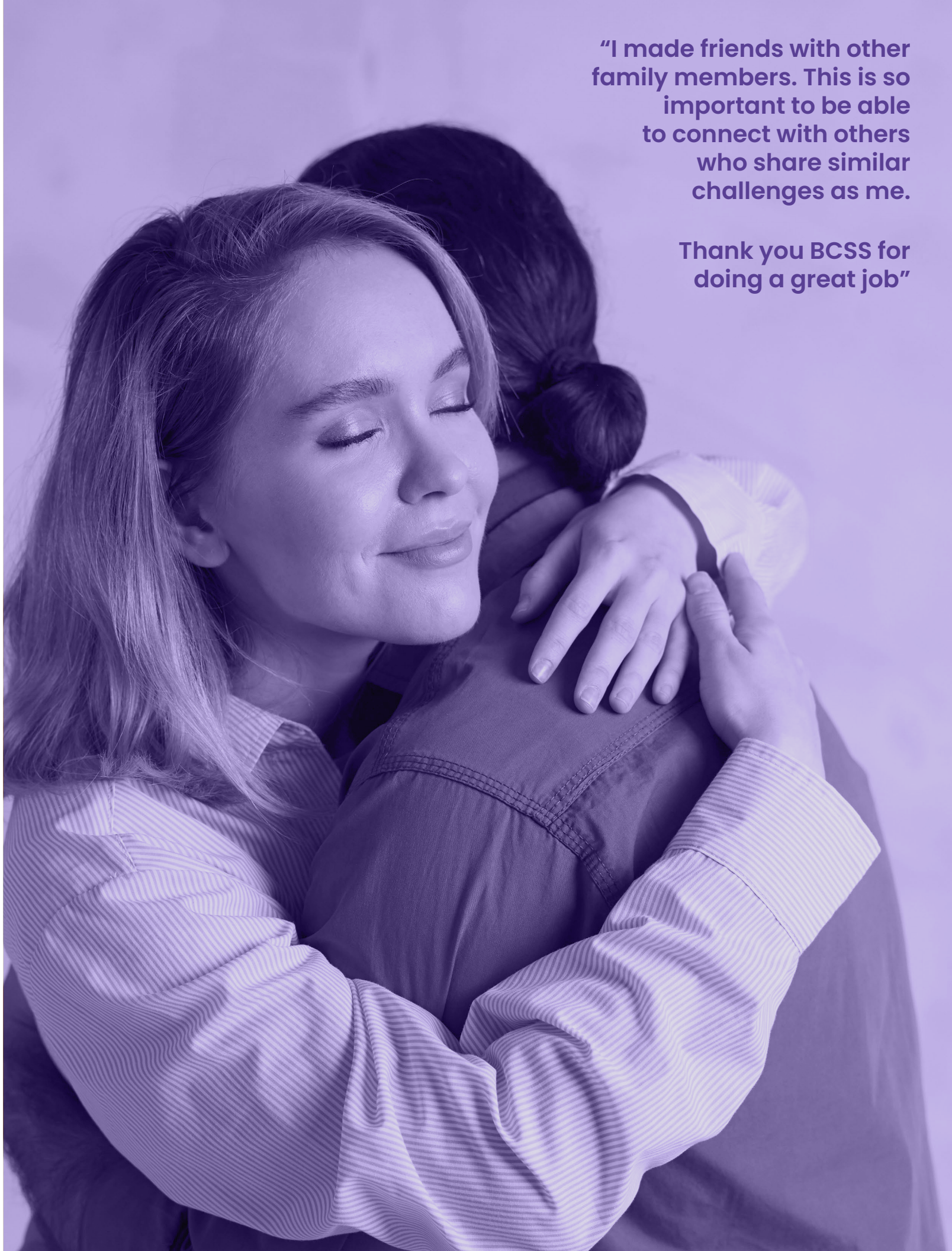
We do this by organizing events, webinars, engagement opportunities, and by sharing stories and educational content through our channels. Our team also handles copywriting, graphic design, and supports the regional education and development departments.

Over the past year, we have streamlined our email blasts to better deliver news to our subscribers and increased website traffic. Our tactics also involve regularly reviewing social media metrics and website traffic to ensure that we are doing more of the things that are working. We are now making adjustments to our content to improve relatability, discoverability, consumption and engagement. This will be achieved by expanding the work we're already doing with our audio podcast into video formats. *Read more on our podcast below.*

We appreciate all the ways that people support BCSS, but one of the easiest ways that you can help us is to spread the word by re-sharing our posts on whatever your preferred medium happens to be. Thanks for "liking and subscribing"!

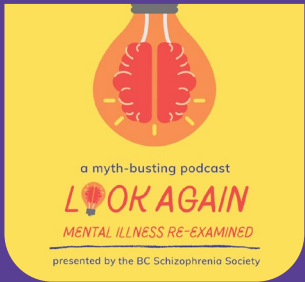
"I made friends with other family members. This is so important to be able to connect with others who share similar challenges as me.

Thank you BCSS for doing a great job"



Season 5 of Look Again: Mental Illness Re-Examined

Continuing our mission to make mental illness education accessible and engaging, BCSS launched Season 5 of its award-winning podcast Look Again: Mental Illness Re-Examined on October 23, 2024 on all major platforms including Spotify and Apple.



seven-episode season featured expert insights and powerful stories from individuals with lived experience, aiming to challenge stigma and broaden public understanding.

With guests such as author Susan Grundy, Doctors Amedeo Minichino, André McDonald, and YouTube sensation Stephen Lathop, the podcast continues to be a vital tool for education and awareness.

This season explored the link between cannabis and psychosis, mental illness and gut health, treatment-resistant schizophrenia, childhood-onset schizophrenia, and many other topics. Hosted by BCSS CEO Faydra Aldridge, the bi-weekly,

Listen to our latest episode at bcss.org/lookagain



Providing a reason to **hope**
and the means to **cope**
since 1982.



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