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**Greater  
than  
anything**



# LOVE NOVA SCOTIA

## CASE FOR SUPPORT

March 2021

# FIRST OF ALL, **THANK YOU**



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## FOR CONSIDERING US!

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Dear friends and supporters of LOVE,

After contributing to LOVE Nova Scotia as their Registered Social Worker and Deputy Director for the past 20 years, it was my honour to take over as Executive Director in 2020. Our former Executive Director, Sarah MacLaren, left me with big shoes to fill, but I am excited to use my experience in the field to inform LOVE's current period of growth.

One of the things about LOVE that makes me feel proudest is our inclusivity, which is reflected in both the youth we serve and our staff team. LOVE supports youth with incredibly diverse backgrounds and challenges, including Black youth, Indigenous youth, LGBTQIA2S+ youth, and youth who are marginalized by the effects of racism, poverty, violence, mental health issues, and other forms of oppression. We are proud of the fact that youth who often struggle to find a place within other services and institutions find a place at LOVE.

At the heart of LOVE's success is our individualized approach. This means that we are available to our youth not only during program time, but 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We recognize that one size does not fit all, and that crises don't always happen between 9 and 5.

One of my goals as Executive Director is to continue to explore ways to amplify youth voice. For example, our new Conversation for Change initiative was envisioned by youth in LOVE's Leadership Program and is designed to give youth a platform to interview community leaders about social issues. I believe that the way to change the world is through conversation and real, honest questions.

I am grateful to everyone who chooses to support LOVE and sees as much potential in our youth as we do.

Sincerely,

**Dennis Adams, RSW**  
Executive Director

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WE BUILD

# RESILIENT YOUTH

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LOVE Nova Scotia supports youth to thrive through programs and healthy relationships that give them the emotional intelligence to overcome the challenges they face. Our participants emerge with greater resilience, skills, and confidence as leaders. The foundation of LOVE's model is to respond and adapt to the needs of the youth we serve, and the communities they live in. This is at the core of every service we provide.

We are doing this work at a time when the need for our support is greater than ever. Specifically, we work directly with youth at risk: 2SLGBTQIA youth, Indigenous and First Nations youth, Black youth, and youth who have just set foot in this country. Our youth are facing the effects of trauma, poverty and oppression that are often three generations deep. Our programs work to reverse these damages.

# **WE'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR YOUTH**

**... AND GIVING THEM THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS  
THEY NEED TO SUCCEED**

When it comes to the positive impacts on healthy relationships for youth, the research is conclusive.

1. STATISTICALLY, KIDS WHO HAVE HIGHER QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR PEERS HAVE BETTER OVERALL HEALTH.
2. HEALTHY EATING INCREASES AS THE QUALITY OF YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS INCREASE.
3. AS RELATIONSHIP QUALITY WITH SCHOOL INCREASE, FIGHTING DECREASES.
4. HIGH QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS ALSO LEAD TO A NEARLY 20% REDUCTION IN CANNABIS USE, MORE THAN 15% REDUCTION IN ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION, AND OVER A 10% REDUCTION IN SMOKING AND HARD DRUG USE.
5. KIDS WITH HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS SEE A 20% DECREASE IN VICTIMIZATION RESPECTIVELY.

## **SO THAT'S WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY, BUT WHAT DO LOVE YOUTH THINK?**

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## WHEN SURVEYED, OUR YOUTH REMINDED US THAT WHAT WE'VE DEVELOPED IS GREATER THAN A PROGRAM

- 100% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to a supportive group of people.
- 67% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they are doing better in school
- 83% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that because of LOVE, they are better able to cope when things go wrong.
- 90% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that LOVE provides the services they need.
- 93% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they can get services at LOVE when they need them.
- 80% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more confident in themselves.
- 70% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they have the skills to solve difficult problems
- 83% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they believe they can handle unexpected situations.
- 73% of youth agreed or strongly agreed that they are working to change their community for the better.
- 100% of youth indicated that LOVE brought positive change to their lives.

Source: DYSC Lab Evaluation Survey, 2019

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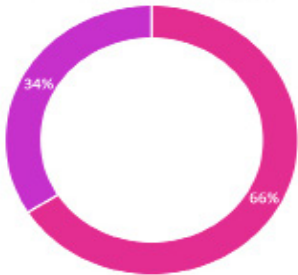
# OUR YOUTH TRUST US BECAUSE WE'RE ALWAYS THERE.

And with your support, we know we can do more.

Part of building a healthy relationship is gaining trust.

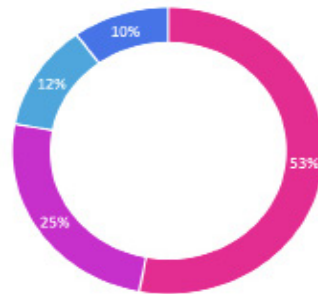
One way we do this is by providing 24/7 counselling support.

Have you ever contacted LOVE outside of program hours?



■ Yes ■ No

If yes, how often in a year?



■ 1-10 Times

■ 11-20 Times

■ 21-30 Times

■ More than 30 times



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IN THE PAST DECADE, IT HAS BECOME COMMON PRACTICE FOR SCHOOLS TO OFFER ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS, BUT THERE IS STILL NOT THE SAME WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP PROGRAMS.

BESIDES THE RESEARCH ON HOW IT DRASTICALLY IMPROVES THE LIVES OF YOUTH, THE TIMING IS RIGHT TO REACH THEM. RESEARCH INTO INTERVENTION PROGRAMS THAT TARGET ADULTS WHO ABUSE THEIR PARTNERS SHOWS THIS BEHAVIOUR IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CHANGE. PREVENTION IS KEY.

RESEARCH ALSO SHOWS THAT TEENS' ATTITUDES PREDICT THEIR FUTURE BEHAVIOUR. ONE STUDY OF MALE TEENS SHOWED THAT GROUPS WHO USED "HOSTILE AND DISRESPECTFUL" LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT GIRLS WERE MORE LIKELY TO USE AGGRESSION AGAINST THEIR DATING PARTNERS SEVERAL YEARS LATER.

WITHOUT INTERVENTION, ABUSIVE TEENS WILL VERY LIKELY CONTINUE THEIR BEHAVIOUR INTO ADULTHOOD, AND OFTEN ESCALATE. DATING VIOLENCE AS YOUTH IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST PREDICTORS OF VIOLENCE IN ADULT RELATIONSHIPS.

THANKFULLY, THE TEEN YEARS ARE AN IDEAL TIME TO LEARN ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HIGHLY INTERESTED IN RELATIONSHIPS, BOTH FRIENDSHIPS AND ROMANTIC PARTNERS, AND ARE EAGER TO TALK ABOUT THEM.

SOURCES: SOURCEBOOK ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, SECOND EDITION, CLAIRE M. RENZETTI, JEFFREY L. EDLESON, RAQUEL KENNEDY BERGEN, SAGE PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2010, P. 335.

BATTERER INTERVENTION SYSTEMS: ISSUES, OUTCOMES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS, E. W. GONDOLF. THOUSAND OAKS: SAGE PUBLICATIONS, 2002.

AGGRESSION TOWARD FEMALE PARTNERS BY AT-RISK YOUNG MEN: THE CONTRIBUTION OF MALE ADOLESCENT FRIENDSHIPS," D.M CAPALDI ET AL, DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY, VOL. 37, 2001, PP. 61-73.

"A SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM TO PREVENT ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE," DAVID A. WOLFE ET AL, ARCHIVES OF PEDIATRICS & ADOLESCENT MEDICINE, VOL. 163, AUGUST 2009, P. 692.

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THE ASPEN INSTITUTE LED NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, & ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS SPENT DECADES INVESTIGATING THE NEEDS OF YOUTH. WHAT THEY FOUND IS SIMPLE BUT PROFOUND: CHILDREN LEARN BEST WHEN WE TREAT THEM AS HUMAN BEINGS WITH SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL, AS WELL AS ACADEMIC NEEDS.

ACCORDING TO THEIR RESEARCH, WHEN KIDS LEARN HOW TO REALLY BE VULNERABLE AND GET REWARDED WITH CONNECTION, THAT IS A RECIPE FOR BUILDING COURAGE, THE SUPER HABIT FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH - THEY REFER TO THIS AS THE JOYFUL STRUGGLE.

YOUTH ARE ALSO OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND NEW LEARNING. SINCE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP PROGRAMS CHALLENGE POWERFUL STEREOTYPES ABOUT BOYS AND GIRLS, IT'S BEST TO DO THIS WORK AS EARLY IN LIFE AS POSSIBLE, BEFORE THESE IDEAS BECOME TOO DEEPLY INGRAINED TO BE UNLEARNED.

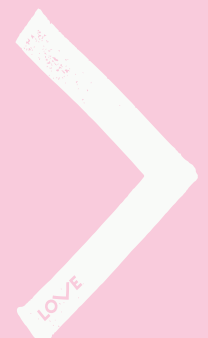
THIS "WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY" IS ALSO A GOOD DEVELOPMENTAL FIT, SINCE PEOPLE AT THIS AGE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF "LEARNING AUTONOMY AND CONTROL, AND SHIFTING (THEIR) EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY FROM PARENTS TO PEERS." THIS IS WHERE LOVE COMES IN.

SOURCES: THE ASPEN INSTITUTE - NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT, "FROM A NATION AT RISK TO A NATION AT HOPE, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, & ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT" [HTTP://NATIONATHOPE.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2018\\_ASPEN\\_FINAL-REPORT\\_FULL\\_WEBVERSION.PDF](http://NATIONATHOPE.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2018_ASPEN_FINAL-REPORT_FULL_WEBVERSION.PDF)

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2009, P. 5.

SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS: A RESOURCE MANUAL, P. 171.

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OUR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS ARE BASED  
ON 4 PRINCIPLES:

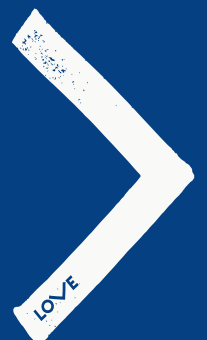
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**Real** - Accepting each person as they are, creating an environment of honesty and respect.

**Open** - Inclusive and non-judgmental.

**Adaptable** - Responsive to the realities of our youth and communities.

**Reliable** - Trusted to do what we say we are going to do.



## **WHY DOES NOVA SCOTIA NEED LOVE?**

**WHEN LOVE BEGAN OPERATING IN NOVA SCOTIA IN JANUARY 2000, THERE WERE 15 YOUTH ENROLLED IN ONE PROGRAM. SINCE THEN, WE HAVE EXPANDED OUR OFFERING OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO REACH MORE THAN 200 YOUTH EACH YEAR. IN 2018/2019, WE HAD MORE THAN 240 YOUTH ENROLLED IN OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. TODAY WE SERVE YOUTH IN HALIFAX, MEMBERTOU AND SIPEKNE'KATIK.**

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## LOVE PROVIDES CLOSE TO 1200 HOURS OF ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT OUTSIDE OF REGULAR PROGRAMMING.



7,800 CONTACTS BY PHONE, TEXT, AND MESSAGING



MORE THAN 120 CONTACTS BY YOUTH WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY ACTIVE WITHIN OUR CORE PROGRAMS, BUT WHO RELY ON OUR STAFF FOR SUPPORT WITH ISSUES SUCH AS HOUSING, JOB REFERENCES, PARENTING SUPPORT, MENTAL HEALTH CRISES, AND CAREER AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING



11 YOUTH-DRIVEN PROGRAMS ACROSS NOVA SCOTIA, INCLUDING MAP AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS, IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS IN THE MI'KMAQ COMMUNITIES OF SIPEKNE'KATIK AND MEMBERTOU



400 HOURS OF PROGRAMMING TO YOUTH



2,880 MEALS TO YOUTH EVERY YEAR



3,000 BUS TICKETS TO YOUTH EVERY YEAR



# WE'RE POSITIONED TO SUCCEED, BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN DOING IT FOR 20 YEARS.

At the heart of LOVE's success, we believe, is the level of depth and individualized support we provide our youth, particularly those using our one-on-one and crisis support services:

- One-on-one support services are offered outside of program hours for employment support, academic support or any other type of support our youth call on us for
- 24/7 crisis support services responds to youth in danger of making a life altering decision or have suffered a traumatic event

In the past year, we have used an app to track our interactions with our youth. We've gained some interesting insights from the data:

- 1/3 of our calls are from Non-Active youth members
- Decision making, education, and mental health are the three most common topics our youth need support on
- Over 25% of our calls come from Membertou or Sipekne'Katik
- Almost 30% of our calls come from youth between the ages of 12-16
- More than 85% of our calls come directly from the youth themselves

We are committed to offering high quality programs and services. We continuously adapt our offerings in response to the changing needs of our youth and their feedback. We also have a formal independent evaluation of our programs and services performed every 3 to 4 years to help ensure our programs and services continue to be relevant and effective for the youth we serve.



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# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LOVE WINS?

DESPITE FUNDING CONSTRAINTS, LOVE HAS BEEN ABLE TO GROW ITS OPERATIONS SINCE 2000 WITH GROWTH GENERALLY OCCURRING AS A RESULT OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING GROWTH INITIATIVES:

1. SERVICE EXPANSION – A NEW SERVICE OR PROGRAM IS DEVELOPED FOR A GROUP OF YOUTH LOVE IS ALREADY SERVING BASED ON A DEMONSTRATED NEED.
2. PROGRAM EXPANSION – AN EXISTING PROGRAM IS OFFERED TO A NEW SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY.
3. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT – A NEW PROGRAM IS DEVELOPED IN RESPONSE TO A NEED AND/OR OPPORTUNITY WHERE LOVE’S KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS POSITION IT TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN ADDRESSING OR SOLVING AN ISSUE FOR NS YOUTH.
4. OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS – IMPROVEMENTS TO LOVE’S EXISTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (INCLUDING BASED ON FEEDBACK FROM YOUTH OR AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION) OR TO STRENGTHEN ITS INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE ONGOING DELIVERY OF QUALITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO YOUTH.

OUR NEW 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN IS INTENDED TO DRIVE THE ORGANIZATION FORWARD THROUGH A VISION TO “DOUBLE OUR PROGRAM AND SERVICE OFFERINGS BY 2024”. THE PLAN FOCUSES ON INCREASING THE ORGANIZATION’S CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN ITS CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND CONTINUE GROWING IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER.

WE ARE DRIVEN TO SUCCEED, BECAUSE WE KNOW THE HUMAN COSTS ALL TOO WELL IF WE DON’T.

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# WHAT'S AT RISK IF WE FAIL?

WHEN ASKED WHERE OUR YOUTH WOULD BE WITHOUT LOVE, IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO HEAR OUR YOUTH RESPOND:

**“DEAD OR IN JAIL.”**

ONE OF LOVE'S STRENGTHS IS THAT OUR FUNDING COMES FROM A VARIETY OF DONORS. THERE IS NO PART OF OUR OPERATION THAT IS SOLELY DEPENDENT ON ONE FUNDER. THIS HAS GIVEN US GREAT FREEDOM TO RUN OUR PROGRAMS IN A MANNER THAT HAS PROVEN EFFECTIVE. MANY OF OUR FUNDERS ARE LONG-TERM PARTNERS BUT VERY FEW OF THEM PROVIDE FUNDING THAT SPANS MORE THAN ONE YEAR. THERE ARE ALWAYS SEVERAL UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS IN THE COURSE OF A YEAR AND SOMETIMES FROM FUNDERS WHOM WE EXPECTED TO BE SUCCESSFUL WITH. IN ORDER TO MITIGATE THIS RISK WE HAVE TO CONTINUOUSLY BE SEEKING NEW SOURCES OF FUNDING. AND, IF WE WANT TO GROW, WE WILL NEED TO FIND NEW SOURCES OF FUNDING TO SUPPORT OUR NEW VENTURES.

THIS IS WHY WE NEED YOU NOW. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT WE ARE AVAILABLE FOR THE YOUTH IN OUR PROVINCE, BECAUSE NOT BEING THERE CREATES COSTS THAT WE ALL END UP PAYING.

