

Looking | Glass

FOUNDATION FOR EATING DISORDERS

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



Looking Glass Foundation
envisioning a province where
everyone who suffers
from an eating disorder
receives the services they need
to support their recovery,
and where the stigma of this
mental illness is replaced with
compassion and understanding

A Message

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

We are honored to share our 2024 Annual Report, reflecting on a year of growth, progress, and unwavering commitment to supporting individuals impacted by eating disorders. This past year, **we expanded our reach and deepened our impact**, ensuring that more people receive the care and connection they deserve. Eating disorders thrive in isolation, but with timely, accessible support, recovery is not only possible—it is transformative!

Guided by our Strategic Plan, we made significant strides in broadening access to care. We strengthened specialized support for people from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, expanded public presentations to foster education and awareness, and introduced new therapeutic groups to create meaningful connection and wraparound clinical support. At Looking Glass, we know that waitlists can be life-threatening, which is why we remain committed to providing immediate, low-barrier and tangible support—**because no one should be left waiting for lifesaving care.**

Our commitment to this work is deeply personal. Many of our staff, volunteers, and board members have walked this journey themselves—either personally or as caregivers. **Their lived experience fuels our dedication to building a continuum of care that meets individuals where they are, for as long as they need.**

As we celebrate this year's achievements, we look ahead with determination. There is still much work to be done, and we cannot do it alone. The generosity of our donors, volunteers, and community partners makes this work possible. Together, we are creating a future where compassionate, specialized, and timely care is available to all who need it.

With gratitude,

Lisa Brooks, Executive Director
Denise Karkkainen, Board Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Brooks'.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denise Karkkainen'.

2024

Highlights & Initiatives



6
scholarships
awarded

3,442
bridge the gap affordable
counselling hours

1,088
people supported
across all programs

86
people in
therapeutic
groups

931
people reached
through 31
presentations

345
volunteers

290
hours of art, tutoring &
yoga for residents

240
people received
resources & referrals

503
peer support
program participants

Who We Are

For over two decades, Looking Glass Foundation has been working to create a province where everyone who is struggling with an eating disorder has access to the services they need to support their recovery. Together, we have walked alongside thousands on their courageous recovery journeys and built innovative, specialized and low-barrier programs when no others of the kind existed—but there is still much left to be done.

Right this minute, thousands of people in BC are struggling to find help for an eating disorder—life threatening mental health conditions that threaten every aspect of life.

Without help, eating disorders carry severe consequences for everything from physical health to cognitive functioning to everyday tasks. Tragically, they are also deadly: someone with an eating disorder is five times more likely to die by suicide. Yet support is scarce. Less than 50% of people with eating disorders receive the treatment they need.

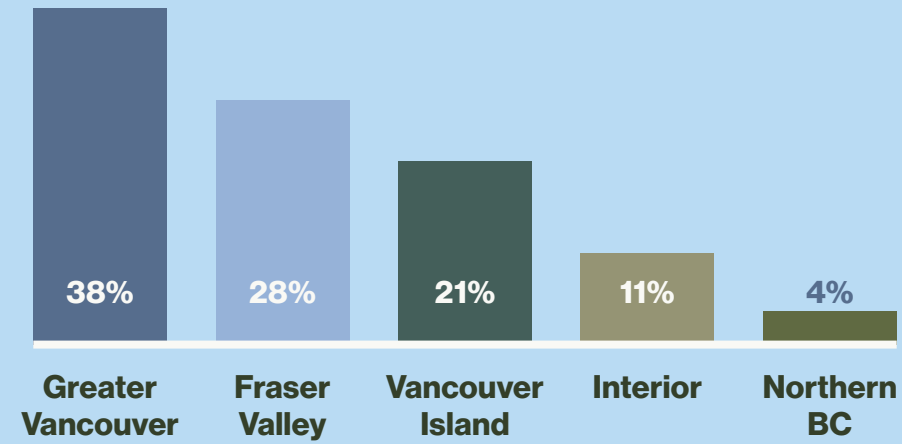
We help people move away from the suffocating grip of an eating disorder to the life-changing freedom of recovery. We know that with the right support, recovery isn't just possible—it's transformative. It's about returning to your true self, rediscovering your dreams, and renewing your embrace of life. It's about getting your life back.



1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men
will experience an eating
disorder by age 40

Source: pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31596495/

Who We Serve



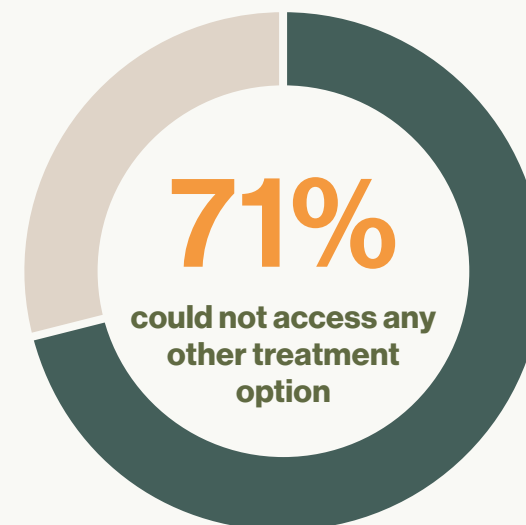
THE NEED FOR INCLUSIVE & AFFIRMING CARE

Recovery is deeply personal, shaped by life circumstances, identity and the support available. **2SLGBTQIA+ and Indigenous individuals experience disproportionately high rates of eating disorders**, yet many face additional barriers to care and a lack of affirming, identity-informed resources. This can lead to delayed treatment, misdiagnosis, or care that fails to address the full complexity of their experience. **We recognize the urgent need for safe, inclusive spaces where people feel seen, valued and supported.** As we work to strengthen our commitment to these communities, we remain focused on ensuring that care is accessible, affirming, and honours each person's identity, culture, and recovery journey.



BARRIERS TO CARE

81% of people who access Looking Glass programs have faced significant barriers to care when seeking treatment elsewhere, with **high cost, long waitlists and a shortage of skilled clinicians** being the most common obstacles they have experienced, and 71% tell us that they are not able to access any other treatment option. At Looking Glass, we remove these barriers by providing accessible, timely and expert-led support—because no one should be denied care when they need it most.



COMPLEXITY

Eating disorders are rarely standalone illnesses—they often exist alongside other mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD and substance use disorders. Factors like **trauma, socioeconomic stress, and systemic barriers can further complicate recovery**, making it essential to provide care that addresses the full scope of an individual's experience. Without integrated and informed support, these overlapping challenges can delay recovery or make it more difficult to sustain progress.





Qrystal's Story

In her first year of university, like so many young adults transitioning into a new phase of life, Qrystal found herself facing major life choices and questions about her purpose and identity. During this time of stress and uncertainty, eating disorder behaviours began to emerge in Qrystal's life.

“Outwardly, it seemed like I was thriving, but I was dying on the inside,” Qrystal shares. “My body wasted away in a relentless cycle of restricting and binging, all while maintaining a facade of normalcy to the outside world.”

“One day I thought to myself, ‘I can’t do this anymore, I need to get better.’ I didn’t know where to start. That’s when I found Looking Glass. I joined the Hand in Hand program thinking, ‘Why not give it a try?’ Right from the start, I clicked with my volunteer peer counsellor, Angeline. It was such a relief to connect with someone who truly understood what I was going through. For the longest time, I had believed I was stuck, that things would never improve. But my peer counsellor has been a constant support who makes me feel truly heard and accepted.

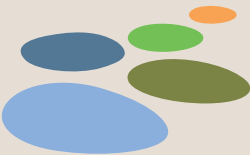
Having access to free services through Looking Glass changed everything for me. Financial worries often deter people from seeking help; I certainly hesitated, wondering if I could justify spending hundreds of dollars on therapy when I had other responsibilities. But with Looking Glass, there was no pressure. Knowing that someone genuinely cared and was there to support me without any cost made all the difference. I struggled with my eating disorder for over a decade simply because I didn’t know these resources existed.”

“Hope for eating disorder recovery feels like community – people who are there to hold you up and create a safe space and not being afraid of judgement. We lift each other up when we are down, and we don’t give up on one another.”

Qrystal is now excited to be completing her practicum as part of our Bridge the Gap affordable counselling program, and looking forward to a career help others on their own healing journeys.

OUR PROGRAMS

A Continuum of Care



Bridge the Gap AFFORDABLE COUNSELLING



At Looking Glass Foundation, we are dedicated to systemic change. We not only address urgent needs but also train a new generation of clinicians, ensuring that the next wave of professionals is equipped to handle the complexities of eating disorder treatment.

Bridge the Gap provides affordable one-to-one counselling to individuals throughout BC and specialized training for masters of counselling students.



97%
say they have made progress in their recovery through Bridge the Gap



My therapy sessions have begun to restore my faith in myself, that my thoughts and feelings matter and that it is okay to be not so okay in the moment.

- Bridge the Gap Participant



Scholarships

The Reflections Scholarship supports students who are in recovery from eating disorders, enabling them to pursue their dreams. **These scholarships are especially crucial for people who have persevered through major disruptions in their education and careers,** helping them overcome barriers to higher education and achieve their full potential.



Looking Glass Residence

Through a unique partnership with Provincial Health Services Authority, we help provide a welcoming place of healing for those who require residential treatment to recover from their eating disorder. By also supporting recreational activities, residents build **the life skills and confidence to help sustain their recovery post discharge.**



OUR PROGRAMS

A Continuum of Care

Outreach

To address the widespread but often overlooked impact of eating disorders, which have high occurrence rates and alarming mortality rates, we increased our community outreach and education activities. We know many people struggle for years without knowing how to access support, and we want to change that.

Through 31 presentations to schools, at health fairs, educating health care practitioners and hosting webinars, we reached over 900 individuals—including students, community partners, parents, Indigenous communities and health and social service workers—providing them with crucial information on how to access our services, dispelling myths, and equipping attendees with tools to recognize and support those struggling with an eating disorder.

31
PRESENTATIONS

931
PEOPLE
REACHED



Peer Support

Our three peer support programs are a lifeline for so many – often being the only programs they can access to support their recovery because they aren't eligible for other supports. Participants are able to join programs virtually or connect in person, depending on the program of their choice. For many, our peer support programs are a first – and critical – step in seeking help on their recovery journey.

94%

say that peer support
has decreased feelings
of isolation



“

For so long, I felt isolated in my struggles, but Looking Glass introduced me to a network of understanding individuals who truly ‘get it.’ Their resources and programs filled a critical gap in an area of mental health where accessible support is often lacking. I always felt heard, valued, and supported. Looking Glass Foundation didn’t just help me on my path to recovery – they gave me hope when I needed it most.

- Program Participant



Volunteers

Volunteers are the heart of Looking Glass, enabling us to deliver our vital programs and services to the community.

By generously giving their time, they become part of something much larger, leaving a lasting impact on the recovery journeys of those we support.

Many of our volunteers bring their lived experience, helping to create a compassionate, supportive environment that nurtures personal growth and meaningful connections.



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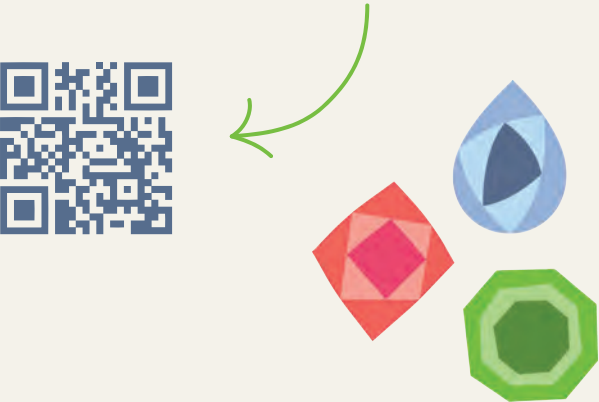
During my time as a volunteer, I've seen firsthand the remarkable impact this space has on individuals dealing with eating disorders. Looking Glass offers a safe and supportive environment where people can start their journey toward healing.

- Looking Glass Volunteer



Are you passionate about providing accessible and compassionate support for people facing eating disorders?

Become a Looking Glass GEM by Giving Every Month!



345

VOLUNTEERS

18,788

VOLUNTEER HOURS

Community Events

We love to see so many people giving their time and energy to spread awareness and raise funds for eating disorder care! In 2024, we partnered with Be Kind to Your Mind for the third year in a row, saw many businesses rally their communities for Eating Disorder Awareness Week and hosted a film screening and discussion about eating disorders. We love seeing the dedication and creativity each year brings for these events!



Reflections Gala

\$448,000

IN FUNDS RAISED



A Night of *Illuminating Hope*

On May 9, 2024, Reflections co-presented by Ledcor Group and PCI Developments raised nearly half a million dollars for Looking Glass' programs and services. Reflections is Looking Glass' biggest event of the year, and we continue to be inspired by the many leaders in philanthropy in our community who are committed to ensuring everyone who suffers from an eating disorder in our province receives the services they need to support their recovery alongside us. Each year, Reflections provides core funding for our accessible, specialized and safe program offerings.



Check out Reflections 2024!

Reflections

co-presented by



“I almost lost my life battling an eating disorder. It changed my life being about to talk to people who have gone through the same thing as me. Now I am going to school to be able to help, the same way others have helped me.

- Program Participant



healing happens together

We respectfully acknowledge that this Annual Report was created at our Vancouver office, located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwəta /Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Our work provincially extends across the homelands of many diverse Indigenous peoples within the area often called British Columbia.

Looking Glass is a Canadian Registered Charity (863814042RR0001)
2006 West 10th Avenue, Suite 200, Vancouver, BC, V6J 2B3
604-314-0548 | hello@lookingglassbc.com