

MRCSSI

MUSLIM RESOURCE CENTER FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT & INTEGRATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



A Message from the Leadership

As we reflect on the past year at MRCSSI, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the resilience, compassion, and strength of our community. In the face of challenges, we have fostered hope, safety, and healing, not just responding to crises but planting seeds for lasting change.

Last year, as the criminal trial following the loss of the Afzaal family began, our community was reminded of the ongoing impact of Islamophobia. In response, our Justice Department-funded program became a beacon of hope, reaching over 2,100 individuals. Through support in mosques, community centers, and safe spaces, we reaffirmed our stand against hate and commitment to a more inclusive society.

Our work in domestic violence intervention deepened this year as we continued community engagement and support for survivors and families. Our new partnership with Probation and Parole enabled us to work with men referred from the justice system, providing culturally integrative interventions that promote accountability and break the cycle of violence.

This year marked the first phase of our five-year strategic plan, with visible results. We expanded services, entered new communities, and deepened partnerships. We also invested in our staff with 36 professional development opportunities, ensuring we serve with excellence and renewed passion. Overall, we served almost 1,200 individuals and engaged 4,500.

With the continued support of our partners, MRCSSI is poised for sustainable growth and greater impact. As we move forward, we will continue to break barriers, build bridges, and create safe spaces for all.

Thank you for your unwavering belief in our mission. Together, we are building a future where every individual and family can thrive in safety, health, and dignity.



Dr. Mohamed Baobaid
Executive Director



Elyas Farooqi Lodin
Managing Director

A Message from Chairs of the Board

As we reflect on the past year at MRCSSI, we are honored by the remarkable progress made toward building a safer, more inclusive, and empowered community. The challenges we have faced have strengthened our resolve, and through the dedication of our staff, partners, and community, we have planted the seeds for meaningful, lasting change.

Two years ago, the Board made a significant investment in MRCSSI's future by developing a strategic plan aimed at addressing the growing needs of our community. This report reflects the successful implementation of the first year of that plan. The strategic roadmap has provided us with a clear direction to expand our services, deepen our impact, and strengthen the organization's long-term sustainability. Through this framework, we've been able to effectively respond to the most pressing and growing needs in family support, violence prevention, and community safety.

MRCSSI has continued to stand strong in the face of adversity, offering vital support to individuals affected by hate. Our efforts have provided safe spaces for healing and connection. Our work in violence prevention has also expanded, allowing us to reach both individuals and families in need of support. A new initiative enables us to work directly with individuals referred through justice services, offering interventions that break the cycle of violence, fostering safer homes and communities.

The Board has also committed to ensuring the future success of MRCSSI through leadership planning. We have developed a succession plan for the next Executive Director, ensuring the organization will continue to thrive under strong, strategic leadership. This ensures continuity as we face new challenges and opportunities.

As we look forward, the Board is committed to supporting MRCSSI in its ongoing efforts to build a sustainable and resilient organization. We are optimistic about the future, with efforts underway to secure new funding sources and foster support within the community. The past year has demonstrated the power of collaboration and resilience, and together, we are shaping a brighter future for all.

With deep gratitude,

Zeba Hashmi and Bonnie MacLachlan



Zeba Hashmi (left) and
Bonnie MacLachlan (right),
Co-Chairs of the Board

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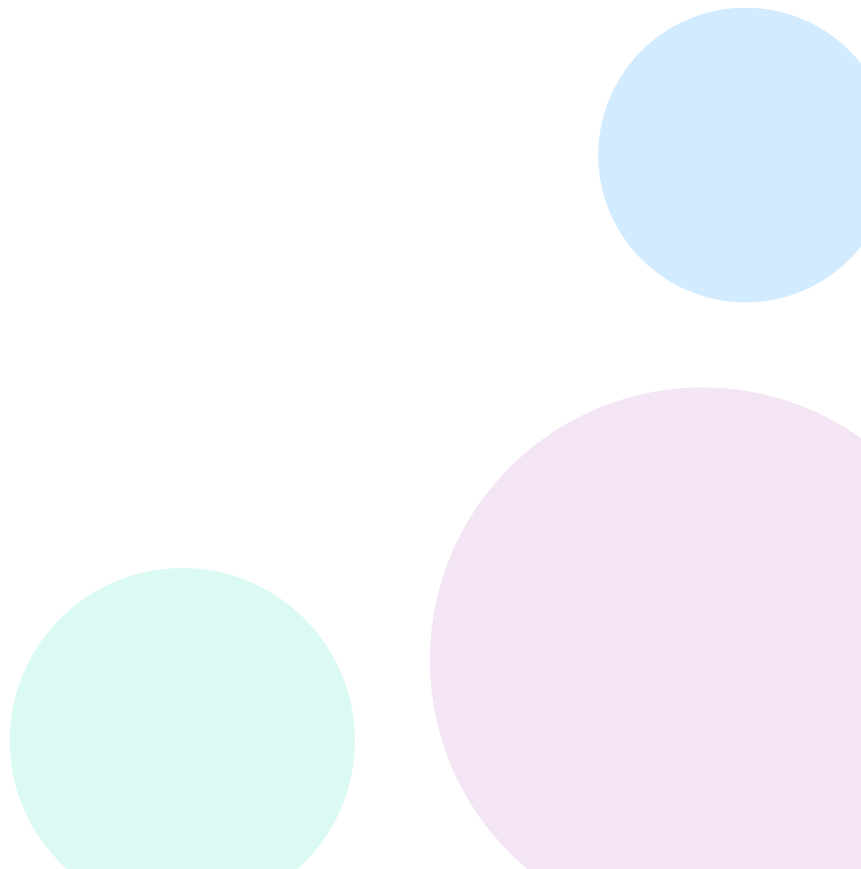
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Our Vision

Safe, strong, and healthy individuals and families in caring communities.

Our Mission

MRCSSI provides culturally integrative services that build capacity to help individuals, families and communities to overcome challenges, manage conflict and ensure safety and well-being.

Our Values

Dignity and Respect

We actively listen to each person and hear their perspective.

Support and Empowerment

We help people to develop and experience healthy relationships and be leaders in their own lives through a strength-based response.

Collaboration and Consultation

We work together to create value and leverage the wisdom of the community.

Innovation and Creativity

We think with open minds and flexibility to find effective ways to do our work.

Care and Compassion

We treat each other with care and compassion.

Integrity and Accountability

We hold ourselves and each other accountable for our thoughts, actions, and results.

Our Approach

MRCSSI provides culturally integrative services that support Muslim individuals and families with their well-being and resilience, respond to situations of family violence, and strengthen capacities for safety in families and communities.

Our Services

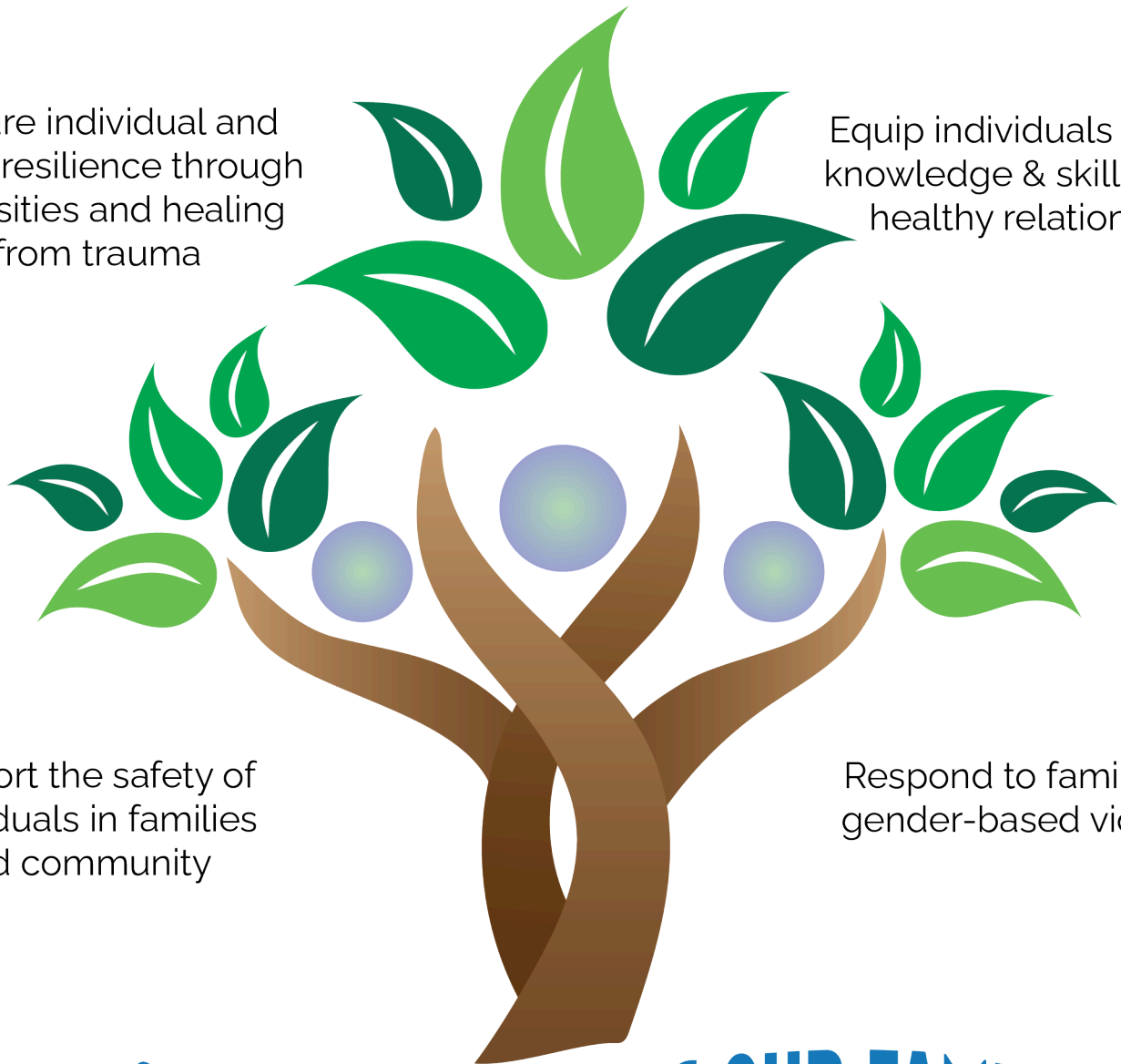
- Social Support & Counselling
- Family Violence Interventions
- Client Programs
- Community Programs & Projects
- Awareness & Education
- Research

OUR CULTURALLY INTEGRATIVE SERVICES

Foster the well-being
of individuals & families

Nurture individual and
family resilience through
adversities and healing
from trauma

Equip individuals with the
knowledge & skills to have
healthy relationships



Support the safety of
individuals in families
and community

Respond to family and
gender-based violence

OUR COMMUNITY IS OUR FAMILY

Visit our website for more information!

mrcssi.com

Continuum of Care

	Community Engagement	Basic Psycho-Social Support	Early Intervention	Intensive Services
Risk		Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
Service	Provide education and information to community	Provide basic need support, capacity building & advocacy	Provide support to clients experiencing challenges with daily functioning and may have had concerns with police or other mandated services.	Situation is already escalated and authorities already involved including Police, CAS, Probation & Parole, Courts, Hospital Referrals, etc. Provides intensive services for individuals or families with complex needs.
Activities	Outreach, community engagement, presentations, workshops	Social Support, Advocacy, System navigation, referring, capacity building workshops	Risk Mitigation & management Group Based Support Counselling Family Based Programs	Counselling, Risk Assessment, Coordination of Support & Responses
Stats	Individuals Engaged - 2667 Workshop participants - 413	Individuals served 585 Psycho-social group participants - 1060	Individuals served 475	Individuals served 345

1163 Individuals served
1473 workshop participants
4477 Individuals engaged

Meet Our Team

Abd Alfatah Twakkal
Abir Al Jamal
Ammar Al-Kwafi
Cindy Martin
Dana El-Saleh
Elyas Farooqi Lodin
Eman Arnout
Ese Ashley Ekhomu
Eugene Tremblay
Hassna Nassir
Joseph Capozza
Juman Aljumaili

Mahmoud El-Saleh
Mohammed Baobaid
Nermin Elgohary
Nicola-Maritza Coombs
Nidaa Khalil
Nourhan Ali
Quds Siam
Rana Salem
Rimah Abou Hussein
Sarah Darsha
Sherri Whiteman
Taghreed Al-Soumairy
Yasmin Hussain
Yunith Gonzalez Ulloa

Our Board of Directors

Bonnie MacLachlan, Co-Chair
Zeba Hashmi, Co-Chair & Secretary
Sohail Makhdoom
Zaheiya Moussa
Tosha Densky
Shelley Yeo, Treasurer
Amir Hage
Lena Hassan
Angie Ingram

Social Support & Counselling

MRCSSI provides supports to individuals (including youth and adults), couples and families experiencing adversities and stressors that impact their well-being through:

- Counselling
- Social support with legal, education and housing systems, etc.
- Spiritual Support
- Advocacy

Family Violence Intervention & Safety Response

MRCSSI responds in situations of family violence using our *Culturally Integrative Family Safety Response (CIFSR)* model. Situations of family violence that MRCSSI responds to include intimate partner violence (IPV), child abuse, and sibling abuse.

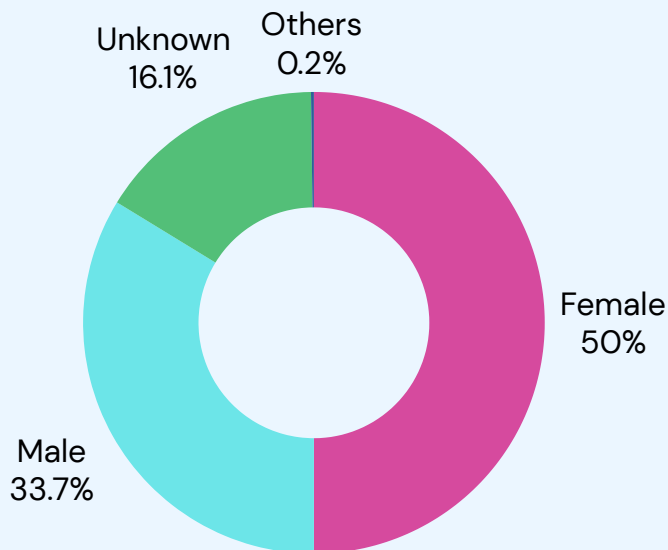
We ensure the safety of individuals who are experiencing abuse or at risk of experiencing abuse through:

- Risk Assessment & Risk Mitigation
- Safety Planning
- Coordinated responses & services with community partners

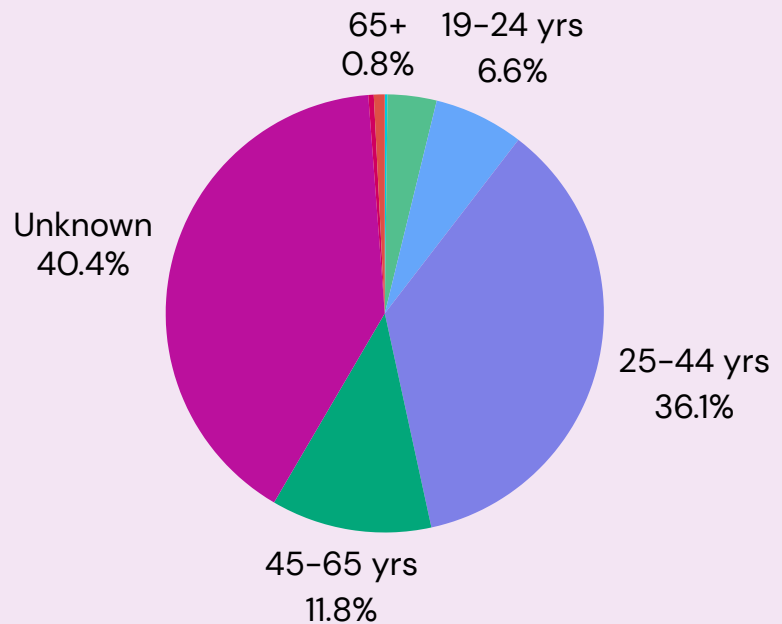
Clients Served: Demographic Overview

MRCSSI provides supports to a diverse group of individuals and families from different walks of life. Here are some of our client statistics.

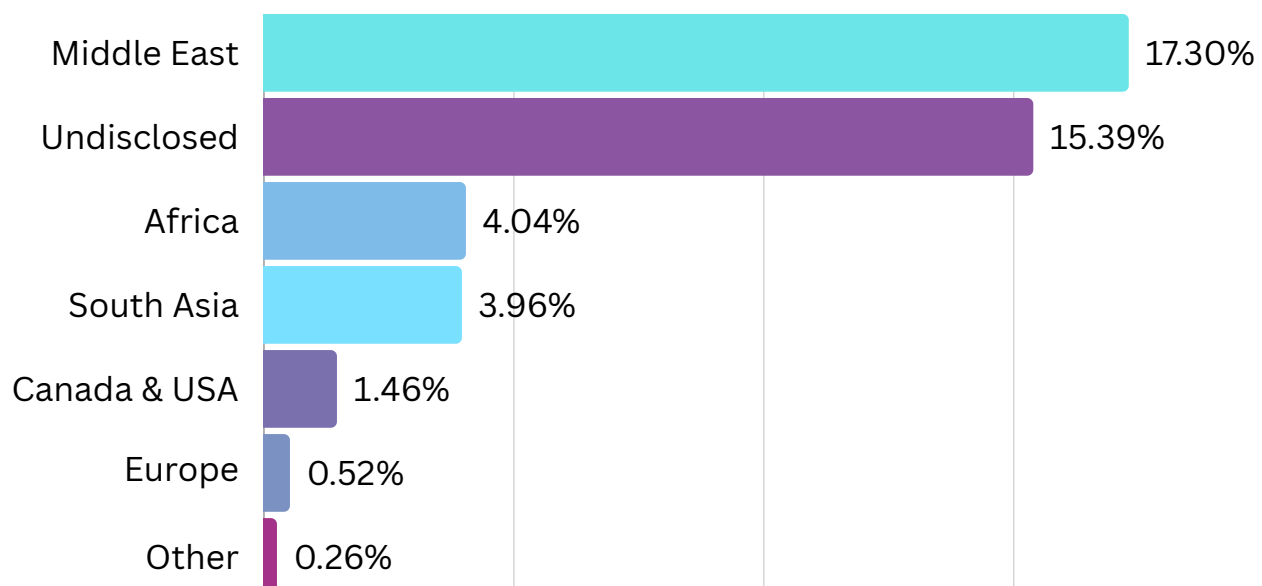
GENDER



AGE



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



A Year in Review:

Social Support & Counselling Services

United Way of London and Middlesex is one of our long-term annual funders and provides MRCSSI with base yearly funding to engage cultural and linguistic communities in London, Ontario and Elgin to reach out to newcomer families and pave their way to connecting to services in the community that they are eligible to receive. This program funds our initial contact and referral to community-based and mainstream services for families that are struggling at accessing the services they require. United Way within its program supports us in outreach to our cultural communities with the hope of increasing the individual recipient's knowledge of services available to them in the London community.

The increase of need for MRCSSI services has continued to grow both in numbers and in complexities. The demand for MRCSSI to be responsive in high risk situations has doubled. The key indicator for this is the number of individuals and families that are facing or are homeless. This increases the risk for family violence. During the course of this reporting year, we have received **370 referrals for our clinical support.**

Our evidence-based culturally informed programs; Strengthening Families Program, is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Our Helping Arabic Newcomer Families of Children with Different Abilities to be Empowered (HAND2E) is funded by London Community Foundation.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) funds our continued engagement to support newcomer families settling in Canada. MLITSD helps us provide services to families who are struggling with integration and settlement.

In addition, we have the privilege of receiving the support of Dr. Sohail Makhdoom of CPRI who provides consultation to our clinicians for children and youth in difficulty and who are struggling. We also are able to consult with Dr. Mohamad Elfakhani, and his team from London Health Sciences Centre in regards to situations of adult mental health. The support and expert consultations that we receive allows our team to respond to the increase of demand and severity of mental health issues in our community.



Impact Story

A woman had to flee from home due to safety reasons, leaving her 3 children and husband back home. Since she came to Canada, she was struggling mentally due to the impact of trauma she experienced back home from the government and leaving her children behind. Here's how we helped.

1

We made calls, referrals, wellness checks, and advocacy through the MP's office to help speed up the immigration process for her to reunite with her family.

2

We facilitated psychiatric services to get mental health support and we provided faith-based support.

3

Also, we provided advocacy for housing when the family arrived. We worked collaboratively with the church group to reunite the family.

We continue to support this family related to child protection and domestic violence.

This story, exemplified the profound impact that community support and advocacy can have on those in need, showing that even the most challenging problems can find a path to resolution when people come together with empathy and determination .

MRCSSI continues to support the survivor to navigate the Court system, access services, legal aid support, and any other service that would be required to meet her needs and those of her children.

Client Programs

Strengthening Families Program (SFP)

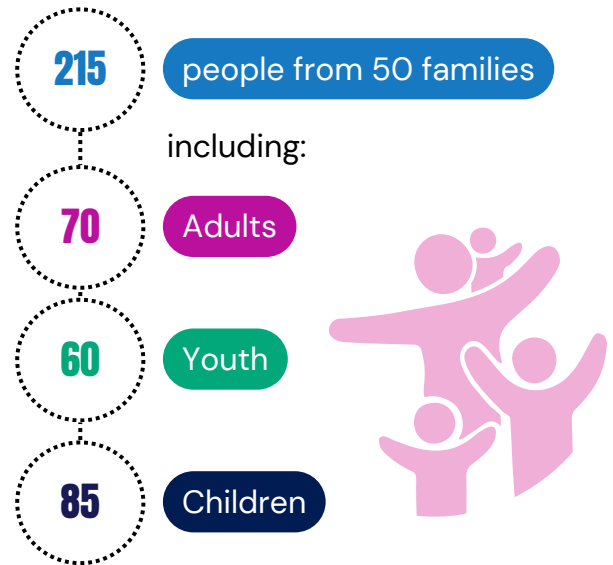
The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is a 14-week family life-skills training program, delivered in Arabic and English, for children (ages 6 to 17) and their parents. Parents and children work on communication skills, goal setting, behaviour management, strategies for dealing with peer pressure, substance use, and positive family relationships.

The program increases family resiliency and is known to reduce problem behaviours in children. It also improves social competencies and school performance. Parents develop greater understanding about their children's behaviour and they learn to set limits while showing love and affection.

The Muslim Resource Centre is committed to creating a culturally adaptive program customized for collectivist cultures, predominantly Muslim families in London, Ontario.

Launched in 2021 with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the program ran 6 cohorts including 5 in-person groups and 1 cohort who completed the program individually (due to COVID), reaching 50 families, with over half being lone-parent. Families were diverse with respect to family size and type, education level, countries of origin, and number of years Canada. Most were from Syria and spoke Arabic. Managing this diversity required skilled facilitation so that all felt respected and welcomed.

WHO PARTICIPATED?



“

I noticed a huge change in myself and I have more confidence now how to talk to my kids and by applying my time, it had a major role in my understanding of my children's behaviour and how to deal with them.

”

Parent Testimony

“

I learned how to properly interrupt a conversation, since this used to be something I got in trouble for before, especially when adults would be talking. The family meeting was a success at my house.

”

Teen Testimony

Client Programs

Culturally Integrative Coordinated Community Support Program

In response to the tragic event that claimed the lives of the Afzaal family two years ago, and in light of the recent criminal trial of the perpetrator found guilty of this heinous act, our project was initiated to provide essential support to the London Muslim community. This initiative is crucial to addressing the ongoing trauma experienced by individuals affected by this tragedy.


The MRCSSI has been successful in providing culturally integrative support through a comprehensive program that includes counselling, awareness initiatives, community engagement, therapeutic interventions, the creation of safe spaces, and long-term support.

From mosques and schools to wellness centers and courthouses, our strategic presence ensures that our services are accessible and responsive to the immediate needs of the community.

“ Having not to explain the impact of the attack, since she was already aware of it, was very helpful in the beginning. She helped me understand what my feelings meant, and how growing forward, I can control them, or deal with them in a healthy way. ”

Served Member

 **2138**
individuals served

48 individuals received counselling


54 
presentations & workshops

 **8**
locations

Community Programs & Projects

Not In Our Backyard (NIOB)

Reclaiming Our Safety is a creative leadership project with, and for young Muslim women in London. NIOB creates a space of collective healing & strength through discussion and arts-based sessions.

Our program aims to empower Muslim women and nurture communal resilience and healing, as well as raise awareness on issues of gendered Islamophobia through social media campaigns centering Muslim women's voices.



Supporting Her Safety (SHS)

The "Supporting Her Safety" Peer Leader Training Program is funded by MCCSS and it is delivered in English and Arabic. It is a ten session program or series of one-time workshops for women, men or youth that builds valuable knowledge and skills on how to support a loved one experiencing abuse with confidence and compassion.

Supporting Her Safety equips participants with the knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the difference between healthy, unhealthy, conflictual and abusive relationships
- Recognize different forms of abuse and warning signs
- Challenge harmful norms & responses
- Support a friend or loved one experiencing abuse using the 5 *Alifs*, a trauma and culturally informed guide

“After attending the program: I became more focused on the warning signs and red flags of domestic abuse, and I became able to distinguish and extend a helping hand and support to victims of abuse.”

SHS Participant

Awareness & Education

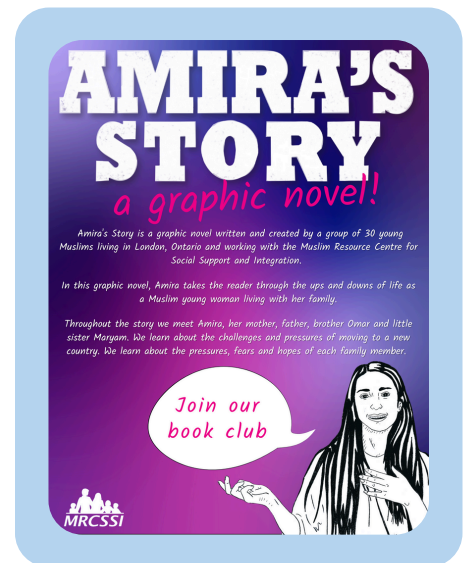
SHS Resources

We created 3 resources providing guidance on how to support a friend or loved one experiencing abuse while taking care of yourself.

- Being there: Checking in on a loved one experiencing abuse
- The 5 *Alifs*: Supporting a loved one who discloses abuse
- Taking care of yourself: Balancing care and self-care while supporting a loved one experiencing abuse

Amira's Story

Amira's Story is a graphic novel written by over 20 London Muslimahs about gender-based and family violence, which was 7+ years in the making. It follows Amira and her family over two days and highlights themes of gendered double standards, the pressure and violence some young Muslim daughters face and the struggles of immigrant and racialized families. The book is in the process of being published and book clubs with youth, parents and community members will start soon.



Is it Abuse?

A series of 6 culturally informed resources supporting Muslim women and girls to identify their experiences of abuse within intimate partner and family relationships. These resources help Muslim women & girls identify experiences of abuse, validate impacts of abuse, and provide them with information about supports they can access.

We have created:

- 6 short graphic poster versions (digital and print)
- 6 detailed booklet versions (digital and print)



Research & Innovation

Building on MRCSSI's commitment to research informing practice, the Centre for Culturally Integrative Responses (CCIR) was established to formalize and enhance our research efforts. The CCIR focuses on the culturally integrative framework, addressing challenges faced by immigrant communities from collectivist backgrounds. It also aims to scale the Culturally Integrative Family Safety Response (CIFSR) model to other sites.



The CCIR has continued its collaborative framework with Africa Institute for the third year, at Western University to host PhD visiting scholars who contribute their skills towards the diverse research projects at MRCSSI. Last year, MRCSSI hosted a Postdoctoral scholar who has contributed to diverse MRCSSI research projects.

The CCIR continues to engage diverse universities and colleges from different disciplines such as Social Work both BSW and MSW students, Social Service Workers, Addictions and Mental Health, Child and Youth Care, Health Sciences to provide placement opportunities to work within the diverse MRCSSI departments. Last year we hosted 16 students from Social Work schools, Addiction and Mental Health, Social Service Workers, Child and Youth Care and two groups from Med. Science department who had the opportunity to work with the Client Service department, while one student from Health Sciences volunteered as part of her capstone with the research department.

Supporting Muslim GBV Survivors: The Culturally Integrative Family Safety Response Model (CIFSR)

In a 29-month Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) funded project, MRCSSI tested the CIFSR model in Ottawa and Kitchener/Waterloo, building partnerships with local organizations. The research team conducted full-day trainings for staff and professionals, reaching 117 attendees across both cities.



Financials

Statement of Financial Position as at March 31, 2024

ASSETS

Current Assets	2024	2023
Cash	\$ 547,693	\$ 628,496
Accounts Receivable	44,054	65,693
HST receivable	5,934	-
Prepaid expenses	15,512	14,975
	<u>613,193</u>	<u>709,164</u>
Tangible Capital Assets (note 4)	<u>4,588</u>	<u>7,379</u>
	<u>\$ 617,781</u>	<u>\$ 716,543</u>

LIBAILITIES AND NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)

Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 129,578	\$ 149,105
Government remittances payable	-	11,004
Deferred revenues (note 5)	309,210	387,978
	<u>438,788</u>	<u>548,087</u>
Commitments (note 6)		
Net Assets		
Net assets	<u>178,993</u>	<u>168,456</u>
	<u>\$ 617,781</u>	<u>\$ 716,543</u>

Statement of Changes in Accumulated Net Assets for the Year Ended March 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Balance, Beginning of Year	\$ 168,456	\$ 325,579
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures	+10,537	-(157,123)
Balance, End of Year	<u>\$ 178,993</u>	<u>\$ 168,456</u>

The attached Independent Auditor's Report and notes form an integral part of these audited financial statements.

Financials

Statement of Operations for the Year Ended March 31, 2024

Revenues	2024	%	2023	%
Grants (note 7)	\$ 1,568,183	89.31	\$ 1,425,876	84.26
Donations and fundraising	187,098	10.66	264,631	15.64
Consulting	550	0.03	137	0.01
Employment incentives	-	-	1,351	0.09
	<u>1,755,831</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>1,691,995</u>	<u>100.00</u>
Expenses				
Payroll – Salary and wages	\$ 1,168,207	66.53	\$ 1,279,392	75.61
Payroll – contractor fees	183,864	10.47	168,954	9.99
Rent	94,084	5.36	86,745	5.13
Office	95,185	5.42	102,997	6.09
Consulting	74,952	4.27	71,264	4.21
Professional fees	35,995	2.05	26,810	1.58
Programming meals	21,400	1.22	19,719	1.17
Insurance	17,689	1.01	15,595	0.92
Advertising and promotion	13,591	0.77	20,209	1.20
HST	10,427	0.59	8,905	0.53
Travel	9,110	0.52	11,427	0.68
Utilities	7,499	0.43	11,057	0.65
Fundraising	4,279	0.24	14,258	0.84
Interest and bank charges	3,848	0.22	5,332	0.32
Amortization	3,392	0.19	6,371	0.38
Professional development	1,803	0.10	-	-
Conference	500	0.03	330	0.02
	<u>1,745,825</u>	<u>99.42</u>	<u>1,849,365</u>	<u>109.32</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures from operations	+10,006	0.58	-(157,370)	(9.32)
Other Income				
Interest	531	0.03	247	0.01
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures	\$ +10,537	0.61	\$ -(157,123)	(9.31)

*The attached Independent Auditor's Report and notes form
an integral part of these audited financial statements.*



For more information:

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