

Report to the Community 2017-2018





Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre is looking forward to 2019 and to celebrating 40 years of providing services to women in the Ottawa region in a safe, warm, and friendly environment.

We look forward to commending our dedicated staff, volunteers, and funders, as well as the resiliency of the women who come to Amethyst and help to ensure its continued success.

During the past year, the Board of Directors welcomed several new members who demonstrate their commitment to the women served by Amethyst. As a full working board, the challenges have been high but the board has been able to commit and meet most of our duties and goals. We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to departing board members for their hard work and commitment.

In preparation for Amethyst's 40th year celebration, the board is looking forward to various fundraising events that will celebrate the women of Amethyst as well as give the community a chance to know who Amethyst is and the services rendered.

We look forward to working together with our staff and the wider community to continue to make a difference in the lives of the women who come to Amethyst.

Elizabeth Momodu, Chair





How time flies — another busy year for the Management Committee!

Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre supports women, 18 years and older, seeking counselling for substance use or problem gambling issues. The women we see come from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life. Regardless of their path, we are here to help them take control of their lives and of the factors that are causing them to use substances as a way of coping.

We try to meet the challenge of the increased demand for our English and French

Treatment Programs — and on very limited resources. Amethyst continues to seek increases in funding as well as in donations from individuals aware of the changes Amethyst has made in the lives of women living in the Ottawa area.

At the end of the fiscal year, we were fortunate to receive several One-time Grants from the Champlain LHIN. One was to hire a Financial Strategist to assist us in developing a long term financial plan for the agency, an important piece of work that will help guide us as we seek increased funds for programs.

In 2017 we were thankful to also receive a One-time Grant from the LHIN for our Health Promotion Coordinator to develop and pilot two opioid prevention and intervention workshops, one in English and one in French, for Ottawa-area women at high risk of opioid use and addiction. This is a key area of work, particularly when you note the dramatic and rapid increase in the use of opioids in Ottawa and indeed across Canada.

We also received a One-time Grant from the Champlain LHIN to purchase appliances as well as new couches for our Group Room.

We really appreciate the support by *Le Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario* regarding implementation of Amethyst's French Language Designation Plan, an important pillar in making Amethyst a bilingual service organization.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Amethyst's Board of Directors for their outstanding work and continued support. As well, thanks to Amethyst's dedicated staff who did remarkable work throughout the year. And, once again, we would like to extend a big thank you to our community members, donors and volunteers.

The Management Committee

Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre offers a free bilingual treatment program. Both English and French programs are very much in demand, and our small staff of counsellors works hard to meet that need.

The English treatment team has worked at full capacity during the past year as reflected by the team's output. The team spirit was high in 2017-2018 and there was enthusiasm for change and progress.

All counsellors work hard to incorporate best practices in clinical work. They regularly update their clinical skills by attending professional development courses and through the clinical supervision of Brenda Saxe and Janice Fraser.

We envision Amethyst as taking a leadership role in the field of women's addiction, and consequently put our full effort into having that dream materialize. We not only work at an individual level but remain vigilant regarding the systemic oppression of women and how it impacts women's recovery and healing process. Our clients are our best teachers and we work together to create a better society.

All of our treatment programs also offer intensive group sessions and workshops. The French program offers an 8-day intensive session for small groups of women. These sessions are popular and run two or three times a year, depending on demand. This year we also held French workshops on body

image, family dynamics, mindfulness and medication, and self-esteem among others.

For several years the English team also held 8-day intensive programs for clients. Meanwhile, in 2017 the English treatment team became aware that demand from our clientele for the intensive workshop was changing. We addressed this issue in 2017 by delivering the English program in a different format. Instead of offering the intensive 8-day program, we now offer three cycles of an intensive workshop series on relevant topics. We have incorporated social engagement sessions to add a new dimension to our service. Client response is quite high, and feedback received is very encouraging.

In 2017-2018, we also engaged Carleton Social Work students to do research to guide us in further remodelling of our program. Focus group discussions with current and waitlist clients, including clients on an advisory committee, were important components of this research project to highlight the voices of our service consumers. We always want to serve our community the best way we can and feedback and cooperation from our clients makes it easier for us to identify needs and make adjustments.

Last year the mother-daughter program and relapse prevention programs also went very well. We are planning to increase the length of these programs to meet the need of clients.

The English and French treatment programs had quarterly planning days last year to brainstorm innovative ideas to overcome new challenges and to ensure the commitment of service delivery.

Our relief workers always play a valuable role in filling in the gaps in service. We faced a new challenge last year with a shortage of relief workers as some of them moved on to new opportunities in their careers. We wish them all the best. We are very grateful to Rose McDade and Darlene Row for their continued support as relief workers. The Treatment Team manual was revamped last year by our brilliant staff Allie James. Thank you, Allie, for also organizing our file cabinets!

Both our English and French treatment teams strive for excellence within our limited resources. We are determined to offer our service at the high standard that our founders and funders would expect of us!

Our greatest reward is appreciation from our clients, the women to whom Amethyst is a safe home. As a client once said: "I don't know where I would be without Amethyst... but I do know I would still be drunk if it wasn't for Amethyst!"

Nighat Ara, Counsellor, English Treatment Team

Nadine Letang, Case Manager, French Treatment Team

Amethyst's Outreach Volunteer Program connects women who are early in recovery or struggling to maintain sobriety with women who have previously completed and graduated from Amethyst's program. Our Outreach Volunteers are able to connect with clients to provide support outside the regular hours that Amethyst counsellors are available. These volunteers provide support during times of crisis, provide clients with someone they can relate to, and act as positive role models, showing women who are struggling that recovery is possible. This program allows women to break some of the isolation that often surrounds addiction.

We would like to give a huge thanks to all of the women who have volunteered their time and energy to provide ongoing support for people in our community. Some of our volunteers have been with the program for many years, and we truly appreciate their incredible commitment and dedication to



helping others. Although the demand for this service has fluctuated throughout the year, it has still remained a valuable component of our services. When women do make the connection with their Outreach Volunteer, this relationship can become a lifeline and point of light through the loneliness and isolation that sometimes accompanies addiction.

We met as a team four times this year, along with other counsellors at Amethyst. These meetings provide us with the opportunity to support the volunteers in the

work they are doing, and to discuss and plan around the program itself. We are always looking for new ways to improve the program, and to continue engagement with the program by clients, volunteers, and Amethyst staff. This year we were pleased to add Kathleen to our Outreach Volunteers.

Welcome Kathleen! We also said good-bye to Rita, a long-time volunteer who supported women at Amethyst for almost 10 years. Thank-you Rita for your dedication to supporting countless women. We wish you all the best in this next chapter!

I would also like to thank my Outreach Volunteer Co-coordinator Nighat Ara. Thank you for another productive year!

Elise Harris,
Outreach Volunteer Co-coordinator

As always, the Problem Gambling Program has had a busy year.

We served women through individual counselling and psycho-educational programming, while also partnering with other services in the community to ensure access to group counselling opportunities.

We also continued to network with allied services to raise awareness about the needs and challenges faced by folks who problem gamble; we worked regularly with Rideauwood, the YM/YWCA, Centretown Community Health Centre, and Ottawa Public Health.

Amethyst's distinct voice continues to be much needed because we work from an alternative model to 12-step based approaches.

Something that I have been particularly struck by in the last year is the value of trauma-informed approaches to working with problem gamblers.

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Several clients, in the past year, have noted that Amethyst's understanding of the intersection between experiences of trauma and problem gambling has been invaluable to their process of healing and moving forward.

These sentiments serve as an important acknowledgement of the value in ensuring that women in our community have access to a diverse range of services.

Gundel Lake, Counsellor

The Sexual Abuse Support Program (SASP) at Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre is a unique program in the Ottawa community. Through this program we help women make links between their experiences of addiction and childhood sexual abuse. SASP is a combination of psycho-education and therapeutic processing and incorporates creative expression. The program supports women to meet goals such as decreasing isolation and addressing shame and helps to build a more positive history of experiences, support, and caring while they are doing this difficult work.

This year, we offered one 12-week program, one 10-week program, and created and delivered two new workshops to support women who were interested in exploring this topic in a different, less intensive format. The workshops included one on the power of sharing your story and creating community, and another art-based workshop on exploring personal sources of power. We supported 21 women in our programs and workshops, and additional women were supported by phone with information about the program or referrals to other agencies. During the past year women have used these words to describe the program: inspirational, worthwhile, intense, fulfilling, loving, healing, safe, real, loving, enlightening and transformational. Being able to witness the support and caring that women provide for



each other in this program, and the incredible courage that women display in doing this work continues to be an honour and inspiration for me.

Beyond direct support to our clients we also provide information about the program to service providers in the community and about the connection between experiences of sexual violence and addiction. This year we not only connected with individual service providers directly, but also provided a community presentation through the City of Ottawa in partnership with the Royal Ottawa Hospital. This presentation reached more than 50 front-line service providers in Ottawa.

In addition, we are members of the Sexual Assault Network and the Front-Line Support Committee of the Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women, where we have the opportunity to network with other organizations while also providing education and advocacy around the unique issues that women with a history of childhood sexual abuse face when they also experience addiction.

Elise Harris, Program Coordinator

The past year has been one of renewal for the Amethyst's Community Relations Program. As part-time coordinator for the program, my work shifts between general communications work (such as social media, web, writing and editing) community relations and outreach, attendance at events, and my role on various committees alongside Amethyst colleagues. The goal of Community Relations is, in essence, to showcase the important role that Amethyst plays as it reaches out to women in the community who would benefit from knowing about our services.

In 2017-2018, the Amethyst staff and board approved a new 5-year Communications Strategy that includes: an updated look and content for the website; social media editorial calendar that includes regular posts of key information on Facebook and Twitter; a revamped method of producing and distributing the annual report; a renewed brochure for general distribution; and the addition of occasional blog posts to our website. Much of this work was begun in 2017 and will continue and be consolidated through 2018.

In addition to the general communications tasks, Amethyst staff was also present at many events throughout 2017.

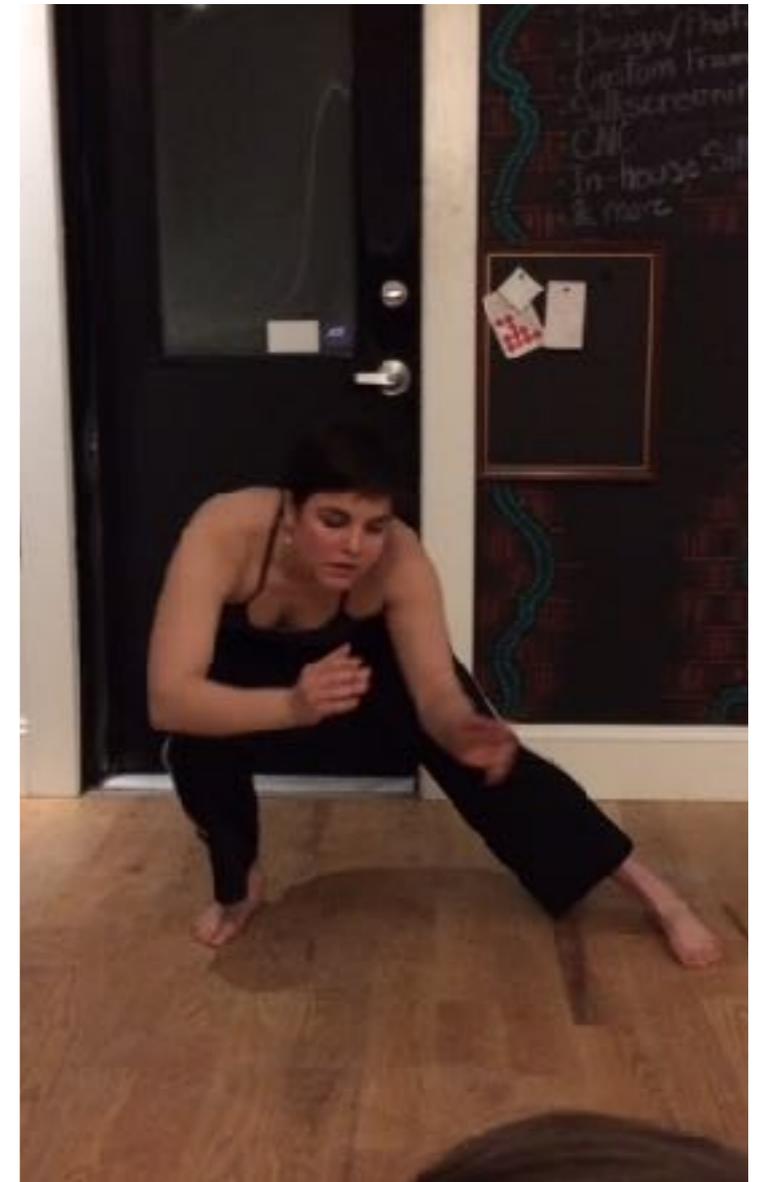
Some of the events over the past year include; *Take Back the Night* events in

September of 2017; the City of Ottawa's Recovery Day September of 2017; the Bank of Canada's Community Info Fair last October; a presentation to the U of Ottawa's Law Faculty students in November; the Royal Ottawa's November 2017 Women in Mind conference information fair; Alterna Savings Crackup the Capital Snowmania event in February 2018; the International Women's Day Femmy Awards information evening held at Lansdowne Park; and She's the Change inaugural event in March of 2018. There were several other events as well including dance performances and informal meetings, among others.

As well, community relations work has included recruiting of our first student from the Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement. The Centre was able to match Amethyst with a student volunteer interested in doing research on potential funding sources. Student Dawn Curran, was a joy to work with, and the research and proposal writing information she gathered during her months at Amethyst are much appreciated. Throughout the year, there have also been several opportunities to engage with students interested in touring our facilities and learning more about Amethyst's work. It's always great fun to see and meet bright young faces, and to witness the eagerness with which they want to make a difference in this world.

The upcoming year 2018 looks promising as I work to consolidate some of the ideas contained in the Communications Strategy related to communications and outreach in the hopes of reaching out to more women and community members interested in our services or in supporting our work.

Lois Ross, Coordinator



embarrass yourself
for a good cause

KARAOKE NIGHT

in support of Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre's
annual client holiday celebration.
We are looking for **cash donations** & **unwrapped gifts** for our
clients this holiday season. Bring what you can!



DECEMBER 1ST, 2017
SHANGHAI RESTAURANT
651 SOMERSET ST W
7:00 PM



Amethyst's Early Childhood Development Program is a bilingual program, offering services both in English and French.

The services we currently offer include: counselling, referrals, and case management to pregnant and parenting women with addictions and mental health issues. There is also an emphasis placed on guiding these women to develop their autonomy and take charge of their lives in order to leave the dangerous context in which they are living in.

Often, this aid also means helping children raised in this environment. Our treatment tasks consist primarily of delivering long-term counselling, facilitating support groups, offering long term addiction and mental health treatment and offering interventions to multicultural and diverse groups of women suffering from abuse, sexual abuse and trauma. We regularly testify in Court in relation to the counselling we deliver to these clients, and we also participate in

joint meetings to support women offenders from various correctional services (provincial and federal).

The responsibilities for the Early Childhood Development Program include: one-on-one counselling; facilitating the Intensive Program at Amethyst; facilitating support groups; and advocating for client's rights. The majority of clients in this program are mandated by the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa as well as the legal system. This year we're seeing an increased number of pregnant women with complex mental health and substance use issues.

Finally, we facilitate counselling in partnership with the Children's Aid Society in order to create long-term care plans. We have been practicing interventions and counselling to women who, for many years, have been struggling and coping with various traumas and challenges. Counsellors involved in this program strongly value the work involved and their contribution of offering guidance,

structure, and care to those in need. Through this program we also do community capacity building to support young families with addictions. We continue to work closely with our partners: Rideauwood Addiction & Family Services; St. Mary's Home; The Royal; Children's Aid Society of Ottawa; Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health; the Canadian Mental Health Association; and the Montfort Hospital.

Nadine Letang, Case Manager
Marlia Biggart, Counsellor

During the past year, Amethyst's Health Promotion Program has reached out to 305 people. The Health Prevention Program is a bilingual program with workshops given at times in English and other times in French.

In 2017, the Health Promotion Program extended its activities in immigrant communities while diversifying its services and reinforcing its partnership with the francophone community. Besides its Women and Wellness Program, based on addiction prevention and harm reduction, the Health Promotion Program developed and provided Opioid Prevention workshops in response to the opioid crisis. These workshops helped to inform and educate marginalized populations about opioids and harm reduction. In partnership with Ottawa Public Health, workshop participants also had access to Naloxone kits. This experience has been very successful and very valued by participants.

The Health Promotion Program is in the process of evaluating its programs to better respond to the needs of its target populations. So, in partnership with the University of Ottawa's Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement, we are conducting a needs assessment with our community partners.

We have several partners who help us to facilitate workshops. Included in these partnerships are: Partners Ottawa Public Health; The Well; Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre; Oasis Program at Sandyhill Community Health Centre; Lowertown Community Resource Centre; Centre Espoir Sophie and UOttawa.

Below are comments from the women who have participated in our Women and Wellness Programs and the Opioid Prevention Workshops during the past year.

- **“I learned how to affirm myself and try change in my life.”**
- *“I did not know anything at all about opioids. So, I found out what opioids are — very helpful information.”*
- **“It is and was a huge blessing for me to be able to come for support. Thank you so much for helping us and all the encouragement, and great, great kindness.”**

- *“I learned that opioids are addictive, sold on the street, and that some doctors prescribe opioids like Tylenol.”*
- **“I learned about Naloxone and how to detect if someone is in overdose.”**
- *“I learned how opioids are introduced, how I can prevent harm, and about the role of Naloxone.”*
- **“I have learned how to be happy, to respect myself more, and how to stand up for myself. It was very motivational and a joyful experience.”**

Jeannette Muzinga, Coordinator

Amethyst continues to be a much sought-after placement by students from various programs at various institutions.

During the past year, we have expanded our opportunities for student placements by recognizing the role that students can play in various parts of the organization beyond the treatment program. Of particular interest is our recent partnership with the Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement in which students across programs at the University of Ottawa volunteer their time with local organizations on projects of interest and necessity. So far, we have had the opportunity to engage in two separate research projects that have really benefitted the work being done at Amethyst.

In addition, we also were fortunate to have two students from Carleton University join our Treatment Team between May and December. Kailey Brennan and Monika Banel were tremendous assets to Amethyst and

offered incredible knowledge, wisdom, and skill.

To all the students who choose Amethyst, thank you. We benefit tremendously from your time here, and your energy and ideas continually shape the work we do.

Gundel Lake, Counsellor

Testimonial

“Thank you so much for making this student practicum such a powerful, safe, rich and wonderful experience for me. You have each taught me so many things about working collectively, holding space, being in community with other women, self-care and so much more. I have felt respected by all of you — you each have taken time for me in your busy days and it has meant so much to me to get to feel

like a part of this team and the beautiful work that you do together. I know that I am a better practitioner, ‘better’ feminist, and better person for the lessons you have taught me and I could not be any more grateful to you all! The work that Amethyst does for this community is so essential and it comes from this wonderful team that dedicates their time both collectively and individually to asking the right questions, putting ‘ego’ aside, and putting the folks who come here for support at the forefront.

Keep asking the ‘right’ questions! I am forever grateful and deeply honoured!”

Kailey, 2017 student placement

One of the most popular programs at Amethyst is 'Art Days'. What started many years ago as an informal and occasional gathering has evolved into a very important and alternative space for connection.

Approximately every two months, we develop an art-based activity that is done in a group setting, with particular attention to budget restrictions and varied skill sets. This year we have made shelves out of popsicle sticks, felted wall hangings, mala-inspired meditation bracelets, and quilted placemats.

Art Days have inspired us to notice the therapeutic value in activities that might otherwise not be recognized as "treatment" or "therapeutic". What we have witnessed is that the opportunity for connection in a sober environment where women can explore their creative selves is quite vital to many women. For various reasons, many women have never had much opportunity to explore their creative selves, but Art Days offer an alternative way of exploring and expanding women's relationships with themselves.

We learn a lot both about various creative activities and ourselves. We laugh a lot during these sessions. And perhaps most importantly, we foster new relationships by supporting and encouraging ourselves and each other.

Gundel Lake and Marlia Biggart, Counsellors

quilting 101:

Tuesday March 20th, 10am-2pm
watch for the sign up sheet





Fiscal year ending March 31st 2018

Board of Directors

Elizabeth Momodu - Chair; Christiane Saad - Vice-chair; Kim Kealey - Treasurer; Dana Kuehl - Secretary; Hala Migahed - Director; Wagenda Sylvestre - Director; Melissa Rodgers - Director; Nicole Morin - Director; Ex officio - 2 Staff Members (rotation)

Counsellors

Nighat Ara; Marlia Biggart; Linda Blot; Elke Keating; Elise Harris; Gundel Lake; Nadine Letang

Staff

Jocelyn Bigras - Administrator; Allie James - Catalyst Input Worker; Claire Lacelle - Intake Worker; Jeannette Muzinga - Health Promotion Coordinator; Lois Ross - Community Relations Coordinator; Carol Wu - Coordinator

Clients at Admission

Client - Alcohol/Drug	349
Client - Alcohol/Drug/Gambling	2
Client - Gambling	8

Problem Substance Identified at Admission

Alcohol	269
Tobacco	189
Cannabis	89
Cocaine	53
Crack	46
Prescription opioids	37
Benzodiazepines	10
Other	51

(*Other substances identified include amphetamines and other stimulants, over-the-counter codeine preparations, heroin/opium and ecstasy.)

Income Source at Admission

Employment	130
Employment Insurance	6
ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program)	68
Disability Insurance	36
Ontario Works	7
Retirement Income	15
Other	12
None	8
Family Support	27

Language of Service at Admission

English	286
French	69
Other	4

Education at Admission

No formal Schooling	1
Some Primary School	1
Primary School	4
Some Secondary or High School	43
Completed Secondary or High School	47
Some Community College, CEGEP Technical College, CE	34
Completed Community College, Technical College, CE	78
Some University (Not completed)	50
University Degree Completed	101

Legal Problems at Admission

No	322
Yes	37

Number of clients and visits per program

English and French clients served	509
Substance Abuse Program - visits	3,389
Problem Gambling Program - visits	159
Intensive Treatment Program participants (English and French)	62
Health Promotion and Awareness /Substance Abuse and Problem Gambling - visits	1,531
	5 groups
Sexual Abuse Support Program	2 groups with 21 women
Enriched Play Care - visits women and children	100

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Pages 1, 7, 8, 12,13 – Lois Ross

