



Families for
Addiction Recovery

Annual Report
2023-2024

Who We Are



Families for Addiction Recovery (FAR) was founded in 2016 by parents with lived experience supporting young teenagers with substance use disorders (SUD).

Our Programs

FAR provides three free peer support services for family caregivers across Canada: the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Program, online family support groups, and a live telephone support line. All FAR volunteers receive extensive training in The Invitation to Change Approach developed by CMC: Foundation for Change. It is a non-confrontational, compassionate and evidence-based approach that combines Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), Motivational Interviewing, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

Our Mission

The mission of Families for Addiction Recovery is to support families affected by substance use disorder (SUD), educate about SUD, advocate for protective health laws and protective drug policies, research the impact of SUD on families, protect our families from the legal and illegal drug trades and end stigma. Our vision is long term recovery for those with SUD and their families.

Our Research

FAR partners with educational institutions and others to advance research to raise awareness of the plight of families affected by addiction and how to remove barriers to improving outcomes for those with SUD and their families.

Our Education/Awareness

FAR engages in many education and training initiatives focused primarily on health care providers and family caregivers, but also for the broader community. These conference presentations, webinars and workshops cover a range of topics relevant to families affected by SUD. These topics include raising awareness of SUD as a preventable and treatable illness and of systemic barriers, including policies and practices, to improving outcomes for those with SUD and their families. FAR champions family-centred care to ensure that caregivers are respected and supported in these roles within the healthcare system and that their needs are met.



FAR also creates public service announcements that play on conventional and specialty television stations across Canada to millions of viewers to raise awareness of SUD as a treatable illness that can affect any family, to reduce stigma and raise awareness of our free services to support families.

Our Advocacy

FAR meets with all levels of government to discuss barriers to improving outcomes for those with SUD and their families. These barriers include the lack of compassionate, evidence-based treatment on demand, current drug policies regarding illegal drugs as well as the regulation of legal drugs, and health laws relating to consent/capacity, privacy and involuntary treatment.

FAR has been on several panels and workgroups of Toronto Public Health with respect to the Toronto Drug Strategy and its implementation, as well as to develop a model of decriminalization of drugs for personal use for the City of Toronto.



What We Achieved

214

Caregivers Supported in
Our P2P Program

Calls to Our Live Phone
Line Answered

632

1,700

Hours of P2P Support
Provided to Caregivers

Caregivers Attended Our
Bi-Weekly Online
Support Group

258

Our Service Impact in Numbers

During our 2023-2024 fiscal year, our 26 trained peers supported 214 caregivers in our P2P program, answered 632 calls to our live phone line, and 258 caregivers attended one of our bi-weekly online support groups. Each caregiver in our P2P program receives 8 hours of support, generally over a three-month period. This means that FAR's P2P Program provided over 1,700 hours of support to caregivers.

Our Service Impact in Words

“ I would love to see this organization grow and be promoted by medical professionals. Given the growing need to support those with addiction and the deadly street drugs available, this supportive organization may be the best antidote. ”

“ I reached out to FAR Canada upon the suggestion of my EAP therapist. I was struggling in my efforts to support my young adult daughter who has been significantly challenged by addiction, and in managing my own emotional and mental wellbeing as a result. My initial email was responded to quickly and I had an in-depth phone conversation with Sydney. I immediately felt heard and supported by someone who has walked the journey of a Mom of a struggling child. From there I attended their support group which was tremendously helpful, non-judgmental [sic] and removed that feeling of isolation. A sense of understanding and comradery [sic] existed in the group. I later had phone sessions with a wonderful peer support who shared her wisdom and compassion. FAR came into my life at a time I felt broken and their support helped me to stand up again with new ideas and helpful information and support. The FAR volunteers are to be commended for supporting parents through dark times and providing hope for a brighter future. ”

“ These sessions were immensely purposeful. Repeatedly, I found myself feeling grateful that I discovered the existence of this organization. I only wished I had known of FAR sooner. Dealing with a child experiencing addiction, I felt lost. I gained indispensable knowledge from My Peer Support Sessions, as well as confidence to help my child through the difficult journey towards recovery. My peer support person was professional, compassionate, flexible and personable. She offered useful suggestions, advice and resources. The sessions offered me peace within myself, knowing that I was offering the best possible support for my child. ”

2023 - 2024 Research

FAR collaborated on a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded partnership grant with Dr. Toula Kourgiantakis from Université Laval on youth and young adult cannabis use. The aim of this study was to better understand how cannabis is affecting youth and young adults from the perspectives of young people under 25, parents and service providers.

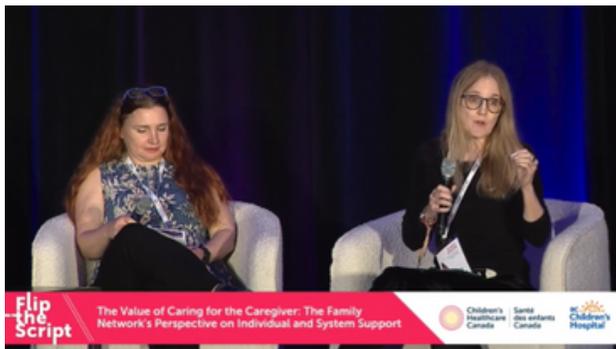
FAR is engaged in ongoing research through a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funded study with Dr. Oona St-Amant from Toronto Metropolitan University, along with co-investigators from CAMH, Western University, and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. It is called “Families Responding to Substance Use Disorders: A Community-Engagement Study to Promote Family-Centred Public Health Policy and Health Service Delivery”, and aims to identify policies, practices, and health laws that affect family caregivers. Using participatory action research, the study will develop family-centred recommendations to promote social change and better support families affected by SUD through innovative policies and practices.

FAR is also engaged in ongoing research with Drs. Brynlea Barbeau and Oona St-Amant on a study at Sault Area Hospital, testing an intervention co-designed by FAR to engage affected family members at the point of hospitalization. The intervention integrates CRAFT principles and evidence-based peer-to-peer support strategies created and implemented by FAR. Ultimately, this study will test the effectiveness of community-supported family intervention for persons with SUD.

2023 - 2024 Education / Awareness

For Healthcare Providers

The results of FAR’s cannabis research study were presented at the 2023 Canadian Society for Addiction Medicine Conference, as well as the 2023 Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) conference, and an article is currently under review in a peer-reviewed journal entitled “Reducing the harms of cannabis use in youth post-legalization: Insights from Ontario youth, parents & service providers”.



Sydney Graham, FAR’s Support Services Manager, participated in panels and presented at the Children’s Healthcare Canada Conference in Vancouver on Caring for the Caregiver and on FAR’s peer support services.

FAR presented on “Keeping Families Together” at the First Annual Nova Scotia Adolescent Addictions Conference in Halifax.

FAR addressed the Dalhousie Pediatric Grand Rounds on “Youth with SUD: Impact and Policy Challenges” regarding “A family perspective for health care providers”.

FAR addressed medical students at the University of Toronto during their Addiction Medicine Week regarding the experiences of family members of those with SUD and how physicians can help those with SUD and their families.

FAR gave a presentation to Masters of Nursing students at Toronto Metropolitan University on the impact of SUD on the family.

For Caregivers

FAR gave a webinar on “How to talk to your kids about substance use” for Sober Kids Canada.

“Addiction - A Family Disease: How to Support a Loved One” was presented to CMHA Durham.

Other

FAR launched a new public service announcement, “When I Grow Up”. It addresses stigma and brings hope by raising awareness that SUD is a treatable illness which can affect anyone and that no one wants to struggle with addiction. It has been seen by millions of viewers across Canada on conventional and specialty television stations thanks to the generosity of broadcasters who donate air time to our cause.



FAR joined with community partners for International Overdose Awareness Day at Toronto City Hall and spoke on the impact of the drug poisoning crisis on families and arranged for the “Toronto” sign at City Hall as well as the CN Tower to be illuminated in purple.

The Chair of FAR’s Education Committee, Doug Hunter, represented FAR at the Working on Wellness (WOW) Festival in Ottawa.



FAR received the Proclamation of the Mayor of Toronto declaring September 30th as Recovery Day for the City of Toronto and arranged for the “Toronto” sign at City Hall as well as the CN Tower to be illuminated in purple.

FAR met with the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario regarding two audits currently being conducted; one on Child and Youth Mental Health and the other on the Opioid Crisis.

FAR’s Executive Director was a member of the Expert Advisory Panel of the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health regarding his 2023 Report, “Balancing Act: An All-of-Society Approach to Substance Use and Harms”.

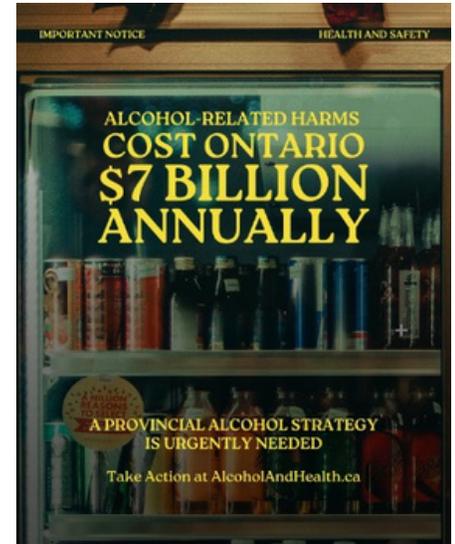
2023-2024 Advocacy

FAR joined many community partners to advocate for the federal excise tax on alcohol to be increased in accordance with the inflation rate as intended by the federal government.

FAR also joined community partners to request that the Ontario government develop a provincial alcohol strategy to mitigate the harms of alcohol particularly given the expedited expansion of retail sales in Ontario.

Together with the Canadian Cancer Society, The Ontario Public Health Association and The Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation, FAR launched an alcohol advocacy website “alcoholandhealth.ca”.

FAR made a joint submission with Dr. Toula Kourgiantakis from Université Laval to The Cannabis Act Legislative Review Committee with recommendations to reduce the harms of cannabis based on their joint cannabis research.



Our Financials

Our revenue and expenses for the last two years are set out below. Our revenue from donations is down by \$44,000 because we received a generous grant of \$50,000 in our 2022-2023 fiscal year from the Petro-Canada CareMakers Foundation. Otherwise, our donations are up by \$6,000 (10%) to over \$65,500.

The fair market value of the airplay of our public service announcements, recorded as gifts-in-kind, increased by \$114,000 (10%) to over \$1,300,000. Administrative expenses remain low at \$6,800.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses and Net Assets

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	Note	Year ended March 31	
		2024	2023
Revenue			
Donations			
Foundations		\$ 20,249	\$ 68,791
Individuals		45,327	40,912
Other		-	41
		<u>65,576</u>	<u>109,744</u>
Gift-in-kind - Public Service Announcements	2	1,305,886	1,191,606
Gain (loss) on sale of donated marketable securities		-	(874)
Interest income		3,316	802
		<u>1,374,778</u>	<u>1,301,278</u>
Expenses			
Program			
Education and awareness	2	1,327,545	1,246,290
Family support services		22,893	12,253
Telephone support line		15,220	9,018
Professional development		545	1,521
		<u>1,366,203</u>	<u>1,269,082</u>
Non-program			
Administration		6,801	8,128
Professional fees		5,189	2,905
		<u>11,990</u>	<u>11,033</u>
Total expenses		<u>1,378,193</u>	<u>1,280,115</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses (expenses over revenue) for the year		(3,415)	21,163
Net assets, beginning of year		121,101	99,938
Net assets, end of year		<u>\$ 117,686</u>	<u>\$ 121,101</u>

What We Envision

As we look to the future, we are excited to prepare papers for publication and presentation on the learnings from our study on youth and young adult cannabis use, as well as our research to identify policies, practices, and health laws that affect family caregivers to those with SUD. We are looking forward to commencing our study at Sault Area Hospital to engage affected family members at the point of hospitalization.

We will continue to support caregivers to those with SUD in every way possible to the best of our abilities and as our resources allow.

Contact Us



For further information, please reach out to us



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