

Inspiring Trust in Transformation

Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Barbra Schlifer 
Commemorative Clinic

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2023/24 - 2025/26

Vision Statement

We envision a world where women and gender diverse people live free from violence and discrimination.

Mission

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic offers trauma-informed legal services and representation, counselling and multilingual interpretation, and drives system transformation to support women and gender diverse people who have experienced violence.

Rooted in the foundations of intersectionality, innovation, and a client-centred approach, we foster the skills and resilience of the people we serve and amplify their voices to create individual and collective change.

Belief Statements

We believe:

1. Gender-based violence is an act of violence against women and gender diverse people that includes various forms of oppression such as racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism. Rooted in and perpetuating gender inequalities, it results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering. Gender-based violence may include financial, structural, or institutional abuse, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.
2. Gender-based violence happens in all cultures. It is an abuse of power, results in inequality, and affects all relationships through the generations.
3. Communities globally have worked and will continue to work together to stop gender-based violence. We honour, value and cultivate the work that has come before us in our commitment to finding sustainable solutions in the present.

Value Statements

We value:

Anti-Oppression, Anti-Racism and Feminism

We are a trauma-informed, intersectional feminist organization. The concept of intersectionality describes the ways in which systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, class and other forms of discrimination “intersect” to create unique dynamics and effects. Our work is guided by the experiences and struggles of underserved, Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities and movements against oppression, sexism, colonialism, racism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination.

Empathy

Our work is grounded in empathy and compassion for individuals’ dignity and safety, viewing the world from multiple perspectives with empathy in action. The concept of empathy requires the ability to actively listen, be curious and build relationships without judgment.

Self-Awareness

Our work is grounded in a reflective practice that continually examines power imbalances and builds our collective awareness and ability to work towards equitable responses and solutions. The concept of self-awareness is the ability to be reflective of one’s thoughts, emotions and behaviours to allow us to respond compassionately to others.

Partnerships and Networks

We work in partnership with local, national and global movements to amplify voices against systemic and structural oppression. We commit to respectful and reciprocal collaborations across many sectors.

Autonomy and Self-Determination

We respect and promote individuals’ autonomy to make the choices that are best for them as we support them in their journey to freedom from violence. We centre our services around people’s experiences and decisions.

Our 3-Year Vision

Through access to direct services, which include legal support, counselling, interpretation and connections to broader social services, we will support women and gender diverse people to build their lives free from violence and discrimination.

Our efforts in law reform and transformation of systems and supports will result in accessible and intersectional services that create more safety and dignity for the communities we serve.

The Clinic will remain responsive to emerging community needs through client-centred services, innovation and evolution, grounded in evaluation and an evidence-informed approach. The Clinic will continue to promote best practices to advance gender equity and rights.

As a gender-based violence expert, we will engage in partnerships locally and globally to transform laws and policies to respond to emerging needs and generate collective action.

Strategic Priority #1: Service Impact – Inspiring Trust with Community

Over the next three years, the Clinic will respond proactively and adapt to shifting trends and needs. We will engage with local, national and international experts and advisors to meaningfully embed evidence-based approaches and responses in our work.

The lived experiences and expertise of racialized and marginalized communities facing discrimination will inform and drive the changes ahead. We will broaden client outreach and engagement strategies to ensure their expertise keeps our services proactive and responsive.

The Clinic will continue to create an affirming place and inclusive service experience for gender-diverse communities who come through our door.

Deepening our existing wrap-around service model and trauma-informed approach, the Clinic will build partnerships and relationships to expand our services for unserved, underserved, and vulnerable populations across the continuum from youth to seniors. We will enhance our capacity to do in-depth risk assessment for high-risk situations. And we will strengthen our clinical work based on innovations and partnerships within Canada and internationally.

We will strengthen our links to community resources and create innovative service pathways beyond the Clinic's scope of service delivery for a holistic approach to care and support. We will also continue to invest in our intake services to create a better service experience.

We will provide survivors with services based on their choice of modality. To this end, using a hybrid model – which includes in-person, remote, and community-located services – the Clinic will always respond to the unique needs of each client and their environment.

Additionally, the Clinic will assess the impact of and promote its innovations, special projects, technology and social media strategies to transform the broader system and services. We will take a systematic approach to benefit-cost analysis for each program area to assess and maximize strengths for program design and impact.

We will continue to invest in intersectional evaluation to better reflect on and measure our long-term impact while devising strategies for continual improvement and learning.

We will monitor and assess the evolving hybrid environment of service delivery and organizational structures to respond most effectively to gender-based violence.

The Clinic will actively promote its best practices and feminist educational approaches to communities, service providers, and decision makers. Along with continued commitment to collaborative community education and partnerships with local, regional and national levels, the Clinic will share its unique expertise and evidence-based programming to support underserved communities. We will also explore the feasibility and sustainability of establishing new fee-for-service models.

Through both focused and broad knowledge-sharing of expertise in gender-based violence and legal rights, the Clinic will increasingly be recognized as a thought leader in the movement to end gender-based violence.

We will build trust and better meet the service needs of the community through the following strategies:

- A. Strengthen core programs and services for continued relevance, quality and outcomes with a focus on:
 - I. Deepening a commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression and intersectionality.
 - II. Increasing service access for people who are at-risk or high-risk and unserved or underserved.
 - III. Lowering barriers to service by using hybrid models, neighbourhood-based partnerships, and co-located flexible programs.
 - IV. Sustaining group programming and therapy to include education about rights.
 - V. Sharing knowledge Clinic-wide and centralizing resources, networks, tools, and referral sources.
- B. Promote and disseminate evidence-based best practices and frameworks of response to gender-based violence.
- C. Enhance trauma-informed evaluation practices for tracking internal and external service pathways to influence community outreach strategies and diversification of services.
- D. Collaborate with intersectional community-based organizations, researchers and practitioners to assess service gaps and to improve service response and innovation.

Strategic Priority #2: Transformational Change – Across Gender Justice, Rights and Equity

The Clinic will influence public policy and systems change and create spaces for people with lived experiences of gendered violence to mobilize for change.

As a result of the Clinic's grassroots strategic litigation and law reform work, key decision-makers will be aware of the impact of their decisions on the people we serve and, in turn, will inform effective policy options.

The Clinic will capitalize on its current work to influence governments at all three levels as well as UN international bodies. We will engage strategically in initiatives that further inform public policy for ending gender-based violence in each of these forums.

The Clinic will engage in knowledge-sharing nationally and internationally through publications, teaching and learning opportunities, and other creative educational initiatives.

Leveraging our partnerships and alliances, we will collectively respond to the global pandemic of gender-based violence. Ultimately, we will continue to advance Canada's international obligations concerning violence against women.



We will work towards positive systems change through the following strategies:

- A. Partner with local, provincial, national, and international coalitions, networks, institutions and bodies of influence to transform systems that support and build policies for participation, equality and justice.
- B. Engage with key law and policymakers, media and other influencers to advance and resource sustainable public responses to gender-based violence.
- C. Support local, provincial, national, and international movements that advance the rights of people with lived experiences of gender based violence.
- D. Proactively monitor and intervene in relevant legal cases connected to gender-based violence to advance intersectional rights at both lower and appellate courts

Strategic Priority #3: Organizational Strength – Responsive Leadership, Wellbeing, and Sustainability

People are the foundation of our journey to inspire trust and transformation. To this end, the Clinic will continue to cultivate a trauma-informed, anti-racist, inclusive, flexible and entrepreneurial culture. Putting people first, we will promote an environment of compassion, collaboration, and learning as we build the leadership of our Board, staff, and volunteers. With a focus on wellbeing, the Clinic will invest in initiatives that support diverse volunteer and staff teams to grow, learn and achieve their professional goals while meeting client needs.

We will invest in self-care practices, trauma-informed compassionate training and professional development that promote engagement, skills development and accomplishment among our employees. The Clinic will continue to build leadership from within our staff, students, and volunteers. We will engage our teams in interdisciplinary and cross-departmental activities and practice development that results in internal learning, mentoring, evaluation, sharing of data, and lessons learned.

The organization will adapt and develop its human resources and governance structures, systems and processes to support retention, succession, and growth. This includes piloting a hybrid model to support effective service delivery, staff wellbeing and operational efficiency.

We will continue to invest in innovative special projects and, where possible, adapt our service delivery model to integrate these programs into the Clinic's work. Successful innovations and emerging best practices will further shape program design as well as operational enhancements.

The Clinic will strive to strengthen its people, infrastructure and systems for greater service responsiveness with a focus on IT and facility use based on the community we serve and staff needs.

To effectively showcase our successes, impact and position as a responsive leader and champion for gender justice, rights and equity, we will design a compelling and clear social cause marketing campaign and outreach plan. We will ensure the Clinic's commitment to intersectionality, social change and expertise are recognized among diverse audiences.

As a result of strategic messaging and targeted promotion, government, funders, influencers, key stakeholders, media, donors, and community members will further recognize the Clinic provincially and nationally as a leader in the sector.

The Clinic will give voice to at-risk and distinct populations most in need, build its credibility and brand through the dissemination of its innovative work, and build the resources needed to invest in the solutions.

We will embed outcomes-focused strategies within a trauma-informed evaluation framework that records progress, results and impact across all functions and programs.

To enhance the organization's long-term sustainability, the Clinic will creatively diversify its funding through government, corporate, foundation, community, and individual giving. We will develop innovative and cost efficient fundraising strategies and best practices to ensure our stability, resilience and success.

Through compelling communications, we will engage our donors and funders and communicate the impact of our work in order to continue building a broad network of loyal supporters and revenue. We will inspire Board members, volunteers and corporate influencers to raise the profile of and increase public support for our important cause.

We will build on our existing social purpose enterprise, Interpretation Services Toronto, to generate independent revenue resulting in greater self-reliance. We will also explore the feasibility of establishing a knowledge centre that leverages the Clinic's expertise in a fee-for-service model.

We will ensure the organization has the capacity to achieve its goals through the following strategies:

- A. Strengthen our Board, staff and volunteers through professional development, wellness initiatives, succession planning, leadership development, and improved human resource strategies.
- B. Build the Clinic's long-term financial resilience and sustainability through creative and compelling fund development and fee-for-service opportunities.
- C. Promote the Clinic's important work and impact through knowledge-sharing and social cause marketing, positioning the Clinic as a leading organization that is trauma-informed and solution-driven.
- D. Invest in the Clinic 's infrastructure, systems, communication and internal collaboration to support service design and delivery, operational stability, and leading-edge policy governance.



Thank You!

To our Board of Directors for their leadership.

To the team, clients, volunteers and stakeholders for their support and participation.

To our consultants and editors for their guidance.