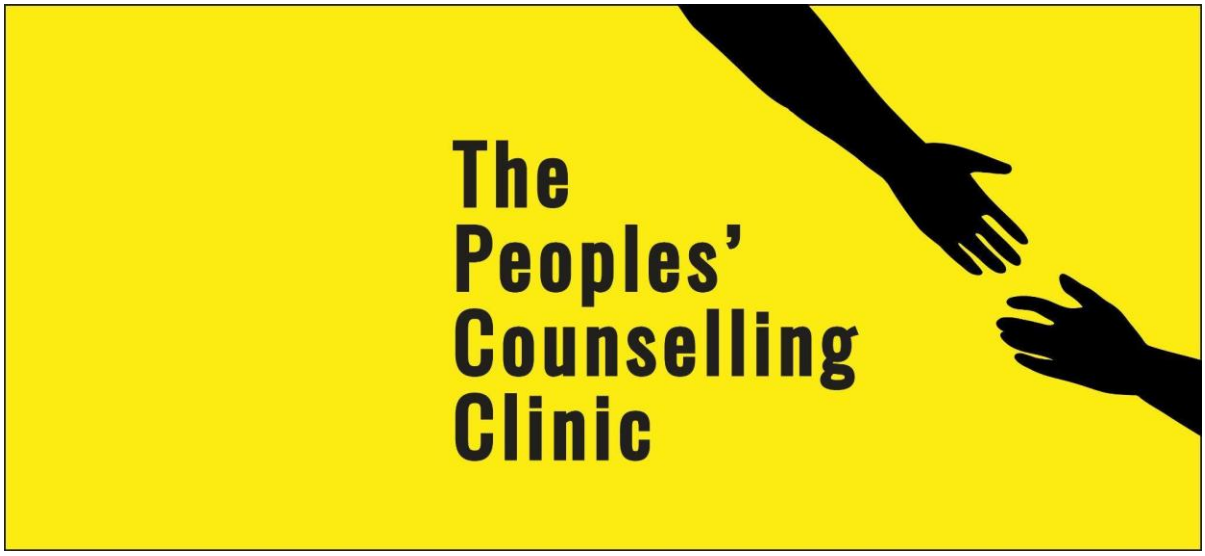


Accountability Report

2026

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1.0 A Note from the Executive Director

The growth of the clinic has been both exciting and overwhelming. We have gone from a staff of two in 2017 to eight currently. In the lifespan of the agency, we have moved three times. We are currently again coming up against the physical limitations of our space. Our growth has come because of the quality of the clinical work we do, which is only possible because of the skills and values of the people who come to join our team.

Our agency structure is focused on maintaining staff wellness. We offer weekly team meetings and open-door supervision so that staff can seek clinical guidance and process the ways the work affects us. We close the clinic twice yearly for two weeks to allow staff time to be well. We emphasize professional development and ensure our staff have ample opportunities to learn how to practice effectively.

Our programming has developed based on our competencies and the relationships we nurture with other agencies and systems. We have become trusted partners in various settings related to Justice, Mental Health, and Community Services. The programming described below has evolved organically over time and has recently resulted in funding commensurate with the work we do for the sectors we serve.

We have also regularly evaluated our programming and the performance of all staff, including myself. Some comments on our most recent evaluations and resulting action items are provided below. As I contemplate the next steps for staffing and programming at the clinic, I am also mindful that the key to the success of the agency is being able to attract and retain highly competent clinicians. To this end, in the coming months I will be reviewing and adjusting our compensation and benefits packages with the aim of remaining in alignment with clinical positions at other non-profits and larger institutions.

I am thrilled to be a part of the next phase of growth of the clinic. Looking back on our beginnings gives me a sense of awe and wonder. I also feel a bit sad about the weight of the system in which we work, and the ways it keeps people trapped. However, it is to shoulder some of this weight that the clinic was founded and continues to exist. Moving forward, whatever else we do, the clinic will commit to serving people whose needs are not met elsewhere. And we will do that proudly.

2.0 About the Clinic

The Peoples' Counselling Clinic is a registered non-profit, community based, free mental health clinic that provides direct services and public education focused on various issues including trauma, race, sex and gender. We work with underserved populations, including victims and perpetrators of sexual and intimate partner violence using a forensic mental health approach to practice. We have partnered with various Justice, Health, and community agencies to offer assessment, counselling, and case management services to people of all genders, although our focus has been on male-identified individuals. We conduct forensic assessments, including parental capacity assessments and voice of the child assessments, on contract with Government departments or with individuals.

Services are delivered by counselling professionals and students in a professional, supervised environment. Priority clients of the clinic are hard to serve, multi-problemed, often street-affected

individuals whose needs are currently being underserved by other systems and programmes. As a low-barrier, culturally competent and queer friendly space, the Clinic often provides services to racialized, queer, and marginalized clients.

We offer counselling services in a wide range of areas, including Trauma, including complex trauma stemming from severe abuse, neglect, racial violence, and other adverse childhood experiences; Patterns of abuse in relationships, including counselling for people involved in criminal Justice processes; Family of origin, attachment, and development; Sexual behaviour problems. We provide a confidential, supportive and safe space to help people heal and grow.

The clinic's links to public safety considerations are several: We employ and train forensic clinicians to work in the context of the intersection of law and mental health; our staff are experts in sexual and domestic violence; we regularly consult and train in prevention of crime and treatment of the harm caused by criminal behaviour.

Our Mission

We strive to create services that are safe, accessible, inclusive, responsive, innovative and relevant.

Our Vision

Societies and communities where all peoples enjoy equitable access to mental health and social services.

3.0 Activities

3.1 Programming

3.1.1 History

The Peoples' Counselling Clinic was born when our inaugural Executive Director, Robert Wright, took on an enthusiastic undergraduate Social Work student, James Dubé. Robert had run ManTalk and taken on counselling students in his private practice starting in 2011. In 2015, as James was finishing his BSW placement at that practice, Robert hired him for a few hours per week to expand the ManTalk and teaching clinic work. The branches of programming offered at the clinic all evolved in one way or another from the early activities of that expansion.

The Peoples' Counselling Clinic was incorporated in 2017, shortly after our first major programming expansion took place when we were invited to help form the Halifax Domestic Violence Court Programme. A few years after that, the first of several federal grants were

secured to expand the clinic's work. These were used to offer new programmes, to evaluate services offered, and to generate public information materials to support male victims of sexual violence.

Forensic assessments for child welfare and criminal courts were always a part of the work done at the clinic. Over the past decade, the clinic has become one of the few organizations that regularly conducts Parenting Capacity Assessments for the family courts. Robert designed and developed Impact of Race and Culture Assessments and eventually used the clinic to launch them more broadly. Around 2015, we began offering sexual behaviour assessments for local universities following some well publicized incidents of sexual violence on campus. At the same time, we started working with the criminal courts to offer clinical services for some kinds of sexual offenses. This work has recently gained momentum and is becoming a more structured Sexual Behaviour Assessment and Intervention Programme.

After incorporating, a leadership transition started to occur, and James eventually became our Executive Director in 2024. At that point we shifted toward seeking financial support for the work we do in community mental health (the teaching clinic) and this move resulted in greatly increased funding as government priorities shifted toward universal access to mental health services. We have completed two separate pilots with the Office of Mental Health and Addictions related to this effort and have informed the development of the larger system through these pilots.

3.1.2 Current Status

The programs we offer are designed to fill gaps in the system and are designed to address mental health and community needs through targeted and accessible services. These include:

- ManTalk, a group therapy program for male-identified victims of sexual abuse
- Inside Out a group therapy supporting male individuals who are concerned about their mental health and relationships.
- A free counselling clinic that functions as a low-barrier mental health service addressing a wide range of issues regarding mental health, addictions, trauma, sex, relationships and grief.
- A single-session therapy clinic helping access clients' immediate needs to develop both personal and structural solutions.
- Forensic assessment and treatment services, including Child Welfare, Family and Criminal Courts.
- Dedicated services for Black community members and agencies that support people of African descent.

- Wellness groups and individual therapy for participants in the Halifax Domestic Violence Court Programme.

3.1.3 Future Plans

Some highlights of our programming intentions moving forward:

- Continued partnership with OMAH on universal mental health services
- Continued partnership with DOJ on Halifax Domestic Violence Court
- Men's Symposium- hosted by The Peoples' Counselling Clinic in collaboration with International Families Alliance
- Sexual Behaviour Assessment and Intervention Programme
- ManTalk Family

3.2 Public Education

3.2.1 Conferences

Breaking Down Invisible Walls: Optimizing Engagement and Collective Impact
International Families Alliance- São Miguel, Azores, Portugal July 7-8, 2026

Our Executive Director, James Dubé and clinic manager Kim Gowan attended and represented The Peoples' Counselling Clinic at the 5th International Families Alliance, held in São Miguel, Azores, on July 7–8, 2026. Kim Gowan delivered a presentation titled "Challenging the Assumptions of How Forensic Systems Work with Youth," examining common misconceptions about forensic systems and high-conflict systems. James Dubé presented "Breaking Down Barriers to Engagement with Men and Boys in High-Conflict Situations: Strategies for Clinicians," sharing practical evidence-informed approaches to improving engagement with men and boys in complex family and forensic contexts. The clinics' continued engagement in this international conference strengthened our organization's profile as a leader in innovative clinical practice, fostered valuable professional partnerships, and contributed to advancing collaborative approaches and outcomes for families.

Men's and Boys' Mental Health and Wellness: Advancing Knowledge to Action
International Families Alliance - Toronto, Ontario, Canada November 6-7, 2026

We are sending 4 staff members to this conference and have been given a one-hour presentation slot to offer attendees a deeper look at the various programmes we offer to male-identified individuals. The presentation will be focused on our forensic services, as this is where we encounter the most men (as perpetrators and as victims).

3.2.2 Projects

- Abuse Against Men and Families: Integrating Theory, Research, and Practice. Book Chapter written by James Dubé, edited by Susan Chuang, published by Springer
- Specific Populations of Victims in the Justice System. Documentary produced in collaboration with IMOVe

4.0 Data Collection and Evaluation

4.1 Staff and Executive Director Evaluation

4.1.1 Staff Evaluation

The clinic facilitates a yearly staff evaluation process in which every staff member completes a self-assessment about their performance and long-term professional development goals. This assessment is discussed with the Executive Director in a formal meeting in which a plan is developed to support growth.

4.1.2 Executive Director Evaluation

An anonymous survey was used to evaluate the Executive Director in domains related to supporting staff wellness, professional development, and programming at the clinic. Results of this evaluation were used directly to inform policy decisions and the ongoing professional development of the Executive Director.

4.2 Financial Outlook

4.2.1 Current Funding

The clinic's primary source of funding for its free counselling clinic services is the Office of Addictions and Mental Health. The funding supports the delivery of free mental health services aligned with the government's Universal Access to Mental Health Services mandate.

The Nova Scotia Department of Justice houses The Halifax Domestic Violence Court, which provides funding specifically to support services for clients referred to the clinic through that programme. This funding supports the delivery of individual and group therapy programming for these referred clients. This past year, we have successfully received an increase in funding such that services offered are aligned with funding received.

The clinic also receives additional project-based funding through grants from Justice Canada to support specific initiatives and projects related to sexual and intimate partner violence.

In addition to grant and project-based funding, the clinic generates revenue through fee-for service activities, including specialized paid counselling services and forensic assessments. This significant revenue provides an additional source of funding to support the clinic's activities that are not covered by government grants.

4.2.1 Future Plans

There is a growing trend for non-profit agencies to try to compete for staff retention through increased salaries. We have enjoyed an incredibly low rate of staff turnover (3 people in total have left the agency in the past ten years). We offer a very competitive vacation and benefits package, and our agency structure is conducive to staff retention. However, should a salary gap widen, it may become necessary to address that to retain highly competent clinicians. To manage this risk, over the next year we will conduct an environmental scan of the sector and seek additional funding to raise salaries if appropriate.

4.3 Staffing

The clinic is staffed by our Executive Director, James Dubé; Clinic Manager Kim Gowan; Executive Assistant, Nina Ribac; three full-time Therapists, JJ Wilson, Chapa Pinnaduwa, and David Hinch; and two part-time Therapists, Michelle Chisholm and Natalia Castellanos.