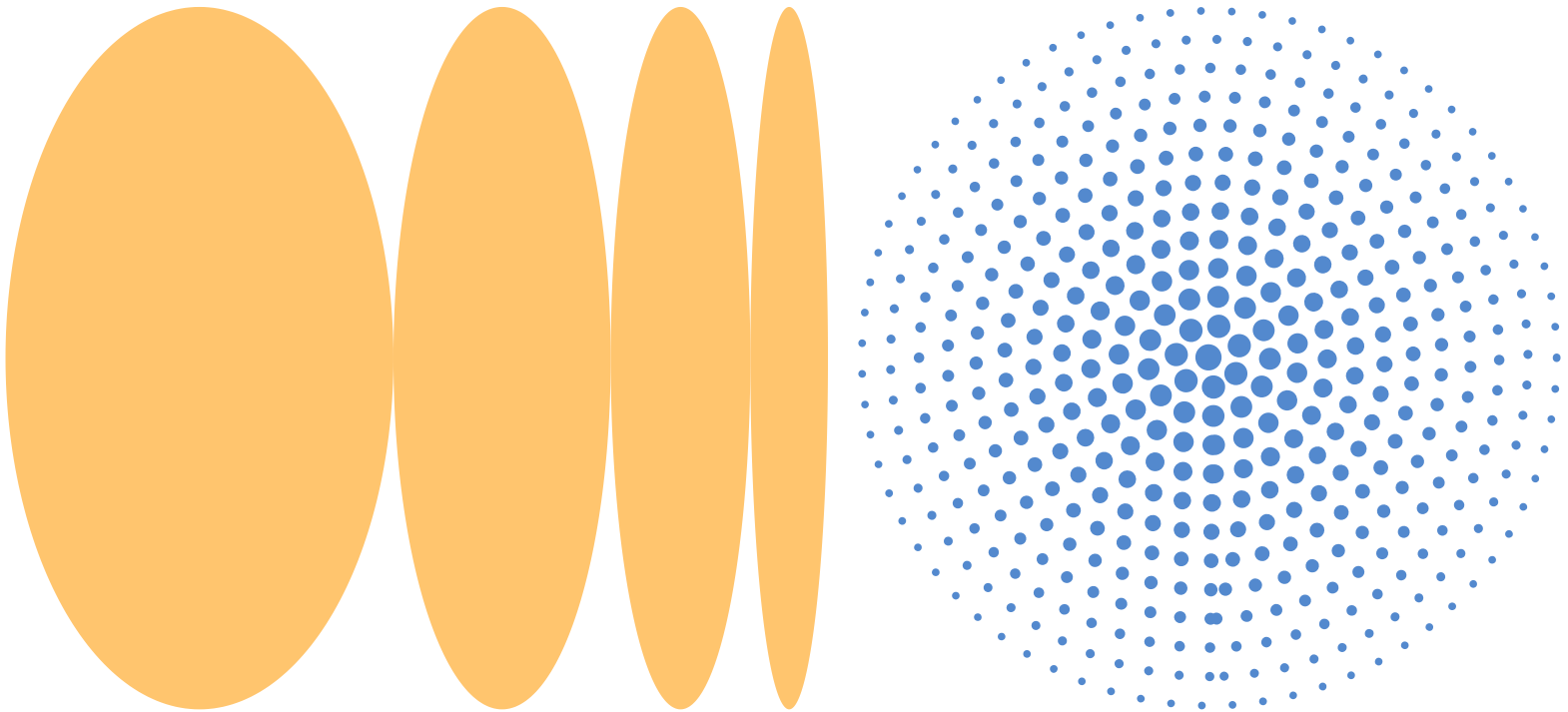




Annual Report

2025 - 2026



Our Members are here for you.



Who We Are

The Ontario Association of Distress Centres, operating as Distress and Crisis Ontario (DCO), is a provincial Association that primarily supports training, education, advocacy, and collaboration for distress centres across Ontario. We aim to build capacity within the distress and crisis sector by expanding our reach to support distress and crisis centres who offer specialized services to vulnerable populations.



MISSION

To be an association that is the recognized leader in promotion, collaboration, and building capacity within organizations that provide distress and crisis response.



VISION

To foster an environment of collaboration and networking while providing universal, 24/7, access to support for individuals in distress and crisis.



ACCOUNTABILITY



COLLABORATION AND
EMPOWERMENT



INCLUSION



INTEGRITY



LEADERSHIP



Message From the Executive Director

As we reflect on 2025/6, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication, compassion, and resilience that continue to define the crisis and distress support sector across Ontario. This year has once again demonstrated the critical importance of accessible, responsive, and human-centered crisis services in communities large and small.



At Distress and Crisis Ontario, we have continued to strengthen collaboration across our member organizations, partners, and stakeholders while navigating increasing complexity within mental health and social service systems. Demand for crisis support continues to rise, reflecting not only the ongoing impacts of trauma, isolation, grief, substance use, housing insecurity, and economic uncertainty, but also a growing willingness for individuals to reach out for help. Behind every call, text, and conversation is a person seeking connection, safety, and hope.

This year also marked continued growth and evolution within crisis response systems provincially and nationally. As communities adapt to new service pathways and increased awareness surrounding suicide prevention and emotional wellbeing, the role of distress and crisis services remains essential. Our sector continues to provide not only immediate intervention, but also compassion, dignity, and human connection during moments of profound vulnerability.



Message From the Executive Director (cont...)

I remain continually inspired by the frontline responders, volunteers, leaders, educators, and community partners who sustain this work each day. Crisis services are built on relationships—on the willingness of individuals to listen deeply, respond compassionately, and stand alongside people during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. The commitment of our member centres and sector partners continues to reflect the very best of community care.

This annual report highlights the collective accomplishments, partnerships, and innovations that shaped our work throughout 2026. It also reflects the strength of a sector committed to continuous learning, equity-informed practice, collaboration, and service excellence.

On behalf of Distress and Crisis Ontario, thank you to our member organizations, Interns, team members, Board of Directors, funders, and community partners for your ongoing leadership, trust, and commitment.

Together, we continue to strengthen crisis response systems that are compassionate, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of

Ontarians.

“It is an honour to serve as the Executive Director of Distress and Crisis Ontario (DCO).

-- Dr. Neta Gear, ED”

Neta Deonarain-Gear

Dr. Neta Gear

Executive Director
PhD, BA BSW, MAed. FM,
RSW #810749



Message from the Chair of the Board

The past year has continued to remind us how the challenges facing our communities do not stop at our borders. Global conflicts, economic uncertainty, social polarization, and rapid, often technology-catalyzed societal change, have increasingly local consequences, impacting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities across Ontario. These consequences leave many organizations navigating a difficult funding environment, creating additional pressures for a sector that is being asked to do more with fewer resources.

In this context, the work of distress and crisis services has never been more important. DCO remains committed to supporting the resilience and sustainability of our member centres and the sector as a whole through advocacy, relationship building, marketing, education, and meaningful data collection.

We are also pleased to see our community continue to grow. This year, we were proud to welcome LGBT YouthLine to DCO's membership, further strengthening our collective ability to support Ontarians through a diverse range of distress, crisis, and suicidality services.

None of this would be possible without the exceptional dedication of the eclectic team formed by our staff and Executive Director, whose expertise, vision, and commitment continue to move the organization forward. The association could not be in better hands. I am equally grateful to our Board of Directors for their leadership, insight, and stewardship.



Message from the Chair of the Board

Given all that, it only seemed right for Board and staff to come together to develop a new strategic plan designed to help DCO continue to adapt, meet emerging challenges, and seize new opportunities. Grounded in a shared vision for a strong, sustainable, and responsive sector, we have completed this work and positioned the association well for the years ahead.

Together, we will continue to support our members, strengthen our sector, and ensure that people across Ontario can access compassionate support when they need it most.



Benjamin Zaiser
Chair of the Board



Messages from DCO Staff

Caitlin Ennis | Operations Manager

Joining DCO has been an incredible experience and I am grateful for Dr. Neta Gear's steadfast leadership and genuine mentorship. With a background in health science and women's reproductive health research, supporting DCO's work to build capacity within the distress and crisis sector has been a new and rewarding experience.

Connecting with DCO's member centres and witnessing the life changing work they accomplish has demonstrated the need for equitable, inclusive, and accessible resources

to distress, crisis, and suicidality services. Moving forward, I aim to support our member centres through reimagined approaches and expand DCO's network to provide more resources to those who need it most.



Lexie Stewart | Program Coordinator



This year has been an exciting opportunity to contribute to DCO's work in new and creative ways. As Program Coordinator, I have enjoyed supporting initiatives that foster connection, learning, and collaboration across the distress and crisis sector. Working alongside such a dedicated and passionate team has made this experience especially rewarding. From helping to grow our webinars, to co-hosting the DCO Discourse podcast, and connecting with our community through social media, I have valued every opportunity to engage with our

members and partners. These experiences have reinforced the importance of creating spaces for knowledge sharing and meaningful dialogue. I look forward to continuing to support DCO's members while finding new ways to amplify voices, share resources, and strengthen connections across the sector.



Statistics, Information, and Outcome Measures (SIOM)

April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026



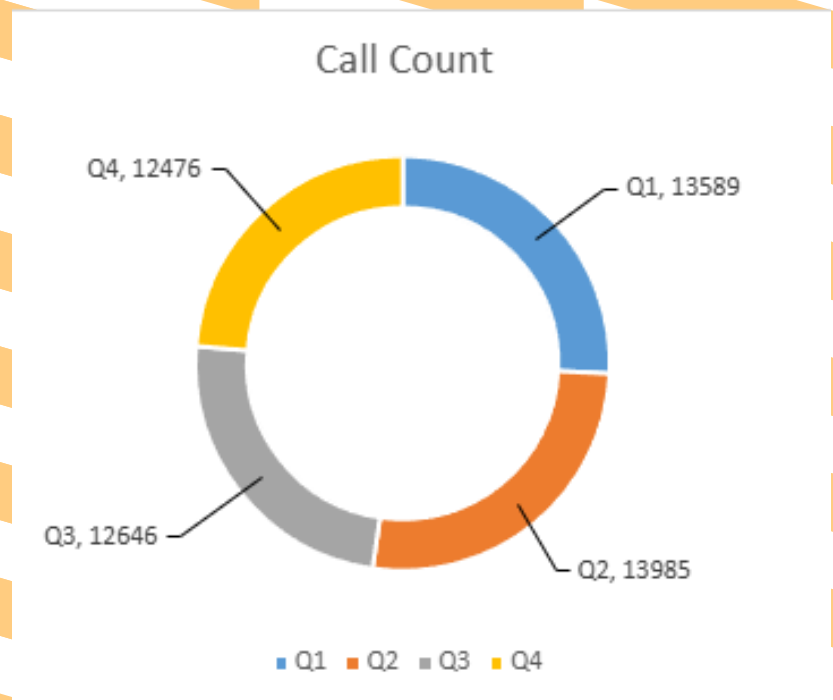
Participants:

Distress Centre Lanark, Leeds and
Grenville

Distress Centre Ottawa & Region

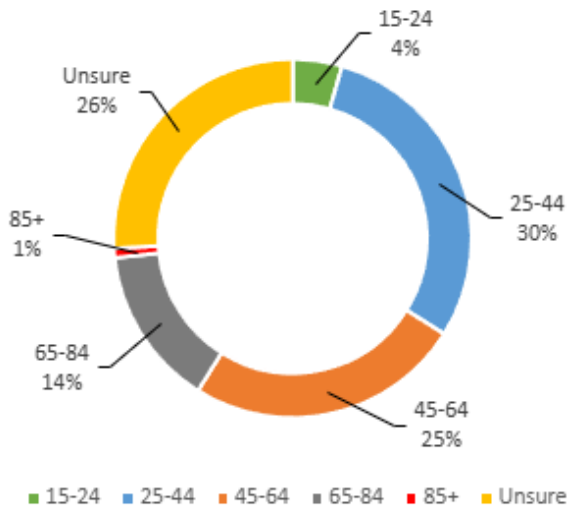
This annual year, we observed a decrease in call count of 33.9% relative to last year, however this year's data includes one less centre.

Call counts were relatively consistent this year. We observed a peak number of calls during Q2 before calls decreased in Q3 and Q4.



SIOM (cont'd...)

Age Range %



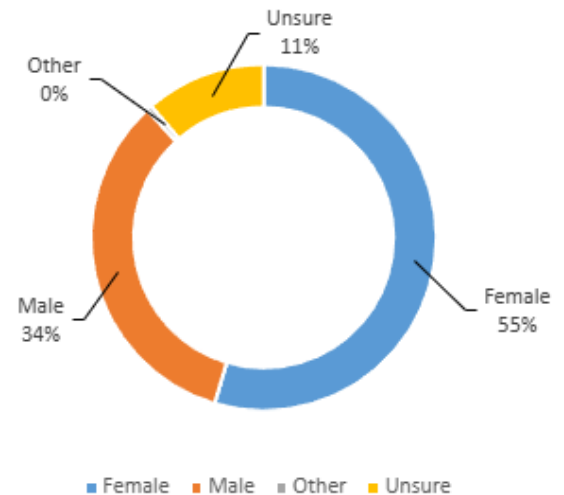
Age Range

For this fiscal year, we observed that callers aged 25–44 make up the most frequent callers, followed by cases where the caller’s age group was not identified. Those aged 45–64 represent the next most common group.

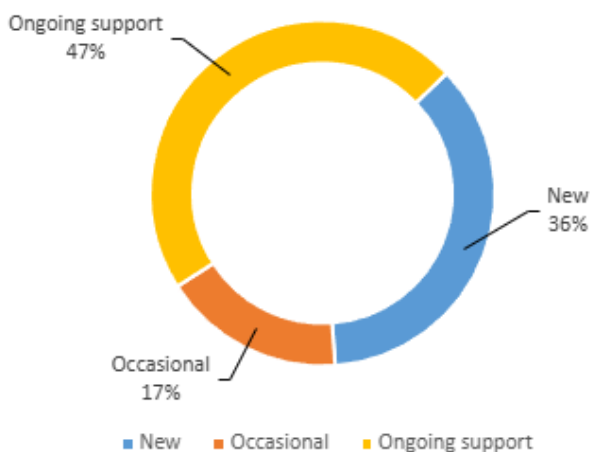
Gender

55% of all callers were identified as female this quarter, 34% were male. Less than 1% were other categories, and the rest were classified as unsure. This is a similar trend as last year.

Gender %



Caller Status %



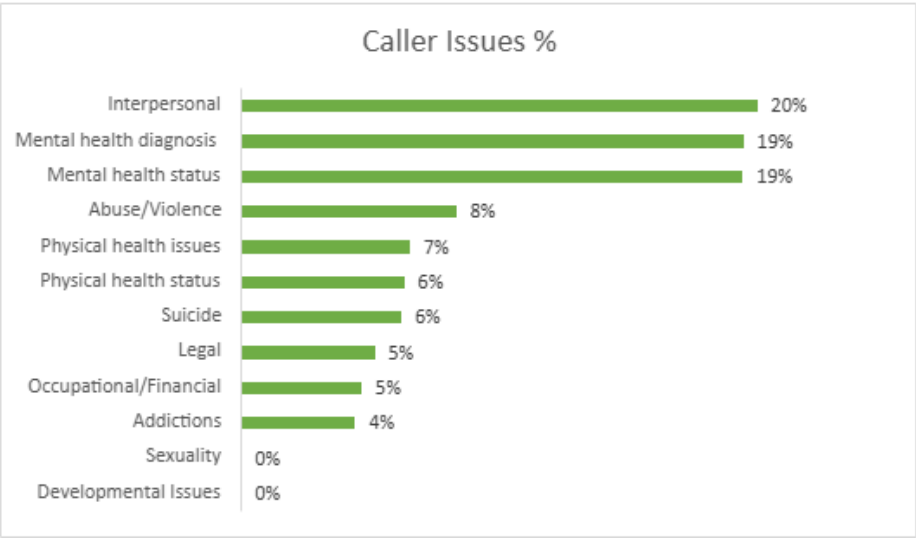
Caller Status

47% of all callers were receiving ongoing support from call centres as frequent callers, while 17% were occasional callers. Only 36% of all callers were new callers. This trend is consistent with last year’s annual results.



SIOM (cont'd...)

Caller Issues

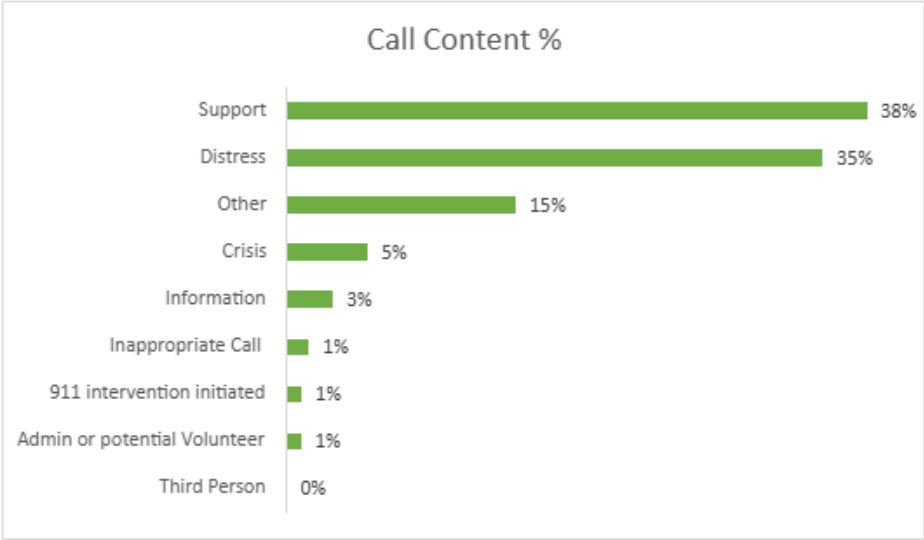


Interpersonal challenges are the most common caller issue this year, followed by mental health status and mental health diagnosis as the second and third most common issues. Abuse/violence has increased compared to last year and is now the fourth

most common caller issue. 6% of all calls are due to suicide risk, which is consistent with last year’s results. Overall, this trend is largely consistent with last year’s results, with some variation in the ranking of the top issues.

Call Content

This year, the majority of calls were related to support, followed by distress-related concerns, consistent with last year’s distribution. Calls that did not fall within the primary classifications increased significantly compared to last year and now represent the third most common category.

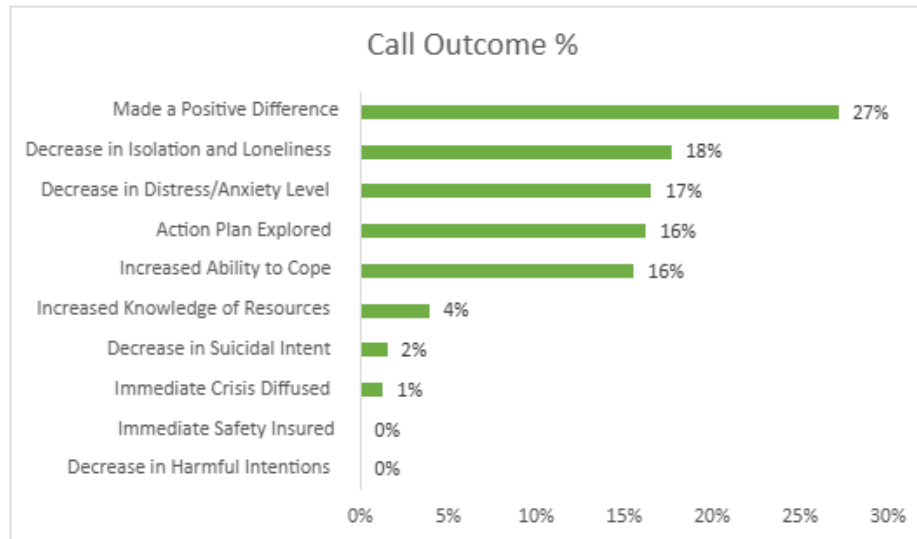


In contrast, inappropriate calls decreased significantly, while crisis-related calls showed a slight increase when compared to last year’s annual results.



SIOM (cont'd...)

Call Outcome



Calls resulting in a positive difference were the leading outcome this year, increasing significantly to account for 27% of all callers. **Calls resulting in a decrease in isolation and loneliness declined significantly** compared to last year but remains among the top reported outcomes. This could contribute to the increase in frequent callers (seen in Caller Status). The remaining outcome categories maintained the same order as last year's annual results.

Key Takeaways

1

Across 2 centres, **over 52,000 calls** were received and 27% of these calls made a positive difference.

2

20% of calls reported **interpersonal issues** as the primary issue while the amount of calls classified under Abuse/Violence increased compared to last year.

3

Almost half (47%) of all callers were receiving ongoing support from call centres while only 36% of callers were new.

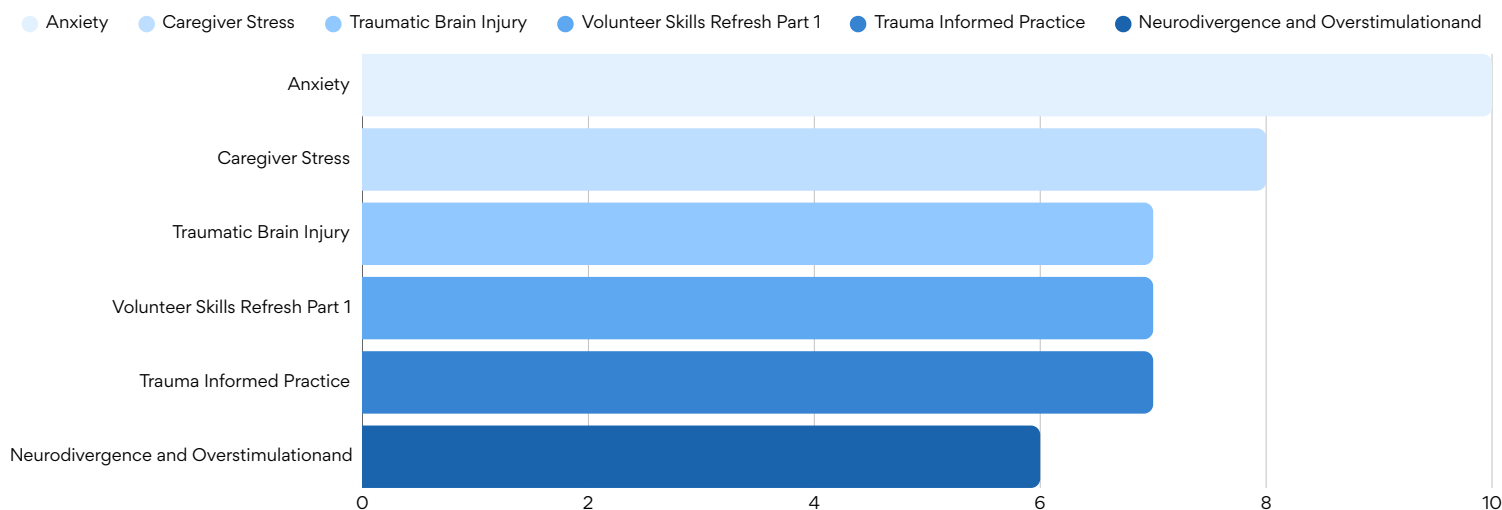


Learning Forum Analytics

Top 5 Learning Forum Modules

- 1 Anxiety
- 2 Volunteer Skills Refresh Part 1
- 3 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 4 Trauma Informed Practice
- 5 Neurodivergence and Overstimulation

Engagement by Product

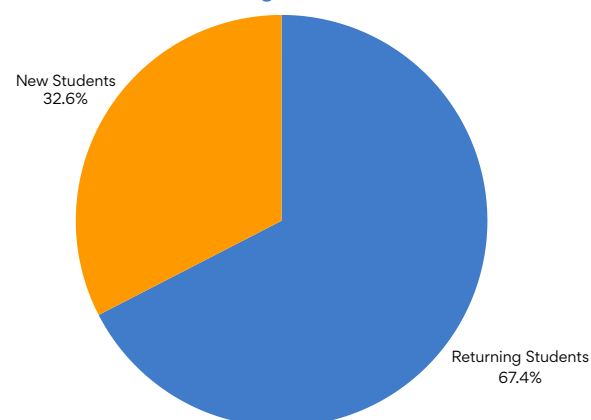


APRIL 1, 2025 - MARCH 31, 2026

96

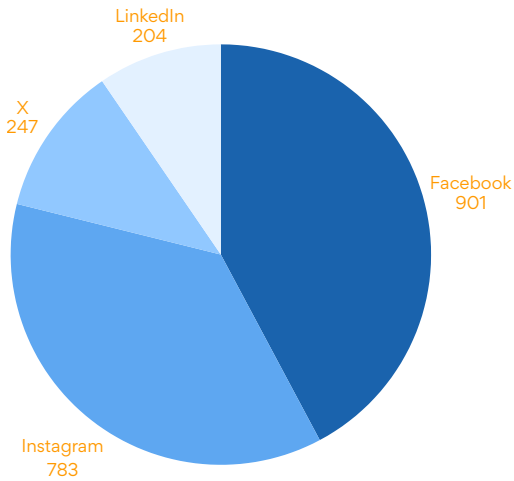
ENROLMENTS, 50% OF WHOM
HAVE FULLY COMPLETED THEIR
CHOSEN COURSES

Amount of Orders by New vs.
Existing Students



Social Media Analytics

Followers

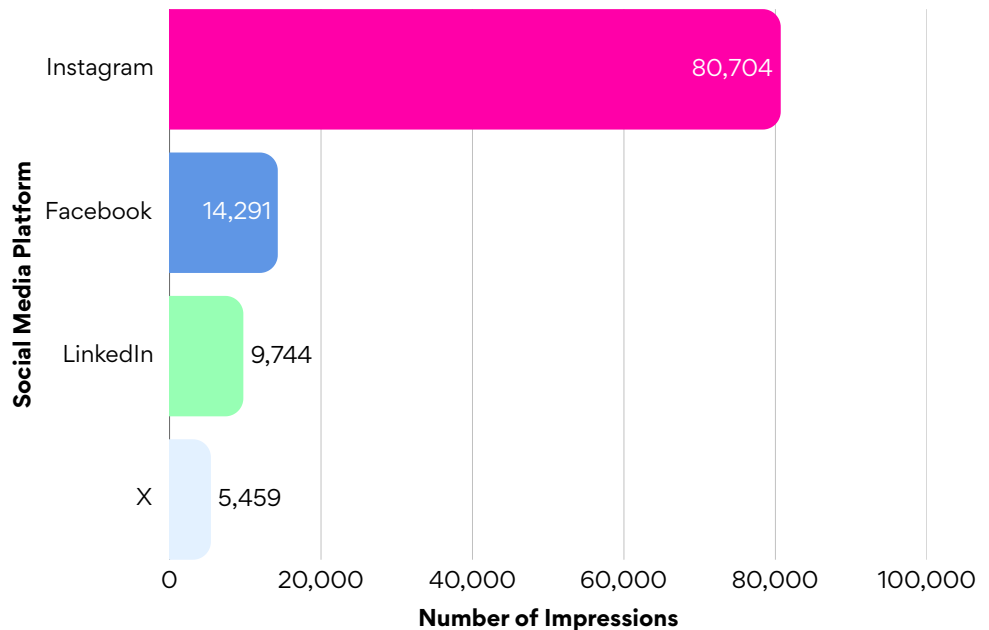


Follower Count

From April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026, DCO had a total following of **2135** individuals across our 5 social media platforms, an **8.6% increase** in overall followers compared to 2024-2025.

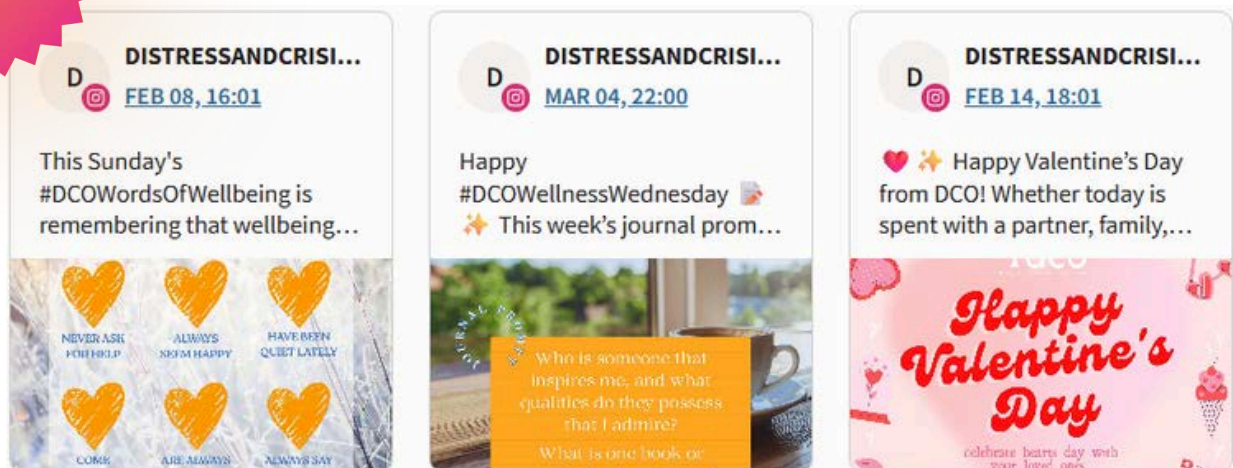
We reached a high of **110,198 post impressions**, which is the number of times our posts appeared on your screens. Compared to 2024-25, we observed a **140% increase** in post impressions.

Post Impressions



72.73% Engagement Rate

Top 3 Engaging Posts



The DCO Discourse... Podcast

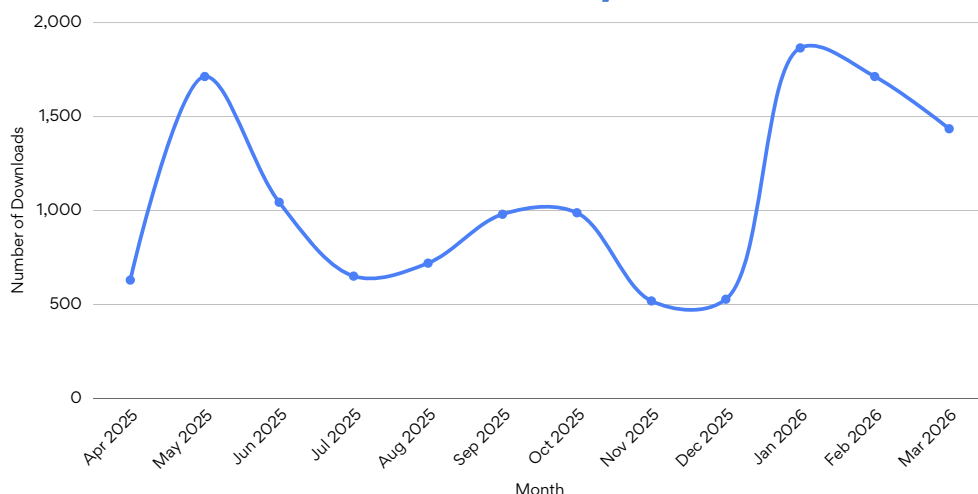
APRIL 1, 2025 - MARCH 31, 2026

12,786

DOWNLOADS, ACCOUNTING FOR 33% OF
OUR LIFETIME DOWNLOADS



DCO Discourse Monthly Downloads



We averaged **1065.5**
downloads per month
and as of June 2026,
we have achieved

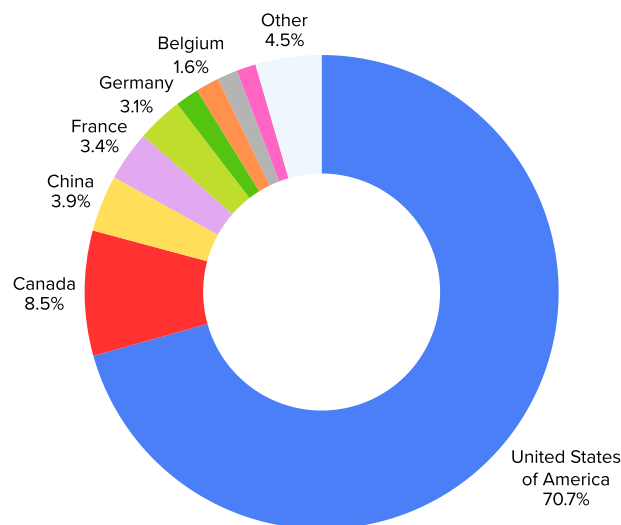
**38,553 total
downloads.**

Top 5 Podcast Episodes*

- 1 Episode 331: Stressed Out: How to Cope Before You Burn Out
- 2 Episode 364: On CPBAO's Cuts to Training for Psychologists
- 3 Episode 336: On Men's Mental Health and Why It Matters Pt 1
- 4 Episode 328: On Exploring the Heart of Distress and Crisis Ontario
- 5 Episode 371: On Women's Mental Health in a Culture of Comparison

*based on downloads per episode for the period of April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026

Podcast's Global Reach



Meet the Team



Caitlin Ennis

OPERATIONS MANAGER

I joined DCO in February 2026 and am incredibly grateful to work for an organization like DCO who is striving to make a difference in people's lives. With a background in health sciences and interest in health services research for reproductive care, I bring a unique perspective to this role. I oversee administrative duties, communications, and membership. I aim to strengthen DCO's relationships with its member centres and provide support to build capacity within the distress and crisis sector.

OPERATIONS
MANAGER



Lexie Stewart

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

I joined DCO as Program Coordinator in February 2026 and have really enjoyed getting involved in the organization's programming and communications work. In this role, I support a range of initiatives including the DCO Discourse podcast, webinars, Learning Forum development, and social media engagement. I'm especially interested in finding creative ways to connect with our member centres and share knowledge across the sector. I look forward to continuing to support the team in building accessible, engaging, and collaborative spaces for learning and connection.

PROGRAM
COORDINATOR



Madeline Bauzon

CONTENT CREATOR

My name is Madeline (she/her), but I go by Maddy for short. In my free time, I enjoy being with family and friends, playing soccer, rock climbing, shopping, and especially traveling! I recently graduated from the University of Waterloo with a double major in Psychology and Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF). I chose to work with DCO because I'm drawn to spaces that center care, advocacy, and mental health. Even though this role isn't face-to-face, I've come to value the impact that thoughtful, often invisible, work can have on someone's well-being. My journey with DCO began as a student intern and that experience solidified for me how important the work is at DCO and is why I chose to continue.

CONTENT CREATOR



Meet the Team (cont'd...)



Rifad Amjath

SIOM COORDINATOR

With a solid foundation in data organization and a keen interest in data analytics, I thrive on bringing structure and clarity to complex initiatives. I have chosen to work for DCO because I was drawn to its innovative work (SIOM project), which provides data insights on the impact of distress, crisis, and suicide intervention and prevention services.

SIOM COORDINATOR



Sabrina Popernitsch

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT CREATOR

I am a Registered Psychotherapist with a focus on psychoeducation and improving access to supportive mental health resources. My professional background includes work in mental health support, systems navigation, and education. I am committed to promoting accessible, informed, and empathetic responses in times of distress. I value clear communication, collaboration, and evidence-based practices in support settings. I am motivated by the organization's mission to provide responsive and inclusive support. Contributing to a service that prioritizes accessibility and community well-being aligns closely with my professional goals.

CONTENT CREATOR

Not pictured above:

Our Podcast Engineer - Damien Ragubance

Our Blog Author - Regan

Our Board of Directors - Benjamin Zaiser, Diwa Satkunanathan, Shri Kalyanasundaram, Elie Labaky, Sneha Sathaye



The Ontario Association of Distress Centres O/A Distress and Crisis Ontario

Statement of Financial Position

Docusign Envelope ID: DC7A3A65-C356-8FB5-80ED-A7C16B747E2D

The Ontario Association of Distress Centre

(Distress and Crisis Ontario)
Statement of Financial Position
(Audited - See Auditor's Report)

As at March 31, 2026

	2026	2025
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 195,817	\$ 169,366
HST receivable	1,841	4,542
Prepaid expense	2,167	19,193
GIC investment (note 3)	33,264	30,000
Total Assets	\$ 233,089	\$ 223,101
Liabilities		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 10,708	\$ 12,856
Employee deductions payable	9,422	3,468
Deferred revenue (note 4)	26,675	32,153
	46,805	48,477
NET ASSETS		
Internally restricted - contingency reserve	15,000	15,000
Internally restricted - strategic reserve	25,000	25,000
Unrestricted Net Assets	146,284	134,624
	186,284	174,624
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 233,089	\$ 223,101

Approved on behalf of the Board

Signed by: Mta Gar 207E30E11BC844E
Signed by: [Signature] Director
Signed by: [Signature] Director
AEA4EFB7F88445E

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

Rakesh Majithia CPA
Professional Corporation

3.



The Ontario Association of Distress Centres O/A Distress and Crisis Ontario

Statement of Financial Position

Docusign Envelope ID: D7AF849A-CB5C-8948-8295-83D170542BAB

The Ontario Association of Distress Centre		
(Distress and Crisis Ontario)		
Statement of Revenue and Expenses		
(Audited - See Auditor's Report)		
For the year ended March 31, 2026		
	2026	2025
Revenue		
Ontario Health funding (note 5)	\$ 309,600	\$ 297,600
Membership revenue	5,368	8,358
Interest income	3,264	-
Conference income	3,000	-
Donations	302	48
Grant (note 6)	-	8,732
	<u>321,534</u>	<u>314,738</u>
Expenditures		
Salaries and benefits	138,370	167,448
Program delivery	78,021	44,668
Sub-contracts	63,310	42,326
Professional fees	12,310	20,227
Office and general	4,585	16,632
Education program	4,070	1,500
Storage fees	3,604	3,239
Staff education	2,853	9,590
Memberships	1,665	1,127
Bank charges and interest	774	783
Insurance	312	1,305
Travel expenses	-	2,108
	<u>309,874</u>	<u>310,953</u>
Excess of revenue over expenditures	<u>\$ 11,660</u>	<u>\$ 3,785</u>
The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.		
Rakesh Majithia CPA		
Professional Corporation		
		4.



Thank You to Our Funders

We appreciate the ongoing and generous financial support of our long-term funder, the Ontario Health's Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence.

We also greatly appreciate all donations made by individuals through CanadaHelps.org. Thank you to CanadaHelps for their ongoing support.



Ontario Health
Mental Health and Addictions
Centre of Excellence

DCO Member Agencies (as of March 31, 2026)

Distress Centre Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville
Distress Centre Ottawa & Region
Nunavut Kamatsiaqtut Helpline
Talk 4 Healing (Beendigen INC)
Telecare Distress Centre of Peterborough
Telephone Aid Line Kingston (TALK)
Crisis Centre North Bay
Connex Ontario
Telecare Distress Line of Greater Simcoe
LGBT YouthLine



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