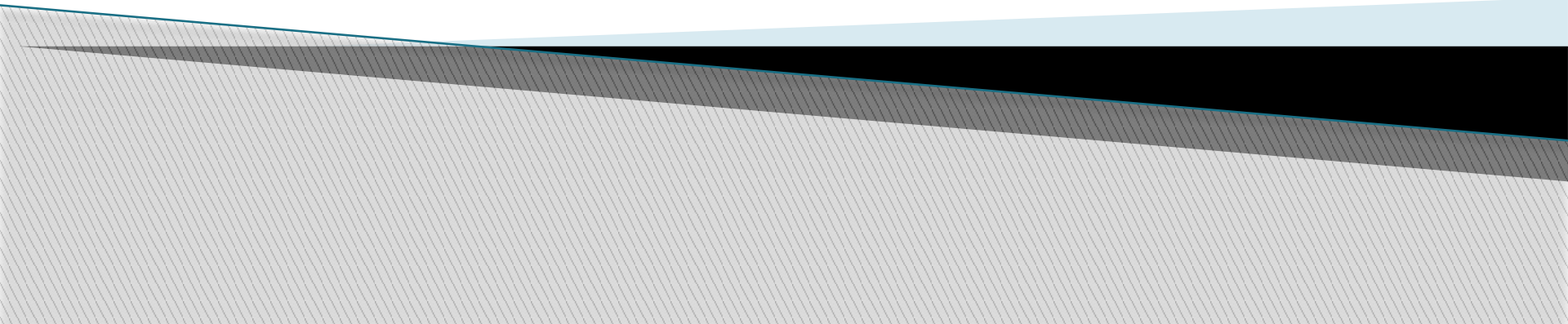


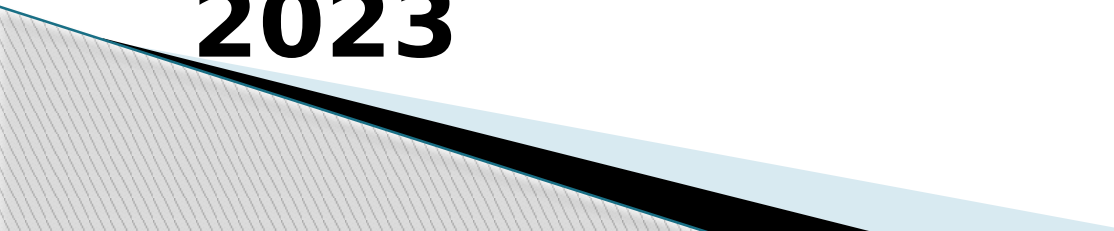
GUIDING GOOD CHOICES



GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

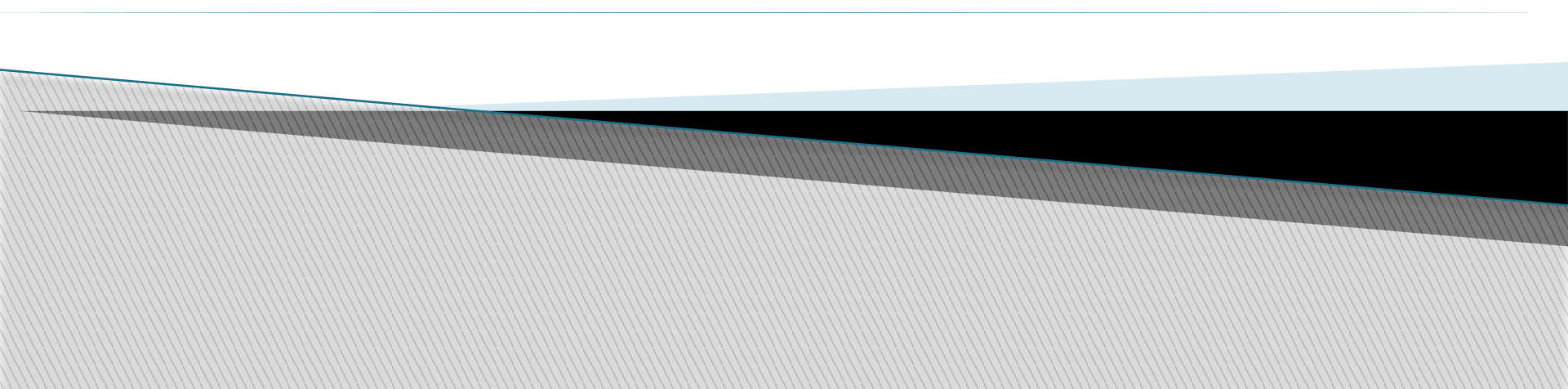
- ▶ **1. How the idea started**
 - ▶ **2. Who was part of program design**
 - ▶ **3. Project Highlights**
- 

CoSA

- ▶ **CoSA: In existence for over 25 years**
 - ▶ **Grassroots program**
 - ▶ **Funded by Federal Government until March of 2023**
- 

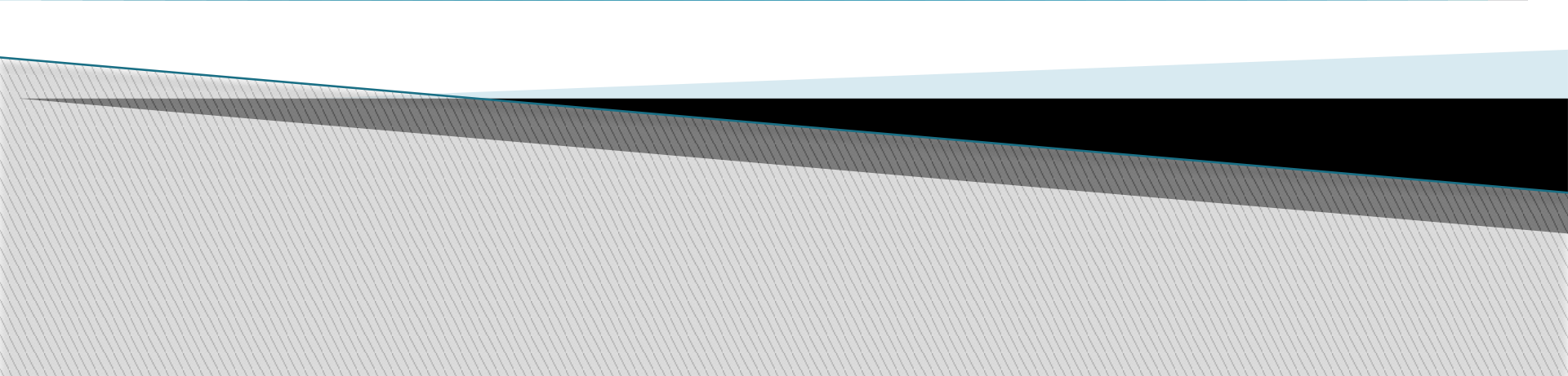
CoSA

CoSA is a reintegration program inspired by **restorative justice principles that reduce victimization by assisting people** who have committed sexual offences to lead a responsible, constructive, and accountable life in our community.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide. It features a series of overlapping, wavy horizontal bands. The top band is light blue, followed by a black band, and then a grey band with a fine diagonal hatched pattern. The lines between the bands are slightly irregular, giving it a hand-drawn or layered appearance.

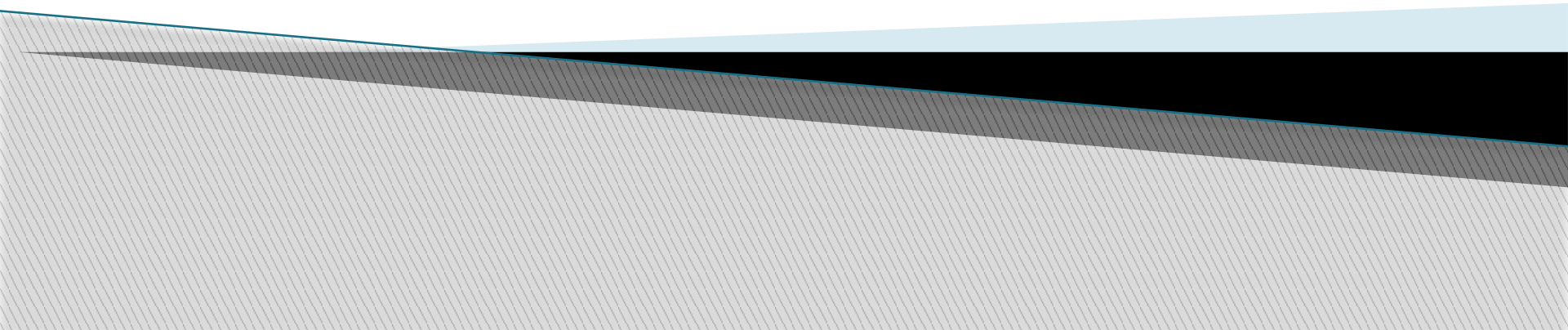
CoSA

CoSA was formed by a dedicated group of volunteers in 1994 in Hamilton, Ontario. CoSA has had one primary goal: **No More Victims.** Circles of Support and Accountability is the **only community-based organization offering this service.**



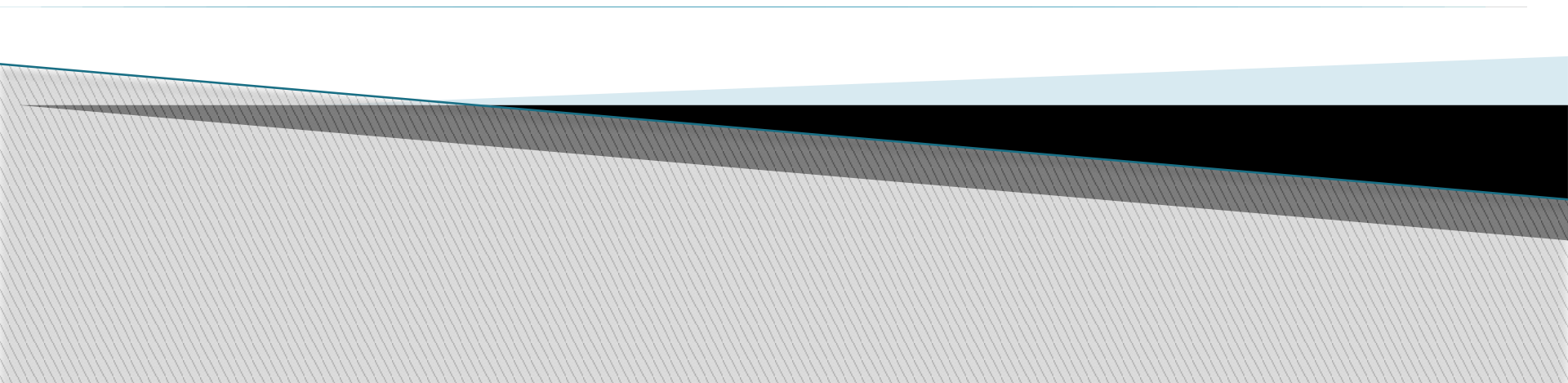
CoSA

Over the years, CoSA sites across Canada, as well as worldwide, have **assisted thousands of recently incarcerated people, referred to as Core Members**, who voluntarily seek CoSA's help to learn to stop the cycle of harm and to establish a place in society.



CoSA

I work with all members of society who harm sexually, male/female/two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse peoples



GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

Covid 2020


Phone calls seeking help!!!!!!



GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

- ▶ The email that started it all
- ▶ CAMH received the following:
 - ▶ **“I'm trying to find some help with problematic thoughts and actions.**
- ▶ **I haven't hurt anyone and really don't think I would but would like some help or information on how to prevent doing so.”**
I asked what type and he said against children. He lives in the GTA. Not sure where I should direct him??? Thoughts????

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

- ▶ What do we need?
 - ▶ *“The goal of the project is to prevent individuals at risk of harming others sexually to get them help before they do so – in doing so we prevent the cost and trauma of the growing number of criminal offences related to sexual assault and less victims.”*
- 

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

**No help for pre-conviction
- asked CAMH**

**“we are developing an anonymous helpline and formal in-person treatment program for this group. We talked about whether or not there could be value in what we are both trying to do and if there could be collaborations. We aren't at the stage yet where we are ready to officially partner - but that struck me as a good idea for COSA given your expertise.” Dr. Ainslie Heasman
-Funded by Public Safety**

GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

Therapists have a 'duty to report' which can be a grey area and difficult for some to navigate.

Went online searching for programs working with pre-conviction

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

**Reached out to Marlee Liss-
survivor and Restorative
Justice Advocate**



GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

Met with “WomenatthecentrE”-They are a survivor-led non-profit eradicating gender-based violence against women, girls, two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse peoples through personal, political and social advocacy.

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

Met with Men & Healing out of Ottawa

- Sexual Integrity program will support men with issues of chronic porn use, infidelity, and other compulsive behaviours.

GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

**Met with Toronto Sex Crimes Unit,
Child Exploitation unit.**

**“Detective Sergeant Sex Crimes Unit-Child Exploitation
Section: Barbara Adams: “This program is cutting edge. If
it can stop even one person/child from being exploited, it
has succeeded. I have been speaking with the Crown
Attorney responsible for sex crimes and advised to
speak with Carol.””**

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

- ▶ Met numerous times with Christoffer Rahm who is the Principal Investigator (PI) for Prevent It, an online CBT program with the purpose of preventing child sexual abuse out of Stockholm

GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

It is now late 2021 and one of the agencies in the U.K. that I spoke with sent me this info:

“Last week we had 482 Canadian's click through from a MindGeek "illegal search"! Get help self-directed intervention website. That is now nearly 15,000 such clicks through from Canada since 2 February.”

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

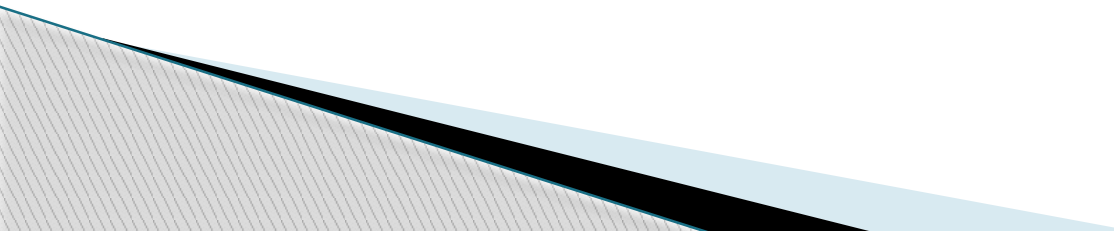
It is now April 2022 and I have two individuals 'drop' into my sphere

- Larry

- Jerry

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the slide consisting of several overlapping, wavy bands of color: light blue, black, and a grey band with a fine diagonal line pattern.

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

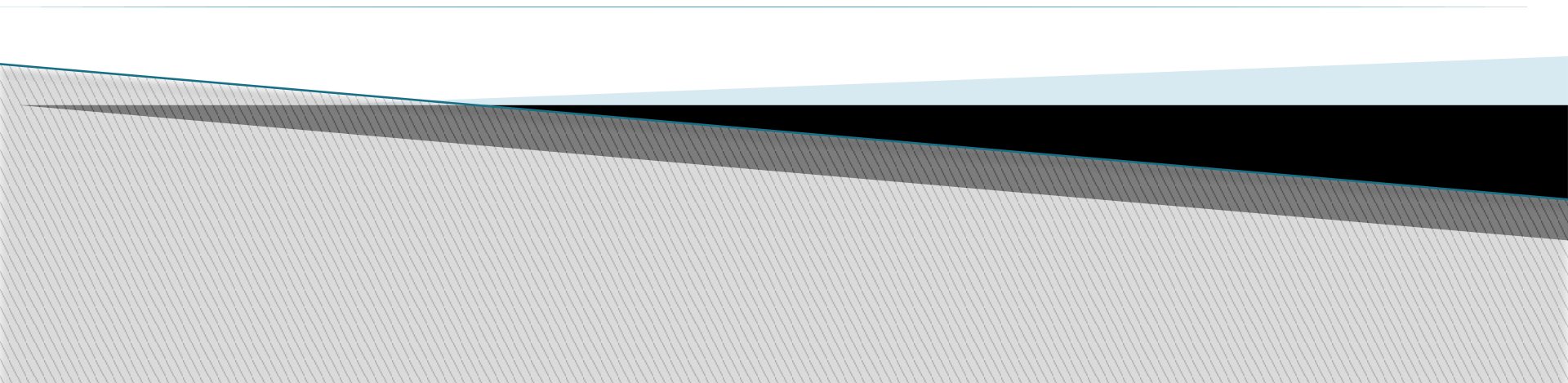
- ▶ A Triangle is born:
 - ▶ A Peer (*alumni of Circles of Support and Accountability*)
 - ▶ A Volunteer from CoSA familiar with the concerns and struggles they will hear
 - ▶ The Core Member
 - ▶ Guiding Good Choices staff
 - ▶ provide a safe, non-judgmental place for participants to talk openly about struggles related to sexual thoughts, attitudes, or behaviours that are harmful to others or themselves.
- 

GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

- Larry's story**
- 19 when we met online**
- from Japan, sent to Winnipeg for school**
- lived with 'Mennonite Foster Family'**
- charged with 'sexual interference with a minor'**

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

Larry's outcome

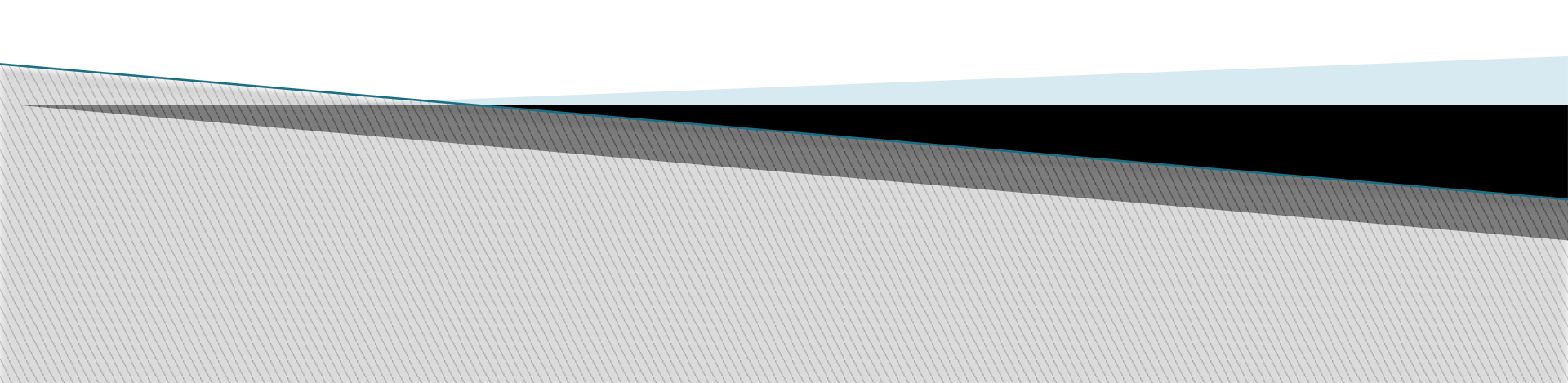


GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

- Jerry's story**
- 42 years old when we met online**
- lives in Toronto**
- just broke up with longtime girlfriend who used his 'past confession' and posted on Facebook**
- suicidal thoughts**

GUIDING GOOD **CHOICES**

Jerry's outcome



GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

GOAL: to help participants identify and understand their 'cycles' and address beliefs that underlie unhealthy and harmful patterns of thinking and behaviour.

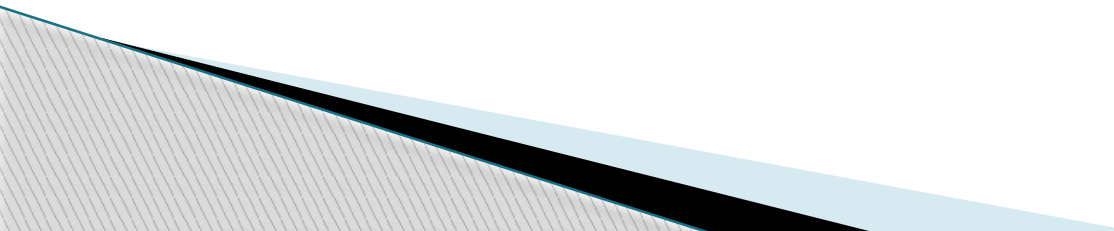
GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

GGC 'triangle' groups discuss with the participant their current and past factors that may lead to them harming others. To do this there is an emphasis on building an understanding of the relationship between their unmet needs and sexual harm to themselves or others.

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

Research demonstrates that pre-offenders will be less likely to offend or harm others if they learn more appropriate ways to meet their needs (e.g., leisure activities, social needs, sex, etc.) as well as a safe place to express their concerns

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

- ▶ On their own - prior to meeting with their GGC triangle the men all used words like they were “evil” and that no one would ever understand. The shame and isolation for all the participants was overwhelming. Without the support of GGC these individuals have admitted they would either be in jail or have successfully died by suicide.
- 

GUIDING GOOD CHOICES

Outcomes:

Direct Impact in our first year –

individuals are getting to see their worth and can live a healthy life and be in a better place emotionally.

Community level Outcome – the project is keeping people safe in the community and participants are not self-harming.

QUESTIONS



THANK YOU

