

Annual Report 2022



NSCCT
Nova Scotia College of
Counselling Therapists

f u t u r e



Welcome to the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists

We are the public-interest regulator for all
Registered Counselling Therapists in Nova
Scotia

Land Acknowledgement

The Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists would like to respectfully acknowledge that we do our work in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqivik (Maliseet) Peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqivik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between Nations. As we strive for respectful partnerships with all the peoples of this beautiful province in search of collective healing and true reconciliation, we also acknowledge the histories, contributions and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years.

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Message from the Board Chair

Kwe'

I'd like to begin with gratitude for all of the Healers in our communities. As we acknowledge the people that bring calm to the chaos, witness the suffering, hear the struggles and rise to meet the waves of pain and grief with care and support; I offer the deepest thank you. Choosing to be a Counseling Therapist is more than just a job, it's a way of life and it can be hard to hold what we hold. I invite all the helpers to make some space to breathe and create time for yourself. As we pause and reflect, we can easily connect to the Earth through the sensation of gravity and remember that land is alive, has a rich history and holds all of us. That we are here in the Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq and that we are all treaty people.



We've had a busy year at the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists and I'm excited to report that, through a huge amount of policy development and reporting, we have stabilized our relationship with the Department of Health and Wellness. We have also been assigned new government appointed public representatives to the Board. Filling these long-standing vacancies at the highest level of College oversight will help us continue to regulate in the public interest.

On a Saturday in May, the board members met at Mt. St. Vincent university for an engaging training. Fulfilling one of our key commitments from the last AGM, we explored the Mission, Vision and Values of the College through the lens of our mandate. With the help of a professional facilitator, we had lively discussions, focused clarity and some great team building. Outcomes of the session, along with the introduction of a 3-year strategic plan, will be shared later in this document and at the AGM. Together, these documents will guide the Board's activities and shape the direction of the College.

A huge thank you to John Hubert (Executive Director/Registrar) and Mary Kate Jollymore (Administrative Coordinator) in the office. They have been doing fantastic work and are always available if you have any questions or issues.

In closing, I want to thank all Nova Scotians for entrusting counselling therapists with the privilege and responsibilities of governing the profession. I sincerely hope this 2022 Annual Report will evince our dedication to regulating the profession in *your* interest.

Warmly with gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan M. Torti".

Nathan M. Torti, RCT

Executive Director & Registrar Report

2022's most notable achievement for the College has been the development of a *Mission, Vision and Values* platform upon which we have established a 3-year strategic plan (2022-2025). Having this framework in place is a key element in organizational planning and considered an essential component of regulatory best practice. Not only will a clear articulation of our *Mission, Vision & Values* inform longer-term strategic planning, it will also guide year-to-year priority setting and self-assessment.

The spring Introductory and Intermediate Candidacy Supervision seminars offered by Acadia University were well attended and very well received. Plans are underway for the 2023 edition so please watch for notice in the new year. As registrations continue to rise, so too will the need for qualified candidacy supervisors.

With the Common Foundation Legislation scheduled for the spring sitting of the NS Legislature, 2023 promises to be an adventure in governance requiring the creation of new Counselling Therapists Regulations and subsequent updating of our General Bylaws. In the spring, the College signed a memorandum of understanding with the Workforce Planning Unit of the Department of Health and Wellness for the collection of a large occupational data-set. The data will be linked to reports by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) for use by researchers and policy-makers to help determine the need for counselling therapists across the country. Recently, several registrants of the College participated in an information-gathering session with the Office of Mental Health and Addictions. The information gained directly from working counselling therapists will be used to inform the DHW plan to improve mental health services throughout the province.

Unfortunately, the year has recently taken a sad turn with the passing of Board Past-Chair, Linda Wheeldon, RCT. Linda's myriad contributions to the College, the profession and the education of Counselling Therapists, was accomplished the same way she approached everything in her life, i.e., with love and with grace.

Respectfully,



Board Highlights

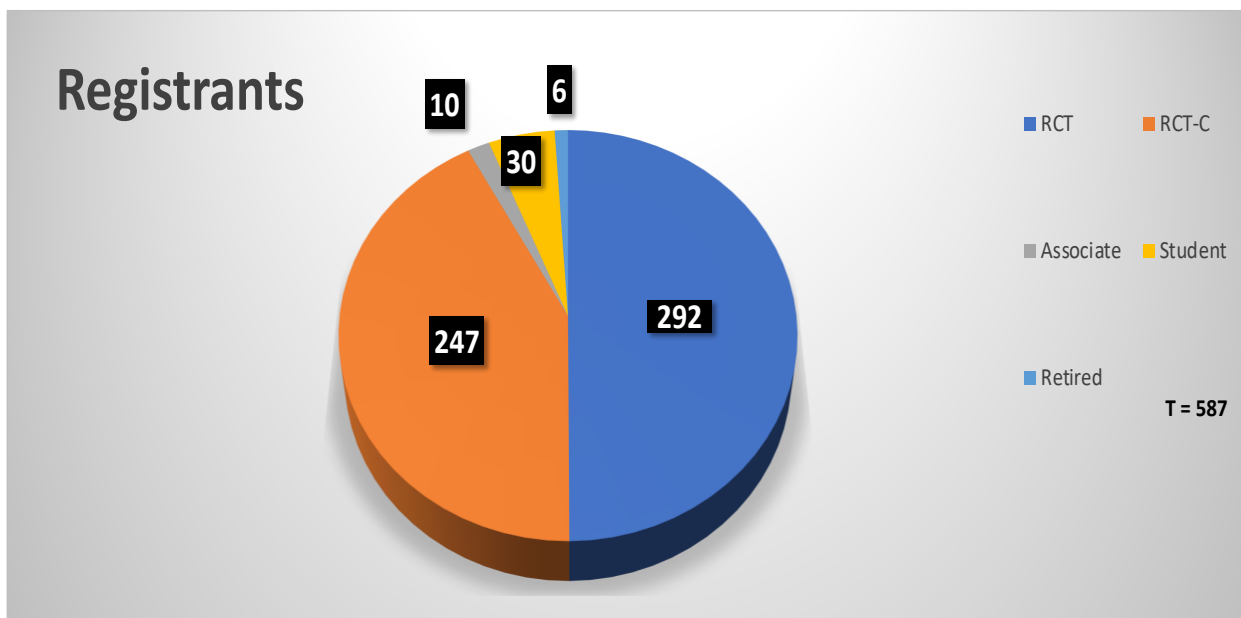
- Board Governance Training
- Individualized mentorship for new directors
- Facilitated *Mission, Vision and Values* workshop
- 3-year strategic plan
- Adopted Key Performance Indicators for Board, committees and administration
- Joined the Health Association of Nova Scotia
- Established health benefits for staff
- Full-time Executive Director/Registrar
- Broader use of the Skills-Attributes-Knowledge Matrix

2022 Board of Directors

Chair	Nathan Torti, RCT
Vice Chair	Michelle Labine, RCT
Past Chair	Linda Wheeldon, RCT
Secretary	Felicia Boutilier, RCT
Treasurer	Maher Masalmeh, RCT
Member-at-Large	Theresa Fraser, RCT
Member-at-Large	Chris Charles RCT,
Member-at-Large	Stacy Darku, RCT-C
Public Rep	Lisa Matthews
<i>Ex Officio</i>	John Hubert

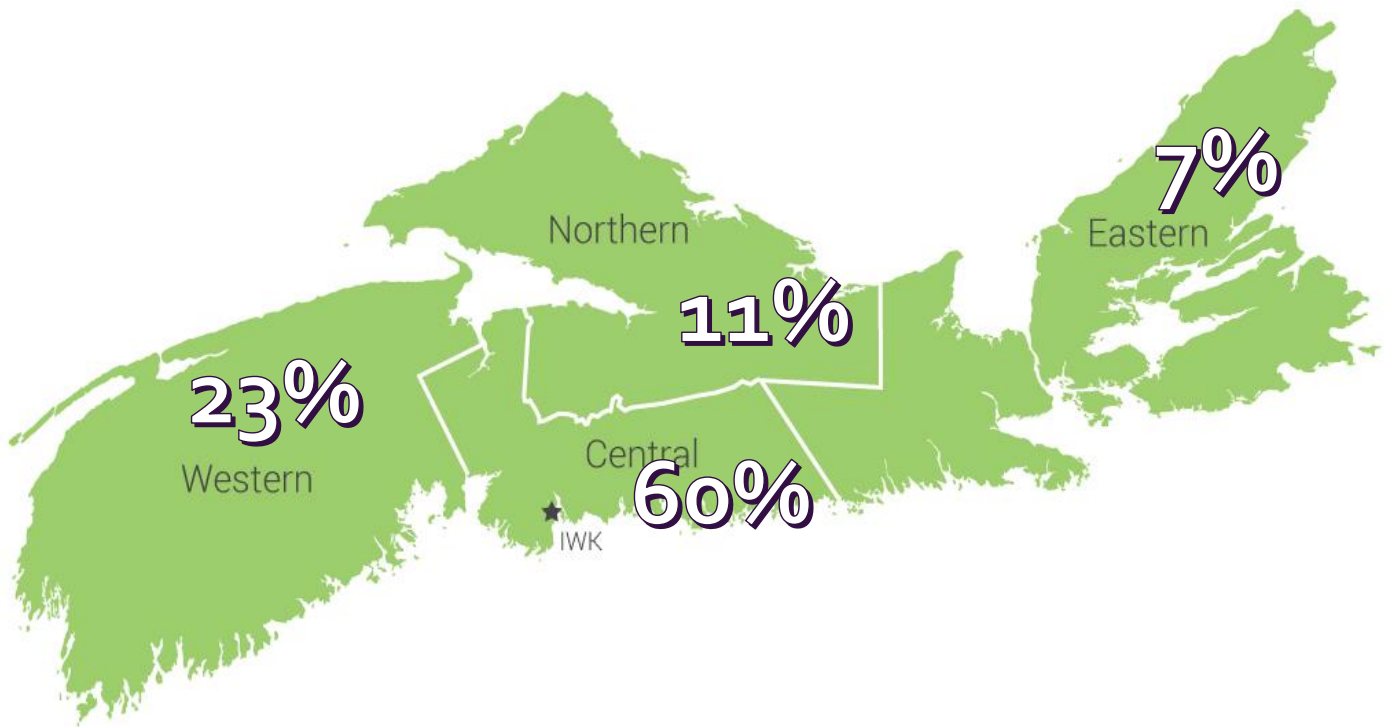
College by the Numbers

NSCCT entered a period of unprecedented growth in 2021, with registrations edging over the 500 mark. Based on new registrations so far this year, we project that 2022 will see us reach beyond 600.



Revenue from this growth will allow us to better support existing programs and introduce new innovations in regulatory excellence. But most importantly, there will be more Counselling Therapists available to help meet the mental health needs of Nova Scotians!

Student Affiliate registrations are also rising rapidly as keen future counselling therapists take an early interest in the governance of their chosen field.



Distribution of RCT/RCT-Cs in Nova Scotia by Health Zone

While our numbers continue to grow year-to-year, greater access to counselling therapy in Nova Scotia depends in large part on how these vital human resource are distributed.

The most underserved areas include the **Northern Zone** which has 15% of the population but only 11% of counselling therapists, and the **Eastern Zone** which has 16% of the population with 7% of RCTs.

By comparison the **Western Zone** has 23% of RCTs serving 19% of the population. The **Central Zone** is the population hub of the province with about 42% of Nova Scotians having access to 60% of counselling therapists.

From an equity perspective, research will need to dig down to the community or postal code level in order to discover how well racialized groups and specific areas of lower socio-economic status are being served.

65

... the number of

approved Candidacy Supervisors now available to guide and assess RCT-Cs along their journey to fully independent practice... that's about **1/3** of eligible RCTs passing along their knowledge, skills and experience to the next generation and helping increase access to mental health services for all Nova Scotians. Supervisor education is provided in cooperation with NSCCT through the MEd-Counselling Program at Acadia University's School of Education

Mission, Vision and Values

In May of this year, the Board undertook to develop a Mission Statement, a Vision for where we want to be in 2030, and a set of core values that will guide our decision-making into the future. What follows is the outcome of a weekend think-tank facilitated by Wayne Marsh.

To regulate the profession of counselling therapy exclusively in the public interest

The **Mission** is an enduring descriptive statement that sets out the boundaries of legitimate activity for the College.

The College fulfills our **Mission** by ensuring that:

- only fully qualified individuals who have met rigorous academic and clinical practice standards are licensed by the College
- all registrants adhere to recognized *Standards of Practice* and a prescribed *Code of Ethics* and practice to a level described in the *NSCCT Entry-to-Practice Competency Profile*
- all registrants meet the requirements for on-going skills maintenance and continuing education
- the public has access to a robust and objective professional conduct process to investigate complaints against counselling therapists and impose disciplinary measures where appropriate

The **Vision** is a compelling statement of aspirations within the boundaries of the **Mission**. It projects into the future as a rallying cry for change and growth within a specific time horizon.

To be recognized for excellence in the stewardship and regulation of Counselling Therapy

Values convey what we stand for and what should characterize our attitudes, decisions and behaviour. Values are used to monitor the “rightness” of day-to-day decisions and longer-term strategic choices. The Board presents 7 core values that will mark the College's commitment and guide our path.

It is important to note that these are values *of the College* (as a legislated entity) and they should not be confused with the values *of the profession* itself.



Respect is foundational to our personal and professional interactions and the means through which we recognize the humanity, dignity and autonomy of others



Accountability – We take responsibility for our

decisions and the actions which affect our Mission and our stakeholders



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion -- All of our

endeavours are informed by an awareness that historical injustices continue to echo through the systems of colonial design to create continuing systemic barriers that we wish to identify and eliminate throughout the College's sphere of influence



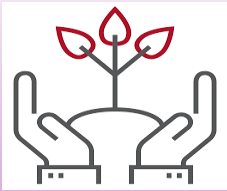
Transparency & Openness -- We are open to

constructive ideas and transparent in our processes



Humility – We approach the challenges of regulation

with a willingness to listen and understand the voices and perspectives of others and with a recognition of our own cultural biases and shortcomings



Stewardship – We nurture and protect the

reputation and integrity of the profession



Responsiveness -- We respond to new trends in

governance and practice through the use of research, evaluation tools and best-practices

-- We respond to the needs and enquiries of our stakeholders

-- We believe that being responsive includes striving not only to listen, but also to ensure people feel listened-to

Strategic Objectives

2022-2025

Strategic Objectives are the broad-based platforms for change that guide near-term priority setting and operational planning.

The **Strategic Objectives** of the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists for 2022 to 2025 are:



Anti-Racism

Using the tools of education, policy and regulation to combat racism in our systems and in professional practice

A report commissioned by the Anti-Black Racism Task Force of the Nova Scotia College of Physicians and Surgeons (NSCPS), and graciously made available to other provincial health regulators, will be used to inform our EDI planning through 2025, including a direct focus on anti-racism.

Education

- Staff, Board & Committee EDI training
- Targeted RCT professional development
- Continuing Education Credits

Policy

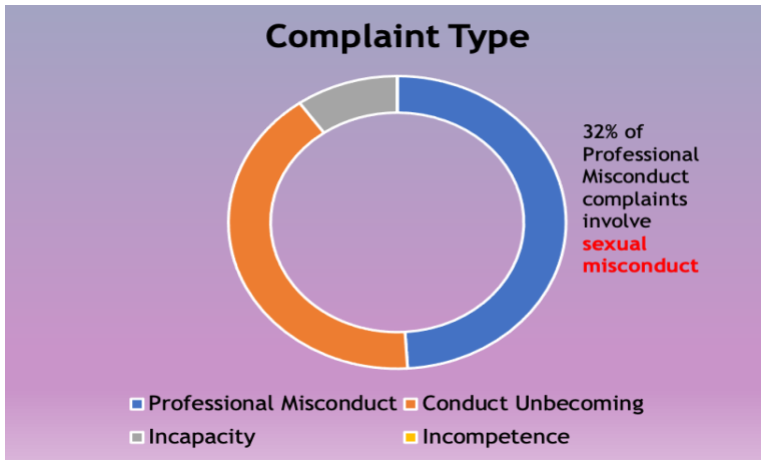
- Identify and eliminate policy and process barriers unique to applicants and registrants from BIPOC communities

Regulation

- Professional Competence *includes* Cultural Competence

Sexual Misconduct

Redoubling efforts to prevent, collect and investigate sexual misconduct complaints and to impose appropriate discipline as warranted



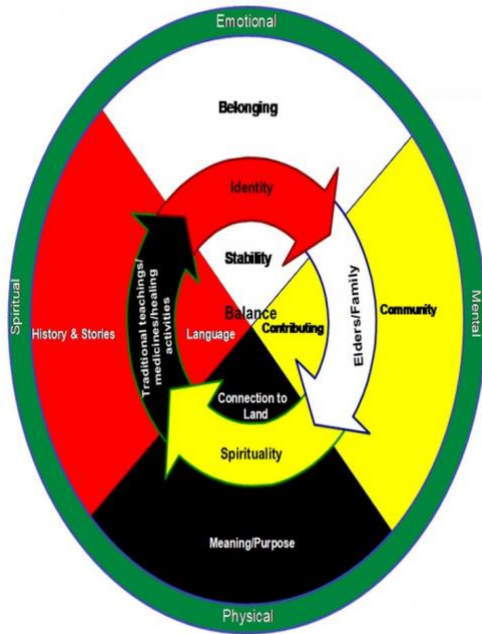
- Educational focus on preventing sexual misconduct, e.g., Regulatory Practice Notice
- Zero-Tolerance policy approach to sexual misconduct
- Strategies to enhance reporting of sexual misconduct, e.g., sexual misconduct reporting line
- Trauma-informed complaints intake for sexual misconduct complaints, e.g., Intake Support Navigator (female)
- Trauma -informed investigation and review
- Counselling support for eligible complainants

32 % ...of misconduct complaints involve a sexual component

- unmanaged transference and countertransference
- incapacity related
- predatory

The next three years will see the College strengthen its efforts to reduce incidents of sexual misconduct by counselling therapists. This will include strategies to make reporting easier and less threatening; efforts to better support complainants through the process and limit the re-traumatization; and, focused educational opportunities for registrants.

Indigenous Pathways



In recognition of the need for greater access to mental health services within Indigenous communities, the College will prioritize the exploration of ways to facilitate access to registration by Indigenous applicants

- Seek ways to better recognize Indigenous learning in assessing applicants
- Work with our educational partners to investigate joint opportunities to attract Indigenous applicants
- Explore alternative complaint resolution mechanisms for Indigenous registrants

...building capacity within communities while integrating input from Indigenous communities is essential to improve accessibility. (Nguyen, et al. 2020)

Committee Achievements

Registration Committee

- 148 applications reviewed
- 104 new RCT-Cs approved
- 25 new RCTs approved
- 13 new CFTA transfers approved
- 5 new International approved
- 2 applications refused
- 1 new committee member

Policy Changes:

1. group supervision (>35 hr)
2. new or additional supervisor (>20 hr)
3. CEC requirements (36/3-years)

Complaints Committee

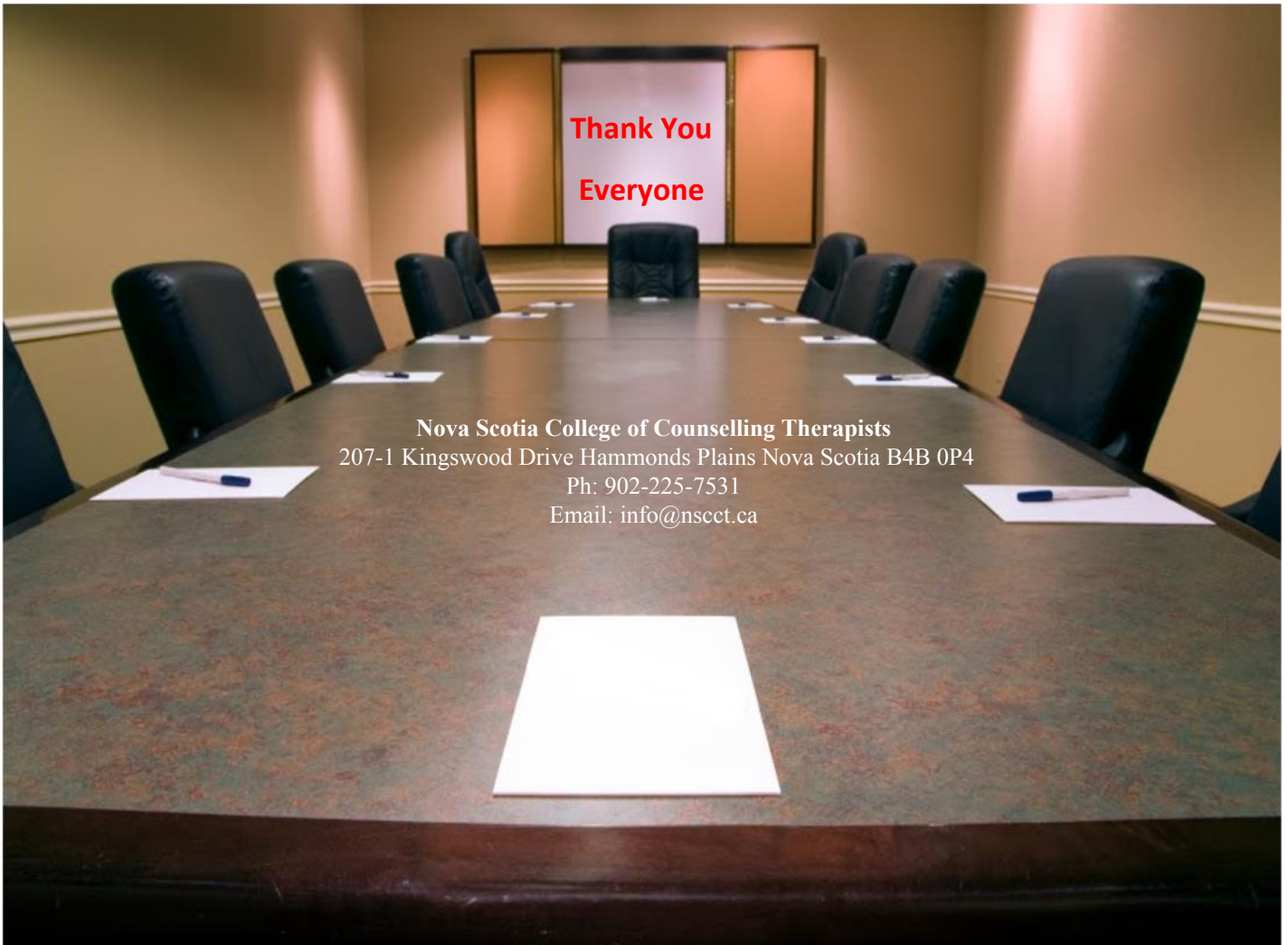
- 13 new complaints received
- 5 closed files
 - 1 withdrawn
 - 4 dismissed
- 15 open files
 - 1 suspension
 - 7 investigations
- 2 new committee members

Policy Change: All complaints against a registrant that allege *sexual misconduct* are sent for external investigation *at the time the file is opened*

Policy Committee

- 3 new policies
- 4 revised policies
- Published first *Regulatory Practice Notice (sexual misconduct)*
- 2 new members joined the policy team

Board of Directors 2023



Executive

Chair	Nathan Torti, RCT
Vice-Chair	Michelle Labine, RCT
Past Chair	TBD
Secretary	Felicia Boutilier, RCT
Treasurer	Maher Masalmeh, RCT

Members-at-Large

Theresa Fraser, RCT
Stacy Darku, RCT-C
Chris Charles, RCT
Kerry O'Reilly, RCT

Public Representatives

Lisa Matthews
Alana Baxter
John Boddie

Member *Ex-Officio*

John Hubert (Executive Director/Registrar)