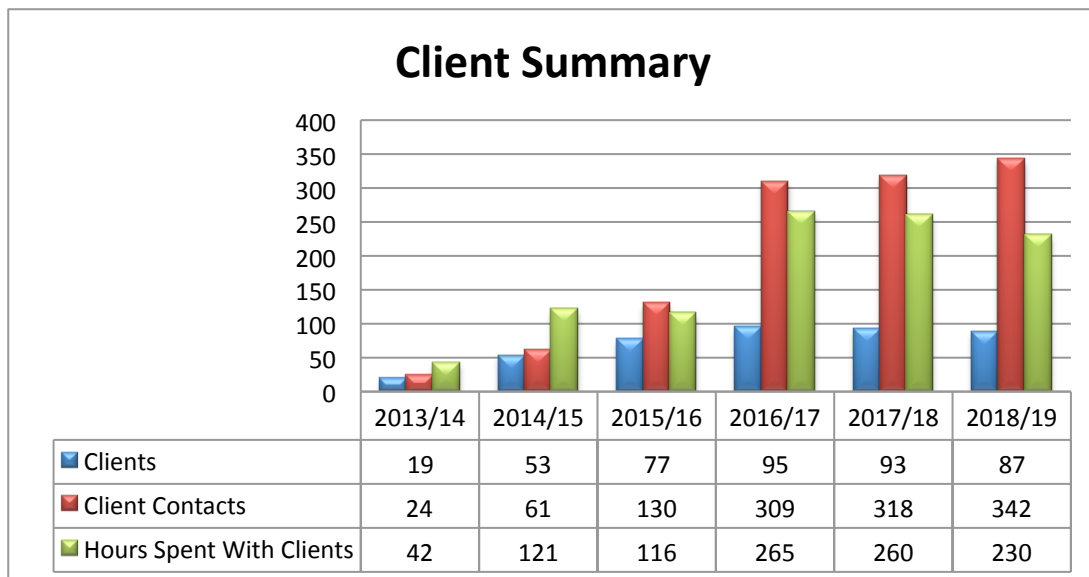


# Community Information & Resource Coordination Service

At The Meeting Place Tobermory – June 2019

## Service Summary and Comparison

The Meeting Place ‘community hub’ provides a unique blend of rural social support called Community Information & Resource Coordination or CIRC. It’s designed to respond to those who may be in stressful situations, are isolated or need system navigation. CIRC connects people to a wide range of resources, through a skilled ‘community connector’. This informal connection and personal support approach works well for people living in small towns.



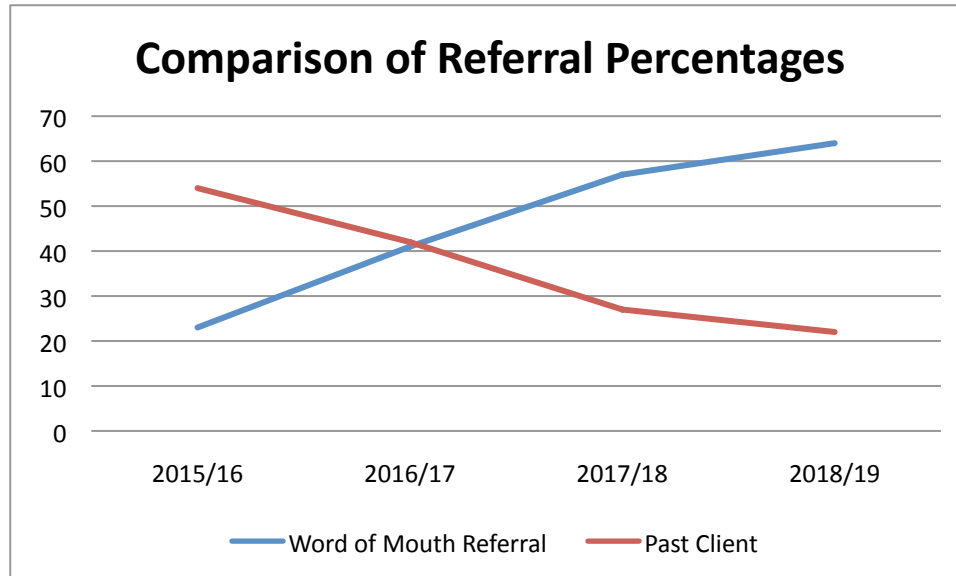
**Notes:**

- The number of Client contacts is higher than the number of Clients because most Clients require 2 or more visits to the office, and some Clients return with a new request.
- Client contacts and time spent with Clients does not include the customary check-up call to ensure they received all the information and have no further questions or concerns nor does it include research conducted in their absence.
- There are no open files as of the completion of this report.
- Number of Clients does not include the 62 Clients the CIRC (Community Information and Resource Coordinator) contacted/booked for appointments with CVITP (Canadian Volunteer Income Tax Program)

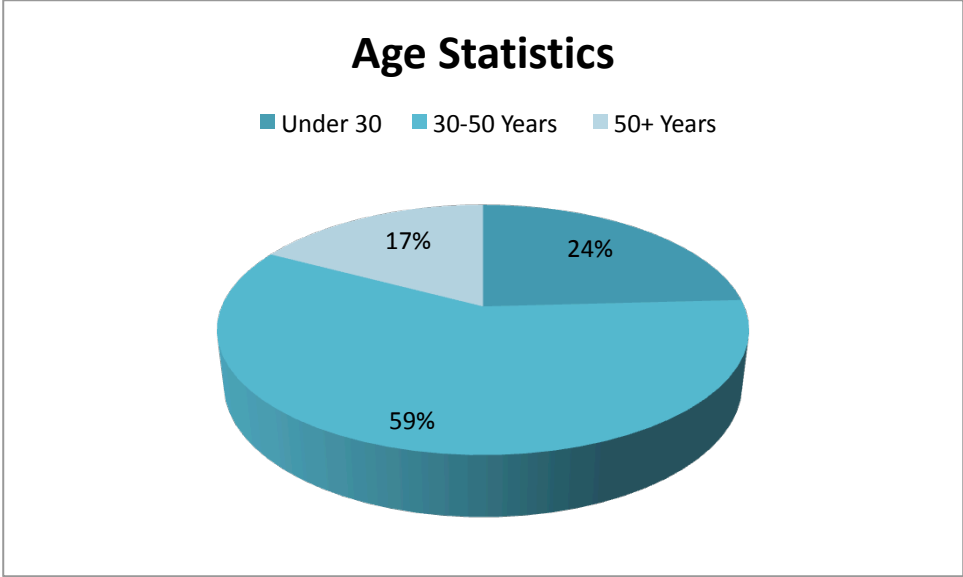


**Notes:**

- Past Clients are always encouraged to return should they require more information and/or assistance. This year, 22% of Clients had been a Client in the past 3 years. This is a significant decrease from 2017/18 at 27%, and 2016/17 at 42%.
- The number of new clients this year represents a broader reach into the community. This trend can be observed yearly in the next graph.
- CIRC has a very close working relationship with the organizers of our local Food Bank, granting CIRC access to take Clients into the food bank during closed hours should the need arise. The Food Bank volunteers know the services CIRC provides and encourages their clients to visit the CIRC office.
- New Client Not Referred increased from 7% to 9% this year. Many of these Clients were patients of the Tobermory Hyperbaric Chamber, who use the facilities at The Meeting Place as a comfortable and quiet place to rest and enjoy their lunch between treatments, and upon hearing the CIRC services offered, they requested further information.

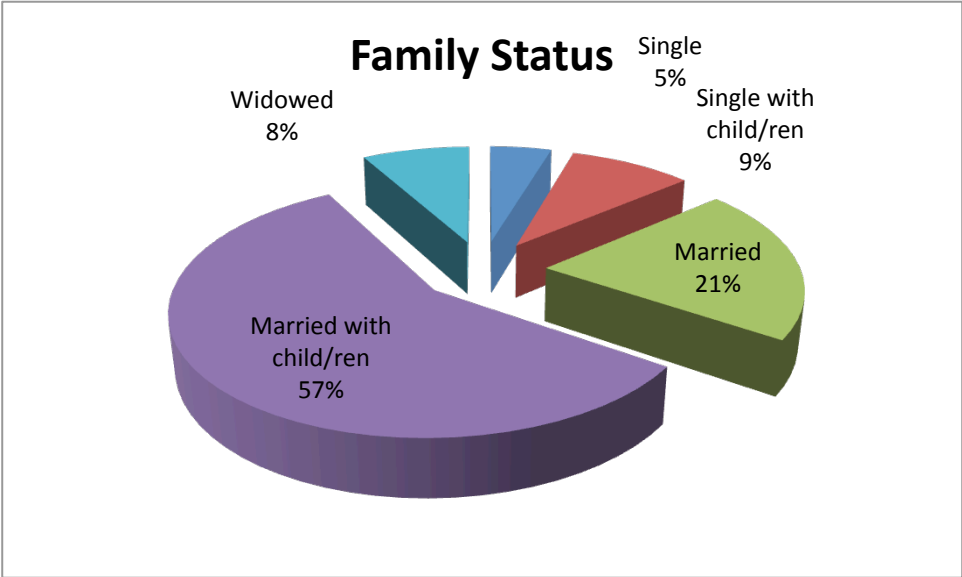


- Above, you can see a significant decrease in the past Clients accessing the CIRC program, and a large increase in the word of mouth referrals. This shows that the program is working! Past Clients no longer need the resources we provide, and have helped spread the word about the services available to friends, family and neighbours.
- Word of mouth referrals increased to 64%, up from 57% in 2017/18, and 41% in 2016/17, and surpassed returning clients again this year. Word of mouth referrals are new referrals and mostly come from past clients telling family, friends, neighbours etc. about CIRC services. The United Way GB office, Ecumenical Outreach Committee, CVITP (Canadian Volunteer Income Tax Program), as well as our Bruce Peninsula Family Health Team social worker have also referred clients to CIRC for services
- These results also support the observation, that each year is different than previous years. In past years, December and January were the busiest months for CIRC. This year, however, November was the busiest month statistically.



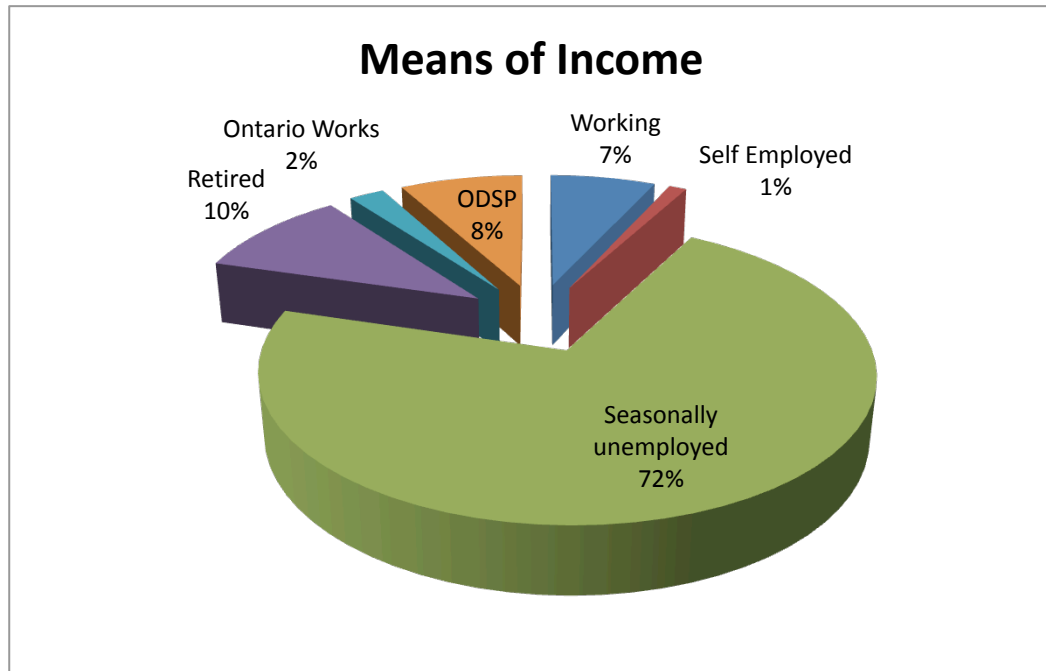
**Notes:**

- Large increase in the age group under 30 from 6% in 2016/17 to 18% in 2017/18 to 24% in 2018/19.
- The majority of under 30 were single, Female with children. This remains unchanged from previous years.
- Of the 50+ age group, 60% of the Clients were widowed Males which is an increase of 10% over last year.



Notes:

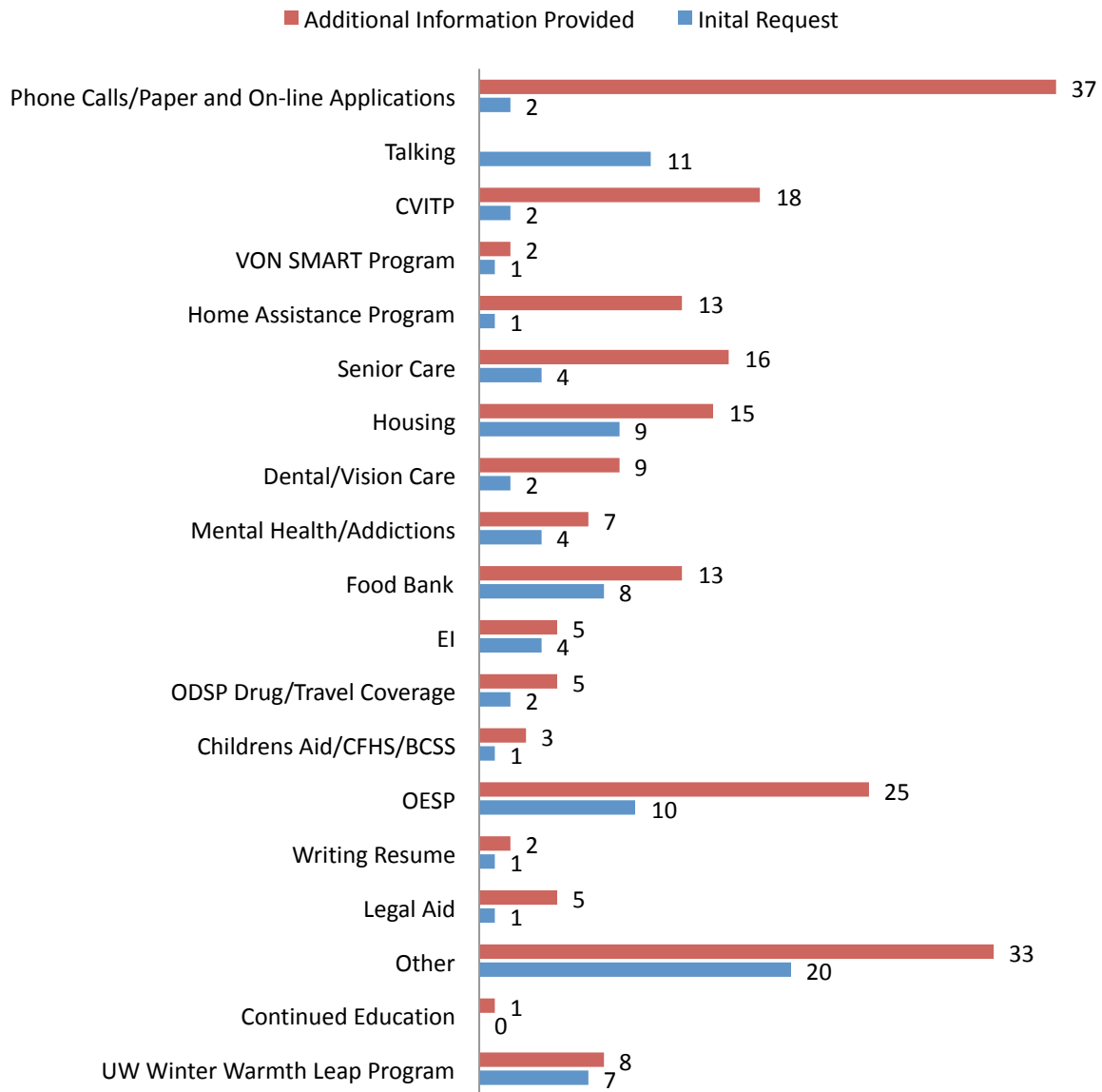
- Married includes families with no child/ren as well as families with child/ren no longer living at home. This group increased from 2% in 2016/17, to 19% in 2017/18, to 21% this year.
- 4 Clients with custody of and raising Grandchildren are recorded as Married with child/ren or Single with child/ren.



Notes:

- Of the 10% retired Clients, only 3 had an RRSP or pension income other than OAS/CPP.
- The above information clearly shows the majority of Clients seen are married, with children, seasonally employed between the ages of 30 and 50 years old. These clients have high seasonal child care expenses.
- 26% of Clients were Male and 74% were Female.

## Initial Request and Information Provided

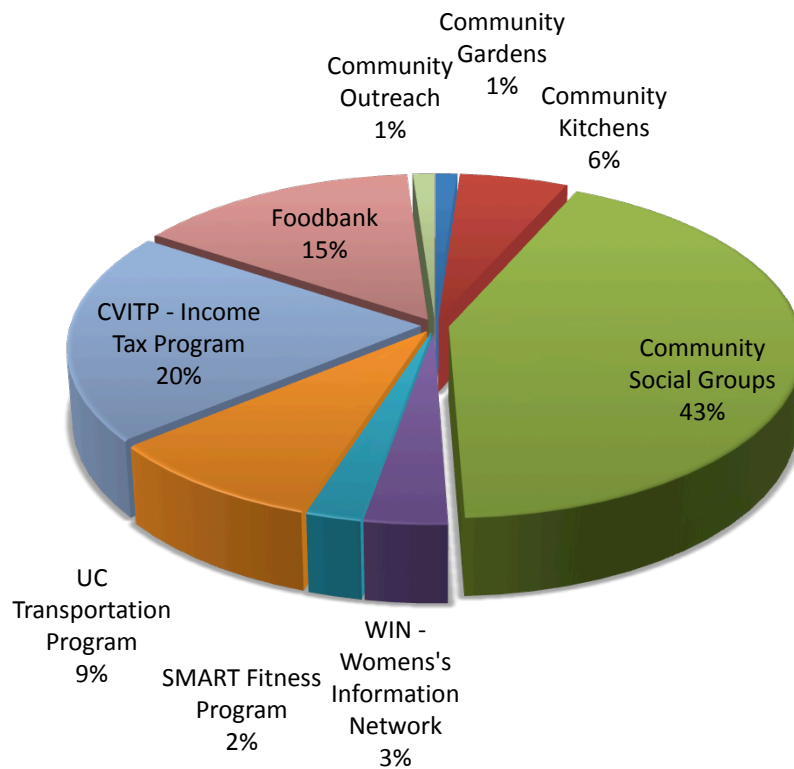


### Notes:

- Chart above shows initial requests totalling 87. Additional information provided totals 217. A client rarely leaves with just the original requested information.
- You may notice a new initial request on this graph "listening". Some Clients make an appointment, not knowing what they need help with exactly. They book an appointment to 'talk'. Starting a dialogue with no particular destination, opens up the conversation to take a natural path, and enables the Client to feel comfortable, as they control the conversation.

- CIRC uses "caring questions" to open a dialogue and address other concerns the client may not have known there was help for. Some examples of "caring questions" are;
  - Have you struggled with this before
  - How do we stop this from happening again
  - Is there anything anyone in the family needs
  - Would you like to be more involved in our community
  - What is getting in your way of getting involved
  - How will you stay active this winter
  - Is there anything you would like to do for fun
  
- Example of how one concern can lead to many sources of relief; Client comes in that is seasonally employed, EI (Employment Insurance) has run out, and is not expected to work for another month and a half. Client is now behind in Hydro/Heating bills, which lead to falling behind in rent, phone bill and inability to buy groceries. Client is informed of the following programs; UW winter warmth/Leap program, OESP (Ontario Energy Savings Plan \$30 credit off Hydro bill), BCSS daycare subsidy (for when client returns to work), CHPI (Community Homeless Prevention Innovative grant to help with emergency housing needs such as rent arrears), CVITP (Canadian Volunteer Income Tax Program) and Food Bank.
  
- OESP numbers are high as Hydro rates continue to be a burden no matter the age, income source, or marital status. Every client seen is informed of and offered assistance in completing the OESP application forms.
  
- Some Clients need help making phone calls. They become stressed with not being able to get a human on the other end and give up.
  
- Dental and vision care continue to pose a problem. There are some programs out there for children; CNIOT children in need of treatment, free glasses for children entering Kindergarten, and 'at cost' dental care for those willing to travel to university dental programs.
  
- Healthy Smiles Ontario, Public Health and Salvation Army offered a free dental cleaning clinic at TMP this year. 7 Children were seen in May, and the program will be available again in October.
  
- The Foodbank was a service offered to 13 clients, yet only 9 Clients accepted that offer. Stigma and limited scope may account for this.
  
- 211 Ontario helpline and data base service was accessed 8 times in 2018/19.

## Local Community Services Offered 'Strengthening the Community'

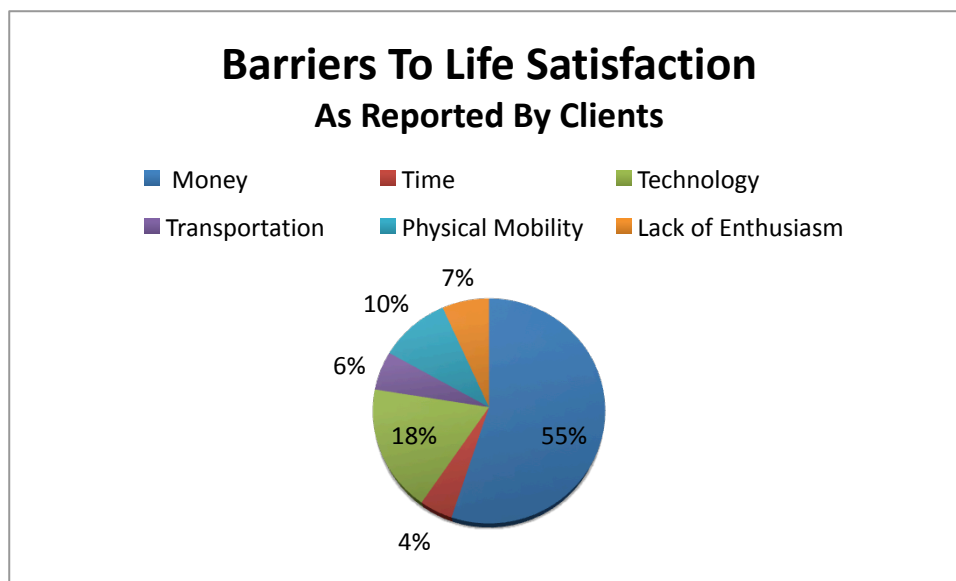


**Notes:**

- By regularly attending the Ecumenical Outreach committee meetings (consisting of representatives from 4 local churches) community concerns are brought to the CIRC's attention, clients are referred to CIRC for assistance, and the Outreach fund is available for CIRC to refer Clients, should there be no other resources, grants or programs to assist.
  
- Since transportation is an issue for many clients due to distance, weather, or access to a reliable vehicle, the United Church volunteer transportation program was recommended to 8 Clients this year.
  
- Many Clients expressed concerns about trying to eat healthy on a fixed income, so they were referred to The Meeting Place Community Kitchens program, the Dollars and Sense program at TMP, and community garden program.
  
- Mobility restrictions for some senior Clients led them to be referred to the VON SMART (Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together) exercise program, and well as Sharing Dance Seniors which is a new fitness program at TMP.



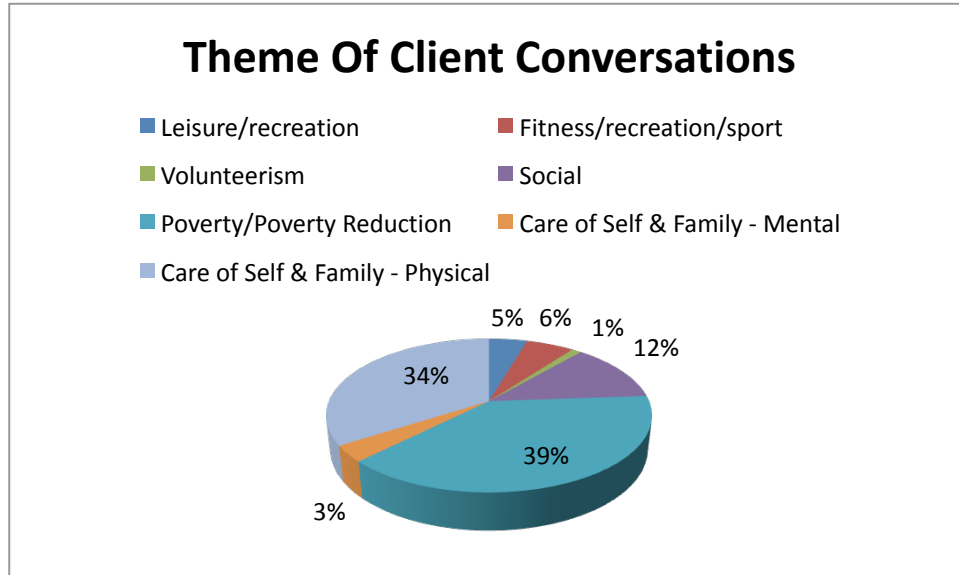
- Two years ago, the CIRC published a brochure "Community Life in Tobermory" that highlights community groups, both social and fitness, youth related volunteer opportunities and other volunteer opportunities and local Churches This brochure was offered to all Clients, and accepted by 12 Clients. This brochure was a valuable resource to give information to Clients that were feeling isolated, lonely, and were struggling with lack of social stimulation.
- The CVITP (Canadian Volunteer Income Tax Program) is mentioned to every Client that qualifies for the program.
- By offering Local Community Services, which are different and closer to home than other resources and programs, many barriers (see pie chart below) can be addressed.



Notes:

- 'Money' continues to be the largest barrier faced by CIRC Clients, but did see a decrease by 1% this year.
- There was a slight decrease in 'transportation' as a barrier. Clients were informed of the United Church transportation program, and many CIRC Clients took advantage of that program. Movin' GB is another program available, but the cost of using that program, and lack of coverage in our area made it a unaffordable and unreliable resource. Private transportation services on the Peninsula have been short-lived.
- The barriers of 'time' and 'lack of enthusiasm' statistics decreased dramatically last year, and held steady this year, which is a positive statistic to make note of.

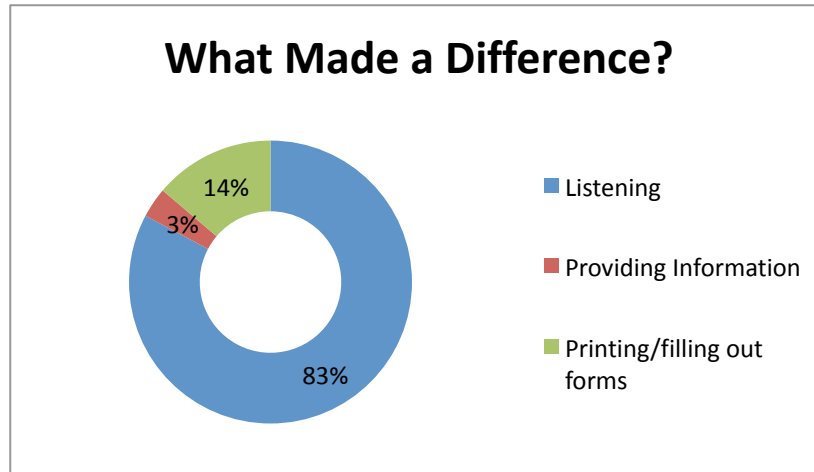
- 'Physical mobility' barriers often related to 'getting around in winter' and fear of falling.



Notes:

The above chart shows the theme results of the "Caring questions asked" .

- The above chart is based on the overall interaction with a Client not the initial request.
- Clients almost always come in with an initial request regarding financial distress. However, once the dialogue is open, many other concerns, interests, and goals come to light.
- Clients are seen one on one in a quiet, safe, and confidential setting . This environment is the perfect way for people to open up and connect to the underlying problems they didn't realize were part of the bigger problem.
- The theme may start out as poverty reduction, but after a friendly conversation, the Client is suddenly excited and talking about getting out more socially, joining a volunteer organization or fitness class.



Notes:

- This is the second year tracking this outcome. CIRC always makes a final call to the Client to make sure they have no other questions, concerns, or need assistance with the information they were provided with before closing their file. This became the perfect opportunity to ask them what they thought made a difference for them through the CIRC program.
- Every Client was offered information, yet only 3% of them said that alone was what made a difference to them.
- Overwhelmingly the answer is ‘listening’ and the feelings of emotional support that come with that. By always asking open ended questions, not questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no, allowed the Client to tell their story, and to get to the root of their problem. Many times, the client themselves didn't know where things started to go wrong until talking it out through the resources of CIRC.
- The ability to listen to and/or tune into a Client's needs is reflected in this chart as well. Some Clients like a formal setting across the table from each other, while other like to be offered a cup of tea and settle down on the couch and have a conversation.
- Having more time available for CIRC allowed for more one-on-one time with the clients, and through conversation and "caring question asked" concerns and resources needed by the client other than their original request were found and addressed.
- Many Clients noted that although listening is what made the difference for them, having the CIRC office open and accessible, coinciding with the foodbank hours also made a difference as it was a chance stop in, catch up, book another appointment, or just say hello.
- It should be noted that self reporting provides one source of outcome but it is important.

Concluding Summary:

**People seeking Information & Support:** In 2018/19, the CIRC service continues to be relevant for a large number of local residents. Although number of individuals and contacts are relatively constant, there are a large number of new clients who find their way to The Meeting Place by word of mouth. What we are seeing is a continued need for exploration and dissemination of information with a supportive and listening approach reaching further into the community.

This report highlights that an initial request for information through CIRC is only part of the story. With time and use of active listening, the connections made to an additional range of information and resources beyond the initial request is impressive. See chart – ‘Initial Requests and Information Provided’. This is an indicator of trust coming from the rural community and interestingly, some residents are just seeking a place to ‘talk’. The setting at The Meeting Place offers flexibility from living room style seating, to small group tables to closed door office and kitchen and all spaces support the conversation.

**Strengthening our own Community:** For the third year, CIRC invited clients to engage in an exploration of meaningful connections within their own community. Many clients seeking information and resources were also invited to discuss leisure and recreation options, food security strategies, volunteerism and individual and family self care. These opportunities and **local community services** are found or can be developed in rural communities when the right connections are made. When more people access the informal supports and participate in community life there is a good chance that their expressed barriers to life satisfaction can be altered. In turn the rural community is stronger when it has some capacity to care for its citizens. The Meeting Place partnerships with other groups and the services and programs facilitated by The Meeting Place, among others, show up as important in this constellation of local community services. This data may suggest a readiness for more community engagement and ‘linking’ and ‘mobilizing’ to create new resources for residents to access and improve their quality of life.

Jennifer Cuffe, Community Coordinator, TMP

Noreen Steinacher, Board Chair, TMP

June 26, 2019