



# *Annual Report*

**BRIDGEPOINT CENTER FOR EATING DISORDERS**

# BridgePoint

## OUR VISION

All persons affected by disordered eating experience discovery, recovery and healing.

## OUR MISSION

BridgePoint Center for Eating Disorders is a provincial resource providing recovery based programming for people who are experiencing disordered eating.

## OUR VALUES

### *Safety*

A place where all are respected without judgement and experience physical, spiritual, emotional well-being

### *A Participant Centred Focus*

The participant is the expert in their experience and free to be their authentic self and the voice of their healing journey

### *Compassion*

Embracing the uniqueness of each person with empathy, caring and kindness to build a sense of trust and belonging

### *Expertise*

Excelling through competence in our specialty, knowledge, continuous learning, and a multidisciplinary holistic approach

### *Collaboration*

The best outcomes result from working together and empowering our strengths through partnerships with others



**A special thank you to everyone who makes sacrifices that make such a positive impact on our program.**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Anne Rankin - Chair	Sharon Lyons
Amy Pickering- Vice Chair	Dave Nelson
Marie Kleven - Secretary/Treasurer	Amy Pickering
Karen Gibbons	Kayla Seipp

## BRIDGEPOINT TEAM

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### Leadership

Carla Chabot, B. Admin, Executive Director  
Lauralyn Blackburn, MSW, Clinical RSW, CEDS-S, Clinical Program Director  
Helen Uhrich, Senior Program Facilitator

### Financial Office

Linda Bahr, Financial Co-ordinator

### Multi-Disciplinary Program Facilitators & Support Team

Lindsay Crowley, LPN  
Marilyn Erickson  
Fleurette Gallais, B.Sc. Kin., CEP  
Janelle Kapeller  
Louiese Kemp  
Rhea Lewandoski, RD  
Sky Pryor, B.A.  
Barb Sanderson, RP, CCPA  
Janine Wagar, RD (maternity leave)  
Shasta Zeeman, BScN MSN PHC-NP

### Kitchen & Night Support

Sandra Hellings, Kitchen Coordinator  
Barb Hannah  
Carole Evacheski  
Nannette Brooks

### Housekeeping & Maintenance

Barb Hannah  
Barry Craig

**We acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.**



what we've been up  
to... where we are  
going...

# *Leadership* UPDATE

# Executive Director Report

As I reflect on the successes and challenges of this past year, I am so proud of the work that we are doing at BridgePoint. Small, purposeful, and integral steps are taken each day as we are purposefully shifting BridgePoint towards the center of excellence in Saskatchewan. BridgePoint relies on partnerships, relationships, expertise, collaboration, creativity, and ongoing innovation to continue to forge ahead and bring quality evidence-based and practice informed programming to the province of Saskatchewan.

Highlights of the year include a renewed partnership with the Saskatchewan Health Authority and a team of Community Mental Health Nurses from the former Heartland Health Region. To add another piece to our multi-disciplinary team, we were also able to secure a contract with Saskatchewan's first independent Nurse Practitioner. Having access to these key resources is such a benefit to our multi-disciplinary team with backgrounds in eating disorder expertise, social work, nursing, counselling, nutrition, movement, psychology, creative expressions, and peer support/lived experience. As we look ahead, access to current education and training will remain a high priority for our team development.

Much time and care were taken as we evaluate each component of our program to ensure that it is evidence-based, trauma-informed, and is still relevant in the evolving world of eating disorder treatment. We have begun an extensive deep dive into our quantitative program data to demonstrate the impact on the quality of life of our participants. New and continued research and program evaluation projects will be a priority in the coming year.

New program development includes expansion into Equine Assisted Learning as a new modality. This exciting enhancement complements our existing residential program options and we are fortunate that our current team has a passion in this area.

Please take a moment to celebrate and reflect as you go through this annual report. With all the uncertainty that COVID19 has handed to us, we have been able to utilize our expertise and existing strategic plan to pivot our programming onto virtual platforms. While our participants are not able to be onsite, the ability to continue to provide programming virtually opens many opportunities for the increased reach of our programs.

Creativity is not just an important part of the program for our participants. A quote that rings true this year is "Creativity takes courage." These words by Henri Matisse describe how we have truly embraced the challenges brought our way to discover new and emerging opportunities that will launch our program forward. The work that we do is directly inspired by the courage we witness from every participant who walks through our doors to begin their recovery journey.

Keep well and stay safe.



Carla Chabot  
Executive Director





## Clinical Program Director Report

Dr. Brené Brown says that “Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change.” If this is the case then BridgePoint has been embracing vulnerability wholeheartedly!

This past year has been one in which BridgePoint has grown in so many ways. Our goal to become the Center of Excellence in the field of eating disorders is becoming a reality!

I have been busy formalizing our evidence-based and practice-informed program manuals. We have started the work of synthesizing the data collected through our use of the EDQLS (Eating Disorder Quality of Life Scale) and program evaluations completed by participants which will strengthen the data and research regarding residential eating disorder treatment programming. We launched our webinar education series with topics including recovery, communication, hope, intuitive eating and visualizations. We look forward to expanding our support for not only those with lived experience of an eating disorder but also to family and caregivers as well as community professionals.

The emergence of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and pandemic created an opportunity for us to practice vulnerability in new ways! While we had to temporarily stop on-site residential programming, we responded with the creation of almost daily FaceBook Live posts providing meal support, guided movement information, support and psychoeducation. We dreamed of having a platform to interview experts in the field as well as do virtual retreats and support groups. This is also now a reality!

Change is never easy and requires stepping from the known into the unknown. As we prepare to launch our first virtual retreat, I reflect on all the innovation, creativity and change that BridgePoint has not only faced but embraced. I am so grateful to work with a team that is courageous in stepping outside their comfort zone!



Lauralyn Blackburn  
MSW, Clinical RSW, CEDS-S, CDWF  
Clinical Program Director



## Nine Truths About Eating Disorders

- **Truth #1:** Many people with eating disorders look healthy, yet may be extremely ill.
- **Truth #2:** Families are not to blame, and can be the patients' and providers' best allies in treatment.
- **Truth #3:** An eating disorder diagnosis is a health crisis that disrupts personal and family functioning.
- **Truth #4:** Eating disorders are not choices, but serious biologically influenced illnesses.
- **Truth #5:** Eating disorders affect people of all genders, ages, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses.
- **Truth #6:** Eating disorders carry an increased risk for both suicide and medical complications.
- **Truth #7:** Genes and environment play important roles in the development of eating disorders.
- **Truth #8:** Genes alone do not predict who will develop eating disorders.
- **Truth #9:** Full recovery from an eating disorder is possible. Early detection and intervention are important.

based on Dr. Cynthia Bulik's 2014 "9 Eating Disorders Myths Busted" talk at the National Institute of Mental Health Alliance for Research Progress meeting.

# Program Evaluation

A program evaluation was completed at BridgePoint Center for Eating Disorders (BridgePoint) using the Eating Disorder Quality of Life Scale (EDQLS). Participants fill out an EDQLS during every stay at BridgePoint. During longer programming like Module 1 and 2 the EDQLS is filled out more than once. The EDQLS is a Quality Of Life (QoL) measurement specific to eating disorders (ED).

It looks at the following 12 domains: cognitive functioning, education/vocation, family and close relationships, relationships with others, future/outlook, appearance, leisure, psychological health, emotional health, values and beliefs, physical health, and eating issues. These are areas of life that are affected by EDs.

The EDQLS is a consistent, valid measurement tool, which provides BridgePoint with information on the recovery of their participants. This assists team members to make decisions with participants about the future of their recovery and can be used to evaluate BridgePoint's programming. It provides information BridgePoint can use to further develop and improve programming to suit the needs of participants.

The following data was pulled from completed EDQLS' from January 2018 – February 2020 that were obtained from BridgePoint's records. A total of 3 sets of data were analyzed. The 3 data sets include: 65 participants who completed more than one EDQLS during any programming – Retreat, Module 1, Module 2 and Module 3; 47 completed Module 1s looked at exclusively; and 17 completed Module 2s looked at exclusively. Three data sets were used to compare results to see if QoL changed based on the programming attended. Ages and ED diagnoses were collected from all participants. The average age of the participants was 37 years. The most common ED diagnoses in all three data sets were Anorexia Nervosa (27%) and Binge Eating Disorder (34%).



**All 3 data sets revealed an increase in Quality of Life after attending BridgePoint programming.**

Out of the 65 participants who completed the EDQLS, 80% had an improvement in their overall QoL. In all 3 data sets those that improved their QoL had a larger average change than those that decreased. BridgePoint has demonstrated a positive impact on the ability to increase participants' quality of life. This takes into consideration participants who attended a range of programming. Therefore, it did not necessarily matter which programs were completed. Overall, the majority of participants had an increased QoL no matter how long their stay or how many programs they attended at BridgePoint.

In all 3 data sets BridgePoint's programming had a positive impact on all 12 domains, representing areas of life that are affected by eating disorders.

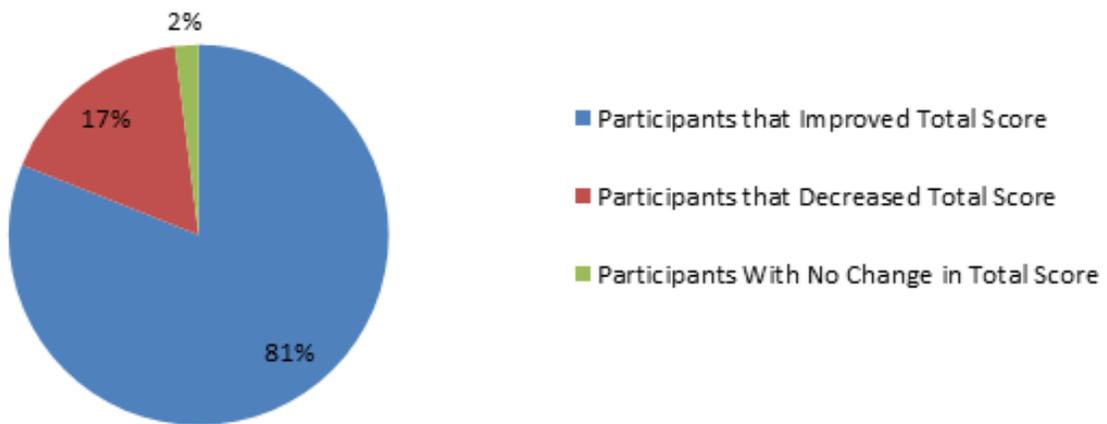
The largest number of participants improved their score in the "emotional" domain with an average of 72%. BridgePoint's group work consistently works towards improving emotional health. The data set including only Module 1 completions had the largest number of participants improve their score in the "physical" domain. Showing that BridgePoint participants believe they are physically improving. BridgePoint strives to improve participants' physical health as well as their interpretation and understanding of their physical health. The data set including only Module 2 completions found the largest number of participants improved their score in the "education/vocation" domain. This could be because Module 2 is focused on relationships and communication with others.

In the data set looking at all 65 participants the largest number of participants decreased their QoL in the "future outlook" domain at 31%. However, an overall positive improvement in the "future outlook" domain was still shown. This could be because of the deep dive into emotional work that occurs. BridgePoint could strive to ensure programming includes activities and group discussions geared towards "future outlook" to improve this outcome.

BridgePoint is making a difference in the QoL of participants who attend programming. This is made possible with the hard work of BridgePoint's team who supports, educates, and encourages participants to get curious and work hard to discover a variety of new and improved patterns and choices that support their personal values.



## All Administration Total Score Change Results



# testimonials

"Thank you for saving my life."

"A life saver – or at least a life changer. I felt very hopeless before coming to BridgePoint. I was full of self-loathing and pain that any chance of recovery was slim. More than anything I was treated with tremendous compassion and care – reminding me how important it is that I do this myself. I was able to feel many emotions that I hadn't felt in a long time, feeling alive again – even in the discomfort. It has changed my perspective on my purpose and what is important in my life."

"Module I has been life changing for me. I came in full of self-hatred, fear and hopelessness. I am now better able to calm myself. I am now feeling compassion and kind curiosity towards myself. It is such a relief to not hate myself. I feel a lightness of spirit and am looking towards the future with hope. I have been given easy to use tools to help me regulate my emotions. I feel confident in my ability to practice my new skills and enjoy a kinder and better quality of life."

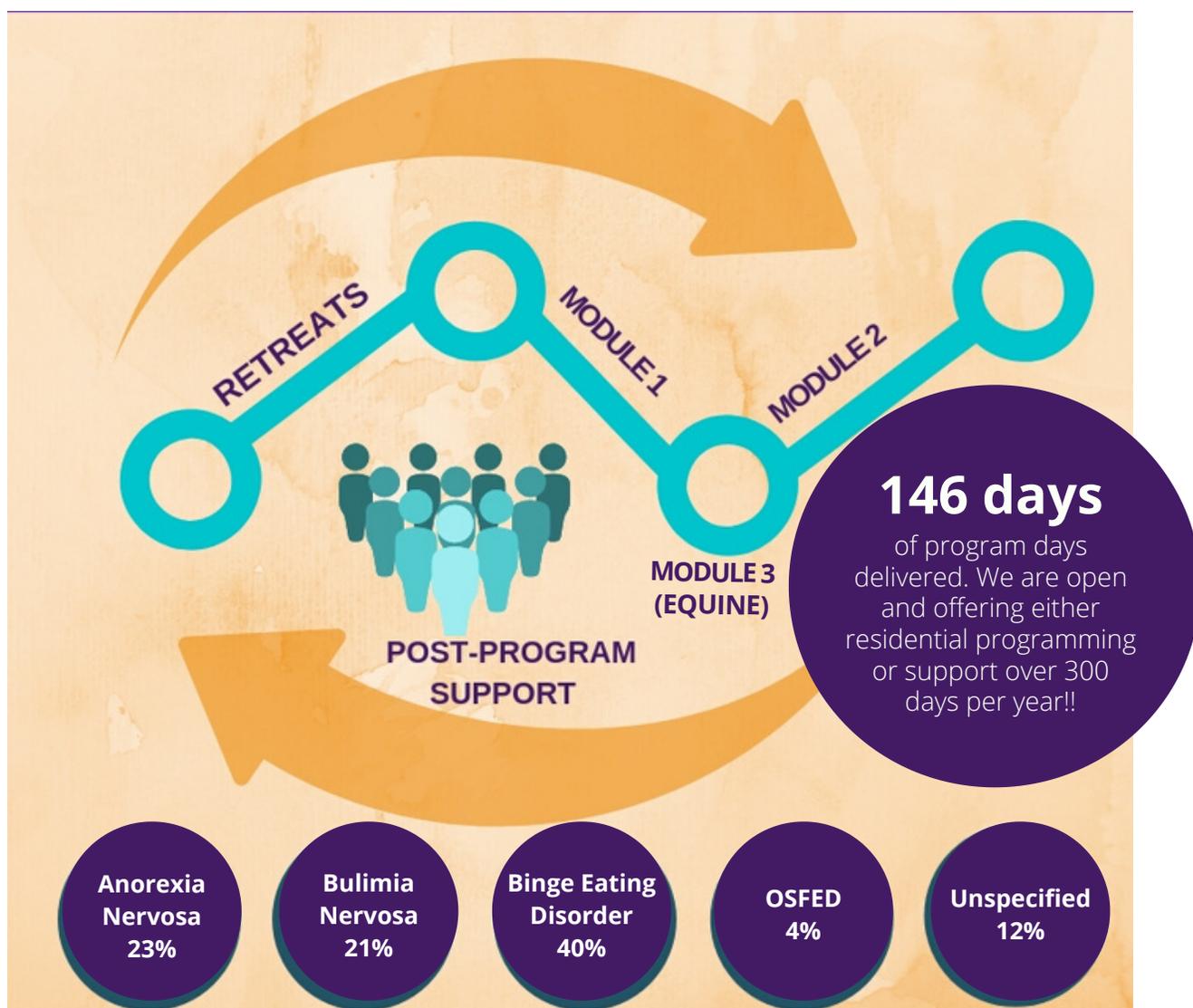
"BridgePoint is a safe haven and refuge. A place where an amazing group of women work to help us navigate through the messy, scary, struggles of life with an eating disorder. And it is done with kindness, compassion and with absolutely NO judgement. Because of access to BridgePoint programming I am learning that I matter, I am capable, and living my life authentically is so much better than just surviving."

"The BridgePoint philosophy has been instrumental as I enter this road to recovery. After decades of falling into diet culture numerous times only to find myself disappointed and discouraged it has been a huge breath of fresh air to be awakened to a whole new process. Creating a new story – leading to a new reality has awakened me to a whole new beginning. My relationship with myself has changed my relationship with food."

## Recovery & Discovery

# Program Stats

The initial stage of programming for a participant is to attend a retreat. Retreats are offered 8-10 times per year and participants are able to self-refer. Participants require counselor and physician support for subsequent modules determine medical and psychiatric stability. Once participants attend a retreat, they are able to apply for the longer and more intensive programming offered in Module 1 and Module 2.



**95**

discrete participants attended onsite programming, plus 24 Friends/Family attended portions of the program

**8500**  
**Website Visits**

82% were new users, with the largest age range between 24-35

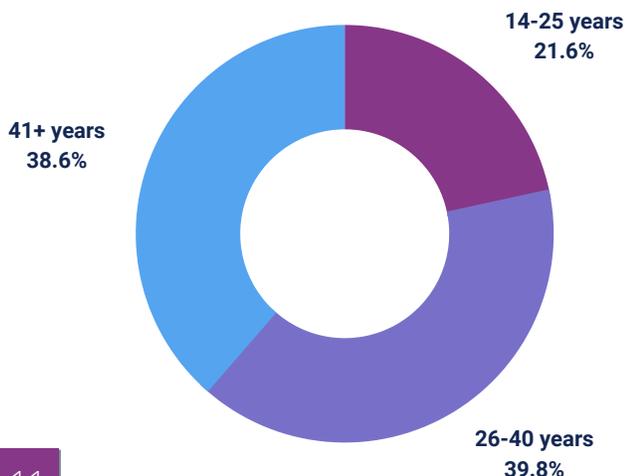
**2046**  
**Program Emails**

(Doesn't include administrative, internal or leadership email)

**1198**  
**Support Calls**

Recovery Support Line for participants (77%), potential participants (12%), SHA professionals (6%), Family/Friends (5%) and other professionals and educators.

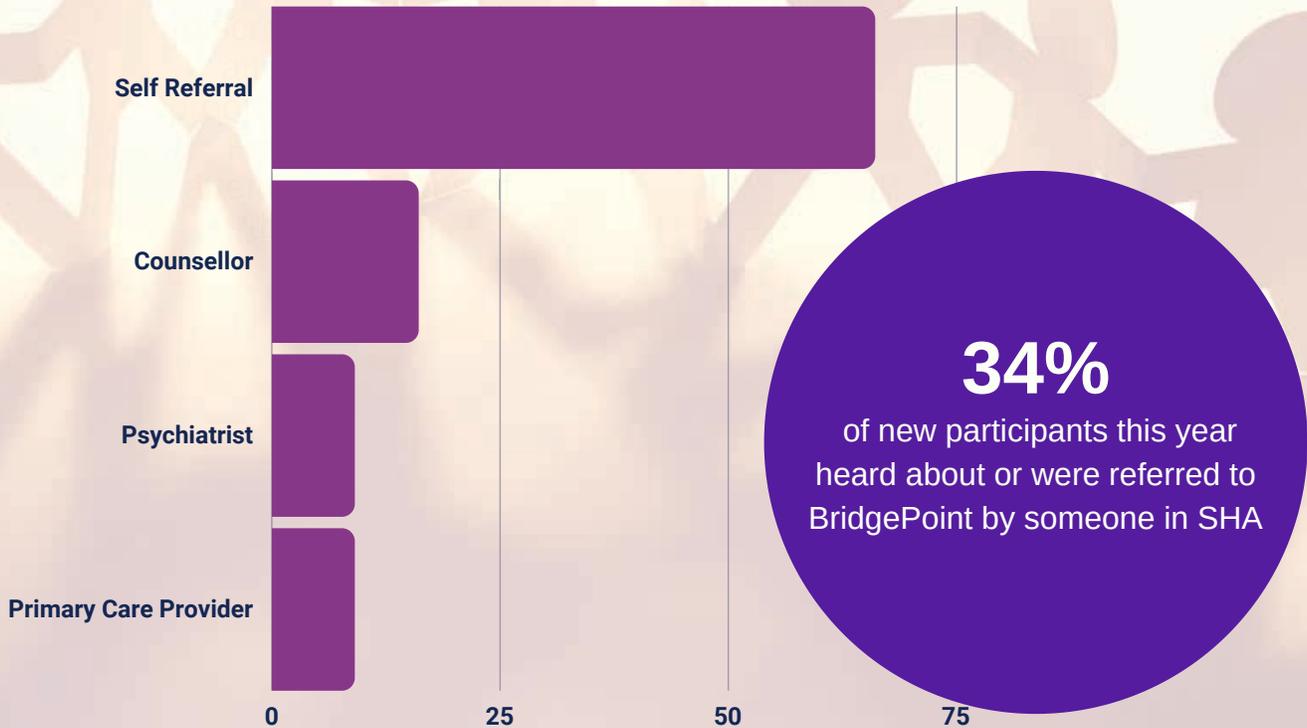
## PARTICIPANT AGES



**Eating disorders don't discriminate. They affect all ages and demographics.**

- Average age of BridgePoint participant was 35 years old
- 54 % of our participants were new to our program
- 3% of our participants identified as men, transgender or other.

# Referrals



Our programs continue to have a high demand. In the 15 programs we hosted in 2019-20, there was an average of 13 people on the wait list for each program.

Average age of eating disorder diagnosis was reported as **21** years

Average Number of Years Struggling with Eating Disorder was reported as **19** years

**39%** of participants attended more than one stage of programming this year

# Impact

“BridgePoint is an inventive and proven resource for those experiencing a range of severe and enduring eating disorders. The program saves and enriches lives. It provides services and care unique not only in Saskatchewan but to Canada itself. In a desert of quality supports for eating disorders, BridgePoint shines like a ray of hope for recovery and wellness. I never expected to be free of this disorder or find any significant resources to help. My life has changed irrevocably for the better just after on month of inpatient treatment.”

“I am grateful to have the opportunity to attend this program. The support I have gained and the tools I have developed will be key as I return home and continue to recover. It is such a relief to know that BridgePoint is just a call away and I can return for future programming. BridgePoint is a safe, supportive environment where I can practice strategies/tools in the presence of others so that I feel confident to return home and take on the “real world”. BridgePoint has provided me with the armor I need to recover.”

“BridgePoint is saving lives. Before coming to BridgePoint I had opportunities for recovery and continually found myself feeling hopeless and that I couldn’t keep living each day the way I had been. The group therapy community model at BridgePoint creates real life situations to practice learned tools and strategies for distress, tolerance and challenge old destructive coping behaviors. BridgePoint provided me and others the opportunity to find a quality of life worth living, full of connection, community, self –worth, health and meaningful relationships with loved ones, self, mind, body and food. Bridgepoint has offered me support to find a life free of the chains of disordered eating, self-hatred and shame”.

*Hope & Healing Happen Here...*





Participants rated our programs  
**4.3 out of 5**  
overall based on presentation style, quality, content, tools learned, and facilitator knowledge.

The recovery journey can be a life-long endeavor, on average between 2-9 years.  
**And recovery is possible**

Our doors were open over 300 days of the year for support & programming

Outcomes are focused on recovery and resilience models:

Self knowledge & Insight,  
Sense of Hope,  
Strong Relationships,  
Personal Perspective & Meaning

*On the Road to Recovery...*

# Partnership

A new partnership between the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and BridgePoint Center for Eating Disorders is leveraging expertise and adding quality to client care throughout the treatment pathway.

Since 1997, BridgePoint has been contracted as a provincial, community-based organization to provide essential services and residential programming in the non-medical treatment of eating disorders. Now, SHA Community Mental Health Nurses will support BridgePoint participants along on their journey to recover from eating disorders from the time they first enter the program.

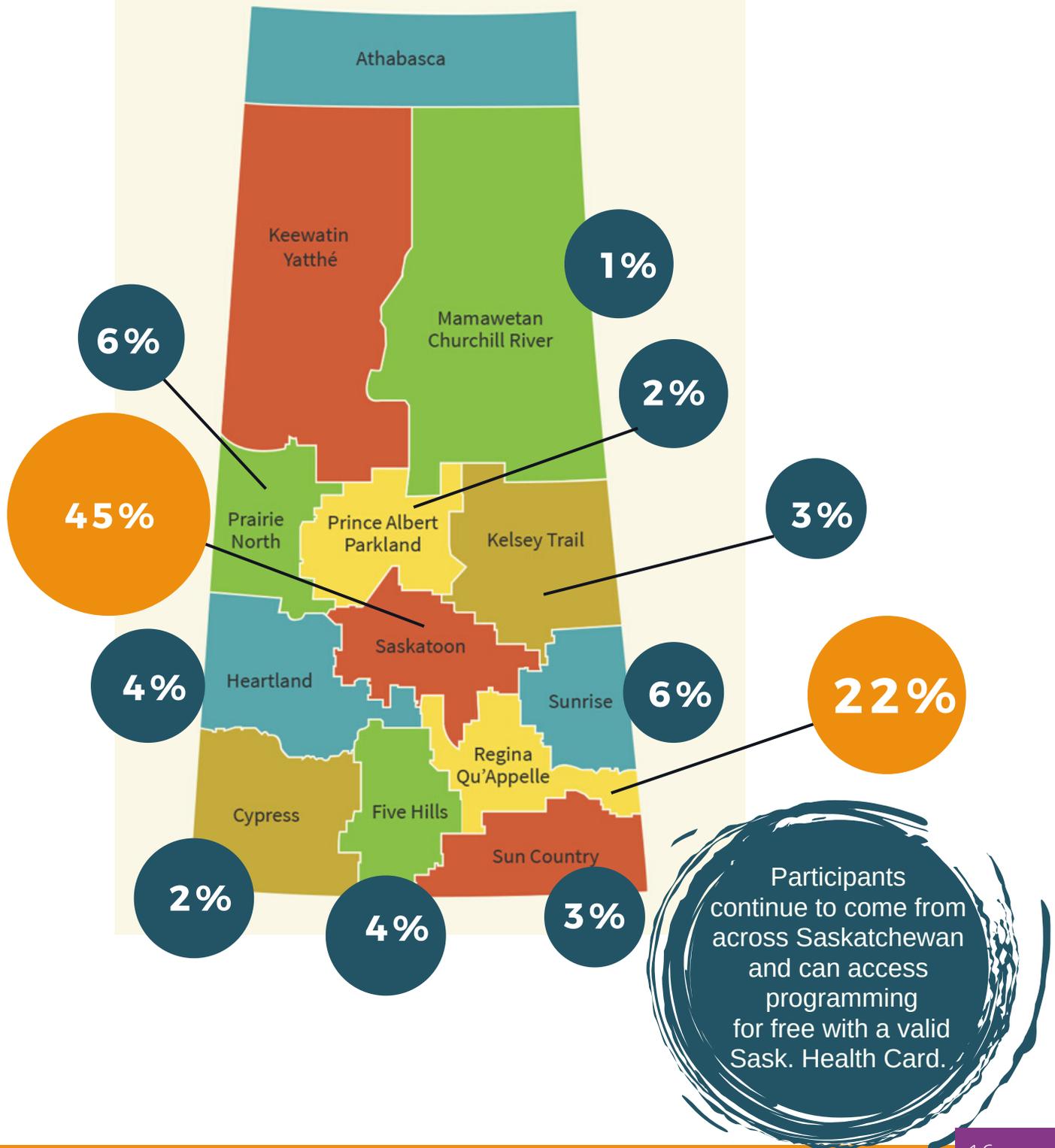
“The benefits of this partnership will extend past safety and quality improvement initiatives for program participants,” says Stacey Gedak, Clinic Lead of Community Mental Health Services for the Saskatchewan Health Authority. “The community mental health nursing team will gain a unique and hands-on experience, and learn more about the field of disordered eating from the BridgePoint multi-disciplinary team.

“This partnership will help to improve the client experience by allowing them easier and more familiar access to follow up with Mental Health services in their home community once their program is complete.” This work is the first step in a more significant partnership linking access to expertise, ongoing consultation and support, and educational opportunities that will also benefit those working within the mental health field and the treatment and support of those struggling with disordered eating in Saskatchewan,” says BridgePoint’s Executive Director, Carla Chabot.



*Lauralyn Blackburn, Clinical Program Director BridgePoint Center for Eating Disorders collaborates with Stacey Gedak, Clinic Supervisor of Community Mental Health Services for the Saskatchewan Health Authority as they coordinate and plan for the upcoming program integration.*

# Former Saskatchewan Health Regions



# Equine

Being an innovative program isn't new for BridgePoint as we have continued to grow and evolve over the last two decades. At the end of April 2019, BridgePoint successfully launched a new pilot program that included pairing Equine Assisted Learning into existing core programming. This modality uses equine partners as teachers to facilitate healing.

Equine-Assisted Learning is a powerful, professional and effective approach that is proven to have a positive impact on individuals of all ages. Participants from all across Saskatchewan had the opportunity to be a part of this pilot program that incorporated the use of horses into a BridgePoint-style retreat to begin trauma-informed healing of eating disorders. The focus of utilizing horses in a therapeutic process is not about riding or horsemanship, although horse care is sometimes involved. This pilot program was so successful that it has been evolved into a new 6 day module, called Module 3. We will be completing a detailed program evaluation on this program once we have enough data collected.

Equine Assisted Learning is a highly effective, interactive modality involving certified equine assisted learning coaching, a multi-disciplinary team, participants and horses. Participants engage in activities with the horses and given an opportunity to explore and process their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. This was a unique opportunity for growth in ways that other methods and modalities haven't been able to achieve.

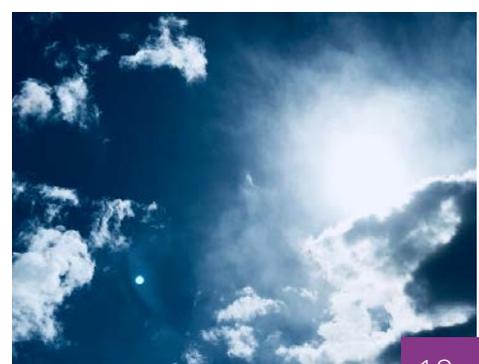
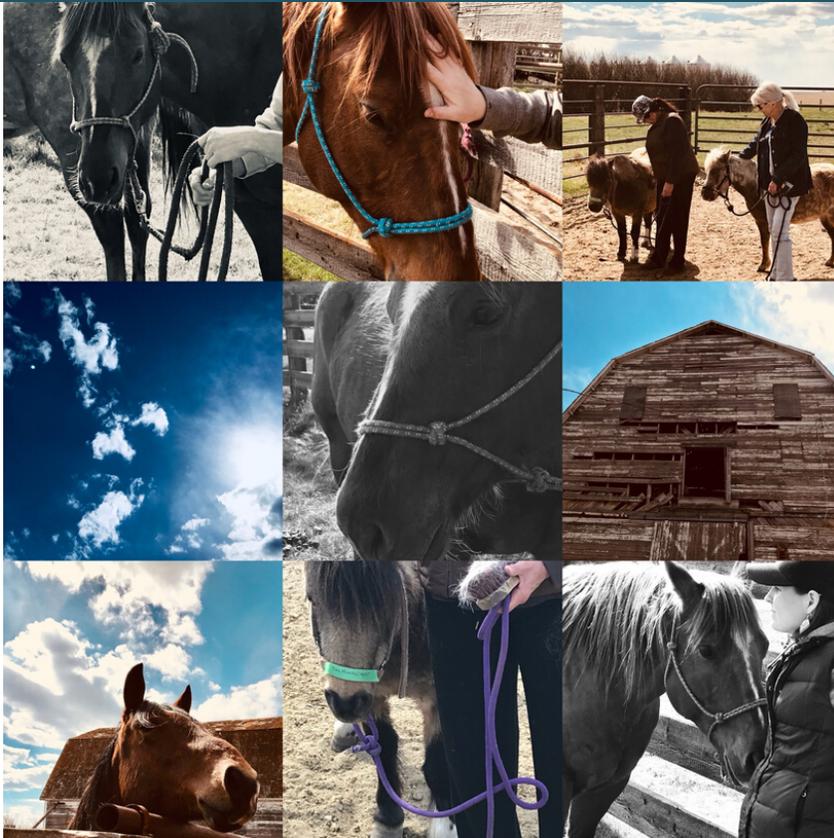
"For the first time, I've been able to thrive instead of survive," recounted a participant in the program. The goal of the program was to increase the participants' quality of life by providing enhanced trauma-informed programming and recovery from eating disorder behaviours. Participants left this program with tools to increase health outcomes and quality of life. Participants were able to attend the program free of charge and stayed onsite at the eating disorder recovery center in Mildren, Saskatchewan.

**"The horses were a huge part of me opening up to talk about stuff I haven't said out loud and allowed myself to feel."**

**"I wouldn't trade this experience for anything in the world, and I feel more equipped to deal with my trauma."**

**"I have learned a lot about myself by looking into the eye of the horse. There is something about the horse that touched my soul."**





Program outcomes were measured by using coherence data, formal evaluations, qualitative feedback and facilitator observations. Coherence is an optimal physiological state shown to prevent and reduce stress, increase resilience, and promote emotional wellbeing. All participants demonstrated and reported positive outcomes from the pilot program. The participants who have previously attended all existing stages of BridgePoint's current programming appeared to experience the biggest shifts in their discovery and recovery journey.

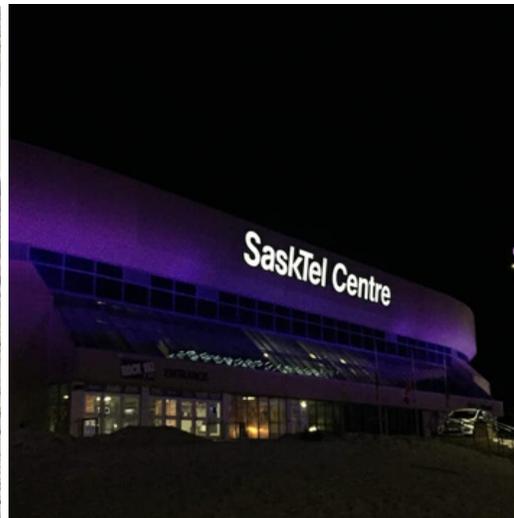
"Less than a year ago adding equine into our program at BridgePoint was just a dream," says Executive Director Carla Chabot. "This became reality this weekend after a lot of dreaming, training, planning, fundraising and collaboration. I'm so proud of my BridgePoint team and the hard work of our participants.

We look forward to connecting with funding partners to ensure that we are able to include equine assisted



# Prevalance

Eating disorders have a devastating impact on millions of people in Canada, and this is why the funding and treatment of Eating Disorders can no longer be put on hold. One in ten people suffering with an Eating Disorder will die. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness.



Thank you to Jim Reiter, Minister of Health in Saskatchewan for your continued support of Eating Disorder Awareness week and for your ongoing support of our program.

# Philosophy

We provide...

- Support to Saskatchewan residents who are experiencing eating disorders and their support networks. Our approach is holistic with a focus on mind, body and spirit.
- A safe, comfortable, nurturing environment for individuals to heal that is separate from the stress of daily life.
- Ongoing, individualized support services and collaboration with the Saskatchewan Health Authority professionals and care teams.
- Ongoing interdependent planning among BridgePoint, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the province.

## Available for Consulting, Workshops, Presentations & Training:

- Programs based on the research of Brene Brown including Daring Greatly, Rising Strong, Gifts of Imperfection & BOLD Adolescent Program
- Emotion coaching for caregivers
- SafeTalk
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- Equine Assisted Learning
- BridgePoint Webinar Series
- Other individualized training based on your needs!

## Coming Soon:

- Saskatchewan Eating Disorder Community of Practice Group
- Launch of an innovative e-learning platform to deliver online courses and live virtual programming
- Daily Mental Health Texting Service
- Expanded virtual programming options



Just call or email  
to arrange training  
for your group or  
organization!

# Outreach & Education

## Events & Activities during 2019-20

Presentations to Various Schools

Launch of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training Program in the community and at University of Saskatchewan

Partnering organization on an innovative e-learning platform with Body Brave, National Initiative for Eating Disorders and Eating Disorders Nova Scotia

Provincial Proclamation for Eating Disorder Awareness Week February 1-7

World Eating Disorder Action Day (June 6)

Panelist at event hosted by UofS Student Wellness, Nourish YXE and Saskatoon Weight Attitudes and Disordered Eating

Nurse Practitioner Conference

SRNA Conference

Sun Nurses Health Innovation Summit

Development of a Saskatoon Support Group with CMHA Saskatoon (cancelled due to COVID-19)

Website and Social Media presence.  
(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)



We had over 28 requests for outreach opportunities between January and March this year alone. Unfortunately, we had to cancel many of our bookings due to COVID19.





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