



Support through the pandemic: Dan

With his cat, TK, underfoot and the time and space to focus on his art and talk with friends on the phone, Dan is finding social distancing rather pleasant. Thanks to LOFT's unfaltering support, he's in a good place these days. But that was once far from true.

Dan lives with schizophrenia, and coupled with a drug addiction, he struggled to function, often experiencing homelessness and spending time in jail.

Lacking the mental health supports he desperately needed, Dan was living at a shelter 13 years ago when he was accepted into LOFT's Mental Health and Justice Initiative.

This donor-supported program changed Dan's life. With the help of LOFT staff, Dan has developed strategies to manage negative thoughts

and approach challenges with mindfulness. Over time, he's come to understand he can't change others, but he can control his behaviour. *"I can only work on me alone,"* he explains. Transitioning to a new case worker recently has been especially helpful. *"He's been wonderful,"* says Dan. *"I can relate to him."*

Practicing gratitude has been a big help, and Dan actively works to reframe negative narratives utilizing the 90-second rule (after the initial physiological response to a trigger, you can change your emotional response). *"In 90 seconds, the negative thoughts will be gone,"* he explains. *"I take a deep breath, identify the thought, and let it go."*

To pay it forward, Dan shares the 90-second rule with other LOFT clients, helping them cope with their negative thoughts and mental illness. Before the pandemic, he also contributed by volunteering as a co-facilitator of art classes.

While he's mostly doing well these days, there are ups and downs associated with his mental health. But Dan notes LOFT's ongoing support has made such a difference in his life. *"It's been incredible. I have nothing but gratitude to LOFT."*



LOFT's Mental Health and Justice Initiative provides supportive housing and intensive case management services for individuals with serious mental illness and recent or current involvement with the criminal justice system.



Get to Know Us: Rhonda

COVID-19 has changed everything for Rhonda Sloane and others on LOFT's Behavioural Support Transition Resource team.

As a psychogeriatric case manager working in two North Toronto hospitals, Rhonda supports seniors with behavioural issues and mental illnesses, helping to stabilize the patient's behaviour, serving as a patient advocate and supporting the patient's transition to a new hospital unit or care home.

Information-gathering is a big part of the job. She speaks with the client, their family and hospital staff to get a full picture of behaviours and triggers so she can make results-based decisions and plans. She describes her role as part private investigator. The pandemic means she works in full PPE, which is a must in hospitals that are treating COVID-19 patients.

With seniors being especially vulnerable to the novel coronavirus, protecting her clients' health while advocating for their rights and needs has been critical. In the first month of the pandemic, Rhonda worked closely with hospital staff to provide solutions to client behaviours that keep both clients and staff safe.

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Another big change: The number of clients she supports. Where Rhonda typically had about 12 clients to care for before the pandemic, her caseload has jumped to 28. *"We've never stopped during the pandemic,"* she says. *"Our patients are often misunderstood, and we are all they have."*

Like many health care providers and her LOFT colleagues, Rhonda has also had to make significant personal sacrifices. She went 13 weeks without seeing her spouse and two sons to ensure she wouldn't bring COVID-19 home. And she continues to avoid grocery shopping and patios to protect the public.

Despite the very real risk, she knows the care she provides clients is important. *"One of the most meaningful parts of this job is knowing we are there for the forgotten."*

WAYS TO HELP

COVID-19 has put a great strain on the communities and people we serve. Many are going without much-needed supplies.

Please consider a financial gift so that we can purchase items like medical grade personal protective equipment (PPE), or an in-kind donation of:

- Reusable cloth masks and gowns that open at the back
- Catered meals for LOFT staff and clients
- Personal care products such as shampoo, toothpaste and feminine hygiene products
- New, unused sheets and blankets
- Air conditioning units, since many of our locations aren't air conditioned

Have something you'd like to donate? Email fundraising@loftcs.org today!

Christmas Concert

The 30th Annual LOFT Christmas Concert is going virtual! We are making every effort to gather and celebrate this anniversary during the pandemic while keeping everyone safe.

Given the ongoing evolution of public health guidelines, more details about the event will be available over the next several weeks.



WHAT'S NEW AT LOFT?



Heather McDonald, CEO

Keeping our foot on the gas

The pandemic has added lots of complex challenges to the work we do at LOFT. New cleaning protocols, closure of common spaces in residences, cancellation of in-person services and other major adjustments have deeply impacted our staff and clients alike. We remain determined to serve our clients with dignity and compassion—and that means changing how we do business.

We've reimagined our community programs to continue providing critical care virtually, through secure platforms that protect the privacy of our clients. Our staff has been adaptable, redeploying to programs that need additional support, and our Caring for our Carers strategy is more important than ever

as our staff continue this challenging work for the foreseeable future. LOFT is offering safety training, virtual staff support sessions, and access to up-to-date information.

LOFT has also been involved in critical COVID-19 planning with our city and provincial partners. We've shared our experience and expertise in three Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence webinars for health care providers across the province. Locally, we've partnered with the City of Toronto to transition people from the shelter system and provide them with housing, mental health and addictions support, and daily meals.



The 2020 Survey

As a valued member of the LOFT community, we deeply appreciate your trust and are committed to keeping you inspired and informed on the impact you are making.

To help us understand what inspires your support, please fill out the survey below and send it back in the envelope provided. Or visit our website www.loftcs.org/2020survey to fill it out online. Or give us a call at **416-979-1994 ext #2033**. Your experiences with us are instrumental in helping us respond in a crisis and strengthen the work we accomplish together.

Name:

Email Address:

Sign up for our emails. Unsubscribe at any time.

1. What inspires you about LOFT?
2. Tell us how you first got involved with LOFT?
3. What other causes do you support?
4. What do you wish people knew about LOFT?

5. How do you prefer to donate?
 - a. Online
 - b. Over the telephone
 - c. By Mail
6. What factors are important to you when making a donation? (choose your top two)
 - a. Fundraising efficiency
 - b. Recognition options
 - c. Making a local impact
 - d. Diversity of Programs
 - e. Clear idea of where your money goes
 - f. Other:
7. How much impact do you feel your gift has?
8. From a scale of 1 - 10, how appreciated do you feel by LOFT? (10 the most appreciated)
9. How may we update you about your impact?
 - a. Mail
 - b. Email
10. We are looking to learn more about your experiences with LOFT. Please use the space below to share any additional feedback.

I would like someone to call me. My phone number is _____

<<Addressee>>

<<Org Name>>

<<Address1>>

<<Address2>>

<<City>>, <<Prov>> <<Postal>>