COMMUNITY CONNNECT YC (CCYCYC) is a collaborative initiative aimed at transforming access to affordable counselling services for residents of Calgary and its surrounding areas. Launched in August 2020 by Kindred in response to the growing mental health needs exacerbated by the pandemic, CCYCYC aims to address barriers to counselling access through its user-friendly online platform, offering a variety of counselling services including rapid access, first-language counselling, addiction support, domestic violence counselling, sexual health counselling, and more.

CCYCYC’s innovative digital approach not only improves access to services but also fosters collaboration among community partners. By providing a centralized platform, CCYCYC facilitates seamless scheduling, appointment booking, and access to diverse services. The initiative’s impact is categorized into three areas:

- **Client Accessibility**: CCYCYC offers autonomy, choice, and convenience to clients, enabling timely access to counselling. It has expanded service options and improved self-referral services.
- **Mental Health Outcomes**: Improved access to services is positively affecting individual mental health outcomes, helping clients receive the support they need when they need it.
- **Organizational and Sector Transformation**: CCYCYC streamlines intake processes, offers secondary service options, and encourages collaboration among various sectors, including other health professionals.

To further improve accessibility, the CCYCYC website was successfully translated into four languages including Mandarin, Arabic, Punjabi and Spanish in 2023.

CCYCYC has made significant strides in changing how mental health services are understood and accessed in the community and continues to address evolving challenges and gaps in mental health supports in the Calgary community.

CCYCYC is very excited to continue its growth into 2024 with three exciting new initiatives made possible by the generous support from the City of Calgary.

1. **Connect the Dots**: This two-year funding will support the critical infrastructure of CCYCYC and increase capacity of the most in-demand services – single session, long-term and trauma counselling. The three services that will have increased capacity through this funding are Kindred’s Rapid Access Counselling, Veevo’s Trauma Counselling, and Trelli’s Youth Counselling.

2. **Community Information Exchange**: Distress Centre, as the lead of this initiative and funding will be partnering with CCYCYC to help explore the synergies between the two projects and the possibility of integration for better coordination of referrals and information exchange.

3. **Crises Response and Coordination**: As part of the secondary crisis response this initiative aims to enhance community support programme’s implementation across the city, and utilize a centralized platform (CCYCYC) for efficient service navigation and referral. This two-year funding will enable CCYCYC to become an integral part of the crisis response system, offering easy access to mental health support which various crisis responders can refer to. This funding will position CCYCYC as the first stop for affordable counselling during crisis stabilization, supporting a holistic approach to client care. Funding through this grant will help reach those in crisis by supporting the ongoing development and maintenance of the CCYCYC platform. It will also increase service offerings and/or reduce wait times for CCYCYC services that positioned to respond to crisis including Kindred’s Rapid Access Counselling, Veevo’s Individual Counselling for Domestic Violence, Centre for Newcomer’s Counselling for Immigrants, Centre for Sexuality’s Sexual Health Counselling, and the Alex’s Rapid Access Addiction Medicine.