



Strategic Plan 2016-2021

About Cota

Cota is an accredited community-based organization that has been supporting adults with mental health and cognitive challenges for more than 40 years. Our goal is to inspire meaningful change in the lives of our clients by helping individuals to recognize and build on their strength and skills so that they can achieve their goals.

We also work collaboratively with our funding partners and other stakeholders across the provincial health and social sectors to inspire positive change in the development and deliver of services for those living with mental health and cognitive challenges.

The People We Help

Cota offers a wide range of services to adults living with:

- Serious Mental Illness
- Geriatric Mental Health Conditions
- Developmental Disabilities
- Dual Diagnosis
- Acquired Brain Injuries
- The Experience of Homelessness

The Things We Do

Our Services Include:

- Case Management
- Supportive Housing
- Short-Term and Transitional Residential Beds
- Day Programs
- Court and Justice-Related Supports
- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

Our Mission

To support individuals with mental health and cognitive challenges to live within their communities.

Our Vision

A supportive and inclusive society in which all people have equal opportunity to live, thrive and enjoy the full benefits of belonging within their communities.

Our Values

- Hope
- Respect
- Collaboration
- Dedication
- Accountability
- Innovation

Our Funders

Funding supports provided by:
Central Local Health Integration Network; Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network; Ministry of Community and Social Services; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; and, the City of Toronto.

Pictured here are clients and a volunteer, at Cota's Acquired Brain Injury Adult Day Service located in Scarborough. Bill, the individual in the red hat, is a former Cota client, and now proudly volunteers at the Adult Day Service.

A Message from the President and the Executive Director

We are very pleased to present Cota’s Strategic Plan for 2016-2021. This plan is the result of both a careful review of the many influencing factors in our external environment and a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process that we conducted over the past twelve months. We held over twenty two (22) internal Town Hall session sessions with our staff, engaged over seventy (70) clients, from across all of our services, in a series of focus group sessions and received feedback from nineteen (19) key external stakeholders. We are very thankful to everyone who offered their time, thoughts and suggestions along the way. We truly value the opportunity to have spent such a considerable amount of time engaging with you as we developed this plan.

We feel we have developed an ambitious and motivating strategic plan. We hope you agree.

Over the next five years, Cota will be focusing on the following four key strategic directions:

Inspire Positive Change in the Lives of the People We Support

Invest in Our Staff

Drive Necessary System Transformation

Demonstrate Our Value and Attract Support



Sundeep Sodhi
Sundeep Sodhi
President, Board of Directors



Paul Bruce
Paul Bruce
Executive Director

Inspire Positive Change in the Lives of the People We Support

Cota will inspire positive change in the lives of the people we support. We will do so by responding to what clients told us in the engagement sessions feeding into the development of this strategic plan, committing to improved ongoing client and family engagement and through our unwavering dedication to the provision of safe, high quality services.

Key Strategic Objectives

Moving forward Cota will:

- Approach client and family engagement in a manner consistent with new best practice standards that have been introduced by Accreditation Canada.

In addition, we will act on what clients told us in the engagement sessions feeding into the development of this strategic plan. The major themes of which were desires to see Cota:

- Provide self-contained rooms (with ensuite washrooms), bachelor and/or one bedroom units within all Cota site-based supportive housing programs
- Secure a new purpose-built site for our Short-Term Residential Beds program
- Create more supportive housing options for people who are waiting for these services
- Assist, where possible, with better access to food and improved nutrition
- Foster a greater sense of community amongst clients
- Enhance service user engagement and involvement within the organization

We will do so while ensuring our services:

- Promote client safety
- Result in a positive client experience



Clients at Bailey House, a supportive housing program, work together to plant a vegetable and herb garden. The harvest will be used to make nutritious meals. During the engagement process, our clients told us that they would like us to assist in fostering a greater sense of community amongst clients.

Invest in Our Staff

Cota recognizes that the overall quality of our services is inextricably linked to the nature of the relationship that Cota holds with its staff, how we support them to do their work and how we value and recognize their contributions. As such, we will invest in our staff, to the best of our abilities, over the term of this Strategic Plan.

Key Strategic Objectives

Quite simply put, Cota’s key strategic objective in this area is to create and foster an environment that will support a motivated, high-performing and engaged workforce.

In order to do so, Cota will:

- Offer more staff training in relevant areas of best practice and skill development
- Improve our ability to support clients with complex presentations
- Identify and reduce barriers to efficiency
- Implement a comprehensive staff wellness and recognition program
- Become a Recognized Employer of Choice



Cota’s Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT Team), pictured here, serves homeless adults living with a serious mental illness in the City of Toronto. During the engagement process, our employees shared their thoughts with us about supporting clients with increasingly complex presentations.

Drive Necessary System Transformation

Cota will drive necessary system transformation to ensure that people in need of service receive improved/faster access to those services, closer to home, through better coordinated and integrated care. We will take an active leadership role and seek out opportunities to improve community-based service delivery while protecting the sustainability of our publicly funded health and social service systems.

Key Strategic Objectives

Cota will play an active role in driving necessary system transformation by:

- Working closely with coordinated access mechanisms, our funders and our community partners to improve access processes and reduce wait times for those seeking support
- Playing a significant role in health system reforms, such as Health Links and emerging focus on Sub-LHIN service areas, aimed at providing improved services to clients, closer to home
- Supporting the City of Toronto’s efforts to improve services to the homeless and vulnerable
- Working closely with and supporting Toronto Community Housing as they prepare to undergo their own transformative change
- Doing what we can to assist the Province of Ontario in achieving its stated goal of ending chronic homelessness in Ontario in 10 years, through our involvement with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness
- Developing more opportunities for hospitals and community based services to work more effectively together to ensure clients receive the right services, at the right time, in the right place
- Actively pursuing service level and/or agency level integrations that result in improved services, stronger back office supports and/or overall cost containment

Cota is formally involved with the City of Toronto’s Specialized Program for Interdivisional Enhanced Responsiveness (SPIDER), a service resolution table for complex health and safety issues involving vulnerable residents of Toronto.

From left to right: Pam Nir, Cota Senior Manager; Peter Hardisty from Municipal Licensing & Standards; and, co-chair Daniel Breault, from the City of Toronto’s Social Development, Finance & Administration, discuss highlights of a SPIDER meeting.



Demonstrate Our Value and Attract Support

Cota has been doing great work in our community for over 40 years. We provide high quality services and have a tremendous impact in the lives of the individuals we serve. Unfortunately, few outside of the health and social service sectors are aware of who we are and what we do. Moving forward, we'd like to change that! Over the next four years we will make concerted efforts to demonstrate our value. We hope that, in doing so, Cota will experience increased support for our work, whether it be through the promotion of the challenges faced by our clients and our services, the formation of new partnerships, or the commitment of new resources.

Key Strategic Objectives

- Achieving an “Accredited with Exemplary Standing” award from Accreditation Canada
- Seeking out opportunities to speak about challenges that affect our clients and value of community-based services in general
- Enhance awareness and recognition of the positive impact of Cota’s work
- Increase year over year funds raised through general fundraising and donations
- Launch successful fundraising drives to help equip and furnish and new site-based programs we may establish



Left: In 2015, Cota fundraised for the first time at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Charity Challenge, and raised more than \$10,000! The funds will provide more than 4,500 breakfasts to Cota’s Short-Term Residential Beds Program for one year.

On this page: Luis, Cota employee interacts with a client during a drop-in breakfast at the Short-Term Residential Beds.

Strategic Plan Summary 2016-2021

Inspire Positive Change in the Lives of the People We Support

- Improve client and family engagement by adopting Accreditation Canada's Standards
- Provide self-contained rooms (with ensuite washrooms), bachelor and/or one bedroom units within all Cota site-based supportive housing programs
- Secure a new purpose-built site for our Short-Term Residential Beds program
- Create more supportive housing options for people who are waiting for these services
- Assist clients where possible, with better access to food and improved nutrition
- Foster a greater sense of community amongst clients
- Enhance service user engagement and involvement within the organization
- Promote client safety
- Ensure positive client experience of our services

Drive System Transformation

- Improve access processes and reduce wait times for those seeking support
- Play a significant role in Health Links and Sub-LHIN service areas
- Support the City of Toronto's efforts to improve services to the homeless and vulnerable
- Support Toronto Community Housing's transformation
- Assist Ontario to end chronic homelessness in 10 years
- Work in collaboration with key hospitals to ensure clients receive the right services, at the right time, in the right place
- Actively pursue service level and/or agency level integrations with other community based organizations

Invest in Our Staff

- To create and foster an environment that will support a motivated, high-performing and engaged workforce by:
 - a) Offering more staff training in relevant areas of best practice and skill development
 - b) Improving our ability to support clients with complex presentations
 - c) Identifying and reducing barriers to efficiency
 - d) Implementing a comprehensive staff wellness and recognition program
 - e) Becoming a Recognized Employer of Choice

Demonstrate Our Value and Attract Support

- Achieving an "Accredited with Exemplary Standing" award from Accreditation Canada
- Seeking out opportunities to speak about challenges that affect our clients and value of community-based services in general
- Enhance awareness and recognition of the positive impact of Cota's work
- Increase year over year funds raised through general fundraising and donations.
- Launch successful fundraising drives to help equip and furnish new site-based programs



Cota's head office is located at:

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Please visit our website **www.cotainspires.ca** to learn more about our services and to find out how you can help inspire change by making a donation.

