

**Calgary Counselling Centre responding to the mental health needs of Calgarians dealing with economic conditions and job loss**

***New support groups available for individuals and couples***

**Calgary, AB – Dec. 9, 2015** – Following the recent Statistics Canada report that the Alberta economy has lost 66,000 jobs since November 2014, and the impact this has on Calgarian’s mental wellbeing, Calgary Counselling Centre is introducing support groups to help those who are impacted by the current economic conditions. Those affected could be individuals who have lost their jobs, are uncertain if they will have jobs in the new year, or are simply struggling with the uncertainty and stress due to changing economic conditions. Starting immediately, Calgarians can register to participate in one of three support groups – one for men, one for women and one for couples – set to begin mid-January.

“Calgary Counselling Centre has always, and will always, respond to the needs of the community. Today, the need is to help these individuals and families through these tough times,” said Dr. Robbie Babins-Wagner, Chief Executive Officer, Calgary Counselling Centre. “Uncertainty about employment and losing a job can take a tremendous toll on a person’s mental wellbeing. We can offer them the information and skills required to endure these difficult times. As with all of our programs, we don’t want fees to be a barrier. Participants will be charged on a sliding scale.”

The Centre is seeing higher demand than ever before, as counsellors help more and more individuals and couples who are experiencing strain due to job loss, pending job loss and employment uncertainty. Intake numbers are up 16 per cent from the same time last year, and requests for couples counselling has increased by more than 10 per cent.

Despite these numbers, many are choosing to carry on in silence, continuing to suffer with stress, anxiety, depression and loss of sleep. All of which not only impacts a person’s mental wellbeing, but their relationships with loved ones as well.

“We feel strongly that these support groups will help those dealing with stress and uncertainty. There’s a lot to be said about sharing your fears, concerns and uncertainty with others that are going through the same things as you,” said Cathy Keough, Director, Counselling Initiatives. “The groups aren’t meant to be financial or career counselling. Our highly-experienced counsellors will offer expertise and guidance on how to manage and cope during a time when opportunity seems far down the road.”

“The community started to hear of layoff announcements as far back as this time last year. So, the reality is that many Calgarians have been without a job for a year. And seeing the oil price continuing to dip, it’s clear that we could be in this situation for quite a while longer than originally anticipated,” adds Babins-Wagner.

The groups begin mid-January and will run once a week for approximately six weeks. Interested individuals and couples can register online or by phoning the Centre at 403-691-5991.

Calgary Counselling Centre is always here to help with no waitlist, a sliding fee scale based on income, and barrier-free access to counselling for all Calgarians.

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**For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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Calgary Counselling Centre is the leading research, training and knowledge-based counselling organization in Canada. Since 1962, the Centre has been committed to providing best practices in counselling, training and research to improve the well-being of Calgarians through highly effective counselling based on solid research and practice. Our services are available to anyone regardless of financial status, the Centre is a recognized leader in the treatment of domestic abuse, depression, eating disorders, separation/divorce, trauma and self-esteem. Through its ongoing research and education programs, Calgary Counselling Centre strives to meet the changing needs of our community.