

ANNUAL REVIEW

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023



SANCTUARY
Mental Health Ministries

OUR MISSION

Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries equips the Church to support mental health and wellbeing.

We provide resources that meaningfully engage the topics of faith and mental health. Our content is developed in collaboration with theologians, mental health professionals, and people with lived experience of mental health challenges. These resources prepare communities of faith around the world to raise awareness, reduce stigma, support mental health, and promote mental wellbeing.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where the Church plays a vital role in supporting mental health and wellbeing in every community.

PATRON AND AMBASSADORS

THE MOST REVD AND RT HON JUSTIN WELBY, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, SANCTUARY PATRON



"I am delighted that The Sanctuary Course is helping churches start conversations about and reduce the stigma attached to illness. We must all get better at talking about this... These free resources will help all of us—ordained or lay, whether we've been in the Church for five minutes or fifty years. I encourage you to talk, learn, pray, share, and care about this. Whatever your church and wherever you live, it matters."

HILLARY MCBRIDE, PHD

Psychologist, Author, Researcher, and Speaker



REV. ISABELLE HAMLEY, PHD

Secretary for Theology and Ecumenical Relations and
Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops



REV. JOHN SWINTON, PHD

Chair in Divinity and Religious Studies, University of Aberdeen



MATT MAHER

Nine-time-GRAMMY® nominee and three-time-GMA Dove
Award® winning artist



YOUR IMPACT IN 2022-2023



"We need to be seen. We need to be heard. We need our life experience to be witnessed. When people are offered that gift in a loving environment and compassionate space, people find hope. They find hope by being the recipient of those things. So I think that the Sanctuary mental health course creates a space where people can receive that gift."

– Rev. Anne Baxter Smith, Surrey, BC

"My partner and I have just co-facilitated our first run of *The Sanctuary Course* at Christchurch Church of England, Aughton, Ormskirk, Lancashire, UK. The feedback was amazing from the course participants.... Your quality of material, rich resources, and brilliant layout enabled us to deliver the course effectively to an increasingly engaged and enthusiastic group. What happened over time was the development of trust amongst the group, the opening of selves to each other, growing courage to be vulnerable as individuals, and the deepening and strengthening of that wonderful skill of listening. Silence became easier for them to sit in while listening and the results were palpable.

I am a therapist and a Christian, and my partner is a new Christian who has considerable training in counselling skills too. Together we simply want to convey our thanks to you for such a course, its quality, its production, and accessibility. We looked at other courses and none were up to your standards. I even brought, and led, a session of *The Sanctuary Course* to my supervision group at the hospice I volunteer at and they were impressed. Course number two begins in two weeks time and we are excitedly preparing for it. These initial courses are for the benefit of our own church members, to build their abilities up before we reach out to other churches and our community.... So, as you see, you have inspired and helped begin a wonderful work in our lives and church which we are, by the help of the Holy Spirit, compelled to see, reach out, and touch many lives."

– Graeme Scroggie and Victoria Burton, Lancashire, UK

"I've had *Sanctuary Songs* going pretty much nonstop! It's been really comforting with so much going on globally and also thinking about my friends [who are going through a hard time] and also moving. There's a song for it all on that album and that's really unique for Christian music albums which are usually more victorious than how life actually feels." - **Erin, NM**

"Feel seen and loved. Something accessible to those in dark and hurting times. Love it!"
- **@cocaomelissa on YouTube**

Christ is Lower Still: "The lyrics, composition, and heart-filled praise in this song and video is incredible. What a powerful reminder! We don't need to climb to reach Him. He is right here with us."
- **@dharrisonpvd on YouTube**

By My Side: "In these times of loneliness and so many weary souls, like mine, this song is a balm... God Bless. Cheers from Brazil!"
- **@denisegomesdias5580 on YouTube**

Always With Me: "As someone who has and can struggle with mental depression, this song is so beautiful and speaks the truth that I cling to in the darkest of times. The truth that fights the lies of my... depression and helps lessen the spiral. Thank you for this beautiful gift."

- **@christyannetaylor on YouTube**

By My Side: "I. Am. Sobbing. I cannot even express how I needed this. So powerful. So beautiful. Thank you."
- **@k.rose_xo on Instagram**

Christ is Lower Still: "Thank you for helping me find the words. In Your wounds I find room for all of mine."
- **@heartofa.daughter on YouTube**





WE WOULDN'T BE WHERE WE ARE WITHOUT YOU



Daniel Whitehead
CEO

When I started leading Sanctuary in the summer of 2016, I never would have dared to dream that we would be where we are today. I am overwhelmed by our transformation from a local organization with two part-time staff to an organization with global exposure, resources in multiple languages, and household names endorsing our work. In the midst of these successes, there are two things worth noting.

The first is that, at its core, Sanctuary is the same organization that I started working for in 2016. The connection each team member feels to our mission and vision is real and deeply personal. We genuinely believe that the Church can be a place where people experience profound belonging, regardless of where they are in their mental health journeys. This belief

motivates each of us to show up in our work with vulnerability, with compassion, and with a sense of healthy inadequacy and dependence on God.

The second point worth making is that so much hard work goes into making Sanctuary's resources and equipping the Church. It's not easy, and many of us have had to make sacrifices in seasons of intensive effort. Ultimately, our efforts feel meaningful when we have the opportunity to hear about the difference that Sanctuary is making in communities around the world.

I recently had the distinct privilege of sitting with a cohort of church leaders from San Antonio, TX. These bishops and pastors have been part of a pilot group, trialing *The Sanctuary Course* in congregations that are culturally, ethnically, and denominationally diverse. In what was easily one of the most emotionally overwhelming moments I've experienced since I started working

for Sanctuary, I was moved to tears as each person shared what *The Sanctuary Course* had meant to them personally and to those in their congregations. The resources produced by our small team are making a difference. They are offering hope, shifting perspectives, and providing new frameworks that empower individuals to love one another well in light of the realities of mental health challenges. As one leader remarked, *The Sanctuary Course* didn't offer disembodied information about disorders; it helped his congregation learn to really see people. **This is the power of Sanctuary: equipping the Church to be a place where people can be seen and valued as they are, and where lived experience can be brought into the love of Christ and the love of Christian community.**

In a city over 3,500 kilometers away from where Sanctuary began, Sanctuary's message is making a tangible difference. Communities are growing in compassion and awareness, and individuals are being equipped to offer holistic support and care. Thanks to this pilot and our growing partnerships in the area (more on that to come), we look forward to a broad and concerted rollout of the course in churches throughout San Antonio and the rest of Texas.

But none of this would be possible without the many people who have believed in, advocated for, and resourced Sanctuary! Words fail me when I think of the depth of gratitude I feel towards all of you, our wonderful supporters. God bless you, and thank you.

Members of the Sanctuary team and friends at the Fall 2023 Team Retreat





Amy Yeung
Youth Lead

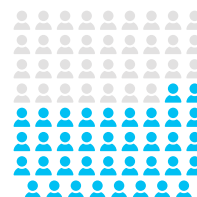
Why create a youth resource? The answer might seem obvious to you. Stats and articles abound heralding a youth mental health crisis in the wake of the unforgettable global pandemic. During the pandemic, youth missed key life milestones, their anxiety rose, and they lived with mandated social isolation. The concerns we already had around the use of technology were pushed aside as our young people had to rely on technology more than ever to learn, complete homework, connect with friends and family, or just pass the time during lockdowns. The direct impact and the accompanying ripple effects of these circumstances on youth mental health is the topic of much discussion and will continue to ripple throughout the years. But for me, the answer to the question I posed is rooted in pre-pandemic realities.

I first wanted to move to Vancouver, BC from Sydney in 2014, but at God's leading I stayed in Sydney to complement my undergraduate degree in psychology with a masters in counselling. In 2016, I started a role as youth pastor and quickly began delivering training about mental health. One night after giving a seminar, I was chatting to a couple of youth leaders in a city just outside of Sydney. They were concerned about the mental health of one of their students, but felt paralyzed by a lack of information and a fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. On my drive home that night, the seed was planted in a half-thought, half-prayer:

71

PEOPLE INVOLVED

37 of whom were youth





8 STORIES RECORDED from 4 countries

"I might not be the best person for the job, but I've got to do something. There needs to be a youth mental health and faith resource that anyone can access online."

A few years later, I finally made the move to Vancouver and was introduced to Sanctuary. The alignment between Sanctuary's mission and my skills, experience, and passion made for a beautiful match. It truly has felt like God took that half-thought, half-prayer and led me to the right place at the right time. It has been especially exciting to join hands with other team members, volunteers, and youth in the development process. To date, I can name seventy-one people who have contributed to this resource in some way, with just over half of them being young people.

I'm so grateful to all who have offered ideas, advised, donated, edited, reviewed, shared their story, and created with me. I cannot wait to share with you what we've made together, and to see young people in faith communities engage in the mental health and faith conversation, all while decreasing secular and spiritual stigma. As groups go through this series, they'll hear from people with lived experience and gain a better understanding of themselves, their friends and family, and God. We're excited for you to go on this journey with your community!

"Grade eleven is when it became almost impossible to hide the struggles that I lived with. I was so anxious my stomach hurt all the time, I felt physically unwell, and I was having breakdowns. One time I had a panic attack and Mum said, 'You need to see a doctor. I'm going to book you in.' And she literally just went and booked me in, which is surprising because there was this whole idea in my household that prayer is all you do and your problems are fixed... I'm not denying the power of prayer, but I believe God can help you through people and other means. ...he can work in many different ways to guide you, to lead you, and to get you the help that you need."

- ELLA, NIGERIAN-CANADIAN

631

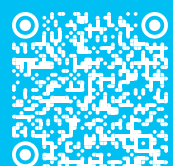
PEOPLE SUBSCRIBED TO
THE YOUTH NEWSLETTER



15

months taken to write, edit,
and review the scripts

Want to be the first to know when
The Sanctuary Youth Series is
coming out? Subscribe to the
youth newsletter here:





A GLOBAL REACH



Corin Pilling
UK National Director

In a year of memorable highlights for Sanctuary UK, establishing a fully-formed team is a key step forward in our journey. Thanks to generous donors we were able to fulfill our ambition of building a team to extend our reach even further. Lisa Yates joined the team as Programme Lead to support leaders in facilitating *The Sanctuary Course*. She shares, “Everybody I speak to is convinced of the need for Sanctuary’s resources.” Lisa and Charlene Grant, who leads UK communications, aim to help the 40,000 churches across the UK become part of a movement of churches actively engaging in mental health conversations.

A second highlight is our growth in visibility in the UK: *The Sanctuary Course* appeared on BBC national TV and we hosted a preview of the *Sanctuary Songs* album in London with a concert by The Porter’s Gate and our new ambassador, Matt Maher. Feedback on the night was incredible, including one comment we will treasure: **“I’ve lived with mental health challenges all of my adult life, and**

this is the first time I’ve felt the worship in church was for me.”

Thirdly, our frontline training for leaders continued to grow. We offered sessions on stress impact and burnout risk. We also delivered training to groups studying for ordination, offering a framework for mental health and ministry. We couldn’t do this without the help of so many valued partners, to whom we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

UK church leaders, like Gareth Brown, offer us encouragement as they share their experience of the impact of *The Sanctuary Course*. I share that encouragement now with you who are part of Sanctuary’s work:

“[Course participants] say—actually, I’m not on my own—I feel part of something, and I’m part of a community that’s addressing these issues. People have said they feel safer in church, which I think is one of the best things to hear.”

We look forward to new relationships with those God places with us on this journey as we seek to build a UK movement together.

Estimated Resource
Participants:

286,408*

Global Newsletter
Subscribers:

10,618

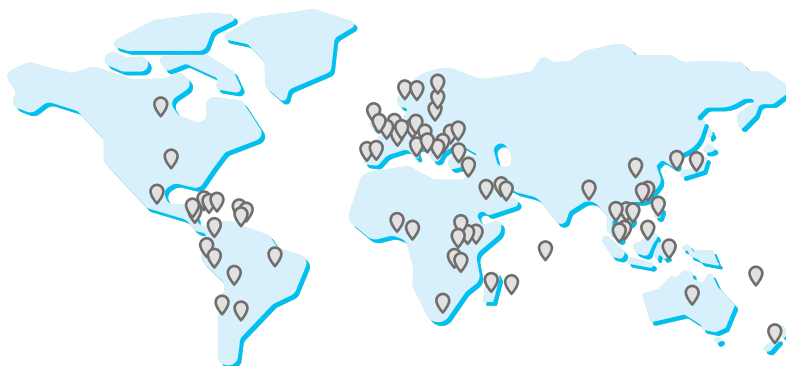
Sanctuary UK
Newsletter Subscribers:

3,307

Website Views**:

503,498

Countries using *The Sanctuary Course* + *The Sanctuary Course for Catholics* (via Sanctuary's portal):



Countries with highest website visitors**:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. US – 75,824 | 6. Philippines – 2,282 |
| 2. Canada – 28,323 | 7. New Zealand – 1,686 |
| 3. UK – 23,391 | 8. Ireland – 1,537 |
| 4. Australia – 6,007 | 9. India – 1,378 |
| 5. South Africa – 4,253 | 10. Singapore – 739 |

The Sanctuary Course
Translations:

- Deutsch (German)

The Sanctuary Course for Catholics Translations:

- Español (Spanish)
- Русский (Russian)
(released 2024)
- Română (Romanian)
(released 2024)

“As a follower of Jesus, seeking to function well in all my roles as an adult while also seeking healing and wholeness from the wounds of a traumatic childhood, [The Sanctuary Course] blessed me in terms of my mental health because it gave me a better understanding of my mental health. [It] taught me how to care for myself. It also educated me on how to care for others who might cross my path. I’m very convinced that this is a very crucial and important frontline ministry of the Church. And, this conviction is what made me donate to this ministry.” – SONIYA, INDIA

*These numbers represent cumulative data collected for all of the resources on Sanctuary's portal from fiscal year 2019-20 to 2022-23. To calculate resource participation, we use a multiplier of fifteen participants per account holder, based on unique email addresses. This multiplier is based on historical data indicating a reported average group size of fifteen participants.

**Note: These numbers are based on data from September 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023 inclusive.



SANCTUARY SONGS

WHAT IS SANCTUARY SONGS?

How do the songs we sing on a Sunday morning impact people with lived experience of mental health challenges? **Are we inadvertently excluding or stigmatizing members of our congregations by only singing certain types of songs, or only singing about certain experiences in the life of faith?** How can we help people hold on to God's presence at all times and in all circumstances—including experiences of mental health challenges?

These questions are what inspired Sanctuary to collaborate with The Porter's Gate Worship Project to produce the *Sanctuary Songs* album. **By creating worship music that centres around the lived experience of people who are often marginalized in churches, and by**

modelling life-giving and healing ways for congregants to sing and talk about mental health challenges, the songs unite liturgy and advocacy.

HOW DID SANCTUARY SONGS ACTUALLY COME TOGETHER?

Sanctuary Songs began as a conversation and dream in 2021. In October 2022, Sanctuary hosted a songwriting retreat at Barnabas Landing near Vancouver, BC. Musicians and songwriters joined together with mental health professionals, theologians, people with lived experiences of mental health challenges, and members of the Sanctuary team to learn and create together. In February 2023, we gathered again in Nashville, TN to begin recording *Sanctuary Songs*.

The full *Sanctuary Songs* album released

on September 15, 2023 on all streaming platforms. Along with the album, Sanctuary offers free downloadable sheet music as well as a booklet of album liner notes, featuring lyrics and reflections on the songs from the artists and people with lived experiences of mental health challenges. One worship leader shared with us: “I’ve had [*Sanctuary Songs*] going pretty much nonstop! It’s been really comforting with so much going on globally, and also thinking about my friends [who are going through a hard time] and also moving. **There’s a song for it all on that album and that’s really unique for Christian music albums, which are usually more victorious than how life actually feels.**”

WHAT ABOUT CONCERTS?

While mixing and mastering was underway, *Sanctuary Songs* premiered in April with a concert at the Holy Sepulchre Church in London, UK attended by over 250 people. The same week, musicians performed songs from the album on stage at London’s Royal Albert Hall as part of the Alpha Leadership Conference. After the concerts, many people told us that they finally felt seen in their lived experiences of mental health challenges as Christians.

In October 2023, Sanctuary hosted a concert featuring *Sanctuary Songs* for over 1,200 people in Vancouver, BC. Led by Matt Maher, John and Valerie Guerra, and other talented artists, the concert was a beautiful evening of worship where stories of lived experience were heard and many people were introduced to Sanctuary’s work.

For those of us who dream of the Church being a place where people who live with mental health challenges experience belonging, *Sanctuary Songs* is an invaluable resource—one which could not have been possible without the support of so many people across the world.

“I went to the Sanctuary Songs concert recently and was impressed to finally hear some songs that are so needed in the Church. Living with a mental illness that includes extreme highs and despairing lows, I have often struggled feeling authentic in worship on typical Sunday mornings. Sanctuary Songs makes space for aspects of our faith journey that include suffering, depression, confusion, and even doubt. I am so grateful how these songs make people feel seen and included in their journey.”

— MELISSA V., TEACHER WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES, CANADA

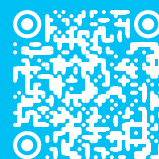
Top 3 most-streamed songs on Spotify:

“Take it Easy” – **246,346**

“Christ is Lower Still” – **201,239**

“Always with Me” – **161,808**

Sanctuary Songs is
now streaming!



GROWING RESOURCES

Resource hosted by Sanctuary ●
Resource hosted by collaborator ●

The Sanctuary Course and The Sanctuary Course for Catholics

Eight-session study guides for small groups, designed to raise awareness and start conversations in local churches and parishes regarding mental health. Participants in these courses will explore key mental health topics through reading, discussion, reflection, and prayer. Each session is accompanied by a film featuring the story of a person of faith with lived experience, along with the insights of mental health professionals, theologians, and church leaders (including archbishops, priests, pastors, and ministry leaders).

Sanctuary Songs album, liner notes, and sheet music

A worship album inspired by the faith and experiences of people living with mental health challenges, with accompanying liner notes featuring lyrics and insights from the artists and people with lived experience. The album was created by Sanctuary and The Porter's Gate Worship Project and released in September 2023.

Introduction to Mental Health Ministry

A new course intended to prepare parish-based teams to establish and develop mental health ministries in their context. This resource was developed in partnership with and is offered by The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers.

The Sanctuary Blog

Our regularly updated blog features posts that open up meaningful conversations about mental health and faith with theologians, pastors, mental health professionals, and people with lived experiences of mental health challenges. Fourteen posts were published in 2023.

When A Loved One Dies By Suicide

A series of eight films designed for use in grief support groups, created for and by Catholics who have experienced suicide loss. This resource was developed in partnership with The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and Ave Maria Press, and released in October 2021.

Holy/Hurt: A Podcast Exploring Spiritual Trauma and Healing (Sponsored by Sanctuary)

A podcast series in which Hillary McBride (PhD, RPsych, RCC) explores questions of spiritual trauma and healing, shares her research, clinical experience, and embodied approach, and engages with other mental health professionals and people with lived experience of spiritual trauma.

Devotionals

Throughout 2023, Sanctuary collaborated with authors, mental health professionals, theologians, and pastors to develop devotionals and prayer exercises related to mental health and faith. Publishing partners include: YouVersion, Every Day with Jesus, and Pray As You Go.

“We really enjoyed having the privilege of serving our church family in this way. We have a son ourselves who struggles with his mental health, so it was both helpful to him and to us! We are so appreciative that you have put such a wonderful set of videos and curriculum together for the Church at large. Thank you so much!”

– ANONYMOUS COURSE PARTICIPANT

The Sanctuary Youth Series

A youth resource that centres on the most pressing questions young people are asking about faith and mental health. It is designed to facilitate essential conversations about mental health in youth groups and educational settings.

Becoming a Sanctuary

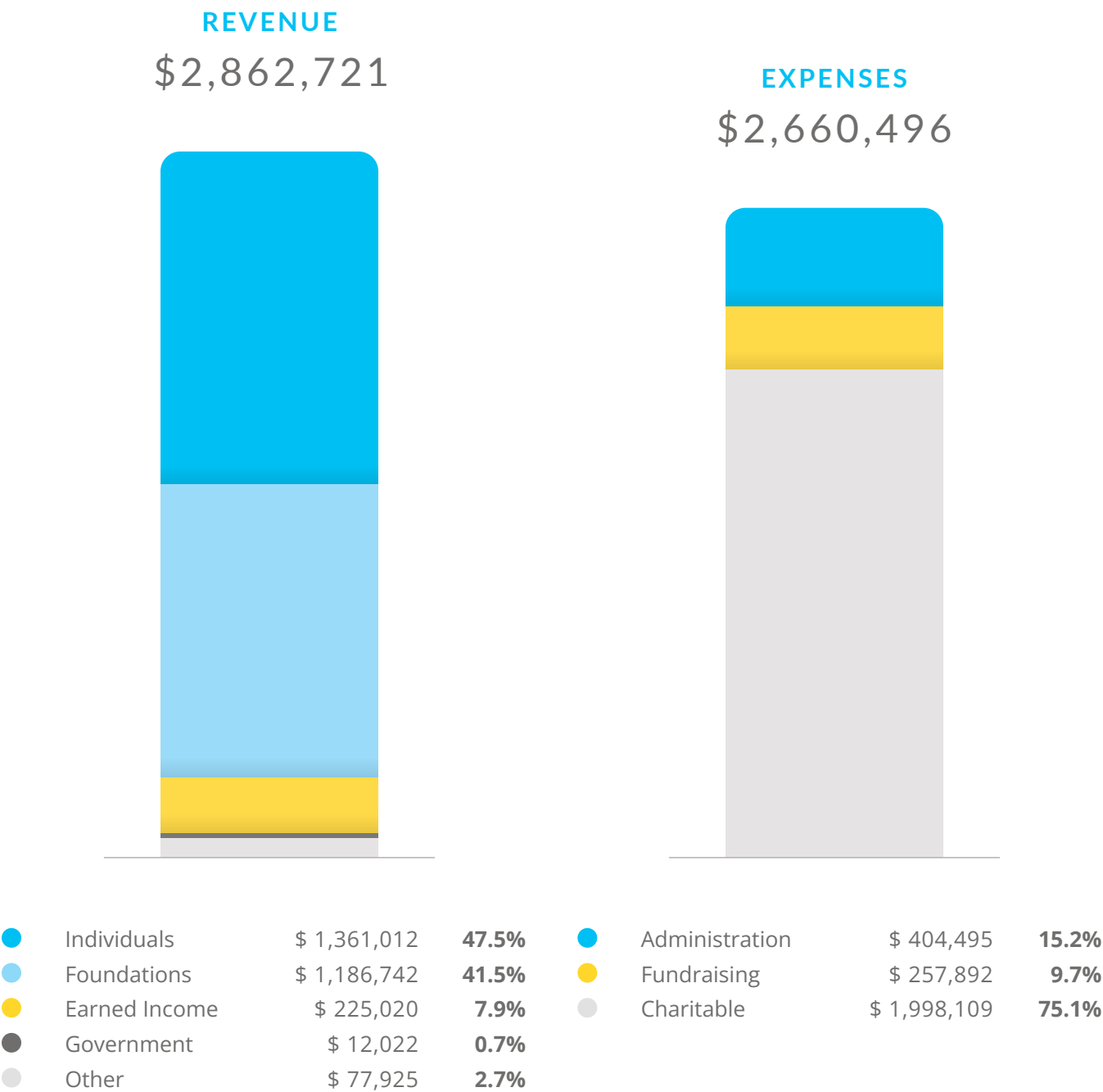
A community development resource that will build on conversations started in *The Sanctuary Course* by providing concrete examples of how churches are working to support mental health and wellbeing in their congregations and beyond.

Modules

A series of additional sessions designed to complement and expand *The Sanctuary Course*. Each module will explore a specific diagnosis, providing general information on symptoms, development and course, and treatment. Accompanying films will feature multiple stories of lived experience, demonstrating the variety and complexity of each diagnosis.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

TOTAL OPERATIONAL BUDGETS FOR CANADA, UK, AND US



These financials represent Sanctuary's operations in Canada, the UK, and the US combined. Financials for Canada and the US are from September 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023. Financials for the UK are from May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023. Canada's financials for September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023 are audited. Financials are written in Canadian dollars.

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SANCTUARY

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