

Ensuring Resilience In Canadian Artists
Assurer la résilience des artistes canadien.nes

Projet
danse

Dance
Project

ERICA



Strength of Mind, Body and Spirit
Force de l'esprit, du corps et de l'âme



Impact Report

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



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Introduction



ABOUT US

Founded in 1985, the Dancer Transition Resource Centre (DTRC) is a national, charitable organization dedicated to helping dancers make necessary transitions into, within, and from professional performing careers.

We also operate as a resource centre for the dance community and general public and support activities that improve the socioeconomic conditions of artists across the country.

As a world leader in dancer transition, we are active participants in international conferences and research initiatives and help drive change within the dance community.

VISION

Our vision is to support healthy transitions that improve the lives and livelihoods of professional Canadian dancers.

MISSION

Our mission is to serve professional Canadian dancers from diverse backgrounds, dance forms and practices, both at home and abroad, by being a resource for career development and transition.

The ERICA Dance Project (Ensuring Resilience In Canadian Artists) was made possible through the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage's Canada Performing Arts Workers Resilience Fund. Collectively, the programs form part of a larger offering of professional support for dance artists in Canada. Offered by the Dancer Transition Resource Centre, with various partners, this initiative was designed to empower artists in the Canadian dance sector at a time when they need it most.

The objectives of this report were to:

- report to funders, board and other financial stakeholders on overall impact and effectiveness;
- report to participants, members, presenters, partners on experience, impact, outcomes, future needs;
- assess program content, format/design and delivery for relevance and effectiveness, and to inform future iterations and/or new programs;
- assess success in reaching, engaging and serving new/non-DTRC members and, specifically, equity-deserving individuals.



PROGRAMMING

1 HOMECOMING

Homecoming is a body-based wellness practice emphasizing movement versus conversation. Designed by IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) wellness professionals to take place within an affinity space for IBPOC artists, this series of six, weekly, one-hour online sessions explored the correlation between movement and emotion. This offering was made possible in partnership with the Adulam Foundation.

3 ACCESS COUNSELLING

Access Counselling is an expansion of the DTRC's existing counselling services, available to both member and non-member dance artists across the country. This program offered support through two streams: Personal Counselling and Career Pathways Counselling (including Career, Employability, Entrepreneurship, Financial and Legal consultations).

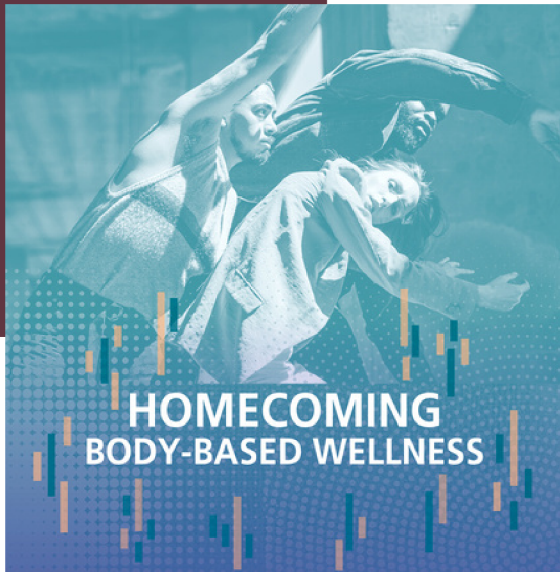
2 EXPLORATION

Exploration is a robust group mentorship experience to expand dance artists' capacity to reinvigorate and reimagine their careers. Through collective learning and with professional guidance, all online, mentees were supported in planning their career paths and expanding their professional networks toward futures both within and beyond dance performance.

4 MARKETING ME

Marketing Me! is an intensive training program for individual dancers who are building their own career marketing strategies. Part lecture, part hands-on workshop, part guest speaker Q and A, this six-part series, offered online, allowed participants the time and space to think more deeply about how they market themselves in our current dance ecology. This offering was made possible with a partnership with WorkInCulture.

**** Open to both members and non-members, the ERICA Dance Project provided both individual and group programming in French and English by subsidizing services for eligible dance artists.*



OVERVIEW

Designed by IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) wellness professionals to take place within an affinity space* for IBPOC artists, this series of six, weekly, one-hour online sessions explored the correlation between movement and emotion.

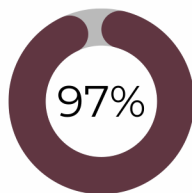
With the promotion of emotional, intellectual, physical, and soulful/spiritual integration in mind, Homecoming sought to aid in movement healing and improving well-being.

Homecoming was offered in partnership with the Adulam Foundation.

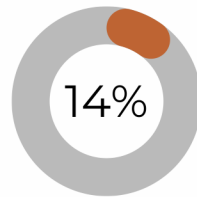
**Affinity spaces are intended to bring people together over a commonality and share the mutual benefits of their identities. Affinity spaces strive to form safe and brave contexts that offer support, healing, and connection.*

13
Total
Participants

6
Sessions per
Cohort

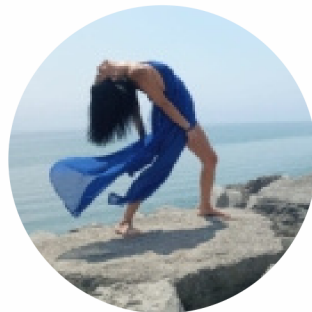


ENGLISH

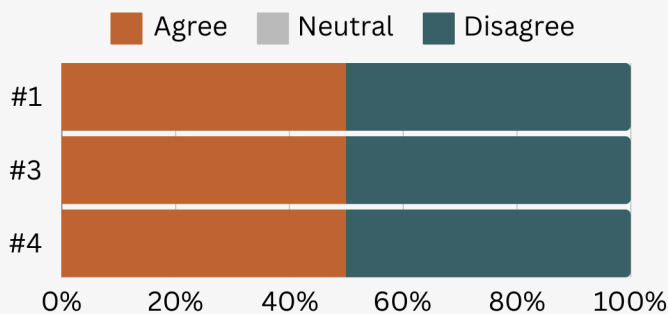


FRENCH

Nylda Gallardo-Lopez
Facilitator, Cohort 1
(English)



Amy Sylla
Facilitator, Cohort 2
(French)



PARTICIPANT SURVEY

#1 - This program improved their well-being, and that the group discussions were helpful

#3 - The content and themes were engaging

#4 - The program's length of time and number of sessions were appropriate



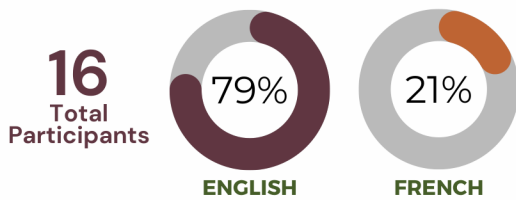
OVERVIEW

We had mentors from across the country representing different cultural voices and spanning disciplines including; dance, theatre, film/tv and visual arts. We served 16 mentees and contracted 9 mentors and two facilitators over the course of six weeks.

Some emergent themes of discussion relevant to the mentees included: partnerships and collaborations, leadership, branding and marketing, risk, and defining one's worth as a dance artist which included transferable skills, perfectionism and integrity in a dance professional's work.

Overall, the program was very successful but there is always room for improvement. The mentors were excellent. Their commitment and enthusiasm for the program was demonstrated in their care and integrity in the weekly sessions' interactions. The mentees came from disparate backgrounds and had diverse career enquiries. They engaged wholeheartedly in the process, which made for thoughtful and provocative discussions.

*~ Michael Du Maresq,
Managing Director of Exploration*



3
Cohorts

9
Mentors

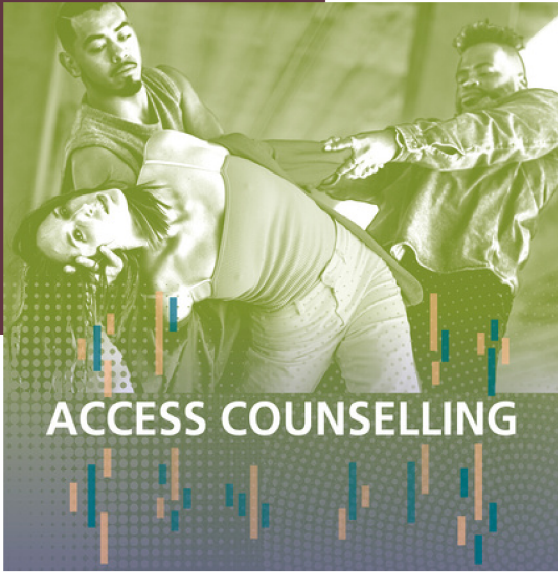
Participant's testimonials:

"I really valued how diverse the mentors and the mentees were in their careers and all the various knowledge that they had to share..."

"I think we could have done 1 more round of the sessions with each mentor. Because there was so much to learn in a short time, the group session was interesting too..."



Cohort A - Group Session



OVERVIEW

The DTRC understands the unique experiences that affect dance artists and knows that funds are often unavailable to access needed support. The transitions dancers make are complex to navigate and securing professional guidance in the form of counselling or consultation can make those transitions easier. Identifying transferrable skills and developing parallel careers can enable dance artists to fulfill other passions, establish financial stability and build overall career resiliency.

As part of the ERICA Dance Project, we offered funding support towards counselling services under two streams:

- **STREAM 1** – Personal Counselling (packages of 10 sessions)
- **STREAM 2** – Career Pathways Counselling (packages of 5 sessions)

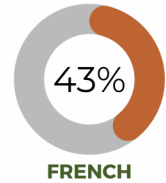
Over 22 paid counsellors were engaged and reimbursed through this project.

Participant's testimonials:

"This program has benefited me so much, and made counselling support available in a much needed time. Without this project, I would not have been able to get this level of support..."

"I found I was able to be balanced and focused even in high pressure activities. My mental health was really well maintained. I also felt empowered by the financial counselling I received through the Career Pathways stream. I got so much out of those sessions both personally and professionally."

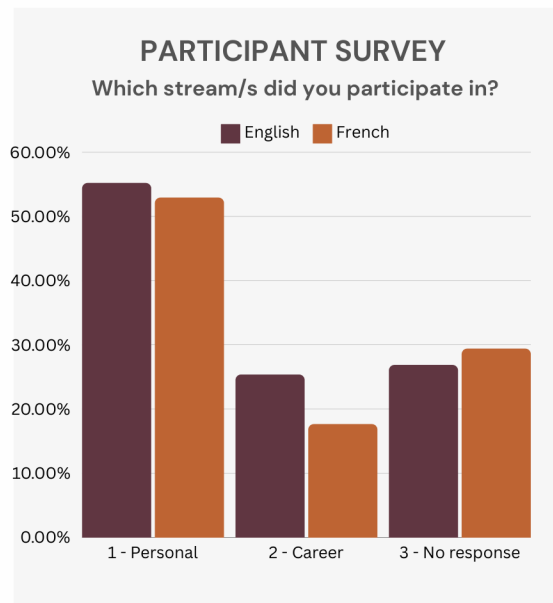
155
Total Applicants



Close to:
1,000
sessions



\$150,000





Participant's testimonials:

"The sessions were a great introduction. I would definitely say that, as NOT a millennial/gen whatever we are now, who was a young adult before social media, these sessions were really good to get a handle on those avenues. However to really move forward, for me, I would need more direct one-on-one help."

"There was so much information but I know I can go back to my notes and resources to continue a cyclical approach to marketing."

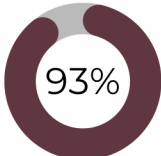
OVERVIEW

This offering was made possible with a partnership with WorkInCulture. WorkInCulture is a non-profit arts service organization that supports the professional lives of artists, creatives and cultural workers across Canada, as well as the organizations that support and engage them, through skills development, research and career resources.

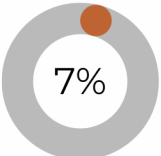
Highlights included:

- Learning how to determine who the buyers and audiences are, where to find them and how to approach them.
- Understanding the Unique Value Proposition (UVP), or why should people choose you over other dancers and dance companies?
- Making sure your social media strategy really reflects who you are and taking the opportunity to really shine for your followers!
- Learning about the effectiveness of your marketing strategy.

155
Total Registrants



ENGLISH



FRENCH

6
Bilingual Sessions



Sue Edworthy, Presenter



Group Sessions (bilingual)

344

Total registrants across Canada

70%

Participants indicated the project to be excellent

53%

Participants agreed the project enabled them to learn new skills

78%

Participants agreed the project had a positive impact on their well-being

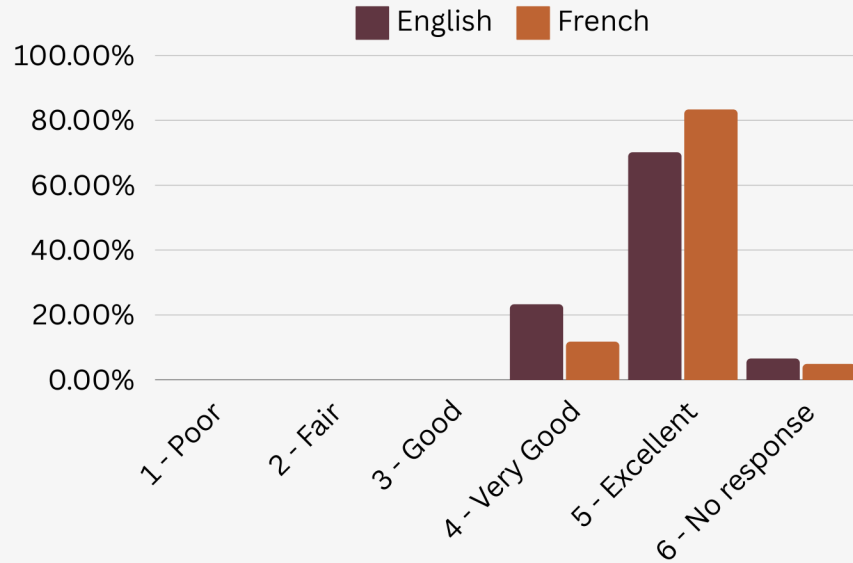
84

Total Survey Respondents

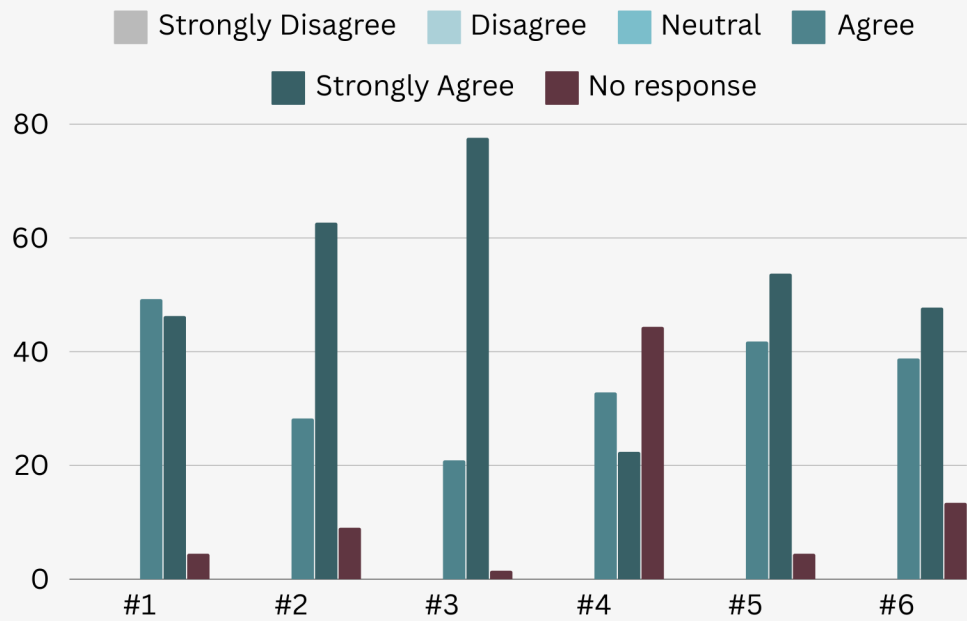
STATISTICS

PROJECT EVALUATION

Overall, how would you rate this project?



PROJECT IMPACT*



#1 - This project had a positive impact on my career

#2 - This project was relevant to my career

#3 - This project had a positive impact on my well-being

#4 - This project helped me to advance my career as a dancer

#5 - I gained new skills and/or knowledge

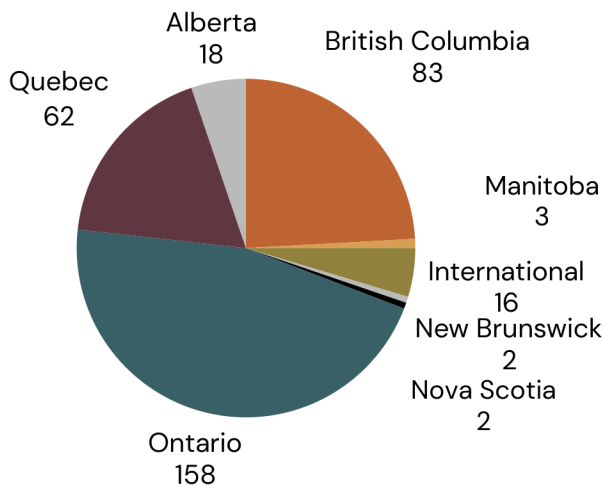
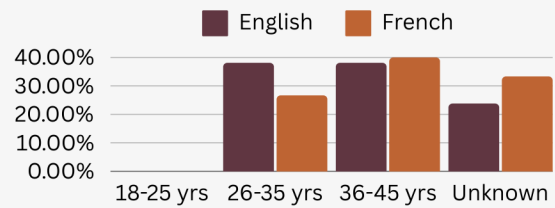
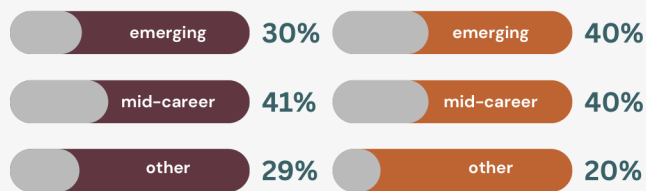
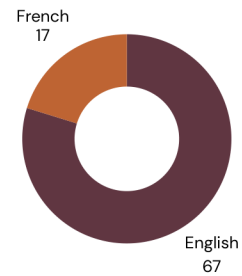
#6 - This project was effective

(*English participants only)

DEMOGRAPHICS

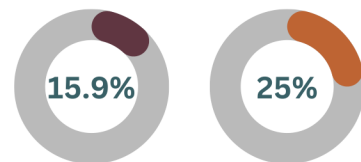
Based on a total of 84 Participant Survey responses

E **F** (noted where applicable)

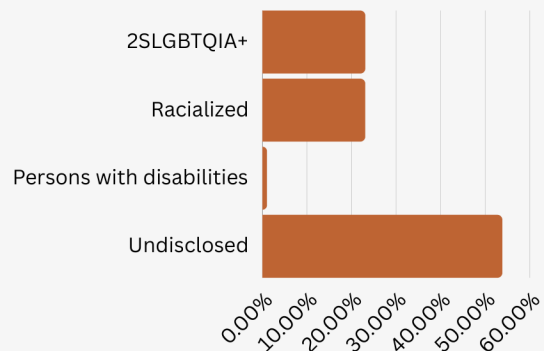
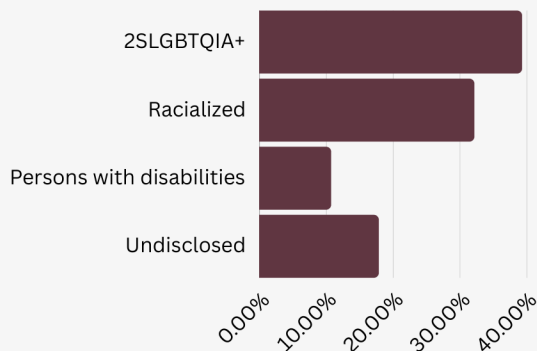
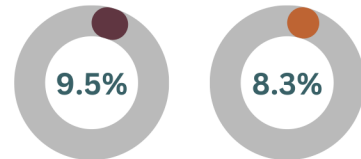


Self-identified with:

(a) mental health conditions



(b) physical limitations



Suggestions for Moving Forward

Project participants offered the DTRC suggestions on how the ERICA Dance Project, or similar programming might be offered in the future:

"I wish the program would have been spread over 6 months as initially I found it hard for myself to select the right counsellor and discuss with the staff about my needs and what would fit best for me. Also while booking the session it would be difficult to get dates easily as the counsellor was pre-booked by other members and it was a bit difficult to coordinate our timing."

"Spread the word to younger dancers who are graduating from dance programs and don't necessarily know what to do next. I shared my experience with some younger dancers and they were thrilled to hear about it. I think the word Transition in DTRC makes younger dancers think that the organization only helps dancers at the end of their career find a new career."

"I feel strongly now that a career coach throughout a dancers' life span is something that can always be beneficial and allows the dancers to always be on track and not overly anxious about unknowns. I would recommend having sessions on a regular basis after the first 5, then dancers can meet maybe once every 6 months or a year or as needed with their career specialist, mentor, etc."

"Please continue this mentorship program! It would be helpful to reach out to mentors in other arts and entrepreneurship industries to help broaden horizons both within and outside of the dance sector in integral roles outside of just performance or stage creation (admin, law, advocacy, HR, business, etc.)"

"Please continue programming around artists' well-being as well as workshops/seminars for newcomers to Canada and emerging BIPOC artists so they better understand how to ask for help and what resources are available to them."

"This was really an amazing program. It would have been nicer to have a little bit longer for each session, to get more deep into the group conversations and more deeply into discussion with each mentor. It also would have been nice to have a mentor in dance who is a parent as this is a major question and issue in my life as a 40 year old woman still working in dance."



Conclusion

The ERICA Dance Project was a major focus for the DTRC over a 6-month period, starting in October 2022 as part of the project planning stages, and into the end of March with the various programming and service offerings. To conclude the project, the Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO) a third party consultant, was engaged to conduct a project evaluation. This report is based primarily on their findings.

The DTRC was successful at distributing significant subsidies to dancers across Canada through our Access Counselling Program. In addition, we provided comprehensive Group Mentorship opportunities and IBPOC Wellness programming to both English and French cohorts, and a very thorough Marketing Program with our presenting partner, WorkInCulture.

Throughout this endeavor, we encountered the expected challenges associated with a project of this magnitude. However, we are content with our handling of these challenges and our team approach to short timelines for its delivery.

The prevailing sentiment in the feedback we received was positive, with dancers expressing immense gratitude for the support extended following the hardships experienced during, and post the pandemic. While this fund provided vital temporary relief, it became evident that sustaining a livelihood as an independent artist remains exceedingly challenging.

- **Participant Survey.** All participants (French and English) were invited to respond to a survey to assess how the project and its components were received. Where relevant, all survey references for English and French have been identified respectively as (E) or (F).
- **Focus Groups.** There were four focus groups involving program participants and/or facilitators. The results of these informed this report.
- **Staff Survey.** Staff were invited to respond to a survey to provide internal feedback to the organization around the development and implementation of the project. These results are not presented in this report.



Acknowledgements

Huge thanks to everyone who helped make it happen:

- Funder: Department of Canadian Heritage's Canadian Performing Arts Workers Resiliency Fund
- Program Partners: WorkInCulture & Sue Edworthy, Adulam Foundation, Michael Dumaresq
- Our generous presenters, mentors, facilitators and counsellors
- Our Ambassador Organizations: Regroupement quebécois de la danse, Propellor Dance, Canadian Dance Assembly, CSARN, CPAMO, and The Dance Centre
- The dance community and all our program participants
- Additional project consultants: Sue Edworthy, Ben Block, Amanda Hancox, Lopa Sarkar, Nathalie Scott, Tariq Sami and the folks at CPAMO
- Accessibility and Translation Services: TSLIS (Toronto Sign Language Interpreter Service), Interprétation Signes et Paroles and World Communications

Finally, a big shout-out to the DTRC staff and interns who went above and beyond to bring this project to life!

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Canada

Une ressource précieuse pour le développement et
la transition de carrière pour les danseur.se.s
professionnel.le.s canadien.ne.s

A resource for career development
and transition for professional Canadian dancers

The logo for DTRC CRTD features a large, stylized white letter 'D' on the left. To its right, the letters 'DTRC' are stacked above 'CRTD' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

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NATIONAL OFFICE

The Lynda Hamilton Centre
1000 Yonge Street, Suite 303
Toronto, ON M4W 2K2
416-595-5655
Toll-Free: 1-800-667-0851
nationaloffice@dtrc.ca

Charitable Registration Number:
10125 8077R0001

www.dtrc.ca

