



# PARENTS' LIFELINES

**SUPPORT – EDUCATE – EMPOWER**

**YOUTH WITH GOOD FAMILY SUPPORT HAVE BETTER OUTCOMES.  
FOR FAMILIES TO BE EFFECTIVE SUPPORTERS THEY NEED SUPPORT  
AND THEY NEED TO BE EMPOWERED.**



# PLEO

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

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# Message from our President and Executive Director

It has been another exciting year of change and opportunity. This year with the support of our partners and funders, we expanded our Parent Support Groups from 13 to 18 to provide increased access throughout the region. A new partnership with the Ontario Trillium Foundation has allowed for the expansion of our one-to-one mobile service previously only available in Ottawa into all regions of the LHIN, allowing us to provide better service to all families in our catchment area.



Phyllis Grant-Parker  
President



Elyse Schipper  
Executive Director

As with past years, we have received very encouraging feedback from our families. Parents and caregivers we served reported feeling less isolation and stress, being better able to access needed services, better able to support their child, and better able to cope. They reported wishing they had found us sooner in their journey. We also hear that the challenges they face in the mental health and education systems remain significant.

We are thrilled to be working closely with service providers and government in the quest for system improvement. Parents’ Lifelines and the family voice are now ever present at research, planning, and system transformation tables throughout the region. Families are best supported and the challenges they face best addressed when we all work together.

The dedicated and passionate Parents’ Lifelines community makes all of this possible. Our staff consistently go above and beyond to provide hope and empathetic support to parents and caregivers. Our Board of Directors provides strong strategic direction and oversight, and has ensured a solid infrastructure for continued growth, positive outcomes for families, and return on our funders’ contributions. And lastly, our champions and supporters who recognize the critical importance of parents and caregivers and the value of empowering them to ensure positive outcomes for their child and families, and help carry this message throughout the broader community. To all of you, we are grateful.

Our challenge for the coming year is to embrace the opportunities that come with growth. Our commitment to our families and our funders is to provide the best possible care so that parents and caregivers we reach are better able to ensure positive outcomes for their family, themselves included. This means continuously evaluating our performance, listening to our families, and responding to the changing needs of the community, as we understand them. We will continue to push ourselves to be creative and relentless in addressing the barriers families may face to engage in our services, and to continue amplifying their voice in the community so that one day, families of children facing mental health challenges can thrive stigma-free with the support and services they need, when and where they need them.

**Elyse Schipper**  
**PLEO – Executive Director**

**Phyllis Grant-Parker**  
**PLEO – President**

**Our Board of Directors 2017 – 2018**



**Phyllis Grant-Parker  
President**



**Denise Gilby  
Vice-Chair**



**Tara Draper  
Treasurer**



**Tanya Parker-Wallace  
Director**



**Dr. Margaret DeCorte  
Director**



**Karen Magalhaes  
Director**

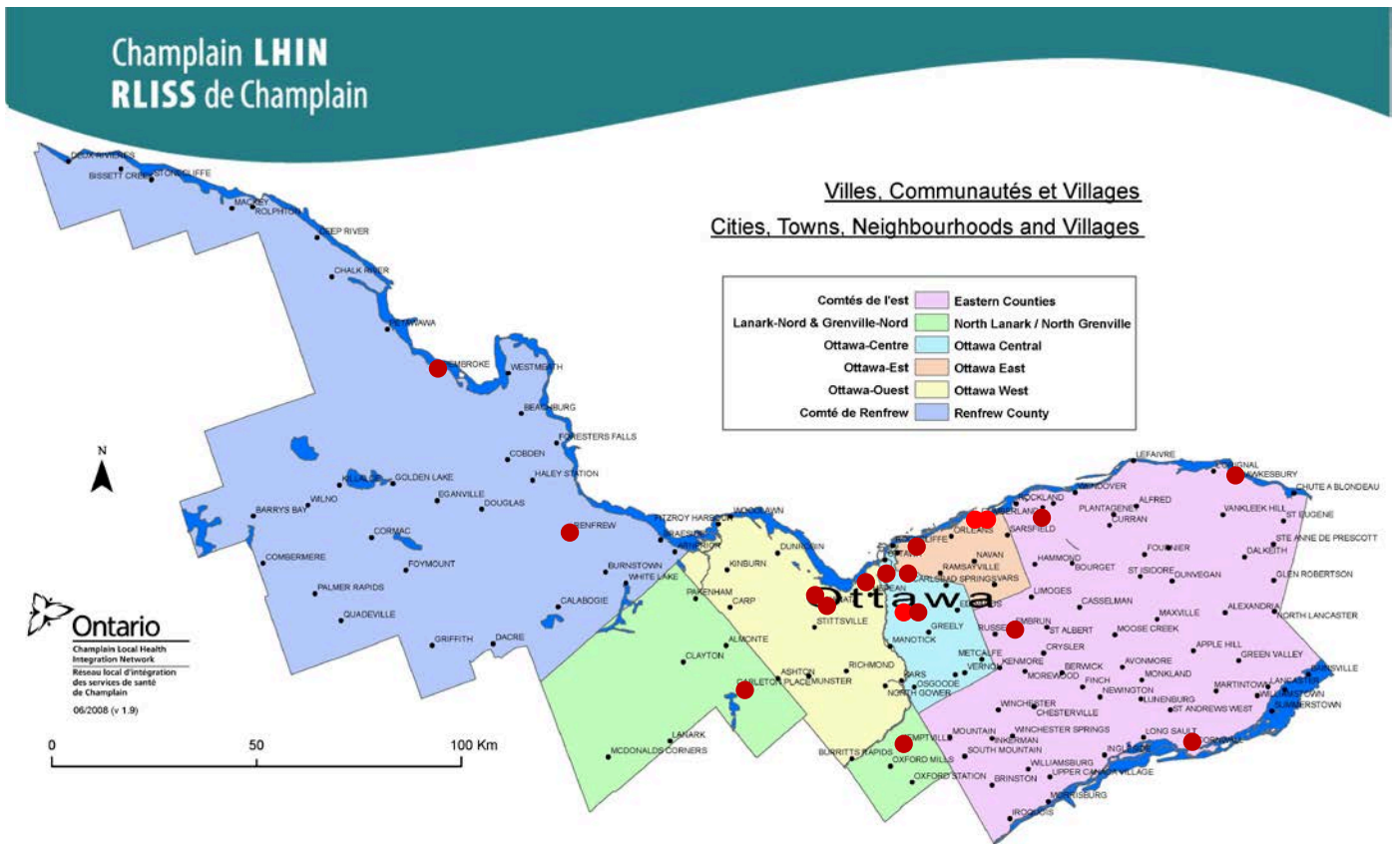


**Noah Spector  
Director**



**David Millen  
Director**

# The Region we Serve



**PLEO serves families throughout the Champlain LHIN providing a Helpline, 18 Parent Peer Support Groups and One-on-One Mobile Support.**

● PLEO Parent Peer Support Groups as of March 31, 2018

## The Challenges Families Face

While the past two decades have seen efforts to reduce stigma and a concerted emphasis on improving service delivery for mental health, parents and caregivers still struggle to support their family when a child faces mental health challenges.

The mental healthcare system remains underfunded and fragmented, with gaps in service and dangerously long wait times. Families thrown into this system face a steep learning curve, struggle to have their family needs heard and to find the resources they need. They must advocate for services that should be automatic as they are for physical ailments. Parents and caregivers, in addition to the demands of life including work and other children, are tasked with a full-time job as case manager, researcher, advocate, and supporter for their struggling child. That child's chance at recovery rests on the capacity of the parent or caregiver to keep their head above water amidst these tremendous stressors.

### What parents reported about the challenges they face:

- Over **90%** found it very challenging to find mental health services for their child and to get the right educational supports
- **84%** faced wait-lists (in Ontario, wait times of six months to one year are common 8,9)
- **78%** did not feel engaged by the system in their child's situation
- **85%** were very challenged to support other family members
- **78%** were feeling financially challenged by their child's situation
- Over **90%** were challenged by crisis situations
- **93%** worry about the future

*Data Source: PLEO's anonymous online survey*

## How serious is the issue?

- **70%** of mental health problems have their onset during childhood or adolescence.<sup>1</sup> But an estimated 75% of children with mental disorders do not access specialized treatment services.<sup>6</sup>
- Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness and/or substance use disorders than any other age group.<sup>2</sup>
- **34%** of Ontario high-school students indicate a moderate-to-serious level of psychological distress (symptoms of anxiety and depression). 14% indicate a serious level of psychological distress.<sup>3</sup>
- In Ontario about **12%** of high-school students report having seriously contemplated suicide in the past year. 3% report having attempted suicide.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2012, suicide accounted for **15%** of deaths among youth aged 10 to 14, **29%** among youth aged 15 to 19, and 23% among young adults aged 20-24.<sup>4</sup> After accidents, it is the second leading cause of death for people aged 15-24.<sup>4</sup>
- First Nations youth die by suicide about 5 to 6 times more often than non-Aboriginal youth. Suicide rates for Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2013-2014, **5%** of ED visits and **18%** of inpatient hospitalizations for children and youth age 5 to 24 in Canada were for a mental disorder.<sup>7</sup>

### Sources

1. Government of Canada (2006). The human face of mental health and mental illness in Canada. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.
2. Pearson, Janz and Ali (2013). Health at a glance: Mental and substance use disorders in Canada. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-624-X.
3. Boak et al. (2016). *The mental health and well-being of Ontario students, 1991-2015: Detailed OSDUHS findings*. CAMH Research Document Series no. 43. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.
4. Statistics Canada (2017). Deaths and mortality rate, by selected grouped causes, age group and sex, Canada, 2014. CANSIM 102-0551.
5. Health Canada (2015). First Nations & Inuit health – mental health and wellness. Retrieved from <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/promotion/mental/index-eng.php>.
6. Waddell et al. (2005). A public health strategy to improve the mental health of Canadian children. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 50: 226-33.
7. Canadian Institute for Health Information (2015). *Care for children and youth with mental disorders*. Ottawa: CIHI.
8. Children's Mental Health Ontario (2016). Ontario's children waiting up to 1.5 years for urgently needed mental healthcare. Retrieved from <https://cmho.org/blog/article2/6519717-ontario-s-children-waiting-up-to-1-5-years-for-urgently-needed-mental-healthcare->
9. Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (2016). Annual report 2016, volume 1. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

## Supporting Parents and Caregivers is Imperative

Parents want the best for their children; they want them to be healthy and happy and to see them flourish. They are often the first to recognize that their child is struggling, but they don't know where to turn for help and face countless barriers when they do. Parents must be empowered to ensure the best possible outcomes for their family.

### What do families need to thrive?

- Knowledge, support, and hope
- An understanding, stigma-free, supportive community
- A responsive mental healthcare system when and where they need it



***To realize the full benefits of caregiving, it is crucial that caregivers have access to the information and supports they need to sustain their own wellbeing, and that their voices are recognized and respected in Canada's mental health system. Failure to support caregivers undermines mental health across the entire population, leading to poorer outcomes, both for the people living with a mental illness and their caregivers. This also leads to increased health and social service costs."***

- The Mental Health Commission of Canada



# What Makes Parent’s Lifelines Such a Unique and Valuable Resource?

## ***Our Services are Bilingual and Provided by Peers with Lived Experience***

PLEO Family Peer Supporters have personal lived experience in supporting a child with mental health or addiction issues allowing them to clearly understand the parents and caregivers they support.

## ***Our History of Excellence***

We have been supporting families since 2000. We have been an integral part of system tables and committees to influence change and amplify the family voice. We know the system and the needs of families.

## ***Our Collaborative Approach***

We believe the best way to support families and to influence change is to collaborate with community service providers to improve the supports for families and their children. We are part of the solution.

## ***Our proven integrated support model***

The PLEO model is fully integrated providing parents with support when, where, and how they need it. Once they connect with PLEO Family Peer Supporters, they never need to be alone.

## ***The breadth of those we support***

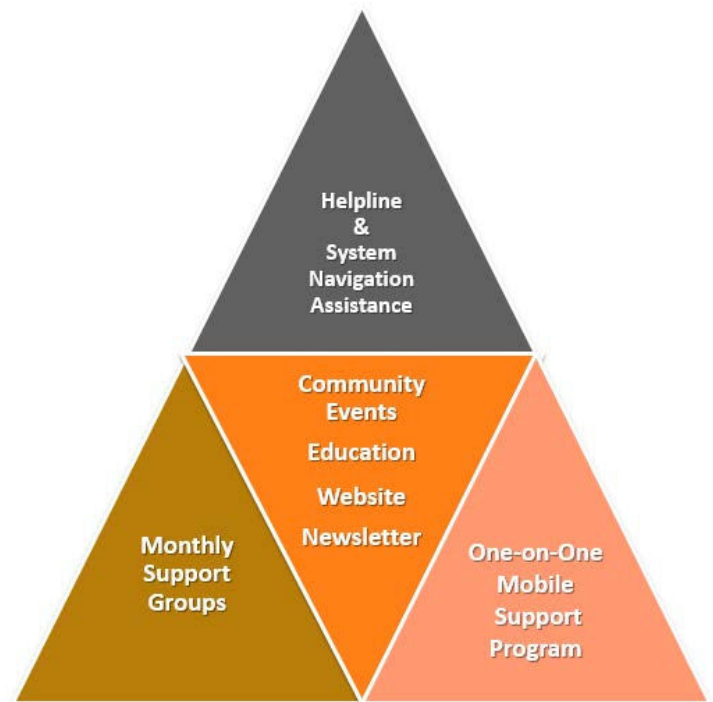
We serve families with children to age 25 – covering transitional aged youth who experience a significant gap in the system – throughout the entire Champlain LHIN, and for an extensive breadth of concerns and behaviours related to their mental health.

## ***Our proprietary database***

While all the data is reported only at an aggregate level and remains confidential we are able to collect real-time information about the needs of our community to inform system improvements.

## ***Our bias to action***

We understand the urgency of the issues and the high risk to children and youth, and our focus is on finding solutions to address them now.



## Our Impact in 2017-2018

### Through our Confidential, Bilingual Helpline

We supported **350 families** this year. **264** of these parents and caregivers received continued Helpline support.

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*“Every time I called PLEO I was given a voice and someone who listened with compassion. I felt respected, heard and not judged. For the first time in a long time (two very long years) I felt that I was indeed a good parent who was just struggling with a difficult situation.”*

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### Through our 18 parent support groups

We supported **622 parents and caregivers** (457 in Ottawa and 165 in the counties) who attended our **146** support groups throughout the region (76 in Ottawa and 70 in the counties of the Champlain LHIN)

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*“I am so glad I went to support group last night. I felt heard and empowered. I actually slept a solid eight hours for the first time in a year!”*

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- Ottawa – 10 groups
- Prescott Russell – 3 groups
- Renfrew County – 2 groups
- North Lanark/North Grenville – 2 groups
- Stormont Dundas & Glengarry – 1 group

### Through One-on-One Mobile Support

We supported **32 families** through more intensive one-on-one, mobile support to build capacity and momentum. We assisted parents and caregivers to develop a family plan, build a support network, and increase their capacity to cope. Following three years of success in Ottawa, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has provided funding to expand this service throughout the region beginning in the spring of 2018.

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*“Got us out of being stuck in the mud. You need to get unstuck and move it to the next level. It’s a huge thing, like really huge. Otherwise you feel like you’re on a never ending hamster wheel.”*

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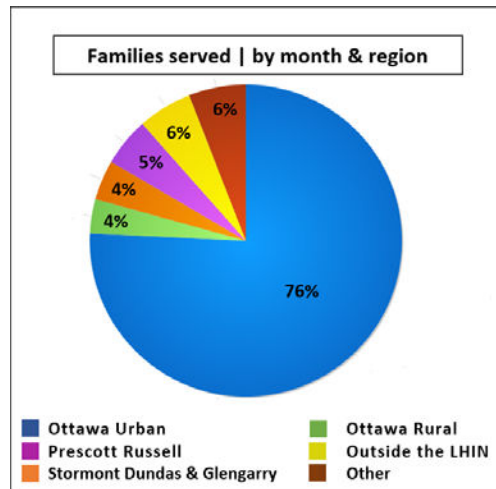
### A Monthly E-Newsletter

We reached **1451 individuals**, an addition of **408 new subscribers**, with our monthly E-Newsletter keeping families and service providers connected, informed and up-to-date.

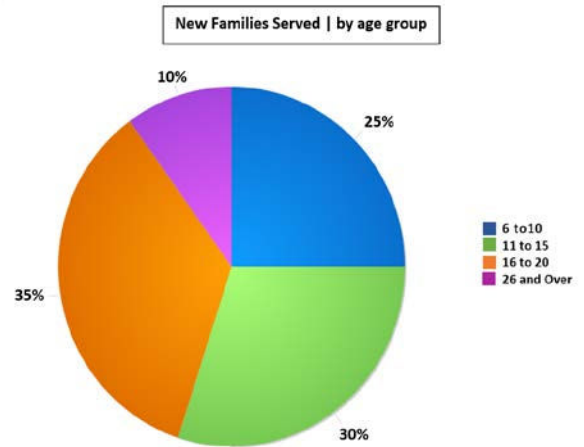
### Participation in Community Events

We connected with **1608** parents and caregivers at **48** community events, providing them with education, information and resources.

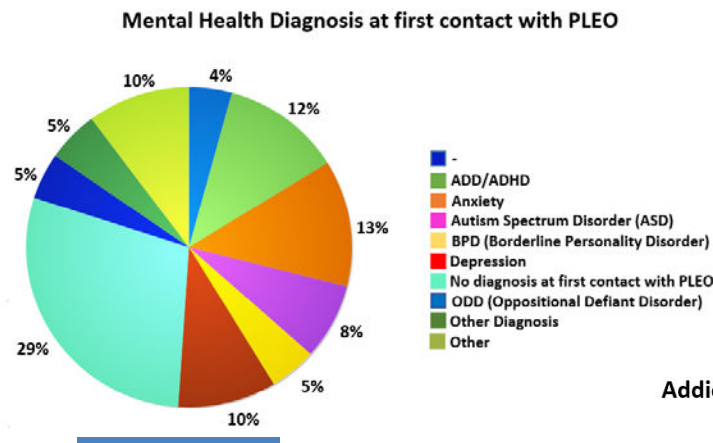
# Who We Served



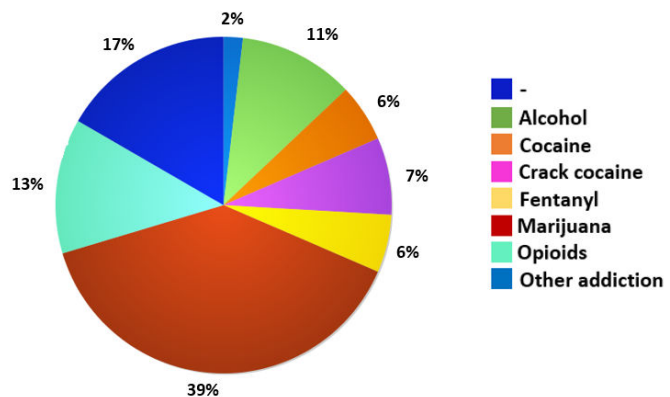
We served families with children across the age spectrum. There was a fairly even distribution with **55%** of the parents supporting daughters and **45%** sons. Their language choice was **88.9%** English, **9.6%** French and **1.5%** another language.



The majority of parents reported their child did not have a formal diagnosis when they first contacted PLEO



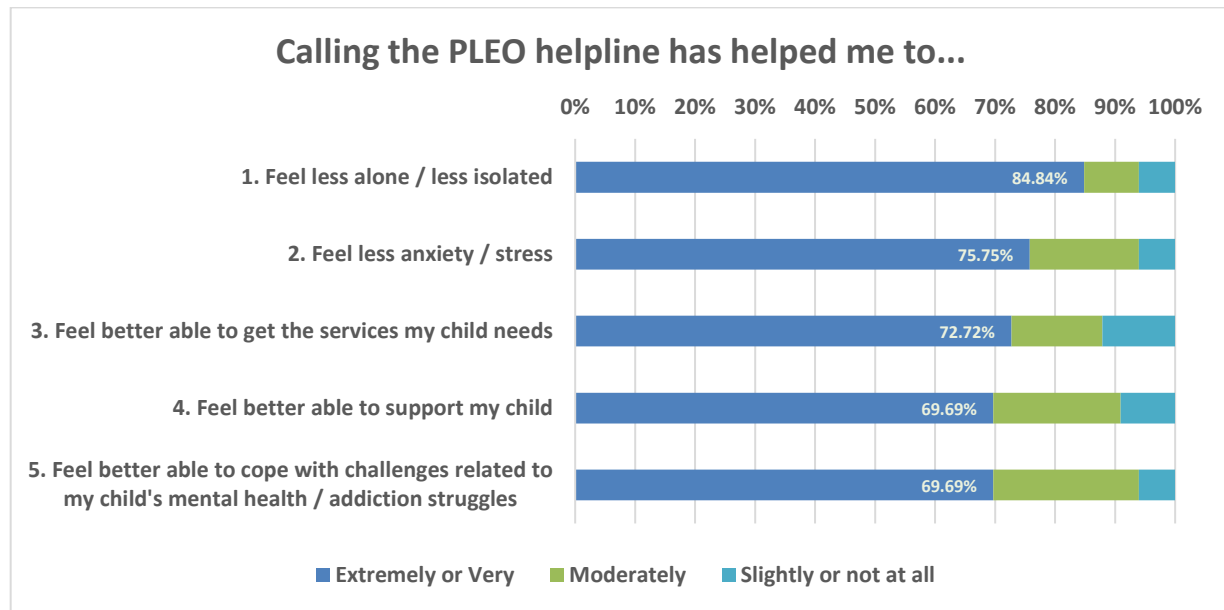
Addiction concerns as reported by parents/caregivers



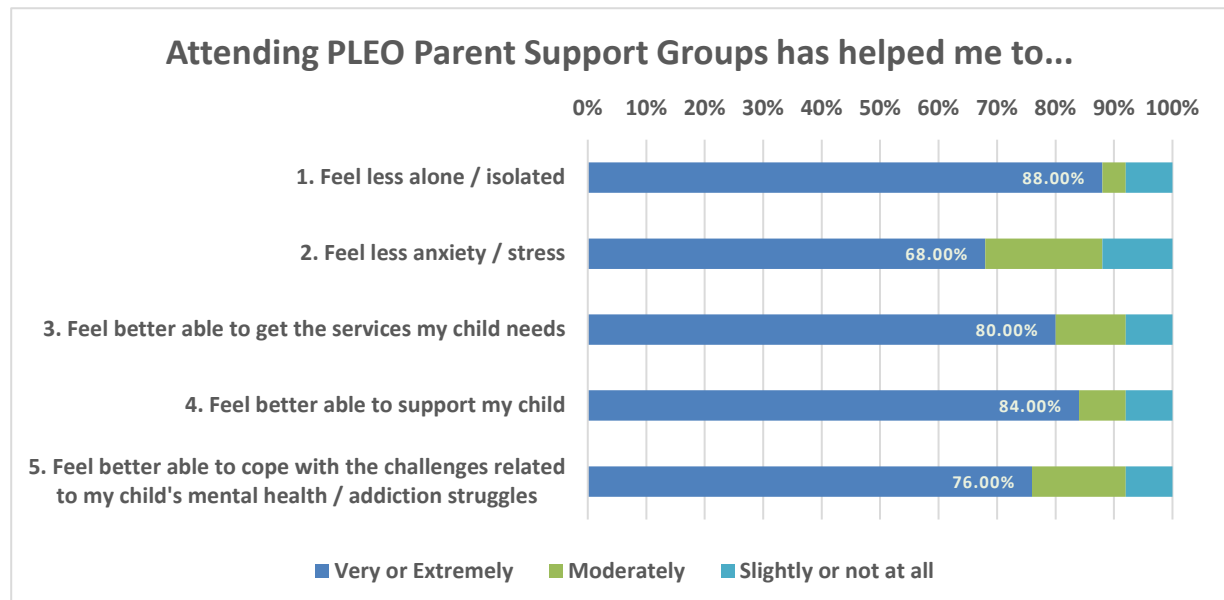
*“Just knowing you guys are there; on the phone every day makes me feel stronger.”*

## Our Impact on the Families we Served

Our commitment to families is that our services will have a positive impact. Through anonymous surveys we check-in with the parents and caregivers we have served to ensure we are fulfilling our mission. The vast majority of our families report that as a result of our services they feel less alone and isolated, less anxious and stressed, better able to get the services they need, and better able to support their child.

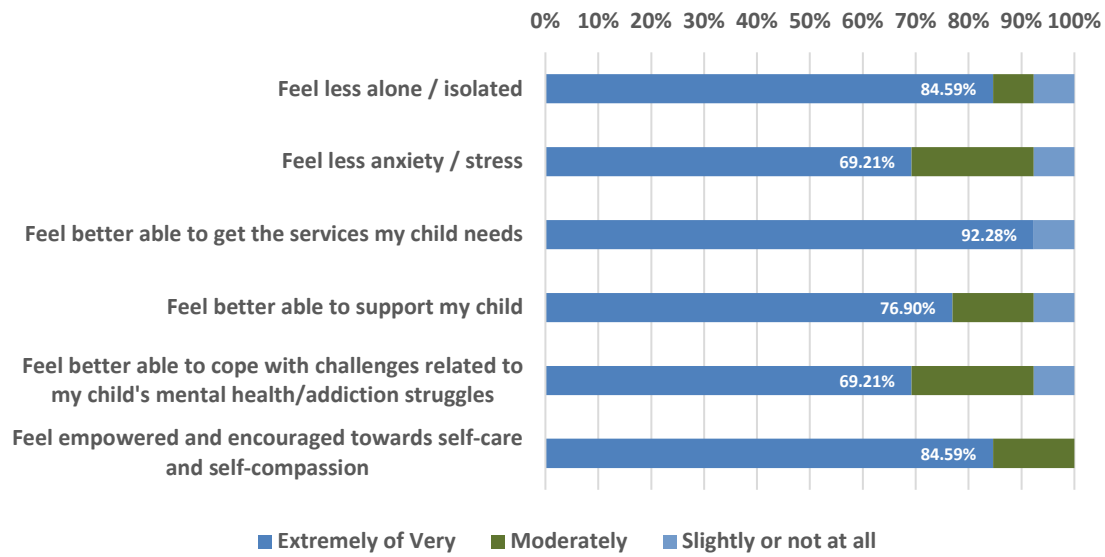


Data Source: PLEO's anonymous online survey



Data Source: PLEO's anonymous online survey

## Working one-on-one with a PLEO peer supporter has helped me to...



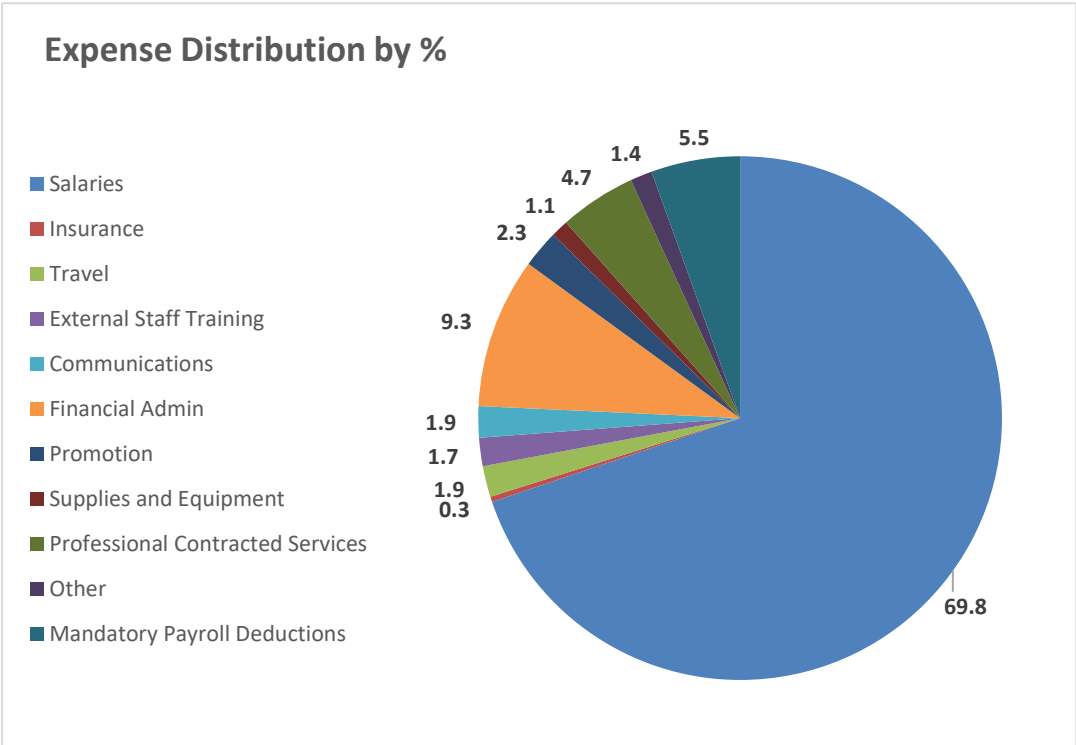
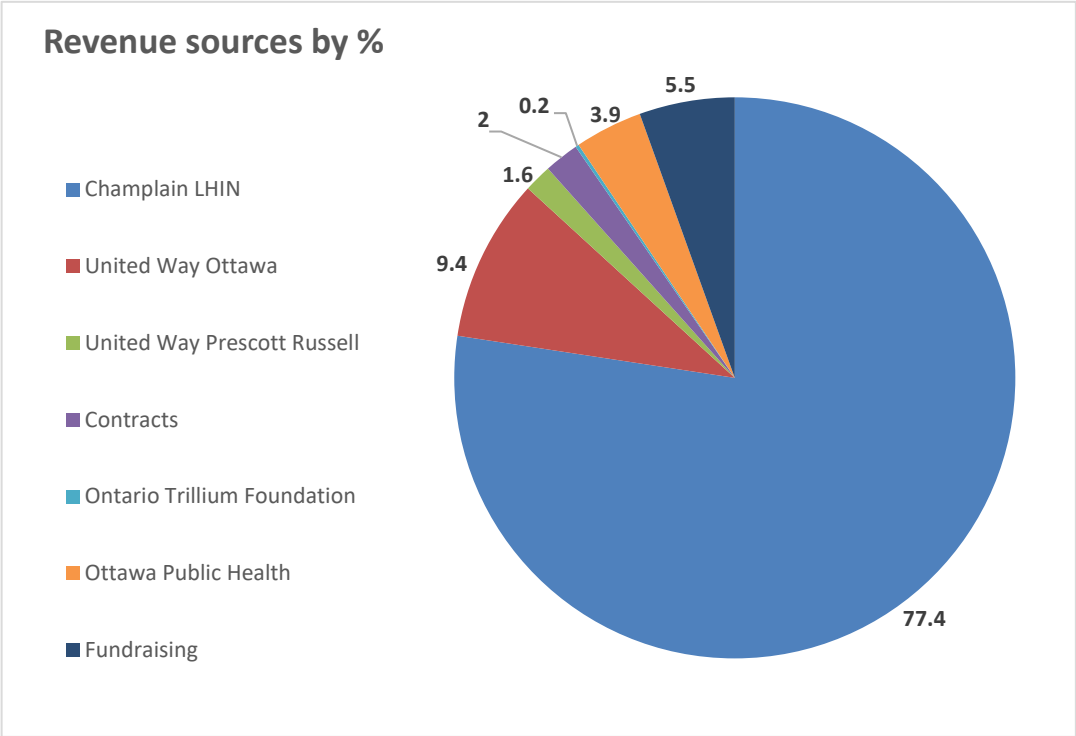
Data Source: PLEO's anonymous online survey

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*"I am now able to think straight. I have felt like I have been in a fog forever. Having someone to really talk to makes all the difference."*

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# 2017 – 2018 Revenue & Expenses



# Auditor's report

## PARENTS' LIFELINES OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2018, with comparative figures for 2017

|                                      | 2018              | 2017             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                        |                   |                  |
| Current assets                       |                   |                  |
| Cash                                 | \$ 148,198        | \$ 36,924        |
| Accounts receivable                  | 49,199            | 1,923            |
| Government remittance recoverable    | 2,230             | 1,191            |
| Prepaid expenses                     | 718               | 718              |
|                                      | <b>\$ 200,345</b> | <b>\$ 40,756</b> |
| <b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>    |                   |                  |
| Current liabilities                  |                   |                  |
| Accounts payable and accrued charges | \$ 24,169         | \$ 7,706         |
| Deferred contributions (Note 3)      | 119,406           | 4,966            |
|                                      | 143,575           | 12,672           |
| Net assets                           | 56,770            | 28,084           |
|                                      | <b>\$ 200,345</b> | <b>\$ 40,756</b> |

Approved on behalf of the Board



**Board Chair**

## Auditor's report

### PARENTS' LIFELINES OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

Year ended March 31, 2018, with comparative figures for 2017

|                                              | 2018      | 2017      |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Revenue                                      |           |           |
| Donations and fundraising                    | \$ 43,155 | \$ 16,683 |
| Grant revenue (Note 4)                       | 435,755   | 433,273   |
| Participant fees                             | -         | 1,238     |
| Miscellaneous income                         | 5,300     | 6,652     |
|                                              | 484,210   | 457,846   |
| Expenses                                     |           |           |
| Advertising                                  | 10,405    | 1,270     |
| Bank charges and interest                    | 38        | -         |
| Fundraising expenses                         | 3,849     | -         |
| Insurance                                    | 1,486     | 1,215     |
| Occupancy costs                              | 1,505     | 2,077     |
| Office                                       | 15,187    | 16,214    |
| Professional fees                            | 94,433    | 63,737    |
| Salaries and wages                           | 308,648   | 373,309   |
| Training                                     | 11,437    | 1,537     |
| Travel                                       | 8,536     | 14,085    |
|                                              | 455,524   | 473,444   |
| Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses | 28,686    | (15,598)  |
| Net assets, beginning of year                | 28,084    | 43,682    |
| Net assets, end of year                      | \$ 56,770 | \$ 28,084 |



## Auditor's report

### PARENTS' LIFELINES OF EASTERN ONTARIO

#### Cash Flow Statement

Year ended March 31, 2018, with comparative figures for 2017

|                                                                                | 2018       | 2017        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Operating activities                                                           |            |             |
| Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses                                   | \$ 28,686  | \$ (15,598) |
| Changes in working capital balances (Note 5)                                   | 82,588     | (8,443)     |
| Cash provided by (used in) operating activities                                | 111,274    | (24,041)    |
| Increase (decrease) in cash                                                    | 111,274    | (24,041)    |
| Cash, beginning of year                                                        | 36,924     | 60,965      |
| Cash, end of year                                                              | \$ 148,198 | \$ 36,924   |
| Cash consists of:                                                              |            |             |
| Cash held by Parents' Lifelines of Eastern Ontario                             | \$ 162,310 | \$ 30,557   |
| (Bank indebtedness) cash held by Crossroads Children's<br>Mental Health Centre | (14,112)   | 6,367       |
|                                                                                | \$ 148,198 | \$ 36,924   |

# How You Can Help

## Volunteer

Sign up on our website to help by:

- Hosting our information table at various events
- Organizing and/or providing support at fundraising events
- Sharing and distributing PLEO information in the community



## Donate

- Directly to Parents' Lifelines of Eastern Ontario or online through CanadaHelps (see button on our website)
- By directing your United Way contribution to PLEO
- **Charitable Org # 8956-35019-RR0001**

Although our services are free to families, there is a cost for us to deliver them. Every contribution goes a long way to help families.

On average this year:

- It cost \$12 for every parent that attended one single support group
- It cost \$407 for every family we supported through our helpline

## Spread the word

Let others know about Parents' Lifelines – let's work together to reduce stigma

## A Very Special Thank You to our Funders



Ontario  
Trillium Foundation

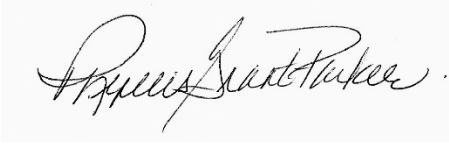


Fondation Trillium  
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



**This Annual Report Approved by:**



**Phyllis Grant-Parker**

September 28, 2018

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Board Chair

Date



**Elyse Schipper**

September 28, 2018

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Executive Director

Date