




Celebrating 20 Years



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



3 A Message from
our President

4 Reflections from our
Executive Director

5 Who we Are

6 Board of Directors

7 How we Help

8 Our Services

9 The Region we Serve

10 Impact & Highlights

13 Financial Statement

A Message from our President



Here we are, celebrating our 20th anniversary. Over the past twenty years, PLEO has

supported families facing the mental health challenges of their children, youth, and young adults. We have been there for parents to help them be the supporters and advocates needed to foster positive outcomes for their children. We know first-hand that parents play a significant role in their child's outcomes and research supports this. We recognize that parents cannot do it alone. We understand the challenges and the stressors on families, and we believe that recovery is possible.

During these 20 years, in addition to working directly with families, we have championed positive system change to create a more effective, family focused approach to mental health care. Through collaboration with service providers and key stakeholders, we ensure that the real needs of the thousands of families we support are understood.

I am very proud to say that PLEO has never strayed from our mission to foster positive outcomes for families and their children, youth and young adults facing mental health challenges. This has never been more evident than the amazing response from our staff when the

pandemic hit. They didn't miss a beat. Office phones were disconnected and moved to homes where our family peer supporters continue to take calls from parents who find themselves feeling more isolated and facing greater challenges. They did this amidst dealing with their own challenges created by the pandemic.

An organization doesn't grow and achieve the kind of positive results PLEO has managed alone. Many people have contributed throughout the twenty years. On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to say thank you to all of you who have been there with us and to support us.

Thanks to our funders who have believed in our cause and in our ability to deliver results.

Thanks to our community partners for their eagerness to collaborate and their commitment to improve the mental healthcare system experience for youth and their families and to meaningfully engage them in the process.

Thanks to the PLEO Board of Directors who volunteer their time to support and provide direction. Working quietly behind the scenes they selflessly contribute their knowledge and experience to ensure a strong and effective path moving forward.

And of course, a sincere thanks to our Executive Director, Elyse Schipper and our team who are always there for the families in our community. They are the heart and soul of PLEO.

As we move forward in these uncertain times PLEO will remain grounded in both urgency and hope and will continuously move forward towards our vision.

Hope over despair

Phyllis Grant-Parker, President & Chair

Reflections from our Executive Director



In early 2020, it was already shaping up to be a memorable year for PLEO. Our reach was growing. We were better able to meet parents where and when they needed us most, and deepened our services to better support them on their path forward. We were finding new ways to collaborate with our mental

health colleagues, bringing our knowledge of how to effectively partner with and support families to a broader audience. We were part of building a better, innovative model of care for children and families throughout the region. The conversations amongst our staff were about the wins of our client families – a mother finding connection with her child, a young adult engaging in treatment, a father finding a place, with us, to express his grief for the first time – and also about the gaps we were determined to address. This is life in an organization made up of compassionate people so connected to urgency and driven to make change – exhilarating, heart-wrenching, rewarding.

I'm grateful for the practice of putting together this annual report – there was life before the pandemic! And, as I reflect on the past year, what I am most proud of is how our team responded to this unprecedented crisis. They brought the same skills and determination that make them incredible parents and supporters of other parents to bear on the challenges. Their resilience, strength, flexibility, and total focus on our mission has been awe-inspiring. In the whirlwind of taking our entire organization and all of our services virtual, we have not missed a moment or opportunity to be there for a family in need, and, we did it all with the direct guidance of our clients who told us how they needed us to be there for them in this new normal.

(In a nod to Mister Rogers), it has been a gift, in the midst of this chaos and crisis, to be surrounded by the helpers - our team, our board, our partners, our funders. That's what I will remember most from this year.

With gratitude,

Elyse Schipper, Executive Director



Who we are

PLEO – Parents’ Lifeline is an incorporated non-profit family peer support organization for parents whose children to age 25 are facing mental health challenges. We are staffed with parents who have supported their own children with these challenges – we have travelled the journey.

Our proven model of family peer support is unique within Ontario. Our integrated services include a parents’ helpline providing support and guidance in navigating a fragmented mental health system; facilitated parent support groups where families can share information and learn from one another, and more intensive one-on-one family peer support.

In addition to working directly with families, we champion positive system change to create a more effective, family focused approach to mental health care. Through collaboration with service providers and key stakeholders, we ensure that the real needs of the thousands of families we support are understood. We know first-hand that parents play a significant role in their child’s outcomes and research supports this. We recognize that parents can’t do it alone. We understand the challenges and the stressors on families and we believe that recovery is possible. Hope over despair.

Our Vision is that families facing mental health challenges can flourish, stigma-free, with the support and services they need.

Our Mission is to foster positive outcomes for families with children to age 25 facing mental health challenges by providing family peer support and by amplifying the family voice for system change.

Our Core Values

- We have a sincere and compassionate interest in the well-being of those we serve and we value the dignity of all families dealing with mental health challenges
- We believe in hope, inclusion, recovery and the capacity of families to provide support and advocacy for their children when supported
- We believe trust, respect, honesty and fairness are the foundations for all relationships
- We value equity and diversity in our community
- We value excellence and meeting the highest standards of professionalism
- We believe in continuous improvement with a bias to action

Our Strengths

Experience. We have been supporting families for 20 years. That, combined with our own lived experience, provides us with an in-depth understanding of the fundamentals of effective family peer support.

Proven Record: Results from ongoing evaluation consistently show that our model is working, and that we are making a positive impact.

Bilingual Services: All of our services are available in both English and French.

Scope: We support parents of children to age 25 to include transitional aged youth, clients identified as suffering from a gap in services elsewhere in the system.

Integrated Approach: Our model allows for parents and caregivers to access our services when, where, and how they need us. Together, they provide a comprehensive approach that can respond to a family’s individual and changing needs.

Real-time, on-the-ground data: Our customized database and surveys capture in detail the experience of thousands of families, providing invaluable insight into real needs and journeys – the collective ‘Family Voice.’

Strong collaborative partnerships: We work closely with service providers, system leaders, and researchers to exchange knowledge and support efforts towards more effective care.

Our bias to action: We respond to the urgency for change.

Board of Directors



Phyllis Grant-Parker
President & Board Chair
Mental Health Advocate and
Architect of the PLEO Model
Retired, Corporate Marketing and
Business Development



Denise Gilby
Vice Chair
Senior Policy Analyst, Health Canada



Noah Spector, M.S.W, Ph.D, RSW
Therapist, CHEO



Michelle Neville, RN, B.Ed., M.Ed.
Mental Health Leader at Catholic
District School Board of
Eastern Ontario



Karen Magalhaes, PMP, CMC
President and Director at
KAM Consulting Inc.



Frank Vassallo, MHA, MCM
CEO, Kemptville District Hospital



**Tanya Parker Wallace, LL.B.,
AccFM (OAFM)**
Family Lawyer and Mediator



Margaret DeCorte, Ph.D., C.Psych.
Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice



Dhaval Shah, P.Eng
Director of Innovation,
Bank of Canada



David Millen
Retired Social Worker & advocate
for children and youth



Tara Draper, CPA, CA
Treasurer
Financial Analyst,
The Ottawa Hospital



Leah Eustace, ACFRE
President, Blue Canoe Philanthropy



How we Help

We help parents of children facing mental health challenges find their way forward.

The Parents we Support

The parents we support have children, youth, or young adults up to age 25 who are struggling with their mental health. The range of challenges is broad – ADHD, addiction, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, autism as there is often overlap or dual diagnosis, eating disorders, and many others. Their child may or may not have a diagnosis, and can be at any stage of their journey.

We know that the challenges these parents face are significant – from our own experience as parents, our work within the mental health system, and directly from parents themselves through our ongoing Family Experience Survey.

Who we are video: https://youtu.be/0ypDYyJcn_8



In 2019-20 the percentage of parent respondents who described the following as extremely or very challenging were:

56% : finding mental health / addiction services for their child

63% : being on wait-lists for services

56% : getting the right educational supports

44% : being involved as much as they would like in their child's treatment

75% : having other people understand their situation

56% : having other people understand their child's situation

31% : supporting other family members

44% : financial pressures associated with their child's situation

63% : stigma and judgement from others

69% : being able to cope and care for themselves

100% : worrying about the future

63% : managing crisis situations



My experience with PLEO has been through one-on-one mobile. My personal contact has been excellent - she has given me a fresh perspective, access to information and coping skills that have really made a difference."

Our Services

We provide Family Peer Support through integrated services specifically designed to support parents when, where, and how they need it, and to work together so that parents can move seamlessly between them.

Thanks to the support of our funders, all of our services are available at no cost. Parents do not need a referral to access our services, and, we are thrilled with the increase in referrals from hospital emergency departments, mental health service providers, family physicians, walk-in clinics, schools, and community health centres since launching last year. 629 parents were referred to us this year - more than double the year prior.

We help parents find and access the right services for their child and family. We help them build their own capacity to support their child, and to cope with the tremendous challenges they face. We work together to figure out how to manage suicidality, substance use, co-parenting, setting boundaries, school difficulty, medication, violence and safety, housing, lack of motivation or insight, and all the other issues and stressors that the whole family faces when a child is struggling. And we're here alongside them as peers – as parents who have been there ourselves and really get it – so that they never have to feel alone or isolated.



Our **Parents' Helpline** is answered Monday to Friday from 9am to 7pm. Any parent or caregiver of a child up to age 25 can call – any time and as often as is helpful. There's no waitlist, no fee, no paperwork. You call and get support right away.

2019-20 BY THE NUMBERS:

685 Unique families served through our Parents' Helpline, a 34% increase over previous year

439 of these families supported multiple times, a 30% increase over previous year

Our **Parent Support Groups** are confidential, no judgement, small groups of parents who meet once a month to support each other, share valuable information, and connect with a community. These are facilitated by two Family Peer Supporters who bring their own experience, wisdom and knowledge of the services and resources available in the community. All groups are drop-in with no registration required.

2019-20 BY THE NUMBERS:

178 Parents Support Groups

544 parents and caregivers participated

Our **One-on-One Mobile Service** is for parents who, for whatever reason, would benefit from more intensive support and guidance. Our Family Peer Supporters meet with parents in their community, one-on-one, usually over about 8 weeks.

2019-20 BY THE NUMBERS:

Provided One-on-One Support to **142** families

With the success of our on-site hours, piloted last year, we added 4 new location across the region, working closely with our partners to ensure the whole family is supported.



2019-20 LOCATIONS:

Pembroke - The Phoenix Centre for Children and Families

Cornwall – Cornwall Hospital Community Addiction and Mental Health Centre

Cornwall – Équipe psycho-sociale pour enfants et adolescents francophones S D G

Carleton Place – Open Doors For Lanark Children & Youth

Perth – Open Doors For Lanark Children & Youth

Smith Falls – Open Doors For Lanark Children & Youth

Embrun – Valoris for children and adults of Prescott-Russell

Kemptville – Children’s Mental Health of Leeds and Grenville

Ottawa – CHEO Outpatient Mental Health Services

Ottawa – Youth Services Bureau (YSB)

Rockland – Valoris for children and adults of Prescott-Russell

Throughout the year you can find us participating in **community events** where parents are, or speaking to parents and service providers on topics such as family partnership, supporting parents in a school setting, and how to help a loved one when services aren’t available. We also provide a monthly newsletter with the information our Family Peer Supporters are most excited about. Our goal, as with our other services, is for participants and readers to leave better informed and equipped.

2019-20 BY THE NUMBERS:

Participated in **39** events

Meaningful contact with **985** attendees

1789 newsletter subscribers

The Region we Serve



- In November 2019 we presented a full day workshop on *Family Partnership in Mental Health: Learnings from Eastern Ontario* at the Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) Conference in Toronto. With partners from Embrace Project, The Change Foundation, Child Development Institute, and Ontario Caregiver Organization, we provided support for child and youth mental health agencies to help understand the caregiver experience and develop a robust plan for partnership. Attendees represented organizations from across Ontario.



- We found more ways to collaborate with Crossroads Children's Mental Health Centre, this time to deliver a workshop for educators on the parent experience and effective family partnership. We were particularly thrilled to pursue this opportunity as schools were identified by parents in our focus group the year prior as a prime opportunity for better and earlier intervention.



- With continued support from United Way Prescott-Russell, and a strengthened partnership with Valoris, we were able to expand family peer support with new on-site hours in Embrun and Rockliffe, helping to bring service closer to rural families.



- We are thrilled to be partners in Kids Come First (KCF), the only innovative model greenlit by the MOHLTC to proceed with implementation of a pediatric focused Ontario Health Team. 61 organizations, 1,089 physicians, 2,535 staff, and family and youth representatives have been working together as equal partners to improve health care in Eastern Ontario. As members of the steering committee and several working groups of KCF, we are bringing the family voice to the development and implementation of this exciting endeavour.





I have had **only** positive experiences. Each time I have called, it has been in a time of total crisis. The ladies I have spoken with have been calm, compassionate, and supportive, without indulging (i.e. "I'm here for you", not "oh you poor dear, life is hard.") That made all the difference. They have also followed up with me and really helped tremendously."

Calling the PLEO helpline has helped me to...

Feel less alone / isolated	100%
Feel less anxiety / stress	86%
Feel better able to get the services you need	86%
Feel better able to support your child	86%
Feel better able to cope with the challenges related to your child's mental health / addiction struggles	86%

Attending a PLEO support group has helped me to...

Feel less alone / isolated	100%
Feel less anxiety / stress	100%
Feel better able to get the services you need	86%
Feel better able to support my child	86%
Feel better able to cope with the challenges related to your child's mental health / addiction struggles	71%

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

Feel less alone / isolated	100%
Feel less anxiety / stress	94%
Feel better able to get the services you need	100%
Feel better able to support your child	100%
Feel better able to cope with challenges related to your child's mental health/addiction struggles	100%
Feel empowered and encouraged towards self-care and self-compassion	94%

Extremely, very or moderately

Slightly or not at all helpful

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2019/20

Parents' Lifelines of Eastern Ontario
 Summary of Program Revenue and Program Expenditures
 For the 12 months ended March 31, 2020

TOTAL REVENUE 676,285

Champlain LHIN 354,960

Ontario Trillium Foundation 217,018

United Way 61,660

Donations & Fundraising 2,235

Miscellaneous 10,412

RBC Foundation 10,000

Bell Let'sTalk 20,000

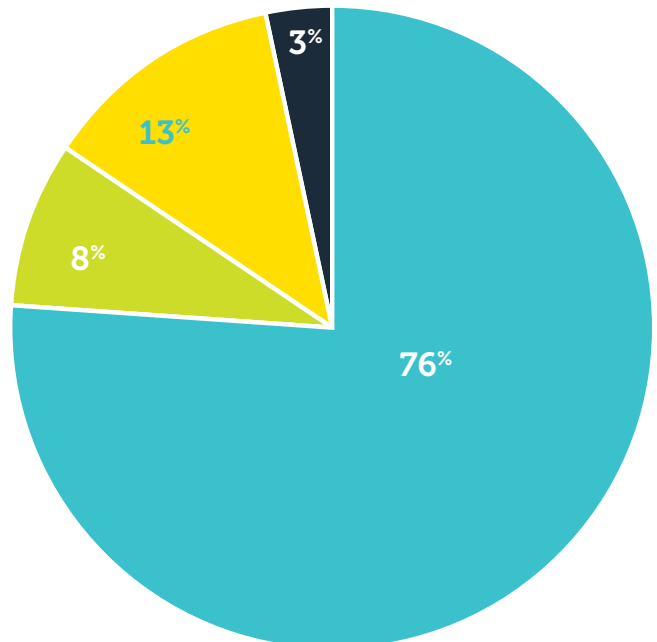
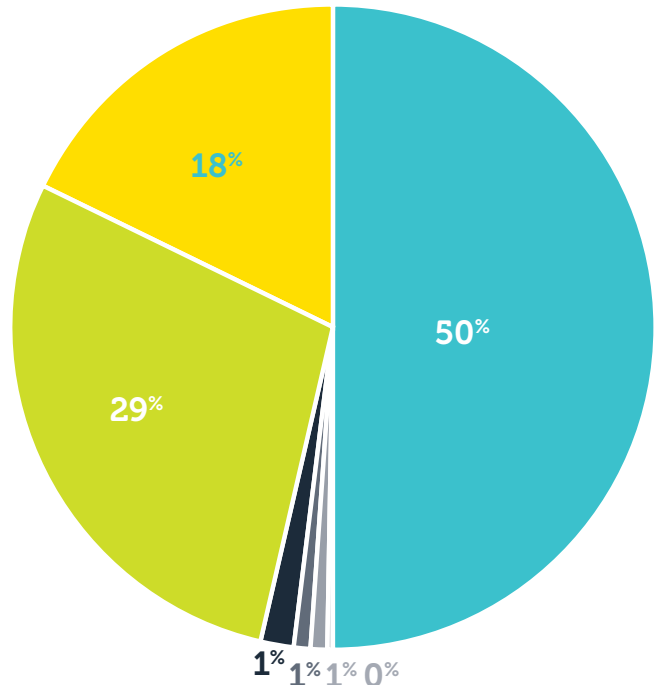
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 637,326

Salaries & Training 486,177

Travel & Communications 52,527

Professional Services 78,332

Administration 20,290





we've been there,
we get it
and we can help

OUR FUNDERS



pleo.on.ca

613.321.3211 (Ottawa)

1.855.775.7005