



annual report
2022-2023



In the spirit of reconciliation, Pleo acknowledges the land on which it was originally established as the traditional and unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation (Ottawa). Our team works across the territory now called Ontario, on the treaty lands of many First Nations.

We recognize the people and the land in this way as part of our commitment to anti-oppression and decolonization. Beyond recognition this is a reminder of our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities. In particular at Pleo, this means recognizing and valuing the experience and wisdom of Indigenous Peoples as it relates to our specific work with mental health and families, and making sure that delivering on our mission includes supporting Indigenous families and children to flourish.



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Message from the Board Chair

It has been a year filled with remarkable achievements, dedicated efforts, and unwavering commitment from every member of the Pleo team. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding leadership of our managers and the invaluable work and commitment to our mission of our dedicated front-line staff.

The team was able to quickly pivot in response to the pandemic, not missing a beat, moving to virtual services and then to further capitalize on the learnings and successes to rise to the increased post pandemic demand.

As we look back on the year's accomplishments, we are immensely proud of what we have achieved together. We have expanded our reach to support more families, launched new initiatives to reach individuals in unique ways and forged meaningful partnerships that amplify our impact.

The collaboration among all partner agencies to work together to continually improve the access to mental health services for the youth in our communities has delivered results. We are proud that Pleo has been an integral partner, furthering family engagement and amplifying the family voice.

We remain grateful to our funders, our champions and our donors who make all of this possible.

David Millen, Pleo Board Chair

Pleo Board of Directors

2022-2023

Angela Fenton

Dhaval Shah

Connor Shea

Purnima Sundar

Maddy Toca

Noah Spector

Michelle Neville

Denise Gilbey

Margaret De Corte



Message from the Interim Executive Director

The result of the increase in youth mental health challenges resulting from the pandemic and further exacerbated by the far-reaching effects of inflation on food prices, housing, and financial insecurity; the ongoing lack of access to services; and the isolation has tested the resiliency of our families and our systems in unprecedented ways. Parents and caregivers continue to reach out for support in record numbers. Referrals to our support services from other service providers increased by 40%.

We have seen our partners in youth mental health rally through these challenges to adapt, to rethink and rebuild differently and collaboratively. Pleo was a founding member of the Kids Come First Health Team which successfully developed and implemented a new approach to accessing youth mental health services called 1Call 1 Click. This service allows children, youth and families to access the most appropriate services with the right service provider including family peer support, with just one call or one click at www.1Call1Click.ca.

Through further collaboration with the Royal, Pleo introduced the Youth Nominated Support Team program whereby a youth in recovery and their four chosen adult allies receive Pleo peer support training and coaching for a 12-week duration increasing their support network.

While continuing to provide families with the support they need, we remain mindful of the importance of our core values as an employer. We are very proud to have received the 2022 Charity Village award for Workplace Mental Health, recognition of the importance of realizing our core values internally.

We are grateful to the parents who trust us and teach us, our staff who consistently go above and beyond, our Board for their steady guidance, our partners for their collaboration and our funders for their investment in our mission.

Michelle Kay, Pleo Executive Director (Interim)



Who We Are

Pleo is an incorporated (2000) non-profit family peer support organization for parents and caregivers whose children to age 25 are facing mental health challenges. We provide the unique service of family peer support. Our staff are all parents who themselves have supported a child with these challenges and who have all been trained in the principles and methodologies of family peer support. We also represent and amplify the voice of families to ensure that all transitions and improvements to the mental health systems reflect the needs of the families it serves.


We've travelled the journey – we get it.

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 in system change.

Our Strengths

- **Experience:** We have been supporting families since 1999. 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 years of ongoing evaluation show that our model is working and that we are making a positive impact.
- **Diversity and Equality** are cornerstones of our core values.
- **Bilingual Services:** all our services are provided in French and English.
- **Scope:** we served families with youth to 25 helping to close the system gap when youth transition from child to adult systems.
- **Real-Time, on the ground data:** Our contact management system captures 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.



“I so look forward to our call every two weeks, it keeps me going, I don't know what I would do without them”

How we Help

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

Children with strong family support have better outcomes. By supporting the parents/caregivers, building their capacity and resiliency they are better able to navigate an under-resourced and fragmented mental health system and better able to provide the support and environment their child needs to thrive.

We provide support through integrated services designed to support parents when, where and how they need it and that work together so that parents can move seamlessly between them. Because of the support of our funders all Pleo services are provided at no cost to those accessing them.

- Our telephone helpline.
- Our numerous support groups – now delivered virtually.
- Our One-on-One Mobile service for more intensive support when needed,
- Our on-site program where a Family Peer Supporter is on site at a service provider's facility for families to access support.

We work collaboratively with partners to improve access to services that reflect family identified needs.

Examples this year:

- As part of the Kids Come First Health Team developed and launched 1Call 1 Click to improve access – one stop service.
- Co-delivered the Smart Recovery Program with Sandy Hill Health Centre.
- In collaboration with the Royal delivered an evidence-based program to support youth in their recovery and train and coach adult allies.
- We were regularly on site with numerous partners locations to provide support to their clients.

We participate in community events to be part of the education to help reduce stigma.

"I would sincerely like to express my heartfelt thanks to Pleo for providing my family support when I had no other resources. Words cannot express how comfortable my Family Peer Supporter made me feel about the situation we were facing. The first time she returned my call we talked like we knew each other for years. I must say, I was praying for a way to rectify my issues and they came like a blessing in disguise. I absolutely love her demeanor, very patient, caring, knowledgeable, and friendly. I felt it was a great experience to just have met someone as a person. We look forward to speaking with her weekly she has a wealth of knowledge to share. Always reminding us that we are great parents. boosted our spirit, reassured us, and continue to encouraged us. Thank you!!!!!"

Our Impact

Delivering quality Family Peer Support...



In surveys completed by families who have used our services they report feeling:

less alone and isolated

92%

less anxiety and stress

92%

better able to get the services they need

89%

better able to cope with challenges associated with their child's mental health/addiction

92%

empowered and encouraged towards self-care and self-compassion

100%



Our Impact

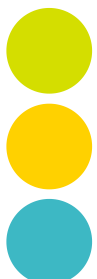
...affecting many families across all our services

- Through the Helpline and One-to-One Mobile services we supported **1054** unique individual parents/caregivers. Of that total, **868** were reaching out for the first time this past year and 186 from the previous year were seeking continued support.
- On average, we support each parent through three support activities per year with a total of **2576** telephone calls and **2692** email exchanges.
- We facilitated **176** support groups which were attended by **802** individuals.
- As part of our partner collaboration, we provide on-site days at several centers throughout Ottawa and surrounding counties. In that program, we supported an additional **82** parents/caregivers.
- In our unique partnership with The Royal and Suicide Prevention Ottawa, the Youth Nominated Support Team (YNST) supported **10** youth and **30** adult allies.
- Through our more intensive one-to-one mobile service we reached another **155** families. This is an 8 week average program.

Number of unique families served through our Parents' Helpline and One-to-One Mobile services					
2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
1054	848	416	685	510	350

Number of Parent Support Groups						
	2022-23	2021-22*	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of groups	176	309	173	178	201	146
# of participants	802	1243	670	544	533	622

*2021-22 we received funding for groups in Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Manitoulin.



Highlights for 2022-2023

- We are a founding member of Kids Come First Health Team and a member of the steering committee continuing to ensure the family voice is considered in all the decisions.
- We were Integral to the design and implementation of the 1Call1Click (1C1C) initiative to improve access to youth mental health services ensuring that all parents are offered Pleo Family Peer Support.
- In collaboration with the Royal, we delivered the Youth Nominated Support Team (YNST) whereby youth with the support of the Pleo facilitator nominated four adult allies for support. Pleo then trained and coached the adult allies. 12 number of youth were involved and 33 adult allies received peer support training.
- We experienced a 46% increased referrals for partner agencies including hospital emergencies, 1C1C and other mental health care groups demonstrating the relations forged, the recognition for family engagement and the confidence in the work Pleo does.
- We have continued to upgrade our systems such as our contact management and implement applications such as the HR system Collage that allows us to increase efficiencies, reduce admin time allowing more time to be directed to our front line support efforts and enhance our analysis and reporting ability.
- We received Charity Village's Award for Best Nonprofit Employer –Workplace Mental Health (20+ staff) indicative of our core values.



Opportunities and Challenges

Over the last 23 years Pleo has continued to grow, to collaborate with partners and to actively promote family engagement. We have earned the trust of families, and the respect of partners and our generous funders. Our model for support is well proven.

There are so many other opportunities where we have been asked to play an integral role that would increase the number of families we could serve and for which families in our community would greatly benefit. Those are the opportunities, but the challenge is to have the funding and resources to ensure that we maintain our quality of service and that we respect the health and well-being of our staff.

Opportunities are there and we will actively seek the support of funders, donors and the community to support our capability to serve more people and to help families find their way forward.



Gratitude

We are grateful for the continued commitment from
the province of Ontario,
United Way East Ontario including Prescott-Russell and Lanark,
Youth Services Bureau and the CHEO Foundation.



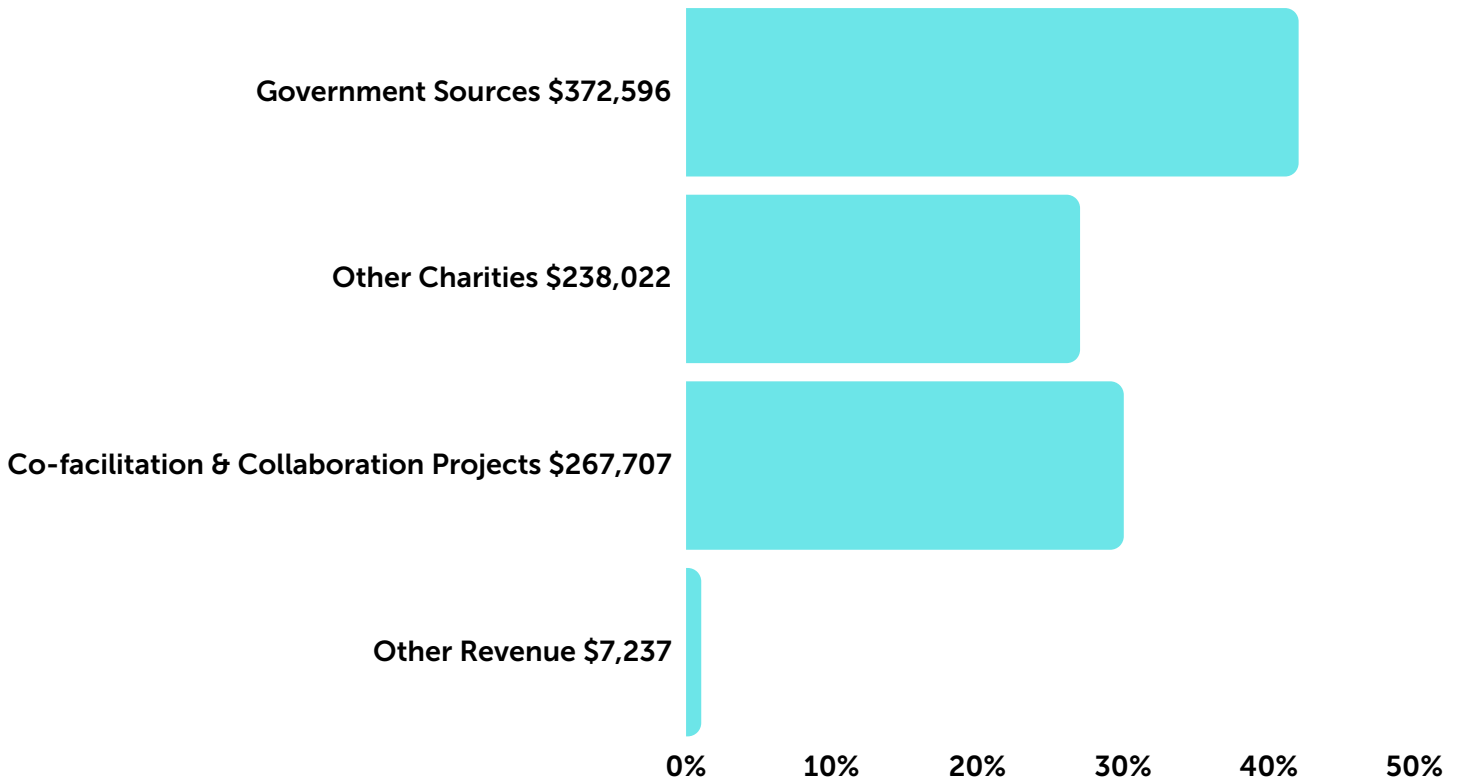
Thank you both to Collaborative Divorce Ottawa and 100 Women who Care Ottawa
for choosing Pleo as recipient of their Ottawa fundraisers.



We have many individual donors to thank too for their generous contributions
through regular workplace giving, and to our Giving Tuesday and Annual Campaign;
donating over \$26,000 in support of our services.



Total Revenue \$885,562



Total Expenditures \$907,086

