



**PLEO** **Parents' Lifelines**  
OF EASTERN ONTARIO



# *Parents' Lifelines*

## **Families for Child & Youth Mental Health**

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# *Parents Lifelines of Eastern Ontario*

## *About us ...*

- Truly grassroots – created by parents for parents
- Registered as a non profit charity since 2002
- 100% volunteer organization until 2012
- Now, staffed with parents with lived experience supporting their own children, youth or young adults with mental health or addictions challenges



# Who are we?

- Organisation providing peer support and system navigation for families with children and youth (up to age 25), who are experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges
- PLEO is the voice of families, advocating on their behalf to community organizations, with the goal of achieving positive and sustainable systemic change



# Community Partners & Engagement

- Moving on Mental Health – engagement with Lead Agencies and participation on various committees throughout the counties of the Champlain LHIN



# Why?

- **1 in 5 youth** will experience a mental health challenge
- Only **1 in 6** of those will receive the treatment they need
- **3 of 4** adolescents in conflict with the law have a diagnosable and treatable mental illness
- **Suicide** is the **number 1 cause** of non-accidental death in youth
- **The burden of care** for someone caring for a loved one experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges **is greater** than that of someone caring for a loved one with cancer

The mental health and addiction system is fragmented, under-resourced and difficult to navigate

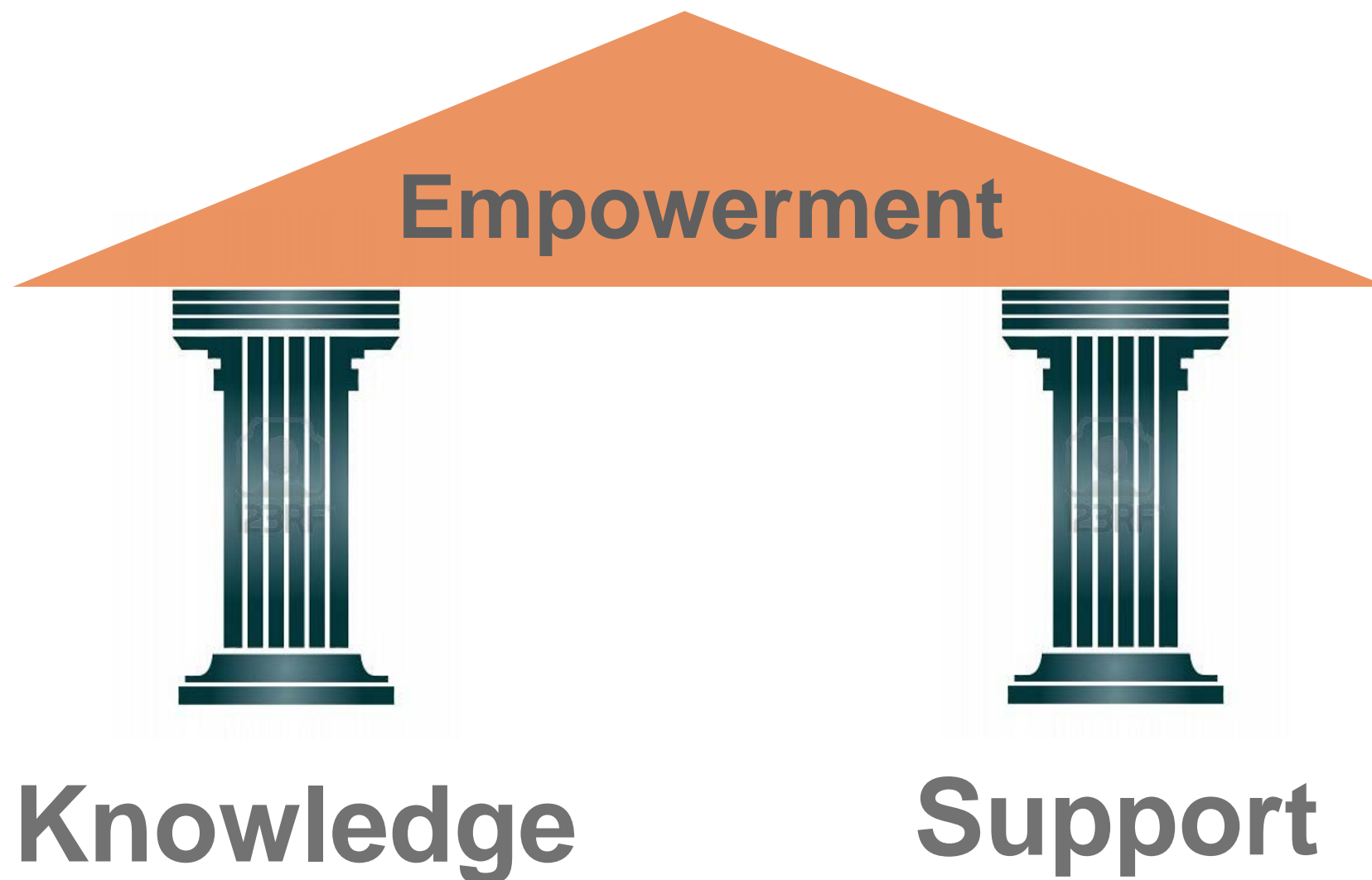
# Why?

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## *Stigma is real*

*It isolates families and prevents youth from seeking and accessing help*

# *Our Mandate*



To provide the **knowledge** and **support** the parents/caregivers of children, youth and young adults with mental health and addiction issues in order to **empower** them to be the supporters and advocates their children need



# *Attachment & Resiliency*

# Attachment

- A relationship
- A process
- The pursuit of proximity, contact and closeness with others so as to be loved, known and understood by others.





# Youth, Mental Health and the Disconnect

Many of today's youth are struggling.

Young people are happy because of attachment to parents

Parental attachment weakens with age

And is replaced with other attachments that are superficial and conditional

Meanwhile youth spend less time outside and 7.5 hrs/day in front of a screen

Parents are lame  
You just need friends & social media

Leaving them with little fresh air, or genuine connections and unconditional acceptance/support

I have 500 friends but no one to talk to.

I hate my life. Want 2 die :(

LOL! Ur funny. Wanna have a Netflix marathon?

And more vulnerable to mental health/behavioural issues

↓  
Empathy

↑  
Narcissism

Suicide rates have increased 3-fold in adolescent females since the 1960s

## What can we do?

**Spend 1:1 time with your child.** Because it's hard to open up at the dinner table with everyone around

**Connect with nature.** Take a walk in the forest with your loved ones

**Connect before direction.** Start with empathy, validation, & acceptance before advice & guidance

**Unplug from technology.** Reconnect with one another prioritize human interaction over a device or screen

**Advocate for Change.** Help advocate for changes to social policies in our governments, workplaces to support our attachments to families and each other.

# Attachment & Technology

Technology is not bad per se, but it tends to disconnect us from that which we need



- It can keep us awake at night
- Disconnect us from the sleep we need
- Social media can consume hours of our time
- Keeps us from face-to-face and deeper level connections



# *How do you know if your child or teen is using too much technology?*

1. Does your child or teen prefer to spend time in front of a screen rather than with family?
2. Do you have trouble getting your child or teen away from the screen, device or game to spend time with family?
3. Does your child or teen spend more than 2 hours a day in front of a screen? (computer, video game or phone?)

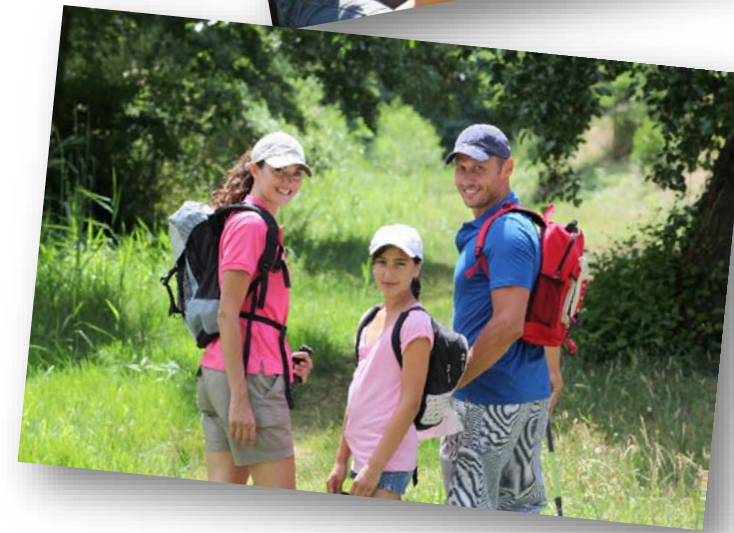
Answering 'yes' to any of these questions may mean that your child or teen is becoming too attached to technology

# *Would we allow our under-age kids to drive?*

- No, because cars are dangerous for the under-aged
- And yet... every week professionals at CHEO see suicidal and depressed kids due to the effect of technology
- Technology addiction has become a reality in our society and needs to eventually be restricted in the same way we restrict tobacco or alcohol.

# *For mental wellness, kids need:*

- Attachment to parents
- Nature
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Proper nutrition



Our brains are wired to require strong relationships, attachments and face-to-face social contact with fellow human beings for happiness and well-being

# ***Attachment & Technology***

[www.drcheng.ca](http://www.drcheng.ca)

[www.ementalhealth.ca](http://www.ementalhealth.ca)



# *Resiliency*

# *What Is Resiliency?*



- The psychological strength to cope with stress and hardship
- The mental reservoir of strength that people are able to call on in times of need to carry them through without falling apart.

Resiliency gives people the strength to tackle problems head on, overcome adversity, and move on with their lives.

# ***Factors that Contribute to Resiliency***

- Some individuals come by these abilities naturally
- However, others need to learn the skills that it takes to become more resilient
- Social support is a critical variable that contributes to resilience
- Mentally strong people tend to have the support of family and friends who help bolster them up in times of trouble



# ***Dandelions and Orchids***



## **Dandelion Children**

- Have the capacity to survive – even thrive – in whatever circumstances they encounter
- Psychologically resilient

## **Orchid Children**

- Highly sensitive to their environment
- Especially to the quality of parenting they receive
- If neglected, orchid children promptly wither
- But if nurtured, they not only survive but flourish



# *Other Factors Associated with Resiliency*

- Holding positive views of yourself and your abilities
- The capacity to make realistic plans and stick to them
- Being a good communicator
- Viewing your self as a fighter, rather than a victim
- Having high emotional intelligence and managing emotions effectively



# *Resiliency and the ability to cope*



- Today's high speed society, electronic addictions and lack of healthy attachment to our loved ones is affecting children, youth and their families.
- More and more, families lack the resiliency and capacity to cope.

# *Tips for Raising Resilient Kids*

1. Don't accommodate every need
2. Avoid eliminating all risks
3. Teach them to problem solve
4. Teach your kids concrete skills
5. Avoid 'why' questions
6. Don't provide all the answers
7. Avoid talking in catastrophic terms
8. Let your kids make mistakes
9. Help them manage their emotions
10. Model resiliency



# *Characteristics of Resilient People*



- Strong coping skills
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Strong social connections
- Identifying as a survivor, not a victim
- Being able to ask for help



# *Resiliency*

Resiliency helps kids navigate the inevitable trials, triumphs and tribulations of childhood and adolescence.



Resilient kids also become resilient adults, able to survive and thrive in the face of life's unavoidable stressors

*How does  
PLEO help  
families?*

# How PLEO Helps Families



## Telephone Helpline

Monday to Friday  
9:00 am to 7:00 pm

**613-321-3211**

**Toll free: 1-855-775-7005**

A bilingual, confidential service

- Our Family Peer Supporters answer the calls – they understand, they have supported their own child with mental illness and/or substance use challenges
- They provide emotional support to the caller – an understanding, caring ear
- They assist the caller in identifying services available in the community

# *How PLEO Helps Families*

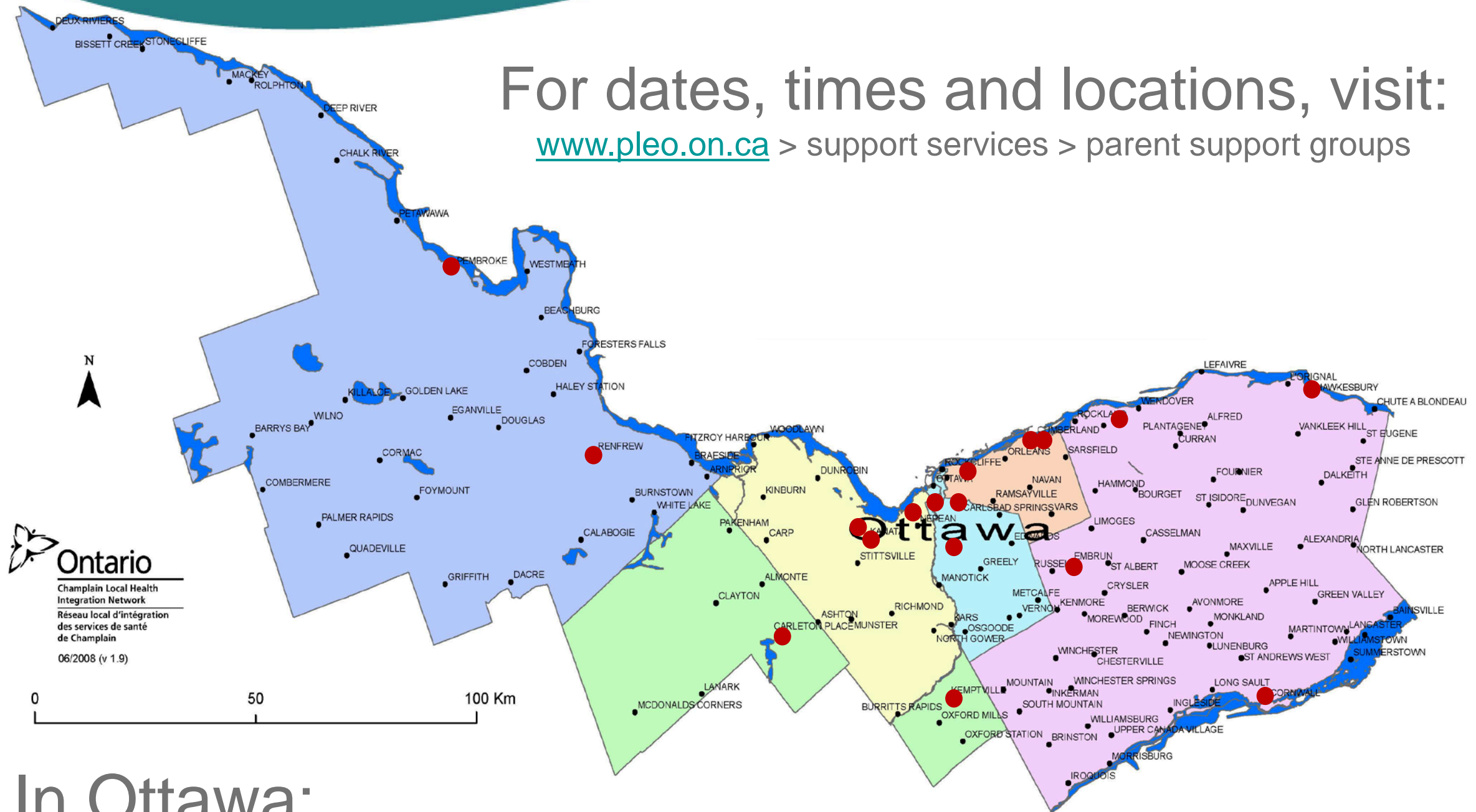
## *Parent Support Groups*



- Currently facilitating several groups each month, targeted to parents/caregivers of children, and youth (up to age 25)
- Several groups, in Ottawa and throughout the counties of the Champlain LHIN

*A safe, confidential, non-judgmental environment for parents and caregivers to connect with one another and share resources*

For dates, times and locations, visit:  
[www.pleo.on.ca](http://www.pleo.on.ca) > support services > parent support groups



## In Ottawa:

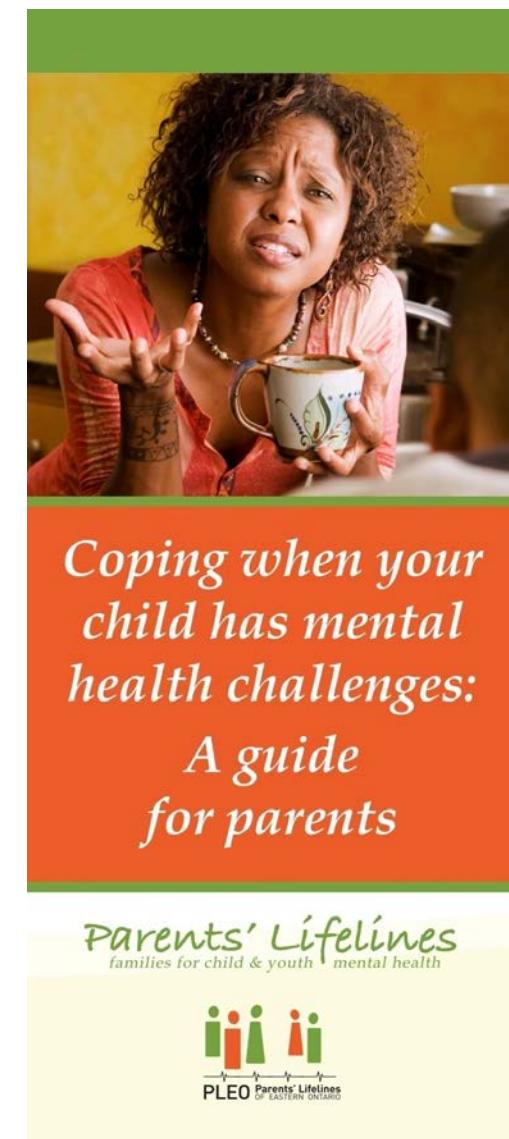
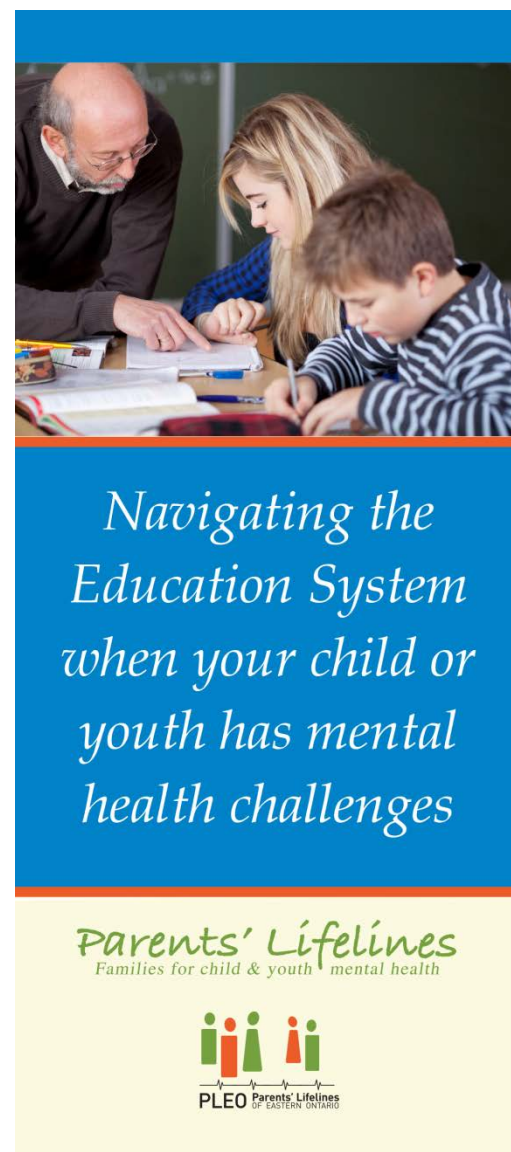
Crossroads	0-12 E
CHEO	12-18 E
The Royal	16-25 E
Kanata	0-15 E
Kanata	16-25 E

Hôpital Montfort	16-25 F
Orleans	0-15 B
Orleans	16-25 B
Barrhaven	0-15 E
Barrhaven	16-25 E



# *How PLEO Helps Families*

## *Information Brochures*



# *How PLEO Helps Families*

## *Individual Support Program (ISP)*

- Targeted short-term intervention (approximately 8 sessions)
- Provides one-on-one, face to face support to parents with the goal to:
  - Reduce caregiver strain
  - Identify formal and informal resources
  - Improve their capacity to support their child or youth



# *How PLEO Helps Families*

## *Monthly Newsletter*

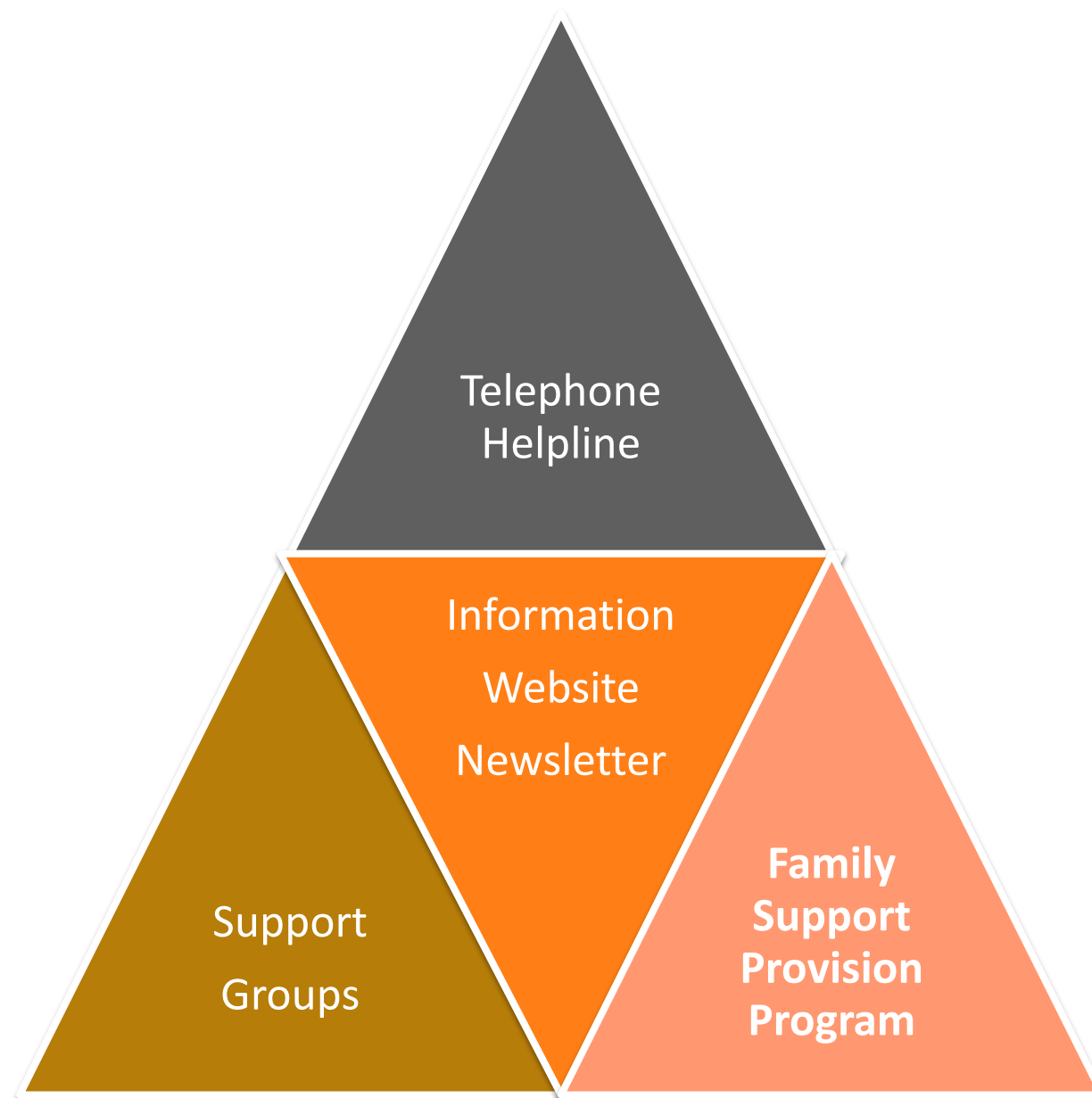


- Hundreds of families and service providers receive the newsletter monthly
- Important events and education opportunities
- Latest research
- Mental Health in the news

*And more info on our website:*  
*[www.pleo.on.ca](http://www.pleo.on.ca)*



# *A fully integrated model*



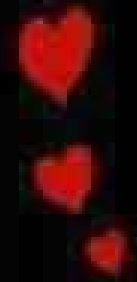
*Once a family reaches out to PLEO....*



*They never again need to feel alone*

# *Parents' Lifelines*

Sometimes we need someone  
to simply be there...  
Not to fix anything or do  
anything in particular, but  
just to let us feel we are  
supported and cared about



***Thank you!***

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# Questions?

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