



Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound Lead Agency Child & Youth Mental Health Three Year Service Plan

Executive Summary
October 2020

HANDS The Lead Agency - Mission

To ensure the child and youth mental health system is accessible and comprehensive, we will work collaboratively with core service providers, community partners with expertise in the delivery of child and youth mental health services, and clients, in order to lead community planning based on the values of collaboration, transparency and accountability.

Executive Summary

In March 2020, the Minister of Health released a strategy document to improve mental health and addiction care: Roadmap to wellness: a plan to build Ontario's mental health and addictions system. As the Lead Agency for all children and youth mental health services across the Districts of Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound, HANDS led the development of a three-year service plan for children, youth and families. The Plan was developed collaboratively with Core Service Providers for the region, Family Connections in Muskoka and Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing. The Plan supports the four pillars of the Roadmap to wellness strategy document which are to

- improve quality of care;
- expand existing services;
- provide innovative solutions; and
- improve access.

The Plan is also aligned with the priorities of the Lead Agency Consortium which include the improvement of

- the client experience;
- quality and consistency of services;
- access to services with a focus on availability, affordability, and acceptability; and
- outcomes for children and youth with the most complex needs

The analysis of current service assets, gaps and pressures among core provider agencies helped to inform the following service level priorities with an increased focus on the needs of children, youth and families with increased vulnerabilities including in the 0 to 5-year age group; LGBTQ2S children and youth; transitional youth; and children and youth with complex emotional/behavioural/mental health issues:

1. To enhance existing staffing and clinical supervision to support access to specialized counselling and therapy services, both virtual and in person, for vulnerable client groups.
2. To broaden the scope of practice and strengthen the clinical competencies of staff across the service area with a focus on family therapy and specialized services for clients and families with increased vulnerabilities.
3. To develop and implement solutions that will improve how the system plans for, and responds to the most complex needs of vulnerable clients.

A review of the local child and youth community mental health system including both challenges and opportunities resulted in identifying the following priorities:

1. To develop and implement one engagement strategy across core service providers to ensure the client and family voice is part of the design, delivery and review of services.
2. To focus on the provision of targeted prevention and early intervention programs and services for children, youth, families and caregivers with increased vulnerabilities.
3. To provide innovative and integrated virtual services.

The Plan reflects the belief that child and youth mental health is a key determinant of overall health, with children, youth and their families achieving optimal wellness by having equitable access to responsive, innovative and evidence-based services. It demonstrates the importance of developing a strong system of care to improve outcomes and accelerate progress towards optimizing mental health particularly among children and youth with more complex mental health issues. It also expresses a commitment to inter-agency and cross-sector collaboration to build and support more effective services in partnership with children, youth, families and communities – because the more we plan and problem solve together while using this common priority framework, the better our chances of strengthening the system, making it more equitable and responsive.