

# BETTER TOGETHER:

STRENGTHENING THE ONTARIO MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES

MAY 2021



ACCESS



PERCEPTION OF CARE



COMMON ASSESSMENT



LIVE-IN TREATMENT

**The Lead Agency Consortium (LAC) has continued to build on the provincial priorities identified in its third report, *Realizing the Potential* to advance quality and optimize services for child and youth mental health in Ontario.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and amplified the need for continued action to advance these priorities. The Lead Agency Consortium in Child and Youth Mental Health has developed priorities through the Provincial Priorities Report, ***Better Together (2021)*** with the goals of:

- Addressing the most significant service challenges infants, children, youth and families with mental health concerns face.
- Ensuring the best opportunity to deliver core child and youth mental health services through a focus on building and improving system quality and consistency .

The fourth report, released May 2021, highlights progress made to date on the four priorities and recommended next steps. *Better Together* is about tangible, systems level quality improvements that can be lead and advanced by the sector that will improve services. Lead agencies are committed to working with core service providers, the Centre of Excellence in Child and Youth Mental Health, Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO), local and provincial system partners, and the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health to advance these priorities.

We're asking government to work with us to make these system level improvements needed to build capacity, improve access and expand common experiences to provide better value for money and improved quality over the long-term.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES:**

The priorities and recommendations in *Better Together* align with the goals of better connected and integrated health care, and also the priorities for mental health and addictions outlined in the *Roadmap to Wellness*. Our focus priority areas are about deepening progress made

since the release of *Realizing the Potential (2018)*, but also formalizing partnerships to move priorities forward.

Just as the *Roadmap to Wellness* prioritizes improving quality and access, expanding services and innovating solutions, the provincial priorities of the LAC are also rooted in advancing quality and services by putting a focus on improving access to services and common experiences to get the best outcomes possible for children, youth and families.

In collaboration, lead agencies are committed to doing this work with core service providers, system level partners, and government to move forward service system improvements. Even in the context of COVID-19 where long standing issues in our service system have been magnified and mental health needs are increasing, we know we can continue to move our priorities forward to stabilize and strengthen our system's capacity to provide high-quality care. Together, we have created the capacity to collaboratively generate measurable improvements for children, youth and families across Ontario.

## CHALLENGE:



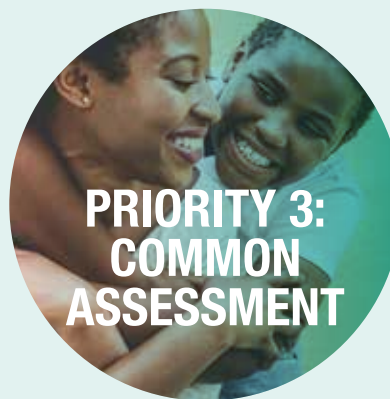
### PRIORITY 1: ACCESS

Children, youth and families face challenges getting the right mental health services at the right time, in the right place, and at the right cost.



### PRIORITY 2: PERCEPTION OF CARE

Most service providers do not use a standardized tool to assess perception of care yet being client-centered is a core principle that guides service delivery.



### PRIORITY 3: COMMON ASSESSMENT

The use of non-standardized assessment and evaluation tools hampers efforts to identify service system improvements and investments, make informed comparisons across the province and implement evidence-based practices.



### PRIORITY 4: LIVE-IN TREATMENT

Live-in treatment services in Ontario have been developed in the absence of a provincial plan, based primarily of local provider considerations and without ability to secure the resources needed to consistently and appropriately assess and treat. Treatment services and therapeutic care continue, undelimited for the most part, with system demands for a 'head in a bed' prevailing over tiered treatment capacity.

## PROGRESS SINCE PPR 3:

- Refined the definition of access: expanded the three "A's" to include appropriateness
- Developed a common framework to guide related discussions
- Identified first two areas of focus: availability (wait times); and acceptability
- Conducted and analyzed findings of the 2019 OPOC Demonstration Project
- Reviewed learnings and success factors that enabled this work
- Established priorities for next steps including working with partners at CMAH to continue implementing OPOC in the 13 demonstration sites, and scaling up OPOC-MHA across remaining 19 service areas
- Survey to determine current state of interRAI use
- Identified two priorities to support mobilization: communications strategy and pilot implementation plan
- Three working groups are working on: clinical profiles, defining tiers and a communications strategy

## NEXT STEPS:

Gather information on how "brief services" is defined and how wait time data on this service is gathered and reported across all 33 child and youth mental health service areas in Ontario to better understand how these services are being used.

Work with an Implementation Coach to ensure ongoing implementation of the OPOC-MHA in the existing 13 Lead Agencies; and scale up this implementation to include the remaining 19 service areas

Consult with experts including CPRI to develop the implementation and communications plan, including addressing barriers to mandating a common assessment and identifying resources and support towards an implementation strategy

Establish a joint working table with government to align and optimize our work. Strengthen clinical treatment by hiring and training clinical staff and support a province-wide approach to standardizing services that includes regional planning.