



**STRATEGIC PLAN 2016–2018**



Ontario Centre of Excellence  
for Child and Youth  
Mental Health

*Bringing People and Knowledge Together to Strengthen Care.*

# A SHARED VISION

**From the beginning, the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health (the Centre) was a small team with a big vision: Optimal mental health and well-being for children, youth and their families and caregivers. It's one that inspires us in our work of bringing people and knowledge together to strengthen care.**

Today, our vision remains just as relevant despite significant changes in child and youth mental health. As the Ministry of Children and Youth Services works closely with lead and service agencies to transform the way mental health services are delivered in Ontario, the playing field has shifted. Practitioners and leaders are now collecting, analyzing and using data to inform decision-making at agency, service area and system levels. Community and ministry partners are working together more than ever to share stories and best practices. Collectively, they are pushing the boundaries to discover what's possible for an improved mental health system for children, youth and their families and caregivers.

The extension of our mandate to the end of system transition in 2018 reinforces the Centre's role within Ontario's child and youth mental health system. It underscores the value of our services and our role as facilitators and knowledge experts in supporting agencies, service areas and the system as a whole.

**A Shared Vision** is a plan that builds on the important work we've achieved alongside our partners through *Charting the Course: Strategic plan 2010–2016*. It re-aligns our focus and priorities and supports the evolving needs of our stakeholders. In this new plan, we have identified three strategic directions:

- strengthen skills and knowledge in key areas that promote the use of evidence-informed practice and lead to improved outcomes;
- provide credible evidence that promotes system-wide consistency and leads to enhanced service planning and delivery outcomes at the system level;
- demonstrate impact and inspire excellence through continuous learning, evolution and innovation.

Our refreshed strategic plan is a result of the combined work of our Governance and Advisory Committees, as well as Centre staff. It demonstrates our renewed commitment to realizing the Centre's mandate, mission, vision and values. **A Shared Vision** is a guide to expand our work in promoting reflective evidence-informed practice and enhancing our collective impact at all levels of the child and youth mental health system.

# CORPORATE PILLARS

## MISSION

We bring people and knowledge together to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of mental health services for children, youth and their families and caregivers.

## VISION

Optimal mental health and well-being for children, youth and their families and caregivers.

## VALUES

At the Centre, we define ourselves as:

### **PASSIONATE: People with purpose**

We're a talented and diverse group of planners, thinkers and doers who embrace our vision and are committed to the cause.

### **AUTHENTIC: We keep it real**

Our people are genuine, sincere and always eager to source and share the facts.

### **CREATIVE: Innovation inspires us**

We push the boundaries of average and status-quo—making room for excellent and cutting-edge.

### **RESPONSIVE: Change is the name of the game**

We make the most of our time with stakeholders by remaining attentive, responsive and flexible to their evolving needs.

### **ACCOUNTABLE: We make it count**

We use our resources responsibly and have the processes to prove it.

### **COLLABORATIVE: Everything is better when we work together**

We bring people together as one-team to get the job [of improving the system] done.



# SERVICE AREA SUPPORT



## Strategic direction 1

The Centre will continue to support child and youth mental health agencies by **strengthening skills and knowledge in our \*key areas of expertise. We will achieve this by promoting evidence-informed practices that lead to enhanced outcomes in practice, agencies and across service areas.**

### OUR APPROACH

The Centre has recently responded to changes in the child and youth mental health system by enhancing our own service approach. We now offer accessible, responsive and customized supports to all lead and service agencies within Ontario's thirty three service areas.

Through our customized and flexible approach we:

- work alongside lead agencies to understand and respond to the unique context, strengths and diverse needs of child and youth mental health agencies in their respective service areas
- support the development of a plan tailored to meet these needs based on our established areas of expertise: *evaluation/performance measurement, implementation, youth and family engagement and youth suicide prevention*
- provide a consistent level of service while remaining adaptable to meet continuously evolving needs

### OUR SUPPORT

- support lead and service agencies as they implement Ontario's plan for child and youth mental health service delivery
- provide consultation and training in our key areas of expertise
- produce and mobilize tools and resources that are practical and readily accessible to agencies and their leaders
- respond to questions from lead and service agencies by providing the latest evidence to those who need it, when they need it most
- mobilize the latest evidence and share our expertise on issues related to system improvement

\*The Centre's key areas of expertise include: evaluation/performance measurement, implementation, youth and family engagement and youth suicide prevention

# SYSTEM SUPPORT



## Strategic direction 2

The Centre will provide consistent evidence-informed approaches that enhance service planning and delivery across the system.

### OUR APPROACH

The need for ongoing collaboration, coordination and consistency in practice has never been greater as agencies, cross-sectoral partners and ministries work together to create a more accessible system of care. Equally important is the need for reliable and credible evidence to support decision-making on key policy issues.

We believe that stable, standardized approaches are critical to the future strength of child and youth mental health. A consistent, province-wide approach to evaluation and performance measurement will allow decision-makers to see what is working and where improvement is required. We know this important work requires time and expertise to do well.

The Centre is well positioned to:

- facilitate connections and knowledge sharing for system improvement
- collaborate with cross-sectoral partners to help align priorities and increase efficiencies
- identify trends and patterns occurring across the system and share this information for system improvement
- provide credible, evidence-informed advice and support for system planning and positive change

### OUR SUPPORT

- connect people and knowledge by offering support to communities of practice
- co-create tools, resources and processes that support the work of others and mobilize them
- support the planning, development and implementation of a system-wide evaluation framework
- provide decision-makers with reliable evidence from research and practice on key policy issues
- advise on system planning and implementation along with relevant cross sectoral initiatives

# IMPACT AND INNOVATION

## Strategic direction 3

**The Centre will demonstrate impact and inspire excellence through continuous learning, evolution and innovation.**

### OUR APPROACH

Learning and continuous quality improvement are central to who we are as an organization. The benefits of evaluating our practices and measuring our performance are just as important for us as they are for the agencies and communities we serve. We will continue to measure, monitor and communicate our impact as we evolve over time.

We are well positioned within the system to provide stability and standardized supports, while promoting new thinking and ideas that will benefit children, youth and their families and caregivers. The Centre will:

- encourage continuous learning and improvement both inside and outside our organization
- measure and mobilize the impact of our collective work across the system and beyond
- think outside-the-box and continue to push the boundaries for system improvement

### OUR SUPPORT

- provide tools and expertise to expand today's thinking of what may be possible for tomorrow, while balancing the need for consistency and stability in our work
- explore new ways of sharing our knowledge and expertise across Ontario and beyond



# FORWARD FOCUSED

**A Shared Vision** sets ambitious but achievable goals for the Centre and its stakeholders. As we update our performance measurement framework to reflect these new directions, we will continue to track the Centre's progress as well as collective progress for lead agencies and their service areas across Ontario. This is reflected in our strategy map on the following page.

Through the coming years, we will continue to revisit and refresh this plan with the support of our partners to ensure it meets the real needs of our

stakeholders. As the system continues to evolve, we will adapt our indicators to demonstrate systemic outcomes and impact where possible.

The Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health thanks all of the agencies, partners and friends who have joined us along this journey. We look forward to continuing the conversation, and creating lasting change for children, youth and their families and caregivers in the years to come.



# STRATEGY MAP

By managing and mobilizing our resources we will ensure our services and supports create value for our stakeholders and fulfill our mission



# GLOSSARY

**Capacity:** Enhancing the skills and abilities of an individual, team or organization that allows them to carry out a set of activities with the goal of improving an evidence-informed practice or program.

**Collaboration:** Working together to achieve a goal that one entity cannot accomplish alone. Collaborative efforts can ensure a comprehensive approach to achieving a shared and mutually beneficial goal.

**Community of practice:** A self-organized, formal or informal group of people who share a common interest, concern or passion. Members of these communities interact regularly to discuss and advance their knowledge of best practices, issues or skills.

**Cross-sectoral partners:** Child and youth mental health is one sector responsible for improving the mental health of children, youth and their families and caregivers. Health, education and child welfare are among some of the other sectors that also have a responsibility in improving child and youth mental health.

**Evidence-informed practice:** Putting research into practice using empirically supported methods combined with other sources of information, including a clinician's own knowledge and practices. In evidence-informed practice, clinical decisions might be enriched by prior research but not limited to it, and knowledge is constantly updated.

**Implementation:** Implementation is a continuous process that includes a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman & Wallace, 2005).

**Knowledge mobilization:** The meaningful use of evidence and expertise to align research, policy and practice and improve outcomes for, in our case, children, youth and their families and caregivers.

**Lead agency (MCYS):** Within each defined service area, a lead agency is responsible for five primary functions. These include: planning for service delivery, creating clear and simple pathways to care, ensuring the delivery of a range of defined core services, ensuring services are effective as well as accountability.

**Learning organization:** An organization that continuously acquires knowledge fast enough to adapt, innovate and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.

**Partnership:** An alliance between organizations. Partnerships may involve pooling of specialized resources, working collaboratively toward a similar goal and sharing of information.

**Service area:** A service area is a geographic area across Ontario determined by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. These geographic divisions were also determined by demographic data and the projected population of children and youth in each area.

**Stakeholders:** Organizations or individuals with whom the Centre collaborates, partners or shares information. These groups include people with lived experience (youth, family members and caregivers), child and youth mental health practitioners, managers and leaders working in service agencies directly funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as well as policy-makers and cross-sectoral partners.

**System:** The child and youth mental health system is comprised of a number of organizations, agencies, institutions and sectors that come together to support child and youth mental health.