



Mental Health and Addiction Strategy 2021





OUR VISION

A Safer Community Together.

OUR MISSION

To protect the rights and well-being of all through service excellence and community engagement.

OUR VALUES

Trust is the foundation of what we do.

Respect and honour the dignity and rights of all.

Understanding and compassion.

Service excellence that ensures cultural, physical and psychological safety.

Transparency and accountability.

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Message from the Chief

It is with great pride that I present the Peel Regional Police Mental Health and Addiction Strategy.

This strategy is the result of significant collaboration between members of our organization and many community partners that are invested in supporting the mental health and well-being of residents in Peel Region. It outlines a shared commitment to ensure that residents have access to effective, timely mental health and addiction resources when they need them most.

This first version of our Mental Health and Addiction Strategy is a living document that will continue to evolve through ongoing engagement with our partners and our communities and is part of our commitment to being the most progressive, innovative and inclusive police service in Canada. As we move from planning to implementation, we are committed to an agile approach and will continue to adopt new strategies and initiatives in response to changing community needs.

As a police service, we are routinely called upon as the first point of contact for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. While we recognize that we have an important role, our primary goal is to connect people to the programs and services best suited to meet their needs. We have identified several steps to work collaboratively with our partners to achieve this objective by leveraging existing programs and exploring new and innovative approaches through this strategy. Our strategy also outlines ways in which we will build the capacity of our members to supportively engage with individuals struggling with their mental health or addiction and ensure that we are making evidence-based and data-driven decisions.

More broadly, this strategy is aligned with a fundamental shift within our service to integrate and operationalize the Provincial Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Framework (see page six) as a key driver for our service. At its core, this means that we will identify opportunities to work further upstream, build multi-sector partnerships, and recognize that people in crisis, our human service system and our community as a whole are better served when we work in a more coordinated, integrated and person-centred manner.

I want to thank the nearly 20 community organizations and the many members of our service who contributed their time, expertise and experience to inform this strategy. Through continued collaboration, I am confident that we will realize our collective vision of providing superior, sustainable, and inclusive services to those affected by mental health and addiction now and into the future.

Nishan Duraipappah
Chief, Peel Regional Police

Our Partners

Mental health and addiction are complex issues that require a community approach. Peel Regional Police would like to thank the following partners for their contribution to this strategy and continued commitment to work together to meet the needs of the residents of Peel.



“The Mental Health and Addiction Strategy has been an effective, efficient, and inclusive collaboration. It has been inspiring to work alongside Peel Regional Police and all the other community agencies involved to affect positive change to support individuals living with mental health and addiction in our region. There have been innovative ideas, research, resources, training, and human effort combined to make this strategy a comprehensive and successful one, ensuring empathy, dignity, diversity, equity and inclusion for all”.

“Coming together is the beginning, Keeping it together is progress, Working together is Success”

John Howard Society Peel-Halton-Dufferin

Introduction

This strategy highlights current and emerging efforts to strengthen how Peel Regional Police works with our partners to support individuals impacted by mental health and addiction. It is built on a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach that is in keeping with our adoption of the provincial Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Framework as a core foundation of our service. The strategy is a living document that will evolve as we continually evaluate our approach and seek opportunities to enhance service delivery. We welcome ongoing feedback from our members, community partners and residents as we continue to achieve a **safer and healthier community together**.

In July 2020, Peel Regional Police convened a working group comprised of nearly 20 community partners and a wide range of our members, civilian and sworn, to guide how our service can play a more supportive role in the mental health and addiction system in Peel. This strategy is the first outcome of these efforts that sets a foundation for ongoing collaboration with our community partners and other opportunities to improve how we respond to mental health and addiction.

We are doing this because issues of mental health and addiction have become a core function of policing nationwide, including in Peel. In 2020 alone, Peel Regional Police attended **5,950 calls** for service directly related to mental health. It is important to note that this number reflects only the service calls formally classified as mental health-related. The reality is that a much more significant amount of our day-to-day interactions are with individuals struggling with their mental health or an addiction.

While police will always have a role to play in responding to individuals in crisis, we know that our community is better served when people in need of mental health and addiction-related support can access assistance from community health and social service programs best positioned to meet their needs.

Through this strategy, we are seeking to do just that – to identify ways of ensuring that more people struggling with addiction and mental health receive the right response, at the

right time and by the service provider that is most appropriate to their needs. This means that we are committed to applying a CSWB lens to everything we do and putting collaboration and partnerships at the forefront of our service delivery model.

Our strategy also challenges us to strengthen how we identify, understand and support people who are displaying signs of a potential mental health or addiction issue through training and enhanced knowledge and awareness of community programs and resources. As we move forward we are committed to working in a way that is evidence-based and driven by data. This will include seeking opportunities to build academic partnerships and regularly evaluating how we deliver programs as a service and in coordination with our partners.

Ultimately, our ability to effectively respond to and support people in need requires us to ensure that our members are part of a supportive culture that prioritizes well-being and self care. As a service, we are committed to continuing to take steps to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all Peel Regional Police employees.

To provide your input on this strategy, please send an email to CSWB@peelpolice.ca.



In 2020 Peel Regional Police attended

5,950

calls for service directly related to mental health.



Peel Regional Police spent more than

45,000

hours related to calls for mental health in 2020.



Glossary

Addiction: Is a complex process where problematic patterns of substance use or behaviours interfere with a person's life.

Human service system: Is comprised of a wide range of health, social service, community and government based programs that support the well-being of a community.

Mental health: Includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being and how it affects how we think, feel, and act. Our mental health helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

Priority populations: Individuals or communities that are disproportionately impacted by inequitable health, social or economic outcomes.

Upstream intervention: Approaches to health or social issues that examine and addresses root causes to achieve long-term, sustainable outcomes.

Wrap-around supports: Bring together multiple service providers to address the complex needs of individuals and families through a holistic, person-centred approach.

Addressing Mental Health and Addiction Through a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Lens

Peel Regional Police has adopted the provincial CSWB framework as a core foundation of our service. The framework is a tool or 'lens' that shapes how we strengthen the safety and well-being of our communities by planning in four key areas of intervention: Incident Response, Risk Intervention, Prevention and Social Development. CSWB planning is also about taking approaches that are collaborative, holistic and based on evidence. We have and will continue to apply the CSWB Framework to guide how we respond to mental health and addiction in collaboration with our partners.



Incident Response

Responding to issues that require an urgent response by police or other crisis-driven services.

Commitment: We will actively seek opportunities to redirect calls for service for mental health and addiction to community health and social service programs to ensure the right response, at the right time by the right service provider.

Risk Intervention

Working with partners to address situations where there is an immediate need for help to prevent a 911 call or other incident response.

Commitment: We will continue to work with the Peel Situation Table and other community partners by supporting individuals in crisis through wrap-around supports to reduce involvement by police and other first responders.

Prevention

Putting in place proactive strategies to mitigate risks to the safety and well-being of individuals and communities

Commitment: We will strengthen education and awareness of mental health and addiction programs and work with our partners to support people before a crisis occurs.

Social Development

Addressing root causes of social issues by ensuring that people have access to programs and resources to help maintain their safety and well-being.

Commitment: We will work collaboratively within the human service system to address gaps and advocate for the resources that our partners need to support mental health and well-being in Peel.

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Responding to Mental Health and Addiction from the Inside Out

As a Service, we are often engaged with individuals struggling with mental health or addiction in the incident response area of the framework. From the inside of the CSWB framework, our goal is to connect people to community supports and work with our partners to reduce the number of situations that result in crisis-based response. Moving further upstream, we are committed to working with our partners to establish prevention and social development strategies to improve access to community supports and promote and maintain well-being.

Building On Our Foundation

Through our Community Safety and Well-Being Bureau, we work in partnership with the community to support priority populations and individuals struggling with mental health and addiction. The following initiatives will play a key role in how we mobilize our Mental Health and Addiction Strategy and will provide a foundation to strengthen how we respond to those in crisis and support well-being.

MCRRT

Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams (MCRRT) pair an officer equipped with additional mental health training with a Canadian Mental Health Association of Peel-Dufferin Crisis Support Worker. MCRRT is dispatched to service calls for individuals experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis to provide immediate access to crisis supports and reduce apprehensions under the Mental Health Act.

COAST

The Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) is comprised of a plain clothes officer and a Canadian Mental Health Association of Peel-Dufferin Crisis Support Worker that offers support to individuals who have experienced a mental health or addiction-related crisis. The goal of COAST is to promote life stabilization, maintain well-being and prevent the need for a crisis-based response.

MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR

Peel Regional Police has a dedicated Mental Health Coordinator that acts as a resource for the community and our members to support individuals and families living with mental health struggles. The Coordinator liaises with healthcare partners, community and social services and criminal justice agencies to identify mental health trends, alternative resolutions and training opportunities.

SITUATION TABLE

The Peel Situation Table consists of over 50 community partners that meet on a weekly basis to support individuals in crisis through timely wrap-around supports. The Situation Table plays a critical role in connecting individuals and/or families with the appropriate services and reducing the need for involvement by police and other first responders. The Situation Table is co-chaired by Peel Regional Police and CMHA Peel-Dufferin.

DMU

The Divisional Mobilization Unit (DMU) was launched in 2021 to support a wide range of priority populations through non-enforcement-based engagement and supports. Through CSWB follow-ups, DMU facilitates connections to services with a focus on those who are experiencing homelessness, mental health and addiction challenges and other socially-based issues that impact safety and well-being.

In the first 10 months of 2021

MCRRT attended
2,257
calls for mental health crisis

COAST completed
1,053
mental health follow-ups

62
cases of individuals requiring intensive wrap-around services brought to the Situation Table

*All data is for the period of January 1, 2021 to October 31, 2021



Five strategic directions and
26 actions to strengthen
our approach to mental
health and addiction

Our Strategy – Overview

Our Mission

To work collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop superior, sustainable and barrier-free services for those impacted by mental health and addiction in Peel.

Our Approach

In ongoing coordination with our partners, we have adopted an initial focus on five key strategic directions:



1. Building our continuum of supports for mental health and addiction through strategic enhancements to our human and technological resource capacity.



2. Expanding our knowledge base of mental health and addiction through education, training and awareness opportunities.



3. Enhancing our evidence base through academic research, data and ongoing evaluation.



4. Supporting those who serve through a focus on the well-being of our members.



5. Ongoing collaboration, planning and action for the development of future initiatives as part of a flexible approach that will continue to evolve.

Our Principles

Collaboration and Partnerships: Establish mutual partnerships and collaborative solutions with a focus on connecting people living with mental health and addiction to community resources and reducing calls to police.

Culturally Responsive: Develop approaches that are culturally responsive, equitable, inclusive and in keeping with the diverse needs of the Peel community.

Treatment Focussed: Build empathy and compassion into how we interact with individuals with a mental health and addiction, and prioritize care and treatment over enforcement and criminalization.

Evidence-based: Ensure our decisions are based on data and evaluation and that we leverage the perspectives of academic partners, people with lived experience and other subject matter experts.

Trauma Informed: Strengthen our understanding of how previous trauma can affect an individual's physical, psychological and emotional safety and apply this understanding to our interactions with people in need.

Harm Reduction: Recognize the value of and incorporate harm reduction principles into how we approach and engage with individuals living with mental health and addiction.



1. Building our Continuum of Supports: Increasing Human and Technological Resource Capacity

Together we are committed to strengthen and adapt programming to meet community needs and ensure that individuals living with struggles associated with mental health and addiction have access to the right supports at the right time.

As a service, we will build on the success of existing partnerships, including our Mobile Crisis Rapid Response (MCRRT) and Crisis Outreach and Support Teams (COAST), explore opportunities to redirect mental health and addiction-related service calls to community service providers, and embrace technology-enabled solutions to enhance our response.

Our goal is to achieve the best possible community outcomes and ensure that we leverage our resources where they are needed the most.



Actions

- 1.1 Seek opportunities to expand MCRRT to enhance coverage throughout the region and reduce the number of mental health calls that result in an apprehension under the Mental Health Act.
- 1.2 Develop and implement a pilot project to explore the feasibility of dispatching crisis support workers to mental health and addiction-related service calls that do not require police involvement.
- 1.3 Embed a crisis support worker in our 911 call centre to provide immediate access to a trained mental health professional and redirect non-emergency calls to the appropriate service provider.
- 1.4 Leverage the Peel Regional Police Divisional Mobilization Unit to facilitate follow-up and support to individuals living with mental health and addiction struggles to promote early intervention, connection to community resources, and reduce 911 calls.
- 1.5 Ensure all officers have appropriate tools and resources to provide information and referrals to individuals and caregivers who require access to a wide range of mental health and addiction programs and services.
- 1.6 Explore opportunities to leverage technology-based solutions to enhance how we respond to mental health and addiction and coordinate with partners.
- 1.7 Strengthen channels and pathways to connect people with mental health and addiction to our community partners and continue to utilize alternative resolutions where appropriate.

Key Indicators

- Proportion of calls for mental health and addiction that are deferred from the frontline.
- Decrease in apprehensions under the Mental Health Act.
- Number of referrals to community mental health and addiction programs.



2. Expanding Our Knowledge Base: Education, Training and Awareness

Peel Regional Police recognizes the importance of ensuring that all members have access to training and educational opportunities to increase addiction and mental health knowledge and strengthen how we respond to individuals in crisis. This includes expanding our awareness of community programs and resources to connect more people in need of help to services that support life stabilization and maintain well-being.

Through ongoing collaboration with our working group, we will identify gaps in our knowledge base and explore opportunities to co-construct timely, relevant and effective mental health and addiction education for our members and the broader community.



Actions

- 2.1 Develop, and where possible, co-construct and deliver education and training opportunities on mental health and addiction topics relevant to Peel Regional Police and our community partners.
- 2.2 In partnership with the Peel Regional Police Training Bureau, integrate mental health and addiction learning opportunities within a wide range of existing courses and curriculum to reinforce learning objectives.
- 2.3 Provide formal and informal opportunities for members to learn from and connect with community programs and services available to support individuals living with mental health or addiction struggles.
- 2.4 Strengthen the capacity of Peel Regional Police to respond to mental health and addiction in a way that is trauma informed, culturally responsive and reflective of the diversity of Peel. This will include honouring our commitments to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.
- 2.5 Consult with and learn from individuals with lived experience and other subject matter experts to inform training, increase awareness and continuously improve how we and our partners support individuals living with mental health and addiction struggles.

Key Indicators

- Number of Peel Regional Police members that receive training on mental health and addiction.
- Number of education sessions delivered.
- Member feedback and assessment of education and training activities.



3. Enhancing Our Evidence Base: Academic Research, Data and Evaluation

Peel Regional Police will develop and leverage academic partnerships and research to better understand and improve the efficacy of mental health and addiction interventions. As a key first step, we are actively engaged in a research partnership with York University and EveryMind Mental Health Services.

Academic partnerships are part of a broader approach to enhance how we collect, analyze and build a data-driven view of mental health and addiction in Peel. This will include establishing and monitoring key metrics and regularly evaluating our programs and initiatives to ensure we are on track and achieving our intended outcomes.

York University Research Partnership

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Peel Regional Police has partnered with Dr. Maria Liegghio (Lead Researcher, Social Work, York University), Dr. Kathy Sdao-Jarvie (EveryMind Mental Health Services), and Dr. Renée Sloos (Post-doctoral Visitor, Social Work, York University and EveryMind) for a research study to better understand the experiences of children and youth who require access to community or police-based crisis mental health supports. The study entitled *Crisis Responses, Policing and Police Encounters Among Psychiatrically “At-Risk” Children and Youth*, is supported by a Research Advisory Participant group comprised of Peel Regional Police, EveryMind, and York University. It will be based on the following key outputs:

- Data analysis of existing mental health and police service statistics.
- In-depth interviews and/or focus groups with youth, caregivers, child and youth mental health practitioners, police officers and other first responders.
- A comparative policy and practice analysis.

It is anticipated that the study will be completed in early 2023. Findings will be widely disseminated to inform how service providers, police and other first responders can best meet the needs of children and youth who require crisis-based supports.

Actions

- 3.1** In collaboration with our partners, explore and embrace opportunities to partner with academic institutions to strengthen our understanding of mental health and addiction interventions and make improvements based on findings and recommendations.
- 3.2** Regularly monitor academic literature to identify leading practices and trends to inform the development of mental health and addiction programs, initiatives and training within Peel Regional Police and in collaboration with our partners.
- 3.3** Strengthen our capacity to collect and analyze data related to calls for service generated by mental health and addiction to inform program delivery and resource allocation.
- 3.4** Develop, implement and monitor a dashboard of mental health and addiction indicators to track our progress and contribute to evidence-informed decision-making.
- 3.5** Establish a multi-year evaluation plan based on developmental (early) and outcome-based (impact) methods to assess existing and emergent mental health and addiction initiatives in coordination with our partners.

Key Indicators

- Number of academic partnerships established.
- Number of evaluation activities completed.
- Number of leading practices implemented.

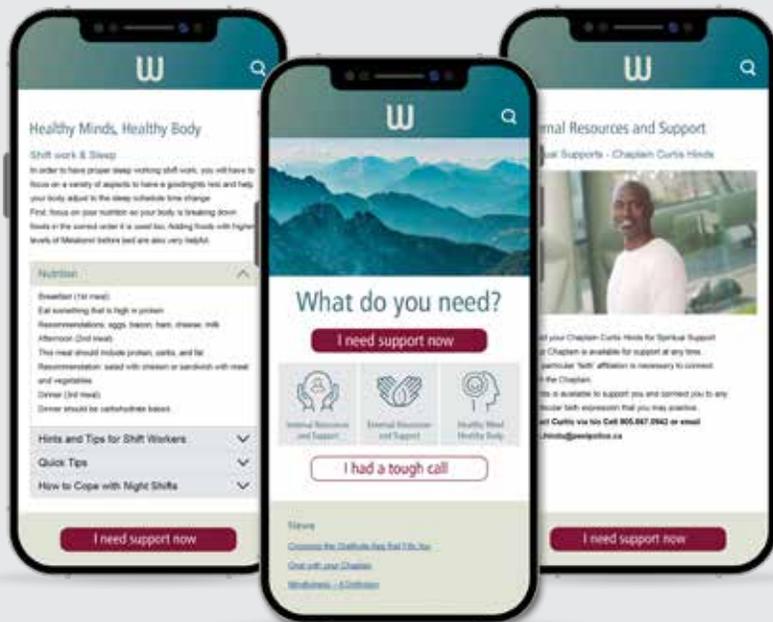


4. Supporting Those Who Serve: Our People

Ensuring the well-being of our members is an essential priority for Peel Regional Police. To effectively respond to the needs of the community, it is critical that we, as emergency responders, focus on our wellness.

As a starting point, this means continuing to take steps to reduce stigma associated with mental health and addiction and ensuring that our members, leadership and the organization as a whole, commit to fostering a culture of mutual care and respect.

Building on the work of our Wellness Bureau, including a new needs based Wellness Support Application that will roll out in late 2021, we will take all necessary actions to make sure that our members receive the appropriate supports to safeguard and strengthen their mental health, well-being and resilience.



Actions

- 4.1 In keeping with our Strategic Plan commitments, develop initiatives that support our members' cultural, physical, and psychological well-being and safety.
- 4.2 Promote the importance of self-care and encourage utilization of wellness programs offered by the Wellness Bureau and other supports and resources available to members and their families.
- 4.3 Take steps to address stigma and proactively encourage members who may be experiencing a mental health or addiction concern to seek assistance from the appropriate resources.
- 4.4 Create mechanisms to regularly engage with members to identify trends in well-being and seek input on ways that we can continue to enhance available supports and resources.

Key Indicators

- Increased utilization of wellness and healthy lifestyle programs.
- Participation in surveys and other feedback opportunities.



5. Ongoing Collaboration, Planning and Action: Future Anticipated Initiatives

Peel Regional Police commits to ensuring that this mental health and addiction strategy is regularly updated to best serve our members and our community. This will include maintaining collaborative working relationships with our community partners as a vital part of how we approach mental health and addiction and other factors that impact the safety and well-being of the community.

Moving forward, we will put mechanisms in place to identify new and emerging trends that should be integrated into this strategy, maintain active participation within the Peel Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (CSWB), and continue to establish leading practices to best assist those impacted by mental health and addiction in Peel.



Actions

- 5.1 Seek to formalize the role of the Mental Health and Addiction Working Group to inform the evolution of this strategy and advise Peel Regional Police on our approach to mental health and addiction.
- 5.2 Continuously monitor our data and consult with community partners to identify trends in mental health and addiction that require a coordinated approach.
- 5.3 Coordinate our mental health and addiction initiatives in conjunction with the Peel Regional CSWB Plan to ensure that activities are mutually reinforcing and are collectively achieving impact.
- 5.4 Explore opportunities to bring together Peel Regional Police, mental health and addiction partners, individuals with lived experience and other stakeholders to share best practices and identify opportunities to work collaboratively.
- 5.5 Regularly update the community on the progress we are making towards the strategic directions and actions identified in this strategy as part of our commitment to foster public trust and confidence through transparency and accountability.

Key Indicators

- Indicators for future anticipated initiatives will be established on an ongoing basis.

Moving Forward

The strategic directions, key actions and overall trajectory set out in this first version of our strategy will guide Peel Regional Police in how we plan for and respond to mental health and addiction both now and into the future. In doing so, our flexible approach will enable us to pivot as our understanding of the needs of our communities and our members continues to evolve. What will not change is our commitment to work in coordination with our partners and our recognition that communities are best served when multiple agencies and sectors work together towards a common goal.

Here's what you can expect as we move from planning to implementation:

- We will regularly monitor and evaluate our efforts to build on what is working and make course corrections where necessary.
- Continued alignment with the provincial Community Safety and Well-Being framework.
- Ongoing two-way communication with our partners and our communities.

We will also seek opportunities to work further upstream and be part of a broader discourse about root causes that impact mental health and addiction in Peel. Ultimately, the success of this strategy will depend on the commitment of our entire organization, sworn and civilian, from the frontline to senior leadership. By harnessing our collective efforts and committing to our own mental health and well-being and that of our partners and those we serve, we will achieve a safer and healthier community together.



A SAFER COMMUNITY TOGETHER

PeelPolice.ca/MentalHealth

