

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 10th, 2021

## SUPPORTING PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHO ARE STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

**SUDBURY, Ont.**, – PLEO – Parents’ Lifeline is teaming up with Compass to offer even more support to parents of children and youth who are struggling with mental health challenges in the Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts.

The need to support parents of children and youth who are struggling with mental health challenges is not new – but the COVID pandemic has exacerbated the difficulties these families are facing. PLEO, Compass, Sudbury Catholic District School Board, Rainbow District School Board, Conseil scolaire catholique Nouvelon and Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l’Ontario have partnered to provide virtual parent sessions to support parents in our communities.

The virtual parent support sessions will start on February 16<sup>th</sup> and will run for five weeks. The sessions will consist of four groups – two in English and two in French with a maximum of 12 participants per group. Two Family Peer Supporters will facilitate the groups. The facilitators are parents who bring lived experience of supporting a child through mental health or addiction challenges, and have Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), motivational interviewing and Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART). Parents can expect information from their respective school board on how to register within the next few weeks. This project was made possible through Ministry of Health funding and comes at no cost to families.

“There are very few caregiver supports available for parents of children and youth who are struggling with mental health challenges,” says Linda Dugas, Executive Director at Compass. “The burden on parents during the pandemic is compounded by demands of working from home, homeschooling, assisting with online learning and the restricted access to recreational and social programs. These are unprecedented times which are not only affecting children or youth’s mental health but also the parent’s mental health.”

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Parents who participate in these groups will have access to the Parents Helpline as often as they require. The Parents Helpline provides support and guidance while navigating the mental health system, finding resources in your community and for when you just need to talk to someone.

To learn more about PLEO, please visit: <https://www.pleo.on.ca/>.

### About Compass

Compass is the Lead Agency for child and youth mental health services for the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin. Our purpose is to create paths for our young people to reach their full potential. We believe in making a positive impact on the lives of others, by genuinely caring about individuals and our community.

### About PLEO

PLEO – Parents' Lifeline is an incorporated non-profit family peer support organization for parents whose children to age 25 are facing mental health challenges. We are staffed with parents who have supported their own children with these challenges – we have travelled the journey.

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