



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **One Stop Talk Expands Access Across Ontario this Back-to-School Season**

**September 12, 2023 (Toronto, Ontario)** *One Stop Talk/Parlons maintenant (OST/PM)* is a new virtual and confidential counselling service rolling out across the province. It provides children and youth (aged 0-17 years) with immediate, low barrier access to free mental health support when needed. When a child or youth connects with *One Stop Talk/Parlons maintenant* through [www.onestoptalk.ca](http://www.onestoptalk.ca), or 1-855-416-8255, they will be connected to a professional clinician for a virtual or telephone session of brief therapy. OST/PM aims to fill the service gaps that leaves children and youth waiting and struggling to navigate a complex healthcare system while increasing the availability of in-the-moment intervention.

This innovative pan-provincial initiative, funded by the Ministry of Health, addresses key challenges within the child and youth mental health sector, a priority area in Ontario's Roadmap to Wellness. It also supports the government's commitment to creating a more connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system, ensuring that Ontarians receive the right level of service at the right time and in the right place.

#### **How does it work?**

Through the participation of a network of agencies across the province, OST/PM-designated therapists will provide online or telephone counselling sessions for children, youth and parents/ caregivers (with their child). A child or youth can connect with a registered therapist (via phone or online) for a brief single therapy session, and there is no limit to the number of times they can contact OST/PM.

The virtual sessions usually focus on a single issue and support the individual through the co-development of an action plan with an OST/PM therapist. If additional or ongoing services are needed, an OST/PM Service Navigator is available to provide a warm hand off by sending a referral to more local services coordinating care closer to home.

OST/PM is available Monday to Friday from **12 PM to 8 PM (EST)** and from **12 PM to 4 PM (EST)** on Saturdays.

## **Connecting with OST/ PM will ensure that children and youth in Ontario:**

- receive standardized counselling therapy from trained, experienced and registered clinicians located across the province;
- have access to after-hours service, including Saturdays (increasing availability of in-the-moment intervention);
- receive a personalized plan, co-developed and shared with the client;
- self-select services at the right time and obtain support for a current concern/issue; and,
- are provided with a warm hand-off and referral to additional services, if needed, within the same interaction.

## **OST/PM Quick Facts:**

- This transformational initiative is funded by the Ministry of Health.
- The program currently has a partnership with 20 different mental health agencies leveraging clinician capacity across the province.
- OST/PM has 80+ registered therapists providing counselling.
- OST/PM primarily offers service in English and French and interpretation services are available (200+ languages including ASL).

## **Quotes**

*We know that children and youth have the highest mental health needs of any demographic, which is why we are so proud to be partnering with organizations like Strides to deliver the One Stop Talk program. Making sure that young people who are struggling have low barrier access to mental health care is critical to their growth into happy and healthy adults. Through programs like One Stop Talk, our government is building a mental health care system that is modern, compassionate, evidence-based, and ensures that no one is left behind.*

**Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions**

*One Stop Talk / Parlons maintenant provides children and youth with immediate access to mental health professionals in their moment of need, with no waitlists. Young people can choose their preferred virtual engagement method and session time. They receive free single therapy sessions as often as needed, with equitable access, including interpreter services in 200+ languages and ASL. This province-wide, responsive mental health service ensures timely help and seamless transfers to additional supports in the communities where they live as required."*

**Kirsten Dougherty, CEO, ROCK Reach Out Centre for Kids  
Co-Chair, One Stop Talk / Parlons maintenant**

*Strides Toronto is delighted to be the host site for One Stop Talk/Parlons maintainant (OST/PM). We love collaborating with a growing number of sector partners to deliver this innovative service, where and when young people and parents need it. In addition to providing high quality, on demand counselling service, OST/PM provides a pathway into the infant, child and youth mental health system, making it easier than ever before to access services.*

**Janet McCrimmon, President and CEO, Strides Toronto  
Host Site, One Stop Talk / Parlons maintainant**

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