



NEWS RELEASE

Kenora's RISK intervention support program continues to most commonly serve youth in third year of community partnership

(Kenora, November 27th, 2019) – A dynamic partnership between police, justice and social service groups known as Rapid Intervention Service Kenora (RISK) recently completed its third year, providing help to 55 people facing immediate crisis situations in the past 12 months.

In RISK's third-year report, results show the demographic that received the most support from this unique social service collaborative were youth aged 12-17, making up 40 per cent of all individuals supported. Further, 61 per cent of individuals supported by RISK were aged 24 and under.

On Wednesday, Dec. 4, RISK is hosting an all-day forum to present its third-year report. The forum, scheduled for 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Super 8 Kenora, 240 Lakeview Dr., is open to the public. Register at risktableforum.eventbrite.ca.

Information contained in the report includes:

- Fifty-five individuals were referred to RISK.
- By gender, referrals were 58 per cent male and 42 per cent female.
- Youth aged 12-17 made up 40 per cent of all individuals supported. Further, 61 per cent of individuals referred to RISK were aged 24 and under.
- The top risk factors for those who used RISK included mental health (12 per cent), drugs (10 per cent), negative peers (eight per cent), antisocial or negative behaviour (seven per cent), and suicide (seven per cent).
- Fifty-two of 55 cases (95 per cent) resulted in a positive outcome for individuals, meaning RISK partners provided support to make individuals safe and take them out of harm's way.

RISK brings together diverse service providers to identify situations of acutely elevated risk and prevent negative outcomes from occurring. Service providers rapidly respond and offer wraparound services to individuals with diverse needs who find themselves at risk of criminalization, victimization and/or harm.

RISK has a membership of 36 agencies and meets every two weeks to identify individuals, families or groups in crisis. These are often situations where a single agency may have exhausted all its resources trying to help. But together, RISK members act quickly to provide resources across multiple agencies.

"Through three years of RISK, this partnership has a demonstrated track record of effectively supporting those in crisis," said RISK co-chair and Kenora OPP Const. Bob Bernie. "Our annual report and forum provide an opportunity to reflect on how this program is used and how we can better serve individuals in our community going forward."

"RISK's collaboration between police, justice and social service groups continues to prove its worth by effectively mitigating risk and imminent threats of harm to individuals and families in our region," said RISK co-chair and Canadian Mental Health Association, Kenora Branch executive director Sara Dias. "Three years in, awareness of this initiative is growing and we remain committed to fine-tuning so RISK can provide the very best in crisis support for individuals who need it."

RISK is based on a proven community safety model known as a “situation table.” Situation tables have proven effective in keeping people out of the justice system and connecting them with multiple service agencies in a timely manner. There are now 44 situation tables across Ontario in rural, urban and First Nation communities. Similar models exist in Dryden, Fort Frances, Red Lake and Sioux Lookout.

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BACKGROUND

Example Referral to RISK

Originating agency: police

The police present a female youth (between the ages of 12 and 17) who has a history of alcohol and drug use to the point of passing out. The youth has been caught with alcohol and drugs on multiple occasions. There is a high-risk of overdose and a very real risk that she could die.

Risk factors identified:

- Alcohol - alcohol use by person
- Drugs - drug use by person
- Truancy (Missing school)
- Self-harm
- Violence (family)
- Missing/runaway
- Mental health
- Negative peer group
- Antisocial/negative behaviour
- Crime victimization (sexual assault)

The Situation Table Process

Filter 1: Internal agency screening

The youth has been involved in 94 calls for police service since the beginning of the year. The situation is referred to the Table as police have exhausted their services and cross-agency approaches. The case is getting more challenging as there is evidence of extreme risk for victimization/sexual assault. The youth is at Acutely Elevated Risk and crisis is imminent.

Filter 2: De-identified information sharing to assess risk

Information that does not reveal an individual's identity is shared about the situation. The chair asks whether there is consensus that the situation meets the threshold of acutely-elevated risk. All participants agree that the situation meets the threshold of acutely-elevated risk.

Filter 3: De-identified discussion to identify agencies for intervention

If the participating agencies conclude that the threshold is met, a brief question and answer period about the situation will take place to help determine who should continue to be part of the discussion. At this point the RISK Table can determine which agencies will be required to participate in a full intervention-planning discussion outside of the full table.

Filter 4: Planned intervention

The originating agency provides limited identifying information relevant to the risk. Agencies consult their own records and are provided an opportunity to share additional information deemed to be necessary and relevant to the situation of acutely-elevated risk. Lead and assisting agencies convene after the meeting to discuss a collaborative plan to help the teen. All other agencies leave the room.

Results

As a result of this planned intervention, the youth is now aware that she has community resources available to help her and that there are individuals in the community who are concerned about her wellbeing. The number of calls for service involving this youth has been reduced by 76 percent.

RISK Members

- Adult Probation and Parole - Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services – Kenora
- Anishinaabe Abinoojii Family Services - Kenora
- Brain Injury Services of Northern Ontario
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Kenora Branch
- Canadian Pacific Police Service
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health - Kenora
- Changes Recovery Homes - Clarissa Manor
- Changes Recovery Homes - Del Art Manor
- Dryden Regional Health Centre
- Firefly Northwest - Kenora
- Kenora Association for Community Living
- Kenora Catholic District School Board
- Kenora Chiefs Advisory
- Kenora District Services Board - Kenora
- Kenora Fire Department
- Kenora Jail - Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
- Kenora Patricia District School Board
- Kenora Sunset Country Family Health Team
- Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services - Kenora
- Kitapinoonjiiminaanik Family Services
- Lake of the Woods District Hospital
- Local Health Integration Network - North West - Kenora
- Nechee Friendship Centre
- Northwest Emergency Medical Services
- Northwestern Health Unit - Kenora
- Ontario Disability Support Program - Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services - Kenora
- Ontario Provincial Police - Kenora Detachment
- Sunset Area Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service
- Tikinigan Child and Family Services - Kenora
- Treaty Three Police Service
- Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig Health Access Centre
- Wabseamong Child and Family Services
- William W. Creighton Youth Services - Community Support Team
- WJS Northern Youth Centre
- Women's Shelter Saakaate House
- Youth Justice Services - Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services – Kenora