



# Eating Disorders Ontario Prevention

Building capacity for the local adoption of evidence based prevention of Eating Disorders across Ontario

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2021-2022

# EDO Prevention

## The Key Issue . . .

In 2021, approximately 46% of Ontario youth in grades 7-12 reported preoccupation with food and weight and body image concerns which are known precursors to disordered eating (Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey - OSDUHS, 2022). Canada-wide, up to 30% of youth report disordered eating symptoms (which includes food restriction, binge eating and other weight control methods). Disordered eating places youth at risk for eating disorders. Of note, there was a significant increase in the number of children and youth seeking help for an eating disorder in Ontario throughout the pandemic (Couturier et al., 2021; Spettigue et al., 2021, Katzman, 2021).

Funded by Ontario's Ministry of Health, **EDO-Prevention** aims to scale up evidence-informed, implementation-sensitive and identify affirming prevention and early intervention strategies to help stave off disordered eating by helping to intervene in a strategic way on their precursors.

The **EDO-P** framework and overall implementation and scale up strategy is guided by:

- 1) prevention and implementation science and the input from international prevention scholars,
- 2) a culturally responsive set of principles,
- 3) best practices in community development,
- 4) discussion groups hosted with youth and carers with lived experience, and
- 5) lessons learned from local community engagement meetings hosted across 4 regions.

Engagement at the provincial systems level and at the local community level is underway to ensure "fit" with on the ground health promotion and prevention work led by stakeholders across multiple sectors. Alignment of **EDO-P** strategies is key for successful and sustainable uptake.

**EDO-P** is supported by long standing co-development, research and collaborative partnerships carried out with stakeholders from multiple sectors including public health, schools, post-secondary, sports stemming from a 20-year program of longitudinal intervention research (see The Ontario Project; Levine & McVey, 2015; McVey & Antonini, 2016). The EDO-P strategy is further backed up by intervention research by additional internationally-recognized prevention scholars (Becker & Stice, 2017; Conrod, 2016; Diedrichs, 2021; Levine & Smolak, 2021).

**EDO-Prevention** is led by Eating Disorders Ontario at UHN, in partnership with regional lead organizations and clinical advisors across the province that, collectively, have key expertise in eating disorder treatment, prevention, health promotion, research, community development and partnership development.

## Our Provincial Lead

## Our Regional Leads



Toronto General  
Toronto Western  
Princess Margaret  
Toronto Rehab  
Michener Institute



Est. 1983

CHEO

nedic

National Eating Disorder  
Information Centre

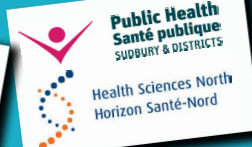
Northwestern  
Health Unit



St. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP



Drishya Jain  
Family Health Team



Public Health  
Santé publique  
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

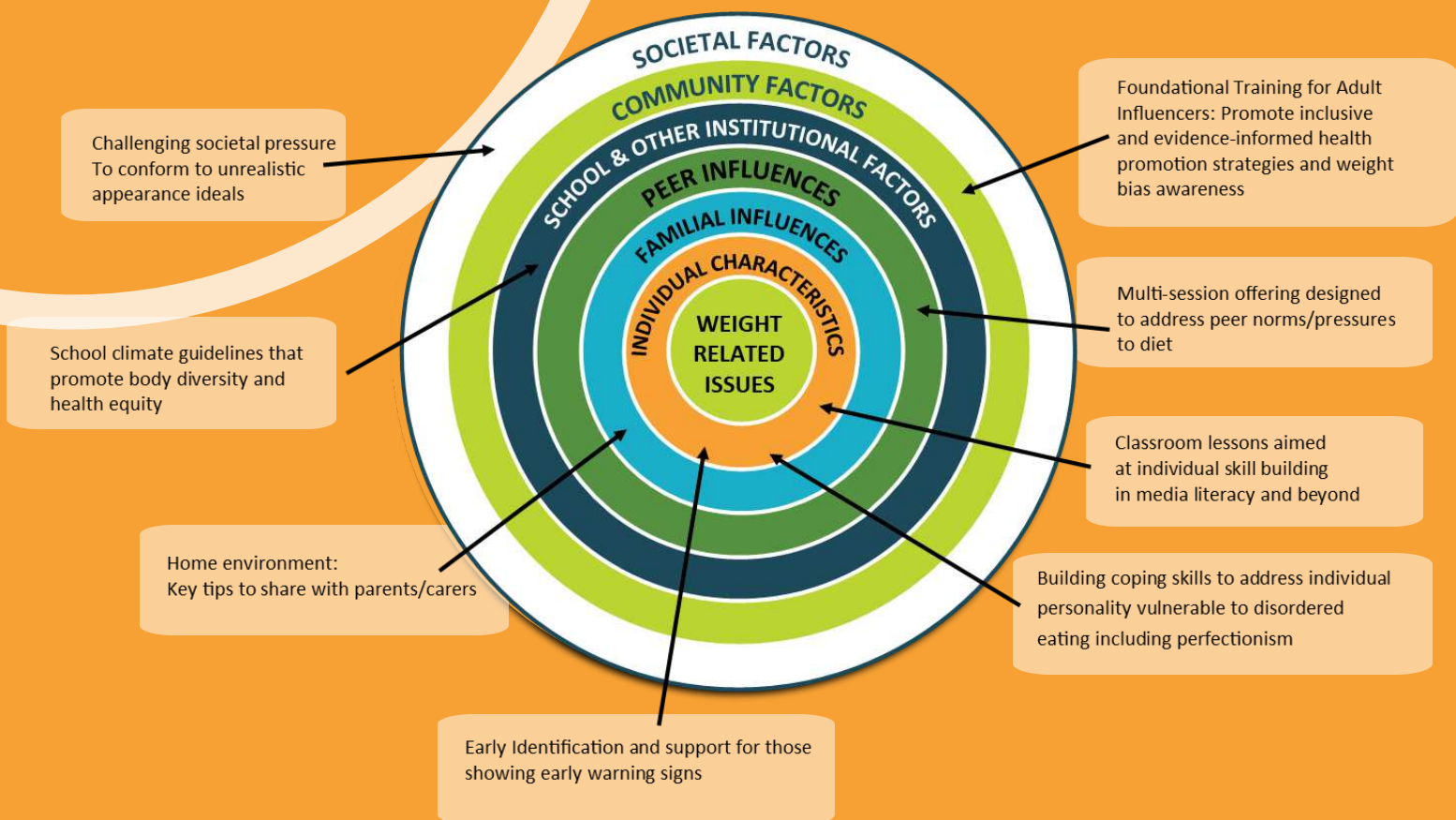
Health Sciences North  
Horizon Santé-Nord

Two main goals of  Eating Disorders Ontario Prevention. (previously ED:PPEI)

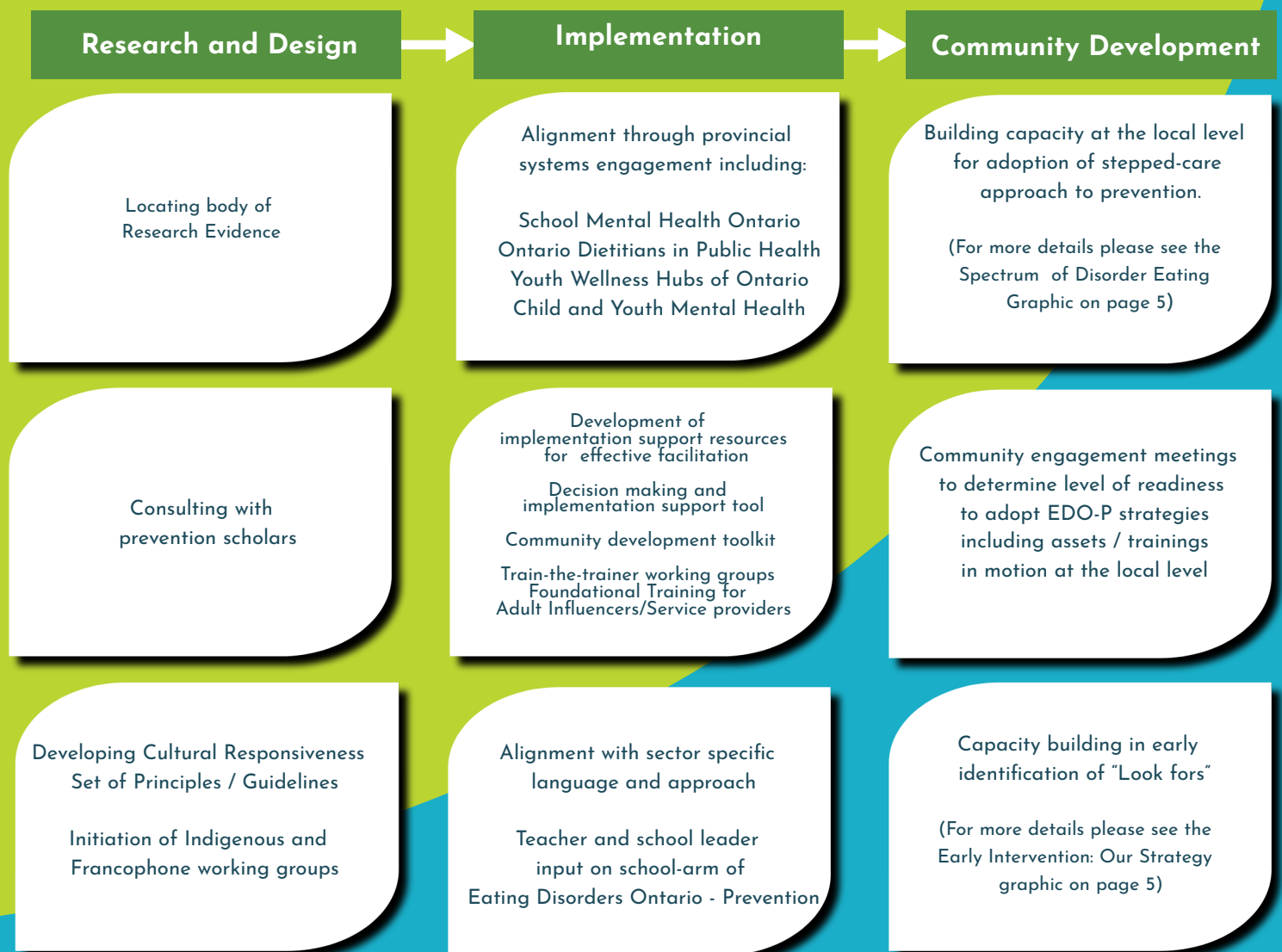
- 1** Build local capacity for the delivery of promotion and evidence-based eating disorder prevention.
- 2** Develop and implement a Provincial strategy for prevention of eating disorders that is comprehensive and sensitive to the Ontario context (including the variety of regional and ethno-cultural considerations across the province).

### Framework Development: A Multi-Pronged, Comprehensive Approach To Prevention

There are multiple spheres of influence / contributing factors to disordered eating or weight-related issues, necessitating a multi-pronged approach



# Creating the EDO-P Framework



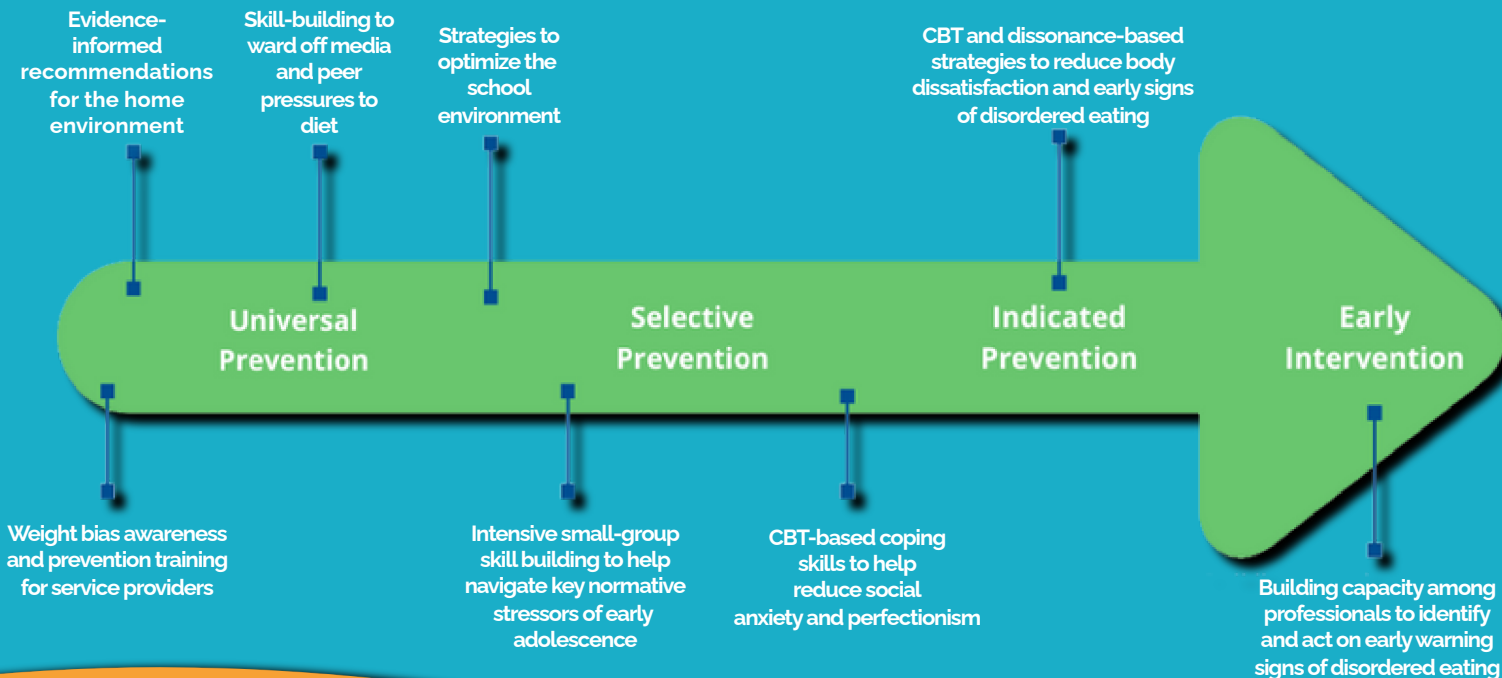
## ... We've also solicited input from youth and carers\* (What we have heard so far from youth and carers)

- Be an ally for individuals with disordered eating/eating disorders.** Feeling supported by, and building trust with those who understand EDs are key factors to promote timely help-seeking. Reducing weight bias and stigma, and adopting weight inclusive language is recommended.
- Adopt a holistic approach to disordered eating/eating disorders.** A focus on emotional health and well-being and on societal contributing factors versus a sole focus on food, eating practices and physical side effects is preferred
- Improve education and training for professionals.** Enhanced opportunities for training and education across all sectors is recommended to build supportive environments
- Create opportunities for peer support and system navigation roles to compliment the system.** Peer support and system navigation from individuals with lived experience can have multiple benefits, including facilitating earlier help-seeking. Enhance opportunities for peer support and system navigation roles through formal channels
- Increase availability of and awareness about eating disorder/disordered eating resources.** Youth and caregivers struggle to locate resources either due to lack of availability or awareness. Improving ways for people to navigate the existing system of care and enhancing access to resources across multiple settings is recommended.
- Make available resources and services that are accessible, appropriate and inclusive. Minimize barriers to help-seeking by making resources and services accessible and inclusive. Tailored, stage-appropriate care and resources were recommended.** The right service, in the right place at the right time.

# Creating the EDO-P Framework



## Tailored Prevention along the Spectrum of Disordered Eating



2021-2022

## Clinical Teaching in Early Intervention

### EARLY INTERVENTION: Our Strategy



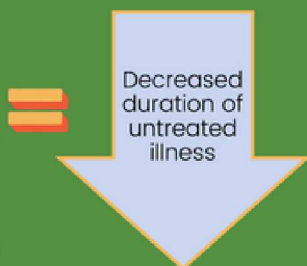
Early intervention (EI) means getting help and support as soon as possible for individuals with early signs and symptoms of an Eating Disorder (ED).

What can be done to help?

✓ Identify signs and symptoms earlier

✓ Encourage treatment-seeking

✓ Connect quickly to evidence-based interventions



People with EDs experience changes to their brain, body, thoughts and behaviour. If detected and treated early, these changes are more easily avoided or reversed.

How is this accomplished?



Build partnerships with youth-serving sectors and settings that have a mandate and resources to do EI work



Educate and train a wide range of professionals on the early detection and intervention of EDs



Implement screening in a wider range of settings to detect issues earlier



Identify accessible culturally-sensitive low resource, low barrier stepped-care interventions that meet the needs of the individual during these early stages



# 2021-2022 Clinical Teaching in Early Intervention

EDO-P has been fortunate to have had outstanding interest in clinical learning from local, regional and provincial health, wellness and educational partners. Among those that we provided services to in 2021-2022 include:

- School mental health providers (province wide, 300-400 in English, 50-100 in French)
- Child and Youth Mental Health Councillors and Clinicians (300-350 in Ottawa, Niagara North East, North West York Region)
- Youth Wellness Hub Teams (province wide, 100 English and French)
- Community Based Dietitians (province wide)
- General Pediatric Ward Nurses (province wide)

Across these sectors we received participant feedback including:

I have a better understanding of approaches to use when meeting with a client with a potential or confirmed ED

From a biopsychosocial model I have a better understanding on how families play a critical role in therapy and for the young person's mental health well being

I gained more understanding about eating disorders in young people, empathy and the importance of connecting them to appropriate care team.

I learned how to interact with ED patients as a nurse

Questions regarding specific eating behaviours and feelings toward food, body etc. will now be a part of every assessment.

Information received will allow me to be more mindful with clients and more aware of complexity of the ED spectrum



## Engagement with Primary Care Service Providers

As we at EDO-P believe Disordering Eating and Eating Disorders are a public health issue, in addition to our community partners, part of our mission is to engage with primary care service providers across the province. In 2021-2022 we cultivated relationships, hosted dialogue and provided evidence based knowledge training to a variety of medical organizations including:

- Family Health Teams
- Nurse Practitioners
- Inpatient setting Registered Dietitians



2021-2022

# Prevention Service Provision and Reach



## Multi-sector Community Engagement/ Asset Mapping Meetings

EDO-P has actively engaged in Community Stakeholder meetings across the province including in Windsor, Kenora, Dryden, Sudbury and Toronto.

Of the 170-200 individuals surveyed, direct feedback stated that:

- 78% of participant's felt that their understanding of disordered eating and eating disorders had expanded/increased
- 83% believe that disordered eating is an important health issue that requires a concerted public health response
- 91% indicated that the EDO-P framework will sufficiently meet their needs and 95% indicated that it would complement the work already underway
- 91% were in support of creating a local Community of Practice to adopt EDO-P

## Foundational Training Workshops

Foundational Training aims to increase self-awareness and knowledge about topics relating to food, weight, and shape so that participants will be able to think more critically about the messages they are sending in their personal and professional lives as adult influencers. EDO-P is proud to have hosted several FT workshops across the province including the communities of Windsor, Kenora and Dryden as well as hosting the Ontario Dietitians in Public Health.

Of the approximately 300 participants surveyed, direct feedback included:

This training is a must for anyone who deals with children...parents, teachers, primary care providers, etc.

It's eye-opening, and instrumental to understanding what needs to be done to prevent disordered eating among future generations, as well as how to destroy the harmful effects of diet culture and weight bias.

This is a great workshop that helps you really dig deep into your pre-conceived notions and understand where they may come from. There is something for everyone; whether you learn best through real-life case studies, looking at research/data, statistics, models and frameworks... this workshop covers it all!

Thank you to the entire EDO-P team for this wonderful day of learning. I appreciate the comprehensiveness of this workshop and the opportunity to interact with you and other public health RD's. We all have a lot of unlearning to do and this is one step that I think will be invaluable in helping our province move forward to a way of promoting health that is not to the detriment of mental or emotional well-being.



## It Takes A Village

As with all successful promotion and prevention initiatives, EDO-P is excited to forge and leverage existing collaborative partnerships with educators, health promoters and service providers working across public health units, schools, post-secondary institutions, youth wellness hubs and other organizations that support children, youth and their families.

Stay tuned for information about EDO-P host organizations (hubs) in your Ontario Health Region.

Please feel free to contact the Eating Disorders Ontario provincial training program (OCOPEd) for:

1. Consultation on best practices in prevention visit: <http://www.ocoped.ca/Services>
2. Further details about the EDO-Provincial Prevention Strategy and regional contacts  
visit <https://www.ocoped.ca/ED-PPEI>
3. An overview of "How schools can help" with prevention visit  
<http://www.ocoped.ca/EDO-P-For-Schools>
4. Referral information for Ontario Ministry-funded specialized ED treatment services  
visit <http://www.ocoped.ca/About-Us>



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