

# Healthy Families: Growing Together

Children are more likely to thrive in families with **healthy family dynamics**, which involve: positive communications and interactions; caring, accepting relationships; cooperation; mutual support; and healthy, protective parenting behaviours.

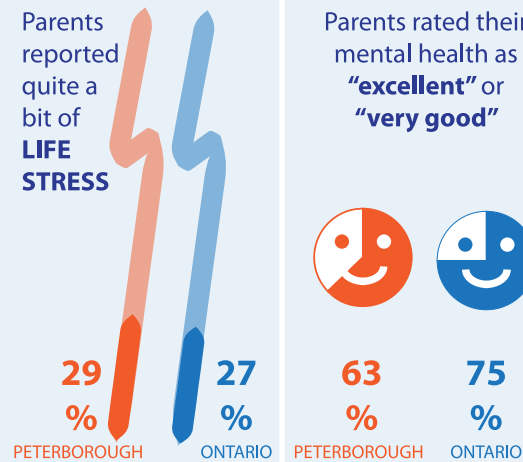
The term "parent" includes all primary caregivers within the child's home.



## PARENTAL STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

A similar proportion of Peterborough and Ontario parents report that most days are stressful. A smaller proportion of Peterborough parents feel confident about the quality of their mental health, compared to Ontario parents. (2011/2012)

**Life Stress and Perceived Mental Health** parents with children 0-17  
Children with highly-stressed parents are at increased risk for poorer: development, attachment, and behaviour. Parental mental health concerns increase the risk for poor socio-emotional adjustment in children.



## Report on Child Health 2015

for more information and references  
[www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca)

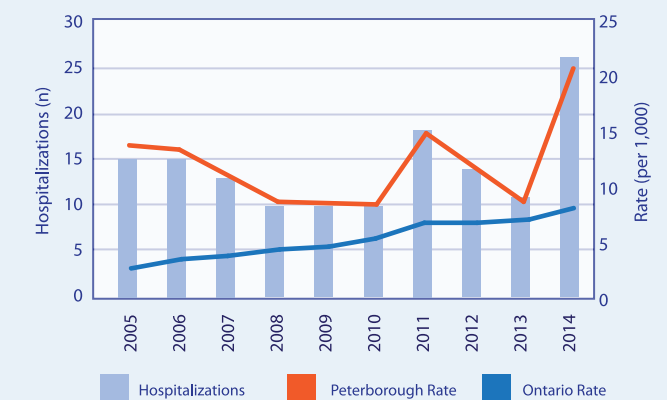


## PRENATAL DRUG USE

An average of 14 Peterborough infants are hospitalized each year due to addictive drug use during pregnancy, 2.5 times the Ontario rate. (2005-2014)

### Maternal Use of Addictive Drugs during pregnancy

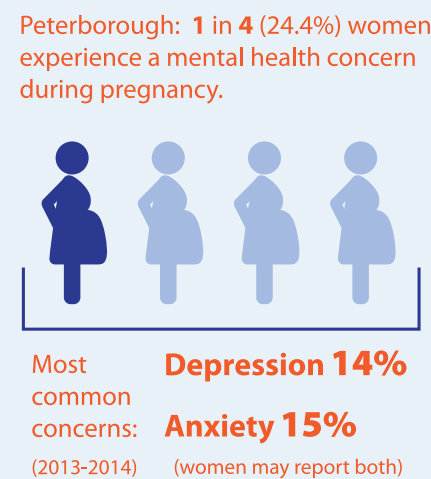
Prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs puts infants at increased risk for: disrupted development, addiction and withdrawal, prematurity, low birthweight, and childhood learning disabilities and behaviour problems.



Studies link prenatal maternal depression to poor neurological and cognitive development, behaviour problems, and psychiatric disorders in children.

### Mental Health During Pregnancy

Mothers who were depressed during pregnancy are more likely to have post-partum depression. Infants whose mothers have post-partum depression are at increased risk for poorer: attachment, mood, engagement, and for mental health and behaviour problems in childhood.



## WHY WORRY?

"For families coping with many difficulties, stress can be chronic and intense. Teen and lone parent families are especially vulnerable. High levels of stress are linked to unhealthy family dynamics, maternal depression, and poor parenting." Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health

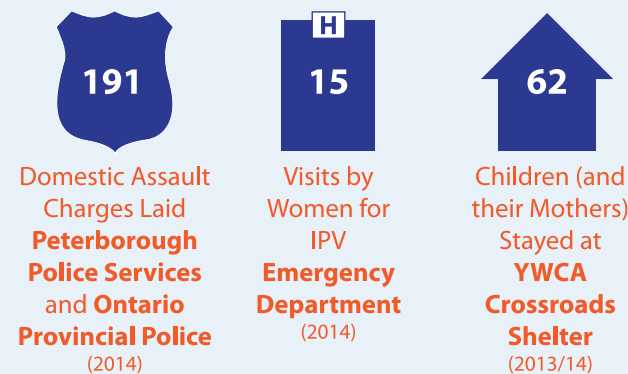


## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs when children hear, see, or try to intervene in an assault on a parent, or cope with the aftermath.

### Domestic Violence

Children exposed to IPV are at increased risk for: sleep problems, stress, anxiety, depression, aggression, poor school performance, and delinquency.



## PARENTAL SUBSTANCE USE

Almost twice the rate of Peterborough parents smoke tobacco compared to parents in Ontario. Peterborough parents also have a higher rate of alcohol use. (2011/2012)

### Parental Substance Use Behaviours

Children with parents who misuse alcohol or drugs are at increased risk for: poor health/mental health, behaviour problems, maltreatment, and future substance use. Children exposed to tobacco smoke are at increased risk for: asthma, middle ear infections, high blood pressure, poor development, and behaviour problems.

