



IOWA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC  
HEALTH

# 2021 Annual Report

Summary of IDPH Activities

Authorship – Foundation 2 Crisis Services

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October 2021



Protecting and Improving  
the Health of Iowans

## Acknowledgements

### Suggested Citation:

Department of Public Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse/ *Your Life Iowa – SFY 2021 Annual Report* Des Moines: Iowa Dept. of Public Health, 2021. YourLifeIowa.org, 2021. Web.

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### Funding:

During SFY 2021, Your Life Iowa was funded through the appropriation from the State General Fund to the Iowa Department of Public Health for the provision of addiction services, the Federal Substance Abuse Block Grant, the Federal Zero Suicide Grant, and the COVID-19 Response Project, and Federal Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (Department of Human Services).

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## Executive Summary

Your Life Iowa (YLI) is where you can turn to when facing a question, concern or problem with substance use, gambling, mental health or suicidal thoughts and is a collaborative project between the Iowa Department of Public Health and Department of Human Services. YLI provides trusted information, resources and support. 24/7 resources include a telephone helpline, mobile-friendly internet-based communications (e.g., online chat), texting, and social media (@YourLifeIowa). YLI became the statewide crisis line in July 2019.



### **YLI Key Accomplishments and Activities during SFY 2021:**

- Answered 31,089 contacts (phone, text, chat), more than double the contacts answered during SFY 2020.
- Made almost 11,000 referrals to access substance use, gambling, and mental health related services.
- Almost 226,000 individuals visited YourLifeIowa.org (up 37 percent) resulting in over 277,500 sessions (up 33 percent), and over 401,000 page views up 23 percent)
- Continued to develop and expand the YLI brand recognition across Iowa. YLI marketing efforts resulted in over 100 million impressions via digital ads, billboards, social media, and television commercials.
- Launched new website (yourlifeiowa.org) with improved navigation, additional resources, and the new YLI brand. Website traffic in the first four months of the new website increased by 134 percent compared to the previous four months.

## Glossary

**1-800-BETS OFF:** Helpline and website devoted to raising awareness of problem gambling and providing assistance to those Iowans who are being negatively impacted by their gambling and related behaviors, and their affected loved ones.

**Gambling:** The act or practice of risking the loss of something of value upon the outcome of chance or future contingent event not under his/her control in an attempt to gain something of greater value.

**Gambling Disorder:** Persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior leading to clinically significant impairment or distress.

**Iowa Gambling Treatment Program (IGTP):** The Iowa Department of Public Health program that receives from the State General Fund as part of the Addiction Services appropriation, funds for provision of problem gambling services. The IGTP is organized within IDPH in the Division of Behavioral Health Bureau of Substance Abuse. Problem Gambling services are provided through the Integrated Provider Network.

**Integrated Provider Network (IPN):** The IPN is a statewide community-based, resiliency- and recovery-oriented system of care for substance use and problem gambling services. The IPN launched in January 2019 as a result of a competitive RFP process.

**MHDS Regions:** Iowa's community-based, person-centered mental health and disability services system providing locally delivered services that are regionally managed within statewide standards. Local access to mental health and disability services for adults and children with severe emotional disturbances are provided by established mental health and disability services regions to residents of Iowa, regardless of the location of their residence.

**Problem Gambling:** Participation in any form of gambling activity that creates one or more negative consequences to the gambler, their family or loved ones, employer, or community. If unchecked, can lead to a gambling disorder.

**Your Life Iowa:** The 24/7 integrated resource for free and confidential help and information for alcohol, drugs, gambling and suicide concerns. Information and assistance are available through the telephone helpline at 855-581-8111, online at [YourLifeIowa.org](http://YourLifeIowa.org), through text at 855-895-8398, and through mobile-friendly internet-based online chat and social media messaging.

## List of Acronyms

**CMHC:** Community Mental Health Center

**DHS:** Iowa Department of Human Services

**IDPH:** Iowa Department of Public Health

**IPGS:** Iowa Problem Gambling Services

**IPN:** Integrated Provider Network

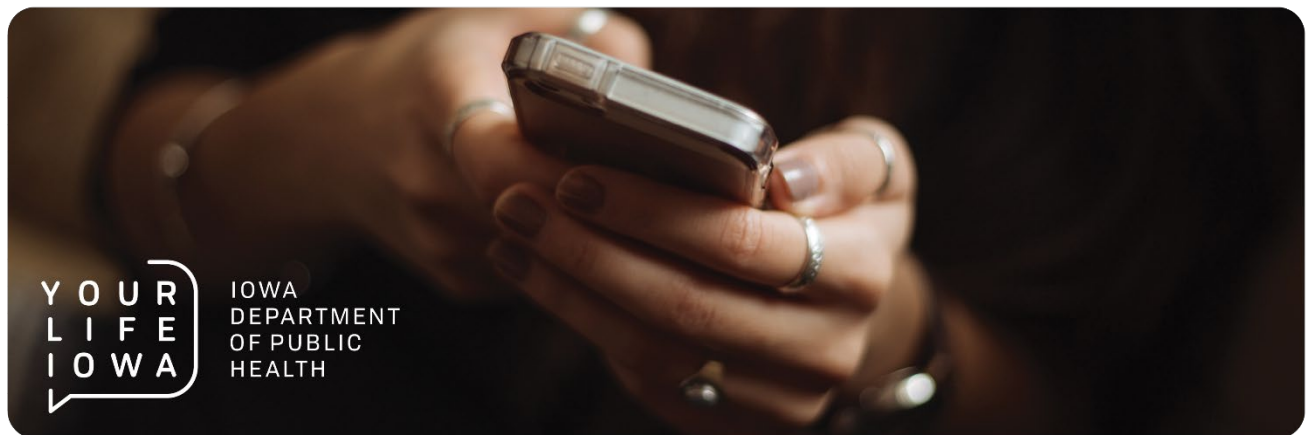
**MHDS:** Mental Health and Disability Services

**RFP:** Request for Proposal

**SFY:** State Fiscal Year

**YLI:** Your Life Iowa

# Your Life Iowa SFY 2021 Report



## Background

Your Life Iowa (YLI) is the single go-to resource for individuals and their friends/family to access when facing a problem with substance use, gambling, mental health, or suicidal thoughts. YLI's "re-launch" was the result of two distinct RFP processes, combining three previously distinct and separate websites and helplines (Your Life Iowa, DrugFreeInfo.org and 1-800-BETS OFF). This new integrated system launched in July 2017 when Foundation 2, an Iowa-based nonprofit human service agency offering suicide prevention and crisis intervention programs to people of all ages, was awarded the YLI contract. Foundation 2 has provided crisis counseling by phone since 1970.

## YLI Mission

Offer non-judgmental support, connection and information for individuals, and their families and friends, who don't know where to turn for help.

## YLI Services

Your Life Iowa services include 24/7 phone, text, and chat crisis support services for all Iowans, regardless of age, income, location, or any other factors. Per the Your Life Iowa contract, Foundation 2 Crisis Services, a non-profit crisis services organization based out of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, provide these crisis support services. Additional support and resources can be found on [yourlifeiowa.org](https://yourlifeiowa.org) and on the [Your Life Iowa Facebook page](#).







**PHONE**  
855-581-8111



**TEXT**  
855-895-8398



**CHAT**  
yourlifeiowa.org

When an individual contacts Your Life Iowa, they are often struggling with challenges including substance use, problem gambling, mental health, and thoughts of suicide. The Your Life Iowa counselors provide gentle, non-judgmental listening and guidance, talking each individual through their situation. They can provide assurance and guidance; connect callers with additional resources, and more to help navigate crises and long-term concerns. All services are free and confidential.

### YLI Contacts

In SFY 2021, Your Life Iowa provided:

**31,089**

**Total contacts**  
(Phone, chat, and text).



**126% increase**  
**from SFY 2020**



**27,387**  
**phone calls**

**Highest number of calls**  
**per month occurred in**  
**June 2021 with**  
**2,939 contacts.**



**1,491**  
**texts**

**Highest number of texts**  
**per month occurred in**  
**May 2021 with**  
**195 contacts.**



**2,211**  
**chats**

**Highest number of chats**  
**per month occurred in**  
**Sept. 2020 with**  
**271 contacts.**

Figure 1: Total contacts and contacts by method.

### YLI Contacts - Topic and Contact Type

YLI Contacts broken down into categories based on Your Life Iowa's focus areas of gambling, substance use (including alcohol), suicide, mental health (adults and children), and non-mental health crises calls. Contacts broken down by method of contact (phone, text, or chat) and topic of call (gambling, substance use (including alcohol), and suicide, and mental health (adults and youth). Additionally, YLI tracks how social determinants of health affects each topic area.

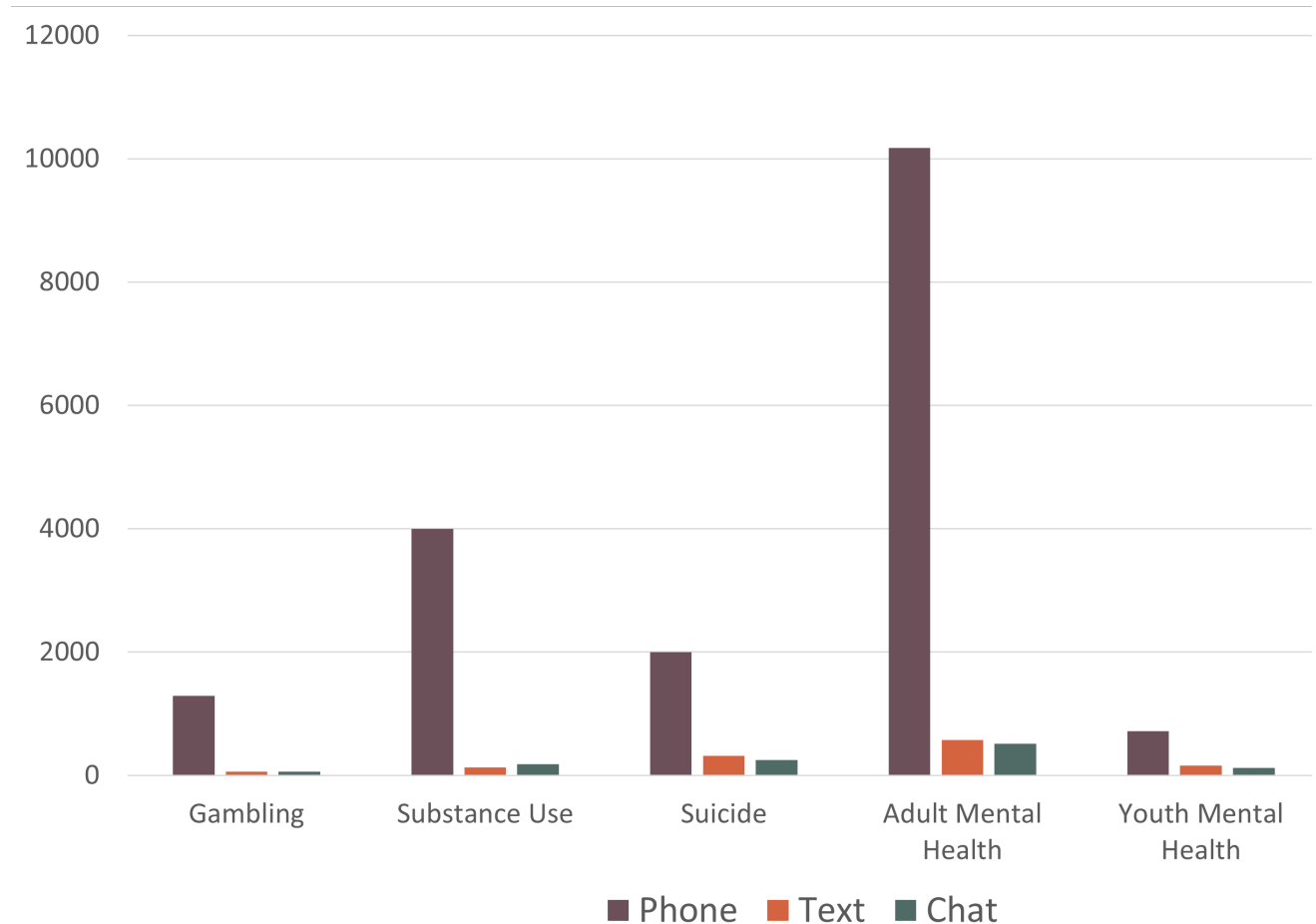
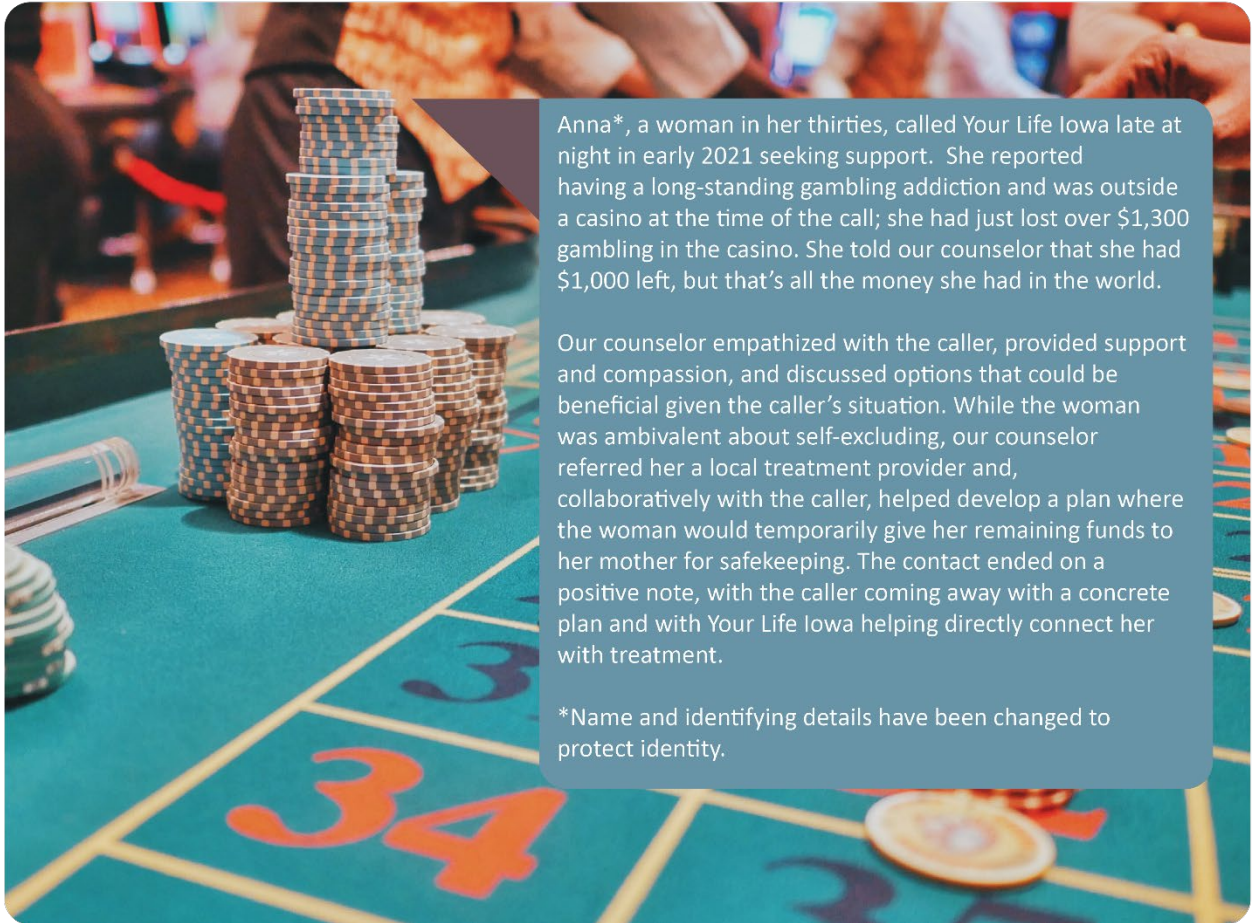


Figure 2: Contacts by contact method and topic.

### Contacts by Topic and Contact Type

	Phone	Text	Chat
Gambling	1,291	63	57
Substance Use	3,999	184	129
Suicide	1,996	250	314
Adult Mental Health	10,177	513	576
Youth Mental Health	714	124	159

Table 1: Total contacts by contact method and topic.



Anna\*, a woman in her thirties, called Your Life Iowa late at night in early 2021 seeking support. She reported having a long-standing gambling addiction and was outside a casino at the time of the call; she had just lost over \$1,300 gambling in the casino. She told our counselor that she had \$1,000 left, but that's all the money she had in the world.

Our counselor empathized with the caller, provided support and compassion, and discussed options that could be beneficial given the caller's situation. While the woman was ambivalent about self-excluding, our counselor referred her a local treatment provider and, collaboratively with the caller, helped develop a plan where the woman would temporarily give her remaining funds to her mother for safekeeping. The contact ended on a positive note, with the caller coming away with a concrete plan and with Your Life Iowa helping directly connect her with treatment.

\*Name and identifying details have been changed to protect identity.

## Iowa Contacts

While Your Life Iowa focuses on serving Iowans, we do not limit our service area. Of all contacts, 72 percent came from Iowans in SFY 2021.



# 22,314

Iowa contacts  
(phone, text, and chat)

### Iowa Contacts - Topic and Contact Type

Iowa contacts broken down by method of contact (phone, text, or chat) and topic of call (gambling, substance use (including alcohol), and suicide, and mental health (adults and youth). A single contact may have more than one topic.

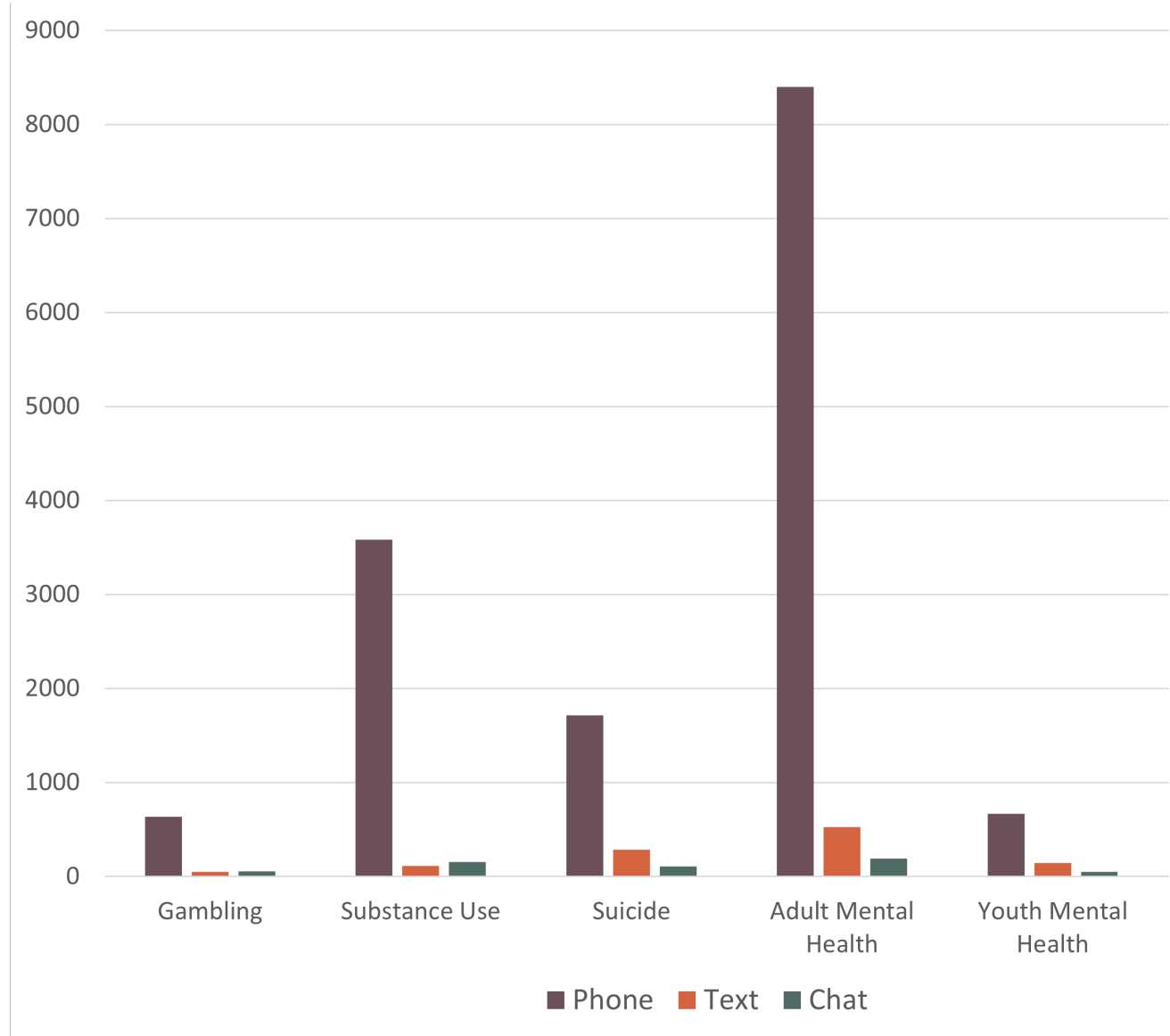
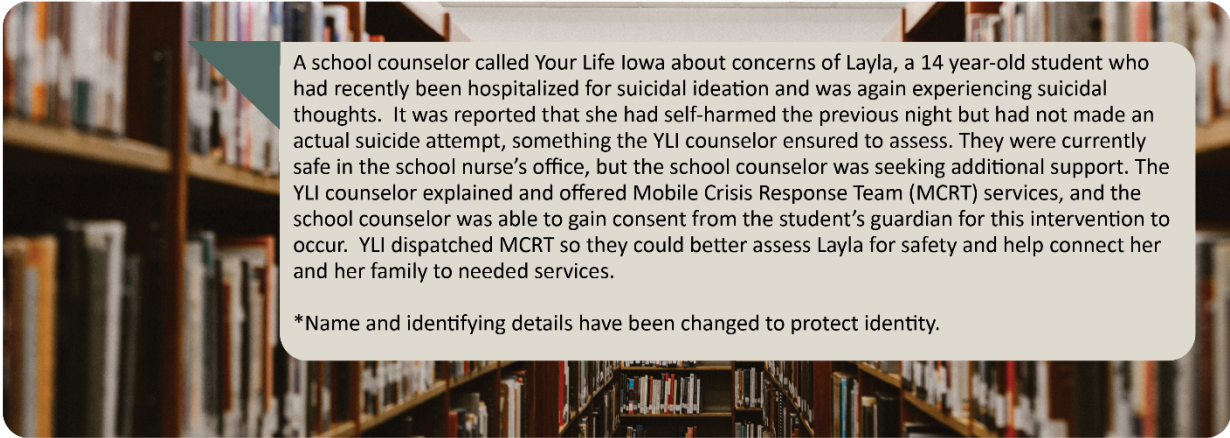


Figure 3: Iowa-based contacts by category and contact method.

### Iowa Contacts by Topic and Contact Type

	Phone	Text	Chat
Gambling	638	49	52
Substance Use	3,585	114	155
Suicide	1,716	284	109
Adult Mental Health	8,400	524	193
Youth Mental Health	665	143	49

Table 2: Iowa contacts by contact method and topic.



### Contacts – Average Length

Each phone call, text exchange, and chat is different, and our crisis counselors answer each contact with compassion and understanding. The length of the contact varies based on the nature of the concern. In SFY 2021, the average duration of each mode of contact was:

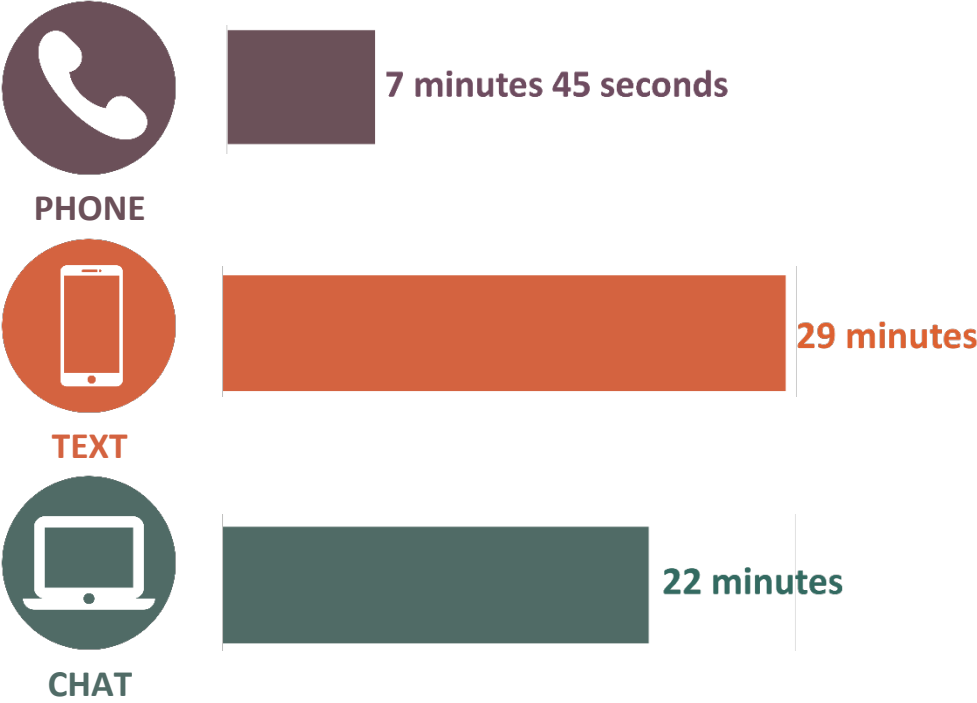


Figure 4: Average duration of phone, text, and chat contacts.

## Referrals

### Total Referrals

Many times, when an individual calls Your Life Iowa, they are looking to connect to ongoing support for gambling, substance use, mental health, or thoughts of suicide. Our crisis counselors are educated on available resources and utilize Your Life Iowa's Facility Finder to connect individuals with the best support services based on their needs and geographic area.



# 10,968

Referrals to providers for problem gambling, substance use, mental health, out-of-state mental health, and non-mental health crisis.

Of the 10,968 referrals, the majority were for substance use (4,184), followed by mental health (3,196), Other Social Determinants of Health (1,200), out-of-state referrals (1,113), gambling (651), and suicide (624).

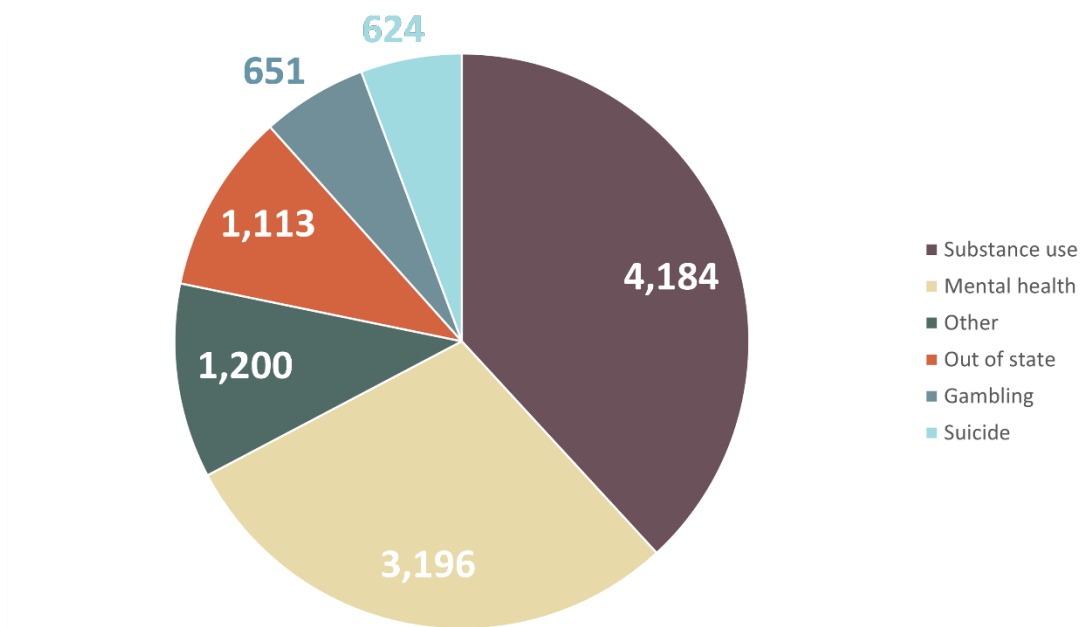
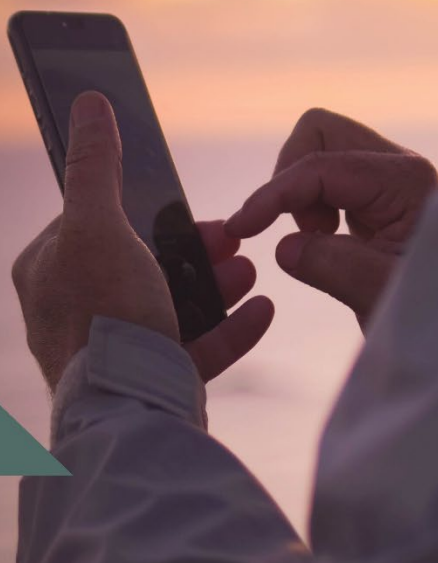


Figure 5: Referrals by type: gambling, substance use, mental health, out of state mental health and non-mental health crisis.

John called Your Life Iowa and reported struggling with depression and anxiety. He had retired just over a year ago, and his mental health had started to decompensate around that time. It had gotten to the point where he did not want to leave his home and had lost motivation to do things he previously enjoyed, plus there were physical impairments with which he was struggling that made daily life painful and difficult. Our counselor empathized with the caller and worked to elicit positive components of his life along with prosocial coping skills he had been able to develop. A suicide risk assessment was conducted as well, and the caller was found to not be at-risk of suicide. Our counselor continued to provide support throughout the call, and the caller indicated he would be following up with both his medical doctor and therapist. The man reported being glad to have YLI there as a support and indicated he would call back if needed.

\*Name and identifying details have been changed to protect identity.



## Iowa Contacts - Integrated Provider Network Referrals



# 4,024

Referrals to providers in the Integrated Provider Network (IPN) for problem gambling and substance use.

## Integrated Provider Network (IPN) Referrals

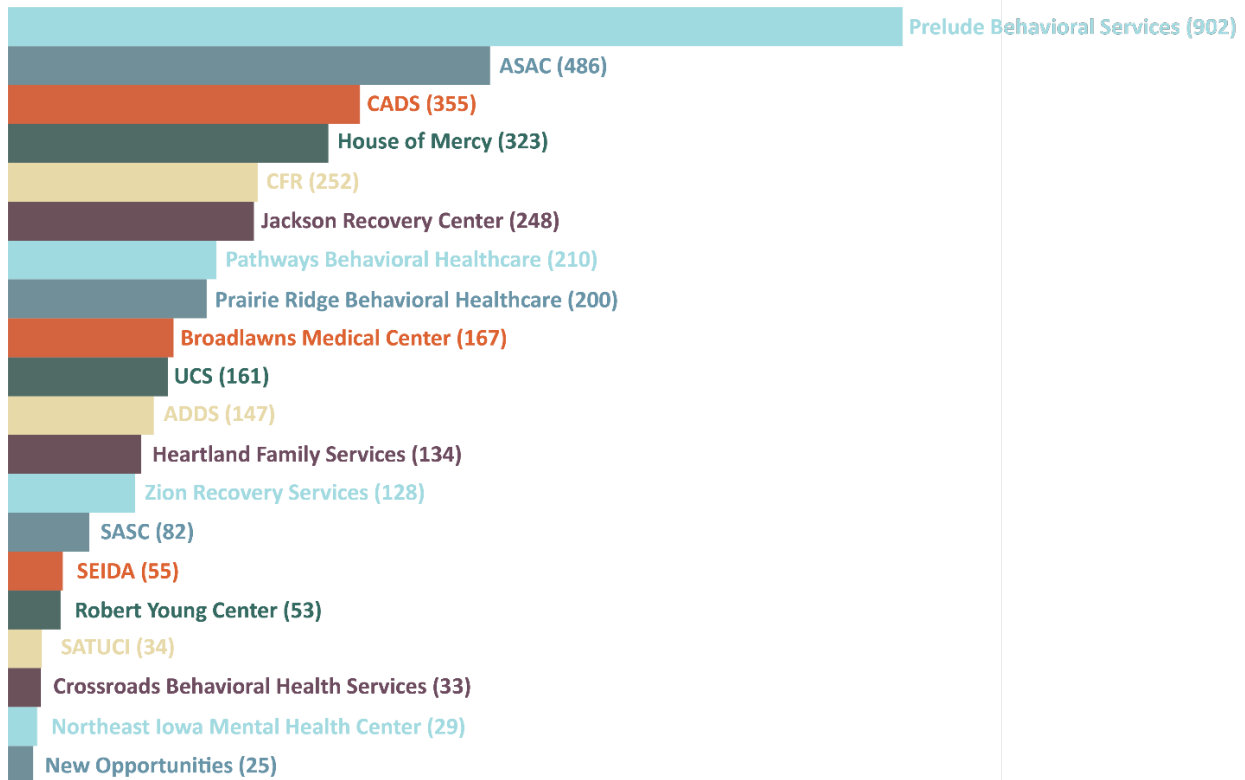


Figure 6: Integrated Provider Network referrals by facility.

## Integrated Provider Network (IPN) Referrals (Listed in alphabetical order)

Facility	Referrals	Facility	Referrals
ADDS	147	Northeast Iowa Mental Health Center	29
ASAC	486	Pathways Behavioral Healthcare	210
Broadlawns Medical Center	167	Prairie Ridge Behavioral Healthcare	200
CADS	355	Prelude Behavioral Services	902
CFR	252	Robert Young Center	53
Crossroads Behavioral Health	33	SEIDA	55
Heartland Family Services	134	SATUCI	34
House of Mercy	323	SASC	82
Jackson Recovery Center	248	UCS	161
New Opportunities	25	Zion Recovery Services	128

Table 3: Integrated Provider Network referrals by facility.



## Iowa Contacts – Community Mental Health Center Referrals



# 477

Referrals to Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) providers for mental health care.

## Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) Referrals

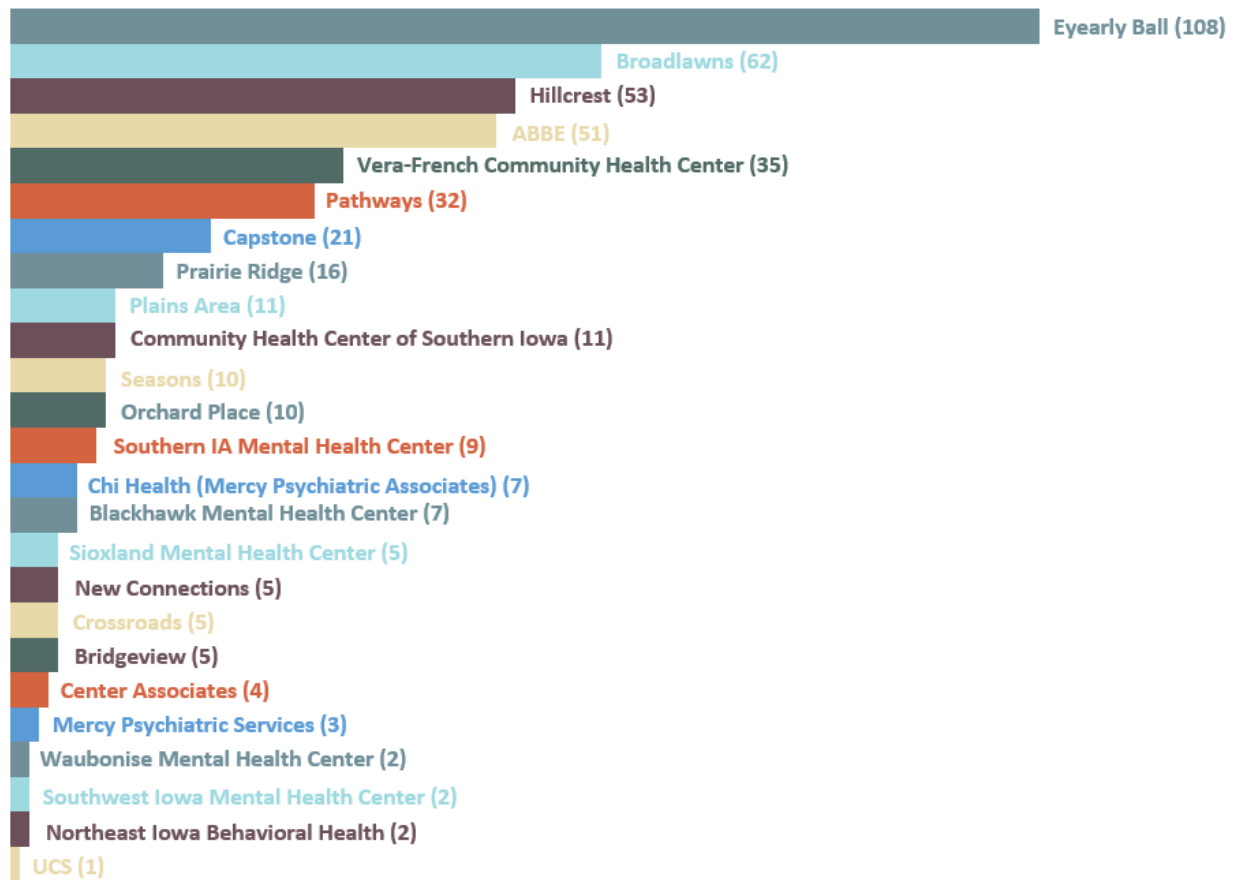


Figure 7: Community Mental Health Center referrals by facility.

## CMHC Referrals (Listed in alphabetical order)

CMHC	Referrals	CMHC	Referrals
ABBE	51	New Connections	5
Blackhawk Mental Health Center	7	Northeast Iowa Behavioral Health	2
Bridgeview	5	Orchard Place	10
Broadlawns	62	Pathways	32
Capstone	21	Plains Area	11
Center Associates	4	Prairie Ridge	16
Chi Health (Mercy Psychiatric)	7	Seasons	10
Infinity Health	11	Sioxland Mental Health Center	5
Crossroads	5	Southwest Iowa Mental Health Center	2
Eyerly Ball	108	UCS	1
Hillcrest	53	Vera-French Comm. Health Center	35
Mercy Psychiatric Services	3	Waubonise Mental Health Center	2

Table 4: Community Mental Health Center referrals by facility.

## Marketing

### Advertising

Your Life Iowa contracts with ZLR Ignition for marketing and promotion, with secondary support from Foundation 2 Crisis Services. In SFY 2021, marketing included cable television advertisements, digital advertisements, videos, printed materials, and more.



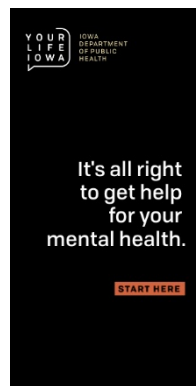
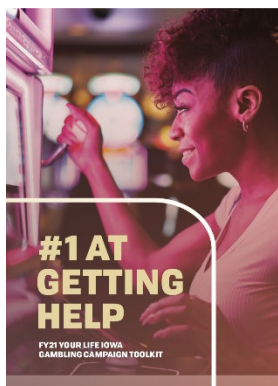
# 103,034,625

Impressions across all marketing content.

Platforms where Your Life Iowa was promoted include:

- Billboards
- Broadcast & cable TV
- Facebook
- Hulu
- Instagram
- Paid search
- Pandora Radio
- Printed supplies for providers
- Programmatic banners
- Outdoor posters & bulletins
- YouTube

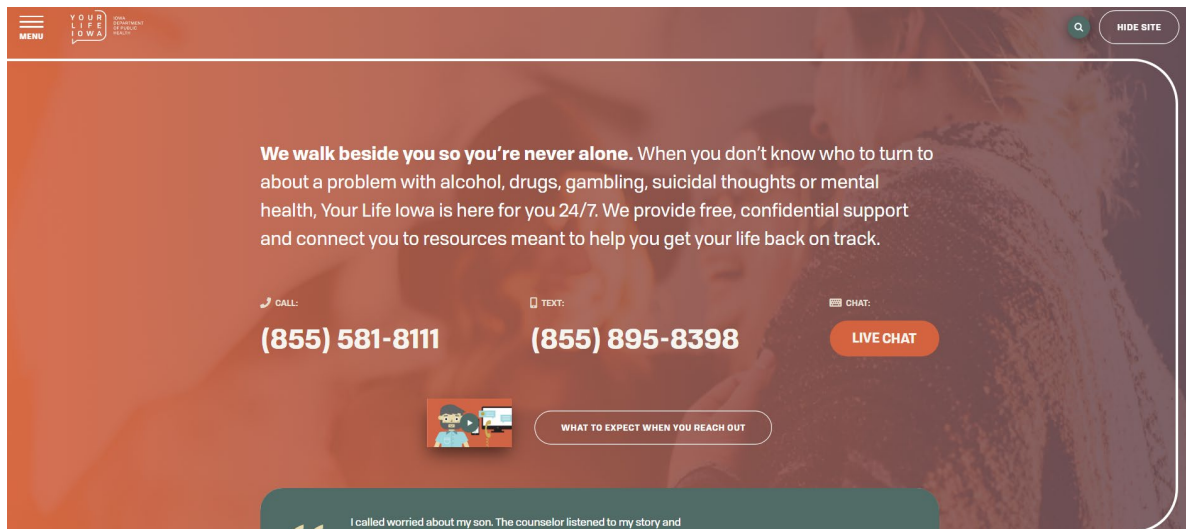
## Examples of Your Life Iowa materials:



## Website

The new Your Life Iowa website officially launched in March 2021 ([www.yourlifeiowa.org](http://www.yourlifeiowa.org)). The new website contains updated resources, the new YLI branding, and an easier interface to improve navigation.

In the first four months of the new website, the site saw a **134 percent increase in traffic** compared to the previous four months. The number of sessions also increased **137 percent in the same time frame**.



## Website Users

**Yourlifeiowa.org user data at for SFY 2021.**

<b>225,948</b> users	<b>224,823</b> new users	<b>277,549</b> Sessions
<b>1.23</b> sessions per user	<b>401,173</b> page views	<b>00:40</b> average time on site



## Website Visits

### Top Ten Pages

Here is a list of the top ten pages that users visited with their corresponding number of visits.

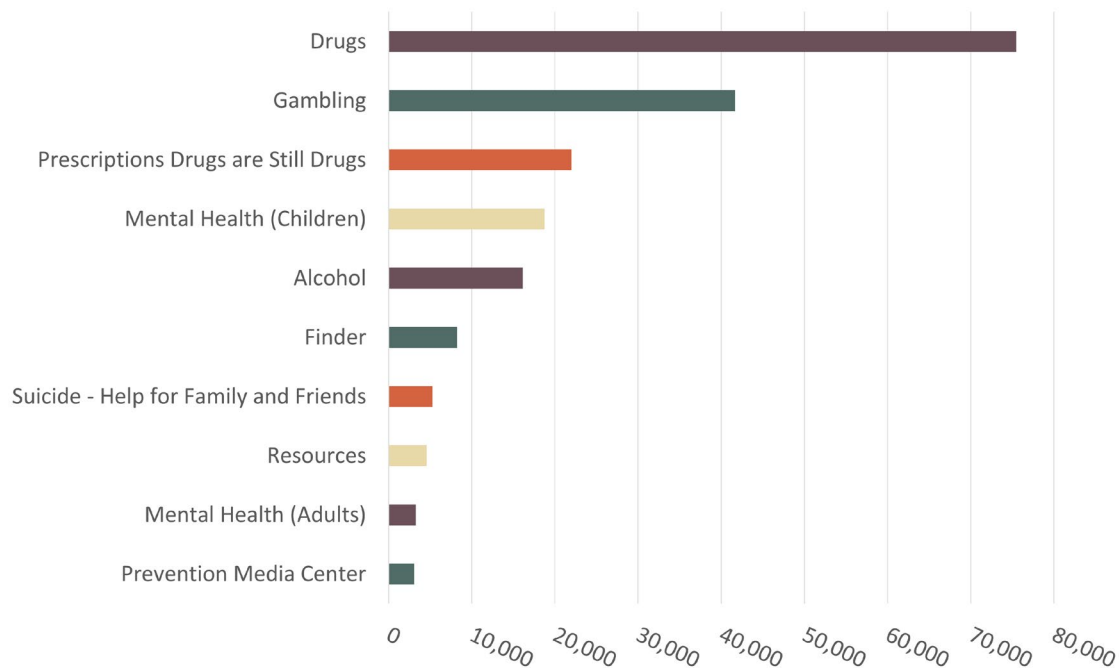


Figure 8: Number of page visits on top ten pages of yourlifeiowa.org. Homepage visits (60,389) are excluded.

## Your Life Iowa Page Visits

<b>Drugs</b>	75,454	↑ 10% *	<b>Finder</b>	8,246	↑ 326%
<b>Gambling</b>	41,640	↓ 30%	<b>Suicide – Help for Family and Friends</b>	5,288	↓ 39%
<b>Prescription Drugs Are Still Drugs</b>	22,001	↑ 42%	<b>Resources</b>	4,572	↓ 5%
<b>Mental Health (Children)</b>	18,747	↑ 212%	<b>Mental Health (Adults)</b>	3,293	↑ 11%
<b>Alcohol</b>	16,123	↑ 317%	<b>Prevention Media Center</b>	3,091	↑ 128%

Table 5: Number of page visits on top ten pages of yourlifeiowa.org with comparison to FY2020 data. Homepage visits (60,389) are excluded.

\*SFY 2020 data includes Drugs/Opioids, Opioid/Addiction, Opioids and Women in category total.

## Social Media

Your Life Iowa maintained the Your Life Iowa Facebook page, publishing daily social media posts to share relevant information and encourage Iowans to contact YLI for support. With an increase in paid social media advertising, we saw an increase in reach and engagement over SFY20, including a 163% increase in paid media reach on Facebook. YLI monitored posts daily and responded to comments to increase engagement.

## SFY 2021 social media data with percent change over SFY 2020



Figure 9: SFY 2021 social media data with percent change over SFY 2020.

## Testimonials

### NON-JUDGMENTAL

#### Joanna's Story

Joanna called Your Life Iowa because she had been struggling with IV methamphetamine use. She hoped to find inpatient treatment options in her area. Our counselor provided support and trauma-informed encouragement to the client while locating inpatient treatment options. Our counselor also conducted a suicide screen while speaking to the young woman, and she endorsed that she had been having some vague suicidal thoughts recently but was not having any currently, nor did she endorse a plan or intent. Our counselor was able to have the client loop in family who was also home while still on the line to provide the woman support during this difficult time, and to ensure she could safely get to one of the treatment facilities upon intake. Both the client and her two family members thanked our counselor for the assistance provided.

### GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH

#### Miguel's Story

Miguel\* called the Your Life Iowa crisis line one evening and reported having thoughts of suicide. The caller had been consuming alcohol as well which had not helped him to feel better. During the suicide screening, the man endorsed two specific plans but indicated he did not truly want to die and wanted help. He was tearful throughout the call, and the YLI counselor provided support and compassion while assessing for the caller's immediate risk of harm to himself. Our counselor explained and offered to have Mobile Crisis Outreach (MCO) respond to better provide some in-person support to the caller (and also to help mitigate the risk of suicide that was evident). The caller accepted this offer and indicated he could keep himself safe until MCO arrived, and additional safety plan components were put into place.

### YOU'RE NEVER ALONE

#### Mike's Story

Mike\* had been struggling with alcohol addiction and called Your Life Iowa late one evening. He was very upset. He had been recently charged with DUI and related charges and was worried about going to prison along with the repercussions for his family. Our counselor empathized with the caller and conducted a suicide risk assessment to ensure he was not at risk of self-harm or suicide. Our counselor connected the man to a local outpatient treatment provider. The man reported a strong support system was in place, but was struggling with alcohol use. Collaborating with the caller, our counselor helped the man locate AA meetings nearby as well so he could get additional support for his alcohol-related concerns. A collaborative safety plan for the evening helped the caller included connecting to a positive, non-substance-using friend with whom he could stay and receive some extra support for the night.

\* Name changed to protect identity

## YLI Strategic Priorities

The YLI Five-Year Strategic Marketing Plan provides an outline of overview of the deliberate approach and the corresponding operational activities that will need to be implemented to achieve the operational goals and proposed growth in awareness and corresponding services and the bold goal of achieving 85% unaided brand awareness of lowans and 85% engagement of those referred to services.

YLI has embarked upon a five year initiative to expand the YLI brand awareness across Iowa, and increase the number lowans seeking and accessing information and care for substance use, gambling, mental health and suicide. This deliberate approach and the corresponding operational activities outline the effort that will be needed to achieve the operational goals and proposed growth in awareness and corresponding services and the bold goal of achieving 85% unaided brand awareness and 85% engagement of those referred to services.

## YLI Care Continuum

The YLI Care Continuum outlines the various types of services available and will help YLI to effectively target messaging for across the entire continuum, and ensuring we are more effectively reaching individuals across all stages of their recovery journey.



## YLI Messaging Priorities

### JUDGMENT FREE

Your problem is our problem. We want to make sure you're put on the right path to have a successful future. That's why we leave our judgment at the door. It makes it easier to help put you on the right path to recovery.

### YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Many of us face these same challenges every day. We know it's hard, but when you have someone there for you every step of the way it helps. We're always here.

When you're tempted. We're here. When you're struggling. We're here. When you just need someone to talk to. We're here.

### GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH

We offer the information, support and guidance to help you get their life back to a good place.