



IOWA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF PUBLIC  
HEALTH

# 2020 Annual Report

Summary of IDPH Activities

Authorship – Foundation 2 Crisis Services

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Protecting and Improving  
the Health of Iowans

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## Executive Summary

Launched in October 2017 and expanded in July 2019 in partnership with the Department of Human Services and the Mental Health and Disability Service Regions to become the statewide crisis line, Your Life Iowa (YLI) is the integrated hub/system for free and confidential help and information for alcohol, drugs, gambling, suicide, and mental health. 24/7 resources include a telephone helpline, mobile-friendly internet-based communications (e.g., online chat), texting and social media (@YourLifeIowa).

Your Life Iowa is the result of two distinct RFP processes that combined three distinct and separate websites and helplines into one website and one vendor to manage this new integrated system.

- **Problem Gambling:** 1-800-BETS OFF helpline and 1800BETSOFF.org, including online chat function
- **Alcohol/Drug use:** DrugFreeInfo.org and help line (866-242-4111)
- **Suicide and Bullying Prevention:** Helpline (855-581-8111), Text Line (855-898-8398) and yourlifeiowa.org with online chat feature

The YLI contract was awarded in 2017 to Foundation 2, an Iowa-based nonprofit human service agency offering suicide prevention and crisis intervention programs to people of all ages. Foundation 2 has provided crisis counseling by phone since 1970.

### SFY 2020 Key Accomplishments and Activities

- Successfully completed the statewide crisis line transition from multiple regional crisis lines to Your Life Iowa. This was the result of extensive work between Foundation 2, IDPH, DHS, and the MHDS regions.
- 13,724 contacts (phone, text, chat) to Your Life Iowa (includes 1-800-BETS OFF calls) resulting in almost 4,232 referrals for Iowans. The number of contacts (phone, text, chat) is up 54 percent over SFY 2019.
- 165,417 users (up 43% compared to SFY 2019) of YourLifeIowa.org resulting in over 208,600 sessions (up 42% over SFY 2019) and over 327,000 page views (up 40% over SFY 2019).
- Established branding standard for Your Life Iowa, including a new logo and marketing materials to increase brand awareness. Social media content reached more than 2.5 million people through organic and paid posts.

## Glossary

**1-800-BETS OFF:** Helpline and website devoted to raising awareness of problem gambling and providing assistance to those residents of Iowa 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 (see Table 1).

**Iowa Problem Gambling Services (IPGS):** 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 IGPS resides within IDPH in the Division of Behavioral Health Bureau of Substance Abuse. IPGS funds problem-gambling services through the competitively procured 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 after a competitive RFP process.

**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, mental health, and suicide concerns. Information and assistance are available by phone (855-581-8111), online chat (YourLifelowa.org) or text (855-895-8398), and through mobile-friendly social media messaging.

## List of Acronyms

**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

## Overview

Your Life Iowa (YLI) is the single source and starting place for individuals or friends/family when facing a problem with alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health or suicidal thoughts. Its purpose is to provide everyone with trusted information, resources and the support they need to get their lives back on track.

In SFY20, Iowans faced unique challenges including the coronavirus pandemic and resulting challenges including loss of employment, concerns about health, and more. YLI saw an increase in calls related to these concerns in the spring of 2020, including calls about mental health, suicide, and substance use.

### Your Life Iowa Contacts

#### Total Contacts (phone, text, chat) = 13,742

Gambling, Substance Use, Suicide, Mental Health and Non-Mental Health Crisis calls for SFY 2020

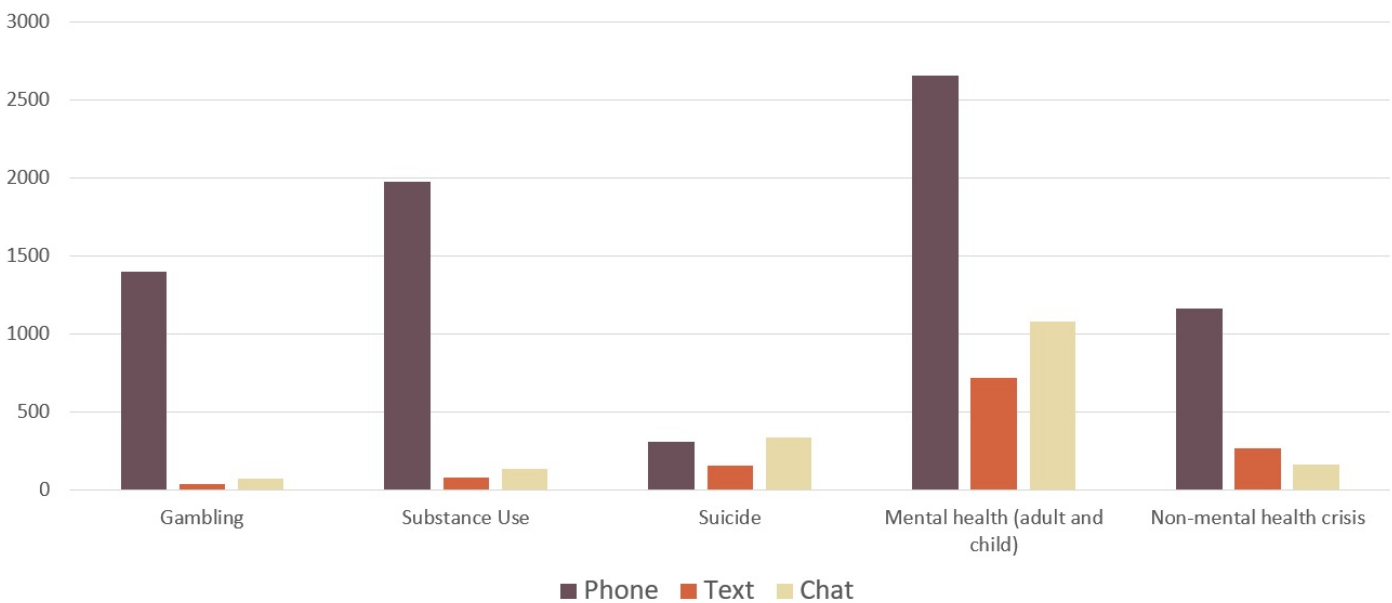


Figure 1: Total Your Life Iowa contacts by category and contact method.



### Iowa Contacts (phone, text, chat) = 8,160

Gambling, Substance Use, Suicide, Mental Health and Non-Mental Health Crisis calls for SFY 2020 from residents of Iowa

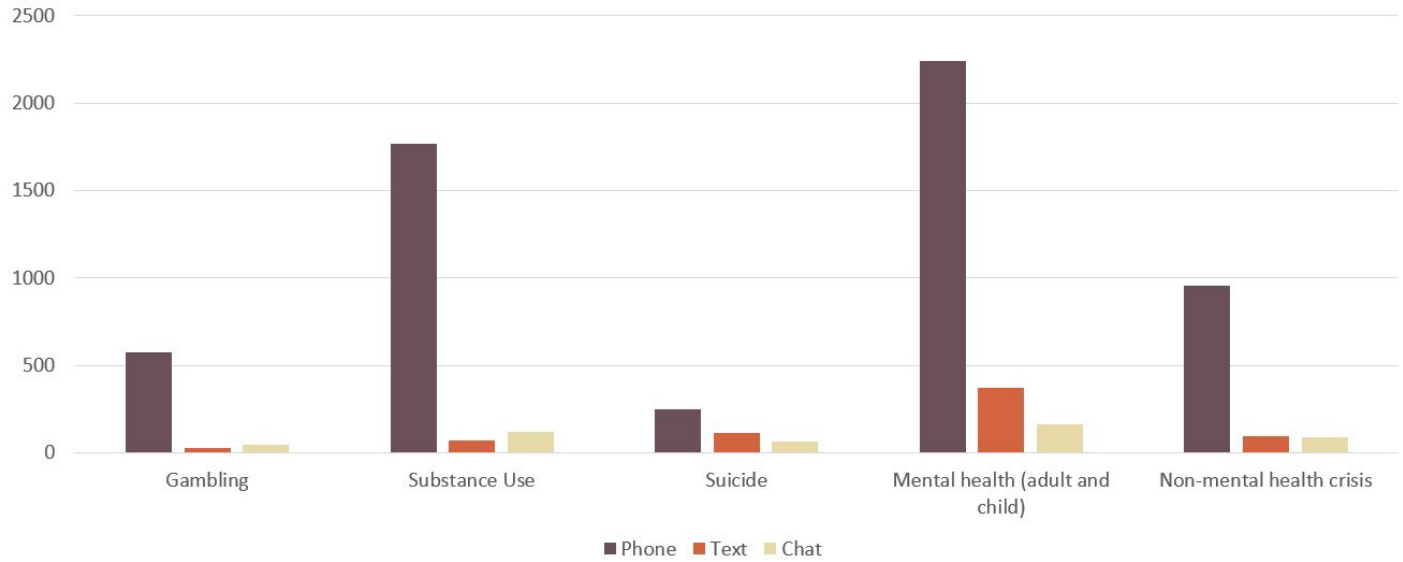


Figure 2: YLI Iowa-based contacts by category and contact method.

### Contact – Average Length

Gambling, Substance Use, Suicide, Mental Health and Non-Mental Health Crisis calls for SFY 2020

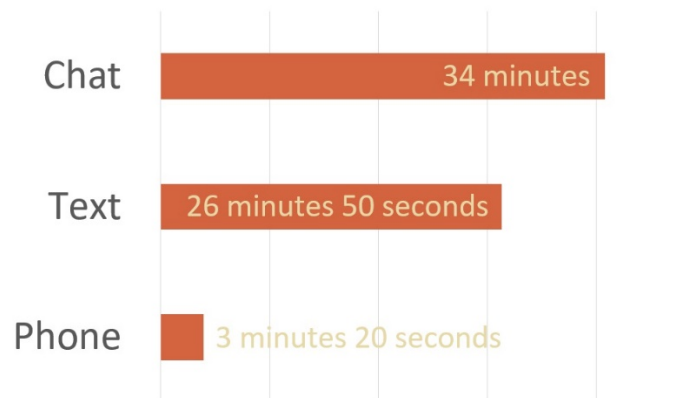


Figure 3: Contacts by average length.

### YLI Referrals

#### Total Referrals = 4,232

In SFY 2020, Your Life Iowa made 4,232 referrals to providers for problem gambling, substance use, mental health, out of state mental health and non-mental health crisis.

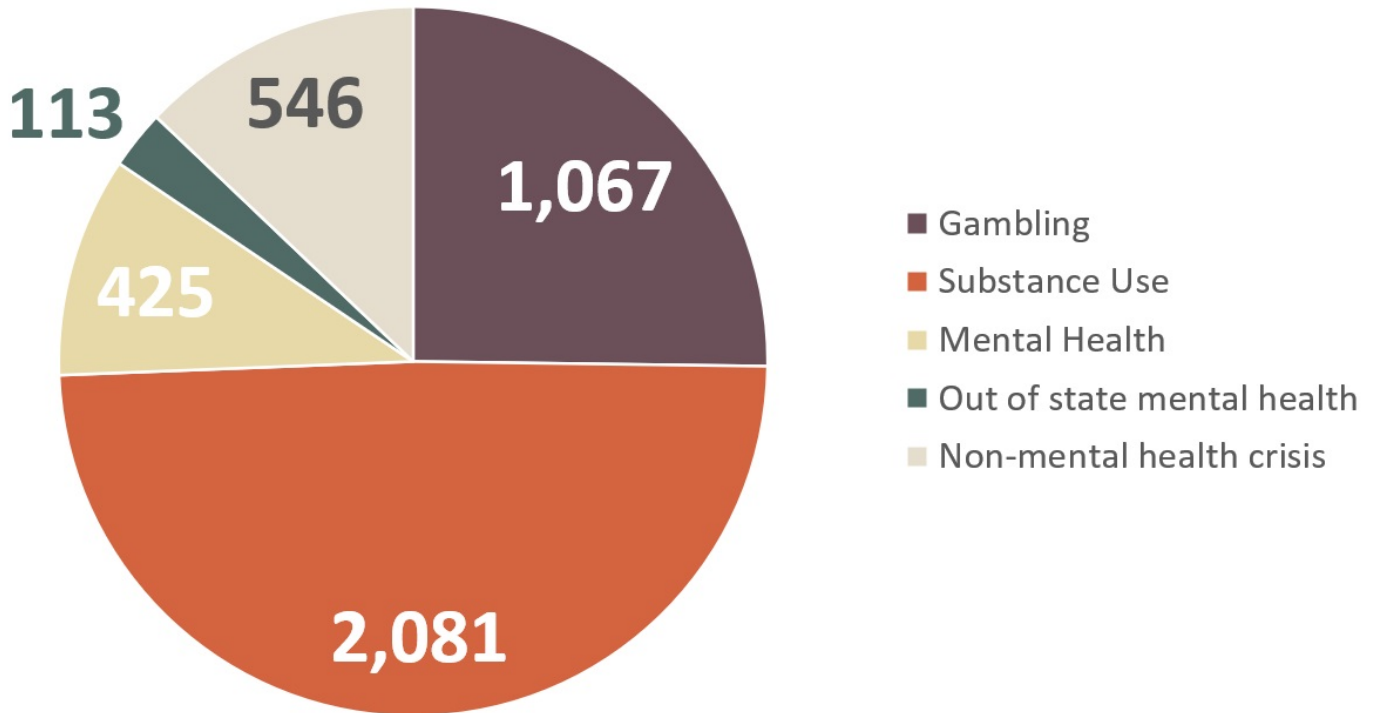


Figure 4: Referrals by type: gambling, substance use, mental health, out of state mental health and non-mental health crisis.

#### NEVER ALONE

Jane\* called Your Life Iowa and shared all the recent changes in her life and how ‘it was just too much.’ The Your Life Iowa counselor explored with her how she has ended a job due to her frustrations and how different her life has been. The counselor spent time listening and identified with Jane many feelings she was having about looking for a new job. They explored her options together, and the Your Life Iowa counselor provided her with emotional support and resources she could use for searching for a new job.

## Referrals to Iowa Provider Network providers = 2,472

In SFY 2020, Your Life Iowa made 2,472 referrals to providers in the Iowa Provider Network (IPN) for problem gambling and substance use.

Facility	Total Referrals
ADDS	96
ASAC	281
Broadlawns Medical Center	125
CADS	179
CFR	164
Crossroads Behavioral Health Services	16
Heartland Family Services	107
House of Mercy	185
Jackson Recovery Center	182
New Opportunities	15
Northeast Iowa Mental Health Center	16
Pathways Behavioral Healthcare	139
Prairie Ridge Behavioral Healthcare	103
Prelude Behavioral Services	481
Robert Young Center	41
SEIDA	39
SATUCI	32
SASC	66
UCS	115
Zion Recovery Services	90

Table 2: Iowa Provider Network referrals by facility.

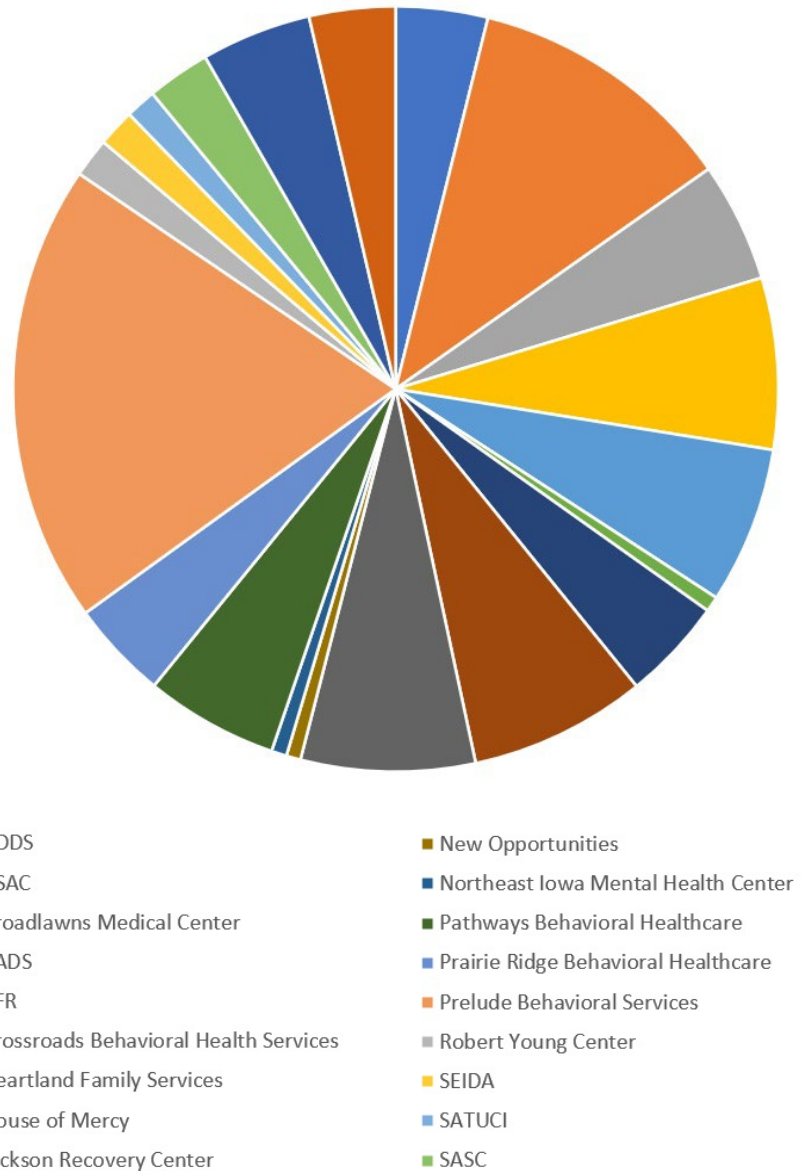


Figure 5: Iowa Provider Network referrals by facility.

## Your Life Iowa Strategic Foundation

In SFY 2020, a research and marketing initiative assessed relevance, awareness and overall appeal of using YLI to access information and support resources. The research consisted of 63 participants in focus groups across Iowa. The goals of the research project were:

1. **Find out what are some of the barriers people have to get support**
2. **What they think of the concept of Your Life Iowa, and**
3. **Develop the YLI the brand for continued and future use.**

With all of these topics coming together, a new **brand architecture** and strategic foundation evolved providing a foundation and direction for the future of YLI. A five-year plan is under development to leverage the information learned and formalize the vision and mission of YLI, as well as a deliberate marketing and operational approach to increase mass awareness of YLI and increase the number of persons able to access care for substance use, problem gambling, mental health, and suicide concerns.

## Qualitative Research

The methodology of the qualitative research used unaided exercises - participants used their own words to express opinions and their ideas in response to open-ended questions. It utilized additional research tools and exercises to uncover a person's deeply held expectations and values.

The research uncovered many findings that are an opportunity for YLI. Here are some of the findings:

- People don't know where they would start if they were seeking help for themselves or a loved one for these topics.
- They feel like they're alone on getting help and that people don't care.
- Multiple barriers/challenges to access help exist.
- Participants saw the value in the YLI concept.
- Participants saw the value of marketing to increase mass awareness.

In addition,

- The study found their preferred channels (call/text/chat/social media/print) for reaching out.
- Suggestions to overcome barriers/challenges to accessing help included:
  - Create a one-stop shop that's simple and easy to access
  - Increase awareness of the opportunities/tools to get help
  - Reduce stigma/discuss topics/normalize these problems so more and more people can come forward without feeling shame

YLI serves to address all of these issues by providing a single, go-to resource for individuals and their families to access when they or loved ones are struggling with alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health or suicidal thoughts.

### YLI Priority Messaging

Based on the focus group data, ZLR Ignition created three messaging priority concepts to address barriers to accessing services. The three message priorities are:

#### **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.**

#### **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.**

#### **GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH**

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

### YLI Logo

To strengthen the visual identity for the brand, ZLR developed the new YLI logo. Three logos were chosen by IDPH to be tested with the audience. This test was conducted over an online survey of 500 people across the state and their feedback and comments help IDPH choose the winner.

The new YLI logo launched in the spring of 2020 and utilized in new marketing materials, on social media and on the website.



Figure 6: Your Life Iowa logo unveiled in SFY 2020

### YLI Website

The Your Life Iowa website ([yourlifeiowa.org](http://yourlifeiowa.org)) provides tools and resources on the topics of gambling, alcohol, substance use, mental health and suicide for thousands of Iowa residents each year. With the new strategic foundation of YLI, and to keep up with the increasing demand, a new YLI is coming in early 2021. The website will include an improved user-friendly interface, new color themes and improved content and organization.

### SFY 2020 YLI Website Overview

<b>165,419</b> users	<b>164,757</b> new users	<b>208,688</b> sessions
<b>1.26</b> sessions per user	<b>327,932</b> page views	<b>00:52</b> average time on site

#### Yourlifeiowa.org Page Views

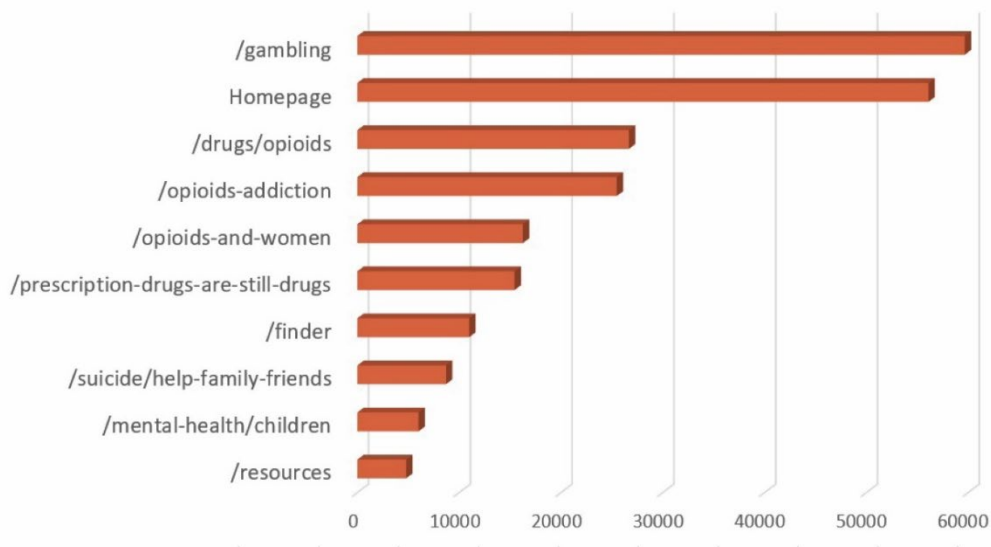


Figure 7: Number of page visits on top ten pages of yourlifeiowa.org in SFY2020.

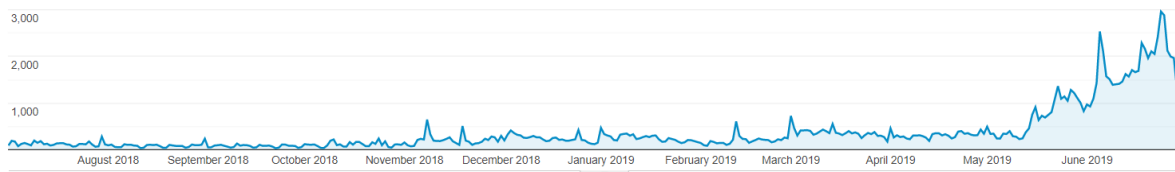
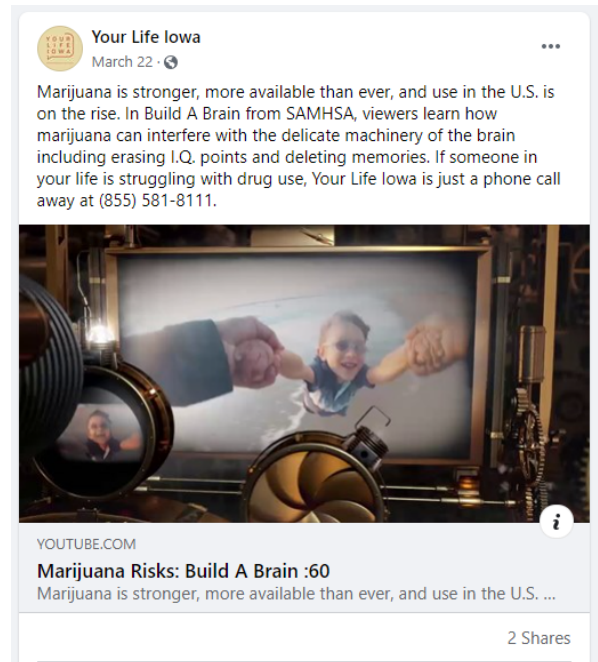


Figure 8: Daily traffic for yourlifeiowa.org in SFY 2020.

### YLI Social Media

Your Life Iowa maintained the Your Life Iowa Facebook page, publishing daily social media posts to share relevant information and encourage lowans to contact YLI for support. With an increase in paid social media advertising, we saw an increase in reach and engagement over SFY19. YLI monitored posts daily and responded to comments to increase engagement.

Daily Facebook posts focused on the three YLI messages of “You’re Not Alone,” “Judgment Free” and “Guide to Better Health” through the sharing of original graphics and content, reputable third party articles, videos and more. Each post was designed to educate users on YLI services and encourage them to seek support for YLI.



### SFY 2020 Social Media Overview

**21,290**  
organic reach

**2,517,045**  
paid reach

**13%**  
increase in page likes

## YLI Testimonials

### NON-JUDGMENTAL

#### Janet's Story

When Janet\* called the Your Life Iowa crisis line, she shared that she was feeling “nauseous and can’t do anything like housework.” She’d had an appointment with her doctor recently to discuss her depression but was still struggling. She needed support and encouragement to come up with ideas to feel better. The YLI counselor actively listened when Janet shared about getting a new medication and they explored if her nausea was a possible side effect of the new medication. Together, they also identified how her pet helps her manage her depression and how the Janet can spend time with the pet to manage her depression for the time. Janet and the YLI counselor developed a plan on how she could use coping skills and do her housework when she began to feel better, **empowering Janet to take steps to manage her mental health.**

### GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH

#### Miguel's Story

Miguel\* called the Your Life Iowa crisis line because he was feeling “trapped.” He explained that he experiences anxiety and depression and has been working with doctor to get the right medication combination. The YLI counselor empathized with Miguel on how overwhelming this can be. He expressed that he just wants to be normal and that he was at home with family but did not feel like they understand what he is feeling. Miguel shared that he has thoughts about wanting to die. **Together, they explored these thoughts and identified a safety plan.** Miguel identified coping skills he was going to use and shared he would call back if they began to struggle again.

### YOU'RE NEVER ALONE

#### Cheryl's Story

Cheryl\* called the Your Life Iowa crisis line because she was struggling with a relationship with a male friend and was unsure how to create healthy relationships. The Your Life Iowa counselor allowed her time to share her story about the relationship and validated Cheryl's feelings of confusion and frustration. Together, they explored how it is important for her to ask the friend about the confusing behaviors so she could have clarity and build positive, healthy relationships. The YLI counselor worked with Cheryl on **identifying ways she can manage her emotions** in the situation and identified how the scary it can be to talk to her friend. Cheryl agreed and said she was thankful for the time to discuss the situation.

\* Name changed to protect identity