

CREATING YOUTH-INFORMED SUBSTANCE USE CURRICULA FOR PEER SUPPORT WORKERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

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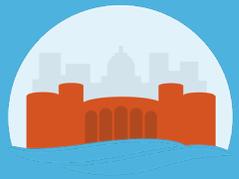


CFHA and SharedCare Annual Conference
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FACULTY DISCLOSURE

The presenters of this session **have NOT** had any relevant financial relationships during the past 12 months.



CONFERENCE RESOURCES

Slides and handouts shared by our conference presenters are available on <https://www.integratedcareconference.com/> and on the conference mobile app.

All sessions will be recorded and posted to <https://integratedcarelearning.talentlms.com/> shortly following the conference.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Our team would like to acknowledge that we are uninvited guests, working and living on the unceded, traditional territories of the xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sel̓ílʷitulh (Tsleil-waututh) Nations, and that the Experience Project has taken place on many different strong Indigenous Nations across what we now call British Columbia.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify best practices for engaging youth in research and curriculum development
- Define the needs and experiences of youth with lived/living experience of substance use and peer support workers
- Identify specific strategies for improving youth care experiences

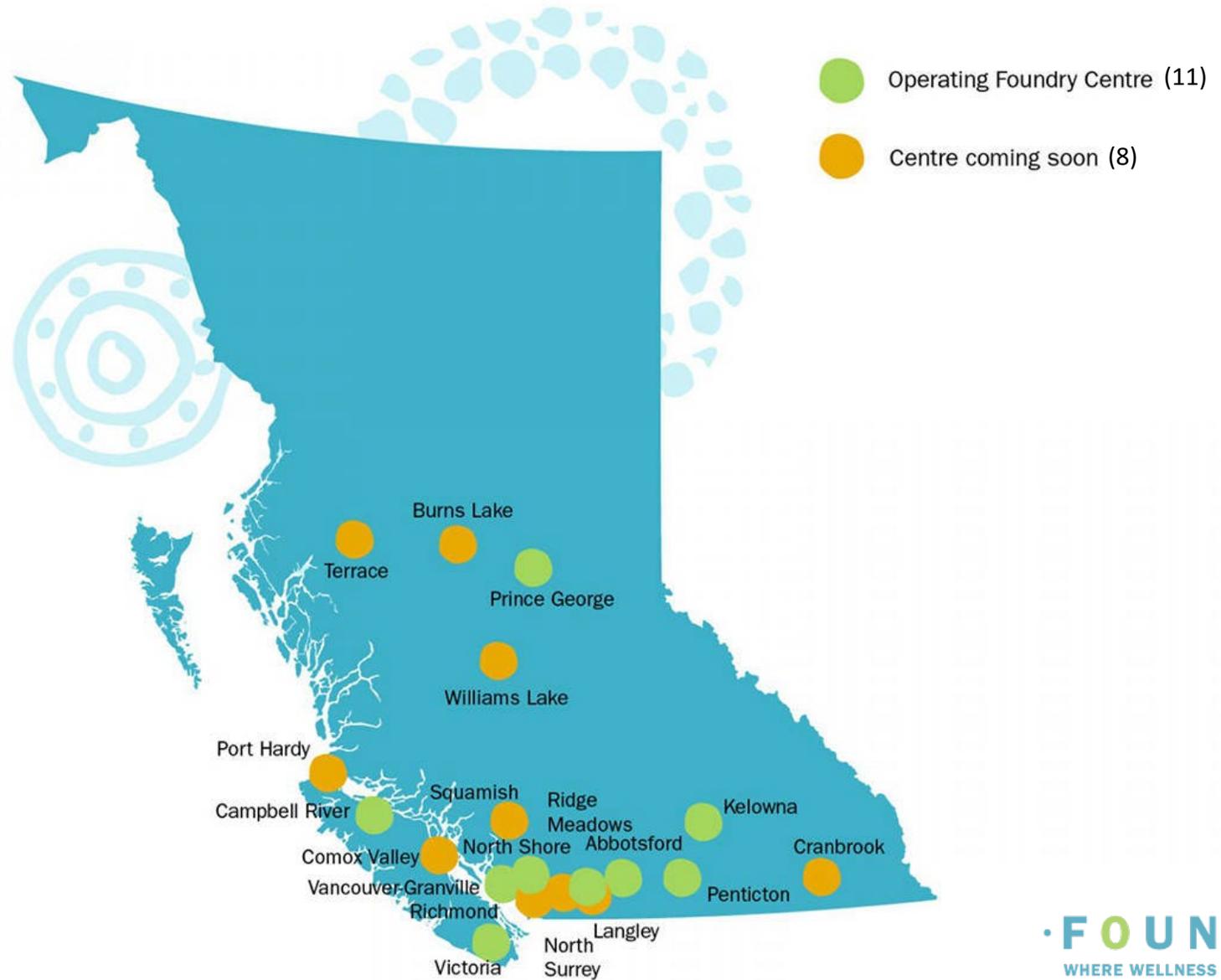


BACKGROUND: FOUNDRY

- Foundry centers provide **integrated health and social services** for young people ages 12-24 across BC
- **One-stop-shop** model to access:
 - Mental health care
 - Substance use services
 - Primary care
 - Social services
 - Youth and family peer supports
- Foundry Central Office leads the provincial initiative and supports the development of local centers



BACKGROUND: FOUNDRY



BACKGROUND: SUBSTANCE USE AMONG YOUTH

In North America, youth report using **alcohol, cannabis** and **illicit substance** use more than other age groups^{1,2}

In Canada (2017 data)¹:

Youth ages 15-19

57% used alcohol
19% used cannabis
4% used illicit substances*

Youth ages 20-24

83% used alcohol
33% used cannabis
10% used illicit substances*

Youth are also more likely to use more heavily and in riskier ways compared to their older counterparts and are more likely to experience harms^{1,3}

*Illicit substances include cocaine, crack, ecstasy, speed, methamphetamines, hallucinogens, and heroin



BACKGROUND: SUBSTANCE USE SERVICE ACCESS AMONG YOUTH

Youth are less likely to access substance use services. The 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported:

- only 6.7% of youth ages 12-25 received treatment*
- only 3% of youth perceived they had a need for treatment*

This gap is higher among youth of colour⁴

- Substance use treatment services are largely based on an adult model
- Youth face unique barriers to receiving treatment

*Treatment: specialty facility (e.g., hospitals, rehabilitation facility, or mental health center)



BACKGROUND: THE EXPERIENCE PROJECT

This project aims to:

- Understand youth experiences with substance use services and how these experiences can be improved
- Create **youth-informed** substance use training for peer support workers and other service providers who support youth
 - **Foundry**: Peer support training
 - **YWHO**: Service provider training



PROJECT TIMELINE & STRUCTURE

Youth4Youth Advisory Committee 

PHASE 1: Knowledge Gathering

1

Conduct interviews with

- youth
- peer support workers

6 Evidence summaries

Youth Research Assistants

PHASE 2: Curriculum Development

2

Develop substance use training for peer support workers

Youth4Youth members
Peer support workers
Project team

2

Adapt YWHO's substance use training for service providers

PHASE 3: Implementation & Evaluation

3

Curricula implementation & evaluation

Youth Peer Evaluators

RESEARCH METHODS

Approach

- Qualitative research
- Phenomenological approach

Data collection

- Demographic survey
- Open-ended interviews
- Interview experience survey

Data analysis

- Thematic analysis using an inductive approach (verbatim coding)
- Validation of themes and selection of quotes with youth research assistants

PHASE 1: Youth Experiences

Research Questions

1. How do young people **experience substance use services** in BC?
1. How can we **improve substance use services** for young people based on their experiences and recommendations?



RESEARCH METHODS

Population sample

30 young people

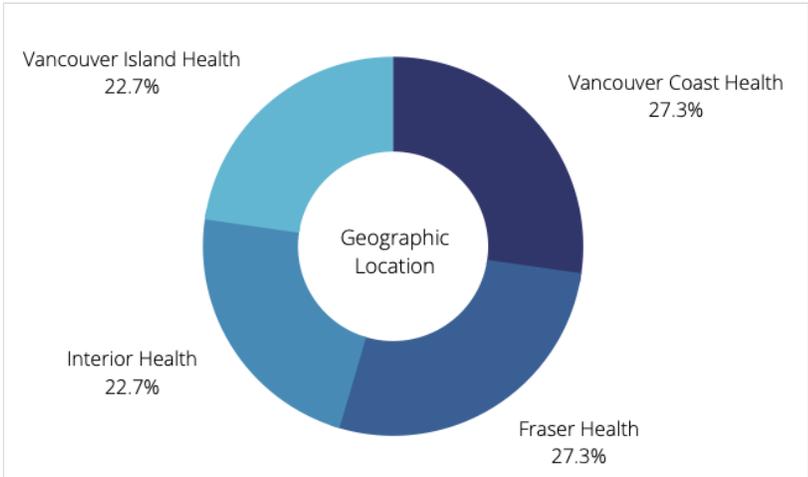
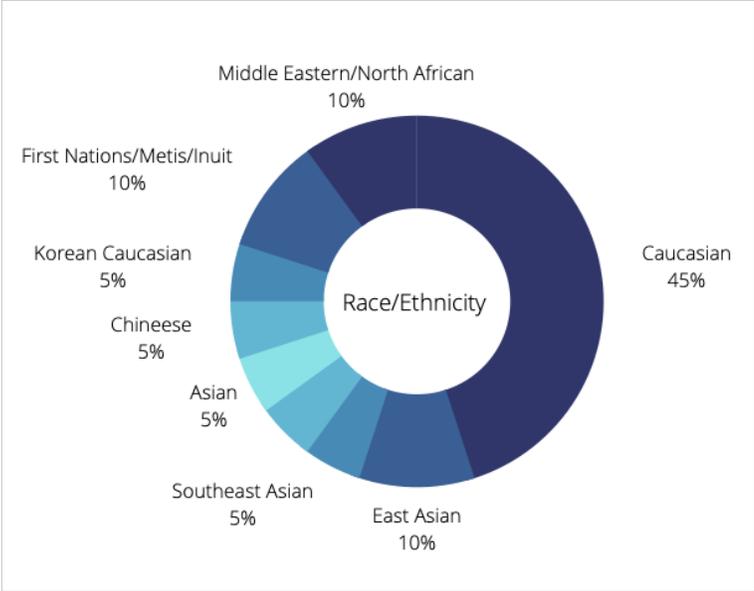
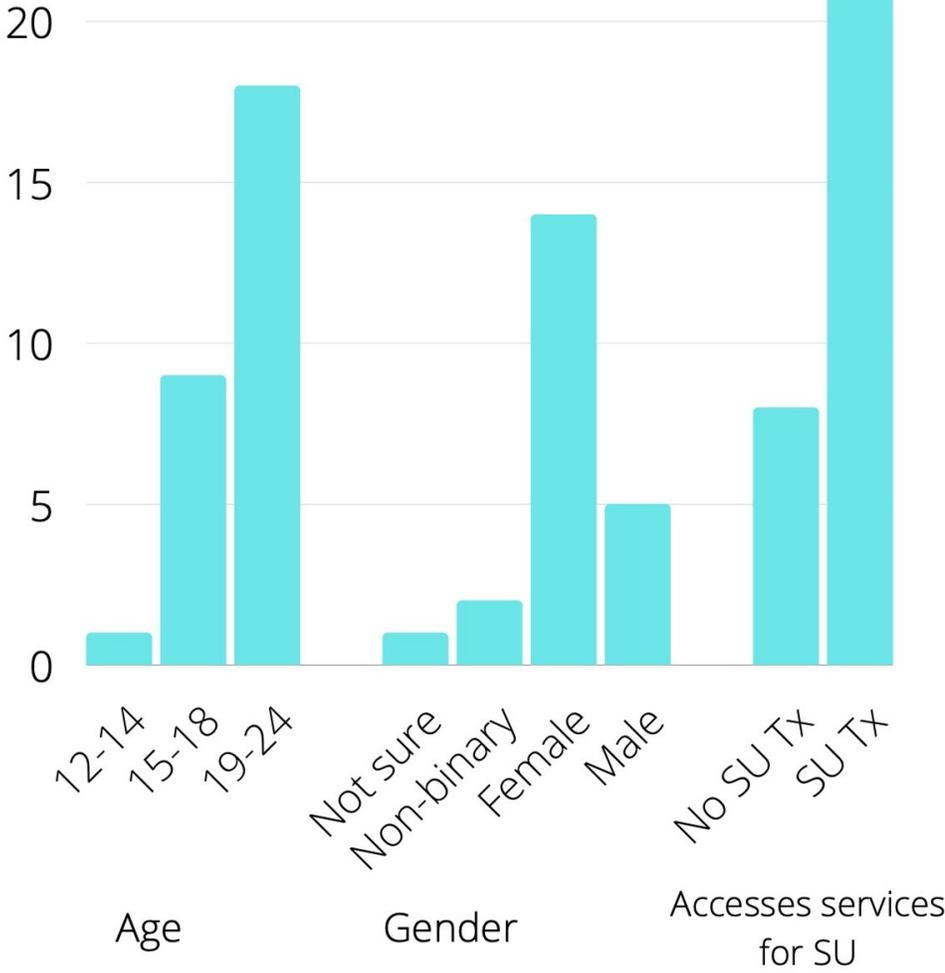
Eligibility criteria

Between 12-24 years old

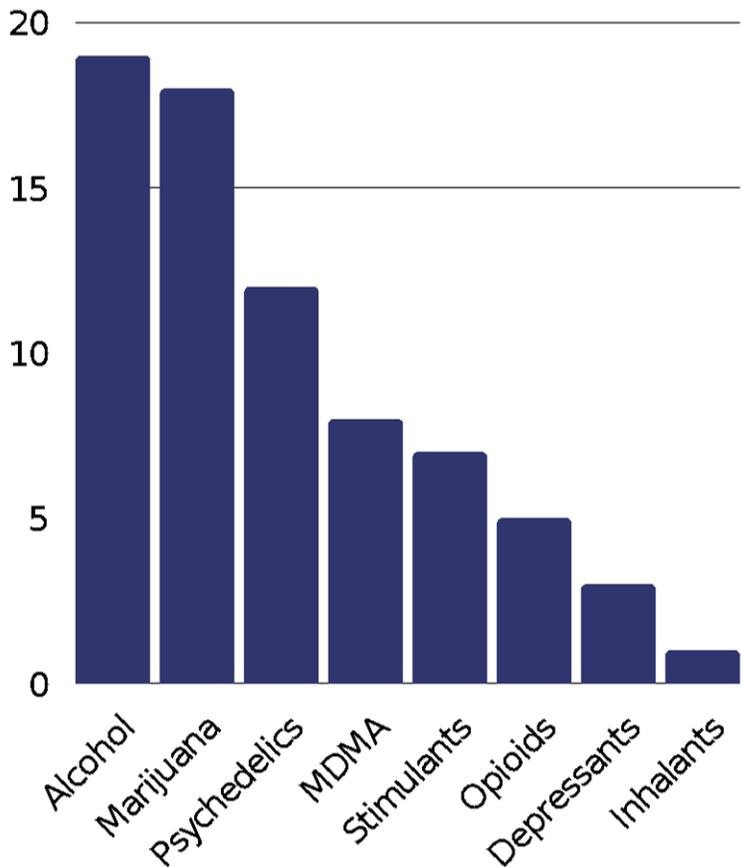
Living in British Columbia

Lived/living experience of substance use
(including alcohol, cannabis or illicit
substances)

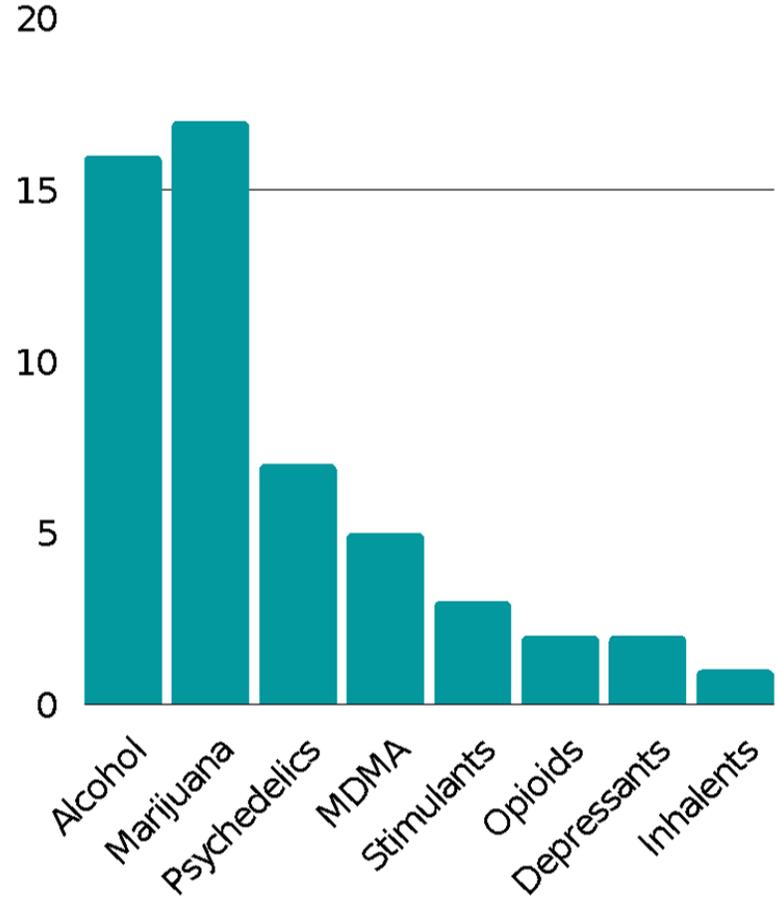
RESULTS: YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS



RESULTS: YOUTH SUBSTANCE USE



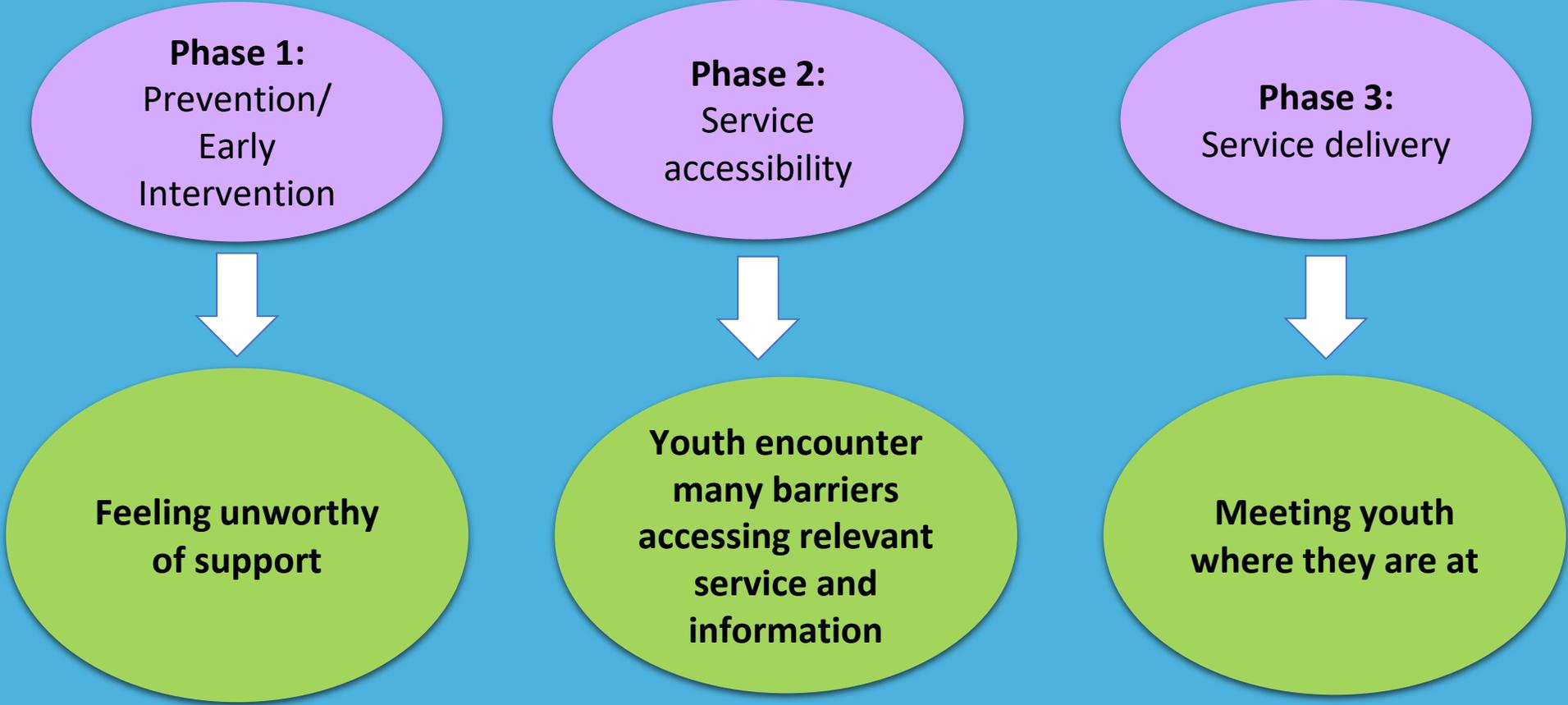
Substances used (lifetime)



Substances used (past 12-months)



RESULTS: SNAPSHOT OF MAJOR YOUTH EXPERIENCE THEMES



PREVENTION/EARLY INTERVENTION

**Feeling
unworthy of
support**

Youth perceived substance use disorder as harder substance use and being in crisis situations.

Youth feared they would take space away from other who needed it more or get laughed at/judged for accessing services they don't need.

Lack of conversations make it highly stigmatizing and challenging to know what constitutes as 'problematic' and when to reach out for support.

Youth feel like substance use messaging is not relevant to their experiences and that stimulant and marijuana use are often disregarded.

Youth feel the need to deal with issues on their own, not wanting to disappoint anyone or be stereotyped as an '*addict*', a '*bad person*' or a '*criminal*'.

FEELING UNWORTHY OF SUPPORT

"...when you express things to them [service providers], they shouldn't act shocked or disoriented, rather than like... This is something I deal with every day from people of all different kinds of personalities and identities. Rather than just being like, "Oh, well, okay. You're not... You're socioeconomically privileged. You do not experience discrimination, so you know, your life really can't be that bad. **Why are you struggling with this?**" Like, this is something that people whose parents are drug addicts suffer from, **not you**. And I was like, "Okay."

Youth (15-18)



SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY

Youth encounter many barriers accessing relevant service and information

Not knowing what services and supports are available or which services youth might benefit from.

Youth expressed a need for more information where they could access it easily, and they had to research information independently which had its own barriers:

- Not knowing what to look for or where to start
- Lack of information about services listed on websites
- Lack of service options available (counselling > rehab)

Barriers when trying to access services:

- Long wait times and limited hours of operations
- Transportation challenges
- Lack of service options outside of Vancouver
- Lack of affordable services and non-crisis service options
- Lack of connection between services

YOUTH ENCOUNTER MANY BARRIERS ACCESSING RELEVANT SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

“I feel like a lot of service providers don't take into account, like a lot of young people aren't going to tell them the full extent of their problems, so they only give you resources for what they think is useful for you. A lot of the time, when I first went for support, they recommend things like, "Here's a meditation option that's gonna cost like \$70 per hour." And they wouldn't tell me about, you know, "This is a free counselling service that you can call." And they didn't bother talking to me about crisis lines or like any support lines for anything...they didn't tell me about any of that because they were like, "**Oh, you're not in a crisis.**" So, that was just so stupid to understand why they can't just give you a pamphlet with every resource there is and let you decide, or... And a lot of the time, if you call someone and they can't help you with it, especially at the Foundry or like other organizations, they'll send you someone else where they can help. Whereas with the doctor, if they don't give you all the information, you only get like two people to call, and you call one of them, it's too expensive; you call the other one, it doesn't work, and you have to schedule another appointment with your doctor and be like, "Okay, that didn't work. What now?" Whereas when you get the whole network and the list of options, **you're able to choose for yourself.**”

Youth (15-18)



SERVICE DELIVERY

**Meeting
youth where
they are at**

Service experiences varied depending on interactions with care providers:

- Some who *'genuinely listened'* and *'took their time to make a connection'*
- Others who were *'uncompassionate'* and *'didn't understand where they were coming from'*

Youth want *'to be treated with the same respect and dignity like anyone'*, however often felt treated like children.

Youth who did not fit a certain stereotype described not being taken seriously and their issues being pushed aside

Youth desired holistic care, where all aspects of their life were considered rather than solely focusing on their substance use.

SERVICE DELIVERY

**Meeting
youth where
they are at**

Youth appreciated service providers who focused on accomplishments rather than abstinence, rejecting the *'all or nothing'* approach:

- Not all youth want to abstain from substances
- Relapses are often a source of shame
- More attainable and flexible goals reduced pressures and increased confidence

Youth were often more comfortable talking to someone who could relate and had their own experiences, which helped them feel more *'normal'*

This included peer support, friends, support groups and online forums such as Reddit.

Being able to connect with someone of similar age, gender and race/ethnicity also generally made it easier to relate

MEETING YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE AT

“I felt like I wasn't being treated like a person a lot of the time, and that everyone wanted to make the choices for me. And they weren't, they were very strongly suggesting it and pushing me in that direction, which I did not appreciate. And even just for an example, with rehab, it was my choice but I was getting pushed so hard, I had you know all these application forms coming at me and a bunch of texts from counsellors and it just kept getting pushed and pushed and pushed until **I felt like it was the only option.** And I didn't like that because it didn't make me feel like I was part of my own recovery process.”

Youth (19-24)



MEETING YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE AT

“I don't want to be treated like I have a drug addiction. I just want to be treated like **a teenager who is stressed out and needs help.**”

Youth (15-18)



PHASE 1: Peer Support Worker Experiences

Research Questions:

1. What role does **peer support** play in a young person's substance use journey?
1. How can we **better support peer support workers** who are working with young people with lived/living experience?



RESEARCH METHODS

Peer support worker: someone who provides support based on their own lived experience.

Population sample

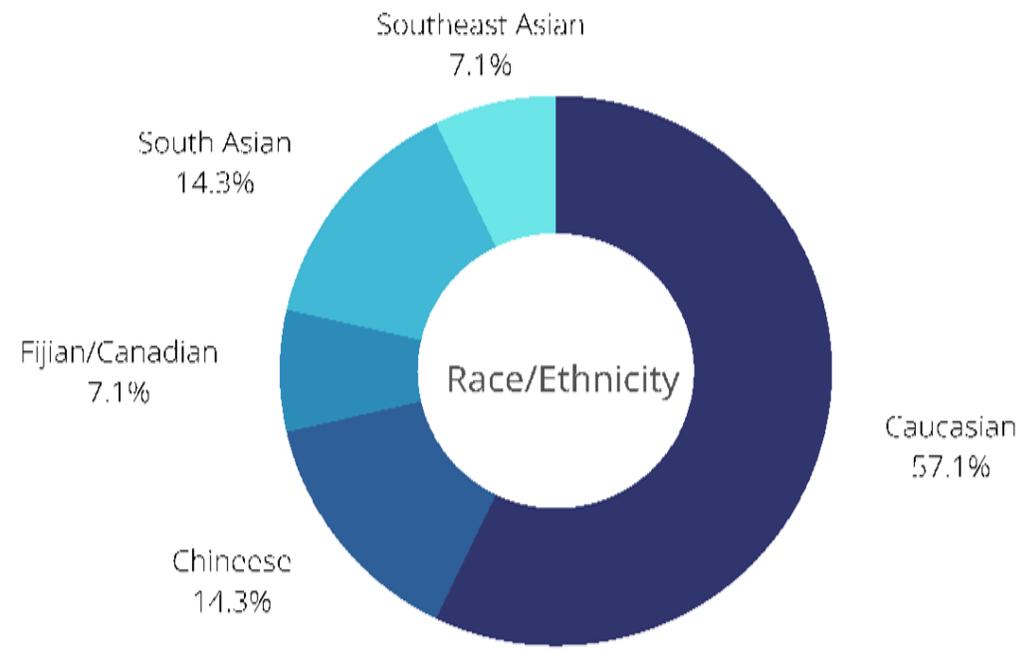
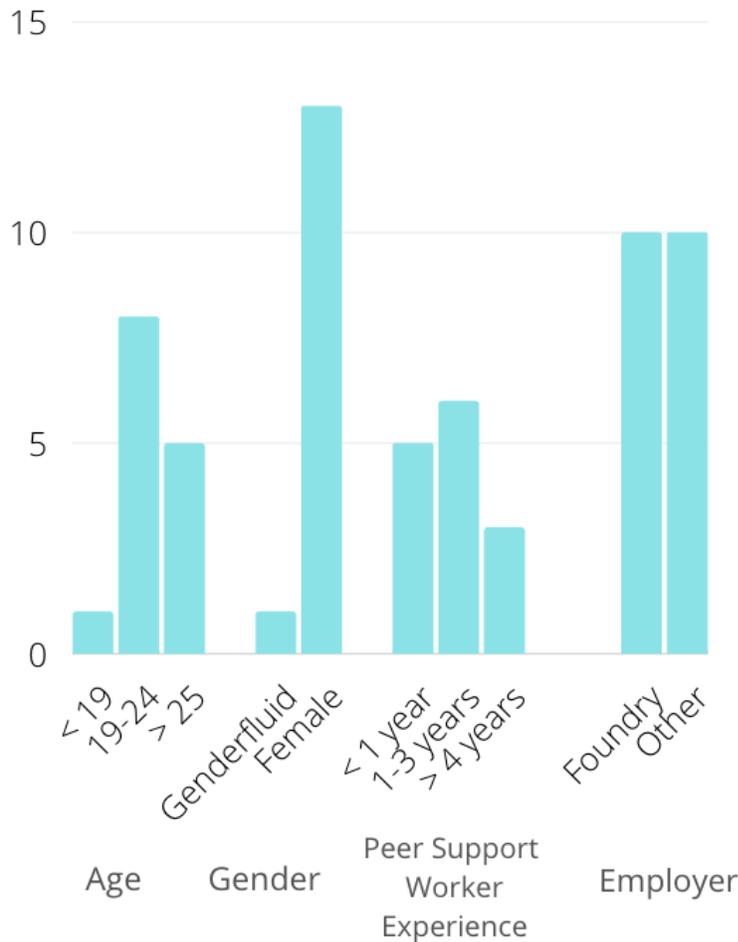
20 peer support workers

Eligibility criteria

Currently a peer support worker in BC
Provides peer support to young people (12-24)



PEER SUPPORT WORKER DEMOGRAPHICS



RESULTS: PEER SUPPORT WORKERS EXPERIENCES – PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

What role does peer support play in a young person's substance use journey and how can we better support them?

Training Components

- Scenario examples & stories
- Interactive components
- Debrief sessions with colleagues

What to do in crisis situations

- How to support more at-risk youth
- What to do when abuse is reported or risk of harm
- Self-care

Provide holistic care

- Understanding SDOH
- Cultural differences & family dynamics
- Active listening & validation
- Harm reduction

KEY ACTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUTH SERVICE EXPERIENCES

Policy makers: Standardize peer support into collaborative care models

Organizations: Increase opportunities for flexible service delivery (e.g., drop-ins, later service hours, low-cost services, online and anonymous services, transportation support, and choice of provider)

Service providers: Provide holistic and patient-centered care and complete training to foster more supportive relationships with youth

Action to all: Involve youth with lived/living experience as a central voice in decision-making that affects them



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Youth4Youth Advisory Committee

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QUESTIONS?

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SESSION EVALUATION

Use the CFHA mobile app to complete the evaluation for this session.



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