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An Overview of **Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO)**: Measurement-Based Care, Data Snapshots, and Integrated Supports for Indigenous Youth

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youth
wellness
hubs
ONTARIO

wellness
your way



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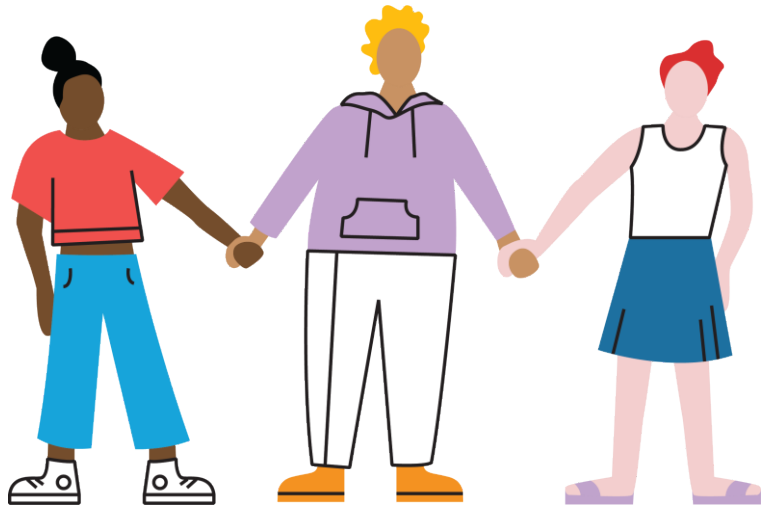
YWHO Land Acknowledgment (English)

The YWHO Provincial Office (CAMH) is situated on lands that have been occupied by First nations for millennia; lands rich in civilizations with knowledge of medicine, architecture, technology, and extensive trade routes throughout the Americas.

In 1860, the site of CAMH appeared in the Colonial Records Office of the British Crown as the council grounds of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, as they were known at the time. Today, Toronto is covered by the Toronto Purchase, Treaty No. 13 of 1805 with the Mississauagas of the Credit. Toronto is now home to a vast diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis who enrich this city.

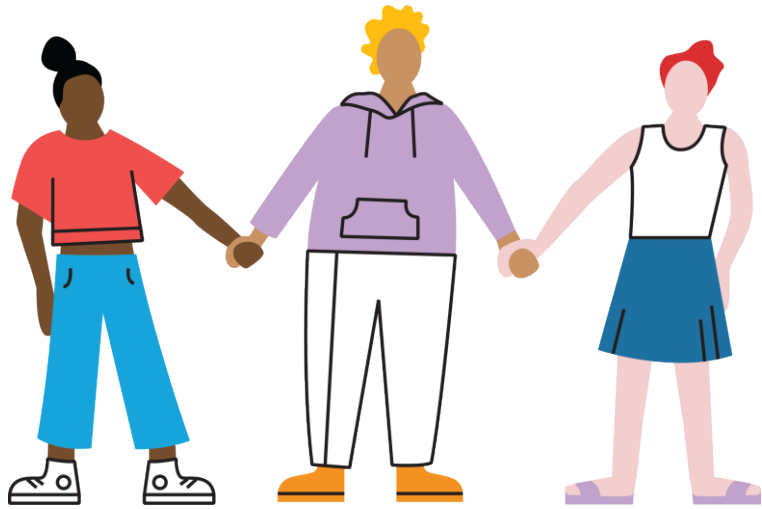
YWHO and CAMH are committed to reconciliation. We will honour the land through programs and places that reflect and respect its heritage. We will embrace the healing traditions of the Ancestors, and weave them into our caring practices. We will create new relationships and partnerships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and share the land and protect it for future generations.





Learning Objectives:

1. Identify how to access Integrated Youth Services (IYS) in Ontario.
2. Describe co-creation frameworks which can be used to design service models alongside youth, with a specific focus on Indigenous Youth engagement.
3. Apply public health prevention strategies in work with youth.
4. Discuss how to implement an integrated model of care for mental health, substance use and community support services.



Agenda:

- 1. YWHO Model**
- 2. Indigenous Engagement and Wellness Programming**
- 3. Measurement Based Care**
- 4. Data Snapshot**
- 5. Experience of Working with Community-Led Youth Wellness Hub Sites**

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Acknowledgement and Gratitude

1. More than 1000 youth and family members engaged over the past 10+ years
2. Hundreds of service users, providers, policy makers, and system leaders
3. Dozens of researchers and other academic colleagues



What is YWHO?



Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO) is an integrated youth services initiative and learning health system for improving youth service experiences and outcomes through access, measurement, and tailored, integrated high quality services.

Established in 2017, YWHO's aim is to address gaps in the youth mental health system by providing fully integrated youth service for youth aged 12-25, offering:

- Mental health support
- Substance use support
- Primary care services
- Education support
- Employment services
- Housing support
- Peer support
- Outreach
- System navigation
- Other community/social programming



Local YWHO Networks



Integrated youth services (IYS) model

YWHO delivers services through multidisciplinary collaboration across care providers, services and sectors. This model aims to:

- Reduce transitions
- Remove barriers
- Improve access care as a walk-in model
- Facilitate early intervention
- Emphasize age-appropriate evidence-based care

Integration of...

Space: co-location of services, shared work spaces

Processes: Joint service consent form, records, team meetings

Services: Integrated service options, co-led treatment groups, care navigation, outreach, peer support

Governance: Structure, MOU/agreements, shared decision-making & accountability

32 YWHO Hub Networks

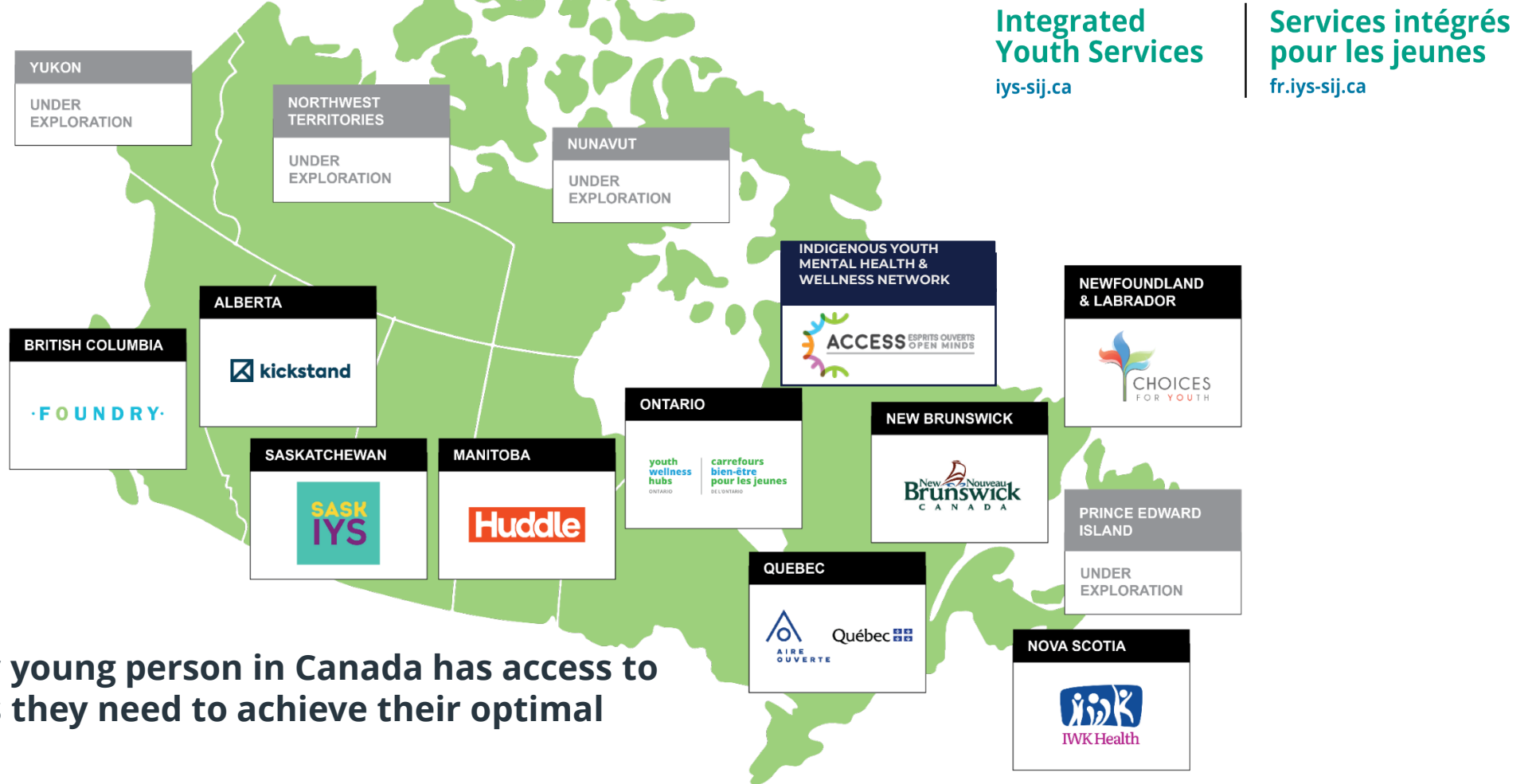
There are 32 YWHO Hub Networks in Ontario serving communities in diverse geographic and cultural contexts, including Indigenous, Francophone, rural, urban, and culturally diverse areas.

www.youthhubs.ca

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IYS – Creating a pan-Canadian Youth Mental Health and Substance Use Learning Health System



Vision: Every young person in Canada has access to the supports they need to achieve their optimal outcomes

**** Oversight is provided by individual provincial and territorial governments and regional networks.**

YWHO Provincial Office

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MOH funds the YWHO Provincial Office located at CAMH as the backbone of YWHO and the provincial network, providing oversight and fidelity monitoring of all YWHs.

As the backbone, YWHO PO:

- Supports the implementation and sustainability of the provincial network
- Collects common measures and maintains common data platform (My Wellness Passport) used by YWHs
- Monitors youth outcomes and provincial trends
- Supports knowledge mobilization and measurement-based care across the provincial network
- Oversees funding of YWHO sites on behalf of the province, monitors site budgets and financial reporting.
- Provides advice to government regarding current issues and trends in youth mental health, substance use, and wellness.





YWHO Model and Core Components

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YWHO Key Features

Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario is a model of Integrated Youth Services (IYS), offering a continuum of developmentally-appropriate, transdiagnostic services for youth aged 12-25.

- Emphasis on transition-age youth
- Common branding and in youth-friendly, high traffic locations
- Youth co-create responsive and developmentally appropriate programming
- Skills and well-being services are co-designed by youth and intentionally attract youth to the hub, build community, reduce stigma, and facilitate connections to clinical staff
- Youth complete electronically delivered standardized measures every session

Youth Wellness Teams

1

Mental Health and Substance Use Clinician

Provide high quality mental health/substance use interventions.

2

Nurse Practitioner/Primary Care

Provide full range of health care, including support with mental health, sleep, sexual health and other physical health needs.

3

Care Navigator

Work to proactively link/warmly transfer youth to YWHO partners or external service providers, facilitate continued engagement of youth at YWHO and continuity of care between all service providers.

4

Peer Support

Provide individual and group support services that draw on lived experience and recovery.

5

Youth Wellness Facilitator

Create and maintain a developmentally appropriate, non-stigmatizing, safe, and welcoming hub atmosphere, gather information for service determination using YWHO intake processes and standardized forms, engage with youth to explain (and support) measurement-based care.

YWHO Core Components



Evidence has shown that the six core components of YWHO are an essential and indispensable part of delivering services to youth and young people. The YWHO Provincial Office collects measures* from the hubs to monitor the hub adherence to the model.

Youth Engagement

Empowers youth and families to make decisions about their care by embedding their voice at all levels

Integrated Governance

Strategic collaboration between youth and service provider network to manage resources and organize service delivery

Accessible

A comprehensive array of services offered in a one-stop-shop model of care – everything youth need under one roof

Inclusive & Culturally Diverse Services

Services that respond to the health beliefs, practices, and cultural and linguistic needs of diverse youth

Integrated Service Delivery

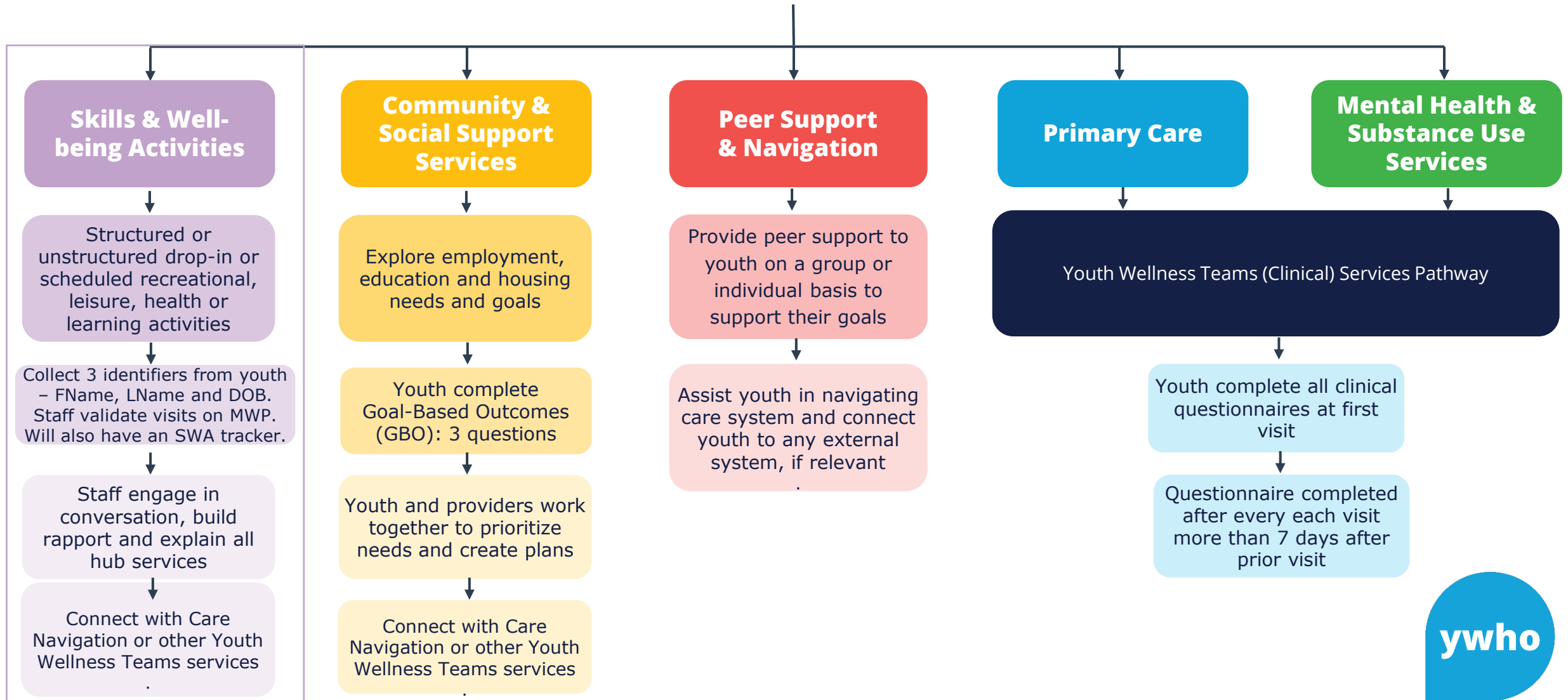
Integration, co-location, and a stepped-care model of service through a single, youth-friendly access point

Measurement-based Care

Practice of routine collection of standardized measures to guide collaborative care decisions with youth and improve care.

*YWHs report to YWHO PO on more than 166 indicators across the six core components, demonstrating fidelity to the YWHO model.

YWHO Service Options



Basic Needs



Transportation:

Offering bus tokens and transport using Hub Van.



Food:

Hampers, emergency food pantry, snack bag program, and snacks and meals in the space.



Hygiene:

Youth can access a variety of hygiene items in the washrooms. Hygiene kits for youth. Access to showers and laundry.



Connectivity:

Phones, plans, and computers to help stay connected to services.

Basic Needs



Traditional Medicines:

Sage, sweet grass, tobacco, bear root, and cedar. Youth can take what they need and are supported to smudge at any time.



Gender Affirming Supports:

TransTape, and chest binding materials, name change support, peer support groups.



Clothing:

Donated clothing is available to young people in the space as needed.



ID Supports

Support youth and families in applying for replacement birth certificates and IDs. In-house ID bank so that we can keep IDs safe and accessible for young people.

Clinical Services Model

Clinical screening tools and assessment help to inform the services that youth receive in addition to clinical judgment and discussions with youth and their families

LOW INTENSITY

- Psychoeducation
- Solution-focused brief therapy
- Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) (1-5 sessions)
- Individual or group peer support
- Care navigation

MODERATE INTENSITY

- Evidence-based structured psychotherapy for mental health concerns (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) skills, CBT; 6-12 sessions)
- Evidence-based group treatment for substance use/concurrent disorder concerns (MET, CBT, DBT; 6-12 sessions)
- Family support
- Supported education/employment/housing, if relevant

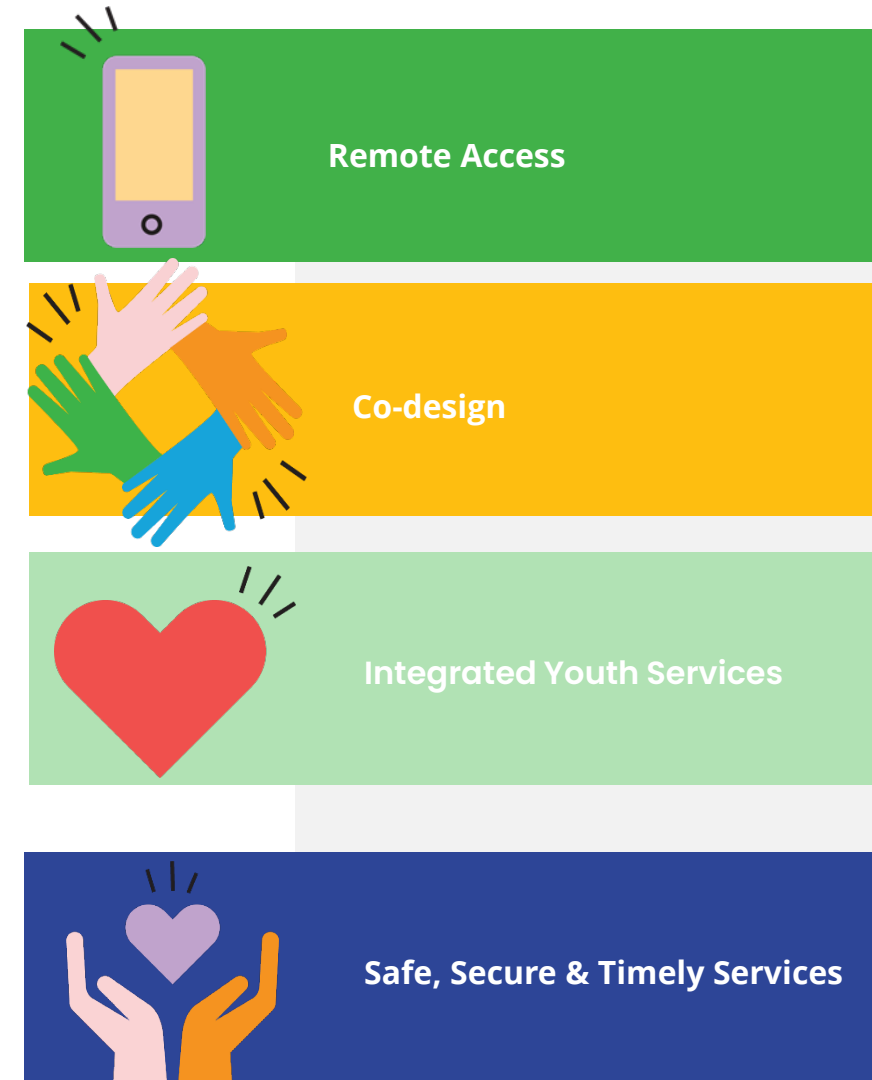
HIGH INTENSITY

- Psychiatric response (telepsychiatry or in-person)
- Medication consult
- Access to crisis supports
- Supported linkage to higher intensity services (e.g., long term psychotherapy, day treatment, inpatient, addiction medicine, specialist addiction treatment, withdrawal support)

YWHO Virtual Hub

The [YWHO Virtual Hub](#) is an innovative, purpose-built, web-based virtual service platform that enables youth aged 12-25 years to receive access to high quality integrated youth services offered virtually.

Led by YWHO Provincial Office and YWHO Algoma (Algoma Family Services)





Snowy YWHO Kenora!



**Wayfinding at YWHO
Brampton**

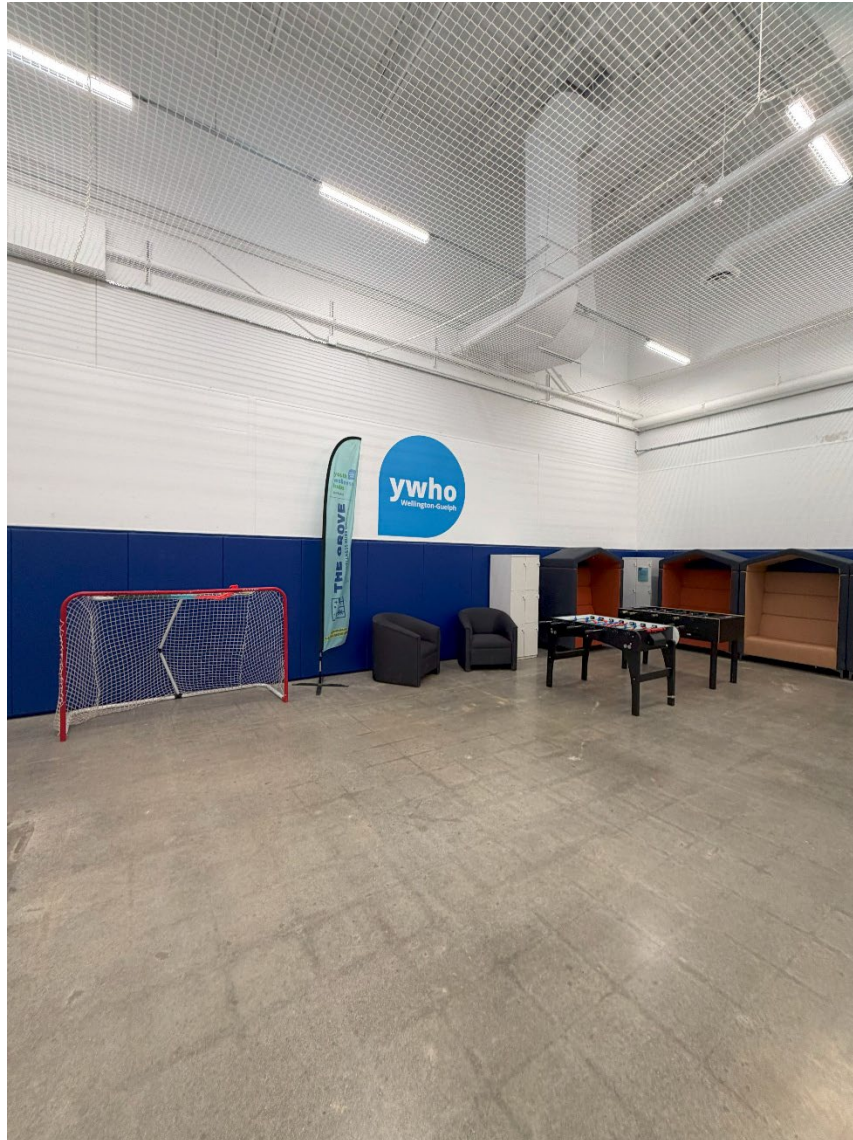


**Seven Grandfather Teachings at
YWHO North Hastings**

**Welcoming Space at
YWHO Niagara**



Youth-designed Activity Space - YWHO Wellington-Guelph



Primary Care Space – YWHO North Hastings



1-1 Spaces - YWHO WG



YWHO Windsor-Essex





Indigenous Engagement and Implementation Considerations



The YWHO Provincial Indigenous Youth & Family Advisory Circle (PIYFAC) Five Priorities

Established in 2020, the PIYFAC Five Priorities provides guidance to direct work of the YWHO Provincial Office and hub networks across the province. YWHO will continue to implement and evaluate the PIYFAC Five Priorities in collaboration with youth, family members and hub partners.

Priority 1: Training for YWHO Staff

- Creating awareness of Indigenous peoples' history of intergenerational trauma
- Participating in cultural awareness, anti-oppression and anti-racism training (such as San'yas)
- Incorporating Indigenous wellness as part of any mental health training and workshop

Priority 2: Collaborating with other Organizations and Communities

- Collaborating with local Indigenous communities, schools, and Indigenous-led organizations to provide services
- Provide wrap around service for Indigenous youth in culturally grounded supports
- Inter-community exchange – creating opportunities for youth to learn traditions, languages & recipes from other Indigenous communities
- Supporting youth who are aging out of programs and services

Priority 3: Youth-Centred Supports

- Focusing on prevention and strengths-based approaches
- Empowering Indigenous youth with leadership opportunities
- Creating opportunities for land-based, language, and cultural learning
- Education and support for Indigenous youth involved with the justice system
- Indigenous-specific youth crisis and substance use supports with a focus on harm reduction
- Creating supports for 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous youth
- Support for youth who transition from First Nation communities to urban areas
- Providing a supply of traditional medicines at the Hub

Priority 4: Broadening Understanding of Circle of Care

- Recognizing and establishing support from folks such as Elders, Aunties, and Uncles in a youth's healing journey
- Creating supports for young parents
- Organizing healing opportunities for families and parental support

Priority 5: Increase Indigenous Representation among YWHO Hub Staff

- Prioritizing Indigenous representation at the hub sites
- Hiring employees with lived experience



Implementation Considerations for Supporting Indigenous Youth and Communities

- Process of working with First Nations communities and hubs supporting larger populations of Indigenous youth includes significant time understanding community strengths and needs and a focus on relationship building – with Provincial Office and with other hubs.
- Complete review of the YWHO model (staffing structure, Core Components, Minimum Data Set (My Wellness Passport), adapted Funding Agreements/Data Sharing Agreements. Allowing hubs the opportunity to suggest changes needed to implement in community or needs not represented through current implementation approach.
- More start-up time needed – this work needs to be specific to each community and their needs.
- More in-person time allocated for implementation support and relationship building within community.
- Must be connected to other partners outside of community – whole community/regional approach.

Lessons learned leading to a better way of working with all hubs

Structures to Support Indigenous Youth

First Nations Led On-reserve

- Community led and driven hub network
- Example: Sagamok Anishnawbek
- Situated between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie
- Considerations to support additional nations as part of the Robinson Huron Treaty
- Interested in working collaboratively as a broader regional approach

First Nations Led Off-reserve

- Indigenous-led agency as Network Lead working alongside other community partners
- Example: Kenora
- 15 First Nations Served by Kenora Chiefs Advisory
- 407,193 km² - covers 38% of the province's area
- Majority of youth accessing the hub identify as First Nations

Integrated Governance Partner

- Non-Indigenous led Network Lead with Indigenous-led agency as community partner
- Example: Thunder Bay
- Thunder Bay is home to the largest First Nation, Métis and Inuit population in Canada
- Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School serves approx. 20 First Nations in Northwestern Ontario

Equity Focused Core Component Indicators

- Diverse youth and family engagement that is representative of the communities served. Strategies in place to engage youth with diverse perspectives, skills, and abilities, and socio-demographic characteristics.
- Integrated governance including representation of leaders with background in health equity and that reflect the diversity of the community.
- Physical space reflective of local community - room for smudging and other cultural activities.
- Equitable and inclusive access to remote services.
- Inclusive and culturally diverse services that reflect population groups.
- Culturally appropriate and safe supports for Indigenous youth (see next slide for more detail).
- Hub network employs equity focused hiring practices to build a team of service providers from diverse groups and cultural backgrounds that reflect the diversity of the populations living in the region.
- Understanding service reach and applying equity-related data.
- Clinical outcome data mapped against sociodemographic data at the group level to identify and respond to disparities in outcomes.

Example Programming within Hubs

- Elder support
- Indigenous clinicians
- Cultural programming, workshops and community events: Healing Lodge, drumming circles, and Anishinaabemowin language sharing
- Indigenous youth support groups
- Land-based healing: feasts, full moon ceremonies, equine therapy, Right to Play, counselling on the land instead of in offices
- PreVenture for Indigenous communities



How Does the YWHO PO Support Indigenous Wellness

- Implementation support – dedicated implementation support for communities with larger populations of Indigenous youth, implementation support on as needed basis for all hubs
- Youth, family member, Elder and Knowledge Keeper engagement – Provincial Indigenous Youth and Family Advisory Circle (PIYFAC)
- Data governance strategy development and dedicated data reviews
- Partnership development – local, provincial, national and international
- *Led by: Implementation Specialists (x2), Youth Engagement Specialist & Manager of Equity and Engagement*



Measurement-Based Care

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Measurement-Based Care

Measurement- based care (MBC):

- Practice of routinely gathering structured information through standardized measures to guide collaborative care decisions with youth and improve care.
- A standardized approach to care by helping to ensure all youth experience the same quality of youth-centered care.

MBC is all about..

- Building a stronger partnership between youth and care provider
- Empowering youth to take an active role in their care
- Tracking and seeing changes over time
- Tailoring youth's treatment plan to meet their needs



My Wellness Passport

- My Wellness Passport is the data collection platform used across YWHO sites to collect information and data to inform measurement-based care.
- Provides an interactive method of data collecting
- Each YWHO site collects the same measurement-based care fields which are part of the Minimum Data set (MDS).
- Using a standardized approach to care helps ensure all youth experience the same quality of youth-centered care, no matter which hub they visit.





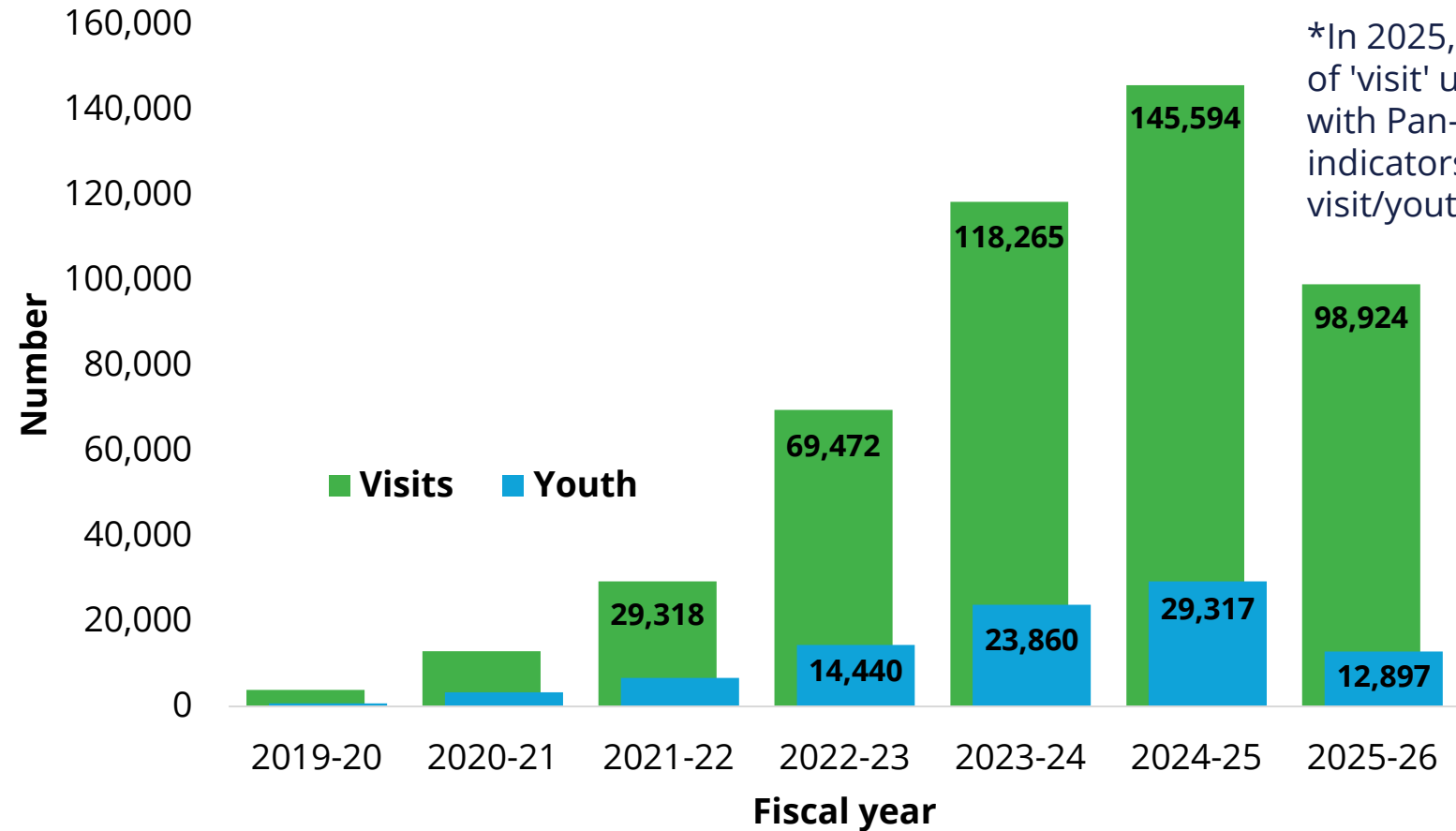
Data Snapshot

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Visits and Youth since opening

478,000+
YWHO service
visits

91,000+
youth†

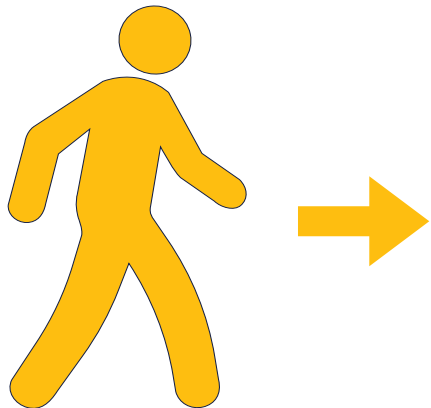


*In 2025, the definition of 'visit' updated to align with Pan-Canadian IYS indicators: one visit/youth/day

Timeframe: 01/08/2019 – 31/03/2026
†includes actual and estimates

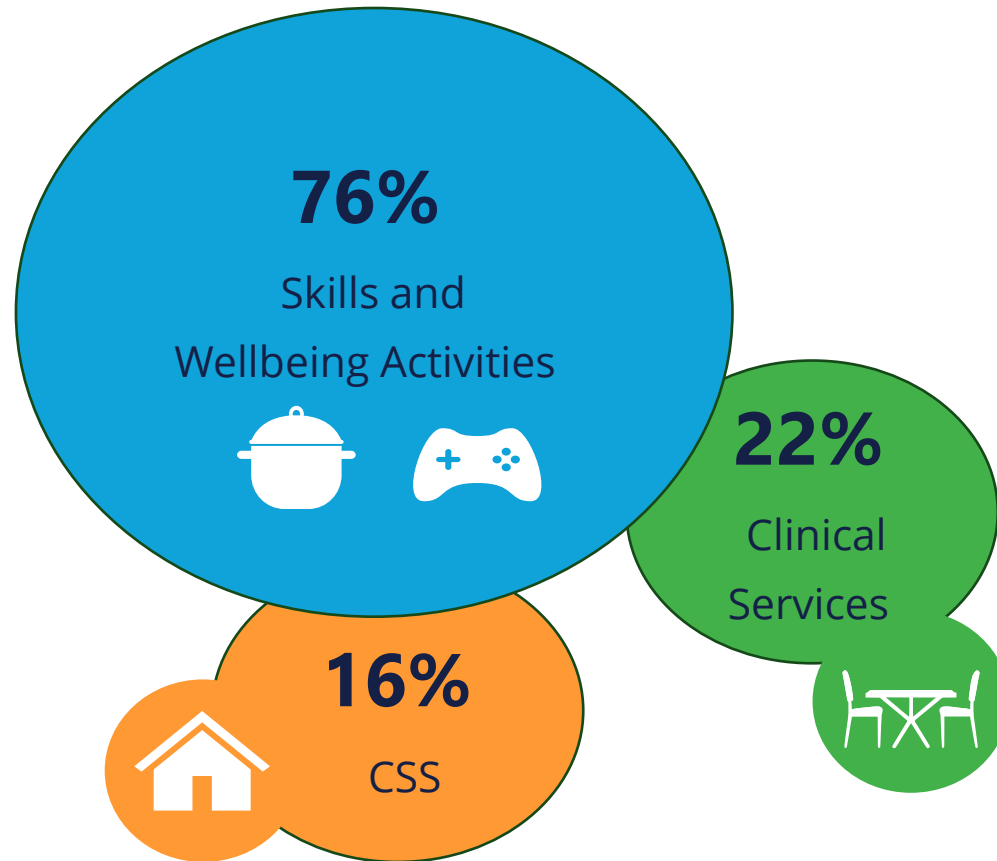
Visits and Youth FY 2025-26

13,097
Unique youth



Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Ways YWHO is helping youth

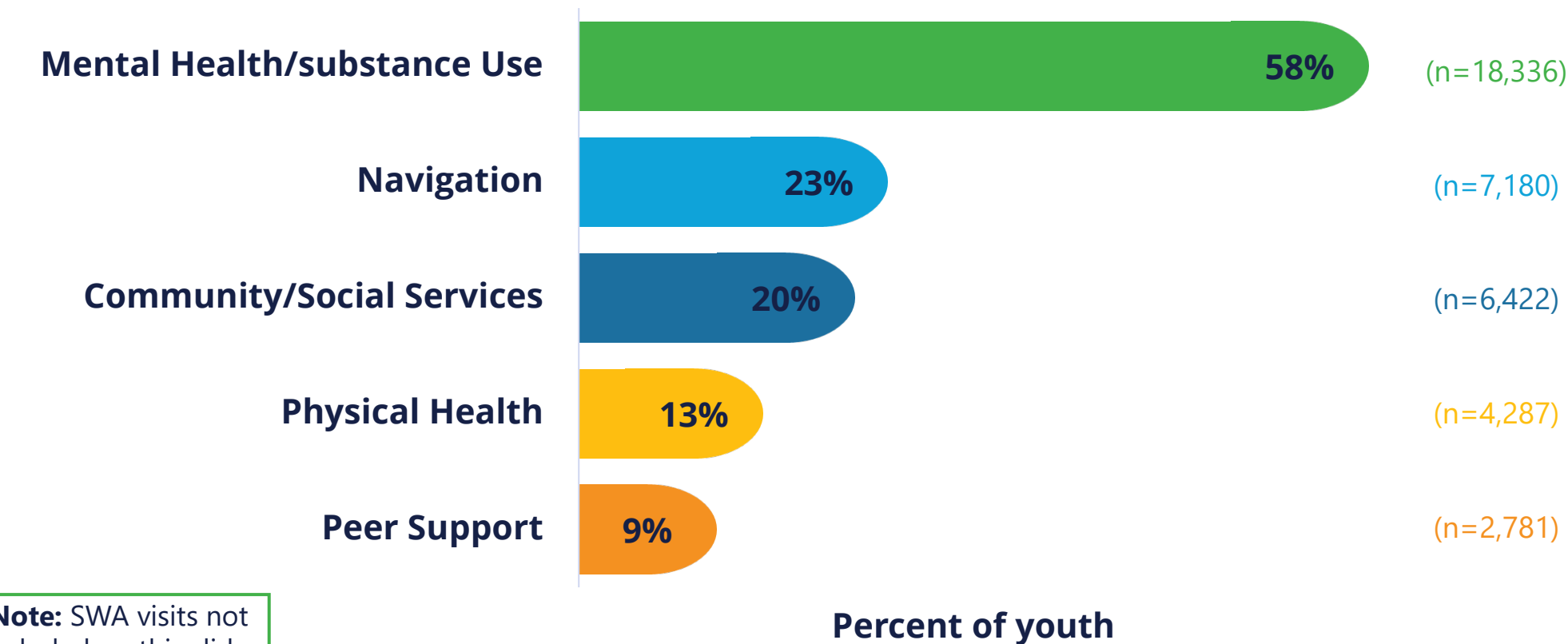


- Youth can access multiple integrated services in a single visit, including Clinical care, Social supports, and Skills & Wellbeing Activities (SWA)
- SWA are highly attended, offering preventive, wellness, cultural, and recreational programming that promotes positive health and well-being

Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Youth access a variety of 1:1 service types

Clinical and Community & Social Support Service types:

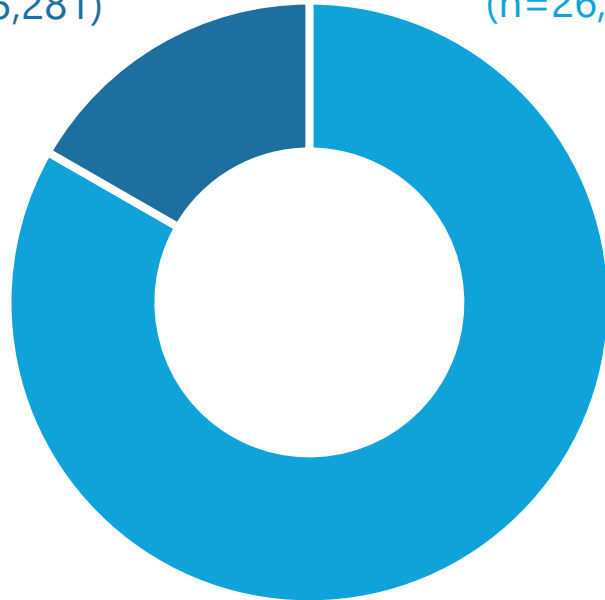


Note: SWA visits not included on this slide

Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Service access for 1:1 visits

17% of visits
were virtual
(n=5,281)



83% of visits
were in-person
(n=26,382)

68% of youth receive services **within 3 days** of first contact with the hub
(n=1,889)



24% of visits
were **walk-ins**
(n = 7,696)

Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Reasons youth seek services

Top reasons why youth seek support at YWHO:

Feelings



61%
(n=10,025)

Relationships



22%
(n=3,603)

Family



17%
(n=2,895)

Housing



17%
(n = 2,875)

Physical health



15%
(n=2,411)

Education



11%
(n=1,902)

Employment



11%
(n=1,836)

Navigation support



9%
(n = 1,558)

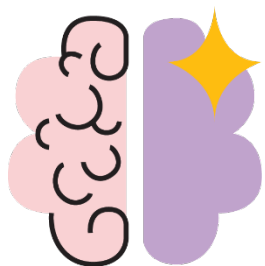
Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

*Reasons listed are selected in 10% or more of services

Youth clinical presentation



43% of youth
report **fair or poor**
health (SRH)
(n=1,631)



77% of youth
report **fair or poor**
mental health
(SRMH)
(n=2,905)

**Problematic substance
use (GAIN-SSS)**

52%

(n=1,501)

**Moderate to severe
anxiety (GAD-7)**

73%

(n=2,486)

**Moderate to severe
depression (PHQ-9)**

74%

(n=2,527)

**Moderate to severe
distress (K6)**

92%

(n=2,927)

Percent of youth

1/1



Note: Percentage for each clinical
tool is calculated based on total
number of unique respondents

Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

How is YWHO addressing system gaps?



56% of visits included **measurement-based care** (n = 265)



90% internal referrals **within YWHO Network** (n = 15,618)

17% external referrals **beyond what is available within the YWHO Network** (n = 2,958)

Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Satisfaction and Service Experience

Overall very positive!

98% (n = 815)

Found services welcoming, non-discriminating, and comfortable

99% (n = 816)

Felt safe in session at all times

97% (n = 816)

Agreed serviced received were right way of helping them

99% (n = 850)

Satisfied with services accessed

98%

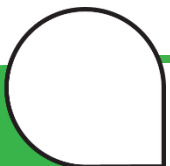
(n = 800)

Would recommend hub to a friend in need of similar help



Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026

Satisfaction and Service Experience



"I loved the space you guys have made, I felt safe and able to talk through every bit of the session."



"Sometimes it was hard to feel motivated to come, especially on busy days, but once in session I felt good and my family has noticed I have been calmer afterwards."



"[Service provider] has been amazing to work with through the whole process, she is very welcoming and a very comforting atmosphere whenever sessions were happening. Thank you for everything!"



"This place rocks."

Timeframe: 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026



Thank you!

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