

Priorities in substance use and addictions services for young people in Ontario

The Knowledge Institute is committed to driving high-quality, evidence-based child and youth mental health and addictions services for Ontario’s children, young people, and families. There is an important relationship between mental health and problematic substance use among young people. We engaged in a series of consultations to understand current priorities, needs and challenges throughout the child and youth mental health and addictions sector.

Who did we speak to?



59
agencies

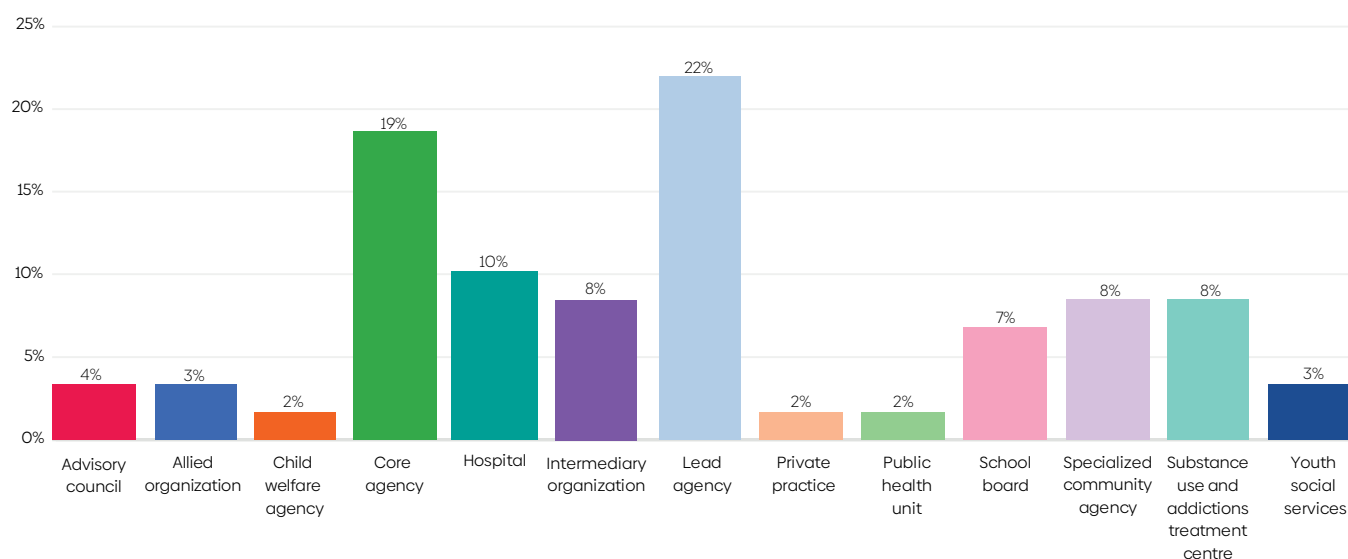


113
participants



62
consultations

Groups consulted (n=59)



695 Industrial Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 0Z1

☎ – 1 613 737 2297

EN – cymha.ca

✉ – info@cymha.ca

FR – smdej.ca



What is the current state?

Most programming is focused solely on mental health or on substance use and addictions – not both concurrently.

Young people's cannabis use and problematic technology use were most mentioned as key priorities.



What is working well?

Formal and informal partnerships with other agencies and professionals within the immediate service area, and across other sectors.

Partnerships that leverage existing expertise, use limited resources efficiently, and help service providers to build capacity in the area with which they are least familiar.



What are the challenges?

A system that dichotomizes mental health and substance use and addictions, resulting in fragmented mandates, funding streams, and pathways to care, as well as continued stigma.

A lack of services for substance use and concurrent disorders, and few options for support specific to behavioural addictions.



What is needed?

An integrated system that provides a continuum of youth-centered, identity-affirming services.

Ongoing capacity building and knowledge mobilization that is timely, relevant, and evidence-informed.



The road ahead

We are well positioned to support the needs of the sector related to substance use and addictions and these conversations have informed our road ahead. We look forward to building on successes and contributing to ongoing efforts for improvement by:

- Addressing the knowledge and capacity-building needs identified from these consultations.
- Fostering partnerships and collaborations.
- Collaborating to create individualized resources to ensure unique experiences of trauma, inequity, stigma, mental health, help-seeking, and substance use are fully recognized.