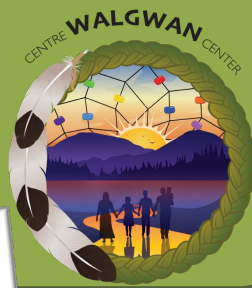


# Centre Walgwan Center



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## 2023-2024 Annual Report

## Centre Walgwan Center

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### Mission

***To work in partnership with families and communities to engage and support the empowerment of each Indigenous and Inuit youth who seek help in their personal journey to sustained, wholistic, culturally-rooted wellbeing and a healthy, fulfilling life.***

### Vision

**Empowered, engaged and responsible Indigenous and Inuit youth fully in control of their well-being and their lives, and contributing to the well-being of their families and community.**

### Values

**Love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth**

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## Executive Summary



Pamela Charlong,  
Executive Director

Welcome to the Annual Report of CWC. We are proud to present this year's annual report, showcasing our unwavering commitment to supporting Indigenous and Inuit youth in their journey towards healing and wellness. At CWC, we strive to create a nurturing environment that respects and integrates the rich cultural heritage of our communities with modern therapeutic practices. Over the past year, we have made significant strides in enhancing our programs, expanding our reach, and deepening our impact. Our holistic approach not only addresses substance misuse and mental health challenges but also empowers youth to reconnect with their cultural roots and build a foundation for a healthy future. This report highlights our key achievements, financial overview, and the dedicated efforts of our team, partners, and supporters. It also outlines the challenges we faced and the opportunities we see for growth and improvement in the coming years. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the well-being of our youth. Together, we are making a profound difference in their lives and the future of our communities.



## Executive Summary

Walgwan is pleased to publish its Annual Report supported by the data collected within the Addictions Information Management System (AMIS).

This report provides comprehensive information about the services offered and the individuals supported by our mental health and substance misuse program.

To develop this report, we utilized data from the Addictions Management Information System (AMIS). The report aims to enhance transparency and accessibility for stakeholders, featuring data on youth served, demographic and historical backgrounds, types of services provided, substance misuse trends, and outcomes from the Native Wellness Assessment.

We are committed to presenting this information in a manner that respects the cultural and historical contexts of the communities we serve, ensuring a trauma-informed approach throughout.



The Walgwan Center is proudly accredited by the Qmentum Accreditation Program Canada, demonstrating our adherence to the highest standards of excellence established by external organizations to ensure the quality of our services. Following the most recent survey completed in the fall of 2021, our center received the distinction of Accreditation with honorable mention.

At Walgwan, we place the utmost importance on continuous quality improvement and prioritize the physical, mental, emotional, and cultural well-being of the youth we serve. Our trauma-informed approach ensures that all aspects of our care and services are designed to foster a safe, supportive, and healing environment



# Our Origins

The CWC was established in 1996 in response to a severe crisis affecting First Nation and Inuit youth across Canada. During the mid-1990s, communities were grappling with alarming rates of solvent abuse and suicides among our young people. This epidemic underscored the urgent need for culturally-specific support systems and healing environments that could address the unique challenges faced by Indigenous youth.

Recognizing this critical situation, a coalition of Indigenous leaders, healthcare professionals, and community advocates came together to develop a solution. Their collaborative efforts led to the creation of CWC, a National accredited Center dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for healing and wellness for youth between 12-17 years old.

CWC is a 12-bed healing lodge dedicated to providing trauma-informed and culturally safe care for Indigenous youth of all genders. Our center is designed to be a welcoming and supportive environment where youth can begin their healing journey.

We provide a safe and inclusive space for all youth, respecting their gender identities and cultural backgrounds. Our healing lodge is designed to be a place where every individual feels valued and supported.

Understanding that many of our youth have experienced significant trauma, our programs are grounded in trauma-informed practices. This means recognizing the widespread impact of trauma and ensuring that our approach fosters safety, trustworthiness, and empowerment.





# Program Description

Our In-Person Program offers a 10-week, immersive experience designed to address substance abuse and mental health challenges. This program provides individual and group therapy, life skills sessions, and a variety of cultural activities such as traditional drumming, storytelling, and land-based practices. The community living setting offers a safe and supportive environment where youth can focus on their healing journey.

To ensure a positive and smooth reintegration into their home and community, we have introduced a 4-week outpatient program. This innovative program provides continued support and resources as youth transition from the healing setting. It includes follow-up counseling, community-based activities, and family engagement sessions, helping youth maintain their progress and successfully integrate their new skills and insights into their daily lives.

Our Land-Based Healing Program takes place in natural environments, emphasizing the deep connection between land and well-being. Youth participate in activities such as traditional hunting, fishing, and plant gathering, which are not only therapeutic but also reinforce cultural knowledge and skills. This immersive experience fosters a sense of belonging and purpose.

Central to our program are the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who guide the youth through traditional teachings and ceremonies. Their wisdom and presence are integral to the healing process, offering spiritual guidance and reinforcing cultural identity. Activities such as sweat lodges, smudging, and storytelling are woven into daily life, providing a strong cultural foundation.

Healing is viewed as a communal process, involving not just the individual but their family and community. We facilitate regular family sessions and community gatherings, where youth can share their progress and participate in collective ceremonies. Workshops and counseling sessions for families help them support their loved ones' healing journey and strengthen familial bonds.

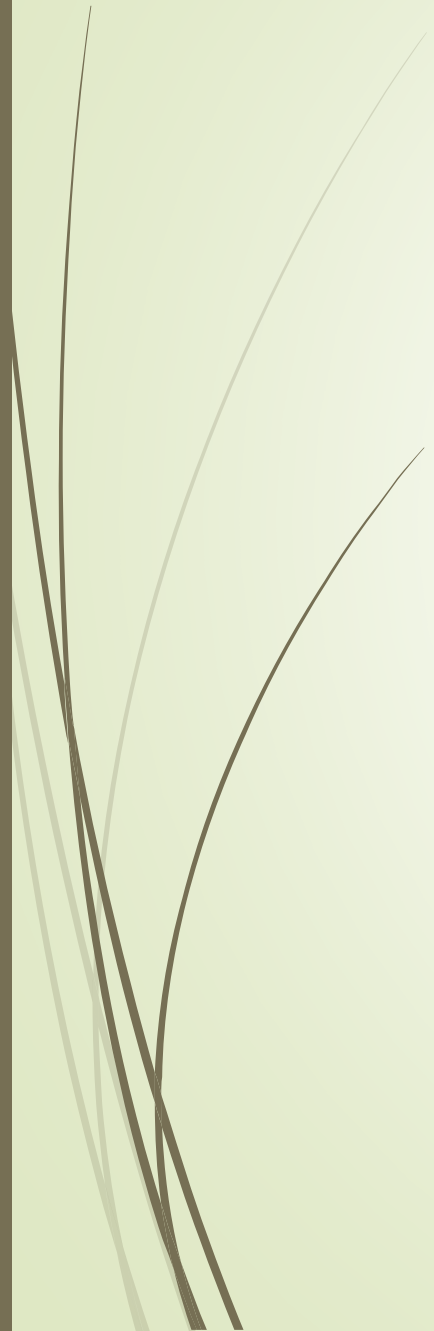
Our therapeutic approaches are rooted in Indigenous perspectives, focusing on holistic well-being. This includes emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical health. Traditional healing methods are integrated with modern therapeutic practices, such as talking circles and peer support groups, creating a balanced and culturally-relevant approach to healing.

Our educational component challenges colonial narratives and highlights Indigenous histories, languages, and worldviews. Youth engage in culturally-relevant education that promotes pride in their identity and equips them with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in both Indigenous and mainstream society.

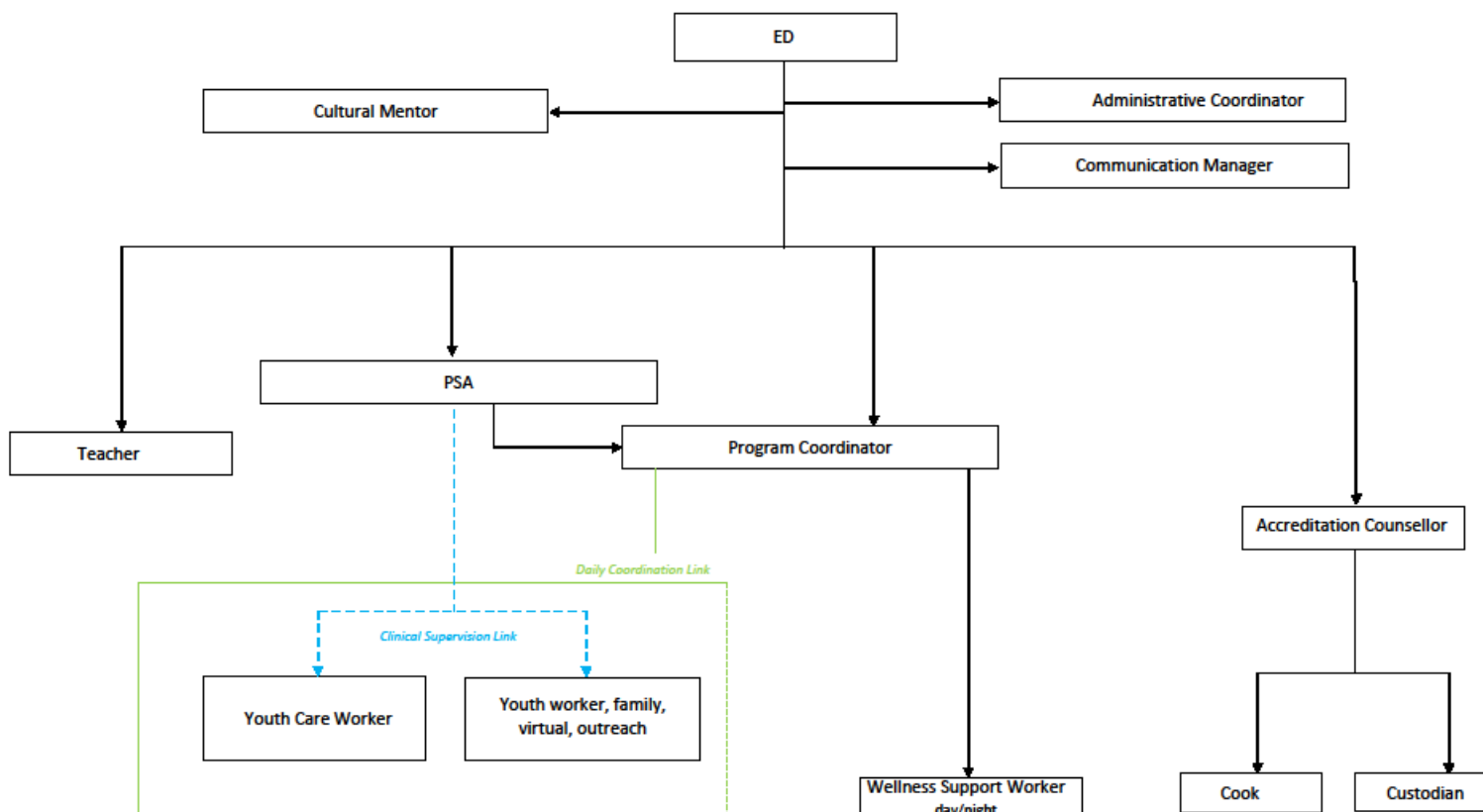




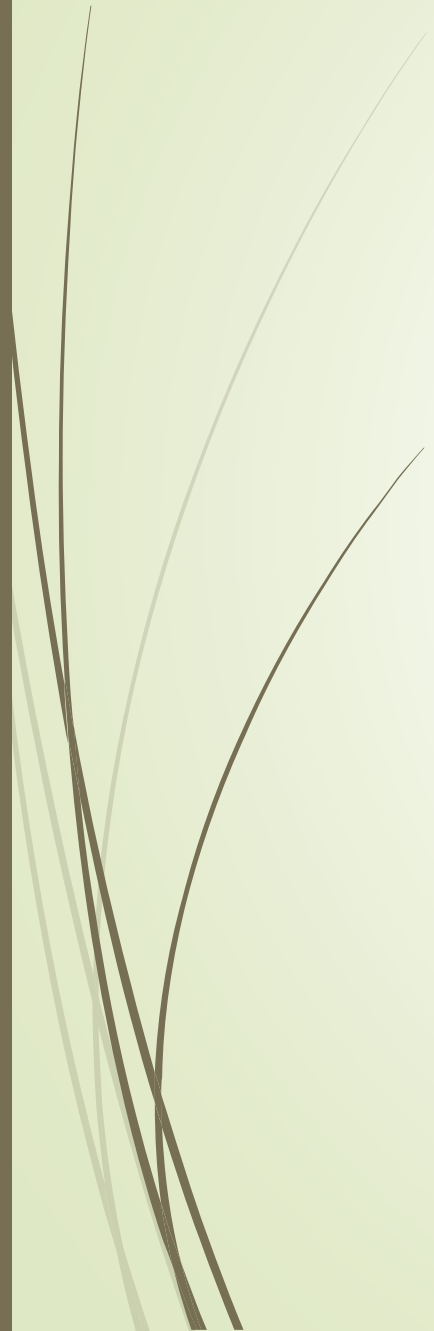




# Organizational Chart







## Continued Learning Culture

### **Workforce Development Overview**

At CWC, we are committed to fostering a skilled and culturally competent workforce that can effectively support our mission and the youth we serve. To achieve this, we provide a range of training and development opportunities designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of our staff.

**Continuous Learning and Development** We believe in the importance of continuous learning and professional growth. Our training programs are tailored to meet the needs of our team, ensuring they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills in trauma-informed care and culturally safe practices. We offer various workshops, seminars, and courses that focus on both traditional and modern therapeutic techniques.

**Staff Satisfaction and Competency Assessments** To maintain a high standard of care, we conduct an annual staff satisfaction survey and a core competency assessment every two years. These assessments help us understand the needs and aspirations of our staff, allowing us to tailor our training programs accordingly. By responding to the feedback and results of these assessments, we ensure that our workforce remains engaged, competent, and motivated.

**Cultural Competency and Certification** We encourage all forms of staff certification and credentialing, with a particular emphasis on cultural competency. Our goal is to ensure that our team members are not only professionally qualified but also deeply understanding and respectful of the cultural backgrounds of the youth they serve. (strategic organizational objective)

**Supporting Staff Well-Being** We recognize that the well-being of our staff is crucial to providing the best care for our youth. Therefore, we prioritize creating a supportive and nurturing work environment. This includes offering wellness programs, peer support groups, and opportunities for personal and professional development. (Strategic organizational objective)

By investing in the growth and well-being of our team, we strive to build a workforce that is not only strong and capable but also culturally sensitive and deeply committed to the healing and empowerment of Indigenous youth.

# Workforce Development



## 2023-2024 Continuous Education Opportunities

- Life is Sacred
- Intervention Program for parents with an addiction and their children
- Trauma Informed Care
- Culture as Foundation
- Cannabis Education
- Mental Wellness Continuum Framework
- Treatment Planning
- Quality and outcome collections
- Self-Harm
- Ethics and ethical decision making
- Profan (naloxone training)
- Pharmacology
- Infection Prevention
- Suicide assessment and intervention
- Cultural competency training
- Leadership mentoring training
- Knowledge keepers exchange
- First Aid/CPR

Degreed	2
Addiction Specialist ICBOC	7
College Diploma/Certificate	9
Certified Accreditation Surveyor	1
Certified Aboriginal Professional Administrator	In process
Certified First Nation Health Manager	1



# Amis Data





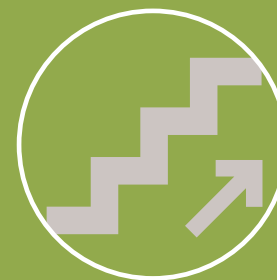
### Client

Each client count is a unique client, much of the demographic data is reported at a unique client level, even if the client has accessed treatment more than once in an annual time period



### Episode of Care

Describes a healing journey connected to one centre. How many times a program has been accessed by a client across levels of care. One episode of care may include pretreatment, residential treatment and aftercare services



### Level of Care

Describes service time/mode/intensity. Can be any level in the continuum including pre treatment, day treatment

## Access Data

### Understanding the DATA

In this report, we summarize clients served and services provided by the centre during fiscal year 2023-2024. These data include clients served in our National Youth Solvent Abuse Program (NYSAP). The clients and the services are diverse, and the data is complex. This report will, at different times, report numbers that refer to different subgroups or events that are based on specific filtering of the data. We also distinguish between unique clients and unique episodes of care. This distinction is important: Client counts are unduplicated counts in which each client is counted once. Episode counts represent an episode of care to a client – entailing admission, all services received, and discharge. All occur within the context of a period of healing for a client at a particular program. Each client may have multiple levels of care (treatment instances) that occur within the fiscal year; thus, the client may be counted multiple times in some data- once for each level, if applicable. At the end you will see data related to our prevention and outreach interventions. Keep in mind while this might not be our primary funded mandate it is an important part of the continuum of care.

Level Of Care	Total Clients
Inpatient (Youth)	N=28
Virtual Program	N=13
Outpatient	N=16
Outpatient - After Care	N=30
Pre Service Assessment	N=41
Total Number of Clients	N= 128

Non-  
Operational  
Days

156

Operational  
Days

210

Available  
beds

12

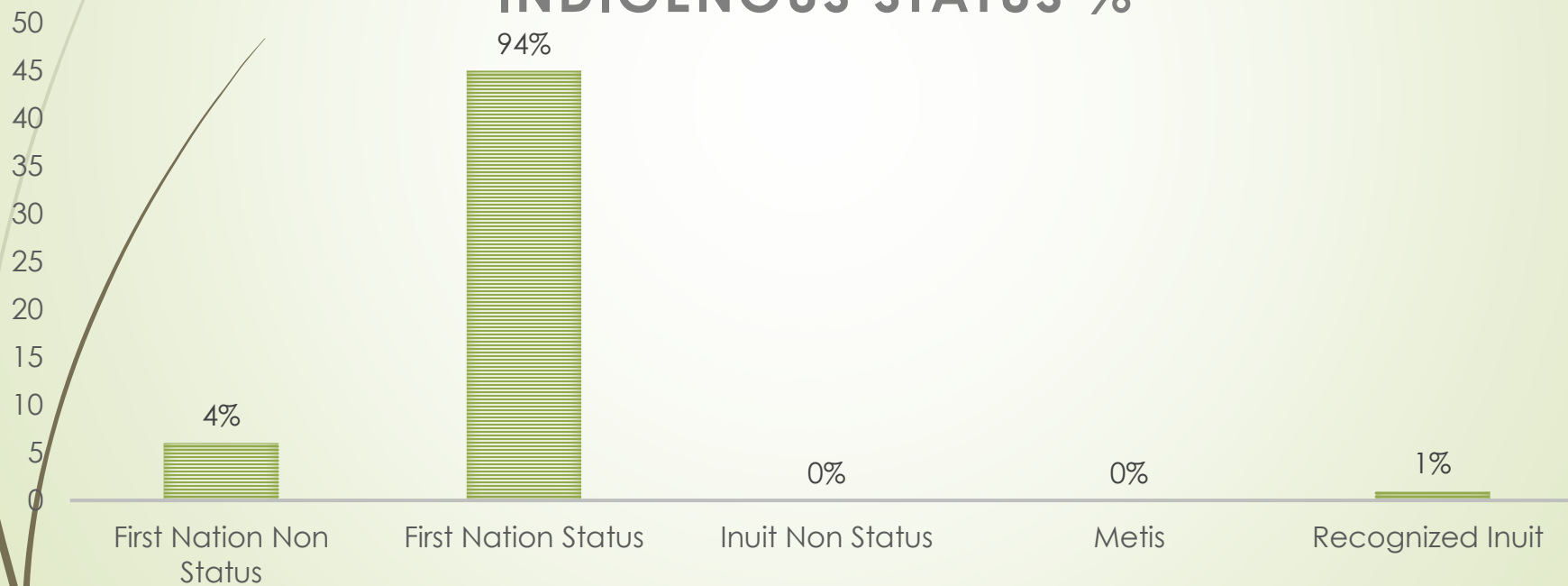
Available  
Bed  
Space  
days

2520



## Indigenous Status

### INDIGENOUS STATUS %



## Program Utilization

Bed  
Utilization  
Rate

51%

Service  
Utilization  
Rate

54%

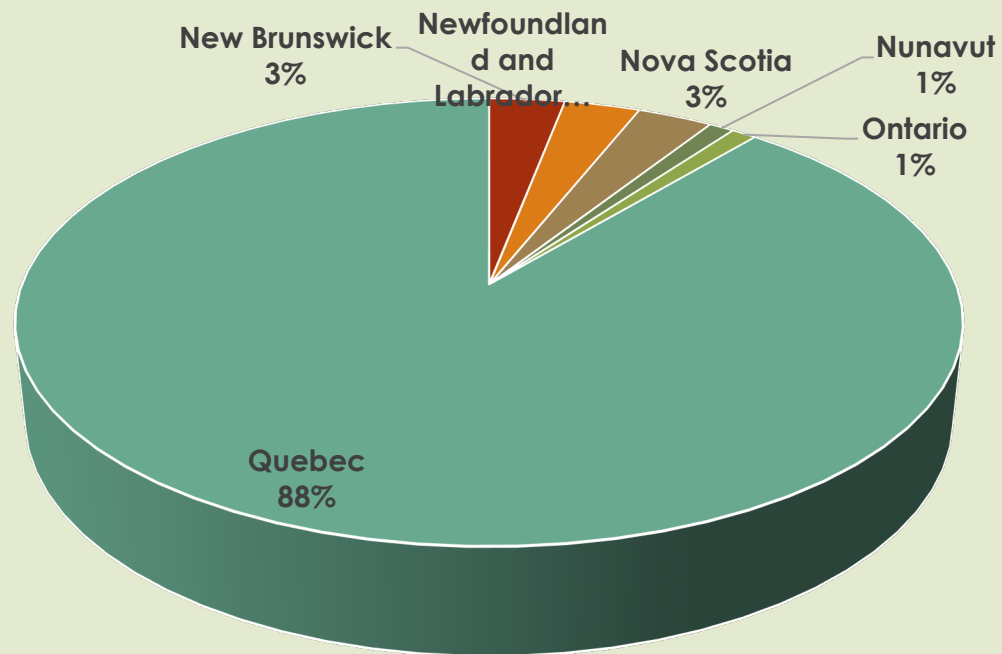
Attended  
previous  
Treatment  
Rate

21%

## Age at Entry

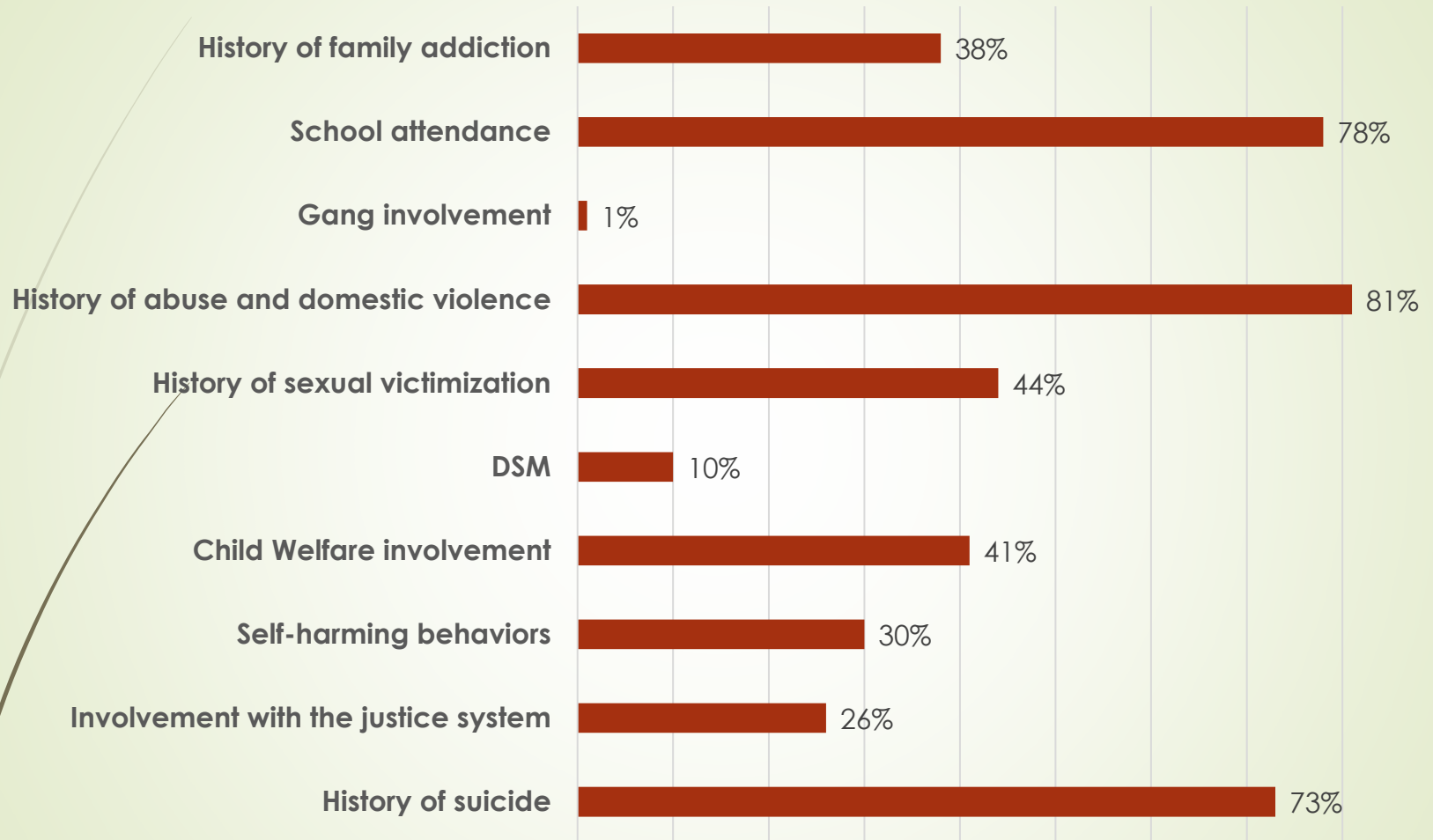
Age Group	Males	Females	Combined
under 12			
12	N= 1 (5%)	N= 7 (14%)	N= 8 (11%)
13	N= 4 (20%)	N= 8 (16%)	N= 12 (18%)
14	N= 3 (16%)	N= 13 (25%)	N= 16 (23%)
15	N= 6 (32%)	N= 12 (24%)	N= 18 (26%)
16	N= 4 (21%)	N= 6 (12%)	N= 10 (14%)
17	N= 2 (11%)	N= 5 (8%)	N= 6 (9%)
18			
over 18	N= 0	N= 1 (2%)	N= 1 (1%)
Total Number of Clients	<b>N=20</b>	<b>N=51</b>	<b>N=72</b>
Average Age	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>

## Territories





## Client Characteristic Profile

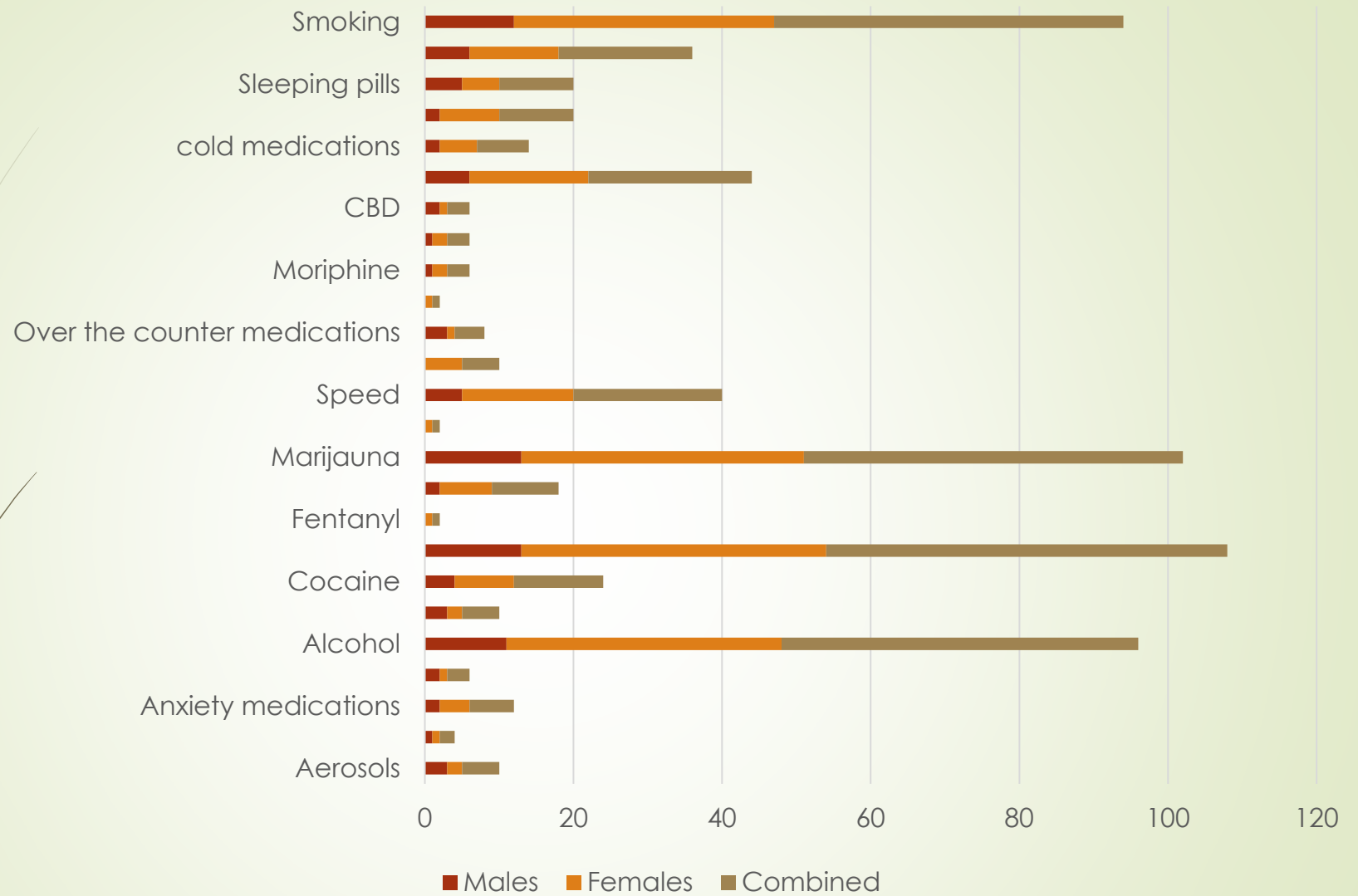


## Departures

22

Reason for departures	Males	Females
Completed Treatment	N= 4	N=15
Left voluntarily, before treatment completed	N=4	N=8
Terminated by Facility	N=0	N=1
Transferred to another substance abuse program or facility	N=0	N=1
File Abandoned	N=1	N=0
Death	N=0	N=0
Family Emergency	N=0	N=0
Left against professional advice (dropped out)	N=0	N=1
Employment Issues	N=0	N=0
Discharged at the request of family	N=0	N=0
Mental Health Issues	N=0	N=0
Incarcerated	N=0	N=0
Medical needs	N=1	N=0
No Show	N=2	N=2
Not Discharged During Report Period	N=0	N=2
Retained for next treatment cycle	N=0	N=0
Emergency Closure	N=0	N=0
Total Number of Clients	N=10	N=19

## Substance Trends



## Outreach Activity



Limited capacity to provide outreach services due to the lack of human resource stability internally.



## Community Development, Universal Prevention, and Health Promotion

- Collaboration with Mawiomi Treatment Center in providing outreach and continuum of care for community members in partnership with the CISSS de la Gaspésie.
- Implementation of the strategic plan supporting community engagement to define program enhancements and service delivery in addressing any existing gaps.
- In partnership with YSAC, Walgwan has now two Life is sacred facilitators (suicide prevention) and this will allow for regional training opportunities for our Québec region.
- Developed a partnership with Gesgapegiag Police Department in the delivery of the good Samaritan law and naloxone kits to our youth.
- Assisted at various wellness initiatives within community and at the provincial and national level.
- Treatment center network adopted a strategic plan to promote meaningful collaboration, sharing of resources and fostering the continuum of care across our regions.

## Early Identification, Brief Intervention and Aftercare

Our early intervention approach begins with a thorough intake process to understand each individual's unique needs. This process identifies underlying factors contributing to addiction and mental health challenges. Individuals are invited to complete the assessment tools provided within the National framework such as the DUSI-R (drug user screening inventory revised) and the NWA (native wellness assessment) in providing a portrait of the priority areas that are at risk.

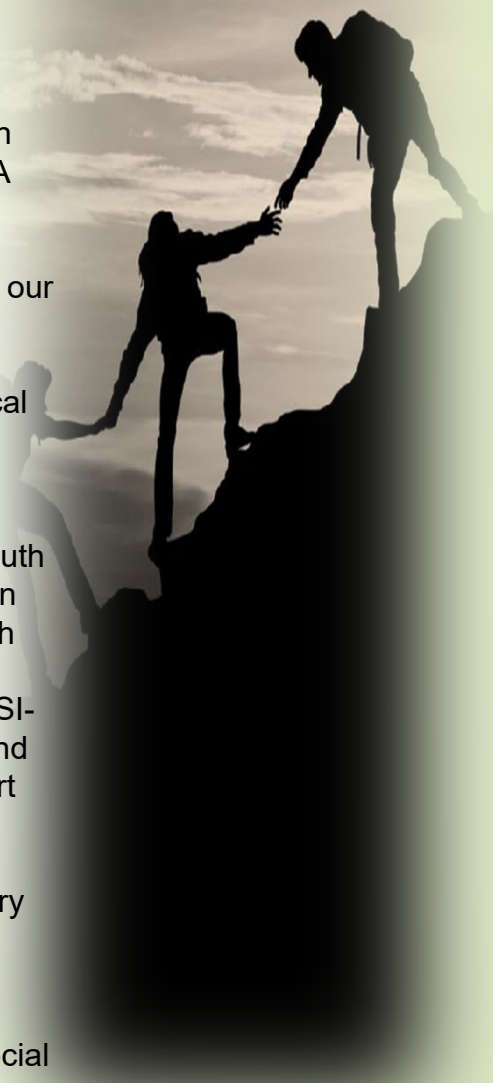
Through this comprehensive assessment we are able to recommend various levels of care within our service delivery model such as; pre-treatment, in-house care, outpatient, and virtual services.

Pre-treatment occurs 5-6 weeks before program acceptance, led by our cultural mentor and clinical lead with support from other clinical staff as needed. This phase helps us understand the youth's readiness and allows them to explore if our program aligns with their needs and interests.

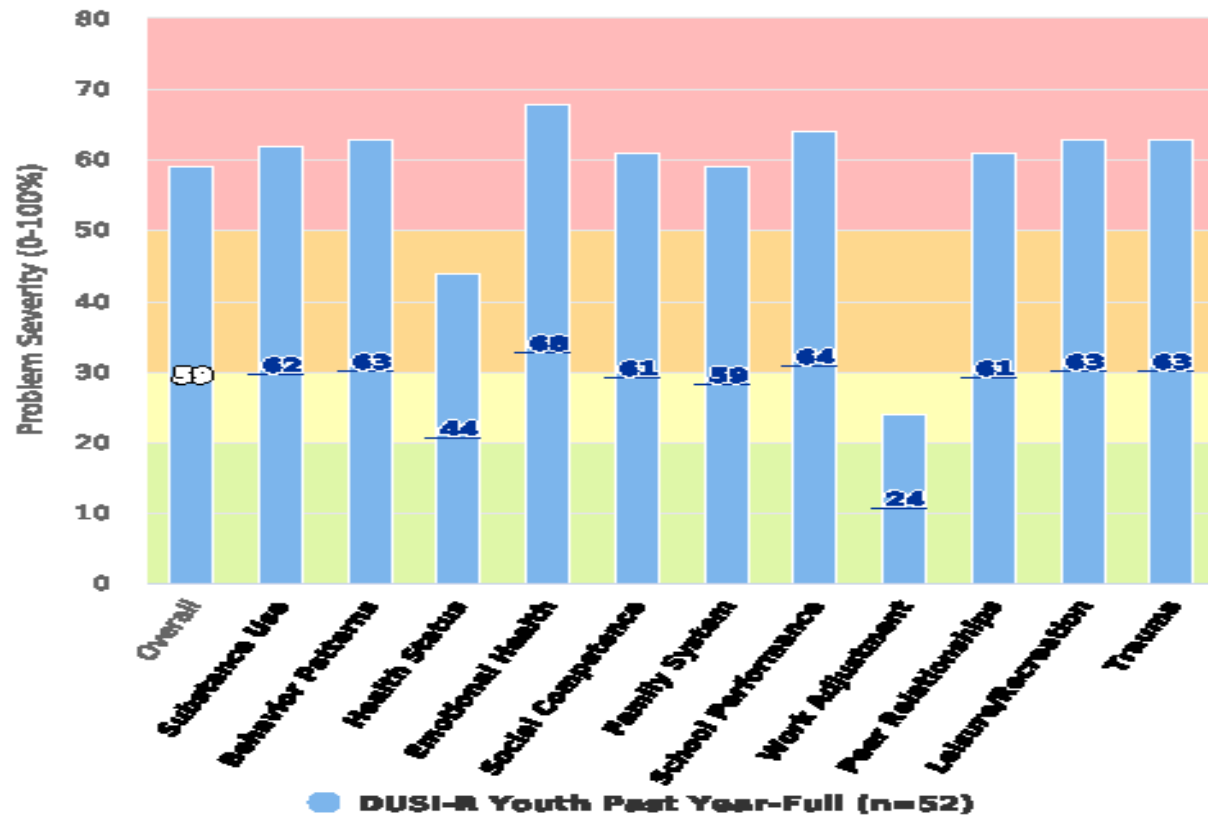
Aftercare is offered to youth who have completed the 10-week program. Within this framework youth are met once a week virtually for the first month with our aftercare worker to facilitate the transition back home and support the objectives outlined in the return home plan. This can include work with the family in addressing some challenges and refining the initial objectives. After the one month period a post-treatment assessment is completed to identify any high risk priorities using the DUSI-R. These results are shared with the youth, then family and services to address the risk factors and identify solutions collaboratively to increase overall protection and wellness outcomes. We support the youth and family up to two years within the interval of 1. 3. 6. 9. 12. 18 and 24 months.

Following our engagement with the communities we now offer virtual family support sessions every Wednesday night. Close family relationships can improve the impact that trauma, stress, and adversity have on an individual's overall wellness.

We now offer virtual individualized support to communities for youth who require a brief psychosocial intervention that is a minimum of five weeks and a maximum of eight weeks consisting of two meeting a week. Most often youth benefitting from this service are in the precontemplation phase within their challenges around substance misuse. Following the virtual service most youth do come to the in-house program to continue their healing more intensely.



### Absolute Problem Density

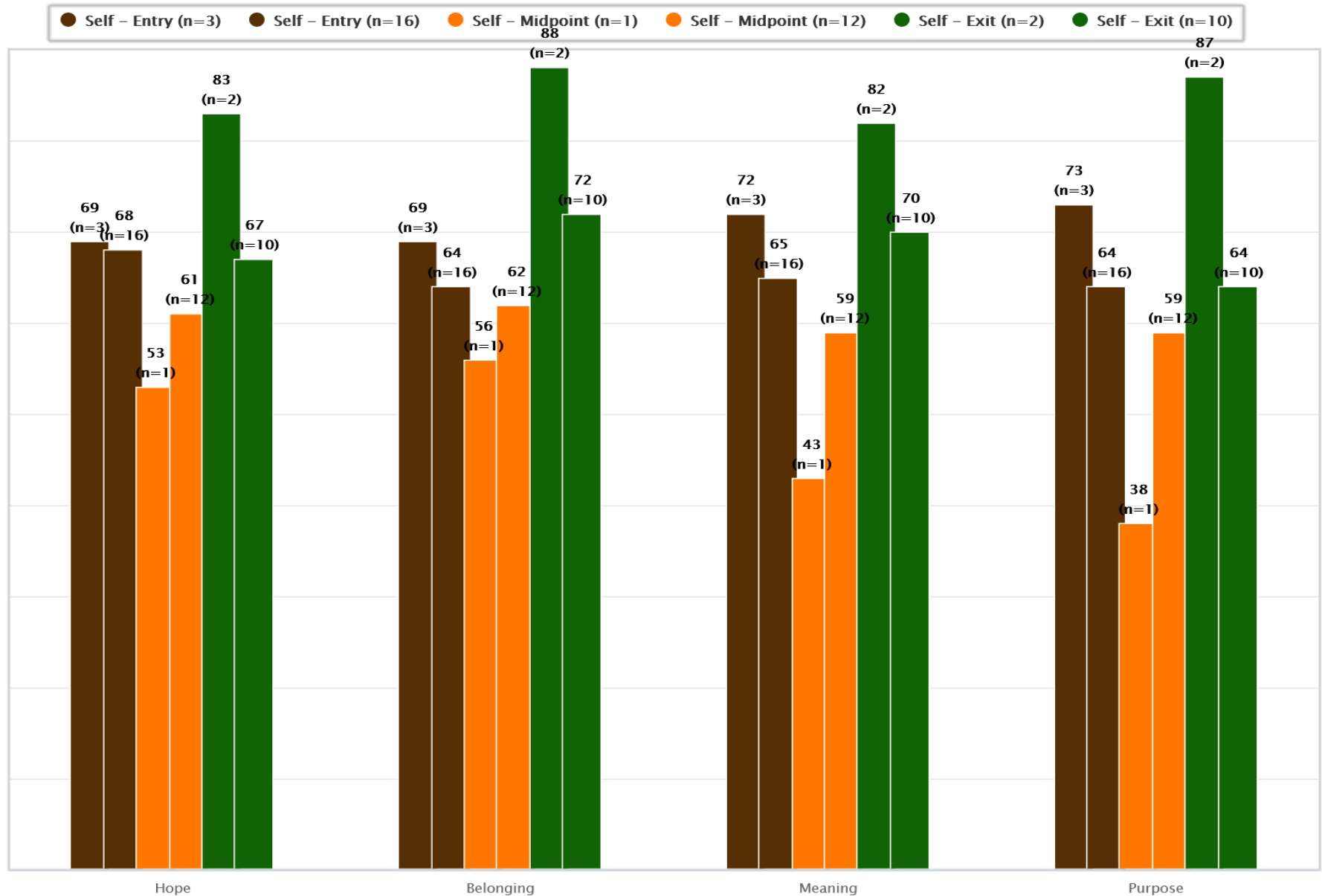


## Bar Graph: Balance in Wellness Across Time

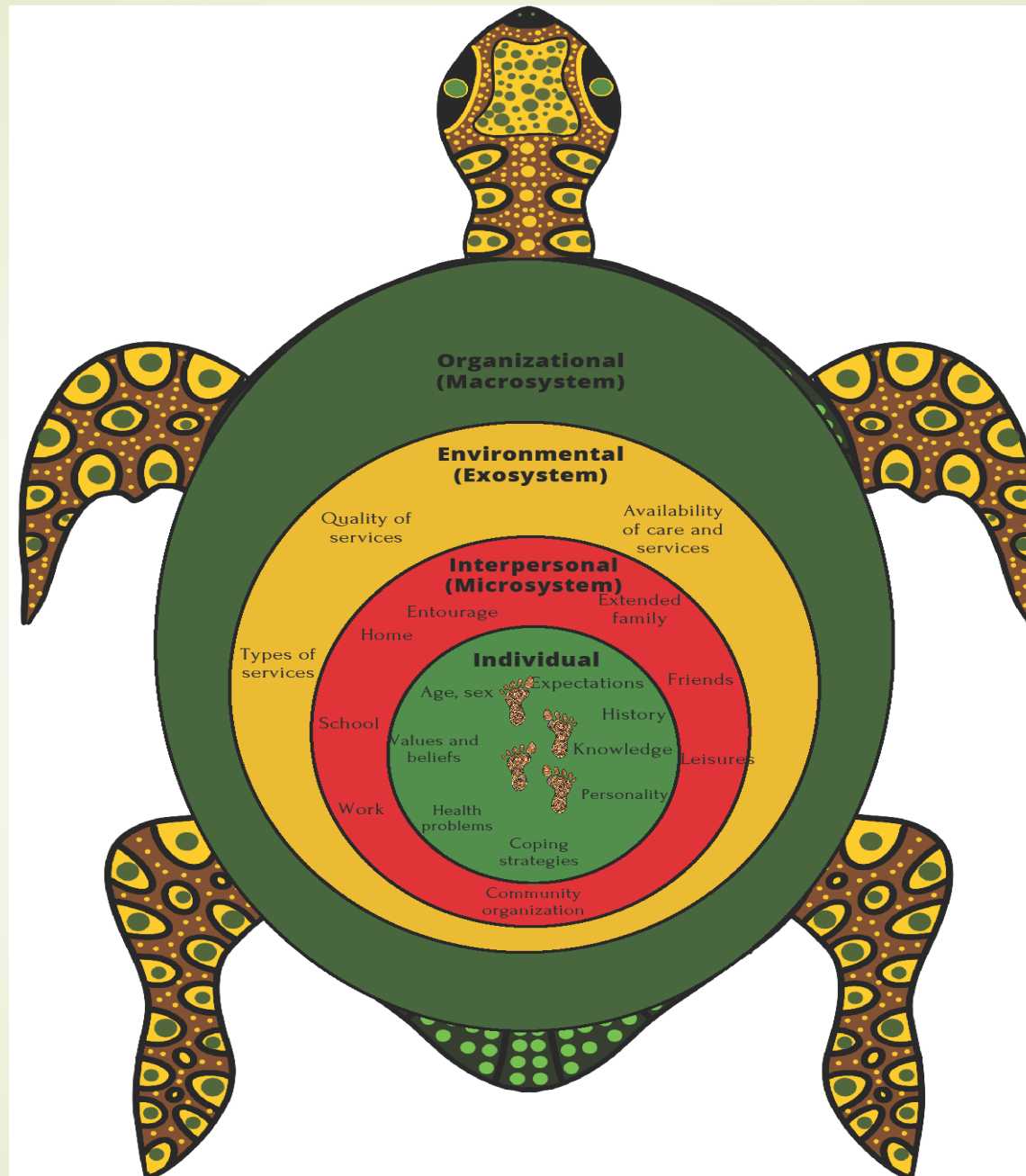
The following aggregate report was generated using the following parameters

Completed From: 04/01/2023 To: 03/31/2024

Participant Status: Active and Inactive







## Secondary Risk Reduction

Strategic objective to collaborate with families in outlining the needs to support culturally relevant and a strength-based family support program to help foster positive family environments and improve supportive parenting practices, including positive cultural socialization, communication, and consistent supports, thereby enhancing parents' and caregivers' efforts to help youth develop positive goals as well as skills to resist involvement in risk behaviors, like early initiation of substances.

Providing overdose prevention awareness and knowledge to youth in partnership with AIDQ (Profan) and GPD. Harm reduction initiatives in providing naloxone kits to all youth in program.

Distribution of safe cut kits for youth with a tendency to self-mutilate. These kits are designed to offer safer alternatives to self-harm and skin picking and come with sterile first aid supplies. They do not contain any items designed for cutting.

Aftercare support reduces secondary risks by providing continuous monitoring and support through regular check-ins and access to counseling. It focuses on skill-building by offering life skills training and educational support. Family involvement is encouraged through family counseling and parental education. Community integration is promoted by connecting youth to community resources and providing assistance. Relapse prevention is addressed by developing personalized prevention plans and offering crisis intervention services. Health and wellness are supported by ensuring access to medical care and continuous substance abuse recovery support. Feedback and evaluation of aftercare programs are conducted to track outcomes and improve services. This comprehensive approach helps youth maintain their progress, reduce the risk of relapse, and successfully reintegrate into their community.

Strategic objective to develop peer support facilitated through support groups and mentoring programs.



# Active Treatment

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**Drug Use Screening Inventory (DUSI):** The DUSI, a tool from the Addictions Management Information System (AMIS), is employed by Walgwan to assess the psychosocial profiles of youth. This 215-item self-report assessment uses sliding scale and yes/no questions to identify areas such as previous and current drug use, housing stability, social support, and behavioral challenges. The DUSI is administered two times during the treatment program, once during the admission process, and again during the last week to track progress, successes, and treatment response. This information is critical for making referrals to specialized services and targeted supports, ensuring the care plan addresses the youth's specific needs.

**Post treatment follow-ups:** A shorter version of the DUSI are used in the post-treatment follow-ups at the 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 and 24 months. Care plans are adjusted accordingly to minimize risk factors and increase protective factors.

**Native Wellness Assessment (NWA):** The NWA, used by Walgwan, measures youths' cultural competencies and goals. This 105-item self-report form includes background information and statements related to various cultural interventions and activities. Administered at the beginning, midpoint and end of the treatment program, the NWA helps identify the traditional practices the youth has engaged in and their cultural connections. Both the youth and Walgwan can recognize growth and Indigenous well-being during the mid and final assessment, ensuring culturally relevant progress is acknowledged supporting hope, meaning, purpose and belonging.

**Program Curriculum:** In 2023 our curriculum was revised to support the implementation of the National frameworks that include honoring our strengths, the wellness continuum framework and culture as intervention. All our program activities are based on the medicine wheel concept for the program, and this was decided following information received during community engagement sessions, discussions with partners and providers from the communities. Our model fosters the youth as the expert in their healing journey and is delivered within four phases over a 10-week period. The phases encourage youth to reinforce their cultural identity, self-regulation in managing stress, challenges and disappointment, emotional intelligence in recognizing behaviors in others and self, brain science around substance misuse, sexual health, positive relationships, rights, guided meditation, values, self-esteem, communication and a positive self image.

There is also a component of healing circles that are conducted weekly by the youth counselors to support emotional health and wellness offering a peer support group.





## Active Treatment Continued

32

**Cultural Program:** Our continued vision is to have a seamless delivery of cultural interventions throughout our program. Over our 10-week program, each week is thoughtfully structured to incorporate the guiding principles of the seven sacred teachings. We integrate healing from an Indigenous lens, recognizing the unique cultural perspectives and approaches to healing. Through storytelling sessions, understanding their respective creation stories, promoting knowledge sharing between youth and adults-elders deepen their cultural identity.

Our cultural mentor also coordinates and facilitates hands-on workshops centered around traditional crafts such as rattle making, drum making, talking sticks, chokers, medicine pouches, bracelets and other opportunities to foster creative expression and cultural connection. Youth are able to learn the significance of spiritual items such as medicine pouches and tobacco offerings in understanding their connection to the land and spirit and potential healing practices. Talking sticks made by the youth are encouraged to be introduced to the family and used during the family circles.

We are blessed to have our cultural mentor who has his rights of passage to conduct sweat lodges. Lodges are available at the youths request. At times, lodges are conducted one on one based on the youths needs at any given moment. Group lodges are done weekly for all youth who want to experience the benefits of the lodge to reinforce personal growth, healing and recovery rooted in indigenous wisdom and spirituality.

**Education curriculum:** In August 2023 we implemented a new learning program based in culture and following the Quebec Education Program for Secondary. We targeted the acquiring of Cross-Curricular competencies, broad areas of learning and social studies, as well as notions based on history, geography, math and science. The new learning program used lesson plans developed by First Nations teachers and scholars. Lesson plans developed by various federal government agencies or entities which have educational tools developed with the Indigenous perspectives and knowledge as a priority.

The goal of this new program was to enable the youth to make a connection between the cultural knowledge and practices and the present competencies being taught in the regular school system. The need of the youth to find pride in the ways of doing and being of their Nations and ancestors and see that there is still today place for the traditional ways in the world of today.

We have realized that youth need to be encouraged to learn and maybe in a different way than how they had been expected in their schools.



## Active Treatment Continued

**33 Case Management:** Case management is conducted with two in-house youth counsellors and an aftercare worker who ensure the seamless coordination of integrated services for the youth enrolled in various levels of care within our service delivery. Some of their responsibilities include managing a case load and providing support to our youth within their wellness objectives and overall journey. They are supported by the clinical supervisor.

Youth care wellness support workers animate and facilitate the program activities and support youth individually and within the group dynamics. They play a crucial role in the healing journey of the youth and we encourage a coordinated approach with the vision of all staff play an integral part of the healing experience.

After care worker provides family circles upon admission, mid-program and at the end of programming in collaboration with the cultural mentor and youth counsellors. These circles are appreciated by the families and feedback mechanisms are in place to support quality improvement.

Our elders and cultural mentors guide us in program delivery and support the staff through various ways during administration weeks such as knowledge sharing, sweats and talking circles.





## Specialized Treatment

34

**Psychological Services:** We are fortunate to have a psychologist on contract that provides weekly services to youth, families and care givers who require more in depth services to address areas such as; grief, sexual victimization, childhood trauma and gender identity/transitions.

4-week programming aimed at promoting healing and meeting the individual needs of vulnerable youth across First Nation communities. This short program includes a variety of activities and workshops focusing on cultural identity, mental health, physical well-being, and personal development.

### Care Facilitation

Each youth is designated a mentor (youth support worker) in supporting and providing additional support throughout the program. Mentors meet with the youth once a week in a confidential setting where youth can share their thoughts, feelings and experiences within the group dynamics and programming in a non-judgmental environment. There are usually goals set for the week that are shared with the youth counsellors to ensure a seamless collaboration and effort towards the objectives and goals.

Regular check-ins are scheduled with the youth where they are provided with a survey to review the weekly programming and rate various elements of programming. This can be done with a link to the survey where it can be done anonymously or within a group setting. The results are then used to finetune program outcomes based on their responses. An area to improve within this initiative is to create a feedback loop where youth are informed about how their feedback is being used to make changes. Regularly updating them on actions taken based on their input.

Empower youth through modeling and education around self-advocacy in terms of their rights as an indigenous youth. Empowering them with the knowledge that their voices can lead to positive changes helping youth express their thoughts and concerns effectively when it is impacting their life choices and wellness.

Anonymous satisfaction surveys are provided for all levels of care within our service delivery model to identify areas for improvement and adapt programming as needed.

