



# Towards a Northern Centre of Excellence for Addiction and Mental Health

Engagement Results for:

**NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO**

**WE ASKED:**



▶ What are the mental health and addiction priorities where you live?

▶ How could a Northern Centre of Excellence for Addiction and Mental Health help?

▶ What should a Centre of Excellence for Northwestern Ontario look like?

## NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

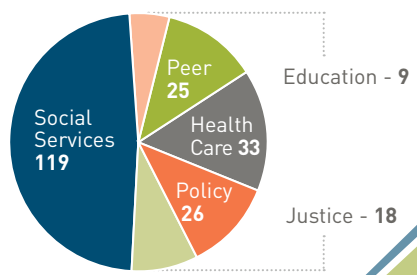
**WHO**

**216**

participants from 5 engagement areas

**35%** city of Thunder Bay  
**65%** towns, rural areas and First Nations

**65** participants were affiliated with Indigenous organizations and First Nations



**HOW**

**14**

Face-to-Face Engagement Sessions

**12**

Teleconference and Videoconference Engagement Sessions

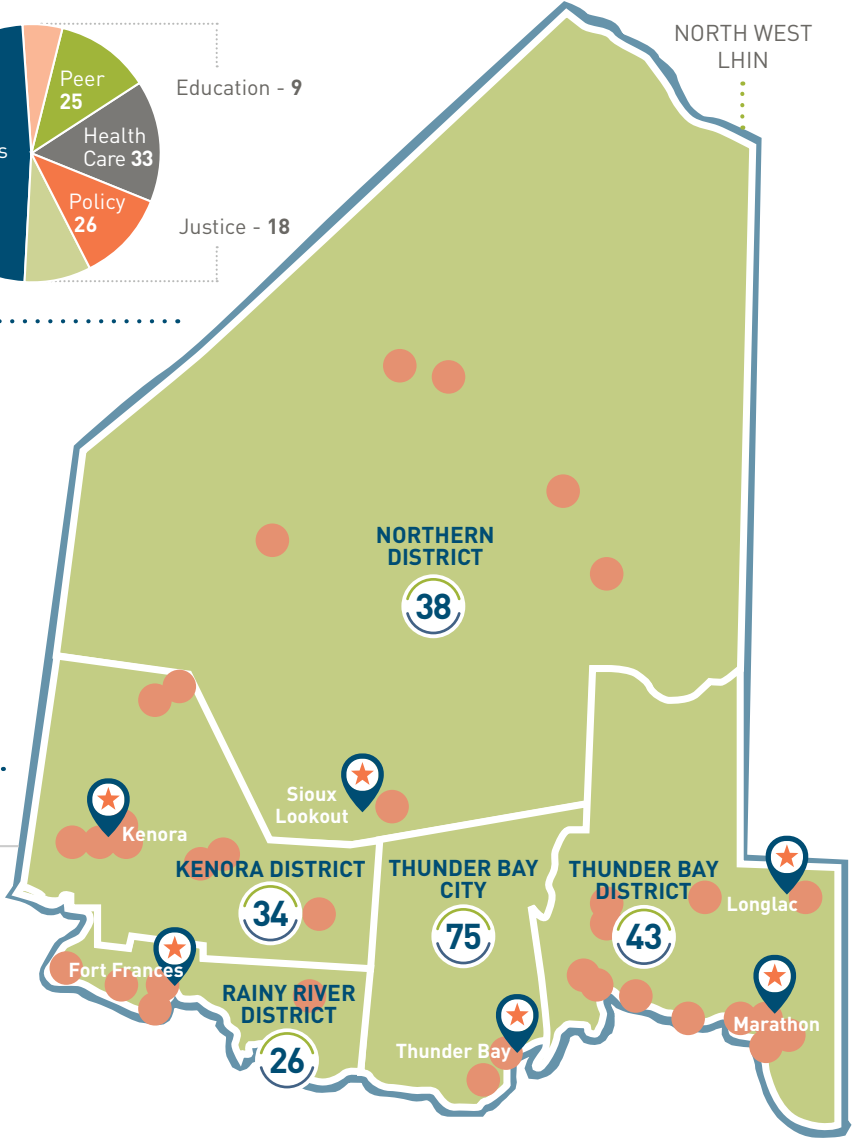
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Follow-up Survey

**WHERE**

**ENGAGEMENT SESSION PARTICIPATION**

- Face-to-face
- Teleconference or Videoconference
- Number of participants per engagement area



# NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO RESULTS

## MAIN MESSAGES



Mental health and addiction issues are disproportionately high in Northwestern Ontario and clients have increasingly complex needs (often dual diagnosis of addiction and mental health). For many, fundamental needs such as food security, safe and secure housing and access to basic health care are not being met. The landscape of substance use is also constantly changing with synthetic drug and polysubstance use making effective interventions more challenging.

Current mental health and addiction services are oversubscribed and there are serious service gaps across Northwestern Ontario with few or no specialized programs for youth, seniors, women, Indigenous, Francophone and LGBTQ2S populations. Lengthy waitlists, lack of detox, counselling and supportive programming, shortages of adequately trained personnel, poor coordination of care and unclear care pathways negatively impact both clients and care providers. Prevention and wellness programming and long-term addiction and mental health recovery supports are lacking.

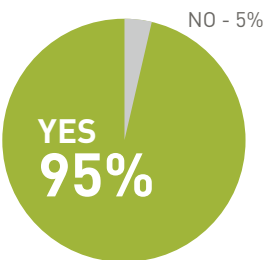
Community-based programs, and Indigenous mental health and addiction programs are chronically under-funded and under-staffed and burnout and turnover are high creating constant staffing deficits. Limited access to programming leads to a revolving cycle of crisis with high levels of law enforcement and emergency services involvement overloading those systems as well.

The Northwestern Ontario engagement identified overwhelming support (95%) for a Northern Centre of Excellence for Addiction and Mental Health. Participants endorsed a blended model which would combine face-to-face and virtual interaction.

A Northern Centre of Excellence could serve as an advocate for addiction and mental health issues in the north, building local capacity through specialized training and education, connecting service providers, community partners and those with lived experience, researching gaps in service, and developing and sharing educational programming and best practices made in and for the North, with particular attention to cultural sensitivity and the need for respectful and holistic care for Indigenous people.

## SUPPORT

Do you support the development of a Northern Centre of Excellence for Addiction and Mental Health?



## PREFERRED MODEL

### BLENDED MODEL

-  Research, Training, & Evaluation Services
-  Face-to-Face Communications
-  Internet-based and Telephone Communication
-  Partner Sites (participating organizations and communities)



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