

North BEAT

Exploring the Service Needs of Youth Experiencing Early Psychosis in Northern Ontario: Final Results & Next Steps of the NorthBEAT Project

BACKGROUND

Psychosis, a symptom of serious mental illness, typically emerges in adolescence.

Early psychosis intervention (EPI) is critical as shorter durations of untreated psychosis (DUP) are associated improved outcomes and recovery.

The *North BEAT* Project (Barriers to Early Assessment and Treatment) was a 3-year (2012-2015) descriptive, mixed-methods research project that aimed to:

- explore the service needs of youth who experience early psychosis in Northern Ontario
- gain a snapshot of functional status and DUP
- identify facilitators and barriers to EPI in Northern Ontario

MIXED-METHODS APPROACH

Qualitative Interviews explored the help-seeking experiences of youth who have experienced psychosis in Northern Ontario.

Participants: youth aged ≤18 years who had experienced psychosis (n = 18), their family-caregivers (n = 11), and mental health service providers (n = 14) from across Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario.

Structured interviews assessed DUP and functional status of a subset of youth.

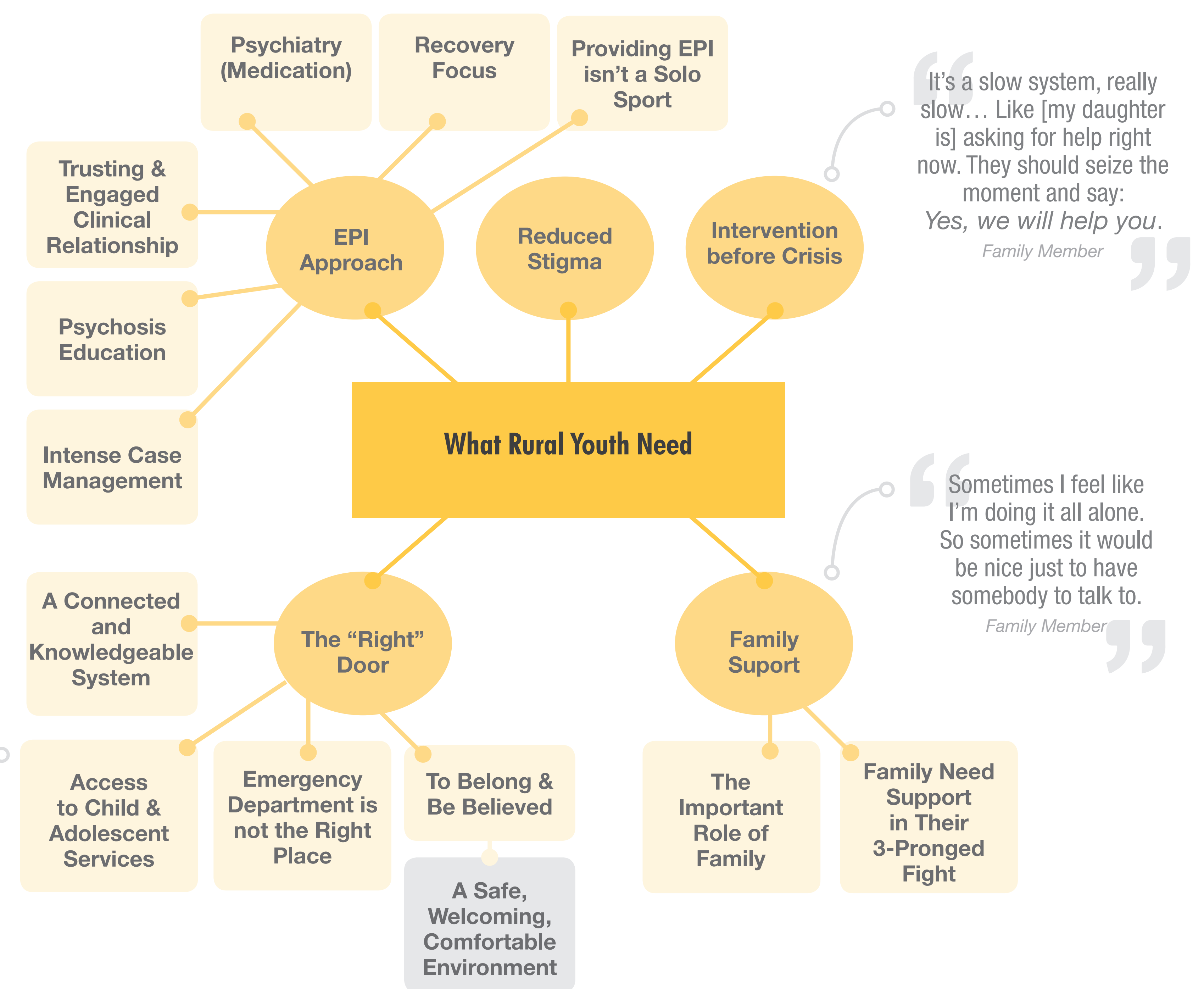
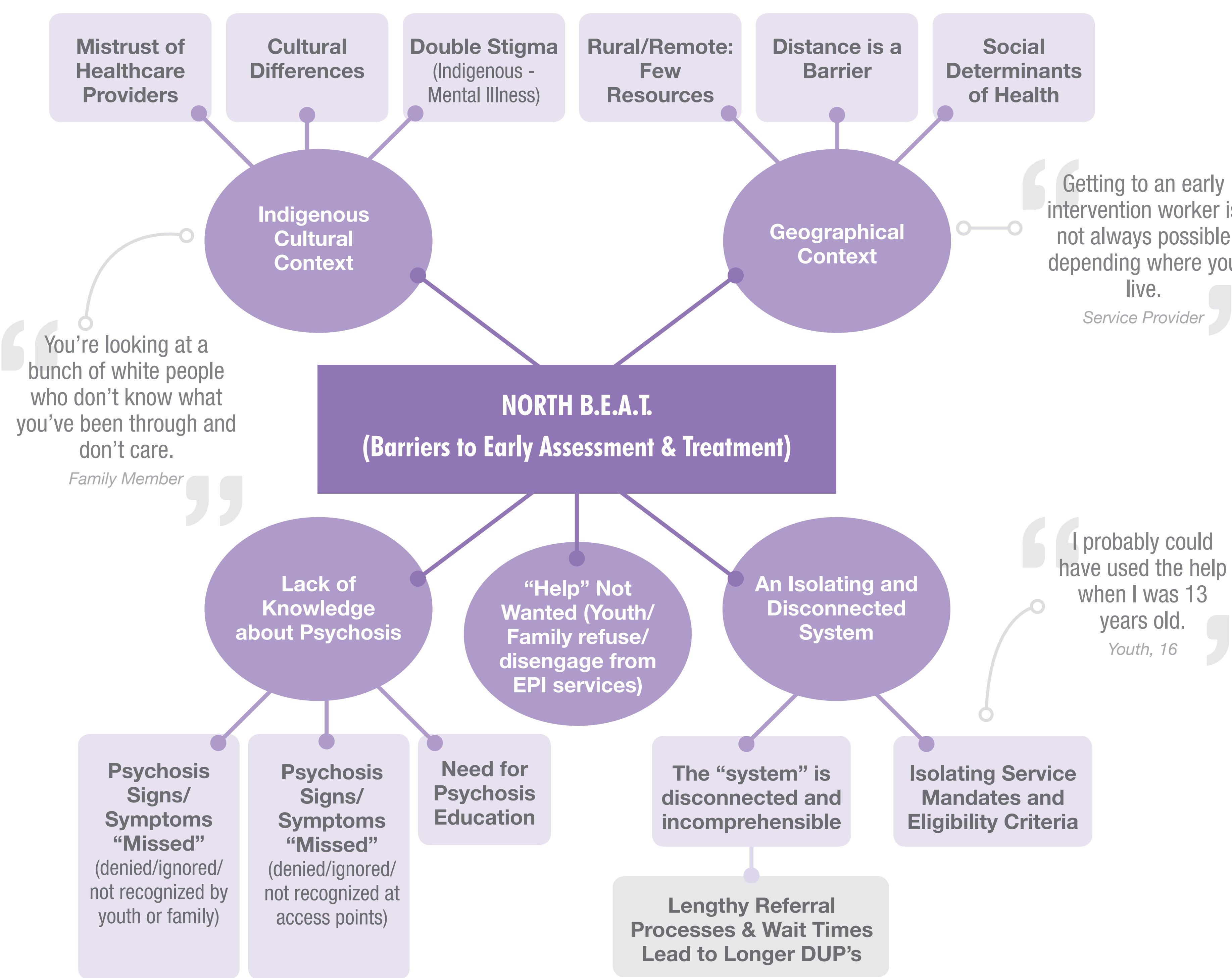
Participants: EPI clients aged ≤21 years (n = 29) from across Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario.

Domains assessed (measure): DUP (NOS); Global Functioning (GAF); Psychosis Symptomatology (PANSS); Hope and Recovery (RAS)

RESULTS

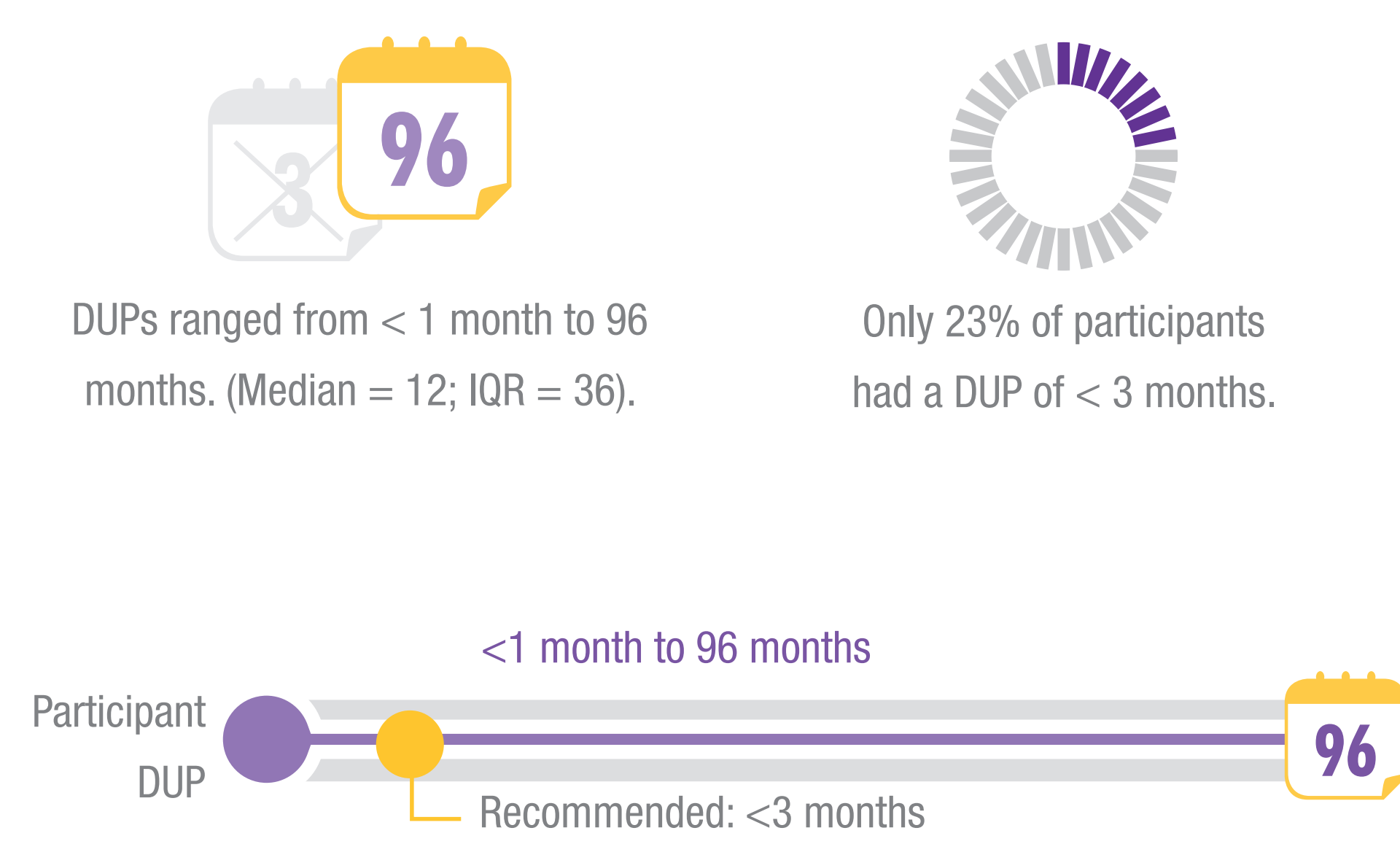
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Content analysis of the verbatim transcripts resulted in two global themes: “NorthB.E.A.T. (Barriers to Early Assessment and Treatment)” (Figure 1) and “What Rural Youth Need” (Figure 2).



STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Duration of Untreated Psychosis (DUP)



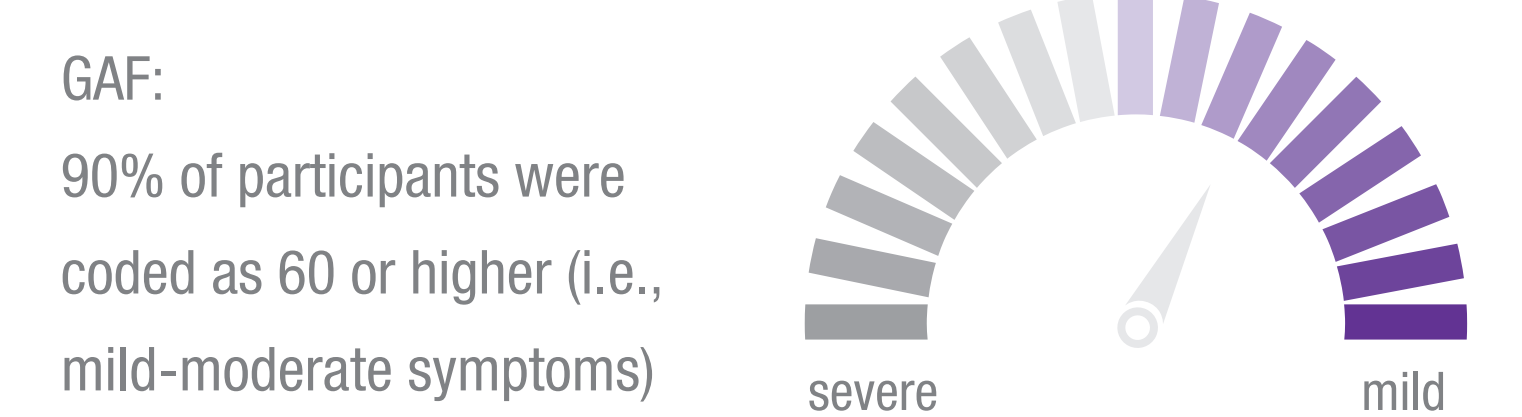
Functional Status

Scores on the psychometric scales suggested participants were functioning relatively well (GAF & PANSS) and had a positive outlook on their recovery (RAS):

PANSS:

When compared to the normative sample, participants were experiencing fewer symptoms and general psychopathology.

PANSS Scale	Mean (SD)	Compared to Norm
Positive Scale	39.65 (8.54)	Slightly below average
Negative Scale	32.77 (5.13)	Much below average
General Scale	32.77 (7.72)	Much below average



RAS: Participants generally had high levels of hope and confidence and goal/success orientation, and were not dominated by psychosis symptoms.

RAS Scale	Mean (SD)	Maximum Possible Score
Personal Confidence & Hope	32.38 (7.28)	45
Goal & Success Orientation	19.65 (3.54)	25
Not Dominated by Symptoms	9.42 (3.58)	15

CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

These findings provided insight into the barriers that Northern Ontario youth face in receiving appropriate EPI.

These findings informed the formation of the *North BEAT Collaborative* (2017-2021). Officially launched December 1, 2017, the NorthBEAT Collaborative is a multi-sectoral systems collaborative which will make it easier for Northwestern Ontario youth experiencing psychosis to get the services they need, where and when they need them.

- With a focus on youth with psychosis in Northwestern Ontario, the NorthBEAT Collaborative will:
- Share knowledge about contexts, existing resources and pathways in Northwestern Ontario
 - Move knowledge about early psychosis intervention to stakeholder groups
 - Build connections across the inter-sectoral system of care
 - Strategize other ways to address barriers to early assessment and treatment

Youth with psychosis in Northwestern Ontario do not get the help they need when they need it.

We're going to change that.

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