

The NavMAP Standards for youth mental health and addictions navigation programs in Canada

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Background

- > Less than 20% of **youth** with **mental health and/or addictions (MHA) concerns** in Canada receive appropriate MHA treatment.
- > Youth and their families encounter many **barriers** to care.
- > **System supports** are needed to help youth and their families find and equitably access appropriate care.
- > **Navigation** is an innovation in MHA care, providing patient-centered support and care planning that helps individuals and families overcome barriers to care.
- > MHA navigation services have become increasingly available in Canada. However, **practices and models vary**.
- > No single source has synthesized evidence and created **comprehensive standards** to set expectations and inform the delivery of these services.

Objective

- > Title: Navigation for youth mental health and addictions: A realist review and synthesis of approaches and practices (NavMAP)
- > **Objective:** Develop a comprehensive understanding of current approaches and practices through a consolidated set of standards in MHA system navigation for youth and their families.

Methods

- > This project utilized **Realist Review and Synthesis methodology** to develop standards.
- > Realist methods help identify **what works, why, how, for whom, and under what circumstances**.
- > The project was conducted over several **phases** (see Figure 1).
- > These stages also involved **community consultations** and **environmental scanning**.
- > All project stages involved **researchers, administrators, clinical leads, MHA navigators, and youth and caregivers with lived experience**.
- > Over 90 programs **across Canada** informed the standards (see Figure 2).

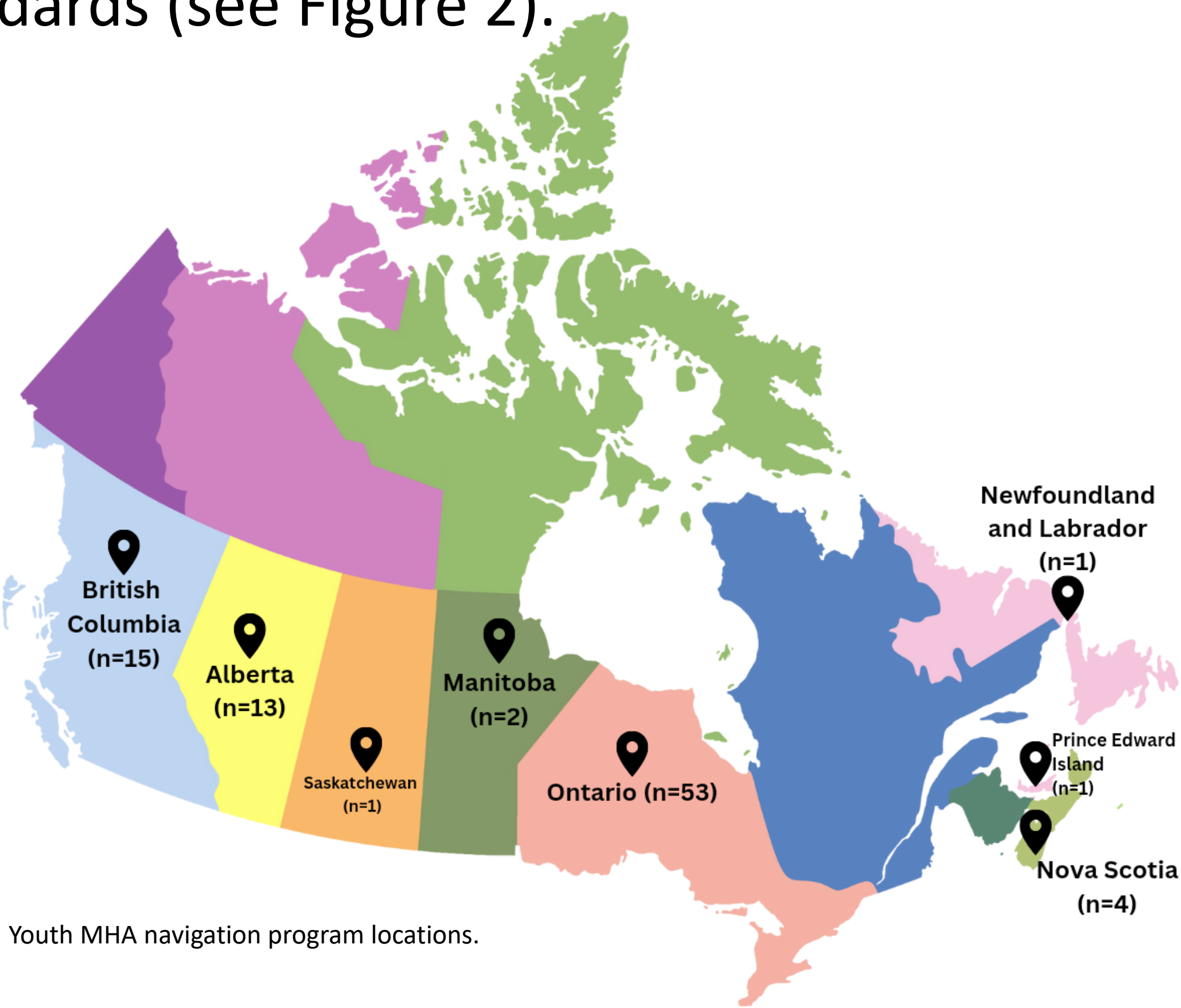


Figure 2. Youth MHA navigation program locations.



Figure 1. NavMAP study phases.

Findings: The NavMAP Standards

The national standards for youth MHA navigation programs are organized around **ten themes**

1. Service Delivery

- Navigation program determines and communicates service hours, catchment area, eligibility criteria, method of referral, caseload, duration of support, modality of support, consent process, privacy and confidentiality process, elements of the navigation process, types of support provided as a complement to navigation, and waitlists.

2. Needs of Target Population

- Navigation program understands its local context and addresses individual and systemic needs, barriers, and gaps.

3. System Resource Options

- Navigation program helps clients navigate the MHA system and/or any system needed. Navigation program maintains a database and/or file system with specific and relevant information about services in the community.

4. Community Collaboration

- Navigation program identifies, builds, and maintains relationships with community services and service providers.

5. Outcomes

- Navigation program gathers feedback from clients, community members, and service providers to determine the impact and effectiveness of the program. Feedback results are used to inform changes within the program.

6. Navigation Team composition and credentials

- Navigation program includes a multidisciplinary team with relevant credentials and offers program staff with onboarding training and opportunities to engage in community for learning.

7. Elements of Access to MHA Care

- Navigation program enhances access to the program for current and potential clients by using different strategies and improves access to the MHA system by addressing barriers to care.

8. Lived Experience and Outreach

- Navigation program values lived experience by actively promoting youth and family-centeredness, offering peer support, implementing and engaging with advisory councils, and spreading awareness about MHA and the MHA system in general.

9. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Health Equity

- Navigation program adopts and regularly reviews policies and practices that meaningfully promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility among program staff and youth/families.

10. Sustainability

- Navigation program makes efforts to secure and sustain funding for the program.

Conclusions

- > These standards offer an **in-depth understanding** of youth MHA navigation services and promote **evidence-based decision making** when considering navigation program practices.
- > Enhancing understanding of MHA navigation services can catalyze their **scale** and **spread**.
- > Developing and sharing national standards can help promote **equitable** and **undisrupted access** to MHA care.

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