



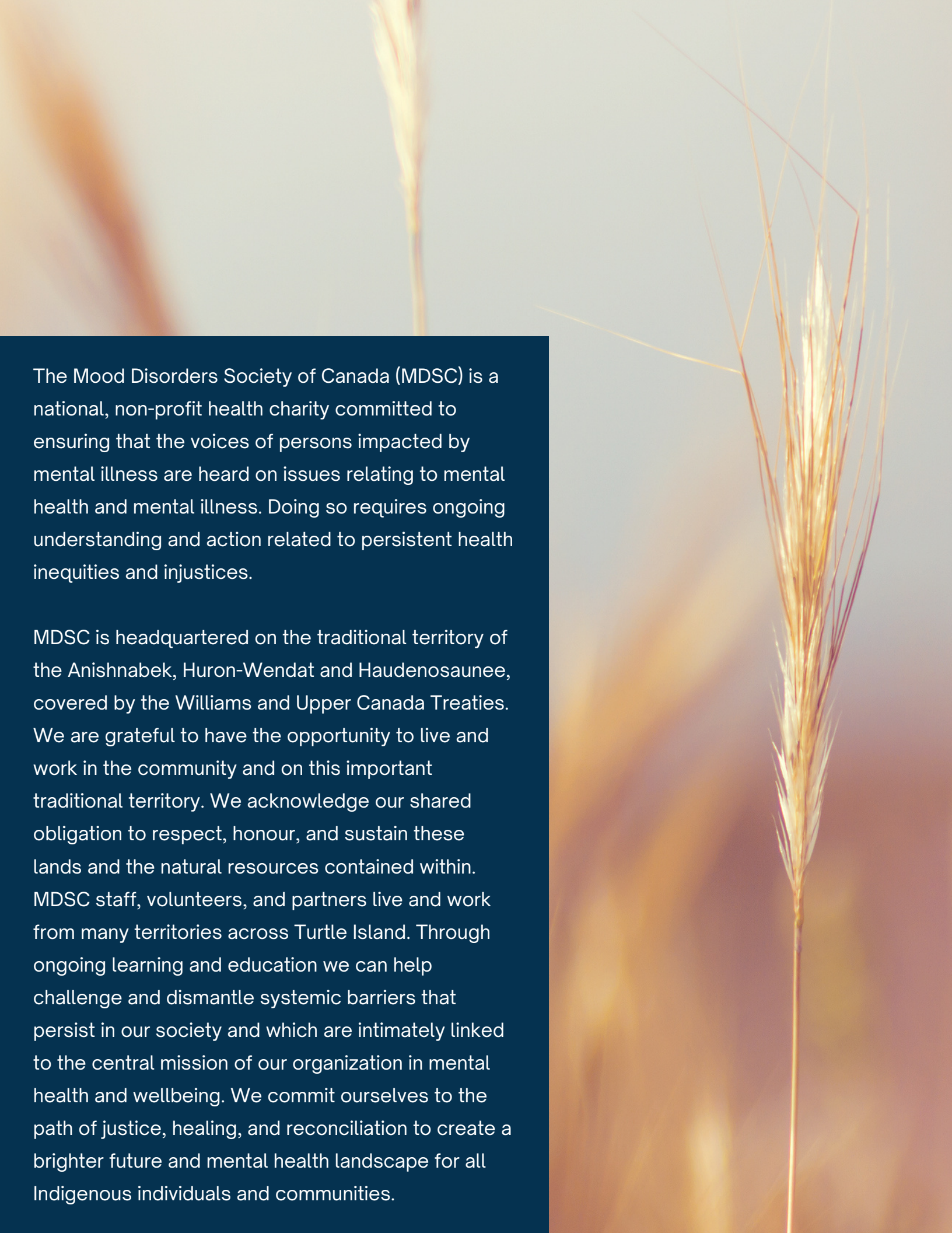
Mood Disorders Society of Canada
Société pour **les troubles de l'humeur** du Canada

CANADIAN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES

Opinion Survey Results

Prepared by:
The National Youth Advisory
Council (NYAC)





The Mood Disorders Society of Canada (MDSC) is a national, non-profit health charity committed to ensuring that the voices of persons impacted by mental illness are heard on issues relating to mental health and mental illness. Doing so requires ongoing understanding and action related to persistent health inequities and injustices.

MDSC is headquartered on the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee, covered by the Williams and Upper Canada Treaties. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work in the community and on this important traditional territory. We acknowledge our shared obligation to respect, honour, and sustain these lands and the natural resources contained within. MDSC staff, volunteers, and partners live and work from many territories across Turtle Island. Through ongoing learning and education we can help challenge and dismantle systemic barriers that persist in our society and which are intimately linked to the central mission of our organization in mental health and wellbeing. We commit ourselves to the path of justice, healing, and reconciliation to create a brighter future and mental health landscape for all Indigenous individuals and communities.



THE NATIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada's National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC MDSC) is a network of high school and post-secondary students as well as recent graduates across the country, aimed at engaging young adults in discussions about mental health, creating resources, participating in fundraising for peer-based mental health initiatives, and advocating for youth mental health.





THE SURVEY

In April of 2023, the Council launched an anonymized survey to collect opinions from post-secondary students across the country.

The survey was intended to learn more about student opinions and experiences with their school's wellness services and mental health resources. The Council hopes to use these results to

better understand mental health experiences and resource accessibility for students across Canada. This will inform future Council initiatives to address any gaps.

These research findings are available for any others working in the youth mental health space to support evidence-informed practice and further research.



A PAN-CANADIAN VIEW

Students ($n = 80$) responded from 12 post-secondary institutions in British Columbia, the Yukon Territory, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

Q1: “I feel like my school’s campus environment is one where my mental health is supported”



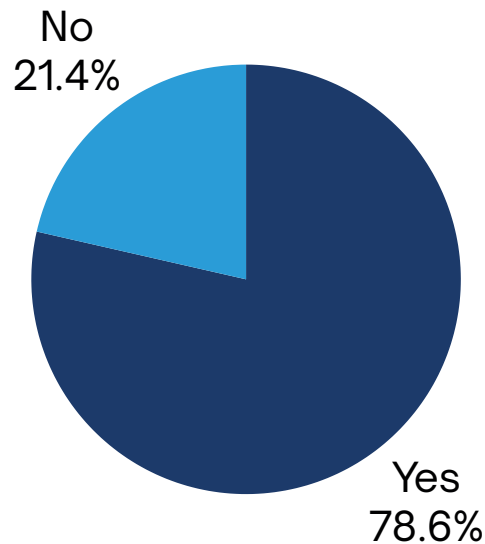
5.82 / 10

Average agreement score

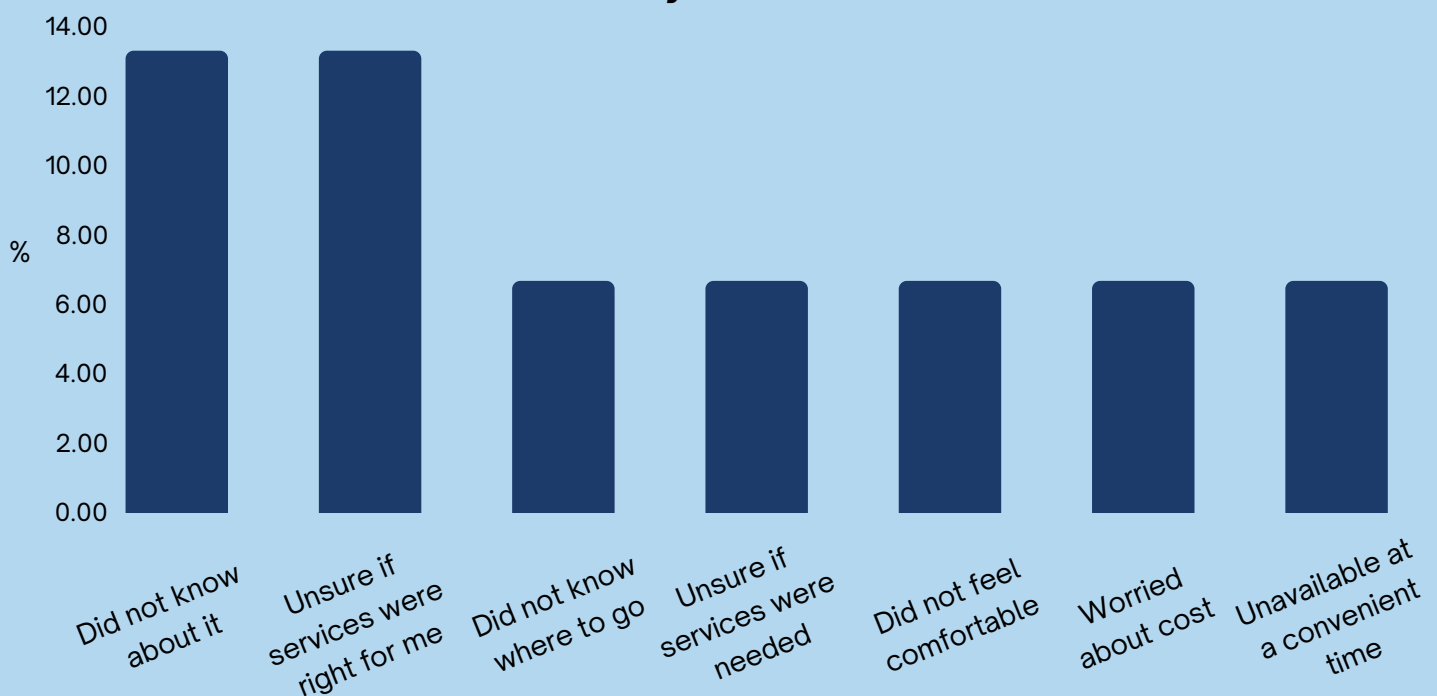
BARRIERS TO WELLBEING AT POST-SECONDARY

- Insufficient access to adequate healthcare insurance coverage
- Lack of academic course flexibility or mechanisms to accommodate sudden events/illness
- Not enough mental health resources
- A disconnect between online students and their institutions
- Unrealistic expectations that demand heavy workloads and high performance
- Long wait-times for counselling
- Old and unsafe campus infrastructure

Q2: *Have you ever felt like you needed psychological, mental health, or wellbeing support from your current school?*



Students who responded “no” to Q2 were asked:
2.a) *For what reason(s) did you not need support from your school?^a*

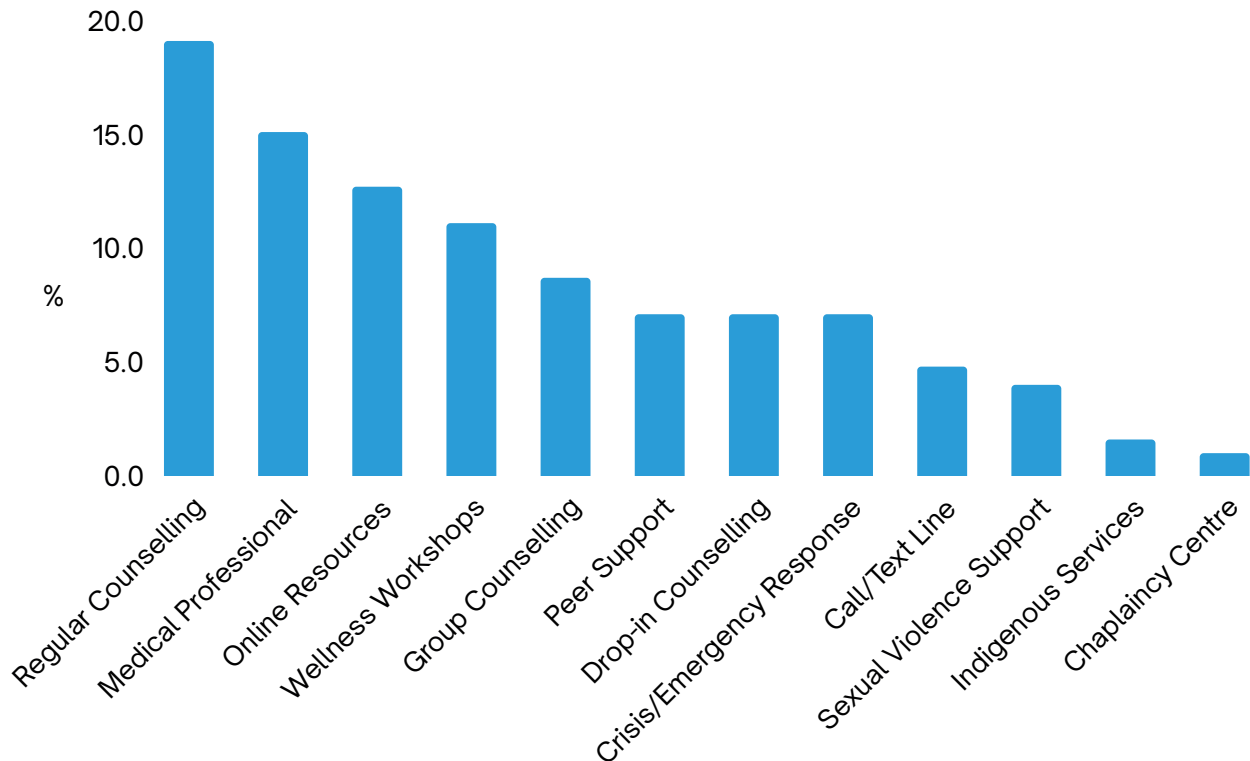


a. Students were permitted to select multiple options. Results are presented as a portion of the total number of selections (n = 15)

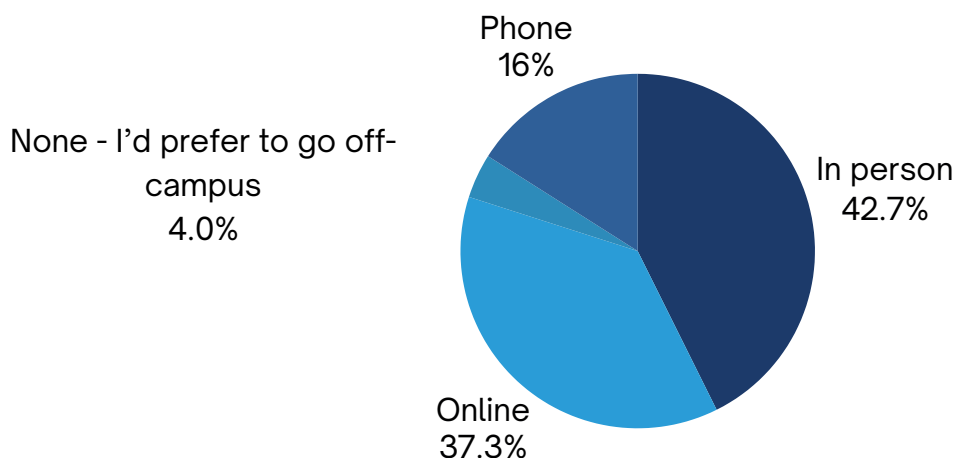
Students who responded “yes” to Q2 were asked:

2.b) What best describes the type of resource(s) you used or wanted to use?^a

a. Students were permitted to select multiple options. Results are presented as a portion of the total number of selections (n = 126)



Q3: If needed, what is your preferred method of accessing mental health/wellbeing resources at school?





89%

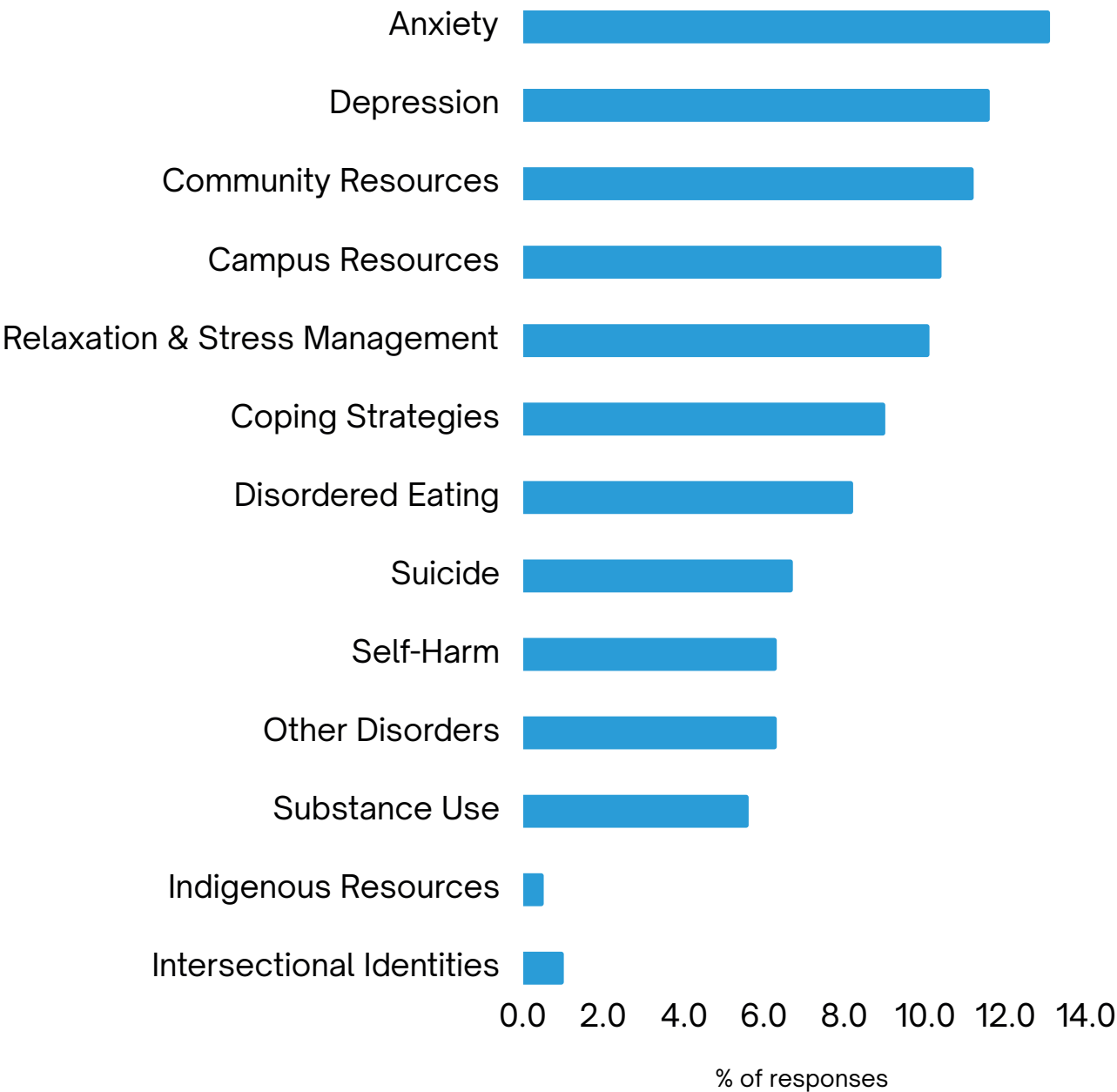
of respondents said they would like to receive information from their school about mental health.

50%

of respondents said they felt their institution did not provide enough mental health resources.

DESIRED RESOURCES

Q4: *What topic(s) is/are you interested in receiving information about?*^a



a. Students were permitted to select multiple options. Results are presented as a portion of the total number of selections (n = 268)

4.b) From whom would you prefer to receive resources?^a

A mental health professional
17.0%

A primary health care provider (e.g.,
nurse, family doctor)
12.3%

A professor or teacher
12.3%

A guidance or career counsellor
11.1%

Anonymously (from no one directly)
9.4%

A friend / an unknown peer / a coach
or mentor each:
7.0%

4.c) In what format(s) are you most interested in receiving information?^b

Social media
10.7%

Podcasts, audiobooks, or videos
9.7%

Informational websites
9.2%

Print - brochures, flyers, posters
8.7%

In person - health care appointments
7.8%

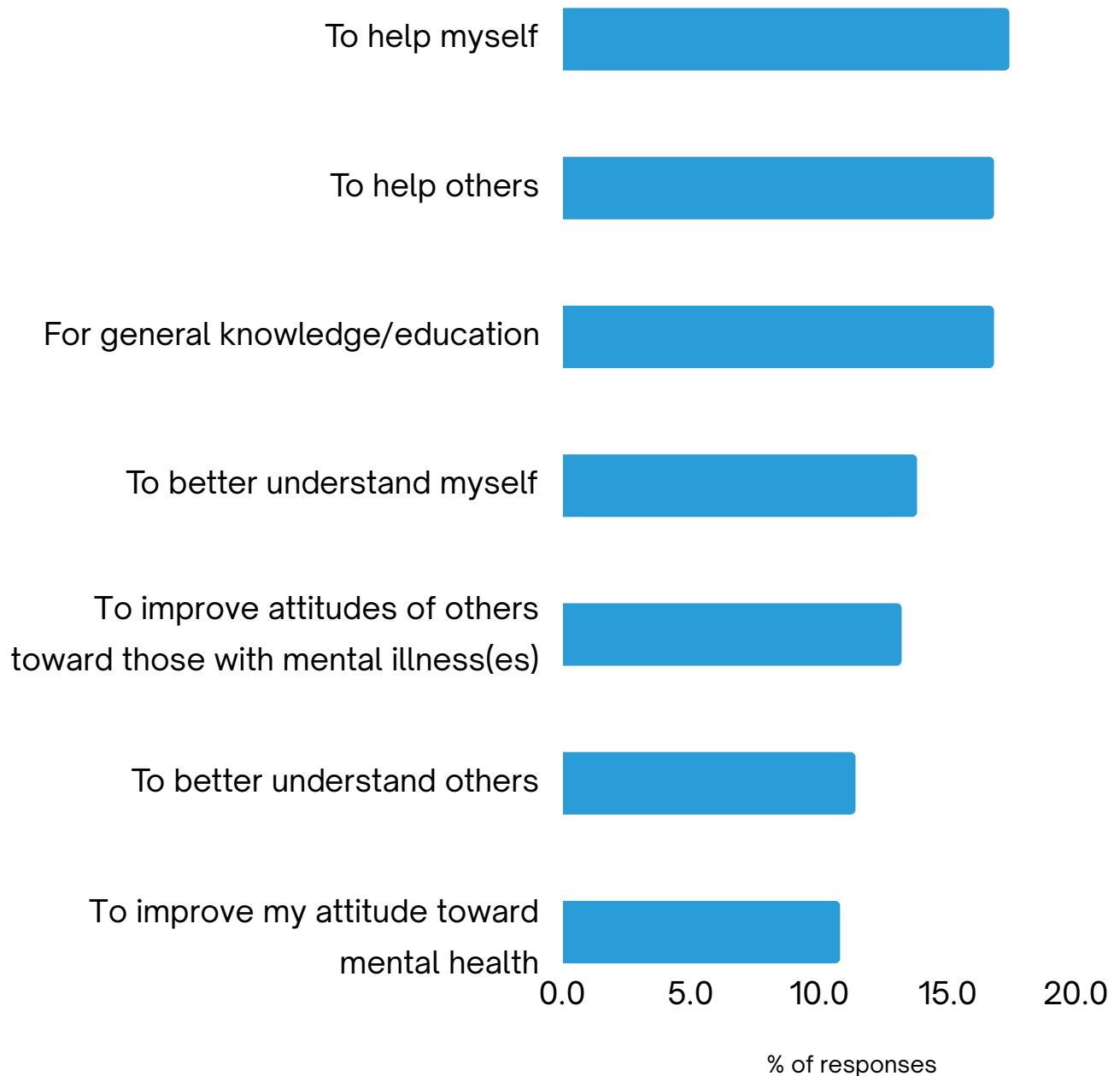
Online training or courses
7.8%

Online events (webinars, panels etc)
7.8%

In person - workshops, training, or
events
7.3%

In person - support or peer groups
7.3%

4.d) For what purpose(s) are you interested in receiving information about mental health and wellbeing?^a



a. Students were permitted to select multiple options. Results are presented as a proportion of the total number of selections (n = 167).

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



21.6

average age
(in years - min
18, max 29)



2.9

average year
of study



95%

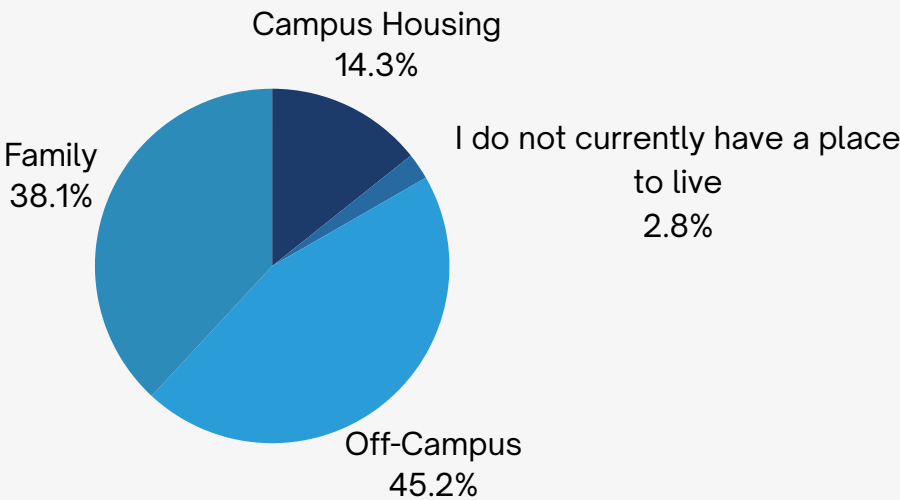
enrolled
full-time



83%

identified as
white

Living Situation



68.4% living with others, 31.6% living alone.

97.5% domestic students (i.e. studying in their country of permanent residence)

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Post-secondary schools tend to offer a variety of mental health and wellbeing resources but students still perceive barriers to their use.

- Students reported feeling uncertainty about how to access resources, the appropriateness of services for their needs, long wait-times, and imperfect timing.
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Students feel they could benefit from more mental health and wellbeing resources and more diversity in their delivery and topics.

- Online resource formats may be an accessible option (e.g., social media, websites, podcasts), but students similarly desire in-person options (e.g., counselling, workshops, print information).
 - Information about community resources (outside the school) was also desired, including increased insurance coverage for these services.
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Respondents noted that post-secondary can be a demanding experience, with many stressors inherent to student life. However, many students suggested an accommodating, compassionate culture with sufficient support resources could reduce barriers to wellbeing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our gratitude to the NYAC Core Advisory Council members for their invaluable contribution in both creating and translating the survey. We also extend our appreciation to all of the NYAC volunteers for assisting in outreach and consultation for this project.

A special thanks also to Jill Stringer, Core Advisory Council member and former NYAC co-chair, for her design expertise and the data extraction.

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to engage young adults in discussions about mental health!



Contact

nyac@mdsc.ca

mdsc.ca/nyac



[@nyacmdsc](https://www.instagram.com/nyacmdsc)



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