

Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Network Enhancing MHSU Workforce Capacity Through ECHO: Integrating Lived Experience and Provider Perspectives

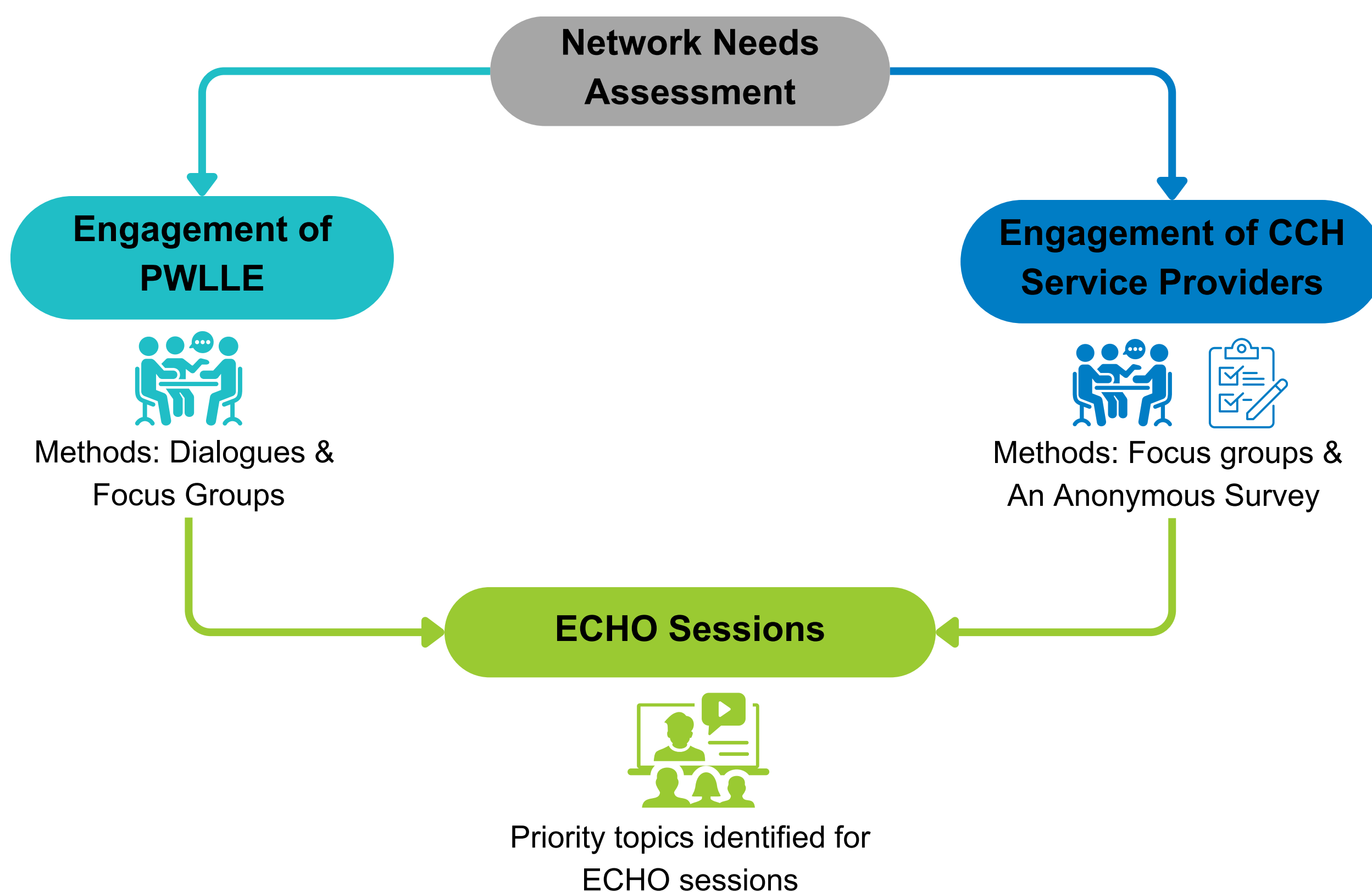
Background & Procedure

The Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Network (the Network) is leading an ongoing needs assessment to better understand long standing system-level challenges experienced by people in British Columbia with complex mental health and substance use (MHSU) needs. The findings inform learning opportunities, program design, and system-level improvements.

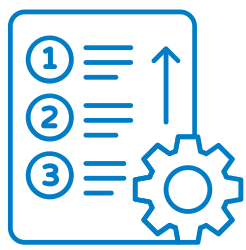
The Network leverages scientific evidence, lived experience and wise practices to guide the needs assessment work. Engagements have been conducted to learn directly from the valuable experience of those we aim to support, including:

- Engagement sessions involving people with lived and living experience (PWLLE) of complex MHSU challenges were conducted to better understand their unmet needs.*
- Engagement sessions and a survey involving service providers in Complex Care Housing (CCH) settings sought their perspective to identify training needs.*

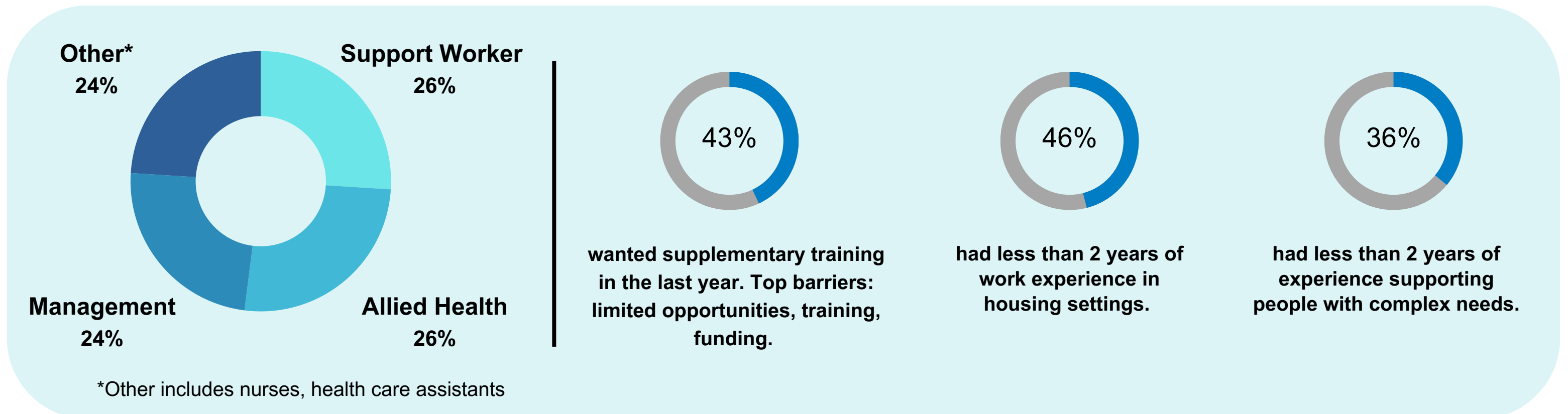
This document integrates the findings from these two engagements to inform one of the Network's knowledge mobilization initiatives - **the Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use ECHO** - which is an online learning platform for service providers supporting people with complex MHSU challenges. By integrating the perspectives of both PWLLE and service providers, ECHO training is tailored to address the unmet needs of those delivering and receiving services.



Findings: Service Providers Need & Want Supplementary Training



The [CCH staff survey](#) revealed that respondents had limited work experience in clinical, housing, and complex needs settings, alongside barriers to addressing these competency gaps. These findings highlight the need for free and accessible training that focuses on practical and readily implementable skills and information. [CCH staff survey](#) statistics:



Findings: Priority Topics for Service Provider Training



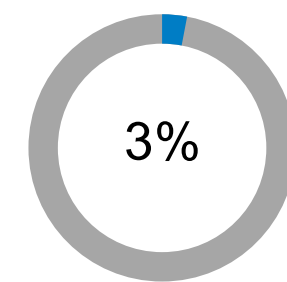
Integrated findings from the [Engagement sessions with PWLLE](#) and the [Engagement sessions & survey with CCH staff](#) helped to identify topics that could be targeted in service provider training. The identified priority topics include:

Cultural Awareness

- Healing approaches of diverse communities.
- How to help clients reconnect with their cultural roots.
- Practical skills to enact cultural awareness or to develop the confidence to use previously learned skills.

"I don't necessarily value the approach that psychiatry takes in terms of how it constructs illness and views people, but it's hard to have that adjusted to my [cultural] values because that's how we operate in a Western medical model."

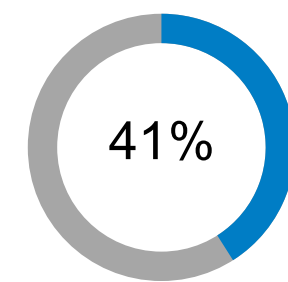
- PWLLE



felt confident ensuring clients experience cultural safety

Crisis Intervention

- De-escalating a crisis/violent situation, without physical contact.
- Team-based learning to ensure consistency and role clarity between team members.



felt well prepared to handle aggressive, violent, or suicidal behaviour

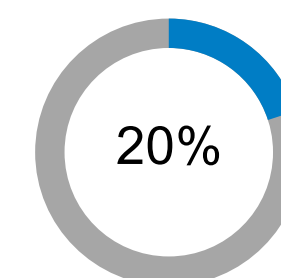
Psychosis Management

- Best practices to prevent/treat/manage acute psychosis.
- The relationship between psychosis and other mental health illnesses, illicit substances, and prescribed medications.



Staff Self-Care

- Skills for self-care, specific to staff who support clients/patients with complex MHSU challenges.
- How to debrief after challenging situations (e.g., death, overdose).



felt confident in their self-care skills or in avoiding burnout

“Often staff are experiencing burnout which affects the level and attention and care patients are receiving. It gives [the impression] that everyone has given up on them, which is an awful feeling.” - PWLLE

Overdose Management

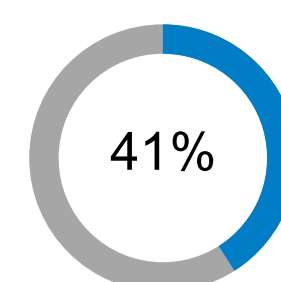
- How to develop and implement a plan of action in an overdose scenario, including outlining different team roles.
- Strategies to implement in overdose situations non-responsive to naloxone.

Medical Issues

- Medication awareness including terminology, an overview of commonly prescribed medications, and their side effects/interactions with illicit substances.
- Medication administration.
- Advanced wound care for clinical staff; basic wound care training for support staff for situations where clinical staff is not on-site.

Boundary Setting

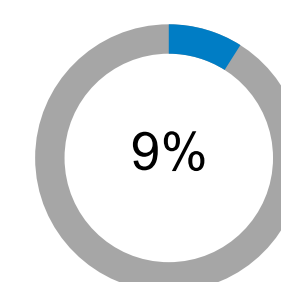
- Respectfully, but firmly set boundaries with clients.
- Set boundaries that balance cultural awareness and respect.



felt confident ensuring people feel respected

Respectful Interactions & Psychological Safety

- Developing “soft” skills such as effective communication, relationship development and psychologically safe approaches.



felt confident ensuring people experience psychological safety

Respectful engagement, where providers ask the right questions without making assumptions, contributes significantly to patients' sense of safety.
“What I need to feel safe in care is to be able to trust the person. A lot of that relies on their comfort in engaging with me as a person, not just a diagnosis.”
- PWLLE



Stigma

- Strategies to help clients navigate stigma in health care settings.
- How to manage stigma occurring within government/municipal organizations.
- How to effectively communicate with other healthcare providers and the general population (eg, friends, family) about stigma and its impact on clients.

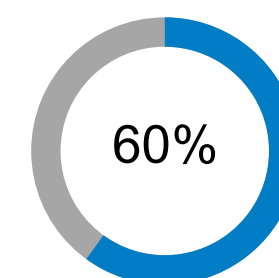
PWLLE described feeling the most stigmatized in healthcare settings. They expressed that these settings would benefit from *“empathy, compassion, hope. Just a non-judgmental approach, have a conversation with the patient or the client and see them as a person.”* - PWLLE

Gender Equity and 2SLGBTQIA+

- Addressing unique challenges experienced by 2SLGBTQIA+ clients during care.
- The relationship between gender diversity and Indigenous culture.
- How to incorporate the learning from lived experience when providing care.

Trauma-Informed Care

- How trauma influences the development of mental health issues and how it can contribute to substance use.
- How to respectfully and compassionately provide services for clients who have/are experiencing trauma.



felt confidence in their ability to provide trauma-informed care

“In some cases, [the service providers] are not practicing [trauma-informed care]. And, that has caused harm, it has caused trauma, retraumatizing individuals, my family members, and myself.” - PWLLE

Concurrent Disorders

- How illicit substances and prescription medications interact with and influence the presentation of various mental health conditions.
- The potential interactions of illicit substance use with prescription medication.
- How to tailor care/interactions for clients with concurrent disorders.
- The influence of genetics on the susceptibility of concurrent disorders.

Takeaways

Engagement sessions with those who provide and receive services helped identify priority topics for **ECHO sessions**. Incorporating the preferences and perspectives of PWLLE in session development will translate to more acceptable recommendations and, ultimately, better outcomes. By directly asking service providers about the topics, skills, and additional training they need, the ECHO program can be tailored to more effectively meet their needs.

