

# Reducing Harms Through Youth Cannabis Education: A Survey of Educator Perspectives

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## Introduction

- In 2022, 18% of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) youth in grades 7-12 reported using cannabis<sup>1</sup>
- There is a lack of harm reduction cannabis education in NL schools<sup>2</sup>
- The Cannabis Health Evaluation and Research Partnership (CHERP) is developing a youth harm-reduction substance use education strategy



## Research Objectives

Explore grades 4-12 NL educators:

- 1 Attitudes toward harm reduction approaches to substance use education
- 2 Needs in order to deliver harm reduction substance use education to students
- 3 Preferences for receiving educator training and curriculum materials

## Method

### Measure

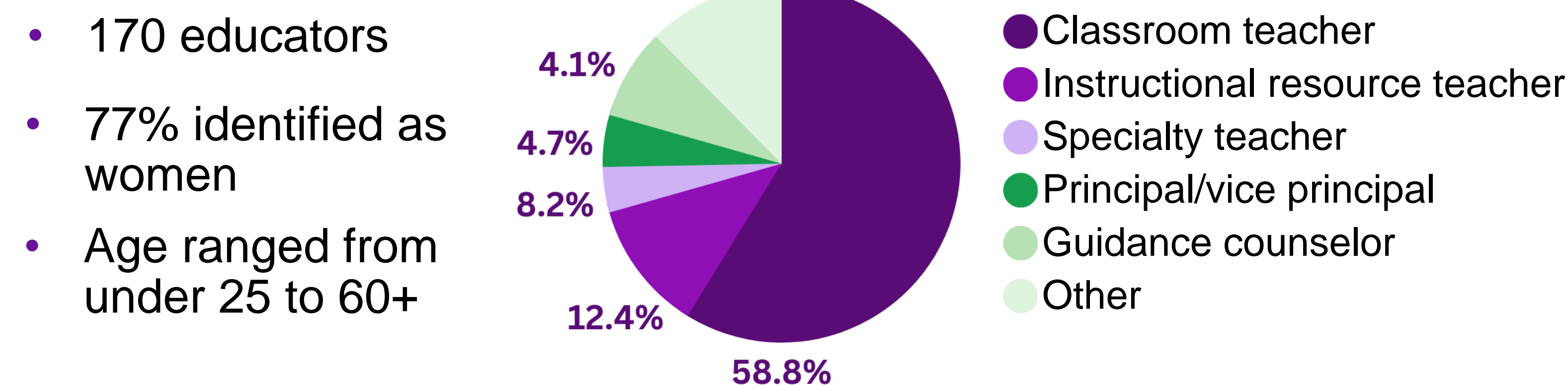
- An online survey was created in consultation with educators and included Likert scale, multiple choice and open-ended items

### Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics evaluated demographic variables and response frequencies
- T-tests and ANOVAs identified differences between subgroups based on educator demographics
- Inductive thematic analysis established potential themes in open-ended responses

## Results

### Participant Demographics



### Perspectives Toward Harm Reduction Cannabis Education

**92%** believed harm reduction was an effective approach

However...

**16%** felt that teaching students about safer substance use would encourage substance use

**100%** agreed students need honest information about substance use to reduce harms

However...

**46%** thought that youth who use substances should be expected to pursue abstinence

**68%** believed they would be able to recognize if a student was under the influence of cannabis

However...

**61%** felt uncertain how to properly respond to student cannabis use

**77%** of educators would be comfortable supporting a student who had consumed cannabis

However...

**8%** thought their teacher training would allow them to intervene and prevent cannabis-related harms

### Professional Learning



**98%** thought that teachers need training for reducing cannabis-related harms



**70%** wanted harm reduction training to be interactive



**57%** preferred to receive curriculum materials online



**89%** were personally interested in receiving harm reduction teacher training



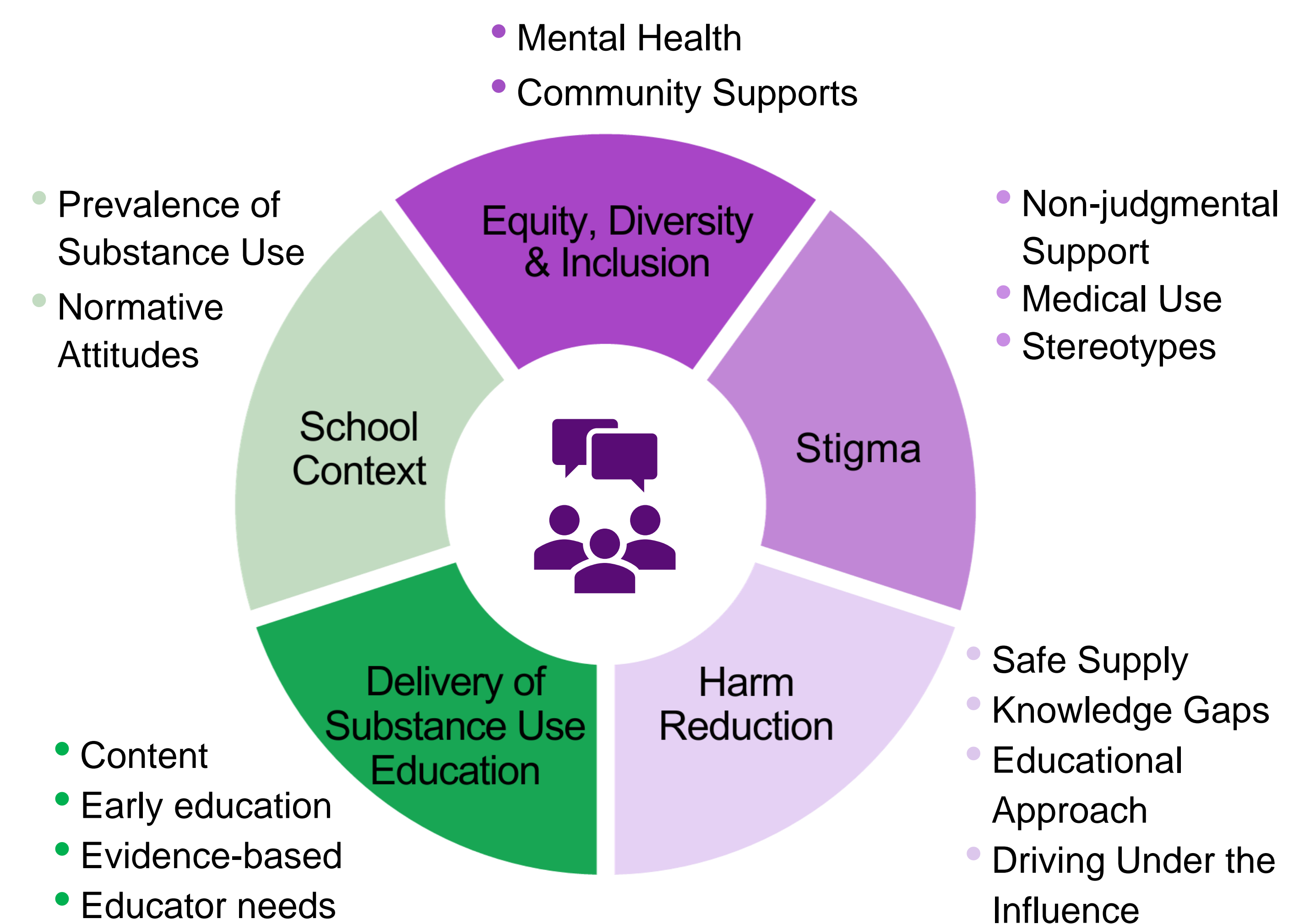
**80%** were interested in receiving e-learning resources for students

## Results

### Demographic Differences

- Educators under 40 and women indicated greater support of harm reduction and were more interested in training

### Themes From Open-Ended Responses



“ We need to understand that some students will use cannabis, and they need to be able to talk about it. The more we hide, the more it can hurt us. The more we stigmatize, the less we can manage. Students are just trying to figure their world out, and it is our responsibility to support them. ”

## Discussion

- Findings indicated considerable educator support for harm reduction substance use education
- Educators felt unprepared to teach this topic
- Educators require harm reduction training and additional support to successfully teach and support students
- This will allow educators to help students make safer choices and reduce substance-related harms



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