

# Presentation to the Standing Committee on Community Services

## Employment Support Services

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DEPUTY MINISTER

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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## Employment Support Services (ESS)

- ESS provides a continuum of programs to support ESIA clients and their spouses to meaningfully attach to work and increase their self-sufficiency.
- This means that a range of services and approaches are needed that address the unique barriers and needs facing ESIA clients.
- ESS also holds the mandate for employment-focused preventative programming for youth at risk ages 12 to approximately 24. This suite of programming supports dependents of ESIA and DSP clients, youth in care, youth attached to the Youth Outreach Program (CYFS) and youth attached to the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre.



In May 2019, ESS served 4,380 participants.



The ESS budget consists of \$9,371,000 in provincial funding, and \$1,712,500 in federal funding.

## Employment Action Planning

- A portion of ESIA clients are required to participate in ESS in order to maintain their full eligibility, while other clients may participate in ESS voluntarily.
- ESIA clients create their Employment Action Plan (EAP) in collaboration with their ESS caseworker.
- This plan helps to map out the journey for each client and the supports and services they will need to attach to work.
- This plan is completely unique and customized to an individual's strengths, experiences, education, interests and life situation.
- EAPs can range from a few months to a few years, depending on an individual's distance from independence. What is most important is that clients are matched with the right services at the right time that meet their distinct needs.



# Employment Action Planning

An example:

Jane is 52 and has never worked. She has spent her adult years caring for her children and now has an empty nest. She suffers from anxiety and doesn't have a strong connection to the community, but is ready to try work.

EAP: Jane needs a long-term EAP that builds a comprehensive plan for her success:

- ▶ workshops/supports for confidence building,
- ▶ identification of transferrable skills and career exploration
- ▶ attainment of high school diploma
- ▶ skills specific training
- ▶ workshops and supports to develop coping mechanisms for managing anxiety
- ▶ Pre-employability and employability skills development
- ▶ job search support
- ▶ ongoing job maintenance
- ▶ transition support from ESIA



# ESS Client Programming Overview

ESS is comprised of several programs to support ESIA clients

- **Post-Secondary Supports:** For ESIA clients pursuing university or college education, ESS offers help with the cost of tuition, textbooks, childcare, internet, transportation, and other educational-related costs. Each program below offers program-specific incentives:
  - Career Seek
  - Educate to Work
- **Employability Enhancement Programs:** Enhance the employability of ESIA clients by providing pre-employment, skills development, work experience and on-the-job supports.
  - EDGE
  - Move to Work
  - Skills Work
  - Ability Works
  - Inspiring Success
  - Work Activity Program
- **Wage Subsidy Programs:** Subsidies are provided to employers as an incentive to hire employment-ready ESIA clients.
  - Post-Secondary Wage Subsidy
  - Targeted Wage Subsidy
  - Youth Wage Subsidy



# ESS Client Programming Overview

## Special Needs

ESS provides employment-related special needs to support participation in programming and work. For example:

- ▶ Childcare (up to \$400/month)
- ▶ Transportation (up to \$150/month)
- ▶ Employment-related special needs (e.g., clothing, tools, union dues, etc.)
- ▶ Criminal record and child abuse registry checks
- ▶ Application for pardons

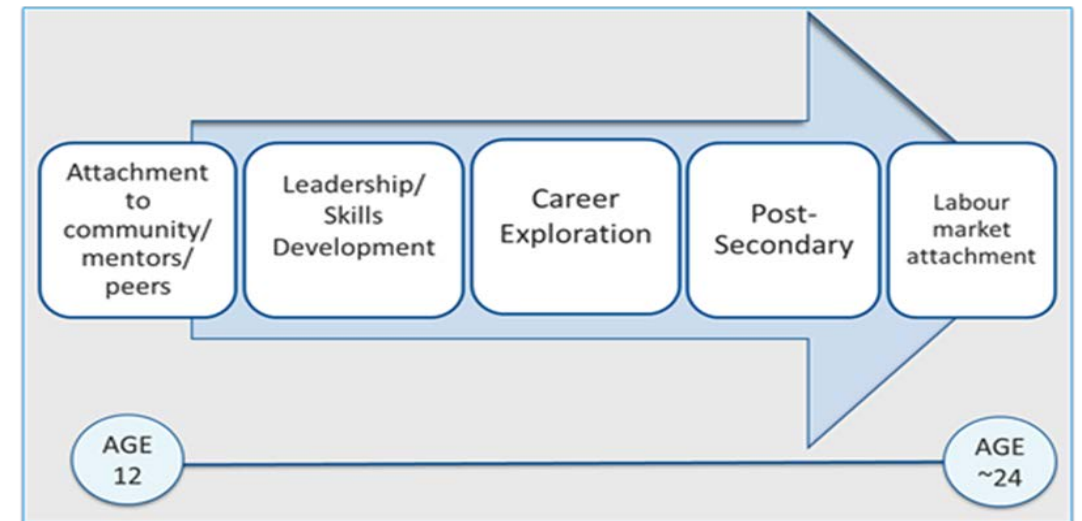
### Workplace Support Program

ESS also provides technical aids, assistive devices and attendant support to Nova Scotians whose employment and post-secondary participation is at risk due to their disability. This is an income tested program available to all Nova Scotians.

# ESS Youth Programming Overview

In collaboration with community, ESS provides a continuum of youth-focused supports to help break the cycle of intergenerational reliance on ESIA.

- The programming aims to build connections to community, enhance self-confidence, provide career exploration, work experience and support participation in post-secondary.
- Several new programs have recently been implemented in response to recent analysis that shows that youth (19-24) are the fastest growing proportion of new intakes to ESIA. ESS has taken action to change this trajectory and are already seeing results.
- Since these new programs have launched, there has been a decline in youth on the caseload (16-25) of about 10%.



# ESS Youth Programming Overview

ESS preventative programming supports predominantly dependents of ESIA and DSP clients and youth in care:

▶ **Youth Development Initiative (YDI):** Provides career-focused, project-based programming (ages 12-20) and wage subsidies for work experience (ages 16-20) to dependents of ESIA and DSP clients and youth in care.



Approximately 300 youth annually

▶ **Career Rising:** A partnership with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council to provide skills development camps, work experience within predominantly resource-based sectors, and a post-secondary grant to dependents of ESIA clients and youth in care. There are four sites across the province (Truro, Kentville, Bridgewater, North Sydney). Career Rising was recently recognized by the OECD as a best practice for youth programming.



37 youth completed the program last summer

▶ **Youth Immigrant Career Exploration Project:** In partnership with ISANS, the project provides unique employability-focused programming to new Canadian youth attached to DCS.



18 youth completed the program in 2019



## ESS Youth Programming Overview

- ▶ **Employment Supports within Residential Facilities for Youth in Care:** Employment services are being designed for facilities supporting youth in care ages 15 and up.



Serves approximately 40 youth annually

- ▶ **Educate to Work for Dependents of ESIA Clients (ETWD):** Provides financial support to ESIA dependents to attend NSCC and works with them to attach to employment in their field of study during and after graduation.



37 youth sponsored in 2018

- ▶ **Inspiring Success:** Provincial government work experience opportunities for ESIA clients attending post-secondary, and youth in high school who are dependents of ESIA clients or youth in care. The intent of the program is to introduce government as a career path and help to reduce stigma and barriers to future employment.



50 clients and youth participated in 2019 with 14 departments and agencies.

# ESIA Case Management Approach

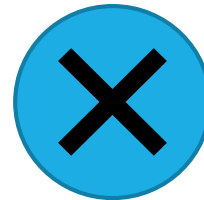
# ESIA Case Management Approach

- A key part of ESIA Transformation is the implementation of a new way of working with and supporting our clients. Our case management approach will be one built on mutual respect, individualized care and **providing the right services and supports at the right time.**
- New supports will include a digital platform with enhanced case management capabilities, assessment tools to inform decision-making, and customized training for ESIA caseworkers.



## A new case management approach will be:

- accessible
- equitable
- delivered by trained career development practitioners
- tailored to meet specific client needs

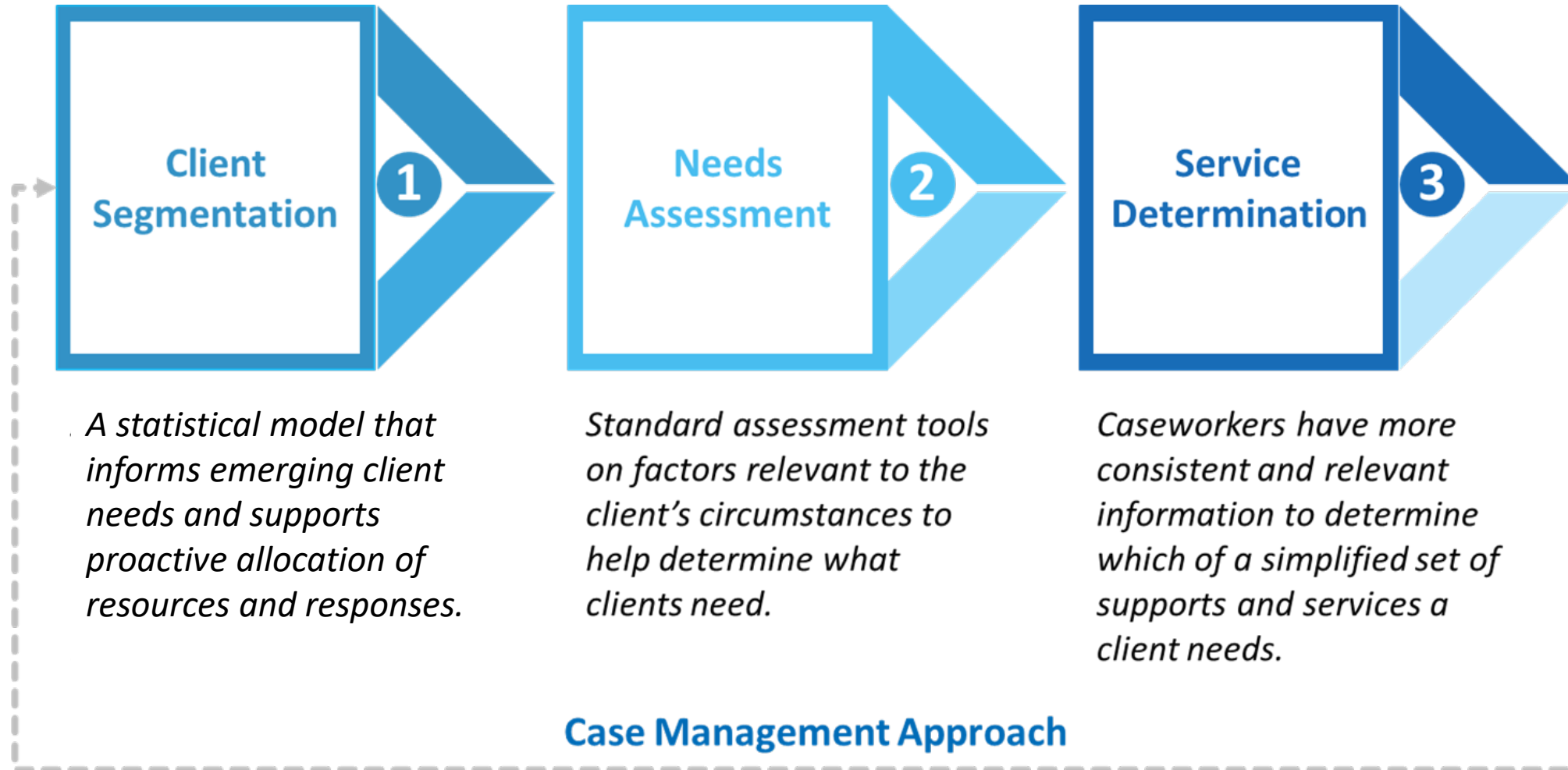


## The new approach will NOT:

- be one-size fits all
- put people into boxes
- be prescriptive
- make assumptions

# ESIA Case Management Approach

## How it will work



## New and Upcoming

- ▶ Funded through the Poverty Reduction Government Innovation Grants, ESS is currently testing 3 small pilots to expand ESS services to youth at risk not attached to DCS.
  - ▶ Expansion of YDI to youth from low income working families
  - ▶ Creation of an Afrocentric YDI for youth at risk
  - ▶ Expansion of ETWD to youth from working families with low incomes
- ▶ DCS and LAE are working together to align and collaborate on employment services across the provinces to ensure equitable services for all Nova Scotians.
- ▶ In Spring 2020, ESS staff will begin customized training through the NS Career Development Association.
- ▶ Future targeted consultation with community providers and clients will help ESS design new programming to fulfill the new case management approach.
- ▶ The new Intake Process will allow for the implementation of the full client segmentation model.

Thank you!

*EDGE is a job search and readiness program designed for young adults aged 18 to 26 who receive Employment Supports and Income Assistance.*

*EDGE is delivered in peer groups, with mentorship and youth-focused supports. It helps young adults develop skills and gain access to the resources they need in a supportive environment designed to meet their unique needs.*

*Funded by the Government of Nova Scotia*



# *EDGE ON EMPLOYMENT*

*2 sites, 3 organizations*



# *DESIGN*

YOUTH INPUT

HUMAN-CENTRIC DESIGN

PRACTICAL DELIVERY

EFFECTIVE FACILITATION

CONSTANT REFINING

SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

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*youth on the caseload face different and sometimes more complex barriers than their adult counterparts*



*a process that starts with the people you're designing for and ending with new solutions that are tailor made to suit their needs*



*a targeted approach with faster access to employability programming is required for ESIA youth clients*



# EDGE PARTICIPANT

UNDERSTANDING TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

## JUSTICE CHALLENGES

Outstanding court issues, criminal records, and overcoming injustice



## HOUSING INSTABILITY & POVERTY

Precarious housing, inadequate communication, lack of resources, marginalization, and isolation.



## HIDDEN CHALLENGES

Literacy, cognitive challenges, lack of success with traditional learning, past trauma and limited job experience



## MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS

Hopelessness, anxiety, depression, self-medication, substance misuse, and barriers to community supports.



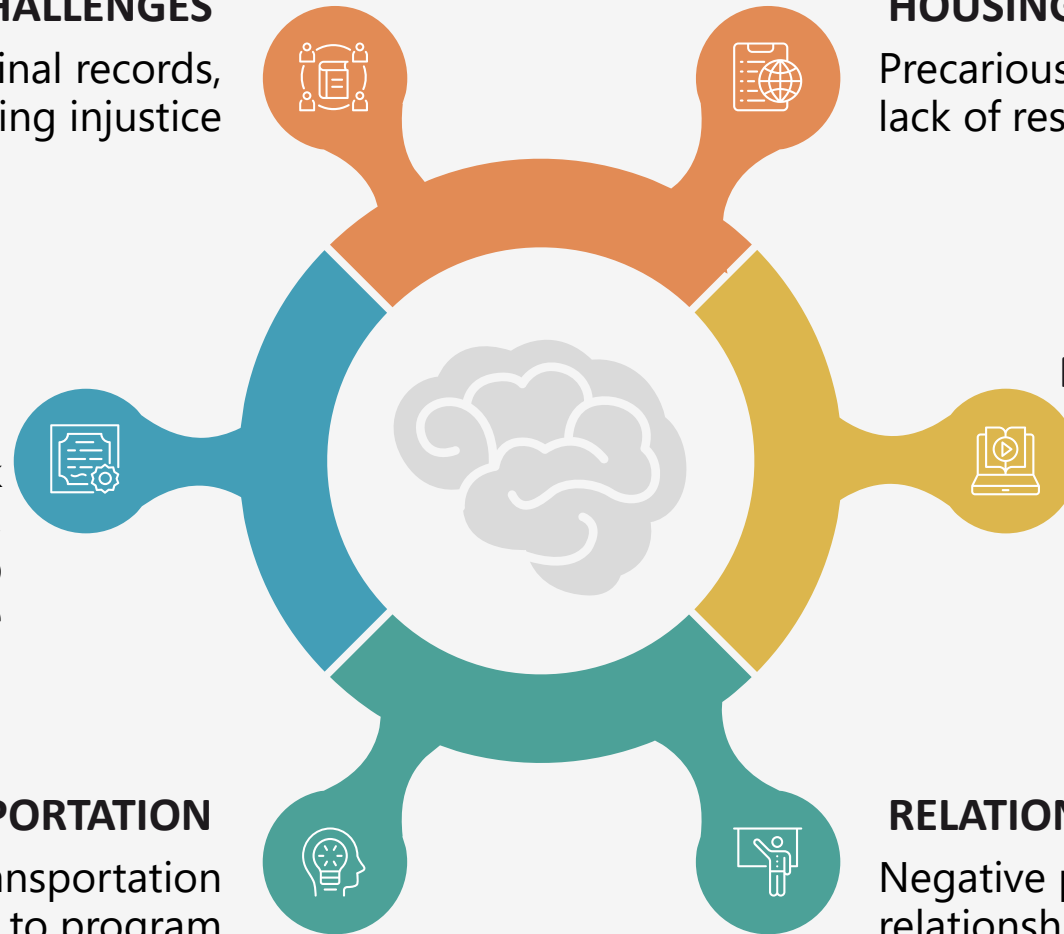
## TRANSPORTATION

Inadequate or lack of transportation means, travel time to program

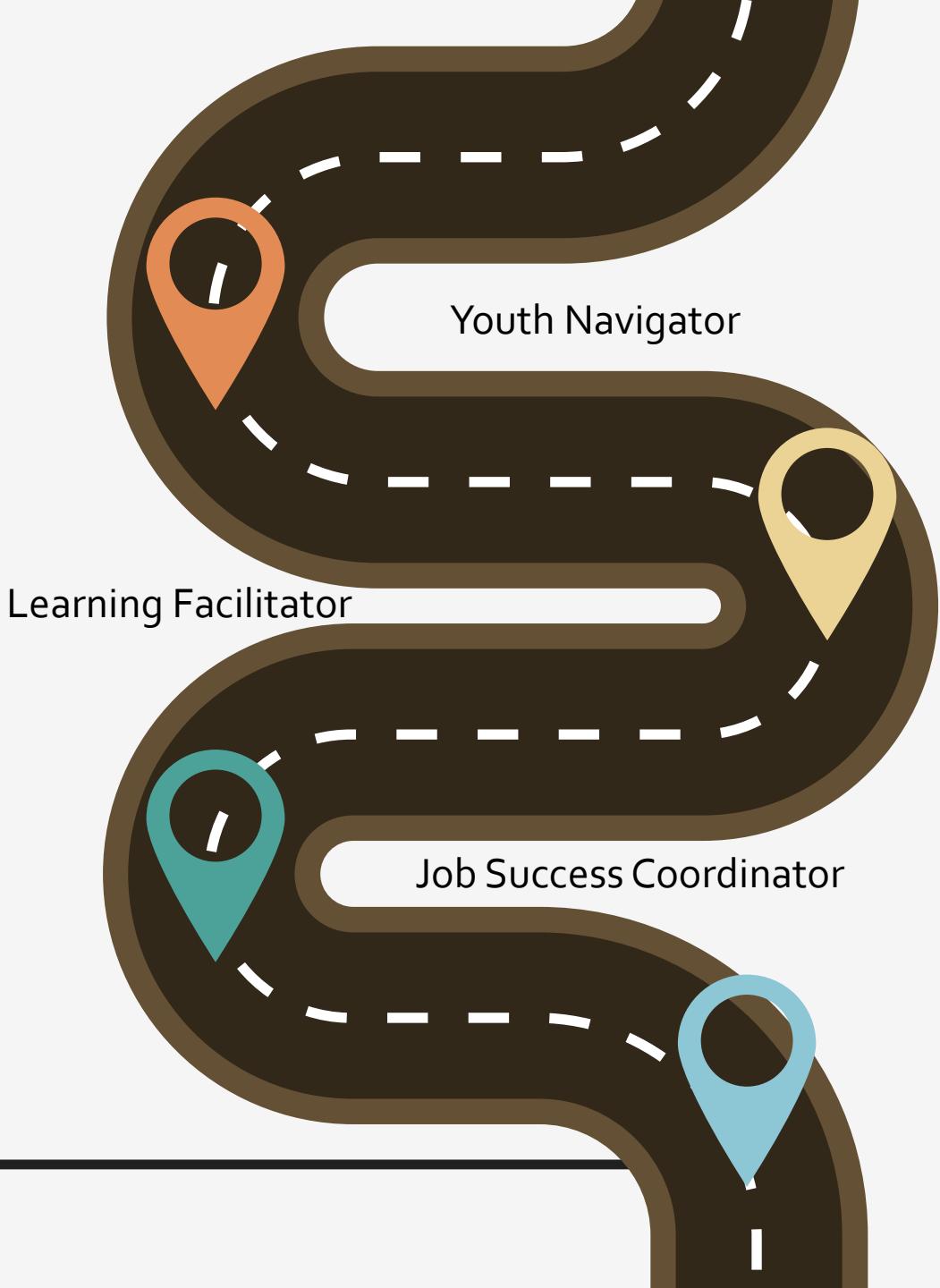


## RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Negative pressures to succeed, unhealthy relationships, inadequate childcare, past relationships with teachers and employers



# EDGE: A JOURNEY TOGETHER



## BEGINNING THE JOURNEY



In partnership with ESIA staff, the Team digs deep to understand personal goals, barriers to attendance & employment, and unique strengths of each participant.

## INDIVIDUALIZED NAVIGATION



Navigator & team builds the client-centered case plan, removing barriers, cultivating belonging, accessing community resources and building courage.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



Learning Facilitator leads group work & individual track employing creative strategies, field experience, interactive discussions, hands on learning and food to build the sense of community.

## SUSTAINING JOB SUCCESS



Job Success Coordinator cultivating the partnership with employers for understanding & supporting clients for effective matching and ensuring sustained employment.

# *Elements & the EDGE approach*

Relational  
Strengths based  
Trauma Informed  
Solution focused  
Creative



Intake / Assessment

- Team Approach
- Intakes on site
- ESS staff on site for assessments
- Strong partnership with ESS office



Case Management

- Collaborative approach with ESS and sponsoring agencies
- Integration and advantages of sponsors' programs and support



Life Skills

- Essential Employability Skills
- Hands on Practice
- Recreation
- Food Skills
- Community Action Projects
- Art Projects

# *Elements & the EDGE approach*

Relational  
Strengths based  
Trauma Informed  
Solution focused  
Creative



Job Search Skills / Job  
Related Training

- Customized training related to career goals
- Networking
- Community Interactions – job fairs
- Mentorship
- Volunteerism



Job Shadows/ Job  
Development / Wage  
Subsidies

- Career Panels
- Mentorships
- Job Fairs / partnership with NS Works
- Collaborative Job Developer Group
- Employer Celebrations



Post Employment  
Support

- Employers as partners
- Navigating life & employment challenges
- Continued support and connection (saving jobs, new successes)

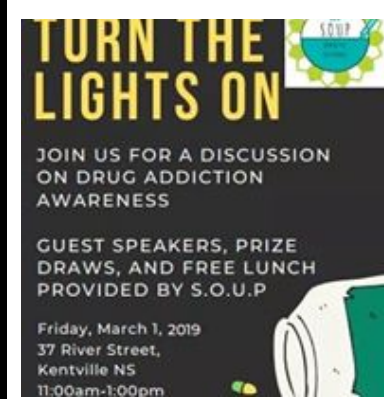


# Edge

A Story in Pictures



Leadership



Raising Awareness



Employer Engagement



Career Aspiration



Reverse Career Fairs



Educating Employers



# *Edge*

A story in Pictures



Team Building



Community Art Installations



Confidence Building



Cooking Skills



Nature / Wellness



Impacting Community

# Edge

## Quotes

"Edge has helped me a lot with my resume work and interview prep and it has help me boost my self confidence about what to say in a job interview. And my favorite thing about edge is the trips we take."

**Josh**

"My favorite thing I have learned or done at Edge would be getting the chance to go out and experience what it is like being in the work field. Also having the chance to meet new people and develop better people skills."

**Kayla**

"My favorite thing about Edge is the fun, passionate, comfortable setting here with all the great people. The learning is fun and interesting, the outings are fun as well and very learning full. Everything impacted me in my life because of the way it is taught, very informational as well."

**Stacie**

Community Inc  
61 Webster Street, Knoxville, TN

The Portal  
440 Main Street, Knoxville, TN

MetroWorks  
707 ...

# Edge

Quotes

"Edge has impacted my life by teaching me the skills to improve my confidence and interview prep, explaining everything in detail not just addressing the topics as one but digging into every little detail about whatever they teach us. Support is awesome, every staff here is really supportive and uplifting/understanding."

**Shiedda**

"Without Edge, I'd never have never had come as far as I have; both the staff and other participants have made a lasting impact on me that I feel will stay with me for years to come."

**Jason**

"I learned many different skills including job readiness and how to manage my time, and emotions with employers. Also being part of the Edge program I built friendships with like minded people who are in the same position as I am, when it came time to apply I knew exactly what i needed and was given the credentials I needed to succeed. If I ever had the chance to be part of the edge team again I would do it in a heartbeat!"

**Jessie**



# *Key Learning*

What have we discovered from the past year

## Engagement

- Youth and Employers are highly invested and connected
- Youth seek greater opportunities to learn about employment and the work world

## Basic Necessities

- Youth consistently cite the supports such as having a safe space, routine, food and transportation as key components

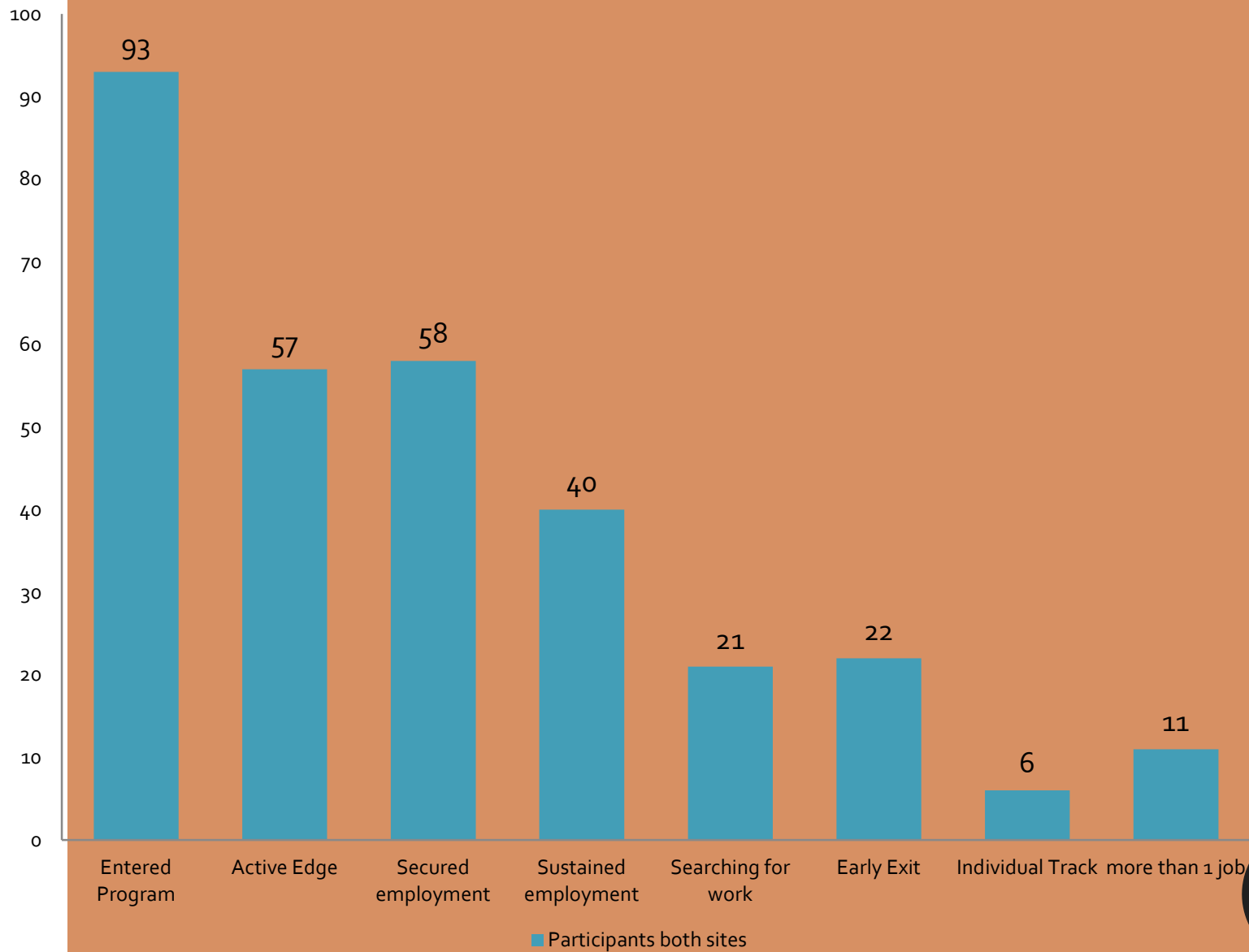
## Trauma

- Majority of the youth live with mental illness as a result of trauma
- To respond to gaps in mental health system – both sites have responded



# Outcomes

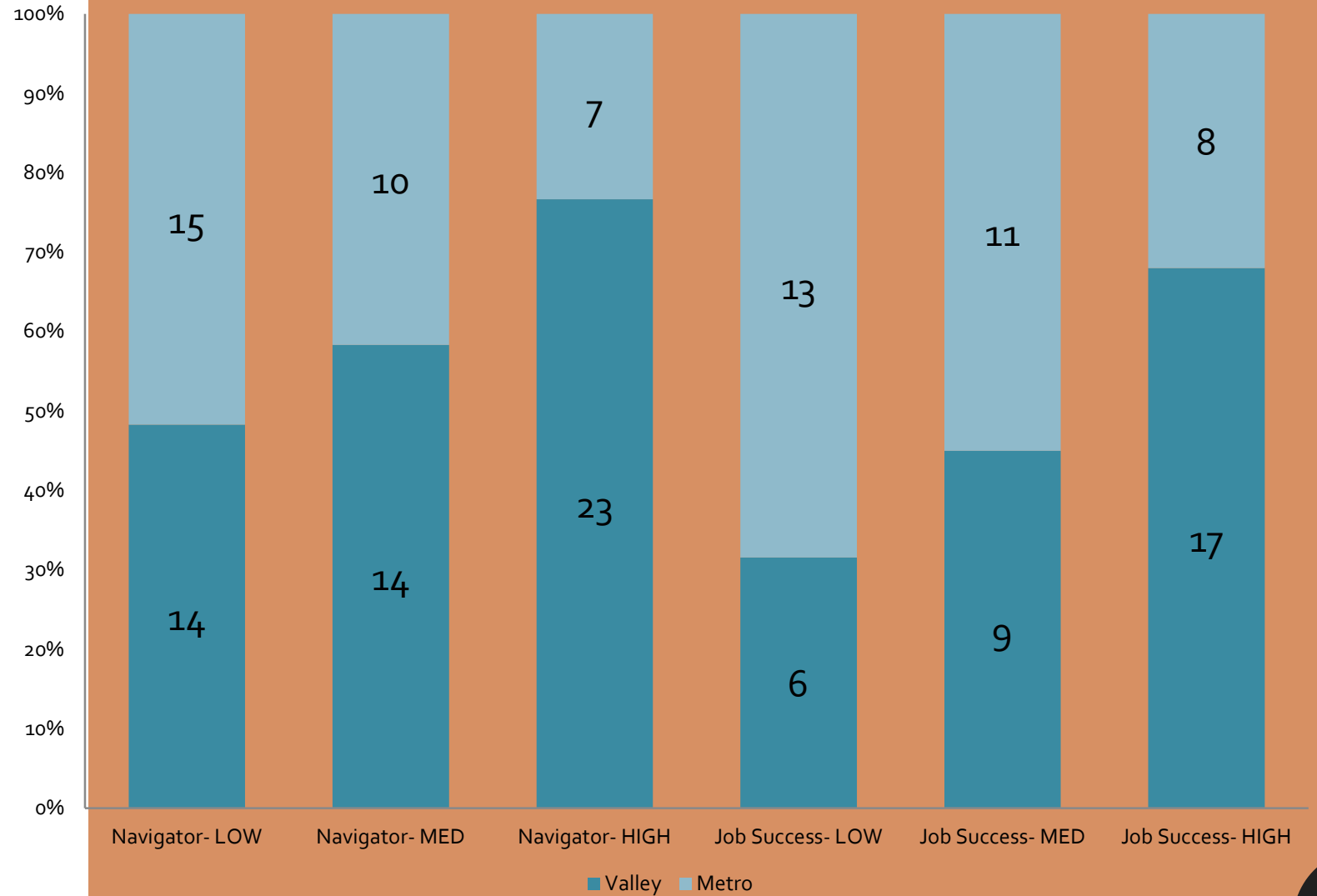
Valley and Metro





# *Support varies with need*

Valley and Metro





## *What youth are saying*

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“build more confidence in my abilities”

“given me the a place to go outside of my house to keep me from going stir crazy”

“EDGE has given me a place where I know that I'm always welcomed with open arms”

“I truly realized that I was being noticed and it felt amazing”

“getting the chance to go out and experience what it is like being in the work field”

“everyone in this space is funny, and relaxed, and have this sense of comradery”

“Without Edge, I'd never have never had come as far as I have; both the staff and other participants have made a lasting impact on me that I feel will stay with me for years to come.”

“It has given me a comfortable environment full of peers who are my age that can relate to the struggles of finding youthful employment and career success.”

“EDGE has changed my life in the best way possible. I feel so loved and supported. “

“ I would recommend to others. I've learned a lot about self-care, respect and I'm not alone.”