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### Navigating Emerging Adulthood: Exploring Current Challenges Experienced in the Community

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# Navigating Emerging Adulthood: Exploring Current Challenges Experienced in the Community

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## BACKGROUND

- Emerging adulthood, or transitional-aged youth, refers to the developmental period between adolescence and adulthood, which has been characterized by instability, discovery, and transition (Arnett, 2015).
- Despite experiencing mental health outcome challenges (Wiens et al., 2020), many young people resist seeking formal mental health services (McGorry & Mei, 2018; Rickwood et al., 2007; Velasco et al., 2020).
- One possible reason for the underutilization of formal support systems is that outreach and current service frameworks do not meet the evolving needs of this group, which may be an even more significant concern for young people with marginalized identities (Robards et al., 2018).

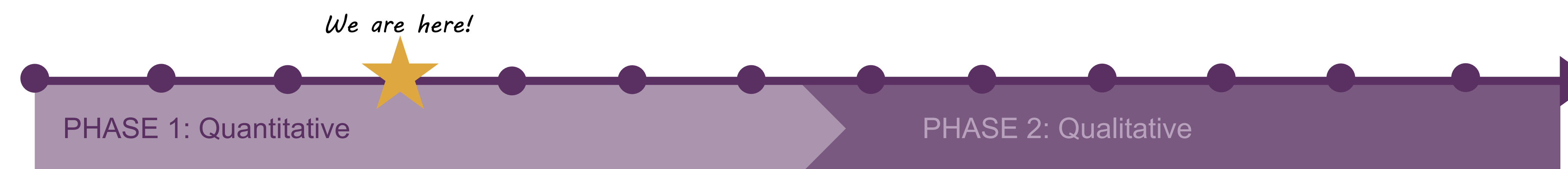
## OBJECTIVES

- This project seeks to contribute to literature and applied initiatives specific to transitional-aged youth's mental health, trauma, and help-seeking barriers and facilitators within the context of COVID-19.
  - Insights may be leveraged to inform and refine existing support services.
  - This project aims to accomplish these objectives by conceptualizing the problem at the local level from the youth perspective.



## METHOD

- This study invites undergraduate students and transitional-aged youth (18–24 years old) residing in Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, to participate in a mixed-method project with two phases:



- The first phase is ongoing and consists of a quantitative online survey, which includes measures to assess:
  - How the pandemic has impacted participants' lives (C19-apV; ECHO, 2020; CRISIS; Bromet et al., 2021)
  - Recent posttraumatic stress symptoms experienced in the past month (PCL-5; Weathers et al., 2013)
  - Mental health and wellbeing (PGWBI; Lundgren-Nilsson et al., 2013)
  - Intention and barrier domains of help-seeking (GHSQ; Wilson et al., 2005; SSOSH; Vogel et al., 2006)
- The next phase of this project will involve a narrative inquiry approach to interview a subsample of participants from the community and university settings.



## DISCUSSION

- The expected implications of this mixed-method study include gaining valuable insights into understanding the unique challenges experienced by a traditionally hard-to-reach population during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Findings will be shared with local mental health service providers.

Data collection is ongoing

Interested in participating?



### Who can participate?

Participants must be 18 to 24 years old

### What's involved?

- Complete a brief online survey
- Be invited to participate in an optional follow-up interview

### What are the benefits to participating?

- Help enrich our understanding of unmet mental health needs and help-seeking barriers to improve services
- Enter a draw to win 1 of 15 \$30 e-gift cards

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

### Perceived impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

- During the pandemic, most participants shared the quality of their relationships with
  - Family was "about the same"
  - Friends was "a little worse"
- Overall, participants reported that the pandemic had a "somewhat negative" impact on their life.

### Mental health and wellbeing <sup>a</sup>



Note. Findings presented above represent data collected up until March 19, 2022.

<sup>a</sup>The possible score ranges for the wellbeing subscales differ (depressed mood, self-control, and general health: 0–15; positive wellbeing and vitality: 0–20; anxiety: 0–25)

### Recent posttraumatic stress symptoms

Symptoms with an average rating of "moderate" or above:

- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Feeling distant or cut off from other people
- Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy
- Reactive when reminded of stressful experiences
- Irritable behaviour
- Having strong negative beliefs about yourself, other people, or the world

### Help-seeking

Most participants agreed with or felt neutral toward the following statements:

- "I would feel okay about myself if I made the choice to seek professional help."
- "My self-confidence would remain the same if I sought professional help for a problem I could not solve."

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