Youth Preferences for Text-Messaged Supports During Transition to Adult Mental Health Services

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BACKGROUND

The transition from child to adult mental health services is a vulnerable time associated with treatment disengagement and illness progression. Text-message based interventions can be used to support motivational, informational, and behavioural needs of youth. Evidence about youth preferences for intervention content and functionality are scarce but could improve how text messaging services are used to support positive transition outcomes. The primary goal of this study was to investigate the level of consensus among youth on content, technology features, and engagement supports for a transition-focused text message service.

METHODS

A cross-sectional online survey of convenience sampling of youth in Canada collected information on demographics, current levels of technology use, importance ratings on message content, technical features and barriers and enablers to engagement.

Participants

Canadian youth, aged 16-26 who reported accessing mental health services in Canada within the past 5 years, who were able to complete the survey in English, and had access to an internet enabled device.
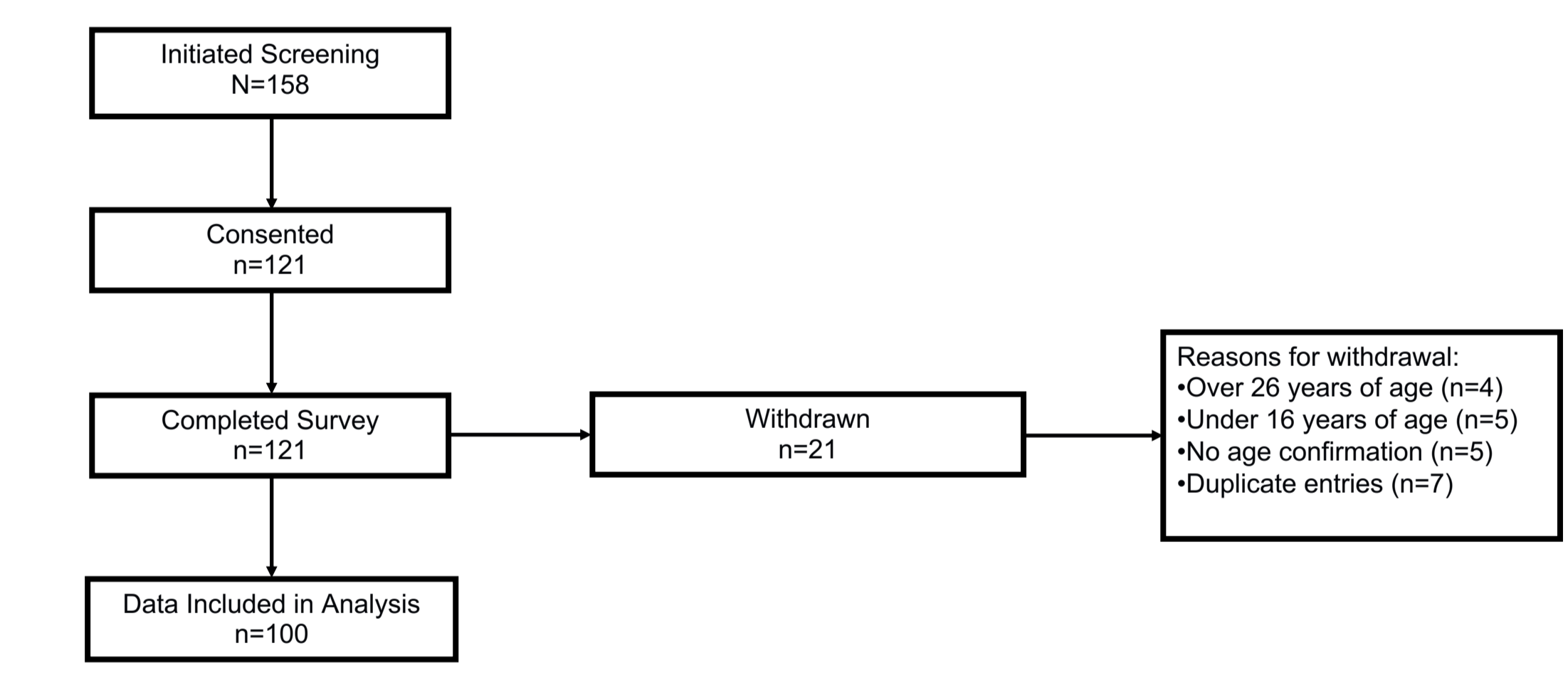
Survey Development

Survey items were created based on review of academic literature and local resources co-developed with youth and clinicians. Survey items on content were categorized according to the Information-Motivation-Behaviour (IMB) change model. Survey items on technical features were categorized according to the Persuasive System Design (PSD) model.
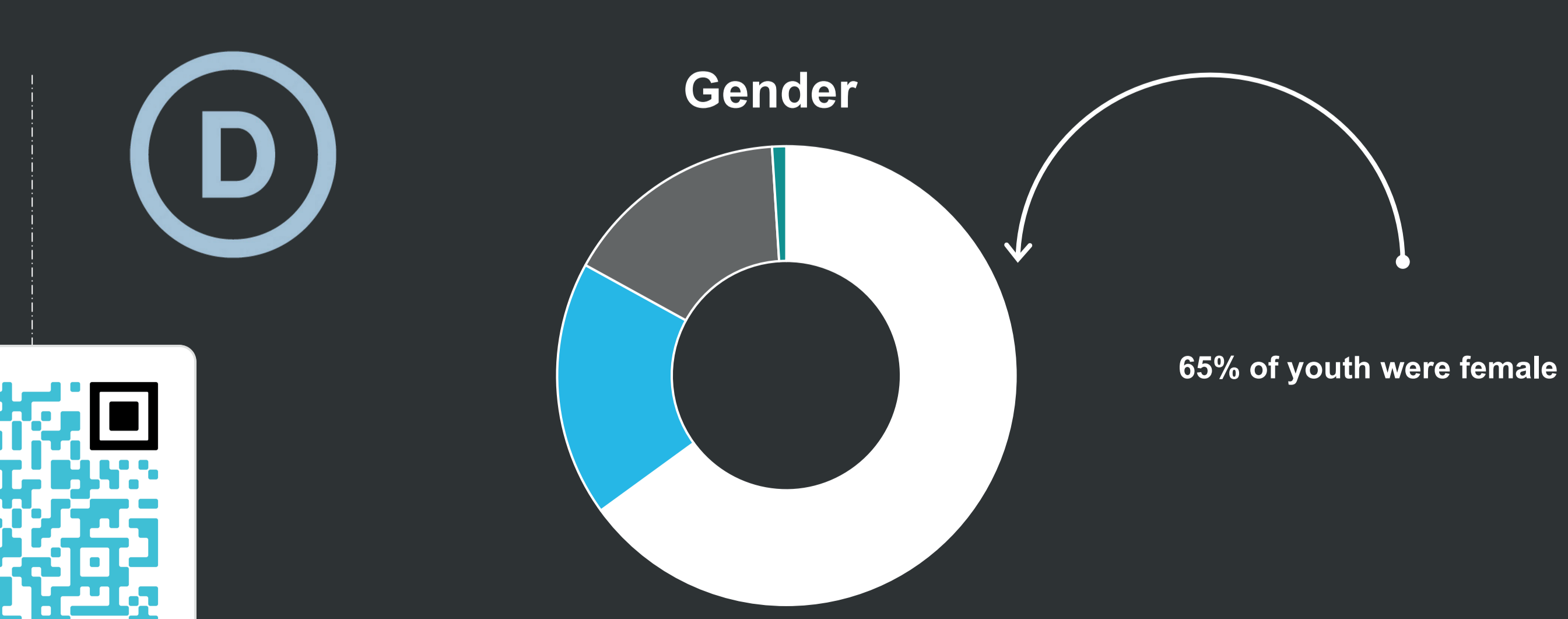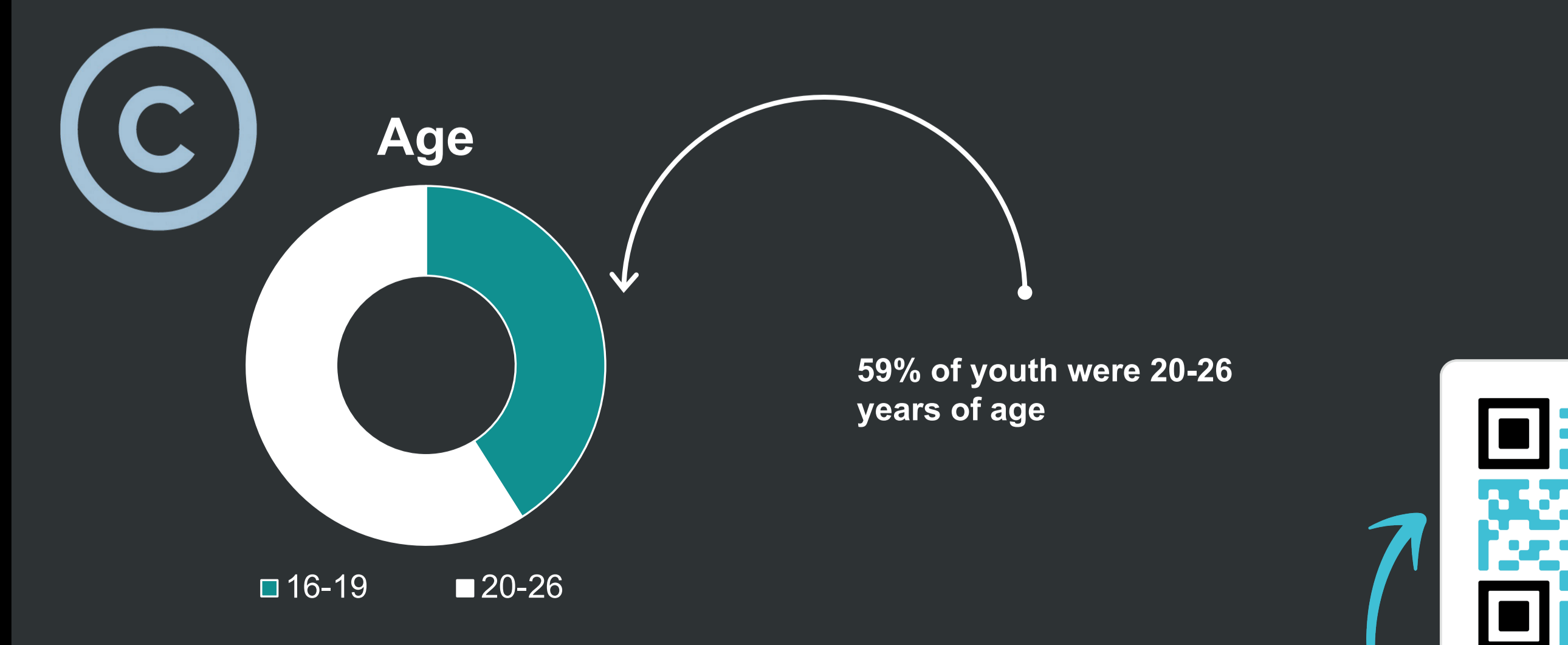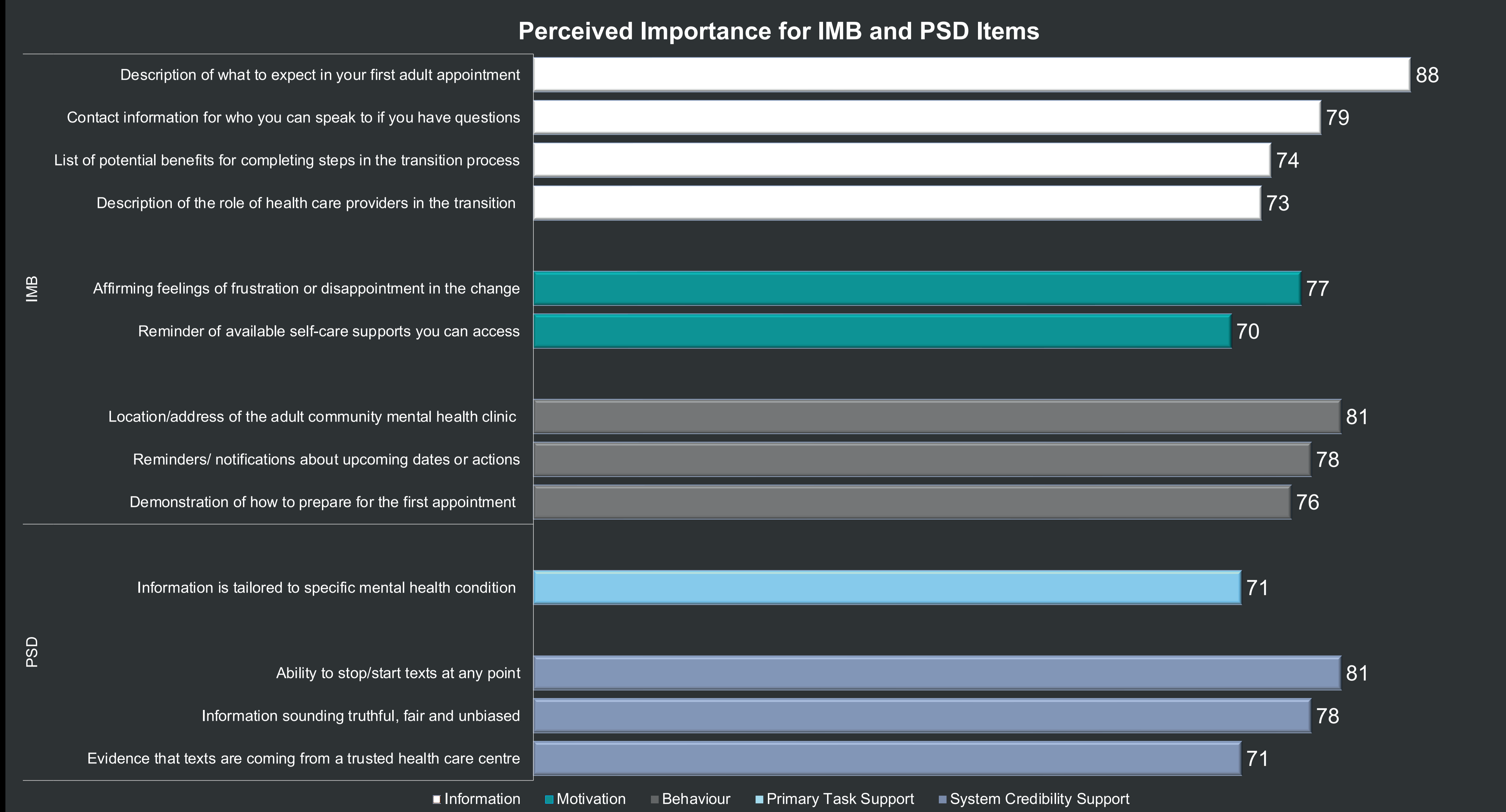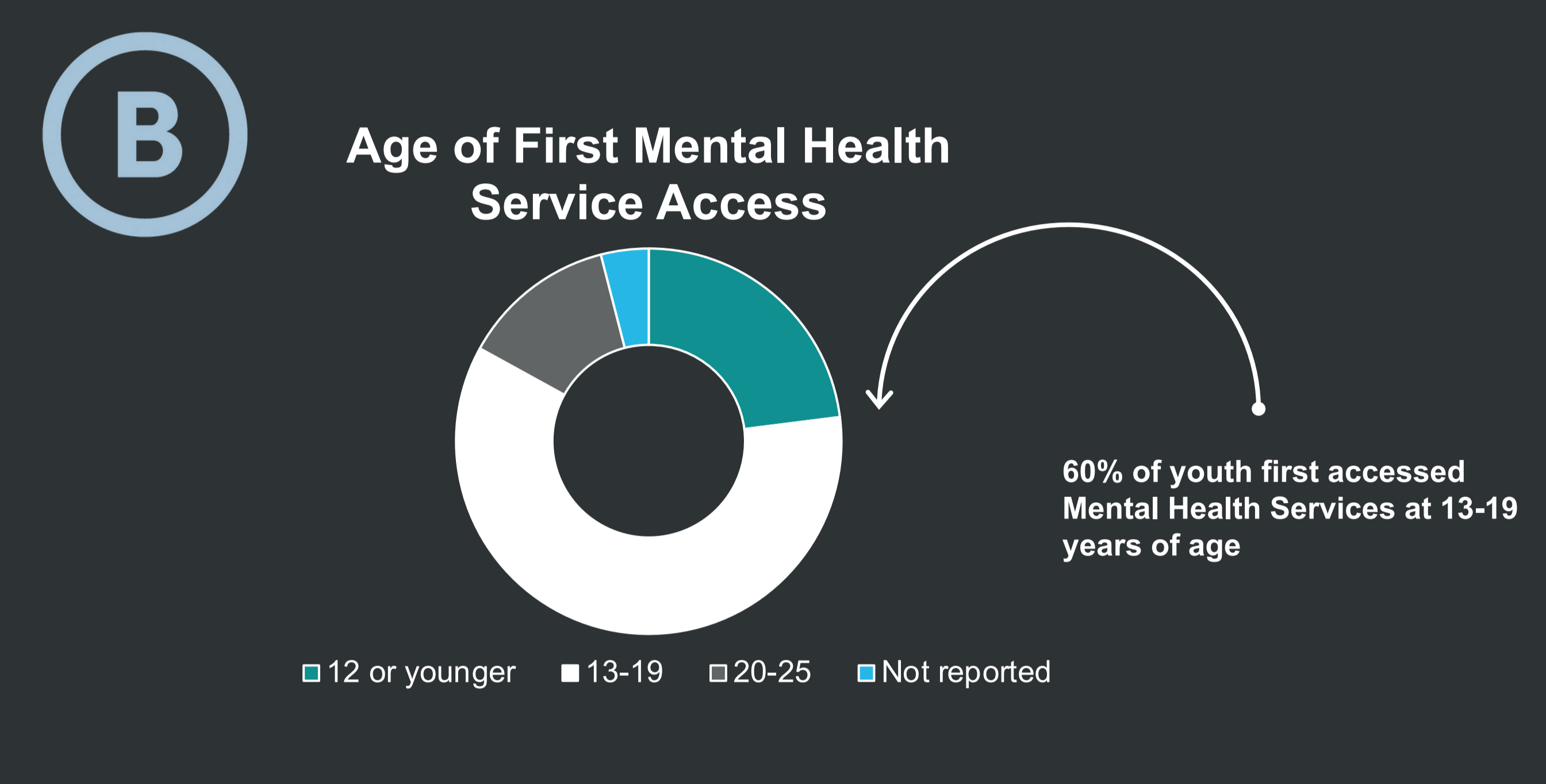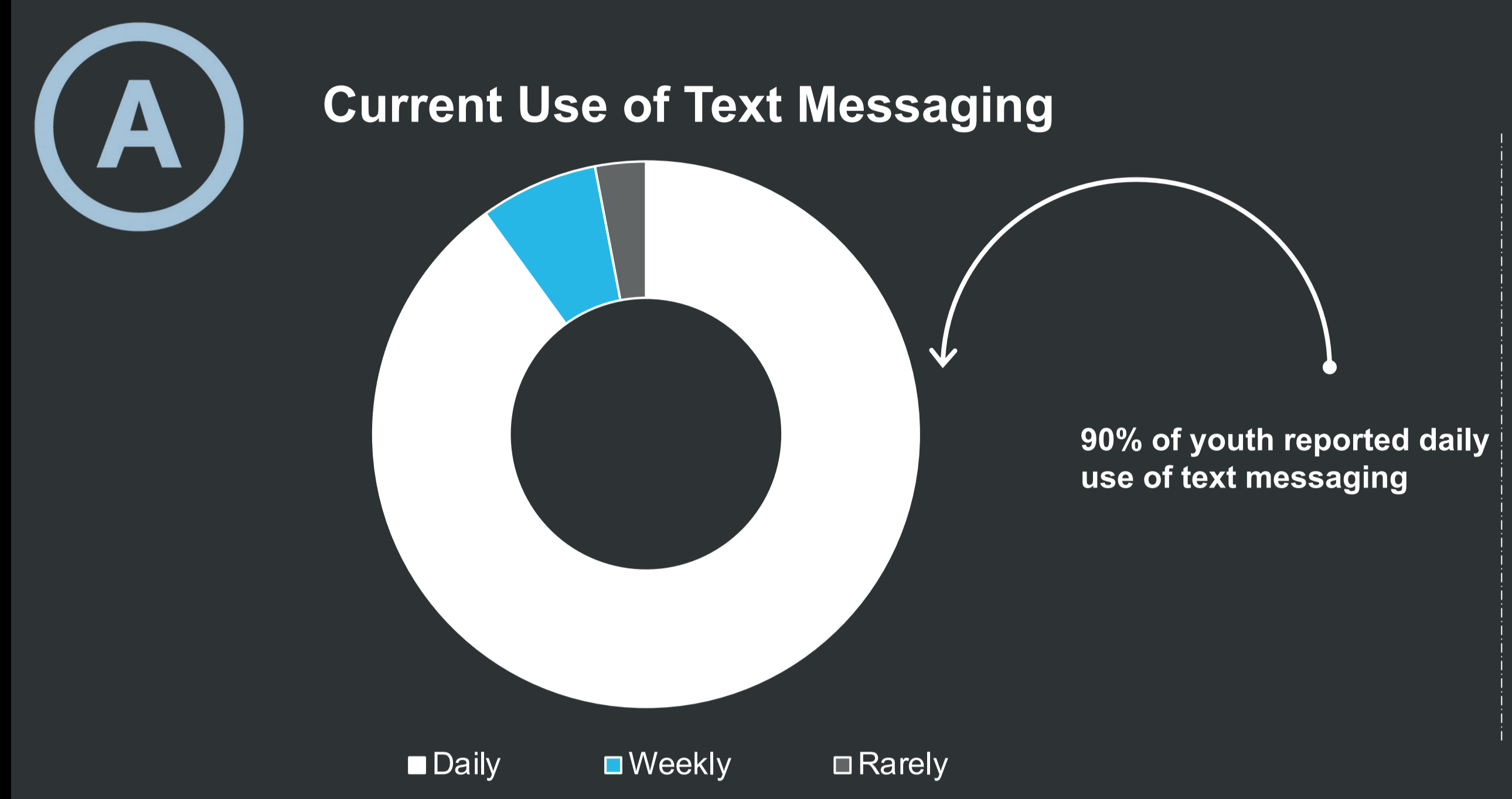
Analysis

Pre-defined consensus matrix and descriptive statistics were used to characterize the sample and levels of agreement. Chi-square tests helped examine whether group differences on age, gender, and ethnicity were statistically significant at $p<.05$.
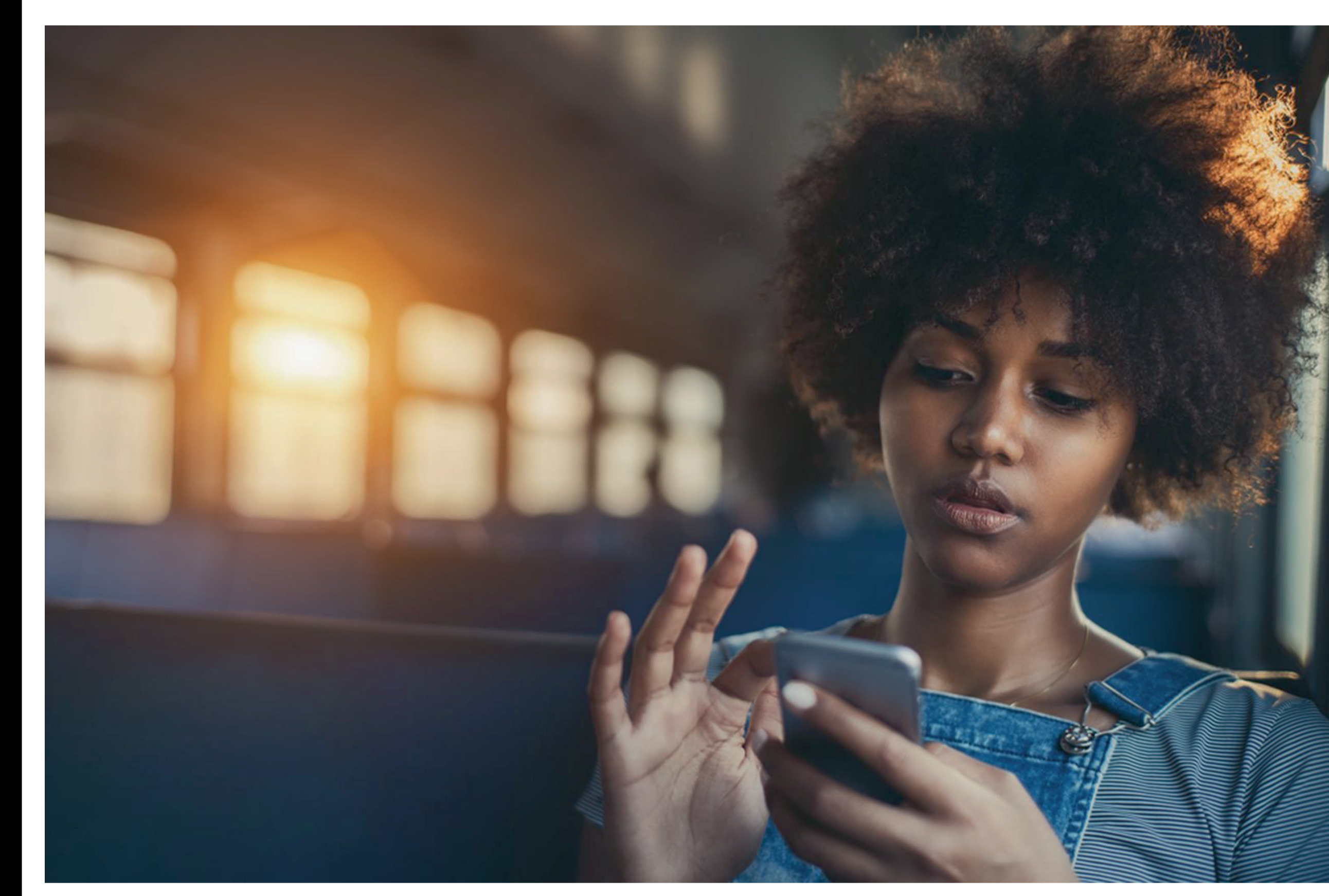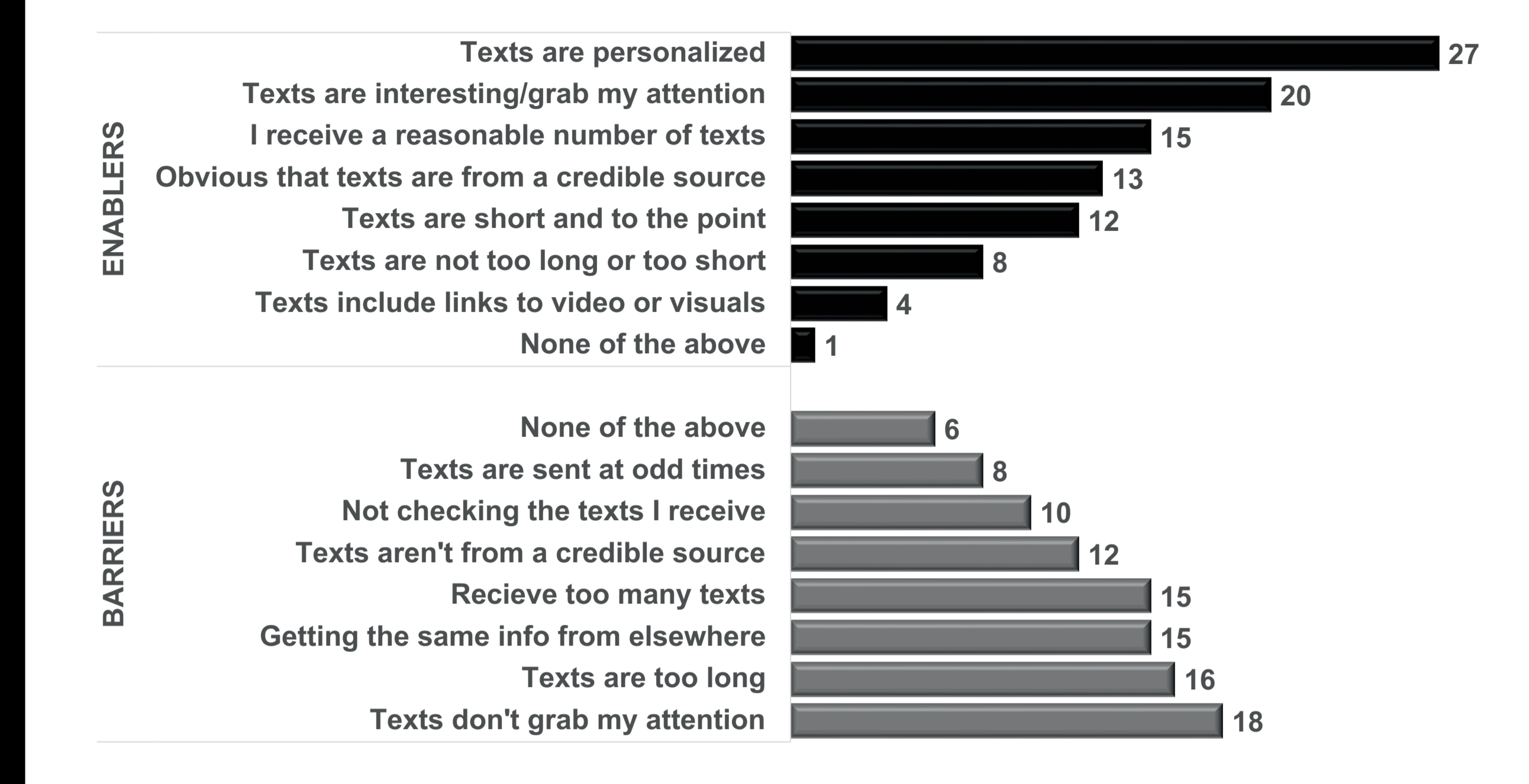
RESULTS

A high level of consensus on importance ratings was reported in 45% (9/20) of message content items. A high level of consensus on importance ratings was reported in only 19% (4/21) of feature and functionality items.

HIGHER CONSENSUS FOR PERSONALIZED AND PRAGMATIC CONTENT OF TEXT MESSAGES FOR YOUTH TRANSITIONING TO ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

A — Current Use of Text Messaging

90% of youth reported daily use of text messaging

■ Daily ■ Weekly ▢ Rarely

B — Age of First Mental Health Service Access

60% of youth first accessed Mental Health Services at 13-19 years of age

■ 12 or younger ■ 13-19 ▢ 20-25 ▢ Not reported

Perceived Importance for IMB and PSD Items

IMB
- Description of what to expect in your first adult appointment — 88
- Contact information for who you can speak to if you have questions — 79
- List of potential benefits for completing steps in the transition process — 74
- Description of the role of health care providers in the transition — 73
- Affirming feelings of frustration or disappointment in the change — 77
- Reminder of available self-care supports you can access — 70
- Location/address of the adult community mental health clinic — 81
- Reminders/ notifications about upcoming dates or actions — 78
- Demonstration of how to prepare for the first appointment — 76

PSD
- Information is tailored to specific mental health condition — 71
- Ability to stop/start texts at any point — 81
- Information sounding truthful, fair and unbiased — 78
- Evidence that texts are coming from a trusted health care centre — 71

■ Information ■ Motivation ▢ Behaviour ■ Primary Task Support ▢ System Credibility Support

C — Age

59% of youth were 20-26 years of age

■ 16-19 ▢ 20-26

SCAN ME

D — Gender

65% of youth were female

▢ Female ■ Male ▢ Prefer to self describe ▢ Prefer not to say

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Level of Importance Consensus Matrix

≥70%	Reporting 'extremely important', 'important' indicated HIGH level of consensus
60-69%	Reporting 'extremely important', 'important' indicated MODERATE level of consensus
50-59%	Reporting 'extremely important', 'important' indicated LOW level of consensus
<50%	Reporting 'extremely important', 'important' indicated NO consensus

ENABLERS
- Texts are personalized — 27
- Texts are interesting/grab my attention — 20
- I receive a reasonable number of texts — 15
- Obvious that texts are from a credible source — 13
- Texts are short and to the point — 12
- Texts are not too long or too short — 8
- Texts include links to video or visuals — 4
- None of the above — 1

BARRIERS
- None of the above — 6
- Texts are sent at odd times — 8
- Not checking the texts I receive — 10
- Texts aren't from a credible source — 12
- Recieve too many texts — 15
- Getting the same info from elsewhere — 15
- Texts are too long — 16
- Texts don't grab my attention — 18

CONCLUSIONS

➢ Low levels of consensus on technology features may impact feasibility of text message services for health care organizations and service developers.

➢ Future research is needed to identify different informational supports youth are looking for as well as youth preferences for motivational messaging.

➢ The findings of this study will aid in conducting a controlled trial looking at youth behaviour change during the transition period.

> Youth can (and should) play an integral role in the early development of transition interventions.

> Preferences research is a useful preliminary step in intervention development.