

Increasing Addiction Service Access for Rural Populations in North America: The Screening, Self Management, and Referral to Treatment (SSMRT) Resource Platform

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INTRODUCTION

- The lack of mental health resources in remote and rural communities across North America is a significant barrier to treatment access for individuals with substance use problems.
- Existing data suggest that brief, online tools grounded in evidence-based therapeutic literature have great potential for addressing this disparity.

PURPOSE

- Develop and implement a remotely accessible platform called the Screening, Self Management, and Referral to Treatment (SSMRT).
- SSMRT is a cannabis misuse resource aimed at youth and young adults who may not have access to traditional addiction health services (e.g., rural areas)

METHODS

- The platform was based on:
 - (a) scoping review of 2473 studies that used brief screeners and 468 studies of brief interventions for substance use,
 - (b) establishing a reference group of 36 researchers and front-line service providers, and
 - (c) online survey of 3600 university students' cannabis use habits and interest in specific types of online supports for their substance use concerns.

SAMPLE MATERIALS

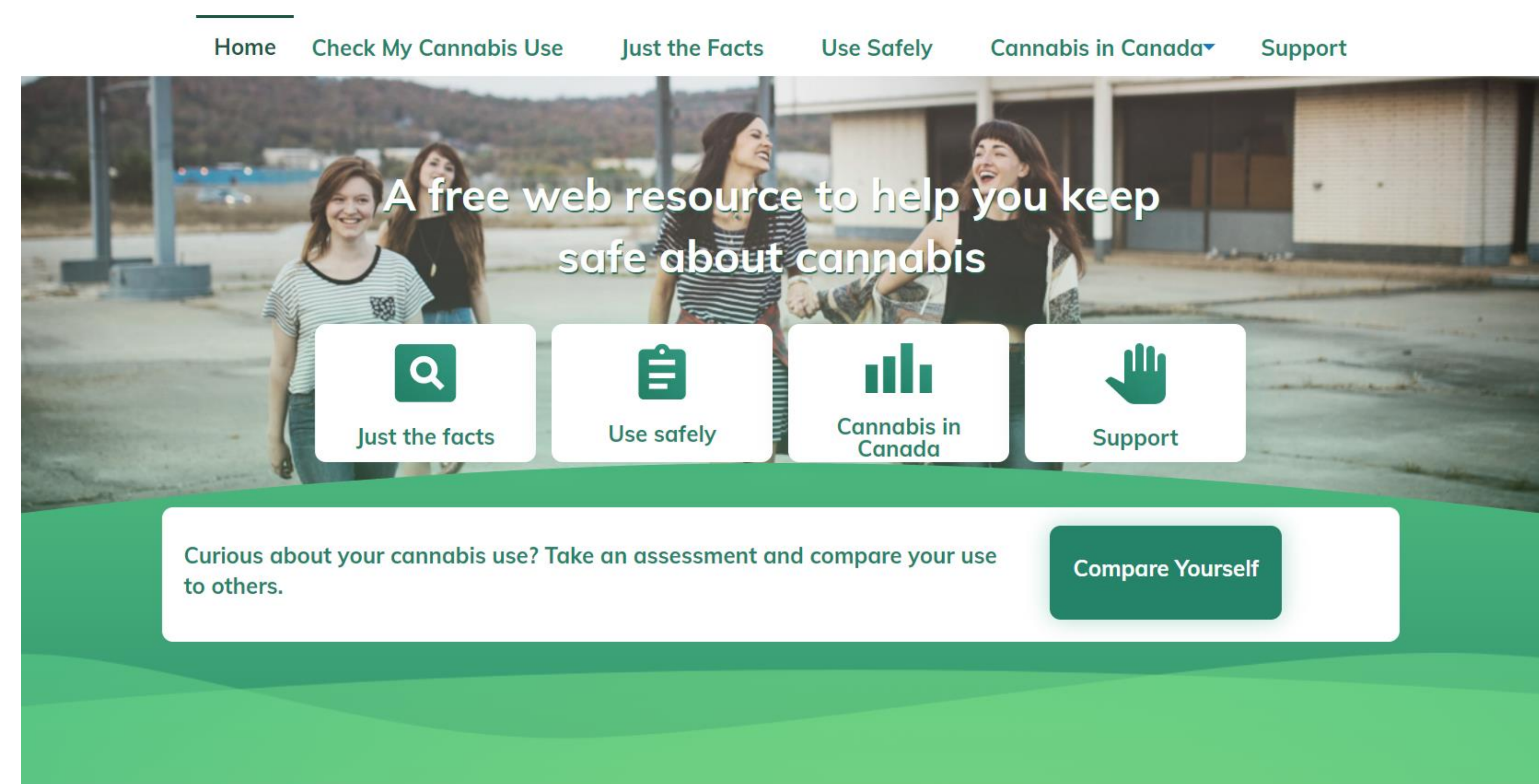


Image 1: The SSMRT (final product).

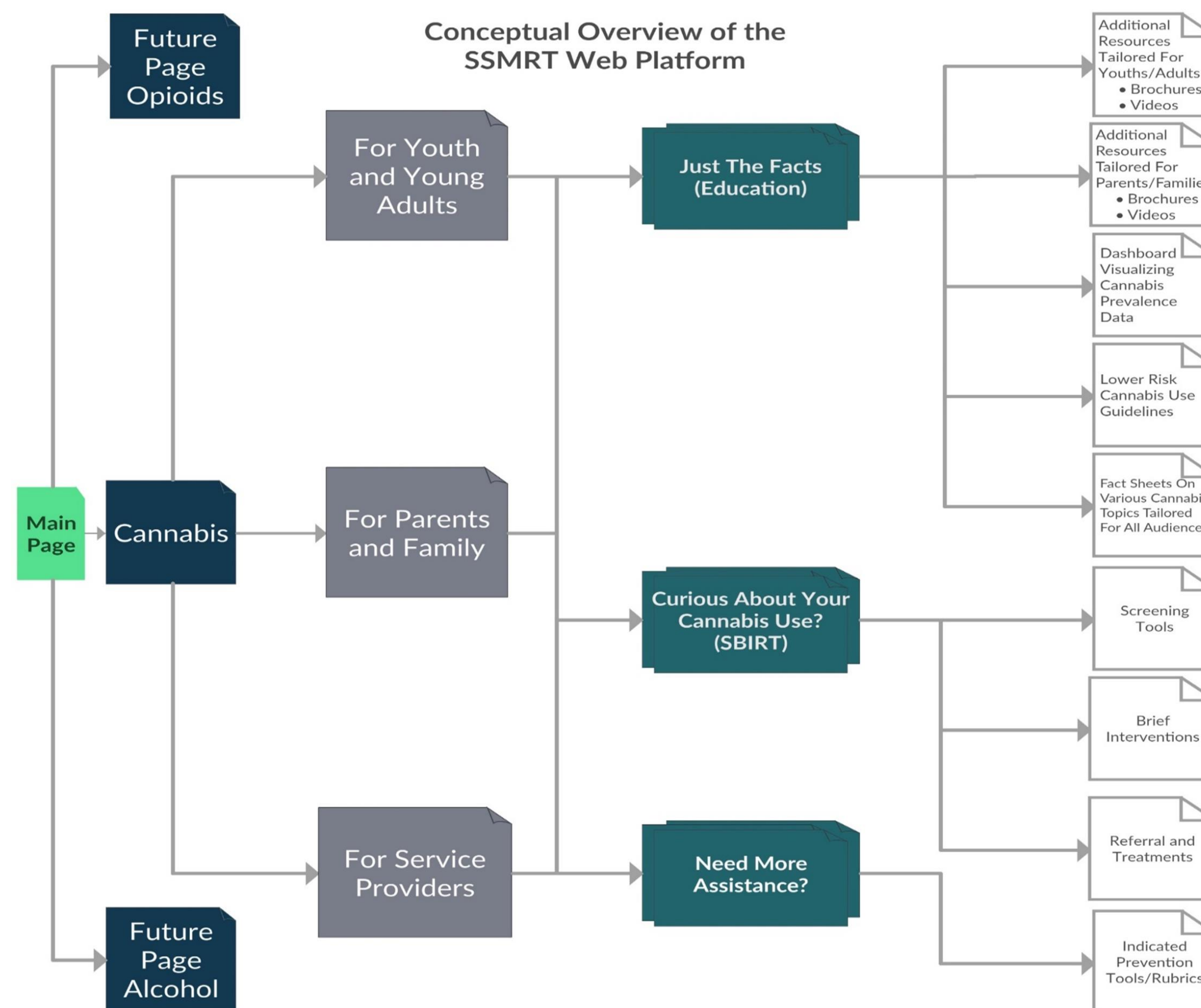


Figure 1: Overview of the SSMRT platform.

RESULTS

- The SSMRT platform is a free, online intervention designed to increase access to mental health resources and supports in rural communities across North America
- SSMRT allows clinicians, cannabis users, family members of users, and researchers to take advantage of its resources remotely.



- Survey on youths' substance use habits
 - Between 26% and 51% of past 6-month cannabis users indicated that they would be 'very interested' or 'definitely would' access screening tools to help them think about their cannabis use, general information on cannabis, interactive tools to help them manage substance use problems, and locally available treatment resources.

CONCLUSION

- The SSMRT platform offers a novel way to address the limitations of primary prevention approaches for cannabis use and offers opportunities for widespread dissemination of secondary prevention efforts.

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