



United Way
York Region



present

Responding to Youth Homelessness: A Systems Approach

Learning Series

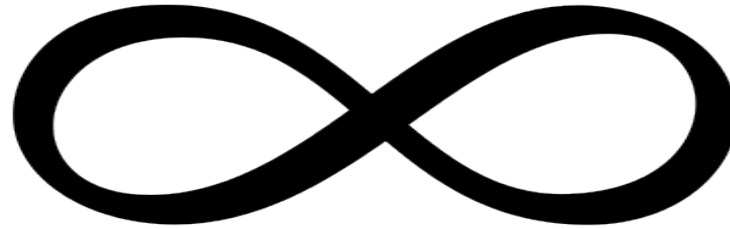
Canadian Homelessness
Research Network



the
homeless hub



The Infinity Project



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Youth Housing and Shelter

Toronto, Ontario
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Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary

A good place to be

Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary

Celebrating our 75th Anniversary in 2014

Four streams of service with the common goal of adult self-sufficiency:

Clubs, Camp and Experiential Learning

Family Based Care

Education and Employment
(Aboriginal Services)

Youth Housing and Shelter

Calgary Context

- Calgary Youth Sector Strategic Plan
- Calgary's Youth Plan to End Homelessness
- Alberta Framework to End Youth Homelessness
- Calgary Homeless Foundation System Planning

BGCC Youth Housing and Shelter

Prevention

Outreach

Shelter

Housing

What would it take to end this youth's homelessness with this experience?

Youth Shelter

- Youth Shelter: Ages 12 to 17 and in one case 18
- Adult Shelter: 18+
- BGCC: 2/3 youth shelters and 34/49 beds
- Avenue 15 Supportive Shelter Options
 - Loft
 - Link
 - Launch
- Safe House Youth Shelter

Prevention and Outreach

- Elements: Family support for homelessness prevention/diversion
- Fusion: Support for family reconnection
- Script's Relationship-Based Case Management
- Script's 828-HOPE Assessment and Referral

828-HOPE

Assessment and Referral

Centralized referral service and interim case management

- Centralized phone number
- 48 hour face-to-face response
- Basic needs
- Youth Acuity Scale Assessment
- Right matching
- Interim case management
- System navigation and facilitated referral

Youth Housing

- Youth housing – Ages 16 to 24
- Haven's Way
 - House Parents
 - Supportive Roommate
- Youth Transitions to Adulthood
 - 19 beds + fee for service
- The Infinity Project
 - 30 beds

The Infinity Inspiration

Def: **in · fin · i · ty** (n–f n–t) n.
something without limits;
something too great to
count.

(Encarta World English Dictionary)



The Infinity Project...

...is a “**housing first**” program for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Infinity works with youth to help create a **permanent home in the community of their choice**, provide them **financial supports** to quickly access housing and then wraps **transitional supports** around them to help maintain their housing.

What would it take to end this youth's homelessness with this experience?



The Need for Infinity

The Infinity Project began in March 2009, based on data and trends gathered by:

- The Youth Housing Connection (YHC)
 - a Collaborative Project between The Calgary John Howard Society, McMan Youth Family & Community Services, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary.
- Calgary Youth Sector (CYS)
 - a sector of the Calgary Action Committee on Housing and Homelessness (CACHH) – Calgary's Community Advisory Board (CAB)



What we learned...

Youth were often not accessing existing service:

Pregnancy

Couples

System Navigation

System Barriers

Fear of Adult Shelters

Pet Owners

Need to live alone

Ongoing support to maintain housing



Family Modeled Services

The Infinity Project offers homeless youth the supports that a caring parent would provide to their young adult children leaving home for the first time:

- household items to get started
- good advice
- a few dollars when you are short
- someone to call when you don't know what to do



Infinity Theory of Change

When youth live in a safe and permanent home with support to develop the financial assets and living skills that promote self-sufficiency, then they are able to end their cycle of homelessness forever.



Infinity: Guiding Beliefs



Housing is a human right:

Youth do not earn their home through good behavior and do not need to be “housing ready” to be successful in maintaining their home. People should not have to change residences when their service needs change.

Infinity: Guiding Beliefs

2

“Choice” and “voice” in one’s own life is essential.

Infinity: Guiding Beliefs

3

All youth need time and practice to learn to be good neighbours and to gain the skills and confidence necessary to live as self-sufficient adults.

Infinity: Guiding Beliefs

4

Supportive, accepting relationships that youth can count on are essential as youth move out of homelessness and street life.

Infinity: Guiding Beliefs

5

Youth need financial and instrumental supports to get started.

Infinity: Guiding Beliefs

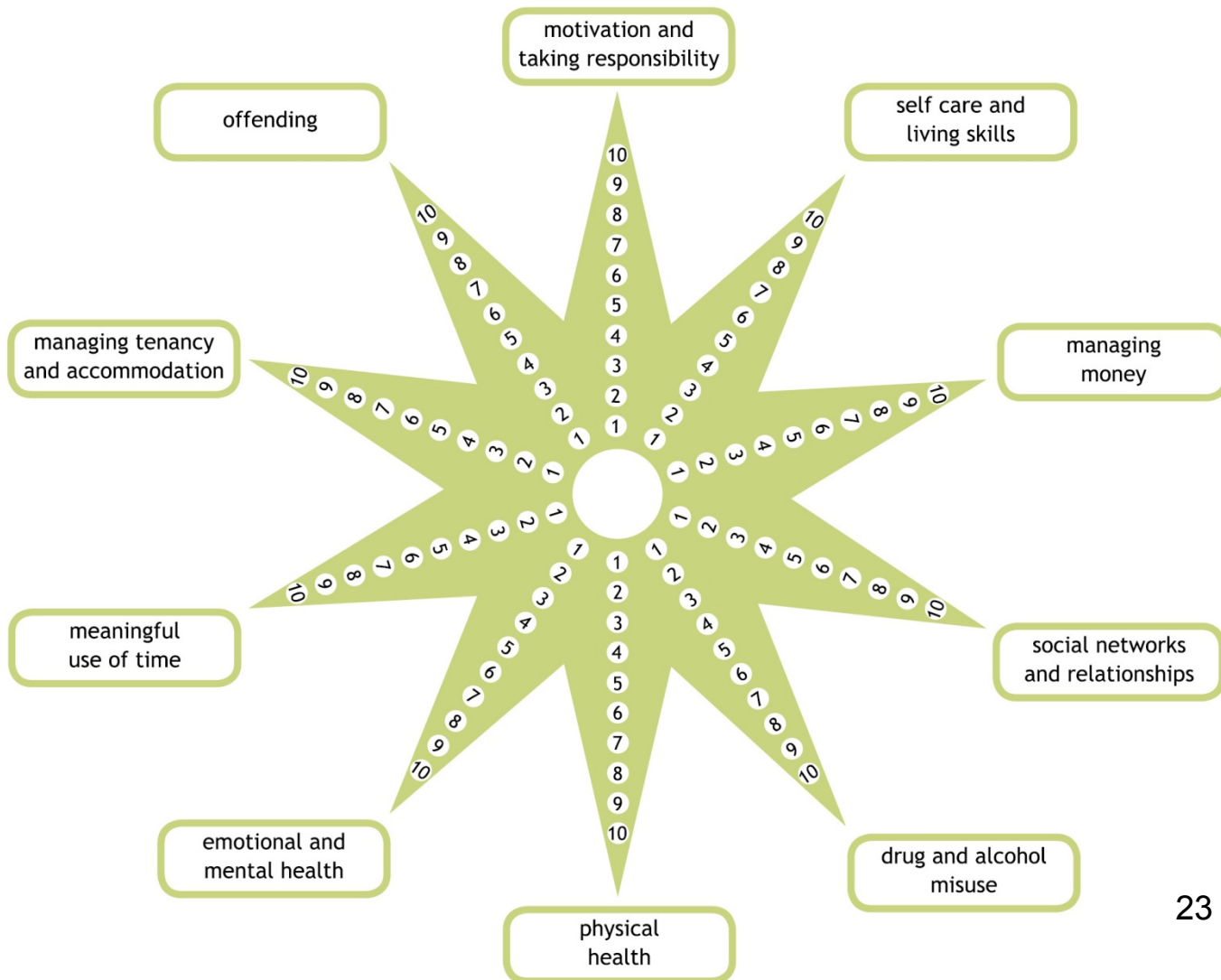
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All people benefit from connection with community supports and resources that offer a safety net in times of trouble.

Case Management

- Healthy supportive relationship
 - “Doing with” in the early stages of skill acquisition
 - Space for making mistakes
- Coaching and goal setting
 - Transition planning begins on the day of intake
 - Outcome Star
- System navigation and referral
- 24/7 emergency on-call support

Outcome Star – Homelessness



Housing Options

- Treehouse (BGCC Owned)
 - 6 One Bedrooms
 - 4 Two Bedrooms
- SIL Building (Rental)
 - 3 Studios
 - 3 One Bedrooms
- “Bat Cave” (Rental)
 - Able to rent blocks of units at a reduced rate
- Scattered Site

Housing First: Good Economics

Average cost per day for Shelter and Detention \$82-\$250

VS

Average Cost per day for Infinity clients \$38.81

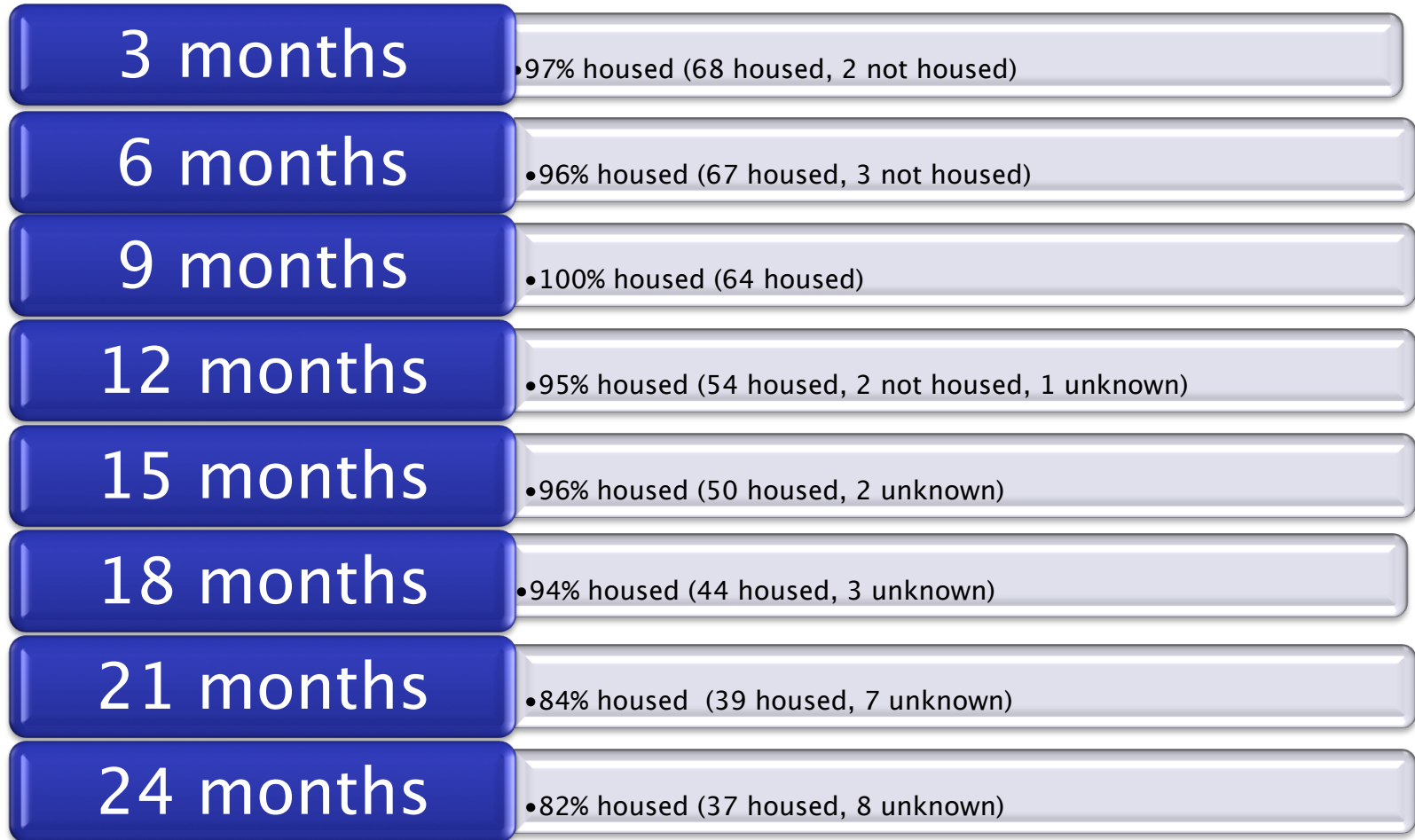


Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary

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Housing Permanency

(Based on time since intake not discharge)



Infinity: What has worked?



- Housing first rather than housing ready
- Zero discharge to homelessness
- Flexible financial support
- Landlord relations
- Convertible Leases
- Access to a variety of affordable housing
- Youth voice
- Relationship between support worker and youth
- Connecting youth to community resources and other BGCC programs



What's Next?

More supports & resources for youth under 18

Prevention and Diversion

Reconnection to natural supports and/or family

Mental health supports for youth

More Affordable Housing



Alumni Quote

*“For the first time in my life I am not living a ‘program’.
I am living my life.”*



Thanks to Infinity Supporters



BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES



Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary

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