




MAKING
THE SHIFT^{INC}

5 Program Models

to Prevent Youth Homelessness in Canada

Stephen Gaetz

Melanie Redman



**What is the
problem we are
trying to solve?**

Age of first experience of homelessness

Many homeless youth became homeless before they were 16, and youth who leave home at a younger age experience greater adversity on the streets.

40.1%

were younger than 16 when they first experienced homelessness

THOSE WHO LEAVE HOME AT AN EARLY AGE ARE MORE LIKELY TO:

- Experience multiple episodes of homelessness
- Be involved with child protection services
- Be tested for ADHD
- Experience bullying
- Be victims of crime once homeless, including sexual assault
- Have greater mental health and addictions symptoms
- Experience poorer quality of life
- Attempt suicide
- Become chronically homeless



Involvement with **Child Protection services**

57.8%

*indicated some kind of
involvement with child
protection services in the past*

47.2%

*had a history of
placements in foster care
and/or group homes*

30.9% were in group
homes



Mental Health and Well-Being

Findings indicated that a total of 85.4% (942) of the youth fell in the 'high' symptom/ distress category. This is indicative, in the general Canadian population, of youth midway between inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care levels.

85.4%

of youth fell in the 'high' symptom/ distress category

42%

reported at least one suicide attempt

35.2%

reported at least one drug overdose requiring hospitalization



Criminal Victimization

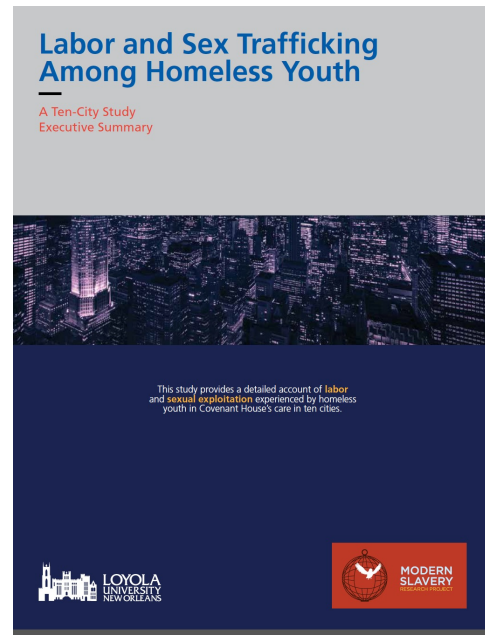
PROLONGED EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

Exposure to street violence makes the impact of pre-street adversity much less relevant. This suggests that whether prior to becoming homeless young people were exposed to adversity or not, experiencing violence while homeless has a 'leveling' effect on youth mental health risk.

Exposure to sexual and physical violence on the street made youth over three times as likely to be in the high mental health risk group.



Exploitation and **Sex** **Trafficking**



Nearly
1 in 5



(19%) of interviewed youth were identified as victims of some form of human trafficking.



Pathways off the streets

and

Exits from Homelessness

Data points to some important conclusions

First, we are waiting too long to intervene.

Second, experience of homelessness has a devastating impact on health, safety, mental health and well-being.

Third, some young people – Indigenous, LGBTQ2S, newcomer youth – experience additional burden of discrimination and exclusion.

Fourth, the emergency response does not prevent or end youth homelessness.

Fifth, our public systems are failing to prevent youth homelessness.

Sixth, people with lived experience of youth homeless strongly profess the need to shift to prevention.





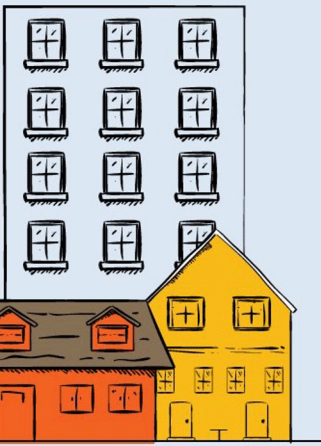
Why

Youth

Homelessness

Prevention?

**REACHING
HOME**




Mandatory Community Level Outcomes



- Fewer people experience homelessness (homelessness is reduced overall)
- Fewer people were newly identified (new inflows to homelessness are reduced)
- Fewer people return to homelessness (returns to homelessness are reduced)
- Fewer Indigenous peoples experience homelessness (Indigenous homelessness is reduced)
- Fewer people experience chronic homelessness (chronic homelessness is reduced)

PREVENTION!

2018 **EVERYONE COUNTS HIGHLIGHTS**

Preliminary Results from the
Second Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count
of Homelessness in Canadian Communities

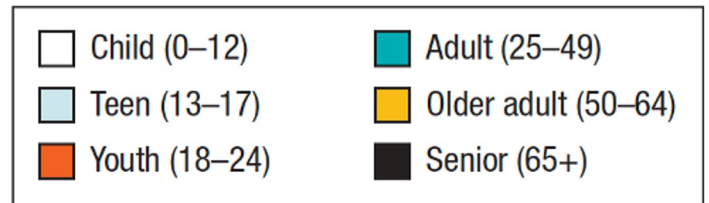
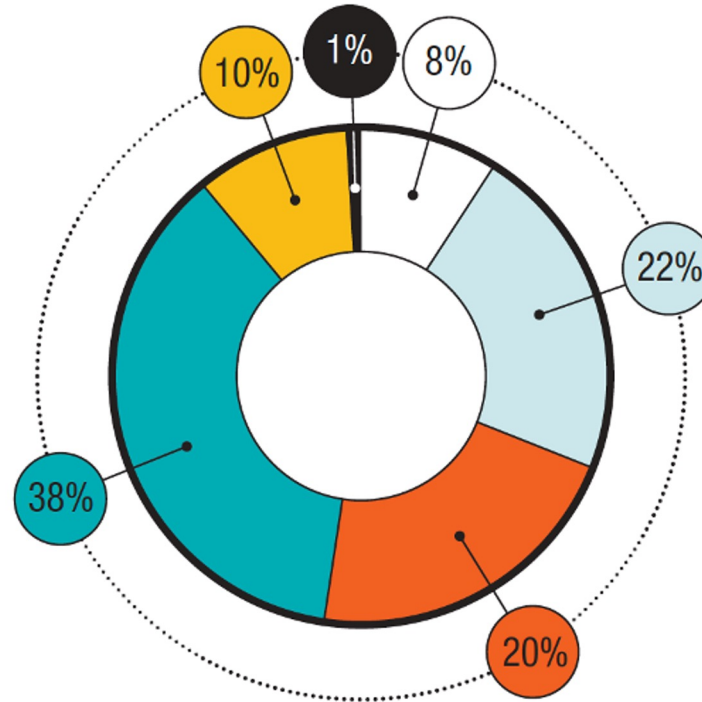


 Employment and Social Development Canada
 Emploi et Développement social Canada

Canada

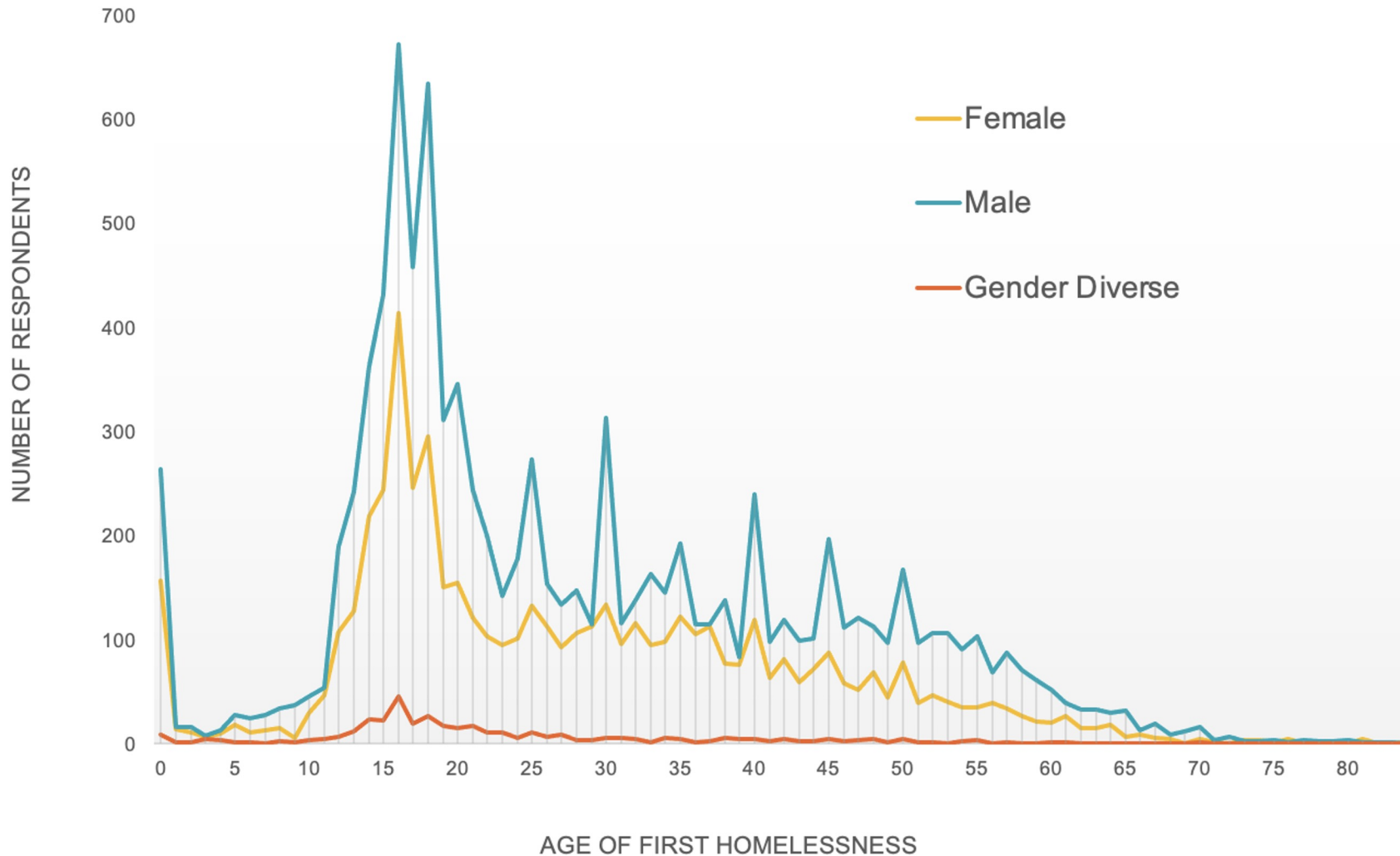
FIGURE 6 Age of First Homelessness Experience

50% First experienced homelessness before the age of 25





Selected research findings on youth (PiT 2018)



The 2018 PiT Count survey asked respondents at what age they first experienced homelessness.

Half of all respondents first experienced homelessness under the age of 25. This percentage was still high among older adults (aged 50-64) and seniors (aged 65+), with 25% first experiencing homelessness before 25.



**Defining the
Prevention
of Youth
Homelessness**

Definition

Youth Homelessness Prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that provide supports designed to:

- Reduce inflows into homelessness – in other words, to stop people from becoming homeless in the first place
- Reduce the risk that those who have recently become homeless transition to long term or chronic homelessness.
- Reduce returns to homelessness for those who have experienced homelessness.

What it is *NOT*!

Youth Homelessness is a “Fusion Policy” Issue

Because homelessness is a fusion policy issue, higher orders of government must put in place legislative and policy frameworks as well as funding that will mobilize other public systems in order to have a more effective impact on homelessness through working upstream. In Canada, both federal and provincial/ territorial governments have a key role in this regard.



Typology of Youth Homelessness Prevention



1. Structural Prevention

2. Systems Prevention

3. Early Intervention

4. Crisis Intervention

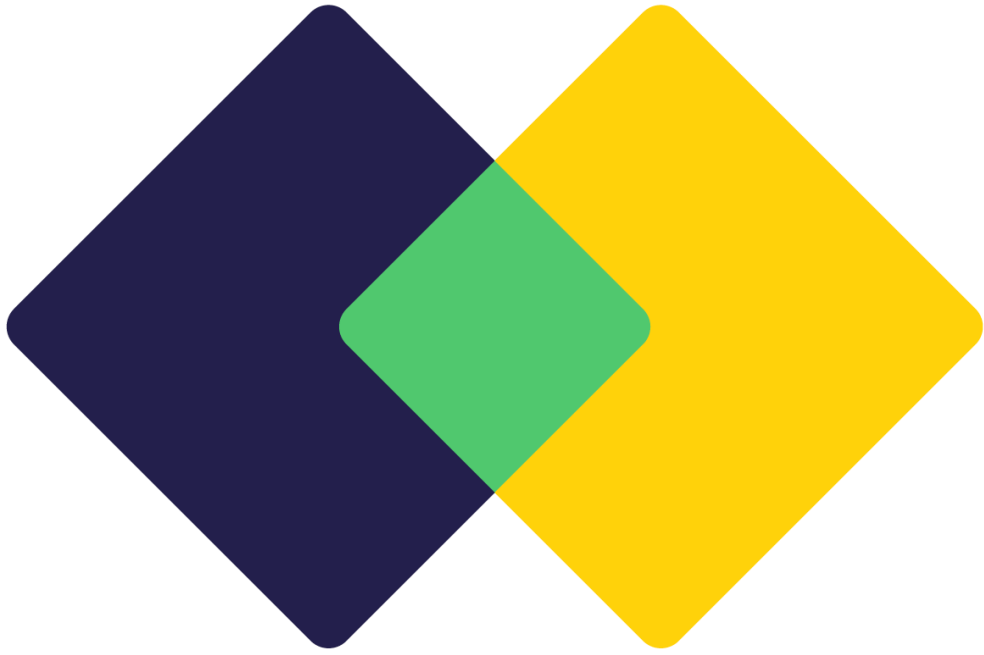
5. Stabilization



Solving problems through

Social

Innovation



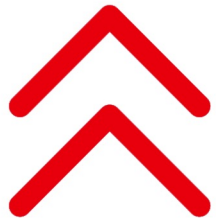
MAKING
THE SHIFT

**Youth
Homelessness
Social Innovation
Lab**



MAKING THE SHIFT^{INC}
youth homelessness social innovation lab

Co-Leadership



canadian
observatory on
homelessness

The **Canadian Observatory on Homelessness** (COH) is a research and policy partnership working to conduct and mobilize research designed to have an impact on solutions to homelessness.

Founded - 2008

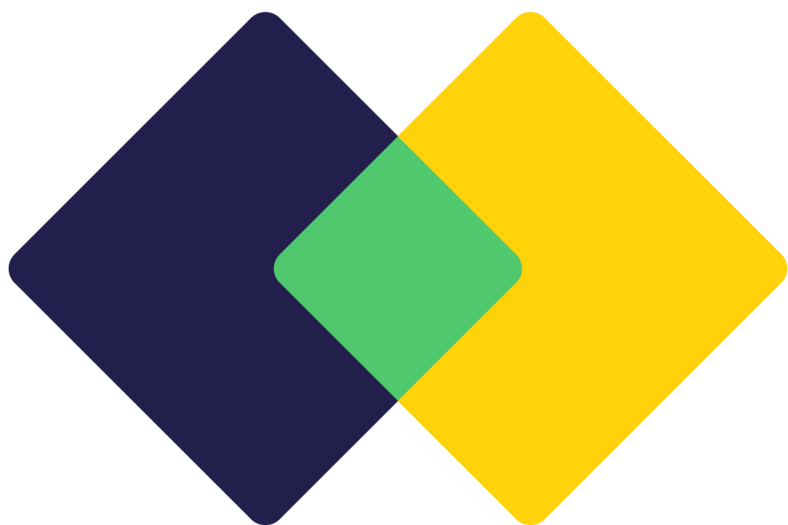


A WAY HOME
VERS UN CHEZ-SOI

CANADA

A Way Home is a national coalition reimagining solutions to youth homelessness through transformations in policy, practice and planning. We also lead the National Learning Community on Youth Homelessness.

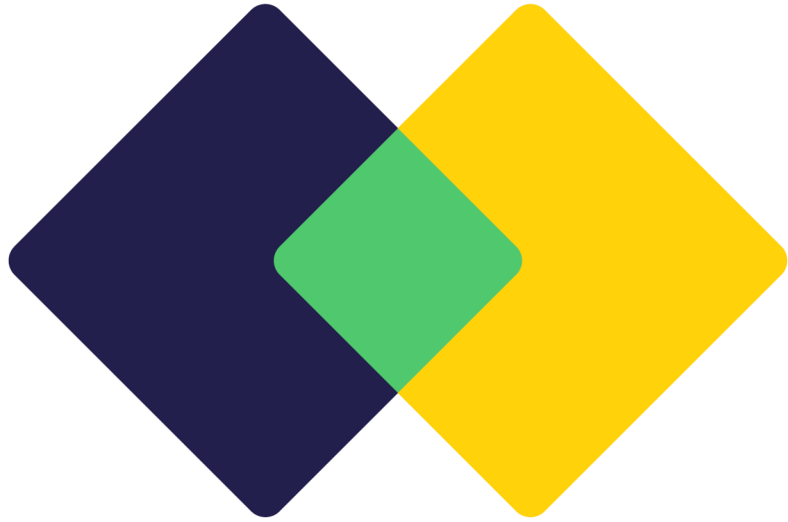
Founded - 2016



MAKING THE SHIFT Funded Research

Making the Shift has funded **39 research projects** across Canada focusing on the prevention of youth homelessness





MAKING
THE SHIFT
**Demonstration
Projects**

Employing design thinking, our ***demonstration projects*** are intended to expand our knowledge and understanding of innovative approaches to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

Demonstration Project Models:

- **Upstream**
- **Youth Reconnect**
- **Family and Natural Supports (FNS)**
- **Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)**

We do this by identifying, developing, prototyping, testing, evaluating, and mobilizing innovations in policy and practice.



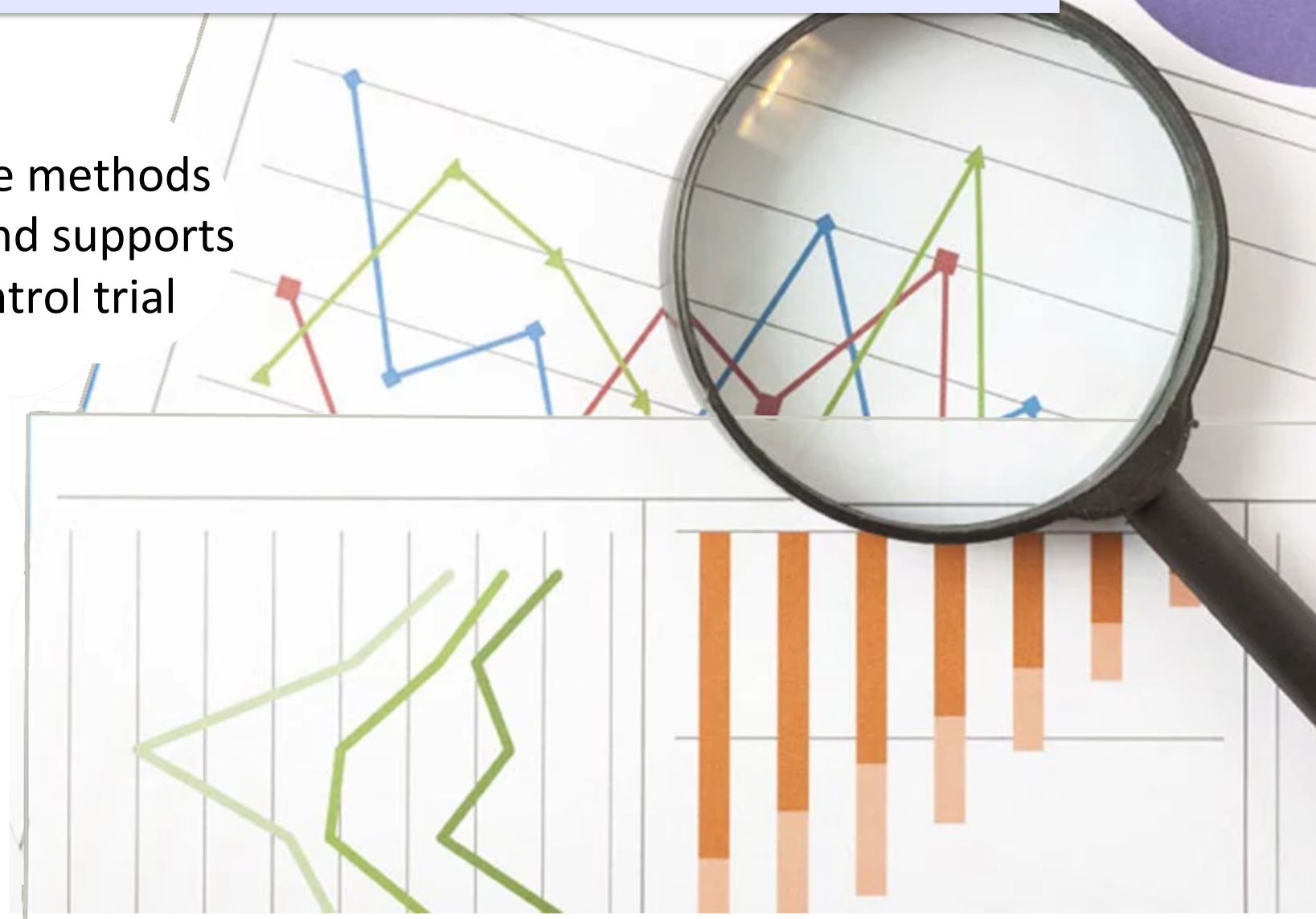
Research and Evaluation

Research:

- Qualitative and quantitative methods
- Outcomes tied to service and supports
- For HF4Y - Randomized Control trial

Evaluation:

- Developmental Evaluation
- Outcomes Evaluation





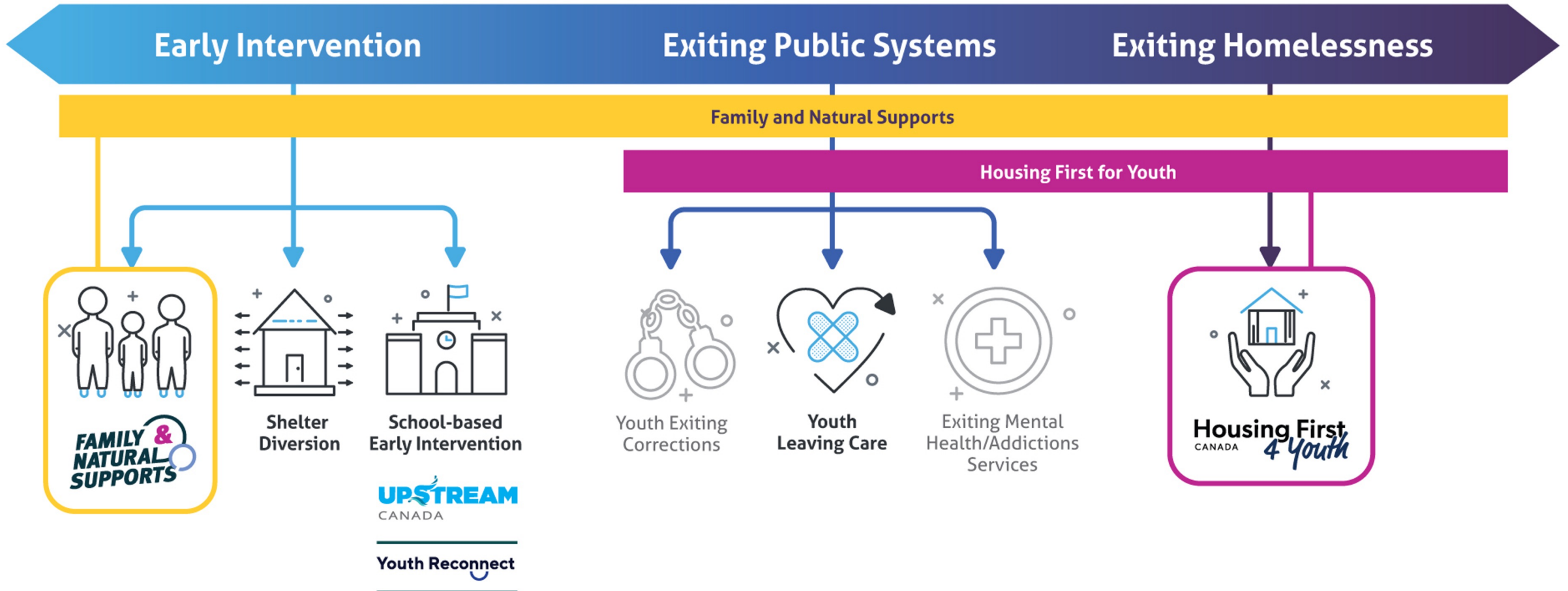
key

**Program
Models**

**to Prevent Youth
Homelessness in Canada**

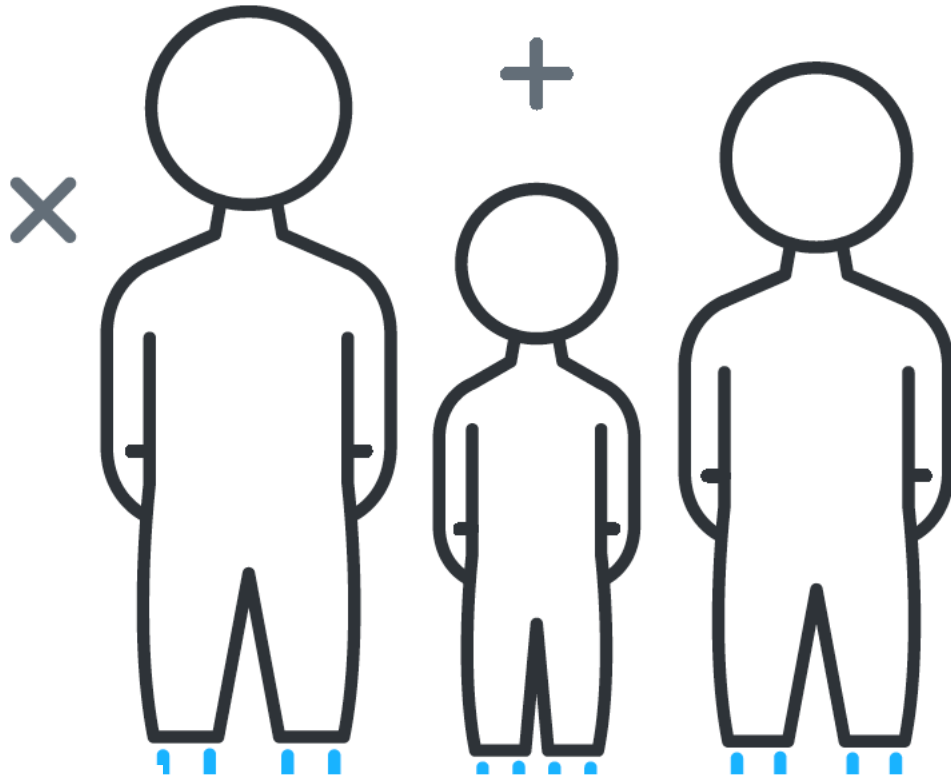
Preventing Youth Homelessness

What you can do in *your* community



1

Enhancing Family and Natural Supports



"My trauma led me down a wrong path, and I didn't know that I had ... places where I could go to access help for that. And my family didn't know how to support me with my mental health. So they ended up giving up on me because they didn't know... how. And they didn't have... anyone show them or teach them how to take care of someone with those circumstances."

Kamloops Youth





Why enhance Family and Natural Supports?



Youth experiencing homelessness said that enhancing family and natural supports was an important goal on their journey:

- 77% said they would like to improve contact and relationships with their family.
- Young people who reported positive relationships with friends were much more likely to report high levels of self-esteem. Likewise, those who are in regular contact with family members (more than once a month) and who value family connections also demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem (Gaetz et al., 2016)

The underlying ethos of an FNS approach is that family and the support of caring adults is important to almost everyone and can be an asset that enhances young people's quality of life, and gives youth a sense of belonging, identity, security, self-esteem, and someone to rely on when problems emerge.

“Family reconnection may be especially important for Indigenous youth, whose ability to maintain and strengthen ties with their families, kin, and communities is key to their well-being, as well as broader reconciliation.”

– Gaetz 2018b, p. 19



To Find Out More

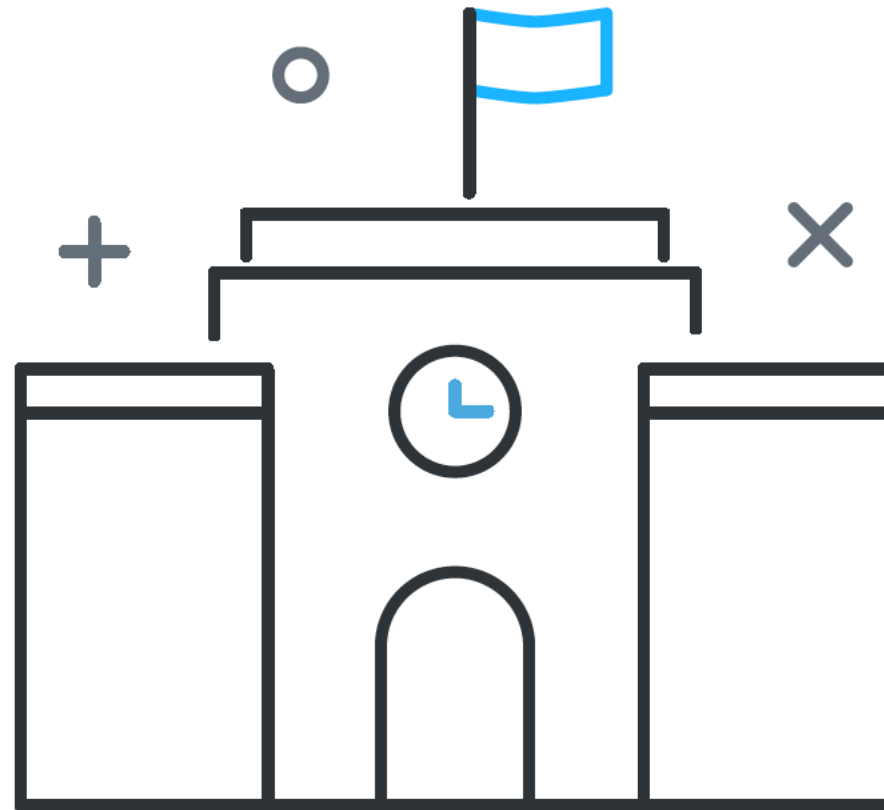


2

SCHOOL-BASED Early Intervention

“Almost everyone has, like, the one teacher that they really trusted and liked, or the one school counsellor that was cool and not scary. So it would be nice if just they got this basic training and also like, signs to look out for. And like, how to approach a student and be like, “hey, you know, how’s everything at home, everything going okay?”

Vancouver Youth



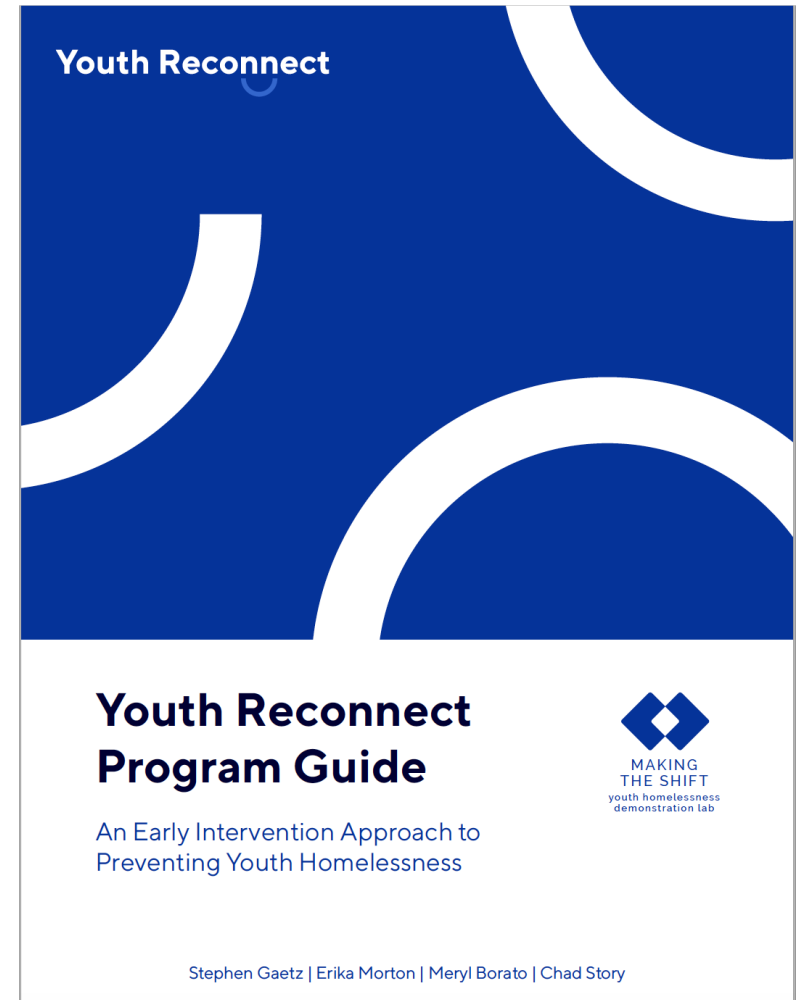
Why do **SCHOOLS** matter?



Youth Reconnect

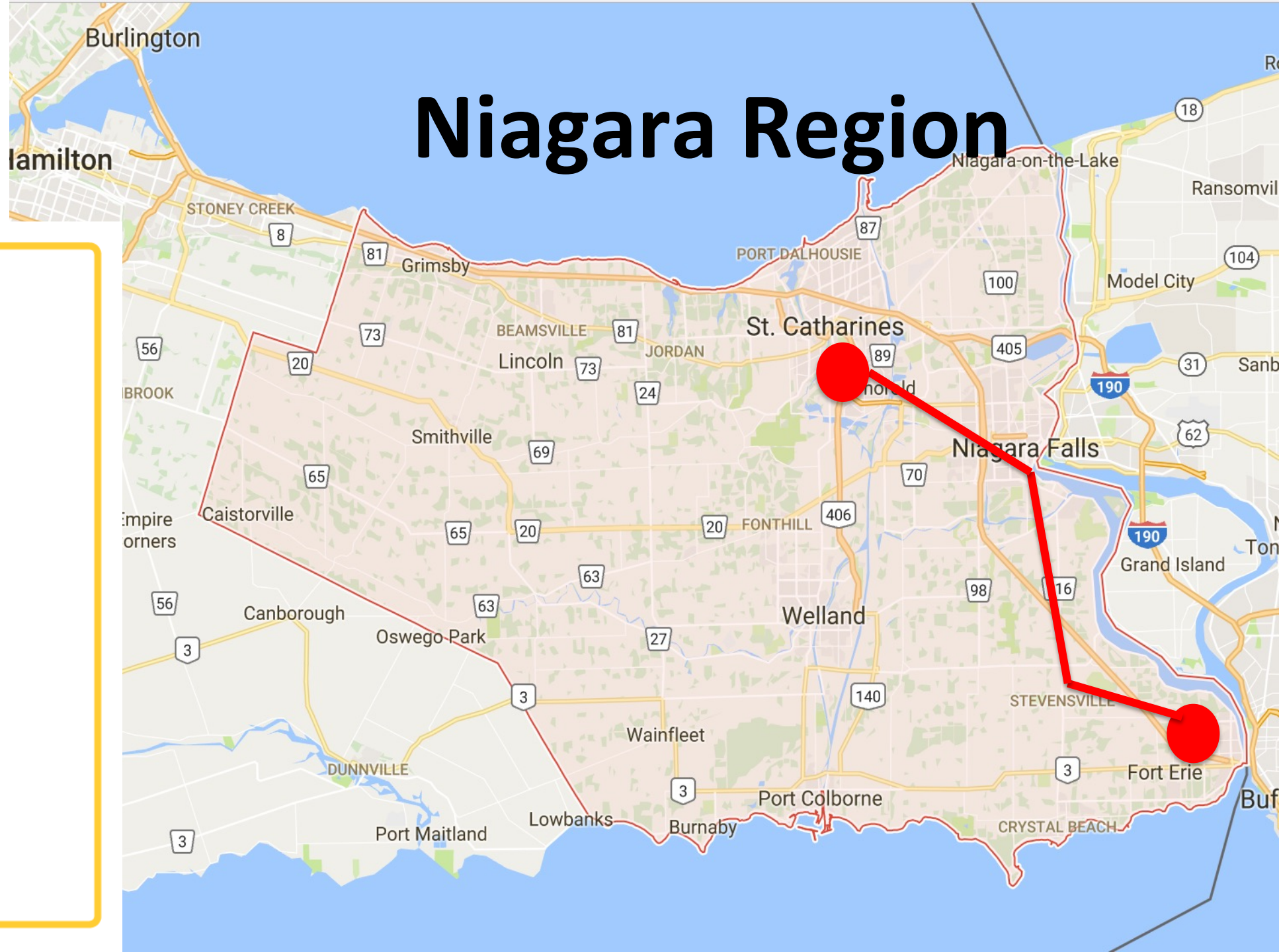
Keeping young people in place

School ↔ Community
Partnerships



Niagara Region

RAFT's [Youth Reconnect](#) initiative "helps clients' access resources and increases their self-sufficiency, by assisting adolescents to maintain school attendance, secure housing and develop a social safety net in their home community."



1 Keep young people “in place”

“Keeping young people in place is about keeping them in their community. To this day I still feel out of place, an outcast, that’s bumming out of housing...It would be so nice to get that sense of home again, even if you have to rebuild your home.”

Youth with Lived Experience

2 Stabilize living situation

“A lot of kids and their families need help, they don’t get along, YR helps with that, you can sit down and have conversations, handle conflict when it comes to parents.”

Youth Reconnect Participant

3 Support young people and their families

“The family is a collective unit that needs to be supported. (It’s) not the youth that has all this bad stuff that happened to them.”

Youth with Lived Experience

4 Enhance school engagement

“A lot of people on the verge of dropping out of schools. YR would be a helpful response for those youth...A lot of people hesitate (to reach out for support) and the more they hesitate they aren’t going to do anything. They are ashamed of the situation.”

Youth Reconnect Participant

To Find Out More

Youth Reconnect

Youth Reconnect Program Guide

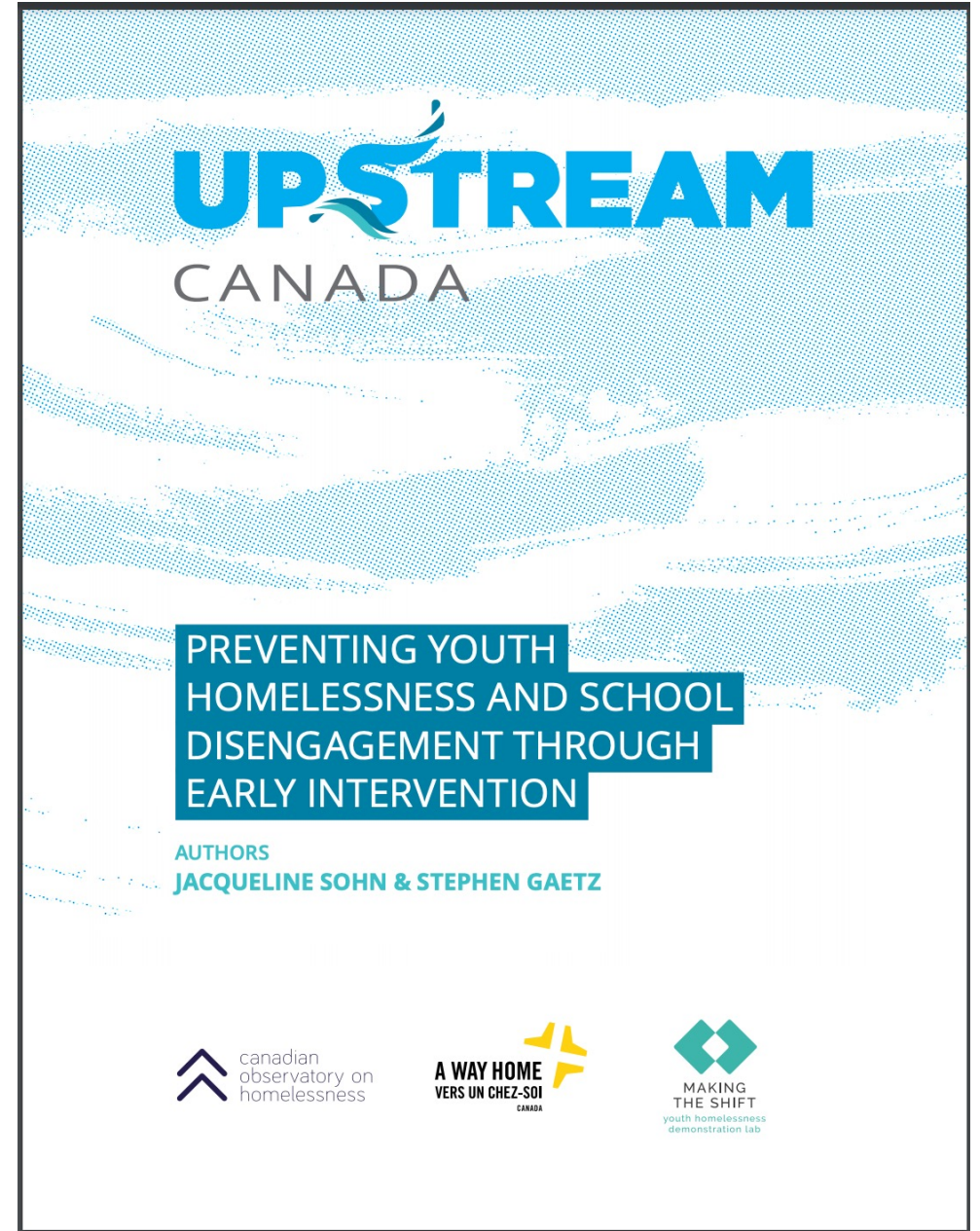
An Early Intervention Approach to
Preventing Youth Homelessness



Stephen Gaetz | Erika Morton | Meryl Borato | Chad Story

3

**THE
UPSTREAM
PROJECT
CANADA**





Students complete a standardized assessment;



Based on the results, students who are flagged for potential risk have the opportunity to participate in validation interviews with case managers;



Once needs are determined, a collaboratively developed care plan is established and students are connected to supports.

Population Screening:

Identification of students at risk

All students fill out a survey ...

AIAD AUSTRALIAN INDEX OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS
 • Completely fill in the oval of your choice
 • Use a black or blue pen or pencil.
 • Do not use a red pen
 • Rub out any mistakes or stray marks.
 MARK LIKE THIS: 1 2 3 4 5 NOT LIKE THIS: x 0

Where there is a WRITE-IN box please complete like this: **A B C D** or **1 2 3 4**

Name: First Name: _____ Surname: _____
 Date of Birth: DD / MM / YYYY
 Name of School: _____ Year: _____ Class: _____

This survey asks some questions about you and your life and relationship at home, at school and outside of school. Your answers to various questions will be treated in strict confidence. A few questions might seem a little personal, but please have the confidence to answer honestly.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Age: 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 19+

3. Cultural Background:
 (a) Were you born in a non-English speaking country?
 Yes No If YES, which country:

 (b) Are one or both your parents an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander? Yes No
 (c) Are one or both your parents born overseas in an non-English speaking country?
 One Both Neither Parent

4. Youth Allowance
 Are you in receipt of a Youth Allowance payment from Centrelink?
 1 No
 2 No, but I get Abstudy
 3 Yes, at a standard at home rate
 4 Yes, at the away from home rate
 5 Yes, at the independent rate
 6 Yes, at the "unreasonable to live at home" rate

5. Living situation: (Mark one only)
 (a) Which residential setting best describes where you stayed last night?
 1 Family owned house/flat
 2 A privately rented house or flat
 3 A social/public housing house/flat
 4 in a ...

(c) Over the past 12 months, at any time, have you ever gone and stayed with friends or relatives because you did not want to be at home with your parent(s) and family?
 Yes No

(d) Have you ever, at any time in your life, gone and stayed with friends or relatives because you did not want to be at home with your parent(s) and family?
 Yes No

6. Your Family (mark one only)
 Which adults do you currently live with all or most of the time?
 1 Both parents together
 2 One parent
 3 One parent and a step-parent/de-facto partner
 Neither parent but with:
 4 Foster parents or carer
 5 Relatives
 6 Non-related person(s)
 7 Live alone
 8 Siblings
 9 Friend(s)

7. Some issues:
 (a) Do you regularly smoke cigarettes?
 Yes No
 (b) Have you ever experimented with marijuana or other drugs?
 Yes No

Results: Research Impact

KELOWNA

94%

Participation rate

(N=220)

Implementation Approach

Collaboration from the earliest stages of design

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Low-moderate needs; mixed

CONSENT PROCESS

Waiver of the requirement to obtain parental consent

ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

235 (ages 13 & 14)

STUDENTS AT RISK (SNA)

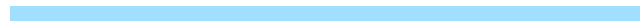
34% (N=75)

tier 3: 3% (n=6)

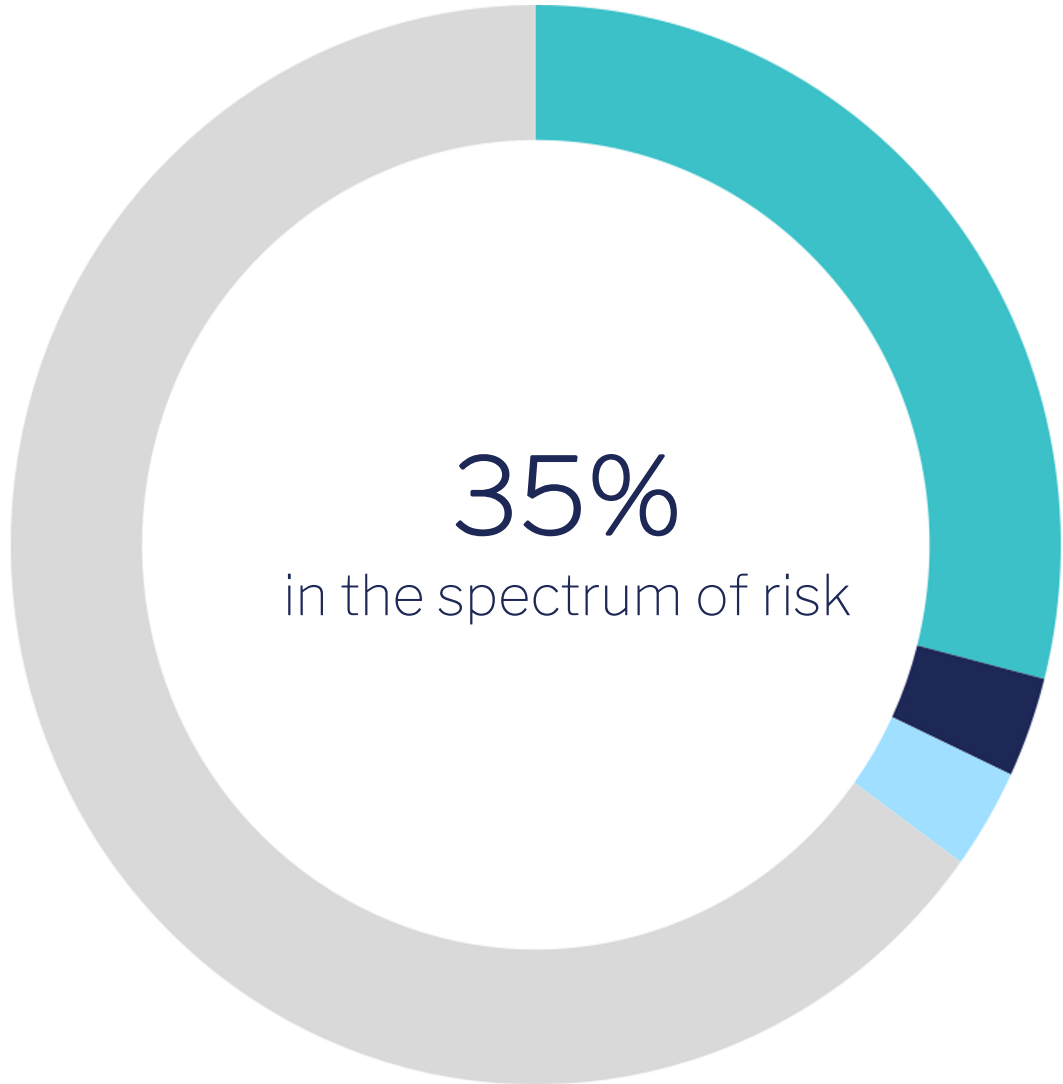
tier 2: 3% (n=6)

tier 1: 29% (n=63)

Results: Screening



KELOWNA



- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Not flagged

Risk of Homelessness & School Disengagement

Follow up interview assessment



Flexible Supports Delivery

A 3-Tier Response

Tier 1.

Active monitoring by school staff, or a secondary consultation where a referral is made to another program or agency.

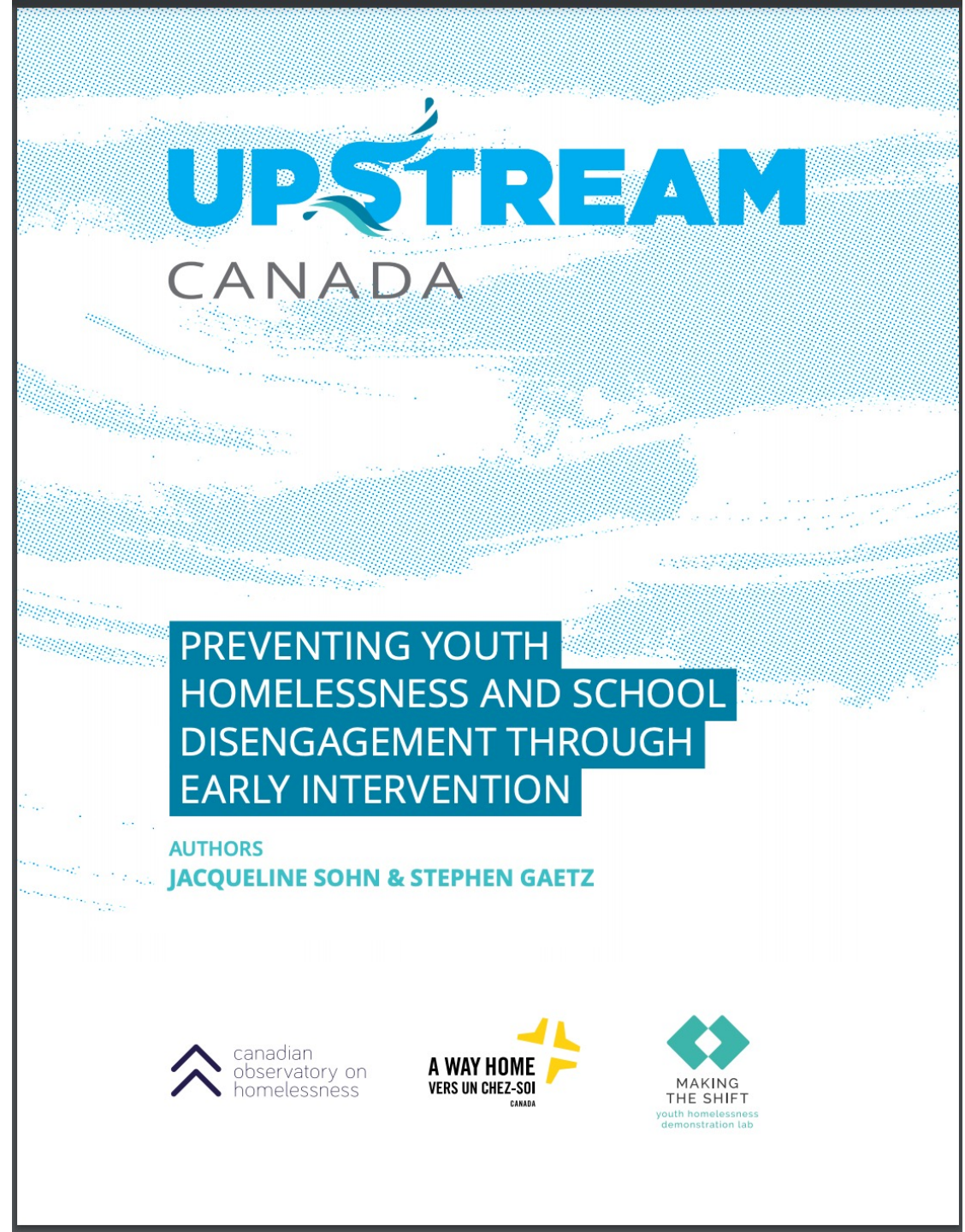
Tier 2.

Casework support, either a brief counselling-type of casework or case management by TGP

Tier 3.

'Wrap-around' case management for complex cases requiring the formal involvement of several agencies.

To find out more ..



4

Helping youth *exit* homelessness for good!

Housing First
4 Youth



The Core Principles of HF4Y

Promoting housing stabilization, well-being, social inclusion and positive transitions to adulthood.



1. A Right to Housing with No Preconditions



2. Youth Choice, Youth Voice, and Self-determination



3. Positive Youth Development and Wellness orientation



4. Individualized, Client-driven Supports with no Time Limits



5. Social Inclusion and Community Integration

Models of Accommodation

for Housing First for Youth



Areas of supports to enhance HOUSING STABILIZATION

for Housing First for Youth



1. HOUSING SUPPORTS



2. HEALTH & WELL-BEING SUPPORTS



3. ACCESS TO INCOME & EDUCATION



4. COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORTS



5. SOCIAL INCLUSION



HF 44 OUTCOMES AREAS



1. HOUSING SUPPORTS



2. HEALTH & WELL-BEING



3. ACCESS TO INCOME & EDUCATION



4. COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORTS



5. SOCIAL INCLUSION

1. Housing stability

Young people have:

- ✓ Obtained housing
- ✓ Maintained housing
- ✓ Enhanced knowledge and skills regarding housing and independent living
- ✓ Reduced stays in emergency shelters

2. Health and well-being

Young people have:

- ✓ Enhanced access to services and supports
- ✓ Improved health
- ✓ Food security
- ✓ Improved mental health
- ✓ Reduced harms related to substance use
- ✓ Enhanced personal safety
- ✓ Improved self-esteem
- ✓ Healthier sexual health practices
- ✓ Enhanced resilience

3. Education and employment

Young people have:

- ✓ Established goals for education and employment
- ✓ Enhanced participation in education
- ✓ Enhanced educational achievement
- ✓ Enhanced participation in training
- ✓ Enhanced labour force participation
- ✓ Improved financial security

4. Complementary supports

Young people have:

- ✓ Established personal goals
- ✓ Improved life skills
- ✓ Increased access to necessary non-medical services
- ✓ Addressed legal and justice issues

5. Social inclusion

Young people have:

- ✓ Built and/or reconnected to natural supports
- ✓ Enhanced family connections
- ✓ Enhanced connections to communities of young person's choice
- ✓ Increased access to necessary non-medical services
- ✓ Addressed legal and justice issues
- ✓ Strengthened cultural engagement and participation
- ✓ Engaged and participated in meaningful activities

Housing First *4 Youth*

1

**Currently
homeless
youth**

2

**Early
Intervention:
youth leaving
care**

3

**ENDAAAYAANG
Supporting
Indigenous
youth**

RESEARCH RESULTS

Housing First for Youth



Randomized Controlled

Group 1: Receiving
Housing First for Youth
intervention

Trial



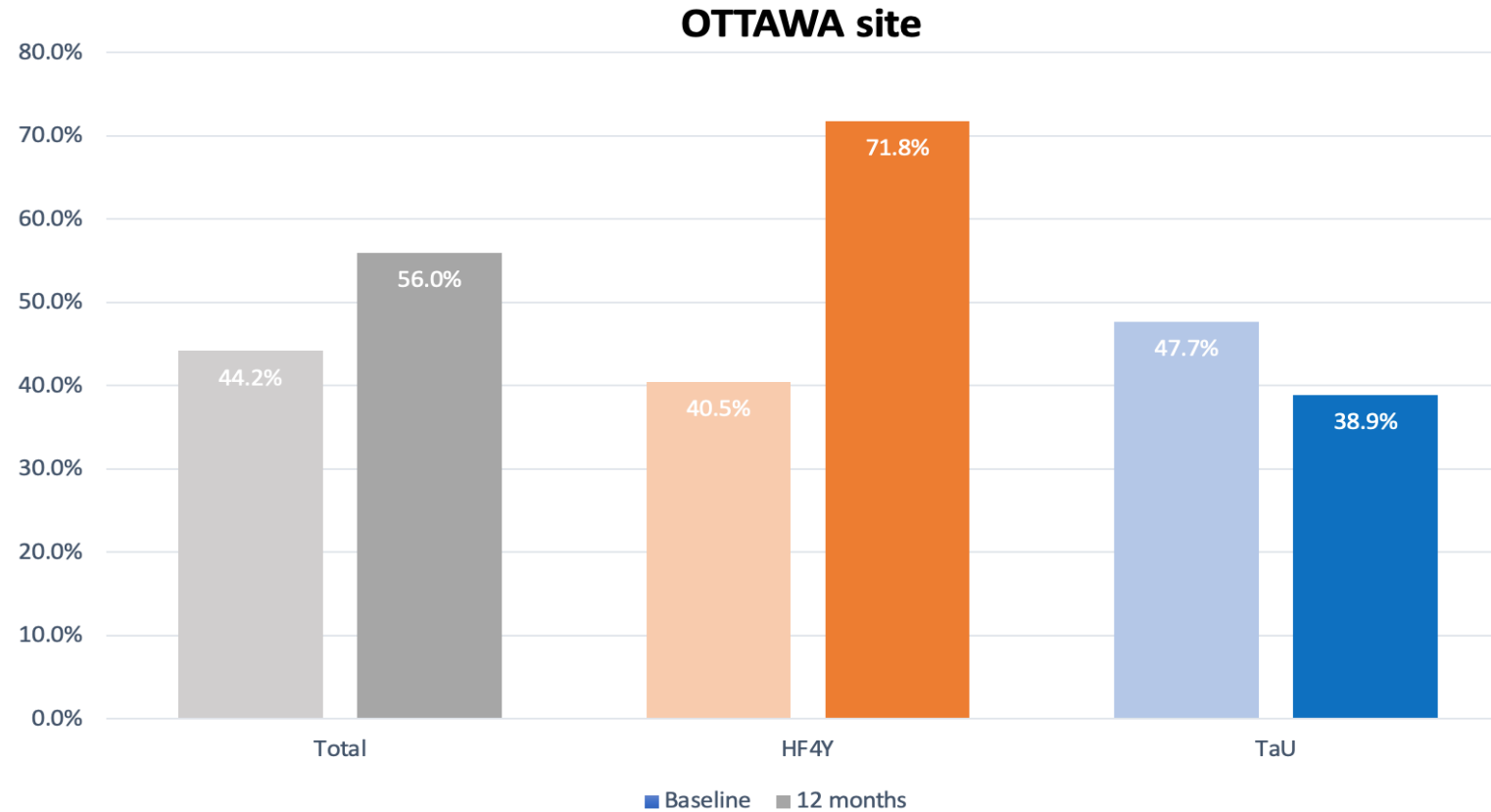
Group 2: Treatment as Usual
(TaU) - *NOT* receiving the
intervention.



EDUCATION Outcomes

Table 3

HF4Y group participation in education – Baseline vs. 12 months



Column 1 – Baseline
TOTAL N= 86 HF4Y N=42 TAU N=44

Column 2 – 12 months
TOTAL N= 75 HF4Y N=39 TAU N=36

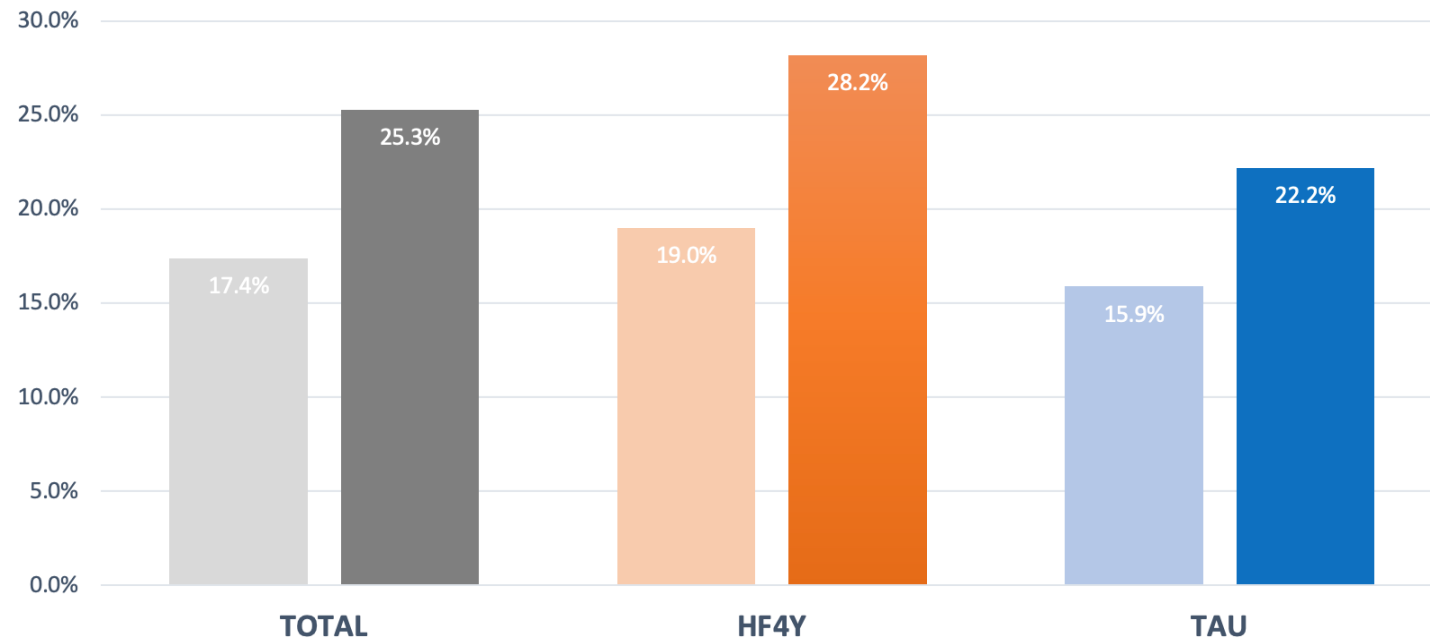


EMPLOYMENT Outcomes

Table Table 4

Labour Force participation – Baseline vs. 12 months

OTTAWA site



Column 1 – Baseline
TOTAL N= 86 HF4Y N=42 TAU N=44

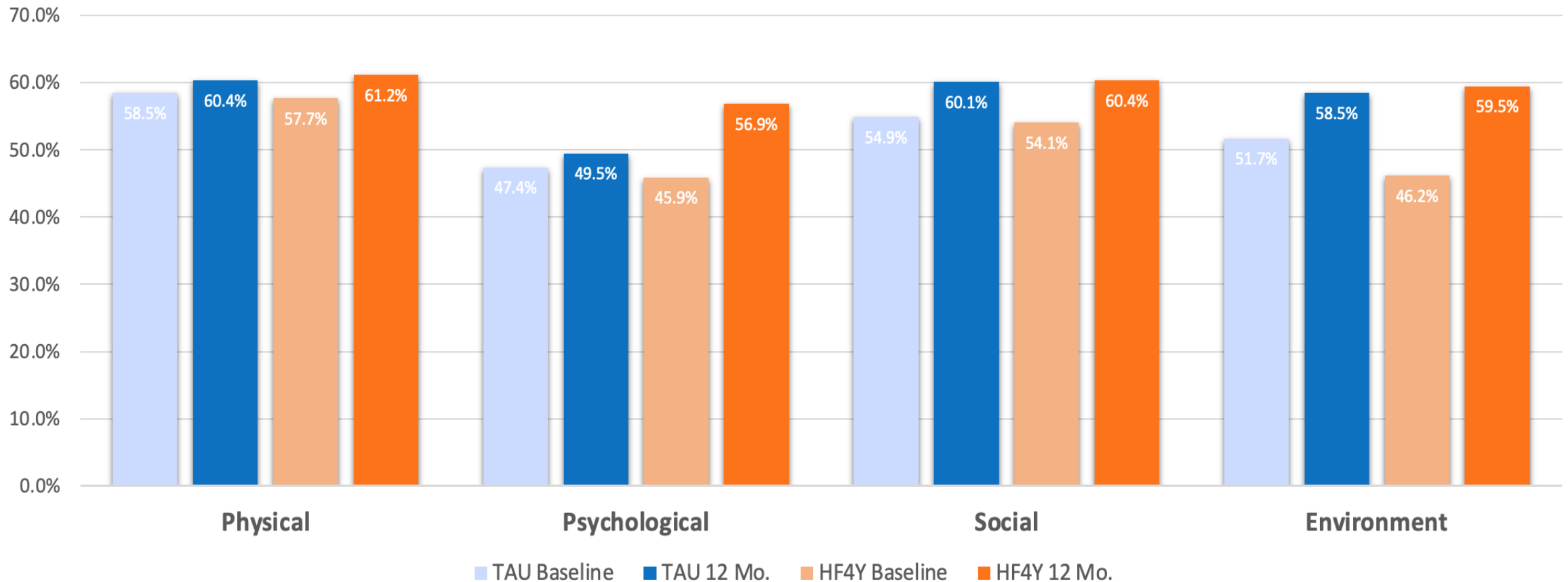
Column 2 – 12 months
TOTAL N= 75 HF4Y N=39 TAU N=36

HF
44

Quality of Life Outcomes

Table 5

WHO Quality of Life after 12 months - HF4Y compared with TaU

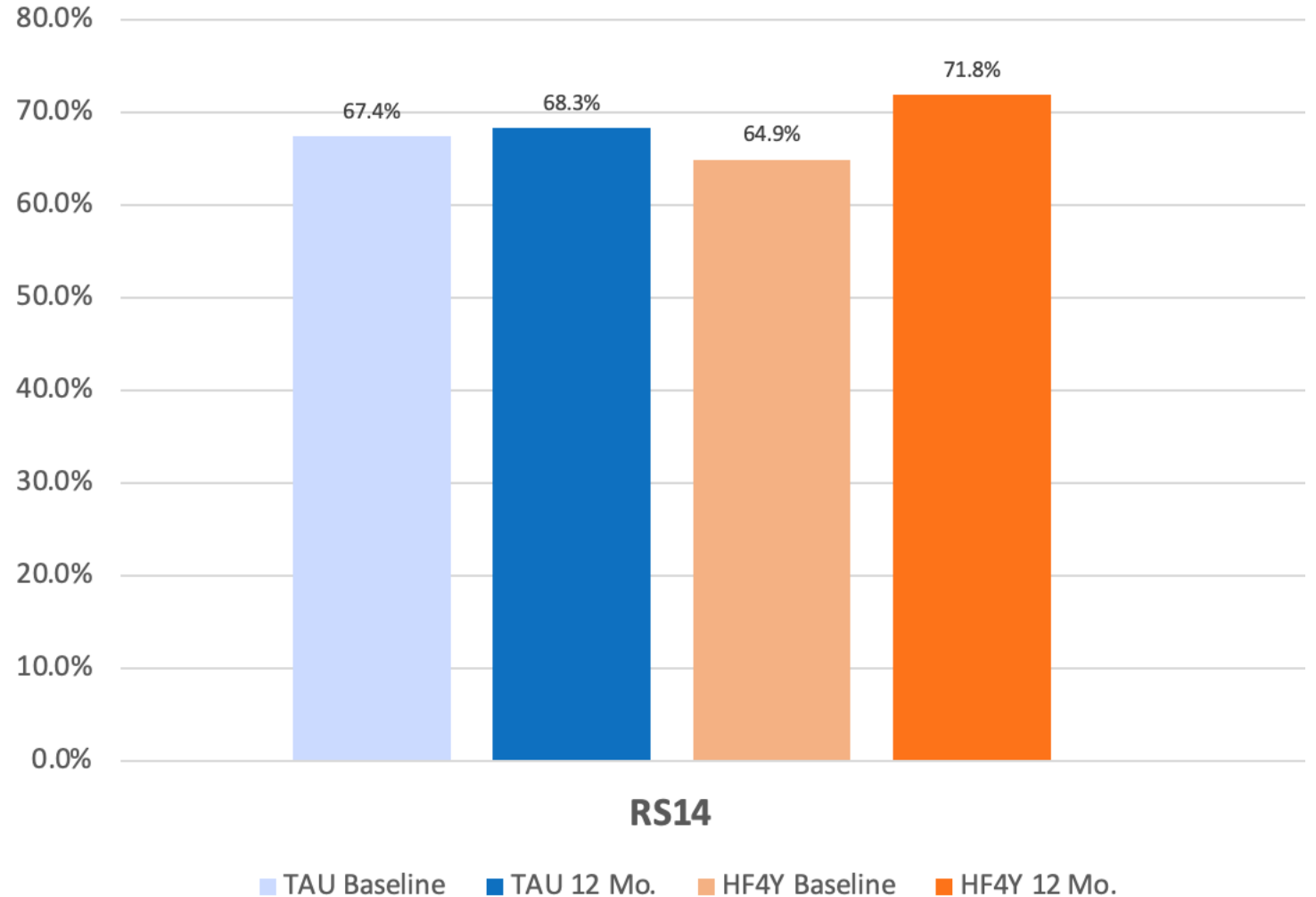




Resilience

Table 7

Improvement in Resilience after 12 months - HF4Y compared with TaU



Resilience Scale-14 (RS14)

5

DUTY TO ASSIST

Taking a Rights-Based Approach



If the prevention of youth homelessness is to be grounded in a human rights approach, we must consider the positive obligations of governments and communities to ensure the rights of youth are protected. The fulfilment of young people's social and economic rights must include legal and practical mechanisms to seek assistance and redress in the event that their rights are or will soon be violated. Currently, there largely is no protocol or legal requirement to assist youth in distress outside of the child welfare context.



What
the
FUTURE
looks
like



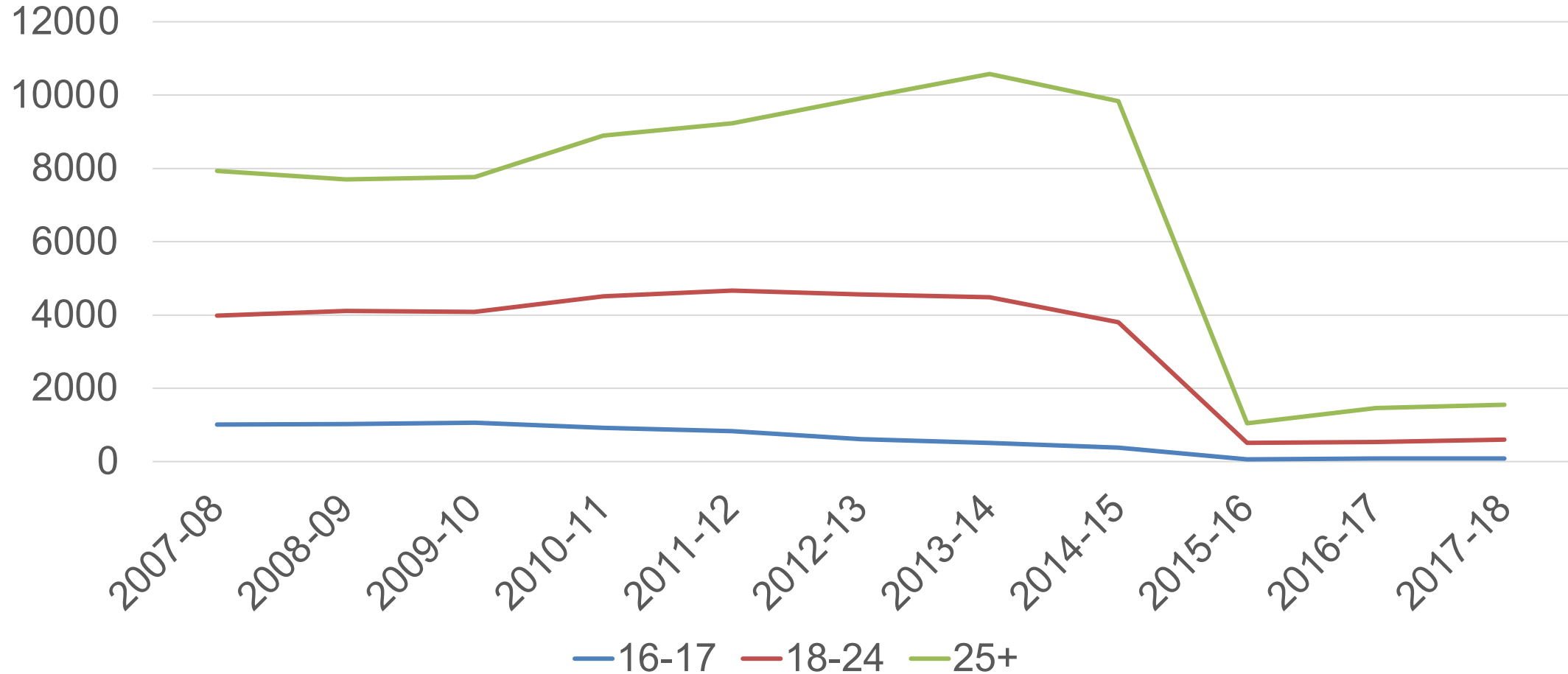
The Housing Act (Wales) 2014

- Attempts to **prioritise homelessness prevention**, reorienting services, entitlements and funding
- Makes access to prevention services a **universal right** – challengeable through the courts.
- The **duty to assist**: local authorities must take ‘**reasonable steps**’ to **prevent and relieve** homelessness and should have recourse to a wide range of different mechanisms of assistance.
- Local authorities should consider the most appropriate intervention or range of interventions for **each person**
- Homelessness is prevented if accommodation is available for **at least 6 months**
- People are also expected to **cooperate**

Peter Mackie, 2018



Homeless households owed a duty to provide housing in Wales, 2007-2018



Mackie, Peter, Ian Thomas, and Jennie Bibbings. (2017). "Homelessness Prevention: Reflecting on a Year of Pioneering Welsh Legislation in Practice." *European Journal of Homelessness* 11(1): 81-107.

How could a Duty to Assist be adapted to the Canadian context?



Accessing help ...

What mechanisms
need to be in place to
ensure people who
need help get it?



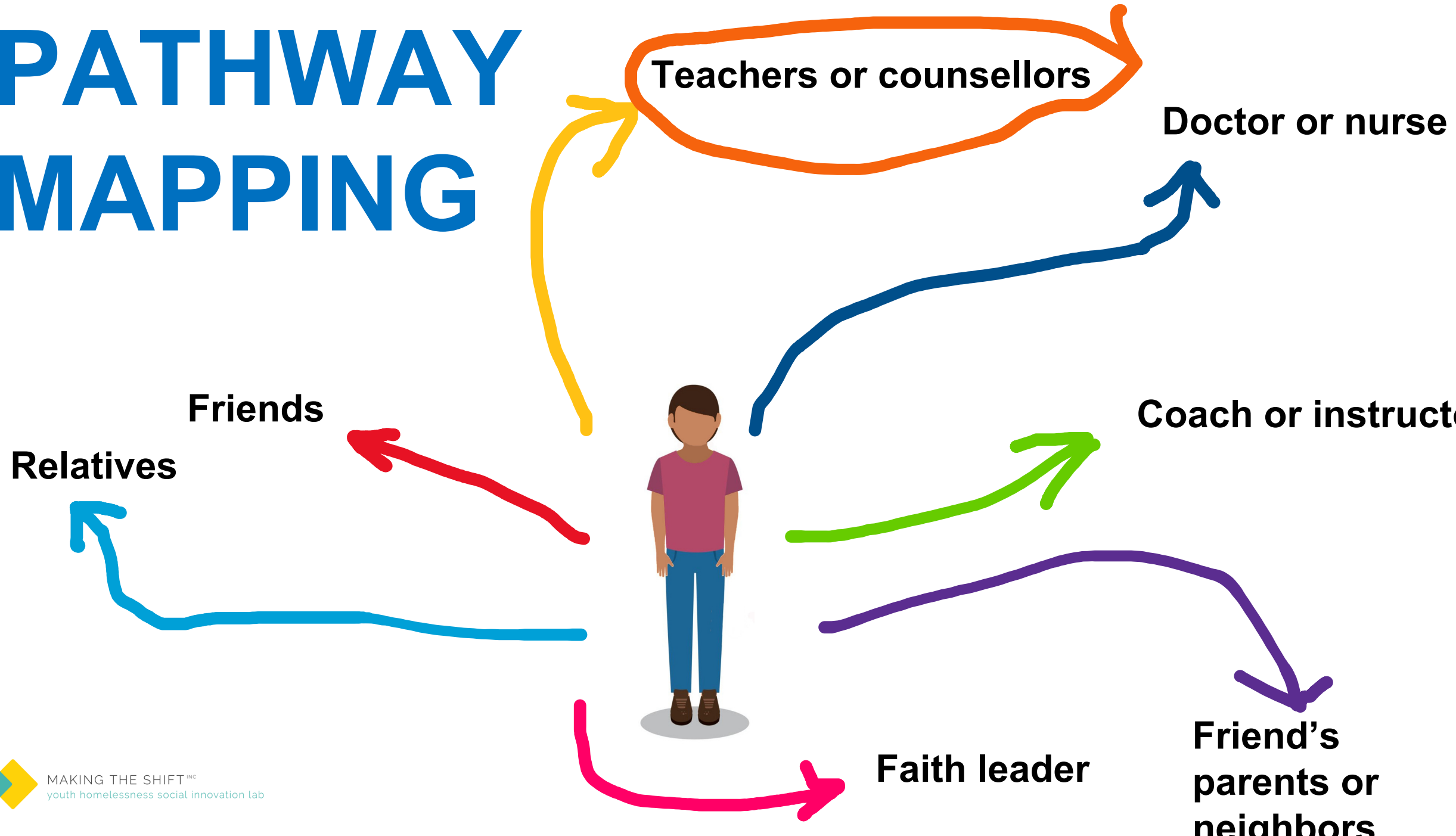
Project Challenge

How might we use design thinking to prototype components of Duty to Assist in Hamilton, Ontario in order to deliver a more effective and implementable policy?

HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN



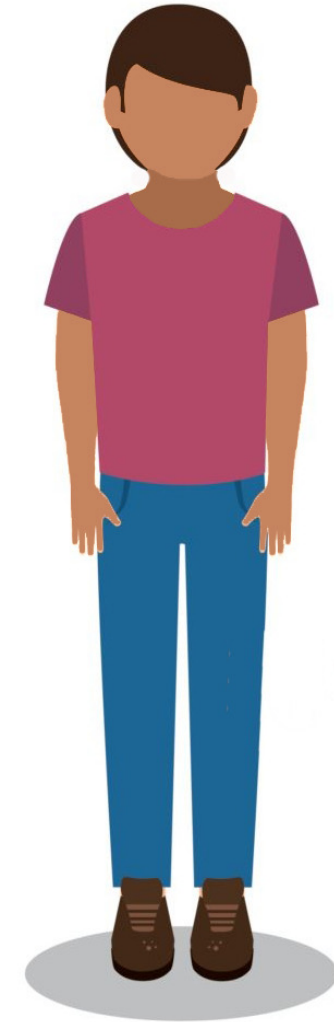
PATHWAY MAPPING



PATHWAY MAPPING

Considerations

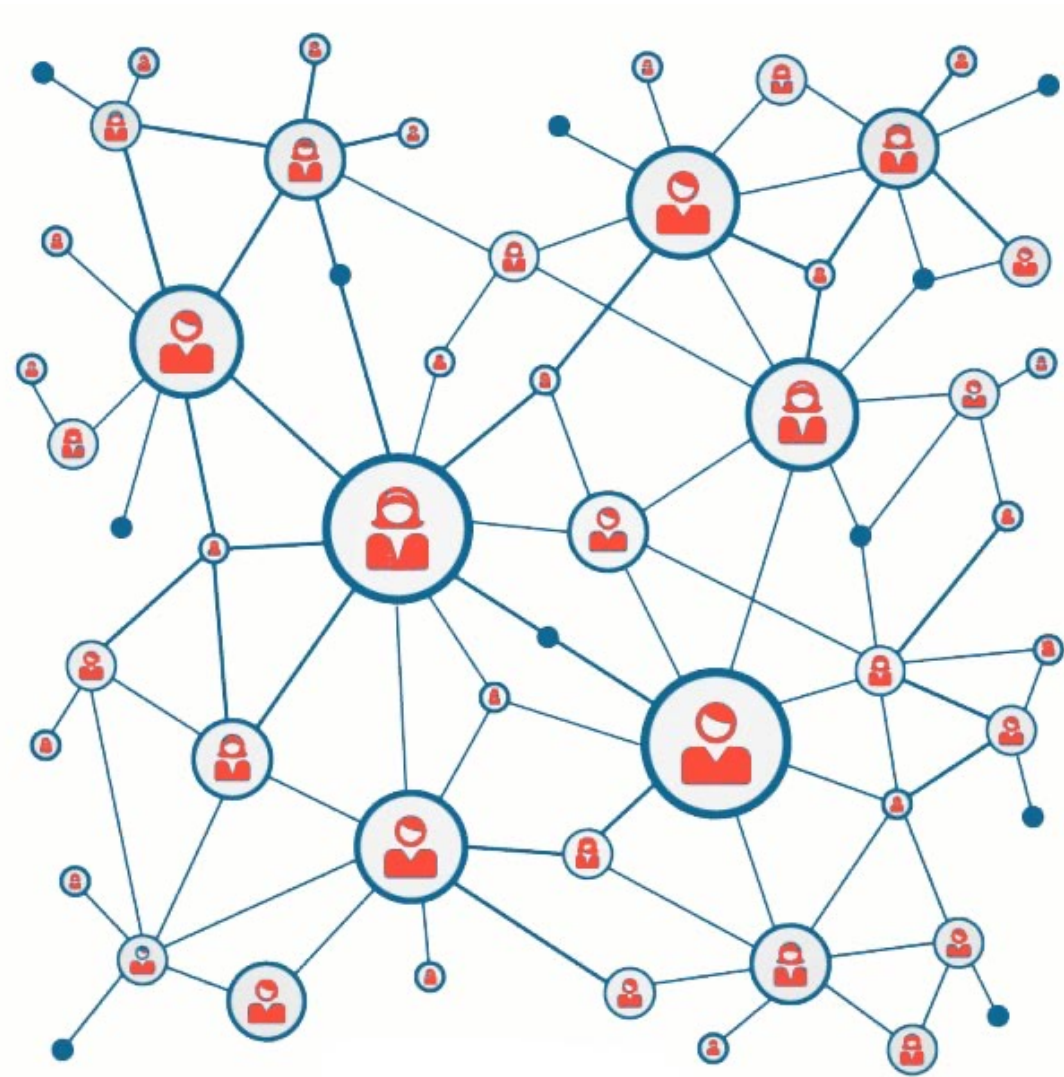
- In Canada, the response to homelessness does not reach unattached youth under the age of 16.
- 2/3 of currently homeless youth do not consider themselves to be homeless.
- As a result, youth at risk of homelessness are unlikely to reach out to the municipality, or even the homelessness sector for assistance.
- Youth are more likely to seek help or talk with meaningful adults if they already have a relationship with them.



Who is responsible?

Meaningful adults in the lives of young people who identify or reasonably suspect that a young person is at risk of, or is experiencing homelessness, have a duty to offer support and / or facilitate access to supports. This includes, for instance:

- Teachers
- Instructors
- Coaches
- Community workers
- Child protection workers
- Health care professionals
- Employment workers, etc.

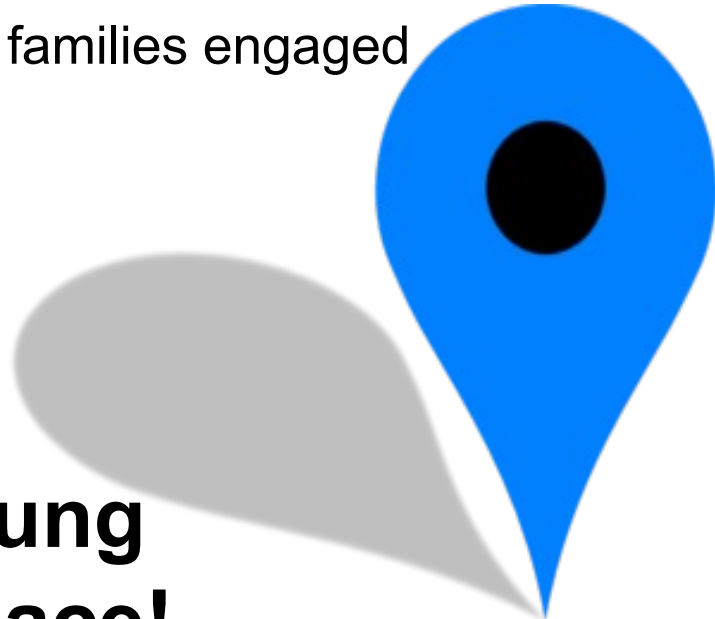


Youth Reconnect

Providing supports for youth and families

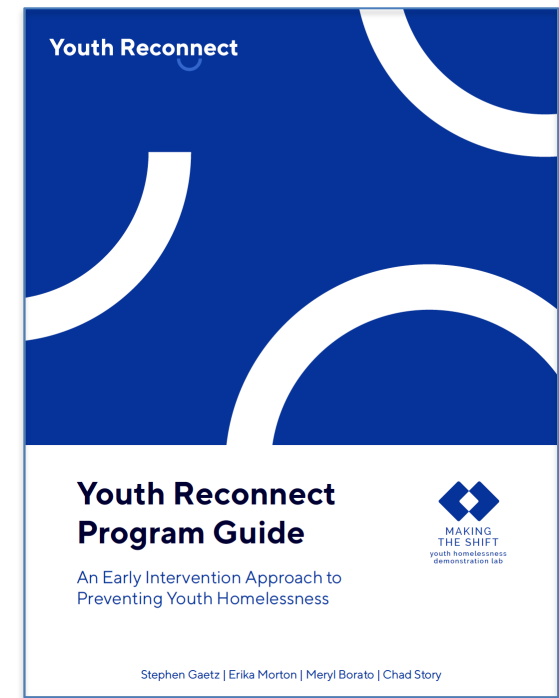
- School / Community partnerships
- Students, teachers and families engaged
- At risk youth identified

**Keeping young
people in place!**



Program goals

- Keeping young people 'in place'
- Stabilizing living situation
- Supporting young people AND their families
- School engagement





How **DUTY to ASSIST** works

Supporting youth

- Information
- Access

Supporting Teachers, counsellors and other staff

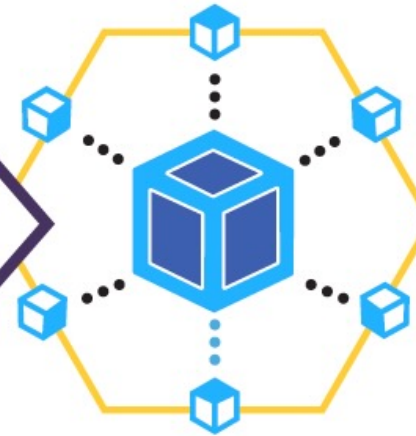
- Information
- Access

Identification



Connection: A place to access support

System of Care



Range of Services and Supports

Early Intervention

- > Enhancing Family and Natural Supports
- > School-Based Interventions
- > Shelter Diversion
- > Housing-Led Interventions
- > Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

Housing

- > Housing Stabilization
- > Returning Home
- > Transitional Housing
- > Independent Living
- > Supportive Housing

Supports

- > Housing Stabilization
- > Health and Well-Being
- > Education and Employment
- > Complementary Supports
- > Social Inclusion

Accessing support

- Coordinated Access
- Youth Reconnect staff
- Use of technology
- Strong school-community engagement

Collective Impact

- Community of services and supports

Planned roll-out of Duty to Assist by sector

1. Education System

2. Child Protection Services

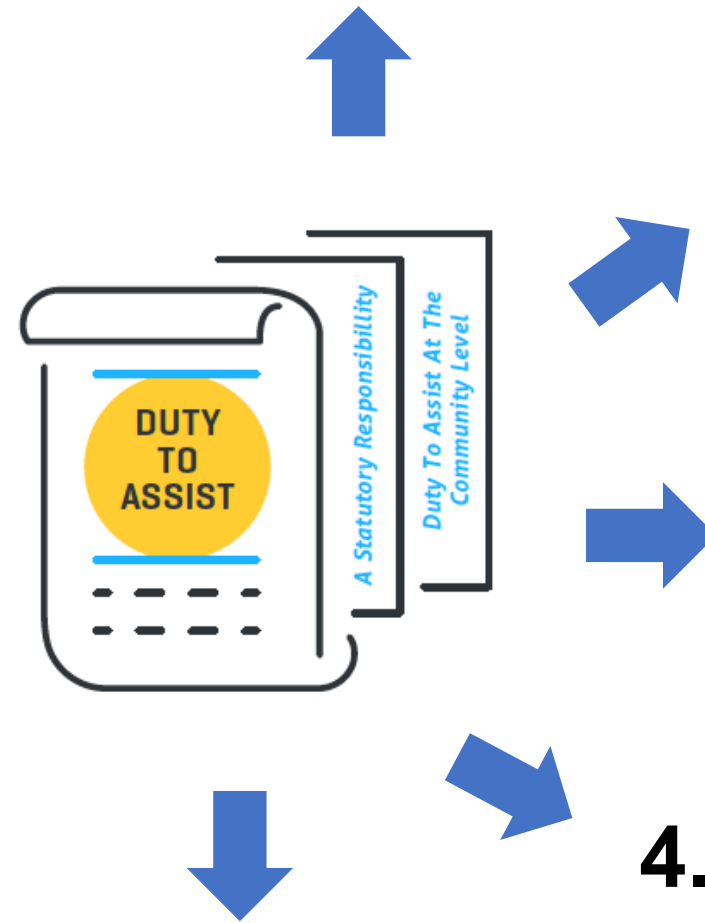
3. Health and mental health services

4. Justice system

5. Community Services

7. Faith Community

6. Employment Services





IMPLEMENTING

Preventive

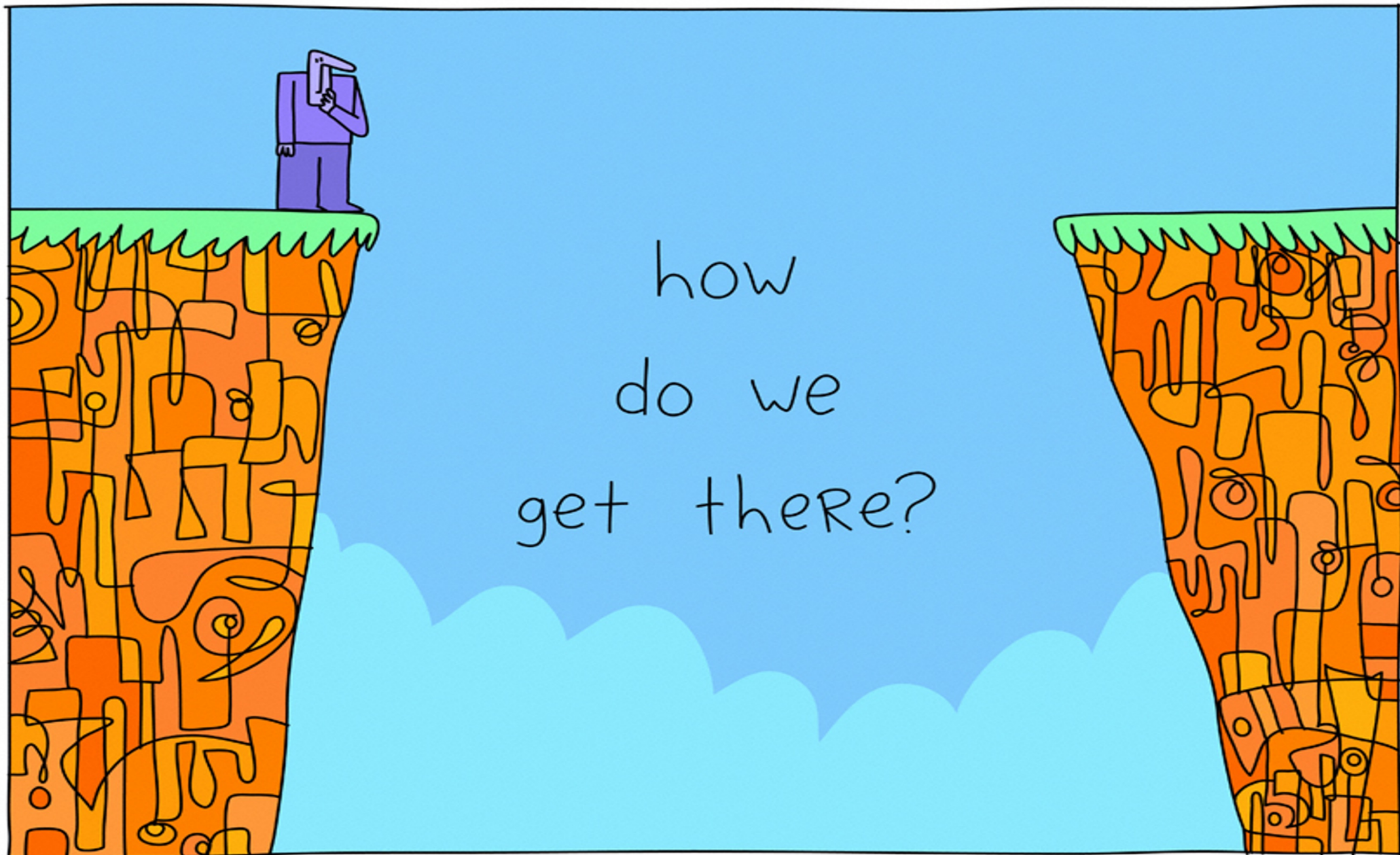
Program

Models

The **CHALLENGE**

The *shift to prevention* requires:

- **Policy and funding** aligned to support prevention
- Knowledge base about **how to do prevention** is developed
- **Evidence** for effective prevention is developed
- **Capacity building:** Local government and not for profit sector are supported to make the shift
- **Need to shift hearts and minds:** *Just do it!*

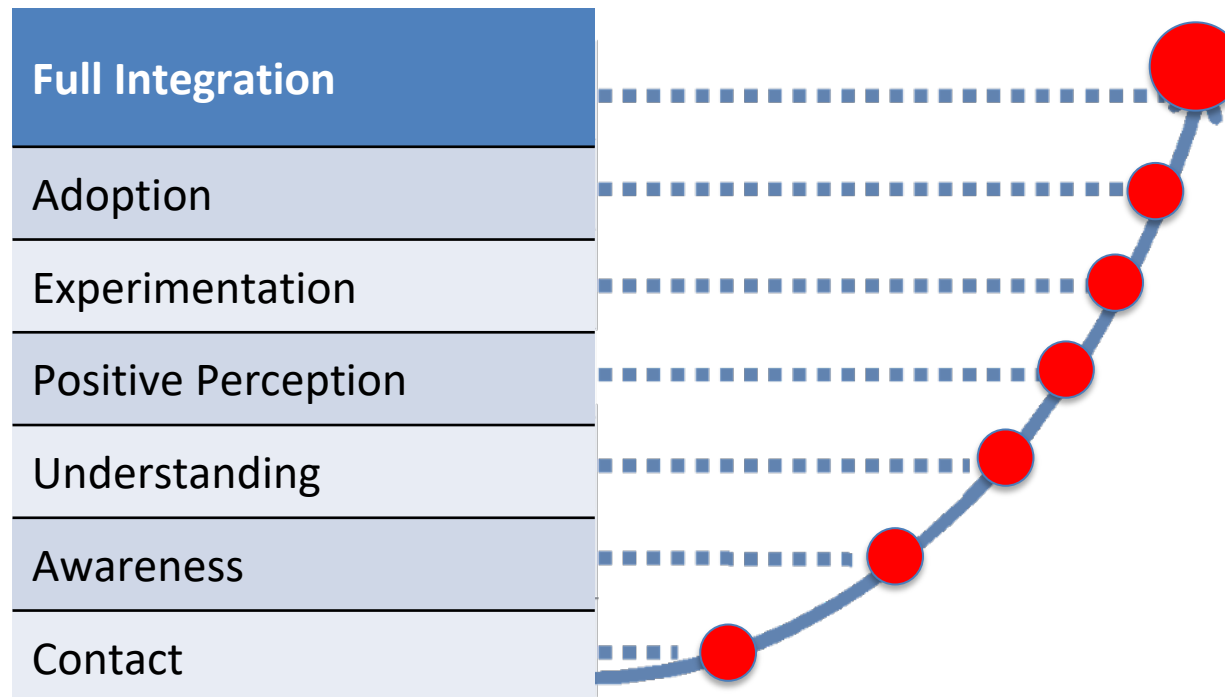


CHANGE MANAGEMENT - Shifting to *Prevention*
means doing things differently . . .

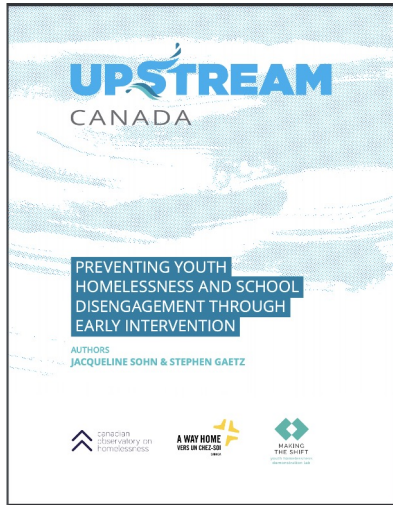


Where are you and your organization on the *Commitment Curve*

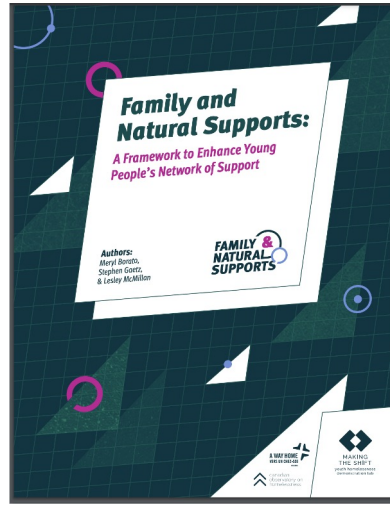
- Reflects change that may happen among or within organizations
- The commitment curve is a way of assessing the commitment of stakeholders to changes in policy and practice.



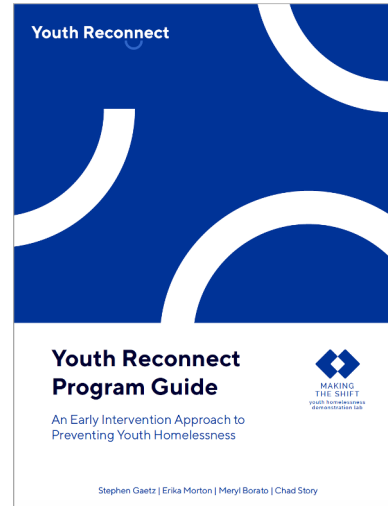
Find out more



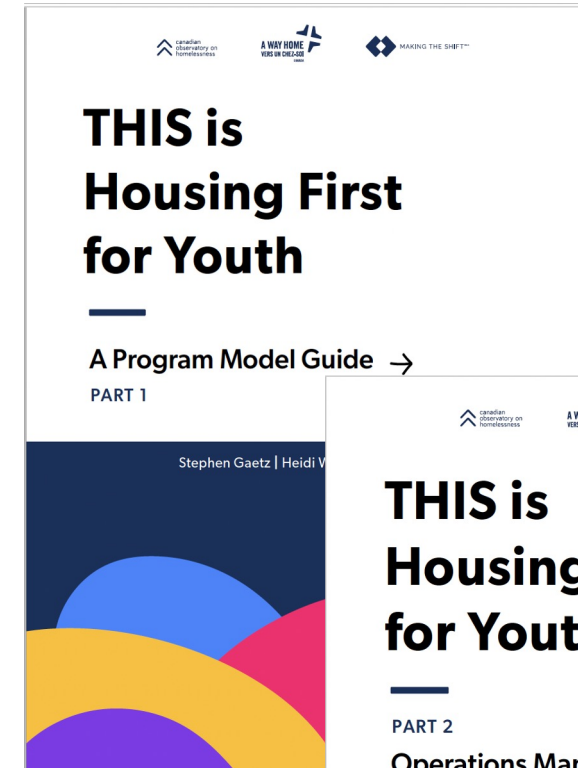
UPSTREAM



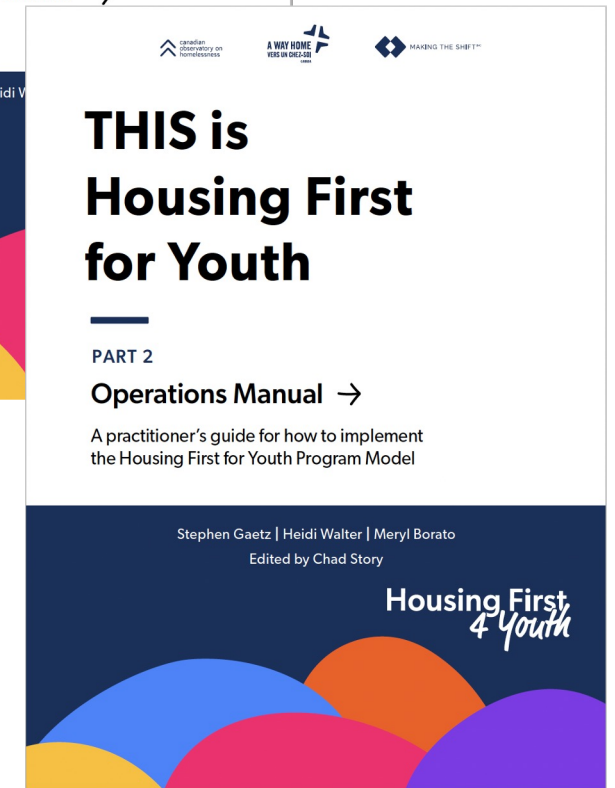
**Family and
Natural
Supports**



**Youth
Reconnect**



**HF4Y
Program Model
Guide +
Operations
Manual**





MAKING THE SHIFT^{INC}
youth homelessness social innovation lab

Shifting Practices

Building capacity at the frontlines to deliver prevention-based services that improve the well-being of young people.



MAKING THE SHIFT^{INC}
youth homelessness social innovation lab



Training and Technical Assistance

Get support:

1

Training & Technical Assistance offerings:

- Housing First for Youth
- Family & Natural Supports
- Youth Reconnect
- Upstream
- Duty to Assist
- Working with Indigenous youth

2

Community of Practice calls

3

FREE Online training/resources on the Homelessness Learning Hub



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INTERVENTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Take Survey



We want to know:

- *What* you/your organization knows about youth homelessness prevention program models
- *Who* has implemented these programs across Canada, and
- *How* they've found success or barriers to implementation

Win a presentation or consultation for your organization valued at \$1,000.

Take the survey:

bit.ly/41livSM

ANY
QUESTIONS?

