### MAKING THE SHIFT<sup>INC</sup> youth homelessness social innovation lab

## Making Research Matter: Mobilizing research to impact on homelessness policy

**Stephen Gaetz** Professor, Faculty of Education, York U President, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Faculty of Education Public Lecture Series

## **ABOUT US:**



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.

# The problem we are trying to Solve.

## Youth Homelessness is a seemingly intractable problem in Canada





- 40,000 over the course of a year
- 7,000 on any given night





Gaetz, Stephen; Dej, E., Richter, T., Redman, M. (2016) <u>*The State of Homelssness in Canada – 2016*</u> Canadian Homelessness Research Network / Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. Homeless Hub Paper series #2

# DIVERSITY

#### WITHOUT A HOME: The National Youth Homelessness Survey

STEPHEN GAETZ BILL O'GRADY SEAN KIDD KAITLIN SCHWAN



# 29.5%30.6%28.2%16%10.1%identified as<br/>LGBTQ2Sidentified as<br/>Indigenousidentified as<br/>racializedidentified as<br/>Blackidentified as<br/>newcomers

## 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

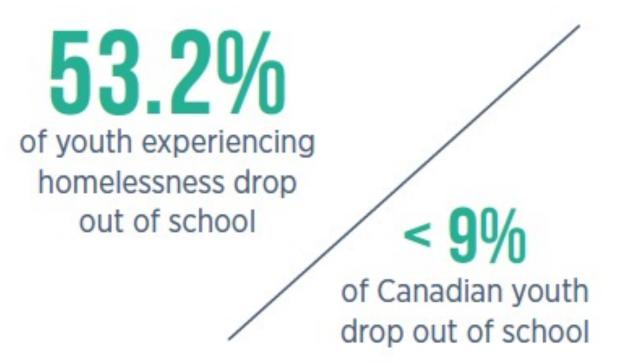
**57.8%** indicated some kind of

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



Dropping out?



This is not a result of their lack of desire or motivation, as 73.9% of those who have dropped out would like to return to school at some time.



## 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

reported at least one suicide attempt

**47**%

**35.2%** reported at least one drug overdose requiring hospitalization



## Criminal Victimization

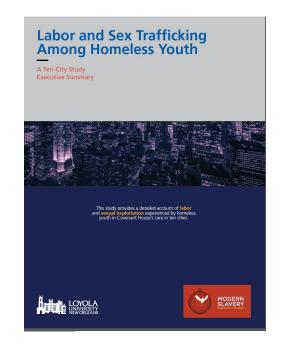
### PROLONGED EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

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 mmmm 1 in 5

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



## Pathways off the streets

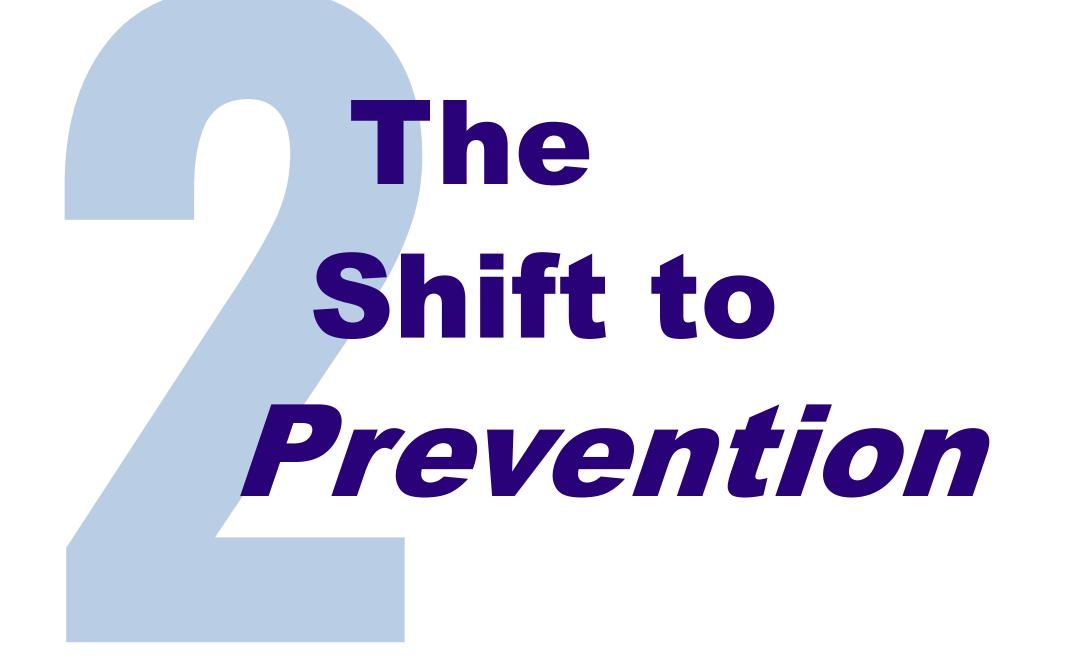
## and Exits from Homelessness

### 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.





## Addressing homelessness in Canada







#### Dr. Eric Latimer McGill University

# Cost of keeping someone in a state of homelessness per year, in five Canadian cities:

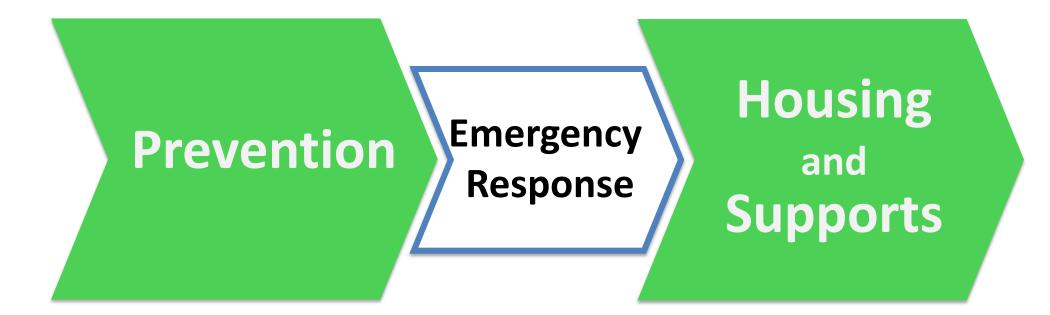


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Vicky -	N. Goering RN PhD; for the re-
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Moncton - \$29,610

- Montreal \$56,406
- Toronto \$58, 927
- Winnipeg \$45,565
- Vancouver \$53,144

## The change we want to see ...

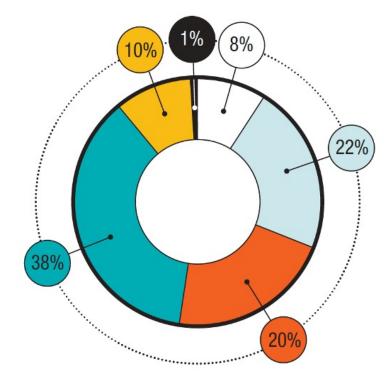


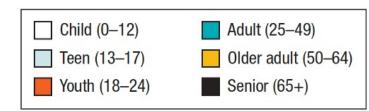


**EVERYONE COUNTS** 2018 **HIGHLIGHTS** Preliminary Results from the 1 + Second Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count of Homelessness in Canadian Communities # H  $\top$ + +1+  $\mathbb{T}$  $\left| + \right|$ + ×+, ×. --Canada Employment and Emploi et Social Development Canada Développement social Canada

FIGURE 6 Age of First Homelessness Experience

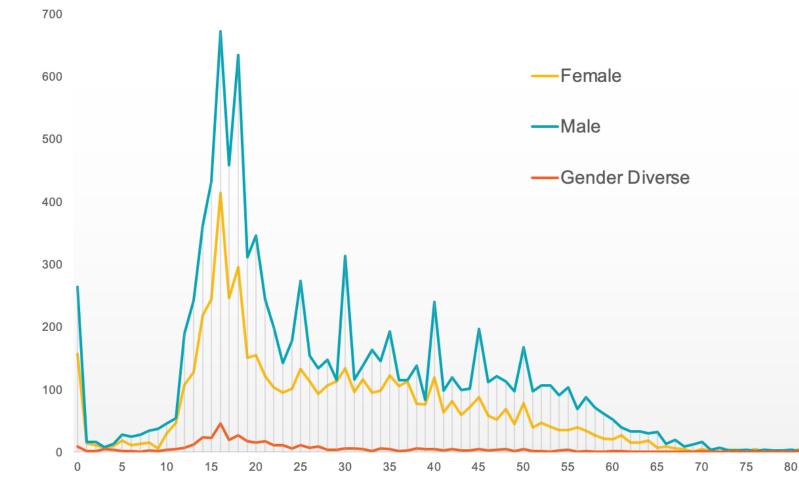
# 50% First experienced homelessness before the age of 25







### 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.

Canadä

AGE OF FIRST HOMELESSNESS

# **Solving problems through** Social Innovation

# What is a Social Innovation Lab?



#### SOCIAL INNOVATION LABS IN CANADA

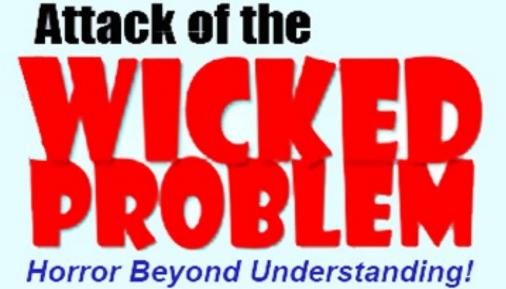
#### A Preliminary Analysis of the Canadian Social Innovation Lab Landscape

Gary Martin, PhD., Wakefield, QC; Professor Ann Dale, Royal Roads University; Dr. Christopher Stoney, Carleton University April 24, 2017

"Social Innovation" is defined as:

"...a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than current solutions. The value created accrues primarily to society rather than to private individuals" (Stanford, 2017).

# Solving "Wicked Problems" through Social Innovation





## Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

## MAKING THE SHIFT



### MAKING THE SHIFT<sup>INC</sup> youth homelessness social innovation lab

## **Co-Leadership**



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.



*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.

### **MtS Research Program**

### **Research Theme Areas**



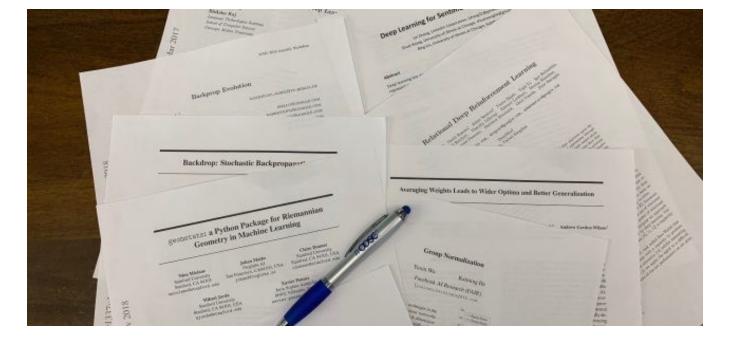


**Crosscutting Research Themes** 



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

## MAKING THE SHIFT **Funded Research**



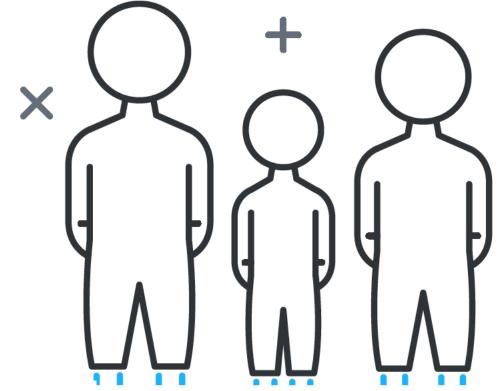


## MAKING THE SHIFT Demonstration Projects

Employing design thinking, our *demonstration projects* are intended to expand our knowledge and understanding of innovative approaches to preventing and ending youth homelessness by identifying, developing, prototyping, testing, evaluating, and mobilizing innovations in policy and practice.

Demonstration Project Models: Upstream, Youth Reconnect, Family and Natural Supports (FNS), Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)

## 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)

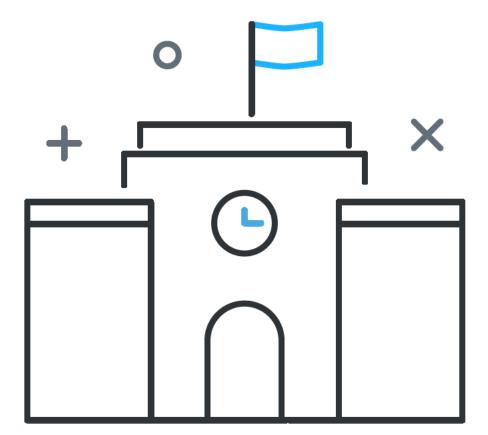
The underlying ethos of an FNS approach is that family and the support of caring adults is important to almost everyone and can be an asset that enhances young people's quality of live, and gives youth a sense of belonging, identity, security, self-esteem, and someone to rely on when problems emerge.

"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** 

# **SCHOOL-BASED**

### **Early Intervention**



## Why do SCHOOLS matter?



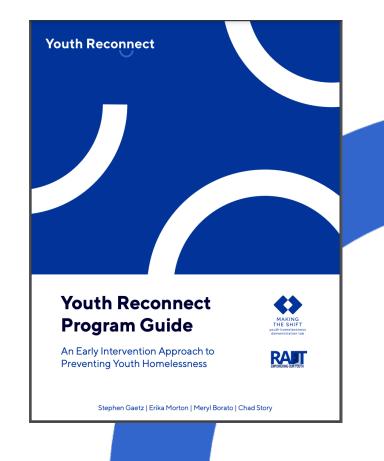






## Keeping young people in place through

## School Community Partnerships



### **YOUTH RECONNECT Workers**

Engage with students, teachers and counsellors

## Meets Youth Reconnect Worker

Who supports Sarah and her family.

#### Keep young people "in place"

Stabilize living
situation

"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

#### "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 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."

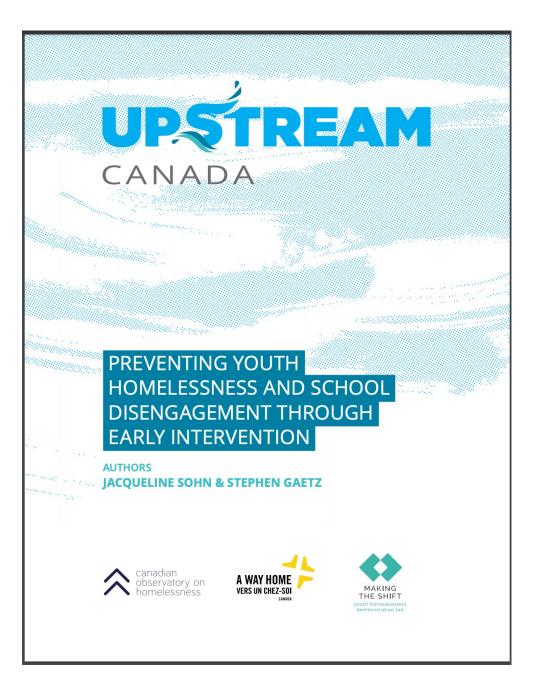
Youth with Lived Experience

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





# **Population Screening:**

The *Student Needs Assessment* is used to identify students at risk of homelessness, dropping out, and criminal involvement.

All students fill out a survey, conducted once a year ...

UPSTREAM Student Needs Assessment To build equal opportunities and support youth to thrive, Upstream Canada is working with your community to start supporting young people and their families early - before barriers to community to start supporting young people and their Jumilies early - before battlers to resiliency such as difficulties with school, conflict at home, challenges with mental health and/or Central Okanagan Public Schools, in partnership with BGC-Okanagan want to provide more resources and supports to its students and their families. This confidential assessment is one Please complete the assessment to help Central Okanagan Public Schools and BGC-Okanagan understand the needs of young people and their families in the community in terms of Furpose Upstream Canada supports students with a variety of barriers to resiliency at home and at school. It is a collaboration between your school and community service providers. school, it is a conaboration between your school and community service providers. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) is non-profit research institute that will be This Student Needs Assessment asks questions about your life inside and outside of school. Some questions on the assessment might seem a little personal, but please answer them honestly. This way, your school and community will be able to better understand how to There is a small chance you will feel uncomfortable when answering the questions. If you feel inere is a small chance you will leer unconflortable when answering the questions. If you leer distressed at any point, please reach out to the support staff available today, or you can reach out to the resources listed on the Student Pocket Guide that has been provided. Upstream wants you to know that you have the choice to participate. You do not have to complete this assessment if you do not want to. You can also complete the assessment and complete this assessment if you do not want to, rou can also complete the assessment and choose not to submit at the end. If you submit it and change your mind later, you can cancel

## **Flexible Supports Delivery A 3-Tier Response**

#### Tier 1.

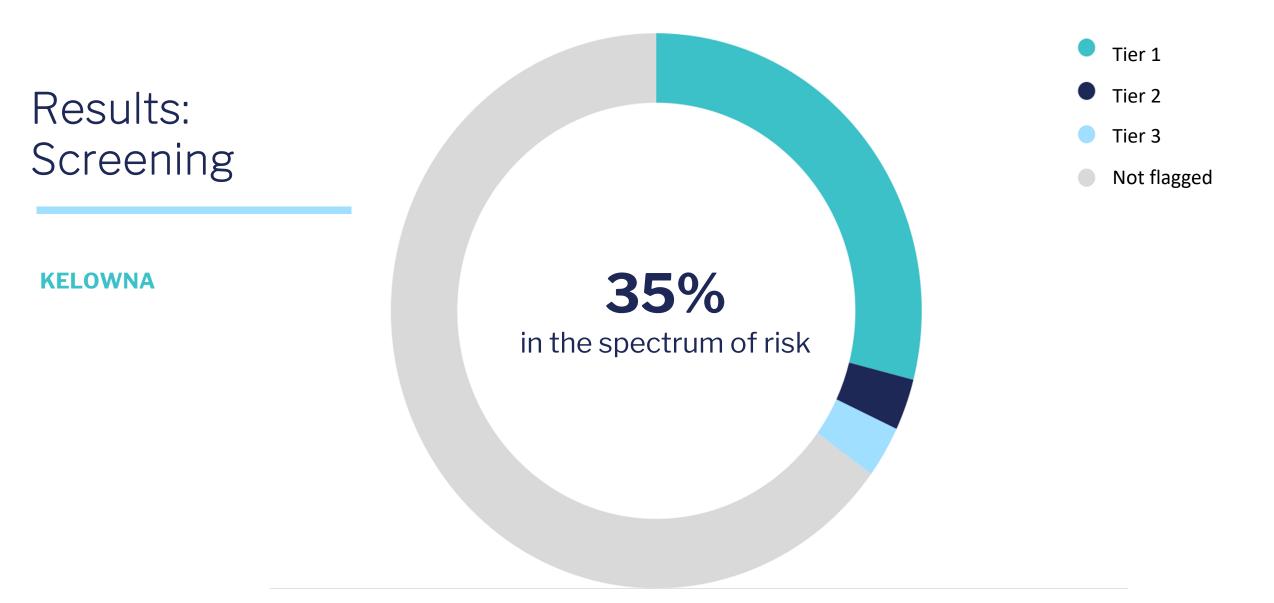
Active monitoring by school staff, or a secondary consultation where a referral is made to another program or agency.

#### Tier 2.

Casework support, either a brief counsellingtype of casework or case management by TGP

#### Tier 3.

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



#### **Risk of Homelessness & School Disengagement**

# Follow up interview assessment

### **Conducted by Upstream Case Manager**



# 4 Helping youth *exit* homelessness for good!

# Housing First 4 Youth



# The Core Principles of HF4Y

Promoting housing stabilization, wellbeing, social inclusion and positive transitions to adulthood.



1. A Right to Housing with No Preconditions

 $\checkmark$ 

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

 $\checkmark$ 

3. Positive Youth Development and Wellness orientation

 $\checkmark$ 

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

 $\checkmark$ 

5. Social Inclusion and Community Integration

# Housing First 4 Your



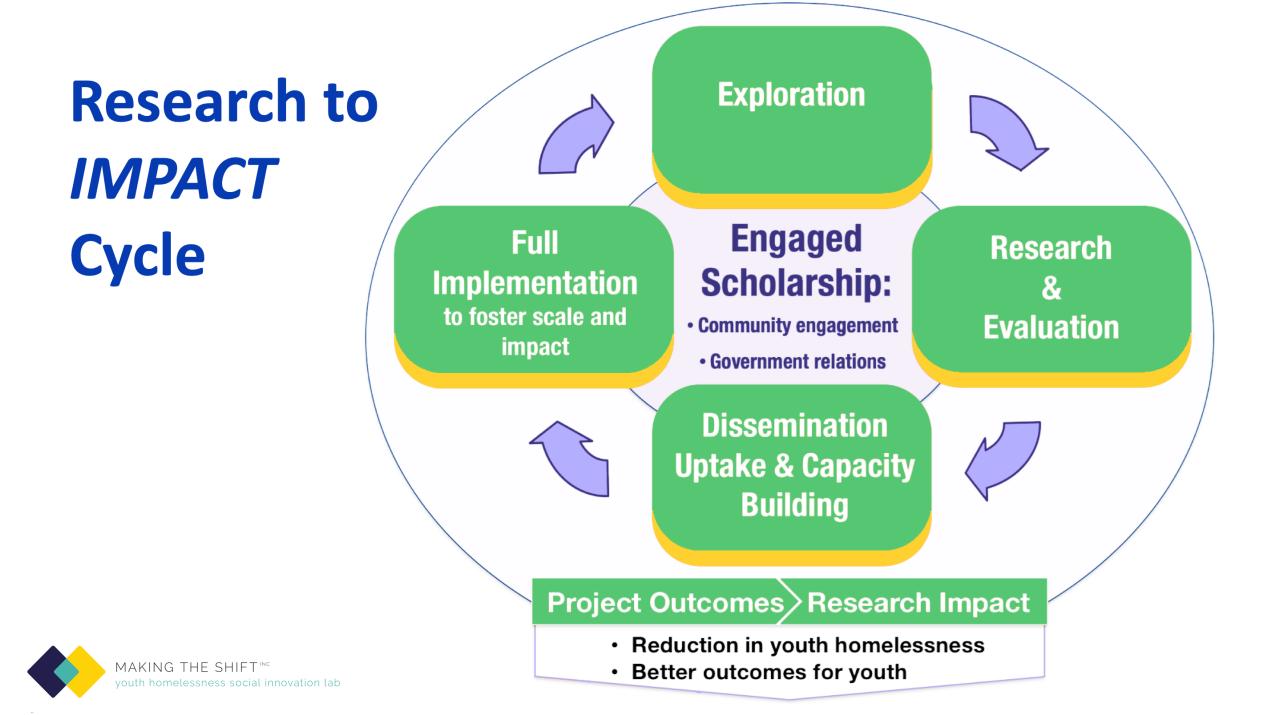
Currently homeless youth



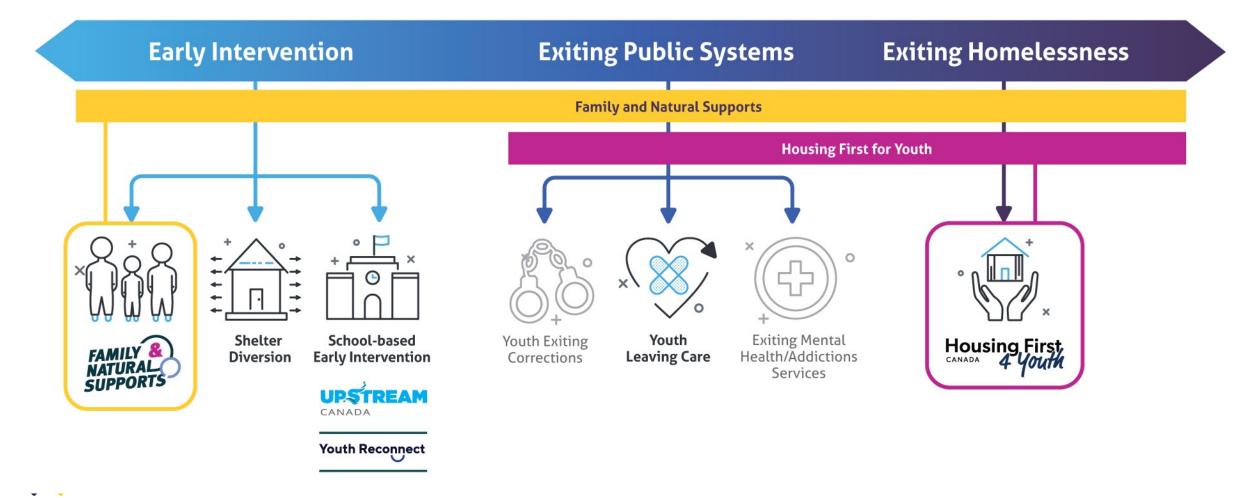
Early Intervention: youth leaving care 3

ENDAAYAANG Supporting Indigenous youth

# Supporting the shift to PREVENTION



## Preventing Youth Homelessness What you can do in your community



## Our task: Influencing a move up 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.

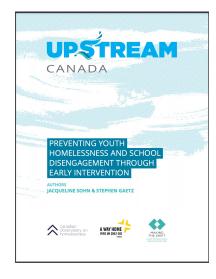
Full Incorporation	Stakeholder has incorporated and fully integrated policy/practice into organization's strategy.
Adoption	Currently piloting and testing
Experimentation	Planning to implement if resources and supports available
Positive Perception	Positive perception - service / policy could help achieve our goals
Understanding	Understand service / policy but not ready for implementation.
Awareness	Some awareness
Contact	Lack of awareness



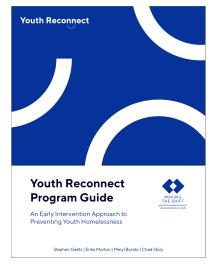
# how do we get there?



# **Public facing resources**







UPSTREAM

Family and Natural Supports

Youth Reconnect

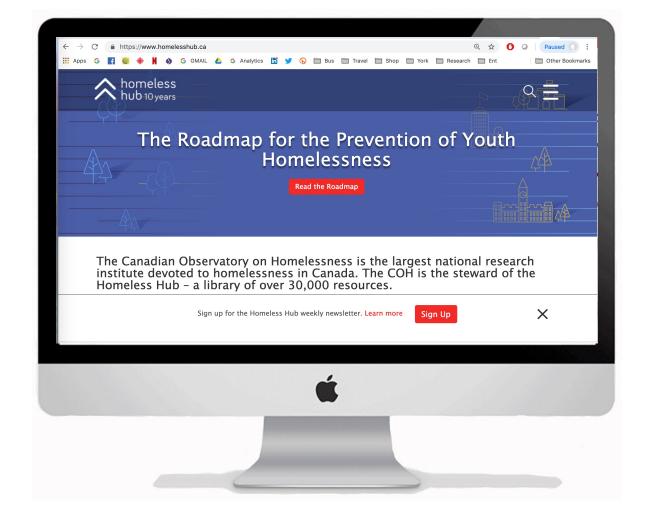
> HF4Y Program Model Guide + Operations Manual





# **Communications Strategy**





# **Productive Interactions**

- All orders of government
- Service providers
- Community entities
- Funders



# **Government Relations**



# **Community Engagement**



#### **Coming of Age: Reimagining** the Response to Youth Homelessness in Canada **Homeless Hub Report**

by Stephen A. Gaetz

On the surface, youth homelessness seems to be an intractable problem. In many Canadian cities, the sight of young people panhandling or sleeping in parks may be unsettling, but by 2014 it probably doesn't shock most people. It seems that we have been dealing with this problem for a very long time; because of its persistence the solutions to youth homelessness can appear elusive.

Instead of becoming complacent with the reality of youth homelessness, perhaps we need to reimagine our response to the issue.

That is, it is time to shift from an approach that manages the problem, to an approach that ends youth homelessness. The good news is that we do



**Recent Blog Posts** 

ASK THE HUB: Can We End Youth Homelessness? by Stephen Gaetz



youth experiencing homelessn self-identified as LGBTQ

INFOGRAPHIC OF THE WEEK: Coming of Age by Tanya Gulliver

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### **Shifting Practices**

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

## **Get support:**



Training & Technical Assistance offerings:

- Housing First for Youth
- Family & Natural Supports
- Program Implementation
- Systems Planning



**Community of Practice calls** 



**FREE** Online training/resources on the Homelessness Learning Hub





## **Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative**

# **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

## Interest in the Prevention of Youth Homelessness

#### Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Not sure	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Prevention is necessary to solve youth homelessness.	6.7% (7)	3.8% (4)	0.0% (0)	6.7% (7)	82.7% (86)
I think my organization should do more in the area of youth homelessness prevention.	6.8% (7)	6.8% (7)	13.6% (14)	34.0% (35)	38.8% (40)
I think my community should do more in the area of youth homelessness prevention.	5.8% 6	1.0% (1)	1.9% (2)	12.5% (13)	78.8% (82)
I have seen a growth in interest in youth homelessness prevention in the last five years.	3.8% (4)	9.6% (10)	11.5% (12)	38.5% (40)	36.5% (38)
We need support as an organization to help shift to prevention.	6.9% (7)	9.8% (10)	18.6% (19)	29.4% (36)	35.3% (36)
We could do more homelessness prevention IF we were provided with dedicated funds.	6.9% (7)	4.0% (4)	7.9% (8)	13.9% (14)	67.3% (68)
We could do more homelessness prevention IF we had access to quality Training and Technical Assistance	5.8% (6)	6.7% (7)	13.5% (14)	26.9% (28)	47.1% (49)
I think my organization has funding for and interest in TTA on youth homelessness prevention interventions.	29.1% (30)	11.7% (12)	32.0% (33)	17.5% (18)	9.7% (10)

Youth Homelessness Prevention Interventions & the Commitment Curve

- I) Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)
- II) Family and Natural Supports (FNS)
- **III) Reconnect**
- IV) Duty to Assist (D2A)
- V) Upstream



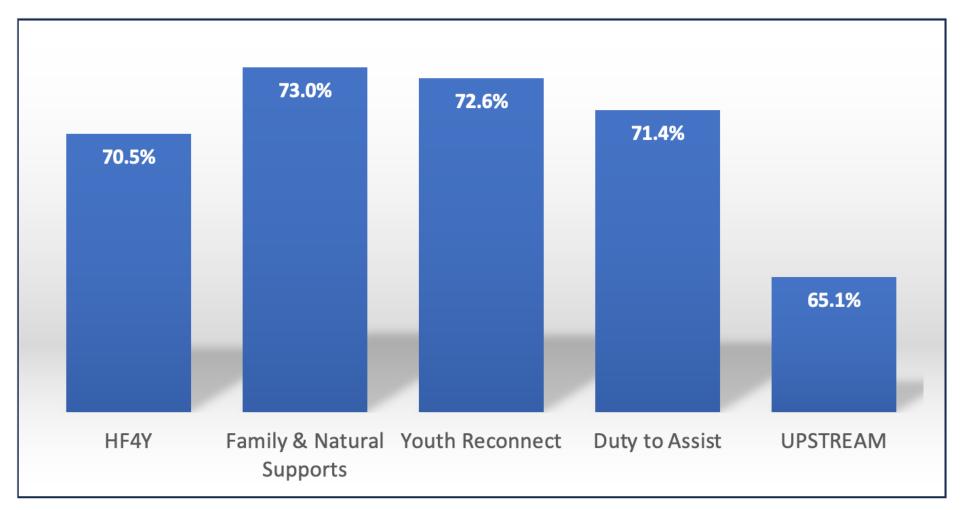
Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

## **I** Housing First for Youth

Full Incorporation	We have fully implemented HF4Y an it is now one of our core programs.	d		13.0%			Zone	of	
Experimenting	We are currently piloting and testing HF4Y Program.	a	7.3%				Intere 53.7% (N	st	
Planning	We are planning to implement HF4Y, but we need more support.	'		12.2%					
Interest/lack capacity	We are interested in HF4Y, but we lack the capacity to implement it.						3	0.1%	
Positive Perception	Implementing HF4Y would help achieve organizational goals.						3	0.1%	
Aware, lack interest	Clear understanding of HF4Y but there is not interest in implementing	it.		14.6	5%				
Awareness	We have heard about HF4Y but don' know much about it.	ť					26.0%		
Contact	We are not aware of this program.			1	L6.3%				
	N=147	0.0%	5.0%	10.0%	15.0%	20.0%	25.0%	30.0%	

### **Desire to Learn More**

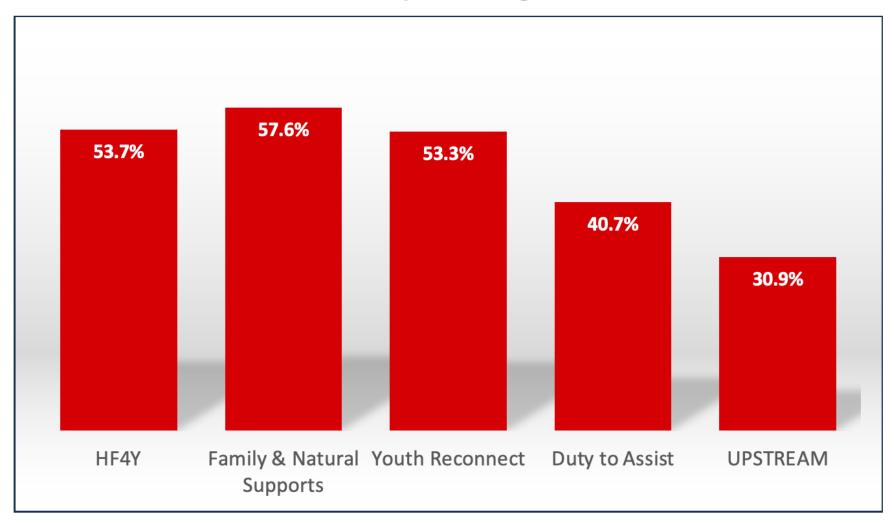
Percent of organizations indicating that they would like to find out more about the following interventions.



## In the Zone of Interest

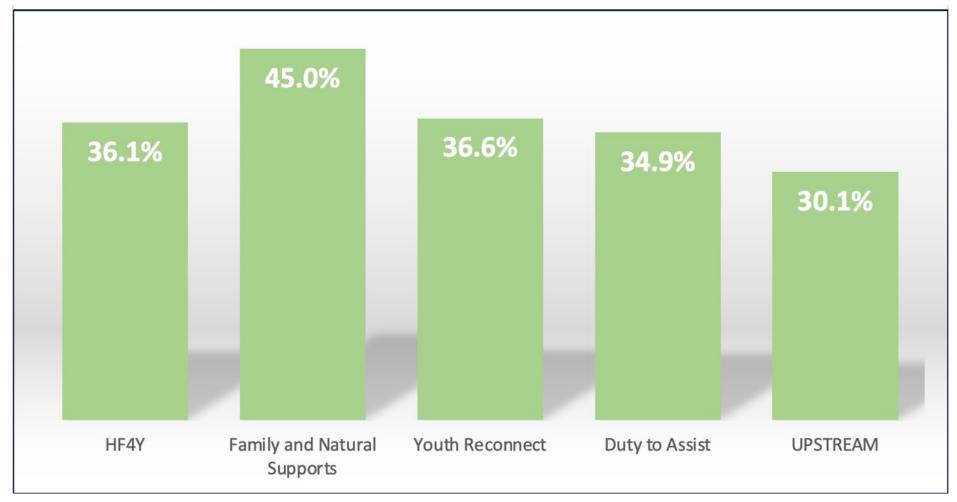
#### **Zone of Interest**

Percent of respondents who are positively inclined towards implementing the intervention



## **Interest in Training and Technical Assistance**

Percent of organizations interested in Training and Technical Assistance for the following interventions, but who are not sure where we access it.



# UN Geneva Charter Centre of Excellence

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION York University



