



MAKING THE SHIFT^{INC}

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:



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.



**The *problem*
we are trying
to Solve.**

Youth Homelessness

is a seemingly
intractable problem
in Canada



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

in

CANADA

BY THE NUMBERS

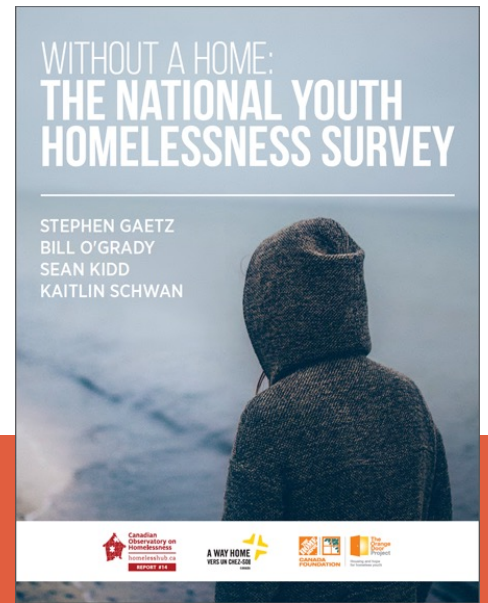
- **40,000** over the course of a year
- **7,000** on any given night

YOUNG PEOPLE

aged 16-24

**MAKE UP ABOUT 20%
OF THE HOMELESS POPULATION.**

DIVERSITY



29.5%

*identified as
LGBTQ2S*

30.6%

*identified as
Indigenous*

28.2%

*identified as
racialized*

16%

*identified as
Black*

10.1%

*identified as
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%

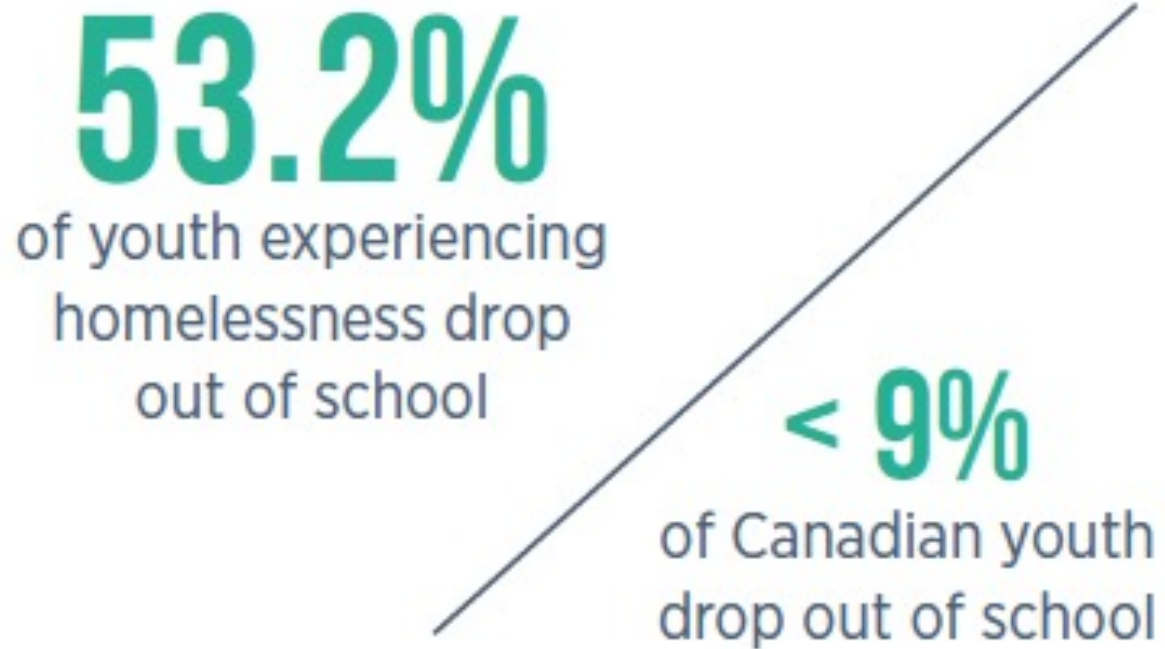
*indicated some kind of
involvement with child
protection services in the past*

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

42%

reported at least one suicide attempt

35.2%

reported at least one drug overdose requiring hospitalization

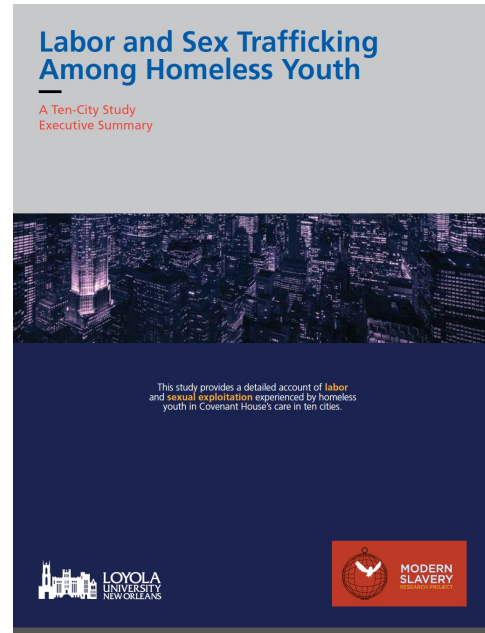
Criminal Victimization

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.



The

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:



Moncton	-	\$29,610
Montreal	-	\$56,406
Toronto	-	\$58,927
Winnipeg	-	\$45,565
Vancouver	-	\$53,144

The change we want to see ...



2018 **EVERYONE COUNTS HIGHLIGHTS**

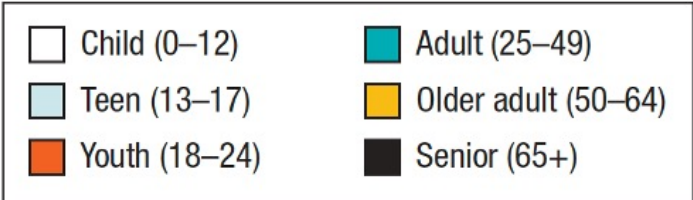
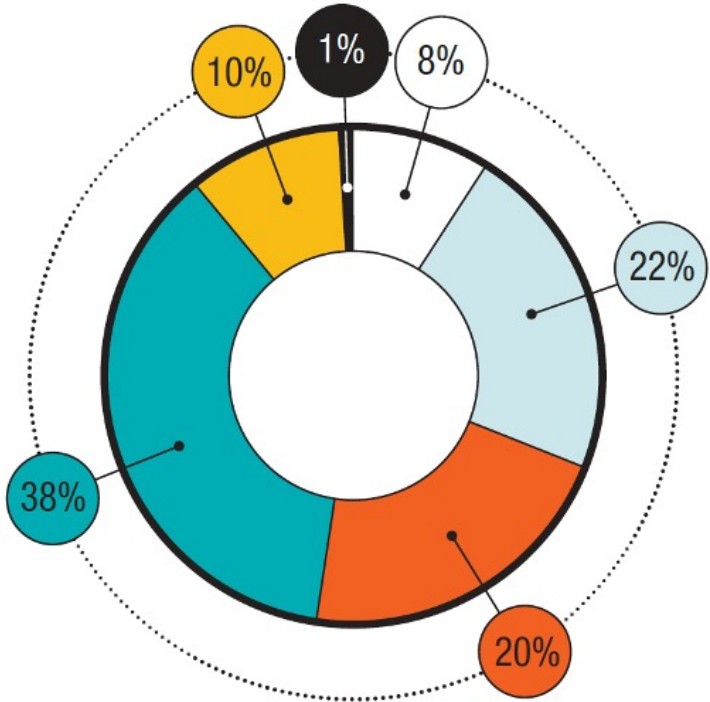
Preliminary Results from the
Second Nationally Coordinated Point-in-Time Count
of Homelessness in Canadian Communities

Employment and Social Development Canada / Emploi et Développement social Canada

Canada

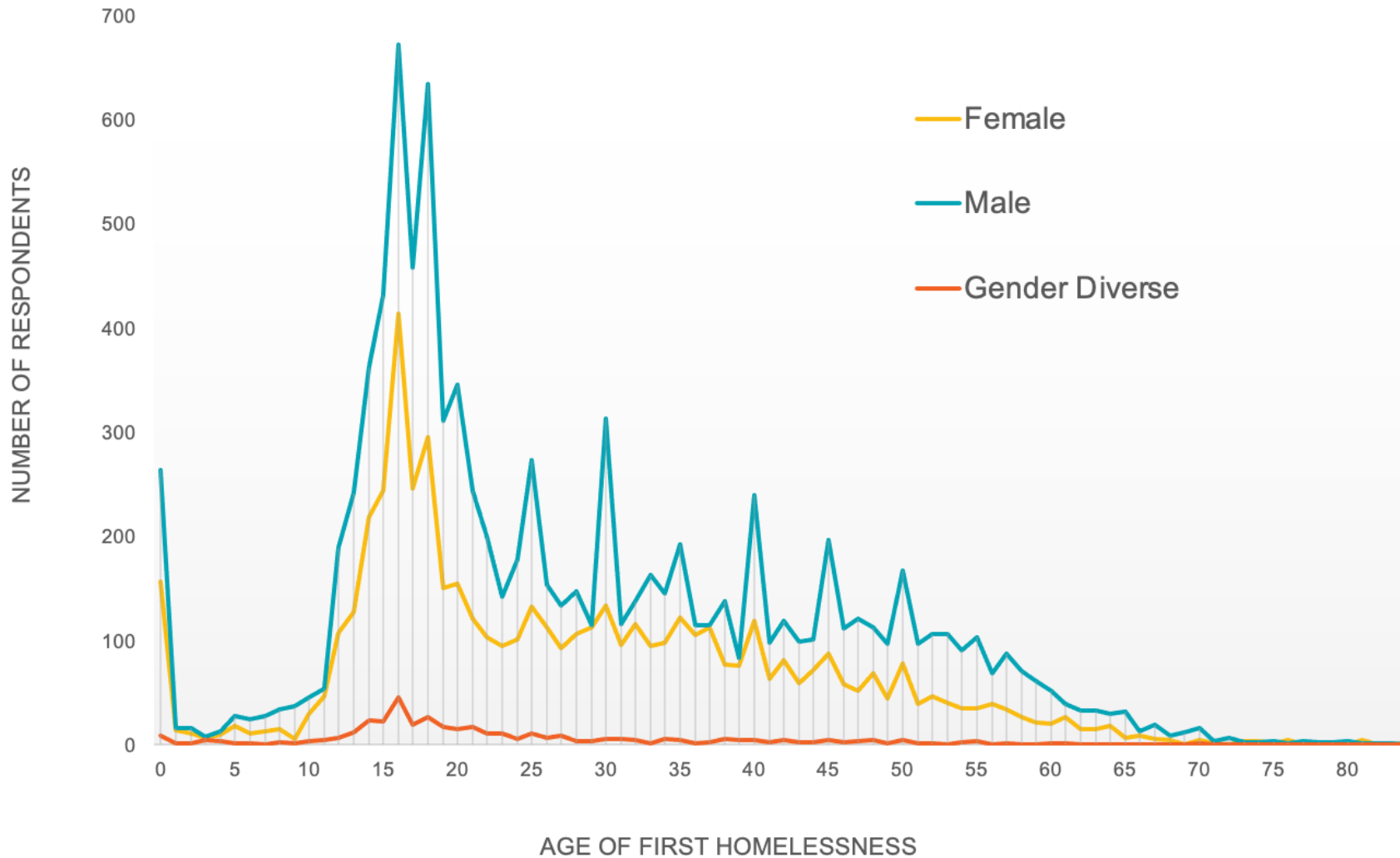
FIGURE 6 Age of First Homelessness Experience

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.



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

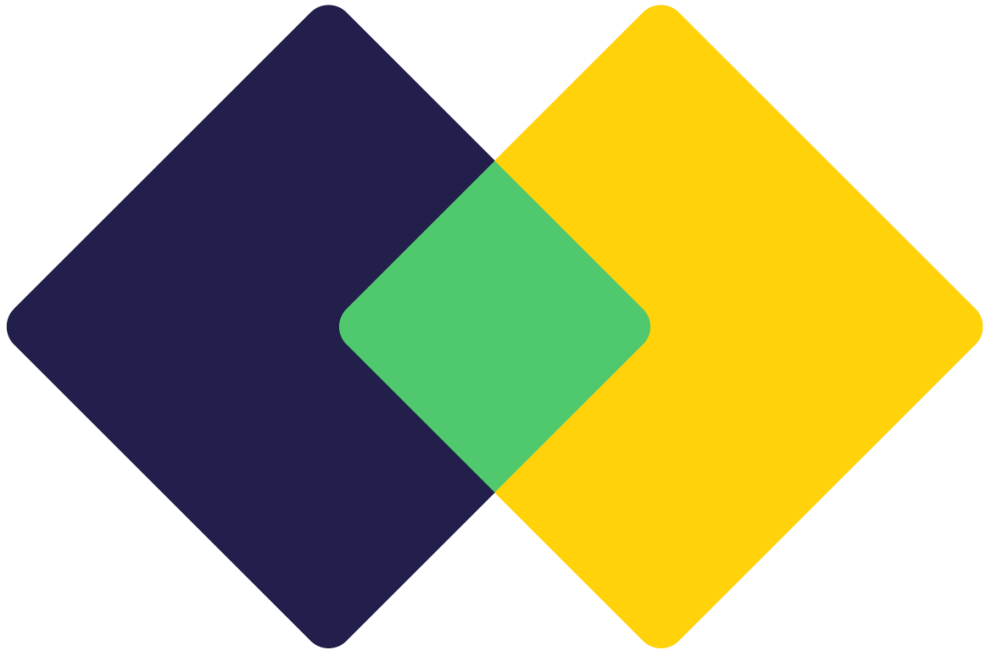
“Social Innovation” is defined as:

“...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



Attack of the
WICKED
PROBLEM
Horror Beyond Understanding!



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Youth
Homelessness
Social Innovation Lab



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Co-Leadership



canadian
observatory on
homelessness

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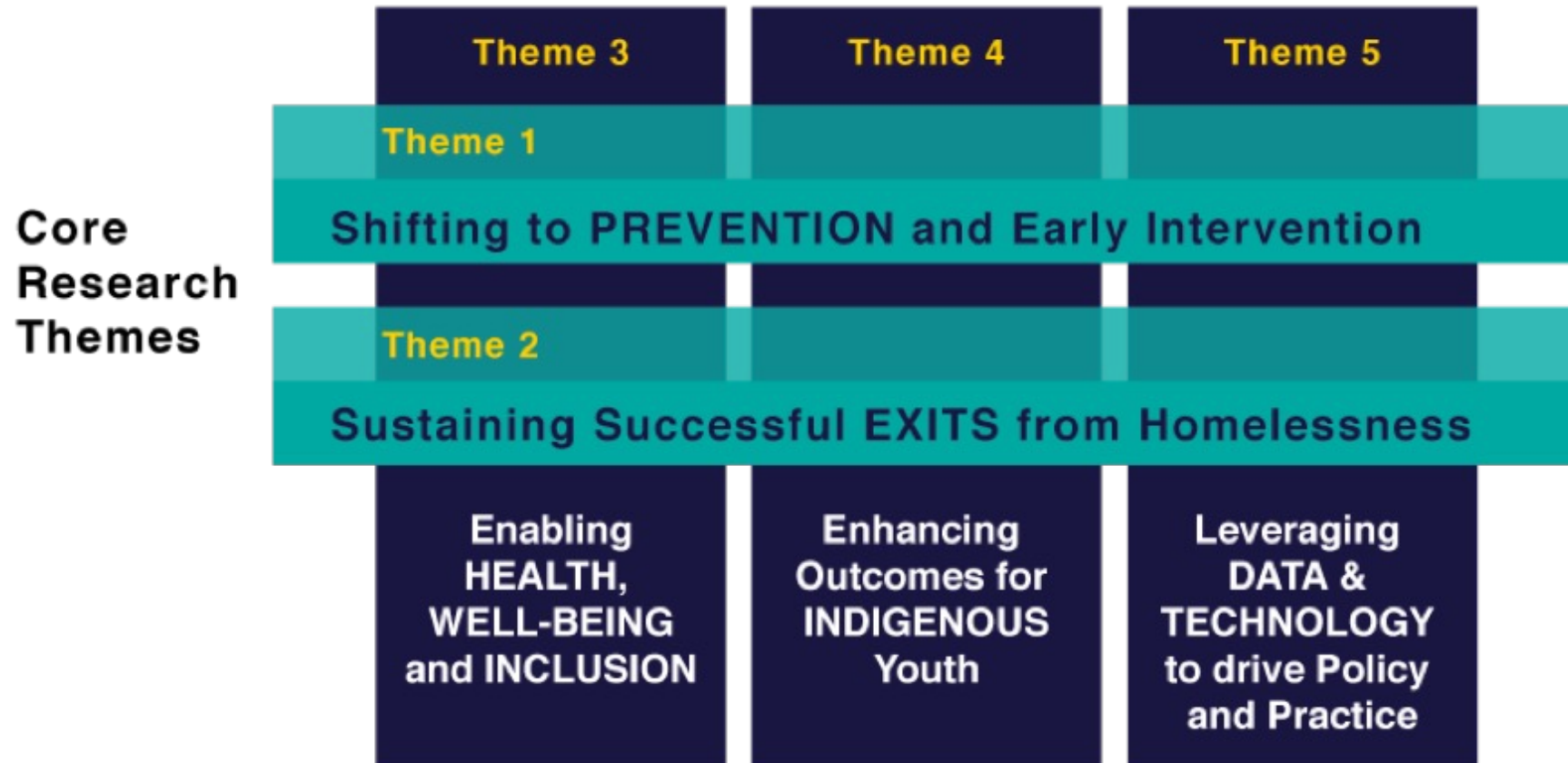


A WAY HOME
VERS UN CHEZ-SOI
CANADA

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.

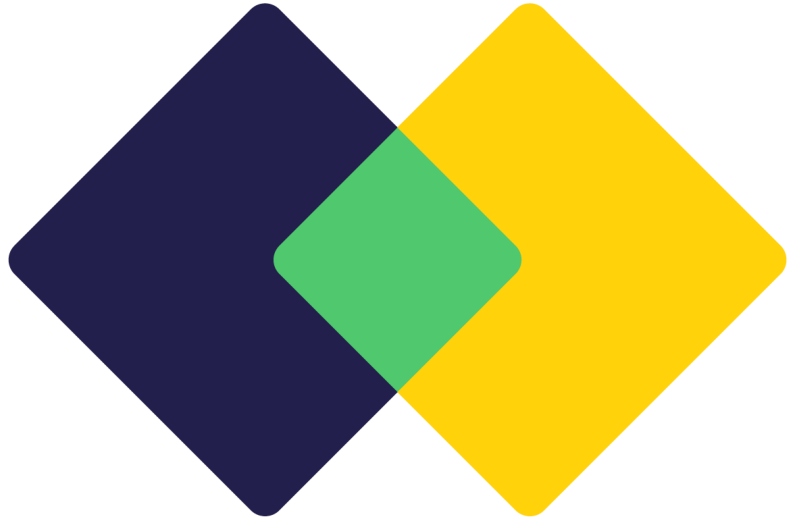
MtS Research Program

Research Theme Areas



Crosscutting Research Themes

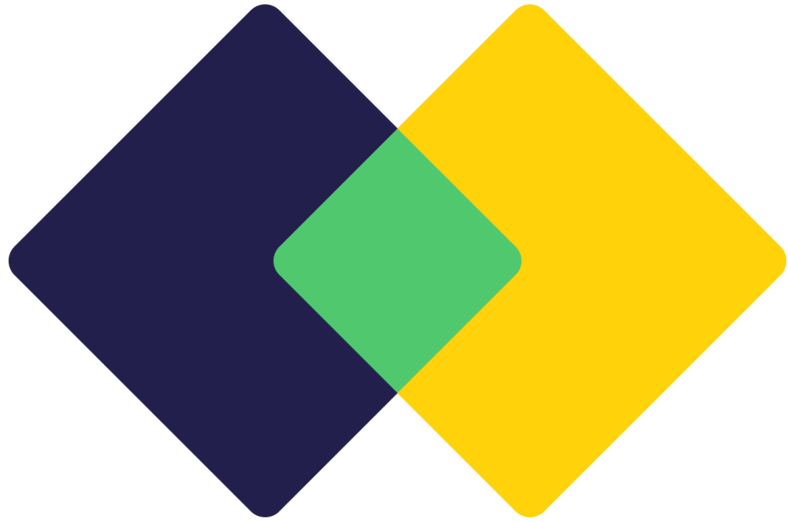




MAKING
THE SHIFT
Funded Research

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





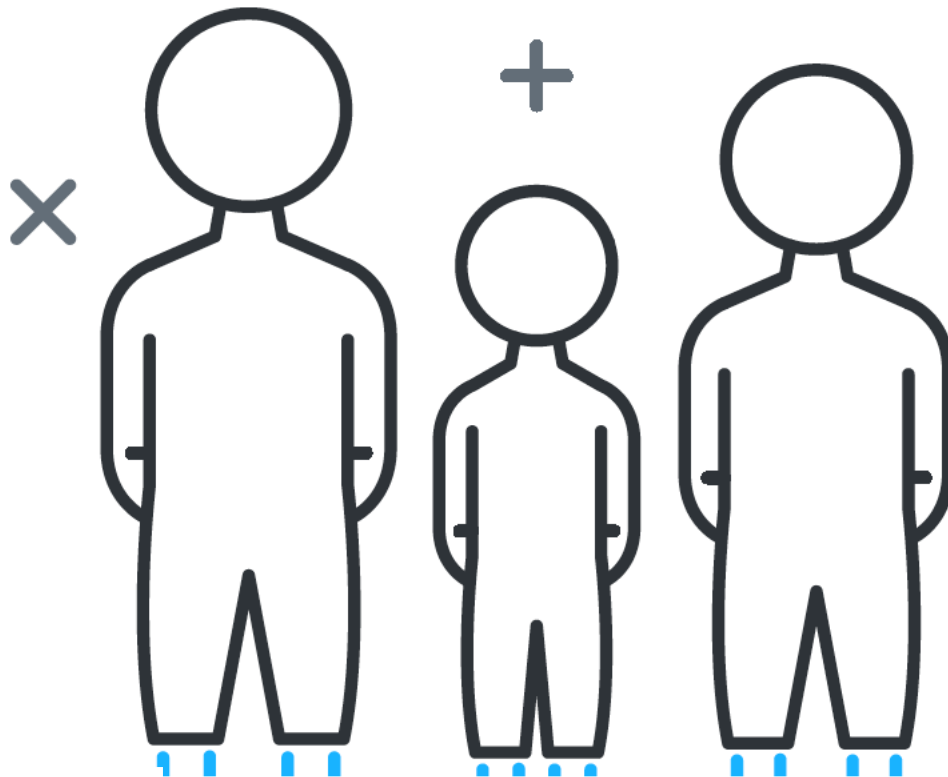
MAKING
THE SHIFT
**Demonstration
Projects**

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

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:

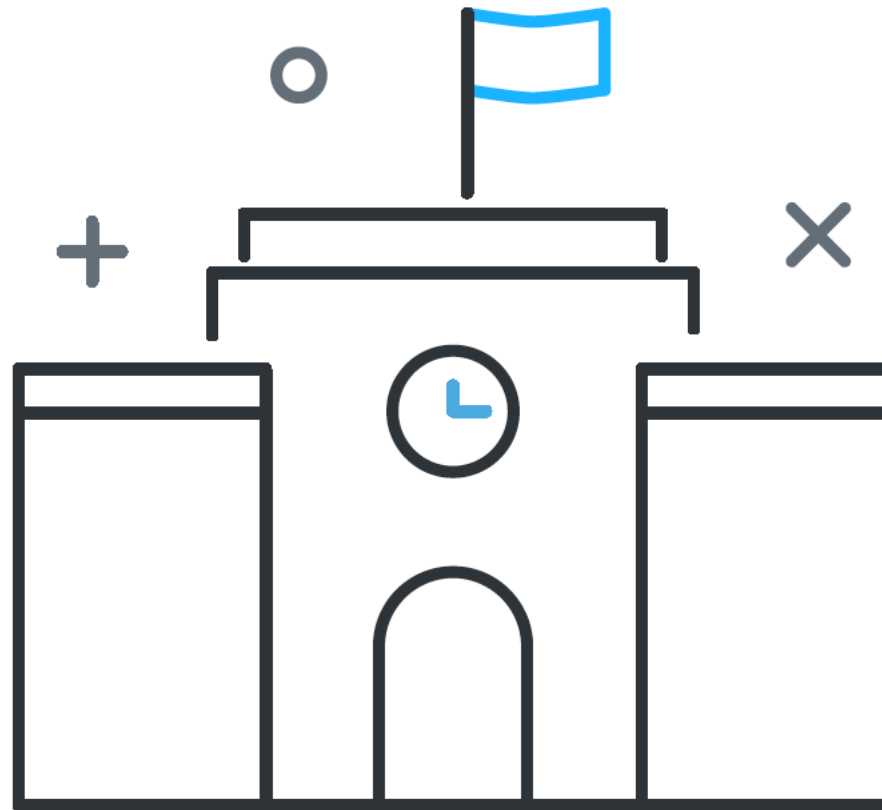
- 77% said they would like to improve contact and relationships with their family.
- Young people who reported positive relationships with friends were much more likely to report high levels of self-esteem. Likewise, those who are in regular contact with family members (more than once a month) and who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

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?

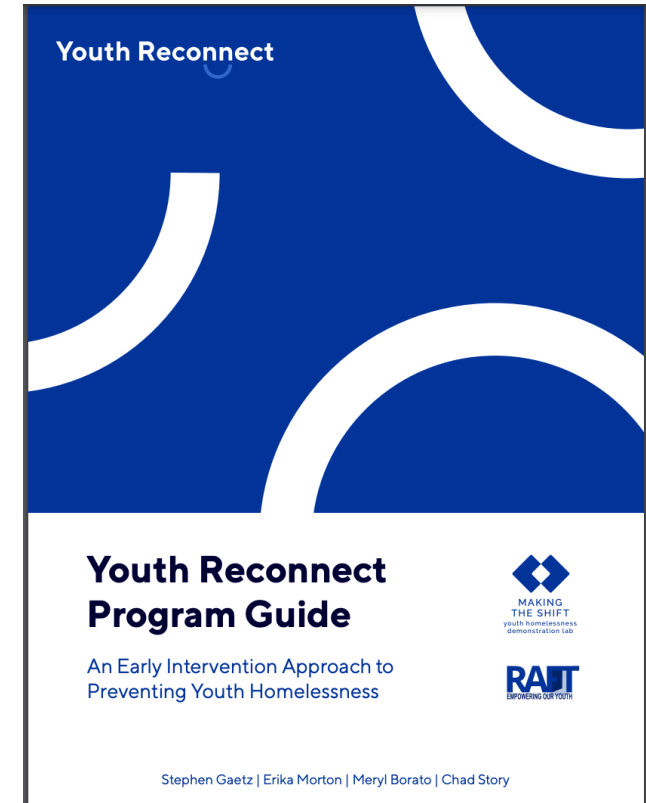


2

Youth Reconnect

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.



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

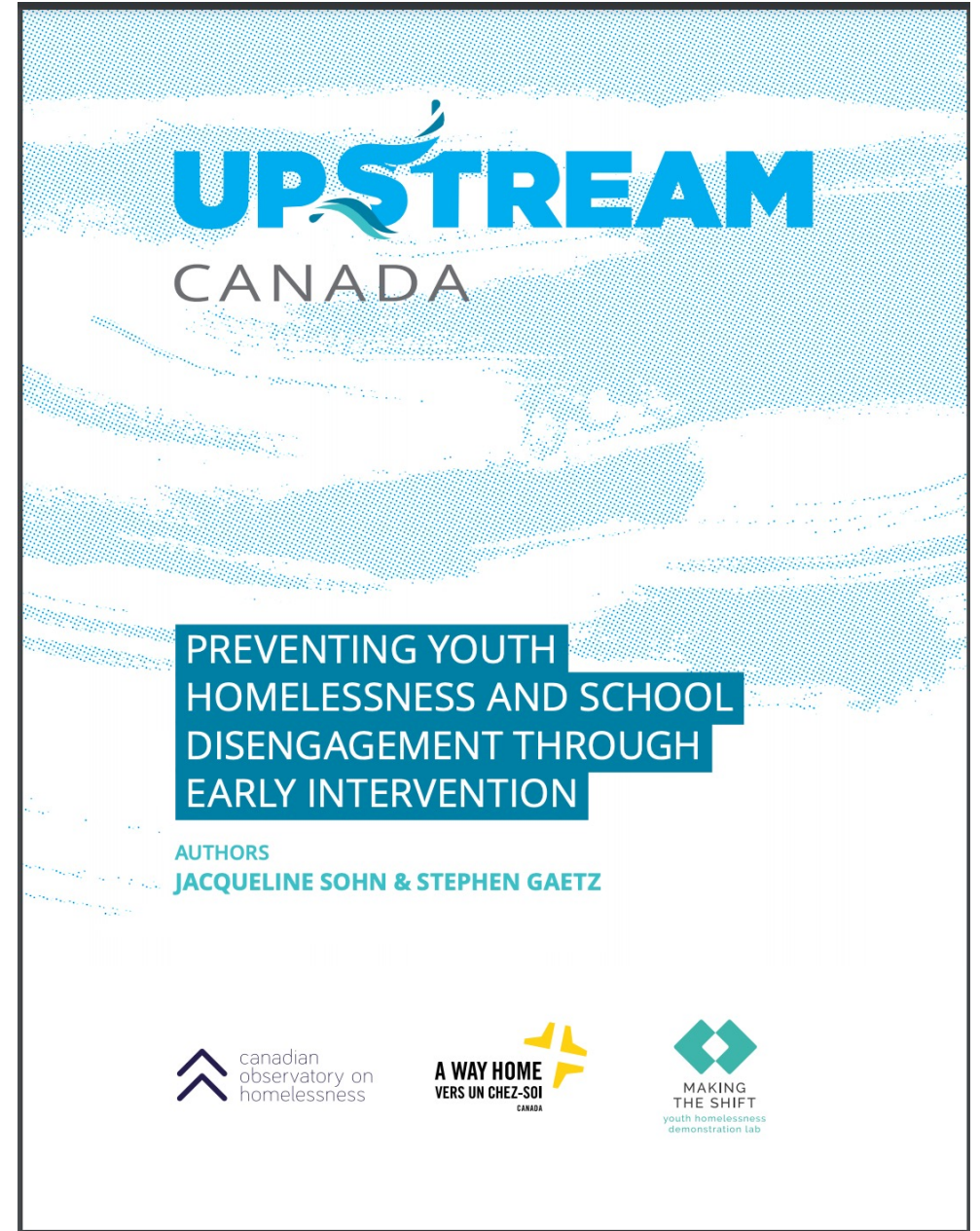
4 Enhance school engagement

“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

3

**THE
UPSTREAM
PROJECT
CANADA**



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 ...



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.

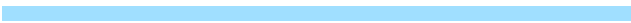
Tier 2.

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

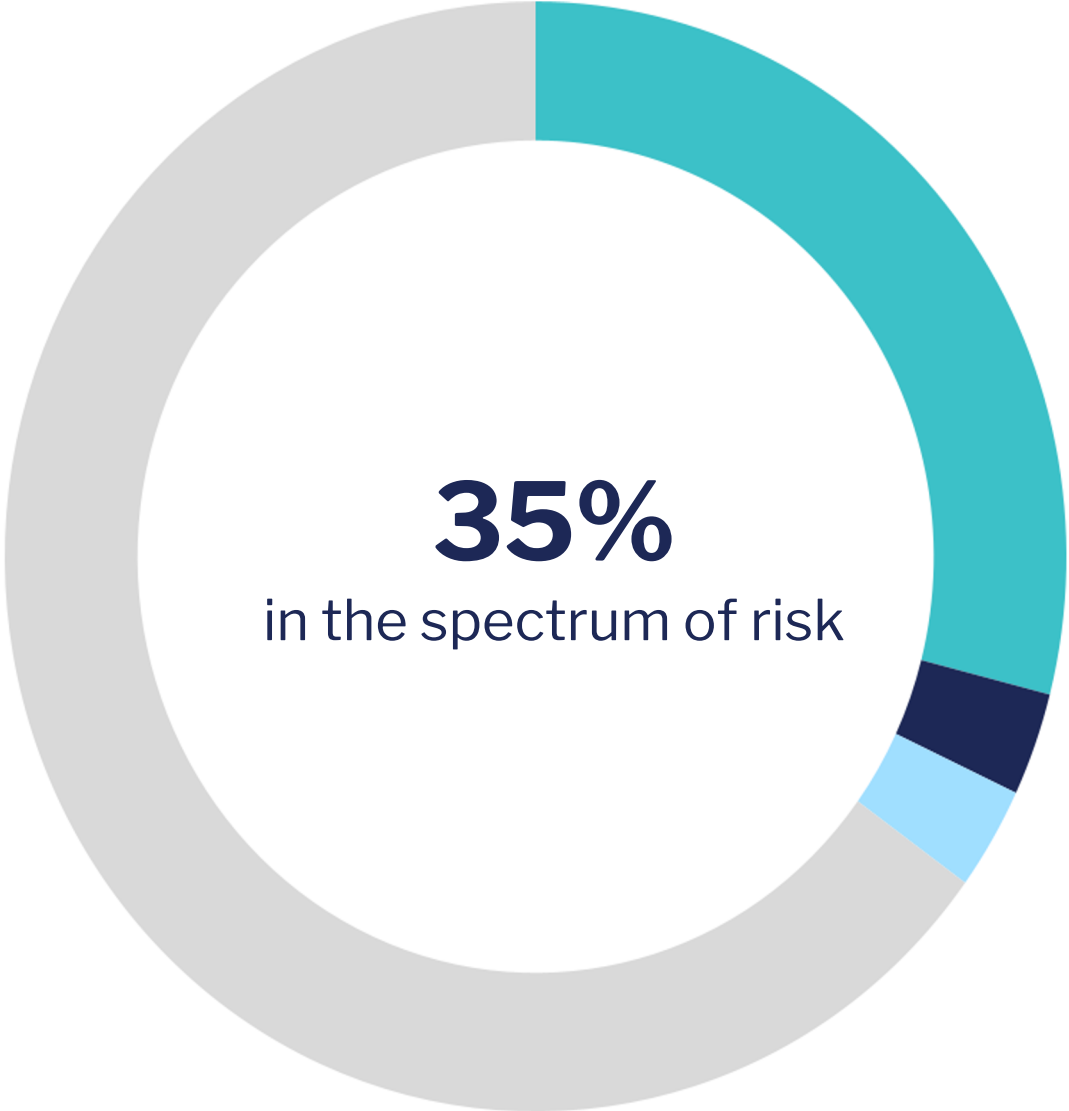
Tier 3.

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

Results: Screening



KELOWNA



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

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



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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

Housing First 4 Youth

1

**Currently
homeless
youth**

2

**Early
Intervention:
youth leaving
care**

3

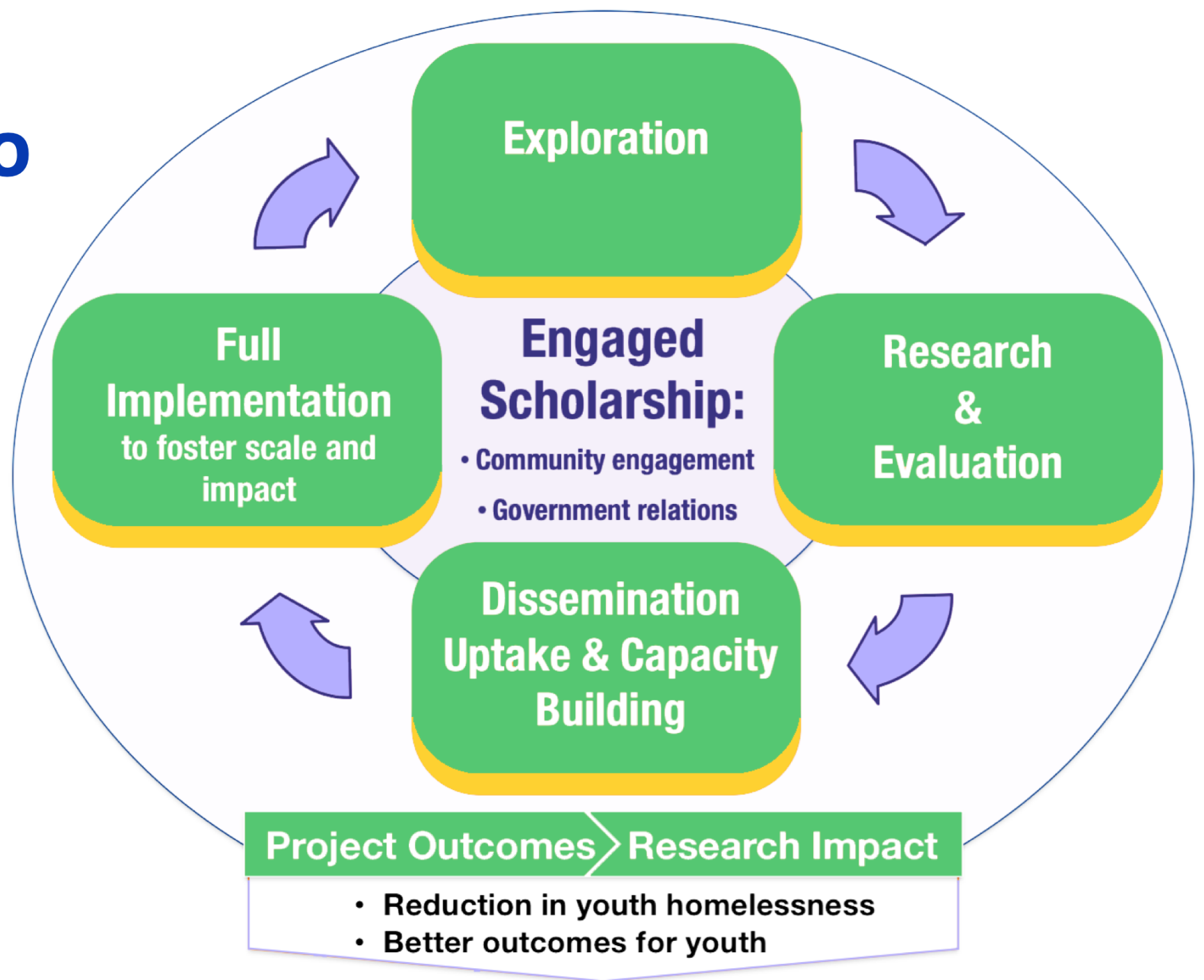
**ENDAAYAANG
Supporting
Indigenous youth**



**Supporting
the shift to**

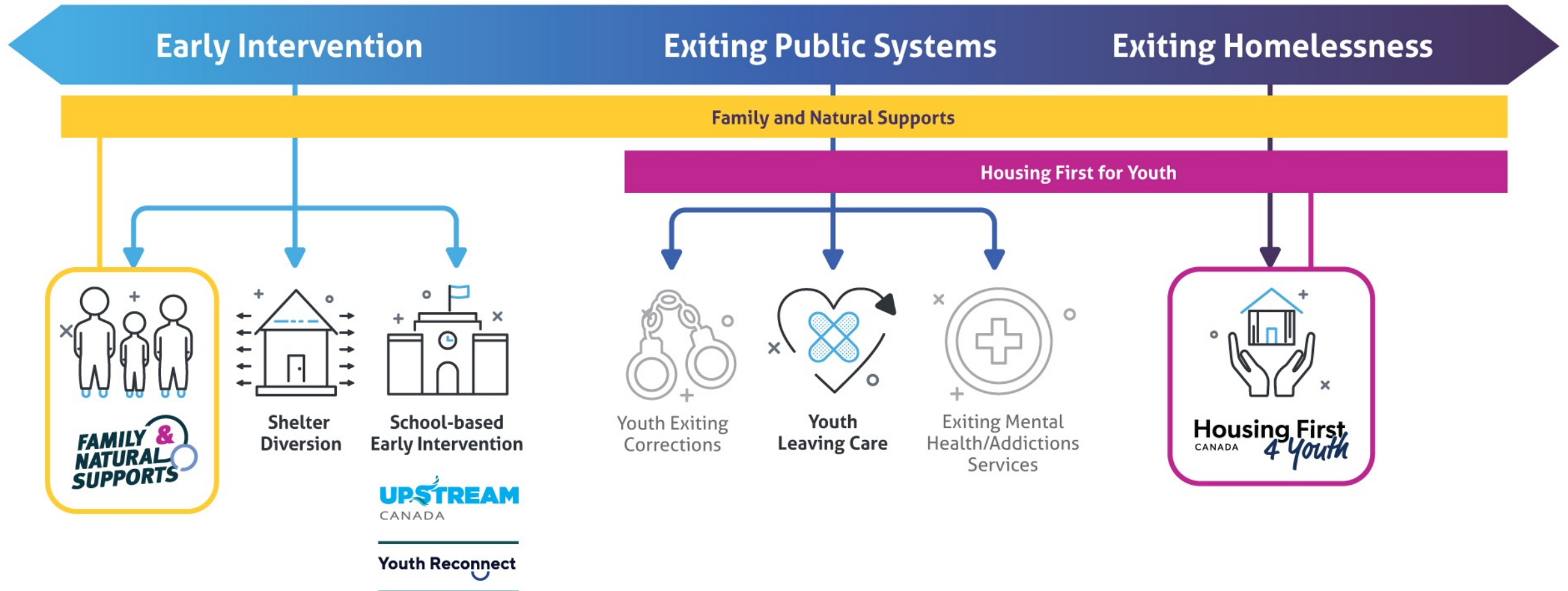
PREVENTION

Research to *IMPACT* Cycle



Preventing Youth Homelessness

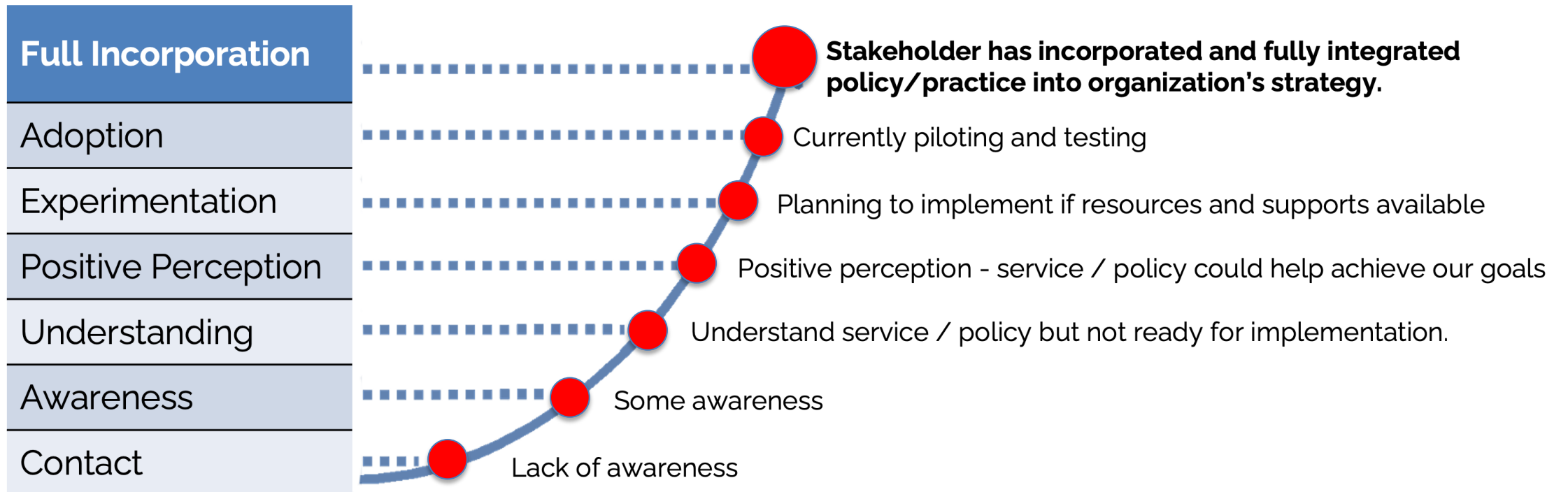
What you can do in *your* community



Our task:

Influencing a move up the Commitment Curve

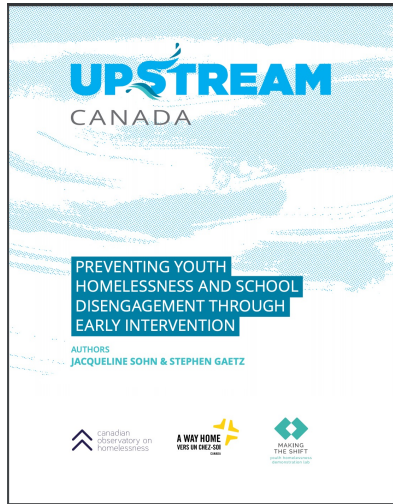
- Reflects change that may happen among or within organizations
- The commitment curve is a way of assessing the commitment of stakeholders to changes in policy and practice.



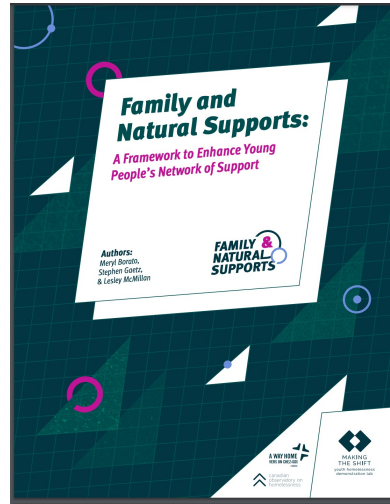


how
do we
get there?

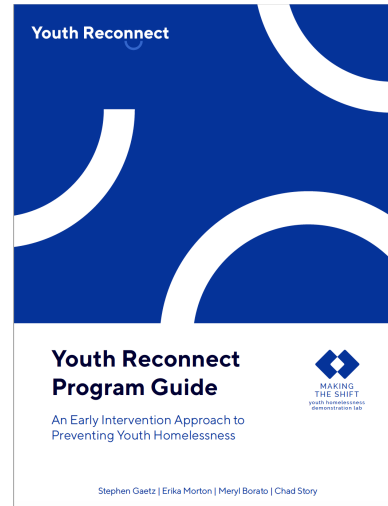
Public facing resources



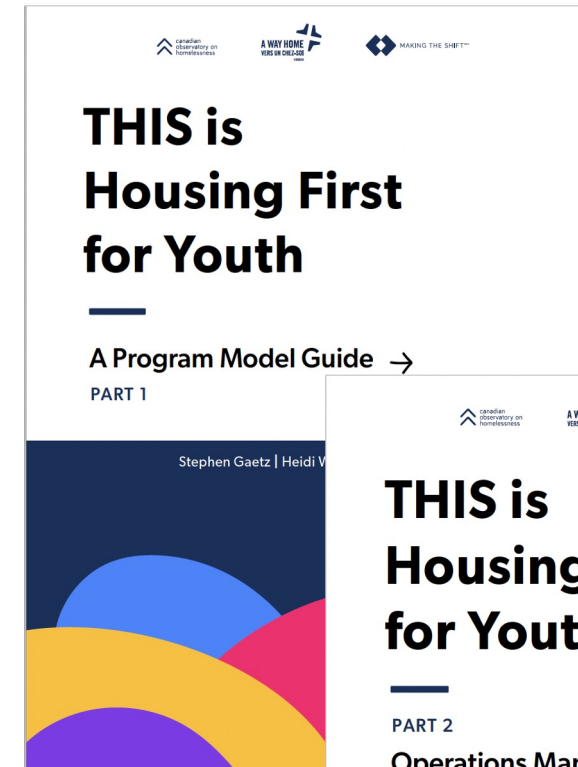
UPSTREAM



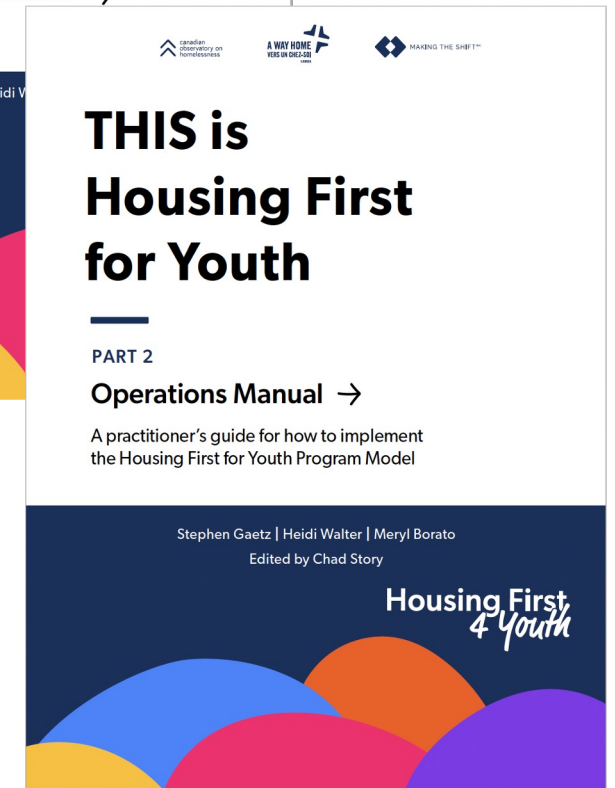
**Family and
Natural
Supports**



**Youth
Reconnect**



**HF4Y
Program Model
Guide +
Operations
Manual**



Communications Strategy

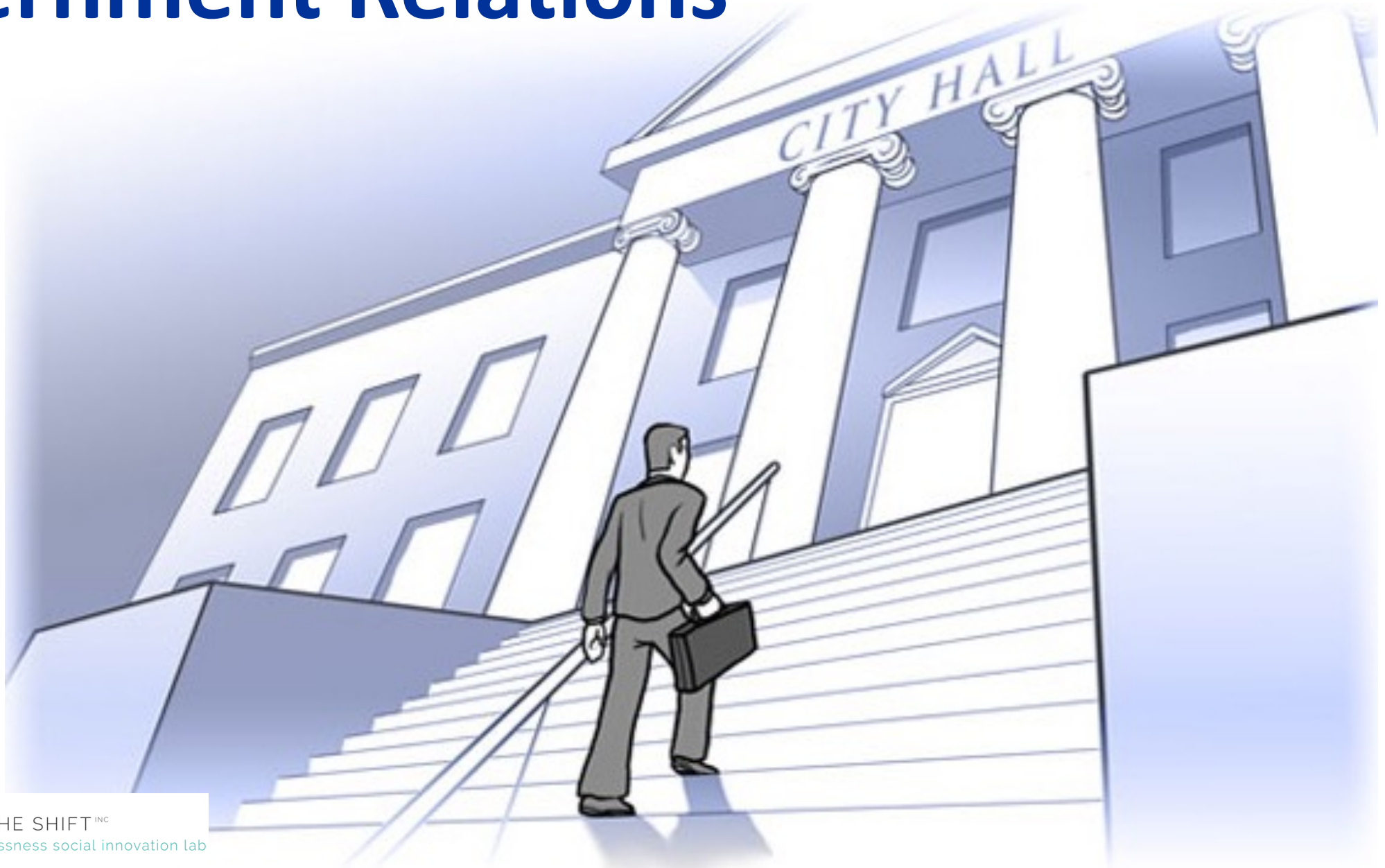


Productive Interactions



- 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



25 - 40%
of youth experiencing homelessness self-identified as LGBTQ

INFOGRAPHIC OF THE WEEK:
Coming of Age
by Tanya Gulliver





Training and Technical Assistance

Shifting Practices

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

Get support:

- 1 Training & Technical Assistance offerings:
 - Housing First for Youth
 - Family & Natural Supports
 - Program Implementation
 - Systems Planning
- 2 Community of Practice calls
- 3 **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

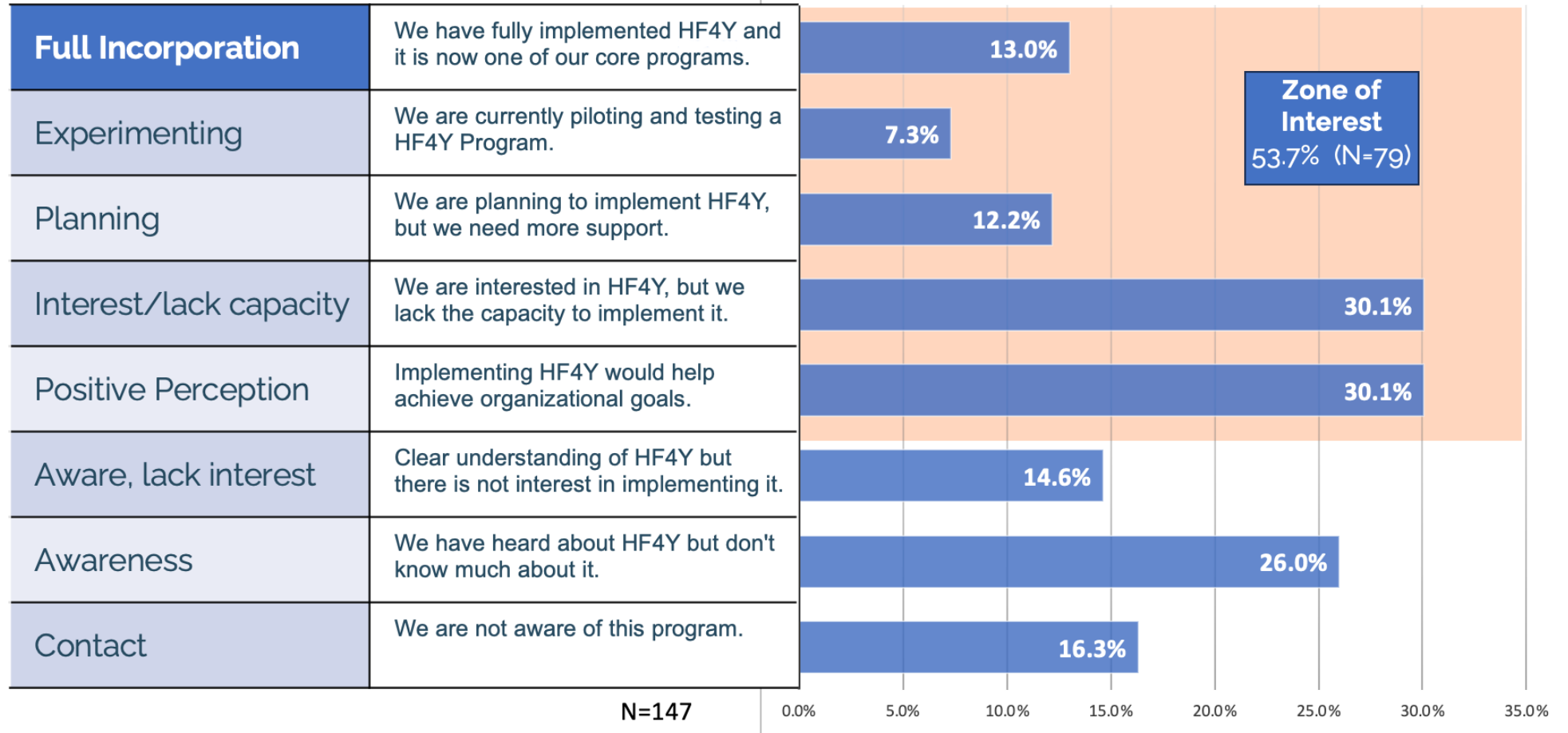
- I) **Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)**
- II) **Family and Natural Supports (FNS)**
- III) **Reconnect**
- IV) **Duty to Assist (D2A)**
- V) **Upstream**



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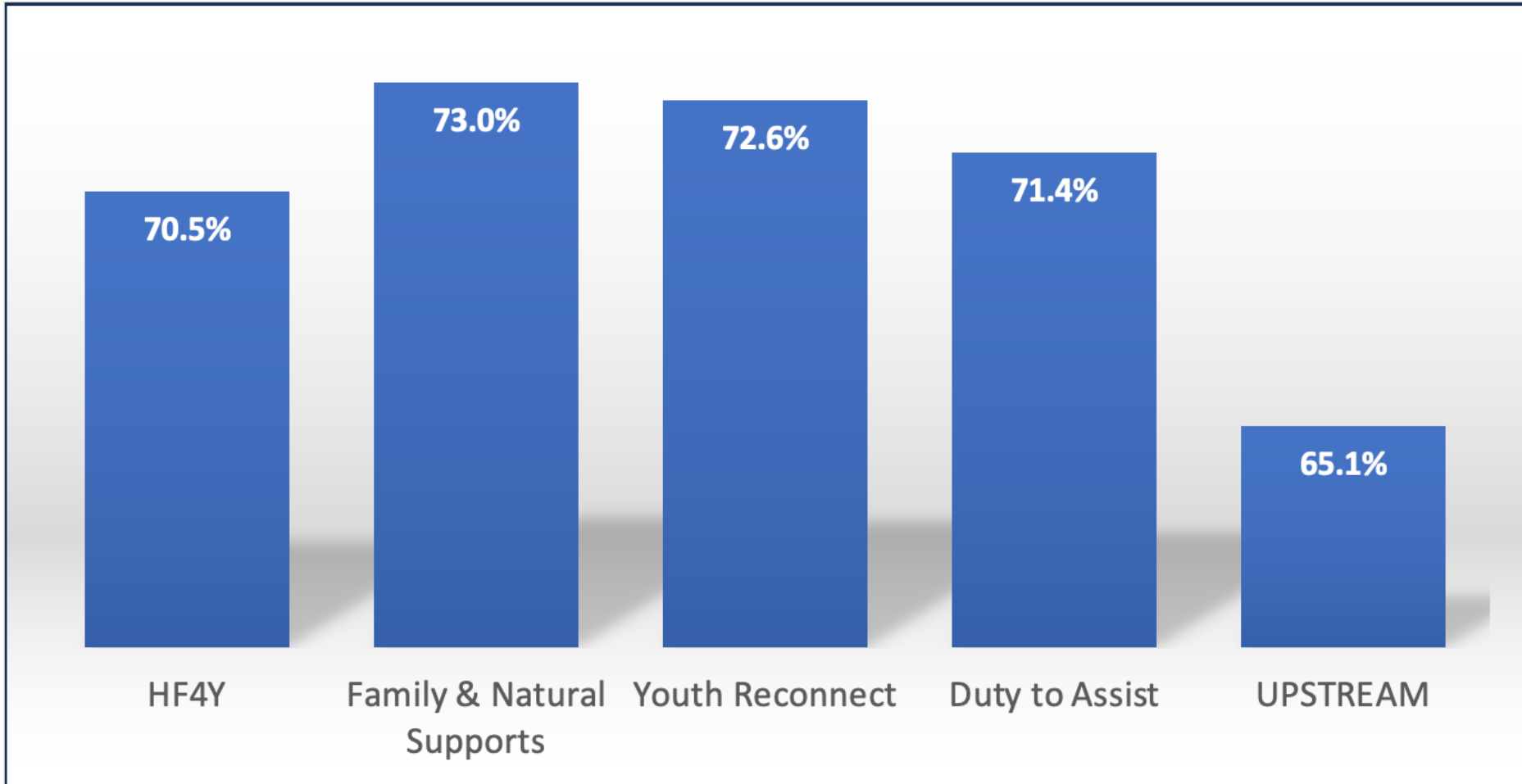
Youth
Homelessness
Social Innovation Lab

I Housing First for Youth



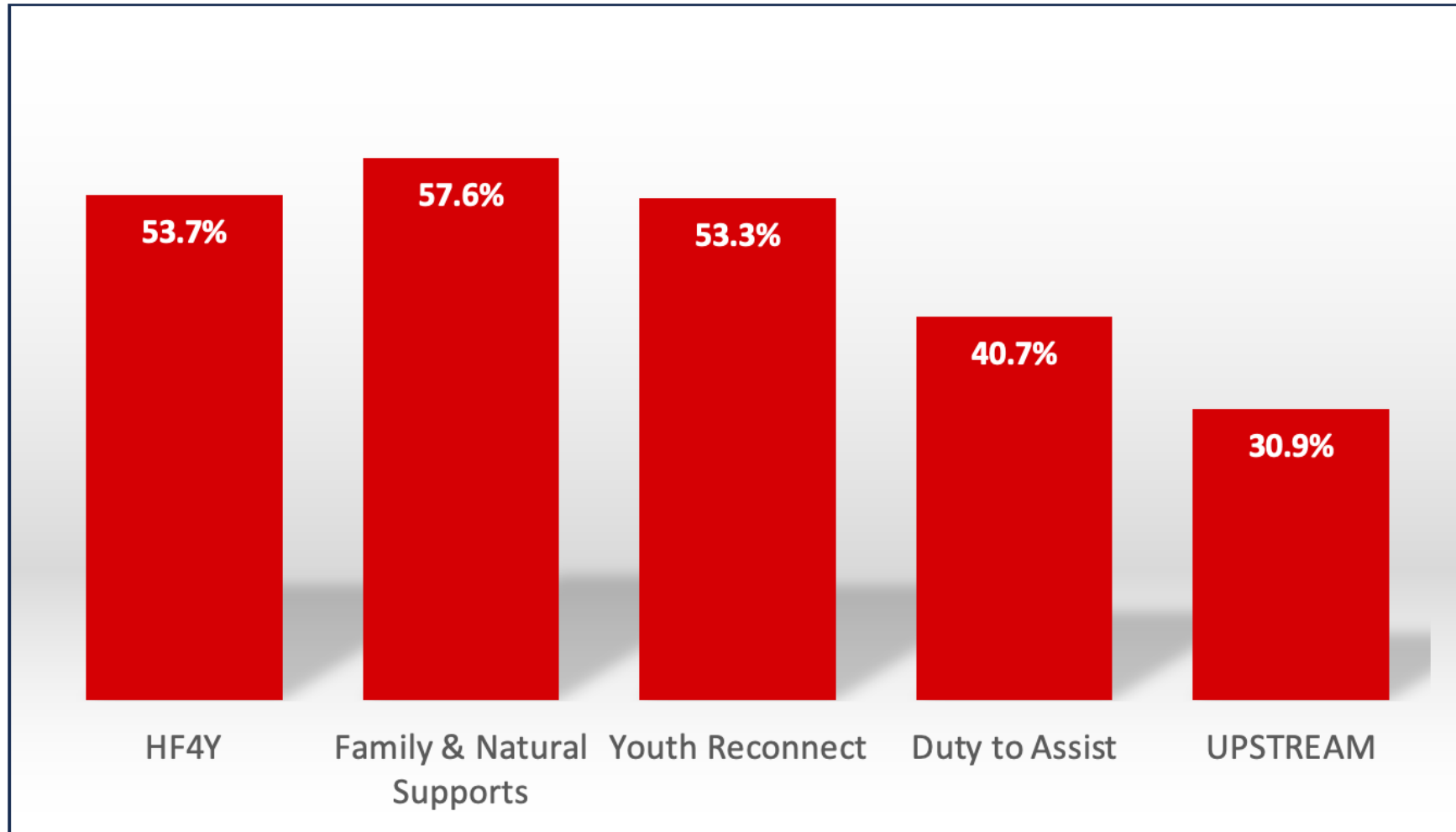
Desire to Learn More

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



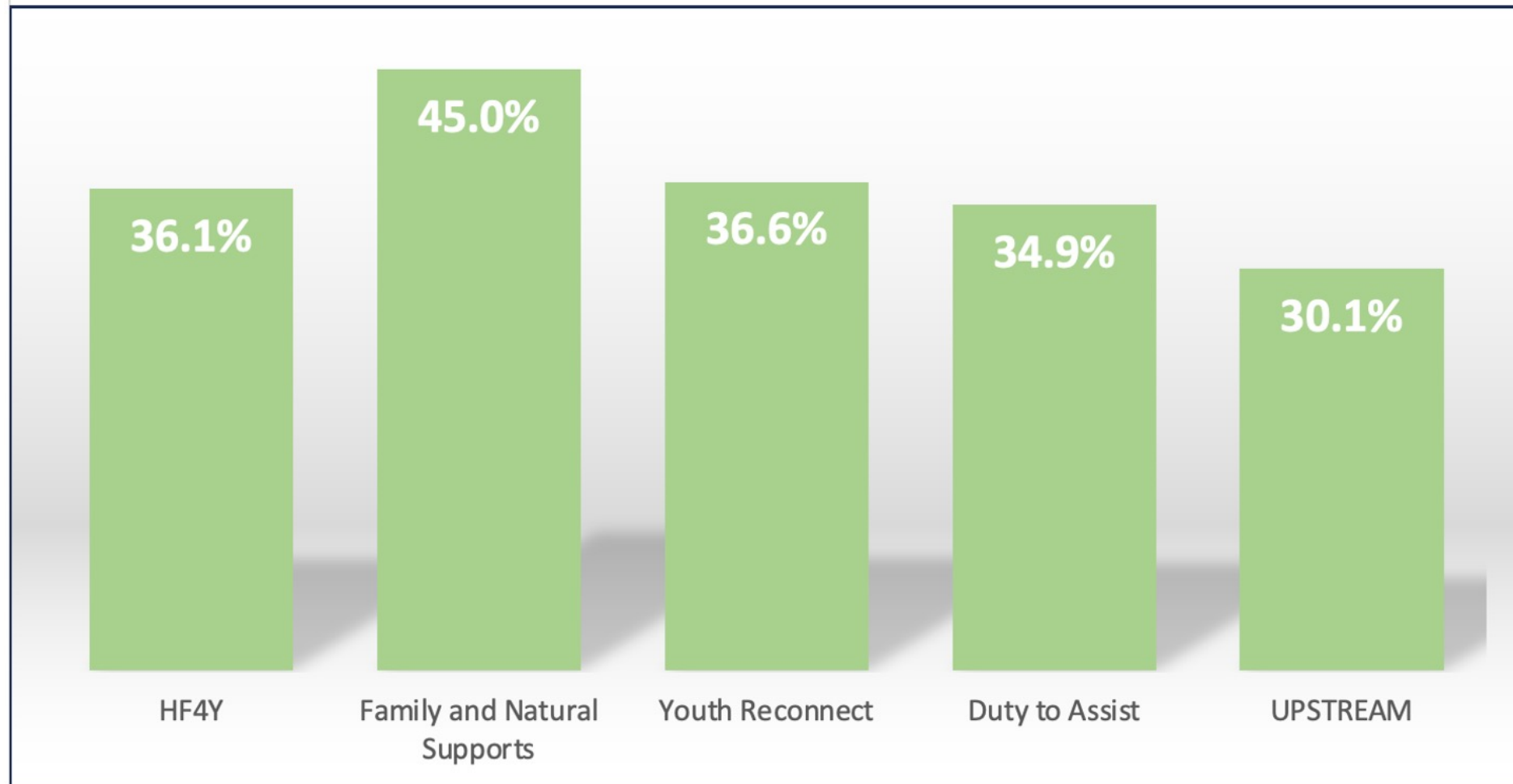
In the Zone of Interest

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



UNECE

**END YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS!**

IF YOU WANT TO

**END
YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS!**

IF YOU WANT TO

BENEDICT

FRESH DRINKS

**ON
TIMES
CULTURE**

**DRINK
Coca-Cola**

CHILDOS

ANY
QUESTIONS?

