

Innovative Supports in Emergency Youth Shelter



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Stoney Nakoda Nation
Chiniki, Bearspaw, Goodstoney

Moh'kinstsis (Blackfoot word for Calgary)

Tsuu T'ina Nation

Siksika Nation

Stoney Nakoda Nation
Eden Valley

Piikani Nation

Kainai Nation

TREATY 7

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



AVENUE 15 YOUTH SHELTER

- Opened in 1987
- 18 Beds (25 licensed)
- 12–17-year-olds

New shelter service design components

- Diversion/FNS Workers
- Natural Supports Approach
- Harm Reduction
- No Discharge Policy & LOS
- Provincial Shelter Framework



Serena's Journey Age 15





Avenue 15 Youth Shelter – 2022/23 Data

- 120 youth served and 182 FNS served
- 140 instances of diversion
- 31% of all shelter stays had natural supports outside of Calgary
- 32% of youth had spent the previous night with a natural support (family or friend) and 37% of youth were discharged to a natural support
- 35% served with Indigenous





Family & Natural Supports Approach

- Implemented in 2018 with support from external Organizational Consultants and internal Change Lead
 - Challenges: harm reduction approach, professional role of staff as youth advocates
- Developed a Toolkit for FNS implementation
- 139 youth and family members supported by FNS work in 2022/23
- 140 diversions by phone

‘Previously we only saw Natural Supports as a barrier, but under this approach I see that we created that barrier. We now invest just as much into a youth’s family as we do into them and now there are more options for youth to exit the shelter.’
~ shelter staff, 2018



Staffing Model: Diversion/FNS Worker

- 2022-23: 140 instances of youth being diverted
- Community-based role to meet youth and families in community
- Manages all phone calls/inquiries from parents and youth
- Uses a diversion script for phone calls
- Determines which youth are intaked into the shelter
- Responsible for intakes with new youth staying at shelter



No Discharge Policy & Length of Stay

For CS Youth	24 days
For Non-CS Youth	10 days

One Time Stays	70%
2 Stays	20%
3 Stays	8%
4+ stays	2%



Harm Reduction & Amnesty Lockers



- Naloxone Distribution site
- New RI Categories:
 - Overdose requiring hospitalization
 - Overdose not requiring hospitalization
 - Overdose of community member
- 3 overdoses, 0 deaths

“I learned how to stay safer with drugs and how to Narcan people.”

~youth at Ave

Shelter Framework Principles and Practices



1.

PREVENTION FOCUS

2.

FAMILY & NATURAL SUPPORT
INVOLVEMENT

3.

RECOVERY-ORIENTED &
BARRIER REDUCTION

4.

HONORING INDIGENOUS
EXPERIENCE

5.

EMOTIONAL & PHYSICAL
SAFETY

6.

HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH
PHILOSOPHY

7.

TRAUMA-INFORMED
PRACTICE

8.

YOUTH VOICE &
STRENGTHS-BASED

9.

CROSS SYSTEM
COLLABORATION &
COORDINATION

Shelter Framework Service Design



1.

BEFORE & DURING ACCESSING SHELTER

- Community Outreach
- Family Support and Diversion
- Shelter Intake

2.

FAMILY & NATURAL SUPPORT INVOLVEMENT

- Immediate Needs Provision
- Daytime Services
- Case Management & Warm Connection to support and services
- Family Mediation & Support Building

3.

EXITING & AFTER DISCHARGE

- Discharge
- Post Care Outreach Services for youth and families

Questions?

Thank you!

