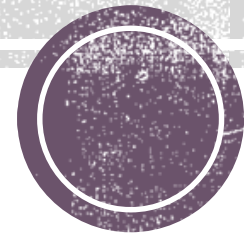# Including the voices of youth: homelessness and housing instability

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Acknowledgements

Overview

- Background

- Research questions

- Key findings

- Youth Homelessness Gathering – Building a community action plan to end youth homelessness in Thompson

- Where next?

Background

2013 grant from MRA

2015 grant from UAKN

Threes phases:

- Ethics; initial meetings; Youth and Service Provider survesy; Community Café Consultation on youth homelessness; Inventory of community services, programs and resources for youth; Hip Hop Event.
- Youth Count
- Community Action Plan on Youth Homelessness; Knowledge mobilization

Research represents a first step in beginning to answer two questions about youth homelessness in Thompson:

- What are the pathways and the causes of youth homelessness?
- From the viewpoint of youth, what changes are needed to support youth and their families?

Background

Phase I – relationship building	• Community Café, focus groups and Mapping
Phase II – Youth Count	• Conducted May 11-19, 2016
Phase III – in progress	• Development of collaborative community action plan for youth who are homeless or experiencing housing instability in Thompson and surrounding communities – Youth Homelessness Gathering April 10, 2017

Phase II - Youth Count key findings: Demographics

- 69 female, male, transgender, and LGBTQ youth

- More females (57%) than males (38%) who identified that they were experiencing homelessness or housing instability

- Average age was 22.3 years

- 85% identified as Indigenous

Key findings – Top main causes of homelessness:

- Dysfunctional family
- Lack of housing
- Involvement in criminal justice system
- Poverty
- Parental addictions
- Ageing out of care

Other key findings from phase II

- 45% of youth in the study came from outer areas

- 29% had experienced 3 or more episodes of homelessness

"No place to go" - picture take by a youth participant

Experience with child welfare system

Nearly half, **46%** of participants were involved with the foster care system in which **56%** of them were female youth and **81%** of them were 24 years old or younger.

Criminal Justice system

- More than half, **52%** of participants had been involved at some time with the law. Those youth 24 and younger represented 67% of the youth involved in criminal justice.

- **78%** of youth involved with the criminal justice system were not attending school.

- **30%** of youth were involved both with the foster care and criminal justice systems.
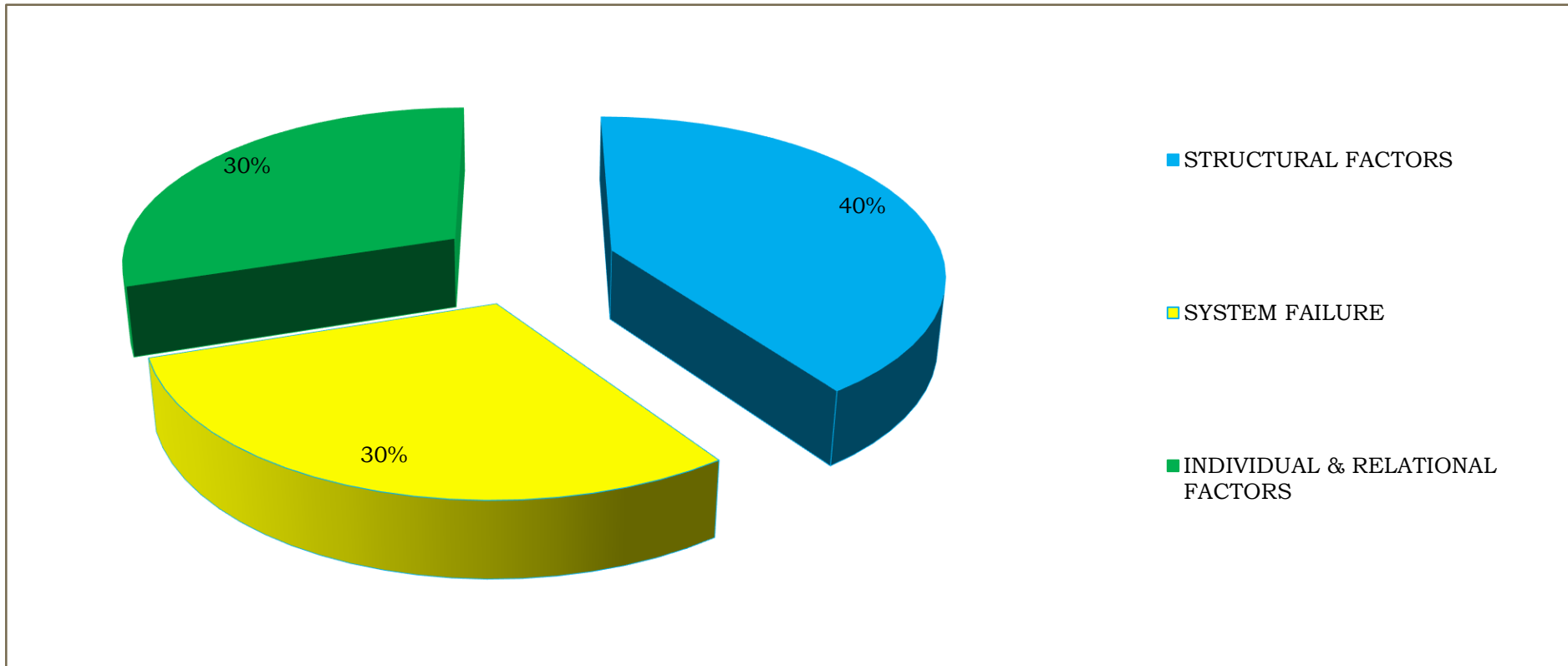
FACTORS - CAUSES - PATHWAYS TO YOUTH BECOMING HOMELESS

STRUCTURAL	SYSTEM FAILURE	INDIVIDUAL & RELATIONAL
Lack of housing **(32)(12.6%)**	Involvement with the criminal justice system **(26) (10.3%)**	Dysfunctional family life **(39) (15.4%)**
Poverty **(26)(10.3%)**	Aging out of care **(24)(9.5%)**	Parental addictions (25)(9.9%)
Intergenerational trauma **(13)(5.1%)**	Lack of activities for youth **(18)(7.1%)**	Mental health issues **(11)(4.3%)**
Parents are homeless **(12)(4.7%)**	Physical health **(7)(2.8%)**	Alcoholism **(1)(0.4%)**
Racism **(10)(4.0%)**		
Sexual identity **(5)(2.0%)**		
High rent **(3)(1.2%)**		
Co-signer issues **(1)(0.4%)**		

FACTORS - CAUSES - PATHWAYS TO YOUTH BECOMING HOMELESS

- ■ STRUCTURAL FACTORS
- ■ SYSTEM FAILURE
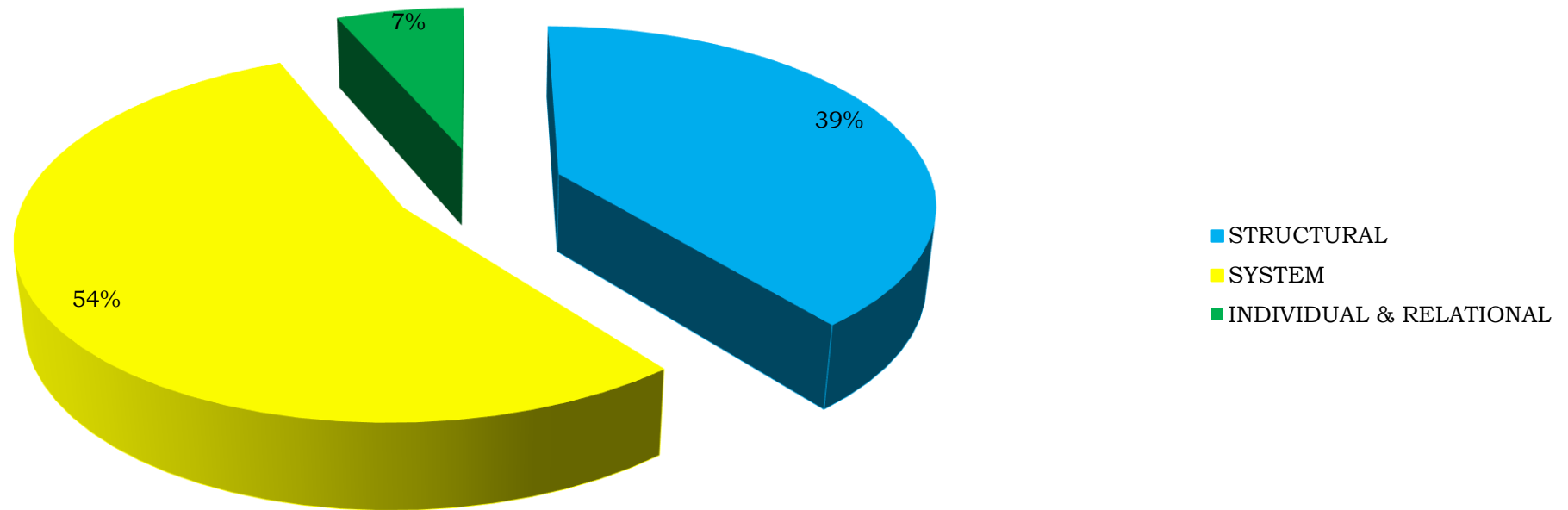- ■ INDIVIDUAL & RELATIONAL FACTORS

40%

30%

30%

Changes That Youth Would Like To See In Thompson

STRUCTURAL	SYSTEM	INDIVIDUAL & RELATIONAL
Housing for youth (49)(17.8%)	Job training for youth (43)(15.6%)	Support for parents economically and psychologically (18)(6.5%)
A Youth centre and shelter (48)(17.4%)	More cultural and recreational activities (26)(9.4%)	
Support for LGBTQ youth (9)(3.3%)	Support regarding addictions (24)(8.7%)	
Break the cycle (1)(0.4)	More social and sport activities (15)(5.4%)	
Support for marginalized youth (1)(0.4)	Support for those with disabilities (12)(4.3%)	
	Mental health resources (11)(4.0%)	
	BCR program community (10)(3.6%)	
	Information about physical health (8)(2.9%)	
	Programing for school (1)(0.3%)	

Changes That Youth Would Like To See In Thompson

Winnipeg Action Plan to end youth homelessness

- Developed a youth count in 2015

- Winnipeg has developed a community action plan to address youth homelessness released October 2016.

- Had identified that a significant number of youth who were homeless or at risk in Winnipeg are from northern Manitoba communities

- Most of northern Manitoba youth who are homeless or at risk do not have family support in Winnipeg

Developing Effective Strategies to End Youth Homelessness

A review of strategic responses to youth homelessness identifies several core components of an effective framework. This includes:

1. Develop a plan

2. Create an integrated system response

3. Facilitate active, strategic and coordinated engagement by all levels of government and interdepartmental collaboration

4. Adopt a youth development orientation

5. Incorporate research, data gathering and information sharing

Youth Homelessness Gathering

- April 10th gathering brought broad cross section of community together to begin the development of a community action plan to end youth homelessness in Thompson

- Findings are included in the City of Thompson Youth Homelessness Instability Count 2016 report.

Reinforced some of the findings from the 2016 Youth Count:

- Youth want a safe place, a center open 24hrs where they can drop in, sleep, and access resources.
- Youth housing options
- Employment and training

Where next?

- Knowledge mobilization through dissemination of findings

- Making an inventory of services accessible

- Community action plan on youth homelessness

Resources

- Bonnycastle, M. & Simpkins, M. (2017). City of Thompson Youth Homelessness/ Housing Instability Count 2016. Unpublished report

- Gaetz, S. (2014). Coming of age: Reimaging the response to youth homelessness in Canada. Toronto: The Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

- Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., Kidd, S., & Schwan, K. (2016). Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.