



Implementing Prevention Programs - Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

Justin Sage-Passant
Manager, Prevention Initiatives
jsagepassant@covenanthouse.ca



Why Prevention?

Toronto's emergency shelters are at capacity



Prevention helps a young person remain housed, or exit shelter quickly for housing



Each young person supported in this way makes a bed available for someone else who needs it



Serving more youth better



What does Prevention mean?

1. Working 'upstream' to prevent youth experiencing homelessness
2. Working with youth as soon as possible to transition out of homelessness
3. Working to create networks of support that help youth exit homelessness and enhance housing stability



What does that look like at Covenant House?

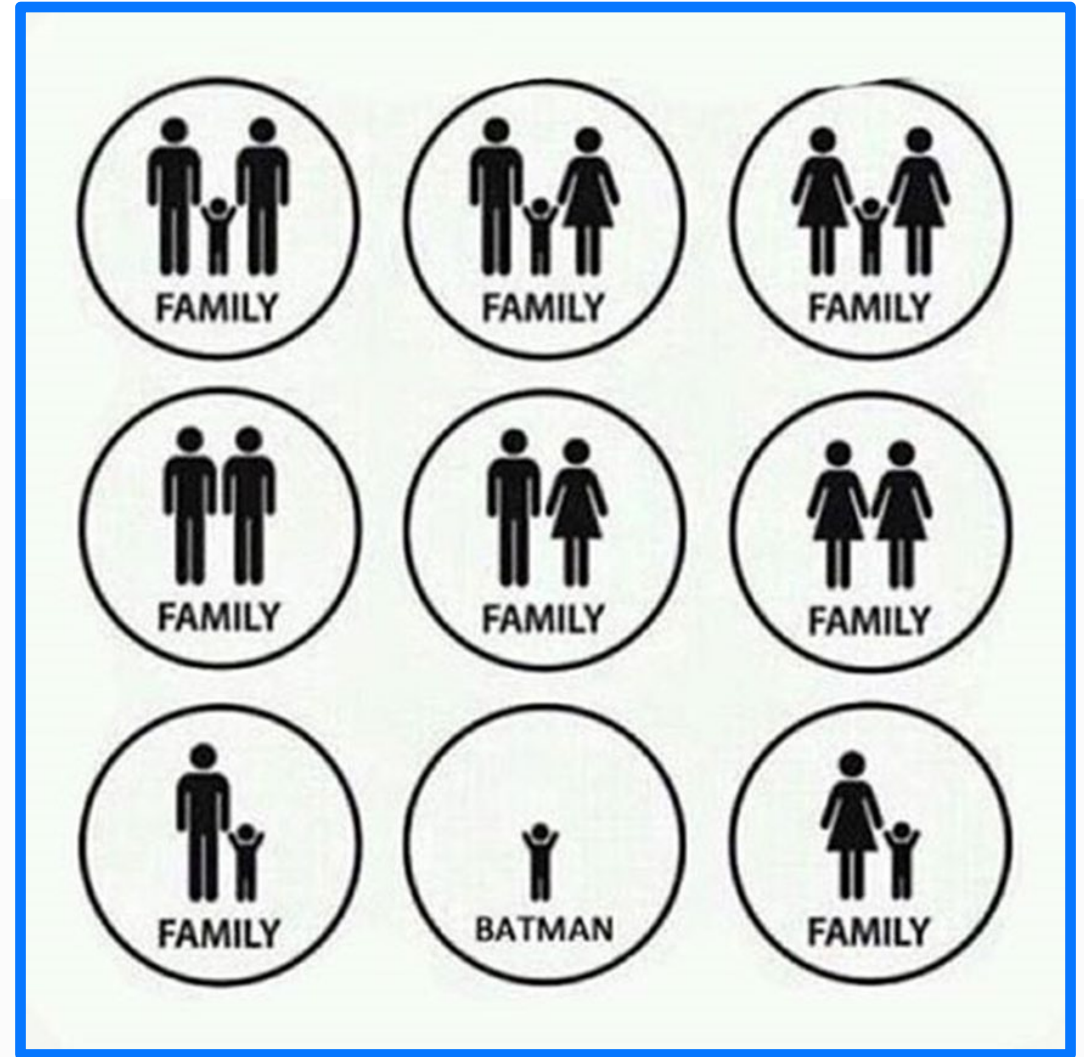
1. Working 'upstream' to prevent youth experiencing homelessness
= **Youth Reconnect Program**
2. Working with youth as soon as possible to transition out of homelessness
= **Shelter Diversion**
3. Working to create networks of support that help youth exit homelessness and enhance housing stability
= **Family & Natural Support (FNS) Program**



FNS Program

Support for youth (16-29) who are experiencing, or at-risk of, homelessness to strengthen relationships with **community**, and **immediate, extended** and **chosen** family members.

- Support exits from homelessness
- Maintain housing stability
- Improve health and well-being



FNS Program

“It feels good to know that you are part of a family. It’s better when you are not alone”

Youth Consultant

“This could help deal with a lot of emotional stuff. I can’t do school if my mental health is not good. My mental health is not good if my relationships aren’t good”

Youth Consultant



FNS Program Participants

August 1, 2018 – June 30, 2022

Total # participants: 403

Youth: 250

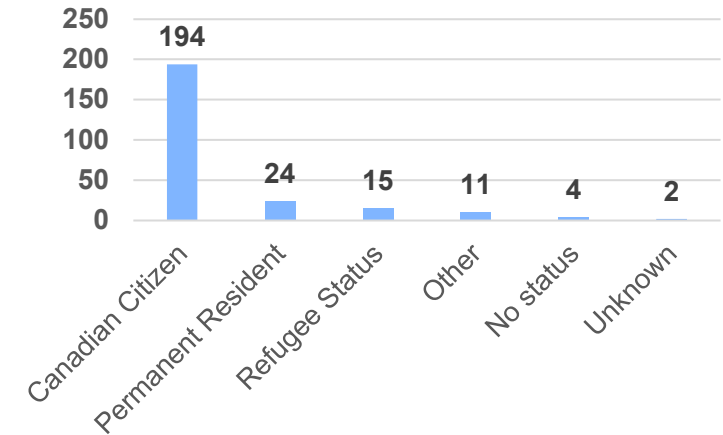
Family members: 153

65 (26%)

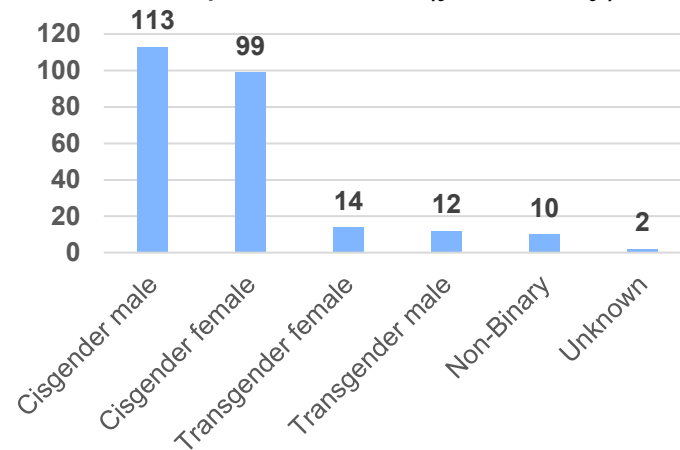
of youth identify
as 2SLGBTQIA+

Ethnicity (youth only)	
White - North American, European	73 (29.2%)
Black - African, Caribbean, North American	66 (26.4%)
Asian-South	23 (9.2%)
Mixed Race	21 (8.4%)
Asian - East, South East	20 (8%)
Middle Eastern	17 (6.8%)
Latin American	12 (4.8%)
Other	9 (3.6%)
Indigenous	5 (2%)
Indian Caribbean	2 (0.8%)
Unknown	2 (0.8%)

Immigration status (youth only)



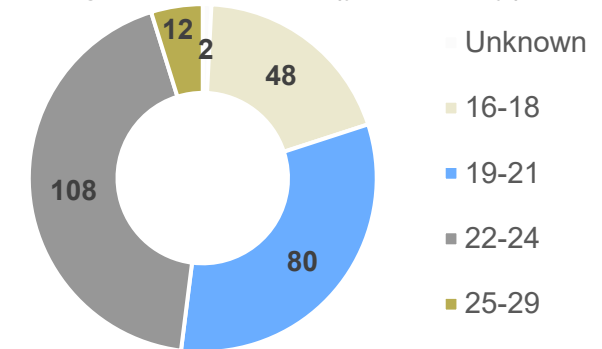
Participant Gender (youth only)



150 (60%)
of youth identify
living with a
mental health
struggle

67 (27%)
of youth had previous
child welfare involvement

Age Breakdown (youth only)



FNS Referrals

August 1, 2018 – June 30, 2022



REASON FOR REFERRAL	
Seeking improved family relationships	46%
Processing disruption/experiences with family	33%
Expanding network of supports	12%
Seeking to return home	7%
Preventing homelessness	2%

146 youth - staying in shelters at time of intake

79 youth - housed at time of intake

25 youth – unknown living situation at intake



FNS Successes

August 1, 2018 – June 30, 2022

3,205
Counselling sessions
(includes individual and
conjoint family sessions)



215
Youth reports of
Improved Family
Connections



53 (36%)
Youth exited
homelessness

*NOTE: this % is reflective of
#youth who were staying in
shelters at intake to the FNS
Program and were living in stable
housing at exit*



75 (96%)
Youth remained
housed

*NOTE: this % is reflective of
#youth who were living in stable
housing at intake to the FNS
Program and maintained stable
housing for their entire enrollment*

439
Referrals made to
community resources
(for youth and family
members)

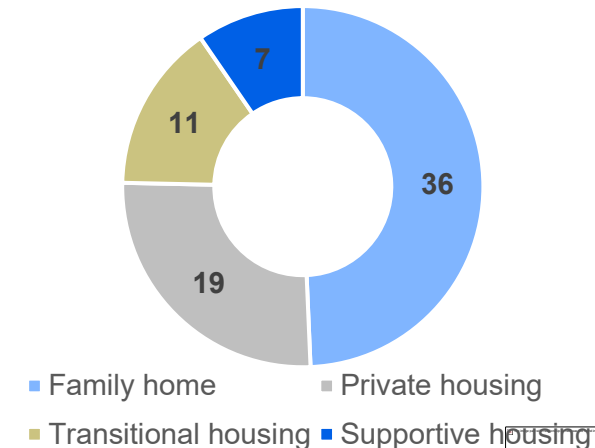


76
Youth with improved
Health and Wellbeing

*NOTE: this number is the unique
#youth that achieved one or more
of substance use treatment, mental
health treatment, and enhanced
mental health capacity outcomes*



Housing outcomes for youth that
exited homelessness



Shelter Diversion

The goal is to empower youth to immediately find safe housing options as an alternative to staying in a shelter, and provide wraparound supports and connections in the community

“Sometimes youth are just too scared to ask someone if they can stay there. Its a big question and having someone to mediate it would be helpful”

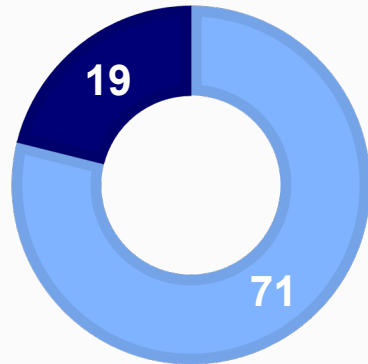
Youth consultant



Shelter Diversion Successes

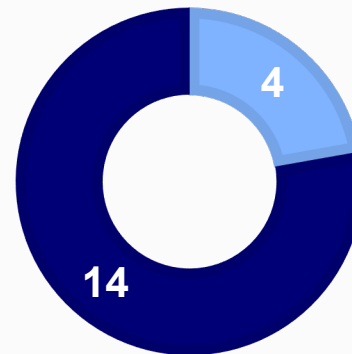
February 17, 2022 – August 31, 2022

90
youth met with DCM



■ Intakes ■ Turnaways

18 (20%)
youth successfully diverted to safe, stable housing



■ Intakes ■ Turnaways

Housing outcomes for successful diversions	
Friends and family	12
Private housing	4
Supportive	2

Timeframe for successful diversions	
At time of 1st contact	11
Within 30 days	7

Youth Reconnect

I skipped a lot of school...and I didn't tell people what was going on. Youth just want a safe place, and then school and everything else is so much better"

Youth consultant



Youth Reconnect

- Helps young people (ages 14-18) stay engaged in school either by;
 - 1) addressing issues at home that are producing the risk of homelessness, such as family conflict
 - 2) helping young people who can no longer stay at home find housing and support options in their community
- Focus on meeting the needs of youth that identify as Black and/or 2SLGBTQ



**Thank you.
Any questions?**

