

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) Program Adoption & Practice Innovations Study

Ashley K. Ward, PhD

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MAKING THE SHIFT^{INC}
youth homelessness social innovation lab

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are all Treaty People
by Mi'kmaw Artist Chelsea Brooks





PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

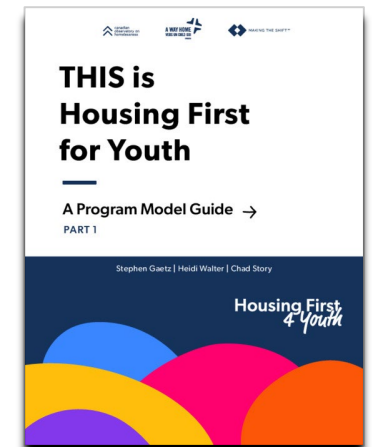
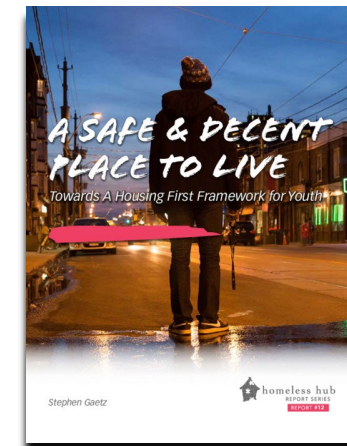
- Housing First Programs for Youth
- Research Evidence
- Program Adoption, Implementation, & Innovation
- Study Aims & Research Questions
- Methods
- Knowledge Mobilization Plan

INTRODUCTION

Housing First and Youth

For over a decade, Housing First (HF) has been adapted as a program and as a philosophical approach to address youth populations experiencing homelessness.

Relative to adult models, HF models for youth acknowledge and empower their developmental and social-cultural contexts.



Canadian provinces and cities with HF4Y programs:

Alberta

- Calgary (5)

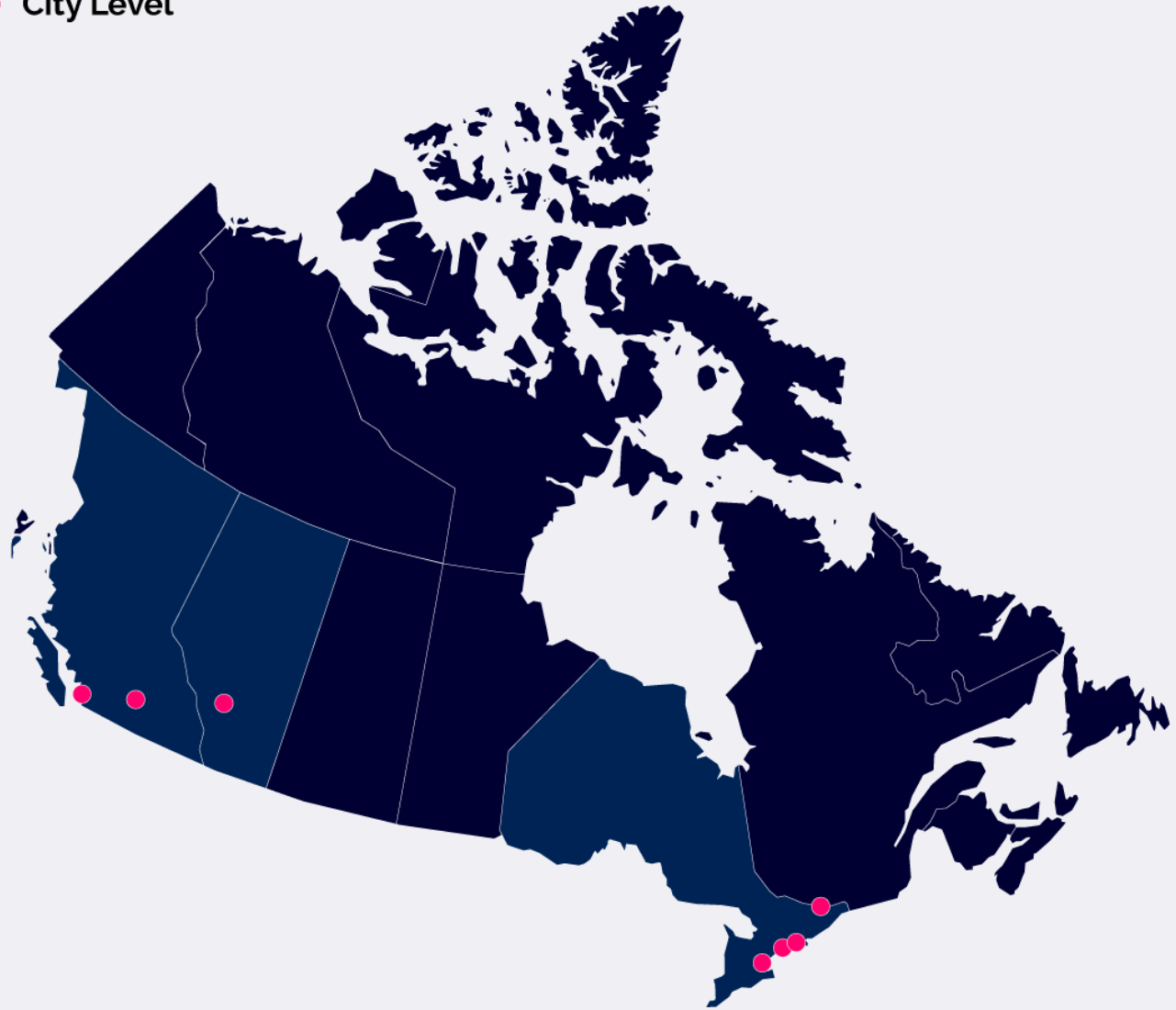
British Columbia

- Kelowna
- Vancouver

Ontario

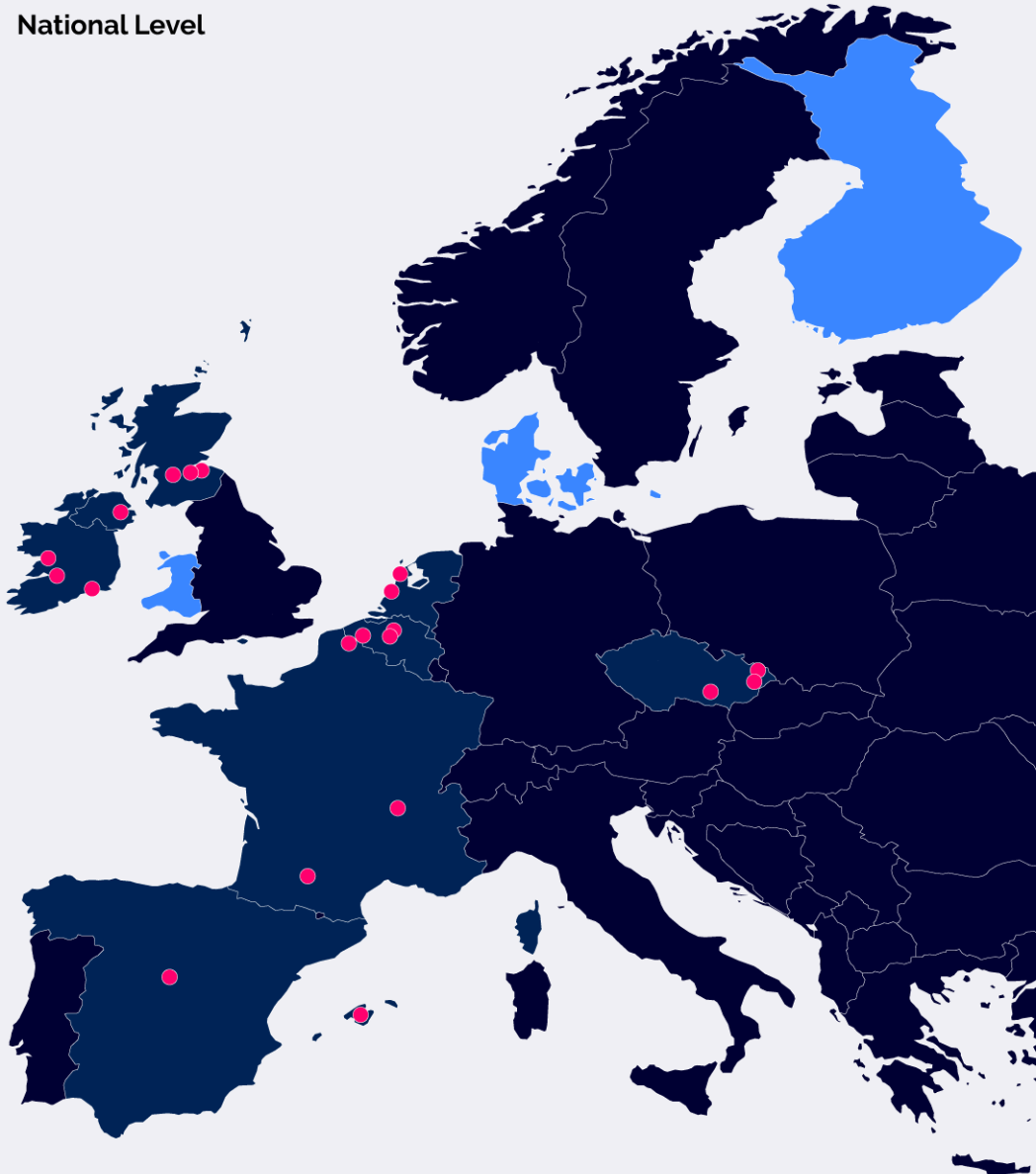
- Hamilton
- Toronto
- Whitby
- Oshawa

● City Level



Housing First Programs for Youth: Canadian Provinces

- City Level
- National Level



Housing First Programs for Youth: European Countries

European countries and cities with HF and youth programs:

- Belgium
- Czechia *in development
- France
- Ireland
- Netherlands
- Scotland
- Spain
- Finland

Implementation at the national level:

- Denmark
- Wales

CORE PRINCIPLES OF Housing First *4 Youth*

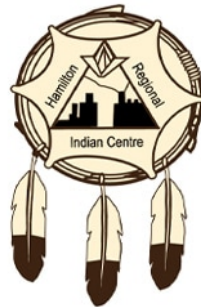
1. A Right to Housing with No Preconditions
2. Youth choice, youth voice, and self-determination
3. Positive youth development and wellness orientation
4. Individualized, client-driven supports with no time limits
5. Social inclusion and community integration

INTRODUCTION

Making the Shift Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) Demonstration Project

Three HF4Y programs in Ontario:

- Endaayaang (Hamilton)
- Free 2 Be (Toronto)
- HF4Y Ottawa (Ottawa)



INTRODUCTION

Research Evidence

There is some empirical evidence to show that HF programs for youth:

- Have been tested to support **multiple youth populations** – e.g., young mothers (Slesnick et al., 2023), youth with MH problems (Doré-Gauthier et al. 2019a; Kozloff et al., 2016; Gilmer, 2016), youth who use drugs (Kelleher et al., 2021), and youth exiting care (Bonakdar et al., 2023)
- **Stabilize housing** (Doré-Gauthier et al., 2019a; Forchuk et al., 2013; Holtschneider, 2016; Kozloff et al.) as well as feelings of **security** with housing (Brakenhoff et al., 2022) and **independence** (Doré-Gauthier et al., 2019b)
- **Improve physical health** outcomes (Bonakdar et al.,) and decrease the need for hospitalization and emergency services (Collins et al., 2019)
- **Improve MH** outcomes (Bonakdar et al.,), and reduce the need for hospitalization and emergency services (Doré-Gauthier et al., 2019b)
- **Support family connections** (Holtschneider), **decrease CPS involvement** (Collins et al.), and **decrease negative peer influences** (Forchuk et al.) and

Table: Five Constructs Associated with Innovation Adoption

Factor	Description
1. <i>Sociopolitical and Community Factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An environment supportive of innovation adoption • Policies, regulations, and accreditation standards supportive of innovation • Financial incentives
2. <i>Organization Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture of openness, learning, and risk-taking • Leadership support for and experience with innovation adoption • Resources to facilitate adoption and implementation success (e.g., engagement with innovation developers)
3. <i>Innovation Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based and superior to current program or practice • Adaptable to the organization context; compatible with its mission and policy, values, and cultural norms • Cost effective • Low risk
4. <i>Staff Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes toward, and motivation for, adoption • Values and beliefs that appreciate change and quality improvement • Compatible skills and experience • Tolerance for ambiguity and propensity towards risk taking
5. <i>Client/Service User Characteristics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs and attitudes compatible with innovation • Having moderate to high motivation/readiness for change

(adapted from: Wisdom et al., 2014)

INTRODUCTION

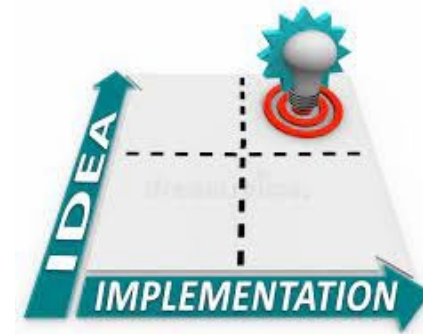
Key questions for research to answer are:

- What factors matter for leaders considering adoption of HF programs for youth?
- Do the interests and priorities of leadership and host organizations always lead to HF for youth program adoption, as well as their successful implementation?
- In what contexts is it better for organizations to adopt youth-focused HF programs, or to apply HF principles and practices to other types of housing and supports programs?
- How can HF programs for youth be supported to move successfully from a pilot stage to full implementation?
- How can program sustainability be engaged at the start of planning and design, and carried through to full implementation?

INTRODUCTION

Program Implementation

- Are the program's key practice components aligned with the service delivery model?
- Is the program reaching its intended audience?
- Is the program achieving its planned outputs?
- What are the program's strengths and improvement areas?
- What adaptations (if any) were made to the program to fit the context and needs of the surrounding community and target participants?



INTRODUCTION

Innovation and Social Change

To be most effective, HF efforts for youth require broad systems change, as well as wide-scale implementation with sustained investment.

At the program level, team flexibility and adaptability matter, partnerships with stakeholders matter, and advocacy and justice for youth matter.

Innovation needs to further consider the barriers we know exist with this model, such as housing availability and supporting youth through the challenges they face.



The aims of the current study are to:

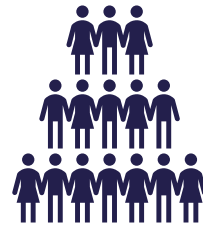
1. Understand how Housing First is recognized as an innovative program to address youth homelessness in various communities;
2. Understand the needs of organization leaders and service delivery teams as they adopt, implement, and build the capacity of their youth-focused Housing First programs;
3. Understand how Housing First programs for youth are planned and designed to fit the needs of the host organization, as well as the community context of youth homelessness and the needs of housing providers, service delivery partners, youth, and other stakeholders;
4. Understand the model compatibility between Housing First for Youth and other Housing First programs for youth;
5. Understand how Housing First programs for youth are implemented, accounting for the ways in which organizational adaptations, barriers, limits, and facilitators occur;
6. Ascertain the training, capacity-building, and technical support needs for programs as they grow and evolve.

METHODS



Research Design

Cross-sectional mixed-methods design



Participants

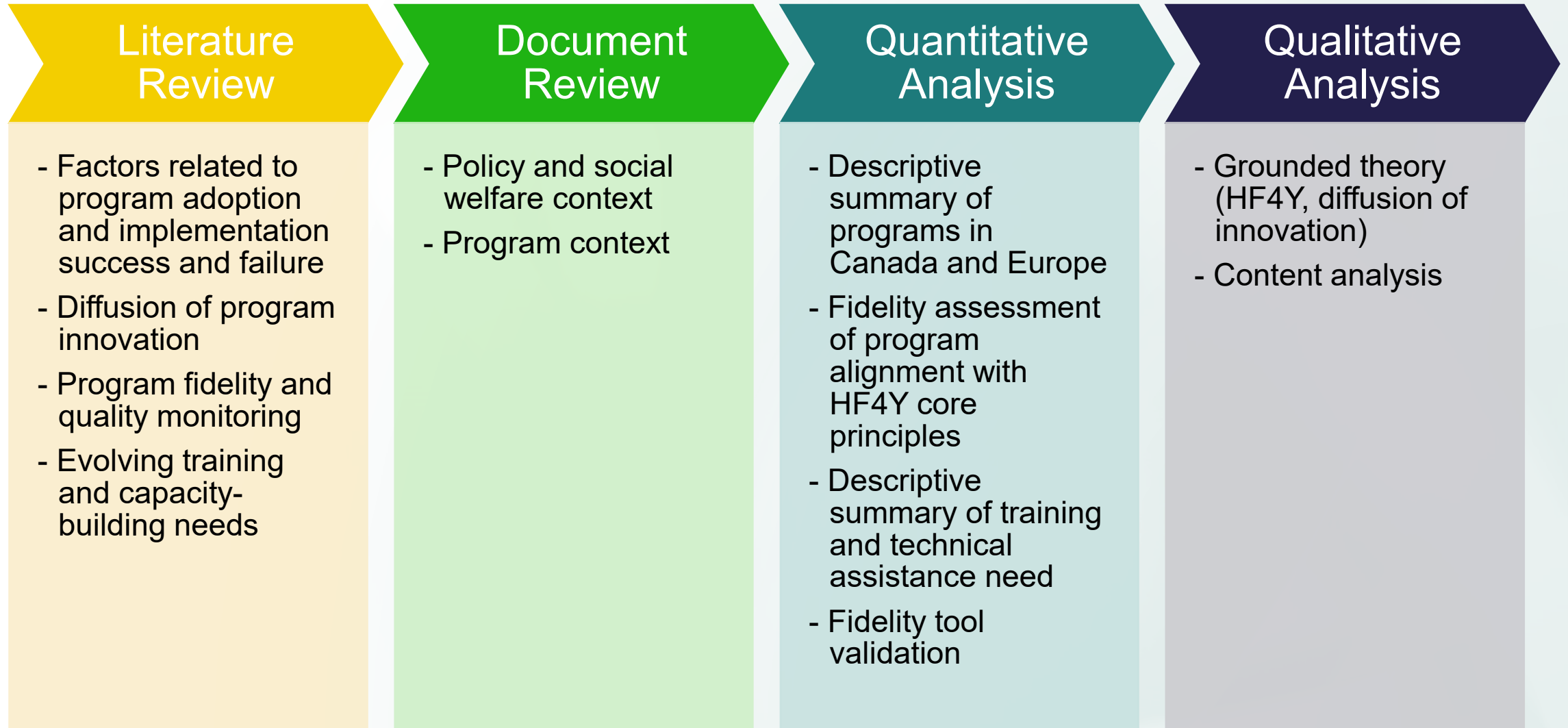
Leaders of host organizations
Service delivery team leads



Recruitment Strategy

- (1) email invitation via AWHC's Training & Technical Assistance Program
- (2) social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- (3) recruitment flyer through newsletters and mailing lists
- (4) snowball strategy with interview participants

METHODS



METHODS



Quantitative Measures

HF4Y Site Description Survey
Core Principles Checklist: HF4Y Program
Fidelity Self-Assessment
HF4Y Training & Technical Assistance
Questionnaire



Qualitative Measures

Individual and focus group
interviews

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) Site Description Questionnaire

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- ✓ 40 questions
- ✓ MC, DD, & SA response types
- ✓ ~25 minutes to complete
- ✓ Completed by service team leads

Section	Example Content
Site Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Size of surrounding community ● Populations served and services offered ● Experience serving homeless youth or adults prior to HF for youth program
Program Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service team structure and roles ● Caseload characteristics ● Frequency and content of individual and team supervision
Program Eligibility & Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who is program intended for (age range, population focus, housing status) ● Inclusion and exclusion criteria ● Referral process
Program Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Length of time to complete intake, secure housing, etc. ● Internal/in-house and external services ● Service team's overall skill/capacity in practice areas
Program Retention & Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of youth currently enrolled ● Number of youth completed/exited ● Average length of time for a youth's enrollment in the program ● How the program qualifies a youth's readiness to complete the program
Research & Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall evaluation practices (e.g., program logic and outcome measurement, usage of program data and quality improvement)

Core Principles Checklist:

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) Program Fidelity Self-Assessment

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- ✓ 29 items
- ✓ Yes/No response
- ✓ ~5 minutes to complete
- ✓ Completed by service team leads

Core Principle	Example Questions
Principle 1: <i>A Right to Housing with No Preconditions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to housing is provided to youth regardless of their situation, needs, and behaviors. ● The location of youths' housing are separate physically from service delivery.
Principle 2: <i>Youth Choice, Voice, and Self-Determination</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth are active collaborators in service delivery. Their interests and choices are incorporated in several areas of service delivery - such as in goal setting, determining weekly appointment times and where they happen, and selecting options for services and supports. ● The program includes an agreement that youth meet at least once weekly with their case manager.
Principle 3: <i>Positive Youth Development and Wellness Orientation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The program incorporates a Positive Youth Development approach. That is, the physical, cognitive, emotional, and sociocultural needs of developing adolescents and young adults are built into the program's framework. It recognizes the hardships that youth who experience homelessness commonly encounter, and builds on their strengths, goals, and aspirations while addressing risks/vulnerabilities and enhancing protective factors and resilience. ● The program incorporates a trauma-informed approach, characterized in service delivery by relational trust-building, collaboration, and nonjudgmental support, as well as a physical environment that addresses triggers and provides a safe, welcoming space.
Principle 4: <i>Individualized, Client-Driven Supports With No Time Limits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth are held accountable for their goals and actions while also given opportunities to learn and make mistakes. ● The program incorporates a harm reduction perspective and practices when addressing youths' substance use and addiction concerns, as well as their health, social behaviours, and sexual practices. Case managers have conversations with youth about their risky behaviours and support their safety.
Principle 5: <i>Social Inclusion and Community Integration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The program incorporates an intersectional focus that acknowledges the social complexities in a youth's lived experiences and identities, and connects youth to social, cultural, and spiritual opportunities and events. ● The program incorporates a focus on building a youth's natural support (e.g., building healthy and satisfying relations with peers, repairing relations with family and/or caregivers, encouraging young people to find healthy mentors).

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) Training & Technical Assistance Questionnaire

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- ✓ 18 items
- ✓ MC & SA response types
- ✓ ~10 minutes to complete
- ✓ Completed by service team leads

12. If you supervise the service delivery team, how confident overall are you regarding your supervision practices:

Very confident	Mostly confident	Somewhat confident	Slightly confident	Not confident
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What topics would you like to receive further training in?

14. a. What are the most common ways the service delivery team members stay up-to-date in their HF4Y practice knowledge? Select all that apply:

- Online tools and training resources (e.g., Homelessness Learning Hub)
- Webinars
- Workshops
- Coursework
- Periodic events provided by the program or host organization
- Periodic events provided by community organizations and institutions
- Community of Practice (CoP) meetings
- Conferences and professional meetings
- Other

14. b. If 'Other,' indicate the method of training:

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS



Program Founders

n = 20 (10 Canadian, 10 European participants)

Impact of Gov't Mandates & Agendas

HF and Youth

Stakeholder Involvement & Engagement

Program Planning & Implementation

Barriers and Facilitators to Uptake



Service Team Leads

n = 20 (10 Canadian, 10 European participants)

Program Implementation

Team Training & Capacity-Building

Program Innovation, Impact on Youth, and Contribution to Addressing Homelessness

Program Evaluation

KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION PLAN



BEST PRACTICE
GUIDELINES



BLOG SERIES



COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE SESSION
SERIES



UPDATES TO CORE
HF4Y GUIDES AND
TRAINING
PRODUCTS



REPORT SERIES



PRESENTATIONS
FOR PROFESSIONAL
CONFERENCES



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Ashley K. Ward

Senior Researcher
wardash@yorku.ca
1-905-730-3195

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