

# RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SURVEY

*Coming November 16th, 2016*



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# RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SURVEY

*Coming November 16th, 2016*

1138

YOUTH  
PARTICIPANTS

57

PARTICIPATING  
AGENCIES FROM

42

COMMUNITIES  
ACROSS CANADA



National Learning Community  
on Youth Homelessness



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**A WAY HOME**  
**VERS UN CHEZ-SOI**

CANADA



**CANADA  
FOUNDATION**



**The  
Orange  
Door  
Project**

Housing and hope  
for homeless youth

# Part 1

***Who is homeless?***

# How do we define youth homelessness?

## **DEFINITION**

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**“Youth homelessness” refers to the situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence.**



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# Diversity!



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# Gender differences within the youth homeless population

Gender	Percent
Cisgender Male	57.6% (n620)
Cisgender Female	36.4% (n392)
Transgendered	1.8% (n90)
Gender non-binary	2.5% (n27)
2 Spirit	1.8% (n19)
Total	1077



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# Key Finding



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**LGBTQ2S – 29%**

**Indigenous youth - 30.6%**

**Racialized youth – 28.2%**

**Newcomer youth – 10.1%**



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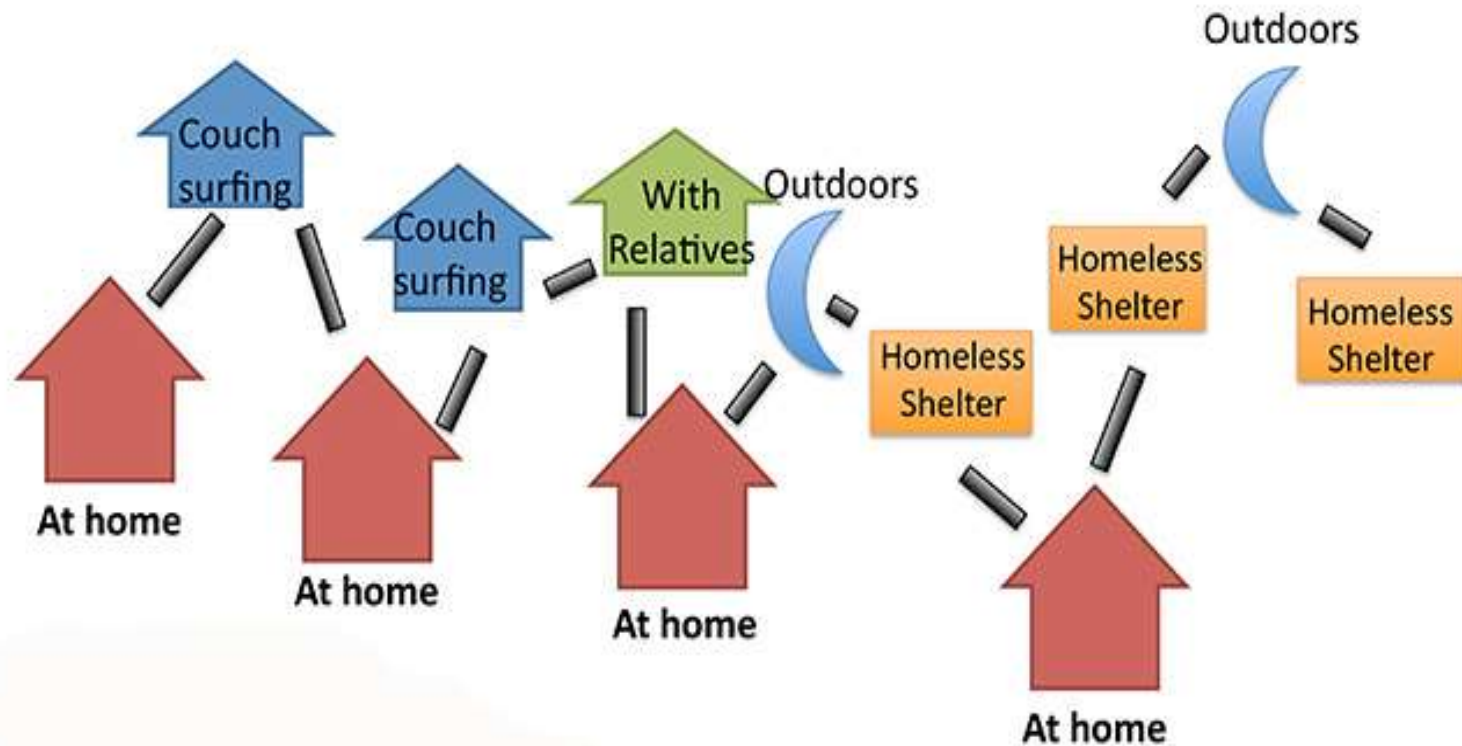


# Part 2

## *Becoming* homeless

# PATHWAYS

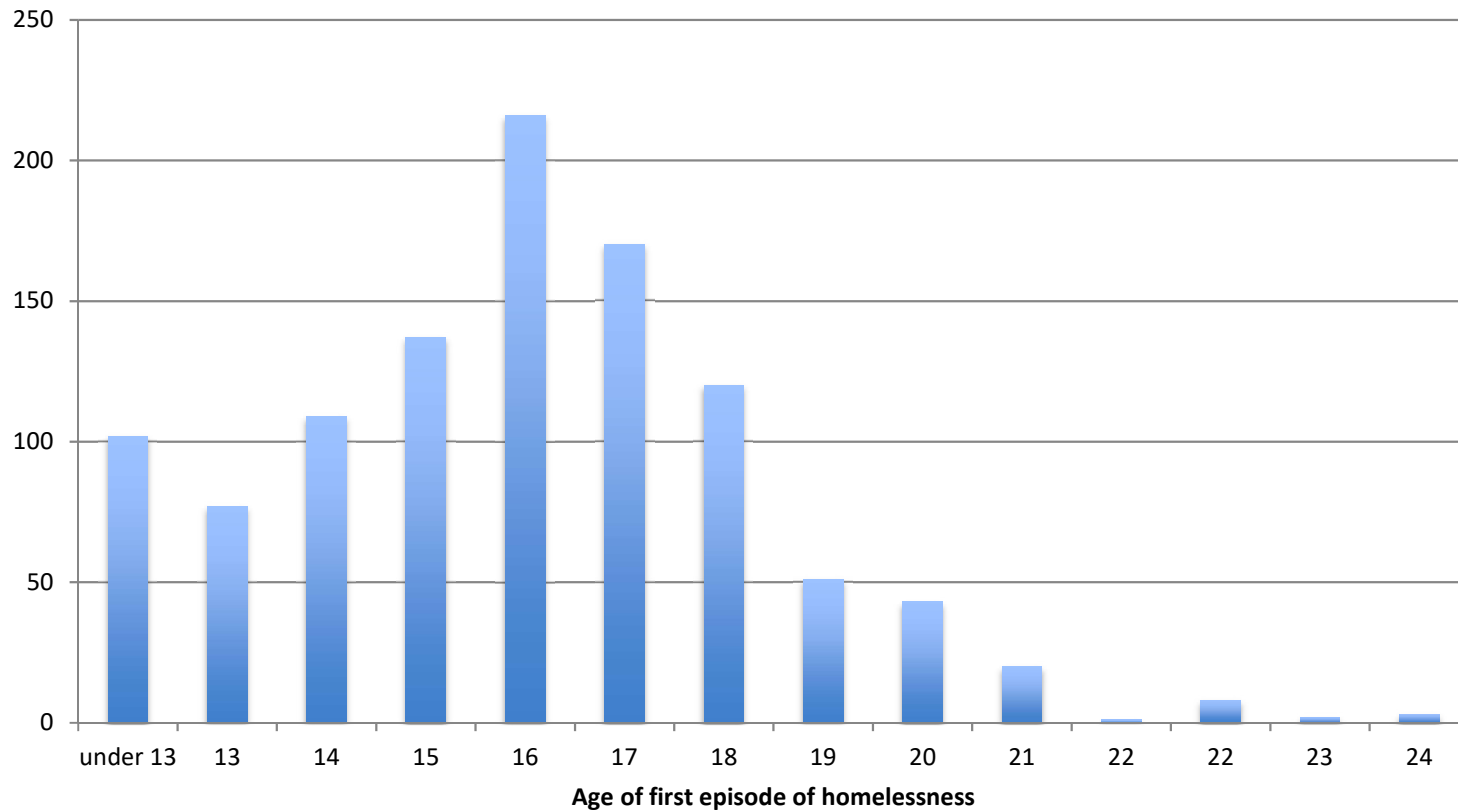
into homelessness



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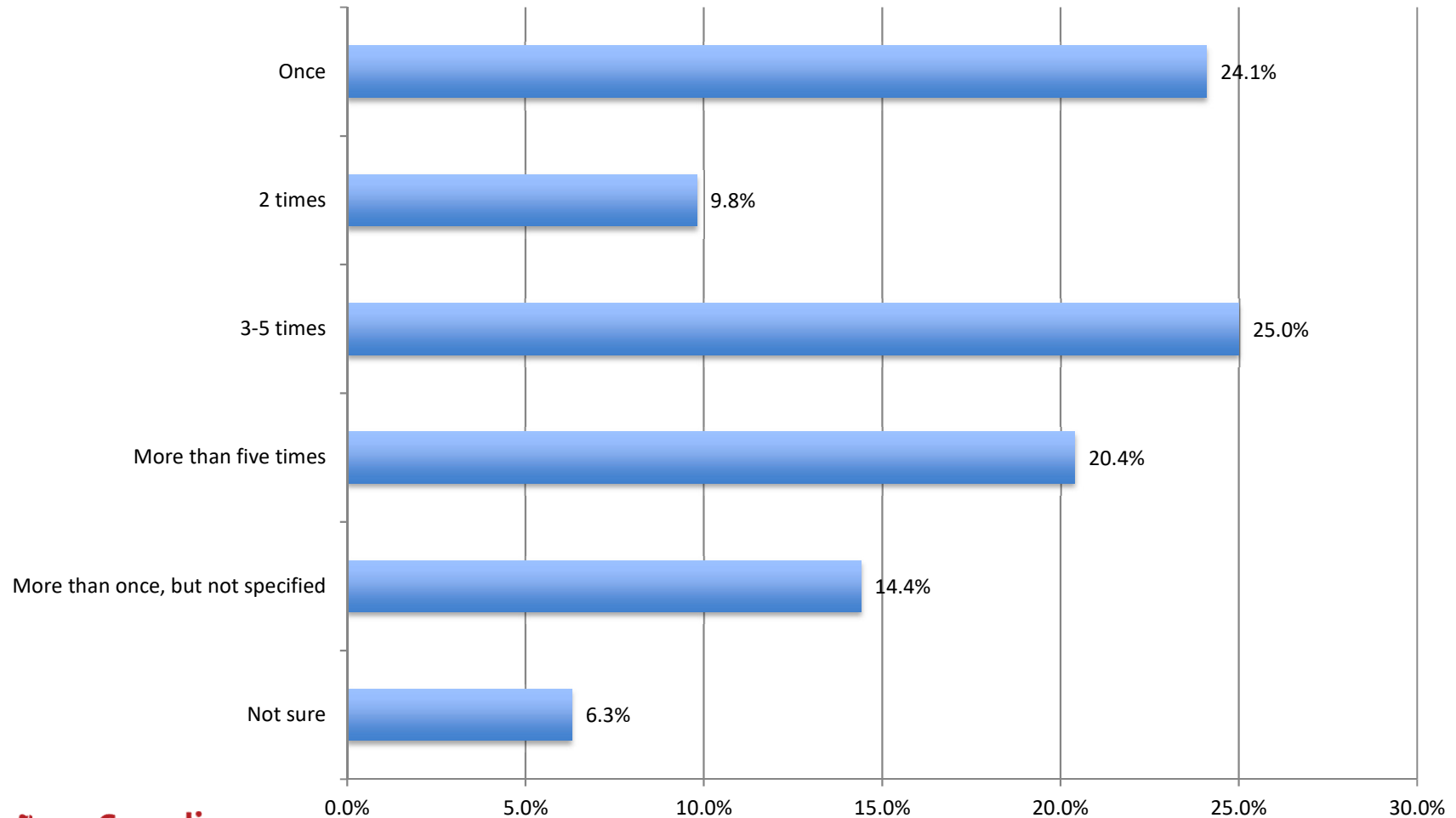
# Age of first experience of homelessness



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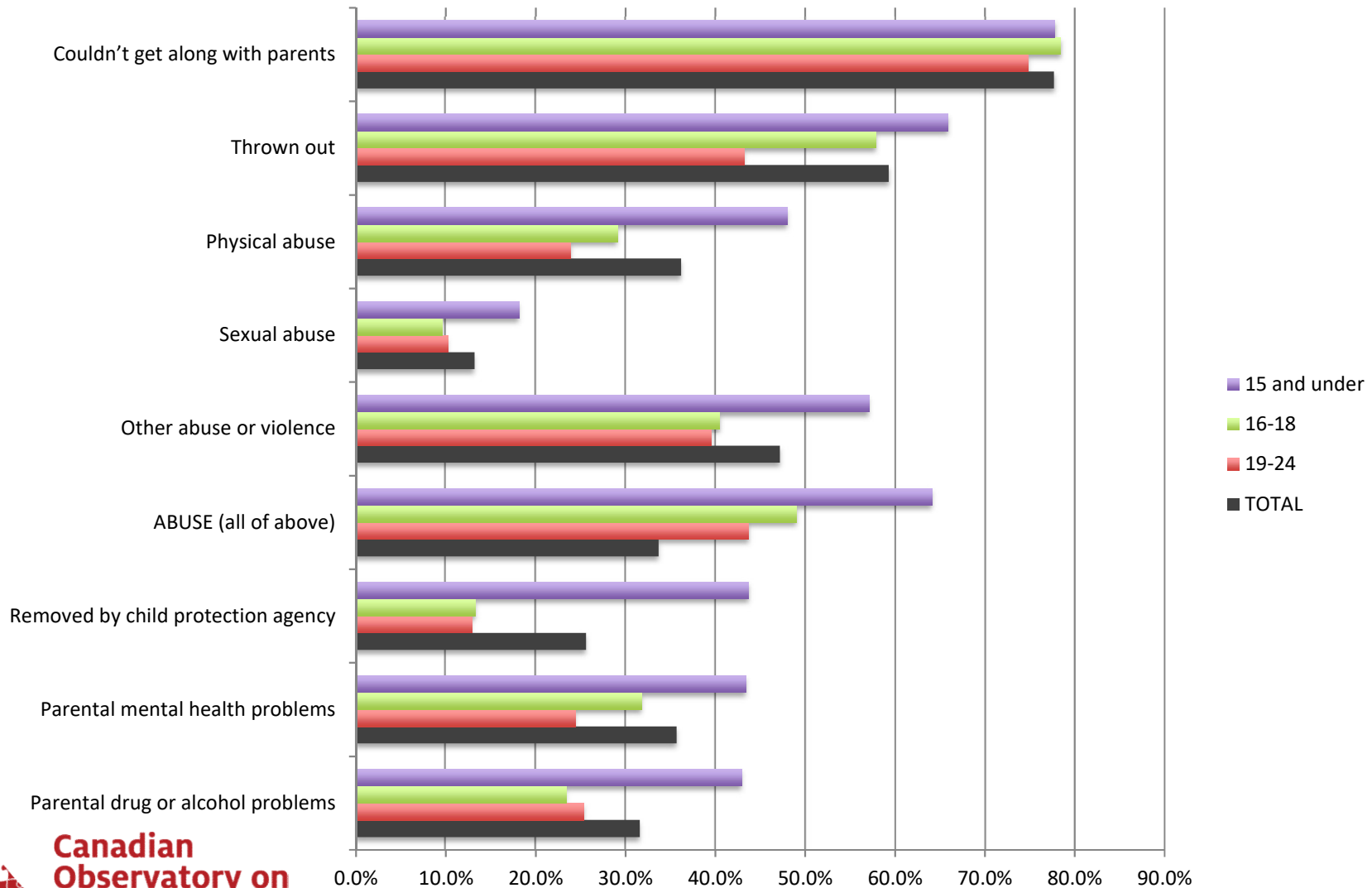
# Number of times homeless



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# Conflict with Parents



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# Involvement with Child Protection Services

In our survey, almost sixty percent (57.8%) of youth indicated that they had some kind of involvement with child protection services in the past.

47.2% had foster care placements  
30.9% were in group homes



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Thirty percent of those who were previously involved in care saw leaving the system as having a direct impact on their current situation of homelessness.

“I had nothing set up. I was not prepared to move – turned 19 and got told I had to move.”

(Male, 24)



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# Experiences in school

## Highest Level of Education

	% (Number)
<Grade 9	8.1% (n84)
Some High School	58.7% (n608)
<b>Failed to complete high school TOTAL</b>	65% (n692)
High School Graduate	21.1% (n218)
More than High School	12% (n129)



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# Learning Disabilities

50% tested for a learning disability

41% tested for ADHD



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## Being Bullied

<b>When growing up were you ever bullied at school?</b>	<b>%</b>
No	17% (N172)
Sometimes	37% (N363)
Often	46% (N453)



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# Part 3

## Life on the Streets

*The experience of being  
homeless*

# 1. Housing – Where people stay?



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# How long have people been homeless?

## A Typology of Chronic Homelessness

Categories of Chronicity	% (N)
<b>TRANSITIONAL:</b> Individuals and families who generally enter the shelter system for a short stay (less than a month) and usually for one stay only.	32% (347)
<b>EPISODIC:</b> This includes individuals who move into and out of homelessness several times over a <u>three year period</u> (and some of the moves may be into corrections or hospital).	13.3% (144)
<b>CHRONIC:</b> Individuals and families who are homeless more than	54.8% (594)



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## 2. Health and Well-being



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## Nutritional Vulnerability

In the past month, how often have you ...	Daily	Several times a week	Once a week or less
Eaten a good quality, balanced meal when you wanted or needed one	26.8%	26.8%%	46.3%
Accessed clean drinking water	70.6%	15.1%	14.3%
Eaten on a clean surface	50.8%	24.7%	24.6%



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# 3. Mental Health and Addictions



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# Mental Health and Addictions - Context

- A high degree of adversity in key mental health determinants
- Evidence of challenge pre and post homelessness
- PTSD, depression, addictions most common
- High suicide attempt rates
- Suicide and overdose leading causes of death



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# Mental Health and Addictions - Context

But also – ***Resilience!***

- navigating very complex social and cultural scenarios
- street survival knowledge
- creativity
- keeping engaged in efforts to care for self and others



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# Mental Health and Addictions - Findings

- 85.4% in the high symptom distress category
- 42% at least 1 suicide attempt
- 35.2% at least 1 overdose requiring hospitalization
- Struggling to sustain resilience, older youth reported greater resilience with indications of a strength in this area for Indigenous and LGBTQ2S youth



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# Mental Health and Addictions - Findings

## Important variables:

- Age of first homelessness
- Female youth – poorer mental health and more suicide attempts
- LGBTQ2S participants (e.g., 70% suicide attempt rate)
- Racialized youth in more distress but lower suicide attempt rate
- Indigenous youth with higher suicide attempt rate and addictions concerns
- Child protection involvement, abuse and neglect
- Physical and sexual violence while homeless



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# Mental Health and Addictions - Findings

- **Connections with at least 1 family member**
- **Support of friends**
- **Pragmatic supports**
  - Contributes to resilience
  - Reduce risk across key domains



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# Mental Health and Addictions - Findings

## Belonging to the highest risk group (n=144)

- LGBTQ2S overrepresented
- Racialized youth underrepresented
- Age of first homeless episode
- Victimization while homeless
- Social supports equivocal



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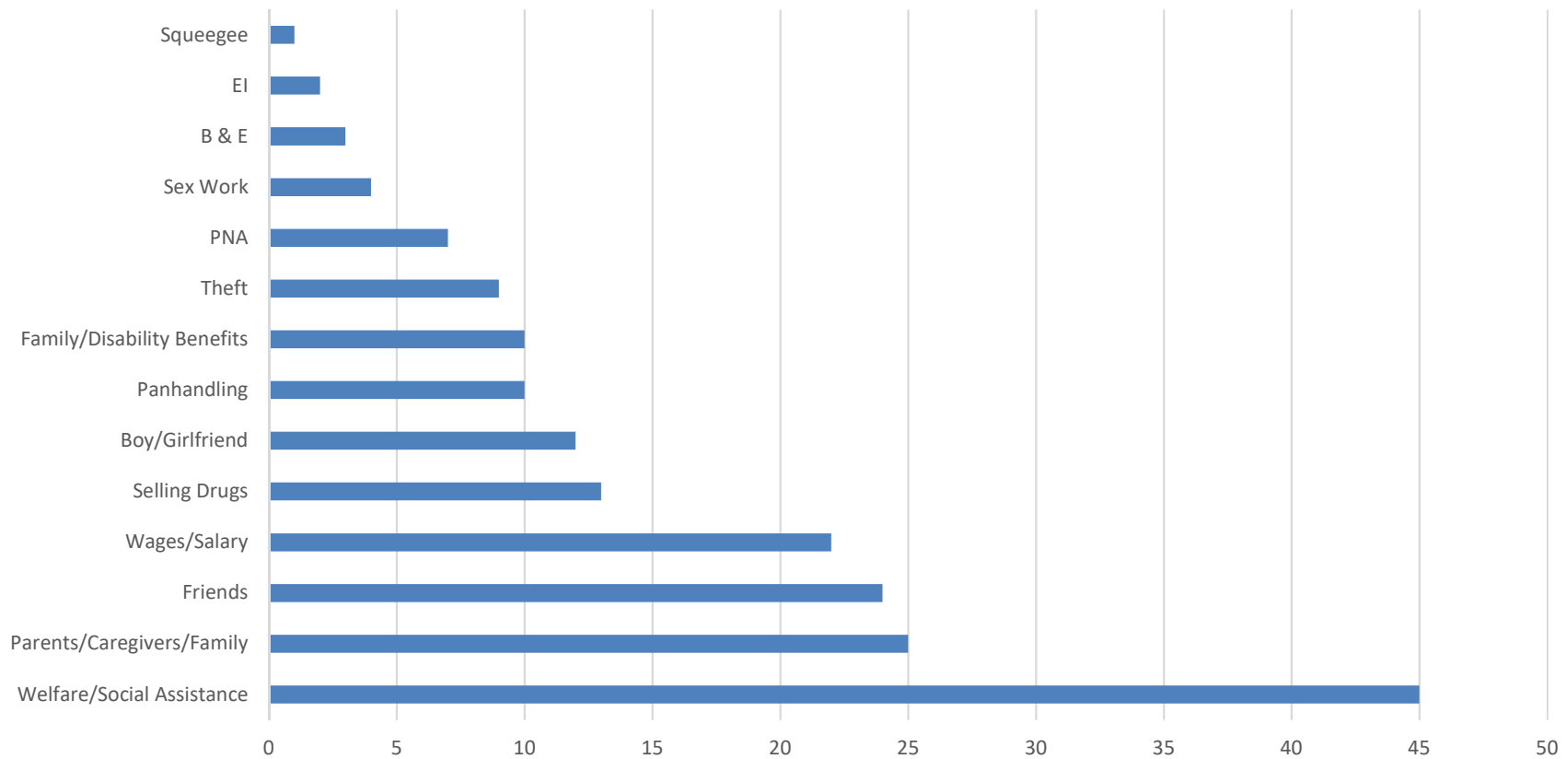
# 4. Employment and Financial Security



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# Money Making: Past 30 Days (%)



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# 4 Groups of \$ Making

- Employment
- Gov't/NGO Assistance
- Money from Friends and/or Family
- Subterranean/illegal income generation



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# Labour Market: Important Variables

## Gender

Males 24.6%

Females 19.1%

Trans/ Gender non-binary 15.3%

(n= 236; p <.05)



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## Education

< Grade 9	14.3%
Some High School	20.3%
High School Graduate	28.4%
Post-Secondary	27.1%

(n=231; p<.01)



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# State/NGO Support: Important Variables

## Gender

Males 53.3%

Females 58.0%

Trans/ Gender non-binary 69.7%

(n=593; p<.05)



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## Tested for Learning Disability at School

Yes 53.9%

No 38.5%

(n=547; p <.01)



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## Age

<16	39.5%
16-17	45.4%
18-20	57.6%
21+	61.3%

(n=604; p<.001)



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# Money From Family/Friends: Important Variables

## Education

< Grade 9	48.8%
Some High School	42.8%
High School	38.5%
Post-secondary	33.3%

(n=425; p<.05)



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## Age First Left Home

< 13	56.0%
13-15	45.2%
16-17	39.4%
18-20	31.6%
21+	33.3%

(n=428; p< .001)



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## Indigenous Status

Indigenous 46.5%

Non-Indigenous 37.3%

(n=443; p<.05)



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## Age

< 16	67.4%
17-18	48.1%
19-20	38.5%
21+	36.8%

(n=436; p<.001)



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# Subterranean and Illegal Means: Important Variables

## Gender

Male	25.8%
Female	17.3%
Transgender	39.4%

(n= 252; p<.001)



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## Age First Left Home

<13	36.4%
13-15	30.0%
16-17	21.4%
18-20	16.7%
21+	12.1%

(n=254; p<.001)



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## Indigenous Status

Aboriginal	29.1%
Non-Aboriginal	21.2%

(n=261; p<.05)



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## Tested at School for ADHD

Yes 51.1%

No 38.1%

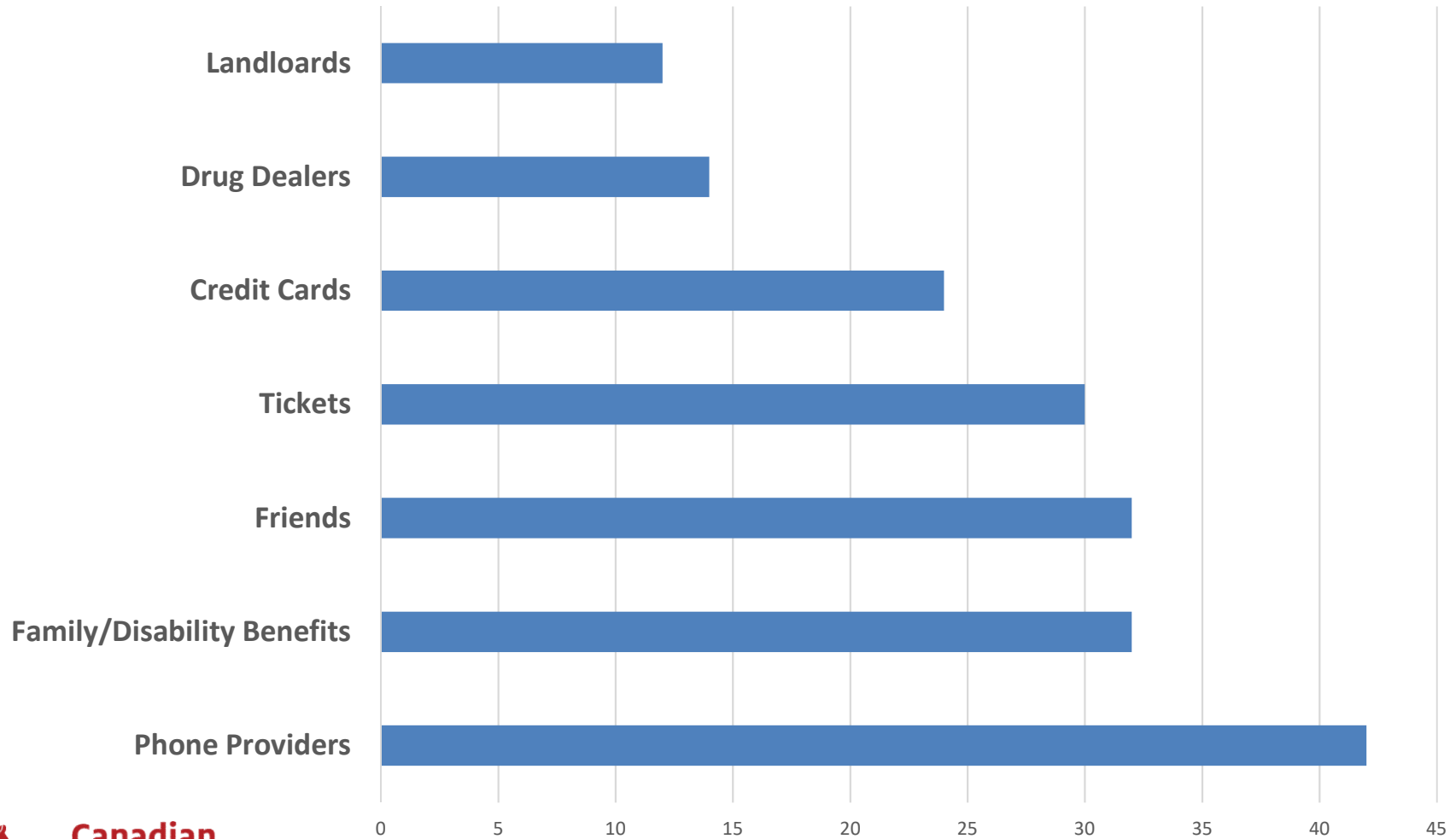
(n=251; p<.001)



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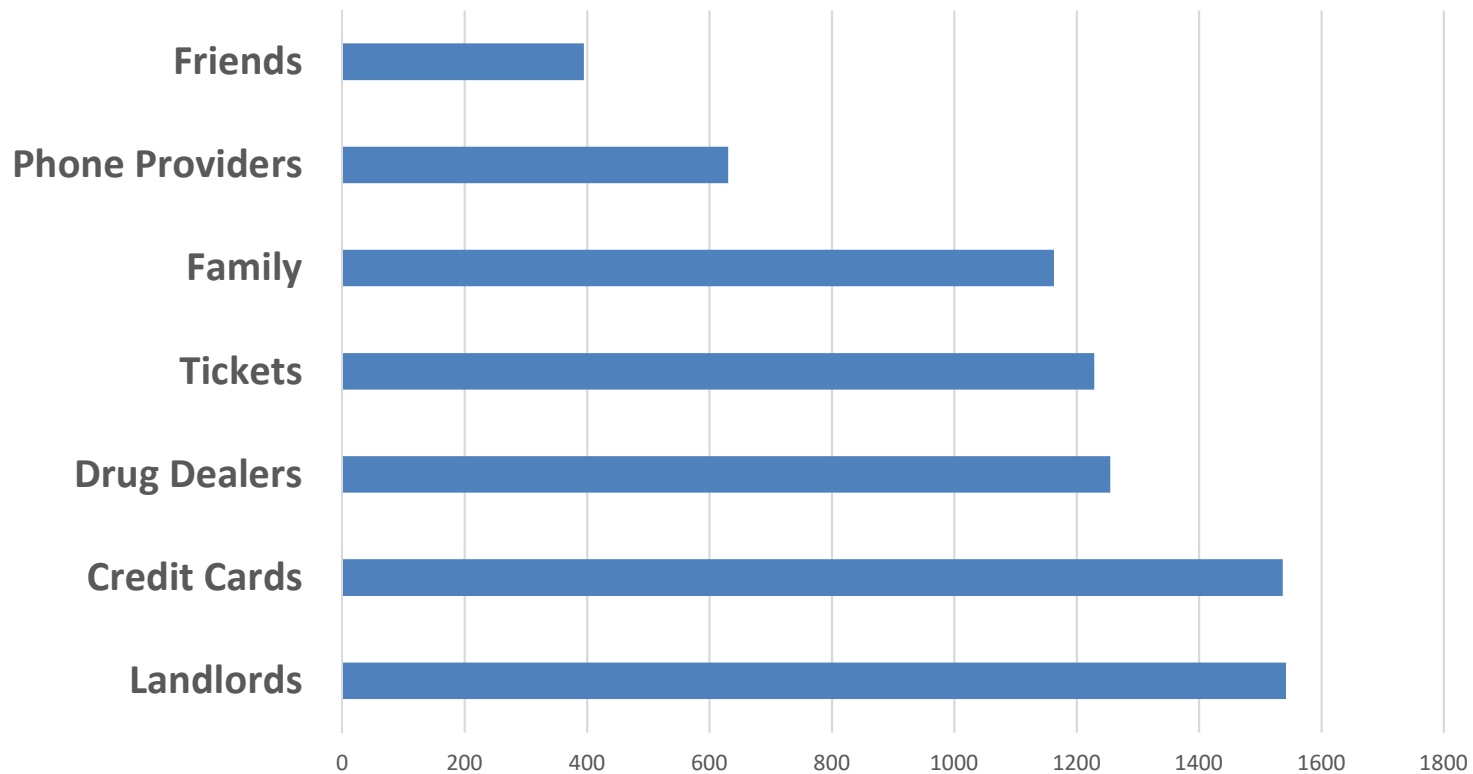
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# Average Amount \$ Owed



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# Payday Loan past year



	N	%
<b>No</b>	558	54
<b>Yes</b>	475	46

## For those who did:

<b>1-5 times</b>	295	29
<b>6+ times</b>	181	17



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# Age of those who took out Payday loans

<16	22%
16-17	39%
18-20	48%
21+	50%

P<.01



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# 5. Going to School



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# Dropping Out

Drop out rate in Canada: <9%

Drop out rate amongst homeless youth: 53.7%

## Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

	% (Number)
Employed	8.0% (n82)
Employed AND in training/education	12.0% (n123)
Training or Education	29.4% (n300)
Not in Employment, Training or Education	50.5% (n516)



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## 6. Assets: Relationships with Friends and Family, and Self Esteem



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## People you can count on

Do you have someone you can count on to:	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree (strongly or somewhat)
Provide help in an emergency?	21.3% (227)	12.3% (131)	66.4% (708)
Provide you with emotional support?	22.2% (237)	15.9% (170)	61.8% (659)
Check in to see how you are doing?	22.1% (234)	13.8% (146)	64.2% (680)

## Friendship: Level of engagement and quality

Quality of friendship	Responses to questions on friendship	%(N)
<b>POSITIVE</b> Relations with friends	<b>1) Very engaged</b> (respondents agreed (“Strongly” or “Somewhat” with all nine statements)	23.9% (264)
	<b>2) Engaged</b> (respondents agreed with 5 to 8 statements)	27.3% (301)
<b>MODERATE</b>	<b>3) Moderate</b>	24.3% (268)
<b>NEGATIVE</b> Relations with friends	<b>4) Disengaged</b> (respondents disagreed with 5 to 8 statements)	13.2% (146)
	<b>5) Very disengaged</b> (respondents disagreed (“Strongly” or “Somewhat” with all nine statements)	8.2% (90)



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# Family Relationships

- 72%** currently have contact with some family member at least once a month
- 64%** consider contact with family to be important
- 77%** would like to improve relations with family



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# Part 4

## DISCUSSION

Implications for policy  
and practice



## 4.1 Priority Populations – Taking Account of Diversity



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# Priority Populations

- Transgender youth
- LGBTQ2S
- Racialized Minorities
- Indigenous youth

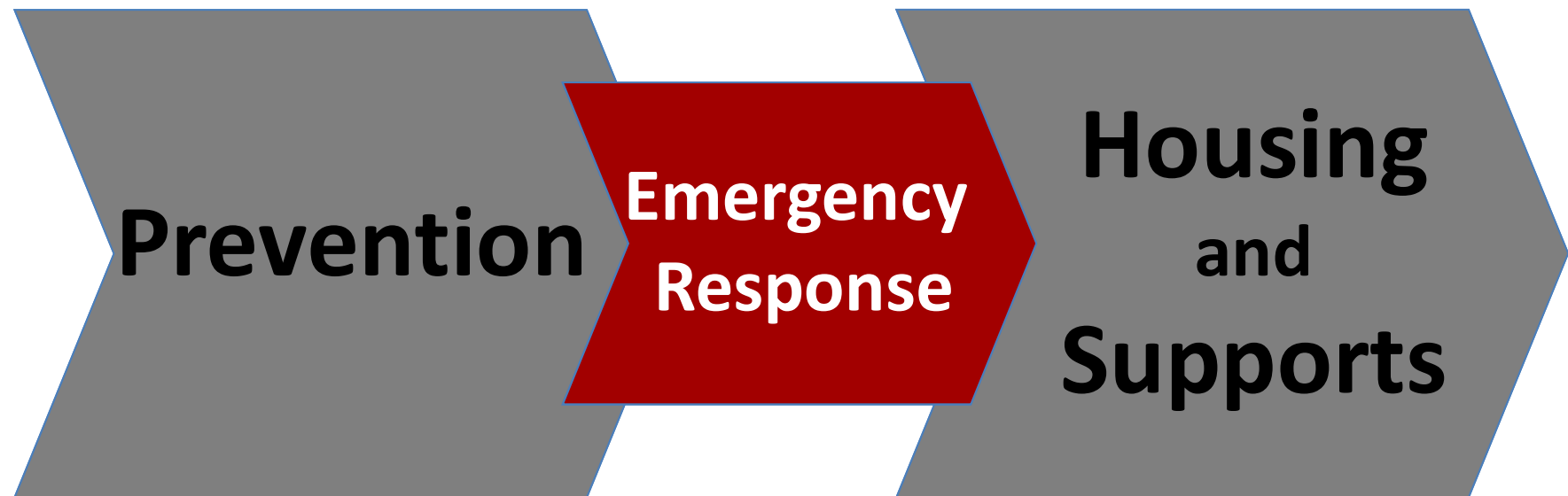


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## 4.2 The Need to Shift from a Crisis Response to Prevention



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# First experience of homelessness

Those who first leave home at an early age were 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
- Be chronically homeless



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# Housing Instability

75.9% experienced multiple episodes.

Amongst those who had multiple experiences of homelessness

- 63% had two to five experiences
- 37% had more than five

Who is most likely to experience multiple episodes of homelessness?

- Youth whose first experience happened before they were 16 (86.7%)
- Trans / Gender non-binary youth (82.8%)
- LGBTQ2S youth (80.2%)
- Indigenous youth (80.4%)



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# Involvement with Child Protection

## Abuse

63.1% - experienced childhood trauma and abuse

## Involvement in Child Protection

57.3% involved in Child Protection

47.2% had foster care placements

30.9% were in group homes



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Sooooooooo...

If we know the following:

- Many young people experience homelessness at a very young age
- Many demonstrate high rates of housing instability
- Many have a history of involvement in child protection



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# **We need to consider the following:**

Develop a system that more aggressively addresses the needs of young people 16 and under

- 1. Family First approaches**
- 2. Early intervention strategies**
- 3. School-Community partnerships**
- 4. Transitional supports for young people leaving care**



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## 4.3 Helping young people make rapid exits from homelessness.

**MOVING  
FORWARD**



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## The data from our Finding Home study confirm:

- Ongoing housing instability
- Nutritional Vulnerability
- Declining mental health
- Lower rates of school participation
- Higher unemployment
- Greater risk of criminal victimization
- Higher levels of chronicity

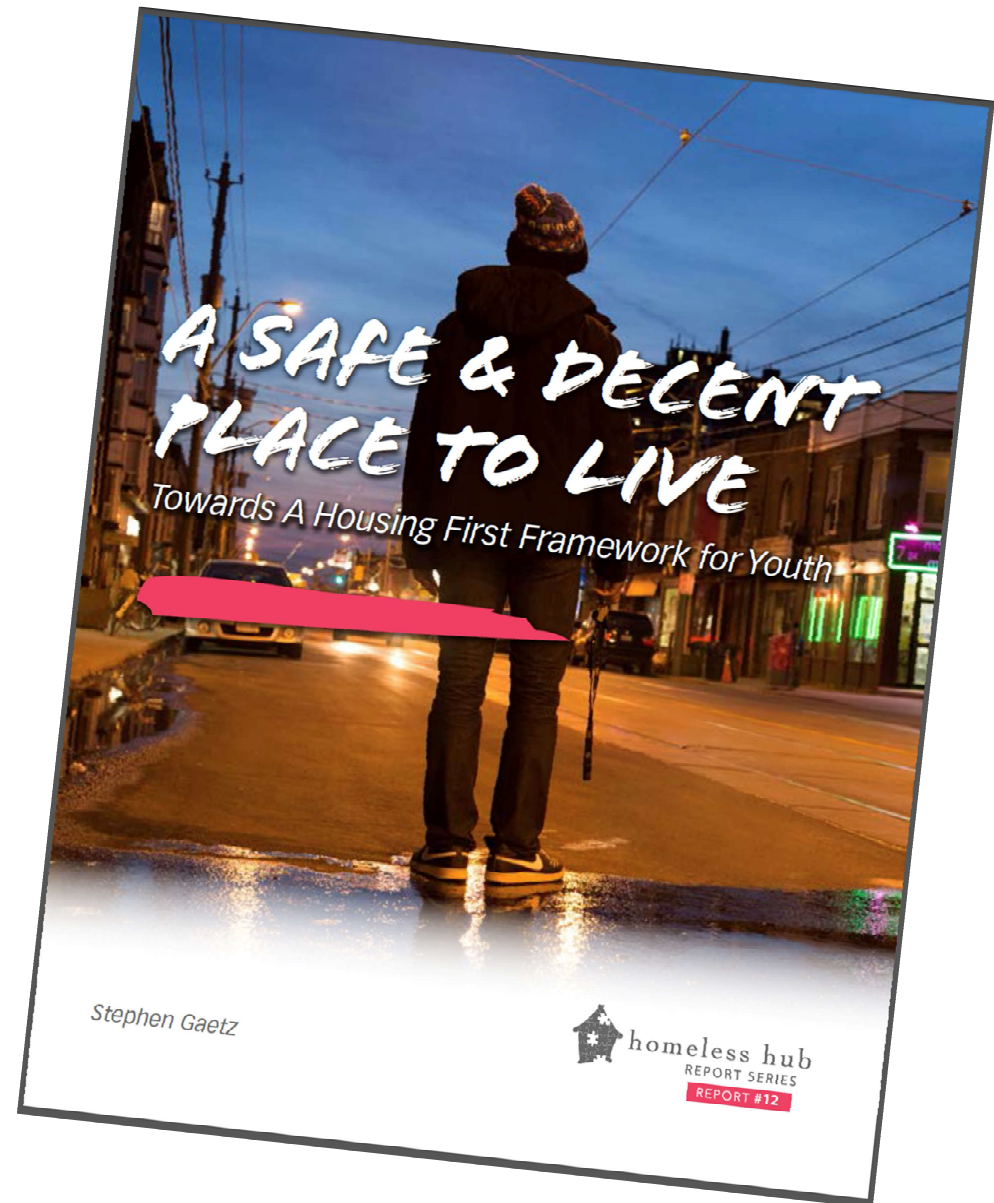


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# Housing First for Youth



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## 4.4 The importance of targeted plans focusing on systems integration



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## 4.5 Addressing education and employment



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## 4.6 The need to support youth with mental health challenges



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## 4.7 Building Resilience, Assets and Opportunities

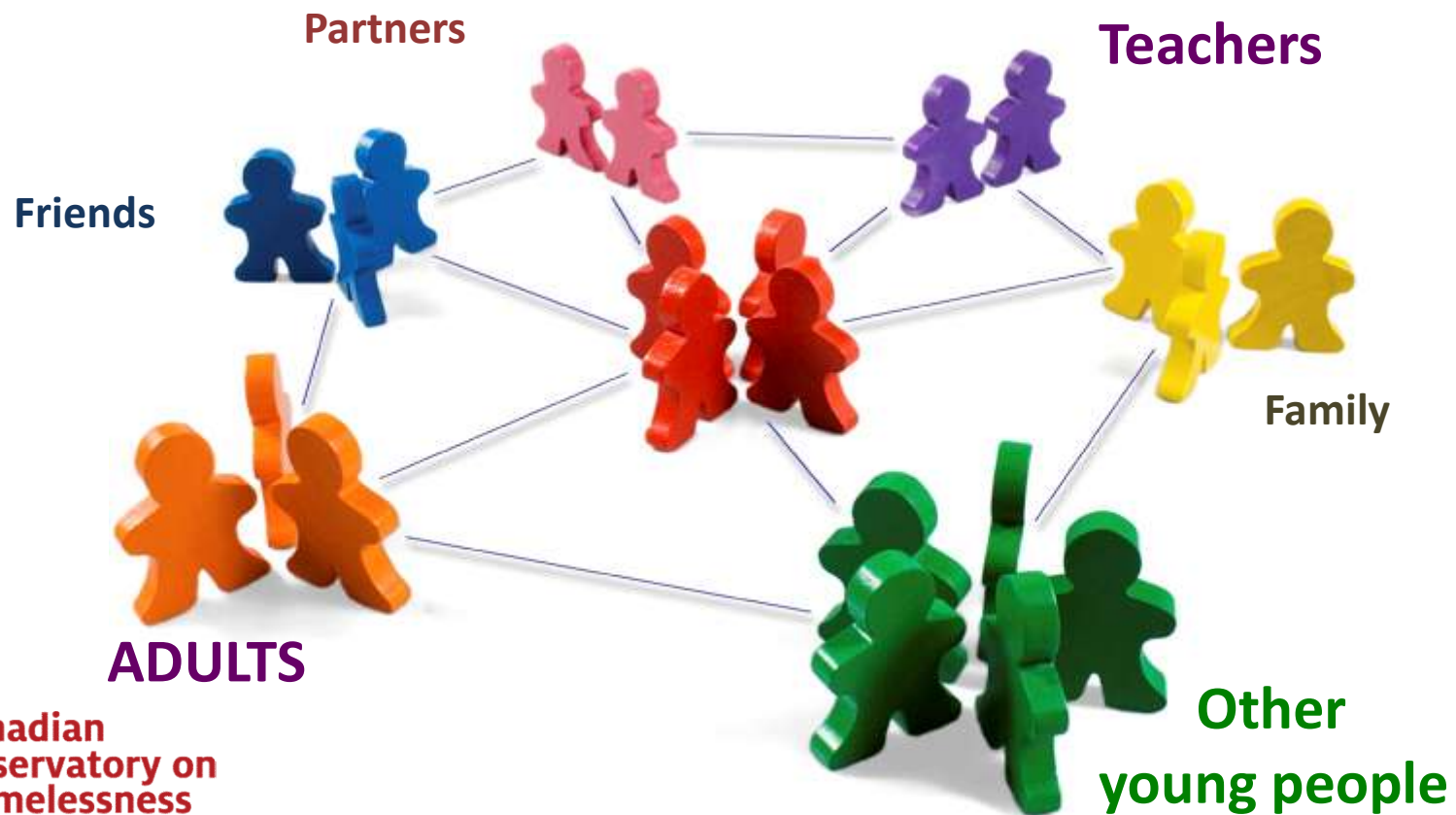


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# 4.8 The Importance of Fortifying Natural Supports



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## 4.9 Supporting Youth Voice



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**Questions or  
comments?**

