

YOUTH'S EXPERIENCES OF BEING KICKED OUT, AND WHY THEY COME  
BACK

By

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at

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores homeless and street involved youth's experiences of being kicked out from various programs and family situations and what draws them back. Using secondary data analysis from the Pathways to Resilience study, I examine the quantitative and qualitative data to determine youth's risk and resilience processes, their past service use history, and their positive and negative experiences within these services. Homeless youth experience similar levels of risk as other high risk youth, higher individual resilience and prosocial behaviours but lower overall resilience and relationship to caregivers. Youth felt they were kicked out of services primarily due to minor rule infractions or due to their own lack of engagement with the service. Participants discussed critical aspects of engaging with service providers including whether services met their basic needs and whether relationships with staff were respectful, trusting, accepting, and non-judgmental. The implications for service design and delivery are discussed.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

SYS <sup>1</sup>	Street Youth Services
RRC	Resilience Research Centre

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<sup>1</sup> Street Youth Services (SYS) is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the organization. All identifying information has been changed

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Homeless youth face unique challenges such as mental health concerns, addictions, poor health, and many of these are a result of living on the streets (Karabanow, 2004b; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Kidd, 2003; Koeller, 2008; McManus & Thompson, 2008; Whitbeck, Johnson, Hoyt, & Cauce, 2004). Despite their need for service provision, homeless youth tend to underutilize the services available to them (DeRosa et al., 1999; Koeller, 2008). Some of the reasons for this include restrictive rules, unwelcoming atmosphere, bad past experiences, and age restrictions (Garrett, Higa, Phares, Peterson, Wells, & Baer, 2008; Karabanow, 2004b; 2004a; Koeller, 2008; Raising the Roof, 2009; Thompson et al., 2006). Many youth have also been either temporarily or permanently suspended from programs, making it difficult to access the services necessary for survival. However, in spite of all the risks and challenges homeless youth experience, many of these youth demonstrate resilience in their ability to survive and thrive.

To understand why these youth continue to do well, it is necessary to examine their resilience; both their individual attributes and their environment, including their relationships to adults. Resilience studies have examined the individual characteristics, invulnerabilities which tend to foster resilience and protect youth from adversity (Anthony, 1987). The concern with this individualized view of resilience is that it creates the potential for blaming the individual for issues and problems which arise from their unsafe and risky environments (Bottrell, 2009; Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Cheung, & Levine, 2008). Consequently, it is important to consider that service ecologies and a

person's environment have a role to play in developing resilience and protecting against and coping with adversity (Bottrell, 2009). It can be argued that formal and informal supports can aide youth in developing resilience and a sense of community, civic engagement, and pro-social behaviours (DeRosa et al., 1999; Fogel, 2004; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Ungar et al., 2008). Therefore these organizations and services which help promote resilience and help youth to cope with adversity are important to research in order to inform best practice in the field. This study examines at risk and homeless youth's stories of being "kicked out" from various programs, services, and familial situations and what services do to engage youth to come back.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to examine youth's experiences of being either temporarily or permanently asked to leave services and families, and what draws them back into these services from a resilience framework. At risk and homeless youth have an overwhelming number of stories associated with being suspended or banned from a variety of places such as school, home, services, and public places. This thesis seeks to answer two questions. The first question explores youth's perceptions as to why they were asked to leave and the ramifications of this. The second question has two areas of concern. The first focuses on youth's experiences of service provision to determine what aspects of service delivery works and what does not. The second examines the specific areas of services that are necessary to facilitate youth engagement in order to establish what youth believe are necessary components of services to draw them back even after being suspended. Specifically this research will examine data from Street Youth Services (SYS) using secondary data analysis. The data includes both quantitative and qualitative

data from the Pathways to Resilience project (Resilience Research Centre, 2011). Using this data I want to understand how youth view current service provision with the aim to facilitate growth and change within the current service delivery.

### **1.3 IMPORTANCE OF STUDY**

Young people are suspended either temporarily or permanently from services for a number of clear and purposeful reasons such as not following rules, aggression, or violence (Karabanow, 2004b; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Garrett et al., 2008).

Sometimes youth are not overtly kicked out of a service, but instead the way the service is offered discretely excludes youth and leads them to feel unwelcome and unsupported (Karabanow & Rains, 1997). Often when youth are advertently or inadvertently pushed out of a service, they avoid the particular service and find alternate ways to meet the needs. However, sometimes young people do re-access services after they have been kicked out. In order to understand why young people re-access some services but not others, it is important to explore youth's experiences of being kicked out but also their experiences within the service. By exploring youth's experiences within service provision we can see what aspects of service delivery are working from the youth's perspectives.

This research is important because it provides youth a voice in program and policy development. Often their voices are not included in the development of programs, services, and policies, resulting in services that do not necessarily meet the needs of the youth. By exploring youth's experiences of being kicked out and their perception of service provision it is possible to understand the daily impact these services have on their lives. It also allows the exploration of what youth believe to be quality services; what is working and what is not working. This knowledge can then be used to redesign programs

and policies and appropriately train staff so they are able to connect with youth in a meaningful manner.

#### **1.4 OPERATIONALIZATION OF TERMS**

It is important to define many of the terms used throughout this thesis to ensure clear understanding of these words.

**Kicked out:** For the purpose of this thesis being kicked out refers to being asked to leave either temporarily or permanently from services, programs, family environments and public places.

**High Risk:** Refers to youth who are at risk for delayed physical and psychosocial development, delinquency, poverty, substance use, and other problems as a result of their history. These risk factors these youth potentially lead to a higher probability that they will have trouble achieving typical functioning.

**Safe:** It is important that services provide youth a safe environment. Young people must be protected from dangerous situations and people, and feel secure in the neighbourhood the service is located. The service environment and community must be free from violence and physical, sexual and emotional harm. Safety not only includes physical security and protection but also emotional security which includes lack of fear, and sense of worth.

**Engagement:** Some indicators of engagement with services include; developing meaningful relationships with staff, seeking and participating in meaningful programs and supportive. It also includes empowering relationships where youth voice is respected

and taken into account in program and intervention planning. Any decisions take into account of the young person's opinions and are explained clearly and in a meaningful way to the youth.

Unconditional positive regard: Refers to staff's relationship to the youth, rather than youth's connection to the agency. Staff members who show support, acceptance, value, and understanding of the youth regardless of the youth's decisions, behaviours or actions display unconditional positive regard. Although there may be conditions upon accessing the service, or behaviours within the program, this is independent from staff who show unconditional positive regard.

Doing well: Young people who are doing well are those youth who achieve the social norms and the typical goals and milestones for youth despite the disadvantages and risks they experience.

## **1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY**

Chapter two provides an overview of the literature surrounding youth resilience as well as homeless and street involved youth. It outlines the link between homeless youth, their resilience, and the key characteristics of services that work. Chapter three outlines the methodology of secondary data analysis and the methodology of the Pathways to Resilience Project, where the data was originally collected. It also describes the sample, the data gathering tools, and provides a brief background of SYS. Chapter four highlights the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data. The key demographic information, the risk and the risk and resilience scores, and the youth's past service use patterns are reported. The youth's involvement with past service provision and their experiences of being asked to leave programs is also explored. Finally, youth's participation with SYS is

examined to determine what makes this program different and successful. The last chapter, chapter 5 concludes the thesis by providing an overview of the key findings and the implications of these findings.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

At risk and homeless youth face many challenges and often require unique supports and services. Many youth have been victimized, stereotyped, physically, verbally, and sexually abused, had their services withdrawn temporarily or permanently, and many experience physical or mental health concerns or addiction issues (Karabanow, 2004b; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Kidd, 2003; Koeller, 2008; McManus & Thompson, 2008; Whitbeck, Johnson, Hoyt, & Cauce, 2004). Despite these problems, these young people still show resilience when under stress. Those working with this population advise us to involve youth in the creation of rules and policies, develop and maintain trusting, genuine caring relationships, focus on the strengths rather than deficits of the youth, value them as individuals, treat them with respect, provide a clean, safe environment, and foster positive development so they can reach their potential (Karabanow, 2004b; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Rew & Horner, 2003; Thompson, McManus, Lantry, Windsor, & Flynn, 2006). Ultimately, they advise us that “people are more valuable than programs and that process is more important than outcomes” (Kurtz, Lindsey, Jarvis, & Nackerud, 2000, p. 400).

This chapter will review resilience literature, as well as literature related to youth at risk of becoming homeless and homeless youth and what qualities services need to have in order to effectively engage and help develop resilience processes with this population. The literature shows that resilience in youth develops from many different aspects of their environment and experience. Risk factors and protective factors affect their risk level and susceptibility to or repeated homelessness. Their resilience also

influences their receptiveness to engagement with services, and in turn, establishes guidelines for creating and operating services for these youth.

## **2.2 RESILIENCE LITERATURE**

Resilience research as an overarching concept has shifted from focusing on individual characteristics towards a more interactional understanding of resilience. The environmental, contextual, and social factors are key considerations in resilience and are believed to buffer against the impact of difficulties (Ungar et al., 2008). The interactions between the individual and his or her environment are necessary to understanding coping and resilience (Bottrell, 2009) and resilience is “as dependent on what is built inside them as what is built around them” (Ungar, 2005, p. 429). Resilience is not a static or inherent characteristic, rather it is more accurately defined as follows: “in the context of significant adversity... resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individuals’ family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways” (Ungar, 2008, p. 225). Resilience therefore relies upon not only the individual factors, but also is heavily influenced by the availability of services and supports in the environment and an individual’s ability to access them. Some examples of supports important to resilience include a positive relationship with a caring adult, a community to engage with, as well as services that are provided in a meaningful manner to youth (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000). These supports are important to develop and ensure health when surrounded by adversity.

### 2.2.1 *Protective Factors*

There has been much research examining how protective factors buffer against risk and adversity in youth (For example, Garmezy, 1983; Rutter, 1987). Many youth have protective factors and engage in processes that help them to do well under adversity when others would not. These factors are not necessarily recognized as a protective factor until risk is experienced (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1987). Protective factors have been identified as at least one positive social relationship such as parents, teachers, community members or positive peer relations (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Nettles et al., 2000; Rutter, 1987; Wolkow & Ferguson, 2001), high self esteem, high intelligence, coping skills, spirituality, goals (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Kumpfer, 1999), supportive neighbourhoods or other institutional environments (Boyden & Mann, 2005) including school, and opportunities for extra-curricular activities (Nettles et al., 2000). These processes influence the way young people experience and cope with risk and other stressful situations (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Although many are internal to the individual, others are external, such as positive social relations and support which can be developed at any point in a youth's life and are consequently an important focus of service delivery (Wolkow & Ferguson, 2001).

While there are many factors that contribute towards youth's resilience, these same factors may also contribute to their risk when faced with a different situation (Boyden & Mann, 2005). For example qualities such as resourcefulness, intelligence, and being goal oriented may help youth to achieve resilience, but if they fail to achieve their desired goals they can also experience decreased self-esteem, sense of worthlessness and suicidal ideation (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Resilience should not be considered a "fixed

state” (Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 18) and it should not be assumed that seemingly resilient children and youth are resilient when faced with any and all situations (Boyden & Mann, 2005; McManus & Thompson, 2008; Resilience Research Centre, 2011; Rutter, 1987). If young people experience many risk factors simultaneously, it is possible they will become overwhelmed and not deal as effectively as when the risks were not compounded (Boyden & Mann, 2005).

### *2.2.2 Risk Factors*

Risk factors increase the likelihood of negative development or outcomes. Some risk factors youth face are more personal elements such as personality, temperament, or genetic components while others are external to them such as low socioeconomic status, belonging to a minority group, living in an unsafe environment, having a family facing challenges, or having a single parent (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Kumpfer, 1999; Paradise & Cauce, 2002).

### *2.2.3 Engagement with Services*

Youth will engage with services and individuals in a manner that provides them with resources in a meaningful way, so “at risk children who are deprived of the resources to sustain health (and resilience) find creative ways to successfully engage with caregivers to get what they need” (Ungar, 2005, p. 435). These creative ways to engage with caregivers may result in a young person making unconventional decisions in order to survive and maintain their well-being (Kumpfer, 1999). These decisions are often forced choices and once they are closely examined it is clear these decisions and

behaviours are in fact adaptive, health maintaining, and functions of resilience (Ungar, 2001; Ungar et al., 2008). By the same argument, leaving home and entering the streets may be a form of coping and an adaptive response to the environment (McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005). These youth are displaying resilience as they are interacting with their environment to modify the level of environmental risk they face (Kumpfer, 1999).

#### *2.2.4 Importance of Caring Relationships*

Another important factor that is likely to have a positive outcome in a youth's life is having a genuine relationship with a caring adult (Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Paradise & Cauce, 2002; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Norato, 2002). Many times, at risk and homeless youth have not had the opportunity to develop supportive, healthy relationships and when youth are able to develop a fulfilling relationship, they tend to do better (Paradise & Cauce, 2002). Furthermore, it has been argued that this "social support, defined as social integration or social embeddedness, has a beneficial effect on well-being whether or not the person is under stress" (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovich, & Ungar, 2005, p. 272). Often it is this caring adult who teaches the young person positive coping mechanisms, helps them to increase their self-esteem and self worth, provides empathy and emotional connectedness, acts as a role model, provides advice, and sets reasonable expectations (Kumpfer, 1999; Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and Norato (2002) suggest that a mentor, or a nonparent adult with whom the youth interacts with on a regular basis can decrease the risk of becoming involved with drugs and alcohol, delinquency and other such problematic behaviours.

### 2.2.5 *Resilience Literature and Homeless Youth*

Many homeless and street involved youth are generally viewed as resilient (Karabanow, 2004a). Resilience in homeless youth is sometimes determined by their ability to successfully adapt and survive on the streets, though this is often counter to society's norms (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). The skills necessary to survive on the streets can contradict the skills necessary to survive in mainstream culture and tend to be opposite to typical social norms, prosocial behaviours, and educational attainment (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). Resilience may also be determined by their successful transition into adulthood (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999).

Research shows that homeless youth have several specific strengths; resources and self-improvement or personal strengths (Lindsey, Kurtz, Jarvis, Williams, & Nackerud, 2000; Rew & Horner, 2003). These young people have the resources and knowledge to survive on the streets, meet their basic needs, and develop relationships that provide them with acceptance, guidance, friendship, and resources (Rew & Horner, 2003). They also have internal resources such as independence, responsibility, maturity, caring, determination, and self-confidence (Lindsey, et al., 2000). Self improvement consists of learning from mistakes, taking responsibility for their actions, avoiding bad influences, and setting and reaching personal goals (Lindsey et al., 2000). Some homeless youth are also motivated to change as they learn new attitudes and behaviours and learn about themselves which allows them to recognize the consequence of their actions such as the ramifications of substance use, not taking care of their health and unsafe sex (Lindsey et al., 2000; Rew & Horner, 2003). Positive self esteem also predicts healthy outcomes in homeless youth and buffers against risk, for instance loneliness, suicidal

ideation, substance use and the feeling of being trapped (Kidd, 2003, 2004; Kidd & Shahar, 2008). In addition to this, homeless youth who perceive themselves to be resilient tend to be less lonely, less hopeless, engage in fewer risky behaviours, and had lower suicidal ideations than their counterparts (Cleverley & Kidd, 2011; Rew et al., 2001). However, youth who have been on the streets for an extended period of time perceive themselves as less resilient and have higher rates of psychological stress (Cleverley & Kidd, 2011). Rew et al. (2001) argue that resilience in homeless youth may be “less a protective factor that facilitates growth and development, and more an adaptive strategy or defense against the feelings of disconnectedness, loneliness, and hopelessness” (p. 38).

### **2.3 AT RISK AND HOMELESS YOUTH**

At risk and homeless youth lives and situations can change frequently and unexpectedly and each youth faces unique challenges (McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005). As a result of their transient nature and unique experiences and situations, at risk and homeless youth require specialized services to ensure their engagement within programs and to increase their resilience (Kurtz et al., 2000; McManus & Thompson, 2008).

#### *2.3.1 Entering the Streets*

Youth become homeless for a variety of reasons such as gaps in service provision, poor experiences within the child welfare system, and family issues (Dadds, Braddock, Cuers, Elliott, & Kelly, 1993; Karabanow, 2004b; Kidd, 2003; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005). Notably, most “youth are running *away* from problematic situations rather than running *toward* the street” (Karabanow,

2004a, p. 4). In many provinces in Canada, when youth turn 16, neither their parents nor the child welfare system has a legal responsibility to provide them with housing, leaving them potentially homeless (Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Raising the Roof, 2009; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). Youth sometimes have negative experiences within the child welfare system as they are frequently moved around, the rules are experienced as stringent, the staff or foster family are experienced as not truly caring for the young person, or their foster family or group home staff abuses them or neglects to meet their needs (Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Kidd, 2003; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005). Family reasons can include being asked to leave their family home by their parents or caregivers (Dadds et al., 1993; Karabanow, 2004a; Paradise & Cauce, 2002), being removed by the authorities, or deciding to leave for a variety of reasons such as lack of emotional attachment, violence, abuse, or neglect (Dadds et al., 1993; Karabanow, 2004a; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006; Paradise & Cauce, 2002; Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005). In one study, 34% of young people viewed leaving home as a choice, though in reality they often had few other options available to them and thus were forced into the choice to leave home (Karabanow, 2004b). In many cases leaving home or the child welfare system is seen as a better and safer alternative than staying, due to unsafe conditions (Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Koeller, 2008; McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005; Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). Karabanow (2004b) states that “if ‘home’ is defined as a safe haven, with people who love and care for you, most of these youth were homeless long before they left for the streets” (p. 22).

Although entering the streets can lead to some positive outcomes such as leaving abuse, rape, and other unsafe situations at home (Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005), it does not solve all problems (McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005). A large portion of homeless youth have experienced victimization and trauma in their childhoods (Gaetz, 2004; Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Kidd, 2003; Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005) and this history increases the likelihood of experiencing victimization and trauma in adulthood (Karabanow, 2004b; Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; McManus & Thompson, 2008; Thompson, 2005; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). Learning how to survive on the streets increases the chance of victimization as the youth can be forced to engage in deviant and illegal activities such as prostitution, selling drugs and theft to ensure their survival (Gaetz, 2004; Karabanow, 2004a; Koeller, 2008; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). The trauma the young people may experience both in their past and current lives on the street can range from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, to abandonment (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006; Paradise & Cauce, 2002). Some argue that becoming homeless is in itself a form of psychological trauma as it can create a life of instability, insecurity, and threatens one's ability to meet basic needs (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991). Leaving home as a response to the trauma experienced at home provides an escape from it, but does not provide the resources to help cope with it (McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005). This may then compound past psychological trauma and exacerbate any already existing mental health concerns or substance abuse patterns (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Martijn & Sharpe, 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that when at risk youth leave their home, "an already negative

developmental trajectory is accentuated by what they experience on their own”  
(Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Yoder, 1999, p. 292).

Leaving home can also be a significant stressor in a youth’s life and they may experience a sense of loss of familiar routine and relationships (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; McCarthy & Hagen, 1992; Thompson, 2005; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Bao, 2000). Once these youth leave their homes, they are also more likely to experience stress and physical and sexual assaults on the streets (Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Bao, 2000; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). It is consequently important to have programs and services which target the unique needs of this population, their strengths and independence (Thompson, 2005; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Yoder, 1999).

### 2.3.2 *Social Exclusion*

Homeless youth experience social exclusion in areas such as employment, housing, social capital, and access to resources (Gaetz, 2004). Since these youth cannot rely upon familial support, they often resort to unconventional and illegal means to obtain money, food, housing, clothing, and other resources (Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, & Flynn, 2007). This then leads to further problems such as a criminal record and increased risk of becoming the victims of crimes (McCarthy & Hagan, 1995). Homeless youth often cycle between placements, detention facilities, friends’ houses, and the streets (Gaetz, 2004; McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005; McCarthy & Hagen, 1992; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005). These moves can either be institutionally initiated (e.g. a social worker moves a youth from a foster home to a group home), family initiated (e.g. the family is evicted from their house and they move in with

other relatives), or youth initiated (e.g. the youth leaves an abusive family home) (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). Youth tend to go to the streets when their housing situation breaks down because they feel a sense of connection to their street family when this connection is lacking in other areas of their lives (McAdam-Crisp et al., 2005; Paradise & Cauce, 2002). This connection to their street family strengthens bonds with individuals involved in street life and they may become more ingrained in this way of life (McAdam-Crisp et al., 2005). This may then increase the likelihood of using drugs and alcohol, engaging in unsafe sex, and becoming involved with the criminal justice system to ensure their survival (McCarthy & Hagan, 1995; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Yoder, 1999; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990).

### 2.3.3 *Housing and Employment*

Stable and safe housing provide youth with shelter, safety, and an address for social assistance and employment, amongst other resources. Youth tend to avoid shelters, group homes, and other residential facilities they view as unsafe or lacking an appropriate environment (Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010; Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Karabanow, 2004b; Koeller, 2008; Thompson et al., 2006). Many times youth are forced to share crowded living quarters with strangers, live in unsafe environments, unfamiliar areas, or in a different shelter or group home than their partner or children (Karabanow, 2004b; Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010). Shelters and group homes also may cause youth to feel that they lack control because they must depend on staff members and have to obey restrictive rules (Karabanow, 2004a; Karabanow & Rains, 1997) when they are used to the independence of the streets (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991). In addition to these

internal disadvantages of living in a shelter or group home, community members are often distrustful and fearful of the shelter or group home residents. This can cause youth staying in shelters or group homes to feel further stigmatized and isolated (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Koeller, 2008). Many youth would rather stay with friends, friends' families, or on the streets than stay at an unsafe or undesirable shelter or group home (Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010; Koeller, 2008).

Despite these concerns, living in a shelter is sometimes necessary and unavoidable to increase their chances of gaining employment or social assistance. Homeless youth tend to find themselves in a difficult situation when trying to gain employment while living in a shelter or on the streets (Karabanow, 2004b). It is challenging to get and maintain a job while living on the streets or in a shelter for a number of reasons such as lack of employment skills and experience, stigma and stereotypes within the community and from employers, and much of the youth's time is spent trying to find food and shelter leaving little time to find and hold a job (Karabanow, 2004a; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005).

Social assistance is another venue to gain income. However, social assistance programs for youth tend to have rules and regulations that leave many youth unqualified to access the money (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). If the young person does qualify for the money, social assistance often does not provide sufficient funds to find and maintain safe housing (Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010). As a result these young people are stuck in a cycle, leaving them unable to improve their lives. They need employment or social assistance to get housing, but social assistance does not provide enough for safe, clean housing, while

living in a shelter is a deterrent for employers, leaving youth both jobless and homeless (Koeller, 2008).

Many youth try to solve this problem by borrowing money, working under the table or in illegal paid activities like prostitution, pan handling, busking, squeegeeing, dealing drugs or theft (Gaetz, 2004; Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Kidd, 2003; Koeller, 2008; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990), or finding a roommate to offset the cost of housing. However, their peers and friends are often also homeless, may be experiencing their own difficulties, and therefore may have challenges paying their portion of rent on time. This then places their housing in jeopardy (Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010; Raising the Roof, 2009).

## **2.4 SERVICES THAT WORK FOR AT RISK AND HOMELESS YOUTH**

### *2.4.1 Introduction*

Despite the need for various service delivery systems, at risk and homeless youth tend to under-use the services that are available to them (DeRosa et al., 1999; Koeller, 2008). Research has demonstrated that there are a variety of reasons for this under-utilization of services such as prior negative experiences or stigmatization from the service, fear that child welfare or the police will be called, unwelcoming or unhelpful atmosphere, the inability of the service to ensure safety of the youth and their belongings, structural barriers such as age restrictions, hours of operation limitations, being at full capacity, pet free policy, restrictive rules, lack of harm reduction model, and a sense of personal pride and self-reliance (Garrett et al., 2008; Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Koeller, 2008; Raising the Roof, 2009; Thompson et al., 2006; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005). In addition, survival needs such as accessing food and shelter may override the decision

to access physical or mental health services (Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005). It is consequently important that service provision for at risk and homeless youth be carefully planned and delivered to ensure their unique needs are met (Thompson, 2005).

Three qualitative studies within Canada explored social stigma, discriminatory actions and related feelings of worthlessness, loneliness, and suicidality among youth involved in street life (Kidd, 2003, 2004, 2007). It was found that the amount of social stigma experienced plays a role in a youth's mental health status and suicidal risk (Kidd, 2007). It is therefore important to have the opportunity to develop positive relationships with other individuals (both youth and staff within institutions) and the surrounding community, as well as have a structured routine to promote a feeling of safety and security (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991). It is also important to help youth connect socially with others and the community, as homelessness often breaks former social bonds with the youth's family, friends, and community and may lead to distrust toward others (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Koeller, 2008).

#### *2.4.2 Providing the Basic Needs*

It is necessary for services to provide for the youth's basic needs such as shelter and food (Maslow, 1968). Research shows that immediately providing these basic needs in a caring and compassionate fashion is a characteristic of successful service delivery for homeless youth (Karabanow, 2003; 2004a; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Raising the Roof, 2009; Thompson et al., 2006). When these needs are not met, locating these resources tend to be a priority in the person's life (Karabanow, 2004b; Koeller, 2008; Wingert, Higgit, & Ristock, 2005) and as a result youth are not necessarily concerned with developing relationships with staff members or connecting with the agency itself (Raising

the Roof, 2009). Research also shows that the first step towards creating a caring environment and building long term relationships between youth and staff often revolve around providing practical support such as food, shelter, and treatment for physical injuries or illnesses (Bender et al., 2007; Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010; Karabanow, 2003; 2004a; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Kidd, 2003; McManus & Thompson, 2008).

Providing these basic needs and giving youth time and space to become comfortable in the environment and with the staff can be a means to assess whether the youth has other needs which staff could help to meet as well (Karabanow, 2004a; Kidd, Miner, Walker, & Davidson, 2007; McManus & Thompson, 2008). Providing for the youth's basic needs and allowing them to access the service risk and commitment free, demonstrates the agency's respect and care for youth (Karabanow, 2003). McManus and Thompson (2008) argue that as youth become more comfortable with staff members and more familiar with the organization there is greater likelihood youth will engage on a deeper level. Youth may also begin to feel as if they belong to part of a community (Karabanow, 2003). Once a youth commits to a service and trust has been established, it is possible for staff to begin advocating for and linking the youth to long term services and supports in the larger, mainstream society such as supportive housing or independent living (Karabanow, 2003; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005).

#### *2.4.3 Positive Relationships*

As an alternative to formal services, many youth rely on informal supports such as peers and other supportive relations. The size of the support network is not important; rather the quality and amount of support provided by these relationships is crucial

(Ennett, Bailey, & Federman, 1999). Many times, having social support and a peer network, often consisting of friends, partners, family and neighbours, acts as a protective factor for at risk and homeless youth (Ennett, Bailey, & Federman, 1999; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003).

Friends are especially important when young people first enter the streets because their more experienced friends provide protection, teach them how to survive and may provide emotional support (Bender et al., 2007; Gaetz, 2004; Kidd, 2003; Kurtz et al., 2000; Rew & Horner, 2003; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). Sometimes youth view their peer network which consists of other homeless and street-involved youth as their replacement family (Koeller, 2008; Paradise & Cauce, 2002). However not all youth are able to rely on their peer network for long term emotional support (Karabanow, 2004b; Rew, Taylor-Seehafer, Thomas, & Yockey, 2001). Research has shown that youth who are unable to identify a peer support network are more likely to engage in survival sex (sex for resources) (Ennett, Bailey, & Federman, 1999) or turn to drugs to help cope with difficulties (Karabanow, 2004b). Friendships can also be counter-productive, especially when friends become untrustworthy or turn on their friends for drugs and alcohol (Kidd, 2003; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). Although peer friendships can provide youth with support, protection from the streets, and someone to count on in times of need, these same individuals may also expose youth to elements of risk and danger (Paradise & Cauce, 2002; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990).

#### *2.4.4 The Quality of Service Providers*

Effective service providers have been found to mimic the same conditions among peers that are supportive of youth. Developing relationships with staff members has been

shown to be a very important aspect of successful services (Garrett et al., 2008; Karabanow, 2003; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Kurtz et al., 2000; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Thompson et al., 2006). Homeless and street-involved youth have reported that the helping professional should be caring, accepting, encouraging, supportive, empathic, respectful and trustworthy (Garrett et al., 2008; Kidd, Miner, Walker, & Davidson, 2007; Kurtz et al., 2000; Thompson, et al., 2006). In addition to those qualities staff should also value youth and their ideas, set boundaries, hold the youth accountable, follow through with what he/she says he/she will do, see the world as the youth sees it, truly listen to them, maintain confidentiality, provide practical assistance, advocate for their needs and rights, and make youth their priority and the centre of their attention (Karabanow, 2004a; Kidd et al., 2007; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Kurtz et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2006).

To build positive relationships with youth, staff must also take action. Advocacy with and on behalf of youth is another critical aspect of effective service delivery, as is connecting youth with other services (Karabanow, 2004a). It is important to link youth with and advocate for young people to access resources outside of the capacity of the service such as employment, education, stable housing, parenting services, and addiction services. In order to link youth to the appropriate services and to increase the odds of success, it is necessary that youth and staff members work together to create reasonable, attainable, and co-created goals (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Thompson et al., 2006). Staff should be prepared to play multiple roles such as counselor, advocate, or financial planner depending on youth's needs (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991).

Alternatively, service providers who break confidentiality, treat youth as an object and are experienced as interfering with autonomy and independence and who are viewed as judgmental, disrespectful, rude, and pathologizing are often avoided by youth (Garrett et al., 2008; Kurtz et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2006; Wingert, Higgitt, & Ristock, 2005). It is consequently important when providing services to homeless and street-involved youth to ensure they have autonomy and a voice in decisions affecting them and how the service is provided to them (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003). Developing positive and trusting relationships helps to create a space where young people feel safe and respected which is necessary for successful service delivery with homeless and street-involved youth (Karabanow, 2004a).

#### 2.4.5 *The Environment*

Effective services not only have staff with the appropriate skills and personality to engage homeless and street-involved youth, but they also have an environment that is welcoming, well maintained and experienced as safe. It is necessary the location of the service is in a safe and accessible neighbourhood, and the physical space of the service is clean and well maintained (Karabanow, 2004a; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Thompson et al., 2006). The youth attending the program must feel respected, safe, cared for and that they and their ideas are valued (Karabanow, 2004a).

In order to create a caring, safe and trustworthy environment, services must have a framework of consistent, understandable, and reasonable rules and expectations that the youth themselves have helped to develop (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). It is also necessary for service providers to hold youth accountable for their actions in a respectful

manner (Kurtz et al., 2000; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). However, rules set up certain expectations the youth must abide by and often the consequence of not obeying the rules is a suspension from the program for a specific and set amount of time. Many youth have reported that it is difficult to follow through with the rules and expectations of these programs (DeRosa et al., 1999; Karabanow, 2004b). It is consequently important that the rules and policies ensure that youth have “boundaries and expectations, fulfillment of physiological and safety needs, a climate of love and caring, the inculcation of self-esteem, the encouragement for growth, positive values, and positive links to the community” (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000, p. 15). This provides an environment where although there are rules, there is also an atmosphere of caring and opportunity to develop positive relationships and a sense of community (Karabanow, 2004a).

Immediately meeting basic needs, building positive relationships with staff members, making referrals, advocating and ensuring a respectful and open environment within the agency are building blocks of trust for many youth who have previously been disenfranchised by other people, services, and agencies (Karabanow, 2004a; Kidd et al., 2007). Youth must feel comfortable to make mistakes, feel unconditionally supported by staff and the agency, and feel comfortable and able to come back to a service when they determine they are ready to make a change (Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010; Kidd et al., 2007). Many times, the services these youth have previously been engaged with have rejected them when the youth is ready to engage with the service and work towards positive change (Gharagahi & Stuart, 2010; Kidd et al., 2007).

#### 2.4.6 *Being “Kicked Out”*

The phenomenon of youth being “kicked out” is a salient aspect of many homeless youth’s lives (Karabanow & Rains, 1997). They have often experienced being suspended temporarily or permanently from family homes, shelters, group homes, drop in centres, public places, and other such venues and organizations. These youth experience social exclusion on a regular basis, and where they are and are not allowed to be is often controlled and under surveillance (Gaetz, 2004). Youth who are not permitted to sit or walk in certain areas are often forced to hang out in less safe parts of the city or town which in turn leads them to more dangerous situations (Gaetz, 2004). Social exclusion creates a means for discriminatory and unfair treatment as well as puts the youth in dangerous situations (Gaetz, 2004).

One of the most common reasons youth either voluntarily leave an organization or are involuntarily asked to leave is a result of the rules (Karabanow, 2004b; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Garrett et al., 2008). Youth often find the rules too restrictive, feel the staff members are inflexible in their administration of the rules, and feel they are suspended for minor rule violations (Karabanow & Rains, 1997). The restrictive rules tend to make the transition challenging, going from being on the streets where there are no rules or restrictions to entering a shelter or group home where they must abide by the rules (Garrett et al., 2008; Karabanow, 2004b).

## 2.5 SUMMARY

At risk youth become homeless for a variety of reasons and many times they leave a risky situation only to enter into another lifestyle which has many different risks and

challenges. Most homeless youth experience being “kicked out” or being temporarily or permanently asked to leave a place, an organization, or a group. However, many of these youth demonstrate resilience when faced with adversity. The youth who do better tend to be engaged with services and have positive relationships with the staff in this service, but also have positive relationships with their peers and community.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 APPROACH

I conducted a secondary data analysis of qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the Pathways to Resilience Research Project. As an employee for the Resilience Research Centre (RRC), I was involved in the data collection and analysis for the larger Pathways to Resilience Project. As such, I became familiar with the data collection tools, methodology and themes arising out of the analysis. I was also involved in gathering all quantitative and qualitative data from Street Youth Services (SYS). For the purpose of this study, a separate analysis was undertaken to explore the data and themes specifically from SYS. Where necessary, this data was compared to the larger Atlantic Canada data sample. This includes both the high risk service using and the comparison, non-service using samples.

In addition to this, as an employee of both the RRC and SYS, I bring a particular lens and a certain element of bias into the interpretation of the qualitative data. I have worked with at risk and homeless youth extensively for three years and have an understanding of the youth, their strengths and the challenges they experience on a daily basis. SYS's client-centered, harm reduction approach and philosophy also influences my outlook of these youth. My experiences and knowledge of SYS and therefore bias, also plays a role in my understanding and interpretation of the data. Grounded theory argues that the "interaction between the researcher and the researched produces the data, and therefore the meanings that the researcher observes and defines" (Charmaz, 1995, p. 35). As such I am aware that I, as the researcher, am a filter through which the data are understood and constructed based on my interactions with and perspectives of youth as

well as my research philosophy (Charmaz, 2006). This has influenced my decision to include some themes while omitting others from the analysis. In addition to this, my social location as a middle class, biracial female also had an impact on how I conducted the interviews and how I interpret and understand the data. It is not possible to separate my social location, values, experiences, knowledge base, and emotional reactions to the youth's experiences from the way I interacted with the young people through body language and probing questions (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). Therefore, me as the researcher, the data and the interpretations are intricately interconnected.

Secondary data analysis involves examining a dataset that was collected for a different study (Glaser, 1963; Glass, 1976; Hakim, 1982). Some argue secondary data analysis further analyses new research questions with an already existing dataset and provides new knowledge and interpretations (Glaser, 1963; Hakim, 1982) while others argue it involves using more sophisticated statistical measures to answer the original research questions and can sometimes result in refuting the prior conclusions (Glass, 1976; Hakim, 1982).

Advantages of secondary data analysis include saving time and money (Hakim, 1982). Research teams such as the RRC tend to have more finances and resources available including archived data and are more likely to “yield data that is in good measure precise, reliable, and based on carefully chosen representative samples” (Glaser, 1963, p. 11). In addition to this, the sample sizes of these dataset tend to be large and representative which can be harder to achieve as an independent researcher (Hofferth, 2005). Secondary data analysis has benefits for both the team that produced the data and the individual researcher undertaking secondary data analysis (Glaser, 1963). It helps the

research team by promoting further exploration and analysis of the dataset, as it is difficult for a team to use the data set to its full potential (Pienta, O'Rourke, & Franks, 2011). Secondary data analysis also benefits the individual researcher because it provides high quality data to the independent researcher and avoids being “wasteful of time, money and data when the independent neglects possible secondary analysis of pertinent available information” (Glaser, 1963, p. 12). Finally, secondary data analysis also helps to avoid over-burdening the public with multiple questionnaires (Hakim, 1982).

Some of the documented disadvantages of secondary data analysis are not necessarily disadvantages to this particular study since I was involved in the collection of the original data. For example, the time and resources necessary to become familiar with a dataset and the specific data collection methods is cited as a disadvantage (Pienta, O'Rourke, & Franks, 2011; McCall & Appelbaum, 1991; Hofferth, 2005). However given my position and role at the RRC, I am familiar with the data collection methods, dataset, as well as have access to the entirety of the data. One disadvantage that does apply to this study is that the original data was collected to answer specific research questions with a larger and more diverse population (Pienta, O'Rourke, & Franks, 2011; Hofferth, 2005).

### **3.2 SAMPLE**

This study examines data gathered from youth involved with SYS, whose mandate is to serve at risk and homeless youth. This population of youth was chosen for the study because they were involved with a program designed to work with at risk and homeless youth, which was most appropriate to answering my research question. In the larger Pathways to Resilience study there was a total of 622 youth in Halifax, New

Brunswick, and Labrador. Two hundred and ninety-six (296) of these youth were from Halifax and 79 of these youth were from SYS. Of the 296 youth from Halifax who participated in the quantitative component, 64 completed qualitative interviews and 14 of these youth had used SYS. Each youth from the total Pathways to Resilience sample completed one qualitative interview with the exception of one youth within the justice system who completed two interviews. All youth who used SYS services as identified in either the quantitative or qualitative data were included in this analysis.

To participate in the original Pathways to Resilience study, youth were between the ages of 14 and 21 and using more than one service. Because youth nominated to the Pathways to Resilience study were multiple service users, data included in this analysis were selected based on identifier codes within the quantitative and qualitative data sets. Any youth coded as using SYS was included (79). The average age of the participants was 19.42 (SD=1.93) and the mean grade completed was grade ten (M=10.49; SD=1.41). There were approximately equal numbers of females (45.6%) and males (54.4%) and almost two thirds of youth were of white majority ethno-racial background (54, 68.5%), with approximately one third (25, 31.5%) from racially diverse minority populations (Table 1).

### **3.3 DATA GATHERING TOOLS**

Quantitative data was obtained using the raw data from the *Pathways to Resilience Youth Measure* (PRYM) (see Appendix A). The measure is designed to assess risk and resilience as well as formal and informal service use patterns. The questionnaire includes many validated subscales such as the *Child and Youth Resilience Measure*

(CYRM) (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005), SDQ Prosocial scale, SDQ Conduct Problem scale, SDQ Peer Problems scale (Goodman, 1997; 2001), 4HSQ Risk Scale, 4HSQ Delinquency Scale (Phelps, et al., 2007; Theokas & Lerner, 2006), CES-D-12-NLSCY Depression scale (Poulin, Hand, & Boudreau, 2005), community risk and school engagement scales. The PRYM takes about 50 minutes to complete and is administered individually to participants. All questions were read out loud to youth to ensure full comprehension and to eliminate any literacy issues.

The qualitative data for the Pathways to Resilience study was gathered through interviews with a sub-sample of youth. Interviews were conducted individually with youth, in a semi-structured format and followed an interview guide (see Appendix B). The interview guide was created and finalized with the input from the advisory committee for the Pathways to Resilience study. The interview was designed to elicit information about youth's experiences regarding their service use, their families, and their communities, as well as the risks they face and how they cope with these risks. The interviews were intended to be a conversation that encouraged each youth to explain and interpret his or her life experiences (Charmaz, 2006). All data were collected between November 2007 and December 2009. See Section 3.3 for how the youth participants were selected.

The interviews were half an hour to an hour and half in length depending on the detail and elaboration of the youth's responses. Interviews were recorded using a DVR with the youth's permission and later transcribed by the same researcher who conducted the interview. During the consenting process and again once the interview was completed, youth were asked if they wanted a copy of their transcript. This gave the

youth the opportunity to read over the transcript, to add or remove any comments from the transcript and to meet with the research associate to clarify any ambiguous statements, which helped to ensure trustworthiness of the data. If youth did request a copy of their transcript, they were asked how they wanted their transcripts sent to them to ensure confidentiality. It was then noted on the consent form with the means of how they wanted the transcript sent to them; email or mailing address. If they requested their transcript via mail, it was emphasized to youth that they were confident no one else reads their mail. When an address was not available, youth received their transcripts by email.

#### **3.4 DATA GATHERING METHOD**

For the subsample of youth using SYS, both the questionnaires and interviews were conducted at the SYS. Participants were recruited through both staff nominations and self referrals. Staff at SYS helped to set up times for the youth and the researcher to meet. As an employee with SYS, I was permitted to sit in the common room of SYS while waiting for youth to inquire about the study. The questionnaires were either completed in the common room or in a staff office depending on availability of office space and youth comfort level. The 79 youth who participated in the initial quantitative data set for the Pathways to Resilience study were between the ages of 16 and 21 and had all used the community program, SYS, in addition to at least one other service: Child and Family Services, Mental Health, Education, or Justice Services. After completing the PRYM, the youth received \$10 compensation for their time and to offset any costs associated with completing the questionnaire.

During this initial phase of the research, the researchers asked participants for permission to contact them again for the second phase of the study. This phase, the

qualitative interviews, was explained to youth, and consenting participants provided detailed contact information.

Based on results from the quantitative phase of the study, the sub-sample of participants was selected for the interviews using the participant's scores from the PRYM. Using SPSS (6.1) to run the analysis, the youth's risk and resilience scores were generated. Using the mean results for the total SYS sample, youth with the highest risk and highest resilience, and the highest risk and lowest resilience were invited to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. The following outlines the procedure used to contact and set up interviews with the selected participants:

1. If the youth indicated on their quantitative consent form they wished to be contacted again for future research, I attempted to contact the youth to set up interviews using their contact information.
2. Youth were either contacted via phone or email to inquire whether they wanted to take part in the qualitative interview and a meeting place and time that was convenient to the youth was arranged.
3. At the same time I also made myself available at SYS where the original sampling took place during certain times and days of the week. The purpose of this was to identify youth selected for the interview with the help of staff and present them the option to participate while they were accessing SYS and to make participating in the interview convenient.
4. Some youth were chosen through convenience sampling as it was difficult to contact the youth pre-selected for the interview due to their transient nature. The researcher attempted to contact the young people who were pre-selected to

complete the interview however their contact information was often out of date. The researcher also tried to access these youth through SYS however few youth were found. Youth who indicated an interest in the interview, who had completed the questionnaire, and who SYS staff or the Research Associate who met with the youth felt would have an interesting interview were also invited to participate.

After following the outlined steps, I met with the youth and conducted the interview at the designated location. At the conclusion of the interview, youth received a \$25 stipend to assist with food or transportation costs associated with the research.

### **3.5 CONSENT PROCESS**

Participants were informed verbally face-to-face about the purpose of the research, what the study would entail, and the time it was to take to complete the research. They were informed that participating in the study was completely voluntary and confidential and were also informed of the limits of confidentiality. Information gathered from all participants remained confidential and de-identified to those outside of the research team by placing no identifying information on questionnaires, and keeping research records in a secure place. Participants understood they were in no way obligated to take part in the study and that they could withdraw at any time, or decline to answer specific questions without penalty. It was also explained to youth that within one year of enrolling in the study, they may withdraw without penalty. All related data would be destroyed upon notification: hard copies of data shredded and electronic data deleted. However, no youth requested they be removed from the study.

Both SYS staff who referred youth to the study and youth themselves were assured that refusal to participate would in no way affect service. All participants were given the opportunity to ask questions before, during, and after the study. Before the study commenced, participants were made aware that some questions may ask them to recall stressful situations, which may trigger uncomfortable memories and feelings. Participants were presented with further debriefing information after completing the questionnaire or the qualitative interview and all youth were offered contact information for a mental health professional if participation in the research process had caused them distress. No youth requested contact information for a professional as a result of the study.

Finally, since I was a new employee of SYS, as well as a researcher at the RRC, I explained my dual role to the youth and that my knowledge of the youth as an employee of the organization would not affect their ability to participate in the research or in the analysis of the research. The youth were given the opportunity to decline participation as a result of my dual role, however no youth declined.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the youth, participants were assigned a pseudonym, as were any other individuals named in the interviews such as staff members, family members, and friends. Any other identifying information was removed or altered such as school or community names. Throughout this thesis, the pseudonyms and de-identified information will be presented. All procedures used for this research passed the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at Dalhousie University.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

The quantitative data was entered and stored in a secure, password protected electronic database using Microsoft Access (2007). Statistical analysis was performed using Statistical Processing for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 6.1. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the demographic information. The CYRM, SDQ Prosocial scale, the SDQ Peer Problems scale, and Relationship to Caregivers scale were also analyzed to explore the resilience processes patterns within this population. In addition, I examined patterns of school disengagement (items B41-45, and D7), service use density assessment (items C18-51), and service use experiences (items C1-17 and C65-81). To contextualize the environment in which youth are functioning, section D, questions 1-6 were examined. Finally, the risk scales within the PRYM were helpful in understanding the interplay between youth's experience of being asked to leave services and the risks they face; internalized risks such as depression and externalized risk such as conduct problems.

Qualitative interviews were transcribed using Express Scribe Transcription Playback Software and were coded using Atlas Ti version 5.5. Data analysis for the qualitative data utilized grounded theory, examining themes and patterns that emerged from the qualitative data (Charmaz, 1995; 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Each SYS interview was examined using open coding to create a code book which was then used with other data from the Resilience Research Project. I became familiar with the data since I completed the interviews and then transcribed them, and thus I was able to determine some of the nuances and themes in the data (Charmaz, 1995). I then worked with the Principal Investigator of the Pathways to Resilience Project, Michael Ungar,

using grounded theory to create codes, a code book, and memos about these codes and any observations about the data (Charmaz, 1995; 2006). We both coded a section of an interview, using line by line coding and in vivo codes to maintain youth's views and understandings (Charmaz, 1995; 2006), and then compared codes and ideas and combined these into one code book. After we decided on the initial codes, we placed the codes in categories which helped to focus the analysis (Charmaz, 1995; 2006). This process created a large number of themes and codes which demonstrated the similarities and differences between the youth's stories and allowed comparisons to be made between participants and data from one participant at different times (Charmaz, 2006). After the initial coding phase, the codes were examined further and the codes clustered into appropriate groupings via axial coding.

### **3.7 RESEARCH SITE**

SYS Youth Programs (SYS) is a non-profit community organization, which offers programs and services to youth who are at risk of becoming homeless or are homeless. The program targets youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The mission of SYS is to advocate for social justice while offering a variety of meaningful programs with the goal to break the cycle of homelessness.

SYS has several programs which offer youth a variety of services ranging from prevention of family break down and homelessness, to emergency to long term housing, to counselling, to health services, to parent support and education to recreation and leisure skill building activities. All programs are offered in a safe, structured, supportive environment with caring, accepting, encouragement, and helpful staff. For each service youth access they are assigned a key worker as their main point of contact. This staff

member works closely with the youth and the youth's other key workers to move towards the youth's goals and to provide ongoing and consistent support. SYS is inclusive to youth of all ethnicities, cultures, genders, sexual orientations, and abilities.

The drop in centre provides advocacy, referrals, counselling, as well as the practical supports such as food, showers, laundry, internet and phone access. Any youth within the age group of SYS is permitted to access the centre. The shelter is an emergency shelter and provides food, a bed in their own room, counselling and support to any youth in crisis due to lack of safe and secure housing. The shelter provides housing to youth on a short term basis until the youth is able to access more stable housing or chooses to leave. To access the group home and supportive housing programs, the youth must be referred by either the shelter or the drop in centre or another service such as a probation officer or a social worker. These residential programs are designed to provide long term housing to youth and intend to serve as a transition from group living to supervised living to independent living. As the youth's lives become more stable and they learn more skills their responsibilities and the program's expectations increase to aid their transition to independent living.

Health services are also available to youth who access the residential programs and the drop in centre. SYS has a nurse on staff who works closely with a physician and psychiatrist in the community. The nurse frequents the drop in centre and the shelter on a weekly basis and provides basic medical care, mental health assessments and referrals. SYS also provides a learning and employment centre, which any youth is able to access. This centre provides educational and employment support such as resume building, job hunting skills, and assistance applying for educational upgrading. The prevention

program provides clinical counselling and community development. The counsellors work with junior and high school students and their families and attempt to prevent family break down and homelessness by working with youth and their families before the youth becomes homeless. SYS staff also can refer any youth in crisis to the prevention program to receive counselling.

Staff at SYS have either a degree in social work or a child and youth worker diploma. In addition to having key workers in each of the programs, there is a roster of relief staff that youth also have a lot of contact with. Although these staff members are not the youth's key worker, they work closely with the youth, which includes enforcing the rules and developing rapport. Each program also has a coordinator who is responsible for overseeing the day to day operations of each program. The coordinators support the frontline staff and hold meetings with youth to discuss their behaviours and issue consequences such as time aways (suspended from the program) or behaviour contracts. The coordinators also meet with youth before they are allowed to re-access a program after being suspended to develop a safety plan during their stay.

SYS shapes resilience through the development of positive relationships. Staff work diligently to develop and demonstrate healthy relationships with youth as this is a skill and support that has often been lacking in their lives. SYS also uses a strength based approach and builds upon youth's already existing strengths and survival strategies. If a coping strategy has been designated harmful or destructive by society, staff try to reframe this strategy and help the youth to understand why this strategy works for them and may help them to find other strategies. However, the underlying belief of SYS is the importance of developing of a positive, healthy relationship.

## **CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study. It explores youth's past service use needs and how services have or have not been able to meet their needs in order to understand what has and has not been effective. Then, it seeks to answer the first question, "What are youth's experiences of being kicked out of services" by analyzing the qualitative interviews. It goes on to answer the second research question, "What draws youth back to services" by examining the quantitative and qualitative data to determine what youth believe to be necessary for quality service provision and to ensure service engagement. It will do this by discussing their experiences of being kicked out of SYS programs and what makes SYS different from other programs and organizations. Finally, it discusses positive outcomes experienced by youth involved with SYS.

### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC AND DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS**

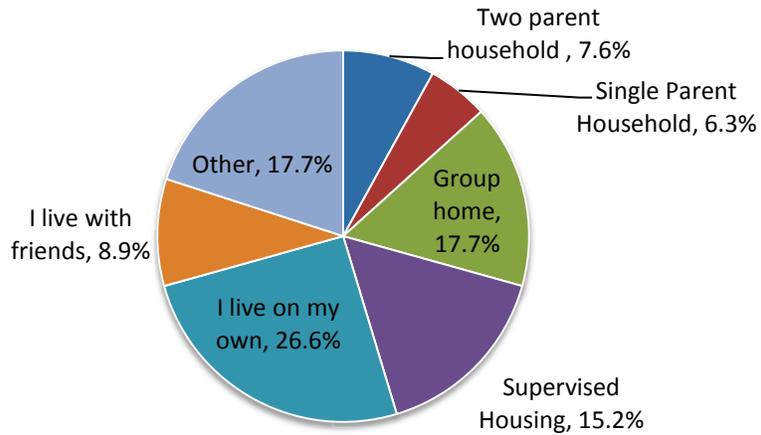
There were 79 participants in the quantitative phase of data collection who were involved with SYS. The age of the participants ranged from 16 to 21 with an average age of 19.55 (SD = 1.89) (Table 1). There was approximately equal proportion of males and females (52.7% and 47.4% respectively). Fourteen of these youth participated in a qualitative interview; 7 males and 7 females.

Table 1: Quantitative Phase Demographics of Youth from SYS

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>SYS (N=79)</b>
Mean age	19.42 (SD=1.93)
Female	45.6 %
Male	54.4 %
White majority ethno-racial background	68.5%
Racially diverse minority populations	31.5%
Last Grade Completed	10.49 (SD=1.41)
Living with two parents	7.6 %
Living with single parent	6.3 %
Living in Group Home, with Foster Parents or in Supervised housing	32.9 %
Living on own, with friends, relatives or homeless.	53.2 %

At the time of completing the questionnaire, participants indicated on the PRYM a variety of housing situations such as living on their own, living with family or friends, living in a shelter, or without a home (Figure 1). The largest percentage of youth indicated they were living on their own (21; 26.6%) and the second highest percentage of youth lived in other housing situations (14; 17.7%). The fewest youth reported living in a single parent household (5; 6.3%). Of the youth who were living in other housing situations, 7 (9.1%) lived in a shelter, 3 (3.9%) lived on the streets or not in a house, 3 (3.9%) lived with a partner, 1 (1.3%) lived with family, and 1 (1.3%) resided in secure housing for abused women. It is important to recognize these are self-identified living situations.

Figure 1: Household Configurations



SYS intends to provide service to at risk and homeless youth, yet only 4.0% of youth identified being homeless. It is possible the way the question was worded, “where are you currently living” may have provided misleading results. In a meeting with the Program Director, she stated that although most participants identified they had a place to spend the night, one should not assume they all had stable, secure and safe housing (Personal communication, June 7, 2011). The young person may have known where he or she was sleeping that night, or that week, but at risk and homeless youth are often only one night away from ‘sleeping rough’ on the street. Many of these young people may have experienced relative homelessness where the youth may temporarily have a place to live, but the housing was unaffordable, inadequate and unsustainable (Hick, 2007).

An update to the questionnaire mid-way through the study resulted in the inclusion of the questions, “are you currently in a relationship or dating someone,” “are you a parent,” and “are you caring for your child at the moment.” Thirty-eight youth were asked these questions. About half (23, 60.5%) of the participants identified they were in a relationship and 7 (18.9%) indicated they were parents. Of the youth who identified being

parents, 3 (42.9%) were caring for their child at the time of the questionnaire. One female identified being a parent and she was not currently caring for her child and 6 males identified being parents and half (3) of them indicated they were caring for their child.

The mean grade completed was grade 10.5 (SD=1.41) (Table 1). In 2009-2010, according to Stats Canada, 68.5% of youth aged 18 and 19 in Nova Scotia had finished high school and 88.7% of youth aged 20-24 had completed high school (McMullen & Gilmore, 2010). Of the youth involved with SYS aged 18 and 19 (28), 23.1% of them had completed high school, and 30.3% of those aged 20-24 (36) completed at least high school. This under-achievement or failure to finish grade school is consistent with other studies (Hughes, et al., 2010; Karabanow, 2004b; Kidd, 2003; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006; Raising the Roof, 2009). Only 38.0% identified currently being in school or correspondence classes. Since the average age of the participants was 19, it is possible some of them may have already graduated from high school or aged out of the mainstream public school system and were not enrolled in post secondary education. However, in terms of educational aspirations, 68.4% of youth indicated they wanted to achieve at least a college or university education.

In order to understand youth's perceptions and experiences of service provision, it is necessary to explore their service use history and density. Young people were asked whether they had accessed a particular service within a service category three times or more, two times, one time or never needed it over the course of their lifetime. Based on these responses and the responses from other services within the particular service categories, the mean service use score was determined. Youth engaged with SYS had frequent involvement with other formal service providers in the categories of health,

education, child welfare, mental health and justice services (Table 2). SYS participants used health services more than any other services and had similar service use densities for all other service providers (Table 2).

Table 2: Mean Service Use Score by Referring Service

<b>Mean Service Use Scores (0 to 10)</b>	<b>SYS (N=79)</b>	<b>Total SU (N=622)</b>	<b>Total Non SU (N=495)</b>
Health	6.24	5.75	5.53
School	3.47	3.09	1.76
Child Welfare	3.69	2.00	0.35
Mental Health	3.30	2.52	0.44
Justice	3.71	2.99	0.31

While 63.6% (49) accessed emergency services at least three times only 31.2% (24) had ever stayed after school to get help with school work. Over 75% (64) stayed in a homeless shelter at least once in their life and 91% (71) had used a social worker at least once in their life. About half (40, 53.3%) had seen a counsellor, therapist, psychiatrist or psychologist three times or more and 58.7% (44) had used mental health medication at least three times in their life. Most youth (76; 96.2%) had been questioned by the police in consideration of a crime at least once in their life and 51.9% (41) had been in jail three or more times.

Youth involved with SYS have higher lifetime service use density than other youth with complex needs (i.e. multiple service using youth) in the Pathways to Resilience study. This suggests these youth have not experienced meaningful service provision throughout their lives, instead have accessed multiple services in attempts to have their needs met. Comparing youth involved with SYS to other multiple service users in Atlantic Canada (Table 2) we see that on average, youth involved with SYS used more

health, educational supports, CYFS, mental health, and justice than other high risk service using, and low risk non-service using youth in Atlantic Canada. It is unclear the impact that age has on these comparisons as youth involved with SYS were older than the other service users and non-service users.

### **4.3 RISK AND RESILIENCE**

Components of risk and resilience were also measured in the PRYM. Youth involved with SYS scored similarly to other service using youth on the risk measures such as the SDQ Peer Problems, SDQ Conduct, CES-D12-NLSCY Depression Scale, 4HSQ Delinquency, School engagement, and Community Risk (see Table 3). The exception to this was the 4HSQ Risk scale which measures substance use and abuse; the youth from SYS scored higher on this scale, however the youth involved with SYS were older than the other service using populations which may explain the discrepancy. Though previous research has shown that street involved youth do tend to use substances more than other populations of young people (Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Whitbeck, Johnson, Hoyt, & Cauce, 2004), these scores indicate that youth from SYS experience similar levels of risk as other high risk multiple service using youth.

Table 3: Mean Risk Scores

<b>Mean Risk Score</b>	<b>SYS (N=79)</b>	<b>Total SU (N=622)</b>	<b>Total Non SU (N=495)</b>
SDQ Peer Problems (0 to 10)	2.84	2.74	1.65
SDQ Conduct Problems (0 to 10)	3.52	3.55	2.04
CES-D12-NLSCY Depression (0 to 37)	13.39	12.84	7.84
4HSQ Risk (0 to 27)	13.28	10.19	1.09
4HSQ Delinquency (0 to 20)	7.96	7.04	1.94
School Engagement (1 to 22)	12.35	12.73	19.60
Community Risk (5 to 22)	13.08	12.25	9.98

The youth involved with SYS also show resilience in many areas. Youth from SYS scored the highest on the SDQ Prosocial scale and the Individual resilience subscale compared to other high risk youth (Table 4). However, their scores were the lowest for overall resilience and relationship to caregivers, but were comparable to other high risk youth for sense of belonging. This suggests that youth rely upon themselves much more than other people, yet they still see themselves as helpful towards others and feel like they belong.

Table 4: Mean Resilience Score

<b>Mean Resilience Score</b>	<b>SYS (N=79)</b>	<b>Total SU (N=622)</b>	<b>Total Non SU (N=495)</b>
SDQ Prosocial (0 to 10)	<b>8.37</b>	7.95	8.03
CYRM score (28 to 140)	94.16	98.73	<b>113.66</b>
Individual subscale (9 to 45)	36.03	33.50	<b>37.16</b>
Relationship to primary caregivers subscale (6 to 30)	16.20	25.16	<b>25.43</b>
Context/Sense of belonging subscale (8 to 40)	27.86	27.99	<b>31.93</b>

#### **4.4 PAST SERVICE USE**

Before it is possible to understand youth’s experiences of having service provision temporarily or permanently withdrawn or how to draw youth back into services, we must explore their experiences and perceptions of past and current service provision. This will help to determine what young people feel is effective and not effective. It is also important to understand whether the services they have accessed met their needs and whether the services and informal supports have helped the youth to foster resilience processes.

##### *4.4.1 Service Use Needs*

The lack of appropriate service provision and encouragement of youth engagement is a significant contributing factor to young people becoming homeless, contrary to the popular belief that these young people could live at home if they just listened to their parents. Many times youth are blamed for becoming homeless rather than

exploring the youth's family and service use history which may uncover family dysfunction and/or gaps in service provision (Paradise & Cauce, 2002; Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005).

Youth involved with SYS have used many services in their lifetime as seen in Table 2. Based on the youth's qualitative responses it does not appear that prior services have appropriately met their needs or have helped them develop the networks and relationships necessary to foster resilience. As a result of this lack of fit between meaningful service provision and needs of the youth, youth may become homeless as a safer or more viable alternative than remaining in an abusive or neglectful home environment (Karabanow, 2004b; Koeller, 2008; McAdam-Crisp, Aptekar, & Kironyo, 2005; Reid, Berman, & Forchuk, 2005; Whitbeck & Simons, 1990). It is necessary to understand the youth's history and insufficient service provision may have contributed to the young person becoming homeless.

#### *4.4.2 Lack of Meaningful Service Provision*

Examining the total risk and total resilience scores within the PRYM can help to determine whether youth have experienced meaningful service provision and whether services have helped to develop resilience within the youth. For participants involved with SYS, the total risk score (scale ranges from 0-100) ranged from 2.86 to 74.29 and had a median score of 40. On a scale from 0 to 100, the total resilience score for youth involved with SYS ranged from 40.69 to 85.52 with a median score of 66.21. By using the median scores for both the total risk and total resilience scales as cut off points, it was possible to divide youth into four categories; high risk – high resilience (18; 22.8%), high

risk – low resilience (22; 27.8%), low risk – high resilience (24; 30.4%), and low risk – low resilience (15; 19.0%).

Twenty-two (27.8%) youth fell into the high risk- low resilience category, which may indicate a lack of meaningful service provision throughout their lives (Ungar, Liebenberg, Armstrong, Dudding, & Van de Vijver, under review). These youth experienced high levels of risk in their lives and yet had not developed or had access to the skills, resources, and connections necessary for resilience. Despite their past experience and involvement with services these services were not provided to the youth in a meaningful and relevant manner (Ungar et al., 2008); they were unable to connect to appropriate resources and services to develop skills that foster resilience.

On average, youth involved with SYS have used more services in their lifetime than other high risk youth (Table 2). In addition to this, just less than one third of youth involved with SYS are in the high risk-low resilience category. Both increased lifetime service use and being high risk-low resilience could indicate the lack of meaningful service provision throughout their lives.

#### **4.5 EXPERIENCES OF BEING KICKED OUT**

The quantitative data shows that the youth involved with SYS require supports and services yet many of these services do not appear to have adequately met their needs. A prevalent theme within the qualitative data was the *in vivo* code of being “kicked out.” In order to explore youth’s experiences having their services withdrawn temporarily or permanently, I will use the qualitative data to describe and begin to understand the youth’s experiences of various services in more detail.

#### 4.5.1 *General Experiences of Being Kicked Out*

Participants frequently discussed being kicked out of family homes, programs, housing, organizations, as well as public places such as streets or malls.

And then I left to go to [group home1]. But I went there and then got moved to [group home2]... And then, when I was at [group home3]...and then I got kicked out of the [group home3] and then ... I moved into the shelter. (Female, 18)

I went to [a secure treatment centre], and then I went out West to see my mom, and then I came back and I got sent to [the same secure treatment centre]. And then I got out, and then I went back to [group home1] and I got in a fight with one of the girls and I got kicked out of [the group home1]. Then I moved back to [group home2], then I got sent back to [group home3]. (Female, 18)

Based on the tone and contexts within the interviews, I felt the youth were describing their experiences in a factual and unemotional manner and I interpreted that these young people were matter-of-fact about being kicked out and that they experienced it as a normalized experience. Given the turmoil and instability prevalent within the lives of these youth, it is not surprising that being kicked out was not a significant transition in their life. Similar to prior research by Whitbeck & Hoyt (1999), these youth were moved around with their family or between group homes or foster homes and did not have a stable place to call home. For example, five participants discussed the instability they experienced and the consequences of the instability in their childhoods and teenage years:

I moved in [to group home 1] in June and I got kicked out in November... I was there for like the first month and then I ran away for the summer and then I came back. [Then] I went to [a secure treatment facility], and then I went out West to see my mom, and then I came back and I got sent to [the secure treatment facility]. And then I got out, and then I went back to [group home 1] and I got in a fight with one of the girls and I got kicked out. Then I moved back to [group home 2], then I got sent back to [group home 3]... Then I pretty much moved in with [boyfriend].. And then I got kicked out of [group home 3] for not being there, because I wasn't there for like five months (Female, 18)

*Y:* I turned 16 and they [social services] have an age limit. So I went back to my aunt's, then back to my mom's. Then I went back to my dad's and eventually to a shelter.

*I:* Okay, so what happened when you went to your aunts?

*Y:* She [aunt] was a gambling addict and couldn't afford to keep her place, so I ended up leaving.

*I:* Okay. And you went to your Mom's from there?

*Y:* Yeah.

*I:* And how did that go?

*Y:* She was a gambling addict and my step-brother was there and me and him never got along, so I had to leave there too.

*I:* And then you ended up moving to your fathers?

*Y:* Yeah.

*I:* And how did that go?

*Y:* He's a drunk. (Male, 20)

When I'd move I'd have no friends and then I'd get friends and then I'd move and then, I'd come back and half my friends from when I went to the school don't even remember me, and then I'd make new friends and then I'd move, and then I'd make new friends and then I'd move and move and move and move. (Female, 18)

I don't really have a relationship with a certain community cause I moved around so much and I lived in so many different communities so I couldn't really place one as my own. (Female, 20)

I jumped around like so many times like moving from school to school, house to house. Like I'd say at least 70-75 moves in the last three years. I'm not even, that's not even exaggerating... It was buddies to buddies place, parents to parents, like aunt to cousin like I don't know like shelter to shelter, house to shelter. Like so many places. (Male, 20)

The youth's tone and context of the interview again influenced my interpretation that their frequent moves may have contributed to their nonchalant attitude towards being kicked out. These youth, as with many other youth involved in the research, moved around so much that it appears they became used to the experience of being displaced.

Participants were not only kicked out of home, they also frequently discussed being kicked out of school or an educational program. Similar to previous research, (Hughes et al., 2010; Karabanow, 2004b; Kidd, 2003; Public Health Agency of Canada,

2006; Raising the Roof, 2009) most participants involved with SYS did not achieve their high school diploma and in many cases it was because they had been kicked out of school and they decided not to return. Participants discussed that they were kicked out of school for a variety of reasons such as missing too much time, getting into arguments with teachers and other students, and doing drugs on property. Sometimes it seems youth were unaware or unwilling to disclose why they were being kicked out from school:

It's like... I don't know I keep getting kicked out. (Male, 20)

I got kicked out a lot for, I don't know. Ever since grade eleven I started skipping with my friends up in the country. I just, they got me to skip all the time and ever since then I have not been able to stop skipping. (Male, 20)

Other times they were fully aware of why they were kicked out and were not concerned because the disciplinary actions (e.g. in or out of school suspension, expulsion, or detention) were not relevant or important. When an 18 year old female was asked how a suspension affected her, she stated, "it really didn't because I never really went to school anyways and after they suspended me they just expelled me after that." Other youth were not motivated to attend school because they did not feel supported by their school:

When I was in junior high, I had a lot more support than when I was in high school. Maybe that is why I verved off when I was in high school more so than when I was junior high. Like I still missed some days [in high school], but there were teachers there that I loved to see. So I went. (Female, 20)

When participants described their experiences of school, they often discussed skipping school, fighting with staff and peers, or hanging out with their friends. Youth also discussed changing schools frequently. Sometimes the changes in school were related to family instability and consequent moves, other times it was due to being kicked

out of school so they had to attend a different one. Similar to the report by Karabanow (2004b), one youth commented he had a difficult time going to school while homeless:

I was homeless and still going to school in the day sleeping in the hospital in the emergency room. And they wake you up at six o'clock in the morning and kick you out. And I would go to school. (Male, 20)

Few youth described positive relationships and experiences with teachers and school staff. When youth did speak positively about school staff, it was often in relation to teachers they could relate to or who provided them with emotional and physical support:

And each day I'd make it, they would give me like twenty-five bucks for the Superstore to get some food, so it was pretty good. (Male, 20)

The lack of engagement with school as expressed in the qualitative interviews is consistent with the quantitative data. Youth involved with SYS had lower school engagement scores than both the total service using sample and the total non-service using sample (Table 3). In addition, 55.9% of youth involved with SYS skipped school at least once a week, 23.1% were suspended at least once a month, and 45.6% of youth were expelled from school at least once in their life. Most youth (62.0%) also had failed or had been held back at least once. Only 39.3% of youth felt they belonged in their school, 24.1% were undecided and 36.7% did not feel they belonged in their school. All of these youth indicated a lack of involvement, support or commitment to school. This lack of involvement to school likely resulted in being suspended for missing too many classes. In addition, if the young person was suspended or expelled from school for reasons discussed in the qualitative interviews, there is less likelihood they would try to return to school once their suspension was complete or find a new school when expelled because they were not engaged or felt connected.

There is a similar pattern of behaviours and consequences for other services youth were involved with such as group homes, shelters, community programs, and foster placements. Participants discussed similar reasons for being kicked out of these services such as running away or skipping the program, drug use, violence, and not being old enough:

And then I got kicked out of [a group home] for not being there, because I wasn't there for like five months. (Female, 18)

I went there for the first time, I think I was underage and they kicked me out. And it really hurt. Because I was like, well I'm homeless too. You know, just because I'm underage doesn't mean I'm not homeless. Right? It really hurt. (Female, 20)

I got uh kicked out for selling drugs... my Ritalin drugs [*Youth laughs*]. I didn't want them and my friends were like, I'll give you two bucks for them, and I was like no man. And then I dunno, I just ended up giving them to them. And then someone told on me. (Male, 20)

#### 4.5.2 *Being Kicked out of SYS*

As with other services and programs, youth discussed being kicked out of SYS in their qualitative interviews. However, the young people discussed being kicked out of SYS differently than being kicked out of other services. Youth tended to have more to say about being kicked out of SYS than other services which may indicate a further level of engagement with SYS. In addition, participants appeared to disconnect from other services when they were kicked out, while when they were kicked out of SYS they did not appear to disengage from the service. One participant, a female aged 18, commented that when she was younger she always got kicked out of SYS, however now appreciates everything SYS has done for her. This was only possible because she continued to come back and be engaged in the service:

Like before it was negative right because I was always just getting kicked out. Like move in, get kicked out, move in, get kicked out right? But it has a positive impact

because if it wasn't for SYS I wouldn't be at the house and I wouldn't be as far as I am now. (Female, 18)

Youth sometimes understood why they were kicked out of SYS and were able to reflect positively upon the experience. For example a male, aged 20, commented:

Except I wasn't very good at following the rules...So, I got kicked out... But while I was there [a residential program] it was awesome, I was there for a year and a half.

Some participants discussed that being kicked out for "stupid reasons" (Male, 20) was one aspect that made a service unhelpful. For example, this male shared in detail one of his experiences of being kicked out. He explained that while he was in an independent living environment and the entire residence received a consequence. This youth felt that since he was not involved in the incident he should not have to follow the consequence stipulations. However, as a repercussion of not following the consequence, he was further reprimanded and eventually got kicked out of the residential program. He was not able to find a place to live close to his school so he was unable to attend. This resulted in him being kicked out of school. A few youth discussed that sometimes specific SYS programs kick youth out instead of helping them better their situation:

**I:** That I didn't find helpful because instead of trying to help you fix your problems, they were quick just to kick you out and move someone else in. So, personally they didn't deal with your issues, they just put them aside and told you you had to leave.

**I:** Okay, so why did they tell you to leave?

**Y:** I had anger management issues. (Male, 20)

I'm not so mad that they kicked me out because of punching him, I'm mad because they seen that I was trying to change and do something different with my life and they knew that and they seen that and they still kicked me out right? (Female, 18)

Sometimes youth perceive they are kicked out when they are asked to leave programs because of structural issues such as a youth becomes too old to access programming (Garrett et al., 2008), or the youth is too young to access. The youth who

discussed aging out of the programs commented that this would be a challenging period in their life because SYS programs are familiar and they have developed relationships with the staff members and other youth, making it difficult to leave once they age out. One participant, age 20, discussed how aging out of SYS will affect her when she reaches 24 years of age:

Well maybe I won't need all the resources then but you know. It's going to be hard to not be able to come in and just chill and talk to staff. Cause I don't really come to chill and talk to, you know youth here, I come to see staff. (Female, 20)

#### 4.5.3 *Consequences of Being Kicked Out*

Although many youth did not appear to mind or speak negatively about being kicked out of services, they still discussed the consequences of being kicked out of school and various programs:

Well I'm going back to school to upgrade my math because I only had like a 56 in advanced math twelve right... Because I would skip a lot. And then I was going to school this semester, I was doing excellent up until I got kicked out of [a residential program] for eight days and didn't go to school at all for two weeks because I had no way to get there because I was living with my mom because I had nowhere else to go... And like I missed a lot of time. I missed two tests and two assignments and it was like if I work my ass off what's the point if I am trying to upgrade the course. I won't, if I won't get higher than what I am going to get then. (Male, 20)

How does it affect you? At first you kind of, I don't know. It's weird. It affects you by, it affects the mind, the state of mind. It affects your lifestyle because they are you're always on edge. It's like a drug dealer, always looking over your shoulder for cops or someone trying to rob him or try to kill him. Or always looking over his shoulder for so someone he can sell his drugs to. It's like a drug dealer looking over his shoulder but for me, it's always looking over my shoulder to see if I'm going to be sleeping here tonight. (Male 20)

It is hard sometimes... Little sleep. Always freezing cold. Like um, I didn't have a shower every day. Like, I didn't have clean clothes every day. And it's like, it wasn't very... didn't really feel like going to school. It's not something I really wanted to do at the time (Male, 20).

Participants acknowledged that being kicked out of SYS had a very large impact on the other aspects of their life:

Well, I couldn't go to my visits [*supervised visits with her children*] cause they, it was over Christmas time, I got kicked out, I slept outside Christmas Eve.... For a week I had dirty clothes when I went to see my grandparents for Christmas. Like I was really not happy with them. (Female, 20)

Many youth involved with SYS had an extensive history of being kicked out of various places and services which created a lack of stability in the young person's life. Several youth spoke of being constantly uprooted through being kicked out and moved from house to house or community to community. Youth also discussed many of the reasons for being kicked out of services such as skipping, running away, violence and drug use. I interpret that these reasons indicate a lack of engagement with and commitment to the service because the young people participate in these activities despite the knowledge of the consequence of being kicked out and rarely did the young person try to re-access the service once kicked out. However, the experience of being kicked out of SYS tended to have a different impact on youth than being kicked out of other organizations and agencies.

Based on the data from the qualitative interviews, it appears youth have a tendency to come back to SYS and continue to have overall positive experiences with the agency. In order to answer the question, what draws youth back into services, I will explore the qualitative data to determine what the youth feel to be effective service provision. Youth discussed that relationship to staff, clear and understandable rules, and a safe, supportive environment as important factors in youth's experience with a program.

## **4.6 SYS SERVICE ENGAGEMENT**

To answer the question, “What aspects of service delivery are necessary to facilitate youth engagement with services,” it is necessary to explore the youth’s satisfaction with services. To do this, I will examine the quantitative service use section of the PRYM as well as qualitative data related to service use engagement for general services as well as for SYS. Specifically some of the issues that will be discussed to indicate engagement are satisfaction with the service, relationships to staff, meeting youth’s needs, choice and unconditional positive regard as well as negative experiences within SYS.

### *4.6.1 Service Use Satisfaction*

Satisfaction with a service has an impact upon the likelihood an individual will return to that particular resource (Carlson & Gabriel, 2001; Druss, Rosenheck, & Stolar, 1999). One section in the PRYM was a service use satisfaction scale and all youth referred by SYS were asked to complete the section in reference to their experience with SYS. Overall youth were satisfied with the services they received from SYS, which may help to explain why they may re-access this service, especially after they have been temporarily suspended.

The participants’ service use satisfaction scores are presented in Table 5. Overall, youth indicated they were satisfied with the services, the staff, and their experience with SYS with a score of 3.98 out of 5. This score is higher than the service use satisfaction scores for youth referred by all other 5 service groups (Table 5). Most youth indicated SYS is accessible (81.0%) and suitable for meeting their needs (80.8%) (Table 6). The

majority of the youth reported they were overall satisfied with the services they received at SYS (84.8%). Over 80% of youth felt they received services that were right for them at SYS (80.8%), and felt SYS was a service they needed (83.5%). Approximately three quarters of youth felt that as a result of the services they have received from SYS they are now better able to cope when things go wrong (73.4%). Yet, just over a quarter of the youth (29.1%) felt that there was a service within SYS they needed but couldn't get (Table 6).

Table 5: Mean Service Use Satisfaction by Referring Service

	<b>SYS (N=74)</b>	<b>Community (N=91)</b>	<b>Justice (N=106)</b>	<b>Education (N= 188)</b>	<b>Child Welfare (N=94)</b>	<b>Mental Health (N=143 )</b>
<b>Mean Service Use Satisfaction Score (0 to 5)</b>	<b>3.98</b>	3.91	3.42	3.34	3.48	3.77

Table 6: Youth Satisfaction with Services

<b>PERSONAL AGENCY</b>				
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
I helped choose my services	<b>SYS</b>	7.6 %	12.7 %	<b>79.7 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	63.2 %	0.0 %	36.9 %
	<b>Non Mandated Service</b>	34.8 %	26.1 %	39.1 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	41.3 %	13.8 %	44.8 %
I had a say in how this service was delivered to me and could ask for what I wanted	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
	<b>SYS</b>	9.0 %	20.5 %	<b>70.5 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	63.2 %	15.8 %	21.1 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	43.5 %	26.1 %	30.4 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	43.3 %	16.7 %	40.0 %

<b>EXPERIENCE WITH STAFF</b>				
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
The people helping me stuck with me	<b>SYS</b>	7.7 %	15.4 %	<b>76.9 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	42.1 %	21.1 %	36.9 %
	<b>Non Mandated Service</b>	21.7 %	17.4 %	60.9 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	43.3 %	10.0 %	46.7 %
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
I felt I had someone within the service to talk to when I was in trouble	<b>SYS</b>	6.4 %	12.7 %	<b>81.0 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	52.7 %	15.8 %	31.6 %
	<b>Non Mandated services</b>	26.1 %	21.7 %	52.2 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	43.3 %	23.3 %	33.3 %
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
Staff respected my religious and spiritual beliefs	<b>SYS</b>	9.2%	22.4 %	<b>68.5 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	41.2 %	5.9 %	52.9 %
	<b>Non Mandated services</b>	22.7 %	31.8 %	45.5 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	27.6 %	37.9 %	34.5 %
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
Staff spoke in a way that I understood	<b>SYS</b>	6.3 %	7.6 %	<b>86.1 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	33.3 %	16.7 %	50.0 %
	<b>Non Mandated services</b>	30.4 %	21.7 %	47.8 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	23.3 %	3.3 %	73.3 %
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
Staff were sensitive to my cultural and ethnic background	<b>SYS</b>	9.2 %	18.4 %	<b>72.4%</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	33.3 %	22.2 %	44.5 %
	<b>Non Mandated services</b>	26.1 %	26.1 %	47.8 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	20.7 %	37.9 %	41.3 %

<b>SUITABILITY OF SERVICE</b>				
I received services that were right for me	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
	<b>SYS</b>	7.6 %	11.5 %	<b>80.8%</b>
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	47.4 %	15.8 %	36.9 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	26.1 %	26.1 %	47.8 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	46.7 %	13.3 %	40.0 %
This was the service I needed	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
	<b>SYS</b>	2.5 %	12.7 %	<b>84.8%</b>
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	55.6 %	0.0 %	44.5 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	26.1 %	26.1 %	47.8 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	46.7 %	16.7 %	36.7 %
<b>ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE</b>				
I could get the service when I needed it	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
	<b>SYS</b>	3.9 %	19.5 %	<b>76.7 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	55.6 %	5.6 %	38.9 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	26.1 %	34.8 %	39.1 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	40.0 %	6.7 %	53.3 %
The location of the service was convenient	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
	<b>SYS</b>	6.3%	11.4 %	<b>82.3 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	50.0 %	5.6 %	44.5 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	4.3 %	21.7 %	73.9 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	20.0 %	16.7 %	63.3 %
There was a service I needed, but I couldn't get	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
	<b>SYS</b>	50.6 %	20.3 %	29.1 %
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	<b>52.9 %</b>	23.5 %	23.5 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	47.8 %	26.1 %	46.1 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	27.6 %	24.1 %	48.2 %

<b>EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE</b>				
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
I am now better able to cope when things go wrong	<b>SYS</b>	7.6 %	19.0 %	<b>73.4 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Services</b>	44.4 %	22.2 %	33.3 %
	<b>Non Mandated Services</b>	13.0 %	30.4 %	56.5 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	43.3 %	20.0 %	36.6 %
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes
Overall, I am satisfied with the services I received	<b>SYS</b>	5.1 %	8.9 %	<b>86.1 %</b>
	<b>Mandated Service</b>	52.7 %	15.8 %	31.6 %
	<b>Non Mandated Service</b>	30.4 %	17.4 %	52.2 %
	<b>Social Services</b>	50.0 %	20.0 %	30.0 %
	Program	No	Undecided	Yes

Table 7: Mean Service Use Satisfaction Scores

	<b>SYS (N=74)</b>	<b>Mandated (N=19)</b>	<b>Non Mandated (N=23)</b>	<b>Social Services (N= 30)</b>
<b>Mean Service Use Satisfaction Score (0 to 5)</b>	<b>3.98</b>	2.70	3.35	2.84

Most youth involved with SYS indicated a positive experience with staff members (Table 6); more than three quarters of participants agreed that the staff stuck with them (75.6%), that there was someone to talk to when they were in trouble (79.7%) and that staff spoke in a way that the youth could understand (84.8%). The majority of youth also reported the staff respected their religious and spiritual beliefs (68.5%) and were sensitive to their cultural and ethnic backgrounds (72.4%).

The PRYM also includes a section where the youth answered the same service use satisfaction questions for a second service that they have had a lot of contact with over their lifetime. Based on the services the youth chose to discuss,

the services were divided into three categories: mandated services non-mandated services, and social services. The mandated services included detention centres, restorative justice and other justice services, anger management, and mental health and addiction services. The non-mandated services included school services such as guidance counselors, tutors, and extra help, other community drop in programs, and SYS when youth discussed two different SYS services. Social services included the Children's Aid Society, group homes, and social workers. The youth's overall satisfaction with each of these services was lower than for SYS (Table 7).

Unsurprisingly youth were more satisfied with the non-mandated services (3.35 out of 5) and less satisfied with mandated services (2.70 out of 5). Participants were more satisfied with the services at SYS in regards to personal agency, experience with staff, suitability of services, and effectiveness of services (Table 6). In terms of experience with staff, 81% of youth felt they had someone to talk to within SYS when they were in trouble, while only 31.6% felt they could talk to someone within the mandated services, 52.2% within the non-mandated services, and 33.3% within social services. This is supported by the qualitative data. For example, two youth commented:

Staff [at another residential service], really was more into you know, calming kids down and talking to them, rather than helping them with their problems and being there for them all the time. Whereas here [at SYS] they are always there for you no matter what. (Female, 20)

Well you've got people there who actually want to help you right? And like at [another shelter] and stuff they are just there to make sure nobody kills each other. (Male, 20)

The quantitative and qualitative data indicate that youth are overall satisfied with services provided by SYS and less satisfied with other services the young person had a

lot of contact with during his or her life. Service use satisfaction does not necessarily lead to service engagement so it is necessary to also explore youth' experiences of engagement within SYS.

#### 4.6.2 *Relationship to Staff*

The quantitative and qualitative data both indicated a positive connection and relationship to staff as an important aspect of service delivery. Kidd et al., (2007) discuss how staff members must be able to meet the youth “where they are at.” Such an approach requires skills including flexibility, versatility, and recognizing that each youth requires a different set of these skills (Kidd et al., 2007). This is mirrored in youth narratives as participants often reflected more positively upon staff members who treated them like an individual, who took the stance that the youth is the expert on their own life, and who took the time to get to know them individually and allowed the youth to get to know the staff:

Like she was, she knows me quite well. She's like been helping me out with a lot of different like get out of the house, get into [another residential program], she like always try to find me a place. She is always determined to be there to help me. So, she seems like she's one of those good people. (Male, 20)

The participants also reflected positively about staff members who were perceived as going above and beyond the basic parameters of their job description. This may have included sharing personal belongings with the young person, making them feel important and listened to, providing them with options and choices, and sharing personal experiences with them. The significance of positive relationships has been noted in other research as an important aspect of resilience (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Nettles et al., 2000;

Wolkow & Ferguson, 2001). Youth discussed the value of feeling connected with their youth workers at SYS and feeling special or a priority in their youth workers' lives:

Debbie that works here [at SYS]. She definitely stretches herself as far as she can stretch herself for me. Um, she's not even my caseworker. Molly is my caseworker and Molly helps me a lot too. But, I don't know, I just, I feel more of a connection with Debbie. She really helps me a lot. (Female, 19)

He was awesome. He was amazing. He actually sat down and gave his time to me and talked to me. You know and help me. Instead of being like, you know, I'll be with you in a minute I'll be with you in a minute. When I came in, I was his first priority. Yea, he was amazing. But he made everybody feel like that. So it was even more amazing. (Female, 20)

They actually took interest in you and tried to help you. Whether you didn't want it or not, they still tried to. (Male, 20)

#### 4.6.3 *Personal Disclosure*

Participants also spoke more positively about staff members who were willing to disclose some details from their personal lives such as likes or dislikes, major life events, or interests and hobbies. Youth were often expected to share their stories and life experiences with staff and the young people discussed that they were better able to connect with staff members who reciprocated. Participants frequently reflected on individual characteristics that each staff member brought to the agency and took pride in being able to relate to a staff member on a more intimate and personal level:

And I mean like when you're Rene's age and you can still pull it off [having blue hair] and feel great about it, you feel more welcome and you feel like she's kind of a teenager but kind of an adult at the same time. You know what I mean? And if you put a smile on your face or you have blue hair, or even grey hair, or whatever, it's still blows my mind. (Female, 17)

And Jill and I usually connect on a reading level. Like I've borrowed some books from her and stuff... So uh we usually, when we, when me and Jill

talk it's usually about arts and books and reading and writing and stuff like that. We don't really talk about like uh school or like ... I don't know other things like, can you give me... socks, or I need tampons Jill, like it just don't happen. We just talk about other stuff, like I don't talk to her like a caseworker, I don't ask her for things, like she's a caseworker, I just, we just chat. (Female, 20)

#### 4.6.4 *Trust*

Many homeless youth have difficulties trusting other people and services (Karabanow, 2004b; Kurtz et al., 2000; Raising the Roof, 2009; Thompson et al., 2006). As results from other studies have found, trust was an integral component to successful relationships between staff and youth (Kidd et al., 2007; Kurtz et al., 2000; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Thompson et al., 2006). Young people often discussed the importance of gaining and building trust with the staff members before disclosing information about their personal lives. Many youth felt it was a gained privilege to open up and tell their stories to staff members. This trust was often built upon mutual respect between the staff person and the youth. Respect manifested in many different ways such as listening to the youth, being non-judgmental towards the youth and their decisions, and allowing them to make mistakes (Kidd et al., 2007):

It was nice to be spoken to not spoken at, uh they were, I found they were considerate and my, my opinion mattered to them but when I was in a group home uh my opinion didn't matter to anybody, like I was picked up and moved from here to there. (Female, 20)

She is my case worker like she's, she's my equal but at the same time she's not. But she doesn't make me feel like she's higher than me, Like she talks to me on the same level, uh she doesn't belittle me, uh I feel like I can have open conversations with Jennifer and I know they're not going to leave her office. Like I can trust her. (Female, 20)

And Marcus brings his guitar hero game and stuff. And I know for a fact I would not bring my PS2 to shelter because you turn around and it's gone. Especially with smokes, anything, you name it, you leave it, it's gone. But he

has enough trust in us which feels good too because they put trust in us. I mean sure there are a couple with criminal records and all that fun stuff but when you actually bring your stuff from home into the shelter for us to have fun, it shows a lot of respect. And it's a lot of fun when you can sit and play guitar here for two hours with people you live with. (Female 17)

Within each of the SYS programs, each youth is assigned to a specific youth worker. Youth said that staff demonstrated respect towards them by not being territorial and understanding they may wish to speak to other staff members based on the staff member's strengths and personality traits. Many youth discussed the importance of being able to speak with any of the SYS staff, not only their youth worker:

I got news a couple of days ago and I've been going to Katrina about it instead of Allan [*her case manager*] because it's more of a girl thing than a guy thing. So I feel more comfortable knowing that if I'm not comfortable talking to Allan about it, I can always talk to Katrina about it. You know what I mean. And when I'm done talking to Katrina about it, then I can talk to Allan and Katrina together in the same room. Because I mean I have a lot of respect for both of them. I mean they do their job and they do it really good. (Female, 17)

#### 4.6.5 *Staff Consistency*

Youth commented about the importance of consistency with who worked each day, but also consistency in staff mood:

Like sitting in group home with five girls and just certain amount of staff. It's not always the same staff everyday so you don't always get the one on one... Whereas at SYS it's a lot easier because you can connect with the people more because you are with the same people all the time. (Female, 20)

The staff needs to be more personal [at a group home]. There needs to be like. Too many staff workers and too many change overs and stuff like that (Female, 20).

The daily mood of staff members had an impact upon the youth as well. Youth thought more positively about staff members who did not bring their personal issues and troubles to work and began their shift with a smile and a positive mood. The youth were able to and do pick up on the varying moods of staff members and behaved or reacted

accordingly. The youth commented during the interviews that they felt a sense of comfort when they know they can count on staff members behaving and reacting in a consistent, understandable manner rather than anticipating what a staff's reaction may be based on the mood they are in:

And she's so upbeat and she's so positive and never negative. (Female, 20)

And when you have Katrina all pregnant and bloated and still happy and like bubbly and bouncy and you look at Allan and he has a lot going on too and how he still puts a smile on his face it just makes everybody else feel welcome and okay. And I mean like there's a lot of people here that have a lot of different problems and a lot of different worries, if you are staff or if you are youth. (Female, 17)

She's just so happy. You can never tell what's wrong, you can never tell when she's sad. When she comes into work, she doesn't care about that. She's always herself. With other staff, some days they're in a great mood, some days they're in a cranky mood, some days they don't talk or whatever. Wanda, every single time she walks into that shelter she's always the exact same person. And that's a lot of respect. (Female, 17)

It all depends on the staff too. Like uh, there's a couple of staff here, I don't know, they're uh, just the way uh present themselves and act towards you, right? You really don't want to be nice and try to be all that towards them, right? (Female, 18)

#### 4.6.6 *Meeting Youth's Needs*

Ensuring both their physical and emotional needs are met is an important consideration to a successful service (Karabanow, 2004a; Raising the Roof, 2009; Thompson et al., 2006). Several youth commented in their quantitative and qualitative data the practical aspects of SYS which were helpful:

Provide bus tickets (to get to school), laundry service, hygiene products (tampons, shampoo etc), food when can't afford. Got me into SYS (psychiatrists). Helpful in every way expected and more. (Female, 19)

It gave me a place to sleep, you know I had three square meals a day, you know, I was able to eat. The staff were there if I needed them. I had a phone. It wasn't too bad. (Female, 20)

Like the free laundry and being able to get fresh vegetables and stuff when the food truck comes in. And... they offered me a position of work. (Female, 20)

Youth discussed the importance of having their basic needs met, but also commented that SYS ensures more than their basic needs are satisfied. For example, youth discussed that SYS creates an environment that is like home by ensuring youth have their own rooms, have access to TVs, and comfortable places to sit:

You get your own bedroom, it's actually clean like, like, it's actually, it's cozy. Well cosier than all the other places. It's got like couches and TV's. (Male, 20)

[There is] good food, like the kitchen is always open so you can eat whenever you want. You can have friends over, you get your own room and...Computers, everything. It's almost like you're at home. (Male, 20)

One youth contrasts this with another service he accesses.

It's like everybody is snoring and doing like their addictions or whatever right. It's just something you don't want to be around... Everybody is sleeping in one room and it's just disgusting. It stinks, it's dirty, it's just somewhere that you probably would catch lots of diseases and it's somewhere you don't want to go. (Male, 20)

#### 4.6.7 *Choice and Unconditional Positive Regard*

Another important aspect of service delivery youth discussed was choice. Youth stated they needed to feel they had the choice to attend or not attend services, the choice in when to engage, and the choice to adapt a service to better meet their individual needs:

It feels good that people actually care for those teenagers that didn't make it through high school, or who are struggling through high school or who are having kids or whatever. It feels really good knowing that there's different programs. And I mean, you can use like, a drug thing over here and you can use a drug thing over here. And maybe this drug one wasn't your way so you go to this one and you find

it's perfect because they did their program a little bit different from this one.  
(Female, 17)

The PRYM also asks youth to discuss what is helpful and not helpful about SYS services and many youth stated the positive aspects included choice and providing alternative solutions to problems:

The most helpful aspect of this service was that they were willing to listen to what I had to say. They never put my ideas or accomplishments down.  
(Female, 21)

The fact that SYS is not just programs and food our houses provide a strong consistent family base for those that have little or none. A place where you feel the love and understanding from amazing people and supporters.  
(Female, 22)

Previous research also supports the notion that along with having the opportunity for choice, many youth discussed the importance of feeling unconditionally supported by staff and the agency (Kidd et al., 2007). The youth stated they felt comfortable to make mistakes and did not feel pressured to make the decision the staff member felt was appropriate. This ability to make choices and mistakes without feeling judged or fear of being reprimanded was generally discussed within the context of positive relationships with staff members:

Well, I've made so many stupid choices since I've been down here for like 4 months and I've made a lot of stupid choices but I mean, they helped me through it. And if it wasn't for them, I don't know where I'd be. I seriously don't know. It scares me thinking of where I would be if it wasn't for such a program like this. (Female, 17)

I am probably going to use this about 10 times in this whole [interview] thing, but the fact that they don't force you to pick an option. They give you a whole bunch of options and you get to pick. Cause everybody is different, right? Like some people would like to do something else, than what I would like to do or whatever, like living situations or whatever right? But they give you options that would suit you the best. (Female, 17)

Some youth felt that the services provided by SYS provided the stability they were lacking in other areas of their life. This became obvious when the youth discussed the unconditional positive regard staff had for the youth:

It's the one thing that's stable in my life... And I, since my grandmother has died...since then I haven't had stability in my life and it's nice to know that SYS is always here no matter if I live you know where ever I live. If I'm on the street, if I'm whatever I'm doing, if I lose everything in my life. I can always come here. This is always like. If I don't, if I don't have a home to go to, I can come here and, they're [the staff] waiting, you know, they're here. (Female, 19)

The youth not only felt comfortable to make their own decisions but they also felt safe to make mistakes without fear of judgment. Because of that, staff members have the difficult job to balance the youth's need for self-determination and self-efficacy but also maintain their safety. This feeling of safety led to a comfort within the program as the youth knew the program would be available to them regardless of their particular situation:

They are really supportive. It doesn't matter if you are making the worst mistake of your life. They don't tell you what to do, they give you options on how to do it. (Female, 17)

But I like them because they understand me too. When people understand me, then I'm happy. (Female, 18)

These results provide support for the notion that a positive connection to staff members has a significant role to play in service use satisfaction with at risk and homeless youth are discussed (Garrett et al., 2008; Kidd et al., 2007). Building trust by providing for the youth's basic needs, providing a comfortable, nonjudgmental environment to make mistakes, mutual self-disclosure, and relating on a personal level are all aspects which have been discussed as what makes a quality service. In addition, consistency with staff is also important, not only in terms of staff turnover rates, but also

in terms of staff mood. Youth respected and spoke positively when they what to expect when particular staff members came on shift. Staff members who are predictable and consistent tended to be spoken of more positively than those who are not.

#### 4.6.8 *Negative Experiences with SYS*

Although many of the experiences were positive at SYS, not all were. Some youth talked about their belongings being stolen or lost, lack of staff availability, staff's negative attitude, the inflexibility of staff members and the rules, and the inability for staff members to know the interpersonal dynamics between the youth involved in the program. For example youth said:

It also made me mad. And then, I don't know, one minute all my clothes were there, and then they like lost [them]. (Female, 18)

And I got kicked out for two weeks. I went back on the next couple days and found out they might have lost my clothes and I lost my mind. I tried to break in and I yelled at them. So I got kicked out for a month. (Male 20)

They're too busy, there's not enough staff. (Male, 20)

Here you can talk to a case worker, but they also have you know, they will get interrupted or they'll have phone calls or you know they just not, they're not qualified to tell you um, they can tell you their opinions, but they can't really help you in depth as much as they want to. (Female, 19)

Some staff are, seem like they don't like kids, but others are different. (Male, 20)

As found in the literature (DeRosa et al., 1999; Garrett et al., 2008; Karabanow, 2004b), another reason youth did not have a positive interaction with the agency were the rules. Several youth commented that being kicked out for "stupid reasons" was the least helpful aspect of SYS. When asked to elaborate, most youth stated "stupid" reasons were related to the rules within SYS programs. In some cases, it appeared the youth did not

fully understand the rationale for the rules and felt staff were being inflexible to their particular situation. One youth commented:

*Y:* ... Um, just the way like, I don't know, just like that staff really pisses me off like they need to make better decisions and stuff.

*I:* Yea, can you give me an example?

*Y:* Like I don't know. Like the shelter, like people are in there because they need sleep and but they kick you out for like the littlest stuff... (Male, 18)

Another youth commented how the rules got him into trouble:

Well it has a lot to do with horseplay and like, me having a big mouth. [*Youth laughs*]... So staff piss me off then I do whatever I can to piss them off. (Male, 20)

Youth also discussed the unhelpful aspects of SYS while completing the PRYM.

Half of youth (40, 50.6%) reported there was nothing unhelpful about any of the SYS services. Of the youth who did comment on what they felt was unhelpful, some commented about the hours or location of the programs (6, 7.6%), about "stuck up" and hard to relate to staff members (11, 13.9%), and other youth who frequent the programs (6, 7.6%). Some participants (8, 10.1%) said the rules in general or specific rules within the programs were the least helpful aspect of SYS services.

The rules suck. Staff could be more understanding of exceptions to the rules. Staff don't put themselves in our shoes...they listen but don't always understand our situation or the circumstances if there's a particular incident. (Female, 19)

Within the qualitative interviews, it seems to be important the youth understand the rationale for the rules in order for them to follow them:

Like some other days I don't mind the rules, right? Because it does make sense. Like you are supposed to be doing more independent things, and they do make you more independent here. (Female, 18)

They were always supportive. Some of the times weren't helpful because I didn't want to listen. But when I wanted to listen they actually were helpful. (Female, 20)

It was also necessary for staff to be flexible with the rules.

I think he [a staff member] knew that I was fifteen, but just he never kicked me out. He never did. Every time, I'd go in like every day and he'd ask me all the time "You got your ID?" (Female, 18)

He was always bending the rules to help us out. You know what I mean like, as long as like we do what he wants he'll like give us like so much like flexibility. It was awesome. (Male, 20)

To make it work for everybody, there is no excuse for anything. Like if you need to do your chore later, they'll let you do your chore later, right? If you like miss your chore, they'll give you a make-up chore right? (Female, 18)

Other youth believed staff members were being particularly difficult, rude or mean towards them because the youth felt the staff member did not like them or because staff were on "power trips." It appears that these participants often failed to recognize the policies and procedures behind the rules and staff actions and instead felt the staff members acted unjustly specifically towards them:

Uh... I dunno, some of the workers have an attitude complex sometimes... Uh, they get snooty, I get snooty I tell them to 'f' off and then I get banned for a few weeks. (Male, 20)

It's just like the rules, some of them take their job too serious and stuff... Some of them make mistakes and stuff. Like stupid mistakes. (Male, 18)

And it's like I had nothing to do with it but they still give me the consequence. And it's like, so I didn't really listen to the rule because I didn't really like it. So I still [youth explains behaviour that went against the rules] all the time and they kicked me out for three days. And then I [did the behaviour] again and they kicked me out for another eight days. (Male, 20)

Good, but bad. I don't know. I hate a lot of the staff and stuff... Like, the bad part's just like staff like just, piss me off sometimes. (Male, 18)

When youth did not understand the rationale for the rules they were more likely to feel the rules interfered with their autonomy and freedom. When youth did not follow the rules, it most often led them to being kicked out of SYS, however youth still tended to overall speak positively about their experience with SYS. It appears they continued to

have a positive feeling towards SYS due to their commitment to the program and the staff members working within the program.

Almost all youth, even youth who had been kicked out of SYS, discussed the positive impact that at least one staff person from SYS had on their life and how they made a difference to them and supported them during difficult times. Youth who did not speak as positively about SYS staff still generally viewed SYS positively and viewed the programs as a place to provide for their basic needs such as food, hygiene, their social connection such as internet, phones, and a place to hang out with their friends. However, these youth who viewed staff at a particular program at SYS negatively still had positive experiences with at least one staff within all the SYS programming. Therefore, it appears staff and staff relationships have the largest impact upon youth's continued engagement with this service, even after being kicked out.

#### **4.7 POSITIVE OUTCOMES SUPPORTED BY SYS SERVICE ENGAGEMENT**

During the qualitative interviews, youth explicitly spoke of the positive outcomes that SYS helped to facilitate. The youth spoke of SYS helping them and supporting them to overcome challenges such as drug use and abuse, mental health concerns, develop skills such as parenting skills, and connect them to resources such as school, addiction services, mental health services and housing. A young male, aged 20 said, "Cause otherwise [without SYS] I would probably be in a dumpster now." Other youth also spoke of the positive impact being involved with SYS had on them:

If I didn't have them [SYS], I would be a very lost little girl right now. I really would, like, uh, I don't know what I would do, I wouldn't be able to get the nutrition that I need, or be able to get referrals for um my, my mental

health. I wouldn't be, just every way, like everything. It seems like they are the mould to keep my life going. (Female, 18)

They've helped me with like parenting skills, I got like my WHMIS and my First Aid and all that from the parent program. What else have they helped me? Um, they helped me when Jordan [the youth's partner], like he was out on the streets so they [found him a place to stay] for a couple of days so they helped me out that way...They've helped me in like any way possible. Cause like every time I need something, they are always there to help me. (Female, 18)

If I wasn't, if it weren't for SYS I probably would had to move back with my family. I wouldn't be able to support myself, I wouldn't be independent. And I wouldn't be going back to school right now. And I am going back to school... And SYS keeps me on the right track, it keeps me on the focused, it keeps me something to do it gives me plenty of resources. (Female 20)

It made me do a complete 360, like I was really, really hard into cocaine and crack and really bad, badly gone. I was pretty much you know, worst place I was at... And these guys [SYS] helped me turn myself right around, they helped me you know, get out of the [specific] program, get a social worker, you know. Help me, you know, look for work if I needed work, or get into programs if I needed programming and everything. All the AA meetings and everything like that, or NA. They were awesome. If it weren't for SYS, I think I would still be doing drugs. Yea, they are amazing. (Female, 20)

#### **4.8 LIMITATIONS**

There were several limitations to this study. Among the limitations was the potential for a biased sample. Since SYS is a voluntary service, it is possible that the young people who had negative experiences with SYS did not return and therefore did not participate in the study. Similarly, it is difficult to determine whether youth's engagement to SYS was indicative of self-reflection or maturity. Another potential limitation of the study was my dual role as a researcher and staff at SYS. Although many youth commented they felt more comfortable having a familiar person conduct the research, it is also possible that the youth focused on their experiences at SYS and I asked

more in depth questions about SYS as we were both more familiar with this service. The scope of the data was limited as it was influenced by my social location, experiences, values, and knowledge. The power imbalance also may have influenced the youth's decision to disclose some experiences but not others. Another limitation is that the research was not specifically designed to answer these particular research questions presented in this thesis. Future studies could ask specifically about youth's experiences of being kicked out and explore youth's engagement with and relationships to staff at SYS and other services.

#### **4.9 SUMMARY**

The data shows youth involved with SYS have a history of using multiple services, however these services do not appear to have engaged the youth nor provided adequate or meaningful service. It can be inferred that a gap in service provision may have contributed to the youth to become homeless. As a result of this limited service provision, these youth have not developed the skills and relationships necessary to foster resilience to help them when experiencing adversity.

The young people appeared to have experienced much instability and have been kicked out of many places throughout their lives and appear to cope with this adversity by disengaging from services and supports and relying on themselves. However, when these youth became involved with SYS services the youth often experienced a new sense of belonging, connection to a service, choice, unconditional positive regard and most importantly, positive relationships with staff. The youth discussed the importance of connecting with the staff at SYS and I interpreted that despite difficulties with the program's rules and being kicked out, they came back because they were engaged with

the service and felt a positive attachment to staff members. Based on the findings presented in this thesis it can be argued that a youth who experiences an engaging service environment may be better able to develop resilience processes and attachment to a service and service providers, which in turn could help them to better cope with risk.

## **CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study was to examine homeless and street-involved youth's experiences of being kicked out, and what aspects of service delivery are necessary to engage youth in programs and services, even after they have been suspended or asked to leave. By exploring youth's experiences and already existing strengths, it is possible to develop services that help to bolster their resilience.

### **5.2 INTERPRETATION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Using a resilience framework, homeless youth's experiences of being kicked out of services was explored. Through these narratives, youth discussed what aspects of service delivery were helpful in their engagement with the service, and what aspects of the service were unhelpful and disengaging. Specifically, this study examined youth's experiences with Street Youth Services to determine what makes this service different (i.e. more engaging) than the others.

The data from this study shows that SYS works with very high risk youth who are and who have been involved with multiple services, and yet the majority of them are doing well. Overall, SYS services are meeting the needs and expectations of the youth who access the program, as only 5% of youth indicated they were not satisfied with the service. The youth in this study discussed positive relationships with staff, a welcoming environment, choice, and support for positive change as conditions necessary for successful service engagement, which is supported throughout existing literature (Garrett

et al., 2008; Karabanow & Rains, 1997; Kurtz et al., 2000; Laursen & Birmingham, 2003; Thompson et al., 2006).

When examining resilience processes of the 75 youth who participated in this study, the scores indicated that the youth's overall resilience was low and they did not have a strong connection or relationship to primary caregivers compared to other high risk youth. However, the youth had high individual resilience and prosocial behaviours, which implies that homeless youth have individual strengths and capacities and rely on themselves rather than others for their survival. Rew et al. (2001) also stated that homeless youth must depend on themselves to ensure their survival. Despite this reliance upon themselves, the youth who access SYS feel like they belong. These youth view themselves as helpful, caring, supportive individuals who look out for each other, yet they do not partake in "typical" developmental activities such as working on homework or volunteering or working. In order to bridge this gap and help youth succeed in more typical prosocial behaviours, it is necessary for services to provide sufficient support for career and educational development. Service delivery models must help youth to recognize that their individual strengths and the skills they utilize with their friends (e.g. sharing, being kind, and helping each other out) are skills that can be transferred into the workplace or educational setting.

In terms of risk factors, these youth are categorized as high risk and their scores on the risk subscales are similar to other high risk youth, with the exception of the substance use sub-scale. This higher involvement in substance use is supported by the literature (Karabanow, 2004a, 2004b; Whitbeck, Johnson, Hoyt, & Cauce, 2004), though it is important to note that the youth involved with SYS are also older than the other

service users in the sample and are therefore more likely to be involved with substance use (Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1997; Salomonsen-Sautel et al., 2008).

This study examined youth's experiences of being kicked out of a variety of services and places. There are few other studies examining youth's experiences of being kicked out of programs and services. The young people who participated in this study had similar experiences of being kicked out as youth in the study by Karabanow and Rains (1997). Youth reported that they are kicked out of services for minor infractions and 'stupid reasons' (Karabanow & Rains, 1997) which are often a result of youth and staff members misunderstanding each other and the perceived unwillingness of staff to be flexible. Youth also reported running away, purposely missing mandatory programming, using drugs, or being violent as factors leading to suspension. Young people stated that the consequence of being suspended from these programs is that they are unable to finish their high school education, to meet their basic needs, as well as experiencing emotional distress from heightened vigilance. Young people also discussed that being asked to leave programs often sets back any progress they had made as their focus is forced to change from positive change to survival mode (Karabanow & Rains, 1997).

The study also examined youth's perceptions of positive and negative service provision. Youth's experiences of positive and negative service provision confirm trends in the literature. Youth most frequently discussed their positive relationship with staff as the most helpful and positive aspect of SYS. Specifically, being able to relate to staff on a personal level, having choices, ensuring their needs are met, feeling respected and trusted, and feeling comfortable being themselves and making their own mistakes. As the literature suggests, youth at SYS reported that the rules tended to be the most

challenging aspect of successful service delivery (DeRosa et al., 1999; Karabanow, 2004b). On the one hand there needs to be rules and structure to create boundaries and a sense of responsibility, however the rules must be flexible and negotiable (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000).

My interpretation of this data, which is influenced by my social location, experiences and knowledge, is that the young people were suspended or kicked out of programs because they were not engaged or committed to the program. Similar to the results in Karabanow and Rains' (1997) study, youth who were kicked out of SYS felt a level of betrayal by the staff who the youth regard as allies and being kicked out puts youth behind in their efforts to change. I interpret this to mean that the young people did not have empowering relationships with staff where their voice is respected and listened to. When young people discussed being unaware of why they were kicked out of services, this also suggests a lack of engagement as it would appear the youth were not included in the decision making process and the decisions were not explained to them. Similarly when youth skipped programs or ran away, I interpreted these actions to suggest lack of engagement since the youth appeared not to have a connection to the program.

My interpretation of the data also includes the importance of unconditional positive regard towards youth from staff. The youth in the study discussed the importance that they feel valued, respected, understood and listened to. They spoke about how staff at SYS created an environment where youth were comfortable to make a mistake, knowing that staff would continue to be there for them and support them. I interpreted this to mean unconditional positive regard because regardless of youth's actions or

behaviours, the staff's positive attitude towards youth was unchanging. Though the young people discussed the conditions and rules imposed upon them by the program, their tone and context led me to the interpretation that young people were able to separate these agency conditions from staff's unconditional positive regard. Much like the youth in Karabanow and Rains' (1997) study, the youth tend to come back to SYS because of their connection with the staff; they are familiar with the staff and the environment, the services are engaging, and SYS tends to feel more like home than other services.

### **5.3 IMPLICATIONS**

Most homeless and street-involved youth have experienced being temporarily or permanently suspended from programs and places such as their family home, group homes, shelters, schools, and other educational programs. Many times, youth feel that being kicked out of these places is counter to their goals and forces them to prioritize engagement in survival strategies rather than positive change.

Despite the challenges, including being kicked out, homeless and street involved youth have many strengths and resilience processes on which they rely. Most youth involved with SYS rely on themselves rather than the supports of adults, service providers and peers. Despite this, these youth view themselves as prosocial individuals with a willingness to help and be kind to others, and take care of each other on the streets and look out for their peers. Therefore, service providers must provide youth with this same type of unconditional support youth provide and receive from their peers and staff must help when youth are seeking educational attainment, job skills, or other goals.

In order to ensure new and existing programs are designed in such a manner that meet the youth's needs and are meaningful to the young person, it is necessary to create

training for staff and develop policies to stop young people from suffering from a domino effect as a result of being kicked out. I believe staff training should not only include how to successfully perform the day-to-day aspects of the job, but also include a mentoring component to teach new staff how to develop positive relationships with youth. Staff training should also include concrete examples that demonstrate specifically how staff action, inaction, mood, attitudes and behaviours have a direct impact upon the young people. In order for staff to fully understand how staff impact young people, I believe that examples of youth testimonials specific to the organization should be explored and deconstructed to help staff to develop an appreciation and full understanding of positive relationship building.

In terms of policies, I believe that organizations should collaborate with each other to ensure young people do not suffer from a domino effect; that is if a young person is kicked out of one place, they are not then kicked out of another for lack of attendance. Organizations should collaborate and create a plan with the youth to ensure other areas of their life and not negatively impacted as a result of being kicked out of a specific program or agency. In addition, the rules surrounding being kicked out should be flexible and situation dependent. Overarching rules and policies do not work because sometimes the young person makes a mistake, even though they are making positive changes. For example, instead of kicking out the youth who punched an individual, even though all other areas in her life were on the right track, staff should have made a plan so that she would be able to continue towards the positive goals she had set out for herself. Although the consequence of being suspended from a program is sometimes unavoidable and can

teach young people valuable lessons, it is necessary to ensure young people are committed and engaged to that program through flexible rules and caring staff.

Staff who work with homeless and street-involved youth must be trained to be encouraging, hold youth accountable in a respectful and non-judgemental way, truly listen to the youth's goals, needs and wants and be willing to trust youth. When youth can make a positive connection with a staff in an organization, feel unconditionally supported, and that they can contribute to the greater good, they are more likely to engage with a service on a deeper level and be less likely to be kicked out. If a young person is suspended from a program, this atmosphere of trust and caring is more likely to draw youth back into the service which ultimately leads to more positive outcomes.

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## APPENDIX A: PRYM

### For Office Use Only

*Participant ID:*

*Country ID:* 01

*Site ID:*

*Sample ID:*

*Referral Agency:*

*Administration:* T1

*Department ID:*

*Date of Administration:*

### PATHWAYS TO RESILIENCE YOUTH MEASURE - SU

Thank you for participating in the Pathways to Resilience Research Project. Please answer the following questions as honestly as you are comfortable with. There are no wrong answers.

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We want to learn about the sorts of help that works best for young people and about the types of services they use. Before answering the attached questionnaire, please can you tell us if you are **currently** or have used **during the last 6 months**, any of the following?

- [ 1 ] Community-based service provider (eg Street Youth Services, Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Family SOS, etc)
- [ 2 ] Corrections / Justice (eg been questioned by the police, on probation, had to do community service, mediation or alternative measures, restorative justice, etc)
- [ 3 ] Educational supports (eg tutor, guidance counsellor, IPP, school-based social worker, school-based psychologist or school-based therapist, etc)
- [ 4 ] Child, Youth and Family Services (Social services) (eg Social worker, foster placement, group home, shelter, etc)
- [ 5 ] Mental Health (eg counsellor, therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist, addictions programming etc)
- [ ] None of the above

## PATHWAYS TO RESILIENCE YOUTH MEASURE - SU

Thank you for participating in the Pathways to Resilience Research Project. Please answer the following questions as honestly as you are comfortable with. There are no wrong answers.

---

### SECTION A:

1. How old are you now? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Female [ 1 ]            Male [ 2 ]
3. People often identify themselves with a particular racial group. To which of the following groups do you belong? (Mark or check the one that best describes you).

- [ 1 ] Aboriginal or Native (e.g. Innu, Inuit, Métis, Mi'kmaq)
- [ 2 ] South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan)
- [ 3 ] Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese)
- [ 4 ] Middle Eastern (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese)
- [ 5 ] Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese)
- [ 6 ] Black (e.g., African, Caribbean)
- [ 7 ] White
- [ 8 ] Filipino
- [ 9 ] Latin American (e.g., Mexican, South American, Central American)
- [10] Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- [11] Mixed Race (please list all groups that apply): \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your ethnicity? (For example, Mi'kmaq, Chinese, Jamaican, German, Italian, Irish, English, Ukrainian, Inuit, East Indian, Jewish, Scottish, Portuguese, French, Polish, Vietnamese, Lebanese, etc.) Please list as many groups as you want to.

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- 5a. Are you in school now or doing correspondence classes?

- [ 1 ] Yes
- [ 0 ] No

- 5b. What was the last grade you completed? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Who are you living with now?**

- [ 1 ] Married parents/guardians
- [ 2 ] Parents/guardians living together but not married
- [ 3 ] A sole/single parent/guardian
- [ 4 ] Staff or house parents in a group home
- [ 5 ] Foster parents
- [ 6 ] I live in supervised housing (independent living unit) but am responsible for myself
- [ 7 ] I live on my own
- [ 8 ] I live with friends
- [ 9 ] Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**7. If you said you were living with one or more parents for Question 6, is one or more of these people your birth parents?**

- [ 1 ] Yes
- [ 0 ] No
- [ 99 ] Not applicable

**8. How many brothers and sisters (including step-siblings and half-siblings) do you have? \_\_\_\_\_**

**9. What language(s) do you speak at home? (Please list in order of importance) \_\_\_\_\_**

**10. Are you currently in a relationship, or dating someone?**

- [ 1 ] Yes
- [ 0 ] No

**11. Are you a parent?**

- [ 1 ] Yes (Go to question 12)
- [ 0 ] No (Go to question 13)

**12. Are you caring for your child at the moment?**

- [ 1 ] Yes
- [ 0 ] No
- [ 99 ] Not applicable

**13. In the house you currently live at, how many bedrooms are there? \_\_\_\_\_**

**14. How many people (including yourself) sleep at this house normally?**

Number of adults (older than 18 years) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B:**

**How much do the sentences below DESCRIBE YOU?**

	<b>Does NOT Describe Me at All</b>				<b>Describes Me A LOT</b>
1. I cooperate with people around me	1	2	3	4	5
2. I try to finish what I start	1	2	3	4	5
3. People think that I am fun to be with	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example by using drugs and/or being violent)	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am aware of my own strengths	1	2	3	4	5
6. Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think it is important to serve my community	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel supported by my friends	1	2	3	4	5
9. My friends stand by me during difficult times	1	2	3	4	5

**How much do the sentences below DESCRIBE YOU?**

	<b>Not true</b>	<b>Somewhat true</b>	<b>Certainly true</b>
10. I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings	0	1	2
11. I usually share with others, for example CDs, games, food etc.	0	1	2
12. I help when someone is hurt, upset or sick	0	1	2
13. I am kind to people younger than me	0	1	2
14. I often offer help to others (parents, teachers, peers etc.)	0	1	2
15. I have one or more good friends	0	1	2
16. Other people my age generally like me	0	1	2

**How many of your CLOSE FRIENDS do the following activities?**

	<b>None</b>	<b>A Few</b>	<b>Most</b>	<b>All</b>
17. Smoke cigarettes	0	1	2	3
18. Drink alcohol	0	1	2	3
19. Do drugs	0	1	2	3
20. Are sexually active	0	1	2	3
21. Break the law (other than by using illegal drugs)	0	1	2	3

How much do the statements below DESCRIBE YOUR SITUATION? When we say “caregiver(s)” we mean the person or people who most often look(s) after you (for example, biological parent(s), foster parent(s), or caregiver(s) from a group home). You do not have to be living/staying in the same place as your care-givers to answer these questions.

	Does NOT Describe My Situation at All				Describes My Situation A LOT	Not applicable
22. My caregiver(s) watch me closely	1	2	3	4	5	99
23. My caregiver(s) know a lot about me	1	2	3	4	5	99
24. If I am hungry, there is enough to eat	1	2	3	4	5	99
25. I talk to my caregiver(s) about how I feel	1	2	3	4	5	99
26. My caregiver(s) stand(s) by me during difficult times	1	2	3	4	5	99
27. I feel safe when I am with my caregiver(s)	1	2	3	4	5	99
28. I enjoy my caregiver’s cultural and family traditions	1	2	3	4	5	99

How much do the statements below DESCRIBE YOUR SITUATION?

	Not true	Somewhat true	Certainly true
29. I would rather be alone than with people of my own age	0	1	2
30. Other people pick on me or bully me	0	1	2
31. I get along better with adults than with people my own age	0	1	2

How many days a week is your parent/guardian/caregiver at home with you when you do the following things? If you are NOT living with a parent/guardian/caregiver skip to question 35.

	No Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days Or More	Not applicable
32. You wake up in the morning?	0	1	2	3	4	5	99
33. You come home from school or work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	99
34. Go to bed at night?	0	1	2	3	4	5	99

35. Think of the person that is most like a mother and most like a father to you, that you spend a lot of time with. Are these people your...? Please mark one “X” in each column.		
	A. My mother figure is my . . .	B. My father figure is my...
Biological mother/father	1	1
Adoptive mother/father	2	2
Stepparent, girlfriend/boyfriend or partner of legal guardian	3	3
Foster mother/father	4	4
Grandparent, aunt/uncle, or other relative	5	5
Another person (please specify)	6	6
I cannot think of someone like this in my life at the moment	7	7

36. Thinking of the mother and father figures you identified above, how much affection do you receive from each of these people? Please mark one "X" in each column.		
	A. Mother figure	B. Father figure
A great deal	3	3
Some	2	2
Very little	1	1
None at all	0	0
Not applicable	99	99

37. Overall, how would you describe your relationship with the mother and father figures you identified above? Please mark one "X" in each column.		
	A. Mother figure	B. Father figure
Very close	3	3
Somewhat close	2	2
Not very close	1	1
Not applicable	99	99

How much do the sentences below describe YOUR SITUATION AT SCHOOL or, if you are no longer in school, your experiences when you were still attending school?

	Does NOT Describe Me at All				Describes Me A LOT
38. Getting an education is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
39. I feel I belong at my school	1	2	3	4	5
40. Teachers at my school who see students hurting each other will do something to stop them	1	2	3	4	5

41. How far do you hope to go in school? (Check only one) I hope to complete ...

- [ 1 ] Grade 9
- [ 2 ] High school
- [ 3 ] College
- [ 4 ] A university degree
- [ 5 ] More than a university degree
- [ 0 ] I don't know
- [ 6 ] Other \_\_\_\_\_

42. During the last 12 months (or the last full school year you attended), how many times did you SKIP A DAY of school without permission?

- [ 0 ] Never
- [ 1 ] Once
- [ 2 ] A few times a year
- [ 3 ] Once a month
- [ 4 ] A couple times a month
- [ 5 ] Once a week
- [ 6 ] A few times a week
- [ 7 ] Everyday

**43. During the last 12 months (or during the last full school year you attended), how many times did you get SUSPENDED?**

- [ 0 ] Never
- [ 1 ] Once
- [ 2 ] Once, for lack of attendance
- [ 3 ] A few times a year
- [ 4 ] Once a month
- [ 5 ] A couple of times a month
- [ 6 ] Once a week

**44. Were you ever EXPELLED from school?**

- [ 1 ] Yes
- [ 0 ] No

**45. Have you ever FAILED a grade or been held back a year?**

- [ 1 ] Yes
- [ 0 ] No

**How much do the statements below DESCRIBE YOU?**

	Does NOT Describe Me At All				Describes Me A LOT
46. I have people I look up to	1	2	3	4	5
47. I know how to behave in different social situations	1	2	3	4	5
48. I am given opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly	1	2	3	4	5
49. I know where to go in my community to get help	1	2	3	4	5
50. I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)	1	2	3	4	5
51. I am proud of my ethnic background	1	2	3	4	5
52. I am treated fairly in my community	1	2	3	4	5
53. I participate in organized religious activities	1	2	3	4	5
54. I enjoy my community's traditions	1	2	3	4	5
55. I am proud to be a citizen of _____	1	2	3	4	5

**SECTION C:**

Thinking about the services you have received from \_\_\_\_\_, (the service that referred you to the study) please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Overall, I am satisfied with the services I received	1	2	3	4	5
2. I helped choose my services	1	2	3	4	5
3. The people helping me stuck with me	1	2	3	4	5
4. I felt I had someone within the service to talk to when I was in trouble	1	2	3	4	5
5. I had a say in how this service was delivered to me, and could ask for what I wanted	1	2	3	4	5
6. I received services that were right for me	1	2	3	4	5
7. I could get the service when I needed it	1	2	3	4	5
8. The location of the service was convenient	1	2	3	4	5
9. Staff respected my religious and spiritual beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
10. Staff spoke in a way that I understood	1	2	3	4	5
11. Staff were sensitive to my cultural and ethnic background	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am now better able to cope when things go wrong	1	2	3	4	5
13. This was the service I needed	1	2	3	4	5
14. There was a service I needed, but I couldn't get	1	2	3	4	5

**15. What has been most helpful about this service?**

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**16. What has been least helpful about this service?**

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**17. Overall, how would you rate this service?**

- [ 3 ] Very helpful
- [ 2 ] Somewhat helpful
- [ 1 ] Not helpful at all

Please check all of the services you have had during your entire life. How often did you use each service?

	How often have you used each of these services?	Never need-ed it	Once in my life	A couple of times	3 times or more	Needed, but could not get it
<b>Health Services</b>	18. A nurse	0	1	2	3	99
	19. Family doctor	0	1	2	3	99
	20. Teen health centre	0	1	2	3	99
	21. Specialist doctor (someone to whom you were sent by your family doctor for skin problems, allergies, a disease, etc.)	0	1	2	3	99
	22. Dental hygienist (for teeth cleaning)	0	1	2	3	99
	23. Dentist	0	1	2	3	99
	24. Emergency services at a hospital or clinic	0	1	2	3	99
	25. Been admitted to hospital	0	1	2	3	99
<b>School</b>	26. Tutor	0	1	2	3	99
	27. Guidance counselor	0	1	2	3	99
	28. One-on-one support (teacher's assistant, resource teacher etc)	0	1	2	3	99
	29. Extra help from a teacher after school	0	1	2	3	99
	30. Independent educational program (IEP/IPP)	0	1	2	3	99
	31. Alternative education centre (eg Bridges for learning; YPT; HYAC; 24/7; etc)	0	1	2	3	99
	32. Speech pathologist	0	1	2	3	99
	33. School-based social worker, therapist or psychologist	0	1	2	3	99
<b>Child and Family Services</b>	34. Social worker (NOT for income assistance)	0	1	2	3	99
	35. Foster placement	0	1	2	3	99
	36. Group home	0	1	2	3	99
	37. Family resource center	0	1	2	3	99
	38. Home care (in home support)	0	1	2	3	99
	39. Intensive family intervention to deal with family or individual problems	0	1	2	3	99
	40. Residential treatment (eg Woodstreet; Day Spring; etc)	0	1	2	3	99
	41. Homeless shelter	0	1	2	3	99
42. Special recreation program or camp	0	1	2	3	99	

	How often have you used each of these services?	Never need-ed it	Once in my life	A couple of times	3 times or more	Needed, but could not get it
<b>Mental Health</b>	43. A Counselor, therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist	0	1	2	3	99
	44. Group treatment	0	1	2	3	99
	45. Substance abuse or addictions services	0	1	2	3	99
	46. Support group (like Alateen for example)	0	1	2	3	99
	47. Medication (prescribed for depression, anxiety, ADHD etc)	0	1	2	3	99
	48. Hospital treatment for things like anorexia, anxiety, depression or another mental health problem	0	1	2	3	99
	49. Out-patient emergency mental health service/Mobile crisis unit	0	1	2	3	99
	50. A help line (like Kid's Help Phone)	0	1	2	3	99
<b>Corrections</b>	51. Gone to court (when charged)	0	1	2	3	99
	52. Been questioned by police in consideration of a crime	0	1	2	3	99
	53. Been put in jail	0	1	2	3	99
	54. Been on probation	0	1	2	3	99
	55. Had to do community service	0	1	2	3	99
	56. Alternative measures program or restorative justice	0	1	2	3	99
	57. Special community recreation program or camp associated with a corrections program	0	1	2	3	99
<b>Cultural / Spiritual Services</b>	58. Traditional healer	0	1	2	3	99
	59. Religious or cultural councillor	0	1	2	3	99
	60. Religious or cultural leader	0	1	2	3	99
	61. Religious or cultural elder	0	1	2	3	99

Are there other services you have used? Please list them below, then circle how often you have used them.	Never	Once in my life	A couple of times	Three times or more
62.	0	1	2	3
63.	0	1	2	3
64.	0	1	2	3

65. Please think of a service other than the one which referred you to the study that you have had a lot of contact with. Which service was it?

\_\_\_\_\_

This service was:

- [ 3 ] Very helpful
- [ 2 ] Somewhat helpful
- [ 1 ] Not helpful at all

Thinking about this other service, please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
66. Overall, I am satisfied with the services I received	1	2	3	4	5
67. I helped choose my services	1	2	3	4	5
68. The people helping me stuck with me	1	2	3	4	5
69. I felt I had someone within the service to talk to when I was in trouble	1	2	3	4	5
70. I had a say over how this service was delivered to me, and could ask for what I wanted	1	2	3	4	5
71. I received services that were right for me	1	2	3	4	5
72. I could get the service when I needed it	1	2	3	4	5
73. The location of the service was convenient	1	2	3	4	5
74. Staff respected my religious and spiritual beliefs	1	2	3	4	5
75. Staff spoke in a way that I understood	1	2	3	4	5
76. Staff were sensitive to my cultural and ethnic background	1	2	3	4	5
77. I am now better able to cope when things go wrong	1	2	3	4	5
78. This was the service I needed	1	2	3	4	5
79. There was a service I needed, but couldn't get	1	2	3	4	5

**80. What has been most helpful about this service?**

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**81. What has been least helpful about this service?**

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**SECTION D:**

How much do the sentences below describe your neighbourhood? Circle one answer for each question.

	<b>Does NOT Describe My Community At All</b>			<b>Describes My Community A LOT</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. People in my neighbourhood can be trusted	1	2	3	4	98
2. People in my neighbourhood get along with each other	1	2	3	4	98
3. There is litter, broken glass or trash around my community	1	2	3	4	98

**SECTION E:**

**How often you have felt like this during the past WEEK?**

1. I had crying spells	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
2. I felt depressed	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
3. I was happy	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
4. I felt that I could not stop feeling sad even with help from my family or friends	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
5. I felt hopeful about the future	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
6. I enjoyed life	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
7. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
8. I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
9. My sleep was restless	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
10. I felt like I was too tired to do things	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
11. I felt that people disliked me	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days
12. I felt lonely	Less than 1 Day	1 to 2 Days	3 to 4 Days	5 to 7 Days

**How many times in the past year have you done the following things?**

13. Stolen something from a store	Never	1 Time	2 Times	3-4 Times	5 Or More Times
14. Got into trouble with the police	Never	1 Time	2 Times	3-4 Times	5 Or More Times
15. Hit or beat up someone	Never	1 Time	2 Times	3-4 Times	5 Or More Times
16. Damaged property (such as breaking windows, scratching a car, putting paint on walls, etc)	Never	1 Time	2 Times	3-4 Times	5 Or More Times
17. Carried a weapon (such as a gun, knife, club, etc)	Never	1 Time	2 Times	3-4 Times	5 Or More Times

**How many times in the past year have you done the following things?**

	Never	Once or twice	Occasionally	Regularly
18. Smoked cigarettes	0	1	2	3
19. Used chewing tobacco or snuff	0	1	2	3
20. Drank beer, wine, wine coolers or hard liquor	0	1	2	3
21. Sniffed glues, sprays or gasses	0	1	2	3
22. Used marijuana (grass, pot) or hashish (hash, hash oil)	0	1	2	3
23. Used any other drug, such as ecstasy, speed, heroin, crack or cocaine	0	1	2	3
24. Taken steroid pills or shots/needles without a doctor's prescription	0	1	2	3
25. Had sexual intercourse	0	1	2	3
26. Had unprotected sexual intercourse	0	1	2	3

**How much do the statements below DESCRIBE YOU?**

	<b>Not true</b>	<b>Somewhat true</b>	<b>Certainly true</b>
27. I get very angry and often lose my temper	0	1	2
28. I usually do as I am told	0	1	2
29. I fight a lot	0	1	2
30. I am often accused of lying or cheating	0	1	2
31. I take things that are not mine from home, school, or elsewhere	0	1	2
32. I pick on or bully others (using text, the internet, physically or emotionally)	0	1	2

**33. In the past year, what things have you experienced that have improved your life? For each experience, how big an influence did it have on your life? (For example, getting a job, moving, traveling somewhere special, forming a special relationship with someone etc.)**

<b>Experiences that improved my life</b>	<b>Effect</b>				
	A little 1	2	3	4	A lot 5
a. _____					
b. _____					
c. _____					

**34. In the past year, what events have you experienced that caused you difficulties? For each event, how big an influence did it have on your life? (For example, trouble at school, being fired, getting into trouble with the law etc.)**

<b>Experiences that made life difficult</b>	<b>Effect</b>				
	A little 1	2	3	4	A lot 5
a. _____					
b. _____					
c. _____					

**SECTION F:**

**1. What COMMUNITY programs or activities do you participate in (that are not school related)? For example, Boys and Girls Club, a theatre group, music, sports such as soccer, basketball, skateboarding, or cultural, family or traditional activities.**

Community programs or activities	How often do you do each of these?					
	A few times a year	Once a month	A couple of times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
a. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

**2. What SCHOOL activities do you participate in now (sport teams, student council, theatre, music etc.) that are organized by staff or students at your school? If you are out of school, what activities did you do the last year you were in school?**

School activities	How often do you do each of these?					
	A few times a year	Once a month	A couple of times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
a. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

**How often do you do the following activities?**

	Never	A Few Times A Year	Once A Month	A Couple Of Times A Month	Once A Week	A Few Times A Week	Every day
3. Volunteer (help others without pay) your time?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Do paid work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Go out with your friends and just hang out?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Been a leader in a group or organization?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

**How often in the past year have the following reasons stopped you from participating in community or school activities?**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
7. Not having enough money	0	1	2	3	4
8. Not having transportation	0	1	2	3	4
9. Your parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) tell you that you can't participate	0	1	2	3	4
10. You have too many responsibilities at home	0	1	2	3	4
11. You are working at a paid job	0	1	2	3	4
12. You didn't feel comfortable participating	0	1	2	3	4

**On an average school or workday, how many hours do you spend doing the following activities? Circle one answer for each activity.**

	Never	Less Than 1 Hour	1-2 Hours	3-4 Hours	5-6 Hours	7 Or More Hours
13. Working on homework ( <i>If you are not in school, please do not answer</i> )	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. Watching TV	0	1	2	3	4	5
15. Playing video games	0	1	2	3	4	5
16. On the internet (but not playing video games)	0	1	2	3	4	5
17. Talking to friends electronically (by texting, using MSN, etc)	0	1	2	3	4	5
18. Doing chores/jobs at home	0	1	2	3	4	5
19. Reading for pleasure	0	1	2	3	4	5
20. Practicing a skill	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. Exercising or being physically active	0	1	2	3	4	5

***Thank you very much for helping us with our study!***

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE



### **Pathways to Resilience:**

A Mixed-method Investigation of the Negotiations for Health Resources among At-Risk Children and their Families who Experience Concurrent Child Welfare, Mental Health, Correctional and Educational Services

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE: YOUTH**

Introduction:

*If consent was obtained from the youth at a separate meeting prior to meeting for the interview, the following points should be reviewed at the time of interview:*

The Information Letter and consent form explained the purpose of this research. All the information you provide will be treated as confidential and will be stored in a locked cabinet. As discussed in the Letter of Information your involvement is entirely voluntary and please be assured you can end your involvement with the study at any time. Should you feel uneasy about what is discussed and would like to talk to a mental health counsellor about issues brought up during this research, please let me know so that I can refer you to one.

*The following points should definitely be discussed with the youth at the start of the interview:*

I now have some questions I would like to ask you. These questions will help us understand how youth and their families cope when involved with different services in the community. Please take as much time as you like to answer. There are no right or wrong answers, just answer as truthfully as you are comfortable with. Also, feel free to tell me when you do not want to answer a question.

*The three key points we want to understand are:*

- **What risks do you face?**
  - **Relationships**
  - **Community**
- **How do you cope?**
  - **Supports etc**
- **How do you know that you are doing well?**

Service Use:

*These questions focus on youths' service use experiences:*

- How did you or your family originally get involved with [name each of the systems relevant to the discussion]?
- What's your experience been like?
- Have any of your experiences been helpful? Any unhelpful?
- How has being a client of // using ... [choose one: Child in Care, client, permanent ward, etc.] affected your life?
- What other (health or social) services have you been involved with while growing up?
- What other community organizations have you been involved with?
- What was your experience like with each of these?
- What's your experience been like at school?
- Thinking about all the ways people have tried to help you, has there been anything that stands out in your mind as especially good? How about anything that was especially bad?
- Were there barriers to getting the kind of service you wanted? What were these?
- Can you tell me about your life when it is different from now, so you're not in school (or at home) (or on probation) (or in residential care)?
  - How do you spend your time?
  - What do you do to keep busy or have fun?
- Before moving on to other topics, and reflecting on all that we just discussed, is there one person, or a group of people, some activity, or event, which was particularly important when you were involved with [name relevant service]? How did this make a difference to your life?

## Health:

*While these questions are framed as health, it is important to remember that our focus here is on the whole individual, and so in many ways this section also focuses on youth as individuals:*

- What does being healthy mean to you?
- How do you see yourself: healthy or unhealthy, or something else?
- What do you do to stay healthy, spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally?
- What kinds of things threaten to make you unhealthy?
- What do you do about these?
- Do you have any physical health problems? Mental health problems? Do others know about these?
- What do you do to cope with these?
- When you have a problem in your life, what do you do?
- Do you ever need help? If you do, who's help do you need?

## Relationships:

- Can you tell me about your relationships with your family? Friends?
- Are any of these people especially important in your life? Why?
- How have your relationships with these people been affected by contact with the [name relevant service systems]?
- What do these people think about you once they know you are involved with these different services? – *the notion of being involved with these services in general*
- What do they think about the time you spent in special programs either at school or through social services such as [ask interviewee for suggestions]? – *how this may impact on how youth use their time and especially when these decisions impact on time spent with friends and family*
- What have your relationships been like with staff at referring service and in other service agencies in the community? (*Probe amount of time spent with workers and the quality of the attachments*)
- Is there someone else in your life you enjoy talking to or spending time with? (*Who is this person? What do you do when you are together? Why do you enjoy this time?*)

## The System and Community:

*This is about both formal and informal supports*

- Did any of your involvement with [name service system] include placing you away from your home community?
  - If yes, ask about how this experience affected the youth's relationships with their home community.
  - In the following questions, follow-up on how being in a different community for a time affected the child).
- How do you see your community?
- How does your community see you?
- When you were being treated (in care) (at school) (etc.) how helpful was your community? Alternatively, if youth is still receiving services: how helpful is your community?
- How did each of the people in the different places (eg school, social workers, family, community, etc etc) that tried to help you work together?
  - Did they talk to each other?
  - Did that help, or not?
  - Can you explain?
- What do you wish had happened when you (or your family) began having problems (if that was the case at all)?

Do you have anything else you would like to add?

## Closing Comments:

We would like to send you a copy of the transcript of our discussion today so you can look it over and add any other comments that may come to mind. **To what address would you like the transcript sent? You should feel comfortable that no one else will access your mail and read the transcript if it is sent to this address. You may also opt to receive the transcript by email if this makes you more comfortable.** I will telephone or meet with you to get your comments on the transcript in a couple of weeks. Our second meeting, either by phone or in person, will give me a chance to ask you what you think of the interview today and some other questions which come to mind between now and then. I will also be able to let you know what we are finding through our research. It is important to us that you have an opportunity to tell us whether what we are finding makes sense to you. Of course, whatever you said here today will be treated with confidentiality and will not be shared with parents and/or guardians. Do you have any final questions?

Thank you for taking the time to share this information with me.