Partnering to Keep Girls Safe

Final Project Report

Pacific Community Resources Society

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Executive Summary

The past decade has seen an increased interest in youth homelessness as a social problem, a growing body of knowledge of the dynamics that put youth at risk and greater awareness of the impact of youth homelessness on adult life and population health outcomes. The Partnering to Keep Girls Safe Housing Project grew out of the work of the Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group and a need to understand the unique circumstances of female youth at risk. This project was a 16-month study of female youth homelessness and exploitation in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley, with additional consultations throughout BC.

The project included:
- A review of research about the kinds of experiences that lead to homelessness and best practices to support female youth who are experiences or are at risk of exploitation and homelessness
- Focus groups, surveys and individual interviews with more than 55 female youth
- Focus groups and interviews with more than 55 service providers providing supports to female youth
- Focus group meetings held in 11 communities: Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, White Rock, Chilliwack, Duncan, Nanaimo, Fort St. James, Prince George, Kamloops, Kelowna and Keremeos
- Creation of a Toolkit of practices to keep female youth safe from exploitation and homelessness
- The creation of partnerships among agencies supporting female youth at risk

Sponsored by Pacific Community Resources Society and funded by the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, the Keeping Girls Safe project engaged female youth and service providers in communities across BC to learn about the lived experiences of teen girls at risk of exploitation and/or homelessness and "best practices" in prevention and response.

Project participants included teen girls and young women and service providers involved in relevant services and supports. While the focus of the project was on the needs of teen girls between the ages of 13 to 19, the youth focus groups included teens and young women aged 15-37, with a median age of 21, sharing their experiences as youth at risk. Service providers were identified by various agencies throughout the province.

Advisory Tables of female youth and service providers helped to shape and guide the project and after the completion of field work, helped to analyze and confirm the themes and findings of the project, especially with respect to pathways and effective practices. The Female Youth Advisory Table also recommended that the title of the project be shortened as the Keeping Girls Safe project and this title was used for the project thereafter. Literature reviews informed the initial study questions and themes and the voices and experiences of female youth informed the project and formed the foundation of data analysis and findings.

Key Findings and Outcomes

1. **Experiences and voices of female youth** – The outcomes of the Keeping Girls Safe Project are grounded in the experiences and illustrated by the voices of female youth who contributed to the project through focus groups, interviews and surveys. Mirroring the research and statistics on youth homelessness and female youth homelessness in Canada, findings related to the experiences of female youth involved with the project reflect the enduring impact of colonization, the structural impacts of poverty, stigmatization related to racialization and gender and personal experiences of abuse, unstable housing and supports and the destabilizing effects of the child welfare system. Of the 55 female youth who contributed to the project through interviews and surveys:
- 62% identified as Indigenous
- 27% identified as part of the LGBTQ2S+ community
- 42% had lived in foster care

- 24% had experienced youth custody
- 82% experienced homelessness or unstable housing
- 44% experienced sexual assault
- 55% experienced physical assault
- 69% experienced emotional/psychological abuse
- 62% felt they were put at risk by substance use
- 65% had been in a relationship that was harmful or abusive
- 69% had lived in housing situations they felt were unsafe
- 45% had lived in housing situations where they were sexually exploited

2. **Identification of pathways to exploitation and homelessness** – Pathways identified through the project included Structural, Systemic and Personal Factors:
   - Structural factors include the impacts of colonization, stigma and discrimination, poverty and unaffordable housing.
   - Systemic factors include limited family support/preservation options in the child welfare system, high rates of Indigenous children in care, unstable Foster Care, limited housing and support options for youth, inadequate income support, limited access to child/youth-friendly victim services, therapy and justice system responses for young victims, poor transition planning and supports for youth and young adults.
   - Personal factors include experiences of childhood abuse and trauma, early attachment issues and unstable relationships, experiences of early housing instability, addiction/substance use and mental health issues.

3. **Identification of promising practices** – The primary deliverable for the project was the creation of *We Don't Need Anything Fancy: A Toolkit of Promising Practices to Keep Female Youth Safe from Exploitation and Homelessness in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley*. Nine "promising practices" were identified. The Toolkit presents each promising practice, exemplary programs and female youth voices illustrating lived experiences related to each of the nine practices:
   1. Indigenous Culture-Centred, Trauma Informed Supports and Services
   2. Stop It Before It Starts
   3. Expert, Timely Response to Emergency Situations
   4. Meet Immediate Needs Now
   5. Relationship-Based Supports and Services
   6. Female Youth-Centred Supports and Services
   7. Interdisciplinary Support Models
   8. Practice Youth Housing First Model Approaches
   9. Optimize Transitions to Adult Services and Adult Life

4. **Partnerships** – The project included the formation of informal and formal groups of professionals and presentations on the project and related issues:
   - Female youth and service providers involved in the project (Advisory Table member) agreed to be part of an informal group that will collaborate on issues affecting female youth at risk
   - This project led to discussions about and formation of the BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness which is engaged with provincial leaders (Ministers, provincial Homelessness Action Plan leads and others) in systematically identifying youth homelessness issues related to each of ten provincial Ministries and developing a provincial plan to end youth homelessness

5. **Presentations**
   - The project and results were presented to the Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group (June 2018) and the Ending Violence Association annual conference (November 2018).
   - A webinar is planned to launch the Toolkit in January 2020

Process Overview

The consultation process for the Keeping Girls Safe Project was developed through initial research, project proposal guidelines, consultation with project originators, ethical considerations and the input of Advisory Table members regarding values and principles as well as practical considerations for engaging youth and conducting the study.

Ethical and Safety Considerations

The project was based on the following ethical and safety considerations:

- Ethical considerations were articulated in a one-page ethical guideline for the project
- Participation was voluntary
- Utilizing familiar, safe meeting settings for focus group sessions
- Ensuring that youth had support from familiar people/professionals at all meetings (meetings did not proceed when adequate supports were not in place)

Youth Voices First

The project was based on the principle that youth experiences and youth voices should have priority in the planning of project activities and in the analysis of data:

- Female Youth Focus Groups were scheduled – and rescheduled as necessary - in each community first, followed by the planning of the Service Provider focus group (this contributed to the delay in a number of planned visits and focus groups; virtually every Female Youth Group had to be rescheduled)
- Data from Youth Focus Groups were analyzed first to identify emerging themes, concepts and categories; subsequently, service provider data were then analyzed and coded
- Verbatim quotes and language used by youth to describe experiences and concepts
- Young women with lived experience were included and given prominent roles as presenters in the project's EVABC Conference presentation

Inclusion of Youth from Over-Represented Homeless Youth Populations

- Efforts were made to ensure an inclusive range of experiences informed the project
- Additional focus groups were planned to ensure that Indigenous individuals and communities, youth involved in treatment programs in urban and rural settings and youth with disabilities were included

Project Components

1. Advisory Tables (Youth and Service Providers)
2. Literature Review
3. Focus Groups with youth and (separately) with professionals
4. Surveys and Interviews
5. Data Analysis
6. Presentations and Reports

Advisory Tables

Separate Advisory Tables were established for 1) Female Youth and 2) Service Providers in November 2017. Each meeting involved a presentation and facilitated discussions of:

- Project overview (who is involved, outcomes, project steps)
- Definitions of homelessness
- Advisory table roles
- Advisory members' ideas for the project

The Female Youth Advisory Table also involved more in-depth discussion of what the Female Youth Focus Groups should be conducted and ways of attracting youth to attend.

A final, joint Advisory/Focus of female youth and service providers came together in June 2018 to review and give feedback on draft Pathways and Promising Practices.

Literature Review

A review of the research literature was conducted to identify issues that put teen girls and young women at particular risk of exploitation and homelessness in order to inform the basic research and survey questions. However, as most research on youth homelessness is not gender-specific, most articles reviewed were non-gender specific. Summaries of relevant articles were developed to provide an overview of the literature on the pathways to homelessness and effective practices. Some research studies examine the risk factors that predispose individuals to homelessness, such as previous abuse or current living circumstances, some of the service needs of homeless youth were identified and best practices are suggested. The summary is included with the Final Project Report.

Summaries include reviewed literature, and a chart that evaluates the relevance and quality of the findings. It should be noted that the research on youth homelessness is in the preliminary phase. Therefore, the information contained in the summary on these topics is meant to highlight risk factors and examples of homelessness and offer suggestions, where applicable, and is not meant to be exhaustive.

Of particular relevance is the Canadian study, *Without a Home: National Youth Homelessness Survey*, a self-report survey administered to over 1000 homeless youth across Canada in 2015 to determine some of the reasons why youth become homeless and what can be done to combat homelessness. Pathways into homelessness were found to be complex, non-linear and unique for each individual. Common factors associated with youth homelessness are early experiences of homelessness, housing instability, involvement in child protection, and challenges in school. The results from this study suggest that homeless youth are disadvantaged in a multitude of ways and often experience ongoing housing instability, nutritional vulnerability, declining mental health, low school participation, unemployment, and criminal victimization. Homeless youth not only experience severe hardship prior to becoming homeless, but that they likely experience greater adversity than other youth once they are on the streets (Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd & Schwan, 2016).

The literature review confirmed the over-representation among homeless populations of female youth and youth in general who are Indigenous, LGBGTQ2S, survivors of early sexual abuse, physical abuse survivors, youth with experience in child protection services and juvenile detention. LGBTQ youth have been found to leave home at higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts (Cochran, Sterart, Ginzler and Cauce, 2002). Youth who are homeless are twice as likely to have a learning disability and three times more likely to manifest emotional problems than their classmates who are not homeless (Gargiulo, 2006).

Focus Groups with Youth and Professionals

Focus Group meetings were organized in 11 communities. Project personnel began with efforts to organize a Female Youth Focus Group, followed by efforts to organize a Service Provider Focus Group. Service Provider Focus Groups were facilitated by the Research and Project Lead while the Female Youth Focus Groups were facilitated by the Project Youth Worker. Three Female Youth Focus Groups included both the Project Lead and the Youth Worker.

Focus group discussions for both groups were guided by five statements and questions:

1. Experiences and pathways contributing to homelessness, exploitation, risk for teen girls
2. Community services for teen girls who are exploited, homeless or at-risk
   - Early intervention/preventative services
   - Housing and support services
3. What works and what are "best practices"? Identify and describe most effective prevention and support services for teen girls in your community
4. What doesn't work? Identify the barriers to accessing early intervention, prevention, support and housing for teen girls in your community
5. Partnerships, potential new partnership in your community and provincially

Two graphics/charts (one for "pathways" and one for "services") were developed to be used at Focus Group meetings to guide the conversations and on which to record input from participants (see Appendix B) as:

1. Re-usable wall chart templates or
2. Presentation "slides" or
3. Colour handouts

All three methods were used to record input on pathways and "best practices" depending upon the room set-up and the preferences of the group.

Chart One - Pathways to Unstable Housing/Harmful Relationships (see Appendix B) - was used to guide discussion and record factors - circumstances and experiences - that may put girls and women at risk for exploitation or homelessness. In some sessions, participants gave their input by adding post-it notes to the chart. In other groups, slides of these "pathways" were used to guide discussion while the facilitator recorded and in other groups, participants recorded their input on colour handouts of the charts.

Chart Two – Services and Supports Scan (see Appendix B) – again, in the form of a chart, slide or handouts, were used to illustrate the range of supports and services in a given community and guide discussion and recording. These categories of service were used to facilitate discussion to identify "what works well and what are examples of best practice" and "what doesn't work well/what is missing/unavailable/inaccessible".

In some sessions, these charts played a central role, while in others participants held more open discussions while the facilitator or recorder recorded comments and discussions with coding or categorizing the input took place later, following the session.

Surveys and Interviews

The purposes of the female youth survey were to:

1. Inform the project of experiences of teen youth project participants in a way that ensures privacy and anonymity.

2. Obtain information related to the project questions, specifically:
   a. What are the pathways to exploitation and/or homelessness?
   b. What are project participants' (teen girls') life experiences that relate to risk of exploitation and/or homelessness?

3. Obtain information about services and supports for teen girls at risk that:
   a. Are available and/or timely
   b. Work best/are effective
   c. Don't work/are ineffective

Survey questions:

1. Mirrored focus group questions while also asking about personal experiences
2. Were based on previously used surveys on youth homelessness and research articles
3. The original survey – used in the first two sessions - was refined and shortened based on participants' feedback in order to be easier/faster to complete and to focus on the most essential information
4. Interview option were also offered based on literacy issues, youth's preference
5. Data were compiled to produce descriptive statistics about female youth project participants and also coded and summarized along with focus group data from that community

Survey contents were developed to include three categories:
1. Background, non-identifying demographic information
2. Questions related to pathways and risk factors experienced by teen participants
3. Questions related to supports and services needed and available to teen participants

Data Analysis and Summary Process

Data from focus groups, interviews and surveys were analyzed through an iterative approach using selected Grounded Theory (GT) research methods. This approach:
   o Assumes that answers to the study questions are grounded in the data and are to be "discovered"
   o Focuses on female youth voices and the perspectives of professionals closely involved as the primary sources of data
   o Uses GT methods as a structure to guide and provide rigor to data analysis

Grounded Theory is typically used as a research methodology to "develop a theory" about phenomena not widely studied. However, GT was used for data analysis in the Keeping Girls Safe Housing Project not to develop a theory, but to provide a method of data analysis that was rigorous and grounded in the lived experiences of female youth and the perspectives of closely involved professionals and service providers.

The process below was followed to analyze data, beginning with female youth input/comments in meetings and surveys to identify pathways and best practices (later labelled "promising" practices). Following the analysis of female youth data, input/comments from professionals/service providers was analyzed.

Data analysis process steps:

1. Recording and summarizing meeting/interview/survey input
    a. Record comments – verbatim quotes were recorded by one or more meeting facilitators, in response of each of the 5 questions about pathways and services in each community:
        i. Experiences and pathways contributing to homelessness, exploitation, risk for teen girls
        ii. Experiences accessing/receiving community services for female youth
        iii. What works and what are "best practices"? – Identify and describe effective prevention and support services for female youth
        iv. What doesn't work? Identify ineffective services and barriers to accessing early intervention, prevention, support, housing for female youth
        v. Partnerships, potential new partnership in your community and provincially
    b. Surveys and interviews with female youth
        i. Survey development: began with comprehensive questions related to the study topic found in related surveys and research, then reduced to essential, relevant questions based on feedback from first two surveys (Nanaimo and Duncan)
        ii. Analyze one survey at a time
2. Analysis/comparisons to identify categories, themes and best practices
    a. Constant comparison method: beginning with first data set, identify:
        i. Concepts
        ii. Recurrent concepts
        iii. Categories that concepts fall within (big ones like Prevention/Early Intervention, Housing and Support services are pre-determined/known and other concepts that emerge from data)
    b. Repeat analysis for each data set, identifying examples within categories (gaps and service practices that "work" and "don't work")
    c. Do further focused sampling and collection related to emerging categories/issues/themes
3. Summarize findings and best practices in meeting/interview summaries for each community (see Appendix C)
4. Research Lead writes memos connecting concepts, categories, issues and emerging pathways and best practices

Coding of the data was conducted by the Project Lead and the Youth Worker by reviewing and coding – individually and then together - each line or phrase from the data from each focus group and survey. Categories and themes were identified for each data set (meeting and interview data) based on recurring issues and experiences identified. Questions to guide coding included:

- indicating whether statements refer to pathways (p) or potential best practices (bp)
- define actions or events occurring/being described
- describe what the participants are saying
- analysis questions such as "what's going on here", "what are the surrounding conditions", "how does the person feel, think, or act in this situation", "what changes are described", "what consequences of actions or conditions are identified"

Presentations

Presentations of the Keeping Girls Safe Project and findings took place:
- At the Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group Meeting in June 2017
- At the Ending Violence Association of BC Annual Training Forum in November 2018
- A Webinar to launch the Toolkit is planned for January 2020 in Surrey

Promising Practices Toolkit

The Toolkit, *We Don't Need Anything Fancy: A Toolkit of Promising Practices to Keep Female Youth Safe from Exploitation and Homelessness in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley* was developed as the key outcome and deliverable of the Keeping Girls Safe Project.

Project Results

1. **Experiences and voices of female youth** – The outcomes of the Keeping Girls Safe Project are grounded in the experiences and illustrated by the voices of female youth who contributed to the project through focus groups, interviews and surveys. Mirroring the research and statistics on youth homelessness and female youth homelessness in Canada, findings related to the experiences of female youth involved with the project reflect the enduring impact of colonization, the structural impacts of poverty, stigmatization related to racialization and gender and personal experiences of abuse, unstable housing and supports and the destabilizing effects of the child welfare system. Of the 55 female youth who contributed to the project through interviews and surveys (see full survey compilation in Appendix D):
   - 62% identified as Indigenous
   - 27% identified as part of the LGBTQ2S+ community
   - 42% had lived in foster care
   - 24% had experienced youth custody
   - 82% experienced homelessness or unstable housing
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   - Personal factors include experiences of childhood abuse and trauma, early attachment issues and unstable relationships, experiences of early housing instability, addiction/substance use and mental health issues.

3. **Identification of promising practices** – The primary deliverable for the project was the creation of *We Don't Need Anything Fancy: A Toolkit of Promising Practices to Keep Female Youth Safe from Exploitation and Homelessness in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.* Nine "promising practises" were identified. The Toolkit presents each promising practice, exemplary programs and female youth voices illustrating lived experiences related to each of the nine practices:
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   2. Stop It Before It Starts
   3. Expert, Timely Response to Emergency Situations

4. Meet Immediate Needs Now
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6. Female Youth-Centred Supports and Services
7. Interdisciplinary Support Models
8. Practice Youth Housing First Model Approaches
9. Optimize Transitions to Adult Services and Adult Life

4. **Partnerships** – The project included the formation of informal and formal groups of professionals and presentations on the project and related issues:
   - Female youth and service providers involved in the project (Advisory Table member) agreed to be part of an informal group that will collaborate on issues affecting female youth at risk
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   - A webinar is planned to launch the Toolkit in January 2020

About the Toolkit

The Toolkit presents a set of practices:
- To prevent circumstances that place teen girls at risk of exploitation and homelessness, and
- To respond to the needs of teen girls who are experiencing or are at risk of harmful relationships and unstable housing in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley.

The title of the Keeping Girls Safe (KGS) Project Toolkit, *We Don't Need Anything Fancy* is a quote from a teen girls at one of the project's focus group sessions. Her comment reflects a key message voiced by female youth throughout the project - that the things needed to minimize and remedy risks that girls face are mostly ordinary, fundamental things like respectful relationships, being treated with dignity, being accepted and honoured for who you are and as you are, having help with everyday needs and the security of being able to live in a safe place and to engage with others at school and in the community without abuse, neglect or exploitation.

This Toolkit includes:
- An overview of the Toolkit and the Keeping Girls Safe Project
- Identified Pathways to Exploitation and Homelessness for Teen Girls
- Promising Practices to prevent risk and respond to the needs of teen girls at risk
- A directory of selected programs identified as responsive to the needs of teen girls at risk

The Promising Practices presented in the Toolkit are:
1. Indigenous Culture-Centred, Trauma Informed Supports and Services
2. Stop It Before It Starts
3. Expert, Timely Response to Emergency Situations
4. Meet Immediate Needs Now
5. Relationship-Based Supports and Services
6. Female Youth-Centred Supports and Services

7. Interdisciplinary Support Models
8. Practice Youth Housing First Model Approaches
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Promising Practices are ordered to present preventive practices first, acknowledging the need to be informed by our knowledge of root causes and pathways to exploitation of teen girls and recognizing that real solutions will require fundamental changes to societal structures and service systems which fail to provide timely, evidence-based responses and which continue to place Indigenous teen girls and young women at a profoundly disproportionate increased risk of harm.

Each Promising Practice in the Toolkit includes an explanation of what that practice means for service providers and why the practice is essential. Promising Practice examples identify programs identified by female youth, service providers or through project research as exemplifying the practice. Finally, comments made by teen girls and young women related to the issues encompassed by this practice are presented under "Female Youth Voices".

Best Practices, Effective Practice and Promising Practises

This project called for the identification of "best practices" in preventing and responding to teen girls' experiences of exploitation and homelessness. The terms "best practice" and "effective practice" are reserved for practices conclusively demonstrated and replicated through research to be effective. The "promising practices" presented in this Toolkit generally fall into categories of "promising" or "innovative" practices – they represent a range of practices which have been found to be successful in one or more organizations. It is also noteworthy that evidence and opinions about some practices are contradictory. For example, having a female-specific residence was identified as most effective by one agency while another was in the process of converting its residence to be co-ed, feeling that this approach would be better.

Female Youth Voices

The voices and experiences of female youth have guided the Keeping Girls Safe Project process and the identification of Pathways and Promising Practices. While questions to frame the project were informed by an initial review of the research literature and confirmed by both youth and professional Advisory Tables, the voices of teen girls and young women were the primary drivers of this project. Every effort has been made to present their words and experiences and to conceptualize what they identified as the "best" practices in supports and services intended to meet the needs of girls and young women at risk. Themes and draft Pathways and Practices were identified through analysis of data from Female Youth Focus Groups and Surveys first, prior to analysis of data from Service Provider Focus Groups, interviews and follow-up literature reviews. Quotes from female youth support the Promising Practices and powerfully illustrate their experiences related to each.

Other Project Outcomes

- Most youth Focus Groups had to be rescheduled or cancelled to accommodate female youths' needs (due to youth becoming unstable, support worker illness, death of youth and other unforeseen events)
- The schedule for Focus Groups was extended by five months to accommodate youth and community needs and to ensure inclusion of important populations of youth at risk
- Development of BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness as a result of developing partnerships and 'community of practice'

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APPENDIX A

Advisory Tables Input to the Keeping Girls Safe Project

Advisory Tables Input to the Keeping Girls Safe Project
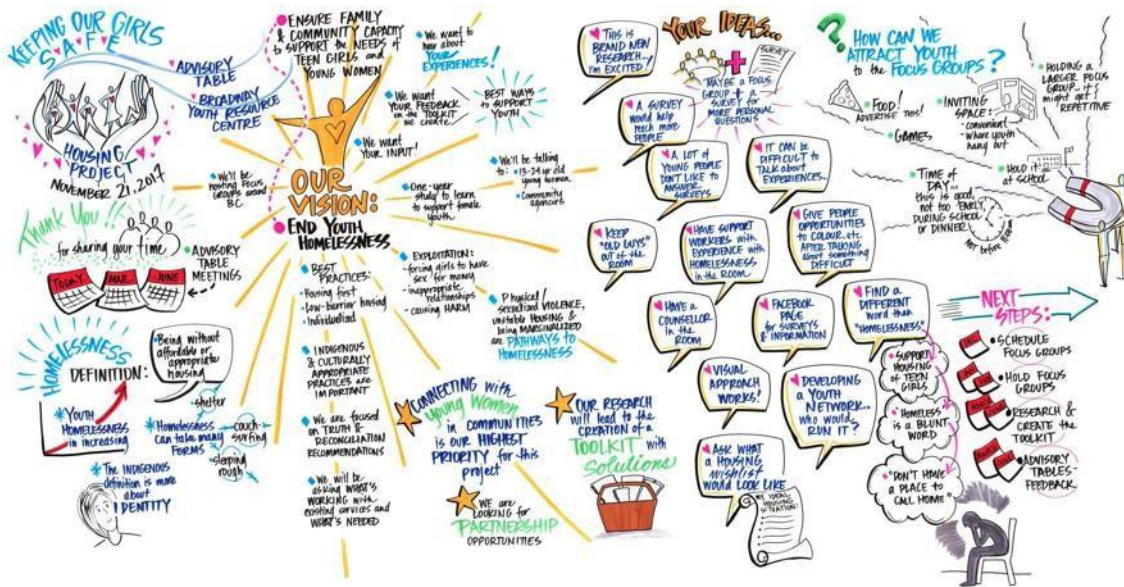
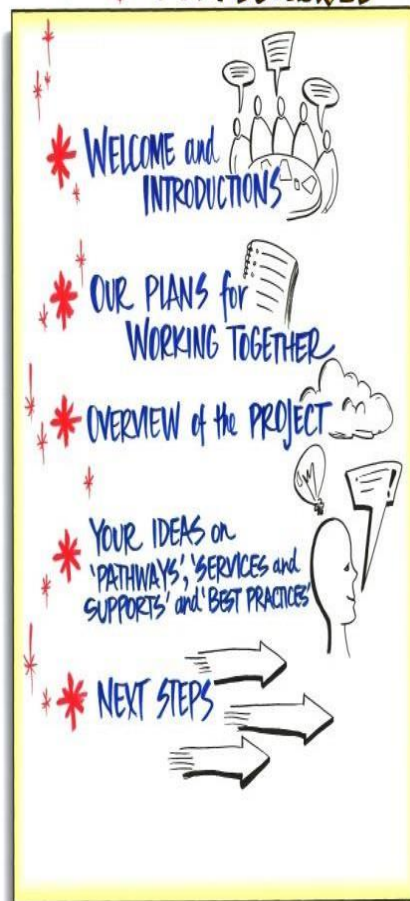# Advisory Tables Input to the Keeping Girls Safe Project

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Materials

Focus Group Visual Agenda

Focus Group Graphic to Guide Pathways Discussion

Focus Group Graphic to Guide Services Discussion

○ INCOME SUPPORT

○ HOUSING, OUTREACH and SUPPORT

○ HEALTHCARE and TREATMENT

○ POLICE and VICTIM SERVICES

○ SCHOOL/EDUCATION

○ EMPLOYMENT

○ INDIGENOUS CULTURE-CENTRED SUPPORTS

○ IMMIGRANT, INTERPRETIVE and CULTURAL SERVICES

Services & Supports Scan

APPENDIX C

Focus Group Meeting Summary Samples

Focus Group Data Analysis Summary
Female Youth Focus Group (Metro Vancouver Sample)

Pathways	Doesn't Work	Works	Best Practices
1. Abuse in the home 2. Lack of understanding about harmful relationships v. healthy relationships 3. Discrimination and prejudice towards indigenous people (from police, teachers 4. Addictions	1. Strict guidelines for admittance to programs (ie, age limits, municipal boundaries, drug use, etc) 2. Police and/or program staff don't believe what the youth are telling them 3. Lack of information from social workers and support services. 4. Most services are located in the DTES, which can be difficult for people to get to and/or triggering for people with substance use issues	1. Programs that can support you with multiple things in one place (ie: birth certificates, housing, food, employment) 2. Genuine staff that will fight for you and genuinely want to help 3. Having separate areas for boys and girls in shelters 4. Having an open door policy- ready to help whenever you need it	1. Never turn away a youth without providing at least a referral to somewhere else that can help them 2. Allowing people to access support at your agency no matter what (no file closures, open to all ages from all areas) 3. Client driven resources that allow the individual to set the goal and then support them to reach it

Categories and Examples Identified

	Category	Examples
Pathways and Prevention	1. Harmful Relationships 2. Indigenous culture-centred supports	1. There is a lack of understanding and education surrounding healthy relationships versus harmful relationships 2. Employees at all support services should all be able to provide Indigenous culture-centred supports (not just services specifically for Indigenous people)
Housing and Supports	1. Accessible, affordable housing 2. Supports that offer childcare for young moms	1. There is a lack of subsidized housing for young women with children and the housing that is available is located in the DTES which can be a triggering area to live 2. Ray-Cam is a school in Vancouver that provides childcare for moms who are attending, NEC in Surrey also does this

Quotes:
- All services should have culturally trained employees so that you can access any service and have understanding staff
- You should never just say 'no' and turn away youth who need help. If you can't help them, tell them where they *can* go. Refer, refer, refer!
- Covenant house is great for a place to stay and they do outreach. One woman shared that they were able to give her a ride to treatment (She had a bed waiting for her but it was outside of Vancouver and she had no way to get there so she called Covenant house and they drove her). Someone else mentioned that they really like having the girls and boys separated at this location - it makes it so that you are able to focus on yourself
- Everything about Aunt Leah's; "They don't turn anyone away…friendly, supportive, genuine, family friendly, help with many things (housing, birth certificates, goals)"

Follow-up:
- Purpose Society
- Kaackamin (Treatment in Port Alberni)

Focus Group Data Analysis Summary Template
Female Youth Focus Group – Rural Youth Treatment Centre Sample

Pathways	Doesn't Work	Works	Best Practices
1. Trauma, abuse, rape 2. Having trust betrayed, feeling worthless 3. Violence/drug use in home 4. Unstable/abusive relationships modelled for you 5. Bullying in schools 6. Foster care - instability and abuse in care	1. Being denied a youth agreement because I wasn't yet 17 and because I use drugs 2. As a victim of crime, having confidentiality betrayed 3. Police siccing dogs on you or hurting you by treating you roughly 4. Aging out of care and not getting support; Aging out at 19 is too young 5. Lack of coordination between cops, justice system	1. Having youth agreement 2. Just to have a mattress in a safe place, nothing fancy 3. Safe houses until you can find your own place 4. Clubhouse with cool activities 5. Low barriers 6. Additional supports for young adults 7. Victim services at court house 8. Foundry, Watari, Odyssey, 9. Youth Supported Independent Living in Newton	1. Individualized, responsive support from someone who cares about you (e.g., SW) 2. For youth in jail, having rehabilitation and training; learning life skills 3. Accommodations for vulnerable witnesses 4. Incentives (gift cards) from police, Crown, Victim Services 5. DES Women's Centre has a good "flyer" with all services

Categories and Examples Identified

	Category	Examples
Pathways and Prevention	1. Violence and abuse 2. Unstable relationships	1. Rape. Getting locked in apartment, getting hit. 2. Having a good relationship but ending up alone because of (boyfriend's) situation or lifestyle (addicted to heroin)
Housing and Supports	1. Housing instability 2. Supports	1. Getting kicked out for using; mom living with abusive man because no options 2. Cops asking you to "check in", giving you gifts when you come in

Quotes:
- I've been abused and I attract people who are abusive and violent and mean and just don't give a shit about you
- Easy to feel stupid, then you feel like shit. When you feel like shit you do bad things.
- LGBTQ are bullied and picked on.
- I've been through many (11 or 12) foster placements – lots of violence (foster mother's boyfriend, other youth)
- Just to have a mattress in a safe place – we don't need anything fancy
- If you're using and need dope and have no place to live, people can exploit the situation which may get you into a dangerous situation
- If you need clothes – someone says, "I just gave you a sweater yesterday" – I'm homeless and my shit gets taken away

- Cop at Carnegie Centre helped me to go to St. Paul's Hospital and get the help I needed – he pressured me, but I needed it
- AVI (Victoria) - took youth in and had harm reduction supplies and safe injection services. They give out meals, are non-judgmental
- They let you talk about whatever you want. They would also text you when you go out, stayed in contact after you left the facility
- (MCFD SW assigned to youth when she was 16 and put her on Youth Agreement): He visited me in hospital; I haven't been homeless since he was assigned to my file.

Follow-up:

Pathways	Doesn't Work	Works	Best Practices
1. Abuse, Intergenerational Trauma 2. Trauma response leads to distrust/not reporting 3. Abuse is normalized 4. Lack of services 5. Isolation 6. FASD	1. Lack of services 1. Vacant positions, turnover 2. Racism 3. Rotating/itinerant workers from outside FSJ: MCFD, John Howard, etc. 4. Overlapping/confusing services 5. Rec Centre not fully utilized	1. Inter-Agency meetings 2. Local Action Team for C/Y mental health (disbanded) 3. Transition House accepting teens 4. Youth-specific services (ie., Nak'azdli Youth Center)	1. Youth Centred support approach 2. Train local workers (proposed) 3. Local Action Team

Categories and Examples Identified

	Category	Examples
Pathways and Prevention	1. Trauma and abuse 2. Service capacity/lack of service 3. Services inappropriate (not youth-friendly or culturally safe 4. Racism	1. High rates of domestic violence and sexual abuse, abuse normalized 2. SAIP needed but no SAIP provider here 3. Fear of police, reluctance to report; PanIndianism 4. Landlords won't rent to FN people; "Boundary" Road
Housing and Supports	1. Accessible, affordable housing 2. Youth-Centred Supports	1. Lack of housing in FSJ and surrounding communities; no youth housing; Transition House full all the time 2. Youth housing, genuine connection with youth; Harm reduction

Quotes:
- Jordan's Principle enacted here – in response to extremely suicidal youth – none of the positions have been filled (one filled – female clinical counsellor – funded for six); First Nation Health Authority – some for here – some for the outer communities
- People may not be able to leave exploitative situations because they need food, shelter, access to a shower. Since there are very few or no resources (none in smaller surrounding communities) people have no choice but to stay with their abusers
- There is physical and sexual abuse happening in the community, lots of which is not being reported
- Within First Nations communities there is a concern that you could bring shame to the family if you report abuse. In these small, close communities there are other concerns such as the fact that your abuser could be living right across the street and if you report and it doesn't go anywhere (Which often happens) then you are still living across from the abuser who you will see every day
- People in the community are scared of and triggered by the police. The justice system seems to be failing the kids, there is mistrust in the system. There have been instances of kids/youth being passed back and forth between the ministry and the police and being made to tell their stories over and over again. This is traumatizing and pushes others not to report

Follow-up:
- Nechako Valley Community Services (Chris Nielson) services and attempt to establish a one-stop/co-located centre)
- Housing development in outlying communities; Jenifer – housing and support services
- Maddison - overlapping services

APPENDIX D

Female Youth Survey Results

Female Youth Survey Results
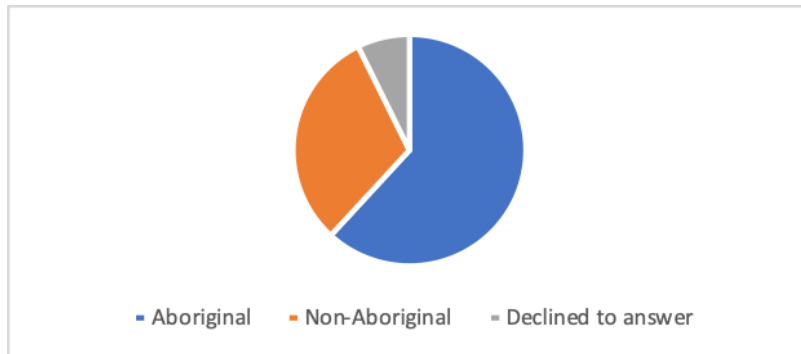
1. **What is your age?**
    - Mean: 21.78
    - Median: 21
    - Range: 15-37 (22)

2. **Are you a recent immigrant to Canada?**
    a. Yes: 1
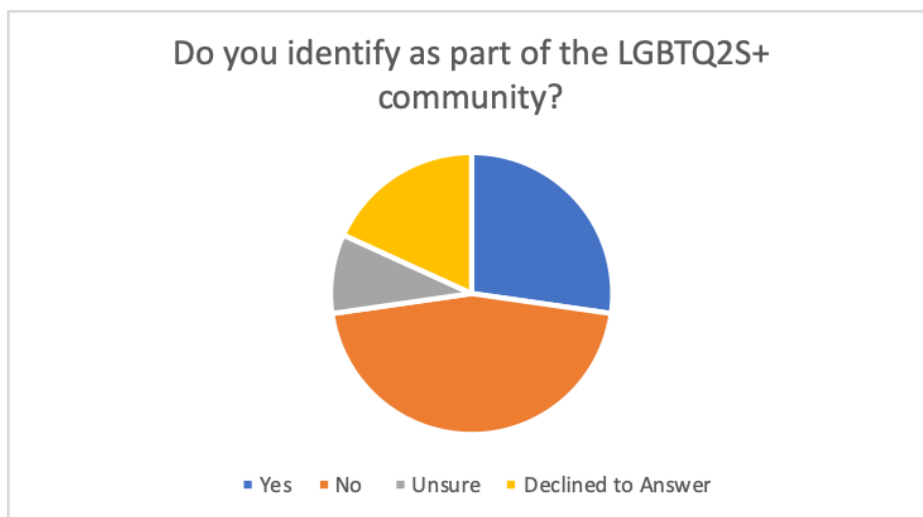   b. No: 54

2. **Do you identify as Indigenous (Aboriginal, First Nations, Metis)?**
    a. Yes: 34 (62%)
    b. No: 17 (31%)
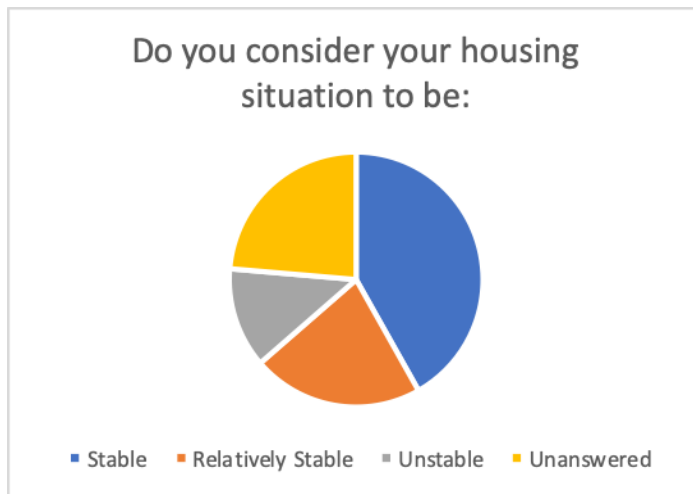   c. Unanswered: 4 (7%)

3. **Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ2S+ community?**
    a. Yes: 15 (27%)
    b. No: 25 (46%)
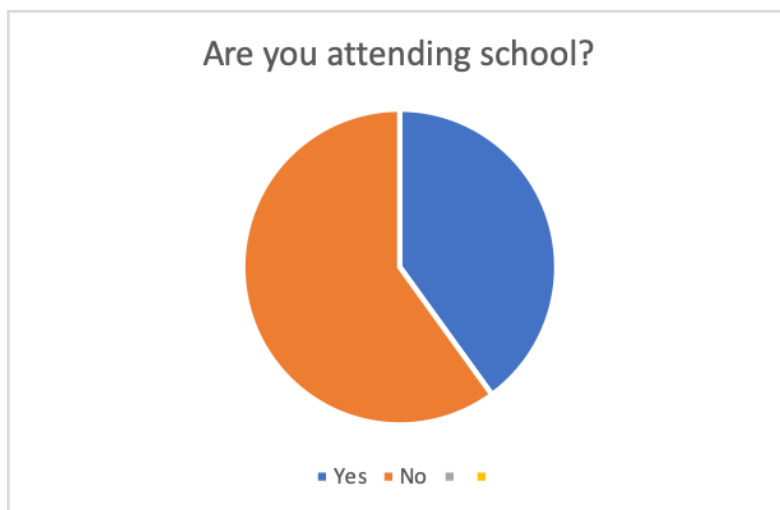   c. Unsure: 5 (9%)
    d. Unanswered: 10 (18%)

4. **Do you consider your current housing situation to be:**
    a. Stable: 23 (42%)
    b. Relatively Stable: 12 (22%)
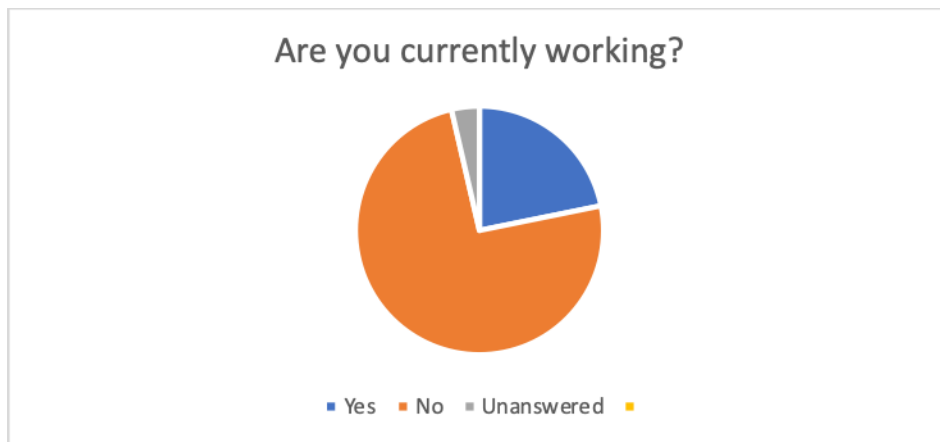   c. Unstable: 7 (13%)
    d. Unanswered: 13 (24%)

5. **Are you currently attending school?**
    a. Yes: 22 (40%)
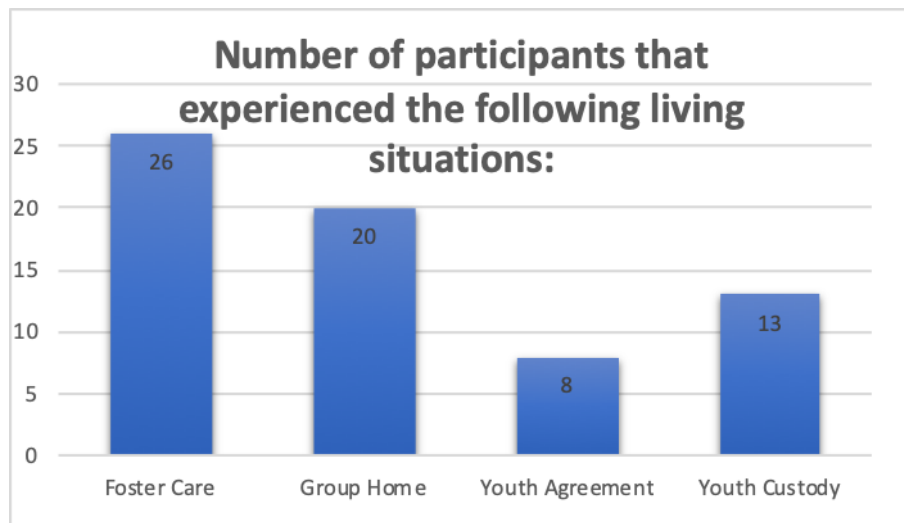   b. No: 33 (60%)

6. **Are you currently working?**
    a. Yes: 12 (22%)
    b. No: 41 (75%)
    c. Unanswered: 2 (3%)

Are you currently working?

Yes   No   Unanswered

7. **Have you experienced:**
   a. Foster care: 26 (47%)
   b. Group home care: 20 (36%)
   c. Youth Agreement: 8 (15%)
   d. Youth custody: 13 (24%)
      ** Respondents were able to choose as many as apply to their situation

Number of participants that experienced the following living situations:

Foster Care	26
Group Home	20
Youth Agreement	8
Youth Custody	13

8. **How many foster care, group home or other placements have you experienced?**

   • 33 out of 55 answered this question

17	Experienced 1-5 placements
7	Experienced 6-10 placements
3	Experienced 11-15 placements
3	Experienced 20 + placements
2	Unsure
1	Experienced 16-20 placements

9. **Have you experienced homelessness/unstable housing?**
   a. Yes: 45 (82%)
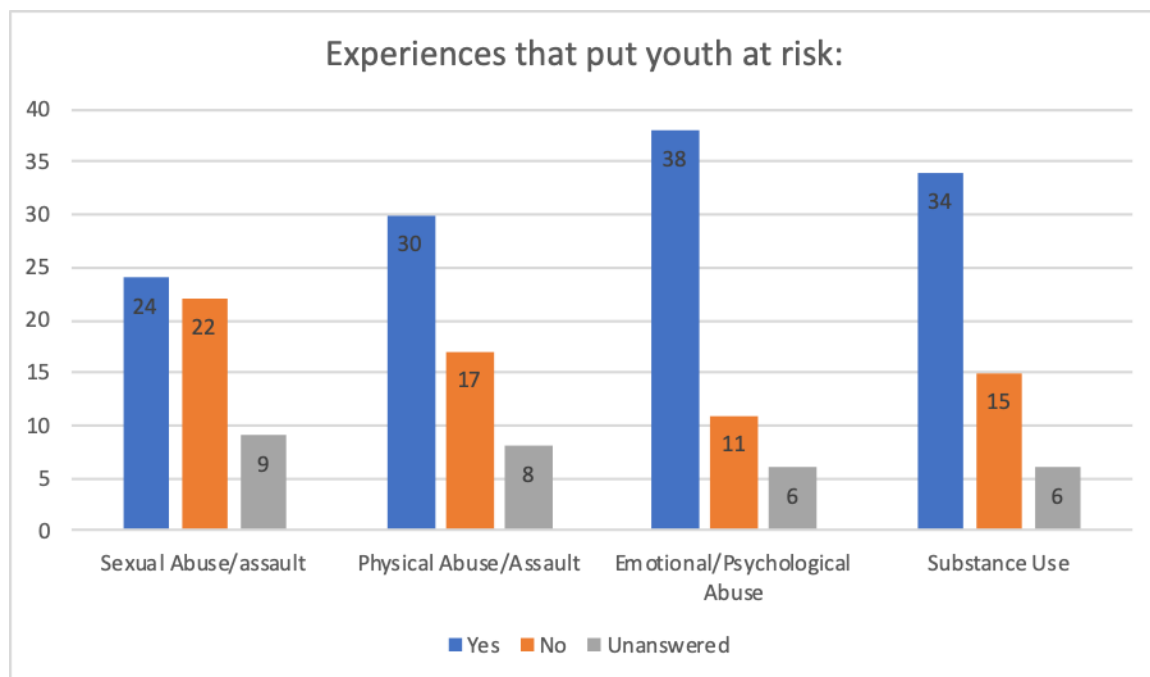   b. No: 10 (18%)

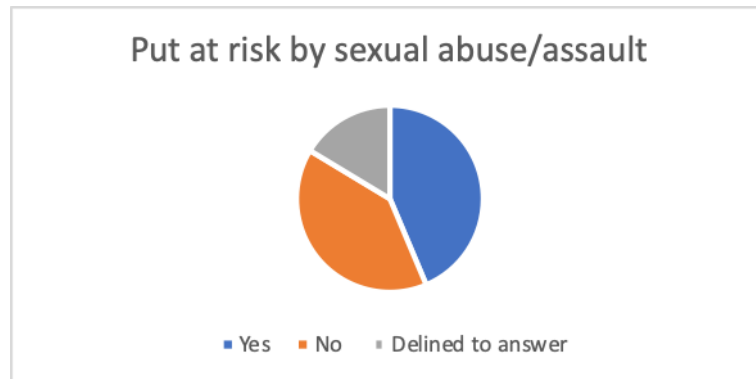**Have you experienced homelessness**

10. **At what age did you first experience unstable housing or homelessness?**
    - 42 out of 55 responded to this question
    - Mean: 14.5
    - Median: 15
    - Range: 4-24 (20)

11. **Do you feel that any of the following experiences put you at risk?**

Experiences that put youth at risk:

	Yes	No	Unanswered
Sexual Abuse/assault	24	22	9
Physical Abuse/Assault	30	17	8
Emotional/Psychological Abuse	38	11	6
Substance Use	34	15	6

a. Sexual abuse/assault
   i. Yes: 24 (44%)
   ii. No: 22 40%)
   i. Unanswered: 9 (16%)

Put at risk by sexual abuse/assault

■ Yes   ■ No   ▪ Delined to answer

b. Physical abuse/assault
   i. Yes: 30(55%)
   ii. No: 17 (31%)
   iii. Unanswered: 8 (14%)

Put at risk by physical abuse/assault

■ Yes   ■ No   ▪ Declined to answer   ▪
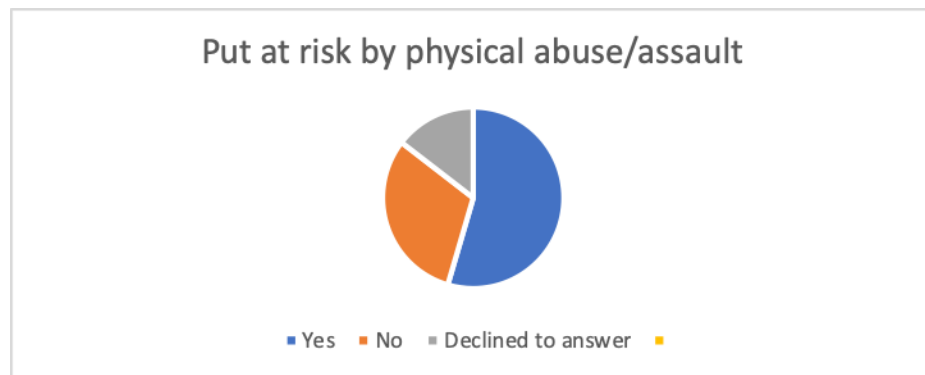
c. Emotional/psychological abuse
   i. Yes: 38 (69%)
   ii. No: 11 (20%)
   iii. Unanswered: 6 (11%)

Put at risk by emotional/psychological abuse

■ Yes   ■ No   ▪ Declined to answer   ▪
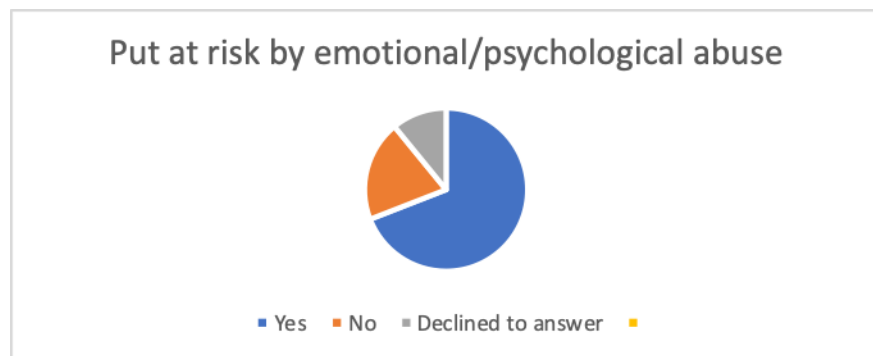
d. Substance use issues
    i. Yes: 34 (62%)
    ii. No: 15 (27%)
    iii. Unanswered: 6 (11%)

Do you feel that substance use put you at risk?
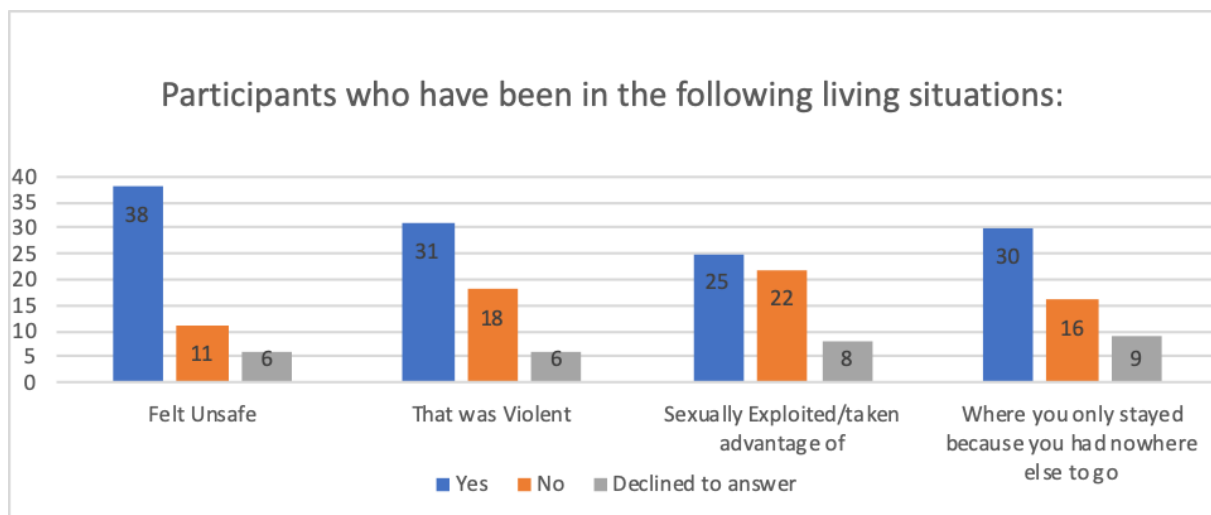
Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Declined to answer ■
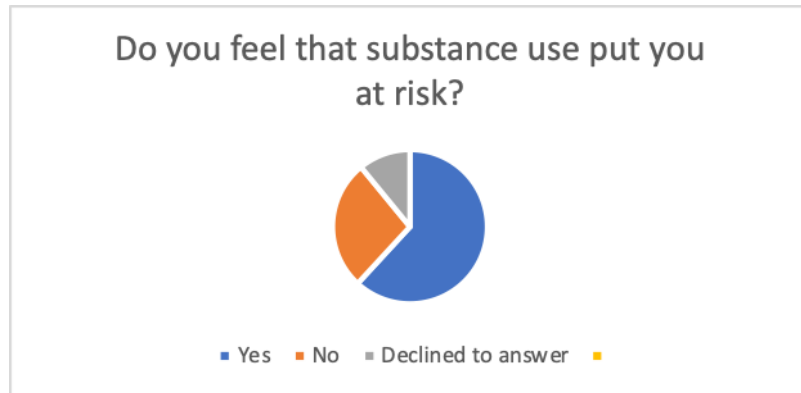
12. **Have you been in a relationship that was harmful or abusive?**
    a. Yes: 36 (65%)
    b. No: 13 (24%)
    c. Unanswered: 6 (11%)

Have you experienced a harmful or abusive relationship?

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No ■ Declined to answer ■

13. **Have you been in any of the following relationships/living situations (check all that apply)?**

Participants who have been in the following living situations:

Situation	Yes	No	Declined to answer
Felt Unsafe	38	11	6
That was Violent	31	18	6
Sexually Exploited/taken advantage of	25	22	8
Where you only stayed because you had nowhere else to go	30	16	9

a. Where you felt unsafe
   i. Yes: 38 (69%)
   ii. No: 11 (20%)
   iii. Unanswered: 6 (11%)

### Have you ever been in a living situation where you felt unsafe

■ Yes ■ No ■ Declined to answer ■

b. That was violent
   i. Yes: 31 (56%)
   ii. No: 18 (33%)
   iii. Unanswered: 6 (11%)

Have you ever been in a living situation that was violent?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Declined to answer

c. Where you were sexually exploited/taken advantage of
   i. Yes: 25 (45%)
   ii. No: 22 (40%)
   iii. Unanswered: 8 (15%)

### Have you ever been in a living situation where you were sexually exploited/taen advantage of?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Declined to answer ■
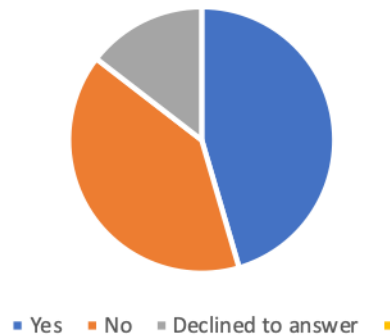
d. Where you stayed only because you had no other options?
- i. Yes: 30 (55%)
- ii. No: 16 (29%)
- iii. Unanswered: 9 (16%)

Have you been in a living situation where you stayed only because you had no other options?

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Declined to answer   ■
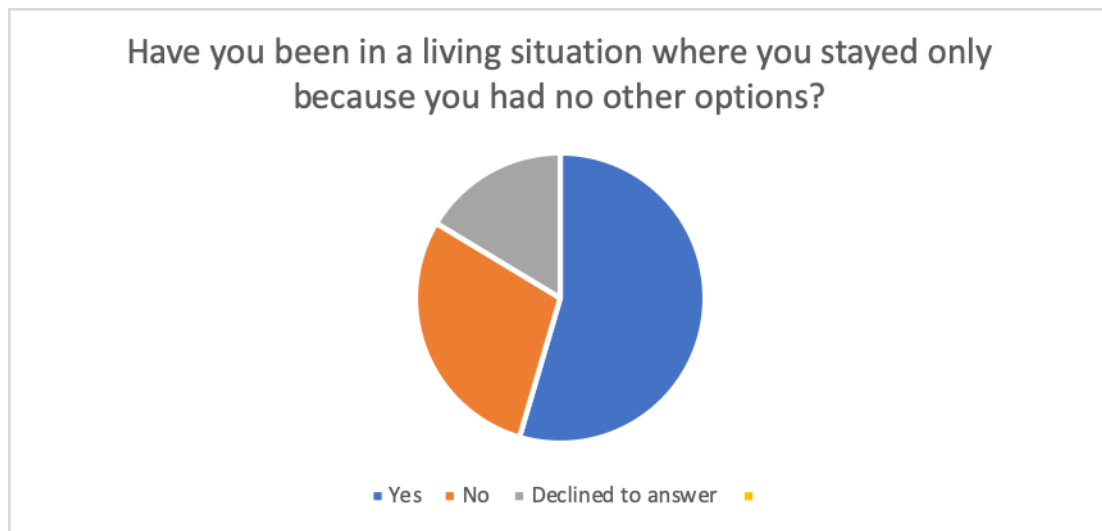
14. How satisfied are you <u>overall</u> with the services you received or accessed in the past 12 months?
a. Very satisfied: 8 (15%)
b. Satisfied: 24 (43%)
c. Unsatisfied: 7 (12%)
d. Very unsatisfied: 1 (2%)
e. Not sure: 5 (10%)
f. Unanswered: 10 (18%)

Level of satisfaction with services
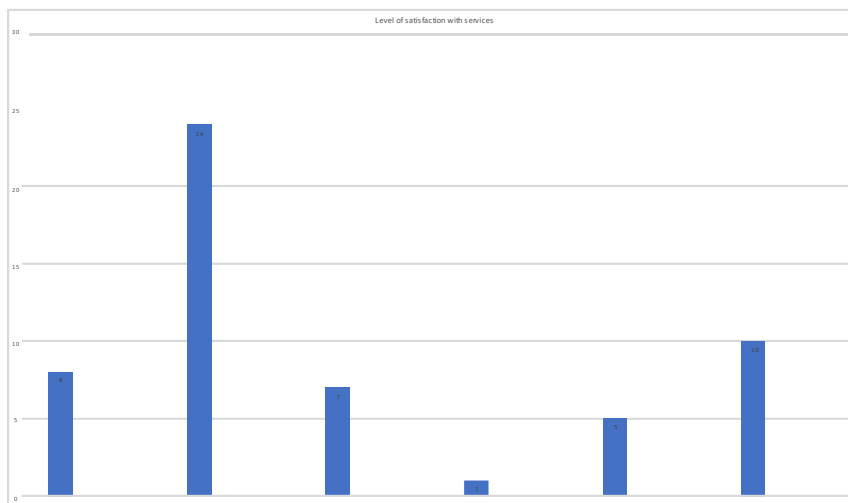
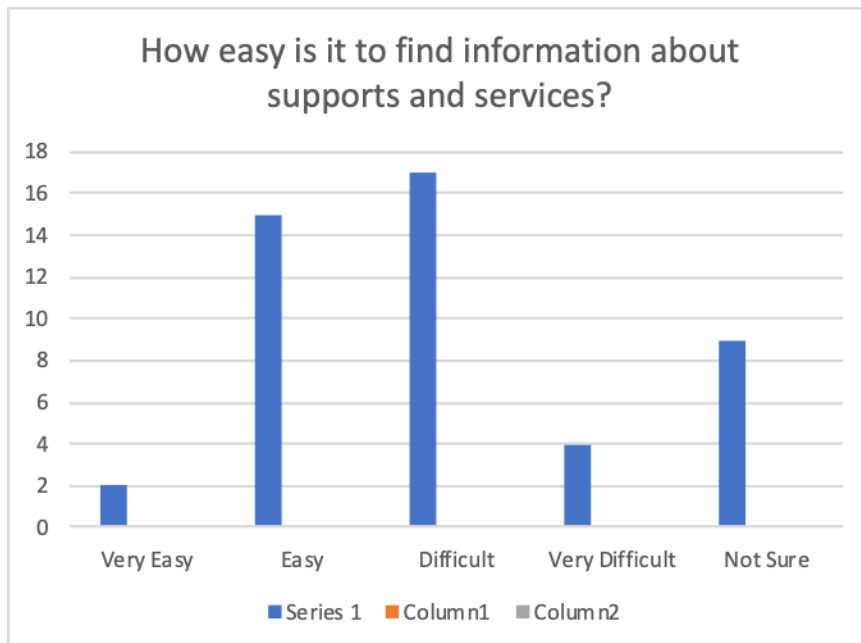**15. What would be the best ways for you to get information about supports available to you?**

a. Instagram: 12

b. Twitter: 6
c. Facebook: 38
d. Website: 19
e. From outreach worker: 33
f. From social worker: 19
g. From counselor/therapist: 22
h. Other/describe): 7

The best way to get information to youth regarding services

Category	Value
Instagram	12
Twitter	6
Facebook	38
Website	19
Outreach	33
Counsellor	19
Social Worker	22
Other	7

16. How easy is it to find the information you are looking for about supports and services?
a. Very easy: 2
b. Easy: 15
c. Difficult: 17
d. Very difficult: 4
e. Not sure: 9

How easy is it to find information about supports and services?

Category	Value
Very Easy	2
Easy	15
Difficult	17
Very Difficult	4
Not Sure	9

■ Series 1　■ Column1　■ Column2

APPENDIX E

Final Advisory/Focus Group
Materials and Graphics

Final Advisory Table/Focus Group Meeting for the Keeping Girls Safe Housing Project

NOON (Lunch provided) to 4:00 p.m., Monday, June 18, 2018
Red Room, Pacific Community Resources Society Regional Office
10328 Whalley Blvd., Surrey

Background

The Keeping Girls Safe Housing Project, Funded by the federal government through Employment and Social Development Canada and sponsored by Pacific Community Resources Society is a one-year study intended to identify pathways to homelessness for teen girls and to create a toolkit of best practices and to strengthen partnerships among service providers working with female youth in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley.

The focus of the project over the past six months has been to engage female youth voices and service providers in communities across BC to learn about lived experiences of teen girls. Through interviews and focus groups, more than 40 female youth and more than 50 professionals identified factors related to risk of exploitation and homelessness as well as approaches to support and services they have found most effective in responding to the needs of teen girls.

This session will bring youth and professionals together to explore and deepen our understanding of what we have learned about:
1. Pathways to exploitation and homelessness and

2. Effective ways to prevent teen girls' exploitation and homelessness

3. Effective ways to support young girls and women to find and sustain lives free of exploitation and homelessness

Come prepared to share your unique perspective and build our collective knowledge about these issues and effective practices in an interactive, collaborative, problem-solving dialogue.

What We'll Accomplish Together

1. Explore and deepen our understanding of:

   a. Pathways to exploitation and homelessness for teen girls in BC.

   b. Effective ways to prevent teen girls' exploitation and homelessness

   c. Effective ways to support young girls and women to find and sustain lives free of exploitation and homelessness

2. Identify barriers and gaps in supports and services to prevent and respond to teen girls' exploitation and homelessness and prioritize which barriers, if removed will have the greatest impact on prevention, supports and services.

3. Identify ways that current systems need to change to better prevent and respond to exploitation and homelessness of teen girls and young women.

4. Identify steps for strengthening partnerships among service providers involved in providing supports and services with and for teen girls and young women in Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley and across BC.

AGENDA

(Breaks taken when needed)

NOON	Arrival and Lunch
12:10 p.m.	Welcome and Opening**;** Keeping Girls Safe Project - overview and provisional findings
12:30 p.m.	Pathways Overview and Discussion
	(Review pathways identified by youth and professionals; discuss meanings, definitions, examples of pathways)
12:45 p.m.	Interview Matrix 1 (Pathways and Barriers)
	(3 questions to deepen our understanding of Pathways and Barriers - include identification of structural and systemic changes that are needed for prevention and to reduce barriers)
1:15 p.m.	Pathways and Barriers presentations and discussion
1:45 p.m.	Effective Practices Overview
	(Review Effective Practices identified; discuss meanings, definitions, examples)
2:00 p.m.	Interview Matrix 2 (What works/Effective Practices
	(3 questions to deepen our understanding of What works/What are Effective Practices – what would effective practices look like/feel like, additional investigation needed to specify effective practices)
2:30 p.m.	Effective Practices presentations and discussion
3:00 p.m.	Ideas for strengthening partnerships
	(Among service providers providing supports and services with and for teen girls and young women in Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley and across BC)
3:25 p.m.	Effective Practices Toolkit
	(What should it include; what should it look like?)
3:50 p.m.	Discussion of concluding project activities; closing remarks
4:00 p.m.	**FINISH**

Interview Matrix (Part One)

4 Questions About Pathways:

Interviewer One

1. Do these "Individual and Relationship" Factors ring true to you? What are the most important things for service providers to know about these experiences?

Interviewer Two

2. Do these "Structural" Factors ring true to you? What do you think that we as a society can do to address these factors?

Interviewer Three

3. Considering the first 5 "Systemic Factors" bullet points, what are the most important things that need to be done to make things better for children, youth and families?

Interviewer Four

4. Considering the second 5 "Systemic Factors" bullet points, what are the most important things that need to be done to make things better for children, youth and families?

Interview Matrix (Part Two)

4 Questions about Effective Practices:

Interviewer One

1. Why is it important for agencies to provide Indigenous culture-centred services? What are the most important things that agencies need to do to ensure that services are centred on Indigenous culture?

Interviewer Two

2. Why is it important that youth services be based on genuine, caring relationships? What are some specific things that agencies can do to make services "relationship based"?
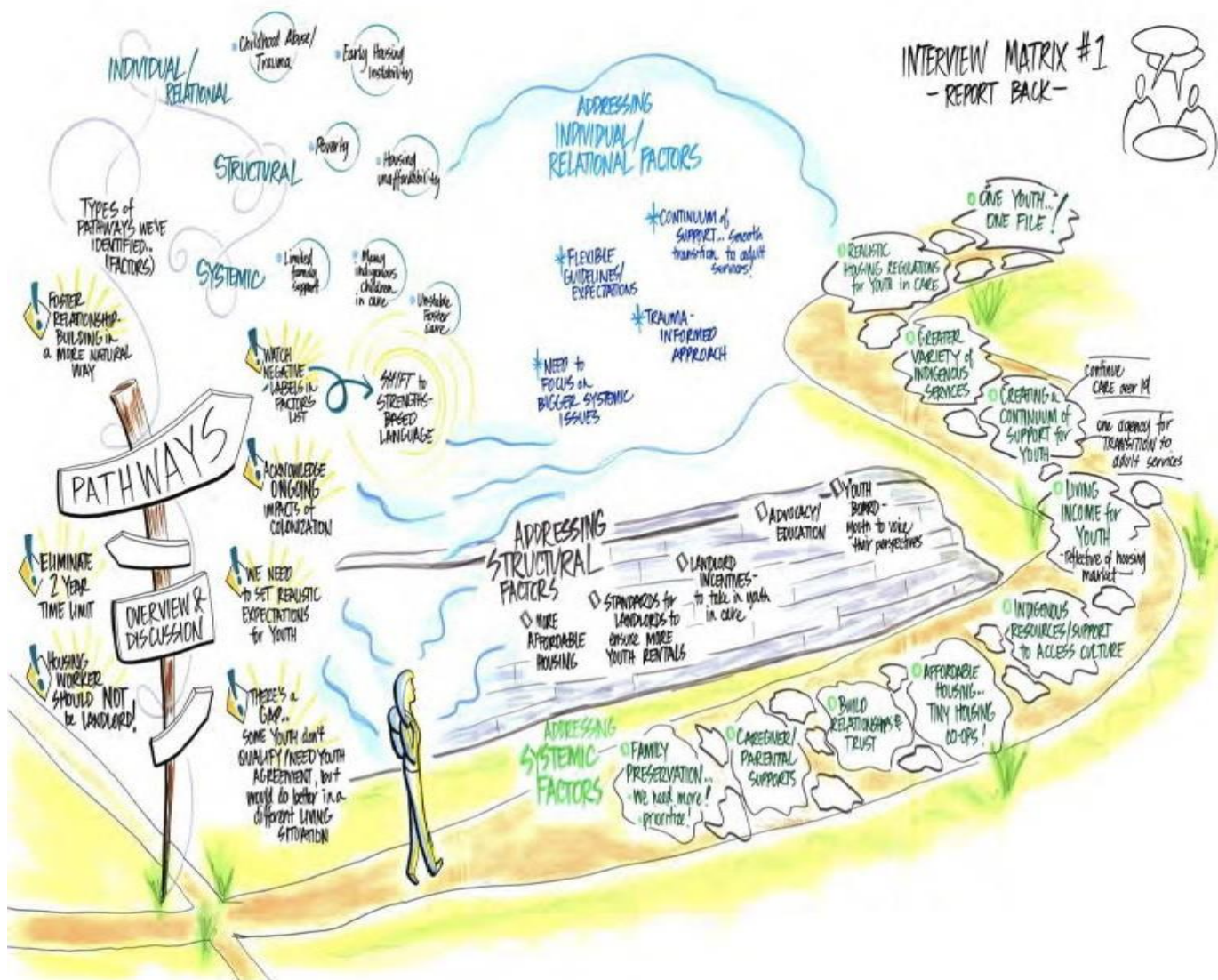
Interviewer Three

3. What does it mean for services to be youth-centred and individualized? What are some specific things agencies can do to be more youth-centred?

Interviewer Four

4. Why is it important for youth in crisis to have the opportunity to receive supports (housing, victim services, therapy, counseling) immediately? What are the most important ways of providing services to youth who are in crisis?

Joint Advisory Focus Graphic Recordings