



Participation in School by Youth with Histories of Being Homeless



What you need to know

Resilient youth are young people who adapt positively to challenging life circumstances. Some young people with histories of homelessness are able to return to school, while others are not. Young people who participate in school, despite experiencing homelessness show educational resilience.

What is this research about?

This study examines a number of things (e.g. coping, social service use, relationships) which are thought to influence whether or not youth with histories of homelessness participate in school. The researcher's goal was to determine which of these factors predict school participation for young people who have been homeless.

ARTICLE SOURCE

The article *Resilient Educational Outcomes: Participation in School by Youth With Histories of Homelessness* by Sophie Hyman, Tim Aubry and Fran Klodawsky was published in the *Journal of Youth and Society* 20(10): 1-21 in 2010.

KEYWORDS

youth homelessness, education, social housing

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What did the researchers do?

Drawing on prior resilience research, Hyman and colleagues developed an Ecological Resilience Prediction Model. They used this model to investigate community, individual and social factors that shape homeless young people's experiences that may or may not facilitate school participation.

The researchers interviewed 157 youth originally, and 99 youth after approximately 2 years. A total of 63% participated in a second interview. Analyses were based on information provided by 82 young people (45 male and 37 female) because 17 young people had become parents since the first interview, and it was assumed that these youth would have different priorities from youth who had not become parents during that time. To participate in the study, young people had to be homeless at the time of the first interview.

What did the researchers find?

Only 28% of youth reported participating in school at the time of the second interview.

Females were found to be more likely than males to stay in school during or after periods of homelessness. A longer time spent housed was also associated with increased school participation. None of the social factors (social network, social support, mentor) predicted school participation at the time of the second interview. In terms of

The authors gathered information that they hoped would allow them to predict resilience with respect to school participation among homeless youth. Based on the development of their Ecological Resilience Prediction Model, the researchers examined:

- individual predictors: time spent housed after a period of homelessness, coping skills, empowerment, and sex;
- social predictors: size of social network, satisfaction with social supports, and presence of a positive mentor; and
- community predictors: social service use.

Two types of statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether any of these things could be used to predict school participation.

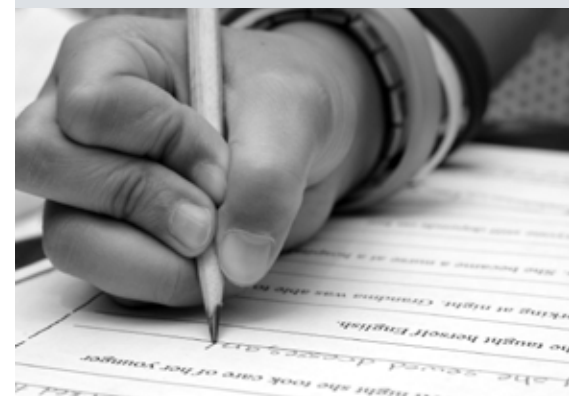
community factors, **a decrease in social service use was able to somewhat predict participation in school**, although it is likely that many social services were no longer used once youth became housed. Youth who were not in school at the time of the second interview reported an increase in satisfaction with social supports between the first and second interviews. **Becoming stably re-housed was the single best predictor of being in school at follow-up.**

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

This research can be used to support the development of educational and social housing policies for homeless young people; to strengthen proposals for social housing development for homeless youth; and to mobilize knowledge among frontline practitioners who work with youth (teachers, social workers, social assistance workers, and so forth).

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Dr. Sophie Hyman received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Ottawa in 2010. Her research and clinical interests involve working with marginalized and vulnerable individuals at risk of severe mental illness across the lifespan.



The women also reported that the skills they learned from participating in the workshops gave them a **sense of identity as artists, improved their confidence, and empowered them** to teach other women how to be advocates and mentors.