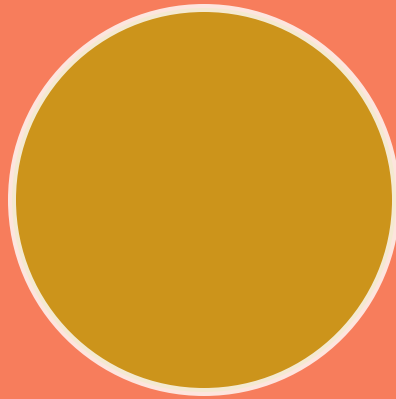


# Homeward Trust Edmonton

High Risk & Complex Needs Homeless Youth Scoping Session  
August 27, 2014





“Homelessness cannot be solved by a single agency or organization, by a single level of government, or by a single sector. Everyone should be reminded of the intricacies of homelessness as a policy area, and remember that preventing and ending homelessness will take real coordination, collaboration, and a constant exchange of ideas.”

HHS Secretary- Kathleen Sebelius



# Background to the Scoping Session



## What we are hearing

High risk and complex needs youth are encountering:

- Serious gaps at systems level
- Misconnections at community level
- Accessing programs/services not equipped to address their needs



# Purpose of the Scoping Session



**Strategic  
Planning**

**Youth  
Tailored  
Responses**

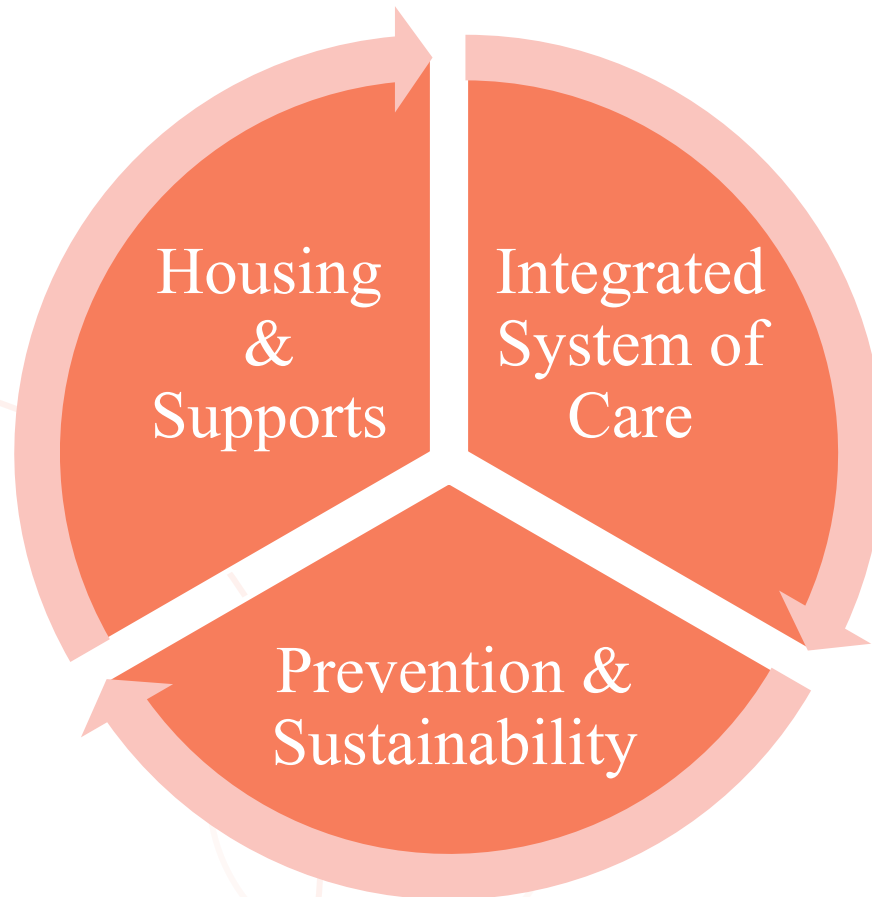
**Systems and Community  
coordination and integration**



# Youth Homelessness Framework

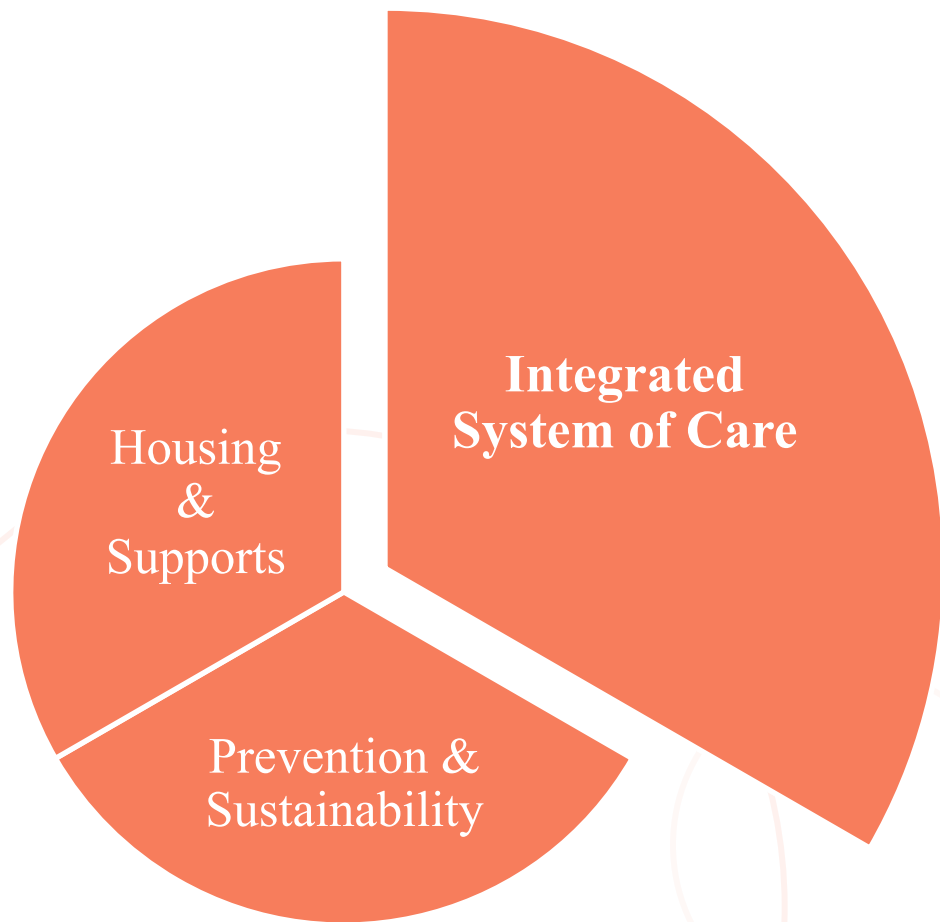


**Setting the way for an action plan**





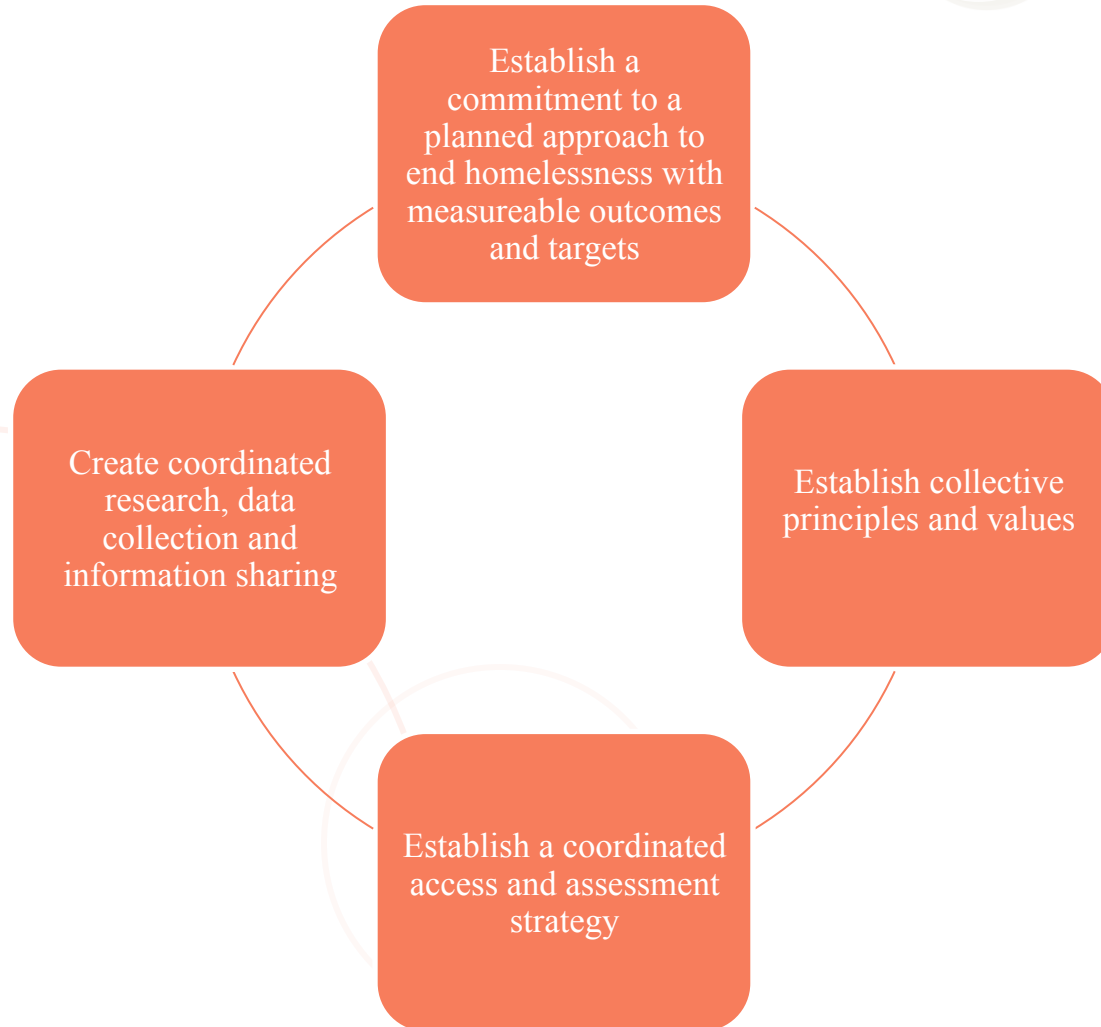
# Youth Homelessness Framework



An integrated system of care is a local system that addresses the needs of individuals through the coordination and integration of programs, services and resources from planning to delivery.



# Integrated System of Care





# Integrated Systems of Care

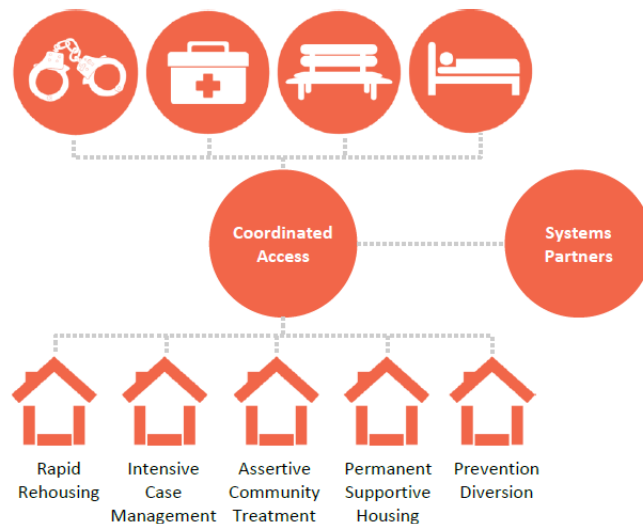


## Best evidence for coordinated access

- Client- centred service delivery
- Prioritizing service access
- Balance across service providers
- Timely decision-making around program access
- Leveraging strengths of service providers

3 components in most communities:

- Access
- Assess
- Assign







# Integrated System of Care

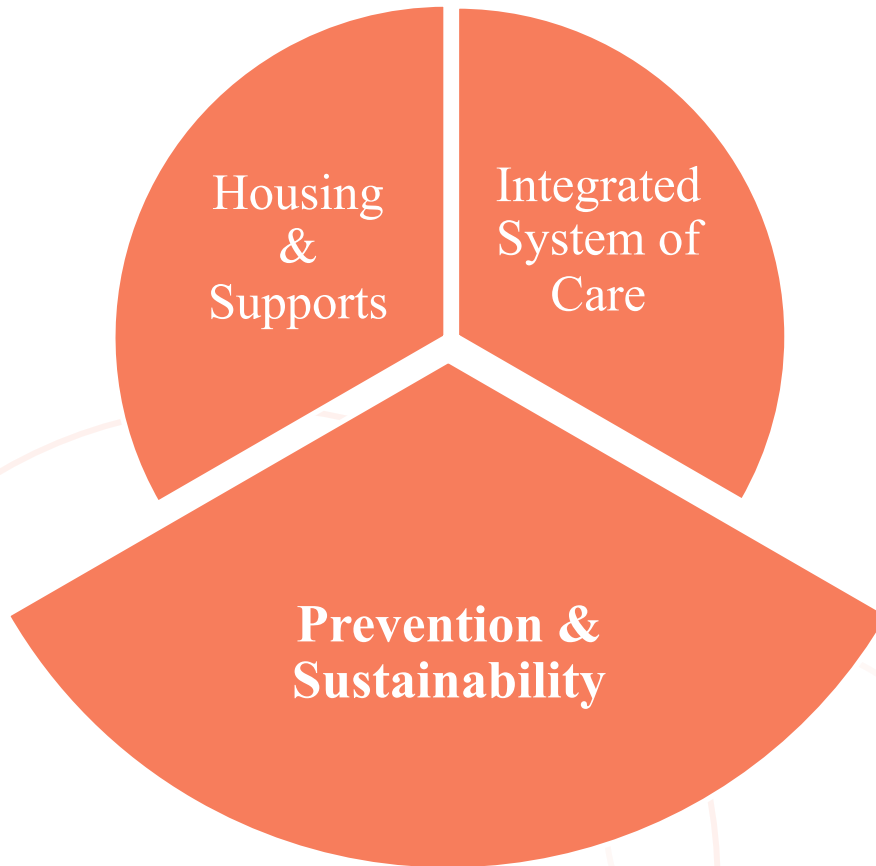


## St. Basil's Hub, UK

- The Young Person's Hub is a single point access service based in the Link, St. Basil's City Centre, providing an advice and referral service with a range of accommodation and support services to help young people regain the stability they need to rebuild their lives, gain skills, training and employment.
- Young people access the service through a 24 hour Youthline, through email, or they can go to the centre itself. An appointment is required.
- Youth are then assessed and matched with a service that is most likely to meet their support needs.



# Youth Homelessness Framework



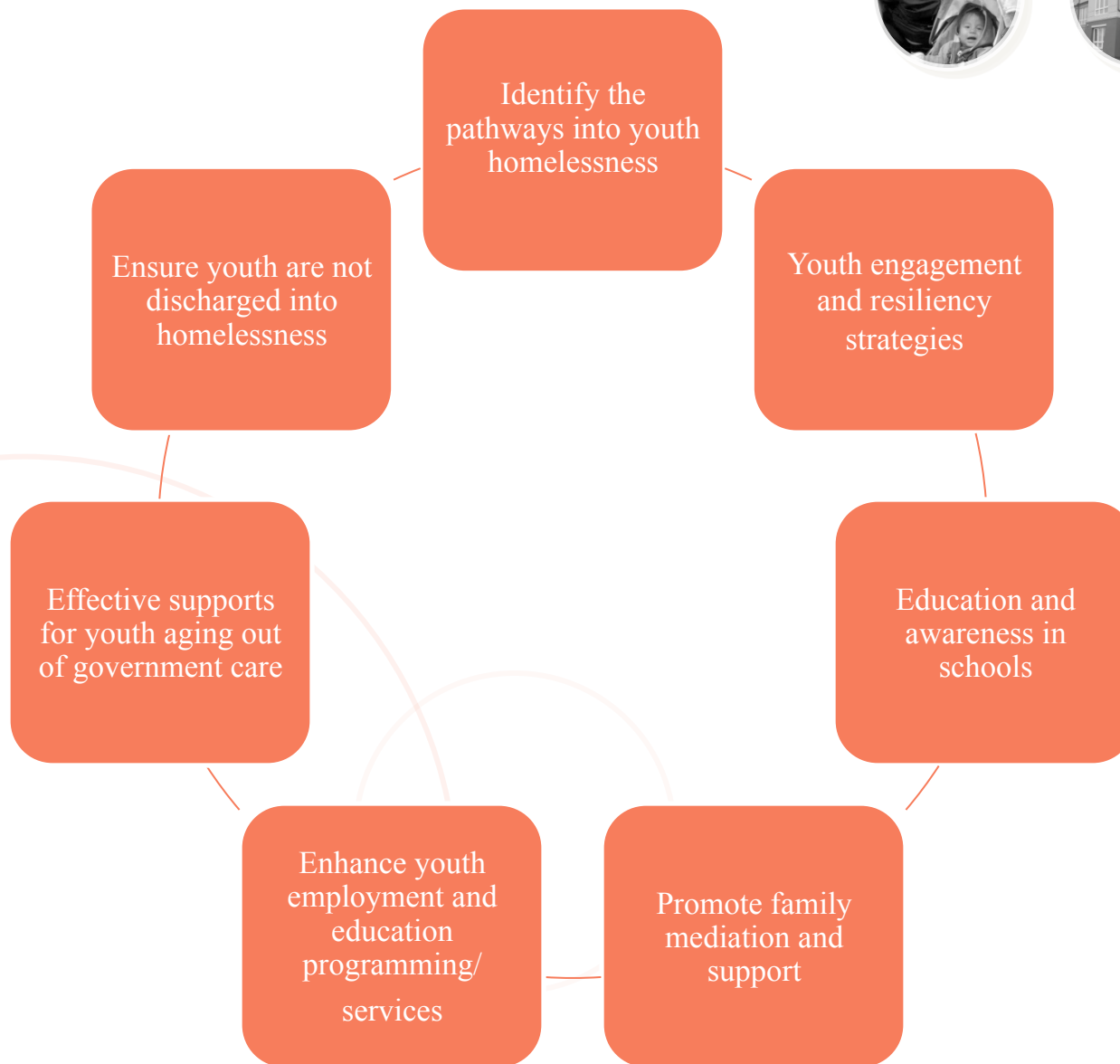
Prevention is the first step towards ending youth homelessness. Strategic planning must prioritize coordinated efforts focused on prevention and sustainability

## Pathways of Prevention

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary



# Prevention & Sustainability





# Integrated Systems of Care



## Best evidence for education and awareness

- The education and awareness in schools strategy can be considered a primary prevention approach, which ensures that youth are aware of the services that exist, so that they can access supports to divert crisis.
- It involves service or systems partners engaging with youth and the broader community with clear messaging around the contexts of youth homelessness and available resources, which enables empowerment of the community and helps educate both youth and teachers or community leaders the knowledge necessary to identify youth who require assistance.



# Prevention & Sustainability



## Education & Awareness

### Covenant House Toronto

An interactive awareness presentation for youth in schools to learn about homelessness, youth rights and options available for youth.

#### Before You Run (grades 6-12)

- age-appropriate presentation that explains the diversity of contributing factors for youth homelessness: family breakdown, abuse, mental health, bullying, drugs and stress
- includes a video featuring Covenant House youth relating their real-life experiences in a non-threatening way

#### Reality Check (grades 6-12)

- age-appropriate presentation that deglamourizes street life and discusses the struggle homeless youth face--Students participate in an activity that highlights the hardship of living independently, without family support, education or a career.
- Includes a video featuring Covenant House youth describing the challenges of living on the street and what they did to overcome them.



# Integrated Systems of Care



## Best evidence for discharge planning

- Systems level and community level integration
- Case management and support workers
- Appropriate wraparound supports
- Ensuring that safe and adequate housing is available

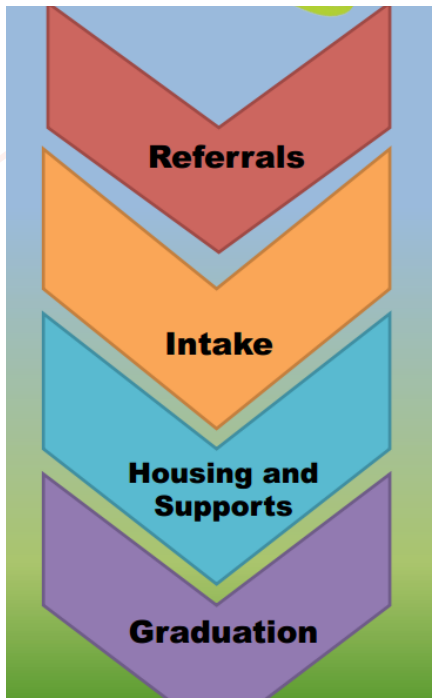
# Prevention- Ensure youth are not discharged into homelessness



## Roofs for Youth

Partnership between Wood's Homes, John Howard Society and the Calgary Young Offenders Centre to provide stable housing and supports to youth (15-18) prior and post sentencing.

- Roof's provides a continuum of services from discharge planning to housing placement and then continuous case management supports to help the youth stay out of jail, remain housed and successfully transition to adulthood.



CYOC | Youth Probation | Youth Criminal Defense Office | Schools | Emergency Health Centres

**Process:** Determine eligibility and suitability for program | Assesses readiness of individual, willingness to participate considered | Develop Clinical Summary and Crisis Plan, Release Plan | Complete modified version of the Rehousing, Triage and Assessment Survey (RTAS) | Assignment of Case Manager (conducts youth acuity scale, implements assessments, intake program)

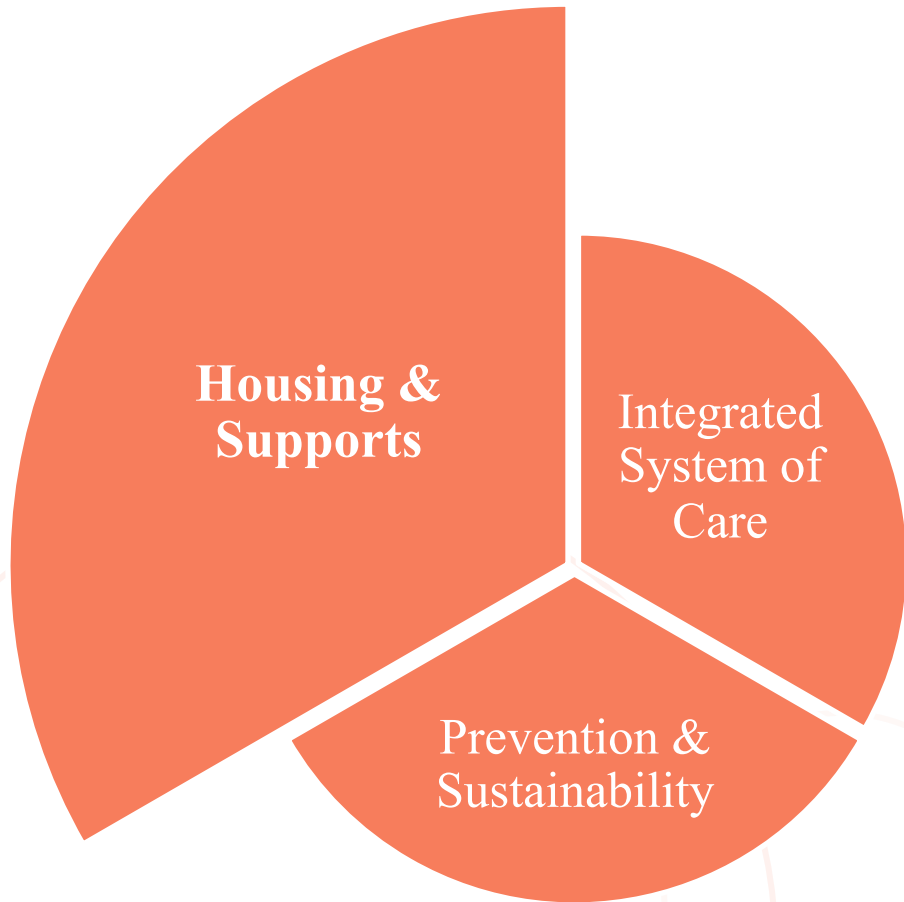
**Options:** Return to family (permanent) | Scattered Site (permanent) | Place Based (temporary) | Youth shelter (temporary)

**Procedure:** Policy of zero discharge into homelessness | Remain in the program 18-24 months | Follow up contacts conducted at 2, 4, and 6 week intervals and then two months thereafter | Clinical services continue after graduation for 6 months | Required follow up contact 3, 6, 9, 12 months after graduation

**On Going Supports:** Goal planning | Outreach activities | Therapeutic support | Skill development | Vocational Support | Connecting youth to community services (employment, education, counselling, medical services, recreation, volunteer involvement) | Harm Reduction



# Youth Homelessness Framework



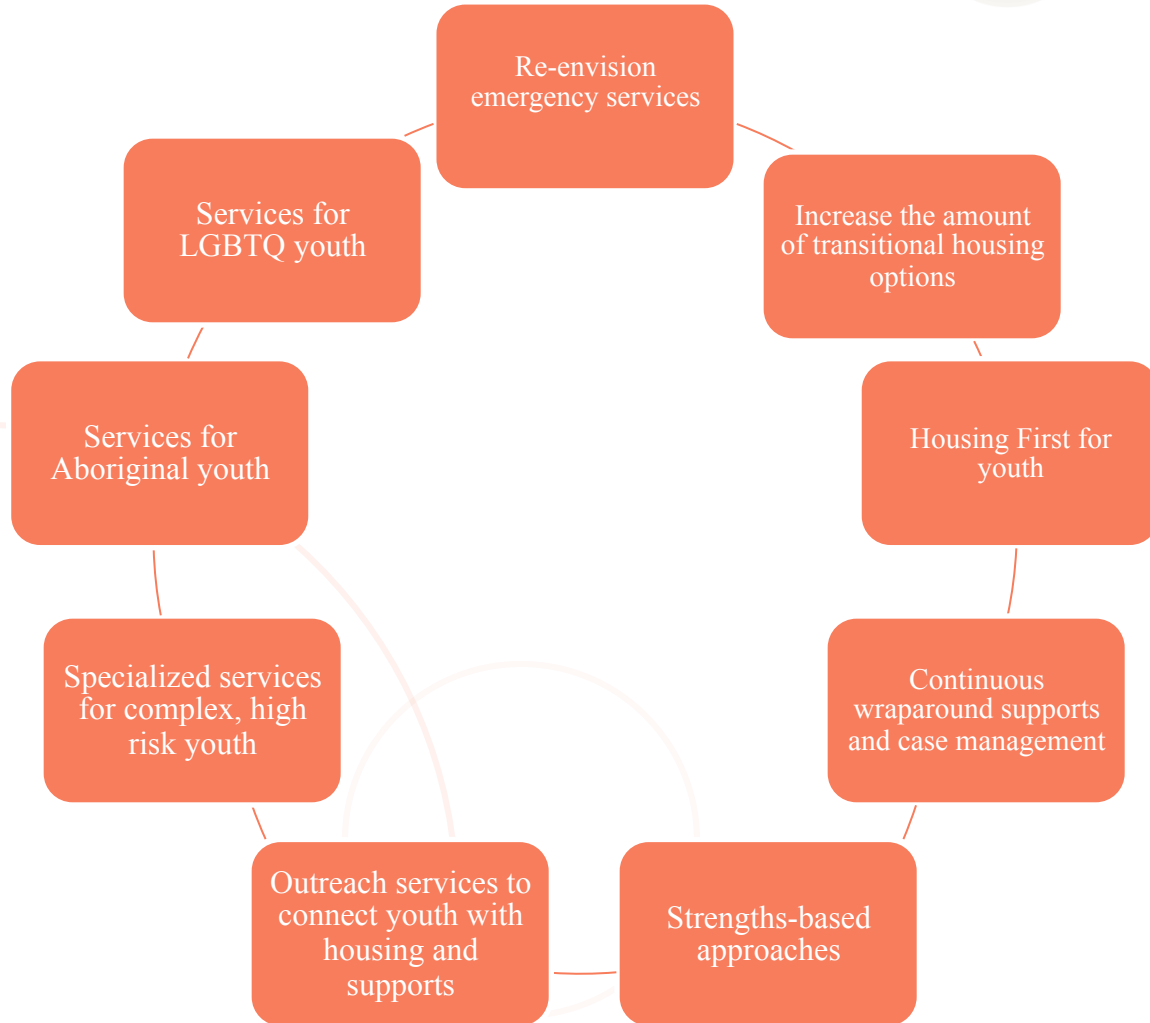
“The one thing all homeless people have in common is a lack of housing. Whatever other problems they face, adequate, stable, affordable housing is a prerequisite to solving them. **Homelessness may not be only a housing problem, but it is always a housing problem;** housing is necessary, although sometimes not sufficient, to solve the problem of homelessness.”

- Cushing Dolbear





# Housing & Supports



# Housing & Supports



## Best Evidence for Emergency Service

- Ensuring that all young people entering the sector are assessed and provided with supports to either return home or move into housing as quickly as possible.
- Adopting a case management approach for every youth who enters the sector and ensure they are tracked through the system.
- Funding and rewarding service providers for focusing on prevention and rapid rehousing as a service priority (as opposed to funding shelters with per diem rates that reward them for filling beds on an ongoing basis)
- Making the goal shorter stays.
- Developing a system of “respite housing” or cooling off accommodation that is separate from the hard core homeless sector (excellent examples exist in the UK).
- A strong outreach focus to bring in young people who are not connected to services.
- Investing in shelters that provide individual rooms with locked doors.



# Housing & Supports



## The Berwick St. Shelter, London

example of how the emergency shelter is conceived of as an assessment centre.

- It is a hostel with 27 beds targeting 16-17 year olds become homeless and need advice and support for housing.
- They can stay up to 28 days.
- Young people are interviewed at intake, and staff undertake detailed assessments of their support needs, and determine their ability to live independently.
- They also provide advice and support regarding accessing benefits, staying in school, employment and the basics of how to obtain and maintain housing.
- They 'contract' with young people to ensure that there is a clear understanding of what is expected, and help young people set goals.
- For some young people, staying at the shelter becomes a place to 'cool off', and they may eventually return home. For others, they will need support to move into transitional housing or permanent accommodation



# Housing & Supports



## Best evidence for continuous case management

- A good case management approach means that once a young person becomes homeless or is identified as being at risk, they are assessed.
- They are provided with comprehensive supports from the moment they are identified, right through to the solution stage, then after they have either returned home or moved into a place of their own.

Key components include:

- **common intake and assessment (systems wide)**
- **single point access (community dependent)**
- **no wrong door approach**
- **outreach**



# Housing & Supports



## The Common Assessment Framework - UK

The CAF is a shared assessment system that builds upon a larger government policy document called “Every Child Matters – Children and Young People’s Plan”.

### **The CAF consists of:**

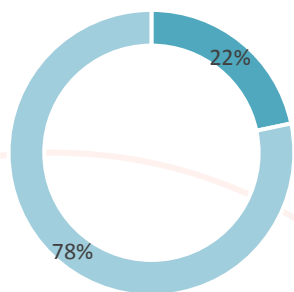
- a pre-assessment checklist to help decide who would benefit from a common assessment
- a process to enable practitioners in the children and young people’s workforce to undertake
- a common assessment and then act on the result
- a standard form to record the assessment
- a delivery plan and review form



# Youth Homelessness in Edmonton

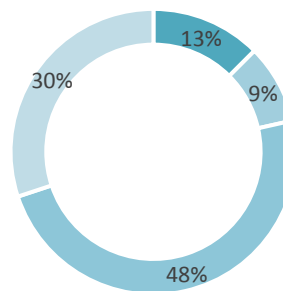


In the 2012 Homeless Count, 258 homeless youth aged 14-24 were counted, marking 13% of the total number of homeless Edmontonians.



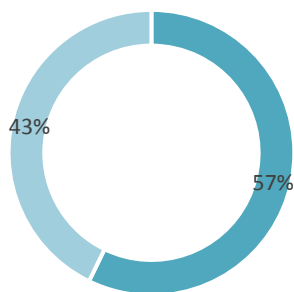
AGE

- 14-17
- 18-24



GENDER

- Male (14-17)
- Femal (14-17)
- Male (18-24)
- Female (18-24)



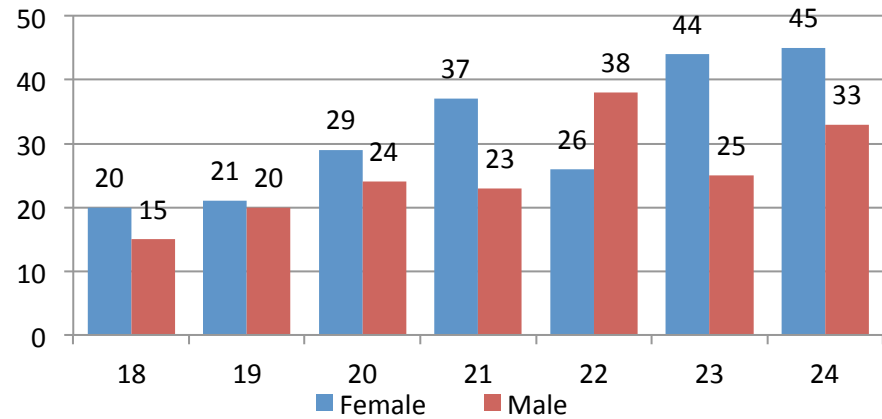
ETHNICITY

- Aboriginal
- Caucasian

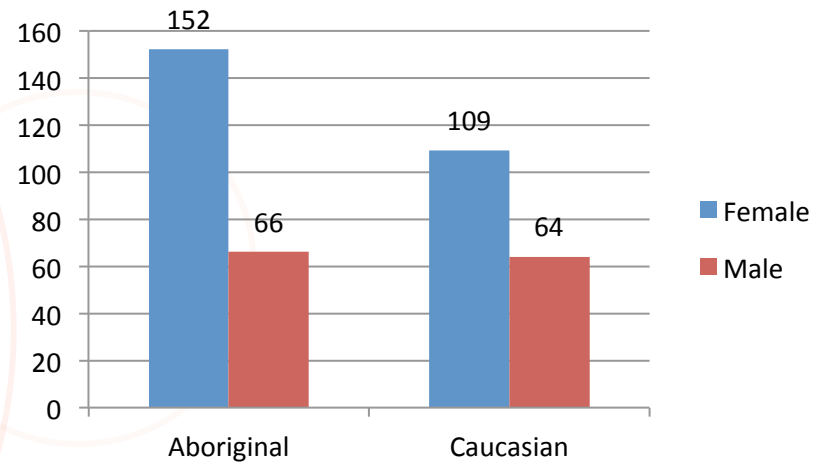
# Housing First



	N	%	Mean Age
Males	178	44.5%	21.44
Females	222	55.5%	21.53



	Aboriginal	Caucasian
Female	152	109
Male	66	64



# Conditions underlying youth homelessness



To frame our discussions we utilize the definition of **homelessness** from the Homeless Hub:

“an extreme form of poverty characterized by the instability of housing and the inadequacy of income, health care supports and social supports. This definition includes people who are unsheltered (those living on the streets); sheltered (those staying temporarily in shelters); hidden homeless (those staying temporarily with family/friends); and others who are described as under housed or at risk of homelessness.”



# Conditions underlying youth homelessness



Drawing upon this definition of homelessness, we define **youth homelessness** as:

“those who are under the age of 25, and who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers and importantly lack many of the social supports that we typically deem necessary for the transition from childhood to adulthood” (Gaetz, 2000, p. 3).

# Conditions underlying youth homelessness



## **Edmonton and Area Children and Youth Services defines “high risk youth” as:**

- Use of drugs and/or alcohol seems to be interfering with day to day functioning
- The choices they are making may jeopardize their safety (including where they are living and with whom they are associating).
- They cannot identify a healthy adult in their lives outside of the professional community.
- The youth struggles with authority figures and has few, if any, people they can trust.
- There have been multiple placements or the youth is unwilling to stay in an “approved placement”.
- There have been multiple file closures due to lack of follow through by the youth.
- The youth is involved with, or at-risk for, sexual exploitation including survival sex.
- Multi-generational involvement with child and youth services.
- Struggle with mental health disorders and are living an unpredictable day-to-day existence.

# Conditions underlying youth homelessness



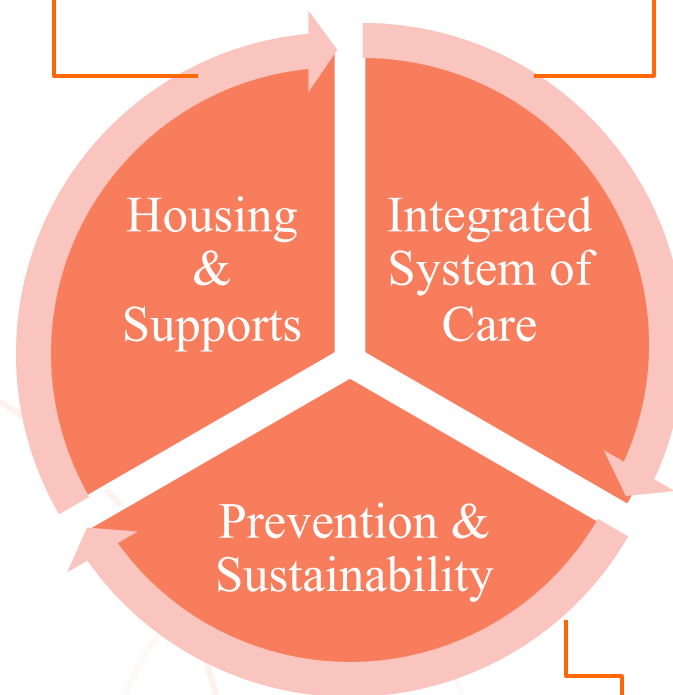
Causes of homelessness, grouped into 3 types

**Structural Causes:** includes inadequate income, lack of affordable housing, lack of transportation and discrimination against sexual and ethnic minorities

**Systems failures:** including the difficult transition experienced by youth leaving government care, gaps at systems level – discharging to homelessness

**Individual and relational causes:** including family conflict, violence and abuse, personal crisis and trauma, mental health issues and addictions

# Youth Homelessness Framework



- Re-envisioning emergency services
- Increase the amount of transitional housing options available
- Housing First for youth
- Ensure continuous support services and case management
- Develop and maintain relationship-based approaches to supporting youth
- Maintain outreach services to connect youth with supports and housing
- Ensure appropriate and adequate services for youth with complex needs
- Enhance services for Aboriginal youth
- Enhance services for LGBTQ youth

- Establishing a commitment to a planned approach to end homelessness with measurable outcomes and targets
- Establishing collective principles and values
- Establishing a coordinated access and assessment strategy
- Creating coordinated research, data collection and information sharing

- Understanding the pathways into youth homelessness
- Youth engagement and resiliency strategies
- Education and awareness campaigns in schools
- Promote Family mediation and support
- Enhance youth employment and education programming
- Ensure effective supports for youth aging out of government care
- Ensuring youth are not discharged into homelessness

# References



- Joseph Roundtree Foundation. (2008). Youth homelessness  
Quilgars, D., Johnsen, S., & Pleace, N. (2008). Youth homelessness in the UK.