This is Housing First for Youth

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Part 1

Why Housing First for Youth?
When we let young people become homeless ...
When we let young people become homeless ...

• Health worsens
  • Mental health declines
  • Exploitation
  • Greater risk of addictions
  • Involvement with the law
  • Dropping out of school
  • Trauma and criminal victimization
  • Entrenchment in life on the streets
Homelessness JUNIOR
How are youth different from the adult homelessness population?

- Age
- Adolescent development
- Experience
- Dependency and supports
Key question:
Can Housing First be adapted for youth?
“We suggest considering modifications of "Housing First" to maintain fidelity to core principles while better meeting the needs of youth”.

Kozloff et al., (2016) At Home / Chez Soi
A framework for Housing First for Youth (2014)
Part 2

THIS is Housing First for Youth!
The importance of developing a response based on the needs of young people.
Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) is a rights-based intervention for young people (aged 13-24) who experience homelessness, or who are at risk. It is designed to address the needs of developing adolescents and young adults by providing them with immediate access to housing that is safe, affordable and appropriate, and the necessary and age-appropriate supports that focus on health, well-being, life skills, engagement in education and employment, and social inclusion.
THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH

Core principles are important because they provide a guide for planning and delivering a strategy, service or intervention. Core principles also help to measure fidelity to the HF4Y model, especially for scaling or adaptation.

The core principles of HF4Y include:

1. A right to housing with no preconditions
2. Youth choice, youth voice and self-determination
3. Positive youth development and wellness orientation
4. Individualized, client-driven supports with no time limits
5. Social inclusion and community integration
A Right to Housing with No Preconditions

A right to housing with no preconditions means that housing and supports are separated. In other words, access to housing cannot be defined by conditions such as participation in programming where non-compliance leads to a loss of, or a denial of, access to housing.

• What does “no preconditions” mean?
• Separation of Housing and Supports
Youth Choice, Youth Voice and Self-Determination

• What does CHOICE mean?
• Limits to choice?
• Putting choice into action!

The concept of self-determination acknowledges that young people should be in control of their own lives, and be encouraged to make decisions and learn from them.
The HF4Y model employs a “positive youth development” orientation, a strengths-based approach that focuses not just on risk and vulnerability, but also youth’s assets. A positive youth development approach:

- Identifies the youth’s personal strengths in order to build self-esteem and a positive sense of self
- Works to improve the youth’s communication and problem-solving skills
- Enhances and builds natural supports, including family relationships
- Assists the youth in personal goal setting
- Helps the youth to access educational opportunities and identify personal interests
4 Individualized, Client-Driven Supports with No Time Limits

**Active engagement without coercion**

In doing so, one must consider:

- Supports must be flexible in terms of time frames.
- The needs of young people will evolve over time.
- What the worker thinks the young person needs or wants is not necessarily what they want for themselves.
- It may take a long time to build a trusting relationship to engage in this kind of work.
- Young people should be encouraged to focus on positive change and to learn from mistakes.
- The importance of harm reduction
- Consider the impact of trauma and disabling conditions
Social Inclusion and Community Integration

- Housing models should not stigmatize clients
- Make available opportunities for social and cultural engagement
- Build natural supports
- Ensure opportunities to identify and engage in meaningful activities
Part 3

Models of Accommodation & Supports
In a community, there may be a range of housing options that support young people at risk of, or who experience homelessness.
Figure 2: Models of accommodation within a HF4Y framework

HOMELESS YOUTH
or “at risk youth”

Return Home
(Family Reconnect)

Crisis Housing

Supportive Housing

Transitional Housing
Stage 1: Congregate
Stage 2: Separate Units

Independent Living
(Scattered Site)
The HF4Y model offers a broader range of supports than what is typically associated with Housing First targeting adults.
1. HOUSING SUPPORTS
2. HEALTH & WELL-BEING
3. ACCESS TO INCOME & EDUCATION
4. COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORTS
5. SOCIAL INCLUSION
1 Housing supports

- Help in obtaining housing
- Housing retention
- Rent supplements
- Support when things go wrong
- Aftercare
2 Supports for health and well-being

- Trauma informed care
- Mental Health
- Substance use and addictions
- Harm Reduction
- Healthy Sexuality
- Personal Safety
Access to income and education

- **Income supports**
- **Training**
- **Employment**
- **Education**
4. Complementary Supports

- Life skills
- Adult support and mentoring
- Supporting young people with children
- System Navigation and Advocacy
- Peer support
- Legal supports
Enhancing social inclusion

- Developing social relations
- Family Reconnect
- Community engagement
- Cultural engagement
- Meaningful activities
Part 4
Considerations for Service Delivery
Prioritization
Embedding HF4Y within an integrated systems response
Program outcomes

1) Housing stability
   - Obtaining housing
   - Maintaining housing
   - Enhancing knowledge and skills regarding housing and independent living
   - Reducing stays in emergency shelters

2) Health and well-being
   - Enhanced access to services and supports
   - Improved health
   - Food security
   - Improved mental health
   - Reduced harms related to substance use
   - Enhanced personal safety
   - Improved self-esteem
   - Healthier sexual health practices
   - Enhanced resilience

3) Education and employment
   - Established goals for education and employment
   - Enhanced participation in education
   - Enhanced educational achievement
   - Enhanced participation in training
   - Enhanced labour force participation
   - Improved financial security

4) Complementary supports
   - Established personal goals
   - Improved life skills
   - Increase access to necessary non-medical services
   - Addressing legal and justice issues

5) Social inclusion
   - Building of natural supports
   - Enhancing family connections
   - Enhancing connections to communities of young person's choice
   - Strengthening cultural engagement and participation
   - Engagement in meaningful activities
Good Case Management

- Client driven
- Effective assessment
- Collaboration and Cooperation
- Right matching of services
- Contextual case management
- Evaluation for Success
Consider the importance of Family and Natural Supports
“Caseloads numbers should be carefully balanced. When considering the impacts of including family and natural supports, complexities of targeted groups (LGBTQ2S, Indigenous) and the potential of managing crisis, caseloads in excess of 7 should be avoided.”

Kim Kakakaway – Homefire Support Worker, Boys and Girls Club of Calgary
Each youth has a primary worker but consider Shared Caseload
Working with Landlords
Rent and Income Supplements
Effective data management is important to support the work of HF4Y. It begins with clarity about organizational goals and objectives: what is the problem one is trying to solve and what are the outcomes we want to see?
Part 5

How do we get there?
HF4Y - A PHILOSOPHY AND A PROGRAM MODEL

It is important to address the question of whether HF4Y is a program or philosophy – it is actually both.
Can guide targeted Plans to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness!
In communities of any size, the response to youth homelessness can be driven by these principles.
Part 6
Building the evidence base
Making the Shift
This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy program.
Making the Shift

Project: Phase ONE

2 Provinces, 10 Communities, DOZENS of Community Partners
Canadian Demonstration Projects

Building the Evidence Base

PREVENTION

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS
FAMILY FIRST
HOST HOMES
YOUTH RECONNECT

EXITING SYSTEMS

YOUTH LEAVING CARE
YOUTH EXITING CORRECTIONS
EXITING MENTAL HEALTH/ADDICTIONS SERVICES

EXITING HOMELESSNESS

HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH

1. HOUSING
2. HEALTH & WELL-BEING
3. ACCESS TO INCOME & EDUCATION
4. COMPLEMENTARY SUPPORTS
5. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
Housing First for Youth

Demonstration Projects

**Ottawa:**
- Housing First for Youth

**Toronto:**
- Housing First for Youth (leaving care)

**Hamilton:**
- Housing First for Youth (Indigenous)
Research and Evaluation

Research:
• Control trial – interviews at three month intervals
• Control groups in each city
• Quantitative and qualitative methods
• Outcomes tied to service and supports
• Positive youth development orientation (strengths-based approach)

Evaluation:
• Developmental Evaluation
• Outcomes Evaluation
Research Team

Sam Tsemberis
Clinical Director

Many key researchers from At Home/Chez Soi
Questions or comments?

www.homelesshub.ca

www.AWayHome.ca
Resources

• A Way Home Canada Youth Homelessness Community Planning Webinar #6: Serving Youth Better: Introducing the Youth Homelessness Assessment and Prioritization (YAP) Tool | September 2017
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tWVawRwZ18&feature=youtu.be

• THIS is Housing First for Youth: A program model guide:
  http://www.homelesshub.ca/HF4Y?_ga=2.121375695.694991686.1517236497-29638153.1506525847