

# Transitioning Youth Out of Homelessness 2.0:

A Pilot Rent Subsidy and Identity Capital Intervention for Youth Exiting Homelessness in Canada

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**MAP** Centre for  
Urban Health  
Solutions

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# Overview

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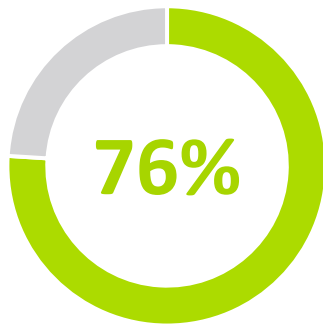
1. Background
2. Methods
3. Quantitative Findings
4. Qualitative Findings
5. Implications

# Background

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# Youth Homelessness and Interventions: The Evidence

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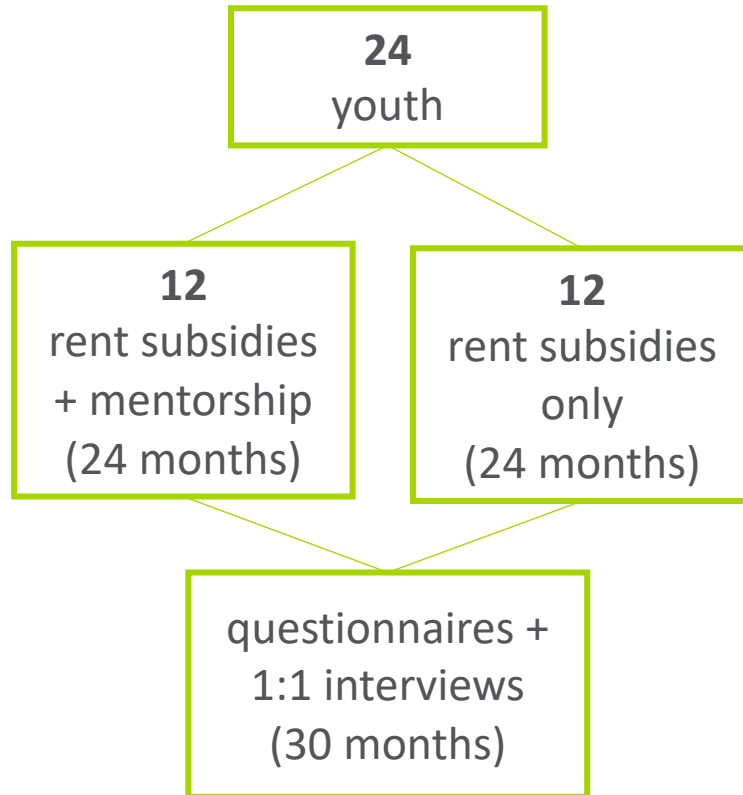


of youth experiencing homelessness in Canada have attempted **at least twice** to exit homelessness<sup>1</sup>

## Existing literature on youth homelessness interventions:

- Limited rigorous evaluation evidence for existing program models<sup>2</sup>
- Need for interventions **beyond housing** to address socioeconomic inclusion<sup>3-5</sup>

# Transitioning Youth Out of Homelessness (TYOH) 1.0: 2019-2022

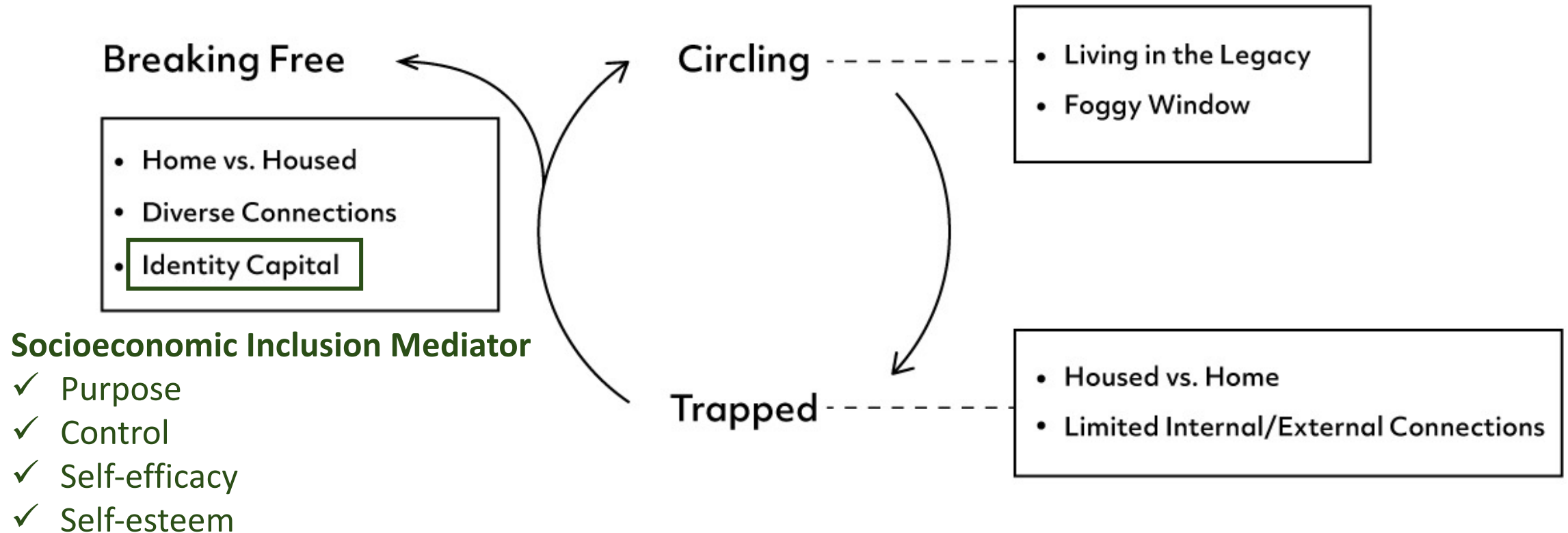


## TYOH 1.0 Quantitative Findings:<sup>6</sup>

- Assessed **socioeconomic inclusion** (proxy indicators):
  - Community integration
  - Self-esteem
  - Hope
  - Social connectedness
  - Education, employment, or training
- **No quantitative differences** between groups at primary endpoint (18 months)
- Some evidence for positive impact of **informal mentors** (outside the study) on psychological integration

# TYOH 1.0 Qualitative Findings<sup>7</sup>

## Exiting Homelessness



# Methods

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# Community Engagement and Lived Expertise

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## Research Team

- People who have **experienced youth homelessness**
- Those **overrepresented** in youth homelessness demographics (e.g., 2SLGBTQ+; racialized)
- Members with **invisible disabilities** (e.g., learning and mental health challenges)

## Community Partners

- **Long-standing relationships** (5+ years)
- Quarterly advisory board meetings

## Youth Engagement

- Three TYOH 1.0 participants **paid advisors**



# Participant Recruitment and Setting



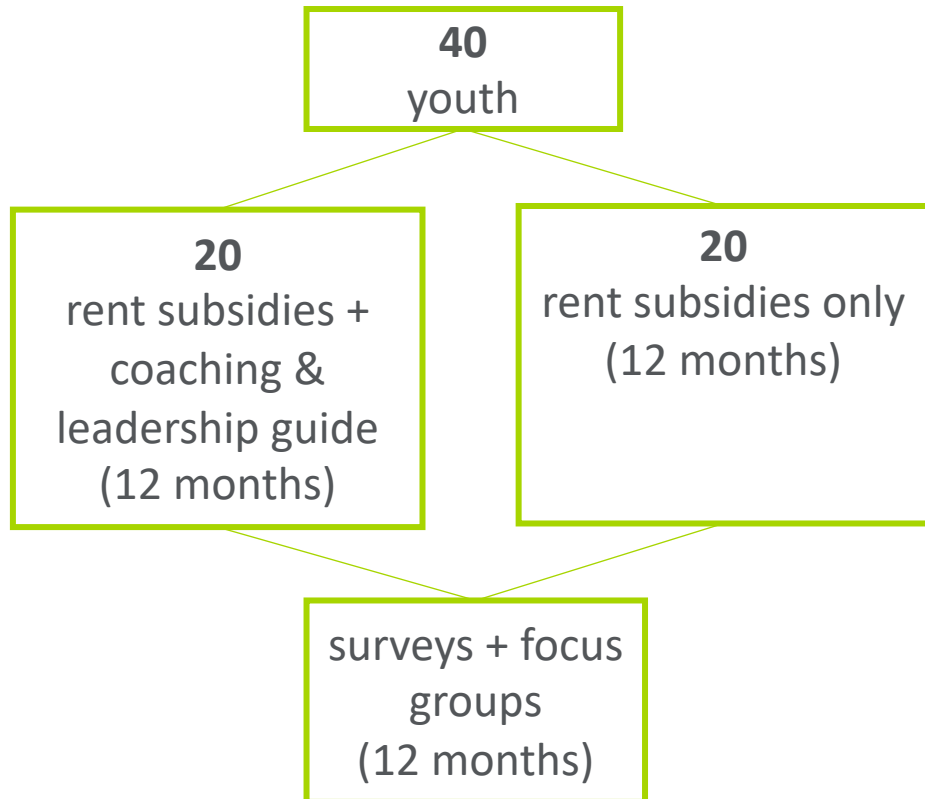
## Study Sites

- Greater Toronto Area (pop. 6.7 million)
- Hamilton (pop. 785,000)
- St. Catharines-Niagara Region (pop. 416,000)

## Inclusion Criteria

- Age 16-24
- **Left homelessness** in the past year
- Secured **market rent** housing

# Transitioning Youth Out of Homelessness (TYOH) 2.0: 2022-2024



## TYOH 2.0 Study Objectives:

1. Feasibility and acceptability
2. Differences in **socioeconomic inclusion** between groups:
  - Identity capital – purpose, control, self-efficacy, self-esteem
  - Housing security
  - Education, employment, or training
3. Explore whether impact of intervention differs by **baseline variables or coaching engagement**

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# TYOH 2.0: Intervention Group

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## Solution-Focused Brief Coaching

- **Youth come up with solutions** (vs. getting advice from a mentor)
- 2 study coaches (10 youth/coach)
- Biweekly 1:1 coaching sessions and monthly group coaching

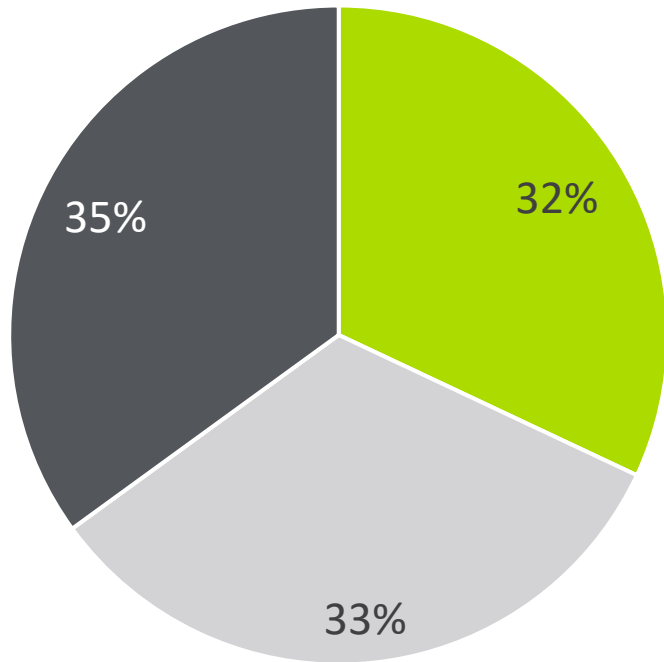


## Leadership Guide

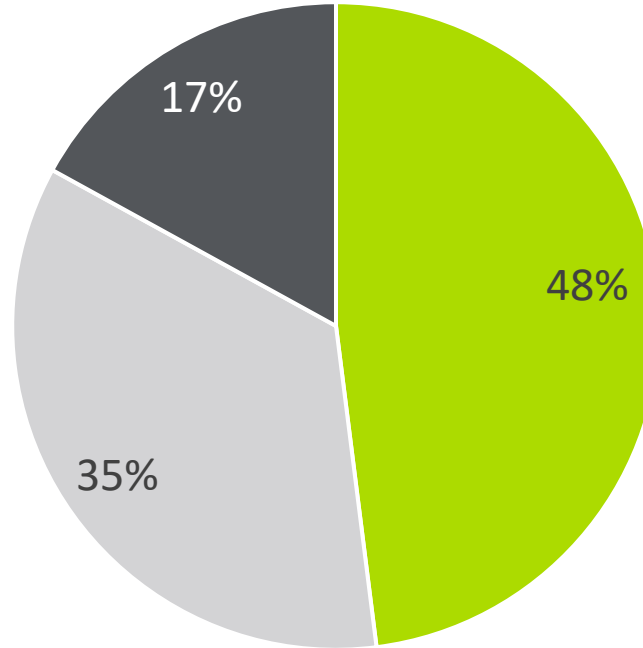
- **Co-designed** with youth who have experienced homelessness
- 12 chapters (1/month) aiming to enhance **identity capital**
- Self-directed learning

# Quantitative Findings

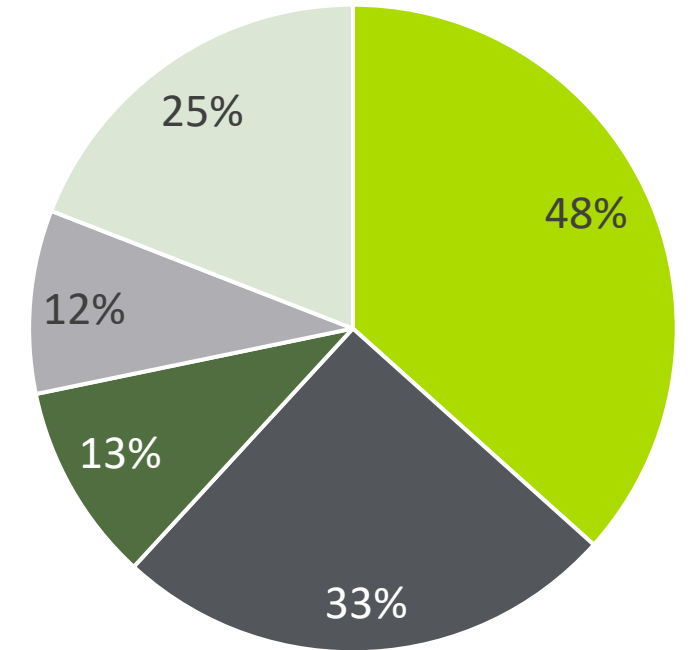
# Baseline Demographics



- Age 16-18
- Age 19-21
- Age 22-24



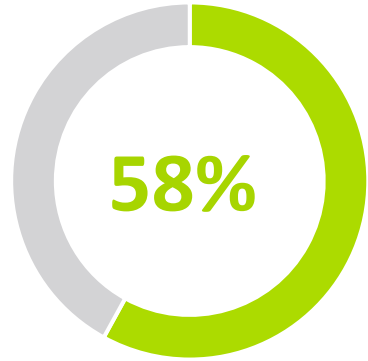
- Girl/woman
- Boy/man
- Non-binary/Trans/Two-spirit



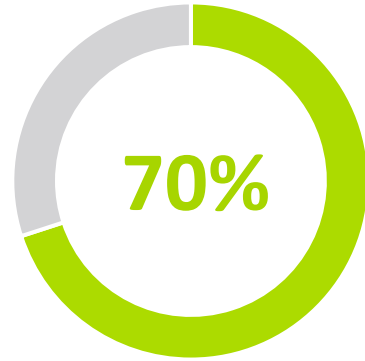
- White
- Black
- Indigenous
- Mixed
- Different option

# Baseline Demographics

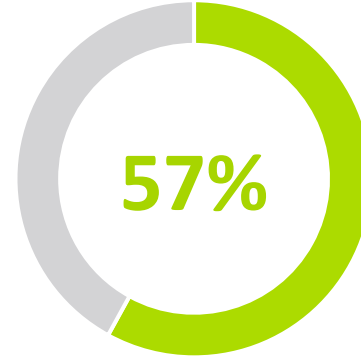
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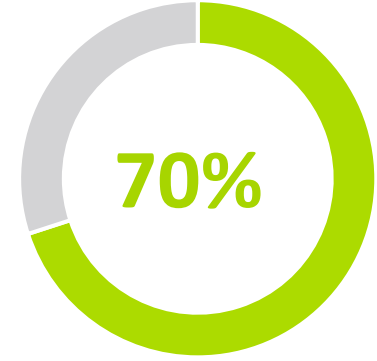
**child welfare  
involvement**



**aged ≤18 first  
experience of  
homelessness**



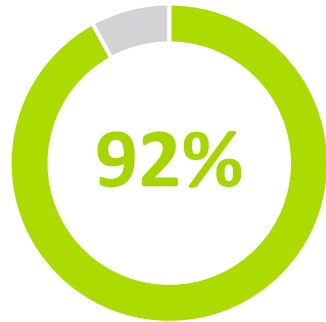
**completed high  
school**



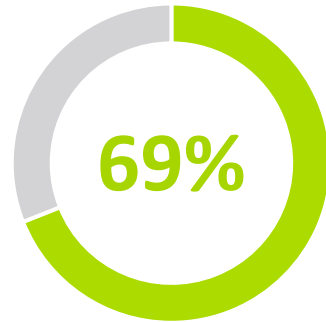
**social assistance**

# Baseline Mental Health: GAIN-SS (Global Assessment of Individual Needs – Short Screener)

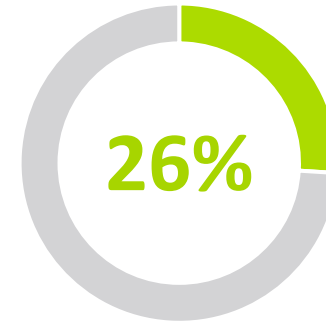
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probable **internalizing** diagnosis  
*(anxiety; flashbacks)*



probable **externalizing** diagnosis  
*(paying attention)*

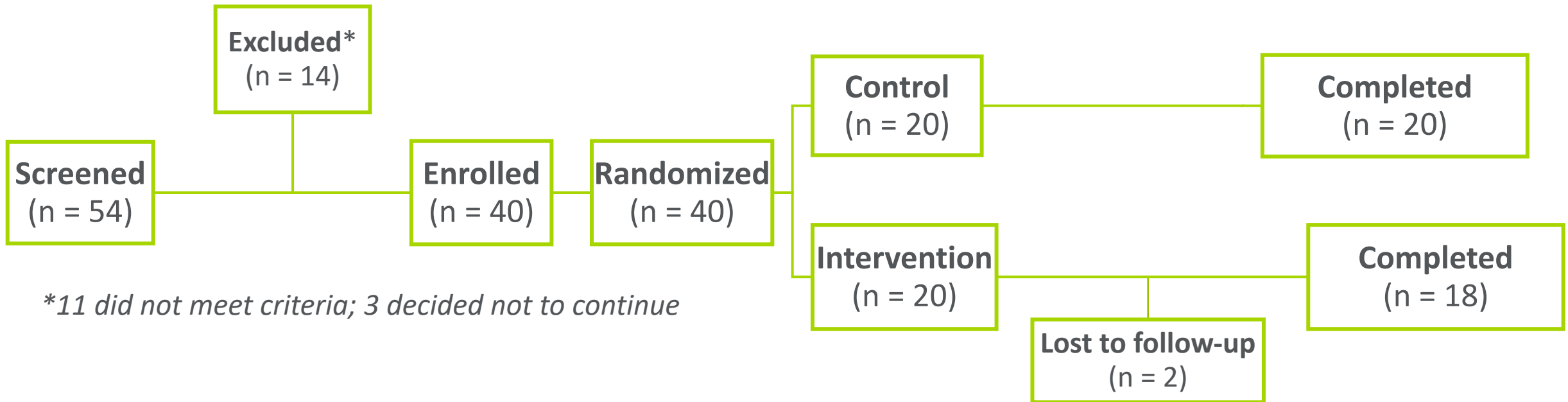


probable **substance use** diagnosis  
*(excessive use)*



probable **crime or violence** challenges  
*(stealing)*

# 1. Feasibility and Acceptability: Recruitment, Enrolment, Engagement

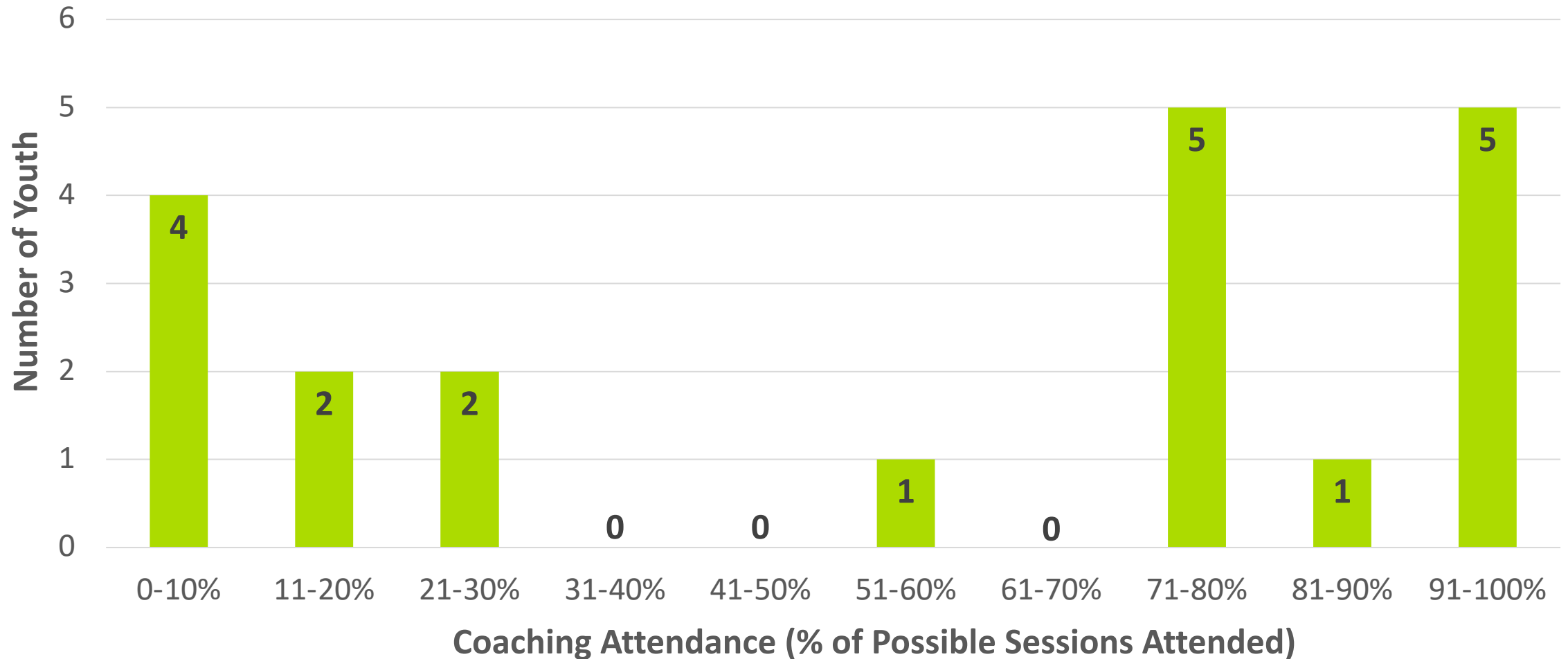


## Intervention Acceptability:

- Youth attended a mean of 13/24 sessions (55%)



# 1. Feasibility and Acceptability: Coaching Engagement (n = 20)



## 2. Socioeconomic Inclusion Outcomes Between Groups: Intention to Treat Analysis

Measure	Subscales	Intervention Group Mean Scores (SD)		Control Group Mean Scores (SD)		Mean Group Difference (95% CI) at 12 Months (n = 38)	P value
		Baseline (n = 20)	12 Months (n = 18)	Baseline (n = 20)	12 Months (n = 20)		
Identity Capital <sup>8</sup> (MAPS20)	Self-Esteem (5-30)	18.5 (4.8)	19.7 (4.0)	18.1 (5.3)	17.7 (2.9)	1.2 (-0.9, 3.3)	0.24
	Purpose in Life (5-30)	17.8 (5.2)	18.4 (4.6)	17.3 (4.7)	18.2 (4.4)	-0.3 (-2.6, 2.0)	0.78
	Locus of Control (5-30)	20.9 (4.0)	19.9 (3.7)	20.3 (4.2)	18.7 (3.6)	1.6 (-0.6, 3.8)	0.16
	Self-Efficacy (5-30)	20.1 (4.8)	20.1 (3.4)	18.7 (6.0)	18.9 (5.0)	1.1 (-1.2, 3.3)	0.36
Education, Employment, or Training*		14 (74%)	12 (71%)	13 (65%)	12 (60%)	11% (-19.9, 41.1)	0.50

\*For binary outcomes, n (%) of youth responding "Yes" is reported

## 2. Socioeconomic Inclusion Outcomes Between Groups: Intention to Treat Analysis

Measure	Subscales	Intervention Group Mean Scores (SD)		Control Group Mean Scores (SD)		Mean Group Difference (95% CI) at 12 Months (n = 38)	P value
		Baseline (n = 20)	12 Months (n = 18)	Baseline (n = 20)	12 Months (n = 20)		
Housing Security Scale (HSS) <sup>9</sup>	Housing Need*	11 (56%)	13 (72%)	11 (55%)	11 (55%)	17% (-12.8, 47.3)	0.27
	Subjective Stability (5-30)	17.6 (4.3)	20.2 (4.9)	18.3 (5.9)	18.9 (6.0)	1.8 (-1.9, 5.4)	0.34
	Safety Net (3-18)	8.7 (2.7)	9.6 (3.5)	8.4 (3.2)	8.9 (3.3)	0.8 (-1.5, 3.0)	0.48
	Threats to Stability (7-42)	18.3 (4.5)	15.4 (5.2)	16.0 (6.4)	16.3 (5.0)	-1.6 (-5.2, 2.0)	0.37

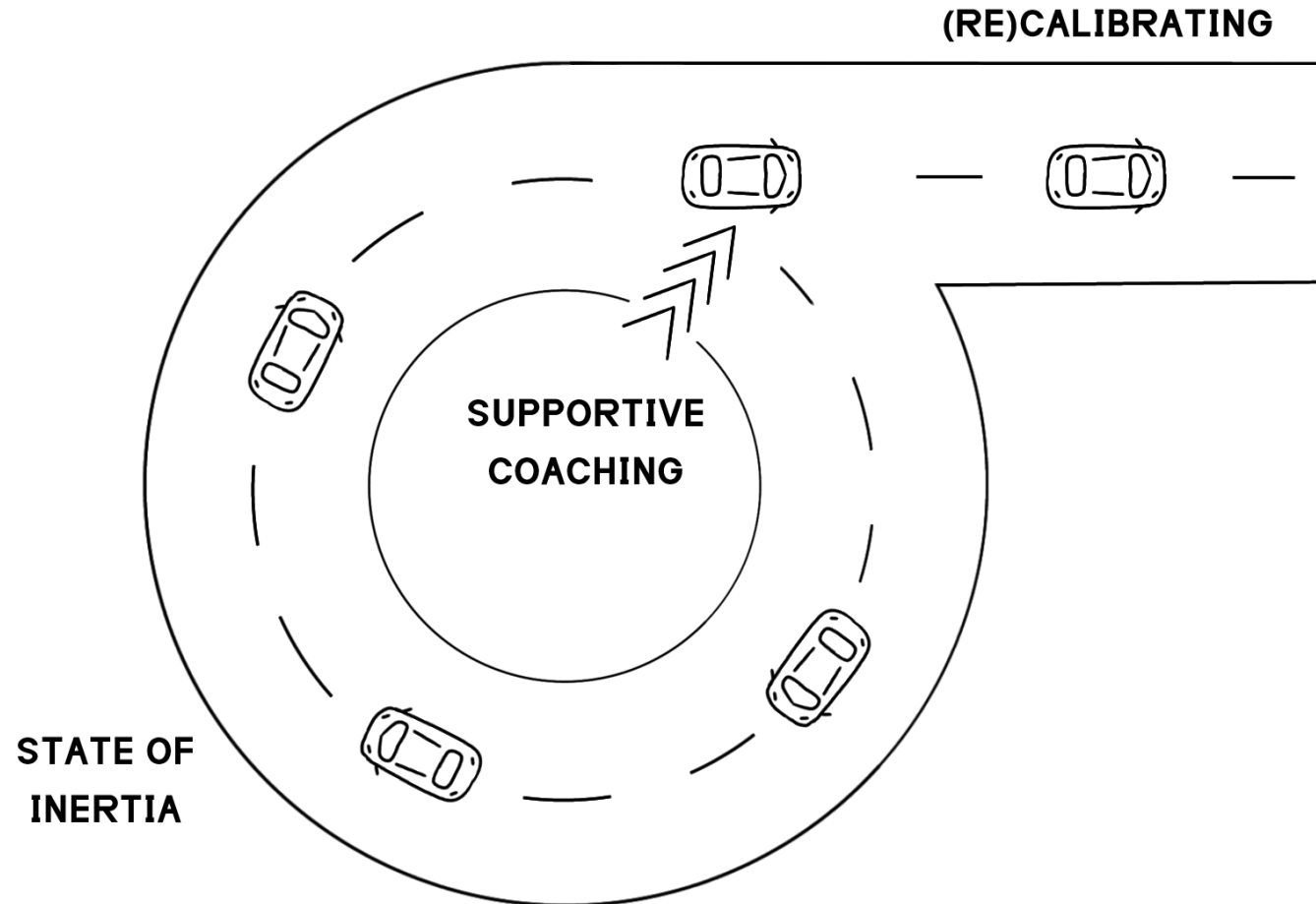
\*For binary outcomes, n (%) of youth responding “Yes” is reported

### 3. Exploratory Outcomes: Correlations with Coaching Engagement

Measure	Subscale	Correlation with Coaching Engagement (Spearman's $\rho$ )	
		Baseline (n=20)	12 Months (n=18) (accounting for baseline values)
Identity Capital (MAPS20)	Self-Esteem	0.08	0.24
	Purpose in Life	0.27	0.22
	Locus of Control	<b>-0.51</b>	0.20
	Self-Efficacy	-0.03	<b>0.50</b>
Mental Health (GAIN-SS) <sup>10,11</sup>	Internalizing Symptoms	<b>0.03</b>	-
	Externalizing Symptoms	<b>-0.09</b>	-

# Qualitative Findings

# Thematic Framework



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## State of Inertia

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“ I don't get feedback from **nobody**.  
*(4 months)*

“ I'm sort of working on getting into a [local] **college course** to get some of the credits that I need. And at the same time **working a summer job**. So, in my case, **it's a little difficult to get 30 minutes in** [to work on the leadership guide] after coming home. I just want to pass right out face first.  
*(4 months)*

# State of Inertia





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## Supportive Coaching

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“

With [coach], I feel like [they are] **more willing to actually try to help with the situation**, compared to where a therapist kind of just gets paid to sit there and listen to your problems and go, ‘well here you go, have fun with it, figure it out on your own,’ instead of kind of **collab-ing with you and trying to figure out different things that actually work for you.**

*(4 months)*

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## Supportive Coaching

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“ Coaching is very much **in the moment**. We’ll talk about things that are upsetting me at the moment, and then we’ll figure out how to get past those things or to solve those things.

We’re focusing on **how we can change and be better, rather than looking back** to my past and trying to figure out why it happened like that.

*(8 months)*

# Supportive Coaching



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## (Re)Calibrating

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“ So right now, I'm going with, ‘this is what's happening **in this moment**, and these are the potentials.’ But I'm **not focused on the bad things that could potentially happen** like I would have been because **I always have a solution** to everything ahead of time.

But I want to have those [potentials] on the back burner while being able to **enjoy the things that are going on right now**. I want to **be in the moment**, I want to **be present**, and I don't want to stress myself out.

*(8 months)*

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## (Re)Calibrating

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“

Before I was very quiet. I didn't speak out for myself at all. I was very much a **pushover**. Everyone kind of **walked all over me**. But I feel like now, being home, having someone who I love by my side all the time, having the resources like [coach], having therapy and all that stuff has really pushed me to see that **I'm much more than just a shell of a person**.

That's how I kind of felt throughout my life, just a shell of person, someone who just kind of lived to help others. But now that I'm helping myself, I feel like **I'm more of a person who has a life**, who has those opportunities, and who can **make a change in someone else's life**.

*(12 months)*

# (Re)Calibrating



# Implications

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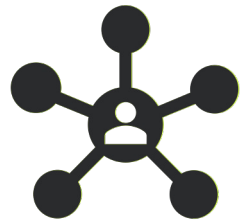
# TYOH 2.0 Findings in Context

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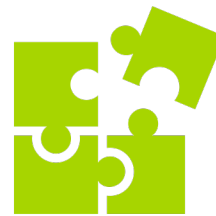
A 2024 systematic review<sup>12</sup> on **youth's perspectives** about **youth homelessness interventions** identified **five key approaches** for helping young people exit or avoid homelessness:



**centrality of relationships**



**youth-centered approach**



**integrated and multi-disciplinary service provision**



**beyond housing approach**



**strength-based therapeutic models/interventions**



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## Implications: Front-Line Work



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Coaches did not deliver pure Solution-Focused Brief Coaching; they **adapted** to meet youth's needs and context:

- Involved aspects of **mentorship** (e.g., advice-giving)
- **Human-ness** central to building trusting and supportive relationships (e.g., personal connection)

Other **key aspects** of the coaching approach that resonated with youth:

- Feeling **seen on their own terms** (e.g., holistically; free of assumptions/judgement)
- Coaches being **prepared, consistent, and reliable** (requires \*low caseload\* and adequate support)

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# Implications: Future Research

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- Redesign **leadership guide** and delivery
  - TYOH 2.5: in-person summer intensive leadership program
  - Potential for high school credits



- Adjust **intervention targets** and measures
  - Focus on **(dis)connection** (e.g., loneliness; community/social connectedness)
  - Increase length of intervention and follow-up period; consider non-randomized design



- **Integrate** coach-like support (“connection coach”) with holistic/multi-disciplinary supports
  - e.g., psychotherapy; **meaningful** employment; education support; “natural” relationships



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Housing and hope  
for homeless youth



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# References

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- <sup>2</sup>Morton, M.H., Kugley, S., Epstein, R., & Farrell, A. (2020). Interventions for youth homelessness: A systematic review of effectiveness studies. *Children and Youth Services Review, 116*, 105096.
- <sup>3</sup>Aubry, T., Bloch, G., Brcic, V., Saad, A., Magwood, O., Abdalla, T., ... Pottie, K. (2020). Effectiveness of permanent supportive housing and income assistance for homeless individuals in high-income countries: A systematic review. *The Lancet Public Health, 5*(6), e342-e360.
- <sup>4</sup>Chen, K.L., Miake-Lye, I.M., Begashaw, M.M., Zimmerman, F.J., Larkin, J., McGrath, E.L., & Shekelle, P.G. (2022). Association of promoting housing affordability and stability with improved health incomes: A systematic review. *JAMA Network Open, 5*(11), e2239860.
- <sup>5</sup>Marshall, C.A., Easton, C., Phillips, B., Boland, L., Isard, R., Holmes, J., ... Oudshoorn, A. (2022). Experiences of transitioning from homelessness: A systematic review and meta-aggregation of qualitative studies conducted in middle to high income countries. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness, 33*(1), 28–49.
- <sup>6</sup>Thulien, N.S., Amiri, A., Hwang, S.W., Kozloff, N., Wang, A., Akdikmen, A., ... Nisenbaum, R. (2022). Effect of portable rent subsidies and mentorship on socioeconomic inclusion for young people exiting homelessness: A community-based pilot randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Network Open, 5*(10), e2238670.

# References

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- <sup>8</sup>Côté, J. (2016). The identity capital model: A handbook of theory, methods, and findings. *Sociology Publications*. 38. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/sociologypub/38>
- <sup>9</sup>Frederick, T., Vitopoulos, N., Leon, S., & Kidd, S. (2022). Subjective housing stability in the transition away from homelessness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(2), 1083-101.
- <sup>10</sup>Dennis, M.L., Feeney, T., & Titus, J.C. (2013). *Global Appraisal of Individual Needs-Short Screener (GAIN-SS): Administration and scoring manual, version 3*. Bloomington, IL: Chestnut Health Systems.
- <sup>11</sup>Dennis, M.L., Chan, Y.F., & Funk, R.R. (2006). Development and validation of the GAIN Short Screener (GSS) for internalizing, externalizing and substance use disorders and crime/violence problems among adolescents and adults. *The American Journal on Addictions*, 15, s80-91.
- <sup>12</sup>Rambaldini-Gooding, D., Keevers, L., Clay, N., & MacLeod, L. (2024). Researching effective practices to reduce youth homelessness and disadvantages from a young person’s perspective: A systematic review. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*.