

Seminar 23: Youth Homelessness II (Room: TBD) - Chair: Melanie Redman, CA (TBC)

Naomi Thulien and Mardi Daley, CA: Transitioning Youth Out of Homelessness 2.0: A Pilot Rent Subsidy and Identity Capital Intervention for Youth Exiting Homelessness in Canada

Background: This 12-month pilot study builds on our previous community-engaged work and explores whether portable rent subsidies and an intervention targeting identity capital (purpose, control, self-efficacy, and self-esteem) hold promise as a way to facilitate socioeconomic inclusion for youth (age 16-24 years) exiting homelessness and living in market rent housing in Ontario, Canada.

All (n = 40) participants received rent subsidies; half were randomly assigned an identity capital intervention (co-designed leadership guide + coach). Two coaches with expertise in solution-focused coaching were hired from outside the homelessness sector; each managed a caseload of 10 youth.

Methods: The overall study was guided by a community-based participatory action research approach. The qualitative component employed a qualitative descriptive design underpinned by critical social theory. The objectives and measures were:

1. Primary – examine the feasibility and acceptability of a randomized trial of targeted economic and identity-based supports as a way to foster socioeconomic inclusion. Measures: recruitment/enrolment/dropout metrics; self-report composite checklists regarding intervention engagement; qualitative focus groups.
2. Secondary – estimate the effect of adding identity-based supports to economic supports (intervention group) compared with economic supports alone (control group) at the 12-month primary endpoint with respect to self-reported proxy indicators of socioeconomic inclusion. Measures: education, employment and training; housing security; identity capital.
3. Exploratory – explore whether the estimated effect of the intervention differs by baseline variables (e.g., gender or mental health symptoms).

Discussion: We will share our quantitative and qualitative findings, and discuss important lessons learned about the impact of solution-focused coaching on identity capital for youth transitioning out of homelessness. This intervention was co-designed with youth from our last study and their voices, along with youth from this study, will continue to inform next steps.



Dr. Naomi Thulien is a nurse practitioner and researcher committed to working with the community – especially young people with lived expertise – to tackle the social and structural inequities that cause and perpetuate youth homelessness. Naomi is an investigator at MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, a research institute at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada focused on health equity. She is also an assistant professor (status only) at the University of Toronto Dalla Lana School of Public Health. In 2021, Naomi co-founded Breakwater Foundation – a non-profit organization that provides rent subsidies, education bursaries, and primary health care to young women who have experienced homelessness.



Mardi Daley has eight years of experience as a lived experience advocate, researcher, and youth engagement specialist. She works in Toronto, Canada at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, and the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness. Mardi has an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Toronto. Mardi focuses on building ethical and meaningful engagement strategies for youth participation and leadership in research, evaluation, and community-based projects. In 2019, Mardi founded Lived Experience Lab to better support lived/living experience in workforce development, including supporting the creation of intentional youth advisory models.

Jörg Dittmann, Cyril Boonmann, Nils Jenkel and Delfine D'Huart, CH: Fragile housing of vulnerable people. On the connection between homelessness and care leaving

Care leavers are adolescents and young adults who leave care homes or foster families when they reach the age of majority or later. International studies show that care leavers, especially in transition, are exposed to numerous stresses (Thyen & Konrad, 2018; Gypen et al. 2017; Fegert et al., 2017). Experiences of homelessness have been little studied quantitatively for care leavers in Europe like Australia or North America (Kaleveld 2018; Kelly 2020). The following presentation provides results based on the quantitative longitudinal Swiss study “JAEL - Jugendhilfe aus Erfahrung lernen” (Schmid et al. 2022).

The analysis points to the high vulnerability of care leavers to ending up in precarious housing situations and experiencing homelessness compared to the Swiss population as a whole. 30% of all care leavers between the ages of 18 and 25 years report experience of homelessness, while the lifetime prevalence rate in the Swiss population as a whole is between 0.1% and 8.1%, depending on the definition of homelessness. The example of higher risk to experience homelessness highlights the extreme level of fragility in the area of housing for adults who were formerly placed in institutions or foster families as minors. Especially when those affected are dealing with mental illnesses. The results imply problems the support system has in responding appropriately to young people with specific mental health problems. We would like to discuss with you approaches and possibilities of how social and medical support systems can prevent careers at failed support services.



Prof. Jörg Dittmann, University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work. His main topics include poverty and homelessness, social planning and quantitative life situation analyses.



Dr. Cyril Boonmann, assistant professor, LUMC-Curium —Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Leiden University Medical Center, Leiden, Netherlands, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Research, Psychiatric University Hospitals Basel, Basel, Switzerland. His main research interests include mental health problems and offending behavior in children, adolescents and young adults with multiple and complex needs.



Nils Jenkel, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Research, Psychiatric University Hospitals Basel, Basel, Switzerland. He is responsible for various initiatives, including overseeing the online platform WeAskYou, which provides psychometric diagnostics services to institutions and research projects.



Dr. Delfine d'Huart, Department of Youth forensic, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Research, Psychiatric University Hospitals Basel, Basel, Switzerland. Her main research interests include personality disorders and childhood maltreatment in young people.