

HOUSING FIRST AND 'ENDING' YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEOLIBERAL ERA:
A Case Study of the Infinity Project & Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

AMANDA J.F. NOBLE

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program of Education

York University

January 2018

© Amanda J.F. Noble, 2018

Abstract

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, I conduct a mixed-methods program evaluation of the first known Housing First program for Youth called the Infinity Project in Calgary, Alberta. I analyze Infinity using Gaetz's (2014b) Housing First for Youth Framework and investigate the main outcomes of the program using HMIS and Outcomes Star data. The second purpose of this research is to conduct a grounded analysis of the Infinity Project and the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness it is embedded within through the lens of neoliberal governmentality.

The findings show that the Infinity Project strongly adheres to Gaetz's Housing First for Youth Framework, although informally in some respects. The youth also retain their housing at levels comparable to the Canadian literature, and show modest improvements in their physical health and in the use of public services. The program faces several challenges, particularly in securing affordable housing for the youth and the necessary mental health and addictions support. These findings suggest that while largely successful at a programmatic level, there are multiple systemic and structural challenges that are beyond the control of the program. From a governmentality perspective, I argue that the Housing First and 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness models are insufficient to address homelessness because they do not challenge the neoliberal status quo in two ways. First, while there are important sites of resistance, the initiatives remain mired in neoliberal governmentality at the levels of the individual, population and spatially. Second, they do not address the root structural causes of homelessness, including poverty, the lack of affordable housing, colonization / discrimination and the inadequate welfare state and social service sector. I question whether using the language of 'ending' homelessness in the absence of primary prevention can be harmful to the overall cause of addressing homelessness as it continues to allow governments to abdicate on their responsibilities, and

reinforces the notion that homelessness is ‘solved’ through strategies targeted at the individual level. Instead, these efforts must be combined with primary prevention strategies that are targeted at a universal level, and which situate housing and obtaining a particular standard of living as a human right. Only then may we be closer to ending mass homelessness that is characteristic of modern neoliberal society.

Acknowledgements

It is hard to believe that I am finally writing this page, the last of my dissertation. It has been a long road and there are numerous people who have made this possible. I would like to start by thanking my partner Christopher, whose love, encouragement and support through the writing of my dissertation has been invaluable. Christopher, you once gave me the best advice for succeeding in the academic world (“*be yourself*”), and while ostensibly simple, I know that it has changed my career forever. I would also like to thank my three children Kaylin, Adelaide and Daxon, for being my motivation to keep working every day. You are the lights of my life and I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to watch you grow into the amazing people you are becoming.

I would like to thank the young people I interviewed for taking the time to share their thoughts and experiences with me. Your courage and resilience is truly inspirational, and I wish the best for you in all of your future endeavours. I am genuinely grateful for the Infinity Project staff whom allowed me to study their program and generously shared their thoughts and wisdom with me. I am in awe of the work you do, and believe that you provide a wonderful and much needed service to your young people.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support of my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Gaetz. He has provided me with an incredible amount of guidance throughout my PhD studies, and for this I am extremely grateful. I am continually inspired by his work in the field of homelessness where he is the national guru, even being given the Order of Canada. If I achieve even a fraction of what he has in his career, I will know that I have succeeded. Stephen, you have been my main cheerleader, and have continually inspired me to continue moving forward in the face of doubt and uncertainty, and for this I am forever grateful.

I am also greatly indebted to my dissertation committee for taking the time to review my work and provide invaluable feedback that has greatly improved my final product. Thank you for continuing to push my thinking and for supporting me through this process.

I would like to thank my many colleagues whom I have witnessed progress from PhD candidate to Doctor of Philosophy, as they have all helped me maintain my motivation during some difficult times: Dr. Nick Falvo, Dr. Kaitlin Schwan, Dr. Kristy Bucierri, Dr. Naomi Nichols, Dr. Naomi Thulien, and Dr. Alex Abromavich. I am in awe of all of your passion, intelligence and dedication to addressing homelessness in Canada, and I am honoured to be your colleague. Similarly, my work colleagues have helped me keep moving forward when I felt overwhelmed and on the verge of burnout: Jazzy and IC (nickname pending), thank you for encouraging me each and every day.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their love and support, particularly my mother Joanne, father Russell, sister Jennifer, Aunt Maude, dad in heaven, James, and cousin Dani. I would not be who I am today without all of you. I love you all to the moon and back.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
1. CHAPTER ONE: HOUSING FIRST AND ‘ENDING’ YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN THE NEOLIBERAL ERA.....	1
Neoliberalism and Governmentality.....	3
Youth Homelessness in Canada and Models of Accommodation	5
Calgary’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Infinity Project	7
A Mixed-Methods Case Study Approach.....	7
The Housing First for Youth Framework and Outcomes.....	9
Infinity, Calgary’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and Neoliberalism.....	9
Discussion: A Rights-Based Approach to Homelessness.....	10
2. CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY.....	13
Understanding Neoliberalism.....	13
A Post-Structural Critique of Neoliberalism: Governmentality	15
Neoliberal Governmentality at the Level of the Individual – Discipline.....	19
Technologies of Self.....	19
Neoliberal Governmentality at the Level of the Population – Biopolitics.....	20
The Spatial Dimensions of Neoliberal Governmentality.....	22
Neoliberal Complexities.....	25
Performativity.....	26
Neoliberalism in Canada.....	28
Affordable Housing.....	29
Alberta and Neoliberalism.....	31
In Summary – Neoliberalism.....	33
3. CHAPTER THREE: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA AND MODELS OF ACCOMMODATION.....	34
Youth Homelessness in Canada.....	34
Understanding Youth Homelessness.....	35
What Causes Youth Homelessness?.....	36
The Consequences of Youth Homelessness.....	40
Canada Responds to a New Crisis.....	41

Ten-Year Plans to End Homelessness and the Calgary Homeless Foundation.....	44
Models of Accommodation and Housing First.....	46
Emergency Shelters.....	46
Transitional Housing.....	49
Housing First.....	53
Housing First for Youth.....	61
A Housing First Framework for Youth.....	63
In Summary – Youth Homelessness and Models of Accommodation.....	69
4. CHAPTER FOUR: CALGARY’S PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS AND THE INFINITY PROJECT.....	72
Calgary’s Plan to End Homelessness.....	72
Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA).....	75
Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS).....	77
Calgary’s Plan to End Youth Homelessness.....	78
A Note on the Province of Alberta.....	80
The Infinity Project.....	81
Program Goals and Evidence of Effectiveness.....	85
In Summary: Calgary’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Infinity Project.....	86
5. CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS.....	88
Design.....	88
A Case Study Approach.....	91
Phase One.....	91
Phase Two.....	92
Document Review.....	92
HMIS Data.....	93
The Outcomes Star – Homelessness Star.....	97
Staff Interviews.....	99
Youth Interviews.....	100
Qualitative Data Analysis.....	101
Ethical Considerations.....	102
6. CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS: THE INFINITY PROJECT - THE HOUSING FIRST FOR YOUTH FRAMEWORK AND OUTCOMES.....	104
The Clarificative Evaluation: The Housing First for Youth Framework – The Principles.....	104
Immediate Access to Permanent Housing With No Preconditions.....	105

Youth Choice and Self-Determination.....	106
Positive Youth Development Orientation.....	109
Individualized and Client-Driven Supports.....	111
Opportunities for Meaningful Engagement.....	112
The Clarificative Evaluation: The Housing First for Youth Framework - The Program.....	114
Theory of Change.....	115
Housing Supports.....	116
Health and Well-Being.....	119
Income and Education.....	122
Complimentary Supports.....	123
The Impact Evaluation: Youth Outcomes.....	126
HMIS Data.....	127
Intake Data.....	127
Discharge Data.....	129
Housing Retention.....	130
Change Across Time.....	131
Employment Training and Education Status.....	132
Mental and Physical Health.....	133
Contact with Public Institutions.....	135
Changes in Basic Needs.....	136
Indigenous Youth.....	138
The Outcomes Star – Homelessness Star.....	139
Change Across Each Domain.....	140
Overall Scores.....	142
In Summary – The Infinity Project: Housing First for Youth Framework and Impact.....	144

7. CHAPTER SEVEN: GOVERNMENTALITY ANALYSIS: PERFORMING & RESISTING NEOLIBERALISM.....	152
Calgary’s 10-Year Plan and the Language of Neoliberalism.....	154
Infinity, Calgary’s 10-Year Plan and Neoliberal Governmentality.....	158
Neoliberal Governmentality at the Individual Level.....	158
Resistance to Neoliberalism.....	158
Conforming to Neoliberalism.....	159
Governmentality at the Level of the Population.....	164
Conforming to Neoliberalism – In a Positive Way?.....	164
Conforming to Neoliberalism – Potential Dangers.....	166
Governmentality at the Spatial Level.....	171
Resistance to Neoliberalism.....	171

Conforming to Neoliberalism.....	172
In Summary – How Does Infinity and Calgary’s 10-Year Plan Resist and Perform Neoliberal Governmentality.....	174
8. CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION: A HUMAN’S RIGHTS APPROACH TO ADDRESSING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS FOCUSED ON PREVENTION.....	178
Complex Neoliberal Entities.....	182
Ending Homelessness Primary Prevention.....	185
Preventing Homelessness at a Primary Level.....	190
Poverty.....	190
Affordable Housing.....	195
Decolonization and Discrimination.....	199
A Note on Other Forms of Discrimination.....	202
The Welfare State, Decentralization, and the Role of Senior Governments.....	202
A Note on the Province of Alberta.....	206
Why Resist Prevention?.....	209
Interconnected Causes of Homelessness.....	210
Language Matters.....	211
The ‘Reverse Staircase’ and Working Toward a Counter-Conduct.....	217
A Human Rights Approach to Homelessness.....	220
Conclusion.....	222
Limitations and Considerations for Future Research.....	224
REFERENCES.....	227
APPENDIX A: THE OUTOMCES STAR.....	257
APPENDIX B: INFINITY STAFF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	258
APPENDIX C: YOUTH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	261

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Calgary’s 10-Year Plan Principles.....	73
Table 4.2: HMIS Measures.....	78
Table 4.3: Youth Housing and Shelter Stream at Boys and Girls Club of Calgary.....	82
Table 4.4: Desired Outcomes for the Infinity Project.....	86
Table 5.1: Research Questions and Data Collection Tools.....	92
Table 6.1: Principles for Gaetz’s Housing First Framework for Youth & The Infinity Project..	104
Table 6.2: HMIS Intake Data.....	128
Table 6.3: HMIS Discharge Data.....	129
Table 6.4: Exit Destinations.....	130
Table 6.5: Housing Retention Rates, First and Twelve Month HMIS Assessments and First and Last Assessments.....	131
Table 6.6: Changes from First and Twelve Month HMIS Assessments and First and Last Assessments.....	132
Table 6.7: Average Change in Each Star Domain.....	140
Table 6.8: Percentage of Change in Each Star Domain.....	141
Table 6.9: Percentage Improving in Overall Star Scores.....	143
Table 6.10: Paired T-Test Results.....	143

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework – Neoliberalism and Governmentality.....	19
Figure 2.2: Theoretical Framework with Resistance.....	26
Figure 3.1: Housing First for Youth Principles.....	65
Figure 3.2: Housing First for Youth Program Elements.....	66
Figure 4.1: Calgary’s Homeless Population Over Time.....	74
Figure 5.1: Excel Spreadsheet with HMIS Data.....	95
Figure 5.2: Excel Spreadsheet with HMIS “Change” Scores.....	96
Figure 5.3: Excel Spreadsheet with Star Calculations.....	99
Figure 6.1: Participant Housing Retention.....	131
Figure 6.2: Average Change in Each Star Domain.....	142
Figure 8.1: Shapcott’s Iceberg.....	189

Chapter One

Housing First and 'Ending' Youth Homelessness in the Neoliberal Era

In 2012 the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) released a report entitled *A Plan, Not a Dream*, aimed at giving local communities across Canada the tools needed to end homelessness. The report begins with the proclamation:

A Plan, Not a Dream is a declaration that we, as Canadians are no longer willing to accept as inevitable the homelessness of any of our neighbours. This is a challenge to our fellow citizens and communities to take the initiative to end the un-natural disaster of homelessness in Canada once and for all (CAEH, 2012, p.3).

This powerful quote illustrates the tremendous shift that has occurred in Canadian society: not only is homelessness no longer considered an inevitable phenomenon as portrayed in popular sentiment for decades, people have started to believe we can end it! The CAEH has been wildly successful in enacting its vision of ending homelessness across Canada through the supporting of communities to implement 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness, with Housing First, a relatively new model of housing the homeless, as its bedrock. Housing First can be considered both a program and a philosophy that ensures people who are homeless are provided with permanent housing as a first step without any preconditions such as sobriety or going to treatment, and services the client desires are provided once they are housed (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013). The first Canadian 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness was implemented in Calgary, Alberta in 2008, with multiple Housing First programs initiated, including one for young people, aged 16-24 called the Infinity Project. Unfortunately, while this movement has created tremendous momentum that should be celebrated, caution should be exercised regarding whether this presents a real solution. Almost ten years into the launch of the Plan in Calgary, while there is evidence that the rate of homelessness has stabilized (i.e. not increased even with population growth), the city is a long way from ending homelessness. In fact, in a recent 2016

Point-in-Time Count in Calgary, 3,222 individuals were counted as homeless (Campbell, Falvo & Smith, 2017), a number very similar to an enumeration done in 2008, the year the 10-Year Plan was implemented, when 3,195 were counted (City of Calgary, 2008). This is also the case in many communities across Canada, including in other major cities with 10-Year strategies (Adamo et al., 2016). Recent evidence suggests that while there may be slightly fewer people using Canadian shelters than in the past, tens of thousands of Canadians continue to do so, and for longer periods of time (ESDC, 2016). It is estimated that 235,000 Canadians continue to experience homelessness every year (Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016) and this is likely an underestimate given the vast challenges in enumerating the homeless, particularly those that do not come into contact with the shelter system or who are visibly homeless on the streets. This includes various sub-populations such as young people aged 16-24, who represent approximately 20% of the homeless population, and due to their youthful age, have unique developmental and economic needs (Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016).

How is this possible? In this dissertation, I contend that despite the great work being done by local communities, Housing First programs and 10-Year Plans do not challenge the neoliberal status quo sufficiently to exact wide scale change in two major ways. First, they remain mired in neoliberal governmentality, or disciplinary and regulatory practices that reinforce neoliberalism at the level of the individual, the population, and spatially. Second, because the majority of 10-Year Plans are implemented at the municipal level, they cannot address the root structural factors that have arguably led to the homelessness crisis including poverty, the lack of affordable housing, colonization and discrimination, and the provision of an effective welfare state. In order for these fundamental drivers of homelessness to be addressed leadership is required by senior levels of government including federal and provincial/territorial.

Neoliberalism and Governmentality

I begin this discussion by outlining the theoretical framework, the post-structuralist concept of governmentality commonly associated with Michel Foucault. Governmentality refers to a form of regulation that penetrates every element of society from direct governing to self-regulation (Lemke, 2001). It is an entire system of thought, shaping which actions and thoughts are possible (Hardin, 2014). Foucault refers to governmentality as the way one “conducts the conduct of men” (Foucault, 2004, p. 186). Specifically, I utilize governmentality as a means to critique the ideology of neoliberalism. Although the definition of neoliberalism is contested, O’Neil & Weller (2016) define it broadly as:

The new political, economic, and social arrangements within society that emphasize market relations, re-tasking the role of the state, and individual responsibility...most scholars agree that it involves the extension of competitive markets into all areas of life, including the economy, politics and society (Springer, Birch & MacLeavy, 2016, p.28).

Neoliberalism can be thought of as one form of governmentality where market principles and ideology penetrate every aspect of life (Peterson, 2013). There are two important elements of governmentality. First, the power of governmentality is realized in multiple ways and scales in society, including through discourse and everyday practices. Second, the central intention of governmentality is for particular aims to be achieved. In the case of neoliberalism, these aims are to facilitate the development of ‘proper’ neoliberal citizens and spaces. The neoliberal subject is someone who is autonomous from the state and participates in the market economy by being employed in the labour market and a consumer of its products, including housing. Neoliberal spaces are those that provide unhinged access for neoliberal goals to be achieved, such as a thriving market.

Neoliberalism does not, however, exist in a pure and uncontested state. Foucault famously stated that “when there is power there is resistance” (Foucault, 1998, p. 95), meaning

that different forms of resistance can co-occur with the exercise of power. One type of resistance is the counter-conduct, which provides alternative knowledge to the dominant form of governmentality. These alternatives exist in tandem, in a continuous state of struggle. For example, Keynesianism can be thought of as a counter-conduct to neoliberal governmentality, which posits that the market is not sufficient to organize society, and the role of government should be to compensate for the negative consequences of the market. In this dissertation I discuss two examples of how initiatives (Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Infinity Project) enacted in the context of neoliberalism can both espouse neoliberal governmentality and simultaneously resist it, and how attempts at social change can exist in this complex space of struggle.

I conclude chapter two with a discussion of how neoliberalism has impacted Canadian society through a series of policy initiatives favouring deregulation, privatization and fiscal responsibility. One consequence of the shift to neoliberalism is an increased downloading of responsibilities previously considered to be that of senior levels of government to municipalities, communities and individuals (such as homelessness). Both federal and provincial levels of government underwent a series of spending cuts including in education, housing, health care, social assistance and social services. Particularly devastating to Canada was the federal government's decision to completely withdraw from its provision of social housing to low-income Canadians. One of the major consequences of these policy shifts was the rise of mass homelessness in Canada to unprecedented levels, and not only among the stereotypical single males on the streets, but also sub-populations such as unaccompanied youth (generally defined as ages 16-24).

Youth Homelessness in Canada and Models of Accommodation

In chapter three I discuss youth homelessness in Canada, including its causes and consequences. I utilize Fitzpatrick's (2005) critical realist framework to describe the causes of youth homelessness, which posits that various strata in society exist in relationships with one another, and while various factors such as poverty might not directly trigger an episode of homelessness, it can nonetheless be an important factor in its eventual occurrence. This is critical when considering the role that prevention at a structural level can play in addressing youth homelessness. The consequences of youth homelessness are profound because young people are in a unique stage of life and have distinct developmental and economic needs. Many have been exposed to multiple hardships and trauma, and being homeless can magnify this. They are more likely to suffer from compromised physical and mental health, to misuse substances, become disengaged and/or dropout from school, and be exposed to victimization and exploitation on the streets. All of these factors greatly impact the life trajectories of young people, and increase their risk of becoming homeless adults. Youth who are homeless deserve the chance to realize their full potential, and to not just survive, but to thrive.

After discussing youth homelessness, I turn to the strategies that senior levels of government, municipalities and communities have evoked to respond to the issue, and how this response has changed over the years. The largest shift was toward one where communities no longer sought to *manage* the homelessness crisis through a series of emergency services, but toward *ending* homelessness, largely through Housing First programs and 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness. Calgary was the first city to implement a 10-Year Plan, followed soon after by six other cities in Alberta (a network dubbed the Seven Cities). Several other municipalities across the country later followed suit.

Each strategy to address homelessness involves a combination of models of accommodation, including the three most common: emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Housing First. I discuss each of these models with a focus on the latter, the topic of this discussion. In theory, housing is seen as a human right with Housing First, and is provided right away rather than after people who are homeless proceed through a series of ‘steps’ such as treatment or maintaining sobriety before they are deemed ‘ready’ for housing. Housing First positions housing as the foundation to which all else (including employment or becoming sober), relies on. The literature on Housing First unambiguously shows that it is an effective model of accommodation, and can dramatically improve housing stability even for those with the most complex needs (such as addictions and mental health). This dissertation builds upon this literature in two ways. First, I examine Housing First as a model of accommodation for young people, an area where literature is just beginning to emerge. I examine Housing First using Gaetz’s (2014b) Housing First for Youth framework, a model that is not only geared toward finding housing for youth, but also facilitating a successful transition to adulthood. The framework contains five core principles and five program components (detailed further below). While Housing First has had demonstrable success in allowing individuals with mental health concerns and addictions to retain their housing, little research has examined the efficacy and appropriateness of this model for subpopulations such as youth, or examined the model against a framework. Second, I analyze Housing First using a grounded governmentality approach. I analyze Housing First from the perspective of neoliberal governmentality using examples ‘from the ground’, or a specific Housing First for youth program, the Infinity Project, as well as the larger 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness driven by its funder, the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), as examples.

Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Infinity Project

In chapter four I discuss Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, where 'ending' is defined as having no one stay in a shelter or on the street for more than seven days before they are provided with permanent housing and supports. I detail the key principles of the Plan as well as the progress achieved to date. This includes developing a 'system of care' or a regional coordinated system of services for the homeless, and their use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), an electronic database that programs funded through the CHF are mandated to use. In addition to implementing a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, Calgary and the province of Alberta have also implemented 10-Year Plans to End Youth Homelessness, which aim to bring prevention to the forefront of their work. After discussing Calgary's 10-Year Plans, I describe the Infinity Project, one of Canada's first known Housing First programs for young people aged 16-24. Infinity is funded entirely by the CHF and at the time of this research was one of eight programs (as of late-2017 it is one of ten) run through the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary's Youth Housing & Shelter Stream. I describe the program principles, goals and reported evidence of its effectiveness.

A Mixed-Methods Case Study Approach

To investigate this topic I utilize a mixed-methods case study approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data on a specific case, the Infinity Project, and the 10-Year Plan that it is embedded within. The methodology used in this research is detailed in chapter five. In addition to the case study approach, there are also elements consistent with clarificative and impact program evaluation methodologies, which collect information about the specific workings and effectiveness of a social program (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does the Infinity Project uphold the principles and necessary program components as outlined in Gaetz's (2014b) Housing First Framework for youth?
2. What are the main outcomes for young people participating in the Infinity Project? Specifically, how do youth fare in regards to housing retention, mental and physical health, substance use, and contact with public systems?
3. How can Housing First programs such as the Infinity Project and Calgary's 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness be understood in the context of neoliberalism? In what ways do they resist and espouse neoliberal governmentality? What are the implications of 'ending' homelessness, particularly for young people?

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected to investigate these questions. The qualitative data collected included three preliminary interviews with Infinity managers (to inform the development of the methodology), seven interviews with staff, eight interviews with young people currently enrolled in Infinity, and a document review consisting of several program documents as well as multiple reports published by the CHF.

Two forms of quantitative data were also collected. First, three and a half years of administrative information collected through HMIS was analyzed, the aforementioned database that programs funded by CHF are mandated to use. This data included intake and discharge data, as well as that collected at three-month increments. This allowed me to analyze demographic information, data on program usage, and to track outcomes such as housing retention and changes in education and mental/physical health (among others). The second form of quantitative data came from the Homelessness Star, one of several tools collectively referred to as the Outcomes Star. The Homelessness Star measures change in ten domains including motivation and taking responsibility, self-care and living skills, managing money, social

networks and relationships, drug and alcohol misuse, physical health, emotional and mental health, meaningful use of time, and maintaining tenancy and accommodation. The Star data is collected collaboratively with the young people and their primary worker in three-month increments. I was able to examine all existing Star data for the current residents (n=26). Through the use of multiple sources of data I was able to analyze information from a wide cross-section of program participants as well hear the rich stories and experiences from the staff and program participants.

The Housing First for Youth Framework and Outcomes

In chapter six I discuss the results of the program evaluation, including how the Infinity Project compares to the Housing First for Youth framework briefly discussed above, and what the main outcomes of the program are. The first half of the chapter outlines the results from the qualitative interviews with staff and youth. The Housing First for Youth Framework (Gaetz, 2014b) contains five key principles including immediate access to permanent housing with no preconditions, youth choice and self-determination, a positive youth development orientation, individualized and client-driven supports, and social and community integration. There are also five key program components including providing housing supports, provisions for and health and wellbeing, facilitating access to income and education, complementary supports (including life skills, adult mentoring, family reconnection, advocacy, etc.), and opportunities for meaningful engagement. After discussing the principles and program elements of the Housing First for Youth framework, the second part of chapter seven discusses the results of the outcome data obtained through the HMIS database and the Homelessness Star.

Infinity, Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and Neoliberalism

In chapter seven the discussion shifts to the governmentality analysis, or examining the

ways that Infinity and the CHF's 10-Year Plan can be understood from a neoliberal perspective. Here I show that both initiatives exist in a complex theoretical space; while they act within the confines of neoliberal governmentality, they also resist it. I elaborate on the specific ways that Infinity and CHF's 10-Year Plan simultaneously perform and resist neoliberal governmentality at three levels: the individual, the population, and spatially. Foucault describes governmentality at the individual level as disciplinary, or concerned with governing the conduct of individuals. Neoliberal governmentality aims to create proper neoliberal subjects, meaning individuals become participants and consumers of the private market economy including in the labour and housing markets. At the level of the population, Foucault describes governmentality as being regulatory, or aiming to regulate an entire population. This is largely achieved through the biopolitical use of data and experts, the gatekeepers of this data. Finally, neoliberal governmentality occurs on a spatial level as spaces are created to facilitate market activity.

Discussion: A Rights-Based Approach to Homelessness

I conclude this dissertation in chapter eight by discussing the implications of this research. Namely, while the Infinity Project has been successful at a programmatic level, largely structuring their program in congruence with Gaetz's Housing First Framework for Youth and helping dozens of youth obtain and maintain stable housing, the program is limited by systemic and structural barriers. Despite being embedded within Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, their long-term impact on 'ending' youth homelessness – regardless of how ending is defined – is limited because both initiatives do not sufficiently challenge the neoliberal status quo in two ways. First, while there are important sites of resistance, the initiatives remain grounded in neoliberal governmentality at the levels of the individual, population, and spatially. Second, the root, structural causes of homelessness, including poverty, affordable housing,

colonization/discrimination and the inadequate welfare state and social service sector are left unaddressed. By framing solutions to homelessness as occurring at the local, community level, the government is abdicated from their responsibilities to prevent homelessness from occurring. I question whether the language of ‘ending’ homelessness is harmful to the overall cause of addressing homelessness as it implies that homelessness can end in the absence of primary prevention or addressing the root causes. Language is not neutral, and as argued, can be a major factor in how neoliberal governmentality is performed. By working within this framework of ‘ending’ homelessness, and neoliberal governmentality in general, the types of solutions that are put forward are limited to those that are within the realm of influence of local communities and agencies, hence ignoring the primary drivers of homelessness.

Instead, a counter-conduct, or an alternative to neoliberal governmentality is required. I propose one that views homelessness as a violation of our human rights. All humans have the right to live at a particular standard of living, or the right to social citizenship, which Lake and Newman (2002, p.14) define as “attainment of life according to the prevailing norms in society”. While there is room for debate on what the current norms are, few would argue that having adequate, safe and affordable housing, an income to subsist on, and a life free from discrimination and oppression are prevailing norms. While as a philosophy Housing First claims to be rights-based, in practice this is not the case as there are strict eligibility criteria to gain access to Housing First programs. In fact, Housing First can be seen as a ‘reverse staircase’ program where instead of having participants be required to prove how ready they are for housing (the ‘staircase’ model), they now have to prove how ‘unready’ they are by scoring high enough on an acuity screening tool before they are deemed eligible. By truly shifting to a rights-based approach to homelessness a fundamental shift is required in how we understand the issue,

and more efforts have to be placed on prevention, or addressing the root causes of homelessness.

When all humans have a right to social citizenship, only then will we be closer to truly ending homelessness.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework – Neoliberal Governmentality

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical framework of this dissertation, neoliberal governmentality. I begin by defining and exploring the concept of neoliberalism, and proceed to discuss governmentality as a specific framework in which to critique neoliberalism. I articulate how neoliberal governmentality is enacted at the level of the individual, the population, and spatially and show that Housing First programs such as Infinity, and Calgary's 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness, simultaneously embodies and resists neoliberal governmentality. I discuss the concept of 'performativity' (Glass, 2016) to articulate how neoliberalism penetrates the everyday practices of individuals, including those who respond to homelessness. Particularly important to the concept of performativity is how space is created for alternative forms of conduct (the counter conduct), and how this can be used to shift our response to homelessness to include a human rights based approach, with a focus on preventing homelessness rather than responding to it. I conclude the chapter by providing a historical overview of how neoliberal social and economic policy infiltrated Canada and Alberta, and how this produced a homelessness crisis unprecedented in our country.

Understanding Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism has become a widely used academic concept over the past two decades, often being used in a general, nebulous manner to critique capitalism or to create political alliances that separate the left from the right (Cotoi, 2011). The term has become so widespread that some scholars worry its utility as a theoretical framework has been reduced (e.g. O'Neil & Weller, 2016). While neoliberalism has become somewhat of a buzzword, it remains a useful

framework for understanding the causes and proposed solutions to contemporary social concerns such as homelessness, particularly when narrowly defined and applied to concrete examples.

A broad definition of neoliberalism given by Springer, Birch and MacLeavy (2016) is:

The new political, economic, and social arrangements within society that emphasize market relations, re-tasking the role of the state, and individual responsibility...most scholars agree that it involves the extension of competitive markets into all areas of life, including the economy, politics and society (p. 28).

Neoliberalism as a form of thought dates back to (at least) post World War II in Germany when economists such as Fredrick Von Hayek and others in the Mont Pelerin Society sought to create space for the free market in the presence of a strong Nazi state (Davies, 2014). Von Hayek (1944) advocated strongly for individual freedom and liberty both commercially and in acquiring private property. He argued that the government's role should be to facilitate competitiveness in the market and to protect individual rights rather than facilitate equality among citizens.

Neoliberalism remained a marginalized framework to Keynesian monetary policy during this time, which aimed to ensure full employment and alleviate poverty among citizens through the creation of a robust welfare state.

Neoliberalism began to emerge as a dominant framework after the economic crisis of the 1970s, largely through the leadership of The Chicago School of Economics and scholars such as Milton Friedman, George Stigler, and Gary Becker (Davies, 2014). Economists influenced by this line of thought argued that the state's regulations and high taxes were infringing upon the market and that the general welfare state was creating a culture of dependency among recipients (MacLeavy, 2016). They advocated for the size of the government to be reduced and to focus on promoting stability at a macroeconomic level (Friedman, 1962). These economists are thought to have heavily influenced the policies of former American President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the political leaders most commonly associated with the

emergence of neoliberalism as a dominant framework (Springer, Birch & MacLeavy, 2016). It was also during this time that phenomena previously not associated with the market began to be analyzed according to market principles (such as investment and economic efficiency), including social relationships, the family and the individual (Foucault, 2004; Oksala, 2013). For instance, Gary Becker, the Vice-President of the Mont Pelerin Society in the late 1980s, is credited with the introduction of the theory of human capital, or the notion that humans must now ‘invest’ in their own ‘capital’ (themselves) through mechanisms such as education in order to obtain the greatest payout (salary) as possible (Peters, 2016).

Several scholars such as Harvey (2005) and Peck (2010) have since highlighted several assumptions of neoliberalism including the importance of promoting privatization of property and assets, reducing government spending and prioritizing economic efficiency. These have led to the implementation of two types of neoliberal social policy as defined by Peck and Tickell (2002): *roll-back* and *roll-out* neoliberalism. Roll-back policies involve government reducing their funding and involvement in various social welfare initiatives. Decentralization, or the offloading of responsibility to lower levels of government, is one way that ‘roll-back’ neoliberalism occurs. Roll-out neoliberalism involves having programs and policies implemented in response to the consequences of roll-back policies. For instance, the voluntary and non-profit sectors have expanded to respond to the gaps in service provision left by government withdrawal. This has been called the “shadow state” (Lake & Newman, 2002; Evans, 2011).

A Post-Structural Critique of Neoliberalism: Governmentality

One approach to framing neoliberalism is through the post-structural lens of governmentality. Rather than focusing on grand narratives of neoliberalism, England and Ward (2016) argue that post-structural accounts draw attention to the situated and contextual ways that

neoliberalism is articulated and experienced. Post-structural approaches discuss neoliberalism as being enforced through various *processes* or the manner in which people engage as active agents in particular practices rather than as a powerful structure that exists ‘out there’ (England & Ward, 2016). Power is expressed through multiple technologies and scales, including relationally between different actors, which then has material and productive consequences. In this sense, neoliberalism is not a monolithic force, but a spatially contingent one rooted in “situated experienced, meanings, representations and explorations of neoliberalism” (England & Ward, p. 87). Within the post-structuralist framework is the concept of governmentality, largely associated with the French scholar Michel Foucault (1991) and continued by Brown (2005), Huxley (2008), and Larner (2000), among others.

Governmentality provides a useful framework for understanding the process of ‘how’ the government governs, or to bridge the gap between ideology and practice (Lewis, 2016). Foucault describes governmentality as the form of power that is concerned with the way one “conducts the conduct of men” (Foucault, 2004, p.186). It is not only the form government takes; it is an entire system of thinking which makes capable certain possibilities at the expense of others (Hardin, 2014). Huxley (2008) defines governmentality as:

A composite of government practices, programmes and projects that aspire to bring about certain aims for the government of individuality and mentality, the discursive ‘truths’ that serve as rationales for the aims of government of others and self (pp. 142-3).

Huxley’s quote accentuates two crucial aspects of governmentality. First, the power of governmentality is realized in multiple ways and through various scales in society, including in everyday discourse and language exchanged between actors. It is through the discursive realm that persons are directed to what is ‘common sense’ in society (the “discursive truths”). Second,

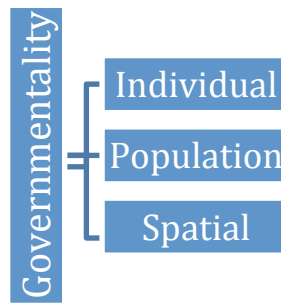
the central aim of governmentality is to achieve particular aims for the government, such as the creation of subjectivities and spaces.

Neoliberalism is one form of governmentality in which the market is seen as a place of truth and is concerned with creating the elements in which the market can thrive (Cadman, 2010). It is concerned with “extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action” (Brown, 2005, p. 40). Hence, key to neoliberal governmentality is that a specific set of values and ethics is promoted that is congruent with the facilitation of neoliberalism (Springer, Birch, & MacLeavy, 2016). This includes the creation of ‘proper’ neoliberal subjects, and spatial landscapes that are most conducive to facilitating the market. The proper neoliberal subject is one who acts autonomously and does not require assistance from the state, adequately participates in the labour market and consumes items in the private market, including housing. In fact, Brown (2005) has argued that within neoliberal governmentality, full citizenship is granted only to those that are autonomous from the state. Individuals are expected to be ‘self-sufficient’, and problems previously considered to be the responsibility of the state, such as poverty and employment, are seen as individual problems that require private solutions rather than government intervention (England & Ward, 2016). This notion has justified the retrenchment and complete withdrawal of government in numerous social provisions, including social assistance, public housing, and funding of multiple social services.

While the role of government has changed under neoliberalism, this does not mean, however, that there is less governance (Larner, 2000). Ensuring that individuals act as neoliberal subjects and that society is governed according to market principles requires active governmentality techniques that occur at the level of the individual, the population, and spatially (see Figure 2.1 below). Foucault describes the governmentality that occurs at the level of the

individual body as *disciplinary*, or work that is done to ‘normalize’ an individual, whereas at the level of the population it is *regulatory* (Foucault, 2003). As these mechanisms occur at different levels, they are not mutually exclusive and can co-exist. Each level will be discussed below.

Figure 2.1- *Theoretical Framework – Neoliberal Governmentality*



Neoliberal Governmentality at the Level of the Individual: Discipline

Governmentality is concerned with governing conduct - this includes the conduct of others and of oneself to be proper neoliberal citizens (Cadman, 2010). Here, power affects the individual through disciplinary techniques such as surveillance and training. Neoliberal discipline occurs through institutions (such as schools, community agencies, etc.) that supervise individuals according to their ability to conform to market norms, and through individuals themselves and their ability to evaluate themselves in relation to these norms.

The shadow state, while often the provider of basic needs and a caring atmosphere, has been criticized for carrying out the function of disciplinary governmentality (Willse, 2008). Programs geared toward the homeless largely espouse case management as a ‘best practice’ (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2011) and are implemented in emergency services and Housing First programs alike. In fact programs are evaluated in terms of their ability to return individuals experiencing homelessness to self-sufficiency (i.e. ‘normality’) by obtaining independent housing and paid employment, or at the very least, having them invest in their human capital by

participating in education or in employment training (Horsell, 2006). The caseworker is tasked with the duty of teaching skills and monitoring individuals' progress in achieving self-sufficiency (Hennigan, 2013). This work remains rooted in notions of individual deficiencies and is based on the assumption that the homeless (or those abnormal people), require assistance in becoming 'rehabilitated' (Hennigen, 2013). In the absence of prevention strategies, relying on case management reinforces the notion that homelessness results from individual deficiencies, thereby ignoring the broader structural causes, such as the neoliberal political economy (Hennigan, 2013).

The social services provided by the shadow state provide essential services to those who otherwise would have nothing, and in this sense have been argued to facilitate greater inclusion in society (Evans, 2011). Unfortunately, in most instances, this access is conditional upon meeting specific eligibility criteria for programs. This creates, according to Lake and Newman (2002) 'differential citizenship'. Evans (2011) writes:

Voluntary organizations often impose definitions of eligibility and incentivize certain care practices. These, in effect, enforce political boundaries around who is worthy of support, who is to count as a citizen, and which lives matter (p.31).

Indeed, in light of Housing First's focus on the chronically homeless, those that are able to access Housing First programs are a very small percentage of those who experience homelessness. This says nothing about the majority of people who experience homelessness or millions of households who are in such dire poverty that they could become homeless in an instant.

Technologies of self. Key to governmentality is that individuals are able to discipline themselves, what Foucault referred to as "technologies of self" (Hutton, 1988). This is done through knowledge of what it means to be a 'normal' and ethical citizen. Individuals whom desire this normality learn to monitor, judge and condemn their thoughts and actions according

to these ‘truths’ (Vaz & Bruno, 2003; Pylypa, 1998). By not governing themselves according to prevailing norms, individuals experience negative or guilty feelings. This guilt results from what ‘abnormal’ behaviours mean in terms of individual identity, or who one is as a person (Vaz & Bruno, 2003). Foucault gives the example of the ‘pervert’, the ‘criminal’ or the ‘madman’ as identities people seek to avoid (Hutton, 1988). The ‘homeless’ (or a bum, a beggar) is arguably another identity that most would wish to evade. People can avoid incurring this identity internally by acting in ways that they assume the homeless do not – say for example by avoiding certain spaces, physical appearances, and maintaining employment. The individual’s ability to control oneself, and govern oneself is essential in political and economic rule (Lemke, 2001).

Internalized norms and self-surveillance are important for understanding how power becomes accepted and as a legitimate force in society. For instance, in spaces of care, service providers gain legitimacy by offering to care for the pieces of our lives that threaten our identity. Vaz and Bruno (2003) explain, “After all, they [service providers] only intend to prevent us from straying from the ‘correct’ path” (p. 273). It also demonstrates how individuals, including the oppressed, are implicated in the perpetuation of power, as it exists in everyday “micro-levels” such as discourse and behaviour (Pylypa, 1998). Foucault (2003) argues:

If power were never anything but repressive...do you really think one would be brought to obey it? It also traverses and produces discourse. Its needs to be considered a productive network that runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance (p. 307).

Neoliberal Governmentality at the Level of the Population: Biopolitics

Foucault (2003) contends that at the end of the eighteenth century the state began to acquire a new form of power over the biological processes of living beings, what he called biopower. While the state could no longer inflict death on citizens directly, it obtained the power to control particular facets of life that could allow some to live and others to die through policies

and procedures that affect elements such as birth rates, mortality and longevity. These life or death decisions were termed biopolitics. Biopolitics is concerned with controlling elements at the level of the population, and uses technology to predict the probability of particular events including demographics, forecasts and statistics. In this sense, biopower is largely tied to experts or those who have access to this statistical information (Oksalsa, 2013). Data that is gathered has the result of becoming the ‘truth’, and the experts with access to this data become gatekeepers of this knowledge (Legg, 2005). Individuals are only important in terms of their relation to the data (Willse, 2008). Similar to discipline, biopower is not just observed at the level of the government, but is enforced through a variety of relationships of power including at hospitals, schools, and community agencies (Lisen & Walsh, 2012). The use of data, from a biopolitical perspective, does not merely reflect ‘what is’, but is a *productive* force in that it is used to define a population (for instance, the data indicate the homeless are mostly male, etc.) and it determines how particular resources should be distributed.

Fundamental to Foucault’s description of biopolitics is what he termed “racism”, or the manner in which groups are separated from one another and decisions are made as to “what must live and what must die” (Foucault, 2003, p.254). The death of what is deemed to be the inferior race is viewed as something that will make the population healthier. Racism in this sense can refer to literal racism as Foucault discusses colonialism as the ‘first’ racism, but also what he terms “the evolutionist kind” (p. 256), or the segments of the population that are deemed a threat to the health of the population through their ‘impurity’ or ‘abnormality’, such as the mentally ill, or the homeless. The homeless, according to Sibley (1995) have long been subjected to exclusionary discourses based on the themes of dirt, disease, and nature. Homeless identities are constructed based on distinctions between the dirty and the clean, the diseased and the healthy,

the savage and the civilized – with the white, middle-class, heterosexual male often being the reference point of normality (Sibley, 1995).

The Spatial Dimensions of Neoliberal Governmentality

Neoliberal governmentality has profound spatial implications for urban centres. Not only is this governmentality experienced within space, it actively *produces* particular spatial arrangements in society (Larner, 2003). City spaces have largely been transformed for the purposes of economic development; urban policy is shaped by the need for cities to remain competitive, and to attract investment, businesses, consumers and tourists (Mayer, 2016). Although neoliberal urbanism varies by city, Mayer (2016) has identified four common elements. First, economic growth and attracting investment is prioritized above all else. Second, in light of tight budgets and pressure for austerity measures, municipal officers are turning increasingly to the private market to fund their projects, including the development of basic infrastructure. Third, state assets are becoming increasingly privatized, and fourth, cities have responded to increasing economic and social polarization in a two-pronged approach. The first prong is by ‘redeveloping’ undesirable areas (i.e. gentrification). The second is the development of increased surveillance and policing techniques to enforce the intended uses of city spaces.

In the process of neoliberal urbanization, the use of city spaces have become increasingly governed in undemocratic ways to meet the interests of developers, private property owners, financiers (e.g. Bay Street) and corporate business owners (Harvey, 2012). According to Sibley (1995), city spaces are increasingly divided into closed and open spaces. The use of closed spaces are constructed by dominant groups in society (e.g. the neoliberal elite), and have clear boundaries which are strictly enforced through policing. Examples include shopping malls, churches and schools. Open spaces are akin to ‘public’ spaces, and in theory, are to be available

to all. Unfortunately, in the neoliberal era, more spaces are becoming closed, and who is considered to be legitimately part of the public is decreasing. In order to preserve the neoliberal intent of urban spaces, those who are seen as undesirable, such as the visibly homeless, are increasingly removed from 'public' spaces. The homeless, who are seen as a threat to tourism, business and serve as a constant reminder of the abject failures of neoliberalism, are seen as undesirable users of urban spaces and are managed accordingly.

The homeless as a population are managed spatially through a combination of 'geographies of exclusion' and 'geographies of inclusion' (also known as 'spaces of care') (Johnsen, Cloke & May, 2005; Evans, 2011). A variety of regulations have been created to banish the homeless from many areas of the city, including what are considered 'public' spaces (geographies of exclusion) and contain within them specific institutions such as shelters, services, and hospitals (spaces of care). These population-specific regulations work in tandem with disciplinary practices that occur when individuals experiencing homelessness enter either type of space. Each concept is elaborated on below.

Those with homeless identities are deemed to be inappropriate users of many spaces and are actively removed (or excluded) from these areas. This is particularly true for those used for business, consumerism, and tourism. The homeless are relegated to low-income, deprived urban locations either by force or by having services congregated there. The spaces themselves become stigmatized because individuals experiencing homelessness are aggregated in these areas, resulting in what Sibley (1995) has called "place-based phobias" (p.59). The boundaries between these spaces are reinforced by several means, some outright coercive. Wright (1997) refers to this as repression, or the "forcible removal, punishment, or harassment for occupying space or communicating in ways not sanctioned by authority" (p.183). For instance, park benches and

street vents are increasingly manipulated so that no one may sleep on them (O'Grady, Gaetz, & Buccieri, 2010). Similarly, individuals who are visibly homeless are frequently 'moved along' from places such as subways and malls, as they are not deemed to be appropriate users of these spaces. Perhaps the most coercive strategy used is the active criminalization of homelessness, or legislation that has been passed in several Canadian jurisdictions which imposes legal sanctions on many of the survival tactics utilized by the homeless including squeegee cleaning and panhandling. Similarly, individuals experiencing homelessness may be subjected to high incidents of police harassment, or receive tickets for behaviours they are forced to conduct in public as they do not have access to private space (such as urinating in public or drinking alcohol) (O'Grady et al., 2010). Of course, not all individuals who experience homelessness are subjected to the punitive spatial practices in the same manner. Clearly, the absolutely, visibly homeless are the main targets, and race, gender and age shape each individual's experience with the punitive streets (De Verteuil, May, & von Mahs, 2009). For the purposes of this research, youth may be at particular risk as this group in general is perceived as an undesirable user of public space (Malone, 2002), regardless of whether they are visibly homeless or not.

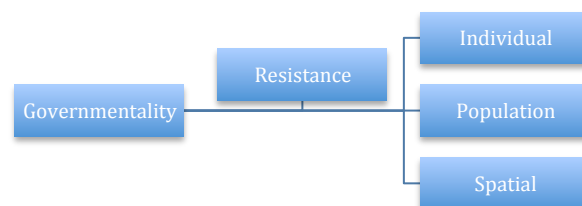
In response to the regulation of the spaces that the homeless may occupy, a variety of social services, such as emergency shelters, drop-ins and soup kitchens have emerged to meet their basic needs. Together, these services have been called 'spaces of care'. These spaces are vital to the survival of the street homeless, and can act as sites of compassion and inclusion. These spaces have also been argued as a way to contain the homeless, as many are forcibly removed from other spaces and are dependent on them for survival. Moreover, as described above, they also may serve to discipline homeless individuals by working to restore them to some form of 'normality' through case management practices. To date, very little has been

written about the spatial implications of Housing First programs. This will be discussed at length in chapter seven.

Neoliberal Complexities

One of the benefits of thinking about neoliberalism as a form of governmentality is that it is not viewed as an omnipresent and impenetrable ideology, which is a common criticism of the political economy approach (England & Ward, 2016). Political economy perspectives have also been criticized for minimizing human agency under the auspice of structuralism (Glass, 2016). Instead, since governmentality occurs at multiple levels, it is possible to engage active agents and locate sites of struggle and places for resistance (Lewis, 2016). Central to Foucault's theory of governmentality is resistance, as he famously said, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1998, p. 95)(see Figure 2.2 for a visual of how resistance fits into the theoretical framework). One form of resistance he describes is the counter-conduct, the form of "struggle or revolt against the processes implemented for conducting others" (Foucault, 2007, p. 202). If governmentality is concerned with how to 'conduct the conduct of others', counter-conducts provide alternative knowledge and subjectivities to organize conduct. Counter-conducts describe how we can be "led differently, by other men, and towards other objectives than those proposed by official and visible governmentality of society" (Foucault, 2007, p. 198). Counter-conducts can produce new forms of knowledge, practices and subjectivities.

Figure 2.2 – *Theoretical Framework with Resistance*



Yet power and resistance are not to be understood as binary oppositions; instead Foucault describes these as existing in a constant tension, mutually constructing one another (Death, 2016). Cadman (2010) argues that Foucault did not discuss counter-conducts as mere reactions to dominant governmentality; they are necessary to the very creation of these governmentalities. For instance, neoliberalism would not have gained prominence without other counter-conducts, such as Keynesianism, already in place. These counter-conducts exist in tandem with hegemonic governmentalities, and exist in a continuous state of struggle. While there is a tendency to view resistance as revolutionary, Foucault argues that resistance rarely exists in pure form (Death, 2010). Indeed, counter-conducts can emerge within the structures of power and simultaneously challenge *and* reinforce these relations of power (Death 2010, Death, 2016). Death (2016) writes:

[The] counter-conduct approach looks *within* government to see how forms of resistance rely upon, and are even implicated within, the strategies, techniques and power relationships they oppose (p. 210).

For instance, the Occupy Movement has been categorized as existing within a contradictory space where protesters use the very system they challenge, for example by being consumers. Similarly many of the protesters are privileged middle-class students who benefit from the system (Death, 2016). Finally, viewing neoliberalism through the lens of governmentality also emphasizes how the experience of neoliberalism is not monolithic, and can take multiple forms, depending on the local context as its implementation interacts with past policy frameworks, political struggles, and regulatory practices that vary by nation, region, and local context (Miller, 2007).

Performativity

Governmentality scholars have been criticized for debating exclusively within the discursive realm, failing to provide ‘grounded’ examples of how governmentality infiltrates policy and practice (Evans, 2012; McKee, 2009). This research aims to contribute to this

grounded governmentality research by examining a specific Housing First program for young people, the Infinity Project, and its funding body, the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), the leader of Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Neoliberalism cannot exist without active agents that enact it in some way (Glass, 2016). Glass (2016) uses the concept of performativity to describe how neoliberalism is an embodied practice:

There are multiple people who produce and perform neoliberalism, including those who define and carry out political and economic policies considered neoliberal, recipients of policies who must determine how to respond, and those who assess the influence of neoliberalism, power and subject formation (p. 420).

There are hence actors who 'perform' neoliberalism by utilizing and promoting the discourse and practices in a continual manner. This creates the potential for people, such as those at Infinity or the CHF, to unintentionally reproduce neoliberalism as part of the practices performed regularly. Glass emphasizes the use of language in performing neoliberalism as this has material impacts on the world, either sustaining or challenging it, particularly if the people speaking "have the proper authority" (2016, p. 421). For instance, speaking about individual responsibility has the material effect of the government retracting from their responsibilities, and arguably increasing the number of people who experience homelessness. In this sense, concepts are not neutral, but are performed through a particular ideology or governmentality.

Glass describes the concept of agency as being crucial to performativity. While it is true that continually reproducing discourse and practices has the effect of reinforcing particular aspects of reality, each time an idea is replicated, it is possible for slight changes or transformations to occur. It is also possible for those receiving the information to resist or challenge it. Hence despite the prevalence of neoliberalism, the expression and experience of it is not monolithic or complete, and there is always space for resistance and alternatives (Glass, 2016). Glass cautions, however, that resistance, particularly left within the discursive realm, does

not necessarily lead to transformation, particularly if they are separated from organized challenges to structural inequities. Glass's notion of performativity helps explain how the CHF and Housing First programs such as Infinity can simultaneously perform and challenge neoliberalism, and how the response to homelessness has changed from one focused on emergency services to solutions, even under the broad structure of neoliberalism. The latter point regarding how resistance can be separated from civic engagement is also useful to explain how despite the multiple sites of resistance found in Housing First and 10-Year Plans, without an organized attempt to address the main drivers of homelessness at a structural level, the overall impact on homelessness will likely be limited.

Neoliberalism in Canada

After decades of relative prosperity under Keynesian monetary and social policy (including the development of a robust welfare state), Canada's economy slowed in the 1970s, leading to a period of 'stagnation', or rising inflation and falling wages (Strikwerda, 2014). By the 1980s, Canada's economy was in full-scale recession, and deficit and debt levels began to rise, leaving it vulnerable to neoliberal critics who claimed that the welfare state in its current form was unsustainable, and public expenditures needed to be reduced substantially. Neoliberalism officially arrived in Canada under Brian Mulroney's conservative government in 1984, when corporate and personal taxes, social spending and transfers to the provinces were reduced.

Neoliberal transformation intensified under the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien who in 1993 won on a platform to "reinvent" government by mimicking the private sector through a series of initiatives designed to increase deregulation, privatization and fiscal responsibility and accountability (English & Young, 2006). One of the most significant changes occurred in an

insidious, less detectable way, through changes to the structure of transfer agreements between the federal and provincial governments. In 1996, the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) and Established Programs Funding amalgamated into the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The CAP was the vehicle through which the federal government transferred funds to the provinces and territories for social services and social assistance based on 50/50 cost sharing agreements. Several rights enshrined into law under the CAP were not retained under the CHST, including the right for all those in need to receive assistance regardless of one's province of origin, and the right to appeal decisions made by welfare (Hulchanski, 2002). The Established Programs Funding was designated for health care and post-secondary education. The CHST combined these two federal programs, at a reduced rate, into one lump sum or block of funding for the provinces to spend at their discretion. The result was "a glaring patchwork [of programs] and profound differences in what was considered worthy of government investment" (Harrison & Weber, 2015, p. 14). Social services, particularly social assistance, in competition for giants such as health care and post-secondary education, easily became less of a priority for provincial governments, with many (including Alberta) slashing rates in a draconian manner. Hulchanski (2002) argues that changes to the CAP had a devastating impact on the poor, and the result was an increase in the number of households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

Affordable housing. Particularly pertinent to the current homelessness crisis is the impact that neoliberalism had on the role of senior levels of government in developing and subsidizing affordable housing. Prior to the neoliberal era, the federal government was actively involved in the provision of social housing, including direct investment in its development, subsidization of rent, and through tax incentives for developers (Gaetz, Gulliver, & Richter, 2014). Beginning in the 1980s and accelerating in the 1990s, the federal government began to

withdraw its funding for affordable housing. By 1993, the federal government terminated all new funding. The government continued to provide operating agreements to subsidize existing units, but did so without adjusting for inflation and population growth, which amounted to a reduction of about a third in spending (Gaetz, Gulliver & Richter, 2014). Since then, the production of new affordable housing has declined dramatically. Shapcott (2008) writes that funding for new social housing units fell from 20,450 in 1982 to 4,393 in 2006, with an all-time low of 1,000 in 1995. Per capita spending on affordable housing fell from \$115 per Canadian in 1989 to a little over \$60 in 2013 (Gaetz, Gulliver & Richter, 2014).

Yet as Gaetz, Gulliver and Richter (2014) argue, the federal government did not cease all involvement in housing; instead, their priorities changed to favour home ownership through tax expenditures. In 2014, the federal government contributed just one-fourth of the amount to renters as homeowners. The main vehicles for this was the tax system and legislation permitting condominiums to be built. For instance, changes were made to Canada's Income Tax Act to make home ownership more profitable than renting, which dramatically reduced developers' return on investment for building rental housing (Adamo et al., 2016). In addition, legislation was passed which permitted condominium ownership, which allowed developers to get an immediate return on their investment as units were sold in entirety rather than rented at a monthly fee. These actions, in conjunction with higher property taxes and construction costs severely reduced the amount of rental properties developed in Canada (Adamo et al., 2016). Many more Canadians became homeowners as a result of these changes. In fact, Hulchanski (2002) argues that by the early 2000s, nearly two-thirds of Canadians were homeowners. The problem, of course, is that homeownership is out of reach financially for most low- and modest-income Canadians, and the private market has not been able to produce enough affordable rental

housing to accommodate them. The only way to ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing for all Canadians is to have a proportion subsidized by the government (or rent geared-to-income), a need that Canadian officials are not meeting. By the early 2000s, Canada's housing sector became one of the most market-based systems in the western world, with only 5% of the population living in public housing (Hulchanski, 2006). This is one of the fundamental reasons that hundreds of thousands of Canadians experience homelessness each year (Gaetz, DeJ, Richter & Redman, 2016), a phenomenon that was rare prior to the 1980s (Hulchanski, 2002).

Alberta and neoliberalism. Alberta was one of the first provinces to be swept by neoliberalism. In response to growing debt in Alberta in the 1980s the provincial government under Premier Donald Getty, reduced government spending by 15% in real terms by the early 1990s (Taft, 1997). Yet the worst cuts would be felt under Premier Ralph Klein, who was elected in 1993 and started the “Klein Revolution” characterized by massive public spending cuts, lowered corporate tax rates, the selling of government assets, and privatization of public services (Harrison & Weber, 2015). By 1996, Alberta had cut over \$2 billion in spending, including in education, health care, and social services. Social assistance rates were slashed, and between 1995 and 1996 public expenditures on housing decreased by half ¹(Taft, 2012). Strikwerda (2014) writes:

Almost at a stroke, Klein's conservative government undid decades of incremental policy changes in the delivery of social services to Albertans. In the end, Albertans were left with a mere ghost of a welfare state and a government with a radically different ideological bent than what they had known through the four decades immediately following World War II (p. 5-6).

¹ It should be noted that even in the height of Alberta's welfare state, particular populations such as Indigenous peoples, married women and migrant workers, were not eligible for many provincially run 'entitlement' programs. In the case of Indigenous people it was assumed that since their service provision fell under the jurisdiction of the federal government, there was no need for additional provincial support.

By 2005, through the draconian slashing of public funding and an increase in oil prices, the Alberta government was operating with a surplus, and much of the spending was restored and increased for education and health care. The same cannot be said for social services, which continue to be funded on a per capita rate similar to 1994, despite the Alberta economy growing by over 70% since that time (Taft, 2012). When measured as a percentage of GDP, or the total value of the Albertan economy, Alberta ranks among the worst in Canada in social spending. While between 1989 and 1993 the Alberta government spent an average of 23% of GDP on public services and supports, this number was only 14% between 2005 and 2009 (Taft, 2012).

It has been argued that while the Alberta government cut public expenditures under the guise of the need to reduce debt levels, a more fundamental problem lay in the provincial revenue stream, as Alberta is the lowest taxed province in the country (Harrison & Weber, 2015), including having no provincial sales tax. The government is also reliant on revenue from oil and gas profits, which is highly variable (Taft, 2012). When gas and oil prices are high, the government's revenue is abundant; when prices drop, however, their revenue streams decrease dramatically. Moreover, similar to the discussion above on affordable housing, the government did not reduce spending all together; rather its priorities changed. In fact, the Alberta government increased its subsidies for the corporate sector (particularly the oil and petroleum industries) in conjunction with reducing corporate taxes. Taft (1997) writes that between 1986 and 1993, the "corporate sector was a net drain on the provincial taxpayer of \$5.3 billion – the very period that Alberta's debt increased so rapidly" (p. 48). Moreover, corporate profits from the oil and petroleum industries have increased substantially since the 1980s, rising 250% from the levels of 1989, and as of 2009 were 309% higher than the Canadian average (Taft, 2012).

In Summary – Neoliberalism

In this chapter I established the theoretical framework of this thesis, neoliberal governmentality. I defined the term and expanded on the post-structural framing, including Foucault's notion of governmentality. I discussed how governmentality occurs at the levels of the individual, population, and spatially, and how a particular type of resistance, the counter-conduct, co-exists with dominant forms of governmentality. I used the concept of performativity to explain how actors in society enact neoliberalism in their everyday practices, and emphasized how this also creates space for transformation. I concluded the chapter by outlining the ways that neoliberalism infiltrated Canadian social policy. One impact of this neoliberal transformation was a notable increase in homelessness in the 1990s, leading the Big City Mayor's Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to declare homelessness a "national disaster" in 1998 (Adamo, Klodawsky, Aubry, & Hwang, 2016). In the next chapter I examine homelessness in Canada, including among young people, and outline the strategies that governments and communities have used to address the crisis.

Chapter Three

Youth Homelessness in Canada and Models of Accommodation

In the 1990s Canada witnessed a dramatic rise in the number of people experiencing homelessness across the country. In addition to the staggering increased visibility of homelessness, it was apparent that it was not just the stereotypical single man with addictions on the street; instead other subpopulations emerged, including women, families and unaccompanied young people. In this chapter I define homelessness, including for youth, and discuss the causes and consequences of homelessness for this unique population. I proceed to discuss the strategies the federal Canadian government and local communities have employed to address the issue, and outline how this response has changed over the years towards one focused on ‘ending’ homelessness, largely with Housing First programs. I proceed to discuss the three traditional models of accommodation for youth experiencing homelessness: emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Housing First, with a focus on the latter as it is a focal topic of this dissertation.

Youth Homelessness in Canada

The Canadian Homelessness Research Network (CHRN)(2012) defines homelessness as:

The situation of an individual or a family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it (p.1).

Individuals can be homeless in an absolute sense, such as sleeping on the streets, or they can reside in temporary housing situations such as emergency shelters or staying with friends or family members (relatively or the ‘hidden’ homeless). American and Canadian scholars have created a typology of the homeless beginning with Kuhn and Culhane (1998) and continuing with Aubry et al. (2013) where the experience of homelessness falls into one of three categories: transitional, episodic, or chronic. The first group represents the majority of citizens who experience homelessness. Their episodes of homelessness tend to be relatively brief, they

typically require little assistance to exit homelessness, and rarely are homeless again (Gaetz, 2014a; Gaetz, Donaldson, Richter & Gulliver, 2013). It is estimated that this represents 88-94% of those that experience homelessness in Canada (Aubry et al., 2013). Episodically homeless individuals experience homelessness periodically over several years, or have ongoing experiences in and out of homelessness. They are estimated to comprise 3-11% of those that experience homelessness. Finally, chronically homeless individuals experience homelessness for prolonged periods of time, and can live on the streets and/or in shelters. They generally have the highest level of need, including severe mental health concerns and addictions (Gaetz et al., 2013). The chronically homeless make up approximately 2-4% of the homeless population (Aubry et al., 2013).

Understanding Youth Homelessness

Multiple sub-populations experience homelessness in Canada, including unaccompanied young people. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2016) defines youth homelessness as:

The situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence (p.1).

Youth are believed to represent just fewer than 20% of the homeless population, which works out to approximately 35,000 young people per year and 6000-7000 on a given night (Gaetz, Donaldson et al., 2013; Gaetz, Dej, et al., 2016; Segart, 2012). One national study with 1,103 respondents found that youth were more likely to experience chronic homelessness than what is observed in the general homeless population in Canada (Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd, & Schwan, 2016). The authors report that 31.4% of youth were continually homeless for a year or more (60% of these youth for more than three years), and 21.8% were episodically homeless, experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness over the past three years. This suggests that

youth may face additional barriers escaping homelessness, and as a country, we are keeping youth mired in homelessness for far too long.

The experience of homelessness for youth is distinct from that of adults as youth are typically leaving the care of adults such as parents or foster care, before they have had the chance to acquire the resources, knowledge and skills to live independently (Gaetz, O'Grady, Buccieri, Karabanow & Marsolais, 2013; Gaetz, 2014a). They are also in the throes of multiple developmental changes, including physical, cognitive, and emotional. Youth typically experience multiple events that cause them to leave their homes, and often fluctuate between securing accommodations and experiencing housing stability. In the national study cited above, 75.9% reported experiencing homelessness numerous times, with 25% stating they had three to five experiences, and 20.4% had five or more (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016). This has led some researchers to argue that homelessness is a 'process' rather than a single 'event' (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016; Gaetz, 2014a). For instance, Gaetz (2014a, p.14) writes:

[Homelessness] is rarely experienced as a single event. It may be the end result of a process that involves multiple ruptures within family and community, and often numerous episodes of leaving, even if for a short while...they return only to experience the same stresses and pressures that will cause them to leave again.

What causes youth homelessness? The causes of youth homelessness can broadly be divided into individual, systemic, and structural causes (Gaetz, 2014a). As will be elaborated on further in this chapter, these causes should not be thought of as existing independently from one another, but as existing in complex relationships with one another. At the individual level, family (or caregiver) conflict is often at the root of most experiences of youth homelessness (Gaetz, O'Grady, Kidd, & Schwan, 2016; Baker Collins, 2013; Karabanow, 2006). Between 60-70% have experienced violence or abuse in their homes, including physical, sexual, emotional, or witnessing domestic violence (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016; Gaetz & O'Grady, 2002;

Karabanow, 2006; Thrane, Hoyt, Whitbeck, & Yoder, 2006; Tyler & Bersani, 2008; van den Bree et al., 2009). Other family problems may include parental mental health and substance use concerns (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016; Andres-Lemay et al., 2005; McMorris et al., 2002) or similar concerns with the youth that the family are ill equipped to cope with (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2013; Gaetz, 2014a). These household situations can in turn produce secondary effects such as criminal involvement and school disengagement, creating further conflict in the family home (Gaetz, 2014a).

Youth homelessness can also be the result of the failure of various social institutions or systems (systemic causes). This is particularly the case with child welfare, criminal justice, and mental health systems. In regards to child welfare, several pieces of Canadian research have found that approximately 40-50% of youth who are homeless have a history of living in foster care or group homes (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016; Gaetz & O'Grady, 2002; Gaetz, O'Grady, & Buccieri, 2010; Karabanow, 2006; Lemon Osterling & Hines, 2006; Serge, Eberle, Goldberg, Sullivan, & Dudding, 2002). Inadequate discharge and planning in prisons and mental health institutions can also lead to homelessness. In many cases youth are discharged from prisons or hospitals directly into homelessness (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2006). This shifts the responsibility for the youth onto the homelessness system where most workers are not qualified or equipped to provide supports in these areas. Youth coming from prison and mental health institutions face multiple barriers to moving forward in their lives, particularly in regards to gaining employment. Without the necessary support, the result is often worsening mental health symptoms and criminal recidivism, and perpetual shifting between homelessness and either jail or mental health institutions (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2006; Kellen et al., 2010).

Finally, youth homelessness can be caused or exacerbated by structural factors such as poverty, a lack of affordable housing, and limited meaningful employment opportunities. Structural changes to the economy, such as rising credentialism, rising housing costs and an increase in precarious and/or temporary employment, have made it increasingly difficult for young people to transition to independence. Discrimination can also be a direct cause of homelessness or can create additional challenges for youth. For instance, research has shown that a disproportionate number of youth who are homeless identify as LGBTQ2S (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016; Abramovich, 2012; Abramovich, 2013; Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler, & Cauce, 2002). Colonialism and racism also affect youth homelessness as Indigenous and Persons of Colour disproportionately experience poverty and housing insecurity (Gaetz et al., 2016; Baskin, 2012; Belanger, Weasel Head, & Awosoga, 2012). Discrimination can cause homelessness directly, such as when a LGBTQ2S youth comes out to an unsupportive family, or can affect homelessness indirectly by limiting the opportunities available to young people. This may occur, for example, if employers and landlords are less likely to hire or rent to youth based on their age, gender, race and/or immigration status, sexuality, or religious identity (Gaetz, 2014a; Preston et al., 2011), or if it leads to school disengagement.

It is clear that there are multiple factors that can lead to homelessness. Yet given the fact that homelessness is arguably a process rather than an event, there is a need for more conceptual clarity about how the aforementioned risk factors can interact to cause this process. Fitzpatrick (2005) has proposed a “critical realist perspective” for explaining the causes of homelessness. In this framework, the world is divided into various structures (or strata to use Fitzpatrick’s language) that have relationships with one another, including economic, housing, individual attributes, and interpersonal structures. The latter structure Fitzpatrick dubs “patriarchal and

interpersonal structures” to account for variables that can be impacted by gender, but I would also include any form of structural oppression that marginalizes individuals by their social location, such as race and sexuality. Each of these strata can potentially cause or put one at risk of homelessness, and together are understood to be a “multiple set of nested systems with no hierarchy or influence assumed between them” (Fitzpatrick, 2005, p. 14). These structures exist in various relationships with each other, including ‘necessary/internal’ and ‘contingent/external’ that together increase or decrease the possibility that a person or household may become homeless (see example of poverty below for description). A change in one of the relationships can influence the others, either in a positive or negative way, which Fitzpatrick calls “non-linear dynamics”.

This framework helps to understand how something may be associated with homelessness but not necessarily a direct ‘cause’ – i.e. the ‘trigger’ that directly leads to the experience of homelessness. Fitzpatrick (2005) provides the example of poverty to explain her model. While poverty can cause homelessness simply by virtue of one not being able to afford housing, she says the relationship is likely more complicated. Instead, other factors such as spatial disadvantage and domestic violence (among many others) may also play a role. Spatial disadvantage is internally (or necessarily) related to poverty in that it would not exist without poverty, and domestic violence is externally related to poverty in that either one can exist without the other. When these factors occur together, the risk of homelessness is increased. There are therefore numerous ‘causal factors’ of homelessness, and they each exist in a network of “necessary and contingent inter-relationships” (Fitzpatrick, 2005, p.15).

This framework is very useful in understanding homelessness in today’s neoliberal era. While theoretically the framework does not privilege any form of strata, meaning individual

factors can cause homelessness without negating the importance of social structures, the interrelationships also point to how social and political changes in some realms can have consequences across the whole system. As previously argued, a marked increase in homelessness occurred after the implementation of neoliberal social and economic policy, because they fundamentally shifted the housing and economic strata in society. These in turn can place more strain on the others. In chapter eight I elaborate on the importance of social structures and how these can both cause and impact youth who are homeless in addition to impacting other strata in society that we know to cause youth homelessness such as family conflict and the breakdown of the child welfare system.

The consequences of youth homelessness. Youth homelessness is a pressing social concern in Canada for a myriad of reasons. Youth are transitioning to adulthood, and as such have unique developmental needs. Physical, cognitive and social development occurs at a time when they have often been exposed to multiple traumatic events, including the experience of homelessness itself. Homelessness can impact the long-term health and wellbeing of young people and can shape the opportunities available to them (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016). For instance, they are more likely to have compromised health and lack access to nutritious foods at a time their bodies and minds are still developing (Gaetz, O’Grady, et al., 2016; Kulik et al., 2011 & Tarasuk et al., 2013), and to experience mental health challenges and addictions (often as a consequence of their history of trauma and the trauma of homelessness itself)(Gaetz, O’Grady et al., 2016; Kidd, 2013). Being on the street increases their exposure to sexual exploitation, being lured by traffickers, and criminal victimization in general (Saewyc et al., 2013; Gaetz, O’Grady & Bucierri, 2010). They become more likely to engage in criminal activities in an effort to survive, and to be unable to remain in school or stable

employment (Gaetz, 2014a). In Gaetz, O'Grady, et al.'s (2016) national study, 50.5% of the 1,103 youth were not in education, employment or training (NEET), which demonstrates the difficulties youth who are homeless face pursuing these paths. Finally, there is evidence that youth that leave home at earlier ages (16 or younger) face increased barriers (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016) and that interventions for young people become more challenging the longer that youth are on the streets (Karabanow, 2006). Given the high levels of chronicity youth experiencing homelessness face, it is not unreasonable to worry that without adequate supports, these youth may transition to adult homelessness.

These challenges occur at a time when young people are generally in a vulnerable economic position simply by virtue of their youthful age; they have not had the opportunity to obtain the necessary education and work experience to obtain a living wage. In addition, the neoliberal era has brought several important social and economic changes including worsening labour market outcomes, rising credentialism, and an affordable housing crisis, which means that for most Canadian youth, the period of adolescence and young adulthood is becoming extended. In this context, the challenges for young people who experience homelessness are profound, and can severely impact their life trajectory. It is clear that many young people who become homeless have experienced various types of barriers, hardships and trauma. In light of this fact, services and models of accommodation should be structured in a manner that addresses their multifaceted needs and circumstances.

Canada Responds to a New Crisis

In light of the potential consequences of youth homelessness, it is worth examining the strategies that senior levels of government, municipalities and communities have used to address the problem. These include federal housing and homelessness initiatives and 10-Year Plans to

end Homelessness. Each of these initiatives generally contains a combination of three models of accommodation, including emergency shelters, transitional housing and Housing First. Each of these initiatives and housing models are discussed below. To date, there are few strategies that specifically target youth, and as such, the majority of initiatives implemented focus on homelessness in general.

With the rise in homelessness, the federal government came under increased pressure to respond, and implemented two initiatives: a national housing strategy called the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), and one to respond to homelessness, the National Homeless Initiative (NHI). The Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) was designed to address the shortage of affordable housing in Canada. The AHI was based on cost-sharing agreements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments. The first phase of the AHI was funded at \$680 million in order to create new affordable housing as well as to complete major renovations (although ‘affordable’ was not defined)(Hulchanski, 2002). The program has continued to be extended in short-term funding periods (Adamo et al., 2016). In 2011, this was replaced by a new three-year Affordable Housing Framework (IAH), funded at \$1.4 billion from federal and provincial/territorial funding combined, and was extended for another five years in 2013 at \$1.25 billion combined (Adamo et al., 2016).

While it is crucial that senior levels of government became invested in addressing the homelessness and housing crisis in Canada, the efforts were modest and insufficient to address the magnitude of the crisis. For instance, Hulchanski (2002) writes that the first phase of AHI would only create approximately 5,400 new units each year, which is approximately the capacity of Toronto’s emergency shelter system alone. He argues that this initiative could be described as “damage control” by the government and that:

It is enough money to subsidize a steady stream of press releases, but not enough to make a difference. In other words, there has been no real change in federal housing policy (p. 13).

The second initiative, the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) was designed to “help ensure community access to programs, services and support for alleviating homelessness” (HRSDC, 2008, p.i). The NHI began with \$753 million in funding over three years. This was later renewed for three more years in 2004, at \$405 million. The original phase was designed to strengthen resources to respond to emergency housing needs and to develop a process where local communities would be able to plan for a longer-term response and prevention, and to raise awareness among Canadians about homelessness (HRDSC, 2008). Interestingly, the first version of the NHI contained a youth-specific stream, which disappeared in subsequent renewals and has never returned. With the federal change in government to Stephen Harper’s Conservatives in 2006 the NHI was rebranded as the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The HPS maintained the focus on community-driven solutions to homelessness, and in later years, shifted its focus to Housing First as a strategy to addressing homelessness. In 2015, 65% of the initiatives funded in each community through the HPS must be Housing First initiatives. Gaetz, Dej, et al., (2016) argue that the amount of annual expenditures under the HPS declined dramatically since the NHI was created, falling from \$349 million per year in 2001 to \$119 in 2013 after adjusting for inflation. The Liberal government of Justin Trudeau, elected in 2015, have made some important changes, including through the development of a National Housing Strategy (NHS). In their 2017 Budget \$11.2 billion over eleven years to this end was allocated, including \$2.1 billion to expand the HPS. This investment is significant, and is the longest-term commitment the federal government has ever pledged to addressing homelessness in Canada. While promising, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and Canadian Observatory on Homelessness have estimated that to make significant headway in preventing and ending

homelessness in Canada an investment of \$43.8 billion would be required over ten years (Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016). Compared to this number, while the amounts pledged in 2017 are a vast improvement, a staggering discrepancy between what is provided by the federal government and what is needed remains.

Ten-Year Plans to End Homelessness and the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

Despite the implementation of the two federal programs, there was no notable decrease in homelessness in Canada. This led many to believe that a new approach was needed – one that sought to *end* homelessness rather than *manage* it. Influenced by the work of the American-based National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)², several cities across Canada created a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Ten-Year Plans set clear targets to ‘end’ homelessness in their communities in ten years, and have measurable indicators to track this process. They are generally municipally-based initiatives (although several provinces have followed suit) aimed at addressing homelessness through strategic efforts largely focused on Housing First, but also include the creation of affordable housing and prevention efforts focused on those in imminent risk of losing their housing. In fact, while the plans are created to meet the local needs of each community, the CAEH recommends they include four components: 1) effective research and data management; 2) prevention, defined as detecting and intervening for households at risk of homelessness and reforming systems that discharge people into homelessness (such as correctional institutions); 3) Housing First, the bedrock of 10-Year Plans which involves providing permanent housing and supports without any preconditions such as treatment or sobriety; and 4) building the infrastructure necessary for 10-Year Plans such as affordable

² The NAEH pioneered the “10-Year Plan to End Homelessness”, and was implemented in over 250 communities in the United States.

housing, income support, and support services (CAEH, 2012). Ten-Year Plans generally place priority on addressing chronic homelessness, or individuals who have been living in shelters or the street for over a year and have the highest needs, such as addictions and mental health concerns.

In response to increased visibility of homelessness in Calgary, the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH) was created in 2006 to produce a 10-Year Plan in Calgary. The committee was comprised of business leaders from around Calgary as well as service providers. The CEO of TransAlta Corporation was the chair of the Committee, and the majority of the leadership committee were CEOs from the business community (Adamo et al., 2016). Inspired by the work being done in the United States, the Committee brought in a leading expert from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Philip Mangano, and the pioneer behind one of the original Housing First Programs, Pathways to Housing in New York, Sam Tsemberis. Both made strong cases for the use of Housing First (and Mangano for the 10-Year Plan as well), citing the growing research demonstrating impressive housing retention rates at one or more years (around 85%) among what was previously considered the hardest to house, or complex cases with mental health and addictions issues (e.g. Tsemberis & Eisenberg, 2000; Tsemberis et al., 2004; Yanos et al., 2004)(Gaetz & Scott, 2013). Moreover, they were able to show that this approach was not only more effective, it was also cheaper than leaving people homeless (Gaetz & Scott, 2013). The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) was tasked with leading the implementation of the Plan. They provide funding for approximately 50 programs across Calgary, including the Infinity Project, described in greater detail in chapter four.

Models of Accommodation and Housing First

The strategies initiated across Canada generally have one or more of three models of accommodation for youth that are homeless: emergency shelters, transitional housing and Housing First. Each is discussed in turn below.

Emergency shelters

Historically, communities have addressed homelessness, including for youth, by providing emergency services in the form of crisis shelters. This is arguably still the most common response to youth homelessness in Canada, and in many communities is their ‘solution’ to homelessness (Gaetz, 2014a). While shelters were designed to provide emergency accommodations to people in crisis, and to facilitate self-sufficiency as quickly as possible, in many communities this is the only housing service offered to people who are homeless, and has served as de-facto transitional housing for individuals who have no housing to move to (City of Toronto, 2013). Shelters have been criticized for being a ‘band-aid solution’ that really is a way to manage the crisis, leaving individuals mired in homelessness, and for serving as institutions to house people that have been failed by other systems such as corrections, mental health and child welfare (Culhane, 1992). Yet not every community even has access to emergency shelters (particularly in rural areas), meaning that people who are homeless must leave their communities in search of shelter. Even fewer communities have shelters specifically for youth, leaving young people to rely on adult shelters. This is problematic as young people are in a unique developmental stage in their lives, and as argued previously, have specific needs. Being in an adult population may also increase their risk of exploitation. Interestingly, in Calgary while Housing First programs such as Infinity work with young people aged 16-24, their youth shelters have a maximum age of 18, meaning many young people are forced to use the adult system. The

Calgary Homeless Foundation (2017) reports that about 16% of adult shelter users are under 24, and the 2016 Point-in-Time count in Calgary found that of all the youth counted, 46% were in adult facilities. Particularly vulnerable youth such as LGBTQ2S youth may also require specialized or population-specific accommodations as mainstream shelters have been criticized for being discriminatory and unsafe for these youth (Abramovich, 2016).

Research has shown that most people that use shelters do so for short periods of time and infrequently. In fact, the typology mentioned above of the transitional, episodic and chronic homeless is based on research from shelter users (Kuhn & Culhane, 1998; Aubry et al., 2013). In the United States, Kuhn and Culhane (1998) found that the majority of shelter users (just over 80%) they studied in Philadelphia and New York stayed in shelters for a brief visit, only once or twice. Episodic users (around 9%) tended to use the shelters more frequently, but for relatively short periods of time compared to chronic users (around 9%) that had long shelter stays. Aubry et al. (2013) replicated this research in three Canadian cities (Toronto, Guelph and Ottawa) and found similar results, with transitional users making up the vast majority (from 87.5-93%) and episodic and chronic users making up a much smaller percent of users (from 3.4%-10.5% and 2-4% respectively). Kneebone, Bell, Jackson, and Jadidzadeh (2015) studied shelter use in Calgary over five years and found an even smaller percentage of shelter users to be chronic users. Out of 33,000 people, only 900 or 1.6% were chronic shelter users, visiting shelters on average three and half times for a combined length of stay of over 900 days. Episodic users resided in shelters an average of eight times for 113 days, while transitional users stayed on average less than twice for 15 days. The authors argue that the implications of this is that by providing housing for the 900 chronic shelters users, one-third of shelter beds would be freed. It is this logic that has served to inform the way that 10-Year Plans operate, as these Plans target the chronic and

episodically homeless, with an emphasis on the former. An additional implication is that since over 80% of shelter users stay for temporary periods of time and do so infrequently, the most likely cause of their shelter use is poverty-related. As such, policy interventions that attempt to reduce poverty and increase housing affordability could go a long way to reducing the need for emergency beds (Kneebone & Williams, 2016a).

From a Foucauldian perspective, shelters are arguably the clearest example of the homelessness sector performing neoliberal governmentality as they have been particularly guilty of attempting to ‘rehabilitate’ the homeless through severe surveillance and disciplinary techniques. This occurs through the enforcement of routines and rules, and the use of ‘rewards’ and ‘punishments’ for behaviour (Armeline, 2005). For instance, in many shelters residents can earn privileges such as a night away (an overnight) or be punished for negative behaviour (such as substance use, etc.) by being discharged from the program and losing their bed. Shelter occupants can also be barred from shelter use after a certain number of infractions, particularly substance use (Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, 2016). Residents are also subjected to regular surveillance including room and bag searches, and are often surrounded by cameras and intercoms. Youth shelters can be particularly disciplinary, with many designed to provide ‘structure’ for young people so that they may learn “responsibility and self-discipline” in the absence of parental figures (Armeline, 2005, p. 1126).

While emergency shelters are crucial to supporting youth in crisis who need their basic needs met, they have not been successful in reducing homelessness and at best should be considered a short-term support before youth are connected to longer-term accommodation. Gaetz (2014a) suggests that the way that emergency shelters are used needs to be rethought in light of the push towards Housing First. He argues this can be done by having shelters work to

re-house or move residents from shelters quickly as part of an integrated framework of prevention and providing stable housing. This would require funders to reward shelters for moving individuals out as quickly as possible instead of by providing funding based on outputs such as the number of occupants. Indeed, shelter diversion should be an important part of any strategy to reduce and end homelessness, particularly for young people. Gaetz (2014a) argues that this is important because shelters tend to mix a broad range of young people, including those that have just left home to those that are chronically homeless. This can lead to those in the earlier stages forming relationships with the latter group and becoming more entrenched in ‘street culture’. While this may be beneficial for young people who crave companionship, these relationships may not be the most productive for working with youth to move forward in their lives (Gaetz, 2014a). Remaining homeless can also increase young people’s exposure to victimization and exploitation (Gaetz, O’Grady et al., 2016). Shelter diversion can also be important in small communities that do not have shelters so youth do not have to leave their communities. This can negatively impact youth who must leave any natural supports they have including teachers, friends, extended family, etc. (Gaetz, 2014).

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing aims to “provide people with the structure and support they need to address the critical issues necessary to maintain permanent housing” (Novac et al., 2004, p.6). It is intended to be an interim step between emergency accommodation and permanent housing where tenants can stay for a time-limited period (usually one year) and theoretically acquire the resources and receive the supports necessary to achieve permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Traditionally, youth have been considered a target demographic for transitional housing due to their age and general lack of life skills. While in transitional housing, youth have access to

intensive supports and services including employment and skills training, and life skills education such as household management and budgeting (Giffords, Alonso, & Bell, 2007). Residents are generally expected to participate in employment and/or school during their stay. The assumption of this housing model is that the support received will prepare youth to live independently once the program is complete.

Transitional housing programs vary in the level of support provided (some are considered for ‘high-demand’ residents, others are ‘low-demand’), as well as in the form they take. For instance, transitional housing facilities have traditionally been located in one dedicated building, where residents have their own room (or must share with one other resident), have common living areas (such as recreational areas) and onsite staff available 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Gaetz & Scott, 2012). More recently, ‘scattered-site’ transitional facilities have been developed where units are ‘scattered’ across a city or community and there is typically a central space where staff are available, and a communal area where residents can congregate. It has been argued that this arrangement feels less like a program and hence is less stigmatizing for residents (Eberle Planning and Research, Kraus, & Woodward, 2007).

While a few reports have discussed transitional housing in terms of it being part of a range of housing options for young people (see for example Eberle et al., 2007; Millar, 2009), there is little outcome research on the effectiveness of transitional housing in Canada. One notable exception is by Turner Research and Strategy (2016) of a program in Calgary called Haven’s Way (run through the same housing stream as the Infinity Project by Boys and Girls Club of Calgary). Out of eighteen participants, all but one improved in their housing stability as well as educational or employment outcomes as a result of their participation in the program. Of eleven graduates in three years, only one left for ‘negative’ reasons, or did not have a transition

plan and experienced subsequent homelessness. Over half found rental accommodation, and the remaining participants returned to their families or other natural supports. The average income of participants increased by 32.1% between intake and program exit, from \$700 per month to \$925. Staff were able to remain in contact with the eleven youth, and over 60% graduated high school, and 63.3% were pursuing some form of post-secondary education. Over 80% were employed either full-time or part-time.

Haven's Way is an example of a Foyer, a transitional housing model regulated by the Foyer Federation. To meet the criteria of the Federation, a Foyer program must utilize a specific strength-based philosophy of care and meet three criteria: a focus on providing services for homeless youth to help them move to independence, a holistic approach that includes housing, personal development and education and/training, and a formal agreement must be drafted between the young person and the agency outlining the youth's 'commitment' to moving forward (Gaetz & Scott, 2012). International research has generally found positive outcomes for Foyers, particularly in regards to the number of youth who are employed at the end of the program and the number of youth who move into permanent housing or do not return to homelessness (Common Ground Community and Good Sheppard Services, 2009; Randolph & Wood, 2005; Smith et al., 2006). It has been noted, however, that while many youth are employed these incomes are generally very low, even after youth have left the program (Smith et al., 2006). One study found that newcomer youth were particularly likely to do well in Foyer programs, and youth with more complex histories and needs including addictions and mental health participated in the Foyer program less and achieved less consistent outcomes (Grace et al., 2011). This suggests that the Foyer model (and possibly transitional housing in general) may be better suited for higher functioning young people with less acute needs.

The transitional housing model has also been subject to controversy. Eberle Planning and Research et al. (2007) argue that this results from two factors. First, transitional housing rewards those who do well by making them move, and second, it is only effective if there is affordable housing for individuals to move into afterwards. In fact, some have argued that transitional housing exists largely because there are not enough affordable units in which to house people (Novac et al., 2004). Transitional housing has also been accused of being stigmatizing, institutional, and a waste of funds that could better be spent on building affordable units and creating more community-based services (Novac et al., 2004).

Perhaps less contentious, but equally problematic, is that sometimes due to government policy³, transitional housing typically has a time-limited stay, which in respect to youth, does not allow them the time needed to fully prepare for adulthood. Although there is no set time period for such a transition to occur, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this process takes longer than one or two years. This is particularly true for younger youth (under 18), youth who have suffered trauma, and who have not had a reliable adult figure to provide support and nurturing through their development. Moreover, in light of the increased need for educational credentials for nearly any type of meaningful employment position, youth need a safe place where they can pursue an education without the added stress of having to support themselves. Education can rarely be made a priority in current transitional models. In fact, in the review of the Chelsea Foyer in New York after five years, evaluators commented that because of the two-year time limit in their program and the pressure to prepare youth for self-sufficiency, they have had to change their

³ The term limit can be the result of government policy rather than program design as in some jurisdictions such as Ontario, where residents of transitional housing programs can claim the right of tenancy under the Landlord Tenant Act after one year.

focus from education to workforce development (Common Ground Community and Good Sheppard Services, 2009).

With a shift in focus to Housing First, transitional housing models are also criticized for their ‘housing readiness’ requirements. While Housing First programs pride themselves on having no requirements for participants to be housed, the same cannot be said for transitional housing programs, where in many cases residents must abide by program rules, including mandatory education or employment, and remaining sober (Turner Research & Strategy, 2016). Transitional housing programs have also been criticized for lacking a clear pathway to more permanent forms of housing once young people have completed the program. The government of Canada has made their preference for Housing First clear through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, as they do not fund transitional housing programs.

Housing First

The primary vehicle of ‘ending’ homelessness through 10-Year Plans is Housing First. The Mental Health Commission of Canada (2013) defines Housing First as:

An approach where housing is provided as the first step, in combination with supportive services to people who are homeless...It is based on the idea that the first and most primary need for people is housing, and that any other issue a person is living with can be addressed once a person has housing (MHCC, 2013:1).

In recent years Housing First has emerged as a response to homelessness in many countries, including the United States, across Europe, Australia, and Canada. It was originally designed to help homeless individuals living with mental illness, often with substance abuse concerns that were chronically homeless, but has recently been expanded to work with other populations. This model was popularized by the work of Sam Tsemberis, who studied the Housing First program Pathways to Housing extensively. This program serves individuals living

with mental illness and addictions issues in New York City. The evidence-based Pathways model has served to inform Housing First programs internationally (Tsemberis, 2010).

Housing First can be thought of as both a program that provides housing and supports to people in need, as well as a philosophy with fundamental principles (Gaetz, 2014b). As a program, Housing First provides permanent housing to individuals without any preconditions. This model is often viewed as an alternative to traditional responses to homelessness where it is assumed that in order to maintain housing, individuals must first make themselves ‘housing ready’ by going to treatment or addressing an addiction. This has been referred to as the ‘staircase’, ‘treatment as usual’ or ‘continuum of care’ model. While clients receive such services, they remain in emergency shelter, then perhaps transitional housing, with the ultimate goal of maintaining permanent housing.

Once an individual is housed, services requested by the client are provided. This can include, but is not limited to, treatment for mental illness, addictions services, community integration and case management. Rent supplements are often key to the success of Housing First, and in many programs clients are not expected to pay more than 30% of their income on rent (Tsemberis, 2010). Housing First is based on the premise that housing is a human right and people are better able to move forward in their lives once they are housed (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013). In Canada, the first official Housing First program was Streets to Homes, run by the City of Toronto starting in 2005. Since then, models have emerged throughout the country, and in 2013 the federal government has identified Housing First as a priority area for funding through its Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS). The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) also gave \$110 million to fund the largest study of Housing First ever done, “At-Home/Chez Soi” (Goering et al., 2012; 2014).

An essential element of Housing First is its core principles. As a philosophy, Housing First is rooted in the notion that housing is a fundamental human right (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013; Gaetz, 2014b; Tsemberis & Asmussen, 1999). Maintaining tenancy is not based on the utilization of any service or ‘good’ behaviour, such as remaining sober (MHCC, 2013; Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013). It is client-centered, or geared to the self-identified needs of the client. Choice and self-determination are at the center of this philosophy. For instance, clients choose where they live (although local housing availability may impede this), and which services they would like to receive (MHCC, 2013). It operates on the principle of harm reduction, or the idea that it is important to minimize risk or harm of substance use to both individuals and communities, without requiring sobriety from tenants (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013). The final principle is social and community integration. This means that clients are provided with the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities and become integrated into their communities.

The majority of research conducted on Housing First has been done in the United States (although the largest study was done in Canada). Here, research on the effectiveness of Housing First for adults with a mental illness who are homeless is remarkably positive, particularly in regards to housing retention. In several randomized controlled trials of Housing First versus ‘treatment first’ in the United States, housing retention rates for individuals in Housing First programs have been incredibly high, with ranges of 78-90% when measured anywhere from six months to two years (Padgett, Gulcur, & Tsemberis, 2006; Pearson, Montgomery, & Locke, 2009; Stefancic & Tsemberis, 2007; Tsemberis, Moran, Shinn, Asmussen, & Shern, 2003). In one longitudinal study, the majority of participants in Housing First remained housed after five years (88%) compared to the 47% in the treatment as usual group (Tsemberis & Eisenberg, 2000). Studies have also found that participants in Housing First programs report better health,

less hospitalizations, and a higher quality of life (Goering, et al. 2012; Gulcer et al., 2003; Padgett et al., 2006; Sadowski, Kee, VanderWeele, & Buchanan, 2009). Many participants report feeling a greater satisfaction with life, and that they are “normal” or a part of “the mainstream human experience” (Yanos, Barrow, & Tsemberis, 2004).

In addition, Housing First is argued to be a cost-effective alternative to treatment as usual namely by reducing the use of emergency services, psychiatric stays, health care costs and correctional services (Falvo, 2009, MHCC, 2012; Gulcur, Stefancic, Shinn, Tsemberis, & Fischer, 2003). For instance, in the At-Home/Chez Soi study, the largest study to be conducted on Housing First to date (to be described below), the authors argue that for every \$10 invested in Housing First services a costs savings of \$9.60 was obtained for high need participants and \$3.42 for moderate need participants (Goering et al., 2014). These savings occurred through reduced stays in emergency shelters and other institutions such as jails, hospitals and addictions treatment facilities, and emergency room visits. The most substantial reduction occurred through reduced psychiatric hospitalizations. One service use that increased under the Housing First treatment condition was food bank utilization, which makes sense as recipients require an address to receive food, and participants are able to avail of this service if they have food storage and a place to prepare their food. These findings suggest that without housing, individuals experiencing homelessness are forced to rely on (or are involuntarily placed in) expensive public institutions either to survive, or to contain them.

There is some evidence in the American literature that Housing First can reduce both the incidence and the number of days spent in jail. In one study in Seattle by Clifasefi, Malone and Collins (2013), the authors tracked the number of days participants spent in jail and the number of bookings, along with Housing First exposure over two years among a sample of the

chronically homeless with severe alcohol addictions. Criminal histories were also taken. Participants formed two non-randomized groups: the Housing First treatment group (n=97) and the control group, or those on the wait list for the program (n=37). The researchers found that while criminal histories did not predict housing retention rates, the number of jail bookings and days spent in jail was reduced by over half between baseline and the two-year follow-up. In fact, the more time participants spent in Housing First, the less time was spent in jail and the fewer times participants were booked. This was the case even after controlling for criminal histories and previous jail time. Moreover, the majority (91.3%) of past criminal convictions were for misdemeanours such as trespassing and public order offences (typically pertaining to public intoxication). The authors suggest the participants had criminal histories largely as a result of their homelessness rather than their deviant nature per se. The authors caution that the sample was a small subset of the chronically homeless population, and that the study was located in one city, with one Housing First program. The results, therefore, might not be generalizable to other populations and contexts.

The largest study of Housing First to date was conducted in Canada, called *At-Home/Chez-Soi*. This study utilized a randomized control design where individuals who were homeless (absolutely homeless or precariously housed) and had a mental health diagnosis were randomly assigned to one of two Housing First conditions or Treatment as Usual (TAU). The study occurred in five Canadian cities (Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, and Moncton). The two Housing First conditions included Intensive Case Management (ICM) for those with moderate needs, and Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), (psychiatric care from a multi-disciplinary team of mental health professionals) for those with high needs. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected for two years. A total of 2,148 individuals aged 18 and older

were enrolled in the study, and 1,158 were placed in the Housing First intervention. While the findings varied somewhat across the cities, the researchers were able to conclude that Housing First can be implemented in a variety of cities, but is best tailored to meet the needs of local contexts. In regards to housing retention, participants in both Housing First conditions reported higher retention rates than the TAU groups. At one-year, participants in the Housing First conditions spent 73% of their time housed (Goering et al., 2012). In the final six months of the study, 62% of Housing First participants were housed “all of the time”, and 22% were housed “some of the time” (Goering et al., 2014, p. 5). This is compared to 31% and 23% in the TAU groups respectively. Quality of life improved for both conditions, although significantly greater in the Housing First conditions. Parallel to that reported in the American literature, substance use and mental health symptoms were reduced in a similar way for both conditions. The study did not find a significant difference between Housing First and Treatment as Usual (TAU) conditions in regards to contact with criminal justice systems. On closer examination, however, the kinds of police contact were different between groups. In the Housing First condition, participants were arrested fewer times for public nuisance offenses and offenses related to substance use over time, while this was not the case in the TAU group.

The research to date on Housing First therefore indicates that it is an effective strategy for providing supports in obtaining and retaining housing for single adults with a psychiatric diagnosis, often in conjunction with substance abuse. The research is less clear in regards to the effectiveness of Housing First programs in reducing substance use and psychiatric symptoms, facilitating community integration, and supporting the needs of subpopulations, such as youth. Some studies show a reduction in substance use among Housing First participants (City of Toronto, 2007; Padgett, Stanhope, Henwood, & Stefancic, 2011; Collins et al., 2012), and others

do not show a demonstrable difference to control groups (Tsemberis, Gulcur, & Nakae, 2004; Tsai, Mares, & Rosenheck, 2010). Similar results have been found in terms of reduction in mental illness or psychiatric symptoms. While some studies have found that psychiatric symptoms decreased for participants, they were not able to demonstrate this was significantly higher than control groups (Padgett et al., 2006; Tsemberis et al., 2004). Other studies have reported no decrease in psychiatric symptoms (Pearson et al., 2009; Tsai et al., 2010).

There is also some question of whether Housing First has been effective in integrating participants into their communities, one of its core principles. Some scholars have argued that housing provides the solid base required to foster community and economic activity (Padgett et al., 2006; Padgett, 2007), while other research shows that social isolation is still a major concern for some participants (Falvo, 2009; Pleace, 2011). There is evidence that some participants face difficulties integrating into their communities. For instance, in an evaluation of the City of Toronto's Streets to Homes Program (2007), social interaction was reported to be the area where clients reported the least improvement. From a sample of 88 participants, 40% said their interaction got better, 34% stated it stayed the same, and 26% said it got worse. Interestingly, those housed in the private market were the most likely to state their social interaction got worse, while those in alternative or supportive housing were most likely to state that it improved. While this may suggest that individuals in alternative housing arrangements experience less social isolation, client choice may be a large factor in this finding. For instance, participants who did not feel they were given a choice as to which housing unit they would occupy were the most likely to report experiencing social isolation (Falvo, 2009). Similarly, in a study on the Pathways Program in New York, Yanos, Barrow and Tsemberis (2004) report that while being housed generally improves community integration, a "meaningful minority" (one-third of participants)

experienced challenges that made community integration difficult. This was particularly true for individuals discharged from psychiatric or medical institutions.

Findings from the At-Home study also suggest that participants have mixed experiences with social integration (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2011). For instance, while some participants indicate that housing provides a foundation to remove themselves from unhealthy relationships and develop a sense of belonging in healthier neighbourhoods, others report that they continue to face difficulties in this respect. In addition, while some participants expressed a newfound sense of control over their social interactions (such as more privacy), some participants remained socially isolated, particularly if they were also isolated while homeless (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2012). These findings suggest that multiple variables are at play when facilitating social integration among individuals who have been homeless and living with a mental illness. Genuine integration requires more than the physical placement of an individual in a community – it also involves social and psychological aspects that provide the base for an individual to feel that they belong to, and can participate in a community (Yanos et al., 2004). Particular neighbourhoods, other tenants, type of housing, perceived cultural similarity to neighbours (including language), and perceived choice in housing are all important factors in clients feeling that they ‘fit in’ their communities (Yanos et al., 2004; Yanos, Felton, Tsemberis, & Frye, 2007). Engagement in meaningful activities and employment has also been shown to facilitate community integration (Yanos et al., 2007).

In addition, research consistently demonstrates that at least 15-20% of participants are *not* successful at retaining housing in Housing First programs. Researchers involved in the At-Home/Chez Soi study (Volk, et al., 2015) investigated the participants deemed ‘unstably housed’, or those that were housed less than 50% over nine months of the first year of the study.

They did not include those that retained housing for the last three months 100% of the time, even if they met the previously outlined criteria outlined for the first nine months. This left a sample size of 157, or 13.5% of participants in the Housing First condition. The authors found that this group was significantly more likely to be Indigenous (22%) or a racialized minority (23%), to have a diagnosed psychiatric disorder (as opposed to PTSD or panic disorder), to have spent a greater percentage of their lives homeless, and to have spent more of the previous three months in jail. The mean age of participants was 41 years old, and 66.4% were male. The authors cautioned however that these results could not be used to predict who would *not* benefit from Housing First programs, as regression analysis found that this model only predicted between 6.7 and 8.5% of the variance.

Current research also points to the need for further investigation into the effectiveness of Housing First programs for populations other than single individuals with a mental health diagnosis such as women, racialized and Indigenous populations, and young people. There is some evidence to suggest that outcomes for Indigenous populations are lower than what is generally reported in the Housing First literature. In the Winnipeg section of the At-Home/Chez-Soi project where 71% of participants identified as Indigenous, housing retention rates were lower than the general sample. For the last six months of the study, 45% of Housing First participants were housed all of the time, 28% some of the time, and 27% were housed none of the time. These numbers were still higher than the TAU groups, where 29% were housed all of the time, 18% some of the time, and 52% none of the time (Distasio, Sareen, & Isaak, 2014).

Housing First for youth. Only three studies have been conducted which examine the effectiveness of Housing First for homeless youth in Canada. The first is a small case study conducted by Gaetz, Scott, and Gulliver (2013) on the Infinity Project in Calgary (the program

evaluated in this study). The authors reported on three of the main outcomes measured at Infinity: housing retention, self-sufficiency, and access to services. Housing retention rates were found to be quite similar to those found in other studies of Housing First. For example, based on data collected from the beginning of the program until October 2012, 91.7% of program participants were still housed at one year, and 86.5% were at two years. Of youth who had been at Infinity for at least six months or more, 100% had engaged in some form of community activities and supports, and 50% had accessed addictions and/or mental health services. In regards to their income levels, of youth who had been in the program for six months or more, 63% over the age of 18 and 87% of those under 18 secured a stable income, either through employment, alternative funding, or education/employment programs. The authors note, however, that income levels were generally not enough to cover living expenses, and youth often required rent subsidies to get by (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013).

Assisting youth in finding employment that pays a living wage, therefore, appears to be a challenge for the Infinity program (and perhaps Housing First in general). In addition to this concern, a second study conducted in London, Ontario, raises some important questions regarding the efficacy and appropriateness of Housing First for young people. One hundred and eighty-seven youth with a mental health diagnosis were asked for their preference between Housing First, ‘treatment first’ or ‘both together’. Only 40% preferred Housing First, and many worried that independent living would increase their feelings of isolation and simply provide a stable place for them to use substances (Forchuk et al., 2013). Other youth felt overwhelmed at the thought of managing a lease (Forchuk et al., 2013).

Finally, Kozloff et al. (2016) analyzed a subset of data from the At-Home/Chez-Soi project, for participants between the ages of 18-24. Of the original 2148 study participants, 7% or

156 were youth. Eighty-seven received the Housing First treatment and 69 received treatment as usual (TAU). The results show that youth in the Housing First condition were stably housed 65% of the time in the study (437 out of 645 days) compared to 31% in the TAU condition (189 out of 582 days), representing a mean difference of 34%. Age was not found to be a significant variable in this study, meaning the youth were no more or less likely to be housed than the older participants. The youth in this sample were more likely to be part of an ethno-racial minority and to have a learning disorder or a substance use disorder than their older counterparts. They were also less likely to have a regular doctor. There were no statistically significant results on any of the other measures, including quality of life, which was significant in the overall sample. The authors suggest this may be the result of the Housing First intervention not being adapted to meet the needs of youth or using measures that are meaningful to the youth population such as peer relationships, sexual health, education and job skills, and life skills. What is noteworthy about this study is that despite the authors' declaration that ethno-racial youth were overrepresented in the sample of youth, their analysis of housing retention adjusted for racial and Indigenous status. Although no rationale was provided, it is possible that the retention rates were lower for these young people. While not adjusting for racial and Indigenous status could skew the mean housing retention rates for all of the youth, discovering a difference in retention rates for these groups (and the reasons why) is a potentially important topic that was not discussed in this article.

A Housing First framework for youth. The results of the At-Home/Chez Soi study had a profound impact on government policy in Canada as in 2013 the federal conservative government renewed the Homelessness Partnering Strategy with the explicit expectation that communities would shift their focus to Housing First (despite reducing the funding available). This shift led to many youth-focused programs being defunded. In addition, as Housing First

interventions prioritize the chronically homeless, many young people were not eligible as their needs were not deemed to be acute enough to qualify. The reaction from some in the youth sector was to decry Housing First as a solution to youth homelessness. In response, after national collaborations with staff from the community sector and interviews with young people, Dr. Stephen Gaetz released a framework for providing Housing First services for youth based on the premise that Housing First could work for young people, but it must be modified to meet the unique developmental needs of the population. The focus of this framework is to ensure young people successfully transition to adulthood, not just become housed (Gaetz, 2014b). Gaetz argues that instead of asking whether Housing First works for young people (as research shows that it can work for anyone), it is more pertinent to ask, “How can Housing First be adapted to meet the needs of young people who experience homelessness?” (p.1). He argues some of the core principles should be modified to include a developmental orientation, and a wider array of supports should be offered than what is generally in Housing First programs. As this framework provides the analytic lens for part of the program evaluation of the Infinity Project, it is discussed at length.

Gaetz lists five key principles in the Housing First framework for youth⁴, most of which are similar to the Housing First model in general (see Figure 3.1 below). For instance, youth are to have immediate access to housing with no preconditions, choice and self-determination are

⁴ In late 2017, Gaetz will be launching a Revised Housing First for Youth Framework which makes some changes to the five principles. The new principles will be: the right to housing with no preconditions; youth choice, voice and self-determination; a positive youth development and recovery orientation; individualized, client-driven supports; and social inclusion and community integration. What is notable about the revised framework is an enhanced focus on recovery through the use of a trauma-informed model of care, the introduction of social inclusion into the framework, the importance of addressing youth homelessness from a rights-based perspective, and the notion of collective impact, or various stakeholders working together to address youth homelessness (Gaetz, 2017).

paramount, supports are to be client-driven and individualized to meet the needs of each young person, and opportunities for meaningful activities (similar to community and social integration) are important to reducing isolation. Unique to the framework for youth is the addition of a positive youth development orientation. This approach emphasizes the strengths and assets of young people, and posits that work with youth should aim to increase their protective factors (social, recreational, occupational, etc.). Key to this tenant is a focus on understanding the physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs of a young person, and working to facilitate a successful transition to adulthood.

Figure 3.1 – *Housing First Framework for Youth- Principles* (Reprinted From: www.homelesshub.ca)



In addition to the principles, Gaetz identifies several provisions that are key to providing Housing First services for youth. This includes housing supports, care for health and wellbeing, access to income and education, complementary supports, and opportunities for meaningful engagement (see Figure 3.2 below). Each one will be discussed in turn.

Housing supports assist youth in obtaining and maintaining housing. This includes finding housing, providing rent supplements, general counselling and support (particularly in case anything goes wrong), and aftercare. It can be difficult for young people to find and obtain housing that is safe and affordable. Many lack the knowledge of how to do so, and face age

discrimination by landlords. Young people may need guidance around choosing a suitable unit, signing leases, and understanding their rights and responsibilities. They are also vulnerable to being taken advantage of by “unscrupulous landlords” (Gaetz, 2014b, p. 24). Once youth find housing, they often need support in learning the life skills necessary to maintain their housing. This includes taking care of the property, paying their rent regularly and on time, and developing positive relationships with landlords and neighbours.

Despite workers’ best efforts, young people will sometimes lose their housing for a number of reasons including not paying rent, being loud, or damaging the property. When this happens, Gaetz argues that it is important that Housing First programs continue to work with the youth, acknowledging that they will make mistakes, and that this is part of a learning process. Evictions should not be seen as failures or a reason to sanction a youth, and that program staff should continue to work with the young person to secure and maintain new accommodations. He states:

A successful Housing First agenda must be supported by a “zero discharge into homelessness” philosophy, so that housing stability and crisis management become key (p. 25).

Figure 3.2 - *Housing First Framework for Youth- Program Elements* (Reprinted from: www.homelesshub.ca)



Finally, once youth are ready to ‘graduate’ from a program, there should be a plan for some form of aftercare, particularly the option to move back into the program or some form of supportive housing should they experience a setback. This is important to ensure that youth do not return to homelessness.

The second component of the framework is supports for health and wellbeing. Gaetz defines this as “supports designed to enhance the health, mental health and social care of the client” (p. 26). Providing trauma-informed care is central to this approach. This means understanding that the majority of youth experiencing homelessness have been subject to some degree of trauma, generally in their childhoods but also due to the experience of homelessness itself, and gearing program practices and policies to accommodate such trauma. This includes acknowledging that some behaviours (such as substance use and angry outbursts) derive from young people’s experience of trauma. Mental health supports, as well as provisions for substance abuse, should be available for young people who require such services. A harm-reduction philosophy is necessary for youth in Housing First programs, meaning that there should not be an ‘abstinence-only’ policy implemented in regards to substance use. This is essential in working from a trauma-informed perspective as it acknowledges the complex interplay between trauma and substance use, and it enforces the basic principle that housing is a human right, and not earned through good behaviour such as sobriety.

The third component is access to income and education. Due to their age, most young people have not had the opportunity to pursue an education and/or gain meaningful employment experience. This severely limits their earning capacity, making maintaining housing challenging. It is important that programs work to support youth in their long-term goals, particularly in pursuing an education, so that they are not pigeonholed into low-wage, precarious labour.

The fourth component is complementary supports. These include a wide array of supports such as life skills, adult support and mentoring, family reconnection, supporting youth with children, providing an anti-discrimination environment and advocacy. Due to their youthful age, many participants lack the life skills necessary to live independently. This includes a wide spectrum of skills such as financial literacy, self-care and hygiene, communication, nutrition, food management and cooking. Programs must include a component that gears the development of new life skills to suit each youth's needs. Relatedly, many young people have not had access to positive adult role models, and this should be available to participants. This can be facilitated through formal mentorship programs, or through positive relationships between staff and young people. For some youth, external support with adults can also be developed through family reconnection efforts. While this may not be appropriate for all youth, particularly if there are safety concerns, many young people have relationships with caregivers that are capable of being repaired or strengthened, or relationships with extended family members that have not been fully explored. Both of these can strengthen the natural support network available for young people.

Many young people are parents themselves, and hence require access to housing that can accommodate a family. They may also need support around childcare and parenting skills. Programs must also adapt an anti-discrimination framework within their programs, including explicit policies and practices that cultivate a safe environment for all young people, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexuality. Finally, young people may need assistance navigating complicated systems and gaining access to resources. In this sense, advocacy is paramount.

The final component in the framework is opportunities for meaningful engagement by developing social relationships, engagement in the community and cultural engagement. The aim

is to reduce isolation, ensure that there is a support network in place for youth, and promote overall wellbeing. Gaetz argues that young people should be supported in developing healthy relationships with a variety of people, including peers, adults, employers, and their landlords. They should also be supported around becoming engaged in their communities, however this is defined (people or neighbourhoods, for example) as well as culturally. Cultural and spiritual engagement may be important to some youth, and connections in this regard should be made available. Finally, meaningful activities such as sports, art and volunteering can bring enjoyment and promote wellbeing among youth, as well as allow them to develop skills and provide opportunities to socialize.

There is one known study that evaluated a program whose services “closely mirrors the Housing First framework for youth” for youth aged 18-24 in Limerick, Ireland (Lawlor & Bowen, 2017, p.4). The authors found that out of the 54 youth that have used the services, 85% achieved housing stability upon leaving the service, and close to half managed their own tenancy. Additionally, 85% were participating in employment, education or training upon leaving the program, although the authors acknowledge they are not sure if these results were sustained over time. In qualitative interviews with 14 graduates of the program, youth reported improvements in their physical health, quality of life, independent living skills (such as financial and self-care), feelings of safety and stability, and improved relationships with family and peers as a result of participating in the program. Half of the youth were engaged in education and/or training and youth reported less contact with the criminal justice system.

In Summary – Youth Homelessness and Models of Accommodation

In this chapter I defined homelessness, including for youth, and discussed the causes of youth homelessness using Fitzpatrick’s (2005) critical realist framework. The intersecting causes

of homelessness, both direct and indirect, were emphasized. I then discussed the consequences of homelessness for young people, and discussed how the federal government, municipalities and communities have used to respond to the problem, including a shift toward 10-Year Plans and Housing First. I then reviewed the three most common forms of accommodation for youth that are homeless: emergency shelters, transitional housing and Housing First. I argued that while emergency shelters are important for youth that are in a crisis situation, they should not be our primary response as they do not reduce the incidence of youth who become homeless. They can also serve as vehicles of oppression, further marginalizing an already marginalized population by attempting to ‘rehabilitate’ individuals and through their strict rules and ‘barring’ of people from shelters. Transitional housing models, including the Foyer, have shown to be effective models for accommodating youth who are homeless, particularly those who have less complex needs and are able to commit to pursuing particular goals such as employment and education. This model has been criticized for its term limits, its failure to provide permanent accommodation, and for its housing readiness requirements. This model should best be thought of as one option available for youth who choose it rather than a primary response to homelessness.

Finally, Housing First is a unique model that posits that housing is a human right, and people should not have to prove they are ‘ready’ by seeking treatment or remaining sober. Research has consistently found that participants retain their housing at higher levels than treatment as usual, including the most complex participants. The research is less clear about the role Housing First plays in facilitating recovery in mental health symptoms, substance use, and for some participants, social integration. There is also a need for more research on Housing First for subpopulations such as Indigenous peoples, whose outcomes have been somewhat worse than others, and youth. As young people are at a unique stage of their lives, there is reason to believe

that the Housing First model should be accommodated to meet their needs. To this end, I reviewed a proposed framework for providing Housing First to youth (Gaetz, 2014), which includes several important principles and program components that acknowledge the developmental period young people are in, as well as their needs for the future. This research explores a Housing First program for youth called the Infinity Project, using Gaetz's framework as an analytic lens. The next chapter describes the Infinity Project in more detail, including their philosophy and program components. First I provide an overview of the broader context in which Infinity is situated – as part of Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness which is run by the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), Infinity's funder.

Chapter Four

Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness and the Infinity Project

Calgary's Plan to End Homelessness

In 2008, the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) launched its 10-Year Plan to End homelessness, unlike anything previously attempted in Canada. The Plan was based on the model developed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness in the United States, which has been implemented in over 250 communities. As previously mentioned, 10-Year Plans are strategies that aim to 'end' homelessness in ten years, and have measurable indicators to track this process. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) recommends that they include four components, modified to meet the needs of each community: 1) effective research and data management; 2) prevention, defined as detecting and intervening for households at risk of homelessness and reforming systems that discharge people into homelessness (such as correctional institutions); 3) Housing First, or providing permanent housing and supports without any preconditions such as treatment or sobriety; 4) building the infrastructure necessary for 10-Year Plans such as affordable housing, income support, and support services (CAEH, 2012). While in theory each plan is supposed to contain all elements, in practice, the majority of efforts are placed on Housing First geared toward the chronically homeless, or those with the highest needs.

Calgary's Plan was launched in response to the estimated 650% increase in homelessness that occurred between 1998 and 2008 in the city (CCEH, 2008), and the 18.2% increase between 2006 and 2008 (CCEH, 2008). The then named Calgary Committee to Ending Homelessness wrote in 2008:

Our aim is to deliver a plan that will not only end homelessness, but do so in the most economically efficient means possible. Our plan rewards personal accountability and initiative; it helps people move to self-sufficiency and independence; it ensures that people will receive the care and support they need when they need it, and it will result in a net cost savings to taxpayers (p.5).

CHF defines ‘ending’ homelessness as having no individual or family stay in an emergency shelter or on the streets for longer than one week before they can move into an affordable home, with the necessary supports to maintain it. The guiding principles for the 10-Year Plan is listed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 – Calgary’s *10-Year Plan Principles* (CCEH, 2008, p. 9)

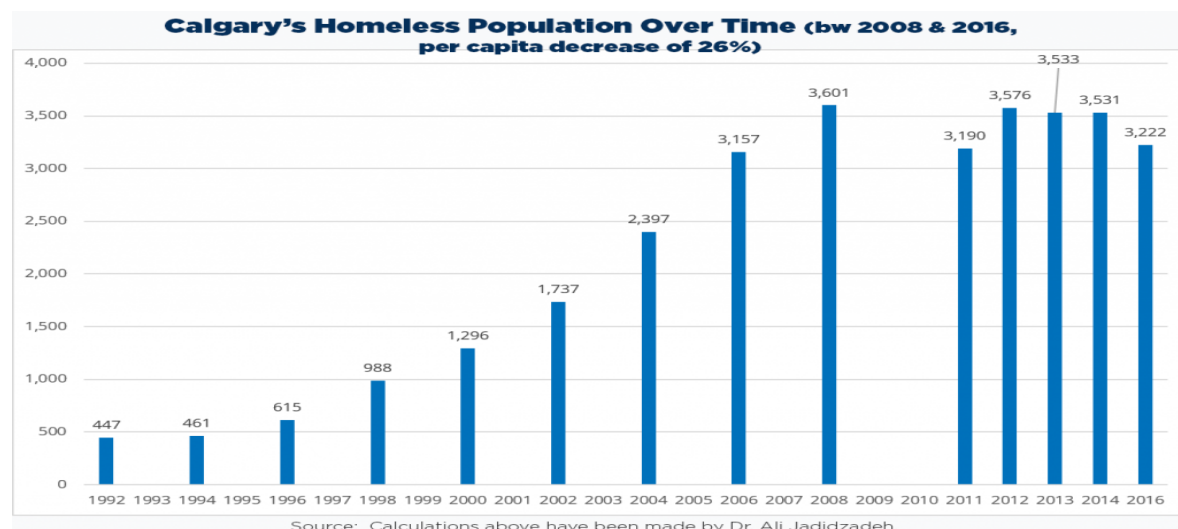
1	Ending homelessness is a collective responsibility. This includes the people experiencing homelessness who must take personal ownership and accountability in ending their homelessness
2	Our plan will aim to help people move to self-reliance and independence
3	All people experiencing homelessness are ready for permanent housing, with supports as necessary
4	The first objective of homelessness-serving systems and agencies, programs and funding must be to help people experiencing homelessness gain and maintain permanent housing (Housing First)
5	We will prioritize the most chronically homeless populations
6	The selection of affordable housing and the provision of services should be guided by consumer choice
7	Resources will be concentrated on programs that offer measurable results
8	Affordable housing is safe, decent and readily attainable. Diverse, integrated, scattered site affordable housing, close to services is preferred
9	10 Year Plan funding must be diverse and sustainable
10	The use of markets will be maximized by involving the private sector in the implementation of the 10 Year Plan
11	The economic cost of homelessness must be reduced
12	A well educated, well trained and adequately funded non-profit sector is central to the success of the plan

The Plan was implemented in three phases. In phase one (from 2008 to the end of 2010) CHF aimed to focus on beginning capital projects, introducing policy changes, and conducting research on homelessness in Calgary. The second phase, from 2011 to the end of 2013 was set to focus on systemic changes or filling in service gaps as well as implementing the shared information system (HMIS, described below). The final phase, from 2014 to 2018 was set to be

the “fine-tuning phase” (CCEH, 2008, p.8), where final adjustments would be made in order to sustain their plan and success.

While as of 2017, Calgary is not in a position to ‘end’ homelessness, the CHF has achieved several successes. For instance, despite continued population growth in Calgary, the homeless population has not increased since the implementation of the 2008 10-Year Plan (it has remained steady)(see Figure 4.1 below). As of 2016, they have provided housing through the 50 programs they fund to 9,000 people, and claim that homelessness has decreased by 19%, based on the last point-in-time count and adjusted for population growth (Campbell, Falvo, & Smith, 2017). The CHF also state that they have saved taxpayers a tremendous amount of money instigating the Plan (CHF, 2015). They estimate that prior to being housed, participants cost taxpayers approximately \$55,000 per year in emergency and public services. In contrast, housing participants cost \$22,000 per year - resulting in a net savings of \$34,000 (CHF, 2015). They note that this a conservative estimate in cost savings as it does not factor in all potential savings through enhanced life expectancy and greater tax contributions to society “particularly for families and youth” (CHF, 2015, p. 9).

Figure 4.1 - *Calgary’s Homeless Population Over Time* (Falvo, 2017).



In addition, CHF has created a coordinated ‘system of care’ to respond to homelessness in the city of Calgary. The system of care is defined as a:

Regional system for helping people who are homeless or at imminent risk...that aims to coordinate resources to ensure community level results align with strategic goals and meet client needs effectively (CHF, 2015, p. 102).

This system has changed Calgary’s infrastructure for responding to homelessness, making it more coordinated and efficient. Rather than several fragmented programs operating in isolation (e.g. an emergency shelter here, a transitional program there), the CHF has become a centralized governing (and funding) body for many of the agencies responding to homelessness in Calgary (though not all). This system of care is comprised of eight program models including housing loss prevention, triage/assessment/diversion (which occurs through the Coordinated Access and Assessment service, detailed below), emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, supportive housing (another term for Housing First), permanent supportive housing, the graduate rental assistance initiative, and affordable housing (CHF, 2015). It should be noted that while the CHF operates its system of care by funding 30 agencies and over 50 programs (six specifically for youth), there are multiple agencies and programs that respond to homelessness that exist outside of this system. The CHF (2015) have listed over 200 programs in total that respond or prevent homelessness in Calgary, meaning that at least 150 are not funded by CHF.

Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA). Individuals who experience homelessness are placed into the system of care through a process of Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA). The CAA is comprised of a centralized intake and Place Committee Meetings (PCMs). The centralized intake, called SORCe, is located in downtown Calgary, and is run by 14 agencies that serve the homeless (Dressler, 2016). Here people experiencing homelessness can undergo an assessment to gain access to the CAA. Need or acuity is assessed using a tool called Service Prioritization Decision Assessment Tool (SPDAT), which is often used in conjunction with the

Vulnerability Index (VI). The SPDAT assesses a variety of factors, including their perceived daily living skills, mental and physical health, social support, and homelessness history, amongst others. The intention of the SPDAT is to determine the needs of individuals and to assess how acute these needs are. Clients receive a score between 0-4 in each domain and can garner a score up to 60. Clients with a score of 44 or higher are deemed to be high-acuity, and those with a score under 44 are determined to be mid-acuity (Dressler, 2016). There are two intentions in garnering these scores. First is to determine which type of support a person is suited for. Those that score from 35-60 are deemed suitable for Housing First programs (OrgCode Consulting Inc., 2014). Those that receive lower scores are to be diverted into brief housing assistance (such as financial assistance) or rapid rehousing, where in theory they are housed but not provided the same case management supports as in Housing First programs⁵. Second, the assessment is meant to help communities prioritize which persons experiencing homelessness are to receive services. Those with the highest scores (reflecting high acuity and chronicity) are triaged to the top of the list for the CAA groups to place in an appropriate program.

The Vulnerability Index (VI) is a scale that can be used in conjunction with the SPDAT. The VI is designed to measure the “medical vulnerability of homeless persons”. It is not an assessment tool, but one designed to triage the needs of people experiencing homelessness, much like an emergency room. The VI focuses on homelessness history and health risk factors such as substance use, suicide risk, and use of emergency health services (Community Solutions & OrgCode Consulting Inc., 2014).

⁵ When Infinity staff were asked what happens to youth that are not eligible for Housing First programs, they were unclear about what services they were provided with or what happened to them. Therefore, the extent to which those who are screened and determined to have low acuity are housed is unknown.

Clients' assessments are taken to Placement Committee Meetings (PCMs) where service providers collectively place clients based on their acuity level. There are four of these meetings, one of which is specifically for youth. Ideally, individuals with the highest acuity scores are placed first, or are of top priority for placement. The PCMs are reported to have facilitated collaboration among service providers, and to hold one another accountable to the principles of Housing First, as agencies that are reluctant to place individuals in their agencies due to their complex needs must fully articulate their thoughts, and if they are not espousing a Housing First philosophy, other agencies may point this out (Dressler, 2016).

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Agencies within the system of care are mandated by the CHF to collect common metrics at intake, every three months and discharge in order to measure common outcomes such as housing retention, and reductions in public system usage (such as police and hospital services). Data is entered in the shared Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The CHF has defined HMIS as:

A locally administered, electronic data collection system that stores longitudinal client-level information about persons who access the social service system (CHF, 2015, p. 95).

One of the objectives of HMIS is to provide an efficient way for caseworkers within the system of care to share information, as (providing a client permits his or her information to be shared) a client's history can be pulled up in HMIS. This avoids clients having to continually retell their stories and provide their information to every service provider they encounter. In the CHF's Plan to End Youth Homelessness (described below), they identified several measures that can be used to track the progress of the Youth Plan, including system and program measures. These measures can be seen in Table 4.2 below. Currently, HMIS is mandated in all 30 of CHF funded agencies. The CHF uses HMIS data to inform policy and program development as well as identify gaps in the system of care (Dressler, 2016).

Table 4.2 - *HMIS Measures* (CHF, 2011)

System Measures	Program Measures
“Occupancy” measures the rate of bed utilization	“Income gains at exit” measures the number of people who have increased their income while in a program
“Destinations at exit” tracks the number of people who exit to permanent housing situations	“Length of stay/stability” is the number of days a person or household is enrolled in a program
“Return to shelter/rough sleeping” refers to the percentage of people who receive a positive exit from a program and then re-enter the shelter/street within a relatively short period	“Client rate of engagement” is the total amount of people engaged by a shelter or outreach program that ended up obtaining a better housing intervention
“Discharge from public institutions” measures the decrease in numbers of people discharged into homelessness from public institutions, such as hospitals, jails and child intervention services	“Self-sufficiency measures” look at programs providing intense support services in areas such as employment, substance abuse and mental health

In 2015, the CHF published results from two years of HMIS data (2012-2014). Twelve percent of all 2,050 people housed during these years were youth (or 434 young people) defined as “unaccompanied young people under 24”, 32.6% of which were chronically homeless and 64.7% episodic. These latter figures were reversed in adult intakes, where 62.8% were chronically homeless. Thirty-nine per cent of youth were recorded to have left their respective programs for “negative reasons”, or not exiting into permanent stable housing, which was roughly equal to all exits (37%). Indigenous Peoples (not just youth) exited for negative reasons in 47% of cases. The CHF asserts that the best practice benchmark is 15%, meaning that a higher percentage of participants are not remaining in their programs than what they forecast based on the (largely American Pathways to Housing) literature.

Calgary’s Plan to End Youth Homelessness. In 2011, Calgary was also the first city in Canada to launch a Plan to End Youth Homelessness specifically arguing that as the causes of youth homelessness differ from adults, so too must the solutions (CHF, 2011). Similar to the general plan, they define ‘ending’ youth homelessness as having young people stay no longer

than an average of seven days in an emergency shelter, and instilling a zero discharge into homelessness policy at various institutions such as shelters, hospitals and jails. The CHF argues that a strong emphasis must be placed on prevention. They state:

Ending youth homelessness requires effective intervention that engage youth as early in the cycle of homelessness as possible and helps to stabilize them in appropriate, supportive environments (CHF, 2011, p. 13).

The Plan calls for priority to be placed on chronically homeless youth and Indigenous youth. Indigenous youth were listed as a priority as research has shown a large correlation with children growing up in foster care and becoming homeless, and as of 2010, 64% of children in the care of Child and Youth Services in Alberta were of Indigenous descent. They also cite the 2008 Calgary Point-in-Time Count, which revealed that 28% of the homeless under 24 identified as Indigenous, despite only 2% of Calgary's overall population identifying as such (CHF, 2011).

The Plan to End Youth Homelessness calls for three broad strategies including coordinating systems that youth come into contact with, developing housing units and supportive housing arrangements for young people, and improving data and systems knowledge to influence policy. The plan emphasizes developing "standards of care" so that youth that enter the system are provided with both case management and housing supports, as "this is the most successful approach to ending homelessness" (p. 20). Key targets in this plan included having no more than 10% of youth in Housing First programs return to homelessness by 2015, and not having Indigenous youth be overrepresented in the homeless population by 2018.

After this Plan was established, it was not clear what progress had been made at the time of this study (2014), although it was likely limited as the CHF recently released a "2017 Refresh", citing a desire to better align with the Provincial Plan to End Youth Homelessness (described below), the renewed "openness" in government around advancing "common objectives" and the city's economic downturn that began in 2014 (CHF, 2017, p. 2). The 2017

Relaunch includes four priorities: prevention, collaboration and leadership, systems integration and Housing First/housing. Similar to its original Plan, CHF places a priority on prevention. The prevention activities include initiating public education and awareness, enhancing access to mainstream supports, peer-based supports, school-based addictions and mental health programs, engaging schools in youth homelessness prevention, and increasing employment and education supports for youth. The CHF also discusses creating a policy agenda and increasing its advocacy efforts, and attempting to support youth in their transitions from systems such as corrections and child welfare (CHF, 2017).

A note on the province of Alberta. In 2009 the province of Alberta also launched a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. The priorities of the plan include more housing options, better information (research), aggressive assistance (services), coordinated systems and effective policies (Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, 2008). Like CHF's Plan, Housing First was placed at the centre of Alberta's Plan. In 2013 the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness (AICH) was formed to highlight the challenges to achieving the goals of the plan and to investigate systemic barriers that create homelessness in Alberta. The Council reports to the Minister of Human Services, and is expected to report annually on the progress of the plan and develop concrete recommendations. In 2014, they released a progress report that states in the first five years, they housed 9,451 Albertans in Housing First programs, and 73% remained housed for at least twelve months. Just over 1,000 new affordable units were built. The Council's recommendations included systemic changes to government operations (to enhance accountability and contribute to better funding outcomes), coordinated funding and planning so that more affordable housing units could be created, better community capacity building, and increased strategies to prevent homelessness, including being released from provincial systems

into homelessness and expanding shelter diversion strategies. The council stated that there were challenges to the long-term success of the plan, particularly the need for adequate investment in housing and ensuring that prevention strategies were sufficiently resourced (AICH, 2014).

The province also released a Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness in 2015 with prevention listed as one of its five priorities in addition to early intervention, client-centered support, research and evaluation and stakeholder engagement (Government of Alberta, 2015). The prevention activities they list as part of their Plan include supporting families and parents (through reunification, counselling and parenting resources) developing a needs/risk assessment tool, and public education and awareness. The Plan also articulates the goals of ensuring youth are re-housed rapidly, and have a range of housing options, including through both transitional housing and Housing First.

The Infinity Project

The first known Housing First program for youth in Canada, the Infinity Project, began in 2009. At the time this research was conducted (2014), the Infinity Project was one of eight programs run through the Youth Housing & Shelter stream at the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary, and is funded entirely by the CHF. Together, these programs address prevention, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Housing First. For a list of the programs offered through the Youth Housing & Shelter stream, see Table 4.3 below.

Infinity is a Housing First program for youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Davies (2012) states that the Infinity Program:

Works with youth to help create a permanent home in the community of their choice, provide them with financial supports to quickly access housing and then wraps transitional supports around them to help maintain their housing (presentation for HPS, Oct. 2012).

Table 4.3 - *Youth Housing & Shelter Stream at the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary*⁶

Program Name	Program Type	Description
Youth Transitioning to Adulthood (YTA)	Scattered site transitional	Provides youth leaving care with assistance finding a permanent home and support obtaining financial and life skills to transition out of care and into adulthood
Haven's Way	Transitional	Transitional housing for females ages 12-24 who are attending school, have the goal to complete their education or are pursuing self-sufficiency through employment
Avenue 15	Emergency shelter	Emergency shelter for youth ages 12-17. Provides basic needs and assistance reuniting with their families or finding alternative living arrangements
Safe House	Emergency shelter	Emergency shelter for youth ages 15-19 who have status through Intervention Services. Provides basic needs and short term housing
828-HOPE	Centralized Referral	A centralized referral service for youth who need housing or support obtaining basic needs. Provides information on housing programs, assistance applying for housing, and supports to avoid eviction
Script	Outreach & Prevention	The script program works with youth in the community on whatever their needs are, including basic needs, health, education, employment and recreation

The Infinity Project therefore works with youth to live in their own permanent housing by searching for affordable housing units, developing relationships with landlords, resolving conflicts between landlords and youth, providing a housing subsidy when needed, and working with youth to access financial supports such as Employment Insurance, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), or student financing (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013). Youth are

⁶ The Boys and Girls Club has subsequently added two housing programs since this research was conducted: Aura, or specialized housing for LGBTQ2S youth aged 16-24, and Home Fire, a Housing First program for Indigenous youth aged 16-24.

then provided with access to multiple services, including assistance finding employment or entering a training program, continuing their education, developing life skills such as preparing meals, budgeting, and managing one's home (cleaning, organizing, working with landlords, for instance) (ibid., 2013). Staff may also work with youth in reconnecting with family when appropriate, exploring community resources, parenting skills, and providing necessary referrals (ibid., 2013). The Infinity Project has a wide array of partnerships that they may utilize when making referrals or ensuring youth have their needs met (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013).

The central philosophy that guides the Infinity Project is that if youth are to develop the financial assets and living skills necessary to achieve self-sufficiency, they require a safe and permanent home with the necessary supports (Davies, 2012). Davies (2012) identifies six principles that guide their philosophy. First, housing is a human right. It is not something that is 'earned' with good behaviour or something that people must be 'ready' for. Young people are provided with the freedom to make mistakes without the fear that they will lose their housing or relationships with staff as a result. Similarly, youth should not have to leave their housing when their service needs change. Second, 'choice' and 'voice' are essential in young peoples' lives. This means that service delivery plans and housing arrangements are based on the individual choices of each youth, and they are paramount in creating their own plan. Choice is believed to empower youth to feel more confident in addressing their needs, and to create conditions more conducive to happiness (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013).

The third guiding principle is that creating supportive and accepting relationships between youth and staff is essential for youth to transition from homelessness. Staff work to establish a relationship with youth so that they feel comfortable coming to them about concerns or to provide guidance. Fourth, due to their youthful age, residents need time to learn how to be

good neighbours and acquire the life skills necessary to live independently. Fifth, youth need financial and instrumental supports in order to get started living independently. This includes household items and a few dollars when necessary, similar to what many parents would do for their children who are just getting started living independently. Finally, people benefit from a community full of supports and resources that can provide a safety net should trouble arise. Connecting youth to a variety of supports within their community is pivotal in the Infinity program. This helps to integrate youth into new communities, provide a safety net, and reduce isolation.

Other factors believed to be imperative to Infinity's success include its "zero discharge into homelessness" policy, building relationships with landlords, and developing convertible leases. A zero discharge into homelessness policy means that program staff will never ask youth to leave their housing without an alternative place to stay, and if landlords evict them, the program will rehouse them. The young people therefore do not need to worry about becoming homeless. Staff at the Infinity program work hard to establish relationships with landlords so that they are understanding of the needs and concerns faced by their young tenants, and will continue to work with the program. They do this by guaranteeing the program will pay rent, responding to landlord concerns, and mediating conflicts. They have made arrangements with some landlords to devote a percentage of their units to Infinity participants, which is particularly effective in providing housing for youth under the age of 18, whom landlords are typically reluctant to rent to. Staff also negotiate the possibility of convertible leases with the landlords. This means that while apartments may be leased to the program initially, the youth have the option of taking over the lease once they are ready to do so.

The Infinity Project is overseen by the Director of Housing and Shelters at the Boys and Girls Club, and managed by the Manager of Youth Housing. Both oversee several programs in the Housing and Shelter stream. The Coordinator supervises the day-to-day operation of the program and has four Housing Support Workers that report to her. The Housing Support Workers are the front-line staff that work with the youth regularly, and are responsible for providing case management services. As the program is client driven, meaning each case plan is geared toward the individual, this can include supporting the youth in obtaining and maintaining housing, pursuing an education or employment, facilitating the development of life skills, and providing general support and guidance.

Program goals and evidence of effectiveness. Based on the documents reviewed at Infinity, their desired program outcomes fall into three categories: short-term, intermediate and long-term. These are listed in Table 4.4 below. Infinity cites the following indicators as evidence of success: 100% of young people in the project for six or more months make positive contact with community supports; 100% have enhanced readiness to transition to adulthood in seven areas six months into the program (financial support, education, housing, relationship, life skills, identity, youth engagement); 70% have stable income at six months; 85% remain housed one year after intake; and a reduction in the percentage of youth housed through incarceration, emergency rooms, and in-patient hospitalization.

According to Infinity documents (such as their program summary and a grant application), data collected in 2012 showed that 91% of youth in their program (44 out of 48) remained housed after one year, and 86% (or 32 youth) remained housed after two years. Sixty-three percent of youth over 18 and 87% of youth under 18 had a stable income at six months into

the program. Eighty-four percent of youth under 18 and 94% over 18 reported being supported in accessing community supports in the past year.

Table 4.4 - *Desired Outcomes for the Infinity Project*

Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
Youth obtain permanent housing or long-term transitional housing	Increase in self-confidence	Youth maintain their housing
Youth are able to stabilize	Increase in life skills	Youth have a stable source of income
Youth have basic needs met	Youth obtain and maintain employment and/or student financing	Youth have access to community supports as needed
Youth identify their goals	Youth are able to support themselves financially	
Youth are linked to employment or skills training	Increase in self-sufficiency (e.g. pay 100% of their rent, convert lease, autonomous problem solving)	

Since this research was conducted (2014), the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary have expanded the Infinity Project and created two additional Housing First programs for sub-populations of youth: Aura House for LGBTQ2S+ youth, and Home Fire, for Indigenous youth. Home Fire is Indigenous-led, and rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing. When asked to describe the new programs, the Youth Housing Manager wrote:

Aura provides youth with a safe place where their sexual orientation and gender identity is respected and celebrated. Home Fire provides Indigenous youth with a home where they can begin to heal, build community and reconnect with culture and family. Through this initiative, we endeavour to help Indigenous youth reconnect or create their ‘Home Fire’ by building community and family using a Housing First approach (Walters, 2017).

In Summary – Calgary’s 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Infinity Project

In 2008 the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) implemented the first 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Canada. The Plan has had many successes since its inception including housing thousands of people, stabilizing the rate of homelessness in the city, and developing a coordinated system of care or a network of agencies responding to homelessness. Each program

funded by the CHF is mandated to use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the electronic database. Individuals who are homeless, including youth, undergo the SPDAT assessment, an acuity measure designed to prioritize individuals for services and measure how acute their needs are. Since the inception of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, the CHF have also implemented a 10-Year Plan to End Aboriginal Homelessness and a 10-Year Plan to End Youth Homelessness (including the 2017 “Relaunch” of this latter Plan). The Alberta Government has also released a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and a Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness.

One of the programs the CHF funds is the Infinity Project, one of Canada’s first Housing First Programs for youth aged 16-24. The Infinity Project is based on the philosophy that if youth are to acquire financial assets and principles to live independently, they require the solid foundation that comes from having a permanent home. Program documents indicate that the program has been very effective in helping youth achieve housing stability and in becoming prepared to transition to adulthood through elements such as education, employment and life skills. This program will be examined according to Gaetz’s Housing First Framework for Youth, and with the addition of CHF’s 10-Year Plan, analyzed from a neoliberal governmentality perspective. To do this a solid methodology is required, the topic to which this discussion turns next.

Chapter Five

Methodology and Analysis

Design

This research examines Housing First as a model of accommodation for youth by conducting a case study of the Infinity Project, a Housing First program for youth in Calgary, Alberta. Of particular interest is how Infinity compares to Gaetz's (2014b) Housing First for Youth Framework, and how Infinity (and Housing First) and Calgary's 10-year Plan to End Homelessness can be understood from a neoliberal framework, including the multi-faceted ways they both resist and conform to neoliberal governmentality. As such, the following research questions will be investigated:

1. To what extent does the Infinity Project uphold the principles and necessary program components as outlined in Gaetz's (2014b) Housing First Framework for youth?
2. What are the main outcomes for young people participating in the Infinity Project? Specifically, how do youth fare in regards to housing retention, mental and physical health, substance use, and contact with public systems?
3. How can Housing First programs such as the Infinity Project and Calgary's 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness be understood in the context of neoliberalism? In what ways do they resist and espouse neoliberal governmentality? What are the implications of 'ending' homelessness, particularly for young people?

This study utilizes a sequential mixed methods design as data was collected in two stages, and the methodology for the second phase was partially dependent on the results of the first (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). A mixed methods design was selected for several reasons. First, the use of both qualitative and quantitative data allows different types of evidence to be

collected. For instance, the qualitative data enables the context of the program to be established (such as the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness) and for staff and youth to be able to provide descriptions of their personal experiences. Quantitative data allows for the measurement of particular outcomes such as housing retention and self-sufficiency measures such as education, employment and income. Multiple sources of data allows for comparisons to be made (for example do the youths' descriptions of events match the outcome data?) and for stronger inferences to be made (triangulation).

This research also contains design elements that are consistent with a program evaluation methodology. Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004, p. 2) state that evaluation research is aimed at “collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and communicating information about the workings and effectiveness of social programs”. Although related, research and program evaluation are not synonymous as evaluation research is based on standards or criteria that must be met based on a set of values (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Evaluation research therefore is political in the sense that what is being evaluated is based on decisions made about what is important, and what priorities should be measured (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). For instance, the staff at Infinity, their funders and myself as a researcher, have ideas about what outcomes are important and therefore decide to measure those outcomes while excluding others.

Early in its development evaluation research was generally divided into two types of approaches: formative and summative. Formative evaluation is generally (though not always) done during the developmental stage of a program and is useful for identifying components in need of improvement (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). In contrast, summative evaluation looks at the impact of a program and relevant stakeholders use this information to determine its value (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Several authors have since attempted to expand on this classification by developing alternative evaluation typologies (see Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Own, 2007; Bledsoe & Graham, 2005, for example). Owen (2007) has identified five types of evaluation, two of which, clarificative and impact, are used in this research⁷. Clarificative evaluation is “designed to assist stakeholders to conceptualize interventions and improve their coherence” (Owen, 2007, p. 191). It seeks to identify the structure of a program or clarify the program theory. In this research, clarificative evaluation was used to establish (or clarify) the extent to which the Infinity Project adheres to Gaetz’s (2014b) Housing First for Youth Framework. An impact evaluation seeks to establish “what works and why” (Owen, 2007, p. 255), or to determine whether a program is reaching its stated objectives. Of particular concern is the intended or unintended outcomes, or effects of a program. These may include changes in knowledge or attitudes, an increase in skills, or obtaining something tangible such as housing or employment. In this research, the outcomes of interest were housing retention, improvement in mental and physical health, decreased substance use and less contact with public systems, and were measured quantitatively using the administrative database HMIS and the evaluation tool the Outcomes Star (described below).

The use of multiple forms of evaluation has become increasingly common in evaluation research as it allows for a more comprehensive investigation and for different aspects of a program to be examined. Bledsoe & Graham (2005) argue that using multiple forms of evaluation:

⁷ The other forms of evaluation include proactive, interactive and monitoring. Proactive evaluation is conducted before a program is developed and determines which program elements are required. Interactive evaluation is a form of participatory research where program participants are included in the evaluation. Finally, monitoring evaluation is conducted to determine whether a program is reaching particular targets or benchmarks as anticipated.

Can better help in understanding the needs of stakeholders and program recipients, producing better method designs, and yielding more accurate recommendations to enhance program (p. 303).

A Case Study Approach

A case study approach was chosen because of its unique ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the Infinity program, as well as the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness that it is situated within. For both, I explored the goals of the program/initiative and outcomes achieved. I also examined Infinity's program model and the youth and staff experiences. I examined the context in which the 10-Year Plan and Infinity operate, including how homelessness is addressed, housing affordability, and vacancy rates, etc., in two phases, described below. For a description of how the various data collection tools were used to answer the research questions, see Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 – *Research Questions and Data Collection Tools*

Research Question	Data Collection Tool
The Clarificative evaluation - To what extent does the Infinity Project uphold the principles and necessary program components as outlined in Gaetz's (2014b) Housing First Framework for youth?	Document Analysis Staff and Youth Interviews
Impact evaluation - What are the main outcomes for young people participating in the Infinity Project? Specifically, how do youth fare in regards to housing retention, mental and physical health, substance use, and contact with public systems?	HMIS Data Outcomes Star Staff and Youth Interviews
Governmentality analysis - How can Housing First programs such as the Infinity Project and Calgary's 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness be understood in the context of neoliberalism? In what ways do they resist and espouse neoliberal governmentality? What are the implications of 'ending' homelessness, particularly for young people?	All data

Phase one. The purpose of this phase was to establish the context in which to conduct the research. This included the broader social, political and economic factors, and detailed program and operating information about Infinity and the 10-Year Plan. I began by reading the

documents outlining Calgary's 10-Year Plan to understand the goals of the Plan as well as its major activities (CCEH, 2008; CHF, 2011, 2015). I then established the conceptual framework that guides the work at Infinity including their objectives, the steps they envision as necessary to reach their goals (program activities), and how they measure change. Program documents from Infinity were reviewed including their logic model and descriptions of the program, and preliminary interviews were conducted with three staff (all part of management). I learned about the staffing model, the participants, and data collected by the program. With this information I formed the methodology for phase two.

Phase two. Once a better understanding of the 10-Year Plan and the Infinity Project was attained, the second phase of the methodology was developed. In this phase I determined which forms of data to use to answer each research question. I visited the Infinity program for three weeks where I attended staff meetings, collected quantitative program data (HMIS and the Outcomes Star), and interviewed seven staff and eight program participants.

Document review. Multiple documents were included in the data analysis including those created by the Infinity project and published by the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF). The documents from Infinity included a logic model, program summary, an intake interview, staff and youth manuals, a grant proposal, a presentation, a case study by the Canadian Homelessness Research Network (Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver, 2013), the SPDAT-VI assessment tool, and material from the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary's website. The CHF have published multiple reports including the original *10-Year Plan to End Homelessness* (2008), the *10-Year Plan Update* (2011), the *Update to the Calgary Plan* (2015) and the *Plan to End Youth Homelessness* (2011). All documents were available in PDF form and were analyzed thematically using NVivo software.

HMIS data. As discussed previously, the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) uses an information system called the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect data from their programs, including Infinity. HMIS assessments are conducted at Intake, at three month intervals thereafter, and at discharge. At intake, client demographic data is collected including age, race/ethnicity, Indigenous status, gender, citizenship, and family situation (e.g. couple or single, parent, etc.). Questions about their homelessness is asked, including if they are fleeing abuse or violence, if they are episodically or chronically homeless, absolutely or relatively homeless (i.e. on the streets or couch-surfing), if they have been released from a correctional, addiction, or health institution in the past twelve months, and if they had been in foster care. They also ask if youth are currently enrolled in school or employed, and their general health and mental health status.

At the three-month follow-up assessments, data is collected on what services and supports the staff have provided including basic needs and referrals. The basic needs provided vary but typically include housing supplements, transportation, and food (amongst others). Referrals are generally to other agencies that provide counselling, legal assistance, and addiction services. Housing status, education and employment training enrolment, and income is tracked, as is participants' recent use of public institutions, such as the number of contacts with police and the health system (both emergency and non-emergency). Curiously, with the exception of the intake data, the HMIS data I received did not include whether the youth were employed at each assessment, only if they were enrolled in employment training. At discharge, information collected includes the reasons participants are leaving the program, where they are going, and their level of satisfaction with the program.

Infinity management requested all HMIS data entered to date from CHF for this study. As they are the owners of the data, they were permitted to share the data from their program with me at their own discretion. This avoided a lengthy application process through the owners of HMIS. Youth were not identified by name, but had a unique code. The data was provided in several Excel spreadsheets, sorted quarterly by year (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4), and by type of assessment (i.e. intake, three-month follow-ups, discharge). I received three and a half years of data, from the first quarter in year 2011-2012 to the second quarter in year 2014-2015. It is likely that this information was incomplete as some participant codes did not appear on the spreadsheets until they were in the program for many months (e.g. 30 months, 33 months). In other cases assessments were missing, and data entered would jump from 12 to 18 months, for example, indicating their 15-month assessment was either not completed or entered. For the intake and discharge data, simple calculations were made using SPSS, including the total number of intakes and discharges, and were analyzed according to various demographic factors.

Ideally, changes in variables (such as changes in education, health status, etc.) would be calculated between intake and discharge. This was not possible with the current dataset. Although there were 21 discharges recorded from the HMIS records, the spreadsheets contained only nine cases where the client was tracked from beginning of their time at Infinity to their discharge, and only four of these cases had four or more assessments. Of these, only one was recorded as having completed the program rather than leaving for some other reason. This most likely reflects the fact that HMIS was implemented just over two years after the program began. Hence, for the follow-up data, several calculations were made. First, I organized the data into a new Excel spreadsheet by participant code (combining all of the spreadsheets). I made a second spreadsheet to track change in the number of basic needs received by participants, referrals,

income, education, employment training, housing status, and contact with public institutions. In Figure 5.1, a screenshot is provided of part of this spreadsheet. Here there are several columns including the client ID, and columns tracking the number of assessments in which Infinity participants were in employment training and in school (“#employ” and “#ed”), as well as the percentage, which was found by dividing the first figure by number of assessments (“%employ” and “%ed”)(explained in further detail below). The figure also shows the number of times that participants experienced a change in their housing status between assessments (“#ofchangesinhousing”) and the number of times they were rehoused (“#rehoused”).

Figure 5.1 – Excel Spreadsheet with HMIS Data

Client ID	#ofchangesin Housing	#rehoused	#employ	%employ	#ed	%ed	# Contacts H
4432	0	2	0	0	10	100	0
10450	0	1	1	12.5	1	12.5	1
4434	2	4	1	16.6	2	33.3	1
10457	3	0	2	22.2	3	33.3	4
10516	0	1	0	0	4	44.4	1
10497	1	2	2	50	2	50	0
10464	1	2	0	0	2	40	3
10834	2	2	1	11.1	0	0	0
10465	2	4	1	12.5	6	75	5
10466	2	1	0	0	3	42.9	0

Only those that had four or more HMIS assessments were entered into analysis (n=27), as four assessments would indicate they had been in the program for at least a year, and it is hence not unreasonable to investigate whether any changes occurred. As the number of months participants had been in the program varied, I tracked change from the first assessment (three months) and twelve months, and for those who had been in the program for at least a year and a half (and hence had at least six HMIS assessments)(n=22), I also compared the first and last assessments. A decision was made to use ‘last’ assessment rather than a set month (such as 24 months) because while 25 participants had been in the program for more than a year and a half (indeed most for over two years), there were only ten 24-month assessments (some last assessments were

21 months, some were 27 months, etc.). A screenshot was taken of the spreadsheet used to make calculations and can be found in Figure 5.2 below. Here, there are several columns that track whether change occurred between first and twelve month and first and last assessments. For instance, “*changeemploy1-12*”, “*changeemployF-L*” track whether change occurred in employment training between the first and twelfth-month assessments and between first and last, respectively. In these columns, 1 indicates “yes” and 2 indicates “no”. Beside these columns the nature of this change is entered (“*natureofchangeemploy*”), such as a change from “yes-enrolled full-time” (yes-FT) to “no, not enrolled” (no).

Figure 5.2 – Excel Spreadsheet with HMIS “Change” Scores

ChangeEmploy1-12m	Nature of Change Employ	ChangeEmployF-L	NatureEmployFL	ChangeED12	ChangeED	NatureEDI
2		2		1 Yes FT - Ye	2	
2		2		1 No - FT ED	2	
1 Yes FT - No		1 Yes FT - No		2	2	
2		1 No - Yes FT		2	2	
2		2		2	1 Yes FT - N	
1 Yes FT - No		1 Yes FT - No		2	2	
2		1 No - Decline		1 No - Yes P	1 No - Decli	
2		2		2	2	
2		1 No - Yes FT		1 No - Yes P	1 No - Yes P	
2		2		2	2	
2		2		2	2	

These 22 participants had completed an average of 7.5 HMIS assessments, and the average number of months for the last assessment was 25.4. To calculate changes in use of basic needs and referrals I subtracted the total number at month twelve from the total in the first assessment (month three), and ‘last’ from the total in month three. For instance, if a participant received three basic needs at their twelve-month assessment and five at their three-month assessment I would enter -2 in the column tracking change between three months and twelve. The average of all the changes was then calculated across scores to determine the mean change in basic needs

between their third and twelfth-month assessments. Average income at three months and last assessment was also calculated.

Only measuring change at two set point risks not capturing the full picture as changes may have occurred at different points in time over the span of program participation (for example at eighteen months). To compensate for this, the average incidence of change was calculated for relevant variables. For example, there might not have been a change in housing status between a participant's third and twelfth-month or third and last month's assessments (i.e. he or she was tracked as being stably housed), but he or she might have been rehoused several times in between. To account for this, I counted the number of times a participant was listed as being housed across all assessments and divided it by the total number of assessments. For example if a participant had 8 HMIS assessments and in two they were listed as not being housed, I would divide 6/8 to obtain the overall percentage of time in the program the participant was housed, which would be 75%. Similar calculations were made for percentage of time spent enrolled in school and employment training.

The Outcomes Star – Homelessness Star. The Outcomes Star is an evaluation tool designed for several sectors including addictions, domestic violence, and mental health by Triangle Consulting Inc. The Star used by Infinity, The Homelessness Star, was designed specifically for the homelessness sector in 2006. This Star is designed to measure change in ten core areas: motivation and taking responsibility, self-care and living skills, managing money, social networks and relationships, drug and alcohol misuse, physical health, emotional and mental health, meaningful use of time, and managing tenancy and accommodation (MacKeith, Burns, & Graham, 2006). Service providers sit down with their clients and discuss where they feel they are at in each of these areas. The Star is based on the transtheoretical or 'stages of

change' model developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1982), originally used in the addictions field to determine an individual's readiness for change (from pre-contemplation to maintenance). Service users are provided with a guide that outlines a "change ladder" (MacKeith, Burns, & Graham, 2006). On this ladder is a scale from one to ten, with an explanation of what each number means for each category. For instance, in the category of self-care, number one indicates "I don't have a problem looking after myself though others think I do" and number ten is "I can look after my place and take care of myself without outside help" (MacKeith, Burns, & Graham, 2008). After measuring each area at several points in time (generally every three months), the service user and provider can monitor change together. For a visual diagram of the Homelessness Star and the Ladder of Change, see Appendix A. Staff at the Infinity Program have been trained to use the Outcomes Star, and each primary worker is responsible for keeping track of their own clients' progress.

The Star data was collected by staff using paper and pencil, and as of my arrival, had not been entered into an electronic database. I obtained permission to photocopy the data from each participant binder (n=26), and used a marker to black out each participant's name before taking the data offsite. I indicated the age and gender of each participant on the documents⁸. An Excel database was created where each entry was given a participant code, and then the scores for each domain were entered. The number of Star assessments was calculated for each participant (for instance, youth XY completed eight different Star assessments, youth YZ completed five). To a reasonable amount of time had passed for change to occur, only participants with four or more assessments were entered into analysis (n=23), as this would indicate they had been in the

⁸ Unfortunately since the HMIS data was provided with anonymous participant codes, I was not able to cross-reference the Star data with the HMIS data.

program for at least a year. These participants all had five or more Star charts completed, with an average number of 7.7.

The Star data was analyzed in three ways. First, the average change in each domain was calculated using Excel. I computed the difference between each participant's first and last score for each area, and then calculated the mean change for all youth. For instance, if a participant scored five on managing tenancy in their first assessment and eight on their last, their score would be three. If their score was nine on the first reading and six on the last, their score would be negative three (see Figure 5.3 below for an example of calculations). These scores were added and divided by the total to determine the average. I then calculated the mean change in each domain. Second, I determined the percentage of scores that improved, stayed the same, and decreased in each domain by counting the number of Star scores that were either positive, negative, or zero, and dividing it by the total.

Figure 5.3 – *Excel Spreadsheet with Homelessness Star Calculations*

B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
M & R	SC & LS	MM	SN & R	D & A	PH	E & MH	MUoft	MT & A	Offendin
3	4	2	3	5	3	1	4	4	4
-2	0	-2	6	0	2	-2	0	-2	-7
0	2	4	1	4	4	1	-1	3	0
1	-1	-3	-4	-2	-2	-3	-2	-5	-2
2	0	-2	-5	-7	-2	-4	-1	2	0
2	3	3	1	7	1	0	2	-1	5
-1	1	-1	-2	9	3	1	-4	2	0

Third, inferential statistics were performed (paired T-tests) using SPSS to determine if Star scores changed significantly between first and last measurement, and between specific time points. I added the scores for all ten areas for each participant, so they received a score between ten and one hundred, an overall score for each assessment. In order to control for the number of Stars participants had (for instance some may have had ten while others had five), calculations

were also made based on averages at three-month intervals. In this way, I could determine if there was a significant change between first scores and three, six, nine, twelve months, and so on.

Staff interviews. Semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted with Infinity staff. This included two directors, one manager, one coordinator, and three front-line staff (n=7). Due to scheduling conflicts, I was not able to interview one of the front-line staff. The interview protocol was created using Gaetz's (2014b) Housing First Framework for Youth. Staff were first asked what each of the principles meant to them. For instance, "What does housing with no preconditions mean to you?" They were then asked if they felt that this principle was upheld at Infinity, and to elaborate on their answers giving examples. Staff were then asked about the elements of service provision in Gaetz's framework, such as housing supports. For instance, "Do you provide housing supports? How so?" They were asked if there were additional services provided that were not outlined. The management team were asked additional questions, including about how the program was created, and how decisions were made regarding the program philosophy and design. To see these protocols, see Appendix B.

Youth interviews. Due to the relatively short period of time spent in Calgary, and the numerous other types of data collected, a convenience sample of eight young people currently enrolled in Infinity was obtained (out of 26). These youth were solicited through their primary caseworkers. All eight of the youth had been in the program for at least a year, and one of them for almost three. There were five youth that identified as female, and three as male. They ranged in age from 18-24, with a mean age of 20.7 years. Four of the youth identified as Caucasian, three as Black, and one as having Indigenous identity. One youth identified as LGBTQ. They all left home before the age of eighteen, with a mean age of 14.7 years.

As the original intent of this research was to investigate whether Housing First can facilitate positive youth development (PYD)⁹, the interviews were structured based on a tool used to measure PYD in homeless and at-risk youth (Heinze, Hernandez Jozefowicz, & Toro, 2010). The tool measures the presence of the eight factors identified by Eccles and Gootman (2002) as being necessary to facilitate PYD in community agencies: appropriate structure, safety, supportive relationships (with both staff and peers), opportunities to belong, positive social norms and support for efficacy and mattering. The survey is designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative data. Participants are asked to respond to items on a four-point scale, (1) *disagree*, (2) *somewhat disagree*, (3) *somewhat agree*, and (4) *agree*. Questionnaires were administered orally so that participants could elaborate on their answers verbally. Examples of survey items include “I feel very safe here” and “I can go to staff if I need advice or to talk about personal problems”. To view the questionnaire, see Appendix C. In order to learn more about their time in the program, once the interview was completed, I sought permission to review their files, and all youth agreed and signed permission forms. Youth were given \$20 for their participation.

Qualitative data analysis. Staff and youth interviews were transcribed verbatim. These data sources, as well as relevant Infinity and Calgary Homeless Foundation documents were imported into Nvivo and analyzed thematically. The content was organized into various themes or codes developed inductively. Once the codes were identified, they were categorized into

⁹ The original intention of this research was to investigate whether Housing First can facilitate positive youth development in young people. As I proceeded with the research, the structural barriers that service providers faced in providing Housing First services to young people made me rethink my original premise, and I wanted to examine how Housing First fits into Canada’s response to homelessness in general.

larger themes or topics. For instance, the codes ‘reluctant landlords’ and ‘high rental costs’ were grouped into the larger theme of ‘housing barriers’.

Ethical Considerations

An ethics certificate was obtained from York University’s Human Participants Review Committee (HPRC). As youth experiencing homelessness are a particularly vulnerable group to conduct research with, it was critical to be aware of and follow all guidelines written by York University’s HPRC, including one document that pertains specifically to research with people who are homeless (HPRC, 2010). Homeless youth have been subjected to marginalization and multiple hardships. It is therefore the duty of researchers to ensure that all encounters with youth are respectful and that any potential risk is minimized (HPRC, 2010). This involves ensuring informed consent is provided, that the participants’ right to privacy and confidentiality is respected, and that supports are available for youth if they experience emotional discomfort as a result of their participation. Youth were provided with informed consent by discussing with them prior to the commencement of the interview the purposes of the research, what they would be asked to do, how the information would be used, and what benefits and risks could potentially result from their participation. Interviewees were informed that all information would be kept confidential and anonymous (by identifying youth with a participant number only), that they did not have to discuss topics they were uncomfortable with, and that they could cease participation at any time without penalty. The youth were informed that their participation was completely separate, and in no way impacted the services they received at the Boys and Girls Club. This information was provided in writing and reviewed orally. The youth were asked to sign two consent forms, including one for them to keep with contact information for my supervisor and myself should they have any questions. In the event that the interviews brought up

uncomfortable feelings or past trauma, I arranged for caseworkers to be available for youth once their participation was complete (with referrals if necessary), and I also ensured that I did not ask any questions about trauma they experienced in the past.

Finally, when a case study is conducted, particularly one with elements of program evaluation, presenting findings that are not flattering can present problems for the researcher, the service providers and the youth. A thorough discussion was held with the Program Management Team prior to the commencement of the research to discuss how the findings would be used and how constructive criticism would be addressed in publications.

Chapter Six

Results: The Infinity Project – Program Evaluation

In this chapter I review the findings of the program evaluation of the Infinity Project. I begin by reviewing the findings of the clarificative evaluation, or the extent to which Infinity's philosophy and program design are in line with the principles and program elements of Gaetz's (2014) Housing First for Youth Framework. After reviewing these results I make the case for why Infinity should incorporate several elements such as a positive youth development orientation, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction into a formal program framework with regular checks and evaluations to ensure they are operating according to these principles. In the second part of the chapter, the results of the impact evaluation using HMIS and Outcome Star data are revealed and discussed.

The Clarificative Evaluation: The Housing First for Youth Framework – The Principles

As mentioned previously, Infinity has six principles that are very important to the way the program operates, three of which overlap greatly with the principles of Gaetz's Housing First framework for youth (see Table 6.1 below). The six Infinity principles are very important to staff, and at least one is reviewed in each weekly staff meeting. Staff are asked to elaborate on how they used the principle in their work in the past week.

Table 6.1 – *Gaetz's Housing First Framework for Youth & The Infinity Project*

Gaetz's Housing First for Youth Principles	Infinity Project Principles
Immediate access to housing with no preconditions	Housing is a human right
Choice and self-determination	Youth voice and choice
Individualized and client-driven supports	Community supports and resources
Opportunities for meaningful activities	Accepting and meaningful relationships
Positive youth development orientation	Financial and instrumental supports
	Youth learn to be good neighbours

Immediate access to permanent housing with no housing readiness requirements.

The staff at Infinity unanimously feel that providing access to housing with no preconditions is integral to their work. Staff are adamant that Housing First means that everyone deserves housing, regardless of their current situation or barriers. In fact, one staff conveys that the very behaviours or needs that cause some programs to turn youth away are those that indicate to Infinity that a youth is a good fit for them, as it shows that they are of high acuity. Housing is seen as a fundamental human right at Infinity, and as the bedrock that allows young people to address their barriers and move forward in their lives. For instance, one staff said:

The idea is that you get them housing and you help support them in maintaining it because until they have a roof over their heads they are not going to be able to deal with all the other barriers, or have the ability to be successful...it's hard to tell someone to get job trainings done, get a resume, when at the end of the day they have no place to go.

A youth describes how housing provides the necessary foundation to move forward:

This program goes beyond housing...it applies to a lot of personal issues. Like me, I was an alcoholic, and getting housed was a big step. It's a miracle because you find a foundation to build something on...so finding that solid ground...I found my way with treatment, detox...everything like that.

If youth are evicted from their units, they are not dismissed from the Infinity Project.

Instead, staff rehouse them as many times as necessary as part of their zero discharge into homelessness policy. One staff member states:

We will intake youth no matter what, if there are spots available...we rehouse youth, so if they get evicted three or four or seven times, we will house them as soon as we can. We don't discharge youth because of their behaviours...or if they're not going to school or if they're using meth every day.

The zero discharge into homelessness policy is described as pivotal to establishing trust with youth participants. Building relationships with youth takes time, and many youth in the program have good reasons to be distrustful of adults and authority. If young people are afraid they are going to lose their housing for making a mistake, they will not let their guard down and feel safe, which staff at Infinity feel is necessary if youth are going to move forward in their lives.

Similarly, punitive policies (such as discharge from a program for negative behaviour) that are often present in shelters and other programs are seen as having the potential to rupture any progress that has been made in relationship development. Staff argue that change and progress is not linear, and youth might take one step forward and then two backwards; it is ultimately their job to work with the young people through this journey and show them that they will always be there for them. One staff speaks about the zero discharge into homelessness policy:

I think that's [discharge] an easy out for programs. It's easy to say well that kid doesn't want to engage, that kid isn't ready, so the solution is to abandon them? That doesn't make sense to me.

Several of the youth interviewed describe scenarios that would have arguably led traditional 'staircase' programs to discharge them. For instance, one youth was 25 and technically should have aged out of the program, one drank and partied in her first apartment so much that she was evicted by her landlord, and another blatantly refused to engage with staff at the beginning, saying he took off to another province for weeks without staff being aware. In all cases, their spaces in the program were preserved. Unfortunately, one youth expresses that she has felt that staff have threatened her with eviction, although it is not clear if this youth was referring to eviction from the landlord or the program:

When things don't go as planned they [staff] get really mad...threatening to evict me at a certain time if things don't go right, like if I can't pay rent on time.

Youth choice and self-determination. This principle is parallel to Infinity's "youth choice and voice" principle that the program strongly adheres to, as staff believe that if youth are going to accomplish any goals, they must be driven by the youth themselves. One staff describes how the principle of youth choice impacts his work:

For youth choice, it's pretty much whatever the kid wants I will support them, even when they are making choices I think are bad, I will never say that to them but I will talk about it and safety plan if need be...I see my role as helping them reflect on their options and hoping they'll decide for themselves what's better.

Another staff describes this principle as being applied at every stage of the program. For instance, at intake young people are asked what their goals are, and how staff can work with them to achieve them. When finding housing, the youth decide what type of housing to pursue. While staff might make suggestions or stimulate discussion, the choice is ultimately up to the youth. Of course there are limitations to the kind of housing that young people can obtain, particularly due to availability and cost. Yet even if youth are not being realistic about the type or location of housing they would like, staff state they will work with them to come to this discovery on their own rather than imposing their views on them.

Once a young person is housed, staff work with youth (via the Outcomes Star) to identify which goals they would like to pursue. The only program area that all youth have in common is housing. As the Outcomes Star is based on the theory of change model, if young people are ‘stuck’ or are in the pre-contemplation stage, staff do not force them to work on any goals, but focus on relationship building and what they refer to as harm reduction (such as safety planning, providing condoms, etc.). A couple of staff suggest that their role is to provide options for youth, while the decisions ultimately lie in the young people’s hands. One states:

I believe my job is to provide options, to explain to them the resources and options and then here – you can decide not to do any of them, but at least you know there’s options now... When they choose one way, they go, and my job is to help them get there.

For instance, if a young person wants to focus on employment despite not finishing high school, it is their choice to do so. The worker may, however, introduce particular options such as a GED course or an alternative high school should they change their minds. One staff expresses that she also lets youth decide how much contact they have with her. While some youth desire frequent contact, she describes others as being more independent, and she respects that. She works to maintain a balance between pushing them and showing that she is available for support.

The majority of the young people interviewed feel they have some degree of choice in the program, although this varies somewhat. For instance, when asked the degree to which they agree with the statement “youth have input into how things are done at this program” in the PYD questionnaire, five youth said “*agree*”, one said “*somewhat agree*” and two said “*disagree somewhat*”. When asked “I feel like my ideas count at this program” six said “*agree*”, one “*somewhat agree*”, and one “*disagree*”. Therefore, it appears that most of the youth interviewed feel like they have choices in the program and that their voice matters. One youth elaborates:

Oh yeah, we have choice. They ask you what you want to do, and I tell them what I want and they decide what they can do for you.

A couple of the youth interviewed disagree, at least somewhat, that they always have a choice and a voice. One youth said, “I get a say, but sometimes I feel decisions are made without me”.

Another said:

This program helps but it doesn't at the same time. They're not really involved in our lives and when they are they're really pushy about it...there was one time when my worker was coming over two times a week because that was her rule, and it didn't really work for me.

The concept of choice in Housing First programs is an interesting one. For instance, if youth truly have a choice, they could theoretically choose to forgo services altogether and continue to receive housing supports. Staff were asked if youth can choose to opt out of service altogether and be allowed to remain in the program. One staff responds that while there is an agreement that young people have to meet with their worker, there have been cases where youth refuse to connect for several months. In these situations, their approach has been to keep trying to engage. A member of the management team states that setting goals and having a case plan is not a condition of service but in general, this has not been an issue as most youth have goals and are eager to participate in the program. They also discuss that while we all have choices, these choices are obviously constrained. For instance, youth can choose to not pay their rent; this does

not mean that they will not be subjected to what they call “natural consequences”, including eviction. One staff discusses how they continually try to find a balance between working with the youth and supporting them, and then allowing them to experience natural consequences and learn from them. In his revised framework, Gaetz (2017) discusses the concept of choice within the context of Housing First programs for youth. He argues ‘choice’ means that:

Young people are able to make their own decisions about their goals and their future, what services they receive, and when to start using (and end) services (p.4).

He points out that using the term choice does not imply that youth can act however they would like, as all individuals have constraints on their choices. Participating in a Housing First program means that youth must agree to be in contact with their worker weekly, and if they have an income, to pay 30% on rent. If a youth ‘chooses’ not to adhere to these constraints, they are choosing not to participate in the program.

It is worth remembering that in the context of choice, how truly limited the options are for young people in the program to ‘choose’ from. For instance, how many would choose to be in a program at all if they had other options, such as a steady income or a supportive family? The choices of young people who have experienced homelessness are arguably more constrained than most, as they face numerous economic and structural barriers to moving forward in their lives. Many do not have the financial luxury of focusing on their education exclusively, nor of obtaining a job with a living wage. Hence, while the Infinity Project provides youth with ‘choice’ whenever possible, it is worth remembering how constrained their ‘choices’ really are.

Positive youth development orientation. While Infinity does not have a formal positive youth development (PYD) philosophy embedded in the program, there are many features that are conducive to this orientation. As mentioned in the methodology, a program that supports PYD recognizes the strengths and assets that youth have and works with them to build the number of

protective factors in their lives such as supportive adults, social supports, recreation, etc. Infinity is explicitly strengths-based in its mandate and staff continuously work with youth to identify and draw upon their strengths, starting at intake. Their relationship-based approach works to facilitate the presence of supportive adults in the youth's lives, and as will be shown later in this chapter, they often are successful in working with youth to engage in meaningful activities.

Infinity staff recognize that their participants are in a unique developmental stage in their lives, although they struggle somewhat to describe how the program is geared to meet youth in this stage. For instance, a couple of staff describe the need to understand that young people are discovering their dreams and deciding on career paths. For others it means being aware that youth are going to assert their independence and that some defiant behaviours can be understood in this way. The most common response was that the youth require support in transitioning into adulthood. For instance one staff states:

We talk a lot about helping our kids with the goal of adult self-sufficiency...how are we preparing you for the next step and how can we help you get there? Trying to understand what a good parent would do, but recognize that we can't parent kids who have been failed by their parents already.

Perhaps one of the most important ways that Infinity supports PYD is that although they often do define their main goal as fostering self-sufficiency, they also allow young people to remain in the program for extended periods of time, and allow the young people to make mistakes without punishing them by discharging them from the program. They describe their mistakes as learning opportunities, which for young people who are just discovering their way in the world is paramount. Youth are in a stage where they are exploring their identities, considering educational and career paths and having new experiences. This process takes time, and unconditional support and guidance from adults during this time is pivotal. Yet this process is much more complex for young people that are homeless given their high likelihood of

experiencing complex trauma, their distrust of authorities and systems and high rates of educational disengagement. Achieving stability from crisis, developing relationships and having youth move forward in their lives takes time, and this journey is generally not linear. Infinity staff talk about this journey regularly, and will not rush a young person to leave the program based on any arbitrary timeframe, thereby supporting their healthy transition to adulthood.

Individualized and client-driven supports. Staff describe individualized care as the foundation of service provision at the Infinity Project. One manager elaborates:

We moved away from the kids fitting into the program rather than the program fitting the kids...[the program has] a real client-centred perspective.

Depending on the goals of the young people, case plans and services can be geared toward employment, education, addictions, counselling, or any number of things. Rental subsidies are decided on an individual basis as well, depending on the income of the young person and what their case plan is. One manager states that staff from other programs will ask them for their program model or curriculum, and this is difficult because case plans are geared toward each youth, with varying skills and needs. This staff further explains that young people vary in their readiness to change, and staff must adjust the way they work with each youth to accommodate this.

The managers spoke about how individualized care can be challenging for front-line staff as they are asked to be comfortable with ambiguity rather than with black-and-white rules and programs. One said:

The hardest part for front-line staff is that grey...we talk about walking with them [the youth] until they're ready, but sometimes you don't get that right. Sometimes we say the kid should do that on their own now, we've taken them to four appointments and they should do the fifth one on their own...and something happens and we're like, oh we didn't get that right...that happens all the time and there isn't an answer...That's just the way it is, there's so much grey and the kids are such individuals and there are so many factors, there's never a black-and-white answer.

In light of this individualized care, staff were asked about the process they undergo when making important decisions. Staff describe bouncing ideas off of one another and having in-depth discussions in team meetings and supervisions. As the quote above illustrates, staff describe trying to make the best decision possible for each situation, but admit they do not always get it right. The youth interviewed in general feel they are treated equally, as five youth said “*agree*” to the statement “I am treated the same as other people at this program”, while two said “*agree somewhat*”, and one “*disagree*”. This latter youth elaborates:

I would like to get treated similar to other people. Some people are not paying rent as much as other people when they’re both working...and some people will get like five warnings and others get like one warning. So it’s kind of like everyone is getting treated differently.

Opportunities for meaningful engagement. This principle is similar to Infinity’s principle of “building community”. Infinity staff work with youth to find meaningful activities and to facilitate some form of community integration, however the youth define ‘community’. Staff refer to this as developing their “natural supports”. This is achieved by connecting youth to volunteer opportunities, making referrals to community agencies, re-establishing and strengthening family relationships, and connecting them to recreational activities. The Infinity Project also hosts several community events, which a few of the youth speak very positively about, including a summer barbeque and holiday dinners. In fact two of the youth describe these events as making them feel like they are part of a family. For one youth, the only way Infinity can improve is to facilitate more of these gatherings:

More gatherings, like bringing youth together more often than like thanksgiving and Christmas...I think it’s really good for a lot of the youth in the program, from the backgrounds that a lot of us come from...to have more healthy gatherings of friends. If they did like a dinner or a movie night, or something like that.

Most of the youth interviewed feel that they are a part of some form of a community. For instance, six of the youth “*agree*” with the statement “I feel I am part of a group or community”

(either geography or group of people)”, two “*agree somewhat*”, and one “*disagree*”. Three of the youth said the community they feel a part of is Infinity. One youth socializes regularly with a group of musicians, one is a part of a mixed martial arts community, and one feels he is part of a community as he is a DJ at a Caribbean nightclub. One youth is a refugee and speaks about how he struggled upon first coming to Canada, but Infinity staff connected him to various activities:

In the beginning it was a struggle...it's a different culture...a huge difference... they [Infinity staff] help us...they help to discover some activity, to go to pools, discover things I never had in my life...to meet with staff and youth and go to parks and things like that.

One young person describes being introduced to some Indigenous cultural experiences (although she does not identify as Indigenous) such as smudges and sweat lodges, experiences which she values tremendously and plans to continue to be involved in.

While staff work hard to support community integration, social isolation is an ongoing concern for youth. One staff asserts that it is possible that due to their large caseloads and the ongoing work of securing basic needs, sometimes the integration piece falls off the radar or can become less of a priority. Another staff describes how some youth begin to display behavioural issues when they first move into an apartment, as they are not used to being alone. This concern has led some to suggest that congregate care settings, such as transitional housing, are an important option for young people as it can foster a sense of ‘family’ or community (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2011). The management staff at Infinity, however, adamantly disagree with this. One manager expresses that congregate care can create an artificial community where young people are placed together by virtue of their homelessness rather than other uniting factors (such as values, culture, interests, etc.). Furthermore, too much effort has to be put into policing the youth in these circumstances by virtue of the shared environment. This staff argues that these settings have a tendency to only serve the lowest acuity youth, and to do so at a tremendous

financial cost. Another staff comments that youth cannot stay in shelters and group homes their whole lives and at some point they are going to have to learn to live on their own. It is ideal for them to learn to live alone with the support of the Infinity program who can help them adjust and connect them to resources.

One staff exclaims that integrating youth into their communities is a vital part of their job, and if the youth feels isolated, it is their responsibility:

You put them there [in housing] and unless you don't want this kind of work, they become your responsibility. If they become isolated, if they believe that they do not belong, then you need to ask yourself, the workers, the program, the agency, what have you done? Have you done enough for the client? You cannot blame the client.

The Clarificative Evaluation: The Housing First for Youth Framework - The Program

The Infinity Project program framework is designed to provide individualized supports geared to each person. While many of the components of Gaetz's framework are incorporated into the program in some way, it is largely informally, including the positive youth development framework (outlined above), the trauma-informed perspective and harm reduction.

Staff were asked to articulate the goals of the program. The majority of answers focused on the themes of self-sufficiency and independence. For instance, one staff said, "Ultimately our goal would be to help youth become self-sufficient adults and contributing members of society". Another said, "Our goal is that kids are going to successfully transition and be self-sufficient adults". One manager said "We talk a lot about transitioning kids out of homelessness into housing and we talk about transitioning kids from youth to adult". Although there is a 'checklist' with several items that must be in place before a youth is deemed ready to graduate the Infinity staff use this more as a guide, and like everything else, make the decision of when a youth is ready to graduate individually and in consultation with the youth. This list includes having youth

paying their own rent for several months, having a source of income, and taking care of other items such as obtaining ID, among others.

Theory of change. According to various program documents and staff, the relationship between staff and youth is the agent of change in the program, or according to one staff, is “where the magic happens”. It is through the relationship that youth feel safe to discuss their goals and barriers and staff can feel comfortable challenging the youth when necessary. As many young people have experienced trauma and have had negative experiences with adults and authorities, building trust is crucial. One staff elaborates on this:

The biggest problem is trust. Because they [the youth] don’t think you really care about them, or that you’re not going to stick around for any length of time to make an impact in their lives.

The youth interviewed generally report that they have developed a good relationship with at least one staff member, although one youth suggests her feelings toward her worker are ambivalent. Seven youth “*agree*” with the statement “there is at least one person I know at this program whose advice I really trust” while one said “disagree somewhat”. Similarly, six “*agree*” with the statement “when I feel lonely there are several people at this program I can talk to” and two “*disagree*”. Finally, five “*agree*” with the statement “staff really help and support the youth at this program”, two “*agree somewhat*”, and one said “*disagree*”.

Staff depict the process of developing a relationship as taking time, often six months to one year before trust is established. When they first start working with a youth, staff will take them for coffee or lunch just to chat rather than immediately focusing on their goals. One of the youth describes how this really helped her feel comfortable at Infinity:

One of the things I really like about Infinity staff is they don’t pry...if I say I don’t want to talk about it, they’ll just leave it alone. They let you come to them and talk to them and open up...and a lot of other places pry which is why I know a lot of youth don’t talk to workers - because they pry. Like when they first meet you it’s like ‘oh why are you here?’ and ‘how did you get here?’ and it’s like no, no, no...but at Infinity they’re

like, ‘hey, want to go get a burger?’.

A major challenge in developing the relationship between staff and young people is a high staff turnover. All eight youth participants have had more than one worker, and some have had several (an average of 3.4 workers). When asked what could lead to the high turnover, staff propose several reasons. They describe the nature of the work as being difficult, even scary for workers who must go out into the community. They suggest that some staff find it difficult to balance their work with self-care, and this can lead to burnout. It can also be difficult for staff when they do not see their youth ‘succeed’ the way they hope they will. Finally, front-line work does not pay a lot. Management also notes that several of their staff have been promoted and that their turnover rates are lower than others at the Boys and Girls Club Calgary, such as the emergency shelter.

Another challenge in developing relationships is the crisis-laden nature of the work. Management describe how it can be easy for staff to become preoccupied with “putting out fires” or responding to crises, which can divert from relationship development. One said:

When a lot of the kids are in crisis, all the staff are doing is responding to crisis. And we’ve had to sit them down and be like no, we need to get back to building relationships. You need to spend time with the kid that’s not phoning you in a crisis and you need to hang out with that kid when they aren’t in crisis.

Housing supports. When asked about their job duties, staff at Infinity describe a triage of responsibilities in which housing is the most pressing concern. Housing support workers search for housing with youth, go to apartment viewings, work with young people to understand their lease and responsibilities, physically move the youth, and support them in maintaining their housing. Maintenance includes teaching youth how to be good neighbours, mediating with landlords and working with youth to make sure their rent is paid.

Most of the housing that young people obtain are apartments or basement suites in the community, although Infinity does own one apartment building called 'Treehouse' with eight units and has block renting with another apartment building called 'Batcave'. While the type of housing that youth obtain is ultimately up to them, staff generally recommend that young mothers and youth under 18 live in the building they own as there is more flexibility, and staff generally find it more difficult to find landlords that are willing to rent to youth under the age of 18. Higher-risk individuals are generally housed in the community as staff find that they might impact the other youth in the building and they don't want too many high-risk individuals living in one space.

Developing relationships with landlords is an important part of the work Housing Support Workers do. Many landlords are reluctant to rent their units to young people because they are afraid the youth will party all the time, damage their unit, or not pay their rent. While staff are upfront about some of the risks, they reassure landlords that the rent will be paid, and that they will fix any damages done to the units. They describe the goals of program and assure landlords that they will be there to support the young people. It is ultimately up to the landlords if they decide to evict the young people, and staff are agreeable to finding another youth who might be more suitable for the unit. Staff state that they have many landlords who are eager to participate, and whom they have an ongoing relationship with. Other landlords reluctantly agree and if something happens, do not take any more youth.

While the Housing Workers recognize the importance of providing housing services for youth, they assert that this takes up the majority of their time, diverting from other important job responsibilities such as relationship development. Staff spend a great deal of time searching for housing and physically helping the young people move as there is no funding available to help

with this. At a staff meeting I attended, staff were currently looking for housing for eight (or 27%) of their youth for the first of the upcoming month. Given that there are only four housing support workers, staff state that this can be overwhelming. The high volume of moves generally occurs for two reasons. First, the housing available to young people is limited and second, participants move somewhat frequently, partly due to evictions.

The front-line staff unanimously express having trouble finding affordable housing in Calgary, as did a few of the youth. Staff describe going through countless rental listings and websites such as Kijiji, but the number of units that are affordable are limited. Often, when a unit is listed, there is strong competition for it, and even when staff do find a potential unit, it goes quickly. It was common for staff to speak about the vacancy rate in Calgary as being under 1% (although at the time of this research it was 1.4%, CHF, 2015) and the number of units available to their youth being even less by virtue of their cost and the number of landlords willing to rent to them. One youth describes the challenge in getting housing:

It's hard to get housing, it's not the program's fault. It's just harder to get housing, and a lot of places once they hear a program is subsidizing part of your rent and you're on social assistance, and oh you have an animal! They never call you. It's tough in this city.

Two additional barriers staff cite include the major flood that Calgary experienced in June of 2013 which damaged many housing units, and the lack of rent control in Alberta. Without rent control, landlords can raise rent levels at their own discretion, making it difficult to have units remain affordable.

Interestingly, management at Infinity question whether finding housing is as difficult as the front-line staff let on. After hearing this complaint from staff frequently, one manager decided to search for units herself. She made a few calls and was able to view several apartments immediately. She said she was going to go back to staff to see if her experience was a “fluke” or

if they could use more support in “selling” the program to landlords. Another manager said that she has heard from the funder (Calgary Homeless Foundation) that the Infinity program is somewhat more successful in finding apartments than the other programs they fund. The front-line staff indicate they would like the program to add a housing worker to the team, or an additional staff member whose primary job responsibility is to find and secure housing for the young people. Management however, feels that searching and acquiring housing with the young person is an important part of the relationship development process, and there are often numerous learning opportunities that occur through housing issues, such as frequent moves, etc. that the youth workers can utilize in mentoring the youth.

The youth move somewhat frequently either by choice or due to evictions. All eight of the youth interviewed moved at least once, and one moved five times. The reasons for this vary. For instance, some youth do not like the unit they live in, or do not find it desirable geographically. One of the youth I interviewed describes his unit as run-down and uncomfortable. Another youth moved to be closer to his school. Youth are evicted somewhat frequently as well. Some of the reasons include partying, bringing too many guests over, playing music too loud, and smoking in the units. Often youth are given warnings before they are evicted but continue the undesirable behaviours. One staff asserts that one youth was evicted after experiencing blatant racism at the hands of his landlord, including name-calling and derogatory comments.

Health and wellbeing. Two important components of health and wellbeing identified in Gaetz’s framework are trauma-informed practice and harm reduction. Staff speak about both of these philosophies quite regularly, although it is not always clear how staff define them or how formally they are structured into the program. A trauma-informed practice is one that

acknowledges the role that previous trauma has played in clients' lives, and the effect this trauma can have on behavioural or psychological concerns (Bussey & Wise, 2008). Harris and Fallot (2001) suggest that trauma-informed practice will take previous trauma into account when working with individuals, ensure that staff do not re-traumatize clients, adjust working styles to accommodate each person's capacity, and assist clients in managing their trauma successfully. While I was at the program, the coordinator passed around an article to staff about trauma-informed care, and informed them that there would be a speaker coming in a few weeks to present on the topic. Staff are required to complete training on trauma-informed practice as well as for providing care to Indigenous peoples in light of their history of inter-generational trauma. Management speak about trauma-informed care as an alternative to traditional behavioural modification practices in the homelessness sector. For instance, in the shelter system, youth are often discharged in an attempt to modify particular behaviours or so that they are not 'rewarded' for negative behaviour such as substance use. Alternatively, management describes trauma-informed practice as trying to understand where 'negative' behaviours come from rather than trying to change them:

Trauma-informed [practice] talks about not dealing with the behaviour, it's all about asking what's behind the behaviour...I think we've moved from parenting kids to coaching and mentoring kids.

A couple of the front-line staff were unsure how to articulate what trauma-informed practice is, but indicate that it is an important part of their work. To these staff, trauma-informed care is synonymous with providing safety and security to young people and developing relationships.

Another front-line staff very eloquently illustrates what trauma-informed practice means to her:

When we're working with youth, providing them with services, we need to be mindful of what their experiences have been, and what kind of trauma, and making sure that the work we're doing is in line with whatever trainings we've gotten about trauma to make sure we're not re-traumatizing them...making sure we're being really sensitive to what they've been through.

While Infinity staff describe trauma-informed practice as being part of their work, it is not implemented in a structured or methodical way. There was no mention of it in the program documents, and some staff were unable to articulate what it is and how it impacts their work. It is also unclear how often staff discuss their work and their ability to operate in a trauma-informed manner, and there is no method in place to evaluate whether they are doing so.

Harm reduction is also implemented in informal ways at the Infinity program, particularly if defined as an approach that does not require youth to remain sober as a condition of being in the program. As a practice, staff describe harm reduction as a way to ensure that young people are safe, and to reduce the chances that negative consequences will result from particular aspects of young people's lives, such as in relationships, while doing sex work, and when using substances. Staff state they provide numbers for the on-call staff, emergency transportation, and make sure youth have condoms. One staff elaborates:

I say have fun, but let's think about it. Fun is fun, but what if something happens, who can you call? Make sure you don't get into a vehicle if someone is drunk, make sure you know the number of the RCMP and do you have a cell phone that actually works?

Harm reduction as a formal approach, however, requires more than literally reducing harm in particular situations. Harm reduction can involve a variety of approaches depending on the readiness of a young person to stop using substances and is an active approach that uses techniques such as motivational interviewing to support youth in making incremental change over time, without making it mandatory (Gaetz, 2014a). Staff require specialized training to utilize this approach. While Infinity does not require abstinence of their clients and absolutely works with youth around safety planning and reducing harm whenever possible, it is informal in nature, and not an active harm reduction approach.

Income and education. Once youth are housed, staff work with them to pursue some form of education and/or employment and secure an income, depending on their case plan. Four of the youth I interviewed were enrolled in school. For instance, two were attending a school for young parents full-time, one was enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL), and one was on maternity leave. Another was starting school in the next couple of months to learn about human resources. There are some conflicting responses from staff about the resources available to youth that are pursuing an education. For instance, one staff speaks about the ample opportunities to which youth can avail:

In Calgary and Alberta there are a lot of different ways that it's [school] paid for. There's a lot of support...[we have a] fundraiser manger and he always secures some kind of scholarship for our kids...there's also a lot of paid school programs in Alberta.

This staff also indicates that the Infinity Project will fully cover the youth's rent while they are in school so that they may focus on that. In contrast, a manager expresses the desire to have more resources for youth to pursue an education:

I think we would like to see more supports for kids to finish school...so right now kids can access student financing but there's really rigid rules about that...and the kids we serve aren't going to go to school for eight hours a day, and that's one of the requirements for funding.

Another staff indicates that it is difficult for students to obtain funding on a part-time basis, which is problematic as a lot of their youth need to go back to school in a gradual manner rather than jumping straight to full-time studies as they have been out of school for some time or have not been successful in school previously. The staff member continues that they also need a safety net in case they 'fail' at school. Current student funding requires students to attend full-time, and funding is withdrawn immediately should a youth stop attending or not maintain passing grades. When asked if the program can cover their rent while in school, in contrast to what the staff above said, she said "We don't have the budget for that, but that's what we wish for".

Securing an income (particularly a living wage), whether through employment or government, can be very challenging for Infinity youth. Staff describe many stipulations to receive Alberta Works (AW), and even more for disability benefits, called Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH). When youth do receive these, the amounts are abysmal. One youth describes his experience trying to live on AW, only to ultimately be cut off, and how difficult it can be to pursue an education without an adequate income:

They [AW] cut me off. It wasn't big money...like \$600. But I could survive a little bit. And then they cut me off and it was hard with my renting and my food...my school is going to be full-time, and it's scary.

Staff describe providing support to youth around employment, including resume support, job search, and mock interviews. At least one youth, however, states that he would like if staff could provide more support around finding employment. Unfortunately, staff describe the struggle many of their youth face in finding jobs that pay a living wage. For instance, one said:

The employment they can get is pretty low wage. And it's hard for them to find employment. A lot of employers are kind of like landlords, not willing to give them a chance...they don't have the highest education or experience, or a resume even...A lot of them can't put anything on a resume because they don't have any references.

In light of these barriers, it is not surprising, as will be shown in the following chapter, that the outcomes around accessing employment training and an adequate income for youth in the Infinity Project are modest.

Complimentary supports. Infinity staff provide many complimentary supports, including life skills development, advocacy, referrals, and when appropriate, family reconnection. Life skills are taught on a case-by-case basis rather than as a 'program' or curriculum per se. As youth come into the program with varying levels of skills sets and knowledge, staff work with youth based on their needs. For instance, some youth may need help

learning how to cook, do laundry, grocery shop, open a bank account, or create a budget, to name a few. One staff states:

Like skills development is in everything we do with them [the youth]. So we don't offer groups, we teach kids how we were taught. Like your mom taught you how to open a bank account or your dad taught you how to make spaghetti. That's how we believe in teaching life skills, not bringing 20 kids in the room and trying to teach them all the same thing. It's about individual skill development.

Unfortunately, as of the time this research was conducted, the Infinity Project did not have a way to evaluate this component of their program.

Central to the work done at Infinity is referral services. As the staff at Infinity are case managers, there are a lot of services their clients require that they cannot provide directly. The services youth are referred to vary tremendously, and can include counselling, the food bank, or immigration services. One frequent referral that staff identify is to the Alex, a community health centre that has doctors, counsellors and psychiatrists. Unfortunately, staff express that there is a shortage of social services for youth, particularly mental health and addiction services. Youth are often subjected to long wait lists or complicated bureaucratic procedures they find difficult to navigate. In this sense, staff must often advocate for their client. Advocacy services is described as essential to all the work the Housing Support Workers do, both internally in their agency and externally in the community. One staff elaborates on this point:

We have to advocate to everybody. Sometimes we have to advocate to my manager or coordinator about something a kid needs...I'll go in and say no, we need this for this kid. I advocate all the time with landlords. I have to advocate to get my kids services from pretty much anyone. If we have to get them into counselling, or mental health assistance, anything that has a waitlist. [This job] requires a lot of advocating for youth.

Several of the other supports identified in Gaetz's framework are provided through a combination of direct supports at Infinity and external referrals, including providing support for youth with children. In this regard, Housing First is a great alternative for young parents as most

emergency shelters and transitional housing programs are for individuals only. There were several young women at the time of this research that were either pregnant or parenting in the Infinity Project. In fact, two of the youth participants interviewed in this study had young children, and one was about to give birth. Infinity is very supportive in terms of ensuring they have their basic needs met, but it was through referrals that the young ladies were able to access prenatal support and educational services. The two aforementioned young women both attend a school for young parents, which allows them to get their high school diploma, take parenting classes, and receive support from youth in similar situations.

Finally, family reconnection is an area identified by the Housing First framework for youth. As Infinity works within a network of other programs at the Boys and Girls Club in Calgary (BGCC) (see page 83), in theory, by the time youth are referred to the Infinity Project, moving to a family member's house has been ruled out, and they are deemed in need of independent living. Family reconnection, however, can refer to numerous elements, including strengthening existing relationships and seeking out extended family, even if returning home is not an option. Infinity staff speak about the importance of youth establishing contact with their families. One staff speaks about how almost all young people she works with desires some form of connection with their families, and they work with them to set appropriate boundaries and communicate effectively. They also operate in partnership with the Fusion Program, the program of BGCC whose entire focus is on family reconnection (e.g. by trying to keep a youth at home, providing family counselling, etc.). There are also cases when the youth return home and Infinity continues to work with them as if they were in independent housing. This is viewed as a positive outcome as ideally they would like to see their youth return home or be with family, providing the environment is healthy. One staff elaborates:

At some point they [the youth] may lose housing and they go home for a bit...And it's not like there's any limits...ok you have to stay at home for six months or if you stay longer you'll get kicked out, because for us, the goal is to actually get them back home. That's probably the best thing we can do, because a lot of these individuals are really young and it's hard to be independent. So home is not a negative thing for us, we work with the kid.

Interestingly, despite the numerous services and supports available at Infinity, a few of the young people interviewed state that they only require support obtaining basic needs (including housing), and in fact prefer to be independent. One said, "I'm not really about the program, I'm out trying to do my own thing". Another youth said that the program helps her with rent but otherwise she is pretty independent. In fact she expresses the desire to be in another type of program where you do not have to be in as frequent communication with a worker, but they still help you with rent. Another youth emphasizes that she does not need the program for anything other than housing:

I was already mature and knew where I was before I came into the program...
They didn't really help me with getting my shit together, they helped with housing me.

The Impact Evaluation: Youth Outcomes

In addition to determining the extent to which Infinity adheres to the Housing First for Youth Framework, I analyzed data collected from HMIS and the Outcomes Star to determine whether program participants have been achieving the outcomes that Infinity, and its funder the CHF, have deemed to be important. These include housing retention, increased enrolment in employment training and education, improvement in mental and physical health and substance use, and a decreased use of public services (including the basic needs received from Infinity), public health and interactions with the criminal justice system. Below I review these findings, starting with the intake and discharge data from HMIS, followed by the outcome data. I then present the findings from the Outcomes Star.

HMIS Data

Intake data. Between the first quarter of the 2011-2012 year and the end of the second quarter of 2014-2015, the Infinity Project had 31 intakes, or new youth join the program (see Table 6.2). The majority of the intakes occurred in the first two years, decreasing to four in 2013-2014, and two in the first half of 2014-2015. The relatively low number of intakes is the result of youth remaining in the program for about two years, and sometimes longer. The youth ranged in age from 16-22 at intake, with a mean age of 18.1. Interestingly, the majority of new Infinity participants were 18 or younger at intake (21 young people or 68%). The remaining ten, or 32% were between the ages of 18-22. Eighteen of these youth (58%) were female, and thirteen, or 42% were male. This is an overrepresentation of females when compared to the literature on youth homelessness, which generally has males outnumber females at a 2:1 ratio. This may mean that there is an overrepresentation of females at Infinity, or it may be reflective of the ability of Housing First programs to better reach females who due to safety concerns are generally part of the ‘hidden’ homeless population. Much of the counts on homeless youth are based on street and shelter counts, spaces that males are more likely to occupy. Only three youth were not Canadian citizens, with two being Permanent Residents and one a Refugee. Just over half of the youth were Caucasian, or 55% (17 young people). Close to a third were of Indigenous background (ten youth or 32%), and three young people (10%) were listed as African or Caribbean. The one remaining youth was listed as ‘other’. The overrepresentation of Indigenous participants is congruent with the literature on youth homelessness, particularly in Calgary.

Fourteen youth, or 45% were listed as chronically homeless (meaning they were homeless for a year or more) while the rest were episodically homeless. At the time of intake, 21 or 68% of youth were listed as absolutely homeless, meaning they were living on the streets or a

shelter. Nine youth (29%) were released from a public institution in the past twelve months, with three (10%) being released from a correctional facility, one from a mental health institution, five from a health center. None were released from an addictions institution. Twelve young people, or 39%, had contact with the health care system in the past 12 months that they were homeless. Five youth, or 16% were listed as having been evicted from a residence in the past 12 months.

Table 6.2- *HMIS Intake Data*

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2011-2012	1	2	5	3	11
2012-2013	2	7	2	2	13
2013-2014	2	1	0	2	5
2014-2015	0	2	-	-	2
					31

At the time of intake, about a quarter of youth (eight youth or 26%) were recorded as being employed, with two of them full-time and six part-time. One (3%) was listed as being in part-time employment training. Ten young people (32%) were enrolled in some form of education, with seven in full-time school and three in part-time. Only three youth, or 10%, were recorded as “not-employable” or “impacted by major barriers like health or addiction”. Three youth had completed their high school diploma (10%), while the majority, 21 youth or 68%, were recorded as having “some high school”.

Many of the youth presented at intake with physical and mental health concerns and addictions. Seven youth (23%) were listed as having an ongoing mental health condition, either treated or untreated. Half of the young people were recorded as having substance abuse issues (16 or 52%). Most of these, or thirteen of the sixteen, were listed as untreated. Six youth had physical health conditions (19%), two of which were listed as untreated. About a quarter (eight

youth or 26%) of participants had been in foster care, and one (3%) had Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Discharge data. A total of 21 participants were discharged from the program between the first quarter in the year 2011-2012 and the end of the second quarter in 2014-2015 (see Table 6.3 below). One of these discharge entries had multiple sections left blank in their assessment, so the majority of the figures below are based on data from the remaining 20 discharges. Thirteen (62%) resulted from participants completing the program, while seven (33%) did not. These results are comparable (slightly better) with the general HMIS data released by the CHF (2015), which shows that 39% of young people leave for ‘negative’ reasons. The number of months spent in the program for all of the discharges varied tremendously, with a mean of 23.8 (SD = 12.6), or approximately two years. This varied from 5 to 48 months. For those that completed the program, the average number of months was 27 (SD=10.4), and ranged from 7 to 41 months. This number was lower for those that did not complete the program, at 17.9 months (SD=14.9), with a range of 5 to 48 months.

Table 6.3 - *HMIS Discharge Data*

Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2011-2012	3	3	0	2	8
2012-2013	3	1	0	2	6
2013-2014	0	0	1	3	4
2014-2015	1	2	-	-	3
Total					21

Exit destinations were available for 18 of the discharges and are listed in Table 6.4 below. Nine of the youth, or 45%, were reported to be living in rental units, seven of which were unsubsidized. Other locations included couch surfing, long-term supportive housing, and for one, owning a home. Five of the youth were listed as “other”, which included three in independent living (it is not clear how this varies from the accommodations listed above), one with his/her

mother, and one moved out of the city. Unfortunately in three cases (15%) their exit destination was unknown.

Table 6.4 – *Exit destinations*

Exit Destination	# of Youth	%
Own Home	1	4.3
Rental – Subsidized	2	8.7
Rental – Unsubsidized	7	30.4
Supportive Housing	1	4.3
Couch Surfing	2	8.7
Other	5	21.7

While the small sample size does not allow for generalizations to be made, in this sample, younger, Caucasian males were the most likely to be part of the group that did not finish the program. The average age that participants were discharged was 19.8, although crosstab analysis revealed that only two youth that completed the program were 19 or younger (one was 19 and one was 17), and only two that did not finish the program were over the age of 20 (one was 21 and one was 22), suggesting that older youth are more likely to finish the program. The discharges were evenly split among genders, with ten males and ten females. When cross-tab analysis was conducted with program completion, there was only one female that did not complete the program; the remaining six were male. The ethnicity of the participants at discharge was only listed for 19 youth. Of these, thirteen were reported as Caucasian, three Indigenous, and three as ‘other’. Of those that did not complete the program, five were Caucasian, one was Indigenous, and the other ethnicity was not listed.

Housing retention. Housing retention was calculated in two ways. First, housing status was compared at two different HMIS assessment points: first assessment (three months) and at twelve months for all participants who had four or more assessments (n=28), and at first and last assessment for participants who had six or more assessments (n=22), to see if participants were

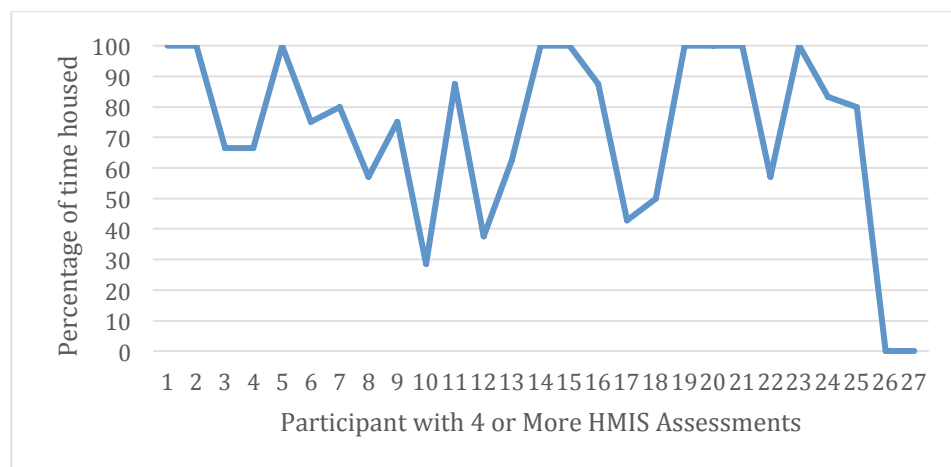
housed at both points in time. Second, the percentage of time that participants were housed was calculated by adding the total number of times youth were listed as being housed at each assessment and dividing it by the total number of HMIS assessments.

Table 6.5 – *Housing Retention Rates, First and Twelve Months and First and Last Assessments*

Timeframe between Assessments	Percentage Housed at Both Times
1 st – 12 months	56%
1 st – last assessment	68%

As seen above in Table 6.5, 56% of participants were housed at both first and twelve-month assessments, and 68% were housed at both first and last assessment. Participants were housed on average 73% of their time in the program. As seen below in Figure 6.1, this percentage ranged from 0-100%, where ten participants were housed 100% of the time and two were housed 0% of the time. Of the 28 participants, sixteen (57%) had changes in their permanent housing status over the course of their journey in Infinity. Participants were rehoused an average of 2.41 times, although this number ranged from 0 to 6 times.

Figure 6.1 - *Participant Housing Retention (%)*



Changes across time. Using the HMIS assessments taken while the participants were in the program (i.e. every three months), changes were calculated for several domains including

mental and physical health, substance use and contact with public institutions between two different points in time: between first assessment (i.e. at three months in program) and twelve-month assessment for all participants with at least four assessments (n=27), and first and last assessments for those with six or more assessments (n=22). Changes in a ‘positive’, or desired, direction was also calculated. For instance, a change from not being enrolled in education at first assessment to being enrolled in the twelfth month would be considered positive. Caution should be exercised in interpreting whether such changes were positive or not, however, as the context in which the change occurs is unknown. In this example, a positive change might not be observed in between months if a participant was in school throughout their time in Infinity. Alternatively, a youth might have a change that initially looks ‘negative’ such as going from being enrolled in school to not, but this could mean that the youth graduated. For a list of the percentage of youth that experienced change in each of the domains, see Table 6.6 below.

Table 6.6 - *Changes From First HMIS Assessment to Twelve Month and Last Assessments*

Item	% Change 1st-12th month (n=27)	% “Positive” Change 1st-12th month	% Change 1st-Last (n=22)	% “Positive” Change 1st – Last
Employment Training	11%	4%	22%	15%
Education	30%	19%	23%	14%
Physical Health	22%	7%	27%	9%
Mental Health	37%	0%	27%	23%
Contact Health System	44%	11%	55%	32%
Contact Police	30%	15%	59%	
Addiction	37%	4%	50%	32%

Employment training and education status. Participants did not spend a large percentage of their time in the program in employment training, either full-time or part-time. On average, participants were in training 10% of their time in the program. Fifteen participants

(56%) were not in training at any point in the program. Three participants experienced a change in employment training status between their first and twelve-month assessments (11%), one from not being in training to being enrolled in full-time employment training, and two from full-time training to not being in training at all (which could indicate they completed training).

Unfortunately, whether these young people obtained employment after training is unknown.

When assessed from first to last assessment listed, five experienced a change, with four participants, or 15%, changing from not being enrolled in training to being enrolled full-time.

In regards to education, participants spent an average of 34% of their time during the program enrolled in school. Eight participants (30%) experienced a change in their education status between their first and twelve month assessments, and of these, five (19%) changed from not being enrolled in school to either full-time or part-time enrolment. Three participants (14%) changed from not being enrolled to being enrolled between their first and last assessments (one full-time and two part-time).

Mental and physical health. There were several options for staff to fill out in regards to each youth's physical and mental health statuses. They could enter 'no', indicating there were no known conditions, 'yes – untreated', 'yes – treated', or 'yes – both treated and untreated'. The participants' mental and physical health statuses generally varied a few times throughout their journey. The desired change would be from 'yes' to either health concern to 'yes-treated' or 'no'. Six participants (22%) experienced a change in their physical health status between their first and twelve month assessments, but none were in the 'desired' direction¹⁰. Six participants (27%) experienced changes between their first and last recorded assessment. Of these, five changed

¹⁰ Of these changes, two were changes from no reported health issues to 'yes - treated', and one from 'yes-treated' to 'no-untreated', and one from 'no' to 'decline to answer'.

from ‘no’ to ‘yes’ (one treated, two untreated, two both treated and untreated), and two went from ‘yes-treated’ to either ‘no’ or ‘don’t know’. It is difficult to assign value to these differences, as changing from ‘no’ health concerns to ‘yes’ is arguably negative, but this could also be considered positive if a concern was identified and then treated (as is the case in one). Similarly, changing from having a health concern (albeit a treated one) to no is arguably a positive result, but it is not clear how the program assisted in this if it was already treated. If these latter situations are deemed ‘positive’ then the desired change occurred in 9.1% of cases from first to last assessments.

There were ten participants (37%) whom experienced changes in their mental health status between their first and twelve-month assessments. Eight of these were from ‘no’ to some form of ‘yes’ (two were listed at ‘treated’, six ‘untreated’). One participant went from ‘don’t know’ to ‘yes-untreated’ and one went from ‘yes-treated’ to ‘no-untreated’. When comparing from first to last assessment, seven participants (32%) experienced change in their mental health status, six of which were from no to yes (two untreated, one treated, three both treated and untreated) and one from yes-treated to no. At first glance it appears that the mental health of participants is *decreasing* as they participate in the Infinity program. Perhaps a more likely explanation is that as youth feel more comfortable with Infinity staff they become more likely to disclose mental health concerns, or as staff get to know the youth better they are more able to identify potential mental health challenges. Once again, it is difficult to ascertain which of these changes can be deemed ‘positive’ as changing from no to yes can seem like a negative change. If they are treated, however, (to some extent) this could arguably be a positive step forward. Similarly, if a participant changes from ‘yes-treated’ to ‘no’, this could also be a positive, but once again, it is not clear how the program is responsible if it was already treated. If these cases

are viewed as ‘positive’, then arguably 23% of participants experienced a positive change in their mental health from first to last assessment.

In regards to addiction, the ‘desired’ change would be from ‘yes’ to either ‘yes-treated’ or ‘no’. While ten participants (37%) experienced a change in addiction status between first and twelve-month assessments, the nature of these changes was highly variable. The most common change, with four participants (15%), was a change from ‘no’ to ‘yes-untreated’. Only one participant (4%) changed from ‘yes-untreated’ to ‘yes-treated’. Similar to with mental health concerns, these findings could be interpreted to mean that substance use concerns get worse as participants are at Infinity. This may be the result of participants being more likely to disclose substance use concerns, or may be related to mental health difficulties, as young people begin to address these, they are more likely to self-medicate. The results from first and last known assessments were also highly variable, but somewhat more positive. While eleven (50%) experienced change between assessments, three of the last assessments indicated that participants had substance use concerns that were treated (one started as having no concern, one as ‘yes-untreated’ and one as ‘both treated and untreated’). One youth changed from ‘yes-treated’ to ‘no’, and three from ‘yes-untreated’ to yes ‘both treated and treated’. All of these can arguably be seen as positive differences (32% total with positive change). Four young people (18%) changed from ‘no’ to ‘yes untreated’, suggesting once again, that substance use can become more visible once in the program, or youth may self-medicate when they have a safe space to begin to address past trauma or mental health concerns.

Contact with public institutions. The outcomes that are the most consistent with ‘desired’ change are with contact with both the health care system and the police, particularly when comparing first to last assessments. For instance, with health care system contact, of the

twelve participants (or 44%) whose assessments varied between both first and twelve-month assessments, seven of these (26%) moved from ‘no’ contact to ‘yes’ as youth accessed treatment. When comparing first to last assessments, while there were ten participants who experienced change in contact with the health system, of these, seven cases (32%) were in the desired direction, from ‘yes’ to ‘no’, and only two (9%) went from ‘no’ to ‘yes’. These results support the notion that health care concerns are addressed for some youth at Infinity, as participants are connected to health care services in their first year, and then gradually over time as their health issues are addressed, less contact with the health system is necessary.

Similarly, participants appeared to have had less contact with the criminal justice system when comparing first and last assessments. While four young people (15%) reduced their contact with criminal justice between first and twelve-month assessments, or went from ‘yes’ to ‘no’ contact, this number was ten or 46% by first and last assessments. Only one participant changed from a ‘no’ contact to ‘yes’ in both comparisons (other changes had ‘decline to answer’). This may suggest that Infinity is successful in reducing the exposure the participants have with the legal system while in the program, particularly later in the program.

Changes in basic needs. Participants are eligible to receive numerous supports to secure their basic needs while at Infinity including a housing supplement, food and transportation. In theory, young people should be using less of these supports the longer they remain in the program and transition to self-sufficiency. Youth used an average of 4.5 basic needs at the time of their first assessment (SD = 2.8), with this number ranging from 1 to 11. At twelve-months this number dropped to 3.4 (ranging from 2 to 8), and was 3.9 (ranging from 0 to 7) at last assessment (SD = 1.6 and 1.8 respectively). At last assessment participants had used an average of 23.5 basic needs over the course of their time in the program (SD= 7.7), with a range of 14 to

40. The mean difference between the first and last assessment was -1.3 (SD = 3.2, range -10 to 4), suggesting that while the number of basic needs dropped by their last known assessment, the majority of youth were still relying on Infinity to help them with approximately three basic needs two years into the program, the point when in theory, the program is supposed to be wrapping up.

The number of referrals used by youth did not change significantly among assessments, and if anything, increased slightly as youth were in the program. For instance, at three months, youth received an average of 1.4 referrals (SD = 1.2), varying from 0 to 4. At twelve months this number dropped to .91 referrals (SD = 1.1), ranging from 0 to 4, and by last assessment it was at 1.4 (SD = 1.5), ranging from 0 to 5. The difference between first and last assessments was 0.8, suggesting that participants used the same number, or slightly more, referrals at about two years. This may indicate that as youth remain in the program they are more likely to accept help from external resources, that young people require just as many services at the ‘end’ of the program as the beginning, or that as youth begin their process of exiting the Infinity program, staff refer them to more external resources.

Participants’ income generally increased while at Infinity. While the average monthly income at three months was \$255.14 (SD = 389.4) and ranged from \$0 to \$1,300, this number jumped to \$434.26 (SD = 423.72) at twelve-months (a difference of \$179.12) with a range of \$0 to \$1,200. By last assessment the average income was \$770.31 (SD=683.89), or a difference of \$515.17, and ranged from \$0 to \$2,380. At least thirteen youth (48%) had no income at three months (and possibly more as the income of an additional eight youth was unknown at this assessment), while this number dropped to seven at the last assessment. It should be noted, however, that while the incomes did generally increase after time in the program, income levels

generally remained very low, even after two years into the program (and seven had no income at last assessment). Only three youth had incomes over \$1,500 at their last assessment, the highest being \$2,380. Young people, particularly youth who have been homeless and been disengaged from school, have low levels of education and often by virtue of their age, limited employment experience. The low incomes observed speak to the youth's modest earning potential, and the difficulties they face in becoming truly self-sufficient.

Indigenous Youth

The results of crosstab analysis show that the outcomes for Indigenous youth were generally worse than the broader group at Infinity, particularly in regards to housing retention. Data was available for ten Indigenous youth (seven females and three males), seven of whom had four or more HMIS assessments. This latter group of seven was analyzed for change throughout the program, and all ten were included for information at intake (e.g. substance use, mental health). While the percentage of time spent housed for all youth was 73%, this number was 38% for the seven entered into analysis. Indigenous youth in this sample were also rehoused the most number of times while in the program. For instance, all three of the participants that were rehoused six times (the highest number) were of Indigenous background, as were half (or two participants) of those rehoused four times, the second highest. Yet even this finding may not fully detail their housing difficulties, as some were not *rehoused* simply by virtue of not being housed to begin with. For instance, one Indigenous youth did not achieve permanent housing at all over the course of six assessments, and one was not housed three out of four times (the fourth entry was blank).

Indigenous youth did not fare well in employment training or education either. All those with four or more assessments spent an average 0% of their time in employment training, and

19% of their time in school, compared to 10% and 34% in the general sample, respectively. These youth appeared to have very complex needs as all ten were listed as having substance use issues at intake and only one of these youth went from having a substance use concern at intake to 'yes – treated' by their last known score. Four out of ten were recorded as having mental health concerns at intake, and the remaining youth had various mental health statuses throughout their journey at Infinity (i.e. from 'no' to 'yes', 'no' to 'don't know', etc.), and none of the ten youth had 'no' mental health challenges throughout their time in program. Four Indigenous youth had no income at intake, and of these, half remained at zero income throughout their time at Infinity. Of the former two, one had part-time employment at last assessment (but the recorded income was only \$80 per month), and the other had \$840 in student income at last assessment. Two of the Indigenous youth regressed in income, going from receiving some income at intake to none at last recording. One of the seven youth with more than four assessments was on Alberta Works throughout the program.

The Outcomes Star – Homelessness Star

Data was collected for twenty-six participants (those currently enrolled in Infinity minus a few new intakes), nine (35%) of which were male and seventeen (65%) female. The mean number of Stars per participant was 7.2. The majority of participants had been in the program for at least twenty-three months (only four were at shorter periods, at eight, ten, fifteen and sixteen months respectively). To ensure that a 'sufficient' amount of time had passed in the program, and participants had a reasonable amount of time to experience change, only participants that had four or more Star assessments were entered into analysis (they in fact all had five or more)(n=23).

Change across each domain. These results are listed below in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 - *Average Change in Each Star Domain*

Domain	Average Change	Range
Motivation & Responsibility	1.12	-6 to 3
Self-Care & Life Skills	-0.02	-5 to 5
Managing Money	0.24	-4 to 5
Social Networks & Relationships	0.65	-3 to 7
Drug & Alcohol Misuse	0.39	-5 to 7
Physical Health	1.13	-6 to 4
Emotional & Mental Health	0.26	-4 to 4
Meaningful Use of Time	0.54	-4 to 4
Managing Tenancy & Accommodation	-0.08	-6 to 4
Offending	0.48	-7 to 9

The organizational guide for the Homelessness Star suggests that a change of two or more is a ‘large’ improvement, and between 0.5 and 2 is a ‘moderate’ improvement (MacKeith, Burns, & Graham, 2006). While there were no large improvements on the average scores, it appears that youth experienced the greatest gains in motivation and responsibility and physical health, with an average change of over one point. Moderate gains (albeit smaller gains) in scores were also observed with social networks and relationships, meaningful use of time, and offending (the latter was just under the .50 mark).

Very small positive changes were observed with managing money, drug and alcohol misuse and emotional and mental health, and a decrease in scores was observed with self-care and living skills and managing tenancy and accommodation. It should be noted that participants varied tremendously in terms of their ‘change scores’, with most domains having a range around ten, peaking at sixteen for offending. This makes finding the average change somewhat

problematic. It can nonetheless point out general trends, particularly when paired with the percentage that improved in each domain (see Table 6.8 and Figure 6.2).

Table 6.8 - *Percentage of Change in Each Star Domain*

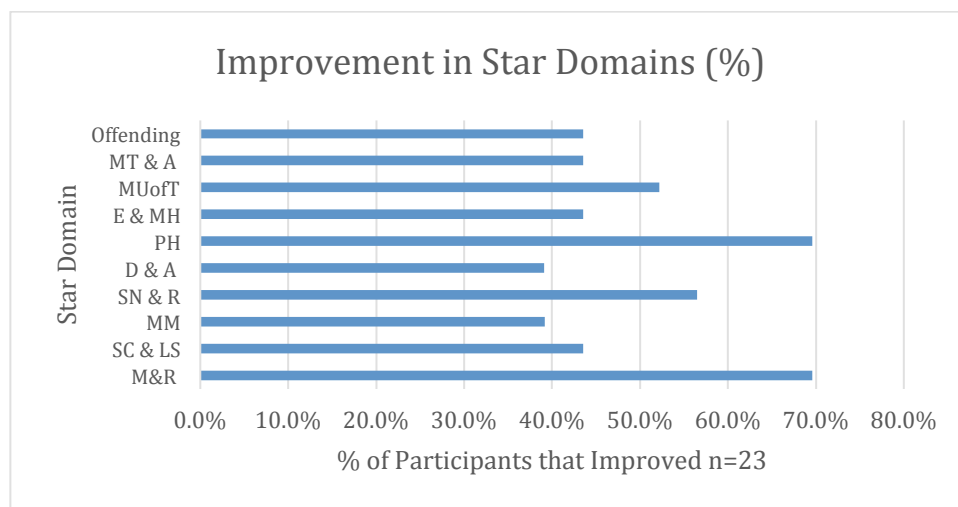
Domain	% Improve	% Decrease	% Same
Motivation & Responsibility	69.6%	8.7%	21.7%
Self-Care & Life Skills	43.5%	30.4%	26.1%
Managing Money	39.2%	30.4%	30.4%
Social Networks & Responsibility	56.5%	34.8%	8.7%
Drug & Alcohol Misuse	39.1%	34.8%	26.1%
Physical Health	69.6%	13%	17.4%
Emotional & Mental Health	43.5%	47.8%	8.7%
Meaningful Use of Time	52.2%	21.7%	26.1%
Managing Tenancy & Accommodation	43.5%	47.8%	8.7%
Offending	43.5%	26.1%	30.4%

The percentages of participants that experienced a positive change in each domain told a similar story to the average changes in scores. For instance, relatively high percentages, or just under 70% of young people, improved in the motivation and responsibility and in physical health. Over half of participants also experienced an increase in social networks and relationships and meaningful use of time. It is likely that securing housing, and the support of the Infinity staff increased the motivation of the young people to move forward in their lives, and hence an increase in motivation and meaningful use of time was observed. Similarly, securing housing and perhaps gaining access to regular health care services increased their physical health.

The results were less favourable in the other domains, with less than half improving. Close to half of participants showed a decrease in maintaining tenancy and accommodation, as well as emotional and mental health. This latter finding is supportive of the HMIS data, which shows that youth move somewhat frequently, and that participants' mental health can appear to decrease while they are in the program. Being able to maintain housing is dependent on the

acquisition of living skills, so it makes sense that the two scores are both low. The low maintaining tenancy and accommodation scores might also speak to the tremendous barriers that young people face in securing and maintaining housing, particularly in light of their low incomes.

Figure 6.2 – *Average Change in Each Star Domain*



Overall scores. The ten Star domains can also be added to obtain an overall score. As there are ten domains with a possible score of ten for each, the highest score a participant can get is 100. The first overall score was compared to the last overall score for each participant. Extrapolating from the scale discussed above (that indicates an increase in each domain of 2 or more is a ‘large’ change, 1 to 1.9 is ‘moderate’ and 0.1 to 0.9 is ‘small’), an increase in the overall score of 20 or more is a ‘large’ increase, 10 to 19 is ‘moderate’ and 1 to 9 is ‘small’, the findings show that four youth, or 17% experienced a ‘large’ change in their scores, five or 22% had a ‘moderate’ change, and eight or 35% had a ‘small’ change. One youth, or 4% had the same score, and 5 youth or 22% experienced a decrease in their overall scores (see Table 6.9 below). Considered together, 74% of youth (or 17) showed some improvement in their overall scores. The overall change in scores varied widely, from -37 to 30.

Table 6.9 - *Percentage Improving in Overall Star Score*

Large Increase (>20 or more)	Moderate Increase (10 to 19)	Small Increase (1 to 9)	No Change	Decrease in Score
17%	22%	35%	4%	22%

Despite the small sample, paired T-tests were conducted for the first score and last score, and first with every other three-month denomination until 24 months. As the results in Table 6.10 show below, none of these tests were significant, although the test between time one and twelve months was approaching significance ($p = .056$). This is most likely the result of the small sample size and the high variation in participant scores, as reflected in the large standard deviations.

Table 6.10 - *Paired T-Tests Results*

Paired T-test	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Time 1-Time last	- 4. 72	13.47	-1.68	22	.107
Time 1 – 3 months	2.23	14.09	.728	20	.475
Time 1 – 6 months	2.00	15.91	.471	13	.646
Time 1 – 9 months	0.90	14.85	.271	19	.789
Time 1 – 12 months	7.75	16.99	2.04	19	.056
Time 1 – 15 months	5.13	14.63	1.57	19	.134
Time 1 – 18 months	1.98	13.60	.633	19	.535
Time 1 – 24 months	-3.66	16.57	-.962	19	.349

When the Star data is considered all together, it appears that the while the scores have a high level of variation, the majority of young people experience some improvements while in the program, although most of the time in the small to moderate range. Youth appear to fare the best with motivation and responsibility and physical health, and to a lesser degree, meaningful use of time and social networks and relationships. Scores in other areas, particularly managing tenancy and accommodation and emotional and mental health did not show improvement. This may speak to programmatic gaps, to structural barriers (such as housing and mental health supports),

or may suggest that change is difficult, and is not always quick and linear. Future research should examine scores at discharge from the Infinity Project to observe how participants fare in these areas at the end of the program.

In Summary – The Infinity Project: Housing First Framework for Youth and Impact

In this chapter I discussed the qualitative and quantitative results of the program evaluation of the Infinity Project. In the first part of the chapter I evaluated Infinity using the Housing First Framework for Youth as an analytic lens, and demonstrated that the Infinity Project largely adheres to the principles of the Framework, although there are some challenges. For instance, the program is congruent with the principles by providing housing with no preconditions, and adhering to the zero discharge into homelessness philosophy. The program also allows for flexible timelines in which youth can remain in the program, recognizing that some youth will need support for a longer period of time than two years. They do not rush to graduate youth, but make sure that they are ready before they complete the program. They ensure that young people have a choice in the services provided to them, believing that if youth are going to be successful in obtaining their goals, they must come from them. The majority of youth interviewed feel that they have some degree of choice in the program and that their input is important, but this was not unanimous.

The program is centered on providing individualized supports, as all case plans and decisions are geared toward each client. Staff argue that youth vary in their needs and readiness to change, and hence they try to make the program “fit the kids” rather than the other way around. This poses challenges to some staff and youth, however, as it can be difficult for staff making decisions when there are no black-and-white rules. While most youth feel they are treated equally by staff, again, this sentiment was not unanimous. Similarly, while the staff and

the youth largely feel that the program is successful at increasing meaningful activities and facilitating a sense of community amongst program participants, they acknowledge that this too can be difficult, and can become less of a program priority when crises arise.

The Infinity Project also provides most of the services articulated in Gaetz's framework, particularly housing supports. Staff spend much of their time searching for housing, moving the youth, and developing and maintaining relationships with landlords. Some staff, however, feel that due to the difficulties in finding and securing housing for their young people, they have to spend too much of their time providing housing supports, diverting attention from other important activities such as relationship development.

The Infinity program works to strengthen the health and wellbeing of young people in many ways, and to secure income and employment for youth, although in both cases they face structural barriers that are out of their control. The program also provides many important referrals, advocacy services, and when possible, family reconnection supports.

There are, however, several program elements that are not integrated into the program in a formal manner. This means that while there are notable components of positive youth development, trauma-informed care and harm reduction within the Infinity program, they are informal in nature, and not embedded into the program in a methodical or foundational way. The same can be said in terms of an anti-discriminatory framework (they lack a policy or framework in this regard). Not having a formal program structure can be risky in the event of staff or leadership turnover as it is not certain that these elements will continue to be implemented. Most importantly, without a program framework in place, it is difficult to measure program fidelity, or "the extent to which the delivery of an intervention adheres to the protocol or program model as intended by the developers of the intervention" (James Bell Associates, 2009, p. 1). James Bell

Associates (2009) identify several components of fidelity including adherence and exposure. Adherence measures the extent to which program components are implemented as intended, and exposure refers to the amount of the program components (or the ‘dosage’) participants are subjected to. Knowing whether a program is ‘faithful’ to its program components is necessary in understanding the reasons particular outcomes are achieved, and ensuring that those that lead to positive outcomes are preserved (James Bell Associates, 2009). Research, including a meta-analysis of 500 studies, shows that stronger fidelity is associated with larger effect sizes in positive outcomes (Durlak & DuPre, 2008). Staff at the Infinity Project identify several principles and practices they feel are crucial to the work they do, yet currently have no way of evaluating whether they are being realized, and if they are having the intended effect. In fact, Infinity does not measure its fidelity to the Housing First model in general, which leads to the same problems. How do they know if they are truly upholding the principles of Housing First? How do they know which elements of the Housing First framework lead to positive outcomes and which ones do not? A formal program framework, including fidelity measures, would be a positive step for Infinity to take to ensure that the principles they endorse are being actualized, and to ensure that they can identify the program elements that lead to the greatest success for their youth.

In the second part of the chapter, the outcomes of the program were discussed using HMIS and Outcomes Star data. Based on the intake data, the Infinity Project serves a relatively young group of people, with just under 70% being under the age of 18 at intake. This is important as research shows that youth who become homeless at a younger age are more vulnerable to a variety of hardships and barriers including victimization and school disengagement, and that it can be more challenging for interventions to be successful the longer

youth are street-involved (Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016; Karabanow, 2006). Infinity may be successful in interrupting this process by housing youth who are relatively young. Increased barriers may result from working with younger youth, however, particularly when trying to find landlords willing to rent to youth under 18, and assisting them in securing a living wage.

Close to one-third of youth at Infinity were of Indigenous background, an overrepresentation that is consistent with the literature in Calgary (CHF, 2011; 2014) and nationally (ESDC, 2016; Gaetz, O'Grady, et al., 2016). The CHF reports that only 2% of Calgary's overall population identify as Indigenous (CHF, 2011). Unfortunately, the positive outcomes for Indigenous youth were not as high as the sample in general, particularly in regards to housing retention, but also for employment training, education and income. This finding echoes those from the Winnipeg site in the At-Home/Chez Soi study, where only 45% of Housing First participants retained their housing in the last six months of the study (this is out of an overall sample where 71% identify as Indigenous (Distasio, Sareen, & Isaak, 2014) compared to 62% in the overall sample. The potential implications for Indigenous youth (peoples in general) are significant. It is possible that current Housing First programs are not meeting the needs of Indigenous youth and have to be adapted. It is also possible that Indigenous youth would have better outcomes if the programs were Indigenous designed and led. Perhaps most significantly, as will be elaborated further in the discussion, the historical trauma and ongoing colonization of Indigenous Peoples must be addressed. It should be noted that after this research concluded and in response to the observations of staff that Indigenous youth were not fairing as well, the Infinity Project created a new Housing First program specifically for Indigenous Youth called Home Fire. Future research should investigate this model and whether this is a more effective program for Indigenous youth.

About equal amounts of young people were categorized at intake as chronically or episodically homeless at Infinity. There were hence more youth listed as chronically homeless at Infinity than CHF's HMIS data in general for youth, where 32.6% of their youth were listed as chronically homeless and 64.7% episodically homeless. This is interesting in light of the high proportion of young people who enter the program before the age of 18 at Infinity. This means that many have been homeless from a very young age, or they have not been identified as chronically homeless simply by virtue of their age. Just over 60% of participants that left the program 'graduated'. This is congruent with the CHF's data which shows that young people left for 'negative' reasons 39% of the time. Those that did graduate stayed for just over two years, with an average of 27 months in the program. Those that did not complete the program were more likely to be young (only two of the thirteen who graduated were under the age of 19), Caucasian males. The exit destinations of those that left the program varied, and although not known for all, more than half were in stable housing. This indicates that Infinity is successful in working with many of their youth, often with very difficult backgrounds and multiple barriers, to stabilizing their housing situations.

The housing retention rates observed in this study were lower than those reported in Infinity documents and in the case study conducted by Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver (2013). In this study, 56% of participants were housed at both the three and twelve month assessments, and 68% housed at three month and last assessment. Gaetz, Scott, & Gulliver (2013) report that from the beginning of the program until October 2012, 92% of participants were still housed at one year, and 87% were at two years. Documents at Infinity report these numbers as well, stating that the first figure is based on 44 out of 48 participants, and the latter is based on a sample of 32 youth. It is not clear how this discrepancy arose, as I am unaware of the methodology used to

analyze the aforementioned results. It is possible that the housing retention has decreased since 2012, or that the two samples used are qualitatively different. The sample used in this study was somewhat smaller, and was based exclusively on HMIS data. As the Infinity Project did not have HMIS at the beginning of the program, some of their analysis is not based on this data, and I am unsure how it was tracked.

Participants were housed an average of 73% of their time in the program, where two participants were never housed and ten were housed 100% of the time. Youth were generally rehoused a couple of times, although this ranged from 0-6 times (average 2.4 times). This housing retention rate is identical to the At-Home/Chez Soi general findings at one year where participants were housed 73% of the time, and higher than the last six months of the study where participants were housed 62% of the time. These retention rates are lower than the 85-90% that is generally reported in the American, mostly Pathways to Housing, literature (Padgett, Gulcur, & Tsemberis, 2006; Pearson, Montgomery, & Locke, 2009; Stefancic & Tsemberis, 2007; Tsemberis, Moran, Shinn, Asmussen, & Shern, 2003). When using the Outcomes Star data, young people varied in their managing tenancy & accommodation scores, although alarmingly, close to half changed in the 'negative' direction. While the results are positive overall, it is also clear that some youth continue to experience housing instability. The results show that Housing First is by no means a silver bullet or a panacea to ending homelessness. It is difficult work, and outcomes do not occur quickly for all participants.

There were modest outcomes in education and employment training, where participants spent an average of 34% of their time in education, a number nearly identical to the percentage that were enrolled in school at intake (32%), and 10% enrolled in employment training. There were some positive changes in education between three-month assessments and twelve and last

assessments, but these were under 20%. Unfortunately the percentage of young people that were employed throughout the program is unknown (although about 25% were at intake). Four of the youth interviewed in this study were employed. It is difficult to determine whether these numbers are indicative of the program intervention or the goals/initiative of the young people themselves. While the income of the young people generally increased while they were in program (on average over \$500 from first to last assessments), the average income was only \$770.31 at last assessment. Hence while Gaetz, Scott & Gulliver (2013) report that 63% of youth over the age of 18 and 87% of those under 18 secured a “stable income”, this can be misleading as while it may be ‘stable’ – i.e. received in regular increments – it remains a meagre amount, making independent living without the support of the program challenging (the authors do note this). Similarly, young people were receiving a similar amount of assistance with basic needs at 24 months than they were at three months (one less on average). Given that the program is in theory two years long, young people will likely continue to face financial difficulties after they leave the program.

The outcomes for health, both mental and physical, and substance use, are difficult to interpret. It can appear that the incidence of these concerns increase while young people are in program. The more likely explanation is that while they are in program they are able to seek help for these ailments, or feel more comfortable disclosing them. It is also possible that mental health concerns get worse as young people start to explore them, or in the event they try to reduce or eliminate the use of substances. This finding is similar to that found in the Housing First literature where modest, if any, improvements are seen in regards to substance use and mental health symptoms (Tsemberis, Gulcur, & Nakae, 2004; Tsai, Mares & Rosenheck, 2010; Padgett et al., 2006; Pearson et al., 2009; Tsai et al., 2010). The lack of progress on these areas (or

positive outcomes by 24-months or end of program) likely reflects the complexity of these challenges, and demonstrates that change is difficult and not linear. This highlights the need for young people to continue to receive support after the program, and also points to the needs of the participants that go beyond those that can be met with the homelessness sector, particularly mental health supports. Using the Outcomes Star to measure progress tells a similar story, with the exception of physical health, which was one of the domains where youth displayed the greatest positive change, although the average change was still in the ‘moderate’ and not ‘high’ range. Changes in mental and emotional health were in general ‘small’, and close to half changed in the ‘negative’ direction. When participants were given an overall score for the Outcomes Star, the majority of scores improved, suggesting that most participants do move forward in some way as a result of the Infinity Program.

Finally, youth at Infinity do appear to have less contact with public systems, particularly the criminal justice system. Although the measure used in this research did not calculate jail time, this reduced contact is somewhat consistent with the research conducted in Seattle by Clifasefi, Malone and Collins (2012) where participants’ jail time was reduced by half.

The outcomes revealed in this chapter show that while the Infinity Project provides essential services to youth who are homeless, and is effective in facilitating housing stability for some youth, several continue to struggle in some areas. In the next two chapters I examine the role that neoliberal governmentality and structural barriers play in these challenges.

Chapter Seven

Governmentality Analysis: Performing and Resisting Neoliberalism

Infinity, like all programs, is embedded in a wider structure that impacts its philosophy, operations, and ultimately its ability to have a long-term impact on youth homelessness. As previously mentioned, the Infinity Project is funded by the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), as part of their 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Now that I have explored the impact that the Infinity Project is having on youth participants, in this chapter I turn to the governmentality analysis, and ask the broader question of how Infinity and the CHF can be understood in the context of neoliberalism. I discuss the myriad ways that they simultaneously resist and embody neoliberal governmentality at the level of the individual, the population and spatially. I show that while they offer important sites of resistance, they continue to ‘perform’ neoliberal governmentality by working to produce ‘proper’ neoliberal citizens and spaces, and biopolitically managing the lives of the homeless through the use of statistics and experts. Individuals are to remain autonomous from the state and to participate in the labour market and other consumer places, such as the housing market, and spaces are designed to facilitate neoliberal economic activity at the expense of the democratic rights of marginalized citizens.

As the end of the 10-year period comes closer, it is clear that homelessness will not be coming to an end in Calgary any time soon - however ‘ending’ homelessness is defined. Despite the CHF’s claim that homelessness has been reduced by 19% (based on the 2016 Point-in-Time count and adjusted to population growth)(Campbell, Falvo, & Smith, 2017) this number is problematic as it is based on the assumption that as the population grows so too will the incidence of homelessness, which may or may not be the case. More importantly, the city of Calgary witnessed a 10.9% increase in those counted as homeless between their 2012 and 2014

PIT counts, indicating that the overall number of those experiencing homelessness has not decreased (CHF, 2014). Disturbingly, the number of youth counted as homeless increased by 30% in this same time frame. This trend continued into 2016 when 377 unaccompanied youth were counted (aged 13-24) compared to 286 in 2014 (Campbell, Falvo, & Smith).

Calgary is not alone in this result¹¹. In a study of major homelessness strategies in four cities across Canada (Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa), Adamo, Klodawsky, Aubry and Hwang (2016) found that:

Despite differences in scope and approach, targets and timelines and the types of policy, program and system-level interventions implemented under the plans, early outcomes are strikingly similar across the four cities. While cities have made important progress on many fronts, early findings suggest that homelessness is not declining across the four cities (p. 36).

While these strategies have been successful at helping communities identify their local needs, and appear to be stabilizing the rate of homelessness (Adamo et al., 2016), it is unclear if they are effectively reducing homelessness, particularly in the long-term. For instance, while the province of Alberta claims to have reduced homelessness across the province by 19.2% between 2014 and 2016 (Campbell, Falvo, & Smith, 2017), there are many potential difficulties in gaging the accuracy of this claim. For instance, the methodology for enumerating the homeless in PIT counts has changed between counts and the nature of PIT counts also ensures that only limited information is available. Differences in counts might represent genuine changes in the incidence of homelessness, or merely different samples. Moreover, as PIT counts only capture the most visibly homeless, whether these samples are representative of the entire population of people experiencing homelessness is unknown (Falvo, 2016). It is also difficult to know what the cause

¹¹ Edmonton may be a notable exception, with a PIT count in 2016 showing a 43% decrease in chronic homelessness since 2008 with relatively similar PIT methodologies (Seven Cities on Housing & Homelessness, 2017). Future research is necessary to investigate the local contextual factors that have made this possible, and whether this is indicative of a permanent reduction in homelessness.

of any reduction might be. For instance, a decrease could be the result of a 10-Year Plan, or due to economic or social factors. Research has shown that Calgary's shelter usage increases when there is a 'boom' in the economy and people migrate to the city in search of work (Kneebone, Emery, & Grynishak, 2011). Lower numbers could also be the result of a reduction in the backlog of people who have been neglected by our system for too long rather than a genuine change in the number of people who are at risk or will become homeless.

It is time for practitioners and scholars alike to have a critical discussion about how we as a country are responding to homelessness. I contend that Housing First and 10-Year Plans, while resisting neoliberal governmentality in important ways, also remain embedded within it, and do not have the ability to address the root causes of homelessness. Below I discuss the ways that they both resist and continue to embody neoliberalism at the level of the individual, population and spatially. I begin by demonstrating the degree to which Calgary's 10-Year Plan is rooted in neoliberalism by providing examples of the language used to guide the Plan. This is important because it demonstrates the degree to which CHF is 'performing' neoliberalism, which as described earlier, has material impacts on the world either by sustaining or maintaining the status quo, and shaping how problems are defined, and which solutions are deemed pertinent.

Calgary's 10-Year Plan and the Language of Neoliberalism

Calgary published their initial 10-Year Plan to End homelessness in 2008 and two updated Plans in 2011 and 2015. One does not need to venture far into these documents to encounter strong neoliberal language. Indeed, the fundamental principles are entrenched in the discourses of personal responsibility, accountability and economic efficiency. As shown earlier in this thesis, the first two principles of Calgary's Plan are:

1. Ending homelessness is a collective responsibility. This includes the people experiencing homelessness who must take personal ownership and accountability in ending their homelessness.
2. Our plan will aim to help people move to self-reliance and independence (Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, 2008, p. 9).

Despite describing ending homelessness as a collective responsibility, it is also portrayed as a matter of personal accountability and responsibility, and ensuring that people become self-reliant, or not ‘dependent’ on the system. The Plan is also heavily steeped in the discourse of economic efficiency, as the CHF talks regularly about the costs of homelessness, and continually promises a “return on investment”. The Plan states:

The social costs of homelessness are well understood...it takes a toll consuming public services...we estimate that a full payout on the direct and indirect costs savings of over \$3.6 billion achieved by the end of 10 years (Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, 2008, p.7).

The CHF also uses quotes from participants who have received housing supports from the programs they fund, which largely conform to stereotypical notions of homelessness. For instance, in the 2011 updated Plan, there are two participant quotes throughout the report (the only two) that each take up a full page. For instance:

Richard admits his homelessness has to do with alcohol. “I loved drinking and I need to learn from when I was foolish” (p.8).

Similarly:

Earlene appreciates Calgary’s approach to housing people and the services available to support them. Yet, she underscores the importance of the individual. “It takes heart to change”, she says (p.13).

While it is important not to discount the words of people with lived experience, the choice of the authors to use these two quotes serves to reinforce individual explanations of homelessness, and perpetuates the notion that it is up to the individual to make the ‘choice’ to end their homelessness rather than highlighting the structural barriers to doing so. As discussed

in the section on the causes of youth homelessness, individual issues such as substance use can very well be a cause of homelessness, but it is also possible that these individual ‘choices’ are constrained by structural factors, such as poverty and discrimination. In regards to the second quote while individual motivation or ‘grit’ is an important factor in overcoming hardship, the choice to include this quote at the expense of others may inadvertently perpetuate the notion that escaping homelessness is merely a matter of ‘pulling up one’s bootstraps’, a notion deeply embedded in neoliberal governmentality. The CHF used these two quotes alone to describe the experience of homelessness, and as a result, inadvertently perpetuated stereotypical notions of both the causes and solutions to homelessness without highlighting the many structural and systemic causes and barriers. The consequences of language choice will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

It is likely that the use of neoliberal language, particularly economic efficiency, is a strategic move on the CHF’s part, in order to garner support from those who otherwise would not buy-in to the cause. This is arguably a smart move, and if I were to speculate, this is why 10-Year Plans and Housing First have gained momentum in the United States and Canada, including with conservative governments. Continually emphasizing the economic benefits also has its pitfalls, however. For instance, Stanhope and Dunn (2011) caution that by shaping the problem in terms of the costs to society, even if advocates finally have their case heard, it is risky should economic analysis not come up in their favour. Perhaps more importantly, this language fortifies neoliberal discourse, including the notion that government resources are scarce. This reinforces the concept that limited resources are the norm rather than a series of political decisions that have reduced our resources to the current state (Katz, Zerger, & Hwang, 2017), including eroding revenue through multiple tax cuts and subsidies to the business sector. Katz, Zerger and Hwang

(2017) argue that by framing the problem using market-based logic, while strategic, this can have the effect of marginalizing what solutions are deemed pertinent, particularly the structural root causes of homelessness as the main goal is to reduce costs, not address homelessness.

What is particularly striking about the CHF's Plan documents is that despite their acknowledgement of the structural causes of homelessness (as shown in the quote below), many articulated to be a direct result of neoliberal social policy, their solutions remain largely focused on individualized and targeted strategies, rather than universal and preventative measures. For instance, in the original 2008 Plan, the causes of the homelessness crisis in Calgary is explained as resulting from the (neoliberal) transformation the city and province underwent in the 1990s:

Homelessness was a relatively rare phenomenon until a series of economic, social and public policy changes converged in the early 1990s to cause its dramatic rise. The changes resulted in increased migration to Calgary, a decline in real earnings for those with low incomes and a scarcity of affordable housing. The impact of these changes have been compounded by systemic barriers in government and social services that effectively trap the most vulnerable, increasing the duration and severity of homelessness for hundreds (Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, 2008, p. 21).

The authors continue to discuss that housing affordability is the worst it has been in 26 years, and despite the low unemployment rate in Calgary, wages have not kept up with the cost of living. They highlight the federal and provincial withdrawal from social housing, and the strained social safety net – all direct impacts of neoliberal policy. Yet while the CHF acknowledges the structural causes of homelessness, the majority of the programs funded by the CHF are Housing First programs. As will be elaborated on below, while the CHF does describe the need to develop affordable housing and 'preventative' measures, their resources in this area are limited; they are only enough to scratch the surface of what is needed. Furthermore, their prevention efforts are targeted to those deemed to be at risk of homelessness, and as such, have limited impact on the overall incidence of homelessness.

Infinity, Calgary's 10-Year Plan and Neoliberal Governmentality

It is clear that Calgary's 10-Year Plan (and hence Housing First and Infinity) are deeply embedded in neoliberal logic and discourse. Yet it is important to remember that neoliberalism rarely occurs in a pure form, but exists in a complex space with both dominance and resistance. This is the case with CHF's Plan and Housing First (and hence the Infinity Project). In this section I highlight the ways they simultaneously resist and enforce neoliberal governmentality at the level of the individual, population, and spatially.

Neoliberal governmentality at the individual level. Foucault describes neoliberal governmentality at the level of the individual as disciplinary, or concerned with governing the conduct of individuals, particularly so that they become 'proper' neoliberal subjects. Disciplinary action is enacted at various sites at the individual level, including through social institutions and oneself.

Resistance to neoliberalism. Homelessness has been understood to be the result of individual characteristics or flaws well before the neoliberal era (for example, the 'hobos' on skid row). The dramatic spike in the incidence of homelessness after neoliberal restructuring did not change this, nor did the increased awareness that it is not just the single male alcoholic living on the streets who becomes homeless. Neoliberalism has further enforced the notion of individual accountability, and has downplayed the role the government should play in solutions to homelessness. When the crisis was first addressed by the government in the early 2000s it was assumed that emergency shelters were all that the homeless needed to 'pull up their bootstraps' by finding a job and staying sober so they can obtain housing. In order to receive such services, however, people needed to prove their 'readiness' for housing by demonstrating their ability to stay sober and find a job; failure to do so often resulted in discharge from various programs. In

theory, the Housing First philosophy challenges this punitive model of responding to homelessness that is rooted in notions of individual deficiencies. Instead, housing is situated as a fundamental right that does not need to be earned with good behaviour. It assumes that access to housing coupled with the right supports is the foundation to which all else can be built, including potentially sobriety and employment. The Housing First philosophy challenges the notion that individuals experiencing homelessness are unable to make their own decisions by placing choice at the forefront of its philosophy and approach, including for youth who have historically been seen as being too immature. Having one's own space also greatly reduces the surveillance that individuals experiencing homelessness are subjected to in other residential programs, as they are constantly under the gaze of program staff. The approach strives to acknowledge the trauma that individuals who are homeless have undergone rather than deeming them to be different from the rest of society. Indeed, several of the youth interviewed speak about how they prefer the Housing First model to other traditional programs they have been in. For instance, one says:

I like the fact that with Infinity, with the Housing First aspect, they house you before they try to deal with all of your other issues...whereas a lot of different programs will start trying to well why did this happen, why are you on drugs, why you do that? And [meanwhile] you're still living at the drop in and you know they want you to get a job and figure everything out.

That Housing First has made a difference in the lives of thousands of people in Calgary, and has done so in a less oppressive manner than previous responses to homelessness is not in question. This is important and cannot be understated. The question left to be answered, however, is whether this is an effective response to ending homelessness in the long-run, particularly for youth.

Conforming to neoliberalism. While 10-Year Plans such as Calgary's (largely through their use of Housing First), resists neoliberal governmentality at the individual level, they also embody it, particularly through the manner in which case management is used as a disciplinary

technique. Case management in itself is not necessarily a neoliberal practice; when executed in a client-centered fashion, it can be extremely helpful to individuals and provide them with much needed services. The problem is that case management services are the predominant response to homelessness, including in 10-Year Plans, with services designed to help individuals address their personal problems. In the absence of other strategies aimed at prevention, this implies that the solution to homelessness remains at the individual level, especially if this is the predominant way in which homelessness is ‘ended’.

Moreover, within the context of neoliberalism, the goals of case management are generally geared towards restoring people to self-sufficient beings in a relatively rapid manner (although Infinity does challenge this time-limited notion). For instance, in Calgary’s 2011 updated Plan, the role of case management is described as “to help people who are rehoused become self-sufficient and then contribute as active members of society” (CHF, 2011, p. 21). From a Foucauldian perspective, this type of case management is akin to disciplinary actions that assist clients in conducting themselves as neoliberal subjects. This was observed in the goals of Infinity being described in many cases as having the youth people become ‘self-sufficient’ (although several managers also talked about transitioning to adulthood). This means that the case plans that individuals participate in, and the outcomes that programs are interested in, are geared toward clients gaining access to market-based norms such as private housing and employment immediately – not ensuring long-term health and well-being. For instance, while young people might be employed, they generally do not have the educational credentials to obtain a meaningful career in the long-term. Doing so requires the time to pursue an education, which can be difficult without the financial assistance to do so, and the pressure to pay rent. While having housing and employment may indeed be a positive step forward for the young

people, they may be pigeon-holed into low-wage labour because they do not have the opportunity to pursue an advanced education, or must do so with tremendous barriers.

It is difficult for Housing First programs, including Infinity, to avoid seeing participants as subjects who are somehow deficient and who need ‘help’ (or discipline) in order to exit homelessness. The Outcomes Star, for instance, although designed to draw attention to service users strengths (when used according to its design) is nonetheless a tool that assumes that clients are lacking in several life domains and need to change in a fundamental way. The one used at Infinity is called the Homelessness Star, and the domains are created based on the assumptions that these are the areas that ‘homeless people’ need to change in order to exit homelessness (or to become normal?). It is true that many young people who are homeless have not been afforded the privileges many others have, including a stable home environment, adult mentors and the development of life skills and genuinely benefit from accessing these services. Yet by having Housing First touted as the vehicle to ‘end’ homelessness, which predominantly focuses on case management services, individualized causes of homelessness are reinforced at the expense of larger systemic ones. This is particularly true in light of Housing First’s focus on the chronic and episodically homeless. Despite their representing a small fraction of the homeless population, the priority placed on the chronically and episodically homeless has the unintended effect of making homelessness and chronic homelessness appear to be one and the same. This detracts from the majority of people experiencing homelessness who are not chronically homeless, including women, families and youth (Katz, Zerger, & Hwang, 2017). The chronically homeless are often described as having the most complex needs or the most barriers, particularly mental health and addiction concerns, despite the fact that not all chronically homeless individuals are high acuity, and not all high acuity individuals are chronically homeless. By focusing on this population,

individual (stereotypical) causes of homelessness are overstated and reinforced at the expense of structural and institutional ones. Whether these are the cause or consequences of being homeless for many years is seemingly irrelevant.

If the CHF defines ‘ending’ homelessness as having no one stay in a shelter or be precariously housed for more than seven days, then really they are trying to end chronic homelessness, not homelessness in general. Having people exit homelessness quickly does not stop people from becoming homeless; it aims to avoid having people experience homelessness for extended periods of time, thereby managing homelessness in a more efficient manner. Aiming to reduce the length of time that an individual or household experiences homelessness is a laudable goal, and appears to work on the assumption that the longer one is homeless, the more challenges and harmful effects they will encounter. In theory, by making everyone’s experience of homelessness ‘transitional’, people may avoid becoming chronically homeless. On the flip side, it is not clear if housing providers are expected to prioritize these groups until the backlog of people who have been without housing for some time is lifted, or if there is an assumption that there is something qualitatively different about those who experience homelessness chronically and hence require a unique intervention. For instance, the authors in the original Plan write:

Research shows that 65% of people find their own way out of homelessness. The most vulnerable – mostly those with the greatest combination of risk factors – can get trapped and become chronically homeless (Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, 2008, p. 20).

This statement is echoed in 2015:

Not all who experience homelessness require supports. In fact, most find a way out on their own after relatively short periods of housing stability. This is why we need a coordinated approach to target those with higher needs with limited resources (CHF, 2015, p. 47).

These statements could be interpreted to mean that most people (i.e. the ‘normal’ people) do not require any assistance as they can find their own way out of homelessness, unlike those ‘other’

qualitatively different people (i.e. the chronically homeless). It also reinforces the narrative that the private market in its current form is sufficient for the majority of people, detracting from the real economic struggles that many face in contemporary neoliberal society, including obtaining a living wage and accessing housing that is affordable (Katz, Zerger, & Hwang, 2017).

The implications of this for young people who do not have natural supports such as family or the earning power to live independently simply by virtue of their age are profound. Is it fair to expect they will escape homelessness on their own without the personal, social and financial resources to do so? There is evidence to suggest that the longer young people are homeless, the more entrenched they can become in “street-life” (Karabanow, 2004) and the more barriers they encounter (Gaetz, O’Grady, et al., 2016). They are more likely to experience continued hardship including a deterioration of their physical and mental health, substance use, and to be vulnerable to criminal victimization and sexual exploitation. They are more likely to turn to quasi-legal and illegal ways to secure an income including sex work and drug dealing, making them vulnerable to obtaining a police record. This of course can impact access to future employment opportunities. Should youth be expected to experience more hardship and trauma so that their problems become more acute before they can gain access to housing? As Gaetz, O’Grady, et al. (2016) write:

If we want better outcomes for our young people, we cannot let them become mired in homelessness. The homeless young people of today could potentially become the chronically homeless adults of tomorrow (p. 102).

I previously discussed how homelessness is rarely a ‘one-off’ event for young people, but is better envisioned as a process where young people perpetually move between accommodations. Youth may return home several times only to face the problems that caused them to leave originally, obtain their own housing but be unable to maintain it, secure accommodations with friends or family and have them fall through, etc. The central aim should be to interrupt this

process, and prevent young people from experiencing these hardships. This would drastically change their life trajectories, providing them with the opportunities we hope for all of our nation's youth. We cannot leave young people with limited supports, life skills and earning potential to escape homelessness on their own – they need the same nurturing and guidance that any other young person requires and more importantly, deserves.

Governmentality at the level of the population. Foucault describes governmentality at the level of the population as being regulatory rather than disciplinary and occurs through the use of large amounts of data such as those collected in HMIS, and the use of experts, or the gatekeepers of the data.

Conforming to neoliberalism – in a positive way? The neoliberal era brought with it a new emphasis on evidence-based practice and accountability in the non-profit sector. There are many benefits to this. For instance, it is important to ensure that proposed policies and solutions for the homeless are having their intended impact. This ensures that programs are accountable not only to funders, but also to program participants. It is only through ongoing evaluation that programs can know if they are being effective, and that they are providing the best possible services to their clients by continually making modifications and improvements as necessary. While this may seem like common sense in today's era, this has historically not been the case in the homeless sector. For instance, the Director of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Canada's leading research institute on homelessness writes:

It was not so long ago that I would lament the lack of impact of research on the homelessness crisis in Canada. You often used to hear people say, “We don't need research – we know what the problem is and we know what the solution is” (Gaetz, 2016).

Similarly, programs have received funding in the past regardless of whether they were leading to meaningful change or serving their population in an impactful way (Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016).

This meant that programs could not only continue to operate in the absence of meaningful work,

but in theory, even if they were practicing in a way that was oppressive or harmful to participants.

The CHF and the Infinity Project are genuinely interested in learning from their work and the continuous improvement of their programs, all driven by the desire to achieve the best outcomes possible for the population they serve. Their readiness to learn is apparent in many ways. For instance, the CHF has research and evaluation components built in to every aspect of their 10-Year-Plan, and have a research agenda (see for example, Falvo & Campbell, 2016). They evaluate the process of the Plan through HMIS data, using both program-level and system-level indicators (outlined on page 86) and through biannual Point-in-Time (PIT) counts. PIT counts provide a snapshot of homelessness in a particular area by tracking the number of people on the streets, in shelters and transitional housing spaces as well as those in public institutions that do not have a home to return to (such as in hospitals and correctional centres). The CHF conducts biannual counts in both winter and spring.

Similarly, the senior staff at the Infinity Project describe creating the program based on their learnings. They express a willingness to examine their own practices and admit when they might have it wrong. One manager states:

We did a lot of talking... and reading and visiting and looking at our own data and saying wow, we invest a lot of money into some of these programs but we don't get the outcomes and what is that about? So I think we had a shift internally from a psychological standpoint... if *we* [the agency staff, emphasis added] got out of the way, what would that look like?

The Infinity Projects also collect ample data that they use to inform their program, much of it beyond what the CHF mandates through HMIS, including the Outcomes Star and youth satisfaction surveys. Staff express a desire to collect more information, such as follow up data from youth that have exited the program.

There is a strong argument to be made about the importance of having data on homelessness as this provides evidence of the problem, describes its manifestation, and allows for meaningful and informed solutions to be created. Marquardt (2016) argues that individuals experiencing homelessness have experienced “statistical exclusion” (p.303) as a result of being left out of traditional census counts as these only go to those with an address. By not being included in census data, the problem of homelessness can go unacknowledged by policy makers, or be easily dismissed on account of stereotypes (‘those people’ choose to be homeless, it is not the result of structural causes) by way of “manufactured ignorance” (p. 304). Marquardt continues that advocates have fought for data to be collected on homelessness so that they could have evidence of the scale of the problem and its causes, which could provide a useful tool to counter stereotypes. For instance, data that show that the prevalence of homelessness increases during an economic crisis or after austerity measures provide evidence for the structural causes of homelessness (Marquardt, 2016). Moreover, having access to information about the barriers and health impacts of homelessness can help to ensure that there are policies and programs in place to meet the needs of the homeless, ultimately enhancing their health and wellbeing (positive biopolitical use of data).

Conforming to neoliberalism – potential dangers. There are potential concerns that arise with the new emphasis on collecting data and ensuring that agencies are more accountable. For instance, while tracking outcomes is important, the outcomes that are deemed to be important, and by whom, is also critical. While it may be important to a funder that a young person is employed at the end of a program, this may not be the most meaningful indicator if the young person is employed in menial, precarious labour, or if this employment is not sustained. Moreover, agencies that are mandated to work with HMIS (such as all of those under the CHF)

are funded according to their ‘performance’. The programs with the best outcomes, largely defined by transition to self-sufficiency, are awarded funding accordingly. While it is important that programs are accountable and measure the outcomes that are meaningful to them, the punitive use of outcome data – i.e. not funding programs if their outcomes are not high enough can be problematic as there are many structural and systemic drivers of homelessness that can impact outcomes. In the realm of limited funding, it is possible that some programs that are doing meaningful work can be defunded, and some programs will continue to receive funding because they have high outcomes but not necessarily on meaningful indicators. Or while the outcomes might be meaningful to funders, they may not be indicative of a larger impact or change in homelessness (such as the employment example given above). While benchmarks can be useful to give programs something to strive for, they can also create the incentive to produce false data in order to continue to receive funding, or to ‘cream’ by selecting only the highest functioning young people for their programs who are more likely to succeed by traditional measures.

From a Foucauldian perspective, concerns also arise from the biopolitical use of data in at least three ways. First, life and death decisions are made based on statistics and economic considerations rather than a moral imperative. Second, the data ‘produces’ a population, and third, it can be used to determine the distribution of scarce resources. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

It is clear that street homelessness is a life or death situation. Several studies have established that living on the streets increases the likelihood of premature death, particularly through exposure to various medical conditions such as tuberculosis, and elements such as extreme weather, malnutrition and violence (Hwang, 2000; Hwang & Cheung, 2004; Condon, &

McDermid, 2014). Under neoliberal biopolitics, the life and death of the chronically homeless is decided based on statistical and economic considerations. Calculations are made to determine probable outcomes (i.e. life or death) for people experiencing homelessness. The chronically homeless are seen as an economic cost, and biopolitical calculations are made based on how much it costs to keep them alive, either on the streets or in housing (Hennigan, 2013). The decision to focus on the chronically homeless in Calgary's (and most other's) 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness is literally because the chronically homeless are first, at higher risk of death, and second, because they place the greatest financial burden on taxpayers. For instance, in 2011, the CHF writes:

The chronically and episodically homeless are at higher risk of death due to very poor health and long-term homelessness. They also use more than 50% of the emergency shelter capacity... The needs of the chronic and episodically homeless are prioritized throughout the updated plan (CHF, 2011, p. 17).

As a further example, the Vulnerability Index (VI), a subscale that can be used with the SPDAT, the acuity measure used to determine priority into Housing First programs, was created to determine which homeless persons are most at risk of death. The VI is described by Leopold and Ho (2015) as a tool that:

Uses an algorithm to prioritize individuals for permanent housing based on their mortality risk... [The VI] is critical to moving the most vulnerable individuals into permanent housing before they died on the streets (p.36).

While there is no doubt that those in the most precarious position or facing life or death should be prioritized to receive services – much the way an emergency room at a hospital operates – the concern is that the livelihood of human beings is being determined based on crude economic calculations removed from any moral imperative. The fact that there are suffering, destitute citizens is seemingly of little consequence compared to the 'more important' issues of saving money and doing what makes sense economically. Moreover, in line with the emergency room

metaphor, how do we stop responding to the emergency situations of homelessness and reach a place where less people need the emergency response? Like any health issue, preventing homelessness would be the more cost-effective and humane response (Gaetz & DeJ, 2017).

Second, through the use of technologies such as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the CHF's electronic client management system, experts in the field define homelessness and shape our understanding of who the homeless are. While HMIS creators have ensured that data is collected and shared in a manner that has respect for privacy laws, Willse (2008) argues that there are concerns that extend beyond those of individual rights. He argues that the data are not used to reflect 'reality', but are *productive* of the element under study, actively generating this object, or what we understand the object to be (in this case the homeless 'population'). As the programs that use HMIS are required to prioritize the chronically homeless the data becomes skewed toward those using the services: programs target the chronic homeless, collect data on their participants, and this becomes who the 'homeless' are, despite the sample being selected in a purposive way, omitting the majority who are not eligible for Housing First programs. Taken in conjunction with the PIT counts that can only capture information on the absolutely or visibly homeless, there is a danger that our understanding of homelessness can be partial and misleading; once again reifying the notion that the homeless and the chronically homeless are one in the same, ignoring the majority who do not fit this profile. The CHF has acknowledged that there are "blind spots" in their data as they only collect data on the participants that use their programs, and there are several programs that service the homeless that are not funded by the CHF (CHF, 2011).

Willse (2008) further argues that the individual client must become a part of this population in order to gain access to services and therefore survive. In the case of Housing First,

individuals must declare themselves to be as unwell as possible in order to gain access to housing, as those with the highest acuity score are prioritized. Those experiencing homelessness who do not wish to declare how unfit they are mentally and physically do not have the option of joining Housing First programs, and are instead pushed into other, generally more punitive, spaces (Sparks, 2012). As Sparks (2012) states, “it is their choice as ‘consumers’ to admit their deviance and accept benevolently offered services” (p. 1526). Savvy individuals who learn what service providers are looking for may attempt to conform to this in order to gain access to services, thereby skewing the data further, and the more accurate picture of the homeless can be lost.

Finally, HMIS data is productive in that information obtained is used to actively determine which solutions to pursue to meet the needs of the population under study. The knowledge that is generated through this data is used to create specific interventions and to distribute resources, actively “organizing possibilities and kinds of living rather than just recording life as it is” (Willse, 2008, p. 244). The information that is obtained through HMIS is passed along various networks, becoming the knowledge that is used to determine life chances such as access to services and resources. The data becomes central in determining “what kinds of life are made available by programs targeting the homeless” (Willse, 2008, p. 245). While prioritizing the chronically homeless makes economic sense and ensures that those with the most pressing health needs are provided with access to services, in the context of limited funding, the majority of people experiencing homelessness will not meet this criteria and will likely not have access to the same services and supports. This dramatically impacts their life and wellbeing, and can increase their level of risk and need.

Governmentality at the spatial level. Neoliberal governmentality is realized at a spatial level by ensuring that spaces are created and maintained in order to facilitate its aims. Earlier I argued that this has implications for visibly homeless people who are deemed to be inappropriate users of many spaces, and are often removed by force.

Resistance to neoliberalism. While much has been written about people who experience homelessness and their diminished access to public space, less has been written about the spatial implications of Housing First. In many ways, acquiring housing through Housing First programs greatly facilitates access to a particular standard of living that was unavailable while homeless.

Hulchanski (2002) accurately summarizes what kind of exclusion the homeless experience:

Having no place to live means being excluded from all that is associated with having a home, a neighbourhood, and a set of established community networks. It means being exiled from the mainstream patterns of day-to-day life. Without a physical place to call 'home' in the social, psychological and emotional sense, the hour-to-hour struggle for physical survival replaces all other possible activities (p. 8).

Hence, obtaining a small space of one's own provides the foundation for many physical, social and psychological elements that many have the luxury of taking for granted. Adequate housing is necessary to living a healthy life – previously homeless individuals are no longer subject to harsh outdoor conditions, and they have a space to rest and recover from illness. They have a place to store their belongings and to prepare food. They gain privacy and a place of refuge. Their personal safety is increased as they can lock their doors and are removed from many of the dangers of the streets. Having this private space is foundational to allowing young people the opportunity to plan for the future, and pursue educational and employment opportunities, as they no longer have to focus on their survival.

Having housing theoretically removes individuals from the cycle of geographic inclusion and exclusion the homeless are subjected to in which they are forced from spaces they are deemed undesirable and pushed into other 'spaces of care' such as shelters and hospitals.

Research shows that individuals housed through Housing First programs utilize emergency services less, and are less likely to come into contact with police due to ‘public nuisance’ behaviours as they no longer forced to conduct particular behaviours in public, such as drinking alcohol and urinating (Goering et al., 2014; Clifasefi, Malone & Collins, 2013). They are also no longer subjected to the stereotypes, stigma and contempt that arise from having to live outdoors and be visibly homeless.

Conforming to neoliberalism. While Housing First programs do facilitate a type of spatial inclusion among its participants, I would argue that it is necessary but not sufficient. They do not change the status quo or the punitive streets to which the homeless are subjected to in the first place. In fact, the exclusion and forcible removal of the visibly homeless from many urban spaces is one piece of a larger process of neoliberal urbanization and the management of the poor (De Verteuil, May, & von Mahrs, 2009). As discussed above, the city has become a place where the interests of economic production and competitiveness trump all else; where developers, city officials, financiers and private property owners increasingly determine how urban space will be used and by whom. In fact, in the absence of preventive measures, Housing First can arguably be seen as another strategy to move the visibly homeless from the streets, who historically have been eyesores to consumers and tourists and serve as a reminder of the abject poverty that many citizens are forced to endure despite the neoliberal promises of economic growth and prosperity for all. In this sense, with its focus on the chronically homeless, Housing First can be seen as a new “spatial fix” (Harvey, 2002), which works in tandem with the other punitive spatial strategies discussed previously that have not been successful in removing the sight of homelessness from the public’s view. Harvey (2002) describes a spatial fix as being similar theoretically to the Malthusian technological fix, or the need for technology to continually evolve

to meet increasing demands caused by population growth in order to avert mass starvation and destruction. Spatial fixes result from the need for capitalism to incessantly rearrange geographical structures to respond to new ‘crises’ that emerge with ongoing expansion. For instance, it is not uncommon for one space to be developed and then destroyed at a later date in order to make room for a new spatial fix. Harvey argues that capitalism would not be able to survive without perpetually seeking spatial fixes, or continually expanding geographically.

In addition, while housing does facilitate important aspects of social inclusion, the fact that many Housing First participants continue to live in poverty after they are housed means that their spatial exclusion may endure, albeit to a lesser degree. As a result of gentrification, low-income residents are increasingly being displaced from urban areas. The process of gentrification occurs when capital is invested in an urban area, attracting middle- and upper-class residents to the area. Lower-income residents are either evicted directly so that new developments can be built, or they are removed from the area indirectly when the influx of capital drives the cost of living up, and they can no longer afford to live there. In contrast to gentrified urban spaces, areas deemed to be less attractive to investors become marginalized spaces - investors pull their funds out of these neighbourhoods, resulting in crumbling infrastructure and a lack of local businesses and job opportunities. Consequently, these areas can be more affordable for low-income residents, resulting in congregate spaces of poverty. In these urban areas, not only are there more affordable housing units, but services that Housing First participants rely on are also located (such as drop-ins or food banks), as there is less resistance from local residents, or the inhabitants have less political sway. This results in continued spatial exclusion as these spaces are stigmatized, or as Sibley (1995, p.59) refers to as “place based phobias”. Research has shown that youth in general, regardless of whether they are homeless, particularly youth of colour, are

generally subjected to high levels of surveillance and policing when they are in public spaces (Malone, 2002; Fine et al., 2003). This means that young Housing First participants may continue to be harassed in their neighbourhoods, simply for being out in public. Future research should investigate formerly homeless young people's experiences in public spaces once they are housed in Housing First programs.

Useful to this discussion is the concept of the "right to the city", a phrase commonly associated with French scholar Henri Lefebvre. To Lefebvre (1991), the right to the city not only means that residents have the right to occupy urban spaces, but it also means that they have a right to determine how space will be produced or used. It is worth asking in contemporary neoliberal society, who has this right to the city? The visibly homeless clearly do not - having housing is undoubtedly a requirement to exercise this right (Mitchell, 2003). Yet arguably neither does the poor, nor perhaps the majority of citizens, to varying degrees. The right to the city is currently held by an elite group of economic and political actors (Harvey, 2002). Citizen's ability to have their voices heard in how urban spaces are used lies in direct relationship to their acquisition of private property and wealth. In addition, with the globalized nature of contemporary neoliberal society, the actors deciding on how urban spaces will be used are not necessarily even local residents, as their office are increasingly headquartered internationally.

In Summary – How Does Infinity and Calgary's 10-Year Plan Resist and Perform Neoliberal Governmentality?

Housing First programs such as Infinity and 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness, such as the CHF's, have made important strides towards transforming Canada's response to homelessness from an emergency-based model toward a more solution-focused one. They have resisted traditional neoliberal responses at the level of the individual, population and spatially.

Individually, Housing First in theory positions housing as a human right and removes preconditions such as sobriety and treatment from service provision. At the level of the population, Infinity and the CHF show how large-scale data can be important to this work by placing an emphasis on providing high-quality programs that are supported by evidence. It is important for societies such as Calgary to have evidence of the extent of the homelessness crisis so that services can be provided and policy makers cannot ignore the issue. Finally, spatially, Infinity and Housing First initiatives have ensured that thousands of people have access to their own private space, a foundation for meeting the physical, social and psychological needs of participants. This theoretically removes individuals from the punitive streets that they may have been subjected to when they were visibly homeless.

I have also shown that while these initiatives offer important sites of resistance to neoliberal governmentality, they continue to be embedded within it. The language of Calgary's 10-Year Plan powerfully depicts examples of the extent to which its creators 'perform' neoliberal governmentality by being heavily steeped in the discourse of personal responsibility, accountability and social return on investment. At the level of the individual, 10-Year Plans largely facilitate Housing First programs that operate from an individualized case management model. While this is valuable and necessary work, in the absence of more preventative efforts, it reinforces the notion that homelessness is caused by individual deficits, and the solution to 'ending' homelessness is to 'rehabilitate' individuals. Moreover, in the context of neoliberalism, case management services generally focus on creating proper neoliberal subjects as their fundamental goals are geared towards having clients gain access to market-based norms such as private housing and employment. Calgary's 10-Year Plan appears to make an assumption about the nature of chronically homeless individuals; that they are the ones where attention must be

focused since ‘most’ people can exit homelessness on their own. I have shown that in light of the developmental stage and economic barriers that young people face, the assumption that most can escape on their own is particularly problematic for youth. Moreover, since homelessness can be seen as a process for young people, by not interrupting this process earlier and waiting for their needs to become more complex and acute, active damage can be done to these youth, severely affecting their life trajectories.

At the level of the population, the biopolitical use of data is concerning in three ways. First, life and death decisions are made based on crude economic calculations, not a moral imperative. The decision of CHF, and most 10-Year Plans, to focus on the chronically homeless is not necessarily because they are suffering the most but because they are more likely to die on the streets and cost the most to taxpayers. Second, large-scale data such as that used in HMIS do not merely capture reality; they actively produce it. A ‘homeless population’ is produced based on the findings, despite the fact that they are purposefully choosing a particular segment of the homeless population, the chronically homeless currently utilizing the programs. This almost ensures that the data will be skewed towards those eligible for Housing First programs, neglecting the majority experiencing homelessness that are not. Third, these data are used to establish how resources should be distributed. This determines what kind of services are available for whom, and drastically impacts the lives of both those that are eligible for these services and those who are not. Since the most acute and chronically homeless have been deemed to be the priority, resources are shifted away from those that do not fit into this category, which impacts their wellbeing and increases the likelihood that their need levels will rise.

Finally, on a spatial level, while having housing is a prerequisite to having a ‘right to the city’, it is necessary but not sufficient. The punitive streets that the homeless are subjected to

remain unchallenged, meaning that anyone that appears visibly homeless may still be subjected to policing and surveillance. Moreover, these punitive streets are one example of a larger process of neoliberal urbanization, or ensuring that urban spaces are free from obstacles to neoliberal activities. In this sense Housing First may participate in this process by assisting in removing the visibly homeless from the streets. Finally, many Housing First participants continue to live in poverty and as such, may continue to experience spatial exclusion.

The authors of CHF's 10-Year Plan describe the structural causes of homelessness in their reports, yet their proposed solutions are centered on individuals because this is within their jurisdiction of influence. This perhaps, is the fundamental problem with 10-Year Plans; they claim they can end homelessness without addressing the root causes of homelessness, thereby allowing senior governments to abdicate on their responsibilities to their constituents. Ten-year plans cannot end homelessness because to do so requires stopping the incidence, or the number of people that become homeless in the first place. I elaborate on this argument in the next, concluding chapter.

Chapter Eight

Discussion: Youth Homelessness – A Human’s Rights Approach to Addressing Youth

Homelessness Focused on Prevention

There is no doubt that those who work for the Infinity Project and the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) have had a positive impact on a great number of people, and care deeply about the issue of homelessness. This research has shown that the CHF have housed thousands of people and identified the local needs of Calgary to a degree that has never been done before. They have been successful in engaging diverse stakeholders from the community, including both the private and government sectors, in a tangible Plan to address a growing crisis in their city. The CHF has created a unique system of care among its agencies, and has made great strides in sharing information and tracking outcomes in their Plan through HMIS. Their trailblazing work has contributed to the huge momentum across the country and given advocates and service providers hope and inspiration that the homelessness crisis could be solved. Infinity has also done important work, housing several dozen youth. This research showed that they upheld the majority of the principles of Gaetz’s (2014b) Housing First Framework for Youth, particularly immediate access to housing with no preconditions, youth choice and self-determination, individual and client-driven supports, and opportunities for meaningful engagement. The program provides crucial services to youth, particularly in regards to housing supports. They also facilitate the development of life skills, family reconnection, support for young parents, and advocacy for their youth. The Outcomes Star data showed that most of the youth improved in their overall scores, suggesting that they are moving forward in their lives in important ways, particularly their physical health and motivation. Youth also decreased their use of public health and correctional services, which is congruent with the literature on Housing First. Future

research should investigate the nature of this reduced police contact, to see, as Goering et al. (2014) found, if this is the result of a decrease in public nuisance offenses, or police contact that occurs by virtue of being homeless.

Several of the youth interviewed were adamant that Infinity has changed their lives for the better. One young person interviewed has been homeless since he was eleven, and has moved through multiple programs and shelters throughout his life. He describes finally exiting homelessness upon entering Infinity:

I was homeless for six years in these shelters. And then I got to Infinity and I just got a house! So it was like a whole flip of life around. It's awesome. Going from sleeping in -40 in the park...this program is awesome. Because I'd still be homeless and completely fucked in the head and lost if it wasn't for this program. I'd still be like – it wouldn't be pretty. I'd be dead or in jail, guaranteed.

The majority of youth were able to maintain their housing at rates congruent with the Canadian literature (they were housed 73% of the time), demonstrating that Housing First can be an appropriate model for youth, and that youth can be successful in maintaining their housing.

This research also identified multiple challenges that Infinity and the CHF face in doing their work. Infinity did not have some elements of the Housing First Framework integrated in a formal manner, making it difficult for them to ensure that they are providing a program that is congruent with the principles of positive youth development, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction. While there were elements of each of these philosophies present at Infinity, they were informal in nature, and staff had a hard time articulating how they impacted their work at times. They also had no way to measure the fidelity of the program model, including to the Housing First model in general, making it difficult to know which elements of the program were producing positive outcomes, and which ones could be improved. The HMIS and Outcomes Star data showed that change was slow in several domains in the young people's lives, particularly mental health and substance use, which is also consistent with the literature. This suggests that

change in these areas is difficult and non-linear, and while housing is a necessary foundation to addressing these concerns, it is not a panacea. Having housing does not erase the complex trauma that the young people have been exposed to, but it does provide the necessary cushion to allow them to begin to address these concerns, without having to worry about basic survival. It was also shown in this research that service providers face tremendous difficulty accessing mental health and addictions support for their clients, demonstrating the effect that our reduced welfare state and social service sector has on Housing First participants.

Other structural barriers were seen in the lack of affordable housing that participants have access to, and the difficulties they face in securing an income that they can support themselves with. Participants were all living on very low incomes, even a couple years into the program, and most required support with securing basic needs throughout. This demonstrates that Housing First participants, while housed through the program, often continue to live in poverty. As this was the case two years into the program, it is not unreasonable to assume that even once they are ready to ‘graduate’ the program, their incomes remain devastatingly low. This means that even upon exiting Infinity, they will continue to be at risk of homelessness. Participants also discussed the difficulties they face financially in pursuing an education. Having to pay rent while attending school is very difficult, and the financial support available for students depends on their ability to maintain adequate grades in full-time studies. For some youth, this is difficult, but possible. For others who have been disengaged from the education system for some time, this is not feasible. The options that are available to youth remain limited, particularly in terms of their ability to pursue opportunities that will increase their odds of earning a living wage.

Finally, the outcomes for the Indigenous youth at Infinity were worse than found in the general sample, suggesting that the Housing First model in its current form may not be meeting

the needs of this population. Future research should investigate whether Infinity's subsequent creation of "Home Fire", a Housing First program for Indigenous youth improves their outcomes, and determine which specific program elements are necessary for this to occur.

This research has shown that the Infinity Project is largely successful at a programmatic level. Yet Infinity exists within a larger context, including the CHF's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Within this 10-Year Plan, the dominant vehicle used to 'end' homelessness is Housing First programs, such as Infinity. It is therefore reasonable to question if this is an appropriate mechanism to address long-term homelessness, including for youth. From a governmentality perspective, it is questionable whether this is possible as these strategies do not challenge the neoliberal status quo sufficiently in two ways. First, while there are important sites of resistance, the initiatives remain mired in neoliberalism at the levels of the individual, population and spatially. Second, they do not address the root, structural causes of homelessness such as poverty, affordable housing, colonization/discrimination, and the inadequate welfare state and social service sector. These are not areas that the homelessness sector can address, but members can advocate for these with specific policy recommendations and by ensuring they remain part of the ongoing dialogue on addressing homelessness. To do otherwise is to allow the government to abdicate on their responsibilities. It is perhaps here that Housing First and 10-Year Plans operate within the confines of neoliberal governmentality the most – by claiming that they can end homelessness without senior levels of government making efforts at addressing the primary drivers, and by overstating the role that communities can play in ending homelessness. While all communities have important insight onto their local context and needs, they do not have the power or the resources to end homelessness.

In the remainder of this discussion I elaborate on these two ways that Infinity and the CHF's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness operate within the confines of neoliberal governmentality. I conclude by arguing that the language of 'ending' homelessness may ultimately be harmful to the cause and propose an alternative counter-conduct to neoliberal governmentality: a human rights approach to addressing homelessness.

Complex Neoliberal Entities

As previously argued, neoliberalism does not exist in a pure form, and the Infinity Project and the CHF's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness are complex entities that simultaneously resist and embody neoliberal governmentality at the level of the individual, population, and spatially. I have shown that Housing First challenges previously punitive models of care that place conditions such as sobriety and employment on participants before they may access housing. While not necessarily challenging neoliberalism, I have also shown that collecting data on homelessness can be positive as this allows programs to ensure they are providing effective services, and to determine what the needs of people experiencing homelessness are so that they can be met. Having data allows advocates to prove that homelessness is an ongoing concern, and can provide a foundation to challenge individualist explanations by providing evidence that economic factors, such as austerity measures, can increase the incidence of homelessness. Finally, I have shown that having housing provides the first step towards individuals having a right to the city, and removes the previously homeless from the punitive streets.

I have also demonstrated that Housing First (including Infinity) and CHF's 10-Year Plan remain embedded in neoliberal governmentality in many ways, and that these will ultimately limit their long-term impact on 'ending' homelessness, including for youth. The language used by the CHF in their documents is centered on personal responsibility, accountability and

economic efficiency. Despite acknowledging the structural causes of homelessness, solutions remain focused at the individual level, and the root causes remain largely overlooked. Infinity, like all Housing First programs, is centered on individual case management, which in the absence of preventative measures, can be seen as disciplinary action to restore individuals participation in the private housing and labour markets, as proper neoliberal subjects. Moreover, the prioritization of the chronically and episodically homeless is based on the assumption that ‘everyone else’ will be able to escape homelessness on their own. This is extremely problematic for young people who face tremendous economic disadvantages in living independently, and who may not be chronically homeless simply by virtue of their age. If homelessness can be viewed as a process rather than one event, we must interfere as early as possible in this process, not assume youth will find a way on their own. We cannot allow young people’s needs to become more acute before they have access to housing and services. This can profoundly impact their life trajectories and expose them to increased hardships. It is possible that the majority who do not fit the definition of the chronically homeless can become more acute simply by virtue of not having access to services. In other words, today’s transitionally homeless could be tomorrow’s chronically homeless (Gaetz, O’Grady, et al., 2016).

At the level of the population, concerns arise from the biopolitical use of data in three ways. First, life and death decisions are made based on economic and statistical calculations rather than a moral imperative to ensure all of our citizens have the right to live at a particular standard of living. Second, big data such as that collected by HMIS is productive in that it shapes our understanding of who the homeless are, even though their focus on the chronically homeless will skew the data. The notion that homelessness and chronic homelessness are one in the same is reified, reinforcing individual explanations of homelessness. Finally, understanding

who the homeless are determines how resources will be distributed which greatly impacts the life and wellbeing of persons experiencing homelessness. The focus on the chronically homeless has diverted funds from other populations, including women, families and youth.

Lastly, Housing First and CHF's 10-Year Plan conform to neoliberal governmentality at the spatial level by not challenging the punitive streets that the homeless are exposed to or the ongoing spatial exclusion the poor and marginalized citizens are subjected to through the acts of criminalization and gentrification. Housing First can arguably be seen as another spatial fix to remove the visibly homeless from the streets, rather than efforts to increase everyone's right to the city or more democratic ways to use urban space.

These arguments make clear the fact that despite resisting particular elements of neoliberal governmentality, it is not in a way that challenges the structural causes of homelessness, and the language, many of the underlying values, and spatial arrangements of these solutions remain mired in neoliberalism. The question remains if meaningful change can occur within this context. While it can be argued that these are the structural parameters that advocates are forced to work within, can a consequence of neoliberal policy and practice (i.e. mass homelessness) really be solved with *more* neoliberal policies and practices? Or is it doomed to produce much of the same? If the limited success of Calgary's 10-Year Plan, and many Plans like it are any indicator, the answer appears to be 'no'. Moreover, it is worth asking whether this can ultimately undermine the goal of ending homelessness. Hennigan (2013) elaborates on this point:

At its best [Housing First] will provide housing to a fraction of the poor and homeless while making us feel good about ourselves. At its worst, it will function to reproduce neoliberal geographies built to subsidize capital accumulation, to uphold social institutions that reproduce homelessness and extreme poverty, and to maintain political legitimacy by effectively hiding the most visible symptoms of capitalist contradiction and neoliberal state policy: homeless people (chronic or otherwise) and the extremely poor. Housing First will function in this manner because Housing First was primarily (re)produced by neoliberal

urbanism to sustain neoliberal urbanism (p. 179).

Previously I referenced Glass's (2016) concept of performativity to discuss how individuals 'perform' neoliberalism in their everyday practice, and how this can leave space for resistance. Glass cautioned, however, that resistance in itself is not sufficient to lead to transformation if the structural causes of inequities are left unchallenged. Our approach to ending homelessness must therefore transcend resistance to neoliberalism and challenge the root causes of homelessness. This research has pointed to at least four areas this is necessary: poverty, affordable housing, colonization/discrimination, and the inadequate welfare state and social service sector. Addressing these can be considered the primary prevention of homelessness (Gaetz & DeJ, 2017), the topic this discussion turns to next.

Ending Homelessness through Primary Prevention

If mass homelessness as we know it today is the result of specific neoliberal social and economic policies, then it follows that long-term solutions are to be found here as well. This requires the leadership and policy intervention from senior levels of government, not local communities or non-profits (although their work remains important). If we are to truly end homelessness, we must address these structural factors, or those that make people vulnerable to homelessness, and create barriers to exiting. Housing First and 10-Year Plans continue to respond to the issue once people are homeless (for some time often); this response must be augmented by efforts that prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Gaetz and DeJ (2017) argue that Canadian governments have historically been resistant to developing a comprehensive prevention strategy, partly because it is a broad topic which has not been conceptualized adequately. To address this gap the authors created a prevention framework that details three types of prevention for homelessness: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary prevention involves addressing the root causes of homelessness, or the systemic and structural

causes of homelessness. It seeks to reduce the overall incidence of homelessness in the population at large rather than any one person's experience of homelessness (Parsell & Marston, 2012). Examples of primary prevention include poverty reduction, the creation of affordable housing, anti-discrimination and colonization work, and the creation of a robust welfare state (described below). Secondary prevention targets those who are at imminent risk of homelessness through interventions such as eviction prevention. Systems of care, including coordinated intake procedures and shared information systems, such as those seen in Calgary, are important to secondary prevention as they ensure that individuals have access to the same services regardless of which service 'door' they enter, that services are streamlined and efficient, are easier for clients to navigate, and are not-duplicated (CHF, 2011). Finally, tertiary prevention attempts to prevent individuals who have experienced homelessness, including the chronically homeless, from becoming homeless again. Housing First falls into the realm of tertiary prevention as it targets people who are already homeless and aims to reduce their reoccurrence of homelessness. These levels of prevention are not necessarily discreet categories but better represent a continuum where overlap can occur (Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016).

Despite acknowledging the need for primary prevention, the efforts of the CHF remain focused on people deemed to be at-risk of or are already experiencing homelessness (secondary and tertiary prevention) because this is within their realm of influence – primary prevention requires the leadership of senior levels of government. For instance, their updated Plan in 2011 includes a plan of providing prevention supports for 9,400 households who are at risk of experiencing homelessness. They write that their prevention efforts are guided by five principles (CHF, 2011, p. 20):

1. Identify those at greatest risk of homelessness and intervene at predictable pathways to homelessness;

2. Prioritize resources to the most vulnerable, especially those at risk of long-term homelessness;
3. Provide *just enough* (emphasis added) resources to prevent and/or end homelessness;
4. Integrate key public systems that integrate with those at high risk of homelessness such as corrections and health care;
5. Reform public systems so there is a shared responsibility for stable housing across public systems

They note that this plan will require the development of an assessment to target those most at risk of becoming homeless to ensure that resources are used effectively, but do not outline any plans to develop one.

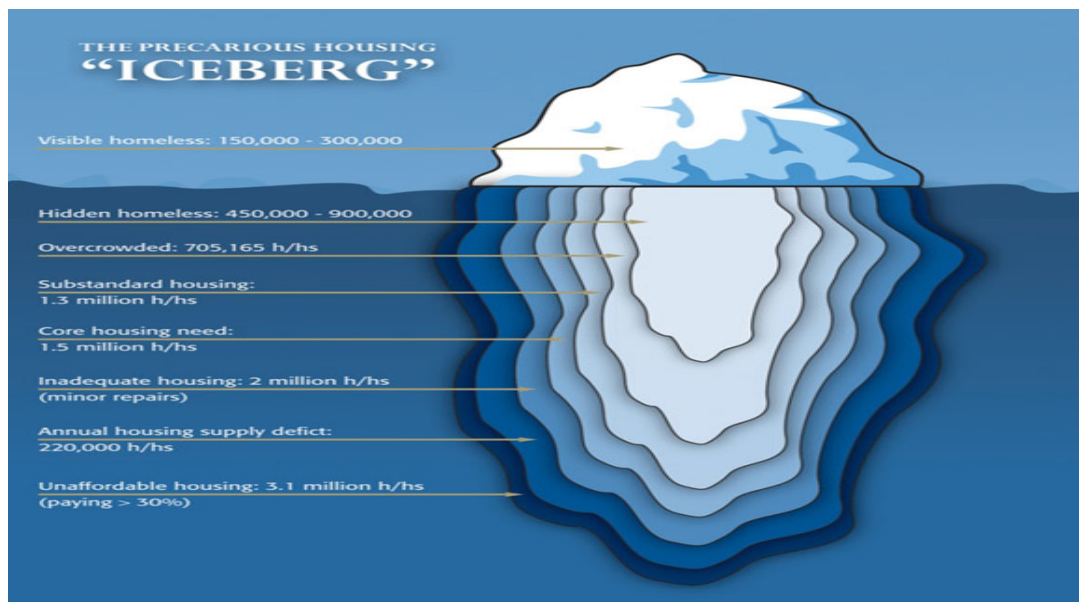
Parsell and Marston (2012) describe two problems with interventions that target those ‘at risk’ or whom are already experiencing homelessness in the absence of primary prevention. First, they reinforce notions of homelessness as being the result of individual deficiencies rather than structural barriers. Second, by targeting specific individuals or households, these interventions do not reduce homelessness at the level of the population because they do not stem the flow into homelessness. As I have already discussed this first point at length, I will focus on the second idea. By attempting to target prevention measures toward those at risk, it can be exceedingly difficult to know who might become homeless and who might not. This has caused the CHF and others to worry that prevention efforts are not cost-effective because “savings...could become washed out by the cost of assisting many false positive cases” (Culhane, Metraux & Byrne, 2011, p. 297.). This is of course possible as many who have the identified risk factors do not ultimately become homeless. It is also true that many who do become homeless will not be identified in targeted efforts (Parsell & Marston, 2012). In this sense, while secondary and tertiary prevention might literally prevent some households from becoming homeless in a crisis situation, they have limited impact on reducing the overall incidence of homelessness (Parsell & Marston, 2012). For every household that is assisted with targeted prevention, there will be another to replace them as

the root factors that cause homelessness have not been addressed. Moreover, those who have escaped homelessness once through targeted prevention might soon find themselves in the same situation, as their overall financial situation has not necessarily improved. This is not to say that secondary or tertiary prevention is not necessary or important, but rather in the absence of more efforts directed at a primary level, the strategy is flawed. Previously I discussed Fitzpatrick's (2005) critical realist framework on the causes of homelessness, where multiple 'strata' or factors contribute to the experience of homelessness. Homelessness is not simply the loss of a physical structure; it is one manifestation of a series of interrelated social concerns. In order to genuinely address homelessness, we must address them simultaneously. Targeted interventions such as emergency loans to those in imminent risk of eviction are helpful to avoid an immediate episode of homelessness, but their ability to address homelessness in general is limited as the interconnecting factors that make households vulnerable to being homeless have not been resolved.

While the work being done by the CHF and Infinity is invaluable, they are ultimately limited in their potential for wide-scale change because they do not address the root structural causes of homelessness. In order for this to occur, buy-in and action is required from senior levels of government. If we are serious about 'ending' homelessness, we must do more to stem the flow of people into homelessness. Part of this involves changing the way we envision homelessness. I view the current homelessness crisis as one consequence of many that have occurred as the result of neoliberal economic and social policy. Consider the metaphor of the iceberg. I was introduced to this metaphor several years ago in a report by Shapcott (2010), where precarious housing in Canada was presented as an iceberg (see Figure 8.1 below). Visible homelessness was considered to be the tip of the iceberg, or the part of the crisis visible to others.

Beneath the water lies the largest part of the iceberg. Here, Shapcott highlights hidden housing, households living in overcrowded conditions, households living in core housing need (paying more than 50% of their income), and general housing unaffordability.

Figure 8.1 – *Shapcott's Iceberg* (Reproduced from Shapcott, 2010, p. 4).



I propose a similar iceberg metaphor but to which homelessness is the tip of an iceberg of much larger systemic social concerns such as poverty, systemic discrimination and racism (colonialism, racism, homophobia, etc.), the lack of affordable housing, and the inadequate welfare state. We know that for youth who come into contact with the system of homelessness, their marginalization often began much earlier in their lives. In most cases, by the time the young people become homeless, they have already experienced many social concerns and forms of oppression that have impacted their lives. Unfortunately it is likely they will continue to encounter these after they are housed. I view current responses to homelessness as problematic because they are only addressing the tip of the iceberg of much larger social concerns. In fact, since chronic homelessness affects a small percentage of the homeless population, it is akin to addressing only the ‘tip of the tip’ of the iceberg. Just as the emergency shelter system is not

designed to end homelessness, neither are 10-Year Plans in their current form. Housing First and 10-Year Plans remain focused on housing people when homelessness is a consequence of much larger structural and systemic factors. Solving homelessness requires addressing these elements, many of which do not appear on a surface level to be related to homelessness, and intervention from multiple actors in senior government not traditionally associated with the homelessness sector. The question remains whether Housing First and 10-Year Plans can chip away at the iceberg (as current approaches are doing) until we reach the parts that remain ‘under water’ or if we are doomed to continue to circle the top of the iceberg because for every individual, family, young person that the system houses or provides services for, they will be replaced as more continue to emerge from underwater.

Preventing Homelessness at a Primary Level

In this section I describe what primary prevention measures are needed to address homelessness in a fundamental way, or to reduce the overall prevalence of homelessness. These include poverty, affordable housing in Canada, discrimination and colonialism, and the inadequate welfare state / social service sector.

Poverty. While Housing First initiatives are important as they provide housing to people in need, many of the participants continue to have low incomes and live in poverty once they are housed. Housing First programs cannot address the poverty that the majority of their participants must live with, regardless of whether their participants obtain social assistance or low wage labour while they are in the program. The young people in Infinity were on average living on less than \$800 a month by the time they were in the program for 24 months (and seven had no income at all), and most were still relying on Infinity to provide basic needs for them at this time. It did not matter if youth were receiving government assistance or were employed, their incomes

were very low. This is partly due to the abysmal amounts that government assistance offers, but also due to the type of employment that is available to young people.

Most young people in Canada, including the most privileged, have limited work experience and education levels simply by virtue of their age. Youth require time to obtain the credentials necessary to secure meaningful employment, particularly an education. In today's era, jobs increasingly require post-secondary education and/or training. Those that have supportive home environments are often able to remain at home while they pursue an education, and young people are staying at home longer as a result. Yet youth that do not have this supportive environment, or the financial support of their family, do not have this luxury. Youth experiencing homelessness are at a distinct disadvantage to obtain higher-level credentials as not only do they not have a home they can remain in, many have become disengaged from education at some point in their lives, often due to the same family problems that caused their homelessness, or as the result of homelessness itself. If these young people are to get the opportunity to thrive, and not just survive, programs must take into account their limited earning potential and provide them with the opportunity to pursue some form of education or training so that they are not pigeon-holed into menial labour or meagre social assistance rates the rest of their lives. Of course in current programs, as seen with Infinity, this is difficult because they do not necessarily have the funding to support youth in long-term educational endeavours. Instead, the focus on getting youth self-sufficient remains.

While homelessness is often described as an extreme form of poverty, proposed solutions to homelessness, such as with Housing First and 10-Year Plans, rarely include specific actions or recommendations to address poverty. In fact, even in the original 10-Year Plan the authors write, "poverty is the one common denominator in virtually all homelessness" (Calgary Committee to

End Homelessness, 2008, p. 26-27). Yet the goal of Housing First (or any homelessness initiative) is to house people, not to ensure that they live a life free from poverty. This view is tremendously short-sighted if the goal is to end homelessness, as continuing to live in poverty ensures that people remain at risk of homelessness. Indeed, many of the outcomes that homelessness initiatives, including Infinity and CHF's 10-Year Plan aim to achieve, such as a higher quality of life, better health, social inclusion, etc. I would argue are also dependent on ensuring that all households are able to achieve a life free of poverty. Many of the consequences of homelessness for young people such as worsened health, exposure to violence, and disengagement from school, are also true for youth that live in poverty (see for example, Wadsworth et al., 2008; Murry et al., 2011; Anderson, Leventhal & Dupere, 2014). Ending a young person's experience of homelessness is necessary, but not sufficient to giving young people the opportunity to thrive in life.

Despite having much in common, the homelessness and anti-poverty sectors largely operate independently from one another. In Canada, while 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness emerge in various communities, so too do multiple poverty reduction strategies. Both strategies often operate simultaneously in complete isolation from one another, including in Calgary (see for example, the poverty reduction strategy *Enough for All* by the City of Calgary & United Way of Calgary, 2013). Yet as I have argued, social concerns do not exist in a vacuum; they are often the result of interrelated factors. Current social concerns such as poverty and homelessness (among others such as environmentalism) have specific manifestations that result from neoliberal social policies. I continue to be in awe of the disjuncture between reports on homelessness citing poverty as a cause of homelessness, but very rarely including efforts to reduce poverty by way of economic redistribution as a solution. For instance, in Calgary's 10-Year Plan to end

Homelessness, while poverty is discussed as a major cause of homelessness, the Plan only briefly mentions a desire to address this in one paragraph with vaguely defined goals:

We will bring several recommendations to the provincial government to increase income support and AISH rates, change the income support regulations that prevent homeless individuals and families from collecting assistance, and introduce new rules that encourage more Calgarians on assistance to join the workforce. We will also work rapidly to link people with employment opportunities and skills training (CCEH, 2008, p. 25).

While this is important, this is only a fraction of what is needed to address poverty in a meaningful way. Moreover, the use of neoliberal language shows that it is based on the assumptions that Calgarians on assistance require encouragement to work or that it is a motivational issue. Barriers such as mental health concerns, child care costs, or dental and medical benefits provided through income assistance are not considered. The last part also assumes that there are ample employment and training opportunities that are available to Housing First participants, and the problem is merely a matter of ‘linking’ participants to such opportunities. Both of these assumptions reflect the degree to which structural barriers are overlooked in the proposed solutions in CHF’s Plan. Moreover, while the issue of poverty was only given a cursory mention in the original Plan, this was not discussed again in follow-up Plans, nor was there an update on the advocacy efforts that were mentioned in the aforementioned quote.

Although there are differences in how poverty is defined and how solutions are articulated, broad strategies include addressing income inequality through progressive taxation and raising benefit levels of various income transfers and ‘entitlement’ programs, including child benefits, social assistance and disability benefits, the minimum wage and Employment Insurance. The rise of temporary, precarious labour must also be addressed (Standing, 2011). It is

my contention, that if we are to ever end homelessness, we must ‘end’ poverty, or at least the tremendous wealth inequality that is a characteristic of neoliberal society.

I will never forget hearing a leader of the National Alliance to End Homelessness speak at a conference and pronounce that while poverty and homelessness are related, they are not synonymous because poverty, as a social issue has existed long before homelessness in its current crisis state. While this is true, it is also the case that income inequality has risen dramatically under neoliberal economics (Heisz, 2007; 2015). Buckland, Jackson, Roberts and Smith (2001) argue that income inequality may be more of an important factor than poverty per se in predicting homelessness. Income is increasingly polarized between those with low-incomes on one end, and those with high-incomes on the other. The authors point out that this impacts the housing market as developers accommodate those on the high-end of the income spectrum through gentrification and the creation of condominiums at the expense of affordable housing. This also pushes market rates to higher levels. In fact, the income gap between homeowners and renters has grown exponentially since the 1980s and 1990s (Hulchanski, 2006). This creates two groups of customers who must operate within the same market but who have very different abilities to do so. The market in turn accommodates those with the most resources. Hulchanski (2002) writes, “There is a great deal of *social* need for housing, but the households in need lack the money to generate effective market *demand*” (p. 7, emphasis in original).

With the introduction of neoliberal economics and social policy, Canada has witnessed dramatic levels of income inequality. Heisz (2015) examined the Gini Coefficient, a “summary indicator” of inequality as well as market income inequality (from earnings and investments) over several decades in Canadian history and found that inequality rose dramatically during the second half of the 1990s, and that by the 2000s, was at the highest level since the 1930s. Recent

statistics show that in 2013, the top 1% of income earners held 10.3% of all Canadian income (Statistics Canada, 2016). When looked at in terms of overall wealth (all assets minus debt), the Broadbent Institute (2014), citing Statistics Canada's Survey of Financial Security, report that in 2012 the top 10% of wage earners in Canada controlled almost half (47.9%) of all financial wealth. In contrast, the bottom 30% accounted for less than 1% of the wealth in Canada; the bottom 50% less than 6%. Alberta has the worst income inequality of any province, with the top 1% controlling 17.8% of income; this is followed by Ontario, where the top 1% control 11.2% of income (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The issue of poverty raises questions about the principle of choice in Housing First programs, a topic I touched upon earlier. How much 'choice' can youth really have if they live in poverty? I wonder how many youth would 'choose' to be in a Housing First program, and to participate in case management if they had the resources to live independently. The young people's poverty also severely limits their ability to choose their housing or even what plan to pursue while they are in the program. As discussed earlier, it can be difficult for youth to pursue long-term education plans in light of their financial reality.

Affordable housing. Since the federal withdrawal from the realm of social housing in the 1990s, the lack of affordable housing has become extremely pronounced in Canada, and Calgary is no exception. The topic of affordable housing broadly falls into two domains: availability and affordability. Currently in Calgary, there is a huge deficit in the supply of affordable housing, with the gap between those who need this housing and the availability growing at about 1,000 units per year (CHF, 2015). The CHF (2015) reports that 27,000 units would need to be built immediately just to house the homeless and those in extreme core need (paying more than 50% of their income on rent). They estimate that 15,000 Calgarians are in

extreme housing need, and project this number will be 18,000 by 2018. In October of 2014, a month after the data for this study was collected, the rental vacancy rate was 1.4% (CHF, 2015). As Infinity staff point out however, this number is lower for youth utilizing Infinity (or any population with multiple barriers) because many rental units are too expensive, and some landlords are reluctant to rent to youth and to individuals utilizing social services. This lack of housing also does not speak to the availability of housing for Indigenous populations, both on- and off-reserve (AICH, 2015).

According to the Calgary City Council, affordable housing is supposed to meet the needs of low- and moderate- income households at costs that are lower than what is found in the private market (CHF, 2015). It is to be geared toward households with 65% or less the median income in Calgary (CHF, 2015). When defined as households paying 50% or more of household income on housing, one in ten Calgary households are in core housing need (CHF, 2015). Rental units are increasingly unaffordable for Calgary residents, as there is no provincial or municipal rent control legislation, allowing landlords to increase rental rates freely. For instance, in only one year from October 2013 and October 2014, average rental rates grew by 8.2% (CHF, 2015). This has profound implications for young people experiencing, or attempting to escape, homelessness with minimal incomes. For instance, Kneebone and Wilkins (2016b) analyzed housing affordability in several Canadian cities and found the situation in Calgary to be particularly precarious. The authors found that studio apartments range in price from \$700-1,099 per month, depending on the quality. One-bedroom apartments ranged from \$850-1,300 per month. If we compare these averages to the mean incomes that young people at Infinity had at 24 months (under \$800), it is clear that these youth are subjected to extreme housing affordability problems, even two years into the program. Even the cheapest, lowest-quality apartments would

consume an extremely large proportion of the young people's incomes, and in many cases, would exceed it.

The shortage of affordable housing for low income people plays a fundamental role in Calgary's homelessness crisis. Kneebone, Emery and Grynishak (2011) compared shelter use in the cities of Calgary and Edmonton, both cities in Alberta with comparable populations. The authors state that while the two cities combined account for 90% of all shelter use in Alberta, over 60% of this is in Calgary. Seeking to understand the differences between these two cities, the authors found that Calgary is distinct in that when its labour market flourishes, the city attracts a high level of migrants. Calgary gets twice the number of migrants when there is strong employment growth than Edmonton (12, 243 per year versus 5,904), even when economic growth is similar. Moreover, the supply of rental units in Calgary is less than half that found in Edmonton: while Calgary has 38 units per 1,000 people, this number is 86 units per 1,000 people in Edmonton. The authors argue that these three factors combined (strong economy, high rates of migration and a shortage of rental units) puts tremendous pressure on Calgary's shelter system. They caution that without substantial public policy initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing, there will continue to be large numbers of people using the shelter system when employment growth is strong. The implication for Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, therefore, is that despite all the work that might occur in Housing First programs, without more affordable housing, the effect on reducing the number of people that become homeless will be minimal, particularly in cycles of strong economic growth.

The CHF have made the creation of affordable housing a component of their Plan from the beginning, aiming to create 11,230 new units in their original Plan. This number was significantly reduced in the 2015 Plan, with the CHF aiming to assist in the creation of 765 new

affordable units (CHF, 2015). The CHF acknowledges these efforts are not enough to scratch the surface of the problem (CHF, 2015). While it is important for the CHF to work to facilitate the creation of new affordable units, caution must be extended for two reasons. First, it is unknown how ‘affordable’ is defined, and second, it can be misleading to discuss new units without considering the *loss* of affordable housing in a city (Adamo et al., 2016). Due to reconstruction and conversion of rental units to condominiums, Calgary loses many affordable units annually. It can be misleading to announce the creation of new units without a discussion of units lost, as this can result in a net loss of affordable housing in the city (Adamo et al., 2006) which some advocates say Calgary is currently operating within (Peterson, 2013). As the rise of petroleum prices in the early 2000s created a massive surge of investment and employment in Calgary, a surge of gentrification resulted in redevelopment of much of Calgary to accommodate oil and gas professionals (Peterson, 2013).

It is clear that Canada has an affordable housing crisis, and that the private market has not been able to meet the needs of all Canadians. The federal government is currently in the process of developing a National Housing Strategy, to be released in late 2017. Considering the substantial neglect over the past few decades from the federal government the investment will have to be significant to have an impact. Gaetz, Gulliver and Richter (2014) recommend that the federal government reinvest in the funding of social housing, and that the federal and provincial governments create a new affordable housing framework in which they agree on investments, outcomes and timeframes for joint ventures in developing housing across the country. They suggest that investments total \$13.84 billion over ten years to this end. They also recommend the creation of a housing benefit, or a cash benefit that is distributed monthly through CRA to low-

income households to assist in rental costs, and the development of an affordable housing tax credit that will serve as an incentive for developers to build affordable housing.

Decolonization and discrimination. Often absent from discussions of primary prevention is the anti-discrimination and decolonization work that must be done to truly prevent homelessness. In this study, although the sample size was small, the outcomes for Indigenous youth were worse than those found in the overall sample. This is congruent with the literature where outcomes for Indigenous populations are worse in Housing First programs than participants at large. Indigenous peoples continue to disproportionately experience homelessness. For instance, despite the fact that they comprise only 4.3% of the Canadian population, they make up 28-34% of the population using emergency shelters across Canada (ESDC, 2016). In a national sample of over 1000 young people across Canada, Gaetz et al. (2016) report that 30.6% identified as Indigenous. In fact, despite the CHF's release of a Plan to End Aboriginal Homelessness (to which there has been no update), the number of Indigenous people enumerated in the PIT count increased from 18% in 2012 to 21% in 2014 (CHF, 2014) and remained at 20% in 2016 (Campbell, Falvo, & Smith, 2017). While these statistics are troublesome on their own, Gaetz, Gulliver & Richter (2014) argue that the problem is likely to get worse as the Indigenous population is expanding rapidly. Using data from the Employment and Social Development division of Canada (2014), they state that while the Indigenous population grew by 20% between the years of 2006-2011, the rest of the Canadian population grew by 5.2%. Once these children grow older, they will also require housing, and the current crisis will become even more acute.

These alarming statistics are the result of the historical and ongoing colonization and traumatization of the Indigenous peoples in Canada, as well as the systemic discrimination and exclusion they face in many of our nation's institutions, including education, criminal justice,

and child welfare. For instance, as discussed previously, research demonstrates that there is a large correlation between child welfare involvement and youth homelessness. While this is true in general, it is important to consider the fact that Indigenous children are even more likely to enter the child welfare system (McKenzie et al., 2010; Trocme, Knoke, & Blackstock, 2004). Forty per cent of Indigenous children live in poverty, and this number skyrockets to 60% of Indigenous children that live on reserve (Campaign 2000, 2016). Indigenous youth are more likely to drop out of school (Gilmore, 2011) and are more likely to be imprisoned. According to a report by the Office of the Correctional Investigator in 2015 (cited in Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016), Indigenous peoples make up just under a quarter of the federal prison population (24.6%). They are more likely to stay in prison for longer periods of time and are less likely to get parole. These experiences shape the opportunities and life trajectories of Indigenous peoples, ultimately making them more vulnerable to experiencing poverty and homelessness.

Neoliberalism, like liberalism in general, was created on the back of colonization. Strakosch (2015) argues that while the previous liberal era attempted to exclude Indigenous Peoples from obtaining citizenship, the neoliberal era is characterized by an attempt to include Indigenous peoples within the realm of liberal/social citizenship, albeit in a way that “forecloses demands for decolonization” (p. 20). Yet this inclusion, according to Strakosch, is based on the foundations of colonialism, and does not challenge or question it; including Indigenous people “as full liberal citizens entrenches rather than dismantles existing settler institution and authority” (p. 22). Colonization is seen as an event that has happened in the past, and the presence of the colonizer is seen as natural. Yet colonialism is not merely a historical phenomenon, it is an ongoing struggle and gives shape to our current economy (Preston, 2013). Current neoliberal economics gives prominence to the acquisition of private property and the

interests of big business. One need only consider recent protests between Indigenous peoples and the petroleum industry over the development of pipelines through their lands, or Stephen Harper's First Nation's Property Ownership Initiative, created to convert Indigenous reserves into private property for examples. Preston (2013) writes:

That neoliberalism figures individual private property as a fundamental and necessary element of human progress inevitably leads, within the structure of settler colonialism, to an attack on collective rights and Indigenous self-determination (p. 49).

From a neoliberal perspective, it is assumed that Indigenous peoples, like all citizens, are autonomous subjects that can get ahead in life if they 'choose' to, and failures to do so are pathologized and racialized. The state is skeptical of its ability to respond to social problems. Moreover, as Strakosch (2015) warns, while neoliberal critics are always quick to point to Canada's previous welfare state that was more universal and generous, this was also a period in history marked by "the most successful practices of assimilation history" (p. 24), such as the "60s scoop" and residential schooling. The implications for social policy, homelessness and Housing First initiatives are that genuine solutions to the social problems faced by Indigenous populations require a removal from the traditional paradigm that legitimizes colonization. A first step must be to acknowledge the horrific history that Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to, and their ongoing battles around colonization and multi-generational trauma. Not only does Canada need to acknowledge and apologize for its awful history, but Indigenous communities have the right to self-governance and to identify and address social problems in an autonomous fashion – in partnership with senior levels of government when necessary. For instance, solutions to homelessness in Indigenous communities must be grounded in an understanding of what homelessness means to them, and what a meaningful solution would be. Christensen (2013) argues that 'home' has a different meaning to many Indigenous communities, often acting as a signifier of relationships with kin. Homelessness does not only mean a loss of a physical

structure, but can also involve the loss of land, language, spiritual and cultural connections (Gaetz, DeJ, et al., 2016).

A note on other forms of discrimination. Unfortunately the data collected in this study was limited in terms of deciphering the impact of Housing First on vulnerable sub-populations other than Indigenous youth, including racialized and LGBTQ2S youth. While the results of this study heavily point to the impact of colonization on the issue of homelessness, this does not mean that primary prevention efforts should not take into account other forms of discrimination, including racism, homophobia and transphobia as other research has found these to be directly related to youth homelessness (Abramovich, 2012; 2013; Springer, Lum, & Roswell, 2013). Discrimination can be both a cause of homelessness, such as when an LGBTQ2S youth comes out to an unsupportive family, and can create barriers to exiting homelessness if a landlord or prospective employer makes judgements of youth based on their social location. A comprehensive primary prevention effort must therefore include measures to combat all forms of discrimination.

The welfare state, decentralization, and the role of senior governments. With increased pressure for governments to reduce their expenditures, combined with neoliberal reluctance to involve government in social problems (preferring to defer families and communities), the robust welfare state Canadians previously enjoyed has largely been eroded. Canada's welfare regime in its current form is means-tested and eligibility to many forms of benefits are based on labour market participation as opposed to being universally applied, as in the case of social-democratic welfare states (Benjaminsen & Andrade, 2015). This leaves many citizens vulnerable to living in poverty if they do not qualify for benefits in the event of an emergency, or those who for one reason or another cannot work in the market economy.

Moreover, the amounts provided for those who do qualify are meagre and not sufficient to live on. Research has shown that countries with more robust and universal welfare states have lower levels of income inequality, poverty, and homelessness (Benjaminsen & Andrade, 2015).

Related to the erosion of our welfare state is decentralization, or the downshifting of responsibility from senior levels of government to municipalities and the non-profit sector, often under the guise of giving local communities and individuals more autonomy (Harrison & Weber, 2015). Through rollback neoliberal social policy, senior levels of government have increasingly reduced their role in a number of jurisdictions, including housing, social assistance, and the provision of social services, and left cash-strapped municipalities and non-profits to fill the void. Municipalities are limited constitutionally in the ways they can increase their revenue (they generally must rely on transfers from provincial government and property taxes), resulting in what Miller (2007) calls a “real municipal fiscal crisis. Municipalities have increased responsibilities matched with neither local tax increases nor provincial transfers” (p. 240). Calgary suffered immensely from decentralization, seeing their provincial transfers cut from 21.9% in 1988 to 15.9% in 2001 (Miller, 2007).

In the absence of added funds, governments increasingly rely on the non-profit and charitable sector to respond to social problems (the ‘shadow state’ or ‘third sector’), including homelessness. In fact, the nature of the non-profit sector has changed dramatically under neoliberalism. Previously responsible for providing ad hoc services in conjunction with the public sector’s social programs, the non-profit sector has taken on a foundational role in responding to social concerns (Harrison & Weber, 2015). Harrison and Weber (2015) argue that while there are some benefits to this such as less bureaucracy and flexibility for non-profits to respond to local needs, relying on the non-profit sector is problematic as staff generally undergo

less training, are paid less, and are overburdened. This can result in a high staff turnover, which was observed at Infinity. Non-profits, including Infinity and the Calgary Homeless Foundation, generally run at high or full capacity and are critically under-resourced. They are often reliant on short-term funding contracts and increasingly have staff hired with the sole task of fundraising. Yet ironically, while neoliberal rhetoric claims that non-profits have more flexibility to respond to local needs, those that are dependent on government funding often find themselves with less autonomy as they are subjected to rigorous government criteria and accountability measures. As Harrison and Weber (2015) state:

Surely one of the greatest ironies is that efforts to download services has resulted in processes of accountability and contracting that has made the government more controlling than ever (p. 36).

The struggle to obtain funding has contributed to a sense of competitiveness among social service agencies, even those who are responding to the same social problem, as they must apply to the same funders. This almost ensures that the social concern in question, such as homelessness, will not be addressed in a way that can lead to long-term solutions, as this will require collective action to change many of the structural and systemic barriers highlighted in this paper. One agency cannot end homelessness alone, just as the homelessness sector cannot do it on its own as the issue results from the failure of multiple systems whose control is beyond the jurisdiction of the sector (this discussion is continued below). I have argued that homelessness shares many of the same causes as other social concerns – namely neoliberal social and economic policies. Challenging the status quo requires individuals and groups to work together (the collective impact model). This seems unlikely if even those in the same sector have difficulty collaborating.

Young people who face family conflict and violence will always require a strong social service sector, as will their families. They may require personal or family counselling and

mediation, support for addictions, and even emergency shelter in case they must flee violence (albeit with a mandate to rapidly rehouse residents). Housing First is based on the premise that once individuals are housed, they can gain access to the wrap-around supports they need. Yet these services are generally hard to access and fraught with waitlists. At Infinity, staff speak regularly about the difficulties they face accessing services for their youth. One staff said:

There just isn't enough resources for the kids. Just with the population we work with and the mental health and the behavioural needs that they have. There's just not enough resources... Sometimes I have to accept that there's nothing else out there, and that's really hard as a worker because you want your kids to succeed.

When asked if there were any services that were particularly difficult to access, the staff continued:

Mental health is a big one. I think addictions can be pretty frustrating, but I have more hope when the kids' issues are addiction. Mental health I have no hope... It's usually just they get prescribed medication and that's about it. They have a hard time accessing counselling and seeing psychiatrists and getting any help for a free or reduced price.

Finally, downloading responsibility for social concerns is problematic as the homelessness sector is left to respond to problems that are beyond their capacity, and for which genuine structural solutions remain out of their jurisdiction. The homelessness sector has historically been tasked with responding to the failures of multiple systems and orders of government, and to do so with less funding and training. They are asked to respond to the failure of child welfare to protect and transition young people leaving care, of correctional institutions that discharge prisoners into homelessness, and of social services that are unavailable to serve those with mental health concerns. The sector is then commissioned to house individuals when there is little affordable housing, and who have incomes that are hardly enough to subsist on. A fundamental reason that Housing First and 10-Year Plans are unlikely to affect wide-scale change is that they are often controlled at the municipal level (or in the case of the CHF by a

non-profit), and most of the main drivers of homelessness require the intervention of policy from senior levels of government. Adamo et al. (2016) write:

For 10-Year Plans to be effective, the existing patchwork of federal and provincial programs and modest, short-term funding envelopes need to be replaced with a comprehensive and well-integrated national plan. Municipalities require a strategic federal response that addresses the underlying structural causes of poverty, precarious housing and homelessness (p. 10).

In CHF's 2015 Updated Plan, the authors appeared more aware that Housing First is not a panacea, and that there is a desperate need for multiple systems and sectors to come together to address the problem. They write:

Housing First programs will not end homelessness on their own...integrated service delivery and planning with child intervention services, poverty reduction, family violence, health/mental health, affordable housing, corrections, Aboriginal and immigrant sectors and others is essential to preventing and ending homelessness. These systems play a key role in mitigating the risk to stem the flow the homeless-service sector grapples with (p. 64).

While municipalities and non-profits deserve recognition for the hard and tireless work they do, they cannot replace the policies and programs that must be administered through the cooperation of senior levels of government. Provincial governments are constitutionally responsible for housing, income security, child welfare, and health care services. The federal government is responsible for ensuring that the provinces have ample funding, as well as for Indigenous people and immigration, among others. They have the capacity to ensure that there are federal standards of care, which becomes increasingly difficult in light of decentralization. If homelessness is to be ended, senior levels of government must reinvest in the welfare state. This is counter to neoliberal logic, which dictates that the welfare state creates dependency and a sense of entitlement among recipients (Hunter, 2006). It is seen as counter to motivating people to entering and remaining in the workforce.

A note on the province of Alberta. In the call for senior levels of government to address the root causes of homelessness, it is worth noting again that the province of Alberta released a

10-Year Plan to End Homelessness and a Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness.

While promising, the problem with these Plans is that they continue to frame homelessness as an issue that must be solved at a local level, and they scarcely address the root causes of homelessness, even in their ‘preventative’ efforts. Multiple community-driven Plans to End Homelessness have emerged in Alberta (indeed multiple Plans *within* some communities such as Calgary). Yet the country also needs centralized strategies that target the root causes of homelessness discussed in this chapter. Despite this need, the Province of Alberta continues to promote community-based initiatives. In their 10-Year Plan the authors claim that “action on homelessness must be community-led” (Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, 2008, p.15), which is similar to the federal government’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) which addresses homelessness by funding 61 communities across Canada. While it is true that local communities can best identify their needs, senior levels of government must do more than fund community-initiatives, they have to address the structural causes of homelessness in a universal manner rather than leave communities struggling to address the issue without the funds or power to affect real change.

Moreover, similar to local Plans, Housing First is placed at the center of the Plan, and although structural causes are acknowledged, they are largely left to the periphery. While the Alberta government reports to have housed over 9,000 people through Housing First in the first five years of their Plan, only 1,000 new units of housing in Alberta were built during this time (Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, 2013). The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness (2015) states that as of 2014, there was a \$1billion gap in the investments required to build the housing necessary for Alberta’s Plan to End Homelessness. Similarly, while the authors acknowledge poverty as a cause of homelessness, they write that “the Secretariat will

examine ways in which poverty impacts homelessness and encourage further study to determine ways of reducing these impacts” (Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness, 2008) rather than lay out any plans to reduce poverty. To be fair, in a progress report published in 2013, the authors talk about how they are developing a Social Policy Framework to inform the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which will be the first one created in Alberta to date. The progress of this Framework and Strategy are currently not known, but it is questionable whether their efforts will be sufficient to effectively combat poverty, or like their attempts to create affordable housing, woefully inadequate.

Finally, in the province’s Plan to Prevent and Reduce Youth Homelessness, the authors claim that prevention is at the forefront (Government of Alberta, 2015). Yet their prevention activities continue to target at-risk youth and families, including by developing an assessment tool to identify those at risk. While they talk about ensuring there are more supports for families, including counselling and family reunification, they make little to no mention of poverty, affordable housing, colonization/discrimination and the deteriorated welfare state. In fact secondary prevention efforts such as discharging youth from systems that are within their jurisdiction such as child welfare and corrections are not even listed as being part of their prevention efforts. The only universal measure the province discusses is public education and awareness, which while needed is puzzling given that they are one of the most imperative bodies to addressing youth homelessness and have the power to make the most meaningful change. This suggests that either they could use more education on the causes of youth homelessness, or that they are continuing to relinquish their responsibilities.

Why Resist Prevention?

It is not difficult to understand the need to prevent homelessness; in fact it is common sense that preventing something bad from happening is better than reacting to it (Gaetz & DeJ, 2016). So why has Canada's response focused so heavily on managing the crisis rather than preventing it? At a policy level it is arguably the result of continuing to view homelessness as an individual problem, and supports should be in place only to ensure individuals can 'pull up their bootstraps'. It is also difficult to get the buy-in and resources necessary for primary prevention efforts from governments because the results emerge gradually rather than rapidly, they can be expensive (particularly at the forefront), and governments instigating these measures are unlikely to see the results during their tenure (or be re-elected without immediate gains to report)(Parsell & Marston, 2012). Yet some resistance has also come from the homelessness sector itself, largely through what Gaetz and DeJ (2017) call the "politics of scarcity" (p. 25). Since the sector is critically under-resourced, service providers are struggling to meet the needs of people currently experiencing homelessness. Understandably, they do not want funds diverted from providing these essential services to people currently suffering and in acute need. It is assumed that once the crisis is under control, the sector can move on to prevention. The problem is that without preventing homelessness from occurring, the sector is essentially running in circles; for every person or household they assist, another one will be along to replace them. Moreover, this argument relies on the assumption that it is up to the sector alone to prevent homelessness, when as I have shown, the causes are much broader and result from systems and structures completely outside of the control of the homelessness sector (Gaetz & DeJ, 2017). This means that it is incumbent upon senior levels of government to prevent homelessness across several ministries and jurisdictions. The role of the sector in this case is to continue to advocate for broader

solutions, and to ensure that the primary causes of homelessness remain a part of the ongoing dialogue of solutions to homelessness.

Another concern with prevention occurs as a result of the increased pressure to produce measurable outcomes. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to show which interventions will prevent episodes of homelessness. This is why it is important to think about homelessness as existing within a wider framework of social concerns rather than an independent one. If we think about the multiple factors that can drive homelessness (though not necessarily trigger a particular episode of homelessness) then indicators in other domains in life become important to measure, such as housing affordability, poverty rates, etc. It would also be expected that the overall incidence of homelessness would decline, though this will take time.

Interconnected Causes of Homelessness

Addressing poverty, the lack of affordable housing, colonization/discrimination, and the welfare state / social service sector are four areas that must be addressed if homelessness is to be addressed at a primary level. This, of course requires leadership from senior levels of government, and buy-in from society at large, who elects our government representatives and can put pressure on them to act. Unfortunately, these topics often remain at the periphery of modern responses to homelessness. Dialogues regarding structural solutions are arguably even more absent in conversations about youth homelessness as the main causes are generally described to be family conflict and broken systems such as child welfare. While this is demonstrably true, it is worth revisiting Fitzpatrick's (2005) critical realist framework on the causes of homelessness to discuss how what she calls various strata of society exist in relationships with each other. The impact that structural factors can have on youth homelessness is important to discuss – after all, youth homelessness also emerged as a major social concern

after the rise of neoliberalism because the structural changes had a ripple effect on other areas in society. The factors discussed in this chapter including poverty, the lack of affordable housing, colonization/discrimination and the state of our welfare state and social services sector can have an impact on other strata, including family relations and the way our systems operate. Research has shown for instance, the impact that economic stress, inadequate housing, and racial oppression can have on family relationships including both marital and parent-child (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010). Research has also shown that families in the child welfare system are disproportionately from low-income and/or Indigenous households and often live in situations with precarious housing (McKenzie et al., 2016; Chau et al., 2009). While it is certainly not the case that every poor household will experience family discord, or every poor or Indigenous family will become involved in child welfare, this does not negate the relationship or the causal links to homelessness. Individual households will vary in their mix of protective factors and individual capacities to respond to stress, as will the young people that emerge from these situations. The more factors that stack up against families and young people, the likelihood that they will become homeless increases. A holistic solution to youth homelessness therefore requires addressing the multiple and interacting social concerns that create vulnerability, well before a young person leaves home.

Language Matters

It is not my contention that the CHF, nor its adjacent programs such as Infinity, are nefarious agents of the neoliberal state whose efforts are directed toward maintaining the status quo. Rather, they act (or to use the Foucauldian phrase, conduct their conduct) within the context in which they are located, which currently is neoliberal governmentality. The CHF cannot ‘end’ homelessness (nor should they claim to be able to) because the primary preventative measures

that are required to do so falls outside of their jurisdiction. There are simply too many barriers that arise from neoliberal governmentality that make ending homelessness unlikely (if not impossible) within the current context. While the CHF envisioned a Plan that would put an end to managing the homelessness crisis, this is in fact, what they continue to do, albeit in a different and potentially more efficient way.

Advocates have long fought to have housing recognized as a right, and not ‘earned’ with good behaviour, particularly for those with mental illness and addictions. Housing provides the necessary foundation to achieve health and wellbeing. Participants in Housing First programs have a degree of choice and autonomy that was unheard of in previous responses to homelessness. In this sense, Housing First is the most humane and progressive response to homelessness to date, and this should not be overlooked. It can be insensitive to theorize the merits of programs providing housing to our most vulnerable citizens, particularly from a place of academic privilege. For instance, Padgett (2013) writes:

From the lofty realm of academic criticism Housing First might well appear to be doing the dirty work of the state, sweeping the homeless off the streets and seducing them with a false sense of empowerment while in fact concealing and co-opting them. Invoking the trope of neoliberal policies, Housing First is producing responsible choice-makers even as it falls short... The Housing First approach is not a panacea... tenants do get lonely and ask ‘what’s next’? Existential questions made possible by having a safe, non-surveilled place to live (p. 345).

While I agree with the above statement, I also feel that we should not diminish the importance of searching for more long-term strategies to addressing homelessness, nor should we minimize the role that Housing First can play in reinforcing neoliberal hegemony, as this can impact the solutions that are created to address homelessness. Moreover, while Padgett (2013) argues that Housing First is not intended to be a panacea, I argue that this is indeed how it has been presented, particularly through government policy and the language surrounding 10-Year Plans to *End Homelessness*. While the CHF defines ending homelessness as having no one stay in a

shelter for more than seven days, this nuance is arguably not observed in popular rhetoric or practices. Nor is this nuance given in CHF's reports or media coverage of 10-Year Plans. For instance, the CHF make claims such as:

Our vision is that by the year 2018 all people facing homelessness in Calgary will have access to safe, decent, affordable housing as well as the resources and supports necessary to sustain that housing. Our aim is to deliver a plan that will not only end homelessness, but do so by the most economically efficient means possible (Calgary Committee to End Homelessness, 2008, p. 5).

Recent literature has attempted to define what it means to end homelessness through a distinction between a “functional” and “absolute” zero (see Turner, Albanese, & Pakeman, 2017). The functional zero is defined as a community having enough services, shelter beds and housing units for everyone, and that episodes of homelessness are brief and not recurrent. This is compared to the absolute zero concept where no one experiences homelessness ever again. This distinction emerged from the wide variation in how communities with 10-Year Plans were defining ending homelessness (Turner, Albanese, & Pakeman, 2017). The functional zero concept assumes that an absolute zero is unrealistic, as there will always be people in need of emergency accommodations. Generally, 10-Year Plans such as Calgary's attempt to achieve the functional zero. For instance, Calgary defines ending homelessness as having no one stay in shelter for more than seven days. While it is useful to have an operational definition of ending homelessness with the rise of 10-Year Plans across Canada, even a functional zero requires that there are enough services and housing to support everyone who becomes homeless. Of course, as already shown, current plans to end homelessness (including in Calgary) do not have the resources to ensure this – far from it, in fact. The same can be said for poverty and systemic discrimination/colonization, which can remain unaddressed within a functional zero.

A functional zero solution to homelessness remains focused on managing the problem by ensuring that individuals' exit homelessness quickly. It is a relative term used to describe how

efficiently a community responds to homelessness, not necessarily prevents it from occurring. I feel very strongly that you cannot claim that homelessness has been ended without eradicating the mass incidence of homelessness that is characteristic of modern society. It is not enough to be able to manage those who are homeless more efficiently by saying they will ‘only’ be homeless for seven days; more needs to be done to ensure that fewer individuals become homeless in the first place. Moreover, perpetuating the idea that an absolute zero is unrealistic feeds into the neoliberal notion that homelessness is inevitable and eradication of the problem is not possible. While it is true that there will always be people in need of emergency accommodations such as those fleeing family violence, it is also true that mass homelessness as we know it today was not inevitable, but the result of neoliberal economic and social policies. Eradicating the mass homelessness of today is achievable, and service providers and advocates must continue to champion this message.

We cannot pretend that language is neutral and that values are not ascribed to it. Jacobs and Manzi (1996) argue that language is shaped by political and social contexts, and has implications for policy and practice. They write:

[Language has] the ability to structure debates, to set parameters for discussion and to prevent issues from consideration, which illustrates the potential for marginalization, exclusion and manipulation of policy agendas (p. 551).

Indeed, central to Foucault’s discussions on power and governmentality is discourse. As Foucault argues that power occurs at multiple levels, discourse can shape the parameters in which ideas and knowledge are generated (Foucault, 1981). If ending homelessness is discussed in terms of a functional zero, then the solutions that are seen as pertinent are those currently discussed through 10-Year Plans: i.e. Housing First, systems coordination, and collecting meaningful data for a small sub-section of the homeless population. While these are important, they exclude several of the root causes of homelessness, and leave neoliberal hegemony largely

unchallenged. This may have the unintended effect of undermining the goal of genuinely ending homelessness in Canada (Katz, Zerger, & Hwang, 2017). Katz, Zerger and Hwang (2017) argue that while the effectiveness of Housing First is often discussed in the academic literature, less has been said about the consequences of the manner in which Housing First is discussed. They state that Housing First is often discussed as a ‘silver-bullet’ solution to homelessness, and is decontextualized from the political and social context in which it is situated. They argue that this narrative:

... can imply that program interventions have the potential to solve large-scale societal problems on their own, potentially drawing attention and support away from the very policy solutions that might serve to transform conditions (p. 141).

Katz et al. (2017) argue that the focus on Housing First reinforces “proximate causes” of homelessness, at the expense of addressing the fundamental causes.

The perception of individuals is critical to how power is realized. The term ‘ending’ is a powerful one that will evoke notions of all Canadians having a home. How the public perceives this language is crucial. If the general population (and government perhaps) hears that a community is trying to end homelessness and then are unsuccessful, it only serves to reinforce the notion that homelessness is an inevitable part of society, that nothing can be done, and the neoliberal status quo remains intact. One staff at Infinity expresses this fear:

We’re at the sixth year of this Plan. I still love the work, but the homeless population is not dropping. The only worry I have is that when it’s reached ten years the government will say ‘well we can’t end it’. Then what’s going to happen?

If homelessness is truly to be ended, broad public support is needed to keep pressure on policy makers. The CHF acknowledge the need for public support:

We need to engage the hearts and minds of Calgarians in the movement to end homelessness. We have to challenge myths about those experiencing homelessness and tackle systemic barriers to housing stability...we must inform Calgarians that affordable housing contributes to our overall community wellbeing (CHF, 2015, p. 79).

What if the language of ending homelessness ultimately erodes this support? While it can initially empower citizens that there is a way to address this issue, the impact of over-promising should be considered. Katz et al. (2017) also point out that a sense of helplessness can emerge from people working to transform a social concern when the fundamental causes are left unaddressed as despite their tireless efforts, the problem continues unabated.

As the CHF correctly points out, stereotypes of the homeless must be challenged in order to garner public support. If the public believes that individuals choose to be homeless or is a result of their ‘sickness’, there will be little political pressure to address the issue at a structural level. Yet as I have argued, CHF’s 10-Year Plan reinforces individualist narratives through their focus on the chronically homelessness. The homeless have long been subjected to negative portrayals and stereotypes that reinforce the image of the individual on the street whose defects (such as alcoholism or mental illness) prevent them from participating in society. Portraying the chronic homeless as ‘the homeless’ minimizes the diversity of the population, ignores the vast majority of those who experience homelessness, and reinforces the notion that individuals are responsible for their homelessness, at the expense of raising awareness of the structural and systemic causes. Gelobter, Dorsey, and Fields (2005) argue that dominant institutions (i.e. neoliberal governmentality) will not go away with a fight. Instead, the only way alternatives can gain traction is through “a battle for the hearts and minds of enough people” (p.14). It is only by understanding and responding to homelessness in a different way, as a violation of human rights, that change will occur. Gimmicky slogans and overpromises, while in the short-term might help to promote a sense of urgency and motivate people, might have the opposite, ultimately harmful effect in the long run.

The ‘Reverse Staircase’ and Working Toward a Counter-Conduct

While Infinity and the CHF have resisted neoliberal governmentality in important ways, the current response is not enough to have a long-term impact on the incidence of homelessness, including for youth. Since they are working within the confines of neoliberal governmentality, then the way homelessness is defined and the solutions that are available are limited. For instance, if we understand neoliberalism as a form of governmentality that seeks to achieve the aims of producing proper neoliberal subjects and spaces, then it is not the job of government to restore equity or justice, or to compensate for the negative consequences of neoliberalism, but only to intervene when there are barriers to these aims. Inequality and even homelessness to some degree is necessary and desirable to promote competitiveness and to provide a measure of discipline to the working population (Mitchell, 2003). Through this lens, using the economic argument about homelessness is likely to motivate governments to act, but only so far as the heavy costs to society are lessened, and to ensure that there are more ‘players’ in the market, not to correct the root causes that have led so many to become homeless in the first place. In fact, it is likely for these reasons that 10-Year Plans and Housing First are attractive to governments. They can appear to be acting on homelessness and to be saving taxpayers money, but to do so without fundamentally changing the status quo. In this sense, homelessness is a political problem. Ending homelessness in a genuine manner will be difficult if not impossible under neoliberal governmentality because there is no political will to do so. As Hulchanski (2006) writes:

There is no scientific or objective way to arrive at an answer about a political problem. The nature of the problem is well understood and the potential sets of programs are not complicated or even very expensive for a country with Canada’s wealth (p. 27).

Housing First and 10-Year Plans are also attractive to advocates and service providers who have long fought to have housing recognized as a right. The problem is that if all of the

chronically homeless people across Canada were housed under Housing First programs, then only approximately 5% of those experiencing homelessness would be housed (and current Housing First programs do not even have the capacity to do this). Perhaps more importantly, housing is no more a right under Housing First than it was under the former staircase model as there are strict eligibility requirements. For instance, anyone entering into Calgary's system of care must undergo the SPDAT assessment, and only those deemed to be of high acuity are prioritized for Housing First programs. Instead of universal inclusion, Housing First has produced a new type of differential citizenship where some people are deemed worthy of the 'right' to housing and supports over others (Lake & Newman, 2002). In fact, it could be argued that Housing First programs have largely reversed the continuum of care or the 'staircase' model; instead of having individuals prove that they are housing ready, individuals now have to prove how 'hard to house' or chronically homeless they are. This might create a perverse incentive for savvy individuals to exaggerate their risk factors in an (understandable) attempt to gain access to housing. One youth who was pregnant at the time of the interview for this research acknowledges that if she did not have the staff at Infinity advocating for her, she would not have been provided with housing:

I wouldn't pass that thing [the SPDAT]...I wouldn't get a high enough score so I would be out on my ass if it weren't for these guys.

While this youth did not fabricate any of her risk factors, this quote does demonstrate that at least some participants are aware that the SPDAT results can lead to some participants being eligible for Housing First programs (and hence others not). Perhaps more importantly, using this form of testing sends the message to our citizens that if they wish to exit homelessness, they must suffer for extended periods of time - perhaps develop a mental illness or a substance use problem - before they have a 'right' to housing.

Instead of having to prove they are ready for housing, participants now must prove how ‘unready’ or how high their needs are before they are deemed eligible. The implicit message for the majority of people who experience homelessness is that they must suffer more before they have a ‘right’ to housing. It also sends the message that current private markets are sufficient to meet everyone else’s needs, ignoring the growing income insecurity and housing unaffordability that many Canadians must contend with. As previously discussed, the implications for young people whom due to their age do not have the earning power to secure a living wage, and in many cases important life skills, are profound. Moreover, leaving them to fend for themselves can cause damage to them if they are exposed to continued trauma and the hardships of being homeless.

A different form of resistance to neoliberalism, or a counter-conduct is necessary for this to occur. As previously discussed, Foucault (2007) defines a counter-conduct as an alternative way of organizing governmentality, or a way to be “led differently, by other men, and towards other objectives than those proposed by official and visible governmentality of society” (p. 198). A counter-conduct allows us to change the way we understand homelessness, and how we envision solutions. I propose moving from the lens of neoliberal governmentality where homelessness is viewed as a distinct social phenomena, often the result of individual causes, to one where homelessness is viewed as one social concern among many that are impacted by neoliberal policies. I propose a counter-conduct where homelessness is viewed as a violation of our basic human rights and as denying individuals access to social citizenship, defined by Lake and Newman (2002) as the “attainment of life according to standards prevailing in society” (p. 14). For it is through this lens that the deeper, structural and systemic problems can be addressed. Solutions are not just geared toward those who are visibly or ‘at risk’ of homelessness, but

applied universally at the level of the population. Before elaborating on this concept, a word of caution is warranted. This counter-conduct is not meant to be a silver-bullet to ending homelessness. Instead, as mentioned previously, counter-conducts often emerge within the structures of power and simultaneously challenge and reinforce this power (Death, 2010; 2016). Counter-conducts exist in a state of continuous struggle with hegemonic governmentalities, and as such, this alternative is suggested as a way to move this struggle forward.

A Human Rights Approach to Homelessness

I propose a counter-conduct that understands homelessness as a violation of our human rights; specifically our right to social citizenship. In other words, every individual, every youth, has the right to a particular standard of living that is ‘normal’ in Canadian society. While there is undoubtedly room for debate about what this constitutes, few would deny that having access to safe, affordable and adequate housing, an income that one can subsist on, and basic needs such as food, is a prevailing norm in contemporary Canadian society. From this perspective, homelessness is not just a social problem, it is a violation of our human rights as Canadians (Canada Without Poverty et al., 2016). Canada is a signatory in several international human rights agreements that already make homelessness a violation of our human rights. For instance Canada has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and specifically for homeless youth, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2016). In fact, allowing so many of our people to be without adequate housing and failing to take measures to prevent homelessness, Canada has been criticized by the

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for being in violation of the ICESCR (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2016).

Canada Without Poverty et al. (2016) argue that looking at youth homelessness from a rights-based perspective allows us to:

Look beyond the physical needs of homeless youth to their social and emotional needs by recognizing them as equal citizens with a right and dignity and full participation (p.10).

There are several benefits to the human rights counter-conduct. In the absence of having their basic needs provided, individuals have recourse to express their concerns and the government must be accountable for the violation of human rights. It also ensures that citizens have their rights protected regardless of the social circumstances. For instance, Mitchell (2003) asks:

What would happen if in a few years, with the continued absence of enumerated rights to housing and livelihood, society no longer produced homelessness so efficiently? That is, if homelessness occurred in reduced numbers, [and was] no longer quite so pressing a matter in most cities? How would the interests of those who remained homeless be protected when the attention of activists and advocates turned elsewhere? (p. 28).

This is an important question in the current context, as Housing First and 10-Year Plans focus on the chronically homeless. If they were successful in reducing chronic homelessness, the visibility of the problem would be reduced dramatically. It is not unfathomable that this would result in governments feeling less pressure to act. This is concerning as the vast majority of those who experience homelessness do not fit into this category. What will happen to them when chronic homelessness is ‘ended’? Within the framework of human rights, their homelessness and poverty will still be considered unjust, and they will have grounds for recourse, despite the decreased attention to the issue.

Finally, having a right to social citizenship means that policy makers must understand what measures are needed to ensure that all citizens have housing and the means to sustain it rather than providing piecemeal services to individuals who have already been homeless for

extended periods of time. In other words, measures must be taken at the level of the population, provided on a universal basis, rather than strategies that are only targeted to those at risk. The objective is to prevent the situations that make people vulnerable to experiencing homelessness in the first place (Parsell & Marston, 2012). Currently in Canada there are hundreds of thousands of people who could make a case that their human rights have been violated by being homeless and precariously housed. Under these circumstances senior levels of government would face monumental pressure to approach the crisis differently, and perhaps address the root causes of homelessness.

Conclusion

Understanding homelessness as a human rights violation requires a fundamental shift in how we understand homelessness. Under neoliberalism, citizenship has been defined by individuals' proximity to market-based norms, particularly their labour market participation and ownership of private property. In this context, the debate about homelessness has become so skewed that we now must advocate to have individuals experiencing visible homelessness simply exist in public, let alone have a right to housing and a life free from poverty (Mitchell, 2003). Citizenship is something that should be universally granted to all Canadians, regardless of their social location. Everyone must be provided with basic rights, including the right to housing, to live free from poverty, a right to public spaces and "the right to control, rather than be victims of economic policy" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 222). Youth experiencing homelessness (as all citizens do) deserve the right to life, and to *thrive*; to take advantage of life's opportunities, and achieve a level of health and wellbeing.

Research has shown that countries with lower rates of income inequality and more robust welfare states have lower levels of homelessness (see Toro et al., 2007 and Benjaminsen &

Andrade, 2015). In one study, Benjaminsen and Andrade (2015) compared the prevalence of shelter use and the characteristics of individuals using the shelters in Denmark, a country with low income inequality and a social-democratic welfare state to the United States, a country with high income inequality and a liberal welfare state, and found that not only was the incidence of homelessness in Denmark lower by two-thirds, the characteristics of those who experience homelessness in Denmark was different. While both countries had people that could be divided into transitional, episodic and chronically homeless, the majority of people experiencing homelessness in Denmark, regardless of the category they fit into, had mental health and substance use concerns (over 80%). In contrast, the vast majority of individuals experiencing transitional homelessness in the United States did not have these concerns listed, suggesting that poverty and a lack of affordable housing was the predominant cause of their homelessness. Even those defined as chronically homeless in the United States did not have the same level of complexity as those in Denmark (40% were listed as having mental health and addiction concerns). The majority of the homeless in Denmark were listed as ethnic Danes, while the majority in the United States were African American, suggesting that institutional racism is a factor in the United States. While caution should be exercised in making cross-country comparisons, the results do point to the effect that macroeconomic and social structures have on the incidence of homelessness. Indeed, it is curious why in light of the findings that 85% of shelter users are there on a transitional or short-term basis that the homelessness sector has decided to focus on the 15% that are episodic or chronic users. As seen earlier, this is partly based on the assumption that the transitional users will be able to exit homelessness on their own, but why has the sector not also responded with the argument that we can reduce shelter use

by 85% if we did more to address poverty and the lack of affordable housing? (Kneebone & Wilkins, 2016a).

The arguments presented here do not imply that emergency or targeted interventions are unwarranted, as there will always be crisis situations such as fleeing violence or family conflict. Nor do they suggest that Housing First as a response should be stopped or that 10-Year Plans are completely ineffective at addressing homelessness. However, this has to date been the primary strategy for addressing homelessness, and it does little to stop new cases of homelessness from occurring. Without a focus on primary prevention, this is akin to running around in circles. I do question, however, if society genuinely operated from a human rights perspective, would the concept of Housing First be necessary? If all citizens were already thought to have a right to housing, then indeed, Housing First as a concept might be redundant.

I believe strongly that we can genuinely ‘end’ homelessness, or at least the crisis-state that we find ourselves in now, and that many of the detrimental social policies and practices evoked by neoliberalism can be reversed. Let us use this language to motivate and inspire people to act, but not if it is framed in terms of Housing First and local Plans in the absence of policies from senior levels of government that address the root causes of homelessness. Only then may we find ourselves closer to truly ending homelessness.

Limitations and Considerations for Future Research

There are several limitations to this study. While case studies allow for in-depth information to be captured about a particular research site, the results cannot be generalized to others. The sample size of the youth interviewed was relatively small, so it is unknown whether the experiences and opinions of the youth interviewed are representative of the program participants in general. Moreover, the interview protocol was designed with a different research

purpose in mind. I would have preferred to design the youth interview protocol similar to the staff's regarding the Housing First Framework for Youth. Luckily, the protocol used was able to illicit important and relevant information nonetheless. Next, the HMIS data collected is incomplete. For instance, it does not capture the first two years the program was in operation, and there is data missing from the years I analyzed. I was unable to track youth from the beginning of their time at Infinity to the end, which is ideal when conducting an outcome evaluation. Both the HMIS data and Outcomes Star data was collected by front-line staff, and as such, I have no way of ascertaining the quality of the data. Finally, the views and Plans of the CHF was incorporated through written documents exclusively, rather than through interviews with the staff.

I attempted to compensate for these limitations by using multiple sources of data and by sending preliminary findings to Infinity staff so they could determine if they made sense in light of their experiences. Future research should include a larger time frame of HMIS data that includes data from intake and discharge for multiple youth and should include a larger sample of young people, including those who have graduated from the program. Future research should also seek participation from the creators and staff of the Calgary Homeless Foundation in order to obtain a more detailed and nuanced view of their goals and activities.

This research points to at least two implications for evaluation studies. First, the use of multiple types of evaluation, such as the clarificative and impact evaluation approaches used in this study, allows for diverse elements of a program to be investigated and for a more comprehensive review to be implemented. Second, when conducting impact evaluations, the broader context in which a program is situated must be considered. Evaluators and program stakeholders must remain realistic about the impact that any one program can have at addressing

social concerns such as homelessness. While a program may provide pivotal and necessary services to individuals in need, in the absence of structural and systemic interventions, the social problem they are responding to will likely continue to exist. Programmatic interventions cannot be the primary solution to social problems, but instead be considered an emergency response to people in need.

References

- Abramovich, A. (2012). No safe place to go - LGBTQ youth homelessness in Canada: Reviewing the literature. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth*, 4(1), 29-51.
- Abramovich, A. (2013). No fixed address: Young, queer, and restless. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice* (pp. 387-404). Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Abramovich, A., (2016). Preventing, reducing and ending LGBTQ2S youth homelessness: The need for targeted strategies. *Social Inclusion*, 4(4), 86-96.
- Adamo, A., Klodawsky, F., Aubry, T., & Hwang, S. (2016). *Ending homelessness in Canada: A study of 10-year plans in 4 Canadian cities*. Toronto, ON: Centre for Urban Health Solutions, St. Michael's Hospital.
- Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2014). *Housing & homelessness in Alberta: A progress report*. Edmonton, AB: AICH.
- Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness. (2008). *A plan for Alberta: Ending homelessness in 10 years*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness.
- Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness. (2013). *A plan for Alberta: Ending homelessness in 10 years, 3 year progress report*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness.

- Anderson, S., Leventhal, T., & Dupere, V. (2014). Exposure to neighborhood affluence and poverty in childhood and adolescence and academic achievement and behavior. *Applied Developmental Science*, 18(3), 123-138.
- Andres-Lemay, J.V., Jamieson, E., & MacMillan, H. L. (2005). Child abuse, psychiatric disorder, and running away in a community sample of women. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 50(11), 684-689.
- Armaline, W. T. (2005). "Kids need structure": Negotiating rules, power, and social control in an emergency youth shelter. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(8), 1124-1148.
- Aubry, T., Farrell, S., Hwang, S. & Calhoun, M. (2013). Identifying the patterns of emergency shelter stays of single individuals in Canadian cities of different sizes. *Housing Studies*, 28(6), 910-927.
- Baker Collins, S. (2013). Childhood stress and mobility among rural homeless youth. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice* (pp. 53-74). Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Barnett, C. (2005). The consolations of 'neoliberalism'. *Geoforum*, 36(1), 7-12.
- Baskin, C. (2012). Shaking off the colonial inheritance: Indigenous youth resist, reclaim and reconnect. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice* (pp. 405-424). Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

- Belanger, Y., Weasel Head, G., & Awosoga, O. (2012). *Assessing urban Aboriginal housing and homelessness in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) and the Office of the Federal Interlocuter for Metis and Non-Status Indians (OFI).
- Benjaminsen, L., & Andrade, S. B. (2015). Testing a typology of homelessness across welfare regimes: Shelter use in Demark and the USA. *Housing Studies*, 30(6), 858-876.
- Bledsoe, K. L., & Graham, J. A. (2005). The use of multiple evaluation approaches in program evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 26(3), 302-319.
- Bridgman, R. (2003). The Peel Youth Village: Designing transitional housing for suburban homeless youth. In D. Hulchanski, P. Campsie, S. Chau, S. Hwang & E. Paradis (Eds.), *Finding home: Policy options for addressing homelessness in Canada (ebook)*. (pp. Chapter 3.7). Toronto, ON: Cities Centre, University of Toronto.
- Broadbent Institute. (2014). *Have and have nots: Deep and persistent wealth inequality in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: The Broadbent Institute.
- Brown, W. (2005). *Edgework: Essays on knowledge and politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Buckland, L., Jackson, A., Roberts, R., & Smith, P. (2001). *Structural and systemic factors contributing to homelessness in Canada: An analysis of research gaps and proposed research directions*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Council on Social Development.

- Bussey, M. & Wise, J.B. (2008). The recovery paradigm in trauma work: Approaches to healing psychiatric disability and substance abuse in women's lives. *Journal of Social Work in Disability & Rehabilitation*, 7, 355-379.
- Cadman, L. (2010). How (not) to be governed: Foucault, critique, and the political. *Environment Planning D: Society and Space*, 28, 539-556.
- Calgary Committee to End Homelessness. (2008). *Calgary's 10-year plan to end homelessness*. Calgary, AB: Calgary Committee to End Homelessness.
- Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2011). *Plan to end youth homelessness in Calgary*. Calgary, AB: CHF.
- Calgary Homeless Foundation (2014). *Winter 2014 point-in-time count*. Calgary, AB: CHF.
- Calgary Homeless Foundation. (2015). *Calgary's updated plan to end homelessness: People first in Housing First*. Calgary, Alberta: CHF.
- Calgary Homeless Foundation (2017). *Calgary plan to prevent and end youth homelessness - 2017 Refresh*. Calgary, AB: CHF.
- Campaign 2000. (2016). *A road map to eradicate child & family poverty*. Toronto, ON: Campaign 2000.
- Campbell, R., Falvo, N., & Smith, M. (2017). *Calgary Homeless Foundation's PIT count report: Fall 2016*. Calgary, AB: CHF.

- Canada Without Poverty, A Way Home Canada, The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, & FEANTSA. (2016). *Youth rights! Right now! Ending youth homelessness: A human rights guide*. Toronto, ON: Maytree and Laidlaw Foundation.
- Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. (2012). *A plan, not a dream: How to end homelessness in 10 years*. Calgary, AB: CAEH.
- Canadian Homelessness Research Network (CHRN). (2012). *Canadian definition of homelessness*. Retrieved from www.homelesshub.ca/CHRNhomelessdefinition/
- Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. (2016). *Canadian definition of youth homelessness*. Retrieved from: <http://homelesshub.ca/resource/canadian-definition-youth-homelessness/>
- Chau, S., Fitzpatrick, A., Hulchanski, D. J., Leslie, B., & Schatia, D. (2009). One in five...Housing as a factor in admission of children into care. In D. Hulchanski, P. Campsie, S. Chau, S. Hwang, & E. Paradis (Eds.). *Finding home: Policy solutions for addressing homelessness in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Homeless Hub Press.
- Christensen, J. (2013). 'Our home, our way of life': Spiritual homelessness and the sociocultural dimensions of Indigenous homelessness in the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 14(7), 804-828.
- City of Calgary. (2008). *Biennial count of homeless persons in Calgary: 2008 May 14*. Calgary, AB: City of Calgary.

- City of Calgary, & United Way of Calgary. (2013). *Enough for all: Unleashing our communities' resources to drive down poverty in Calgary*. Calgary, AB: City of Calgary & United Way of Calgary.
- City of Toronto. (2007). *What Housing First means for people: Results of Streets to Homes 2007 post-occupancy research*. Toronto, ON: City of Toronto: Shelter, Support & Housing Administration.
- City of Toronto. (2013). *Update on emergency shelter services*. Toronto, ON: City of Toronto.
- Clifasefi, S. L., Malone, D. K., & Collins, S. E. (2013). Exposure to project-based Housing First is associated with reduced jail time and bookings. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 24(4), 291-296.
- Cochran, B. N., Stewart, A. J., Ginzler, J. A., & Cauce, A. M. (2002). Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: Comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(5), 773-777.
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (2016). *United Nations Economic and Social Council: Concluding observations on sixth periodic report on Canada*. UN: CESCR.
- Common Ground and Good Sheppard Services. (2009). *The Chelsea Foyer and the Christopher at five years: Lessons in developing stable housing and self-sufficiency for homeless youth and youth exiting foster care*. New York, NY: Common Ground Community and Good Sheppard Services.

- Community Solutions & OrgCode Consulting Inc. (2014). *Service Prioritization Decisions Assistance Tool (VI - SPDAT): Manual for single persons households*. Oakville, ON: Community Solutions & OrgCode Consulting Inc.
- Condon, S., & McDermid, Jenn. (2014). *Dying on the streets: Homeless deaths in British Columbia*. BC, Canada: Street Corner Media Foundation, Megaphone.
- Conger, R. D., Conger, K., J., & Martin, M. J. (2010). Socioeconomic status, family processes and individual development. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 72, 685-704.
- Conger, R. D., & Donnellan, M. B. (2007). An interactionist perspective on the socioeconomic context of human development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58, 175-199.
- Cotoi, C. (2011). Neoliberalism: A Foucauldian perspective. *International Review of Social Research*, 1(2), 109-124.
- Culhane, D. (1992). The quandaries of shelter reform: An appraisal of efforts to 'manage' homelessness. *Social Services Review*, 63(3), 428-440.
- Culhane, D. P., Metraux, S., & Byrne, T. (2011). A prevention-centered approach to homelessness assistance: A paradigm shift? *Housing Policy Debate*, 21(2), 295-315.
- Davies, K. (2012). The Infinity Project. *Homelessness Partnering Strategy workshop on homelessness: Sharing promising practices*. Ottawa, ON: Presentation on October 24, 2012.
- Davies, W. (2014). Neoliberalism: A bibliographic review. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 31(7/8), 309-317.

- Death, C. (2010). Counter-conducts: A Foucauldian analytics of protest. *Social Movement Studies*, 9(3), 235-251.
- Death, C. (2016). Counter-conducts as a mode of resistance: Ways of “not being like that” in South Africa. *Global Society*, 30(2), 201-217.
- De Verteuil, G., May, J., & von Mahs, J. (2009). Complexity not collapse: Recasting the geography of homelessness in a 'punitive' age. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(5), 646-666.
- Distasio, J., Sareen, J., Isaak, C. (2014). *Winnipeg final report: At Home/Chez Soi project*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Mental Health Commission of Canada.
- Dressler, J. (2016). Coordinated access and assessment: Calgary, Alberta. In N. Nichols & C. Doberstein (Eds.), *Exploring effective systems responses to homelessness*. Toronto, ON: The Homeless Hub.
- Durlak, J. A., & DuPre, E.P. (2008). Implementaton matters: A review of the research on the influence of implementation on progam outcomes and factors affecting implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 327-350.
- Eberle Planning and Research, Kraus, D., & Woodward, J. (2007). *Vancouver youth housing options study*. Vancouver, BC: Eberle Planning and Research.
- Employment and Social Development Canada. (2016). *Highlights of the national shelter study*. Ottawa, ON: ESDC.

- England, K., & Ward, K. (2016). Theorizing neoliberalization. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.
- English, J., & Young, W. R. (2006). The federal government and social policy at the turn of the twenty-first century: Reflections on change and continuity. In A. Westhues (Ed.), *Canadian social policy: Issues and perspectives*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Evans, J. (2011). Exploring the (bio)political dimensions of voluntarism and care in the city: The case of a 'low barrier' emergency shelter. *Health & Place*, 17, 24-32.
- Falvo, N. (2009). *Homelessness, program responses, and an assessment of Toronto's Streets to Homes program*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Falvo, N. (2016). *Ten things to know about Canadian attempts to count homelessness through point-in-time counts*. Research blog downloaded from: calgaryhomeless.com/info/research-blog/
- Falvo, N. (2017). *Public policy and homelessness: The case of Calgary*. Research blog downloaded from: <http://calgaryhomeless.com/info/research-blog/public-policy-homelessness-case-calgary/>
- Falvo, N., & Campbell, R. (2016). *Calgary Homeless Foundation research agenda*. Calgary, AB: CHF.
- Fine, M., Freudenberg, N., Payne, Y., Perkins, T., & Smith, K. (2003). "Anything can happen with police around". Urban youth evaluate strategies of surveillance in public places. *Journal of Social Issues*, 59(1), 141-158.

- Fitzpatrick, S. (2005). Explaining homelessness: A critical realist perspective. *Housing Theory & Society*, 22(1), 1-17.
- Forchuk, C., Richardson, J., Lavery, K., Bryant, M., Csienik, R., Edwards, B., . . . Kelly, C. (2013). Service preference of homeless youth with mental illness: Housing first, treatment first, or both together. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice* (pp. 95-110). Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Foucault, M. (1981). The order of discourse. In R. Young (Ed.), *Untying the text: A post-structuralist reader* (pp. 48-78). Boston, Mass: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1993). About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self: A transcription of two lectures in Dartmouth, November 1980. Edited by M. Blasius, *Political Theory*, 21(2), 198-227.
- Foucault, M. (1998). *The will to knowledge: The history of sexuality, volume I*. London, UK: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2003). "Society must be defended". *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*. New York: Picador.
- Foucault, M. (2004). "The birth of biopolitics". *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. France: St. Martin's Press.

Foucault, M. (2007). “*Security, territory, population*”. *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gaetz, S. (2010). The struggle to end homelessness: How we created the crisis, and how we can end it. *Journal of Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 3, 21-26.

Gaetz, S. (2014a). *Coming of age - reimagining the response to youth homelessness in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

Gaetz, S. (2014b). *A safe and decent place to live: Towards a Housing First framework for youth*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

Gaetz, S. (2016). *Creating research impact - How we make homelessness research matter*.
Downloaded from: www.homelesshub.ca/blog/creating-research-impact.

Gaetz, S. (2017). *A safe & decent place to live: towards a Housing First framework for youth, revised framework*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Gaetz, S. & Dej, E. (2017). *A new direction: A framework for homelessness prevention*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Gaetz, S., Dej, E., Richter, T., & Redman, R. (2016): *The state of homelessness in Canada 2016*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

Gaetz, S., Donaldson, J., Richter, T., & Gulliver, T. (2013). *The state of homelessness in Canada 2013*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network.

- Gaetz, S., Gulliver, T., & Richter, T. (2014). *The state of homelessness in Canada 2014*. Toronto, ON: The Homeless Hub Press.
- Gaetz, S., & O'Grady, B. (2002). Making money: Exploring the economy of homeless workers. *Work, Employment and Society*, 16(3), 433-456.
- Gaetz, S., & O'Grady, B. (2006). *The missing link: Discharge planning, incarceration and homelessness*. Toronto, ON: The John Howard Society of Ontario.
- Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., & Buccieri, K. (2010). *Surviving crime and violence: Street youth and victimization*. Toronto, ON: JFCY & Homeless Hub.
- Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., Buccieri, K., Karabanow, J., & Marsolais, A. (2013). Introduction. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice* (pp. 1-13). Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., Kidd, S., & Schwan, K. (2016). *Without a home: The national youth homelessness survey*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.
- Gaetz, S., & Scott, F. (2012). *Live, learn, grow: Supporting transitions to adulthood for homeless youth - A framework for the Foyer in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Gaetz, S., & Scott, F. (2013). Calgary Homeless Foundation. In S. Gaetz., F. Scott., & T. Gulliver (Eds.), *Housing First in Canada: Supporting communities to end homelessness*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

- Gaetz, S., Scott, F., & Gulliver, T. (2013). *Housing First in Canada: Supporting communities to end homelessness*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Gelobter, M., Dorsey, M., Fields, L., Goldtooth, T., Mendiratta, A., Moore, R., Morello-Frosch, R., Shepard, P. M., & Torres, G. (2005). *The soul of environmentalism: Rediscovering transformational politics in the 21st century*. Oakland, CA: Redefining Progress.
- Giffords, E. D., Alonso, C., & Bell, R. (2007). A transitional living program for homeless adolescents: A case study. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 36(4), 141-151.
- Gilmore, J. (2011). *Trends in dropout rates and the labour market outcomes of young dropouts*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
- Glass, M. R. (2016). Performing neoliberalism: Practices, power and subject formation. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Goering, P., Veldhuizen, S., Watson, A., Adair, C., Kopp, B., Latimer, E., & Ly, A. (2012). *At Home/Chez Soi interim report*. Ottawa, ON: Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC).
- Goering, P., Veldhuizen, S., Watson, A., Adair, C., Kopp, B., Latimer, E., Neison, G., MacNaughton, E., Streiner, D., & Aubry, T. (2014). *National At Home/Chez Soi final report*. Ottawa, ON: Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC).
- Government of Alberta. (2015). *Supporting health and successful transitions to adulthood: A Plan to prevent and reduce youth homelessness*. Edmonton, AB: Province of Alberta.

- Gulcur, L., Stefancic, A., Shinn, M., Tsemberis, S., & Fischer, S. N. (2003). Housing, hospitalization, and cost outcomes for homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities participating in continuum of care and Housing First programmes. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 13(2), 171-186.
- Hardin, C. (2014). Finding the ‘neo’ in neoliberalism. *Cultural Studies* 28(2), 199–221.
- Harris, M. & Fallot, R.D. (2001). *Using trauma theory to design service systems: New directions for mental health services*. Toronto, ON: Wiley.
- Harrison, T., & Weber, B. (2015). *Neoliberalism and the non-profit social services sector in Alberta*. Edmonton, AB: Parkland Institute.
- Harvey, D. (2001). Globalization and the “spatial fix”. *Geographische Revue*, 2, 23-30.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey D. (2012). *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. London, UK: Verso.
- Heisz, A. (2007). *Income inequality and redistribution in Canada: 1976-2004*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series.
- Heisz, A. (2015). Trends in income inequality in Canada and elsewhere. In D. Green, C. Riddell, & F. St. Hilaire (Eds.), *Income inequality: The Canadian story* (pp. 77-102). Ottawa, ON: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

- Hennigan, B. (2013). *House broken: The functions and contradictions of "Housing First"* (Master's Thesis). Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
- Horsell, C. (2006). Homelessness and social exclusion: A Foucauldian perspective for social workers. *Australian Social Work*, 59(2), 213-225.
- Hulchanski, D. J. (2002). *Housing policy for tomorrow's cities*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Networks Inc.
- Hulchanski, D. J. (2006). What factors shape Canadian housing policy? The intergovernmental role in Canada's housing system. In R. Young & C. Leuprecht (Eds.), *Canada: The state of the federation 2004: Municipal-federal-provincial relations in Canada* (p. 221-250). Montreal, QB: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Human Participants Review Committee. (2010). *Guidelines for conducting research with people who are homeless*. Toronto, ON: York University.
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (2008). *Summative evaluation of the National Homelessness Initiative*. Ottawa, ON: HRSDC.
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (2009). *Evaluation of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy*. Ottawa, ON: HRSDC.
- Hunter, G. (2006). The federal government and social policy at the turn of the twenty-first century: Reflections on change and continuity. In A. Westhues (Ed.), *Canadian social policy: Issues and perspectives*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

- Hutton, P. H. Foucault, Freud, and the technologies of self. In M. Foucault, L. H. Martin, & P. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault*. (pp. 121-144). Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hwang, S. (2000). Mortality among men using homeless shelter in Toronto, Ontario. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 283, 2152-2157.
- Hwang, S., Cheung, A. M. (2004). Risk of death among homeless women: A cohort study and review of the literature. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 170(8), 1243-1252.
- Jacobs, K., & Manzi, T. (1996). Discourse and policy change: The significance of language for housing research. *Housing Studies*, 11(4), 543-560.
- James Bell Associates (2009). *Evaluation brief: Measuring implementation fidelity*. Arlington, VA: James Bell Associates.
- Johnsen, S., Cloke, P., & May, J. (2005). Day centres for homeless people: Spaces of care or fear? *Social & Cultural Geography*, 6(6), 787-812.
- Karabanow, J. (2004). *Being young and homeless: Understanding how youth enter and exit street life*. Toronto, ON: Peter Lang.
- Karabanow, J. (2006). Becoming a street kid: Exploring the stages of street life. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 13(2), 49-72.
- Katz, A. S., Zerger, S., & Hwang, S. W. (2017). Housing First the conversation: Discourse, policy and the limits of the possible. *Critical Public Health*, 27(1), 139-147.

- Kellen, A., Freedman, J., Novas, S., Lapointe, L., Maaranen, R., & Wong, A. (2010). *Homeless and jailed: Jailed and homeless*. Toronto, ON: The John Howard Society of Toronto.
- Kidd, S.A. (2013). Mental health and youth homelessness: A critical review. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow, & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Klodawsky, F. (2009). Home spaces and rights to the city: Thinking social justice for chronically homeless women. *Urban Geography*, 30(6), 591-610.
- Kneebone, R., Bell, M., Jackson, N., & Jadidzadeh, A. (2015). Who are the homeless? Numbers, trends, and characteristics of those without homes in Calgary. *The School of Public Policy Research Papers*, 8(11), 1-16.
- Kneebone, R., & Wilkins, M. (2016a). Shrinking the need for homeless shelter spaces. *The School of Public Policy Research Papers*, 9(21), 1-16.
- Kneebone, R., & Wilkins, M. (2016b). The very poor and the affordability of housing. *The School of Public Policy Research Papers*, 9(27), 1-18.
- Kozloff, N., Adair, C.E., Palma Lazgare, L.I., Poremski, D., Cheung, A. H., Sandu, R., & Stergiopoulos V. (2016). Housing First for homeless youth with mental illness. *Pediatrics*, 2016 Sep 28. pii: e20161514.

- Kuhn, R., & Culhane, D. (1998). Using cluster analysis to test a typology of homelessness by shelter utilization: Results from the analysis of administrative data. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(2), 207-232.
- Kulik, D., Gaetz, S., Levy, A.S, Crowe, C., & Ford-Jones, L. (2011). Homeless youth's overwhelming health burden - a review of the literature. *Pediatrics and Child Health June/July 2011*, 16(16), 43-47.
- Lake, R. W., & Newman, K. (2002). Differential citizenship in the shadow state. *GeoJournal*, 58, 109-120.
- Larner, W. (2000). Neo-liberalism: Policy, ideology, governmentality. *Studies in Political Economy*, 63, 5-25.
- Lawlor, E., & Bowen, N. (2017). *Limerick youth housing evaluation report*. Dublin, Ireland: Focus Ireland.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Legg, S. (2005). Foucault's population geographies: Classifications, biopolitics and governmental spaces. *Population, Space and Place*, 11(3), 137–156.
- Lemke, T. (2001). 'The birth of biopolitics': Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality. *Economy and Society*, 30(2), 190-207.
- Lemon Osterling, K., & Hines, A. M. (2006). Mentoring adolescent foster youth: Promoting resilience during developmental transitions. *Child and Family*, 11(3), 242-253.

- Leopold, J., & Ho, H. (2015). *Evaluation of the 100,000 homes campaign: Assessing the campaign's effectiveness in housing the chronically and vulnerable homeless*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.
- Lewis, N. (2016). Governmentality at work in shaping a critical geographical politics. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Lisen, L. T., & Walsh, M. B. (2012). The competing meaning of 'biopolitics' in political science: Biological and postmodern approaches to politics. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 31(1-2), 2-15.
- MacKeith, J., Burns, S., & Graham, K. (2006). *The Outcomes Star: Organizational guide*. London, UK: Triangle Consulting Inc.
- MacLeavy, J. (2016). Neoliberalism and welfare. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Malone, K. (2002). Street life: youth, culture and competing uses of public space. *Environment & Urbanization*, 14(2), 157-170.
- Marquardt, N. (2016). Counting the countless: Statistics on homelessness and the spatial ontology of political numbers. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 34(2), 301-311.
- Mayer, M. (2016). Whose city? From Ray Paul's critique of the Keynesian city to the contestations around neoliberal urbanism. *The Sociological Review*, 00, 1-18.

- McKee, K. (2009). Post-Foucauldian governmentality: What does it offer critical social policy analysis? *Critical Social Policy*, 29(3), 465-486.
- McKenzie, H. A., Varcoe, C., Browne, A. J., & Day, L. (2016). Disrupting the continuities among residential schools, the sixties scoop, and child welfare: An analysis of colonial and neocolonial discourses. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 7(2), 1-24.
- McMorris, B. J., Tyler, K.A., Whitbeck, L.B., & Hoyt, D. R. (2002). Familial and "on-the-street" risk factors associated with alcohol use among homeless and runaway adolescents. *J Study Alcohol*, 63(1): 34-43.
- Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2011). *At home/chez soi project early findings report*. Ottawa, ON: MHCC.
- Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2012). *Early findings report: Volume 3*. Ottawa, ON: MHCC.
- Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2013). *What is Housing First?* Ottawa, ON: MHCC.
- Mertens, D. M., & Wilson, A. T. (2012). *Program evaluation theory and practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Miller, B. (2007). Modes of governance, modes of resistance: Contesting neoliberalism in Calgary. In H. Leitner, J. Peck, & E.S. Sheppard (Eds.), *Contesting neoliberalism: Urban frontiers*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

- Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: Social justice and the fight for public space*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Murry, V. M., Berkel, C., Gaylord-Harden, N. K., Copeland-Linder, N., & Nation, M. (2011). Neighborhood poverty and adolescent development. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 114-128.
- Nicholls, C. M. (2009). Agency, transgression and the causation of homelessness: A contextualized rational action analysis. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 9(1), 69-84.
- Novac, S., Brown, J., & Bourbonnais, C. (2004). *Transitional housing: Objectives, indicators of success, and outcomes*. Vancouver, BC: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.
- O'Grady, B., Gaetz, S., & Buccieri, K. (2010). *Can I see your ID? The policing of youth homelessness in Toronto*. Toronto, ON: Justice for Children and Youth, and Homeless Hub Press.
- Oksala, J. (2013). Neoliberalism and biopolitical governmentality. In J. Nilsson & S. Wallenstein (Eds.), *Foucault, biopolitics and governmentality*. Södertön Philosophical Studies.
- O'Neil, P., & Weller, S. (2016). Neoliberalism in question. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, 2016. *Out in the cold: The crisis in Toronto's shelter system*. Toronto, ON: OCAP.

- OrgCode Consulting Inc. (2015). *The Service Prioritization Assistance Tool (SPDAT) manual*. Oakville, ON: OrgCode Consulting.
- Owen, J. M. (2007). *Program evaluation: Forms and approaches. Third edition*. New York, NY: Guildford Press.
- Padgett, D. (2007). There's no place like (a) home: Ontological security among persons with serious mental illness in the United States. *Social Science & Medicine*, 64(9), 1925-1936.
- Padgett, D. (2013). Choices, consequences and context: Housing First and its critics. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 7(2), 341-347.
- Padgett, D. K., Gulcur, L., & Tsemberis, S. (2006). Housing First services for people who are homeless with co-occurring serious mental illness and substance abuse. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 16(1), 74-83.
- Padgett, D. K., Stanhope, V., Henwood, B. F., & Stefancic, A. (2011). Substance use outcomes among homeless clients with serious mental illness: Comparing Housing First with treatment first. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 47, 227-232.
- Parsell, C., & Marston, G. (2012). Beyond the 'at-risk' individual: Housing and the eradication of poverty to prevent homelessness. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 71(1), 33-44.
- Pearson, C., Montgomery, A. E., & Locke, G. (2009). Housing stability among homeless individuals with serious mental illness participating in Housing First programs. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(3), 404-417.

Peck, J. (2010). *Constructions of neoliberal reason*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380-404.

Peters, M. A. (2016). Education, neoliberalism, and human capital. Homo economicus as 'entrepreneur of himself'. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.

Peterson, K. D. (2013). *Gentrification through public participation? Acceptance and resistance in Calgary's inner suburbs* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from:
http://theses.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/11023/835/2/ucalgary_2013_peterson_kyle.pdf

Pleace, N. (2011). The ambiguities, limits, risks of Housing First from a European perspective. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 5(2), 113-127.

Preston, J. (2013). Neoliberal settler colonialism, Canada and the tar sands. *Race & Class*, 55(2), 42-59.

Preston, V., Murdie, R., D'Addario, S., Sibanda, P., Murnaghan, A., Logan, J., & Ahn, M. (2011). *Precarious housing and hidden homelessness among refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in the Toronto metropolitan area*. (No. CERIS Working Paper No. 87). Toronto, ON: CERIS.

Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1982). Transtheoretical therapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 19(3), 276-288.

- Pylypa, J. (1998). Power and bodily practice: Applying the work of Foucault to an anthropology of the body. *Arizona Anthropologist*, 13, 21-36.
- Sadowski, L. S., Kee, R. A., VanderWeele, T. J., & Buchanan, D. (2009). Effect of housing and case management program on emergency department visits and hospitalizations among chronically ill homeless adults: A randomized trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 301(17), 1771-1778.
- Saewyc, E., Drozda, C., Rivers, R., MacKay, L. & Peled, M. (2013). Which comes first: Sexual exploitation or other risk exposures among street-involved youth? In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice* (pp. 147-160). Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Segaert, A. (2012). *The national shelter study: Emergency shelter use in Canada 2005-2009*. Ottawa, ON: Homelessness Partnering Strategy, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.
- Serge, L., Eberle, M., Goldberg, M., Sullivan, S., & Dudding, P. (2002). *Pilot study: The child welfare system and homelessness among Canadian youth*. Ottawa, ON: National Homelessness Initiative.
- Seven Cities on Housing and Homelessness. (2017). *Alberta point-in-time homeless count: Edmonton*. Edmonton, AB: Seven Cities on Housing and Homelessness.

- Seven Cities on Housing and Homelessness. (2017). *Homelessness in province continues downward trend. Drops 19.2%*. Media release downloaded at:
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ff2744_5de915f232694126bacd171e98fae2cc.pdf
- Shannon, P. (1998). *Reading poverty*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Shapcott, M. (2008). *Wellesley Institute national housing report card*. Toronto, ON: Wellesley Institute.
- Shapcott, M. (2010). *Precarious housing in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Wellesley Institute.
- Sibley, D. (1995). *Geographies of exclusion*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Sparks, T. (2012). Governing the homeless in an age of compassion: Homelessness, citizenship, and the 10-year plan to end homelessness in King County Washington. *Antipode*, 44(2), 1510-1531.
- Springer, S., Birch, K., & MacLeavy, J. (2016). An introduction to neoliberalism. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.). *The handbook of neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge.
- Springer, J., Lum, J., & Roswell, T. (2013). Policy challenges to homelessness among Caribbean youth in Toronto. In S. Gaetz, B. O'Grady, K. Buccieri, J. Karabanow, & A. Marsolais (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for policy and practice*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The dangerous new class*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.

- Stanhope, V., & Dunn, K. (2011). The curious case of Housing First: The limits of evidence based policy. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 34, 275-282.
- Statistics Canada. (2016). High-income trends among Canadian taxfilers, 2014. *The Daily*, November 21, 2016.
- Stefancic, A., & Tsemberis, S. (2007). Housing first for long-term shelter dwellers with psychiatric disabilities in a suburban county: A four year study of housing access and retention. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 28(3-4), 265-279.
- Strakosch, E. (2015). *Neoliberal Indigenous policy: Settler colonialism and the 'post-welfare' state*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Tarasuk, V. & Dachner, N. (2013). Homeless youth, nutritional vulnerability, and community food assistance programs. In Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., Buccieri, K., Karabanow, J., & Marsolais, A. (Eds.), *Youth homelessness in Canada: Implications for Policy and Practice*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- Taft, K. (1997). *Shredding the public interest: Ralph Klein and 25-years of one party government*. Edmonton, AB: The University of Alberta Press.
- Taft, K. (2012). *Follow the money: Where is Alberta's wealth going?* Edmonton, AB: Brush Education.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

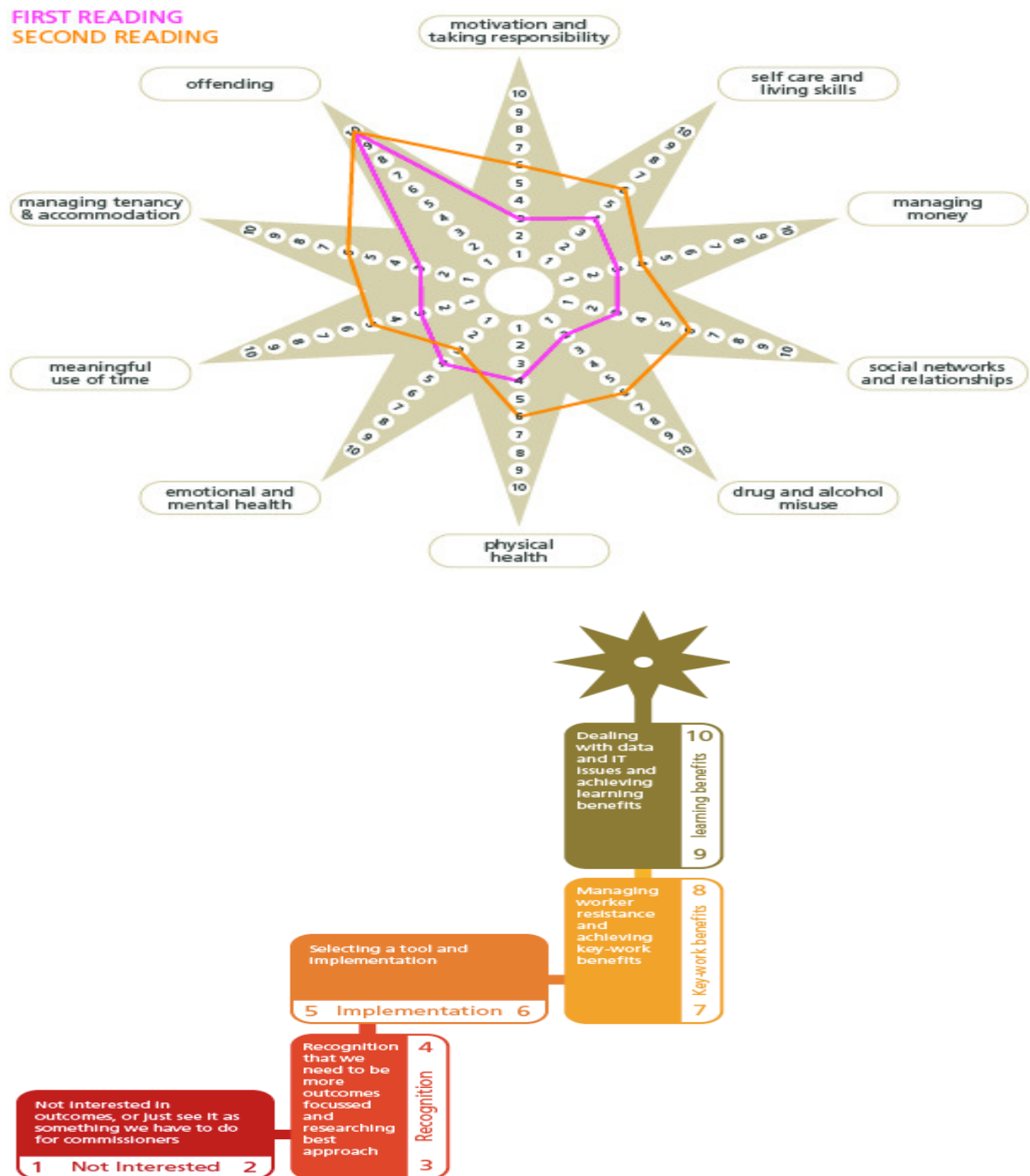
- Thrane, L. E., Hoyt, D. R., Whitbeck, L. B., & Yoder, K. A. (2006). Impact of family abuse on running away, deviance, and street victimization among homeless rural and urban youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 30(10), 1117-1128.
- Toro, P. A., Tompsett, C. J., Lombardo, S., Philippot, P., Nachtergaeel, H., Galand, B., Schlien, N., Stammel, N., Yabar, Y., Blume, M., Mackay, L., & Harvey, K. (2007). Homelessness in Europe and the United States: A comparison of prevalence and public opinion. *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(3), 505-524.
- Trocme, N., Knoke, D., & Blackstock, C. (2004). Pathways to overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in Canada's child welfare system. *Social Service Review*, 78(4), 577-600.
- Tsai, J., Mares, A. S., Rosenheck, R. A. (2010). A multisite comparison of supported housing for chronically homeless adults: "Housing First" versus "residential treatment first". *Psychological Services*, 7(4), 219-232.
- Tsemberis, S. (2010). Housing First: The pathways model to end homelessness for people with mental illness and addiction model. *European Journal of Homelessness*, 5(2), 235-240.
- Tsemberis, S., & Asmussen, S. (1999). From streets to homes: The pathways to housing consumer preference supported housing model. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 17(1-2), 113-131.
- Tsemberis, S., & Eisenberg, R. (2000). Pathways to housing: Supported Housing for street-dwelling homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities. *Psychiatric Services*, 51(4), 487-493.

- Tsemberis, S., Gulcur, L., & Nakae, M. (2004). Housing First, consumer choice, and harm reduction for homeless individuals with a dual diagnosis. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*(4), 651-6.
- Tsemberis, S., Moran, L., Shinn, M., Asmussen, S., & Shern, D. L. (2003). Consumer preference programs for individuals who are homeless and have psychiatric disabilities: A drop-in center and a supported housing program. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 32*(3-4), 305-317.
- Turner, A., Albanese, T., & Pakeman, K. (2017). Discerning 'functional and absolute zero': Defining and measuring an end to homelessness in Canada. *The School of Public Policy Research Papers, 10*(2), 1-43.
- Turner Research & Strategy. (2016). *Haven's Way evaluation report*. Calgary, AB: Boys and Girls Club of Calgary.
- Tyler, K., & Bersani, B. (2008). A longitudinal study of early adolescent precursors to running away. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 28*(2), 230-251.
- van den Bree, M. B. M., Shelton, K., Bonner, A., Moss, S., Thomas, H., & Taylor, P. J. (2009). A longitudinal population-based study of factors in adolescence predicting homelessness in young adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 45*(6), 571-578.
- Vaz, P., & Bruno, F. (2003). Types of self-surveillance: From abnormality to individuals 'at-risk'. *Surveillance & Society, 1*(3), 272-291.

- Venn, C., & Terranova, T. (2009). Introduction: Thinking after Michel Foucault. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(6), 1-11.
- Volk, J. S., Aubry, T., Goering, P., Adair, C.E., Distasio, J., Jette, J., Nolin, D., Stergiopoulos, V., Streiner, D. L., & Tsemberis, S. (2015). Tenants with additional needs: When Housing First does not solve homelessness. *Journal of Mental Health*, Online 1-7.
- Wadsworth, M. E., Raviv, T., Reinhard, C., Wolff, B., DeCarlo Santiago, C., & Einhorn, L. (2008). An indirect effects model of the association between poverty and child functioning: The role of children's poverty-related stress. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 13, 156-185.
- Walters, H. (2017). *Description of Aura House and Home Fire, two new Housing First programs run by the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary*. Personal email correspondence: April 21, 2017.
- Willse, C. (2008). "Universal data elements," or the biopolitical life of homeless populations. *Surveillance & Society*, 5(3), 227-251.
- Worthen, B. R., Sanders, J. R., & Fitzpatrick, J. L. (1997). *Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines. Second edition*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.
- Wright, T. (1997). *Out of place: Homeless mobilizations, subcities, and contested landscapes*. Albany, NY: State of New York Press.
- Yanos, P. T., Barrow, S. M., & Tsemberis, S. (2004). Community integration in the early phase of housing among homeless persons diagnosed with severe mental illness: Successes and challenges. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 40(2), 133-150.

Yanos, P. T., Felton, B. J., Tsemberis, S., & Frye, V. A. (2007). Exploring the role of housing type, neighborhood characteristics, and lifestyle factors in the community integration of formerly homeless persons diagnosed with mental illness. *Journal of Mental Health, 16*(6), 703.

Appendix A: The Outcomes Star and Ladder of Change



(MacKeith, Burns & Graham, 2006)

Appendix B: Infinity Staff Interview Protocol

Housing First Framework – Staff

1. Please state your job title and the responsibilities it entails
2. How long have you been at the Infinity program? The BGCC?
3. What is your background (e.g. relevant work experience, education)

Housing First

- What does HF mean to you?
- What do you see as being the needs of young people? Do youth see them as having unique development/social/legal needs? How so?
- Have you had to adjust the HF model in any way to accommodate the needs of youth?
- Have you worked under other models as a staff? Was this experience different? How? Was it challenging to adapt in any way?
- Is there anything that makes the HF model challenging when implementing it for young people?
- Do you have any concerns/critiques of HF?

Core Principles

- What do the following mean to you? Does it apply to the work you do? How or how not?

1. Immediate access to housing with no preconditions

2. Choice and self-determination

- Probe:
 - Housing – location and type of housing
 - Choice in services receive and when to start using services

3. Positive Youth Development

- Probe:
 - a. Trauma-informed
 - b. Harm reduction

4. Individualized and client-driven supports

5. Social and community integration

- Probe:
 - Social and cultural engagement
 - Relationship building – with staff and others
 - Meaningful activities – employment, vocational and recreational activities

Program Elements

1. *Housing* - What kinds of housing are available?

- How do find housing?
- Discuss process of negotiating/building relationships with landlords, signing lease, ensuring Y know their tenant rights and responsibilities
- How do ensure the housing is adequate and affordable?
- How do provide assistance in maintaining housing?
- What does 'learning how to be good neighbours' mean?
- Have young people been in jeopardy of losing their housing? Why? What does the staff do in these situations?

Other program components

- How often do contact/visit?
- Do young people ever refuse services?
- What is ratio of workers to young people?
- Describes services offered, implemented:

2. *Health and wellbeing?*

- Probe:
 - Trauma informed
 - Harm reduction
 - Healthy sexuality and relationships

4. *Access to income and education?*

- Probe:
- To what degree is education a priority? How does that work? What employment supports are provided?

5. *Complementary supports?*

- Probe:
- Life skills, adult support and mentoring, family reconnection, supporting youth with children
- *Advocacy*

Other

- What is coordinated assessment?
- Acuity assessment tool (SPDAT) – does assess needs effectively?
- What is motivational interviewing? Do you use this?
- *Process of triage* – What is process of determining which supports are needed when? Where do you find you have to focus most of your energy
- Outcomes star – how do you find working with this tool? Pros/cons

- Are there any aftercare supports? Do you have a sense of how many youth have graduated? Any idea of how they're doing?
- How often can you do a new intake? (What's the turnaround)
- Are there other elements we haven't spoken about that are critical to the success of your work?
- Other challenges?
- Areas you would like to build upon?

Infinity – Management

1. For the record, please state your job title and the responsibilities it entails
2. How long have you been at the Infinity program? The BGCC?
3. What is your background (e.g. relevant work experience, education)
6. In some of your documents, you speak about the developmental, transitional stage youth are at – what does this mean? How are the needs of young people distinct from adults?
7. Were you involved in the creation of Infinity? Why HF? How were the guiding principles developed?
8. Does the HF model need to be adapted to meet these unique needs?
9. Do you have any way of measuring the program's fidelity to HF?
10. *Anti-discrimination environment* – are there anti-discrimination policies? Training for staff?
How might you support young people who have faced additional stigma/discrimination (race, sexuality, gender, etc.)
11. What would you describe as the 'critical success factors' for making this program work?
12. The individualistic approach – what are the pros/cons of conducting programming this way?
13. What challenges do you/your staff face in doing this work?
14. Are there elements you would like to add or build upon in the Infinity program?
15. What are some unique elements about working in Calgary that either facilitate or impede your work?

Appendix C: Youth Interview Protocol

Adapted from tool used in:

Heinze, H. J., Jozefowicz, D. M. H., & Toro, P. A. (2010). Taking the youth perspective: Assessment of program characteristics that promote positive development in homeless and at-risk youth. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(10), 1365-1372

Remember, all answers will be anonymous and confidential. No one will know your individual information. Staff and supervisors will not have access to individual questionnaires, and will only receive summaries of everyone's responses combined.

Part I: Program Rules and Organization

Think about how it has been at Infinity. How much do you agree/disagree with the following (use scale):

1	2	3	4
Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree

1. Activities at **(this program)** are pretty carefully planned _____
2. Each person's duties are clearly defined at **(this program)** _____
3. We are rarely ordered around here _____
4. There are very few rules to follow at **(this program)** _____
5. There is one person here who makes most of the decisions _____
6. There are set ways of doing things at **(this program)** _____
7. There is a strong emphasis in following the rules at **(this program)** _____
8. Everyone has equal say in decisions at **(this program)** _____
9. We can do whatever we want to at **(this program)** _____
10. This is a well-organized program _____
11. **(This program)** rules are fair _____
12. **(This program)** rules make sense _____
13. **(Youth, clients)** have input into how things are done at **(this program)** _____

Part 2: Program Safety

How much does each of the following happen at your apartment/neighbourhood. Please use the following scale:

1	2	3	4
----------	----------	----------	----------

Never Rarely Often Always

1. I feel very safe in my apartment _____
2. People have threatened me when I have been here _____
3. People have attacked or hurt me when I have been here _____
4. I'm afraid to associate with other people in this neighbourhood _____
5. Its safest to keep to yourself here _____
6. I worry about my belongings getting stolen _____
7. My belongings have been stolen in my apartment _____
8. There are people that bother me in this neighbourhood _____
9. I'm afraid I might get hurt in this neighbourhood _____

Part 3: Relationships with Others

How much do you agree or disagree with the following (use scale):

1	2	3	4
Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree

At My Apartment:

1. I fight with other people a lot here _____
2. People here become openly angry _____
3. People here lose their tempers _____
4. People here often criticize each other _____
5. People here sometimes hit each other _____
6. If there's a disagreement between people, we try hard here to smooth things over and keep the peace _____

In My Life in General: (People other than staff)

1. There is someone in my life who takes pride in what I do _____
2. There are several different people I enjoy spending time with _____
3. There is at least one person I know whose advice I really trust _____
4. I feel there is no one with whom I can share my most private worries and fears _____
5. When I feel lonely, there are several people I can talk to _____
6. If a personal crisis arose, no one I know would be able to give me good advice about handling it _____
7. No one cares about me _____
8. It is hard for me to make friends _____
9. I feel like there are people in my life whom try to get me into trouble _____

Now, think about your relationships with (*staff*), people who work or volunteer at (this program) how much do you agree or disagree with the following (use scale):

1	2	3	4
Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree

1. There is at least one person I know at **(this program)** whose advice I really trust _____
2. There is someone at **(this program)** who will give me suggestions about things to do for recreation or entertainment _____
3. There is someone at **(this program)** who takes pride in what I do _____
4. When I need suggestions about how to deal with a money problem, I know there is someone at **(this program)** I can turn to _____
5. If I needed a quick emergency loan of \$20, there is someone at **(this program)** I could get it from _____
6. When I feel lonely, there are several people at **(this program)** I can talk to _____
7. No one cares about me at **(this program)** _____

1. **(Staff)** pay attention to what's going on in my life _____
2. **(Staff)** get on my case if I screw up _____
3. **(Staff)** say something nice to me when I do something good _____
4. I can go to **(staff)** if I need advice or to talk about personal problems _____
5. I can go to **(staff)** if I am really upset or mad about something _____
6. **(Staff)** make me feel good about myself _____
7. I could go to **(staff)** in an emergency _____
8. **(Staff)** know my interests and goals _____
9. **(Staff)** care what happens to me _____
10. **(Staff)** keep conversations we've had about my problems confidential _____
11. **(Staff)** have spent time to talk with me when they didn't have to _____
12. **(Staff)** have gone out of their way to help me _____
13. **(Staff)** understand me and my background _____
14. I have difficulty getting along with **(staff)** at **(this program)** _____
15. **(Staff)** accept me for who I am _____
16. **(Staff)** help me stay out of trouble _____
17. I wish there were different people working at **(this program)** _____
18. **(Staff)** really help and support **(Youth, clients)** at **(this program)** _____
19. **(Staff)** at **(this program)** take a personal interest in me _____

Part 4: Opportunities to Belong

Think about how people feel about **(this program)** *overall*. How much do you agree/disagree with the following (use scale):

1	2	3	4
Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree

1. I often seem to be killing time at my apartment _____
2. There is plenty of time and attention for everyone at **(this program)** _____
3. People at **(this program)** try to make me feel comfortable _____
4. I am treated the same as other people at **(this program)** _____
5. I feel out of place at **(this program)** _____
6. I wish I was at a different **(program type)** _____
7. We all respect each other at **(this program)** _____

In my life:

1. I've had trouble "fitting into places" _____
2. I feel that there are people or places with whom I 'belong' _____
3. I feel I am part of a group or a community (either geography or group of people) _____
4. I feel like I most 'belong' when I'm _____

Part 5: Positive and Negative Influences

Think about the help you receive from (staff) at (this program). How often have you received help with the following (use scale):

1	2	3	4
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often

(Staff) at (this program) have helped me:

1. Feel more confident _____
2. Handle my life _____
3. Become more mature/grow up _____
4. Use all my skills and knowledge _____
5. Act on my own _____
6. Develop as a person _____
7. Be with friends who stay out of trouble _____
8. Do work that takes advantage of my abilities _____
9. Make good decisions in my life _____
10. Develop my own work life _____
11. Feel I can do things well _____
12. Stay away from drugs _____
13. Stay away from alcohol _____
14. Follow the law _____
15. Practice safe sex _____
16. Get a good education _____
17. Go to school regularly _____
18. Do better at school _____
19. Stay away from gangs _____
20. Avoid fights _____

21. Learn new things that will be useful once I leave _____
22. Participate in recreational activities _____
23. Talk about youth issues _____
24. Learn from my mistakes _____
25. Make plans and carry them out _____
26. Deal with things from my past _____
27. Feel better about myself _____
28. Become more responsible _____
29. Feel I can accomplish things I set out to do _____
30. Turn my life around _____
31. To get back on track _____
32. Deal better with other places, like schools, hospitals, etc. _____
33. Helped me change for the better _____
34. Identify my strengths _____
35. Other _____

Now look at all of the things you have been helped with on this page. Please circle the five most important things you have been helped with.

Now, think about how (this program) has influenced your life and the lives of other (Youth, clients) here:

1	2	3	4
Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree

36. (Youth, clients) at (this program) stop doing things they shouldn't while they are here _____
37. (Youth, clients) behave differently at (this program) then they do after they leave here _____
38. I am afraid I will go back to my old ways once I leave here _____
39. I am confident that being at (this program) has helped me change things for good _____
40. (Youth, clients) are at (this program) because they want to change _____
41. (This program/apartment) is located in a good neighborhood _____
42. (This program) is connected to many other places and people that are helpful _____.
- Please Explain**
43. People at (this program) are good role models _____
44. I would like to be more like people at (this program) _____

Part 6: Saying and Doing

Think about how things are done at (program name). How much do you agree/disagree with the following (use scale):

- | | | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Disagree | Disagree Somewhat | Agree Somewhat | Agree |
1. We often do things on our own at **(this program)** _____
 2. At **(this program)**, we are strongly encouraged to be independent _____
 3. We think things out for ourselves at **(this program)** _____
 4. People here almost always rely on themselves when a problem comes up _____
 5. People at **(this program)** strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights _____
 6. We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves at **(this program)** _____
 7. I feel like my ideas count at **(this program)** _____
 8. People really listen to me at **(this program)** _____
 9. I feel like I really matter here _____
 10. **(Staff)** let me decide how I spend my time while I'm here / what my goals are _____
 - a. What were the goals you choose? How are they going? _____
 - b. How do you like using the Outcomes Star? _____
 11. I get to choose which services, if any I receive at Infinity _____
 12. People treat me like an adult at **(this program)** _____
 13. I am given opportunities to be responsible at **(this program)** _____
 14. I feel positive/hopeful about the future _____

Part 7: Program connection with Family, School, and Community

Think about how (program name) has influenced other areas of your life. Answer yes or no if you have received help with the following:

Mark Yes (Y), No (N) or Does not apply (DA)

Explain N vs. DA: If the following are or were ever relevant to you and you need/needed help, have you gotten assistance, mark Y or N, but if it hasn't been an issue for you, DA. Provide a concrete example.

1. **(Staff)** have helped me with my relationship with my family _____
2. **(Staff)** have helped me in my relationship with my romantic partner _____
3. My parents have contacted or visited me at **(this program)** _____
4. **(Staff)** have helped me to work with my romantic partner on our problems _____
5. **(Staff)** have encouraged me to work _____
6. **(Staff)** have helped me to build healthy romantic and sexual relationships _____
7. **(Staff)** have helped me deal with people and places outside of here _____
8. **(Staff)** have helped me find work. _____
9. **(Staff)** have helped me to manage my money. _____
10. **(Staff)** have helped me to eat healthier foods. _____
11. **(Staff)** have helped me get job interviews. _____
12. **(Staff)** have helped me get to a doctor _____

13. People at **(this program)** have connected me with the following services:

Mark Yes (Y), No (N) or Does not Apply (DA)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Temporary housing_____ | m. Drug or alcohol counseling_____ |
| b. Permanent housing_____ | n. Doctor/medical services_____ |
| c. Showers/Cleanliness_____ | o. Money_____ |
| d. Clothing_____ | p. Social assistance_____ |
| e. Transportation_____ | q. Child care_____ |
| f. Meals_____ | r. Parenting training_____ |
| g. Food Banks_____ | s. Prescriptions filled_____ |
| h. Jobs_____ | t. Disability benefits_____ |
| i. Job training_____ | u. Prenatal care_____ |
| j. Educational support_____ | v. Cultural/spiritual_____ |
| k. Individual counselling_____ | w. Other_____ |
| l. Family counselling_____ | |

Now look at all of the things you have been helped with on this page. Please circle the five most important things you have been helped with.

Part 9 - Questions Specific to housing settings:

1. It was easy for me to get housing through this **(this program)** _____
2. I have enough to eat since joining the Infinity project _____
3. I have the furniture I need b/c of Infinity _____
4. **(Staff)** have helped me to cope with being without a place to stay_____
5. _____

Questions Specific to Parents with children:

Are your children currently staying with you?

Yes_____ How many?_____

No_____ Where are they staying (please list for all children)?

All

1. **(Staff)** help cut down my family's daily problems _____
2. **(This program)** offers parenting classes _____
3. **(This program)** has helped me care for my child(ren)_____
4. **(This program)** has helped me to learn how to care for my child(ren)_____
5. **(Staff)** care about my kid(s) _____
6. My kids get health checkups _____
7. **(Staff)** help me find child care when I have to work_____

8. **(This program)** offers rides for my kid(s) to school or child care _____

Toddler and above

9. My kid(s) are safe to play in my neighbourhood _____

10. There are places for my kids to play at **(this program)** _____

12. **(This program)** has helped me get my child into school _____

School age and above

15. My kid(s) can get help with schoolwork _____

16. My kid(s) have mentors through **(this program)** _____

18. My kid(s) have access to parks and other community resources _____