Gap Analysis of Research Literature on Issues Related to Street-Involved Youth

Prepared by CS/RESORS Consulting Ltd. for
Research and Statistics Division
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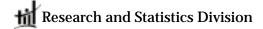**Research and Statistics Division
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Canada

GAP ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH LITERATURE ON ISSUES RELATED TO STREET-INVOLVED YOUTH

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Preface

In March 2000, the Deputy Minister and Attorney General of Canada hosted a one-day symposium on access to justice, titled *Expanding Horizons: Rethinking Access to Justice in Canada.* The purpose of the Symposium was to explore new directions and identify emerging challenges for assuring access to justice for Canadians in an increasingly complex and demanding environment. Approximately 100 people from across the country attended the Symposium, including members of the judiciary, representatives from the Law Commission, officials from the highest ranks of the police, justice service practitioners, and leading thinkers from outside the justice domain.

The symposium left all participants with one resounding message, quite remarkably, from a large group of leading thinkers from within the justice system and from other areas of human endeavor. The key message was not so much that the justice system – both civil and criminal justice, but especially the criminal justice system – does not work. On that issue there *was* overwhelming agreement. The truly surprising message that emanated forcefully from this conversation was that there is a tremendous appetite for change among leaders from both inside and outside the justice system.

The Symposium did not produce a recipe for change, however it produced a strong endorsement for experimentation – and to get on with the job of exploring options for change forthwith – and a set of themes that can act as guideposts toward innovative and more accessible forms of justice. Some of the symposium findings included access to the justice system is not access to (social) justice, providing justice is contingent upon recognizing diversity and diverse needs (one size does not fit all), and considerable support for community-based and holistic justice-related programs and initiatives.

This report is part of the Research and Statistics Division's on-going commitment to further explore the results of the Deputy Minister's symposium on access to justice and identify key issues that relate to this important policy area. One area of examination is access to (social) justice for street involved youth. Access to justice barriers for this population include much more than access to the formal legal system (e.g. access to housing, education, employment and health services). To help understand the various "access" issues experienced by street involved youth, the Division commissioned a review of the literature in this area to examine the state of knowledge and research needs. The results of this report will assist the Division and other interested partners in identifying possible research projects on street-involved youth.

About the Author

CS/RESORS Consulting is an established social policy research and program evaluation company with a main office in Vancouver and associates in Ottawa and Montréal. The team of highly experienced professionals provides a nation-wide research capability in both official languages (as well as in Cantonese, in our Vancouver office). CS/RESORS staff and associates combine over five decades of experience using the most effective methodologies. Extensive research and project management in government settings, long experience with community organizations and their policy concerns, strong academic background, and a highly professional, consultative style of client service - these qualities characterize the team and the performance of CS/RESORS Consulting Ltd. CS/RESORS Consulting has completed several justice-related projects, including research and evaluation in the areas of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, violence against women and corrections.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A survey was conducted of research materials published since 1990 dealing with background, experiences, behaviours and programming needs of street-involved youth in Canada. The goals of the literature review were: 1) to identify key characteristics of street-involved youth; 2) to explore how these characteristics are transected by factors of familial background and the conditions and experiences of street life in such a way as to create a constellation of risks for young people who spend significant amounts of time on the street; 3) to examine the range of research methodologies used in these studies of street youth; 4) to briefly examine programmatic responses to their service needs; and 5) to identify gaps in research that, if appropriately addressed, could contribute significantly to a better understanding of this phenomenon and to the development of more effective programmatic responses.

A variety of web- and print-based resources were examined, including academic sources and publications of federal, provincial and municipal governments and community organizations. A substantial bibliography was compiled, focussing on Canadian sources but including American ones of particular relevance.

Appendices include an annotated bibliography consisting of 22 publications considered by the authors to be key research documents on street-involved youth; and a comprehensive bibliography of 189 sources published since 1990, which were identified and surveyed for this review.

There is a substantial amount of current material on Canadian street youth, but the gaps in research are considerable, both in terms of subject matter, and size or scope of studies. The field is characterized by highly localized, case study research, often having the benefit of an ethnographic approach, which typically allow the youth to give their personal accounts of living circumstances and service needs. Along with the gaps in specific subject matter, there is a lack of large-scale research that would allow a more complete view of the street youth situation. Nor are there enough localized case studies having methodologies that are sufficiently comparable to allow aggregation of findings across regions or nationally. The research gaps are listed below, rather than the descriptive findings from the studies reviewed, because of the potential value of

this review for the development of research frameworks in future. The gaps the authors feel should be addressed are as follows (in no particular order of priority):

- Antecedent family physical and sexual abuse: analysis by gender and Aboriginal ancestry.

- Youths' decision-making patterns related to finding employment and budgeting or managing income, cross-referenced to age, gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

- A systematic study of housing: including an assessment of conditions in youth shelters, including hostels, and the development of models for appropriate youth-centred multi-stage housing.

- Links between mental illness in street-involved youth and age, gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

- Attitudes and beliefs of street-involved youth with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention programming available; cross-referenced with age, gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

- Youth needs for a range of information about survival basics such as housing, access to medical services, other programming; and what types of communication media are most likely to be effective.

- Identification of culturally appropriate programming that could be used in health care and social service centres for Aboriginal street youth.

- In-depth analysis of the reproductive health of female street-involved youth, addressing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perceptions about conception, pregnancy rates, birth control practices, strategies for coping with pregnancy, self-care during pregnancy, care of infants.

- Study of the formation of two-parent or extended family units among heterosexual couples, same-sex couples, or fictive kin among Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, heterosexual, lesbian, gay male and bisexual street youth – developed as a coping mechanism.

- Investigation of the role of racism in the experiences of street youth – whether internalized attitudes, or the attitudes and behaviours of peers, service providers, the justice system, educational system – or other key players in the life of street youth.

- Study of street-involved youth of Asian, Hispanic or other ethnic origins, to determine their participation in this life, antecedents, possible programming strategies that would be culturally appropriate and more likely to be effective.

- Study of impacts of internalized and externally-located homophobia upon street-involved youth.

- In-depth study of street-involved youth with disabilities – incidence, types, impacts on life on the street, potential programming to assist these youth.

- In-depth "meta-analysis" of programmatic responses already in existence for street youth in general and/or particular sub-groups (age groups, ethno-cultural, females, gay/lesbian/bi-sexual/transgendered), drawing on evaluation research findings for the programs.

- In-depth "meta-analysis" of methodologies used that most incorporate youth, but which still utilize accepted standards of methodological rigour.

Gap Analysis of Research Literature on Issues Related to Street-Involved Youth

By CS/RESORS Consulting, Ltd.

1.0   Introduction

Street youth have been the subject of a number of studies and related policy discussions, but a review of the literature from 1990 on reveals appreciable gaps in coverage of certain important issues.[1] The primary intent of this review is two-fold: 1) to explore relationships between key background variables of youth and their experience on the street and 2) to identify gaps in the literature that may be considered in the planning of future research. Secondarily, the review is to examine research methodologies that may offer promise for a youth-focused research strategy in future and to review programmatic responses to the needs of street youth. In all cases, the emphasis is on Canadian studies, but where they are particularly relevant or illuminating, findings from other locations will be noted.

For the purposes of this study, the key background characteristics of street-involved youth are: by antecedent family background, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. These are then reflected against factors such as: terms of conditions and experiences of street sub-culture, including poverty, hunger, insecure shelter, poor health, and forms of victimization such as racism and homophobia. These complex conditions – background and day-to-day living –

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[1] Research sources for this survey have been identified and listed using such Internet search tools as EBSCOHost Academic Search, CARL, and Medline, database including Humanities and Social Science Index, Social Work Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and First Nations Periodical Index, and website search engines such as Google. As well, federal and provincial government websites and some print indexes of periodicals were searched. Finally, print bibliographies in books and articles discovered through other means were scanned for additional titles.

Key search terms such as street-involved youth, street youth/gay/female, youth-at-risk, homeless youth, and adolescent runaways/throwaway were used to narrow the searches. Both Canadian and American references have been included, although titles relating to specific local programs in the United States have been excluded. Titles that

combine to create conditions for street-involved youth that make them particularly vulnerable to violence.

2.0   Antecedent Family Background

The majority of sources surveyed describe virtually identical features for antecedent, or family backgrounds of homeless adolescents in both Canada and the United States: poverty, neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse by one or both parents, parental alcohol and/or drug abuse, parental involvement in and conviction for criminal behaviour, and generally conflicted and destructive home environments (see Canadian sources: Baron 1999; Brannigan and Caputo 1993; Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994; Hagan and McCarthy 1994; McCarthy 1995; McCreary Society 2001; Weber 1991; and United States sources: Busen and Beach 1997; Clatts *et al.* 1999, 1998; Fitzgerald 1995; Kaufman and Widom; Kipke, Palmer *et al.*;; Rotheram-Borus, Mahler et al. 1996; Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Ackley 1999).

Fitzgerald (1995:718) remarks that the lives of street-involved and homeless youths (in the US) "…reflect the long-term and continuing effects of unsupportive, damaging backgrounds." McCarthy's (1995:47) Canadian data also demonstrate that, compared with youth in stable family backgrounds, youth who live on the street have "…disproportionately higher levels of family physical and sexual abuse …[and] parents …[with] substance abuse problems." As well, a study of Toronto street youth in substance abuse treatment refers to antecedent sexual abuse as a characteristic of survey respondents (Smart and Ogborne 1994:739). In a more recent study, Whitbeck, Hoyt, and Ackley's (1997:526) comment that "the family portraits that emerge …involve troubled family relationships often characterized by sexual exploitation, mutual aggression, and violence" is confirming of other findings.

seemed to refer only to street prostitution were omitted.

2.1   Background and Gender

In that street-involved youth are vulnerable to victimization through prostitution, and that it is generally accepted that the majority of those engaged in prostitution are females, it is interesting that so few studies reviewed have a gender analysis of street youth. Although Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly comment that 25% of Ottawa youth (1994:30) reported physical or sexual abuse and 18.3% of Saskatoon youth (1994:30) reported being "abused in some way" as a reason for leaving home, unfortunately no further analysis by type of abuse or by gender is provided. In a study of child prostitutes in Vancouver, Webber (1991:98) notes that 80% of the girls and 17% of the boys had been sexually abused at home. But child prostitutes are further along the trajectory of vulnerability and exploitation than are the street youth that form the subject of this review. A number of American studies (*e.g.*, Rotheram-Borus, Mahler, *et al.* 1996; Terrell 1997; Whitbeck and Simons 1990) indicate that adolescent females living on the street are considerably more likely to have experienced sexual abuse at home. But this gender breakdown of findings remains the exception rather than the rule.

2.2   Background and Sexual Orientation

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth report homophobic reactions and homophobic victimization and violence at home and in school (Hunter 1990:299; Kruks 1991:516; Sullivan 1996:59). Sullivan, in his San Francisco study (1996:59), observes "…many gay and bisexual youths become 'throw-away' children, ejected from their homes and prematurely left to their own devices."

2.3   Background and Aboriginal Ancestry

The findings on the relationships between Aboriginal street youth and their families point to the importance of considering ethnic or cultural traditions in the experience of – and response to – street-involved youth. For example, a study of Aboriginal young people on the streets in Saskatoon shows that there is not a strict boundary between home and the street. The youth may

indeed leave home, but do not appear to "run away from home" in the usual sense of this term. In fact, the youth "…remain 'connected' with family…[and] intermittently connected to institutions such as schools" (Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994a:10). Although family conflict and abusive backgrounds are mentioned (p.30) as reasons for leaving home, the Saskatoon study does not include specific information on types of abuse experienced at home by Aboriginal youth; recent anecdotal and media reports on widespread sexual abuse among Aboriginal families, often as a result of residential school experiences, suggest that a connection between this phenomenon and Aboriginal family background might be explored. The reasons why Aboriginal street youth in Saskatoon do remain connected with family and home, while non-Aboriginal youth who have been sexually abused do not, is not addressed anywhere in the literature.

In reference to service use, there is consistent documentation of a lack of culturally sensitive services and resources for Aboriginal youth involved in street life (e.g., Caputo, Weiler and Kelly 1994a:11). Research that takes into account cultural differences in relationships with families would be informative for the development of services that would be more culturally appropriate and hence, it is assumed, more effective.

3.0   Conditions and Experiences of Street Life

A constellation of factors contributes to the harshness and instability of the day-to-day life of street-involved youth. In the following discussion we review the extent to which poverty in street youth, as indicated by lack of employment and financial resources and a lack of shelter and food, is dealt with in the literature. Findings on situational factors such as problems of poor health, racism, homophobia, and other forms of victimization will follow. Where possible, the impact of these factors on street-involved youth will be examined in terms of gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

3.1   Poverty

Numerous studies (e.g., Baron 1999; Brannigan and Caputo 1993; Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994a, 1994b; Fitzgerald 1995; McCarthy 1995; McCarthy and Hagan 1992; Webber 1991) refer to the poverty of youth involved with the street. For example, McCarthy notes that once on the street, most Vancouver youth spend much of their time searching for food, shelter, and employment. Unfortunately, these searches are often unsuccessful and a majority of street youth frequently go hungry and sleep in unsafe places. These experiences left many of these youth "shaken and scared…" (McCarthy, (1995:47).

Webber (1991:14) describes this economic deprivation in vivid terms:

> *Life on the streets is a scavenger's existence, a restless hunt for cash or for anything that can be converted into cash or a bed or a meal or drugs to sustain the hunter for one more day…First snow does not signal time to take goose-down parkas to the dry cleaner. It triggers fear: of numbing cold, of constant fatigue because it is too risky to allow yourself to sleep in a frost.* (1991:14)

3.1.1   Income and Unemployment

No Canadian or American studies were discovered that provide a systematic, in-depth analysis of how street-involved youth acquire income, find employment, and budget or use the income they do acquire. (Given this gap, it is to be expected that there is little analysis in terms of gender, sexual orientation, or Aboriginal ancestry.) What we do find are descriptions of a chaotic daily life, lived in conditions of extreme deprivation, but where economic factors are addressed largely in the context of the relationship to drug and alcohol use (Baron, 1999). In earlier studies, researchers locate economic factors within the context of their contribution to criminal behaviours. For instance, Baron and Hartnagel (1998:184) identify low income as "…the only consistent significant predictor across four …types of violent crime." (These four types were

robbery, aggravated assault, group fights, and simple assault.) (See also, Baron and Hartnagel,1998 and McCarthy and Hagan,1992)

In a study of Ottawa street youth, only 15.4% of responding street youth told Caputo *et al.* (1994b:32) that lack of money was the most important problem they faced. However, in their discussion of employment opportunities for young people on the street in Ottawa, the same research team predicts that given the lack of education, marketable skills, and the fact of having a lifestyle conducive to steady employment, "…most runaways and street youth will never experience a career in the conventional sense. Most will move between low-paying marginal jobs in the service sector and living on some form of social assistance" (1994a:17).

In a 1995 study of youth on the streets in Vancouver, McCarthy (p.23) identifies panhandling, social assistance, and crime as the three major sources of their income, although he also describes other employment in low-skill, service occupations that typically hire adolescents. These include food services, janitorial, and retail sales work. He also mentions some employment in certain occupational areas that are less typical for adolescents, such as trades and clerical work. Respondents stated that they had received social assistance at least once during their time on the street. Seventy-five percent of the youth interviewed said that they had engaged in panhandling, but for most this was a very modest source of funds, most street youth making "considerably less" than the $30 to $50 a day that a few reported from this source (McCarthy, 1995:24). Moreover, 80% of McCarthy's respondents had not been employed at all since they started living on the street. Webber (1991:167) states that "…most of the youngsters [she] interviewed…periodically…work for wages that cannot both feed and house them."

McCarthy and Hagan (1992:623) investigated what they termed the "foreground" factors contributing to criminal delinquency. By this they mean the conditions and situations on the street rather than in the family background. They found that unemployment, especially among

adolescent females, significantly related only to one outcome – prostitution. Other studies (e.g., Greene *et al.* 1999; Moon *et al.* 2000; Sullivan 1996) make a distinction between prostitution and "survival sex, " the selling of sex to meet subsistence needs. "It includes the exchange of sex for shelter, food, drugs, or money …[and is] among the most damaging repercussions of homelessness among youths" (Greene *et al.* 1999:1406). However, there is scant information on this source of income that compares patterns of engagement by gender or sexual orientation, other than findings that show that both male and female youth have participated in survival sex.

3.1.2   Finding Shelter

In the sources surveyed, there is considerable information about the problems street youth have of finding shelter, the types of shelter they do find, and the dangers associated with shelter. Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly's (1994c:30) case study of street-involved youth in Saskatoon states that 18.3% of respondents had "marginal living situations…in temporary shelters, with 'friends' or on the street." Nearly 40% of respondents lived with one or two parents or with other relatives, and the remainder had places of their own or were in foster care. However, as the authors point out, the explanation for the high number of youth with fairly stable living arrangements seems to be that the greatest proportion of their respondents are Aboriginal and, as noted earlier, Aboriginal street-involved youth are rarely made to leave by parents or relatives, nor once on the street do they tend to sever ties with families. This situation is not generally found among non-Aboriginal street youth. On the other hand, the researchers were told that, among street-involved Aboriginal youth, "living with parents or relatives may mean little more than having a place to sleep" and that young people of First Nations ancestry were apparently as likely as non-Aboriginal to find staying at home "intolerable." The authors report that the service providers in Saskatoon they interviewed interpret this pattern of moving back and forth from home to the street to other relatives as reflecting the strength of kinship ties and responsibilities among Aboriginal people. They consider this pattern to be something of an Aboriginal tradition of "camping out" rather than running away (Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994c:31). Moreover, it

is noteworthy that emergency street shelters such as the Salvation Army were rarely used by street-involved youth in this study, whether of First Nations background or not, and over 50% of all respondents said they did not know of any emergency shelter locations.

From a Vancouver study, McCarthy provides a detailed account of the places where street-involved youth seek shelter. He remarks that since there were no hostels exclusively for young people in the city at the time of the interviews, Vancouver youth spent considerable time sleeping "…on balconies, roof-tops, in doorways, hotels and a variety of other places." According to 80% of McCarthy's respondents, walking around all night was not uncommon; others spent the night in an all-night cafe, in empty cars, or in abandoned buildings where they might stay for one or two months. Parks were also utilized, though usually in the company of one or two friends, since parks were, and continue to be regarded as very unsafe locations for street youth after dark. (McCarthy, 1995:26-27).

Ayerst (1999:570) explains how searching for secure shelter can lead to negative coping strategies, when Canadian street youth "…commonly take amphetamines or other 'uppers' in order to stay awake throughout the night so that they are not 'jumped' (attacked or robbed) while sleeping." Smart and Walsh (1993:51-52) make a similar statement, concluding that the amount of time that street youth spend in hostels is strongly associated with depression, since street-involved youth with particularly low self-esteem may be "…less able to cope with the problem of accommodations and more often [may] require hostels…which are sometimes dirty, noisy, dangerous, and overcrowded," thus deepening their depression. Webber's (1991:140) interview with one street youth prompts her to comment that "hostels seem to be particularly dangerous places to sleep: 'It's the kind of place where tempers flare up…You got to sleep wearing your clothes, or on top of all your possessions, or they get stolen'." Webber (1991:159) views hostels as "decrepit storehouses of misery. At one level, they provide relief from distress. At another level, they serve as a penalty for failure."

Our search of the literature did not locate any studies focusing on an assessment of the appropriateness of shelters such as hostels for street youth. However, McCarthy and Hagan emphasize that problems of inadequate shelter and attempts to find shelter are clearly contributing factors to youth turning to serious theft and to prostitution for sheer survival (1992:597).

3.1.3   Finding Food

McCarthy and Hagan (1992:614) find a strong association between street youths' search for shelter and food and involvement with street crime. Moreover, they note that "…hunger alone has a substantial and statistically significant effect on theft of food" from stores on the street. In his 1995 study of street-involved youth in Vancouver, McCarthy refers to hunger again, noting that 75% of street youth "…said they had gone a full day without eating 'a few times' or 'often'." Though youth could at times obtain food from social service agencies, they frequently scavenged food from garbage dumpsters, and 80% admitted to stealing food (1995:25).

Antoniades and Tarasuk explore the problems of hunger and of obtaining food in greater detail. They interviewed a sample of 88 street youth, consisting of 49 males and 39 females, about "food acquisition practices, food-related concerns, and perceived barriers to food sufficiency" (1998:371). They found, for example, that "youth who were living on the street or in a 'squat', and those whose major source of income was squeegeeing or panhandling, appeared most vulnerable to food deprivation" (1998: 373). The authors attribute the vulnerability to hunger of this group of street youth to the fact that they had the least contact with family or friends who might feed them. Antoniades and Tarasuk also asked youth who reported problems getting enough food to eat what would be required to help them to eat better. Most respondents answered that adequate income, access to cooking facilities, and stable housing were essential, "…but several youth also noted that improved access to and service at charitable food programs

would be of help" (1998:373-4). However, Webber states that street youth characterize this food source as "charity food" and as being "…poor food …heavy on starches and sugars…and light on protein, minerals, and vitamins." Street youth told her that wherever possible, they avoided food from food banks and instead made "…'burger runs' from behind …[fast food restaurants] that discard food after it has staled under heat lamps" and she concludes that, overall, street kids eat "rarely and poorly" (Webber, 1991:161).

The Antoniades and Tarasuk study is also noteworthy because five young women in the sample were either pregnant or breastfeeding. Interestingly, none of the five reported experiencing severe food deprivation and with just one of the respondents indicating that she had gone hungry during this time (Antoniades and Tarasuk 1998:373).

Overall, from the sources reviewed which discussed the issue of food and street youth, there did not seem to be any significant gender differences in access to food, and the authors do not mention ethnic or racial background of the respondents.

3.2   Health Problems

Determining the health status of street-involved youth is a complex and wide-ranging task. Both physical and emotional health problems are investigated in the literature. Hwang (2001) chronicles a host of physical health problems afflicting street adults and youth in Canada, including the risk of HIV/AIDS infection, other STDs (especially *gonorrhea* and *chlamydia*), Hepatitis B viral infection, substance abuse and addiction, asthma, tuberculosis and other respiratory infections, anaemia, vitamin deficiencies and other nutritional problems, skin infections and infestations, dental, and foot problems. Emotional or mental problems are also prevalent among street-involved young people and include depression and suicidal tendencies, personality disorders such as obsessive-compulsive behaviours, and psychoses such as schizophrenia (Busen and Beech 1997:317).

In addition, street-involved young people are prone to injuries and death from accidents and violent attacks, suicide, and disease. According to Roy, Boivin, *et al.* (1998:32), the mortality rate among street youth in Montreal is "strikingly high" when compared to that of youth living in stable family situations.

One aspect of the health of street-involved youth that does not appear to have been a subject of interest in any of the research materials investigated is that of street youth with disabilities. Why this should be is not clear, but it does seem likely that it is a reflection of the more general social invisibility of persons of disabilities. This would be an obvious subject for future research, as we will note again later, and which should include both visible and invisible disabilities. Learning disabilities and Fetal Alcohol/Narcotics Syndrome/Effect would be prime examples of the latter.

The alarmingly high incidence of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B viral infections among street-involved youth as a whole in Canada is well-documented and linked to "…the high incidence of sexual abuse reported by runaway and homeless girls prior to leaving home" (Athey 1991:520), high-risk sexual behavior (e.g., Brannigan and Caputo 1993; Hwang 2001; Roy, Lemire, *et al.* 1998; Sullivan 1996) such as unprotected sex with multiple sex partners, particularly among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, and to injection drug use (Haley *et al.* 1998; Hwang 2001; Roy, Lemire, *et al.* 1998). However, there is apparently very little research dealing with these infections among Aboriginal street-involved youth. Given their relative over-representation among street youth, and the particular health risks to which Aboriginal groups are exposed, this is a decided research deficit.

Substance abuse as a risk factor in the lives of street-involved youth in Canada has been investigated by several authors (e.g., Baron and Hartnagel 1998; Brannigan and Caputo 1993; Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994b, 1994c; Fitzgerald 1995; Hwang 2001; Webber 1991). What is

of interest is that all of these studies stress that alcohol and drug use is part of a cluster of interrelated factors that contribute both to health problems among young people and also to such problematic behaviors as criminal activity and violence. Baron and Hartnagel, however, caution that although simple assault is linked to recreational alcohol use, this form of violence is also a product of "…association with criminal peers and the stresses of poverty" (1999:185).

Substance abuse is reported as a frequently used means of coping with the array of painful and stressful experiences faced by street-involved youth (Fitzgerald 1995:722). Most would agree with Webber (1991:225) that:

> *More than typical adolescents, street kids are beset with oppressive problems, both those they bring from home and those they acquire on the street. They have more than the average need to escape. Killing the pain of their existence…is the most compelling lure drugs offer. Addictions develop naturally out of the vulgar business of living in the street because some kids can cope with what is being done to their bodies only by being out of their minds. Drugs offer …illusion. (Webber, 1991:225)*

The mental and physical health outcomes of such escape strategies are often life threatening. Depression, suicidal tendencies, and other forms of mental illness associated with drug and alcohol abuse are noted by Hwang (2001:231), although in their study of Toronto street youth, Smart and Walsh (1993:51) maintain that "the best indicators of current depression…were [low] self-esteem and amount of time spent in hostels." The health risks of injection drugs, specifically HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B viral infections, are well documented for youth (e.g. Haley, Roy, *et al.* 1998; Roy, Haley, *et al.* 1999). In addition to disease morbidity and mortality, alcohol and drug use are also part of a spiral of problems related to criminal activity, violence and the very real possibility of early death (Baron and Hartnagel 1998; Hwang 2001; Roy, Lemire, *et al.* 1998).

The prevalence of depression among street-involved youth is the subject of at least two recent Canadian studies (Ayerst 1990; Smart and Walsh 1993). Both studies link the deeper levels of depression among homeless youth to low self-esteem and such stressors as insecure and potentially violent sleeping places such as hostels and the lack of a stable support network. For example, Crowe and Hardill's (1993:21) survey found that in a one-year period in Toronto, 21% of homeless women were sexually assaulted. While the study did not distinguish victims by age, this finding shows clearly the hazard to the mental and physical well being of young women. The reality of sexual assault may well be one of the sources of depression among young women who are street-involved. This remains to be studied, however.

As well, there are no full-scale studies investigating how depression among street-involved youth may be linked to gender, Aboriginal ancestry, or sexual orientation.

There is a very interesting study conducted by a medical anthropologist that examines attitudes and ideas held by American street-involved youth about HIV/AIDS information distributed to them (Sobo *et al.*,1997). Results indicate a high degree of skepticism and misunderstanding, especially among female and African-American street youth, toward the advice of AIDS experts. These findings led the researchers to question the effectiveness of the preventive material distributed to street-involved youth. Their findings suggest it would be fruitful to undertake a full-scale, ethnographically-based study in Canada involving extensive participant observation among street youth, in order to learn what kinds of HIV/AIDS educational materials would be more culturally sensitive and more likely to be accepted and heeded by high-risk street-involved youth. No further analysis was undertaken to determine if there are differences in degrees of acceptance or rejection of similar education materials based on gender, sexual orientation, or Aboriginal or other ethnic or cultural groupings.

Health care services for street-involved youth in Vancouver, Saskatoon and Ottawa have been studied. Chand and Thompson (1997:16, 18, 20) note the need for expanded drug and alcohol treatment facilities and programs, for enhanced mental health services, and for medical and dental clinics located close to areas where street youth spend their days. They observe, further, that one of the major obstacles to taking advantage of existing medical facilities is that street-involved youth are confused about their eligibility for medical coverage (1997:19). Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly (1994c:22) in their study of street-involved youth in Saskatoon state that health care services for Aboriginal youth in that city are not culturally sensitive and do not incorporate Aboriginal healing traditions. Additional research may be warranted in other Canadian cities to determine if this is a problem elsewhere, and to identify approaches to healing that would be appropriate for street-involved Aboriginal youth.

Furthermore, reproductive health of young women involved in street life is a concern. There has been no systematic study of pregnancy rates in this population, but according to Hwang "anecdotal reports suggest that pregnancy is common among street youth in Canada; in a recent study in the United States, 10% of homeless females aged 14-17 years were found to be pregnant" (2001:231). Fitzgerald (1995:718) refers to homeless youth in Canada as "…a new class of 'untouchables'…who are functionally illiterate, disconnected from school, depressed, prone to drug use and early criminal activity, and eventually, *parents of unplanned and unwanted babies*" (italics added). Greene and Ringwalt's (1998:370) comparison of lifetime pregnancy rates among three cohorts of homeless youth in the United States reports that youth living on the street had lifetime pregnancy rates that were four times that of young women living in stable households.

Greene and Ringwalt offer several explanations for the alarmingly high rates: antecedent sexual abuse in the home, which may have resulted in pregnancy; multiple sex partners; survival sex practices/prostitution; inability to afford effective contraceptives; vulnerability to sexual assault;

and limited access to or use of medical and family planning services. They (1998:375) also state that pregnancies among street-involved adolescents may be either under-reported, if young women did not know they were pregnant or were reluctant to admit to pregnancy, or over-reported, if they were malnourished and underweight, using drugs, or suffering stress which was misinterpreted by the young woman as menstrual periods missed due to pregnancy. The researchers conclude with a discussion of policy recommendations directed at street-involved youth. These include the development of pregnancy prevention and safe sex programs, condom distribution, prenatal services close to centres where homeless youth live, infant care education projects, and independent living and job training programs for female street youth with infants (Greene and Ringwalt, 1998:376).

Chand and Thompson (1997:21,31) also recommend child-care subsidies as part of educational programs for street youth and parent support programs for young parents who are street-involved. They also suggest that street-involved youth who are parents should be consulted in the design, development, staffing and delivery of child-care services. However, it should be noted that a pilot study undertaken by Goldman (1988:1041) among 50 Toronto street-involved youth found that almost half of the teenage girls believed themselves to be at little or no risk of becoming pregnant, even though there had been eight pregnancies in the group. Only one-third of the girls used a reliable, regular method of birth control. The denial also applied to sexually transmitted diseases.

This pattern of "misconception" that clearly leads to actual conception would seem to parallel the findings of Sobo *et al.* (1997) regarding AIDS misconceptions among runaway adolescents. It warrants further study. Moreover, not only has there been no in-depth study of pregnancy rates among street-involved young women, but there appears to be a glaring gap in research about how homeless and street-involved adolescent females, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, attempt to prevent pregnancy, cope with pregnancy, care for themselves during pregnancy, and ultimately

care for and cope with their infants. Moreover, little is known of attempts to establish two-parent or "extended" street families, whether based on heterosexual couples, same-sex couples, or fictive kin ties.

3.3   Victimization

Street youth are often at risk of many kinds of victimization. These include the negative effects of racism, homophobia, and various forms of harassment as well as direct violence. It is not uncommon for street youth to be victimized by other street youth. In the next sections (3.3.1 – 3.3.4) we discuss in more detail several complicating factors related to victimization of street youth – racism, homophobia, self-destructiveness, and criminal activities.

3.3.1   Experiences with Racism

There is very little in the literature on the subject of racism in the sub-culture of Canadian street-involved youth. Though there may be youth of various racial backgrounds on the street, the most evident and numerically over-represented group is Aboriginal youth. Yet, Aboriginal street-involved youth are discussed at length in only one study located for this review (Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994c). A substantial minority (20%) of Aboriginal respondents engaged in street life claimed that Saskatoon police were "racist" (Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994c:33). Responses from the youth and from Aboriginal community leaders show that they perceive the racism directed at Aboriginal peoples to be systemic and institutional, and thus they call for responses at that level. For example, the leaders called for greater involvement of the Aboriginal community in the design, development, and delivery of services to street-involved youth and in "…increasing sensitization to Aboriginal interests within the existing system [of youth justice]" (pp. 44-45).

The call for increased numbers of Aboriginal law enforcement officers within the Saskatoon Police Department to deal with Aboriginal street youth and for Aboriginal advisory groups for various components of the justice system confirm the Aboriginal view on the structural and

institutional nature of racism. All of the recommendations emerging from the Saskatoon Case Study focus on the need for more culturally sensitive youth services in order:

> *…to recognize the historical realities of …[Aboriginal] young people and their families, the increased challenges now confronting urban Aboriginal people and those measures which are effective in identifying individual, family and community growth among Aboriginal people* (Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994c:38-45).

A second study that touches upon the issue of racism on the streets in Canada is Baron's (1997) analysis of male street skinheads in Edmonton who are perceived as "…extreme racists who violently victimize racial, ethnic and sexual minorities" (Baron, 125). Baron points out that there are contradictory interpretations and portrayals of skinhead groups, and that much of the available research on skinheads comes from journalists, special-interest groups, and law enforcement agencies whose works may reflect bias and "…lack the rigour required for social science research" (Baron, 1997:126). His research concludes that "violence between (a) skinhead(s) and a member of a racial minority was quite rare, although not unheard of," in part because other than First Nations street youth, "…there were few visible-minority youths available to victimize." He goes on to state that, in Edmonton, "…Natives tended to be headbangers, the dominant subcultural group in the area," and that, as a result, they are subject to only "minimal victimization" (Baron, 1998: 142). While Hunter (1990:295) points out that "minority youths [Black and Latino]…are at a greater risk of violent and frequent discriminatory behaviour than are White youths" in the United States, and there are numerous other studies of racism among American street-involved youth, no Canadian sources were unearthed for this review that focus on street-involved youth from non-Aboriginal but other racial groups, such as Asian or Hispanic youths. In fact, the extent to which members of ethnic minorities other than Aboriginal are involved in any aspect of street sub-culture in Canadian cities is not well documented. (Yet in a city like Vancouver, there is frequent media discussion of "Asian youth

gangs" or "Latin youth dealing drugs" and there have been social programs – some years ago – addressed to "Asian youth at risk of conflict with the law."[2])

3.3.2   Homophobia

The negative effects of homophobia in the antecedent family backgrounds of gay, lesbian and bisexual street-involved youth have been noted earlier in this review. Our attempts to find Canadian studies of instances of homophobia as experienced by gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth on the street, were not fruitful. There appears to be no study of this topic.

Given that this topic has not been explored in Canadian research, brief mention will be made of a few American studies that could be useful in considering future research in Canada on this topic. Homophobia in the United States takes a variety of forms, from verbal harassment to violent assaults. For example, of those youth interviewed by Hunter (1990:297) who reported violent physical assaults, 46% claimed that the assaults were gay-related. Hunter (p. 299) suggests that homophobic emotional and verbal abuse is probably even more common and concludes that violent homophobic attacks seem to be linked to the frequent suicide attempts among lesbians and gay males in her study. Kruks states that anti-gay prejudice, discrimination, and homophobia are "rampant" in modern American society and contribute to a multiplicity of problems for homeless and runaway gay males and lesbians, including increased incidence of attempted suicide and a sense of isolation. He suggests that since it is often on the streets that gay and lesbian youth first experience peer acceptance and support, these very experiences make it more difficult for them to leave street life (Kruks 1991:515-517).

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[2] . One of the authors of this study conducted an evaluation of such a program, nearly a decade ago (Stephenson, CS/RESORS Consulting, for HRDC, the program funder).

Berrill's (1990:282) study of anti-gay violence and victimization among adults observes that anti-lesbian behavior may be difficult to distinguish from more general violence against women, particularly if there is no "…explicit verbal indication" by assailants. He cites a chilling observation made by one lesbian activist that:

> *Like other women, lesbians are so conditioned to expect violence in their lives because of their gender, so trained to accept the threat of violence, that when they are assaulted it may not even occur to them to question why it occurred.*

The implications of these findings for very young, street-involved women call for further investigation.

3.3.3   Self-destructiveness as Victimization

In their efforts to categorize youth violence, Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly (1994b:103) identify "…a wide range of behaviours or actions (verbal, psychological or physical) which result in harm, intimidation or threats to others." They add that "self destructive behaviour should be considered…as violence that is turned inward." Ayerst (1999:573) lists a variety of forms of self-victimization, including "…scraping, cutting, head banging, burning, and reopening old wounds" as common outlets and coping strategies for street-involved youth with "…stressful, conflict-ridden family backgrounds."

3.3.4   Criminal Activities as Victimization

Another type of victimization characteristic of the experiences of street youth is involvement in criminal activities. This very serious form of street victimization affects young people both as its direct victims and its perpetrators. Baron and Hartnagel's (1999:185) findings, for example, reveal that involvement with criminal activities among peers increases the propensity for youth violence. Baron (1999:7) also points to research that indicates "…high-frequency drug users on

the street are heavily involved in property crime, violent crime, and drug trafficking." Baron (1999:19) concludes:

> *…homeless youths tend to come to the streets with backgrounds that promote drug and alcohol use. However, once on the street, their risk for drug and alcohol use is exacerbated by their street experiences, including cultural supports for substance use, drug-using peers, and involvement in a criminal lifestyle that finances heavy drug and alcohol use.*

McCarthy and Hagan's (1992:614) analysis of crime causation among street-involved youth in Toronto relates occurrence of crime to hunger and the need for shelter and does provide gender analysis that links males to theft and females to the sex trade. They summarize the connection: "…there is consistent evidence that hunger causes theft of food, problems of hunger and shelter lead to serious theft, and problems of unemployment and shelter produce prostitution" (1996:597). McCarthy provides evidence from interviews collected from street-involved youth in Vancouver that criminal activities such as drug use, occasional drug sales, theft, burglary and violence are "…an integral part of living on the street" and that their prevalence increases with prolonged exposure to the street (McCarthy, 1995:32).

4.0   A Vulnerable Population

This survey of antecedent family background, and the interrelatedness of the effects of poverty, health and types of victimization among street-involved youth clearly shows how these factors intersect to make street-involved youth vulnerable to serious violence. The potential and actual violence emanating from life on the street is all encompassing. Street-involved youth frequently find themselves in extremely risky situations as they try to find ways to survive, eat, sustain their substance abuse, and sleep in a safe place. Their situation can be complicated and exacerbated by factors such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. They become, as Brannigan and Caputo (1993:96) remark, subjects of research interest and of control. This control is seen as crucial

because the general public comes to view their disheveled and unkempt appearance and their unpredictable behavior as dangerous, as potentially violent. At the same time, because they are young people outside the reach of caring adults, they are decidedly vulnerable to the violence of the streets where they live.

And above all, speaking as the authors of this review, it must be remembered that these are *youth,* which by definition means individuals who have not reached adult levels of cognitive development or mature levels of judgement. They may want to be "grown-ups," and they certainly face challenges that the majority of adults have never faced. However, street-involved youth are by virtue of their age particularly ill-equipped to overcome the stark nature of their present life – while carrying the burdens that most research shows they carry from the untenable home life from which they are fleeing.

4.1   Research Methodologies

This section will briefly describe the key research methodologies using some of the sources included in the annotated section of the bibliography. A number of the researchers made significant efforts to include the direct reporting by street youth of their experiences and views of what kinds of programming would be of use to them for leaving the street. The studies tended to focus on attempting to develop definitions of street youth and typologies of the youth themselves and the kinds of circumstances and activities that made up their day-to-day lives.

Of particular interest is Brannigan and Caputo's (1993) research design for the Runaways and Street Youth Project conducted in Ottawa and Saskatoon by Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly (1994b, 1994c). The research design was the product of attempts to conceptualize street involved youth in such away that the multidimensional nature of this "varied and highly mobile" (Brannigan and Caputo 1993:3) population could be reflected with clarity. Characteristics of the target population meant that a classification scheme could not be developed with mutually exclusive

conceptual categories. For example, young people of different ages might be involved in overlapping or "…very different types of behaviour" (p.3). Even making a decision about what "…age range to include in a viable definition of runaways and street youth" (p.5) was problematic, since the literature on street-involved youth has included youngsters from their pre-teens to individuals in their late 20s and even early 30s. The problem of age range is compounded by variable legal definitions of youth used by various community, provincial and federal jurisdictions.

Brannigan and Caputo (p.6) note two other problems in research design and methodology. First, returning to the challenges of the age range of youth, comparisons of the actions of two individuals as much as eight years apart in age presents substantial difficulties for analysis. They (p.6) ask, "how can questions of responsibility, choice or intent be decided for individuals in such very different stages of their lives and with such different amounts of power and resources at their disposal?"

The second problem relates to the "fluid and mobile nature of the street population [which] makes estimates of its size and composition virtually impossible" (p.6).

Without a single, accepted and appropriate definition of runaways and street youth, the authors (1993:53, Fig.1) attempted to construct a "schematic overview" that took into account the relationship among types of street youth, antecedents, consequences and institutional responses and services. The authors (p.54) point out that "…this schematic overview can do little more than highlight the complexity of the problem of …runaways and street youth."

One of Brannigan and Caputo's (1993:103, Fig.2) schematic models is utilized in Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly's (1994c) analysis of "…[Saskatoon's] response to runaways and street youth." The study uses the two major, intersecting dimensions of this schematic model to characterize

four groups of youth according to, first, the amount of time that young people spend on the street, from only occasionally to most of their time, and second, degree of involvement in conventional activities or in dangerous and risky street activities. The primary methodology for this study involved interviews with staff in a variety of youth service agencies, with a wide range of young people either associated with the street or in high school, and with representatives of community groups. The interviews addressed the characteristics of the street-involved population, the operation of various aspects of the social system that involved interaction with street youth, and the operations of the youth service system as a whole (Caputo, Weiler, and Kelly 1994c:1).

Community and youth participation were essential components of the project, and community groups were consulted about problems facing runaways and street youth. Notable features of the methodology included, first, a youth conference where young people from various parts of the community came together to consider and discuss issues arising from the community consultation, and second, a "delphi conference" (p.10), involving representatives from agency and community groups and young people who met to discuss the results of the research project and to plan future strategies.

The research team associated with the Runaways and Street Youth Project used an ethnographic approach to interviewing, and this same qualitative approach is used by Sobo *et al.* (1997) in their study of AIDS misconceptions among runaway adolescents in the United States. A similar, qualitative "phenomenological approach" is used by Kurtz *et al.* (2000) and Lindsey *et al.* (2000) in two studies designed to investigate the external and internal resources that runaway and homeless youth utilized "…to make successful transitions to adulthood." Thus, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and self-administered questionnaires are used to elicit information, personal experiences, attitudes and ideas from the respondents. The research team also used focus groups with peer educators and social service providers to obtain data.

Self-reporting instruments were also employed by McCarthy and Hagan (1992) to examine the extent to which "foreground causes" such as unemployment, hunger and food scarcity, and shelter have direct impact on criminal activities such as stealing food, serious theft, and prostitution. They employed bivariate statistical techniques to test the strength of relationships between pairs of variables.

It is worth noting that McCarthy and Hagan (1992), Moon *et al.* (2000), and Greene and Ringwalt (1998), among others, used food, food vouchers, restaurant coupons, and cash to pay respondents for interviews.

More formally structured interviews were used by Baron (1999) and Baron and Hagan (1998) in their studies of street youth in Edmonton. The interviews were administered to samples of male homeless street youth. Both studies employed a variety of criminological perspectives to examine the intersection of street subculture with substance use, in the first case, and criminal activity and violence, in the second. Both analyses employed multivariate techniques.

A very large project in the United States (Greene and Ringwalt 1998) drew upon three nationally representative surveys of female street youth to compare pregnancy rates. A "purposive sampling strategy" (p.372) was used. This entailed selection of sites in 10 American cities where high concentrations of street youth were expected. Staff of local street outreach programs and local police departments aided in the identification of locations and selection of the most appropriate times to contact street youth, but none of the surveys included data collection from the outreach staff or police.

There are no "best practices" that can be identified in the various methodologies reviewed for this study. There is a strong theme of respect for and involvement of the youth themselves, with which we as researchers can only agree. This approach is compatible with – and may to a great

degree rely upon – an ethnographic, or at least highly qualitative, research strategy. This allows for the youth's own experience to come to the fore, for them to define their fears and their strengths, the risks they undergo, the decisions they make, and their successes in overcoming obstacles. An ethnographic, highly consultative approach does not, however, preclude quantitative data and statistical analysis – if on a modest scale. That is, if a large enough number of youths can be interviewed, if enough detail of their background and current activities can be elicited, and if the research coverage is systematic and comprehensive in scope, then there are enough "cases" to allow for at least univariate and bivariate analysis. For example, length of time on the street can be compared with extent of use of drugs, or various means of getting money. [3]

5.0 Programmatic Responses To Street-Involved Youth

One of the areas of interest flagged for this study was an examination of the range of programmatic responses to assist street-involved youth. It was recognized that the scope and timing of the study would allow for a relatively modest response to this interest. However, there are two points the authors would like to make, in the hope of advancing planning for future research on this complex topic of street-involved youth.

First, any review of this topic calls for a workable typology of programmatic responses. In our view, this has been done, and done well, by Brannigan and Caputo, in their 1993 study of runaways and street youth in Canada. They point out that a workable typology must be able to have categories that are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. They developed a typology that took into account first, the length of time on the street and, second, the nature of their participation in street culture. From this framework they developed what they call a "continuum of

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[3] . We cannot refrain from mentioning a study done by one of the authors which was able to cross-tabulate such data as length of time on the street and use of drugs. It is too early for inclusion in this review, but the methodological approach was rewarding. (Stephenson, Study of Vancouver Street Youth and the Reconnect Program, 1989)

services…that encompasses a broad range of programs" (1993: 148, *passem*). The typology thus flows from:

- *Preventive programs* (information and education on risks of alcohol, various sexual practices, early school leaving, programs for the provision of condoms, needle exchanges, etc.), to

- *Crisis intervention programs* (stabilize youth in crisis, emergency healthcare, emergency safehouse shelter, etc.), to

- *Maintenance programs* to meet on-going needs of youth while on the street (money, shelter, clothing, transportation, emotional support, legal and health services, etc.), to

- *Transitional programs* to help youth leave the street (life skills training, special educational and employment programs), to

- *Incapacitation programs* aimed at protecting the youth who is most in danger to self or others, or is criminally involved and "incapacitated" through incarceration. (If these programs are "protective" they can also be seen as crisis intervention. If related to criminal behaviour, they may include rehabilitative services to assist the youth in not repeating the behaviour.)

In our own review of the literature, it seems clear that any of the programs reviewed would be fit within the appropriate segment of the Brannigan and Caputo service typology. Their typology is useful work that could be applied to future study. However, simply slotting current programs into the typology would tend to be more of an "academic" exercise than one that would be useful for research planning at departmental levels. (It might be useful at a community level however, to identify local gaps in programming that should be considered for ensuring that there is an appropriate range of services for youth.)

However, there is another issue in looking at programmatic responses that became apparent in our study. That is, there are a number of studies that describe a program, but few or none that report on the *evaluation* of it. Or rather, there may well be evaluations existing, but these are

rarely turned into articles for publication.[4] Hence, it is not possible from a standard review of the traditional literature to learn which programmatic responses offer the most hope of success, which are "best practices" in programming. A simple description of programming, or the application of a typology to programs, while useful for clear conceptualization of certain issues and systematic perception of the programmatic responses themselves, cannot advance understanding of program effectiveness.

To do this, it would be necessary to identify and collect evaluations of programs, quite possibly categorized according to the Brannigan and Caputo typology. Then there could be a "meta-analysis" of programming effectiveness. This exercise would not be without its difficulties, of course. Issues such as evaluation research quality, comparability of methodology, consistency of data, consistency of data analysis, etc. – all would have to be taken into account. However, a systematic approach to the task, recognizing that its rigor may be somewhat limited, could be of considerable value for program planning at departmental, provincial, regional, or local levels. Hence, we do suggest such an enterprise as one of the research gaps to be considered.

6.0   Research Gaps: Issues and Information

This review has identified a number of issues and straightforward gaps in information that should be considered in future to enhance understanding of the street youth phenomenon and of how best to assist such youth in leaving the street and leading a safer life over which they can have more control.

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[4] . Of course, there is a whole evaluation research literature, which could be searched for reports on street-youth programming. These reports would be of great interest, but the numbers are likely to be small. The more likely source of evaluation research reports would be the departments that funded the program/research in the first place. This can be done, though it would naturally take some digging, given the sometimes ephemeral nature of archiving such materials.

The authors thus suggest the following topics be considered for future research. Priorities and appropriate methodologies would be the subject of another discussion paper. The research gaps to be filled are thus:

6.1   Antecedent family physical and sexual abuse: analysis by gender and Aboriginal ancestry.

6.2   Youths' decision-making patterns related to finding employment and budgeting or managing income, cross-referenced to age, gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

6.3   A systematic study of housing: including an assessment of conditions in youth shelters, including hostels, and the development of models for appropriate youth-centred multi-stage housing.

6.4   Links between mental illness in street-involved youth and age, gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

6.5   Attitudes and beliefs of street-involved youth with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention programming available; cross-referenced with age, gender, sexual orientation, and Aboriginal ancestry.

6.6   Youth needs for a range of information about survival basics such as housing, access to medical services, other programming; and what types of communication media are most likely to be effective.

6.7   Identification of culturally appropriate programming that could be used in health care and social service centres for Aboriginal street youth.

6.8   In-depth analysis of the reproductive health of female street-involved youth, addressing both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perceptions about conception, pregnancy rates, birth control practices, strategies for coping with pregnancy, self-care during pregnancy, care of infants.

6.9   Study of the formation of two-parent or extended family units among heterosexual couples, same-sex couples, or fictive kin among Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, heterosexual, lesbian, gay male and bisexual street youth – developed as a coping mechanism.

6.10   Investigation of the role of racism in the experiences of street youth – whether internalized attitudes, or the attitudes and behaviours of peers, service providers, the justice system, educational system – or other key players in the life of street youth.

6.11   Study of street-involved youth of Asian, Hispanic or other ethnic origins, to determine their participation in this life, antecedents, possible programming strategies that would be culturally appropriate and more likely to be effective.

6.12   Study of impacts of internalized and externally located homophobia upon street-involved youth.

6.13   In-depth study of street-involved youth with disabilities – incidence, types, impacts on life on the street, potential programming to assist these youth.

6.14   In-depth "meta-analysis" of programmatic responses already in existence for street youth in general and/or particular sub-groups (age groups, ethno-cultural, females, gay/lesbian/bi-sexual/transgendered), drawing on evaluation research findings for the programs.

6.15   In-depth "meta-analysis" of methodologies used that most incorporate youth, but which still utilize accepted standards of methodological rigour.

APPENDICES:

A. Annotated Bibliography

B. Bibliography

APPENDIX A

Annotated Bibliography

Ayerst, Sandra L. (1999). "Depression and stress in street youth." Adolescence 34(135): 567-575.

Ayerst's study explores stress and depression levels among 27 Canadian street youth and 27 "nonrunaway peers" (p. 567) over the age of 12, using a questionnaire to investigate not only depression level, family history, and stress factors, but also coping strategies. Street youth are found to experience deeper levels of depression than youth who live at home and attend school. In administering a standard questionnaire to measure depression, researchers found that factors such as sleep disturbance could not be used as a symptom of depression because, since "…it is rare to find a street youth who is able to sleep safely…, the scale may be tapping lifestyle rather than depression level." Of particular interest is Ayerst's discussion of coping strategies such as use of drugs and alcohol and engaging in acts of self harm. She observes that although these strategies are negative in nature, they may not be maladaptive when street culture is taken into account. Thus, "street youth commonly take amphetamines…to stay awake throughout the night so that they are not 'jumped' (attacked or robbed) while sleeping [and] inhalants may be used to provide a feeling of warmth during cold weather." She also points out that self-harm, in the form of cutting, burning and other self-inflicted violence "…may also be seen as a negative but adaptive coping strategy for street youth…from tension-filled, hostile environments in which other outlets for anger or frustration are lacking."

Baron, Stephen W. (1999). "Street youths and substance use: the role of background, street lifestyle, and economic factors." Youth and Society 31(1):3-26.

This research examines the relationship between drug and alcohol use and a variety of street life experiences. It focuses on the role of homelessness, peers on the street, criminal behavior, poverty and unemployment in influencing drug and alcohol use. The data were collected in Edmonton through the use of a structured interview schedule administered to a sample of 200 male youths "…with an average age of almost 19 years" (p. 11). Youths who participated were given a $10 food coupon. To determine the effects of street lifestyle on drug and alcohol use, respondents were asked about duration of homelessness, drug and alcohol use by peers, "…and their own involvement in property, violent, and drug crimes" (p. 12). Multivariate analysis of data suggests that while the backgrounds of homeless youths tend to promote drug and alcohol use, experiences on the street such as criminal activities, cultural supports, and the presence of drug-using peers are likely to exacerbate these risk-behaviors. Moreover, the author (p. 18) observes that unstable labor market histories and prolonged unemployment can either leave street-involved youth "…alienated from conventional society or frustrated with their failure, both of which serve to increase the risk of drug and alcohol use." In addition, participation in crime

increases the use of drugs and alcohol among street-involved youth "crime finances use; use encourages more use; more use encourages more crime."

Baron, Stephen W. and Timothy F. Hartnagel (1998). "Street youth and criminal violence." Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 35(2):166-192.

Critical of studies that focus solely on antecedent background factors in determining street youth violence or that adopt "unicausal" explanations for violence among street youth, Baron and Hartnagel employ a variety of criminological perspectives to examine the intersection of street subculture, poverty, and victimization in promoting and shaping the involvement of street youth in criminal violence. Their study draws upon data collected over a six-month period in Edmonton and employs interviews and self-reports with 200 homeless male street youths whose average age was just under 19 years. They distinguish between "…prior family and recent street experiences of violent victimization as possible causal variables" (p. 168) in four different forms of criminal violence – robbery, aggravated assault, common assault, and group fights. Results reveal that "…aspects of the street subcultural lifestyle, economic deprivation, and victimization" (p. 184) coupled with family histories of serious abuse and victimization work together to explain street youth violence. The authors find that while low income is "…the only consistent significant predictor across the four types of violent crime" (p. 184), different combinations of street subculture, economic deprivation, and victimization are associated with the different types of violent behavior. For example, robbery is best predicted by poverty, length of time on the street, perception of a lack of legitimate opportunities, and victimization both at home and on the street. On the other hand, "predictive accuracy was weakest for group fights" (p. 184) which seem to be conditioned by other unexplored factors such as "…territoriality, protection, and group identity" (p. 185).

Bass, Deborah (1992). Helping Vulnerable Youths: Runaway and Homeless Adolescents in the United States. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Bass examines the needs of runaway and homeless youth for shelter, independent living skills, and drug abuse and prevention education and evaluates U.S. federal government programs available to assist them with these needs, in order "…to develop practice-relevant information and to identify innovative practices" (p. xi). Of interest is her assessment of short-term shelter services which are "…extremely effective for youths who have been away from home for a short time and who seek help….but may not be as effective for youths who have long-term problems" (16). The author (p. 27) itemizes adequacy of referral sources, staff training, the availability of social services, and "after-care services" as essential factors in the effectiveness of programs designed to meet the needs of street youth. The book provides a series of recommendations for program activities to meet youth needs and presents a model for serving runaway and homeless youths based on "…a composite of best practices" (p. 47). These include identification of education, health and social service systems and establishment of service linkages, and

development and implementation of outreach activities, public awareness campaigns, and empowerment of youth and families. In addition, appendices provide samples of data collection instruments used in a National Association of Social Workers survey of street youth. These instruments include questions relating to the experiences of cultural minorities, immigrant, and gay and lesbian youth.

Booth, Robert E., Yiming Zhang and Carol F. Kwiatkowski (1999). "The challenge of changing drug and sex risk behaviors of runaway and homeless adolescents." Child Abuse and Neglect 23(12):1295-1306.

The objective of this research was to expand understanding of drug and sex risk behaviors of street-involved adolescents and to assess the effect of youths' knowledge about HIV and AIDS, their perceptions and concerns about the likelihood of infection, and the effectiveness of a peer intervention program in changing risk behaviors. Standardized, structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 244 street-involved youth to assess their risk behaviors and to determine the extent of their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. An intervention model was designed, with a cohort of HIV prevention educators trained to assist their peers on the street. This assistance involved four major topics: (1) facts about HIV/AIDS transmission and ways to reduce risks; (2) facts about sex risk behaviors and how to negotiate safer sex; (3) drug-related risks and role playing to practice refusal skills when drugs are offered; and (4) preparation of participants to assume the peer helper role . Three major findings emerged from the study: (1) there was no relationship between greater understanding of AIDS and practice of lower risk behaviors; (2) perceived likelihood of infection did not lower risk behavior; and (3) using peer educators in the intervention model was not effective in changing the risk behaviors.

Brannigan, Augustine and Tullio Caputo (1993). Studying Runaways and Street Youth in Canada: Conceptual and Research Design Issues. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.

This report concentrates on five issues: (1) the size of the runaway and street youth population in various locations in Canada; (2) demographic characteristics of runaways and street youth; (3) background antecedents contributing to becoming street-involved; (4) the consequences of street involvement and patterns of leaving the streets; and (5) the nature of services – educational, health, criminal justice and social services – available to street youth and identification of gaps or overlaps in service delivery. Problems of conceptualizing street youth are addressed; the authors (pp. 3-5) remark that attempts to categorize and define street-involved youth are confounded by issues of how the youth came to be on the street, age range and problems of comparing the activities of youth under 12 with those over 20 years of age, behavioral characteristics on the street (drugs, alcohol, high-risk sexual behavior, sources of income), criminal involvement and whether the individual street youth is victim or victimizer (pp. 3-5). The discussion generates a

"schematic overview" (Fig. 1, p. 53) that illustrates, in diagrammatic form, the relationship among types of street youth, antecedents, consequences and institutional responses and services. The authors (p. 54) point out that "this schematic overview can do little more than highlight the complexity of the problem…of runaways and street youth…" Eleven Canadian studies are then surveyed, with reference to definitions, research design, and data collection strategies. Following their survey of case studies, the authors turn to a discussion of conceptualizing the problem of street-involved youth. They (p. 96) maintain that "… interest in the area of runaways and street youth is largely reactive," driven by the needs of institutions to collect information on characteristics of street-involved youth in order to provide necessary services to them and to establish some measure of control over them. They make a number of recommendations related to conceptual issues, including, first, that "…a systematic count be made of the size [and age range] of the population of youth on the street" (p. 100). To this end, they develop "…a methodological strategy" (p. 109) for estimating population size that takes into account the activities and behavior patterns of street youth that make them so difficult to count, such as their sleeping locations and nocturnal activities. A second recommendation is that the extent and type of participation in street culture should be viewed as an important variable in studying street youth, in order "…to encompass a broad range of activities and levels of participation" (p. 102). To meet this second recommendation, Brannigan and Caputo (pp. 102-107) devise a two-dimensional model – length of time on the street and degree of involvement in street life – that will aid in differentiating among "…the diverse elements of the street youth population" (p. 102) and in encompassing a broad range of activities and levels of participation in street culture. The authors also report on the results of a pilot study conducted in Calgary in the winter of 1992. The study examined four major factors: family background antecedents, personal characteristics such as age, gender and educational level, psychological, health, and economic consequences of being on the street, and use of social services. Although data were collected on "hazards of running" (p. 129), these deal largely with psychological factors such as depression, suicidal tendencies, and lack of self-esteem , and with police detention, involvement with drugs, and problems with employment rather than with violence and victimization.

Caputo, Tullio, R. Weiler and Katherine Kelly (1994). Phase II of the Runaways and Street Youth Project: The Ottawa Case Study. Final Report No. 1994-11. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.

As a result of Brannigan and Caputo's (1993) recommendations stemming from their discussion of research design strategies and review of the literature on street youth, the authors conducted an in-depth analysis of Ottawa's response to runaways and street youth. In addition, the research team collaborated with an Ottawa community project on Youth and Violence, and a background document (pp. 102-112) for participants attending a conference on Violence and Youth is appended to their report. The report itself utilizes Brannigan and Caputo's (1993:103, Fig. 2) second schematic model to characterize the various components of the runaway and street population, so that the full range of behaviors typical of street youth can be identified and met

with appropriate community responses. The authors discuss the results of interviews with both front-line and supervisory staff in youth service agencies, interviews with youth living on the street or in marginal situations, as well as youth not involved with street life. Interviews explored characteristics of the street youth population, antecedent family situations, involvement of street youth in high-risk or illegal activities, and street youths' "…knowledge, use assessment of services available to them" (p. 3). Their assessment reveals, for example, that the vast majority of street youth were aware of available youth services and the agencies that provided them, that most regarded health care services highly, but that, in contrast, more than half of the street youth gave the police negative ratings.

Caputo, Tullio, R. Weiler and Katherine Kelly (1994). Phase II of the Runaways and Street Youth Project: The Saskatoon Case Study. Final Report No. 1994-12. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.

Paralleling the Ottawa study by the same authors (see above, p. 4) and part of Phase II of the Runaways and Street Youth Project, this volume is an in-depth case study of Saskatoon's response to runaways and street youth . Noting that more than three-quarters of these youth are aboriginal (p. 30), the authors apply Brannigan and Caputo's (1993:103, Fig. 2) second schematic model to their analysis. Thus, the study uses the two major dimensions of the schematic model to characterize four groups of youth: "'conventional youth'… [who live at home and] are only marginally involved in the street scene;…'victimized youth'… [who are] not, as yet, very involved in street life… [but whose] precarious living situations make them extremely vulnerable to its dangers;…'delinquent youth'… [who] are not on the street to any extent, but …do participate heavily in the illegal and dangerous activities characteristic of street culture; [and]…'entrenched youth' who are both homeless and heavily involved in street life" (p. 13). The analysis provides overviews and evaluations of the role of social services, education, health care, criminal justice and community services for street youth. Such problematic areas as the lack of supportive access to these services, as well as inadequate training for staff, unrealistic expectations of schools and other educational services, middle class bias in the criminal justice system, and the presence of only a few culturally sensitive program responses for aboriginal street youth are investigated. The need for greater involvement of the aboriginal community and street youth in the design, implementation, and evaluation of runaway and street youth services is discussed. Moreover, the authors (p. 21) find that "intervention strategies and treatment orders do not take into account the reality faced by aboriginal street youth." While considerable attention is paid to the views of street-involved youth, especially those who are aboriginal, no mention is made of the involvement of gay or lesbian youth or of those with disabilities in street culture. In general, the presentation of youth views is not broken down by gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The authors touch very briefly on such issues as the lack of culturally sensitive mental health services, and there is reference to the existence of birth control programs, but there is no discussion of pregnancy among runaways and street youth. Given these

omissions, the study is a relatively thorough assessment of the street-involved youth service system.

Chand, Manjit, Lisa B. Thompson and Coralys Cuthbert (1997). You Have Heard This Before: Street-Involved Youth and the Service Gaps. Vancouver: Interministerial Street Children's Committee, City of Vancouver Social Planning Department.

The purpose of this project is aimed at "…identifying some of the service gaps for street-involved youth in Vancouver" (p. 4). Gaps in service to street-involved youth include insufficient facilities for short- and long-term housing options and for long-term alcohol and drug treatment for youth, as well as a lack of round-the-clock access to services, and both poor coordination of services and inadequate integration of case management among service-providers. Special attention is given to the need for shelters with laundry and shower facilities that may influence youth success in finding employment and to a variety of gaps in accessible health care. Lastly, the report speaks about "promises to be kept concerning the reformation of laws and policies that could protect street youth" (p. 4). Recommendations are made to address these shortcomings, but there is little reference to the implications of the recommendations for issues of gender, ethnicity, disabilities or sexual orientation, nor is there any discussion of victimization.

Fitzgerald, Michael D. (1995). "Homeless youths and the child welfare system: implications for policy and service." Child Welfare 74(3):717-730.

According to the author (p. 717), child welfare services in Canada are inadequate for youths between the ages of 16 and 19, and community-based organizations do not have the necessary resources to provide assistance to this cohort. This article investigates current child welfare policy and practice in Canada as it applies to homeless youths. In addition, a long-term residential program for homeless youths is profiled, and implications and recommendations for child welfare are discussed. Fitzgerald comments that while it is generally recognized that the lives of street-involved youth reflect the on-going impact of "unsupporting, damaging backgrounds" (p. 718), there is little in the Canadian child welfare system to deal with the emotional, social, legal and economic consequences of these backgrounds. Obstacles to providing effective care and protection for homeless adolescents include insufficient training for youth care workers, the restriction of most child welfare legislation to youth 16 years of age and under, and poorly integrated medical, housing and financial sources. Fitzgerald then examines Phoenix House, a long-term residential program for homeless youths in Halifax. He describes the structure of this non-profit community service, noting that it "…provides its male and female residents (age 16 to 24 years) with a safe, stable living environment and a range of educational, skill-building, and leisure programs" (p. 725). The aim of the program is to promote increased responsibility and independence among individual residents using staff-guided social- and life-skills training, emotional guidance, computer-based education, preparation for employment,

addiction treatment and intervention, and recreational and leisure activities. The author remarks that although Phoenix House attempts to respond positively to issues of concern to street-involved youth, lack of government and public funding and concomitant problems with providing quality, affordable services delivered by adequately compensated, skillful and dedicated staff hamper the operation of the program. Fitzgerald proposes a number of improvements including (1) development of a national policy on child welfare that leads to consistent legislation and service; (2) increased public education and training for child welfare professionals; (3) development of creative programs based on the needs of children and their families; (4) policies that extend equal protection to adolescents and that recognize their special needs; and (5) street-level and outreach services.

Greene, Jody M. and Christopher L. Ringwalt (1998). "Pregnancy among three national samples of runaway and homeless youth." Journal of Adolescent Health 23(6): 370-377.

The purpose of this article is to compare estimates of the incidence of pregnancy among three youth cohorts between the ages of 14 and 17 years who were living on the street, in funded shelters, or at home. Although earlier studies of street youth document pregnancy rates of between 25% and 60% in different American cities, Greene and Ringwalt's study is the first to examine three nationally representative surveys of the three youth cohorts for evidence of prevalence of lifetime pregnancy rates. The intent of the authors is to provide more reliable empirical information that can be used by program planners to assess the extent of need for family planning and pre-natal care services and to develop funding proposals for such services. Multistage sampling techniques were used in the shelter survey to ensure a nationally representative sample of 169 female youth residing in both federally funded and non-federally funded shelters and in both large and small shelters. A total of 85 female street youth were surveyed with a "purposive sampling strategy" (p. 372) that involved selection of sites within ten American cities where high concentrations of street youth were expected. Staff of local street outreach programs and police departments aided in the identification of locations and times for contacting large numbers of street youth. Virtually identical questionnaires were used in both shelter and street surveys, and respondents were given food or food coupons. A pre-existing survey that monitors health risk behaviors among youth was used to collect data on 1988 female youth living in households. All three surveys included comparable questions on lifetime pregnancy. Age and race/ethnicity (white, black, and other) were measured in each survey. Data from all three surveys were standardized and weighted to take into account variations in demographic characteristics, and *Chi*-square tests were used to assess statistical significance of the differences among standardized lifetime pregnancy rates for the three groups. Results indicate that "…youths living on the street had the highest lifetime rates of pregnancy (48%), followed by youth residing in shelters (33%)" (p. 370), while youth living in stable households, with and without recent homeless experiences, had lifetime pregnancy rates of under 10 per cent. Differences in rates between street and shelter youth were not statistically significant when

demographic variables were taken into account. The authors postulate that homeless youth, whether in shelters or on the street, are at very high risk for pregnancy because of a variety of factors: (1) they may have been sexually abused at home and become pregnant as a result; (2) they engage in high-risk sexual activities such as having multiple sexual partners; (3) as a result of poverty, they are compelled to engaging in "survival" sex, trading sex for their basic subsistence needs; (4) as a result of poverty, they cannot afford effective contraceptives such as the pill, IUDs, diaphragms or condoms; (5) they are vulnerable to sexual assault on the street or in shelters; and (6) they have "…limited access to medical and family planning services" (p. 370). Several problematic factors that may skew the findings are identified: pregnancies may be underreported if females did not know they were pregnant or they were reluctant to admit to pregnancy; pregnancies may be overreported if young females who were undernourished, using drugs, or suffering stress misinterpreted missed menstrual periods. The authors note in conclusion that there are many policy implications for their findings, including a need for pregnancy prevention and safe sex programs for street-involved youth, condom distribution, prenatal services close to centres where homeless youth congregate, infant care education projects, and independent living and job training programs for female street youth with infants.

Hoyt, Dan R., Kimberly Ryan, and Ana Mari Cauce (1999). "Personal victimization in a high-risk environment: homeless and runaway adolescents." Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 36(4):371-392.

Acknowledging flaws in previous studies using a criminal opportunity theoretical perspective, Hoyt *et al.* attempt a more rigorous examination that concentrates on patterns of personal victimization within the specific context of homeless and street-involved youth. The authors (p. 372) also acknowledge that the "single dominant finding …from the literature on criminal opportunity theories … is that location matters." They proceed to extend these theories in several ways: (1) consideration of what types of exposure are most predictive of personal victimization; (2) refinement of visibility and accessibility criteria; (3) elaboration of measures of target attractiveness and guardianship and their relationship to victimization. Two issues are given special attention: "involvement in deviant activities …[and] time-lagged prior victimization" (p. 373). Data were collected through a longitudinal study of Seattle adolescents between 13 and 21 years who were not living in stable situations. Hoyt *et al.* note that homeless and street-involved youth "…have fewer resources available to respond to victimization experiences" (p. 377), while "the very nature of the homeless experience fosters involvement in deviant subsistence strategies" (376). The authors hypothesize that a variety of factors linked to exposure, guardianship, and victim attractiveness will produce important variation in victimization. Four exposure factors – (1) actual amount of time living on the street without shelter; (2) level of substance abuse; (3) degree of involvement with gang activities; and (4) prior personal victimization – show a strong positive association with increased risk of victimization for both males and females. Of particular interest, "the risks for current victimization were approximately two-and-one-half times greater if the youth had been a prior victim of a personal assault" (p.

387). One factor, degree of involvement in deviant activities, was not significantly associated with risk of personal victimization. Moreover, no significant relationship was discovered between amount of time spent in stable residence and reduced risk of personal victimization for either males or females, but assignment to an intensive case management significantly reduces victimization risks for females. Two measures of personal attractiveness –internalized, depressive symptoms and a disheveled, unclean appearance are weakly associated with increased risk of personal victimization for both males and females. The authors (p. 388) conclude that not only is exposure strongly related to victimization, but also "victimization of street youths is not simply a matter of being homeless and in an unsafe environment; it is also dependent on what they are doing in this context." They maintain that their research and similar projects in other American cities provide an important test of the value of criminal opportunity models of victimization.

Kurtz, P. David, Elizabeth W. Lindsey, Sara Jarvis et al. (2000). "How runaway and homeless youth navigate troubled waters: the role of formal and informal helpers." Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal 17(5):381-402.

This goal of this study, a part of a larger research project (see also Lindsey *et al.*, 2000, below), is to identify formal and informal external sources of help that enable runaway and homeless adolescents who have left home to escape conflicted or dangerous family situations develop skills and strategies for resolving difficulties, dealing with the dangers of street life, and achieving a modicum of "self-defined success in young adulthood" (p. 381). The authors remark that adolescents in general are often reluctant to seek assistance from formal agencies and that it is essential to program planning and to professional workers to understand what types of helping are perceived by street youth as useful, trustworthy and appropriate to them. The research team used qualitative methodologies, including focus groups with peer educators and social service providers, and semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with a total of 12 youth between the ages of 18 and 25 who were no longer living on the street. Respondents identified three types of helpers – family, friends and professionals – and five types of help they perceived as important in facilitating their acceptance of help – "…caring, trustworthiness, setting boundaries and holding youth accountable, concrete assistance, and counseling" (p. 387). Youth identified two essential conditions that had to be present for help to be sought and used: the young people had to perceive the helper as trustworthy and they had to be ready to accept help. The authors discuss significant findings of the study, noting that participants valued supportive, multiplex relationships with patient, nurturing helpers, whether family, friends, or professionals, far more than they did specific treatment programs and services. Thus, they state that programs for homeless youth need to be flexible and person-centred, allowing autonomy in decision-making and avoiding labelling or pathologizing youth.

Lindsey, Elizabeth W., P. David Kurtz, Sara Jarvis *et al.* (2000). "How runaway and homeless youth navigate troubled waters: personal strengths and resources." Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal 17(2):115-140.

Lindsey *et al.* point out that although there is considerable information about "…why runaway and homeless youth leave home, the hazards they face, and the lifestyles they lead" (p. 116), very little research has examined "…how some of these youth are able to resolve the challenges and problems they face to make successful transitions into adulthood" (p. 116). Here, they discuss a qualitative study, one segment of a larger research project (see also Kurtz *et al.* 2000, above), that investigates the "…personal strengths and resources" (p. 115) employed by youth to make these successful transitions. These strengths and resources are described as "…learning new behaviors, personal attributes, and spirituality." Data were collected using a "phenomenological approach to identify…(1) the nature of decisive turning points in the lives of these young people; (2) the personal and contextual factors that enabled them to successfully resolve difficulties and achieve some level of self-defined success in young adulthood; and (3) how they define success for themselves" (p. 117). Four members of the research team used ideas obtained from focus groups with 30 peer educators from youth shelters and interviews with 22 youth shelter service providers to develop a semi-structured interview format for data collection. Twelve participants between the ages of 18 and 25 were interviewed, using a conversational style to elicit demographic information, accounts of difficult times experienced and strategies used to deal with those times, turning points in their lives, current situation, definition of success, and future hopes and plans. Transcripts of initial interviews were analyzed using the "constant comparative approach" (p. 119) which uses preliminary finding to shape future interviews. A process of coding was developed that organized into larger conceptual categories the "…well over 30 factors that youth identified" (p. 119) as significant markers in their ability to moved from homelessness and alienation to a self-defined sense of success. The article provides profiles of the 12 participants before discussing findings related to three categories of personal strengths and resources. The first major category, "Learning New Attitudes and Behaviors" (p. 124), encompasses both what was learned and the nature of the learning process and identifies as most significant what youth learned about themselves and what they learned about being in relationships with others. Included in this first category are ideas gleaned from "Learning About Themselves" (p. 124) including building self-confidence, developing self-love, learning about self-care, and goal-setting and learning from experience (p. 131), both from their own mistakes and experiences and from those of others. In addition, learning how to be more considerate, responsible, and careful in relationships with others and taking responsibility for one's own actions were significant elements of this first category. The second major category, "Personal Attributes" (p. 133) was seen by the participants as including attributes such as determination, independence, responsibility and maturity that were considered as internal qualities rather than learned behaviors. The third category, spirituality, was identified by over half of the 12 youths and was expressed as "…faith in God or a higher power…[,] direct divine intervention in their lives…[or] active engagement with their higher power through prayer" (p. 134). According to

the authors, implications of this study include shifting from a traditional perspective of street youth as problematic and dysfunctional individuals to one of viewing them as resourceful individuals attempting to meet and cope with the challenges of life on the street. Lindsey *et al.* argue that programs such as "Scared Straight" which stress negative consequences of non-traditional behaviors may be little value to youth who need "…to see a real connection between potential consequences and their own lives" (p. 137). The authors stress the importance of early intervention programs that do not label adolescents in trouble as "'troublemakers' or even worse" (p. 138) and of ways that social workers can assist youth by focusing on what can be learned from a poor decision or ineffective problem-solving, by facilitating enhancement of self-defined positive attributes, and by designing programs that include youth learning bout themselves and their relationships with others. They caution, finally, that findings based on qualitative research with small samples must be carefully assessed before being applied to other and larger populations.

McCarthy, Bill (1995). On the Streets: Youth in Vancouver. Victoria: Ministry of Social Services, Province of British Columbia.

This report consists of a "…review [of] available data and an overview of the situation of 'street kids' in Vancouver" (1). McCarthy examines such parameters of their existence as family background, living situations, school experiences, employment history and involvement in crime. This last variable is the focus of the document. He (1) defines street-involved youth as "…people, age 14 to 24 years, who do not have regular access to permanent shelter…[and thus] are not easily included in conventional social surveys. Typically they migrate between living on the streets and finding temporary accommodation in hostels, group homes, hotels, with friends or relatives, or in their own apartments" (1). The author (p. 2) provides a statistical analysis accompanied by quotations from interviews "…to give the abstract notion of 'street life' …immediacy", but these quotations do not yield insight into such factors as gender, ethnic background, disabilities, or sexual orientation. McCarthy (p. 47) notes that compared with youth who remain at home and in school, street youth appear to have far more problematic family backgrounds, school experiences, and encounters with law enforcement. He (p. 47) also comments that the frequently unsuccessful search for food, shelter and employment not only occupies much of the time of street youth but also leaves them vulnerable to violence and to being victims or perpetrators of crime. He (p. 47) concludes that "…policies that reduce the amount of time homeless youth spend on the street will greatly affect …[their] involvement in street crime" and that access to safe shelters "…should decrease street youth's involvement in high risk activities."

McCarthy, Bill and John Hagan (1992). "Mean streets: the theoretical significance of situational delinquency among homeless youth." American Journal of Sociology 98(3):597-627.

The authors compare youth on the street and in schools and control for factors of family background in order to identify adverse situational conditions that contribute to delinquency. These conditions are (1) hunger, which causes theft of food, (2) hunger and inadequate shelter, which lead to "serious theft…[and (3)] problems of unemployment and shelter" (p. 597) which lead to prostitution. Acknowledging traditional sociological theories of crime causation based upon background life experiences, McCarthy and Hagan turn their attention to "foreground causes" (p. 623), that is to "…the adverse circumstances of homeless street youths" (p. 597). They examine the role of these circumstances in exacerbating both strain and weak social control and thereby pushing youths to delinquency. The study surveyed of Canadian street youth, 19 years of age and under, in Toronto, using a two-part research strategy: (1) a self-reporting instrument "…for which they received $10 in restaurant coupons" (p. 603) and (2) a parallel instrument for a sample of adolescents living at home and attending school. Three dependent variables – stealing food, serious theft, and prostitution – were selected for analysis, the latter two "…because they are likely to reveal gender-specific patterns, with situational concerns and difficulties more likely to cause male involvement in theft and female participation in prostitution" (p. 605). These measures are used to explore situational difficulties on the street – (1) unemployment since leaving home, (2) frequency of hunger and food scarcity, and (3) shelter. Meshing these indicators with information on strain and control at home, the authors present statistical models to consider the extent to which background and situational measures of street difficulties "…have direct effects on the three dependent variables." The authors (p. 613) find that, "…compared with adolescents still at home, street youths are disproportionately drawn from families characterized by aversive strain and an absence of control" and that "…the strongest and most consistent relationships involve two measures of situational problems and two street control variables: hunger and shelter, and length of time on the street and arrests of street friends. In contrast, our third situational measure, unemployment, is significantly associated with only one indicator of street crime, prostitution" (p. 614). They (p. 614) also note "…evidence of gender specialization in street crime;….as expected, males are more likely to steal, while females are more likely to work in the sex trade." McCarthy and Hagan (p. 625) conclude that "…many of the most serious problems of the street derive from the conditions of street life itself, including the problems of sustenance and security that street life produces," and that there are policy implications for bringing about changes to street situations.

Moon, Martha W., William McFarland, Timothy Kellogg *et al.* (2000). "HIV risk behavior of runaway youth in San Francisco: age of onset and relation to sexual orientation." Youth and Society 32(2):184-201.

Among the large numbers of young people who are homeless and living on the streets or in shelters in the United States, up to 35% engage in drug use behavior that places them at high risk for HIV infection. High risk sexual behavior characterizes upwards of 27%, many of whom participate in "…'survival sex,' selling sex to meet subsistence needs" (p. 185). In San Francisco, where this study was undertaken, gay, lesbian and bisexual youth are at particularly high risk for HIV infection, but the authors note that very few studies distinguish sexual orientation among street-involved youth. Moon *et al.* make this distinction in order to better understand differences in sexual and drug use behavior. Information collected from heterosexual and from gay/lesbian/bisexual youth is compared. Participants were recruited when seeking medical services at two health clinics and were included if they were between the ages of 12 and 21 and were willing and able to consent to both an interview and a blood test for HIV. Upon completion of the blood test and interview, they received food or thrift store vouchers or $20 cash. Comparison of sexual and drug use behavior by sexual orientation reveals "…higher levels of HIV risk among homeless gay/lesbian/bisexual youth than heterosexual youth" (p. 195); the former were sexually active at an earlier age and reported earlier onset of use of heroin, alcohol, amphetamines and cocaine. "Differences in risk by sexual orientation were particularly pronounced among females" (p. 193). The authors recommend that HIV educational materials must be directed at a younger population – "…by or before the age of 10 to achieve the greatest chance of influencing risk behavior before they become well established" (p. 198). Moreover, Moon *et al.* maintain that peer-designed and peer-led programs must be instituted to promote tolerance and to prevent both homophobia and self-destructive behaviours among gay/lesbian/bisexual youth.

Smart, Reginald G. and Alan C. Ogborne (1994). "Street youth in substance abuse treatment: characteristics and treatment compliance." Adolescence 29(115):733-745.

Commenting that the current population of street-involved youth includes many both substance abuse and serious psychiatric problems, this study focuses on street youth undergoing treatment for alcohol and drug abuse. Using data collected on 867 youth treated at centers in Ontario, the authors compare 261 homeless youth and 586 "conventional" youth for "…social and demographic characteristics, alcohol and drug abuse histories, and treatment outcomes" (p. 734). A questionnaire designed especially for the study and featuring questions on psychosocial issues is used to compile data and to provide a way of assessing the effectiveness of participating treatment programs. Overall, comparisons indicate that street-involved youth have more problems and more serious problems than do non-street youth. These problems were social, economic and substance related. Homeless youth were more likely to be unemployed, on

welfare, and to have legal and l problems, and their family backgrounds tended to be abusive. Street youth also tended to have psychological problems such as depression, low self-esteem, and hyperactivity, and they were more likely to define themselves as addicted to alcohol and drugs. A central finding of the study is that street-involved youth are more likely to leave treatment programs prematurely. The authors suggest that there is a need for more experimentation in the delivery of youth services, including "…planned, brief interventions, the use of outreach workers to maintain contact with drop-outs, …and the establishment of long-term supportive residences for youth in treatment" (p. 745).

Smart, Reginald G. and Gordon W. Walsh (1993). "Predictors of depression in street youth." Adolescence 28(109):41-53.

This article documents the extent of depression and other psychiatric problems among a sample of 145 street-involved youth, 24 years old or younger, in Toronto. The study examines the relationship between depression and a range of factors, including alcohol and drug use, social support networks, self-esteem, and family background. Drawing on youth from both service agencies and the street, the authors (p. 43) selected young people for the study on the basis of criteria associated with leaving school, street involvement, use of social services, and homelessness. Respondents were paid $20 for answering a questionnaire and undergoing an interview. Depression, self esteem, social support, alcohol and drug problems, and family instability were measured using a series of scales and their association was assessed through regression analysis. The authors (p. 51) conclude that the most reliable indicators of depression among street-involved youth are self-esteem and amount of time spent in hostels. They (p. 51-52) observe that not only is low self-esteem self-reinforcing, but also "depressed street youth are probably less able to cope with the problem of accommodations and more often require hostels… which are sometimes dirty, noisy, dangerous, and overcrowded", thus leading to further depression.

Sobo, Elisa J., Gregory D. Zimet, Teena Zimmerman *et al.* (1997). "Doubting the experts: AIDS misconceptions among runaway adolescents." Human Organization 56(3): 311-320.

This paper reports on attitudes and ideas held by street-involved youth about HIV/AIDS information and advice in order "…to improve the effectiveness of AIDS/HIV education programs that target adolescents" (p. 311). The authors point out that homeless youths in urban areas may be at increased risk for AIDS as a result of their participation in high-risk sexual and drug use behaviors. They note that poverty and the need for food, shelter and money take priority over gaining access to condoms. Youth from two shelters in Cleveland, Ohio were surveyed using "…a semi-structured face-to-face interview" (p. 314) format and a self-administered questionnaire to collect sexual decision-making data and information regarding attitudes towards AIDS experts and their advice. The survey analyzes data on the basis of both gender and

ethnicity, but not sexual orientation. Results indicate numerous misconceptions and cynicism about AIDS information given to youth, with black youth and females tending to express more cynicism and to be more suspicious about information being withheld from them. Sobo *et al.* (p. 318) call for "a far more ethnographically-oriented approach, complete with extensive participant observation and full-time contact with youths under study" to increase the reliability of the data and to decrease the need for self-reports which may be influenced by "social acceptability" (p. 318).

Weber, Marlene (1991). Street Kids: The Tragedy of Canada's Runaways. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Consisting of a wide range of interviews with street youth collected unsystematically in several Canadian cities, Weber's work is of interest because the narratives yield a compendium of street experiences chronicled by both male and female youth from a variety of ethnic groups. She (p. 14) maintains that "the street…is rife with racism, homophobia, and sexism" and provides examples that have been offered by the street youth she interviewed on their "timetables and turf" (p. 5). Her study touches upon the dangers of shelters, sources of food, vulnerability to victimization and violence, and the "oppressive problems" (p. 225) of drugs and alcohol. Although the book does not attempt a scientific analysis of life on the street for young people, careful reading of the interview material affords evidence of an array of problems, from cold weather to pregnancy, encountered by street youth. Many of these stresses are not described elsewhere in the literature surveyed.

Witt, Peter A. and John l. Compton, eds. (1996). Recreation Programs That Work for At-Risk Youth: The Challenge of Shaping the Future. State College, Penn.: Venture Publishing.

This edited volume contains 38 community case studies of model youth-at-risk programs developed by recreation and parks departments across North America in an effort to ameliorate societal problems involving youth at-risk. Programs designed specifically for street-involved youth include Youth 2000, a multicultural project in Montreal that brings together street-involved youth and adult "animators" (p. 137) to act as role models and to facilitate youth participation and responsible commitment. In addition, the Northern Fly-In Sports Camps for aboriginal youth in Manitoba, is described as an attempt to bridge the gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures and to address "…the need for programs and training emphasizing the value of physical activity." As well, a Late Night Recreation Program in Seattle, Washington directed at such cultural groups as Asians and Pacific Islanders, and an outreach partnership for homeless youth in Olympia, Washington that involves community youth services, parks and recreation, and city police are relevant to this discussion. All programs include full-participation by street-involved youth in design, development, and implementation and have been subject to evaluation methods. Although several of these programs had components directed at ethnically diverse youth and

pregnant teens on the street, there is no mention of other components for girls nor of any directed at gay or lesbian youth nor at young people with disabilities.

APPENDIX B

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