

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF YOUTH PROGRAMMING SUPPORTS THAT ARE
OFFERED TO AT-RISK YOUTH WITHIN CANADA AND AUSTRALIA**

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Under the Supervision of

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An Honours Project submitted

in partial fulfillment

of the Degree requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts – Criminal Justice (Honours)

Mount Royal University

Date Submitted: April 2022

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Abstract

Youth, who are identified as being at-risk, have often experienced at least one negative event within their lifetime, with most experiencing more than one; these risk factors often elevate a youth's risk at becoming victimized, or becoming involved with the criminal justice system. The at-risk youth population requires well-rounded programming in order to mitigate these potential outcomes. The purpose of this research paper is to critically examine various programs from similar countries, specifically from Canada, and Australia, and then identify the positive factors within each program. Then, utilizing the identified factors, a grading scale/criterion will be created in order to rank the programs with a numeric value. Further, by using the scaled programs, an analysis of Alberta will be conducted to determine if similar programs exist within the province.

Dedication & Acknowledgements

To begin, I would like to thank my Honours Supervisor, Professor Doug King. Throughout the entire honours process, Doug has remained encouraging, supportive, and understanding. Not only is Doug a wonderful professor with a vast array of knowledge, but he is also an incredible advocate for the students. Since my initial meeting with Doug, he has encouraged me to remain confident in my abilities as a researcher, writer, and student. Further, Doug remained enthusiastic about my topic and provided the necessary guidance that I needed to pursue it in full. I am grateful that I was able to complete an honours thesis with his supervision.

Secondly, I would like to express my gratitude towards my fiancé, Nathan Burns. While I poured myself into this paper - whether it was reading, writing, or obsessively staring at the computer screen, you effortlessly encouraged me to continue on. Furthermore, you provided a sense of comfort and relief when I felt overwhelmed and burdened by my studies. Your calm and collected demeanor continued to ground me on the days that I needed it the most. I appreciate all your support in every capacity.

Lastly, but certainly not the least important, I would like to thank my Mum, Dad, and two older sisters. While my parents did not study anything related to Criminal Justice, nor did my oldest sister, they listened to my ideas with intent, expressed interest and reiterated how proud they were of me. They provided the necessary morale boost that I needed to carry myself through the last term of my Undergraduate Degree. My middle sister, who is well-versed within the Criminal Justice system through her career, spent countless hours expressing interest in my topic. Along with her expressed interest, she also kept me on my toes - her intellectual stimulation provided me with alternative ideas and perspectives to research. For her wits and encouragement, I am grateful.

Land Acknowledgement

Mount Royal University is located in the traditional territories of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and the people of the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta, which includes the Siksika, the Piikani, the Kainai, the Tsuut'ina and the Iyârhe Nakoda. We are situated on land where the Bow River meets the Elbow River. The traditional Blackfoot name of this place is "Mohkinstsis," which we now call the city of Calgary. The city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation.

I am grateful for the opportunity to study, live, and create on these traditional lands.

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A Critical Analysis of Youth Programming Supports that are Offered to At-Risk Youth within Canada and Australia

Adolescence is often described as a critical point in an individual's life that lays the foundation for future events and personal outcomes. However, if pressures or adversities like homelessness, poverty, agency involvement, and mental health concerns, present themselves – reaching proper developmental milestones becomes challenging and may leave a youth at-risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system. Importantly, programs and organizations exist to mitigate those risk-factors and address the needs of a youth; although not all programs are structured or built the same. Therefore, it is important to examine which program/organizational supports may best support a youth in mitigating and/or eliminating their at-risk status.

Through the use of descriptive design, a meta-analysis of pre-existing literature on a variety of youth programs, from Canada and Australia, has been compiled and will be examined. After a thorough review, the information will then be used to create a grading scale, with the hopes that this scale will be able to adequately depict which programs provide the most support for an at-risk youth.

Research Question & Methodology

The purpose of this research thesis is to critically examine a variety of support programs that are offered to at-risk youth and then discern which of the examined programs exhibits the highest measurable benefit for youth's mental health and wellness. The programs being examined originate from both Canada and Australia and will aim to answer the primary research question - Which programming supports offer the highest described and ranked benefits for at-risk youth? After the analysis of the primary research question, a secondary research question will be

examined. The secondary research question examines whether the critically examined programs are available within the Province of Alberta - Are similar programs found within the Province of Alberta? If they are not readily available, or accessible, within Alberta, suggestions on how to implement/improve the programs will be provided.

The research design is made up of a multi-method structure that includes the use of descriptive design, a meta-analysis of pre-existing literature, and a systematic review of relevant programs. Through the use of the selected research designs, data will be collected in order to provide a detailed account of the current literature on select youth-programs, to indicate if there is a gap within the literature, and to critically assess the value that these programs may provide. For both countries, Canada, and Australia, only 3 youth programs will be examined; criteria for inclusion will include the frequency of use, the availability of the program, and the data available in relation to the program. Through the use of purposive sampling, each source that is collected will serve the purpose of highlighting a program that is available to at-risk youth within the specified country. Key terms that were used to begin data collection include “at-risk youth,” “youth programming,” “at-risk youth programming”, “young offenders”, “young offenders programming”, “youth mental health programming”, “juvenile offenders programming”. Once the initial, purposeful, sources are collected, snowball sampling will then be conducted to gather further information on the specified programs. A variety of databases will be used to acquire sources, including SAGE Journals, JSTOR Arts & Sciences, Taylor & Francis Library, APA PsycArticles, ProQuest, and the MRU Library Database; however, data collection is not limited to these databases.

Although, like all studies, there are limitations that are present throughout the duration of this thesis. This project does not contain any primary data, such as surveys or interviews, which

can limit the interpretation and analysis of the research (Prada-Ramallal et al., 2016). Further, when conducting this style of research, a systematic review and/or a meta-analysis, the literature that is being examined is only as credible as the original source on which it was founded. Consideration on sources used must be thoroughly thought out, as poor sources will influence the findings. Additionally, if flawed data-collection is used, a systematic review and/or a meta-analysis will not be able to address this issue, as they do not use original research to correct the methods (Garg et al., 2008). Further, in the interest of being brief and having a time-limit on completion, the limitation of only using 3-4 programs from each country is present. There is a vast array of programs available within each individual country; this paper is too brief to contain them all. Instead, an assortment of programs will attempt to capture a small snapshot of the available programming.

At-Risk Youth

For the purpose of the current thesis, the definition of at-risk youth will center around how the criminal justice and/or social work field interprets the definition. At-risk youth is not a readily agreed upon term amongst academics; it has no set definition and can be interpreted in various ways. However, many of the definitions that are outlined within academic articles share a variety of common key terms, ideas, and themes. The term at-risk youth may also be referred to as youth at risk (Etzion & Romi, 2015), poly-victimized youth (Ford et al., 2013), or, if a youth has been involved with both the social work and criminal justice sector, a crossover youth (Cho et al., 2019; Modrowski et al., 2021). Statistics Canada (2009) defines at-risk youth as - a youth that has been exposed to one or more risk factors, which then impacted the youth's ability to develop the proper social, emotional, cognitive, as well as physical abilities of a typical adult.

Risk factors, or behaviors, are negative circumstances or lived experiences that a youth has been exposed to that may increase their chances of being involved in criminal or delinquent activities, as well as their chance of becoming victimized (Free, 2020; National Crime Prevention Centre, 2007). Risk factors may be present in a variety of ways and are often categorized into 5 categories: individual, peer group, academic/institutional, family, and community (Public Safety Canada, n.d.). However, the types, frequency, and severity of the risk factors that youth may experience are not universal; instead, each youth may have a unique set of circumstances. Common risk factors may include substance abuse, exposure to violence, homelessness (Knight et al., 2018), academic disinterest, involvement with social services, teen pregnancy, domestic violence, sexual abuse, parental involvement in the justice system (Cho et al., 2019), and the attachment style of the youth (Etzion & Romi, 2015). It should be noted that while risk factors are termed as negative experiences or circumstances, this does not mean that individual characteristics are negative, or bad. Examples of individual characteristics include gender, disability, ethnicity, and age (Cho et al., 2019). Risk factors may also interact with other social factors, such as low socio-economic status, cultural identity, and poor health; thus, disproportionately influencing sub-populations of youth (Knight et al., 2018).

In addition to not having an agreed upon definition, there is no universal age for what constitutes a youth. Within Canada, a youth, within the criminal justice system, is seen as an individual between the ages of 12 - 17 years old (Government of British Columbia, n.d.). However, at-risk youth may also be seen as being between the ages of 10 to 20 years old (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2012). For the purpose of this thesis, programs that identify the at-risk youth population as being between the ages of 10 to 20 years old will be considered. This age range ensures that a wide array of individuals will be captured in the research.

To summarize and define, at-risk youth are those individuals between the ages of 10 to 20 years old that have experienced one or more risk factors, which may have also interacted with social factors, thereby increasing the chances of the youth becoming victimized or involved with delinquent and/or criminal behavior. The above definition will be used to determine if a program will be considered as part of the thesis; this ensures that the data collected will be able to be compared in a succinct manner.

Youth Programming

Similar to the definition of at-risk youth, a definitive definition of youth programming is lacking amongst academics. However, this is most likely a result of the incredible variety that is present within the field; to compartmentalise an entire industry into a neat definition would be difficult. Instead, a working definition will be thoroughly outlined for the purpose of this thesis paper.

Generally, a youth program is a resource/ support that a youth can access that will help to mitigate and address the risk factors, or behaviours, of the youth in a positive manner (Heinze et al., 2010). Programs may be offered in a variety of settings, such as community-based, home-based, school-based, court ordered, clinical (de Vries et al., 2015), or as an outreach service (Oldeide et al., 2020). Programs may also include one, or a combination of, one-on-one intervention, group intervention, or family interventions (de Vries et al., 2015). For the purpose of this thesis, all program and intervention settings will be considered valid during the research process; as it is important to encapsulate a wide range of programs when determining which is, from an objective standpoint, the best overall program.

According to the Government of Canada, programs may be identified as a model, promising, or an innovative program. A model program is described as a program that contains the highest standards and is determined to be the most effective at addressing the identified needs of the population. A model program is founded on a wealth of knowledge and research; and has proven, over time, to be effective at addressing the adverse risk factors related to the individual (Public Safety Canada, 2015). A promising program is meant to be a precursor to a model program and uses many of the same factors to outline itself. A promising program will also address the needs and risk factors of the individual and be rooted in previous knowledge. However, additional research is needed to add to the knowledge base and move it to the model program category (Public Safety Canada, 2015). Finally, an innovative program is meant to explore new interventions that do not have a strong existing evidence base. An innovative program may be borrowed from alternative fields, such as healthcare, or education, and is then fitted to the new settings (Public Safety Canada, 2015). Throughout the duration of this thesis, each program will be labelled as one of the three categories listed above. While the program may not self-identify as one of the categories above; using the same characteristics, knowledge/evidence based, research, frequency of use, age of program, a label will be given to the program.

To reiterate, youth programs are those programs that address the risk factors, or behaviours, of those that are defined as at-risk youth in a positive and supporting manner. Each youth program, regardless of the setting and intervention style, will be considered for the purpose of this thesis.

Snapshot of Canadian Youth

As previously stated, there is no universally accepted definition, or age, of what a youth is; Statistics Canada is no exception to this phenomenon, as the classification of a youth varies within its publications. Currently, Statistics Canada readily identifies youth, within their reports on the demographics of Canada, as those who are between the ages of 15 to 29 (Statistics Canada, 2018). However, content specific reports from Statistics Canada, such as the Adult and Youth Correction Services in Canada 2018/2019 report, may identify youth as those who are between the ages of 12 to 17 (Malakieh, 2020). For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of a youth includes those who are between the ages of 10 to 20 years old; therefore, only information that is within the scope of the thesis will be examined.

By examining the population estimates, which are conducted annually, a better understanding of how large the youth population is may be found. As of July 1st, 2021, it was reported that there were 4,148,725 youth between the ages of 10 to 19 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2021). Unfortunately, Statistics Canada coalesces the data for the ages of 20 to 24 years of age. Therefore, the closest estimate on the youth population, for those between the ages of 10 to 20 years old, would be above approximately 4.1 million. Also reported in 2021, the total population of Canada was 38,246,108 people (Statistics Canada, 2021); making the youth population, of 10 to 19 years of age, about 10.8% of the total Canadian population.

As reported by Statistics Canada (2019), youth are becoming increasingly diverse. While they utilize the ages of 15 to 29 years of age, the overall picture of what the youth population currently is can still be examined. As of 2019, it was reported that youth were increasingly diverse in terms of their ethnicity, religion, generational status and LGBTQ2S+ identification (Statistics Canada, 2019). Within Canada, the Indigenous population continues to see an

exponential growth in its overall numbers; between the years of 2006 and 2016, the Indigenous population grew 42.5%. As of 2016, over 1.67 million individuals self-identified as Indigenous; many of these individuals, approximately 44%, were below the age of 25 and considered a youth (Indigenous Services Canada, 2020).

However, on a less positive note, it is reported that approximately 20% of Canadian youth are suffering/living with a mental disorder (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2020). Additionally, many youth are not receiving adequate care to address their mental health needs; only one in five receive appropriate care (Mental Health Commission of Canada, n.d.). These statistics are important to consider, as they indicate that numerous responses to at-risk youth must be considered - as the uniqueness of youth continues to flourish and mental health needs continue to be present.

Youth Programs in Canada

In order to ensure an adequate representation of the Canadian youth population, programs from separate provinces will be considered. Included within the Canadian youth programs section will be Directions Youth Services (Vancouver, B.C.), the Calgary John Howard Society (Calgary, A.B.), and the Resource Assistance for Youth (Winnipeg, M.B.)

Directions Youth Services – Vancouver, British Columbia

Servicing Vancouver, British Columbia, Directions Youth Services is part of the larger organization known as Family Services of Greater Vancouver; Family Services of Greater Vancouver has been in operations since 1928 and services the Lower Mainland of British Columbia (Directions Youth Services, 2022a). The aim of Directions Youth Services is to “... offer low-barrier programs and services to support youth under the age of 25 who are in crisis or experiencing homelessness as a result of abuse, neglect, substance use, or mental health

challenges” (Directions Youth Services, 2022a). Through the use of eleven, listed, programs on their website, Directions Youth Services is able to provide services to the youth population of Vancouver; regardless of their personal circumstances.

Directions Youth Services makes it known, on numerous webpages, that they are allies and supporters of the LGBTQ+ community (Directions Youth Services, 2022c). Additionally, Directions Youth Services indicates that they are in support of all youth communities - including Canadian newcomers, those living with mental health concerns, those who have been racialized, and those that may have a physical disability (Directions Youth Services, 2022c). Lastly, Directions Youth Services utilizes three social media platforms – Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. However, the posting is infrequent across all three platforms.

These programs include a Youth Services Centre, Haven & Safehouse, Youth Detox, Street Youth Job Action, an Outreach Team, Transitions for Youth to Adulthood, 10K Supportive Housing, COLTS Daycare and Young Parents Program, Digital Media & Music Program, a Visual Art Program, and a Culinary Training Program (Directions Youth Services, 2022b). In line with the youth programming definition provided within this thesis, all programs offered by Directions Youth Services will be examined; as all serve a separate, but beneficial purpose to at-risk youth.

Directions Youth Services Centre - The Youth Service Centre is meant to provide 24/7, all year round, low-barrier, access for youth under 25 years of age who are experiencing difficulties with their housing. As stated online, the team at the Youth Services Centre aims to provide support to at-risk youth by addressing the immediate needs of the youth first, while then building a long-term relationship with the youth to ensure that they receive adequate support (Directions Youth Services, 2022c).

Through the use of client-centred and trauma-informed care, the team is able to actively listen to what the youth is experiencing and provide support; while connecting them with additional community resources. At the Centre, youth may access nutritious meals, showering facilities, laundry facilities, harm reduction supplies, Indigenous services, medical services, provided hygiene items, support for pets, and emergency shelter services (Directions Youth Services, 2022c). In the year 2018, over 700 youth were able to access help at the centre and 341 crisis situations were managed by the team (Directions Youth Services, 2022c).

Directions Youth Services Shelter Programs: This service provides access to a 12-bed shelter, for those who are between the ages of 19-24 years of age. While at the shelter, a youth will receive support and guidance, via a Clinical Counsellor, on how to move into a more stable housing environment (Directions Youth Services, 2022c).

Directions Youth Haven & Safehouse: Both Haven and Safehouse are confidential emergency shelters that emphasize their acceptance of all youth and backgrounds, while ensuring that they have low-barrier access to needed services (Directions Youth Services, 2022f). In the year 2018, 124 youth accessed both Haven and Safehouse services and a total of 65 crisis and overdose situations were able to be addressed by the team (Directions Youth Services, 2022d).

Offering emergency housing to those high-risk youth, between the ages of 16 to 19 years old, Youth Haven is a five-bedroom home that aims to provide a safe space to those with mental health and/or substance use concerns. Youth are able to immediately access youth service workers that can aid in beginning an integrated support system. In line with their “low-barrier” stance, Directions Youth Services accommodates those who are currently using substances, or who have exigent circumstances (Directions Youth Services, 2022d). Further, the youth are actively involved in developing a personal plan that will work with them, in order to achieve

their goals. Additional resources that are available at Haven include access to hot meals, harm reduction supplies, medical care, counselling support, aid in securing Government ID, detox services, and supported treatment services. Safehouse is able to offer the same support and services as Haven. However, Haven is aimed at the ages of 16 to 18 years of age (Directions Youth Services, 2022d).

Youth Detox: Available for those youth who do not require a large amount of medical care while detoxing, Youth Detox is able to provide a home-style environment for the at-risk youth. While at Youth Detox, a youth may access services such as referrals to treatment centres, counselling, medical support, and housing supports. Included within the program is the resource and support of an Indigenous Elder; they visit throughout the week and are able to offer help in connecting with a youth's cultural and spiritual roots (Directions Youth Services, 2022e).

In 2018, 388 youth were able to access and stay at Youth Detox, with 125 of those youth staying more than one time (Directions Youth Services, 2022e).

Directions Outreach Team: The Outreach team is made up of five full-time workers who survey the streets of Downtown Vancouver to offer help to those youth who are experiencing homelessness, substance use, exploitation, or other vulnerable situations (Directions Youth Services, 2022g). Recognizing that Indigenous Youth are disproportionately affected by adverse living conditions, an Indigenous Outreach Worker is part of the team and engages directly with the Indigenous youth on the street. The Outreach Workers aim to facilitate a relationship of trust between themselves and the youth; the eventual goal is to have the youth access additional resources and services from Directions Youth Services, which will aid them in creating an integrated community of support (Directions Youth Services, 2022g).

The 10K Supportive Housing Program: This program is designed to support Indigenous youth, who are between the ages of 16 to 19 years old and involved with Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, or the Ministry of Children and Family Development. A referral is necessary for this program. The overall aim of this program is to support youth, in all areas of their life, and coach them into living an independent life (Directions Youth Services, 2022h).

All Other Programs: The other programs that are offered at Directions Youth Services include Transitions for Youth to Adulthood, COLTS Daycare and Young Parents Program, Digital Media & Music Program, a Visual Art Program, and a Culinary Training Program. These programs all provide additional support for youth accessing Directions Youth Services and are important for well-rounded care. These programs may not directly address the needs of at-risk youth, such as harm reduction services, but they do offer support in other areas; such as having an outlet for creative expression.

John Howard Society – Calgary, Alberta

Founded in 1949, the Calgary John Howard Society (CJHS) provides positive assistance to both youth and adults who wish to separate themselves from engaging in criminal behaviour, by addressing the root cause of crime (Calgary John Howard Society [CJHS], 2018a). Through the use of an evidence-based and trauma-informed lens, the CJHS is able to offer programming that addresses employment, education, housing, and additional services that mitigate the need for an individual to engage in criminal activity (CJHS, 2018a). The CJHS (2020) indicates, within their mission statement, that positive change must be advocated for through “humane, just and informed responses to crime and its effect” (p.2), and, as a result, the CJHS practices the use of Restorative Justice within the individual and community relationships. Currently, the CJHS

services youth who are between the ages of 12 through 24 years of age through five specialised programs; all of which require applications. These five programs include Roofs for Youth, a Community Youth Reintegration Project, an Outreach Advocacy and Support Program, a Mentorship Program for Indigenous Youth (CJHS, 2018b) and, lastly, an Indigenous Youth Outreach, Advocacy and Support Program (CJHS, 2018c).

Importantly, the Calgary John Howard Society indicates that they are committed to embracing the diversity of all individuals, while promoting an inclusive community (CJHS, 2020). However, neither their Annual Report for the year of 2020, nor their official website, indicate in a clear and straightforward manner that there are specific supports for youth who are members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Further, their referral form does not include information that may allow a youth to identify their LGBTQ2S+ status, if desired (CJHS, 2018d). However, their Saskatchewan counterpart, the John Howard Society of Saskatchewan, has opened up a supportive transitional house for LGBTQ2S+ who are experiencing homelessness in Regina; formally known as Lulu's Lodge (Skjerven, 2021). The CJHS does indicate that additional programming supports are available to Canadian newcomers and Indigenous individuals (CJHS, 2018e). Lastly, the Calgary John Howard Society provides three social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. All of which include frequent informative posting.

Mentorship Program for Indigenous Youth: The mentorship program, available for Indigenous Youth between the ages of 12 to 24 years old, is meant to address the impacts of intergenerational and high risks of Indigenous Youth. This is done by providing an Indigenous Mentor to youth, with the goal that the two build a relationship that may guide the youth to a successful path (CJHS, 2018f). Further, both the youth and the mentor will be able to attend

mentoring sessions, taught by an Elder within the community, which can further their cultural connection through various activities (CJHS, 2018f).

Community Youth Reintegration Project: Provided to youth who are transitioning from Custody to the Community, in a one-on-one, trauma centred approach, this program aims to re-connect a youth to the community. The youth will be connected to a Community Youth Integration Advocate, as well as a Family Conflict Facilitator, in order to support the building of relationships between youth and their families. Additionally, they help the youth set goals, obtain the basic necessities, and navigate through various social systems (employment, school, recreation, probation, etc.) (CJHS, 2018g).

Roofs For Youth: Available to youth who may, or may not, be exhibiting criminal behaviour, this program aims to provide a variety of supports for youth who are experiencing homelessness. The aim is to shift the youth into a stable and safe environment, which may enable them to grow into healthy and independent adults; instead of becoming attuned to a life of living on the streets (CJHS, 2018h). A youth may be eligible to stay at Radio House, Windsor Park, or an Independent House within Calgary. Radio House is an eight-bedroom home, designated for those between the ages 15 to 18 years old, that can provide access to critical support services that aid in the transition to independent living. Much like Radio House, Windsor Park offers the same vital services, but includes nine bedrooms that may accommodate a youth between the ages of 18 to 24 years old. Finally, the Independent House provides support for those between the ages of 15 to 24, include the same services, but add a level of independence (CJHS, 2018h).

Indigenous Youth Outreach, Advocacy, and Support: The Ksískstaki Ikamotaan, or Beaver Survival, Program is available to youth who are between the ages of 12 to 24 years old who are engaging or exhibiting criminal behaviour. The program aims to address the difficulties

that a youth is experiencing at home, school, or within the community and provides alternatives for those who are at-risk of offending or reoffending (CJHS, 2018c). The youth begin to work with the CJHS Youth Advocates, in a one-on-one environment, to aid youth in a variety of supports; these include setting-goals, participating in crisis resolution, understanding family relationships, accessing counselling services, obtaining basic needs, accessing affordable housing, obtaining employment/education opportunities, exploring cultural connections, financial supports, recreational supports, and navigating the justice/welfare system (CJHS, 2018c).

Outreach, Advocacy and Support: The Outreach, Advocacy, and Support Program, is available to youth who are between the ages of 12 to 24 years of age. This program is identical to the Ksisskstaki Ikamotaan Program; however, it does indicate the addition of being able to offer the services to immigrated youths (CJHS, 2018e). Otherwise, it provides the same services as already stated.

Resource Assistance for Youth – Winnipeg, Manitoba

Embracing a similar model to that of Directions Youth Services, Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) is a self-titled “one-stop-shop” for wrap-around youth services in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-a). Since 2004, RaY has been employing a working model known as the “Hub Model”, in which numerous supports and services are offered; including cultural supports, street outreach, drop-in services, basic needs, housing access, primary health, mental health and addictions, and employment training (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-a). The model itself is backed by and places an emphasis on the World Health Organization's Social Determinants of Health, in which the aim is to reduce health inequality faced by individuals (World Health Organization, n.d.). At the center of the Hub

Model is the Youth, and encircling the youth are the core components that RaY strives to display within their programming and services: culturally competent, gender-sensitive, trauma-responsive, strength-based, non-judgemental, harm reduction, social determinants of health, life skills, and advocacy (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-a). Overall, the guiding vision of RaY is that each youth will be able to utilize the services provided to enhance themselves and their social determinants of health, to the point where they will become self-sufficient (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-b).

Resource Assistance for Youth recognizes that those who are Indigenous, a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community, or who have been in contact with Child and Family Services, are more likely to experience homelessness and barriers to accessing mental health needs (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-c). As such, RaY is committed to providing services to youth under the age of 30, no minimum age is indicated, and welcomes all youth without judgment. RaY recognizes and welcomes all members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, all races, and ethnicities, those from rural or city communities, from any part of Canada, those involved with government systems, those living with mental health concerns and/or addiction, and those with a range of abilities (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-d).

RaY provides updates on the effectiveness of their Hub Model and supports/programs within an annual report; the most recent one is for the calendar year of 2020. Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic, RaY continued to have youth access their services and support. As many as 67% of the youth that came into RaY accessed both a service, as well as using drop-in necessities (Resource Assistance for Youth, 2020). The Street Outreach program, in the year 2020, continued to provide essential support to those who were hard hit by the pandemic. They reported that there had been an increase in the number of encampments and make-shift housing

within the City of Winnipeg (Resource Assistance for Youth, 2020), and were able to make 8,624 contacts with those individuals who were on the streets (Resource Assistance for Youth, 2020). Further, the Drop-In services had to be adapted to an outdoors-model, following the COVID-19 restrictions. However, over 897 youth continued to access the adapted drop-in services (RaY, 2020). Overall, youth continued to have access to all services originally provided by RaY, despite the growing concern of the pandemic.

Resource Assistance for Youth has an incredibly active social media presence. They boast an active Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, as well as YouTube Channel; for which their services can be easily located and accessed. In addition, RaY provides a section, or blog-style page, on their website dedicated to news about the agency (Resource Assistance for Youth, n.d.-e). Overall, their website and social media pages make it easy for youth to know when and how they may access services through RaY.

Snapshot of Australian Youth

Akin to Canada, the Australian Government often uses the term “youth” or “young person” to describe an individual who is between the ages of 15 to 24 years old (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021a). However, by examining population specifics, it is possible to find the approximate population of the total youth between the ages of 10 to 20 years old. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021a), as of June of 2020 there were 3,087,000 individuals between the ages of 10 - 19 years old. Unfortunately, the data for those that are the age of 20, is only found within the dataset that includes the ages of 20-29 years old. Therefore, an estimation of the youth population, or those between the ages of 10 - 20 years old, would be slightly above 3 million individuals. Currently, as of June 2020, the total

population of Australia was 25.7 million (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021a); making the 10- to 19-year-old population approximately 12.0% of the overall population.

Australian youth, similar to Canada, are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, and immigration status. Within Australia, a quarter of their defined youth population, or those aged 15 to 24 years old, were born overseas; with the highest rate being from China, then India, New Zealand, and England (Australian Institute of Health and Wellness, 2021b). However, in terms of LGBTQ2S+ statistics, it is recognized that the data is limited, as the definition for reporting only includes gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Further, gender diversity statistics are also lacking; with a new Standard for Sex and Gender Variable only having been released in 2016 (Australian Institute of Health and Wellness, 2018a; Australian Institute of Health and Wellness, 2020). Similar to Canada, Australia recognizes the importance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents and youth. In 2018, the Indigenous youth population, between the ages of 10 to 19 years old, was estimated to be approximately 167,762 individuals (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018b). As previously stated, the total population for Australian youth, between the ages of 10 to 19, was approximately above 3 million individuals; in context, the Indigenous population of the same age is considerably smaller.

Further, the most recent publication that was released by the Australian Government, on the mental health of youth, was conducted during 2013-2014 and published in 2015. The report was titled, the “Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing”. Within the report, it was determined that approximately 14% of the youth population surveyed, between the ages of 12 to 17 years old, had suffered from a mental disorder in the previous 12 months (Lawrence et al., 2015). Additionally, it was reported that one fifth of those adolescents

surveyed, between the ages of 11 to 17 years old, reported experiencing high/very high levels of psychological distress (Lawrence et al., 2015). Alternative/independent reports from organizations within Australia indicate that the amount of Australian youth, or those who are 12 to 25 years old, who are experiencing psychological distress has increased to one third of the population (Headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation, 2020). However, Indigenous youth experience higher rates of psychological stress, than that of the overall youth population (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018b).

Finally, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are beginning to be recorded within academic literature. The 2021 Youth Survey, released and conducted by Mission Australia, has indicated that the youth involved in the survey, aged 15 to 19, are experiencing negative impacts on their mental health as a result of COVID-19 (Mission Australia, 2021). However, the Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing (2021c) has indicated that the full effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the mental health of young people, remains to be seen.

Youth Programs in Australia

To ensure that an adequate representation of the Australian youth population is provided, the programs being examined are taken from various parts of the country. Included within this analysis are three programs: Youth Futures (Joondalup, WA), Youth Projects/Youth Outreach (Moreland, VIC), and StreetWork Youth (North Willoughby, NSW).

Youth Futures – Joondalup, Western Australia, AUS

Youth Futures began in 1987 as a small group of community members that were dedicated to enriching the lives of youth who were facing homelessness within Perth's northern sector. However, over the years it has undergone a wonderful transformation, blossoming into a

fruitful and ambitious organization that proudly presents 28 programs. These programs focus on homelessness, education, wellbeing, and overall support programs that are made available to youth (Youth Futures, 2022a). At Youth Futures, they practice holistic approaches that aid in providing youth with the wrap-around services that allow them to access opportunities to thrive within their communities. While there are a variety of programs available to youth, with most requiring a referral (self or organization), the three core areas of their organization include Homelessness, Education, and Support & Wellbeing programs (Youth Futures, 2022b). According to their Impact section, Youth Futures was able to support over 3,100 youth with their programs in the year 2021. However, they indicated that their ability to help is limited by program capacity; the demand for their services has continued to increase (Youth Futures, 2022d). Additionally, Youth Futures provides public and readily accessible annual reports to further explore how their programs have an impact.

Importantly, Youth Futures readily and explicitly indicates that they support youth of all ages, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, LGBTQ2S+ status, abilities, and socio-economic status. Youth Futures also provides support for those who are newly immigrated, within 5 years, to Australia (Youth Futures, 2022c). Additionally, Youth Futures aims to create a non-judgemental environment for at-risk youth, by understanding that each youth is faced with unique challenges and circumstances (Youth Futures, 2022b). Youth Futures acknowledges that Aboriginal Youth are more likely to experience circumstances leading to homelessness than youth that are not Aboriginal (Youth Futures, 2022d). Finally, Youth Futures acknowledges that those who are Aboriginal have traditional connections to the land, waters, and communities; they continue to pay their respects to those of the past, present and future (Youth Futures, n.d.).

Homeless Programs: Currently, Youth Futures offers six homeless programs that youth may access; ranging from preventing homelessness or reacting to homelessness of at-risk youth (Youth Futures, n.d.). The age range for the programs spans the ages of 15 to 25 years old; each program requires that either an individual, agency, or the youth themselves refer the young person to the services (Youth Futures, 2022e). Additionally, the length of stay at each residence service may range from one night, to a maximum of twelve months (Youth Futures, 2022e). Each of the six programs incorporates a range of wrap-around services, to ensure that the youth is being supported in a holistic manner (Youth Futures, n.d.). Importantly, Youth Futures also offers additional services, through Housing Support, if they are unable to accommodate a youth in their residency programs. Housing Support ensures that those who are 16 to 25 years of age will be supported by a Housing Support Worker, focusing on education, health, wellbeing, and advocacy supports, that will help the youth obtain long-term housing and stability (Youth Futures, n.d.).

Support Programs: Ranging from Drop-In Services, to Drug Education & Support Services, Youth Futures offers 13 Person-Centered Support Programs; the ages that may access them range from 11 to 25 years old (Youth Futures, 2022c). Of the programs, only two have restricted access to youth who are already engaging with Youth Futures - Drug Education & Support Service, as well as Youth Needs Assessment Service (YNAS). One support program, Youth Engagement Support Service (YESS), is dedicated to servicing Aboriginal youth by connecting them with an Aboriginal Engagement Officer (Youth Futures, n.d.). The Aboriginal Engagement Officer is then able to aid the youth in accessing education, basic needs, and justice system support. Additionally, the YESS program provides a holistic framework that incorporates Aboriginal Ways of Working, while also providing cultural workshops (Youth Futures, n.d.).

Education Programs: Youth Futures offers nine educational programs available and tailored to each individual youth, who are between the ages of 15 to 19 years old (Youth Futures, 2022f). All educational programs that are offered through Youth Futures are nationally accredited, as well as registered with the Department of Education (Youth Futures, 2022f). Programs range from non-traditional, non-structured educational environments that accommodates students, to structured classroom environments that focus on curriculum subjects. However, no matter the program, a youth will have access to wrap-around supports that ensure that they attain critical life skills that move them towards independence (Youth Futures, n.d.). Wrap-around support may include access to a youth worker, a literacy coach, a psychologist, and life-skills training (budgeting, cooking, interviewing skills, etc.) (Youth Futures, n.d.).

Youth Futures has an above average media presence, regularly using Facebook and Instagram to show real life snapshots of the work they do with the youth in Australia. However, their YouTube Channel lacks videos that provide regular updates or stories. However, Youth Futures does provide a section on their website, titled “Our Stories,” that allows the public to read the real-life responses of youth participants (Youth Futures, 2022g).

Youth Projects/ Youth Outreach – Moreland, Victoria AUS

The preliminary beginnings of Youth Projects are rooted in the year 1981, when a vacant space in Broadmeadows, VIC, an area that was home to a large migrant population, was converted into a drop-in centre for young people. A few years later, in 1985, the agency incorporated into what they are today - Youth Projects. Their early initiatives as Youth Projects included a drop-in centre, job training, a drug and alcohol counseling assessment, specializing in adolescent drugs and alcohol consumption, and, lastly, a needle syringe exchange program (Youth Projects, n.d.-a). Today, Youth Projects is a registered charity that aims to provide wrap-

around, client-centered, care and harm reduction; with a focus on the young population. Overall, Youth Projects aims to assist individuals in breaking the cycle of disadvantage, through numerous supports (Youth Projects, n.d.-b); including, health supports, job supports, a social enterprise project, youth outreach, and alternative training programs (Youth Projects, n.d.-c). While they do not directly specify which ages of youth/young people on their main introductory page, program specific ages range between the ages of 12 to 25 years of age.

Additionally, Youth Projects is presented as a diverse and inclusive environment for all individuals. On the footer of their webpage, Youth Projects indicates that they are welcoming of “any age, gender, sex, sexuality, culture, religion and ability” (Youth Projects, n.d.-a). Further in the same footer, they recognize and acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are Australia's First People (Youth Projects, n.d.-a). Utilizing the search function of their website, when inputting the key terms “LGBT” and “Aboriginal,” results indicate an array of support for both groups. For “LGBT,” there are pages that aim to educate individuals on inclusion of LGBTQ2S+ individuals, support regarding outreach focuses, and a link to the Youth Advisory Group (Youth Projects, n.d.-d; Youth Projects, n.d.-e). For the key term Aboriginal, less results are found, but includes the addition of personal stories (Youth Projects, n.d.-f).

Focusing on the core areas in which Youth Projects provides support, a briefing of all the areas that may apply to youth will be examined: including, health services, job and employment services, youth outreach, and training services.

Health Services: Under the banner of health services, there are currently five programs that a youth may be involved in. These programs include The Living Room, Health & Drop-In Support, Counseling, Drug Safety and Life Skills. The Living Room is the primary mode of delivery for health care services at Youth Projects and will work on connecting youth to the

additional programs listed above. The Living Room begins by focusing on the social determinants of health, the Living Room offers a variety of support services that address the physical, mental, and social well-being of a youth (Youth Projects, n.d.-g). Through a non-judgemental environment, Youth Projects is able to offer access to General Practitioners consults, immunizations, opioid replacement therapy, pathology, a variety of nurses, alcohol and drug counseling, podiatry, hepatitis C and liver supports, support groups, welfare workers, and therapists (Youth Projects, n.d.-g). In addition to support services, the Living Room is able to offer showers, meals and snacks, clothing, laundry services, and Wi-Fi services (Youth Projects, n.d.-g).

Job and Employment Services: A youth may take one of four pathways to connect with job and employment opportunities within Youth Projects - Transition to Work, Disability Employment Services, Here4Hospitality and Traineeships. Transition to Work is the lowest-barrier option for youth who are looking to gain an array of skills to achieve employment, as it has no eligibility requirements that they youth must meet. Transition to Work aids youth in - developing practical job-ready skills, understanding the wants of an employer, the potential to advance education or training, finding work experience, seeking out job opportunities, and connecting with community services (Youth Projects, n.d.-h). While at Transition to Work, the Youth Projects team will work with the youth to identify their personal interests and strengths, that will then guide them to a new model of self-confidence and instilling stability (Youth Projects, n.d.-h).

The remaining programs, Disability Employment Services, Here4Hospitality, and Traineeships, all require that the youth meet each individual program's eligible criteria. The criteria varies amongst each program, but most include a limited age range, limited to those who

have been diagnosed with mental health challenges or an intellectual and/or a psychosocial disability (Youth Projects, n.d.-i; Youth Projects, n.d.-j). However, they all continue to provide wrap-around services for youth who are looking to engage in meaningful skill acquisition and employment.

Youth Outreach: Commonly referred to as YHOP, the Youth Projects youth outreach program is meant to provide at-risk youth, between the ages of 12 to 25, with an accessible way to connect with vital support in the regions of Hume and Moreland, for up to 6 months. While working with a YHOP coach, a youth will be able to overcome any barriers that a youth is facing and provide personalized support to the young person (Youth Projects, n.d.-l). YHOP is able to address issues concerning housing, mental health, education, training, employment, and crisis support. Additional links that a youth will be able to access includes, alcohol and drug supports, legal assistance, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support, LGBTQ2S+ support, and family violence assistance (Youth Projects, n.d.-k). Overall, YHOP is able to be regarded as an all-in-one access point for youth who are beginning to navigate an array of social support services.

Further, Youth Projects provides up-to-date information on how their services are being used, within their annual report. The annual report is not in a traditional pdf format; rather, it is a web page that provides easy to read information in a fresh, potentially innovative, format (Youth Projects, 2021). According to Youth Projects Annual Report, they have managed to support over 10,000 individuals; and are aiming to support 3 times that amount by 2030 (Youth Projects, 2021). Overall, Youth Projects continues to maintain their wrap-around approach to supporting youth and will aim to continue acknowledging and recognizing the whole individual.

Finally, Youth Projects has an above average and active social media presence. Their social media reach spans across Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Each social media

page contains a variety of content, from short updates to longer-format videos. Additionally, Youth Projects provides a webpage that is made up of a variety of individual's stories (Youth Projects, n.d.-f).

StreetWork Youth – North Willoughby, New South Wales, AUS

Since its founding in 1980, by Peter Hobbs, StreetWork has been home to early intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth between the ages of 11 to 18 years old, aiming to provide meaningful change and the opportunity to turn a life around (StreetWork, n.d.-a). Through referrals and one-on-one mentoring, StreetWork's goal is to provide opportunities for at-risk youth that may assist them in discontinuing destructive behaviors or removing themselves from destructive environments and influences (StreetWork, n.d.-b). In an effort to achieve this goal, StreetWork takes an approach, through their core values, which ensures the youth is respected, builds confidence, is valued, is involved with the community, is supported through a meaningful relationship and, finally, is provided with exceptional mentoring services (StreetWork, n.d.-b).

Importantly, StreetWork readily and clearly identifies as a diverse and inclusive space, for which all youth, regardless of gender, ethnicity, lifestyle, faith, sexuality, or disability, are welcome; indicating they are LGBTQ2S+ allies. Also found under their Diversity and Inclusion webpage, StreetWork indicates that they are supporters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, acknowledging that they are the Traditional Custodians of the Country (StreetWork, n.d.-c). Further, StreetWork indicates that they are supporters of women's rights and gender equality; not only in their community, but within their company as well (StreetWork, n.d.-c). Overall, they acknowledge that it is important to remain an ally and support the various communities a youth may identify as a part of.

Unlike the program's examined above, StreetWork provides only one main program, KickStart Mentoring, along with several wrap-around engagement services and/or programs; as well as community support referrals. These additional services include Crisis Management, Outreach Services, and a Skill Building Program; however, they are intertwined with the KickStart Mentoring Program.

KickStart Mentoring Program: Utilizing a client-centered case management model, as well as professional Youth Workers, the KickStart Mentoring Program aims to provide at-risk youth with the necessary skills and supports that assist them in enacting change in their identified personally tailored goals. For a minimum of three months, the youth worker, and the at-risk youth work together to identify which areas of the youth's life is having the greatest adverse impact on them, and then works to remedy, or address, that impact through a goal-oriented and positivity-reaffirming approach (StreetWork, n.d.-d). Additionally, KickStart and the youth workers may connect a youth with any further supports, such as addictions counselors, mental health counselors and recreation providers, as they aim to integrate alternative agencies to allow the youth the best possible opportunity to achieve their goals. Overall, at the end of the KickStart Mentoring Program, StreetWork hopes to guide the youth into an independent journey that can contribute to their community (StreetWork, n.d.-d).

StreetWork provides an annual Social Impact report that measures the impact that the KickStart Program has had on the youth and the community. The latest annual report is dated for the calendar year of 2020 and was released in April of 2021. According to the data, the KickStart program has been able to improve the overall well-being of the youth involved, has addressed the greatest needs of youth, and has been able to recognize the issues that may accompany gender (StreetWork, 2021). According to the KickStart Program's target goals, they were able to

positively impact the lives of youth the most in the following categories: Housing Skills, Employment Skills, Mental Wellness, Financial Skills, Daily Life Skills, and Relationship Skills (StreetWork, 2021).

Finally, StreetWork presents itself in social media via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube (StreetWork, n.d.-a). However, of the four pages, only Facebook is regularly used to engage socially with the public. YouTube and Twitter fall the furthest behind, with both their accounts only posting in 2021. Instagram is somewhat more active than the previous two platforms, but not as much as their Facebook is. In addition to their social media accounts, StreetWork provides its own blog space via their website. The content on this page is diverse, ranging from workshop information to awareness and informational posts (StreetWork, n.d.-e). Lastly, StreetWork provides a space for youth to share their experiences with others and discuss their involvement with the KickStart program (StreetWork, n.d.-f).

Ranking System for Youth Programs

In determining which program, of those examined from Canada and Australia, is able to provide the highest measurable benefit for at-risk youth, a points-ranking system has been created in the following section. Within the point-ranking system, a variety of categories will be utilized, including age range of the program, range of services provided, accessibility for the youth, acknowledgement of LGBTQ2S+ status, use of terminology, importance of Indigenous Culture, ease of access to information, media activity, and the use of preventative and reactive measures.

The points for the system range between 1 - 3 points; 1 indicating that the examined program did not directly address the category, or the information was not provided, 3 indicates

that the program clearly provided the information and addressed the category directly. The information relating to each program has been based off of only publicly available information.

	Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range	The program provides services to less than half the indicated age range (10 – 20 years).	The program provides services to more than half of the indicated age range (10 - 20 years).	The program provides services to the full age range (10 - 20 years), or more.
Range of Services	The program provides a limited array of services and does not provide additional support areas.	The program provides an array of services; but may not provide one or two of the following: drop-in, short term, or long term. Wrap-around additional services are limited.	The program provides an array of services; ranging from drop-in, short term, long term. As well as, covering a variety of wrap-around support areas.
Youth Accessibility	The program only accepts referrals/applications (either agency or private).	The program uses a mixture of referrals (agency or private) and open access.	The program is considered open and low-barrier access and can be readily used by the youth.
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement	The program does not clearly, readily, and plainly acknowledge the LGBTQ2S+.	This program clearly, readily, and plainly identifies as an ally to the LGBTQ2S+.	This program clearly, readily, and plainly identifies as an ally; while providing additional support for members of the LGBTQ2S+.
Terminology Used	The program does not use client-centered or trauma-informed language.	The program includes client-centered or trauma-informed language.	The program includes client-centered and trauma-informed language that is defined and used throughout each service.
Indigenous Culture	The program does not clearly, readily, or plainly acknowledge Indigenous culture.	The program provides acknowledgement of Indigenous culture in a clear, plain, and readily viewable manner.	The program actively acknowledges/respects Indigenous culture. The program engages Indigenous communities and includes them within their youth programs.

Access to Information	The program does not provide adequate or readily accessible information to the public.	The program provides basic information to the public that is readily accessible.	The program provides extensive information to the public that is readily accessible and easy to read.
Social Media Activity	There is little to no social media presence/engagement.	There are frequent posts across at least one (1) social media platform.	All social media platforms being utilized by the program are active and consistently post.
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support	N/A	The program only provides either preventative OR reactive levels of support.	The program provides both preventative and reactive levels of support.

Overall Ranking of Youth Programs

Directions Youth Services Vancouver, British Columbia	Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range			X
Range of Services			X
Youth Accessibility			X
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement		X	
Terminology Used			X
Indigenous Culture			X
Access to Information		X	
Social Media Activity		X	
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support			X
Total	24 Points		

Calgary John Howard Society (CJHS) Calgary, Alberta		Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range			X	
Range of Services			X	
Youth Accessibility		X		
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement		X		
Terminology Used				X
Indigenous Culture				X
Access to Information			X	
Social Media Activity				X
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support			X	
Total	19 Points			

Resource Assistance for Youth Winnipeg, Manitoba		Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range				X
Range of Services				X
Youth Accessibility				X
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement			X	
Terminology Used				X
Indigenous Culture				X
Access to Information				X
Social Media Activity				X
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support				X

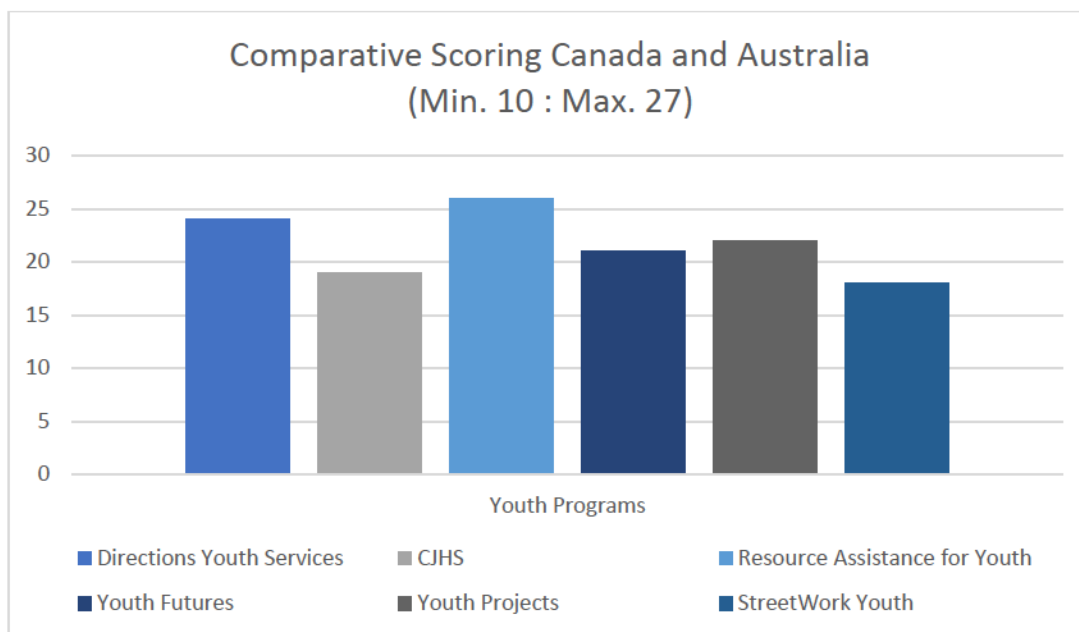
Total	26 Points
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Youth Futures Joondalup, Western Australia, AUS.	Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range		X	
Range of Services			X
Youth Accessibility		X	
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement		X	
Terminology Used			X
Indigenous Culture		X	
Access to Information			X
Social Media Activity		X	
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support		X	
Total	21 Points		

Youth Projects Moreland, Victoria, AUS.	Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range		X	
Range of Services		X	
Youth Accessibility		X	
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement			X
Terminology Used			X
Indigenous Culture		X	
Access to Information			X

Social Media Activity			X
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support		X	
Total	22 Points		

StreetWork Youth North Willoughby, New South Wales, AUS	Poor 1	Average 2	Excellent 3
Age Range		X	
Range of Services		X	
Youth Accessibility	X		
LGBTQ2S+ Acknowledgement		X	
Terminology Used			X
Indigenous Culture		X	
Access to Information			X
Social Media Activity	X		
Preventative & Reactive Levels of Support		X	
Total	18 Points		



Discussion & Future Research

At-risk youth should have access to client-centered, trauma-informed programs that provide additional support services in a non-judgemental and openly accepting environment. Of the programs examined, the two that scored the highest were Resource Assistance for Youth (26 of 27 points) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Direction Youth Services (24 of 27 points) in Vancouver, British Columbia. Shared amongst the programs are the common themes of inclusivity, wrap-around services, the utilization of multiple targeted services, and low-barrier access for youth; providing both preventative and reactive support. However, as the scores are based off of only publicly available information, additional research should be conducted, in the form of interviews and/or a survey, with those who have either participated or worked for either program. Adding this quality of research would be able to strengthen, or even potentially change, the structure and validity of the scale.

Further, are similar programs, to that of Resource Assistance for Youth and Directions Youth Services found within the Province of Alberta? Currently, similar programs are available

in the Province of Alberta. Found, primarily, within Calgary, Alberta, are organizations known as Wood's Homes and Hull Services. Both services offer similar, well-rounded, services that are comparable to Resource Assistance for Youth and Directions Youth Services. However, of the two, only Wood's Homes provides almost identical services to Directions Youth Services; including a street outreach team, known as Exit Street Outreach (Wood's Homes, 2018). Importantly, programs, such as the ones presented in the article, should continue to expand in order to address the needs of a growing population. Overall, a future research endeavour would include examining the programs available in Alberta, with the addition of qualitative data (interviews, survey's, questionnaires, etc.), and then applying the criteria as outline above.

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