

Supporting BC youth with government care experience

In 2018, 5% of students aged 12–19 had been in government care or an alternative (such as on a Youth Agreement). Data from the BC Adolescent Health Survey shows that despite the challenges faced by youth with care experience, they report better health and well-being when they are supported.

Youth with care experience benefit from positive relationships at school

- Youth with care experience who felt their teacher cared about them were more likely to report positive mental health (63% vs. 31% who did not feel this way), to feel safe at school (75% vs. 19%) and to feel happy there (64% vs. 12%); and were less likely to have skipped class (32% vs. 57%). They were also less likely to experience extreme stress (18% vs. 37%), and to have attempted suicide in the past year (12% vs. 33%).
- Youth who felt that school staff expected them to do well were more likely to feel like a part of their school (55% vs. 18% who did not feel that school staff expected them to do well), to feel hopeful for their future, to expect to graduate, and to have post-secondary plans.

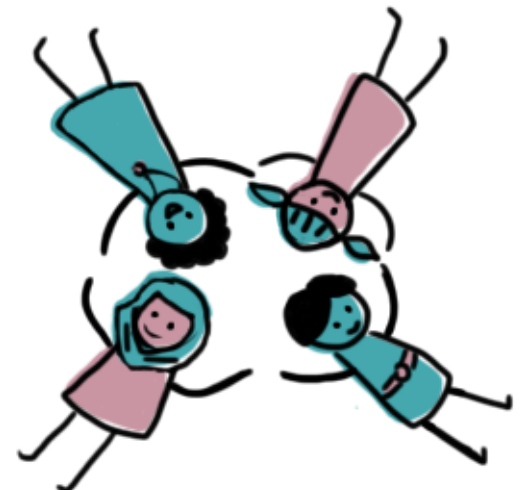


Adults can make a difference

- Youth with care experience who reported they had an adult outside their school or family who really cared about them were less likely to have self-harmed (35% vs. 44% without such an adult) and to have seriously considered suicide (33% vs. 46%) in the past year.
- Youth who had an adult to help them with making and getting to appointments were less likely to report missing out on needed medical help and mental health services.

Friends also make a difference

- Youth with care experience who had close friends in their school or neighbourhood were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (53% vs. 39% of those who had no such friends) and overall health (65% vs. 54%), and to feel hopeful for their future (50% vs. 23%).
- Youth who had friends who would be upset if they used substances or dropped out of school were more likely to report positive health and well-being.



Practical support is important

- Access to transportation can help youth to connect to supports, services, and activities. Youth with care experience who did not experience challenges with transport were less likely to miss school (4% vs. 13%), or miss out on needed mental health services (10% vs. 16%).

Youth need opportunities to participate

- Youth with care experience who took part in extracurricular activities, such as sports and cultural activities were more likely to report positive overall health and mental health.



Illustrations by Danielle Mahdal



This poster highlights findings from McCreary Centre Society's Youth Research Academy report *Supports in the Spotlight*, available at mcs.bc.ca.

The Youth Research Academy is surveying youth aged 18–20 who are currently in government care or have recently aged out. For more details or to participate, visit: https://mcs.bc.ca/youth_transitioning_out_of_care_study.

