

YOUTH TRANSITIONING OUT OF CARE IN METRO VANCOUVER:

**A report prepared for TRRUST
Collective Impact**



**McCreary
Centre Society**



**YOUTH
RESEARCH
ACADEMY**



We acknowledge that the Metro Vancouver area is located on the ancestral, traditional, and shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including 10 local First Nations: qíicə́y (Katzie), q̓'a:n̓́l ə́n (Kwantlen), k̓'ik̓'ə́l ə́m (Kwikwetlem), máthxwi (Matsqui), x̓'məθk̓'ə́y ə́m (Musqueam), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), se'mya'me (Semiahmoo), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), scə́waθən məsteyəx̓ (Tsawwassen), and səlílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh). We also acknowledge the ancestral and continuing connection to this land of the Métis Nation.

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McCreary
Centre Society



YOUTH
RESEARCH
ACADEMY

Copies of this report are available at: mcs.bc.ca.
For inquiries about this report, please email: mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the youth, policy makers, and practitioners who helped to develop the Youth Transitioning Out of Care survey.

Thank you to all the youth with care experience who are participating in the study.

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Ethics approval

The Youth Transitioning Out of Care study was approved by the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development Ethics Review Committee.

Report layout and illustrations:

Danielle Mahdal

For further information about the Youth Transitioning Out of Care study, or to schedule a presentation of the results presented in this report contact: erin@mcs.bc.ca or (604) 291-1996, ext. 233.

To learn more about TRRUST Collective Impact visit mcs.bc.ca/trrust or contact: erica_trrust@outlook.com.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared for TRRUST Collective Impact to assist with a review of the collective's progress in contributing to improving outcomes for youth transitioning out of care in Metro Vancouver. The results will also be used to help set the direction and focus of the collective moving forward.

The report includes data from 193 youth in Metro Vancouver who had experienced various types of government care or an alternative, including foster homes (66%), group homes (43%), and Youth Agreements (64%). Around a third of participants in the study identified as Indigenous, and 54% of these youth had been in the care of a Delegated Agency.

TRRUST is specifically focused on improving outcomes in the areas of housing; education; employment; health, wellness, and culture; and meaningful connections. Report findings in those areas include:

- **Housing**—Most youth (81%) who had transitioned out of care had experienced challenges to finding housing in the past six months; and only around half (53%) felt their current housing met their needs. Housing stability and feeling safe where they were living were linked to a more positive sense of well-being among youth. For example, youth who felt safe where they were living were more likely to feel their life was going well (47% vs. 25% of youth who did not feel safe).
- **Education**—Among youth who had transitioned out of care, around three quarters (73%) were enrolled in school, and 42% had received a tuition waiver. Over half of youth (58%) had an adult in their life to help them with applying for school (e.g., post-secondary). These youth were more likely to feel very prepared to pursue their education, and were less likely to have experienced challenges to graduating from high school, compared to their peers without such a supportive adult in their life.
- **Employment**—Most youth who had transitioned out of care were currently working (65%), and 32% were working 20 or more hours a week. The majority of youth (62%) had experienced barriers to getting or keeping a job in the past six months. Their most commonly identified barriers included mental health, substance use, or other health challenges (52%); competing commitments (e.g., school, childcare; 43%); and government funding restrictions (33%); they could mark all that applied).
- **Health, wellness, and culture**—Youth experienced a range of health conditions and disabilities, including mental health conditions (58%), learning disabilities (24%), and substance use addictions (16%). Youth reported challenges accessing services. For example, 64% of those who felt they needed mental health services in the past six months had missed out on these services. Around a quarter of youth (24%) had accessed cultural supports in the past six months (39% among Indigenous youth). Accessing cultural supports had positive associations with health and well-being. For example, youth who had accessed cultural supports in the past six months were more likely than those who had not accessed these supports to rate as good or excellent their spiritual health (54% vs. 36%), emotional health (51% vs. 24%), and mental health (49% vs. 25%).
- **Meaningful connections**—Most youth (86%) had an adult in their life who cared about them, had at least one close friend (96%), and felt at least somewhat connected to their community (62%). Having these connections was protective. For example, youth with a supportive adult in their life were less likely to miss out on accessing needed medical care (23% missed out vs. 60% of youth without a supportive adult) and mental health services (37% vs. 79%) in the past six months. They were also more likely to feel satisfied with their life.

INTRODUCTION

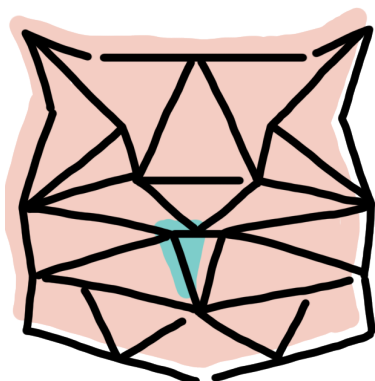
Since 2019, McCreary Centre Society's Youth Research Academy (YRA) have been carrying out a longitudinal study focusing on youth transitioning out of government care and alternatives to care (e.g., Youth Agreement) across BC. The goal is to gain a better understanding of the experiences of BC youth as they transition out of care and into adulthood. The results are intended to provide policy makers and service providers with current and relevant information that can help to identify what is working well, and what is challenging for youth transitioning out of care. The aim is to support youth to experience the most successful transition possible.

To date, the YRA have created three annual reports based on findings from across the province. The most recent report was released in Spring 2023, and is available here:

mcs.bc.ca/pdf/youth_transitioning_out_of_care_2023_update.pdf.

The YRA also created a regional report focused on youth transitioning out of care in the Surrey area, for the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition. The report included data from the longitudinal survey, as well as local BC Adolescent Health Survey data. The report can be accessed at: mcs.bc.ca/pdf/sprc_yic_2023_report.pdf.

This current report was prepared for TRRUST Collective Impact and focuses on youth transitioning out of care and alternatives to care in Metro Vancouver.



Youth Research Academy

McCreary's YRA are a group of youth between the ages of 16 to 24 with government care experience. They gain skills to carry out research and community-based projects that are relevant to youth in and from care and the agencies that serve them. McCreary employs eight youth each year for approximately 10 hours a week over a ten-month period from June to March. To learn more about the YRA or how to join, please visit mcs.bc.ca/youth_research_academy or email katie@mcs.bc.ca.

TRRUST Collective Impact

TRRUST is a Collective Impact initiative that began in 2014. TRRUST is a shared effort, now comprised of over 80 organizations and 400 members, including non-profits, government agencies, and young people with lived experience in government care. The common interest of all TRRUST members is to achieve systems-wide improvements in the outcomes for youth transitioning out of care in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia. The initiative is supported by the leadership of the Collective Young Leaders (CYL) and the Strategic Advisory. The project manager oversees the collective, and McCreary Centre Society acts as the backbone agency that provides coordination and organization support. To contact TRRUST, please email the project manager at erica_TRRUST@outlook.com.

ABOUT THE STUDY

In 2019, members of the YRA invited key policy makers and service providers to join them in developing the topics for a survey that youth may complete every six months starting around six months before their 19th birthday, through to their 24th birthday. The study was recently extended to engage youth up to the age of 27, and participants can join the study at any point between the ages of 18 and 26.

The survey has been modified since 2019 to reflect the changing circumstances of young people leaving care, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the impact of new government policies to support youth transitioning out of care. However, many of the core questions have remained the same to allow for comparisons over time.

Survey questions ask about youth's background and experiences in care; health and well-being; housing experiences; education; employment; finances; access to services and supports; and strengths and needs. Surveys can be completed online or in paper format. Data collection started in Spring 2019, and will continue through at least 2024.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report focuses on youth with care experience in Metro Vancouver and includes data from 193 youth who completed a baseline survey. To date, 27% went on to complete a follow-up survey(s), and a total of 246 surveys were included in the analyses. Many of the 193 youth were not yet eligible to complete a follow-up survey, because they had filled out a baseline survey less than six months earlier.

Findings in this report are organized based on TRRUST's five main areas of focus: Housing; Education; Employment; Health, Wellness, and Culture; and Meaningful Connections.

All findings and quotes are among youth in Metro Vancouver who had transitioned out of care, unless otherwise noted.

If you have any questions about the study; wish to request paper copies of the survey or the reports; or would like to schedule a presentation of the results, please contact Erin at erin@mcs.bc.ca or (604) 291-1996, ext. 233.

If you are a youth with care experience who may be interested in participating in the study, please contact yicstudy@mcs.bc.ca to receive a survey link.

ANALYSES

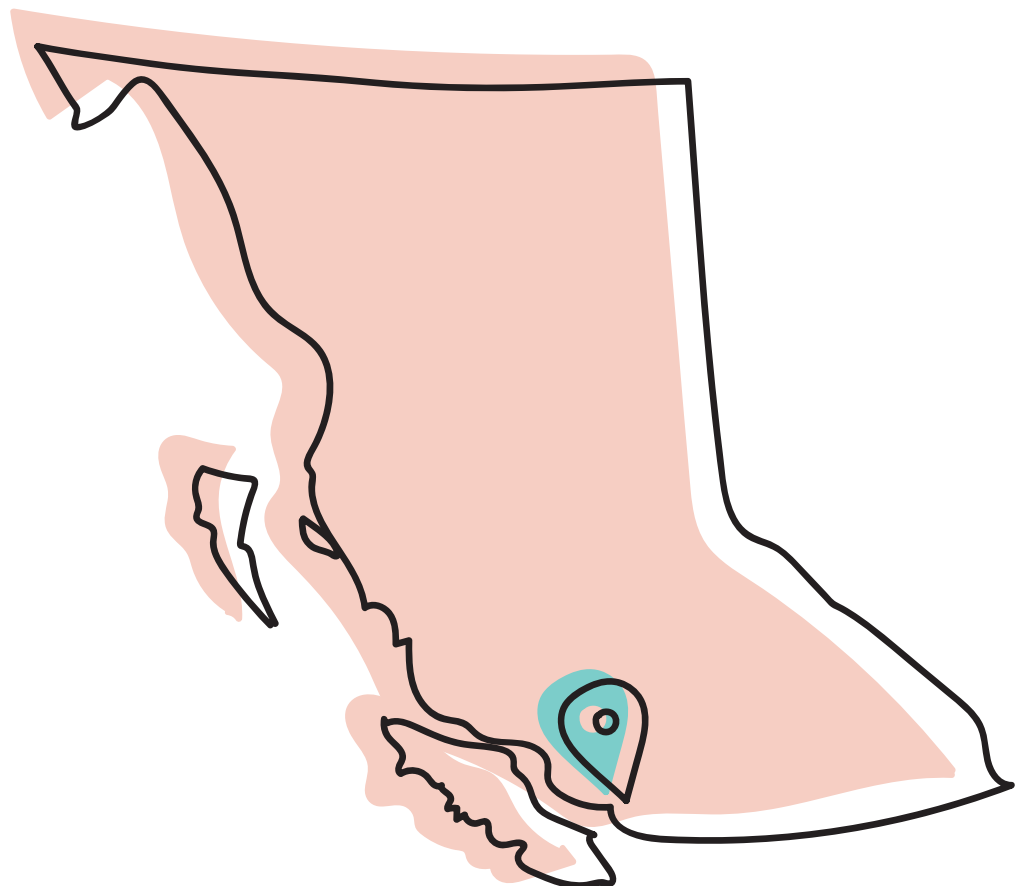
Survey data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Comparisons were carried out between youth who were nearing their transition out of care and those who had transitioned out. Percentages were similar between the two groups, unless otherwise noted.

Comparisons were also carried out to track any changes in youth's experiences pre- and post- their transition out of care. Percentages were similar across time points, unless otherwise noted. Additional analyses assessed if there were any changes over the course of the study (from April 2019 to March 2023), perhaps resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Any comparisons in this report are statistically significant at $p < .05$. This means there was less than a 5% likelihood the results occurred by chance.

LIMITATIONS

Findings in this report reflect the experiences of Metro Vancouver youth who have participated in the study, and may not be representative of all youth in Metro Vancouver with experience of government care or an alternative to care. As the sample of youth who have completed multiple surveys is relatively small, some longitudinal comparisons of pre- and post-transition out of care may not have been statistically significant, and therefore were not reported.



METRO VANCOUVER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

To date, just over half (53%) of survey respondents from Metro Vancouver were under 19 years old when they joined the study. Around 3 in 10 (28%) were aged 19, and the remaining 19% were 20 to 24 years old. Most youth (64%) started taking part in the study while they were still in care.

Sixty-five percent of participants were female, 30% were male, and the remainder were non-binary. Survey participants reported a range of sexual orientations, including 64% who identified as straight, 17% as bisexual, 6% as gay or lesbian, and 2% who indicated having no attractions. Another 7% were not yet sure of their sexual orientation, and 4% specified a sexual orientation not among the list of options.

Most survey participants (89%) had lived in Canada for six or more years (including their whole life). Around a third (34%) of participants identified as Indigenous. Among Indigenous youth, 80% were First Nations and 17% were Métis. The majority of Indigenous youth (62%) could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language (e.g., Chilcotin, Cree, Shuswap), including 17% who could hold a conversation and 6% who were fluent.

GOVERNMENT CARE

Most youth had been in care for at least three years (34% for three to five years, and 24% for six or more years). Another 23% had been in care between one and two years, and 13% for less than a year, while 7% were unsure of how long they had been in care.

Eighty-five percent of youth reported they had received services through MCFD, and 23% from a delegated Indigenous agency (e.g., Métis Nation BC, VACFSS). Among Indigenous youth, 54% had received services through a delegated Indigenous agency.

Most youth had been in foster care and/or on a Youth Agreement at some point. Among youth who had transitioned out of care, 61% had accessed an Agreement with Young Adults (AYA).

Most commonly reported types of government care or alternatives to care youth had experienced	
Foster home	66%
Youth Agreement	64%
Group home	43%
Placed with a friend/relative through MCFD	35%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

All youth in government care in BC are entitled to a written care plan, which is developed within six months of their entry into care and includes input from the young person. The plan identifies the young person’s needs and goals, and how these will be addressed. Around three-quarters of youth (76%) approaching their transition out of care reported having a care plan, while 10% did not have one, and the remainder did not know if they had one.

THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSITIONING OUT OF CARE

In addition to having a care plan, youth who are preparing to leave care should have a transition plan that identifies their post-care plans and goals, and supports them to develop the skills necessary for independent living. Among Metro Vancouver youth approaching their transition out of care, 54% reported they had a transition plan, 30% did not have one, and 16% did not know. Among those who had transitioned out of care, 45% had a transition plan while they were still in care, 34% reported they did not have one, and 21% did not know if they had one.

PREPAREDNESS

Youth who had transitioned out of care were asked how prepared they had been for their transition, knowing what they know now. Around a third (32%) had felt not at all or only a little prepared, while 30% had been quite or very prepared, and the remaining 38% had felt somewhat prepared.

Comments from Metro Vancouver youth on how prepared they had been to transition out of care (among those who had transitioned out of care)

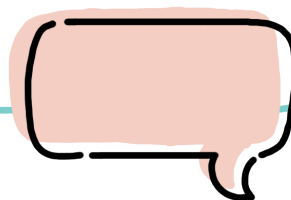
"Although I had the funds to move out and places to reach out to for further help, moving out of care was still scary and I missed talking with my social worker as well as counsellor provided by the ministry."

"For the most part I was in a position to transition out. But there could have been more supports. I was also not as mentally prepared as I had realized, and not in as good of an environment as I had thought."

"I was very prepared to transition out of care because I switched to an AYA agreement and am currently in university, still receiving funds while I'm in school so I was not nervous to transition out. I still have support from my social workers."

"Social workers left everything to last minute. I was interested in being prepared earlier on but they refused to tell me what was to come after my 19th birthday."

"I got my agreement extended so I was able to have help with getting into school and now that I'm officially aged out, I am still able to contact my youth worker and she has helped me tremendously."

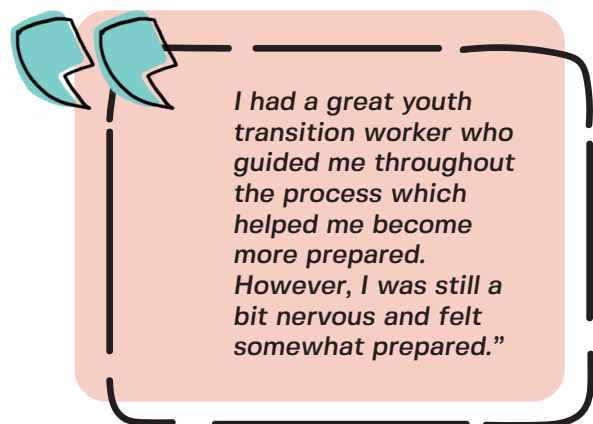


Youth were asked how prepared they felt with tasks and skills relating to independent living. At least 7 in 10 who had transitioned out of care felt prepared to live independently, find a job, and pursue their education.

Metro Vancouver youth who felt quite or very prepared to ... (among those who had transitioned out of care and who felt this was a skill they wanted or needed)

Live independently (e.g., do laundry, cook, shop)	78%
Find a job	71%
Pursue education	71%
Cook healthy meals	65%
Access needed health care	62%
Pay their bills/budget	55%
Have a healthy romantic/sexual relationship	55%
Apply for AYA/income assistance/other benefits	54%
Find housing	52%

Youth aged 19 or older whose time in care was extended (e.g., because of the COVID-19 pandemic) were more likely to feel prepared to apply for needed benefits, compared to youth aged 19 or older who had transitioned out of care (81% vs. 55%).



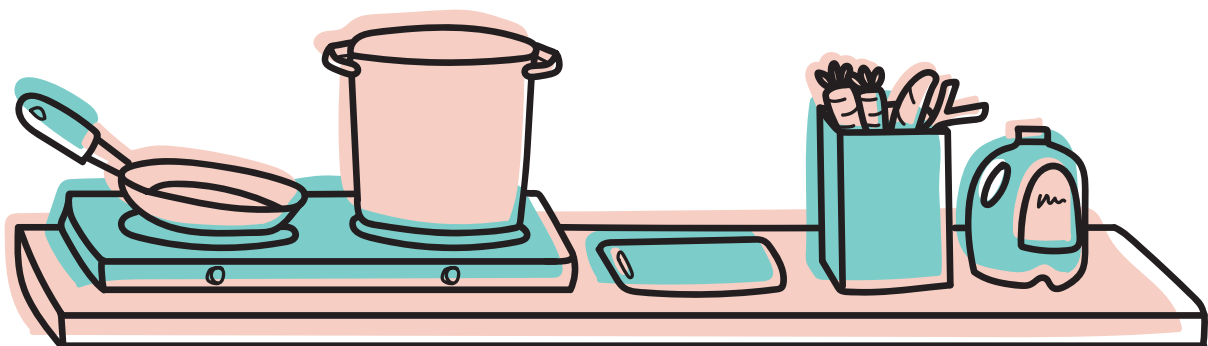
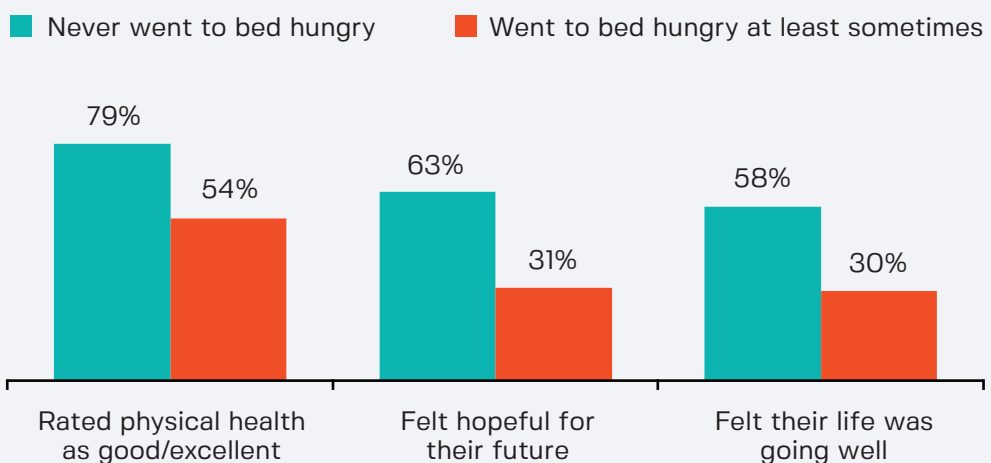
FINANCIAL STABILITY

Financial stability is an important part of youth's successful transition from government care. This includes youth having enough money to meet their basic needs, and being debt free.

Most youth who had transitioned out of care (64%) went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food, including 15% who went to bed hungry often or always. A minority of youth (10%) always ate three meals a day (25% always ate breakfast; 33% lunch; and 58% dinner).

When youth had their basic needs met, their likelihood of experiencing more positive health and well-being increased. For example, youth who never went to bed hungry were more likely to rate their physical health as good or excellent, to feel satisfied with their life, and to feel hopeful for their future compared to those who went to bed hungry at least sometimes. Similarly, youth who consistently had access to three meals a day were more likely to rate as good or excellent their mental health (71% vs. 30%) and emotional health (71% vs. 23%), and to feel good about themselves and their life.

Never going to bed hungry in relation to health and well-being (among Metro Vancouver youth who had transitioned out of care)



Around half of youth who had transitioned out of care were in debt (53% vs. 25% of youth still in care). Among those in debt, credit card debt was the most common type for youth who had transitioned out of care (49%), while owing money to a friend or family member was the most common type of debt for youth still in care (57%). Around a third of youth who had transitioned out of care owed money to a loan agency.

The percentage of youth in and from care who experienced debt increased over time (e.g., from 23% who completed a baseline survey before mid-March 2020, to 50% who completed a baseline survey after May 2022). A rise in credit card debt appeared to be driving this finding.

Most commonly reported causes of youth's debt (among those in debt who had transitioned out of care)	
Credit card	49%
Unpaid bills (Internet, cell phone, etc.)	37%
Owed money to a loan agency	34%
Owed money to a friend or family member	34%
Student loan	29%
Overdraft	14%

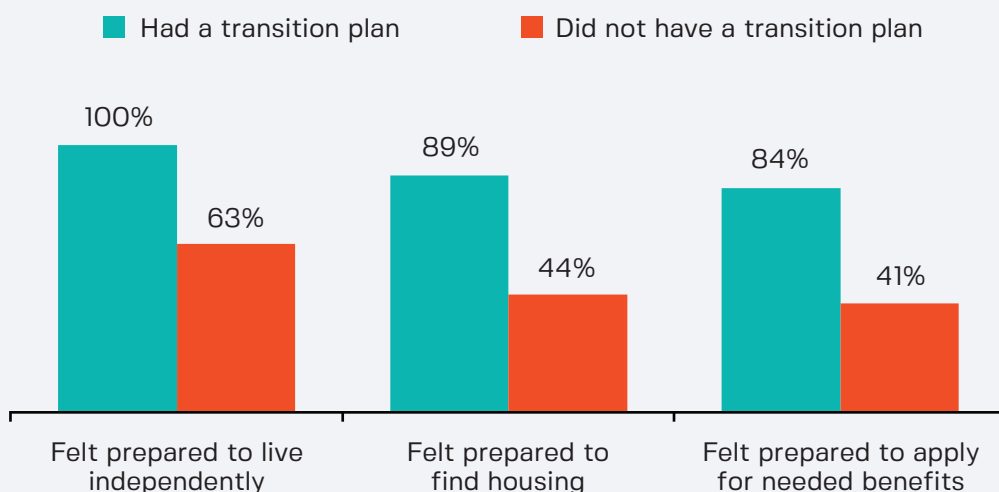
Note: Youth could mark all that applied.



IMPACTS OF TRANSITION PLANNING

Youth who had a transition plan were more likely to feel prepared to live independently, find housing, and apply for any needed benefits, compared to those without a transition plan. The impact of having a transition plan appeared to be maintained six months later.

**Having a transition plan predicting positive outcomes six months later
(among Metro Vancouver youth with care experience)**



YOUTH'S VIEWS ON SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRANSITION OUT OF CARE

Youth were asked an open-ended question about how young people can be better supported to transition out of care. Many youth nearing their transition out of care emphasized the importance of having an adult in their lives who could support them throughout the process. They also mentioned that youth should have access to housing, financial support, mental health services, and support to gain independent-living skills not only before transitioning out of care but also afterwards.

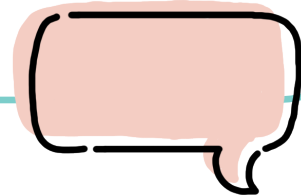


Comments from Metro Vancouver youth nearing their transition out of care on how young people's transition can be better supported ...

"Making sure youth have a home after they age out, making sure they're in a program and/or school, they have a support worker still, there's programs they can do that offer \$ if they need it cause I know it helps me time from time, also that they have a phone and their resumes are up to date. (They should know how to update it themselves too.)"

"Easier reach out teams to get youth onto Agreements who are slipping thru the cracks and literally ending up on these streets. So many young people need 1 solid adult support to get them headed to success. That adult has to be consistent and preferably for longer term."

"Having workers and people of higher power supporting and reaching out instead of leaving it up to the youth."



Youth who had transitioned out of care felt that transition planning should be an intentional and individualized process for all youth transitioning out. They also stated that adult supports should regularly check-in to ensure that youth have what they need to live independently. In addition, they identified the need for more financial supports.

Comments from Metro Vancouver youth who had transitioned out of care on how young people's transition can be better supported ...

"I truly believe that when people age out of foster care there needs to be a very detailed plan of support for them until they turn 25 or 30. Often the plans are very short term and the workers are very short term because they are just working with you until they can transition you out and then often youth go into adult services."

"If young people were given a stable source of income—enough to live comfortably—like CERB provided, they would be able to pursue their dreams without stressing every minute of every day about finances."

"Young people who leave government care can be better supported by providing them with resources such as counselling, case management, job training and placement programs, housing and educational assistance."

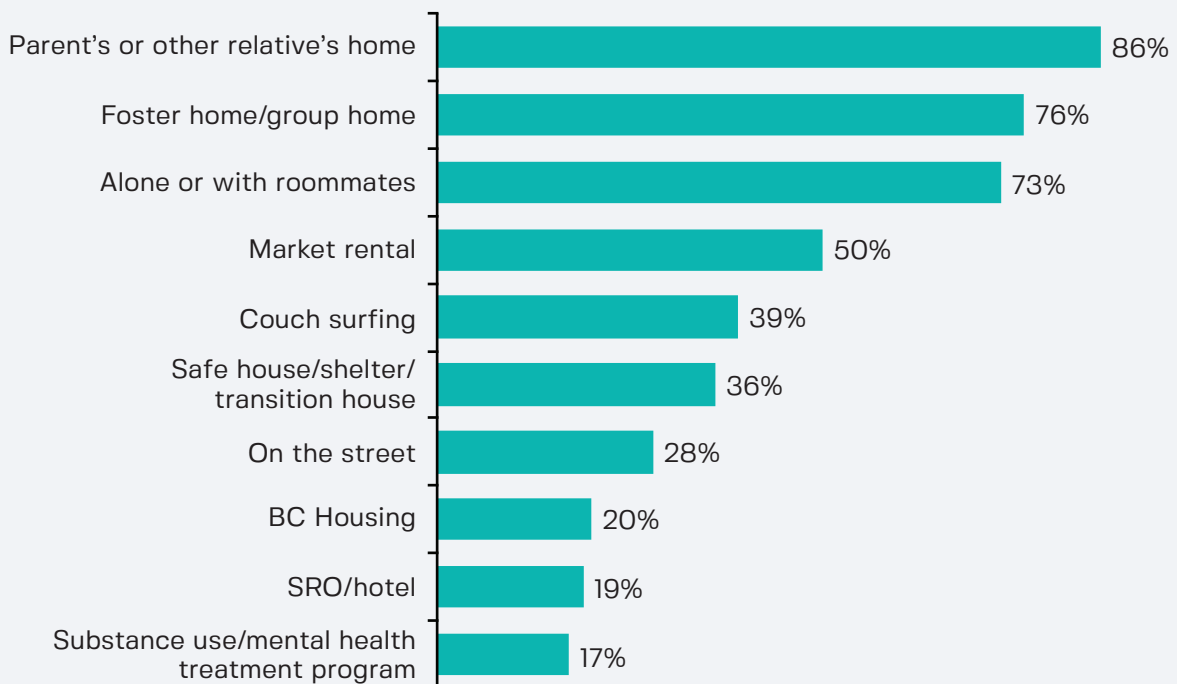
"Keeping a long-term connection with an adult who can give great motivation and encouragement, who follows up with constant consistency, supporting youth thru hard transition."



HOUSING

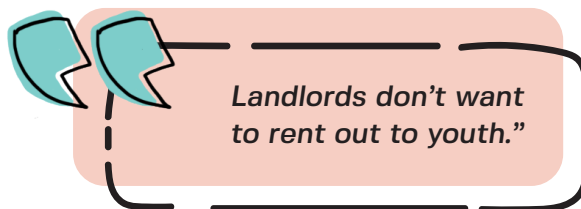
Metro Vancouver youth had experienced a range of living accommodations, including precarious living situations. For example, just over a quarter of youth had been street homeless.

Where Metro Vancouver youth had ever lived

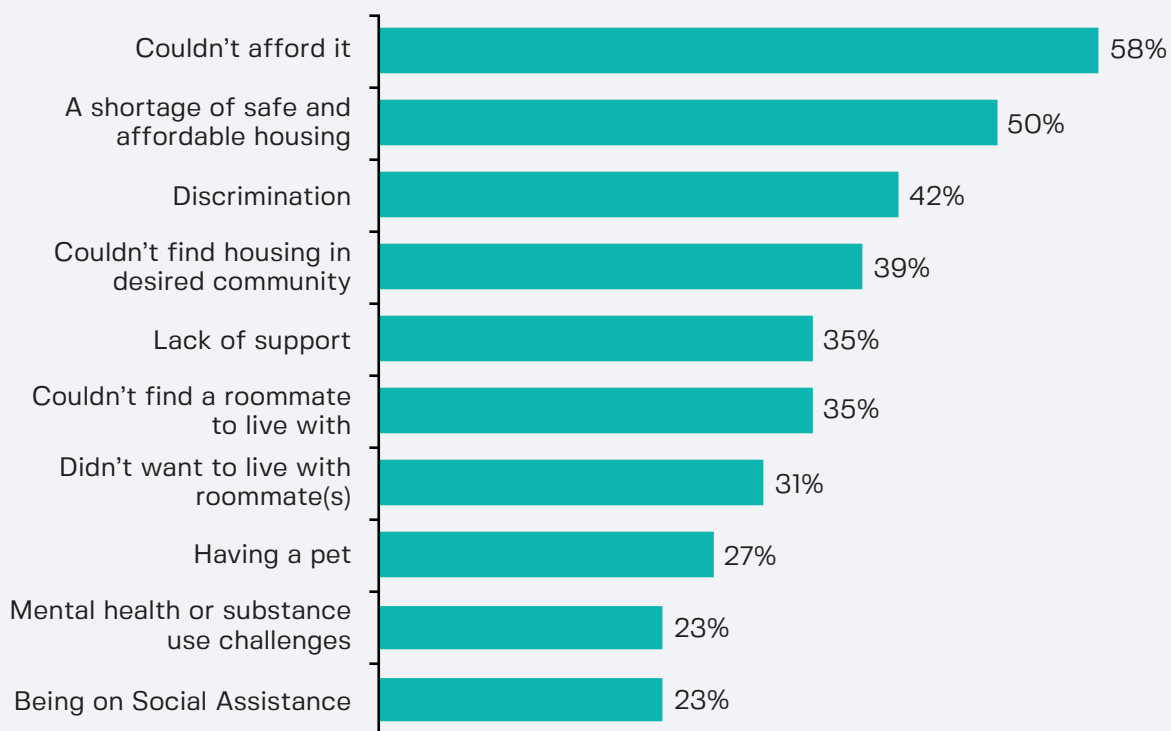


RECENT CHALLENGES FINDING HOUSING

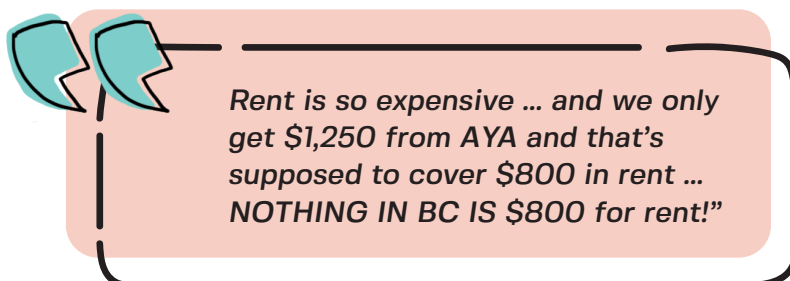
Most youth (81%) who had transitioned out of care had experienced challenges to finding housing in the past six months. Common challenges included being unable to afford housing, as well as a shortage of safe and affordable housing.



Metro Vancouver youth's challenges to finding housing in the past six months (among those who had transitioned out of care and had trouble finding housing)



Note: Youth could mark all that applied.



CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

Among youth who had transitioned out of care, just under half (46%) had moved in the past six months, including 12% who had moved twice or more. They were most commonly currently living in a market rental (41%), and 11% were in BC Housing. Youth were currently living with a roommate/friend/partner (36%), alone (36%), with their biological family (12%), and/or with their children. Nine percent were currently in a youth housing program, and 29% had been in a youth housing program at some point.

Most youth who had transitioned out of care (70%) had understood their tenancy rights and responsibilities before moving into their current accommodation. The majority of youth in a rental accommodation (65%) had signed a tenancy agreement before moving into their current place, and 39% had completed a Condition Inspection report with their landlord (and 19% did not remember if they had completed one).

Around 6 in 10 youth (62%) felt quite or very safe where they were currently living, while 29% felt somewhat safe, and 9% felt only a little or not at all safe. Around a quarter of youth lived with a pet (23% vs. 9% of youth still in care), and most youth who had a pet reported that their pet made them feel safer (89%) and improved their well-being (89%).

Around half of youth (53%) who had transitioned out of care felt their current living situation met their needs. Some added explanations that they were grateful to be housed and to have what they needed to live. Others noted that their current living situation was not ideal for them, such as having a roommate, paying high rent, and staying in a place that was not permanent.

Metro Vancouver youth's comments about their current living situation meeting/not meeting their needs (among those who had transitioned out of care)

"I have a roommate but because of that it's like I'm in care again with all these rules and I don't feel free as I should."

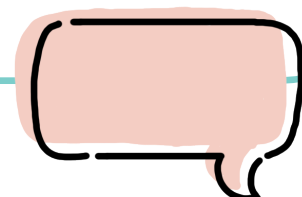
"No proper kitchen and expensive to move anywhere else but I can still cook but not as many options."

"I have everything I need, there is access to food, laundry, heat, and a gym. The place I am in provides what is needed to live."

"It's not permanent so I'm unable to feel completely comfortable."

"Would be great to have a house of my own one day and not pay such high rent."

"I have a roof over my head and food so I am thankful."

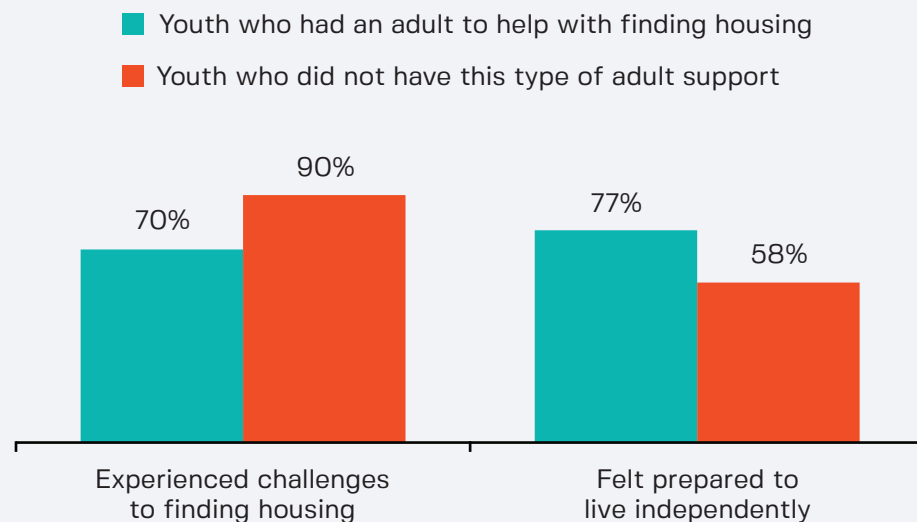


HOUSING STABILITY & SUPPORTS

Experiencing housing stability and safety were linked to positive well-being. For example, youth who felt safe where they were currently living were more likely to report they were satisfied with their life (47% vs. 25% of those who did not feel safe).

Over half of youth who had transitioned out of care (56%) had an adult who helped them with finding housing. Having this type of adult support was linked to more positive housing outcomes. For example, these youth were more likely to report feeling prepared to live independently and were less likely to experience challenges finding housing.

Having an adult who helped with finding housing in relation to housing outcomes (among Metro Vancouver youth)



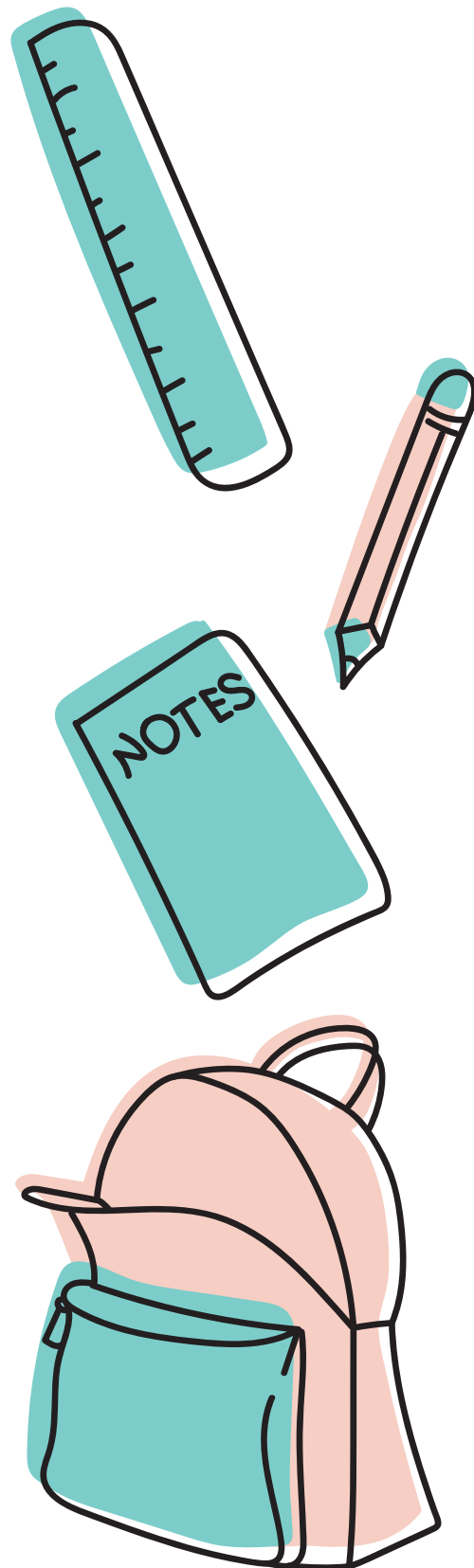
EDUCATION

Among youth nearing their transition out of care, around two thirds (65%) were currently in school (38% in high school and 27% in a post-secondary program).

Among youth who had transitioned out of care, around three quarters (73%) were enrolled in school (61% in post-secondary and 12% in high school or the equivalent). Among those not in school, 56% had stopped going before graduating from high school, while 22% had stopped once they finished high school, 11% sometime after beginning a post-secondary program, and the remainder upon completing post-secondary.

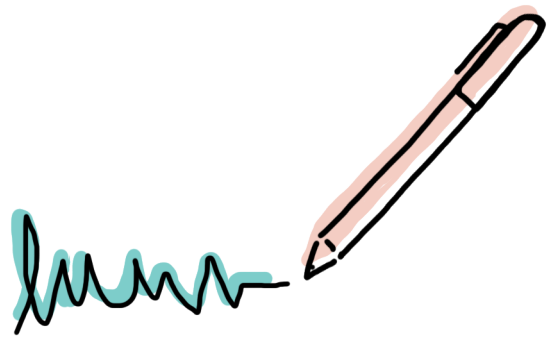
Among youth aged 19 or older, those who had transitioned out of care were more likely to be in a post-secondary program than those who had stayed in care past their 19th birthday (60% vs. 24%).

Among youth who had transitioned out of care, 30% had accessed Adult Basic Education, and 42% had received a tuition waiver.

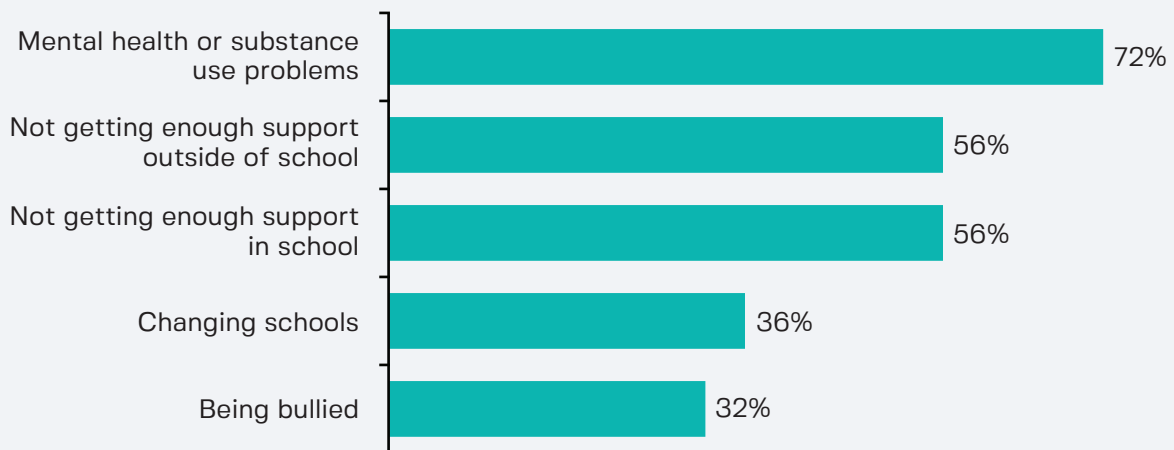


CHALLENGES GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL

Around 8 in 10 youth (81%) had experienced challenges to graduating from high school. They most commonly reported mental health or substance use challenges, and not getting enough support inside and outside of school, as barriers to graduating.



Metro Vancouver youth's most commonly reported challenges to graduating from high school (among those who had transitioned out of care and had experienced such challenges)



Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

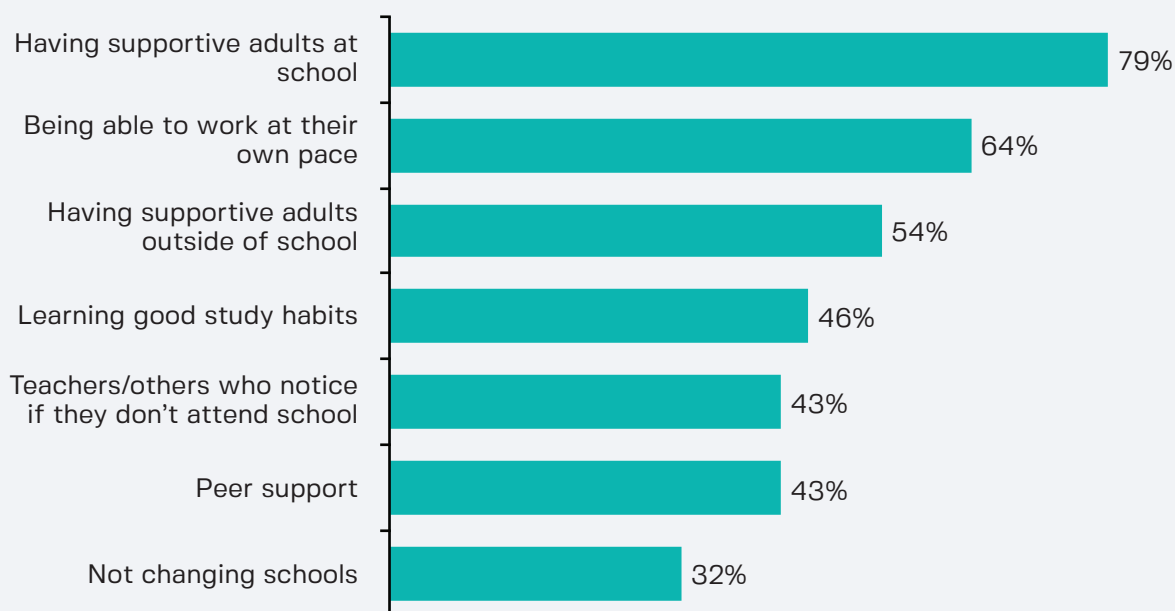


EDUCATION SUPPORTS

Findings are among youth who had transitioned out of care, unless otherwise noted.

Most youth (90%) identified supports that had helped them to do well in school. These included having supportive adults at school and being able to work at their own pace.

Supports that helped Metro Vancouver youth do well at school (among those who had transitioned out of care and felt the question applied to them)

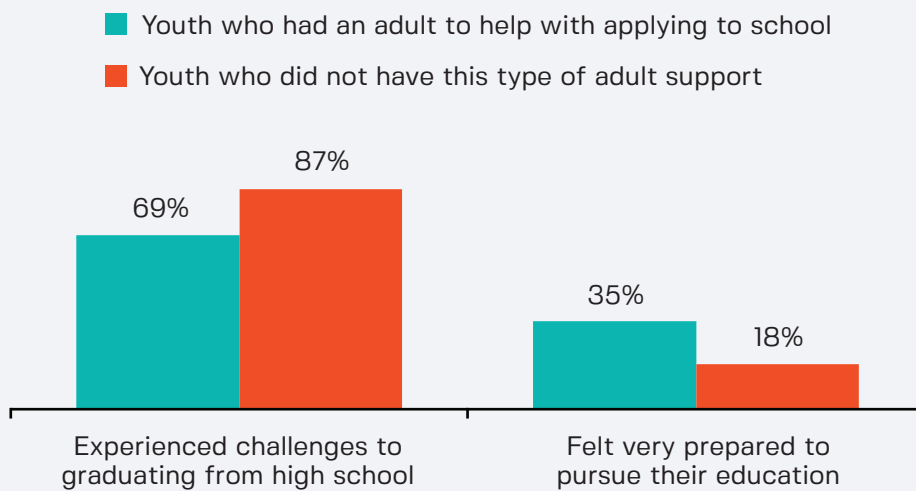


Note: Youth could mark all that applied.



Over half of youth (58%) had an adult in their life to help them with applying for school (e.g., post-secondary). These youth were more likely to feel very prepared to pursue their education. They were also less likely to have experienced challenges to graduating from high school.

Having an adult who helped with applying for school in relation to education outcomes (among Metro Vancouver youth)



EMPLOYMENT & OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

Findings are among youth who had transitioned out of care, unless otherwise noted.

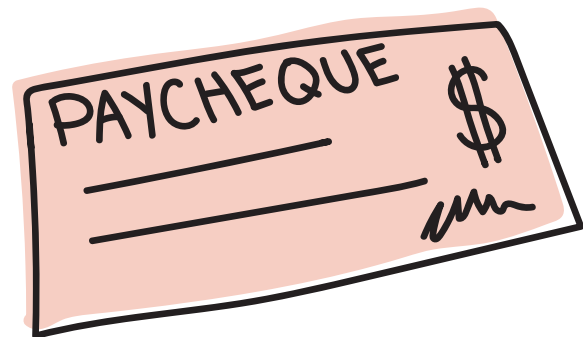
Most youth were currently working (65% vs. 49% of youth still in care), and around 3 in 10 were working 20 or more hours a week (32% vs. 16% of youth still in care). Just under half (48%) were actively looking for a job.

The majority of youth (62%) had experienced at least one barrier to getting or keeping a job in the past six months. Their most commonly identified barriers were mental health, substance use, or other health challenges (52%); competing commitments (e.g., school, childcare; 43%); and government funding restrictions (33%; they could mark all barriers that applied).

Most youth had at least one source of income (97% vs. 87% of those still in care). Common sources of income for youth who had transitioned out of care included a legal job and an AYA.

For youth still in care, common sources of money were a legal job (40%), Youth Agreement (35%), family members (22%), a youth program (15%), and honoraria (13%).

Most youth reported having a bank account (96% vs. 83% of youth still in care), including 83% who had an active bank account (vs. 69%).



Most common sources of income (among Metro Vancouver youth who had transitioned out of care)

A legal job	52%
AYA (Agreement with Young Adults)	42%
Bursary/scholarship	27%
YEOF (Youth Education Assistance Fund)	15%
Family	14%
A youth program	12%
PWD (Person with Disabilities benefit)	9%
Honoraria	9%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, & CULTURE

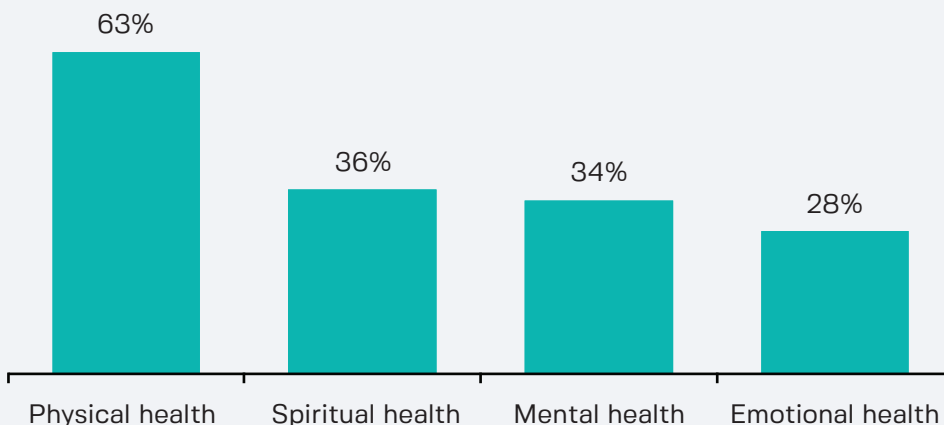
Findings are among youth who had transitioned out of care, unless otherwise noted.

HEALTH

The majority of youth reported good or excellent physical health, while a minority rated their spiritual, mental, and emotional health this way.

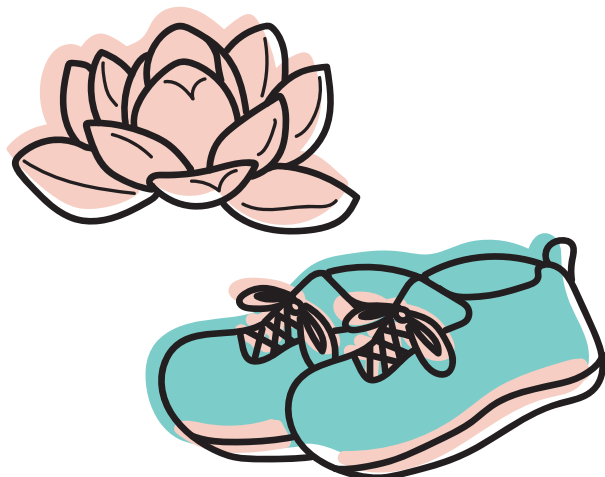


Metro Vancouver youth who rated their health as good or excellent (among those who had transitioned out of care)



Over half of youth (58%) reported having a mental health condition, and 16% had an addiction to alcohol, cannabis, or another substance. Around a quarter (24%) reported having a learning disability, and 15% had a condition which was long term or chronic.

Among youth with a health condition or disability, around two thirds (64%) reported that it prevented them from doing things that other youth their age could do (e.g., playing sports, participating in school activities, getting together with friends).



VIEWS ON LIFE & SELF

Under half of youth felt satisfied with their life, such as reporting having a good life (45%), their life was going well (40%), and having what they want in life (30%). Around 4 in 10 (42%) wished they had a different life.

Around 1 in 5 youth (21%) often or always felt good about themselves, while most youth (76%) could identify something they were good at. They commonly specified being good at art, music, sports, and video games. When asked what they were most proud of, a number of youth described feeling proud of themselves for overcoming challenges in their lives and for pursuing their goals.



Some of Metro Vancouver youth's comments on what they were most proud of ...

"Staying on track and keeping a good GPA even though it is hard at times."

"I am most proud of my ability to come back from a bad situation and continue into university despite the challenges I faced as a teen."

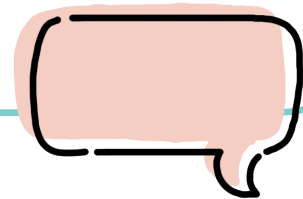
"I am proud of myself and my journey."

"My recovery [from] substance abuse."

"My mental health now."

"Being the first in my family to go to university."

"Myself, I came a long way."



HOPEFULNESS & GOALS

Around 4 in 10 youth (42%) often or always felt hopeful for their future. Hopefulness among youth with care experience has steadily increased over time. For example, before mid-March 2020, 17% of youth felt hopeful, which increased to just under half (46%) more recently, after May 2022.

The majority of youth with care experience (83%) had set goals for themselves for the next six months. Common goals included continuing or completing their education, budgeting and saving money, pursuing employment, and taking steps to improve their physical and mental health.

Just over half of youth (55%) had experienced barriers to achieving their goals. When asked to specify, their commonly identified barriers included mental health challenges, financial insecurity, and a lack of support to help them achieve their goals.



Some of Metro Vancouver youth's goals for the next six months (among those who had transitioned out of care)

"Find a more stable job that will give me experience in my desired field."

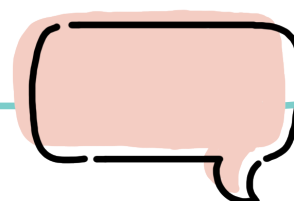
"Get some physical activity at least twice every week."

"Save up money to live independently while in school. And also get my driver's license."

"To be able to budget more, and complete 2 more semesters of college to get closer to my goal."

"Volunteer with local non-profits."

"See my counsellor regularly."



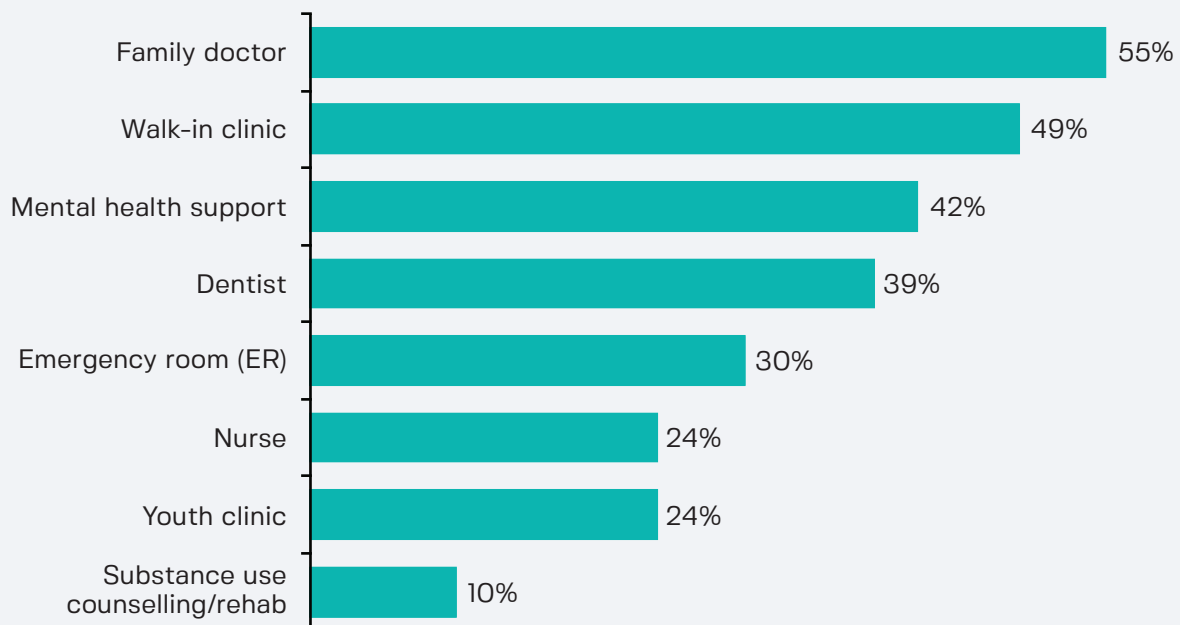
ACCESSING SERVICES & SUPPORTS

Over half of youth (58%) needed medical help in the past six months, with 34% reporting they did not get the medical help they needed. Also, 66% of youth felt they required mental health services in the past six months, and around 6 in 10 of these youth (64%) reported they did not get the support they needed.

In terms of health services accessed in the past six months, around half of youth had accessed family doctors and/or walk-in clinics, and around 4 in 10 had accessed mental health supports and/or dentists (they could mark all that applied).



Health-related services and providers that Metro Vancouver youth accessed in the past six months (among those who had transitioned out of care)



Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Youth had also accessed other supports and services in the past six months, including education supports (58%), youth employment supports (42%), and online support services (33%). The majority of youth who had accessed these services found them helpful; for example, 9 in 10 youth (90%) found education support services to be helpful.

Most youth (87%) had the ID they needed (e.g., a BC services card or birth certificate). Also, over half (57%) had access to necessary technology (e.g., cell phone, internet connection, laptop). Those who did not have access to this technology most commonly identified a laptop as what they needed.

When asked an open-ended question about what services and supports they currently needed, youth commonly identified counselling, as well as consistent one-on-one support to help them gain life-skills.

Comments from Metro Vancouver youth on supports and services they needed now (among those who had transitioned out of care)

"One-on-one counselling would be very beneficial. The only counselling [my community] offers is group counselling and I am really not ready for that."

"I need more consistent workers, I've [gone] through two case managers in the last two months because they keep moving ... I need a support that can help me on a weekly or every two-week basis with life skills."

"I need a counsellor and I need more financial support."

"Housing support."

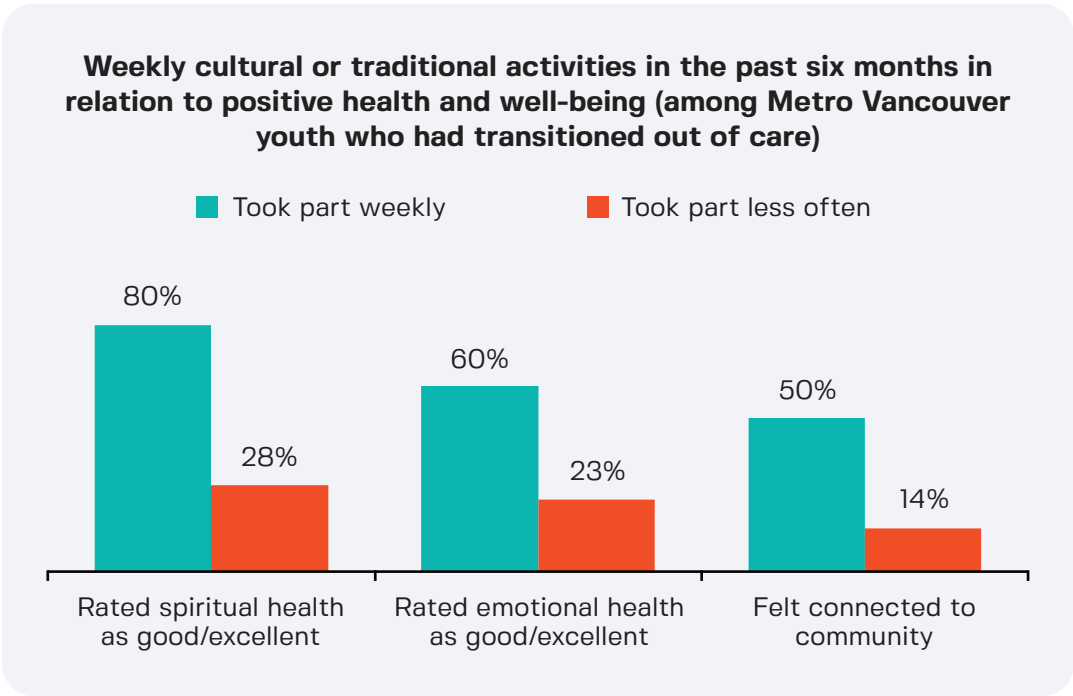
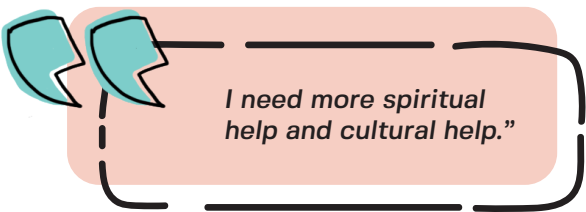
"Dentist but it's too expensive."



CULTURAL INVOLVEMENT & SUPPORTS

The majority of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth (64%) were involved in cultural or traditional activities in the past six months. This included 15% who were involved on a weekly basis.

Youth who took part weekly in these activities were more likely to report good or excellent spiritual health and emotional health, and to feel connected to their community, compared to youth who took part less often.



Around a quarter of youth (24%) had accessed cultural supports in the past six months, and 63% found the support helpful. Among Indigenous youth, 39% had accessed cultural supports, and 73% found the support helpful.

Accessing cultural supports had positive associations with health and well-being. For example, youth with care experience who had accessed cultural supports in the past six months were more likely than those who had not accessed these supports to rate as good or excellent their spiritual health (54% vs. 36%), emotional health (51% vs. 24%), and mental health (49% vs. 25%).

MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Findings are among youth who had transitioned out of care, unless otherwise noted.

SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

Most youth (86%) reported having an adult in their life who cared about them. Also, most (61%) could identify an adult they would talk to if they were having a really good or bad day. This included an adult they knew socially (50%) and/or an adult they had met through services (24%).

Among youth who were 19 or older, 58% had maintained connections to service providers and staff members they had known before they had transitioned out of care.

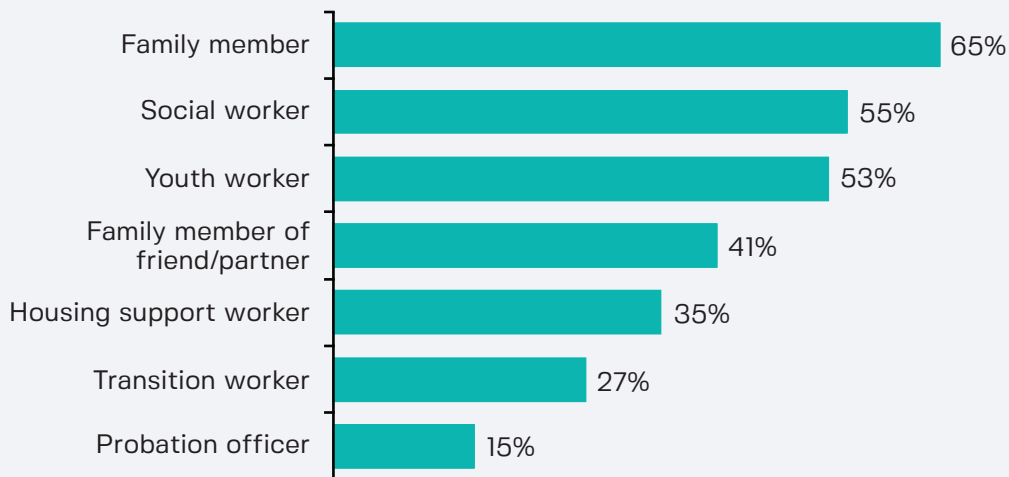
Youth with care experience who could identify a supportive adult in their life were less likely to miss out on accessing needed medical care (23% missed out vs. 60% of youth without a supportive adult) and mental health services (37% vs. 79%) in the past six months. They were also more likely to feel satisfied with their life.



More than 5 in 10 youth had approached a family member, social worker, and/or youth worker for help in the past six months. When youth approached an adult for help, they generally found the support helpful. For example, most found helpful the support they had received from a youth worker (88%), housing support worker (85%), and social worker (70%).

Finding the support helpful was linked to positive health and well-being. For example, those who felt their youth worker was helpful were more likely to feel prepared to live independently (76% vs. 41% who did not find the support helpful). Similarly, having a helpful social worker was associated with youth feeling more prepared to pay their bills and budget (57% vs. 37%; among those who had approached a social worker for help).

People whom Metro Vancouver youth had approached for help in the past six months (among those who had transitioned out of care)



PEERS

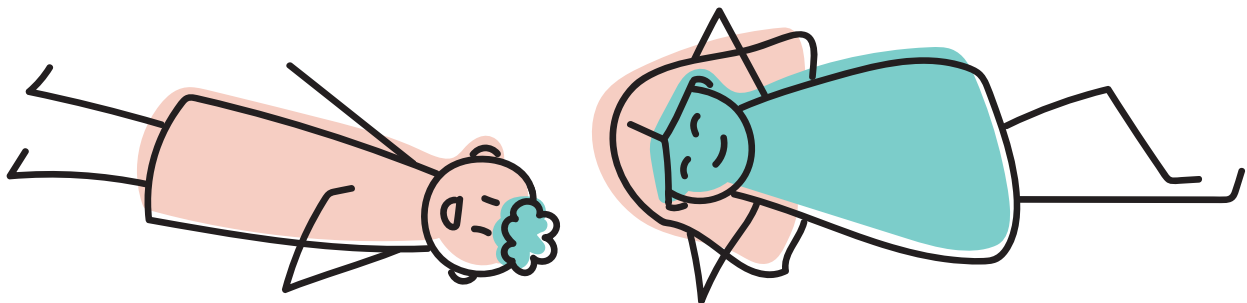
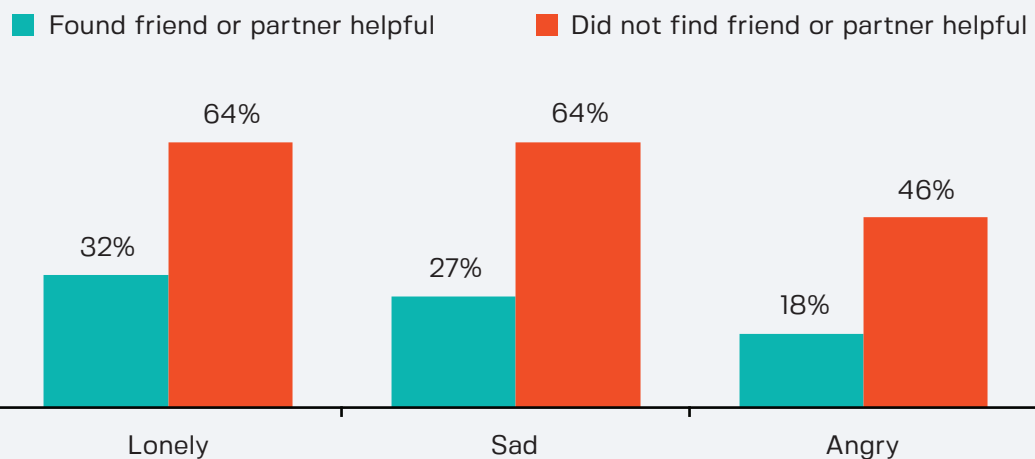
Almost all youth who had transitioned out of care (96%) had at least one close friend, including 47% who had three or more. Around half (49%) had at least one friend with government care experience.

Youth who had at least one friend with care experience were less likely to often or always feel stressed compared to youth who had no friends with care experience (49% vs. 67%).

Around four in 10 youth (38%) had a young person in their life they could talk to if they were having a really good or bad day. Most youth (80%) had asked a friend or partner for help in the past six months, and the vast majority (94%) had found it helpful.

Among youth with care experience who had asked a friend or partner for help, those who found the support helpful were less likely to feel lonely, sad, and angry compared to those who did not find the support helpful.

Metro Vancouver youth who had a helpful friend or partner in relation to often or always feeling ... (among those with care experience who had asked for help)

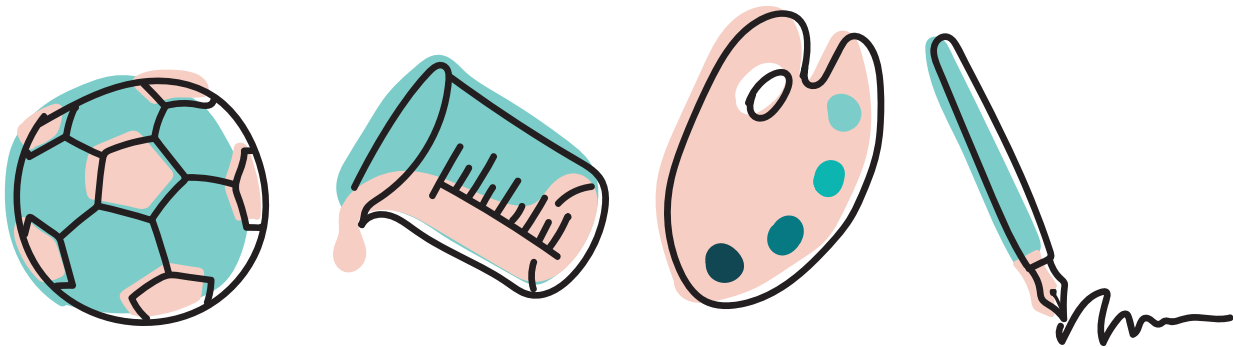
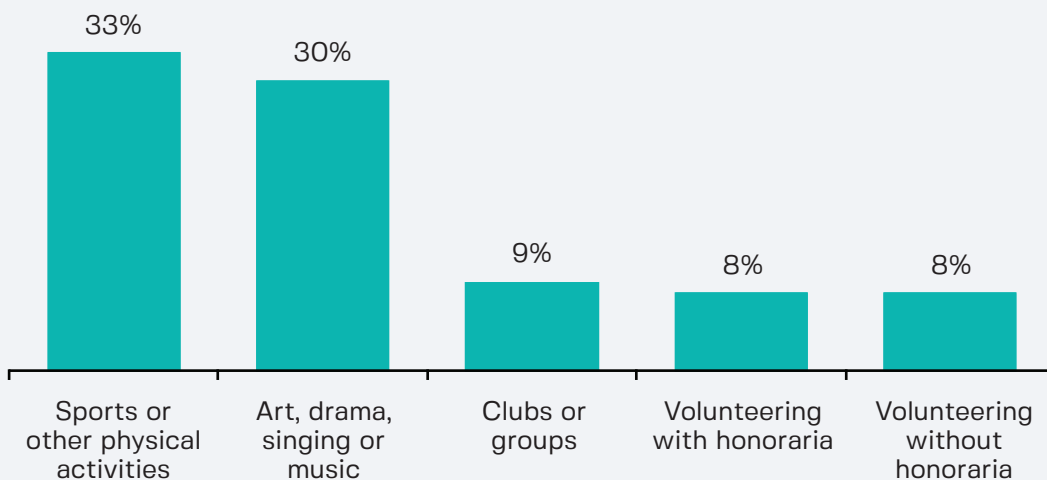


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONNECTION

Youth took part in a variety of community activities in the past six months. For example, a third had participated in sports or other physical activities on a weekly basis.

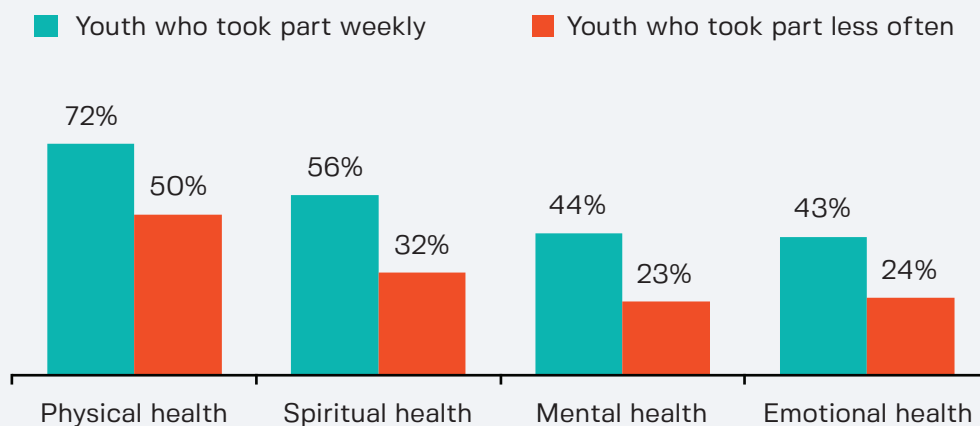


**Weekly involvement in extracurricular activities in the past six months
(among Metro Vancouver youth who had transitioned out of care)**



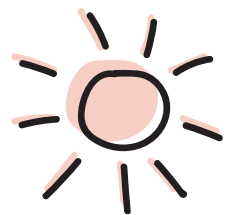
Involvement in weekly sports and other physical activities in the community was associated with positive health and well-being among youth with care experience. For example, youth who participated weekly were more likely to rate their health as good or excellent, compared to those who took part less often.

Metro Vancouver youth with care experience who took part in weekly sports or other physical activities in the past six months in relation to good or excellent health ratings



A fifth of youth (20%) felt quite or very connected to their community, and another 42% felt somewhat connected, while the rest felt only a little or not at all connected to their community.

Youth in and from care who reported feeling quite or very connected to their community were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (49% vs. 25% of those who felt less connected), emotional health (46% vs. 26%), and spiritual health (73% vs. 31%). They were also less likely to have missed out on accessing needed mental health care (28% vs. 56%) and other community services and supports they felt they needed (e.g., life-skills support, employment supports; 25% vs. 50%).



FINAL THOUGHTS & NEXT STEPS

Findings in this report were organized based on TRRUST Collective Impact's clusters which focus on housing; education; employment; health, wellness, and culture; and meaningful connections.

Findings showed some improvements over the course of this study, such as in youth's hope for their future. It may be that increased MCFD supports that were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, and other recent changes announced by MCFD to improve the experiences of youth transitioning out of care, have contributed to youth's enhanced sense of hopefulness. The findings also highlighted challenges among Metro Vancouver youth who have transitioned out of care, such as debt and employment barriers. The results can help to inform TRRUST's future work in order to improve outcomes for youth transitioning out of care in Vancouver.

Presentations & workshops

The YRA are available to present findings from this report and to host interactive workshops to facilitate discussions based on the findings, with youth and with adults who support youth in and from care. To schedule a presentation or workshop, please email erin@mcs.bc.ca.



Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants

The Trevor Coburn Memorial Grants are available to BC youth (up to age 29) wanting to carry out projects to support BC youth facing barriers, including youth with experiences of homelessness, substance use challenges, and government care. For more information or to apply, please visit mcs.bc.ca/trevor_coburn_memorial_grants.



McCreary
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YOUTH
RESEARCH
ACADEMY

