

## What can homelessness prevention look like?

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1

## Aim of the presentation



Briefly share the findings of the study on a survey on homelessness in Prince Albert



Discuss what ideas we can learn from it to promote upstream interventions

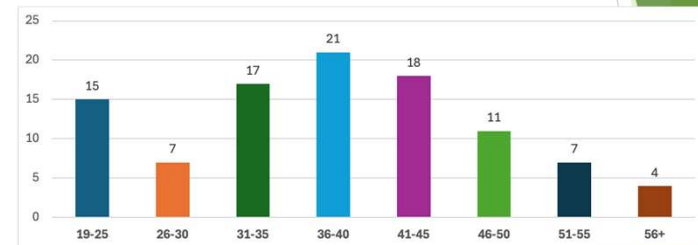
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## Homeless prevention in Prince Albert is on the rise

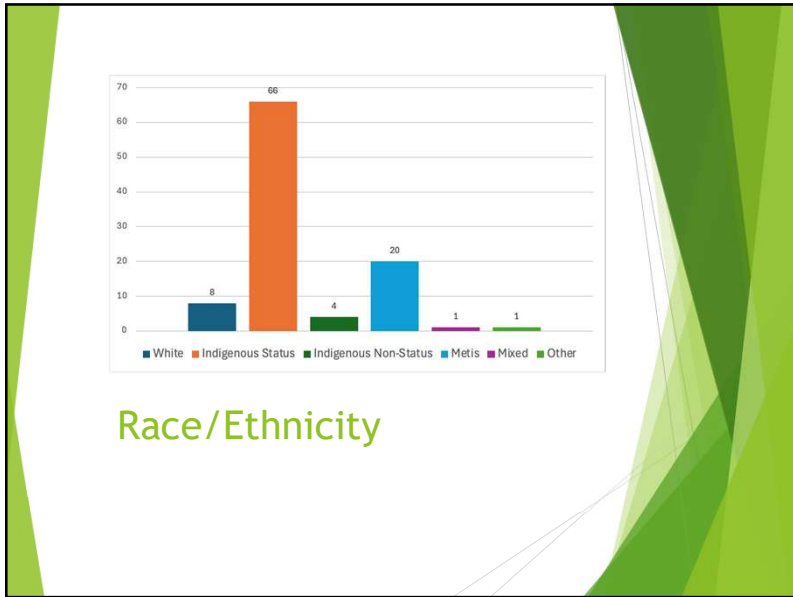
- ▶ Recap of the findings of the survey on homelessness in
- ▶ In 2025, we conducted a survey on sociodemographic and clinical characteristics of PEH in PA
  - ▶ 90% of those we surveyed had an encounter with the child welfare system at some point in their lives
  - ▶ A brief snapshot of their sociodemographic and clinical characteristics
  - ▶ The big question we want to pose, what can we learn about this data that can inform prevention rather than management
  - ▶ Is it about time we seriously reframe our conversation on preventing/upstream interventions even as we talk about downstream?

3

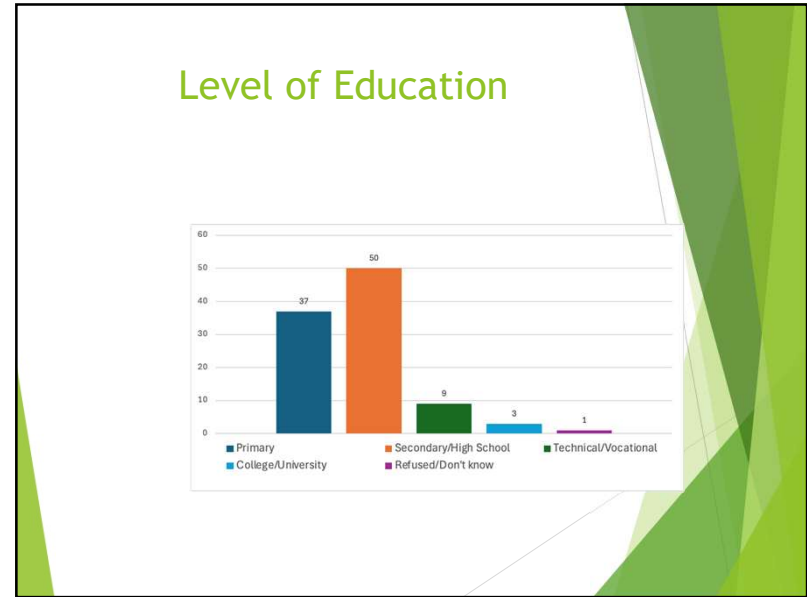
## Age of PEH



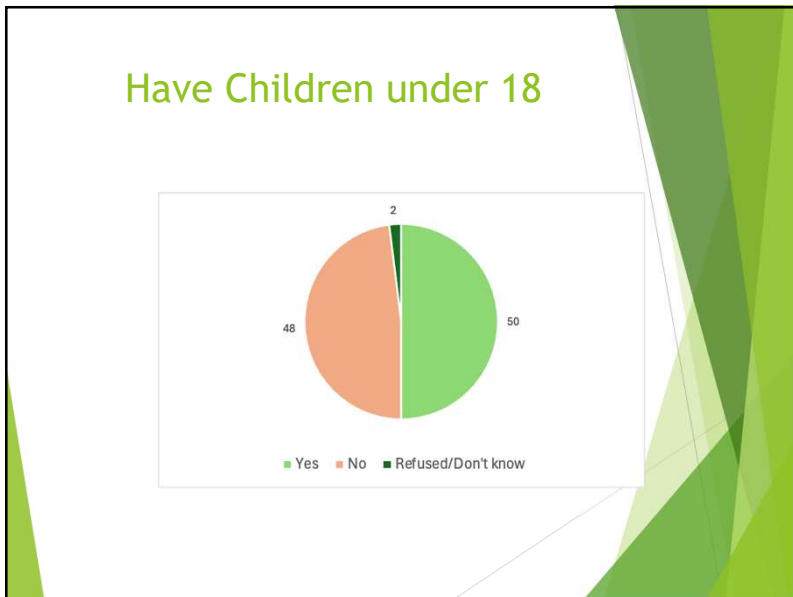
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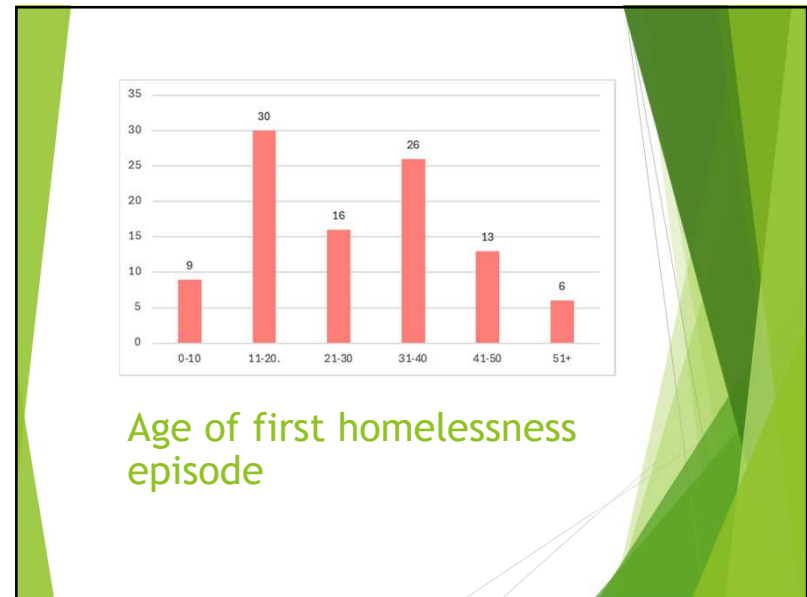
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8



## Reasons for homelessness

**Personal**

- Independence
- Mental health issues

**Interpersonal**

- Kinship issues
- Interpersonal conflict
- Tenant-landlord issues
- Uninvited guests causing trouble
- Death of a loved one/room mate issues
- Suspension from transitional home due to medical incomppliance

**Community /society**

- ▶ Fire
- ▶ Pandemic and health issues
- ▶ Interaction with CJS hindering return home
- ▶ Condemned home no alternative
- ▶ Kicked off reserve
- ▶ High rent
- ▶ Safety issues

13

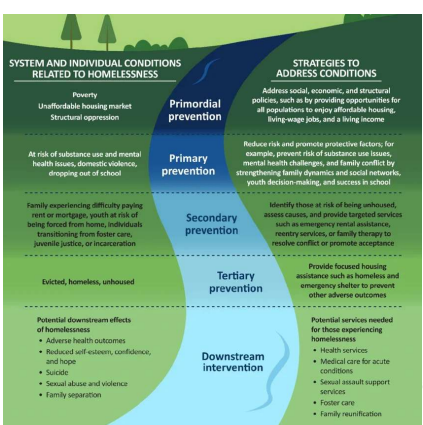
## Visible interventions in PA

- ▶ Downstream
  - ▶ Complex need facility
  - ▶ Permanent shelter
  - ▶ Transitional homes
  - ▶ Affordable housing program
  - ▶ Case management program
  - ▶ ? Prevention programs



14

## Upstream or downstream (Akers et al., 2023).



**SYSTEM AND INDIVIDUAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO HOMELESSNESS**

- Poverty
- Unaffordable housing market
- Structural oppression

At risk of substance use and mental health issues, domestic violence, dropping out of school

Family experiencing difficulty paying rent or mortgage, youth at risk of being forced from home, individuals transitioning from foster care, juvenile justice, or incarceration

Evicted, homeless, unshoused

**Potential downstream effects of homelessness**

- Adverse health outcomes
- Reduced self-esteem, confidence, and hope
- Suicide
- Sexual abuse and violence
- Family separation

**STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS CONDITIONS**

Address social, economic, and structural policies, such as by providing opportunities for all populations to enjoy affordable housing, living-wage jobs, and a living income

Reduce risk and promote protective factors, for example, prevent risk of substance use issues, mental health challenges, and family conflict by strengthening family dynamics and social networks, youth decision-making, and success in school

Identify those at risk of being unshoused, assess causes, and provide targeted services such as emergency rental assistance, money services, or family therapy to resolve conflict or promote acceptance

Provide focused housing assistance such as homeless and emergency shelter to prevent other adverse outcomes

**Potential services needed for those experiencing homelessness**

- Health services
- Medical care for acute conditions
- Small respite support services
- Foster care
- Family reunification

15

## Do we know enough about the risks that we can think of prevention rather than management ?

- ▶ Strengthening families
  - ▶ Dysfunctional families are a significant risk factor for homelessness
    - ▶ Insecure attachment
    - ▶ Risk for mental health
    - ▶ Risk for neglect
    - ▶ And other childhood experiences
- ▶ Making CWS experiences safer
  - ▶ 90% experienced child welfare involvement
  - ▶ Higher risks: education disruption, trauma, mental health

16

## Upstream Strategies

- ▶ Educational continuity
  - ▶ Early screening and intervention
  - ▶ Substance use prevention
  - ▶ Mentorship programs
  - ▶ School retention intervention
- ▶ AIM: make at risk thrive and not just survive

17

## The new study

- ▶ Co-creating Youth homelessness education intervention in Prince Albert, SK: Community-based research
- ▶ This study is informed by the findings that 90% of PEH we surveyed had interaction with CWS
- ▶ RQs:
  - ▶ What are the risks of homelessness for indigenous youth in Prince Albert?
  - ▶ How can indigenous youth be best supported to articulate the risks for homelessness they face?
  - ▶ How can community partners be mobilized to mitigate risks faced by Indigenous youth in Prince Albert?
- ▶ Population of interest
  - ▶ Interview youth (18-25) with CWS experiences but not homeless
  - ▶ Service providers including MSS with experiences working with this population

18

## To ponder

- ▶ What changes do we need to make in the policy and programming if we deem interaction with CWS a risk factor to future homelessness?

19

## Discussion questions

If we are to assume that children in child welfare system are at risk of future homelessness, how would our practices change?

What would it take to emphasize Upstream intervention for this population to guarantee safe transition out of care?

20

## References

- ▶ Akers, L., Tippins, J., Hauan, S., & Lynch-Smith, M. (2023). Advancing Primary Prevention in Human Services: Convening Findings. US Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy.