



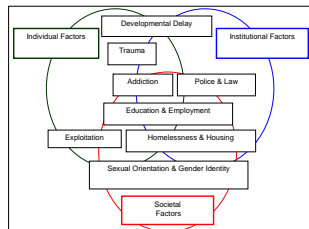
Evaluating Shout Clinic's Role in Providing Health Services to Street Youth in Toronto, Kristy Buccieri and Shout Clinic

This poster highlights the findings of an environmental scan and needs assessment commissioned by Shout Clinic, a City of Toronto community health centre. The project took place between the months of May and August 2008 and was made possible by a student internship through York University's Knowledge Mobilization Unit. The purpose of the study was to seek the opinions of social service providers on three key issues: (1) the changing needs of Toronto street youth within the past three to five years, with a keen focus on health related issues, (2) the spectrum of services available to street youth in downtown Toronto and (3) an assessment of the scope and effectiveness of Shout Clinic within the spectrum of these services. The goal of the study was to help the clinic improve its services and develop key strategic directions. A total of twenty social service providers were interviewed from nine downtown street youth serving agencies. These agencies included Shout Clinic, Sherbourne Health Centre, Covenant House, Evergreen, Central Toronto Youth Services, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Turning Point Youth Services, Leap of Faith's Street Outreach Services, and Youthlink Inner City. The results of the interviews were compiled into a report entitled "Evaluating Shout Clinic's Role in Providing Health Services to Street Youth in Toronto." This report was distributed by Shout Clinic to each of the nine agencies involved as a means of increasing communication between agencies that are serving similar and/or overlapping populations.

Purpose

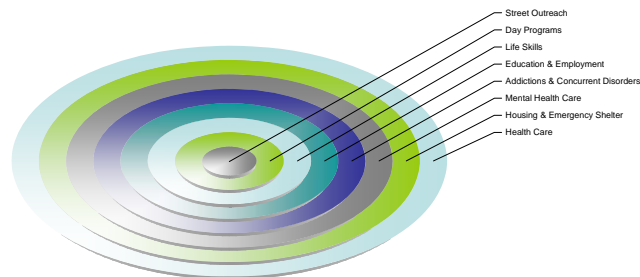
Shout Clinic is a City of Toronto Community Health Centre based in downtown Toronto. Their mandate is to provide health care for street involved youth under the age of 25. The staff at Shout Clinic have a strong understanding of their client base, but also know that street youth are a challenging group with unique needs. Street youth are a diverse group, often made up of people from different races/ethnicities, religions, ages, gender identities, and sexual orientations. As a result of their lifestyles they face many challenges that domiciled youth do not. The management at Shout Clinic wanted to gain a better understanding of the street youth population in Toronto and the services that other agencies provide to help them. They planned to use this information to reassess the current services at Shout Clinic and to make improvements.

Findings



The results of the study indicate that street youth in Toronto face barriers related to trauma, addiction, sexual orientation and gender identity, exploitation, developmental delay, lack of education and employment, encounters with police and the law, and a lack of stable housing. The health of street youth in Toronto appears to be on the decline, as they commonly suffer from infections, pain, injuries, upper respiratory issues, skin conditions, and foot problems. In recent years there has been an increase in eye problems, malnutrition, dental problems, and pregnancy. The mental health status of street youth is equally concerning. The most common mental health illnesses are depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, trauma disorders, bipolar disorder, and paranoid personality disorder. Recently there has been a perceived increase in major mental illnesses and concurrent disorders.

The agencies involved in this study offered eight main types of services for street youth. From the most commonly offered to least commonly offered, these services include 'health care', 'housing & emergency shelter', 'mental health care', 'addictions & concurrent disorders', 'education & employment', 'life skills', 'day programs', and 'street outreach'. As the diagram suggests, these programs are intricately connected. Programming is needed to address the increases in developmental delay, complex mental health disorders, concurrent disorders, and health issues such as malnutrition, declining vision, and dental problems.



Outcomes

Throughout the course of this project it came to light that many of the agencies were struggling with the same issues as Shout Clinic. To address this, Shout Clinic has distributed copies of the final report to each of the nine agencies involved. This project has brought agencies together who previously did not have a formal relationship. Shout Clinic is using the information gained in this study to make strategic programming decisions for their future. The report has been distributed to the board of directors as well as to staff at Shout Clinic. With this information they are in a better position to improve their programming and help meet the many needs of the street youth in Toronto.

References

Buccieri, K. (2008). *Evaluating Shout Clinic's role in providing health services to street youth in Toronto*. Toronto: Shout Clinic.

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Knowledge Mobilization at York

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