

2. PFC Student Worksheet - What is youth homelessness?

“Youth homelessness” refers to the situation and experience of young people between the ages of 13 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire a stable, safe or consistent residence.



1 in 5
shelter users
are youth

Youth homelessness is a complex social issue because as a society we have failed to provide young people and their families with the necessary and adequate supports that will enable them to move forward with their lives in a safe and planned way. In addition to experiencing economic deprivation and a lack of secure housing, many young people who are homeless lack the personal experience of living independently and at the same time may be in the throes of significant developmental (social, physical, emotional and cognitive) changes. As a result, they may not have the resources, resilience, education, social supports or life skills necessary to foster a safe and nurturing transition to adulthood and independence. Few young people choose to be homeless, nor wish to be defined by their homelessness, and the experience is generally negative and stressful.



2:1
male to female ratio
in youth shelters

Youth homelessness is the denial of basic human rights and once identified as such, it must be remedied. All young people have the right to the essentials of life, including adequate housing, food, safety, education and justice.



25 - 40%
of youth experiencing
homelessness self-identified
as LGBTQ

(Gaetz, 2014)

The degrees of **homelessness**:

- “1) **Unsheltered**, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;
- 2) **Emergency Sheltered**, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence;
- 3) **Provisionally Accommodated**, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure and finally,
- 4) **At Risk of Homelessness**, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.”

(Canadian Homelessness Research Network, 2012).

Canadian Homelessness Research Network. (2012). *Canadian Definition of Homelessness*. Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition-1pager.pdf>

Gaetz, S. (2014). *Coming of Age: Reimagining the Response to Youth Homelessness in Canada*. Toronto: The Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.