



2a. PFC Student Worksheet – Responding to Youth Homelessness



“First, one can focus on **prevention**, which is to **invest in supports** and the **coordination of services** so as to reduce the likelihood that people will become homeless in the first place. In addressing youth homelessness, this means working ‘upstream’ to **identify those at risk** of homelessness and putting in place interventions that greatly reduce the risk that young people will become homelessness.”
 (Gaetz, 2014).

“The second approach, the **emergency response**, is the set of interventions available to someone once they become homeless. The goal here is to provide **emergency supports** in order to address basic and pressing needs for shelter and food, for instance, in order to lessen the immediate impact of homelessness on individuals and communities. Some communities have emergency shelters and supports designed specifically for youth, other places do not. The ‘emergency response’ can also include the use of law enforcement. This includes enactment of special laws to prohibit the activities of homeless people and/or more extensive use of enforcement measures such as regular stop and searches, ticketing and arrest.

(O’Grady et al., 2011).

The third response supports **rapid transitions** out of homelessness through the provision of appropriate accommodation and supports. The goal is to get people into **housing** and give them the supports needed (income, health care and other assistance, for instance) to ensure they do not fall back into homelessness. For young people, for whom staying with parents or caregivers is no longer an option, it means ensuring a planned and safe exit via appropriate accommodation and supports (if necessary).

(Gaetz, 2014).



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

O’Grady, B., Gaetz, S. & Buccieri, K. (2011). *Can I see your ID? The policing of homeless youth in Toronto*. Homeless Hub Research Report Series #5. Toronto, ON: Homeless Hub.

PFC in a Tweet! Follow us on Twitter @pushforchange each school day for class discussions #ReadySetJoe!

THE UPSTREAM PROJECT

The best way to address youth homelessness?

By working *upstream* to prevent it from occurring in the first place.



Countries such as Australia have achieved great success in addressing youth homelessness by developing integrated community responses that operate within the school system. **Why schools?** Because virtually every young person who becomes homeless was in school at one point, and very likely was in contact with an adult (teacher, guidance counselor, coach) who knew something was wrong but, didn't know how to help.

1. IDENTIFY & ASSESS



Identify students at-risk of homelessness, using a proven screening method (*Student Needs Survey*)



2. CONNECT TO SERVICES

Provide wrap-around services to identified students and their families

3. MEASURE & REPLICATE

- Comprehensive program evaluation
- The Upstream Project will be replicated in communities across Canada



Evidence-Based

The Upstream Project adapts the innovative, evidence-based successes of Australia's *The Geelong Project (TGP)*

The Geelong model of youth homelessness intervention has been **extensively evaluated** over the past five years

100% of supported youth have safe, sustainable accommodation (TGP)

INCREASE school engagement, graduation rates & access to safe, secure housing

REDUCE the risk of family breakdown, dropping out of school and involvement in crime.

What is The Upstream Project?

The Upstream Project will take innovative approaches developed in Australia and adapt them to the Canadian context. Specifically, we will look to The Geelong Project (TGP), a ground breaking partnership that helps young people at risk of homelessness. TGP uses a proven tool to assess students and identify those who may be at higher risk of homelessness. Young people and their families are provided with necessary supports aimed to repair family relations (if it is safe for the youth to do so), increase school engagement and success, and reduce the risk of family breakdown, dropping out of school and involvement in crime.

What Do We Hope to Achieve?

The goal of The Upstream Project is to transform the way we respond to youth homelessness by shifting the focus to prevention. We hope to support Canadian communities with planning and implementation of school-based prevention programs modeled on TGP. Our goal is to noticeably reduce the number of young people who experience homelessness.

Project Updates

Pilot Community Partners

We have identified two fantastic community Partner Agencies in Ontario to pilot The Upstream Project. They are 360° kids in York Region and The RAFT in Niagara Region. Training will take place from May-August 2016, with implementation beginning in September 2016.

Toolkit Development

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness is currently in the early stages of developing a comprehensive toolkit that will be used to guide and implement The Upstream Project in local communities.

Funding Partners

LEAD PARTNERS

Intact Foundation

The Push for Change

MAJOR PARTNER

Ontario Trillium Foundation

SUPPORTING PARTNER

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