



MAKING  
THE SHIFT

## Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

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**A WAY HOME**  
**VERS UN CHEZ-SOI**  
CANADA



canadian  
observatory on  
homelessness

# Youth Homelessness

is a seemingly  
intractable problem  
in Canada



# Part 2

## Youth Homelessness

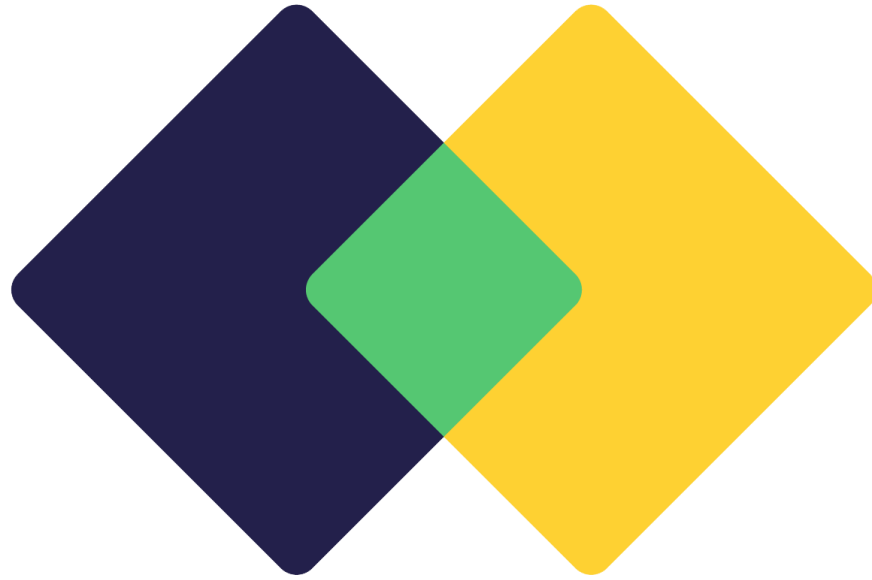
Social Innovation Lab

# Responding to youth homelessness in Canada



# Where we want to get to ...



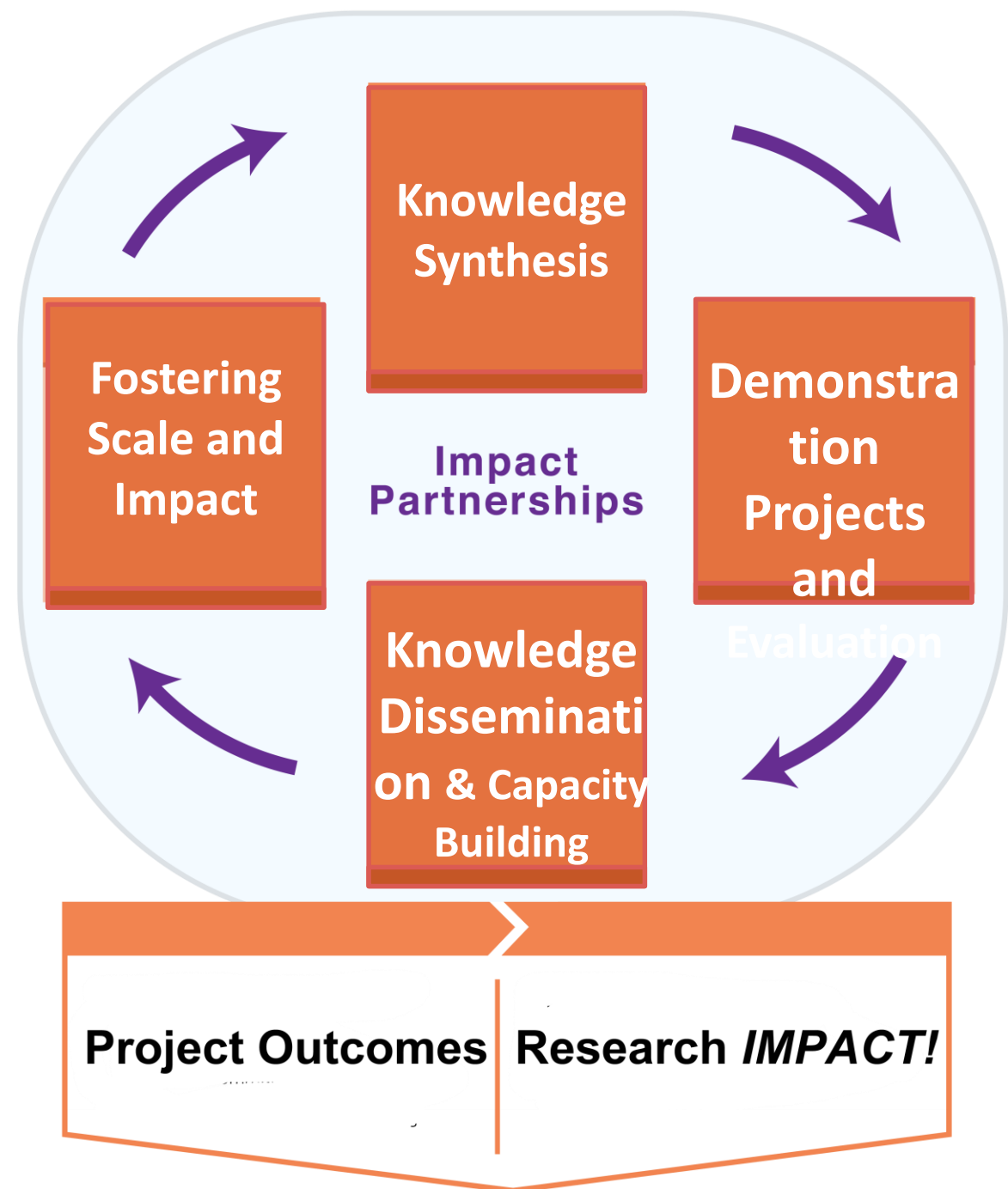


# Phase 1

## MAKING THE SHIFT

Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

# Research to *Action Cycle*





# 1

## Knowledge Synthesis

- Assessment of current knowledge base
- Gap analysis
- Identification of innovative policy and practice
- Prioritization for:
  - Research
  - Demonstration projects
  - Resource development

# 2

## Demonstration Projects and Evaluation

- Research and evaluation on program models
- Demonstration Projects
- Developmental and Outcomes evaluation
- Peer reviewed publication and dissemination of findings

# 3

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## Knowledge Dissemination and Capacity Development

- Resource development
  - Program Model Guides
  - Toolkits
  - Policy briefs
  - Evaluation framework
- Communities of Practice
- Training and Technical Assistance
- KTEE / Homeless Hub
- Community “Living Lab”

# 4

## Fostering Scale & Impact

- Communications and Marketing Strategy
- Community System Planning
- Community engagement strategy to identify local capacity and readiness
- Government relations strategy – policy & funding
- Private sector engagement & philanthropy

# Research ***IMPACT!***

# The anticipated impact of addressing challenge(s)

## Project Outcomes

- Research demonstrating policy and practice effectiveness
- Uptake of better policy
- Uptake of better interventions
- Supporting communities to transition from crisis response to prevention and sustainable exits from homelessness

## Research *IMPACT!*

- **Reduction** in youth homelessness
- Enhanced housing stability, life changes & well-being
- Inclusion and strengthened natural supports
- Enhanced participation in employment, training & education



# Project Objectives

1. The establishment of a youth homelessness Social Innovation Laboratory to support the development of the knowledge base to help communities make the shift to prevention. This includes exploring a range of funding and relationship models, including social finance tools, to foster collaboration across sectors.
2. Conducting a series of demonstration projects on evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention interventions, including Housing First for Youth to demonstrate program model effectiveness at preventing and ending youth homelessness.



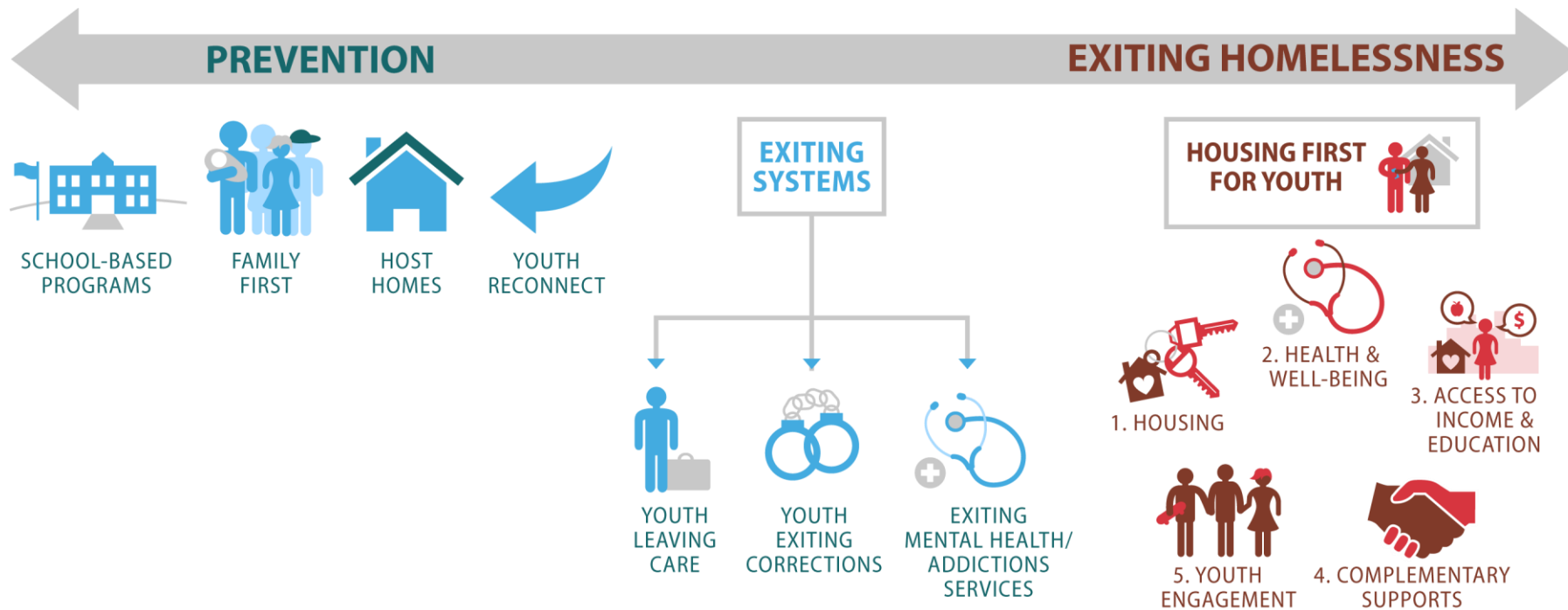
# Project Objectives

3. Providing youth participants with an intervention that will prevent and/or end their experience of homelessness. Individual outcomes include:
  - Enhanced educational participation and achievement
  - Stronger employment and labour market participation outcomes
  - Housing stability (tested quarterly)
  - Improved health and well-being
  - Strengthened family and community relations
4. Developing and disseminating to communities across Canada a comprehensive knowledge base on a range of systems-focused program models in the areas of prevention, housing and supports.
5. Informing homelessness policy and practice to support the scaling of effective youth homelessness prevention models and a Housing First model for Youth.



# Canadian Demonstration Projects

## Building the Evidence Base



1

# Enhancing Family and Natural Supports



***Unfortunately,  
family is often  
framed as a  
problem and  
as part of a  
young  
person's past.***



# 2

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## Youth Reconnect

Keeping young people in place





# Quick *Facts*

## Reconnect is an Early Intervention Program

- School / Community partnerships
- Students, teachers and families engaged
- At risk youth identified

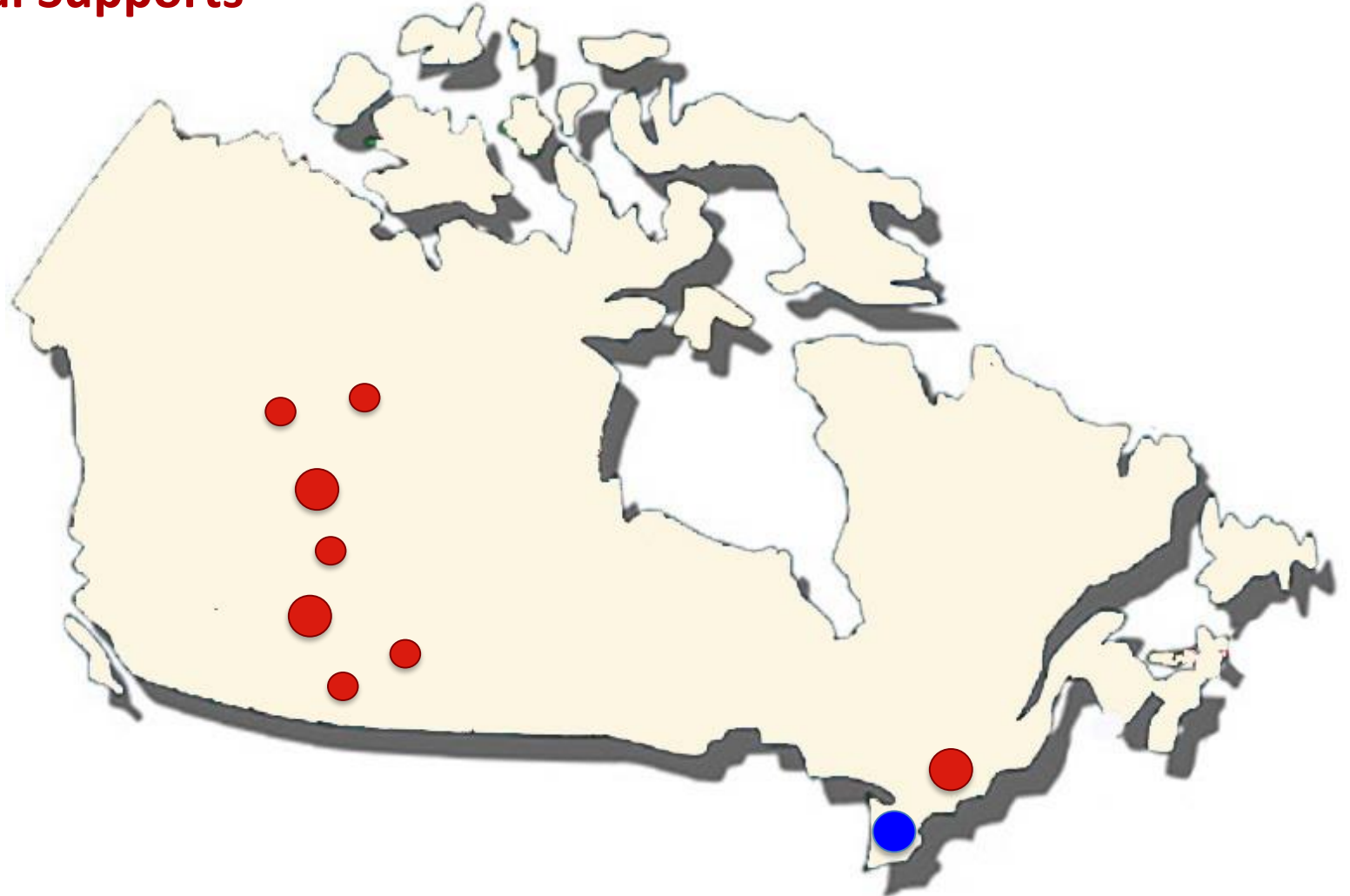
## Program goals

- Keeping young people 'in place'
- Stabilizing living situation
- Supporting young people AND their families
- School engagement

# ***PREVENTION***

## **Demonstration Projects**

- **Enhancing Family and Natural Supports**
- **Youth Reconnect**



# 3

## Housing First for Youth Demonstration Projects



**Ottawa** - Housing First for Youth

**Toronto** - PREVENTION focus:  
Housing First for Youth leaving care

**Hamilton** - Housing First for Indigenous  
Youth (An Indigenous led project)

# Part 2

## Research and Evaluation



# Research and Evaluation

## Research:

- Qualitative and quantitative methods
- Outcomes tied to service and supports
- Positive youth development orientation (strengths-based approach)
- Control trial – interviews at three month intervals (HF4Y)

## Evaluation:

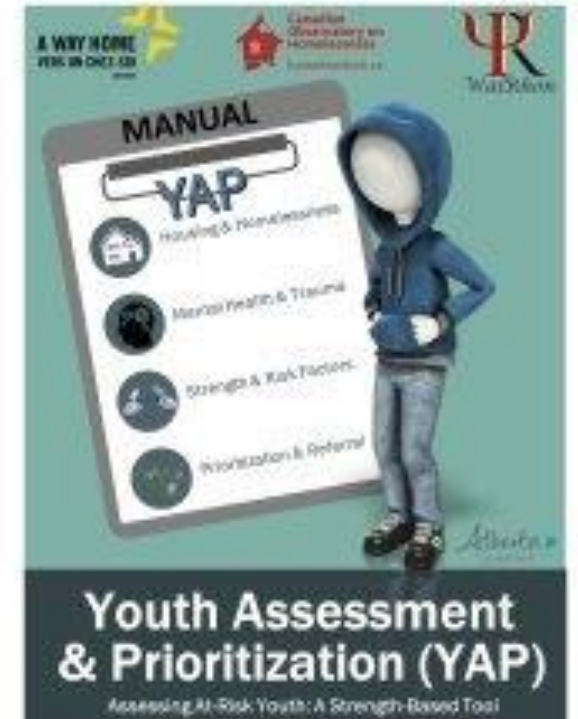
- Developmental Evaluation
- Outcomes Evaluation



# Youth Assessment and Prioritization (YAP) tool

For Making the Shift, we are using the **Youth Assessment and Prioritization tool**, because:

- It is based on the needs of developing adolescents and young adults
- Is strengths-based and rooted in a Positive Youth Development orientation.
- It involves both client and staff knowledge
- It assists decision-making, and doesn't determine prioritization for you
- It can catch things that other vulnerability assessment tools cannot.



# OUTCOMES

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Outcomes are tied to the service delivery models. Because the focus of these interventions is not just on independence, but on healthy transitions to adulthood, outcomes go beyond a simple measure of housing stability.

# Program outcomes



## 1) Housing stability

- Obtaining housing
- Maintaining housing
- Enhancing knowledge and skills regarding housing and independent living
- Reducing stays in emergency shelters



## 2) Health and well-being

- Enhanced access to services and supports
- Improved health
- Food security
- Improved mental health
- Reduced harms related to substance use
- Enhanced personal safety
- Improved self-esteem
- Healthier sexual health practices
- Enhanced resilience



## 3) Education and employment

- Established goals for education and employment
- Enhanced participation in education
- Enhanced educational achievement
- Enhanced participation in training
- Enhanced labour force participation
- Improved financial security



## 4) Complementary supports

- Established personal goals
- Improved life skills
- Increase access to necessary non-medical services
- Addressing legal and justice issues



## 5) Social inclusion

- Building of natural supports
- Enhancing family connections
- Enhancing connections to communities of young person's choice
- Strengthening cultural engagement and participation
- Engagement in meaningful activities

# Final thoughts about the research

- Demonstration projects essential for building the evidence base for prevention, and HF4Y.
- For HF4Y the clinical trial helps build knowledge and demonstrates proof of concept. Important for policy, funding and taking HF4Y to scale.
- Need to balance the needs of the trial and those of the communities.
- Therefore requires some trial-based (though community informed) parameters on the population.

# Part 3

MtS Phase 1

# Implementation

# TARGETS

**Anticipated number of Youth participants in the project:**

- Family and Natural Supports – 900
- Youth Reconnect – 180
- Housing First for Youth - 165



## Year one of Making the Shift has been foundational

- Staffing up
- Partnership Building
- Developing and refining program models
- Designing research agenda across three program areas
- Engaging community partners and instilling confidence in these new and innovative prevention approaches.
- Training and local-level program development



# STAFF TRAINING AND COMPETENCIES



# Key areas for on going training

- Training and Technical Assistance on program models
- Positive youth development and strengths/asset based case management
- Training on Indigenous perspectives, methodologies, and community participatory approaches to research
- Trauma informed care
- Harm Reduction
- Developmentally focused motivational interviewing

## The road to recovery ...



# Community Readiness

## Key Learning

- Assessing readiness is a challenge / community dynamics are unique
- Communities are at different stages of readiness
- Moving from agreement to implementation takes time
- Effective community leadership is necessary
- Program models by design require collaboration at the local level
- There can be resistance to research and evaluation
- Change management is necessarily part of the process

# Systems Transformation

## Key Learning

“I don’t know how to make a short quote about the impact of the YR program in the Hammer. From going to the Children and Youth Mental Health table to the Street youth Planning Collaborative table to the Young parent collaborative table and 21 more that we sit on it is a constant message that people should check out YR and the incredible way it impacts the lives of people 13-19 years old.”

**Loretta Hill-Finamore** *Director, Youth Services*

# Systems Transformation

The Youth Reconnect Program has provided Good Shepherd Youth Services the opportunity to be a driving force in a shift from a crisis response to youth homelessness towards a focus on prevention and community and family reunification. Making the Shift has encouraged this by allowing interventions to take place at a younger age (as early as 13), in creative ways (working with youth and families in whichever way works for them) and encouraging community based interventions.

From my perch here in the Hammer, I have not seen another program impact the community as this one has in such a powerful way of diversion from ever becoming homeless.

**Loretta Hill-Finamore** *Director, Youth Services*

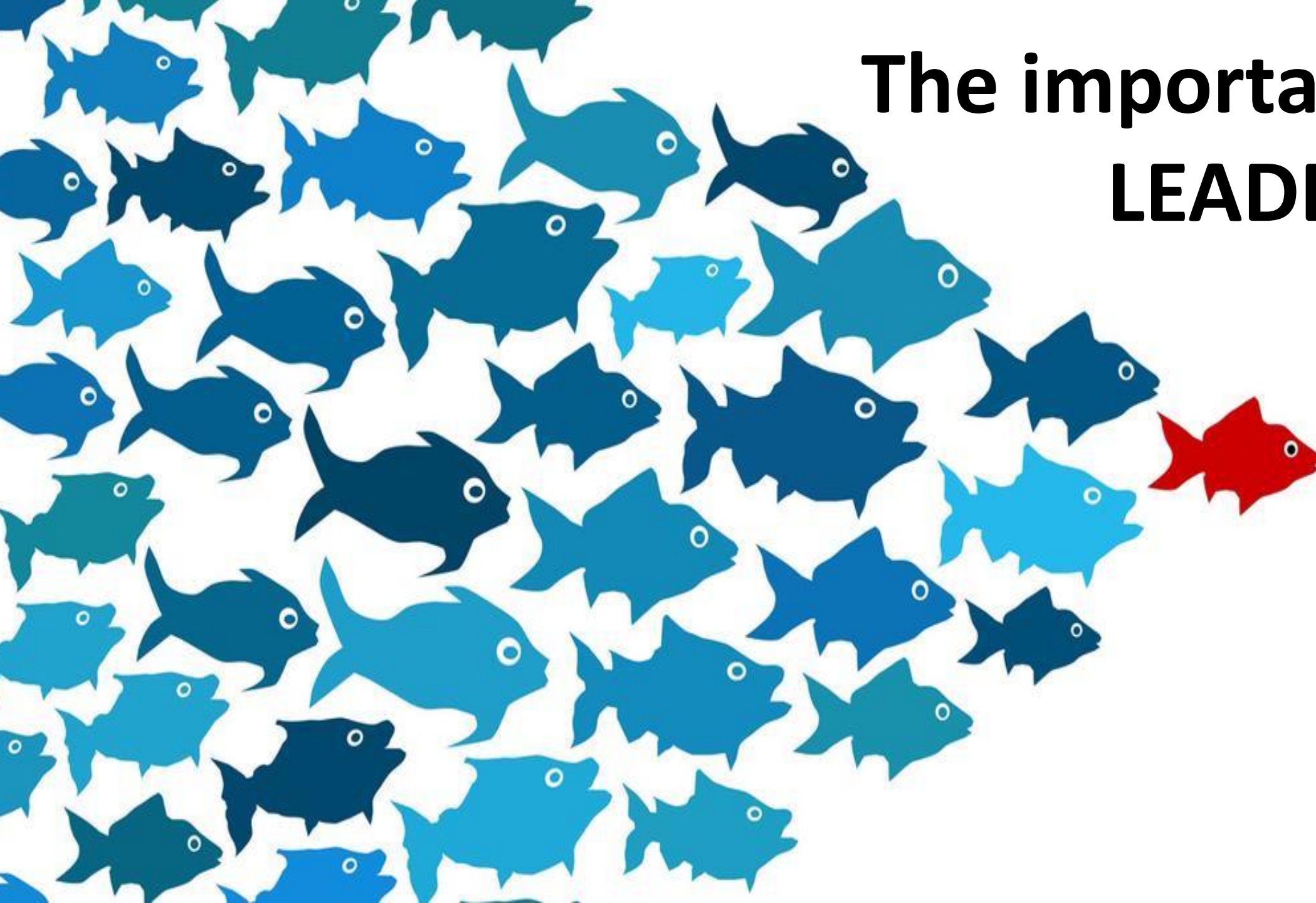
# Change Management

## Key Learning





# The importance of **LEADERSHIP**





# INDIGENIZING Programs and Research

## Key Learning

“Making the shift is in all aspects giving our Indigenous young people an opportunity to grow and learn the tools necessary to achieve a balanced wholistic lifestyle and ultimately paving the way to preventing adult homelessness.”

Sheryl Green, Aboriginal Youth in Transition Worker



# INDIGENIZING Programs and Research

“So many of our Indigenous young people have been impacted by various systems creating self doubt, low self esteem, insecurity, and a sense of worthlessness. Making the Shift has enabled us to focus on these areas to create a sense of community, an understanding of Indigenous Culture and identity and empowerment to know and feel they are not what the systems have dictated them to be”.

“Endaayaang is infused with culture from day one. Making the Shift has been very supportive in the development from grounding the project in ceremony to how the research will be captured in order to reflect a true Indigenous view.”

Sheryl Green, Aboriginal Youth in Transition Worker

# Questions or comments?

[www.homelesshub.ca](http://www.homelesshub.ca)

[www.AWayHome.ca](http://www.AWayHome.ca)

