Beyond a Home: Facilitating Socioeconomic Inclusion for Young People Transitioning Out of Homelessness

Naomi Thulien, Stephen Hwang, and Andrea Wang
What interventions work with young people who have experienced homelessness?
Evidence Finder

Locate and access relevant studies on homelessness interventions.

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Use our Evidence Finder to see where in the world reliable studies have been conducted. Each pin will provide a link to the original study. You can filter the results by population group, study type or year of publication. Some studies may appear on the map in more than one place if they have been conducted in multiple distinct contexts.

The studies from this map come from our Evidence and Gap Map of Effectiveness Studies (red pins) and Implementation Issues (blue pins). View the reports behind these maps here and here. We will continue to add new studies as they are identified; if you know of any we have missed please let us know.

https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/evidence-finder
5 relevant papers (including 2 reviews)
1 with formerly homeless youth (HF intervention)
0 with social or economic inclusion as primary outcome
No studies measured the primary outcome of reintegration (equitable social and economic inclusion)

Little evidence exists on how to promote reintegration and recovery after social exclusion
Research on how to support socially excluded young people is “urgently needed”

Thulien, N.S., Gastaldo, D., McCay, E., Hwang, S.W. (2019). “I want to be able to show everyone that it is possible to go from being nothing in the world to being something”: Identity as a determinant of social integration. *Children and Youth Services Review, 96*, 118-126.
Identity

Socially constructed
Malleable
Actions align with identity

Identity Capital

- Self-esteem
- Self-efficacy
- Control
- Purpose

Q. Can an identity capital intervention delivered outside the social service sector positively impact the social and economic inclusion of young people who have experienced homelessness?

Design and Methods

- Recruited by community partner (shelter/drop-in centre)
- Participants must have exited homelessness < three years prior
- Prospective cohort hybrid design (intervention + delayed intervention)
- Mixed methods: quantitative (what worked?) + qualitative (why and how?)
- Quantitative – questionnaires re: social and economic inclusion indicators
- Qualitative – ethnographic study + focus groups
- Quantitative analysis: t-test (statistical significance) + Cohen’s d (effect size)
- Qualitative analysis: common themes using equitable social inclusion framework (doctoral work) “lens”
The Identity Project

Week One: Dare to Dream

- full-day workshop
- 15-page workbook
- vision board
- catered lunch

Weeks Two and Three: Group Coaching

- half-day
The Identity Project

**Week Four: Strategic Career**

- full-day workshop
- 25-page workbook
- 3 career/personality assessments
- podcast series: 50 industry experts
- catered lunch

**Weeks Five and Six: Group Coaching**

- half-day
## Baseline Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Group 1 (n= 8)</th>
<th>Group 2 (n= 11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n (%)</td>
<td>n (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (mean)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female gender</td>
<td>6 (75)</td>
<td>5 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Canada</td>
<td>3 (38)</td>
<td>5 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>1 (13)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed high school or more</td>
<td>6 (75)</td>
<td>9 (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>6 (75)</td>
<td>9 (82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempts to exit homelessness (mean)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years away from biological parents (mean)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Group 1 (intervention) vs Group 2 (no intervention)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td>(n=10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.3 (5.1)</td>
<td>0.9 (2.5)</td>
<td>1.2*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Integration Scale (Physical)&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.4 (1.0)</td>
<td>-1.1 (1.7)</td>
<td>1.8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Integration Scale (Psychological)&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.3 (4.2)</td>
<td>0.1 (2.1)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Connectedness Scale&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.8 (18.9)</td>
<td>3.2 (9.3)</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beck Hopelessness Scale&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-1.6 (2.5)</td>
<td>-0.5 (3.3)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05. Cohen’s d: 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = large


Self-Esteem

High self-esteem (25-30)
Average self-esteem (15-25)
Low self-esteem (0-15)
Range 0-30

Psychological Community Integration

Kidd et al. (2013)
Social Connectedness

Range: 20-120

Lee et al. (2001)

$d = 0.37$

$d = 0.33$

$d = 0.19$

$d = 0.42$

Cohen’s $d$: 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = large

Beattie et al., (2018)
Hopelessness

Range 0-20

No hopelessness (0-3)

Mild hopelessness (4-8)

Moderate hopelessness (9-14)

*d = -0.46  d = -0.40  d = -0.73  *d = -0.60

*p < 0.05. Cohen’s d: 0.2 = small, 0.5 = medium, 0.8 = large

Beattie et al. (2018)
Other Socioeconomic Inclusion Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Baseline (n =19)</th>
<th>9 Months Post-Intervention (n =18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in secondary education</td>
<td>4 (21)</td>
<td>1 (6)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in post-secondary education</td>
<td>4 (21)</td>
<td>7 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time (&gt; 30 hours/week)</td>
<td>3 (16)</td>
<td>2 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time (&lt; 30 hours/week)</td>
<td>6 (32)</td>
<td>5 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (any time during study)</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>3 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Income</strong> (mean)</td>
<td>$1,356</td>
<td>$1,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housed</strong></td>
<td>19 (100)</td>
<td>18 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Three youth completed secondary education during the follow-up period
Vision for Life

Reaffirming Potential
I don’t feel like the shelter is what I represent. I felt like I was downgraded. Going to this program helped boost up my self-esteem again. ~ Dominic (Group 1, FG 2)

- Low program expectations
- Vision board
- Space matters

(Re)gaining Control
My main takeaway is that I am the master of my own future. I feel lots more in control. I’m in the driver’s seat. ~ Nayah (Group 2, FG 1)

- Car of life
- Tangible goals vs. positive fantasizing
Reconstructing Identity

Past as an Asset

Because I was able to focus on something changeable and see results, see my own progress, it took away any internalized stigma from the past. The past is still a defining factor in my identity, but it suddenly kind of switched in the program as being an asset as opposed to something that is like a weight. ~ April (Group 1, FG 2)

- Failure a prerequisite to success (grit)

Internal (vs. external) Control

Before, I needed to have support from my worker or some other person [to make decisions]. But now, I’m doing it by myself… Now I see myself in the car, like in the driver’s seat and I feel proud of myself. Like, I see myself there. ~ Katherine (Group 2, FG 2)

- Daily schedule (new – *need vision first)
- Having a better life vs. “getting better”
Conclusion

1. Promising intervention
   - Statistically significant improvements and large effect sizes in self-esteem and physical community integration in Group One (intervention) compared to Group Two (no intervention) immediately post-intervention
   - Pooled data: statistically significant improvements and moderate effect sizes in self-esteem and hopelessness six and nine months post-intervention
   - Pooled data: small to moderate effect sizes in self-esteem, physical community integration, and hopelessness at all time points (*aligns with qualitative findings)
   - Pooled data: some enrolled in post-secondary education and all remained housed

2. Purpose and personal control key to meaningful social (and ultimately economic) inclusion

3. Limitations
   - Small sample
   - Atypical baseline education
   - Specific context
   - No change in income (all still living in poverty)
Recommendations

1. Housing-focused (tangible) + Identity-focused (intangible)
   - self-esteem
   - self-efficacy
   - internal locus of control
   - purpose in life

2. Trauma-informed care = Identity-informed care

3. Consider adding occupational therapist to team

4. Consider partnerships with established private sector programs

5. More interventions targeting social and economic inclusion!!
Socioeconomic Inclusion

✓ A person that has your back
✓ A place to stay
✓ A dream

~ Summer (Group 2, FG 4)