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Life Domain Research Report Series: Social Connections and Community Conduct (2010 UPDATE)

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**Long Term Community Adaptation of Children/Youth
and Families Participating in Residential and Intensive
Family Service Children's Mental Health Programs**

**Life Domain Research Report Series:
Social Connections and Community Conduct**

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Introduction

Understanding how youth participate in social networks with peers and friends, engage in social or leisure activities, and more generally forge healthy relationships with others are key considerations in assessing overall well being of youth. Among a variety of emotional and behavioural challenges faced by children and youth involved with residential treatment or intensive family services may be their ability to negotiate relationships within social contexts (Cameron, de Boer, Frensch, & Adams, 2003).

Data were collected about youth who had been involved with children's mental health residential treatment (RT) or intensive family service programs (IFS), designed as an alternative to residential treatment. Data were gathered about youth functioning at program entry, discharge, 12 to 18 months after leaving the program (Time 1 Follow Up), and 36 to 48 months post discharge (Time 2 Follow Up). Parent-reported measures were used to assess youth functioning prior to service involvement and at follow up. Admission and discharge information was gathered from program records.

Both youth and parents/guardians were asked a series of questions assessing behaviour within social networks as well as conduct within the community. For example, parents/guardians indicated how often youth experienced difficulties getting along with friends or how often youth were easily annoyed by others. At 12-18 months post discharge, youth in our study had the opportunity to speak freely about their friendship networks, social activities, and what they liked to do for fun. We also sought to describe the nature and frequency of youth misconduct within the community such as vandalism or theft. Both parents/guardians and youth were asked about behaviour that led to involvement with the legal system.

Participants

Participants were recruited from five children's mental health agencies in south western Ontario, Canada that offered both residential treatment and intensive family service programs. Three of these agencies served children aged 5 to 12 years at admission and their families. The remaining two agencies served youth aged 12 to 16 years and their families.

To maximize sample size, two panels of youth were recruited. In the first, all youth discharged from our partner agencies between January 1, 2004 and July 31, 2005 were invited to participate. These Time 1 follow up interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 2006. In the second panel, all youth and their families entering residential treatment or the home-based programs in our five partner agencies between August 1, 2005 and December 31, 2006 were invited to participate. Most of these Time 1 follow up interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 2007.

This strategy generated a Time 1 follow up sample of 106 parents or guardians and 33 youth from the residential treatment program and 104 parents or guardians and 35 youth from the intensive family service program. Within the RT sample group, only 48 respondents were parents. The remaining respondents were guardians from the Children's Aid Society (CAS). Respondents in the IFS sample consisted of 101 parents and 3 CAS guardians. Only youth 12 years and older were interviewed individually.

All parents and guardians interviewed at Time 1 were contacted again approximately 24 months following their interview and invited to participate in a second follow up interview. Researchers were able to meet with almost 75% of the original Time 1 sample. There were 79 Time 2 follow up interviews completed with parents and guardians of youth who had been involved in residential treatment and 75 Time 2 follow up interviews with intensive family service program parents (See Table 1). At Time 2, over half of all residential treatment interviews were with CAS guardians.

For the residential treatment group, the average length of time between program discharge and the Time 1 follow up interview was 21.6 months with 57% of interviews occurring less than 18 months after program discharge. The average length of time between program discharge and the Time 1 follow up interview for the intensive family service group was 17.8 months with 60% of the interviews taking place less than 18 months post discharge.

The average length of time between discharge and the Time 2 follow up interview was 41.7 months for residential treatment parents and guardians, with 58% occurring less than 42 months post discharge. For intensive family service parents and guardians, the average length of time between discharge and the Time 2 follow up interview was 38.4 months and 64% of these interviews took place less than 42 months post discharge.

At Time 1 follow up, youth were on average 14.11 and 13.65 years old for residential treatment and intensive family service youth respectively. At Time 2 follow up, the average age was 15.55 for RT youth and 15.42 for IFS youth.

Table 1: Description of Time 1 and Time 2 Follow Up Interviews

	Time 1 Follow Up		Time 2 Follow Up	
	<i>RT</i>	<i>IFS</i>	<i>RT</i>	<i>IFS</i>
Number of Parent Interviews	48	101	38	71
Number of Guardian Interviews	58	3	41	4
Average Length of Time Between Program Discharge and Interview (in months)	21.6	17.8	41.7	38.4
Average Age of Youth (in years)	14.11	13.65	15.55	15.42
Number of Youth Interviews	33	35	n/a	n/a

Both Time 1 and Time 2 follow up interviews with caregivers and youth (at Time 1 only) were mainly conducted in the families' homes; however, on a few occasions, participants chose to meet at another location such as at the university or local library. Participants received \$25.00 for their participation each time. All participants provided informed consent. Ethical approval was obtained from Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board, and the participating mental health agencies.

Description of Services

Residential treatment involved multi-disciplinary teams who created individual treatment plans for each child based on cognitive-behavioural, psycho educational, brief and solution-focussed models. RT environments were intended to be safe and structured. Children received individual counselling and were usually involved in family counselling. Children lived in residence five days a week and attended either their own community school or an on-site school. Children usually returned home on weekends; however, children referred by a child welfare agency may have remained in residential care on weekends. The expected length of stay was three to nine months. The average length of stay for youth in the present study was 7.8 months.

Intensive-family service was the home-based alternative to residential treatment that was developed in response to the long waitlists for residential services. Originally intended for children and youth with difficulties of comparable severity to those accessing RT, in IFS programs children remained at home, and the family received a range of intensive, home-based services similar to those offered in residential care. The expected length of involvement ranged from three to nine months. The average length of program involvement for youth in this study was 5.25 months.

Measures

Clinical data were obtained using The Brief Child and Family Phone Interview, 3rd version (BCFPI-3) (Cunningham, Pettingill, & Boyle, 2002) and the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) (Hodges, 2000). These standardised measures were already in use by the participating agencies at intake and at discharge, and the BCFPI data was collected again at follow up. Using existing clinical data reduced the burden for clinicians and enhanced the cost efficiency of the research. Additional social relations and community conduct data was collected from parents and guardians.

Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale

The CAFAS was designed to assess impairments in day-to-day functioning secondary to behavioural, emotional, psychological, psychiatric, or substance use problems. Eight subscales assess functioning in various domains: role performance at school or work, home, community (reflects delinquent acts), behaviour toward others, mood/emotions (primarily anxiety and depression), self-harm behaviour, substance use and problems in thinking.

The CAFAS subscales assess the severity of impairment in domain related role performance. Subscale scores can range from 0 (*minimal or no impairment*) to 30 (*severe disruption or incapacitation*). CAFAS has shown sensitivity to change, good concurrent-criterion validity and predictive validity, good discriminant validity and reliability, and has been widely used (Hodges, Doucette-Gates, & Kim, 2000; Hodges & Kim, 2000; Hodges & Wong, 1996).

The Brief Child and Family Phone Interview-3

The BCFPI-3 is an interview protocol that measures the severity of three externalizing problems (corresponding to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder), and three internalizing disorders (corresponding to separation anxiety disorder, anxiety and general mood and self-harm). It also provides descriptive measures of child functioning (social participation, quality of relationships, and school participation and achievement), and child functioning impacts on the family (social activities and comfort).

The questions used in this computerized instrument were taken from the Revised Ontario Child Health Study, and generate *t*-scores. A *t*-score greater than 70, a score higher than 98% of the general population, is indicative of a significant problem. Internal consistency scores range from .73 to .85, and content validity “was ensured by selecting items which map onto the descriptions of common clinical problems in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association IV” (Cunningham, et al., 2002, p. 77). The BCFPI Cooperation with Others, Community, and Social Participation subscales were of interest to understanding youth problems in the life domain of social and community conduct.

KINDL Quality of Life Questionnaire for Children (Parent's Version)

The KINDL is a 24 item instrument designed to measure health related quality of life in children and adolescents age 8-16 (Ravens-Sieberer & Bullinger, 2000). A higher score corresponds to a higher health related quality of life. Item responses range from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time). There are five subscales that assess quality of life in various life domains including physical health, emotional health, social contacts, self esteem, family and school.

Parents or guardians were also asked whether or not the youth had been in trouble with the law prior to admission and at follow up. If the youth was reported to be trouble with the law, parents/guardians were asked if the youth had received formal charges as a result.

Qualitative Youth Interviews

At Time 1 follow up, a subset of youth in our sample who were aged 12 years or older participated in a semi-structured qualitative interview in which youth were asked to describe, in their own words, their functioning in several life domains including school and work, family, social connections and health. Information youth shared with us included discussions about their friends, what they liked to do for fun, conduct in the community, and troubles with the law.

Data Analysis

For the CAFAS, frequencies were generated to estimate prevalence of clinical severity, and the Friedman's ANOVA and Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test were used to assess change over time. For the BCFPI-3, changes from admission to discharge and follow up were analyzed with Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance. Differences between the RT and IFS groups at specific points in time were analyzed with *t*-tests.

Qualitative data were subjected to a thematic analysis. Transcripts of youth interviews were coded using the qualitative data analysis software package N-Vivo. Interview content was organized into four broad life domains (family, social connections and community conduct, health and well being, and school and employment). Through a process of reading the content of a particular life domain by the research team (3 individuals), descriptive codes emerged that were common among the experiences of youth.

Results from the quantitative and qualitative analyses were shared with service providers and program directors from the partner children's mental health agencies. Their feedback was incorporated into the final analyses and interpretations of study results.

Limitations of the Study

While the study sample likely represents experiences typical of many youth and families using these types of programs, the sample came from five agencies in south west Ontario. In areas with very different socio-economic or ethno cultural characteristics or with other service delivery models, the results might be quite different.

Also, the sample represents all of the youth and families we were able to contact who agreed to participate. Participation levels were very high (> 80%) for the youth and families entering the program during our recruitment year; however, since the mental health agencies had minimal contact with youth after they left their programs, we were only able to establish contact with about half of parents/guardians of these youth. Selecting a statistically representative sample was not possible. Sample recruitment strategies were also shaped by the limited number of youth and families participating in these programs at the partner agencies.

The study was not intended to be a formal evaluation of the participating programs. It also does not address the relative effectiveness of the two program approaches. The study's focus was on describing what happens over time to these youth and their families. For this purpose, despite the above limitations, the data were sufficient.

Results

This report summarizes youth social connections with friends and conduct within the community. For each area of interest, we begin with a presentation of data from parent-reported standardized measures. This is followed by a summary of youth perspectives. Results are organized by timeframe: admission, discharge, and follow up. There is some variation in the data presented at each timeframe, as not all questions or measures were administered or available at all points in time. Most of the information collected on social functioning at admission and discharge was collected retrospectively from paper files. As well, parents or guardians were asked to reflect back to the few weeks prior to youth entering services to answer certain questions. Youth spoke mostly about friendships, social activities, and community behaviour at the time of their interview (which we have labelled as Time 1 follow up).

Within each section, results are further organized by program type. Where available, we present scores for the group of youth who received residential treatment separately from the scores for youth who received intensive family services. While the scores for these two groups of youth are presented side by side and comparisons are often made, this study is not designed to evaluate the effectiveness of residential treatment or intensive family services. Our intention is to provide a portrait of youth social networks

and community conduct prior to admission, immediately following discharge from treatment, at 12-18 months follow up, and again at 36 to 48 months post discharge.

Social Connections

In order to understand how youth were functioning in their daily social interactions, we examined several social and community measures at admission, discharge, and follow up. Where appropriate, we examined these measures for any change patterns across time.

There were several measures used to formulate a picture of how youth were functioning in their social interactions. These included:

- CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale
- BCFPI Social Participation Subscales
- BCFPI Quality of Child's Relationships Subscale ("friends" item only)
- BCFPI Cooperation with Others Subscale
- KINDL Quality of Life Social Contacts Subscale

(a) CAFAS: BEHAVIOUR TOWARD OTHERS SUBSCALE

i. Admission

The CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale assesses appropriateness of behaviour toward others including displays of anger, poor judgment, inappropriate sexual behaviour, and cruelty to animals. A higher score was indicative of greater impairment in this domain. Scores could range from 0 (minimal or no impairment) where a youth is able to establish and maintain age-appropriate relationships to a score of 30 (severe disruption of functioning or incapacitation) where a youth's behaviour is so disruptive or dangerous that harm to others is likely.

The sample sizes for each group on this measure were smaller at admission than our overall sample sizes due to data missing from the retrospective review of paper files at each participating organization. As a result there were 79 RT youth and 91 IFS youth with scores on the CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale. Table 2 shows the mean score for RT youth was 21.39 and 16.59 for IFS youth. Both groups of youth had higher mean scores than the 2006 Ontario mean of 12.37 which was calculated using scores from approximately 18,520 children at admission to children's mental health services (including both inpatient and outpatient services).¹ RT youth had higher scores on this scale than IFS youth at admission and this difference was statistically significant ($p=.000^*$).

¹ Ontario's Children with Mental Health Needs 2006 Report. CAFAS in Ontario, SickKids.

Table 2: CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Scores at Admission

Statistics	RT (N=79)	IFS (N=91)	2006 Ontario (N=18,520)
Mean	21.39	16.59	12.37
Std. Dev.	6.93	7.77	
Frequencies			
0.00=	1 (1.3%)	5 (5.5%)	25.6%
10.00=	11 (13.9%)	33 (36.3%)	33.2%
20.00=	43 (54.4%)	41 (45.1%)	33.1%
30.00=	24 (30.4%)	12 (13.2%)	8.1%
Total=	79	91	
Mann-Whitney Test	U=2394.50 Z= -4.061 p=.000*		

Looking at the distribution of scores in Table 2, we see that the largest proportion of youth in both groups displayed moderate impairment (score of 20) in their behaviour toward others at admission (54.4% of RT youth and 45.1% of IFS youth). While 25.6% of the 2006 Ontario CAFAS population had minimal or no impairment in their behaviour toward others (score of 0), only 1.3% of RT youth and 5.5% of IFS youth fell into this category. Conversely, 30.4% of RT youth and 13.2% of IFS youth were reported to have the highest level of impairment (score of 30) in comparison to only 8.1% of the 2006 Ontario CAFAS population.

ii. Discharge

Similar to the comparisons at admission, there continued to be a statistically significant difference between RT and IFS youth on the Behaviour Toward Others Subscale at discharge ($p=.005^*$). The average score on this measure was 13.00 for RT youth and 8.91 for IFS youth. In addition, table 3 shows that 38.6% of RT youth were still reported to exhibit moderate to severe levels of impairment (scores of 20 or 30) as assessed by service providers at discharge. This was true for only 25.3% of IFS youth.

Table 3: CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Scores at Discharge

Statistics	RT (N=70)	IFS (N=83)
Mean	13.00	8.91
Std. Dev.	8.90	8.69
Frequencies		
0.00=	13 (18.6%)	33 (39.8%)
10.00=	30 (42.9%)	29 (34.9%)
20.00=	20 (28.6%)	18 (21.7%)
30.00=	7 (10.0%)	3 (3.6%)
Total=	70	83
Missing=	37	12
Mann-Whitney	U=2180.00 Z= -2.799 p=.005*	

Looking at the patterns of change from admission to discharge for both groups, there was a movement toward less severe impairment in functioning on the Behaviour Toward Others Scale for both RT and IFS youth. Scores on the CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Scale at discharge were significantly lower than those at admission (indicating a reduction in severity of impairment) for both groups ($p=.000^*$). Table 4 shows that 65% of RT youth (44 out of 68 matched cases) had a reduction in severity of impairment scores from admission to discharge. Similarly, 58% (48 out of 83 matched cases) of IFS youth had lower scores at discharge indicating a reduction in impairment.

Table 4: Change in CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Scores from Admission to Discharge

	RT	IFS
Reduction in Severity of Impairment	44 (64.7%)	48 (57.8%)
Increase in Severity of Impairment	5 (7.3%)	2 (2.4%)
No Change in Severity of Impairment	19 (28%)	33 (39.8%)
Total N	68	83
Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	Z= -5.473 p=.000*	Z= -6.069 p=.000*

Figure 1 shows the distribution of scores on the CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale at admission and discharge for RT youth. At admission, over 80% of RT youth were experiencing moderate to severe impairment in their behaviour toward others. This proportion fell to 38.6% at discharge.

Figure 1: CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale Scores for RT Youth Only

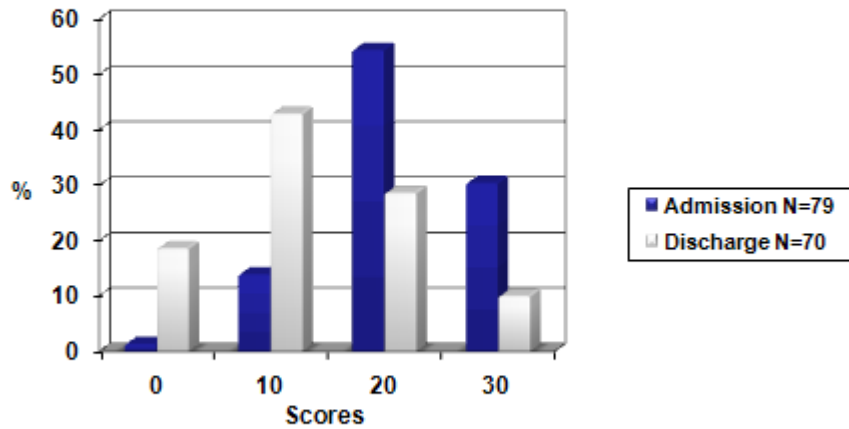
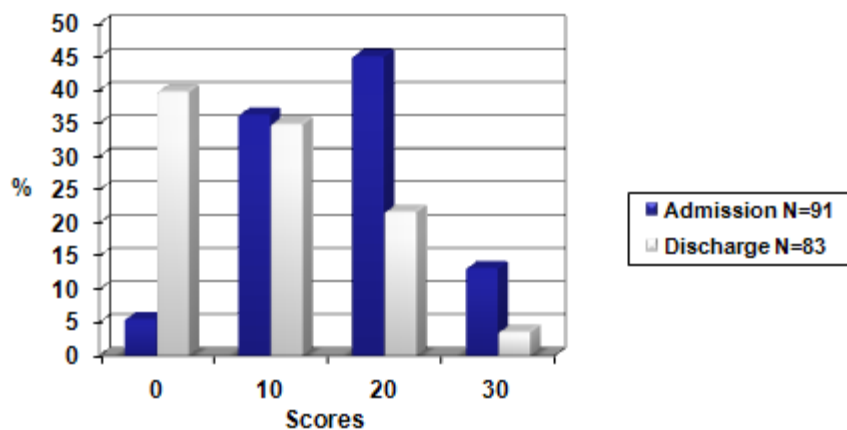


Figure 2 shows the distribution of scores on the CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale at admission and discharge for IFS youth. At admission, over 80% of IFS youth were experiencing mild to moderate impairment in their behaviour toward others (scores of 10 or 20). At discharge the greatest proportion of IFS youth were reported to have no impairment (39.8%). However, 56.6% of IFS youth were still reported to have mild to moderate impairment (scores of 10 or 20) in their behaviour toward others at discharge.

Figure 2: CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale Scores for IFS Youth Only



(b) BCFPI: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION SUBSCALE

i. At Admission

The Social Participation subscale of the BCFPI measures youth participation in social activities. High scores may indicate that the youth is withdrawing or spending less time with other children. At admission, RT youth had a mean score of 76.94 and IFS youth had a mean score of 78.80 (see Table 5). Both of these mean scores were above the clinical threshold score of 70. A score of 70 is higher than 98% of the average child and youth population used by BCFPI administrators to assess impairment and is considered a clinically significant score. Both of these scores were also higher than the 2006 Ontario average score on this scale for 4,918 children with completed BCFPI data at admission to children’s mental health services (includes inpatient and outpatient programs).² While

² St. Pierre, J. (Feb, 2007). BCFPI/CAFAS outcomes at CPRI/MCYS. Ontario Psychological Association Annual Conference, Toronto.

IFS youth had a higher mean score than RT youth in our study, this difference was not statistically significant. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences between groups when we looked at the three individual items that make up this subscale (test results not shown here).

Table 5: BCFPI Social Participation Score at Admission

Statistics	RT (N=75)	IFS (N=84)	2006 Ontario (N=4918)
Mean	76.94	78.80	69.58
Std. Dev.	19.37	16.90	
T-test	t= -.643 df=157 p=.521 (equal variances assumed)		

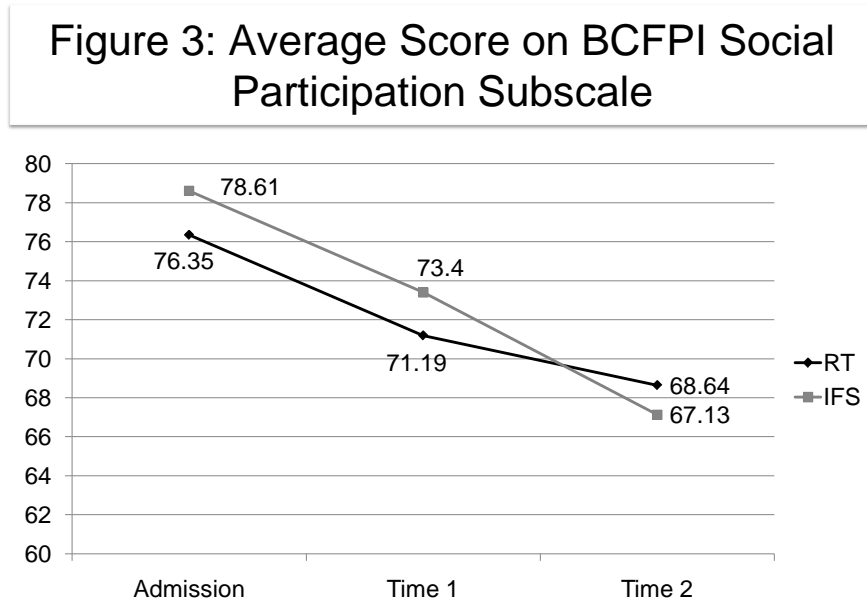
ii. At 12-18 Months Follow Up (Time 1) and 36-48 Months Follow Up (Time 2)

To examine changes over time, scores on the BCFPI Social Participation Subscale at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 were compared *for only youth with information at all three points in time*. Table 6 shows that for 55 RT youth, over time there was a decrease in the average score suggesting that these RT youth were less withdrawn socially from admission to follow up. This change over time, however, was not statistically significant. The 59 IFS youth with scores at all points in time also saw a decrease in their average scores on this measure. The improvement in social participation over time was statistically significant for IFS youth ($\chi^2 = 7.79$, $p < .05$). In particular, the greatest change was from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up for IFS youth. While IFS youth had more problematic social participation scores than RT youth at admission and 12-18 months post discharge, at 36-48 months RT youth had higher problem scores than IFS youth. These differences between program types were not statistically significant.

Table 6: Average Scores on the BCFPI Social Participation Subscale at Admission, 12-18 Months (Time 1), and 36-48 Months Post Discharge (Time 2)

	RT (n=55)	IFS (n=59)
Admission	76.35	78.61
Time 1	71.19	73.40
Time 2	68.64	67.13

Figure 3 shows the change in average scores on the BCFPI Social Participation Subscale over time for RT and IFS youth. By Time 2 follow up, both groups of youth had average scores below the clinical cut off of 70 with IFS youth showing a greater improvement than RT youth.



The following figures (Figures 4-6) show the proportions of RT and IFS youth scoring at the highest problem level at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 on each of the individual items that comprise the BCFPI Social Participation subscale.

Figure 4 shows the proportions of RT and IFS youth reported to be socially withdrawn or isolated “a lot” at admission, Time 1, and Time 2. The change over time in proportions of youth highly withdrawn or isolated was similar for RT and IFS youth. The greatest change was from admission to 12-18 months post discharge. From Time 1 to Time 2, approximately the same proportions of youth (almost one-quarter for each program) were reported to be withdrawn or isolated a lot.

Figure 4: Proportions of RT and IFS Youth Socially Withdrawn or Isolated “A Lot”

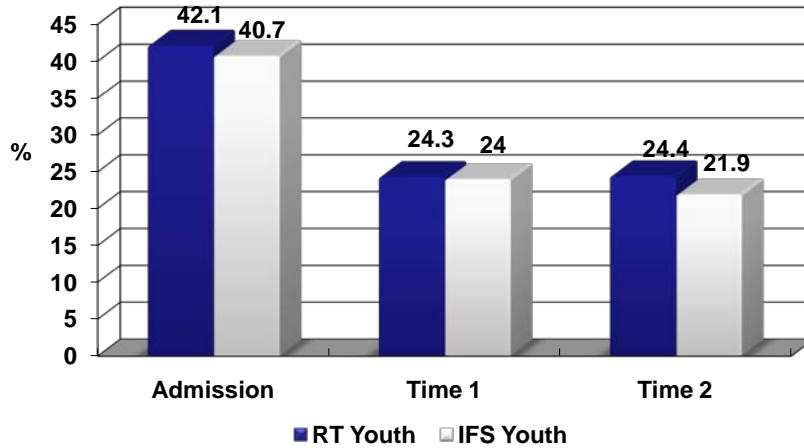


Figure 5 shows the proportions of RT and IFS youth who were reported to do things with other kids “a lot” less as a result of their mental health issues. Similar to the pattern in Figure 3, approximately 40-45% of all youth at admission were doing things a lot less with other children. At Time 1, the proportions fell to just below 30% for both RT and IFS youth. At Time 2, approximately one-quarter of all youth were still reported to do things a lot less with other children as a result of their mental health issues.

Figure 5: Proportions of RT and IFS Youth Doing Things “A Lot” Less with Other Kids

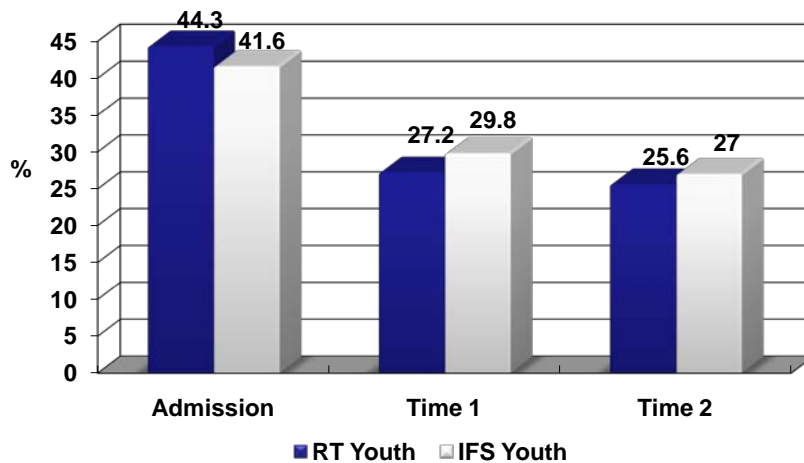
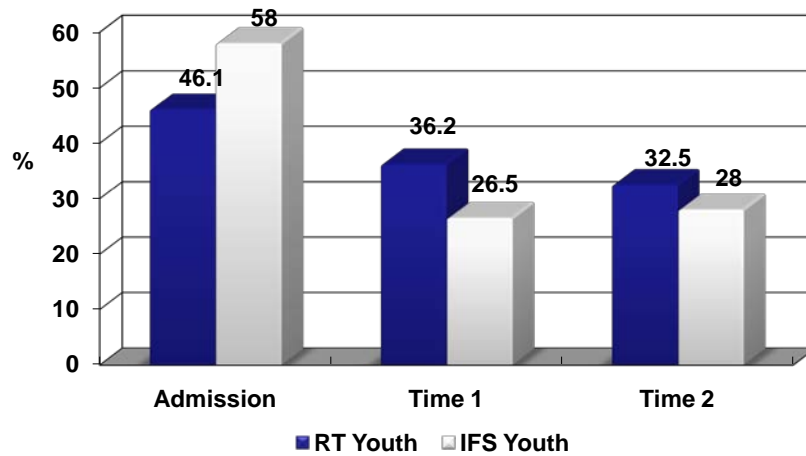


Figure 6 shows the proportions of RT and IFS youth reported to have a life that was “a lot” less enjoyable as a result of their mental health concerns. At admission, a greater proportion of IFS youth than RT youth were reported to have a lot less enjoyment in their lives. At Time 1 and Time 2, these proportions were significantly smaller for IFS youth. Larger proportions of RT youth continued to have less enjoyment in their lives at follow up.

Figure 6: Proportions of RT and IFS Youth with “A Lot” Less Enjoyment in their Lives



(c) BCFPI COOPERATION WITH OTHERS SUBSCALE

The Cooperation with Others Subscale of the BCFPI measures the extent to which youth are engaged in cooperative relationships with others. High scores may indicate that the youth is non-compliant, defiant, and resentful toward adults and peers.

i. At Admission

At admission, both RT and IFS youth had mean scores within the clinical range of impairment (above 70) on the Cooperation with Others subscale. RT youth had a mean score of 77.26 and IFS youth had a mean score of 76.92. A t-test summarized in Table 7 shows that there was no significant difference between programs on this measure. Both RT youth and IFS youth had mean scores well above the 2006 Ontario average score of 68.33.

Table 7: BCFPI Cooperation with Others Subscale Scores at Admission

Statistics	RT (N=75)	IFS (N=84)	2006 Ontario (N=4918)
Mean	77.26	76.92	68.33
Std. Dev.	8.4	8.94	
T-test	t= .249 df=157 p=.804 (equal variances assumed)		

ii. At 12-18 Months Follow Up and 36 to 48 Months Follow Up

To examine changes over time, scores on the BCFPI Cooperation with Others Subscale at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 were compared for only youth with information at all three points in time. Table 8 shows that for 57 RT youth, over time there was a decrease in the average score suggesting that these RT youth were engaged in more cooperative relationships from admission to follow up. This change over time was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.77$, $p < .001$). In particular there was a statistically significant difference in the distribution of scores from admission to 12-18 months post discharge ($Z = -4.68$, $p < .001$). The change from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up, however, was not significant.

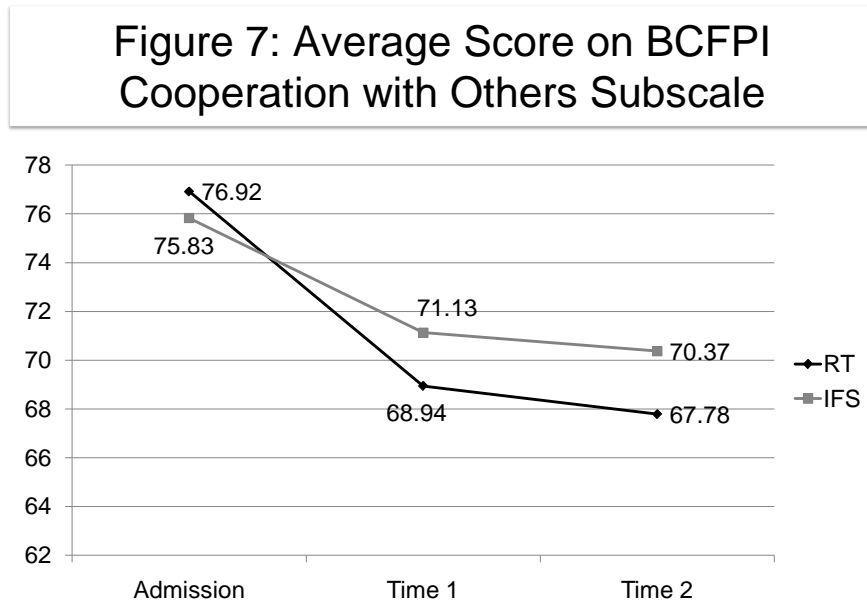
The 62 IFS youth with scores at all points in time also experienced a decrease in their average scores on this measure suggesting they were more compliant and cooperative over time. The improvement in cooperation with others over time was statistically significant for IFS youth ($\chi^2 = 7.53$, $p < .05$). In particular, the greatest change was from admission to 12-18 months post discharge ($Z = -4.48$, $p < .001$).

While RT youth had more problematic scores than IFS youth at admission, at both Time 1 and Time 2 follow up IFS youth had higher problem scores than RT youth. The average score for IFS youth at both 12-18 months and 36-48 months post discharge continued to be above the cut off score for clinical levels of concern. These differences between program types were not statistically significant.

Table 8: BCFPI Cooperation with Others Subscale Scores at Follow Up

	RT (n=57)	IFS (n=62)
Admission	76.92	75.83
Time 1	68.94	71.13
Time 2	67.78	70.37

Figure 7 shows the change in scores from admission to Time 1 to Time 2 follow up for both groups. Both RT youth and IFS youth showed a similar pattern of improvement over time on the BCFPI Cooperation with Others subscale. The average scores for RT youth at Time 1 and Time 2 follow up fell below the clinical cut off score of 70. This was not true of IFS youth scores.



(d) BCFPI QUALITY OF CHILD’S RELATIONSHIPS SUBSCALE (SINGLE ITEM)

From the BCFPI Quality of Child’s Relationships Subscale there was one item directly relevant to our understanding of youth connections and relationships with peers. More specifically, parents and guardians were asked about how much youth had been irritable and fighting with friends as a result of their mental health problems.

i. At admission

Table 10 shows the distribution of responses for this single item at admission. Approximately 66% of RT youth and 41% of IFS youth had been irritable or fighting with friends at admission “a lot”. A Chi-Square revealed a statistically significant difference between RT and IFS youth at admission on this item ($p < .01$). The distribution of responses suggests that a greater proportion of RT youth than IFS youth were irritable and fighting with friends as a result of their problems at admission.

Table 10: How much has your child been irritable or fighting with friends as a result of these problems?

Responses	RT (n=74)	IFS (n=81)
<i>None</i>	9 (12.2%)	23 (28.4%)
<i>A Little</i>	16 (21.6%)	25 (30.9%)
<i>A Lot</i>	49 (66.2%)	33 (40.7%)
Chi-Square Value=10.929 df=2 p < .01		

ii. At 12-18 Months Follow Up and 36 to 48 Months Follow Up

At follow up, both RT youth and IFS youth were fighting less with friends. Table 11 shows that 35% of RT youth and 27.7% of IFS youth were irritable or fighting with friends “a lot” at Time 1 follow up. At Time 2 follow up, these proportions were even smaller with 24.7% of RT youth and 13.5% of IFS youth fighting a lot with friends.

Table 11: How much has your child been irritable or fighting with friends as a result of these problems?

	Time 1 (12-18 Months Follow Up)		Time 2 (36-48 Months Follow Up)	
	RT (n=100)	IFS (n=101)	RT (n=77)	IFS (n=74)
None	26 (26.0%)	32 (31.7%)	21 (27.3%)	25 (33.8%)
A Little	39 (39.0%)	41 (40.6%)	37 (48.1%)	39 (52.7%)
A Lot	35 (35%)	28 (27.7%)	19 (24.7%)	10 (13.5%)

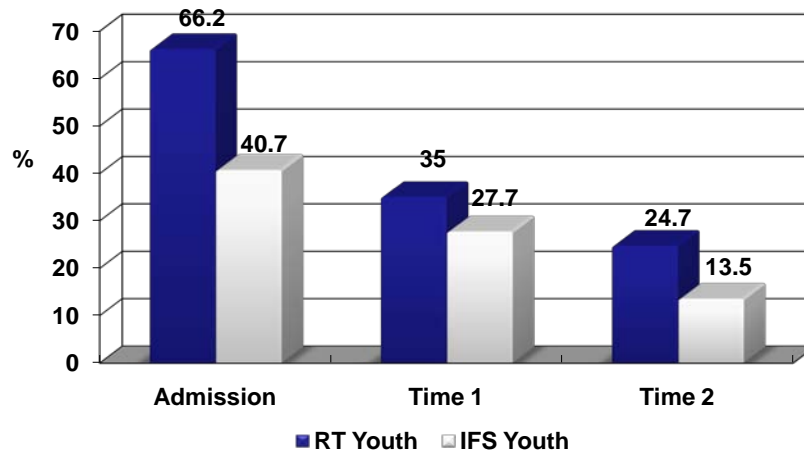
The proportion of RT youth who were irritable and fighting with friends a lot significantly decreased over time ($\chi^2 = 15.58, p < .001$). More specifically, there was a significant change between scores at admission and Time 1 follow up ($p < .001$); however, there was no further significant improvement in RT youth’s scores from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up.

Similarly there was a significant decrease over time in how much IFS youth were irritable and fighting with friends ($\chi^2 = 6.37, p < .05$). Further analyses revealed that the significant change in scores was from admission to Time 2 (36-48 months post discharge)

($p < .05$). The difference in scores between Time 1 and Time 2 was approaching statistical significance at .05; however, there was no significant change in scores from admission to Time 1 follow up (12-18 months post discharge).

Figure 8 shows the proportions of RT youth and IFS youth reported to be irritable and fighting with friends “a lot” at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 follow up. The reduced proportions of youth fighting with friends over time suggest a pattern of improvement in the quality of youth friendships.

Figure 8: Proportions of RT and IFS Youth Irritable and Fighting with Friends “A Lot”



(e) KINDL QUALITY OF LIFE SOCIAL CONTACTS SUBSCALE

Parents and guardians were asked how often youth did things with friends, were liked by other kids, and got along well with their friends at admission and follow up. They were also asked to rate how frequently youth felt different from other children. These questions made up the KINDL Quality of Life Social Contacts Subscale. Responses to individual items ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time). A higher overall score was indicative of greater quality of life in the area of social contacts.

i. At Admission

Table 12 shows that at admission RT youth had a mean score of 2.65 and IFS youth had a mean score of 2.90 on the KINDL Quality of Life Social Contacts Subscale. While IFS youth were reported to have slightly greater overall quality of life in this area than RT youth, there was no statistically significant difference in mean score between the

two groups at admission. With a larger sample size, however, this trend may have approached significance at the .05 level.

Table 12: KINDL Quality of Life Social Contacts Subscale At Admission

Statistics	RT (N=88)	IFS (N=103)
Mean	2.65	2.90
Std. Dev.	.970	.979
T-test	t= -1.772 df=189 p=.078 (equal variances assumed)	

ii. At 12 to 18 Months Follow Up (Time 1) and 36 to 48 Months Follow Up (Time 2)

Both RT youth and IFS youth were reported to have higher quality of life in their social contacts at Time 1 and Time 2 follow up than at admission. There were 61 RT youth and 69 IFS youth with scores at all points in time. An analysis of change over time for these youth revealed that both groups had a significant increase in their social contacts quality of life ($\chi^2 = 34.24$, $p < .001$ for RT youth and $\chi^2 = 19.28$, $p < .001$ for IFS youth). Table 13 shows the average scores for each group at admission, Time 1, and Time 2.

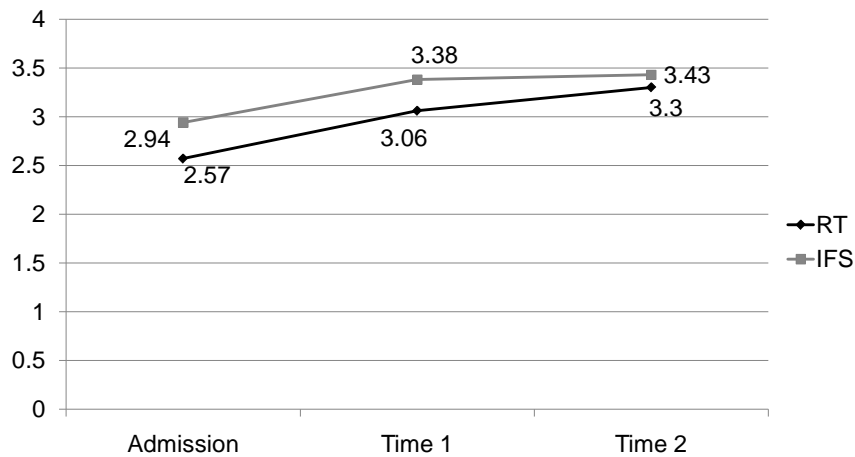
Table 13: KINDL Quality of Life—Social Contacts Subscale Scores at Follow Up

	RT (n=61)	IFS (n=69)
Admission	2.57	2.94
Time 1	3.06	3.38
Time 2	3.30	3.43

RT youth saw statistically significant improvements in their quality of life from admission to Time 1 follow up ($Z = -3.73$, $p < .001$). Additionally, there was a significant improvement in scores from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up ($Z = -2.45$, $p < .05$). IFS youth also experienced a significant improvement from admission to Time 1 follow up on this measure ($Z = -5.01$, $p < .001$); however, the difference in scores from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up was not significant.

Figure 9 shows average scores on the KINDL Quality of Life—Social Contacts Subscale at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 follow up. IFS youth had consistently higher quality of life in this area than RT youth.

Figure 9: Average Score on KINDL Quality of Life—Social Contacts Subscale



Youth Perspectives on Social Connections at 12 to 18 Months Follow Up

This next section summarizes youth perspectives on social and community connections approximately 12 to 18 months following discharge from residential treatment or intensive family services. The majority of information on social connections focused on peer relationships, particularly friendships. Youth were asked about their hobbies and leisure activities. Activities shared with friends were important. Some youth shared information and perceptions about their neighbourhoods.

(a) FRIENDS AND PEERS

Three profiles emerged regarding friendships and relationships. In the first profile, were youth who reported having many friends, enjoying their social relationships and feeling generally positive about themselves socially. The second profile characterized youth who reported having friends but whose reports about their peer relations were more mixed with both positive and negative experiences. Youth in the third profile talked about a “lack” of friendships and social acceptance. Often these youth described bullying in their lives and there was a sense of social isolation in their stories.

Of the 35 IFS youth, 43% described feeling highly satisfied with their friendships, 40% described mixed feelings and 14% described a “lack” when it came to friendships and social supports. Of the 33 RT youth, 48% described feeling highly satisfied with their friendships, 34% described mixed feelings and 18% described a “lack” of

friendships and social supports. These reports suggest that over one third of the youth may have been doing relatively well socially, about a third had some challenges and about one fifth of the youth (less in the IFS sample) were having significant difficulties socially.

Generally, most youth talked about friends as being very important in their lives, whether they had many friends or just a few, whether relationships were healthy or conflicted. The majority of youth reported having friends in a variety of settings (schools, treatment, custody, and different neighbourhoods). Even youth who were relatively socially isolated were able to identify a few or a single significant friend they had. The following quotes³ demonstrate some of the satisfaction that youth derived from friendships:

I love spending time together, anything, it's good, we're more like family, we're like a little circle of family instead of friends. [IFS-1]

I have a bunch of creative friends, I really appreciate them, they mean a lot to me. [IFS-2]

We just get along, we act really stupid, do stupid fun things at lunch, I don't know, have fun. A whole bunch of things I like about my friends. [IFS-3]

I look forward to just go out with my friends and being around my friends, I like being around them a lot. [IFS-4]

They're always there for me when I need a friend and they're the best friends a person could ask for. [RT-1]

These strong examples came primarily from IFS youth. However, friends were generally presented as highly significant by both IFS and RT youth, with the IFS youth perhaps articulating more about the quality of their relationships than RT youth.

School was a key setting for forging peer relationships, particularly for IFS youth. School enjoyment was often linked with positive peer relationships. Youth frequently described friends as something they liked about school. The following quotes demonstrate how the social aspect of school enhanced the whole school experience for a young person:

Well, meeting new people for one thing and being there with your friends. I don't know, somebody I like to get work and it like, puts you on a focus and you can just get down and do it, I don't know, like, it depends which class it is, I like different things about different classes....Well, my family studies class, I have great people in them, it's just like a good a nice laugh... [IFS-1]

³ To further protect the anonymity of research participants, for each quote we have only identified the program of interest (either RT or IFS) and consecutively numbered quotes for each section.

It's going good now, like, I have a lot of friends there. We constantly joke around, during lunch, after school, sometimes we'll walk down to the terminal and hang out there. And we're constantly joking around and we have different activities going on in school. [IFS-2]

I get to hang out with friends in one of my favourite courses. [RT-1]

Yeah, I met a lot of new people and I guess it must be the environment that it was, just twice as many people, you don't have the negativity of all the other people in your class, because everybody else in your class knows you so well, and you're in a school with 2,500 kids, you get to know other people and become part of a group and if somebody else is bothering you, what the problem? You have your own friends. [RT-2]

School was a less enjoyable experience for youth who had no friends at school, felt isolated, or experienced bullying or conflict among peers. The following examples demonstrate how conflicted peer relations sometimes made school feel unmanageable for a youth:

I don't know, like, I didn't go to school, like, I wouldn't go, because there were people I just didn't want to see, and I was like, I'm going to lose it if I see them, like I can't handle seeing them, so, um, I'd go to maybe one class a day or not at all. But I went to all my exams, except for one. [IFS-3]

I hate—like, I just don't like it, because people, it's just a drama-fest going to school, I can't stand it. [RT-3]

The reason I left is because of all the stress. All the kids always pickin' on me, I'm a main center for bullies, so... Everybody likes to pick on me and stuff was just not going well, so, my anger would get the best of me so... [RT-4]

The social aspect of school clearly emerged as being highly important to the point where it could “make or break” a youth's school experience. More IFS youth than RT youth reported positive social connections in school.

A noteworthy theme in among RT youth (24%), and to a much lesser degree among IFS youth (9%), was the forging of friendships outside of what would be typical for a teenager. Sometimes youth who described feeling isolated from, excluded by, or different from other kids their age described friendships with individuals much older or younger than themselves and who often shared common lifestyles or interests. In the following example, this youth had a history of conflicted peer relationships and now felt further isolated from her peer group because she was pregnant and soon to become a mother. She found common ground with an older friend who was parenting and pregnant:

I hang out with this other lady, she's like 28, she's pregnant, she's been my friend for a while she's my mom's friend too, she has a 4-year-old kid and she's together with my friend (name) and he's like 34 or something like that and he has 3 boys and she has a boy and now they're having a baby together, so... Yeah, we both do the same things right now, we're both pregnant so we pretty much hang out together all day...and I feel safe around her, so... Yeah, I don't like hanging out with a lot of the younger girls because it brings such problems...[IFS-1]

This youth describes being introduced to drugs by a former older friend who was boarding with her parents:

I used to be like best friends with the girl who used to live in our basement, she's like 32 but she's, fucked up now, like apparently she's like a prostitute in Burlington trying to get money for like cocaine..... Yeah, she got me into drugs.....Yeah. She's like an older friend that I would always hang out with too, but she's not close to me anymore.
[IFS-2]

Some youth talked about hanging out with a much older peer group. For example:

I don't hang out with anyone my age, all of them are older. [Q...] Between well—typical like 14-year-old, my buddy, but that's about it, I'd say between 16 and 25 or 26. [RT-1]

I hang out with an older crowd. I don't really like the immature kids, I can't handle it.[Q....?] Um, they're older. I don't really hang out with—[Q. ...] My best friend is 20. [RT-2]

In the following example, a youth who is socially isolated talked about a 7 year old in the neighbourhood that she calls her friend:

... okay, my friend lives just down the street and sometimes I bring him to the park, I watch him, babysit him for a couple, like 45 minutes. [Q. How old is he?] 7. [RT-3]

Some youth who described feeling different from “regular kids” alluded to feeling “accepted” by an alternative peer group. The following example illustrates this case:

[Q. So there's not really any kids your age around here then?] You know, even if there was, I still wouldn't talk to them. [Q. How come?] Because I don't like people that... because I'm like my own person, because I have my own friends and my friend are fucked like me, like, we all are, we don't care, but I just can't stand people who are like, blah, blah, blah, like I hate just normal, perfect, people, I don't know why, I just don't like them. Because they're not me, because I'm not normal and perfect. [RT-4]

Also, noteworthy is the fact that some of the youth in our study, RT youth in particular, lived in group homes or closed custody and/or were in alternative educational programs. These youth would have limited opportunities to make social connections with youth in the larger community. By virtue of their living arrangements or schooling, they would be somewhat isolated from most youth their age.

Several youth told stories about their friends that demonstrated a strong emotional investment in close friendships. These youth expressed worry when friends were struggling and they talked about trying to help their friends:

Um, I have friends that aren't really happy with life that I'm really trying to help them get through that, right? Some of the things that I'm going to have to face is the fact that they're getting sadder or the fact that they're getting really sad and stuff like that and yeah, that's pretty much it... [IFS-1]

Like, well, like, a few of my friends have a lot of problems and stuff. My one friend, her parents are getting divorced and she's just having some problems at home right now and my best friend has an eating disorder and she doesn't take care of herself so it's like, constantly worrying about, are you eating? Are you doing your insulin? Are you doing this? Are you doing that? But trying not to be really pushy about it, but still trying to help her, because I do, I want to see her succeed in life and I want to see her be healthy and stuff so it's kind of a pain in the butt. [IFS-2]

Well, that friend, when I met her, she had 1, her son, and I mean, like, he's like my nephew, both the kids are like my niece and nephew, like, I love them to death. But she was 15 when she got pregnant, but her pregnancy was the worst, because she was beat throughout the whole pregnancy and I really respect her for actually keeping that baby [...]... if anything does happen to her, I will fight for her, because she has 2 kids that she's not going to lose and I don't have anything to lose. I'm going to jail? Good for me. [RT-1]

I hope it gets easier for them...I don't know, just everything that they have and I don't know, easier in life, things aren't as hard for them. [RT-2]

Two RT youth described close peers as being like family members to them. The following quotes reflect this sense of family experienced within these youths' close friendships:

I love my friends dearly and they love me.... they are like my family that's what I said in the beginning. [Name of friend] is family to me. [He] is like a brother. [RT-3]

[Name of friend] is my friend who does not do any drugs. ...he's like my brother, you don't even understand. I've known this fucking kid since I was in grade three.

[RT-4]

Six IFS youth and six RT youth talked about a girlfriend or boyfriend that was an important connection for them. These “significant others” seemed to take on a role similar to an important or best friend and seemed to fill similar social roles for the youth – a close friend to confide in and spend lots of time with. For example:

Hang out with my girlfriend, hang out with my friends, listen to music....We watch TV, sometimes we go bike riding...She’s really nice. We care for each other...You get really close. Really trust them. [IFS-1]

Well, so far, even though it’s just been about less than a month, seems a lot better of a relationship than all the others I’ve been in [...] And from what I know, she isn’t using me for stuff, so...[...] And she’s—y’know, the only thing she uses me for is talking all the time. [...] Because whenever she’s bored, she phones me so... [RT-1]

When I get home, oh, I’m going to see my girlfriend.[..] 2 years.[.....]I’ve been with her about 2 years, since I was 12. [...] She’s alright. She’s a funny girl. [Q...?] Go to the movies, go to my house and just chill. Stay at her house. Stuff. [RT-2]

He’s my lifeline. [Q, And can you tell me about your boyfriend?] Um we’ve been dating for two and a half years so when I really started um when I came out of the hospital in grade 9. I just, when we started going out I told him about my history and what he would be dealing with, but um it’s been pretty good. I’ve went in the hospital a few months later but he dealt with that. [Q....] And he’s just my backbone kind of thing. He’s been there for everything and I’m there for him and. [IFS-2]

Three of the youth in a committed relationship identified their partners’ faithfulness as important to them. This youth describes this valued aspect of his intimate relationship:

[My girlfriend] doesn’t do drugs that often, she drinks here and there. Uh me and her get along good. Argue not that often. And yeah it’s a good relationship. [Q. what makes it good?] Uh the fact that we get along a lot and that she won’t cheat on me and I won’t cheat on her. We both trust each other. [RT-3]

While youth did not specifically discuss the sexual aspects of their dating relationships, it was evident that several youth were sexually active. One IFS female youth was pregnant and no longer in a relationship with the father of her baby and two RT youth, who were in jail at the time of the interview, reported that their girlfriends were pregnant.

Youth generally had a lot to say about friendships and activities with their friends relative to other topics. When asked to rate their friendships on a scale youth generally rated their satisfaction with friendships as very high and followed up with positive

comments about their friends. This overall rating of friends was not always consistent with some of the difficulties they also described. The amount of time spent talking about friends and the high rating of friends may be a result of the importance of friendship and peer connections at this developmental level in youth's lives, whether or not the friendships are as ideal or as plentiful as youth would like.

Friendship Qualities Admired By Youth

Youth often talked about the qualities that they liked in their friends. All youth described very similar qualities they admired in friends. When describing what they liked about their friends, youth talked about qualities such as trust, respect and similar interests. Trust was the most common theme. Youth talked about trusting their friends, feeling supported by friends, being able to talk to friends about anything and feeling like friends were looking out for them. The following examples illustrate the importance of trust in relationships with friends:

Um, well, my two best friends are guys and that's the boy you saw me walking out with, that's my best friend (name) and we tell each other everything and generally there's a strong trust bond between me and my friends and we can tell each other everything and if one person is down the other person can tell and be there for them and help them out and we speak our minds, we tell the truth and we don't... no, I love you, I hate you, because that happens a lot when you're my age right? ...Because I know everything about my friends and there's nothing that I don't know and there's nothing that they don't know about me, because we never keep things from each other or anything like that and I think that's really important when you're friends.[IFS-1]

Um, they're nice to me, if I were to be drunk or something like that, and I was puking they'd hold my hair back or something like that, right? They'd – if I was about to jump off something, they'd talk to me, right, just something like that, basically, they'd be there for me.... It's kind of like a mutual thing, if my friends are trying to do something that will hurt themselves, then I'll stop them too type thing. [IFS-2]

And then when it really comes down to it, when someone's feeling bad, we're always there for them. We always back each other up. Anytime something happens, we're right there, so... [name] is part of our little group. Her ex-boyfriend would race... like go tear, and then my friend would be right there to make sure he didn't and I would be standing back where he would run up, so we are always there anytime they need it, we're right there. [IFS-3]

Um, depends on the day, but usually stuff about school, how our lives are going back home and stuff. [...] Like, really good friends? Probably about 10

that I really trust.[...] (describing girlfriend) She's really nice. We care for each other.....You get really close. Really trust them. [IFS-4]

They're really open and they don't judge people, I don't know, they're so easy to talk to, if you're having a problem, they're always there for you and want to help you and stuff. And they're never like, why are you telling me about this, about your problems, I don't want to hear it, that kind of thing, they're really understanding, they want to hear what's wrong with you and you can always trust them and rely on them to be around. [IFS-5]

Yeah, I got one best friend, but the rest are just mostly friends. [Q. Um, is it hard backing up your friends?] A. Not really, because you just back one up and then the rest back each other up because there are so many. [RT-1]

My friends, I don't know, they're good, take care of each other. [RT-2]

She's funny. She's reliable and she's... what's that word saying that you can... dedication. She's a dedicated woman. She'll stay with you... when I was in... uh... (institution), for about a year, almost two years, she waited, that's what you call it, whatever. And then, yeah... she's just a really reliable person, you can... I can count on her. So... [RT-3]

Because they always watch out for me. [RT-4]

Though there are many positive examples of youth experiencing trusting relationships with friends, obviously not all youth experienced these. There is an absence of these sorts of comments for roughly one third of the sample. The following RT youth explicitly talked about deficits in their relationships with friends:

My friends aren't that bad, but there's stuff they could work on.[Q...] I don't know, like we don't really like, if we have problems at school or whatever, we don't like, stick with each other to help each other. Most of the people just walk away. So like, we could help, work on helping each other with helping out or whatever, but that's pretty much it. [RT-5]

...it's really hard when you've been bullied through most of your life and you get some friends who you think are friends and then they turn around and treat you like a piece of crap and then you try and get friends and they seem like good friends but you really don't know for sure.[...] The few friends I do have, I don't even know if they're truthful friends or not. [RT-6]

So while many youth talk about trust in relationships, and while trust is clearly important to many youth, this strength was not found in all friendships. It appears from the data that RT youth expressed somewhat more concern with deficits in

friendships.

Youth commonly used the word “nice” to describe their friends, suggesting a sense of mutual respect:

And I feel safe around her, so...I don't know. She's just a really nice lady.
[IFS-1]

I don't know, they're nice. Um... yeah. That's about it, because somebody's nice. [IFS-2]

Treat me with respect, unlike everybody else and basically they're nice people I can hang out with. [RT-1]

I don't know, he's a good friend, he's nice. [RT-2]

Most of them are good friends. Not in anything bad or nothing, so it's good to hang around with them. They're nice to me, I'm nice to them. [RT-3]

In some cases, a peer being “nice” implied acceptance. Being accepted as well as being respected seemed to be important. For example:

They're funny and they're cool and they're nice sometimes. [...] And sometimes... sometimes they get mad at what happens and um... they um... like me for who I am. [RT-3]

Because they all like me, friendliness, so that's why I be their friend. [RT-4]

In the following example a younger youth described in his own words the importance of being accepted by a peer:

Well, he's kind of... like my only friend, well, not the only friend, he's kind of my real friend. ... He's a true friend. ...He used to care....That I was actually alive. ... Sometimes people just play with you once and they just leave. (name) used to always play with me. And it used to be happy when he used to play with me, he'd laugh with me, the others, just boring playing people, they don't laugh when we play, we just... doing whatever they want to do. [IFS-3]

Mutual respect and mutual acceptance were apparent qualities when youth talked about relationships.

Some youth identified common interests as being important in friendships. For example:

Yeah, we both do the same things right now, we're both pregnant so we pretty much hang out together all day... I like to be around them. Teach me a lot of stuff... I dunno, about my pregnancy and just anything. Girl things and everything. [IFS-1]

Well, there's one friend that I don't eat lunch with, but he um, in fact, helps, like we work together on projects that we got in same classes. I help him, he helps me, that kind of thing. ... Oh, they're really understanding. They both got same problems in life, the sort of stuff like I do. [...] Kids bullying the heck out of me. [Q.....So they all get picked on?] Well, not as much, they've got like problems with some teachers. Like, I have a few problems with a couple of them in that school, so like... I don't know. [IFS-2]

They have the same interests that I do. [Okay, like skateboarding and stuff?] Yeah. [What about, like, personality things?] Um, I don't know. They're nice? [IFS-3]

...And they're funny. They always like to do something, not sit around. Things I like. [IFS-4]

Pretty nice, likes the same kind of music I do, some of them do. Uh, most of them go to my school. [IFS-5]

Um, same interests I guess.[Q...] Music, games.[RT-1]

Both IFS and RT youth articulated the importance of common interests in their friendships. While common interest may be a factor in many relationships, more frequently youth talked about things such as acceptance, respect and trust as important to them in their friendships.

(b) SOCIAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Social Activities

Spending time engaged in activities with friends was important to many of the youth in our study. Youth talked about a variety of things they enjoyed doing with friends; however, just "hanging out" with friends was a common reference. Youth talked about a variety of things they did with friends such as playing sports and video games/internet with friends. Others liked going to the mall/walking around; and, a few participated in "illegal" behaviour with friends including substance use, fighting, dealing drugs, and stealing. However, youth consistently mentioned and derived a lot of satisfaction from simply "hanging out" with friends, talking, connecting, and "doing nothing." Slightly more than two thirds of IFS youth (71%) and over one half of RT youth (61%) talked about specific activities they did with friends:

I like hanging out with my friends and listening to my music. [IFS-1]

Uh, I don't know, just talking to friends and I just hang out ...we'll just sit down and play games and watch movies and talk and stuff. [IFS-2]

We just go play outside, maybe tag, teams against teams. [...] Whatever we like to play. [IFS-3]

Go over to my friend's shed and play board games, Monopoly and stuff. That's about it. [IFS-4]

They're fun to be around....We just hang out at school or just talk or whatever. [IFS-5]

Just hang around and just walk around or just talk or whatever....Just the mall, just downtown here, that's about it. [IFS-6]

Well, we used to love to go—I love to go bowling with my friends, just spending time with my friends doing anything is fun. Like, seeing movies, chilling at the mall, staying over at a friend's house or having a movie party, parties, we generally do have a lot of parties, like my friend (name) had a movie party and we had a '50s party and we had an Oscar night party. [IFS-7]

Uh, go to the movies. I go to the movies every single weekend pretty much. Go to dances, go to the mall, just hang out, go paintballing, lasertag...[IFS-8]

Like, hang out on nutrition break and fool around and talk....I don't know. We just, like, walk around outside and talk. [IFS-9]

Just like hang out with my friends or do whatever I feel like doing, it doesn't really. It depends on what I feel like doing because I just feel like being lazy, sometimes I feel like hanging out with my friends, hanging out with my friends, just like anything....Well, sometimes, we go to the movies, if I go with the (other school) people, other times I just hang out with people and talk on the computer and today my friend came over and we were supposed to practice with our [drums], but then, we're not that great at it, so yeah, but then we're like whatever. [IFS-10]

Well, I usually like to hang out with friends, because I have the spare time just to go down to (high school) after school when they get out and hang out with them for a long time and then I ... usually when I'm at home I'll have some people sleep over too and stuff like that so it's pretty cool. It's basically what I do in my free time, I'll just have friends come over and we'll hang out. Uh, usually watch TV, play video games, listen to the radio, because I like all that industrial stuff, and like computerized stuff, like Apex Twin type

things, but that's basically what we do and we film stuff that we do, like Charlie Chaplin type things. [IFS-11]

Play video games, sports, stay up all night. [IFS-12]

I don't know, we just like to like, hang out and see other people and talk and just like, go to movies or go out for dinner or something. [IFS-13]

Hang out with my girlfriend, hang out with my friends, listen to music...Mall, here, her house. Somewhere around the neighbourhood.... We watch TV, sometimes we go bike riding. [IFS-14]

[Q. So what do you and your friends do together?] Hang out. [...] (Place), McDonald's, wherever. Sometimes we just walk down the street and then that's cool. [RT-1]

Um, most of my friends are like me, energetic and hyper. It works like, we don't really have one hangout spot, we just kind of walk all over or whatever. So... [Q. What kind of stuff do you do together?] Um, well, we play... well, we've gone to the mall and we hang out at each others' houses, play video games, do sports.[Q...]Uh, football, hockey and baseball. And tennis. [RT-2]

Well, just like going out and having a good time.[...] Pretty much, just... go to my friends, just stay there and hang out, just go away from school, my house, just go away. [Q...] Yeah, just forget about everything and have a good time with my friends. [RT-3]

I like to chill with my friends. [...] That's about it.[...] I would walk with my friend (name) here, to our buddy's house and then we would chill. I don't know, we just hang out and talk and I don't know. [RT-4]

Mostly just (street), just walk around school, hang out there, or the park. [...] Biking... and mostly we just play video games. [Q. Okay. You were saying that your friends aren't into anything. What kind of stuff are you guys not into?] Drugs or nothing, the bad stuff. Just try to stay away from that and try to keep physically fit and bike around a lot. [RT-5]

These quotes illustrate that spending time together was key and the activities were secondary. Somewhat more IFS youth (71%) were able to comment on specific leisure activities they engaged in with friends as compared to RT youth (58%). While some IFS youth (18%) made reference to problematic behaviours such as fighting, drinking or engaging in illegal behaviours with friends, overall, RT youth were more likely to make reference to these activities (see section on community conduct). IFS youth were somewhat more likely to articulate a more varied and active social life than RT youth.

General Leisure Activities

There was a wide array of examples shared by youth regarding leisure activities in which they engaged. This included both individual activities and activities with friends. Generally, IFS youth had more to say about leisure activities and talked about a wider range of these types of activities. Specifically, 88% of RT youth as compared to 97% of IFS youth commented on leisure activities. IFS youth also described more variety of leisure activities in which they engaged. However, what was most significant was the difference in quality of leisure activities. A large number of IFS youth (71%) and fewer RT youth (39%) identified leisure activities that were either active (sports) or creative activities (reading, writing, and cooking).

The most commonly identified leisure activities were watching television, listening to music and playing on the computer. Computer activities were sometimes interactive (messenger, video games) and sometimes solitary. Sports were the next most common activities, followed by a variety of other hobbies including writing, cooking, reading, dancing and fishing.

While several youth (11% of IFS and 21% of RT), talked about problematic activities they did in their spare time such as drinking, drugs and criminal activity, many other youth talked about positive and varied social and leisure activities. The following are several exemplary comments that suggest a very healthy leisure life:

Um, writing, and I like to cook and I like to take pictures. Um, again, because putting your soul into something else for somebody, into something for somebody else. [IFS-1]

I don't know, I like to be athletic, I like to run a lot, stuff like that. I like going outside, riding my bike, taking my skateboard, going down, shooting hoops. [IFS-2]

I like to play my guitar, going to dances, working, hanging out with my dad here at home, different things that I do. It depends what mood I'm in, sometimes me and my friends go over to the [river] and go fishing.[...] I go to this church called the (name), I like to go there, hang out with some people there when they have activities going on. [IFS-3]

I don't know, I like being around people that I like. I'm a people-person. And um, I like to dance a lot, so...[Q...?] Um, like, lyrical, modern type stuff. Ballet. So...[...] [Q...what kind of stuff do you do with your friends?] I don't know, we just like to like, hang out and see other people and talk and just like, go to movies or go out for dinner or something.... I like soccer and swimming. [IFS-4]

While the above quotes reflect active or creative leisure activities, the following youth comments may suggest a lack of healthy leisure activities:

I dunno, drugs alcohol, listening to music and go out and steal cars, or go out and deal, make some money. [RT-1]

Do drugs... Or steal cars.... Just smoke weed...And other stuff. [RT-3]

I don't really do any leisure activities, because, again, I'm never in the same house long enough, so I'd rather not waste money and time. [RT-4]

In general, social and community activities identified by youth were diverse. Comments made by IFS youth suggested that these youth seemed to fare somewhat better in their engagement in healthy leisure activities than RT youth where we noted a slight deficit in the number of examples of healthy leisure activities and an increased reporting of engagement in illegal leisure activities.

Certain quotes suggested that some youth desired more leisure opportunities, especially in sports, but lacked the access or the confidence, ability or friends to be involved. Money was a barrier that affected access for some youth who expressed that they would like to be more involved in community activities. For example:

...I was kind of getting ready for rugby and kind of just running around with it and just learning, picking up everything, money became an issue and I just kind of stepped down, away from it, but I'll get it into it next year. [Q....]
Yeah. The school team. It's like 90 bucks. No money... expensive. On top of that, I had to buy shoes. So, it was going to end up being \$140 before you get playing. [RT-1]

No, my mom won't put me into sports, she doesn't have enough money, so... I just bike mostly as a sport. [RT-2].

I like biking, I haven't biked for a while, my bike got stolen. My bike—I used to bike everywhere, like from here to [city], I biked around the neighbourhood, everything, until my bike got stolen now I just play football. [RT-3]

Such examples of financial barriers to sports and leisure came predominantly from RT youth. Other youth talked about lack of opportunities due to social and ability barriers. The following are examples of some of the other challenges that youth described:

Not really a lot of people to play with. I play football sometimes at lunch. [IFS-1]

I, like, I don't know, it just doesn't—I'm improving my skills, just haven't played for a long time. I don't know, I never try out for teams because I know I won't make them. [IFS-2]

Well, some of my friends play hockey and I like hockey but I can't ... like I can skate but not as well play hockey, so yeah. So I'm not really in anything. I wanted to be in drama I missed that, because we were at someplace on a trip and then I missed dance. [Q. Mmm, have you done dance before?] No, but I wanted to join the class one because my friend was in it and it wasn't that hard, but then I missed all those things that I wanted to be in. [Q. Because you were missing school?] And since I was like—other stuff, I just didn't bother, but now that I actually want to be involved in stuff, it's, like, too late. [IFS-3]

I like baseball, nobody else in my family likes to play baseball with me. I'm always on my own when I want to play baseball. [Q. Baseball's kind of tough to play on your own, eh?] Not if you hit the ball softly.[...] Yeah. But, eventually, sometimes I can get my brother to come out and play baseball with me. Very rarely does that happen, but still... [RT-4]

Today I got kicked out of dance. [Q....?] Well, there's this teacher, right? Who said I'm not a good at—uh, dancing and she told me to go, leave, and I said, I'm like, this is not your school. So she's like, get out and I went out the door. [Q...?] Yeah, after school. And one of these—one of my friends, they're like, haha, you're not in dance all you are is a part of a loser.[...] I was like... I was like, unhappy. [RT-5]

These appear to be youth who might have been more engaged in healthy leisure and community activities if they did not face a variety of social and ability challenges. While many of the IFS youth appeared to be fairly engaged in healthy leisure activities, there was a noteworthy difference between IFS (29%) and RT youth (61%) who had described a lack of positive leisure activities.

(c) NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Troubled Neighbourhoods

About 31% of IFS youth and 52% of RT youth complained about their immediate neighbourhoods. These youth often expressed strong negative feelings about their neighbours and community environments. They talked about such things as unfriendly neighbours, feeling unsafe, and not being able to make positive connections in these neighbourhoods. A common theme identified by youth was interpersonal conflict in the neighbourhood, sometimes involving the youth in question. Drug use and crime were also identified by the youth as commonplace in some neighbourhood settings. Lack of resources prevented some families from moving out of troubled neighbourhoods. The following quotes illustrate how some youth felt about their neighbourhoods:

Ah, I don't like my neighbourhood, it's like a little city out there. Everybody's ignorant and they all gossip. I don't like it. [IFS-1]

...we have these really annoying neighbours upstairs that are like, always banging and the property manager's a real weirdo. [...]—she hasn't complained about a lot of things, but things like, I don't know, like apparently, loud noises coming from our apartment, like sometimes, since it's a smaller family, like really, it's just crap. [IFS-2]

Not a good neighbourhood, the house is falling apart, the neighbours are very miserable people. [Q....] Ugh, most of the time, they don't smile, they are a-holes and get into arguments with them. We have good neighbours, but not very often.[...]A lot of them do drugs and are very... I don't know how to describe it, not good people. The only reason we live here is because it's cheap rent and the place is falling apart, so I think it's worth it. [IFS-3]

This neighbourhood?...It's bad.[Q...] A lot of gangs or whatever. And there's gunshots in the neighbour's window. So we're moving. So yeah, it's not a very good neighbourhood, that's why, like, I don't go out, not because it's bad, but I don't hang out with anyone here. [...] Like someone stole stuff out of our backyard twice.[...] Well, there's a lot of fights going on and I got into one of them, like not a fight, but there's just a lot of arguing going on and I don't know... I just don't go outside anymore because it's stupid. It's retarded.[Q....] I don't remember, it's just a lot of stupid little fights, like little kids going around and a lot of the adults are just like, oh, she's such a backstabber, and I was like, don't go outside, like move. It's pretty bad. [IFS-4]

Well, there's a couple of people upstairs that are drug addicts and alcoholics. They have a drinking problem, they're always coming down here and everything and I don't really like that. The apartment is small and everything, but it's a place to live and it's a nice little apartment, so... and the neighbourhood around here, it's not like my old neighbourhood, there's not as many kids my age. So, but one thing I like about this neighbourhood, as soon as I get my fishing rod back from my mom I can go out to the [river], see there's a fishing spot just over there.[IFS-5]

...it's a bad area. [Q...] The people across the street there... , probably a week ago, my girlfriend's bike was chained outside my window, they snapped the chain and tried to steal it and the next day they egged the house. [Q....] Because they didn't get away with, because I ran out. [Q...] Lots of cops around. [IFS-6]

It's a rooming house, I don't like them. [Q....?] They do drugs and they drink. All the time. [...] ... one of the cops described it as it walks the line of a crack house and I kind of agree with that, due to drugs. Drugs, that's why... Bad neighbourhood. [RT-1]

This is a pretty crappy neighbourhood.[...] I don't know, there's a lot of, I would say there's violence around here—...and there's always something going missing around and just the chances, just looking over your shoulder at night and just watching your back making sure nothing's happening, but the people that live in this complex, they're all nice and all know who's who and just nice people. I tend to stay out of this neighbourhood as much as I possibly can and I'm usually gone out and about, just doing my own thing.[...] ... And don't have to worry about the outside butting in, so this is kind of a druggy neighbourhood and I don't do drugs. Just kind of stay away from those people. [Q. Do you think it had much of an impact on you?] Yeah, because I got really into drugs last June and I stuck with them was always doing it up and I think drugs have done a lot of things that should have been better. [RT-2]

You have to be fit in (small town), there's a lot of people that try and do stupid stuff to people, so you gotta back up people.[..] I know people—some people who are in bad stuff, so I have to watch out for them. So you gotta stay like that. [RT-3]

A terrible area.Yeah. [Q...] Grubby and the neighbours are just rude and annoying. [Q. ...?] They try to evict us for every little thing.[...] The neighbourhood's just rough. The lights in our complex went out and they won't turn on now, so it's completely pitch dark all the time and yeah. [Q...?]. I'm not afraid of the dark, it's just, you could get mugged or something and nobody would know. [RT-4]

Um, a little bit terrible. [Q. In what way?] 'cause... people they go across the street and when there's a car coming, they'll be so crazy and they'll run out in the street. [Q. The kids will?] Yeah! [...].There are... some people are rude. [...].And threatening other people. [Q...?] Like (name), he threats everybody. Like, he threats one of my friends by, he says, well, if you come around my neighbourhood, I'm going to hit you over the head with something, right. Well, like, okay, we're not going to go by your house. [RT-5]

When I lived on (street), some little kid stole my bike, so I went to his front yard and I took it back and the he stole it back. Yeah. And over here, it's not (street), so no one really wants to be stealing my bike which is a good thing, because bikes are expensive. [Q. Yeah, they are. Is (street) a tougher street?] Well, yeah, kind of. There's a lot of punks on (street). [RT-6]

I don't know, there's lots of fights in the neighbourhood and most of the people that are here are in the gangs and stuff, in our neighbourhood or in jail. [RT-7]

These quotes suggest that a significant number of youth seemed to live in troubled neighbourhoods. Clearly, the socio-economic status of many of these youth was not high. In addition, youth seemed to be attuned to the negative social factors in their neighbourhoods such as people with anti-social behaviours. Some comments suggest that youth found these behaviours so troubling because they struggled with similar issues (i.e. substance abuse, fighting). Youth comments also suggested that some of these neighbourhoods were not the best environments in which to make social connections.

Isolation

When talking about their communities, about 17% of IFS youth and 9% of RT youth talked about feeling isolated in their neighbourhoods and/or rarely going outside. In the following examples, youth make reference to this lack of healthy social contact:

I don't like going outside my home. [...] Yeah, I used to always go out. I would wake up and be out the door. [Q. Can you tell me why it's changed?] Well, because I'm pregnant and there's a lot of danger out there for me. [IFS-1]

Because I just stay inside and I never hang out with my friends, really. I honestly don't care about what's going on outside... [IFS-2]

Uh... well, I'm pretty much—like I stay in the house a lot especially during the week, because—and I think my parents probably think I'm some sort of a loner or something, but it's just that there's nothing to do during the week because all my par—all my friends, they're either, y'know working or something ... [IFS-3]

So yeah, it's not a very good neighbourhood, that's why, like, I don't go out, not because it's bad, but I don't hang out with anyone here. [IFS-4]

I don't like going out for some reason. [Q....?] I'm not scared or anything, I just don't like outside. [IFS-5]

Having access to friends was important to youth and some youth complained that living arrangements and neighbourhoods did not always allow this access. This was more often a complaint of RT youth whose living arrangements tended to change frequently because they were in government care. A variety of practical barriers contributed to social isolation:

Well, my neighbourhood is really new and it keeps developing and I like my neighbourhood because you get a different mix of people and stuff, but a lot of my good friends don't live near here, so... It sort of sucks for me, like, I have my best friend, she lives over there, but I'd rather have a lot of friends that live near me, because it's too hard to travel to where they live, like they

live in (city) and to get a drive there and try to get a drive there, to take the bus, is sort of annoying. [IFS-1]

(living in a trailer park with grandparents) When you live out in the country there's practically nothing. You live in (city), there's malls practically in every corner of the city, there's... sports teams like (name) and (name) and... there's just so much more to do in cities.... Because I like hanging out with my friends because that's basically all I have to do right now, but really there's nothing for me to do, especially when I can't get rides into (city), so...[RT-1]

I don't have any friends around here. I usually play with my brother and his friends.[Q....] There isn't very many people around here since I haven't gotten to know...[Q. And I guess your school's kind of far from here, right?]Yeah. [RT-2]

Yeah, most of them are living up by... well, one just lives up the street and the pretty much everybody else, one of my friends lives up in (place) and another friend that lives in (place), I don't know where that is, but it's some rich neighbourhood, just kind of stay out of here.[RT-3]

I hate my neighbourhood because it's old people. I don't know anyone, like anyone, I don't talk to anyone. [RT-4]

Ah, I hate it. Yeah, I don't talk to anyone. Well, when I am in there. [Q...?] Basically, just at night, just to sleep. Any other time I'm out, because I don't like that place. [RT-5]

Moving

There were a number of cases where youth talked about moving, changing neighbourhoods or leading transient lifestyles and this seemed to effect their connection to their communities. Moving was a phenomena that was much more prevalent for RT youth, many of whom were in care or in alternative living arrangements.

...moved into it last weekend, I don't know.[....]Well, I lived here and around (small town) or something, right outside (small town). Pretty much I'm a (small town) guy. [RT-1]

Well, I lived with my boyfriend for 8 months, then I moved back here, then I moved back in with him. I used to live with (best friend). [Q....] Um, 7 months. [Q. So how long have you been living back home now then?] Um, two months. [RT-2]

I used to live at (address) so most of my friends are up there, but I have a couple down here from like, old school [...]I don't know, if I had a choice, I'd kind of like to live closer to all my friends that I usually hang out with the most, 'cause like all my friends around where I live are mostly busy all the time.[RT-3]

Um, I don't know, it's like, we move around a lot, so usually we only live in the same place for a year or two years, but we've been here for like, almost 5 years now. So this place feels more like home, just because I'm so used to it and stuff. Whereas before, we would move around all the time, we would... 3 times in 2 years last and it was just like, you'd start to get comfortable and it'd be like, pack your stuff, let's go. And then like, crap, you have to do it all over again. Feel more steady and stuff here than at other times. I don't know... I like everybody that I'm around. I don't have a problem with anybody. [IFS-1]

So we're moving. So yeah, it's not a very good neighbourhood, that's why. [IFS-2]

In addition, five youth talked about living transient lifestyles (two were in jail at the time of the interview). These youth were at times "homeless" and typically moved from friend to relative. Changing communities or school programs, besides making it difficult to feel part of a community, could place stress on peer relations as well. Youth often described the impact that changing school environments or communities had on their friendships or ability to see friends. This youth saw himself as fortunate for having maintained his important friendship ties despite going into a group home:

A few friends slipped and then the people that I usually hung out with were always there, and I would see them every weekend, so... I never really let everything completely slip away from me. [...] I always had my best friend, (name), there and no matter what I would call him from (group home) and talk to him and everybody was always there for me. [RT-1]

Not having access to old social connections because of geographical distance and alternate living arrangements was problematic. Youth generally talked about disliking changes in their school or neighbourhood environments.

Positive Experiences

Across all youth interviewed, there were several very positive descriptions of neighbourhood or community. Neighbourhoods that permitted youth easy access to schools, friends, community resources (for example, banks, pharmacies and groceries stores) and leisure or recreational facilities (such as sports complexes, libraries and movie theatres) were described in very positive terms.

The following comments reflect an appreciation of neighbourhoods that are close to friends, schools and community resources:

Ah, the only things I like about it is that there's a playground outside [uh huh] and that my friend lives upstairs [uh huh] and ah, it's really close to my schools [uh huh] and that there's a library just down there [uh huh] and that its close to the grocery stores for my mom [uh huh] 'cause she's a diabetic and I have to go get her stuff [ok] and that our doctor I mean our pharmacy is just down at [street name] [ok]. It's very convenient 'cause a lot of stuff we need is around here [uh huh, ok] [IFS-1]

Well it's on a quiet street and um my friend is close by so I can walk up to their house and a lot of stuff is... a lot of fun stuff is very close. Like walking distance.[Q. Like what?]. Well um just like a swimming place and movies that play all the good movies there and um some stores... [IFS-2]

It's very good. The complex itself is very good, like everyone in the complex is active and they do sports and stuff like everyone. In the green field we play sports. [IFS-3]

The neighbourhood's pretty good. Um there's a library not far from here, about a five minute walk, that's pretty good. There's a park right behind us but the park's a bit rougher at night and in the afternoons. [RT-1]

Uh the school's in walking distance. It only takes like two minutes to walk there. [RT-2]

Ah I live near my best friend. And we live near a park. [RT-3]

Other youth identified friendly neighbours and community members caring for one another as positive aspects of their neighbourhoods, as the following comments reflect:

It's a pretty good neighbourhood. Pretty quiet. Neighbours are friendly. [IFS-1]

Um because there's a lot of people that watch around for like, the complex watches like everybody and makes sure every body's okay and... and uh if there's something unusual they contact somebody or... [IFS-2]

Um well over the past couple years I've kind of like avoided everybody but this year I've started talking to my neighbours and stuff and they're nice people. Even though I've lived beside them for a long time, I'm just finally getting to know them, you know? [IFS-3]

In summary, while many youth articulated concerns about their neighbourhoods, a small number of youth described their neighbourhoods in positive terms.

Community Conduct and Trouble with the Law

Information was available at admission, 12 to 18 months follow up, and 36 to 48 months follow up on youth delinquent activities and involvement with the law. The following measures were used to gage involvement in delinquent and illegal activities:

- Has youth ever been in trouble with the law?
- Was youth formally charged as a result of being in trouble with the law?
- CAFAS Community Subscale
- BCFPI Conduct Subscale

Where appropriate, we examined these measures for any change patterns across time.

(a) IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW

i. At Admission

Information was collected retrospectively from parents and guardians about youth's involvement with the law prior to entering the program. Parents/guardians were asked if the youth had been in trouble with the law in the few months leading up to entering residential treatment or intensive family services, as well as whether they had been formally charged as a result. Table 14 shows that approximately 35% of RT youth and 31% of IFS youth had been in trouble with the law immediately prior to admission. There was no significant difference between the proportions of RT and IFS youth reported to be in trouble with the law.

Table 14: In Trouble with the Law Prior to Admission

	RT	IFS
Yes	37 (35.2%)	33 (31.7%)
No	68 (64.8%)	71 (68.3%)
Total	105	104
Chi-Square	Pearson= .289 df=1 p=.591	

Table 15 shows that 56.8% of RT youth and 42.4% of IFS youth who had been in trouble with the law prior to admission received formal charges. While the proportion was slightly higher for RT youth, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 15: Received Formal Charges as a Result of Being in Trouble with the Law Prior to Admission

	RT	IFS
Yes	21 (56.8%)	14 (42.4%)
No	16 (43.2%)	19 (57.6%)
Total	37	33
Chi-Square	Pearson= 1.433 df=1 p=.231	

ii. At 12-18 Months Follow Up (Time 1) and 36-48 Months Follow Up (Time 2)

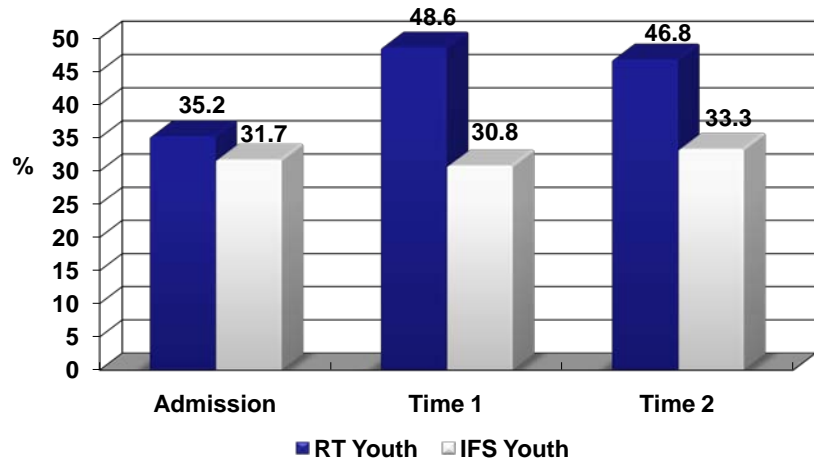
At Time 1, parents and guardians were asked if the youth had been in trouble with the law since ending services, as well as whether they had been formally charged as a result. At 12 to 18 months post discharge, 48.6% of RT youth and 30.8% of IFS youth had been in trouble with the law (see Table 16). The proportions of IFS youth in trouble with the law at admission and at follow up were similar; whereas, the proportion of RT youth in trouble with the law increased from 35.2% at admission to 48.6% at Time 1 follow up. A Chi-Square revealed that there was a significant difference between groups regarding whether they had been in trouble with the law at Time 1 follow up ($\chi^2 = 6.92$, $p < .01$). From Time 1 to Time 2 follow up, the proportions of youth in trouble with the law decreased slightly for RT youth and increased slightly for IFS youth. The difference in the proportions of each group reported to be in trouble with the law at Time 2 follow up was not statistically significant, likely as a result of the decrease in group size over time.

Table 16: In Trouble with the Law

	Time 1 (12-18 Months Follow Up)		Time 2 (36-48 Months Follow Up)	
	RT (n=105)	IFS (n=104)	RT (n=79)	IFS (n=75)
Yes	51 (48.6%)	32 (30.8%)	37 (46.8%)	25 (33.3%)
No	54 (51.4%)	72 (69.2%)	42 (53.2%)	50 (66.7%)

Figure 10 shows the proportions of RT youth and IFS youth in trouble with the law at admission, 12-18 months post discharge, and 36-48 months after discharge.

Figure 10: Proportions of RT and IFS Youth In Trouble with the Law



To examine the changes over time in involvement with the law for both RT and IFS youth, each individual’s status (in trouble/not in trouble with the law) at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 was noted *for only youth with information at all three points in time*. Table 17 shows that for the 79 RT youth, there was a significant increase in the proportion of youth in trouble with the law from admission to Time 1 follow up; however, there was no change from Time 1 to Time 2. In contrast there was little change in the proportions of IFS youth in trouble with the law over time.

Table 17: In Trouble with the Law from Admission to Follow Up

	RT	IFS
In trouble with the law at admission	23 out of 79 (29.1%)	21 out of 74 (28.3%)
In trouble with the law at Time 1	37 out of 79 (46.8%)	24 out of 74 (32.4%)
In trouble with the law at Time 2	37 out of 79 (46.8%)	25 out of 74 (33.7%)
Test of Difference Over Time	Cochran’s Q = 7.396 df = 2 p < .05	Cochran’s Q = .963 df = 2 n.s.

Table 18 shows that 64.7% of all RT youth and 46.9% of all IFS youth who had been in trouble with the law at Time 1 follow up received formal charges. Increased proportions of RT youth and IFS youth received formal charges at Time 2. This was likely a result of the older age of youth at Time 2 follow up. While the proportions of youth receiving formal charges were higher for RT youth at both Time 1 and Time 2 follow up, the difference between program groups were not statistically significant.

Table 18: Received Formal Charges as a Result of Being in Trouble with the Law

	Time 1 (12-18 Months Follow Up)		Time 2 (36-48 Months Follow Up)	
	<i>RT (n=51)</i>	<i>IFS (n=32)</i>	<i>RT (n=37)</i>	<i>IFS (n=25)</i>
Yes	33 (64.7%)	15 (46.9%)	31 (83.8%)	16 (64%)
No	18 (35.3%)	17 (53.1%)	6 (16.2%)	9 (36%)

(b) CAFAS: COMMUNITY SUBSCALE

i. At Admission

The CAFAS Community subscale consists of behaviours in the community grouped by increasing severity in impairment. These behaviours refer mostly to participation in illegal acts and violation of persons or property. A higher score was indicative of greater impairment in this domain. Responses could range from 0 (minimal or no impairment) in which a youth had no negative impact on the community to 30 (severe disruption of functioning or incapacitation) where a youth may be confined or involved with the legal system as a result of serious violations of the law (theft, drug dealing, assault with a weapon).

At admission, RT youth had a mean score of 11.26 and IFS youth had a mean score of 5.11 on the CAFAS Community Subscale. Table 19 shows that there was a statistically significant difference in scores on the CAFAS Community subscale between RT youth and IFS youth at admission ($p < .001$). While both RT and IFS youth in our sample had higher mean scores than the 2006 Ontario CAFAS population, RT youth were almost 3X as high at admission.

Table 19: Community CAFAS Score at Admission

Statistics	RT (N=79)	IFS (N=90)	2006 Ontario (N=18,520)
Mean	11.26	5.11	3.68
Std. Dev.	11.58	8.64	
Frequencies			
0.00=	36 (45.6%)	61 (67.8%)	80.2%
10.00=	9 (11.4%)	17 (18.9%)	7.4%
20.00=	22 (27.8%)	7 (7.8%)	8%
30.00=	12 (15.2%)	5 (5.6%)	4.5%
Total=	79	90	
Missing=	28	15	
Mann-Whitney Test	Z=-3.561 p < .001		

From Table 19, we see that 67.8% of IFS youth showed no impairment in community functioning at admission while only 45.6% of RT youth scored similarly. A Mann-Whitney test revealed a significant difference in the distribution of scores between RT youth and IFS youth at admission suggesting that a greater proportion of RT youth displayed some type of impairment in community functioning with moderate impairment (20.00) being the most common.

ii. At Discharge

While there was a statistically significant difference in community functioning (as measured by the CAFAS Community Subscale) between the two groups at admission, this difference did not persist at discharge. From Table 20, we see that approximately 75-80% of both RT and IFS youth displayed no impairment at discharge on this subscale.

Table 20: Community CAFAS Score at Discharge

Statistics	RT (N=70)	IFS (N=82)
Mean	5.28	3.29
Std. Dev.	10.17	7.37
Frequencies		
0.00=	53 (75.7%)	66 (80.5%)
10.00=	4 (5.7%)	7 (8.5%)
20.00=	6 (8.6%)	7 (8.5%)
30.00=	7 (10.0%)	2 (2.4%)
Total=	70	82
Missing=	37	23
Mann-Whitney Test	Z=-.939 n.s.	

Looking at the patterns of change from admission to discharge, there was a statistically significant movement toward less severe impairment in functioning on the CAFAS Community Subscale for RT youth ($p < .01$). Table 21 shows 27 out of 68 RT youth had a reduction in severity of impairment scores from admission to discharge. Similarly, 16 out of 82 IFS youth evidenced a reduction in severity of impairment on the CAFAS Community subscale. This change in distribution of scores from admission to discharge approached statistical significance as well ($p=.059^*$).

Table 21: Change in CAFAS Community Scores from Admission to Discharge

	RT	IFS
Reduction in Severity of Impairment	27 (39.7%)	16 (19.5%)
Increase in Severity of Impairment	7 (10.3%)	5 (6.1%)
No Change in Severity of Impairment	34 (50%)	61 (74.4%)
Total	68	82
Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	Z= -2.957 p < .01	Z= -1.890 p=.059*

Figure 11 shows a notable change in the distribution of scores for RT youth from admission to discharge with many more youth displaying no impairment in community functioning at discharge than at admission.

Figure 11: CAFAS Community Subscale Scores for RT Youth Only

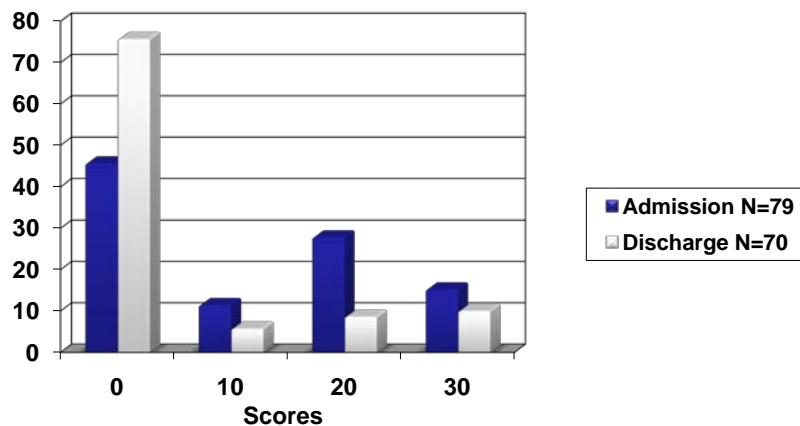
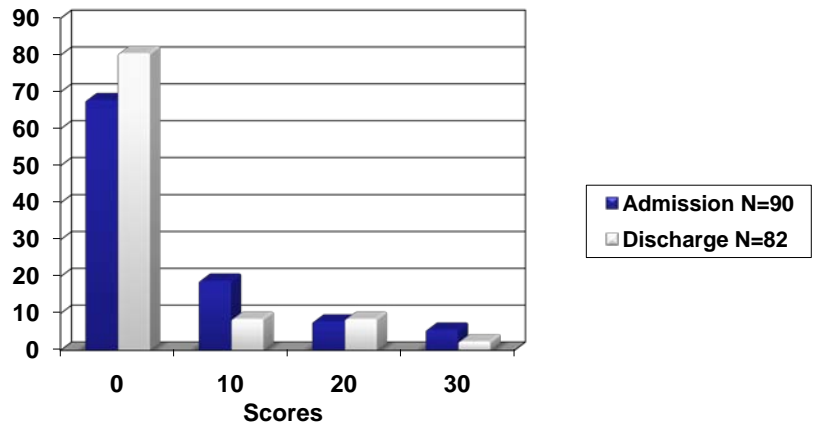


Figure 12 shows a similar distribution of scores for IFS youth at admission and discharge. While there was some movement toward a reduction in severity of impairment, the difference in distributions was not as noticeable as that of RT youth.

Figure 12: CAFAS Community Subscale Scores for IFS Youth Only



(c) BCFPI: CONDUCT SUBSCALE

The BCFPI Conduct subscale measures “serious rule violations and antisocial behaviour” (Cunningham, Pettingill, & Boyle, 2002). Individual items include how often youth engage in delinquent activities like stealing, vandalism, forced entry, physically attacking others, and using weapons when fighting. Because the delinquent behaviours measured occur infrequently in non-clinical normative populations, when a small number of individual items are endorsed or several items are endorsed at a low level on this subscale a high score is generated.

i. At Admission

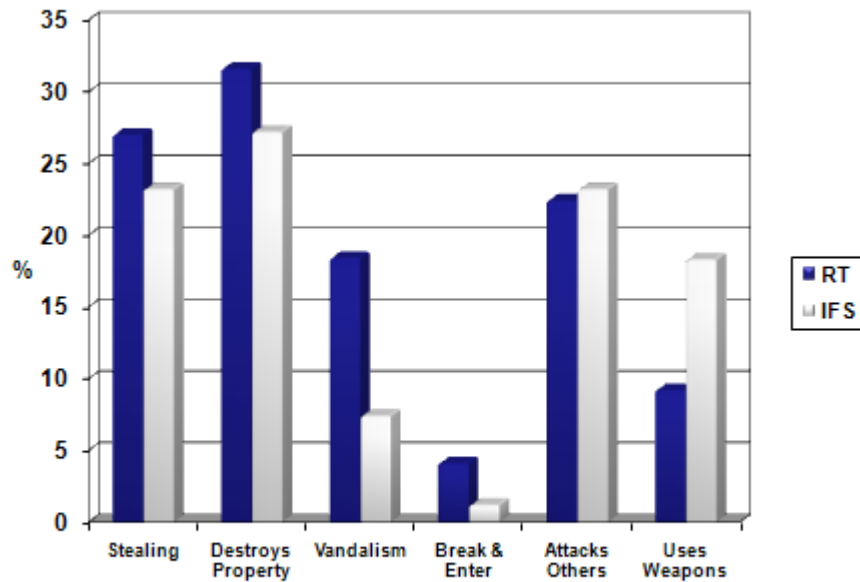
At admission RT youth had a mean score of 93.32 and IFS youth had a mean score of 89.01. A large standard deviation was noted for both groups. Average scores for both groups were in the clinically significant range (above 70) as determined by BCFPI creators. Approximately 98% of the normal population has scores below 70. Despite the slightly lower score for IFS youth on this measure, Table 22 shows no significant difference between RT and IFS youth at admission on the BCFPI Conduct Subscale.

Table 22: BCFPI Conduct Subscale Scores at Admission

Statistics	RT (N=75)	IFS (N=83)
Mean	93.32	89.01
Std. Dev.	28.72	30.52
T-test	t= .913 df=156 n.s.	

Figure 13 shows the proportion of RT and IFS youth who were reported to engage in certain types of deviant and illegal activities “often” at the time of admission. A Pearson Chi-Square test revealed a statistically significant difference between the proportion of RT and IFS youth reported to engage in destroying property at admission ($\chi^2 = 7.446, p < .05$). There were no statistically significant differences between groups on any other individual behaviour measured.

Figure 13: Percentage of Youth Engaged “Often” in Delinquent and Illegal Activities at Admission



ii. At 12-18 Months Follow Up (Time 1) and 36-48 Months Follow Up (Time 2)

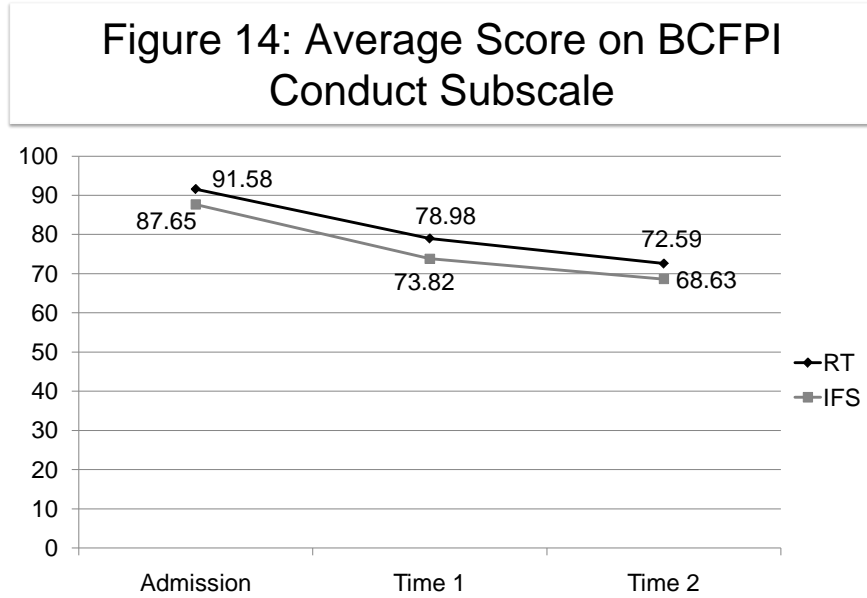
To examine changes over time, scores on the BCFPI Conduct Subscale at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 were compared *for only youth with information at all three points in time*. Table 23 shows that for 56 RT youth, over time there was a decrease in the average score suggesting that these RT youth were engaging in illegal and delinquent activities less frequently from admission to follow up. This change over time was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 17.64$, $p < .001$). Further analyses revealed that the significant decrease in scores occurred from admission to Time 1 follow up ($Z = -3.49$, $p < .001$). The change in scores from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up was not significant.

The 61 IFS youth with scores at all points in time also saw a decrease in their average scores on this measure. The reduction in delinquent and illegal activities over time was statistically significant for IFS youth ($\chi^2 = 21.32$, $p < .001$). The change in scores from admission to Time 1 was significant ($Z = -4.86$, $p < .001$). Additionally the change in scores from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up was also significant ($Z = -2.13$, $p < .05$).

Table 23: BCFPI Conduct Subscale Scores at Follow Up

	RT (n=56)	IFS (n=61)
Admission	91.58	87.65
Time 1	78.98	73.82
Time 2	72.59	68.63

Figure 14 shows the change in scores from admission to Time 1 and Time 2 for both groups. Both RT and IFS youth showed a similar pattern of improvement over time. RT youth had higher average scores on the BCFPI Conduct Subscale than IFS youth at all points in time. While RT youth's average scores remained above the clinical cut off over time (score of 70), at Time 2 IFS youth's average score was below the clinical cut off. Despite these observed differences, there were no significant differences between groups at Time 1 or Time 2 follow up.



The following figures show the proportions of RT and IFS youth “often” engaged in certain types of delinquent and illegal activities at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 follow up.

Figure 15 shows much smaller proportions of RT youth were often engaged in delinquent or illegal activities at Time 1 and Time 2 follow up than at admission. At Time 2, however, increasing proportions of RT youth were reported to steal, destroy property, and break into houses, buildings, or cars.

Figure 15: Percentage of RT Youth Engaged “Often” in Delinquent and Illegal Activities

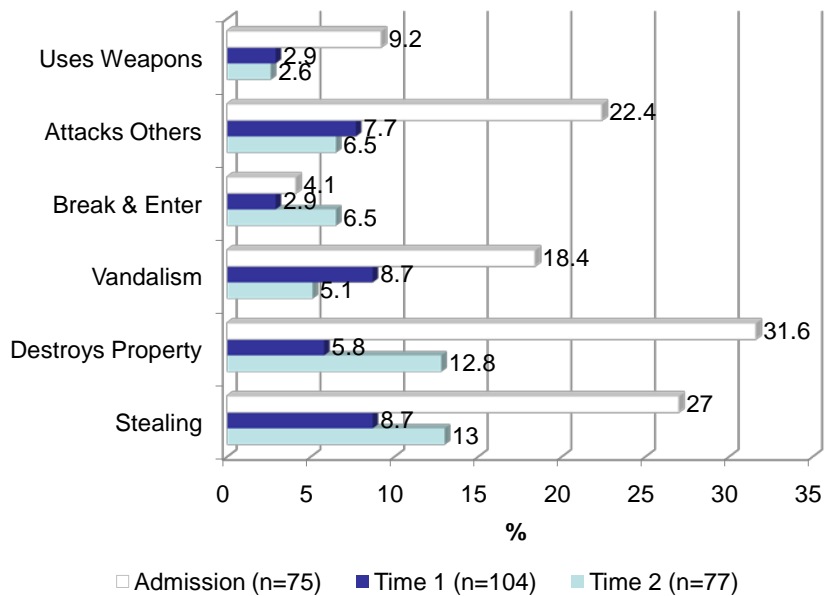
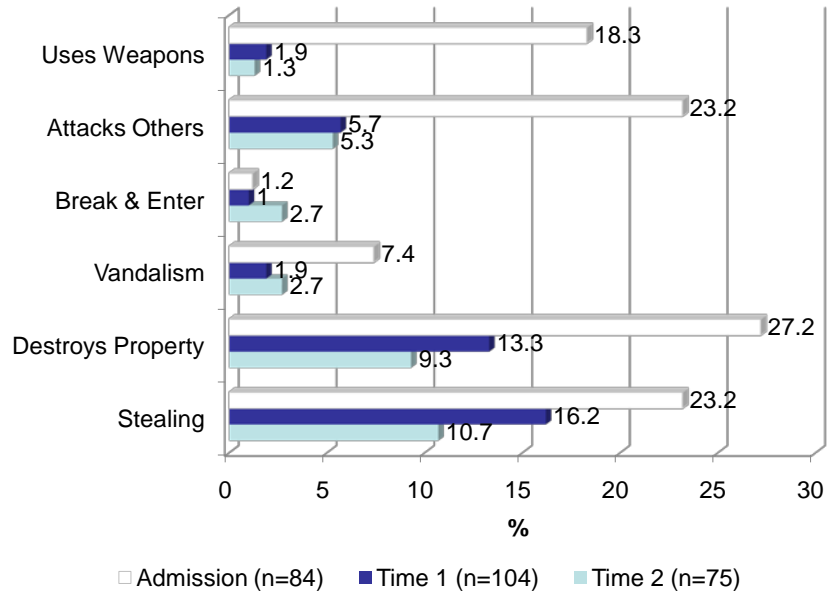


Figure 16 shows the proportions of IFS youth “often” engaged in delinquent and illegal activities at admission, Time 1, and Time 2 follow up. Approximately one-quarter of all IFS youth were reported to attack others, destroy property, and steal things at home at admission. The proportions of IFS youth engaged in these activities shrank dramatically over time, most notably far fewer IFS youth were reported to physically attack others at Time1 and Time 2. Very few IFS youth were reported to break into houses, buildings, or cars at any point in time.

Figure 16: Percentage of IFS Youth Engaged “Often” in Delinquent and Illegal Activities



To understand the relationship between age and BCFPI Conduct Subscale scores, we next looked at average scores of smaller sample groups based on age at follow up. Table 24 shows average scores for IFS youth and RT youth under age 16 and 16 or older.

Table 24: BCFPI Conduct Subscale Scores by Age at Follow Up

	Time 1			Time 2		
	<i>n</i>	Average Score (St.Dev.)	Average Age	<i>n</i>	Average Score (St.Dev.)	Average Age
RT < 16 years	68	77.08 (25.42)	12.54	35	66.47 (27.79)	13.02
IFS < 16 years	67	74.67 (22.92)	12.02	37	68.98 (22.98)	12.75
RT ≥ 16 years	37	68.37 (25.50)	17.01	41	76.35 (33.24)	17.60
IFS ≥ 16 years	38	71.52 (28.69)	16.52	38	68.73 (29.67)	18.02

From Table 25 it appears that both RT and IFS youth age 16 or older had lower BCFPI Conduct Subscale scores than youth younger than 16 years old at Time 1. Only RT youth over the age of 16 had a mean score that fell below the clinically significant cut off value of 70. This finding was unexpected given that 48.6% of RT youth were in trouble with the law at Time 1 follow up. At Time 2, however, all groups except for RT youth age 16 or older had average scores below the cut off for clinical concern. The average score for RT youth age 16 or older actually increased from Time 1 to Time 2 follow up suggesting that this group in particular was engaged more frequently in delinquent or illegal activities. This finding seems to make sense as 46.8% of RT youth were reported to be in trouble with the law at Time 2 follow up. None of these age differences, however, was statistically significant.

Youth Perspectives on Community Conduct at 12 to 18 Months Follow Up

Youth who were interviewed at Time 1 follow up responded to questions about legal issues and conduct in the community. A review of youth comments suggested that some youth were successful in avoiding problematic behaviour while others with legal involvement at admission continued to struggle at follow up.

More RT youth (52%) than IFS youth (31%) reported having police involvement following discharge from services. Somewhat more RT youth interviewed described more violent criminal behaviour than their IFS counterparts. Of RT youth, 24% reported recent assault or weapons charges compared with 11% of IFS youth. Some examples of behaviours that led to criminal charges included:

Yeah, I'm currently on probation, but that's because when I was at school, my teacher pushed me into the wall and I ended up getting really angry and I punched him in the mouth and he called the police because they have to and just got arrested for that. [IFS-1]

I went around and smashed windows, I assaulted, back then, assaulted people, vandalism, smashing windows and that, stealing. [IFS-2]

And assault with a weapon that got dropped down to assault [...] Throwing pebbles at the group home at (name). Bounced off a window and hit a staff in the leg. [RT-1]

Theft under \$5000. Assault causing bodily harm with a deadly weapon. Oh god, I don't even know, breaches, still have to go to court... just being stupid. [RT-2]

They said that, and they know I would get angry, so I got angry and had a stand-off and tried to stab a staff. [RT-3]

Two youth were in detention when interviewed. These youth were still deeply involved in criminal lifestyles. One youth talked about going to jail as a “break” from her lifestyle. This youth disclosed using hard drugs and being involved in a variety of criminal behaviours:

Like, because, I mean, I might be content with what I do, but it’s not always easy. So coming in here gives me a break and then I’m not always influenced to do... like, I’m not easily influenced, but I do things out there to get me a lot of time in here and I just have a lot of excitement out there, then when I come in here, it gives me a little vacation before I go back to all the excitement. [RT-1]

A number of youth talked about making concerted efforts to stay out of trouble. Here again we noted a difference between IFS and RT youth, with more IFS youth talking about being committed to avoiding or moving away from destructive social behaviours.

IFS youth talked about primarily pro-social behaviours with friends. In fact, there were many examples of IFS youth attempting to move away from peers engaged in negative behaviours or trying to avoid these behaviours themselves:

A lot of them, the people my age, um, they’re, like, the troublemakers so that’s why I don’t hang out with them. They like to cause a lot of trouble. [IFS-1]

Well, some like, some of my friends are almost like me, they talk and stuff like that or they kind of lose interest in our friends which is like, mostly like, you could say, like trendy like a gang or something. [...] Yeah, they’d be like, all that crap and spit it all over me and stuff, and I don’t like stuff like that. [Q. So you kind of see that they’re doing stuff that you don’t want to do?] Yeah. [...] [Q. And so, is it easy or hard to tell them that you don’t like that? Some of the stuff—] Easy. [Q. It’s easy to tell them you don’t like it? You just don’t hang out with them for a while or something?] Yeah. [IFS-2]

Um, they’re all good. All of them. They don’t do bad stuff. [Q...What are some of the not so good things about your friends?] The ones I used to hang out with, (Friend 2), (Friend 3) and (Friend 4), they smoke. [...] I don’t hang out with them anymore, so it doesn’t matter to me. [...] [Q. Okay. What about your friends at school? I know you talked about one friend, what about other friends at school?] I don’t really hang out with anybody outside of school. [IFS-3]

...No, me and my friends if we see a fight, we’ll just walk out and don’t run into it. [IFS-4]

They're a good crowd, like, they're not into drugs and stuff like that, like, hey, everyone drinks at a certain age, sorry to say, but it's the truth, gotta face that, like, not a lot of my friends break, but they'll have occasional drinks sometimes. I don't know, they're a funny group of people, they're fun to go and hang out with. I don't know, they're just good people, I really like my friends. Like, if I don't feel good about a certain friend, like, I don't drop them, like, I'm not mean like that, but I sort of just... slide away from them, step-by-step, and then just sort of... just... [Q. And sorts of things might make you feel uneasy like that around somebody?] Well, people that... maybe that, like have sex, do drugs, like, I don't care if they smoke weed. Whatever, a lot of people do that, that's not my choice, that's theirs. People who don't give a crap about school, they just want to be dropouts. I don't know just stuff like that. [IFS-5]

I don't know, a lot of my friends, they skip, so you get involved with that, now my friends aren't skipping as much, because a lot of my other friends have been expelled too or suspended and I just want to start going to class now. [IFS-6]

[Q. Okay. Is there stuff ... do your friends know about your AA program?] Yeah, I make sure that they do.[..] Like, be nice, I got into AA, they mention something about alcohol or drugs and ask me to go along, sorry I quit that, I'm in AA.[Q. Okay. And they're pretty supportive of that?] Yeah, they just go tell me when they're going to do it or they won't tell me and I don't go along.[..] Stuff like that, they don't drag me into it or anything. [Q. They don't try and get you to—] No. [..] Like, they know that I'm fine with them doing it, but they know that I'm okay with as long as they don't drag me into it. [IFS-7]

Um, I don't know, I haven't associated myself with the people that I was around before and whatnot, so—[Q. How were you able to break those ties?] Um, I don't know, slowly, just moved away from them and decided I didn't want to live my life that way and end up having something happen, like, just because I'm around those sort of people. So, I just didn't want to deal, like, consequences for their actions and whatnot.[Q. What kind of things are that peer group involved in?] Um, well, a guy that I was dating, he was really nice and all that and like—but I didn't know him very well, but then we started dating and then, um, one day I was at school and my mom called my cell phone and was like, really mad, and I was like, "Why? What are you so mad about?" And my boyfriend at the time had left his schoolbag at my house and it was full of like, pot and stuff, so I guess he was a dealer and I didn't know that at the time. And so, just like, I don't know and I ended up getting, like, kicked out of my house and whatnot and it was just like, a lot of problems and whatnot with that sort of stuff. [IFS-8]

Somewhat fewer RT youth described similar efforts:

I'm learning now... if I get angry and I have time to think, go for a walk, at least if I'm going to break something, I can't really break anything out in the country if I'm walking down the road. If I pick up a rock and chuck it, I'm not going to break anything. [RT-1]

[Q. You talked a bit about, just, sometimes getting into fights at school and stuff? Do you get into fights outside of school at all? Might happen when you're hanging out?] Sometimes, not that often, though, because I've kinda learned to hold my tongue, kinda like, stay out of, like, bossing people around. [RT-2]

I stick to staying away from them now, not even once in a while, not going to let them mess up my life again.[Q. Do you hang out with the same people you did before when you were doing drugs and stuff?] No, not really.[...]I'll see them every once in a while and say hi, what's going on, but other than that, no, not really any of the guys. Most of the guys I used to do drugs with, they're either in jail or they've moved, or... something. [Q.What do you think about that?] How happy that I stopped and I'm here. [RT-3]

[Q. Okay, you were saying you have to help out your friends, sometimes people want to do drugs and stuff.] Yeah. [Q. Are there a lot of pressures like that in (small town)?] That's all there is in (small town), drugs mostly.[..] Try to stay away from them, so... It's easier than it sounds.[..] Because it's really mental decision if you want to do it, then alright, then you just say no. [RT-4]

That they do drugs, some of them. [Q...] Most of them, but I don't mind. I don't mind, it's just I don't like it. But I don't tell them, "you're not a friend of me". Or, whatever. [...] They just tell me and they'll leave me alone and yeah, I understand. [RT-5]

RT youth appeared less likely to change their social group because of antisocial behaviour. For example one youth stated, "They're cool, some of them do bad things, but whatever, it's okay. It's alright with me." [RT-6] In fact, two youth who were charged with minor crimes (vandalism, theft) claimed they were charged by association with a friend who was responsible for the crime. Certainly some youth, particularly RT youth, glorified anti-social behaviour in friends such as drinking or participating in illegal activities or were simply more accepting of these behaviours than youth in the IFS sample.

Conflict in Peer Relationships

Conflict with peers was not uncommon among all youth; however, the nature and magnitude of conflict seemed to vary by group. Mild to moderate conflict in peer relationships was reported by approximately one third (31%) of IFS youth and ranged from relatively minor conflicts with friends to more major emotional events. Examples of the type of minor conflicts reported include:

...might occasionally go too far with a sarcastic joke, but that's not really—that's kind of—just like, because I—my mom and my sister and my dad are always ribbing me because I'm very against the sarcasm, like I don't really... so... so somebody will just say something sarcastic about me, like you're so stupid or something and I'll be very sensitive about it and they'll be like (name), lighten up. [Q....]Yeah. [Q....] Um, yeah—well, occasionally he might go a little bit too far. [IFS-1]

Um, well, some of them are nice, but some of them, they'll hold grudges too, like say if they have a band that I don't like, and I'll just be like, I don't like that band then they'll just flip out on you type thing, just like... like that's my opinion, right? That's basically it, like I'll do that too sometimes, they'll be like this band sucks, then I'll just be like screw you or something. [IFS-2]

Um, well sometimes one person will be in a fight with another person and the two people who are in the fight will guilt people into being on their side and a whole bunch of our friends will be, like, split up and at each other's throats about the stupidest thing, like, somebody saying, oh that skirt's really ugly, or something like that, it's just so stupid and it divides all my friends, which I really don't like, because I think that two people should work things out by themselves without pulling other people into it. Like, everyone can put their two cents in, but I think that it shouldn't be between anybody else.[....] People will say things, like, well, you were my friend first and blah, blah, blah, I don't know, I guess, okay. Just, yeah, also, my friends are very judgmental, and they, if you say one thing that's like stupid, they'll be like, wow you're so stupid, again with the fighting issue, we fight, but we do mostly—most of the time we get along well.[IFS-3]

These examples show that while there is sometimes conflict within these youth's peer groups, the conflicts are usually not of a serious nature. More specifically, they generally do not involve violence and are not highly troubling for the youth. Only two IFS youths reported being engaged in a violent conflict with a sibling or a peer. In general, peer conflicts described by IFS youth appeared to be within the range of what would be normal for this age group.

More serious conflicts were reported by a minority of IFS youth. In the following example a youth talked about a conflict with a peer with whom he was living in a group home:

No, I just said something, he got mad and I just had surgery on my toe and he came up and he said stand up so I stood up and he just stepped on my toe and I just pushed him back up against the wall right over there and he went upstairs and just... I got in trouble for it. [IFS-1]

Another example shows a significant conflict that resulted in prolonged stress for the youth. This youth described a conflict with a friend where she felt threatened and feared she would retaliate:

Um, well, there was this girl, she's my best friend. She was my best friend. And like, the day that my grandma died, and me and my grandma were really, really close, I don't know, she just started flipping out because I was talking to the guy that she liked, and like, F-you, mean stuff, like, so she started threatening me and my family and stuff. So, I'm like, I don't want to be around her at all. [...] I don't know, just like, that I'd like, get in a fight with her or something and just like, say something really out of line and just like, doing something really stupid, so...[IFS-2]

While the last two examples are more serious, the majority of the youth conflicts described, outside of youth who were bullied, were not identified as major concerns for the youth.

More severe conflict, particularly involving fights, was reported by 21% of RT youth. When youth described relationships in group homes conflict was also commonly reported. The following are examples of peer conflict described by some RT youth:

We always fight people. [...]Um, because every time people say stuff, we always fight them. [RT-1]

Because, I mean, I dunno, I'm part of a gang called (name)[...] So, most of my buddies come through here, so if any body's messin' with me, then they're messing with all them and they get pretty messed up.[...] But, if you want to be initiated into it, you get 30 seconds of fame, which is, like 3 or 4 people beat you for 30 seconds, because if you can't handle that or you start crying or fight back, then how are you ever going to handle a gang fight? [RT-2]

Because from where we are right now, if we were to walk down about six blocks, practically everybody on that corner wants me dead. [RT-3]

My age and older, pretty much everyone in (small town) battles with each other. [...] Well, I lost a couple and I won a couple, so that's pretty much it.[...]In grade 8 I won a fight, in grade 9, I lost two fights and I won another fight. [RT-4]

Sometimes I get into fights....[Q....] People think they wanna be big and bad and try to fight me and then they lose or they win, it doesn't matter, it just... people think they're better than me and I tell them, you know what, you might be. You might be better at some things, but I might be better at some things. ... just start arguing and pushing me and there you go, get into a fight.[RT-5]

The nature of the conflict in the preceding quotes seemed different from that described by IFS youth. Many of the examples of conflict among RT youth and their peers involved physical fighting and violence. There were several references to gangs and gang activity among the RT youth specifically.

Bullying

Being a victim of bullying was reported by 14% of IFS youth and 18% of RT youth. The bullying usually occurred outside of friendship relationships, though in two cases the youth reported being bullied by friends as well as neighbourhood children. Bullying took place in school or the neighbourhood, usually by similar aged peers. The bullying usually involved threatened physical harm and there was a perceived power difference between the victim and aggressor and a sense that youth felt powerless in these situations. The following examples illustrate some of the bullying that youth experienced:

'cause everybody's like bug on me. They pick on me and it annoys me and I don't feel safe around them?... Well, this girl (name) over here, she always gets drunk.[....] And then she comes and bugs me. [...] Yeah, I don't like it. [Q...] Like, picking on me, chasing me to my house, all like, "I'm going to beat you up" saying she's going to kick me in my stomach. [...] Doesn't—I don't like it. [IFS-1]

It's really upsetting, but I learn how to deal with it, then they start yelling at you louder, they think I'm trying to be mean to them and then I still just ignore them, it's just like, what the—? And they call me all these names like retard and moron.[...]Well, I was really getting upset in the beginning, but now I'm just tuning it out. [IFS-2]

(in reference to friends)...They can kind of turn me off some days.[...] I can't even remember, because I don't really want to remember it really.[...] Like, if they do something to me or around me or unless they're... I guess kind of showing me something I really don't want to see or something like that. [...] When they do, like, weird stuff. [...] Like, when they make, like, pinch each other, or pinch me and stuff, or smack me, but not, they just play stuff up, I kind of get offended sometimes.[...] (in reference to neighbourhood kids) Yeah, sometimes.[...] Kick me and stuff like that, or... [...] I don't know. Something I said or something. [Q. Do you get into fights with them?] No, I try not to. [IFS-3]

...because like they thought they were better than me and they just decided to bug me. Yeah. [...] There was a girl at the beginning of the year and just because I wouldn't get off the swings, she started being really rude to me and I didn't do anything and I had a shirt that said I had issues, because I like that shirt and she said, yeah, that's right, you do have issues and she said all this stuff and then she grabbed my shirt and threw it in the creek and it almost went in, but I got it and then she was asking all the people I was with where my backpack was, and they weren't even helping me, they were... [IFS-4]

A lot of the kids are mean ones. They gave me a card, an invitation and I opened it up and there was dog poo in it [...] Sometimes they're mean. [Q...]They beat me up. [Q...] Like punch me. One of the kids locked me in the locker, one kid whacked me in the head with keys and he got suspended for it. [RT-1]

At school, there's these boys, and um, they bug me a lot. They throw stuff at me and they throw basketballs at me and they throw footballs at me and push me and ... and then they to throw me in the puddles when it's wet on the ground and sometimes they call me names [Q...] They call me, uh, they call me a b-word and I'm like, what are you talking about, right? Why do you make fun of other people? And then they're like, well you're different from all the other people, and I'm like, what are you talking about? [RT-2]

Like, they make fun of me because of stuff I used to do, but I don't do anymore. [...] [Q. Okay, so kids hear about past problems then they tell and they tease you. What's that like for you?] Um, not fun.[.....][Q...can you tell me about what you mean by bullying?] Like, name-calling, teasing, making fun, laughing at me when I do something wrong, insulting me. [RT-3]

Let's just say I've been bullied all my life because of being in [name of group home] and all the other group homes I've been in, it's not fun. [RT-4]

The youth who reported bullying also comprised the group of youth that reported a general lack of peer relationships and friendships. These youth represented about 16 % of all youth interviewed. Youth descriptions of being bullied suggested feelings of stress, sadness, and lack of safety due to bullying.

Overall Comments on Social Connections and Community Conduct

The measures used to understand how youth were getting along with others suggested that both RT and IFS youth experienced positive changes over time from admission to follow up; however, both groups were still experiencing problems within their social networks at follow up:

- Both RT and IFS youth showed significant improvements in their appropriateness of behaviour toward others from admission to discharge as measured by the CAFAS Behaviour Toward Others Subscale. This measure was not administered at follow up.
- IFS youth showed significant improvements over time on the BCFPI Social Participation Subscale. While RT youth also evidenced improved average scores from admission to follow up, the change over time in social participation was not significant. Both groups saw a significant reduction over time in problem scores on the BCFPI Cooperation with Others Subscale. Average scores for IFS youth at follow up, while better than scores at admission, were still considered to fall within the clinical range of concern on these measures. This suggests IFS youth were still experiencing problems, albeit to a lesser degree, within their social networks at follow up. Our analysis of youth-reported information on social networks also supported this trend. About one-quarter of all youth talked about social isolation and lack of social contacts in their lives. Being bullied was a phenomenon that was part of the problem for some.
- Significantly fewer youth were reported to have trouble getting along with friends from admission to follow up. For RT youth, the proportions of youth having a lot of trouble getting along with friends fell from 66% at admission to 35% at Time 1 and 25% at Time 2. A similar, but less pronounced, trend was observed for IFS youth. Despite these improvements, one-quarter of RT youth were still fighting with friends a lot at 36-48 months post discharge. Among youth who were interviewed at 12-18 months post discharge, close to half of all RT and IFS youth reported high satisfaction with friendships. There were, however, somewhat more instances of RT youth struggling significantly in the area of friendships.
- RT youth's quality of life associated with social contacts (as assessed by parents and guardians) was lower than IFS youth's quality of social contacts at admission and follow up. This trend was also evident in our analysis of youth interviews. Descriptions of IFS youth's social and leisure lives were characteristic of a higher quality of life in this domain. Most IFS youth seemed to be engaged in a variety of healthy leisure activities while this was less so for RT youth.

Not unexpectedly, involvement in delinquent and illegal activities by the youth in our research study was higher than youth within the general population. Some notable findings included:

- One-third of both RT and IFS youth were in trouble with the law prior to admission.
- The proportion of IFS youth in trouble with the law did not change over time. At Time 1 and Time 2 follow up, approximately one-third of IFS youth were in trouble with the law (similar to admission). In contrast almost half of all RT youth were reported to be in trouble with the law at 12-18 months (Time 1 follow up) which was a significant increase over the one-third with police involvement at admission. From Time 1 to Time 2 follow up (36-48 months post discharge), the proportion of RT youth with police involvement was relatively unchanged. Our youth interview analysis also revealed a high degree of conflict and violence in the community among an increasing portion of RT youth at follow up.
- At admission, RT youth had scores on the CAFAS Community Subscale which were almost 3 times as high as the average score for the 2006 Ontario CAFAS population. The average score for IFS youth at admission did not change much at discharge and scores at both admission and discharge were similar to the average score for the 2006 Ontario CAFAS population. As a result, RT youth showed a significant improvement from admission to discharge as they had the most room for improvement. RT youth were also in a more restrictive treatment setting than IFS youth during the period used for assessment and likely had less opportunity to engage in the measured activities.
- Significant improvements were noted for both RT and IFS youth over time on the BCFPI Conduct subscale. Despite this, all average scores over time were still within the clinical range of concern for RT youth. The average score for IFS youth at 36-48 months post discharge was the only average score that fell below the clinical cut off. IFS youth interviewed reported much less anti-social behaviour and conduct issues as well as less serious conflict within social relationships. The biggest reduction in RT youth delinquent and illegal activities occurred from admission to 12-18 months post discharge. Results suggested that delinquent behaviours (stealing, destroying property, and breaking & entering) among RT youth were on the increase again at 36-48 months post discharge.

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