



Young, Homeless, and Raising a Child: A Review of Existing Approaches to Addressing the Needs of Young Australian Parents Experiencing Homelessness

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Homelessness among young people is becoming an increasingly prevalent issue both within Australia and internationally. Recent Census data suggests that over 26,000 youth currently experience homelessness throughout the country. Young parents are particularly vulnerable to experiencing homelessness, due in part to the increased stressors and challenges they face when transitioning to parenthood. This is particularly problematic for young parents who experience homelessness. This group faces significant physical, social, and emotional difficulties which may negatively impact on their ability to provide for their child.

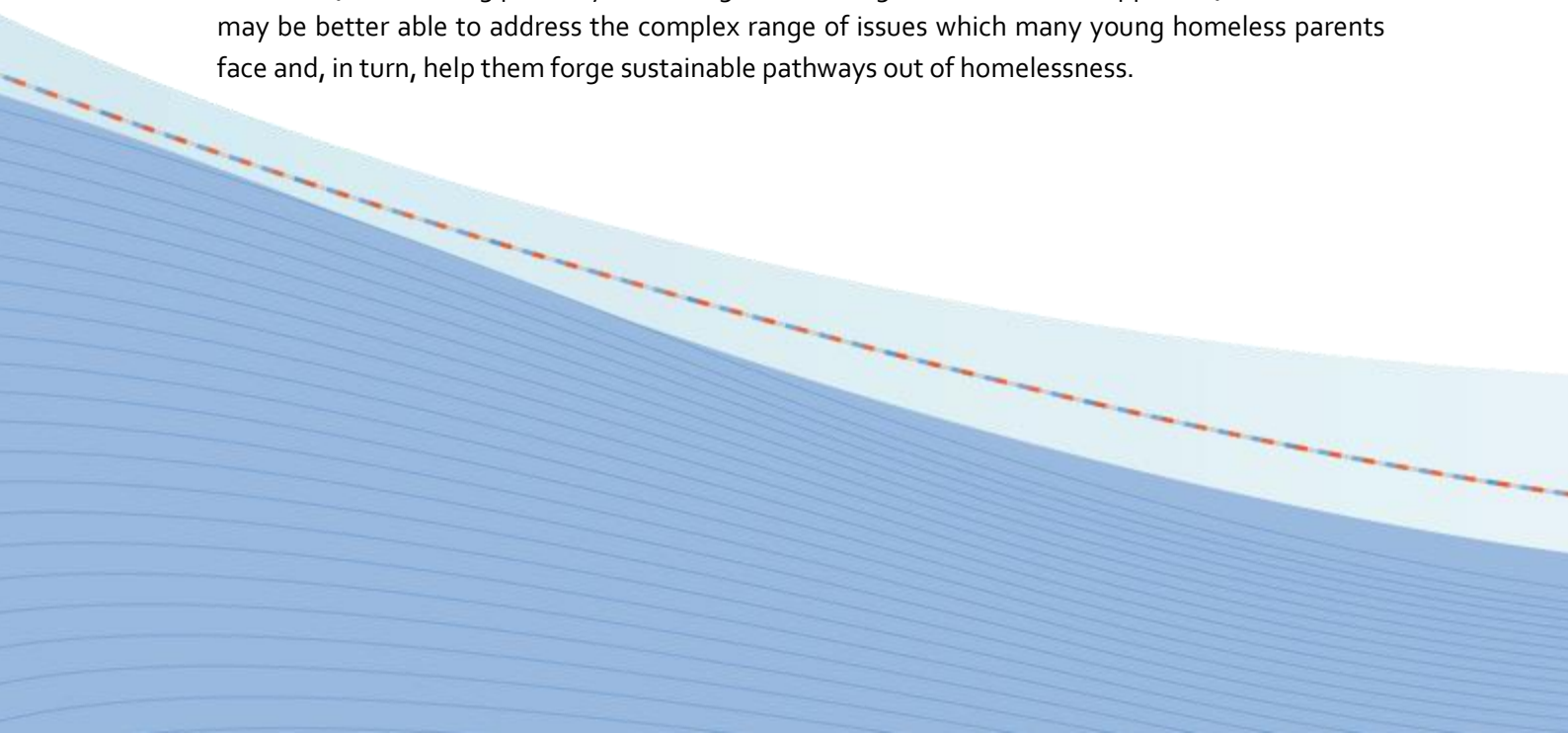
While young parents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are often highly motivated to actively improve their circumstances, they often face considerable obstacles which can prevent them from initiating change and maintaining positive outcomes. For example, a lack of affordable housing, a lack of social and financial support, and a lack of access to education and employment can all act as barriers which prevent young disadvantaged parents from moving out of homelessness.

Australian state governments and several not-for-profit organisations provide services to support young homeless individuals and help them move out of homelessness. We review a number of different service model approaches in this paper, including (i) the Outreach Model, (ii) the Crisis Model, (iii) the Supported Accommodation Model, (iv) the Intensive Support Model, (v) the Foyer Model, and (vi) the Coordination Model.

Our review of the current literature on effective homelessness support services reveals that there is a considerable lack of studies exploring the long-term outcomes of youth who access such services. However, the research that is available suggests that the provision of employment, education and training pathways, as well as ongoing support, all play important roles in helping vulnerable youth move out of homelessness and achieve better life outcomes.

Unfortunately, service providers often experience barriers which prevent them from effectively engaging and addressing the needs of their clients.

The findings of this review suggest that service providers may benefit from putting greater emphasis on the integration of services and providing youth with greater access to employment, education, and training pathways. In taking a more integrated and holistic approach, such services may be better able to address the complex range of issues which many young homeless parents face and, in turn, help them forge sustainable pathways out of homelessness.



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Abstract

In Australia, the rates of homelessness among youth are higher than for any other age group in the country, with young people aged between 12 and 24 comprising 25% of the homeless population. Young parents are making up an increasingly large proportion of this group. This is particularly problematic because individuals who experience homelessness when they are young are more likely to experience persistent homelessness throughout their lives. In this paper, we review the current literature surrounding the types and effectiveness of support services available to such youth, demonstrating that while a number of different approaches exist, various factors can affect the extent to which these services are able to effectively engage and address the needs of their target clients. Ongoing support once individuals leave support services and the provision of education, employment, and training pathways play key roles in helping young vulnerable parents make a sustainable transition from homelessness to a stable independent living environment. These findings can inform the design of future support services aiming at reducing youth homelessness in Australia.

Keywords: homelessness; youth; parenthood; Australia

1. Introduction

Current research suggests that young Australians are becoming increasingly overrepresented within the country's homeless population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). For example, youth aged between 12 and 24 currently comprise 25% of the homeless population, despite making up only 17% of the national population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Research also indicates that young parents are particularly vulnerable to experiencing homelessness due to the increased social, financial, medical, educational, and employment difficulties which they often face (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013). In fact, in 2013-14 alone, over 10,500 parents aged between 15 and 24 required support from specialist homelessness services (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014).

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, homelessness occurs when a person is living in a dwelling that is inadequate, has a short, non-extendable or non-existent tenure, or does not provide the person with space for social relations (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The issue of youth homelessness is an important one, and it is attracting increasing attention in contemporary literature. This is partially because youth homelessness has been linked to numerous negative long-term outcomes, such as poor mental and physical health, as well as low educational attainment (Collins & Curtis, 2011; Perlman, Willard, Herbers, Cutuli, & Eyrich Garg, 2014). Furthermore, when people experience homelessness for a prolonged period of time, they often adapt to it as a way of life. With the passing of time it becomes increasingly difficult for individuals to undergo sustainable transitions out of homelessness (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008).

Despite the increasing severity of this problem and the large literature on youth homelessness, there has been limited research to date on vulnerable young parents, particularly in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the services currently available to them (Altena, Brilleslijper-Kater, & Wolf, 2010; Clay & Coffey, 2003; Hall, 2006; Marrone, 2005; O'Toole, Dennis, Kilpatrick, & Farmer, 2010). In this review paper, we provide a summary of the various forms of services available to homeless youth and homeless young parents in Australia, and review national and international literature examining the effectiveness of different service approaches. In doing this, we aim to further our understanding of the factors which influence the effectiveness of these service approaches, and contribute to

public discourse surrounding the best ways to serve the needs of young parents who experience homelessness.

Overall, the literature suggests that while many homelessness services provide accommodation for disadvantaged youth, a large number of these services are not equipped to serve their broader educational, vocational, psychosocial, and health needs, particularly when these youth have children (Anderson, Stuttaford, & Vostanis, 2006; Barber, Fonagy, Fultz, Simulinas, & Yates, 2005; Rashid, 2004). Furthermore, services which attempt to address a wider variety of vulnerable young people's needs often find it difficult to engage their clients (Garrett et al., 2008; Giullari & Shaw, 2005; Peled, Spiro, & Dekel, 2005; Scapaticci & Blay, 2009). Importantly, the literature suggests that access to ongoing support and education, employment, and training pathways is a crucial component in helping youth make a sustainable transition out of homelessness (Boese & Boyle, 2006; Broadbent, 2008; Hampshire, 2010; McNeill, 2011; Robinson & Baron, 2007).

2. Current Service Models

While few service models currently exist to specifically address the needs of young Australian parents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, Australian state governments and various not-for-profit organisations offer a number of services to help support homeless youth (Australian Government, 2008; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2011). These services range from early intervention and crisis support to longer-term support involving access to education and training for employment (Australian Government, 2008). Such services can be grouped into several distinct categories according to the model they follow, including (i) the Outreach Model, (ii) the Crisis Model, (iii) the Supported Accommodation Model, (iv) the Intensive Support Model, (v) the Foyer Model, and (vi) the Co-ordination Model (Barker, Humphries, McArthur, & Thomson, 2012; Beer et al., 2005). The provision of such wide-ranging support is important as it enables homeless youth with different needs and complex issues to make smoother and more positive transitions into both adulthood and parenthood (Knight, 2012).

The Outreach Model

The Outreach Model is employed by a number of services throughout the country, and is a proactive approach which focuses on primary and secondary intervention (Beer et al.,

2005). That is, the Outreach Model aims to provide support to young people at risk of homelessness, as well as children before they enter high risk groups, to prevent future homelessness (Beer et al., 2005). Through encouraging collaborations between businesses, communities, and governments, this model aims at addressing the structural causes of homelessness (Beer et al., 2005). One example of the Outreach Model is the Reconnect program, a community-based early intervention program run across Australia (Australian Government, 2008). Using early intervention strategies, such as counselling, mediation, and family support, Reconnect helps vulnerable youth between the ages of 12 and 18 to attain a more stable living situation, improve family relationships, and increase their engagement in employment, education, and training (Australian Government, 2013). In targeting youth before they become homeless, Reconnect works to prevent homelessness and engage families and educational institutions in young people's journeys towards more stable living situations (Beer et al., 2005). It provides youth with family counselling and mediation, as well as practical support to facilitate their involvement in education and employment (Australian Government, 2013). In doing this, Reconnect is able to help young people work on their issues and more actively participate in both the community and the workforce (Broadbent, 2008).

The Crisis Model

The Crisis Model is another model which is used throughout the country, and its main focus is to provide immediate support to homeless people with severe needs (Beer et al., 2005). However, as this model is purely reactive and focuses solely on short-term relief from homelessness, it is unable to provide long-term support or address the underlying causes of homelessness (Beer et al., 2005). Youth refuge services, such as those run by Melbourne City Mission, generally follow this model, as their primary aim is to provide youth with crisis accommodation and help build their resilience (Barrett & Cataldo, 2012). These refuge services are open to youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are either experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness (Barrett & Cataldo, 2012). In addition to crisis accommodation, such services often provide youth with support in finding stable, long-term accommodation and making informed decisions about their future (Barrett & Cataldo, 2012). However, as these services have limited capacity to address multiple needs, they generally have a limited impact on the long-term outcomes of people

experiencing homelessness (Beer et al., 2005). Despite this, such approaches continue to exist around the country as they are able to provide quick and targeted support to address the immediate and pressing needs of their clients (Beer et al., 2005).

The Supported Accommodation Model

The Supported Accommodation Model is another model which is used throughout Australia to help address the needs of those experiencing homelessness. This particular model often takes a housing-first approach, which is based on the idea that adequate housing is a basic human right, and that once stable housing has been gained, social, educational, and employment participation will follow (Barker et al., 2012). As such, the Supported Accommodation Model focuses on providing safe and affordable housing to vulnerable individuals and families, along with support staff to help provide clients with safety, flexibility, permanence, access to support services and, above all, independence (Barker et al., 2012). One example of this model is Common Ground, a program based on the provision of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless people (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). Common Ground is currently run in five states throughout the country, and it is aimed at the most vulnerable and chronically homeless people (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). It provides them with safe housing and additional support services, such as access to employment and training, to ensure they remain housed, healthy, and safe (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). The program generally houses homeless people along with other low-income individuals, such as students, in order to help encourage social inclusion, facilitate a healthy living environment, foster positive community development, and provide the opportunity for homeless people to experience living outside of an institutionalised environment (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), on the other hand, takes a case management approach to the Supported Accommodation Model (Australian Government, 2008). It aims to provide people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with transitional supported accommodation to help them achieve independence (Australian Government, 2008). It is targeted at people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, with particular focus on youth, women and children escaping violence, and single men and women (Australian Government, 2008). While SAAP provides a range of services, including early intervention, emergency support, outreach support, and some post-crisis support, it is limited in its capacity

to provide its clients with employment, education, and training pathways (National Youth Commission, 2008). This is problematic in that links to education and employment are seen to play a large role in helping homeless individuals become active members of the workforce and make sustainable transitions out of homelessness (Boese & Boyle, 2006).

The Intensive Support Model

The Intensive Support Model is often used by services aimed at providing support to individuals with a specific intensive need, such as pregnancy, substance abuse, or mental health issues (Beer et al., 2005). Such services aim to provide support on a level that helps reduce the risk factors of homelessness while simultaneously providing clients with the secure accommodation that they require in order to move off the streets (Beer et al., 2005). One example of an Intensive Support Model is St Mary's, a Brisbane-based accommodation and support service for parenting and pregnant young women between the ages of 16 and 25 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless (Knight, 2012). The service aims to empower young mothers to live independently through the provision of affordable accommodation, as well as training in parenting and life skills (Knight, 2012). St Mary's allows the women to stay for three to eighteen months, providing them with secure and stable medium-term accommodation and access to support staff, before helping them move into more permanent accommodation (Knight, 2012). By addressing young mothers' complex needs, this service is able to help them develop independent living skills and break the cycle of homelessness (Knight, 2012).

The Foyer Model

The Foyer Model has gained increasing attention within Australia in recent years, as it focuses on providing direct access to employment, education, and training, in combination with quality and affordable accommodation (Barker et al., 2012). For example, the Education First Youth Foyers in Victoria prioritise education and training pathways and focus on helping youth gain sustainable employment (Mallett, James, McTiernan, & Buick, 2014). They take an 'open talent' approach, which is based on recognising and developing young people's talents and abilities (Mallett et al., 2014). The Education First Youth Foyers ultimately aim to improve the lives and circumstances of homeless and vulnerable

youth who are having issues with transitioning to independent adulthood, and they achieve this through the provision of education and employment support, health and wellbeing support, social network and participation support, affordable accommodation for up to two years, and continued support once clients exit the foyer (Mallett et al., 2014). Similarly, the Foyer Oxford in Perth provides affordable accommodation, life skills training, help with finding long-term accommodation, as well as post-exit support with the aim of improving long-term outcomes for homeless youth (Foyer Oxford, n.d.). It also provides links to education and vocational training and supports clients in preparing for and finding sustainable employment. Foyer Oxford is open to homeless and vulnerable youth aged between 16 and 25, as well as young parents and their children. Like the Education First Youth Foyers, Foyer Oxford supports clients for up to two years. The Miller Live 'N' Learn Campus in Sydney takes a similar approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable youth (ACT Government, n.d.). It provides affordable accommodation, counselling, life skills programs, education and vocational training programs, and employment programs to disadvantaged youth with the aim of helping them develop life skills, networks, and self-esteem to facilitate a more positive transition to independence (Beer et al., 2005). Such holistic approaches are argued to help young people develop their skills and become more self-reliant, ultimately helping them to move out of homelessness for the long-term (Knight, 2012).

The Co-ordination Model

Similarly to the Foyer Model, the Co-ordination Model is based on the idea that housing is only one of the needs which must be addressed in order to help an individual move out of homelessness (Beer et al., 2005). This model aims at improving links between homelessness services and programs to provide clients with a more integrated platform of services (Beer et al., 2005). One service which takes this approach is YP4, an initiative which was created to demonstrate that combining services helps youth achieve more sustainable employment and housing outcomes (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). This service works with unemployed, homeless youth aged between 18 and 35, and provides sustainable employment and housing outcomes for clients through the integration of services (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). YP4 provides clients with a single point of contact for up to two and a half years. Rather than providing a rigid, program-based service delivery, YP4 aims to provide

a more client-centred, flexible mode of delivery (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). Similarly, Frontyard youth service in Melbourne provides a client-centred service for youth aged between 12 and 25 who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, disengaged, or requiring support (Melbourne City Mission, 2014). It provides clients with integrated services to address a number of physical, social, and emotional needs, including access to doctors, dentists, legal advice, family mediation, and links to employment and education providers (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). As it links youth to a range of support services which they require to help forge pathways out of homelessness, it is able to meet a number of needs, ranging from crisis intervention to long-term support (Eardley & Bullen, 2011). This suggests that services which are based on the Co-ordination Model are able to more effectively address the needs of individuals who require access to a range of separate elements of the service sector (Beer et al., 2005).

3. The Effectiveness of Current Service Models

To date, there has been limited research focusing specifically on young parents who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, particularly in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the services available to them (Altena et al., 2010). However, existing Australian and international literature on services aimed at vulnerable young people in general is relatively extensive. There are a number of common themes in this literature. These include (i) barriers preventing vulnerable youth from seeking support services, (ii) practices which make the services successful, (iii) practices which prevent the services from being successful, (iv) outcomes after exiting support, and (v) the importance of education, employment, and training pathways. We discuss these in turn.

Barriers to Seeking Support

Despite being specifically designed to address the needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, many service providers struggle to engage this group in the use of their services (Garrett et al., 2008). For example, a recent study by Garrett and colleagues (2008) examined how homeless youth make the decision to access the services available to them, particularly in terms of the factors that act as barriers and facilitators. The results showed that the decision to access (or not access) homelessness services was linked

to developing autonomy and identifying with street lifestyles (Garrett et al., 2008). Many youth felt that living on the street was preferable to living with their parents, as it provided them with autonomy and freed them from family rules and abusive relationships. As such, they often felt that the structure and rules imposed by homeless shelters were too restrictive (Garrett et al., 2008; Giullari & Shaw, 2005). In addition, factors such as a distrust of staff, unattainable expectations, unsafe environment, and a lack of services which align with their wants and needs have all been found to act as barriers which prevent vulnerable youth from accessing services (Garrett et al., 2008; Peled et al., 2005).

Concerning homeless mothers, research has found that they are often hesitant to seek support from shelters due to difficulties with following rules and trusting others (Scappaticci & Blay, 2009). These difficulties often arise as a result of difficult past experiences (Scappaticci & Blay, 2009). A lack of control over their own parenting is also an issue that many parents face when they stay in a shelter, as rules and decisions regarding everyday events such as bed or meal times are often made by the shelter (Swick, 2009). Furthermore, living in a shelter often turns parenting from a private experience into a public one, and can thus prevent parents from shielding their children from the harsh reality of their situation (Scappaticci & Blay, 2009). Overall, these barriers indicate some of the weaknesses of current approaches to service provision which must be addressed in order for them to better engage their target population.

Effective Forms of Support

While available support programs are often underutilised by youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, there are particular aspects of such programs which have been found to be helpful in keeping youth engaged and assisting them in moving out of homelessness (Garrett et al., 2008; Hennessy, Grant, Cook, & Meadows, 2005; Robinson & Baron, 2007). For example, a study by Taylor and colleagues (2012) investigated effective strategies to engage young parents in support services. The study involved a one-day workshop in Sydney which included both service staff and young mothers, and it found that strategies such as having supportive and approachable staff, having numerous services available at the same place, providing childcare and education for parents, and being more inclusive of fathers helped encourage young parents to initiate and maintain engagement with support services (Taylor et al., 2012). Such 'wraparound' services

which focus on a number of needs at once have been shown to be effective in aiding vulnerable people enter the labour market and move out of homelessness (Marrone, 2005). Furthermore, homeless mothers have been found to value parenting programs which involve time for discussion with other vulnerable parents, as these enable them to discover better approaches to meeting their family's needs (Swick, 2009). Many parents also find one-on-one parenting support helpful, particularly when the frequency and intensity of the support provided is based on the specific needs of the parents (Anderson et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2012). However, it must be noted that the voluntary nature of participation in such services is regarded as highly important for many vulnerable young parents, as it helps them maintain both their sense of autonomy and their ability to make their own decisions about their future (Taylor et al., 2012).

Issues with Current Models

The existing literature also makes a number of references to issues with current models which are preventing them from successfully addressing the needs of vulnerable youth and young parents (Anderson et al., 2006; McLaren, 2013). For example, a study by Anderson and colleagues (2006) investigated a family support team which was created to respond to a range of social and health needs of homeless parents and children living in a hostel for homeless families. The study found that while most families found the hostel secure, the layout of the apartments proved to be an issue for some parents due to the inconvenience of living in a single room along with a young child (Anderson et al., 2006). The location of the hostel was also seen by some to be an issue, as it was located in an area that was perceived to be disadvantaged and dangerous, and was too far away from schools and relatives of the clients (Anderson et al., 2006). Similarly, a study by Martin and colleagues (2005) found that young parents were generally against models that involved sharing accommodation with other young parents. Hostels in particular were seen as having a stigma attached to them and were considered to be impractical as they were unable to meet all of the parents' needs and often forced them to live in very close quarters with other parents (Martin, Sweeney, & Cooke, 2005). Additionally, some youth criticise services for the length of time it takes to complete certain programs, as well as the types of people who are allowed to participate. For example, Robinson and Baron (2007) found that some of the youth who were participating in an education program resented

other participants who were not fully committed to the program as they would arrive late and be disruptive, thus hindering everyone else's ability to learn (Robinson & Baron, 2007). As such, it is clear that there are particular factors which must be considered when designing services for vulnerable youth, to provide them with more effective support and enable better outcomes.

Outcomes after Accessing Support

Research suggests that the outcomes of vulnerable youth can be influenced considerably by the support that they receive from homelessness services (Broadbent, 2008; Pollio, Thompson, Tobias, Reid, & Spitznagel, 2006; Sadler et al., 2007). For example, Barber and colleagues (2005) conducted an American study into the outcomes of youth who accessed crisis services at a homeless shelter. The shelter provided a number of different services, including short-term housing, counselling, health care, and vocational support. At a three-month follow-up, the study found that 12% of the youth had spent at least one night on the street since leaving the service and 36% were employed. At a six-month follow-up these numbers had improved, as only 8% of the youth had spent at least one night on the street in the previous three months and 38% had stable employment (Barber et al., 2005). This suggests that after leaving the service, outcomes continued to improve in the short-term. Furthermore, studies by Pollio and colleagues (2006) and McLaren (2013) of the short-term outcomes for individuals who accessed homelessness services found that clients who received post-discharge support achieved and maintained more positive outcomes compared to those who did not (Pollio et al., 2006). Overall, these findings illustrate the interconnected nature of housing, employment, and social outcomes, and suggest that increased levels of post-discharge support are needed to facilitate the maintenance of positive outcomes.

The Importance of Education, Employment and Training Pathways

Education, employment, and training have also been found to be crucial components in helping youth make a sustainable transition out of homelessness (Boese & Boyle, 2006). For example, studies have shown that participating in education and training can help

vulnerable youth acquire and maintain secure accommodation, as there are strong relationships between building confidence, developing skills, gaining employment, and successfully maintaining a stable independent living environment (McNeill, 2011). Furthermore, participating in education has been found to be particularly beneficial for young mothers, who tend to have fewer subsequent teenage pregnancies, better long-term financial outcomes, and better social, behavioural, and academic outcomes for their children when they remain engaged in education (Sadler et al., 2007). However, while many young people experiencing homelessness may want to participate in education, employment, or training, they often face multiple barriers which hinder their entry into the workforce and educational institutions (Stoten, 2014). These include personal barriers, such as a lack of skill, substance use, and poor mental health, and structural barriers, such as discrimination, poor training services, and bad employment advice (McNeill, 2011). This is problematic because unemployment has been linked to social isolation, a lack of confidence, lower self-esteem, and poor mental and physical health (Rose, Daiches, & Potter, 2012). Furthermore, young people not participating in education, employment, or training are at risk of experiencing social exclusion, including exclusion from education, recreation, and employment institutions (Rose et al., 2012). Social exclusion can often lead to negative outcomes, including limited educational attainment, substance use, anti-social behaviour, and issues with mental health (Rose et al., 2012). Thus, it is important that youth who are at risk of experiencing or experience homelessness have access to adequate employment, education, and training services which meet their needs and can facilitate their long-term participation in the workforce.

4. Gaps in the Literature

While the existing literature has covered the services available to homeless youth fairly comprehensively, there are a number of gaps in knowledge. For example, there is a considerable lack of follow-up studies which investigate the long-term accommodation, employment, and independence outcomes achieved by vulnerable youth after they exit homelessness services (Collins & Curtis, 2011). Furthermore, many of the existing studies are limited in that they only involve participants who have accessed homelessness support services at some point in their lives, and their views and experiences are likely to be

very different to those of vulnerable youth who have never been engaged in support services (Kirk & Day, 2011; Martin et al., 2005; Tischler, 2008). Furthermore, while the literature investigates young vulnerable people and the services available to them in considerable detail, there is much less research about the availability and effectiveness of services aimed specifically at vulnerable young parents. Young fathers in particular are largely excluded from the literature, which may be a result of the lack of services available to them. For example, many emergency accommodation services for mothers have rules which prevent their partners from visiting or staying overnight, which limits their ability to be involved as parents (Giullari & Shaw, 2005). Furthermore, fathers who access Specialist Homelessness Services without their children present often have their parental status ignored (Barker, Kolar, Mallett, McArthur, & Saunders, 2011). Overall, it is clear that more research is needed into the experiences and outcomes of young vulnerable mothers and fathers who access or require support services in order to better understand how to more effectively address their needs and improve their long-term outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the literature suggests that vulnerable young people and vulnerable young parents often experience a number of interrelated issues for which they require support. Such issues may include a lack of independent living skills, financial instability, poor physical and mental health, low educational attainment, and a lack of training or employment opportunities. As such, it is important for support services to have the ability to address multiple issues at once in order to better help vulnerable youth to make a sustainable transition out of homelessness (Marrone, 2005). Furthermore, support services tend to engage more youth and help them to achieve better outcomes when they are more flexible, easier to access, and are better tailored to individuals' needs.

These findings may have important implications for Australian policies for youth homelessness, particularly in light of the recent shift in policy focus from managing homelessness to preventing homelessness (Parsell, Jones, & Head, 2013). The fact that many homeless youth require assistance in multiple areas suggests that there is a need for service providers to increase their focus on the specific and individual needs of vulnerable young parents and provide them with increased 'wraparound' services to aid them in accessing the support they need. More effective communication and collaboration between service

providers, governments, and community organisations may prove beneficial in helping to better organise such 'wraparound' support programs and facilitate young people's transitions to sustainable housing and employment. Finally, greater emphasis on service flexibility and ongoing support may help ensure that youth remain engaged in services and achieve better long-term outcomes.

These changes to support services may help provide more vulnerable young parents with the opportunity to develop their independence in a safe environment where they can gain the skills that they need to successfully move out of homelessness and improve their outcomes.

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