

Findings and Recommendations from the Youth Empowerment Team (YET)



**A youth led research project from The San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual
Transgender Community Center**

April- December 2005

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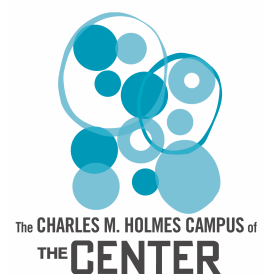


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Facilitator's Statement

I want to share a couple of words about my experience as the facilitator for the Youth Empowerment Team. I came to this work having been a direct service provider for homeless youth in San Francisco for several years. I believe that young people have the best and most sustainable solutions to their own struggles, and I believe it is the responsibility of adult and youth service providers and administrators to create and sustain real opportunities for youth to explore their issues and implement their solutions.

I chose to work on this project because I want to support youth-led organizing work. In recruiting and hiring youth, I made decisions to hire low-income, homeless or formerly homeless youth, youth of color, and transgender youth, because I believe the youth most impacted by issues of poverty and homelessness, must be the leaders of this research and organizing.

The youth leaders I have supported in this project are compassionate, critical thinkers with incredible experience and insight. They are visionaries with real ideas about how to make San Francisco a safer, adequately resourced and fully accessible city for all low-income queer and transgender youth. They are collective-thinkers with a vision for true social and economic justice for all, and I thank them for their courage, their struggle and their leadership.

I urge everyone reading this report to take the Youth Empowerment Team's work seriously. As adults, service providers, and decision-makers, we need to work through our fear of youth and youth leadership if we want any of our work to be sustainable. We will fail to meet the needs of youth in any way, if we continue to resist youth leadership.

Colby Lenz
January 2006

Youth Empowerment Team

Organizer Biographies

T

T lives in San Francisco and is a visual artist specializing in film, painting and photography. T is also an activist and a community organizer. The Youth Empowerment Project presented a great opportunity to help improve circumstances for queer and transgender youth in SF. After completing an M.A. or Doctorate program, T plans to become involved in the international human rights field to prevent the exploitation of youth.

Tino Calenda

I am a youth, empowered, compassionate, motivated and hopefully inspiring. I am a quiet activist giving my time where I can and walking my path sending out good intentions for all. Of an anarchist political bent, I am committed to creating unity and liberty for all individuals. I enjoy humanity and wish to end its suffering, young humans especially (we are so ignored and maligned). I believe in building bridges and erasing the concept of separation between individuals. I am a free agent empowering others, caring when so many won't. I wish to complete a doctoral study program in bioethics and work towards the responsible use of bio-therapies.

Chris Tyler

Hi. I'm Chris (aka Damita Jo) and I am very intelligent and real about what I do. To me, life is the most precious thing to have on top of good health. I participated on this project because I like working with a team of people where we can get things done a lot faster. I also joined this project to find out more about queer youth in San Francisco since I live in Oakland. I work with cool people who really understand what I'm going through.

Jonathan Rodgers

I'm 25 years old and grew up in the Mid-West. I was using drugs at 8, dropped out of school at 14 and left home at 16. I received my GED when in jail in 1998. I was constantly depressed from my actions even though it seemed as if I had no choice. I found freedom from heroine and moved to Austin, Texas. Until then I thought I was the only young person that ever slept outside. I moved to SF then and started using meth daily. I knew I needed something in my life that was more important than getting and being

high. In my fifth year in the city, I have found the fulfillment of my strongest passion to affect the world in a positive way.

Introduction

The Youth Empowerment Team (YET) is a project initiated by the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center (The Center) and sponsored by a Levi Strauss Foundation grant. The Center is a non-profit organization that provides a space where community members can meet, make connections and receive different services. The Center offers programs in HIV prevention, information and referral, arts & culture, children youth and families and economic development in all parts of our community. After a previous assessment of economic development needs for the LGBT Community showed that more work needed to be focused among youth, The Center initiated a project that was organized by youth to find out what the needs are of socio-economically disadvantaged LGBTQQHI youth in San Francisco and how to best improve their circumstances to create better opportunities.

The Youth Empowerment Project



The Youth Empowerment Team consists of youth organizers who wish to make a change in our community by empowering other

youth. Our mission statement is: **We are a team of youth organizing to empower socio-economically disadvantaged lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, heterosexual and intersex (LGBTQQHI) youth in San Francisco.** Through outreach, advocacy, and community organizing, we assess the needs of youth by collecting hands-on information to propose solutions to better meet these needs and ensure adequate resources and equal treatment for LGBTQQHI youth, while building leadership skills and empowering youth and their families.

Our research question was: **What are the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged LGBTQQHI youth and how can the community empower youth by ensuring adequate resources and equal treatment?** We came up with a strategy and decided that we would distribute surveys among youth in San Francisco, conduct focus groups for youth and service providers and interview service providers. By using these research methods, we wanted to find out what the biggest issues are for queer and transgender youth in San Francisco.

We also wanted to find out what youth thought of how to improve their circumstances and how to feel empowered. After collecting and analysing the data, we came up with recommendations that could contribute to improving the lives of youth in San Francisco. We created our survey and focus group questions based on our observations of the many obstacles youth must overcome such as basic needs, and educational and job opportunities.

By being part of this project we hoped to be able to represent the voices and the needs of young people in our community. It was important that we did this research rather than adults because it was done by young adults reaching out to youth and we based our recommendations on answers from youth and on the findings of the collected data. Since we are youth ourselves, we share a similar perspective with our research population because we share some of the same struggles. It is also important for us to lead this project as youth to be a model for our communities to be involved in creating change.

Now that we have this information, we hope to be able to receive funding for next year to implement some of our findings and to create better housing, job and educational opportunities for LGBTQQHI youth in San Francisco.



Methodology

Our team of youth organizers was recruited by Colby Lenz, who was the facilitator of this project and with help from Joel Lopez who works at The Center. Colby and Joel did outreach throughout San Francisco, but specifically to organizations that work with youth. Some of the places they did outreach were services for homeless youth, free clinics for queer and transgender people, and transitional living

programs. A round of applications and interviews followed this, resulting in the selection of our team. We were selected based on our experience as LGBTQQHI youth surviving in San Francisco, on our mix of skills and interests, and our passion for improving the lives of queer and transgender youth in the city. Our team consisted of seven organizers originally, but varied from four to six throughout the project. Since April 2005, we have been meeting once or twice a week at The Center, in addition to work we've done outside of The Center on this project.

After we agreed upon our mission statement, we came up with our research question. During the first few meetings we looked closely at the funder's goals and what The Center wanted to find out. Together we broke down what we thought were the main issues for youth in San Francisco. We started by sharing information with each other about our lives and experiences, since we all were going through a lot of the issues youth are facing. We narrowed our thoughts down to our research question: **What are the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged LGBTQQHI youth, and how can we empower youth by ensuring adequate resources and equal treatment?** The next step was to find the tools to present this question to the larger LGBT, youth, and service provider communities.

From the beginning we all agreed upon including all youth in order to reach as many youth as possible in San Francisco and to get most of their voices represented through our project. This is why we chose a long acronym, LGBTQQHI, to include all youth and the many ways they

identify. We wanted to include all people so they're not excluded like we've been, based on the way they identify. We chose to distribute a survey because it is a professional method that would lead to and support our recommendations. It also would reach a big group of people and would provide us with helpful answers. We also decided to organize focus groups to create space for youth and service providers to give feedback on what they thought were the biggest issues.

Youth in Focus, an organization based in Oakland that provides training to youth-led research projects, taught us research tools. We chose the survey tool as one of our methods, so we could get good statistical data from a larger population of youth. We designed our own survey with multiple-choice, rating and ranking questions and made a list of organizations and locations to distribute the surveys.

We collected our data at locations where we could find youth and young adults who are facing challenges and who could be helpful in finding solutions to the problems. We did some street outreach with our youth surveys. We also visited specific community organizations, shelters and transitional housing sites and drop-in centers to collect surveys. We conducted surveys at the Youth Space at The Center, Larkin Street Youth Services, LYRIC, Dimensions Health Clinic, Guerrero House, HAYOT, and other places. We made plans of who would go where and when, and in groups of two or three we went to different places and did outreach. We collected a total of 91 surveys.

We also ran two focus groups for youth and one for service providers. We wanted the most honest responses we could collect and felt that if we heard people's perspectives through focus groups, we could attain a higher level of accuracy. We handed out focus group applications along with the surveys, and selected a diverse group of potential participants. For the service providers, we nominated dedicated staff members throughout the city and invited them to participate. Since there were only four providers who could make it to the focus group, we held additional interviews.

Once we had collected our data, we analyzed and organized our data according to themes. The themes were: housing/homelessness, education, jobs/income, substance use, gender identity, youth empowerment, and medical care. We identified our key findings by analysing the data from the surveys, focus groups and interviews. By looking at the most outstanding data, we learned to make connections with the findings and the supporting data. After we formulated our key findings, we came up with several recommendations corresponding with the supportive data.

Data Analysis

One important lesson we learned about research during this project was how to stay objective while distributing the surveys and conducting the focus groups. This was a very important skill applied during each step of our research and very helpful for future research projects. We also learned about data entry - how to enter our data into the

computer matching the exact answers of each survey and when in doubt, leaving the answer or the missing answers out. If we had implemented our own interpretation it would have cancelled the whole survey.

After we entered all the data into the computer program, Survey Monkey, we learned how to analyze our data by looking at the answers and outcome of our survey questions. By looking at the highest percentages and highest responses we started to find indicators that led to our findings. These indicators were showing us what youth think their biggest issues are in San Francisco. They also indicated what youth believe their biggest obstacles are in finding housing and jobs, going to school, receiving government assistance and medical care. **We were excited by the outcome of the last two questions of our survey which showed that the majority of the youth we surveyed would want to make a difference in their community.**

For our focus groups and interviews, we transcribed the data, organized it into themes, and drew conclusions. We used quotes from our focus groups and interviews to support our findings.

Our Findings

These are the findings we developed from analyzing our data:

Finding: **The four largest issues low-income LGBTQQHI youth face in San Francisco in order of**

**importance are: housing/homelessness,
jobs/income, substance use and education.**

Supporting Data:

1. 85% youth listed housing as the biggest issue for LGBTQQHI youth.
2. 70% youth listed jobs/income as the second biggest issue for LGBTQQHI youth.
3. 65% youth listed substance use at the third biggest issue for LGBTQQHI youth.
4. 41% youth listed education as the fourth biggest issue for LGBTQQHI youth.

"I don't feel it's even going to get safer. The dangers will always be present." (Youth Focus Group)

Finding: **A significant number of LGBTQQHI poor youth living in San Francisco do not feel safe or have stable housing. Homelessness consumes all of our time because it keeps us focused on food and shelter, leaving no time for other important activities such as education or employment.**

Supporting Data:

1. 67% youth surveyed live on the streets, in shelters or in transitional housing.
2. Only 12% live in apartments.
3. 89% of youth do not identify as feeling "very safe" in youth shelters and/or transitional housing.

"We need to advocate for more housing whether it's transitional housing or...an emergency shelter here in the city. But I really think we need one that is queer specific." (Service Provider Interview)

Finding: **The most significant means of survival for youth in San Francisco is employment, but a lack of job training and education for young people forces them into other means of**

survival, including sex work and obtaining food stamps.

- Supporting Data:**
1. 70% youth listed jobs/income as the second biggest issue for LGBTQQHI youth living in San Francisco.
 2. 66% youth listed lack of education/job training as the biggest obstacle to finding a job/income.
 3. 53% youth listed jobs as their means of surviving in San Francisco.
 4. Over 1/3 of youth use sex work and/or food stamps as a means of survival.
 5. Having no/low income is a major obstacle to accessing housing, schooling and medical care: 88% of respondents listed no/low income as biggest obstacle to finding housing; 72% listed low/no income as biggest challenge in going to school; 85% listed low-no income as biggest challenge to getting medical care

"Make sure that pay [for work] is fair and given on time." (Youth Focus Group)

Finding: **Education is important to youth, but they are faced with obstacles of homelessness and little or no income.**

- Supporting Data:**
1. Biggest challenge in going to school:
 - 72% listed no/low income
 - 28% listed no high school diploma/GED
 - 24% listed gender identity or sexual orientation
 - 22% listed first person in family to go to college
 2. 66% listed lack of education/ job training as the biggest obstacle to finding a job/income.
 3. 45% of respondents listed education as one of the four biggest challenges living in San Francisco.

4. 40.5% of respondents listed education as one of the four biggest issues for LGBTQQ youth living in San Francisco.
5. 72% said having low/no income is the biggest challenge in going to school.

Finding: **Lack of awareness of youth needs, and lack of comprehensive services for queer and transgender youth leads to unequal treatment, lack of respect, and lack of safety in San Francisco for transgender individuals.**

- Supporting Data:**
1. Over 1/3 youth listed gender identity as their biggest obstacle in search of housing.
 2. 24% youth listed gender identity or sexual orientation as their biggest challenges in going to school.
 3. 38% youth listed gender discrimination as a biggest obstacle to finding a job/income.
 4. 38% youth listed sexual orientation discrimination as a biggest obstacle to finding a job/income.

"There is somewhat of a misunderstanding of the tolerance level of San Francisco. That this is the Mecca that accepts all queer youth, transgender youth, questioning youth...And although it is a very tolerant city I think when a lot of good people come here they find that there aren't the resources or people they can rely upon to sustain themselves." (Service Provider Interview)

"One of our biggest issues is more with transgender youth and the fact that we don't really have a comprehensive service." (Service Provider Focus Group)

"We have individuals within agencies that have a really good understanding of trans issues, and have a lot of people who have

really good intentions but just not a lot of education around it to work with. And so a one day training while it provides people something to think about, it's really hard to get that to translate into their everyday work with clients." (Service Provider Focus Group)

Finding: **Queer and transgender youth experience discrimination in medical care, including policy-based discrimination around parental notification and liability. They live in an ageist system that doesn't trust that young people know what they need and want.**

Supporting Data:

1. Over 1/3 of youth said gender identity is one of their biggest obstacles in getting medical care.
2. 22% youth listed sexual orientation as biggest obstacle in getting medical care.
3. 33% of youth surveyed who identify as transgender reported that they have difficulty accessing healthcare because of gender identity.

"You don't throw hormones at people, especially young people...if they're not certain of their sexual identity, we all know people kind of go back and forth...so if you're giving something to someone that changes them physically...then the person decides that's really not them, what is the harm that's done." (Service Provider Focus Group)

Finding: **LGBTQQHI homeless youth feel they have limited access to sufficient medical care in San Francisco.**

Supporting Data:

1. 85% said having low-no income is one of their biggest challenges to getting medical care.

2. 49% of youth listed homelessness as an obstacle to receiving proper medical care.

"[Staff are] condescending, patronizing in clinics and emergency rooms. I waited for 12 hours to have fluid drawn from my joints with a 104 degree temperature." (Youth Focus Group)

Finding: **Many LGBTQQHI poor youth experience a cycle of homelessness to depression to substance use to unsafe sex.**

Supporting Data:

1. 37% of youth get high because of housing/homelessness.
2. 55% youth listed depression as the biggest reason for getting high.
3. 50% youth addressed that they were more likely to feel depressed when getting high.
4. 44% youth addressed that they were more likely to have unsafe sex when high.
5. 31% youth addressed that they were more likely to feel suicidal when high.

Finding: **Almost all the youth surveyed want to make a difference in the community and are willing to participate/organize to improve their situation, but they don't because they feel disempowered.**

Supporting Data:

1. 96% youth surveyed would make a difference in their community if they could:
 - be taken seriously (61%)
 - know people are really listening to them (56%)
 - be truly involved in decisions affecting their life (54%)
 - be considered a leader more than a trouble-maker (46%)
2. 88% youth surveyed would undertake action to improve their situation:

- 56% would get involved with a youth organizing group
- 53% would come to a protest or rally

"I would like to see a young person on the Board here at the Center...and to see more peer-led programs that's why I think this [YET] is such a good program." (Service Provider Interview)

"I would really like to get a peer educator program so we're employing youth to help each other." (Service Provider Interview)

"I think of my role as more of a structure-holder and let the youth that I'm working with decide where to go." (Service Provider Focus Group)

Graphs and Charts

Demographics of Survey Participants

Fig. 1.1 Ages of youth surveyed

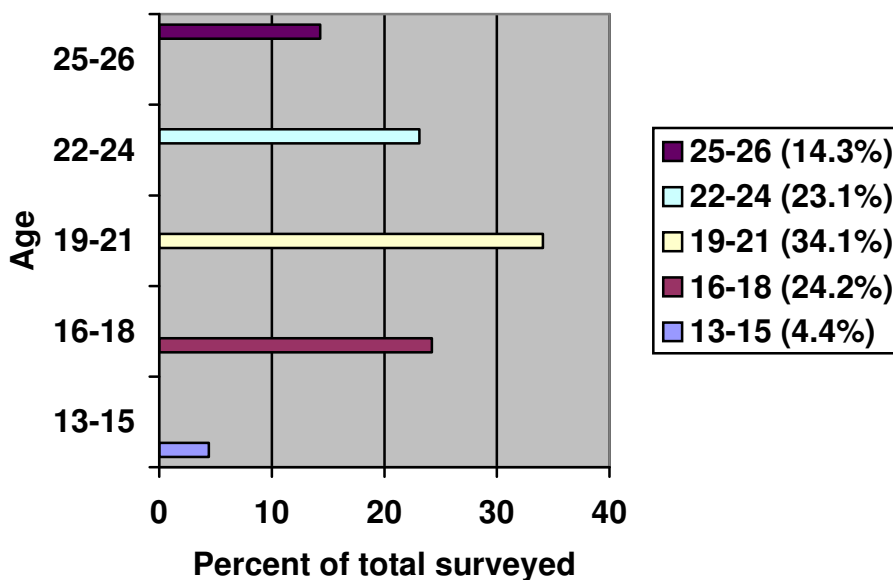


Fig. 1.2 Gender Identity

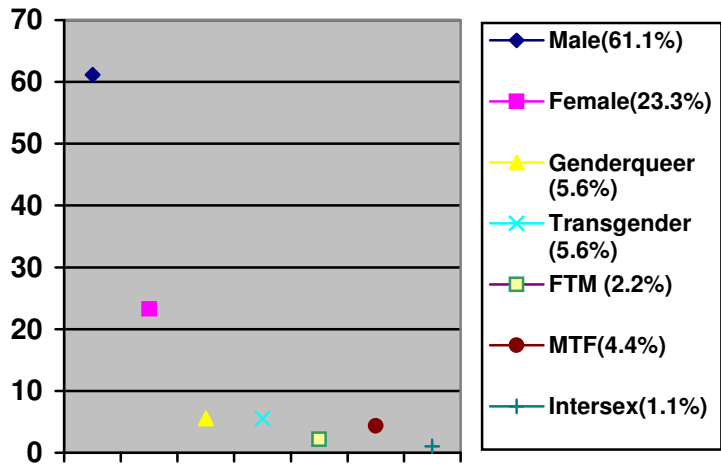


Fig. 1.3 Sexual Orientation

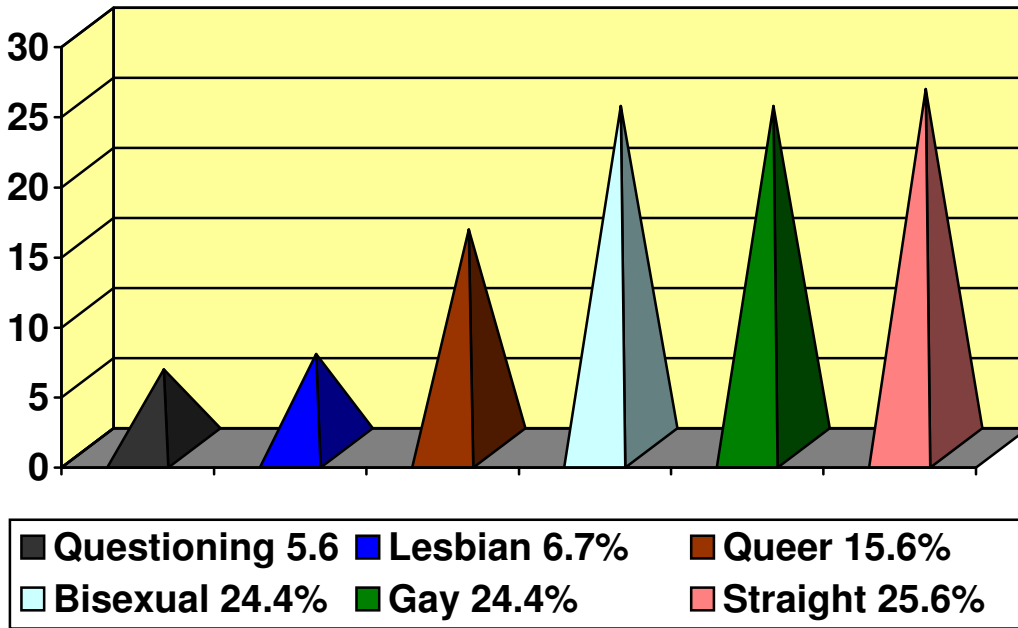


Fig. 1.4 Housing Status

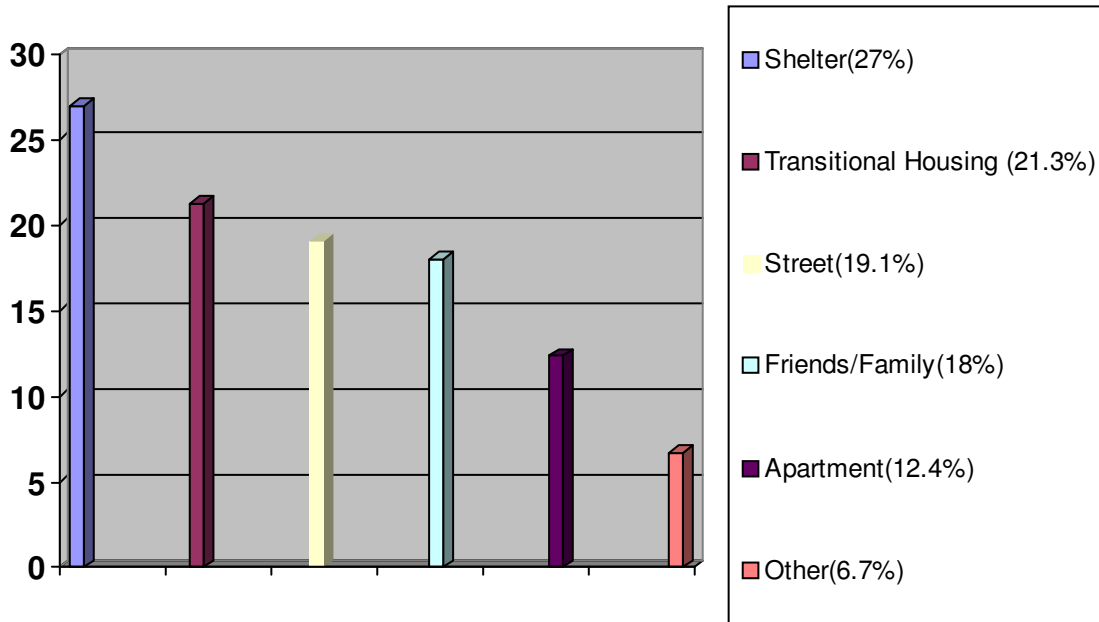


Fig. 2 Four largest issues for low-income LGBTQQHI youth in San Francisco

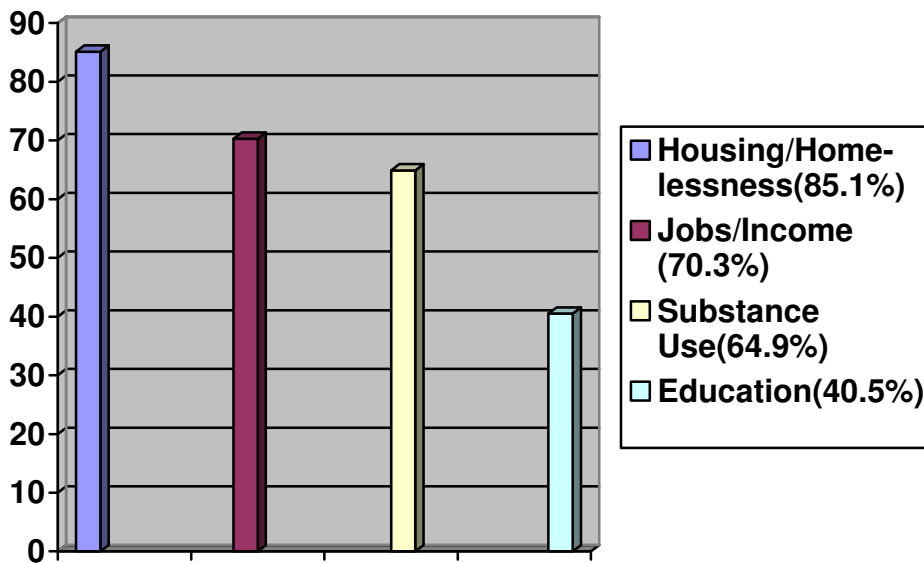


Fig. 2.1 People surveyed reported that no/low income was a major obstacle to accessing 1.) Housing; 2.) schooling; and 3.) medical care

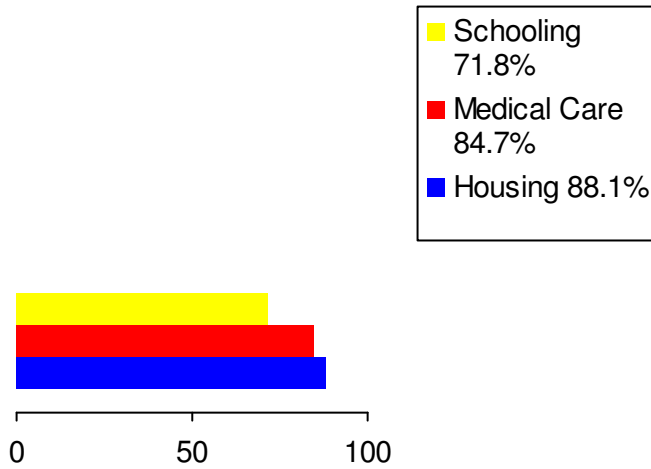
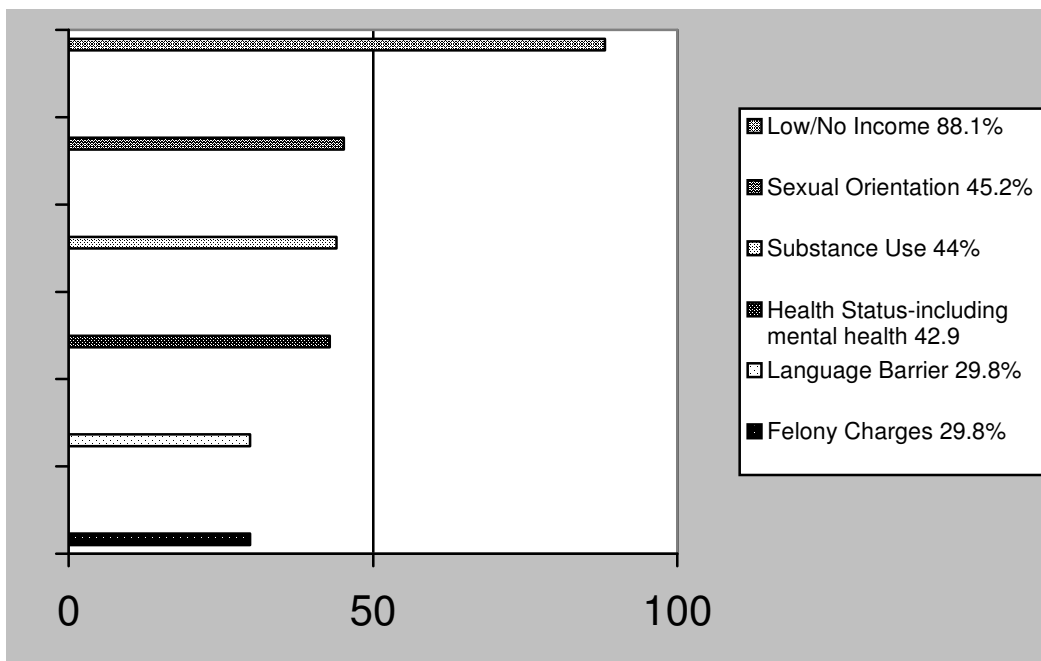


Fig. 3 Biggest obstacles in search of housing



Limitations and Lessons Learned

Some important things we learned about research during this project were the research tools taught by Spenta Kandawalla from Youth in Focus. They have helped us in this project, and now we have a set of skills to use beyond the project.

One of the things we learned is how to make sure we question our bias in doing research. We learned important research terminology. We learned that research is long and tedious but that it can also be fun and relevant to our lives. We learned that our survey may have been too long and too complicated - that we need to simplify our language more and make our questions even more accessible in order to get more of the information we want.

We learned a lot of research tools, like how to conduct a focus group, how to collect data, how to enter data into a computer system, and how to analyze the data. We learned how to put a survey together with a variety of questions in the form of multiple choice, rating, ranking, and scales. For many of our survey questions we had to change them from ranking to multiple choice because that's how youth responded, by checking all the choices that applied to them.

We also learned how to stay professional while distributing surveys to youth in San Francisco. One of the limitations we faced was the service providers at some non-profit organizations in the city who treated us as clients,

instead of professional researchers or youth organizers. We felt that they had a hard time taking young adults seriously.

We also learned how to conduct focus groups. Through exercises and role-plays, we built up confidence to prepare ourselves to lead focus groups. We learned more about service providers through the focus groups. They all seemed very willing to help, but did not know how to fully address or represent the youths' needs. In the context of the focus group, several service providers suggested creating a better network among the non-profit organizations in San Francisco to better serve the youth, and setting up youth council boards to get honest and direct feedback. That feedback would then be used to target the needs of the youth and to make the services more client-centered.

Aside from the research tools, we all learned a lot from working with such a diverse team. We learned how to accept each others' ideas and value them. We learned how our ideas are even better when added together. We also learned how to work with each other, and to stay focused despite our challenging circumstances. It would have been helpful to have a team that could have been consistently present, but due to our own personal challenges, such as the need for long-term housing, this was not always possible. Some people had to drop out of the project because their jobs would not allow them to participate. Others were facing homelessness and transportation issues.

A team that had consisted of six to eight people throughout the whole project would have allowed us to work more

systematically. We could then have reached out to distribute more surveys to more youth, and to recruit more youth and service providers for the focus groups. Because many members of the group had difficult economic situations, a higher stipend would have allowed us to invest more time into our project.

Nevertheless, our group became a committed, persevering team. Our facilitator, Colby Lenz, was able to let us lead our own project, and this was very empowering. We learned skills in youth organizing, including how to make a mission statement, plan a long-term strategy, write a grant proposal for the coming year, and to advocate for our cause with foundations.

At first, it felt like some of the staff at The Center were unreceptive to having us there. It felt like they had a hard time seeing that we were serious about our work, but we were able to stay focused and build bridges with the staff of the Center. With some key staff support, like supporting our presence in the Center, we were taken more seriously, which helped our team to be more effective.

We learned and hope to show others to never underestimate the power of intelligent, informed and pissed off youth. We are responsible and we can do important research. This has been a very empowering experience of community organizing for us. We are hoping to continue this project in the following year to implement some of our recommendations based on our findings.

Recommendations

Based on our data and findings we make the following recommendations:

Housing/Homelessness:

1. Develop more client-centered policies at youth shelters:
 - create youth councils at youth shelters to represent youth and advise shelters on youth-sensitive policies
 - develop policies based on respect and safety for queer and transgender youth
 - tailor case management programs specifically to meet youth's individual needs
2. Open an emergency shelter for queer and transgender youth in a safe location in San Francisco, to increase the overall number of emergency shelter beds available for queer and transgender youth and to provide safer emergency housing for queer and transgender youth.
3. Change housing program policies to allow undocumented immigrant youth to access more housing options (currently only one transitional housing facility allows undocumented youth to get off the street).
4. Develop viable (and client-centered) exit strategy plans for youth in emergency and transitional housing programs that include sustainable long-term housing, education, and gainful employment.

Education:

1. Create housing programs that support youth who want to get an education. Many programs require youth to work 30-40 hours/week to keep our housing. These programs prevent youth who are in school or who want to go back to school from getting off the streets. Programs should change existing housing policies to support youth in part-time or full-time education by changing these requirements to support education.
2. Create housing support programs with City College and other local colleges and universities (dorms, etc.).

Jobs/Income :

1. More job opportunities for youth at the Center and at other non-profits working with youth, including full-time positions, part-time positions and peer positions.
2. More job opportunities for youth to do youth-led programming in non-profits, community centers, etc.
3. More job training programs/ internship tracks in interesting fields (not just low-wage service jobs), including non-profit work, youth outreach, the social sciences, skilled trades, etc.
4. More job opportunities where youth can grow and get promoted.
5. More job opportunities where educational expenses are covered by employers.

Substance Use:

1. More youth treatment programs in San Francisco with actual harm reduction approach.
2. More beds designated for young adults (18-25) in adult treatment programs in San Francisco.
3. The Center should sponsor an internal staff sensitivity training with a harm reduction approach on substance use issues and youth (like the Harm Reduction Coalition training).

Gender Identity:

1. Create a youth-led advocacy group/organizing committee to serve as a "watchdog" for transgender and gender variant youth using services (shelters, youth programs, etc.)
2. Extend age for transgender youth in existing youth shelters and in any new youth shelters.
3. Create policies at medical clinics that serve transgender and gender variant youth that prioritize and trust the voice and experience of these youth, including decisions around hormones.

3. Do youth-made, youth-led trainings for service providers and administrators on how to work with queer and trans/gender variant youth (including training at the Department of Human Services).

Youth Empowerment:

1. Prioritize having youth in decision-making positions at non-profits working with youth (on the Board at the Center, Youth Advisory Council at Larkin, EVRC, etc.).
2. Have a designated physical space for youth to organize from.
3. Develop a recruitment/mentoring program to help get youth involved in improving our own lives.

Medical Care:

1. Build an awareness campaign to get youth on MediCal before we turn 22 (so that more youth can get coverage until 25 yrs.).
2. Create a queer and trans/gender variant training for health care workers.
3. Work with clinics to strategize how to overcome limitations of liability and parental consent.

Next Steps

We, the Youth Empowerment Team, are ready to turn our research into action! In collaboration with the Center and Youth In Focus, we are working to secure funding to carry the project into its action and implementation stage. We are researching, writing and submitting grant proposals to get funding for our action plans.

While working to find funding, we will be looking at our recommendations and breaking them down into short-term and

long-term strategy to come up with our action plan. We will also be looking at our recommendations to figure out who are the best people and organizations to implement them (i.e. encouraging policy changes in clinics, shelters, etc.).

We will meanwhile be looking at recruiting to expand our team, so that we have more of us to share the work and organize together. We will also continue building community allies.

In addition, we are working on developing a series of presentations on our research to various community stakeholders, including City Hall, the San Francisco Youth Commission, direct service agencies, state legislators, Oakland-based queer youth agencies.

More specific next steps based on our recommendations are:

Create independent youth councils or advisory boards to improve conditions and create client-centered policies **(Housing/Homelessness)**.

Develop an awareness campaign that shows higher education is a financial asset. Change policies to make education possible in housing programs and beyond **(Education)**.

Advocate for youth for fair pay based on living costs and job positions where youth can grow and be promoted **(Jobs/Income)** .

Create an awareness campaign about what harm reduction is **(Substance Use)** .

Put together a youth-led transgender training for service providers **(Gender Identity)** .

Have a designated space for youth to organize, set up a peer mentoring program, and have case management **(Youth Empowerment)** .

Work with clinics to strategize how to overcome limitations of liability and parental consent when working with queer and trans/gender variant youth **(Medical Care)** .

Thank you and Acknowledgements

We dedicate this project to all the youth who are surviving in the face of many challenges and who will prevail.

We want to acknowledge the San Francisco LGBT Community Center, specifically Rebecca Rolfe, Roberto Ordeñana and Joel Lopez, and the Levi Strauss Foundation for making the Youth Economic Empowerment Project possible.

Special thanks to Colby Lenz and Spenta Kandawalla (of Youth In Focus) who have done a tremendous job to help us succeed in our project. Their confidence and energetic spirits were a great support and every youth organizing project should have access to adult allies like them.

Thanks to our other team members, JR, Sky, Scarlett and Athena "Tragedy", for your contributions to the project. We hope you are all doing well. Thanks also to Pinar Ozger for her photography contributions.

Thank you to all the youth and service providers who contributed their time and honesty to the project. And thanks to everyone else who has helped us empower ourselves throughout the first eight months of this powerful work.



APPENDIX

SURVEY
Youth Empowerment Team

The Youth Empowerment Team (YET) of the SF LGBT Center made this survey to find out the biggest issues for socio-economically disadvantaged youth in San Francisco. We are a team of youth organizers working to empower other youth. LGBTQH stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Heterosexual. This survey is **CONFIDENTIAL!** If you have any questions please ask YET team members or email YET@sfcenter.org. Thank you for your time and honest answers.

Age:	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 24	25 - 26		
Gender:	Male	Female	Genderqueer	Transgender	FTM	MTF	Intersex
Sexuality:	Gay	Lesbian	Bisexual	Queer	Questioning	Straight	
Race:	White	African American	Latino	Asian/Pacific Islander	Native American		
	Multi-Racial	Middle Eastern	Other: _____				
Housing Status:	Apartment	Transitional Housing	Shelter	Streets	Friends/Family	Other:	
Highest level of completed education:	High school	GED	Some College	College	N/A		

1. **Rank** from 1 to 3 what your biggest obstacles are in search of housing (1= biggest obstacle):

- ___ Sexual Orientation
- ___ Gender Identity
- ___ Substance Use
- ___ Felony Charges
- ___ Health Status (including mental health)
- ___ Language Barriers
- ___ Low/ No income

2. If you have ever been in one of the following living situations, please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how safe you felt or feel(1= very safe; 5 = not safe at all):

		<u>Very Safe</u>		<u>Not Safe</u>			
A. Foster Care/ Group homes	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
B. Youth Shelter		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
C. Adult Shelter		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
D. Inpatient Treatment Program		1	2	4	4	5	N/A
E. Public Housing/ Section 8	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
F. Transitional Living Housing		1	2	3	4	5	N/A

3. What are your biggest challenges in going to school? **Please circle all that apply.**

- A. Low/ No Income
- B. Language Barrier
- C. No high school diploma or GED
- D. Disabilities
- E. Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity
- F. First person in family to go to college
- G. Immigration Status

4. In terms of money, how do you survive in San Francisco? **Please circle all that apply.**

- A. Food stamps
- B. GA
- C. SSI
- D. Family help
- E. Jobs
- F. Sex work
- G. Selling drugs
- H. Other (please specify): _____

5. **Rank** from 1 to 3 what your biggest obstacles are to finding a job/ income (1= biggest obstacle):

- ___ Sexual orientation discrimination
- ___ Gender discrimination
- ___ Access to personal care
- ___ Transportation
- ___ Access to clothing
- ___ Access to shelter
- ___ Lack of education/ job training
- ___ Felony charges/ criminal record
- ___ Racial discrimination
- ___ Immigration issues

6. **Rank** from 1 to 3 which organizations are most helpful to you with job search and/ or job training (1= most helpful):

- ___ Hire-Up (Larkin Street Youth Services)
- ___ LYRIC
- ___ Juma Ventures
- ___ Career Link
- ___ SF LGBT Community Center
- ___ Other (please specify): _____

7. What are the challenges to getting government assistance in San Francisco? **Please circle all that apply.**

- A. You need to be a resident of San Francisco County
- B. You need valid ID
- C. You need a mailing address
- D. You need to prove you have a disability
- E. You need to prove you have a health issue
- F. Other _____

8. **Rate** how you feel about any government benefits you receive in San Francisco (1= good benefits; 5= bad benefits):

Good Benefits Bad Benefits

A. SSI		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
B. Section 8		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
C. Food stamps		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
D. General Assistance (GA)	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
E. MediCal		1	2	3	4	5	N/A
F. CAAPS	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	

9. Rank from 1 to 3 what your biggest obstacles are in getting medical care (1= biggest obstacle):

- No/ low income
- Waiting time in medical facilities
- No healthcare benefits
- Lack of ID
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- Homelessness
- Language Barrier
- Immigration

10. If you have been to the following clinics, please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 your experience with their medical services (1= excellent services; 5= not good services):

		<u>Excellent Services</u>	<u>Not Good Services</u>			
Dimensions		1	2	3	4	5
Tom Waddell		1	2	3	4	5
SF General Hospital	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Larkin St. Clinic		1	2	3	4	5
St. Anthony's Clinic		1	2	3	4	5
Haight Ashbury Free Clinic	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
SAGE		1	2	3	4	5
St. James Infirmary	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

11. Rank from 1 to 3 what, if any, are the drugs you use most (1= use most):

- Crystal Meth/ Speed
- Crack
- Cocaine
- Heroin
- Weed
- Prescription Drugs
- Hallucinogens (shrooms, LSD, etc.)
- Poppers/ Special K
- Ecstasy
- Not Using
- Never Used (skip to question 15)

12. Why do you get high? Please circle all that apply.

- A. Depression
- B. Stress
- C. Money
- D. Family Issues
- E. Housing/ Homelessness
- F. Relationships
- G. Mental Difficulties
- H. Other (please specify): _____

13. What are you likely to do when you're high? Please circle all that apply.

- A. Have unsafe sex
- B. Feel depressed
- C. Feel suicidal
- D. Act violent
- E. Have trouble with the police/ other authorities
- F. Exchange sex for money/ drugs/ shelter

14. If you have had drug treatment or support for drug use, please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how helpful this treatment or support was for you (1= most helpful; 5= least helpful):

		<u>Most Helpful</u>		<u>Least Helpful</u>	
Inpatient Treatment Program	1	2	3	4	5
Outpatient Treatment Program	1	2	3	4	5
Support Group		1	2	3	4
Substance Use Counseling		1	2	3	4
Family		1	2	3	4
Friends		1	2	3	4
Church/ Community Group	1	2	3	4	5

15. Rank your top 3 challenges living in San Francisco (1= biggest challenge):

- Housing/ homelessness
- Healthcare
- Jobs/ Income
- Basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)
- Substance Use
- Education
- Mental Health
- Other _____

16. Rank from 1 to 3 what you think are the top three issues for LGBTQ youth living in San Francisco (1= biggest challenge):

- Housing/ homelessness
- Healthcare
- Jobs/ Income
- Basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)
- Substance Use
- Education
- Mental Health
- Other _____

17. What would it take for you to feel like you could make a difference in your community? Please circle all that apply.

- A. To know people are really listening to you
- B. To be taken seriously
- C. To be truly involved in decisions affecting your life
- D. To be considered a leader more than a trouble-maker
- E. Other (please specify): _____

18. What kinds of action would you organize or participate in with other youth to improve your situation? Please

circle all that apply.

- A. I would design a poster or other outreach materials
- B. I would organize a meeting with other youth
- C. I would come to a meeting with other youth
- D. I would present a problem at City Hall
- E. I would come to a protest or rally
- F. I would get involved with a youth organizing group

Service Provider Focus Group & Interview Questions

1. What services do you provide?
2. How do you feel about being in a focus group led by youth?
3. What do you think are the biggest challenges for LGBTQH youth in SF? How is your organization addressing these challenges?
4. How do you support positive relationships between service providers and youth?
5. What is your opinion about the quality of services that you and your agency provide? How do you think those who utilize your services would rate the quality of services received?
6. How could services be improved at your organization to better meet the needs of youth? How could they be improved to meet the needs of queer and trans youth in particular?
7. What is the biggest obstacle you face in trying to improve services for youth? How can you overcome this obstacle?
8. What is your biggest struggle as a service provider in SF?
9. What as service providers are you doing to provide a viable and sustainable exit strategy for youth?
10. How do you plan to put into practice some of the solutions from this focus group to improve services for youth?

Youth Focus Group Questions

1. How long have you been living in SF?
2. What is the biggest challenge for you living in San Francisco? What progress have you made in overcoming this challenge?
3. What do you think is the biggest challenge for LGBTQ youth in SF? How would you solve this problem?
4. What is your experience trying to access social services in San Francisco? How would you improve these services? What kind of housing/healthcare, etc. would work best for you?
5. How have you experienced discrimination in SF? (Follow-up questions about gender identity, sexual orientation, race, etc.)
6. What kinds of support around job search/job training would be most helpful for you? What opportunities would you like to have?
7. How have you been treated by service providers? How would you like to be treated by service providers?
8. What do you need to feel safe in San Francisco? How have you been treated by authority figures, police, shelter staff, etc.?
9. Who do you turn to for support? How does your family support you and your choices?
10. What do you think about mental health services for LGBTQ youth? What kinds of services would you like to see?
11. Where would you like to be in 5 years and what would it take to get there?

1. Page 1

1. Age:

	Response Percent	Response Total
13-15	4.4%	4
16-18	24.2%	22
19-21	34.1%	31
22-24	23.1%	21
25-26	14.3%	13
Total Respondents		91
(skipped this question)		2

2. Gender:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Male	61.1%	55
Female	23.3%	21
Genderqueer	5.6%	5
Transgender	5.6%	5
FTM	2.2%	2
MTF	4.4%	4
Intersex	1.1%	1
Total Respondents		90
(skipped this question)		3

3. Sexuality:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Gay	24.4%	22
Lesbian	6.7%	6
Bisexual	24.4%	22
Queer	15.6%	14
Questioning	5.6%	5
Straight	25.6%	23
Total Respondents		90
(skipped this question)		3

4. Race:

	Response Percent	Response Total
White	37.6%	35
African American	25.8%	24
Latino	20.4%	19
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.2%	2
Native American	5.4%	5
Multi-Racial	22.6%	21
Middle Eastern	1.1%	1
Other	2.2%	2
Total Respondents		93
(skipped this question)		0

5. Housing Status:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Apartment	12.4%	11
Transitional Housing	21.3%	19
Shelter	27%	24
Streets	19.1%	17
Friends/Family	18%	16
Other	6.7%	6
Total Respondents		89
(skipped this question)		4

6. Highest level of completed education:

	Response Percent	Response Total
High School	31.8%	27
GED	24.7%	21
Some College	21.2%	18
College	4.7%	4
N/A	17.6%	15
Total Respondents		85
(skipped this question)		8

7. 1. Rank from 1 to 3 what your biggest obstacles are in search of housing (1= biggest

obstacle):

	Response Percent	Response Total
Sexual Orientation	45.2%	38
Gender Identity	34.5%	29
Substance Use	44%	37
Felony Charges	29.8%	25
Health Status (Including mental health)	42.9%	36
Language Barriers	29.8%	25
Low/No income	88.1%	74
Total Respondents		84
(skipped this question)		9

8. 2. If you have ever been in one of the following living situations, please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how safe you felt or feel (1=very safe; 5=not safe at all):

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Response Total
Foster Care/Group homes	4% (3)	4% (3)	24% (18)	9% (7)	18% (14)	41% (31)	76
Youth Shelter	11% (9)	14% (11)	30% (24)	15% (12)	4% (3)	25% (20)	79
Adult Shelter	8% (6)	3% (2)	10% (7)	12% (9)	29% (21)	38% (28)	73
Inpatient Treatment Program	6% (4)	10% (7)	10% (7)	12% (9)	6% (4)	57% (41)	72
Public Housing/Section 8	6% (4)	6% (4)	11% (7)	9% (6)	3% (2)	65% (43)	66
Transitional Living Housing	11% (8)	10% (7)	21% (15)	14% (10)	4% (3)	40% (29)	72
Total Respondents							87
(skipped this question)							6

9. 3. What are your biggest challenges in going to school?

	Response Percent	Response Total
A. Low/No Income	71.8%	56
B. Language Barrier	3.8%	3
C. No high school diploma or GED	28.2%	22
D. Disabilities	11.5%	9
E. Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity	24.4%	19
F. First person in family to go to college	21.8%	17
G. Immigration Status	2.6%	2
Total Respondents		78

(skipped this question) 15

10. 4. In terms of money, how do you survive in San Francisco?

	Response Percent	Response Total
A. Food stamps	35.3%	30
B. GA	21.2%	18
C. SSI	7.1%	6
D. Family help	18.8%	16
E. Jobs	52.9%	45
F. Sex work	30.6%	26
G. Selling drugs	18.8%	16
H. Other (please specify)	20%	17
Total Respondents		85
(skipped this question)		8

2. Page 2

1. 5. Rank from 1 to 3 what your biggest obstacles are to finding a job/income.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Sexual orientation/discrimination	38%	30
Gender discrimination	38%	30
Access to personal care	43%	34
Transportation	45.6%	36
Access to clothing	62%	49
Access to shelter	44.3%	35
Lack of education/job training	65.8%	52
Felony charges/criminal record	30.4%	24
Racial discrimination	34.2%	27
Immigration issues	25.3%	20
Total Respondents		79
(skipped this question)		14

2. 6. Rank from 1 to 3 which organizations are most helpful to you with job search and/or job training.

	Response Percent	Response Total
Hire-Up (Larkin Street Youth Services)	61.3%	46

LYRIC	[REDACTED]	49.3%	37
Juma Ventures	[REDACTED]	32%	24
Career Link	[REDACTED]	28%	21
SF LGBT Community Center	[REDACTED]	45.3%	34
Other	[REDACTED]	36%	27
		Total Respondents	75
		(skipped this question)	18

3. 7. What are the challenges to getting government assistance in San Francisco?

		Response Percent	Response Total
A. You need to be a resident of San Francisco County	[REDACTED]	26.1%	18
B. You need valid ID	[REDACTED]	58%	40
C. You need a mailing address	[REDACTED]	31.9%	22
D. You need to prove you have a disability	[REDACTED]	27.5%	19
E. You need to prove you have a health issue	[REDACTED]	20.3%	14
Other (please specify)	[REDACTED]	18.8%	13
		Total Respondents	69
		(skipped this question)	24

4. 8. Rate how you feel about any government benefits you receive in San Francisco (1=good benefits; 5=bad benefits):

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Response Total
A. SSI	10% (6)	2% (1)	15% (9)	3% (2)	10% (6)	59% (35)	59
B. Section 8	8% (5)	0% (0)	14% (8)	2% (1)	12% (7)	64% (38)	59
C. Food stamps	21% (14)	16% (11)	25% (17)	1% (1)	9% (6)	28% (19)	68
D. General Assistance (GA)	11% (7)	8% (5)	17% (11)	8% (5)	19% (12)	37% (23)	63
E. MediCal	16% (10)	3% (2)	18% (11)	6% (4)	10% (6)	47% (29)	62
F. CAAPS	2% (1)	2% (1)	16% (9)	4% (2)	11% (6)	67% (38)	57
Total Respondents							71
(skipped this question)							22

5. 9. Rank from 1 to 3 what your biggest obstacles are in getting medical care:

**Response
Percent** **Response
Total**

No/low income		84.7%	61
Waiting time in medical facilities		45.8%	33
No healthcare benefits		51.4%	37
Lack of ID		40.3%	29
Gender Identity		33.3%	24
Sexual Orientation		22.2%	16
Homelessness		48.6%	35
Language Barrier		20.8%	15
Immigration		20.8%	15
Total Respondents			72
(skipped this question)			21

3. Page 3

1. 10. If you have been to the following clinics, please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 your experience with their medical services (1=excellent; 5=not good services):

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Response Total
Dimensions	12% (7)	2% (1)	12% (7)	11% (6)	5% (3)	58% (33)	57
Tom Waddell	9% (5)	7% (4)	14% (8)	3% (2)	3% (2)	64% (37)	58
SF General Hospital	22% (14)	5% (3)	14% (9)	15% (10)	18% (12)	26% (17)	65
Larkin St. Clinic	19% (13)	16% (11)	23% (16)	7% (5)	4% (3)	30% (21)	69
St. Anthony's Clinic	6% (3)	9% (5)	6% (3)	2% (1)	6% (3)	72% (38)	53
Haigh Ashbury Free Clinic	18% (11)	13% (8)	11% (7)	2% (1)	7% (4)	49% (30)	61
SAGE	6% (3)	6% (3)	11% (6)	2% (1)	4% (2)	72% (39)	54
St. James Infirmary	12% (7)	5% (3)	7% (4)	2% (1)	4% (2)	70% (40)	57
Total Respondents							77
(skipped this question)							16

2. 11. Rank from 1 to 3 what, if any, are the drugs you use most (1=most):

	Response Percent	Response Total
Crystal Meth/Speed	41.2%	35
Crack	18.8%	16
Cocaine	18.8%	16
Heroin	17.6%	15

Weed	69.4%	59
Prescription Drugs	23.5%	20
Hallucinogens (shrooms, LSD, etc.)	22.4%	19
Poppers/Special K	15.3%	13
Ecstasy	24.7%	21
Not Using	25.9%	22
Never Used (skip to question 15)	9.4%	8
3	5.9%	5
Total Respondents	85	
(skipped this question)	8	

3. 12. Why do you get high?

	Response Percent	Response Total
Depression	55.1%	43
Stress	52.6%	41
Money	19.2%	15
Family Issues	30.8%	24
Housing/Homelessness	37.2%	29
Relationships	39.7%	31
Mental Difficulties	28.2%	22
Other (please specify)	37.2%	29
Total Respondents	78	
(skipped this question)	15	

4. 13. What are you likely to do when you're high?

	Response Percent	Response Total
A. Have unsafe sex	44.2%	23
B. Feel depressed	50%	26
C. Feel suicidal	30.8%	16
D. Act violent	17.3%	9
E. Have trouble with the police/other authorities	25%	13
F. Exchange sex for money/drugs/shelter	21.2%	11
Total Respondents	52	
(skipped this question)	41	

5. 14. If you have had drug treatment or support for drug use, please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how helpful this treatment or support was for you (1=most helpful; 5=least helpful):

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Response Total
Inpatient Treatment Program	11% (6)	4% (2)	7% (4)	7% (4)	7% (4)	65% (37)	57
Outpatient Treatment Program	5% (3)	7% (4)	11% (6)	4% (2)	11% (6)	62% (34)	55
Support Group	13% (7)	6% (3)	2% (1)	4% (2)	9% (5)	66% (35)	53
Substance Use Counseling	4% (2)	11% (6)	9% (5)	6% (3)	6% (3)	64% (34)	53
Family	10% (5)	6% (3)	8% (4)	4% (2)	8% (4)	65% (34)	52
Friends	26% (14)	9% (5)	9% (5)	4% (2)	6% (3)	46% (25)	54
Church/Community Group	13% (7)	4% (2)	9% (5)	4% (2)	7% (4)	63% (34)	54
						Total Respondents	64
						(skipped this question)	29

4. Page 4

1. 15. Rank your top 3 challenges living in San Francisco:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Housing/homelessness	77.6%	66
Healthcare	31.8%	27
Jobs/Income	75.3%	64
Basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)	49.4%	42
Substance Use	32.9%	28
Education	44.7%	38
Mental Health	30.6%	26
Other	5.9%	5
Other	5.9%	5
	Total Respondents	85
	(skipped this question)	8

2. 16. Rank from 1 to 3 what you think are the top three issues for LGBTQ youth living in San Francisco:

	Response Percent	Response Total
Housing/homelessness	85.1%	63
Healthcare	37.8%	28
Jobs/Income	70.3%	52

Basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)	████████████████████	40.5%	30
Substance Use	██	64.9%	48
Education	████████████████████	40.5%	30
Mental Health	████████████████████	35.1%	26
Other	██	4.1%	3
Other	████	10.8%	8
Total Respondents			74
(skipped this question)			19

3. 17. What would it take for you to feel like you could make a difference in your community?

		Response Percent	Response Total
A. To know people are really listening to you	██	56.3%	49
B. To be taken seriously	██	60.9%	53
C. To be truly involved in decisions affecting your life	██	54%	47
D. To be considered a leader more than a trouble-maker	██	46%	40
E. Other (please specify)	██████████	17.2%	15
Total Respondents			87
(skipped this question)			6

4. 18. What kinds of action would you organize or participate in with other youth to improve your situation?

		Response Percent	Response Total
A. I would design a poster or other outreach materials	██	45%	36
B. I would organize a meeting with other youth	██	43.8%	35
C. I would come to a meeting with other youth	██	43.8%	35
D. I would present a problem at City Hall	████████████████████	33.8%	27
E. I would come to a protest or rally	██	52.5%	42
F. I would get involved with a youth organizing group	██	56.2%	45
Total Respondents			80
(skipped this question)			13