

# Choices For Youth – A Non-Profit, Youth-Focused, Learning Organization

## Objective

To support youth in finding safe and affordable housing and to identify and provide wraparound care for youth.

## Practice Points

1. Formed in 1990 following the closure of Mount Cashel orphanage, Choices for Youth (CFY) is a not-for-profit charity organization that offers wrap-around support for children, youth, and young families aged 0–29 in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).
2. Youth need much more than housing to be stable including wraparound care, supports and services to address the complexity of their situation, all of which lead to better outcomes.
3. Services young people request at CFY center around housing, mental and physical health, food security education, training and employment, family and natural supports, preventative care, and system navigation.
4. CFY’s vision of wraparound supports means that no one is denied its services.

## Data

To Serve the Vulnerable Youth Population in NL, CFY has Built Trust with Communities Across the Province by Using Seven Principles to Inform its Work:	
<b>Human Centered</b>	Understanding the human element in program design.
<b>Trauma Informed</b>	Understanding that the people served come from complicated backgrounds.
<b>Restorative Justice Approach</b>	Acknowledging that the sources of much of the trauma experienced happened in institutions.

<b>Strengths Based</b>
Recognizing that the best way to help someone is to focus on what they can do rather than what they cannot.
<b>Client Centered</b>
There is a recognized need to build services for the clients themselves.
<b>Harm Reduction</b>
Supporting youth in making decisions that produce the least amount of harm.
<b>Judgement Free</b>
Recognizing that everyone deserves care and everyone has a past.



Figure 1. Seven Principles of CFY

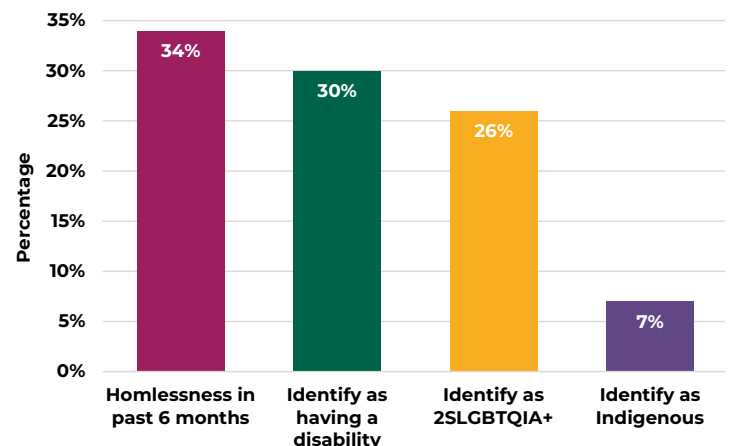


Figure 2. Characteristics of Persons Supported by CFY

- In 2023, CFY supported over 1,300 young people. Of those supported: 34% had experienced homelessness in the past 6 months, 30% identified as having a disability, 26% identified as 2SLGBTQIA+, and 7% identified as Indigenous.

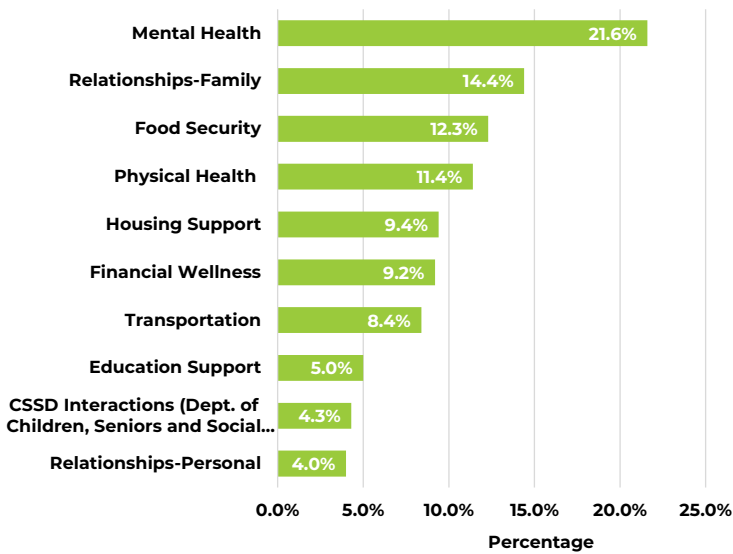


Figure 3. Top Ten Supporting Actions by CFY, 2023

- The top supporting action by CFY in 2023 was for mental health.

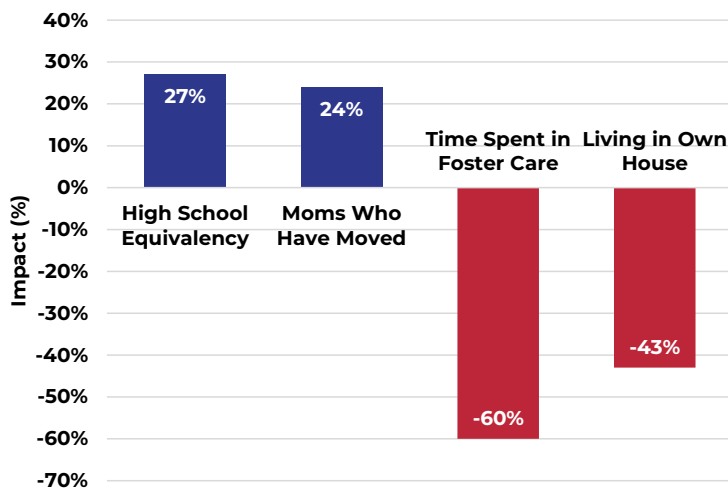


Figure 4. The Social Impact of Services Provided to Youth, 2023

- Services provided by CFY result in: a 27% increase in youth receiving a high school equivalency; a 24% increase in the amount of time living in their own home; a 60% decrease in the number of moms who have moved; and a 43% decrease in the amount of time children spent under kinship or foster care.

## Conclusions

- Amongst housing support, which includes the service of emergency beds, CFY supported training and employment opportunities for approximately 90 youth which resulted in over 36,000 paid insurable hours.
- The value of work by CFY has led to the creation of NL's first and only Integrated Youth Services (IYS) Site. An IYS Site is an integrated hub that includes on-site physicians, therapists, and addictions counsellors that work together seamlessly alongside wraparound services.
- CFY's future plans include promoting and supporting communities across NL in developing a provincial IYS network, with sites operating across the province.