

# SOLUTIONS LAB:

## Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care in Winnipeg

### *Report for Phase 2: DISCOVERY*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SOLUTIONS LAB PROCESS PHASE

### PHASE 2: DISCOVERY - ACTIVITIES

- Lab Team Gathering #2
- Systems & User Journey Mapping Process
- Community Consultations & Events
- Lab Team Coaching & Developmental Evaluation Sessions

### PHASE 2: DISCOVERY - KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

- Lab Learning Agenda
- Developmental Evaluation Framework
- Discovery Phase Learnings



# SOLUTIONS LAB PROCESS PHASE

**LAB PHASE 2: DISCOVERY**

Generate insight through data and lived experience insight. Understand the current state of the issue based on a range of research methodologies.



# PHASE 2: ACTIVITIES

## LAB TEAM GATHERING #2

On October 11th, the Lab Leadership Team gathered together for a meeting to check in and share project updates. The core coordinating team provided detailed updates on project events, learnings, and upcoming activities.

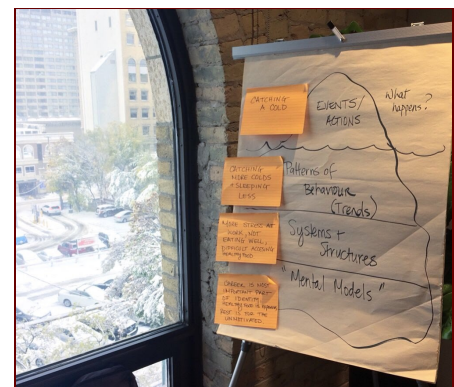


## SYSTEMS & JOURNEY MAPPING JAM



On October 12th, amid an unseasonable snowstorm that left much of the city without power, the Lab Leadership Team and a small group of systems experts met to engage in a systems mapping intensive. The group adapted and dodged snapping branches to reorient our gathering to a new location to dig in and create a more holistic understanding of the challenge.

The Systems and Journey Mapping Jam examined the underlying systems and structures that impact youth as they are aging out of care in Winnipeg, and affect their ability to meet their needs for safety, housing, health, support, and community. The intention of this intensive mapping session was for the Lab Team to gain a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the larger systems that impact the individual experience.



Participating subject matter experts included:

- Indigenous and non-indigenous youth and adults with lived experience of aging out of care
- Child and Family Services employees
- Housing advocates and researchers
- Service providers who operate transitional housing for youth aging out
- Family advocates



The systems mapping intensive, facilitated by Solutions Lab consultant Stacy Barter of SHIFT Collaborative, used participatory mapping approaches. The process focused on two different aspects of the experiences of youth aging out of care:



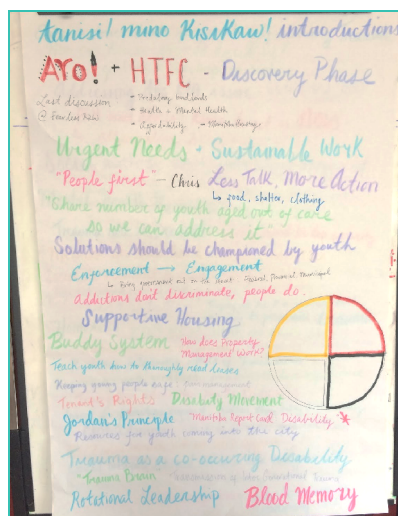
1. Mapping the User Journey Experience of a young person aging out of care. Using personas based on examples of different experiences and journeys of youth in care the mapping team explored the different levels of forces at play that impact an individual's experience.
2. Mapping the systems and institutions involved directly or indirectly that are "touch points" during the course of an individual's experience aging out of care.

Through the exploration of individual journeys of the examples of navigating the process of aging out of care, the group was able to identify and deepen understandings of what youth are experiencing. This includes the direct impacts in the form of actions and events, as well as the underlying patterns of behavior, the systems and structures that influence those patterns, and the mental models and beliefs that uphold those systems.



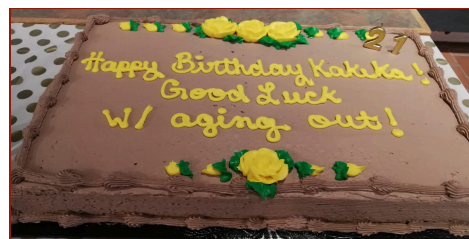
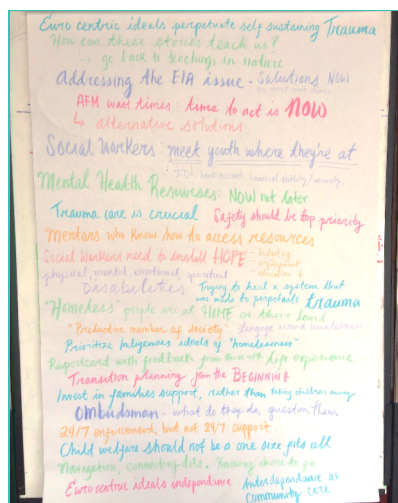
# COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS & EVENTS

During the Discovery Phase, continued community consultation and events were undertaken as a part of the Solutions Lab process. As in other phases of the Lab, the intention of this outreach was to meet community where they're at, and consultation was often hosted at regularly-occurring events.



Community events that the Lab conducted or participated in during the Discovery phase included:

- Consultation and engagement sessions with local community groups such as:
  - [Fearless R2W](#)
  - [13 Moons Harm Reduction](#)
  - [Politix Brainstorm](#)
  - [VOICES - Youth in Care](#)
  - [Shawenim Abinoojii](#)
- Activities and ceremonies for participating youth, including: Berry picking, medicine picking, beading gatherings, sweat lodge ceremonies, story catching, one-on-one interviews, and body mapping training sessions.
- An Aging Out ceremony for one of the youth who is a member of Aboriginal Youth Opportunities.

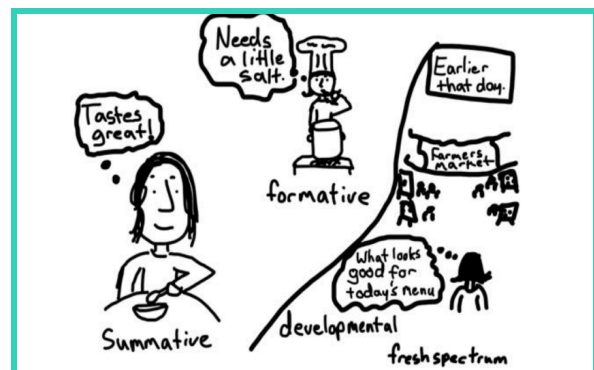


# LAB TEAM COACHING & DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION SESSIONS



Throughout the Discovery Phase, the core Lab Leadership Team (represented by Darrien Morton from Aboriginal Youth Opportunities! and the University of Manitoba, Zoë Mager from HTFC Planning & Design, and Solutions Lab coach Stacy Barter from SHIFT Collaborative) met for Lab team coaching and Developmental Evaluation (DE) over video calls on a frequent basis.

Making time for regular DE check-ins support the ability of the Lab team to create space for ongoing learning and reflection, and tracking key developments and pivot points, and making shifts and adaptations along the way. This work ongoing is guided by and also documented in the co-created Lab Learning Agenda and the DE Evaluation Framework.



# *PHASE 2:* KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

## APPENDICES

1. Lab Learning Agenda
2. Developmental Evaluation Framework
3. Discovery Phase Learnings



# 1. Lab Learning Agenda



# SOLUTIONS LAB

## LAB LEARNING AGENDA

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### Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care in Winnipeg

Throughout the Solutions Lab, we will be carrying out DE to track and inform our learning about the following key topics and questions:

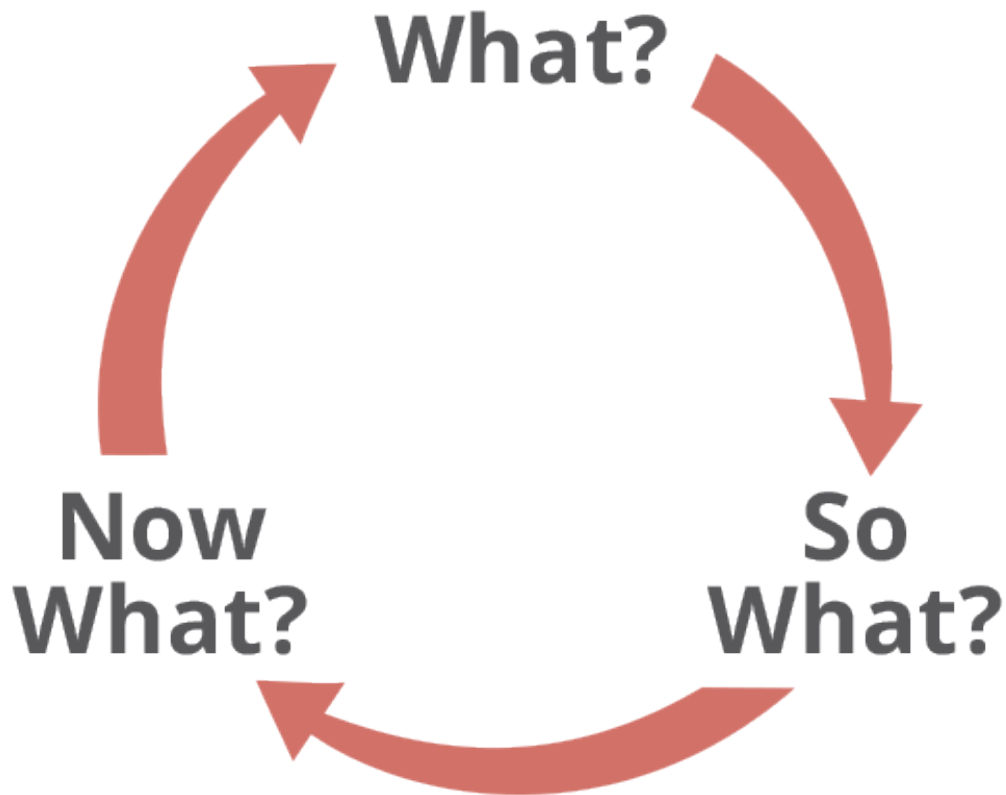
<b>The Lab Challenge &amp; Context:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What values, perspectives, and experiences exist about Indigenous youth aging out of foster care in Winnipeg, and how they are impacted (i.e. socially, culturally, economically, politically, educationally, legally, interpersonally, biographically, physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, geographically, historically, etc.)?</li><li>• What systems and patterns are keeping housing problems for Indigenous youth transitioning out of care entrenched? How and where is the system “stuck”?</li><li>• What are the current policy/service responses to support Indigenous youth aging out of care?</li><li>• How are different groups of Indigenous youth distinctly affected when aging out of care? Who is most impacted?</li><li>• What cross-cultural and cross-sectoral assumptions (e.g. beliefs about what causes the problem and which population(s) is/are most affected) underlie current representations of Indigenous youth aging out of care?</li><li>• What are we learning and seeing about possible leverage points to intervene and break the cyclical nature of these issues? How might this inform possible interventions or prototypes?</li><li>• What is working at a community level to address and respond to the challenge? How can this be leveraged, shared, or scaled to influence other levels of the system?</li></ul>
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<p><b>Collaboration, Partnerships &amp; Networks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are we learning about working in partnership across organizations in convening the Lab? What is working well and what is challenging?</li> <li>• To what extent are relationships and networks across different parts of the system, and across diverse perspectives contributing to more holistic or innovative interventions? So, what might this mean for our Lab strategy moving forward?</li> <li>• What are we learning about developing a networked Lab to sustain efficient, meaningful and impactful processes across diverse Solutions Lab partners/leaders?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lab Platform, Process &amp; Methods:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are we seeing, learning and noticing about Lab strategy and methodology overall? So, what might this mean for the next stage/step of the Lab?</li> <li>• To what extent do we have the “right mix” and make up of partners and participants in the Lab? How do we foster a sense of ownership and commitment amongst participants?</li> <li>• What are we learning about centring Indigenous practices (including cultural activities and land-based engagement), protocols and values into our Lab design &amp; methodology? In what ways are we facilitating “two-eyed seeing” (bringing together Eurocentric and Indigenous ways of knowing/being) and supporting Indigenous leadership in the context of this challenge? How does this inform our Lab strategy and possible solutions? What capacities are being/need to be strengthened to work in this way?</li> <li>• In what ways is/can the Lab process support healing and Indigenous self-determination? What are we learning about honouring diverse perspectives through the Lab process while mitigating the risk of doing harm through unearthing tensions or historical trauma?</li> <li>• How are we ensuring transparency, mutual accountability, and reciprocity during Lab processes?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lab Experiments, Prototypes &amp; “Interventions”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What experiments should be tested, continued, scaled or wrapped up? What patterns of learning are we seeing across experiments?</li> <li>• How are we engaging with policy makers to have an impact on policy related to these issues? How might we engage or influence public discourse to prepare the ground for policy change?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Sharing &amp; Scaling</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Which learnings and opportunities should be harvested and shared with others?</li> <li>● How is the Lab connected and feeding in to the broader movement of decolonization and Indigenous-led cultural revitalization? How might this connection increase potential impact on these issues?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lab Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What shifts are happening for Lab Participants, the Lab Leadership Team and other key players in the system? How and why is this shifting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mindsets and Mental Models/Understanding of the Challenge/Self-understanding</li> <li>● Practice (individual &amp; organizational)</li> <li>● Collaborations, Relationships &amp; Networks</li> <li>● Cultural Landscape, Public Narrative</li> <li>● Policy/ Programs/ Structures</li> </ul> </li> <li>● To what extent are Lab activities resulting in a change in the (eco) systems in which the Lab challenge is embedded? What has been the Lab’s contribution to those changes?</li> <li>● What part of the Lab is resonating most and least for participants and participating organizations? What might this mean for how we adapt?</li> <li>● How have the Lab participants’ &amp; organization(s) changed (if at all) because of their experiences? What have been the barriers and enabling factors for this?</li> <li>● To what extent are we/did we contribute to – or move needle on – the key challenge we are trying to address? What factors have influenced this? Is the progress sufficient for us? How should we adapt our approach?</li> </ul>

# DE Practices, Structures & Methods

DE activities support the Lab team to adopt an “[Adaptive Action](#)” approach where we integrate an ongoing iterative process of reflection and action based on these key questions in relation to the Lab Learning Agenda:



**WHAT:** What patterns are we noticing? What are we learning? What patterns do we want to create?

**SO WHAT?** So what are the implications and what does this mean for our collective work moving forward?

**NOW WHAT?** Now what are the opportunities or challenges we want to act on? What are our “next wise actions” or next steps we will try out?

This adaptive action cycle will be integrated informally into the ongoing activities of the Lab. In addition, the following methods and DE structures will be used to systematically harvest, make sense of, and act on key learnings as they emerge.

<b>DE Practice/Method(s)</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Who</b>
<b>DE Reflection Templates &amp; Sense-Making Debriefs</b>	Short reflection templates and informal debriefs to document key insights and observations	Monthly and ongoing Following key Lab activities such as Discovery research, interviews, community & cultural events	Nigaanii Wabiski Mikanak Ogichidaa (NWMO) and University of Manitoba  HTFC (after interviews)
<b>Regular DE Adaptive Action Meetings</b>	Regular reflection meetings to track learnings and integrate this into next steps & strategy	Monthly	Lab Coordination Leadership Team & DE Coach
<b>Lab Workshop Evaluation Forms &amp; Facilitation Team Debriefs</b>	Participant evaluation feedback forms and facilitator insights/observations on Lab process and content	During and after Lab workshops	Lab Participants, Lab Facilitation Team
<b>Lab Milestone DE Sessions</b>	In depth harvest, reflection and sense-making at key milestones to inform design and implementation of the next phase of the Lab	At end of each Lab Phase: Discovery, Development, Prototype/ Test, Roadmap	Lab Leadership Team & DE Coach
<b>Lab Impact Evaluation (Phase 1)</b>	Evaluation of Lab Contribution & Outcomes (surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups, evaluation report)	Spring-Summer 2020, conclusion of Lab Phase 1	Lab Participants, Partners, Leadership Team & DE Coach

# 2. Developmental Evaluation Framework



# SOLUTIONS LAB

## DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

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### Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care in Winnipeg

## Project Summary

*Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care*<sup>1</sup> is a Social Innovation Lab which aims to reduce rates of homelessness and housing insecurity among Indigenous youth in Winnipeg when they age out of the provincial Child Welfare System at age 18.

Responding to the extremely high rates of homelessness and housing insecurity among this youth population, this Solutions Lab focuses on developing and prototyping innovative solutions to assist young people in this transition, and meet their present and long-term housing needs. It draws critical attention to, and proactively addresses the urgent need to close this glaring gap within the provincial care system.

Recognizing Indigenous homelessness cannot be simply addressed through narrowly defined solutions that increase housing supply, the Lab brings together diverse stakeholders to collaboratively learn, test, and scale more robust and holistic responses to address the complex and culturally safe housing needs and aspirations of urban Indigenous children, youth and families in Winnipeg. Utilizing a “two-eyed seeing”<sup>2</sup> approach to understanding and acting on these issues, the initiative draws together different perspectives and worldviews, including those who are or were “within the system” (e.g. young people in care, caregivers and child welfare case workers and administrators), those working at a community-grassroots level, and those working on larger institutional levels to affect policy and other supports. By building bridges of empathy, providing advocates and policy makers with a more complete systems picture, and co-developing holistic solutions, the Lab aims to close the gaps and reduce the number of Indigenous young people facing homelessness year-over-year.

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<sup>1</sup> Working Title. The Lab Leadership Collaborative will participate in a traditional Naming Ceremony following traditional protocol in asking an Elder or Traditional Knowledge Keeper to present the team and process with a name.

<sup>2</sup> a way of understanding the integration of Indigenous and Western worldviews or forms of knowledge.

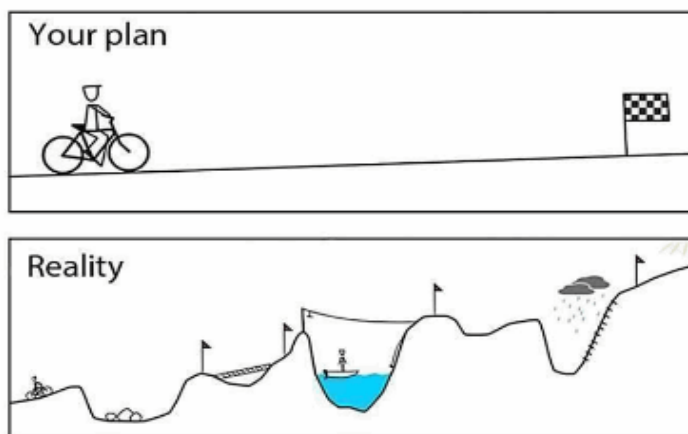
# What is Developmental Evaluation?

Developmental Evaluation (DE) is an evaluation approach particularly well-suited to social innovation initiatives such as this Solutions Lab. DE focuses on ongoing learning and reflection, tracking Lab developments and key pivot points along the way, in order to surface learning for the project team. Evaluation and learning is conducted in real-time so that the team can respond and adapt to what they are seeing and learning, rather than waiting until the end of the project to see what worked well and what didn't.<sup>3</sup>

DE serves a different purpose than traditional forms of evaluation, and is best suited to initiatives that are still under development or testing new models, approaches or interventions where we don't yet know what is going to work. In contrast to formative or summative evaluation, developmental evaluation is often likened to the role of "research and development" in the private sector, supporting the creation, development or radical adaptation of an initiative or model in real-time. Groups using DE conduct a series of analyses to better understand how the initiative is being implemented, how well it is working, and how it should be adapted as it unfolds.

Some of the key DE roles within this Lab include:

- Framing the challenge, desired outcomes and interventions being tested
- Generating and making sense of real-time feedback for ongoing learning, development, and adaptations along the way
- Documenting the overall evolution of the lab (including key developments & forks in the road)
- Surfacing tough issues (tensions, issues related to power, being stuck, or different interpretations), and supporting adaptive action.



<sup>3</sup> Adapted from: [http://ledlab.ca/portfolio/evaluating-ledlab\\_strategies\\_for\\_developmental\\_and\\_systems\\_change\\_evaluation/](http://ledlab.ca/portfolio/evaluating-ledlab_strategies_for_developmental_and_systems_change_evaluation/)

# Evaluation Principles

Our evaluation practices are guided by the following blend of Indigenous evaluation and social innovation principles, and adapted for an urban Indigenous context:

**Relational Accountability:** Relationship-building prior to any research and evaluation process is essential. Relationship-building and strengthening should support the creation of trust, respect and transparency, which has been historically broken by outsiders and non-Indigenous researchers and evaluators. Relationships are intended to mitigate evaluation processes that could result in intrusion or mere co-operation instead of collaboration and sustainable partnerships. Relational accountability requires we remain mutually accountable to all our relations to all kinds of life, past, present and future. They are intended to be ongoing, genuine interactions grounded in shared interests, co-learning, empathy, humility, allyship, reciprocity and ancestral ties. Relationship-building and strengthening are both a process and outcome of any evaluation process. They should always be approached as a ceremony with high *spiritual and moral integrity*.

**“Two-eyed Seeing”:** Integrating diverse Indigenous, western and local ways-of-being and ways-of-knowing will be guided by a “*Two-Eyed Seeing*” approach. It should be attentive to cross-cultural learning from different realities and knowledge systems using more than one “eye” (or perspective) for the benefit of co-creating knowledge and drawing from the strengths and challenges of cross-cultural knowledges. However, the reconciliation of different worldviews, theories, methods, ethics and practices should critically question and reflect upon how the inclusion of marginalized knowledges can be further displaced and compromised. Consequently, evaluation should focus on the creation of *ethical space* where Indigenous and western knowledge systems can co-exist through commitments to respect cross-cultural differences. Respecting differences to centre Indigenous and local paradigms while resisting scientific forms of categorization and contemporary practice that are not in service to decolonization and Indigenous liberation.

**Indigenous Self-determination & Sovereignty:** Evaluation processes and procedures should seek to ensure Indigenous Peoples’ self-determination (i.e. *autonomy and control over decisions and processes*) and sovereignty (i.e. non-interference during decision-making) at all stages of the process. This principle must acknowledge the dynamic relationship between collective and individual rights and responsibilities through *rotational leadership* and *associational communities*, especially in urban Indigenous jurisdictions where community authorities are difficult to define given the cultural diversity of urban-dwelling Indigenous residents and absence of a land-base or means of local control to assume evaluation activities. Evaluation activities will adapt principles of *OCAP/S* (ownership, control, access, possession/, stewardship) to ensure evaluation procedures, data management, storage and knowledge transmission reflect community values, and should be underpinned by *free, prior and informed consent* on an ongoing basis.

**Capacity Building & Mentorship:** Evaluation processes and procedures should aim to develop and nurture the capacity of communities, families and individuals to fully assume research and evaluation activities. Evaluation activities should equally focus on generating learnings, and enhancing employable skills and competencies; offering a non-exploitive space to amplify voice and demonstrate agency among participants and partners (e.g. genuine involvement instead of tokenism, paid labour instead of free labour, etc.); and ensuring *intergenerational mentorship* leading to individual and communal healing and empowerment. The teacher-learner relationship should be able to shift and change over time throughout evaluation activities, and across different expertise, learning and teaching styles, and spaces of story-sharing and story-catching.

**Wholistic Systems Thinking, Knowledge Sharing & Collective Action:** Evaluation processes and procedures should seek to capture and understand the interrelated, complex and contradictory causes and effects of Indigenous youth homelessness and housing insecurity at various systems levels, and concomitant demonstrations of advocacy and transformation. Rather than only emphasizing individual characteristics and symptoms, wholistic systems thinking recognizes the interconnectedness between mental, physical, spiritual and emotional well-being, and social and Indigenous determinants of health, wellness and protection. Throughout evaluation processes, attention should focus on the interrelationships, perspectives, boundaries, and other key aspects of the system and community/cultural context in which learnings are shared, translated, and made actionable at an individual, family and communal level. However, evaluation processes should accommodate the contradictory, imprecise and value-laden journeys evaluators and communities must take to negotiate collective action in relation to rigorous inquiry.

**Cultural Safety & Reclamation:** Cultural safety during evaluation processes moves beyond cultural awareness or competence ensuring different experiences, perspectives and (lived) knowledge are respected among individuals. It is intended to create a *safe space* for shared learning and action that recognizes and accounts for unequal power relations, history, and Indigenous rights. Cultural safety seeks to avoid the pan-Indigenization, perpetuation of stereotypes and marginalization of Indigenous and local knowledge systems at a structural, communal, and individual level. However, promoting cultural safety should additionally contribute to acts of reclaiming cultural identity, kinship relations, and land occupation.

**Honouring:** While seeking to understand and transform underlying challenges, evaluation activities should focus on surfacing and building on existing community, family and individual strengths, gifts, healing, voices and influence instead of focusing on deficits. Evaluations are intended to measure positive dimensions and ‘what is working’ instead of only measuring the negative and ‘what is not working’. However, a *strength-based approach* should not prevent evaluation activities and tools from revealing forms of structural and systemic disadvantage that impact the evaluation of social and health (in)equity. Instead research and evaluation should identify and act on the underlying sources of disadvantage and exclusion while simultaneously honouring and celebrating the strengths of communities as well as *sacred stories* or *gifts* they share during evaluation activities.

# 3. Discovery Phase Learnings



# **SOLUTIONS LAB:**

Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care

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## **Discovery Phase Learnings**

# ABOUT OUR SOLUTIONS LAB:

## Working together towards housing solutions for Indigenous youth aging out of care

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Housing Solutions for Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care in Winnipeg is a community-based solutions lab to support the visioning and creation of housing solutions to address housing insecurity and homelessness among Indigenous youth aging out of the child welfare system in Winnipeg.

The Housing Solutions Lab partnership made up of

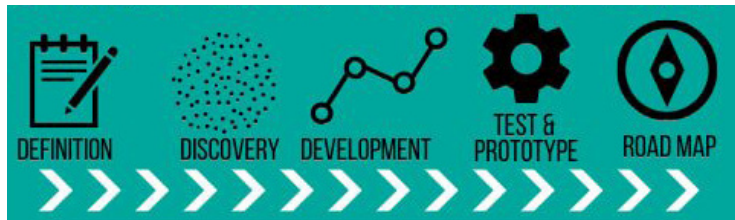
- Aboriginal Youth Opportunities,
- HTFC Planning & Design,
- Nigaanii Wabiski Mikanak Ogichidaa,
- University of Manitoba's Rady Faculty of Health Science,
- SHIFT Collaborative,
- and other supporters such as Fearless R2W.



Our Solutions Lab incorporates Indigenous knowledge and wisdom, and social innovation lab approaches, to collaboratively explore the specific needs of Indigenous youth in Winnipeg who have grown up in foster care and are at the point where institutional supports are removed. We approach this challenge from different perspectives and worldviews, including those of people who:



- are or were in the system (youth in care, aging out of care or aged out of care)
- are working "in" the system (child welfare workers, service providers, administrators, policymakers, etc)
- are working "around" the system (e.g. advocates, families, community organizers, housing professionals, etc.)



Through our engagements we aim to build bridges of empathy and provide advocates, service providers, and policymakers with a more complete picture of the systems impacting Indigenous youth aging out of care. We hope the co-creation of solutions will be scaled up among decision-makers to close service gaps and further reduce the number of Indigenous youth facing housing insecurity and homelessness once they age out of Manitoba’s child welfare system.



This one and a half year-long project is supported by the National Housing Strategy through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s Solutions Lab funding stream, as well as by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and McConnell Foundation’s Innoweave initiative.



# Key Definitions

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## **SYSTEMS:**

Systems describe a far-reaching, interconnected network or arrangement of discourses, practices, rules, actors, structures, and institutions that may not necessarily serve the same function, but relate with one another to produce shared outputs (e.g. decisions, forms of organization, experiences, subjects, knowledges, etc.).

## **INSTITUTIONS:**

Institutions describe discrete, established organizations dedicated to administer policies and services systematically within a framework of a specific field (e.g. health, education, child welfare, housing, etc.).

## **YOUTH:**

Youth and youthhood describes the developmental transition period between childhood and adulthood among younger people. However, development is not restricted to an individual's chronological age, biology, or psychological development. It encompasses sociocultural, political, economic, and spiritual aspects of development. In the context of the solutions lab, however, youth are loosely defined between the ages of 15-24 years as the process of transitioning out of care becomes most explicit and significant.

## **INDIGENOUS:**

Indigenous describes the First Nations & Metis people, communities and nations across Manitoba with diverse cultures, languages, histories, and geographic residence in remote, rural, reserve and urban areas. Indigenous also recognizes the distinct cultural and political rights and aspirations of First Nations and Metis communities.

## **CHILD WELFARE:**

Child welfare as an institution describes the Child Family and Services department under the Ministry of Families in Manitoba as well as other authorities, agencies, foster homes, and organizations regulated through Child Family and Services legislation.

## **HOUSING:**

Housing describes public government managed housing stock; private market rental housing; and other government departments regulating rental housing, housing organizations, temporary shelters and transitional homes, housing advocacy groups, and housing professionals. In the context of the solutions lab, homeownership and land real estate management are excluded as they are not necessarily relevant when considering homelessness prevention and housing insecurity.

## QUICK FACTS:

# A look at what's happening with Indigenous youth aging out of care in Manitoba<sup>1</sup>

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- There are 10,258 children and youth in care (excl. voluntary placements/kinship care), approximately 90% are Indigenous.
- Between 2017-2018, 244 youth aged out of care, and 116 were permanent wards.
- 51.5% of youth experiencing homelessness have been in care, with 62.4% experiencing homelessness within 1 year of leaving care.
- Transition planning is legally supposed to begin at the age of 15, but does not frequently occur in practice until the age of 17.
- When transitioning out of care, Indigenous youth may encounter the following individual/interpersonal factors **preventing** them from finding stable, affordable housing and a sense of home:
  - involved with the criminal justice system
  - migrating between urban and rural/reserve communities
  - inability to find affordable housing
  - inability to find safe tenants and landlords
  - having a poor housing record or credit history
  - experiencing discrimination
  - experiencing loneliness and isolation
  - unable to navigate complex systems
  - unable or unwilling to access adequate mental health and addictions supports
  - inadequate life skills
  - unwillingly institutionalized, or preferring to remain institutionalized
- The following individual/interpersonal factors **enabled** Indigenous youth aging out of care to find stable, affordable housing and a sense of home:
  - volunteering
  - securing employment and earning an income (e.g. employment, EIA, Extension of Care, illegal economic activities)
  - attending post-secondary education, training programs, job preparation programs
  - taking care of children or working to reunify with apprehended children
  - reconnecting with culture or biological families (especially siblings)
  - working on challenges with mental health or addictions, or living with a disability
  - life skills programming and involvement in recreation
  - support from extended families, helpers and street families

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<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from the Housing Solutions project as well as the following reports: 2018 Winnipeg Street Census, Here and Now: The Winnipeg Plan to End Youth Homelessness report & Manitoba Families Annual Report 2018-2019.

## Systems impacting Indigenous youth experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity include:



Social Support  
& Kinship



Justice



Health



Housing



Employment  
& Income



Education

## Some Reasons for Youth Homelessness in Winnipeg<sup>2</sup>



### STRUCTURAL

- Colonization & land dispossession
- Racism & social exclusion
- Poverty



### SYSTEMIC / INSTITUTIONAL

- Housing unaffordability
- Lack of safe housing
- Discrimination
- Involvement in Child and Family Services
- Involvement in Criminal justice and corrections
- Health, mental health & addictions
- Lack of access to education & training
- Inadequate access to Employment and Income Assistance and Disability
- Urban/rural/reserve relocation



### FAMILY / INDIVIDUAL

- Family breakdown
- Abuse
- Neglect
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Parental substance use
- Rejection of gender/sexual orientation
- Teen pregnancy

<sup>2</sup>Adapted from *Here & Now: The Winnipeg Plan To End Youth Homelessness* (2018) report.

# Housing Continuum for Homeless Youth<sup>3</sup>

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## Unsheltered or Institutionalized

- Outdoors (e.g. tent, bus shelters, ATM vestibules, vehicle, etc.).
- Couch-surfing, floor-surfing, trap-surfing
- Medical care (detox, treatment centre, ER, psychiatric wards)
- Imprisonment (e.g. jail, prison, detention centre)

## Short-Term Shelters

- 24/7 Safe Spaces (Rossbrook House, Ndinawe, WE 24/7)
- Youth emergency shelters (Ndinawe, MYS)
- Adult emergency shelter, family shelter & domestic violence shelter

## Transitional Housing

- Transitional Housing (RaY REST, Ma Mawi Yellow Shawl, Pan Am Place, Siloam Mission Exit Up, Shewanim Abinooji Memengoo)
- Independent living programs

## Supportive Permanent Housing

- Youth under 21 in care of CFS with permanent or severe disabilities

## Affordable Housing

- Subsidized housing (Manitoba Housing, not-for-profit housing)
- Rent supplements (HPS & Housing First)

## Market Rental Housing

- Includes rooming houses

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from *Here & Now: The Winnipeg Plan To End Youth Homelessness* (2018) report.

# Common Challenges, Strengths, & Opportunities for Delivering & Funding Services, Programs, & Supports<sup>4</sup>

We identified and prioritized common challenges, strength & opportunities related to the delivery and funding of services, programs, and formal supports across a range of institutions including, but not limited to, child welfare and housing. These common themes considered and impacted the provision, access, quality, and funding of services, programs and formal supports in the following ways:

## PROVISION OF SERVICES

**Complex needs, exclusive services** – limited services and programs are available to youth with complex and holistic service, cultural, and personal needs (e.g. pregnant mothers, youth with disabilities, Indigenous youth). These complex needs additionally shift based on different age grades (e.g. 12-14; 15-18; 18-21; 21-25; 26-29).

**Discharge ≠ Transition out of Care** – services, programs and formal supports when leaving care often do not allow for an ongoing and gradual process of transition to independence or other institutions, but treat “transitioning” as a one-time event leading to abandonment and neglect. Transitioning fails to account for gaps in services, the importance of life skills development, mentorship, and carrying out basic activities of daily living (e.g. cooking, cleaning, banking, self-care, buying groceries, etc.), which are important to ensure self-sufficiency and success.

**“They say no double dipping”** – many institutions, services, programs, and their eligibility criteria are fragmented and access to some services may deny youth access to other necessary services (e.g. receiving mental health and addictions treatment concurrently; receiving Independent living in care and income assistance concurrently; receiving band funding for school and youth in care tuition waivers, etc.).

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

**Unnecessary waiting impacts continuity of care** – youth are often unable to immediately access needed services based on gatekeeping services prior to approval, delayed responses by workers, lack of continuity of care, and bureaucratic processes that involve paperwork, reporting and rules that lead to gaps in services while waiting. During periods of waiting for basic needs, youth may resort to harmful coping strategies and unfavorable actions to close these gaps.

**Systems navigation & centralization** – services, programs, formal supports, and their restrictive eligibility criteria require a high degree of time and effort to navigate, and without necessary systems navigation and advocacy support, may fail to adequately receive service provisions they are entitled to access. Many services could be centralized or provided at certain points of transition (e.g. ID’s, health cards, case management, housing supports, mental health and addictions treatment, etc.).

**Limited choices** – Youth in care and aging out of care have limited options available to them when determining what they need to succeed, feel safe, happy, and healthy (e.g. housing options, treatment options, schooling options, medical doctors, social workers, foster homes or group homes, culture-based programming, etc.).

<sup>4</sup>Principles identified to support housing solutions: culture-based; healing-centred; trauma-informed; harm reduction focused; intergenerational; relationship-based; rights-based; responsibility-based; systems-centred

## QUALITY OF SERVICES

### **Institutions become family**

– services, programs, and supports create dependency and reliance on institutions while not fully equipping youth to be independent. Being in care becomes part of young people’s identity in ways that could be protective (such as service providers becoming like family) but equally harmful, especially when care is cut during a young person’s transition to adulthood and other important developmental transitions.

### **Lack of cultural safety**

– services, programs, and formal supports themselves cause more harm to young people than those who have abused or neglected them (e.g. abandonment, risky circumstances/placements, poverty, over-medicalization, separating siblings, racism and discrimination, etc.).

### **Earlier planning & ‘rites of passage’**

– planning and preparation for youth aging out of care often does not happen earlier (e.g. 15 years old), and the planning and preparation for aging out of care occurs as a process of “letting go” and not a “rites of passage” that celebrates and honours transitions toward adulthood.

### **“Programs and services don’t change people, relationships do!”**

– while institutions are made up of individuals, and some may not support youth aging out of care adequately, there remains success stories that involve good people (e.g. social workers, landlords) who built relationships with youth and were able to compensate for poor and hard to access services.

## FUNDING OF SERVICES

**“25 not 21”** – Extended Care programs for youth aging out of care from 18-21 do not adequately meet their complex needs and sets up unfair expectations for youth aging out of care to be self-sufficient. This does not reflect societal norms where youth generally stay at home or ‘boomerang’ back after moving out. Raising the age from 21 to 25 for will give sufficient time to transition to adulthood without relying on reduced supports provided by income assistance.

**Funding independence instead of interdependence** – limited funding options exist for extended care based on a per diem basis, which impacts different types of living arrangements such as youth aging out of care who return back to families, living with siblings and friends, or living in communal/transition housing arrangements. In these circumstances, youth aging out of care may be denied housing supports or receive them at a reduced amount.

**What does it mean to successfully transition out of care?** – measures and indicators of success tied to funding for youth aging out of care are based on chronological age and predetermined expectations (e.g. securing employment, getting high grades, engaging in positive behaviours) that do not reflect the needs and self-defined goals of youth. Upon aging out of care, young people understand success in different ways (e.g. reuniting with family, volunteering, reconnecting with culture, community, etc).

**Care or Welfare** – receiving funding for transition services, housing, programs, and supports when transitioning out of care requires youth to remain as wards of the state or rely on social services. Otherwise, many supports offered in care are cut. They often have no other legal option but to transition into welfare (i.e. EIA), which offers less supports and incentives.

# Pertinent Questions & Insights We Considered About Indigenous Youth Aging Out of Care in Winnipeg, MB

## WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT COMPLEX SYSTEMS AND RELATIONSHIPS?

**What is Known:** It is well established that youth homelessness and housing insecurity involves multiple systems and policies to ensure adequate support that is more than simply housing.

### **Key Insights:**

- While important, **Housing First Initiatives** do not adequately meet the needs of youth in general. They require multiple wrap-around supports including social support, mental health and addictions treatment, schooling, recreation, and cultural supports. These are crucial to achieve housing stability. ‘Housing First for Youth’ models are more appropriate in these youth specific contexts<sup>5</sup>.
- A public/affordable **housing crisis** exists across Canada, and Manitoba where it effects communities living in poverty specifically. Although the housing crisis has culminated from decades long policies of cost containment and political conservatism, it is exacerbated in Manitoba by the expiration of operating agreements, increasing trends to privatize housing, the transfer of public housing from government to an already fiscally constrained non-profit sector, and a general trend in public discourse viewing homeownership as a gold standard.
- Although there are polarizing opinions about **housing rights** and whose rights are disproportionately affected – the tenant or the landlord – there is general agreement that poor rental or credit histories can be significant barriers to tenants securing stable housing. For youth living in transition housing or as tenants not included on a lease, their rights may be further undermined as adequate mechanisms that recognize them as full rights-holders are not in place.
- The relationship with **employment and income assistance (EIA)** (incl. programs such as Rent Assist) for youth aging out of care is complicated. Among the many institutions we identified other than child welfare, EIA was identified as the most problematic and penalizing. Although permanent wards can access Extensions of Care (i.e. Agreement with Young Adults) if they continue to meet certain criteria, which are reassessed and renewed regularly, they must otherwise access EIA if needing income assistance. However, we also learned that youth access to EIA is very limited to begin with, due to bureaucratic barriers, systems navigation, and limited or restrictive supports covered by the program.
- Graduation from child welfare and entry into justice and corrections (for young adults & juvenile youth) creates a **“revolving door” into detention or prison**, especially for shorter sentences where growth may be interrupted or hindered. It has been identified that quick, immediate responses when released from justice and corrections are necessary to prevent re-entry (e.g. acquiring ID, access to income assistance/employment, enhanced support from parole/probation officers).
- Poor **regulation of standards within foster homes** due to funding and capacity. Foster homes have been identified as important sites for preparation of youth to transition to independence, yet they remain under-regulated and unaccountable for the success of youth as that responsibility rests with the child welfare agencies.

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<sup>5</sup>Find out more at <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/COH-AWH-HF4Y.pdf>

- Inadequate **mental health and addictions** supports for youth under 18, as well as those 18 and older, are not sufficient given inadequate resources and a high prevalence of abstinence-based services. The delivery of these concomitant health challenges are often separately funded and delivered, thus negatively impacting an individual's continuity of care. These health challenges are further exacerbated by mainstream media perpetuating narratives about drugs and violence as personal moral failures as opposed to symptoms of historical and intergenerational trauma, and colonial legacies. They create stigma and discrimination among service providers and the general public, and affect the provision and quality of services.
  - **Poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage** among families is a better indicator of the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in care rather than abuse or poor parenting.
  - Youth who have been **expelled or suspended from school** become increasingly at risk of homelessness. By pushing students out from educational environments, many supportive services offered in and through schools may be cut-off and foster care placements may be impacted, leading youth to be placed in group homes or to potentially runaway from home.
  - **Jurisdictional challenges** between different government bodies create barriers when attempting to secure affordable and safe housing for those migrating between reserves/rural areas and urban areas. Furthermore, jurisdictional conflicts arise between provincial and municipal governments when tenants and tenants rights advocates seek to address unsafe housing conditions in Winnipeg and such as public health concerns (e.g. pests, bugs, mold, etc.) and access to water, hydropower, and heating.
  - **Broader systems change** can only occur by addressing 1) the bureaucratic barriers created by institutions, and 2) the underlying causes and effects of the negative impacts that systems' have on families, infants, and children, before those children are apprehended.
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## WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT INTERACTIONS WITH SYSTEMS?

**What is Known:** Despite there being ample evidence on how systems effect youth aging out of care, there is less evidence and emphasis on how youth interact with systems in unintended ways. Youth have agency to resist and evade systems, institutions, and policies.

### Key Insights:

- Due to feelings of **loneliness and isolation**, young people may choose to live with other people or couch/floor surf even if they are fully housed. However, in many cases when youth attempt to be generous by inviting others into their home, guests or roommates may cause them to become evicted or earn a poor rental record.
- Youth may **become invisible or choose to remain invisible** from formal services and supports due to fear of discrimination, distrust, and inadequate services intended to support them. For these youth, they often become visible to institutions during a point of contact with specific services, and sometimes not of their choosing (e.g. arrest, medical emergency, accessing a shelter, etc.)
- Alternatively, youth may choose to **remain dependent on systems and institutions** to house themselves, seek safety, and find a sense of belonging.

- Rather than support workers and service providers, youth aging out of care instead **rely on informal networks** of extended families, street families, and friends to meet basic needs and foster relationships which may encourage negative or positive growth.
- Youth **may not seek housing advocacy or question their rights as tenants** due to the long, drawn-out processes or fear of police/child welfare involvement in their lives or the lives of their family members.
- Youth **may engage in illicit activities to ensure their basic needs are met** such as stealing, drug dealing, and sex work (survival sex). These activities may put them at further risk of being discriminated against or negatively treated and punished by institutions and services.
- The prevalence of **memory loss, brain damage, and over-prescription of medication** due to injury, violence and mental health was interestingly observed among a number of youth, which results in reduced capacity to remember appointments and pertinent information when dealing with landlords, service providers, and other professionals.

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## HOW DOES THE SYSTEM HOLD TOGETHER DESPITE FRAGMENTATION?

**What is Known:** Given the fragmentation of systems and services that impact youth aging out of care, in many cases they continue to serve the needs and aspirations of youth even when the necessary supports are not in place. It was consistently suggested that people working within and outside of systems, and the relationships they formed, ultimately determined success when youth transitioned to independence.

### Key Insights:

- Having **“good” workers and service providers** that built relationships with youth aging out of care was identified as being able to support the success of youth transitioning to independence.
- **Resilient workers** who have a sophisticated understanding of the system, and know how institutions and policies work, are able to adequately support youth even when policy or service gaps and barriers exist.
- **Community advocates, helpers, and street families** with systems literacy and lived experience are instrumental to support the success and safety of youth aging out of care when institutions and services are unresponsive and unsafe to access, or when youth chose not to access formal supports for various reasons such as distrust, trauma, and failing them in the past. However, while housing advocacy is lacking more generally, it appears that youth are often reluctant to seek out advocates unless housing is required to access other services/supports or is required to facilitate reunification with their own children in care with child welfare.
- **Centralizing resources/waitlists and streamlining communication** among organizations and institutions are important to adequately wrap services around youth and provide continuity of care and support.
- **Workplace burnout** can impede the ability for service providers to adequately and optimally deliver services in ways that support youth and create culturally safe environments. In addition to high workloads, limited capacity, and rigid policies at a governmental and organizational level, burnout is considered a symptom of vicarious trauma experienced on the job and not sufficiently addressed by employers.

## HOW DOES THE SYSTEM BECOME SO ENTRENCHED DESPITE SO MUCH CHANGE?

**What is Known:** Child welfare, in particular, has been identified as one institution which has produced increasingly poorer outcomes over time. Although it has undergone various policy changes, including the devolution of governance of child welfare to Indigenous communities, the child welfare system remains severely entrenched compared to others. Similarly, social housing remains equally entrenched despite the recognition of a housing crisis across Canada.

### Key Insights:

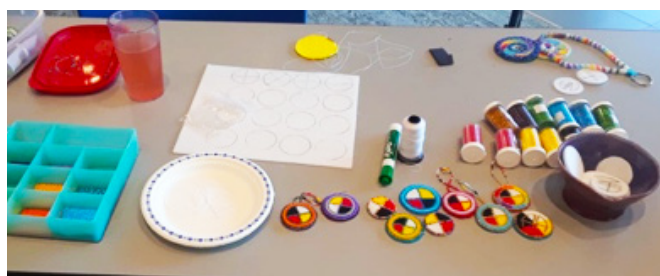
- Fundamentally, the child welfare system does not support the enhancement of children, youth and biological families, but rather is concerned about **protection** and subsequently apprehension.
- The **economic incentives** of different actors in the child welfare system (e.g. foster families, child welfare agencies, social workers, support workers, etc.) decrease as youth age out of care and get older. These incentives become displaced in other systems such as justice and corrections, EIA, and health care.
- Although it is widely recognized that the child welfare system requires transformational changes to see positive outcomes – “a system overhaul” – it has been suggested that because the child welfare system responds to a “**vulnerable**” **population of children and youth**, who are generally constructed through public discourse as the most vulnerable in society, transformational change may seem morally formidable and economically risky. Tinkering with the system in small ways thus becomes a safer yet less transformative approach.
- **Colonial ideologies and racist assumptions** continue to pervade various systems and institutions, including child welfare. These include assumptions about child rearing, emphasis on government intervention, and control and governance oversight by external bodies. Underlying these assumptions are fundamental core beliefs that Indigenous families and communities are not able to fully take care of children and youth, and Indigenous notions of self-determination are illegitimate.
- Over time a general trend across Canada has occurred which has increasingly considered **housing as a product of the private market** as opposed to a public good and service. While variation exists, in Manitoba, this trend has resulted in inadequate investments into publically funded, affordable housing as well as a public housing stock that has seriously deteriorated without adequate provisions made for repairs and maintenance.
- Although the **devolution of child welfare** to ensure First Nations and Metis governance signified an important shift toward systems change, these changes were identified as not being sufficient without any changes to funding models, resolution of jurisdictional ambiguities between provincial and federal agencies, and training of a competent workforce that is representative of the populations accessing services.
- We have noticed a shifting discourse in Manitoba away from **viewing housing on a “continuum” toward a “ladder”**. As a continuum infers that public or social housing and homeownership are equally important and viable, the ladder model views public or social housing as a temporary step toward the ultimate goal of homeownership.

## WHAT LEVERAGE POINTS EXIST TO SHIFT RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURES?

**What is Known:** Several assets and opportunities were identified by community members and in reports detailing recommendations. Key factors for leveraging systems change that were identified through this discovery phase include: research, capacity-building, political will, and sociopolitical instability.

### **Key Insights:**

- The **Here and Now Report: The Winnipeg Plan to End Youth Homelessness** has facilitated the establishment of a network of relationships between youth-serving organizations and government sectors. It also identified the importance of youth homelessness among former youth in care and youth aging out of care.
- **Coalition-building among Indigenous-led organizations and grassroots initiatives** serving youth and housing needs are increasingly focusing on homelessness prevention and housing insecurity.
- **Immigrant and refugee communities and organizations** have been identified as important collaborators to learn from and work with given important changes occurring in the newcomer public housing, social support, and employment training sector (e.g. newcomer housing organizations, life skills and language programs, job training opportunities, etc.).
- Increasing development of **market-based housing** presents opportunities to support affordable housing needs. However, continued contention remains on whether market-based housing can adequately meet the safety and affordability needs of residents.
- **Funding policies** at a federal level (i.e. National Housing Strategy initiative) and asset transfers at a provincial level (i.e. expiration of operating agreements & transfer of housing assets/management to the non-profit sector) indicate there is a shift in housing management, funding, and regulations. While changes are viewed as negatively impacting public housing in the long-term by critics, there are opportunities to support Indigenous youth aging out of care.
- Emerging spaces exist for **political and community advocacy** at a grassroots, organizational, and policy level (e.g. increasing research and data on child welfare outcomes, increased community mobilization and involvement, building relationships with government, and establishing mechanisms to directly advocate among policy-makers).
- Although there is much uncertainty, **child welfare legislative changes** recognize Jordan's Principle, UNDRIP and Bill C-92 to support Indigenous youth and families negatively impacted by child welfare policy.
- The importance of **relatives and street families** play a significant role in providing informal support, advocacy, and belonging, meaning and purpose.



# Important Principles for Guiding the Funding and Delivery of Services for Youth Aging Out of Care

Proposed Principle	Description
<b>Culture-based</b>	A distinction-based and nation-based approach toward Indigenous youth aging out of care that considers a family and community's every day and traditional cultural practices, history, teachings, gifts, and languages.
<b>Trauma-informed and healing-centred</b>	A method of providing services to individuals and communities that have experienced significant trauma and illness. However, it must include a strength-based and holistic approach to services and supports that views the person as more than a victim, and centers culture, spirituality, civic action, and collective healing to achieve wellness. A healing-centred approach incorporates Medicine Wheel teaching that focuses on the whole person – mind, body, heart, and spirit.
<b>Harm reduction focused</b>	A method of providing services and supports that focuses on decreasing harm and injury while respecting the autonomy and self-determination of individuals and communities.
<b>Intergenerational</b>	A method of providing services and supports that encourages shared dialogue and action between children, youth, adults and elders during the appropriate times and with relevant spaces.
<b>Rights-based</b>	An approach that upholds the human rights of individuals and communities with dignity, respect, freedom and equity, including the rights of children and Indigenous Peoples. It ensures the empowerment of rights holders and strengthens the capacity of those whose duty it is to protect and fulfil those rights.
<b>Responsibility-based</b>	Any action aimed at improving the lives and opportunities of Indigenous youth aging out of care should do more than what is expected based on policies and rules to ensure the best interests of children and youth are achieved.
<b>Systems-centred</b>	Social and political action should emphasize the root causes and effects of systems on health and wellbeing to ensure transformative and strategic changes. Interventions should focus on systems wherever possible instead of individuals, and recognize the agency and resistance toward dominant systems impacting the lives of individuals and communities.

## Solutions Map of Proposed Ideas

Type	Proposed Housing Solution	Description
Technology	Youth Aging Out App/Website	A website/app to support youth in navigating how to access services, programs, and necessary life skills as they age out of care.
Education	Independence Board Game	An educational board game to support service providers and decision-makers empathize and understand homelessness and housing security among youth aging out of care.
Mentorship/ social support services	Independent living program (15-18 years old)	An extended, mandatory independent living program for youth aged 15-18 to support mentorship, life skills development, cultural engagement, preparation for adulthood, and celebrating life transitions before 18 years.
	Life skills boot camp	A condensed boot camp for youth over 18 years to support mentorship, life skill development, cultural engagement, and preparation for adulthood.
	Aunties & uncles initiative	Professional development for extended families to support youth aging out of care as well as a meal program to encourage intergenerational bonding.
Policy	Landlord rules reform	Policy/procedural reforms related to landlord rules that ensure and uphold tenants' rights (e.g. evictions, dispute mediation, repairs, predatory practices, etc.).
	Housing waitlist	An initiative to advocate and identify youth aging out of care as a priority population on (a centralized) social housing waitlists (e.g. MB Housing).
	Policy review	Conduct a policy review and analysis to account for policy gaps and identify policy interventions.
Research & Data/ Information	Statistical profile	A statistical profile for Indigenous youth aging out of care to identify service gaps, supports, and outcomes across systems, including Families, Health, Education and Justice.
	Systems & services report card	An annual report from the "Village" and Indigenous advocacy groups on how well the system is performing to support Indigenous youth aging out of care.
	Manitoba Youth Centre engagement	An event to hear the voices, perspectives and experiences of youth involved with the juvenile justice system (i.e. Manitoba Youth Centre).
Housing Models & Infrastructure	Intergenerational apartment building & Indigenous housing organization	(Mixed use) intergenerational apartment building with suites dedicated for youth aging out of care and older adults/elders that is serviced by a dedicated Indigenous housing organization.
	Residential House for youth transitioning out of care	Development of a residential house for youth transitioning out of care with wrap-around support services.

## OUR APPROACH:

# How did we gather stories about youth aging out of care?

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### Conversations with the Leadership Team

Over the course of 9 months (April, 2019 – December, 2019), the Lab Leadership Team have stewarded and guided the Housing Solutions Lab through a collaborative process of relationship-building, consultation and stakeholder engagement, storycatching, and ceremony. The partnership engages Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, HTFC Planning and Design, University of Manitoba, and Niigannii Wabishke Mikinak Ogidjida through a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) solutions lab grant, with additional support from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and McConnell Foundation. Through ongoing dialogue, reflection and collective action, the Lab Leadership Team has participated in the following activities:

- **Lab Leadership Team meetings** have occurred at various stages of the Housing Solutions Lab to enhance the partnership on a continued basis, and collectively analyzed and interpreted stories and information.
- The **systems mapping design jam** established a draft systems map organizing the realities and experiences of Indigenous youth aging out of care from a systems and institutional perspective.
- A **developmental evaluation process** has tracked the learnings and reflections on the processes and outcomes of the Housing Solutions Lab.
- A **preliminary literature review** to gather and document existing reports, research, and recommendations.

### Conversations with Indigenous Young People

The voices of Indigenous Young People in care or aged out of care have grounded the Housing Solutions Lab since its inception through a variety of activities focusing on relationship-building, shared learning and mentorship. They include:

- A **youth talking circle** (n=1) established a cohort of Indigenous youth voices with lived experience to support the Housing Solutions Lab. The talking circle created a space for young people to work with and begin to share their sacred stories as well as build networks of support amongst themselves.
- **In-depth Interviews** (n=8) with youth in care or who have (successfully) aged out of care continue to share their perspectives, experiences and values on child welfare, housing, and youth development.
- **Cultural and community engagement activities** with youth fostered relationship-building and mentorship through culture, ceremony, and volunteering with other youth, knowledge keepers, and elders (e.g. sweat lodge ceremonies, medicine picking, beading workshop, community development, and youth mentorship).

## Conversations with Families and Communities

The voices of Families and Communities located primarily within the North End and inner city of Winnipeg were consulted on an ongoing basis and supported the framing of the Housing Solutions Lab.

The voices of Families and Communities

- Bi-monthly consultations (n=6) were hosted through a number of youth-driven weekly community gatherings to create a space for shared learning, reporting back, and preliminary solution generation and prototype testing.
- Weekly attendance at Fearless R2W Circle of Support to engage and learn about the child welfare system from a community advocacy perspective.



## Conversations with Organizations and Policy Makers

The voices of Organizations and Policy-makers were prioritized as a result of initial conversations with Indigenous Young People, and Families and Communities. These conversations are intended to build on the needs and aspirations of those directly affected by child welfare, housing, and efforts aimed at community development

- The Communities of Practice meeting (n=1) engaged several organizations and policy sectors involved in housing policy development and service delivery, directly and indirectly, with youth aging out of care.
- Ongoing stakeholder meetings to facilitate the mobilization and scaling up of solutions and potential collaborations.
- Conferences & presentations to network with stakeholders and learn about the impacts of housing on Indigenous youth aging out of care.