Apr 3rd, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Resiliency of Homeless Youth in Social Service Settings

Alexis Simpson
Cedarville University, alexissimpson@cedarville.edu

Shruthi Ramachandran
Cedarville University, shruthiramachandran@cedarville.edu

Hannah Lankford
Cedarville University, hlankford@cedarville.edu

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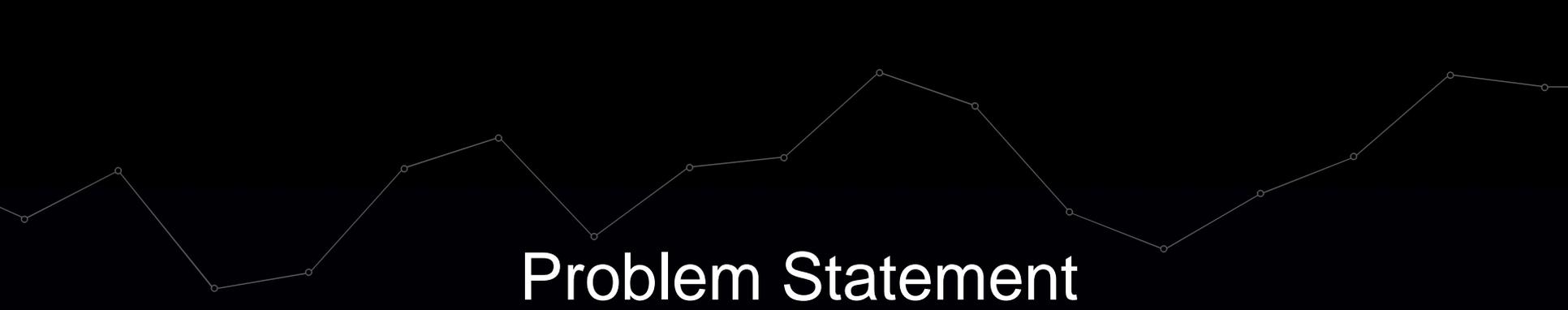https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/research_scholarship_symposium/2019/poster_presentations/15

# Research Proposal:

A Descriptive Study
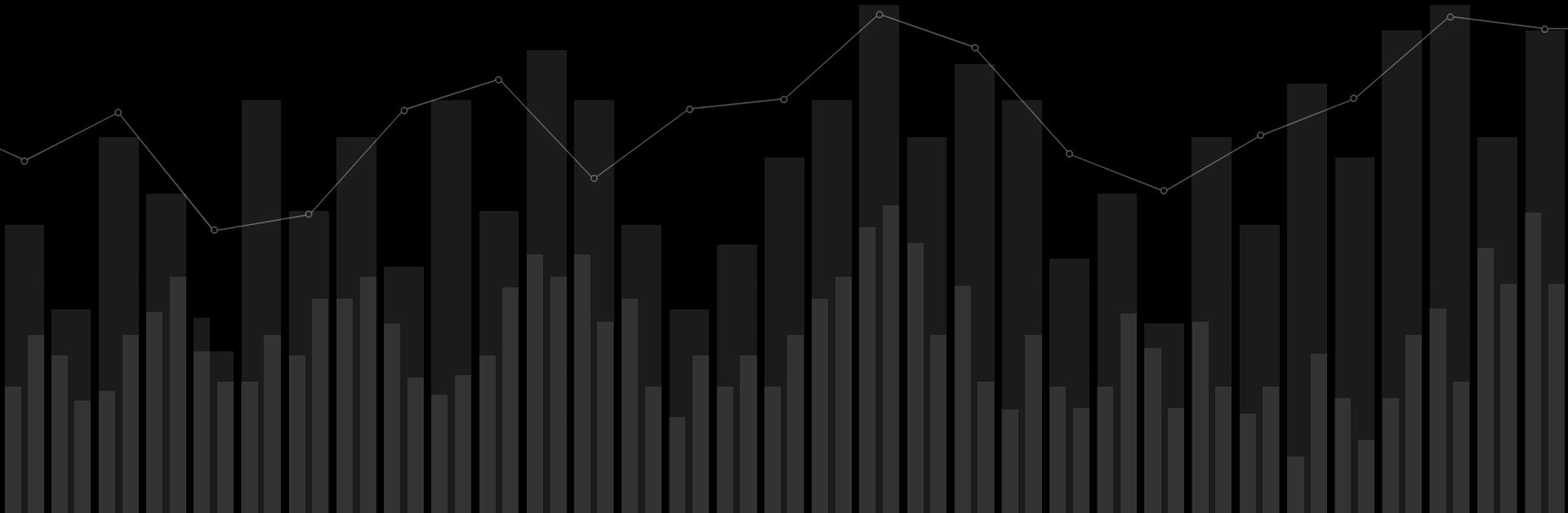
Problem Statement

Public schools and Social Workers are looking for ways to better serve the homeless youth in America due to an increase seen in homeless families. Social Workers who serve homeless adolescents are faced with navigating an educational system that is geared towards the middle class since many of the clients they work with fall under this level of socio economics most often (Erickson, 1993). This is important because there are many homeless youth who have disproportionate negative academic experiences including absenteeism, high rates of mobility, grade repetition, and the need for special education services, which may all contribute to poor academic performance (Hong & Pierscher, 2012). To date there is a need for additional research to examine homeless youth and their resilience.

What are the experiences of homeless youth considered most resilient by their social workers?

Qualitative Question

1
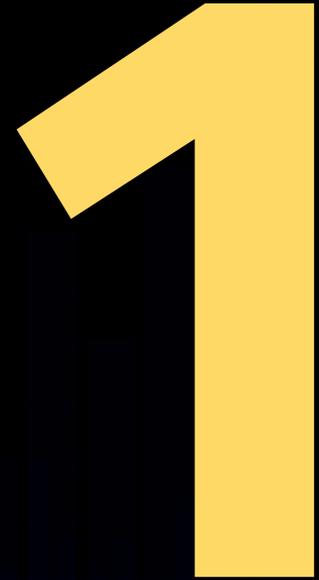
Literature Review
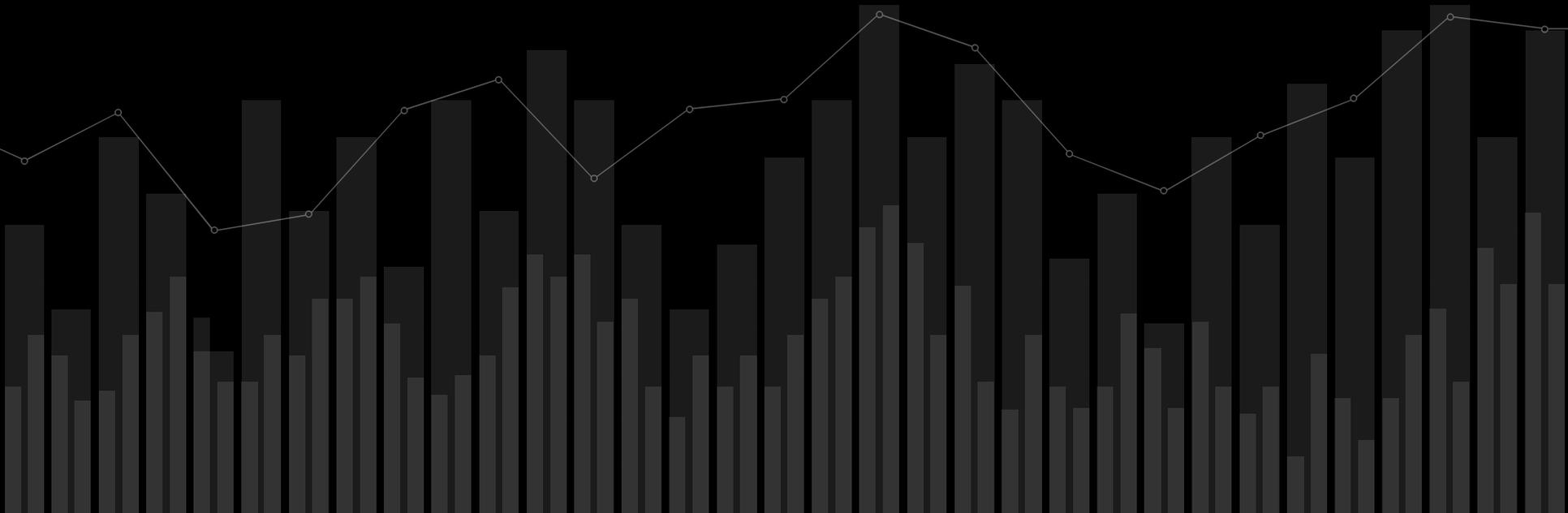
Support Systems

1. Homeless youth have major problems with finding support and stable employment when they travel often (Ferguson, 2016).

2. Higher education can influence homeless youth in a positive way if they have proper support (Gupton, 2017).

3. "Resilient youth were more likely to live with two parents, having less problems stated above than those living in single-parent households or foster homes" (Stieber & Good, 1998).

1. The findings from sources show the exclusive distance travelers were more likely to have fewer intercity moves. "This finding not only mirrors extant research about the street lifestyle of travelers but could be expected, as frequent moves to new cities limit homeless young adults' ability to maintain consistent housing and employment as well as to establish stable relationships with supportive adults and institutions" (Ferguson, Helderop, Bender, & Grubesic, 2016).
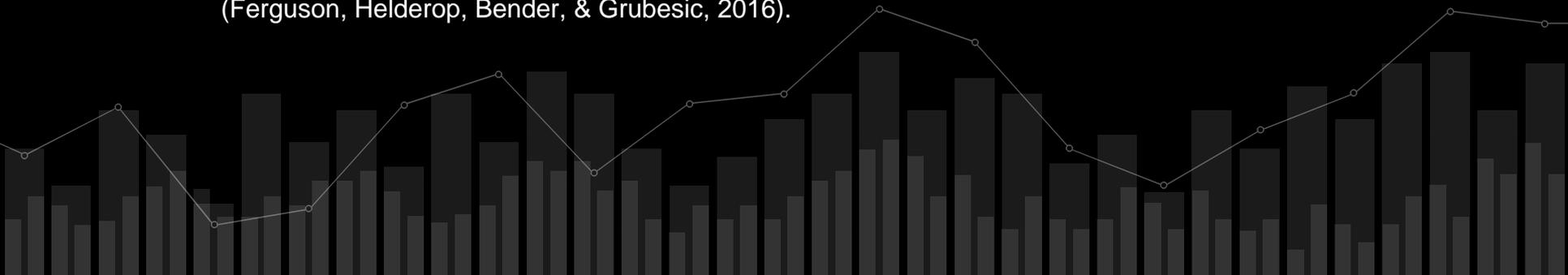
Funding & Government Involvement

1. Government funding can prevent policies from aligning with the needs of the homeless population (Grim, 2015).

2. An important finding noted was how policy makers and providers may be spending unnecessary resources on higher functioning youth instead of those who need more intense services (Cronley & Evans, 2017).

1. The funds need to be spent on creative interventions such as art and mindful meditation to help move higher functioning youth to stable housing, and assist the lower functioning into a stable mindset (Cronley & Evans, 2017).
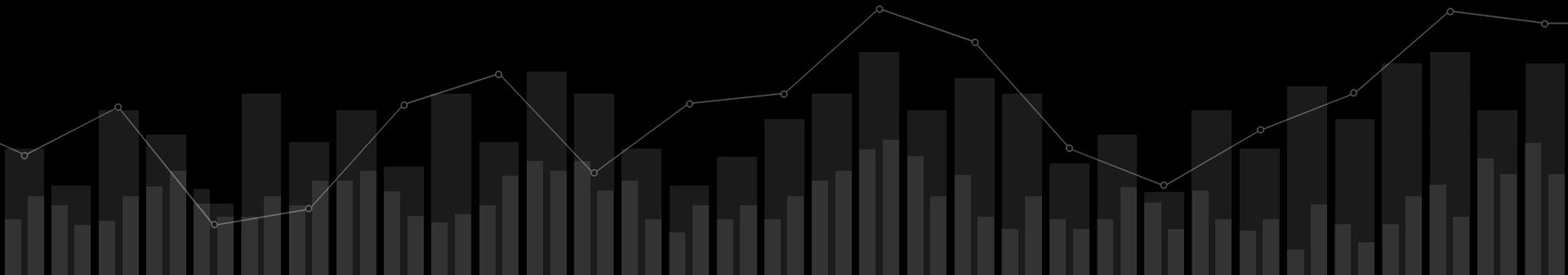
Resilience

1. Psychological resilience is a concept that has many definitions and theories, throughout a variety of concepts (Fletcher, 2013).

2. Some argue that "governments should provide community based opportunities that give individuals access to both environmental and personal resources that develop their resilience in meaningful ways" (Fletcher, 2013, p. 20).

3. Some studies "found that loneliness was significantly associated with resilience" (Perron, 2014).

1. The homeless youth who attended art sessions regularly had a higher incidence of ending drug usage, obtaining housing, finding employment, engaging in academics, improving social skills, and so on (Prescott, Sekendur, Bailey, & Hoshino, 2008).

1. "The authors propose the concept of creative resilience, which draws from the idea of the 'ensemble' in drama, to collectively devise and rehearse strategies of survival and resistance for application in the real world." Creative resilience understands and encompasses groups of using drama to expose, explore, and articular survival and resistance (Gallagher, Starkman, & Rhoades, 2017).

At-Risk Factors

1. Youth on the street are reported to be involved in higher risk behavior, according to Piche, Kaylegian, Smith, & Hunter, (2018). "Both their age and living situations make them more likely to engage in high risk behaviors, particularly during adolescence, a time of increased risk taking" (Piche, 2018).

2. In one study, "there were significant differences in risk taking behavior and substance use between high and low self-reported EF [executive functioning] participants" (Piche, 2018).

3. One study showed "The findings are indicating sexual intercourse served as the outcome where four of six risk factors emerged, making significant contributions. The results of the study showed that risk measures improved the prediction of gang involvement, substance use, and sexual intercourse (Stieber & Good, 1998).

4. Homeless youth deal with their life on the streets with little family support, where depression becomes a critical risk factor (Bender, Cook, Thompson, Williams, & Windsor, 2010).
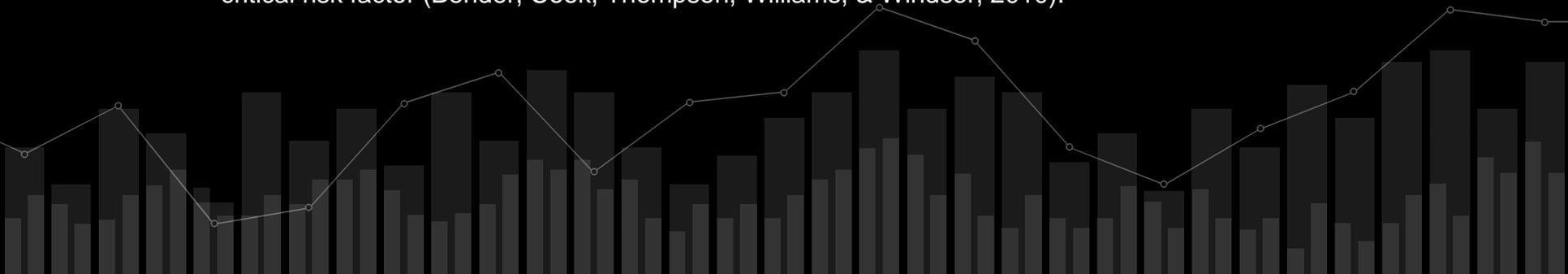
Methodology
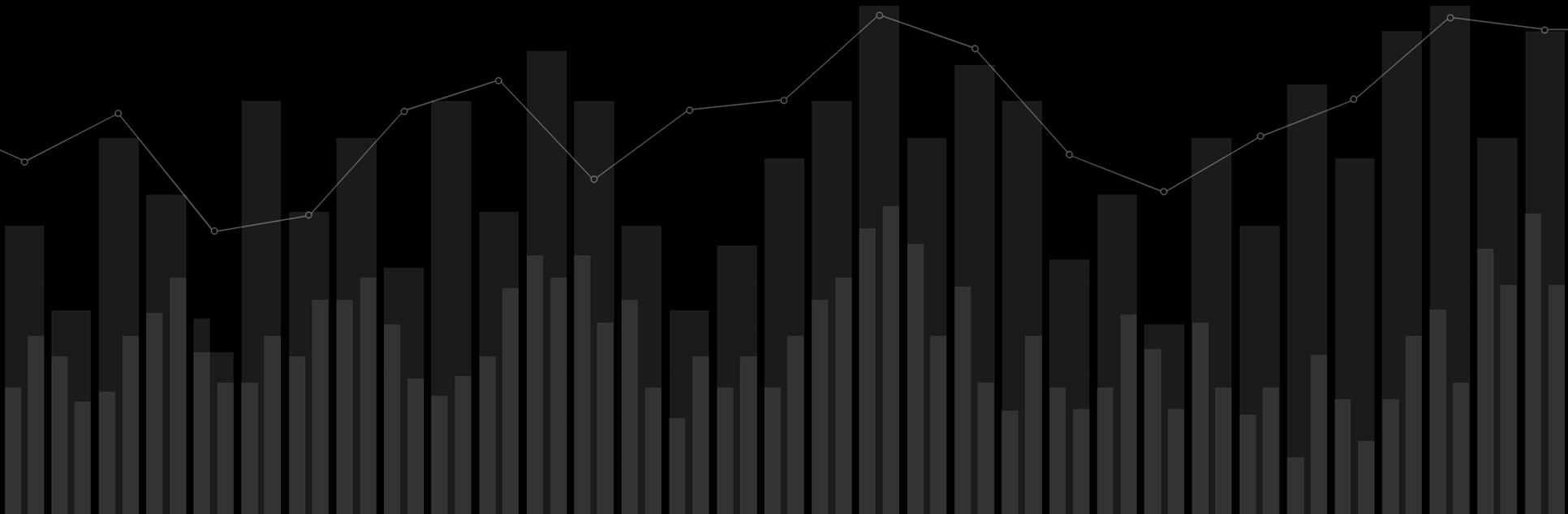
Research Design

This is a cross sectional descriptive study using a purposive sample of social workers who work with homeless youth.
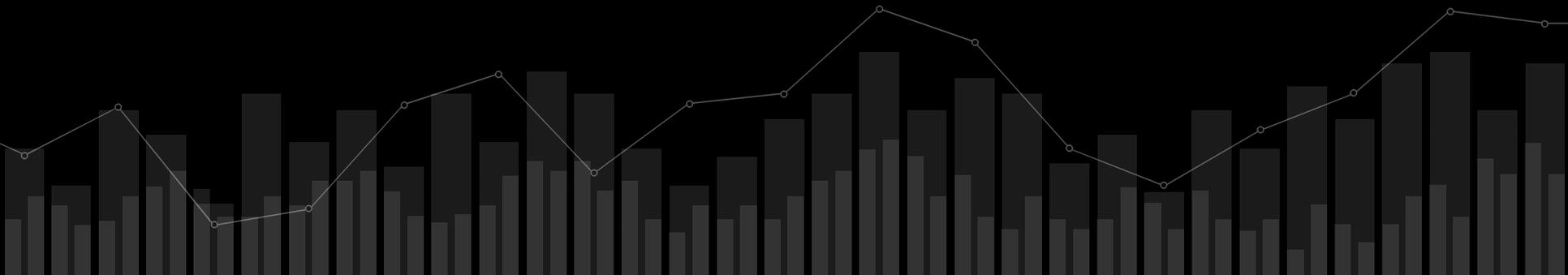
Population Selection Criteria & Sample

Population criteria:

- Licensed social worker, minimum

- Self-selected practice with at-risk homeless youth

Sample selection:

- Social workers consisting of NASW roster & public agency rosters for homeless shelters in the State of Ohio.

- Purposive sampling (With at-risk youth are identified by their social worker's as resilient)

Data Collection Procedures: part 1

Introduce participants to informed consent through a signed document.

Interview: Conduct a semistructured one hour interview with 30 social workers by going to homeless shelters in the State of Ohio. (Appendix A)

We will meet in a focus group for homeless youth at the shelters led by social workers so that we can observe client/worker interaction and gather more detailed field notes.
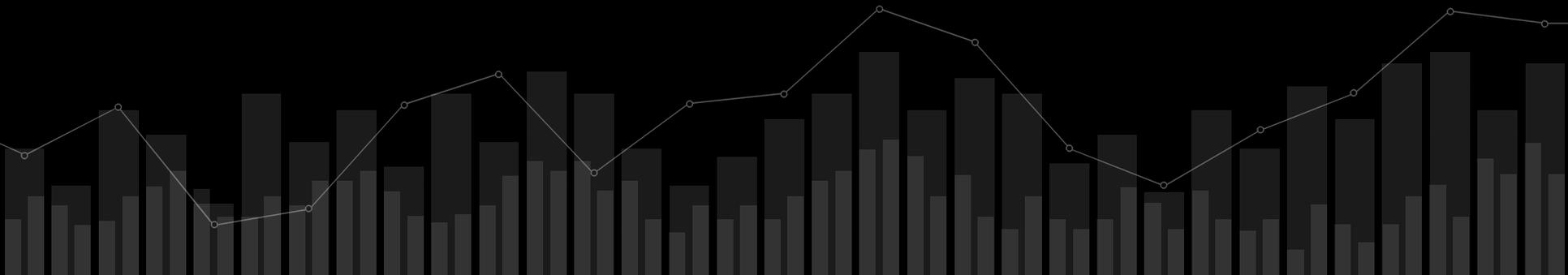
Data Collection Procedures: part 2

Participant observation: We will observe the social workers in their natural workplace setting by sitting in on their focus group. In a perfect scenario, we would sit on the other side of a one way mirror for viewing.

Review archival data: With permission, we will record and transcribe the interview for further research and discussion if needed.
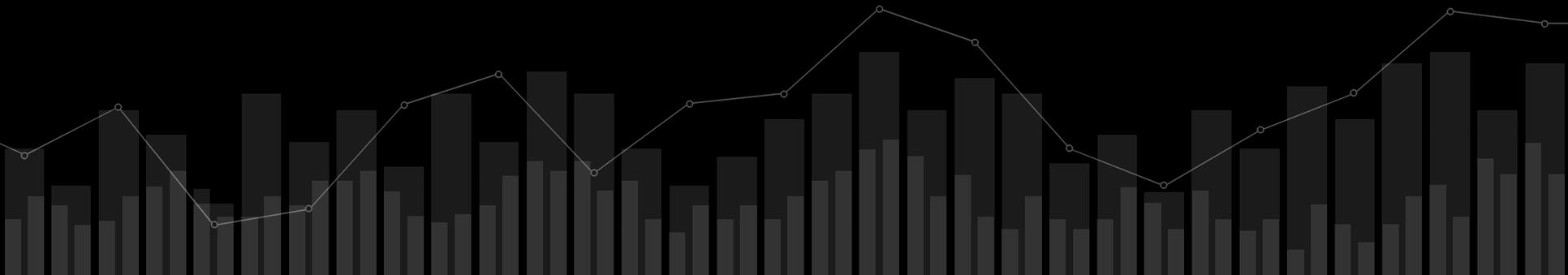
Data Analysis Procedures: part 1

Stage one: Spend at least 50 hours reviewing notes with literature to create domain analysis of observations.

Stage two: Taxonomic analysis working with social workers to organize the domains into a coherent classification system.
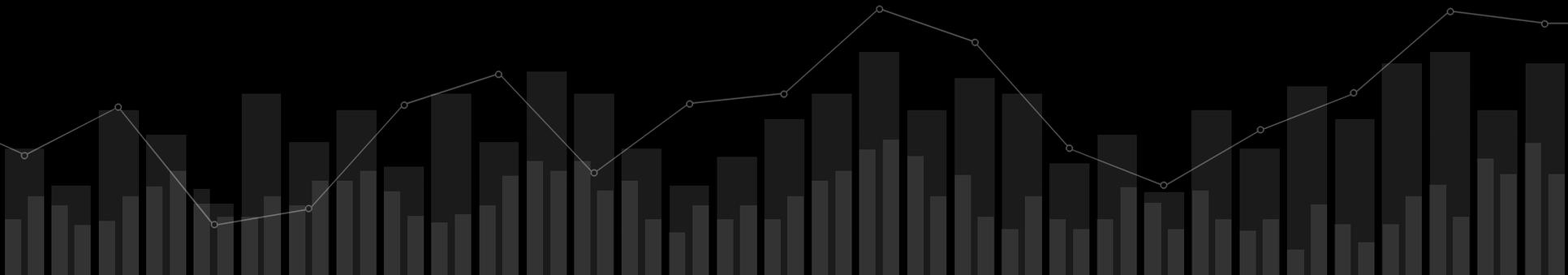
Predicted Findings

We predict that the homeless youth who are more resilient will show their social workers that they have a better support system and are more involved in government programs and funding than those who are at-risk.
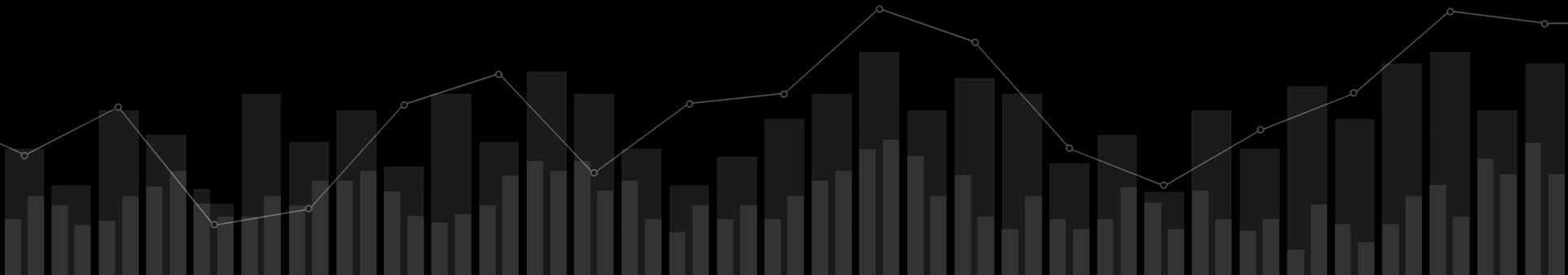
Triangulation of Data

We will use interviews, questionnaires/surveys, observation and journal articles in order to triangulate information that we receive. This will ensure accuracy of our information to the highest degree possible.
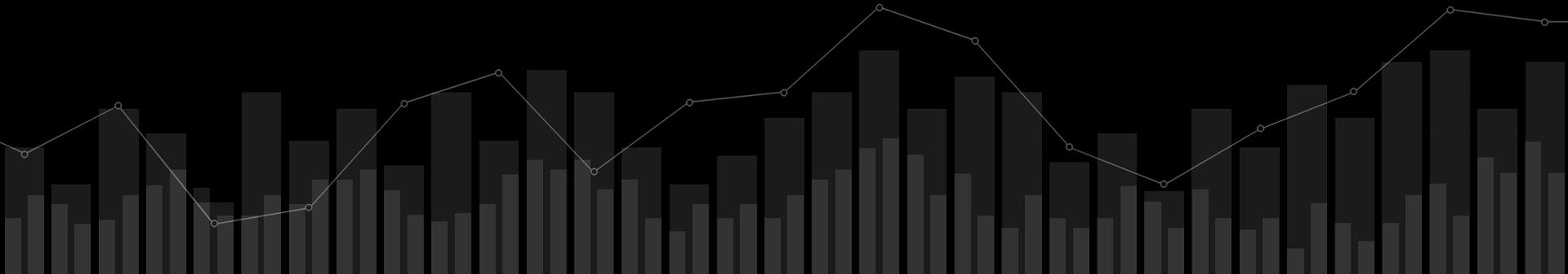
THANKS!

Any questions for us?

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Appendix A
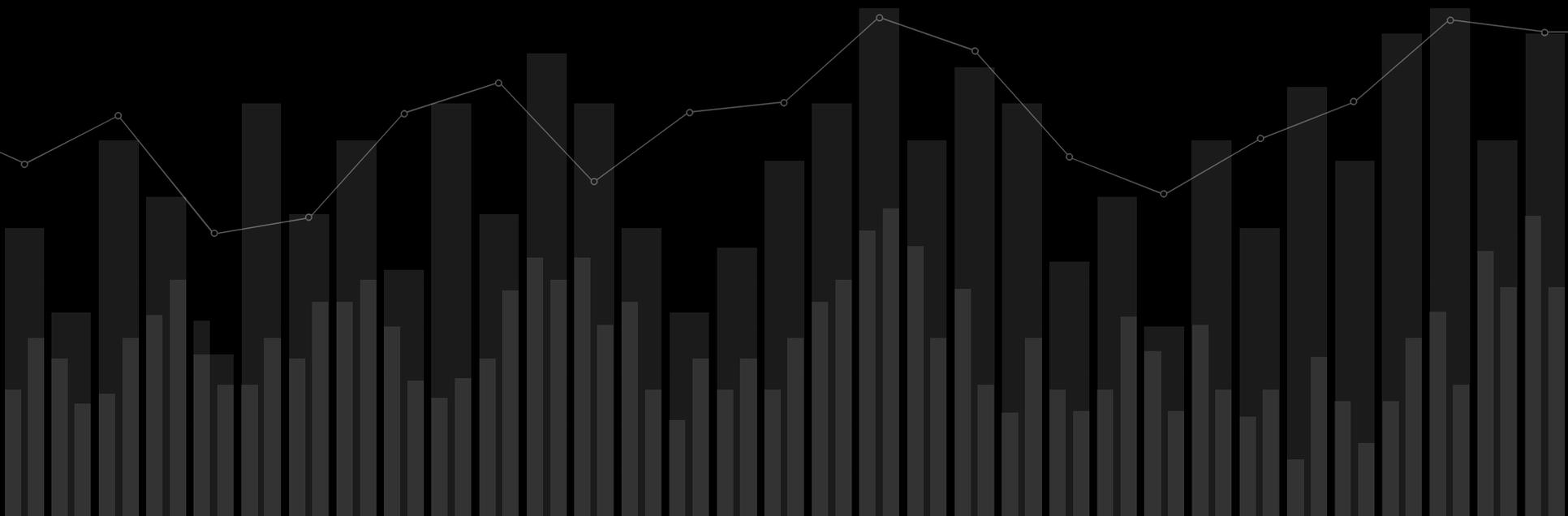
Initial Questions

(Categories for ages included-12 yrs, 16-18 yrs, 19-21 yrs, and 22-24 yrs.)

1. Of the youth you are aware of or work with in the agency, how many:
   a. HUD Youth Homelessness definition of homelessness? Please indicate the age and gender of the youth.
   b. How many of the above youth are in contact with other agency service providers? Please indicate the age and gender of the youth.
   c. May be "at risk" of becoming homeless? Please indicate the age and gender of the youth?
   d. How many of the above youth are in contact with other agency service providers? Please indicate the age and gender of the youth.
   e. Of the youth recorded:
      i. how many are living in your area?
      ii. How many are from your area but are living elsewhere?
      iii. And how many move back and forth between your area and other communities?
2. Of the youth you are aware of or work within your area who may be at-risk of homelessness, how many:
   a. Do not feel secure or content in their home/living situation? _____
   b. Have moved 3 or more times in the last 12 months? _____
   c. Would prefer a different living situation to the one they are currently in? _____
   d. Would prefer to live independently if they had the economic means? _____
   e. Have been away from their primary residence for 7 or more days in this month?
   f. Are gang/peer/boyfriend/girlfriend supported? _____
   g. Of the youth you have indicated as being "at risk of homelessness" who are in the 12 –18 year age range, how many:
      i. Do not live with their parents or legal guardians? _____
      ii. Do not live with any adults? _____
   h. Are there any youth you feel are at risk of homelessness due to other factors not mentioned in the previous questions? If yes, list how many and briefly describe what factors make them "at risk."
3. Additional information about protective/risk factors and gaps in services: Please place a check mark beside each core risk factor for homelessness that apply to the youth you work with, and to what degree they occur (never, rarely, sometimes, often).

SURVEY

Check	Risk Factor	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
	Substance use by youth				
	Substance use by parent/family members				
	Mental health concerns				
	Being or at-risk of sexual exploitation				
	Low level of parent supervision/connection				
	Family breakdown				
	Difficulties at school				
	Not attending school				
	Lack of housing				
	In care of government/youth agreement				
	Family violence, abuse, or neglect				
	History of sexual abuse				
	Disconnected from community				

S U R V E Y

	Cultural challenges				
	Low family income				
	Legal issues				
	Youth with developmental disabilities				
	Immigrant youth on their own (with family living overseas)				
	Youth with an acquired brain injury				
	Youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder				
	Aboriginal youth				
	LGBTQ Youth				

Final Questions

1. What do you think youth need to stay connected to home? Indicate three protective factors that could decrease the risk of homelessness in your area:
2. Prioritize three gaps in youth services in your area:

3. What other services are the youth in your cluster in contact with?

Our Field Notes:

_____