

# SEARCHING FOR A PLACE: THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF HOMELESS AND UNSTABLY HOUSED YOUTH IN BC

In the Spring of 2023, 838 BC youth aged 12–27 took part in McCreary’s *Homeless Youth Health and Wellness Survey (HYS)*. To learn more about the study and to see the full report, visit [mcs.bc.ca/hys](https://mcs.bc.ca/hys).

## AMONG YOUTH WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY:

**85%** reported first experiencing homelessness at age 18 or younger.

Among youth who had been homeless, **77%** had experienced this more than once.



The top reason for becoming homeless was being **kicked out of their home**.

**61%** had experienced government care or an alternative to care.

**84%** had at least one health condition or disability, including **72%** who had a mental health condition (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorder).

**58%** went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there wasn’t enough money for food.



**44%**

had a Naloxone kit



**84%** of these youth knew how to use it.

**71%** of those who used substances did so alone, at least occasionally.

**31%** had been the victim of a crime they didn’t report to the police—**67%** of these youth reported it was because they didn’t trust the police.

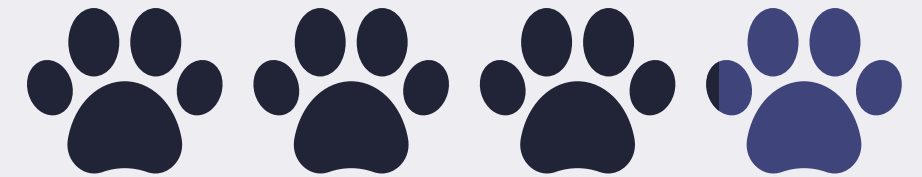
## SERVICES AND SUPPORTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE:

**52%** accessed mental health services, and **66%** of these youth found them helpful.

**40%** of those who had an adult who checked in with them reported good or excellent mental health vs. **16%** of those who did not have such an adult.

**76%**

who had a pet often or always felt safe where they were sleeping.



## YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR UNSTABLE HOUSING REPORTED NEEDING:



Safe and affordable (pet-friendly) housing for youth.



Portable health services (including mental health, and sexual health) for youth under 19.



Opportunities to develop natural supports and to have caring adults in their life.

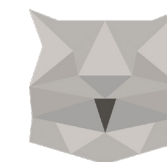


The option to self-refer to shelters, safe houses, and emergency housing options.



Easy access to reliable information about services available to young people, and particularly to those transitioning out of government care.

This fact sheet was created by members of McCreary’s Youth Research Academy (YRA). To learn more about the YRA, visit [mcs.bc.ca/youth\\_research\\_academy](https://mcs.bc.ca/youth_research_academy).



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