



WORKING TOGETHER: LIBRARIES ACTIVELY ADDRESSING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Julie Ann Winkelstein

Stephanie Bell

YALSA's Young Adult Services Symposium

November 2, 2019

Memphis, TN

**“INEQUALITY IS A HUMAN GENERATED
PROBLEM AND CAN THEREFORE BE CHANGED.”**

(FISHER-BORNE, CAIN & MARTIN, 2015, P.15)

TOPICS



Introduction



OUTMemphis



More about what libraries can do



Some examples



Action Plan: What can you do?



Recommended resources



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS: A FEW STATISTICS



(From The Night Ministry, Chicago,
<https://www.thenightministry.org/housing>)

**“EVERY YEAR, MORE THAN 2
MILLION KIDS IN AMERICA
WILL FACE A PERIOD OF
HOMELESSNESS.”**

**COVENANT HOUSE
([HTTPS://WWW.COVENANTHOUSE.ORG/HOMELESS-TEEN-ISSUES/STATISTICS](https://www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-teen-issues/statistics))**

57%
No food

20,000
Trafficking

50%
Foster/juvenile
legal

40%
Under 18



HOMELESS YOUTH
POPULATION



GENERAL YOUTH
POPULATION





Youth Homelessness: Shelby County

PRESENTED BY:

Stephanie Bell

Director of The Metamorphosis Project



What Is Youth Homelessness

HUD defines homelessness as four categories:

- **Category 1: Literal Homelessness:** Individuals and families who live in a place not meant for human habitation (including the streets or in their car), emergency shelter, transitional housing, and hotels paid for by a government or charitable organization.
- **Category 2 Imminent Risk of Homelessness:** Individuals or families who will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and have no other resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- **Category 3 Homeless Under Other Statutes:** Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not meet any of the other categories but are homeless under other federal statutes, have not had a lease and have moved 2 or more times in the past 60 days and are likely to remain unstable because of special needs or barriers.
- **Category 4 Fleeing Domestic Violence:** Individuals or families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who lack resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing



Metamorphosis Project

- The Metamorphosis Project of OUTMemphis is a long term solution to youth Homelessness. The program provides stable housing and services to homeless and at-risk LGBTQ youth, as well as preparing them to be more stable on their own.
- This project is the culmination of all the emergency services that we offer, and will finally allow us the space to provide support to one of our most vulnerable populations: LGBTQ 18-24 living on the streets
 - Emergency Services (YES) Program, which has provided food, clothes, hygiene supplies, and many other services for years.
 - The Rapid Re-Housing component will help us achieve the ultimate goal: providing clients a bridge to move from needing emergency shelter to living independently.



Metamorphosis Project, continued

Youth Emergency Services (YES) Program

- Emergency services for 18-24 year old LGBTQ youth includes:
- Food
- Clothes
- Hygiene supplies
- Case management
- Transportation Assistance

Youth Emergency Center:

- Under construction & expected open date 1/28/20
- 30-day Emergency Shelter for 18-24 year old LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness
- Youth Drop in Center for anyone 24 and under



Youth Barriers to Homelessness

- Family does not agree with lifestyle (sexual orientation/gender identity)
- Employment status
- Eviction on credit history
- Mental or health concerns
- Communication between youth and provider
- Limited resources
- Lack of acknowledgement/ awareness about youth homelessness

Memphis Shelters

- Most shelters are faith based
- The spaces are not Youth or LGBTQ friendly (especially transgender individuals)
- Some shelters require payment
- Lack of warming center open all winter or cooling centers in the summer

Youth Point In Time Count

- Youth Count is an initiative to help develop strategies so communities can better count and understand their homeless youth population.
- Community organizations get an accurate picture of youth homelessness in Memphis.
- OUTMemphis started the first Youth Count by surveying those who showed up at the center's weekly Gen Q youth group for LGBT young adults on Fridays & surveyed more than 100 youth.



Community Alliance for the Homeless

- <https://www.cafth.org>
- Community Alliance for the Homeless provides planning, technical assistance, and service coordination to public and private agencies that are working to end homelessness in Memphis and Shelby County.
- We believe that housing is a basic human right.
- We believe that homelessness is a solvable problem.
- We believe that our community is equipped with resources to impact positive change.



How Can You Help?

- Invite housing providers to table at your library
- Have a section for resource information
- Reach out to your local CoC
- Volunteer at homelessness events
- Host a Job Fair (a job could be a barrier to homelessness)
- Join Memphis/Shelby County Homeless Consortium



Contact Information

Stephanie Bell

(662) 912-6636

sbell@outmemphis.org

<https://www.outmemphis.org>



WHAT YOU CAN DO, CONTINUED



<http://www.iamsafezone.com/>

CONSIDER TRAUMA

- Hostile architecture
- Stigma
- Lived experiences



Renjishino, 2007

Protest against
anti-homeless spikes
outside apartments in
London

WHAT KIND OF
SOCIETY DO WE
LIVE IN WHERE
HOMELESSNESS
IS SOLVED WITH
SPIKES.

See Li Photo Capital
www.seeliphotocapital.com
<http://seeliphotocapital.virb.com/>
London Picture Capital
<http://londonpicturecapital.weebly.com/>
<http://www.allinukoorporateevents.co.uk/>

(Photo taken by See Li, 2014)

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE VOCABULARY

Emergency housing
Gender fluid
Social worker
Permanent housing
Wraparound services
Unstably housed
LGBTQ
Case worker
HMIS
Trauma informed
Point in Time
Low barrier
Shelter
Housing First
Trauma informed care
Transitional housing
Couch surfing
Emergency shelter
Harm reduction

LOOK AT LIBRARY CULTURE



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/istoletv/519756811>

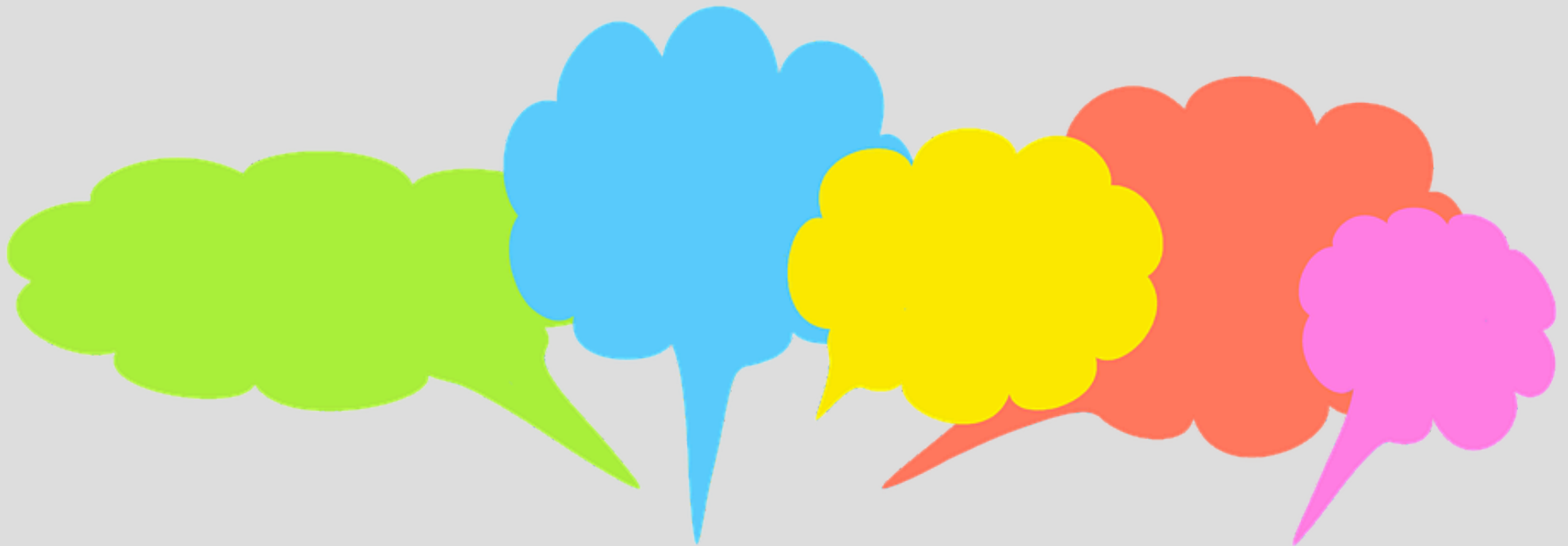
Who has been anticipated?

Whose voices are being heard?

How do displayed materials, featured programs, the library itself welcome the youth?

How do policies create barriers to serving the young people?

WHAT YOUTH SAY





Acknowledge
and include
us

Extend time
on
computers/
Internet

Provide
books we
can relate
to

Respect our
experiences:
don't
patronize

Your rules
and policies
are barriers
for us

We don't
feel safe
asking
questions



Be honest
& direct

Start with
where we
are: don't
be insistent

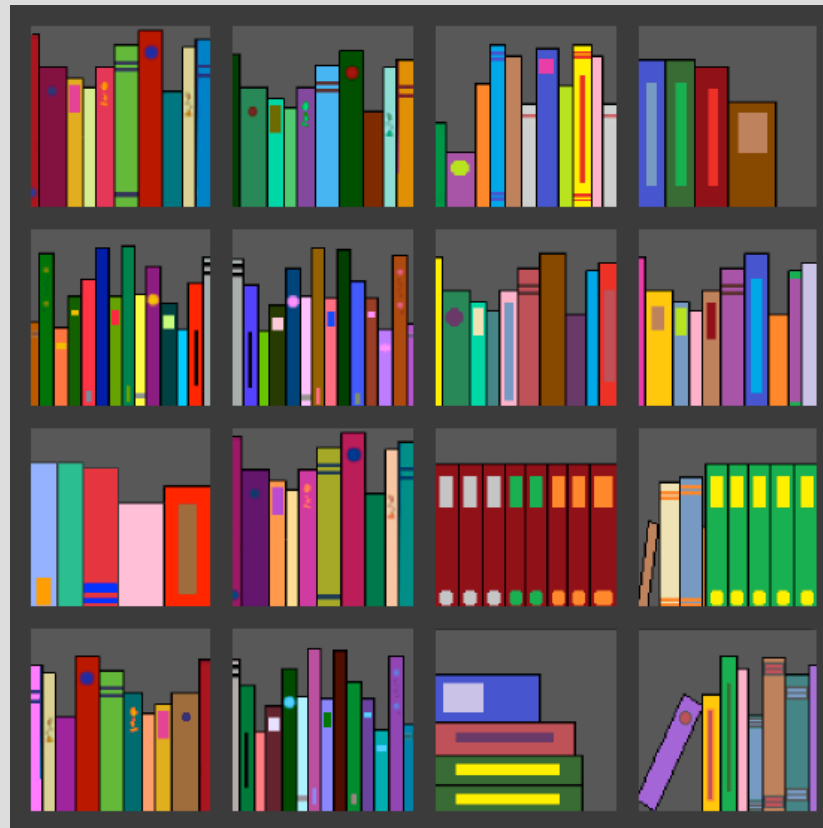
Keep our
information
confidential

Reduce
paperwork/
ask for less
information

Create a
referral
system
that is
direct

Be trauma-
informed

UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR RESOURCES/SERVICES



RESOURCES/SERVICES

Free
Internet

Local
resources

Computer/
laptops

Bathrooms

*Personal
Connections

Charging
stations

PARTNER WITH YOUTH-SERVING AGENCIES

Know the community

Find common goals

Be a local or national partner

Work collaboratively

Tell them about libraries

Persist!



THINK BEYOND STABLY HOUSED YOUTH

Include youth & agencies in book-related
and other events

Example:

YALSA Teens' Top Ten

Ongoing announcements from YALSA,
ALA, PLA

Use your connections!

WHAT SOME LIBRARIES ARE DOING



<http://www.decaturga.com/city-government/city-departments/fire/safe-place>

Family Literacy

“Safe Place”

Rapid Alert
Network
(RAN)

Transportation

Food/hygiene

Staff training

Social workers

Offer meeting
rooms

Laptop

Books to
shelter

Honor
shelf

Library
tours

Point-in-time
counts

Youth
Advisory
Boards

Showcase
youth work

Panel



The Seattle Public Library

LIBRARY NEWS RELEASE

Release Date: 05/20/2016

'Youth Homelessness: Advocacy & Action' Panel Discussion at The Seattle Public Library June 1

The Seattle Public Library will host a panel on youth and young adult homelessness from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 1 at the Central Library, 1000 Fourth Ave., Level 1, Microsoft Auditorium, 206-386-4636.



Library events are free and open to the public. Registration is not required.

This event will engage audience members in a conversation about the causes of youth homelessness, as well as potential solutions. The panel will examine questions such as:

- Why are some groups disproportionately represented among insecurely housed young people?
- How are local agencies and organizations addressing youth homelessness?
- How can community members take action and advocate for young people experiencing homelessness?

GETTING STARTED CHECKLIST

- Consider your forms: Are they gendered? Could they be gender neutral? Example: Instead of he/her, use their or instead of his/hers, use theirs
- If you don't already have all-gender bathrooms, could you?
- Examine your signage: Is the wording positive or negative? Does it say “No, no, no”? Or does it state what is possible? Example: **Don't** speak loudly vs speak softly
- Do you have indicators, such as rainbow flags, that this is a place where LGBTQ+ youth are invited and welcome?
- State your pronouns and ask others for theirs. When you make a mistake, quickly apologize and correct yourself.
- If you have photos/art work on the walls, does it represent everyone?
- Listen, listen, listen – and follow the lead of the youth
- Be conscious of your language

ACTION PLAN: WHAT CAN YOUR LIBRARY DO?

Work together/
individually

Fill out
Action Plan

Share

Thoughts?
Comments? Ideas?

SOME RESOURCES

<https://mic.com/articles/111900/9-things-gender-nonconforming-people-are-tired-of-hearing#.O7uRkHgmO>

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

GLSEN: <https://www.glsen.org/>

PFLAG: <https://pflag.org/>

“Where Am I Going to Go?: Intersectional Approaches to Ending LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness in Canada and the U.S.”

<http://homelesshub.ca/whereamigoingtogo>

Ali Forney Center: <https://www.aliforneycenter.org/about-us/>

True Colors United : <https://truecolorsunited.org/>

MISSEY: <https://misseymissouri.org/>

Larkin Street Youth Services: <https://larkinstreetyouth.org/>

Point Source Youth: <https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/>

MORE RESOURCES

- “Language Matters: Changing the Way We Think About Mental Health Challenges by Changing the Way We Speak.” Julian Plumadore & Terri Byrne. Retrieved from mentalhealthsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/.../161CHC-A1_C5-Language-Matters.pdf
- “Resilience, Grit and Other Lies: Academic Libraries and the Myth of Resiliency” – Angela Galvan, Jacob Berg, Eamon Tewell. Retrieved from <http://pralhad-fyilibrarian.blogspot.com/2017/05/acrl-2017-resilience-grit-and-other.html>
- “From Mastery to Accountability: Cultural Humility as an Alternative to Cultural Competence.” Marcie Fisher-Borne, Jessie Montana Cain & Suzanne L. Martin. *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, November 21, 2014.
- “Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America.” Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from <http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>
- “Why They Run: An In-Depth Look at America’s Runaway Youth.” National Runaway Safeline. Retrieved from <https://www.1800runaway.org/homeless-teen-research/why-they-run/>

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

THANK YOU!

Julie Ann Winkelstein

jwinkels@utk.edu

Stephanie Bell

sbell@outmemphis.org