

Youth Count Focus Group Write-Up

Overview

Two focus groups were undertaken with youth participants recruited through Stand Up for Kids and Orangewood Foundation. Focus groups were provided both virtually (stand Up for Kids) and in-person (Orangewood Foundation). A total of 15 youth participated.

Survey Feedback

1. Question
Which of the following best fits how you think about your sexual orientation? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Heterosexual (Straight)- Bisexual- Gay or Lesbian- Other (Specify.....)- Refused to answer
Youth Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove “Other” from question – feel like I’m being put in a box• Question may not feel safe, however with a non-judgmental approach could feel safe and there’s an option to not answer• Important to know sexual orientation due to high numbers of LGBTQ youth homeless• Approach on asking question- Ask in private
Overall Suggestion
Important to ask, no wording changes needed
2. Question
What is the reason for leaving or finding yourself without a stable place to live? (What drop down answers do we want?)
Youth Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question could be triggering• Put a section for “Other” or “Refused to answer” so youth have a way out of answering it• One answer is hard, usually more than one factor• Use general answers such as Sexuality, Violence in the home, feeling unsafe etc, family conflict (violence, religion, etc)• Choice – some youth choose to be homeless or don’t have a choice• Add financial• Can relate to others- losing everything

- Too complicated to explain, one answer not enough
- Wanting to be independent
- Addiction and drug use
- Disability
- Health-Financial
- Maybe also include questions if a youth is running from a domestic violence relationship or trafficking

Overall Suggestion

Don't ask this question if don't have to. Youth unanimously didn't feel safe answering it, as it brought up emotion or didn't want to tell a stranger personal history. Youth also felt one answer didn't capture the many reasons for becoming homeless. If asking the question, provide general over arching answers and an option to not have to answer.

3. Question

Are you currently enrolled in:

- High School Diploma
- GED
- College
- Another education program (Specify.....)

Youth Feedback

- If we know they are at school and homeless we would be able to help them
- It's hard to do school when housing is unstable
- Have information available if a youth is interested in schooling - have a pamphlet with information
- Need documentation, help obtaining documents
- Specify what school, college attending
- Add trade school
- Add do you intend to enroll
- I got more important things to think about, like getting my next meal
- Education and Employment should be two separate questions
- Ask what's stopping you from attending such as Health Issues (Disease, disability)

Overall Suggestion

Important to ask, possibly add trade school and specific school etc. Have information to hand out to youth if interested

4. Question

Do you receive any of the following assistance?

- Medicare
- Food Stamps

- General Relief (GR)
- SSI
- AB12/SILP
- Welfare cash assistance

Youth Feedback

- It's important because if they don't have any financial resources (or any resources), they could be connected to some.
- Add Financial Aid
- Add donations, food banks
- Add Unemployment (EDD)

Overall Suggestion

Youth felt it was important to ask in case a youth is not connected or not aware and can be linked to resources. Suggested to add financial aid, food banks, unemployment.

5. Question

Are you pregnant or parenting?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Refuse to answer

Youth Feedback

- Important question to ask
- Could be too Personal
- Could be upsetting
- If you're a parent, and/or single parent, you need all the help you can get
- It's important to know if they have a kid or not so we can help them
- Help with medical checkups – for pregnant, for child
- What can I do to make my life stable to get my kid back?

Overall Suggestion

Youth felt it was important to ask, able to link to resources. No wording changes needed.

6. Question

Have you ever been in Foster Care?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

- Refuse to answer

Youth Feedback

- Yes, very important – if they need help connect them to resources
- Some youth may not know that they are still able to get help-resources after Foster Care
- Kicked out as soon as they turned 18, need more resources

Overall Suggestion

Youth felt it was important to ask, able to link to resources.

Other Youth Suggestions For Survey

Ask pronouns - Important to ask this question at the beginning when first meet a youth, so you know what they would like to be called. It's being respectful and will help put the youth at ease.