

Developing Evidence-Based Effective Principles for Working with Homeless Youth: A Developmental Evaluation of the Otto Bremer Foundation's Support for Collaboration Among Agencies Serving Homeless Youth

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Abstract

This study was conducted as part of The Otto Bremer Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative and their support for collaboration among six agencies serving homeless youth in the Twin Cities area. As part of this initiative, agencies identified nine shared principles and participated in a principles-based utilization-focused developmental evaluation. The purpose of this research was trifold. First, it was an attempt to gain an understanding of the experiences of fourteen unaccompanied homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 24 living in the Twin Cities metro area who were making substantial progress and had utilized services at two or more of the six grantee organizations. The second purpose was to understand how the shared principles of these organizations had been implemented in practice. The third purpose was to explore the extent to which implementation of these principles helped lead to healthy youth development from the perspective of the youth. The researcher employed a multiple case study approach. Qualitative data were generated from interviews with youth, street workers, agency staff, Foundation staff, and case file reviews. Fourteen individual case studies were written, and a cross-case analysis was conducted. The analysis provides insight into how the principles were enacted, as well as how they supported a young person's healthy trajectory. This study found that all nine principles were evident in case stories, albeit some more so than others. All principles interacted and overlapped, but each added something unique to the organizations' approach to working with youth. Implications for practice, evaluation, policy, and funding are discussed. This research makes significant contributions to evaluation theory and methods by examining principles as the evaluand and providing a method by which to evaluate principles. It provides a contribution to evaluation practice by providing an exemplar for how principles-driven evaluation can be used to drive change in complex systems.

Context for this Study

The Otto Bremer Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative is a commitment by the Otto Bremer Foundation to fund six grantees in the Twin Cities area at \$4 million over three years. The goal is to build on the research related to youth development, resiliency, and prevention, focusing on strategies and programs that had already proven to be effective. The six grantees (three emergency shelters, two youth opportunity drop-in centers, and one street outreach organization) received funding dedicated to expanding their existing services, as well as to support collaboration and improved outcomes at the systems level. This approach is in recognition of the fact that youth homelessness is a systems level problem that cannot be addressed adequately by any one organization, and the knowledge that many homeless youth accessing services in the Twin Cities area will come into contact with several of the six organizations while experiencing homelessness.

The Otto Bremer Foundation convened grantee leadership at least once per month to engage in reflective practice and a principles-based, utilization-focused developmental evaluation in order to support their ongoing collaboration. This reflective practice group (which is still meeting at the time of this paper's completion) consists of the Otto Bremer Foundation's Executive Director and three program officers, leadership from the six grantee organizations, and the evaluator, for a total of approximately eighteen members. This reflective practice group decided to engage in a particular type of evaluation: a principles-based utilization-focused developmental evaluation.

As part of this work, leaders of the six organizations collaboratively identified the nine shared principles based on a review of the six organizations' existing missions, visions, values, and/or philosophy statements. The nine principles developed were described at the onset of this study as: harm reduction, trusting relationships, positive youth development, trauma-informed care, non-judgmental, journey-oriented, strengths/assets-based, collaborative, and holistic. All of the organizations had at least three of the nine principles stated in their individual missions, visions, values, and/or philosophies at the outset. Journey-oriented emerged from group member discussions and does not currently appear on any of the organizations' missions, visions, values, and/or philosophy statements. These principles had not been systematically and empirically validated. The research sought to explore to what extent were these principles actually being implemented in practice and, if implemented, explore to what extent the principles were effective in meeting the needs of homeless youth. The research questions follow.

Process questions: 1) How do homeless youth actually experience the principles: harm reduction, trusting relationships, positive youth development, trauma-informed care, non-judgmental, journey-oriented, strengths/assets-based, collaborative, and holistic? 2) What does implementation of the principles look like in practice?

Outcome questions: 3) What are the impacts of the principles articulated above on ways to work with homeless youth? 4) In what ways does the work impact the trajectory of the lives of young people?

Emergent question: 5) What other important principles may be guiding the work with youth, principles not yet fully identified, labeled, or understood?

Statement of the Problem

Homelessness among adolescents and young adults is a major social concern in the United States (Robertson & Toro, 1999). Each year, hundreds of thousands of adolescents spend the night on the streets, in shelters, in abandoned buildings, or in some other inadequate location without supervision by an adult caretaker (Fowler, Toro, & Miles, 2009; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). The number of youth suffering from homelessness in any given year, however, is difficult to determine. Various sampling and estimation techniques yield quite different results, and estimates vary widely, depending on how homelessness is defined and measured. It is commonly cited that approximately 7.6% of 12- to 20-year-old youths spend at least one night per year in a shelter facility (Ringwalt, Greene, Robertson, & McPheeters, 1998), but no national count includes those who stay in shelters *and* those who stay in unsupervised locations (Witte, 2012). Kidd (2012) wrote, "The only agreed-upon points regarding the number of homeless youth in North America is that it is large (e.g., one million youth in the United States) and it is likely growing" (p. 534).

Homeless youth are a heterogeneous group. Some of these young people become homeless during adolescence in response to high levels of family conflict and maltreatment that leads them to run away; whereas others are forced to leave when parents will no longer provide care (Thompson, Bender, Windsor, Cook, & Williams, 2010). Other adolescents have aged out of foster care or juvenile justice placements, typically between the ages of 18 and 21, and have no home to which they can return (Haber & Toro, 2004) and no network of people to help meet their needs. Homelessness often occurs slowly, over a number of years; youths have reported that there was not a single event that precipitated homelessness, but rather a series of cumulative events (Kennedy, Agbényiga, Kasiborski, & Gladden, 2010).

Regardless of their pathways into homelessness, homeless youth share many background characteristics, including high residential mobility (Cauce, Paradise, Ginzler, Embry, Morgan, Lohr, & Theofelis, 2000; Toro & Goldstein, 2000), a high degree of conflict in the family, and high rates of child abuse and/or neglect (Caton, Wilkins, & Anderson, 2007). Four specific groups of young people at an increased risk of becoming homeless are: youths who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler, & Cauce, 2002); young women who are pregnant or have children (Halcón & Lifson, 2004); young people of color (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2008); and youth who have been under the supervision of the child welfare or juvenile justice system (Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002).

Viewing Youth Homelessness Through a Systems Lens

While there are many reasons why youth leave home and as many frameworks in which to investigate the problem, The National Alliance to End Homelessness divides the causes for youth homelessness into two categories: family breakdown, and system failure. While these categorizations may not capture all the causes of youth homelessness, they suggest that the problem is, at least in part, a societal one and not one caused by the youth themselves (Schneir et al., 2007). This is consistent with the near consensus reached by researchers that there are overarching structural barriers—such as lack of health insurance, absence of stable housing, and inadequate shelter resources—that help to account for the myriad of negative outcomes documented in studies of homeless youth (Zerger, Strehlow, & Gundlapalli, 2008). This study is important because it addressed another gap in the literature by applying a systems lens to the research design. This framework considers homelessness as a problem rooted in multiple competing systems rather than as a failure of any individual young person or single organization.

Given that the impact of homelessness is felt in multiple interrelated formal and informal systems, it can be helpful to think of homelessness as systems problems, or a problem that goes “beyond the capacity of any one organisation [sic] to understand and respond to” (Briggs, 2007, p. 1). A single homeless youth may be interacting simultaneously with his or her family system, peer network, educational entities, the foster care system, the juvenile justice system, a youth drop-in center, and a homeless shelter. As a result, meeting the needs of a single youth, as well as addressing the systemic phenomenon of youth homelessness, requires that individuals, organizations and systems collaborate to both meet the needs of individual youth and address the growing social problem.

Significance to the Field of Evaluation

The field of evaluation has traditionally focused on programs. Take, for example, The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation mission statement: “The mission of the reconstituted Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation is to promote concern for evaluations of high quality based on sound evaluation practices and procedures and to meet existing and emerging needs in the field of evaluation...” (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1995, p. 4). The resulting evaluation standards are the Program Evaluation Standards (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2011), placing the emphasis of the standards on evaluation of programs. It makes sense then, given the framing of youth homelessness as a systems problem, to discuss the intersection of systems thinking and evaluation.

Interest in large-scale social change among foundations, governments, researchers, and social entrepreneurs has led to an increased focus on the design, implementation, and evaluation of system change through complex interventions (Hargreaves, Parsons, & Moore, 2010; Hargreaves, 2010; Leischow & Milstein, 2006). Increasingly, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers are acknowledging that the systems they are seeking to change and improve need to be viewed not as a machine but as a complex, adaptive entity (Eoyang, 2007; Kitson, 2009; McDaniel et al., 2009; Patton, 2010; Patton, 2012b). The reasons for this growth in popularity are likely as diverse as those who believe it holds great promise. Yet beneath these reasons may lie a more fundamental explanation for the allure of systems thinking: It offers a model for thinking that resonates with people who live and work in these systems (Cabrera et al., 2008; Patton, 2010; Zimmerman, Lindberg, & Plsek, 2009). Evaluators working in complex arenas posit that evaluations should be designed to address the complexity of the system in and on which the evaluation is taking place (Parsons, 2012; Patton, 2010).

Developing Evidence-Based Principles

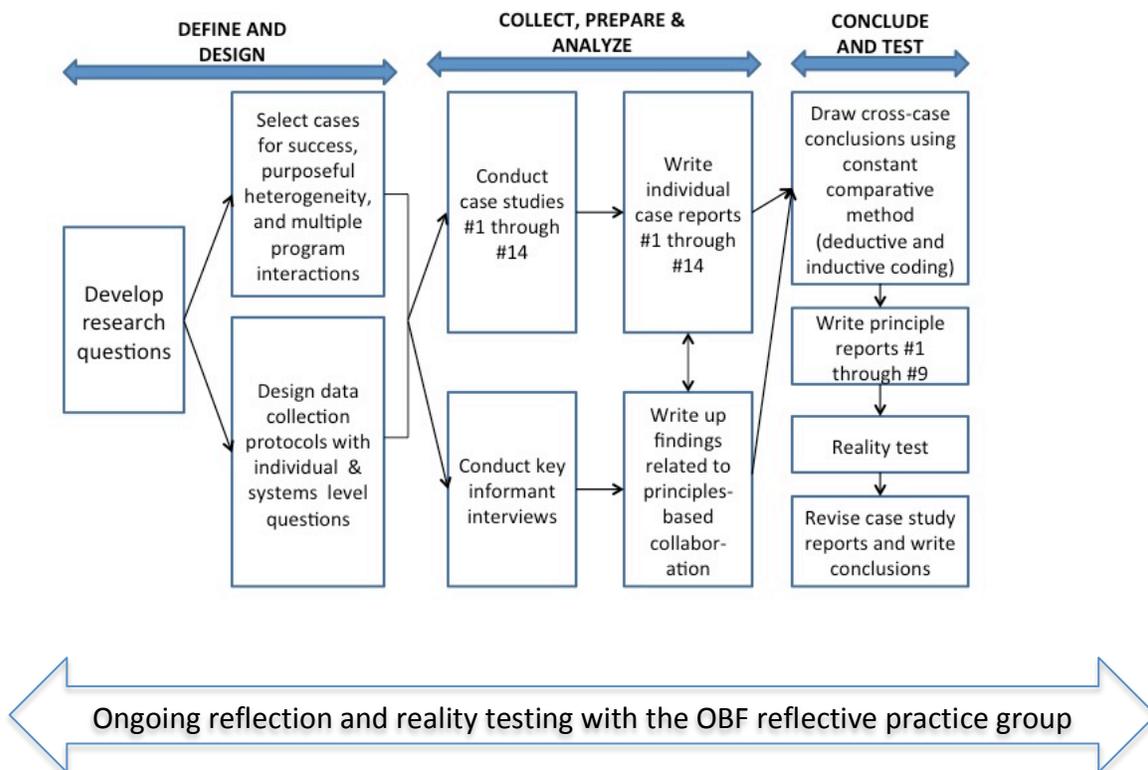
Developing evidence-based principles is an emerging approach that is in contrast to the more traditional approach of developing evidence-based best practices. Evidence-based best practices and evidence-based principles make different assumptions and have different strengths and weaknesses. The label “evidence-based best practice” describes “standardized procedures sometimes but not always validated through randomized controlled experiments or, as second choice, quasi-experimental designs” (Patton, 2012, p. 155). Best practice models are based on the assumption that there is a *best* way to do things, regardless of context. Evidence-based effective principles are different in that they have to be “interpreted and adapted to context” (Patton, 2010, p. 167). Rather than providing a standardized model or method, principles provide guidance for action in the face of complexity. Rather than seeking to develop evidence of a best practice that can be applied the same way in multiple settings without consideration of context, evidence of effective principles guides cohesive decision making and action across diverse contexts. Michael Quinn Patton wrote about this approach in his book, *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use* (2010); however, to date, there is little published research exploring how the implementation of such would impact actual practice. Clearly, youth homelessness is a complex social problem. This study is important because it contributes to the evaluation field by exploring the role that principles can play as an evaluation and that principles-based developmental evaluation can play in informing a collaborative systems-level response to an seemingly intractable social problem.

Research Design and Methods

Evidence of effective principles is the “synthesis of the results of a group of diverse programs all adhering to the same principles but each adapting those principles to its own particular target population within its own context” (Patton, 2014, p. 25). A multiple case study approach to answer the research questions set forth above because it provides a way to gather data and conduct an analysis across multiple programs and contexts. Qualitative data were generated from interviews with fourteen youth, as well as with street workers, agency and Foundation staff. Quantitative data were collected through a review of the young people’s case files. Individual case stories were written, and the constant comparative method was applied to a cross-case analysis. This approach allowed the researcher to understand the heterogeneity of experiences and to explore them through a systems lens. A reflective practice group comprised of eighteen individuals, representing program leaders and foundation staff, convened monthly to engage with the data and participate in the analysis. Individual case stories were written, and both deductive and inductive coding was conducted, using the constant comparison method to identify if, where, and how the youth experienced the principles in action.

It must be noted that this research study is a component of a larger, longer, developmental evaluation initiative. The research component was included as an important part of the evaluation because it systematically gathered youth voice and provided information about a principles-based approach to collaboration. This is an important part of the developmental evaluation, because the stakeholders were not interested in gathering evaluative data about individual programs; rather, they sought research data on a principles-based approach, related to the nine principles in particular, that could be relevant to the larger field of homeless youth.

An overview of the research design is included in the figure below. Important aspects of the design will be explained in greater detail.



Qualitative Approach

This research used an interpretive qualitative paradigm to frame the study, a framework characterized by the notion of multiple, constructed realities, rather than a single true reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretive refers to participant observational research that has, at its center, an interest in identifying human meaning in social life with particular attention to context and original intent (Patton, 2001). I chose to use qualitative inquiry for this study because the paradigm creates an opportunity to understand this approach as experienced by those who matter the most: the homeless youths themselves. It is the experiences of the youth, as described by the youth, that sheds the most light on the phenomenon in question. It is also appropriate for the study of a principles-based approach to evaluation given its relative newness and the dearth of literature on this evaluation approach.

Multiple Case Method

This research used the multiple case study analysis approach described by Robert Stake (2006). Multiple case study design is useful for investigation, description, and explanation of complex social phenomena (Stake, 1994; Yin, 1994). The multiple case method is used when the researcher seeks a better understanding of how this whole, or *quintain*, operates in different situations. In this case, the quintain is the principles-based work that each grantee is engaging in through The Otto Bremer Foundation's Homeless Youth Initiative. Each unique case is selected for what it can reveal about the quintain. Stake (2006, p. 86) writes, "To carry out the study of the quintain, we need to organize separately our data gathering and reporting of the individual cases. These case studies will have one or a few research questions (issues) in common and will have others particular to each. The issues are important problems about which people disagree—complicated problems within complex situations." All decisions, such as recruitment strategy, sampling techniques, and interview protocols, are made with the quintain in mind rather than the individual cases, keeping in mind that the cases should seek out and present multiple perspectives, contradictory testimony, and competing values (Stake, 2006). In this case, it is through the experiences of the youth that we understand how collaboration between among agencies serving homeless youth impacts the experiences or outcomes for unaccompanied homeless youth in the Twin Cities area who use services provided by one of the six grantees.

Reflective Practice Group

Reflective practice involves creating a habit, structure, or routine to examine an experience (Schön, 1983). A reflective practice group is convened for the purpose of regularly and consistently examining an experience together. Reflective practice groups can vary in terms of how often they meet, how much time they devote to group reflection, the scope and scale of the experience upon which they are reflecting, and why that reflection is being performed. In this particular instance, The Otto Bremer Foundation convened members of a reflective practice group at least once per month for a period of nearly two years to engage in an examination of the ways in which they could improve outcomes for youth experiencing homelessness, while bringing additional attention and intentionality to their collaboration with each other. Throughout this research process, the researcher met with the reflective practice group nine times for sessions ranging from two to five hours.

The reflective practice group was an important part of the process for several reasons. First, engagement with the reflective practice group increased the veracity of the case stories. In a few

instances, a young person recalled a timeline incorrectly or interpreted an important interaction differently than the staff. In such instances, cases were adjusted to reflect the divergent understandings of what happened. Second, it is easy for a researcher to read research literature about practice and not truly understand the practice. For example, one can read about taking a non-judgmental engagement in the literature and understand it in an academic sense. However, what is not clear in the literature is that there are times when being non-judgmental is not appropriate. The cases demonstrated that when a relationship between a youth and staff person develop a certain degree of trust on the part of the youth, the young person may actually values honest feedback over non-judgement. Working with the reflective practice group made the principles come to life. Third, the group took ownership of the process and supported the research in many ways from helping the research connect with youth, providing case files, arranging meeting rooms, etc. While this may not sound critical, these small details are critical to the momentum of an evaluation.

Case Selection

Upon approval from the university's Institutional Review Board for the study, participants were selected using a purposeful sampling approach called "heterogeneity sampling" (Patton, 2002). The strength of heterogeneity sampling is that themes that arise out of variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and shared dimensions of an experience (Patton, 2002, p. 235). Since the research goal was to investigate the full range of experiences across various settings, a heterogeneity sampling model was appropriate because it allowed us to see how principles were enacted in various settings (street outreach, drop-in centers, and emergency shelters) and with youth with different reasons for becoming homeless, different levels of interactions with foster care and juvenile justice, different parenting status, difference races, and so forth.

Youth selected were between the ages of 18 and 24, were or had been homeless and unaccompanied by family, utilized services provided by least 2 of the 6 grantees, were identified by staff as being reasonably reflective and articulate, and had made substantial progress towards their goals. The 14 youth represented high involvement with the foster care system (64%) and the juvenile justice system (57%). More than a third of them were pregnant or parenting (36%), and nearly half disclosed being sexually exploited (43%). These statistics are similar to those presented in the literature review. All but one youth met the criteria of utilizing services from more than one of the 6 organizations, and more than a third of the youth (36%) utilized services from 4 or more programs. One young woman who had only interacted with one of the six grantee organizations was included in the sample because she provided the important voice of someone who was homeless in an abusive and sexually exploitative relationship.

While the case stories written for this research relied heavily on the young people's stories of their own journeys, data were also included from interviews with one staff person, nominated by each youth, who knew him or her well. Young people were asked to nominate one person who: worked at one of the six reflective practice organizations; knew them well; and was reachable for interviews about the youth and their journey. There were two reasons for the staff interviews. The first purpose was to potentially add detail and depth to the case stories by gaining a second perspective on the young person's journey. The second was to add validity to the accuracy of the case studies through triangulation. Among the fourteen youth, a total of ten staff people were

nominated across all six organizations. Eight youth nominated a case manager, three nominated a program administrator, two nominated a therapist, and one nominated an outreach worker. Five of the young people first met the staff person they nominated at a drop-in center, five at a youth shelter, three at a supporting housing program, and one at an emergency child protective shelter.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Once the fourteen youth were selected as cases, I worked with program staff at each of the organizations to set up a time for the interview. How this was done depended on the organization and their typical protocols for corresponding with youth. In some cases, they set up the interviews; in others, they gave my contact information to the young person and asked him or her to call me. Interviews were held in a public location, usually the drop-in center, a shelter, or a transitional living program. They lasted an average of 78 minutes, but ranged from 72 to 103 minutes. At the beginning of each interview session, I gave the youth a copy of the informed consent form that we reviewed together, as well as fifty dollars in cash. Participants were informed about their rights while involved in the research, including the opportunity to discontinue or take a break at any time. The participants and I discussed the limits of confidentiality and the use of a pseudonym. They were also informed that the money was theirs to keep, regardless of whether they decided to participate in the interview or not. I asked for their permission to record the interview, to view their case files, and to interview the nominated staff person; all students agreed. Some nominated a staff person right away, while others waited until the conclusion of the interview.

Next, I contacted the staff nominated by each youth, ten in total. Each professional had played a role at some point in the youth's journey. Staff interviews lasted an average of sixty-five minutes and ranged from fifty-one to ninety-three minutes. The longer interviews were with staff who were questioned about two of the young people. The staff also made case files available to me. As I could not remove the case files from the locations, I simply sat with the files in a private location at each agency and took hand notes of my observations.

Writing and Reviewing Case Studies

Case studies were written by organizing the youth interviews, the staff interviews, and the case file notes into a linear story for each young person. The primary text for writing the case study was the youth interview. Priority was placed on using the participants' quotations when possible and to keep the intention of their words and story when paraphrasing. If I was unsure whether I was writing their interpretation of an event or my own, I would return to the transcript to confirm that I was indeed reflecting their telling of the experience rather than my own interpretation. The staff interview was added to more deeply convey an incident or period of time, to add a new dimension to the story, or to add information that was not shared in the interview. Case study notes were primarily used to establish the dates and sequence of events. In only one instance, there was a discrepancy between or among the youth interview, the staff interview, and the case file.

I met with eleven of the youth to read them their final story. I could not make contact with three of the youth because they had moved or did not return calls and emails. Of the eleven youth I did meet with, I handed them a hard copy of the case story and gave them three options. They could read their story silently, they could read it aloud to me, or I could read it aloud to them. All

eleven youth chose one of the two latter options. I had an electronic copy of the case story open on my computer so we could make necessary changes as they arose. No one made substantive changes to their story. Once I had gotten the age of a child wrong and that correction was made. In another story I had used the word *drugs*, and the youth asked me to change it to *marijuana* so as not to give the impression that he was using harder substances. One youth wanted to add a sentence making it more clear how meaningful her relationship with her case manager was to her. No one asked me to change facts, remove facts, or alter the story. On the contrary, all of the youth I met with expressed being pleased to see their own voices reflected back to them. Some suggested that it was empowering to see their strengths and progress reflected in the case stories.

Data Analysis

Individual cases were described, but not analyzed (Yin, 2003). I initially conducted a preliminary exploratory analysis (Creswell, 2005) with all the documents. During this stage in the analysis, the files were uploaded into NVivo 10, texts were read, and notes were made using the electronic notes feature in NVivo 10. The initial codes were formed, including both the principles outlined in the original research questions, as well as any other themes that emerged from the first read through of the texts. Constant comparison analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used and *a priori* coding was applied to the four principles of (a) positive youth development, (b) trauma-informed care, (c) harm reduction, and (d) non-judgmental engagement because there was an extensive literature base outlining what these approaches look like in practice. The remaining five principles were coded using an emergent coding approach because there was little agreement in the literature as to what journey-oriented, for example, looks like in practice. Cross-case analysis was used to make assertions about the phenomenon as a whole (Stake, 2006), highlighting differences, as well as similarities, between cases. The cross-case analysis allowed for examination of the data from a perspective that could not be achieved through individual case analysis. For the cross-case analysis, the codes of the transcripts were used to identify patterns, commonalities, and diversity in the experiences of the fourteen young adults. Evidence for these principles is provided from the case stories.

At this point in the process, the actual names of some principles were modified slightly from the list originally provided to the researcher to better match what was learned through the literature review and through the analysis of the case stories. The final principle names were: youth-adult relationships; journey orientation; collaboration; holistic approach; trauma-informed care; positive youth development; harm reduction; non-judgmental engagement; and strengths-based approach.

Results

Principles in Practice

All nine of the principles were evidenced in the case studies, and seven of the nine principles were present in at least two-thirds of them. The dissertation provided evidence of what each of the nine principles look like in action and, in some instances, how they affected the youths' trajectories. Analysis of the cases found that young people experiencing homelessness are on unique journeys. Because they have experienced multiple traumas in their lives, their journey may, at times, look non-linear, scary, and confusing to people who care about them. Love is one of the strongest motivating factors in their lives, and the youth described going back to the people they love and the behaviors that have helped them survive, even if these people and

behaviors hurt them. Caring adults need to be there to support them without judgment, to help them take steps toward reducing harm in their lives, to help them develop in positive ways, and to create a path to well-being. This requires caring adults to not only create and sustain one-on-one relationships with the young person, but also to work with adults in other sectors and systems who impact the young person's life and to help the young person build community through lasting, healthy relationships with family, kin, and kith. This means that the work with each young person must be highly individualized and contextualized and take place over a long period of time.

Implications for Practitioners and Evaluators

The data suggested that principles-focused evaluation was an effective way for people who work in different organizations and roles to “talk” across boundaries. Principles allowed them to agree on the concepts that guide their work but differ in how they operationalize those principles. For example, one organization gives out condoms regularly and freely as a part of their harm-reduction approach. By contrast, a partner organization is Roman Catholic and cannot provide youth with condoms. In a drop-in center relationships might develop and deepen on the basketball court whereas in a shelter relationships might develop and deepen through late-night talks. The work might look different across contexts, but with principles, the heart of the work is the same.

There were six implications for practice and evaluation that emerged from this research. The first is that working in a principles-driven way takes time. The second implication is that the principles-driven work is non-linear and highly individualized. Third, working this way requires high degrees of trust and judgment. Fourth, it is important to have consistency of understanding and implementation across multiple levels of the system. Fifth, principles-driven work requires high degrees of trust and judgment. And sixth, principles-driven work requires consistency across levels of the system. By defining principles as the evaluand in a systems evaluation, evaluators can help organizations increase their capacity for trust and judgement and to bring consistency to the work.

Conclusion

Given the potential of collaborative relationships and networks as vehicles for achieving societal goals, it is important that we continue to generate knowledge about the circumstances under which inter-organizational collaborations are best formed; what type of collaborative relationships may work best depending on the purpose and the context; and how best to support the evolution of collaborative networks. A principles-based approach to collaborating seems to provide a promising way for organizations to collaborate in complex systems—together organizations can provide a cohesive response to a systems problem in a way that allows for contextual flexibility and adaptation. The approach guides people in the implementation of “so much more.” The principles-driven work described in this study looks at the big picture and tries to honestly see and respond to the complexity of the situation and the diverse and dynamic needs of youth. This dissertation also breaks groups in the field of evaluation, making principles a new kind of evaluand that allows evaluators to work across diverse contexts and system. It also offers multiple case analysis as a method by which to look for patterns, themes, outcomes and impacts across multiple levels of system.

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