



# **EXPERIENCES OF LOCAL YOUTH IN AND FROM GOVERNMENT CARE**

**Prepared for Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition**



**McCreary  
Centre Society**

We acknowledge that McCreary Centre Society is located on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. We also acknowledge the ancestral and continuing connection to this land of the Métis Nation.

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Prepared for Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition

January, 2023



**McCreary  
Centre Society**

YOUTH HEALTH • YOUTH RESEARCH • YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

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ISBN: 978-1-926675-92-3



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was produced for the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition using local data from three waves of the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS; 2008, 2013, and 2018), and a longitudinal survey of youth transitioning out of care (2019–2022).

Results from the BC AHS highlighted the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in the care system, as youth in care in Surrey were six times more likely than their peers never in care to identify as Indigenous (18% vs. 3%). Gender diverse and sexual minority youth were also overrepresented among those with care experience.

BC AHS results did show a number of improving trends among Surrey youth (aged 12–19) with government care experience in some areas of housing stability, access to health care, connection to culture, and school connectedness. For example, youth with care experience were less likely than in previous survey years to have run away from home in the past 12 months (21% in 2018 vs. 43% in 2008), and to have missed out on needed medical care (16% vs. 40% in 2008). They were more likely to have eaten traditional food from their culture (61% vs. 34% in 2013).

There were also improvements in youth's experiences at school. Previously, youth with care experience were less likely than their peers without care experience to feel safe at school or to find their teacher helpful. In 2018, these disparities no longer existed. Youth with care experience did remain less likely than their peers to plan to continue their education after high school. However, they were more likely to plan to attend post-secondary education compared to a decade earlier (78% vs. 50% in 2008).

Despite these and other improvements, discrepancies in the well-being of youth with care experience remained in comparison to their peers never in care. For example, in comparison to youth who had not been in care, those with care experience were over four times as likely to go to bed hungry due to a lack of money for food, more than twice as likely to have missed out on needed medical help, and almost twice as likely to have missed out on needed mental health services.

Being in care also appeared to impact relationships with peers. Youth with care experience were less likely than those never in care to have three or more close in-person friends (70% vs. 82%), and were more likely to have this many online friends they had never met in person (30% vs. 15%).

Results from the longitudinal study of youth transitioning out of care highlighted the difficulties young people experience when they leave care. For example, 86% had trouble finding housing, and around half (54%) had couch surfed. Also, around 7 in 10 rated their mental health as poor or fair. However, the survey also highlighted young people's resilience and provided them with an opportunity to share their suggestions for how they could be better supported.

Suggestions for how to better support youth transitioning out of care included allowing them to keep connected to the same support workers throughout the transition, supporting them to learn life skills and access mental health supports, and providing sufficient financial support for them to live independently.

# BACKGROUND

The Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition asked McCreary Centre Society to analyze data from the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) focusing on youth in Surrey with government care experience, and to examine local data from the Youth Transitioning Out of Care study.

The BC AHS has been carried out every five years since 1992, and Surrey students first participated in 2008. In 2018, over 38,000 students in Grades 7–12, in public schools across the province, completed the survey. This included more than 1,600 students who had ever been in government care or an alternative to care. For more details about the methodology, sample, and limitations of the BC AHS, please visit [mcs.bc.ca/ahs](https://mcs.bc.ca/ahs).

The Youth Transitioning Out of Care study is an ongoing longitudinal study that has been carried out by McCreary's Youth Research Academy (YRA) since April 2019. The YRA is a group of youth aged 16 to 24 with experience in the government care system who are trained to carry out research projects of interest to youth in and from government care and the agencies that serve them. Their longitudinal study aims to canvass the experiences of BC youth aging out of care, with the goal of identifying how youth transitioning out of care can be best supported. Youth have the opportunity to complete a survey in the year before transitioning out of care, and to complete follow-up surveys every six months until their 24<sup>th</sup> birthday. To learn more about the study please visit: [mcs.bc.ca/youth\\_transitioning\\_out\\_of\\_care\\_study](https://mcs.bc.ca/youth_transitioning_out_of_care_study).

## About this report

The report mostly focuses on data from Surrey youth aged 12–19 with government care experience who participated in the BC AHS over the past decade. In 2018, around 130 youth in Surrey reported they had experienced at least one type of government care or alternative to care (e.g., foster home, group home, Kith and Kin Agreement). This represented approximately 3% of Surrey youth aged 12–19 who completed the BC AHS.

The report includes a snapshot of students in Surrey with government care experience; considers changes over time in key areas of interest to the coalition (i.e., housing; education; employment; meaningful connections; and health, wellness, and culture) and considers the well-being of Surrey youth with care experience in comparison to those never in care.

For readability the term “government care” is used to refer to having ever been in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, or a delegated agency or in an alternative to care, such as on a Youth Agreement.

This report also includes findings from 73 surveys collected from local youth between August 2019 and September 2022 as part of the Youth Transitioning Out of Care Study.

***Quotes from local youth who participated in the surveys are included throughout the report.***



## Analyses

The 2018 BC AHS asked whether youth had experienced any of the following types of care or alternatives to care: foster care, group home, Youth Agreement, Agreement with Young Adults (AYA), Kith and Kinship Agreement, or custody centre. For analyses within the 2018 BC AHS, youth with any of these experiences were compared to youth who had none of these experiences.

The BC AHS question wording asking about government care experience changed slightly over time to reflect changes in legislation and practice. For example, while the question in 2018 referenced delegated agencies, and had a response option of Agreements with Young Adults, the BC AHS in previous years did not. For this reason, percentages for trends (changes across survey years) are reported among youth with experience in the types of government care that were asked about on all three waves of the BC AHS over the past decade (2008, 2013, and 2018)—specifically, foster care, group homes, and Youth Agreements.

All reported comparisons are statistically significant at least at  $p < .05$ . This means there is less than a 5% likelihood the results occurred by chance.

As the samples in this study are relatively small some standard errors were higher than would be seen with a larger sample. However, all reported percentages are within the releasable range.

The report provides associations, and does not imply causation or the direction of the relation.

## Limitations

Much of the data from the longitudinal study was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore reflects young people's experience at that time, whereas data collected through the BC AHS was collected pre-pandemic.

The BC AHS is aimed at youth in mainstream school and therefore misses those in alternative education, not attending school, and those who transitioned out of care at 19.

The data from the longitudinal study was collected from youth in the Fraser region. These youth may not have been living in Surrey. For example, they may have been accessing services in Surrey but living in another community in the Fraser region.

# SURREY YOUTH WITH CARE EXPERIENCE

In 2018, 3% of youth in Surrey who completed the BC AHS had experienced at least one type of government care or alternative to care (e.g., foster home, group home, Kith and Kin Agreement).

Among youth with care experience, half identified as female, 43% as male, and 6% as non-binary. Youth with care experience were more likely to identify as non-binary than their peers without care experience (6% vs. 1%).

Most youth with care experience identified as straight (69%); 9% as mostly straight; 10% as lesbian, gay, or bisexual; and 9% were questioning their sexual orientation. Youth from care were more than twice as likely to identify as a sexual minority (28% vs. 13% of youth without care experience).

In Surrey, the most common background among youth never in care was South Asian. However, youth with care experience most commonly identified as being of European heritage. Reflecting the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in care across the province, youth from care were six times more likely to identify as Indigenous (18% vs. 3% without care experience), and were less likely to identify as South Asian (21% vs. 35%). Around 1 in 10 youth with care experience (9%) did not know their background.

## FAMILY BACKGROUNDS OF SURREY YOUTH WITH CARE EXPERIENCE

European	28%
South Asian	21%
Indigenous	18%
East Asian	17%
Southeast Asian	14%
African	6%
Australian/Pacific Islander	5%
Latin/South/Central American	4%
West Asian	NR
Other	NR

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.  
NR: Not releasable

Youth with care experience were more likely than those never in care to have caretaking responsibilities on an average school day. This included taking care of their own child or children (5% vs. 1%).

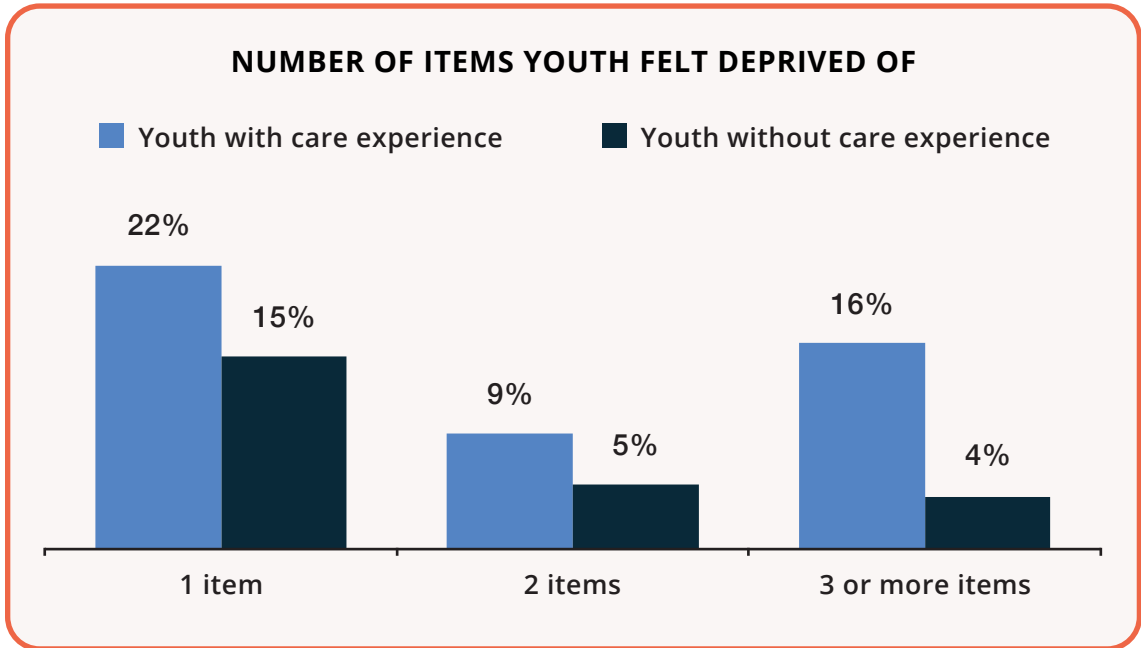
# EXPERIENCES OF POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION

A Youth Deprivation Index was developed for the 2018 BC AHS. The Index included 10 items which BC youth had identified as important to have in order to feel like they belonged. Youth with care experience were equally likely as those never in care to have a smartphone, money to spend on themselves, and clothes to belong/fit in. However, they were more likely to feel deprived of the other seven items.

YOUTH WHO FELT DEPRIVED OF ...		
	Youth with care experience	Youth without care experience
Money for school supplies, trips, or extracurricular activities	16%	3%
Money for self	15%	9%
Access to transport	14%	4%
Space of their own to hang out in	13%	6%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	12%	3%
Lunch for school/money for lunch	11%	3%
Smartphone	10%	6%
Quiet place to sleep	8%	2%
Clothes to fit in	5%	2%
Access to Internet	4%	<1%

Note: The differences between youth with care experience and youth without care experience who felt deprived of money for self, a smartphone, and clothes to fit in were not statistically significant.

Youth with care experience were also more likely to feel deprived of multiple items. For example, 16% lacked at least three of the items on the list (vs. 4% of youth never in care).



Note: The difference between youth with care experience and youth without care experience who felt deprived of 2 items was not statistically significant.

## Going to bed hungry

Going to bed hungry can be a marker of extreme poverty and has been shown to have a detrimental effect on BC youth’s physical and mental well-being ([mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports\\_in\\_the\\_spotlight.pdf](https://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports_in_the_spotlight.pdf)).

Similar to results a decade ago, 30% of youth with care experience went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food. This was more than four times the rate among youth never in care (7%).



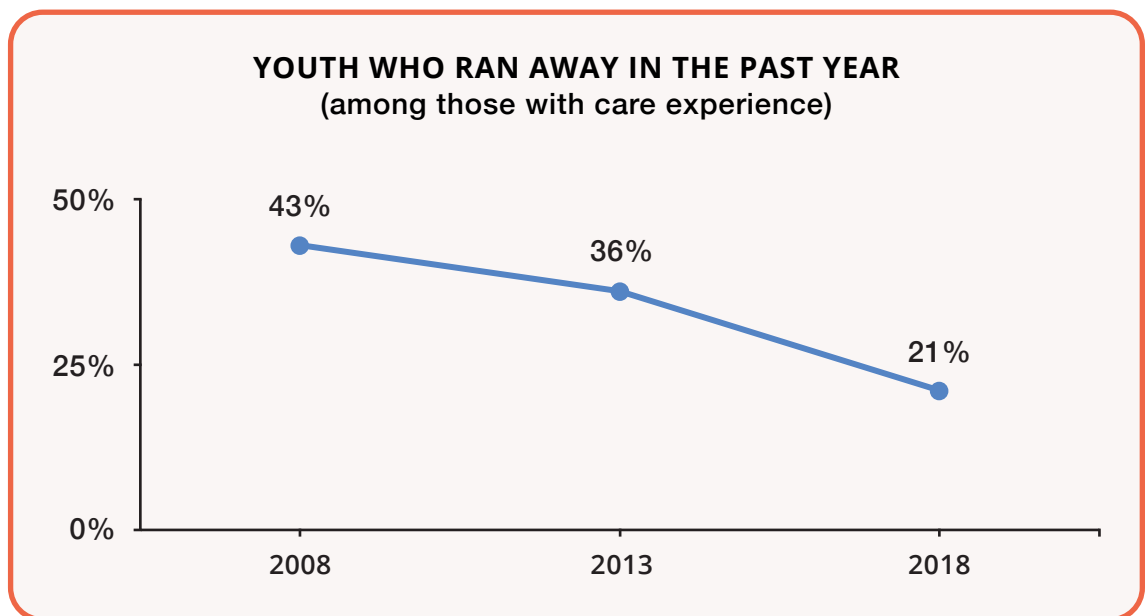
### Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Around half (55%) of youth who had recently transitioned out of care reported they went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at least sometimes.

# HOUSING

Housing stability is an important aspect of health and well-being among youth with care experience, as youth who experience housing stability are more likely to feel connected to their school and community ([mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports\\_in\\_the\\_spotlight.pdf](https://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports_in_the_spotlight.pdf)).

In 2018, just over half of youth in Surrey with care experience had moved in the past year (53% vs. 24% of youth never in care), and 17% had moved multiple times (vs. 4%). Also, 16% had been kicked out of their home (vs. 4% never in care), and 21% had run away in the past year (vs. 5%). However, youth with care experience were less likely to have run away than in previous survey years.



Note: The difference between 2008 and 2013 was not statistically significant.



## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Around 9 in 10 youth (86%) who had recently transitioned out of care had experienced trouble finding housing. Their most common challenges included being unable to afford housing (79%), a shortage of safe and affordable housing (71%), lack of support (38%), and having a bad credit rating (38%; they could mark all challenges that applied).

Around half of youth (46%) who had recently transitioned out of care had moved in the past six months. Also, around half (54%) had couch surfed at some point; 25% had lived on the street; and 22% had stayed in a safe house, shelter, or transition house.

***"[My goal for the next 6 months is to] live on my own or live in semi-independent living."***

***"[Youth transitioning out of care can be better supported] if welfare supported more money for rent because I currently am on a Youth Agreement that pays my rent which is more than welfare will pay when I'm 19."***

## Sense of safety where living

Most youth with care experience (79%) felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day (vs. 91% among youth never in care), and around half (49%) felt safe in their neighbourhood at night (comparable to youth never in care). Feelings of safety were similar to five years earlier.



## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Similar to youth approaching their transition out of care, the majority of youth who had recently transitioned out of care (75%) felt safe where they were currently living.

***"[The] system needs to be better. More support. More regulations for safety in homes. More resources."***

# MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Having positive relationships and connections with adults and peers has been linked to more positive health and well-being among BC youth with care experience ([mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports\\_in\\_the\\_spotlight.pdf](https://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports_in_the_spotlight.pdf)).

## Supportive adults

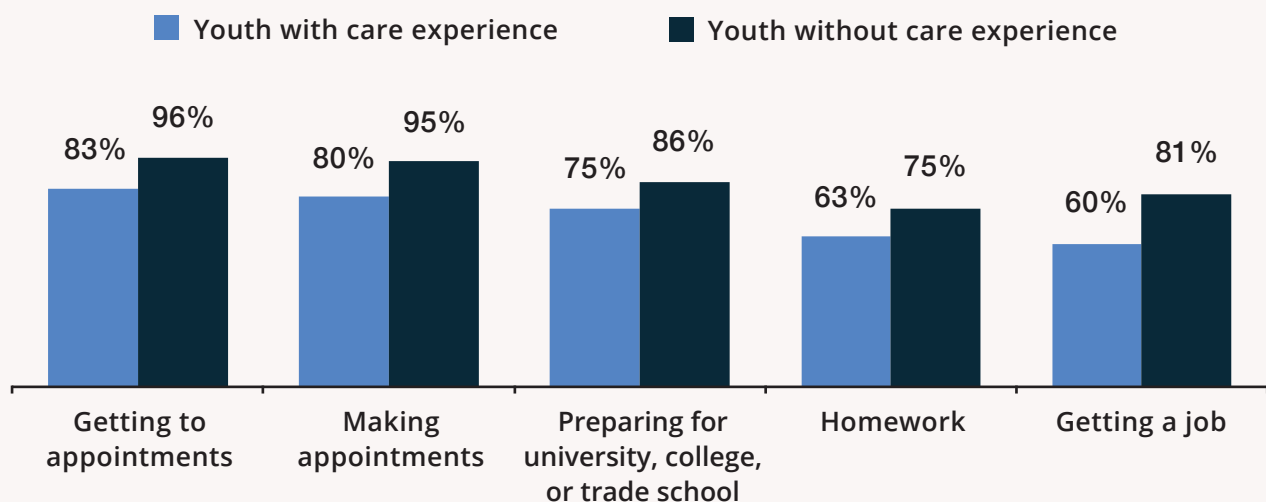
Around half of youth with care experience felt that an adult in their community cared about them (49% vs. 58% of youth never in care). The percentage was comparable to five years earlier.

Around a quarter of youth with care experience (28%) had an adult outside their family whom they felt they could talk to if they were having a serious problem. This was similar to five and ten years earlier, and was comparable to the percentage among youth without care experience.

The majority of youth in care had an adult who helped them with making or getting to appointments, with preparing for school or finding a job, and with school work (among those who felt they needed help in these areas).

**“Generally, teachers and staff care about me. However, I don’t feel like I can express my depression with counsellors UNLESS something bad/tragic happens because that’s when it’s ‘okay’ to be sad.” – Female, age 17**

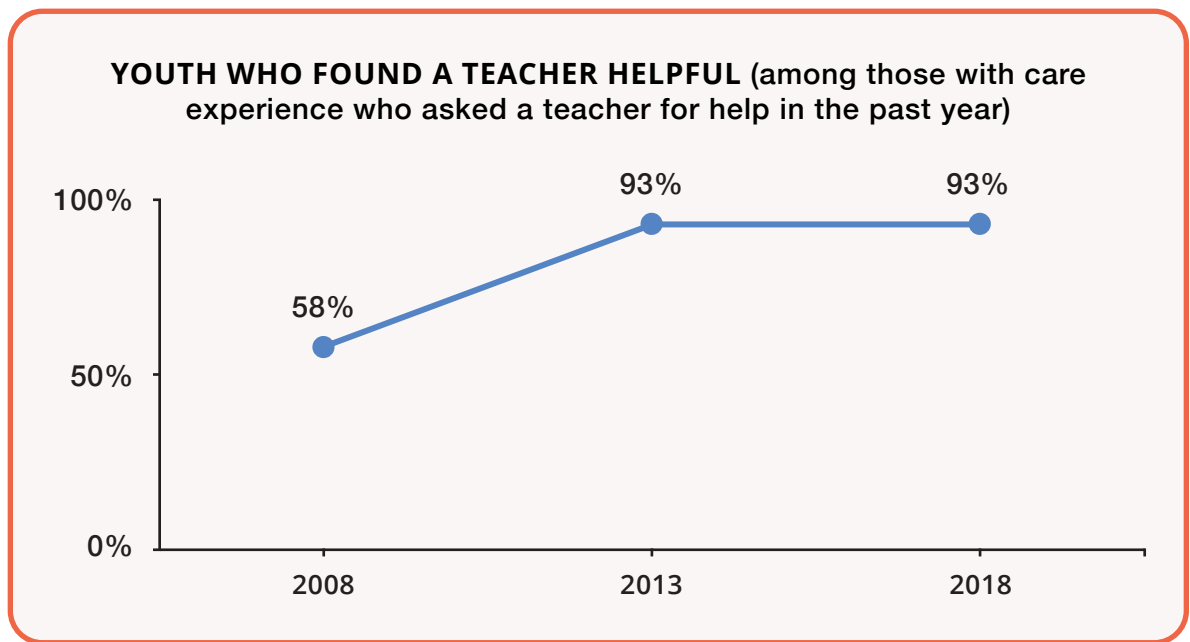
### YOUTH WHO HAD AN ADULT TO HELP THEM WITH ... (among those who needed help)



The BC AHS asked youth if they had approached various people for support in the past year and if they found the assistance helpful. Reflecting patterns among youth never in care, the majority of youth with care experience (72%) had asked a family member for help, and half (50%) had approached a teacher.

Youth with care experience were more likely than those never in care to have asked a school counsellor (46% vs. 30%), youth worker (27% vs. 6%), and social worker (30% vs. 4%) for help. Among youth with care experience who had approached a social worker for help, 58% found it helpful.

Compared to ten years earlier, youth with care experience were more likely to find their teacher helpful. Also, unlike in previous years, they were as likely as youth never in care to find their teacher helpful.







## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Most youth (93%) who had recently transitioned out of care reported having an adult in their life who cared about them. Also, most had an adult who helped them with making or getting to appointments (58%), applying for school or jobs (59%), finding housing (58%), and with school or college work (58%; among those who felt they needed help in these areas).

The majority of youth (83%) felt they had someone they could talk to if they were having a really good or really bad day. This included an adult they met through services (28%; e.g., a youth worker), an adult they knew socially (45%; e.g., a friend's parent), and another young person (38%; they could mark all that applied).

Youth who had recently transitioned out of care had asked a variety of people for help in the past six months, and most commonly a friend or partner (72%), family member (68%), youth worker (54%), and social worker (48%). Most of these youth found the support helpful (e.g., 73% who had asked a social worker for help found the support helpful). Also, 65% had stayed connected with a service provider or staff member they knew before transitioning out of care.

***"We need youth workers past the age of 19. The biggest challenge for me when it comes to aging out will be losing my youth worker."***

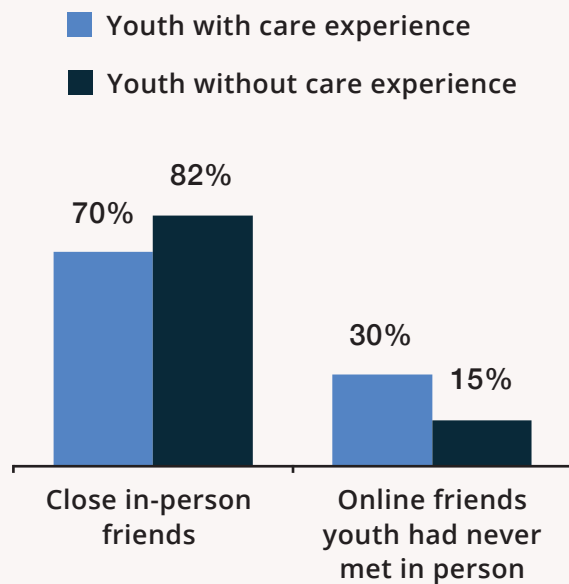
***"I got my agreement extended ... and now that I'm officially aged out, I'm still able to contact my youth worker and she has helped me tremendously."***

***"I would like to say thank you to MCFD and my social workers, without them I would not be living in my own place and I would not be in university working towards becoming a social worker for myself."***

## Peers

Most youth from care (93%) had at least one close friend in their school or neighbourhood, and just under half (46%) had online friends they had never met in person. They were less likely than youth never in care to have three or more close in-person friends, but were more likely to have online friends they had never met in person.

### YOUTH WITH THREE OR MORE FRIENDS



In the past year, 81% of youth with care experience had approached a friend whom they knew in person for help. The majority of these youth (95%) found the experience helpful (percentages were similar among youth never in care). A third (33%) had asked their online friends for help in the past year, and around three-quarters of these youth (74%) had found these friends helpful (with a similar percentage among youth never in care).



### Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

The majority of youth who had recently transitioned out of care (90%) had at least one close friend, including 45% who had three or more close friends. Also, 39% had at least one close friend with government care experience.

In the past six months, 72% had asked a friend or partner for help, and 95% of these youth found the support helpful.

***"[I am most proud of] being able to give my friends advice from my experiences and guiding them through some of the problems I went through."***

***"[I am most proud of] having friends who do care for me."***

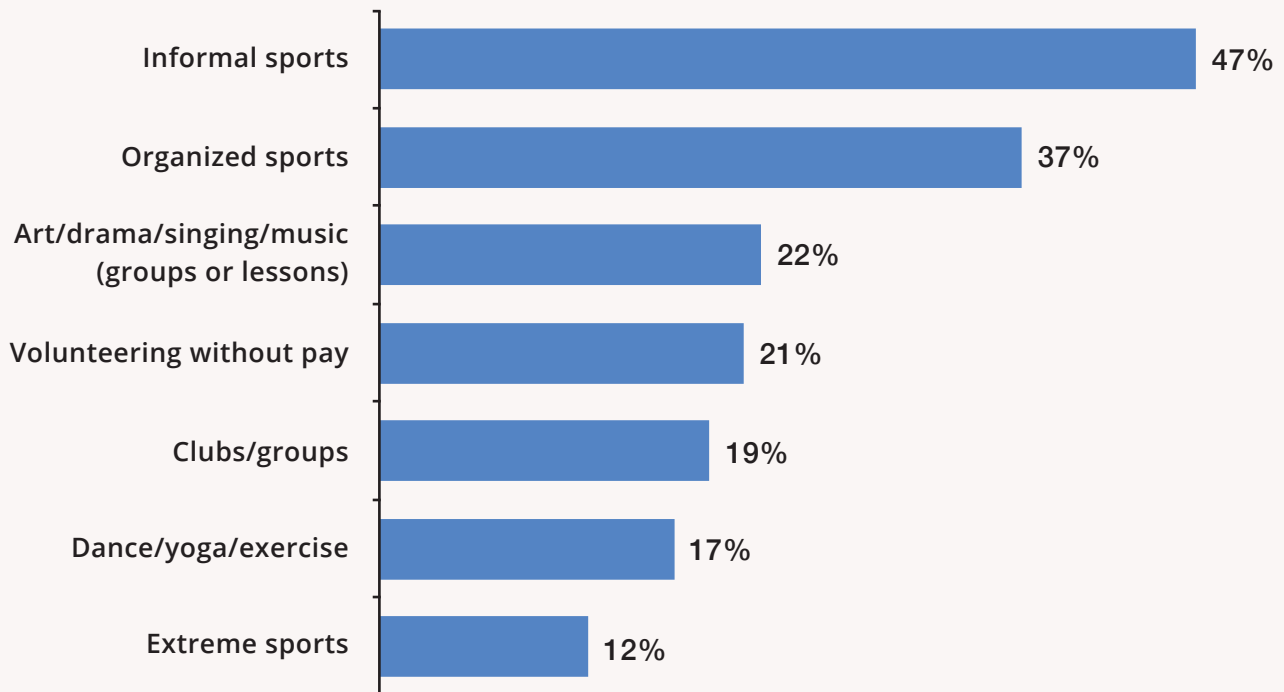
## Involvement in community activities

BC youth with care experience who have opportunities to regularly engage in their community through sports, clubs or groups, or volunteering are generally more likely to report positive health and well-being ([mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports\\_in\\_the\\_spotlight.pdf](https://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports_in_the_spotlight.pdf)).

Youth with care experience took part in a variety of activities on a weekly basis in the past year, and most commonly engaged in informal sports (47%; sports without a coach). They were less likely than youth never in care to participate in weekly organized sports (37% vs. 50%), but were more likely to participate weekly in clubs or groups (19% vs. 11%) and extreme sports (12% vs. 4%).

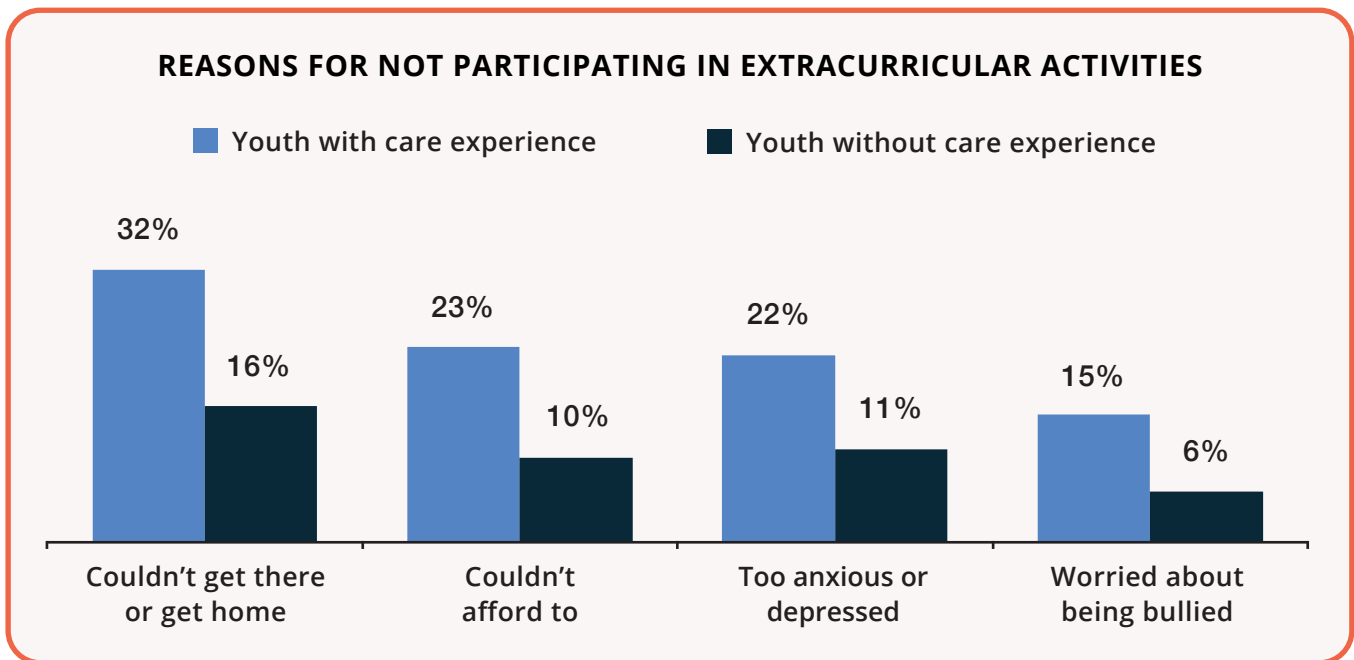
Among youth with care experience, rates of involvement in weekly extracurricular activities were similar to those over the past decade. One exception was that youth were less likely to participate in art, drama, singing or music on a weekly basis.

### PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULARS AT LEAST WEEKLY IN THE PAST YEAR (among youth with care experience)



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Youth with care experience were more likely than youth never in care to have missed out on extracurricular activities in the past year because they could not afford it; they had no transportation; were worried about being bullied; and were too anxious or depressed. In addition, around half of youth from care (54%) had missed out on extracurricular activities because they were too busy to go and 13% had missed out because the activity was not available in their community (similar percentages among youth never in care).



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Half of youth with care experience felt their community activities were meaningful to them (50% vs. 66% of those never in care), and just over a third felt their ideas were listened to within these activities (36% vs. 45%). A little under a third felt like a part of their community (31% vs. 41% of youth never in care). Percentages were comparable across survey years.

### Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Youth who had recently transitioned out of care reported involvement in various community activities in the past six months, including sports and other physical activities (72%); arts, drama, singing and music (52%); volunteer activities (24%); and clubs or groups (24%). Also, around two-thirds (65%) felt at least somewhat connected to their community.

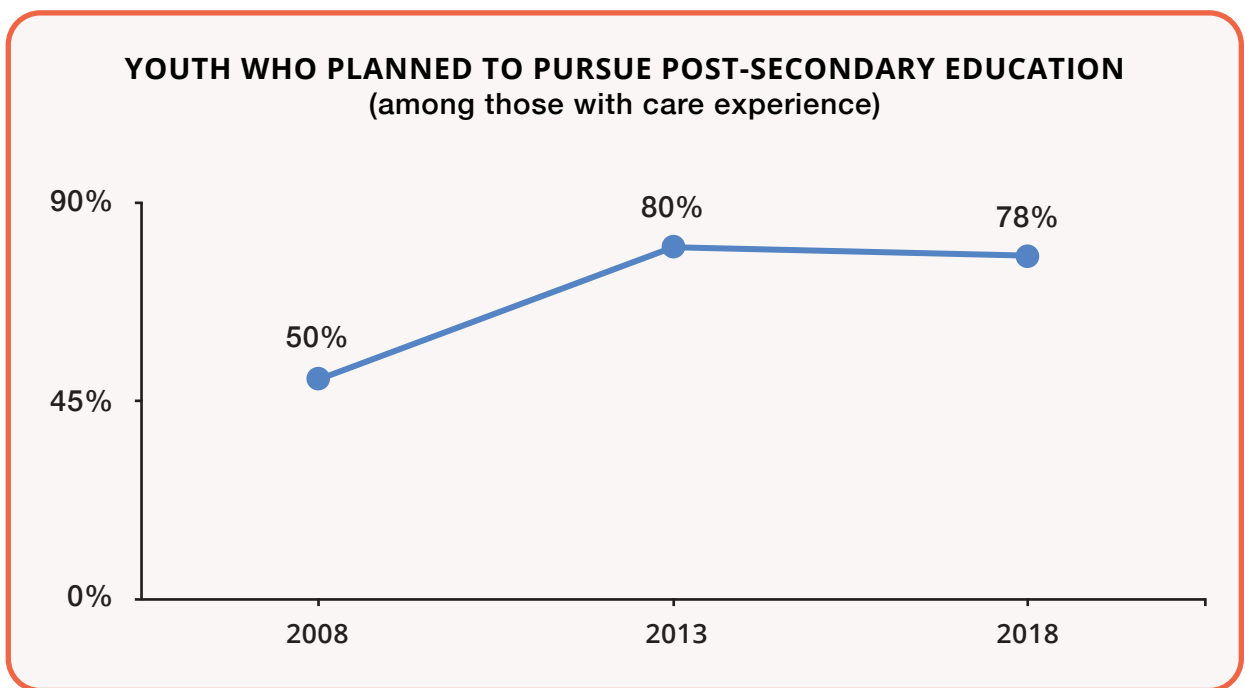
***"[I am good at] playing the trumpet."***

***"[I am good at] lacrosse, gaming, art."***

# EDUCATION

Half of youth with care experience felt like a part of their school (50% vs. 64% of youth never in care), and just over half felt happy at school (54% vs. 65%). Around two thirds (66%) felt safe at school, which was similar to the percentage among youth never in care, unlike five years earlier when they were less likely than youth never in care to feel this way.

Youth with care experience were more likely than those never in care to not expect to finish high school. However, around 8 in 10 planned to continue their education after high school (78% vs. 89% of those never in care), which was higher than a decade earlier.



Note: The difference between 2013 and 2018 was not statistically significant.



## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Two thirds of youth nearing their transition out of care were currently attending school. Among those not currently in school, 77% stopped going once they finished high school. Around 6 in 10 (59%) were aware of the tuition waiver program, and around 4 in 10 (41%) were aware that Adult Basic Education was free.

When asked about supports that helped them do well at school, over 60% identified having supportive adults at school and being able to study at their own pace.

### **MOST COMMONLY IDENTIFIED SUPPORTS THAT HELPED YOUTH DO WELL AT SCHOOL** *(among those nearing their transition out of care)*

Having supportive adults at school	72%
Being able to work at their own pace	66%
Having supportive adults outside of school	56%
Teachers/others who notice if they don't attend school	53%
Peer support	41%
Learning good study habits	38%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Among youth who had recently transitioned out of care, 54% were currently enrolled in a post-secondary education program and 43% had received a tuition waiver.

Youth who had recently transitioned out of care reported experiencing a number of challenges to graduating from high school including mental health or substance use challenges (63%), and not getting enough support outside of school (57%) and within school (43%; they could mark all that applied). Some also identified bullying victimization (27%), changing schools (20%), and health issues (23%) as challenges to graduating from high school.

***"[I am most proud of] graduating from high school."***

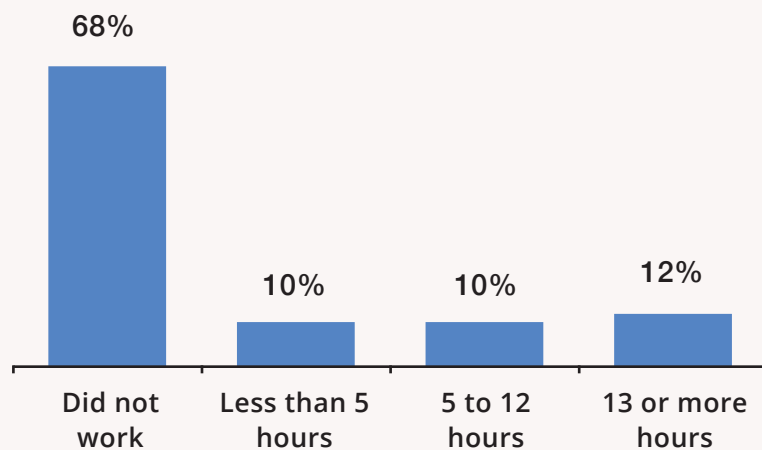
***"The tuition waiver program has helped me in so many ways and will continue to do so until I graduate."***

# EMPLOYMENT

Around a third of youth with care experience (32%) worked at a paid job in the past year, with a similar rate among youth never in care. In 2018, the percentage of youth with care experience who worked was not significantly different from the rates in previous survey years.

Youth with care experience were more likely to have missed school in the past month because they had to work (9% vs. 3% of youth never in care).

## HOW MANY HOURS YOUTH WORKED AT A PAID JOB PER WEEK (among those with care experience)



**“Life isn’t fair, I have to work for my well-being. Always working. Always broke. Sadly repetitive.”**  
– Male, age 17



## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Most youth (89%) who had transitioned out of care had worked at a paid job at some point, and 61% were currently employed. Among those not currently working, 55% were looking for a job.

Common barriers experienced by youth who had tried to get a job included mental health, substance use, or other health challenges (40%), school, childcare or other commitments (40%), a lack of transportation (32%), and poor pay (28%).

***“[My goal for the next six months is to] get a part-time job.”***

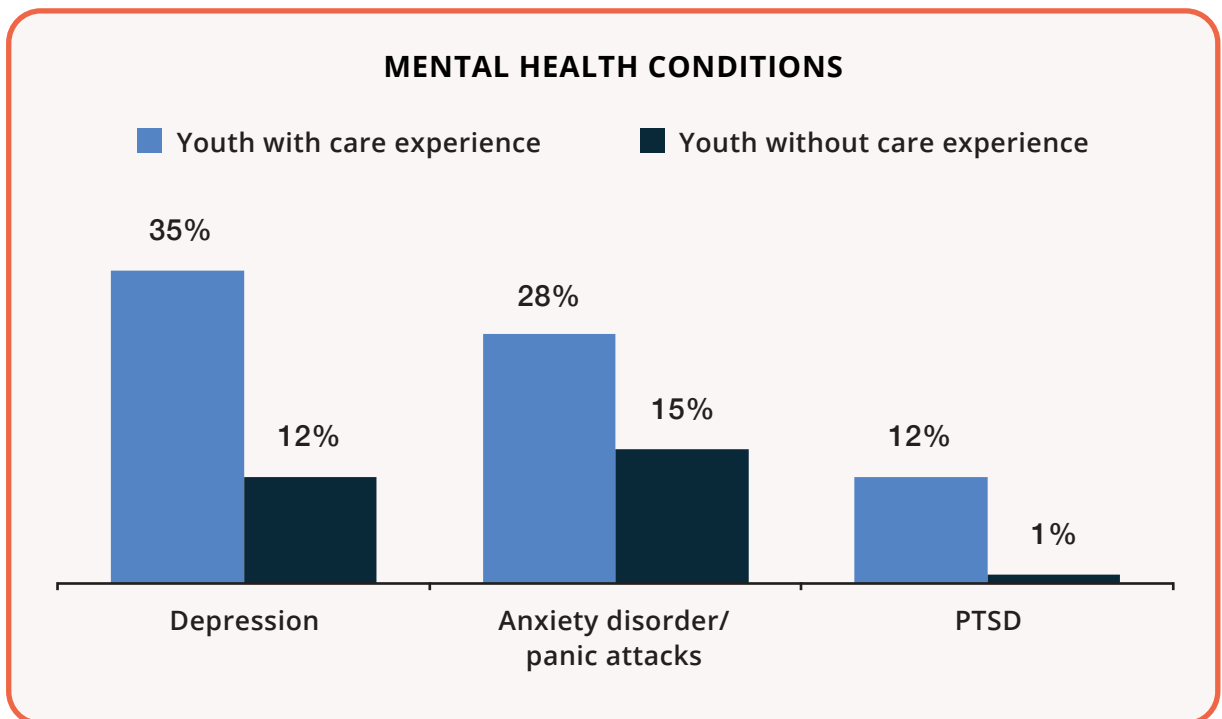
***“[I am most proud of] being able to keep my job.”***

# HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND CULTURE

## Mental health

Around 6 in 10 youth with care experience reported good or excellent mental health (63% vs. 75% of youth never in care). Around a quarter (23%) experienced extreme stress in the past month (vs. 10% of youth never in care) and 19% experienced extreme despair (vs. 7%). The percentages were similar to five years earlier.

About a quarter of youth with care experience (26%) reported having a mental health condition (vs. 12% of youth never in care), including Depression, Anxiety disorder/panic attacks, and PTSD. Youth with care experience were more likely than five years earlier to report having PTSD, while there were no differences across survey years in reporting Depression and Anxiety disorder/panic attacks.







## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

A minority of youth rated their mental health as good or excellent, while most described it as poor or fair (e.g., 69% of those who had recently transitioned out of care rated their mental health as poor or fair).

Around 7 in 10 youth (72%) who had transitioned out of care reported having a mental health condition such as Anxiety, Depression, or PTSD.

Many youth with care experience acknowledged the difficulties in their life which contributed to mental health challenges, and identified feeling proud of their resilience.

***"I am most proud of how far I have come, considering the way I grew up and the people I have lost in my life impacting my mental health."***

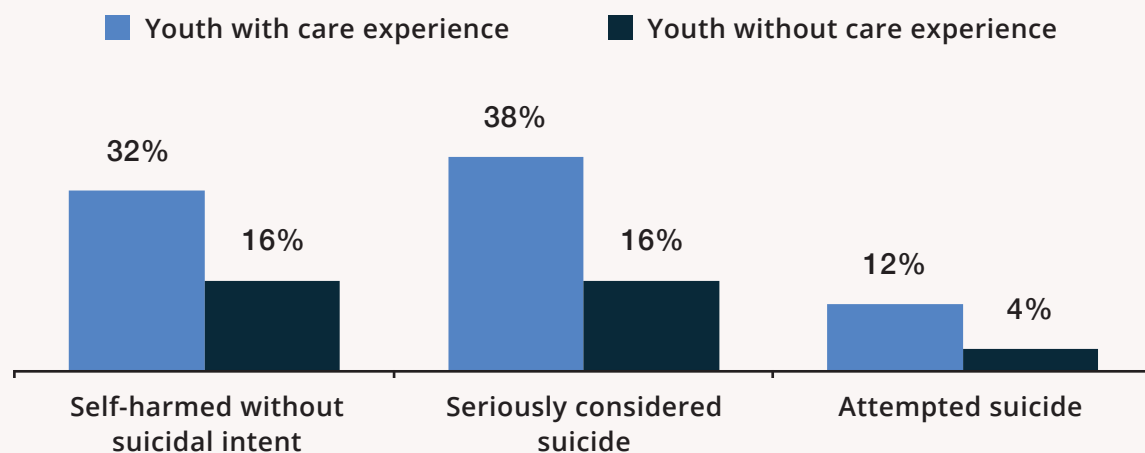
***"[I am most proud of] my persistence and resilience."***

***"[I am most proud of] how brave I am."***

## Self-harm and suicidal thoughts and attempts

Around a third of youth with care experience (32%) had cut or injured themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves in the past year, while 38% had seriously considered suicide, and 12% had attempted suicide in the past year. Percentages were similar across survey years and were higher than among youth never in care.

### SELF-HARM, SUICIDAL IDEATION, AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS IN THE PAST YEAR



## Missing out on needed mental health services

Comparable to previous years, around a third of youth with care experience (32%) missed out on accessing needed mental health services in the past year. This percentage was higher than among youth never in care (17%).

Among those who missed out on needed mental health services, most reported doing so because they did not want their parents to know, and around half missed out because they thought or hoped the problem would go away.

### MOST COMMONLY REPORTED REASONS FOR NOT ACCESSING NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR *(among youth with care experience)*

Didn't want parents to know	62%
Thought or hoped the problem would go away	51%
Too busy to go	43%
Didn't know where to go	38%
Afraid of what the doctor might do or say	38%
Afraid someone I know might see me	27%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



### Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Among youth who had recently transitioned out of care, 58% reported they had needed mental health services but had not received the help they needed.

***"[Youth transitioning out of care can be better supported with] more resources such as housing, mental health, and employment programs. It's important for trusted adults such as social workers and youth workers to inform youth about these resources as well."***

## Overall health

Youth with care experience were less likely than those never in care to describe their overall health as good or excellent (70% vs. 82%), and percentages were comparable across survey years.

**“Medicine shouldn’t be that expensive.” – Male, age 17**

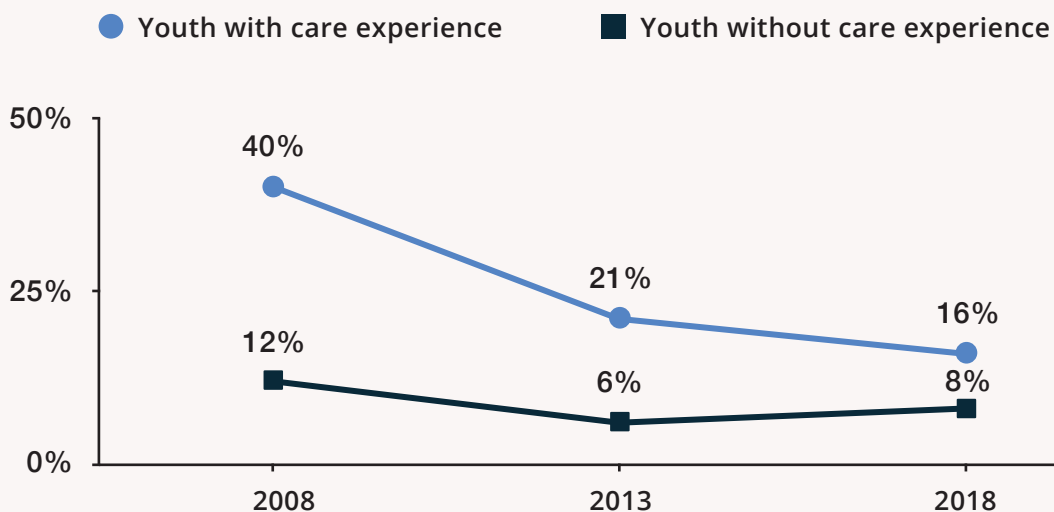
## Missing out on needed health care

Sixteen percent of youth with care experience missed out on needed medical help in the past year, which was twice as high as the percentage among youth never in care. However, youth with care experience were less likely than a decade earlier to have missed out on these needed services.

## Dentist visits

Most youth with care experience had been to the dentist at some point in their life (88% vs. 97% of youth never in care), and 66% had seen a dentist in the past year (vs. 83%).

### YOUTH WHO MISSED OUT ON NEEDED MEDICAL HELP IN THE PAST YEAR



Note: The difference for youth with care experience between 2013 and 2018 was not statistically significant.



## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Among youth who had recently transitioned out of care, 62% rated their physical health as good, and none reported it was excellent. Also, 45% thought they needed medical care in the past six months, and 62% of these youth got the help they needed.

***“Physical and mental disabilities/health are getting in the way of me achieving my goals.”***

## Connection to culture

Being connected to culture has been linked to more positive health and well-being ([mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports\\_in\\_the\\_spotlight.pdf](https://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/supports_in_the_spotlight.pdf)).

Around 4 in 10 youth with care experience (39%) had participated in cultural activities in the past year, and 17% had done so at least weekly. Percentages were similar to five years earlier and among youth never in care.

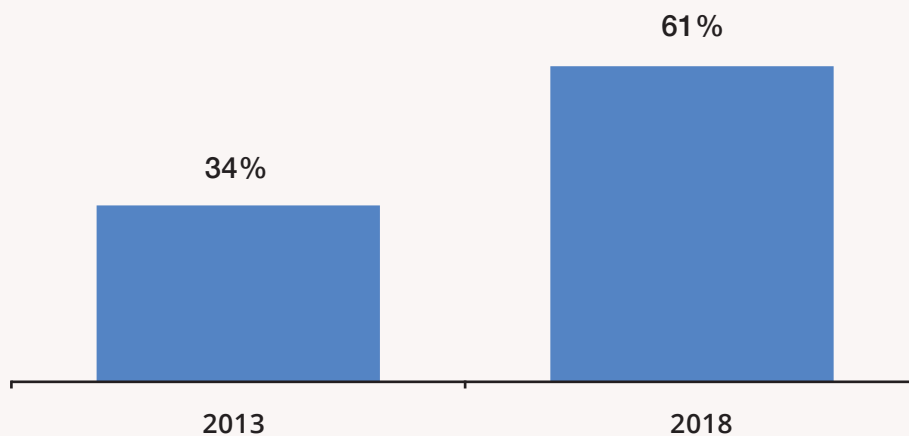
In 2018, around 6 in 10 youth with care experience had eaten traditional foods from their background, on the day before completing the survey (similar to youth never in care). This rate reflected an increase from five years earlier.



### Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Over half of youth (59%) who had recently transitioned out of care participated in cultural or traditional activities in the past six months, such as holidays and ceremonies.

#### YOUTH WHO ATE TRADITIONAL FOODS FROM THEIR BACKGROUND YESTERDAY (among those with care experience)



# YOUTH'S SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW THEY CAN BE BETTER SUPPORTED



## Youth Transitioning Out of Care study

Youth who completed the Youth Transitioning Out of Care study were asked about ways that they felt they could be better supported. Suggestions from local youth are below.

***"Being able to have the adult support, whether it be a Counsellor, youth worker, social worker, etc. Being able to have access to mental/physical health treatment and appointments as necessary, and financial support (for example, PWD)."***

***"More connection between pre-transition and afterwards. Example, being able to keep the same youth worker for 6 months after aging out. Also more support in everyday tasks such as making appointments. There is support but they mostly do it for you, so more independent support if that makes sense."***

***"Have their social worker help them get in contact with support workers. Job training for youth. Life training skills."***

***"I think a better understanding of how the real world works. Things like banking information and budgeting skills would be really helpful."***

***"Longer planning on transitioning out helped being fully prepared. Know everything before aging out."***

***"More resources and weekly check ups."***

***"More time, more rent money for going to school, better clothing allowance, after we age out we should get more help especially kids who don't have anyone."***

***"To still have a support worker on call. For transportation, food bank access, after school programs to help with work load."***

# FINAL THOUGHTS

The findings in this report show that Surrey youth with care experience continue to experience poorer outcomes than their peers never in care, and that challenges to their healthy development continue following their transition out of care. However, BC AHS findings suggest that pre-pandemic there were some improvements in areas that Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition is focused on. Results from the 2023 BC AHS will be useful in determining if this progress has been maintained, as well as in highlighting where additional efforts may be needed.

The sample of youth who are participating in the study of Youth Transitioning out of Care continues to grow, and it is hoped that participation from Surrey youth will increase.

Any youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who wish to participate in the study can learn more at [mcs.bc.ca/youth\\_transitioning\\_out\\_of\\_care\\_study](https://mcs.bc.ca/youth_transitioning_out_of_care_study) or can contact: [yicstudy@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:yicstudy@mcs.bc.ca).





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