Designing the adaptation of *DUTY to ASSIST* in Canada

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Part 1

Social Innovation

Solving "Wicked Problems" through
Social Innovation
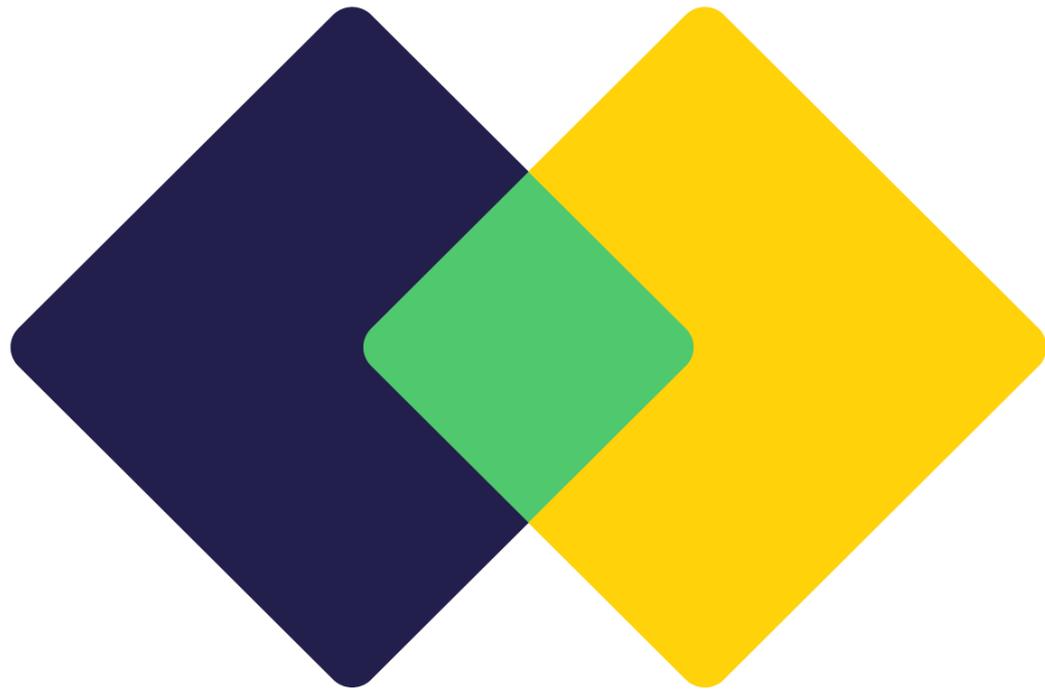
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Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab

Making the Shift
Research Program

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Research Theme Areas

Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5

Core Research Themes

Theme 1

Shifting to PREVENTION and Early Intervention

Theme 2

Sustaining Successful EXITS from Homelessness

| Enabling HEALTH, WELL-BEING and INCLUSION	Enhancing Outcomes for INDIGENOUS Youth	Leveraging DATA & TECHNOLOGY to drive Policy and Practice
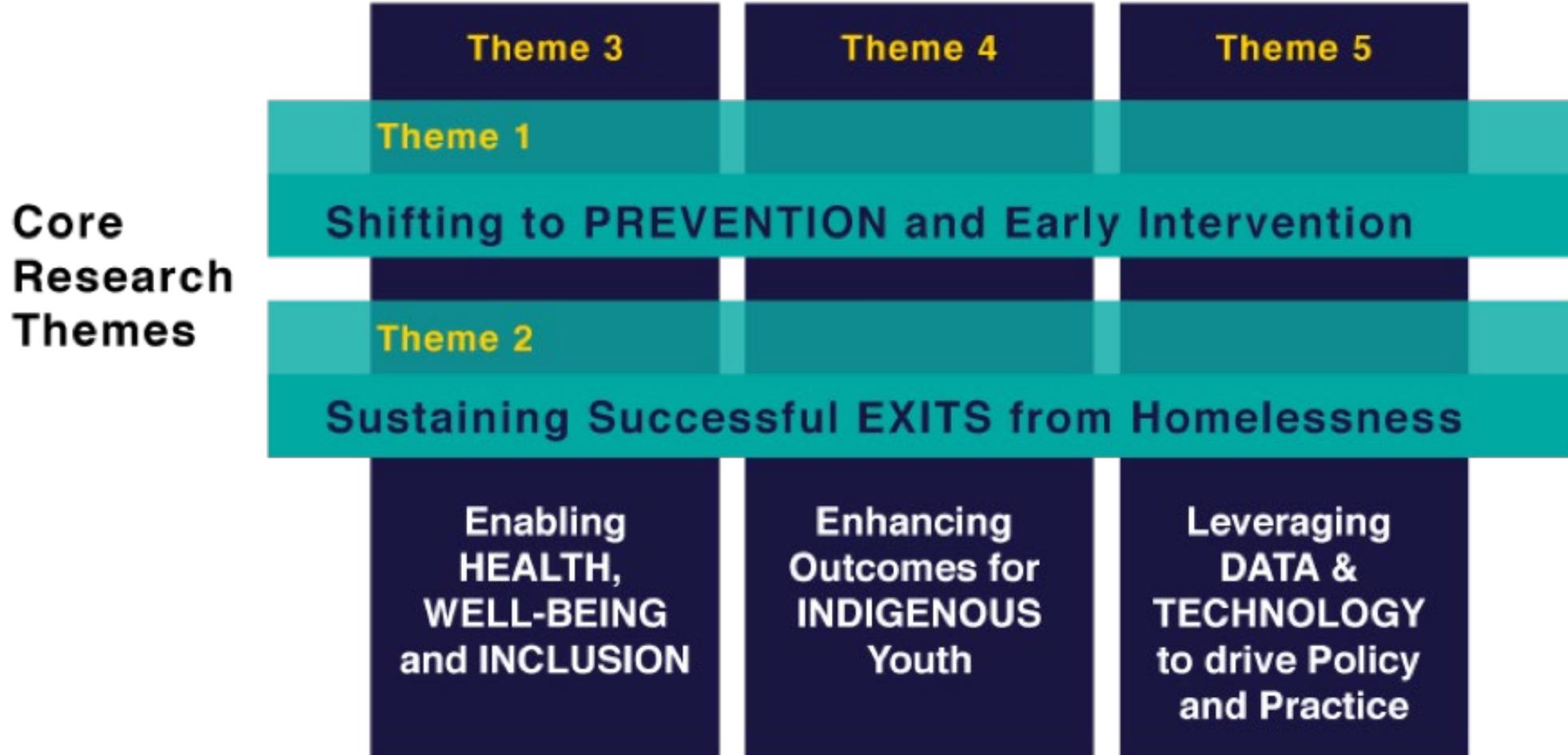
Crosscutting Research Themes
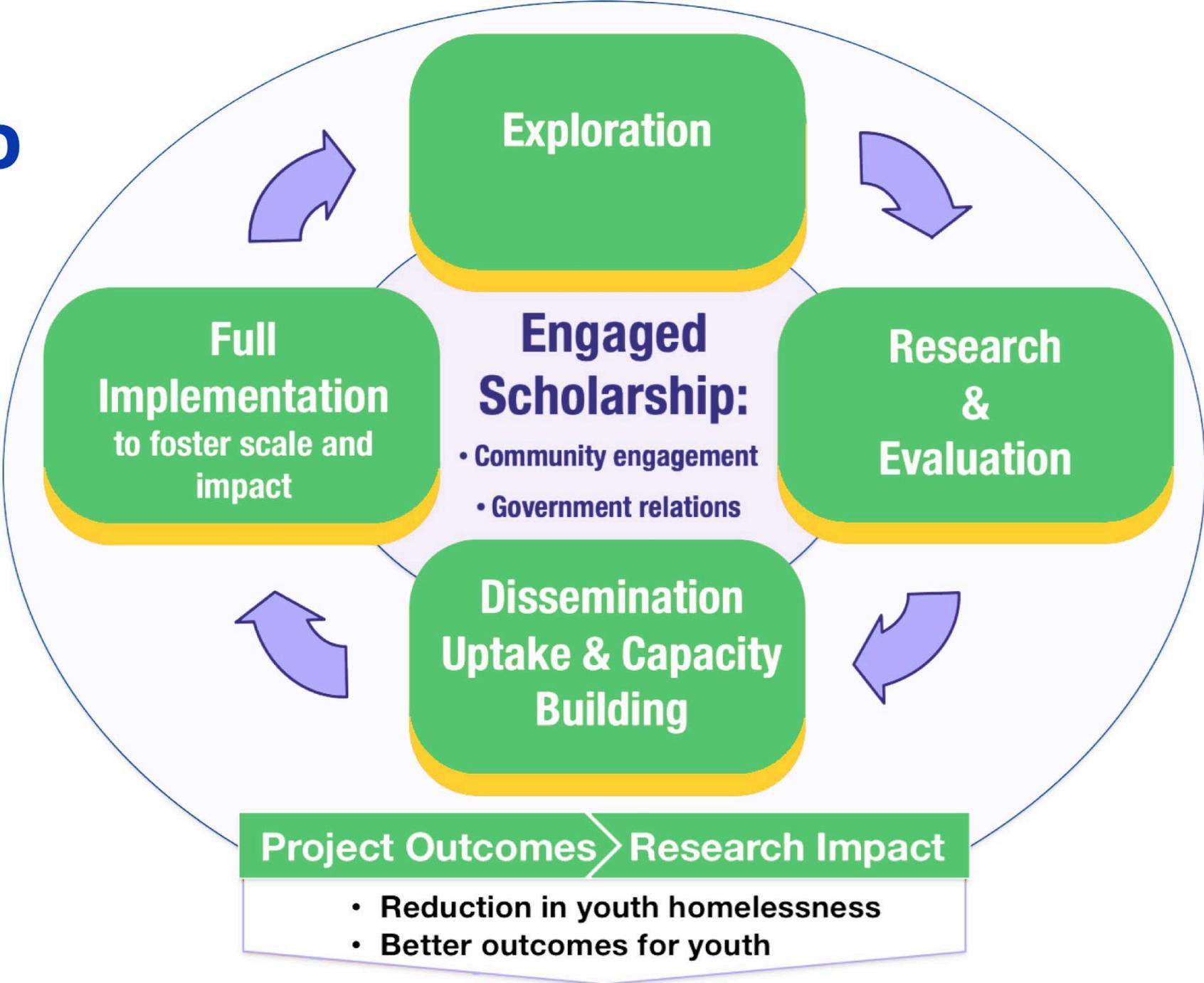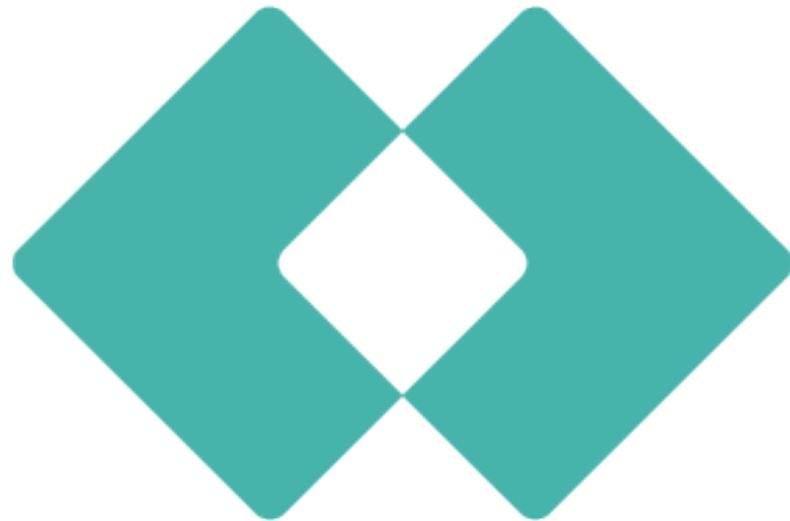
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PREVENTION
Demonstration Projects

- **Enhancing Family and Natural Supports**
- **Youth Reconnect**
- **The Upstream Project**
- **Housing First for Youth**

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Part 2

# Reimagining a Duty to Assist in Canada

The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness

Stephen Gaetz, Kaitlin Schwan,
Melanie Redman, David French, & Erin Dej

Edited by: Amanda Buchnea

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The Roadmap for the Prevention of **YOUTH HOMELESSNESS**

canadian observatory on homelessness

A WAY HOME
VERS UN CHEZ-SOI

5 HOUSING STABILIZATION
> Housing supports
> Health and well-being
> Access to income & education
> Complementary supports
> Social inclusion

6 DUTY TO ASSIST
> A rights-based approach
> A legal duty to make reasonable efforts to end a young person's homelessness or stabilize their housing
> Young people provided with information, advice, and housing-led supports
> Provincial / territorial legislation, delivered at the community level
> Youth have a place to access supports
> Adults have a place to refer young people to

4 EVICTION PREVENTION
> Strengthening laws and legislation protecting tenants
> Provision of information and advice for youth and their families
> Provision of financial supports for tenants
> Access to legal supports, advice, and representation
> Targeted and timely crisis intervention

3 EARLY INTERVENTION

PROGRAM AREAS
> Enhancing family & natural supports
> School-based early intervention
> Shelter diversion
> Housing-led supports
> Preventing sexual exploitation & trafficking

SYSTEM OF CARE
> Integrated services, integrated systems
> Coordinated entry
> Case management

2 SYSTEMS PREVENTION
> Transition supports for youth exiting public institutions and systems
> Enhancing youths' ability to equitably access and benefit from public systems, supports, and entitlements

AVAILABLE   ACCESSIBLE   APPROPRIATE   AFFORDABLE

> Improving youths' experiences & outcomes in public systems

1 STRUCTURAL PREVENTION
> Poverty reduction
> Increasing the availability of affordable housing
> Addressing inequity and discrimination
> Structural prevention of homelessness for Indigenous youth
> Breaking the link between youth homelessness, migration, and displacement
> Promoting social inclusion for all youth
> Preventing and reducing adverse childhood experiences
> Youth homelessness prevention legislation and policy

THIS is what the FUTURE looks like

DUTY TO ASSIST
Taking a Rights-Based Approach

DUTY TO ASSIST

A Statutory Responsibility

Duty To Assist At The Community Level

If the prevention of youth homelessness is to be grounded in a human rights approach, we must consider the positive obligations of governments and communities to ensure the rights of youth are protected. The fulfilment of young people's social and economic rights must include legal and practical mechanisms to seek assistance and redress in the event that their rights are or will soon be violated. Currently, there largely is no protocol or legal requirement to assist youth in distress outside of the child welfare context.

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A **Statutory Responsibility** to Prevent Youth Homelessness

- Legislated requirement, State responsibility

- Retool the sector

- Fund prevention programs

- Promise of assistance to youth (13-25) within 14 days

- Place-based youth-centred
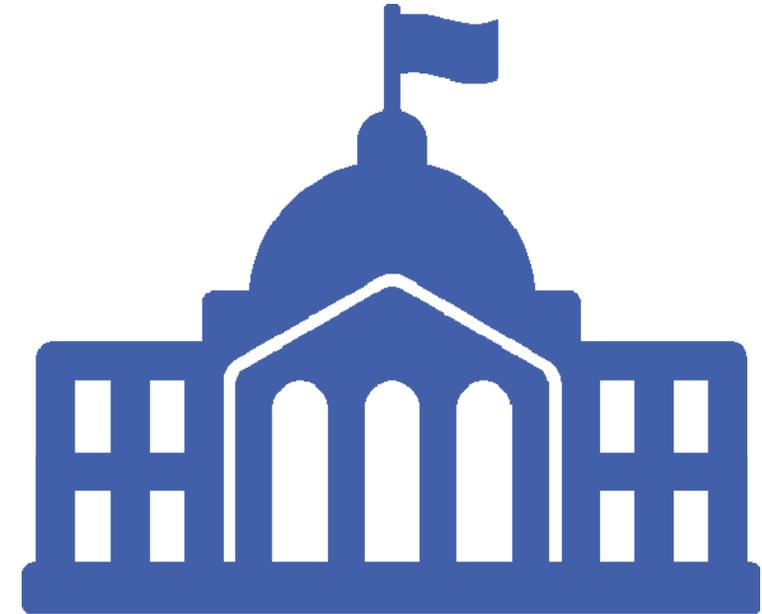
Community-level supports

A "Duty to Assist" means that communities are provided with necessary resources and supports by higher levels of government to enable them to fulfill the requirement of providing information, advice and assistance to young people under the age of 25 who are at risk of, or are experiencing homelessness.
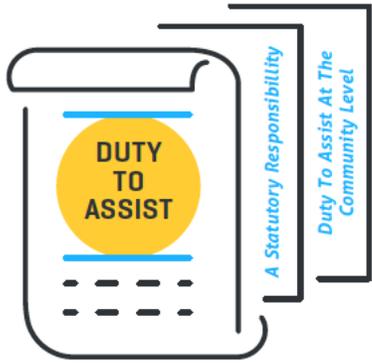
How **DUTY to ASSIST** works
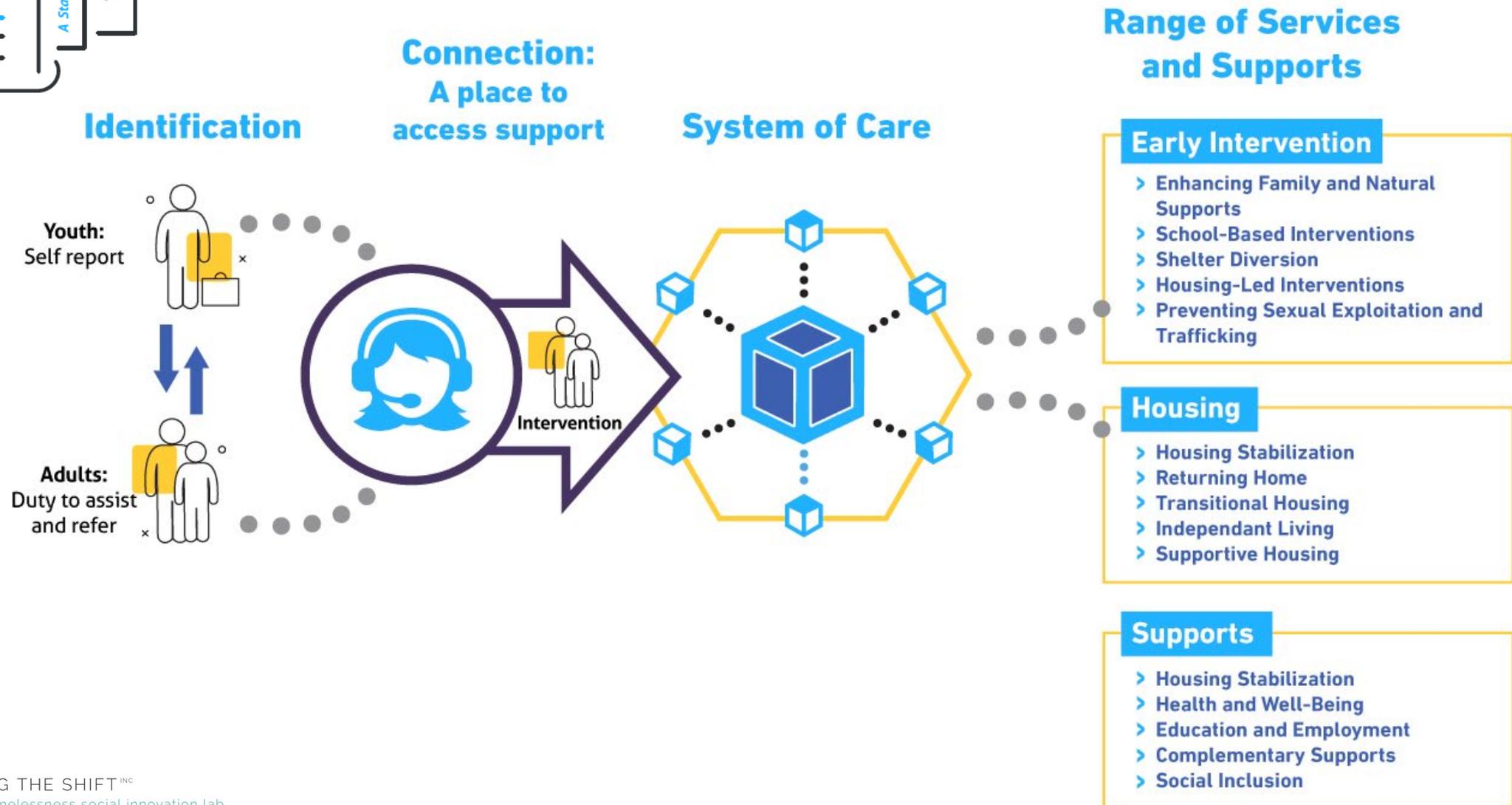
Who is responsible?

Meaningful adults in the lives of young people who identify or reasonably suspect that a young person is at risk of, or is experiencing homelessness, have a duty to offer support and / or facilitate access to supports. This includes, for instance:

- Teachers
- Instructors
- Coaches
- Community workers
- Child protection workers
- Employment workers
- Faith leaders, etc.
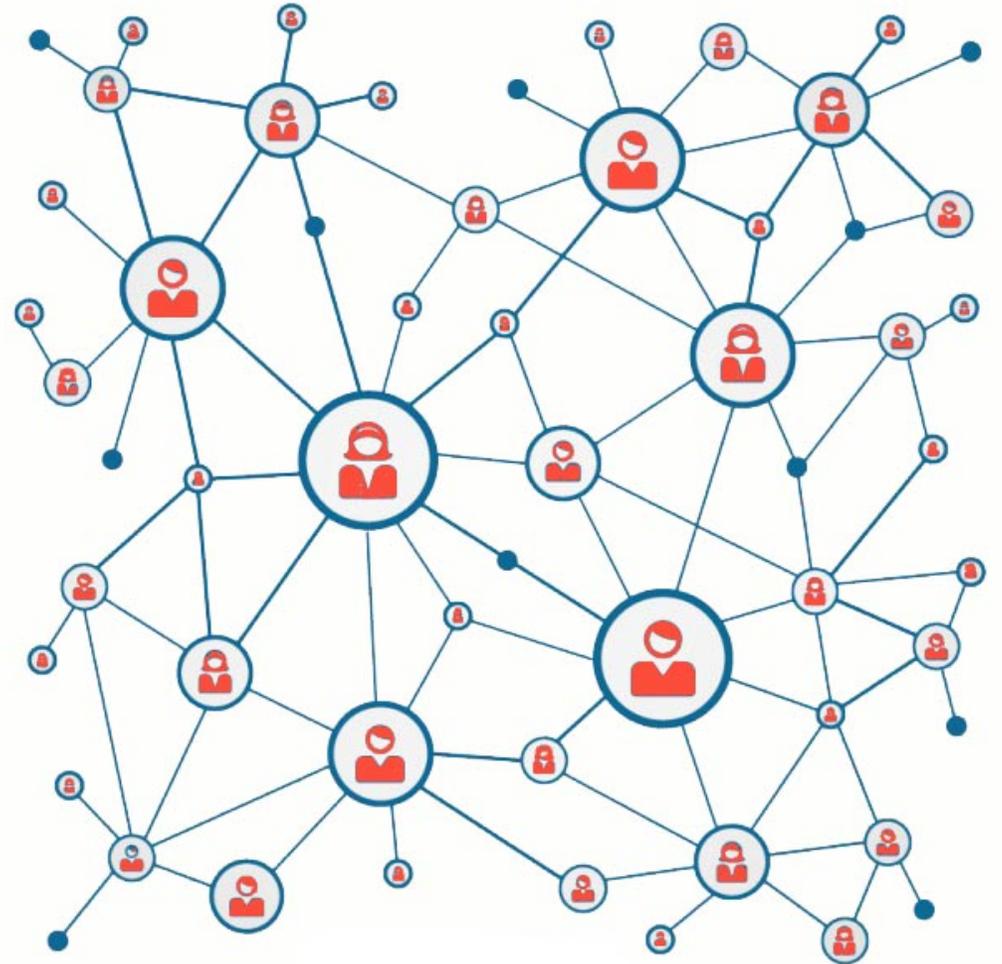
What institutions must be at the table

If higher levels of government provide a legislative and policy framework, as well as funding to support homelessness prevention, the homelessness sector and other community-based services will still have a key role in supporting marginalized and socially excluded populations.

CHILD PROTECTION

HOUSING

TRAINING

EDUCATION

ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

HEALTH

INCOME SUPPORTS

MENTAL HEALTH

Part 3

Designing a Pilot Project

How might we use design to prototype components of Duty to Assist in Hamilton, Ontario in order to deliver a more effective and implementable policy?

bridgeable

HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN

Design Process

| MAY | JUL | AUG | SEPT |

Understand

Arts-based research with young people with lived experience and professionals who work in the field to identify needs.

Co-Create

Co-created future services based on Duty to Assist with professionals from across Hamilton

Prototype

Refined service concepts and tested them with young people and service providers
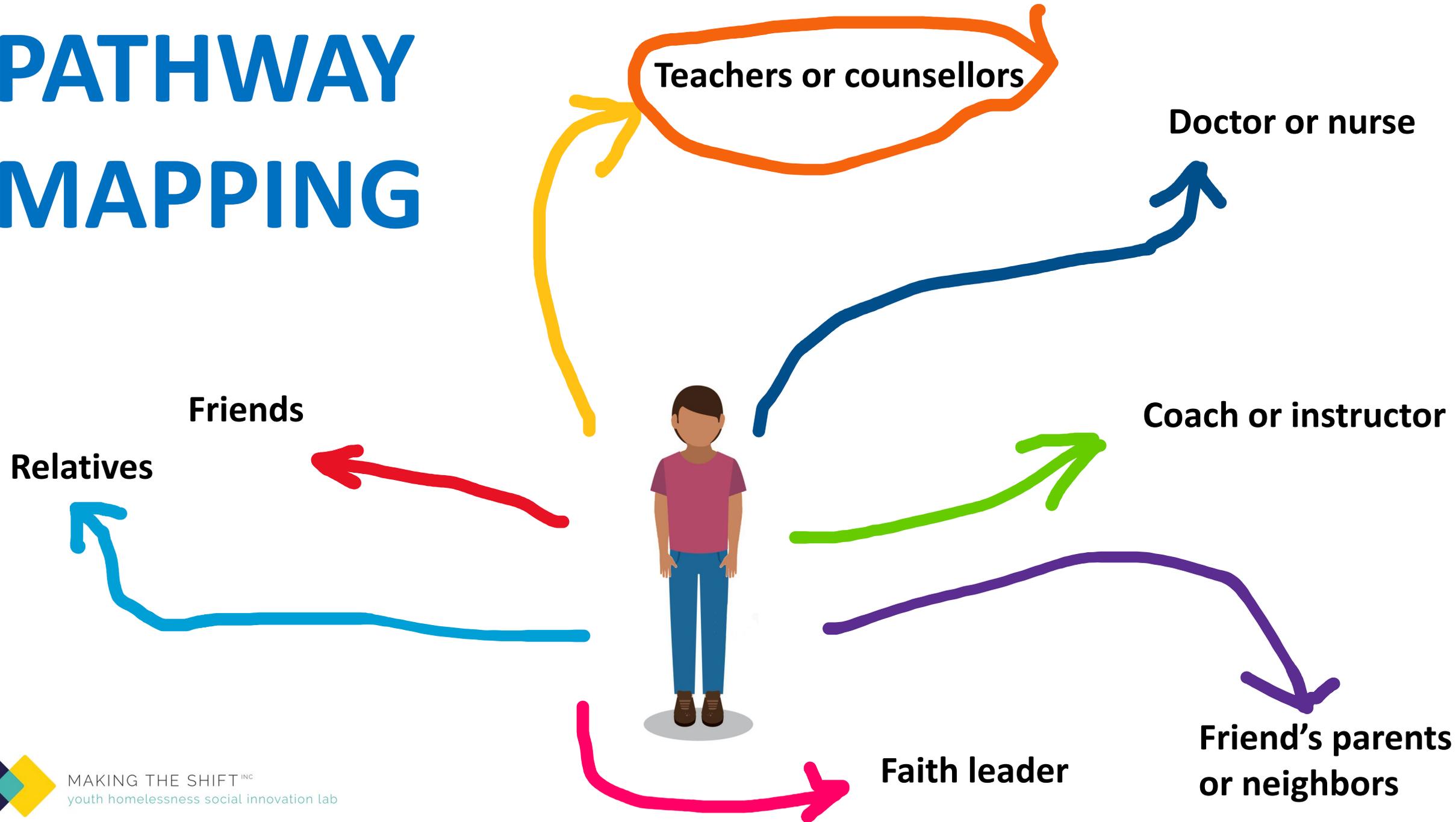
Why do SCHOOLS matter?

Youth Reconnect - Keeping young people in place

Reconnect is an Early Intervention Program

- School / Community partnerships

- Students, teachers and families engaged

- At risk youth identified

Program goals

- Keeping young people 'in place'

- Stabilizing living situation

- Supporting young people AND their families

- School engagement

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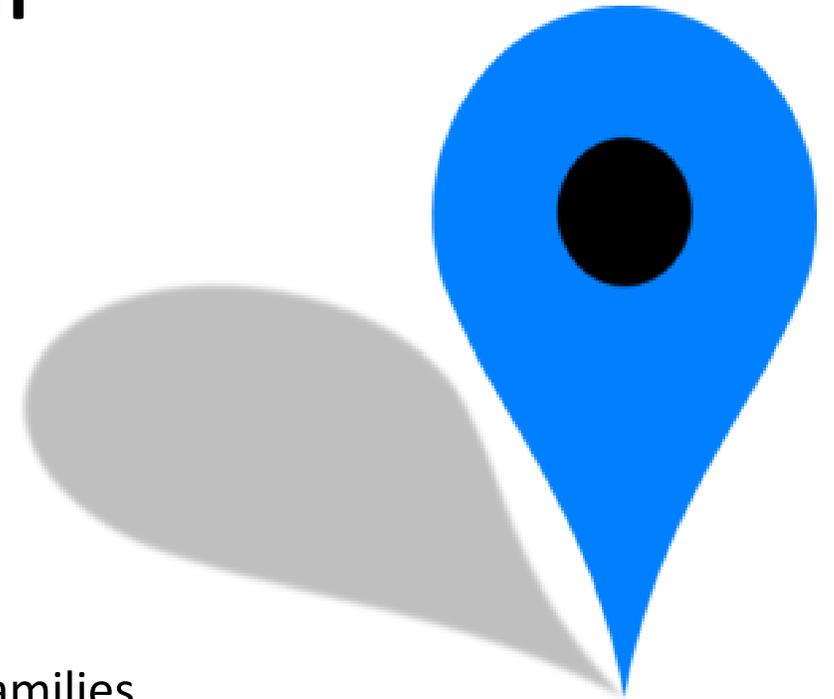
Supporting Indigenous youth

Components of School-Based Duty to Assist

Supporting youth
- Information
- Access

Supporting Teachers, counsellors and other staff
- Information
- Access

Identification

Youth:
Self report

Adults:
Duty to assist and refer

Connection:
A place to access support

Intervention

System of Care

Accessing support
- Centralized Intake
- Youth Reconnect staff
- Use of technology
- Strong school-community engagement

Collective Impact
- Community of services and supports

PluggedIn Service
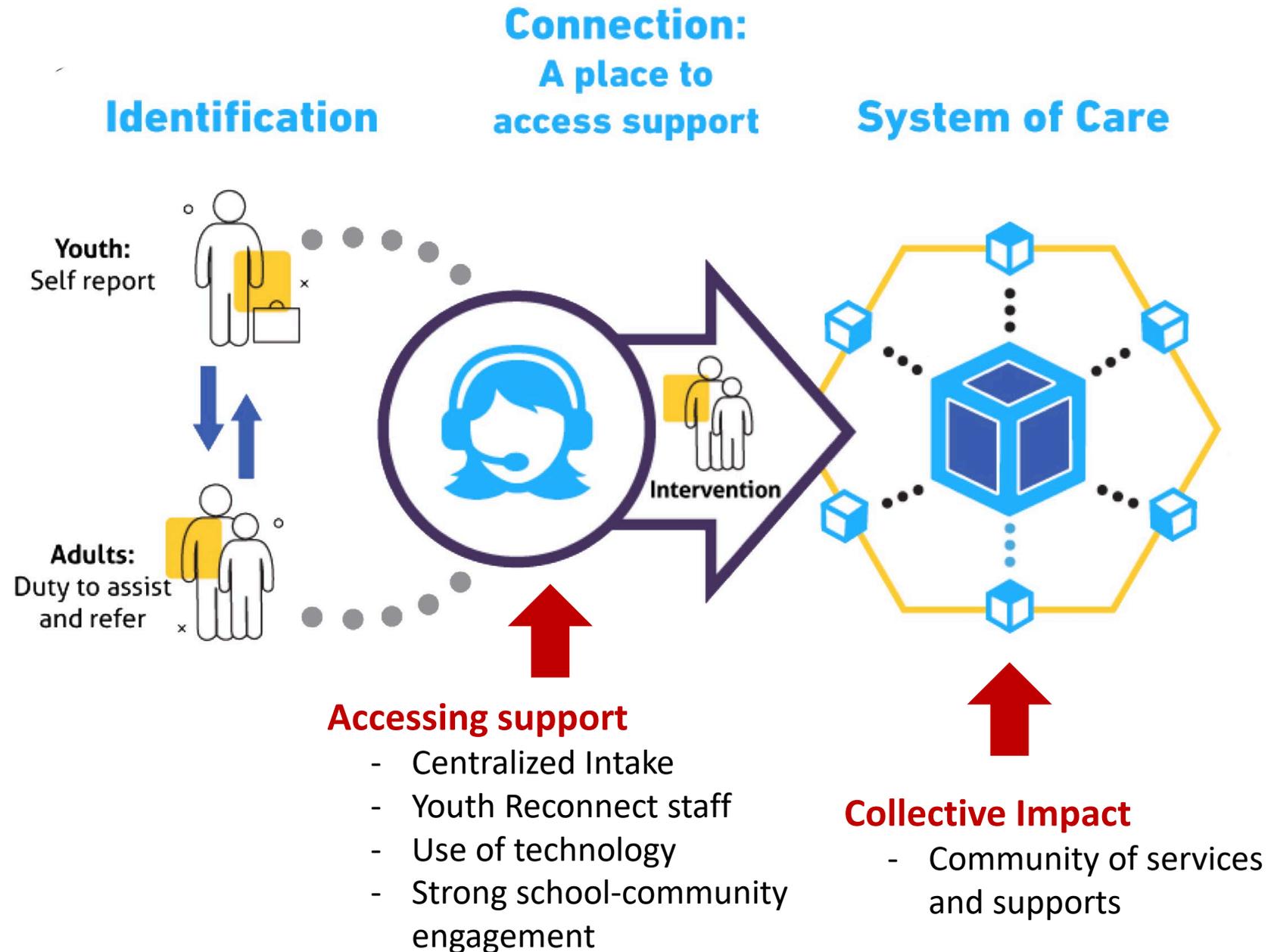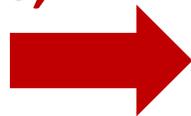
Youth-centred school
awareness

AI-driven
support

Common Ground
drop-in centre

Duty to Assist
real-world training

For YOUTH

Youth-centred school awareness

- Strengths-based outreach to promote awareness of Duty to Assist and PluggedIn
- Co-created by students, school staff, and community organizations
- Youth voice is front and centre of the service experience
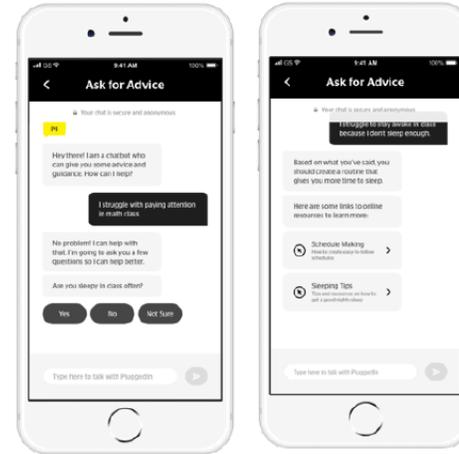
AI Recommendation Engine for students

- AI-driven advice generator using a friendly, text-based interface
- Helps students plug into the community by finding them the local resources they need
- Anonymous chatbot for students to ask sensitive questions

Common Ground drop-in centre

- Space at school for staff and students to plug into community supports
- Dedicated team of support workers from community organizations
- Flexible meeting options for students

Meet Sarah

Grade 10 student
At a new school

Sarah's need

I don't have anyone to talk to about what's going on at home

YOUTH RECONNECT Workers

Engage with students, teachers and counsellors
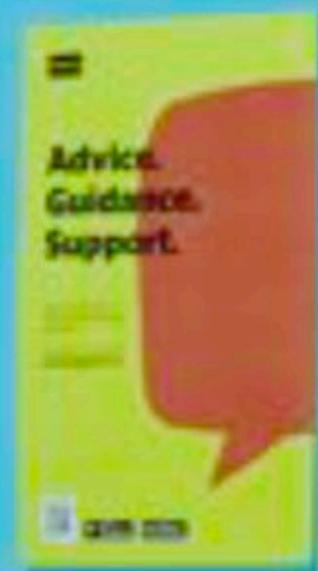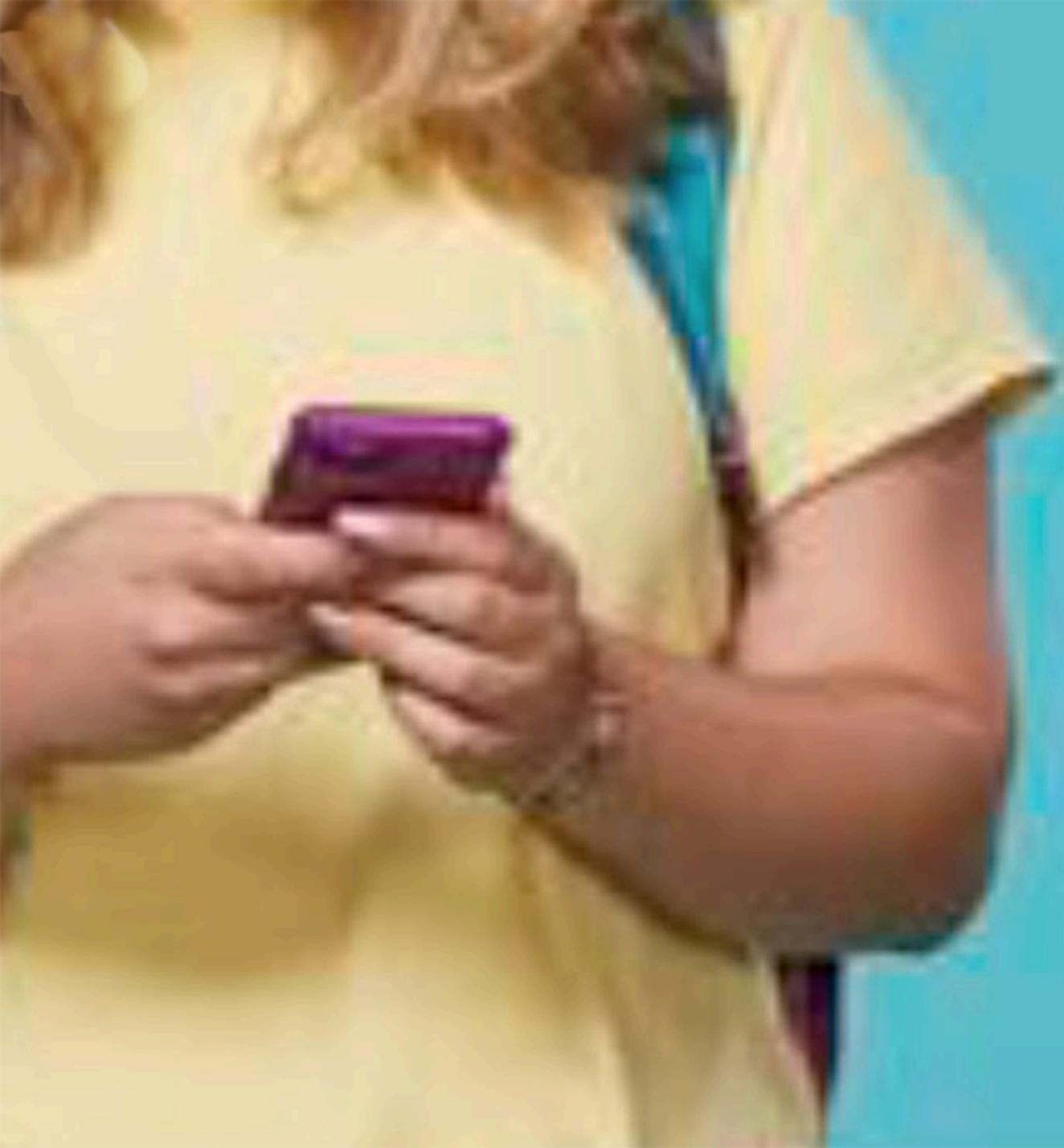
Downloads app

What to do when there's a fight at home
Counselling support
Is it time to talk to someone at school?

PLuggedIn

Talks to teacher

Finds the advice she's looking for

PLUggedIn

Meets Youth Reconnect Worker

Who supports Sarah and her family.

Sarah

Feels like she has the support she needs

# For TEACHERS, COUNSELLORS and STAFF
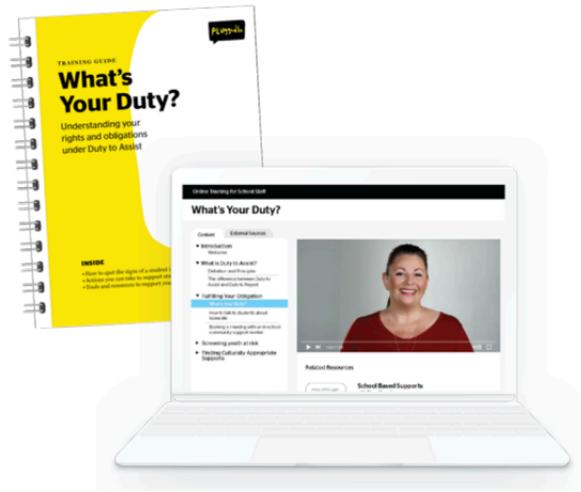
Duty to Assist real-world training

- Online training using real-world scenarios
- Guides staff on how to support students with Duty to Assist
- DtA Leads serve as PluggedIn champions and community liaisons
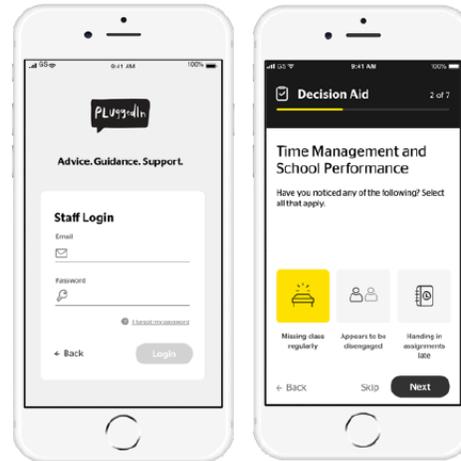
AI Recommendation Engine for staff

- Early identification of students with housing-related needs
- Actionable steps and pathways to connect students to community supports
- No student information is collected so privacy is assured
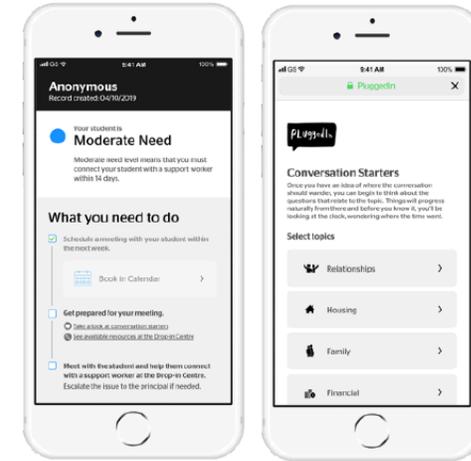
Conversation Starters

- Personalized digital prompts to help teachers discuss difficult topics with their students
- Covering a wide range of youth-relevant topics

Meet Catherine

Grade 9 teacher
10 years at this board

Catherine's student

Rarely shows up for class
Fights with other students
Sent to principal's office

Catherine's need

I don't know how to talk to my students in this situation
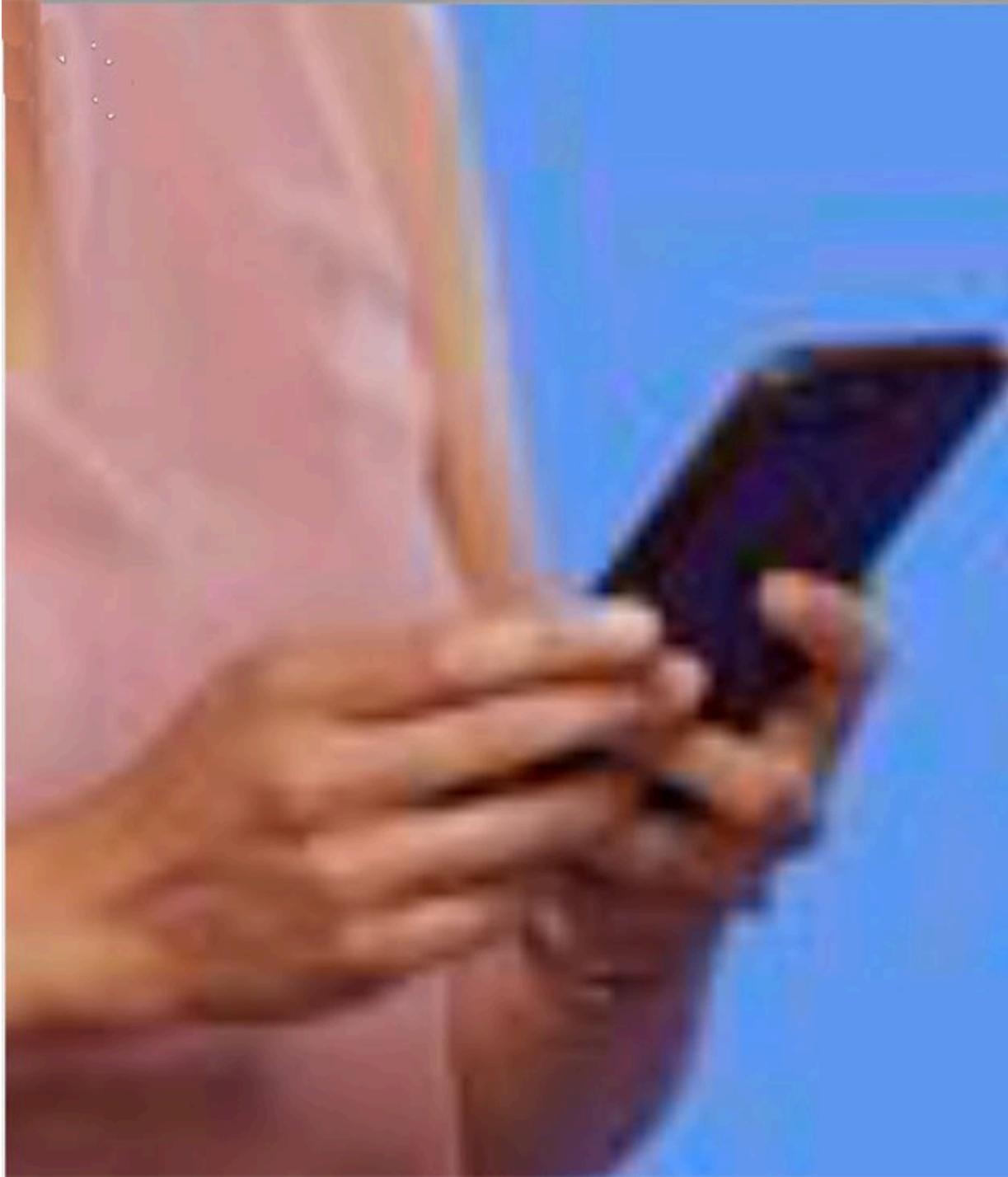
Downloads app

Has he been acting out?
Being less social?

PLuggedIn

Talks to student

Set up an appointment, together

Catherine

Knows how to help
students in this situation

Part 4

Next Steps

Stakeholder Buy-In

- City of Hamilton
- Government of Canada
- Homelessness sector
- Schools and Board of Education
- Child protection
- Justice System
- Health Care System

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Planned roll-out of Duty to Assist by sector

DUTY TO ASSIST

A Statutory Responsibility

Duty To Assist At The Community Level

1. Education System
2. Child Protection Services
3. Health and mental health services
4. Justice system
5. Community Services
6. Employment Services
7. Faith Community
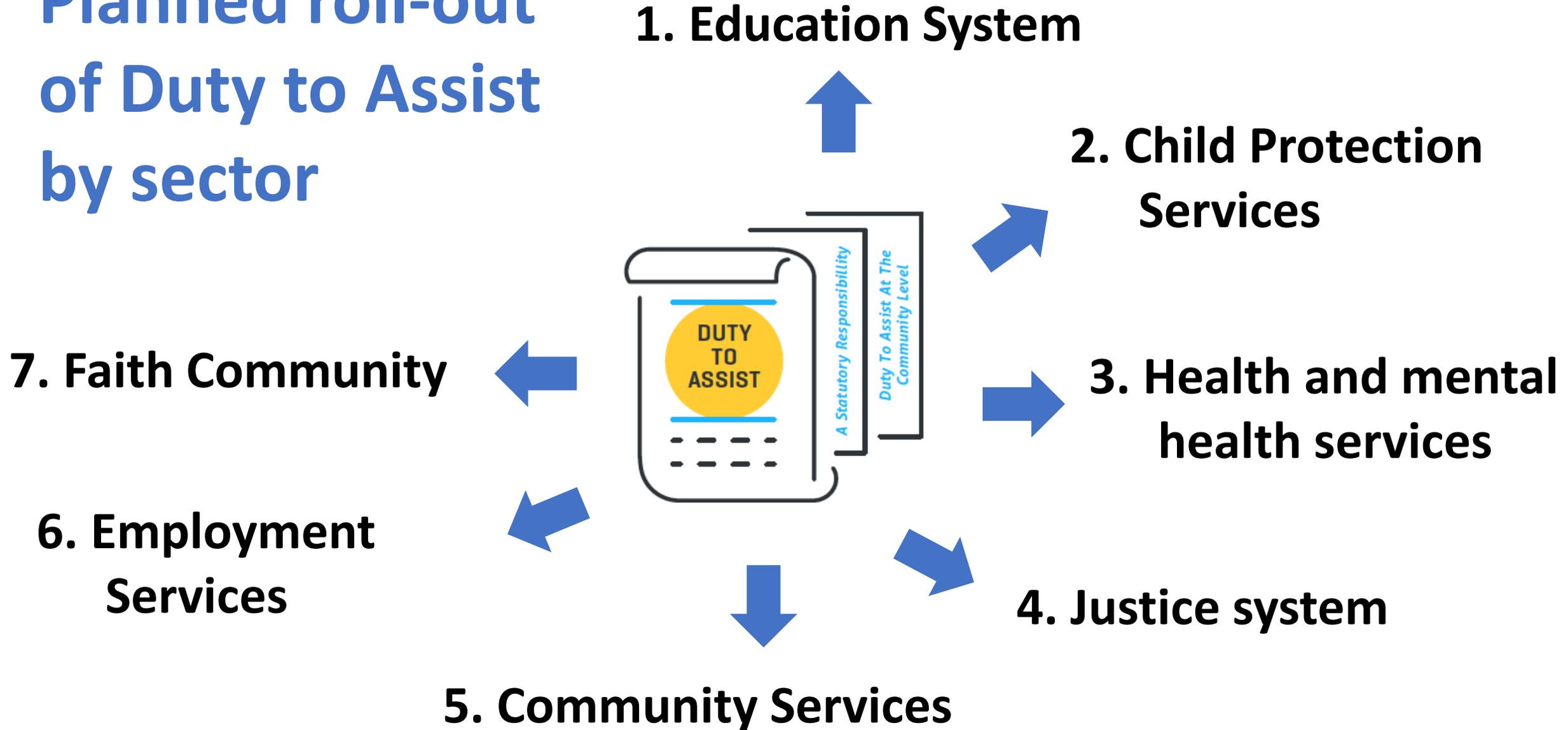
Engagement and relationship building:

- Education system and schools

  - Child protection services

    - City of Hamilton

      - Indigenous community and services

Planning Training and Technical Assistance:

- Building out "Youth Reconnect"

- Design and implement training for educators and child protection staff

- Coordinated access

- Data strategy

- Design and development of technology

Final Considerations for implementation:

Questions or comments?

Designing the adaptation and implementation of the Welsh model of Duty to Assist in Canada, and the role of evidence.

Stephen Gaetz, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, York University Toronto Canada

Melanie Redman, A Way Home Canada

The notion of a Duty to Assist is a central feature of Welsh prevention legislation which was intended to overcome persistent housing exclusion in a context where housing is considered a human right. In this session, Stephen Gaetz and Melanie Redman will discuss the how the adaptation of Duty to Assist is a central feature of the Canadian Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness, and current efforts under way to design and implement the Duty to Assist as a demonstration project to address youth homelessness in the city of Hamilton, Ontario. Such a demonstration project requires a high degree of systems planning at the local level, coordinated access, existing programming that supports the prevention of youth homelessness, and collaboration between the municipality, youth homelessness service providers and mainstream services. Using design thinking along with a consideration of a data driven approach to systems mapping, coordinated intake and accountability, this proposed pilot will be used to test the feasibility of adapting and implementing D2A more broadly in Canada. Our presentation will focus on the results of a developmental evaluation of the planning, design and prototyping process as part of our Making the Shift – Youth Homelessness Social innovation Lab. The timing of this pilot is important as it suggests a potential prevention-based strategy to actualize the recently declared Right to Housing in Canada.