



BRISBANE YOUTH SERVICE

NEW FUTURES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.

An organisational perspective on working with Youth Homelessness and Intimate Partner Violence:

Young people lost in the intersectionality





Brisbane Youth Service *“New Futures for Young People”*

- Multidisciplinary youth service supporting homeless and disadvantaged young people aged 12-25 years, and their children.
- Crisis and transitional housing as well as case support to sustain longer term tenancies.
- Holistic support programs include emergency support, case management, AOD services, a health clinic, psychologists, mental health and social inclusion programs, and specialized support for Young Women and Young Families
- Strategic commitment to Research and Evaluation



**Young
people**

Homelessness

**Intimate
Partner
Violence**



**Family
Violence
Leading to
Homelessness**

**Intimate
Partner
Violence
Leading to
Homelessness**

**Intimate
Partner
Violence
During
Homelessness**



“Domestic Violence”

Defines the violence by the “domestic” space in which it happens... in a “home”.

Versus

“Intimate Partner Violence”

Inclusive of violence that occurs in relationships outside of a domestic or home space



What do we see?





From family violence to homelessness...

Sarah (16) and Joe (15) were found by the school cleaners, asleep in the bike shed. Their mum had left this week, to go to a women's shelter. Joe wanted to go with his mum, however he was not allowed at the shelter because he was a teenaged male.

Joe and Sarah couldn't stay at home because since their mum left, they said "dad went crazy". He stayed in the bedroom for a few days, but last night it got really bad. Sarah said dad began throwing things around and hit her for the first time. Joe tried to help out but this made things worse so they fled.



Family violence: both immediate and long term impacts on homelessness

68% have experienced past family violence

21% report current family violence

48% have a diagnosed mental illness

35% rate their mental health as very poor or poor.

53% of those with a diagnosed mental illness are currently homeless.

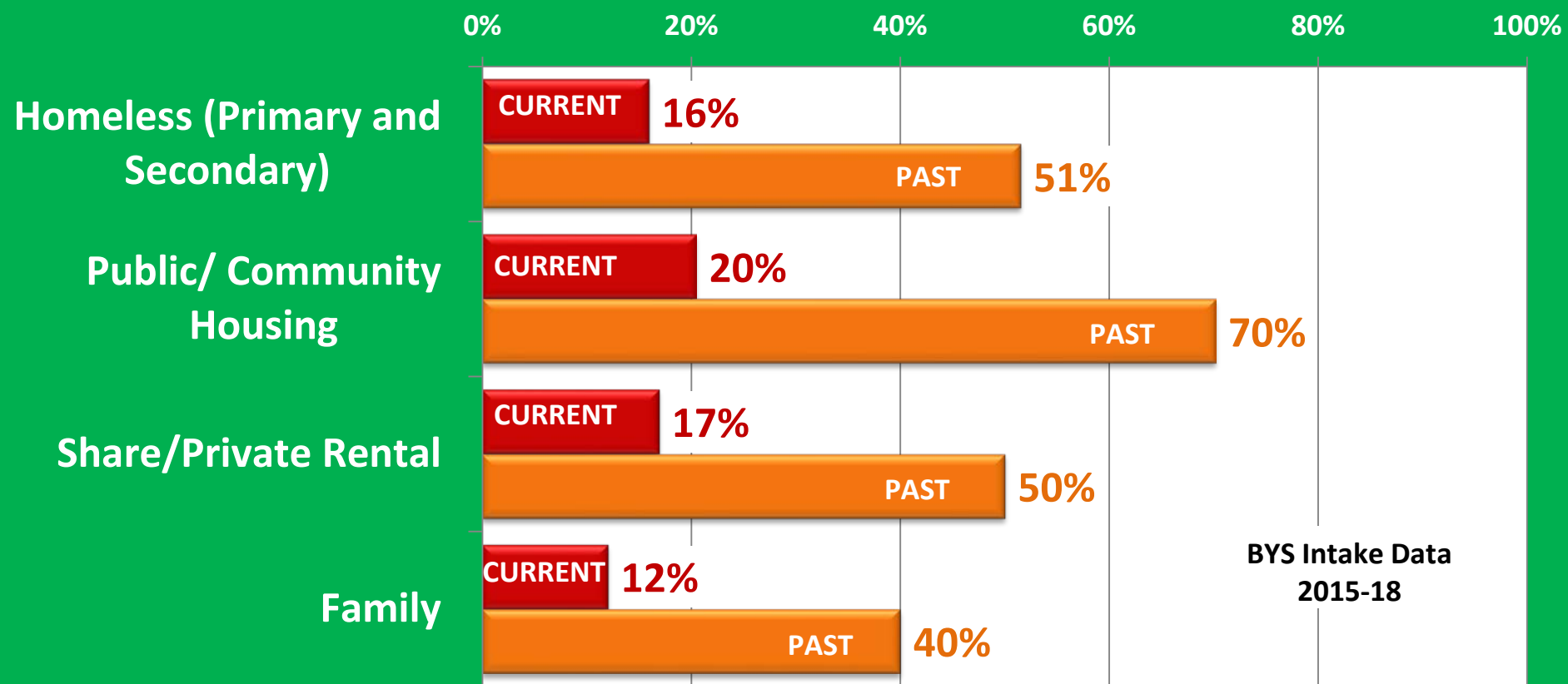
41% use drugs other than alcohol: Cannabis (53%) and Methamphetamines (20%)

80% are in unstable, unaffordable or unsafe living situations



Young people have their own violent relationships...

Rates of Reported Intimate Partner Violence





Young people coming to BYS tell us:

68% have experienced relationship violence

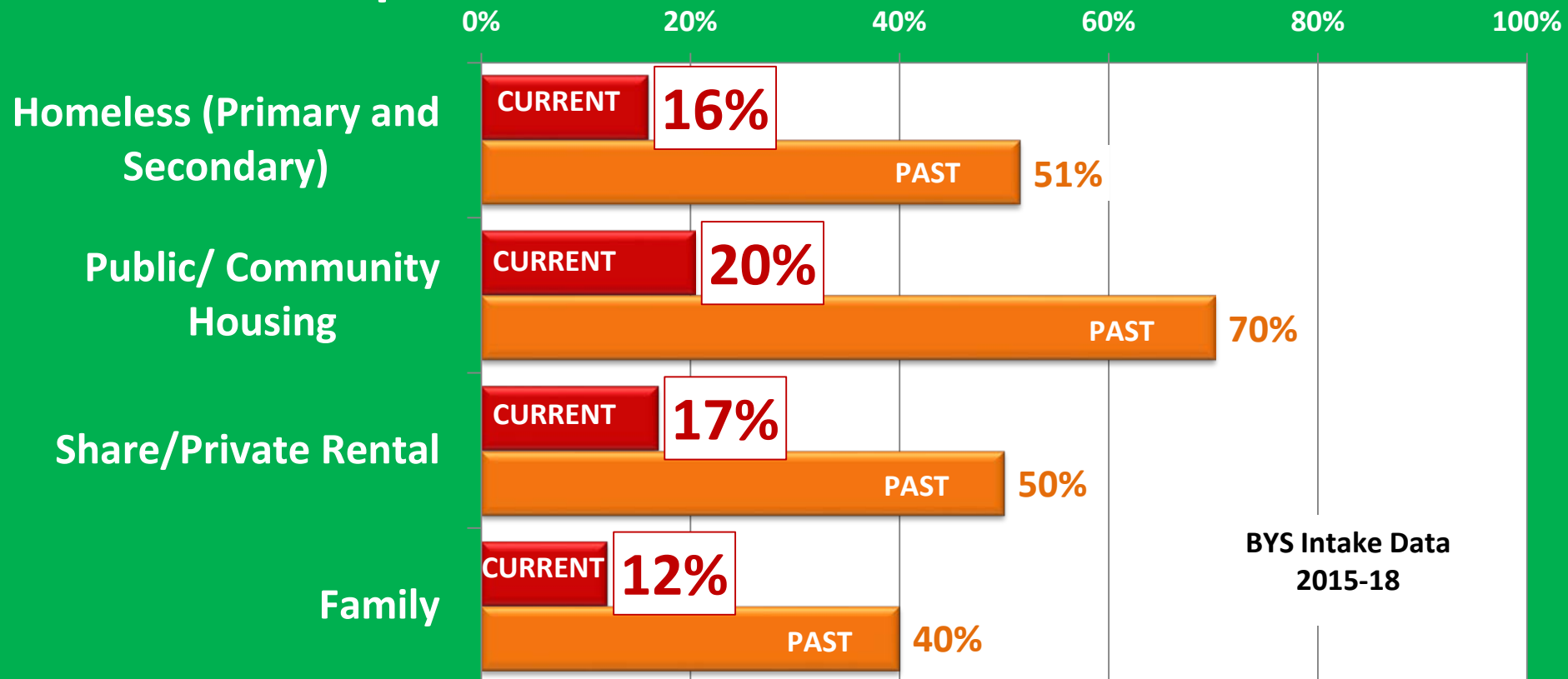
25% use violent and intimidating behaviours themselves

40% want help with violence related issues



IPV happens during homeless

Rates of Reported Intimate Partner Violence





Young People's Experiences...

“When someone is experiencing homelessness they are highly susceptible to DV as they may feel that they are alone except for their partner...that they are only loved by their partner despite the DV and they are safer with them than alone...

Being homeless without their partner can actually open more doors for safe support and housing.”

***Alice, 19**



What young people tell us:

- **“Violent partners ‘protect’ us from other risks”**
- **“How do you get away from a partner when you have no house or money?”**
- **“We are too risky for homelessness services”**
- **“We are too young for refuges but too old to be a child safety priority.”**
- **“We are alone, scared and have nowhere to go”**

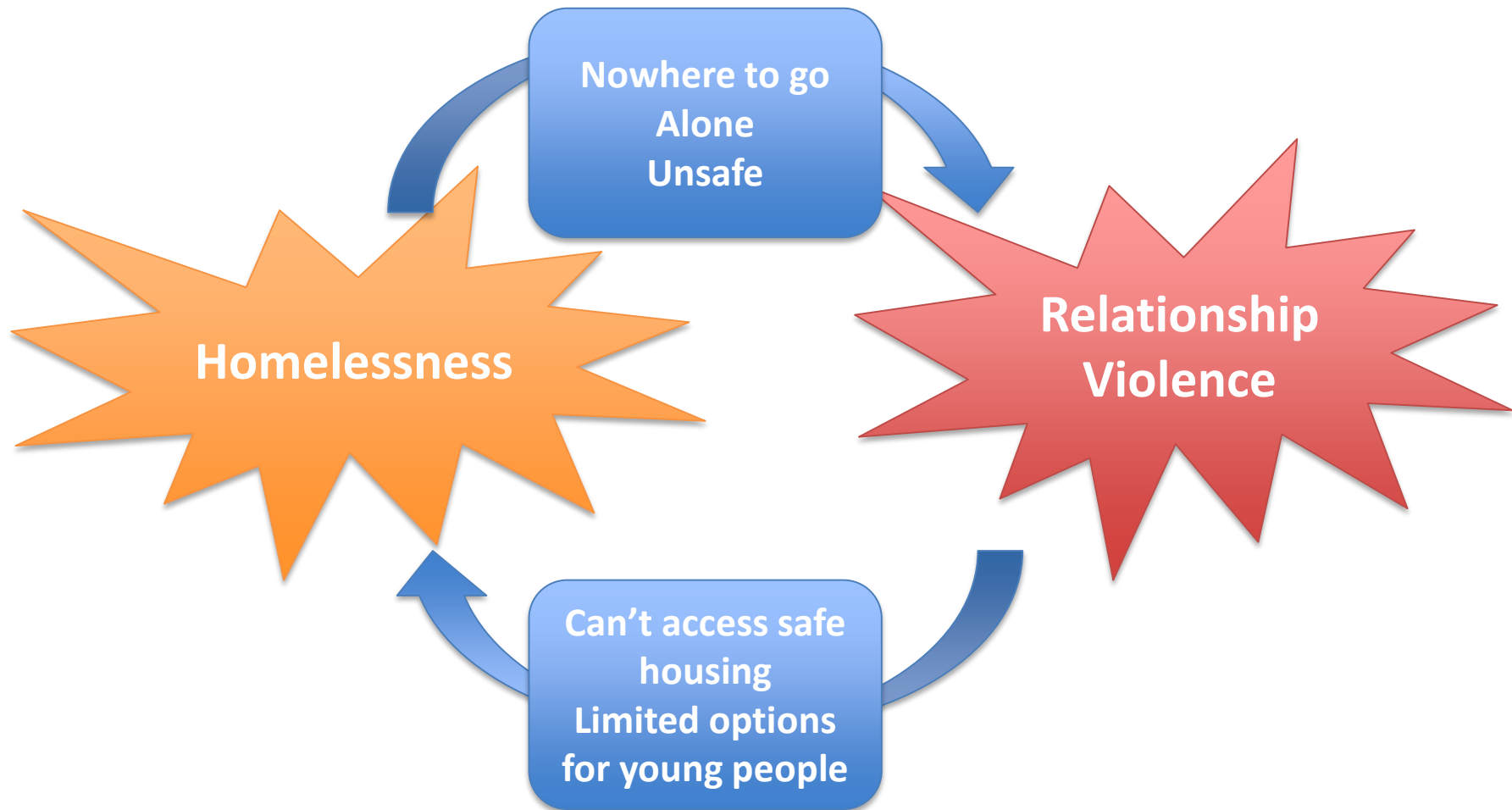


“My first long term partner isolated me... groomed me and mentally/physically broke me. This was all instigated by them seeing that I had experienced long term DV and homelessness therefore I was vulnerable to their manipulations”

Alice★



Mutually Reinforcing and Compounding Risks





Issues for Workers...

- Consistently assessing Violence
- Focus on safety not just housing
- Responding when couples access together
- Opportunistic, creative & brief intervention



Working in the intersection...

- Avoiding collusion – balancing empathy and accountability for violence.
- Adapting practice to prioritize safety
- Risk of normalizing or desensitization to violence



Advice From a Young Person

“It is important to empower (through highlighting and recognising the individuals strengths/talents/gifts) the client to see not what the perpetrator may be telling them to see within themselves but what is truthfully within them... Express that you are not there to control them but to assist them.” *Alice



Further intersections...

**Substance
Use and
Dependency**

LGBTIQ+

**Refugee
and
Culturally
Diverse
Groups**

**First
Nations
People**

Disabilities

**Mental
Health
Issues**

**Criminal/
Legal issues**



Where to from here?



Enhanced safety and
violence response
resourcing for
homelessness
services

Enhanced options for
young people across
both sectors

Enhanced
homelessness and
youth related
resourcing for DV
services



Where to from here?

- Skills Sharing and Professional Development
- Cross-Sector Good Practice Frameworks
- Investment in resourcing for consistent intersectional IPV and homelessness responses.
- Effective early intervention for both issues
- Access to intervention and support options



- Looking beyond ‘housing first’ to “safety first”

While helping the pregnant couple find and move into a unit, Carly’s case worker tried to make appointments with just Carly but was often told “Jack thinks it’s better if we just meet here” or “Jack says we can’t meet you today”.

After the baby was born Jack “lost control”, smashing the unit up and police were called. The joint tenancy was ended due to safety risks and the locks changed. Casey was able to stay in the property with the baby and Jack was helped into housing elsewhere, however he continued to breach DVOs until jailed.



- **Shared case work across sectors**
- **A whole of community response across multiple intersections including youth, DV, Cultural, AOD, Mental Health and Homelessness services**
- **Further Research**





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